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THE

NUMERICAL BIBLE

BEING

A REVISED TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES
WITH EXPOSITORY NOTES:

Arranged, Divided, and Briefly Characterized

ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THEIR

Numerical Structure

FOURTH EDITION

THE PENTATEUCH

NEW YORK
LOIZEAUX BROTHERS, BIBLE TRUTH DEPOT
1 East 13th Street

ORDER AND DIVISIONS OF THE BOOKS.

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

1. THE BOOKS OF THE LAW :—
   1. Genesis.
   2. Exodus.
   3. Leviticus.
   4. Numbers.
   5. Deuteronomy.

2. THE COVENANT-HISTORY :—
   1. Joshua.
   2. Judges.
      Ruth.
   3. Kings :—
      First Book (*Samuel*).
      Second Book (*Kings*).
   4. Captivity-Books :—
      Ezra.
      Nehemiah.
      Esther.
   5. Chronicles.

3. THE PROPHETS :—
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   2. Jeremiah.
      Lamentations.
   3. Ezekiel.
   4. Daniel.
   5. The Book of Minor Prophets:—
      1. *Hosea.*, *Amos.*, *Micah.*
      2. *Joel.*, *Obadiah.*, *Jonah.*
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4. THE PSALM-BOOKS:—
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   2. Job.
   3. Solomon's Song.
   4. Ecclesiastes.
   5. Proverbs.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

1. THE GOSPELS :—
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2. THE ACTS.

3. THE PAULINE EPISTLES :—
   1. Romans.
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      Philemon.
      Philippians.
   2. Thessalonians.
      First Epistle.
      Second Epistle.
      Corinthians.
      First Epistle.
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      First Epistle.
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      Titus.

4. THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES :—
   1. Peter.
      First Epistle
      Second Epistle.
   2. James.
   3. John.
      First Epistle.
      Second Epistle.
      Third Epistle.
   4. Jude.

5. REVELATION.

PREFACE.

THE main feature of the present work I have dwelt upon at length in the opening part. It remains for me only to say a few words upon some points which are not embraced in this, and which need to be noticed for the better comprehension of what is now before the reader.

First, as to the translation here given. The basis of it is (almost necessarily) the common version. It would have been, in the writer's judgment, a great mistake to have renounced the advantage of what appeals in it, in so many ways and so powerfully, to the mind and heart of every English-speaking person. The style of this, therefore, which though somewhat antique is not thereby less suited to the "old, old story" which it enshrines, and which never grows unfamiliar, has been preserved amid whatever verbal alterations. But there was, on the other hand, no profit in retaining real blemishes; and a certain revision seemed almost imperative in a work of this nature. The recent Revised Version, although removing many errors, has not, on the other hand, in general, approved itself to those who had looked with most desire and expectation to its production. Indeed, it was naturally impossible but that it must fail. The translator has always to be, in a certain measure, the interpreter; and a gathering of men chosen for their scholarship from the most opposite ranks of Christian and unchristian schools of doctrine could not be expected to harmonize in the clear utterance of scriptural truth. The Spirit of truth must also be grieved by this latitudinarianism. The effect has been that, as a version intended to replace the old one, it has simply dropped out of mind, and remains only for consultation among other of the many helps to understanding in the present day. I have consulted it throughout, as well as whatever else was available in this way; but it seemed, on the whole, imperative (if one would fulfill one's own responsibility aright,) to assume the office of translator, or rather reviser, one's self. It is a labor too arduous to be needlessly undertaken, and in it the writer, as a believer in plenary inspiration in the most absolute way, has at least used the most conscientious care.

Few critical notes have, however, been appended. It would have increased the size of the book and its cost considerably; and while scholars alone could judge of their value, *they* are just those who need them least. There are, for those who can use them, abundant critical

helps. My desire was, not to make, in this sense, a learned book, but one available to all, and speaking the common language of all,—above all, addressing itself to the heart and conscience, and finding in these, as the truth of Scripture does always, its real sanction, and in the Spirit of God its power to edify.

The chapters and verses—which are of course a merely human contrivance—are here set aside; so much reference only being made to them as to enable them to be found by those who will use a little care, the verses contained in each section in the page being given in the headline at the beginning of it. The divisions which take their place are at least an attempt to indicate the divine ones, according to the manner elsewhere explained. The subject in each case is briefly indicated either at the head of the division or in the margin of the page, while the notes at the bottom expand this in a brief but connected exposition. It has been the endeavor to make all this as simple as could consist with necessary brevity: nevertheless, a word of caution may be needed here. The knowledge of Scripture cannot be attained at first sight, but grows gradually, as we go on with it, and in proportion to our diligence and the progress of our own souls with God. It must not be expected, therefore, that any exposition can be given which will make plain every part alike to those in different stages of growth, and with different degrees of knowledge. Nor is it the way with God to *grade* His lesson-book, so that each class, as it were, should find separately its own lesson. The lesson-book, in every part of it, is beyond us all; and God's way is, to humble us by making us aware that every where are depths where we cannot touch bottom, and at the same time to stimulate by this suggestion of unexplored profundities. "We know in part, and we prophesy in part." The present book must, in its degree, share with Scripture this character if it is in any measure a true reflection of it.

Especially in the types, where the key must be found in truth learned elsewhere—sometimes of truth which cannot be learned without a certain experience which no mere words can convey, will this be realized. And in prophecy, whether typical or otherwise, we have to remember the words of the apostle, that "no *prophecy* of the Scripture is of *its own* interpretation," as the words really mean (2 Pet. i. 20),—*i. e.*, can be interpreted by itself; but every one needs comparison with the rest, and that because the one mind of the Spirit in fact connects them together. It is largely from lack of observance of this rule that so many strange and incongruous applications of the prophecies have arisen, and in general, so little knowledge of them has been attained.

Above all, we need to realize that no help of the kind attempted to be given here can be substituted for that of the Spirit of God, sought in real self-judgment and waiting upon God; and that the readiness to *do* God's will must be found in order to the *knowledge* of the doctrine which is of God. (Jno. vii. 17.)

Every where, what has been sought is what is good for the use of edifying; and our trust is in Him from whom all that is good in it alone is, that He will use it for that purpose. But all Scripture is thus good, not merely certain portions or certain truths. God has given it all to us: let us seek, as far as we may, to claim it all and possess it all. Brethren, is it not truer for us than ever it was for the people under Joshua, that "there remaineth very much land to be possessed"?

The references appended to the text are due to another—Mr. S. Ridout, who, when appealed to to furnish them, was found to have already made considerable progress in this very work, intending only his own profit, but could not but recognize in it the Lord's larger purpose. He divides them into four classes:—

1. Those marking quotations.
2. Those referring to the doctrine or dispensational truth illustrated by the passage.
3. Those referring to parallel or similar texts.
4. Those which show some instructive contrast (in this case, marked "*ctr.*").

Parallel passages and quotations are not specially designated; others which in various ways elucidate the text are marked "*cf.*"

He adds,—

"These references are by no means exhaustive; it is hoped they will be suggestive, and thus fruitful in leading to a deeper understanding of God's precious Word."

In the hope and belief that He will use the whole book to this end, and thus to a fuller sanctification of His blood-bought people, it is committed in confidence to His care and blessing.

F. W. GRANT.

Plainfield, N. J. Feb., 1890.

NUMERICAL STRUCTURE.

I HAVE elsewhere related how, some fifteen years ago, the Lord led me into the discovery of a numerical structure every-where pervading Scripture. I do not need to repeat this here, nor to give proof of the existence of such, as I have there given it. I now call Scripture in general to the proof of it. Believing assuredly that it has pleased God so to write His Word, apology would be entirely out of place for the present attempt to exhibit this in the Word for the practical help of His people. "I believed, and therefore have I spoken;" and I speak not hesitatingly, but with the assured conviction of the truth of what I speak.

But what is meant by "numerical structure"? It is this: That if, for example, in the Pentateuch we find plainly a series of five books,—that is, five divisions of Moses' whole work, this fivefold division has a meaning intimately connected with the subjects of the books themselves. The numerals of Scripture all students of it believe to have (in many cases at least,) definite meaning,—as, for instance, in the number 7 we have "completeness." The view that I am advocating simply applies this symbolism to such a series as we have here, and affirms that Genesis, which stands first among these, has for its special line of truth what would be suggested by the number 1; Exodus, similarly, a line of truth connected with the number 2; Leviticus, with number 3; Numbers, with 4; Deuteronomy, with 5. To take of these, perhaps the simplest, the number 4 stands as the number of the world, and the symbol for "weakness" (which may come out in failure), "trial," "experience;" and so the book of Numbers will be found to be characterized by these thoughts. It is, in fact, the testing and failure of Israel in the wilderness—the type of our own pathway of trial in the world; and the characters implied in the number are found in it throughout.

Now this is not only true of the books as a whole. Each one, we find, when we come to examine it, readily parting into similar divisions, and these again into subdivisions, and so to be divided again and again; and in the case of each division, whether smaller or larger, the same rule applies. The number of each in its series is an indication of the line of truth contained in the division to which it is attached. Of course it is not meant that these divisions are distinctly given us with their corresponding numbers. Had it been so, the numerical structure

would not have needed proof to-day. We have to discover these divisions in most cases for ourselves; but when we have discovered them, we shall find that their numerical place is the sure indication of what is contained in them, and gives us the point of view from which to see them aright.

If this is true, its exceeding importance ought to be plain at once. God has not wrought all this into the web and woof of Scripture to be a mere wonder—a matter of curious inquiry only, but for deepest, truest blessing to all His own. If it be only *there*, then it is there for a purpose worthy of Himself, and cannot be overlooked or rejected without serious loss. Nor does the fact of its having been hidden up to the present time affect the importance of it. How long was the great doctrine of justification by faith hidden from the mass of Christians? For all such things, we have but to blame our own careless unbelieving reading of God's inspired Word. Let us bless Him for His grace, and not refuse His present mercy.

Another objection will doubtless be, that this numerical system is too artificial—too mechanical—seems to make the interpretation of Scripture too independent of the Spirit of God to be of Him. The perfectly sufficient answer to this would be that *it is there;* and being there, it must be of Him, of course. God's ways are often strange enough to us, and we misjudge strangely. Who would have thought that the alphabetic psalms would be worthy of the Spirit of God to write? Probably no one, if He had not confessedly done so. And these alphabetic psalms are but the indication of that very numerical structure which in the hundred and nineteenth stamps it every where with that number 8, which reveals easily one of its main features.

If it has pleased God to give us helps to the consistent interpretation of His blessed Word, it is no wonder if they should be something that we might call unspiritual. The more easily they strike the eye, the better for the purpose. If they are to conduct to the spiritual meaning, they must not be as hidden as the meaning, surely. And in fact, the divisions are often to be discerned without any difficulty, where their meaning is nevertheless hard enough to discern. For it is here that the need of spiritual judgment is still found; and without God, we shall go widely astray.

The fact remains: the numbers are there. Let criticism do its work thoroughly, and prove if they are not. Let it be as severe as the subject demands, and let the pretension be exposed, if it be merely that. Certainly it ought to be easily disproved if untrue, for never did a system submit itself to more rigorous test than does the present one. In the book of Genesis alone there are over two hundred divisions. The numerals must in all these cases characterize plainly the divisions; they must elucidate the spiritual meaning of each part; they must harmonize with one another so as to make the interpretation of the

whole harmonious; and they must bring out the teaching of the book as really one from end to end. These demands are neither few nor small. If they are met in even any tolerable way, then it is useless to deny the truth of what meets them. No human ingenuity could accomplish such a result.

Let it be remembered, however, that, from the immensity of Scripture, no complete success is or can be claimed for what is but a beginning—a first survey of a field so vast and new. It should be no cause for disappointment here if the faithful investigator of divine truth according to this method should soon outgrow his primer, and subsequent attempts—if the near coming of the Lord should yet leave time for them,—soon supersede the present. God would ever lead us on: to be with God is to be led on.

The use of the numerical structure is not simply as an aid to interpretation, though for the child of God that is its great use. It confronts the deniers of the complete inspiration of God's book, and much more the rationalist and the infidel, with an argument they can never meet. It shows the one mind of the Spirit in all these various writings of so many men of so many generations. The Pentateuch it demonstrates, instead of being the piece of literary forgery so commonly now imagined, to have given shape to the whole volume of inspiration; while the same delicate tracery is found every where in it, declaring the hand whose workmanship it is. Its almost mathematical precision, easily to be discerned substantially by the most unspiritual, challenges the infidel to account for what he cannot conceive to have been done by the contrivance and connivance of man. The very fact that there is nothing spiritual upon the surface will enable it to be looked at outside of all the questions with which every thing else is sure to be mixed up. Here is a simple easy problem, which is as open to the unlearned as to the learned—to all classes at once. Yet, settle it as it must be settled, you are brought face to face with God. It is the finger of God. This simple enumeration, this babe's arithmetic, is a web that Goliath's sword can never pierce, and whose meshes will hold powerless the stoutest champions of unbelief. Try it, gentlemen! Learn how God has mocked all your philosophy with the mere enumeration of 1, 2, 3! To despise it will be safer for your pride, but in result your real suicide. The child will understand enough to laugh at you: the most ignorant will be sheltered from your grosser ignorance.

Nor can you afford to despise it, when you remember how all the natural sciences in the present day are ranging themselves under arithmetical law; when, as Herschel says, every law of nature tends to express itself in terms of arithmetic; while astronomy preaches it to you from the starry spheres, the plants in the arrangement of their leaves and the division of their flowers, the animal kingdom shows its partiality among its different tribes for different numbers, the crystal

talks mathematics to you from the window-pane. Why should not a law of numbers pervade Scripture also, and link God's work and His Word together,—or show His Word also to be His work? And remember, nothing more simply expresses *mind* than these arithmetical series. I find a dozen stones in a line exactly three inches apart, and I say this is the work of *mind*. And the Eternal Mind would thus make itself manifest to the minds of His creatures.

Every sound that wakes our hearing has its arithmetical law; every ripple of light no less. Seven notes make all our music; and God's Word is musical with this numerical impress, which tells every where of a Master's hand, that can alone unite all discords into harmony. See how in the events pictured in the closing book of Scripture God's sevens ring their chime throughout. They are celebrating before it comes the victory of God and good in the strife now nearing its end. They are meant to cheer amid it those drooping in the heat and toil of the day. Measured are the hours as they go by; measured all that remains; measured is the cup of sorrow; "sufficient"—not too great—"is the evil" of the day.

And "I am not mad, most noble Festus," when I affirm that the Scripture science of numbers is able to put meaning into all chronology, and to interpret largely nature in every department of it. It is only saying that where things *are*, they will speak; and that all things are full of *reason*,—infinitely fuller than any mere disciple of reason can ever know. But my point now is Scripture, and Scripture must be the key to all the rest.

There is one thing that makes all this solemn yet joyful to the saint: the assurance that it seems to give that the end is nigh at hand. The very power of demonstration that is in this numerical system seems to mark it as a closing testimony,—faith almost coming to an end,—God coming face to face with man. Here it becomes us not to go too far in assumption. His ways are not as our ways. But in any case, the end cannot be far.

THE NUMERALS IN SCRIPTURE.

WE must now look, though briefly, at the symbolical meaning of the numbers themselves. This is needful, both to relieve the reader from unnecessary dependence on the former book, and because that even the short time that has passed since the publication of that has enabled me to give a somewhat fuller account of these meanings. Some may think, indeed, that the increase of their number is a difficulty rather than a help, and that the multiplicity of the meanings given tends to destroy their definiteness. This is very far from being the case, however. However numerous they may be, there is nothing arbitrary in them,

derived as they are from a certain *natural* meaning, which thus pervades and connects them all together. To give an example from one of the most multifarious, as it might seem,—all the variety of thoughts connected with the number 1 are applications of the idea of *unity*, or of *primacy*. It is from the want of discerning this natural root of the Scripture symbolism that the interpretation of the numerals has been so various and discordant.

As there are seven notes in music, and the eighth is but the octave—the beginning again of the series in another key, so there are seven numerals which are alone fundamental in Scripture-symbolism; the number 7 being the well-known symbol of perfection, and 8 merely marking a new beginning, as the eighth day is the first of a new week. All other significant numbers derive their meaning from these, which combine in some way to produce them. The number 10 thus gets its significance from its factors, 2 and 5; 12, from 4 and 3; 40, from 5, 2, and 4; and so on for all others.

I give fully the meanings of these numbers as far as I have yet been able to ascertain them. Others will certainly be found; and here is perhaps the greatest difficulty in the way of the numerical system—that we have to work to this extent with unknown quantities. In practice, however, this is much less a difficulty than might be thought; and this argues well for the amount of knowledge which we have of them. In each number there is, as already said, a central thought, derived from some natural significance, and from which all other meanings take their rise. They are never merely arbitrary and disconnected, never fantastic. Thus, not only have we a guard against their excessive multiplication, but also the assurance that whatever remains to be discovered as to them will only make precise our former knowledge;—it will but adjust the glass, and bring the object better into focus, so that what has been more dimly shall be now more clearly seen.

Let us proceed now at once to the numerals.

One.

The number 1 has for its fundamental idea the *exclusion of difference.*

I.

It excludes another: "The Lord our God is one Lord." (Deut. vi. 4.) "In that day there shall be one Lord, and His name one." (Zech. xiv. 9.)

(1) It speaks, thus, of *sufficiency* which needs no other; of power, omnipotence.

(2) Of *independency*, which admits no other.

And from both these thoughts, of what abides, is perpetual, eternal.

II.

It excludes *external* difference.

(1) Speaks of identity, identification.

(2) Of concord, peace.

III.

It excludes *internal* difference: "The dream is one." (Gen. xli. 25.)

(1) Speaks, thus, of *harmony of parts or attributes.* Thus of consistency, congruity, and of righteousness, which is congruity with relationship.

(2) Of *individuality*—one body, limb, branch; in the highest thought of it, *personality;* in the lowest, of life, which is the basis of all that is truly individuality.

IV.

As an ordinal number, the first, the beginning:—

(1) In the highest way, true of God as Creator, Life-Giver, Father, Source of all.

(2) Headship.

(3) Implies *precedency in thought* and *sovereignty in will:* under which together we have counsel, election; promise, grace.

(4) Birth.

Primarily, then, and very naturally, this number speaks of God; but it may be also applied to men, and may have, then, (as all numbers,) an evil sense.

(1) It may speak of righteousness, as before seen; obedience, practical recognition of divine sovereignty, and so of "repentance toward God;" integrity, which is indeed "wholeness," oneness.

(2) Of independency, as disobedience, rebellion—will.

(3) I think it speaks of a single state, barrenness.

Two.

The fundamental thought is the opposite of the first number: there *is* now another. It speaks, therefore, of *difference, division,* (it is the first number which divides,) and thus often becomes symbolical of the power of evil.

In a good sense, it speaks of *addition,* growth, *increase*; so of help, confirmation, fellowship. We have this idea expressed in our word, "seconding." (Comp. Eccles. iv. 9–12.)

Here we have,—

(1) Confirmation in the way of *testimony:* "The testimony of two men is true." And the power of this confirmation depends much on the very *diversity* of the witnesses: take the Old and New Testament as God's great witness to man. The Second Person of the Godhead is "the True *Witness*" and "the *Word* of God."

(2) Salvation; help.

(3) Fellowship, relationship, covenant—the legal one.

(4) Dependence, humiliation, service. Here again the idea of "seconding" assists the thought.

It will be observed how these various meanings unite in Christ, the Second Person of the Godhead, the Second Man, and uniting these two natures, the divine and human, in His own person,—the Saviour, humbling Himself to death to serve us.

This is the good sense; in the bad one, we have,—

(1) Difference, division, contrast, contradiction, opposition, conflict, enmity, the enemy's work. The unclean beasts were in the ark in *twos;* the mother of a female child was to be unclean *two* weeks after its birth,—double the time for the man-child.

And I may notice here how the woman herself illustrates this number, full of contrasts as she is: dependent on man, but his help-meet; the type of increase, yet through whom came sin, death, and yet, through her victorious "Seed," salvation.

(2) Death is *division, separation*, the last enemy; yet the death of the cross, in which the conflict between good and evil rose to its height, is once again salvation. Nowhere is there so great a contrast, such apparent contradiction, as in the cross.

Three.

3 is the symbol of cubic measure, *solid* measure, *solidity;* of fullness, realization. "Take any two dimensions, and multiply them together: what have you? A measure of surface merely. Take a third dimension; now you have more than surface: the third dimension strikes in deep below the surface, and gives you a measure of solidity. 3 stands, then, for what is solid, real, substantial,—for fullness, actuality. What are length and breadth without thickness? A line that you can draw upon paper is more than that."

3 is the number of Persons in the Godhead,—of the divine fullness, therefore,—and until we reach this, God is not fully manifested. Thus it is the number of manifestation. It is that of the Spirit, who realizes in the creature the counsels of God.

"When the deep lay over the waste and desolate earth, the Spirit of God brooded upon the face of the waters. When men are born again to God, the gospel comes to them, not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost. What is sanctification—the work of the Spirit,—but that in which salvation is actualized in the soul? Without the work of the Spirit, there is nothing but outside work: 'that which is born of the Spirit is spirit;' this is that third dimension which every saint has."

The sanctuary, God's dwelling-place, is a cube: ten cubits in the tabernacle; twenty in the temple; the final city, which the glory

of God lightens, is a cube also: "'the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.' There the counsels of God are realized, the holiness He seeks is attained."

In the sanctuary, God manifests Himself. *Resurrection* too is that in which God is manifest, where all human power is prostrate in the dust: resurrection is therefore on the third day. Revival, restoration, and recovery naturally connect themselves with this.

In connection with these thoughts, we have those of—

Glory, which is indeed, with God, but the manifestation of Himself.

Possession, portion, dwelling-place: heaven as the sanctuary and dwelling-place of God. Worship and praise, the sanctuary-work.

Fruit manifests the tree.

Union, as in marriage, which is the image of sanctification, a *separation to.*

Four.

4 is the first number which allows of simple division, as 2 is the number which divides it. It is the symbol of *weakness* therefore; so of the creature in contrast with the Creator, the material that yields itself to be fashioned by the divine hand, and may, alas! to another. In Scripture, it divides either as 3 *plus* 1, the numbers of manifestation and creative sovereignty, or as 2 x 2, true division, and significant of evil.

4 is also the number of the four corners of the earth, of *earthly* completeness and universality, which has thus on it the stamp of weakness, whatever men may boast. It is the number of the four winds of heaven, the various and opposing influences of which the earth is the scene. This brings in the thought of *testing* and *experience*, which with man connects itself so constantly with *failure.* Practical walk in general comes under this number.

Four beasts sum up the Gentile empires, with their sovereignty over all the earth; four cherubic living ones (Rev. iv. and v.) watch over it. The fourth book of the Law—Numbers—expresses in the most vivid manner the various thoughts connected with this number.

Five.

"In the cleansing of the leper and the consecration of the priest alike, the blood is put upon three parts of man, which together manifest what he is,—the tip of the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, the great toe of the right foot. By the ear, he is to receive the word of God; with the hand, to do the enjoined work; with the feet, to walk in His blessed ways. This is evidently man in his whole *responsibility.*

"Each of these parts is stamped with the number 5.

"The ear is the avenue to the higher part, and there are just *five* such senses, by which man is connected with the scene around,—the avenues of perception, by which alone he can be appealed to.

"The hand of man is that by which he moulds and fashions the natural world around him. It is the expression of active power,—the four fingers with the opposing thumb, the consecrated because the governing part. These on the two hands give 10, the number of the commandments in the two tables of the law, the measure of natural responsibility.

"The foot, the expression of personal conduct, gives a similar division (much less marked, however,) and the two feet a similar 10. 5 stands thus as the number of man, exercised and responsible under the government of God."

Notice, moreover, how carefully man's power is characterized as creature, dependent power. His hand is the instrument of it, as the vicegerent of God in the world: no beast has, in any proper sense, a hand. Yet the power is in no way like divine power,—simple, and without effort, but a co-operation of forces, in which, as he recognizes, "union is strength:" the four fingers, whose symbol is weakness, helped by the strong opposing thumb; the two hands also assisting one another.

The common scriptural division of 7 into $4 + 3$ helps us to realize the present one into $4 + 1$, the symbol of the creature under the government of God,—this approached from the creature side: and the throne of God thus approached is encompassed with clouds and darkness. The divine ways with him give him constant and needed exercise, though the throne is there, steadfast, and towering above the clouds. 5 will be found constantly associated with this thought of *exercise as under responsibility;* but also with the kindred one that, under God, the way, according to its character, leads to a corresponding end. This whole lesson, Deuteronomy, the fifth book of Scripture, enforces throughout.

"The creature in relation to the almighty Creator" gives the fundamental thought.

In connection with 5, and as very near akin to it in meaning, we may take—

Ten.

It is but 5×2, as I have already said. The ten fingers and toes are plainly so, and they give us respectively man's capacity for action and competence for an upright walk. But the measure of capacity is that of responsibility, and the measure of responsibility is that of judgment or of reward. Thus *ten* plagues fall upon Egypt.

The ten commandments are on the *two* tables of testimony, the measure, on the divine side, of man's responsibility.

In the kingdom of the *ten* tribes, Ephraim was set on its own responsibility, apart from the rule of the house of David.

The ten toes of the image in Nebuchadnezzar's vision enable the feet

to stand firm—are what answer to the ten *horns* upon the fourth beast in that of the prophet,—again the measure of power.

In the ten virgins of the parable, responsibility is enforced; and here they are five wise, five foolish. The testimony here is that of the bridegroom's return.

Finally, in the tithe demanded by God in Israel, we have the whole (of whatever it might be) looked at as composed of ten parts, the measure of responsibility, of which God takes *one* in token of His sovereignty.

Forty.

40 is, again, but 4×10—full testing according to the whole responsibility.

And now we may pass on to—

Six.

6 is the second number which is not a prime. Divided, its factors are 2 and 3, which easily yield the thought of the *manifestation of evil*, or *of the enemy's work*.

But evil is weakness, as again this divisibility teaches us; and as such, it must yield to God. Read in a good sense, the number of conflict brings forth from it that which speaks of sanctification and the glory of God.

6 is the number of the days of man's *work-day week*, the appointed time of his labor, type of his life labor, his "few and evil" days,—limited because of sin.

In its full meaning, it seems to speak of sin in its full development, limited and controlled by God, who thus glorifies Himself in the issue of it. The discipline of God for His own would come under this.

In the number of the beast, we find it in three successively higher powers of the decimal scale,—evil in its fullest activity, yet its feebleness ever apparent, and God's hand controlling it: it increases only responsibility and judgment. Its number is "the number of its *name*"—stamps it as what it is, and is only the "number of a man," vainly and impiously aspiring to be as God.

In the tenth psalm is the description of this "wicked one" (*vv.* 2–11). It is, conjointly with the preceding one, an alphabetic psalm, from which in this place exactly *six* letters (*Mem* to *Tzaddi*) are dropped out!

Goliath's height was six cubits; a giant of his race has six fingers and six toes.

Nebuchadnezzar's idolatrous image was sixty cubits high, six broad.

One sixth of Gog's host is spared (Ezek. xxxix. 2). That is, six parts are the measure of the host, of which God spares *one* in divine sovereignty.

Lastly, the darkness at the cross began at the sixth hour and ended at the ninth (3 × 3)—God fully now displayed.

Last of the series,—

Seven

is the symbol of perfection,—the sense, however, being sometimes evil, though prevailingly good. It is in Scripture, where divided, in general 4 + 3,—numbers which speak evidently of the creature as manifesting the Creator, which, being attained, is for the creature its perfection, and for God His rest.

It often seems merely to indicate a complete view or accomplishment, as the parables of Matt. xiii. give a complete view of the kingdom of heaven: the first four, the external world-aspect; the last three, the divine mind. The seven addresses to the churches give in like manner the complete inspired Church-history. The seven seals secure the book completely. In the seven vials is "filled up the wrath of God." The seven more wicked spirits which the unclean spirit associates with himself (Matt. xii. 45) is an example of the bad sense; and the seven heads of the beast in Revelation.

Perfect divine accomplishment we may take as the meaning of this number in a good sense. The regular numerical series is here, therefore, complete; the next number—

Eight

simply showing that it *is* complete by indicating a new beginning, as the eighth day is the first of a new week. It thus speaks of what is *new* in contrast with the old, and thus of the new covenant, new creation.

Thus circumcision was to be performed the eighth day: "the putting off the body of the flesh" (Col. ii. 11), is connected with the new creation in Christ Jesus unto good works (Eph. ii. 10).

So seven days are occupied with the consecration of the priesthood, and on the eighth day they enter on their work.

So the transfiguration on the eighth day (Luke ix. 28) begins, as it were, the new age with "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. i. 16–18.) And the *eighth psalm* announces His kingdom. (Comp. Heb. ii. 5–9.)

But this, like other numbers, can be applied to what is evil; and so we have—

The "seven other spirits" associated with the first "unclean spirit" making eight, and introducing the "last state" of the man into whom they enter.

So the ten horns of Daniel's fourth beast have three uprooted before the little horn, becoming, thus, eight with this; the last state of the

beast being thus brought about, in which judgment falls upon the whole. And in Rev. xvii., where from another side the same things are recounted, the eighth head gives to the beast its blasphemous form, and "goes into perdition."

We have but now one other number, which it needs briefly to consider—the number—

Twelve.

It is, in Scripture, at least as commonly divided into 4×3 as 7 is into $4 + 3$. The factors are the same; but whereas in the one case they are added, in the other they are multiplied. "It is only in the *relation* of the two numbers to one another that it differs from 7: the number of the world, and that of divine manifestation, characterize it; but these are not side by side merely. It is God manifesting Himself in the world of His creation, as 7 is, but now in active energy laying hold of and transforming it. Thus 12 is the number of *manifest* sovereignty, as it was exercised in Israel by the Lord in the midst of them, or as it will be exercised in the world to come."

1 and 5 are also governmental numbers; but *1* speaks simply of supremacy—of sovereign will and power, while *5* speaks of God's governmental *ways*. Both apply to providential as well as manifest government.

In the new Jerusalem, it is plain why the number of manifest sovereignty is every-where apparent:—twelve gates, twelve foundations; twelve thousand furlongs its compass every way. This is its blessedness, that God here rules entirely. Upon earth, according to the Lord's promises, the twelve apostles "sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matt. xix. 28.)

And now, looking back at this series of numbers, we can easily trace in it a connection of thought, which unites it together, and manifests also its completeness as a series. It will serve as confirmation of the meaning of the whole, and of each separate part also. The order of thought gives it a new beauty, and its fullness becomes a demonstration. It is plain that the sum of all truth is contained in it, and that we cannot go beyond it for any thing.

In the first three numbers, thus, we have God in His fullness—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. God must, if our thoughts are right, take precedence in them of all else, and the display of Himself is what is accomplished and designed in all that follows.

We have next, in the number 4, the creature; and here the display of God in it is noted and emphasized in the Scripture division into 3 and 1 which has already come before us. The connection of the first three numbers with the fourth is here made plain to us.

Then 5 we have seen also to be 4 and 1. We start afresh with the number 4; the creature being the means of this display, and therefore the *addition* of the first three to 4 completes the series. 5 is thus a 4 and 1; 6, a 4 and 2; 7, a 4 and 3. There are no more *divine* numbers to be related to the *creature* number, and so the series necessarily ends with 7.

5, then, is 4 and 1: the creature in relation to the Creator, weakness to almighty strength,—that is the first thought.

6 is a 4 combined with 2, the number that speaks of the strife that has come in with evil, and of deliverance from it. Thus it is the number which shows the creature as a *fallen* creature, and God's victory over the evil, by which He is gloriously displayed.

Thus God's work is accomplished, as in the six days every thing was made at first, and the number 7 speaks, therefore, of full accomplishment and rest. The series is complete, and it is plain that there can be no line of truth beyond or outside of it. How beautiful and conclusive a proof of what instruction God has designed for us in the numerical series itself!

THE BIBLE.

THE Bible as a whole has sixty-three books,—Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles being really only one each: our present division of them having been adopted from the Septuagint. And $63 = 7 \times 3^2$. Here we have, then, the symbol of perfection, and that of divine manifestation intensified,—"*God glorified in His perfectly accomplished work.*"

It is, as God's testimony to man, divided into two parts, perfectly distinct,—the Old Testament and the New. ("Testament" and "covenant" are the same word in the original.)

1. In the Old Testament, we have the Creator-God, sovereign and almighty. And here thirty-six books ($36=3 \times 12$) exhibit Him in holy and manifest government.

2. In the New Testament, we have God speaking in the Son, also Son of Man, the Saviour. And its twenty-seven books (3^3) show us how He has gloriously manifested Himself. *Eight* writers (the new-covenant number) carry us on to new creation.

ITS PENTATEUCHAL STRUCTURE.

THE five books of the Law—far from being a comparatively modern compilation,—are in fact the structural basis of the whole Bible, which consists of just *five* Pentateuchs, which correspond, not in number only, but in respective lines of thought. Of these, the Old Testament has four Pentateuchs, the New Testament, one. They compare as follows:—

	THE OLD TESTAMENT.				THE NEW TESTAMENT.
	THE LAW.	THE COVENANT HISTORY.	THE PROPHETS.	THE PSALM-BOOKS.	
1.	Genesis.	Joshua.	Isaiah.	Psalms.	Gospels.
2.	Exodus.	Judges & Ruth.	Jeremiah & Lamentations.	Job.	Acts.
3.	Leviticus.	Samuel & Kings.	Ezekiel.	Solomon's Song.	Paul's Epistles.
4.	Numbers.	Captivity Books.	Daniel.	Ecclesiastes.	Catholic Epistles.
5.	Deuteronomy.	Chronicles.	Minor Prophets.	Proverbs.	Revelation.

Too large in character to have this justly exhibited in one table, the relation of these books to one another must be sought in the analysis of the individual books themselves, or of the sections to which they belong.

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THE main divisions of the Old Testament are, then, four in number, each division being a Pentateuch. Four Pentateuchs, or 4×5, give us the number of the world and of trial, along with that of exercise under divine government. The Old Testament is the *earthly* part of revelation, addressed to the *earthly* people of God, though typically, of course, going far beyond this.

Then it speaks also of the ages of *probation* and exercise, especially under the law,—times measured and characterized by the forty centuries of their duration before Christ came.

The divisions are—

1. THE BOOKS OF THE LAW, in which are enforced God's almighty power and sovereign rights.
2. THE COVENANT HISTORY. 2 is the number of *legal* covenant, and this characterizes the whole. Thus it is a history of discord, division, and the enemy's power, though with divine interventions in deliverances, which stand as types and assurances of the final deliverance to come.
3. THE PROPHETS then give us *God's* voice—the reasoning of divine holiness with man, that he may be partaker of it, as it is seen in the visions of the future he shall be, and the glory of God be then fully displayed.
4. THE PSALM-BOOKS are the books of experience and trial in the world,—speaking of the lessons he has learned in it, the wisdom which is their outcome, and the goodness of God which turns sorrow into song.

THE LAW.

THE books of the Law have a double character,—as literal history and as spiritual type. Both need to be considered, the literal fact being the necessary basis of the other; and in both respects the numerical structure is significant, and the same. We have *literally*, then,—

1. Genesis: the ages of promise, and the birth of Israel.
2. Exodus: the people redeemed and taken into covenant with God.
3. Leviticus: their sanctification in view of His holiness.
4. Numbers: their trial in the wilderness.
5. Deuteronomy: the moral summing up as wisdom for the land.

Spiritually,—the Christian side,—the Law as a whole signifies "the re-establishment of the authority of God over the (new) creature."

1. Genesis: (new-)creation life.
2. Exodus: redemption and fellowship with God through a Mediator.
3. Leviticus: sanctification through the offering of Christ and the work of the Spirit.
4. Numbers: testing in the divine path through the world.
5. Deuteronomy: the ways and end of divine government.

The dispensational types seem to be scattered through these books, coming out here and there into unmistakable prominence, and then disappearing, always linked with, and apparently dependent upon, the individual ones, which seem to extend throughout each book and the whole series of books, and to be the thread upon which all else is strung. God has been pleased thus to show us what to Him His saints individually are, and to enforce upon us that personal walk with God which we see in that type of the Church, Enoch.

It will be seen, moreover, that in this way the types are exhibited, not as fragmentary and hap-hazard as to order, but in perfect connection with each other and with the whole: a thing which certifies to us their interpretation, and places it far beyond the possibility of being merely conjectural, while it puts a wholesome restraint upon the imagination in the things of God, and assures to our hearts the full inspiration of His entire Word.

Let it be noted, too, that this typical meaning gives us alone to see the real importance of many parts of these books, which as simple histories would seem unworthy of the detail with which they are narrated. What, for instance, should we make of the lengthy account of the mission to take a bride for Isaac, if the mere history were all? As it is, although we have only penetrated into it a little way, what is already seen cheers us, not only with the precious things we find there, but also with the assurance of abundance to reward our further search. Thus God would never allow us to shut up His Word as if we knew it, but bring us to it again and again with fresh and ever-growing delight and interest. May He grant it to all readers of this, and that by the truth they may be sanctified.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF GENESIS.

ITS SCOPE LITERALLY.—Creation, and the ages of promise before the law (man having fallen). The promise of life before the ages; the call of Noah and the sovereignty over the earth renewed; the call of Abram and the promise to him; the seed called in Isaac; the election of Jacob and the beginning of the nation; its infancy sheltered of God in Egypt.

ITS SCOPE SPIRITUALLY.—New creation foreshown in the old; the promise of life in Christ; the law of life (Seth); resurrection life (Noah); the call of God (Abram); the child's place (Isaac); election *to* holiness (Jacob); supremacy over the world (Joseph).

Its Divisions are—

1. (Chap. i., ii.) Creation,—type of new creation; its stages, whether in the individual or in the dispensations.

2. (Chap. iii.–l.) *In the Literal Application.*—The breach with God having come in, separation between the world and His people, who are the recipients and witnesses of His salvation in it.

   Typically.—Sin having divided from God, the creative steps become a "growth up unto *salvation*" (1 Pet. ii. 2); in which the divine life is distinguished and separated from the life of nature.

N. B.—The reader will note that the divisions and subdivisions of the text are indicated at the top of each page.

At the head of each section in the text is indicated the chapter and verse of the ordinary translation with which it corresponds.

GENESIS.

DIVISION 1. (Chap. i., ii.)

Creation,—type of new creation; its stages, whether in the individual or in the dispensations.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. i.–ii. 3.)

God's work, of and by Himself.

First day of the work,—light. New birth in repentance (by the Spirit and the Word). Dispensationally, the age of promise.

(I. 1-5.)

1. IN the [a]beginning, [b]God [c]created the [d]heavens and the earth.

And the earth was [e]waste and void; and [f]darkness on the face of the deep; and the [g]Spirit of God brooding over the face of the waters.

And God said, [h]Let there be light; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was [i]good; and God [j]divided between the light and the darkness. And God called the light [k]Day, and the darkness he called Night. And evening was, and [l]morning was,—one day.

c cf. Is. 24. 1; Jer. 4. 23. *f* Eph. 5. 11, 13; Col. 1. 13; Mat. 27. 45. *g* Jno. 3. 6; Jas. 1. 18. *h* Ps. 119. 130; Jno. 1. 5; Jno. 9. 5; 2 Cor. 4. 6; Col. 1. 12; 1 Jno. 1. 5; Acts 9. 3. *i* Eccle. 11. 7; 1 Pet. 2. 9. *j* Is. 5. 20; Phil. 1. 10. *k cf.* Rom. 13. 13; 1 Thess. 5. 5; Ps. 74. 16; Is. 45. 7. *l cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 8.

a Jno. 1. 1. Heb. 1. 10. Ps. 90. 2. Prov. 8. 22. *cfr.* 1 Jn. 1. 1. Jno. 15. 27. Acts 1. 1, 22. 2 Pet. 3. 4. Col. 1. 18.
b Jno. 1. 3. Col. 1. 16. Heb. 1. 2. Eph. 3. 9.
c Heb. 11. 3. Ps. 33. 6. Job. 38. 4.
d Ps. 89. 11. Is. 40. 26. Jer. 51. 15. Rev. 21. 1.

NOTES.

1.

SEVEN words describe the original creation of the first verse. In the second, the *earth*—emphasized in contrast with the heavens—is waste and void. Darkness is on the "face of the deep"—not every where,—and the light of the first day is not created then, but called into existence there where (now) it was not. The "deep," too, is not a true chaos, (nor is the earth that,) but "*waters*," under which the earth lies buried, and which are removed on the third day, so that the dry land appears. All this shows a state of things quite in accordance with the idea of some cataclysmic overthrow succeeding the geologic ages whose remains are entombed in the strata, and immediately preceding the introduction of man and the animals that came in with him.

This thought of a ruined condition of the earth succeeding its original creation, so far from being merely an attempt to meet the demands of geology, is no less required by the typical view. It is the new birth of a fallen creature which is depicted in the first day's work. Here how truly the ruin and vanity of the natural man are only concealed by the moral darkness which is the result of being away from God! The Word of God acts in conjunction with the Spirit, and man is

CRITICAL NOTES.

CREATION.

ONLY three times in this account is *creation* spoken of: first, it is of the heavens and earth at the beginning; secondly, of the living *soul*,—the animal creation; thirdly, of man, who is *spirit*, as well as soul. In each case in which it is used, therefore, a new thing is brought into being, not developed out of pre-existing material. That the word is used elsewhere in a less exact way is true, and not hard to understand either; but to the six days' work as a whole it is never applied: "in six days the Lord *made*," not "created." The closing words, which I have rendered literally, make a distinction between creating and making, and affirm the making here to be a purpose of the original creation.

When men are born again, here also they are "*created*" in Christ Jesus, and have a new, "divine nature," which is "eternal life."

Division between waters above and beneath. Two natures distinguished. Dispensationally, human government established from Noah.

(6-8.)
2. And God said, Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it be a division between waters and waters. And God made the [m]expanse, and divided between the waters which are beneath the expanse and the waters which are above the expanse; and it was so. And God called the expanse [n]Heavens. And evening was, and morning was,—a second day.

[m] Ps. 19. 1.

[n] Mat. 13. 32.

brought into the presence of God, who is light,—a light by which we are discovered to ourselves. All that we become sensible of is ruin—a lost condition,—and yet here, in repentance, true judgment of ourselves before God, the first step in fellowship with Him is found. This is the type in its individual application, and it is easy enough to read.

Dispensationally, it is the age of promise that is pictured,—the time before the flood, when simply the prophecy of the woman's Seed and the enjoined sin-offering (see chap. iv. 7) cast light upon man's condition, and cheer with the commencement of a new day. But as to the earth, God does not interfere with it, and the general state is such that it ends in almost universal judgment.

The evening and the morning throughout these days are in beautiful accordance with the typical significance. The darkness is called "Night;" but, in fact, when light is once come, there is never again *absolute* night. "Evening" already tells of the influence of light, and is *followed* by the morning. Man, according to his reckoning of it, begins and ends his day in darkness. How different is God's! See the beautiful use of the expression "evening-mornings" in that darkest of times for Israel depicted in Dan. viii. (ver. 14), while the sanctuary and host are being trodden under foot. But the end brings deliverance and blessing.

2.

In the expanse of the second day, again, we have not the absolute heavens of the beginning, but the *earth*-heavens,—although through these alone the higher ones are seen. The expanse is the effect of the atmosphere when in its normal condition, lifting by evaporation the clouds from the waters beneath, that, purged of their saltness, they may become the fertilizing "bottles of heaven." What is this ethereal, purifying, fructifying agency but the type of the new nature in the child of God? By and by, in these heavens a sun will shine, and below, the enfranchized earth will repay these influences with fruits and harvests. At first, there is rather conflict and unrest; but it is a step, and an important one, to the full blessing.

Dispensationally, we shall easily read the type if we remember that in Scripture, at least, the "heavens" always "*rule*." (Dan. iv. 26.) But the type of supreme authority, the sun, is yet wanting. There is an "above" and "below," but only waters, the very type of instability, are separated from the waters.

THE "DAYS."

In spite of what seems the general tendency of modern thought, Scripture shows plainly enough that the "days" are literal days. 1. The terms "evening" and "morning" naturally convey this thought; these having reference to the "light" which had just been called forth. The puzzle which would make the preceding darkness part of the first day is thus very simply set aside; for "evening" already speaks of the action of light, and shows that the first day begins with that. But a long period, divided thus into an "evening and a morning" by the absence or presence of light, can hardly be contended for.

2. The "fruit-tree bearing fruit" on the third day evidently implies the presence of man, or at least animals, without ages to intervene. The tender reference to man all through indeed is unmistakable.

3. Man himself is created the sixth day, and on the seventh, the whole creation was pronounced very good: how long must he have lived in paradise unfallen, if the period-theory be true? or was it only at the very end that he was brought into being? Notice, too, that God appoints their food, to beast and man respectively, after the creation of the latter, and the following "and it was so" shows that this actually began at that time. Were they all created at the end of the sixth period, not the beginning?

Yet the days being literal does not at all forbid the thought that the geological periods may

The earth brought up and fruitful. Holiness acquired in deliverance from the law of sin. Dispensationally, Israel set apart to God.

(9-13.)
3. And God said, Let the waters beneath the heavens be [o]gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear; and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters called he [p]Seas; and God saw that it was good.

And God said, Let the earth put forth [q]grass, herb bearing seed, [and] fruit-tree after its kind bearing fruit wherein is the seed thereof, upon the earth; and it was so. And the earth put forth grass, herb bearing seed after its kind, and fruit-tree bearing fruit wherein is the seed thereof, after its kind; and God saw that it was good. And evening was, and morning was,—a third day.

o 2 Pet. 3. 5. Ps. 104. 8, 9. Ps. 136. 6. Ps. 33. 7. Job 38. 10. *Cf.* Ro. 6. 14. Col. 3. 1.

p Rev. 21. 1. Is. 57. 20.

q Ps. 104. 14. *Cf.* Mk. 4. 28. Rom. 6. 22.

Luminaries. "The epistle of Christ, read and known of all men." The Gentile Church and the universal gospel.

(14-19.)
4. And God said, Let there be [r]luminaries in the expanse of the heavens, to divide between the day and the night; and let them be for [s]signs and for seasons and for days and years; and let them be for luminaries in the expanse of the heavens, to give light upon the earth; and it was so. And God made the two great luminaries;

r Ps. 104. 19. Ps. 136. 7.

s 2 K'gs 20. 9. Joel 2. 31.

Hence it is an apt representation of human government, established first in Noah's time in the divine injunction, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, *by man* shall his blood be shed." But how unstable are all human governments! and how little difference really in the distinctions of upper and under among men!—it is but still "waters" from "waters."

3.

And now the earth is brought up from under the waters. These stand, as we have seen, for the evil within us, of which the restless sea is the type. "The wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." This last is the action of the surf upon the shore, and such chafing against its bounds is typically characteristic: "The mind of the flesh is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

The flesh is not removed as long as we are here: "*If Christ be in you*, the body is dead because of sin." (Rom. viii. 10.) But when the true power of resurrection is known in the soul, and the law of the Spirit delivers from the *law*—the dominion—of sin and death, our third day is reached, and the true sanctification of the Christian man is known. With stability—the dry ground—fruit is found,—fruit, too, whose seed is ever in itself. Upon the doctrine of all this I cannot, however, enter here; it will be considered elsewhere.

Dispensationally, we have the sanctification of Israel to God—the earth sepa-

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be *represented*—find their type and similitude in the literal days. And the researches of geologists have really developed such a correspondence. They have shown us in the periods (1) the earth brought up from under the waters; (2) a progress in the development of life upon it; (3) man as the end of this progressive series. Thus the different views are not contradictory, save as they assume, on either side, to be exclusive of the other. It is quite according to what we know of the divine working, that the six days, though really that, should exhibit the same plan as the strata have disclosed to us. There is here a testimony to the truth of the record which challenges the reverence and faith of the true inquirer.

LIGHT BEFORE THE SUN.

The typical meaning may here, as elsewhere, confirm the literal interpretation. That "God is light," Scripture declares, and science in the most beautiful way illustrates it. Light it has proved to be a trinity of color, the blue, red, and yellow rays uniting to produce the one white one; while it is a trinity of power also, the luminous, heat-giving, and actinic, or chemical, rays being similarly distinct, and yet united; the chemical rays, in their invisible, impalpable operation, seem to set forth in a striking way the analogous working of the Spirit of God.

But if God be light, Christ is the sun; in which the earth-body is clothed with the glory of the light, and radiates it to us. But Christ came in the fourth day of the world's history, not its first,—exactly according to the order here. The literal and typical meanings mutually confirm each other, and bear united witness to the truth of this wondrous revelation.

the [f]greater luminary to rule the day, and the [g]lesser luminary to rule the night, [with] the stars also. And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth; and to rule in the day and in the night, and to divide between the light and the darkness: and God saw that it was good. And evening was, and morning was.—a fourth day.

[f] *cf.* Jno. 9. 5. Mal. 4. 2. Jer. 31. 35.

[g] *cf.* Mat. 5. 14. Phil. 2. 15. Ro. 10. 18.

(20-23.)

The living soul from the waters. Fruitful exercise under God's government. Dispensationally, Jacob's and the world's trouble, similarly fruitful.

5. And God said, Let the [h]waters swarm [with] swarms of living souls, and fowl that may fly about over the earth, over the face of the expanse of the heavens. And God created the great [sea-]monsters, and every living soul that moveth, [with] which the waters swarmed, after their kind, and every winged fowl after its kind; and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply upon the earth. And evening was, and morning was,—a fifth day.

[h] Ps. 104. 25. *cf.* Ro. 5. 3, 4. Phil. 1. 12-18.

rated from the waters; for the Gentile is just man left to himself, and his picture the "sea" has already given us: comp. Rev. xvii. 15.

4.

On the fourth day, the luminaries are presented in their practical relation to the earth; and it is as the glory of Christ shines on us *we* become practically the "epistle of Christ, known and read of all men" (comp. 2 Cor. iii. 3, 18; iv. 4, 6). It is the practical effect of occupation with Christ which comes under the eye of men, and which is emphasized here. In this way the numerical stamp is seen here. It is now night; for Christ (the sun) is absent, and we (moonlike) are His representatives.

Dispensationally, the number may therefore easily speak of the present going forth of the gospel, world-wide in its aspect, and characteristically *Gentile*, as the Church is. As the third day speaks of separation, so does the fourth day of dispersion.

5.

The fifth and sixth days are in some of their details most difficult to read, and yet their *general* application is quite easy. The waters speak, as we have seen, of the sin and evil in man; and here yet we see produced by the waters, through the fiat of God, the living soul,—type of the affections and emotions, which in Scripture are associated with the "soul," and not with the spirit. So "tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope." The very sin within, over which we groan, makes us long for the redemption which is yet to come. (Rom. viii. 23.) This seems clearly the lesson here.

Dispensationally, Scripture teaches us to anticipate, after the present day of grace is over, a time of trouble such as never was, and such as never again will be upon earth (Matt. xxiv. 21, 30), closed only by the coming of the Son of Man from heaven;—a time which will be that of Israel's travail-pains, when the nation comes to the birth and is born in one day, and out of this "great tribulation" a countless multitude of all nations will be brought who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. This will be the preparation-time for millennial blessing. Those who know it as the time of Antichrist and other forms of portentous evil will not wonder to hear of the great "sea-monsters" here; for Antichrist himself, with all the powers and faculties he perverts to his own destruction, is still the creature of God and in His hand: "He that made him," as God says of behemoth (Job xl. 19), "can make His sword approach unto him."

The soul from the earth, and man the ruler over the earth. Mastery, in the image of God. Dispensationally, the reign of Christ and His bride.

(24-31.)

6. And God said, Let the [w]earth bring forth the living soul after its kind,—cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after its kind; and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after its kind, and the cattle after their kind, and every thing creeping on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good.

And God said, Let us make man in [x]our image, as our likeness; and let them [y]hold in subjection the fish of the sea, and the fowl of the heavens, and the cattle, and all the earth, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. And God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them; and God said to them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and [z]fill the earth, and subdue it; and hold in subjection the fish of the sea and the fowl of the heavens, and every living thing that moveth on the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you [a]every herb bearing seed which is on the face of the whole earth, and every tree in which is the fruit of a tree bearing seed; to you it shall be for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the heavens, and to every thing that moveth on the earth, in which is a living soul, [shall be] every green herb for food; and it was so.

And [b]God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And evening was, and morning was,—a sixth day.

w Gal. 5. 22.

x ch. 5. 1. ch. 9. 6. 1 Cor. 11. 7. Jas. 3. 9. *cf.* Col. 1. 15. 1 Cor. 15. 49. 1 Jno. 3. 2. Eph. 4. 24. *ctr.* Phil. 2. 7.

y v. 28. Dan. 2. 38. ch. 9. 2. Ps. 8. Heb. 2. 7.

z *cf.* v. 2. ch. 9. 1.

a *cf.* ch. 4. 3. ch. 9. 3. Is. 65. 25.

b *ctr.* ch. 6. 5. Ex. 39. 43. Ex. 12. 13.

6.

Finally, on the sixth day, it is the *earth* produces the living soul, and then the lord of the whole scene, the summit of God's work, is introduced into it, and all is put into his hand. He is to "subdue" and "hold" it "in subjection." Mastery is evidently here a principal thought, as we see it is in what we shall find to be in designed connection with this sixth day's work,—the life of Joseph.

THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD.

It is in the possession of spirit that man is by creation "the offspring of God" (Acts xvii. 29), who is "Spirit" (Jno. iv. 24), and "the God" and "Father of *spirits*" (Num. xvi. 22; Heb. xii. 9);—that is, of angels, who are "sons of God" (Job xxxviii. 7), and of men: not beasts, who yet have and are "living *souls*." The son is in the image of his parent, and in man, in whom the spirit controls (of right) both soul and body, the image of God is plainly found. Were he soul and body alone, as many teach, he would be but in the image of the beast. The image of God consists, not in his sovereignty over the earth, (for he was *created* in it,) but it *fitted* him for this. But we must not confound this *natural* image, which every one has, with the "image in righteousness and true holiness," which only the new-born child of God has. (Eph. iv. 24.)

The question of "likeness" is more difficult. I think, however, that "in our image as our likeness" *identifies* one with the other. Man is in God's likeness, not from his bodily form, nor merely from his dominion over the creatures, but from a *real* resemblance: an image is not always "like."

MAN'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE EARTH.

I have translated "hold in subjection." (v. 26.) The word (*radah*) is literally "tread down," and connects plainly in thought with the "subduing" of the earth in the twenty-eighth verse. There is, in fact, a certain plasticity of nature in man's hand which marks, in a peculiar way, his sovereignty. The fruits of the earth, under his cultivation, mellow and throw off even poisonous qualities, developing in a multitude of varieties, from which he chooses, retaining or rejecting according to his will. The domestic animals, as the dog, similarly develop, in a single species, what might well seem generic differences. Ignorance of the meaning of this fact has favored the modern theories of evolution. But if man does not *hold* nature in subjection, it soon re-asserts its independence, and the forms thus produced are merged into the uniformity of the wild condition.

(II. 1-3.)

God's rest in the accomplishment of His work: type of His final rest.

7. And the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their host. And God had finished on the [c]seventh day his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, because that in it he rested from all his work, which God created to [d]make.

[c] Ex. 20. 11. Luke 23. 56. *etr.* Luke 24. 1. Col. 2. 16. *cf.* Heb. 4. 3, 4, 10.

[d] *etr.* Rev. 21. 25.

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. ii. 4–25.)

Relationships of the Man.

(II. 4-7.)

To God, by the in-breathing of God. Type of the Man, God's First-born.

1. THESE are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and heavens; and every shrub of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew; for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground; but there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. And the Lord God formed man of the [e]dust of the ground, and [f]breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

[e] ch. 3. 19. Ps. 103. 14. Eccl. 12. 7. 1 Cor. 15. 45, 47.

[f] Job 33. 4. Zech. 12. 1. *cf.* Jn. 20. 22.

And if Christ be the true "Image of God," Joseph is more than any other of the types of Genesis the image of *Christ*. Would we could tell more of what this type is! But just enough is plain to make us long for more.

Dispensationally, we have undoubtedly the millennial reign of Christ and His bride over the earth. The limiting of food to fruit and herb seems to speak of the reign of peace under the Prince of Peace.

7.

The seventh, as the day of God's rest, is surely typical of that full rest, which is necessarily *God's*, into which the saints shall enter. It is called a "sabbatism," a Sabbath-keeping: "There remaineth therefore a sabbatism to the people of God." (Heb. iv. 9.) Here, what we call "dispensations" end; for their work is done.

SUBD. 2.—SEC. 1.

THE second subdivision is not a new account of the divine work, written by another hand. Its purpose is quite different, namely, to show us the *relationships* of the man to the whole scene into which he is introduced, and to his Maker. This is why it is not simply "God" in this chapter, but "the *Lord* God." "*The Lord*" is here, in the original, "Jehovah." It is the title by which God entered into covenant with Israel afterward, and is expanded for us in the book of Revelation as "He who is and who was and who is to come,"—the best translation of which in one word would be, as in the French, "The Eternal." But I retain for it the word "Lord," as in the Septuagint and our common version, this being in some sense sanctioned by the New-Testament use, and giving more the thought

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MAN AS A LIVING SOUL.

THE error of holding man to be soul and body only is the parent of many modern heresies. It omits just what makes him *man*. But why, then, is it said here, "Man became a living soul"?—why not a spirit? The question is a fair one, and should be fairly answered.

Let us note first, then, that angels are spirits, and that the angels had already fallen; also that the condemnation of the devil is for *pride*. (1 Tim. iii. 6.) Now all through this account there seems the constant endeavor (which, to speak humanly, is God's, we know,) to "hide pride from man." (Job xxxiii. 17.) Thus he is called "Adam," from *adamah*, the ground, as if to remind him of his origin—"Dust thou art." Yet he was assuredly something more than "dust." Here, in the same way, his being a living soul reminds him of his kinship with the beasts; yet

Dependence, and God's ministering care.

(8-17.)

2. And the Lord God planted [a]garden in Eden eastward, and there he placed the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the [b]tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the [c]tree of knowledge of good and evil.

And a [d]river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted and became four heads. The name of the first is Pishon; that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where the gold is. And the gold of that land is good; there are [e]bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon; that is it which compasseth the whole land of Cush. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel; that is it which goeth in front of Assyria. And the fourth river, that is Euphrates.

And the Lord God took the man, and put him in the garden of Eden, to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou shalt freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt [k]surely die.

[a] ch. 13. 10. Ezek. 28. 13. Ezek. 31. 8, 9. Song 6. 2. *ctr.* Jno. 19. 41.

[b] Rev. 22. 2. Rev. 2. 7.

[c] *cf.* Rom. 3. 20.

[d] Ps. 36. 8. Jno. 7. 38. Ezek. 47. 1. Zech. 14. 8. Rev. 22. 1.

[k] ch. 5. 5. *cf.* Ro. 5. 12. Rom. 6. 22. Heb. 9. 27. Rev. 21. 8.

of relationship, which it is evidently intended to convey. Where it stands by itself, however, I have simply transferred the Hebrew word, "Jehovah."

In the first section, we have necessarily man's first relationship, the foundation of every other,—that to God; and here, God's breathing into him is characteristic of this. No beast has it; and although there is no direct statement,—the language is, as we say, phenomenal,—yet there is implied in this certainly some communication from God Himself, by which (and not by the bodily form,) is conveyed the idea of kinship. Yet the language is more phenomenal even than in the common version, which we have followed. It is literally, "God breathed into his nostrils the *breathing* of life," where indeed the fact that it is in the *nostrils* shows what is meant. Compare the full expression in Gen. vii. 22 as we have given it. *Neshamah* is always the *activity* of the *ruach*, whether this stands for "breath" or "spirit." The effect, and the effect as *seen*, is alone depicted. This is in reality favorable to the deeper thought. It is not mere "breath of life" which is imparted, but the whole living activity, as expressed in this, is the result of the divine impartation. And if man *thus becomes* a living soul, good reason it is why *his* soul should not die, as the beast does. (Matt. x. 28.) In the *fact* of being a living soul, he does not differ from the beast, but he does in the way he becomes one.

The inbreathing is thus essential to relationship, and given for this reason in this place. But the junction of something thus in relationship to God with the dust-formed creature makes Adam in this way a proper foreshadowing of the "last Adam" (Rom. v. 14),—Deity incarnate. He, however, in contrast with the first Adam, in resurrection, *breathes upon* His own. He uses this action, so sig-

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it does not show that he is not more. Among spiritual beings, this is, indeed, his real distinction,—that he is a "living soul."

The "soul" is in Scripture the seat of the passions, emotions, sensibility, as the spirit is of the mental and moral judgment. These latter, in any real sense, the beast has not. The spirit it is which is in man, which knows the things of a man. (1 Cor. ii. 11.) But he learns them, gathering the materials of judgment through the soul—the senses; and as the body begins to develop before even the soul, so does the soul before the spirit. Spirit in man depends, thus, really upon the soul; and it is striking that just when absent from the body his real distinction begins to manifest itself. The soul survives, indeed, the stroke of death; but man is now called, what he never was before, a "spirit." (Luke xxiv. 37, 39; Acts xxiii. 8, 9.; Heb. xii. 23; 1 Pet. iii. 19.)

Man's separation from the beast, and his union with the woman in (typical) resurrection. Christ and the Church.

(18-25.)
3. And the Lord God said, It is not good that [t]the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him.

And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the heavens, and brought [them] unto the man, to see what he would call them; and whatsoever the man called every living soul, that was its name. And the man gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the heavens, and to every beast of the field; but for man there was not found a help meet for him.

And the Lord God caused a [m]deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man [n]built he into a woman, and brought her to the man. And the man said, Now this is [o]bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she has been taken out of man. Therefore shall a man [p]leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh. And they were both [q]naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

[t] ch. 24. 4.

[m] Jno. 12. 24. Jno. 19. 30. Rom. 5. 14.

[n] 1 Tim. 2. 13.

[o] Eph. 5. 30. 1 Cor. 11. 7.

[p] Mat. 19. 5.

[q] *ctr.* ch. 9. 22. Rev. 3. 18. 19.

nificant in the creation of man, to symbolize the introduction of His people into a *new* creation, of which He is the Head: taking Himself the divine place as "quickening Spirit." (Jno. xx. 22; 1 Cor. xv. 45.)

2.

We have next the lesson of dependence taught man, upon One whose goodness makes the very need of His creatures the occasion of ministering care. Every thing is provided that can gratify as well as satisfy. But the tree of life shows him that he has not life in himself, and the prohibited tree of knowledge teaches him practically to recognize this dependence upon Another.

The ministry of the whole triune Godhead to man is typically indicated here. For the tree of knowledge indicates paternal *government*, where indeed "rule" is *service* (Rom. xii. 8); the tree of *life* speaks of Christ, in whom our life is; while the gushing fullness of these bounteous rivers is a plain type of the renewing power of the Holy Ghost. All this we shall find again in the paradise of God, of which this is a true picture. Would we could more enter into it!

3.

The third section shows us Adam's relationship to his wife; and for this, he is first taken to look at the beasts, and to see that no union can be *here*. Man is man by that spirit by which he *differs* from the beast. What a prophetic rebuke to the infidel science of the day!

The application of what we have here to Christ and the Church is shown us by the apostle. Adam, to find his wife, passes through the image of death, and she is "builded" out of him, to whom she is afterward united. So are we chosen *in* Christ, the fruit of His death, raised up with Christ, and by the Spirit united to Christ. Here, once more, however, the last Adam shows His essential difference from the first: *He* will present the Church to Himself. (Eph. v. 27.)

THE PENALTY ON ADAM.

The penalty of eating of the tree of knowledge was, for Adam, death—physical death; but this necessarily the sign of the judgment of God, of separation between himself and God, of which the other is the image. For if death is the separation between soul and body, the separation of God from the soul is death also.

But "dying, thou shalt die," which is literally the penalty here, does not convey the thought of two deaths; it is simply a very common Hebrew idiom, as, "eating, thou mayest eat," in the verse preceding, and meant to express, as all translations probably give it, the certainty of it.

Nor does "in the day" involve more than that in the day that he sinned the penalty would be certain: it does not mean necessarily that it would be inflicted then. (Comp. Ezek. xxxiii. 12.)

The second death, let us remember, is always for a man's own sins, and is in contrast with the first, which it brings to an end.

DIVISION 2. (Chap. iii.–l.)

THE breach with God having come in, separates now between the world and His people, who are the recipients and witnesses of His salvation in it.

Typically.—Sin having divided from God, the creative steps become a "growth up unto salvation" (1 Pet. ii. 2), in which the divine life is distinguished and separated from the life of nature (Seth's seed from Cain's, Isaac from Ishmael, etc.)

The subdivisions are as follows:—

1. (Chap. iii.) "The promise of life in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. i. 1) and the new birth in grace.
2. (Chap. iv., v.) The breach shows itself in the contrasted seeds in the world at large, and in the strife of good and evil within the saint, of which this is the type.
3. (Chap. vi.–xi. 9.) The resurrection of a world, and the threefold division of mankind after the flood. *Typically*, the saint raised up with Christ (the ark).
4. (Chap. xi. 10–xxi.) Abraham, the "heir of the world," and the pilgrim-walk and trial of faith.
5. (Chap. xxii.–xxvi. 33.) Isaac: self-surrender the responsibility of sonship, and the recompense of it.
6. (Chap. xxvi. 34–xxxvii. 1.) Jacob: the discipline of sons.
7. (Chap. xxxvii. 2–l.) Joseph: the Christ-life developed in full "image."

There is a real and evident analogy between the typical significance of this series of lives and that of the six days' work already given; only here, as the six in one case answer to the seven in the other, the numerical stamp becomes a *double* one from the fourth on, as will be seen. Here is the table:—

DAY.	REMARKS.	SUBD.
1st.	The light shining on the "deep;" conviction, repentance, the light of life beginning, as in Adam, ...	1
2d.	Division of the waters, appearance of internal division, the two natures, ...	2
3d.	The bounding of the seas, the stable and fruitful ground brought up out of the waters, resurrection ground (Noah) . . .	3
	(This day is divided in two: God speaks twice; and this second division answers to the significance of Abraham's life; so that now we have *two* numbers attaching to each subdivision; here, 3 and 4:—)	
	The fruit of resurrection, the pilgrim walk of faith, Abraham,	4
4th.	Luminaries: the epistle of Christ is read in self-surrender to Him, as in Isaac, ...	5
5th.	Fruit from the waters: exercise under the government of God is His effective discipline, as in Jacob, ...	6
6th.	The dominion of the man: mastery of the world is developed with the Christ-life, seen in Joseph, ...	7

It will be noticed how, with Abraham onward, the typical character is the main thing,—gives, one may say, the only sufficient meaning to whole chapters, and abundance of minor details. Moreover, it is to be

observed how the literal and the typical (as is natural in this case,) blend in a common spiritual lesson. This will be no surprise to those who recognize God's aim to be every where spiritual, and that this is what the typical meaning develops and enforces.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. iii.) ADAM.

The promise of life in Christ Jesus. The new birth, in grace.
(Light, the first day.)

The beginning of independence, and the opening of man's eyes.

(III. 1-7.)

1. NOW the [r]serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. [s]And he said unto the [t]woman, Is it so, that God hath said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, [u]and ye shall not touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, [v]Surely ye shall not die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes will be opened, and ye shall be as God, [w]knowing good and evil. And the woman saw that the tree was [x]good for food, and that it was attractive to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise; and she took of its fruit, and ate, and gave also to her husband along with her, and he ate. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they [y]sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

[r] Num. 21. 6. 2 Cor. 2. 11. 2 Cor. 11. 3. Rev. 12. 9. Rev. 20. 2. *cf.* ch. 2. 19, 20.

[s] *ctr.* Matt. 4. 1-11.

[t] 1 Tim. 2. 14. 1 Pet. 3. 7.

[u] Prov. 30. 6. *cf.* Luke 19. 21.

[v] Jno. 8. 44.

[w] *cf.* v. 22.

[x] 1 Jn. 2. 16.

[y] *cf.* Mat. 21. 19. Phil. 3. 9.

DIV. 2.—SUBD. 1.—ADAM.

1.

SOLEMN as is the subject of this section, and tremendous as have been its issues, it does not need much comment. It is man's awful new beginning as away from God, and we may easily find in it our own birthplace morally as sinners.

THE TEMPTER.

SCRIPTURE leaves not the slightest doubt as to who the tempter was, although here again there is a vail which only the New Testament fully removes. Revelation (xii. 9; xx. 2) is explicit: "The ancient serpent" is "the devil and Satan." That he was not permitted to come in his own angelic form was clearly a lessening of the temptation, and still more his coming in *bestial* form. Adam had looked over all the beast-creation, and found no help for him in any. How great was his sin, and what renunciation of his higher place, then, in listening to a beast!

The curse upon the serpent had (and has) plainly its expression outwardly, while, as plainly, this only symbolizes the deeper reality. How this and similar things which the Word of God abundantly declares should open our eyes to this language of nature, and enable us to read upon its face the truths of revelation! See the affirmation of this curse in Isaiah (lxv. 25), "Dust shall be the serpent's meat."

Notice, again, that as Satan fell by pride, it is pride especially by which he would work in the woman: "Ye shall be as God." And in him whose coming is after the working of Satan, this is developed as far as in man it can be: "He sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." (2 Thess. ii. 4.) Repentance, the undoing of this pride in self-abasement, is thus the way of escape out of his hands.

THE TEMPTATION.

Notice, that while the woman was deceived, and not the man, yet the man falls as the woman does. Nor is the woman suffered to be assailed with open evil until she has already invited it. The first question *might* have been answered innocently. The woman's heart was her strong point, and not her head, and her heart should have answered easily in paradise! But she makes the question put to her a question in her own mind, and it then becomes a question of God's love, and a prelude to the open disobedience. She tampers with God's word, adds to the prohibition, trifles with the penalty—as to the certainty of it, and the bold attack of the wicked one naturally follows.

The breach, the conflict, and the announcement of salvation. I. The call of God,—a call to repentance.

(8–19.)
2. [1]And they heard the voice of the Lord God, walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and the man and his wife [z]hid themselves from the face of the Lord God amid the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto the man, and said unto him, [a]Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat? And the man said, The woman whom [b]thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent deceived me, and I ate.

z Jer. 23. 24. Job 31. 33. Rev. 6. 16. *ctr.* Ps. 32. 7.

a *cf.* ch. 4. 9. I Kings 19. 13.

b Jas. 1. 13.

2. The serpent's sentence; conflict beginning; the woman's Seed the deliverer.

[2]And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, cursed art thou from among all cattle, and among all the beasts of the field: upon thy belly shalt thou go, and [c]dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and [d]her seed: he shall [e]crush thy head, and thou shalt crush his heel.

c Is. 65. 25. Mi. 7. 17.

d Gal. 4. 4.

e Heb. 2. 14. Col. 2. 15.

3. The woman's fruitfulness in sorrow: everybirth, as it were, a resurrection.

[3]And to the woman he said, I will greatly increase thy sorrow and thy conception: [f]in sorrow shalt thou bear children, and thy desire shall be unto thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

f 1 Tim. 2. 15.

4. The man's toil on the cursed earth.

[4]And to [g]Adam he said, [h]Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat of it, cursed is the ground for thy sake: in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; [i]thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the [j]sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread until thou return unto the ground: for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

g Hos. 6. 7.

h *cf.* ch. 16. 2.

i Matt. 13. 7. Heb. 6. 8. Jno. 19. 2. Rom. 8. 22.

j 2 Thess. 3. 10.

2.

In this second section, we have very plainly the discovery of the breach between God and the soul, the announcement of the conflict between good and evil beginning on the earth, and with this, the announcement of salvation. We have four subsections.—

1. The call of God: a call of mercy to repentance and confession. The serpent therefore has no call, as for him no recovery is possible.

2. The sentence upon the enemy, in which the conflict is announced and the salvation: though, in effecting this, the heel of the woman's Seed is crushed. This has doubtless a secondary accomplishment (such as we find in the fourth chapter) in all that are born of God. The strife with which the world has been filled since was first sealed with the blood of Abel,—a type of Him whose blood "speaks better things."

3. The woman is destined to conceive in sorrow, but thus life—as Adam expresses it in the name he gives his wife, Eve, *Chavah*, "life,"—springs out of travail-pains; already a gospel-hint of resurrection.

4. To man, there is toil upon a cursed earth, and death as the end of it: a picture without relief, whose light must come in from elsewhere.

Shame covered with the fruit of death: ability to stand before God.

(20, 21.)
3. And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all [k]living. And for Adam and his wife the Lord God made [l]coats of skins, and clothed them.

The world-trial begins in the loss of paradise.

(22-24.)
4. And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever—therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man, and placed in front of the garden of Eden the cherubim and the flame of the [m]sword turning every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

[k] *cf.* v. 15. Rom. 4. 17.

[l] *cf.* Luke 15. 22. Matt. 22. 11. 1 Cor. 1. 30. Phil. 3. 9. Is. 61. 10.

[m] 1 Chron. 21. 16.

3.

And now we have what indeed manifests God; for this it is the glory of the gospel to do, though here it is as yet a type-gospel, the time of plain speech being not yet come. Faith acts in Adam in the name he gives his wife. He has heard of life from her, and so he calls her Life; and God answers his faith, clothing them both with the spoils of death, and thus putting away the shame of their nakedness. The conscience of sin, which is what made them flee from God, is removed, God's hand removing it. The sanctuary, so to speak, is open to them once more, and inward healing and restoration are implied.

4.

But the world-trial now begins outside of paradise.

"The Promise of Life."

The prophetic announcement of the Seed of the woman and of His victory is plainly the "promise of life which is in Christ Jesus," "which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." (2 Tim. i. 1, 9; Tit. i. 2.) The last expression, "before the world began," found in both passages, is a peculiar one (πρὸ χρόνων αἰωνίων), which is only found once beside in Scripture. (Rom. xvi. 25.) The *R. V.* gives "before *eternal* times," the word being one every where else rightly translated by "eternal;" but here, "*times*" can hardly be eternal! The truth is, that as the noun, αἰὼν (*aion*), from which αἰώνιος is derived, has two senses in the New Testament,—"eternity" *and* "age,"—the adjective here follows the latter meaning, and the expression should be rendered "before the *age*-times,"—the dispensations of which this earth has been the theatre.

It is a "promise *in* Christ Jesus"—the Seed of the woman,—not *to* Christ Jesus, as many practically make it. "God, that *cannot lie*," and "given to us," are expressions which speak with perfect plainness as to the recipients of the promise. The name "Eve," or "Life," given by Adam to his wife just after, shows that to his faith *some* "promise of life" had been made; and it is consequent upon this confession of it that God clothes them both with the fruit of *death*. Death becomes their minister, and this, too, is assurance that life has become victorious over it.

The "promise," though in the unusual form of a sentence upon the serpent, has been none the less known to man's heart as such ever since. The heathen religions are full of remembrances of it, recognizable amid all their distortion. Nor need we confound this promise with any setting up of the first-Adam head again. It is a promise *in Christ*,—not the first man, but the Second. And He is just what the first man was not—the Seed of the woman.

The texts we are considering require us to omit the period of innocence from these "age-times," or dispensations; and so the six days' work in its typical aspect decides also. The first day answers to the time before the flood, and is plainly a first step in *restoration*.

The Knowledge of Good and Evil.

The common idea that Adam was created *holy*—"upright" he was—would make the knowledge of good and evil to have existed before the fall. On the other hand, the thought of what innocency of this kind involves which some have, would really make the fall "*a fall upward*." Certainly man was a moral being from the outset, and it is a distinctive mark which separates him from the beast. The fall did not create a moral faculty: nay, if he had not had this before, he *could not* have fallen.

Moreover, Adam, at least, was *not* deceived. His eyes were indeed opened by the shock of the fall, but not in this respect. A moral judgment he had of the evil as soon as it was presented to him, spite of his yielding to it. He yielded in the face of the protestation of his moral consciousness.

In what sense, then, did they not know good and evil before the fall? and how is it that

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. iv., v.) THE SEEDS.

(Division of the waters, second day.) The breach shows itself in the contrasted seeds in the world at large, and in the strife of good and evil within the saint, of which this is the type.

The present age (man's day). The ground of the first man. Barrenness toward God. 1. The seeds.

(IV. 1-15.)

1. AND the man knew Eve his wife, and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man with Jehovah[*'s help*]. And again she bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a *keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

n ch. 46. 34.

SUBD. 2.—THE SEEDS.

1.-4.

THE breach now shows itself as division among men. There is at the very beginning of the world what answers to the seed of the serpent *among men;* and there is (but only through grace) the seed of the woman also. The natural outcome of fallen man we see in Cain,—man, as sin and the devil have made him. Cain is therefore the elder; for "first" we have "that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual." But the natural has first possession of the earth, and throughout man's day keeps it. "Cain" is therefore "acquisition," a name expressive, in the first place, of his mother's natural joy, but which stamps his and the natural man's character. Gain is what he seeks, and seeks to hold; and though in the land of vagabondage, builds a city, and adorns and furnishes it. His descendants are for that period the world's great men. Morally, lust and violence mark them as out of the presence of God, although, after their own sort, religious too. The name of God—*El*—in the names of his descendants testify for this.

Abel stands out every way in contrast. His name is "exhalation, vapor," as his life is. He is not a success on earth. And of Seth's seed, who continue the line of the *bruised heel*, their history in the world is a blank: they but live and die, although God numbers these apparently barren years of theirs; they are something in His account. Out of this line too Enoch goes to heaven without

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God says after it, "The man is become as *one of Us*, to know good and evil? In what way was the tree the tree of knowledge in relation to these? and was it only by the fall that it became so?

There is another question which must be asked first: Does the "knowledge of good and evil" mean the knowledge of good *in itself* and evil *in itself*, or of these in *relation to one another?* And again, is it possible to know good in itself *without* knowing it as in opposition to evil? For many tell us that all knowledge is the knowledge of difference,—that you cannot know a thing without knowing its opposite: and that if Adam had not the knowledge of evil as distinct from good, he could not have known good either! In this case, the fall must be a "fall upward."

Must we not seek to put ourselves, difficult as it may be, into Adam's position, in order to realize the truth of the matter?

He was in a world where as yet evil was not, for in himself it was not, and he was the only moral being there. But the witness of good was all around him: did Eden speak nothing to him of the hand that had planted and the love that had provided it? How, then, did God make man upright? and is nothing but insensibility innocence?

Holy, it is true, Adam was not; for holiness speaks of the repulsion of evil, and there was as yet no evil. All was good, and the prohibition good also, and all they had to do was to abide in it as good,—to receive it as the love-gift of their glorious Maker. Their safe-guard was in this,—most easy as it seems and was made to them,—to abide in the good. Evil was not permitted really to assail them, until themselves invited it; and this, as we have seen, the woman did. The first open appearance of it is in her own words, her light dealing with the divine command.

The question might in itself have been an innocent one, and have been answered without the suspicion of evil. To have no suspicion was to be safe. She suffers the question to become suspicion, and is in heart already fallen. Here is indeed a great mystery—the origin of evil in an upright soul. We will not spend words over it. But this shows, at any rate, how the *conception* of evil became, in fact, the entertainment of evil with the woman. The beginning of the breach was here which the taking of the tree of knowledge consummated.

But if the tree became thus fatal, could it not, as a gift from God to them, prohibition and all,

2. Their diversity: the breach apparent.

[3]And in process of time, it came to pass that Cain brought of the [o]fruit of the ground an offering to Jehovah. And Abel he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the [p]fat thereof. And Jehovah had regard to Abel and his offering, and to Cain and to his offering he had not regard. And Cain was very [q]wroth, and his countenance fell.

o Rom. 3. 28. *cf.* ch. 3. 17. *ctr.* Deut. 26. 2.

p Lev. 3. 4. Heb. 11. 4

q Jude 11. 1 Jno. 3. 12.

3. The way to God: sanctification by the sin-offer'g.

[3]And Jehovah said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, a sin-offering coucheth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

4. Christ the test of the world. The experience of impotence.

[4]And Cain spake to Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain [r]rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

r Tit. 3. 3.

dying, before the flood; and Noah goes through the flood, safe to the world beyond. Thus they fill heaven, and at last earth also.

That this is the picture of "man's day" upon earth is plain. It is the "world that now is" in contrast with the "world" that is "to come." And a deeper look confirms this fully. Here Cain is the type of the self-righteous Jew, the Pharisee who brings his gift to God, knowing nothing of faith's way of acceptance, or of a lost condition, and who, after the death of Christ (the Offerer of the only acceptable sacrifice), at the hands of His people, was cast out from the land in which God had made known His presence, into vagabondage (Nod), though marked for preservation nationally. The type is here, one would say, too manifest for doubt.

But within the individual saint there is the same breach realized, and Cain and Abel have here also their representatives. Cain gives us the "flesh" in its spiritual significance,—self-righteous, Christ-rejecting, and away from God, yet marked as not to be slain by human hand. Abel, on the other hand, is that which is of God in us, as new born, but as *known in experience simply*,—a thing very important here to note. The new nature which we have of God, of course *cannot die;* but in our experience, ere yet we know God's way of power for us, it is just

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have become the very opposite, and been,—nay, must it not have been, if used aright, an instruction in holiness to spiritual beings?

The transgression of the prohibition was the only thing that, *abiding in the good*, they might yet realize as evil. To abide in the good and know evil would be holiness. But Satan points the question so as to make it a question of God, though it would seem to one in Eden a point dull enough after all. But it was all that was permitted him: so carefully and well were these first human beings guarded. Yet they fell; and the knowledge of evil to them came as the knowledge of an inner experience,—it became conscience, and the sense of guilt shows itself as knowledge of their *nakedness*.

"A Sin-Offering Coucheth at the Door." (Chap. iv. 7.)

The common translation is, "*Sin lieth* at the door;" but it is allowed on all sides that the word means just as well "sin-offering." The question between these must be decided on other grounds than that of the dictionary.

Now the idea in "sin lieth at the door" is not, as the common one is, that sin lies *against the person*. Sin must really be represented as a couching animal; for this is how the word "lieth" really reads. The thought is, then, "If thou doest not well, sin couches like a wild beast at the door,"—why "at the *door*"? and would it not be, in the case supposed, that sin had *prevailed over*, rather than that it was merely watching and ready to attack?

But on the other hand, that "if thou sinnest, a sin-*offering* lies [or couches] at the door," is clear, beautiful gospel-truth for Cain. And not for Cain only, but for all his age and generation. It is "at the door," not to seek or hunt after, but a victim ready to render its meek life up for the sacrifice. Thus God openly announces the way of approach to Him at the beginning,—His way, in fact, all through.

In connection with the typical meaning also, the sin-offering declares God's way of sanctification, condemnation passed upon the flesh—our old man crucified with Christ. And thus the cross clears the way for occupation with Christ; not merely our sins taken away, but ourselves also,—nature, as well as the fruit of it, judged in the cross for our deliverance: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live,—yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

5. The curse of Cain: on the Jew, yet preserved of God; on the flesh, which remains yet in the believer.

[5]And Jehovah said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I [s]know not: am I my brother's keeper? And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood [t]crieth to me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the ground, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield to thee its strength; a wanderer and a fugitive shalt thou be in the earth. And Cain said to Jehovah, My punishment is too great to be borne. Behold, thou hast driven me this day from the face of the ground; from thy face also shall I be hid; and I shall be a wanderer and a fugitive upon the earth; and it shall come to pass that any one that findeth me shall slay me. And Jehovah said unto him, Therefore, if any one slayeth Cain, it shall be sevenfold avenged. And Jehovah set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should smite him.

(16-24.)

Cain's issue: the world in its development.

2. And Cain [u]went out from the presence of Jehovah, and dwelt in the land of Nod, eastward of Eden. And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived, and bare Enoch. And he began to build a [v]city, and [w]called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch. And to Enoch was born Irad, and Irad begat Mehujael, and Mehujael begat Methushael, and Methushael begat Lamech. And Lamech took unto him [x]two wives: the name of the one, Adah, and the name of the other, Zillah. And Adah bare Jabal: he became father of those who dwell in tents, and [have] cattle. And his brother's name was Jubal: he became father of all that handle the harp and pipe. And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-cain, a forger of every cutting tool of brass and iron. And the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah. And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, hear my voice!—ye wives of Lamech, give ear unto my speech! For I have smitten a man for my wound, even a young man for my stripe. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy-seven.

(IV. 25, 26.)

Seth: the day of manifestation and of the Lord, introducing and characterizing the age to come. The law of the Spirit—life in Christ Jesus.

3. And Adam knew his wife again, and she bare a son and called his name Seth, [saying,] For God hath [y]appointed me another son instead of Abel, for him Cain hath slain. And to Seth, to him also a son was

[s] *cf.* ch. 18. 15, etc.

[t] *ctr.* Heb. 12. 24. *cf.* Matt. 27. 25. Deut. 21. 1-9. ch. 37. 32. Rev. 6. 10.

[u] Mt. 27. 5. Jno. 13. 30. 2 Cor. 7. 10.

[v] ch. 11. 4. *ctr.* Heb. 11. 9, 10.

[w] Ps. 49. 11.

[x] *cf.* ch. 32. 22. *ctr.* ch. 2. 24.

[y] Rom. 1. 4. Acts 13. 33. Acts 17. 31. Heb. 1. 2. Is. 42. 1. *cf.* ch. 24. 14.

the lesson of death that we have to learn, and to cry, "Who shall deliver me from the body of *this death?*"

The hopelessness of mere *effort* to produce fruit from the new nature is seen in the death of Abel; the flesh, unchanged in evil to the last (Rom. viii. 7), is traced in Cain's descendants, Tubal-cain, the last son of this line, being but (according to the name) "Cain's issue." Then in the third section comes Seth, and Abel is replaced by one who is really fruitful for God.

"Seth" means, according to Eve's words, "set" (in the place of Abel). He represents to us Christ, and the *man in Christ*. This realized is that "law of the

born, and he called his name Enosh. Then began men to [z]call on the name of Jehovah.

z Ps. 14. 4. Ro. 10. 13. 1 Cor. 1. 2. ch. 12. 8.

The practical outcome in the present time: not unmixed.

(V.)

4. This is the book of the generations of Adam: In the day that God created man, in the [a]likeness of God he made him. Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day that he created them. And Adam lived a hundred and thirty years, and begat one in [b]his likeness, after his image, and called his name Seth. And the days of Adam after he begat Seth were eight hundred years, and he begat sons and daughters. And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years; [c]and he died.

a ch. 1. 26.

b Ps. 51. 5. Jno. 3. 6.

c ch. 2. 17. Rom. 5. 12. Heb. 9. 27.

And Seth lived a hundred and five years, and begat Enosh. And Seth lived after he begat Enosh eight hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years; and he died.

And Enosh lived ninety years, and begat Cainan. And Enosh lived after he begat Cainan eight hundred and fifteen years, and begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Enosh were nine hundred and five years; and he died.

And Cainan lived seventy years, and begat Mahalaleel. And Cainan lived after he begat Mahalaleel eight hundred and forty years, and begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years; and he died.

And Mahalaleel lived sixty-five years, and begat Jared. And Mahalaleel lived after he begat Jared eight hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Mahalaleel were eight hundred and ninety-five years; and he died.

And Jared lived a hundred and sixty-two years, and begat Enoch. And Jared lived after he begat Enoch

Spirit," which is the law "of *life in Christ Jesus*" (Rom. viii. 2) which "delivers us from the law"—the practical dominion—"of sin and death." The man in Christ is never a matter of *experience*, but only of *faith*. Seeing ourselves *in* Christ, we are lifted *out of* ourselves. We find a new self in which without pride we can glory, while in ourselves we do not glory, save in our *infirmities*, that the power of Christ may rest upon us. (2 Cor. xii. 2, 5.) Self-occupation is exchanged for occupation with Christ, and "we all, with open face beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Lord the Spirit." (2 Cor. iii. 18.) Faith and its blessed effect are here pictured.

Seth's issue is thus Enosh—"frail man"—the opposite of the Cainite Lamech, the "*strong* man;" and then men begin to call on the name of Jehovah. Here is the full typical expression of the apostle's words, "We are the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have *no confidence in the flesh*." (Phil. iii. 3.) All *self*-confidence, though in the saint, is confidence in the flesh.

Thus, in the genealogy following, we have no Cain *nor Abel*, but Seth and his issue only, and the image of God again appears. The fourth section (chap. v.) pictures the fruit that follows, though our eyes may be dim to trace it.

eight hundred years, and begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Jared were nine hundred and sixty-two years; and he died.

And Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begat Methushelah. And Enoch [d] walked with God three hundred years after he begat Methushelah, and [e] begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. And Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God [f] took him.

And Methushelah lived a hundred and eighty-seven years, and begat Lamech. And Methushelah lived after he begat Lamech seven hundred and eighty-two years, and begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Methushelah were [g] nine hundred and sixty-nine years; and he died.

And Lamech lived a hundred and eighty-two years, and begat a son; and he called his name Noah, saying, This [child] shall comfort us regarding our work and the labor of our hands, because of the ground which Jehovah cursed. And Lamech lived after he begat Noah five hundred and ninety-five years, and begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred and seventy-seven years; and he died.

And Noah was five hundred years old; and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

d ch. 6. 9. ch. 17. 1. Eph. 5. 1. 1 Jno. 1. 3. Amos 3. 3.

e Jno. 17.15. 1 Tim. 4. 3. Jude 14.

f Heb. 11. 5. 1 Cor. 15. 51. 1 Thes. 4. 17. 2 K'gs 2. 11.

g Eccl. 11. 8. *cf.* Is. 65. 20.

God's purpose and provision.

Subdivision 3. (Chap. vi.–xi. 9.) Noah.

The resurrection of a world, and the threefold division of mankind after the flood. Typically, the saint raised up with Christ (the ark).

1. Men one in and wholly evil, and God's election of grace.

(VI.)

1. [1] And it came to pass when men began to [h] multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the [i] sons of God beheld the daughters of men, that they were fair; and they took them [j] wives of all that they chose. And Jehovah said, [k] My Spirit shall not always plead with man; for indeed he is flesh; but his days shall be [l] a hundred and twenty years. In those days were there the giants upon earth; and also after that the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare unto them: these were the [m] mighty men, which were of old the men of renown. [n] And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, and all the fashion of the thoughts of his heart only evil continually; and it [o] repented Jehovah that he had made man upon the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And Jehovah said, I will

h *cf.* Acts 6. 1.

i 2 Cor. 6. 18.

j ch. 24. 3. Deut. 7. 3.

k Jno. 16. 8. Acts 7. 51. 2 Th. 2. 6, 7.

l 1 Pet. 3. 20. 2 Pet. 3. 9.

m 1 Cor. 1. 26. Is. 2. 17. 2 Cor. 10. 5.

n *ctr.* ch. 1. 31. Ex. 12. 13. *cf.* Ps. 14. 3. Jer. 17. 9. Mt. 15. 19. Ro. 1. 28, 32. Rom. 8. 7.

o *cf.* Num. 23. 19. 1 Sm. 15. 11.

Subd. 3.—Noah.

In Noah, we have a plain figure of resurrection, the whole world passing away also in the judgment of the flood, and a new world emerging from the baptismal waters. The apostle Peter teaches us to see in this a type of salvation (1 Pet. iii. 20, 21), and to the man in Christ, risen with Him, old things are passed away, and all things become new. The figure is here very plain, although many a detail may be hidden from us.

p sweep away man whom I have created from the face of the ground,—both man and beast and creeping thing and fowl of the heavens; for it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noah q found grace in Jehovah's eyes.

2. The ark (Christ) His method of salvation.

2 These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a righteous man, perfect among his generations; and Noah r walked with God. And Noah begat three sons—Shem, Ham, and Japheth. But the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with s violence. And God saw the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth. And God said to Noah, The t end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is full of violence through them, and, behold, I turn them to corruption with the earth. Make thee an u ark of gopher-wood: rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and cover it inside and out with v resin. And thus shalt thou make it: three hundred cubits the length of the ark, fifty cubits the breadth of it, and thirty cubits the height of it. A light shalt thou make to the ark, and shalt make it to end a cubit from the top; and the entrance of the ark shalt thou put in the side of it: with a lower, second, and third story thou shalt make it. And I, behold I, do bring a a flood of waters over the earth, to turn to corruption all flesh wherein is the breath of life beneath the heavens. All that is in the earth shall die; but with thee will I establish my b covenant, and thou shalt come into the ark—thou and thy sons and thy wife and thy sons' wives with thee. And of c all that liveth of all flesh, two of all sorts shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; male and female shall they be. Of birds after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, and of all that creepeth upon the ground after its kind, two of every [sort] shall come to thee, to keep them alive. And take to thee of all food that is eaten, and gather it unto thee, and it shall be for food for thee and for them. d And Noah did so; according to all that God commanded him, e so did he.

(VII.)

Within and without the ark of salvation.

2. f And Jehovah said unto Noah, g Come thou and h all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. Of every h clean beast

p 2Thes. 1. 9. Phil. 3. 19.
q Ex. 33. 13.
r. ch. 5. 22.
s ch. 10. 8.
t Rom. 3. 19. cf. Ro. 10. 4.
u 1 Th. 1. 10. Heb. 11. 7.
v Ex. 2. 3.
a cf. ch. 1. 2.
b cf. ch. 9. 9. ch. 15. 18. Heb. 13. 20.
c cf. Is. 65. 25. Rom. 8. 20, 21.
d Heb. 11. 7.
e ch. 7. 5.
f cf. Mt. 11. 28.
g cf. Josh. 24. 15. Acts 16. 31.
h ch. 8. 20.

1.

God's purpose and provision are the subject of the first section. There are two subsections, in the first of which we find the whole world one in evil, and all the fashion of man's thoughts but that; on the other hand, God's election of grace in Noah. In the second, we have the ark as His means of salvation,—plainly Christ, in whom we have already met and passed through the judgment, dead without dying, in His precious death for us. Indeed, the type speaks more fully than this of what atonement is, the gopher-wood not only giving us the tree cut down, but the "*copher*" also with which the seams are pitched, the very word for "atonement," probably the resin from the tree, (whether or not the cypress, as the ancients thought,) at least shows the need of more than death for this.

1. God's call and Noah's obedience.

shalt thou take to thee by sevens, the male and his female; and of the beast that is not clean, by twos, the male and his female; of birds of the heavens also by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive on the face of all the earth. For in [i]yet seven days I will cause it to rain upon the earth [j]forty days and forty nights, and sweep away every living thing that I have made from the face of the ground. And Noah did according to all that Jehovah commanded him. And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth. And Noah went into the ark, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him, from the waters of the flood. Of beasts that are clean, and of beasts that are not clean, and of birds, and of all that creepeth upon the ground, there went in to Noah into the ark two and two, male and female, according to that which God had commanded Noah. And in seven days, it came to pass that the waters of the flood were on the earth. In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, in [k]that day were all the fountains of the great deep caused to burst forth, and the sluices of the heavens were opened, and the rain-pour was upon the earth forty days and forty nights. In the same day had [l]Noah gone into the ark, and Shem and Ham and Japheth, Noah's sons, and Noah's wife, and his sons' three wives with them;—they, and every beast after its kind, and all cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth on the earth after its kind, and all that flieth after its kind, every little bird, of every wing. And they went in to Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh wherein is the breath of life: and they that went in went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him; and [m]Jehovah shut him in.

[i] Josh. 6. 3. ch. 7. 10.

[j] Ex. 24. 18.

[k] Mt. 24. 27. 1 Thess. 5. 3. Luke 17. 26, 27. 2 Pet. 2. 5. 2 Pet. 3. 6.

[l] 1 Pet. 3. 20.

[m] Rom. 8. 1. Jno. 10. 28.

2. The death which is the fruit of unbelief.

[1]And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and [n]lifted up the ark, and it rose from off the earth. And the waters prevailed and increased greatly upon the earth, and the ark went on the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth, and all the [o]high mountains that were under the whole heavens were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moveth on the earth, of bird and cattle and beast, and every

[n] Rom. 5. 21.

[o] Is. 2. 14.

2.

In the second section, what seems marked is, the solemn contrast between those within and those outside the ark of salvation. God calls the one to enter, and Jehovah—the covenant God—shuts them in. On the one hand the call of God, on the other the obedience of Noah, are certainly the marked features of the first subsection.

The second, shows the death which comes through disobedience, the increase of the flood, the ark going on the face of the waters, until the earth is covered.

crawling thing that crawleth on the earth, and all mankind: all in whose nostrils was there the breathing of the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living thing that was on the face of the ground was swept away: from man unto the cattle and creeping thing and bird of the heavens, they were even swept away from the earth; and Noah alone remained, and what was with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed upon the earth a hundred and fifty days.

(VIII.-IX. 17.)

Ararat, "holy ground:" the resurrection-ground of the Church of God and the sanctification proper to it.

1. A new beginning in rest.

3. [1] And God [p]remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the [2]cattle that were with him in the ark; and God made a [r]wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided. The fountains of the deep also and the sluices of the heavens were stopped, and the rain-pour from the heavens was restrained. And the waters returned from off the earth continually; and at the end of a hundred and fifty days, the waters were abated. And the ark [s]rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat. And the waters decreased continually till the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen.

2. The raven and dove: "flesh and spirit."

[2] And it came to pass at the end of forty days that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made. And he sent out a [t]raven, which went out, back and forth, until the waters were dried up from off the earth. Also he sent out a [u]dove from him, to see if the waters were become light on the face of the ground. But the dove found [v]no resting-place for the sole of her foot, and she returned to him into the ark; for the waters were upon the face of all the earth. And he put forth his hand and took her, and brought her in to him into the ark. And he waited yet other seven days, and sent forth the dove again out of the ark. And the dove came in to him at [w]even-time, and lo, in her mouth an

p Ex. 2. 24.

q Jonah 4. 11. Ps. 145. 9.

r *cf.* Ex. 14. 21.

s Rom. 6. 9. Eph. 2. 6.

t *cf.* Lev. 11. 15. Eph. 4. 20. ch. 4. 16.

u Lk. 3. 22. Jno. 3. 6.

v *cf.* Heb. 13. 14.

w *cf.* ch. 15. 12, etc. Zech. 14. 7.

3.

The third section gives typically the resurrection part, and is naturally much larger and more various. It speaks of the ground of resurrection (the resurrection of Christ) upon which faith now builds, beyond all possible floods—high ground and "holy ground," which "*Ararat*" is said to mean. Nothing is so holy and so productive of holiness as the rest of the gospel. And here we find also the sanctification proper to it detailed. There are five subsections:—

1. The new beginning is in rest: the ark grounds upon Ararat, and the new earth begins to be visible.

2. The raven shows us the flesh still in the believer, at home in a scene desolated by judgment, and using the very cross itself only as a means of enjoying the world better. The dove is plainly the figure of the Spirit in a world such as this,—the type, at once, of love and sorrow. The Spirit and flesh are here seen in essential opposition. In a world upon which the waters of judgment rest, the dove can find no rest. The second time, she brings back the olive-leaf—the assurance of fruitfulness, and judgment past. The third time, she leads them in taking possession of the new earth, returning to the ark no more.

[x] olive-leaf plucked off; and Noah knew that the waters had become light on the earth. And he waited yet seven days more, and sent forth the dove; [y] and she returned unto him no more.

x cf. Song 2. 12. Eph. 1. 14.

y cf. 2 Pet. 3. 13. Rev. 21. 4.

3. Liberty and worship in the Spirit.

3 And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, the first month, the first day of the month, that the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked; and, behold, the face of the ground was dried. And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, was the earth quite dry. And God spake unto Noah, saying, Go forth of the ark,—thou and thy wife and thy sons and thy sons' wives with thee. Every living thing of all flesh that is with thee, of bird and cattle and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, let them go forth with thee, that they may breed abundantly upon the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth. And Noah went forth, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird,—every thing that moveth on the earth, after their families,—went forth out of the ark. And Noah [z] built an altar unto Jehovah, and took of every clean beast and of every clean bird, and offered up burnt-offerings on the altar. And Jehovah smelled a [a] sweet savor. And Jehovah said in his heart, [b] I will not again curse the ground for man's sake, although the fashion of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite every thing living, as I have done. Henceforth, all the days of the earth, seed [-time] and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease.

z ch. 12. 7, etc. Ju. 6. 24.

a Eph. 5. 2.

b Col. 3. 13. Is. 54. 9.

4. The practical walk.

4 And God [c] blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth; and the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon

c cf. ch. 1. 28. Is. 11. 6-8. Ps. 35. 5.

3. Liberty for these voyagers to the new land is now accordingly at hand, although Noah waits for the word of God to sanction its enjoyment, and when he goes forth, consecrates it and the earth with his altar (the first time we read of one) and his sacrifice, Christ typically, in person and work, the material of worship. In the sweet savor of this, is the pledge of abiding blessing, spite of what man has been seen to be. As on the third day of the creation-series, the dry ground is to bring forth fruit.

4. But there are still conditions of fruitfulness, and we come now to consider them; the order in which we reach it suggests the conditions under which it is to be attained. (Notice that, as in the last subsection we have "Jehovah," the covenant-name, it is now "God" blessed and "God" spake.) And first, we need to know that fruitfulness is a gift in grace, and to be received, therefore, as such in faith: He *blessed*, and said, "Be fruitful." Then sovereignty is restored; they are to be masters in their new position; even as all things work together for good to those that love God. Death too serves: it becomes now, as not before, the food of life,—a type, thank God, most easy to realize. Thus are we sustained, and energy is given to us. And now the deeds of the flesh are to be judged, the image of God in man is to be maintained and honored. Finally, all hindrances thus removed, the fruit is reached.

every beast of the earth, and on every bird of the heavens, and on every thing that creepeth on the ground, and on every fish of the sea: into your hand are they given. [d]Every moving thing that liveth, to you it shall be for food; as the green herb, I have given you all. Only of flesh with its [e]life, the blood of it, ye shall not eat. And surely your blood of your lives will I require: at the hand of every beast will I [f]require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of man his brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the [g]image of God made he man. And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply;—bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.

d *ctr.* ch. 1. 29. *cf.* Jn. 6. 53.

e Lev. 17. 11.

f *cf.* ch. 4. 9.

g ch. 1. 26.

5. Tribulation working patience in hope.

[5]And God spake unto Noah, and unto his sons with him, saying, And I, behold I, establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you, and with every living soul which is with you,—of bird and of cattle, and of every beast of the earth that is with you, of all that is gone forth of the ark—every beast of the earth. And I establish my covenant with you, and all flesh shall not again be cut off by the waters of a flood, and there shall be no more a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, This is the [h]sign of my covenant which I give between me and you and every living soul which is with you, for everlasting generations: my [i]bow have I given in the clouds, and it is for a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud, and I will remember my covenant which is between me and you and every living soul of all flesh, and the waters shall not again become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud, and I will look upon it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living soul of all flesh that is on the earth. And God said unto Noah, This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.

h *cf.* Ex. 12. 13. ch. 17. 11. Josh. 2. 12.

i Ezek. 1. 28. Rev. 4. 3. Rev. 10. 1.

(IX. 18-29.)

The trial of the new world; typically, of the professing church.

4. And the sons of Noah who went forth out of the ark were Shem and Ham and Japheth; and Ham was the father of Canaan. These three were the sons of Noah, and of these was the whole earth overspread. And

5. And now, as the token of God's covenant between Himself and the earth, the bow is ordained in the heavens. It bands the clouds which might seem to threaten the renewal of a judgment which can return no more. The light (and God is light) is seen and displayed in its glory upon the storm-cloud, as it was in the cross. And so also to the soul exercised thereby, the blessing is sealed to us in the glory of the cloud. Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope. God is seen and realized in it. The God who brings the cloud is the God with whom we are in covenant; and all things serve Him.

Noah began to be a husbandman, and planted a vineyard; and he drank of the wine, and was [j]drunken, and [k]uncovered himself within his tent. And 'Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and he told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took the outer garment, and [m]put it on both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his youngest son had done to him. And he said, Cursed is Canaan; [n]servant of servants shall he be to his brethren. And he said, Blessed be Jehovah, the God of [o]Shem; and let Canaan be his servant. Let God enlarge [p]Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and [q]Canaan be his servant.

And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years; and all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years; and he died.

(X.)

The distribution of the nations. 1. Japheth, the man of energy and independence.

5. [1] And these are the generations of the sons of Noah—Shem, Ham, and Japheth; and to them were sons born after the flood. The sons of Japheth, Gomer and [r]Magog and Madai and [s]Javan and 'Tubal and Meshech and Tiras. And the sons of Gomer, Ashkenaz and Riphath and [t]Togarmah. And the sons of Javan,

j cf. ch. 6. 9. ch. 8. 20. 1 Cor. 10. 12, 13. 1 Tim. 4. 4, 5. Prov. 31. 4.

k ch. 3. 7. Lk. 10. 30. Rev. 3. 17. Hab. 2. 15.

l Ex. 20. 12. De. 27. 16.

m 1 Pet. 4. 8.

n ch. 10. 15–20. ch. 15. 16. De. 27. 16. Pro. 30. 17. cf. ch. 49. 7. Josh. 9. 23, 27.

o ch. 12. 12. De. 32. 8. Eze. 48. 35.

p Is. 60. 3–9. Is. 54. 2.

q Ps. 108. 9.

r Ezek. 38. 2.

s Is. 66. 19.

t Eze. 27. 13.

u Eze. 27. 14. Ezek. 38. 6.

4.

The trial of the new world is next seen, and weakness and failure are soon apparent. Typically, it is the history of the Church, the company gathered on the ground of that resurrection of Christ which is the assurance of the work done for us having been accepted. The division into diverse families of that *one* family brought through the flood is soon accomplished. Failure begins with the head of newly constituted government—with Noah. Noah's snare is the abundance of the new-blessed earth; and it is here the earth-side of the heavenly life that we have to do with. But this earth-side is Nazariteship; and the Nazarite must drink no wine: falling by this, the stimulus of nature, the nakedness of nature is discovered to our shame. Such failure in the Church brings out the character of those who in exposing it reveal their own profanity. Ham is the "black"—the "sun-burnt"—one darkened by the light; and the light, if not received, becomes a source of darkness to the soul. And Ham—it is noted—is the father of Canaan, the "trader," as his name means. Canaan is, in the professing church, its fruit—the trader in divine things: a sad history sketched in the fewest possible words.

Noah's prophecy, on awaking from his wine, passes over Ham—the indefinite multitude of mere natural men,—to fix upon Canaan its denunciation. Shem and Japheth seem to give us in their various blessing two tendencies which are apt to be sundered and should not be. Shem's is the recipient contemplative life, whose danger is, to run into the mystical: Japheth's is the energetic, practical life, which, in its one-sidedness, tends to divorce itself from faith. In the blessing of Shem, it is Shem's God, Jehovah, who is blessed, as it is indeed the highest blessedness of faith that it has God for its portion and its praise; while Japheth's blessing is in enlargement and dwelling in the tents of Shem, for the practical life finds its true home in faith alone, and true service is but worship in its outflow among men.

Elishah and [u]Tarshish, Kittim and Dodanim. By these were the [v]isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, in their families, in their nations.

[u] 1 Kings 10. 22. Eze. 27. 12.
[v] Zeph. 2. 11.

2. Ham, the "sunburnt," darkened by the light.

[2] And the sons of Ham, Cush and Mizraim and Phut and Canaan. And the sons of Cush, [x]Seba and Havilah and Sabtah and Raamah and Sabtecha. And the sons of Raamah, [y]Sheba and Dedan. And Cush begat [z]Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one upon the earth. He became a mighty [a]hunter before Jehovah: wherefore it is said, As Nimrod, the mighty hunter before Jehovah. And the beginning of his kingdom was [b]Babel and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. Out of that land went forth Asshur, and built [c]Nineveh and Rehoboth-Ir and Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah: this is the great city. And Mizraim begat the Ludim and the Anamim and the Lehabim and the Naphtuhim and the Pathrusim and the Casluhim (out of whom came the [d]Philistines) and the Caphtorim. And Canaan begat Zidon his first-born, and Heth, and the Jebusite and the Amorite and the Girgashite, and the Hivite and the Arkite and the Sinite, and the Arvadite and the Zemarite and the Hamathite. And afterward, the families of the Canaanite spread abroad. And the border of the Canaanite was from Zidon, as thou goest toward Gerar, as far as Gaza; as thou goest toward Sodom and Gomorrah and Admah and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha. These are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, in their nations.

[x] Ps. 72. 10.
[y] 1 Kings 10. 1.
[z] Mi. 5. 6.
[a] cf. ch. 6. 12. Rom. 3. 15, 18. Gal. 1. 23. Mi. 7. 2. ch. 25. 27.
[b] ch. 11. 9.
[c] Na. 1. 14.
[d] ch. 21. 32, etc.

3. Shem, with whom is Jehovah's name.

[3] And to Shem—to him also were children born; [he is] the father of all the sons of Eber, the brother of Japheth the elder. The sons of Shem, Elam and Asshur and Arphaxad and Lud and Aram. And the sons of Aram, Uz and Hul and Gether and Mash. And Arphaxad begat Shelah, and Shelah begat Eber. And to Eber were born two sons: the name of the one was Peleg, because in his days the earth was divided; and his brother's name was Joktan. And Joktan begat Almodad and Sheleph and Hazarmaveth, and Jerah and Hadoram and Uzal, and Diklah and Obal and Abimael, and Sheba and Ophir and Havilah and Jobab: all these were the sons of Joktan. And their dwelling

5.

That the genealogies come under the number which speaks of God's governmental ways will hardly be strange to any. We have here the distribution of the nations in their lands. 1. Japheth, the type of energy and independence, gains at present little notice, passing away very much from the central point of sight to the outlying border-lands. 2. In Ham's family, we have the earliest development of the world-empires, and the most open opposition to God. 3. Shem, (the "name") to whom Jehovah is revealed, has fittingly the third place: he is marked as the father of all the children of Eber, ("passage,") the pilgrim race.

was from Mesha, as thou goest unto Sephar, the mountain of the east. These are the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations. These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations; and of these were the nations divided on the earth after the flood.

(XI. 1-9.)

Babel: the world-church, and the curb upon man's will.

6. And the whole earth had [e] one language and one speech. And it was so, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and dwelt there. And they said one to another, Come on; let us make [f] brick, and burn them thoroughly. So they had brick for stone and bitumen had they for mortar. And they said, Come on; let us build ourselves a [g] city, and a tower whose top shall be in the heavens; and let us make ourselves a [h] name, lest we be scattered over the face of the whole earth. And Jehovah came down [i] to see the city and tower which the sons of men were building. And Jehovah said, The people are one, and have all one language, and this they have begun to do; and now they will be hindered in nothing which they imagine doing. Come; let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. And Jehovah scattered them thence over the face of the whole earth; and they left off building the city. Wherefore the name of it was called Babel, because there Jehovah confounded the language of all the earth. And thence Jehovah scattered them over the face of all the earth.

[e] *ctr.* Acts 2. 4-6. Rev. 7. 9, 10.

[f] Ex. 1. 14. Is. 65. 3. *ctr.* 1 Pet. 2. 5.

[g] *ctr.* Heb. 11. 16. *cf.* ch. 4. 17.

[h] Dan. 4. 30.

[i] ch. 18. 21.

6.

Lastly, here we have the history of Babel, without doubt the picture of Babylon the Great, though not in the full development of the book of Revelation. The account is remarkable for its clearness and simplicity. The process by which the professing church settled down in the world, and then built up for itself a worldly name and power, could scarcely be described in plainer terms. How with one consent they turned their backs upon the sunrise (2 Pet. i. 19), and, leaving the rugged and difficult places in which they were first nurtured—too painful for flesh and blood,—descended to the easier if lower level of the world;—how, settling there, ease and abundance wrought in them desire to possess themselves, in security, of the earth, and make themselves a name in it; how Babylon thus was built, a city after Cain's pattern, whose builder and maker God was *not*, and a tower of strength, human, and not divine: all this, he who runs may read. Let us notice, further, that this is a carnal imitation and anticipation of God's thoughts, and that thus the earthly city usurps the titles and prerogatives of the heavenly one. But Babylon cannot be built of the "living stone," which is the God-made material for building; they have moved from the quarries of the hills, and must be content to manufacture less durable "brick" out of the mere clay which the plain affords: they have brick for stone, and slime (or bitumen) for mortar,—*i. e.*, not the cementing of the Spirit, the true Unifier, but the worldly and selfish motives which compact men together, and are but fuel for the fire, in the day that the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

This is just the Catholic church of antiquity, not many generations after the apostolic. The unity whereof it boasted was not God's, and if God came down

SUBDIVISION 4. (Chap. xi. 10–xxi.) ABRAHAM.

Abraham, the "heir of the world" (Rom. iv. 13); and the pilgrim-walk and trial of faith. (Fruit of the ground, third day.)

SEC. 1. (Chap. xi. 10–xiv.)

The call of God and the obedience of faith.

(XI. 10-26.)

Abram's descent, in the line of promise.

1. THESE are the generations of Shem. Shem was a hundred years old, and begat Arphaxad two years after the flood. And Shem lived after he begat Arphaxad five hundred years, and begat sons and daughters.

And Arphaxad lived five and thirty years, and begat Shelah. And Arphaxad lived after he begat Shelah four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters.

And Shelah lived thirty years, and begat Eber. And Shelah lived after he begat Eber four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters.

And Eber lived thirty-four years, and begat Peleg. And Eber lived after he begat Peleg four hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters.

And Peleg lived thirty years, and begat Reu. And Peleg lived after he begat Reu two hundred and nine years, and begat sons and daughters.

And Reu lived thirty-two years, and begat Serug. And Reu lived after he begat Serug two hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters.

And Serug lived thirty years, and begat Nahor. And Serug lived after he begat Nahor two hundred years, and begat sons and daughters.

And Nahor lived twenty-nine years, and begat Terah. And Nahor lived after he begat Terah a hundred and nineteen years, and begat sons and daughters.

And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

to see what man was building, it was not to strengthen, but to destroy—not to compact, but scatter. The many tongues of Protestantism are but His judgment upon the builders of Babel; its multitudinous sects but the alternative of the oppressive tyranny with which when united she laid her yoke upon the minds and consciences of men, and under which the blood of the saints ran like water. They are but a temporary hindrance, moreover, for at last we find her saying, "I sit as a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." Then, however, her doom shall be at hand: "in one day shall her plagues come upon her."

SUBD. 4.—ABRAHAM.

ABRAHAM occupies an especial place in Scripture, as the pattern of faith so far as the Old Testament could give it, "the father of all them that believe." Coming after Noah, in the series of Genesis-lives, he typically presents to us, and in the most striking way, the pilgrim character, which is the result of the consciousness of the heavenly calling. Called to Canaan, the type of our heavenly portion, he does not yet possess it, except in faith, and is therefore a sojourner only,—a man of the tent, and not the city. Lot is his contrast and opposite in this, and that he is a child of God makes him more strikingly so.

His history divides into two sections: the first of which gives the call of God

(XI. 27-32.)

Delays of nature: the dead bury their dead; and Abram "first" buries his father.

2. And these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot. And Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees. And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and the father of Iscah. And Sarai was [j]barren; she had no child. And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldees to go into the land of Canaan; and they came as far as [k]Haran, and dwelt there. And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years; and Terah died in Haran.

(XII. 1-8.)

In the land of Canaan, type of our heavenly portion.

1. The call and promise of God.

3. [l]Now Jehovah said unto Abram, [l]Get thee out of thy land, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will [m]show thee. And I will make of thee a [n]great nation, and will [o]bless thee and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a [p]blessing. And I

[j] *cf.* ch. 25. 21, etc. Is. 54. 1. *cfr.* [2] Sam. 6. 23.

[k] Heb. 4. 1. *cf.* Num. 32. 1, etc. *cf.* Matt. 8. 21.

[l] Acts 7. 2. Heb. 11. 8. Luk. 14.26. 2 Cor. 5.16.

[m] 1 Cor. 2. 9, 10. Eph. 2. 6. Rev. 21. 9.

[n] Is. 51. 2. *cfr.* Ezek. 33. 24.

[o] *cf.* Eph. 1. 3.

[p] Zech. 8. 13. Jno. 7. 38.

and his obedience to it (chaps. xi. 10–xiv.); the second, the *conflicts* of his faith as regards his relationships and the promises of God.

Sec. 1.—The call of God, and the obedience of faith.

We have in the first section a complete sevenfold picture:—

1. His genealogy, or birth-title, as descended from Shem: the line of promise. (Chap. xi. 10–26.)
2. The hindrances of nature to faith. (xi. 27–32.)
3. Abram in the land: the heavenly portion realized. (xii. 1–8.)
4. His failure in Egypt: the saint going down into the world, and its consequences. (xii. 9–20.)
5. Abram and Lot: our choice and God's choice for us. (xiii.)
6. Abram as overcomer: the strife with the kings. (xiv. 1–16.)
7. Where the heart rests. (xiv. 17–24.)

God, nature, heaven, the world, victory over self, and the victory over opposition from without are all represented here, while the last of this series closes it with so blessed an assurance of what Christ is for the heart occupied with Him that we know without any doubt that there can be nothing beyond it. Let us look more closely at these things.

1. Abram's descent from Shem shows him in the line of promise. Jehovah's revelation of Himself to Shem was to be realized above all in that Seed of Abram whose day his own faith rejoiced to see. But the promise itself expressed a grace in God which preceded all personal claim whatever on Abram's part. In the chosen line itself, though we have only a scanty record of names and of the length of life, it is plain that there is decay, and that continuous. No doubt the years of man's life were every where shortening, but there was at any rate no exception, and elsewhere we read of spiritual apostasy on their part, which left all possibility of hope to the sovereign grace of God. The root of all the blessing following is here and only here.

2. But not only does nature furnish no help: it is in conflict with the call of God when this has come, and not least so when it volunteers obedience which it never performs, and proposes to lead where it cannot even follow. "Terah" means "delay," and he delays: they went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and they came to Haran and dwelt there. And Terah died in Haran.

will [q]bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; [r]and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

2. Abram comes, with all his, to the place of Shechem — "shoulder," service,—and the grove of Moreh, "teacher:" "adding to virtue knowledge."

[2] And Abram went as Jehovah had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and [s]Lot his brother's son, and all their goods that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they departed to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came. And Abram passed through the land as far as the place of [t]Shechem, unto the oak of [u]Moreh; and the Canaanite was then in the land.

3. The face of God, the altar of the worshiper, and the tent of the pilgrim.

[3] And Jehovah appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land; and he built there an [v]altar to Jehovah who had appeared unto him. And he removed thence to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his [w]tent having Bethel to the west and Ai to the east; and built there an altar to Jehovah, and [x]called on the name of Jehovah.

(XII. 9-20.)

The failure in Egypt: going down to the world.

4. [1] And Abram removed, journeying and moving on toward the south country. And there was a [y]famine in the land: and Abram [z]went down into Egypt, to sojourn there; for the famine was heavy on the land.

1. The root of failure — independence.

[a]And it was so, when he was drawing near to enter into Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a woman fair to look upon, and it will be when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they will say, This is his wife; and they will slay me, but save thee alive. Say, now, that thou art my sister; that it may be well with me on thine account, and my soul may live because of thee.

2. Profit and loss: relations sundered, and alliance gained.

[2] And it came to pass, when Abram came into Egypt, that the Egyptians saw the woman how very fair she was; and the princes of Pharaoh saw her, and praised her to Pharaoh; and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. [b]And he treated Abram well on her account; and he had sheep and oxen and he-asses and men-servants and [c]maid-servants and she-asses and camels.

q Nu. 24. 9.
r Acts 3. 25. Gal. 3. 8.
s *cf.* Acts 12. 25. Col. 4. 10. *cf.* ver. 1. ch. 13. 1.
t ch. 33. 18.
u De. 11. 30.
v ch. 13. 4. 1 Pet. 2. 5.
w 1 Pet. 2. 11. Heb. 11. 9.
x ch. 4. 26. ch. 21. 33.
y Ho. 5. 3. *ctr.* ch. 26. 1, 2.
z Is. 31. 1. *cf.* 1 Sam. 27. 1. Gal. 1. 5.
a ch. 20. 2. ch. 26. 7. *cf.* Lu. 22. 55 61. Acts 23. 6. Acts 21. 26. Gal. 2. 12, 13. Gal. 6. 12.
b Jas. 4. 4. *ctr.* ch. 14. 23. ch. 13. 10.
c *cf.* ch. 16. 1. ch. 20. 14.

3. Now, and not before, Abram comes into the land. We have here, (1) the call of God with its accompanying promise; (2) his coming into the land to the place of Shechem, or "shoulder," to the oak of Moreh, "instructor." The "shoulder" is that which bears the burden, and it is in stooping to serve that we acquire ability to learn of God: "to virtue" we add "knowledge." (3) Jehovah appears to him, and Abram builds an altar and worships. His tent is pitched in view of Ai ("ruins"),—a judged world upon the one side, and Bethel, the house of God, upon the other.

4. But as yet he cannot hold this place. The south country attracts him, and he gravitates toward Egypt. A famine in his own land follows, just as barrenness in spiritual things comes surely when we are looking toward the world. Then, upon going down into it, the boldness of faith gives place to disguises and

3. Sanctification means separation.

[3] And Jehovah [d]plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife. And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What is this that thou hast done to me? why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife? why didst thou tell me she was thy sister, so that I took her as my wife? And now behold thy wife; take her, and go away. And Pharaoh gave men charge concerning him; and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that was his.

[d] Ps. 105.15.

(XIII.)

Way and end: our choice, and God's choice for us.

5. [1] And Abram went up out of Egypt—he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south country. And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. And he went on journeying from the south country, as far as Bethel,—unto the place where his tent had been at the [e]beginning, between Bethel and Ai,—unto the place of the altar which he had made there at the first; and there Abram called on the name of Jehovah.

1. A new beginning.

[e] *cf.* ch.35.1. Rev. 2. 4.

2. From increase, strife: the separation from Lot, and his after-associations.

[2] And Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents. And the land [f]could not support them, that they might dwell together; for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. And there was strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle. And the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelt then in the land. And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no [g]strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, or between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we are brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: [h]if to the left, I will take the right; and if to the right, I will take the left. And Lot [i]lifted up his eyes, and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before Jehovah had destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah,—as the [j]garden of Jehovah, as the land of Egypt, as thou goest unto Zoar. And Lot [k]chose for himself all the plain of Jordan; and Lot removed toward the east. So they separated one from the other: Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan; and Lot [l]dwelt in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent as far as Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked, and sinners against Jehovah greatly.

[f] *cf.* ch.36.7.

[g] *cf.* ch. 26. 20. 1 Cor. 3. 3. Acts 15. 39. Phil. 2. 3.

[h] Phil. 4. 5.

[i] *ctr.* ver.14. 1 Jno. 2.15. 2 Tim.4.10. *cf.*ch.18.16.

[j] ch. 2. 8. *ctr.* ch. 19. 28. Joel 2. 3. *cf.* Is. 51. 3.

[k] *ctr.* ch. 15. 1.

[l] 1 Jno. 17.16. Eph. 5. 11. 12.

prevarication. As the direct result, Abram loses his wife, and is enriched by the world. Sarai, as the apostle tells us, speaks of the terms upon which the believer is with God. She is the "covenant of grace:" the grace in which we stand God has linked with faith, and with faith alone. It belongs not to the world. We are of God, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one. But who can maintain such testimony when the world's help is wanted and association with it sought? Sarai must be left open to the world as such; and thus, by sacrifice of their exclusive place, Christians have bought the favor of the world to-day. But the world will yet learn by judgment that Sarai is not its own. This manifest, the world's favors cease, and Abram is sent away.

5. Abram gets back to where he was at the beginning, and his real restoration in heart comes out in this section; while, on the other hand, he who has been

3. A portion from the Lord.

[3] And Jehovah said unto Abram, after Lot had separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place in which thou art, northward and southward and eastward and westward; [m] for all the land on which thou art looking, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, thy seed also shall be numbered. [n] Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee. [o] And Abram moved his tent, and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron; and he built there an altar to Jehovah.

m ch. 12. 7. ch. 17. 8. ch. 26. 3. ch. 28. 13. Ps. 105. 11. Jer. 30. 3. Ezek. 28. 25. Ro. 11. 29.

n Nu. 13. 18. Josh. 18. 4. Eph. 1. 18. Eph. 3. 18.

o ch. 12. 8.

(XIV. 1-16.)

Abram as overcomer.

1. The rebellion of the kings.

6. [1] And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of [p] Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations, that they made war with Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is Zoar): all these were joined together in the vale of Siddim, which is the Salt Sea. Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

p ch. 10. 10. Is. 39. 6.

2. The war: typically, of the world-church and the mere world.

[2] And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer and the kings which were with him, and smote the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim, and the Zuzim in Ham, and the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim, and the Horites in their mount Seir, as far as El-paran, which is by the wilderness. And they returned, and came to Enmishpat, which is Kadesh; and they smote all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites dwelling in Hazazon-tamar. And there went forth the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar. And they set the battle in array against them in the vale of Siddim,—against Chedorlaomer king of Elam,

walking with Abram rather than with God manifests the power of what he has been in still over him, as we shall see. Abram's own power over Lot seems lost also by his failure. The wealth acquired on both sides comes in to separate; but Abram, master of himself once more, offers to Lot his choice as to the land before him. Lot without hesitation chooses, and you see the man in his choice. The plain of Jordan is like the garden of the Lord—like paradise! there is his *religious* self-justification, and Lot will keep his religion and the world as well. Here is the under-current that carries him: it is like the *land of Egypt*. Association with the world follows, however bad the world may be, and Lot's tent (soon to be given up) stretches toward Sodom.

Then he who has *not* chosen is shown what the Lord has chosen for him, and he is bidden to walk through it and enjoy it as his own. So faith is called to enjoy its heavenly portion.

6. As Sodom is a type of the world in its open evil, so Babylon is clearly identified in the New Testament with the world-church, whose head is Rome. (Rev. xvii. 9, 18). Here we have, not Babylon named, but Shinar, first in a coalition of four kings—the world-number, while the kings on the other side are five—the number of the senses, the merely sensual man. Between the open world

and Tidal king of nations, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar: four kings against the five. Now the vale of Siddim was full of bitumen-pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled and fell there, and those that remained fled to the mountain. And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and departed. [q]And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, and his goods, and departed: now he was dwelling in Sodom.

q *cf.* 2 Chro. 18. 31. 1 Tim. 5. 22.

3. The recovery.

[3] And there came one who had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew. And he dwelt by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, the brother of Eshcol and the brother of Aner; and these were allies with Abram. And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them as far as Dan. And he divided himself against them by night—he and his servants, and smote them, and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus. And he brought back all the goods, and also [r]brought again his brother Lot and his goods, and the women also, and the people.

r *cf.* ch. 19. 16. Gal. 6. 1.

(XIV. 17-24.)

Where the heart rests now; and the perfect rest will be found at last.

7. And the king of Sodom went forth to meet him, after his return from smiting Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him, unto the vale of Shaveh, which is the king's vale. And [s]Melchisedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine; and he was priest of the Most High God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the [t]Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be the Most High God, who hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him the [u]tenth of all. And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the souls, and the goods take for thyself. And Abram said unto the king of Sodom, [v]I have lift up my hand to Jehovah, the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, nor aught that is thine, lest thou shouldst say, I have made Abram rich; save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me—Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.

s Ps. 110. 4. Heb. 7. 1.

t Josh. 3. 11. Ps. 24. 1. Nu. 24. 16. Ps. 83. 18.

u Heb. 7. 4.

v *cf.* ch. 23. 13. 1 Chron. 21. 24. 3 Jno. 7.

and the world-church there is constant strife; but man must have a religion, and the latter in general prevails, and puts its yoke upon the other. In the present war, Lot, dwelling in Sodom, is carried captive with the rest: the way a child of God falls under the power of spiritual evil is here pointed out; it is through getting into the world. Abram the overcomer is noticed here (the only time) as the Hebrew, the passenger, the pilgrim. This is the secret of spiritual power. Lot is thus delivered by the power of another, but because only thus, falls back into Sodom.

7. And now we come to Melchisedek, king of righteousness, king of Salem (peace), priest of the Most High (God's millennial name), possessor of heaven and earth,—type of Christ in the day when He shall claim the earth for God and

SEC. 2. (Chap. xv.-xxi.)

Faith's conflicts as to relationship and the word of God.

The covenant of promise, and the righteousness of faith.

(XV.)

1. 1 AFTER these things came the word of Jehovah to Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy "shield, thine [x]exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Lord Jehovah, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go [y]childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Lo, to me hast thou given no seed; and, behold, one born in my house is mine heir. And, behold, the word of Jehovah to him, saying, This shall not be thine heir, but one that cometh forth out of thy bowels shall be thine heir.

1. The promise of the *one* Seed,—typically, Christ.

2 And he brought him out, and said, Look now toward the heavens, and number the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. [z]And he believed Jehovah; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

2. The multitudinous seed: "they which be of faith."

3 And he said to him, I am Jehovah, who brought thee forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. And he said, Lord Jehovah, whereby shall I [a]know that I shall inherit it? And he said unto him, [b]Take me a heifer of three years old, and a she-goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon. And he took to him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each half over against the other; but the birds he divided not. And the birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, but Abram [c]drove them away. And as the sun

3. The land pledged in sacrifice, and the power of the God of resurrection.

w Ps. 84. 11 2 Sam. 22. 3, 31.

x Ps. 16. 5. Ps. 73. 25. Heb. 13. 6.

y *cf.* ch. 3. 15. Ps. 127. 3.

z Rom. 4. 3, 18-25. Gal. 3. 6, 16. Heb. 11. 12. *cfr.* ch. 28. 20.

a Jn. 6. 17. 2 Kl. 20. 8. 1 Jno. 5. 13. Mal. 3. 10.

b Jer. 34. 18, 19. Heb. 6. 17, 18.

c 2 Sa. 21. 10.

bring it back to Him. To him Abram gives tithes of all. Faith owns in Christ the One to whom all belongs, partaking of His true "bread and wine," the memorials of His fruitful suffering, and so refuses to be enriched at the world's hand. Present rest for the heart is here, and the future rest when He fulfills this type. The end of this series is reached, then, with this.

Sec. 2.—Faith's conflicts.

A very different line of truth is found in the second section. We have here faith's conflicts as to relationship and the word of God. The fifteenth chapter clearly gives a new beginning, as Abram here for the first time is recognized as righteous by faith, the true beginning for every soul spiritually. Here again we have seven subsections:—

1. The covenant of promise and the righteousness of faith. (Chap. xv.)
2. Hagar: the legal covenant, manward and Godward. (xvi.)
3. Circumcision, the seal of the covenant of promise, and faith in the God of resurrection. (xvii.)
4. The tent-door at Mamre, and the intercession for Sodom. (xviii.)
5. The gate of Sodom and the end of Lot. (xix.)
6. The Philistines' land and the failure there. (xx.)
7. Isaac: the promise fulfilled. (xxi.)

The connection of these chapters is mostly plain, and Isaac is evidently the Melchisedek of this section. He is, in fact, the type of the same blessed Person, but in quite a different character: here as "dwelling in the heart by faith." The first leaf we turn in this gives us the promise as to Him; the last shows us (typically) the fulfillment. All through, directly or indirectly, we are occupied with Him.

was [d]going down, a [e]deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, a horror of great darkness fell upon him. And he said unto Abram, Know assuredly that thy seed shall [f]sojourn in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them [g]four hundred years. And also that nation whom they shall serve will I [h]judge, and afterward shall they go forth with [i]great substance. But thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace: thou shalt be buried in a [j]good old age. And in the fourth generation they shall come hither again; [k]for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full. And it came to pass as the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a [l]smoking furnace and a [m]burning torch which passed between those pieces. In that day, Jehovah made a [n]covenant with Abram, saying, To thy seed have I given [o]this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: the Kenite, and the Kenizzite, and the Kadmonite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Rephaim, and the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Girgashite, and the Jebusite.

d ch. 19. 1. ch. 28. 11.
e *cf.* ch. 2. 21. 2 Cor. 1. 9.
f ch. 46. 3.
g Ex. 12. 41.
h Ex. 6. 6. Ex. 12. 12.
i Ex. 12. 36, 38.
j ch. 25. 8.
k 2 Pet. 3. 9.
l De. 4. 20. Is. 48. 10.
m Ps. 27. 1.
n *cf.* ch. 6. 18. ch. 17. 2.
o ch. 17. 8, etc.
p ch. 11. 30. etc.

Hagar: the covenant that gendereth to bondage.

I. The apparent barrenness of grace the incentive to one's own efforts.

(XVI.)

2. [1]And Sarai, Abram's wife, bare him [p]no children; and she had a [q]handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold, now, [r]Jehovah hath restrained me from bearing: [s]go in, I pray thee, unto my handmaid: it may be that I shall be built up by her. And Abram [t]hearkened to the voice of Sarai. And Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her handmaid, [u]at the end of ten years that Abram had dwelt in the land of Canaan, and gave her

q ch. 12. 16. ch. 21. 9, 21.
r ch. 30. 3.
s *ctr.* ch. 21. 10.
t *cf.* ch. 3. 12. 1 Pet. 3. 6.
u Gal. 3. 3.

1. The promise is really threefold: of the one seed, Isaac, typically Christ; of the numerous seed, which, as represented by the stars of heaven, directs our eyes especially to the present children of Abraham by faith; thirdly, of the land, type of our heavenly possession. The first is the ground of the second; the second, of the third.

Christ, the heavenly seed, and the heavenly inheritance are all (typically) the subject of promise here. The covenant is of promise,—that is, of grace; the answer to it is faith—dependence on another; and the believer it is who is counted righteous. Every thing is assured to us by God without condition, and to take freely what is freely given is the secret of all joy, all peace, all power. Faith in one's self is what we are never called to, and is but so much glory taken from God. But this we are slow to learn.

In the third promise, as to the land, we have the worth of Christ's sacrifice opened up to us. In these different animals He is variously seen, and by these, passing between the divided parts, God binds Himself. He is seen also as the God of resurrection. The deep sleep falling on Abram is like that of Adam, and even the Egyptian oppression which it represents was, as it were, the death of the nation, from which only such power as that of resurrection could bring them forth. Here, the might of the sacrifice is seen when faith itself seems in collapse. He who guarded it from the birds of prey is now guarded by it; and in the furnace of Egypt, no less than in the word of deliverance, it is the covenant-keeping God who acts. Grace secures holiness, and the means to it; and God acts from Himself and glorifies Himself, where man is powerless. Thus the promise is complete.

to Abram her husband to be his wife. And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress Sarai was [v]despised in her eyes.

2. Conflicting principles: law and grace.

[2] And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my handmaid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes. Jehovah judge between me and thee. And Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hands: do unto her what is good in thine eyes. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face.

3. Beer-lahai-roi: the connection of law and *revelation*.

[3] And the angel of Jehovah found her by a [w]spring of water in the wilderness—by the spring on the way to Shur; and he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither dost thou go? And she said, I am fleeing from the face of my mistress Sarai. And the angel of Jehovah said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands. And the angel of Jehovah said unto her, [x]I will greatly multiply thy seed, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. And the angel of Jehovah said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael, for Jehovah hath hearkened to thine affliction. And he shall be a man [like] a [y]wild ass; his hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the [z]presence of all his brethren. And she called the name of Jehovah that spake to her, Thou art God that seeth; for she said, Have I indeed looked after him that seeth? Wherefore the well was called [a]Beer-lahai-roi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered. And Hagar bare Abram a son; and Abram called the name of his son which Hagar bare [b]Ishmael. And Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram.

v 1 Sam. 1. 6. ch. 21. 9. 2 Sam. 6. 16. Rom. 3. 27.

w *cf.* ch. 21. 19.

x ch. 17. 20.

y Job 11. 12. Jer. 2. 24.

z ch. 25. 18.

a ch. 24. 62.

b *cf.* ch. 39. 1.

2. Promise is grace, and thus the promise already given can only be fulfilled in Sarai, who speaks of this. (See Gal. iv. 24.) Her name is Sarai—"my princess," for "grace reigns." She is the free-woman, and brings forth to freedom; but in contrast with her, another is now seen—Hagar, the law, the full account of which, spiritually and dispensationally, is given us here.

Hagar is an Egyptian, as the law is the "principles of the world" (Gal. iv. 3), and she gravitates naturally to Egypt. She is Sarai's handmaid, as the law is to grace, but taken up by the believer in whom some strength of nature still remains, in the impatient desire for fruit. Grace in him even urges him to it; but God has not to do with it, except that when the relationship is entered on, He sends her *back* to Abram that the fruit might be seen as not what He had promised. Thus the law came in, (faith and grace having long been joined together of God before it,) not at the beginning, but as sought of man himself naturally: and God takes her up, and by the fountain of water makes this child of nature to know Himself. We get thus the law and revelation joined together in the Old Testament. But God declares at the same time the fruit of law, easy enough to produce, to be but lawless (the wild man), though "God hears" the child of law—the Jew.

Circumcision, the seal of the covenant.

1. The revelation of the Almighty.

(XVII.)
3. [1] And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, Jehovah appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the [c] almighty God: [d] walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my [e] covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram [f] fell on his face, and God spake with him, saying, As for me, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of a multitude of nations. Neither shall thy [g] name be any longer called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a [h] father of a multitude of nations have I appointed thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and will make nations of thee, and [i] kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee. And I give to thee and to thy seed after thee the land of thy sojournings—all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, and will be their [j] God.

2. The testimony to be maintained.

[2] And God said unto Abraham, And as for thee, thou shalt keep my covenant—thou and thy seed after thee throughout their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee: every male among you shall be [k] circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be the sign of the covenant between me and you. And the child of eight days old shall be circumcised among you,—every male throughout your generations, he who is born in thy house, and he who is bought with thy money of any stranger, who is not of thy seed. He who is born in thy house and he who is bought with thy money must needs be circumcised; and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that soul is cut off from among his people; he hath broken my covenant.

c ch. 35. 11. ch. 18. 14. Ex. 6. 3.
d ch. 5. 22. ch. 24. 40. ch. 48. 15.
e ch. 15. 18. Ps. 105. 9. Gal. 3. 17.
f Ex. 3. 5. Nu. 16. 45.
g Neh. 9. 7. cf. ch. 32. 28. Jno. 1. 42, etc.
h Rom. 4. 17.
i Ps. 72. 1.
j Ex. 6. 7.
k cf. Rom. 2. 25. Rom. 4. 10. Gal. 5. 2-4, 6. Gal. 6. 12. Phil. 3. 3-7. Col. 2. 11.

3. God now re-affirms His principle; for circumcision is the seal of the covenant of promise, and the sign of righteousness by faith. (See Rom. iv.) Abram's body is now "as good as dead," as Sarai's womb is. Grace will do nothing except as the power of the living God works in it, and for this, nature must be seen as worthless. God is now to be the *Al*mighty, and Abram to walk before Him as such. Significantly thereupon He changes his name, adding but one letter, in fact, to it, in the middle of it—the letter "h," the fifth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and which stands for 5. This, we have seen, is 4 + 1,—"the weak creature in the presence of the almighty God:" thus Abram ("*high* father") becomes Abraham, ("father of a multitude.") He is abased to be multiplied; and this we know well to be the spiritual law. How blessed are the thoughts of God!

Circumcision is thereupon ordained in the flesh of all the family of faith: in its inner meaning, "the putting off of the body of the flesh." (Col. ii. 11.) The typical answer, the "bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be manifest." (2 Cor. iv. 10.) As *born* into the family of God, and

3. The God of resurrection.

[3] And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her, and will give thee also a son of her; and I will bless her, and she shall become nations: kings of peoples shall be of her. And Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, [l] Shall a child be born to him that is a hundred years old? and shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear? And Abraham said unto God, [m] Oh that Ishmael might live before thee! And God said, Sarah thy wife shall indeed bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name [n] Isaac; and with him I will establish my covenant, for an everlasting covenant to his seed after him. And for Ishmael I have heard thee: behold, I will bless him and make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. [o] Twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation; but my covenant will I establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to thee next year [p] at this season. And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.

4. The blessing flowing out.

[4] And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all those born in his house, and all that were bought with his money,—every male among the men of Abraham's house, and [q] circumcised them in the flesh of their foreskin on that very day, as God had spoken to him. And Abraham was ninety and nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin; and Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. In that very day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son. And all the men of his house, born in the house or bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him.

(XVIII.)

The tent-door at Mamre.

4. [1] And Jehovah [r] appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre: and he was sitting in the opening of his tent in the [s] heat of the day. And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, [t] three men standing near him; and when he saw [them], he [u] ran to meet them from the opening of the tent, and bowed himself to the earth, and said, Lord, if

1. Faith's recognition of God.

l *ctr.* Rom. 4. 19.
m ch. 21. 11.
n ver. 17. ch. 18. 12. ch. 21. 6.
o ch. 16. 10. ch. 25. 6.
p ch. 18. 10, 14. Rom. 9. 9. Gal. 4. 4.
q Acts 7. 8.
r ch. 17. 1, etc.
s *ctr.* ch. 15. 12. ch. 19. 1.
t *ctr.* ch. 9. 1. *cf.* ch. 32. 24. Jno. 1. 14.
u Heb. 13. 2.

come into the new creation (the eighth day), and as purchased with the money of atonement, still we are to have this sign.

And now God declares Himself the God of resurrection. Sarai is to have a son—the first positive announcement of it. And *her* name also is changed: from Sarai (my princess) she becomes Sarah (*the* princess), the merely personal element removed with the "i," which stands for the number 10—the number of responsibility, to make way again for the "h"—the 5, where the creature stands once more in its weakness before this almighty God. Thus grace and faith, the ways of God and the conscious need of man, exactly suit, and are united to one another; and *now* grace shall be fruitful, Sarah shall have a son.

4. Hereupon the practical fruits appear. Abraham is found in his tent-door in Mamre ("fatness"?), and this is here as characteristic as the "gate of Sodom," in the next chapter, is for Lot. Here, Jehovah appears to him in the new form of man: *communion* is evidently more realized than at previous times. Note how

now I have found favor in thine eyes, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant. Let a [v]little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree; and I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on; for therefore are ye come unto your servant. And they said, So do as thou hast spoken.

2. Faith's entertainment: Christ the power of communion.

[2] And Abraham [w]hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly [x]three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. And Abraham ran unto the herd, and took a [y]calf, tender and good, and gave it unto the servant, and he hasted to dress it. And he took [z]butter and milk and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree, and they ate.

3. The promise renewed: resurrection-power needed for grace to be productive.

[3] And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent. And he said, I will surely return to thee when the season cometh round; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the opening of the tent which was behind him. And Abraham and Sarah were old—well stricken in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. And Sarah [a]laughed within herself, saying, After I am become [b]old shall I have pleasure, and my [c]lord old? And Jehovah said unto Abraham, Why is this, that Sarah laughed, saying, Shall I indeed bear, when I am become old? [d]Is there any thing too wonderful for Jehovah? At the set time I will return to thee, when the season cometh round, and Sarah shall have a son. Then Sarah [e]denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay, but thou didst laugh.

4. The testing of Abraham and of Sodom—faith and the world.

[4] And the men rose up from thence, and [f]looked toward Sodom; and Abraham went with them, to bring them on the way. And Jehovah said, [g]Shall I hide from Abraham that which I am doing; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and in him shall all the nations of the earth be blessed? For I know him, that he will [h]command his children and his household after him; and they shall keep the way of Jehovah, to do justice and judgment, that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham that which he hath

v *cf.* Luke 7. 44.

w ch. 22. 2, etc.

x Nu. 15. 9. Mt. 13. 33. Col. 2. 9.

y Lev. 3. 1. Lk. 15. 23.

z De. 32. 14.

a *cf.* ch. 17. 18, 19. *ctr.* Heb. 11. 11.

b Luke 1. 18, etc.

c 1 Pet. 3. 6.

d Jer. 32. 17. Rom. 4. 17. I Cor. 1. 28. Lk. 18. 27.

e *cf.* ch. 4. 9. ch. 27. 20. ch. 31. 35.

f *ctr.* ch. 13. 10.

g Ps. 25. 14. Amos 3. 7. Jno. 15. 15. Jas. 2. 23.

h ch. 26. 5. ch. 35. 2. Josh. 24. 15. *ctr.* 1 Sam. 3. 13.

faith in Abraham recognizes God; how suitably yet to His manifestation of Himself he entertains Him; and how ready a response is given to his invitation.

The material for entertainment is typically Christ, in His death, and in the glory of His person; three measures of meal—all the fullness of the Godhead in Him bodily. Such material have we ever to invite God to remain with us.

Then comes once more the promise, in which God more openly takes His place than before. The powerlessness of man is more revealed, faith in the Almighty is challenged, and unbelief rebuked.

And now God reveals as to His "friend" His purposes as to Sodom—the world; as to which, judgment does not come till there has been full testing: only when the state of things is fully proved does God proceed as if He "knew."

spoken of him. And Jehovah said, Because the cry of [i]Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and their sin is very grievous, I will go down now, and see if they have done altogether according to the [j]cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.

5. The discrimination in favor of the righteous.

[5] And the men turned thence, and went toward Sodom; and Abraham [k]stood yet before Jehovah. And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also consume the righteous with the wicked? [l]Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city, wilt thou also consume and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from thee to do after this manner—to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; that be far from thee: shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? And Jehovah said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sake. And Abraham answered and said, Behold now I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, and I am dust and ashes: peradventure there lack five of the fifty righteous, wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it. And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there be forty found there? And he said, For forty's sake I will not destroy it. And he said, Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: peradventure there be thirty found there? And he said, I will not do it if I find thirty there. And he said, Behold now I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: peradventure there shall be twenty found there? And he said, For twenty's sake I will not destroy it. And he said, [m]Oh, let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but this once: peradventure there shall ten be found there? And he said, For ten's sake I will not destroy it. And Jehovah went his way when he had ended speaking with Abraham; and Abraham returned unto his place.

(XIX.)

The gate of Sodom and its consequences.

1. The angels' visit.

5. [1]And the [n]two angels came to Sodom at even; and Lot was [o]sitting in the gate of Sodom; and Lot saw them and rose up to meet them, and bowed himself with his face to the earth. And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn aside, I pray, into your servant's house, and lodge, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early

[i] De. 32. 32. Is. 1. 10. Jer. 23. 14. Ezk. 16. 46. Mt. 11. 23. Rev. 11. 8.

[j] ch. 11. 5. ch. 19. 13. Lam. 4. 6. Ezk. 16. 49.

[k] ch. 19. 27. Ex. 32. 31. Jas. 5. 16.

[l] *ctr.* Ezek. 14. 14. *cf.* Ezek. 22. 30. *cf.* Jer. 5. 1. 2 Pet. 2. 8.

[m] Ju. 6. 39.

[n] *ctr.* ch. 18. 2.

[o] *ctr.* ch. 18. 1. Prov. 31. 23. Ruth 4. 1.

Then Abraham draws near to intercede, pleading that the righteous should be distinguished from the wicked, and God's governmental ways come out. For the sake of even ten righteous He will spare the city, and after six successive and effectual pleadings, Abraham stops with this.

5. The gate of Sodom now comes before us, and Lot sitting there. All is in contrast with the former chapter,—the evening; the visit of two *angels*, not now "men;" the invitation hardly accepted; the city fare, poorer than that under the tent;—all this makes a significant picture.

and go your way. And they said, [p] Nay, but we will lodge in the open place. And he urged them greatly, and they turned aside to him and entered into his house. And he made them a feast, and baked [q] unleavened cakes, and they ate.

2. The interruption: Sodom's witness to itself.

[2] But before they lay down, the men of the city—the men of Sodom—compassed the house round, from the youngest to the eldest,—all the people from every quarter. And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men that came to thee to-night? Bring them out to us, that we may [r] know them. And Lot went out to them to the entrance, and shut the door after him, and said, I pray you, my brethren, do not wickedly! Behold now, I have two daughters who have not known man: let me now bring them out to you, and do to them as is good in your eyes; but unto these men do nothing, for therefore have they come under the shadow of my roof. And they said, Stand back! And they said, This fellow came to sojourn, and he must be a [s] judge! Now will we deal worse with thee than with them. And they pressed hard on the man—on Lot, and drew near to break the door.

3. The revelation of doom.

[3] And the [t] men stretched out their hands and drew Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door. And they [u] smote the men that were at the entrance of the house with blindness, from the smallest to the greatest; and they wearied themselves to find the entrance. And the men said unto Lot, [v] Whom hast thou here besides? son-in-law and thy sons and thy daughters, and all whom thou hast in the city, bring them forth out of the place, for we are about to destroy this place; for the cry of them is become great before Jehovah, and Jehovah hath sent us to destroy it. And Lot went out and spake to his sons-in-law which were to marry his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place, for Jehovah is about to destroy the city. And he was as one that [w] jested to his sons-in-law.

4. Lingering and unbelief.

[4] And as the dawn arose, the angels [x] hastened Lot, saying, Up, take thy wife, and thy two daughters which are found, lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. And as he [y] lingered, the men [z] laid hold upon his

p Jer. 14. 8. Eph. 5. 11. *ctr.* Luke 19. 5.

q Ex. 12. 39. 1 Cor. 5. 11.

r Lev. 20. 13. Rom. 1. 24.

s Ex. 2. 14.

t *ctr.* ver. 1. *cf.* ch. 18. 2.

u Acts 13. 11. 2 K'gs 6. 18.

v Josh. 2. 13.

w *cf.* Luke 24. 11. Ex. 9. 20. 2 Pet. 3. 3, 4

x Ex. 12. 11. Rev. 18. 4. ver. 22.

y ver. 18. ch. 24. 55. *ctr.* ch. 22. 3.

z Jude 22. 2 Pet. 2. 7. *cf.* ch. 14. 16.

Then comes the interruption of the men of Sodom: (Abraham had none!)—like the evil things which association with the world produces to destroy communion. How Lot also smells of the company he keeps!

God can manifest Himself here only in judgment, and call to separate from what is to be destroyed; but Lot's dwelling in the city has rendered ineffectual his witness against it, and his sons-in-law take it as a jest. (Notice how, through all the sorrow of this scene, the "angels" become once more "men.")

Lot too lingers: they hasten him, lay hold upon him, bring him out. Notice how different the prayer of unbelief from that of faith!—his *plea* is unbelief, fear of the consequences of doing what he is bidden; a little city—God can do a little thing! Blessed be His name, He spares it.

hand, and on the hand of his wife, and on the hand of his two daughters, in the compassion of Jehovah on him, and [a]brought him forth, and left him without the city. And it came to pass, as they brought them forth outside, he said, [b]Escape for thy life; [c]look not behind thee, and stay not in all the plain;—escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed. And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, Lord! behold now, thy servant hath found favor in thine eyes, and thou hast magnified thy mercy which thou hast shown me in saving my life, and I cannot escape to the mountain, [d]lest evil come upon me and I die; and behold, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a [e]little one: I pray thee, let me escape thither, —is it not a little one?—and my soul shall live. And he said unto him, [f]Behold, I have accepted thee also in this matter, and I will not overthrow the city of which thou hast spoken. Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou art come thither. Wherefore the name of the city was called Zoar. The sun [g]rose upon the earth as Lot entered into Zoar.

a Zech. 3. 2. Am. 4. 11.

b Mt. 24. 16. Nu. 16. 26.

c ver. 26. Acts 7. 39. Heb. 10. 38, 39. *cf.* Phil. 3. 13, 14.

d *cf.* ver. 17. Nu. 14. 3. Ex. 14. 11. Gal. 1. 4.

e Song 2. 15. 1 Cor. 5. 6. Gal. 5. 9.

f Mat. 19. 8.

g 1 Thes. 5. 3. 2 Pet. 2. 21, 22.

5. The judgment, and the ground of Lot's escape.

[5] And Jehovah [h]rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from Jehovah out of heaven, and overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the dwellers in the cities, and what grew upon the ground. And his [i]wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt. [j]And Abraham gat up early in the morning unto the place [k]where he had stood before Jehovah; and he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and lo, [l]the smoke of the land went up as the smoke of a furnace. And it was so, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God [m]remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the midst of which Lot dwelt.

h Ex. 9. 18. Ps. 11. 6. Lk. 17. 28. 2 Pet. 2. 6. Jude 7. Rev. 21. 8. Mat. 11. 24.

i Lk. 17. 32.

j Ps. 91. 8. Rev. 3. 10.

k ch. 18. 22.

l *cf.* ch. 13. 10. De. 29. 23. Ezek. 47. 9.

m ch. 18. 23.

6. The end of Lot.

[6] And Lot went up from Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him, for he feared to dwell in Zoar; and he dwelt in a cave,—he and his two daughters. And the first-born said to the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in to us [n]after the way of all the earth: come, let us give our [o]father wine, and we will lie with him, and preserve seed of our father. And they gave their father wine that night, and the first-born went and lay with her father; and he knew not when she lay down or when she arose. And it was so, on the morrow, that the first-born said to the younger, Behold,

n Eph. 5. 7.

o ch. 9. 21. Eph. 5. 18. Gal. 5. 19. *cf.* Lev. 20. 12.

Then the judgment comes, in which his wife also is involved. His own being spared is now seen also as for Abraham's sake: of him, though one of His own, God is ashamed.

Finally, we have the end of Lot in a shame which is that of his daughters also. His death need not be mentioned. But from him thus spring Moab and Ammon, the enemies of the people of God.

I lay last night with my father; let us give him wine this night also, and go thou and lie with him, and let us preserve seed of our father. And that night also they gave their father wine, and the younger arose and lay with him; and he knew not when she lay down or when she arose. Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father. And the first-born bare a son, and she called his name Moab: he is father of the Moabites to this day. And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Ben-ammi: he is the father of the children of [p] Ammon unto this day.

[p] De. 23. 3. cf. ch. 16. 15. Ju. 10. 7, etc. Ruth 4. 5. Zeph. 2. 9.

The Philistines: Abraham's exposure and reproof.

(XX.)

6. [1] And Abraham removed thence toward the south country, and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned at Gerar. And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, [q] She is my sister; and Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. [r] And God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art a dead man, because of the woman whom thou hast taken, for she is a [s] man's wife. And Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, Lord, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation? Did not he say to me, She is my sister? and she even, did not she say, He is my brother? In the integrity of my heart and with innocency of hands have I done this. And God said unto him in the dream, Yea, I know that in the integrity of thy heart thou hast done this, and I also have withheld thee from sinning against me; therefore suffered I thee not to touch her. And now restore the man's wife, for he is a [t] prophet; and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live; but if thou do not restore her, know that thou shalt surely die,—thou and all that are thine.

[q] ch. 26. 7.

[r] ch. 31. 24.

[s] 2 Cor. 11. 2.

[t] Ps. 105. 15.

1. The taking of Sarah by Abimelech: the claim of grace by the men of succession.

6. In the Philistines, we find undoubtedly a form of that which meets us in full development in Babel. They are not Canaanites, though sons of Ham. They sprang, according to chap. x. 14, from Mizraim,—*i. e.*, were of Egypt; yet we find them in the land of Canaan always, on the lowland of the south-west coast, with their outlook indeed toward Egypt, with which they had (Ex. xiii. 17) the freest and most unobstructed communication. They hold but a border of the land of Canaan, and its lowest part; beyond that, may ravage, but not possess; although looming in men's eyes so large as to give their name ("Palestine," from "Philistine,") to the whole of it. It is easy to see in this the picture of the world as come into the church, and become the church. Abimelech, whose name (whether "whose father [was] king," or "father of a king,") speaks of successional derived authority, is their king, and Phicol, "the voice of all"—as men say, "the voice of the Church,"—is the captain of their host. Who can fail to see here the shadow of that traditional authority to which human religiousness, ignorant of the living Spirit, ever appeals?

This externalism speaks much of grace, divorcing it from what God has joined it to alone—the living faith which is seen in Abraham. Alas! faith too may easily yield here its exclusive claim, and with the son of the bondwoman in the house, and not yet Isaac, seem ready to yield up its choicest possessions to the demand upon it. This is a chronic evil, as is plain here, and apt to reproduce itself, as we see in Isaac afterward. Philistines are, as we know, ready enough to claim Sarah: the men of tradition speak largely of "grace," but it is in their

2. Exposure of chronic evil in the men of faith.

[2] And Abimelech rose up early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ears; and the men feared greatly. [u] And Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, What hast thou done to us? and wherein have I sinned against thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? thou hast done unto me deeds that ought not to be done. And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this? And Abraham said, Because [v] I said, Surely there is no fear of God in this place, and they will slay me on account of my wife. But she is also really my sister: she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. And it was so, that when God caused me to wander from my father's house, I said unto her, This is the kindness that thou shalt do me: in every place whither we shall come, say of me, He is my brother.

u *ctr.* ch. 21. 25.

v *cf.* 2 Kings 5. 11.

3. Restoration.

[3] [w] And Abimelech took sheep and oxen and men-servants and maid-servants, and gave them to Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife. And Abimelech said, Behold, my land is before thee: dwell where it is good in thine eyes. And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver: behold, it is for thee a covering of the eyes in respect to all with thee, and to all [other]: so she was reproved. And Abraham prayed unto God, and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his maid-servants; and they bare children. For Jehovah had fast closed all the wombs of the house of Abimelech on account of Sarah Abraham's wife.

w *cf.* ch. 12. 16.

(XXI.)

Isaac: the promise fulfilled.

7. [1] And Jehovah visited Sarah as he had said, and Jehovah did unto Sarah as he [z] had spoken. And Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. [y] And Abraham called the name of his son born to him, which Sarah had borne to him, Isaac. And Abraham circumcised Isaac his son at eight days old, as God had

x ch. 18. 14.

1. The child of promise and of grace.

y ch. 17. 19. Lk. 1. 63.

sacraments and outward observances. And this claim imposed for ages on even the men of faith. Yet Sarah in the Philistines' house cannot, do what they may, become their own: grace will not be handled by men's hands. Nay, more; her presence there stops all the wombs of the house of Abimelech: this barren pretension to grace prevents all real fruit; with it, they are just as the "ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance," and so cannot repent; but that is where all true fruit begins. But how guilty, then, are we if we *seem* even to justify them in this claim! and how well may they reproach us with it!

On the other hand, with Sarah we may sojourn in the Philistines' land, for it is our own, though only a border tract. To adopt their language, we may say, for instance, the "sacraments" remain to us, though only *two*, (the witnesses to something better than themselves,) not *seven* (as Rome makes them), the perfect fulfillment of that of which they speak. This is only a sample. All the land here is ours, and it is a fruitful land: may we claim it all!

commanded him. Abraham was a hundred years old when Isaac his son was born to him. [z] And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh: all that hear shall laugh with me. And she said, Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would suckle children? for I have borne him a son in his old age.

2. The casting out of the bondwoman and her seed; and their salvation.

[2] And the child grew, and was weaned; and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was [a] weaned. And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she bare unto Abraham, mocking. And she said unto Abraham, [b] Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son—with Isaac. And the thing was very [c] grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son. And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thine eyes on account of the lad, and on account of thy bondwoman. In all that Sarah saith unto thee, hearken to her voice; [d] for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed. And Abraham [e] rose up early in the morning, and took bread and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it upon her shoulder, and the child, and [f] sent her away. And she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs; and she went and sat her down over against him, a good way (about a bow-shot) off: for she said, Let me not look upon the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lifted up her voice and wept. And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called unto Hagar from heaven, and said to her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not, for God hath hearkened to the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thy hand; for I will make of him a great nation. And God [g] opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink. And God was with the lad, and he dwelt in the wilderness and became an archer. And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.

z *cf.* ch. 18. 15. Lk. 2. 14. 1 Sam. 2. 1-10. Ps. 113. 9. Gal. 4. 27.

a 1 Sam. 1. 22. Heb. 6. 1. Heb. 11.24.

b Gal. 4. 21-26, 29, 30. Gal. 4. 7. Jno. 8. 35. Acts 13. 45, 46.

c *cf.* ch.16.2. Phil. 3. 7.

c *cf.* ch.17.18.

d Ro. 9. 7, 8. Heb. 11.18.

e *cf.* ch.22. 2.

f *cf.* Ro. 11. 28.

g *cf.* ch.16.7. 2 Ki. 6. 17.

7. And now the promise is fulfilled, and Isaac is born to dwell in Abraham's tents: the consummation of the life of faith is when Christ dwells in the heart through faith; the true fruit of faith in us is Christ thus abiding. Dispensationally, it is the coming of Christ and Christianity that we reach here, the two, as it were, identified, for are they not one? Therefore the child is circumcised, (as I take it, at the cross,) and weaned gradually, and there is a great feast when the child is weaned. Is not this the blessed truth which was given through Paul, and which especially brought out the mockery of unbelief and persecution of the Church by the Jews? Then the bondwoman and her son are sent away, the nation is in the meantime as such rejected. The wandering in the wilderness of Beersheba (the "well of the oath"), is a striking picture of their present condi-

3. Beersheba; that God is with Abraham is manifest to all.

[h] And it came to pass at that time that [h] Abimelech and Phicol the captain of his host spake unto Abraham, saying, God is with thee in all that thou doest. And now swear unto me here by God that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son. According to the kindness I have done to thee thou shalt do to me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned. And Abraham said, I will swear. And Abraham [i] reproved Abimelech because of a well of water which the servants of Abimelech had violently taken away. And Abimelech said, I know not who has done this thing, neither didst thou tell me, neither have I heard it until to-day. And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them to Abimelech; and they two made a [j] covenant. And Abraham set seven ewe lambs by themselves. And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What mean these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves? And he said, That these seven ewe lambs thou shalt take of my hand, that it may be a witness for me that I have digged this well. Wherefore he called that place [k] Beersheba, because they sware there both of them. So they made a covenant at Beersheba, and Abimelech rose up, and Phicol the captain of his host, and returned unto the land of the Philistines. And [Abraham] planted a tamarisk in Beersheba, and called there on the name of Jehovah, the [l] everlasting God. And Abraham sojourned in the Philistines' land many days.

[h] ch. 26. 26. Zech. 8. 23.

[i] *ctr.* ch. 20. 9.

[j] ch. 31. 44.

[k] ch. 26. 33.

[l] Ps. 90. 2. Jno. 8. 58-58.

The "Obedience of Christ" to which we are sanctified. "Your bodies a living sacrifice." The Father's gift of His Only Begotten.

SUBDIVISION 5. (Chap. xxii.-xxvi. 33.) ISAAC.

Self-surrender, the responsibility of sonship; and the recompense of obedience.

(XXII.)

1. The command.

1. [m] AND it was so, after these things, that God did [m] try Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham! and he said, Here am I. And he said, Take now thy son, thine [n] only one, whom thou lovest,—Isaac, and go into the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a [o] burnt-offering on one of the mountains I will tell thee of.

[m] 1 Pet. 1. 7. Heb. 11. 17.

[n] Jno. 3. 16. Rom. 8. 32.

[o] Lev. 1. 3. Eph. 5. 2.

tion. The water, the word of life, is spent for them, and the well they see not, though the oath of God, the covenant with their fathers, secures it for their final possession. This, therefore, their eyes are yet to be opened to, and Hagar herself to become a means of blessing to them (Deut. xxx. 1-3); their dwelling still and ever outside of Canaan—the heavenly inheritance.

The contention for the wells is characteristic with the Philistines: they do not dig them, but stop them with earth, though they are made here finally to own that God is with the man of faith, and that the well he digs is all his own.

SUBD. 5.—ISAAC.

ISAAC is the double type of the Son and of the sons of God; and in him the dispensational application is very prominent. No wonder, when the object of the Spirit is to take of the things that are Christ's and show them unto us. In fact, the individual application, which is elsewhere generally the main thing, seems almost to fail us, just where the other acquires fullness of detail. This may be,

2. The surrender to death: "delivered unto death." (2 Cor.iv.11.)

[3] And Abraham rose up [p] early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. And [q] on the third day, Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, [r] Remain here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and return to you again. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and [s] put it upon Isaac his son; and he took in his hand the [t] fire and the [u] knife; and they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, [v] My father. And he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold, here are the fire and the wood, but where is the [w] lamb for a burnt-offering? And Abraham said, God will provide himself the lamb for the burnt-offering, my son. So they went both of them together. And they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham built there the altar, and arranged the wood upon it, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him upon the altar, upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

3. Received back as from the dead: sanctified by the offering of Jesus Christ. (Heb. x.)

[4] And the angel of Jehovah called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham! And he said, [x] Lo, I am here. And he said, Stretch not forth thy hand against the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him; for [y] now I know that thou fearest God, seeing that thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only one, from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and lo, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering instead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-Jireh, as it is said unto this day, In the mount of Jehovah it will be provided.

p Josh. 3. 1. ch. 18. 6. *cf.* Jer. 7. 13.

q Ex. 5. 3. 1 Cor. 15. 4. Phil. 3. 10. Heb. 11. 19. *cf.* ch. 31. 22.

r *cf.* ch. 45. 1. Jno. 16. 32.

s Jno. 19. 17.

t Heb. 12. 29. 1 Ki. 18. 38.

u Zech. 13. 7.

v *cf.* Mt. 26. 39.

w Jno. 1. 29. 1 Pet. 1. 19. Is. 53. 7. Rev. 5. 6.

x *cf.* ver. 1. *ctr.* 1 Kings 19. 13.

y Jas. 2. 21. Heb. 11. 17.

of course, only due to our ignorance; for the types of life, involving as they do often the appeal to inward experience, become naturally harder to read as we go on.

1. The twenty-second chapter is a most striking picture of Christ in the fulfillment of the responsibility which He undertook for us. Here it pleased God for a moment almost to remove the vail from the sacrificial types, and to show the reality that lay under them. Man it is that must suffer and die, although not Isaac, who is saved by the substituted ram. Isaac is withdrawn, but we have the witness that God will provide Himself a Lamb for a burnt-offering.

At the same time, the Father's gift of the Son is no less brought before us than the Son's obedience. The God who provides the Lamb is in the antitype the Father Himself; and to the cost to Him of that wondrous gift our attention is especially called. Our human hearts are arrested by this spectacle of a father's trial, but to find in it all the heart of God declared.

Isaac is only as "in a figure" received back from the dead (Heb. xi. 19); Christ in reality; and to Him thus the promises belong: it is Christ raised from the dead who is the source of blessing to all the families of the earth.

4. The blessing flowing out to the world.

[4] And the angel of Jehovah called unto Abraham the second time out of heaven, and said, By myself I have [z]sworn, affirmeth Jehovah, Because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only one, that blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy [a]seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast hearkened to my voice. And Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose up and went together unto Beersheba, and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.

z Heb. 6. 13. Lk. 1. 73. ch. 26. 3.

a Acts 3. 25. Gal. 3. 16. Lk. 1. 55.

5. The generations of Nahor.

[5] And it came to pass after these things, that it was told Abraham, Behold, Milcah, she also hath borne children unto thy brother Nahor: Uz his first-born, and Buz his brother, and Kemuel the father of Aram; and Chesed and Hazo and Pildash and Jidlaph and Bethuel; and Bethuel begat Rebekah: these eight did Milcah bear unto Nahor Abraham's brother. And his concubine, whose name was Reumah, she also bare Tebah and Gaham and Tahash and Maachah.

(XXIII.)

The death of Sarah and her burial in Machpelah: the (national) existence of Israel (of whom Christ came) ended for the present, but in hope. Death for faith but the fellowship with His death.

2. And the life of Sarah was a hundred and twenty-seven years: [these are] the years of the life of Sarah. And Sarah died in [b]Kirjath Arba, which is Hebron, in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.

b Jo. 14. 15.

And Abraham rose up from before his dead, and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying, A stranger and sojourner am I with you: give me the possession of a sepulchre among you, and I will bury my dead from before me. And the sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him, Hear us, my lord; thou art a prince of God amongst us: in the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead; not one of us will withhold from thee his sepulchre, but that thou mayest bury thy dead. And Abraham arose and bowed down before the people of the land, the sons of Heth. And he spake unto them,

The individual application is still in this chapter plain. The responsibility of a son is obedience to the father's will, and according to it we are to present our bodies a "living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." (Rom. xii.) Here, Isaac's being in will and intent offered, and yet spared from death, becomes completely intelligible; while the substitution of the ram in death is divinely significant. It is with Christ we have died, He bearing the burden of it; but we are taught also to reckon ourselves dead, while yet we live, and live in the power of His resurrection. Not only are we justified, but *sanctified* also (set apart to God), in the offering of Christ for us. So comes the blessing also through us to others: the dead men who live are the great means of blessing to the world.

2. In Sarah's death it is not hard to read the passing away of the nation of whom after the flesh Christ came (Rom. ix. 5), and their committal to a stranger's tomb, though in the faith of resurrection. Thus Israel makes way for the Church, the bride of the true Isaac.

saying, If it be your mind that I should bury my dead from before me, hear me, and entreat for me Ephron the son of Zohar, that he give me the cave of Machpelah, which is at the end of his field. For the full worth let him give it to me in the midst of you, for a possession of a burial-place. And Ephron was sitting among the sons of Heth; and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham, in the ears of the sons of Heth, [even] of all who went in at the gate of his city, saying, Nay, my lord, hear me: the field give I thee, and the cave that is in it, to thee do I give it; in the sight of the children of my people I give it thee to bury thy dead. And Abraham bowed down in the presence of the people of the land. And he spake unto Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying, But if thou wilt hearken unto me, I will give the [c]price of the field: take it from me, and I will bury my dead there. And Ephron answered Abraham, and said unto him, My lord, hearken unto me: A field of four hundred shekels of silver, what is that between me and thee? bury, therefore, thy dead. And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron, and Abraham weighed out to Ephron the money of which he had spoken in the ears of the children of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current with the merchant.

c ch. 14. 22, 23.

[d]So the field of Ephron, which was at Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field, and the cave which was in it, and all the trees that were in the field,—that were in all its borders round about, were made sure to Abraham for a possession in the sight of the children of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city. And afterward, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah, opposite Mamre, which is Hebron, in the land of Canaan. And the field, and the cave which is in it, were made sure to Abraham for a possession of a sepulchre by the children of Heth.

d ch. 25. 9. ch. 35. 29. ch. 49. 30, 31.

The marriage of the heir.

(XXIV.)

3. [1]And Abraham was old, and advanced in years; and Jehovah had [e]blessed Abraham in all things. And Abraham said unto his servant, the elder of his house, who had charge of all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh; and I will make thee swear

e *cf.* ch. 12. 2.

1. The mission (typically, of the Spirit).

Although unable to see fully the individual application here, yet Machpelah seems a beautiful testimony. Purchased out of the hands of the sons of Heth (fear) with the silver money (of atonement), it becomes the portion of faith,—a sepulchre, indeed, but with a fruitful field attached, and right opposite Hebron; in view, that is, of "participation" (with Christ). For Christ has been in death, and through death annulled him who had the power of it, that He might deliver those who all their lifetime through fear of death were subject to bondage. (Heb. ii. 14, 15.) Death thus becomes but conformity to His death. No wonder Jacob should desire to be buried in Machpelah!

The name "Machpelah" means a "doubling," or turning back upon itself,—a hint, as it would seem, of resurrection.

by Jehovah, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that [f] thou wilt not take my son a wife of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; but that thou wilt go to my land and to my [g] kindred, and take a wife for my son Isaac. And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me to this land; [h] must I needs bring thy son again to the land whence thou camest out? And Abraham said unto him, Beware that thou bring not my son thither again. Jehovah, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and who spake to me and sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land,—he shall send his [i] angel before thee, that thou mayest take a wife for my son thence. And if the woman be not willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear of this thine oath; but in any case, bring not my son thither again. And the [j] servant put his hand under the thigh of his master Abraham, and sware unto him concerning this matter.

2. Dependence in the messenger.

[2] And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; [k] now all the goods of his master were in his hand; and he arose, and went to Syria of the two rivers, unto the [l] city of Nahor. And he made the camels kneel outside the city, by a [m] well of water, at even-time—the time when women go out to draw water. And he said, Jehovah, God of my master Abraham, meet me, I pray thee, to-day, and show [n] kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand by the spring of water, and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: let it be that the damsel to whom I shall say, [o] Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink, and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also, be she whom thou hast [p] appointed for thy servant Isaac; and [q] therein I shall know that thou hast shown kindness unto my master.

f *cf.* ch. 27. 46. ch. 26. 34. *ctr.* ch. 38. 2, 6. Deut. 7. 3. 2 Cor. 6. 14.

g Heb. 2. 14.

h Heb. 1. 8. Rom. 10. 6. Phil. 3. 20. ch. 26. 2.

i Ex. 23. 23.

j Acts 1. 8.

k Jno. 16. 14. 1 Cor. 2. 10.

l *cf.* Luke 10. 33.

m *cf.* ch. 29. 2. Ex. 2. 15. Jno. 4. 6. Jno. 7. 37. Acts 16. 13.

n *cf.* ver. 49.

o *cf.* Jno. 4. 7.

p Eph. 1. 4.

q Is. 7. 11.

3. We have typified in the next section the mission of the Spirit to find among the family of faith (Abraham's kindred) a bride for the risen Christ, the Father's heir. The story is told at a length which shows how much God's heart is occupied with it: first, the mission of Him who comes in servant-character. Striking lesson for those through whom the Spirit of God acts, the servant's name is not made known to us: he is content to speak only of his master.

His course is marked by dependence: he waits upon God in simplicity of faith, taking his stand by the spring of water,—the Word of God in its living power; and there Rebekah is found. Evidently it is not the call of sinners by the gospel, but of saints to a special relationship with Christ on high. This is what began at Pentecost, plainly, where the hundred and twenty gathered were already of the "kindred." Rebekah has the well when the call is received to be Isaac's bride in Canaan. Indeed, Isaac's gifts are already upon her before she receives this: she is betrothed and endowed before she realizes or has received the message. So at Pentecost, and for years after, the Church, already begun, knew not yet the character of what had begun. It is only through Paul's ministry that her place with Christ is at last made fully known.

3. The finding of the bride, by the well, and by the water.

[3] And it was so, [r]before he had ceased speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, the son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder. And the damsel was [s]very fair to look upon, a virgin, and no man had known her: and she went down to the fountain, and filled her pitcher, and came up. And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water from thy pitcher. And she said, Drink, my lord; and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him to drink. And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw for thy camels also, till they have done drinking. And she hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again to the well to draw; and she drew for all his camels.

r Acts 4. 31. Dan. 9. 20. Is. 65. 24. cf. Jn. 11. 41.

s ch. 29. 17. Song 1. 5. Song 2. 14. Jno. 4. 18. Eph. 5. 26, 27.

4. The testing: Is she of the kindred? Is there room for that which is of Christ?

[4] And the man, wondering at her, held his peace, to know whether Jehovah had prospered his way or not. And it came to pass, when the camels had finished drinking, that the man took a [t]gold ring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold; and he said, Whose daughter art thou? I pray thee, tell me. Is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge? And she said to him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, whom she bare unto Nahor. She said also unto him, There is both straw and plenty of provender with us, as well as room to lodge. And the man bowed his head, and worshiped Jehovah; and said, Blessed be Jehovah, the God of my master Abraham, who hath not forsaken his kindness and his truth toward my master. I being in the way, Jehovah hath led me to the house of my master's brethren.

t Eze. 16. 11. 2 Cor. 11. 2.

5. The ways of God recounted, and the response required.

[5] And the damsel ran, and told her mother's house according to these things. And Rebekah had a brother, whose name was Laban; and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the fountain. [u]And it was so, when he saw the ring, and the bracelets on his sister's hands, and heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man to me, that he came unto the man; and, lo, he was standing by his camels at the spring. And he said, Come, thou blessed of Jehovah; why standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels. And the man came into the house; and he ungirded the camels, and gave straw and provender to the camels, and water to wash his feet and the men's

u ch. 29. 13.

The ways of God leading up to this are also made known, and although she is really Isaac's, her choice is pressed upon her. Then she must break through all hindrances, resist all temptations to delay, do but one thing, and go out to meet the Bridegroom, with the earnest of what is before her already on her.

The individual application here I cannot give, though Rebekah should have some significance; but I prefer to omit what is conjectural.

feet who were with him. And there was [food] set before him to eat; but he said, [v]I will not eat until I have told my business. And he said, Speak. And he said, I am Abraham's servant; and Jehovah hath blessed my master exceedingly, and he is become great; and he hath given him sheep and oxen and silver and gold, and men-servants and maid-servants, and camels and asses. And Sarah my master's wife bare my master a son, after she was old, and [w]to him he is giving all that he hath. And my master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife for my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell; but thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son. And I said unto my master, Perchance the woman will not follow me? And he said, Jehovah, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way, and thou shalt take a wife for my son from my kindred and from my father's house. Then shalt thou be clear from my oath when thou comest to my kindred; and if they give thee not [one], then shalt thou be clear of my oath. And I came this day to the spring, and I said, Jehovah, God of my master Abraham, if thou indeed art prospering the way in which I go, behold, I stand by the spring of water, and let it be that the damsel that cometh forth to draw, and to whom I say, Give me, I pray thee, a little water out of thy pitcher to drink; and she shall say, Both drink thou and I will also draw for thy camels,—that she be the woman whom Jehovah hath appointed for my master's son. And before I had done speaking in my heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down to the spring, and drew. And I said to her, Give me to drink, I pray thee. And she hasted, and let down her pitcher from her [shoulder], and said, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also; so I drank, and she made the camels drink also. And I asked her, and said, Whose daughter art thou? And she said, The daughter of Bethuel the son of Nahor, whom Milcah bare him. And I put the ring upon her face, and the bracelets upon her hands. And I bowed my head, and worshiped Jehovah, and blessed Jehovah, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter for his son. And now, if ye will deal [x]kindly and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me: that I may turn to the right hand or the left. And Laban and Bethuel answered and said, The thing proceedeth from Jehovah: we cannot speak unto thee bad or good. Behold, Rebekah is before thee: take her, and go; and let her be the wife of thy master's son, as Jehovah hath spoken. And it was so, that when Abraham's

v Pro. 25.13.

w Heb. 1. 2. Jno. 3. 35. ch. 41. 41.

x Josh. 2. 14. ch. 47. 29.

servant heard their words, he bowed down to the earth before Jehovah. And the servant brought out jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah; and he gave also to her mother and to her brother precious things.

6. Overcoming hindrances. Going forth to meet the Bridegroom.

6 And they ate and drank,—he and the men that were with him, and tarried the night; and they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me to my master. And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel [y] abide with us some days, or [say] ten: afterward she shall go. And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing that Jehovah hath prospered my way: send me away that I may go to my master. And they said, We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth. And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, [z] Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go. And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men. And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister: mayest thou become thousands of myriads, and may thy seed possess the gate of their enemies! And Rebekah arose, and her maidens, and they rode upon the [a] camels, and went after the man; and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.

y cf. ch. 19. 16. 2Kings 2. 2. Mat. 8. 21.

z Jno. 5. 40. Rev. 22. 17. Ps. 45. 10.

a ver. 10. Lk. 10. 34. Phil. 3. 13.

7. The consummation.

7 And Isaac came from the way of [b] Beerlahairoi; for he was dwelling in the south country. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at even-tide. And he lifted up his eyes, and lo, there were camels coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and saw Isaac, and she [c] lighted off the camel. And she had said unto the servant, Who is this man that is walking in the field to meet us? And the servant said, It is my master. And she took her vail and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent: and he took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her. And Isaac was comforted after his mother['s death].

b ch. 16. 14. ch. 25. 11.

c 1 Thess. 4. 17.

(XXV. 1-18.)

Abraham's seed, in whom the blessing for the earth is seen.

1. Keturah's sons: the obedience of the Gentiles.

4 1 And Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah; and she bare him Zimran and Jokshan and Medan and [d] Midian and Ishbak and Shuah. And Jokshan begat Sheba and Dedan; and the sons of Dedan were the Asshurim, and the Letushim, and the Leummim. And the sons of Midian were Ephah and Epher and Enoch and Abidah and Eldaah. All these were sons of Keturah. [e] And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac. And to the sons of the concubines which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and [f] sent them away from Isaac his son, while he was yet alive, eastward into the east country.

d ch. 19. 37, 38. Is. 60. 6. Num. 25. 17, 18. Ju. ch. 6. cf. ver. 12, etc.

e ch. 24. 36. Eph. 1. 22. Eph. 3. 6.

f Phil. 3. 20. ch. 24. 5, 6. ch. 26. 4. etc. ch. 28. 14.

2. The death of Abraham,

2 And these are the days of the years of the life of Abraham which he lived: a hundred and seventy-five

and burial in Machpelah.

years; and he [g]expired: and Abraham died in a good old age, an old man and full [with years], and was added to his people. And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is opposite Mamre,—the field which Abraham had purchased of the sons of Heth: there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife.

[g] Heb. 11. 13.

3. Isaac at Lahairoi: type of the heavenly saints.

[3] And it was so, after the death of Abraham, that God blessed Isaac his son; and Isaac dwelt by the [h]well Lahairoi.

[h] ch. 24. 62. Rom. 5. 2. Col. 2. 6.

4. Ishmael: type of Israel, the earthly people.

[4] And these are the generations of Ishmael, the son of Abraham, which Hagar, the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bare to Abraham. And these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: Nebaioth the first-born of Ishmael, and Kedar and Adbeel and Mibsam and Mishma and Duma and Massa, Hadad and Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names by their villages and their encampments: [i]twelve princes of their peoples. And these are the years of the life of Ishmael, a hundred and thirty-seven years; and he expired and died, and was added to his people. And they dwelt from [j]Havilah as far as Shur, which is before Egypt, as thou goest toward Assyria. And he abode in the [k]presence of all his brethren.

[i] ch. 17. 20.

[j] 1 Sa. 15. 7.

[k] ch. 16. 12.

(XXV. 19-34)

Abraham's lesson to be learnt again in the pursuit of the inheritance.

5. [l]And these are the [l]generations of Isaac the son of Abraham: Abraham begat Isaac. And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Paddan Aram, the sister of Laban

[l] *ctr.* ver. 16.

4. After Rebekah—the Church, Keturah's sons would seem to represent the millennial nations; and these, with Ishmael's seed, the plain type of Israel, give us the rest of the family of Abraham, and the picture of the various blessing through him for the families of the earth. Isaac comes into this picture to show the relation to it of the heavenly saints, who live by the "well of" a higher "vision," but in connection also with those blessed on earth. While Abraham's death may have place here as showing how now faith passes into this higher state, as Abraham gives way to Isaac. Thus a very complete view is given.

5. We come now to a section in which the history of Isaac is linked with that of Jacob, just as Abraham's before was linked with that of Isaac. The life of Jacob gives us as its lesson the story of that fruitful discipline by which the Spirit of God brings us from weakness to power,—from nature's strength and strivings to that wholesome weakness in which alone is strength. But, for this, natural strength has to be crippled; and this is provided for in two ways: first, in allowing us to realize the power of another nature (Esau), which we cannot subdue in any strength of our own; and secondly, in the direct dealing of God with our souls. The germ of this history we find already in Isaac's life, because discipline and the need of it grow out of sonship: "what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" But the lesson is given us at full length presently: it is too important to be merely treated as a secondary theme; so that Jacob comes to the front in a little while, and then accompanies us, to some extent, (and we see for what reason,) practically to the end of the book.

1. Election: the elder to serve the younger.

the Syrian, to be his wife. And Isaac entreated Jehovah for his wife, because she was [m]barren; and Jehovah was entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. And the children [n]struggled together within her: and she said, If so, why am I thus? And she went to inquire of Jehovah. And Jehovah said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two peoples shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people, and the [o]elder shall serve the younger.

2. Esau and Jacob contrasted, yet alike: Esau the beast-catcher; Jacob the heel-catcher.

[2] And when her days were fulfilled to be delivered, behold, twins were in her womb. And the first came out red—all over like a hairy garment: and they called his name Esau. And after that, came forth his brother; and his hand laid hold of Esau's [p]heel: and his name was called Jacob; and Isaac was sixty years old when she bare them. And the boys grew; and Esau was a [q]skillful hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in [r]tents. And Isaac loved his son Esau, because he ate of his hunting; but Rebekah loved Jacob.

3. Esau manifested as profane.

[3] And Jacob boiled pottage; and Esau came from the field, and he was [s]faint. And Esau said unto Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with the red—this red—for I am faint. Wherefore his name was called Edom [red]. And Jacob said, [t]Sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I am about to die, and what [u]profit shall

[m] ch. 11. 30, etc.
[n] Gal. 5. 17. Rom. 7. 22, 23.
[o] Rom. 9. 10–12. *ctr.* ch. 32, 4.
[p] Hos. 12. 3.
[q] *cf.* ch. 10. 9. ch. 27. 3.
[r] ch. 18. 1, etc. Heb. 11. 9.
[s] *ctr.* Jn. 8. 4.
[t] ch. 27. 36. ch. 29. 18. ch. 30. 31. ch. 32. 13. ch. 33. 19. ch. 43. 11, 12. *ctr.* ch. 43. 23.
[u] *ctr.* Heb. 11. 13, 22.

No wonder that this section, then, has stamped on it the number which reminds us of *governmental ways*, and also (as in the addition to Abram's name) of the weakness of the creature in the presence of the almighty God!

First, we learn here that Rebekah is as barren as Sarah, except for the power of God. No principle of truth, no inherent power of grace, suffices for us apart from the direct operation of God Himself. And this is the basis-truth for Jacob's history.

But Rebekah conceives, and then a struggle is felt within her, which is once more that internal struggle of contrary natures, realized all through our course here, beginning before it has become an outward manifest thing, and the true meaning of which God must teach us. Then we learn the meaning of the struggle, and that in God's purpose and election lies the strength of the younger over the elder—for "that which is first is natural" still,—and that the elder is to *serve* the younger: strange mystery this, whereby the very evil in us is made to work for blessing to us. But so it is; our senses are, by reason of use, exercised to discern both good and evil; and the wonder of God's grace is known as else it could not be.

Later, these tendencies come into open light, and get their names: Esau is red, and all over like a hairy garment,—unmistakably of the earth, but full of strong, wild life. Jacob is seen in this, from which he gets his name of "heel-catcher"—"supplanter"—that his hand lays hold of Esau's heel. Here is seen the spirit that would by fleshly effort set aside the flesh. Therefore the power of the flesh is felt, and the power of God is not felt, or felt in opposition. Yet Jacob after all is the simple and homely spirit, kept by his affections, and living in tents, as customary with the men of faith. Esau is the free rover, bound but by his own will, pursuing his own objects,—the hunter, Nimrodlike, who can pursue indifferently beasts or men.

the birthright be to me? And Jacob said, Swear unto me now. And he sware to him; and he sold his birthright to Jacob. And Jacob gave unto Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he ate and drank, and rose up and went away: so Esau [v]despised his birthright.

v Heb. 12. 16. Phil. 3. 18, 19.

(XXVI. 1-22.)

Isaac in the Philistines' land.

6. [1] Now there was a [w]famine in the land, beside the former famine which was in the days of Abraham; and Isaac went unto Abimelech the king of the Philistines, to Gerar. And Jehovah appeared unto him, and said, [x]Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land of which I tell thee. Sojourn in this land, and I will be [y]with thee and bless thee; for unto thee and to thy seed will I give all these lands, and will perform the [z]oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father. And I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heavens, and will give to thy seed all these lands; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed,—because Abraham hearkened to my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws. And Isaac dwelt at Gerar. And the men of the place asked as to his wife. And he said, [a]She is my sister; for he feared to say, my wife, lest [said he,] the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah; for she was fair to look upon. And it was so, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and, behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife. Then Abimelech called Isaac, and said, Surely she is thy wife; and how saidst thou, She is my sister? And Isaac said unto him, Because I said, lest I die for her. And Abimelech said, What is this that thou hast done to us? But a little, and one of the people might have lain with thy wife, and thou wouldst have brought trespass on us. And Abimelech commanded all the people, saying, He that toucheth this man or his wife shall surely die.

w ch. 12. 10.

x *cfr.* ch. 46. 3.

y ver. 24. ch. 28. 15. Heb. 13. 5.

z ch. 22. 16. Heb. 6. 17. Mi. 7. 20.

a ch. 12. 11.

1. Promise and blessing. The oneness with his wife maintained.

2. Increase, separation, and strife for the wells.

[2] And Isaac sowed in that land, and received in that year a hundredfold; and Jehovah [b]blessed him. And the man waxed great, and grew more and more until he was very great. And he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and a great number of servants; and the Philistines envied him. And all the wells

b ch. 26. 3.

Presently the manifestation comes. Esau is seen in despising his birthright to be profane; Jacob values it, but seeks it in crooked ways. Esau now is seen openly as Edom,—that is, Adam, only a little changed outwardly, and not in heart.

6. And now we have two sections which almost repeat the history of Abraham which we have considered. We are, as there, in the Philistines' land where Isaac denies his wife as Abraham did, and is exposed and rebuked by Abimelech in like manner; while the strife for the wells is found here as there, ending in the covenant at the same place—Beersheba, which receives its name again from the similar oath of the covenant. The numbers of the sections are also the same.

Isaac, however, does not lose Rebekah, even for a time, and grows very great

which his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, the [c]Philistines had stopped them and filled them with dust. And Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us, for thou art much mightier than we. And Isaac went thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there. And Isaac dug again the wells of water which they had dug in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham; and [d]he called their names after the names by which his father had called them. And Isaac's servants dug in the valley, and found there a well of springing water. But the herdmen of Gerar [e]strove with Isaac's herdmen, saying, The water is ours. And he called the name of the well Esek, because they strove with him. And they dug another well, and they strove for that also, and he called the name of it Sitnah. And he removed thence, and dug another well; and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Rehoboth; for he said, Because now Jehovah hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.

[c] Gal. 1. 7. Col. 2. 8.

[d] *e.g.* ver. 33. ch. 21. 31.

[e] Phil. 1. 15. Ro. 12. 18. 2 Tim. 2. 23, 24. *cf.* ch. 13. 7.

(XXVI. 23-33.)

Rest in blessing and peace.

7. [f]And he went up from thence to Beersheba. And Jehovah appeared to him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for the sake of Abraham my servant. And he built there an [f]altar, and called upon the name of Jehovah. and he pitched his tent there, and there Isaac's servants dug a well.

[f] ch. 12. 8. etc.

2. The Covenant.

[g]And Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and Ahuzzath his friend, and Phicol the captain of his host. And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore are ye come to me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you? And they said, We have certainly seen that Jehovah is with thee, and we said, Let there be now an oath between us,—between us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee, [h]that thou wilt do us no evil, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace:

[g] ch. 21. 22.

[h] ch. 31. 53.

during his stay in Gerar, so that they pray him to depart, as mightier than they. He digs again, and renames Abraham's wells, but gives up well after well rather than contend with the Philistines, at last finding one for which they do not contend.

7. At Beersheba, God appears to him once more, and blesses him. The Philistines make here a covenant with him, owning that Jehovah (not merely God, as in Abraham's case,) is with him in all he does.

It is easy to see in all this blessing, so uniform and unbroken as it is, the recompense of the obedience with which Isaac's life begins. There are no changes, no experiences such as we find in Jacob. He never leaves the land, and seems already almost in possession of it, Hagar's well and the Philistines' land are alike his own, as the children of grace now inherit the portion of the Jew and the legalist,—all the riches of God's Word from the beginning,—finding every where a new fruitfulness, and the face of God revealed.

thou art now the blessed of Jehovah. And he made them a feast, and they ate and drank; and they rose up early in the morning, and sware to one another; and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace. And it was so that that day Isaac's servants came and told him concerning the well which they had dug, and said unto him, We have found water. And he called it Shebah: therefore the name of the city is [f]Beersheba to this day.

f ch. 46. 1.

SUBDIVISION 6. (Chap. xxvi. 34–xxxvii. 1.) JACOB—ISRAEL.

The discipline of sons, which Israel's history as a nation illustrates.

SECTION 1. (Chap. xxvi. 34–xxviii.)

God the unchanging Blesser, but the righteous God.

(XXVI. 34–XXVII. 45.)

Gift congruous to the one who receives it.

1. Esau's choice.

1. [1] AND Esau was forty years old when he [j]took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. And they were a grief of mind to Isaac and to Rebekah.

j ch. 36. 1–3. ch. 27. 46. ch. 38. 6. *cf.* 2 Pet. 2. 7, 8.

2. Opposition and strife.

[2] And it came to pass that when Isaac was [k]old, his eyes were dim, so that he could not see. And he called Esau his eldest son, and said to him, My son! And he said unto him, Here am I. And he said, Behold now, I am old: I know not the day of my death. Now, therefore, take, I pray thee, thy weapons,—thy quiver and thy bow, and go out unto the field, and take me venison, and make me savory meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat, that my soul may bless thee before I die. And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt venison [and] to bring it. And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying, Bring me venison,

k 1 Sam. 8. 1. 1 Ki. 11. 4. *etc.* ch. 48. 10, 14. Deut. 34. 7. Josh. 14. 11.

SUBD. 6.—JACOB—ISRAEL.

THE lesson of Jacob's life is understood more variously than any other of these Genesis-lives. He has been taken to represent the life of service, and the path, to a greater or less extent, of the perfect Servant. His wives have been supposed to picture the Jewish and Gentile brides of Christ. Or, again, the lesson taught us has been said to be that of discipline, which would seem to forbid our finding in it any picture of the Lord at all. That this last is the true view the numerical structure decides at once. Jacob's is the sixth life in this series, and we have seen that "discipline" comes under this number. To this also correspond the two names which distinguish the two parts of his life, before and after this has done its work. He is Jacob in his methods long after his heart is set upon divine things; he is Israel when, his human strength broken down, he halts upon his thigh. His first act in the moment of his birth gives him his natural character and name, (Jacob, the heel-catcher, over-reacher,) what divine grace has to meet and master in him, and in us all.

These two names—Jacob and Israel—are applied all through Scripture, in a perfect and beautiful way, to the nation which sprang from him, and of which he is the representative throughout. Only the effect of the Lord's discipline with them is hardly to be read rightly in their history hitherto: to read it aright, we

and make me savory meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before Jehovah before my death. And now, my son, hearken to my voice in that which I command thee. Go now unto the flock, and fetch me thence two good kids of the goats, and I will make them savory meat for thy father, such as he loveth; and thou shalt bring it unto thy father, that he may eat, so that he may bless thee before his death. And Jacob said unto Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man. My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall be in his eyes as one that mocks, and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing. And his mother said unto him, [l]Upon me be thy curse, my son, only hearken to my voice, and go, fetch me [them]. And he went, and fetched, and brought them to his mother; and his mother made savory meat, such as his father loved. And Rebekah took the garments of her elder son Esau,—the costly ones, which were with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob her younger son; and she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands and upon the smooth of his neck. And she gave the savory meat, and the bread which she had made, into the hand of Jacob her son.

l Mat. 27.25. Ezek. 18. 20.

3. The blessing gained.

[3]And he came unto his father, and said, My father! And he said, Here am I: who art thou, my son? And Jacob said unto his father, [m]I am Esau thy first-born: I have done as thou spakest unto me: arise, now; sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me. And Isaac said unto his son, how is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son? And he said, [n]Because Jehovah thy God brought it before me. And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau or not. And Jacob came near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him; and he said, The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau. And he

m *cf.* ch. 29. 25. Gal. 6. 7. *ctr.* ch. 32. 27.

n *cf.* ch. 15. 15. Acts 5. 4.

must take in prophecy, which is, in its main features, clear enough. Their history has in the past been that of Jacob: it will be yet said "of Jacob and of *Israel*, What hath God wrought!" It is not unimportant to note here, that whereas Isaac's seed is compared to the stars of heaven (xxvi. 4), Jacob's seed is compared to the "dust of the earth" (xxviii. 14), and Abraham's to both. (xxii. 17.)

As connected with the lesson of discipline, Bethel, the house of God, finds easily the significant place which it has in Jacob's history. It is as El-beth-el, "the God of His own house," that he learns at last to recognize the One who is in covenant with him; and it is there that his name of Israel, "a prince with God," is afresh conferred, and finds its full significance. The holiness of God's house imposes the necessary conditions upon which alone he can be "a prince with God."

Jacob's history divides evidently into three parts,—his early life in Canaan, his stay in Paddan Aram, and his life as again restored to Canaan; just as the history of the nation broadly divides into their first occupation of the land (or Old-Testament history), their present dispersion, and their future and perpetual enjoyment of it when God brings them back in the time certainly now not far off.

discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he [o]blessed him. And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am. And he said, Bring it near to me, that I may eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought it near to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank. And Isaac his father said unto him, Come near, I pray thee, and kiss me, my son. And he came near; and he kissed him: and he smelt the smell of his garments, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field which Jehovah hath blessed. And God give unto thee of the [p]dew of heaven and of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and new wine; let peoples serve thee, and races bow down to thee; be lord over thy brethren, and let thy [q]mother's sons bow down to thee. [r]Cursed be they that curse thee, and blessed be they that bless thee!

o Heb. 11. 20. ver. 33.

p Deut. 33. 13. ch. 28. 3, 4.

q ch. 49. 8.

r ch. 12. 3.

4. What the world has in it for the worldling.

[s]And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. And he also had made savory meat, and brought it to his father; and he said unto his father, Let my father arise and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me. And Isaac his father said unto him, Who art thou? And he said, I am thy son, thy first-born, Esau. Then Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who then is he that hunted venison and brought it to me? and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and blessed him: yea, and blessed shall he be! When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with an exceeding great and bitter cry, and said to his father, Bless me—me also, my father! And he said, Thy brother came with [t]guile, and hath taken away thy blessing. And he said, Is it not why his [u]name was called Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he [v]took away my birthright, and behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me? And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants, and with corn and new wine have I sustained him, and what then can I do for thee, my son? And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? [w]Bless me—me also, O my father! And Esau lifted up his voice and wept. And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, Behold, apart from the fatness of the earth shall be thy dwelling, and from the dew of heaven from above; but by thy sword shalt thou live, and serve thy brother: and it shall be, that as thou tossest, thou shalt [x]break his yoke from off thy neck.

s ch. 30. 41. ch. 31. 20.

t ch. 32. 27.

u 1 Ki. 2. 15.

v Ex. 12. 32. Heb. 12. 17.

w 2 Ki. 8. 20.

5. Jacob's retribution.

[5] And Esau [x]hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father had blessed him; and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob. And the words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah; and she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said to him, Behold, thy brother Esau comforts himself concerning thee, purposing to kill thee: and now, my son, hearken to my voice, and arise, flee to Laban my brother, to Haran; and abide with him [y]some days, until thy brother's fury turn away—until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and he forget what thou hast done to him; then will I send and fetch thee thence: why should I be bereaved of you both in one day?

(XXVII. 46—XXVIII. 9.)

Alliances.

1. That of obedience and congruity finds the blessing.

2. [1] And Rebekah said unto Isaac, [z]I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth. If Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me? And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan: arise, [a]go to Paddan Aram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father, and take thence a wife from the house of Laban thy mother's brother. And God Almighty [b]bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a gathering of peoples; and give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee and to thy seed with thee, that thou mayest possess the land of thy sojournings, which God gave unto Abraham. And Isaac sent away Jacob, and he went to Paddan Aram, to Laban the son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.

2. The worldseeks to the law for help it cannot give.

[2] And when Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Paddan Aram, to take a wife thence, blessing him and giving him a charge, saying,

x ch. 4. 5.

y ch. 31. 41.

z ch. 24. 3. ch. 26. 35.

a *ctr.* ch. 24. 5.

b ch. 27. 27-29.

Sec. 1.

We have first, then, to consider Jacob as Jacob, blessed in the purpose of God, but the blessing yet barren, because he is this. Let us remember that he does not really gain the blessing through deceit, but that God had already destined him to it. By his deceit he only gets driven from the land, twenty years a fugitive. That the blessing could not be Esau's we are first of all reminded here. At the end of forty years (the period of perfect probation), he marries at once two Canaanitish wives, chooses in self-will the people of the curse. How could the blessing go with this? Yet Jacob too fails, and would supplement God's assurance of blessing by his own craft; thus he is blessed, indeed, but delays the enjoyment of the blessing. Esau's blessing is not really such, and though living by his sword, not by the soil, he is to serve his brother, though not without slipping his neck at times out of the yoke. We are all quite conscious that the flesh does this. For the present, indeed, Jacob has to give way before Esau,—the necessary fruit of his own doing. And between Jacob merely and Esau the victory is ever with Esau. So the Jew sought the blessing, but in carnal ways which drove him from the land. The applications of this are many and various.

Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan, and that Jacob had hearkened to his father and mother and was gone to Paddan Aram, and when Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan were evil in the sight of Isaac his father, then [c] Esau went to Ishmael, and took, beside the wives which he had, Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebaioth, to be his wife.

[c] 1 Cor. 15. 56, etc. Rom. 7. 5.

(XXVIII. 10-22.)

Bethel: the revelation of God as "with" the one He blesses.

1. Unchanging grace.

3. [1] And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and lodged there, because the [d] sun was set. And he took one of the stones of the place, and made it his pillow, and [e] lay down in that place. And he dreamed; and, behold, a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached unto heaven; [f] and, behold, angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, Jehovah was standing above it. And he said, I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: [g] the land upon which thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the [h] dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south: and in thee and in thy [i] seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am [j] with thee, and will keep thee wherever thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for [k] I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.

[d] ch. 15. 12.

[e] Ps. 127. 2. Tit. 3. 5.

[f] Jno. 1. 51.

[g] ch. 35. 12.

[h] ch. 32. 12. *etr.* ch. 26. 4.

[i] ch. 18. 18. ch. 22. 18.

[j] ch. 26. 3. ch. 31. 3.

[k] Heb. 13. 5. Jno. 13. 1. Ro. 8. 29, 30.

2. The legality of unbelief.

[2] And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely Jehovah is in this place, and I knew it not! And he was [l] afraid, and said, How [m] dreadful is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone which he had put for his pillow, and set it up for a [n] pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of the place [o] Bethel: but the name of the city was Luz at the first. And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, [p] If God will be with me, and will preserve me in this way in which I am

[l] *etr.* ch. 18. 2. 1 Jno. 4. 18.

[m] *etr.* Ps. 16. 11. Ps. 27. 4. Eph. 3. 12.

[n] ch. 35. 14.

[o] Josh. 16. 1. *cf.* ch. 35. 1.

[p] *etr.* ver. 15. ch. 15. 6. 2 Cor. 5. 14-16.

The dream at Bethel takes place when Jacob is just about to leave the land, and we are all aware of how the Lord applied this vision to Himself. He, as the Son of Man, in fact, secures to Israel Jehovah's care and ministrations while outcast from their inheritance, and when they shall, with Nathanael's faith, confess Him Son of God and King of Israel, they shall have, in a more blessed way than ever yet, their house of God on earth. Meanwhile, only the faith of a little remnant has answered to the glorious vision, and it could not hinder their present banishment out of their land. Jacob's covenant with God shows the low and legal spirit which is incapable of rising to the height of God's grace here.

Beautiful it is to see how, the moment he is under chastening, and a wanderer, God can appear to Jacob. But the dwelling of God with man implies the holiness which becometh His house forever. We must stoop our necks to the yoke and accept the fruit of our own ways. God can assure Jacob of no escape from this, but that in it and through it all the blessing shall be attained.

going, and will give me [q]bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I return in peace unto my father's house, then Jehovah shall be my God, and this stone which I have set for a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that thou givest me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

[q] ch. 48. 15.

SECTION 2. (Chap. xxix.-xxxi.)

Increase in the place of humiliation.

(XXIX. 1-14.)

Recognitions.

1. AND Jacob went on his journey, and went unto the land of the children of the east. And he looked, and lo, a [r]well in the field, and lo, three flocks of sheep were lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks: and a great stone was at the well's mouth. And thither were gathered all the flocks; and they rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the sheep, and put again the stone upon the well's mouth in its place. And Jacob said unto them, My brethren, whence are ye? And they said, Of Haran are we. And he said unto them, Know ye Laban the son of Nahor? And they said, We know him. And he said unto them,

[r] *cf.* ch. 24. 11. Ex. 2. 15-17.

Sec. 2.

The history at Paddan Aram is harder to read; and the details of its application to Israel's history as scattered from their land, above all so: and yet it is easy to understand how this should be. During his twenty years of exile, Jacob enjoys no further such revelations of His presence. In the meantime, God deals with him as with one for whom He has purposes of blessing, only to be reached through disciplinary sorrow. He is multiplied through unwelcome Leah and the bondmaids mainly, serving long and with hard labor for wives and flocks. Like his descendants, he is multiplied as the dust, while trampled into it: they, enslaved, trodden down and yet preserved, and merging in the end into wealth and power, witness to the care of that God of Bethel whom yet they know not.

It is a striking thing, in this connection, that it is when Joseph is born that Jacob begins to set his face homeward, although he does not actually start till six years afterward; gaining, however, in wealth continually in the meanwhile; and that his history practically ends with the birth of Benjamin. These two sons of Rachel we must know in their typical significance in order to be able to read aright much—indeed the larger part—of what follows in this book.

Joseph, then, is the one separated from his brethren; having by them been delivered up to death, by them sold to the Gentiles, and coming to power among these, while yet Israel is a stranger to him; having his Gentile wife and children, causing him to forget all his kindred and his father's house, until a famine in all lands forces them to him who becomes their saviour, and the saviour of the world. Joseph, therefore, represents the Lord as we know Him, and as Israel must know Him, to find their blessing in the last days. The birth of Joseph would seem, thus, to speak typically of the dawn of light for them as to Christ whom they have rejected.

On the other hand, Benjamin, the son of the mother's sorrow, becoming the son of the father's right hand, in Jacob's prophecy of the last days foretold to be the warrior-tribe of the nation, is plainly the type of Christ exalted and in power upon the earth. To a *reigning* Messiah the nation cling, but they do not see that through the *Sufferer* alone can they find the Conqueror. Thus the order here; and when the hearts of the remnant in the last days turn to the suffering Christ they have rejected, then it is that their restoration begins, although having to meet many trials, and find in them their needed discipline, as we see in the next section.

Is he well? And they said, He is well; and, lo, Rachel his daughter cometh with the sheep. And he said, Lo, it is yet high day,—it is not yet time that the cattle should be gathered: water the sheep, and go and feed them. And they said, We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together: then they roll away the stone from the well's mouth, and we water the sheep. And while he yet spake with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep; for she kept them. And it was so, when Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and wept. And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's kinsman, and that he was Rebekah's son; and she ran, and told her father. [s] And it was so, when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house. And he told Laban all these things. And Laban said unto him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh. And he abode with him the space of a month.

[s] ch. 24. 30.

(XXIX. 15-30.)

Two wives gained by service.

2. And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou art my brother, shouldst thou therefore serve me for naught? tell me, what shall thy [t] wages be? And Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger Rachel. Now Leah's eyes were tender, but [u] Rachel was beautiful in form and beautiful in countenance. And Jacob loved Rachel; and he said, I [v] will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter. And Laban said, It is better that I should give her to thee than that I should give her to another man: abide with me. And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they were [w] in his eyes but a few days, for the love he had to her. And Jacob said unto Laban, give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in to her. And Laban gathered all the men of the place, and made a feast: and it was so, that in the evening he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and he went in to her. And Laban gave to Leah his daughter Zilpah his maid for a handmaid. And it was so, that in the morning, [x] lo, it was Leah:

[t] *ctr.* Gal. 4. 7.

[u] ch. 24. 16.

[v] Hos. 12. 12. *cf.* ch. 25. 31. Ex. 21. 2.

[w] *cf.* Heb. 12. 2. Matt. 13. 44.

[x] *cf.* ch. 27. 19. Matt. 7. 2.

The individual application is here, however, the most easily read. It is, indeed, impossible, one would think, to miss the lesson of a retribution which is the holy discipline of God for us, that we may be partakers of His holiness. The measure we mete is meted out to us again: what we sow we reap, and in what is the equity of divine government we find the chastening of a Father's hand. Jacob receives from a relative the deceit he had practiced on a relative, has to learn painfully the rights of the first-born which he had disregarded, and, instead of the superiority he had sought, becomes a servant for hire. How hard a matter is the breaking of the will in man!

and he said unto Laban, What is this that thou hast done to me? Did not I serve thee for Rachel? and why, then, hast thou deceived me? And Laban said, It is not so done in our place—to give the younger before the first-born. Fulfill the week with this one, and we will give thee the other also, for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years. And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week; and he gave him also Rachel his daughter to wife. And Laban gave to Rachel his daughter Bilhah his handmaid to be her handmaid. And he went in also unto Rachel, and loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with him yet seven other years.

(XXIX. 31–XXX. 24.)

Fruit of the womb.

1. Sons of the first wife.

3. [1] [y]And Jehovah saw that Leah was hated, and he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren. And Leah conceived, and bare a son; and she called his name Reuben [see a son], for she said, Because Jehovah hath regarded my affliction; for now will my husband love me. And she conceived again, and bare a son, and said, Because Jehovah hath heard that I was hated, he hath given me this one also: and she called his name Simeon [hearing]. And she conceived again, and bare a son, and said, Now at last will my husband be joined to me, because I have borne him three sons: therefore his name was called Levi [joined]. And she conceived again, and bare a son, and said, Now will I praise Jehovah: therefore she called his name Judah [praise]. And she ceased bearing.

y 1 Sam. 1. 5.

2. The strife for children; the bond-maids.

[2] And when [z]Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister, and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die. And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel; and he said, Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb? And she said, [a]Behold my maid Bilhah; go in unto her, that she may bear upon my knees, and I may also be built up by her. And she gave him Bilhah her handmaid to wife, and Jacob went in unto her. And Bilhah conceived, and bare Jacob a son. And Rachel said, God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice and given me a son; wherefore she called his name Dan [judge]. And Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid, conceived, and bare Jacob a second son. And Rachel said, With divine wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and have also prevailed; and she called his name

z ch. 11. 30, etc.

a *cf.* ch. 16. 2.

The names of the wives seem quite significant. Rachel, "sheep," is surely the type of the spirit of discipleship which, in its meekness of self-surrender, shows us the opposite of Jacob's self-seeking temper. But her he must obtain by means of Leah, whose name, "wearied," suggests the tribulation by which patience is wrought out. Nor only so,—for Rachel being barren, and in the despair which comes through unbelief, the bond-maids come into the house, Bilhah, "terror," and Zilpah, "a dropping," as of tears. Then Leah bears

Naphtali [my wrestlings]. And when Leah saw that she had ceased to bear, she took Zilpah her handmaid, and gave her unto Jacob to wife. And Zilpah, Leah's handmaid, bare Jacob a son. And Leah said, A troop is coming; and she called his name Gad [a troop]. And Zilpah, Leah's handmaid, bare Jacob a second son. And Leah said, Happy am I; for daughters will call me happy; and she called his name Asher [happy].

3. Fruitfulness revived in Leah.

[3] And Reuben went, in the days of wheat harvest, and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah. And Rachel said unto Leah, Give me, I pray thee, of thy son's mandrakes. And she said unto her, Is it little that thou hast taken my husband? and wilt thou take also my son's mandrakes? And Rachel said, Therefore he shall lie with thee to-night for thy son's mandrakes. And when Jacob came in the evening from the field, Leah went out to meet him, and said, Thou must come to me, for indeed I have hired thee with my son's mandrakes. And he lay with her that night. And God hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived, and bare Jacob a fifth son. And Leah said, God hath given me my hire, because I gave my handmaid to my husband; and she called his name Issachar [he is hire]. And Leah conceived again, and bare Jacob a sixth son; and Leah said, God hath endowed me with a good dowry: this time will my husband dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons: and she called his name Zebulon [dwelling]. And after, she bare a daughter, and called her name Dinah.

4. The fruitfulness of trial: Rachel's son.

[4] And God [b]remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and he opened her womb. And she conceived, and bare a son, and said, God hath taken away my [c]reproach. And she called his name Joseph [adding], saying, Jehovah will [d]add to me another son.

[b] ch. 25. 21.

[c] Luke 1.25.

[d] Jno. 12.24. *cf.* 2 Pet. 1.5.

(XXX. 25—43.)

The moulding of the creature by the object before the eyes.

4. And it was so, [e]when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said unto Laban, Send me away, and I will go to my place and to my country. Give me my wives and my children, for whom I have served thee, and I will go; for thou hast known my service with which I have served thee. And Laban said unto him, If now I have found favor in thine eyes,—I have discovered that Jehovah hath [f]blessed me for thy sake. And he said, Appoint me thy wages, and I will give

[e] *cf.* Jno. 8. 36.

[f] ch. 39. 3. 2 Sam. 6. 12.

again; and the children's names all the way through speak of blessing; Joseph's —in whom Rachel is at last fruitful—means "adding," and quite according to his origin, we find in him that martyr-spirit which is, in the Christian, the soldier-"virtue," or courage, which the apostle bids us "add to" faith (2 Pet. i. 5), the secret of all true progress. This we shall see afterward to be the moral of his life. As the fruit of Rachel's long trial, he shows us the result of waiting upon God; and from the time of his birth, Jacob's affairs assume another aspect. He begins to look again toward Canaan; and though he tarries six years more, they are years of growing prosperity.

it. And he said unto him, Thou knowest how I have served thee, and what thy cattle have become with me; for it was little that thou hadst before I came, and it is increased unto a multitude, and Jehovah hath blessed thee wherever I turned: and now when shall I provide also for mine own house? And he said, What shall I give thee? And Jacob said, Thou shalt not give me any thing: [g] if thou wilt do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep thy flock. I will pass through all thy flock to-day, and remove from thence all the speckled and spotted ones, and all the brown among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats, and [such] shall be my hire. So shall my righteousness answer for me in the time to come, when thou shalt come about my hire which is before thee: every one that is not speckled or spotted among the goats, or brown among the sheep, with me that shall be stolen. And Laban said, Behold, let it be according to thy word. And he removed that day the he-goats that were ring-straked and spotted, and all the she-goats that were speckled and spotted,—every one that had white in it, and every brown one among the sheep, and he gave them into the hand of his sons. And he put [h] three days' journey between himself and Jacob; and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flock. And Jacob took fresh [i] rods of poplar, and of almond, and of the plane, and peeled white stripes in them, laying bare the white which was in the rods. And he set the rods which he had peeled before the flock in the gutters in the watering troughs, where the flocks came to drink, and they were in heat when they came to drink. And the flocks were in heat before the rods, and the flocks brought forth ring-straked, speckled and spotted. And Jacob separated the lambs, and set the faces of the flock toward all the ring-straked and all the brown in the flock of Laban, and he put his own droves apart and did not put them to Laban's flock. And so it was, whenever the stronger of the flock were in heat, that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the flock in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods; but when the flock was feeble, he put them not

[g] *cf.* ch. 25. 31, etc.

[h] ch. 22. 4. Ex. 5. 3.

[i] *cf.* ch. 27. 16, ch. 32. 20. ver. 41.

His compact with Laban as to the flocks, and his plans to secure himself a recompense, show still, indeed, that he is Jacob. In these, successful as they are, there seems to be a lesson for him, which he might well take home, and which remains for us a notable one. Plainly, the sheep in presence of the rods seems to show how "the eye affecteth the heart,"—how we, and all that comes of us, are moulded by the object that we have before us. So the Lord connects the "eye" and the "master." (Matt. vi. 19–25.) Our object is what controls us; and in a world like this, how many objects compete for the possession of us! Thus, if our mind be set on things which are above, the characteristics of a "life hid with Christ in God" are developed in us. (Col. iii. 1–3.) What need have we of concentration and of jealousy over ourselves, lest that in the midst of which we are gain possession of us!

in: so the feebler were Laban's and the stronger Jacob's.
And the man [j] increased exceedingly, and he had many flocks, and maid-servants and men-servants and camels and asses.

[j] ch. 13. 2.

(XXXI.)

The end in divine government.

1. God's sovereignty in blessing, and not Jacob's means. His recall.

5. [1] And he heard the words of the sons of Laban, saying, Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's, and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all this glory. And Jacob saw the face of Laban, and behold, it was not favorable to him as beforetime. And Jehovah said unto Jacob, [k] Return unto the land of thy fathers and to thy kindred, and I will be with thee. And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock. And he said unto them, I see your father's face, that it is not favorable to me as beforetime; but the God of my father hath been with me. And ye know that with all my power I have served your father. And your father hath imposed upon me, and changed my wages ten times; but God permitted him not to injure me. If he said thus: The speckled shall be thy wages, then all the flock bare speckled; and if he said thus: The ring-straked shall be thy wages, then all the flock bare ring-straked. Thus God hath taken away your father's cattle, and hath given them to me. And so it was, at the time that the flocks were in heat, that I lifted up my eyes and saw in a dream, and behold, the rams that leaped upon the flocks were ring-straked, speckled, and spotted. And the angel of God said unto me in the dream, Jacob, and I said, Here am I. And he said, Lift up now thine eyes, and see: all the rams that leap upon the flock are ring-straked, speckled, and spotted; for I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee. I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, go forth out of this land, and return to the land of thy kindred. And Rachel and Leah answered and said unto him, Is there for us any longer portion or inheritance in the house of our father? are we not reckoned strangers to him? for he hath sold us, and also quite devoured our money. For all the wealth that God hath taken from our father, it is ours and our children's: and now, whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do.

[k] ch. 28. 15. ch. 35. 1. ver. 15.

After all his planning, Jacob has to learn that it is the power of God to which he owes the increase. *God* has looked upon his affliction and his toil, and ordained him a recompense. But his prosperity alienates Laban from him, as spiritual increase separates from the world. Then comes the call of God to return to Canaan. Laban, who cannot get on with him any more, is yet rendered openly hostile by his withdrawal,—just as the world feels the sting of separation, though there can be no more communion. He follows Jacob; God appears for him and shields him; and Jacob finally departs in peace with a covenant between him and Laban, at Galeed, the "heap of witness."

2. Separation.

[2] And Jacob arose, and set his children and his wives upon the camels; and he carried away all his cattle and all his substance which he had gathered, the cattle he possessed which he had acquired in Paddan Aram, to go unto Isaac his father, unto the land of Canaan. Now Laban had gone to shear his sheep; and [l]Rachel stole the teraphim that were her father's; and Jacob [m]stole away unawares to Laban the Syrian, in that he told him not that he fled. So he fled,—he and all that he had; and he rose up, and passed over the river, and set his face toward Mount Gilead.

l ver. 34.

m cf. ch. 27. 35, etc.

3. God manifests Himself for Jacob.

[3] And it was told Laban on the [n]third day, that Jacob fled; and he took his brethren with him, and pursued after him seven days' journey, and overtook him in Mount Gilead. And God came unto Laban the Syrian in a dream of the night, and said unto him, [o]Take heed that thou speak not unto Jacob either good or bad.

n ch. 22. 4.

o ch. 20. 3.

4. Laban's search.

[4] And Laban came up with Jacob; and Jacob had pitched his tent in the mount; and Laban with his brethren pitched on the mount Gilead. And Laban said unto Jacob, What hast thou done, that thou hast stolen away unawares to me, and hast carried away my daughters as captives [taken] with the sword? Why didst thou flee away secretly, and steal away from me; and didst not tell me, that I might send thee away with mirth and with songs, with tabret and with harp; and didst not suffer me to kiss my sons and my daughters? now thou hast acted foolishly. It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt; [p]but the God of your father spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take heed that thou speak not unto Jacob either good or bad. And now, if thou must indeed be gone, because thou longedst sore after thy father's house, why hast thou stolen my gods? And Jacob answered and said unto Laban, Because I was [q]afraid; for I said, Lest thou shouldst take by force thy daughters from me. [r]With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live. In the presence of our brethren, discern what is thine with me, and take it to thee. But Jacob knew not that Rachel had stolen them. And Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the two maid-servants' tent, and found nothing; and he went out of Leah's tent and entered into Rachel's tent. Now Rachel had taken the [s]teraphim, and put them in the camel's furniture, and sat upon them. And Laban searched all the tent, and found nothing. And she [t]said unto her father, Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise up before thee; for it is with me after the manner of women. And he searched, but he found not the teraphim.

p Jno. 19. 11. Mat. 27. 19.

q cf. ch. 28. 17. Prov. 29. 25.

r cf. ch. 44. 9.

s ch. 35. 2.

t cf. ch. 18. 15. ch. 33. 14.

5. Jacob's remonstrance.

[5] And Jacob was angry, and chode with Laban. And Jacob answered and said unto Laban, What is my trespass, and what is my sin, that thou hast so hotly

pursued after me? Whereas thou hast felt over all my stuff, what hast thou found of all thy household stuff? set it here before my brethren and thy brethren, and let them decide between us both. These twenty years that I have been with thee, thy ewes and thy she-goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock I have not eaten. That which was torn I did not bring to thee; I bare the loss of it: of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day or stolen by night. Thus was I: in the day, the drought consumed me; and the frost by night; and my sleep fled from mine eyes. These [u]twenty years have I been in thy house: I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy flock; and ten times hast thou changed my wages. Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the [v]fear of Isaac had been with me, thou hadst now surely sent me away empty. God hath seen mine affliction, and the labor of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight.

6. The victory gained.

[6]And Laban answered and said unto Jacob, The daughters are my daughters, and the sons are my sons, and the flock is my flock, and all that thou seest, it is mine; but what can I do this day unto these my daughters, or unto their children which they have borne? And now come, let us make a covenant,—I and thou; and it shall be a witness between me and thee. And Jacob took a stone, and set it up for a pillar. And Jacob said to his brethren, Gather stones; and they took stones, and made a heap; and they ate there by the heap: and Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha, but Jacob called it [w]Galeed. And Laban said, This heap is witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was its name called Galeed: and Mizpah; for he said, Jehovah watch between me and thee when we shall be hidden from one another. If thou shouldst afflict my daughters, or if thou take wives beside my daughters, no man is with us: see, God is witness between me and thee. And Laban said unto Jacob, Behold this heap; and behold the pillar which I have set up between me and thee: this heap be witness, and the pillar be witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar to me for harm. The God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, [x]judge between us; and Jacob sware by the [y]fear of his father Isaac. And Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount, and called his brethren to eat bread; and they ate bread, and lodged upon the mount. And Laban rose up early in the morning, and kissed his sons and his daughters, and blessed them: and Laban departed, and returned to his place.

u *ctr.* ch. 27. 44.

v ver. 53.

w Ps. 108. 8.

x *cf.* ch. 26. 29.

y ver. 42.

SECTION 3. (Chap. xxxii.-xxxvii. 1.)

Israel: the prince with God, and the holiness of the house of God.

(XXXII.–XXXIII. 16.)

God is Master, and in grace.

1. Mahanaim: power only in God.

1. [1] AND Jacob went on his way, and there met him angels of God. And Jacob said, when he saw them, This is God's camp; and he called the name of the place [z]Mahanaim [two camps]. And Jacob sent messengers before his face unto Esau his brother, to the land of Seir, the country of Edom; and he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye say unto my [a]lord Esau: Thus saith thy servant Jacob, I have been sojourning with Laban, and tarried until now; and I have oxen and asses, flocks, and bondmen and bondwomen, and I send to tell my lord, that I may find favor in thine eyes. And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and he too is coming to meet thee, and with him four hundred men. And Jacob was sore afraid, and he was distressed; and he divided the people that were with him, and the flocks and the herds and the camels, into two camps: and he said, If Esau come to the one camp and smite it, then the other camp which is left shall escape. And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, Jehovah, who saidst unto me, Return unto thy country and to thy kindred, and I will do thee good, I am too mean for all the mercies and for all the truth which thou hast shown unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two camps. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother—from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and smite me,—the mother with the children. And thou saidst,

z *cf.* Song 6. 13.

a *cf.* ch. 25. 23.

Sec. 3.

We now follow Jacob on his return to his own land. This, in its application to the nation, brings us into the field of prophecy: for them, as for their father, Peniel must prepare the way to Bethel; that they may not fall into the hands of their enemies, God, whose name is yet unknown to them, must take them into His own, crippling the human strength with which they contend with Him, that in weakness they may hold Him fast for blessing. Thus broken down in repentance, and purged from idolatry, they will have their second Bethel, when God will reveal to them His name so long hidden, and confirm to them the promise to their father Abraham. Christ, Son of His Father's right hand, will then take His place among them; and so they will come to Mamre and to Hebron—to the riches of a portion which is henceforth to be enjoyed in fellowship with God.

The individual application we can trace more fully. Here it is good to note how, ere Jacob reaches the land really, the angels of God meet him; God Himself not yet, for not yet is Jacob prepared for this. "This is God's host," or "camp," he says; and he calls the place "Mahanaim,"—that is, "*two* camps." Here he must have taken in his own, of which he speaks directly in his message to Esau: "I have oxen and asses, flocks and men-servants and women-servants." Yet in a little while we find him dividing this into "two camps," saying, "If Esau come to the one camp and smite it, then the other camp which is left shall escape"! Such is our strength when built upon, although we would fain, perhaps, associate God's power with it. But then in the time of need, our own, what is it? and God's, where shall it be found?

[b] I will surely deal well with thee, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude. [b] ch. 28. 14.

2. Self-help.

[2] And he lodged there that same night; and he took of that which came to his hand a [c]present for Esau his brother,—two hundred she-goats and twenty he-goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty milch camels with their colts, forty kine and ten bulls, twenty she-asses and ten young asses. And he gave them into the hand of his servants, each drove apart by itself; and he said unto his servants, Pass over before me, and put a space between drove and drove. And he commanded the foremost, saying, When Esau my brother meeteth thee, and asketh thee, saying, Whose art thou? and whither goest thou? and whose are these before thee?—then thou shalt say, They are thy servant Jacob's: it is a present sent for my lord Esau: and, behold, he also is behind us. And so commanded he the second, and the third, and all that followed the droves, saying, In this manner shall ye speak to Esau when ye have found him. And ye shall say also, Behold, thy servant Jacob is behind us. For he said, I will propitiate him with the present which goeth before, and afterward I will see his face: [d] perhaps he will accept me. [c] *cf.* ch. 43. 11. ch. 25. 31. [d] *cf.* Ex. 32. 30. *ctr.* Heb. 10. 10.

3. Jacob manifested in the presence of God becomes Israel.

[3] So the present went over before him; and he himself lodged that night in the camp. And he rose up that night, and took his [e]two wives, and his two maid-servants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford of the Jabbok; and he took them and sent them over the torrent, and he sent over what he had. And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a [f]man with him till the rising [g]of the dawn. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh: and the hollow of Jacob's thigh became [h]out of joint as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the dawn ariseth. And he said, [i]I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, [j]What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Jacob shall thy name no more be called, but [k]Israel, for as a prince hast thou power with God and with man, and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked, saying, Tell me, I pray thee, [l]thy name. And he said, [e] ch. 4. 19. [f] *cf.* ch. 18. 2. Hos. 12. 3, 4. [g] 1 Jno. 2. 8. [h] 2 Cor. 4. 7. 2 Cor. 12. 9. [i] Luke 18. 1. [j] ch. 27. 36. 1 Cor. 1. 29. 1 Jno. 1. 9. [k] ch. 17. 5. ch. 35. 10. Rev. 2. 17. [l] Ex. 33. 18. Ju. 13. 18. Jno. 17. 26. *cf.* ch. 41. 45.

The dread of Esau is upon Jacob's soul. His messengers bring him only the alarming news that his brother is on his way with four hundred men to meet him. He betakes himself to his devices, and then to God, and then once more to his planning. In solitude and in the night God meets him,—unknown, and as an antagonist, the attitude to which Jacob's own has forced Him; and when Jacob's stubbornness stands out against Him, He cripples his strength by dislocating his hip-joint. Then he can wrestle no more, but only cling in helplessness, and thus he prevails: when did man's weakness ever fail to constrain the power of God? He is blest; but God cannot yet disclose His name. He gives Jacob a new one. Crippled, he becomes Israel—a prince with God: the secret of power is disclosed to him; God is not: when the day breaks, He has disappeared.

Why is it thou dost ask after my name? But he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel [the face of God]; for I have seen God [m]face to face, and my life is preserved. And the sun rose upon him as he passed over Penuel, and he [n]halted upon his thigh. Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the muscle which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day; because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh, in the muscle that shrank.

m 2Cor.3.18.

n 2 Cor. 1. 9. 2 Cor. 4. 10.

4. Esau and Jacob: the impotence of the creature.

[s]And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men. And he distributed the children to Leah, and Rachel, and the two maid-servants. And he put the maid-servants and their children foremost, and Leah and her children afterward, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost. But he passed over before them, and [o]bowed himself to the earth seven times till he came near his brother. [p]And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the wives and the children, and said, Who are these with thee? And he said, The children which God hath graciously given thy servant. And the maid-servants drew near, and the children, and they bowed themselves, and Leah and her children drew near, and they bowed themselves; and afterward Joseph drew near, and Rachel, and they bowed themselves. And he said, What meanest thou by all the drove which I met? And he said, To find favor in the eyes of my lord. And Esau said, I have plenty, my brother: let what is thine be thine. And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee: if I have found favor in thine eyes, thou shalt take my present from my hand; for I have seen thy face as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me. Take, I pray thee, my blessing which was brought thee; because God hath shown me favor, and because I have enough. And he urged him, and he took it. And he said, Let us take our journey, and go on, and I will go before thee. And he said unto him, [q]My lord knoweth that the children are tender, and the sheep and kine with young are with me; and if they over-drive them one day, all the flock will die. Let my lord now pass over before his servant, and I will lead on gently, according to the pace of the cattle which are before me, and according to the pace of the

o *cf.* ch.42.6.

p *cf.* Luke 15. 25.

q *cf.* ch. 31. 35.

Jacob calls the place Peniel; "for," he says, "I have seen God face to face"; but his conduct as yet shows nothing of this. He cringes before Esau, though God has disarmed him,—returns to his old deceit, telling him he will follow him to Seir, and going off in another direction, to build him a house at Succoth, which again he leaves to pitch his tent at Shechem on a piece of ground which he purchases, there to meet a deep dishonor, and to witness its bloody retribution, impotent to avert it.

children, until I come unto my lord at Seir. And Esau said, Let me now leave with thee some of the people that are with me. And he said, Why so? Let me find favor in the eyes of my lord. So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir.

(XXXIII. 17—XXXIV.)

Service that is not service: the contradiction at Shechem; why Israel is yet but Jacob.

2. [1] And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built him a house, and made booths for his cattle: therefore the name of the place was called Succoth. And Jacob came in peace to the city of [r] Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan Aram; and he encamped before the city. And he [s] bought the portion of the field where he had pitched his tent, from the hand of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for a hundred kesitahs. And there he set up an [t] altar, and called it El-elohe-Israel [the Mighty One, the God of Israel.]

r ch. 37. 13. ch. 12. 6.

s *cf.* ch. 25. 31. ch. 35. 12.

t ch. 12. 7. ch. 35. 7.

1. God's power and man's will.

2. Humiliation and defilement.

[2] And Dinah, the daughter of Leah, whom she bare unto Jacob, went out to [u] see the daughters of the land. And Shechem, the son of Hamor, the Hivite, prince of the land, saw her, and took her, and lay with her, and humbled her. And his soul clave to Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the maiden, and spoke kindly unto the maiden. And Shechem spake unto Hamor his father, saying, Get me this damsel to wife. And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter; but his sons were with the cattle in the field, and Jacob held his peace until they were come in. And Hamor, the father of Shechem, went out unto Jacob to speak to him. And the sons of Jacob came from the field when they heard it; and the men were grieved and very angry, because he had wrought vileness in Israel in lying with Jacob's daughter,—a thing which is not to be done. And Hamor spake unto them, saying, The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter: I pray you, give her to him to wife. And [v] make marriages with us: give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you. And ye shall dwell with us; and the land is before you: dwell and trade in it, and get yourselves possessions in it. And Shechem said unto her father and unto her brethren, Let me find favor in your eyes, and what ye say unto me I will give. Heap on me greatly dowry and gift, and I will give as ye shall say to me; but give me the maiden to wife. And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father [w] deceitfully, and spake (because he had defiled Dinah their sister) and said unto them,

u Hos. 7. 8. 2 Cor. 6. 17. *cfr.* Jas. 1. 27.

v ch. 28. 1.

w ch. 27. 35.

The power of his name it is evident he has not yet got. His altar proclaims God to be his God (El-elohe-Israel); but this, it would seem, he uses only to walk in his own ways more unblushingly than before: his house at Succoth, his purchase at Shechem, both tell the same tale. He is scarcely now the pilgrim, and losing his separateness Dinah is defiled. The slaughter of the Shechemites

We cannot do this thing—to give our sister to a man that is uncircumcised, for that is a reproach to us. Only in this will we consent to you: if ye will be as we are—every male of you circumcised, then will we give our daughters unto you, and take your daughters unto us, and we will dwell with you, and will become one people. But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised, then we will take our daughter and begone. And their words were good in the eyes of Hamor, and in the eyes of Shechem, Hamor's son. And the young man delayed not to do the thing, because he had delight in Jacob's daughter; and he was more honorable than all his father's house. And Hamor and Shechem his son came to the gate of their city, and spake unto the men of their city, saying, These men are peaceable with us: therefore let them dwell in the land and trade in it; and the land, behold, it is large enough for them: let us take their daughters for our wives, and let us give our daughters unto them. Only in this way will the men consent unto us, to dwell with us, to become one people, if every male among us be circumcised as they are circumcised. Their cattle and their substance, and every beast of theirs, shall they not be ours? Only let us consent to them, and they will dwell with us. And all that went out of the gate of his city hearkened unto Hamor and unto Shechem his son; and every male was circumcised,—all that went out of the gate of the city. And it was so, on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, [x]Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, took each his sword, and came upon the city confidently, and slew all the males. And Hamor and Shechem his son they slew with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out. The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and plundered the city, because they had defiled their sister. Their sheep and their oxen and their asses, and what was in the city, and what was in the field, they took; and all their goods and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and plundered them and all that was in the house. And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, [y]Ye have troubled me, in making me stink among the inhabitants of the land—the Canaanites and the Perizzites; and I being few in number, they will gather together against me and smite me, and I shall be destroyed,—I and my house. And they said, Should he treat our sister as a harlot?

[x] ch. 49. 5.

[y] *cf.* ch. 18. 19.

follows: judgment so cruel, and with such deceit in it, that it is itself pronounced accursed by the Spirit of God in Jacob afterward. And now he is shaken out of his ease and security, and plunged into distress and fear once more. God's grace will not comfort those who will not use it holily.

(XXXV. 1-15.)

El-Bethel: God the God of His own house: and to it we belong.

1. The call of God.

3. [1] And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to [z]Bethel, and dwell there, and make there an altar to God who appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. And Jacob said unto his [a]household, and to all that were with him, Put away the [b]strange gods that are among you, and [c]purify yourselves, and change your garments; and let us arise, and go up to Bethel, and I will make there an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. And they [d]gave unto Jacob all the strange gods that were in their hands, and the rings that were in their ears, and Jacob hid them under the terebinth that was by Shechem. And they journeyed; and the [e]terror of God was upon the cities which were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob.

2. He and all his come to Luz,—that is, "separation."

[2] So Jacob came to Luz, which was in the land of Canaan, that is Bethel,—he and all the people that were with him. And he built there an [f]altar, and called the place El-bethel, because there God appeared unto him in the day that he fled from the face of his brother. And [g]Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and was buried below Bethel, under the oak, and the name of it was called Allon-bachuth [the oak of weeping].

3. God really appears, and Jacob becomes really Israel.

[3] And God appeared unto Jacob again after he had come from Paddan Aram, and blessed him. And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall be called no longer Jacob, but [h]Israel shall thy name be: and he called his name Israel. And God said unto him, I am the [i]almighty God: be fruitful, and multiply; a nation, and a company of nations, shall be of thee; and kings shall come out of thy loins: and the land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, unto thee will I

z ch. 13. 3. ch. 28. 19. ch. 31. 13. Rev. 2. 4.

a etr. ch. 34. 30. ch. 18. 19.

b ch. 31. 19, 34. 1 Sam. 7. 17. 1 Thes. 1. 9. Col. 3. 5. *e.g.* Acts 19. 18, 19.

c Heb. 10. 22. Jno. 13. 8. Ps. 93. 5.

d Hos. 14. 8.

e ch. 9. 2. Deut. 11. 25. Josh. 2. 9.

f ver. 1. ch. 12. 7, etc.

g cf. ch. 11. 31. Acts 7. 2.

h cf. ch. 32. 28. ch. 17. 5.

i ch. 17. 1. Ex. 6. 3.

But now He comes in again, and discloses the remedy: "Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there, and make there an altar to God that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother." Yes, he had forgotten Bethel, God's house, in building his own; he must get up to a higher level, and build his altar to El-Beth-el—the God of His own house. Hitherto he had known only a God that *belonged to him;* now he is to learn and own that *he* belongs to *God.* At once the difference is apparent: the false gods tolerated at Shechem, spite of his altar there, must now be put away, and they must be clean. Then the fear passes from their hearts to those of the nations round them, and they journey to Bethel in peace.

Every thing shows that now he has really reached the goal. All his journeyings in the land are passed over in the quiet words which treat him as just come back to it: "And God appeared to Jacob again after he had come from Paddan Aram." He had spoken to him before, wrestled with him before, blessed him before, and Jacob had *spoken* of having seen His face at Peniel, in the dark, where he could not see it! But now God appears to him, and, as if to show how practically ineffective Peniel had been, gives him afresh the name which he had given him there. "And God said to him, Thy name is Jacob"—still Jacob!—"thy name shall not henceforth be called Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name. And He called his name Israel." Thus we learn that if weakness be the secret of

j ch. 28. 13. *ctr.* ch. 33. 19.

k ch. 28. 18. ch. 31. 47. 1 Sam. 7. 12.

j give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land, and God went up from him in the place where he had talked with him. And Jacob set up a *k* pillar in the place where he had talked with him,—a pillar of stone, and poured on it a drink-offering, and poured oil on it. And Jacob called the name of the place where God talked with him Bethel.

(XXXV. 16-29.)

Ephrath and Mamre: fruitfulness and fatness.

1. Benjamin: Christ in us.

4. [1] And they journeyed from Bethel; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath when Rachel travailed and had hard labor. And it came to pass when she was in hard labor, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not, for thou shalt have this son also. And it was so, as her soul was departing (for she died), that she called his name Benoni [son of my sorrow], but his father called him *l* Benjamin [son of the right hand]. And *m* Rachel died, and was buried on the way to Ephrath, which is *n* Bethlehem. And Jacob set up a pillar upon her grave: that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day.

l Ps. 80. 17.

m *cf.* Col. 3. 3. *cf.* Ezek. 37. 11, 12.

n Ruth 1. 2. 1 Sam. 10. 2.

2. The fall of Reuben.

[2] And Israel journeyed and spread his tent beyond the tower of Eder. And it was so, when Israel was dwelling in that land, that *o* Reuben went and lay with Bilhah, his father's concubine; and *p* Israel heard it.

o ch. 49. 4. Lev. 20. 11. Deut. 22. 30. 2 Sa. 16. 21. 1 Cor. 5. 1.

p *ctr.* ch. 34. 30. *cf.* ch. 49. 4 with Jas. 1. 19, 20.

3. The full number of the tribes attained, and possession of the dwelling-place.

[3] And the sons of Jacob were twelve. The sons of Leah, Reuben, Jacob's first-born, and Simeon and Levi and Judah and Issachar and Zebulon. The sons of Rachel, Joseph and Benjamin. And the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maid-servant, Dan and Naphthali. And the sons of Zilpah, Leah's maid-servant, Gad and Asher. These are the sons of Jacob, which were born to him in Paddan Aram. And Jacob came to Isaac his father, to Mamre, —to Kirjath-Arba, which is Hebron, where Abraham

strength (as it is,) it is *only strength to walk in God's ways.* Israel must come to Bethel to be Israel. How good to remember this!

And now God reveals Himself almighty, as with Abraham, and confirms to him the promise he had made to Abraham; and Jacob sets up his pillar of stone, and pours his drink-offering and oil upon it; and he too names the place afresh —Bethel, as if he had never named it before. Nor intelligently had he done so.

And now we find Benjamin's birth, and Rachel's death at Ephrath: a notable combination of things in this place! Ephrath means "fruitfulness," for now Israel is to be fruitful. But how? Benjamin is Christ in power upon the earth, as we have seen: Christ in us it is who is our power. That we may have it, Rachel herself passes away; for Rachel typifies, as we have seen, that subjective state we seek after, but which must, as a substantial presence with us, pass (as Abel gave place to Seth), that Christ may be alone our occupation. Once more, the "I, yet not I," of which we need again and again to be reminded.

This truth, the fall of Reuben,—"my might, the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity and the excellency of power," says Jacob afterward,— confirms from the other side. It is a more emphatic "Enos." But here comes in this new name of Jacob's beautifully. All awake he is, but without a murmur bows his head at his own dishonor,—"*Israel* heard it."

And so this chequered history ends with Mamre and with Hebron, where now Isaac gives up his place to him as the vessel of testimony for God upon the earth. Only now is he ready to fill the place.

and Isaac sojourned. And the days of Isaac were a hundred and eighty years; and Isaac expired: and he died, and was gathered to his people, old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob [q] buried him.

(XXXVI.—XXXVII. 1.)

5. Now [r] these are the generations of Esau, who is Edom.

The end as the way with Esau and with Jacob.

Esau took his wives of the daughters of Canaan: [s] Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Oholibamah the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite and Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, the sister of Nebaioth. And Adah bare to Esau Eliphaz; and Basemath bare Reuel. And Oholibamah bare Jeush and Jaalam and Korah. These are the sons of Esau, which were born unto him in the land of Canaan. And Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the souls of his house, and his cattle, and all his beasts, and all his substance which he had gotten in the land of Canaan, and went into a land away from his brother Jacob. [t] For their substance was too great for them to dwell together, and the land where they sojourned could not bear them, because of their cattle. Thus Esau dwelt in [u] Mount Seir: Esau is Edom.

And these are the generations of Esau, the father of Edom, in Mount Seir. These are the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz the son of Adah, Esau's wife; Reuel the son of Basemath Esau's wife. And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, and Gatam, and Kenaz. And Timna was concubine to Eliphaz Esau's son, and she bare to Eliphaz [v] Amalek. These are the sons of Adah Esau's wife. And these are the sons of Reuel: Nahath and Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah. These are the sons of Basemath Esau's wife. And these are the sons of Oholibamath the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon, Esau's wife: and she bare unto Esau Jeush and Jaalam and Korah.

And these are the dukes of the sons of Esau. The sons of Eliphaz the first-born of Esau: duke Teman, duke Omar, duke Zepho, duke Kenaz, duke Korah, duke Gatam, duke Amalek. These are the dukes of Eliphaz in the land of Edom; these are the sons of Adah. And these are the sons of Reuel the son of Esau: duke Nahath, duke Zerah, duke Shammah, duke Mizzah: these are the dukes of Reuel in the land of Edom; these are the sons of Basemath Esau's wife. And these are the sons of Oholibamah Esau's wife: duke Jeush, duke

q ch. 49. 31.

r Ps. 37. 35.

s *cf.* ch. 26. 34, 35.

t *cf.* ch. 13. 6.

u *ctr.* ch. 37. 1. Ps. 68. 6.

v Ex. 17. 8, 16. Num. 24. 20. 1 Sam. 15. 2. De. 25. 17. Gal. 5. 19.

But before the story is closed up as ended, Esau's seed is shown us for many generations, prematurely ripening into dukes and kings. Isaac's prophecy becomes, in one part of it, soon fulfilled. Esau leaves Canaan for Seir, and his posterity soon, as their names would seem to show, live by their sword in this barren region. Two texts for us here have special significance: first, that "Esau took his wives and his sons and his daughters, and all the persons of his house, and his cattle, and all his beasts, and all his substance which he had got in the land of Canaan, and went into the country *from the face of his brother Jacob*;" while

Jaalam, duke Korah; these are the dukes of Oholibamah the daughter of Anah, Esau's wife. These are the sons of Esau, and these their dukes; he is Edom.

These are the sons of Seir the Horite, the inhabitants of the land: Lotan and Shobal and Zibeon and Anah and Dishon and Ezer and Dishan. These are the [w]dukes of the Horites, the sons of Seir, in the land of Edom. And the sons of Lotan were Hori and Hemam; and Timna was Lotan's sister. And these are the sons of Shobal: Alvan and Manahath and Ebal, Shepho and Onam. And these are the sons of Zibeon, both Ajah and Anah. This is that Anah that found the warm springs in the wilderness, as he fed the asses of Zibeon his father. And these are the children of Anah: Dishon, and Oholibamah Anah's daughter. And these are the sons of Dishon: Hemdan and Eshban and Ithran and Cheran. These are the sons of Ezer: Bilhan and Zaavan and Akan. These are the sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran. These are the dukes of the Horites: duke Lotan, duke Shobal, duke Zibeon, duke Anah, duke Dishon, duke Ezer, duke Dishan. These are the dukes of the Horites, according to their dukedoms in the land of Seir. *w* Ex. 15.15.

And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom [x]before there reigned a king of the children of Israel. And Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom; and the name of his city was Dinhabah. And Bela died; and Jobab the son of Zerah, of Bozrah, reigned in his stead. And Jobab died; and Husham of the land of the Temanites reigned in his stead. And Husham died; and Hadad the son of Bedad, who smote Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his stead. And the name of his city was Avith. And Hadad died; and Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his stead. And Samlah died; and Saul of Rehoboth-on-the-River reigned in his stead. And Saul died; and Baalhanan the son of Achbor reigned in his stead. And Baalhanan the son of Achbor died; and Hadar reigned in his stead; and the name of his city was Pau; and his wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, daughter of Mezahab. *x* 1 Cor. 15.46.

And these are the names of the dukes of Esau, according to their families, after their places, by their names: duke Timna, duke Alvah, duke Jetheth, duke Oholibamah, duke Elah, duke Pinon, duke Kenaz, duke Teman, duke Mibzar, duke Magdiel, duke Iram. These are the dukes of Edom, according to their dwelling-places in the land of their possession. This is Esau, the father of Edom. *y ctr.* ch. 36. 8.

And Jacob [y]dwelt in the land where his father sojourned, in the land of Canaan. Heb. 11. 9, 13, 16.

the section closes with one verse which, in its brevity, speaks volumes to the ear that hears, contrasting Jacob's portion with that of his brother,—"And Jacob dwelt in the land in which his father was a stranger—in the land of Canaan."

SUBDIVISION 7. (Chap. xxxvii. 2—l.) JOSEPH.
The Christ-life developed in full "image."

SECTION 1. (xxxvii. 2-36).
God's counsel and man's rebellion.

(XXXVII. 2-11).

Visions of supremacy.

1. THESE are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and he was a lad with his brethren, the sons of Bilhah, and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their [z] evil report. And Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a [a] coat of many colors. And his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, and they hated him, and could not speak to him peaceably. And Joseph [b] dreamed a dream, and told it to his brethren, and they [c] hated him yet the more. And he said unto

[z] Jno. 7. 7.
[a] 1 Sa. 2. 19. *cf.* Jno. 1. 14.
[b] ch. 40. 5, 8.
[c] ch. 27. 41.

SUBD. 7.—JOSEPH.

JOSEPH presents, in the main features of his life, a complete contrast to Jacob. As the one shows us the fruit of the flesh, though in a saint, the other gives us the fruit of the Spirit. It is thus no wonder that if he portrays the development of the Christ-life within us, he should represent also, more fully than any other of these Genesis biographies, the life of Christ Himself. There is in this respect a very substantial agreement among the mass of interpreters, from the so-called "fathers" downward. It is only in details that there is really room for question.

The individual application, though easy to be seen as there, is in the details often very difficult to follow; but the reason for this is simple: it is experience that largely unfolds to us these types of the inner life, and in this experience we are sadly deficient. And yet it may well be, also, that (as we have just seen in Benjamin), in the stage to which we have come, the objective largely takes the place of the subjective; the soul freed from self-occupation is all eyes, all ears, for its Object. Just so, John the apostle has many a word for the babes and the young men both, suited to their need; while to the "fathers" he simply says, and repeats, "Ye have known Him that is from the beginning." (1 Jno. ii.) However it may be, we shall find that it is largely with the image of Christ Himself that we shall be taken up in the history of Joseph.

Joseph is the picture, as we have said, of what is essentially the martyr-spirit, whose courage is shown in endurance, in unflinching facing of consequences. In him, patience has her perfect work, and thus, in result, he rises to mastery over all around, because he is master of himself first, and receives from God's hand, does not take things into his own. In the blessing of Jacob at the close, he is divinely pictured, as contemplated here, as the one separated from his brethren, whom the archers have galled and shot at and hated; but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob. Here, indeed, we find Joseph to be Jacob's son, and Jacob's lesson to be fully learned. How fruitful an one! and how the branches run over the wall, yielding their fruit up within no narrow inclosure, but to be gathered freely! For who may not gather such fruit? Not in the exercise of much wisdom, the bringing out of internal resources, but simply "man's weakness waiting upon God;" and who may not wait on Him?

Very like Isaac is he in this, that the path of surrender leads into that of largest blessing. And this is God's constant way.

Six sections carry us now to the end of the book. Let us take them separately.

them, Hear, I pray you, the dream that I have dreamed: Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and stood firm; and behold, your sheaves encompassed and [d]bowed down to my sheaf. And his brethren said to him, Wilt thou indeed be a king over us? wilt thou indeed have [e]dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams and for his words. And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it to his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed another dream, and, lo, the sun and moon and eleven stars bowed down to me. And he told it to his father and to his brethren. And his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall we indeed come,—I and thy mother and thy brethren, to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? And his brethren [f]envied him, but his father [g]observed the saying.

(XXXVII. 12-36).

Separated from his brethren.

2. And his brethren went to feed their father's flock at [h]Shechem. And Israel said unto Joseph, Are not thy brethren feeding [the flock] at Shechem? come, and I will [i]send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here am I. And he said unto him, Go now, see if it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. And he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he went toward Shechem. And a

[d] ch. 44. 14. ch. 46. 29. ch. 50. 18. *cf.* ch. 49. 8. Phil. 2. 10.

[e] Jno. 1. 11.

[f] Acts 7. 9. Matt. 27. 18.

[g] Luke 2. 19, 51.

[h] *cf.* ch. 33. 18.

[i] 1 Sam. 17. 18. 1 Jno. 4. 9. Luke 20. 13.

Sec. 1.

The first section shows us God's counsel as to Joseph and man's rebellion against it. The first view we have of Joseph is, at seventeen years, feeding the flock along with his brethren. The typical ruler for God is ever the shepherd. But He is with the children of the bondmaid,—a significant expression of Israel's condition, perhaps politically as well as spiritually, when our Lord came in the flesh. Separated too, Joseph is from them morally far, as with the Lord, the ground of the after-separation upon their side, not on his. "Me the world hateth, because I testify of it that its deeds are evil."

He is hated too as the special object of his father's love, of which the embroidered coat is the expression. It is not precisely "of many colors," nor a seamless robe of one piece such as characteristically the Lord wore. It is a "tunic of pieces," implying variety, and I think would refer to the manifold powers which showed themselves in the Lord in those mighty works which He spoke of as "from the Father" (Jno. x. 32; xiv. 11), and for which His brethren after the flesh pursued Him with hatred.

The dreams come as a third incitement to hatred,—in which God makes known the future supremacy of the beloved of the father. This is easily read. Together, these three signs give us the Holy One, object of the Father's love, hated for His holiness, hated for His glorious works, hated for the announcement of His coming glory.

Being, then, such as He is, His love-mission to His brethren, as sent of the Father, puts Him into their hands. He goes out of the "vale of Hebron" ("company"), the place of participation with the Father, to find them, not in Shechem ("shoulder"), in subjection to God, taking His yoke; but in Dothan, which some (rightly, I think,) take as meaning "laws;" not in the sense, however, of "precepts"—moral, spiritual guidance, such as the divine law (the *thorah*) was,—but of imperial "decrees." To Israel after the flesh, away from God and from the true spirit of obedience, such had the divine word become.

man met him, and, lo, he was wandering in the field; and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou? and he said, I seek my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed [their flocks]. And the man said, They have departed hence; for I heard them saying, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan.

And when they saw him from [j]afar, and before he drew nigh to them, they plotted against him to put him to death. And they said one to another, Behold, this dream-lord cometh! And now come, let us slay him, and cast him into one of the pits, and we will say, An evil beast hath devoured him; and we shall see what will come of his dreams.

And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and he said, Let us not take his life. And [k]Reuben said to them, Shed no blood; put him into this pit which is in the wilderness, but lay no hand upon him,—that he might deliver him out of their hands, to restore him to his father. And so it was, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they [l]stripped Joseph of his coat—the coat of many colors which was upon him, and they took him and put him into the pit. But the pit was [m]empty; there was no water in it.

And they sat down to [n]eat bread; and they lifted up their eyes, and looked, and, lo, a caravan of Ishmaelites came from Gilead, with their camels bearing spicery, and balm, and ladanum, going to carry it down to Egypt. And [o]Judah said unto his brethren, What good is it to slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites; and [p]let not our hand be upon him: for he is our brother—our flesh. And his brethren hearkened [to him]. And there passed by Midianites, merchants, and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and [q]sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they brought Joseph into Egypt. And Reuben returned unto the pit, and, lo, Joseph was not in the pit; and he rent his garments. And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child is not: and I, whither shall I go?

And they took Joseph's coat, and slaughtered a buck

j Mat. 21. 38. Jno. 11. 53. *ctr.* Luke 15. 20.

k ch. 42. 22.

l Mat. 27. 28.

m Jno. 18. 31.

n Amos 6. 6. Jno. 18. 28. *ctr.* Luke 22. 14, 15.

o *ctr.* ch. 44. 18, etc.

p Matt. 20. 19. 1 Sa. 18. 17. 2 Sam. 12. 9.

q ch. 42. 24. Num. 22. 4. Matt. 27. 2, 9. Zech. 11. 12.

At Dothan, then, Joseph's brethren are found, and at once they counsel to slay him. In fact, they cast him into a pit, but it holds no water—"It is not lawful for us," the Jews said to Pilate, "to put any man to death;" and out of this they draw him, to sell him to the Ishmaelites. So by Israel was the Lord transferred to the Gentiles.

How striking is that touch in this terrible picture, "And they sat down"—with Joseph in their pit—"to eat bread"! How much more terrible the case of the Pharisee-persecutors, who "would not go into the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the passover"! History does indeed repeat itself, because each generation is but the repetition of the one before it: as Ahab, Israel's worst king, was but after all, what his name signifies, his "father's brother."

of the goats, and [r] dipped the coat in the blood. And they sent the coat of many colors, and had it carried to their father, and said, This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no. And he knew it, and said, It is my son's coat: an [s] evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is surely torn in pieces. And Jacob rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth on his loins, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and said, For I will go down mourning to my son, to Sheol. Thus his father wept for him. And the Midianites sold him into Egypt, to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard.

[r] *cf.* ch. 22. 13.

[s] *cf.* Ps. 22. 12,13,20,21. 1 Pet. 5. 8.

SECTION 2. (Chap. xxxviii.).

Judah's separation from his brethren and humiliation.

(*vv.* 1-11).

Tamar's widowhood.

1. AND it was at that time that Judah went down from his brethren, and turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah. And Judah saw there the daughter of a certain [t] Canaanite whose name was Shuah; and he took her, and went in unto her. And she conceived, and bare a son; and he called his name Er. And she conceived again and bare a son; and she called his name Onan. And she yet again conceived, and bare a son; and she called his name Shelah; and he was at

[t] *ctr.* ch. 24. 3.

Thus Joseph is "separated from his brethren." In the individual application, though the details are less plain, the general thought is easy. "Elect of God, holy and beloved," in the world through which we pass, all is hostile to the development of that which is of God. "He that separateth himself from evil maketh himself a prey;" and separation from evil is a fundamental principle of the divine nature. Hence, persecution for righteousness should be accepted as the necessary result for the people of God in a world such as the present.

But for those true Josephs in whom is developed the soldier-"virtue," which with inflexibility of purpose presses on through whatever difficulties in the path of faith, separation will be found (not invited) from those who are not the world, but, though chosen out of it, still practicing conformity to its ways. Nay, one's brethren are, alas! often in this case more hostile than the very world, just because their consciences are more awake to a testimony which condemns themselves. Thus, within the circle of professed Christian fellowship, the Josephs have still to be disciples of the cross. Their path is not merely individual, as the path of true faith must always be, but solitary also, save only for the God with whom they walk, and indeed because they have chosen to walk with Him. Yet it is thus a path of deepest blessing.

Sec. 2.

At this juncture, the history of Judah is introduced, which as that of Judah alone is itself significant. Israel (the ten tribes) has for long had none: the Jews represent for us the whole people. Here, at the outset, Judah separates himself from his brethren, and connects himself with the Canaanite—the "merchantman"—marrying the daughter of Shuah (or "riches"). Surely these names give us in plain speech the characteristics of the nation for these centuries since the cross! His seed is thus, however, continued upon the earth, although God's wrath is upon the first two sons (whose names may speak, Er, of "enmity," and Onan, of "iniquity"), while the *third* son, Shelah ("sprout"?), speaks of divine power in resurrection, bringing out of death. Thus is a remnant preserved.

Chezib when she bare him. And Judah [u] took a wife for Er, his first-born, whose name was Tamar. But Er, Judah's first-born, was wicked in Jehovah's eyes; and Jehovah slew him. And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and fulfill to her a brother-in-law's duty, and [v] raise up seed unto thy brother. And Onan knew that the seed would not be his; and it was so, when he went in unto his brother's wife, he spilled it on the ground, lest he should give seed to his brother. And the thing which he did was evil in Jehovah's eyes; and he slew him also. And Judah said unto Tamar, Remain a widow at thy father's house till Shelah my son be grown; for he said, Lest he too die like his brethren. And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.

[u] *ctr.* ch. 24. 3. ch. 26. 35.

[v] Deut. 25. 5. Ruth 1. 11. Ruth 2. 20. Matt. 22. 24.

(12–23.)

Tamar's deception.

2. And the days went on, and Bath-shua, Judah's wife, died; and Judah was comforted, and went up to his sheep-shearers,—he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite, to Timnah. And it was told Tamar, saying, Behold, thy father-in-law goeth up to Timnah to shear his sheep. And she put the garments of her widowhood from off her, and covered herself with the veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in the entry of Enaim, which is on the way to Timnah, for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given him to wife. [w] And Judah saw her, and took her for a harlot; because she had covered her face. And he turned aside to her by the way, and said, Come now, let me come in unto thee: for he knew not she was his daughter-in-law. And she said, What wilt thou give me that thou mayest come in to me? And he said, I will send thee a kid of the goats from the flock. And she said, Wilt thou give me a pledge till thou send it? And he said, What is the pledge that I shall give thee? And she said, Thy signet, and thy cord, and thy staff that is in thy hand. And he gave them to her, and went in to her, and she conceived by him. And she arose, and went away, and laid her vail from off her, and put on the garments of her widowhood. And Judah sent the kid of the goats by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive the pledge from the woman's hand; but he found her not. And he asked the men of the place, saying, Where is the dedicated woman that was at Enaim upon the way-side? And they said, There hath been no dedicated woman here. And he returned to Judah, and said, I have not found

[w] Lev. 20. 12.

The story of Tamar shows us how, in God's marvelous way of grace, Christ comes into connection with Judah, and thus it is her name appears in the Lord's genealogy in the gospel of Matthew, first of those four women's names, whose presence there demonstrates the grace which has stooped to take up men. Each of these four has its own distinctive gospel-feature to bring out, as elsewhere shown. It is Tamar's *sin* that brings her in, as it is Rahab's *faith;* while for

her: and the men of the place also say there was no dedicated woman there. And Judah said, Let her take [it] to her, lest we be put to shame. Behold, I sent this kid, and thou hast not found her!

(24-30.)

The manifestation.

3. And it was about three months after that it was told to Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter-in-law hath committed fornication, and also, behold, she is with child by fornication. And Judah said, Bring her out, and let her be [x]burnt. When she was brought out, she sent to her father-in-law, and said, By the man whose these are I am with child. And she said, Discern now whose these are—the signet, the cord, and the staff? And Judah acknowledged them, and said, She is more in the right than I, because I gave her not to Shelah my son. And he knew her again no more. And it was so, when she travailed, that, behold, twins were in her womb. And it was so, in her travail, that one put forth his hand; and the midwife took and bound on his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This one came out first. And it was so, when he drew back his hand, that his brother came out. And she said, How hast thou broken forth? on thee be the breach! and they called his name [y]Pharez [breach]. And afterward came out his brother, who had on his hand the scarlet thread; and they called his name [z]Zerah.

[x] Lev. 20. 14. Lev. 21. 9. Rom. 2. 22. 2 Sa. 12. 15.

[y] Mat. 1. 13.

[z] Josh. 7. 1.

SECTION 3. (Chap. xxxix.—xli. 52.)

Zaphnath-paaneah, "the Revealer of Secrets."

(XXXIX.)

Unchanging integrity.

1. Ruler in his master's house.

1. [1] AND Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, [a]bought him from the hand of the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. And Jehovah was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And

[a] Ps. 105. 17.

Ruth to come in, the sentence of the law as to the Moabites must be set aside, and Bathsheba—named even as the wife of Urias—shows us grace triumphing over even a believer's sin. A salvation for sinners,—through faith,—apart from law,—and eternal: this is what the simple insertion of these names declares. Tamar's sin was the very thing which brought her into the Lord's genealogy: and as sinners simply have we title to rejoice in a work accomplished for sinners. Judah will find, in a day that is near, his title, not in legal righteousness, nor in mere descent from Abraham, but in the truth which God has emphasized for us here.

Sec. 3.

With the next section we return to Joseph, to see Christ in connection with the Gentiles. It is plain that, thus viewed, there is no continuity with the thirty-seventh chapter, but in some sort, a new beginning. Even the position of Joseph, under an Egyptian master, may remind us of Zechariah's words, which I, with others, believe to be intended of Christ, "Man acquired Me as a slave from My youth." (chap. xiii. 5, *Heb.*) Here, notice, it is not said, Israel: the lowly service to which He has stooped has the widest scope. But what response did this service receive from man? "What are those wounds in Thy hands? Those with which I was wounded in the house of My friends."

his master saw that Jehovah was with him, and all that he did Jehovah made to prosper in his hand. And Joseph found favor in his eyes, and he waited on him; and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand. And so it was, from the time that he made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that Jehovah [b] blessed the house of the Egyptian for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of Jehovah was upon all that he had, in the house and in the field. And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he knew naught that he had except the bread he was eating. And Joseph was comely in form and comely in face.

[b] ch. 30. 27.

2. The assault of sin, and the accusation.

[2] And it was so, after these things, that his master's wife set her eyes on Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, [c] Behold, my master knoweth not what is with me in the house, and all that he hath he hath given into my hand; there is no one greater in this house than I: and he hath kept nothing back from me except thee, because thou art his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and [d] sin against God? And so it was, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her [or] to be with her. And it was about this time that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there in the house. [e] And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me. And he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out. And so it was, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled out, that she called the men of her house and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath [f] brought us a Hebrew man to mock us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice, and it was so that when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his garment with me, and fled, and gat him out. And she laid up his garment by her until his master came home. And she spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant which thou hast brought unto us came in to me to mock me; and it was so, as I lifted up my voice, and cried, that he left his garment by me and fled out.

[c] cf. Matt. 4. 1-10. ctr. ch. 3. 3, 6.

[d] Ps. 51. 4.

[e] Jas. 4. 4. Eccle. 7. 26.

[f] Jno. 15. 19.

3. His exaltation in the prison.

[3] And it was so, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me, that his wrath was

With Joseph in it, the house of the Egyptian is blessed of God; but with Christ ministering in it, how unspeakably was the world blest! All the power was there, and manifesting itself, which could have turned, and will yet turn, the need of man, however great and varied, into occasion for the display of the wealth of divine loving-mercy. But it availed not to turn man's heart to God: false witness casts Joseph into Pharaoh's prison, where, however, again all things come under his hand; while under false accusation, the Lord descends into a darker prison-house, in result to manifest Himself as Master of all there.

kindled. And Joseph's master took him and [g]put him into the tower, a place where the king's prisoners were bound; and he was there in the tower. And Jehovah was with Joseph, and showed him mercy and [h]gave him favor in the eyes of the warden of the tower. And the warden of the tower gave into Joseph's hand all the prisoners which were in the tower; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. The warden of the tower looked not to any thing which was under his hand; because Jehovah was with him, and whatsoever he did, Jehovah made it to prosper.

[g] Ps. 105.18.

[h] Dan. 1. 9. Ps. 106. 46. Acts 7. 10. Prov. 16. 7.

(XL.)

Joseph in prison the interpreter of life and death.

2. And it came to pass after these things that the cup-bearer of the king of Egypt and [his] baker offended their lord the king of Egypt. And Pharaoh was wroth with his two chamberlains, the chief cup-bearer and the chief baker; and he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, in the tower, the place where Joseph was confined. And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he waited on them, and they were in ward some time. And they [i]dreamed a dream, both of them, each man his dream the same night, each according to the interpretation of his dream, the cup-bearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the tower. And when Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and looked on them, behold, they were [j]gloomy. And he asked Pharaoh's chamberlains that were with him in ward in his lord's house, saying, Why are your faces so troubled to-day? And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, [k]Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell them me, I pray.

[i] ch. 37. 5. ch. 41. 1.

[j] Dan. 4. 5.

[k] Dan. 1.17.

And the chief cup-bearer told Joseph his dream, and said unto him, In my dream, behold, before me a vine, and in the vine three branches, and it was as though budding, its blossoms shot forth; its clusters ripened grapes. Now Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand. And Joseph said unto him, This is the interpretation: the three branches

A higher power than man's was working beneath all this in Joseph's case. The path of humiliation was to end for him in glory; the sorrow of the way was to issue in joy—love's own joy of service in a higher sphere. "God did send me before you to preserve life," he says to his brethren afterward; and he who in prison reveals himself as the interpreter of the mind of God, is, as such, qualified to administer the resources of the throne of Egypt, for the relief of the distress which is at hand for the world. All this is easily read as typical of the Lord, only that the shadows of the picture are immeasurably darker here, as the lights are inexpressibly brighter. From the humiliation and agony of the cross, in which He is the interpreter of man's just doom on the one hand, and of the mercy for him on the other, the lowly Minister to human need comes forth to serve as the Wisdom and Power of God upon a throne of grace.

are three days; yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head and restore thee unto thy place, and thou shalt give the cup into Pharaoh's hand after the former manner when thou wast his cup-bearer. But have me in [l]remembrance when it shall be well with thee, and show me, I pray thee, kindness, and make mention of me to Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house; for indeed I was stolen out of the land of the Hebrews, and here too have I done nothing for which they should put me in the dungeon. And when the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said unto Joseph, I also was in my dream, and, behold, three wicker baskets on my head, and in the uppermost basket there was of all kinds of food for Pharaoh, baker's work, and the [m]birds ate them out of the basket on my head. And Joseph answered and said, The interpretation is this: the three baskets are three days; within yet three days will Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and hang thee upon a tree; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee.

And it was so, on the third day, Pharaoh's birth-day, that he made a feast to all his servants; and he lifted up the head of the chief cup-bearer and the head of the chief baker among his servants. And he restored the chief cup-bearer to his office again, and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand; but he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them. [n]Yet did not the chief cup-bearer remember Joseph, but forgat him.

(XLI. 1-52.)

"A man in whom the Spirit of God is."

1. The king's dream.

3. [1]And it was at the end of two whole years that [o]Pharaoh dreamed; and, lo, he was standing by the river; and, behold, from the river came up seven kine, fine-looking and fat-fleshed; and they fed in the reed-grass. And, behold, seven other kine came up after them from the river, ill-looking and lean-fleshed, and stood by the [other] kine on the bank of the river. And the ill-looking and lean-fleshed kine ate up the seven kine that were fine-looking and fat-fleshed. And Pharaoh awoke. And he slept and dreamed a second time; and, lo, seven ears of corn springing up upon one stalk, plump and good. And, behold, seven ears of corn, thin and parched in the east wind, springing up after them; and the thin ears swallowed up the seven plump and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and, lo, it was a dream.

2. The interpretation.

[2]And it was so, in the morning, that his [p]spirit was moved, and he sent and called for all the [q]scribes of Egypt, and all her sages, and Pharaoh told them his dream, but there was none to interpret them to Pharaoh. And the chief cup-bearer spake unto Pharaoh, saying, I remember my sins to-day. Pharaoh was wroth with

[l] 1 Sam. 25. 31.

[m] Lk. 17. 37.

[n] 1 Cor. 11. 24. Ps. 103. 2. ch. 41. 9.

[o] Dan. 2. 1.

[p] ch. 40. 8.

[q] Ex. 7. 11. 1 Cor. 1. 20.

his servants, and put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guards,—myself and the chief baker. And we dreamed a dream the same night,—I and he: we dreamed each according to the interpretation of his dream. And there with us was a young man, a Hebrew, a servant to the captain of the guard, and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams, to each he interpreted according to his dream. And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was: [r]me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged. And Pharaoh sent and called for Joseph, and they brought him in haste out of the dungeon; and he shaved himself and changed his raiment, and came in to Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none to interpret it; and I have heard say of thee that when thou hearest a dream thou canst interpret it. And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, In my dream, lo, I was standing on the bank of the river, and, behold, from the river went up seven kine, fat-fleshed and fine-shaped; and they fed in the reed-grass. And, behold, seven other kine went up after them, wasted and ill-shaped, and lean of flesh,—I never saw their like in all the land of Egypt for badness. And the lean and bad kine ate up the first seven fat kine; and when they came into their insides, it could not be known that they had come into their insides, but their appearance was as bad as at the beginning. And I awoke. And I saw in my dream, and, behold, seven ears of corn springing from one stalk, full and good. And, behold, seven ears, withered, thin, parched in the east wind, sprang up after them. And the thin ears swallowed up the seven good ears. And I told it to the seers, but there was none to declare it to me. And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, Pharaoh's dream is one: what God is doing he maketh known to Pharaoh. The seven good kine are seven years, and the seven good ears are seven years: the dream is one. And the seven lean and bad kine that came after them are seven years; and the seven empty ears, parched in the east wind, are seven years of famine. This is the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: what God is doing he showeth unto Pharaoh. Behold, seven years are coming of great plenty in all the land of Egypt. And after them shall arise seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt, and the famine shall consume the land. And the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of the famine following, for it shall be very heavy. And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice, it is that the thing is established by God, and that he hasteth to

[r] *cf.* Luke 17. 34.

do it. Now, therefore, let Pharaoh look out a man discerning and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do [this]: and let him appoint overseers over the land of Egypt, and take up the [s]fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years; and let them gather all the food of those good years to come; and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh for food in the cities, and preserve it. And the food shall be for store to the land for the seven years of famine which shall be in the land of Egypt, that the land perish not in the famine.

s ch. 47. 26.

3. Raised from the dungeon to the throne.

[3] And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants. And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Shall we find one like this,—a man in whom the [t]Spirit of God is? And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Since God hath shown thee all this, there is none so discerning and wise as thou art. Thou shalt be over my house, and according to thy word shall all my people be ruled; only in the throne will I be greater than thou. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, [u]See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in garments of white linen, and put a gold chain about his neck, and he caused him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, [v]Bow the knee: and he set him over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or his foot in all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh called Joseph's name [w]Zaphnath-paaneah; and he gave him to wife [x]Asenath the daughter of Potipherah, priest of On; and Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt. And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt; and Joseph went out from the presence of

t Dan. 4. 8, etc.

u Col. 1. 18. 1 Pet. 2. 7. Heb. 2. 9.

v Phil. 2. 9.

w Jno. 4. 29. Jno. 17. 6, 26.

x Eph. 5. 25. cf. Ex. 2. 21. 1 Ki. 3. 1.

Seven years of plenty to be succeeded by seven years of famine, which shall devour them up,—such is the prophecy of Pharaoh's dream. Even yet is the world enjoying its plenteous years, and little it believes in its plainly predicted future. The time of famine is nevertheless not far off, which is to manifest the resources of Him who will then be seen alone competent to meet its terrible exigencies. In that time of sore trial, both Israel is to be brought back to Him whom they have rejected, and the world subjected to the throne whose provision of grace He ministers.

But first, and as soon as ever he is exalted, we hear of new relationships for Joseph: "And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-paaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah, priest of On; and Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt." The name given we may take as Hebrew, and in the meaning anciently given to it, "Revealer of Secrets." How precious a title for Him who has revealed to us the secrets of the heart of God! And especially appropriate is it in connection (as the text suggests) with Joseph's Gentile marriage. To Christianity belongs above all the revelation of the divine "mysteries." The "mysteries of the kingdom," the "great mystery" of Christ and the Church," "the mystery of His will . . . for the administration

Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt. And in the seven years of plenty the land brought forth by handfuls; and he gathered up all the food of [those] seven years which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field which was round about every city laid he up in the same. And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until they left off reckoning, for it could not be reckoned. And unto Joseph were born two sons [y] before the years of famine came, which Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah priest of On, bare unto him. And Joseph called the name of the first [z] Manasseh; for God [said he] hath made me forget all my toil and my father's house. And the name of the second he called [a] Ephraim; for God hath made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.

[y] Rom. 11. 28. *cf.* Rev. 3. 10.

[z] Ps. 108. 8. *cf.* ch. 24. 67. Acts 13. 46.

[a] ch. 49. 22. *cf.* Acts 2. 41.

of the fullness of times to head up all things in heaven and earth in Christ" (Matt. xiii. 11; Eph. v. 32; i. 9, 10) are given to us for the first time in these Christian days, while He is Himself, in His own person and work, the "mystery of godliness."

Even the false church appropriates (though but to pervert) this idea of mystery (Rev. xvii. 5); while the apostle desires no better estimation for himself and others than "as ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." (1 Cor. iv. 1.) For us even the stored treasures of the past dispensation are revealing themselves, and things which happened unto Israel happened unto them for types, and are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come. (1 Cor. x. 11.) All these things are pledges of new relationship, confidences, unspeakably precious, of the heart of Christ. (Jno. xv. 15.) Revealer of secrets indeed is He; no truer or sweeter name for Him who has been pleased to take, in these plenteous days before the time of the world's famine, a Gentile bride.

At the same time, if our Joseph's title can be shown to have in Egyptian the meaning, "Saviour of the world," we need not reject it. This is indeed the outward aspect in which Christ is now revealed.

As to Asenath, if the meaning of her name is conjectural only, those of her two sons are very significant. Born before the famine, and while Joseph's brethren are yet strangers to his exaltation, "he called the name of the first-born Manasseh,—for God has made me forget all my toil and all my father's house;" while "the name of the second called he Ephraim,—for God hath made me fruitful in the land of my affliction." For His Church, His heavenly bride, He has been content to be as if He remembered not His relationship with His people of old. The thread of prophecy lies unwoven in the shuttle of time, as if its wheel had stopped forever. Why this apparent forgetfulness on the part of Him who never slumbereth nor sleepeth? Surely, no change; but the pursuance of eternal purposes, which accomplished, Israel shall look upon the face of Him whom they have pierced, and a fountain be open to them also for sin and for uncleanness.

In the individual application we are again unable to go into much detail. We may easily, indeed, see how the wisdom of God, and His power in measure too, abide with such an one as our type represents. He is master of the circumstances by which at times he may appear mastered. All things necessarily serve the One who is ever with him, content Himself to find, through seeming defeat, His sure, eternal victory. Through all, he is preparing for the place where at last both his brethren shall be restored to him, and also the world shall be his own; for when Christ reigns (of which we have been tracing the figures here), His saints shall reign with Him.

SECTION 4. (Chap. xli. 50—xlvii. 26.)
The Days of Famine.

(XLI. 53—XLII.)

The first descent of his brethren into Egypt, and call to repentance.

1. Joseph the sole resource.

1. [1] AND the seven years of plenty that were in the land of Egypt were ended; and the seven years of famine began to come, as Joseph had said. And there was famine in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. And when all the land of Egypt suffered from the famine, and the people cried to Pharaoh for bread, Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; whatsoever he saith unto you, do. And the [b] famine was over the whole face of the earth; and Joseph opened up all the storehouses, and sold to the Egyptians: and the famine waxed great in the land of Egypt. And all countries came unto Egypt to Joseph to buy, for the famine prevailed in all the earth.

b Matt. 24. 21. Jer. 30. 7.

2. His brethren come for help.

[2] And [c] Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt; and Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another? And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: go down thither and buy for us from thence, that we may live and not die. And Joseph's ten brethren came down to buy corn in Egypt. But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren, for he said, Lest harm befall him. So the sons of Israel came to buy among them that came, for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

c Acts 7. 12. Ps. 132. 15.

3. Manifested to themselves.

[3] And Joseph was the governor over the land: he it was who sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came and [d] bowed themselves unto him with their faces to the earth. And Joseph saw his brethren; and he knew them, but [e] made himself strange to them, and spake roughly to them: and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan, to buy food. And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him. And Joseph remembered the

d ch. 33. 3.

e *cf.* Luke 24. 16, 28.

Sec. 4.

Now comes the time of famine; and when God's judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world shall learn righteousness. Not in the plenteous times of Christianity will the world as a whole turn to God; and therefore come drought and famine from the same hand which, unknown, bestowed the blessing. The present dispensation closed by the removal of the Church to be with her Lord, the times of the Gentiles will close, as the Lord Himself predicts (Luke xxi. 25–27): "And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon, and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken; and then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory."

Before He appears, and amid all the trial of a time such as the world has never seen, Israel will be preparing to recognize and receive her rejected Lord. And this is what we find typified in the chapters to which we have now come. The way in which it is expounded here shows surely the divine interest in their recovery, full of touching pathos as they are known to be.

The famine in all lands reaches Canaan also, and Joseph's ten brethren come down to buy corn in Egypt. We are all familiar with what follows, and how

dreams which he had dreamed about them; and he said unto them, Ye are spies: to see the nakedness of the land it is ye come. And they said unto him, No, my lord; but thy servants come to buy food. We are all one man's sons: we are true; thy servants are not spies. And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land are ye come. And they said unto him, Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is now with our father, and one is not. And Joseph said unto them, This is what I have spoken to you, saying, Ye are spies. By this shall ye be proved: as Pharaoh lives, ye shall not go forth hence except your youngest brother come hither! Send one of you, and fetch your brother; and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in them; and if not, as Pharaoh lives, ye are spies. And he put them together in ward three days. And Joseph said unto them on the third day, This do, and live; for I fear God. If ye be true, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison, and go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses, and bring your youngest brother unto me; and your words shall be verified, that ye die not. And so they did. And they said one to another, We are verily [f] guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us and we hearkened not to him; [g] therefore this strait is come upon us. And Reuben answered them, saying, [h] Did not I speak unto you, saying, Sin not against the lad; and ye hearkened not? And, behold, also, his blood is required. And they knew not that Joseph understood; for there was an interpreter between them. And he turned away from them, and [i] wept; and turned back to them, and spake to them, and took Simeon from them, and [j] bound him before their eyes.

4. Continued trial.

[4] And Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and [k] return every one's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way; and so they did to them. And they laded their asses with their corn, and departed thence. And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the lodging-place, he saw his money; for, behold, it was in his sack's mouth. And he said unto his brethren, My money is returned; lo, it is even in my sack. And their heart failed, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What is this that [l] God hath done to us? And they came to Jacob their father, unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that had befallen them, saying, The man, the lord of the country, spake unto us roughly, and made us out spies as to the land. And we

[f] Zech. 12. 10. Ps. 51. 14.
[g] Dan. 9. 14.
[h] ch. 37. 22.
[i] Hos. 11. 8. ch. 50. 17. ch. 43. 30.
[j] *cf.* ch. 37. 28. ch. 44. 33.
[k] Is. 55. 1. Is. 52. 3.
[l] *cf.* ver. 21.

their hearts and consciences are probed by one who knows and loves them well, but whom they know not. They obtain, indeed, a temporary supply for their necessities, but leave Simeon in prison, and are bidden not to appear again

said unto him, We are true men,—we are no spies: we are twelve brethren, the sons of our father; one is not, and the youngest is now with our father in the land of Canaan. And the man, the lord of the country, said unto us, By this shall I know that ye are true men: leave one of your brethren here with me, and take [food] for the famine of your households, and begone. And bring your youngest brother unto me; and I shall know that ye are not spies, but that ye are true men. Your brother I will give up to you, and ye shall trade in the land. And, behold, when they emptied their sacks, each man's bundle of money was in his sack; and when they saw their bundles of money,—they and their father, they were afraid. And their father Jacob said unto them, Me have ye [m] bereaved of my children! Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me. And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons if I bring him not to thee: put him in my hand, and I will bring him to thee again. And he said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone; and if harm happen to him in the way wherein ye go, then ye will bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol.

[m] *cf.* ch. 37. 33.

(XLIII.–XLV. 28.)

The second descent: Joseph their deliverer.

1. Benjamin sent.

2. [1] And the famine was heavy on the land: and it came to pass, when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt, that their father said unto them, Go again: buy us a little corn. And Judah spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face except your brother be with you. If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food; and if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down: for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. And Israel said, Why did ye deal so ill with me as to tell the man that ye had yet a brother? And they said, the man asked straitly as to us and as to our kindred, saying, Is your father yet alive? have ye a brother? and we told him after the tenor of these words. Could we know that he would say, Bring your brother down? And [n] Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live, and not die,—both we and thou and our

[n] ch. 37. 26.

except they bring Benjamin with them. Famine again forces them to come down; and this time, Judah having undertaken for Benjamin with his father, they bring him also. They are feasted by Joseph, still unknown; are sent away with the cup in Benjamin's sack; pursued, and brought back under the charge of theft; Benjamin is to remain as Joseph's slave, but Judah, his heart fully reached, offers himself in his stead: then Joseph's love bursts out; he makes himself known to them; they own their sin, are reconciled and comforted with his love.

little ones. I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him; if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thy face, then let me bear the sin with thee forever; for if we had not lingered, surely now we should have returned the second time. And Israel their father said unto them, If it be so now, do this: take of the best fruits of the land in your vessels, and carry the man down a °present,—a little balsam, and a little honey, spices and ladanum, pistacia-nuts and almonds. And take double money in your hand: and the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks carry back with you: perhaps it was an oversight. And take your brother, and arise, and return to the man. And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother and Benjamin. And if I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.

o *cf.* ch. 32. 13.

2. Debatings.

[2] And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin, and arose, and came down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph. And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, Bring these men home, and slaughter, and prepare: for these men shall eat with me at noon. And the man did as Joseph had said unto him, and the man brought the men into Joseph's house. And the men were ᵖafraid because they were brought into Joseph's house, and they said, Because of the money that was returned into our sacks at the beginning are we brought in, that he may seek occasion against us and fall on us, that he may take us for bondmen, and our asses. And they drew near to the steward of Joseph's house, and spake to him at the door of the house, and said, Ah, sir, we came down indeed at the first to buy food. And it came to pass when we came to the lodging-place, that we opened our sacks, and, lo, every man's money was in the mouth of his sack—our money in full weight, and we have brought it again in our hand; and other money have we brought down in our hand to buy food. We knew not who put our money in our sacks. And he said unto them, Peace be unto you: fear not! your God, and the God of your father, hath ᵠgiven you treasure in your sacks: your money came to me. And he brought Simeon forth unto them.

p *cf.* ch. 42. 28.

q *ctr.* ch. 25. 31. Ps. 127. 2.

3. With Joseph.

[3] And the man brought the men into Joseph's house; and he gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their asses provender. And they made

In all this, it is plain how all turns upon *Benjamin* and their state toward him. This is made the test of their condition. The power for their deliverance lies in Joseph's hand alone, however, and their exercises as to Benjamin all tend to awakening conscience and heart as to their sin against Joseph. The key of the typical interpretation is to be found in this:—

ready the present against Joseph came at noon; for they heard that they were to eat bread there. And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and [r]bowed themselves to him to the earth. And he asked them of their welfare, and said, Is your father well?—the old man of whom ye spake, is he yet alive? And they said, Thy servant our father is well; he is yet alive: and they bowed, and made obeisance. And he lifted up his eyes, and saw Benjamin his brother, his mother's son; and he said, Is this your youngest brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious to thee, my son! And Joseph made haste, for his bowels yearned toward his brother; and he [s]sought [where] to weep; and he went into his chamber, and wept there. And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread. And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians that were with him by themselves; for the Egyptians could not eat bread with the Hebrews, for it is an abomination to the Egyptians. And they sat before him,—the first-born according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth; and the men marveled one at another. And he had portions carried to them from before him; and Benjamin's portion was five times as much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him.

[r] ch. 37. 8.

[s] ch. 42. 24. ch. 45. 2. Jer. 31. 20. *cf.* Jno. 11. 35, 36. Heb. 4. 15.

4. New trial.

[t] And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry; and put every man's money in his sack's mouth. And put my cup—the silver cup—in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his corn-money; and he did according to the word which Joseph had spoken. As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away,—they and their asses. They were gone out of the city, [and] not [yet] far off, and Joseph said unto his steward, Up! follow after the men! and when thou hast overtaken them, say unto them, Why have ye recompensed evil for good? Is it not this wherein my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in so doing. And he overtook them and spake unto them these words. And they said unto him, Why doth my lord speak such

Joseph is Christ as we know Him, once rejected and suffering, now exalted: this is He whom Israel does not know. A Christ triumphant simply, and reigning upon the earth, is the Benjamin who is found among them, whether in the days of the Lord's rejection or the latter days. The *Conqueror* they were prepared for; the Sufferer who must go before Him—not knowing their own deep need,—they have refused. Yet the two are really one, and for them the Conqueror cannot be till they receive the Sufferer: not the faith of a Sufferer merely, but the One who has been this. Power lies with *Joseph*, not with Benjamin.

words as these? Far be it from thy servants to do such a thing! Behold, the money which we found in our sacks' mouth we brought again unto thee from the land of Canaan, and how should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold? [t] With whomsoever of thy servants it is found, let him die; and we also will be my lord's bondmen. And he said, Now also let it be according to your words: let him with whom it is found be my bondman, but ye shall be blameless. And they hasted and let down every one his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack. And he searched carefully, beginning with the eldest and ending with the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. And they rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city. And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house, and he was yet there, and they fell before him on the ground. And Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done? Do ye not know that such an one as I can certainly divine? And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak, and how justify ourselves? [u] God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants. Behold, we are my lord's bondmen,—both we and he with whom the cup is found. And he said, Far be it from me to do so! The man in whose hand the cup hath been found shall be my bondman; and as for you, go up to your father in peace.

[t] ch. 31. 32.

[u] *cf.* ch. 42. 28. Ps. 50. 20, 21.

5. Judah's plea: the end reached at last.

[5] Then [v] Judah came near unto him, and said, Ah, my lord! let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant; for thou art even as Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father or a brother? And we said unto my lord, We have a father—an old man, and a child of his old age—a young one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down to me, that I may set my eyes upon him. And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father; for if he leave his father, he will die. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall not see my face again. And it was so, when we came up to thy servant my father, we told my lord's words unto him. And our father said, Go again: buy us a little food. And we said, We cannot go down except our youngest brother be with us, then we will go down; for we cannot see the man's face except our youngest brother be with us. And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye

[v] *cf.* ch. 37. 26.

But Joseph's heart longs after Benjamin,—that is, Christ longs to display this character of power for them; but for this they must be brought to repentance, and He uses their ideal, prophetical Messiah to bring their hearts back to Himself the true one.

know that my wife bare me two sons; and the one went out from me, and I said, He is certainly torn in pieces, and I have not seen him since; and if ye take this one also from me, and harm befall him, then ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow unto Sheol. Now, then, when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad is not with us,—seeing that his life is bound up with his life,—it will be, when he seeth that the lad is not, that he will die; and thy servants will bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to Sheol. For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I will bear the sin unto my father forever. Now, therefore, I pray thee, [w] let thy servant abide instead of the lad, a bondman to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest I see the evil that shall come upon my father.

w ch. 42. 24. *ctr.* ch. 37. 26.

6. Joseph's victory.

[6] Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all that stood by him, and he cried, [x] Let every man go out from me! and there stood no man with him when Joseph made himself known to his brethren. And he [y] wept aloud, so that the Egyptians heard, and the house of Pharaoh heard. [z] And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph: doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him, for they were confounded at his presence. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. And now be not in pain, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither, for God sent me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land, and there are yet five years in which shall be neither ploughing-time nor harvest. And [a] God sent me before you to preserve you a remnant in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not ye who sent me hither, but God; and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord unto all his house, and a ruler in all the land of Egypt. Hasten, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph: God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me,—tarry not. And thou shalt dwell in the

x *cf.* ch. 22. 5. Jno. 8. 9.

y ch. 43. 30.

z *cf.* Jno. 20. 16, 21.

a Ps. 76. 10. Ps. 105. 17.

Amid the sorrows of the last days, this will be accomplished for them. He who, unknown, is seeking them will make them realize their Benjamin as Benoni—"the son of my sorrow," and that as the fruit of their own sin. (ch. xliv. 16.) Benjamin is taken from them: they have lost their part in Messiah as having rejected Him. All the depths of Judah's heart are stirred; and in his agony for *Benjamin*, he is met and overwhelmed by the revelation of *Joseph*. They look upon Him whom they have pierced, and mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son, and a fountain for sin and for uncleanness is opened to them. But this brings the whole nation into blessing under Christ.

land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me,—thou and thy children and thy children's children, and thy flocks and thy herds, and all that thou hast. And there will I sustain thee, (for yet there are five years of famine,) lest thou come to poverty,—thou and thy household, and all that thou hast. And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you. And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall hasten and bring down my father hither. And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. And he kissed all his brethren, and wept over them: and after that, his brethren talked with him.

7. The consummation.

[7] And the [b]report was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, Joseph's brethren are come; and it was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye: lade your beasts, and go, get you into the land of Canaan; and take your father, and your households, and come unto me; and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land. Now thou art commanded—this do: take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come. And let not your eye regret your stuff, for the good of all the land of Egypt, it is yours. And the sons of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them wagons according to Pharaoh's word, and gave them provisions for the way. To each one of them all he gave changes of raiment, and to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of raiment. And to his father he sent this: ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she-asses laden with corn and bread and food for his father by the way. And he sent his brethren away, and they departed; and he said unto them, [c]See that ye fall not out by the way. And they went up out of the land of Egypt, and came unto the land of Canaan, unto Jacob their father. And they told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt. And his [d]heart fainted, for he believed them not. And they spake unto him all the words which Joseph had spoken to them. And when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived. And Israel said, It is enough: Joseph my son is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die.

b Ps.126.1-3.

c Ps. 85. 8.

d 1 Kings 10. 5.

Israel dwelling in Egypt.

(XLVI.—XLVII. 12.)

1. The call and blessing of God.

3. [1] And Israel journeyed with all that he had, and came to [e]Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. And God spake unto Israel in visions of the night, and said unto him, Jacob, Jacob. And he

e ch. 26. 33.

said, Here am I. And he said, I am God [El], the God of thy father: *f* fear not to go down into Egypt, for I will there make of thee a great nation; I will go down *g* with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again; and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes. And Jacob rose up from Beersheba, and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons that Pharaoh had sent to carry him. And they took their cattle, and their goods which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt,—Jacob and all his seed with him,—his sons and his sons' sons with him,—his daughters and his sons' daughters, and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt.

f ctr. ch. 26. 2. ch. 15. 13.

g ch. 28. 15. Deut. 26. 5.

2. The increase of Jacob.

[2] And these are the names of the sons of Israel that came into Egypt: Jacob and his sons:—Jacob's first-born, Reuben. And the sons of Reuben, Enoch and Phallu and Hezron and Carmi. And the sons of Simeon, Jemuel and Jamin and Ohad and Jachin and Zohar and Saul the son of a Canaanitish woman. And the sons of Levi, Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. And the sons of Judah, Er and Onan and Shelah and Pharez and Zerah; but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. And the sons of Pharez were Hezron and Hamul. And the sons of Issachar, Tola and Puah and Job and Shimron. And the sons of Zebulon: Sered and Elon and Jahleel. These are the sons of Leah, whom she bare to Jacob in Paddan Aram; and his daughter Dinah. All the souls of his sons and his daughters were thirty and three. And the sons of Gad, Ziphion and Haggi, Shuni and Ezbon, Eri and Arodi and Areli. And the sons of Asher, Jimnah and Jishvah and Jishvi and Beriah, and Serah their sister; and the sons of Beriah, Heber and Malchiel. These are the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter: and these she bare unto Jacob,—sixteen souls. The sons of Rachel Jacob's wife, Joseph and Benjamin. And unto Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, which Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest in On bare to him. And the sons of Benjamin, Belah and Becher and Ashbel, Gera and Naaman, Ehi and Rosh, Muppim and Huppim and Ard. These are the sons of Rachel which were born to Jacob: all the souls were fourteen. And the sons of Dan, Hushim. And the sons of Naphtali, Jahzeel and Guni and Jezer and Shillem. These are the sons of Bilhah whom Laban gave unto Rachel his daughter, and she bare these unto Jacob: all the souls were seven. All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives,—all the souls were threescore and six. And the sons of Joseph which were born to him in Egypt were two souls: all the

souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were [h] threescore and ten.

3. Settling in the land.

[3] And he sent [i]Judah before him unto Joseph, to direct his face unto Goshen: and they came into the land of Goshen. And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father; and he presented himself to him, and fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. And Israel said unto Joseph, [j]Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, that thou art yet alive. And Joseph said unto his brethren, and unto his father's house, I will go up, and tell Pharaoh, and say unto him, My brethren, and my father's house, who were in the land of Canaan, are come unto me: and the men are shepherds, for they have been occupied with cattle; and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have. And it shall be when Pharaoh shall call you, and say, What is your occupation? that ye shall say, Thy servants have been occupied with cattle from their youth even until now,—both we and our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen: for every [k]shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians. Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh, and said, My father and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; and, behold, they are in the land of Goshen. And he took from the whole number of his brethren five men, and set them before Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, What is your occupation? and they said unto Pharaoh, Thy servants are shepherds,—both we and also our fathers. And they said unto Pharaoh, To sojourn in the land are we come; for there is [l]no pasture for the flocks that thy servants have; for the famine is heavy in the land of Canaan: and now, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen. And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee. The land of Egypt is before thee: in the best of the land cause thy father and thy brethren to dwell;—in the land of Goshen let them dwell; and if thou knowest any men of ability among them, then make them rulers over what cattle I have. And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh. And [m]Jacob blessed Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How many are the years of thy life? And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The years of my [n]sojourning are a hundred and thirty years: few and evil have been the years of my life, and have not attained to the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their sojournings. And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh. And Joseph settled his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt—in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded. And Joseph

h Acts 7. 14.
i ch. 44. 18.
j *cf.* Luke 2. 29.
k *cf.* ch. 4. 2.
l 2 Sam. 9. 6.
m Heb. 7. 7.
n Heb. 11. 13.

sustained his father and his brethren and all his father's house with bread according to their families.
(XLVII. 13-27.)

The land reduced under Pharaoh.

4. And there was no bread in all the land, for the famine was very heavy, so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan fainted because of the famine. And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, for the corn which they bought: and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house. And the money was all spent in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan; and all the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, Give us bread! for why should we die in thy presence? for money faileth. And Joseph said, Give your cattle, and I will give you for your cattle if money fail. And they brought their cattle unto Joseph, and Joseph gave them bread in exchange for the horses and for the flocks and for the herds and for the asses; and he fed them with bread in exchange for all their cattle for that year. And that year ended; and they came to him the second year, and said unto him, We will not hide from my lord that our money is spent; my lord hath also our herds of cattle; there is naught left in the sight of my lord but our bodies and our lands. Why should we die before thine eyes,—both we and our land? buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants to Pharaoh; and give us seed, that we may live and not die, and the land may not be desolate. And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field because the famine prevailed over them; so the land became Pharaoh's. And as for the people, he removed them into the cities from one end of the border of Egypt even to the other end thereof. Only the land of the priests he did not buy; for the priests had a portion from Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them: wherefore they sold not their land. And Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day, and your land, for Pharaoh: lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land. And it shall be in the increase that ye shall give a °fifth part unto Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your house-

° *cf.* ch. 41. 34.

After this, we read of the reduction of Egypt itself under the immediate authority of the throne. The people, bankrupt through the famine, receive back their lands from the bounty of the king, returning him one fifth of the produce as the token of their indebtedness to the grace from which they have received. It is thus that the world, under Christ, will find its place in true blessing before God. In the one fifth rendered, we are reminded once more of the Abrahamic 5,—the impotence of the creature and the omnipotence of God,—the one part a recognition of divine sovereignty. If we take it as two tenths, it may remind us of the double claim of God upon us—by creation and by redemption. This the world will acknowledge in the day to come.

holds, and for food for your little ones. And they said, Thou hast saved our lives: let us find favor in the eyes of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants. And Joseph made it a statute in the land of Egypt unto this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth, save that the land of the priests only became not Pharaoh's. And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen, and they had possessions in it, and were fruitful, and multiplied exceedingly.

SECTION 5. (Chap. xlvii. 28—xlix. 27.)

The moral conclusion: the end as the way.

(XLVII. 28-31.)

Survival in death.

1. AND Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years; so the years of the life of Jacob were a hundred and forty-seven years. And the time drew near that Israel must die; and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found favor in thy sight, [p] put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me. Bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt, but I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their [q] sepulchre. And he said, I will do according to thy word. And he said, Swear to me; and he sware to him. And Israel worshiped on the top of his staff.

p cf. ch. 24. 2. ch. 24. 49.

q Heb. 11. 22.

(XLVIII.)

The double portion of Joseph.

1. The birthright made over to him.

2. [1] And it was after these things that one told Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick. And he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. And one told Jacob and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh to thee. And Israel strengthened himself and sat upon the bed. And Jacob said unto Joseph, The almighty God appeared unto me at Luz, in the land of Canaan, and blessed me; and said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and will make of thee a company of peoples; and I will give this land unto thy seed after thee for an [r] everlasting possession. And now thy [s] two sons, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine: as Reuben and Simeon, Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine. And thine offspring which

r Amos 9. 14, 15.

s 1 Chron. 5. 1.

Sec. 5.

The fifth section, well-nigh the close of the whole book, is Deuteronomic in character, giving moral results. Here, Jacob again, rather than Joseph, is the central figure, his day brightening at the end to a serene sunset. He dies at a hundred and forty-seven years old,—a number not without meaning, we may believe, in its $7 \times 7 \times 3$, the number of complete accomplishment intensified, with that of divine manifestation. With him, the single, simple, patriarchal life is ended, the first division of this primitive divine history is over.

In the first place, here we have the vow which Jacob exacts from Joseph—that he shall be buried in Canaan, in the sepulchre of his fathers. He thus links himself with them as waiting, even in death, for the promise to be fulfilled. Thus the promise is a promise of life which death cannot vanquish or undo.

thou shalt beget after them shall be thine: after the name of their brethren shall they be called in their inheritance. And as for me, when I came from Paddan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan on the way, when there was yet a little way to come to Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath,—that is, Bethlehem.

2. Manasseh and Ephraim: spiritual increase.

[2] And Israel saw the sons of Joseph, and he said, Who are these? And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons which God hath given me here. And he said, Bring them to me now, that I may bless them. And Israel's eyes were [t]dim with age: he could not see. And he brought them near to him; and he kissed them and embraced them. And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face, and, lo, God hath made me to see thy seed also. And Joseph brought them out from his knees, and bowed down with his face to the earth. And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near to him. And Israel stretched forth his right hand, and laid it on Ephraim's head, who was the [u]younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly, though Manasseh was the [v]first-born. And he blessed Joseph, and said, The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac [w]walked, the God who as a shepherd [x]tended me all my life long unto this day,—the Angel who redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads, and let my name be named upon them, and the name of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac, and let them swarm into a multitude in the midst of the earth. And when Joseph saw that his father had laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it was evil in his eyes, and he took hold of his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head. And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father, for this is the first-born; lay thy right hand upon his head. But his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become the fullness of nations. And he blessed them that

t ctr. ch. 27. 1.

u Heb. 11. 21.

v cf. ch. 25. 23.

w ch 5. 22. ch. 24. 40.

x ch. 28. 20.

Next, we have the blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh, in whom Joseph receives the double portion of the birthright, Reuben having lost it. (1 Chron. v. 1, 2.) It shows how Joseph fulfills his name, which is, "adding," or "increase." This is, indeed, the beautiful lesson of his life. The law of spiritual increase we find in him, as indicated by the name of his son, "Ephraim"—"fruitfulness." But the way to fruitfulness is by "Manasseh"—"forgetfulness," as with the apostle, "*Forgetting* that which is behind, I press on." (Phil. iii. 13, 14.) Manasseh is the first-born, *in fact;* but as the end is greater than the means, so Ephraim is, in the mind of God, greater than Manasseh. Nature would often with us, as in Joseph here, resist so simple a conclusion. Manasseh before Ephraim is in truth the very principle of asceticism in all times.

day, saying, By thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh.

3. Joseph's portion in the land.

[3] And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die; but God shall be with you, and bring you back to the land of your fathers. And I have given unto thee one portion above thy brethren, which I have taken out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.

(XLIX. 1-27.)

The portions of the tribes.

1. The sons of Leah: the nation under the first covenant.

3. [1] (a) And Jacob called his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the end of days. Assemble yourselves, and hearken, ye sons of Jacob: hearken unto Israel your father. Reuben, thou, my [y] first-born, my vigor, and the topmost of my strength: excellency of dignity and excellency of power! boiling up as water, thou shalt have no [z] excellency! because thou wentest up unto thy father's bed: then thou defiledst it: he went up to my couch!

y Deut. 21. 15-17.

a The first-born loses the primacy.

z *cf.* ch. 48. 12-16. Gal. 2. 20.

In the third place, we have the blessing of the tribes as a whole, in which, from their characters as already shown, or their names as indicating character, their future is predicted. Thus the government of God shows itself throughout it.

In the enumeration, we have, first, the sons of Leah, then those of the bondmaids intermingled with one another, and then Rachel's children. These are plainly three divisions.

Of Leah's, the first-born is Reuben; but just as the might of nature which is fallen, he is necessarily deposed from his primacy: we have seen Joseph getting what Reuben loses here; the two are opposites. Reuben represents, not the flesh,—for God does not bless the flesh; but the dignity of nature,—of man as natural, now indeed fallen, but not *necessarily* fallen. And man's nobility lies essentially in that intelligent *will*, which alone *is* "will," and without which he would be the mere machine worked by other hands, or the boat adrift without oar or rudder. Reuben—"see a son"—is thus man in that which makes him the "offspring of God," His image,—not merely a cause, but a *causer*. Sin has come in, alas! and his will has become *self*-will—an independent energy with "vanity" stamped on it; a "bubbling over," as the word "unstable," said here of Reuben, really means, which scruples not to shame and defile the man himself, the source of it. Thus the will in man has lost its dignity, and become his degradation; and that which is his glory as man lowers him beneath the beast. For indeed his pre-eminence is necessarily connected with this power for self-debasement, which the beast has not.

But one may ask, Where is the *blessing* of Reuben in all this? for it is said of all, "Every one he blessed according to his own blessing,"—that is, according to what *would be* blessing in each case. For Reuben, it must be found, then, in this very deprivation of his. When the will accepts its humiliation,—when we say, but from a different cause from that which made the Lord say it, "*Not* my will, but Thine"! then is it blessed, and its glory returns to it.

Dispensationally for Israel, Reuben represents the time of its energetic youth, when upon the ground of the first covenant,—that is, of its own responsibility, when its corruption deposed it from the primacy among the nations with which God had endowed it, and the birthright passed to Him who alone is able to support it; here the blessing could only be attained in their humiliation.

Violence necessarily follows corruption, as Simeon and Levi follow Reuben. They are united together, as brethren well agreed in character, and actually

β Confederacy and violence remedied only by division.

(β) [a] Simeon and [b] Levi are brethren: weapons of [c] violence are their contracts. O my soul, come not into their plotting! unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united! for in their anger they slew men, and in their wantonness they houghed oxen. Cursed be their anger, for it was violent! and their rage, for it was cruel! I will [d] divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.

γ Judah's exaltation: the spirit of praise the secret of power.

(γ) [e] Judah, thee shall thy brethren praise: thy hand shall be on the neck of thine enemies; thy [f] father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a [g] lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up. He stooped, he lay down as a lion; and as a lioness: who will rouse him? The [h] sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and to him shall the [i] obedience of the peoples be. Binding his foal to the vine, and his ass's colt to the choice vine, he hath washed his clothing in wine, and his garment in blood of grapes. His eyes are red with wine, and his teeth are white with milk.

a ch. 34. 25.
b *etc.* Deut. 33. 8. 1 Cor. 15. 10.
c *cf.* ch. 6. 13. Rom. 12. 19.
d ch. 11. 9. Josh. 21. 3.
e Ps. 108. 8. Ps. 76. 8.
f *cf.* ch. 27. 29. ch. 37. 8.
g Rev. 5. 5.
h Matt. 2. 6. Matt. 27. 37. Matt. 23. 39. Ps. 45. 1-8. Ps. 24. 7-10. Is. 32. 1, 2.
i Ps. 72. 9, 10.

united upon that terrible occasion of which Jacob here so energetically speaks. Notice how the thought of agreement—confederacy—runs through what is said, and how the doom upon them, which, as in Reuben's case, works for blessing, is to be *dis*united, "divided," "scattered." To be brought into loneliness, individuality, weakness, would be the reproof and the remedy for that "strength" which comes of "union," and which so constantly manifests itself in deeds of violence. Conscience is individual, and brings in God. The weakness of individuality makes Him our necessary resource. But thus all the highest character of manhood is developed by it. Confederacy annuls the individual conscience, begins in craft, and develops into tyranny as power is acquired. The doom is here the remedy, and is to bring Simeon and Levi back to the true meaning of their names: Simeon—"hearing," to find the answer which God gives to human prayer; and Levi—"joined," to own the ties only which have *divine* origin and sanction.

Here, then, relationship to others is the question, as in Reuben, what man is in himself. In the divine life both must be met; and one's associations come only next in importance to the fundamental one, Who is my Master? Indeed, the first question *truly* answered answers all; but because we answer it so little truly, God would search us out with one upon another, till He has shown us all.

Dispensationally, we find here, as it would seem, the history of Israel during the times of the Judges, and until David. Coalitions and divisions, strife and violence, fill up this period: there is no king, and no real turning to God.

The blessing of Judah comes in the third place. "Judah," as we know, means "praise," Leah saying, when she bore him, "Now will I praise the Lord." It is striking to see in the history of the people of which these blessings give us the general outline, how, when Judah came to power with David, the worship of Jehovah revived. The ark in the days of Saul the Benjamite had never been inquired at. (1 Chron. xiii. 3.) David brought it to Jerusalem with rejoicing, and Solomon built the house in which it was enshrined. When the great schism came, and the ten tribes went after the golden calves, Judah remained thus far faithful. David was himself Israel's sweet psalmist, and has given to the saints of every generation since songs of praise that never grow old. Thus Judah's name has vindicated its prophetic character, and the rise of the tribe to power is connected with a real revival of spiritual power, which in Israel ever was the basis of political revival. Judah, therefore, was not to lose the sceptre until Shiloh came (the "Man of peace")—Christ springing out of

δ Israel turning to the Gentile world.

(δ) Zebulon shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be a [j]haven for ships, and his border shall be toward Zidon.

[j] Hos. 7. 8.

ε Under the yoke in retribution.

(ε) Issachar is a [k]bony ass, lying down between two hurdles; and he saw that rest was good, and that the land was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant for tribute.

[k] ver. 15.

Judah, and to Him would the obedience of the people be. This carries us plainly through the whole of the Old-Testament history, and into the New, while then, (strange as it might seem,) Judah's sceptre, it is implied, would pass away, just when the coming of Christ would seem to make it permanent. We know well the reason, and see once more how prophecy justifies itself. Messiah comes to His own, and is rejected and cut off.

In its individual application, we find the spirit of *praise* as that of *power*—necessarily, because God is exalted in it. It is what the fiftieth psalm challenges on His part from His people: "Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High; . . . . whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me." It is this that marks the life which comes from God, that it turns back to God again; and the joy of the Lord is ever its principle of strength. A simple lesson, but, oh, that it were learnt! The "wine" so abundant in the portion of Judah is the sign of a joy in which there can be no excess; and the "milk" may show that here there is not merely stimulus, but nourishment as well, and that in a form in which the merest babe may find it.

In the fourth place, we come to Zebulon; and again his name is plainly referred to. It is a "dwelling with," in intimacy, as Leah's use of it shows; but Jacob here uses another word, which has, in this place, evidently a bad significance. Its primary meaning is, "to lay one's self down," and Zebulon does this at the haven of the sea—the haven for ships, and his border is toward Zidon. While the idea of prosperity, or at least the industrious seeking of it, is plain, yet for Israel, we must remember, this commerce with the idolatrous nations was not a good sign, nor in result good, and her border reaching out toward Zidon prophesies dangerous obliteration of what divided Israel from the nations. Coming in the place in which it does also, there is a clear intimation of how the people, having turned from their God-sent Deliverer, would turn to the world.

What is the *blessing* here for Zebulon? and what is the principle which underlies it, similar to what we have found in the former blessings? Openly, God does not come in at all, either to bless or judge, except it be in this, that his portion comes to him from Him in that which it is evident he chooses. And is not this often for us judgment and blessing in one, when God apportions us the very thing we desire, that we may taste the bitterness of our own ways, and learn, in result, the happiness of His? It is not the best way of learning; but yet it is not seldom the only way in which we can learn, and God means at any rate to teach us. What these nations would be—have been—for Israel, we shall learn in Issachar.

In Issachar, we find Israel content to be the drudge of the Gentiles; one who would not endure God's yoke tamely accepting that of men. Here, too, the name is dwelt upon: "there is reward;" ease and gain are alone what is sought. How true to the character of unbelieving Israel! And these are the governmental ways of God, who, unknown by them, yet ordains their circumstances; and this is more plainly from Him, and for good, than in the case we were last considering.

This ends the tale of Leah's sons, who give us, as it appears to me, the history of Israel according to the flesh until the present time of God's seeming forgetfulness is ended, the Church removed to heaven, and the "end of the (Jewish) age," God's determined time upon them, in which He brings them back to Himself, begins. The children of the bondmaids represent this, for it is in the

2. The children of the bondmaids. Deliverance at the lowest point of humiliation and distress under Antichrist.

α Self-government again in Israel, but the reign of the willful king.

β Conflict and deliverance.

γ Enjoyment of their portion in the land.

δ Practical condition. 3. Rachel: seed of the barren wife. The manifestation of God in Christ for His people.

α Abiding power and grace: the blessing of the Almighty.

[2] (α) Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a [l]serpent by the way, an adder lurking in the path, biting the horse-heels, so that the rider falleth backward. I have [m]waited for thy salvation, Jehovah.

(β) [n]Gad, a troop shall press on him, but he shall press at the end.

(γ) Of [o]Asher—his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield dainties for a king.

(δ) [p]Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth pleasant words.

[3] (α) A [q]fruitful tree is Joseph,—a fruitful tree by a spring; the branches run over the [r]wall. The archers have galled him, and shot at him, and hated him; but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made firm by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob—from thence is the [s]Shepherd, the [t]Stone of Israel:—

[l] 2 Thess. 2. 8, 9.

[m] 2 Sam. 23. 5. Ps. 13. 1, 2. Ps. 35. 17, etc.

[n] Jer. 30. 9. Is. 40. 1, 2.

[o] cf. Jno. 6. 51, etc.

[p] cf. Lev. 14. 7. Mark 16. 9. Rom. 6. 9. Jno. 20. 19.

[q] Jno. 12. 24.

[r] cf. Eph. 2. 14.

[s] Jno. 10. 11.

[t] Is. 28. 16. 1 Pet. 2. 6.

time of their lowest degradation that He brings in salvation for them. In the first place here we have Dan; and Dan judges his people *as one of the tribes of Israel*. This is the prophecy of the restoration of the people to self-government,—Dan as well as the rest, though the least of them all. The rise from Issachar's burdened condition is very evident. Yet it is just at this time that their worst trouble and their deepest fall are found. Hence the mingled character of the abrupt address. For it is when the Jews, restored, though in unbelief, by Gentile aid, have once more become a nation, at least partially independent, that the last antichrist, claiming to be their Messiah will appear amongst them (long since, from this very prophecy, connected with the tribe of Dan). He will be the "lawless one" of 2 Thess. ii., and the willful king of Dan. xi. He will be "a serpent in the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse-heels, so that the rider falleth backward." Here, satanic character is apparent, and the cry bursts from Jacob—prophetically, the cry of the remnant of grace in those darkest hours before the dawn,—"I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord." Thus cast upon Him, now the road is upward.

2. Or, "Gad, a troop shall rush upon him, but *he* shall rush upon the heel." Conflict, with final victory, is depicted here: the assaulting foes are routed and pursued.

3. Quiet possession of the land, and abundance, follow with Asher, the "happy one." And—

4. Naphtali is free as the *hind*, the female deer, no longer a warrior, with nothing to dread; and giving goodly words: for Israel's tongue will at last be loosed also, and she shall give forth words of joy and praise and sweetness such as she has never done.

Thus God has come in, and salvation is attained; but we have yet Rachel's children, as a third series, and we are in no doubt as to the significance of these. Joseph, the One separated from His brethren, and Benjamin, the Son of the right hand: both these we know,—the Christ they knew not, now their joy and boast, and the Christ they clung to, but whose dependence upon the rejected One they knew not. Now they are together, the double witness of a double salvation.

1. Joseph whom they despised is, however, the main figure here, whose fruit, maintained for us by the living power of the Spirit, has run over the Jewish wall; and will run over, that the Gentiles also may rejoice in Him; galled, shot at, hated by the archers, yet His bow abides in strength, and the arms of His

by the God of thy father who helpeth thee, and the Almighty, and he shall [u] bless thee with blessings of the heavens above, and blessings of the deep that lieth beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb; the blessings of thy father have out-gone the blessings of my forefathers unto the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills:—they shall be on the head of Joseph, even on the crown of the head of him who was [v] separated from his brethren.

[u] *cf.* Matt. 28. 18. Phil. 2. 9-11.

[v] Jno. 16.32.

β The destruction of the enemies.

(*β*) [w] Benjamin shall tear as a wolf: in the morning devour the prey, and at even divide the spoil.

[w] Rev. 19. 11-16. Ps. 45. 3-5.

SECTION 6. (Chap. xlix. 28—l.)

The final victory: of life over death, and of God over evil.

(XLIX. 28—L. 14.)

Life unchanged by death.

1. ALL these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father spake to them and blessed them; every one according to his own blessing did he bless them. And he charged them, and said unto them, I am being gathered to my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite,—in the cave that is in the field of [x] Machpelah, which is opposite Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought of Ephron the Hittite, along with the field, for possession of a sepulchre. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried [y] Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah. The purchase of the field, and of the cave that was therein, was from the children of Heth. And when Jacob had made an end of charging his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and expired, and was gathered to his people. And Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept over him, and kissed him. And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father; and the physicians embalmed Israel. And forty days were fulfilled for him, for so are fulfilled the days of those that are embalmed. And the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days. And when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph

[x] ch. 23. 17.

[y] ch. 35. 29.

hands are made strong by the hands of *Jacob's* Mighty One, the God of grace. Resurrection has confirmed in this way His power, and as the Risen One He becomes the Shepherd of Israel, the Stone made the head of the corner. Fullness of all blessings are on the head of Him who was separated from His brethren. What a testimony for the Jew to-day!

2. Benjamin ravens as a wolf, but the notice is slight as compared with that of Joseph. The Messiah believed in by Israel is but little indeed beside the greater and more glorious figure. Still, Christ will fulfill both types; and judgment also be His needed though "strange work."

Sec. 6.

The sixth section closes Joseph's history and the book together: a sweet if a solemn ending; for what does the number speak of but of the limit of man's life of toil,—a limit imposed through sin, and for our discipline because of it,—a limit in which we recognize God's mastery of evil, the victory of good over it? Just so does this last section speak. One might say its subject is death:

spake to the house of Pharaoh, saying, If now I have found favor in your eyes, speak, I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh, saying, My father made me swear, saying, Behold, I am dying: in my sepulchre which I have dug for me in the land of Canaan, there shalt thou bury me: now, therefore, let me go up, I pray thee, and bury my father; and I will come again. And Pharaoh said, Go up, and bury thy father, as he made thee swear. And Joseph went up to bury his father, and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, and all the house of Joseph, and his brethren, and his father's house; only their little ones, and their flocks and their herds, they left in the land of Goshen. And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen; and it was a very great company. And they came to the threshing-floor of Atad, which is beyond Jordan, and there they lamented with a great and very sore lamentation: and he made a mourning for his father seven days. And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning in the floor of Atad, they said, This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians: therefore the name of it was called Abel-Mizraim, which is beyond Jordan. So his sons did unto him according as he had commanded them; for his sons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham bought along with the field, for a possession of a sepulchre, of Ephron the Hittite, opposite to Mamre. And after he had buried his father, Joseph returned into Egypt,—he and his brethren, and all that went up with him to bury his father.

Jacob dies and Joseph dies. All that our hearts have linked themselves with passes under the shadow in which for the present we leave them, though in the faith of a future beyond. And this, we may be sure, is good. The night lets fall the dew. Our souls grow soft and tender with fruitful memories. Day and night together, linked by the ordinance of God, we learn to link, and call it, from the brightness that is in it, but "one '*day*.'"

There are two points, as I take it, in this section.

First, Jacob dies, and is buried. Again we find him charging, this time all his sons, to bury him with his fathers in Machpelah. Do we not need the impressive reiteration that the promise of life is all untouched by death? The living man sends his dead body in to take possession in hope of his inheritance.

Jacob they bury with great lamentation, and the Egyptians—all the world—lament. We read of nothing like this in the case of Abraham or Isaac, or even of Joseph afterward. Why does the Spirit of God dilate on this mourning for Jacob? It is in "the threshing-floor of Atad, which is beyond Jordan," that this mourning of the Egyptians is specially marked; and Atad is the buck-thorn, from one of the kinds of which tradition asserts that Christ's crown of thorns was procured. It is not necessary to affirm this in order to get the lesson from it. The threshing-floor conveys aptly the very moral of Jacob's life of discipline. The thorn is the sign of the curse,—the growth of a barren soil. These thoughts associate themselves together without difficulty. The "thorn in the flesh" was a needful discipline for even the chief of the apostles. The threshing-floor of buck-thorn doubly emphasizes, then, the sorrow of Jacob's life, "*beyond* Jordan,"—

Joseph with his brethren.

1. Unchanging grace and divine sovereignty in good.

(L. 15-26.)

2. [1] And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, If now Joseph should be hostile to us, and indeed requite us all the evil which we did to him! And they sent a messenger to Joseph, saying, Thy father commanded ere he died, saying, Thus shall ye say unto Joseph, Oh forgive, I pray thee, the transgression of thy brethren, and their sin! for they did evil unto thee; but now forgive, we pray thee, the transgressions of the servants of thy father's God! and [z] Joseph wept while they spake unto him. And his brethren also went and fell down before his face, and said, Behold, we are thy servants. And Joseph said unto them, Fear not! for am I in the place of God? Ye indeed meant evil against me: God meant it for good, in order to do as it is this day, to save much people alive. And now fear not! I will sustain you and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake affectionately to them.

z ch. 42. 24. cf. Jno. 14. 9.

2. A witness in death. Bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus.

[2] And Joseph dwelt in Egypt,—he and his father's house; and Joseph lived a hundred and ten years. And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third [generation]; the children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were brought up from infancy on Joseph's knees. And Joseph said unto his brethren, [a] I die, but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land of which he sware unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely [b] visit you, and ye shall [c] carry up my bones from hence. And Joseph died, a hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

a 1 Kings 2. 2.

b Ex. 3. 16.

c Ex. 13. 19. Josh. 24. 32. Acts 7. 16. Heb. 11. 22.

that is, the earth-side of death, looking, as we mostly do in Scripture, from Canaan, not toward it. Here are the thorns, and here is the threshing-floor; and here, too, is the mourning. Only, the world, as well as faith, can see the *thorns;* but faith alone can see the *threshing-floor*. The world laments the "few and evil days,"—the blighting and the poverty of life. Faith, smiling through her tears, owns the necessary chastening of a Father's love. Joseph and the Egyptians are not one, although the Canaanites may indeed confound them.

In the second and last place, we have Joseph before us—Christ abiding when all else departs; and abiding in His love unchangeably. The unbelief of Joseph's brethren only brings out and confirms to them this. How the truth of Christ's love is questioned by His own, because of the testimony of our lives against us! Conscience may rightly upbraid us: Christ does not upbraid. Let us not make our Joseph weep afresh.

Now Joseph himself departs; but we have not lost him: here is an exception from all else we have seen. He is *not* to be buried. Why? There is absolutely no thought of burial, so far as this book is concerned. Israel's future departure from Egypt is seen in faith, and when God visits them, and they become pilgrims, they are to *carry his bones with them* on their pilgrimage. Though He be no longer dead, but living, are *we* not also bidden to "bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be manifested in our body"?

Sweet and suited admonition wherewith to close the story of "Life" in the book of Genesis. "That the life may be MANIFEST:" is it not the great aim of all these communications to us? Let us turn it into a prayer, and make it our own: Blessed Saviour, grant that in us indeed Thy life may be manifest!

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF EXODUS.

ITS SCOPE LITERALLY.—In Exodus, in its literal significance, we have the redemption of Israel out of Egypt and the establishment of their relationship with Jehovah their Redeemer. But the redemption being not as yet spiritual and eternal, but only the type of this, the relationship is only as yet by legal covenant, always the contrast with the grace wherein now we stand. Yet the law contains in itself also the testimony to the full salvation which lies beyond, and to which it is the handmaid.

ITS SCOPE TYPICALLY.—Typically, therefore, Exodus speaks to us of our redemption, and of our relationship to God through the Redeemer, corresponding essentially to the two divisions of the book.

The Two Divisions are—

1. (Chap. i.–xviii.) Power acting in grace, according to the promise to the fathers, and to the name "Jehovah," the Self-Existent One.

2. (Chap. xix.–xl.) The Legal Covenant, with its types of the fuller salvation, and throughout typical of our relationship to God by the Redeemer.

NOTES.

AT first sight, the two divisions of the book seem discordant, or at least in slender connection with one another. In fact, nothing could be more in agreement than they are, or more needful to bring out the meaning of the whole. For redemption is not complete in mere deliverance from the power of the enemy, but is a testimony to what is in the heart of the deliverer,—to a relationship to which His love has destined us, and set us free. We are redeemed *to God*; and in no other way could the deliverance be effectual. The yoke of a new Master alone can maintain us in freedom from the old tyranny. Independent we cannot be, and only the delirium of pride and ingratitude could seek it.

In the literal application, however, the two divisions are indeed very different in character, and we feel the change the moment Mount Sinai is reached and the people have taken upon themselves to keep a law impracticable to fallen man. And yet even the giving of the law is based upon redemption. "Ye have seen," saith the Lord, "what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself: now, therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people." And so in the commencement of the "ten words" themselves:—"I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of

Egypt, out of the house of bondage." The law is thus not addressed to all the world on the ground of creation, for man is a fallen being, and the only basis on which God can deal with him, save in judgment, is some new relationship, which must be of grace. Redemption is necessarily of grace; although here as yet it is of a nation only, not involving individual *soul*-salvation or eternal life. Of these it is the type, but the type only.

Here, then, also the second division of the book depends upon the first; while it is evident that the typical or spiritual application alone gives it its proper significance. The history, as in Genesis, is prophecy as much as history: it is history written as no uninspired chronicler could write it; and we may read it with confidence that we shall find in it throughout the lessons of a wisdom more than man's.

The four subdivisions of the first part are too plain to call for any particular remark. The first of these shows redemption to proceed from the sovereign grace of God alone; the second gives witness of the separation of the world from God, and the results of this, with the separation, therefore, of His people from the world; the third shows the full accomplishment of their deliverance; and the fourth, how His grace still pursues and provides for the objects of it in their after-way.

The first subdivision has, again, three sections; but before entering upon the details of exposition to which this brings us, it will be well to look at the scene of all this first part of the book,—

EGYPT,—

and see how vivid is the picture that it presents to us of the world as fallen from God,—that world to which we naturally belong, and from which we have to be redeemed.

The name for Egypt in Scripture is Mizraim, which means "double straitness," or "double strip," and this describes exactly what Egypt is. It is a little strip of country on each side of the great river which flows through it, and to which alone it owes its existence. For the desert on each side hems it in, blowing in its sands from all directions, over which the river, in its yearly overflow, deposits its burden of earth and renews the soil. Thus goes on, as in the world at large, a perpetual conflict between life and death. If for one year the river but partially fails, the land is in distress. And such is the world, in which the stream of God's mercies in its uninterrupted flow maintains what would otherwise be impossible existence. Yet although thus dependent, the world sees not, as Egypt sees not, upon what it really depends. In contrast with Canaan, which drinks its water of the rain of heaven, the sources of its river are too far off for practical acknowledgment. It is the river itself that is their all, and they can even impute to themselves what is the gift of God: "My river is mine, and I have made it." (Ezek. xxix. 3.)

In the pedigree of the nations, Gen. x., Mizraim is found to be the son of Ham; and in the Psalms, Egypt is called "the land of Ham." (Ps. cv. 23, 27.) Chem or Khem, undoubtedly the same word, is the name for Egypt in the hieroglyphical inscriptions. Its meaning is "black," or "sun-burnt"—*darkened by the light.* And this is what the "natural state," as we call it, really is,—not a darkness which proceeds from the absence of light, but the effect, upon such as man is, of the light itself. The state of the heathen is not, as it is often pictured, that of people in the midst of darkness over which they have no control, groping after a God they cannot find. On the one hand, God has never left Himself without witness; and on the other, "there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God." The genesis of heathenism is given thus by the apostle, that "when they *knew* God they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their *foolish heart was darkened.*" (Rom. i. 21.)

Mizraim is thus the son of Ham spiritually as well as naturally, and as being thus turned away from God he sinks under the control of circumstances. He does not seem to give his name to the land so much as to

derive it from the land,—a name which expresses, as we have seen, the straitness of his condition. How significant is all this! how the word of God penetrates to the heart of things, and lays bare the hidden reality!

Yet this Egypt within its narrow limits was remarkable as the abode of the arts and sciences, the home of civilization. Still people go down there—for you "go down," not "up," to Egypt—to study her wonderful monuments and admire her massive architecture. Egypt built as if she had eternity before her in which to enjoy it. Her buildings were made to outlast by ages the people of a day who builded them. They could not make the people last, yet they did what they could at that: they *embalmed their dead*, and sent them down to the generations yet to come, solemn preachers of the vanity attaching to all that is human. What a comment upon all her grandeur! Her main literary memorial is a "book of the dead." In her whole condition, death seems stereotyped. The desert, after all, has vanquished the river. The land of science and art is a land of death, and not of life.

This is the stamp of vanity upon a fallen creation. It is more; it is the stamp of divine reprobation. For "in His favor is life:" could He repent and unmake unless we had given Him cause for repentance? Surely He could not. When God is able to rest in His love, as by and by He will, that will necessitate the eternity of the condition of all amid which He can rest. All will then be stamped with eternity, as the seal of His approbation. When He rests in His love, nothing can deprive Him of the object of His love.

The religion of Egypt was very remarkable. They had a religion in which were embalmed the relics of another religion—the dead tradition of a life that had been. "Even Herodotus had learned that, amidst their system of polytheism, the Egyptians of Thebes recognized one supreme God, who had no beginning, and would have no end; and Jamblichus quotes from the old Hermetic books the statement, 'Before all the things that actually exist, and before all beginnings, there is one God,—prior even to the first god and king, remaining unmoved in the singleness of His own Unity.' And now, if like the prophet on his mission to Egypt we ask by *what name* we shall announce this God, the sacred books of Egypt give the very same answer—an answer which the initiated took with them to the grave, inscribed on a scroll as their confession of faith—'NUK PU NUK'—'I am that I am.'" (Phil. Smith: "Ancient History of the East.")

Spite of all this, what was it, in fact, that Egypt every-where worshiped? Emphatically and universally, the creature, and not the Creator. Egypt, which testified of the true God, took up every thing which was His total opposite, and deified a hundred bestial objects, and debased its worshipers thus below the beasts.

Their worship was a deification really, however,—as all heathen worship is,—of their own lusts and passions; and these are what every where naturally control man. The bait in Eden was, "Ye shall be as God;" and man has found that true in an awful way. He is become his own god; as the apostle says of some, even professing Christians, Their "god is their belly." The craving in man's heart for satisfaction not being met in God, lust and care devour him; he worships himself in a way which tends evermore to what is brutalizing and degrading.

Such is man in the flesh; such is the world: and being such, we are led easily to realize what king reigns over it. The king was a very absolute one, and the state of the people an iron bondage: "he that committeth sin is the servant (or slave) of sin," says the Lord; and in the epistle to the Romans, to which we naturally go for the interpretation of the types of redemption, we find sin accordingly as that which tyrannizes over the natural man: "*sin* hath reigned unto death." And then, when redemption itself is pictured, we find that "our old man is crucified with [Christ], that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve—be slaves to—sin." Here we find what exactly answers to Israel's deliverance at the Red Sea. Pharaoh and his host were cast into the sea.

No doubt Satan is also called "the prince of this world," and many believe

EXODUS.

DIVISION 1. (Chap. i.–xviii.)

Power acting in grace, according to the promise to the fathers, and to the name "Jehovah," the Self-Existent One.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. i.–iv. 17.)

Sovereign grace in the call of the deliverer.

SECTION 1. (Chap. i.)

The first actings of grace: the hidden hand of overruling power.

(vv. 1-5.)

The beginning of a nation.

1.[a] NOW these are the names of the sons of Israel, who came into Egypt: with Jacob came each man with his household: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah; Issachar, Zebulon, and Benjamin; Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls: now Joseph was [already] in Egypt. [a] Gen. 46. 8.

(6-14.)

Increase and bondage.

2. And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation. And the children of Israel were [b]fruitful, and swarmed and multiplied, and became exceeding strong; and the land was filled with them. And there arose a new king over Egypt who [c]knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of [b] Ps. 105. 24. [c] Ju. 2. 10.

this to be what we have here. But the conflict with Satan we find in Ephesians, not in Romans, and typically presented (very differently from this) in the book of Joshua. We shall find, as we go on, what distinguishes the one conflict from the other: it is enough to note here the different place they occupy.

Sec. 1.

Grace in its first actings is here shown to us: the small beginning of a nation in the seventy souls that came into Egypt with Jacob, contrasted with their marvelous and irrepressible increase. Even the bondage into which they come had been already assured them, and what seemed most against them was really the working out of promise for them. The hand of power works in disguise, yet one to faith quite penetrable. It is the same story essentially, whether told of the nation of Israel or of any of the Lord's redeemed.

First, we are reminded how it is the children of Israel are found in Egypt: every man and his household came with *Jacob*. The natural name of their father is in perfect place here. We do not inherit grace. We came into the land of bondage with our father Adam.

The bondage itself, however, does not begin at once; for *conscious* bondage is not the expression of our mere natural state. The man in the seventh of Romans is not a mere child of nature. You will not find such an one crying out, "Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" That is an expression of *felt* bondage. There was a time when Egypt pleased us well enough, as there was a time when Egypt pleased Israel well enough. Afterward, we find them remembering with desire the good things they had in Egypt, as the golden calf was an imitation of the worship of Egypt. They had had a flourishing and happy time there, as we know; and it was God who, seeing a need in them they saw not, as

the children of Israel are more and mightier than we. Come, let us deal [d]wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass when war occurreth, that they join themselves also to our enemies, and fight against us, and [e]go up out of the land. And they set over them [f]taskmasters to humble them with their burdens: and they built for Pharaoh store-cities, Pithom and Raamses. [g]But as they humbled them, so they multiplied and spread; and they were [h]distressed because of the children of Israel. And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor; and they [i]embittered their lives with hard service in clay and in [j]brick, and all manner of service in the field: all the service wherein they made them serve was with [k]rigor.

[d] Acts 7. 19. 1 Cor. 1. 20.
[e] *cf.* Acts 16. 19.
[f] Rom. 6. 12. Tit. 3. 3.
[g] *cf.* Phil. 1. 12.
[h] *cf.* Neh. 2. 10. Acts 4. 2.
[i] Jno. 8. 34. Rom. 6. 17. *ctr.* Prov. 3. 17.
[j] Gen. 11. 3.
[k] *ctr.* Luke 19. 21. 1 Jno. 5. 3.

(15-22.)

Revival out of the death to which they are doomed.

3. And the king of Egypt spake unto the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of the one was Shiphrah and the name of the other Puah, and said, When ye deliver the Hebrew women, and see [them] upon the stool, if it be a son, then ye shall kill him, and if it be a daughter, then she shall live. But the midwives [l]feared God, and they did not as the king of Egypt had said to them, but saved the men-children alive. And the king of Egypt called the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, to save the men-children alive? And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, [m]Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptians, but are vigorous, and have brought forth ere the midwife cometh to them. And God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied, and became very strong. And it was so, because the midwives feared God, that he [n]made them houses. And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the [o]river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.

[l] Prov. 16. 6. Gen. 39. 9.
[m] Josh. 2. 4. 2 Sam. 17. 19.
[n] *cf.* Num. 27. 1, etc.
[o] Acts 7. 19.

He says Himself, "raised up Pharaoh," and thus brought about a state of bondage. Egypt thus became "the smoking furnace" of Abraham's vision (Gen. xv.), in which, however, it was really God who thought upon His covenant.

So with us all—the life of God begins in the very ability to *feel death*; and the light, as at the beginning, shines but on a chaos. Thus are our hearts set yearning after Himself. The famine in the far-off land makes us think upon the bread in a father's house.

Pharaoh's expedient to keep the people down and in bondage should be noted; he uses their own strength against themselves. They build him store-cities,—cities whence he may provision his troops; and these cities are in Goshen,—in the land allotted to themselves. Thus every where men rivet their own chains. If it is money that a man is after, every dollar he puts into his treasury only sets his heart more upon it. Every thing that the heart prizes here, the more one succeeds in getting it, the more will it attach the heart to itself. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" And this is true, in principle, of Christians also. If we allow our hearts to go out after the world in any shape, the more we gain of it, the more its weight will drag us down to earth.

SECTION 2. (Chap. ii.)
The humiliation and rejection of the deliverer.

(vv. 1-10).

His birth, and the hand of God in Pharaoh's daughter.

1. AND there went a man of the house of Levi, and took [to wife] a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived, and bare a son; and she saw that he was a [p] goodly [child], and hid him three months. And when she could no longer hide him, she took for him an ark of papyrus, and daubed it with bitumen and pitch; and she put the child in it, and laid it in the sedge by the [q] river's brink. And his sister stood afar off, to see what would be done to him. And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe in the river, and her maidens were walking by the river's side; and she saw the ark amid the sedge, and sent her handmaid, and she fetched it. And she opened it, and saw the child, and, behold, the babe was weeping. And she had pity on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children. And his sister said unto Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Go. And the damsel went and called the child's mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child and nursed him. And when the child was grown, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became [r] her son; and she called his name Moses, and said, Because I drew him out of the water.

[p] Acts 7. 20-20. Heb.11. 23.

[q] cb. 1. 22. Gen. 6. 14. *cf.* Rom. 6. 3.

[r] Heb.11.24. *cf.* Ps. 84. 10.

(11-22.)

Rejected by his brethren, and in new relationships as deliverer among the Gentiles.

2. And so it was, in those days, when Moses was grown up, that he went out unto his brethren, and [s] looked upon their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew, one of his brethren. And he [t] turned this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he [u] smote the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. And he went out the second day, and, lo, two Hebrew men contending: and he said to the wrong-doer, Why dost thou smite thy neighbor? And he said, Who made thee a prince and a [v] judge over us? Meanest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses was afraid, and said, Surely the thing is

[s] Acts 7. 25.

[t] *cf.* Phil. 3. 13. Luke 9. 52.

[u] *cf.* Gen. 16. 2. 2 Cor. 10. 3, 4. Matt.26.52.

[v] Gen. 19. 9. Acts 7. 27. Heb.11. 27. Matt.21.38.

Sec. 2.

We now are introduced to the deliverer, raised up of God to fulfill His gracious purposes as to the people of His choice. That he is of Levi, third son of Israel, has a significance which we shall find dwelt on afterward. It speaks of the Mediator, "joined" to God and to the people, as Christ in His own person joins them—Son of God and Son of man. It speaks also of resurrection, typically fulfilled in Moses delivered up to death and brought out of it. The overruling hand of God is seen in his preservation, the power of the world serving one whom it knows not, and who is not of it, whom when revealed in his true character it rejects. Moses is still in all this a type of Christ.

But he is rejected also by the people of his choice—the brethren for whom he

known. And when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses; and Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian. And he dwelt by the [w] well. Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters; and they came, and drew, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. And the shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses stood up and helped them, and [x] watered their flock. And when they came unto Reuel their father, he said unto them, Why are ye come so soon to-day? And they said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and even drew for us, and watered the flock. And he said unto his daughters, And where is he? why, then, have ye left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread. And Moses consented to dwell with the man; and he gave Moses [y] Zipporah his daughter. And she bare a son, and he called his name Gershom: for he said, I have been a sojourner in a foreign land.

[w] Gen. 24. 11, etc.

[x] Gen. 29. 10. Ruth 2. 5.

[y] Gen. 41. 45. Eph. 5. 25–33.

(23-25)

God's remembrance of his threefold covenant.

3. And it came to pass in those long days that the king of Egypt died; and the children of Israel [z] sighed by reason of the bondage, and when they cried out, their cry for help went up to God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning; and God [a] remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged [them].

[z] Ps. 12. 5.

[a] Gen. 8. 1. & 15. 14. Ju. 10. 16.

SECTION 3. (Chap. iii.-iv. 17.)

God's revelation of Himself.

(III. 1-6.)

God in the fire, so that the bush abides.

1. Now Moses was [b] tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock behind the [c] wilderness, and came to the mount of God, [even] to Horeb. And the angel of Jehovah

[b] Ju. 6. 11. 1 Sam. 17. 34. 1 Kings 19. 19, 20. Matt. 4. 18–22.

[c] ch. 13. 18. Luke 1. 80.

humbles himself. There was a true desire for them, and presentiment in his mind that God had chosen him to be their deliverer; but they do not recognize him as such. No doubt there was failure on Moses' part, and a work needed to be done in him as well as in them, before he could be to them really what his heart desired. But none the less distinctly did they reject one whose love, at all cost to itself, would be their servant. "Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?" is the answer of unbelief, and Moses flees into Midian at that saying. It is as rejected by His brethren, it hardly needs to say, that we have to do with the Lord Jesus now.

We find him, then, in Midian; and soon with a Gentile bride, to whom also he has been, first of all, a deliverer. But his son's name tells us that he has yet found no real home. He names him "Gershom," "a stranger there;" for he says, "I have been a sojourner in a foreign land." Beautifully in the son is expressed the thought of the father's heart, as our character and position in the world is to reflect and manifest the thoughts of His heart to whom in endeared relationship we belong.

But the days of Israel's bondage are coming to an end. God has heard their groaning, and it is to be seen that He remembers His covenant with their fathers—that in which He is Himself revealed. The next section brings us to this revelation.

appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a [d]thorn-bush. And he looked, and, lo, the bush burning in the fire, and the bush was [e]not consumed. And Moses said, Let me now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when Jehovah saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses: and he said, Here am I. And he said,

d Mark 12. 26. Acts 7. 30.

e Dan. 3. 25. Mal. 3. 6. *cf.* Acts 2. 24.

Sec. 3.

The glory of the gospel is that God is revealed in it. He is making known for all eternity, and to all His creatures, "the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus." (Eph. ii. 7.) For us also "all things that pertain to life and godliness are given in the knowledge of Him who hath called us." (2 Pet. i. 3.) We had lost such knowledge as we had, or as creation would have afforded us. Now both we and principalities and powers in heavenly places are to learn what puts into our mouths a "*new* song." In the section now before us, God, in calling Moses to the work for which He has been preparing him, reveals to him Himself.

1. The *shepherd* is the fitting type of the divine Deliverer and King. So, afterward, God "chose David His servant, and took him from the sheepfolds; from following the ewes great with young He brought him, to feed Jacob His people and Israel His inheritance." (Ps. lxxviii. 70, 71.) So the beautiful expression in the second chapter of the gospel of Matthew, which speaks of Christ as the Governor who shall "rule" God's people Israel, is literally "shall be a Shepherd" to them. This is God's thought. Thus He trains up Moses, after all that he had learned in the palace in Egypt, forty years in the desert in simple shepherd work, until he is fit for the power to be intrusted to him—the meekest man on earth (Num. xii. 3). And such is the Shepherd God has appointed us (Matt. xi. 29).

We find, then, Moses, in the course of his service, now at Horeb, the mount of God. Here the angel of Jehovah appears to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. And the bush burns with fire, yet is not consumed. There from the bush the Lord addresses him, and, as the angel of the bush, gives him his commission.

God had before, and in reference to this very captivity in Egypt, revealed Himself under the similitude of fire. The "smoking furnace" had been His symbol when in covenanting with Abraham He passed between the pieces of the sacrifice. It is to the deep sleep which overpowers him there, and the horror of great darkness which falls upon him, that the vision which follows addresses itself. The smoking furnace and the burning lamp are what the deep sleep and the darkness respectively demand; and these the sacrifice secures and the faithfulness of God supplies to His people. If the activity and vigilance of faith fail, the furnace will not fail as the appointed means of purification; while for the darkness the burning lamp is equally provided.

Thus the fiery trial which was trying them in Egypt was in reality God's remembrance of His covenant with Abraham; and if we look at this *thorn*-bush, for such it is, it is a very striking picture of the people. The thorns and briars are a figure of those "sons of Belial" of whom David speaks as to be "all of them as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands." Thorns were a sign of the curse at the beginning; and are, in fact, abortive leaves or branches, easily read as this,—parts of a plant incapable of fulfilling their original purpose. Sinners are thus, in this symbol, naturally connected with the curse upon sin. But the thorn-bush here is not consumed, for the angel of Jehovah, the covenant-God, is in the fire. The tribulation is the means ordained of God in grace to work repentance; and so the grace that takes us up ordains for us all necessary discipline.

Draw not nigh hither; [f]put off thy sandals from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. And he said, I am the [g]God of thy father, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses [h]hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.

(7-12)

Come down to deliver.

2. And Jehovah said, I have surely [i]seen the affliction of my people, which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry from before their exactors; for I have [j]known their sorrows. And I am [k]come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to [l]bring them up out of that land into a good land and a [m]large—unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the land of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. And now, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me; and I have seen also the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them: and now come, and I will [n]send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt. And Moses said unto God, [o]Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? And he said, Certainly [p]I will be with thee; and this shall be the token to thee

f Gen. 17. 3. Josh. 5. 15.
g Mat. 22. 32.
h *cf.* ch. 33. 17-23. *ctr.* 2 Cor. 3. 18.
i Neh. 9. 9.
j Ps. 142. 3. *cf.* Jno. 5. 3.
k Phil. 2. 7. Jno. 1. 14.
l Gal. 1. 4.
m Ezek. 20. 6. Eph. 1. 3. 1 Cor. 3. 22.
n *cf.* Jno. 5. 24, etc.
o Ju. 6. 15. Jer. 1. 6.
p Ju. 6. 16. Phil. 4. 13. 2 Tim. 4. 17.

The wonder attracts Moses, and he turns aside to see. This is the first design of a miracle—to force men, by the mystery in it, to attention. And those who draw nigh with unshod feet, as Moses did, find in it a "sign"—a thing significant of divine "power" working in man's behalf. These are the three Scripture terms for miracles: "wonders," "signs," "powers." How many of these offer themselves still in nature and in Scripture, and in what we call "providence," to engage our interest, if we have but hearts to ponder them! For the Scripture miracles have thus still their evidences, and are proofs still of what they are attached to,—not burdens upon the evidence, as men say.

Here, then, out of this bush God declares Himself to Moses, and to us, the triune God of revelation, God of his fathers,—the self-same God all through.

2. This God is to be known as the God of salvation, for only thus can He be the object of love or worship (Jno. iv. 22). And for this, it is not enough that He speak the word from heaven: He must "*come down* to deliver;" words which necessarily carry us on beyond the pillar of cloud in which His presence was manifested then to Israel, to the incarnation and the cross. In this "coming down" of God all the sweetness and power of salvation are. God is declared in it, and the manifestation abides for us in the perpetual humanity of the Lord Jesus. "Christ come in flesh" is thus the test, with the apostle, of the utterance of the Spirit of God. (1 Jno. iv. 2, 3.)

Salvation by such an one must be a complete salvation; and it is not complete until the land of promise is their own. Six nations are specified here as to be overthrown,—the full power of evil, and the land is a good land and a large, flowing with milk and honey. It is not a land of straitness, as Egypt is,—and heaven is not conditioned by the needs and struggles of earth. The "river" is not at strife with the desert there. There is all "fatness," which the word for milk literally means, and all sweetness, as the honey implies. Salvation for us must issue in satisfaction, or it is not salvation. Our Canaan, as we shall later learn, is to be entered upon now by faith.

that I have sent thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon [q] this mountain. [q] ch. 19. 2.

God's memorial name. (13-17)

3. And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you, and they say, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I am [r] I WHO AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said, moreover, unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name forever, and this is my [s] memorial to all generations. Go and gather the elders of Israel, and say unto them, Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, hath appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and [seen] that which hath been done to you in Egypt; and I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt, into the land of the Canaanite

[r] Ps. 90. 2. Rev. 1. 8. Col. 1. 15. Jno. 14. 9.

[s] Ps. 102. 12. 135. 13.

Moses objects his personal unfitness, but this only brings the assurance that God is with him, so that self-distrust need not be discouragement. Nay, the more complete it is, the more will God's all-sufficiency be realized. He is solemnly assured, for his encouragement, that the people brought forth by him shall serve God upon that mount; and this is what is the fruit of salvation, and the sign of who hath wrought in it, that it thus brings back to Him in obedience the former slaves of sin.

3. And now we come to what is of the deepest importance—the name of God according to which He takes up, and can alone take up, the people. The question as to this is clearly not of His historical name simply. Names have in the present day so little significance,—stand so much as mere algebraical symbols for unknown quantities,—that we have need to be reminded of the different manner in which Scripture uses them, and indeed in which people of old regarded them. In Scripture, all names appear to have—often a prophetic—significance, of which those who gave them were in general profoundly unconscious, while guided thus by a wisdom quite beyond their own. The names of God especially express what He is Himself,—are a revelation of His attributes; and the question Moses puts in the mouth of the people, "What is His name?" implies, "In what way are we to interpret His present actings? What do they mean? Why is it that He does this?" The answer, therefore, must answer questions such as these, and it should be evident that this will not be given best by God declaring Himself under some new name, but rather by *flashing some new significance out of an old one.* Thus His present acts will be made only to bring out in fresh glory attributes that were but dimly seen before, and He will be seen to be consistent with Himself all through, while yet more and more revealing Himself.

Thus the difficulty is cleared up where God says afterwards, speaking of the patriarchs, "By My name," or "According to My name 'Jehovah' was I not known unto them." This is not in the least a denial of the fact that even before the flood "men began to call on the name of Jehovah," or that Abraham also built his altars to Jehovah, and called upon His name. It means, rather, that the significance of that name had not yet been properly told out. Now it was to be. Israel's deliverance was to illustrate Jehovah's name so as to make it His memo-

> and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite—into a land flowing with milk and honey.

rial name for all generations; and in it Israel should find their abiding ground of confidence.*

"I am" is the Living, Unchanging, Self-existent One, necessarily independent of all others. As such, He acts from Himself in necessary independence also; and here is the ground of redemption, God acting from Himself, and, therefore, according to what He is Himself. God is showing forth Himself, showing forth the riches of His grace in His kindness toward us, glorifying Himself, letting the light of His glory shine. Is it not worthy of Him? We reason from ourselves to God, and can make nothing of it. We are sinners, and can merit nothing: why should not He punish, how can He do aught but punish, sin? How blessed, then, to hear Him say, "I, even I, am He who blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine *own* sake." (Isa. xliii. 25.) Who can deny His right in this, if He chooses to do it, and declares that He has done it?

Jehovah, then, is the living, unchangeable God, acting from Himself, finding in Himself the argument for what He does. How suitable a name for the God of redemption—the covenant-name!

And this is closely connected with what He at the same time declares Himself to be—the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; for as this He fulfils an absolute promise which He had given, and by which He stood pledged, apart from all question of what they were. He was thus plainly acting from Himself, and for His own sake. But this is not all: in connecting Himself with these three men He was surely telling out Himself in a peculiar way. Why just these three? To us now it should be plain at least. Who can read the twenty-second of Genesis without finding in the offerer and the offered there another Father than Abraham, another Son than Isaac? Again too in the epistle to the Galatians, Isaac, the child of the free-woman, is shown to typify those who have now received the adoption—the free-born sons of God, and Abraham here again is the shadow of Him who is our God and Father. The God of Jacob once more declares the divine power which takes up the most intractable material to fashion it into a vessel for the Master's use: and this is the office of the Holy Ghost. Thus Father, Son, and Spirit are really in some true sense shown in the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; and these are but Jehovah, the God of redemption, fully manifested. How clearly can we understand Him, then, when He says, "This is My name forever; and this is My memorial to all generations."

Here, then, is the ground of redemption—that upon which a soul can surely rest, revealed in God's covenant-name. He is the Self-existent One, who acts necessarily from Himself and according to His own nature: "all things were created by Him and for Him." (Col. i. 16.) That this is said of Christ shows at once who Christ is, and how truly He is the full expression of the divine mind. God

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*What, then, is this name, "Jehovah?" Almost the whole consensus of commentators agree, and I see no possible ground of dissent from it, that it means "He who is." Thus the connection with "I am," which the Lord's words to Moses naturally imply, is clear at once; and in the version I have ventured to give, though with few among moderns perhaps to agree with me, it is equally clear with the first title He takes but a few words before it. Here most read, indeed, with the common English version, "I am that I am." The Septuagint, however, gives Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὤν, "I am He who is," and my own version is substantially the same, though more literal,—"I am I who am." I must say a few words in justification of this rendering.

The common version makes an apparent disjunction of thought between "I am that I am" and the "I am" that follows it. Although this does not seem in general to be conceded, yet they are surely not the same. "I am" speaks of God as the Living and Unchanging God; "I am that I am" speaks rather of, or implies the Inscrutable One, whose vail cannot be lifted. These thoughts are in no wise the same; nor do they seem connected. "I am that I am" appears rather a rebuke to the question, "What is His name?" than an answer to it. Yet the answer is given immediately in the "I am" that follows.

The first "I am" does not seem part of the name, any more than it would be if it were said, "I am Jehovah;" and this would be, if we judge by the connection, its real equivalent. It is exactly the Septuagint "I am He who is," and the rendering "I am I who am," while strictly literal, brings all into harmony.

The exposure of Egypt.

(18-20.)
4. And they shall hearken unto thy voice: and thou shalt come—thou and the elders of Israel—unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, hath met with us; and now let us go, we pray thee, 'three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice unto Jehovah our God. And I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go, —no, not by a strong hand. And I will stretch out my hand and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst of it; and afterward he will let you go.

t Gen. 22. 4. etc.

Israel's recompense.

(21-22.)
5. And I will give this people favor in the eyes of the Egyptians, and it shall be that when ye go, ye shall not go empty; but every woman shall ask of her neighbor, and of her that sojourneth in her house, articles of silver, and articles of gold, and raiment; and ye shall put them on your sons and on your daughters; and ye shall "spoil the Egyptians.

u 1 Cor. 3. 22. 1 Tim. 4. 4, 5.

Signs of coming victory.

(IV. 1-9.)
6. [1] And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken to my voice; for they will say, Jehovah hath not appeared unto thee. And Jehovah said unto him, [v] What is that in thy hand? And he said, A rod. And he said, Cast it on the ground.

1. (1-5.) The enemy's power subject to God's hand.

v Ju. 6. 36. Is. 7. 11.

is revealing Himself, acting for the display of Himself,—the joy and blessing of His creatures. And this is the true thought of His glorifying Himself, not as if glory could be conferred upon Him, or as if He craved or had need of something from His creatures. "Love seeketh not her own" (1 Cor. xiii. 5), and "God is love." If He seek His own glory, it is to fill as the sun the heavens with His brightness. This is grace, and the theme of His people's praise forever.

4. In the accomplishment of His purpose, the Lord reveals the state of the world,—its opposition to Himself, its false trusts, its pride and feebleness. This is the meaning of all this parleying with Pharaoh, and the measured succession of judgments upon the land. His people needed the lesson, and, given in a manner so public, all who would might learn it. God foretells the result, that they may not be discouraged or disappointed. We may learn before experience, if we will, by the Word of God, all that we are and all the world is. How much would we be spared if we would learn thus!

5. As the result of all this, moreover, the wealth of the world passes into the hands of the people of God. "All things are yours," says the apostle; "whether the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come,—all are yours." (1 Cor. iii. 22.) Men out of Christ, as they have right to nothing, so indeed they possess nothing. In the end, it will be found so. "Godliness" it is that "hath promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come." (1 Tim. iv. 8.) They who go as pilgrims out of the world yet carry with them all the good of the world, and the world that would enjoy it must yield it up to them. To him who belongs to the world the world cannot belong.

6. Moses is still unready. He objects the unbelief of the people, and is hindered by his own. The Lord gives him three signs, witnessing of the power at work in behalf of the people—signs which are to witness for him as the deliverer raised up of God for them. They must have faith in the deliverer in order to find the deliverance; and so it is to-day: faith in Christ Himself is the first and absolutely necessary thing upon which all else depends.

2. (6-8.) Sin and salvation, unbelief and death.

And he cast it on the ground, and it became a [w] serpent; and Moses fled from before it. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Put forth thy hand, and grasp it by the tail (and he put out his hand and seized it, and it became a rod in his hand), that they may believe that Jehovah, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared to thee.

[2] And Jehovah said, moreover, unto him, Put now thy hand into thy [x] bosom. And he put his hand into his

[w] *cf.* Gen.3. 1. Jno. 14. 30.

[x] Mat.15.19. 2 Kgs.5.27.

(i.) The sign of the rod comes first. The rod is the sign of power—"the rod of Thy power" (Ps. cx. 2)—here, as we know, in the shepherd's hands, who, as we have seen, is the very type of royalty according to God. Even the *iron* rod with which Christ will smite His enemies is still represented as in a shepherd's hands. In all passages, it reads really, "He shall *shepherd* them with an iron rod." (Rev. ii. 27.) Severely as it may smite, love guides it. Woe indeed to those whom everlasting love has thus to smite!

The rod in Moses' hand is, then, the type of power—divine, and characterized by tenderness and care, as a shepherd's rod. But Moses is told to cast it on the ground; and out of his hand the rod changes its character—it becomes a serpent. Plainly enough the type can be read here. Who that looks round upon the earth with the thought in his mind of power being in the hands of eternal love but must own to strange bewilderment at finding every where what seems so completely to negative the supposition? Scripture itself puts the question in its full strength: "Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with Thee, which frameth mischief by a law?" (Ps. xciv. 20.)

The rod is to all appearance out of the Shepherd's hand, and "the prince of this world" is now not Christ, but Satan. The claim he once made to universal empire, before the Son of God Himself, has but too much truth in it: and so the dragon is pictured in Revelation with the heads and horns of the imperial beast. (Rev. xii. 3.)

There is no doubt that there is a special reference to Egypt here, which Moses and the Israelites would readily understand. "The asp played a conspicuous part in Egyptian mythology. It was the emblem of the goddess Ranno, the snake of Neph, the hieroglyphic of 'goddess,' and the sign of royalty. From this last use it was called 'Uræus,' from *ouro*, king, and *basiliskos*, royal. Egypt was, therefore, not obscurely pointed out as the adversary of God and His people at this time."—(*Murphy's Exodus.*)

But Egypt itself is a type of the world at large, as we have seen; and the meaning, while it includes this, is much broader. Every where, we find the apparent contradiction which sin has wrought. The rod seems not in His hand to whom it belongs, but on the ground, and satanic. But observe the beautiful accuracy of the type, and the comfort prepared for us in it. The rod was *cast* out of Moses' hand—did not *slip* out. God has not lost control of the world after all: of His own will, and for purposes of highest wisdom, He has permitted man's self-chosen subjection to demon rule. But if the Lord come in, as in the scene at Gadara, Satan is displaced at once: the victim is delivered without an effort. Alas! this only brings out the real foundation of satanic empire, in man's rejection of the Deliverer. The people pray Him to depart out of their coasts!

"Judgment shall" yet "return unto righteousness" (Ps. xciv. 15), and Satan be vanquished, and cast out of his usurped dominion. Meanwhile, the rod of power is found on the side of love with Him who is the Deliverer from Satan's tyranny. "He is gone up on high; He has led captivity captive," and having spoiled principalities and powers, made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." (Ps. lxviii. 18; Col. ii. 15.) Here is man's first need met.

(ii.) The second sign is that of sin and its cleansing; for that is, above all, what

bosom, and took it out, and, behold, his hand was leprous—as snow. And he said, Put thy hand into thy bosom again (*y*and he put his hand into his bosom again, and took it out of his bosom, and, behold, it was turned again as his [other] flesh); and it shall be, if they will not believe thee, nor hearken to the voice of the first sign, they will believe the voice of the latter sign. And it shall be, that if they will not believe even those two signs, nor hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it out on the dry ground, and the water that thou takest out of the river shall become *z*blood upon the dry ground.

y Mat. 8. 3.

z Ps. 78. 44. Rev. 8. 8.

marks the condition of man. Leprosy is the Old-Testament type of sin in its loathsomeness and malignity, and power to spread. It is shown us in it as no mere accident, or local thing, but a virulent, growing, contagious evil, deeper than the surface, not to be measured by the outward appearance, and absolutely fatal, unless God come in to save. In Moses' case it is strikingly pictured as that which from the heart affects the hand, not from the hand the heart. The clean hand placed in the bosom is drawn out leprous—white as death. "Out of the *heart* proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." Be sure, if the hand be leprous, the heart is not better, but worse: it is the seat of the whole disease. And cleansing must begin accordingly, not with the hand, but with the heart.

So with the type here. Moses' hand thrust into the bosom becomes leprous; thrust into his bosom again, it is restored. Defilement and cleansing both begin at the heart. What has cleansed the heart? No remedial process is seen in this case, but the way to cleansing is very simply shown. For leprosy in the heart is sin hidden, but leprosy on the hand is sin exposed. The hand plucked out of the bosom makes manifest what is there. And "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 Jno. i. 9.) Here, it is leprosy in the *hand* that is manifested; not the mere confession of sin being in our hearts or in our natures, but of sin actually committed—a very different thing. We can own easily, and without any conscience, that we are all sinners, but it is for the sins actually committed we feel we are responsible before God.

Repentance and remission of sins God has joined together. (Luke xxiv. 47.) Faith owns the righteous judgment of God, according to His Word, and finds remission of sins preached through Christ by the same infallible Word. Forgiveness it is that purifies the heart, faith working by love (Luke vii. 47); and thus the blessedness becomes ours of "the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is *no guile*." (Ps. xxxii. 1.)

The third sign predicts judgment for obstinate unbelief. The stream of life and blessing which is ministered to us here from God becomes wrath and judgment if, after all, His goodness lead not to repentance,—every blessing becoming in the end but judgment if a Saviour's voice be disregarded. Here, that is given as a sign to Israel which is given as a testimony to Pharaoh afterward. God's principles are unchanging, and unbelief, even in a believer, will find its judgment, while, by the same Word, *as* a believer, he is, as to eternal condemnation, free forever.

Thus, as there is salvation for sin, so on the other hand there must be faith in order to salvation. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." (Jno. iii. 36.)

(IV. 10–17.)

Aaron as the complement of Moses: provision complete.

7 And Moses said unto Jehovah, Lord, I am not [a] eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken to thy servant; but I am slow of mouth and slow of tongue. And Jehovah said unto him, Who made man's mouth? or who maketh dumb or deaf or seeing or blind? is it not I, Jehovah? And now go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou hast to say. And he said, Ah, Lord, [b] send, I pray thee, by whomsoever thou wilt send. And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Moses; and he said, Is not [c] Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And, behold, also, he is coming forth to meet thee; and when he seeth thee he will be glad in his heart. And thou shalt speak unto him, and put the words into his mouth; and I will be with thy mouth and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall speak for thee unto the people, and it shall be that he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be unto him instead of God. And thou shalt take this rod in thy hand, wherewith thou shalt do the signs.

[a] Mat. 10.19. 1 Cor. 2.1-5. 1 Cor. 4.20. 2 Cor. 10.10.

[b] *ctr.* Is. 6.8.

[c] *cf.* ch. 32.21.

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. iv. 18–xi.)

The testimony to Pharaoh, in which a division is made between Israel and the Egyptians. Typically, the testimony to the separation of the world from Him on whom it is dependent, and the separation of His people from the world.

The congruity of the covenant.

SECTION 1. (Chap. iv. 18–vii. 7.)

The covenant of promise the basis of redemption.

(IV. 18–31.)

1. (18–23.) The Almighty's claim of His first-born.

1 AND Moses went and returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and said unto him, [d] Let me go, I pray thee, and return to my brethren who are in Egypt, and see if they be yet alive. And Jethro said unto Moses, Go

[d] *ctr.* Gen. 30.25. Gen. 31.20.

7. But Moses still objects; and evil as is this slowness of heart to respond to the grace of God, that grace nevertheless, still sovereign over it, makes it the occasion of the more perfect display of what is in His heart. Moses cannot yet speak, and God provides now for him one who is to be his mouth-piece to the people. This is Aaron, in God's mind the designed high-priest of Israel, though not yet revealed as that. It is as Moses' "prophet" that he is here announced,—his associate and complement in the great work which God had committed to them. Provision is now completely made.

Taking in, however, what in the purpose of God he was, Aaron as the priest is indeed the complement of Moses, and together they are the double type of Christ. In Him, king and priest are united,—redemption by power and by blood: without the latter, there could not be the former. Priesthood alone can interpret the Deliverer: sacrifice alone account for salvation. This, in its true import, Israel has not yet learned: there, Moses is delayed by his need of Aaron; when they look upon Him, they shall not only see One whom they have pierced, but know why He had to stoop to that unequaled humiliation.

SUBD. 2.

THE connection of the two sections here is easily to be seen. God has already revealed to Moses, in that covenant-name which He again brings forward now, the ground upon which He takes them up. On man's part, however, and for

in peace. And Jehovah said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return unto Egypt, for all the men are dead who [e]sought thy life. And Moses took his [f]wife and his sons, and made them ride upon the ass, and returned unto the land of Egypt; and Moses took in his hand the rod of God. And Jehovah said unto Moses, When thou goest to return unto Egypt, see that thou do before Pharaoh all the wonders that I have put in thy hand; but I will [g]make firm his heart, and he will not let the people go. And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Israel is my son—my [h]first-born; and I say unto thee, Let my man's own sake, there must be the acceptance of this; and this is the true meaning and necessity of repentance. Grace must be known and received as grace. The self-confidence natural to us must be removed, that our confidence may be in God alone. And not only must we realize the weakness of a creature, but the ruin of a fallen condition, that Christ may be God's remedy and revelation to us. We have hitherto been occupied with God's side of all this; now we have the human, the need of God's grace, and the way we are brought to realize it.

[e] Mat. 2. 20.
[f] *cf.* Gen. 12. 5. ch. 18. 2. Acts 16. 38. 39.
[g] Deut. 2. 30. Josh. 11. 20. Rom. 9. 15-18. *cf.* Is. 6. 10. 2 Thess. 2. 10, 12.
[h] Jer. 31. 9.

We have first, therefore, here, the covenant of promise developed as the only hope of man; and then, in the second section, the cutting off from all other dependence. Egypt is the world, to which naturally we belong, with its resources in itself and its independence of God. The judgments that come upon it from Him are His witnesses of its alienation from Him, and of His separation, and the separation of His people, from it. Practically, this testimony, as it is received, separates; and in this way He acted to wean Israel from the land of their birth but of their bitter servitude, and whose moral condition it revealed to them. Spite of all, we find in the after-history how, when the trials of the wilderness were felt, their hearts could go fondly back to Egypt, as in the golden calf we find also a plain reminiscence of their idolatries. All the more is the need of such dealings as these made manifest.

Sec. 1.

1. In the first section, then, our eyes are fixed upon the covenant itself, which, as a covenant of promise, depends for its fulfillment entirely upon the power and faithfulness of Jehovah Himself. Yet man is not thereby released from the responsibility which is ever his. Grace enables and provides for the fulfillment of it, never sets it aside. It is the fullest expression of divine sovereignty, not the abdication of it.

(i.) At the outset, we see the almighty hand which is at work here. Moses returns to Jethro, to find him at once ready to accede to his desire to see if his brethren in Egypt are yet alive. Then a word from Jehovah Himself assures him of the removal of the difficulties personal to himself in regard to his return to Egypt: all the men are dead that sought his life. This assurance comes at the right time. He has first to face the difficulties, be master of them morally, and then find how He at whose bidding he goes is really master. Then once more he is informed of the stubbornness of Pharaoh's heart, in which and through which God works still as sovereign, the evil serving Him as does the good. In all this, Jehovah shows Himself to be still the almighty God of Abraham.

Israel He claims as His son, His first-born. They owe their place among the nations to His adoption of them. They are born, so to speak, of His covenant with their fathers. They had not worked for this; but as it is said of their father Jacob, so is it with them,—"The children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth." (Rom. ix. 11.)

Yet this grace of God to Israel in no wise implies the rejection of other nations, rather the reverse, as the promise to Abraham long before declared, "In thee

son go, that he may serve me; and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son—thy first-born.

2. (24-26.) The maintenance of the covenant on man's part.

24 [l] And it came to pass by the way, in the lodging-place, that Jehovah came upon him, and sought to put him to death. And Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, For a spouse of blood art thou to me. So he desisted from him. Then she said, A spouse of blood, because of the circumcision.

[l] Gen. 17.14. Ps. 93. 5.

3. (27-31.) The people set to their seal and worship.

27 [3] And Jehovah said unto Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went, and met him in the mount of God, and kissed him. 28 And Moses told Aaron all Jehovah's words wherewith he had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded him. 29 And Moses and Aaron went and gathered all the elders of the children of Israel; 30 and Aaron spake all the words that Jehovah had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. 31 And the people believed; and when they heard that Jehovah had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and [j] worshiped.

[j] ch. 12. 27.

(V. 1-23.)

The resistance of unbelief and the increase of the burdens.

2. And afterward, Moses and Aaron came and said unto Pharaoh, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may keep a [k] feast unto me in the wilderness. 2 And Pharaoh said, [l] Who is Jehovah, that I should hearken unto his voice, to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah; neither will I let Israel go. 3 And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, [m] three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to Jehovah our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword. 4 And the king of Egypt said unto them, Why do ye, Moses and Aaron, withdraw the people from their works? go to your burdens! 5 And Pharaoh said, Lo, the people of

[k] ch. 10. 9. *cf.* Luke 14. 16. Rev. 19. 9.
[l] Job 21. 15. Prov. 30. 9. *cf.* 1 Sam. 25. 10.
[m] Gen. 22. 4.

shall all the families of the earth be blessed." So here, the "first-born" implies other children.

(ii.) In connection with the covenant with Abraham, the scene in the lodging-place by the way becomes at once and strikingly significant. Circumcision was the sign of this very covenant. (See Gen. xvii.) It was the expression of that renunciation of all confidence in the flesh which leaves one to know, with dead Abraham, the power of the Almighty. God insists (as we have seen there) that the token of the covenant shall be in the flesh of all His people; and Moses, like all others, must realize the necessity of this.

(iii.) Lastly, the people set to their seal: they believe and worship.

2. But not yet are they delivered. On the contrary, the forewarned struggle with Pharaoh is only just beginning. He openly declares that he knows not Jehovah, and that he will not let Israel go. Fresh burdens are laid upon the people, who are refused the straw they have hitherto received for their brick-making, and are bidden gather it for themselves; yet not aught of their task is to be diminished. Unable thus to perform their tasks, and beaten for their non-performance, the people undergo a complete revulsion of feeling. From their late joy, they pass into a state of murmuring and despair. How often is this the case

the land are now many, and ye make them rest from their burdens. And Pharaoh commanded that day the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying, Ye shall no more give the people [n]straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves. And the tale of bricks which they have been making heretofore ye shall lay upon them: ye shall not diminish aught of it; for they are idle: therefore they cry, Let us go sacrifice unto our God. Let the service be [o]heavy on the men, that they may be busy in it, and let them not regard [p]vain words. And the taskmasters of the people went out, and their officers, and said unto the people, Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw: go ye and get straw where ye can find it; but not aught of your work shall be diminished. And the people were scattered through all the land of Egypt, to gather stubble for straw. And the taskmasters hastened them, saying, Fulfill the day's work in its day, as when there was straw. And the officers of the children of Israel, which Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten, it being said, Why have ye not fulfilled your task of brick-making, either yesterday or to-day, as heretofore? And the officers of the children of Israel went and cried unto Pharaoh, saying, Why hast thou done thus to thy servants? There is no straw given to thy servants, and they are saying to us, Make brick; and, behold, thy servants are beaten, and the fault is with thy people. But he said, Idle are ye, idle: therefore are ye saying, Let us go and sacrifice to Jehovah. And now go, serve! and straw shall not be given to you; and ye shall deliver the tale of bricks. And the officers of the children of Israel saw that they were in evil case, when he said, Ye shall not diminish of the bricks the day's work in its day. And they came upon Moses and Aaron, who had taken their stand to meet them as they came forth from Pharaoh; and they said unto them, Jehovah look upon you and judge; because ye have made our savor to [q]stink before Pharaoh and before his servants, to put a sword in their hands to slay us! And Moses returned unto Jehovah, and said, Lord, why hast thou done evil to this people? why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh, to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people, neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.

n Luke 15. 14.

o Luke 9. 42. Rom. 7. 9.

p 1 Cor. 1. 18.

q Gen. 34.30

in the experience of a soul awakening under the gospel to realize the power of sin within him, and his own inability to meet and master it! In this condition, the gospel itself seems but a new torture. The work of Christ being yet unknown, and that we are justified as ungodly—as sinners, not as saints,—the unconquerable hardness of the heart amazes and appalls one. Sin seems to be more than ever master, and our hands busier than ever forging and riveting our own chains. The gospel itself seems to have failed with us. It is only that we ourselves have failed as yet to apprehend the gospel.

(VI. 1-13.)

The revelation of Jehovah acting according to His name, and in remembrance of His covenant to give them the land.

3. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do unto Pharaoh, for through a strong hand shall he let them go, and through a strong hand he shall [r]thrust them out of his land. And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am Jehovah; and I appeared unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as God [s]Almighty; but [according to] my name Jehovah was I not [t]known unto them. And I established also my [u]covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their sojournings, in which they were sojourners. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I [v]remember my covenant. Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am Jehovah; and I will bring you out from under the [w]burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage, and redeem you with a stretched-out arm, and with great judgments; and I will take you unto me for a people, and I will be your God; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah your God who bring you forth from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you into the land which I lifted up my hand to give unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, and I will give it you for a possession: I am Jehovah. And Moses spake thus unto the children of Israel, but they hearkened not unto Moses, from oppression of spirit, and from hard bondage. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Go in; speak unto Pharaoh, king of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land. And Moses spake before Jehovah, saying, Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me; how, then, should Pharaoh hearken unto me, who am uncircumcised of lips? And Jehovah spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, and gave them commandment as to the children of Israel, and as to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

r ch. 11. 1.
s Gen. 17. 1.
t *cf.* Jno. 17. 3. 1 Jno. 2. 13.
u Gen. 17. 7, 8.
v Ps. 105. 8.
w Ps. 81. 6.

(VI. 14-27.)

The covenant tested by the record.

4. These are the heads of their fathers' houses:—The sons of [x]Reuben, Israel's first-born, Enoch and Pallu, Hetzron and Carmi. These are the families of Reuben.

x Gen. 46. 9. Gen. 49. 3. 1 Chron. 5. 3.

3. Once again, then, God makes known to them His name Jehovah, patiently reiterating what He has already said. They were now to know Him by this name. All the opposition, all this obstinate tyranny, was only to destroy absolutely all other dependence than in Himself. This is a necessity, that faith may have its rightful and only object. God, by Himself and acting from Himself, is our salvation. If for the present faith even seems to be gone, this too is needful to make us realize that faith itself is not our dependence, but Christ is. Thus God gives an imperative commandment now to Moses and Aaron to bring the people out of the land of Egypt.

4. And here we are bidden to pause a moment, to see who these are upon whom is laid this burden. Their genealogy is put before us,—plainly, in its meaning as to the history here, theirs alone. The fact that others have place in

And the sons of Simeon, Jemuel and Jamin and Ohad and Jachin and Zohar and Saul the son of a [y]Canaanitess. These are the families of Simeon.

And these are the names of the sons of [z]Levi, according to their generations: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. And the [a]years of the life of Levi were a hundred and thirty-seven years. The sons of Gershon, Libni and Shimei, according to their families. And the sons of Kohath, [b]Amram and Jitzhar and Hebron and Uzziel. And the years of the life of Kohath were a hundred and thirty-three years. And the sons of Merari, Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of the Levites after their generations. And Amram took him Jochebed his aunt to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses. And the years of the life of Amram were a hundred and thirty-seven years. And the sons of Jitzhar, [c]Korah and Nepheg and Zichri. And the sons of Uzziel, [d]Mishael and Eltzaphan and Sithri. And Aaron took him to wife Elisheba the daughter of Amminadab, the sister of Nahshon; and she bare him [e]Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. And the sons of Korah, Asser and Elkanah and Abiasaph: these are the families of

y Gen. 26. 34, 35.
z Gen. 28. 1. Gen. 38. 2. 1 Chron. 4. 24.
a Num. 3. 17. 1 Chron. 6. 1.
b Gen. 5. 5, etc.
b Num. 26. 58, 59.
c Num. 16. 1.
d Lev. 10. 4.
e ch. 24. 9. Lev. 10. 1. 1 Chron. 6. 3.

it does not obscure this, but in reality makes it more apparent. Reuben and Simeon only have a place: those who might seem to have, as the elder sons of Jacob, a claim above Levi to furnish the deliverer of Israel, yet who do not, and who are looked at here only to be passed by. But as God does nothing without the fullest reason for it, so there is reason in this case, not upon the surface, no doubt, but yet to be discovered where there is faith to discern. Certainly, a genealogy at this point should awaken attention. Is it an interruption? Is it a mere bit of archæology? or what?

First, the sons of Reuben: Reuben we have seen set aside long since from his birthright, and for personal causes. Boiling up as water, impetuous, and unsteady, he should not excel. Here we have not this, but the record of his sons' names only, four in number: Enoch—"dedicated," Pallu—"separated," Hetzron—"inclosed," and Carmi—"vine-dresser." It is evident that these names make a harmonious series numerically significant, and, at first sight, one would say, good throughout. Enoch is the name of one who walked with God, and was taken without seeing death to be with God. It was also, however, the name of a son of Cain, and, as here, a first-born son. It is in general no good argument when thus there seems no sign of the presence of evil, except indeed outside. Self-righteousness may have its dedication and its separation (Pharisee-like) and its inclosure and its cultivation,—nothing is said of positive fruit; and these four sons naturally, in their very number, speak of what is worldly and unspiritual,—a thing quite easily linked with much pretension.

Simeon's sons are six, a still more unfavorable number, as we know. The meaning of their names I do not attempt to interpret, but they end with the ill-omened "Saul," the half Canaanite. Thus Simeon too is set aside.

Levi is the third son, a number which speaks of resurrection—the power of God manifest when on man's part all is gone. His ruin is owned, and in Levi's case we have one who illustrates this: "joined" to Simeon in that display of "cruel" wrath which Jacob denounces, yet taken up now in the sovereign grace of God, working for His glory. Thus also typically this same Levi, "joined," speaks of the mediatorship of Christ, only fully reached in resurrection. The death He has passed through is the confession of the death under which man lay.

the Korhites. And Eleazar the son of Aaron took him one of the daughters of Putiel to wife; and she bare him [f] Phinehas. These are the heads of the fathers of the Levites according to their families. These are that [g] Moses and Aaron to whom Jehovah said, Bring out the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, according to their hosts. These are they who spake unto Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt: these are that Moses and Aaron.

[f] Num. 25. 7, 8.

[g] Ps. 77. 20.

(VI. 28—VII. 7.)

Creature and Creator.

5. And it was so, in the day that Jehovah spake to Moses in the land of Egypt, that Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, I am Jehovah: speak unto Pharaoh, king of Egypt, all that I speak unto thee. And Moses said before Jehovah, Behold, I am uncircumcised of lips, and how should Pharaoh hearken unto me? And Jehovah said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a [h] god unto Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. [i] Thou shalt speak all that I command thee, and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he let go the children of Israel out of his land. But I will [j] harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand on Egypt and bring forth my hosts—my people the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt with great judgments. And the Egyptians shall [k] know that I am Jehovah, when I stretch out my hand over Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them. And Moses and Aaron did so: as Jehovah commanded them so did they. And Moses was eighty years old, and Aaron eighty-three years old, when they spake unto Pharaoh.

[h] Jno. 10. 35. Jno. 13. 20.

[i] Jer. 1. 6-10.

[j] ver. 13. ch. 8. 15.

[k] Ps. 9. 16.

The world in the light of nature simply.

SECTION 2. (Chap. vii. 8—xi.)

The destruction of all fleshly dependence (Egypt) the accompaniment of the word of salvation.

(VII. 8—VIII. 19.)

1. (vii. 8-13.) The power of evil in the hand of God.

1. [l] AND Jehovah spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Show a miracle for you, then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy [l] rod, and cast it before Pharaoh: it shall become a serpent. And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh,

[l] ch. 4. 3.

With Levi accordingly the genealogy expands, and the Spirit of God lingers over it, recording the number of years of Levi himself, of Kohath, and of Amram, as well as (later on) of Aaron and Moses at the time of Israel's deliverance. Who can doubt that there is much to be found here beside mere history? What we have seen may serve to show at least that the principles of the covenant are maintained all through the history, and that this it is a design of the genealogy to bring out.

5. And again, for the third time, God declares that He is Jehovah, and that Israel, and the Egyptians too, shall know it: the very hardening of Pharaoh's heart, which calls for the judgments soon to sweep over the land, being that which He would use for blessing in this way to any with whom there might be preparedness for it.

> and they did as Jehovah had commanded. And Aaron cast his rod down before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent. And Pharaoh also called

Sec. 2.

And now the judgments begin, prefaced by a sign, however, in the mercy of God, which is not that, and by which, if possible, conviction might be brought home to the haughty king. It takes its place, therefore, with the rest as part of the divine testimony. Of the plagues themselves, Keil has rightly distinguished the last—the death of the first-born—from all the rest. The *announcement* of it, indeed, falls in with the others, as he places it, for very evident reasons. The principal one which separates the plague itself is the relation which it bears to Israel and their redemption. It is not only the stroke by which they are freed, and in which God Himself appears, no longer acting through what men call "second causes," but it is that by means of which they themselves for the first time are taught their true condition before God, and take the place in which alone salvation is possible to them. Thus, in the history of redemption, its relation is with that part in which we shall find the actual accomplishment of this. The present section shows only the preparation for it.

As to the nine plagues that remain, Keil has also given reason for believing that "they are arranged in three groups of three plagues each. For the first and second, the fourth and fifth, and the seventh and eighth were announced beforehand by Moses to the king; whilst the third, sixth, and ninth were sent without any such announcement. Again, the first, fourth, and seventh were announced to Pharaoh in the morning, and the first and fourth by the side of the Nile, both of them being in connection with the overflowing of the river. . . . . This grouping is not a mere external arrangement, . . . but is founded on the facts themselves, and the effect which God intended the plagues to produce. as we may gather from these circumstances, that the Egyptian magicians, who had imitated the first plagues, were put to shame with their arts by the third, and were compelled to see in it the finger of God,—that they were smitten themselves by the sixth, and unable to stand before Moses,—and that after the ninth, Pharaoh broke off all further negotiation."

There are other and deeper distinctions, as we shall see; but we may add to these that "in the first three, Aaron uses the rod; in the second three, it is not mentioned; in the third three, Moses uses it, though in the last of them only his hand is mentioned. All these marks of order lie on the face of the narrative, and point to a deeper order of nature and reason out of which they spring." (*Murphy.*)

The numerical significance accords fully with all this, while it leads us more directly to the deeper reason. Commentators have thus far shown us little of this, while the typical instruction, allowed to be so manifest generally in the book of Exodus, has apparently not been seen at all. Yet it is surely here as elsewhere.

This section falls, then, into four parts, the first of which shows us the world in the light of nature simply, or looked at by itself; the second looks at it as distinguished from the people of God, the division being, as it is really called, a "redemption" of the latter; while in the third, the inflictions are more distinctly from heaven; the fourth contains the warning of that final infliction in which the "chief of all their strength" being smitten, they are effectually humbled in the dust before God. But we must proceed slowly.

1. The numerals show us plainly that we must commence the first group of miracles with the miracle of the rod itself. The signs, then, stand thus: (i.) the rod turned into a serpent; (ii.) the river turned to blood,—the means of sustaining life turned into a cause of death; (iii.) the plague of frogs,—the unclean things that come out of the river; (iv.) the dust becoming lice. Let us look at them in order.

(i.) And first, the miracle of the rod.

2. (vii. 14-25.) The means of refreshment becomes death.

the sages and the enchanters, and they also, the scribes of Egypt, did so with their secret arts. [m] For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents; but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. And Pharaoh's heart was [n] stubborn, and he hearkened not unto them, as Jehovah had said.

[20] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart is [p] hard: he refuseth to let the people go. Go unto Pharaoh in the morning; lo, he goeth out unto the water, and thou shalt take thy stand to [q] meet him at the river's brink; and the rod which was turned into a serpent thou shalt take in thy hand. And thou shalt say

[m] 2 Thess. 2. 9. 2 Tim. 3. 8. Rev. 13. 13-15.

[n] ver. 22. ch. 8. 15.

[o] cf. Is. 19. Jer. 46. Ezek. 29.

[p] ver. 22.

[q] 1 Kings 18. 16.

The rod is the sign of the power conferred upon Moses: hence it is not strange that our attention should first of all be directed to it. The rod turned into a serpent showed the whole power of Egypt delivered into Moses' hand. As here addressed to Pharaoh, it was a challenge of the completest kind; and if imitated by the magicians, the feebleness of the imitation is apparent in Aaron's rod swallowing up their rods. Of course, it was impossible for them really to imitate so stupendous a miracle, in which Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, was demonstrated as the Creator. All the power of Satan was incompetent to bring into being the smallest creature; and the language here is meant merely to affirm that to outward appearance the thing was done,—by what juggle need not be told.

It is simple enough, if we recognize the evil that is in the world, and that yet God is,—that the evil must be in His hand, must have at least its permission, and therefore its mission also from Him. His hand has made leviathan, and He that made him can make His sword approach unto him. "He maketh the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder of wrath He will restrain." This enables us, on the one hand, to see God in every thing; on the other, it reveals where the world is before Him. The evil in it is no accident. The forms of misery apparent every where are the multitudinous witnesses of its condition as away from Him. And this truth of God's indictment of the world is the true Moses' rod, to work the miracle of conviction in the soul. It is by the power of this truth that all the glory of the world passes away, and sin, judgment, and God who judges become reality to the soul.

But here we meet also the power of the enemy to resist conviction in the magicians of Egyptians,—the "wise men," deep in nature's secrets,—the prophets of the god of this world. Their work is in imitation of the power of God, to show, if possible, that this is not His hand from which the judgment comes,—that it is *not* judgment. They cannot abate the evil; they are powerless to avert the storm that is about to sweep through Egypt: they have no real help—cannot pretend to it, never think of it. They have only their pitiful, agnostic evidence, such as it is, that that which is attributed to God can be produced otherwise, so that there is no need for Him in the matter. Their rods too can become serpents: there are other powers in the universe which can produce evil. Be it so: the power of God is demonstrated in this, that Aaron's rod swallows easily their rods. All other powers need to be accounted for, are dependent, not original, do not conflict in the least with that divine power above all, to which conscience affirms our responsibility, and which alone satisfies the need of the heart. True, the world is then under His judgment, but that only (if sin be a reality,) confirms the truth into complete conviction.

(ii.) There has been yet, however, no judgment. The second sign begins these, and there could not be a more notable one. With the Egyptians, "the Nile was in the strictest sense regarded as divine, and was worshiped under a variety of names. As the bountiful Osiris, and under many other divine names, the Nile was the beneficent god of Egypt—the representative of all that was

unto him, Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, hath sent me unto thee to say, Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness; and, behold, thou hast not hearkened hitherto. Thus saith Jehovah, By this thou shalt know that I am Jehovah: behold, I smite with the rod which is in my hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned into [r]blood; and the fish which are in the river shall die; and the river shall stink; and the Egyptians shall loathe to drink of the waters of the river. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thy hand over the waters of Egypt,—upon their streams, upon their canals, and upon their ponds, and upon every reservoir of their waters, and they shall become blood: and there shall be blood in all the land of Egypt, both in [vessels of] wood and of stone. And Moses and Aaron did as Jehovah had commanded them; and he lifted up the rod and smote the water that was in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight

[r] ver. 20. Ps. 78. 44. Ps. 105. 29. Rev. 8. 9. Rev. 16. 4, 6.

good. Evil had, however, also its god, the deadly enemy of Osiris,—the hated Typhon—the source of all that was cruel, violent, and wicked. With this abhorred being the touch or sight of blood was associated. He himself was represented as blood-red; red oxen, and even red-haired men were sacrificed to him, and blood, as his symbol, rendered all unclean who came near it. To turn the Nile waters into blood was thus to defile the sacred river—to make Typhon triumph over Osiris—and to dishonor the religion of the land in one of its supremest expressions." (*Geikie.*)

But though we may see in this way how such a miracle would appeal to the Egyptians, we do not need the teachings of mythology to interpret it to us. The river, as we see in Scripture itself, was the very symbol of independence. Egypt drank no water of the rain of heaven: its source of supply was not above; and this is the world in its independence of God. But this independence of God, the Giver of life, is only death, and turns to death. The judgment here as elsewhere reveals the actual spiritual condition. That which as the creature of God, and His minister, is but the means of multiplied blessing, separated from Him, produces but more confirmed and complete separation. This is so simple that it needs no insisting on, and Scripture is full of it. (Job xxi. 14; Ps. lxxiii. 7, 11.)

But it should be noticed now, what every commentary dilates upon, that these judgments of God which begin here have in measure their natural counterparts. Thus the "Nile, at a certain stage of its yearly rise, assumes a red color, due to the presence of minute vegetative and animal growths." And "when the Nile and its canals are full, in the height of inundation, the abounding moisture quickens inconceivable myriads of frogs and toads, which swarm every where, even in ordinary years." Again, "when the inundation has risen above the level of the canals and channels, and is rapidly flowing over the entire surface, . . . gnats and flies innumerable burst from their pupæ, and spring into perfect existence. The eggs that produce them were laid in the retiring waters of the former flood. They have matured in the interval, and vivify instantaneously on the dust absorbing moisture enough to discolor it." At the close of the inundation, when the water is very foul, murrain has been noticed to occur. Such a relation of these divine judgments to ordinary occurrences has surely meaning for us, not merely in that economy of the miraculous, which many have remarked upon, but much rather as emphasizing how the whole order of nature marshals itself under the divine hand against the transgressor.

of his servants; and all the water that was in the river was turned to blood; and the fish that were in the river died, and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river: and there was blood in all the land of Egypt. And the [s]scribes of Egypt did so with their secret arts; and Pharaoh's heart was stubborn, and he did not hearken to them, as Jehovah had said. And Pharaoh turned and went into his house, and he did not [t]lay even this to heart. And all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink; for they could not drink of the water of the river. And seven days were fulfilled after that Jehovah had smitten the river.

s 1 Kings 4. 30.

t Jer. 5. 3.

3. (viii. 1-15.) The unclean things that come out of the river.

[3] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith Jehovah, Let my people go, that they may serve me. And if thou refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all thy borders with [u]frogs. And the river shall swarm frogs, and they shall come up and go into thy house, and into thy bed-chamber, and upon thy bed, and into thy servants' houses, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneading-troughs. And upon thee, and on thy people, and upon all thy servants, shall the frogs come up. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch forth thy hand with thy rod over the streams and over the canals, and over the ponds, and bring up the frogs upon the land of Egypt. And Aaron

u Ps. 78. 45. Ps. 105. 30. Rev. 16. 13. *cf.* Matt. 15. 9. Rom. 1. 28. 29.

The red Nile-water, however, is pleasant and drinkable, not, as in the case before us, a scourge which the magicians again may counterfeit but cannot remove. The priests of nature can show how this can be done—can do it themselves, substituting in a way common to all ages, never more common than to-day, "nature" for the God of nature, "law" for Him who rules by it. In all this, it is confessed however, there is no help for man—no remedy. Rather is his case given up as remediless, as nature's laws are pitiless; there is no divine heart to turn to. In making man a machine, you escape from sin by denying all morality: but conscience refuses this. Any way, the waters are still turned to blood: the plague is not even moderated, but increased.

(iii.) In the third miracle—the plague of frogs, the river is again a means of distress to the Egyptians. In this case it is evidently by their numbers, their intrusion every where, and as is implied—swarming out of the mud and slime,—their uncleanness, that they become so. This last is, as perhaps all commentators agree, the fundamental idea, and it is this by which its numerical place is justified. Connected, moreover, with the last plague, as it is, undeniably, we find that we are following the same track as the apostle when he speaks of the result of departure from God: that "even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not seemly," or, as he otherwise puts it, "to uncleanness." (Rom. i. 28, 24.) Here are plainly the unclean things that come out of the river, when the creature is worshiped and served rather than the Creator. Man having cast off God dishonors himself, and the lusts he seeks to satisfy have sprung out of departure from God. To return to Him is the only remedy: "If any man is athirst, let him come unto Me, and drink; and he that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." (Jno. vii. 37, 38.)

stretched forth his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt. And the [v]scribes did so with their secret arts, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, [w]Entreat Jehovah that he may take away the frogs from me and from my people, and I will let the people go and sacrifice unto Jehovah. And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Fix for me for what time I shall entreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, that the frogs may be cut off from thee and thy houses, that they may remain in the river only? And he said, For to-morrow. And he said, Be it according to thy word, that thou mayest know that there is [x]none like unto Jehovah our God. And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people; they shall remain only in the river. And Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh, and Moses [y]cried unto Jehovah because of the frogs which he had brought on Pharaoh. And Jehovah did according to the word of Moses; and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the villages, and out of the fields; and they gathered them together in heaps, and the land stank. But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he [z]hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them, as Jehovah had said.

v ch. 7. 11.

w ch. 9. 28. 1 Kings 13. 6.

x ch. 15. 11. Deut. 32. 31.

y *cf.* Jas. 5. 16, 18.

z vers. 19, 32. ch. 9. 7, 12. Rom. 2. 5.

4. (viii. 16–19.) The dust becomes lice—the brand of vanity.

[a]And Jehovah said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the [a]dust of the land, and it shall become [b]lice in all the land of Egypt. And they did so, for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice on man and on beast: all the dust of the earth became lice in all the land of Egypt. And the scribes wrought with their secret arts to bring forth lice, and they [c]could not; and there were lice on man and on beast. And the scribes said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God; but Pharaoh's heart was [d]stubborn, and he hearkened not unto them, as Jehovah had said.

a Ps. 22. 15.

b Ps. 105. 31. Eph. 2. 1, 2. Col. 3. 5. 2 Pet. 1. 4.

c 2 Tim. 3. 9.

d ver. 32.

The wise men of the world have here again no remedy. The water will readily produce frogs for them also; all their disquisitions tend, as they did in Egypt, to hallow the frog, though they may have too much of it. The gods of the heathen were largely just men's lusts and passions deified; and to do them honor, they indulged them. But to call evil good cannot make it so; and to harden the conscience cannot satisfy the heart.

(iv.) And now, not the water, but the land, produces its myriads for their torture. The dust of the land smitten with the rod becomes "lice." I take this, with the *A. V.*, to be the true meaning of the word *kinnim*. "In the Talmud, the *kinnah* is a louse. The Jewish interpreters (including Onkelos and Josephus), the Syriac, the Arabic, and the Talmud give this meaning, which is supported by Bochart. The Septuagint gives *skniphes*, which Gesenius and others take to mean gnats. But *konops* or *empis* is the gnat. The *sknips* is said to be an ant that preys on figs, or an insect that lives under the bark of trees. Either of these bears more analogy to the louse than to the gnat or mosquito. The louse also is found 'on men and beasts,' while the gnat flies in the air." (*Murphy.*) Baker

(VIII. 20–IX. 12.)

The world in contrast with the redeemed of God.

1. (viii. 20-32.) Mixture in the place of unity.

2. [1] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and take thy stand before Pharaoh; behold, he goeth out unto the water, and say unto him, Thus saith Jehovah, Let my people go, that they may serve me. Else, if thou wilt not let my people go, behold, I am sending on thee, and on thy servants, and on thy people, and on thy houses, [e]swarms [of flies]; and the houses of

e Ps. 78. 45. Ps. 105. 31. *cf.* Jas. 4. 1.

suggests that "lice would shrivel at once in the hot sun of Africa," and contends for the kindred thought of "ticks," a kind of which lives in hot sand and dust, and is a great enemy to man and beast. (Quoted from *Geikie.*)

The insignificance of the creature used, the dust as that from which it originates, and the place of this plague in the order of these visitations, seem all to point in one direction. Dust is frequently connected in Scripture with death—"the dust of death." (Ps. xxii. 15.) "Dust unto dust" was the original verdict which put on man the stamp of vanity. The book of Ecclesiastes shows us death as the great tormentor of man, leveling him, with all his wisdom and his pride, to the beast. (Chap. iii. 19, etc.) What is beyond death only divine revelation and not human reasoning can show (*v.* 21); and conscience, if it point beyond, shadows the future with its accusations.

This, then, I take as the spiritual significance of this fourth testimony. Without it, the evidence as to the world's condition would be very incomplete indeed. With it, we have surely a striking picture of what the world is—under Satan's rule, God cast off, corrupt through lust, death brooding over it! And as to the last feature of it, though the wisdom of the world may labor to make it "natural," the whole instinct of that nature of man to which they appeal shrinks from and abhors it. If it be so man is *lower* than the beast, tormented as to the future as the beast is not, craving as his rational heritage an immortality which is denied to him. No; here (as the magicians say) is "the finger of God," and it writes upon the dust itself, as Christ wrote upon it for the Pharisees in after-times, man's condemnation.

And if man be under condemnation, his mouth is stopped; it is for God only to open His. Thus Pharaoh's wise men utter their last word here. The world is now seen in the true "light of nature"—if nature has any light. But God has more to say, if man has not; and Egypt's revealing plagues are not yet concluded.

2. In the three plagues that follow, we find emphasized the division put between the Egyptians and the Israelites,—literally, "redemption," a word I have preserved for evident reasons. God's separation of His people *is* a redemption, the work of His grace in them as well as for them, which in the typical meaning comes out very distinctly. But this typical meaning has been itself almost unrecognized hitherto. I am not aware, at least, of any attempt to bring it out connectedly, though surely such meaning there must be. Apart from this, every commentary will show how barren of any specific spiritual significance these inflictions upon Egypt are. The typical meaning is indeed an illumination.

(i.) In the first plague here there is a difficulty as to its nature even, which might seem to forbid interpretation. The word used as to it (*arob*) seems plainly derived from *arab*, to mix, and would thus mean "mixture," as in the margin of our common version. It is used nowhere else except in the book of Psalms (lxxviii. 45; cv. 31), referring to the same infliction; but a kindred word, *ereb*, denotes the "mixed multitude" that went out of Egypt with the Israelites. Symmachus, Aquila, and Jerome, of the ancients, translate it "mixture," with many more modern, applying it, as again the common version does, to flies. It is objected, however, to this, that ver. 31 is against it, but it does not seem evident that this could not apply to "one" of the myriad swarms that made up the great swarm. The Septuagint has, however, "the dog-fly," and by this or "the gad-fly" many would translate it. But the authority of the Septuagint,

the Egyptians shall be full of the swarms, and even the ground upon which they are. And I will [f] separate in that day the land of Goshen, where my people are settled, that no swarm shall be there, that thou mayest know that I, Jehovah, am in the midst of the land. And I will put redemption between my people and thy people: to-morrow shall this sign be. And Jehovah did so: and there came grievous swarms into the house of Pharaoh, and into the houses of his servants; and in all the land of Egypt the land was corrupted by reason of the swarms. And Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Go, sacrifice unto your God [g] in the land. And Moses said, It is not appointed so to do, for we are to sacrifice the [h] abomination of the Egyptians unto Jehovah our God: lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us? We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice unto Jehovah our God as he shall

[f] Mal. 3. 18. cf. ch. 12. 13.

[g] cf. Gal. 1. 4. Jno. 17. 16. 2 Cor. 6. 14-18.

[h] Gen. 46. 34. 1 Jno. 3. 1.

though great, is far from infallible, and the other is a supposition. Certainly, if we are to abide by the Hebrew, which is alone inspired, the first meaning would seem the true one.

But in this case the instrument employed we must be content to ignore. It was something that "devoured," as the seventy-eighth psalm shows; something of small size, making up for this in numbers; various in kind, whether flies or insects generally: the prominent thought is that of "mixture."

Trying this by its numerical place, we may see that this is not unity, though in its place, and we are led to ask, May not this be the thought suggested, that *lack* of unity which is implied in "mixture,"—*mixture in place of unity?*

Fanciful enough this will seem, no doubt; but in these types, let us remember, we have what is addressed to the imagination, subject to Scripture and spiritual judgment. Let us go on, therefore, and see whither this may lead us.

It is the contrast between the world and the people of God that is before us, and here the index number gives us a plain contrast: it speaks, on the one hand, of "obedience," "righteousness," on the other, of "*will*," "rebellion." God's work is *one*, manifested always as that,—internally, still more than externally, a unity. Man also, when obedient to His will, is at one with himself as with God,—at one with himself *because* with God. His life is of a piece, self-consistent and harmonious. If sin come in, it is a confusion, a contrary will: independence of God is discord, disunity, and man no longer at one with God is no longer at one with himself either. His "will," astray from God, falls asunder into many divided "wills," as the "lusts" within "war in" his "members." (Jas. iv. 1.) And so with all that comes under the power of evil: it corrupts, falls apart, is disorganized; death, which is the stamp upon and fruit of sin, is separation, dissolution.

"Mixture," combination, union, is still possible, and this is man's substitute for God's unity. But it only reveals the want of it. At one with God, we are at one with ourselves, and all things are at one with us also. Outside of this, there is nothing but a jarring concourse of incompatible things: the bond of the universe is snapped; and to one taught of God, the world is a thing smitten with the plague of incoherency, confusion, "*mixture.*" Out of which is only one way of deliverance.

The secret of the condition of things is now revealed. The wise men are useless: Pharaoh turns to Moses and Aaron, but only to suggest an impossible compromise. "Go, sacrifice unto your God in the land." Here again is "mixture"—a half obedience which is not obedience. Worship God where

say unto us. And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice unto Jehovah your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go [i] very far away: entreat for me. And Moses said, Behold, I go out from thee, and entreat Jehovah, and the swarms shall depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people to-morrow: only let not Pharaoh deal [j] deceitfully any more in not letting the people go to sacrifice to Jehovah. And Moses went out from Pharaoh, and entreated Jehovah: and Jehovah did according to the word of Moses, and took away the swarms from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people: there remained not one. But Pharaoh [k] hardened his heart at this time also, and he did not let the people go.

[i] *cf.* Gen. 19. 20. ch. 10. 11. Gal. 6. 14.

[j] Jer. 42. 20.

[k] ch. 9. 7, 12.

2. (ix. 1-7.) The destruction of the ministries of life.

[2] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh, and tell him, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. For if thou refuse to let them go, and wilt hold them still, behold, the hand of Jehovah is upon thy cattle which is in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep—a very grievous pestilence. And Jehovah will separate between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt, and there shall nothing die of all that belongeth to the children of Israel. And Jehovah appointed a set time, saying, To-morrow will Jehovah do this thing in the land. And

you are, he says;—that is, typically, Remain in the world; don't leave it. But that is impossible. In the world, faith's sacrifice is an abomination,—Christ's cross only an offense. The cross is the judgment of the world—of man in the flesh,—and if we can worship there, no cross is needed: it is in this case simply a false indictment against man. Thus there is irreconcilable difference between the world and the believer. By the cross, he is crucified to the world and the world to him, and he glories in that which has done this. How impossible, then, to mix the world and Christ!

He who has turned to Christ has owned the enmity in which he was, and found the reconciliation. He has obedience endeared to him in Christ's obedience to death for him. His is the blessedness of "the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." He is separated from the world and from the world's plague of mixture. He is at one with God and at one with himself: he has taken his true place in that universe of God which has on it every where as that the mark of *unity*.

(ii.) The two plagues following in this series, however little outwardly connected with the first, will be found to have the most real typical connection. In this second one, the destruction of the cattle takes place,—the ordained servants of man, the type of that service which he needs and must receive from others. Independent really he cannot be. The higher *any* creature is in the scale of being, the more its needs multiply and the more dependent is it. And with man, the higher (or more civilized) is his natural life, the more complex and numerous are the services he requires from others. The "division of labor" means, of course, but this. Happy would the world be if men could simply accept this—could serve and be served according to God's ordinance. Each caring for the other, how well would all be served! how blessed would it be to live in such an atmosphere of love—ministered to and ministering—as this implies!

Jehovah did that thing on the morrow, and all the [l]cattle of Egypt died, but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one. And Pharaoh sent, and, lo, there was not one of the Israelites' cattle dead; but the heart of Pharaoh was [m]stubborn, and he did not let the people go.

[l] Ps. 78. 50. Rom. 1. 31. Tit. 3. 3.

[m] ver. 12.

3. (Ix. 8-12.) Corruption through lust

[2] And Jehovah said unto Moses and unto Aaron, Take to you handsful of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward heaven in the sight of Pharaoh; and it shall become fine dust over all the land of Egypt, and it shall become [n]boils breaking out with sores upon man and on cattle in all the land of Egypt. And they took ashes of the furnace and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven, and it became a boil breaking out in sores upon man and upon beast. And the scribes could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the scribes, and upon all the Egyptians. And Jehovah [o]hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them, as Jehovah spake unto Moses.

[n] Deut. 28. 27. Job 2. 7. Rev. 16. 2.

[o] ver. 35.

But the world is away from God; weary, restless, dissatisfied, its craving is lust, its god its belly, and "corruption" is "in the world through lust." In the selfish strife of private interest, the forms of love required by society, serve but as the stones upon graves to mark that the spirit has departed. There is a murrain upon the cattle, except where, among the people of God, the spirit of love has been gained in the knowledge of redemption. Here love manifests itself in service—necessarily, if it be love; there is ability and heart to minister; grace has in a higher way perfected the design in nature: the cattle are preserved.

(iii.) In the next plague, the ashes of the furnace sprinkled toward heaven bring an eruptive disease upon man and beast. The "furnace," derived from a word which means "to subdue," was, as some think, a lime-kiln, or for smelting ore, and connected with those public works in Egypt at which Israel had been made so cruelly to labor. Egypt itself had been such a furnace for the people of God, and as such had earned for itself righteous retribution. This seems a very natural explanation of Moses' significant action. The disease that followed is too briefly described to be identified; but if so, we may be sure there is no need to identify it: all that is needed for the lesson is surely given us. It is noted by all commentators that the uncleanness resulting from such an attack must have been peculiarly severe upon a people who, like the Egyptians, were so punctiliously observant of personal cleanliness, and with whom this was a part of their religion. Typically, it would fittingly speak of the corruption of sin, the breaking out of that moral disease which Isaiah uses language such as might be drawn from it to describe: "From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores." (Isa. i. 6.)

This is the inward condition of the world exposed; for as already said, these plagues only expose what is the true state of things as before God. And the connection between such a state and Egypt's lime-kilns is easy to apprehend. The pomp and glory of the world minister to the lust of ambition and greed of all kinds out of which comes the corruption that is in the world, and in which it finds also its judgment; and this seems to be the meaning of what we have here. And now the magicians cannot stand before Moses: as long afterward the words "he that is without sin among you" scatter the would-be judges of the adulteress, so are Egypt's wise men scattered now; "for the boil was upon the

(IX. 13—XI.)

The heavens manifest themselves.

1. (ix. 13-35.) The action of righteousness.

3. [1] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and take thy stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. For I am at this time going to send all my strokes upon thy heart, and on thy servants, and on thy people, in order that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth. For now have I stretched forth my hand, and will smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth. But in very deed have I raised thee up [p] for this, to show [by] thee my power, and that my name may be declared in all the earth. Yet dost thou lift up thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go? behold, to-morrow, at this time, I will rain an exceeding heavy [q] hail, such as hath not been in Egypt from its foundation even till now. And now send, and hasten in thy cattle, and all thou hast in the field: upon every man and beast that shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down, and they shall die. He that [r] feared the word of Jehovah among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses, and he that regarded not Jehovah's word left his servants and his cattle in the field. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Stretch out thy hand toward the heavens, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt,—upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, in the land of Egypt. And Moses stretched forth his rod toward the heavens, and Jehovah sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along the ground, and Jehovah rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and continuous fire amid the hail, very heavy, such as had not been in all the land of Egypt since it was a

[p] Rom. 9. 17. *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 15. 1 Pet. 2. 8. Prov. 16. 4.

[q] Ps. 18. 12. Ps. 78. 47. Ps. 105. 32. Rev. 11. 19. Rev. 16. 21. Job. 38. 22, 23.

[r] Gen. 19. 14. Prov. 22. 3. *cf.* Jno. 3. 18.

scribes and upon all the Egyptians." Who, indeed, is exempt, save he in whom Christ is found the object for his heart, and the "exceeding great and precious promises" deliver from the "corruption which is in the world through lust"?

3. Here, then, a second stage in the conviction of the natural man is reached. We are now, in the third stage, to see, man being what he is, what the attitude of heaven must be toward him. The three plagues that follow all distinctly point to heaven as their place of origin. Here too the rod, which in the last three had not been seen, appears again,—a thing which the typical meaning alone, as it would seem, accounts for. For it will be seen that the middle plagues to men seem scarcely divine inflictions: they proceed more from man himself, although, in fact, the government of God may truly be seen in them. But now we come again, as in the first plagues, to direct, positive inflictions.

(i.) And first, we have the hail: and here once more we find what might seem a mixture—a concord of contraries. Yet nature furnishes it, though, of course, in this case, increased into a miracle. With the occurrence of hail and fire, (that is, electricity,) we are all familiar. They are products of the same cause—the meeting of a mass of warm air, saturated with moisture, with a cold upper current. Heat and cold must thus mingle together to produce it, and the electricity is disengaged, apparently, at the same time as the freezing of the vapor. We have in the book of Revelation, under the first trumpet, the occurrence of

nation. And the hail smote in all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and every herb of the field did the hail smite, and shivered every tree of the field. Only in the land of [s]Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail. And Pharaoh sent and called Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have [t]sinned this time: Jehovah is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. [u]Entreat Jehovah, for it is too much that there should be [these] [v]thunderings of God and hail, and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer. And Moses said unto him, When I am gone out of the city, I will spread out my hands unto Jehovah: the thunderings shall cease, and there shall be no more hail, that thou mayest know that the earth is Jehovah's; [w]but as for thee and thy servants, I know that ye will not yet fear Jehovah God. And the flax and the barley were smitten, for the barley was in the ear and the flax was in pod; but the [x]wheat and the spelt were not smitten, for they were concealed [in the blade]. And Moses went out from Pharaoh out of the city, and spread out his hands to Jehovah, and the thunder and hail ceased, and the rain was not poured upon the earth. And when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he sinned yet more, and [y]hardened his heart,—he and his servants. And Pharaoh's heart was stubborn, and he did not let the children of Israel go, as Jehovah had spoken by Moses.

2. (x. 1-20.) Salvation for the house; and the hosts of the Lord against the sinner.

[2] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh; but I have [z]hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may do these signs in their midst; and that thou mayest [a]tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what I have done with the Egyptians, and my signs which I have done among them; that

[s] Is. 32. 18, 19.
[t] 2 Cor. 7. 10. cf. 2 Chron. 12. 6, 7. etc. Ps. 51. 4.
[u] ch. 8. 8. Acts 8. 24.
[v] ch. 19. 16. Ps. 29. 3-9.
[w] Is. 26. 10.
[x] cf. Jonah 4. 11.
[y] ch. 10. 1, 20.
[z] ver. 20. Matt. 13. 14, 15.
[a] Deut. 4. 9. Ps. 44. 1. Ps. 78. 4, 5.

hail and fire; and in the eighteenth psalm, "hailstones and coals of fire" are emphasized as expressions of the divine wrath. Cold is the absence of heat, as darkness is of light; and light and heat are near akin, as, of course, are cold and darkness. God is light, and heat is the glow of His presence, which toward sin is wrath—the flame of fire. But cold and heat alike have their part in the storm of His wrath. If He forsake, it must be in anger, never indifference; never, therefore, mere withdrawal,—the chill and the fire mingle, and thus what should have been blessing, like the drops of vapor, becomes a pitiless iron shower which destroys every thing before it.

Thus upon the world the wrath of God abideth, suspended indeed by His forbearing love, which at the same time has provided a place of refuge. But still there are "the treasures of the hail which" He has "preserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war." (Job xxxviii. 22, 23.) And they will be poured out yet, while the heavens proclaim His righteousness in it. It is this that makes it so terrible, that it is the action of righteousness; and this, faith anticipates and takes home as a present thing governing one's thoughts and conduct.

(ii.) If the Lord be thus against the sinner, the world is full also of witnesses to this attitude of His. Man may have departed from God and become hostile to

ye may know that I am Jehovah. And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and said unto him, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to [b] humble thyself before me? let my people go, that they may serve me. For if thou refuse to let my people go, behold, to-morrow I will bring [c] locusts into thy borders; and they shall cover the face of the land, so that one cannot see the land; and they shall eat the [d] residue of that which is escaped, which is left you from the hail, and shall eat every tree which groweth for you out of the field; and they shall fill thy houses, and the houses of all thy servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians, [locusts] which neither thy fathers nor thy father's fathers have seen, since the day that they were on the earth unto this day: and he turned, and went out from Pharaoh. And the servants of Pharaoh said unto him, How long shall this man be a [e] snare unto us? let the men go, that they may serve Jehovah their God: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed? And Moses and Aaron were brought back unto Pharaoh. And he said unto them, Go, serve Jehovah your God: who are they that shall go? And Moses said, With our young and with our old will we go; with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds we will go: for we have a feast unto Jehovah. And he said unto them, Jehovah be so with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones: see! for evil is before you. [f] Not so: go now ye that are men, and serve Jehovah; for that ye have desired: and they were driven out from Pharaoh's pres-

[b] Deut. 4. 37. 1 Kings 21. 29. Jas. 4. 10.

[c] Joel 2. 3, 11, 25. Rev. 9. 3. Prov. 30. 27.

[d] Joel 1. 4.

[e] 1 Pet. 2. 8.

[f] ch. 8. 28. ver. 24. Acts 16. 31. 1 Cor. 7. 14. Eph. 6. 4.

Him, but nature in its whole framework is obedient, and serves Him still. Thus the sinner finds himself in a stream of hostile forces, the hosts of the Lord, which the army of locusts vividly presents to us. "The locusts have no king," says Agur, "yet go they forth all by bands." (Prov. xxx. 27.) "Nothing in their habits," says a recent observer, "is more striking than the pertinacity with which they all pursue the same line of march, like a disciplined army." This instinctive discipline, with an invisible king, shows whose hosts they are—under whose marshaling: "*His* army," the Lord calls them. (Joel ii. 11.) "In every stage of their existence," says the same person who was just now quoted, "these locusts give a most impressive view of the power of God to punish a wicked world." To contend with them is hopeless, and the destruction caused by them is absolute: "the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them." (Joel ii. 3.)

Thus nature, with its laws, serves the Law-giver, and woe to those who contend against their God. They are hopelessly in the grasp of destructive forces which fully own the One they do not—are the disciplined hosts of the Lord of Hosts. This an insect may teach us here, if only we have hearts to learn the lesson.

Along with this, we have in this section Pharaoh's second attempt at compromise, as vain as the first one was. The men may go; the little ones must be left behind; in which case, of course, the little ones become a pledge for the return of their parents. But salvation is here, as the New Testament declares it, for thee and for thy house. If Pharaoh's thought is to retain or bring back the fathers by the children's means, God's is, to save the children with and by

ence. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Stretch out thy hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up over the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land,—all that the hail hath left. And Moses stretched his rod over the land of Egypt, and Jehovah caused an [g]east wind to blow upon the land all that day and all the night; the morning came, and the east wind brought the locusts. And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and settled in all the borders of Egypt: very grievous [were they]; before them were no such locusts as they, neither shall be after them. And they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they devoured every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left; and there remained not any green thing on the trees, nor on the herbs of the field, in all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste, and said, [h]I have sinned against Jehovah your God, and against you; and now forgive, I pray you, my sin only this once, and entreat Jehovah your God, that he may take away from me this death only. And he went out from Pharaoh, and entreated Jehovah; and Jehovah turned a very strong west wind, which took away the locusts, and drove them into the Red Sea; there remained not a locust in all the borders of Egypt. But Jehovah made [i]stubborn Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go.

g Gen. 41. 23. Ps. 78. 46. Ps. 105. 34.

h ch. 9. 27, 28.

i ver. 27. ch. 11. 10.

means of their fathers. The circumcision of the Israelite's house gives the divine rule for the old economy. The new cannot be behind it: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." (Acts xvi. 31.)

This, then, is the tenor of universal Scripture. God's all-embracing love would make of His people hands to reach out to others, and of the human ties which He has established, links by which the new creation itself shall be drawn together. He would thus claim for His own that which is, with no acquiescence on His part, departed from Him, and use as His that natural affection which, though fallen, is not incapable of being renewed and spiritualized. Thus He meets and satisfies the deepest instincts of our manhood, the divine Father manifesting Himself as not strange to what is best in human fatherhood, and teaching us to feel in ourselves the original likeness in which at first He created us to Himself.

The children of believers are, of course, naturally like other children. The nature we can impart is the old, and not the new: to have this, they must be born again, as all must. Nor does it follow necessarily, as we know, that because a man is saved his house must be. But if with faith in God there be faithfulness in the place in which God has put us, He has promised, "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Here is the thing, no doubt, which tests us; for it is not our words only that have fruit in this way; it is the combined influence of our words and ways. That three days' remove from Egypt, if really taken, will have immense effect. And that we have come out to *keep a feast* to the Lord will give the positive side, without which separation from the world becomes a mere cold and hard asceticism.

These things are our types, and the God of Israel is as full of power to-day as ever He was: of that, these very locusts may remind us.

3. (x. 21-29.) The action of holiness.

[3] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Stretch out thy hand toward the heavens, that there may be [j] darkness over the land of Egypt, that one may feel the darkness. And Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven; and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: they saw not one another, neither rose any from his seat for three days; but all the children of Israel had [k] light in their dwellings. And Pharaoh called Moses, and said, Go, serve Jehovah; only let your [l] flocks and herds be left; let your little ones also go with you. And Moses said, Thou must give us also sacrifices and burnt-offerings, that we may sacrifice unto Jehovah our God. Our [m] cattle also must go with us: there shall not a hoof be left behind; for thereof must we take to

[j] Ps. 105.28. Matt.27.45. Jude 13. *ctr.* Jno. 9. 5. 1 Jno. 1. 5.

[k] Matt.6.22. Eph. 5. 8. 1 Jno. 2.10.

[l] ch. 12. 36. *cf.* Luke 16. 9. 1 Tim.6.17. 2 Tim.4.10.

[m] *cf.* Hos. 5. 6.

(iii.) And now we come to the last plague of these nine—the last but one of all poured out upon the land of Egypt. The plague of darkness is one the significance of which is simple for those who know the meaning of the darkness upon the cross. God is light: darkness is the withdrawal of light, the forsaking of God. And this was (as we may see in the twenty-second psalm,) the most terrible part of that judgment upon sin which our dear Lord bore for us in His body on the tree. God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and cannot look upon sin: even from Him who knew no sin, when made sin, He must turn away; and so the cry of forsaken sorrow interprets the darkness to us. The "outer darkness" is its expression in the eternity to come.

God-abandonment! who save that solitary Sufferer can interpret this to us? Men would indeed choose to get away from God here, and the "far-off country" can be for awhile even a place of pleasure while we are recklessly wasting what can never be regained. But even the far-off country is not the hell where men will find the answer to their desire to get away from God. In Egypt, for three awful days they sat overwhelmed; none looked upon another, or rose from his seat. In that darkness that is the "*shadow* of death," it is said, "they sit;" but what when it is not the shadow, but death itself, and the eternal flame shall give yet no light?

"In Thy light we see light." In the ends of the earth, no place so destitute but some beams of that light must come. When men have found the place of their choice—a place without God, where, from the necessity of His nature, He can never be, all figures fail to convey the reality of that horror of utter darkness which they shall find it.

Here, then, fittingly, these nine plagues end. Pharaoh attempts, at the very last, another compromise. If he cannot prevent their going out, he will at least make them as poor as he can. Their flocks and herds were the main part of all which, as a shepherd-people, they possessed. They are thus the fitting type of our possessions—of that which we have in the world. These must be left, says Pharaoh;—the first attempt we have perhaps to define the doctrine which has since met such wide acceptance, alas! among the people of God,—that we are to separate what is "secular" from what is "sacred,"—and that if we ourselves must needs go on pilgrimage, we must not have our all out of Egypt, honestly owning God's title to all we have.

A certain claim, it is owned as reasonable, the Lord should have; but the things are ours outside this tax upon them. Yet does not this show how little we know what it is to be the Lord's, when we have in any thing divided interests from His? Does it not show that we know little what it is to be in Christ, while we have another self with independent aims and motives? Is this other self, can it be, any thing else than the old self, which knows not Christ, and refuses Him?

Thus it is, surely, that along with this lesson of what the holiness of God is as against sin, we are made to learn what is the claim of that holiness—we will not

serve Jehovah our God, and we know not wherewith we must serve Jehovah our God till we come thither. And Jehovah made [n]stubborn Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go. And Pharaoh said unto him, Get thee from me; take heed to thyself: see my face no more; for in the day thou seest my face thou shalt die. And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well: I will see thy face no more.

4. (xi.) The completion of the wonders on Egypt announced: the prostration of "the chief of all their strength."

[4] Now Jehovah had said unto Moses, [o]One plague more will I bring upon Pharaoh and upon the Egyptians: after that, he shall let you go from hence; when he shall let you go altogether, he shall actually [p]drive you out hence. Speak now in the ears of the people, and let them ask, every man of his neighbor and every woman of her neighbor, articles of silver and articles of gold. And Jehovah gave the people favor in the eyes of the Egyptians; also the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the eyes of Pharaoh's servants, and in the eyes of the people. And Moses said, Thus saith Jehovah, At [q]midnight will I go out into the midst of the Egyptians, and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die,—from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his [r]throne unto the first-born of the bondwoman who is behind the mill, and all the first-born of cattle. And there shall be a great cry in all the land of Egypt, the like of which hath not been, nor shall be any more. [s]And against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog point its tongue,—against man or beast, that ye may know that Jehovah distinguisheth between the Egyptians and Israel. And all these thy servants shall come down to me, and bow down to me, saying, Go forth,—thou and all the people that follow thee; and after that,

n ch. 11. 10.

o *cf.* Prov. 29. 1.

p ch. 12. 31, 32.

q Matt. 25. 6. 1 Thess. 5. 3.

r Rom. 3. 22, 23.

s Josh. 10. 21. Zech. 3. 1, 2. Rom. 8. 33.

say *upon* His redeemed, but rather *for* them. It is, in fact, in the very idea of redemption itself, necessary, in order to realize the fullness of blessing in it, that not only we, but all that is ours, shall be brought out of Egypt. "There shall not a hoof be left behind," says Moses, "for thereof must we take to serve Jehovah our God, and we know not wherewith we must serve Jehovah our God till we come thither." How true it is that we have not even—cannot have—the knowledge of the Lord's will concerning us until we are, with all belonging to us, where God's salvation brings us—outside the world.

(iv.) But God does not intend His people to go out of Egypt empty. They are to leave it rather with the spoil of Egypt in their hands; and yet, in taking this, they take but what is their own. Take to-day out of the world all that is the fruit or accompaniment of God's salvation-work—take out of it all that Scripture has enriched it with—how poor would it be left! It is but the result of what the world is, that God could not take His people out of it without leaving it empty of all true blessing and enlightenment.

And now one last warning is permitted to Pharaoh ere the final stroke of judgment falls. At midnight, the time of deepest darkness, Jehovah is coming into the land Himself, and "all their first-born, the chief of all their strength," shall die. The thunderbolt of Israel's deliverance is at last to fall. The prostration of the world is to be the deliverance of those for whom God has undertaken. The type is easily read by its own light.

I will go forth. And he went out from Pharaoh in heat of anger. But Jehovah had said to Moses, Pharaoh will not hearken unto you, that my signs may be multiplied in the land of Egypt. And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh; but Jehovah made 'stubborn Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go out of his land. *t* ch. 14. 4.

The paschal ordinance: peace with God in righteousness.

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chap. xii.-xv. 21.)

God with them manifest in full and realized salvation.

(XII. 1-20.)

1. (vv. 1-6.) The true beginning with the Lamb.

1.[1] AND Jehovah spake unto Moses and unto Aaron [u] in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the [v] beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year unto you. Speak unto all the *u* Luke 10. 33.

v cf. 2 Cor. 5. 17.

SUBD. 3.

THE third subdivision is the history of God's final interference in behalf of His people, in which not alone is Pharaoh's power subdued, but much more—God is manifested, and they are brought into His presence. God with them and for them, which means also that they are to be for Him,—essence, as it is, of all sanctification—this is most evidently its central meaning.

It is a perfect blessing, as realized in its seven sections, which it is well to glance at in their connection with each other before we take them up in detail. The passover and the passage of the sea are the two stages in this deliverance, which answer, I believe, essentially, to the first two parts of the epistle to the Romans (chap. i.-v. 11, and v. 12-viii.); the first, justification by the *blood* of Christ; the second, death to sin in the *death* of Christ. Both parts must be known for full deliverance. The type before us will best illustrate their meaning.

In the first section (chap. xii. 1-20), peace with God in righteousness through the blood of Christ is the plain significance of the passover. All begins with this (1-6), which is the basis both of communion (7-14) and holiness (15-20).

In the second (chap. xii. 21-51), we find, therefore, deliverance from captivity: faith sets its seal to the word of God (21-28), sees the judgment of man in all that comes of him (in the death of the first-born, 29, 30), and is thus separated from the world and to the Lord (31-36), the walk with God now beginning (37-42); finally, the obligations of the passover are made known (43-51).

Thirdly (chap. xiii. 1-16), the *sanctification* of the first-born, corresponding to the judgment upon the first-born before, shows how redemption is *to God*, in the devotion of all the powers of the redeemed.

Next (*vv.* 17-22), the features of the walk with God are made known to us in the consciousness of weakness (17, 18), the bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus (19, 20), and the Lord's presence with us (21, 22).

These four sections, it is evident, are in close connection and complete, the septenary series here being, as with most other sevens, a 4 and 3. The four are the passover series, the three following give us the second stage of deliverance—the passage through the sea.

Thus the fifth section shows us (chap. xiv. 1-14) once more the weak with the Strong —the enemy showing himself once more, but Jehovah revealing Himself as the shelter and salvation of His people.

The sixth (*vv.* 15-31) brings the actual victory, decisive and final. Israel is outside of Egypt, the enemy perished.

In the seventh (chap. xv. 1-21), we close with the song of the delivered people. The spiritual meaning of these latter sections we shall best understand as we enter into the details.

1. The first section, then, relates the institution of the passover; clearly a new beginning, for the year is changed to make it so. The last of the plagues of

assembly of Israel, saying, On the *tenth day of this month, let them take themselves each a ᶻlamb, according to fathers' houses,—a lamb for a house. And if the household be ᵛtoo little for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls: every one according to his eating shall ye count with regard to the lamb. Your lamb

*ref. Ps. 40. 8. Matt. 3. 17. Gal. 4. 4.

ᶻ Is. 53. 7. John. 1. 29. 1 Pet. 1 19

ᵛ Joel, 1. 4

Egypt is in this way clearly separated from all that has preceded it, as, on the other hand, we have seen the former ones as constituting a complete series, the last three giving us completely the attitude of God toward the unbelieving world. The death of the first-born in its aspect toward Israel themselves differs entirely from that of the former plagues. As to these, they had been sheltered by the hand of God, not a question raised as to their own relation to Him; but now, though sheltered, their shelter must be realized as a *refuge*—a refuge to which they must flee as those in danger; themselves justly liable to that which falls on the Egyptians. Here, then, is a total change in God's ways with them, and a change of the deepest significance. Till they own what they are and what they deserve, there can be, spite of all that has been done for them, no deliverance. They must meet death—that which is the wages of sin, pass through it, as it were, leave it behind them, the question settled, and (as all questions settled with God,) never again to be unsettled—never to come up again, before they can be freed from Egyptian bondage, or their feet leave Egyptian soil—nay, before they can *begin* to go out,—before they can take a single step in this direction. Their true passover—all following being but the commemoration of it—they must keep *in Egypt*, and this is particularly noticed in the first place: "And Jehovah spake unto Moses and unto Aaron in the land of Egypt."

All this for us is deeply instructive. There is no progress with us possible until we have come to this. There may be no doubt, plenty of exercise and experience of a certain sort before it, and plenty of effort at self-help; but that only makes more solemn the fact, as here, that withal no step is made in the path with God, nor the path reached, until the shelter of the cross is known. The peace which Christ has made for us we can realize, and we must have peace with God in order to walk with Him. Here, then, is the true beginning for our souls.

(i.) First, the year is changed; the preceding months are blotted out, as it were, and God begins time afresh for them with the paschal month. Grace it is that gives this new beginning, and grace can do nothing kinder than blot out the past. And so with our history, until that is known which is the antitype of the passover here. It will have its use, no doubt, as a lesson; all is not, in that sense, lost: will any thing in the world's history even be really so? All will have its moral in the fast-hastening day of revelation, and instead of being forgotten, will abide in profit for us forever. But when God says, "I will remember no more," it has a very different meaning. He can no more forget than He can repent; yet, *relatively*, both terms can be used of Him. He does not remember our sins when He treats us, and is to us, as if these had never happened—when we can find nothing whatever in His conduct toward us which indicates His remembrance of them; when they are not merely not a cloud in our heaven any longer, but not even a mote in the sunshine of His perfect love.

Yet the vail that love can draw over the past may be, as in this case, so surpassingly glorious that the glow of it may enable us as well to look back as to look forward. And if God set aside the past with a new beginning, He does, in fact, all the more direct our eyes to the vail with which He has covered the past. It is the work of Christ which has covered our past which has begun for us all things anew; and the vail of the past is here the glory of the present and the future.

But the year does not begin exactly with the passover itself: that is the

shall be [z] without blemish, a [a] male of one year: ye shall take it from the sheep or from the goats. And ye shall keep it until the [b] fourteenth day of this month; and [c] all the congregation of the assembly of Israel shall kill it between the [d] evenings.

2. (7-14.) Communion under the blood.

[2] And they shall take of the [e] blood, and [f] put it upon the two door-posts and upon the lintel of the houses wherein they eat it. And they shall [g] eat the flesh in

[z] Jno. 8. 46. Heb. 7. 26.
[a] *cf.* Lev. 1. 3, etc. *etc.* Lev. 4. 28.
[b] Acts 2. 22. Acts 10. 28.
[c] Jno. 11. 50.
[d] Jno. 13. 30. Mk. 15. 33.
[e] Lev. 17. 11. Heb. 9. 22.
[f] Rom. 4. 24, 25; Rom. 5. 1. [g] 1 Jno. 1. 3.

fourteenth day of the year, and not the first: and not till the *tenth* day is the lamb taken. How full of meaning is this fourteenth day,—a number compounded of 2, the number of testimony, and that which speaks of divine and perfect workmanship—7! For is not here the perfect work which is the great subject of God's testimony?

The ten days which pass before the lamb is taken are, as we know, significant as the measure of human responsibility: they answer to that time in our Lord's life before He takes up openly His work among men, as to which the Gospels are as silent as the type here. Yet the type is not silent as to the character of that time, but explains it as that in which He was fulfilling, as man, His own responsibility; coming forth then, at the end of it, to receive the Father's attestation to His perfection, and the seal of the Spirit, when He takes up His work for men. He is then shown the *unblemished* Lamb, and the "four days" of the type begin to be fulfilled with Him, to which the four gospels answer, the time of His testing; for us, the glorious exhibition of what He was and is, as Messiah, Minister, Son of Man, and Son of God. At the end of the four days, the lamb is slain. The different sides of the sacrificial work we shall not find here; for that, we must go on to Leviticus. Here, what is dwelt on is what we must first of all realize,—the effect for us.

(ii.) We go on, then, to see that effect,—perfect shelter from the judgment which is even now pronounced—not executed—upon the world. The blood before the eye of God shows that judgment anticipated, and put away as thus anticipated, by sacrificial substitution. As so often noticed, God's eye is upon the blood, and so cannot be upon the people. Whether *they* are good or bad, whether feelings or experiences are right or wrong in any of them, is not the point: God sees but the blood. Had judgment entered a house so sheltered, not only would the blood have been dishonored, but the truth and righteousness of God would have been wrecked forever. These stood on the side of the worst and guiltiest of these who had fled for refuge to the hope set before them. And so with us. The glory of the gospel it is that the righteousness of God itself is put upon the side of every one who welcomes it in faith.

While outside the house the blood of atonement spoke to God, to whom it was addressed, inside He provided that which was to satisfy *them*, and enable them for that path with Him upon which they were now so shortly to go forth. The lamb is theirs to feed upon, and God is bent upon their enjoying this provision of His love. The lamb too must all of it be eaten. If the household were too little for the lamb, (we read nothing of the lamb being too little for the house,) then, says the Lord, let him and his neighbor next unto his house take it. God would have Christ apprehended by us. He would have our souls sustained, and He would have Christ honored. We are to *eat*—to appropriate to ourselves what Christ is; and what we appropriate becomes, in fact, part and parcel of ourselves. This laying hold of Christ by faith makes Christ to be sustenance indeed to us, and Himself to be reproduced in us.

Death God ordains as the food of life; and it is as sheltered and saved from death that we can feed upon death. It is not merely vanquished and set aside: it is in the cross the sweet and wonderful display of divine power and love in our behalf, accomplished in the mystery of human weakness. Death is become the food of life, and the life is life eternal.

that night, [h] roast with fire, and [i] unleavened bread; with [j] bitter herbs they shall eat it. Ye shall not eat of it raw, nor done at all in water, but roast with fire,—its [k] head with its [l] legs, and with its [m] inwards. And ye shall let none of it [n] remain until the morning, and that which is left of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. And thus shall ye eat it; your [o] loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staves in your hands; and ye shall eat it in [p] haste: it is a passover unto Jehovah. And I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of

h Heb. 12. 29. *etr.* ch. 29. 31.
i Ps. 32. 5, 5. 1 Cor. 5. 8. Acts 24. 16.
j Lam. 3. 19, 20. Eph. 2. 11, 12. 1 Tim. 6. 12-15.
k Col. 2. 3.
l Jno. 8. 29.
m Ps. 40. 8.
n ch. 16. 19. *cf.* Lev. 7. 15.

o Luke 12. 35, 36; Eph. 6. 14. p Gen. 19. 15.

As to the mode of eating the lamb, notice three things which destroy the dangerous dreams that are about with regard to the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. First of all, it was not to be "raw," or "underdone." Fire must do its work, and thoroughly too, upon that which was to be the representative of Christ as in redemption we know Him. Not death alone would do: the Lord in atonement not merely laid down life, but was "made sin,"—yea, "made a curse for us." The chastisement of our peace was thus upon Him in that awful place; death without this would be no food for us: not the lamb *raw*.

But again also, "not done at all in water, but roast with fire." The *water* would hinder the direct action of the fire; and this is the type of the Word, or as "living water," of the Holy Ghost, who acts by it. The Lord's life was always in the power of the Spirit,—always pure absolutely, according to the measure of the Word itself. But would not the water, then, hinder the action of the fire? Could He be made sin who knew none? That is just what Scripture affirms to have been the truth. The holiness of His life, the perfection of His obedience, did not prevent or soften the agony of the cross. It was the just due of sin which He took, glorifying God in thus affirming His righteousness who ordained the penalty. An "equivalent penalty" would not avail, much less a commuted one: these would but set aside the sentence, to His dishonor. No: the lamb must not be done in water, but roast with fire.

Thirdly, "its head, with its legs, and with its inwards." The head, no doubt, expresses the thoughts and counsels with which His walk (the legs) keeps perfect company. The inwards are those affections of His heart which were the motive-power impelling Him upon the path He trod. In all, the fire brought forth nothing but sweet savor; for man, it prepared the food of his true life: all is absolutely perfect; and all is ours to appropriate.

Occupation with the person of Christ is thus impressed upon us: we need this. Not the knowledge of salvation alone will suffice us: it is the One who saves whom we need. Indeed, without occupation with Christ, the very knowledge of peace and salvation may only too easily be found associated with a worldliness most intense. Christ for our hearts alone keeps and sanctifies them.

The pilgrim dress is therefore to be the garb of those who partake of the passover. It is to be eaten in haste, as by men escaping from that the pressure of which they have too well known, and longing to be away. And the dress is the traveling-dress: it is not the "best robe," which gives us quite another thought; but the traveling-dress, which God grant we may ever wear. And here we begin, just as for the conflict in Eph. vi., with the "loins girded."

The long robes of the east, as all are aware, required the girdle, that they might be no hindrance in the way of such a march as Israel had now before them. If loose, they would get entangled with the feet, and overthrow the wearer; and the dust of the road would get upon them and defile them. The truth it is that is to be our girdle, keeping us from loose and negligent contact with ever-ready defilement from the world, and the entanglement to our feet which lax habits prove. We must arise and depart, for this is not our rest.

Then we have, "your sandals on your feet:" and these shoes never wore out

Egypt, both man and beast, and upon all the gods of the Egyptians will I execute [q]judgment—I, Jehovah. And the blood shall be a [r]sign for you upon the houses in which ye are; and when [s]I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the stroke of destruction shall not be among you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be for a [t]memorial unto you, and ye shall celebrate it [as] a feast to Jehovah: ye shall celebrate it in your generations [as] an ordinance forever.

3. (15-20.) Leaven to be put away: holiness based on redemption.

[3][u]Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread: on the very first day shall ye put away leaven out of your houses; for whoso eateth leavened bread, from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be [v]cut off from Israel. And on the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day a holy convocation unto you: [w]no work shall be done in them, save what every soul must eat, that only shall be done by you. And ye shall keep the feast of unleavened bread; for on

q Gen. 15. 14.
r Gen. 9. 13, Josh. 2. 13.
s Rom. 3. 26, Rom. 8. 33, *ctr.* Gen. 6. 5.
t 1 Cor. 11. 25.
u 1 Pet. 4. 2.
v *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 30-32.
w Rom. 4. 4, 5.

through all their journeyings in the iron desert in which for forty years they wandered. They anticipated in this, as we must, the roughness of the road, and the peace of Christ must be our defense, a faith that recognizes God in every thing, and that delights in and makes His will our will. The staff in our hand is that of His promises upon which we may lean without possibility of disappointment. Thus we are provided.

(iii.) We come now to the feast of unleavened bread. Here, of course, is pressed upon us the holiness which all this implies. Literally, it is "*compressed* bread,"—bread of which the particles have not been separated by the action of ferment or leaven. For "leaven" itself there are two words, the one meaning properly "a leaving," or remainder, because it was, in fact, a lump of dough left from a former time; while the other means simply "leaven," or "ferment." The "old leaven" of which the apostle speaks to the Corinthians (1 Cor. v.) is connected with the first thought. The introduction of the "old" into that which is new is what the enemy would ever use to transform and corrupt this. It may be the spirit of Judaism, the old covenant, introduced into the new; it may be, what is of the flesh into the new life which is of God. It may come in as superstition and formalism (the leaven of the Pharisees), or as more open Sadducean rationalism and unbelief, or as simple pandering to the world,—"the leaven of Herod" (see Matt. xvi.). In any case it is corruption—leaven; in any case it implies real departure from God. If we leave Him and His thoughts, what can we do but take up with our own? And this is a thing not merely negative and passive: it is by the law of its nature what all evil is—a *ferment*, a revolt, an antagonism to all that is of God.

The unleavened bread the apostle interprets as "sincerity and truth"—of course, Godward. It is the spirit of integrity with Him—whole-hearted surrender to His blessed will. It is the spirit which says, "Search me, O God, and know my thoughts." The deliberate keeping back from Him of that which is His due is rebellion against Him.

The association of the unleavened bread (where first mentioned) with "bitter herbs" is easy therefore, but solemn. The discovery of self is bitter,—the ruin of the old creation,—that the Lamb should have had to die for my sins. How utterly inconsistent this with the allowance of evil! A chastened spirit becomes us in presence of the cross. Not yet—not here—can we let our hearts out, in a world where the cross has stood.

Yet it is a "*feast* of unleavened bread" that we are called to—truly a feast. The rest for the soul is *never* obtained without taking Christ's yoke (Matt. xi.

this same day have I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt, and ye shall keep this day in your generations [as] an ordinance for ever. In the first [month], on the fourteenth day of the month at even, shall ye eat unleavened bread until the twenty-first day of the month at even: seven days shall no leaven be found in your houses; for whoso eateth that which is leavened, that soul shall be cut off from the assembly of Israel, whether he be a sojourner, or born in the land. Ye shall eat nothing leavened: in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread.

(XII. 21-51.)

Deliverance.

1. (*vv.* 21-28.) The obedience of faith.

2. [1] And Moses called all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Lay hold, and take to you lambs according to your families, and [z] kill the passover. And take a bunch of [y] hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two door-posts with the blood that is in the basin; and [x] none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. And Jehovah will pass through to smite the Egyptians, and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two door-posts, Jehovah will pass over the door, and will not suffer the [a] destroyer to come into your houses to smite you. And ye shall observe this for an ordinance for thee and for thy sons forever. And it shall be when ye come into the land which Jehovah shall give unto you, as he hath spoken, that ye shall keep this service. And it shall be, when your children say unto you, [b] What mean ye by this service? then ye shall say, It is the passover-sacrifice unto Jehovah, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and [c] worshiped. And the children of Israel went and did as Jehovah had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.

2. (29, 30.) The death of the first-born.

[2] And so it was, that at midnight Jehovah [d] smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born

x Josh. 5.10. 2 Kings 23. 21. Ezra 6. 19. Luke22.15. Ezek. 45. 21.

y Ps. 51. 7. 1 Kings 4. 33. Luke 18. 14. Acts 20. 21.

z *cf.* Josh 2. 10. Jno. 15. 6. Heb. 6. 6.

a Rom.8.33. 1 Thess 1. 10.

b Deut. 6.20. Josh. 4. 6.

c ch. 4. 31.

d Ps. 78. 51. Ps. 105. 36. Ps. 135. 8. Ps. 136. 10. Rom.6.23. Luke12.20.

29). In the perfect surrender to God which repentance implies and faith necessitates, the joy of the Lord that enters into the soul is the assurance of an infinite joy to come. And this feast is to fill the "seven days" of our life after;—six here, and then the eternal Sabbath to which no night comes. All these things, as the contents of this section show us are implied in redemption known,—the new beginning of a life eternal.

2. In the second section, we have the history of the deliverance from Egypt, not completed however at once, as we shall find, although at first it might be thought so. Yet their fetters are once for all broken, and He who has begun will complete His work. We have here—

(i.) First, on the part of Israel, their obedience to the prescribed conditions. In sprinkling the blood, they own the sentence of death upon themselves, and the hyssop used in doing so, as the type of what is lowly, in contrast with the cedar (1 Kings iv. 33), speaks very plainly of the condition of heart which must naturally go with this. The knowledge of this grace of God toward them the people are to communicate to their children.

of Pharaoh that sat upon his throne unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon, and all the first-born of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night,—he and all his servants and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house in which there was not one dead.

3. (31–36.) Separation from the world and enrichment.

[3] And he called Moses and Aaron in the night, and said, Rise: go forth from among my people,—both ye and also the children of Israel, and go serve Jehovah, as ye said. Take also your flocks and herds, as ye said, and go; and [e] bless me also. And the Egyptians were [f] urgent upon the people to send them out of the land in haste, for they said, We are all dead men. And the people took their dough [g] before it was leavened, their kneading-troughs being bound up in their bundles upon their shoulders. And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses, and asked of the Egyptians articles of silver and articles of gold, and raiment. And Jehovah gave the people favor in the eyes of the Egyptians, and they gave unto them: and they [h] spoiled the Egyptians.

e Gen. 27.38.
f Ps. 105.38.
g cf. Acts 12 3. Gen. 19.3.
h Gen.15.14.

4. (37–42.) The journey begun: inklings of future failure.

[4] And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about [i] six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children. And a [j] mixed multitude went up with them, and flocks and herds, [even] very much cattle. And they baked the dough which they brought out of Egypt into unleavened cakes: for it was not leavened; for they were [k] thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry; neither had they prepared for themselves any victual. And the dwelling of the chil-

i Ps. 105.37.
j Num.11.4. Luke 14. 25–27.
k ver. 34.

(ii.) Then the judgment falls. The death of the first-born is the judgment upon all that comes of the natural man, the first-born, like the first-fruits being a sample of all the rest, and indeed, as Jacob says, "the excellency of dignity and the excellency of power." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" is our Lord's account of it. Man must be born again.

(iii.) The judgment of the world brings necessary separation from it. The witness of its condemnation before God, if maintained, will soon make the world itself enforce a separation. The people of God go forth, however, enriched, for "all things are yours," says the apostle, "whether the *world*, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours" (1 Cor. iii. 21, 22); and in the time of their visitation the world itself will own this.

(iv.) And now the journey begins. Strikingly the first stage,—all that is mentioned yet,—is from Rameses to Succoth,—from the king's city, built for the glory of his name, to the place of the "booths," or tents, characteristic of the wilderness. But at the very start a hint of the future is already given in the "mixed multitude" which go up with them. Wherever a movement of God takes place, men are wrought upon by other motives than those by which the Spirit of God stirs the renewed heart, and a mass attach themselves to those who are led forth. The Pharisees and Sadducees come to John's baptism; the flesh and the world will go on pilgrimage: and here is the seed of much after-trouble (see Num. xi. 4). Even in the individual believer also how soon may other motives mix themselves with what is of the work of God, at first all seeming to unite to carry us forward in the path of faith, and only by and by showing their true character.

dren of Israel which they dwelt in Egypt was [l]four hundred and thirty years; and it was so, at the end of four hundred and thirty years, on that very day it was that the [m]hosts of Jehovah went out of the land of Egypt. It is a night of observance to Jehovah, for their being brought out of the land of Egypt: this is that night of observance to Jehovah by all the children of Israel throughout their generations.

[l] Gen. 15. 13. Gal. 3. 17.

[m] *cf.* Josh. 5. 14. 1 Sam. 17. 26.

5. (43–51.) The regulations as to the passover: none to eat it but the circumcised.

[5] And Jehovah said unto Moses and Aaron. This is the ordinance of the passover: no [n]stranger shall eat thereof; but every man's bondman that is bought for money, when thou hast [o]circumcised him, then shall he eat of it; a settler and a [p]hired servant shall not eat of it. In one house shall it be eaten: thou shalt not carry aught of the flesh abroad out of the house, nor shall ye [q]break a bone of it. All the assembly of Israel shall keep it. And when a sojourner shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover unto Jehovah, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one born in the land: but no uncircumcised person shall eat of it. One law shall be for him that is home-born and for the sojourner that sojourneth among you. And all the children of Israel did as Jehovah had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they. And it was so, that the self-same day Jehovah brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, with their hosts.

[n] Acts 2. 46, 2 Cor. 6. 14. *cf.* Acts 5. 13. ver. 48.

[o] Col. 2. 11. Eph. 2. 19.

[p] Rom. 4. 4, 5. Luke 15. 29.

[q] Jno. 19. 33, 36. Ps. 34. 20. *etc.* Ps. 51. 8.

Sanctification of the heart and life.

(XIII. 1–16.)

1. (vv. 1, 2.) The claim of God.

3. [1] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Sanctify unto me every [r]first-born, that openeth any womb among the children of Israel, whether of men or cattle: it is mine.

[r] ch. 4. 22. ch. 34. 20. Num. 3. 12. 1 Cor. 6. 19, 20.

Another circumstance emphasizes the warning. It may be true, as Keil suggests, that the command to eat unleavened bread for seven days had not yet been given to the people, but it is none the less typically full of solemn meaning that historically the way in which they came actually to fulfill the ordinance as to it for the first time was that "they were *thrust out of Egypt*, and could not tarry." Had the Egyptians pressed less urgently upon them, they would undoubtedly have put the leaven into the bread! How easy to realize the application of this! Have not the times when the world has pressed most heavily upon the Church been commonly the times when the feast of unleavened bread has been most truly kept? When the world has forced believers out of it, then indeed brightness and devotedness have been more seen. Alas! when the storm relaxed, how soon the leaven again was introduced!

(v.) Now follow the regulations as to the passover, the main point in which is manifestly this, that the circumcised alone are to partake of it. A stranger was no longer this if he were circumcised: and this is clear enough in meaning when we remember what circumcision implied (see Gen. xvii.), as it enables also to understand the distinct specification of the "hired servant" among those rejected. The covenant of grace refuses to be mixed with the thought of wage-work. The feast of redemption is for those who, as those impotent for good, shelter beneath the shadow of the Almighty: "when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

3. In the third section, the sanctification of the first-born to God is insisted on, again illustrating the connection between redemption and holiness. For it was the first-born that had been redeemed from the judgment that fell upon the

2. (3-10.) The memorial feast.

2 And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand hath Jehovah brought you out from this: and nothing leavened shall be eaten. This day do ye come out in the month Abib; and it shall be, when Jehovah hath brought thee into the land of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee,—a land flowing with milk and honey, that thou shalt keep this service in this month. Seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread; and on the seventh day is a feast to Jehovah. Unleavened bread shall be eaten the seven days; and leavened bread shall not be seen with thee,—yea, no leaven shall be seen with thee in all thy borders. And thou shalt [a]tell thy son in that day, saying, It is on account of that which Jehovah did unto me when I came out from Egypt. And it shall be to thee for a [b]sign upon thy hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that Jehovah's law may be in thy mouth; for with a strong hand hath Jehovah brought thee out of Egypt. And thou shalt keep this ordinance in its season from year to year.

[a] ch. 12. 26. Deut. 6. 20.

[b] Deut. 11. 18.

Egyptians, and here the Lord claims for Himself what had been redeemed. This is simply what holiness is: it is setting apart to God; practical sanctification the consecration, in the power of the Holy Ghost, of the heart and life to Him. As in the judgment of Egypt—of the world,—the first-born represent all that comes of man naturally, so here it is all that comes of man—his whole practical life—and in the cattle all that belongs to him. The institution of the feast of unleavened bread is repeated here, and brought into the midst of the ordinance of the first-born, to link the sanctification of *heart* with the sanctification of *life*. Thus the lesson is complete, and it is evident as every where that the spiritual meaning governs all.

(i.) First, in this section, then, Jehovah's claim is asserted. Certainly all that He has created must belong to Him; but it is only redemption that really gives Him what is His. Here, then, all that He has redeemed must be entirely His: disastrous it would be to keep any thing back from Him. Only what is thus rendered to Him becomes indeed our own, for "in Him we live and move and have our being." Independence of the source of life is death, and thus life cannot be enjoyed apart from this sweet and profitable devotedness.

(ii.) If this is to be carried out, however, the feast of unleavened bread must be our introduction to it. The heart must be taken captive if the life is to be surrendered. Service must be the fruit of love, for love is the constraining spirit of service. But *our* love is, again, the fruit of His love: "We love Him because He first loved us." And thus the connection with the opening sentence: "Remember this day in which ye came out of Egypt . . . by strength of hand hath Jehovah brought you out from this,—*and nothing leavened shall be eaten.*" Let us remark here, that certainly a *known* salvation, not a doubtful one, was the basis of this feast for Israel. What reinforcement of the obligation when they should have reached the good land promised—type of that heavenly land which we are called upon now to enter and to make our own! The feast was, too, for them a sign upon the hand, which it consecrated to God, a memorial between the eyes—manifest to all as unblushing confession of separation, and thus the mouth too would be called upon to give its testimony of obedience.

3. (11-16.) The sanctification of the first-born.

[3] And it shall be, when Jehovah hath brought thee into the land of the Canaanite, as he sware unto thee and thy fathers, and hath given it thee, that thou shalt assign unto Jehovah all that openeth the womb, and every [u] firstling, the issue of cattle that thou hast: the males are Jehovah's. But every firstling of an [v] ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb: and if thou do not redeem it, then thou shalt break its neck: and every first-born of man—among thy sons—thou shalt redeem. And it shall be, when thy son shall ask thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, With a strong hand Jehovah brought us out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage. And it was so, when Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, that Jehovah slew all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of man to the first-born of cattle. Therefore I sacrifice unto Jehovah all that openeth the womb—being males, and all the first-born of my sons I redeem. And it shall be for a sign upon thy hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes; for by strength of hand Jehovah brought us out of Egypt.

[u] ver. 2.
[v] Rom. 8. 7.

(iii.) Now the sanctification of the first-born follows, who through all their generations afterward (if males) are to be redeemed. In the epistle to the Romans, in which so many types of the first part of Exodus find their fulfillment, immediately after the full liberty of the redeemed man is reached, we hear of sanctification in the sixth chapter. In the epistle to the Hebrews, we find how by the blood of atonement itself we are sanctified to God: "By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once." (Chap. x. 10.)

Thus we are devoted to God by the very fact of salvation, we and all that we have. And here another instructive lesson is given us. "And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break its neck." How vain to read these typical institutions merely as ordinances in the letter and no more! Why, of all beasts, the special introduction of the ass here, and of the ass only, to be redeemed with the self-same lamb wherewith man himself must be redeemed? Does it not show clearly, when our eye is upon that to which all these ordinances point, that man is himself identified with this "ass," that must be redeemed or slain? And so God characterizes Ishmael, a first-born too, sign and fruit of nature's strength in Abraham, not merely, as in the common version, "a wild," but "a wild-*ass* man." We must not think here, however, of the ungainly drudge, as we see him generally, but of the eastern animal,—fleet, beautiful, uncontrollable in spirit and energy,—of whose tame congener even it is said, in a way so opposite to all our notions, "a whip for the horse, and a bridle for the ass."

Thus nature shows itself in Ishmael, the father of the Bedouin Arab of our day, and, for our instruction, the child of Hagar also, or the *law*,—that law which, after so many centuries of patient training under it, developed but the race which, like the wild ass, refused the "easy yoke" of Him who came to teach man, in Himself, the lesson of obedience—"meek and lowly of heart."

As the seed of Abraham, Ishmael has further instruction for us. For the man of faith, if he take up law to produce fruit, will find assuredly that even faith can make nothing of it: the law is "the strength of sin," and not of holiness. Thus the firstling of an ass speaks to us. Blessed be God, for us the lamb has yielded up its life; and the sanctification which the law could not produce is

A walk with God.

1. (*vv.*17,18.) His choice of the way.

(17–22.)

4. [1] And it was so, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not the way of the land of the Philistines, though that was near; for God said [w] Lest the people repent when they see war, and return to Egypt. But God led the people round, the way of the [z] wilderness of the Red Sea. And the children of Israel went up in array out of the land of Egypt.

2. (19, 20.) Death's witness.

[2] And Moses took [y] Joseph's bones with him, for he had strictly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones hence with you.

3. (21, 22.) God with them.

[3] And they removed from [z] Succoth, and encamped in Etham, on the edge of the wilderness. And Jehovah went before them by day in a [a] pillar of cloud, to lead

[w] *cf.* ch. 14. 11, 12. Num. 14. 3. Acts 7. 39. Gal. 1. 6. Heb. 12. 13.

[x] *cf.* ch. 3. 1.

[y] Gen. 50. 25. Josh. 24. 32.

[z] Num. 33. 6.

[a] Neh. 9. 12. Ps. 78. 14. Ps. 99. 7. Ps. 105. 39.

found for us in the blood of atonement. Let us remember, as we are charged here, with mouth as well as life,—with life as well as mouth,—to give God the glory of our redemption.

4. In the next section, a brief account of the life to which this introduces us is added. We have as yet only seen it (1. ii.; 2. iv.) in its pilgrim character and its connection with redemption. Now we have more distinctly, though yet in brief, its features.

(i.) And first, we find, very strangely as it may seem, the Lord being with them, as we are just now so fully assured, the confession of weakness, implied in their not taking what would seem the nearest road—in one sense was—to Canaan, expressly because in it they might "see war"! By and by, in that land to which they are journeying, they are to be led in a career of conquest over nations mightier than themselves. As yet, it is weakness which God recognizes in them, not strength; and He chooses their way accordingly.

Three points are to be marked here. First, that the way *is* of God's choice, not theirs. This is surely an absolutely needful lesson at the start. Do not all our breaks-down by the way result from this, that we have chosen for ourselves, not let God choose for us? To be in His way is to be where He is with us; and if He be for us, who can be against us?

Then, His way for us is always one in which we are made to realize weakness. Our prayer can never be, "*Lead* us into temptation," and therefore we are never to act as if this were our prayer. In all cases where escape is possible without disloyalty, we are to *flee* rather than *face* it. "Flee also youthful lusts." "*Abstain* (hold off) from fleshly lusts." Flee, as Joseph fled; and there was, perhaps, no bolder man.

Again, at the stage of progress we have reached as yet, the power we need is not yet realized. The *Philistines* may have a way into Canaan by the short natural road; Israel must reach it by a different one, as we shall presently see. The way of the sea is the only one for all God's people: we shall have to look at this fully in a little while.

(ii.) They carry with them Joseph's bones,—at the meaning of which we have glanced at the end of Genesis. "Bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus" is the practical testimony linked with and making manifest the "life of Jesus." (2 Cor. iv. 10.)

(iii.) Thus far, the human side of this walk; the divine side we see in the pillar of cloud and of fire which goes with them, the symbol and pledge of the divine presence. Always in contrast with mere natural surroundings, by day a cloud, by night its glory flashing into fire, it renders them independent of circumstances—able to go by day or by night. The Keeper of Israel is with them in unslumbering vigilance and unslackening care. He leads; they follow. In the wilderness, where there is no way, He marks the way. How wonderful

them the way, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light: so that they might [b] go by day or by night. He took not away the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night from before the people.

[b] Phil. 4. 12.

(XIV. 1-14.)

The weak with the strong.

5. [1] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before

1. (vv. 1-4.) God's design.

[c] Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, before Baal-tzephon: over against it shall ye encamp by the sea. And Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are [d] entangled in the land: the wilderness hath shut them in. And I will [e] harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue after them; and I will glorify myself in Pharaoh, and in all his force, that the Egyptians may know that I am Jehovah. And they did so.

[c] Num. 33. 7.

[d] cf. Rom. 7. 24.

[e] ver. 8.

2. (5-9.) The conflict imminent.

[2] And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled; and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, What have we done, that we have let Israel go from serving us? and he yoked his chariot, and took his people with him; and he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over all of them. And Jehovah [f] hardened the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel. And the children of Israel were coming out with a high hand; and the Egyptians pursued after them,—all the horses [and] chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his force, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, over against Baal-tzephon.

[f] ver. 17.

3. (10-14.) Jehovah their sanctuary.

[3] And Pharaoh drew nigh: and the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marching after them! And they feared greatly; and the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah. And they said

a resource, how inexhaustible the riches, that these poor desert-wanderers possess in Him who if they be pilgrims will be a pilgrim too. Yet this too is but the type of that more wondrous glory which, though hidden, goes with us now!

5. The fifth section, true to its character, puts now the weakness of the people before us in contrast with the strength of the Almighty, tested by the presence of the enemy, who again shows himself as the prelude to his final overthrow. The spiritual meaning for us of this last attempt of the king of Egypt upon Israel we shall better consider, as we need fully to consider, in the next section. The features of the present one are clear enough.

(i.) First, we are shown, beyond doubt, that all that comes comes from God's hand, and in the design of His goodness toward them. Egypt is not yet humbled as it needs to be. God leads the people in such a way that to Pharaoh it looks, and would naturally look, like human blundering, rather than divine wisdom. He is thus hardened to his destruction.

(ii.) The whole force of Egypt is, in consequence, put in requisition; their whole strength is put forth for one decisive blow. Pharaoh comes upon the people in a position from which there is no escape, hedged in between the mountains and the sea. Every thing seems to combine for their destruction.

(iii.) Israel are as heartless as they seem defenseless: there is not even the courage of despair. The slaves would rather go back to the slavery than face

unto Moses, [p] Were there not any graves in Egypt, that thou hast taken us away to die in the wilderness? What is this thou hast done to us, to bring us out of Egypt? Was not this the word that we spake to thee in Egypt, saying, [h] Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? for it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness. And Moses said unto the people, Be not afraid: [i] stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah, which he will work for you to-day; for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day ye shall see them again no more forever. Jehovah will [j] fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

(15-31.)

Victory!

1. (vv. 15-18.) The rod of power.

6. [1] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Why criest thou to me? Speak to the children of Israel, that they [k] go forward. And lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thy hand over the sea, and divide it; and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. And I, even I, am [l] hardening the heart of the Egyptians, and they shall come after them; and I will glorify myself on Pharaoh and all his force,—upon his chariots and upon his horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I am Jehovah, when I glorify myself on Pharaoh, upon his chariots and on his horsemen.

p ch. 15. 24. ch. 16. 3. Gen. 19. 19.

h Ps. 106. 7.

i 2 Chron. 20. 17. Ps. 46. 10. Is. 30. 15. Rom. 4. 5.

j Josh. 10. 14.

k cf. Matt. 12. 13.

l 1 Sam. 6. 6.

the conflict that impends. In this extremity, Jehovah is seen to be the sole resource. The question becomes no longer between Israel and Pharaoh, but between Pharaoh and the Almighty, who has indeed taken upon Himself the responsibility of His people's salvation.

But "all these things happened unto them for types," says the apostle, and the importance of what is contained in this one demands for it a fuller consideration than can generally be given.

6. At the sea, the question is no more (as in the passover), between the people and God: it is entirely between them and their enemies. The question with God, once settled, was fully and forever settled. That raised again now was the old first question, (but which they had learned could not be answered first,) of servitude to Pharaoh, or of liberty. This question God Himself now takes up on their behalf, and they find God with them in a more manifest way than ever yet. Already, from the time of the passover, God was with them; but how truly for them the Red Sea first makes known.

If we look at the doctrinal part of the epistle to the Romans, as found in the first eight chapters, we shall see that the first part of it—to the middle of the fifth—occupies us with the blood of Christ, and its effect for us. This is seen as that through which the righteousness of God itself, which that blood-shedding declares, provides a place of safe and assured shelter for us. We are "justified by His blood;" and this reaches on in its effects to the final judgment of the world, and assures us that "much more shall we be saved from wrath through Him." Judgment is rolled away forever; and with our standing in present grace, and glory as our confident expectation, we are enabled to glory even in tribulation also, conscious that it, with all else, is working, under God's hand, in necessary blessing for us.

This is therefore essentially the passover truth: sheltered from judgment, eating the lamb, and equipped for the journey. But now, in the next part of the epistle, from chap. v. 12 onward, the question of practice at once comes in: "What then? shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" "Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace?" And then, when the

2. (19, 20) The divine intervention.

[2] And the [m]angel of God, who was going before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud removed from before and stood behind them: and it came [n]between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel, and was a cloud and darkness [to one], but [to the other] it illumined the night; and the one came not near the other all the night.

[m] Num. 20. 16.

[n] Jno. 3. 18. 2 Cor. 2. 15.

discovery of the hopeless evil of the flesh is made, one question more: "Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

All through this part, the question is as to the dominion of sin, and we are delivered by *death*, and by being brought into a new place beyond it: "that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not *serve sin*;" "but now, being made free from sin, and become servants to God," "the law of the Spirit, of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

Who can but think of Israel's bondage in Egypt here, and of the divine method of deliverance? Bondage to Pharaoh! but does not that cease on the night of the passover? In a most important sense it surely does. There is a breaking of chains, and a real start. God is now with them, and can never allow His claim to them to be canceled, and the enemy to retain possession of His people. But when we pass from God's point of view to that of the people themselves, with whatever "high hand" they start, we soon find them dropping out of all their confidence, and trembling again before their old tyrant in fear and distress that the actual presence of God with them cannot remove. Shut up between the desert and the sea, with Pharaoh's chariots and horsemen in full pursuit, their cry is the cry of unbelieving despair. The controversy between them and their old enemy had to be taken up afresh by God in their behalf, now to be ended indeed. God interferes—God fights for them. And they do naught but "stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord."

And so with a soul who has found the safe shelter of the blood of Christ, and seen the judgment of God roll over, smiting but the chains from off his hands, the question of deliverance from sin's law is really settled. But it does not follow that he will at once come into the realization of this. Alas! the first teaching of holiness has to be this, that in me, (even as a believer,)—that is, in my flesh, good does not dwell; and in order to strength, we have to learn the lesson of thorough and continual weakness.

At first, indeed, when salvation is new, and one has seen the shadow of death turned into morning through faith in a risen Saviour, whose death has made atonement for his sins, it may seem as if sin could no more put shackles on the enfranchised soul. Knowledge of the flesh and self as yet there is not, and with some it is but slowly attained. But full deliverance is not known until this has been realized nevertheless,—the Red Sea is not reached, Egypt is not left behind, they have not crossed its border. For the sea is its border, and through it only is God's way for His people, though it may seem there as if God had deserted them. For who could penetrate the wisdom that refused a path near, and not apparently difficult, to lead them by one bristling with most formidable difficulties? And how many misjudge in like manner His purpose, who, having begun to lead them in the way of holiness, in fulfillment of the desires which He has awakened in them, leads them, in fact, there where they have to cry and cry again, that they cannot do the things that they would?—progress beyond which seems quite impossible. How many, indeed, stop here, and strangely imagine they must after all serve Pharaoh with the best grace they can: to get out of Egypt,—to escape from under sin's law, they deem impossible! At peace with God through the blood of Christ, they yet think that as to the sin within them there is, and can be, no effectual deliverance! The *mind* is indeed changed,

3. (21-31.) Life out of death.

[3] And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and Jehovah made the sea go [back] by a strong [o]east wind all the night, and made the sea bare ground, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went in the midst of the sea upon [p]dry ground, and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left.

o Gen. 8. 1. Gen. 41. 6.

p Ps. 66. 6. Ps. 77. 19, 20. Heb. 2. 15. Heb. 11.29.

—with the *mind* they serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. They do not see that God is leading them beyond,—that after all, this is but the border of Egypt that they have reached—and that there where all progress seems to have stopped forever, God is at hand to give them so mighty a deliverance from the hand of their enemy that their hearts shall sing aloud of it forever.

The Red Sea is the border of Egypt; and if Egypt be in type the world, and we ask men how they pass out of the world, they will answer with one voice, "By death, and by death alone." Now that is not true in the sense in which they say it. Scripture does not lead us to say, "We must all die," but rather, with the apostle, "We shall *not* all sleep." Those who are Christ's, and "remain unto the coming of the Lord," will be changed without seeing death. And yet it is true that for this we must have passed out of the world before, so as not to have part in it, and that this passing out is by death also, but a death which Another has taken for us. Still we must look at the Red Sea as the type of death. Jordan, the limit of the wilderness, and which the people pass through dry-shod, as they pass through the sea, is similarly understood by all, and helps to confirm this meaning by its evident parallelism.

This "way of the sea" is God's ordained way for His people,—a way we pass by faith, to enter upon our pilgrim-path with God. "By faith they passed through the sea as by dry land," says the apostle (Heb. xi. 29). This dry-shod path which the rod of Moses clears for their passage, but which is no less cleared by "a *strong east wind all the night*"—we ought to be able without difficulty to interpret. The rod of Moses is the rod of power in the shepherd's hand: and has not our Shepherd cleft for us a path through death? And the strong east wind of adversity,—notice in Pharaoh's dream (Gen. xli. 6) how the ears of corn are blasted with the east wind,—blowing through all the awful night of his distress, was it not that which did in fact clear the way for us through those waters of death through which by faith we pass out of Egypt,—out of the whole sphere of Pharaoh's rule, or the condition to which the "law of sin" applies?

But we must trace this experimentally, for it is with experience we have now to do. We are following the track of a people whose history is the type of an actual and real deliverance from a bondage infinitely worse than theirs; and as the bondage is a fact of experience, so the deliverance is also this. Let us get before us, then, this soul just started in the path with God, full of the precious reality of escaped judgment. His bonds are fallen off,—he is free. The joy of salvation is too much in his heart for the world and the things of the world to have power there. But how short a time may pass before all begins to change! The entrancement of His joy is less absolute than it was; the world through which he is passing begins to have more reality and power. Child of God as he is, he finds he has still a nature which is not all *new* nature. The flesh is there, and sin is in the flesh; its "mind" is still "enmity against God," its lusts go out after the things presented to it by the world; and here begins a struggle of which those who know it know the painfulness. The old enemy is reviving and gathering strength; the old chains are being again riveted. Israel's despairing cry by the sea finds its answer in the groan over a body of death which lies upon the soul, a burdensome, loathsome weight, which it is past its power to deal with, whether to improve or cast aside. "Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

It is "between Migdol and the sea" that Pharaoh comes upon them. Migdol should have an important place in the type, then: can we interpret it? The

And the Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea,—all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And it came to pass in the morning watch that Jehovah in the pillar of fire and cloud looked upon the hosts of the Egyptians, and troubled the hosts of the Egyptians, and turned aside their chariot-wheels, and made them drive heavily. And the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel, for Jehovah [q] fighteth for them against the Egyptians. [q] ver. 14.

word signifies a "tower," such as might be a military post, the natural enough accompaniment of a border region. Jealous eyes no doubt watched the escaping hosts from thence. Egypt was not now friendly, and from a place of strength the people of the land would not fear to show hostility. Any way it was a tower in an enemy's country, not a place of help or refuge, but the stronghold of a power now armed against them to the teeth.

Surely the New Testament gives this significance. If we turn to the seventh of Romans, which is the key to the situation here, we shall find, if I mistake not, Migdol looming large upon the scene, and threatening enough to the soul seeking escape from sin's law. We need not, must not, hesitate to follow Scripture, however strangely it must sound to some to be told that "the *strength of sin* is the law" (1 Cor. xv. 56), and that we must be "delivered from the law," not merely to be justified, but to "serve in newness of spirit" (Rom. vii. 6).

Men will have it, because the law is spiritual, that it must be *power for spirituality*—power against sin. Scripture is decisive that "sin, *taking occasion by the commandment*," works in one under the law "all manner of concupiscence." (*v.* 8.) Nay, says he who testifies of it, "without the law sin was dead; for I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." (*v.* 9.) Surely this is just the position between Migdol and the sea, where Pharaoh overtook the camp of Israel.

That the law cannot justify is comparatively simple; that it hinders fruit-bearing is hard to realize. And yet it is as sure as that Migdol was in the enemy's country, and that Israel must leave it in order to escape the pursuit of Pharaoh and his hosts. Under the shadow of Migdol the tyrant of Egypt overtook his former slaves; under the law, the self-occupation which it produces and necessitates ends simply with the discovery of an impracticable body of sin and death from which I, wretched man, see no deliverance. Legality is inconsistent with holiness: self-occupation is not that by which I can produce fruit for God. I cannot bring about the spiritual state I long for, which would satisfy me; and God will give me no help at achieving self-complacency! I desire the consciousness of holiness: His own law gives me the consciousness of sin. Whence, then, can deliverance come?

Now let us look at the type again. First of all, let us mark, God does not lead Israel up against Pharaoh. Their own arm is not strengthened by His to bring salvation to them, they have instead to "*stand still*, and see the salvation of the Lord." God does not call us to fight against the flesh and subdue it. He neither points nor leads in that direction at all. "What other way?" many a heart in Israel might ask. Ah, God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor His ways as our ways. See now how the sea divides, and a channel is made through it, while its uplifted waters become a wall on the right hand and on the left! Christ's precious death is for us—is ours, so that we are dead by it, dead with Him, and as dead men are no longer "in the flesh." Not merely our *sins* are gone; WE are gone; *we* have died: Christ's death has ended our history before God; in Him who has passed through death we have passed through it, untouched, dry-shod; our standing is in Him beyond death.

This is of course true of every child of God: it is not a matter of attainment,

And Jehovah said unto Moses, Stretch out thy hand over the sea, that the waters may return upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its course when the morning appeared, and the Egyptians fleeing encountered it, and Jehovah overturned the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. And the waters returned, and [r] covered the chariots and the horsemen of all Pharaoh's force that had come after them into the sea: there was not left one. But the children of Israel went on dry ground in the midst of the sea, and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left. And Jehovah saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore. And Israel saw the mighty hand which Jehovah had put forth upon the Egyptians; and the people feared Jehovah, and believed on Jehovah, and his servant Moses.

[r] Ps. 78. 53. Rom. 8. 3.

[s] Jn. 5. 1. 1 Sam. 2. 1. 2 Sam. 22. 1. Is. 12. Is. 26. Luke 1. 46-55. Luke 1. 68-80. Rev. 5. 9-14. *cfr.* Deut. 32. 2 Sam. 1. 19, etc.

(XV. 1-21.)

Deliverance complete.

1. (vs. 1, 2.) Jehovah is God.

7. [t] Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this [s] song unto Jehovah, and spake, saying,—

I will sing unto Jehovah, for [s] he is highly exalted:
The horse and his rider hath he cast into the sea.

[t] Ps. 98. 1.

and we cannot too earnestly insist upon this, and yet there is an attainment of it too. What is ours already we are called to apprehend as ours, and thus it is that we find the passage of the sea not on the passover night, but several stages beyond this. To enjoy the blessedness of the place, we must in fact reach it experimentally.

We have not to *die* to sin: we are *dead*, and to reckon ourselves dead. Dead with Christ, we are in Christ beyond death. The self I was taking up to cultivate and improve, God has set aside forever in the cross. Thus the waters are a wall to me, but the death of my enemies. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Self-occupation is ended for those who have learned thus the meaning of the cross, and that in Christ is their true self: that it is as "we all with open face behold the glory of the *Lord*, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit." (2 Cor. iii. 18.)

Faith is thus the principle of sanctification, as it is that of the new nature. "The law is not of faith:" it implies strength in us; faith finds it in Another. God honors it, and works by it, because it honors Christ. I am not dead to sin in experience; I do not *feel* myself so: I *reckon* it (Rom. vi. 11). I cannot *feel* the cross of Christ; by faith I know its effect for me. Faith is, turning from myself to Another: it is the giving up of self-occupation and complacency. Thus by faith I pass the sea to take my new position outside flesh and nature; and when I look back, find that my enemies are buried in the waters. Privileged to turn away from self, the conflict and the distress are over. In Christ is my place, in Him I find a satisfying and a heavenly object, lifting me out of the whole sphere of things in which the lust of the flesh finds what it seeks. Faith, love, hope, twine around Him their tendrils, and flourish there. Here the new nature expands and develops and bears fruit—fruit which is for her Master, not for her own taste and enjoyment. The fruits of the Spirit need to be ripened in the Sun. The least degree of occupation with Christ is GLORY.

7. Now, then, we come to the "song;" and how important it is that the soul

My [u]strength and song is Jah, and he is become my salvation. [u] Ps. 118.14.
This is my God, and I will extol him,—
My father's God, and I will exalt him.
2. (3-10.) The battle was His.
[2] Jehovah is a [v]man of war; his name is Jehovah. [v] Josh. 5.14. Ps. 45. 3. Ps. 46. 8, 9. Rev. 19.11.
Pharaoh's chariots and his force hath he cast into the sea:
His chosen captains also are sunk in the Red Sea.
The floods cover them: they are gone down to the bottom like a stone.
Thy [w]right hand, Jehovah, is become glorious in power: [w] Ps. 118. 15, 16.
Thy right hand, Jehovah, dasheth in pieces the enemy.
Yea, in the greatness of thy [x]majesty thou overthrowest them that rise against thee: [x] Deut. 33. 26.
Thou sendest out thy burning wrath; it devoureth them like stubble.
And by the [y]breath of thy nostrils the waters are heaped up; [y] 2 Thess. 2. 8.
The streams stand up like a heap; the floods are congealed in the heart of the sea.
The enemy said, I will [z]pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil: [z] Ju. 5. 30.
My soul shall be sated upon them.
I will draw my sword, my hand shall repossess them.
Thou blewest with thy [a]breath: the sea covered them; [a] Ps. 148. 8.
They sank as lead in the mighty waters.
3 (11-13.) Glorious in Holiness.
[3] Who is [b]like thee among the gods, Jehovah? [b] ch. 8. 10. Ps. 86. 8.
Who is like thee,—glorious in holiness,
[c]Fearful in praises, doing wonders? [c] Deut. 28. 58.
Thou stretchedst out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them.
Thou [d]leadest, in thy mercy, the people thou hast redeemed; [d] Is. 63. 11-14.

should have a song! "Abounding therein with thanksgiving," says the apostle. If our hearts are not in the enjoyment of the deliverance, the deliverance can scarcely be in realization. There is power in joy: "the joy of the Lord is your strength." Happiness in Christ is an absolute necessity for holiness. The joy is worship—heaven begun.

(i.) Jehovah is really God—*their* God. This is the first strain of the song, and so it must be. What a joy to have known God—to have found God! What a horrible solitude is a world without God! what a glorious God does salvation discover to us! Henceforth God is to be supreme: to be God, He must be that; and joy in Him is necessarily the spirit of obedience.

(ii.) Then the deliverance: it was all His own! we only looked and saw. Think of the old man destroyed! Think of death's piled-up waters! We are under the hand of Him whom all things serve.

(iii.) Nor is this merely power; nor is it the caprice of love, or of vengeance. Holiness is as manifest as power; nay, it is His peculiar glory,—the atmosphere of His presence,—the sanctuary in which He dwells, the satisfaction for our hearts who are called to behold Him there: for His redeemed He is guiding to

Thou guidest them in thy might to thy holy habitation.

4. (14-16.) Prostration of enemies.

[4]The [e]peoples hear,—they are afraid, e Josh. 5. 1.
Anguish possesseth the dwellers in Philistia.
Then the [f]dukes of Edom are in consternation; f Gen. 36. 15, 17.
The mighty men of Moab—trembling taketh hold of them;
All the dwellers in Canaan melt away.
Fear and dread fall upon them:
At the greatness of thine arm they are still as stone,
Till thy people pass, Jehovah,—
Till the people thou hast purchased pass over.

5 (17, 18.) The end of the way.

[5]Thou shalt [g]bring them in and plant them g Ps. 44. 2. Col. 1. 13. 1 Pet. 1. 3-5.
In the mountain of thine inheritance,—
In the place thou hast made for thy dwelling, Jehovah,—
The [h]sanctuary, Lord which thy hands have established. h Ps. 78. 54.
Jehovah shall reign forever and ever.

6 (19.) The victory which implies it still.

[6]For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen, into the sea: and Jehovah brought back on them the waters of the sea; but the children of Israel went upon dry ground in the midst of the sea.

7. (20, 21.) The chorus of praise.

[7]And [i]Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took the timbrel in her hand, and all the women came forth after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to Jehovah, for he is highly exalted: the horse and his rider hath he cast into the sea. i Ps. 68. 25. cf. Num. 20. 1.

His holy habitation. For us, this is heaven; but the tabernacle of God shall be with men also in the new earth.

(iv.) Now they look on to the prostration of all their enemies; nay, the blow already fallen has prostrated them: in the past and the present the future is involved, and God's people cannot be too confident in their anticipations. The glorious challenge of the apostle (Rom. viii. 31–39) is the Christian's counterpart to what is here.

(v.) The land is seen as the end of the way. God's hands have established the place of His sanctuary, and there the same hands will plant the people. The apostle Peter gives us the corresponding truth when he tells us that "God hath begotten us again . . . to an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away; reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." (1 Pet. i. 3–5.) A reserved inheritance for a preserved people: God's way leading to God's end; the Almighty revealing Himself such to those whom He carries through to their predestined place;—thus the song closes here.

(vi.) Then the victory itself is again recounted, stripped of poetical embellishment, grandest in its naked simplicity, type of a greater victory in which for eternity our hearts shall rejoice: evil is under the hand of God absolutely as all else is; goodness alone has might, as in the cross. He who is supreme is worthy to be supreme. This is a grand lesson which we learn in the world, but learn for heaven and eternity.

(vii.) The women's voices, with their musical accompaniment, take up the refrain. It is the seal of completeness. Sin had come in through the woman; now her heart is lifted up in praise, which testifies in itself of victory over it.

SUBDIVISION 4. (Chap. xv. 22–xviii.)

Wilderness-grace.

(XV. 22-27.)

Jehovah the Healer, and His ordinance.

1. AND Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; and they went out into the [j] wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found [k] no water. And they came to Marah; and they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were [l] bitter: therefore they called its name Marah. And the people [m] murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried unto Jehovah,

[j] 1 Pet. 2. 11. Heb. 13. 14.

[k] ch. 17. 1. Ps. 63. 1. Rom. 5. 3.

[l] 2 Cor. 1. 8. Phil. 3. 10.

[m] ch. 16. 3.

The mute inanimate things also become responsive in these timbrels in her hand. The joy is full and universal in the redeemed creation.

SUBD. 4.

ISRAEL is, however, as yet but brought into the wilderness. We have now, therefore,—not the proper *history* of the wilderness (that we find in Numbers), but—the grace which meets the need of the wilderness,—how their bread is given them and their water is made sure. The meaning of their being brought here is evidently to wean them from all other dependencies, and to cast them upon God; to manifest His truth and trustworthiness in all the minutiæ of daily care. His was the responsibility of bringing this multitude through to the land He had promised them, and He charges Himself with it, that we, no less than they, may learn to find Him in the smallest details, and most familiar and homely matters of common life. In the deliverance from Egypt He had shown Himself for them on a great occasion; and there are many who seem only to look for His interference upon great occasions. But our life is not made up of such, and from how much of it must He be banished if we are only to find Him there! Thank God, it is not so: He is about our path and about our bed, serving us ever in the perpetual need we have of Him.

But again, as types, what happened to them reveals to us deeper than physical needs, and a much more marvelous provision. As types, they must have antitypes greater than themselves; and with these, therefore, must be our main occupation, as continually through these books.

1. To be in the wilderness is not failure, but the consequence of redemption. The world is not for sense a wilderness: it is Egypt,—fruitful and fair enough, though storms may sweep through it. But for faith, yearning after the inheritance beyond, all is changed. He who learns to glory in the cross of Christ has to say, "By which the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world." The place of Christ's cross can be but barren ground—a wilderness.

But this truth of the wilderness is not in itself a pleasant, but a bitter, thing. The good of it is in the necessity which brings God in. A place of the most wonderful display of divine power and love, it is the necessity of the people which occasions this display. Had the desert brought forth bread for them, there would have been no bread from heaven. Had it produced water, there would have been no need for the water from the rock. God's supplies are, we must not say, proportioned to the necessity (they are over-abundant), but they are occasioned by it.

Marah, as the introduction to the desert, is just the symbol of what the desert is. It was its proximity to the sea that made the waters bitter. Lying low by the shore, the saltness of the sea made (and still makes) the waters brackish. If the sea speak of death, then Marah shows the wilderness as the place of death, where not merely is nothing given for our thirst, but what is there is the very provocative of thirst.

Naturally, we shrink from this. Marah, in itself, is never pleasant. The Christian spirit with regard to all the sorrow and sin that are in the world is never apathy,—never indifference. It is as redeemed we come to Marah; redemption

and Jehovah showed him a [n]tree; and he cast it into the waters, and the waters were made sweet. There he made them a statute and an ordinance, and there he tested them; and said, If indeed thou wilt hearken to the voice of Jehovah thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases upon thee which I put on the Egyptians; for I am Jehovah, who [o]healeth thee. And they came to Elim, and there were [p]twelve springs of water, and [q]seventy palm-trees: and they encamped there by the waters.

[n] 2 Cor. 1. 5. 1 Pet. 2. 24.
[o] Deut. 7. 15. Ps. 103. 3. *ctr.* Deut. 28. 60.
[p] Jno. 7. 38.
[q] Ps. 92. 12. *cf.* Luke 10. 1. ch. 24. 1. Num. 11. 16.

places in the very position in which to feel the bitterness of the world. Brought dry-shod through the sea, we are then made to drink of it.

But if the flesh shrinks from Marah, God has a remedy, and though we do not know the tree which God showed Moses, we know its antitype. It is the cross of Christ,—the fellowship of His sufferings, and the knowledge of its being that, what suffering can it not sweeten? We are sharing His experiences who gives us therein to realize the wonderful place which He has taken for us,—the path in which divine love led Him for our sakes. We have communion with Himself in such a way as we could not else enjoy; and nothing brings hearts together like sharing a common lot of toil and sorrow.

Atonement was Christ's work alone: here none could be with Him. But in other aspects even of the cross itself we may find that which, linking itself with the glory at the end, characterizes our path. We follow a rejected Master, and are made partakers of His sufferings. This bitterness of death in the wilderness is not the experience which falls to the common lot of men. It is not simply, as in the body, enduring the ills which they say flesh is heir to. It is what results from being linked with Christ in His path of suffering, and in spirit with Him to whom the spirit of the world was only that. "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him." But if with Him we suffer, Marah is no longer Marah; "the valley of Baca (of tears) becomes a well;" the tree is in the waters.

And here is God's standing ordinance for us, and by which He proves us. God is our Healer; He maketh whole; and from the diseases of Egypt He will exempt us, if only we endure the test. If we will accept of the path of sorrow and trial which the Lord gives us here, we shall escape the afflictions which are His judgments on the world, and which come on those also who take their place with the world. Those who do not suffer for Christ, or with Christ, do not by their unfaithfulness escape suffering. They only suffer with the Egyptians.

This is what divine love—what He who has redeemed us to Himself says to us as His redeemed. Love itself cannot give us escape from the necessity of conforming to these conditions. It would not be love to do so. We shall find at last how in fact we have entered in this way,—as only by it we could enter,—into some of the deepest secrets of the heart of God. It is here in this scene of sin and sorrow that we are learning Christ—the Christ we are to enjoy forever. Even in the glory we could not learn what we learn here on earth. But to learn the Man of Sorrows, we must learn sorrow, which yet is lost in the infinite joy of being made like Him, and linked with Him, and in Him learning that which is to be our possession forever.

From Marah now, too, we reach Elim, and here is divine and abundant refreshment for a thirsty people. When we are conformed to God's conditions, we find that the water is not always and merely water that must be sweetened for us. There is water which is in itself sweet,—pure, unalloyed satisfaction and joy, which has no sorrow in it.

The *twelve* springs answering to the twelve tribes, seem to point to a provision for those under the manifest government of God—an obedient people. We must

Manna: Christ in humiliation the food of His people.

1. (v. 1.) The wilderness of Sin:—thorn (barrenness?).

2. (2-5.) The murmuring answered by the assurance of bread.

(XVI.)

2. [1]And they set out from [r]Elim, and all the assembly of the children of Israel came into the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month, from their departure out of the land of Egypt.

[2]And the whole assembly of the children of Israel [s]murmured against Moses and against Aaron in the wilderness. And the children of Israel said unto them, Would that we had died by the hand of Jehovah in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the [t]flesh-pot, when we ate bread to the full! for ye have brought us into this wilderness to kill this whole congregation with hunger. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Behold, I will rain [u]bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather the [v]day's portion in its day, that I may [w]prove them if they will walk in my law or not. But it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare that which they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.

r Num. 33. 10.

s ch. 15. 24. Num. 11. 14. Acts 6. 1.

t Ps. 106.14. Acts 7. 39. Gal. 5. 19, 20.

u Ps. 78. 23-25. Ps. 105. 40. Jno. 6. 31.

v *cf.* Matt. 6. 34.

w Deut. 8. 16.

have been at Marah to find Elim. The sweet water must be tasted after the bitter. When we have stooped to drink the bitter water we shall have the sweet.

Elim means "trees," implying *strong* trees, clearly referring to the growth nourished by its flowing springs. The living water of the Spirit nourishes the "trees of the Lord," which "are full of sap;" and the palm-tree is the figure of the righteous,—upright, and every way profitable,—bringing forth fruit still in old age (Ps xcii. 12, 14) perennial as the streams that nourish them.

2. And now we come to the manna,—the bread with which God sustains His people in the wilderness. Here we cannot be at a loss for the interpretation. Christ is the true bread from heaven, given of the Father, the food of His people, —the meat which, though we find it in the wilderness of this world, nevertheless endures unto *eternal* life. It is Christ in His humiliation "coming down from heaven," but which will be the sustenance of the soul in heaven itself. The story is told in eight subsections, which carry us on, therefore, to the land of promise.

(i.) It is in the wilderness of Sin where the manna falls for the first time, and the numerical stamp seems to emphasize its meaning. "Sin" is connected with *seneh*, a "thorn-bush," the word used for that in which God revealed Himself to Moses. We are familiar already with the thorn as the sign of the ground cursed for man's sake, and we must not surely forget it here. Yet here both the numerical place and the lesson of the whole chapter seem to insist upon another character of a "wilderness of thorn." Of Palestine in its present state Tristram says, "The combined heat and dryness of the climate seem to develop a tendency to *form thorns*, even in groups like the astragalus, where we should least expect them. All plants become more spiny in rocky and parched situations, the expansive effort which under moister conditions would develop a bough with leaf or blossom being arrested, and forming merely a barren thorn or spine." No picture could be more striking than this: the sun smiting, the genial heavenly influence become a scorching heat, water—the type of the Spirit —withheld, the barren soil with its vegetation running into weapons of offense: such is the world as the place of need into which the Son of God came as Son of man.

(ii.) The people again break out into murmuring: an unhumbled spirit can take God's grace as a thing of course, but resents whatever reminds it that God is not its debtor. How beautiful the grace that can meet this return for so

3. (6-12.) The manifestation of the glory of Jehovah.

[6]And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even, then shall ye know that Jehovah hath brought you out of the land of Egypt; [7]and in the morning ye shall see the [x]glory of Jehovah, since he heareth your murmurings against Jehovah: and what are we that ye murmur against us? [8]And Moses said, When Jehovah giveth you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full, since Jehovah heareth your murmurings which ye are murmuring against him, what, then, are we? Your [y]murmurings are not against us, but against Jehovah. [9]And Moses said unto Aaron, Say unto all the assembly of the children of Israel, Draw near before Jehovah, for he hath heard your murmurings. [10]And it was so, as Aaron spake unto all the assembly of the children of Israel, that they turned toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of Jehovah appeared in the cloud. [11]And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, [12]I have heard the murmuring of the children of Israel; speak unto them, saying, Between the evenings ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah your God.

x Jno. 11.40.

y Luke 10. 16.

4. (13-15.) The manna as seen by those who know it not.

[13]And it came to pass at evening that [z]quails came up and covered the camp, and in the morning the [a]dew lay around about the camp. [14]And the dew that lay rose up, and, lo, upon the face of the wilderness something [b]fine, as if pounded to pieces—fine as the hoar-frost on

z Ps. 78. 27. Ps. 105. 40.

a Gen. 27. 28. Deut. 33. 3. Is. 26. 19. Hos. 14. 5. Prov. 19. 12.

b Phil. 2. 7-9.

mighty a deliverance with the assurance of new and continual mercy! Heaven will bestow what no labor of their own can get; giving, indeed, in such a way ("the day's portion in its day") that dependence shall be maintained; for thus the blessing is more than doubled; and providing also that human activity shall be required in its place, for what is given them they must gather. On the sixth day the amount is twice as much as usual; for the *sixth* day is the day of discipline which is also the day of spiritual harvest.

(iii.) In the manna, Jehovah manifests Himself afresh as the Deliverer out of Egypt, and His glory appears in the cloud as they look toward the wilderness. There is little need to interpret this: it is by Christ we believe in *God* (1 Pet. i. 21); and it would be loss indeed to stop short of this. "I and my Father are one" leads into the innermost sanctuary of wonder and worship. There is no hidden God any more, save as in the *light*,—not darkness,—in which He dwells, there are, indeed, inaccessible depths of glory (1 Tim. vi. 16). This is only to say that the God who is perfectly revealed is of course *God*.

(iv.) Now we are made to see what the manna is like. A flight of quails precedes it in the evening, which furnish the people with the flesh that had been promised them. And as we know abundantly what this death as the food of life means, we can have no difficulty as to it here. The Lord Himself, in His sermon on this text of manna (Jno. vi.), assures us that we must not only eat His flesh, but drink His blood, or we have no life in us. His person and His work are both necessary to us; and in fact His sacrifice must precede, as in the blood-sprinkled house alone they could feed on the lamb. So the quails come first, and in the evening. In the morning, the dew exhales and leaves the manna, as the Spirit of God ministers Christ.

It is upon the ground, so that they must stoop to gather it,—on the face of the wilderness,—something fine, as if pounded to pieces,—fine as the hoar-frost on

the earth. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, What is it? for they [c]knew not what it was.

5. (15-18.) The manna in divine government.

[5]And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which Jehovah hath given you to eat. This is the thing that Jehovah hath commanded: gather of it every man according to his eating, an [d]omer for every man, according to the number of your souls; take ye every man for them that are in his tent. And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. But when they measured it with an omer, [e]he that had gathered much had nothing over, and he that had gathered little had no lack: they had gathered every one according to his eating.

6. (19-21.) The manna hoarded corrupts.

[6]And Moses said unto them, [f]Let no man leave of it until the morning. And they hearkened not to Moses, but some left of it until the morning, and [g]it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them. And they gathered it morning by morning, every man according to his eating; and when the [h]sun grew hot, it melted.

7. (22-31.) The manna and the Sabbath.

[7]And it came to pass on the sixth day, that they gathered twice as much bread,—two omers for one; and all the princes of the assembly came and told Moses. And he said unto them, This is that which Jehovah

c Jno. 1. 10. Matt. 11. 27. *cfr.* 1 Jno. 2. 13.

d ver. 32, 36.

e 2 Cor. 8. 15.

f ch. 12. 10. *cfr.* Heb. 9. 25-28.

g *cf.* Rev. 3. 15, 16. Phil. 3. 13.

h *cf.* Matt. 13. 22.

the ground. This is as the people see it, who have not yet tasted it, and know not what it is. It evidently does not look much,—has upon it marks as if of rough usage; it reminds us of the prophet's words, "No beauty in Him that we should desire Him." "What is it?" they say; for they wist not what it was. "The world knew Him not."

There is a natural manna which on account of its likeness to this has been used to discredit the miracle. But it is not properly a food, but a drug,—an exudation from a tree that an insect has pierced, wholly impossible to confound, one would say, with the divine gift: yet men do often confound it. And there are multitudes who confound Christ with common men: but who else could say and prove it, "He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me"?

(v.) As to the gathering of the manna, we have a striking and solemn thing. Every man, it was found, gathered according to his eating. There was no lack for any: each got what he wanted, and not more than he wanted. Does not Christ meet the need we really have of Him? He does: but how much, then, *is* that need with each of us?

(vi.) The manna was not to be hoarded, but gathered (with one exception) morning by morning, and eaten on the day it fell. Hoarded, it bred worms, and stank. So must a living faith draw continually for continual need. We cannot live to-day upon yesterday's enjoyment! Our past experiences will in this case only turn into corruption: they will feed pride; they will be knowledge that puffs up.

(vii.) And now, along with the manna, the Sabbath appears. In the double measure of the sixth day, it is provided for before it is enjoined: they rest not as mere duty, but as privilege; and in the gospels we find this rest connected in the most striking way with the reception of the Lord Himself. He is Lord of the Sabbath. They could not reject Him and have a Sabbath. With Christ known and fed upon, rest follows necessarily; found as we realize a love which has stooped so low as to give us the joy of companionship with Himself, and to bring

hath said: [i] to-morrow is the rest, a holy Sabbath, to Jehovah; bake what ye will bake, and boil that which ye will boil, and all that remaineth over lay up for yourselves, to be kept until the morning. And they kept it until the morning, as Moses had commanded, and it did not stink, nor was there worm in it. And Moses said, Eat that to-day, for to-day is a Sabbath unto Jehovah: to-day ye will not find it in the field. Six days shall ye gather it; but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, on it there shall be none. And it was so, that some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather; and they found none. And Jehovah said unto Moses, How long will ye refuse to keep my commandments and my laws? See, because Jehovah hath given you the Sabbath, therefore giveth he you on the sixth day the bread of two days. Abide every one in his place: let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day. And the house of Israel called the name of it manna: and it was like coriander-seed, white; and the [j] taste of it was like wafer-cakes with honey.

8. (32-36.) The manna kept for the land.

[8] And Moses said, This is the thing that Jehovah hath commanded: [k] Fill an omer with it, to be kept for your generations, that they may see the bread with which I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt. And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot and put in it an omer full of manna, and lay it up before Jehovah, to be kept for your generations.

[i] *cf.* Josh. 5. 12. Heb. 4. 9.

[j] *cf.* Num. 11. 7, 8. Song 2. 3.

[k] 1 Kings 8. 9. Heb. 9. 4. Rev. 2. 17.

us near, in Himself, to God. Away from God, Cainlike, we are but fugitives and vagabonds upon the earth. Nor can circumstances make peace for us; nay, while He says, "In the world ye shall have tribulation," He adds directly, "but in Me ye shall have peace."

In connection with this, we find for the first time what the manna is really like, for those who had tasted it. "It was like coriander-seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafer-cakes with honey." It was white—absolute purity, and more: of the color which speaks of the reflection of the full ray of light, and God is light. Its taste was *like* honey. Honey is the type of natural sweetness, able to yield refreshment if tasted by the way, as with Jonathan in the wood, but needing the wise man's caution in its use (Prov. xxv. 16), and unfit for the fire which tries the offering of the Lord. But the manna only resembles honey in its sweetness: it can abide the fire; and the fire prepares it for the people's food. In Christ is all the sweetness of human affection,—of a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother; but a nature pure, unfallen, incorruptible: the reality of manhood which invites us to intimacy, yet upon which God can put the seal of His Spirit in perfect approbation of it all.

(viii.) Thus of necessity this food "endureth to eternal life," as Christ Himself has told us. The enjoyment of it is not for the present only. And so the manna, though it could not be kept for one day's need in the wilderness, could be kept for the land. The golden pot speaks of how God is glorified in what is here made ours, and perhaps of that glorified One Himself who retains forever the memory of the past, and the gracious heart of the Son of Man also. And we shall not only "see," as Israel might, but "*eat*" of the "hidden manna" (Rev. ii. 17), in the heavenly land to which He is bringing us. It is then in fact, when we come to be there, that we shall have the full enjoyment,—knowing as

As Jehovah commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the testimony, to be kept. And the children of Israel ate manna [l]forty years, until they came to an inhabited land: they ate the manna until they came to the borders of the land of Canaan. Now an [m]omer is the tenth part of the ephah.

(XVII.)

Water from the rock: type of the Spirit.

1. (vv. 1-7.) The gift of God.

3. [1]And all the assembly of the children of Israel [n]journeyed from the wilderness of Sin,—their journeyings being at the word of Jehovah,—and encamped in Rephidim; and there was [o]no water for the people to drink. And the people [p]strove with Moses, and said, Give us water, that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why do ye strive with me? Why do ye [q]tempt Jehovah? And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, [r]Why hast thou brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst? And Moses cried unto Jehovah, saying, What shall I

[l] Deut. 8. 2, 3. Josh. 5. 12.
[m] Num. 28. 5. Heb. 13. 8.
[n] Num. 33. 12.
[o] ch. 15. 22.
[p] Num. 20. 3.
[q] Ps. 95. 8, 9. Matt. 4. 7.
[r] ch. 14. 11, 12. ch. 16. 3.

we are known,—of all the experiences which though they be of the wilderness, yet wait for the land to which we are hastening to find their full interpretation and blessing. The *meat* endures to everlasting life. We are now enjoying that which we shall enjoy for eternity. We feed on that which shall be eternally our food.

3. We have now a familiar type of the Spirit—the living water from the smitten rock; and, as an appendix to it, a necessary one, but still only that, in Amalek, the picture of the fleshly lusts which, in opposition to the Spirit, war against the soul. The numerical structure is here peculiarly significant: for the number of the section, while it is plainly that of the Spirit, says nothing of the strife that follows; nor could it come in very well as a fourth section, which the first part of the eighteenth chapter, moreover, plainly is. On the other hand, the number characterizes it exactly, if coming in as an appendix merely to the third section, unnoticed in the designation of the section itself, and yet finding its prepared place in connection with it. How clearly the spiritual meaning reigns in all this! and how it is brought out by the very arrangement! What connection has the conflict with Amalek with the water from the rock, other than a spiritual one? It comes in the historical order, no doubt. Yes, because "all these things happened unto them for types." The connection is spiritual, it is grounded on this, that it we have the Spirit, "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit." And yet this is but incidental, not to be put upon a level with the glorious reality of the gift of the Holy Ghost itself, which is permanent and eternal blessing. Moreover, as the meaning of all this subdivision is to show the divine furnishing in grace for the wilderness, the struggle with Amalek necessarily could only have a subordinate place.

(i.) "Bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure," says the prophet of salvation. We have seen how the first part of this was fulfilled to delivered Israel; we are now to see the fulfillment of the rest. Again, as sent in answer to the murmuring of the people, the stamp of divine grace is upon the gift. Grace is a mightier triumph over sin than judgment. If the sixth chapter of John's gospel interprets the manna for us, the seventh chapter interprets here. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, 'If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.' But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."

do with this people? a little more, and they will [e]stone me! And Jehovah said unto Moses, Pass before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel, and the rod wherewith thou smotest the river take in thy hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb, and thou shalt [f]smite upon the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of the place [g]Massah, and Meribah, on account of the striving of the children of Israel, and on account of their tempting Jehovah, saying, Is Jehovah in the midst of us, or not?

[e] 1 Sam. 30. 6.

[f] *cf.* Num. 20. 8. Ps. 105. 41. Ps. 114. 8. Zech. 13. 7. 1 Cor. 10. 4.

[g] Deut. 6. 16.

Thus, if the manna shows forth the Lord upon earth in humiliation and rejection, the living water as a gift depends upon His exaltation and glory. If men are to be the recipients of the Holy Ghost, the work must be accomplished for them which alone can enable them to receive or God to give this unspeakable gift. In view of this, the scene in Exodus becomes easy enough to interpret. Horeb is "the dry place," but it now yields water. Against nature, "contrary to nature," is the Lord's working; and the Lord—it is specially noted—is Himself there. He stands upon the rock which is to display at once His power and His grace. The rod which had smitten the river smites it,—the rod of power in behalf of the people; and the streams gush out, an abundant supply for all the thirsty multitude. The smiting of the Rock for us has created a spring of refreshment and satisfaction as inexhaustible as the eternal source from which it comes; and its source is in God Himself—in the love of Him whose name is Love.

The type of water is pregnant with instruction, as it is that which supplies one of man's deepest cravings and strongest necessities. Thirst unsatisfied kills sooner far than hunger, nor can hunger itself be really satisfied where thirst is not, at least in measure, really met. A glance at the need to which water ministers will enable us to understand this.

The soil otherwise most fruitful, without water, is unable to yield nourishment to the rootlets of the plant, which will die of drought in the midst of abundance. Water alone dissolves the nutriment, and supplies it in a shape suited to be taken up and assimilated into sap and juice. In the plant, and in the animal body, every constituent part is saturated with water, which alone enables it to fulfill its function and take its place in living relation to the whole. How perfect and beautiful an expression of that constant ministry of the Spirit with which for due and healthy life we must be "filled," and by which alone we are enabled to absorb and digest all spiritual food!

Every one who has preceded us upon the path of faith has been sustained of the Spirit, as born of the Spirit at first. This is not, of course, peculiar to Christian times. But the streams from the smitten Rock have in them that which *is* peculiar. All streams carry with them the witness of the soil through which they flow,—of the fountain-head in which they originate. The Spirit of God, come down to us as the fruit of accomplished redemption and of Christ's accepted work, is to our hearts the witness of our acceptance and the Spirit of adoption, by which we cry, Abba, Father. A new and settled relationship to God, in and through His Beloved, such as before could not have been known or dreamt of, is now made consciously our own. "At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." Thus the Spirit ministers Christ, and with Him the knowledge of the Father; communion with the Father and the Son becomes our portion, and herein fullness of joy.

(ii.) The appendix to this has how different a tale to tell! Amalek is the grandson of profane Esau, whose name Edom, earned by his actions, is almost

2. (8-16.) Amalek: "fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."

[v] Then came Amalek and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto [w] Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to-morrow I will take my stand on the top of the hill, with the rod of God in my hand. And Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek; and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the [x] top of the hill. And so it was, when Moses lifted up his hand, that Israel prevailed, and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' [y] hands were heavy, and they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat upon it, and [z] Aaron and

[v] Gen. 36. 12. Num. 24. 20. Deut. 25. 17. *cf.* Heb. 12. 15.
[w] Josh. 1. 1, 2. Acts 5. 31. Heb. 2. 10.
[x] Heb. 4. 14-16.
[y] *ctr.* Deut. 33. 27. Is. 40. 28-31.
[z] Heb. 7. 25.

identical with Adam. Amalek's own name has no determined significance. It has been thought to be composed of *am* and *laq*, and thus to mean "a people that licks up," or "exhausts." This would be appropriate enough, but Scripture points rather to a derivation from *Amal* and *laq*, which would give us the thought of "*labor* that exhausts." The first of these words is found in Balaam's blessing of the people the second time, as Amalek appears in the third and fourth. "He hath not seen *perverseness* in Israel" is literally, "He hath not seen *amal*,"—the wearisome labor which one's own will involves; that "labor" from which the Lord calls men off to the "rest" of His easy yoke. *Amal* is thus connected with the will or lust of the flesh, and Amalek may well be the offspring of the old man, Edom. Amalek appears plainly in the third blessing: "His king shall be higher than Agag"—king of the Amalekites. And in the fourth, where the star rises out of Jacob—where Christ's coming is seen,—then it is that Amalek perishes forever.

Put these together, and they read consistently enough as typical of the old nature and its fruits. The first thing for blessing is, "God hath not seen it"—it is not imputed. Next, Christ, Israel's king, is strong above Agag: we are delivered from its actual supremacy. Thirdly, when Christ comes, Amalek perishes forever.

Again, if we compare the present chapter with the twentieth of Numbers, we shall find a strikingly similar scene in the first part of each:—the murmuring of the people in their thirst, the name "Meribah" given in each case to the place, the water brought from the rock to supply their thirst; and while here the conflict with Amalek follows, in Numbers follows correspondingly a scene with Edom.

Amalek thus seems to represent the flesh's will or lust, and the apostle Peter may well refer to this very place when he speaks of "fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."

"The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary, the one to the other, so that ye should not do the things that ye would." (Gal. v. 17.) It is not "*cannot*" do, as in the common version: the tendency of the constant opposition between "flesh" and "Spirit," essential in their very natures, is, to hinder the man who has the Spirit from doing what he would. If it said "cannot," this would deny the power of the Spirit to control the flesh. On the contrary, the apostle says, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." But the flesh is there as this implies, and ready ever to assert itself. How solemn to find, in this way, after the water from the rock, the conflict with Amalek!

Yet though it is all right, and needful to assert in this connection, we must mark just how Scripture connects this attack of the foe. "He called the name of the place 'Massah' and 'Meribah,' on account of the striving of the children of Israel, and on account of their tempting Jehovah, saying, 'Is Jehovah in the midst of us, or not?' Then came Amalek." That is, the moral link, as given thus, seems to be, not between the gift of the water and Amalek's onset, but between the *unbelief of the people* and this attack.

Another thing which is very evident, let us at the same time particularly note:

Hur stayed up his hands,—the one on the one side and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady till the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in the book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua, for I will utterly [a] blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And Moses built an [b] altar and called the name of it [c] Jehovah-nissi, and said, Because [his] hand was against the throne of Jah, Jehovah will have [d] war with Amalek from generation to generation.

[a] Num. 24. 20. Rom. 6. 6. Rom. 8. 3.
[b] Gen. 12. 7, etc.
[c] Ps., 60. 4. Song 2. 4. 2 Cor. 2. 14.
[d] Gal. 5. 17.

that Amalek assaults Israel, not Israel Amalek. *God* did not call to this conflict. He did not say, Seek out and destroy Amalek; it is Amalek seeks out Israel; and Israel's unbelief exposes them to the attack.

And so the apostle: he does not say, "Fight against fleshly lusts," but "abstain," "hold off from," them,—which if it were done, no war were possible. This sort of conflict is not a necessity of God's imposing, but the result of faith not having been in due exercise. Did we "hold off from" the lusts of the flesh by the whole length of being dead with Christ to sin,—were we always *reckoning* ourselves dead, as we are entitled and bound to do, conflict of this kind would be impossible: dead men no more fight than they are allured. And this is no undue insisting upon the Scripture term; for the apostle similarly presses the force of it, where he urges "for he that is dead is freed (or rather, *justified*) from sin." (Rom. vi. 7.) That is, you cannot charge lusts, for instance, on a dead man: he has none. This, of course, is only faith's reckoning; but it is true, or it could not be faith's, and just as simple for the argument here as in the very similar one that the apostle urges. He who, because Christ died to sin for him once, reckons himself dead, cannot be seduced, nor even fight with seduction. But are we always practically in the faith of this? Would that we were! But when we are not, we are shorn Samsons, most accessible, and without strength.

Conflict of this kind, then, comes from faith's failure; and when entangled—if our eyes have been upon the world, and have affected our hearts, then we must indeed fight in order to be free.

Note, then, that in the field *Joshua* is the leader. Joshua is Jesus: the names are the same, and Christ acting by the Spirit is distinctly what he represents to us,—the Captain of our salvation, who leads us into practical apprehension of the heavenly places into which He is gone. We want, as this means, the positive enjoyment of what is ours in the heavenlies, in order to be free from entanglement, and really pilgrims and strangers on the earth.

But even Joshua's success is dependent, as we see directly, upon Moses being on the hill-top before God, and the holding up of the rod of power before Him. If Moses' hands are up, Israel prevails; but if Moses' hands are down, Amalek prevails. Moses is here another type of Christ, but as gone in to God, presenting before Him the value of that work in which, on the part of His people, divine power has acted. And the supporters of Moses' hands figure, surely, that in Him (not, of course, external to Him,) which keeps Him, so to speak, in the place He has taken for us. On the one hand, Aaron seems to represent His priestly character, as touched with the feeling of our infirmities, gracious and compassionate; on the other, Hur, "white," speaks as the manna did, of One who fully reflects the light which God is. Here, then, is mercy toward man, righteousness toward God,—an "Advocate with the Father;" and also "Jesus Christ the righteous."

Real dependence on the one hand, thorough subjection to the word of God on the other—for it is by the edge of the *sword* that Joshua discomfits their enemies,—these things, with one who knows redemption and acceptance in the Beloved, are what will carry him safe and victorious through all opposition and

(XVIII. 1-12.)

The effect upon the world.

4. And Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, [e] heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people, in that Jehovah had brought Israel out of Egypt. And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took [f] Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back, and her two sons, of whom the name of one was Gershom,—for he said, I have been a sojourner in a foreign land, and the name of the other, Eliezer—for the God of my father has been with me, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh. And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came, with his sons and his wife, to Moses, into the wilderness, where he was encamped at the [g] mount of God; and he said unto Moses, I, thy father-in-law Jethro, am come unto thee, and thy wife, and her two sons with her. And Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and bowed himself down, and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare; and they came into the tent. And Moses told his father-in-law all that Jehovah had done unto Pharaoh and the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the trouble which had befallen them by the way, and how Jehovah had delivered them. And Jethro [h] rejoiced over all the good which Jehovah had done unto Israel, whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. And Jethro said, [i] Blessed be Jehovah, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh,—who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that Jehovah is greater than all gods, for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly, he was above them. And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, [j] took a burnt-offering and sacrifices for God. And Aaron, and all the elders of Israel, came to [k] eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God.

[e] Ps. 18. 44. Ps. 126. 2. Is. 2. 2, 3.
[f] cf. ch. 4. 20, 26.
[g] ch. 3. 1, 12.
[h] Deut. 32. 43.
[i] 1 Kings 10. 9.
[j] Is. 60. 7.
[k] Is. 25. 6.

The judgment of the people: the end in grace.

(13-27.)

5. And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood by Moses from

hindrances. But though Amalek is beaten off, Amalek is not destroyed. Israel has gained nothing by the conflict; and by the victory, only a free and unobstructed road. The battle with Amalek was but an episode in their history, not, as so many find the inward struggle, a daily experience. In the epistle to the Philippians,—the rehearsal of Christian experience,—the flesh is only mentioned to say we have no confidence in it: and these are "the true circumcision, who worship God in the spirit, and boast in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." May we be more fully such!

4. The deliverance is complete: the grace which begins perfects the work. Nothing more is needed as to this. But the effect of the work is yet to be seen, for God's way is ever to make the blessing of one the means of blessing to others also. Thus it will be when the final salvation of Israel is accomplished, it will be to the world, says the apostle, "as life from the dead." (Rom. xi. 15.)

In the present time, God is making the recipients of His salvation a testimony by which He works on others,—a thing that needs no insisting on, and which we find illustrated in the case of Jethro in a way so clear that it may be left to speak for itself.

the morning unto the evening. And Moses' father-in-law saw all that Moses did with the people; and he said, What is this thing that thou art doing with the people? Why dost thou sit thyself alone, and all the people take their stand by thee from morning unto evening? And Moses said unto his father-in-law, Because the people come unto me to inquire of God. When they have a matter, they come to me, and I judge between one and another; and I make them know God's statutes and his laws. And Moses' father-in-law said unto him, The thing that thou art doing is not good; thou wilt surely wear away,—both thou and this people who are with thee; for the thing is too heavy for thee,—[l] thou art not able to carry it through, thyself alone. Hearken now to [m] my voice: I will counsel thee, and God be with thee. Be thou for the people with God, and bring the causes unto God; and teach them the statutes and the laws; and show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do. [n] And do thou look out from among all the people men of ability, fearing God,—faithful men, hating unjust gain, and place them over them as rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens; and let them judge the people at all times: and it shall be that every great matter they shall bring to thee, and every small matter they shall themselves judge; and it shall be easier for thyself, and they shall bear [the burden] with thee. [o] If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people also shall go to their place in peace. And Moses hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he said. And Moses chose men of ability out of all Israel, and made them heads over all the people,—rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And they judged the people at all times: the hard cases they brought to Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves. And Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went to his own land.

l 2 Cor. 12. 9.

m *cf.* Gen. 16. 2.

n Deut. 1. 9–18. *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 5.

o Num. 11. 17.

5. The fifth and last section has more difficulty, and yet there need not be much doubt as to the general meaning. According to the number we have before us, as it would seem, those governmental ways of God, by which the "way" leads to the "end," an end which is its righteous (while it may be gracious) recompense. In the history, we find Moses acting under the counsel of his father-in-law, sharing with chosen men of ability in Israel the service of rule over the people. It can scarcely fail to connect itself in our thoughts with that of which it may well be typical,—the day on which Christ (of whom all through Moses speaks to us) shall give according to the will of His Father (Matt. xx. 23) His people to share His throne as Son of Man (Rev. iii. 21). This is surely a fitting and beautiful close of this series of types, which has given us thus in wonderful completeness and reality the history of redemption. Grace ends not with us till the *reward* of grace is given, and it shines at last in glory. Beyond this these types could not go, and a new series must begin with that which follows.

DIVISION 2. (Chap. xix.–xl.)

The legal covenant, with its types of the fuller salvation. Relationship to the Redeemer.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. xix.–xxxi.)

The first giving of the law, then PURE *law; and the counsels of God in grace (the tabernacle). The sovereignty of the Redeemer.*

Obedience the ground of blessing.

SECTION 1. (Chap. xix.–xxiv.)

Law: the proclamation of the righteousness of a sovereign God; the people being yet unfallen. Typically, the obedience which grace enables for and makes necessary to the redeemed.

(XIX.)

1. (vv. 1-6.) The promise of conditional election.

1, [1] IN the third month, after the departure of the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the [p] wilderness of Sinai: they set out from Rephidim, and came into the wilderness of Sinai, and encamped in the wilderness; and Israel encamped there [q] before the mount. And Moses went up unto God. And Jehovah called unto

[p] Num. 33. 15.

[q] ch. 3. 12.

DIV. 2.

WE now come to the second division of the book, the character of which has been already briefly given. That it is largely typical needs no insisting on. Every Christian will recognize this in the whole tabernacle-service, which forms so large a part of it. But the truth, less generally received, is that the whole division —the whole book, therefore,—is typical, a perfect system of types, which is only properly appreciated when seen as a whole,—every part joined to every other part in a symmetry which at once proclaims itself divine. And this is the character of all these historical books: but there is no need to dilate upon this, as the book itself is before us, and will surely respond to the reverent inquiry of faith.

There are two subdivisions, manifestly depending upon a double giving of the law, which the first time is pure law, with no provision for failure as to the people at large; at the second giving they have already failed, as they did immediately; and God declares Himself as forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin. Now, also, the law, which at first was written on the tables by the hand of God Himself, is written by the hand of the mediator, Moses.

The character of this second subdivision will perhaps be better realized after we have gone through the first; and to this, therefore, we shall at present confine ourselves.

SUBD. 1.

IN the first subdivision, we have two very distinct sections: the first, giving the announcement of the law proper—the ten commandments, and others related to them; the second, the instruction as to the tabernacle, in which the types of salvation come before us. In the first part, we have that of which the apostle says, "The law is not of faith;" in the latter part, what addresses itself *to* faith, although with a vail over its glory, such as a legal system could not but maintain. This latter part anticipates the failure of the first, and shows beforehand the provision of His grace, which is no after-thought, but according to the counsel of God from the beginning

Sec. 1.

In the first section, then, we have law in its purity,—the proclamation of the righteousness of God to a people standing on the ground of legal covenant. The measure of requirement must, of course, be in conformity with this, which, save

him out of the mount, saying, Thus shalt thou say unto the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: Ye have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I have borne you on [r]eagles' wings, and have brought you to myself. And now, if ye will indeed hearken to my voice and keep my covenant, ye shall be unto me a [s]peculiar treasure above all the peoples, for all the earth is mine; and ye shall be unto me a [t]kingdom of priests, and a holy nation: these are the words that thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

2. (7-15.) The covenant.

[2] And Moses came and called the elders of the people, and set before them all these things which Jehovah had commanded him. And all the people answered together and said, [u]All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do.

[r] Deut. 32. 11. Is. 40. 31.

[s] Deut. 4.20. Tit. 2. 14.

[t] Is. 61. 6. 1 Pet. 2. 9. Rev. 1. 6.

[u] ch. 24. 3. Josh. 24. 17-19. Rom. 3. 20.

One, no man has ever satisfied. Yet in the *new* covenant it is said, "I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their heart" (Jer. xxxi. 33); and as *so* written, it becomes a "law of liberty." Apart from any question here of the Christian rule of life—which Gal. vi. 16, Col. ii. 6, will answer—it is plain that redemption, as bringing the soul to God, sets up His throne within it, and obedience is the only liberty. It is plain, too, that there is a "righteousness of the law" which the law itself gives no power to fulfill, but which "is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." (Rom. viii. 4.) What is merely dispensational passes, but not that which is the expression of God's character, and required by it. Nothing of this can pass.

1. The people are now at Sinai. The name is nearly the same as that of the wilderness in which the manna fell, and has the same meaning. The scene is still a "wilderness," and the throne of the almighty Lawgiver a barren mount. Law cannot bring into the land, nor produce fruit from the barren heart of man; and of this God would encompass us with reminders.

Here, then, at Sinai, He proclaims the principle of law,—obedience as the ground of blessing. He recalls to them the mighty deliverance He had accomplished for them, and the way in which He had sustained and blessed them, and brought them to Himself. And now it was in His heart for them to have them as His own,—from among all the nations, His peculiar treasure. In an earthly place, and not a heavenly, they should be to Him a kingdom of priests (with perpetual right of approach to Himself), a nation all holy. For this He demands obedience: without it, plainly this access to Himself would be a denial of His nature.

Grace still must affirm this, therefore, not set it aside; but it does what law does not—it provides for the accomplishment of the condition. First of all, the obedience of Another, who owed none, has glorified God infinitely with regard to those who owed but did not pay. Secondly,—for this even could not release (nor could there be blessing in release) from the personal obligation,—grace apprehended in the heart brings back the heart to God, and the heart brought back in love serves of necessity.

(i) There is that which abides for us here, but the law, while it rightly claims, cannot produce it. Israel never under the law became a "kingdom of priests." The choice of Aaron and his family afterward shows this fully. The people thus as a body were set aside from the priesthood, and it was death for any not of Aaron's seed to invade the priestly office.

Thus the promise is one of conditional election, which of course does not touch the fact that God's grace will at last make this good to the nation, when it is plain that in themselves they have no title.

(ii.) The people eagerly, and in ignorant self-confidence, accept the covenant. They have had plentiful proof of their own evil, and of their need of grace, and

And Moses brought back the words of the people to Jehovah. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Behold, I come unto thee in the [v] darkness of the cloud, that the people may hear when I speak to thee, and believe thee also forever. And Moses told the words of the people unto Jehovah. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them [w] wash their clothes, and let them be ready for the [x] third day, for Jehovah will come down on the third day, in the sight of all the people, upon Mount Sinai. And thou shalt set [y] bounds unto the people round about, saying, Beware of going up into the mount, or touching the border of it; whosoever toucheth the mount shall surely be put to death: no hand shall touch him, but he shall be stoned, or shot through; whether beast or man, it shall not live: when the [z] trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount. And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified them, and they washed their clothes. And he said unto the people, Be ready for the third day: come not near your wives.

v Ps. 97. 2. *cfr.* Jno. 3, 5.

w Neh. 4. 3. *cfr.* Zech. 3. 3, 4. Luke 15. 22. Rev. 1. 5.

x Gen. 22. 4.

y Heb. 12. 18-21. *cfr.* Eph. 2. 13. Rom. 5. 2. Heb. 10. 19-22.

z Rev. 8. 6.

3. (16-25.) The appearance of the glory of Jehovah.

[3] And it came to pass on the third day, when it was morning, that there were [a] thunderings and lightnings and a heavy cloud upon the mount, and the sound of the trumpet exceeding loud, so that all the people that were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet God: and they took their stand at the foot of the mount. And Mount Sinai was all asmoke, because Jehovah descended upon it in fire; and the smoke of it went up as the [b] smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount [c] trembled greatly. And when the sound of the trumpet waxed exceeding loud, Moses spake, and God answered him with a voice. And Jehovah descended on Mount Sinai, on the top of the mount; and Jehovah called Moses to the top of the mount; and Moses went up. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Go down, warn the people, lest they break

a ch. 9. 28. Rev. 10. 4.

b Deut. 4. 11. Heb. 12. 29.

c Ps. 68. 8.

had been shown grace; yet, in spite of this, do not hesitate to put themselves under law: and just on this account they had to be put under law, that both they and all others through them might learn by their experience. And immediately they do learn what strict law is. The character of God's dealing with them changes: cloud and darkness, and bounds set round the mount, enforced by the severest penalties, warn them of what law must entail upon a sinful people; the commandments themselves are made known in all the length and breadth of the divine holiness; and yet they go on, after the whole is thus declared, to ratify their engagement as confidently as they had undertaken it at first.

Apart from the legality of this, there is a truth which remains, an answer of the heart to God's offer of love, which He seeks from us, a free-will offering of ourselves to Him (2 Cor. viii. 5). And so Barnabas exhorted the disciples, that "with purpose of heart they should cleave to the Lord." (Acts xi. 23.)

(iii.) On the third day, (the day of manifestation) the glory of Jehovah appears upon the mount; but though this be the seal of the covenant, the people are

through to Jehovah to gaze, and many of them perish. And the priests also who come near to Jehovah, let them sanctify themselves, lest Jehovah break forth on them. And Moses said unto Jehovah, The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai, for thou warnedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it. And Jehovah said unto him, Away, go down, and thou shalt come up, and Aaron with thee; but let not the priests or the people break through to come up unto Jehovah, lest he break forth upon them. And Moses went down unto the people, and spake unto them.

(XX. 1-17.)

"The words of the covenant." (ch. xxxiv. 28.)

1. (vv. 1-11.) Duties Godward.

2. [f] And God spake all [d] these words, saying, [e] I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage: [f] thou shalt have [g] no other gods beside me.

[h] Thou shalt not make thyself any graven image, even any form of that which is in [i] heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth; thou shalt not bow down to them, nor serve them: for I, Jehovah thy God, am a [j] jealous God, [k] visiting the

[d] Deut. 5. 6.
[e] Lev. 19. 37. *etc.* Ps. 81. 10.
[f] Rom. 3. 20. Gal. 3. 13-19. 1 Tim. 1. 8, 9. Jas. 2. 10. Rom. 6. 14. Rom. 7. 12. 1 Cor. 15. 56.
[g] Matt. 4. 10. Heb. 3. 12. 1 Cor. 8. 5.
[h] Is. 40. 19. Is. 42. 8, etc. Rom. 1. 22, 23. Col. 3. 5. 1 Jno. 5. 21.
[i] *cf.* Phil. 2. 9, 10.
[j] ch. 34. 14.
[k] *cf.* Dan. 9. 6. Ezek. 18. 1-4.

not able to draw nigh; and the mercy of God interdicts what would be fatal to man in his sinful condition. Thus already it is plain that the issue of the covenant cannot be favorable to him.

2. The ten commandments, as spoken by Jehovah Himself in the ears of the people, are expressly said to be the "words of the covenant." "Write thou these words," He says to Moses, "for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel. . . . and he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments." It is very evident, therefore, that the ten commandments are not formally addressed to any other than Israel, the covenant-people.

In their form, they bear the most decisive marks of this: "I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt," and "that thy days may be long in the land that Jehovah thy God giveth thee," apply distinctively to Israel, as is plain. In Deut. v. 15, the commandment to keep the Sabbath also is based upon their redemption out of Egypt. It is thus that the law is given to the people as a *redeemed* people; and this is noteworthy in two ways:—

First, it reminds us that man as man is fallen, and under condemnation, and that relationship with God must be on other than natural grounds. Only in *grace* could God give even a law to man now, although not, of course, the full grace that is made known in the gospel. The law as the terms of the covenant was necessarily the sign, therefore, of covenant-relationship.

Secondly, we see how still "all these things happened unto them for types." In the wisdom of God, that same law, whose principle was "do and live," could yet be the *type* of the obedience of faith in those who are the subjects of a *spiritual* redemption, the principle of which is "live and do." Let us remember, however, that law in itself retains none the less its character as opposed to grace, and that as a *type* it does not *represent* law any longer: we are not, as Christians, in any sense *under* the law, but under grace.

(i.) The ten commandments divide, as our Lord has divided them, into duties Godward and manward: this being also the common division. There are four commandments in the first, and six in the second part; and so reckoned, they show the universal numerical stamp:—

The first commandment plainly affirms the *unity* of God: it also affirms His *exclusive sovereignty*.

iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and [t]showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

[m]Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain; for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain.

[n]Remember the Sabbath day, to sanctify it. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is a Sabbath unto Jehovah thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work,—thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy servant, nor thy handmaid, thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days Jehovah made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested on the [o]seventh day, wherefore Jehovah blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it.

2. (12-17.) Duties to one's fellowman.

[2][p]Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land that Jehovah thy God giveth thee.

[q]Thou shalt not kill.

[r]Thou shalt not commit adultery.

[s]Thou shalt not steal.

[t]Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

[u]Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou

[t] Micah 7. 18.

[m] Is. 29. 13. Matt. 5. 33-37.

[n] *cfr.* Col. 2. 16. Jno. 20. 1. Acts 20. 7.

[o] Gen. 2. 2.

[p] Gen. 9. 22. Eph. 6. 1-3. Prov. 1. 8.

[q] 1 Jno. 3. 15. Acts 5. 15.

[r] Matt. 5. 28. 2 Cor. 11. 2. Jas. 4. 4.

[s] Mal. 3. 8. Eph. 4. 28.

[t] Eph. 4. 25. Col. 3. 9.

[u] Col. 3. 5. Rom. 7. 7. 2 Sam. 11. 2-4. Josh. 7. 21.

The second forbids idolatry,—the *abasing* Him to some creature-conception. (See Rom. i. 23.)

The third requires the *hallowing of His Name*,—that which stands for what He really is as revealed. These three commandments thus guard the grand primary truth upon which all others rest, for faith and practice. They are different in character from the fourth, so that this last has been by some of old transferred to the second division; but in fact, this only shows that the 4 here is, as usually, a 3 + 1. The difference sustains, therefore, the numerical arrangement.

The fourth commandment here falls into its place as a memorial of *creation*,—man owning in it his place as a creature, yet in rest, because God rested. True, sin has broken in upon His rest, but this is not noticed here, because in the law there is covenant-relationship supposed, though only while the law is kept. But the rest is in earthly blessing, and, like all else here, never carries us beyond.

(ii.) We come now to the second part: here of six commandments.

The first claims honor for parents, the earth-type and representatives of the Creator-Father. And to this, as the apostle notes, a special "promise of life"—though but the continuance of it—is attached.

The second forbids killing—of course, of men: which our Lord interprets as the prohibition even of anger without cause. It is, as one may say, the *salvation*-ordinance of the life that is.

The third sanctions and sanctifies marriage, and how far it extends the Lord again declares.

The fourth has to do with *things*, not persons,—the goods of others, which it protects from the spoiler.

The fifth, under the prohibition of false witness, condemns deceit of every kind, the resource of weakness at all times where God is not before the soul. The numerical place here seems to be intended to remind the creature of his need of God, walking with whom the holiness of truth will be maintained.

The sixth and last tracks sin to its lair, discovers it in "lust," as the apostle

shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's.

(XX. 18-26.)

"The altar that sanctifieth the gift." (Matt. 23. 20.)

3. And all the people saw the thunderings and the flashes, and the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they [v] reeled back, and stood [w] afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not; for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not. And the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was. And Jehovah said

[v] Rom. 4. 15.

[w] *cfr.* Eph. 2. 13.

shows (Rom. vii. 7), and shows where victory over it must be found: although the secret of the victory it cannot penetrate. The law is but the "strength of sin" (1 Cor. xv. 56), and not of holiness.

In these "ten words" the measure of human responsibility is given—of man naturally. *Christian* responsibility we must not expect to find in it: that is measured only by our new place in Christ before God,—heavenly, so as to make us strangers and pilgrims upon the earth. Of this we have no hint here, and could not have: it would be mere confusion if introduced into it.

3. The unfitness of the people to approach God is demonstrated even to themselves, though they neither understand aright the cause nor receive the discovery aright. Ignorant of the sin which is the real barrier, and misreading, therefore, the mind of God, who would have His people with Himself, instead of seeking to have the barrier removed, they readily accept the place of distance, and beg that God may no more speak directly to them, but through Moses as the mediator. It is this spirit which would interpose the more tolerable image-worship, by which God is attempted to be brought nigh, but in reality banished. This leads, therefore, to the renewed interdiction of idolatry, while God prescribes the way in which He is to be approached. "The altar," as our Lord says, "is that which sanctifieth the gift." Now, if we take the "gifts" that are here spoken of, the burnt-offerings and peace-offerings undoubtedly prefigure the work of Christ. The only thing, then, that could make the work of Christ acceptable was the supreme excellence of the Person who did the work. Of Him the altar of burnt-offering,—as in due time we may see,—assuredly speaks. Of Him no less must the altars here. But as the burnt-offering will be found to have also a secondary application to the believer, so it will be found in this case also.

The gift, the Lord teaches, cannot be acceptable, where the heart of him that offers it is not right. (Matt. v. 23, 24.) This is easily understood: and thus the type before us finds very simply its meaning in both applications, whether (as primarily) to Christ, or to the worshiper.

The material that God accepts for His altar, then, is either earth or stone,—things which are in contrast with one another; "earth," deriving its name from its crumbling character (*cretz*, from *ratz*, to crumble, says Parkhurst of the Hebrew word); and stone, which resists pressure, and is characterized by its hardness and durability. Of the dust of the earth man was made, and as the earth is fertile as it yields to the hand that dresses it, so is man to God, as He yields Himself to the divine hand. Earth seems thus naturally to stand for the creature in its frailty,—conscious of it, and accepting the place of weakness and subjection, thus to bring forth fruit to God. While stone stands for the strength that is thus found in Another, linked with and growing out of the consciousness of weakness: "When I am weak, then am I strong."

Now in both respects He was perfect, who came down to all the reality of man-

unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven: ye shall not make with me gods of silver, nor shall ye make yourselves gods of gold. An [x] altar of earth shalt thou make unto me, and sacrifice upon it thy burnt-offerings and thy peace-offerings, thy sheep and thine oxen: in [y] all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee and bless thee. And if thou make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of [z] hewn stone; for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it. And thou shalt not go up by [a] steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered on it.

x *cf.* Rom. 10. 6-9.
y 2 Chron. 7. 16. Matt. 18. 20.
z Josh. 8. 31. Rom. 4. 4, 5.
a Phil. 3. 3.

Test-cases for practical application of the law.

(XXI—XXIII.)

4. [1] Now these are the judgments thou shalt set before them:—

1. (xxi. 1-11.) The duties of masters.

[b] If thou acquire a Hebrew servant, six years shall he serve, and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing.

b Deut. 15. 12-18. Jer. 34. 8-11.

hood, to know both its weakness and the wondrous strength which is wrought out of weakness thus waiting upon and subject to God. It was thus in endurance He yielded Himself up, and endured by yielding Himself to His Father's will. The stone of the altar no human hand might shape; and he who approached was thus warned that by no work of his own could he gain acceptance with God, or even help to do so. And again, he was not to go up by steps unto God's altar, for steps are human machinery to reach a higher level than otherwise belongs to us. God, blessed be His name, has *come down* to our need, and He would have also our worship and our walk on the same level. Otherwise the effort to take a higher place will surely but expose our shame.

That there is a secondary application of these altars to the believer also seems to be true, however, and may be indicated. Our *justification* is as *ungodly* (Rom. iv. 5); our acceptance, in Another, wholly; yet there are acceptable conditions of soul in drawing near to God, which seem to answer to what is here. If we realize our weakness, we find, as in Hebrews, provision for it in the "High-Priest over the house of God" (chap. x. 21), and all the tenderness of divine compassion drawn out by our necessity. On the other hand, we have our unchangeable position as in Christ before God, and realize thus "the strength of our salvation." The two things, though in contrast, yet suit well together, and we need to have them thus in counter-balance in order to know the fullness of the blessing which is ours, whether we consider what we are in ourselves, or what we are in Christ.

4. The ten commandments are in themselves a perfect rule of duty: yet the bluntness of man's spiritual sense requires help in the application of them to practice. It has been seen thus by many commentators that the divisions of the three following chapters correspond, though not in exact order, with the commandments of the second table, and with that of the Sabbath, several of the divisions developing one of these each. Yet we must not suppose, on the other hand, a full development, which would be practically impossible, or, from its immensity, of little use, but test-cases, if we may call them so, illustrative of their application; leaving plenty of room for individual exercise, ever healthful and necessary to the discipline intended by them. This we shall see in the brief examination which it is alone possible to give them here.

"Bertheau, and after him Baumgarten, maintain," says Murphy, "that as the 'ten words' constitute the great Decalogue, so each of these sections forms a minor decalogue. There is, we conceive, some tenable ground for this subdivision. This brings out in a striking light the wonderful system lying in the structure of

If he came in [c] by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he were married, his wife shall go out with him.

If his master have given him a wife, and she have borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out alone.

And if the servant plainly say, [d] I love my master, my wife, and my children, I will not go out free; then his master shall bring him to the judges, and shall bring him to the door, or to the door-post, and his master shall [e] bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall be his servant forever.

And if a man sell his daughter to be a maid-servant, she shall not go out as the men-servants do.

[f] If she please not her master, who hath betrothed her to himself, then he shall let her be redeemed: to a strange people he hath no power to sell her, when he hath deceived her.

And if he have betrothed her to his son, he shall deal with her according to the right of daughters.

If he take him another [wife], her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage he shall not diminish.

And if he do not these three unto her, then she shall go out free without money.

2. (xxi. 12–32.) Of injury to the person.

[2 g] He that smiteth a man so that he die shall be surely put to death. But if he have not [h] lain in wait, but God have made it happen to his hand, then I will appoint thee a place whither he may flee. But if a man come wantonly upon his neighbor, to slay him with guile, thou shalt [i] take him from mine altar that he may die.

c Jno. 12.24.

d Eph. 5. 25. Matt. 26. 53, 54.

e Ps. 40. 6. Heb. 10. 5. *cf.* Phil. 15, 16.

f Deut. 21. 14. Mal. 2. 14.

g Acts 3. 15.

h Num. 35. 11. Acts 3. 17.

i 1 Kings 2. 29.

this seemingly unconnected collection of injunctions. Seven groups of ten precepts each form the fundamental polity of the commonwealth of Israel."

Those who see so much should look further. What is true of these chapters is true of the whole Word of God, that there is a numerical structure every where which connects all together, and gives added significance to every part. The seventh section, however, in conformity with its character, which is mainly promise, seems to be rather divisible into seven than into ten parts.

(i.) "The first of these sections," says Murphy again, "refers to the duties of masters and servants, and is therefore a natural expansion of the fifth commandment, which relates to parents and children." This is true, and deeply instructive: how instructive is it, and yet how simple, that the master is thus seen in the place of the parent! It is of *slavery* the commandment treats—an evil which as yet could not be done away; and which, in the limited form in which it is here permitted, became often a benefit. How truly so if the slave became thus, as it were, the adopted child of his master, or the maid-servant became the wife of her master or of his son!

But how infinitely is the servant's place here exalted, when we see in the One who voluntarily chooses it forever the type of the blessed Person whose "body prepared" Him was really what the digged ear of the Hebrew servant was,—the sign of love's surrender to perpetual service! Upon all this there is no space to enlarge; but this is how God has filled up the valleys, and glorified what is lowly. Blessed be His name!

(ii.) The second section is, without any doubt, an expansion of the second

[j] And he who smiteth his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. j 1 Tim. 1. 9.

[k] And he that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death. k Deut. 24. 7. Gen. 37. 27. 1 Tim. 1. 10.

[l] And he that curseth his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. l Prov. 20. 20. Mark 7. 10.

[m] And if men strive together, and one smite another with a stone, or with the fist, and he die not, but keepeth his bed: if he rise and walk abroad upon his staff, then shall he that smote him be clear; only he shall pay for his loss of time, and cause him to be thoroughly healed. m *cf.* Col. 4. 10.

[n] And if a man smite his servant or his maid with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall surely be avenged; but if he continue [to live] a day or two, he shall not be avenged,—for he is his money. n Col. 4. 1.

And if men strive, and hurt a woman with child, and her child come forth, but no mischief happen, he shall surely be fined according as the woman's husband shall lay upon him, and shall give as the judges determine. But if mischief happen, then thou shalt give life for life, [o] eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. o Lev. 24. 20. Deut. 19. 21. *ctr.* Matt. 5. 38.

And if a man smite the eye of his servant or the eye of his maid that it perish, he shall let him go [p] free for his eye's sake. And if he smite out his man-servant's tooth, or his maid-servant's tooth, he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake. p *cf.* Luke 4. 18.

And if an ox gore a man or a woman that one die, the ox shall surely be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten, but the owner of the ox shall be clear. But if the ox were wont to gore in time past, and it hath been testified to its owner, and he hath not kept it in, and it hath killed a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned, and its owner also shall be put to death. If a ransom be laid upon him, then he shall give for the [q] redemption of his life whatever is laid upon him. Whether it hath gored a son or gored a daughter, according to this judgment shall it be done to him. q Prov. 13. 8.

If the ox have gored a man-servant or a maid-servant, he shall give unto their master [r] thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned. r Zech. 11. 12, 13. Matt. 26. 15. Matt. 27. 9. Phil. 2. 7.

3. (xxi. 33-xxii. 15.) Laws of property.

[s] And if a man shall open a pit, or if a man shall dig a pit, and not cover it, and an ox or an ass fall into it, the owner of the pit shall make it good: he shall give money to its owner, and the dead [beast] shall be his own. s ch. 22. 6.

commandment of this table. Any comment upon it would have to be in detail, and is therefore beyond the scope of the present work.

(iii.) The *third* section does not follow the order of the Decalogue, but passes

[t] And if one man's ox gore another man's ox, and it die, then they shall sell the live ox and divide the money of it, and the dead [beast] also shall they divide. Or if it be known that the ox was wont to gore in time past, and its owner hath not kept it in, he shall surely pay ox for ox, and the dead shall be his own.

[u] If a man steal an ox or a sheep, and kill it or sell it, he shall pay five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep.

If the thief be found breaking in, and be smitten that he die, there shall be no blood-guiltiness for him. If the sun be risen on him, there shall be blood-guiltiness for him: he should have made full restitution; if he had nothing, then he should have been sold for his theft. If that which was stolen be actually found in his hand alive, whether it be ox or ass or sheep, he shall pay double.

If a man cause a field or a vineyard to be fed upon, and shall put in his beast, and it feed in another man's field, of the best of his own field and of the best of his own vineyard shall he make restitution.

[v] If fire break out, and catch in thorns, and a stack of corn, or the standing corn, or the field, be consumed, he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution.

[w] If a man give unto his neighbor money or stuff to keep, and it be stolen out of the man's house, if the thief be found, let him restore double; if the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall be brought unto the judges, [to see] whether he hath not put his hand unto his neighbor's goods.

In every case of trespass,—about ox, about ass, about sheep, about raiment, about any thing lost, of which one saith, This is it,—the cause of both parties shall come before the judges: he whom the judges shall condemn shall pay double unto his neighbor.

If a man give unto his neighbor ass or ox or sheep, or any beast, to keep, and it die, or be hurt, or driven away, no one seeing it,—an oath of Jehovah shall be between them both, that he hath not put his hand unto his neighbor's goods, and the owner of it shall accept it, and he shall not make it good. But if it be stolen from him, he shall make it good unto its owner: if it be torn in pieces, let him bring it in witness: he shall not make good that which is torn.

[x] And if a man borrow any thing of his neighbor, and it be hurt or die, its owner not being with it, he shall surely make it good. If its owner be with it, he shall

[t] ver. 28.

[u] Luke 19.8. Eph. 4. 28. 2 Sam. 12. 6. cf. Ps. 69. 4.

[v] cf. Jas. 3. 5, 6.

[w] 1 Kings 20. 39-43.

[x] 2 Kings 6. 5.

on to the fourth commandment,—the question of property. This is quite suitable to the significance of the number, however; the third commandment only finding brief reference in the fourth section, which is not at all, as Murphy very strangely makes it to be, devoted to it.

not make it good; if it be a hired thing, it came for its hire.

4. (xxii. 16-31.) Crimes against nature and humanity.

[y] And if a man seduce a virgin that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife. If her father utterly refuse to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins.

[z] Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.

[a] Whosoever lieth with a beast shall surely be put to death.

[b] He that sacrificeth to any god, save unto Jehovah only, shall be devoted to destruction.

Thou shalt not vex a [c] stranger, nor oppress him; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Ye shall not afflict any [d] widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict him in any wise, and he cry at all unto me, I will surely hear his cry; and my wrath shall burn, and I will slay you with the sword, and your wives shall be widows and your children fatherless.

If thou lend money to my people, to the poor with thee, thou shalt not be unto him as a [e] usurer: ye shall not lay upon him interest.

[f] If thou indeed take thy neighbor's raiment in pledge, thou shalt return it to him by that the sun goeth down. For it is his only covering, his garment for his skin,—wherein shall he sleep? and it shall be that, when he crieth unto me, I will hear; for I am gracious.

Thou shalt not [g] revile the judges, nor curse a prince among thy people.

Thou shalt not [h] keep back thy fullness and thy overflow: the first-born of thy sons thou shalt give to me. So shalt thou do with thine ox and with thy sheep: seven days shall it be with its dam; on the eighth day thou shalt give it me.

And ye shall be [i] holy men unto me: and flesh that is torn in the field ye shall not eat; ye shall cast it to the dogs.

5. (xxiii. 1-9.) Against dishonesty and falsehood.

[5] Thou shalt not bear a [j] false report: put not thy hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.

Thou shalt not [k] follow the many to do evil.

Nor shalt thou answer in a cause, to lean after many to perverseness.

Neither shalt thou be partial to a poor man in his cause.

If thou meet thine [l] enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again.

y *cf.* Gen. 34. 12. Deut. 22. 28, 29.

z Lev. 20.27. 1 Sam.28.9. Acts 19. 18, 19. Rev. 22.15.

a Lev.18.23.

b Deut. 13. 1-11. 1 Cor. 10. 14-22.

c Lev. 19.33.

d Ps. 94. 6. Luke 20.47. Jas. 1. 27.

e Lev. 25.36. Ps. 15. 5. Neh.5.7,10. Prov. 28. 8.

f Job 22. 6. Ezek. 18. 7, 12. Ezek. 33. 15.

g Acts 23.35. Jude 8-10.

h Deut.26.2.

i 1 Pet. 1.15, 16.

j Ps. 15. 3. Prov. 19. 5.

k Prov. 17. 15. Luke23.23.

l *cf.* Matt. 5. 44. Rom.12.20.

(iv.) The fourth section, rather, as Lange says, (though with him it is a fifth,) pronounces against unnatural crimes, sins against either the assigned place in creation or the relation to the Creator, or that which we well call "humanity," the consideration of the need and weakness of the creature. And here the numerical stamp is evident.

(v.) The fifth section plainly connects with the fifth commandment.

If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee, lying under its burden, beware of leaving it to him: thou shalt surely loose it for him.

[m] Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of thy needy in his cause. *m* Ps. 72. 4.

Thou shalt be far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not; for I will not justify the wicked.

And thou shalt take no [n] bribe; for the bribe blindeth the open-eyed, and perverteth the words of the righteous. *n* 1 Sam. 8. 3. 1 Sam. 12. 3. Prov. 17. 23.

Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger; and ye know the soul of the stranger, for strangers ye were in the land of Egypt.

6. (xxiii. 10–19.) Positive laws as to set times; the discipline of the Lord.

[6] Now [o] six years thou shalt sow thy land, and gather the fruit of it; but the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie, that the poor of thy people may eat; and what they leave the beast of the field shall eat: so shalt thou do with thy vineyard and thine olive. *o* Lev. 25. 3, 4. Lev. 26. 34. *cf.* Jer. 25. 11, 12.

Six days shalt thou do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest; that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaiden and the stranger may be refreshed.

And in all things that I have said unto you, be on your guard, and make no [p] mention of the name of other gods, nor let it be heard out of thy mouth. *p* Josh. 23. 7. Hos. 2. 17. *cf.* Eph. 5. 3.

[q] Three times shalt thou keep a feast unto me in the year. *q* Lev. 23. 5, 15, 34. Deut. 16. 2, 9, 13.

Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread; (seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee in the appointed time of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out of the land of Egypt, and none shall appear before me empty;) and the feast of harvest—of the first-fruits of thy labors which thou sowest in the field; and the feast of ingathering in the end of the year, when thou gatherest in thy labors out of the field.

(vi.) The sixth section brings us back to the law of the Sabbath, but this only as connected with its subject, which is here to be sought certainly below the surface. On its face, it is a series of laws as to the religious seasons, and this, of course, must be the form under which we shall find the deeper truth. For deeper truth there must be: these positive outward institutions must have a purpose in the care of God for His people, as surely as they have also a typical meaning for us. Of the latter, here is not the place to speak: we find them here in connection with moral precepts, which are given for the spiritual education of the people, and *these* carry their meaning upon their face: the moral purpose of the religious seasons must be as truly in them if not as evident.

Now, in general, it is plain, as we have seen, that these sections take up in order and apply the commandments of the second table, and that in this section, therefore, we should reach the last commandment, "Thou shalt not lust," or "covet." Can there, then, be any correspondence between that commandment, the most spiritual of all, and these merely (as it might seem) external observances?

Yet it becomes evident, as we look at what is here before us, how great a check

Three times in the year shall all thy males appear before the Lord Jehovah.

[r] Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread. [r] Lev. 2. 11.

Nor shall the [s] fat of my feast remain all night until the morning. [s] 1 Sam. 2. 15-17.

The first of the [t] first-fruits of thy land shalt thou bring unto the house of Jehovah thy God. [t] Deut. 26. 2. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 20.

[u] Thou shalt not boil a kid in its mother's milk. [u] ch. 34. 26. Deut. 14. 21.

7. (xxiii. 20-33.) Rest in the land.

[v] Behold, I send an [w] Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee unto the place which I have prepared. Be careful in his presence, and hearken to his voice: provoke him not so that he forgive not your transgressions; for my name is in him. [w] Gen. 24. 7.

But if thou indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to thine enemies, and a troubler to thy troublers. For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Canaanite and the Hivite and the Jebusite; and I will cut them off.

Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their deeds: but thou shalt overthrow them utterly, and break their statues down.

And ye shall serve Jehovah your God, and he will bless thy [x] bread and thy water; and I will take [y] sickness out of the midst of thee; none shall cast her young, nor be barren in thy land; the [z] number of thy days I will fulfill. [x] Deut. 7. 13. Is. 33. 15, 16. *cf.* Eph. 1. 3. [y] ch. 15. 26. [z] Ps. 21. 4. Ps. 90. 10. Ps. 91. 16. Is. 65. 20.

I will send my terror before thee, and discomfit all the people to whom thou comest, and will make all

to covetousness these ordinances would be. Every seventh day a Sabbath of rest; every seventh year sabbatic likewise; three times a year for every male to appear before the Lord, and never empty; the first-fruits to be for Him. In fact, we find that such laws were being constantly broken through by the greed and unbelief of the people. Even then they were witnesses against this. Beside which, a positive law, to which the conscience of the mass does not respond in the same way as to that which therefore they call moral,—if it require much,—tests the state of the heart more than this even. It rests more entirely for its sanction upon the authority of God; it demands more complete subjection from the will of man, which, in its revolt from God, and attracted by the world around, is lust. For those really subject, it becomes, on the other hand, a fruitful discipline.

Moreover, in this continual bringing God before the soul, and the soul to God, the true remedy is pointed out for this root and stronghold of sin within the soul. Attracted to God, the allurement of other things is met and broken, and we find true deliverance. This is what the apostle shows us in the seventh of Romans, though there in a manner beyond any thing the law could speak of.

Thus the connection of this sixth section with the sixth commandment is clearly to be seen however, and the importance of these institutions in Israel may be better realized.

(vii.) The seventh section is rather promise and assurance than command, although command there is also. It carries Israel's heart on to the land of their inheritance, as ours are carried on to one more glorious.

thine enemies turn their backs to thee. And I will send the hornet before thee; and they shall drive out the Hivite and the Canaanite and the Hittite from before thee.

I will not drive them out from before thee in [z] one year, lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field increase upon thee. Little by little will I drive them out from before thee, until thou art fruitful and possessest the land.

[z] cf. Josh.1. 2.

And I will set thy [a] boundaries from the Red Sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness unto the River; for I will give the inhabitants of the land into thy hands, that thou mayest drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for thou wilt serve their gods; for it will be a snare unto thee.

[a] Gen.15.18. Ps. 72. 8.

(XXIV.)

The people with Jehovah on the footing of their own responsibility.

1. (vv. 1, 2.) Moses' unique position.

2. (3-8.) Ratification of the covenant.

5. [1] And unto Moses he said, [b] Come up unto Jehovah,—thou and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship ye afar off. And Moses alone shall come near unto Jehovah, but they shall not come near; and the people shall not come up with him.

[b] Num. 11. 16.

[2] And Moses went and told the people all Jehovah's words, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, [c] All the things that Jehovah hath spoken will we do. And Moses wrote down all Jehovah's words, and rose up early in the morning, and built an altar beneath the mount, and twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel. And he

[c] ch. 19. 8.

The still smaller division of these subsections have been only indicated in the text. To have taken these up in detail would have enlarged these notes beyond their intended limit. We have before us yet much of the book, and where detail will be more required.

5. The law being now substantially complete, and when it is again, formally, accepted by the people, they are permitted to be with God as in covenant-relation. The glory of God is seen, though but afar off. It is for this reason that this manifestation of Himself does not come in its usual numerical place, but under the number which speaks of governmental dealing and human responsibility. This blessedness does not and cannot abide for them. How much can man keep of what is committed to him?

(i.) And this is intimated at the outset: for the people, even in their representatives, cannot draw near. He who has come down to dwell among them has yet to hold them at a distance, while Moses alone, as type of a greater Mediator, is called to approach. This position of Moses is emphasized in Jehovah's words here.

(ii.) We then find the covenant ratified, not alone by the reiterated consent of the people, but by the shedding of blood—the proclamation of the penalty of disobedience, and not the witness of the power of atonement for them. This, no doubt, seems strange and unlikely, when we read, as here, of burnt-offerings and peace-offerings offered, the well-known figures of the blessed Lord's work for men. But when was cleansing by the blood of Jesus the result of man's doing or engaging to do the work of the law? and this was, as Moses said to them, the

sent young men of the children of Israel, and they offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of bullocks unto Jehovah. And Moses took [d] half of the blood, and put it in basins, and half of the blood he sprinkled upon the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read it in the ears of the people: and they said, All that Jehovah hath spoken will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it upon the people: and he said, [e] Behold the blood of the covenant which Jehovah hath made with you according to all these words.

[d] Heb. 9.19.

[e] *ctr.* Heb. 13. 20.

3. (9-11.) The presence of God.

[3] And there went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and they [f] saw the God of Israel; and beneath his feet as transparent [g] sapphire-work, and as the heavens themselves for clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand; and they beheld God, and ate and drank.

[f] *cf.* ch. 28. 31.

[g] Ezek. 1. 26. Rev. 21.19.

4. (12-14.) Provision for man's weakness which is yet to be tested.

[4] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there; and I will give thee tables of stone, and the law and the commandment which I have written to teach them. And Moses rose up, and Joshua

blood of the covenant they were then making, that old covenant of law which is in contrast with the new covenant, and cannot be "added to" the promise of the gospel. (Gal. iii. 8-18.)

How, then, can the blood of the precious sacrifice be the blood of the legal covenant at the same time? For we may not say that the burnt-offering is not the blood of atonement (Lev. i 4); and we may not say that this blood atoned: how then? We have only to look at the cross of Christ, and we shall find in it the answer to this question.

Christ's blood is the "blood of the *new* covenant" (Matt. xxvi. 28); but was it not also (in a sense) the blood of the old? Certainly in this way it was, that it affirmed the *righteousness of the penalty of the law for those under it.* "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us," says the apostle. (Gal. iii. 13.) And this affirms the righteousness of the penalty. Even yet, then, for every one who presumptuously undertakes to stand upon the footing of law-works before God, the blood of Christ bears witness that he must meet the penalty, which for those who are "*justified* by His blood" (Rom. v. 9) *has been met.* How solemn, then, does this make the witness here!

(iii.) But for the moment all seems well with the people, though they are not brought nigh. But how little man thinks really of being brought nigh! how well content he is to be in the sufferable distance, if only he may escape wrath! So the representatives of the people worship in the far-off place, and all is well. And they see the God of Israel,—not as Moses, "face to face,"—nor must we speculate as to the vision. What is "under His feet" is what is dwelt on for us,—the sapphire work, like the clear transparent depths of the heavens themselves, which a comparison with Ezekiel's vision, as well as also the language here, would seem to show as really meant: that "terrible crystal" vault, suggesting with its immeasurable depths the infinite to the finite, yet which God transcends by His whole Being:—for whom they are but the footstool for His feet. Wondrously this reveals Him whom yet we see not; for there is no likeness of Him, and they saw none (Deut. iv. 12). Yet we have seen Him, marvelous to say, in the likeness of the Son of Man! (Rev. i. 13.)

(iv.) The spoken law has yet to be given into man's hand as a written one.

his attendant, and Moses went up unto the mount of God. And he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us until we come back unto you. And, behold, [h] Aaron and Hur are with you: whosoever hath matters, let him come unto them.

h ch. 17. 10.

5. (15-18.) Called up to God.

[5] And Moses went up into the mount, and the cloud covered the mount. And the glory of Jehovah abode upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days; and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the appearance of the glory of Jehovah was like [i] devouring fire on the top of the mount before the eyes of the children of Israel. And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and went up into the mount; and Moses was in the mount [j] forty days and forty nights.

i Heb. 12. 29.

j Matt. 4. 2, etc.

SECTION 2. (Chap. XXV.–XXXI.)

The tabernacle; the means of sustaining relationship when sin has come in: the types of a greater salvation.

(XXV. 1-9.)

The free-will offering.

1. [1] AND Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an oblation: of every one whom his heart [k] inclineth ye shall take my oblation. And this is the oblation which ye shall take of them: gold, and silver, and brass; and blue, and purple, and scarlet; and fine linen, and goats' [hair], and rams' skins dyed red, and sealskins, and acacia-wood; oil for the light; spices for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense; onyx-stones, and stones to be set, for the ephod and for the breast-plate. And they shall make me a sanctuary, that I may [l] dwell among them: according to all that I [m] show thee, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all the furniture thereof, so shall ye make it.

k 1 Chron. 12. 5. 2 Cor. 8. 12. 2 Cor. 9. 7.

l 1 Kings 8. 13. Jno. 1. 14. Eph. 2. 22. Ezek. 48. 35. Rev. 21. 3.

m Acts 7. 44. Heb. 8. 5

Such is man's need, and so little can be trusted to tradition. In the wisdom of God the people are also to be tested by Moses' absence from them: of this trial the forty days of absence definitely speak.

(v.) The mount, covered with the cloud six days, on the seventh breaks out into flame *to the people's eyes;* but the voice of the Lord calls Moses up to Himself,—to that serene Presence where cloud and fire are not. These are but as the infolding fire at the gate of Eden; beyond is the ineffable glory and the eternal peace.

Sec. 2.

We have now the directions as to the tabernacle, the means by which, in the inevitable breach of the first covenant, relationship is to be sustained. We find as yet only the pattern of it, but which fully shows that God has anticipated and provided for the failure of that in which the people placed such assured confidence. Just for this reason was it necessary that they should be allowed to prove fully what was in them. But the trial was to be much longer than this might argue, and not for their need only, but for all after-generations.

1. There are five subsections; of which this introductory one shows how alone Jehovah could dwell amongst them. While He alone must prescribe the manner of it, they yet must provide Him a dwelling-place, and that of their own free-will. The toil of slaves could not furnish this; forced labor could not be acceptable to Him who had been their Redeemer out of Egyptian bondage that

(XXV. 10—XXVII. 19.)

The pattern of the tabernacle: relationship maintained with a Redeemer.

1. (xxv. 10–22.) The throne of the Lord in righteousness, and yet in grace.

2. [l] And they shall make an [n] ark of [o] acacia-wood: two cubits and a half the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with [p] pure gold: within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a border of gold: and thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put them on the four feet of it; and two rings shall be on the one side of it, and two rings on the other side of it. And thou shalt make [q] staves of acacia-wood, and overlay them with gold; and thou shalt put the staves into the rings on the side of the ark, to bear the ark with. The staves shall be in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it. And thou shalt put [r] into the ark the testimony that I shall give thee.

And thou shalt make a [s] mercy-seat of pure gold; two cubits and a half the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And thou shalt make two [t] cherubim of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them at the two ends of the mercy-seat: and make one cherub at the one end, and one cherub at the other end; out of the mercy-seat shall ye make the cherubim on the two ends thereof. And the cherubim

n Heb. 9. 4. Rev. 22. 3.

o Heb. 2.14. 1 Tim. 2. 5.

p Luke 24. 26. Jno. 1. 2. Jno. 17. 5.

q Acts. 10. 38. 1 Kings 8. 8.

r 1 Kings 8. 9. Heb. 9. 4. Ps. 40. 8.

s Rom. 3.25. Heb. 4. 16. Lev. 16.13, 14. Heb. 9. 5.

t 1 Kings 6. 23. Ps. 97. 2. Ps. 99. 1. Ezek. 1. 5. Rev. 4. 6.

they might freely serve Him. The Psalmist's words find expression here (Ps. xxii. 3): God inhabits the praises of Israel. But what meaning is given to this when we remember whose voice it is that utters itself in this psalm,—that it is His who by His own atoning sufferings makes possible and inspires the praises of His redeemed! And it is of this suffering that the tabernacle-services speak to us throughout. Typically thus we see in the materials here of what our praises must be full, for they all utter to us the blessed name of Jesus.

2. And then we enter upon a survey of the elements of this tabernacle-worship,—"patterns" only as yet,—but which we find realized before the book ends, when they are all emphasized by repetition: what may be seen in this it will be for us to inquire there: at present, we have only the patterns.

(i.) First of these, the ark and mercy-seat, together the throne of God in Israel. That He "sitteth between the cherubim" we are often reminded, and thence (we are told here) His law was to go forth to Israel.

Christ is the substance of all these shadows, and in the ark we have surely Christ. The acacia-wood as the wood of the desert,—the only timber-tree in it—speaks of Him as the "root out of a dry ground," as which He grew up before God (Isa. liii. 2), precious and durable, the type of victory over surrounding circumstances—of life conquering death. Such was Christ in His humanity; His divine glory is intimated by the gold which covered it, yet was distinct from it, as His deity was distinct from His humanity. The rings are of gold, in which the staves were to remain constantly; for divine love makes Him ever a pilgrim with His pilgrim-people.

Upon the ark, fitting exactly to it, is the *kapporeth*,* or "mercy-seat," of pure gold, glorious as divine mercy is, one with the cherubim at each end of it, whose

* Not implying a mere "covering," but a word derived from the intensive form of *kaphar* (*kipper*), always applied to atonement or its results. The Septuagint translate it "*hilasterion*," "propitiatory," and the apostle in Heb. ix. 5 adopts their rendering, while in Rom. iii. 25 he applies it to the Lord, "whom God hath set forth to be a *propitiatory* through faith in His blood." This word, as used of the mercy-seat, derives its significance from the blood of atonement, or propitiation, which once a year was put upon it. But the doctrine of atonement will come up for fuller consideration when we come to Leviticus.

shall be stretching out their wings above, covering the mercy-seat with their wings, and their faces toward each other; [u] toward the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubim be. And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And I will [v] meet thee there, and I will [w] speak with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all that I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.

[u] 1 Pet. 1. 12. 2 Chron. 3. 10-13, with Ps. 72. 2, 3.

[v] Heb. 10. 19. Rom. 5. 2. Eph. 2. 18.

[w] *e.g.* Lev. 1. 1.

2. (xxv. 23-30.) The table of show-bread: Christ sustaining communion.

[2] And thou shalt make a [x] table of acacia-wood; two cubits its length, and a cubit its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, and shalt make a border of gold to it round about. And thou shalt make unto it a margin of a

[x] Heb. 9. 2. 1 Jno. 1. 3. *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 23-26. *ctr.* 2 Chr. 4. 8.

faces toward the mercy-seat are also toward each other, attracted by a common object, which, although not seen as yet, is the blood of atonement to be put there. They are attached thus to the throne of God, and are always seen in connection with the display of judicial authority; as at the gate of Eden in conjunction with the sword-flame by which the way to the tree of life is stopped; or as in Ezekiel's vision of judgment; again the "living beings" in the midst of the throne in Rev. iv are undoubtedly cherubic.

Their forms are not given yet, for in Genesis they are only named. Here we see their wings, (suggesting their heavenly character,) and where their faces are directed, and that they are part of the throne itself, and two in number (speaking of competent witness). Every thing assures us that they express the executive righteousness of the throne, which requires and finds its satisfaction in the work of atonement.

The ark, then, as a whole, is the throne of God in Israel, in righteousness, yet in mercy, through the blood of sacrifice; and Christ is shown in it as the One through whom alone such a throne can be set up among men. He is indeed God's righteous mercy-seat. Within the ark is to be put the testimony, the tables of the law; which cannot but remind us of Him who said, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." (Ps. xl. 7, 8.) But if thus within His heart, magnified and made honorable by His own subjection to it through His life, and in His taking upon the cross its curse upon sin,—it is none the less shut up from man, the curse removed from him. In that which we are considering there is as yet only the shadow, not the substance; but the shadow even shows that not by man's fulfillment of responsibility, but by atonement only could God have His place among men. The purely legal covenant was not that under which man could really abide at all, and in God's mind it was already set aside.

(ii.) We have next the table of show-bread, not the ordinance of the show-bread, which comes in Leviticus (xxiv. 5-9). The mention of it here is only to show the purpose of the table itself. The show-bread, as we find it in the later book, assuredly speaks of communion, and with a wondrous fullness of thought in it which it would be here out of place to enter into. Here the table, made of the same material as the ark, must speak of Christ as the ark does. Christ, then, is here the Sustainer of communion. The wood and the gold we need not dwell on again, except to notice (what is equally true of the ark) that the gold outside shows us the Lord, not as He was in His humiliation upon earth, but glorified in heaven. The whole sanctuary, holy and holiest, is the figure of the heavenly places (Heb. ix. 23, 24), and it is Christ as there, risen, ascended, glorified,—gone up, His work being accepted,—who sustains us in the place of fellowship with God.

handbreadth round about, and thou shalt make a border to the margin thereof round about. And thou shalt make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings on the four corners of its four feet. Close to the margin shall the rings be, for places to receive the staves to bear the table. And thou shalt make the staves of acacia-wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be borne with them. And thou shalt make its dishes, and its spoons, and its flagons, and its cups wherewith to pour out: of pure gold shalt thou make them. And thou shalt set upon the table show-bread before me continually.

3. (xxv. 31-40.) The golden lamp-stand: Christ our sanctification.

[3] And thou shalt make a [y] lamp-stand of [z] pure gold: of beaten work shall the lamp-stand be made; its base and its stem, its cups, its knops, and its flowers shall be of one piece with it. And six branches shall come out of the sides of it: three branches of the lamp-stand out of the one side, and three branches of the lamp-stand out of the other side: three cups made like almonds with a knop and a flower in one branch, and three cups made like almonds with a knop and a flower in the other branch: so in the six branches that come out of the lamp-stand. And in the lamp-stand, four cups

[y] Heb. 9. 2. Zech. 4. Rev. 1. 12. Rev. 21. 23. cfr. 2 Chr. 4. 7.

[z] Jno. 1. 18.

Thus the table is of the same height with the ark, overtopped only by the golden mercy-seat, though it falls short of it in breadth and length; for God's mercy, as revealed in the propitiation for sins, is more than actually realized in the communion of saints. The propitiation is for the whole world (1 Jno. ii. 2), though on condition of faith (Rom. iii. 25), which all men, alas! have not. Thus the table spread for the saints has not in this respect the dimensions of the mercy-seat.

Around the table is a margin of a hand-breadth, which may imply the divine hand that is round about; while table and margin are encompassed with a golden border—possibly a crown, although the word is not used for crown elsewhere,—which suggests how the divine glory defines and marks out all.

This table, though in character heavenly, is still for present use, as the rings and staves would show. It is part of that provision of God for us which is available by grace through all our wilderness journeying, and the vessels for the drink-offering which accompany the table show us how of necessity communion and thanksgiving are linked together.

(iii.) The only other portion of the furniture of the sanctuary that we find here (for the incense altar is found in another connection, chap. xxx.) is the golden lamp-stand, which we must, of course, distinguish from the light it bears. In Rev. iv. 5, in unmistakable reference to what we have here, "the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne" are interpreted for us as "the seven spirits of God." The lamp-stand supports the light, while it is itself lighted up by it.—a thing of the most essential consequence in this case: for if the Spirit of God is the Sanctifier, Christ is Himself the means of sanctification to the soul (1 Cor. i. 30), and the work of the Spirit is thus to take of the things of Christ and show them to us.

Moreover, it is not only Christ, but Christ in heaven, who is our sanctification, as He says: "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth." (Jno. xvii. 19.) He sets Himself apart as the One gone up to God, a Man, to be at once the pattern and the power of sanctification in men; and "we all beholding the glory of the Lord with unvailed face"—in

made like almonds, its knops, and its flowers: even a knop under two of the branches from it, and a knop under two of the branches from it, and a knop under two of the branches from it, for the six branches which come out of the lamp-stand. Their knops and their branches shall be of one piece with it: all of it shall be one beaten-work of pure gold. And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof; and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may [a] give light over against it. And its [b] snuffers and its snuff-dishes shall be of pure gold: of a talent of pure gold shall they make it with all these vessels; and see that thou make after their pattern which was shown thee on the mount.

a Jno. 16.14.
b *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 19. 2 Tim. 1. 6.

contrast with Moses' vailed one—"are changed into the same image from glory to glory" (2 Cor. iii. 18).

We have now the means of interpreting the sanctuary lamp-stand. It is of pure gold simply, not (as with the ark and table) of wood and gold: the distinction of natures in Christ is here, therefore, not the thought; our attention is to be fixed upon this, that it is the "glory of *God*" we behold in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. iv. 6). It is to the image of God we are to be brought by this outshining of the glory of God.

Yet we see in whose face it shines: for all over the stem and branches is the semblance of the almond, bud and flower and fruit. Now the almond brings us back to the tree, the human element; nor only so: the almond is in the book of Numbers the symbol of Christ, and of Christ in resurrection. The rod of Aaron put into the sanctuary bursts into sudden bloom and fruitage after the manner of the lamp-stand, the clear and beautiful figure of resurrection. This declares the divine Priest (Num. xvii.), and with our sanctification the glorious Priest, as gone in for us into the sanctuary, is concerned. But not only so; on each branch we find the resurrection-number 3 of these almond symbols, and connecting the three pairs of branches three more on the central stem, which has itself *four*—thus a $3 + 1$.

Still more, the almond is, in Hebrew, *shaqed*, "hastening," because it is the first tree which, reviving out of the winter-sleep, "hastens" to put forth its blossoms, first-fruits of all that is to come. How beautiful the type here of Christ our "first-fruits" in connection with this theme of sanctification, in which when perfected the after fruits will be rendered to God!

But again, as to the branches of the lamp-stand, Isa. xi. is surely an inspired interpretation. There we find the Lord indeed in another character, as the Branch out of the root of Jesse, King of Israel, but with the fullness of the Spirit for the government of the earth. Here is the connection, and it is a remarkable one; for as in the lamp-stand the seven branches which bear the seven lamps are in three pairs, with one uniting central stem, so are the seven spirits of Isaiah united and divided: "And the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah." Here the "Spirit of Jehovah," standing necessarily alone, yet unites certainly all the rest. "Jehovah" is God's name by which He is in covenant with His people as their Redeemer, as this book of Exodus has taught us; and thus Christ, as the Mediator of the new covenant, holds His people fast to God. Is not this possibly the reason why there are, as we have seen, *four* almonds (the number of the creature) upon the central stem?

Strange at first it seems that for these lamps there should be provided snuffers and snuff-dishes; but it becomes simple if we remember that here as elsewhere the Spirit of God is seen as connected with the human instruments He is pleased

4. (xxvi. 1-37.) The tabernacle in the wilderness.

[4] And thou shalt make the tabernacle of [c] ten curtains of fine twined [e] linen, and [f] blue, and [f] purple, and [g] scarlet: cherubim, of skillful work shalt thou make them. The length of one curtain shall be twenty-eight cubits, and the breadth of one curtain, four cubits: all the curtains shall have one measure. Five of the curtains shall be coupled one to another; and [the other] five

c Jno. 1. 14. Heb. 8. 2,5. Heb. 9. 11, 24. 1 Kings 6. 1, etc. Ezek. 41.1, etc.

d Heb. 7.26. *cf.* Rev. 19. 8.

e Jno. 3. 13; Jno. 17. 16. *f* Jno. 19. 2. *g* Matt. 27. 28; *cf.* Rev. 17. 3.

to use, and that *they* need (how often!) the service which this implies. Snuffers are thus "golden," (for the glory of God,) though a priestly hand alone can use them aright.

(iv.) The tabernacle has three aspects in which we are to view it, in all of which the thought of its being the dwelling-place of God is fundamental. In the first place, it sets before us the heavenly places, as the epistle to the Hebrews fully shows; here its interior space with the ark, table, and lamp-stand is specially in view. Though in connection with the earth, the house of God must, of course, in character be heavenly. Then it represents Christ Himself, as made flesh and tabernacling among us, the glory here being the glory of the Only-Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth (Jno. i. 14, *R.V., marg.*). Here the curtains of the tabernacle are before us. And lastly, the Church is God's house, as the epistle to the Hebrews again teaches (chap. iii. 6) with distinct reference to the tabernacle. Here the boards of the tabernacle, the wooden part of the structure, seem to give the thought.

We begin now with the curtains, and here we see that if the tabernacle is throughout the "pattern of things in the heavens," yet they are here brought down to earth, essentially a place of worship for the wilderness, whose bare sands were under the feet of the worshipers. In the land, the tabernacle was replaced by the temple. It is thus, as belonging to the earth, God in it come down to man, that the tabernacle fills its numerical place here, and the goats' hair tent, and its coverings, harmonize perfectly with this.

The curtains speak, as their material shows, of practical righteousness, as the fine linen which covers the bride in Rev. xix. does: "the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints." The Revised Version here gives "righteous *acts*," and such robes have to be washed in the blood of Christ to make them white, (Rev. vii. 14; comp. xxii. 14, *R.V.*) a clear evidence that they are not the symbol of Christ our righteousness, which can need no washing.

The "coats of skin" with which God clothed the first sinners were no human production: they were the fruit of death, not of life. But the "fine twined linen" speaks of human manufacture, the patient labor of which had not been yet transferred to the iron sinews which to-day bear the burden. The *ten* curtains confirm this thought, a number which—or some other multiple of 5—meets us in the tabernacle again and again. Here they are divided into two fives, and in the measure of each curtain we find numbers just as significant—twenty-eight cubits in length, which is 4×7, and four cubits in breadth, showing how in the weakness of the creature into which He had come, one Man had reached an obedience that was perfect.

But we have not alone the fine twined linen here: blue and purple and scarlet are interwoven in it. We scarcely need the assurance of Maimonides, that the first of these "was the color of the firmament," to recognize the symbol of heavenliness; the purple and scarlet are both royal colors, and may well refer to Christ's double royalty, as King of Israel, "the root of Jesse, and He that should rise to reign over the Gentiles," as the apostle quotes Isaiah. And this is the more plain, if as Keil says, and the literal rendering of the text seems to confirm, the blue, purple, and scarlet were simply used for the cherubic figures, which were wrought both upon these curtains and on the vail. The cherubim

curtains coupled one to the other. And thou shalt make loops of blue at the edge of the one curtain at the end of the set; and so shalt thou make in the edge of the outermost curtain in the second set. Fifty loops shalt thou make in the one curtain, and fifty loops shalt thou make in the edge of the curtain in the other set; and the loops shall be opposite to one another. And thou shalt make fifty clasps of gold, and couple the curtains one to another with the clasps; that the tabernacle may be one. And thou shalt make curtains of [h] goats' hair, to be a tent over the tabernacle: eleven curtains shalt thou make. The length of one curtain shall be thirty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain shall be four cubits: the eleven curtains shall have one measure. And thou shalt couple five of the curtains by themselves, and six of the curtains by themselves; and shalt double the sixth curtain in [i] front of the tent. And thou shalt make fifty loops in the edge of the outermost curtain of the [one] set, and fifty loops on the edge of the curtain in the other set. And thou shalt make fifty clasps of [j] brass, and put the clasps into the loops, and couple the tent together, that it may be one. And the excess that remaineth of the curtains of the tent, the half curtain that remaineth, shall hang over the back of the tabernacle. And

[h] Lev. 16. 5.

[i] 1 Jno. 1. 3.

[j] ch. 27. 2, etc.

point to divine government, as we have seen, and thus we find here the King of God's kingdom very simply declared. Let us notice too that the colors here are really purple-blue, purple-red, and crimson, so that through them all is a pervading tinge of the blue,—the heavenly color. But the fine linen, though these figures are woven into it, is itself white,—that which, as absolutely pure, reflects back the undivided ray of light, and "God is light."

Loops of blue and golden clasps unite these curtains into one tabernacle: every where this heavenly character connected with the display of the glory of God.

A tent of goat's hair surmounts it, and here we have what is very different. For the goat is the evident type of the sinner, and therefore speaks also of the Substitute for sinners. "Sin" and "sin-offering" are the same word both in Greek and Hebrew. Thus the type here is simple enough to read. The *eleven* curtains of goats' hair are divided for us into five and six, God with man and triumphing over sin; while each curtain in length is thirty cubits, and in breadth four. The latter number may remind us of the wondrous fact that in human weakness—power all against Him—was the battle won; while the former, if it is not to repeat and emphasize the former truths (being 5×6) must be taken as 3×10, and thus God glorified in the judgment of sin. The sixth curtain is doubled in front of the tent, facing with its gospel message the one who comes toward it from the world outside.

The tent had, again, a double covering: the innermost, of rams' skins dyed red, and the outer, of seal-skin (or, as some still think, of badgers' skins). The latter may speak of immovable steadfastness which no circumstance could affect,* underneath which lay, as the secret of it, a consecration to God which was devotedness even to death: such surely was the rams' skin.

Such, then, is the picture of Him in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. We now come to the board frame-work. And here there are

* It is the suggestion of another that the seal-skin may imply perfect protection from a strange element.

the cubit on the one side, and the cubit on the other side, of that which remaineth in the length of the curtains of the tent shall hang over the sides of the tabernacle, on this side and on that side, to cover it. And thou shalt make a covering for the tent of [k]rams' skins dyed red, and a covering of [l]seals' skins over it.

And thou shalt make [m] boards for the tabernacle of acacia-wood standing up: ten cubits shall be the length of a board, and a cubit and a half the breadth of one board. Two [n] tenons shall be in each board, equidistant from one another: so shalt thou do with all the boards of the tabernacle. And thou shalt make the boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards for the south side on the right: and forty [o] sockets of silver shalt thou make under the twenty boards; two sockets under one board for its two tenons, and two sockets under another board for its two tenons. And for the other side of the tabernacle northward there shall be twenty boards: and their forty sockets of silver, two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board. And for the rear of the tabernacle westward thou shalt make six boards. And two boards shalt thou make for the

k cf. ch. 29. 15, etc. Heb. 10. 7.

l Ezek. 16. 10. Is. 53. 2. Jno. 1. 46.

m cf. 1 Kings 6. 10. Col. 2. 10.

n 1 Cor. 12. 24. Col. 3. 14.

o Num. 3. 49, etc. ch. 30. 11-16. ch. 38. 25, 26. 1 Pet. 1.18. 1 Cor. 3.11.

forty-eight boards in all: $6 \times 8 = 48$; the number of victory over sin and the number of new creation come together. This is when we look at all together—the Church as a whole; when we look at the boards singly, we have quite different numbers. Each board was ten cubits long and one and one-half broad. The number of responsibility is clear enough, whatever the other may be, and this is perpendicular measure also.

But when we look at the boards, there seems a great difficulty in applying them, in the way we are doing, to the Church or to individual believers in it. Each board is of the same material, outside and in, as is the ark, and as is the table; and if these speak of Christ, how can the boards speak of any other? That is perfectly just: the boards do speak of Christ; but there is just the glory of divine grace, for we are *in* Christ. Thus it is that nothing could rightly represent us in our standing before God, except that which will turn our eyes entirely from ourselves, and rest them upon Christ in glory.

Yet let us test this every way. Is it not still an objection that the gold should be here, which we have looked at before as typifying the deity of our Lord? Is it not as *Man*, and simply as Man, that He represents us before God? and can the gold be in place then in such a connection, if it is still to typify, as in consistency it must, what it typified before?

Now it is surely right to insist upon strict accuracy here; for if error in divine things is ever serious, how much more when it involves points so fundamental as are these? It is certain that it is as Man only that Christ represents us before God. As God, He is our God and our Creator simply. Yet we are said (in *some* sense) to be in the Son, and even in the Father (Jno. xvii. 21; 1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1.) This, of course, is not position: it is *relationship;* it is in virtue of that "eternal life" we have received, which we have not in ourselves, but in Him who is the Source of it, and by which we are in very truth the children of God. Our life is in Christ thus, who is the "eternal life," not human life, but divine; and upon this depends our position also; for thus Christ is "last Adam" to the new race of men, and as in the old fallen head we fell, in the risen One we stand upright, as the boards stand before us here, rooted in their double sockets of silver, the witness of atonement (Ex. xxx. 15; xxxviii. 27). This silver of

corners of the tabernacle at the rear; and they shall be twain below, but they shall be whole together at its head in one ring: thus shall it be for both of them; they shall be for the two corners. And they shall be eight boards, and their sockets of silver—sixteen sockets: two sockets under one board and two sockets under another board. And thou shalt make [p] bars of acacia-wood, five for the boards of the one side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the side of the tabernacle at the rear westward. And the middle bar in the middle of the boards shall reach from end to end. And thou shalt overlay the boards with gold, and make of gold their rings, the places to receive the bars; and thou shalt overlay the bars with gold. And thou shalt set up the tabernacle according to its due manner which has been shown thee on the mount.

[p] Col. 2. 19.

And thou shalt make a [q] vail of blue and purple and scarlet and fine twined linen, of skillful work shall it be made, with cherubim; and thou shalt hang it upon four [r] pillars of acacia-wood, overlaid with gold, their hooks of gold: upon four sockets of silver [shall they be]. And thou shalt put the vail under the clasps, and shalt bring in thither, inside the vail, the ark of the testimony: and the vail shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy. And thou shalt put the mercy-seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy place. And thou shalt set the table outside the vail, and the lamp-stand over against the table at the side of the tabernacle, on the south; and the table thou shalt put upon the north side.

[q] Lev. 16. 2. Matt. 27. 51. Heb. 9. 3. Heb. 10. 19, 20.

[r] *cf.* Rev. 3. 12.

the atonement-money upon which they stand seems to show clearly that it is not Christ Himself who is contemplated in these boards, but His people in Him.

The bars that unite them are of the same two materials, but here there is no difficulty, for Christ is surely the uniting bond for His people.

The vail, again, is exactly like the inner curtains, and the inspired interpretation given in Heb. x. 20 confirms that of the curtains also. It is Christ in His humanity, the way into the presence of God, but for which it must be rent, as we know it was rent when He died. Looking back, as we do, upon these types, we have to introduce this thought, that the vail is rent, and I think it is on this account—because of the ideal connection of the vail and its rending, that the cherubim are found upon it, as they are not upon the door of the tabernacle or the gate of the court. In these, the colors and the fine linen are still found; for it is the same Christ that is presented to us, but it is as having *suffered* He has entered into His *glory*. The cherubim speak of government in His hands already, Christ, as now we know Him, although now on the Father's throne, not yet on His own; but on the Father's throne speaks of His fullest dignity and of His eternal glory.

What, then, are the "pillars" that support the vail? It is plain that (in another form) they are just the boards of the tabernacle over again—acacia-wood and gold resting upon silver sockets. Thus we should naturally think of Christ as He now is, held up by the testimony of redeemed men, as in the pages of the New-Testament prophets and apostles. And is it, perhaps, on this account,

And thou shalt make a [s] screen for the entrance of the tent, of blue and purple and scarlet and fine twined linen,—embroiderer's work. And thou shalt make for the screen five pillars of acacia, and overlay them with gold; and their hooks [shall be] of gold; and thou shalt cast for them five sockets of brass.

5. (xxvii. 1-8.) The altar of brass: God with man in view of responsibility.

[5] And thou shalt make an [t] altar of acacia-wood, five cubits long and five cubits broad,—the altar shall be foursquare; and three cubits shall be its height. And thou shalt make the horns thereof upon its four corners, —its horns shall be one piece with it, and thou shalt overlay it with [u] brass. And thou shalt make its pots

[s] Jno. 10. 7.

[t] Matt. 23. 19. 1 Pet. 2. 24. Heb. 1. 3.

[u] Num. 21. 9. 1 Sam. 17. 5. cf. 2 Cor. 5. 21.

that whereas the boards stand each upon *two* sockets, the pillars stand each upon one only: they being the original witnesses upon whose testimony the Church is built? The number (4) may tell us, moreover, that even in this primary witness Israel's exclusive position is set aside, as in Luke, the *Gentile* evangelist and historian of the Church. (Comp. Col. iv. 11 with 14.)

The division of the sanctuary by the vail into the holy and most holy is here pointed out. Thus was constituted that "first tabernacle" which the apostle speaks of (Heb. ix. 2, 8,) as characteristic of Judaism, and for us now done away as such,—the rending of the vail having made the two one. This shows us in what way "the law, having a shadow of good things to come," was "not the very image" (Heb. x. 1), a fact full of significance, and not to be set down to the general disparagement of such symbolic teaching, or as an excuse for loose and ill-fitting interpretations. On the contrary, this in the law is not meaningless, but full of meaning. "The way into the holiest"—into the presence of God—could not be opened while as yet man was under the test of the law: how would he have gloried in himself could this have been! To sinners confessedly under the condemnation of the law, on the other hand, Christ's death has rent the vail and sprinkled the mercy-seat. The word for us—how opposite to all we had but a little while since as to Israel—is, "Let us *draw near* with a true heart, in full assurance of faith." (Heb. x. 22.)

The covering for the entrance of the tent shows by its materials and colors what we know beforehand doctrinally, that Christ is ever the "Way." The cherubim are absent from it, however, as already noticed, and while the curtain still hangs from golden hooks, the five pillars stand now upon *brazen* and not silver sockets. Brass, (or "copper" it may have been; the word stands, as it appears, for both,) is the type of what is fixed and unchanging—of enduring strength. (Deut. xxviii. 23; xxxiii. 25; Ps. cvii. 16; Jer. i. 18.) The "tent upon the tabernacle" is united into one by brazen clasps, and in the court outside we find it repeatedly, replacing the silver or the gold elsewhere. The pillars are still of acacia-wood and gold, and as *not* standing on silver sockets, would seem necessarily to represent Christ Himself and not His people,—Christ's own ministry, when upon the earth, which, going far beyond Judaism, introduced into the sanctuary itself, though the holiest of all only His death could open. "God manifest," as the gold declares, and standing in divine strength (upon the brazen sockets), the *five* pillars would beautifully speak of Immannel, "God with us." Christ Himself come was thus the entrance of the sanctuary for us, the beginning of the ministry of heavenly things.

(v.) We come now to the altar of burnt-offering; and its numerical place speaks again of God with men, as the same number in the length and breadth of it does of that human responsibility, the failure in which atonement was needed for. "The Son of Man *must* be lifted up" and "God gave His Son" are both thus in the type. For the altar has again its two materials, like the ark and the table, thus speaking of two natures; but the gold is replaced by the brass, the divine nature seems obscured and lost, yet is not, for the strength of superhuman

to take away the ashes, and its shovels, and its basins, and its flesh-hooks, and its fire-pans: all its vessels thou shalt make of brass. And thou shalt make for it a [v]grating, a network of brass; and upon the network, upon its four corners, thou shalt make four brazen rings: and thou shalt put it under the ledge of the altar beneath, and the net shall be as far as the middle of the altar. And thou shalt make staves for the altar—staves of acacia-wood, and shalt overlay them with brass: and the staves thereof shall be put into the rings, and the staves shall be upon the two sides of the altar, when they bear it. Hollow, with boards, shalt thou make it; as it has been shown thee on the mount, so shall they make it.

[v] Ps. 102. 4.

6. (xxvii. 9. 19.) The court: the realized victory over sin.

[6] And thou shalt make the [w] court of the tabernacle: for the south side on the right there shall be hangings for the court of fine twined linen, a hundred cubits long, for one side; and its twenty pillars and their twenty sockets shall be of brass; the [x] hooks of the pillars and their connecting-rods of silver. And so for the north side in length, hangings a hundred cubits long, and its twenty pillars and their twenty sockets of brass, the hooks of the pillars and their connecting-rods of silver. And for the breadth of the court on the west

[w] Ps. 92. 13. Acts. 5. 13. 1 Cor. 5. 13.

[x] ch. 26. 19.

endurance is found in the Man, Christ Jesus. And the altar is three cubits high, for God is glorified,—yea, and the Son of Man is glorified in the cross (Jno. xiii. 31.) The brazen horns point every way from the four corners, for Christ died, not for Israel only, but for all; and the horns, speaking as elsewhere of *power*, are the ministry of that, through the blood that anoints them, to every ungodly one that is without strength (Rom. v. 6.) The altar, being hollow, admitted the sacrificial fire within it, not bore it on the surface merely,—a solemn realization as to atonement.

(vi.) In the court of the tabernacle, the fine linen which incloses it has necessarily the same meaning as elsewhere. It speaks of practical righteousness, but there is no adornment of color or of figure traced upon it. The pillars which support it are, with their sockets, which are single, all of brass, but the connecting-rods and the hooks by which it hangs are of silver. The measure of the hangings of the courts is exactly that of the beautiful curtains of the tabernacle; but here the fine linen hangs from silver hooks, answering to the sockets of the tabernacle-boards, so that it is not Christ that is pictured, but the righteousness of saints, yet which is measured by what Christ is. The silver hook is dependent upon the silver rod, by which the weight is thrown upon the brazen posts, which easily sustain it,—redemption linking the believer with a strength that is not his own.

The numbers every-where speak of responsibility, however, as well they may; for these white hangings close round the sanctuary to maintain its separation from the outside world. Sin is to be repelled and excluded from this slight-walled inclosure, where the only entrance is by Christ, as the curtained entrance here again shows, hanging as the fine linen of the court hangs—from silver hooks, because Christ as the way of access depends indeed upon the atonement He has made. Thus divine power has wrought for us in human weakness, as the four brazen pillars show which uphold the curtain.

Here, at the border of the sanctuary-inclosure, where it meets the world, the types are found of God's triumph over sin.

side there shall be hangings of fifty cubits, their pillars ten, and their sockets ten. And the breadth of the court on the east side toward the sunrise shall be fifty cubits, the hangings on the one wing fifteen cubits, their pillars three, and their sockets three; and on the other wing the hangings shall be fifteen cubits, their pillars three, and their sockets three. And for the gate of the court there shall be a screen of twenty cubits, of blue and purple and scarlet and fine twined linen,—embroiderer's work; their pillars shall be four, and their sockets four. All the pillars of the court round about shall be joined together with rods of silver; and their hooks shall be of silver, and their sockets of brass. The length of the court shall be a hundred cubits, and the breadth fifty every where, and the height five cubits of fine twined linen, and their sockets of brass. All the implements of the tabernacle in all the service thereof, and all its [y] pegs, and the pegs of the court, shall be of brass.

[y] *cf.* Matt. 5. 18.

The approach to God: priesthood.

(XXVII. 20—XXX. 10.)

1. (vv.20,21.) The continual light.

3. [1] And thou shalt command the children of Israel that they bring thee pure [z] olive oil, beaten, for the light, to cause the lamp to burn continually. In the tent of meeting, without the vail which is before the testimony,

[z] Jno. 16.13.

3. In the third series of these tabernacle-types, we come now to consider man's approach to God, and in connection with this, necessarily the Mediator-Priest. It is here for the first time the priesthood comes formally before us. Melchisedek in Genesis has given us the type of a better order of priesthood than that of Aaron, but he is very briefly, and as it were incidentally, introduced. In Exodus, beside Jethro, we have among the people of Israel priests recognized, "young men," probably of the first-born, who are not further noticed, but give place necessarily to the exclusive priesthood of Aaron and his sons. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, not to speak of Abel and of Noah, plainly exercised priestly functions, and it seems certain that the law, as it invested the priesthood with special sanctity, correspondingly restricted its exercise, and hedged it round with penalty in a way before unknown. And this is evidently connected with the character of the law as giving the knowledge of sin. The breach of the first covenant, so soon to follow these typical ordinances, was only the beginning of the reiterated proofs of man's natural inability to stand before God, and his need of a Mediator; and God by all these enactments fixes the eye upon this need, and upon Him who alone really meets it,—of whom Aaron was but the shadow. The idea of priesthood will, of necessity, become defined as we go on, and it is best to leave it thus to the Word to develop the meaning in its own perfect way. It is enough here to say that the word for "priest" in Hebrew (*kohen*) seems most probably derived from *kun*, in its significance of "preparing," and "to mean," says Oehler, "either intransitively, 'to present one's self,' or transitively, 'to prepare, fit;' in the former case, *kohen* would be one who stands to represent another, and in the latter case the priest would be named from the preparing and presenting the sacrifice."

(i.) Before, however, we come to the description of the priest himself, we have, in the first place, that which was indeed put under his care, but which is introduced here evidently for the sake of the general principle as to the ways of God. God is light; and the first thing in the great original six days' work was, to bring in the light where there had been darkness. Here also, when the practi-

> Aaron and his sons shall set it in order from [a] evening to morning before Jehovah: it is a statute forever to their generations on behalf of the children of Israel.

[a] *cf.* Gen. 1. 5, etc.

cal working of the tabernacle begins to be set before us, the provision is made for continual light. In His presence, as in Himself, there is no darkness at all; but while, therefore, in the holiest there could be no such provision, in the holy place outside the vail the sanctuary-lamp was needed, so that through earth's night there should be none for those approaching Him. It was never to be out —a continual light through the hours of darkness.

The necessary application of this type shows us how indeed the "things that happened unto Israel" are "written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages are come." While Christ, the light of the world, is absent, it is night, and the light for the priests of God (our calling as Christians) is in the sanctuary only, the light of the seven lamps—the perfect illumination of the Spirit of God —as ministered by Christ risen, the Spirit of Christ. Notice how in 2 Cor. iii., where, "beholding the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory," "the Lord the Spirit" and "the Spirit of the Lord" are connected together, or in a sense identified. "Now the *Lord is that Spirit*, and where the *Spirit of the Lord* is there is liberty," while the change produced in us is "by the *Lord the Spirit*."

For us, indeed, it may be rightly urged, that the vail is rent, and the holy and the holiest are one. As priests in the sanctuary, we are brought into the immediate presence of God. But the light of the glory of God has not for us eclipsed the light of the golden lamp-stand: no, but the two have become for us one, as the apostle shows us in immediate connection with the passage just referred to. For the "glory of the Lord" is the "glory of Christ who is the image of *God*;" and thus "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the *glory of God* in the *face of Jesus Christ*." (2 Cor. iv. 4, 6.)

Let us remember, too, that the responsibility of the children of Israel to furnish the oil, and of the priests to maintain the light, has practical reference to ourselves to-day, when the apostle can say to those who *have* the Spirit, just on this account, "be *filled* with the Spirit." (Eph. v. 18.) Alas! there may be even for the Christian lamps gone out, through drowsiness and neglect. Yet the Spirit, *given* to abide with us (Jno. xiv. 16), abides; and therefore the same apostle's energizing call, "Awake, thou that sleepest! and arise from among the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." (Eph. v. 14.)

Light, then, is ours! how suitable a preface to all the instruction about priestly service from which the world-church, gone back to the darkness of carnal ordinances, has extracted so much mere antichristian blasphemy! How needful, too, the lesson of our responsibility as to all this! Our own true and glorious High-Priest who is passed into the heavens does not Himself even interpose to keep us from God, but in His own Person has brought us to Him. For us the vail is rent, and "we walk in the light as God is in the light." (1 Jno. i. 7.)

With what loathsome impurity, which has done its best to justify the infidelity it has produced, has the verdict of history made infamous the priest! How it has identified "priest-craft" with mere deception and villany! God introduces His account with the witness that He is light, and makes it the solemn and (as it were) the first duty to maintain the light. "God is light;" and we can add, "in the light." All must be light and in the light with us.

The *perpetuity* of the light is what the numerical place seems to insist on here. The eternal light brings every thing to the test of eternal righteousness; and thus alone is the sovereignty of God maintained over the soul. How solemnly is it insisted on as to be "a statute forever"!

(ii.) As the priest is emphatically the minister, so his garments are again and again spoken of as "garments of service," and express this. Not that there are not personal ones as well as official, or that the official do not imply character:

2 (xxviii.) The priestly garments, indicating their service.

a (vv. 1–4.) The designation of the priests.

[2] And do thou bring near unto thee Aaron thy brother and his sons with him from among the children of Israel, that he may be a [b] priest unto me: Aaron, [with] Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons. And thou shalt make holy [c] garments for Aaron thy brother, for glory and for beauty. And thou shalt speak unto all the wise of heart, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they make Aaron's garments to sanctify him to be a priest unto me. And these are the garments that they shall make: a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a checkered coat, a turban and a girdle: and they shall make the holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and for his sons, that he may be a priest unto me.

b (5–14.) The ephod: priestly service.

And they shall take gold and blue and purple and scarlet and fine linen; and they shall make the [d] ephod of gold, of blue, and of purple, of scarlet, and of fine twined linen,—skillful work. It shall have two [e] shoul-

b Heb. 5. 4, 5. Heb. 7. 11, etc.

c Ps. 132. 16. Rev. 1. 13. cf. Matt. 17. 2.

d cf. 1 Sam. 6. 14.

e cf. Luke 15. 5.

in the true Priest,—not the type, but the antitype,—every thing, as we shall see, depends upon this; and thus the divine principle is emphasized which was just now insisted on. It is the heart of the blessed Lord which makes Him serve: it is His spotless purity which enables Him to draw near to God, when for men to see Him is to die: and thus on the day of atonement the high-priest enters the holiest in the *personal* dress of pure white linen only. (Lev. xvi.) We are now, however, to contemplate His service for us.

(*a*) But "even Christ glorified not Himself to be made a High-Priest, but He who said unto Him, 'Thou art My Son: this day have I begotten Thee.'" (Heb. v. 5.) This is how the apostle interprets for us that designation of Aaron by God, which is here for the first time announced plainly. This is therefore a necessary point to begin with. It makes the service which ensues obedience, and the sweet assurance of what was in the heart of God toward us. We "believe on Him whom God hath sent" (Jno. vi. 29), and that gives the right character to Him who sent: "by Him we believe in God." (1 Pet. i. 21.)

The clothing of Aaron is the first step in his installation in his office. The garments are "for glory and for beauty." How beauteous is Christ in this mediatorial place! how glorious has He made a place of service!

(*b*) The ephod is by the Septuagint styled the "shoulder-piece," and this seems its most distinct feature, as we find it here emphasized by the two onyx stones engraved with the names of the tribes of Israel which were upon the shoulders. This is not, however, all, for it as evidently links the breastplate with the shoulder-pieces, and thus the latter help to sustain also the former. The ephod is thus characteristic in the highest way of service,—the maintenance of the people before God.

The ephod is made of the same materials as the tabernacle-curtains and the vail, but without cherubic figures, in which upon these the blue and purple and scarlet were interwoven. The symbols of conferred royalty are thus absent, though the *materials* of it are here. What *qualifies* Him for this place is seen,—what makes Him the "desire of all nations" (Hag. ii. 7), so that the power put into His hands gratifies that desire. But the priestly office is distinct from the kingly, and power is shown in a very different manner in the lowly service of the priest, while it is meant to be plain abundantly that the Priest and the King are one. If, moreover, the cherubim are absent, on the other hand the ephod is interwoven with threads of gold. Is God any where more manifest than in this wondrous provision for man's need, which at such cost has been furnished to him?

der-pieces coupling it together: at its two ends it shall be coupled. And the band for fastening it which is upon it shall be of one piece with it, after its work: of gold, of blue and purple and scarlet and fine twined linen. And thou shalt take two onyx-stones, and [f]engrave on them the names of the children of Israel: six of their names on one stone, and the six names of the rest upon the other stone, according to their birth. With the work of an engraver in stone, the engraving of a signet, shalt thou engrave the two stones with the names of the children of Israel: thou shalt cause them to be inclosed in plaits of gold. And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod, to be stones of memorial for the children of Israel; and Aaron shall [g]bear their names before Jehovah upon his two shoulders for a memorial.

[f] Is. 43 1. Jno. 10. 3.

[g] Jno. 10.28.

c (15-30.) The breast-plate: glory of God identified with the blessing of man.

And thou shalt make plaitings of gold, and two chains of pure gold; like cords shalt thou make them, of twined work, and fasten the twined chains to the plaitings. And thou shalt make the [h]breast-plate of judgment of skillful work, like the work of the ephod thou shalt make it: of gold, of blue and purple and scarlet and fine twined linen shalt thou make it. Four-square it shall be, doubled; a span the length of it, and a span the breadth thereof. And thou shalt set in it settings of [i]stones—four rows of stones: [one] row, a sardius, a topaz, and an emerald,—the first row; and the second row, a carbuncle, a sapphire, and a diamond; and the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; and the fourth row, a chrysolite, an onyx, and a jasper: they shall be inclosed in gold in their settings. And the stones shall be with the [j]names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names; [like] the engraving of a signet, every one with his name shall

[h] Jno. 13. 1, 23. Eph. 3. 19.

[i] *cf.* Rev. 21. 19, 20.

[j] ver. 9. Rev. 21. 14.

In the onyx stones upon the shoulder the end of the priestly office is expressed. The names of the twelve tribes are there, permanently graven upon the banded stones, to be borne up upon the priest's shoulders. So plainly have we here the One who "goeth after that which is lost until He find it; and when He hath found it, He layeth it upon His shoulders, rejoicing." (Luke xv. 4, 5.) Thus the priest's office is declared.

(*c*) But if Christ's people are thus sustained by His mediatorial work, we need to see more perfectly the connection between the display of power which the shoulders express and the holy love which is manifested in the breastplate. By means of the ephod, the breastplate itself is borne up by the shoulders, and in the breastplate again the names of the people are engraved, as in the engraving of a signet, but now upon twelve precious stones,—each cared for with the same care, but each set as it were in the glory of a new lustre!

Would that we could know, in any measure, what these different stones are intended to convey! but even their identification is not certain, and any interpretation would seem too purely conjectural to be attempted. There is, however, no scriptural reason to doubt that they are together the Urim and Thummim, the "lights and perfections" of the thirtieth verse, and this is thus far interpretation, and of convincing clearness.

they be for the twelve tribes. And thou shalt make upon the breastplate chains like cords, of twined work, of pure gold. And thou shalt make upon the breastplate two rings of gold, and shalt put the two rings upon the two ends of the breastplate; and thou shalt put the two twined [chains] in the two rings which are on the ends of the breastplate; and the [other] two ends of the two twined [chains] thou shalt put in the two plaits, and shalt put them on the shoulders of the ephod, in the front of it. And thou shalt make two rings of gold, and put them upon the two ends of the breastplate, upon the border of it, which is upon the side of the ephod inward. And thou shalt make two rings of gold, and put them on the two shoulders of the ephod, beneath, to the front of it, close by the coupling thereof, above the band of the ephod. And they shall bind the breastplate by its rings unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of [k] blue, that it may be above the band of the ephod, and that the breastplate may not be loosed from the ephod. And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart when he goeth into the sanctuary, for a memorial before Jehovah continually. And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the [l] Urim and Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart when he goeth in before Jehovah: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before Jehovah continually.

[k] chap. 26. 1.

[l] Num. 27. 21. Ps. 32. 8. 1 Jno. 1. 5.

God is light, and "the Father of lights" (Jas. i. 17); for the lights are but the prismatic radiance of the one ray of colorless light as we see it in the rainbow, and in which its beauty is displayed to us (see Gen. ix.) In this it shines but for a moment, like a brilliant deed, though an eternal memory of glory, but in the jewels it is enshrined, permanent, as are the divine attributes in God. This is what in fact the jewels mean: they are the "lights and perfections" of Him who is light and perfection; and as the names of the people are graven on the jewels, so is He abidingly glorified in His redeemed. Plaitings and rings, and twined chains of gold, connect the breastplate with the ephod, the manifold interweavings of divine glory with the maintenance of the people thus: while all is upon the heart of the High-Priest, the type of Him who, as the Mediator between God and men, Himself God and Man, maintains ever what is due to God upon the one hand, and His own in blessing on the other, and these not as things apart, but as identified—the names graven upon the breast-plate!

The ephod unites the breastplate with the shoulder, and throws in this way the burden upon the shoulder. All the counsels of God in connection with this great salvation are such a burden as Christ only could sustain; and not the King's, but the Priest's shoulder bears it: the power is realized in weakness, the victory of voluntary humiliation and self-sacrifice. Blessed be His name!

This, then, was the "breastplate of *judgment*,"—that is, in connection with which God answered appeals, and gave sentence among the people (comp. Num. xxvii. 21; 1 Sam. xxviii. 6; Ezra ii. 63), for the divine wisdom is always found in holding together the two principles implied in the breastplate.

(*d*) The robe of the ephod, like that one of our Lord for which they cast lots at the cross, is of one piece, woven without seam, and bound around the necessary opening, that it may not be rent. It is entirely of blue, the heavenly color, and

d (31-35.) Earth's visitation and the universal gospel.

And thou shalt make the [m] robe of the ephod all of blue; and the opening for the head shall be in the middle of it; there shall be a binding of woven work round about the opening of it, as the opening of a coat of mail, that it be not rent. And upon the skirts of it thou shalt make pomegranates of blue and purple and scarlet, round about the skirts of it; and bells of gold between them round about: a [n] golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the skirts of the robe round about. And it shall be upon Aaron for ministering; and the sound thereof shall be heard when he goeth into the sanctuary before Jehovah, and when he cometh out, that he [o] die not.

e (36-38.) Responsibility of the holy things upon Aaron.

And thou shalt make a [p] plate of pure gold, and shalt engrave upon it as the engraving of a signet, Holiness to Jehovah. And thou shalt put it upon a lace of [q] blue, and it shall be upon the turban: upon the front of the turban it shall be. And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead; and Aaron shall bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts: and it shall be continually upon his forehead, that they may be [r] accepted before Jehovah.

f (39-43.) The ordinary dress of Aaron and the priests.

And thou shalt weave in checker-work a coat of fine linen; and thou shalt make a turban of fine linen; and thou shalt make a girdle of embroidery. And for the sons of Aaron thou shalt make coats, and make them girdles, and caps shalt thou make for them for glory and for beauty. And thou shalt clothe with them

[m] ch. 24. 10. Heb. 4. 14. Heb. 8. 4. *cf.* Num. 15. 38-40.

[n] 1 Kings 7. 20. Acts 2. 33.

[o] Acts 2. 24.

[p] Jno. 17. 19. *cf.* Rev. 22. 4.

[q] ver. 28.

[r] Eph. 1. 6.

upon its skirts are alternately pomegranates,—the fruit of many seeds,—and golden bells, which give their sound on going into the sanctuary before Jehovah, and on coming out. Here, then, is the heavenly Man, the fruit of whose work has in itself the abundant seed, wherever the gospel goes forth in the power of the Spirit: this gospel, as it seems to me, characterizing especially the time He goes into heaven—the Pentecostal outburst,—and the time when He shall be coming out again, when the "everlasting gospel" is proclaimed for blessing to millennial nations.

The numerical place, as it seems to me, emphasizes the heavenly Stranger's visit to the world, and the diffusion every where of the seed of the gospel: its result, heaven opened to earth. The words "that he die not" appended to the commandment as to these gospel-bells, as it cannot apply to the great High-Priest, may speak of Aaron as the representative of the nation, as their music is indeed a sign of how Israel shall not die but live—alive to God.

(*e*) Next we have the iniquity of the people in their holy things provided for, the high-priest taking the responsibility of it upon himself. This, of course, involves the necessity of atonement; but it is not atonement that is here spoken of, but the ordering of all, left with perfect confidence to Him who is the Son over God's house, and upon whose forehead rests the "diadem of holiness," as it is elsewhere called (chap. xxxix. 30). In Him who stooped to the uttermost requirement of holiness upon the cross, holiness is indeed a crown. He with whom in that darkest hour of all that ever was could be left the responsibility of the accomplishment of all God's counsels of blessing for eternity, can be safely intrusted with all the care of the holy things.

(*f*) Finally, we have the ordinary dress of Aaron and of the priests his sons, who are for the first time brought in here. They are our picture, and we are

Aarou thy brother, and his sons with him; and thou shalt [s]anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, and they shall be priests unto me. And make them [t]linen breeches to cover the flesh of nakedness: they shall reach from the loins even to the thighs: and they shall be upon Aaron and upon his sons when they go into the tent of meeting or come near unto the altar, to minister in the sanctuary, that they bear not iniquity and die: it is an everlasting statute unto him and to his seed after him.

3. (xxix.) The sanctification and consecration of the priests.

α (vv.1-7.) Aaron only.

3 [u]And this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them to sanctify them to be priests unto me: take one young [v]bullock and two [w]rams without blemish, and [x]unleavened bread, and [y]pierced cakes, unleavened, mingled with [z]oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil: of wheaten flour shalt thou make them. And thou shalt put them in one basket, and bring them in the basket, and the bullock, and the two rams. And Aaron and his sons shalt thou bring near to the entrance of the tent of meeting, and thou shalt [a]wash them with water. And thou shalt take the garments, and clothe Aaron with the coat, and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastplate, and shalt gird him with the band of the ephod, and shalt put the turban on his head, and put the holy diadem upon the turban. And thou shalt take the [b]anointing-oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him.

s Is. 61. 1. Acts 10. 38. Matt. 3. 16, 17.
t *cf.* ch. 20. 26. Ezek. 44. 18.
u Lev. 8.
v Lev. 8. 14. Lev. 16. 3. Heb. 9. 12.
w ver.18,22. Heb. 9. 14.
x 1 Cor. 5. 8. 2 Cor. 2, 17.
y *cf.* Jno.19. 37.
z Luke 1.35.
a Jno. 8. 29. Eph. 5. 26.
b ch. 28. 41. Ps. 133. 2.

necessarily reminded of the difference between ourselves and Christ: even Aaron taking his place as one in contrast with Him. This the numerical place seems to point out—the priesthood of sinful men, but in whom grace shows its victory over sin, clothing their nakedness, and bringing nigh. This naturally closes the account of the priesthood.

(iii.) But we have yet to consider the sanctification of the priesthood and their induction into their office: as yet, of course, only the commandment as to it, for the fulfillment of this is in Leviticus.

(*a*) First, the materials are to be provided and ready, as all things wait upon God's call. Then Aaron and his sons are brought near to the entrance of the tent of meeting and are washed entirely with water. This evidently corresponds with that to which our Lord's words point—that one washing of the whole person that needs not to be repeated (Jno. xiii. 10). All Christians are "a holy priesthood" (1 Pet. ii. 5)—a people as a holy people able to approach God. The washing which makes them this is "the washing of regeneration" (Tit. iii. 5): a new state resulting from new birth. Herein, "He who sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one," (Heb. ii. 11,) the children of God partaking of the life of their glorious Head. In His person human nature was cleansed from its defilement, and God did what Job declared impossible for man—brought forth a clean thing out of an unclean (Job. xiv. 4). He was as born into the world what we are as new born, but without taint of evil, perfect in all things,—yea, the Eternal Life itself.

Thus, while all are of one, there is an essential difference, and we see this in the type in Aaron's being anointed alone, without blood, with all the priestly garments already upon him. The divine life which is His is already His sanctification to the Priesthood, and as absolutely without spot—God's beloved Son, in whom His delight is,—the Spirit of God descends upon Him after His baptism

b (8-18.) Aaron and his sons: redemption and priesthood.

And thou shalt bring near his sons, and clothe them with the coats, and shalt gird them with the girdles,—Aaron and his sons,—and put their caps on them: and the priesthood shall be theirs by an everlasting statute, and thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons. And thou shalt present the bullock before the tent of meeting; and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands upon the bullock's head: and thou shalt kill the bullock before Jehovah at the entrance of the tent of meeting. And thou shalt take of the bullock's blood, and put it upon the horns of the altar with thy finger, and pour out all the blood at the base of the altar. And thou shalt take all the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul over the liver, and the two kidneys and the fat which is upon them, and burn them on the altar. But the flesh of the bullock, and its skin, and its dung, shalt thou burn in the fire outside the camp: it is a [c]sin-offering. And the one ram thou shalt take, and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands upon the head of the ram, and thou shalt kill the ram, and shalt take its blood, and sprinkle it upon the altar round about. And thou shalt cut up the ram into its pieces and wash its inwards and its legs, and put them with its pieces and with its head. And thou shalt burn the whole ram upon the altar: it is a [d]burnt-offering unto Jehovah; a sweet savor, an offering by fire unto Jehovah is it.

c Heb. 13.11.

d Lev. 1. 10. Eph. 5. 2.

c (19-25.) Consecration in the power of the Spirit, (resurrection accomplished).

And thou shalt take the other ram, and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands upon the head of the ram; and thou shalt kill the ram, and take of its blood, and [e]put it upon the tip of Aaron's right ear, and upon the tip of his sons' right ear, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot;

e Lev. 14. 14. 1 Cor. 3. 23.

by John, in which He had presented Himself to God for His "baptism to death" afterward. Thus He is now the Anointed One—the Christ.

(*b*) Aaron's sons are then brought near and clothed with the priestly garments, the bullock of the sin-offering slain, after Aaron and his sons have put their hands upon its head, and the horns of the altar of burnt-offering are anointed with it. Then one of the rams is offered as a burnt-offering, Aaron and his sons identifying themselves in the same way with it, and its blood sprinkled upon the altar round about. Aaron we have seen, as the type of Another, anointed already without blood; but we find him here with his hand, along with those of his sons, on the head of the sin-offering as well as the burnt-offering. The necessary antecedent to the call of a "holy priesthood"—truly, not merely typically, such—was, the fulfillment of the atoning work; and for us individually, we need to stand in the value of it before God in order to be priests to God. But it must be carefully remembered that if Aaron still be a type of Christ in this, his hand upon the victim cannot signify what it does in his sons' case: it can only be the sign of the acceptance, on the part of the One who offers for it, of the burden of sin and of its penalty. And this the cross declares,—sin's awful judgment and the righteousness of Him who judges.

(*c*) The next thing is *consecration*—in Hebrew, "filling the hand." For this the ram of consecration is taken; and the ram we have seen in the coverings of the tabernacle to be a type of devotedness. The sheep yields itself to the slaughter,

and thou shalt sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about. And thou shalt take of the blood that is upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon his sons' garments with him: and he shall be sanctified, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him. And thou shalt take of the ram the fat, and the fat tail, and the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul of the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat which is upon them, and the right shoulder, (for it is a ram of consecration), and one loaf of bread, and one pierced cake of oiled bread, and one wafer out of the basket of unleavened bread which is before Jehovah; and thou shalt put the whole upon Aaron's hands, and upon his sons' hands, and shalt [f] wave them for a wave-offering before Jehovah. And thou shalt receive them from their hands, and burn them upon the altar upon the burnt-offering, for a sweet savor unto Jehovah: it is an offering by fire unto Jehovah.

[f] Lev. 7. 30.

and the ram, as the male sheep, is probably chosen to intensify the thought of self-surrender. Upon this also Aaron and his sons lay their hands; and then it is slain, and the blood put upon their right ear, hand, and foot,—the whole man set apart to God in the power of redemption, to receive from Him, act for Him, walk with Him.

The blood is then sprinkled upon the altar, and then, mixed with the anointing-oil, upon Aaron and his garments, and upon his sons and their garments "with him." Notice how the same connection and order are preserved in the statement of the effect: "and he shall be sanctified and his garments, and his sons and his sons' garments *with him*." Christ is surely before us here, the blessing found by His people in association with Him, and His own sanctification as gone up to God in the power of His precious blood for them, the measure of their own. As He said, when going to the Father, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth." (Jno. xvii. 11, 17–19.) It is His sanctification, or setting apart on high, as Man gone in to God, of which He is speaking. In this new place it is, a glorious Man in heaven, that His people know Him, and only there, for He is in the world no longer (2 Cor. v. 16–18). Into this new sphere we are introduced with Him, and all things become new.

And now comes the "filling of the hands:" the ram of consecration is a peace- (that is, a communion-) offering. We are to be occupied with that in which God delights, which is a sweet smell to Him. The new priests' hands now are filled with that which expresses Christ, and which is presented to God as a wave-offering. Notice the parts: first, the fat and the kidneys (the reins, comp. Ps. xvi. 7) and the fat of the inwards,—that which expressed the health of the animal, and upon which the flame especially fed. "The use of this symbol, fat," says another, "is sufficiently familiar in the Word. 'Their heart is fat as brawn.' 'Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked.' 'They are inclosed in their own fat, with their mouth they speak proudly.' It is the energy and force of the inward will—the inwards of a man's heart. Hence where Christ expresses His entire mortification He declares they could tell all his bones; and in Ps. cii., 'By reason of the voice of My groaning, My bones cleave to My skin.' But here, in Jesus, all that in nature was of energy and force, all His inward parts, were a burnt-offering to God, entirely sacrificed and offered to Him for such, a sweet savor. This was God's food of the offering, 'the food of the offering made by fire unto Jehovah.' In this Jehovah Himself found His delight; His soul reposed in it, for surely it was very good—good in the midst of evil—good in the

d (26-35.) The practical experience

And thou shalt take the [g] breast of the ram of consecration which is for Aaron, and wave it for a wave-offering before Jehovah, and it shall be thy portion. And thou shalt sanctify the breast of the wave-offering, and the shoulder of the heave-offering, that hath been waved and that hath been heaved up, of the ram of consecration,—even that which is for Aaron, and that which is for his sons, and it shall be Aaron's and his sons' by an everlasting statute for the children of Israel: for it is a heave-offering; and a heave-offering it shall be for the children of Israel, of their peace-offering sacrifices—their heave-offering to Jehovah. (And the holy garments which are Aaron's shall be his sons' after him, to be anointed in them, and to be consecrated in them. And that son that is priest in his stead shall put them on seven days, when he cometh into the tent of meeting to minister in the holy place.) And thou shalt take the ram of consecration and [h] boil its flesh in the holy place: and Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram and the bread that is in the basket at the entrance of the tent of meeting. And they shall eat those things wherewith atonement was made, to consecrate [and] to sanctify them; but a stranger shall not eat them, for they are holy. And if there remain any of the flesh of consecration, or of the bread, until the morning, then thou shalt burn the remainder with fire: it shall not be eaten, for it is holy. And thus thou shalt do unto Aaron and unto his sons according to all that I have commanded thee: seven days shalt thou consecrate them.

[g] Num. 18. 11.

[h] *ctr.* ch. 12. 9.

energy of offering to Him—good in perfect obedience." (*Synopsis*, vol. i. p. 169.)

It is easy to see how all this unites with the thought of consecration; but it is *Christ*, we must remember, who in all this occupies us: occupation with Him brings communion and like-mindedness.

With the fat we have the "shoulder"—simple reminder of how for us He bowed His shoulder to bear; and then the meal-offering, of unleavened and of oiled bread,—in general meaning as simple. Waved before Jehovah, all this is then put upon the altar, and goes up to Him. The priests are now consecrated.

(*d*) Yet still there remains for us what is most needful and most precious—the experimental apprehension of our own portion in Christ, and here warning has to be mingled with the instruction. The breast of the ram of consecration is for him who offers it, a place in this case held by Moses, but who, I think, here represents, not Christ, but the typical worshiper. How necessary that the love of Christ (which the breast must signify) should be thus experimentally enjoyed by the heart that worships! In after-cases the breast belongs to Aaron and his sons (*v.* 27) along with the (left) shoulder, the experience of His strength who bears us up before God. But the whole ram (except what has gone up to God) is theirs, and these parts are specially named, to emphasize them: all must be eaten "in the holy place," which does not mean here the sanctuary, however, but at the door of the tent of meeting in the court, as is immediately afterward stated (and comp. Lev viii. 31). The unleavened bread must be eaten with it, and the stranger—that is, in this case, every one outside the priestly family,—excluded. Nor must the flesh be kept until the morning, to guard, as we see in Lev. vii. 17, against any possible corruption: we are warned how readily it

e (36–46.) God's meeting-place with Israel.

And [i]every day shall thou offer a bullock of sin-offering, and thou shalt cleanse the altar by making atonement for it; and thou shalt anoint it to sanctify it. Seven days shall thou make atonement for the altar, and sanctify it; and the altar shall be most holy; all that toucheth the altar shall be holy. And this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar: two [j]lambs of the first year day by day continually. The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning, and the other lamb thou shalt offer between the two evenings: and with the one lamb a [k]tenth part of wheaten flour, mingled with the fourth of a hin of beaten oil, and a fourth of a hin of wine for a drink-offering. And the other lamb thou shalt offer between the evenings, and shalt do with it according to the meal-offering of the morning, and according to the drink-offering thereof, for a sweet savor, an offering by fire unto Jehovah. It shall be a [l]continual burnt-offering throughout your generations, at the entrance of the tent of meeting before Jehovah; where I will meet with you, to speak unto thee there. And there will I meet with the children of Israel, and it shall be [m]sanctified by my glory. And I will sanctify the tent of meeting and the altar; and Aaron and his sons will I sanctify to be priests unto me. And I will [n]dwell among the children of Israel, and I will be their God. And they shall know that I am Jehovah their God, who hath brought them out of the land of Egypt, to dwell among them: I, Jehovah, their God.

f (xxx. 1–10.) Christ our incense-altar: God glorified in victory over sin.

And thou shalt make an [o]altar to burn incense on, of acacia-wood thou shalt make it. A cubit shall be the length of it, and a cubit the breadth of it; four-square shall it be; and two cubits shall be the height of it: its horns shall be of one piece with it. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, its top, and its sides

[i] Heb. 10. 11, 12.

[j] Num. 28. 3, 4. Jno. 1. 29.

[k] ch. 16. 36.

[l] ver. 38. *cfr.* Heb. 10. 14. Jno. 18. 30.

[m] ch. 40. 34. 2 Cor. 4. 6.

[n] Jno. 1. 14. 1 Cor. 6. 19. Jno. 14. 17, 23. Zech. 2. 11. Rev. 21. 3.

[o] Heb. 9. 4. Heb. 13. 10, 15, 16. 1 Pet. 2. 5. Phil. 4. 18. Rev. 5, 8.

comes into our most holy things. Seven days of sanctification cover our whole life here and connect it with the rest beyond.

(*e*) The instruction as to the altar of burnt-offering comes by itself. It is God's meeting-place with the children of Israel; and here I think they are (as on the day of atonement,) their own type. Or, to say better, the priestly house representing the Church (or perhaps the heavenly saints,) the nation at large, outside of these, represents Israel, or the earthly saints. The court, where the altar of burnt-offering stands, is, without any doubt, the earth where the cross has been; and it is meet and right that there the glory of God should be displayed, as it yet will be: Immanuel's name in all that it implies even for the earth revealed, and (in the new earth) the tabernacle of God with men. Their daily offering upon the altar speaks of what to God the work of Christ is, and God's meeting there with Israel, though it give not the full thought of what is our portion, has its special beauty and significance. A blessed thing, with which the feast of our consecration will be ended: not, blessed be God, the priesthood itself.

(*f*) But Israel's blessing does not complete the glories presented to us here. We must rise, as it were, from earth into the heavenly sanctuary, and enter upon our service at the golden altar of incense, to see how fully the triumph over sin has been achieved. The altar, as we see by its material, is Christ, and Christ as

round about, and its horns; and thou shalt make a golden border to it round about; and thou shalt make for it two golden rings under the border of it, at the two corners thereof, upon the sides of it shalt thou make them, and they shall be places to receive the staves, that it may be borne with them. And thou shalt make the staves of acacia-wood, and overlay them with gold. And thou shalt put it [p] before the vail that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy-seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee. And Aaron shall burn thereon incense of sweet spices, every morning, when he [q] dresseth the lamps he shall burn it. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps between the evenings he shall burn it,—a perpetual incense before Jehovah throughout your generations. Ye shall burn upon it no [r] strange incense, nor burnt-offering, nor meal-offering; nor shall ye pour drink-offering thereon. And Aaron shall make [s] atonement on the horns thereof once a year, with the blood of the sin-offering of atonement; once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto Jehovah.

p *cf.* Heb. 9. 3, 4 with Matt. 27. 51. Heb. 10. 19.

q Jno. 4. 24. Phil. 3. 3. Eph. 5. 18, 19.

r Lev. 10. 1.

s Lev. 16. 18. Heb. 9. 23.

(XXX. 11—XXXI.)

Special warnings.

I. (vv. 11-16.) No difference as to the need of repentance.

4. [t] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel, as to those that are to be numbered, then shall they give each to Jehovah a ransom for his soul when thou numberest them, that there be no [u] plague among them when thou numberest them. This shall they give—every one that

t *cf.* 2 Sam. 24. 1.

u *cf.* 2 Sam. 24. 1.

entered into heaven; not on earth. Yet as an *altar*, or "place of sacrifice," as the word (*mizbeach*) means, and foursquare, with its horns facing every way,—its virtue in the blood that is presented on them,—it speaks of sacrifice, while yet no sacrifice is to be made upon it, and in the sanctuary cannot be. Thus it speaks the virtue of what has been done elsewhere, and (so far as the golden altar itself is concerned) can need no re-doing. The golden altar is for perpetual incense—ceaseless praise to God: "We have an altar," says the apostle, an altar to which we come as priests of no earthly tabernacle, an altar upon which no bleeding sacrifice can be again. Christ is our altar still, but no such sacrifice can He offer again. What sacrifice, then, have we? "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of *praise continually*,—that is, the fruit of our lips, confessing His name. But to do good, and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." (Heb. xiii. 10, 15, 16.) Thus we have sacrifices of thanksgiving and praise to offer,—fruit of the lips and fruit of the life,—confessing Him who has done the work which gives us our changeless place with God. The true sacrifice is no longer on the altar; it has been accepted of God once for all, and cannot be repeated, and thus we have the altar clear for *our own* sacrifices, which whether of lip or in life are still but the confession of His name! What a crowning triumph over sin, that sinners such as we can as "a holy priesthood" thus draw nigh!

4. The description of the incense-altar ends the subject of priestly consecration, and another subject is introduced with the words, "And Jehovah spake unto Moses." To find these words before, we should have to go back to the beginning of the twenty-fifth chapter, all the instruction of the tabernacle being one continuous discourse as far as this. Yet they occur six times now within the limits

passeth with those numbered: "half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary, a shekel of twenty gerahs,—half a shekel shall be the heave-offering to Jehovah. Every one that passeth with those numbered from twenty years old and upward shall give the heave-offering unto Jehovah. [v]The rich shall not increase, and the poor shall not diminish, from the half shekel in giving the heave-offering unto Jehovah, to make atonement for your souls. And thou shalt take the atonement-money from the children of Israel, and apply it to the [w]service of the tent of meeting; and it shall be a memorial for the children of Israel before Jehovah, to make atonement for your souls.

u Matt. 17. 24.

v Rom. 3. 22. Rom. 10. 12.

w ch. 26. 19.

of two chapters. Thus each portion here is detached from the rest, and given a special emphasis, which is still further seen in the solemn penalties denounced upon transgression in five cases out of the six. In subject, they are also diverse from one another, though not without a certain connection also among themselves, as we shall presently see; yet they look exactly like so many supplementary addenda to what has gone before. This is Keil's view; and the numerical structure establishes, I believe, its correctness.

The number attached to the whole characterizes it as essentially a series of special warnings or tests as to obedience, whose significance is, as we might expect, brought out by their typical meaning. All this is plainly a magnificent symbolism, which we can only read in any worthy way as "figures of the true;" things which "happened unto them for types, and are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come."

There are in the section before us six sections manifest, with a brief faint seventh (xxxi. 18) which must be reckoned as that, and which in its faintness even has for us the instruction which never can be any where lacking in God's blessed Word, if we have only eyes of faith and hearts of desire for it. The section being, then, a septenary series, divides naturally into $4 + 3$, as is here very evident, the first four, to the end of chap. xxx., being connected together as completing the tabernacle itself, which is then put as complete [in plan] into the hands of the master-workmen.

(i.) We begin the series with the account of the atonement-money, in which Israel confessed their common guilt and need of ransom. None was to be exempt, none give more, none less,—translated into gospel-language, just the "no-difference" doctrine of the apostle (Rom. iii.) This is the evidence of a genuine repentance, to have come down to the confession of such guilt as needs a ransom. The amount of the atonement-money may have significance, *shekel* merely meaning "weight," and the *bekah*, therefore, "*half*-weight." Is it the confession of what was charged against Belshazzar, "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting"? Notice, too, that the shekel is that of the sanctuary, and that being twenty gerahs, the half shekel is just *ten* gerahs—the responsibility-number.

Repentance is in thus taking our place before God; but if the ransom-money speak of man's own short-coming, how does it come to speak also of atonement? This question is not difficult to answer; for atonement is by substitution,—Christ taking our place as coming short. In the same way, the same word in the Hebrew stands for "sin" and "sin-*offering*," "trespass" and "*trespass-offering*. Nor is there any true repentance or confession but that in which Christ is laid hold of or confessed.

Out of this silver the sockets of the sanctuary, and the hooks of the pillars and connecting-rods, were made (chap. xxxviii, 25–28). It is instructive to note that silver was emphatically the medium of exchange, so that (as in French to-day,)

2. (17-21.) Separation from evil according to the Word (the laver).

[2] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Thou shalt make also a [x] laver of brass, and its stand of brass, to wash in, and put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it. And Aaron and his sons shall wash thereat their hands and their feet. When they go into the tent of meeting they shall wash with water, that they die not, or when they [y] approach the altar, to minister, to burn the offering made by fire unto Jehovah. So shall they wash their hands and their feet, that they [z] die not: and it shall be an everlasting statute to them, for him and for his seed after him, throughout their generations.

x 1 Kings 7. 38. Jno. 13. 8-11. 1 Jno. 2. 1. 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17. Heb. 10. 22. Jas. 4. 8.

y Ps. 26. 6. *cfr.* Matt. 27. 24.

z 1 Cor. 11. 30, 31.

3. (22-33.) The anointing oil: the unction of the Spirit.

[3] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Take thou also unto thee chief spices, of [a] free-flowing myrrh five hundred [shekels], and of sweet cinnamon half as much —two hundred and fifty,— and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty, and of cassia five hundred, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of olive oil a hin: and thou shalt make of it [b] oil of holy ointment, a perfume compounded after the work of the perfumer;—it shall be a holy anointing-oil. And thou shalt anoint with it the tent of meeting and the ark of the testimony, and the table and all its vessels, and the lamp-stand and its vessels, and the altar of incense, and the altar of burnt-offering and all its vessels, and the laver and its stand:

a Jno. 19. 39. Ps. 45. 8.

b Luke 7. 38. Jno. 12. 3-8. Song 1. 3, 13.

"silver" and "money" were the same word (*keseph*); and that the derivation of this is from *kahsaph*, "to grow pale," as with longing, shame, or anxiety. Such thoughts cluster round the atonement-money.

Here, then, is the basis-test for the soul. The dwelling of God is with the redeemed: the tabernacle speaks of relationship to a Redeemer; and only those have this who have in repentance and faith, as involved in the common guilt of all, taken their place among the people of God in His great census-roll as under the blood of the Lamb. The book of enrollment is the "book of the Lamb slain." (Rev. xiii. 8.)

(ii.) As thus redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, we are, of course, already priests to God: the warning as to the brazen laver therefore now applies to us. The laver does not speak of new birth; it was for washing the hands and feet simply, and thus it speaks of cleansing by the Word from the defilement by the way. If we are indeed to be permitted to handle holy things, or to draw near to God in the sanctuary, the Word of God must do its work upon us.

The laver was of brass, the symbol of what endures as with divine power. So the Word of God endures, and, moreover, abides unchangeable, whatever our wills may be. Its stand, too, is of brass; for the Word of God rests upon the unchanging nature of God. As He is, so He speaks, and nothing can alter it.

"Separation from evil" is here what is enjoined upon all who draw near to God, or occupy themselves with His things; and this is an "everlasting statute" which abides for all times and dispensations.

(iii.) The unction of the Spirit is the third thing. Would that one could realize something of the meaning of the various ingredients of this holy anointing-oil! The five constituents, are, however, plainly marked, as 4 and 1, and show us the meeting of the human and the divine; for the Spirit of God is pleased to work in and through man, and we see Him in the effect (Jno. iii. 8). It is a sad failure not to be able to recognize God, because He works in familiar and apparently natural ways. Holiness, however, there must be, and this is what is

so shalt thou sanctify them, and they shall be most holy, —all that toucheth them shall be holy. And Aaron and his sons thou shalt anoint and sanctify them to be priests unto me. And unto the children of Israel thou shalt speak, saying, This shall be a holy anointing-oil unto me throughout your generations: upon [c] flesh of man it shall not be poured, and in its proportions ye shall make none like it: it is holy; to you it shall be holy. The man who compoundeth any like it, or putteth any of it upon a stranger, shall be cut off from among his people. [c] Col. 1. 18.

4. (34-38.) The incense: the fragrance of Christ, as perfect man.

[4] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Take thee sweet [d] spices, — stacte and onycha and galbanum, — sweet spices with clear frankincense, — of each there shall be a like [weight]. And thou shalt make of it [e] incense, a perfume after the work of the perfumer, salted, pure, holy. And thou shalt beat some of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tent of meeting, where I will meet with thee: it shall be to you most holy. And the incense which thou makest ye shall not make in its proportion: holy unto Jehovah shall it be for you. The man who maketh its like, to smell, shall be cut off from among his people. [d] cf. 1 Kings 10. 10. [e] ver. 1.

5. xxxi. 1-11.) Human co-operation.

[5] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, See, I have [f] called by name Bezaleel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom and in understanding, and [f] 1 Kings 7. 14. 1 Cor. 12. 4-11. Eph. 4. 8-13.

here specially enforced. The oil must not be poured on flesh of man—cannot sanctify what is really fleshly; and it must not be imitated—there can be no manufacture on man's part of what is the Spirit's work.

(iv.) And now we close this first part of this appendix with the incense, in which we find, no doubt, the fragrance of Christ for God. The numerical place points Him out, I think, as Man, and as the Son of Man, the title He so constantly assumed to Himself: not the partial and narrow Jew, but the One in whom all could find their own; while, above all, God could find in Him the ideal Man to obtain which He had created man, One in all things for God, as was the incense here,—fully and emphatically the Man of God.

The ingredients again as yet seem to baffle research, which has been too little given to their spiritual meaning. Even their number has been disputed, whether four or five. No doubt salt was added to it, according to Lev. ii. 13; but this is noticed incidentally only, and as a matter of course, while the distinctive composition of the incense was of four ingredients,—certified as such by there being three and one,—three spices and the frankincense: this 3 + 1, beautifully significant of Him through whom creation completely attains its ultimate end of manifesting God.

The incense too is guarded from profanation as the anointing-oil had been. This is God's Christ, though man finds in Him his fullest blessing also. So the burnt-offering went up all to God, though in atonement for man; and it is just here, indeed, that he becomes for us all He would be, when we find in Him every where the Doer of the Father's will. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God," characterized His life throughout.

(v.) God now calls by name the human workmen who are to carry out in the power of the Spirit His designs. In Bezaleel, Judah comes to the front in the

in knowledge, and in all workmanship, to devise skillful work, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, for setting, and in carving of wood —to work all manner of work. And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, and in the hearts of all that are wise of heart I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee: the tent of meeting, and the ark of the testimony, and the mercy-seat which is upon it, and all the furniture of the tent, and the table and its vessels, and the pure lamp-stand and all its vessels, and the altar of incense, and the altar of burnt-offering and all its furniture, and the laver and its stand, and the garments of service, even the holy garments of Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons to serve as priests, and the anointing-oil, and the incense of spices for the holy place: according to all that I have commanded thee they shall do.

6. (*vv.* 12-17.) Rest not reached under the law.

[6] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Surely my [g] Sabbaths ye shall keep, for it is a sign between me and you in your generations, that ye may know that I am Jehovah who sanctify you. And ye shall keep the Sabbath, for it is holy to you: every one that defileth it shall certainly be put to death, for whoso doeth work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, holy unto Jehovah: whoso doeth work on the Sabbath day shall surely be [h] put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant. It is a [i] sign between me and the children of Israel forever, for in six days Jehovah made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.

[g] Ezek. 20. 12. *cfr.* Matt. 11. 28. Heb. 3. 19.

[h] Num. 15. 35. *cf.* Jno. 5. 16-18.

[i] ch. 20. 12.

7. (*v.* 18.) The law complete.

[7] And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of speaking with him upon Mount Sinai, the two tables of the testimony—tables of [j] stone, written with the finger of God.

[j] *cfr.* 2 Cor. 3. 3. Heb. 8. 10.

work of the sanctuary—quite according to the meaning of the name and Jacob's prophecy (Gen. xlix.). Dan furnishes his assistant in Aholiab. But beside this, in every wise-hearted man God puts wisdom, and employs him in the building of His habitation. The principle is easy of application, but would that we could know more of what is here for us!

(vi.) The emphatic reiteration of the injunction as to the Sabbath closes all this instruction. The keeping of it is the sign of covenant-relationship subsisting with Jehovah, and of a people set apart to Him. Indeed no *labor* marks us as the people of the Lord so truly as enjoyed *rest* does,—a rest according to the Word, and on the basis of God's own rest. But this is ours in Christ only, and the numerical stamp here assures us that under this first covenant it will not be attained. The law makes nothing perfect; and this assurance seems enforced by—

(vii.) The faint shadow of a seventh section, in which indeed the law is now

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. xxxii.–xxxiv.)

The breach of the first covenant, and the mixture of law and grace in the second,—the "ministration of death."

(XXXII.)

The action of divine righteousness.

1. (vv. 1-6.) The rebellion of the people.

1. [1] AND the people saw that Moses [*] delayed to come down from the mount, and the people gathered unto Aaron, and said unto him, [†] Up, make us a god who shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him. And Aaron said unto

[*] *cf.* Matt. 24. 48. 2 Pet. 3. 4.

[†] Acts 7. 40. ch. 20. 3.

completed and handed over to Moses on behalf of the people; but the covenant is already broken, and in a little more the tables of the covenant lie broken to fragments at the foot of the mount.

SUBD. 2.

IN that which follows here we have the breach of the first covenant and the establishment of the second,—that under which the people went into the land. Under the first, they could not really be said to have stood at all: it was no sooner made than broken; as under pure law none could stand. The trial of it, however, readily undertaken by those ignorant alike of themselves and of God, was, on that very account, and for the continual lesson of what man is, needed to be made, in order that God's grace might have room to show itself, as to self-righteousness it could not. Thus from the beginning God contemplated this second covenant rather than the first, and with it the tabernacle-types plainly connect themselves. The people are, according to this, already sinners, and the special priesthood of Aaron, with the whole mediatorial system connected with it, applies itself to this condition.

Yet we must not confound this second legal covenant with the "new" one, under which Israel will inherit the land, and find abiding blessing in the day yet to come. They are still in contrast, as the epistle to the Hebrews at large explains. And the covenant with Abraham, as is shown in that to the Galatians, refuses equally, as a covenant of promise, to be supplemented by conditions of law (chap. iii. 15–18). The Abrahamic and the new covenant are in substance one: the second legal covenant is in character but a modification of the first here, and in result like it,—nay, more completely what the apostle calls it, a "ministration of death" and of "condemnation." (2 Cor. iii.)

The lesson is for us, and in all this Israel only represented man as man—ourselves, therefore, for we are men: "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." (Prov. xxvii. 19.) Therefore if "whatsoever the law saith it saith to them that are under the law," none the less is it "that *every* mouth may be stopped, and *all the world* may become guilty before God." Our interest in all that we find here is not, therefore, to be such as might be in a past history merely, but fully and intensely personal.

Under pure law, we no more than they could stand a moment. Who could think to stand before Him in rigor of its pure and holy requirements? But the trial is not complete when we have learned that. It is much more than this to realize that we are "without strength," and that we need, not assistance to keep the law, but true SALVATION.

"When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." The "due time" was when that was fully proved; and therefore the need of that which proved it,—the "ministration of death" and "of condemnation."

Not yet could God reveal aright His grace, though in proportion as the need declared itself so did the grace, and thus a mingled system—neither pure grace nor pure law, but just what in the thought of most the gospel should be. Therefore the need that the trial here should be more thorough and patient than the last, as now, when God has spoken of mercy in Himself, it can be. The trial in

them, Break off the [m]golden earrings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people broke off the golden earrings that were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he took them from their hand, and fashioned it with a graving-tool, and made it a [n]molten calf. And they said, This is thy god, O Israel, who brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To-morrow shall be a feast to [o]Jehovah. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt-offerings, and brought peace-offerings; [p]and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

[m] Ju. 8. 24-27. Ezek. 16. 17. Hos. 2. 8. *cfr.* ch. 35. 22.

[n] 1 Kings 12. 28. Ps. 106. 19, 20.

[o] 1 Cor. 10. 19-22. *cf.* 2 Kings 17. 28-41, with Jno. 4. 22.

[p] 1 Cor. 10. 7.

this case lasted until the captivity. Its issue was decisive, as "a ministration of death" must be. In the grace of the gospel, the *dead* hear the voice of the Lord, the life-giver, and live (Jno. v. 25).

But while the result to the people as a whole was thus protracted, the beautiful system of types connected with the law brought nigh to faith already, in measure, at least, the grace it needed. Externally the vail was over Moses' face; but where the law was allowed to do its work upon the conscience, and the soul realizing its guilt turned with it to God, it could with the Psalmist learn to say, "Thou art my hiding-place." The thirty-second psalm, with other kindred ones, throws a comforting light upon the way in which under the shadows of law grace could yet be realized. Let us not on that account confound the two conflicting elements in this second law-giving, nor deceive ourselves as to the necessary result of the mixture of law and grace. The grace thus mixed made it only a more searching exposure and demonstration of man's condition. It was a ministration of *death*.

1. In the first section here we have the action of divine righteousness in view of the rebellion of the people, while yet God acts as He will in the sovereignty of His grace. The legal covenant has not, of course, tied His hand in this respect, nor can He forget, though for the moment it might appear so, that promise to the fathers which we have seen to be that upon which He had acted in redeeming them out of Egypt. Nay, in fact, grace governs all, and the law itself is but its handmaid: its lessons, with all their sternness, do but shut us up to the necessity of grace.

(i.) In the rebellion of the people, human nature shows itself in the blindness and folly of its religious side. It will *make* a god rather than not have one, and is not competent to estimate the value of a god so made. Beyond doubt, even with the wisest of those that follow it, there is in idolatry more than the virtue of a symbolic teaching. There is a mysterious supernatural power which is supposed to reside in the image, and which, at least, has a strange fascination for men, as shown in the general spread of idolatry over the earth, its invasion of Judaism, and long afterward of Christianity. No folly seems more complete than that of bowing down to the work of one's own hands, yet here is shown out what in reality its power is. Not liking to retain God in his knowledge, man makes Him what he wishes Him to be—the reflection of his own passions and desires. These are what already control him, and so he but yields himself to their control in his idol. A new power is added to this when man's original choice becomes confirmed by the adoption of many and by lapse of time concealing its origin, so that it comes to have authority over the conscience as well as power over the heart,—authority which may soon overtop the other.

What Samuel says to Saul long afterward is illustrated here: "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is iniquity and idolatry." (1 Sam.

2. (7-14.) Moses' mediation.

7 q And Jehovah said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for r thy people whom thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt have s corrupted themselves: they have turned aside t quickly out of the way which I commanded them; they have made them a molten calf, and have bowed down to it, and sacrificed to it, and said, This is thy god, O Israel, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt. And Jehovah said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a u stiff-necked people. Now, therefore, let me alone, that my wrath may kindle against them, and I will make an end of them, and v make of thee a great nation. And Moses w besought Jehovah his God, and said, Why, Jehovah, should thine anger kindle against x thy people, whom thou hast brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the y Egyptians speak, saying, For evil he brought them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from off the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce anger, and repent of the evil against thy people! z Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thyself, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens, and all this land of which I have spoken I will give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it forever. And Jehovah a repented of the evil which he had spoken of doing to his people.

3. (15-29.) The consecration of the Levites.

15 And Moses turned and went down from the mount with the two tables of testimony in his hand; the tables were written on their two sides,—on this side and on that were they written: and the tables were the b work of God, and the writing the writing of God, graven on the tables. And Joshua heard the noise of the people

q Deut. 9. 8-21.
r *ctr.* ver. 11.
s Deut. 4. 16. Deut. 32. 5. Hos. 13. 2.
t Ju. 2. 17. Ps. 106. 13. Gal. 1. 6. Hos. 6. 4.
u ch. 33. 3, 5.
v Num. 14. 12. *ctr.* 1 Kings 11. 31.
w Ps. 106. 23.
x ch. 33. 13.
y Num. 14. 13. Deut. 32. 26, 27. Josh. 7. 9. *cf.* Eph. 1. 14.
z Gen. 22. 16, etc.
a 2 Sam. 24. 16. Ps. 106. 45. *ctr.* Rom. 11. 29.
b *cf.* Dan. 5. 5.

xv. 23.) So we find it in this case; and of how many more subtle forms is this as true!

The effect is seen in the manner of their new worship, consecrated though they would have it with Jehovah's name. "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to sport"—after the heathen manner. They were "broken loose," as was said of them directly afterward. "Inasmuch as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things that are not seemly." (Rom. i.) Broken loose from God, as men they degrade themselves. In Aaron's fall with them, both the ruin of man and the unrepenting grace of God are manifest. God is marking him out for the high-priesthood in Israel, while he is making the golden calf below!

(ii.) Above, Jehovah now makes known to Moses the sin of the people, laying the burden of them upon him—"Thy people, whom thou broughtest up,"—putting their case into his hands, so that if he but said so, they should be destroyed, and Moses' own seed become the nucleus of a nation. But He well understands the man whom He is addressing; and Moses shows himself a beautiful type of the great Intercessor, the Servant of the divine glory and the people's need. Moses is here fully established as the mediator of the covenant in the new condition of things that was to ensue.

(iii.) So too Levi consecrates himself to his office now (Deut. xxxiii. 8, 9,) by

as they shouted, and he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp. And he said, It is not the sound of the shouting for victory, and it is not the sound of the cry of defeat; it is the voice of responsive song I hear. And it was so, as he came near the camp, that he saw the calf and the dancing: and Moses' anger kindled, and he cast the tables out of his hand, and [c]brake them beneath the mount. And he took the calf which they had made, and burned it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strewed it on water, and made the children of Israel [d]drink. And Moses said unto [e]Aaron, What has this people done to thee that thou hast brought a great sin upon them? And Aaron said, Let not my lord's anger kindle: thou knowest the [f]people, that they are set on evil. And they said unto me, Make us a god who may go before us; for this Moses, the man who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him. And I said unto them, Who hath gold, let them break it off; and they gave it to me; and I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf. And Moses saw that the people were [g]broken loose, (for Aaron had let them loose for a hissing among their adversaries,) and Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, To me, whoever is for Jehovah! And there gathered unto him all the sons of [h]Levi. And he said unto them, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel: Put ye, every man, his [i]sword upon his thigh: go through and return from gate to gate in the camp, and slay every one his brother, and every one his friend, and every one his neighbor. And the sons of Levi did according to Moses' word, and there fell of the people in that day about three thousand men. For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to-day unto Jehovah,—yea, every man with his son and with his brother, that he may give you blessing to-day.

c *cf.* Heb. 8, 8, 9.
d Gal. 6. 7.
e *cf.* ch. 4. 14.
f *cf.* Gen. 3. 12. ch. 23. 2.. Gal. 2. 12.
g *cf.* ch. 1 21.
h Deut. 33. 8-11. Num. 25. 7-13. Mal. 2. 4-6.
i Ezek. 9. 5, 6. 1 Pet. 4.17.

4. (30-35.) The failure of atonement on the part of Moses.

[4] And it was so, on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin, but now I will go up to Jehovah: it [j]may be I shall make atonement for your sin. And Moses returned unto Jehovah, and said, Ah, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them a god of gold! Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—! and if not, [k]blot me, I pray thee, out of thy

j Gen. 32.20. *cfr.* Lev. 16. 15, 16. with Heb. 9. 11, 12. 2 Cor. 1. 19, 20.
k *cf.* Rom. 9. 3.

the demonstration of a fidelity to God which in zeal for His glory allows the interference of no human tie. The tables of the first covenant are broken beneath the mount, in token that the covenant itself is at an end; and judgment only remains, executed by the hands of kindred; for the breach with God loosens all bonds at once.

(iv.) Moses himself also fails in the atonement that he proposes. This is impossible, even to a devotion well-nigh unequaled among mere men. But "none can by any means redeem his brother, nor give unto God a ransom for him." (Ps. xlix. 7.) To the eager demand, therefore, "And now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of the book that Thou

book that thou hast written! And Jehovah said unto Moses, Whoso sinneth against me, him will I blot out of my book. And now go, lead the people to the place of which I have spoken to thee: behold, my Angel shall go before thee; but in the day of visitation I [l]will visit their sin upon them. And Jehovah [m]plagued the people, because they had made the calf which Aaron made.

(XXXIII–1-11.)

The breach declared and the mediator.

1. (*vv.* 1-6.) The need of repentance.

2 [1]And Jehovah said unto Moses, Depart, go up hence,—thou and the people whom thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it, (and I will send an [n]Angel before thee, and will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite,) unto a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiff-necked people: lest I consume thee by the way. And when the people heard this evil news, they mourned, and no one put on him his ornaments. And Jehovah had said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiff-necked people: if one moment I come up into the midst of thee, I shall consume thee: and now [o]put off from thee thine ornaments, that I may know what to do unto thee. And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments at Mount Horeb.

2. (7-11.) The separation from the camp, and the mediator seen.

[2]And Moses took the tent and pitched it [p]outside the camp, far from the camp, and called it the tent of meeting; and it was so that every one who sought Jehovah went out to the tent of meeting which was outside the

[l] Ps. 99. 8. Jer. 8. 12.

[m] ver. 20. 2 Sam. 12. 14.

[n] ch. 32. 34. ver. 3. ver. 12. ver. 14.

[o] Is. 3. 18, 23. *cf.* 1 Pet. 3. 3, 4. 1 Pet. 5. 6.

[p] Heb. 13. 13. 2 Tim. 2. 19.

hast written," God can only reply, "Whoso sinneth against Me, him will I blot out of My book." Yet He confirms the commission to lead the people to the land He had promised, though the stroke of judgment could not be so averted. Another would one day offer Himself in atonement for more than Israel, and would not fail.

2. Although God will still, therefore, fulfill His promise, and bring them into the land, yet in the meanwhile His own relationship to them is compromised, nor can He in this condition go in their midst as heretofore. They must take the place of those whose sins had separated them from the Lord, for in such a place alone could He show them mercy. Moses too must be recognized as the one through whom alone He could have to say to them,—the mediator, and though not an atoning mediator, the type of Him who would be that. This, then, is plainly the meaning of what is before us in this section; and its importance is plain.

(i.) In the first place, then, Jehovah declares to them through Moses why He cannot take His place in the midst. Were He to do so, they would be consumed by His holiness. Let them strip themselves of their ornaments and await His judgment in the attitude of repentance. For to take the place of condemnation is repentance. The people accordingly strip themselves of their ornaments at the mount.

(ii.) In further sign of where they are, Moses removes from the camp the tent

camp. And it came to pass, when Moses went out unto the tent, that all the people rose up and took their stand, each one at the entrance of his tent, and looked after Moses until he had gone into the tent. And it was so, when Moses had gone into the tent, that the pillar of cloud descended and stood at the entrance of the tent: and he spake with Moses. And all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, and all the people rose up and worshiped, every man at the entrance of his tent. And Jehovah spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend. And he returned unto the camp; but his attendant, Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, [q]departed not from within the tent.

[q] 1 Sam. 1. 22. Ps. 27. 4.

(XXXIII. 12.—XXXIV.)

The restoration of the covenant and the glory which accompanies it.

1. (vv. 12-23.) Grace, yet with God's face hidden.

3. [1]And Moses said unto Jehovah, See, thou sayest to me, Bring up this people; and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and also thou hast found grace in mine eyes; and now if indeed I have found grace in thine eyes, show me, I pray thee, thy [r]way, that I may know thee, so as to find grace in thine eyes; and consider that this nation is thy people. And he said, [s]My presence shall go [with thee], and I will give thee rest. And he said unto him, If thy presence go not [with us], carry us not up hence. And wherein shall it be known that I have found grace in thine eyes,—I and thy people, except in that thou goest with us? and we shall be [t]distinguished,—I and thy people, from all the people which are upon the face of the earth. And Jehovah said unto Moses, I will do even this thing which thou hast spoken, for thou hast found grace in mine eyes, and I know thee by [u]name. And he said, I beseech

[r] Ps. 103. 7. Ps. 25. 9.

[s] *cf.* ver. 3. Matt. 28. 20.

[t] 1 Kings 8. 53. 1 Cor. 14. 24, 25. Acts 5. 13.

[u] Is. 43. 1. Jno. 10. 3. Rev. 2. 17.

which had been heretofore connected with the worship of Jehovah, and pitches it outside and afar off, and calls it "the tent of meeting," for all who now sought the Lord had to go out to the tent. There, too, the intercourse between Jehovah and Moses was seen by the awe-stricken people—Jehovah speaking with Moses out of the pillar of cloud, "face to face," as a man speaketh with his friend. It is here that the peculiar glory of Moses is announced (Deut. xxxiv. 10), and it is here that we see especially the image of that far greater Prophet whom he represented. Christ, the Son of the Father, in perfect communion with the Father, is the One who alone can thus occupy the Mediator's place. How blessed to see Him in it! Upon this link with God our all depended when every natural link was broken.

3. The way is now prepared for restoration, and this we find in the concluding section. Moses takes fully the ground of grace and of God's promise, and God reveals Himself afresh, declaring His grace, though it is not yet the full grace of the gospel. Here, of necessity, all these types fail: they are the shadow, not the image. The special testimony of law to man, that *by* law the way to God could not be opened, would have in that case itself failed.

(i.) In the first place, then, the grace of God is emphasized, and as sovereign grace, in dealing with the sin that had come in. It is Moses' plea, and to it God answers promptly, proclaiming that He shows mercy as He will. But to Moses'

thee, show me thy [u]glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of Jehovah before thee, and I [w]will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy upon whom I will show mercy. And he said, Thou art not able to [x]see my face, for no man seeth me and liveth. And Jehovah said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt take thy stand upon the rock, and it shall be, when my [y]glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will [z]cover thee with my hand while I pass by; and I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my [a]back, but my face shall not be seen.

2. (xxxiv. 1-7.) Law and grace in the second covenant.

[2] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like the former ones, and I will write upon the tables the words which were upon the former tables, which thou brakest; and be ready in the morning, and

[u] Is. 6. 2 Cor. 4. 6.

[w] Rom. 9. 15. *ctr.* Tit. 2. 11.

[x] 1 Tim. 6. 16. *cf.* 2 Cor. 3. 18.

[y] *cf.* Luke 19. 13.

[z] Ps. 32. 7.

[a] *ctr.* Jno. 16. 29, 30. Jno. 17. 26. 1 Jno. 2. 13.

desire to behold His glory He can only answer in a qualified way. Man cannot see His face and live, and as yet He had not come who could say, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Moses, therefore, had to be covered by the divine hand while the glory passes by, and then sees but the back part,—a thing most significant as to the character of the law as then given,—the way into the holiest not manifested, no ability to stand before Him, thus God Himself in His full blessedness unknown. It is a thoroughly kindred thought with that which Solomon uttered in the day of the dedication of the temple, when, the glory of God filling the house, all the priests were driven out!—"The Lord hath said that He would dwell in the thick darkness." Every Spirit-taught Christian will recognize the contrast in the words of the apostle, "We walk in the light as God is in the light."

(ii.) The tables are now renewed, and the commingling of grace and law is fully seen in the new-made covenant. God declares Himself as Jehovah, the Self-existent God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin,—it would seem as if grace were here fully manifest. Straight athwart that magnificent declaration comes this other which seems the antipodes of it,—"but who will in no wise clear the guilty, visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, to the third and fourth generation." There was yet no justification of the ungodly then,—no gospel,—no attainment of a positive standing before Him. This the apostle implies in Rom. iii. 25, 26, where he contrasts God's dealing with "sins done aforetime" (*R. V.*) with the grace of the "present season." In the former case, it was a "passing over of sins." In the present, it is the *justification* of him who believeth in Jesus. And it is God's righteousness as seen in the cross that alone reveals how He could thus "pass over." With no revealed ground of righteousness thus yet through which grace might reign (chap. v. 21), and man yet under the trial of law, which has since given sentence (chap. iii. 19), the gospel could not as yet be spoken out. This was all the ministration of death and condemnation, although God did not by this tie up His own hands, nor was faith left without encouraging assurance, as we have seen.

But as yet even the mercy declared was but the "back part" of God's glory, and His face could not be seen. He forgave iniquity, transgression, and sin, and went on with those who merited to be cut off; but with One who could not clear the guilty—and where was the man who was not that?—it required a more positive utterance than this to give any one to know how for himself these two things were to be reconciled, and to give the heart its rest.

go up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present thyself there unto me on the top of the mount. And no man shall come up with thee; and [b] no man shall be seen on all the mount; nor shall the flocks and herds feed before that mount. And he hewed two tables of stone like the former ones; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up into Mount Sinai, as Jehovah had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone.

[b] ch. 19. 12.

More than this needs to be considered before the place of the Mosaic legislation can be rightly apprehended. The question of its silence comparatively as to the eternal condition of the soul has been raised and answered in very different ways. The fact itself is plain: there is remarkable silence; which if a Warburton can weave it into an argument for "the divine legation of Moses," is still a real perplexity to many a soul. Let it be indeed an opinion to be condemned that the fathers only received promises for this transitory life, yet the contrast in this respect between the Old Testament and the New presses for explanation. Only the more so, that we know (but know by the New Testament) that Abraham and the partakers of his faith *did* look for a heavenly country, and a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Why is it left to the New Testament to tell us this? The hearts of men have never been able to satisfy themselves without some faith as to eternity; and where we know they had it, was it likely to have lacked expression? Least of all, where, as the apostle tells us, the *life* expressed it, is it to be supposed that the *lips* would not utter the hope of which the life was full?

But if this be so, *something* must have operated to keep this largely out of the Old-Testament pages, where, as a divine communication, we would expect it not only to be found, but prominent. Can we give any account of this? Any partial account will be helpful surely; and such at least can be given, as we shall see.

A growing revelation, under dispensational differences of light and divine government, has plainly been God's way of procedure with men from the beginning. He had to teach us both what we are and what He is and does in view of what we are. And the two had to be developed in correspondence with one another. What we are shown to be is the dark background of His own glorious revelation of Himself. But the proof as to what man is (upon which the other waited) required a long detail, slowly accumulating. As Israel had their forty years in the wilderness, so the world had its forty centuries ere "when we were yet without strength," and in the "due time" at last arrived, "Christ died for the ungodly." (Rom. v. 6.)

The books of the Old Testament—the revelation of all that long waiting-time—are characteristically books of law, the Pentateuch and the outgrowth from it, and partake of its slow development and reserve. While for faith there are all through glimpses of deeper things, which we, looking back, can now see everywhere through it, yet on the surface it is God dealing with man here in this world to which these dispensational dealings belong. The race is here, though eternity is before each individual of it. But the law settles nothing as to eternity; blessed be God that it does not! God never proposed to take man to heaven by law-keeping, or to send him to hell for *not* keeping it. Thus you can neither find heaven among its rewards nor hell among its penalties. The "hell" of our common version, into which the Old Testament declares "the wicked shall be turned" (Ps. ix. 17), is now well known to be "sheol," or "hades," the place of the dead. And that which in the New Testament is the real hell of fire—"gehenna"—is in the Old Testament but the valley of Hinnom at Jerusalem. Even "the soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. xviii. 4,) refers not, as is commonly supposed, to the second death, but to the first; the soul of a person being, in the Scripture-language, often just the person himself, as where

And Jehovah descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of Jehovah. And Jehovah passed by before him, and proclaimed, [c]Jehovah, Jehovah God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will in no wise clear [the guilty], [d]visiting the sins of fathers upon children, and upon children's children, to the third and fourth [generation].

3. (*vv.* 8-28.) Separation to God emphasized.

[3] And Moses hastened and bowed his head to the earth, and worshiped; and said, If now I have found grace in

c Ps. 86. 15, etc. Eph. 2. 4.

d *ctr.* Rom. 4. 7, 8. Ps. 103. 10.

Balaam, for instance, desires that his "*soul* may die the death of the righteous" (Num. xxiii. 10, *marg.*), where, of course, the second death is not at all in question.

It is, indeed, the death with which we are all familiar which the law threatens to those who disobey it, just as long life in the land, not eternal life in heaven, is held out as a reward for obedience in the fifth commandment: a life which *would* have been "eternal" (Mark x. 17,) if the law could have found that *perfect* obedience which no mere man ever rendered. Failing in this, it stopped every mouth from self-vindication, and brought all the world in guilty before God (Rom. iii. 19).

As to eternity, God was free still to show His grace, while as to man's claim upon His righteousness, it was demonstrated that he had none. If death, the death that is upon all, were the law's penalty, every grey hair upon a man's head was his manifest condemnation; and this was so complete, so universal, that just the completeness of it has blinded the eyes of most as to the reality of it. They suppose that if the law says, "The man that doeth them shall live in them," a life beyond death must be meant; or, similarly, that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die" must mean the "second death," while they do not see that in this case the demonstration intended by the law as to man's condition would be completely lost. It would be left to eternity to decide whether all had, in fact, failed under it or not; and each one would decide this according to his inclination. But the law as it was, allowed of no such escape; and its sentence, "There is none righteous,—no, not one," appealed to the handwriting of God Himself for confirmation. The finger that had marked the tables of stone marked with no less clearness its verdict on those that were under them.

Death had come in through sin, and death had passed upon all men because all had sinned. It was the manifest stamp upon the fallen creation. But that which had come in by the sin of one, God in the law would give every one opportunity and help to justify his exemption from, if he were able. How fitting the means used which for the most carnal should bring conviction, even while God's mercy was left free to display itself in a region where, as the law could not convey the reward, so it could no longer enforce the condemnation!

The silence of the law as to eternity was as significant, then, as its utterance was plain in riveting upon man the conviction that by the deeds of the law should no flesh living be justified. And if God added to the law here given the second time the declaration of forbearance and mercy, without which the trial itself could not have continued to its perfect issue—though God permitted, in His goodness, man to turn over the blotted leaf and begin a new one,—yet as there was still no justification of the ungodly, and the measure of requirement necessarily must be still the measure of those ten commandments now afresh given word for word as before—then all was hopeless under this new covenant as under the old.

Faith might discover, however, that these new tables were destined, in fact, for the safe keeping of the ark of the covenant, and to be covered by the "capporeth," at once the throne of God and the blood-sprinkled "mercy-seat"!

thine eyes, O Lord, let the Lord, I pray thee, go in our midst: [e] for it is a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine [f] inheritance. And he said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people will I do wondrous things, such as have not been wrought in all the earth, nor in any of the nations; and all the people in the midst of whom thou art shall see Jehovah's doing, for it is a thing for fear that I will do with thee. Observe that which I command thee this day: behold, I drive out from before thee the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it become a snare in the midst of thee; but ye shall break down their altars, and [g] shatter their pillars, and cut down their Asherah-[images]. (For thou shalt not bow down to another god: for Jehovah, whose name is [h] Jealous, is a jealous God.) Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go whoring after their gods, and sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou [i] eat of his sacrifice; and thou [j] take of their daughters for thy sons, and their daughters go whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go whoring after their gods. Thou shalt make thee no [k] molten gods. The feast of unleavened bread thou shalt keep: [l] seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread, which I commanded thee in the appointed time of the month Abib, for in the month Abib thou camest forth out of Egypt. All that openeth the womb is mine; and all thy cattle that is male, the firstlings of ox or sheep. And the [m] firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb, and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break its neck. All the first-born of thy sons thou shalt redeem. And none shall appear before me empty. [n] Six days shalt thou work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in ploughing-time and harvest thou shalt rest. And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks; [even] of the first-fruits of wheat-harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the turn of the year. [o] Three times in the year shall all thy males appear before the Lord Jehovah, the God of Israel. For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy border, and no man shall [p] covet thy land when thou goest up to appear before Jehovah thy God three times in the year. Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven; and the sacrifice of the [q] passover-feast shall not be left unto the morning.

e cf. ch. 33.3.
f Deut. 32.9. Ps. 135. 4. Eph. 1. 11.
g Deut. 7. 2. Ju. 2. 2. Josh. 9. 7.
h ch. 20. 5. Song 8. 6, 7.
i 1 Cor. 8. 1 Cor. 9. 19, 20, 27-29.
j 2 Cor. 6. 14.
k Is. 42, etc.
l ch. 12. 15.
m ch. 13. 13.
n ch. 20. 8.
o ch. 23. 14.
p Gen. 35. 5. 1 Chron. 17. 10.
q ch. 12. 10.

(iii.) The promises are now renewed, and with them the warnings as to separation from the Canaanites and their impure idolatries, to worship the Lord with devotedness of heart and life. It is not difficult to see, in the ordinances that are here afresh insisted upon, the typical holiness of the people who are to be, as Moses has just now asked that they might be, the Lord's inheritance.

The first of the first-fruits of thy ground shalt thou bring unto the house of Jehovah thy God. Thou shalt not [r]boil a kid in its mother's milk.

4. (27-35.) The glory testing the people.

[s]And Jehovah said unto Moses, Write thou these words, for after the purport of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel. And he was there with Jehovah [s]forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water; and he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten words. And it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai,—and the two tables of the testimony were in Moses' hand when he came down from the mount,—that Moses [t]knew not that the skin of his face [u]shone by reason of his talking with him. And Aaron and the children of Israel saw Moses, and, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. And Moses called them, and Aaron and all the princes of the assembly turned back to him; and Moses spake to them. And after that, all the children of Israel drew near; and he gave them in commandment all that Jehovah had spoken unto him on Mount Sinai. And Moses ended speaking with them; and he had put a [v]vail over his face; but when Moses went in before Jehovah to speak with him, he took off the vail until he went out. And he went out and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded. And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone; and Moses put back the vail over his face until he went in to speak with him.

r ch. 23. 19.

s ch. 24. 18.

t *cf.* Ju. 16. 23.

u Matt. 17. 2. Acts 6. 15.

v 2 Cor. 3. 13-18.

(iv.) The covenant is now completed by writing upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments. The period of forty days repeated in the mount may show that this covenant, like the former one, has a probationary character. What follows develops this, as the apostle shows us in his commentary upon it (2 Cor. iii.). Let us remember that the first time Moses went up, when the covenant was purely legal, no glory reflected itself in his face: the second time it was evidently connected with the display of God's glory in His goodness, though not yet by any means His full-orbed grace. Still there was glory; but under law it could not be beheld even as thus reflected. Moses has, therefore, to cover it with a vail while speaking to the people,—a vail which is removed when he goes again into the presence of the Lord. This vail characterizes the dispensation in which the precious things of God's grace, as we have been looking at them, were necessarily under the cover of typical ordinances. For us the vail is done away in Christ. For Israel it will be also when they turn to the Lord; for it is unbelief only that retains it now.

Thus a probationary law, whatever may be mixed with it, is still but law. The least tincture of this destroys the character of grace, darkens the glory of God, and deprives the soul of all its blessedness, as well as of the moral power, which is only found in happiness in God. For us the glory is in the face of Jesus Christ, where to see it is to rejoice in it. But all through that time of legal distance we may be assured that for those who individually turned to the Lord the vail was in some measure taken away. Christ's day was seen: types shadowed and prophets prophesied of Him. For us His full glory is revealed, and if there be *any* distance and *any* vail, it is in the lingering of a vail upon the heart—it is unbelief.

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chap. xxxv.–xl.)
The realization of the house of God.

SECTION 1. (Chap. xxxv.–xxxvi. 7.)
The free-will offerings.

(XXXV. 1-3.)

The Sabbath-law: the acknowledgment of divine sufficiency.

1. AND Moses gathered all the assembly of the children of Israel, and said unto them, These are the things which Jehovah hath commanded us to do: Six days shall work be done, and on the seventh day ye shall have a holy [w] Sabbath of rest unto Jehovah: whoever doeth work upon it shall be put to death. Ye shall kindle no fire in all your habitations on the Sabbath day.

[w] ch. 34. 21. Num. 15. 32-36.

SUBD. 3.

THE construction and setting up of the tabernacle, immediately to be filled with the divine glory, is the seal of the restored covenant, as what answers to it typically is the seal of the new. God dwelling among men is what the presence of Christ on earth pledged and introduced. In Christian times to follow, the Church is God's dwelling-place. In the age to come, it will be again said of Jerusalem, "The Lord is there." While as to the eternal state it is said, "The tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them." No wonder that with this the book of redemption ends. It is the only and the complete satisfaction of the heart that has learnt in redemption what God is, and now would be beggared indeed to be without Him. To whom He has made Himself thus necessary He has pledged Himself by that very necessity which He has created.

Of all this, Exodus as yet gives us but the types; but the types are full of a wondrous sweetness also. God has emphasized them here by an unusual repetition, in which he shows us, after man's opposition has come to an end, how that which He had before determined He at last carries out. How often is it repeated here that all was done at last, as—before the breach had come at all—"Jehovah commanded Moses"! Nay, these commandments themselves distinctly show how the breach itself had been foreseen, and how through and in it all God would glorify Himself: not as Master and Lord over it all merely, but much more in that stooping to those made helpless by their sin, and under the burdens with which by their sin they made Him serve!

Here, then, is, at least in picture, the result reached: God is with men: the tabernacle of God is upon earth!

There are three sections, very easily distinguishable: the first showing us the provision made and how God thus obtains what He seeks—a free-will offering from His people's hearts. In the second we see the tabernacle itself grow into completeness. In the third it is set up, anointed, and filled with the wondrous presence and glory of God.

Sec. 1.

The first section reminds us of what we have seen to be a necessity if God is to dwell among men; it must be amid their *praises*. And that not merely as if God must have His due, but because also these praises are the only effectual proof of hearts brought back to Him, filled and satisfied, exulting in Himself. With such happy hearts God must surround Himself if He is to dwell among men; and in this sense their gifts and hands must build His tabernacle.

1. But before this is entered upon here comes one of those wonderful revealing touches which we have so often in these types—at first sight striking us by its apparent strangeness and incongruity, but in that very way calling our attention the more. Why should a law as to the Sabbath, so often given before, be introduced here again, at the commencement of the appeal for free-will offerings for the tabernacle? One well-known commentator can only suppose that in the

(vv. 4-29.)

The call for help, both as to materials and construction.

2. And Moses spake unto all the assembly of the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing that Jehovah hath commanded, saying, Take from among you a heave-offering unto Jehovah; every one whose heart is [x] willing, let him bring it—Jehovah's heave-offering. Gold and silver and brass and blue and purple and scarlet and fine linen and goats' [hair]; and rams' skins dyed red, and seal-skins, and acacia-wood; and oil for the light, and spices for the anointing-oil, and for the incense of sweet spices; and onyx-stones, and stones for setting, for the ephod, and for the breastplate. And all that are wise-hearted among you shall come and make all that Jehovah hath commanded: the tabernacle, its tent, and its covering; its clasps and its boards; its bars, its pillars, and its sockets; the ark and its staves, the mercy-seat, and the covering-vail; the table and its staves, and all its vessels, and the show-bread; and the lamp-stand for the light, and its utensils, and its lamps, and the oil for the light; and the altar of incense, and its staves, and the anointing-oil; and the incense of sweet spices, and the entrance-screen for the entrance of the tabernacle; the altar of burnt-offering, and the brazen grate which belongs to it, its staves, and all its furniture; the laver and its stand; the hangings of the court, its pillars, and their sockets, and the screen for the gate of the court; the pegs of the tabernacle, and the pegs of the court, and their cords; the garments of service, for ministry in the holy place, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons for priestly service.

[x] 1 Chron. 29. 5. 2 Cor. 8. 5, 11, 12. 2 Cor. 9. 7. Mark 12. 41. Ju. 5. 2. Acts 20. 35.

construction of a work of this kind the people might have thought that they were freed from the necessity of any suspension of labor!

But if we seek a spiritual reason, we may find it in this, that rest indeed is only possible in God—in that divine sufficiency which is able to bear all demands upon it. And is not this the first requisite for all sufficiency on our part, this rest in God? a Sabbath *to* Jehovah, because Jehovah is known as the God of all deliverances, acting from Himself and for the glory of His name? It is this that enables us to bring Him our free-will offering and build His tabernacle. And therefore it is not strange, but simple, that it should be found here, insisted on in the peremptory fashion of the law indeed, but even thus not without its corresponding truth as solemn for the soul.

Thus, then, are we taught in a mystery, that if we are to bring to God, we must first receive of Him, if we are to work for Him, we must first rest in Him; and good it is that He should command us thus to rest in Him.

2. And now we have the call for help as to the tabernacle, both in furnishing materials and in the work: all being precisely specified by Him whose word must furnish thoroughly unto every good work. It is not enough that we have will to serve Him; we must learn from Himself also what He can accept. Would that the service of His people were thus always measured and defined! What they had they brought, little or much, and it was accepted; for when was the service of a willing heart refused by God? A widow's "two mites, which make a farthing" may be here of more value to Him who discerns the heart than the

And all the assembly of the children of Israel went out from before Moses. And they came, every one whom his heart stirred up, and every one whom his spirit made willing,—they brought Jehovah's offering for the work of the tent of meeting, and for all its service, and for the holy garments. And they [y] came, the men with the women, all the willing-hearted; they brought brooches and earrings and rings and necklaces, and all kinds of golden things: even every one who waved a wave-offering of gold unto Jehovah. And every man with whom was found blue, or purple, or scarlet, or fine linen, or goats' [hair], or rams' skins dyed red, or seal-skins, brought them. All those who offered a heave-offering of silver and brass brought Jehovah's offering; and every one with whom was found acacia-wood for all the work of service, brought it. And all the [z] women who were wise of heart spun with their hands, and brought what they had spun, of blue and of purple, of scarlet and of fine linen. And all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom spun goats' [hair]. And the [a] princes brought onyx-stones and stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breastplate; and spices, and oil for the light, and for the anointing-oil, and for the incense of spices. The children of Israel brought a free-will offering unto Jehovah, every man and woman whose heart made them willing to bring for all the work that Jehovah had commanded to be done by the hand of Moses.

[y] *ctr.* ch 32. 2.

[z] *ctr.* 2 Kgs. 23. 7.

[a] *ctr.* Neh. 3. 5.

(v. 30—XXXVI. 7.)

The gifts of the Spirit for the work, and its fruit in the people.

3. And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, Jehovah hath called by name Bezaleel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; and he hath filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all workmanship; and to devise skillful work, to work in gold and silver and brass, and in cutting stones for setting, and in carving of wood,—to work in all skillful work. And he hath put in his heart [ability] to teach,—both in him and in Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart to work all manner of work of the engraver, of the designer, and of the embroiderer in blue and purple, in scarlet and fine linen, and of the weaver,—of those doing all kinds of work, and devising skillful designs. And Bezaleel and Aholiab shall work, and every wise-hearted man, to whom Jehovah hath given wisdom and

gifts of many that are rich. Upon the detail we can say little, however: each must learn individually with God what he can do.

3. Finally, we have the gifts given by the Spirit for the work: and here we find in the chief man raised up a representative of Judah, quite according to the part that Judah afterward plays with regard to the tabernacle and that into which it passes,—the temple for which David provides and which Solomon builds.

understanding to know how to do all the work of the sanctuary-service, according to all that Jehovah hath commanded.

And Moses called Bezaleel and Aholiab and every wise-hearted man into whose heart Jehovah had put wisdom, every one whose heart stirred him up to draw near to the work to do it; and they received from Moses all the offering which the children of Israel brought for the work of the sanctuary-service, to make it, and they still brought a willing-offering morning by morning. And there came unto him all the wise men who did the work of the sanctuary, every man from his work which they were doing, and they spake unto Moses, saying, The people are bringing too much,—more than enough for the service of the work which Jehovah commanded to be done. And Moses commanded, and they caused it to be proclaimed through the camp, saying, Let not man or woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing; for the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to be done, and [b]too much.

[b] 2 Chron. 31. 10. *cf.* Mal. 3. 10.

SECTION 2. (Chap. xxxvi. 8—xxxix.)

The growth of the work.

(XXXVI. 8-38.)

The tabernacle itself.

1. AND every wise-hearted man among them that wrought the work made the [c]tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue and purple and scarlet, cherubim of skillful work made he them. The length of each curtain was eight and twenty cubits, and the breadth of each curtain was four cubits: all the curtains had one measure. And he coupled five curtains one to another; and [the other] five curtains he coupled one to another. And he made loops of blue on the edge of one

[c] ch. 26. 1-14.

With him is associated, however, one of a tribe we should least expect to see in such a place—one of the tribe which afterward led in apostasy in Israel—the tribe of Dan. Thus God's grace can work, and knowing that all *is* grace, why should we wonder at it? But with these there is work for all who had wisdom, —in whose heart God had put wisdom,—none is refused.

The fruit of the Spirit, too, in the hearts of the people is beautiful: they bring so much, that they have to be restrained from bringing! How good a thing to see, and how seldom indeed seen—a thing like this in the work of the Lord.

Sec. 2.

In the second section we find the growth of the tabernacle to completion; and here it is that we have the repetitions which have been already noticed. The difference between the detail of the patterns of heavenly things given before and the present is principally in the order in which they are presented; first, the tabernacle itself being given us; then the vessels of the tabernacle, what was in it or around it; and then the priestly garments, or what had to do with entrance and worship. These are the three subsections, the number 3 having naturally a large place in all this part.

1. The tabernacle comes first, evidently because it is the house of God itself which we are now seeing put together as a whole. Before it was rather one among many objects in connection with the wider plan of salvation. Now all

curtain at the end of the set; and so made he in the edge of the outermost curtain in the second set. Fifty loops made he in the one curtain, and fifty loops made he in the edge of the curtain in the other set: the loops were opposite one to another. And he made fifty clasps of gold, and coupled the curtains one to another with the clasps: so the tabernacle was one. And he made curtains of goats' [hair] for a tent upon the tabernacle: eleven curtains made he them. The length of one curtain was thirty cubits, and four cubits the breadth of one curtain: the eleven curtains had one measure. And he coupled five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves. And he made fifty loops in the edge of the outermost curtain in the one set; and fifty loops made he in the edge of the curtain in the other set. And he made fifty clasps of brass, to couple the tent together, that it might be one. And he made a covering for the tent of rams' skins dyed red, and a covering of seal-skins above it.

And he made the [d] boards for the tabernacle of acacia-wood, standing up: ten cubits the length of a board, and a cubit and half the breadth of each board. Each board had two tenons, equidistant from one another: thus did he make for all the boards of the tabernacle. And he made the boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards for the south side on the right hand; and he made forty sockets of silver under the twenty boards, two sockets under one board for its two tenons, and two sockets under another board for its two tenons. And for the second side of the tabernacle northward he made twenty boards, and their forty silver sockets; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board. And for the rear of the tabernacle westward he made six boards; and two boards made he for the corners of the tabernacle at the rear; and they were twain below; but they were whole together toward its head in the one ring: thus he did to both of them in the two corners. So there were

[d] ch. 26. 15-29.

other objects seen are seen in relation to it. Thus the incense-altar which before was detached from the tabernacle itself to find its place in connection with the sanctification of the priesthood, is now among the vessels of the sanctuary where it belongs.

But what does its numerical place point out? In the earlier series of types it occupies the fourth place, and this evidently points out its character as belonging to the wilderness,—God come down in it to man. Here in the account given there is no change from the former one, except that what was before commanded is now accomplished. But the numerical place may point to what is there and here insisted on, that the tabernacle is *one*. There is internal unity; there is, beside, no other tabernacle of God but this. There is one Christ and no other; in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and in whom we are filled up. He is not one of many incarnations of God, which has been or which will be, but one for eternity the same; and to Him, as in His temple, shall be "glory *in the Church* by Christ Jesus throughout all the generations of the age of ages." (Eph. iii. 21.)

eight boards, and their silver sockets,—sixteen sockets; under every board two sockets. And he made bars of acacia-wood; five for the boards of the one side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the tabernacle for the rear westward. And he made the middle bar in the middle of the boards to reach from end to end. And he overlaid the boards with gold; and he made their rings of gold for places to receive the bars, and he overlaid the bars with gold.

And he made the [e]vail of blue and purple and scarlet and fine twined linen, of skillful work made he them with cherubim; and he made for it four pillars of acacia, and overlaid them with gold: their hooks were of gold; and he cast for them four sockets of silver. And he made a screen for the entrance of the tent, of blue and purple and scarlet and fine twined linen, embroiderer's work; and its five pillars and their hooks, and he overlaid their capitals and their connecting-rods with gold, but their five sockets were of brass.

(XXXVII., XXXVIII.)

[e] ch. 26. 31-37.

The vessels: types of a Saviour and His salvation.

1. (XXXVII. 1-9). The throne.

2. [1] And Bezaleel made the [f]ark of acacia-wood, two cubits and a half the length of it, and a cubit and a half the breadth of it, and a cubit and a half the height of it. And he overlaid it with pure gold within and without, and made a border of gold to it round about. And he cast for it four rings of gold upon its four feet, even two rings upon the one side of it, and two rings upon the other side of it. And he made staves of acacia-wood, and overlaid them with gold; and he put the staves into the rings upon the sides of the ark, to bear the ark. And he made a mercy-seat of pure gold, two cubits and a half the length of it, and a cubit and a half the breadth of it. And he made two golden cherubim, of beaten work he made them at the two ends of the mercy-seat,—one cherub at the one end and the other

[f] ch. 25. 10-20.

Blessed be God! there is not room even in eternity, for any future glory to surpass this! There is room only for its wondrous anthem to show its power to fill infinity with praise. If of Zion, its earthly shadow, God can say, "This is My rest forever: here will I dwell, for I have desired it," how much more must it be said of this! *Conditions* may change: the wilderness give place to the land which is the "glory of all lands;" under the unchanging brightness of skies where storm is not, the "tent upon the tabernacle" be removed, so that its glory shall be fully exposed; the tabernacle form may pass into the temple:—with all this, the delight of God in His beloved changes not,—His "rest" is disturbed no more!

Admire the beauty of these many-hued curtains, where the golden clasp of divine glory embraces the blue loop of heaven's condescending love! Thus are they united into one, and droop their folds over the board-work overlaid with the gold again. This is the Church, as we have already seen in the beauty put upon her,—the glory of Christ her Lord.

2. And now we come to the vessels of the tabernacle, in which we find portrayed for us the salvation which the dwelling of God with man implies. That

cherub at the other end: of one piece with the mercy-seat made he the cherubim at the two ends thereof. And the cherubim stretched out their wings above, covering the mercy-seat with their wings; and their faces were toward each other,—toward the mercy-seat were the faces of the cherubim.

2. (vv. 10-16.) The table: Christ as sustainer of communion.

[2] And he made the [g]table of acacia-wood: two cubits the length of it, and one cubit the breadth of it, and a cubit and a half its height. And he overlaid it with pure gold, and made for it a gold border round about. And he made unto it a margin of a handbreadth round about, and made a gold border to its margin round about. And he cast for it four rings of gold, and put the rings upon the four corners which were to its four feet. Close to the margin were the rings, places to receive the staves to bear the table. And he made the staves of acacia-wood and overlaid them with gold, to bear the table. And he made the vessels which were upon the table,—its dishes, and its spoons, and its flagons, and its cups to pour out with, of pure gold.

g ch. 25. 23-29.

3. (17-24.) The lamp-stand: Christ risen, and the light of the Spirit.

[3] And he made the [h]lamp-stand of pure gold, of beaten work made he the lamp-stand, its base and its stem: its cups, its knops, and its flowers were of one piece with it. And there were six branches coming out of its sides, —three branches of the lamp-stand out of the one side of it, and three branches of the lamp-stand out of the other side of it: three cups made like almonds in one branch, with a knop and a flower; and three cups made like almonds in the other branch with a knop and a flower: so for the six branches coming out of the lamp-stand. And in the lamp-stand were four cups made like almonds with their knops and their flowers; even a knop under two branches from it, and a knop under two branches from it, and a knop under two branches from it, for the six branches coming out of it. Their knops and their branches were of one piece with it: all of it was one beaten work of pure gold. And he made its seven lamps, and its snuffers and snuff dishes, of pure gold. Of a talent of pure gold he made it, with all its vessels.

h ch. 25. 31-39.

4. (25-29.) The incense-altar: where the practical life becomes an offering of praise.

[4] And he made the [i]incense-altar of acacia-wood, a cubit long, and a cubit broad—foursquare; and its height two cubits: its horns were of one piece with it. And he overlaid it with pure gold,—its top, and its sides round about, and its horns; and he made it a border of gold round about. And he made for it two rings of gold

i ch. 30. 1-5.

His name might be "Immanuel" ("God with us"), they called the Son of Mary "Jesus," ("Jehovah the Saviour"), because He was to save His people from their sins (Matt. i. 22-25.)

I have not much to add to what has been already said with regard to these precious types, which, moreover, fall, in general, into the same numerical place as before. There are, however, now (in this and the following part) seven minor

under its border, upon its two corners, on its two sides, for places to receive the staves to bear it with. And he made the staves of acacia-wood, and overlaid them with gold. And he made the holy anointing-oil, and the pure incense of sweet spices,—perfumers' work.

5. (xxxviii. 1-8). The brazen altar and the laver: responsibility doubly met.

5 And he made the [j]altar of burnt-offering of acacia-wood, five cubits long and five cubits broad—foursquare, and three cubits high. And he made its horns upon its four corners: its horns were of one piece with it. And he overlaid it with brass. And he made all the furniture of the altar,—the pots and the shovels and the basins, and the flesh-hooks and the fire-pans,—all its furniture he made of brass. And he made for the altar a grating of net-work of brass under the ledge of it beneath, reaching the middle of it. And he cast four rings for the four ends of the brazen grate, for places to receive the staves. And he made the staves of acacia-wood, and overlaid them with brass; and he put the staves into the rings in the sides of the altar, to bear it with. Hollow, with boards, he made it.

j ch. 27. 1-8.

And he made the [k]laver of brass, and its stand of brass, of the [l]mirrors of the attending-women, who attended at the entrance of the tent of meeting.

k ch. 30. 18.

l 1 Sam. 2. 22. cf. Jas. 1. 23-25.

6. (vv. 9-20.) The court: victory over sin.

6 And he made the [m]court: for the south side on the right the hangings of the court were of fine twined linen, a hundred cubits, their pillars twenty, and their sockets

m ch. 27. 9-19.

divisions instead of six, as there: a number which speaks for itself in connection with these closing portions of the book. As already noticed, the incense-altar fills its own place here among the vessels of the sanctuary: the *fourth* place, because, as we have seen, the practical life is brought into the sanctuary in this way, transformed by the knowledge of redemption into the priestly offering of "thanksgiving and praise."

The brazen altar fills the fifth place, as before; and connected with it, as it seems to me, is the note as to the laver, that it was made of the mirrors of the women attending the tabernacle. This does not, I think, as it might seem, claim for itself a sixth section, both because the court of the tabernacle which follows it, holds that in the prior account, and also that this is followed in its turn by what has evidently the character of a seventh—the tale of the complete amount of metal used.

From another point of view there seems to me a most natural and beautiful thought suggested by this close association of the brazen altar with the laver. For if the former show us, as is evident, our responsibility measured and met in atonement, how simple is the connection of this with the self-judgment intimated in the brazen laver! Is it not so that the knowledge of sin put away for us is that which puts it away from us? that the realization of its judgment in Another is that which accomplishes its judgment in ourselves? The association of the brazen altar with the laver has thus its justification in experience.

And the women's sacrifice of their mirrors, where all is so plainly typical, may represent the willing giving up of our own self-estimates—in general, some form of self-flattery,—to find in the Word of God our true mirror, and fashion ourselves by it.

How beautiful, again, that then, in the next place, we come to the court, where the fine linen of practical righteousness is held up before the world!

twenty, of brass; the hooks of the pillars and their connecting-rods of silver. And for the north side a hundred cubits, their pillars twenty, and their sockets twenty, of brass; the hooks of their pillars and their connecting-rods of silver. And for the west side, hangings of fifty cubits, their pillars ten, and their sockets ten; the hooks of the pillars and their connecting-rods of silver. And for the east side toward the sunrise fifty cubits: the hangings for the one wing fifteen cubits, their pillars three and their sockets three; and so for the other wing: on this side and on that side of the gate of the court, hangings of fifteen cubits, their pillars three and their sockets three. All the hangings of the court round about were of fine twined linen; and the sockets for their pillars of brass, their hooks and their connecting-rods of silver; and the overlaying of their capitals of silver: and all the pillars of the court were joined with rods of silver. And the screen for the gate of the court was embroiderers' work, of blue and purple and scarlet and fine twined linen; and the length was twenty cubits, and the height in the breadth was five cubits, answering to the hangings of the court. And their pillars were four and their sockets four, of brass; their hooks of silver, and the overlaying of their capitals and their connecting-rods, silver. And all the pegs of the tabernacle and of the court round about it were of brass.

7. (21-31.) Completion of the work.

[7] [n]These are the things numbered of the tabernacle—the tabernacle of the testimony—which were numbered according to the direction of Moses, for the service of the Levites, by the hand of Ithamar, the son of Aaron the priest. And Bezaleel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that Jehovah commanded Moses. And with him was Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, an engraver and designer and an embroiderer in blue and in purple and in scarlet, and fine linen. All the gold that was used for the work in all the sanctuary-work, even the gold of the offering, was twenty and nine talents, and seven hundred and thirty shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary. And the [o]silver of them that were numbered of the assembly was a hundred talents, and a thousand, seven hundred, and five and seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary: a bekah a head,—[that is,] half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for every one who passed among the numbered ones from twenty years old and upward, for six hundred and three thousand and five hundred and fifty men. And the hundred talents of silver went for casting the sockets of the sanctuary, and the sockets of the vail,—a hundred sockets for the

n 1 Kgs. 7. 13-51.

o ch. 28. 19.

Finally the seventh section here gives the estimates of the metals used, and we find whence the silver of the rods and sockets was derived. It has already been considered, however.

hundred talents,—a talent for a socket. And of the thousand seven hundred seventy and five [shekels] he made hooks for the pillars, and overlaid their capitals, and made rods for them. And the brass of the offering was seventy talents and two thousand and four hundred shekels. And with it he made sockets for the entrance of the tent of meeting, and the brazen altar, and the brazen grating for it, and all the furniture of the altar, and the sockets of the court round about, and the sockets of the gate of the court, and all the pegs of the tabernacle, and all the pegs of the court round about.

The priestly garments. (XXXIX. 1-43.)

1. (*v.* 1.) The material.

3. [1]And of the blue and purple and scarlet they made garments of service for ministering in the holy place, and made the holy garments for Aaron, as Jehovah commanded Moses.

2. (2-7.) The ephod.

[2]And he made the [p]ephod of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. And they beat the plates of gold, and cut it into threads, to work it in among the blue and the purple and the scarlet and the fine linen, designer's work. They made shoulder-pieces for it, joining it,—at its two ends was it joined together. And the band for fastening it, which was upon it, was of one piece with it, like the work thereof, of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, as Jehovah commanded Moses. And they wrought the onyx-stones, inclosed in plaits of gold, graven with the engravings of a signet, according to the names of the children of Israel. And he put them upon the shoulders of the ephod, stones of memorial for the children of Israel, as Jehovah commanded Moses.

[p] ch. 28. 6-12.

3. (8-21.) The breastplate.

[3]And he made the [q]breastplate of skillful work, like the work of the ephod, of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen; it was foursquare: they made the breastplate double: a span was the length of it, and a span the breadth of it, being doubled. And they set in it four rows of stones; [one] row, a sardius, a topaz, and an emerald,—the first row; and the second row, a carbuncle, a sapphire, and a diamond; and the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; and the fourth row, a chrysolite, an onyx, and a jasper: inclosed in plaits of gold, in their settings. And the stones were, according to the names of the children of Israel, twelve—according to their names: like the engravings of a signet, every one according to his name, for the twelve tribes. And they made upon the breast-

[q] ch. 28. 15-28.

3. The priestly garments come in the third place, identified as they are with the means of drawing near to God. Here each minor section is closed with the words, "as Jehovah commanded Moses." And here, again, there are just seven of them. The numerical place of each is as given before, with the exception of the last two items of the dress, which are reversed. The coats of fine linen are in the fifth place instead of the sixth, the diadem in the sixth instead of the

plate chains like cords, of twined work, of pure gold. And they made two plaits of gold, and two gold rings, and put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate. And they put the two twined chains of gold upon the two rings at the ends of the breastplate; and the two [other] ends of the two twined chains they put upon the two plaits, and put them on the shoulders of the ephod in the front of it. And they made two rings of gold, and put them on the two ends of the breastplate, upon the border of it which is upon the side of the ephod inward. And they made two rings of gold, and put them on the two shoulders of the ephod, beneath, to the front of it, close by the coupling thereof, above the band of the ephod. And they bound the breastplate by its rings to the rings of the ephod with a cord of blue, that it might be above the band of the ephod, and the breastplate might not be loosed from the ephod, as Jehovah had commanded Moses.

4. (22-26.) The robe.

[4] And he made the [r] robe of the ephod of woven work, all of blue; and the opening of the robe in the middle of it was like the opening of a coat of mail, with a band round about the opening that it might not be rent. And they made upon the skirts of the robe pomegranates of blue and purple and scarlet, twined. And they made bells of pure gold, and put the bells between the pomegranates upon the skirts of the robe round about —between the pomegranates,—a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, upon the skirts of the robe round about, for ministry: as Jehovah commanded Moses.

[r] ch. 28. 31-34.

5. (27-29.) The coats.

[5] And they made [s] coats of fine linen, of woven work, for Aaron and for his sons, and the turban of fine linen, and the goodly caps of fine linen, and the linen breeches of fine twined linen, and the girdle of fine twined linen, and blue and purple and scarlet, embroiderer's work: as Jehovah had commanded Moses.

[s] ch. 28. 39, 40, 42.

6. (30, 31.) The diadem.

[6] And they made the [t] plate, the holy diadem, of pure gold; and wrote upon it in writing, with the engravings of a signet, Holiness unto Jehovah. And they fastened to it a lace of blue, to fasten it on the turban above: as Jehovah had commanded Moses.

[t] ch. 28. 36, 37.

7. (32-43.) Full completion.

[7] So all the work was [u] completed of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting: and the children of Israel had done according to all that Jehovah had commanded Moses, so had they done. And they brought the tabernacle

[u] *cf.* Gen. 2. 1.

fifth. It is not strange that in this enumeration we shall end with the latter, the final victory over sin being secured by the character of Him into whose hands all is put. Thus here for the first time the plate is called "the diadem."

As for the other change, the meaning of it is not so clear, although the number of responsibility is suitable enough where as here the ordinary priests come in,—our representatives; and well may we be reminded of it. For where do we more fail than in this character? and it is the root of all other failure.

unto Moses, the tent and all its furniture, its clasps, its boards, its bars, and its pillars and its sockets, and the covering of rams' skins dyed red, and the covering of seal-skins, and the covering-vail, the ark of the testimony and its staves, and the mercy-seat; the table, all its vessels, and the show-bread; the pure lamp-stand, its lamps,—the lamps to be set in order,—and all its vessels, and the oil for the light; and the golden altar, and the anointing-oil, and the incense of spices, and the screen for the entrance of the tent; the brazen altar, and the brazen grate which belonged to it, its staves and all its furniture, the laver and its stand; the hangings of the court, its pillars, and its sockets, and the screen for the gate of the court, its cords and its pegs; and all the vessels of service of the tabernacle for the tent of meeting; the garments of service for ministry in the sanctuary, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to serve as priests. According to all that Jehovah had commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel all the work. And Moses saw all the work, and, behold, they had done it as Jehovah commanded, so had they done it: and Moses [v] blessed them.

[v] *cf.* Gen. 1. 31.

SECTION 3. (Chap. xl.)

The tabernacle set up, anointed, and filled with the glory of God.

AND Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, On the [w] first day of the first month shalt thou set up the tabernacle of the tent of meeting: and thou shalt put therein the ark of the testimony, and shalt screen the ark with the vail. And thou shalt bring in the table, and set in order what is to be ordered. And thou shalt bring in the lamp-stand, and light its lamps. And thou shalt set the golden incense-altar before the ark of the testimony, and put to the tabernacle the entrance-screen. And thou shalt put the altar of burnt-offering before the entrance of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. And thou shalt set the laver between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it. And thou shalt set the court round about, and put the screen at the gate of the court. And thou shalt take the anointing-oil, and anoint the tabernacle, and all that is therein, and sanctify it and all its vessels: and it shall be holy. And thou shalt anoint the altar of burnt-offering, and all its furniture, and sanctify the altar: and the altar shall be most holy. And thou shalt anoint the laver

[w] Num. 7. 1.

Sec. 3.

The tabernacle is now complete, but still Moses has to wait for the word of the Lord to set it up. All through this part, however, the forwardness of man is repressed, and he is made to realize the necessity of dependence, and that with God alone is wisdom! The command is given for the first day of the first month of the second year of the exodus. A year had passed since the ordinance of the passover in Egypt, and their deliverance was now complete.

and its stand, and sanctify it. And thou shalt bring in Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the tent of meeting, and shalt wash them with water; and thou shalt clothe Aaron with the holy garments, and anoint him, and sanctify him that he may be priest unto me. And thou shalt bring his sons near, and clothe them with coats, and anoint them as thou anointedst their father, that they may be priests unto me; and their anointing shall be to them for an [x] everlasting priesthood throughout their generations. Thus did Moses; according to all that Jehovah had commanded him, so did he.

x Heb. 7.17.

And it was in the first month of the second year, the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was set up. And Moses erected the tabernacle, and put in its sockets, and set up its boards, and put in its bars, and reared up its pillars. And he spread out the tent above the tabernacle, and put the covering of the tent above upon it, as Jehovah had commanded Moses. And he took and placed the testimony in the ark, and put the staves upon the ark, and put the mercy-seat above upon the ark. And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, and placed the covering-vail, and screened the ark of the testimony, as Jehovah had commanded Moses. And he put the table in the tent of meeting, on the north side of the tabernacle outside the vail: and he set the bread in order upon it before Jehovah, as Jehovah had commanded Moses. And he placed the lamp-stand in the tent of meeting, over against the table, on the side of the tabernacle southward: and he lighted the lamps before Jehovah, as Jehovah had commanded Moses. And he put the golden altar in the tent of meeting before the vail: and he burned upon it incense of spices, as Jehovah had commanded Moses. And he put the screen at the entrance of the tabernacle. And the altar of burnt-offering placed he at the entrance of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and he offered upon it the burnt-offering and the meal-offering, as Jehovah had commanded Moses. And he placed the laver between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water therein to wash with, and Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet thereat: they washed when they came into the tent of meeting, and when they drew near the altar, as Jehovah had commanded Moses. And he set up the court around the tabernacle and the altar,

Of our deliverance it was but the shadow; but how inexpressibly blessed to see what was in God's heart embodying itself in these symbols, ere yet He could give plain utterance to them! The glory is vailed; but even so, in the very manner of its vailing God intimates His desire to remove it and to speak face to face. Oh may there be with us more boldness and eager desire of faith to enter into what God has made our own! Our dullness and indifference are indeed amazing, only surpassed by the measureless grace that invites us still!

and put the screen at the gate of the court: so Moses [y] finished the work.

Then the cloud [z] covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle. And in all their journeys, when the [a] cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, the children of Israel journeyed; but if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of Jehovah was on the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, [b] throughout all their journeys.

[y] ch. 39. 32.

[z] 1 Kgs. 8. 11. 18. 4. 5. 6. Rev. 21. 3.

[a] ch. 13. 21. 22.

[b] Heb 13.5.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF LEVITICUS.

AS Genesis is the book of Life, and Exodus the book of Redemption, so Leviticus is the book of Sanctification. But sanctification is separation *to God*, and essentially connected with drawing near to God, whose "dwelling is in the high and holy place." From the beginning of the book thus God speaks out of the tabernacle, which at the end of Exodus He has consecrated by His presence; and the middle of the book shows us (though but for a brief moment) the way opened to Himself there.

But sanctification is twofold: we are sanctified in Christ by the blood of atonement—the sanctification of the epistle to the Hebrews (which in the second series of Paul's epistles fills the Leviticus-place); and we are sanctified internally by the work of the Spirit (as in the cleansing of the leper the oil was put upon the blood). The work of atonement is the basis of all, and by it we are brought to God; the Spirit of God fits us practically for His presence. Thus Leviticus opens with the detail of the sacrifices, the glories of the accomplished work; then shows us the consecration of the holy priesthood, who draw nigh; then opens the sanctuary for us; after this the practical holiness that is needed is made known; and finally, man is seen with God, as in the feasts which (with their accompanying matter) close the book. These are in fact its divisions:—

1. (Chap. i.–vii.) The offerings: sanctification in Christ; identification with Him in the obedience by which many are made righteous.
2. (Chap. viii.–xv.) Association with Christ (the priests with the Priest) and fellowship resulting.
3. (Chap. xvi., xvii.) The purification of the heavenly sanctuary and the earthly people: Christ appearing in the holiest and from the holiest.
4. (Chap. xviii.–xxii.) Holiness in practical walk.
5. (Chap. xxiii.–xxvii.) Man with God: the way and the end.

The beautiful completeness and unity of purpose manifested here need no enlarging on.

NOTES.

DIV. 1.

THE general purport of the book is so clear that it can scarcely be needful to say more about it. The connection of its five divisions is also plain. The first division occupies us at once with one of the deepest, most fruitful, and glorious

subjects which could possibly be brought before us—the offerings, in which the whole heart of atonement is opened up to us: and not only this, but Christ in the perfection of His life as well as the wonder of His death—in the meat-offering. Here, then, we have before us what demands the most careful and the most reverential examination. It will not be strange if we give it much more than the usual space; and may God, who "only knoweth the Son," enlighten us and guard us from all that is unworthy of such a theme as this!

The offerings have their character in this, by which also they fill their numerical place, that they picture for us obedience in that which makes it truly such, the recognition of God as Sovereign, heart-felt recognition, the yielding one's self up to Him. In this, what we give up we find, and find eternally: it is the life that is really life, although in Christ we see it under the awful shadow from which we have been freed, just because He went into it.

This first division has two subdivisions, the first of which gives us the offerings by themselves, the second shows them in their relationships to the priest, the offerer, etc., it being thus in the first of these that God would concentrate our attention upon that which is so dear to Him, apart from all else. In the peace-offering, especially, perhaps, does this come out, where, although the very point of it might seem to be to show us man at peace with God through the offering, and at His table in fellowship with Him, yet these results are only seen in the second part, not the first, in which simply the offering itself is given, and three times over, in what seem almost identical words. May we earnestly consider what is in this way, with so much emphasis, brought before us!

SUBD. 1.

IN the first subdivision, then, we have the offerings in themselves, five in number, of which one, the meat, or as the Revised Version puts it, the *meal*-offering, is not a sacrifice, as no blood is shed in it, no atonement made; the other four are sacrificial: and here again two,—the burnt- and the peace-offering,—are of sweet savor, the last two not—the sin- and trespass-offerings—though here also the offering of the fat is distinguished from the rest, and is in one case (chap. iv. 31) expressly stated to be for a sweet savor.

In the order of *application* to the need of man, that which we have here is reversed; the meal-offering being also in general the appendage of the burnt-offering—"the burnt-offering and *its* meal offering." It is very evident, therefore, that which we have here is the divine order, the other the human. Here, as we may say, the ladder of divine grace is let down from heaven; in the other case it is raised up to heaven. This last is also the order of the gospels in which we find again these four offerings, in Matthew the trespass-, in Mark the sin-, in Luke the peace-, and in John the burnt-offering. All this will come up for more examination as we go on with the book.

But there is a doctrine to which we are now brought in connection with these offerings which we must examine briefly before we enter upon the detailed exposition of them. It is the doctrine of the

ATONEMENT.

We have had the thought presented to us in Exodus, just as we have had the offerings before us already; but it is in Leviticus that we come to the development of these. They could not have been treated of before without anticipating largely what we have now come to in the regular order of Scripture, always perfect and to be adhered to if we are to have proper apprehension of the truth it reveals.

In Genesis we had at the outset the effect of sacrifice in the acceptance of Abel. "He obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts" (Heb. xi. 4). In the Lord's words to Cain an offering for sin is plainly stated to be God's way of acceptance for the sinner. In Noah the *altar* first comes openly in sight, and God smells the sweet savor and will not curse. In Abraham's offering of Isaac we learn other most precious truths. In Exodus, at the passover, the

blood first assumes importance, and God declares, "When I see the *blood*, I will pass over you." They feed too upon the lamb. In confirmation of the first covenant at Mount Sinai, the blood is sprinkled upon the people, but the character of the covenant itself necessarily affects the significance of this. Not till we come to the twenty ninth chapter of Exodus do we find the word "atonement" used, which in Leviticus comes into such frequent use as nearly to equal in occurrence all the rest of the Old Testament.

The word used for making atonement is *kahphar* in its *Piel* or intensive form. "The correctness of the generally accepted radical significance, 'to cover,' 'to cover up,'" says Kurtz, "is fully established from the related dialects." When however we ask in what sense we are to understand this "covering" there are conflicting views. Thus Kurtz again says, "Whether the word be understood in the sense of withdrawing from view, or of protecting from danger, the use of the word in other connections seems to show that neither of these interpretations can be sustained." Why should there not be however a use large enough to allow of different implications in different connections, as the idea of "covering" naturally would? It is safer at least to be content with this idea, and not insist upon a difference which may lead us astray.

To the idea of "covering," however, we must add the thought of "propitiation" —a "*propitiatory* covering." Thus Keil says, "The meaning 'to make atonement' lies at the foundation in every passage in which the word is used metaphorically, such as Gen. xxxii. 20, where Jacob seeks to *expiate* the face of his angry brother, *i. e.*, to appease his wrath with a present; or Prov. xvi. 14, 'The wrath of a king is as messengers of death, but a wise man *expiates* it,' *i. e.*, softens, pacifies it; Isa. xlvii. 11, 'Mischief (destruction) will fall upon thee, thou wilt not be able to *expiate* it,' that is say, to avert the wrath of God which has burst upon thee in the calamity, by means of an expiatory sacrifice. Even in Isa. xxviii. 18, 'And your covenant with death is disannulled' (annihilated) the use of the word is to be explained from the fact that the guilt which brought the judgment in its train could be cancelled by a sacrificial expiation; so that there is no necessity to resort to a meaning which is altogether foreign to the word, viz., that of covering up by blotting over. . . . The meaning of expiation which properly belongs to the verb *kipper*, is not only retained in the nouns *kippurim* and *kapporeth*, but lies at the root of the word *kopher*, as we may clearly see from Ex. xxx. 12-16, where the Israelites are ordered to pay a *kopher* at the census, to *expiate* their souls."

To this may be added that the Septuagint uniformly translates the verb *kahphar* in its primary application by *exilaskomai*, to "propitiate," a word which in the New Testament is taken up (only dropping the intensive *ex*) when we are told that Christ was "a merciful and faithful High-Priest to *make propitiation* for the sins of the people." (Heb. ii. 17, *R. V.*) Moreover, in their translation of *kapporeth*, the mercy-seat, they have set the example of dropping the "ex" and speak of it (more literally than our common English word) as the *hilasterion*, or "propitiatory." (Heb. ix. 5.) Thus the inspired Greek confirms the meaning of the Hebrew.

In general, as we may see by Keil, the modern writers prefer to render "expiate," rather than "propitiate," though not refusing the latter. In fact both thoughts are in the word. As Dr. Wilson says, "This word conveys the idea both of pacification of wrath and of the covering of transgression." Three of the texts referred to by Keil are better rendered "propitiate" than "expiate." And the Greek word adopted in the New Testament is used with "sins" as its object, just as in the Septuagint, although the force of the word is to "propitiate." The Revised Version gives, well enough, "make propitiation *for* sins," but it necessarily disguises the fact that "sins" is the direct object of the verb. If we say to "expiate sins" we make less direct and positive the force of propitiation in the word. The only complete rendering would be "to make propitiation for sins by expiation."

LEVITICUS.

DIVISION 1. (Chap. i.–vii.)

The offerings: sanctification in Christ; identification with Him in the obedience by which many are made righteous.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. i.–vi. 7.)

The offerings themselves.

The whole burnt-offering.

1. (*vv.* 1-9.) The primary type, the bullock: the doer of God's will.

(I.)

1.[1] AND Jehovah called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the [a]tent of meeting, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, [b]When any man of you presenteth an offering unto Jehovah, ye shall present your offering of the cattle, of

a Ex. 25.22. *ctr.* Ex. 19. 18, 19. *cf.* 1 Thes. 5. 18. Eph. 4. 21. Heb. 1. 1, 2.

b *ctr.* Gen. 1. 3.

The thought in the Hebrew word then is that of "propitiatory covering." Dr. Wilson adds to what was just now quoted from him, that it "does not seem to express of itself the full and adequate satisfaction for sin." But this is surely implied in the fact that as the covering for sin it really propitiates. It must really in the sight of God cover,—cover, so that God is propitiated by it: how far does that differ from making "full and adequate satisfaction"?

To proceed:—atonement is by an offering; even where, as in Num. 16, incense was used, or where in the case of extreme poverty a meal-offering was substituted for the true offering for sin, this character is always found. The need of insisting upon this arises from the contention that what is called propitiation is only reconciliation, and that man, not God, is the object. This is true, if we speak of reconciliation; false, with regard to propitiation: the two, although often confounded, are not the same. No doubt, our word "atonement" even had originally the force (according to its derivation) of "setting at one" or reconciling. That cannot be allowed to settle its present force, much less to dictate as to the Scripture doctrine, which assuredly is a doctrine of propitiation. The offering is to God—the propitiation Godward.

It is true that from the primitive meaning of *kipper*, God could not be the formal object. It is sin that is covered, or the sinner, and not God. It is not sin however that is propitiated or the sinner: if the thought of propitiation be in the word at all, the object of propitiation must be God.

And when we come to the New Testament, out of the only two occurrences of the verb *hilaskomai*, one expresses the very thought. The publican, praying in the temple, is made by our Lord to cry, convicted of his sin, "God be propitiated toward me the sinner!" The translations in general give "be merciful," but it is hard to understand why, when "be propitiated" is the natural force of the words, and the place in which the publican is represented to be is so necessarily suggestive of propitiation. In the temple went up constantly the smoke of sacrifice; the *kapporeth*, or mercy-seat, God's throne ideally, though for their sins not actually now, and to which his eyes were directed, spoke of it, as we have seen. And if the difference is insisted on as by some it is, between the thought and language of the heathen in this respect and that of Scripture, the more this difference and the importance of it are dilated on, the more impossible is it to suppose the lips of absolute truth putting into the prayer of an accepted sinner, words in their natural sense so plainly suggestive of a thought alien and derogatory to God, as they say this is of propitiating Him!

the herd and of the flock. If his offering be a [c]burnt-offering of the [d]herd, he shall present a [e]male, without blemish: at the [f]entrance of the tent of meeting he shall present it for his [g]acceptance before Jehovah. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering; and it shall be accepted for him, to make [h]atonement for him. And he shall kill the bullock before Jehovah; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall present the blood, and [i]sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar which is at the entrance of the tent of meeting. And he shall [j]flay the burnt-offering, and cut it into its [k]pieces. And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put [l]fire upon the altar, and lay wood in order on the fire; and Aaron's sons, the priests, shall lay the pieces, the [m]head and the [n]fat, in order upon the wood which is on the fire that is upon the altar: but its [o]inwards and its [p]legs shall he [q]wash in water; and the priest shall burn the [r]whole upon the altar, a burnt-offering, an offering by fire, a [s]sweet savor to Jehovah.

o Ps. 40. 8; Matt. 11. 29. *p* Acts 10. 38. *q* Jno. 19. 28; Matt. 26. 54. *r* Jno. 10. 17, 18. *ctr.* ch. 2. 2. *s* Gen. 8. 20, 21; Eph. 5. 2; *ctr.* ch. 4. 11, 12.

c Gen. 22. 2. Ex. 29. 15-18. Num. chs. 28, 29. *cf.* Jno. 10. 18. Ps. 40. 6. Heb. 10. 5-10.
d Prov. 14. 4.
e Ex. 12. 5.
f *cf.* Eph. 2. 13.
g Eph. 1. 6.
h Heb. 7. 27.
i Heb. 12. 24.
j *cf.* Jno. 8. 46.
k *ctr.* ver. 17. *cf.* Song 5. 9-16.
l Heb. 12. 29. Is. 33. 14, 15.
m Col. 2. 3. Phil. 2. 5.
n *ctr.* Deut. 32. 15. Ps. 22. 17.

But if we are seeking things rather than words, the Old Testament is even from the beginning plain enough. "Put on incense and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them," says Moses to Aaron, "for there is *wrath gone out from the Lord*; the plague is begun. . . . And he put on incense, and made atonement for the people; and he stood between the dead and the living: and the plague was stayed" (Num. xvi.) How vain to say that here there was no appeasal of the wrath, no propitiation of God!

When upon the numbering of the people by David, "God was displeased with this thing, and smote Israel," and when David cried to God in view of the angel's drawn sword stretched over Jerusalem, the "angel of the Lord commanded Gad to say unto David, that David should go and set up an altar unto the Lord in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. . . . David built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, and called upon the Lord; and he answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt-offering. And the Lord commanded the angel, and he put up again his sword into the sheath thereof." (1 Chron. xxi.)

The facts of Scripture thus abundantly illustrate its doctrine.

This, then, is the essential meaning of atonement or propitiation: we need not further anticipate what the offerings will now show us abundantly. What *is* in God's sight a "propitiatory-covering" and why it is this, will be apparent as we go on with the picture-lessons of the book of Leviticus.

1. THE BURNT-OFFERING comes first here, and the meaning suggested by its numerical place is evident. It is the only offering which altogether goes up to God upon the altar. "Burnt-offering" is more literally the "offering that goes up." It is the offering that is *all* offering,*—the typical offering,—GOD'S in the most eminent way: and correspondingly His delight is shown in it; the altar derives its name from it; the fire of it is never allowed to go out; it is the basis of the peace-offering (chap. iii. 5), and that with which and in proportion to which, the meal- and the drink-offering are directed to be offered. Every thing marks this as indeed and in the fullest sense, the first of the offerings.

* So much so that twice (Deut. xxxiii. 10; Ps. li. 19) *kahlil*, which means "whole," is given for it.

2. (10-13.) The sheep or goat: self-humbled to the sinner's place.

[2] And if his offering be of the flock, of the [t]sheep or of the [u]goats, for a burnt-offering, he shall present it a male without blemish. And he shall kill it on the side of the altar northward before Jehovah; and Aaron's

[t] *cf.* ch. 5. 11.
[u] *cf.* ch. 4. 23.

As connected with this it was, in contrast with the sin- and trespass-offerings, though not with others, and not at all times, a *free-will* offering. The common version of verse three must not, however, be quoted for this: the translation should be as it is generally agreed, not "he shall offer it of his own voluntary will," but "he shall offer it *for his acceptance*. Nor did it always depend upon his free-will, being in many cases prescribed, as in general following a sin-offering, and in other cases. Still, however this might be, the thought of a free-will offering is certainly what the burnt-offering presents. Nothing could make it so precious and acceptable to God as it being significant of full and entire devotedness. It could not have been else a *whole* offering—nothing kept back. It is thus what the burnt-offering psalm expresses: "Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not; mine ears hast Thou digged: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast Thou not required; then said I, Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God" (Ps. xl. 6–8.) Here indeed Christ replaces all the legal sacrifices with his own marvelous obedience; and "by the which will," says the apostle, "we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once." (Heb. x. 10.)

This unreserved devotedness, and to death, nothing bringing Him on earth, with nothing therefore to do on earth, no motive for action except the will of God,—this is what the burnt-offering expresses. How beautifully is it said therefore of the burnt-offering as of no other, "he shall offer it for his *acceptance!*" The exhaustion of wrath in the sin-offering might put away his sin; he might be free from every charge on this account: blessed as that is, it is not all that God has for us in what *He* calls "acceptance." This must be not a mere negative—nothing *against*, but identification with the glorious perfection of that obedience unto death of which He Himself says, "Therefore doth My Father love Me because I lay down My life, that I might take it again." Thus our acceptance—the favor in which we stand—is "in the Beloved." (Eph. i. 6.)

Now to look at the details of the offering: the usual burnt-offering was of the cattle—of the herd or of the flock. It was not to be a hunted, wild animal, but one which offered itself (so to speak) "at the door." The "pigeon" which was also permitted, was also domesticated, while the nests of the turtle-dove were all around in gardens and olive-yards (of course when in the land.) The offering must not be far to seek, or requiring craft or toil to secure it; it would not in that case truly represent the blessed Victim. If of the herd, it must be a male, unblemished, presented before the Lord with the offerer's hand upon its head, to be accepted for him.

There has been much dispute as to the meaning of the "laying on of hands." Its importance may be noticed from the place the apostle gives it in the "foundation" of Judaism, "the word of the beginning of Christ" (Heb. vi. 1.) The margin is here evidently right, for no one could be exhorted to "leave" "the principles of the doctrine of Christ,"—that is Christianity. Christianity on the other hand is the "perfection" to which, in contrast with the "shadow" of it in the law, Paul is exhorting the Hebrews to "go on." Accordingly in this "foundation" which they are not to lay again, nothing distinctive of Christianity is found. Christ Himself, the true foundation, is not named, but only "repentance from dead works, and faith toward *God*, and resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." These are things that remain of course as true for Christians as for Jews, but Christ as come and His work for sinners are not named. Thus as the apostle goes on to show (chap. ix.), the conscience of the Jew was never perfected. Instead of the reality of what puts away sin, they had but the symbols, and it is of these we read in connection with the plain *present* truths of repentance and of faith in God, and the truths of *future* resur-

> sons, the priests, shall sprinkle its blood upon the altar round about. And he shall cut it into its pieces, with its head and its fat; and the priest shall lay them in order upon the wood which is on the fire that is upon

rection and judgment. *Between* them, just where we need the knowledge of sin put away to confirm and fill out the first, and to enable us to meet in peace and confidence the future, the Jew found what?—a "teaching"—not "doctrine"—"of baptism and of laying on of hands."

It is "teaching," rather than "doctrine," for it is not of the underlying truth in these things he is speaking, but that in place of the full soul-enfranchising reality itself, there were taught ordinances—"baptisms" and "laying on of hands." The "baptisms" are again referred to and explained in chap. ix. 10, 13. The laying on of hands is only here. Both were sacrificial, the purgings by blood, but which could not satisfy the conscience; the "laying on of hands," by which the offerer dedicates the victim solemnly as for himself. It is *his* need, his faith, that is expressed in it. Hence, though there is not in this case any open confession or transference of sin, we see that it is implied; and when over the scape-goat the sins of the people are confessed and put upon its head, we recognize at once that that is only a voice given to the act.

It may be, and has been asked, however, why only then should expression be given thus to it? would it not be rather against the thought of imputation of sin being elsewhere expressed by it? Thus it has been urged that the goat "was not even put to death, but sent alive into the desert; in fact it was not a sacrifice at all, and proves nothing with regard to the ritual of sacrifice." To which Kurtz adds, "that a verbal explanation was thought necessary as an accompaniment to the act itself, is a proof that here, and nowhere else, the imposition of hands was to be regarded as a laying on of sin."

This seems, however, to be a lack of discernment. Rather is it that the exceptional treatment of the scape-goat, which is distinctly said to be (in connection with the goat which is Jehovah's lot) for a sin-offering, necessitates the explanation. We need to be plainly told that the laying on of hands in this exceptional case means what it means elsewhere; and accordingly this is openly declared to us. The meaning of the scape-goat must, of course, wait for exposition till we reach the "day of atonement."

The victim thus presented is then accepted as the atoning offering for him who brings it. We see that it is not only the sin- or the trespass-offering that makes atonement, but the burnt-offering also. And although so much is not directly said of the peace-offering, yet it is implied: for "the life of the flesh is in the blood," we are told later (chap. xvii. 11,) "and I have given it you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls." We need not quote the rest of the verse, as the meaning is contested, and here it is not the place to examine it; but it is plain by this that wherever the blood is put upon the altar, it is for atonement. Thus all the sacrifices are atoning.

But for this the offering must be slain: for "without shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb. ix. 22.) The very word here used for the killing (*shachat*) is sacrificial. In opposition to Delitzsch, who asserts that the killing "was merely the means of procuring the blood and offering the sacrifice, and hence it was not called *killing*, but 'slaughtering,'" Kurtz says: "This thought, however, is derived, not from the Hebrew, but from the German idiom, where the notion of slaughtering has certainly received such an application. And the fact that the word *shachat* is never used in ordinary life to denote a literal slaughtering for the purpose of cooking the flesh (*tabach* is the word generally used) ought to have created some distrust of this attempt to define *shachat*. Moreover, we actually find this word applied to the slaying of a man, where there could not have been any other object than to put him to death, viz., for a crime that was thought worthy of death (*e. g.*, Num. xiv. 16; Ju. xii. 6, etc.)

> the altar: but the inwards and the legs he shall wash in water; and the priest shall present the whole and burn it upon the altar; it is a burnt-offering, an offering by fire, a sweet savor unto Jehovah.

. . . Its primary meaning was probably to throw down, to strike to the ground, to destroy, to lay in ruins. In the more developed stage of the language it became a technical term for the killing of an *animal;* from that it settled down into a special term belonging to the sacrificial worship, and thus acquired so definite and fixed a meaning, that people were afraid to apply it to the slaughtering of an animal for the ordinary purposes of life."

It is striking and blessed to see how God has fenced round this institution of sacrifice from the mistakes which nevertheless even those who are at bottom orthodox are falling into. Here the emphasis laid upon the slaying of the victim corresponds to the emphasis put on the "shedding of blood" by the apostle. It is killed in one appointed place, and expressly "before Jehovah," why insist upon this, if there were no special significance attaching to what is thus marked out as concerning Him and taken notice of by Him?

Indeed, if the eye were not off Christ, who is the substance of these shadows, how would it be possible to misinterpret in this way? That is above all the failure of those German theologians, who with their indefatigable research and abundant learning are leading so many at the present day: even the very best of them fail strangely, signally, in most important points; and that because, though they see Him in the types, He is not the central and sufficient explanation of them. At the best, they reason up to Him, not down from Him, and thus continually lose the very One they seek for. May He keep us from this,—our eyes ever and first of all upon Himself!

If we see Christ in the burnt-offering, how is it possible to say of *His* death, that it had no special significance? How the Old Testament itself rebukes the unholy thought! "For He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of My people was He stricken; . . . when thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. . . . Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; *because He hath poured out His soul unto death,* and was numbered with the transgressors, and He bare the sin of many." (Isa. liii. 8, 10, 12.)

It is this slighting of the death of the victim which has opened the way for much strange teaching as to the true meaning of atonement, and even to the denial of it altogether, as in the Swedish heresy of Dr. Waldenström. The meaning of the blood is separated from the thought of death, and turned by degrees into its opposite, because the "blood is the life." So it is, and yet the *outpoured and sprinkled* blood are not the types of life, but of death. This we must almost immediately consider.

The New Testament is abundantly plain. It speaks of the blood of Jesus fully and with emphasis as the type before us does; but it speaks also of the death of the Lord in the most distinct and definite relation to atonement, and as fundamental to it. Even Caiaphas' unconscious prophecy declared "that Jesus should die for the nation." (Jno. xi. 51). The Lord expands this and emphasizes it in the next chapter: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground *and die,* it abideth alone; but if it *die,* it bringeth forth much fruit." (xii. 24.) The apostle Paul tells us that "in due time Christ died for the ungodly," (Rom. v. 6,) yea, that He "died for our sins, according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. xv. 3); and in Hebrews, the great storehouse of New Testament interpretation as to all this service, that "He was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man," and that "for this cause He is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions which were under the first testa-

3. (14-17.) The dove or pigeon (heavenly).

[3] And if his offering unto Jehovah be a burnt-offering of [v] fowl, then he shall present his offering of turtle doves or of young pigeons. And the priest shall bring

v Jno. 6. 38. cf. ch. 5. 7.

ment, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." (ii. 9; ix. 15.)

Is it possible that this could be forgotten in the type, so that the death of the victim should be meaningless, except as a means of furnishing the blood? On the contrary, the blood itself is only the witness and commentary upon the precious death which indeed has furnished it, and is *thus fundamental to it.*

But it is said, the death of the victim is not at the hand of the priest but of the offerer—although there might be, and were, cases in which the offerer and the priest were one. The fact is so, and deserves consideration; but the meaning is not, we may be sure, in the least a contradiction to the testimony of Scripture elsewhere.

It has been the thought of some, that Christ being both offerer and victim, the offerer slaying the victim speaks of Christ laying down His own life for men. It seems, however, as if in that case it should be the priest, rather than the offerer. For he who brings his substitutionary victim to make atonement for him can hardly be a figure of Christ at the same time. Rather would it seem that the offerer in this act confesses himself as needing death for atonement; which the priest then takes up to exhibit in its relation to *God*, as being the one who can draw near to God for others, the mediator. *He* it is who now developes and presents to God—of course, for our instruction,—the value of this precious offering.

The offerer's work is thus the text, of which the priest's work is the sermon: and this explains very simply what follows, and puts death and the blood in their true relation to one another. "And the priests, Aaron's sons, shall present the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar which is at the entrance of the tent of meeting."

We must now anticipate what is only formally declared in the seventeenth chapter, but which has been already partially quoted, and must be fully, in order that we may be able to realize what is here before us: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." This is according to the common version, but there are some changes called for in it that we must consider before we have title to use it for our purpose.

And first, we have to remember that "life" and "soul" are the same word in Hebrew, and the German interpreters in general read "soul" all through. Says Oehler, "The real covering, that which atoned for the souls of the people, needed to be soul itself . . . for the unclean and sinful soul of the worshiper, God substituted the soul of a clean and guiltless animal." But there are insuperable objections to this view of the matter: it is too theological, too little scriptural. For while it is true that the Old Testament distinctly speaks of the soul of the beast, it never speaks of "clean and guiltless" as if they were qualities of the beast's *soul*, or could affect it, and never of covering the soul of man with the soul of beast.

"Clean" the beast was to be, and "guiltless" it necessarily was; but these are in different orders of thought, and not thus to be associated. The cleanness and the unblemished condition of the beast were both bodily, not *soul*-conditions, and in that way simply and evidently typical, not moral. Typically, they do not suggest the soul of a beast, but spiritual qualities such as could have no place in it. It is the eye that is addressed, taught by what can be put before the eye, and the soul is not that.

But the result of these views is, to ignore, or diminish to nothing, the death of the victim. If the soul of man is to be covered by the soul of beast (strange covering for it!), then some way, in the blood sprinkled on the altar, the soul of

> it to the altar, and pinch off its head, and burn it upon the altar; and its blood shall be pressed out against the wall of the altar. And he shall take away its crop with

the beast must be supposed still to survive; and to justify this, we are reminded of the expressions "living water" and "living flesh" (in distinction from cooked meat—1 Sam. ii. 15). As Oehler asks, with Kurtz's distinct approval, "Can it be surprising, then, that the fresh, steaming, and still fluid blood should be regarded as blood with life and soul in it still?" And this is sought to be maintained by the rendering of the last part of the verse—"'for the blood expiates *through* the soul,'—that is, in virtue of the fact that the soul is in it."

Substituting "life" for "soul," for the reasons given, there can be no objection to translating with the *R. V.*, "For it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life." The blood is the life of the body, and so represents it, and he that ate blood would be therefore cut off:—not merely "fresh, steaming blood," as these views would suppose, but blood in any way. The blood poured out is thus the life poured out—the symbol of death, not of existing life.

This, then, instead of separating in meaning death and the blood, brings them together, and the whole ritual into entire agreement and simplicity. The blood means death, and, as presented to God upon the altar, atones; for the altar, according to its meaning in the Hebrew, is just "the place of sacrifice;" and thus the death is declared to be and accepted as a sacrificial death.

On the other hand, Dr. Waldenström has carried out the separation between the blood and the death of the victim to the uttermost. "Notice," he says, "that the atonement is not ascribed to the blood by reason of the suffering or death which the shedding of it had caused, but by reason of (or through) the life that is or was in it . . . Not by the *shedding* of the blood was atonement made, but by the *sprinkling* of the blood. But what did this sprinkling signify? It signified *cleansing* or *purging* from sin, as the apostle says, 'Almost all things are by the law *purged* with blood.'" Strange it is that the very verse that he appeals to, if he had not stopped short before its close, would have been his sufficient refutation:—"and without *shedding* of blood is no remission." (Heb. ix. 22.) Here it is evident that for him the apostle emphasizes the wrong point, and that he himself has confounded two entirely different things—the sprinkling upon the *altar*, as in Lev. xvii., and the sprinkling upon the *person*, as when God entered into covenant with the people at Mount Sinai, or in the case of the leper. The "cleansing" he has in mind is an internal cleansing by a communication of life to the soul, (which he enters into at length elsewhere, as what is meant by it,) but the sprinkling upon the altar is incompetent to convey this thought; it is a cleansing from *guilt* that results from this, God accepting the propitiation made by the sacrifice.

Let us keep together what God has joined together, and all these errors are avoided, while the typical meaning of the ritual gains an absolute simplicity, which is itself a confirmation of its truth. The blood on the altar is just the witness of the character and power of the death which has taken place, and which is the central point in the whole ritual.

And this is still more evident as we go on to consider that from which the burnt-offering gains, as we have seen, its special significance—the burning of the entire animal upon the altar. Here, with those whose views have been before us, it is no longer in any sense Christ that is represented, but the person of the offerer himself; and the burning is the action of the Holy Spirit, by which he is sanctified to God! The two parts of the offering are related to one another, they tell us, as justification and sanctification.

Kurtz allows that by this interpretation the "unity of idea" in the sacrificial ritual "appears unquestionably" to be destroyed. It is so indeed; and we need not consider the reasons he advances nevertheless for this inconsistency. We have a sure guide to the right thought in the apostle's words, that "Christ loved

the [w]filth thereof, and cast it beside the altar eastward in the place of the ashes. And he shall cleave it by the wings thereof [but] not [x]divide it asunder: and the

[w] 1 Pet. 2. 22.
[x] *ctr.* ver. 7. *cf.* Matt. 11. 27.

us and gave Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor." (Eph. v. 2.) Now it was just this burning upon the altar, by which the sweet savor was produced.

It is surely a strange thought that the fire should typify the action of the Spirit of God. On the other hand it is clearly not of necessity a type of wrath. The incense and the meat-offering went up in fire, and the word for burning is the same word that is used for the incense, a different word from that which is used for the sin-offering, where the judgment upon sin is the prominent feature. Here, too, it is intimated, for the death of the substitute of necessity implies it, but this is not developed; rather, here in the place of sin is found that wonderful display of an obedience which, tried with fire, yielded to the testing of perfect holiness nothing but sweet savor. It should be plain that in this it is still the death of the victim which is the text of all this commentary here. Preceding this altar-burning, the offering is flayed and cut—not into pieces merely, but into *its* pieces. There is to be no hacking,—no disfigurement, but part distinguished from part, all opened to the light, the inward parts and legs,—the heart and inward affections, no less than the practical life,—washed with water to be the figure of the absolute cleanness according to the Word, which was then brought out in sweet savor as submitted to the fire.

Little can we speak of such things; yet may they not be lost upon us! may we with holy reverence consider this unique thing upon earth, the wonder and joy of heaven: the obedience of One who did not owe obedience, perfect in leaving His natural place where another would have been apostate, and whose obedience led Him into depths of unequalled suffering, through utter darkness into the light and glory of God. To us it is the pattern of that to which we are sanctified, but in the value of which we are also before God.

The gospel of John it is, as already said, that gives us this side of the glory of the cross. First, He delivers Himself up, when those who came to take Him had all fallen on the ground before Him: it is the Father's cup He takes, and no man taketh His life from Him. The word that is written of Him, this is what is supreme in His heart: at the entrance upon His ministry, when tempted in the wilderness, unmoved by bodily need to put forth the power which He had to make bread of stones, He proclaims the principle of His life, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God shall man live." On the cross He proclaimed His thirst, using indeed no miraculous power to release it, but yet as if to invite the compassion of the hostile throng around Him? No; it is not so: the principle of His life it is that prompts and sustains Him to the end. In the midst of concentrated sufferings He is master of Himself and of the circumstances; conscious that the predicted course is just at its end, but that there remains one thing yet unaccomplished, Jesus, "*that the Scripture might be fulfilled*, saith, 'I thirst.'" Then when He has received the vinegar He says, "It is finished." The glorious work is fulfilled: triumphant in the conviction, He has but to bow His head and render up His spirit.

Then we hear of a mandate which could not be executed upon Him: there could be no outward disfigurement even of His perfection; "howbeit one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and straightway flowed there out blood and water." The blood is witness of death, not life; but life in the power of atonement—"justification of life"—proclaims for men the acceptance of this precious death.

(ii.) We have yet to look at the grades of the burnt-offering presented here: grades they are clearly, and not, as might be thought, equal presentations of it from different sides. The bullock stands by itself in the first grade: not only is it the largest offering, but it is also that which typically most fully developes the

> priest shall burn it upon the altar, upon the wood that is on the fire: it is a burnt-offering, an offering by fire, a sweet savor unto Jehovah.

thought of the burnt-offering. According to the apostle's interpretation (1 Cor. ix. 9, 10), the ox is the type of the laborer for God. The sheep speaks, as is well-known, of self-surrender: "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." (Isa. liii. 7.) The goat, on the other hand, as the type of the sinner, in our Lord's familiar parable, can only be the figure here of the Substitute for sinners. All these convey some true thought as to the great Sacrifice, and so it is with every grade of every offering. Nothing could be permitted any where but what was true and worthy; while yet some views may be more complete, and in the connection in which they are found bring out more or less fully the mind of God. Now that is apparently the case here. "The Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world" is so before our minds as the sufficient picture of the Lord's sacrificial work that there may be natural jealousy of the thought that there could be any higher type. We shall see perhaps more definitely before we leave the offerings to what specific form the expression links itself; but it may be easily seen that it is the effect in blessing that is spoken of in it, and that in what appeals most or first to man as a sinner, the removal of sin; and this is not properly the burnt-offering. The ox and the sheep differ in the thought associated with them in this way, that the latter shows us Christ as in the world meeting the evil in it that assailed Him, and overcoming it by patient goodness; the former carries us back to the thought of His entrance into the world as the fulfiller of the eternal counsels. It is evident which thought most connects itself with the type of the burnt-offering.

The goat again is very distinct from either of these. It expresses nothing that could be attributed to the Lord personally, any more than does the serpent lifted up by Moses in the wilderness. It speaks of the substitutionary character of the cross, which the burnt-offering has in it also, as we have seen; yet how far is it from expressing what is conveyed under the thought of "sweet savor"! Its association naturally is with the sin-offering, for which alone it is definitely prescribed, though only emphasizing what is a necessary character of every sacrifice: except as vicarious the cross could have no worthy or holy significance.

(iii.) When we come to the birds in connection with the burnt-offering, we are made to see clearly that it is *fitness of relation* rather than the character of the type *in itself* that gives it its grade in connection with these offerings. Here, for example, we have in the birds—the "birds of heaven," as they are commonly called in Scripture—the type of the Lord as a heavenly being: yet they come in as a lower grade, and evidently a smaller offering. Beautiful types they are, the turtle-dove and the pigeon, though it may not be easy to distinguish between them. The latter is the word most commonly rendered "dove," being the rock-dove or rock-pigeon (Song ii. 14; Jer. xlviii. 28.) It is the bird of love and sorrow (Isa. xxxviii. 14; lix. 11; Ezek. vii. 16.) and fittingly therefore characterizes the Spirit of Him whose love made Him a man of sorrows in an alien world. Its wings are again referred to in the sixty-eighth Psalm: "Though ye have lain among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold." The sense of the first part is disputed, yet the reference is surely to Israel in her defilement, now redeemed from her misery and degradation: *silver* wings speak of redemption; redeeming love has come in for them, and in the silver is the gleam of gold—the glory of God therein displayed.

Why then should this heavenly visitant be but so poor an offering in this case? In general, it seems plain, at least, that it is that which is permitted to poverty (chap. v. 7; xii. 8; xiv. 22,) or where the case is that of minor defilement (chap. xii. 6; xv. 14, 29; Num. vi. 10.) and usually a pair are commanded, one not being enough. There is indeed in the case of the leper an exceptional offer-

The appendage to the burnt-offering; the meal-offering: Christ as the Second Man.

2. [1] And when any one will present an oblation of a [y] meal-offering unto Jehovah, his offering shall be of [z] fine flour; and he shall pour [a] oil on it, and put [b] frankincense thereon. And he shall bring it to Aaron's sons, the priests, and he shall take out of it his [c] handful of the flour thereof, and of the oil thereof, with all

y Matt. 13. 33. Jno. 1. 14.
z Jno. 6. 33.
a Luke 1. 35.
b *cf.* Matt. 3. 17. Jno. 17. 4.
c Jno. 8. 29.

ing of two birds (here "sparrows," or small birds, not even doves,) but for a special reason into which we must inquire in its place; and this can hardly affect the matter. Why, then, is what is in itself so blessed here comparatively of less esteem? Is it not because in fact with us there is so little competency to prevent the very glory of the Saviour's Godhead from blurring to our eyes the full truth of His manhood, when His suffering, His conflict, or even the perfection of His obedience, is before them? And therefore, while God puts here His seal upon the truth, in itself so needful and so blessed, that the "Second Man is from heaven," (1 Cor. xv. 47,) He yet would caution us by the very place assigned to the offering here, that we must not allow this truth to take a place which is not its right place—to confuse what should be clear, to dull a glory which it should only intensify.

We cannot but gain some understanding here why the bird is not divided into its parts as with the former offerings. We cannot know the Son apart from the humanity in which He came to tabernacle among us; and here is just the warning of how for us the fullness of His manifestation may be dimmed. On the other hand the notice of the rejection of the crop and what pertains to it, may perhaps illustrate how the types themselves begin to fail us here. On the mount with God, the children of Israel saw "no similitude." (Deut. iv. 15.)

2. THE "MEAT-OFFERING" of the common version has been changed in the late revision to *meal*-offering, a change which is here preserved on account of its slightness in form, and yet sufficiency for the purpose of avoiding a difficulty resulting from the change in meaning of the first word of this compound term. In fact neither "meat" nor "meal" is in the Hebrew *minchah*, which means simply "gift" or "offering," and is used of Abel's offering as well as Cain's, but in the law is restricted to bloodless offerings, and often in fact to that part of it which consisted of meal. We may in these cases accept the term.

It is at least doubtful whether the meal-offering proper could ever be offered independent of an animal sacrifice. The refusal of Cain's offering would argue against it, and no example beside can be appealed to. The worshiper never came before God as one fit without atonement for His presence. If also on the other hand it may be said that the burnt-offering or peace-offering was not to be offered without a meal-offering, yet the relation of these to one another is clearly intimated in the expression often used,—"the burnt-offering and *its* meal-offering," which is never, and could never be reversed. The meal-offering is thus the appendage to the animal-offerings, and explicitly to the burnt-offering; and this apparently is the first point that its numerical place indicates.

The value of this we shall realize when the meaning of the meal-offering is ascertained; and this cannot be difficult. Christ's own words as to the "bread of life,"—a truth perpetuated for us by the symbols of the Lord's Supper,—of necessity come into our mind as we think of what is the ordained portion of the priests of God. Moreover, as in the sixth of John the "flesh" is associated with the blood of Christ, so the cup which is the blood of the New Covenant is associated with the bread which we break at the table of the Lord. Thus the connection between the meal- and the other offerings is maintained in these, although not in the same sense *offerings:* they speak of the human, as the offerings do (though not exclusively) of the divine side. Thus the bread and the meal-offering present alike the "flesh" (or humanity) of Christ, and that in contrast with His "blood" or death: therefore Christ in all that was manifest in Him in His life on earth: His humanity, apart from death.

1. (vv. 1-3.) Fine flour: His oneness with Himself.

the frankincense thereof: and the priest shall burn the memorial thereof upon the altar, an offering by fire, a sweet savor unto Jehovah. And the [d] rest of the meal-offering shall be Aaron's and his sons': it is a thing most holy of the offerings of Jehovah, made by fire.

[d] cf. ch. 6. 17. 1 Pet. 2. 7.

He is thus as presented to God the Second Man, essentially in contrast (though true Man) with other men,—with the world by which He was surrounded, and in which He was, as the result of this, the Man of sorrows. This among these offerings could not lack expression,—could not be merged and lost even in the amazing self-surrender of His soul to death. These two things also—His life and His death—are thus seen in their essential distinctness from, and at the same time in their relation to, each other. For, just because of what He was, Man, but the Second Man, in whom under whatever trial there was only and perfectly a sweet savor to God, there could be for us no part in Him, except through His sacrificial death. His own testimony is, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." The doctrine so prevalent of union with man in incarnation is thus stamped as false, even fundamentally. It is used in fact every where for the purpose of obscuring the true character and glory of the cross. It is not true that in incarnation Christ became "flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone." It is not true that He became one with all men by becoming man. It is we who by His precious death for us, and in the new place which He has assumed (not in the world, but outside it), become flesh of *His* flesh and bone of *His* bone.

Thus the numerical place is most important. That only through participation in His death can we be partakers in Him, is its voice to us; while on the other hand those who are partakers in the value of His death find thus their place before God in Him, who as the Second Man is also the last Adam, Head and Representative of His people. Christ in the whole value of what He is and has done, is ours, the sweet savor in which we are accepted before God.

(i.) The number intimates distinctly to us also this Second Man, in contrast with the first and with the world sprung from him; and this we shall find the characteristic teaching of the meal-offering. There are as usual different forms of it, the difference consisting not in the fine flour itself, but in the accompaniments and mode of preparation.

The fine flour has been characterized by another thus:—

"This meat-offering of God, taken from the fruit of the earth, was of the finest wheat; that which was pure, separate and lovely in human nature was in Jesus under all its sorrows, but in all its excellence, and excellent in its sorrows. There was no unevenness in Jesus, no predominant quality to produce the effect of giving Him a distinctive character. He was, though despised and rejected of men, the perfection of human nature. The sensibilities, firmness, decision (though this attached itself also to the principle of obedience), elevation and calm meekness, which belong to human nature, all found their perfect place in Him. In a Paul I find energy and zeal; in a Peter, ardent affection; in a John, tender sensibilities and abstraction of thought, united to a desire to vindicate what he loved which scarce knew limit. But the quality we have observed in Peter predominates and characterizes him. In a Paul, blessed servant though he was, he did not repent, though he had repented. . . . In him in whom God was mighty toward the circumcision, we find the fear of man break through the faithfulness of his zeal. John, who would have vindicated Jesus in his zeal, knew not what manner of spirit he was of, and would have forbidden the glory of God, if a man walked not with them.

"But in Jesus, even as man, there was none of this unevenness. There was nothing salient in His character, because all was in perfect subjection to God in His humanity, and had its place, and did exactly its service, and then disappeared. God was glorified in it, and all was in harmony. When meekness

2. (4-13.) In contrast with the world opposed to Him.

[2] And if thou present an oblation of a meal-offering [e]baken in the oven, [it shall be] pierced cakes of fine flour, unleavened, [f]mingled with oil, or unleavened wafers [g]anointed with oil. And if thine oblation be a meal-offering upon the pan, it shall be of fine flour unleavened, mingled with oil: thou shalt [h]part it in pieces, and thou shalt pour oil on it: it is a meal-offering. And if thine oblation be a meal-offering in the caldron, it shall be made of fine flour with oil.

And thou shalt bring the meal-offering that is made of these things unto Jehovah, and it shall be presented

e *cf.* Heb. 4. 15.

f *cf.* Luke 1. 35.

g *cf.* Acts 10. 38. Matt. 3. 16.

h ch. 1. 7.

became Him He was meek; when indignation, who could stand before His overwhelming and withering rebuke? Tender to the chief of sinners in the time of grace; unmoved by the heartless superiority of a cold Pharisee (curious to judge who He was); when the time of judgment is come, no tears of those who wept for Him moved Him to other words than 'Weep for yourselves and for your children,'—words of deep compassion, but of deep subjection to the due judgment of God. The dry tree prepared itself to be burned. On the cross, when His service was finished, tender to His mother, and intrusting her in human care, to one who (so to speak) had been His friend, and leaned on His bosom; no ear to recognize her word or claim when His service occupied Him for God; putting both blessedly in their place, when He would show that, before His public mission, He was still the Son of the Father, and though such, in human blessedness, subject to the mother that bare Him, and Joseph His father as under the law; a calmness which disconcerted His adversaries; and in the moral power which dismayed them at times, a meekness which drew out the hearts of all not steeled by opposition. . . . Such was Christ in human nature." (*J. N. Darby, Synopsis.*)

Upon this fine flour of the offering there was poured oil, the symbol of the anointing of the Spirit which, coming upon Him because of what He was, declared His perfection. It is thus the Lord Himself cites it as proof that there was no corruptible element in that which was given nevertheless to be the food of man: "Labor for the meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you: for *Him hath God the Father sealed.*" (Jno. vi. 27.)

But there was another side also to this picture: "upon the flour frankincense also was to be put, the white gum of a tree that yields it to incision and requires no preparation to fit it for use." These are all features which seem significant; and the frankincense, all of which was claimed by God, and went up in the fire to Him, clearly points to a life lived to God, and fragrant with His praise.

Of this offering, a handful of the flour, with all the frankincense, was burnt upon the altar for a "memorial"—a word only used beside this of the very similar showbread (chap. xxiv.) and of the jealousy offering (Num. v.) A beautiful word in relation to this one perfect life on earth: will God ever forget it? Tried by the fire of God's holiness it was nothing but sweet savor. The rest became the portion of the priest,—the worshiper.

(ii.) In the flour, then, we have had the perfect humanity of Christ, at unity with itself. This first view of it is apart from its surroundings and the opposition of the world. It was fitting that we should first see Christ so: not as if it was mere comparison with others that made Him excellent; such indeed is mere human excellence, such was not the Lord's. Yet for this precious Bread of Life the world was what in the preparation of our food, the oven and the frying-pan and the caldron are. As flour simply man could scarcely feed upon it: and so Christ even for us could hardly suffice us, if we could know Him apart from that concrete life of His which the gospels give, and in which the trial and

to the priest, and he shall bring it to the altar: and the priest shall take from the meal-offering the memorial thereof, and shall burn it upon the altar, an offering by fire, a sweet savor unto Jehovah. And the remainder of the meal-offering shall be Aaron's and his sons',—a most holy thing of the offerings of Jehovah made by fire.

[i] No meal-offering which ye shall present unto Jehovah shall be made with leaven: for ye shall burn no old leaven, nor any [j]honey, in any offering made by fire unto Jehovah. As for the offering of the [k]first-fruits ye shall present them unto Jehovah, but they shall not go up upon the altar for a sweet savor. And every oblation of thy meal-offering thou shalt season with [l]salt; nor shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meal-offering; with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt.

[i] Ex 23. 18.
[j] Prov. 25. 16. 1 Sam. 14. 27. 2 Cor. 5. 16.
[k] ch. 23. 17.
[l] Mark 9. 49. Col 4. 6. Ezek. 43. 24.

sorrow which were His intimates, the heat of hatred, the fire of persecution, make sweet to our taste and satisfying to our souls the fruit of God's precious Wheat-corn.

There are three forms of the meal-offering in this way, each with its lesson for us. First, that which was baked in the oven,—as it is thought, a large earthen pot or jar, which would at least make the figure a more striking one. For the sufferings that are indicated here seem, as indeed in the other cases, to be from the world, in which He was as it were shut up; not open sufferings,—not from the hand of violence, but from the heated atmosphere of a place of strife and wars of the lusts which strive in the members, and of the will of the flesh at enmity with God. How terrible a place for the Son of God! And here, again, we find two forms: thick cakes, pierced, it is said, and mingled or made up with oil, and thin beaten-out wafers, anointed with oil. Whatever else is difficult in this, it seems plain that we have in the first, Christ as born through the power of the Spirit of God; and in the second, Christ anointed of the Spirit,—that is, as the holy One, the Son of God, or as the Christ, the anointed One, the minister of God. In both ways we can understand (though how little!) that there was intensity of suffering: perhaps the greater intensity, as brought nearer to it, may be pictured in the last case in the thinner "wafer," which the heat would more completely penetrate, although in the former also there would be special lines of more direct access indicated by the piercing of the cake.

Next, the pan seems to speak of open suffering, the outbreak of enmity against the Lord; and here the mingling with oil and anointing are both found: for it was undoubtedly when He came forward with the open claim to be what He was, that the hostility of the world became fully manifest.

The caldron again speaks of the action of water, though the fire is of course outside; and here sufferings of another kind seem indicated, and, according to the usual meaning of water, from the Word of God. Doubtless the Word which guided his footsteps ever led Him on through paths of ordained sorrow, until the cup was taken from His Father's hand. "For I say unto you, that this which is written must yet be accomplished in Me, 'And He was numbered among the transgressors.'" "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels; but how then should the Scripture be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"

We have then the presentation of the memorial to the Lord enjoined as before, and that the remainder is for the priest (the worshiper) as a most holy thing.

Leaven and honey are both forbidden to be put into any offering made by fire unto Jehovah. Leaven we have seen already to be always characterized as evil,

3. (14-16.) The revival of man in Christ.

[3] And if thou present a meal-offering of thy [m] first-fruits unto Jehovah, thou shalt present as the meal-offering of thy first-fruits green ears of corn roasted with fire, corn beaten out of full ears. And thou shalt put oil on it, and lay frankincense thereon: it is a meal-offering. And the priest shall burn the memorial thereof, part of the beaten corn thereof, and part of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof,—an offering by fire unto Jehovah.

[m] ch. 23. 10.

[n] *cf.* Gen. 18. 7. Luke15.23. 1 Jno. 1. 3.

The peace-offering: in which man is brought nigh.

(III.)

3. [1] And if his offering be a sacrifice of [n] peace-offering,—if he offer it of the herd, [o] whether male or female, he shall present it without blemish before Jehovah. And

1. (vv. 1-5.) The ox.

he shall [p] lay his hand upon the head of his offering,

[o] *ctr.* ch. 1. 10. *cf.*ch.22,23.

[p] *cf.* Jno. 3. 18.

the "leaven of malice and wickedness," the ferment of the lust of the flesh,—the human will in revolt from God. Honey is a different thing, and not in itself evil,—the sweetness of nature, which may be tasted but which must not be yielded to,—readily producing fermentation also. In the loaves of the first-fruits presented at Pentecost there was leaven in what was offered, and on that account a sin-offering was offered with them: but on that account also they could not be burnt as a sweet savor on the altar. They are the similitude of the Church and not of Christ.

Salt was in meaning the very opposite of leaven, the symbol of that which opposes corruption, the type, therefore, of what endures, of the holiness which the "covenant of God" implies. A holy God can only go on with what is holy, and therefore salt is the "salt of His covenant." This was never to be lacking, therefore, in any offering.

(iii.) The meal-offering of first fruits stands by itself in a third section of the chapter, and must present some characteristic difference, and that it is *first-fruits* must imply the difference, which the number of the section, the resurrection-number, confirms. The first-fruits represent the new harvest, the revival of the buried seed, and the fruitfulness of death stooped to for victory over it.

It is Christ also who is before us still. The Church as we have seen, could only be pictured by *leavened* loaves, which could not therefore be burnt upon the fire; but this *is* burnt upon the altar. As in the first case it is anointed with oil, and frankincense is put to it, and there are beside peculiar features which speak distinctly of Christ. The *green* ears of corn roasted in the fire, recall the Lord's words to the women that bewailed Him: "if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" He alone was the green tree full of the sap and vigor of true spiritual life; man was dead, as shown in his alienation from the Life. Yet though green, the ears were to be "full ears,"—no coming short could be admitted: they must be as unblemished as the lamb of sacrifice.

It is Christ, then, as the first-fruits, and yet not in resurrection here. The wave-sheaf after the Passover is that,—for that reason simply waved, and not burned upon the altar: all the significance of this would be lost if it could be applied to a type of actual resurrection.

There remains, therefore, but one explanation that seems possible at all,—that it is Christ who is seen, though down here, the representative of the harvest of blessing to come in through Him, but for which He must suffer! God gives us here to see what he saw in Christ in His path of sorrow and necessary separation upon earth: not simply the Second Man, in His own personal perfection, but as the beginning of the new race of men in whom shall be found His likeness,—the fruit so precious to Him of the travail of His soul.

3. THE PEACE-OFFERING speaks of peace with God accomplished, on man's

and kill it at the entrance of the tent of meeting; and the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about. And he shall present of the sacrifice of peace-offering an offering by fire unto Jehovah: the [q] fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, which is by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, which is by the [r] kidneys, this shall he take away; and Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar upon the burnt-offering, which is upon the wood that is on the fire: it is an offering made by fire, a sweet savor unto Jehovah.

q ch. 1. 8. Gen. 4. 4. *cfr.* 1 Sam. 2. 15-17. Ezek. 34. 3. Ezek. 44. 7. Deut. 32. 37, 38.

r *cf.* Ps. 7. 9. Ps. 16. 7.

2. (6-17.) The sheep or goat.

[2] And if his offering for a sacrifice of peace-offering unto Jehovah be of the [s] flock, whether male or female, he shall present it without blemish. If he present a lamb for his offering, he shall present it before Jehovah; and he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it before the tent of meeting. And Aaron's sons shall sprinkle the blood thereof round about upon the altar. And he shall present of the sacrifice of peace-offering an offering made by fire unto Jehovah: the fat thereof, the whole fat tail, which he shall take off close by the back-bone, and the fat that covereth the in-

s *cf.* ch. 1. 10.

part reconciliation, salvation realized, the theme of the third gospel. Hence, as characteristic of it, the offering, instead of all going up to God as with the burnt-offering, or being simply given to the priest, as with the meal-offering, furnishes, as it were, a table at which God, the priest, and the offerer meet together. For if we have peace with God, it cannot be *merely* peace: God in the work of salvation satisfies His own heart and brings ours to Him. Thus the peace-offering is also the praise-offering, and more perhaps than any other the expression of the free-will of the offerer, while it is (along with the burnt- and meat-offering) a sweet savor to God.

In this chapter, indeed, it is only what the offering is to God that is spoken of; it is reserved for the *law* of the offerings to show us the priest's and the offerer's part in it; while all that constitutes it an *offering* is in the three grades of it, given three times over, with little variation, for He cannot weary of His Beloved.

It is upon the blood and the fat that emphasis is laid: the blood sprinkled upon the altar is (according to the canon in Lev. xvii. 11) for propitiation, although the word is not mentioned, the character of the victim's death being thus declared. The fat we have seen to speak of the energy of a will devoted to God, here specially emphasized as the food of the offering made by fire unto Jehovah—easily intelligible as what the flame would fasten on above all.

(i.) The first grade here is as usual the offering from the herd. We have already seen its significance, and have nothing to add to it. It was to be burnt upon the altar *upon* the burnt-offering: acceptance in Christ is the foundation of communion with God, and this can have, therefore, no narrow range.

(ii.) The second grade seems to include both the lamb and the goat under the head of peace-offerings of the flock: there seems no difference except in the animal, whether lamb or goat, and the meaning of these has been also before us.

As has been said, Luke is without doubt the peace-offering gospel: it is that in which we find salvation realized, and man brought into the presence of God, as in the story of the prodigal so familiar and so dear to us. Upon the cross this character is manifest, where the prayer, "Father, forgive them," is the Lord's first utterance, and the thief is accepted and assured of paradise. "Salvation,"

wards, and all the fat which is upon the inwards, and the two kidneys, and the fat which is upon them, which is by the flanks, and the caul that is above the liver, by the kidneys, it shall he take away; and the priest shall burn it upon the altar—food of the offering made by fire unto Jehovah.

And if his offering be a [t]goat, he shall present it before Jehovah; and he shall lay his hand upon its head, and kill it before the tent of meeting; and Aaron's sons shall sprinkle its blood upon the altar round about; and he shall present of it his offering, an offering made by fire unto Jehovah, the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, which is by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, by the kidneys, it shall he take away: and the priest shall burn them upon the altar, food of the offering made by fire for a sweet savor. All the fat is Jehovah's: it is an everlasting statute for your generations throughout all your dwellings, that ye eat neither [u]fat nor blood.

t *cf.* ch. 4. 28.

u ch. 17. 10-12.

(IV.—V. 13.)

The sin-offering for failure.

1. (vv. 1-21.) The high-priest and the assembly. ONE who unites upon Himself the sins of those who are "all of one" with Him.

4. [1] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a soul sin through [v]inadvertence in any of the things of Jehovah which he hath commanded not to be done, and do any of them; —if the [w]priest that is anointed sin to the inculpation of the people, then shall he present for his sin which he hath sinned a young [x]bullock without blemish unto Jehovah for a sin-offering. And he shall bring the bullock to the entrance of the tent of meeting before Jehovah; and he shall [y]lay his hand on the head of the bullock, and kill the bullock before Jehovah. And the

v Acts 3. 17. 1 Tim. 1. 13.

w *cf.* Ps. 38. 4.

x ch. 9. 2. ch 16. 3.

y *cf.* Ps. 51. 3. 1 Jno. 1. 9. Is. 53. 4-6.

"peace," and "grace," are key-words in the book; and the praise and worship of glad hearts ring throughout it.

4. THE SIN-OFFERING fills the fourth place among these offerings. The number speaks, as we know, of *failure*, and it is strictly for failure that it is provided: "If a soul sin through inadvertence." And on the other hand it is said in connection with this provision of atonement, "But the soul that doeth aught presumptuously . . . that soul shall be cut off from among his people: because he hath despised the word of Jehovah, and hath broken His commandment, that soul shall be utterly cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him." (Num. xv. 30, 31.)

This lack of power to atone for the gravest sins has been urged against the vicarious character of atonement as set forth in the Levitical sacrifices. Thus Dr. Waldenström declares, "God's ordinance concerning these sacrifices is such, *that it excludes every thought of vicarious penal suffering.* For, in the first place, sacrifices were never allowed to be made for other sins than such as *were not to be visited by death or capital punishment.* Thus, for instance, sins against the ten commandments were never to be atoned for by sacrifices. Sacrifices were never to be made for idolatry, Sabbath-breaking, adultery, etc. But if sacrifices were allowed to be made only for such sins as were exempt from death, or capital punishment, how then could any one think that the animal which was offered

priest that is anointed shall take of the blood of the bullock, and bring it unto the tent of meeting; and the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle of the blood seven times before Jehovah [z] before the vail of the sanctuary; and the priest shall put some of the blood on the horns of the [a] altar of sweet incense before Jehovah, which is in the tent of meeting; and he shall pour out all the blood of the bullock at the bottom of the [b] altar of burnt-offering which is at the entrance of the tent of meeting. But all

[z] *cfr.* ch. 16. 12-14.
[a] ch. 9. 9.
[b] ch. 5. 9.

suffered the punishment of death instead of the offender? Why, his sin was not at all liable to be visited by the death-penalty."

It is not to our present purpose to show that there is in this a strangely inadequate idea of the range of the ten commandments. As to the rest he is right as to the fact that there was no explicit provision in the law of the offerings for the expiation of sins to which the death penalty was attached. Nevertheless, his inference from this shows a very superficial idea of both sin and sacrifice. There was, of course, every reason why it should not be permitted to a flagrant offender to avert the righteous penalty of his sin by the cheap offering of an animal sacrifice. The objection that "sacrificial expiation might have preceded execution" proceeds from a fundamental mistake, which has been already made evident, as to the character of legal penalty. As the law could not promise heaven, so neither did it threaten with hell—in the New-Testament sense of hell. Long life in this world was the reward of comparative obedience: "Honor thy father and mother, that thou mayest live long in the land." And so "the soul that sinneth, it shall die" must be interpreted of literal death. This might not come as the penalty upon one specific act, or as an infliction by human hands, and yet be truly the penalty which the breach of law involved. Thus there could be no such thing as expiation before execution, because it would necessarily mean expiation so as to deliver from some penalty *beyond* death, for which the sacrifices of the law were totally inadequate.

Types of a higher atonement they were, and *for that reason* never to be confounded with that higher one, and the marks of inadequacy which they were allowed to bear upon them only made this plainer, not injured them as such. There were thus many cases in which the soul was compelled to look outside the sacrificial forms, and to say, "Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it; Thou delightest not in burnt-offering:" "deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation; and my tongue shall sing aloud of Thy righteousness." Thus where there was faith, a practical dependence would be induced upon that which the offerings only pointed to and themselves were not.

There was, therefore, a double reason for the fact that the sin-offering in Israel was professedly for failure, and not for every grade of sin. But the "wages of *sin* is death,"—not of this sin or that merely,—and thus it will not raise any question with us, that for atonement in any case the victim dies. Here, indeed, the comparative littleness of the sin only preaches the more solemnly of what sin is to God! No ignorance ever avails to lessen the need or alter the character of atonement. Sin is sin no less because we are too stupid or too indifferent to recognize it as such, and God must bring us to His thoughts, not come down to ours. If "by the law is the knowledge of sin," we find that its types teach this as plainly as the two tables: the very atonement for sin proves that failure even in ignorance is accounted that by God, and for the least sin the wages is death, —the atoning victim dies.

It is upon the penalty of sin that this offering insists more strongly than any other, and this is indicated by its name. If the burnt-offering spoke of the perfect obedience in which we are accepted, and the peace-offering of the effect of Christ's work in reconciliation and communion, the sin-offering declares the

the [c]fat of the bullock of sin-offering he shall take off from it, the fat that covereth the inwards and all the fat that is upon the inwards, and the two kidneys and the fat that is upon them, which is by the flanks, and the caul above the liver by the kidneys, this shall he take away, as it is taken off from the ox of the sacrifice of peace-offering; and the priest shall burn them upon the altar of burnt-offering. And the skin of the bullock, and all its flesh, with its head, and with its legs, and with its inwards, and its dung, even the whole bullock shall he carry forth [d]outside the camp unto a clean place where the ashes are poured out, and burn it upon wood with fire; where the ashes are poured out it shall be burnt.

[c] ch. 9. 10.

[d] *ctr.* ch. 1. 9. *cf.* ch. 16. 27. ch. 9. 11.

judgment of God which the sin-bearer must remove by coming under; and thus while the three preceding offerings are all declared to be sweet savor to God, the sin- and trespass-offerings are not, as such. For judgment is not that in which God can delight, but that to which He is forced: it is His "*strange* work." And this is why, no doubt, the chapter begins as a new communication from the Lord with the accustomed phrase, "And Jehovah spake unto Moses." This we must go back to the first chapter to find again. *After* this, we find it indeed at the beginning of the trespass-offering also, and even of the two parts of it, so that the division which it makes is not of equal importance in each case; yet on the other hand where as in the first three chapters, we have an unbroken communication, the contents of it are necessarily linked thus together in a special way. So it is then with the sweet-savor-offerings.

It is noticeable that while we have three grades of burnt-offering, and three (much less perceptible) of the peace-offerings, the sin-offering has no less than seven forms. This at first sight would seem strange and anomalous enough, plain as it is that just here we have not, and cannot have, the element of voluntariness apparent in the preceding forms. The burnt-, meal-, and peace-offerings constituted those which could be and were often brought as an expression of the devotion of the worshiper apart from any command; the sin- and trespass-offerings were imperative—the claim of God upon the sinner which he could neither escape nor diminish, nor even add to. Burnt-offerings and peace-offerings he might bring according to his means, but the sin-offering was one, never multiplied or added to, offered distinctly as obligation, not of choice.

The more remarkable is it, then, that the law itself admitted grades, most of which were apportioned to the station of the person whose sin was in question, but the lower ones permitted to poverty, and with a concession so great that finally even a meal-offering is allowed in place of that which alone could furnish the atoning blood. Here it is impossible, then, to deny that there are grades, natural poverty plainly representing poverty in spiritual apprehension, or in the riches with which it endows the wise of heart. And in these seven forms of the sin-offering we must surely recognize the complete provision which God has made for all possible need.

The epistle to the Hebrews reminds us of one distinctive feature of the sin-offering which it is of the greatest importance for us rightly to understand—that "the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high-priest for sin are *burned without the camp.*" And the explanation is added, "Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate." (Heb. xiii. 11, 12.) Why this necessary link between the place "outside the camp" or "without the gate" and the entrance of the blood into the sanctuary?

Let us take the last first as the apostle puts it, surely in order that we may

And if the [e]whole assembly of Israel err, and the thing be [f]hid from the eyes of the congregation, and they have done any of the things that Jehovah hath commanded not to be done, and are guilty; when the sin which they have sinned is [g]known, then the con-

[e] Josh. 7. 1, 11. cf. Jno. 11. 50.
[f] Num. 15. 22-25.
[g] ver. 28.

find in it the key to the other. In the offering also it is put first, while, however, in the antitype the order must have been reversed. The didactic order is thus the opposite to the order of fact: to *see* the facts aright, we must reverse the order.

"The sanctuary" is here literally "the holy places,"—the tabernacle as a whole. Only once a year, on the day of atonement, did the blood enter into the holiest of all. At other times it might be sprinkled before the vail, or on the horns of the altar of incense. The passage in Hebrews contemplates both of these. The regular place for the sprinkling of blood in connection with other offerings was the altar of burnt-offering; and it was there that God says He gave it for atonement: but where it was carried into the sanctuary it was not put upon the altar outside except on the day of atonement, (chap. xvi. 18, 19,) and then for a special purpose, which we shall consider in its place. Ordinarily, (and in fact even on the day of atonement,) the blood that was carried into the sanctuary was the blood which otherwise would have been upon the altar. The meaning in each case was in its appeal to God on man's behalf, and in the various grades of presentation we find it in nearer and nearer approach to God, sprinkled on the altar-sides, anointing its horns, passing across the court into the holy place, and finally reaching, in the mercy-seat, the throne of God itself. All through it is the same truth that is presented by it—atonement, or propitiation, —but with increasing emphasis, although its being the altar-blood is the essential point to be kept in mind. If it be not, the meaning is really lost, "I have given it you upon the *altar* to make atonement for your souls."

It is the blood of the *sin*-offering only which goes into the sanctuary, or, as the apostle explains to us, "sanctifies the people." Why that, when the fundamental sweet-savor-offering is the burnt-offering, and the sin-offering is not that? If the sin-offering is that in which the judgment of sin is what is specially enforced, then it is evident. The judgment of sin is an essential necessity with a holy God; its judgment fully carried out in the penal suffering of a substitute *sanctifies* those for whom it is borne,—*i. e.*, separates them to God according to holiness. Thus approach to God is by the sin-offering rather than the burnt-offering: not that there is none by the burnt-offering, for it too is for atonement; each offering emphasizes certain features, none (in its full thought) omits altogether any; death and the sprinkled blood are found in all. But the marked features are for our instruction, and it is marked for us here that only the blood of the sin-offering enters the sanctuary.

We have not, however, yet reached the full significance of this, as is plain. For of the sin-offerings themselves, only one form could provide the blood that entered, and that was where the body of the victim was burned without the camp. This was the case only in that of the day of atonement, in the red heifer, or the first two grades of the sin-offering here. Lower grades could, however, lift the blood to the horns of the altar where the blood of the burnt-offering could not reach; and it is thus the culmination of the sin-offering character where the flesh is in this manner burned. If, then, the idea of the sin-offering is the judgment of sin which the holiness of God requires, it will be this, in the fullest way, which is shown in the burning.

And this all the details show: the very word used for it is not *alah*, "to ascend," "mount up," or *higtir*, "to consume as incense," but *saraph*, simply "to burn." The meaning of this is not, as Oehler supposes, to show that the burning is not sacrificial, but simply, as with what remained over of the paschal lamb, or of the peace-offerings, to destroy what could not be eaten! He must

gregation shall present a young [h] bullock for the sin-offering, and bring it before the tent of meeting; and the [i] elders of the assembly shall lay their hands upon the head of the bullock before Jehovah, and one shall kill the bullock before Jehovah. And the [j] priest that is

[h] ver. 4. *cfr.* vers. 23, 28.
[i] *cf.* Deut. 21. 2, 3.
[j] *cf.* vers. 1-12.

surely have forgotten Heb. xiii. But it distinguishes between what was sweet savor and what typified or implied the wrath of God. It thus contradicts also the view of those who with still less propriety would make the fire every where a type of wrath. Thus the meal-offering, the incense, and the burning of the fat would be confounded with the burning here. Rather, the fire is the type of that holiness of God which if it try One perfectly obedient could only develop the sweet savor, but as against sin, or one made sin, indeed becomes wrath by the very necessity of its being holiness. Then it is on the ground without an altar, where, if the altar speak of Christ Himself as we have seen, the burning on the ground would signify that it is not now Christ in His own person, as it were, that is in question, but the sin or sinner with whom God is dealing. While the place "outside the camp," outside of what is in recognized relationship to God, speaks, like that "without the gate" of the epistle to the Hebrews, of distance from God, that real "forsaking" which in the twenty-second psalm we see to be the agony of all others, the one exception to all God's dealings with the righteous since the world was.

It is this that the passage in Hebrews insists on as the main point,—"Christ, *that He might* sanctify the people with His own blood suffered without the gate." Here the order of connection between the "sanctifying" or penetrating to the sanctuary, and the place taken by the Lord is clearly shown to us,—a place which gives its deepest character to the suffering. Nothing in all that makes up the full story of the cross could be unimportant,—relation to it suffices to give value to every detail,—and in what is most external a spiritual meaning may be found infolded,—the life by which it develops in the soul. Here, "without the gate" of the city of God, what does it not speak for Him whose glory enlightens the heavenly city?

"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law," says the apostle again, "being made a curse for us." How is this shown? "For it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth upon a tree." (Gal. iii. 13.) Here once more there seems to be what is perfectly circumstantial. *Why* should a man be cursed that hangs upon a tree? How many an innocent man might hang there! Here there is a vail of type after the manner of the law, and yet (with our eyes upon Him who alone is the key to all types) how thin is the vail! This man that hangs between earth and heaven belongs, as it were, to neither. "Lifted up," as if to invite the verdict of heaven, heaven answers not, nor interferes. How could the picture of utter distress be more complete? But "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so also MUST the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life." (Jno. iii. 14, 15.) Not die, merely, but be lifted up, and as the serpent! How plainly the sin-offering character of the cross comes out here! For there is no altar surely in such a picture: how least of all fitted to remind us of Him, a "serpent"! Yet He *must* be after this manner lifted up, or none could pass from death to life,—no sinner anywhere be born again.

How manifold the witness to this meaning of the cross! The outside place, the cross itself, and then as He hangs there, fruit of the ripened iniquity for which He dies, the pall of darkness wraps Him in full day, out of it the interpreting Voice, but in agony of appeal where there is no answer, "My God, My God! why hast Thou forsaken me?" Yes, "God is light," and this is truly the light withdrawn; the shadow is that of a more awful shadow cast inward upon the soul—who indeed can penetrate it?

This is the judgment of sin, not death merely, as if that were the whole of it:

> anointed shall bring some of the blood of the bullock into the tent of meeting; and the priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle it seven times before Jehovah, in front of the vail. And he shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar that is before

to assert that is to dishonor the Lord morally, making Him feebler than many who as *martyrs* have trod in His steps; and yet many make atonement to consist in nothing more than death. The type here with the other scriptures that we have been examining speaks plainly of man's full penalty borne, the awful separation between God and the soul, which is the outer darkness. And in this lies the power of atonement, that God in it is glorified in holiness by Christ taking our place in that which He had proclaimed the due of sin. He must thus come where we were, and the cross is as much the display of what sin is before God as it is the blessed witness of His love to sinners. The darkness in which we were was that of necessary distance from Him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity and who cannot look upon sin. For faith the darkness is gone, the vail is rent, as at the cross we see it, the precious blood in its power and value has entered heaven for us, and (what the law could never teach us) we too have "boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus." (Heb. x. 19.)

This, then, is the distinctive character of the sin-offering. When we have seen it, we naturally ask why then it should in so many grades of it be so little marked as in fact we find it to be. Only in the first two forms here is there the burning outside the camp; and elsewhere only in the offerings of the day of atonement and the red heifer. In the lower grades almost every other form of offering seems to be substituted for it: in chap. v. 1–6 a trespass-offering; in the offering of the doves, a burnt-offering is brought in; in that of the poorest it is a meal-offering! How strange and like confusion all this seems! but in fact is it not true that, when we come to detail, numbers of believers even know not in what atonement really consists. Many deny all "penalty" in the death of the cross; many more confound the life and the death of the Lord together; many again speak of "equivalent" penalty as true satisfaction. How strange is all this contradiction as to what really puts away sin from before God! and of lesser differences there are many.

Strange is it still, perhaps, when we look at Scripture itself, to find in the plain teachings of the New Testament, a measure, may we not say, of reserve as to the full truth. Taught in the epistle to the Galatians, taught in the Hebrews, taught less openly in the gospel of John, while the doctrine of wrath-bearing is there, there is still not anywhere the full plain language we should expect upon such a point. That which is everywhere is rather Christ's *death* for us, the power of His *blood*,—in fact the language of the type is the common language of the New Testament also in this respect.

Some of the plainest speech is in the Old; as in the fifty-third of Isaiah; or in the twenty-second psalm, wherein the sin-offering aspect of the cross is to faith unvailed.

The truth is there, but not insisted on as we might expect: it is left for discovery, perhaps we may say, rather than forced upon notice. But why this is, the type before us will tell us also. Not surely that God does not desire that we should have the knowledge of it, but because we must grow into this knowledge, learning it as we learn ourselves with God. It can never be too well remembered that in divine things we cannot learn as we do in natural ones: we must learn of God, and for that must be with Him.

(i.) We must now take up the specific cases, and here we find what is peculiar to the sin-offering, that the magnitude of the sin depends upon the position of the person who sins. This needs no enlarging on,—it is an admitted principle in the estimation of sin everywhere. We must not be satisfied, however, to stop here: nay, if Christ be before us in these offerings, it would not be true to argue

> Jehovah, which is in the tent of meeting; and he shall pour out all the blood at the bottom of the altar of burnt-offering which is at the entrance of the tent of meeting. And he shall take off from it all its fat, and burn it upon the altar. And he shall do to the bullock as he did to

that the greater sinner needs a greater offering; His work is needed alike by all, nor has one a larger interest in it than another. We must distinguish thus between any moral lesson as to sin, and the typical instruction (always the greater) which has Christ as its object throughout. This is just where appears the immense inferiority of some modern methods by which it is aimed at, as the beginning of all true knowledge, to put you back at the Jewish stand-point instead of at the Christian one. The types all look forward; and the method is as wise, as if, to give you clear knowledge of the landscape, they should propose to show it you by night rather than by day. It is very simply intelligible, therefore, why one should often find more satisfaction to the *mind* even, as well as satisfaction to the heart, in the views of some unlearned Christians as to these things than in the tomes of many learned men.

Here, the moment we have Christ before us, it must strike us to find in the first place in the sin-offering the case of the high-priest. The day of atonement naturally occurs to us, when the high-priest does all the work; with the apostle's application of it: "Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high-priest in things pertaining to God to make propitiation (*R. V.*) for the sins of the people." (Heb. ii. 17.)

In making atonement it is clear that the high-priest had a place belonging to no other. As the high-priest,—the great priest,—the priesthood culminates in him, or still more simply and emphatically, as *the* priest, he absorbs it, as it were, into himself. He alone, as here, is the anointed, or (merely anglicizing the Hebrew word) the *Messiah*-priest. He alone bore the names of the people upon his shoulders and on his breast. He alone bore the iniquity of the holy things. His representative character shows itself throughout, and this is evidently what the apostle has in mind when he says that to be a high-priest it behoved Christ "in all things to be made like unto His brethren:" He must be in some sense one with them in order to represent them.

Notice: all men are not "His brethren;" there is no thought here of what has been before examined and rejected,—union by incarnation with men in the flesh. It is "of the seed of Abraham He taketh hold" (*v.* 16, marg.); and both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; *for which cause* He is not ashamed to call them brethren." (*v.* 11.) He calls them "brethren," because they are such, not as born naturally, but as born anew of the Spirit, and so truly children of God. Here is the principle of sanctification for them; and as they are the sanctified, so He is the Sanctifier, the last Adam, Head of the new race, Quickener out of death. Here He is found in His own place and with His own company.

The evident difficulty confronts us, however, in any application of the high-priest in this case to the Lord, that it is for his own sin that he offers. That this could not apply to the One who knew no sin, needs no affirming. Yet on the day of atonement also the high-priest offers for himself, without prejudice to his typical character in other respects. These defects are necessarily inherent in types, and had their use also in preventing real confusion between type and antitype. Here also, then, the high-priest may speak of Christ, with this reserve as to a point which can lead none astray who know Christ, and which may even in some ways enable us (as with a darkened glass one may the sun) to see Christ better.

That the sin of the high-priest inculpates the people certainly leads us on in the direction in which we were already looking. It shows that He is already

the bullock of sin-offering, so shall he do to it: and the priest shall make [k]atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them. And he shall carry the bullock forth outside the camp and burn it as he burned the first bullock: it is a sin offering for the congregation. [k] ch. 16. 16.

their representative, and it is in this character that Christ undertakes for His people. In this sense alone could the language of the Psalms apply to Him, where as in the fortieth He who says, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God!" cries yet "out of the horrible pit," "for innumerable evils have compassed Me about; *Mine iniquities* have taken hold upon Me, so that I am not able to look up: they are more than the hairs of My head, so that My heart faileth Me." This is the full reality of substitution, which the vivid words impress us with more strongly perhaps than any other words could do. It is the One for the many, with the iniquity of the many thus accumulated upon Him: "the Lord hath laid on Him"—caused to light on Him—"the iniquity of us all." (Isa. liii. 6.)

To this the type of the sin-offering here brings us perhaps nearer than any other; while the reiteration of the unusual expression, "the *Messiah*-priest," seems as if it were given as a guard at once. So do we take it then: as speaking of the One who alone, as the last Adam-head, united upon Himself the sins of those who as new-born of God are "all of one" with Him.

A bullock is again the victim here, hands are laid upon it as before, and it is killed before Jehovah: Christ, priest and victim, needs, as in other places also, a double type to represent Him. The priest takes some of the blood and passing into the tabernacle, sprinkles it seven times before the vail of the sanctuary. This seems not for presentation to God, but to secure a standing before the throne, like the seven-fold sprinkling of the day of atonement (chap. xvi. 14.) The presentation to God is rather by the anointing the horns of the altar of incense, the only place of communion at all ordinary times with the inner holiest. The rest of the blood in emphatic witness of the death of the victim, emphasized here as nowhere else, is poured out at the bottom of the altar of burnt-offering.

Next follows the burning of the fat upon the altar, just as we are reminded it was done in the case of the peace-offerings. The sacrifice is naturally, therefore, the same; and here we have an example of what we shall find all through these offerings, that they are by no means independent of one another, but pictures from different sides only of the same thing, each emphasizing some part of the truth, while none, perhaps, is altogether omitted. The slaying of the victim and the sprinkling of the blood bind all together. The burning of the fat of the peace-offering is a reflection in part of the burnt-offering, and here links both with the sin-offering. The flesh of the sin-offering is burned where the ashes of the other offerings are poured out, the character of rejection from the altar stamped thus on it also. Here, though in the midst of the sin offering, God would have us realize in the burning of the fat the sweet savor that Christ is to Him: as where we are told, that "He was made sin for us," it is directly added, "who knew no sin,"—not unsuitable words surely, but most suitable; and so here: the lights go with the shadows and make the picture clear.

The burning of the bullock outside the camp we have already considered.

The sin-offering for all Israel is in its ordering exactly similar to that for the high-priest. The truth presented in it seems parallel or complementary to that. The assembly of Israel are, of course, the very people who are represented by the high-priest, and must stand, therefore, as in the last offering, for the "brethren" for whom Christ offers. We may notice with what perfection, suitably to the type, it is said at the close, as nothing similar could be said in previous cases, "and the priest shall make atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them."

I believe it is not the Church only here, as I once thought, but the redeemed

2. (22-35.) The prince and the Israelite: true oneness lost, yet salvation remaining.

[2] When a [l]prince sinneth, and doeth through inadvertence [m]anything of all that Jehovah his God hath commanded not to be done, and is guilty; if a sin of his, wherein he hath sinned come to his knowledge; then he shall bring his offering, a shaggy [n]goat, a male without blemish. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the goat, and kill it in the place where they killed the burnt-offering, before Jehovah: it is a sin-offering. And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin-offering with his finger, and put it on the horns of the [o]altar of burnt-offering; and its blood shall he pour out at the bottom of the altar of burnt-offering. And he shall burn all its fat upon the altar as the fat of the sacrifice of peace-offering; and the priest shall make atonement for him on account of his sin, and it shall be forgiven him.

And if any one of the [p]people of the land sin through inadvertence, by doing any of the things which Jehovah hath commanded not to be done, and be guilty; if his sin which he hath sinned come to his knowledge; then he shall bring his offering, a shaggy goat, a [q]female without blemish, for his sin which he hath sinned. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the

l 2 Sam. 12. 7. Ps. 51. Num. 16. 1, 2. 1 Cor. 2. 8.

m Jas. 2. 10.

n cf. Matt. 25. 32, 33. 2 Cor. 5. 21.

o ctr. vers. 16-18. *cf.* ch. 17. 11.

p. cf. Luke 12. 48. *ctr.* Ex. 30. 11-16. Rom. 3. 22.

q ctr. ver. 23, Ex. 12. 5. *cf.* ch. 5. 6, ch. 27. 4.

generally; while on the day of atonement the distinction between the Church and Israel is clearly maintained. But the offerings here know nothing of dispensations.

The need typically of the present offering is to remedy the necessary defect of the last one. In that, it was the high-priest offering for sin which he accepts as his own. It would not do to leave this so, and thus the other side is now given. The high-priest is in his normal place, offering for the congregation; the atonement made by him there is, as it were, identified with the atonement made for them here, and the effect in forgiveness is made theirs.

(ii.) We now come to the case of the "prince" or "ruler;" and here it is natural to think that Christ is again before us. The same word is used of Christ in Daniel, "Messiah the Prince" (chap. ix. 25). He is the royal priest, or priest-king, Melchisedek; of that order now, and soon to act in that character also. If this "prince" does not speak of Christ, then we seem to have no clue to any typical meaning.

Furthermore, if we look at the next offering—that for one of the people of the land, we shall find almost as complete accordance with the present one, as in that of the congregation there was with that of the high-priest. The four offerings seem to fall into two pairs, the last three being also as plainly, though in a different way, connected with one another; and this is a not uncommon division of a septenary series, namely, into four and three (which is usual), and then the first four into two and two. In these two pairs also there is a parallel order of thought,—the high-priest and the assembly that he represents; the prince, the head of a tribe, or the division of a tribe, and one of the tribe, such as he represents.

There is surely, then, a designed correspondence; and yet looking, as we are doing, at the typical meaning, it is also evident that there is in this second pair an order of thought less congruous to the subject, as the offering itself is lower in kind, a goat instead of a bullock. The goat, however, is still in complete accordance with the idea in the sin-offering, speaking, as it does, of substitution, of Christ in the sinner's place. In the day of atonement, the bullock and the

sin-offering, and kill the sin-offering in the place of the burnt-offering. And the priest shall take of its blood with his finger, and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt-offering; and he shall pour out all its blood at the bottom of the altar. And he shall take away all its fat as the fat is taken away from off the sacrifice of peace-offering, and the priest shall burn it upon the altar for a sweet savor unto Jehovah: and the priest shall make atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him.

And if he bring a sheep for his offering for sin, he shall bring a female without blemish. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin-offering, and he shall kill it for a sin-offering, in the place where they kill the burnt-offering. And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin-offering with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt-offering; and he shall pour out all its blood at the bottom of the altar. And he shall take away all its fat, as the fat of the lamb is taken away from the sacrifice of peace-offering; and the priest shall burn them on the altar with the offerings of Jehovah made by fire: and the priest shall make atonement for him for his sin which he hath sinned; and it shall be forgiven him.

goat are both taken for the sin-offering, the bullock for the priests, the goat for the people. Representation is evidently the controlling thought of the sin-offering, and here the "prince" falls necessarily behind the priest, as indeed the individual does behind the congregation. The prince represents the people over whom he is placed, as responsible for them, but *in government, not in mediation.* True as it is of Christ that He is King, propitiation appertains to His priestly, not His kingly office: the truth is not in its place, and this is commonly the way in which error as to the Word of God arises, by dislocation of the truth.

It is not that the truth of priesthood is wholly lost, for it is still the priest that makes atonement, but this is simply official, not grounded upon that kinship to the "sanctified" which we have seen to be necessary to representation in this way. It is from the loss of this that on the one side we hear of general redemption in all its phases to complete Universalism; on the other hand, of atonement for the elect *as such.* Thus atonement becomes for many indecisive and uncertain, or narrowed so as to limit God's love by that which alone presents it in its fullness. Scripture rightly understood delivers us from both narrowness and looseness. Propitiation becomes for the people of God the full and perfect satisfaction which alone gives rest to the conscience, and yet is for the whole world upon condition of faith, all being welcome and besought to avail themselves of it. We shall have occasion to examine this again when we come to the day of atonement, in which so many of the sacrifices are brought together for us. Meanwhile, the prince and the individual Israelite here may well suggest those thoughts of atonement in which sovereignty of counsel and individual election—both true in themselves—control the doctrine unduly, banishing the full tenderness of priesthood, and the largeness of a love that goes out to all. Yet here a true substitution—the goat—remains, and therefore a genuine salvation. The flesh, however, is not burned without the camp, and as a consequence, the blood does not enter the sanctuary; for true oneness being lost, an "equivalent" penalty can be thought of,—not the actual, and really, therefore, not equivalent. The very idea shows what is lost, for what can the *equivalent* be to the wrath of God? Present entrance into the sanctuary is also lost, the old man not being

3. (v. 1-13.) Full provision.

[3] And if a soul sin, in that he hath heard the voice of adjuration and is a [r] witness whether he hath seen or known, if he do not declare, then he shall bear his iniquity. Or if a soul [s] touch any unclean thing, whether the carcass of an unclean beast, or the carcass of unclean cattle, or the carcass of an unclean crawling thing, and it be hidden from him, he also is unclean and guilty. Or if he touch the uncleanness of man, whatever his uncleanness is with which he is unclean, and it be hid from him, when he knoweth it then he shall be guilty. Or if a soul [t] swear, speaking rashly with his lips, to do evil or to do good, whatever a man shall speak rashly with an oath, and it be hid from him, when he knoweth it, then shall he be guilty in any of these things. And it shall be when he is guilty in one of these, that he shall [u] confess that he hath sinned in that; and he shall bring his [v] trespass-offering unto Jehovah for his sin that he hath sinned, a [w] female from the flock, a sheep or a shaggy goat for a sin-offering. And the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin.

And if his hand [x] cannot acquire so much as a sheep, then he shall bring for his trespass [in] which he hath sinned, a pair of [y] turtle-doves or two young pigeons

r cf. Acts 5. 2. ch. 20. 4.

s ch. 11. 39. cf. Eph. 5. 3.

t cf. Ju. 11. 30. Mark 6. 23.

u ch. 12. 6. cf. 1 Jno. 1. 9. Ps. 32. 5. Prov. 28. 13.

v ch. 14. 12. cf. Rom. 4. 25. 1 Pet. 2. 24.

w ch. 4. 28.

x ver. 11.

y Luke 2. 24. ch. 12. 8.

completely set aside in judgment. But to enter into this would lead one too far at this time.

The sheep allowed to the Israelite in place of the goat is still a descent from the truth here, for in the sheep the full thought of substitution is now also lost.

(iii.) The last three forms of the sin-offering are plainly connected together by the fact that they are provision for the same offenses, only differing in this, that the last two are concessions to poverty. From the trespass-offering being mentioned in ver. 6, commentators have taken these cases to be trespasses rather than sins; indeed the law of the trespass-offering was supposed to begin with the fifth chapter. Kurtz rightly urges against this, (1) that the introductory formula of the trespass-offering is in ver. 14, while the present section is in direct continuation of the fourth chapter; (2) that the sins mentioned are in other places also given as requiring sin-offerings, while the ram, the only animal prescribed for the known trespass-offerings, does not occur here; (3) in the trespass-offerings proper, no allowance for the poverty of the person is or could be made, while there are unquestionably other places where this occurs in the laws relating to the sin-offerings (Lev. xii. 8; xiv. 21). These considerations are conclusive, and the fact before remarked on, that the burnt- and the meal-offering are also found among these offerings takes away all strangeness from the occurrence of the trespass-offering. We are evidently in a doctrinal descent, already begun in the previous chapter, from the full truth as to atonement for sin given in the first two offerings, God in His goodness accepting the sinner coming thus, in spite of imperfect apprehensions of his need and the fullness of the provision for it.

As to that for which these offerings are prescribed, it is to be observed that in the previous chapter the sins are not specified. So to speak, the exact character of the sins is not the important thing, but that they *are* sins; and it is in this way that sin receives its most real judgment. Thus it would seem that in the specification here we have another evidence of the lower ground upon which we are. It is about this or that that the soul is troubled,—the specific character of the thing rather than the generic, and the idea of the trespass-offering introduced exactly corresponds with this; for in the trespass-offering we find the exact esti-

unto Jehovah, one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering. [z]And he shall bring them unto the priest, and he shall offer what is for the sin-offering first, and pinch off its head from its neck, but not divide it; and he shall sprinkle of the blood of the sin-offering on the wall of the altar, and the rest of the blood shall be wring out at the bottom of the altar: it is a sin-offering. And he shall offer the other for a burnt-offering according to the ordinance; and the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin which he hath sinned; and it shall be forgiven him.

z *cf.* ch. 1. 14-17.

And if his hand [a]cannot attain to two turtle doves or two young pigeons, then he that sinned shall bring for his offering the [b]tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a sin-offering: he shall put [c]no oil on it, neither shall he put frankincense thereon; for it is a sin-offering. And he shall bring it unto the priest; and the priest shall take his handful of it, the memorial thereof, and burn it on the altar, with Jehovah's offerings by fire: it is a sin-offering. And the priest shall make atonement for him, for his sin which he hath sinned in one of these things, and it shall be forgiven him: and it shall be the [d]priest's like the meal-offering.

a *cf.* ch. 1. 10, 14.

b Ex. 16. 32, 33, 36.

c *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 21.

d *cf.* ch. 4. 21, etc.

mate made of the wrong done which has to be made up—the debt which has to be paid. The trespass-offering contemplates sin as *injury* rather than sin—against God's *government* rather than His *nature*. Both views are of course right, but the former is the more superficial, and if substituted for the other, is poverty itself. Just so with the "governmental theory of atonement," which makes the necessity of dealing with sin to be in the interests of good government merely. God must show Himself against it in the interests of good government,—true indeed; but He must show Himself for what He is, because He must *be* what He is,—the requirements of His nature are the deepest and most fundamental of all.

The offering in this case is to be either of a female sheep or of a she-goat, that which was most appropriate to the sin-offering coming last, for in the case of the true trespass-offering it does not appear. The governmental theory, in like manner, has no true substitution—Christ was not in the sinner's place. It has a substitute *for* penalty, not a Substitute under penalty: and yet this is not universally so; a happy inconsistency with some who present the trespass- for the sin-offering is that they present nevertheless the goat for their trespass-offering! Yet it is (whether sheep or goat,) the *female* that is offered, a lower thought perhaps even because the thought of fruitfulness is so distinct in it. This can be so pressed as to obscure the primary necessity for atonement.

In the next case we find an assemblage of contradictory thoughts: for his *trespass* in which he has sinned, the offerer brings a pair of doves for a burnt-offering and sin-offering together. The doves are already, as we have seen, the lowest form of burnt-offering; but here, (as where the heart is truer than the head,) save one, no offering fails entirely to be represented. But who can interpret aright the thoughts that crowd together here? One offering, as has been said, is wanting—alas! the *peace*-offering! how significant is its absence, where the cross of Christ is only seen as in the confusion of a dream!

Finally—for plainly we can go no further in this direction,—in case of poverty so great that even the offering of doves is beyond reach,—a meal-offering of fine flour, but without oil or frankincense, is accepted for a sin-offering. Here, at least, there can be no question with any that we have not God's thought of what is atonement for sin,—for even the blood that maketh atonement for the soul is

The trespass-offering: compensation for wrong in divine government.

I. (v.14-19.) Trespass Godward.

(V. 14.—VI. 7.)

5. [1]And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, If a soul act unfaithfully, and sin through inadvertence in the [e]holy things of Jehovah, then he shall bring his trespass-offering unto Jehovah, a ram without blemish out of the flock, according to thine estimation in silver shekels, the shekel of the sanctuary, for a trespass-offering. And he shall make [f]restitution for the sin which he hath committed in the holy thing, and shall add the fifth part to it, and give it unto the priest, and the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of trespass-offering, and it shall be forgiven him. And if any one sin and do any of the things which Jehovah hath commanded not to be done, and [g]know it not, yet he is guilty, and shall bear his iniquity. And he shall bring a ram without blemish out of the flock, according to thine estimation, for a trespass-offering unto the priest, and the priest shall make atonement for him, for his inadvertence, wherein he erred and knew it not, and it shall be forgiven him. It is a trespass-offering: he hath certainly trespassed against Jehovah.

e *cf.* Deut. 12. 26. ch. 22. 14.

f *ctr.* Ps. 69. 4.

g *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 13-15.

absent—but what God in mercy can accept where man has no better. It is Christ, of course, who is trusted in, and trusted in as Saviour, though the soul may be so deeply ignorant as not to know that even His death was needed for atonement. God knows the need, and Christ has met it, even for those utterly unconscious of the depth to which He must descend for this. How blessed the assurance here that the cross it is that saves, not one's intelligence about it! Yet we must remember that ignorance of the cross and opposition to it are different things, though it be true that Peter, when he first heard of it, opposed. Here we must leave Him who knoweth the hearts to draw the line.

5. THE TRESPASS-OFFERING, as the governmental offering, occupies the fifth place. As already said, it is sin as *injury* rather than as *sin* that is contemplated, and thus the thought of compensation is prominent in connection with it: the amount of compensation due was to be estimated by the priest, and then a fifth part more added to it and given to the person injured; so that he was more than recompensed.

No one doubts that this is the peculiar feature of the trespass-offering. As for the rest, it was a ram in every case that was offered, but the manner of the offering is entirely omitted in this place. Further on we shall find that it was very little different from the ordinary forms of the sin-offering: here, all this is omitted, that our eyes may be fixed upon this special feature.

The estimation of the priest seems to *include* that of the ram: to make it the whole thing, attaching to the animal, as Hengstenberg imagines, a supposititious value, is impossible to believe. Think of God ordaining a fictitious compensation to a person wronged! On the other hand, the words certainly give the impression that the ram was estimated; and although this is the only case of such a thing in the sacrificial offerings, we cannot say that it is a contradiction in thought to this one. Otherwise, indeed, we should have to look at the compensation as something merely added to the sacrifice rather than as giving it its character. As it is, the offering becomes the restitution-offering.

If still we have Christ before us, the thought of restitution by the cross will not be difficult to understand or hard to follow out. The law of the offering divides into two parts, clearly distinguished by the "Jehovah spake unto Moses" which divides them, and no less by their subjects,—the first part treating of

2. (vi. 1-7.) Trespass manward.

[1] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, If a soul sin and act unfaithfully against Jehovah, and deny unto his [h] neighbor that which was delivered him to [i] keep, or a pledge, or a thing robbed, or hath oppressed his neighbor, or hath found something lost and denieth it, and sweareth falsely;—in any of all these things that a man doeth, sinning therein: then it shall be, because he hath sinned and is guilty, that he shall [j] restore that which he hath taken away by robbery, or that which he hath gotten by oppression, or that which was intrusted to him, or the lost thing that he hath found, or all that of which he hath sworn falsely; he shall even restore it in full, and add the [k] fifth part to it,—to him to whom it belongeth shall he give it in the day of his trespass-offering unto Jehovah. And he shall bring his

[h] *cf.* 1. Cor. 6. 8. 1 Cor. 8. 12.

[i] Ex. 22. 7-9. Deut. 22. 1-3.

[j] ch. 5. 16. Luke 19. 8.

[k] ch. 27. 13. *cf.* Gen. 47. 24.

wrongs done to God, the latter of wrongs done to man. In both respects it should be clear that Christ has not only restored what He took not away, but *over*-compensated—added the fifth part more. This is the double tithe which the Egyptians gave to Pharaoh in testimony that Joseph had saved their lives, and that all they had was of Pharaoh's bounty. It is the witness of grace and salvation: mark, the *overplus* is the witness of this; for God could not be content with mere restoration of what had been taken away; He could not satisfy Himself with merely repairing the damage sin had done,—the disorder it had introduced. No; there must be for His people greater blessing, and for Himself a greater glory—blessing, thus, for all His creatures, as they behold it.

The failure to apprehend this is the foundation of much error in theology. It leads to a real degradation of Christ's blessed work, which is made to consist in merely canceling the evil Adam did, and completing that which Adam failed to do. But then Adam has to be made from the beginning a candidate for heaven, and law-fulfillment the means originally designed for getting there! As it has been said by one, "This do, and live," was written over the gate of heaven. A creature was to leave the place God had made him for and put him into,—was taught to aspire, when Satan had lost heaven by aspiring. All this, for many, has dislocated their theology from the foundation. Adam is looked at as "holy" instead of innocent; the image of God in righteousness and true holiness into which we are new-created is thought only the renewal of that in which man was created. And it is no wonder if, on the other hand, many should think of earth in a heavenly *state*, as the only heaven intended for us.

How differently does Scripture speak! contrasting the Second Man with the first, the old with the new creation. It is Christ who has opened heaven to us; manhood has entered it in Him; grace has made ours what God could never have *proposed* to us to gain by working: as children of God, possessors of eternal life; as indwelt of the Spirit, members of Christ's body; Eden but the *type* of the paradise of God; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ! Had Adam ever been invited to take possession of such an inheritance?

Godward also He has wrought, glorifying Him, as Adam could never have done. Where was His righteousness told out as in the cross? eternal love at the same time manifest in the Son of God bearing our sins in His own body on the tree! God and man in His own blessed person held fast in an everlasting embrace never to be sundered. Surely salvation is, by the whole fullness of what constitutes it that, an overplus every way of blessing and of glory.

This is the trespass-offering: one perfect Man in the depth of humiliation, lifted up upon the cross, has accomplished this. Manhood itself has been, in Him, raised from its fall to be the dwelling-place of Deity. The divine answer to the question, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of

trespass-offering unto Jehovah, a [t]ram without blemish out of the flock, according to thine estimation, unto the priest for a trespass-offering: and the priest shall make atonement for him before Jehovah, and it shall be forgiven him for any thing of all that he hath done in trespassing therein. [t] ch. 5. 18.

The perpetuity of the burnt-offering: "By one offering He hath perfected in perpetuity the sanctified." (Heb. x. 14.)

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. vi. 8–vii.)

The offerings in relation to priest and people.

(VI. 8-13.)

1. AND Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Command Aaron and his sons, saying, This is the [m]law of the burnt-offering: the burnt-offering shall be upon the hearth upon the altar all night unto the morning, and the fire of the altar be [n]kept burning in it. And the [m] ch. 1. [n] Num. 28. 3.

man, that Thou visitest him?" has been given in Jesus: "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels; Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor: Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet."

It only remains to show briefly now how the first two gospels compare with these last two offerings. Matthew's is, without doubt, the governmental gospel. Its theme is the kingdom of heaven, and Christ the King; while Mark's is ministry and the perfect Servant. In each case, the character is preserved throughout: even the forgiveness of sins in the former, as taught in one of the parables of the kingdom, is conditional and can be recalled; in the prayer taught His disciples we find "Forgive us our *debts*" instead of "our sins," as elsewhere; in the parables of the thirteenth chapter He is the man who *buys* the field, and who *buys* the pearl.

A difficulty in deciding between the two gospels lies in this, that at the cross, in Matthew as in Mark, the cry of desertion is found, and the darkness which it interprets. This in the offerings is characteristic, as we have seen, of the sin-offering and not the trespass. It only shows, however, that there is not the repetition in Scripture which we often imagine to be there. In God's governmental ways He must display His nature; so that there is nothing really contradictory in this. On the other hand, while in both the effect of the darkness endured is that it passes away—the vail is rent,—on the other hand, it is in Matthew only that His death is followed by the resurrection of the saints. But death is governmental, not the necessary penalty of sin. So too the threefold vindication of the blessed Sufferer by the traitor who betrays Him, the judge who condemns Him, and in the dream of Pilate's wife, is again governmental. Mark omits all this, in order to concentrate our attention on the great expiation being wrought, the fruit of which is seen, not, as in Matthew, in disciples bidden to baptize into the kingdom, but in the gospel going forth to men, with the power of the adversary broken down before it.

Space forbids further dwelling upon a theme so precious, and we must close here our comment upon the offerings in themselves.

SUBD. 2.

BUT we have now to look at their relations to the priests and people, especially to the former. The laws here fall into six sections; the offerings in general taking their place much as before, except that the meal-offering for the high-priest takes here the one occupied by the peace-offering, and the peace-offering itself has the last place, as bringing before us that communion with God in which we find the rightful effect and conclusion of the whole.

1. The burnt-offering comes first, then, in order; and it is to be always upon the altar, an abiding testimony to Israel's acceptance with God. Typically even,

priest shall put on his linen garment, and his linen breeches shall he put upon his flesh, and he shall take up the [o]ashes to which the fire hath consumed the burnt-offering upon the altar, and he shall put them beside the altar. And he shall take off his garments, and put on other garments, and shall carry forth the ashes without the camp unto a clean place. And the fire upon the altar shall be kept burning on it: it shall not be put out; and the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and lay the burnt-offering in order upon it; and he shall burn thereon the fat of the peace-offerings. Fire shall be kept burning continually upon the altar: it shall not go out.

[o] ch. 4. 12.

(vr. 14-18.)

The priests' portion in the meal-offering.

2. And this is the law of the [p]meal-offering: let [one of] the sons of Aaron present it before Jehovah, before the altar. And he shall take up from it his [q]handful of the fine flour of the meal-offering, and of the oil thereof, and all the frankincense which is upon the meal-offering, and shall burn it upon the altar, a sweet savor, its memorial, unto Jehovah. And the rest of it shall Aaron and his sons eat: it shall be eaten [r]unleavened in a holy place; in the court of the tent of meeting

[p] ch. 2.

[q] ch. 2. 2.

[r] ch. 20. 12.

this was only imperfectly attained in their case by lengthening out the morning and evening sacrifice, so as to merge them, as it were, in one. For us it is simple that the one offering abides before God continually, and we abide in the value of it, without possibility of change.

Absolutely necessary as the sin-offering is, and the only thing that can open the holiest, yet how different is the ordinance as to it! Except some special sin of the whole congregation called for it, there was but one sin-offering for all Israel on the day of atonement once a year. Nor, as we have seen, does it seem ever to have been voluntarily offered, or multiplied as the burnt- and peace-offerings might be, to any extent.

It was the duty of the priest to keep the burnt-offering with its sweet savor going up to God. The true sacrifice needs not this continual service; and yet it does not follow that there is nothing that answers now to this priestly work. God delights to have us remind Him (though He can never forget it,) of the work of His dear Son, and that we have here our occupation, and live in the fragrance of His acceptance. This is really the foundation of all practical holiness, as it is of rest and satisfaction to the soul. Christ is our righteousness before God: we are accepted in the Beloved; in Christ we are *as* Christ, even in this world. Here the perpetual sunshine settles down on us: it is the true Beulah land for the saint, where the birds sing ever, and the heart goes forth in perpetual melody. "There be many that say, Who will show us any good? Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us!" Here it is ever lifted up, for God turns not His back upon His Son: this day knows no decline. Well may our relation to the offerings begin with this transcendent blessedness!

2. Then we come to the meal-offering,—Christ personally enjoyed, the food of the priests of God. Here is full communion, the memorial for God, the rest for Aaron and his sons. But it can only be eaten in a holy place—in the court of the tent of meeting, where the fine linen of practical righteousness shuts us in from the world. Whatever is put in contact with this becomes holy, whatever we can connect with Christ finds indeed, thus, that He is sanctification; what cannot is leaven, and to be excluded.

shall they eat it. It shall not be baken with leaven: I have given it as their portion of my offerings made by fire; it is most holy, as is the sin-offering, and as is the trespass-offering. All the males among the children of Aaron shall eat it: it is an everlasting statute for your generations, as to Jehovah's offerings made by fire; whatsoever [s]toucheth them shall be holy. (19-23.)

[s] ver. 27.

The offering of the high-priest on the day of his anointing.

3. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, This is the offering of [t]Aaron and his sons, which they shall present to Jehovah on the day of his anointing, a [u]tenth part of an ephah of fine flour as a continual meal-offering, half of it in the morning, and half of it at night. It shall be prepared with oil, on the pan; thou shalt bring it fried; broken pieces of the meal-offering shalt thou present, a sweet savor unto Jehovah: and that priest of his sons who is anointed in his stead shall offer it; it is a statute for ever [that] it shall be wholly burned unto Jehovah. And every [v]meal-offering of the priest shall be wholly burned; it shall not be eaten. (24-30.)

[t] cf. Heb. 5. 1.

[u] Num. 28. 5. cf. Ezek. 46. 14.

[v] cf. Rom. 15. 3.

The sin-offering eaten: the experimental apprehension of sin as before God.

4. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, This is the law of the [w]sin-offering: in the place where they kill the burnt-offering, shall they kill the sin-offering before Jehovah: it is most holy. The [x]priest that offereth it for sin shall eat it: in a holy place shall it be eaten,—in the court of the tent of meeting. Whatever toucheth the flesh of

[w] ch. 4.

[x] cfr. ch. 10. 16-20.

3. What is the meal-offering of the high-priest in the day of his anointing, and which (like the burnt-offering,) is to be wholly burned, not partaken of? If we go back to the time of Christ's anointing, when at His baptism by John the Father's voice proclaimed His delight in His beloved Son, the gift of the Spirit was the seal of the perfection so declared. But to what did it testify? To the preciousness of thirty years of human life which in the inspired history has, it may be said, no place. What it was to God He testifies; He had lived in it to God in the common toil of men—a life of which it is natural to ask, Why should it be hidden from us? Gospels of the Infancy have been imagined even, to fill the gap and satisfy the need, but have only proved their absolute incompetency. It remains, and for us will remain, until we hear it perhaps in the speech of heaven, absolutely hidden, a meal-offering to God alone. If this be the true interpretation, as it seems, then we can understand why it is *made* with oil, but not *anointed;* and we realize the opposition of the world to Him, even before He came openly forward as God's Sent One in it. Half offered in the morning, half at night, it may show us His abiding perfectness all through, whether in sunshine or in shadow: things that test us equally, yet in such different ways, in Him bore equal witness to unchangeable goodness. Could these thirty wondrous years go without notice in these types? Yet it is here only,—nowhere if not here,—we seem to find it.

4. Where the sin-offering was not wholly burned, it was eaten by the priest,—the priest who offered it, and who typifies Christ Himself, sharing it with the priestly family. The eating has the same significance as elsewhere: it is the entering into that which makes atonement for God, hence of necessity into the sin itself as before Him. In Christ it was necessarily found when "bearing our sins in His own body on the tree," and in this way was part of the atonement

it shall be holy; and when any of its blood is sprinkled upon a garment, thou shalt wash that whereon it was sprinkled in a holy place. But the [y]earthen vessel wherein it is boiled shall be broken, and if it be boiled in a brazen pot, it shall be both scoured and rinsed with water. Every [z]male among the priests shall eat it: it is most holy. And [a]no sin-offering, of which the blood is brought into the tent of meeting to make atonement in the holy place, shall be eaten: it shall be burned in the fire.

y ch. 11. 33.

z ch. 7. 6.

a ch. 10. 18. ch. 16. 12, 13, 27.

(VII. 1-10.)

The trespass-offering.

5. And this is the law of the [b]trespass-offering: it is most holy. In the place where they kill the burnt-offering shall they kill the trespass-offering; and its [c]blood shall he sprinkle on the altar round about. And of it he shall present all the fat,—the fat tail, and the fat that covereth the inwards, and the two kidneys, and the fat which is on them, which is by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, by the kidneys, it shall he take away; and the priest shall burn them upon the altar, an offering by fire unto Jehovah: it is a trespass-offering. Every male among the priests shall eat of it; in a holy place shall it be eaten: it is most holy.

b ch. 5.

c ctr. ch. 4. 30.

itself, as Lev. x. 17 indicates; but the fact that the priests could as a whole partake of it shows that it is not to be limited to this. Daniel confessing his sin and the sin of his people was surely eating the sin-offering; and just such identification of ourselves with the sins of God's saints is a great need for all of us: a realization which the knowledge of the cross that we have as Christians will intensify, not in any wise lessen. Alas! the slight knowledge of God's grace may indeed allow a light treatment of sin, perhaps also a bitter judgment of it: a real eating of the sin-offering makes one as serious as tender: who can harshly judge when Christ has borne the judgment? who can treat lightly what brought Him to the cross?

Nothing could be holier than the sin-offering; and as in the previous case of the meal-offering, every thing brought into connection with it becomes holy. Imputed sin is not imparted sin. There is, indeed, in the case of the red heifer (Num. xix.), what seems to argue this, but even in this case the ritual as a whole shows this not to be really so. And here the treatment of the vessels in which the flesh had been boiled was not because of their having been defiled, but that the holy food should not be mixed in any way afterward with common food. "It was possible to prevent this desecration, in the case of copper vessels, by a thorough cleansing; but not so with earthen vessels, which absorb the fat, so that it cannot be removed by washing. The latter, therefore, were to be broken in pieces,—*i. e.*, thoroughly destroyed." (*Keil.*) This minute care as to the type should surely teach us how separate from every other thing is the work of the cross. Death there was not as death elsewhere: Christ was no mere martyr. To mix this wondrous work for God and men with any other thing whatever is but to degrade and desecrate it.

5. In the law of the trespass-offering we have supplied what with all the other offerings comes into the first part,—the direction as to the killing, the sprinkling of the blood, and the burning of the fat. They were left out before, as it seems, to fix our attention upon the specific character of the trespass-offering as *restitution*. Here, in what is indeed (what the whole book of Leviticus is often called) the "priests' guide-book," they are taught that for restitution there must be true

[d] As with the sin-offering, so with the trespass-offering, there is one law for them; the priest that maketh atonement with it shall have it. As to the priest who presenteth a man's burnt-offering, the [e] skin of the burnt-offering which he presenteth shall be the priest's for himself. And every meal-offering that is baken in the oven, and all that is prepared in the caldron and in the pan, shall be the priest's who presenteth it: his shall it be. And every meal-offering mingled with oil and dry, shall all the sons of Aaron have, one as much as another.

(vv. 11-38.)

The peace-offering: victory over sin.

1.(vv.11-21.) God and man at one

6.[1] And this is the law of the sacrifice of [f] peace-offerings which one shall present to Jehovah. If he present it for a thanksgiving, then he shall present with the sacrifice of [g] thanksgiving, pierced cakes, unleavened, mingled with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and pierced cakes of flour mingled with oil, fried. Besides the cakes, he shall present [h] leavened bread for his offering, along with the sacrifice of his peace-offering of thanksgiving: and he shall present thereof out of the whole offering one [of each] a heave-offering to Jehovah; it shall be the priest's who sprinkleth the blood of the peace-offering. And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace-offering of thanksgiving shall be eaten in the day of its being offered: he shall [i] leave none of it till the morning. And if the sacrifice of his offering be a [j] vow or a free-will offering, then it shall be eaten the day that he presenteth his sacrifice, and on the morrow shall the rest of it be eaten; but that which [k] remaineth of the sacrifice on the third day shall

[d] ch. 6. 24.

[e] *cf.* ch. 13. 2. Gen. 3. 21.

[f] ch. 3.

[g] ch. 22. 29. Ps. 107. 22. *cfr.* Amos 4. 5.

[h] ch. 23. 17.

[i] *cf.* Ex. 16. 19. Phil. 3. 13.

[j] ch. 22. 21.

[k] ch. 8. 32. *cf.* Ex. 12. 10.

sacrificial atonement: in government, God's nature must be declared; and this we see the gospels maintain so fully,—that what is in Leviticus absolutely distinctive of the sin-offering is in Matthew as much given as in Mark, so that it is even difficult to distinguish between them.

6. Lastly, the peace-offering fills the sixth place here. It is that which, in the bringing together God and man whom sin has sundered, displays His victory over it. There are three subsections here, the two last plainly marked out, in a way we have seen before, by their being distinct communications from Jehovah. In the first part, we find, in type, through the work of atonement, God and man at one,—peace which is not merely peace, but much more. In the second, we have reiterated the prohibition of eating fat and blood. In the third, we have the priest's portion in the offering.

(i.) As has just been said, peace with God is never merely peace. God can never be simply not at variance with His creatures; there is in His nature no indifference, no neutrality; what He is He is with His whole heart, and, of all things, He nauseates lukewarmness. So to be at peace with Him is to have His love poured out upon us,—it is to be brought into His banqueting-house, and to be made to sit at His table: and thus it is pictured here. The peace-offering is the only one in which the offerer himself partakes of his own offering, and this partaking shows him not only brought into a place of acceptance, but in heart reconciled and brought nigh. That which has satisfied God satisfies him also: peace has become communion.

be burned in the fire. And if any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace-offering be eaten at all on the third day, it shall not be accepted for him that presenteth it, —it shall not be counted to him,—it shall be offensive; and the soul that eateth it shall bear his iniquity. And the flesh that [l]toucheth any thing unclean shall not be eaten; it shall be burned in the fire. But as to the flesh, every clean person may eat the flesh; but the soul that eateth the flesh of the sacrifice of peace-offering which is Jehovah's, with his [m] uncleanness upon him, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. And the soul that toucheth any unclean thing, [whether] the uncleanness of man, or unclean beast, or any unclean abomination, and eateth of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace-offering which is Jehovah's, that soul shall be cut off from his people.

[l] Hag. 2.11-14.

[m] 1 Sam.20. 26. *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 35.

2. (22-27.) The separation of God's portion.

[2] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, [n] Ye shall eat no fat of ox or of sheep or of goat; but the fat of a carcase, and the fat of that which is torn, may be put to any other use; but ye shall not eat of it. For whosoever shall eat the fat of beast of which they present an offering made by fire unto Jehovah, the soul that eateth shall be cut off from his people. And ye shall eat no [o] blood in all your dwellings, whether of bird or beast: any soul that eateth any blood, that soul shall be cut off from his people.

[n] ch. 3. 17.

[o] ch. 3. 17. Acts 15. 29.

There are three characteristics of the peace-offering here,—a thanksgiving, a vow, and a free-will offering. It is strange that there should be contention among the commentators as to the meaning of these, as also that by some the higher character should be ascribed to the first, when the law itself so plainly decides otherwise. The "thanksgiving" is plainly the acknowledgment of some special blessing from God, while the "free-will" offering, on the contrary, supposes that nothing of this kind had roused the heart to remembrance: it needed nothing; as where one walks with God, and finds Him ever before him, walks in His light, rejoicing ever in Himself. It is clear which is the higher state implied, and which therefore is the higher character of offering. As to the vow, it is not so plain at first why it should be higher. The vow is supplicatory, was often dictated by the pressure of circumstances, is in the text distinguished from free-will offerings. Yet as addressed to Jehovah, the expression of confidence in Him in trial, He rates it higher than the simple thanksgiving. And this is evident, if we could not at all account for it, by the fact that, in the case of this as of the free-will offering, the flesh might be eaten the day after as well as the day of the sacrifice, typically implying more energy for sustained communion than in the thanksgiving-offering. On the third day even here, whatever remained was to be burned in the fire; and if eaten, it would be pollution. The contact with uncleanness also, if one went on with what expressed communion with God, would be grievous sin, as connecting His table with it. Reconciliation with God means holiness of life.

(ii.) The fat and the blood God claimed for Himself; and there was need to insist upon this where the people were thus encouraged to draw near to God. Man soon mistakes familiarity for nearness: God has therefore to insist afresh upon what is His due being rendered to Him. Life, as expressed in the blood, was His; and the fat, the will and energy of the life, was to be consecrated to

3. (28-38.) The priest's portion.

[3] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, He that presenteth the sacrifice of his peace-offering to Jehovah, shall bring his offering of the sacrifice of his peace-offering unto Jehovah: his own hands shall bring the offerings by fire unto Jehovah, the fat with the [p] breast shall he bring, —the breast, to wave it for a wave-offering before Jehovah; and the priest shall burn the fat upon the altar, but the breast shall be Aaron's and his sons'; and the right shoulder of the sacrifice of your peace-offerings shall ye give as a heave-offering unto the priest. He among the sons of Aaron who presenteth the blood of the peace-offerings and the fat shall have the right [q] shoulder for [his] part. For the wave-breast and the heave-shoulder have I taken of the children of Israel from off the sacrifice of their peace-offerings, and have given them unto Aaron the priest and to his sons from the children of Israel by an everlasting statute. This is the portion of Aaron and the portion of his sons from Jehovah's offerings by fire, in the day that he presented them to be priests unto Jehovah,—which Jehovah commanded to be given them in the day in which he anointed them from among the children of Israel,—an everlasting statute for their generations.

This is the law of the burnt-offering, of the meal-offering, and of the sin-offering, and of the trespass-offering, and of the consecrations, and of the sacrifice of peace-offerings, which Jehovah commanded Moses in Mount Sinai, in the day that he commanded the children of Israel to present their offerings unto Jehovah, in the wilderness of Sinai.

p Ex. 29. 26. *cf.* Eph. 5. 19.

q Num. 6. 19. 20. *cf.* Luke 15. 5. Ex. 28. 7.

Him alone. Good and needful it is, at the table of the Lord, to recognize that it *is* the Lord's: "the shout of a King is among them" must be characteristic always of the people of God. And so speak the dimensions of the eternal city, every way a 12,—the length and breadth and height of it equal.

(iii.) Lastly, we have the priests' portion of the peace-offering. The offering priest we necessarily recognize as Christ. The wave-breast belongs to Aaron and his sons; for we are, as priests, able to enter into and partake of the affections of His heart. The shoulder is His alone, for His alone is the power by which all things are sustained in blessing. With this the law of the peace-offering ends.

Div. 2.

We have now had in the five offerings that commence the book that which is the basis and type of true sanctification. Is it a fancy that in this number five we are to read of "God with man?" At any rate we now certainly come to that fellowship with God which is implied in this; none the less so that it is fellowship with *Christ*, and *through* Christ, the priests with the Priest, association positional and practical with Him who has, nevertheless, His own peculiar place and glory, as is fully maintained at the beginning of what is here before us. Although we have already had in Exodus (chap. xxix.) the instructions as to the anointing and consecration of the priesthood which are here carried out, and looked at them there, yet as the repetition is neither purposeless nor *mere* repetition, we shall not be hindered from again considering, if briefly, what the

DIVISION 2. (Chap. viii.–xv.)

Association with Christ (the priests with the Priest) and fellowship resulting.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. viii.–x.)

Positional association.

(VIII. 1.—IX.-24.)

Priesthood according to God.

1. (*vv.* 1-12.) The one Priest.

1. [1] AND Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Take [r] Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments and the anointing-oil, and the bullock of the sin-offering and the two rams, and the basket of unleavened bread, and gather together all the assembly unto the entrance of the tent of meeting. And Moses did as Jehovah commanded him, and the assembly was gathered at the entrance of the tent of meeting. And Moses said unto the assembly, This is the thing which Jehovah hath commanded to be done. And Moses

r Ex. 29.

Spirit of God here leads afresh to contemplate. A grand and inspiring scene it is, which may He who only can interpret to us!

The two subdivisions are clear enough: in the first (chap. viii.–x.) we have in the main, *positional* association—though never disjoined from the other: "in Christ" unites inseparably life and standing; and in the second (chap. xi.–xv.) that practical discernment which is fellowship with the Holy One.

SUBD. 1.

1. In the first subdivision there are also two sections, the first of which gives us the setting up of the priesthood; the second, a breach once more through sin, but which (God's forbearance having been proclaimed) does not again break up what has been established under the second covenant.

In the first section we have on the other hand a septenary series which naturally points to the fullness and perpetuity of what is contained in it, seven steps by which we rise into full blessedness. The type here manifestly has to do with those who are now God's "holy priesthood" (1 Pet. ii. 5), and in following it out there should be a most lively interest on our part. We find in it the application of the sacrifice of Christ to the bringing us into settled relation with God, a place eternal, heavenly, and of communion in the fullest sense, for all this is implied in priesthood as here detailed to us.

(i.) Priesthood was what God proposed to Israel as what was in His mind connected with redemption. "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself: now, therefore, if ye will obey My voice . . . ye shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." To this which is His original thought for them He had all through adhered, although it could not then be carried out; and in Christianity the redeemed are in fact priests, as the apostle of the circumcision shows. "I brought you *to Myself*," fully realized, is priesthood in one at least of its essential characters, ability to *draw near to God*: "the priests which come near to the Lord" (Ex. xix. 22), is one of the earliest titles descriptive of them.

For this holiness was an absolute prerequisite: a "kingdom of priests" implies a "holy nation;" and thus in Israel the official nearness was only external, because the holiness was so largely external. God was, as we know, teaching spiritual truths by means of outward representation. In Christianity we have the substance of these shadows.

In the type here "Aaron and his sons" appear together: the high-priest is head of the priestly family, who derive all their title to the priesthood from their relationship to him. How much this is insisted on all through these books is

brought near Aaron and his sons, and washed them in water; and he put on him the coat, and girded him with the girdle, and clothed him with the robe, and put on him the ephod, and girded him with the wrought band of the ephod, and bound it to him with it. And he put the breastplate on him, and placed in the breastplate the Urim and Thummim. And he put the turban upon his head, and on the turban, on the front of it, he put the plate of gold, the holy diadem, as Jehovah had commanded Moses. And Moses took the anointing-oil and [s]anointed the tabernacle, and all that was in it, and sanctified them. And he sprinkled thereof upon the altar seven times, and anointed the altar and all its vessels, and the laver and its base, to sanctify them. And he poured of the anointing-oil on Aaron's head, and anointed him, to sanctify him.

[s] *cf.* Matt. 3. 16, 17. Acts 2. 1-4. Eph. 2. 22. Eph. 1. 13. 1 Cor. 3. 16. 1 Jno. 2. 27.

apparent at a glance: "the sons of Aaron, the priests," is constantly their description. In Christ's own case His High-Priesthood is founded on His Sonship: "so also Christ glorified not Himself to be made High-Priest, but He that said unto Him, Thou art My Son: to-day have I begotten Thee." (Heb. v. 5.) This Sonship, begun in time (or what could be called "to-day") must be carefully distinguished from His *eternal* Sonship. It is as Man, as in the announcement to Mary (Luke i. 35), that He is thus addressed. The priest is the representative of men, "ordained for men," and must for this be man; but the human race being defiled with sin, and no natural product of an unclean thing being clean (Job xiv. 4), there must be a new fountain opened, and Christ must be the "Second Man" by a new birth of humanity in the power of God. Thus a new race of men find in Him their new Adam Head,—a priestly race in accordance with their origin, children of God and priests, as He is Son of God and Priest. "Aaron and his sons" have here their antitype.

This birth involves for us a new and a divine nature, essentially holy therefore, that which is born of the Spirit being Spirit (Jno. iii. 6.) There is a foundation of priesthood, the ability to draw nigh: in the type this is emphasized by that washing of water which, as the first necessity, Aaron and his sons first receive. It was not as afterward, when they went into the tabernacle, a washing simply of hands and feet, but of the whole body. To this the apostle refers as a necessary prerequisite to entering the sanctuary—"our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. x. 22): "the washing of regeneration" (Tit. iii. 5). This of course could not be applied to Christ, except as humanity might be said in Him (by the very fact of what He was) to be regenerate: within as without this child of a human mother was yet "that holy thing."

For a moment, then, we see "Him that sanctifieth and those who are sanctified" linked together here; but then the sons fall behind and Aaron himself is alone before us, and now we see in him that in Christ which is unique. He is indeed with the high-priestly dress which marks out the special service for others he has undertaken: "this was equivalent," says Kurtz, "to an investiture with the office itself, the official dress being a visible expression of the official character." The word "investiture," is indeed a key to the meaning.

After this comes the anointing, first of the tabernacle, the altar, and the laver, and then of Aaron alone, no blood yet sprinkled or shed, atonement, therefore, not the basis of anointing, none as yet needed, Christ being thus borne witness to in His own personal perfect acceptability to God. The anointing of the tabernacle in connection with Aaron has been taken as showing Christ's personal claim to the universe, but for this the order must be reversed, and the reason for the anointing of the altar and laver does not appear. These last are

2. (13-21.) The many priests.

[2] And Moses brought near Aaron's sons, and clothed them with the coats, and girded them with girdles, and bound the high caps on them, as Jehovah had commanded Moses. And he brought the bullock of the sin-offering, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the bullock of the sin-offering. And he slew it; and Moses took the blood, and with his finger put it upon the horns of the altar round about, and [f] cleansed the altar; and the blood he poured out at the bottom of the altar, and sanctified it to make atonement for it. And he took all the fat that was upon the inwards, and the caul upon the liver, and the two kidneys and their fat, and Moses burned them upon the altar. But the bullock, and its skin, and its flesh, and its dung, he burned in the fire outside the camp, as Jehovah commanded Moses. And he presented the ram of [g] burnt-offering, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the ram, and he killed it; and Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar round about. And the ram he cut up into its pieces; and Moses burned the head, and the pieces, and the fat. And the inwards and the legs he washed in water, and Moses burned the whole ram upon the altar: it was a burnt-offering for a sweet savor; it was an offering by fire unto Jehovah, as Jehovah had commanded Moses.

[f] *cf.* Heb. 9. 21, 22. Ezek. 43. 18-27.

[g] ch. 9. 2.

certainly connected with the work of human recovery, while the tabernacle itself, though an undoubted pattern of heavenly things, was in fact the dwelling-place of God in the midst of the people. May this anointing not rather show that those delights with the sons of men which the tabernacle expresses, (even though fallen, as altar and laver show,) find their justification in this wondrous Person who has become Man, and upon whom for the first time the Spirit of God can rest? This seems at least in perfect harmony with what is before us in this place.

(ii.) But now the sons of Aaron are invested, and then immediately we find Aaron along with them, and their hands together upon the head of the sin-offering. That our High-Priest has for Himself no need we have been fully told; but now He is "bringing many sons unto glory," and we may in these hands of Aaron put along with his sons' hands see (together with Aaron's personal need) that confession of the guilt of men and their need of redemption which, for the Lord, involved so much. Then follows the actual sacrifice, and the blood is put upon the horns of the altar, where the "power" of it is seen in its appeal as an offering to God. That the altar itself is thus also purified seems to carry on the thought of its anointing before. Looked at as typifying Christ personally—which we have seen it does—there could be no meaning in such purification; but taken as the expression simply of means needed for the restoration of fallen men, the blood of atonement justifies the employment of such on their behalf. The righteousness of God is thus in accordance with the love of God in their salvation.

The altar in its true typical character we have seen not to be placed in the highest grade of the sin-offering, where as in this case, the victim is burned without the camp, except, indeed, for the burning of the fat upon it, which is never omitted, save in the case of the red heifer,—and which of course is not omitted here.

The burnt-offering follows, a ram, the witness not merely of sin removed but of positive acceptance: atonement is thus emphasized now on both sides, and the link between Christ and His people is sustained.

3. (22-30.) Consecration.

[3] And he presented the second ram, the ram of [v]consecration, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the ram; and he slew it, and Moses took of its blood, and put it on the tip of Aaron's right ear, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the great toe of his right foot. And he brought near the sons of Aaron, and Moses put of the blood upon the tip of their right ears, and on the thumbs of their right hands, and on the great toes of their right feet, and Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar round about. And he took the fat and the fat tail, and all the fat that was upon the inwards, and the caul of the liver, and the two kidneys, and their fat, and the right shoulder; and out of the basket of unleavened bread which was before Jehovah he took one unleavened cake, and one cake of oiled bread, and one wafer, and put them upon the fat, and on the right shoulder: and he put the whole upon Aaron's hands, and upon his sons' hands, and waved them for a wave-offering before Jehovah. And Moses took them from off their hands, and burned them on the altar, upon the burnt-offering: they were a consecration of sweet-savor; it was an offering by fire unto Jehovah. And Moses took the breast and waved it as a wave-offering before Jehovah: it was Moses' part of the ram of consecration, as Jehovah had commanded Moses. And Moses took of the anointing-oil and of the blood, that was on the altar, and [w]sprinkled it upon Aaron, upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon his sons' garments with him, and sanctified Aaron, his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him.

[v] *cf.* Ex. 28. 14. ch. 7. 16, 31. Rom. 12. 1.

[w] ver. 15. *cf.* Heb. 12. 24.

(iii.) We have now the consecration of the priesthood, or, as the Hebrew expresses it, the filling of their hands. Another ram is taken, and after hands have been laid upon it as before, is slain, and the blood put on the ear, the hand, and the foot of Aaron and His sons. The meaning of this can scarcely be mistaken: sanctification by the blood of Christ is here taught, of the ear to listen to the word of God, of the hand to do service, of the foot to walk in His ways; we can do no acceptable work, we can live no acceptable life, until the blood of atonement has set us apart for this as saved and purified. Thus saved, the apprehension of what has been done for us makes us His who has done the work: "we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have received the reconciliation." (Rom. v. 11.) This joy in God is necessary devotedness to Him.

Kurtz objects to this meaning of the application of the blood, that it inverts the order of the ritual, for the blood that anoints the ear and hand and foot of the priests has not yet been put upon the altar, and has thus not yet gained the power to atone. He refers, of course, to the passage in the seventeenth chapter, which we have already partially examined, "I have given it to you *upon the altar* to make atonement for your souls;" but we have already seen that this cannot be intended to show that the blood of Christ had a value distinct from that of His death, or is indeed any thing else than the symbol of it. Nor can it mean that the blood itself receives power from any thing outside itself. The connection of the altar with the blood is this that it testifies to the blood as the blood of *sacrifice*, the symbol of a death which was not a martyr's merely, but a vi-

4. (31-36.) Experimental apprehension.

[4] And Moses said unto Aaron and unto his sons, Boil the flesh at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and there eat it and the bread which is in the basket of consecration, as I commanded, saying, Aaron and his sons shall eat it. And that which [x]remaineth of the flesh and of the bread ye shall burn in the fire. And ye shall not go out of the entrance of the tent of meeting [y]seven days until the days of your consecration are completed, for seven days shall ye be consecrated. As he hath done this day, so hath Jehovah commanded to do, to make atonement for you. And ye shall abide at the entrance of the tent of meeting day and night for seven days, and keep Jehovah's charge, that ye die not; for so I am commanded. And Aaron and his sons did all things that Jehovah had commanded by the hand of Moses.

[x] ch. 7. 17.

[y] *cf.* Ex. 12. 15. Ezek. 43. 26. Heb. 7. 25.

5. (ix. 1-14.) The end as the beginning.

[5] And it was so on the [z]eighth day, that Moses called Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel, and said

[z] *cf.* Gen. 17. 12. 2 Cor. 5. 17.

carious offering to God. This is the simple and necessary truth, and will be seen as such as soon as we get the eye on Christ. Thus it is already atoning blood that is applied to the priests, *although* it is only atoning blood as connected with the altar: truth in Scripture is not seldom paradox.

If Aaron still represent Christ here, as it would seem, we must take the application of the blood to him as speaking of His devotedness to all that His atoning work accomplishes and secures. It may thus have an easy and unstrained interpretation, which prepares the way for what we next find, the fat of the ram and the right shoulder, with some of the unleavened bread of the meal-offering, put upon the hands of Aaron and his sons and waved for a wave-offering before they are burned upon the altar. This is the "filling of the hands," or practical consecration—that occupation with Christ, in which we have necessary communion with the Father and the Son. The oil and blood together are now sprinkled upon Aaron and his sons and their association with him is complete.

(iv.) We have next the feeding upon the ram and the unleavened bread. The flesh of the ram is boiled, a thing forbidden as to the passover-lamb, which was to be roasted with fire. There evidently the endurance of wrath, and so removal of it, is that which is before the soul. Here this is not in the same way prominent; as we have seen in the case of the meal-offering, the sufferings here indicated seem to be those into which the word led Him, for the fulfillment of which He came. This would not, of course, exclude the bearing of wrath upon the cross, the special "cup" which He dreaded, but took obediently from the Father's hand: it would only enlarge the scope of what here the priests of God have presented before them, not merely to behold, however, but to appropriate, which the "eating" in a striking manner expresses. It is the laying hold, not by mental apprehension simply, but in heart and conscience, prompted by the need and hunger of the soul. And it is expressly the "ram of consecration" that we thus feed upon as priests. Consecration without it would be but outward. For it the toil of the way, if it be the road with God we travel, gives but needed appetite; and thus we are reminded here that our consecration goes on for the whole seven days of our human life, while we abide but as it were at the tabernacle door, and keep Jehovah's charge.

With this, four of the seven sections of this series end, and we find that as usual, there is a distinct break here, and that the last three are connected together as occurrences of the eighth day, a number of which we have abundant proof that it indicates a new beginning.

(v.) We come now then to the eighth day and the appearance of the glory of

unto Aaron, Take thee a young calf for a [a] sin-offering, and a ram for a [b] burnt-offering, without blemish, and present [them] before Jehovah, and speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Take you a shaggy [c] goat for a sin-offering, and a [d] calf, and a lamb, yearlings, without blemish, for a burnt-offering, and a [e] bullock and a ram for a peace-offering, to sacrifice before Jehovah, and a [f] meal-offering mingled with oil; to-day Jehovah will appear unto you. And they brought that which Moses commanded before the tent of meeting; and all the assembly drew [g] near and stood before Jehovah. And Moses said, This is the thing that Jehovah hath commanded that ye should do, and the glory of Jehovah shall appear unto you. And Moses said unto Aaron, Draw near unto the altar, and offer thy sin-offering and thy burnt-offering, and make atonement for thyself and for the people; and offer the offering of the people, and make atonement for them, as Jehovah commanded. And Aaron drew near the altar, and slew the calf of the sin-offering which was for himself; and the sons of Aaron presented to him the blood, and he dipped his finger in the blood, and put it on the horns of the altar, and poured out the blood at the bottom of the altar. And the fat and the kidneys and the caul from off the liver, of the sin-offering, he burned upon the altar, as Jehovah had commanded Moses. And the flesh and the skin he burned in the fire outside the camp. And he slew the burnt-offering; and Aaron's sons delivered unto him the blood, and he sprinkled it upon the altar round about. And the burnt-offering they delivered unto him according to its pieces, and the head: and he burnt them on the altar. And he washed the inwards and the legs, and burned them on the burnt-offering, on the altar.

6. (vv. 15-21.) The victory of grace.

[6] And he presented the [h] people's offering; and he took the shaggy goat of the sin-offering which was for the people, and killed it, and offered it for sin, as the first. And he presented the burnt-offering, and did with it

[a] ch. 4. 3.
[b] ch. 8. 18.
[c] ch. 16. 5.
[d] ch. 1. 3, etc.
[e] ch. 3. 1.
[f] ch. 6. 19-23.
[g] *etc.* Ex. 20. 18. *cf.* Heb. 7. 19.
[h] ver. 2. ch. 10. 16. *cf.* Heb. 7. 27.

Jehovah, and this as the fruit of the offering of the sacrifice for the *people*. Thus the time of the consecration of the heavenly priesthood being finished, the eighth day shows us the new covenant coming into effect for Israel,—the people being as in many other places, their own type—and then it is that the glory of the Lord will appear on the earth. We have first of all, however, a new offering for the priests, their seven days being complete,—a sin-offering and burnt-offering as before. Typically it is the completion of the earth watch—at the door of the tabernacle—of the heavenly people, and at the close of this they are found once more, as still needing it, under the shelter of the blood of atonement. Christ, first and last, is our only acceptance. The offerings show that this alone is what is in question here, there being no peace-offering any longer; and this the numerical stamp would impress upon us as the moral lesson—the summing up—the end as the beginning.

(vi.) Then come the offerings for the people. Israel also find acceptance with God in the value of that which they had so long rejected. The meaning of the

according to the ordinance. And he presented the meal-offering and took his handful of it, and burned it on the altar in addition to the burnt-offering of the morning. He slew also the ox and the ram of the sacrifice of peace-offering for the people; and Aaron's sons delivered unto him the blood, (and he sprinkled it upon the altar round about); and the fat of the ox, and of the ram the fat tail, and the covering [fat], and the kidneys, and the caul of the liver; and they put the fat upon the breasts; and he burned the fat upon the altar. And the breasts and the right shoulder Aaron waved for a wave-offering before Jehovah; as Moses commanded.

7. (22-24.) The consummation.

7 And Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and [g]blessed them, and came down from offering the sin-offering, and the burnt-offering, and the peace-offering. And Moses and Aaron [h]went into the tent of meeting and [k]came out and blessed the people, and the [l]glory of Jehovah appeared unto all the people. And there came a fire out from before Jehovah, and consumed upon the altar the burnt-offering and the fat; and all the people saw it, and they shouted, and [m]fell on their faces.

(X.)

The breach on man's part.

1. (vv. 1-7.) Will-worship.

2 1 And Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron, took each his censer and put fire in it, and put incense thereon, and presented [n]strange fire before Jehovah which he had not commanded them. And there [o]came out fire from Jehovah and devoured them, and they died before Jehovah. And Moses said unto Aaron, This is what Jehovah hath spoken, saying, I will be [p]sanctified with them that draw near to me, and before all the people I will be glorified: and Aaron [q]held his peace. And Moses called Mishael and Eltzaphan, the sons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron, and said unto them, Come near, [r]carry your brethren from before the sanctuary outside

i Num. 6. 22-27.

j cf. Heb. 6. 20. Heb. 9. 24. Luke 24. 50, 51.

k cf. Acts 1. 11. Heb. 9. 28.

l cf. 1 Kings 8. 11. Jno. 2. 11. 2 Cor. 3. 18. Is. 40. 5. Ezek. 43. 2-5. with Ezek. 10. 18. Ps. 72. 19. Rev. 21. 10.

m Ex. 20. 18.

n Ex. 30. 9. *cf.* Eph. 5. 18. Phil. 3. 3.

o ctr. ch. 9. 24. *cf.* Num. 16. 35. 2 Kings 1. 10, 12.

p cf. 2 Chr. 26. 16-21. Heb. 12. 28, 29.

q ver. 6. *cf.* Deut. 26. 14. Ps. 39. 9.

r. Acts 5. 6, 10. *ctr.* Acts 8. 2.

sacrifice is already clear to us, and need not be dwelt upon. The number attached may speak of the victory of divine grace at last.

(vii.) Finally comes the blessing of the people, Aaron first giving it, for the priest must do His work before the king, but then Moses and Aaron together appear out of the tabernacle, the double type of Christ as King and Priest—Melchisedek: and then the glory of the Lord is manifested. In Christ, when He appears, all this will be found united together. The King, the Priest, and He in whom the divine glory shines, will be found one.

2. After this blessed picture, which carries us on to a time yet future, we are brought back sorrowfully to the reality in that day. In the first day of the establishment of the priesthood, it fails: Nadab and Abihu offer strange fire before God, and are cut off.

(i.) The sin is will-worship—"strange fire which He commanded them not"—the will of man dictating in spiritual things, a sin which is now thought little of. Nay, with some the exact prescriptions of the Levitical service would be considered only as a contrast with the liberty of Christianity. Liberty, however, is never found in following our own wills, but in obedience to that which as given us by God is in thorough conformity to a new nature which, having been

the camp. And they went near, and carried them in their coats outside the camp, as Moses had spoken. And Moses said unto Aaron, and to Eleazar and Ithamar his sons, Uncover not your heads, nor rend your garments, that ye die not, and that wrath come not on the whole assembly; but your brethren, the whole house of Israel, shall bewail the burning which Jehovah hath kindled. And ye shall not go out from the entrance of the tent of meeting, lest ye die: for the anointing-oil of Jehovah is upon you: and they did according to the word of Moses.

2. (8-11) Discernment of holy and unholy.

[2] And Jehovah spake unto Aaron, saying, Thou [s]shalt drink no wine nor strong drink, thou and thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tent of meeting, that ye die not: it is an everlasting statute for your generations, that ye may put a difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean, and that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes that Jehovah hath spoken unto them by means of Moses.

[s] Ezek. 44. 21. *cf.* Eccl. 5. 1. 1 Cor. 11. 21, 22. Eph. 5. 18. *cfr.* 1 Sam. 1. 13-16. Acts 2. 13, 15.

3. (12-15.) Realization of our portion.

[3] And Moses spake unto Aaron and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons that were left, Take the [t]meal-offering that remaineth of the offerings of Jehovah made with fire, and eat it with unleavened bread beside the altar; for it is most holy. And ye shall eat it in a holy place, for it is thy due, and thy sons' due, out of Jehovah's offerings made by fire: for so am I commanded. And the wave-breast and the heave-shoulder shall ye eat in a clean place, thou, and thy sons, and thy daughters with thee: for as thy due, and thy sons' due, are they given of the sacrifice of peace-offering of the

[t] ch. 6. 16. ch. 8. 26, 29.

begotten in us by the word of truth, cannot find submission to that word servitude. True, the Spirit of God is come: and that glorious fact alters the whole character of worship from what it was in Judaism. We have a living Guide, but this does not affect the need of complete surrender to the control of that which He has written for us, and which is able to furnish us thoroughly to every good work. To take from that Word under whatever pretext is disobedience, and to add to it (as if it were not enough) is, in fact, to take from it. Alas! nowadays who can bear this? Yet in Nadab and Abihu the sin is not said to have been in doing what God had *forbidden*, but simply in doing what He had *not commanded*.

(ii.) The prohibition of wine and strong drink when going into the tent of meeting connects itself, of course, with the sin of Aaron's sons: and for us plainly covers all fleshly stimulus, which prevents clear discernment of what is or is not according to the mind and nature of God. For us also who are called to walk in the light of God's presence continually, this is not a casual, but a constant rule. The impulse of nature needs the restraint of Christ's yoke; even where, as the apostle says, things are lawful to us, we must still not be brought under the power of any (1 Cor. vi. 12). And how easily do they acquire power!

(iii.) The injunction to eat the meal- and peace-offerings follows here because the entering into and enjoyment of our own portion is necessary to deliverance from what in nature would gain power over us. This is a lesson often given, but which cannot be too often or too emphatically enforced. What is the world to a heart that enjoys Christ? But on the other hand, no knowledge of the world will suffice to keep us out of it, if this enjoyment is not a present reality. Most fitly, therefore, does this come in here.

children of Israel. The heave-shoulder and the wave-breast shall they bring with the offerings made by fire of the fat, to wave as a wave-offering before Jehovah; and they shall be thine and thy sons' with thee by an everlasting statute: as Jehovah hath commanded.

4. (16-20.) Feebleness entailed by failure.

4 And Moses diligently [u] sought the goat of the sin-offering, and behold, it was burnt up; and he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron that were left, saying, Why have ye not eaten the sin-offering in the holy place? for it is most holy; and he hath given it to you to [v] bear the iniquity of the assembly, to make atonement for them before Jehovah? Lo, its [w] blood was not brought in within the sanctuary: ye should certainly have eaten it in the holy place, as I commanded. And Aaron said unto Moses, Behold, they have offered this day their sin-offering and their burnt-offering before Jehovah, and such things have [x] befallen me, and if I had eaten the sin-offering to-day would it have been acceptable in Jehovah's eyes? And when Moses heard that, it was acceptable in his eyes.

u ch. 9. 15. Ezek. 44. 29.

v ch. 6. 26.

w ch. 6. 30.

x *cf.* ch. 21. 10.

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. xi.–xv.)

Putting a difference.

What we eat we are.

1. (*vv.* 1-8.) Harmony of faith and conduct.

(XI.)

1 [1] AND Jehovah spake to Moses and to Aaron, saying unto them, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, These are the animals that ye shall [y] eat of all the beasts that are upon the face of the earth. What-

y Deut. 14. 3-20. Acts 10. 9-15. Acts 15. 29. *cf.* Rom. 14. 1-3. Matt. 15. 11. Jno. 6. 53-58. Phil. 4. 8.

(iv.) Lastly, the sin of the priest is seen as entailing feebleness upon others who have not sinned. It is not meant that this must necessarily be. There is surely power with God to avert whatever consequences of even general failure: and yet so it is that at such a time there are few perhaps who do not exhibit some of the consequences of it. Aaron acknowledges a lack of power which we easily excuse in him under the circumstances. May we never excuse ourselves, however; for to throw the blame of what we are upon our circumstances is really only a covert way of laying it upon God. How good on the other hand, is it to realize our accountability in every thing of this kind, when for all realized feebleness there is so sure a remedy in that strength which is perfect in weakness!

Inability to eat the sin-offering is how common a case! It was for *others* that it was to be eaten: and to enter into the sin of others before God, while realizing the grace that has provided for it, a grace needed by ourselves as fully as by any, tests our spirituality. Only the males of Aaron's house could eat the sin-offering, and that as a most holy thing in the holy place. May we know better how to do it!

SUBD. 2.

WE come now to look at the other side of our associations. We have seen how God has in grace associated us with His dear Son. Thus belonging to the priestly family, and brought near to God, fellowship with Him must mean *dis*sociation from all that is contrary to His mind and will. Linked with God upon the one side, we cannot upon the other link Him with what would dishonor Him. Our associations become in this way a matter of the most vital importance to our highest interests here. Innocence is gone from us; the knowledge of evil is that from which we can no longer escape; and God in His

ever [z]divideth the hoof, even completely cleaving the hoof, and bringeth up the [a]cud among the beasts, that shall ye eat. Nevertheless of these shall ye not eat, of those that bring up the cud and of those that divide the hoof: the [b]camel, because he bringeth up the cud but divideth not the hoof, he is unclean to you; and the

[z] *cf.* Eccl. 4. 9-12. Ps. 18. 33. Ps. 116. 8. Ps. 1. 1. *etc.* Prov. 6. 13, etc.

[a] *cf.* Ps. 119. 97. Ps. 63. 6. Luke 8. 15.

[b] Matt. 23. 24; *cf.* Jas. 1. 22; Heb. 5. 14.

wondrous way has turned this into a means of *holiness*, and of fellowship with Himself: "the man has become as one of Us, to know good and evil;" and we are of those "who by reason of use" are to "have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. v. 14).

Even when born again, and our hearts turned to God, it has not pleased Him to deliver us at once from that indwelling sin, which if any man saith he hath not, he deceiveth himself (1 Jno. i. 8). Nay, it is then we are brought face to face with it, not surely to fulfill its lusts, but to realize it in its abominable character, and to learn in the light with Him His own hatred of it.

In the world around too we find it in ten thousand shapes, many gross, many alluring, and in beings like ourselves connected with us in various ways, and exercising various influences upon us. From these we cannot withdraw ourselves: the prayer of our High-Priest was, "not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst deliver them from the evil" (Jno. xvii. 15.) We have thus to conquer, not to flee,—to conquer where we stand; separated from that in the midst of which we are, "in the world, not of it," and to carry out this separation while alive to all the infinite claims upon us of those who are with ourselves of Adam's fallen race,—yea, in sympathy with the tears of Him who wept over His rejectors.

Here on every side is evil ready to defile us, and in those in whom we have to distinguish its various workings, for their sakes and our own learning to "make a difference;" of some having compassion; others saving with fear (Jude 22, 23); others only able to withdraw from utterly with horror. Such things we come to look at now in the fruitful types in which God once taught to a people just emerged from association with the heathen around, His holiness. Of this man, fallen from his place, had in himself so little knowledge, that God must take up the beast below him, to teach it to him. In truth, nature is one great parable, and God, in drawing out such lessons from it, but uses it for what it is.

1. First, then, we have to learn here as to food, what is clean and what is unclean. The German materialist's bald sophism we are taught to realize in another sense as a most important truth, "*man ist was er isst*,"—"what we eat we are." Spiritually, our food declares our character, as it also forms it. He that eateth Christ shall not only live by Him, but His life will be practically assimilated to His also. Thus, in what is here permitted to be the food of the people of God, we find depicted the spiritual life of the people of God. And this is the real and ultimate meaning of these divisions. That wholesomeness as diet should go with this would not be wonderful in view of this very symbolism which is in all things round us. That which is fullest in meaning is also truest in fact, as there need be no doubt. Nevertheless, the matter of health is never brought forward: it is not of what is wholesome or unwholesome, but of what is clean or unclean that the law treats.

(i.) Of clean beasts—mammals, as they are best distinguished—there is but one class, those that ruminate, or chew the cud; but among these also those are excluded who have not a hoof entirely divided. There must be the union of these two characters, the power of rumination and the divided hoof, to constitute the animal clean for the Israelite.

It is not hard to realize the spiritual meaning of *rumination:* we are well accustomed to the use of it for "meditation," quiet reflection; and it would seem almost needless to insist upon the necessity of this for proper apprehension

[c] hyrax, because it bringeth up the cud but divideth not the hoof, it is unclean to you; and the hare, because it bringeth up the cud but divideth not the hoof, it is unclean to you; and the [d] swine, because it divideth the hoof, completely cleaving the hoof, but bringeth not up the cud, it is unclean to you. Ye shall not eat of their flesh, nor touch their [e] carcasses: they are unclean to you.

2. (9-12.) Armed for conflict.

[2] These shall ye eat, of all that are in the waters: whatever hath [f] fins and scales in the waters—in seas and in rivers—these shall ye eat; but of all that have not fins and scales, in seas and in rivers, of all that swarm in the waters, even of every living soul that is in the waters, they shall be an abomination unto you, even they shall be an abomination unto you: yea, their flesh ye shall not eat and their carcasses shall be an abomination unto you; whatever in the waters hath not fins and scales shall be an abomination unto you.

[c] Prov. 30. 26.

[d] Deut. 14. 8. Is. 65. 4. Matt. 7. 6. Luke 15. 15. 2 Pet. 2. 22. *cf.* Luke 18. 9-12.

[e] ch. 5. 2, etc.

[f] Matt. 13. 47-50. Jno. 21. 9-11. *cf.* 1 Jno. 5. 18.

of the truth. The cloven foot, besides its suitability for a light, firm tread, and so for speed, prevents miring in soft ground. These opposed hoofs, uniting to give stability in this way, may perhaps intimate to us how the truths of the Word that seem most opposed to one another, in fact only give balance and firm tread to him that rests on them: while they certainly prevent being mired in the very place of pasture. The speed for which the foot is, above all, made surely reminds us that where spiritual digestion is found in the believer, faith that looks at what is unseen makes the Christian course a *race*. Altogether the type here is a bright and suggestive one: may it speak to our souls with all the power the Spirit of God can give it!

But now look at the exceptions: of the really ruminating animals only one—the camel. It is plain he is no racer: two and a half to three miles is his pace, and he travels it with a burden. Made for the desert, not for the pasture-lands, ungainly, irritable, not like the rest of his class,—may he not remind us of how many Christians, while ever learning, as one would think, the things of God, go yet heavily burdened through the world, as if the desert was their all? The camel-Christian may be indeed a real one, as his representative is a ruminant, and yet what a poor bungled copy does he seem! Cares of this world burden him. He is earthly-heavenly: according to the Word of God "unclean."

The other animals named here are not ruminants at all, and many have wondered that the hare and the coney—the hyrax—should be put among them. But it has been well urged, that these are practical directions for simple people, and not studies in natural history; and to people ordinarily the hare and the coney, though merely grinding their teeth, appear to be ruminating. They are professors of rumination without reality, taken here as God takes men according to their profession: but it cannot make them clean.

The last animal here is a very different one from the rest, and the very type of uncleanness. In the swine there was no pretense of rumination, but there was the cloven foot; if one looked only at that, the swine would seem clean. Surely they are the type of such as, openly slighting faith and the Word of God, plead their good conduct. "He can't be wrong whose life is in the right." In fact, the life is not right: loving the mire, and rooting up the ground, the swine is a typical destroyer. God judgeth not as man judgeth, but His judgment alone is true.

(ii.) We now come to the inhabitants of the waters, and here that which was clean had fins and scales, means of movement and defense; but the opposition of a denser element than before—the water—seems to make movement itself here

3. (13-19.) The unclean bird.

[3] And these shall ye have in abomination among the fowls; they shall not be eaten, they shall be an abomination: the [g] griffon, and the ossifrage, and the osprey, and the buzzard, and the kite after its kind, every crow after its kind, and the ostrich, and the barn-owl, and the gull, and the hawk after its kind, and the little owl, and the cormorant, and the eagle-owl, and the gallinule, and the pelican, and the vulture, and the [h] stork, the heron after its kind, and the hoopoe, and the bat.

[g] *cf.* Luke 17. 37. Job 9. 26. Obad. 4. Jer. 49. 16. Gen. 8. 7. Is. 34. 11.

[h] Ps. 104.17.

4. (20-28.) The taint of earth.

[4] Every flying [i] creeping thing, that goeth upon all four, shall be an abomination to you. Yet these ye may eat of all flying creeping things that go upon all four, those which have legs above their feet, to leap with upon the earth. Of these may ye eat: the [j] locust after its kind, and the bald locust after its kind, and the cricket after its kind, and the grasshopper after its kind. But all flying creeping things which have four feet shall be an abomination to you. And for these ye shall be unclean: every one who toucheth their carcasses shall be un-

[i] *cf.* Phil. 3. 19.

[j] Ex. 10. 4. Matt. 3. 4.

a conflict in which the "fin" is the offensive, as the "scale" is the defensive weapon. So we are reminded here that the life of faith is a warfare also, and one from which we cannot be excused: we cannot be non-combatants and clean; to be unarmed is to be overcome; every step of progress must be a victory.

(iii.) The birds speak to us of that heavenly character which as Christians surely belongs to us; yet here also in what assumes to be that, there may come in that which is unclean, and then we have proportionately what is worst. In the parables of Matt. xiii. the birds of the heavens carry off the good seed, and are devils.

Here there is no rule given for distinguishing the clean, in general to belong to this class was to be so: individual exceptions are named, without any specified characters to distinguish those either. Certainly each one of them has meaning, and the name alone is given, probably the name is enough, as in Bunyan's allegories, but I can attempt nothing as to this. It has been remarked that the list consists almost exclusively of birds which feed on flesh in whole or in part; under which come necessarily also the omnivorous; while in the bat we have an illustration of those flying things that go upon all fours mentioned just afterward, although, of course, a much larger class. "We can trace," says Mackintosh, "in the habits of the above three classes the just ground of their being pronounced unclean; but we can also see in them the striking exhibition of that in nature, which is to be strenuously guarded against by every true Christian. Such an one is called upon to refuse every thing of a carnal nature. Moreover, he cannot feed promiscuously upon every thing that comes before him. He must 'try the things that differ.' He must 'take heed what he hears.' He must exercise a discerning mind, a spiritual judgment, a heavenly taste. Finally, he must use his wings: he must rise on the pinions of faith and find his place in the celestial sphere to which he belongs. In short, there must be nothing groveling, nothing promiscuous, nothing unclean, for the Christian."—(*Notes on Leviticus.*)

(iv.) The "flying creeping things" would seem to be unclean as belonging to two spheres at once, from which those whose mode of progression was a leap were excepted, the leap being perhaps a repulsion of the earth (?). The earth-taint here in question accounts for the introduction of legislation as to death, the touch even of the carcasses of the unclean defiling. Here too, naturally from this point of view, are mentioned as unclean the beasts that go upon their "hands,"—*i. e.*, whose feet are unprotected by hoofs. The classification in this

clean until the even; and every one that carrieth aught of their carcasses shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even. [The carcass of] every beast that divideth the hoof, but doth not completely cleave it, or doth not bring up the cud, it is unclean to you, every one who toucheth these shall be unclean. And what ever goeth upon its paws, of all animals that go on all four, these are unclean to you, whoever toucheth their carcasses shall be unclean until the even; and he that beareth their carcasses shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the even: they are unclean to you.

5. (29–43.) What and how they affect.

[5] These also are unclean to you of the creeping things that creep upon the earth: the weasel, and the [k]mouse, and the tortoise, after its kind; and the gecko, and the monitor, and the lizard, and the sand-lizard, and the chameleon. These are unclean to you among those that creep: he who toucheth them when dead shall be unclean until the even. And on whatever any of them when dead shall fall, it shall be unclean; all vessels of wood, or garment, or skin, or sack, every thing wherein any work is done, it shall be put into water, and be unclean until the even,—then shall it be clean. And every earthen vessel whereinto any of them falleth, whatever is in it shall be unclean, and ye shall break it. All food that is eaten, upon which water cometh, shall be unclean; and all drink that is drunk shall be unclean in every [such] vessel. And every thing upon which any part of their carcass falleth shall be unclean,—oven and covered pan shall be broken: they are unclean, and shall be unclean unto you. Nevertheless a [l]spring or well, with plenty of water, shall be clean, but that which toucheth their carcass shall be unclean. And if any of their carcass fall upon any [m]sowing-seed that is to be sown, it shall be clean; but if water be put upon the seed, and any part of their carcass fall thereon, it shall be unclean to you. And if any beast which is yours for food die, he who toucheth the carcass of it shall be unclean until the even. And whosoever eateth of the carcass thereof

k 1 Sam. 6. 4, 5, 11. Is. 66. 17.

l *cf.* Jno. 4. 14. 1 Jno. 3. 9.

m *cf.* Phil. 1. 15–18.

way shows clearly how a moral symbolism governs it: there is otherwise no order apparent.

(v.) The reptiles follow, but along with these also the weasel and the mouse, —showing the same absence as before of any merely natural classification. Nor indeed does there seem at first a reason for the specification of certain species here when the whole class of creeping things is presently declared unclean (*v.* 41). Commentators seem only able to say that these are mentioned as being of those from whom there was special danger of defilement in the way immediately particularized as dropping into vessels, etc, being generally found in houses or in the abodes of men. But we see also how differently they affect what they come into contact with—the comparative receptivity of defilement. Thus every vessel of wood, or garment or skin or sack, upon which they fell when dead, was to be put into water and would be clean at even; but the earthen vessel could only be broken. The fountain or well could not be defiled;

shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even; and he that beareth the carcass of it shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the even. And every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth is an abomination, it shall not be eaten. Whatsoever goeth upon the belly, and whatsoever goeth upon all four, or whatsoever hath many feet, of all creeping things that creep upon the earth, these ye shall not eat, for they are an abomination. Ye shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creepeth, nor shall ye make yourselves unclean with them, that ye be defiled thereby. For I am Jehovah your God, and ye shall sanctify yourselves, that ye may be [n]holy; for I am holy: and ye shall not defile yourselves with any creeping thing that creepeth on the earth. For I am Jehovah, who am bringing you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: and ye shall be holy, because I am holy. This is the law of the beast, and of the fowl, and of every living soul that moveth in the waters, and of every soul that creepeth in the earth; to divide between the unclean and the clean, and between the animal that may be eaten, and the animal that may not be eaten.

[n] 1 Pet 1. 15, 16. *cf.* Phil. 1. 10. Ezek. 22. 26. Ezek. 44. 23.

(XII.)

Inherited sin.

2. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a woman conceive seed, and bear a [o]man-child, she shall be unclean seven days, as in the days of the impurity of her sickness shall she be unclean. And on the [p]eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. And she shall continue [q]thirty-three days in the blood of her purification: she shall touch no holy thing, nor come into the sanctuary until the days of her purification are fulfilled. And if she bear a [r]female child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her impurity; and she shall continue sixty-

[o] *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 21, 22. Ps. 51. 5. Jno. 3. 6.

[p] Gen. 17. 12.

[q] *cf.* Ex. 34. 28, etc.

[r] *cf.* 1 Tim. 2. 13, 14.

nor seed intended to be sown, but if it had been moistened with water, to be used for food, then it would be defiled. That which died of itself also, though otherwise clean, became unclean,—death in this way being the type of that which had come in through sin. Whether we can read these things or not, it is plain that they imply a different susceptibility as to evil, and a difference in the treatment of that which was defiled, which should be to us suggestive and important.

2. Through the woman death had come in, and through the woman life comes in, but the life which she brings in is tainted with its origin: "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" asks Job. We must answer with him, Naturally, "not one." Hence the truth that we are taught here, that human increase is human defilement. Every child born into the world but adds to the evil in it: although this is not permitted to stand alone, but we are made to see also that "where sin abounded grace has much more abounded."

In the case of a man-child the mother remains seven days wholly unclean, and rendering unclean all she touches. Thus the child also, if for no other reason, begins life defiled by the uncleanness of its mother. These seven days over, the child is circumcised, the eighth day showing us that cleansing can only

six days in the blood of her purification. And when the days of her purification are [s]completed, for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring a yearling lamb for a burnt-offering, and a young pigeon or a turtle-dove for a sin-offering, unto the entrance of the tent of meeting, unto the priest. And he shall present it before Jehovah, and make atonement for her, and she shall be cleansed from the issue of her blood. This is the law for her who has borne male or female. And if her hand find not [t]sufficient for one of the flock, then she shall bring two turtle-doves or two young pigeons, one for a burnt-offering and the other for a sin-offering; and the priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean.

[s] Luke 2. 22-24 with Gal. 4. 4.

[t] *cf.* Luke 2. 22-24. with 2Cor. 8. 9.

[u] *cf.* Is. 3. 9. *cfr.* ch. 7. 8.

(XIII., XIV.)

Leprosy: the manifestation of sin.

α (xiii.—xiv. 32.) The person.

1. (xiii. 1-46.) Its identification.

3. [1]And Jehovah spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, When a man shall have in the [u]skin of his flesh a swelling, or scab, or bright spot, and it becomes in the skin of his flesh like the spot of leprosy, then he shall be brought unto Aaron the [v]priest, or unto one of his sons the priests; and the priest shall look on the spot in the skin of the flesh, and if the [w]hair on the spot be turned white, and the spot look [x]deeper than the skin of his flesh, it is a spot of leprosy, and when the priest has looked on him he shall pronounce him [y]un-

[v] *cf.* Ps. 19. 12. Jno. 2. 25. Heb. 4. 13. Rev. 1. 14.

[w] vers. 4, 10. *cf.* Num. 6. 5. Hos. 7. 9.

[x] *cf.* Matt. 15. 19, 20.

[y] ver. 46.

come through new creation, so inveterate is the evil he has derived. Circumcision spiritually also is the "putting off the body of the flesh" (Col. ii. 11) condemned in the cross of Christ, "our old man crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be annulled, that henceforth we should not serve sin." (Rom. vi. 6.) "We are the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." (Phil. iii. 3.)

God's grace has thus come in, yet the mother remains thirty-three days more in the blood of her purification, completing the full number of forty days. For the female child all these numbers are doubled,—the witness, no doubt, to the entrance of sin by the woman. In either case, purification is completed by the offering of a lamb for a burnt-offering and a young pigeon or a turtle-dove for a sin-offering. The reversal of the usual order in which these are mentioned is emphasized by the disproportion of the offerings, God putting foremost that perfect obedience of Christ which has glorified Him in view of Adam's disobedience. Only where poverty required, another dove or pigeon might take the place of the lamb.

The number of this section most naturally points, I think, to sin as an inheritance, *two* being evidently, as an ordinal number, that which speaks of *succession* and *dependence*. It is in theology the doctrine of "original sin."

3. We now come to the subject of leprosy, which is treated at length. As the most inveterate and loathsome of diseases, so slight in its beginnings, so sure in its retentive hold and in its power to spread both within and around the unhappy subject of it, so awful in its end, it is used as the fit type of the corruption of sin. God Himself therefore takes it into His own hand, as indeed the only One competent to deal with it, and with whom alone its cure was found. All researches into its nature, which have been many, have proved of singularly little help in the interpretation of the Word, which is (as ever,) sufficient for itself. The spiritual meaning is really the whole thing—what even for Israel God had in mind always; and now fully opened—or lying open—to us, "upon whom the ends of the ages are come." Thus, if there is no natural remedy given

clean. But if the bright spot be white in the skin of his flesh, and do not look deeper than the skin, and the hair of it be not turned white, then the priest shall [z] shut up [him that has] the spot seven days. And the priest shall look on him the seventh day, and behold, if the spot be at a stand in his sight, [and] the spot spread not in the skin, then the priest shall shut him up seven days more. And the priest shall look on him again the seventh day, and behold, if the spot be [a] dull, and the spot have not spread in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean: it is a scab; and he shall wash his [b] clothes and be clean. But if the scab [c] spread much in the skin after he hath been seen by the priest for his cleansing, he shall be seen by the priest again; and if the priest see that, behold, the scab is spread in the skin,

[z] ch. 24. 12. *cf.* 2 Thess. 3. 14, 15. Jude 22.

[a] vers. 23, 56.

[b] Gen. 35. 2. *cf.* Jno. 15. 3. Gal. 6. 1.

[c] *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 16, 17.

or hinted at for this disease, for the spiritual malady we shall surely find it in the ordained means for cleansing the leper.

Leprosy speaks of the outbreak of that which the last chapter has shown us to be in the nature of every one that is born of a woman. In the child of God it still remains as "flesh," which "lusteth against the Spirit;" but we are not left helpless under the power of it. Circumcision we have seen to be its remedial antidote,—the cross its judgment before God for our deliverance, and the effect of this for the true circumcision "no confidence in the flesh." Our boasting, then, is in Christ Jesus, and our "walk in Him," His strength perfected in our confessed and utter weakness. If we walk thus in the Spirit, we "shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh;" but the evil is there, and if we do not maintain a humble and subject mind, it will break out: the power of the world will act upon us, the energy of an independent will will carry us away, and this is leprosy.

Here it is in Israel, among the people of God, and this gives it peculiar importance. The Israelite is in relation to God and to His people. All this has to be considered and provided for. The tabernacle of God must not be defiled; the camp of Israel must be kept holy. The question raised by the mere suspicion of leprosy has mainly to do with this. As for the man himself, if it be true leprosy, others are powerless: he must be left to God; but the glory of God must be maintained, and the blessing of His people not sacrificed. Here, for us, now that God has a Church on earth, the house in which He dwells, and where membership is in the body of Christ, there is what is of gravest meaning and deepest solemnity, though little heeded,—nay, practically unknown to the mass of even true Christians to-day, whose associations are so largely characterized by man's will, often by even contemptuous disregard of Scripture, and whose fear of God is so often "taught by the precept of men." May God give us ears to hear! for His Word will, in the end, vindicate itself against all the reproaches and slights which may be cast upon it—nothing can be more sure than that: no syllable that He has uttered shall be lost or in vain; no truth of His, if it seem ever so practically dead, but shall have its resurrection-day, and face its opposers in the time to come!

(i.) The *identification* of leprosy is of course the first thing; and for this the marks are given at length. Not every thing that might appear to be this was so in fact, while that which did not appear so might in result turn out to be. Thus there was need of patient discrimination, giving full heed to all existing signs, and opportunity for new developments. And of these the priest was to be the interpreter,—for us the spiritual man, able to draw near to God, and having the mind of God. In no case could the judgment be left to him who was in question. His opinion was not sought and could not be accepted, an opinion of that in which he was too much concerned to be dispassionate.

the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it is leprosy.

When the spot of leprosy is in a man, he shall be brought unto the priest; and the priest shall look, and behold, if there be a white swelling in the skin, and it have turned the hair white, and there be living [d] raw flesh in the swelling, it is an old leprosy in the skin of his flesh, and the priest shall pronounce him unclean: he shall not shut him up, for he is unclean. But if the leprosy break out much in the skin, and the leprosy cover [e] all the flesh of [him who hath] the spot, from his head even to his feet, wherever the priest looketh, then if the priest look, and behold, the leprosy covereth all his flesh, he shall pronounce [him] clean [that hath] the spot: it is all turned white; he is clean. But when raw flesh appeareth in him, he shall be unclean; when the priest seeth the raw flesh he shall pronounce him unclean: the raw flesh is unclean; it is leprosy. Or if the raw flesh change and be turned white, he shall come unto the priest, and when the priest seeth him, and behold, the spot is turned white, then the priest shall pronounce [him] clean [that hath] the spot: he is clean.

And when in the flesh, in the skin of it, there has been an [f] abscess, but it is healed; and there is in the place of the abscess a white swelling, or a bright spot, reddish-white, it shall be seen by the priest; and when the priest seeth it, and behold, it looketh deeper than the skin, and the hair thereof is turned white, the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it is a spot of leprosy broken out of the abscess. But if the priest look on it, and behold, there is no white hair in it, and it is not deeper than the skin, and it is dull, then the priest shall shut him up seven days; and if it spread much in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it is the spot. But if the bright spot stay in its place [and] have not spread, it is the scar of the abscess; and the priest shall pronounce him clean.

Or if there be in the flesh, in the skin of it, a [g] burn by fire, and the raw flesh of the burn become a bright spot, reddish-white or white; when the priest shall look

d cf. Tit. 3. 11.

e cf. 1 Jno. 1. 9. 1 Tim. 1. 15.

f cf. Ex. 9. 9. Job. 2. 7. 2 Kings 20. 7. 2 Chron. 16. 12.

g cf. 1 Pet. 4. 12. Heb. 12. 5, 11.

If, then, there were certain indications that looked like leprosy, the man who showed them was to be brought to the priest. It was not to be expected that he would volunteer. Nor was suspicion in this case wrong, when there was that which would naturally provoke it. On the other hand, suspicion was not to be acted upon: there must be positive proof before any thing could be pronounced leprosy; and there were signs which (though patience might be needed,) would not deceive.

First, the hair turned white is the sign of departing strength, and decay of spiritual strength will be very plainly discernable in such cases: freshness and vigor are gone, although there may be as much activity apparently as before, but with more effort, perhaps even more external life, while internally it is weakened and languishes.

upon it, and behold, if the hair be turned white in the bright spot, and it look deeper than the skin, it is leprosy broken out of the burn, and the priest shall pronounce him unclean, it is the spot of leprosy. But if the priest look on it, and behold, there be in the bright spot no white hair, and it be not deeper than the skin, and it be dull, then the priest shall shut him up seven days; and the priest shall look on him the seventh day: if it have spread much in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean, it is the spot of leprosy. But if the bright spot stay in its place [and] have not spread in the skin, but be dull, it is the swelling of the burning, and the priest shall pronounce him clean: for it is the scar of the burn.

And when a man or a woman hath a spot upon the [h] head, or in the beard, then the priest shall look upon the spot, and behold, if it look deeper than the skin, and there be in it yellow, thin hair, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it is a scall; it is leprosy of the head or of the beard. And if the priest look on the spot of the scall, and behold, it looketh not deeper than the skin, and there is no black hair in it, then the priest shall shut up [him that hath] the spot of the scall seven days; and the priest shall look on the spot the seventh day, and behold, if the scall spread not, and there be in it no yellow hair, and the scall look not deeper than the skin, he shall [i] shave himself, but the scall he shall not shave; and the priest shall shut up [him that hath] the scall seven days more. And the priest shall look upon the scall the seventh day, and behold, if the scall be not spread in the skin, and it look not deeper than the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean; and he shall wash his clothes and be clean. But if the scall spread much in the skin after

[h] *cf.* 2 Cor. 11. 3. Col. 2. 18. Tit. 1. 15.

[i] ch. 14. 2. *cf.* 1 Pet. 5. 6.

Then the spot looks "deeper than the skin." This requires much closer attention than the white hair, and it is correspondingly difficult to indicate its spiritual counterpart. Of course, it is simple enough to say that it means what is not superficial; but how is this to be known in the case of sin before us for judgment? Here is what is designed, no doubt, to give us exercise, and make us realize our need of God; and we are never left without reminding of this. God's Word itself only furnishes "the man of God." His precepts are not meant to mark out a way for us apart from living guidance. Were they of this sort, they would do us injury. On the contrary, they bring us to God in the conviction of our need of wisdom, and then there is no uncertainty about the meeting of the need: "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it *shall* be given him." (Jas. i. 5.)

The New Testament reaffirms this distinction between two things which to ordinary eyes might look much the same, but where one was superficial and the other not. The one who is called a brother, but is "covetous, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one," we are, "no, not to eat." (1 Cor. v. 11.) Not all these things can in every case be decided off-hand. The case of one "overtaken in a fault" (Gal. vi. 1) may be confounded with such, if there be not due care, and power to discern between things that really differ.

his cleansing, then the priest shall look on him, and behold, if the scall be spread in the skin, then the priest shall not seek for yellow hair: he is unclean. But if the scall be in his sight at a stay, and there be black hairs grown up in it, the scall is healed, he is clean; and the priest shall pronounce him clean.

And if a man or woman have in the skin of their flesh bright spots, bright white spots, then the priest shall look, and behold, if there be spots in the skin of their flesh of a dull white; it is an eruption broken out in the skin: he is clean. And if a man's hair have fallen off his head, he is bald; he is clean; and if he have the hair fallen off the front of his head, he is fore-head-bald; he is clean. And if there be in the bald head, or in the bald forehead, a reddish-white spot, it is leprosy broken out in his bald head or his bald fore-head; and the priest shall look on it, and behold, if the swelling of the spot be reddish-white in his bald head or in his bald forehead, like the appearance of leprosy in the skin of the flesh, he is a leprous man, he is unclean: the priest shall pronounce him utterly unclean; his spot is in his head.

j cf. Rom. 8. 12, 19. Rom. 8. 10. Gal. 4. 13. *ctr.* Song 5. 11

If these two things were really found together—the white hair, and the fact of its being deeper than the skin,—then the man in whom they concurred was to be pronounced unclean. If not, and still there was room for doubt, he was to be shut up for awhile—not shut *out*, but shut *up*. Israel must not be defiled by a possible leper, while on the other hand the man must not be treated as what he may not be. God's people must not act in the dark, but in the light. The great decisive point would now be, whether or not the disease would spread or was stopped. If it did not spread, he was to be bidden wash his clothes, and he would be clean—minor uncleanness there had been, or there would have been no need of this suspension of judgment; but if on the other hand, even after this, the disease spread, the former decision must be recalled: the man was unclean.

In the next case supposed, the appearance of living raw flesh was the decisive proof. In addition to the characteristic spot, there was an ulcer which had bared the flesh. It was a genuine uprise from beneath—something clearly not superficial, but working deeply, so as to manifest the very man himself. Here was uncleanness, and no need of hesitation. On the other hand, suppose that the disease had come all to the surface, the man was covered with it, and yet in fact the vital power had thrown it off: here, if there were no raw flesh, the man was to be pronounced clean. Sin *thus* manifested in confession and open assumption of the shame—a genuine, hearty, unreserved break-down before God and man,—here God's grace has wrought, and grace must be shown.

This is a principle which applies both to the sinner who is brought to God and the saint who is brought *back* to Him. The latter is what the type supposes here, but the apostle's application of the similar thirty-second psalm justifies it in this case. It is a principle of God's dealing with men, which is the necessary result of what He is. Grace is His delight, but it is where truth is in the inward parts it can be shown;—not to self-righteousness, but to sinners truly convicted and confessed.

We are next shown how leprosy may develop out of an abscess or out of a burn. An infirmity unwatched may thus become an occasion of the most serious defile-ment. But however it may arise, the signs of leprosy are the same substantially, and the treatment of the leper is ever the same. His clothes rent, his head bare,

And the leper in whom the spot is, his [k] clothes shall be rent, and his head bared, and he shall cover his upper [l] lip, and cry, [m] Unclean, unclean. All the days that the spot shall be in him he shall be unclean: unclean he is; he shall dwell [n] alone; [o] without the camp shall his habitation be.

2. (47-59.) The garment: things related, but separable.

[2] And if the spot of leprosy be in a [p] garment, whether a woolen garment or a linen garment, whether in warp or woof, of woolen or linen, whether in skin or anything made of skin,—and the spot be greenish or reddish in the garment or in the skin, in the warp or in the woof, or any thing of skin, it is a spot of leprosy, and it shall be shown unto the priest; and the priest shall look upon the spot, and shut up [that which hath] the spot seven days. And he shall look at the spot on the seventh day: if the spot have spread in the garment, either in warp or in the woof, or in skin, or in any work that may be made of skin, the spot is a fretting leprosy: it is unclean. And he shall [q] burn the garment, whether the warp or the woof, in woolen or in linen, or any thing of skin wherein the spot is: for it is a fretting leprosy; it shall be burned in the fire. But if the priest look, and behold, the spot has not spread in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in any thing of skin, then the priest shall command that they [r] wash the thing wherein the spot is, and he shall shut it up seven days more. And the priest shall look on the spot after it is washed, and behold, if the spot have [s] not changed its color, though the spot have not spread, it is unclean: thou shalt burn it in the fire; it is a fretting [leprosy] whether it be bare within or without. And if the priest look, and behold, the spot be dull after washing it, then he shall [t] rend it out of the garment, or out of the skin, or out of the warp, or out of the woof. And if it [u] still appear in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof, or in any thing of skin, it is [leprosy] breaking out: thou shalt burn that wherein the spot is with fire. But the garment, or the warp or the woof, or any thing of skin, which thou shalt wash, and the spot remove from it, it shall be washed again and be clean. This is the law of the spot of leprosy in a garment of woolen or linen, whether in the warp or in the woof, or in any thing of skin, to pronounce it clean or unclean.

k Josh. 7. 6. Joel 2. 13. Is. 6. 5.

l Ezek. 24. 17. Job 40. 4. *cf.* Rom. 3. 19.

m *cf.* Eph. 5. 5, etc.

n 2 Chron. 26. 21-23. *cf.* Is. 59. 2. *ctr.* Jno. 8. 16, 29.

o ch. 16. 27. Num. 12. 10, 15. *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 13.

p *cf.* Ps. 109. 18. *ctr.* Rev. 19. 8.

q *cf.* Col. 3. 5. Acts 19. 19.

r *cf.* Hag. 1. 6.

s *cf.* 1 Cor. 7. 20, 24.

t *cf.* Eph. 4. 25.

u ver. 55.

his upper lip covered, he is to take his place and proclaim his shame. He was to dwell alone, outside the camp. Separated from the assembly, and in his true place, he might yet hope in God, from whom alone could come help and healing in so great a strait.

(ii.) In the garment, we have what is related to man, but separable from him. Leprosy may manifest itself here, as in our occupations, associations, etc. Here again extension and incurability are the fatal signs. The judgment must still be that of the spiritual man; there must be patient examination where there is any cause for doubt; the Word of God must be brought to bear on it, as in the wash-

3. (xiv. 1-32.) Cleansing of the leper.

[3] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his [w]cleansing, he shall be brought unto the [w]priest; and the priest shall go forth out of the camp, and when the priest looketh, behold, if the spot of leprosy be healed in the leper, [4] then the priest shall command to take for him that is to be cleansed, two [x]birds, alive [and] clean, and [y]cedar-wood, and [z]scarlet, and [a]hyssop: and the priest shall command that they [b]kill one of the birds in an [c]earthen vessel over [d]running water. [6] As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar-wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and [e]dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water; [7] and he shall [f]sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and pronounce him clean, and [g]let go the living bird into the open field. [8] And he that is to be clean shall [h]wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and bathe himself in water, and be clean; and afterwards he shall come [i]into the camp, but shall remain outside his tent seven days. [9] And it shall be on the seventh day that he shall shave all his hair off his head, and his beard, and his eye-brows, even all his hair shall he shave off; and he shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and be clean.

[w] Matt. 8. 2-4. 2 Kings 5. 14. [w] Luke 17. 14. [x] ch. 1. 14. *cf.* Jno. 6. 38. [y] Num. 19. 6. *cf.* 1 Kings 6. 9. Is. 2. 13. [z] 2 Sam. 1. 24. [a] Ex. 12. 22. 1 Kings 4. 33. Ps. 51. 7. [b] *cf.* Rom. 5. 6. Acts 2. 23. [c] *cf.* Phil. 2. 7, 8. Heb. 2. 14. [d] *cf.* Heb. 9. 14. [e] *cf.* Gal. 6. 14. [f] *cf.* Heb. 12. 24. [g] *cf.* Gen. 49. 21. Rom. 4. 25. Col. 3. 1. [h] ch. 13. 6, 33. [i] *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 6, 7. Jno. 21. 15-19.

ing; or the part in which the evil was might be taken out, and the rest remain. If still it showed itself unchanged, and even though not spreading, the garment must be burned.

(iii.) We have now to look at what is God's way of restoration when the plague of leprosy is healed in the leper. The healing and the purification are different things; the man healed is not thereby *cleansed* for God: no work in the soul, however needful, can in the proper sense *restore;* for this, God's grace in Christ must come in, and, while it is certain that that grace will not be wanting when the sinner, or the saint that has wandered from God, takes his place in true confession before Him; yet He will have us to know, both for His own glory and our true blessing, the power of that work of Christ which alone brings nigh, whether in position or in inward reality.

There are in this work of restoration two distinct parts, which must not be confounded: first, the restoration to a place among the people of God, from whom he had been separated; and this is done upon the first day, when he returns to the camp; secondly, on the eighth day, there is a new and only now complete cleansing, by which he is brought fully to God, and restored to his tent also. In the first part, the man who has been in living death is restored, as it were, to life; in the second part, he is brought back into communion with God, and thus with His people.

In the application of the first part to the believer who has been away from God —the strict application of the type, as is evident,—there is needed a word of warning, that here, as in so many places, the law, which had a shadow of good things to come, was not the very image. Israel were the people of God, and in this, what Christians are to-day, and yet standing on what a different footing! in how different a relationship! They were a nation taken from among the nations of the earth; brought, in a sense, nigh to God; and having the adoption—God a Father to them (Rom. ix. 4; Isa. lxiv. 8; Jer. xxxi. 9). But all this was —however different under the new covenant it is to be,—as yet on the ground of a legal covenant, which was only condemnation, and by which they could not

And on the eighth day he shall take two he-lambs without blemish, and one yearling ewe-lamb without blemish, and three tenths [of an ephah] of fine flour for a meal-offering, mingled with oil, and one log of oil. And the priest that cleanseth him shall present the man that is to be cleansed and these things before Jehovah at the entrance of the tent of meeting. And the priest shall take one he-lamb, and present it for a [j]trespass-offering, and the log of oil, and wave them for a wave-offering before Jehovah. And he shall kill the lamb in the place where they kill the sin-offering and the burnt-offering—in a holy place: for as the sin-offering so the trespass-offering is the priest's, it is most holy. And the priest shall take of the blood of the trespass-offering, and put it on the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the great toe of his right foot. And the priest shall take of the log of oil, and pour it on the palm of his own

[j] ch. 5. 6. *cf.* Ps. 51. 4.

really draw nigh; and if God were the Father of the *nation*, the individuals composing it were not, *as such*, His children. To be Israelites, they needed no new birth, were partakers of no new life, were not justified by faith, or accepted in the Beloved: in a word, they were only natural men,—as to whom adoption, redemption, sanctification, were but the figures of these to us so precious realities.

Among them God had, of course, ever a true people, and these were surely born again as we, children of God by faith, though but a little flock scattered among and hidden in the mass of the nation. It is the nation with which we have in the Old Testament to do; and to confound the believing remnant with this, or to substitute it for it, would introduce the most entire confusion into a large part of Scripture.

But we have to remember, therefore, in such a type as that before us, that the Christian's place in Christ is his in absolute grace, not on any legal or conditional footing. He cannot, therefore, lose it, or need to be restored to it, although to the *enjoyment* of it he may. The repeated offerings have found their antitype in that one perfect offering which needs and can admit no repetition, and by which "He hath perfected *forever* them that are sanctified." (Heb. x. 14.) Let us now look at the restoration of the leper.

Beautiful is the picture of divine grace here! "This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing, he shall be brought unto the priest; and the priest shall go forth out of the camp." The person to be restored is thus sought out, not bidden to seek out himself the means of restoration. Hands are ready to minister: "And the priest shall command to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds, alive and clean." The kind of bird, otherwise than that it must be clean, is not stated, and its being a *bird*, *i. e.*, its belonging to the heavens, is so much the more emphasized. *Two* birds are needed, as the double symbol of Christ, dying and risen, come from above, and returning thither again. This thought of a heavenly being is further emphasized in what might seem a contradiction to it, for the one bird that dies is killed in an earthen vessel over running water, and this earthen vessel, if there could be doubt about its meaning, the apostle has explained to us (2 Cor. iv. 7.) It is that humanity filled with the Spirit of God, (the running, or "living water,") in which the Son of God acquired capacity to die. This heavenliness of the Son of Man is insisted on because the heart is to be lifted for true cleansing out of the world which had enslaved it, and lifted up to heaven with Him in resurrection. "The life which I live in the flesh," says the apostle again, "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Gal. ii. 20.)

left hand; and the priest shall dip his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand, and sprinkle with his finger some of the oil seven times before Jehovah; and of the rest of the oil which is in his hand shall the priest put upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot, upon the blood of the trespass-offering. And the rest of the oil that is in the priest's hand he shall put upon the head of him that is to be cleansed; and the priest shall make atonement for him before Jehovah. And the priest shall offer the [k]sin-offering, and make atonement for him that is to be cleansed from his uncleanness, and afterward he shall slay the [l]burnt-offering; and the priest shall burn the burnt-offering and the meal-offering upon the altar; and the priest shall make atonement for him, and he shall be clean.

[k] ch. 4. 32.
[l] ch. 1. 10.

It is contended by Kurtz and others, that the bird slain does not speak of atonement, because there is no presentation of the blood to God; but there is more, for this living bird, identified with the slain one by the blood in which it is dipped, speaks of that which is already the proof of acceptance of the work on God's part, and of the justification of him to whom it is applied: "He was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification." (Rom. iv. 25.) Resurrection was the answer of God to Him, the open sentence of God in behalf of all who believe in Him. Thus the blood-sprinkling upon the person implies "the heart sprinkled from an evil conscience." And in this way is the freed heart bound with eternal links to the person of the Deliverer.

These thoughts are supplemented and reënforced upon the other side by the cedar-wood and scarlet and hyssop,—from the highest to the lowest thing in nature, and all the glory of the world—being dipped along with the living bird in the blood of the slain one. In the type of the red heifer which has its strong points of resemblance to the present, they are put into the fire of the offering and consumed. Here the thought is surely analogous: all that is of the world is stained in its glory with the blood of Him who died at the hands of the world; "whereby," says the apostle again, "the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal. vi. 14.)*

There is, then, an entire and wonderful harmony in all the details in this beauteous type, which shows us the so to speak dead man restored to life, and the life a heavenly life outside of the world, in Him who having come from heaven to surrender himself to death, returns to heaven again, the justification of His own being assured to them by His resurrection. Therefore now the restored leper having washed his person and his clothes (his "habits") and shaved off all his hair, returns to his place in the camp of Israel.

But he is not yet fully restored, and for seven days he remains outside his tent: spiritual relationship is in the new creation, which he reaches typically on the eighth day. On the seventh another purification takes place; and on the eighth day he is brought up with his sacrifice and offerings to be presented before Jehovah.

In what follows the special feature is the trespass-offering, which we have seen

* Is it not perhaps on this account also, that the bird is not killed by the priest? In the burnt-offering of birds the priest *does* slay the victim; and for this and other reasons it cannot, I believe, be sustained that it was an unpriestly thing to do. But the bird of the heavens thus slain by an unpriestly hand seems to give the idea of rejection and violence, which harmonizes perfectly with the glory of the world being stained with the blood that it has shed. It will be noticed that in the case of the red heifer, so akin to this in many ways, we have the same thing expressed in a way very suitable to such a meaning: "one shall slay her *before his face*."

And if he be [m]poor, and his hand cannot get this, then he shall take one lamb for a trespass-offering, to be waved, to make atonement for him, and one tenth [of an ephah] of fine flour for a meal-offering, mingled with oil, and a log of oil; and two turtle-doves or two young pigeons, as his hand may be able to get: and the one shall be a sin-offering, and the other a burnt-offering. And he shall bring them to the priest on the eighth day, for his cleansing, to the entrance of the tent of meeting, before Jehovah. And the priest shall take the lamb of the trespass-offering and the log of oil, and the priest shall wave them as a wave-offering before Jehovah. And the priest shall slay the lamb of the trespass-offering, and the priest shall take of the blood of the trespass-offering, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the great toe of his right foot. And the priest shall pour some of the oil into the palm of his own left hand; and the priest shall sprinkle with his right finger some of the oil that is in his left hand seven times before Jehovah; and the priest shall put of the oil that is in his hand upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the great toe of his right foot, upon the place of the

m ch. 5. 11.

is the restitution-offering. With the blood of the trespass-offering the leper is anointed on three parts which together give us the man in his whole responsibility. The ear is restored to God to listen to His word; the hand to serve Him; the foot to walk in His blessed ways. It is to this that the blood shed for him sanctifies, the oil being then put on the blood to signify that by the power of the Holy Ghost this sanctification is practically accomplished. After this the oil is poured upon the head, the whole man being thus invigorated and refreshed, and united together by that which unites us to Christ Himself, for "he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit." (1 Cor. vi. 17.) The conclusion of the sentence, "and the priest shall make atonement for him before Jehovah," refers of course, not to the anointing with oil, but to the trespass-offering of which the anointing is the accomplishment. Atonement for the Israelite could be and needed to be constantly repeated, for the blood of bulls and of goats could never really take away sins. (Heb. x. 1–4.) For the Christian, once cleansed by the blood of Jesus, it cannot be, but there can be a deepening realization of what it means. And the more we go on to know what self-surrender to God really is, the more profoundly shall we be conscious of the value of that by which alone it is possible. The most active worker, the most patient sufferer for Christ, the most devoted in life, will be just the one to sing most realizingly—

"*Nothing* in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling."

The accumulation of these types of atonement in the Jewish ritual beautifully reminds us of how God would put Christ before us in every aspect of His work, in every way in which He Himself sees Him. Here, after the trespass-offering the sin-offering follows: what sin is before God is to be learned nowhere so fully as in the cross of Christ; and we need to learn it thus: not merely that our sins are put away by it, but the divine abhorrence of sin which it expresses. Next the burnt-offering comes to show the completeness of acceptance in that obedience of Christ which has nowhere else any thing that comes near to it; and finally the meal-offering engages us with the Person of Christ, three-tenths of fine flour mingled

blood of the trespass-offering. And the rest of the oil which is in the priest's hand shall he put on the head of him that is to be cleansed, to make atonement for him before Jehovah. And he shall offer one of the turtle-doves or of the young pigeons, such as his hand can get,—even such as his hand can get, the one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering, with the meal-offering: and the priest shall make atonement for him that is to be cleansed before Jehovah. This is the law of him in whom is the spot of leprosy whose hand cannot get [that which pertaineth to] his cleansing.

β (xiv. 33-54.) The house: the place of association.

And Jehovah spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, When ye be come into the [n]land of Canaan which I am giving to you for a possession, and [o]I put the plague of leprosy in a house of the land of your possession, then he who owneth the house shall come and tell the priest, saying, It seemeth to me as if there were a plague in the house. And the priest shall command

n Deut. 17. 14, etc. *cf.* Eph. 5. 3-11. Zech. 5. 1-4.

o *cf.* Prov. 3. 33. 2 Tim. 2. 20, 21. 1 Cor. 3. 16.

with oil, "humanity having in it all the strength, the taste, the savor of the Holy Spirit in its nature." In the fullness of all this is cleansing according to God found: now at last the man is what God would have him, and fitted for the enjoyment of relationship among the people of God,—he comes into his tent.

In the provision for poverty which follows we find the full character of the trespass-offering still maintained, for consecration to the Lord must not be lessened, the ear, the hand and the foot must be as unreservedly His, whether we have little or much with which to serve Him. But two turtle-doves or two young pigeons take the place of the lambs for the other offerings—the thought of the heavenly One again as in that of the first day, yet here not fully the divine thought. Yet it is Christ, and Christ is God's, and the warmth of the heart is more than accuracy as to Him.

(*β*) And now we come to leprosy in a house, a supplementary section, as it seems to be, applying no longer to the individual but to the *house*, that is the place of association, which in the New Testament would be the *assembly;* and here it may be the church of God at large, or the assembly in any place,—the local gathering.

The so-called "fathers" (says Gardner, in Lange's Commentary,) "consider the leprous house symbolical of Israel (See *e. g.* Theodoret, Qu. 18): Israel was examined and purified, and the evil stones of its building removed by the many judgments upon the nation, and especially by the carrying away 'without the camp' to Babylon. But at last, when its incurable sin broke out afresh in the crucifixion of the Lord of Life, the whole house was pulled down and its stones cast out into an unclean place." It is not to be denied that there seems truth in such an application; and as history repeats itself, man being the same through all his generations, and the unchangeable God the same in His necessary holiness, that there may be easily seen a more unwelcome application to the Christian church, as God's house in the world. It too has had, as Luther wrote, but in a way beyond his judgment of it, its Babylonish captivity, and after its partial deliverance in these present times, the incurable evil will break out again in an open apostasy which seems even now coming in, and which will be completed when the true saints are caught up to heaven. Then the solemn words to Laodicea, "I will spew thee out of my mouth," will be fulfilled, and the present gospel light go out in that "gross darkness" which the sure word of prophecy foretells is to "cover the people" when the glory of the Lord arises once more

that they empty the house, before the priest go into it to see the plague, that all that is in the house be not made unclean; and afterward shall the priest go in to see the house. And he shall look on the plague, and behold if the plague be in the walls of the house, greenish or reddish depressions, and in appearance lower than [the surface of] the wall, then the priest shall go out of the house to the entrance of the house, and [p] shut up the house seven days. And the priest shall come again the seventh day, and shall look; and behold, if the plague be spread in the walls of the house, then the priest shall command that they [q] take away the stones wherein the plague is, and cast them into an unclean place outside the city; and he shall cause the house to be [r] scraped inside round about, and they shall pour out the dust that they scrape off outside the city in an unclean place. And they shall take other stones, and put them in the place of those stones, and they shall take other mortar and plaster the house. And if the plague

p cf. 1 Cor. 5. 2. 2 Cor. 12. 20, 21.

q cf. 1 Cor. 5. 9-13. Ezra 9. 2. Ezra 10.17.

r cf. 2 Cor. 7. 11. Neh. 13. 4-10.

for Israel. (Isa. xl.) Men do not like to think this, and a harder saying can scarcely be for man to-day. Yet this will not in the least hinder its fulfillment. The word of God is as plain as it is certain to be fulfilled.

But the principles of God which are thus seen in their application to the dispensations are not thereby deprived of necessary application to the ecclesiastical associations of every Christian. We have seen how they apply to the individual; they apply therefore to every collection of individuals, and above all to those religiously "yoked together." The holiness of God is not relaxed when in relation to these; man's will is no more acceptable to him in one way than in another: as obedient to God ourselves we must refuse all *dis*obedience, yea, all *sanction* to disobedience; a fellowship for which we give up the most simple, single-eyed subjection to the Word of God is then but *dis*fellowship with God,—it is iniquity.

According to Scripture the church of God is but one: it is the body of Christ, and there cannot be different *bodies*. Membership is in the body of Christ, not in a local church, nor something that we can at our own will assume, nor into which we can be introduced by the will or act of other men. "*By one Spirit* are we all baptized into one body," says the apostle; and Christ is He who alone "baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." (1 Cor. xii. 13; Jno. i. 33.)

But this "assembly which is Christ's body" (Eph. i. 22, 23,) cannot as yet assemble. It is scattered over the world, and the practical assemblies are therefore the assemblies of those who belong to this body in each place. Thus the local assembly represents the body at large, and as that which can alone actually assemble has duties and responsibilities for the whole. Here is the sphere of our fellowship, and here is the divine organization for all spiritual purposes in which every one has his place given of God, so that in the maintenance fully of his individuality is found the blessing of the whole. How precious an expression of the divine love which has bound and fitted us together, each ministering to all, and all to each. Pentecost realized in spiritual things, where no one calls that which he has his own, yet finds it multiplied by the whole number of those who share it with him. Too fair a conception to be long realized in a world like this. Where is this church of God in every place? Yet our duty to it and in it remains the same, while the difficulties and needs in a day of ruin only call out the more the grace which ministers to us and the power of the arm that carries us through.

return and break out in the house, after he hath taken away the stones, and after he hath scraped the house, and after it is plastered, then the priest shall come and look, and behold, if the plague have spread in the house, it is a fretting leprosy in the house: it is unclean. And they shall [s]break down the house, its stones, and its timber, and all the mortar of the house, and carry them forth outside the city into an unclean place. And he that [t]cometh into the house all the time it is shut up shall be unclean until the even; and he that lieth in the house shall wash his clothes; and he that eateth in the house shall wash his clothes.

But if the priest shall come in, and look upon it, and behold, the plague have not spread in the house after the house was plastered, then the priest shall cleanse the house, because the plague is healed. And he shall take to purify the house [u]two birds, and cedar-wood, and scarlet, and hyssop; and he shall kill one of the birds in an earthen vessel over running water; and he shall take the cedar-wood and the hyssop and the scarlet, and the living bird, and dip them in the blood of the slain bird, and in the running water, and sprinkle the house seven times: and he shall purify the house with the blood of the bird, and with the running water, and with the living bird, and with the cedar-wood, and with the hyssop and with the scarlet. And he shall let go the living bird outside the city into the open field, and make atonement for the house, and it shall be clean.

s *cf.* Ezra 6. 11. Rev. 2. 5.

t *cf.* 2 Jno. 10, 11.

u ch. 14. 4, etc.

In the type of leprosy in the house we find the full acknowledgment of the power of evil which may come in, and of our responsibility with regard to it,—the case submitted, as before with regard to the individual, to the judgment of the priest, who is first of all surely Christ, and then he or they with whom is the mind of Christ. Here the owner of the house (and there is but one Owner of what is God's house,) starts as it were the question, exercising thus the soul by it, as to a plague in the house. The signs of it are much as in the case of the individual, above all the progress of the evil, a fretting canker which spreads continually. Patience must be exercised, without indifference; if it proceed, the stones wherein the plague is must be taken out,—*i. e.*, the persons put away in whom the evil is manifested,—and the house scraped, new stones and plaster taking the place of the old, (the judgment of ways and conduct as well as of persons.) If the plague is then stopped, it is well, and the house is clean; but if after all this, it break out again, then on the other hand it is to be broken down, and cast out into an unclean place. Coming into the house renders him temporarily unclean who does so; and he who lies or eats in it must also wash his clothes.

All this can be read by one that will. It has but little interest, alas! for the mass of real Christians even in our day. The carefulness as to association with evil implied in it is looked upon as the sign of a legal and illiberal spirit. How many of the countless associations of the day, religious or philanthropic, could abide the test of such principles? Yet the day of the Lord is at hand, when His judgment will at last be the whole matter for us, and man's day will have had its end forever. Oh, that Christians would now accept beforehand what God has written, and what the light of that day will force upon all!

The cleansing of the house is according to that prescribed for the cleansing of

This is the law for all manner of spot of leprosy and scall, and for the leprosy of a garment and of a house, and for a swelling, and for a scab, and for a bright spot, to teach when it is unclean, and when it is clean: this is the law of leprosy.

(XV.)

The frailty of nature.

1. (*vv.* 1-18.) In man.

4. [1] And Jehovah spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When any man hath an [v]issue out of his flesh, because of his issue he is unclean. And in his issue shall be his uncleanness, whether his flesh be running with the issue, or his flesh be stopped from the flow, it is his uncleanness. Every bed on which he that hath the issue lieth is unclean, and every thing whereon he sitteth is unclean; and whosoever toucheth his bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. And he that sitteth on any thing whereon he that hath the issue sat, shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. And he that toucheth the flesh of him that hath the issue shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. And if he that hath the issue [w]spit upon him that is clean, he shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. And any saddle on which he that hath the issue rideth shall be unclean; and whosoever toucheth any thing that was under him shall be unclean until the even; and he that beareth them shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. And whomsoever he that hath the issue [x]toucheth, without having rinsed his hands in water, he shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. And every earthen vessel that he that hath the issue toucheth shall be broken; and every wooden vessel shall be rinsed in water.

v cf. Matt. 15. 18-20. Job 14. 4. Gal. 5. 19-21. Gal. 2. 13.

w Num. 12. 14. *ctr.* Mark 8. 23. Is. 50. 6. Mark 15. 19.

x Num. 19. 22. Lam. 4. 14, 15. *ctr.* Matt. 8. 3. Mark 5. 28.

the individual leper in its first part: the last is omitted. Separation from the world in the power of the grace of Him who has come into it for our salvation, and whom the world has rejected and crucified, is the evident lesson of the two birds. While there is thus a corporate purity which must be preserved, the living activities which are connected with the second part of the cleansing are necessarily individual, and therefore omitted in what refers to the assembly. Conscience and heart are individual things, and true fellowship with others must be maintained, and can only be, in the maintenance of our individuality intact.

4. It is the frailty of nature that is depicted and provided for in the fifteenth chapter, as it is confirmed and determinate evil in the regulations concerning leprosy. Throughout we have impressed upon us how searching and all-inclusive is the holiness of God, and how readily defilement is communicated and received. These are unwelcome thoughts; but if they are true, what gain shall we find in refusing them? what gain shall we *not* find in admitting them into our hearts? If our desire be really a walk with God, two cannot walk together except they are agreed; and for agreement, we must come to His terms, not He to ours. A solemn question results: How much real communion with God is in fact enjoyed

And when he that hath an issue is clean of his issue, then he shall number to himself seven days for his cleansing, and wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in running water, and he shall be clean. And on the [y] eighth day he shall take for himself two turtle-doves or two young pigeons, and come before Jehovah to the entrance of the tent of meeting, and give them to the priest. And the priest shall offer them, one for a sin-offering and one for a burnt-offering: and the priest shall make atonement for him before Jehovah for his issue.

y ch. 12. 3. ch. 14. 10. cf. 2 Sam. 11. 4.

And if any man's [z] seed of copulation go out from him, then he shall wash all his flesh in water, and be unclean until the even; and every garment and every skin, whereon is the seed of copulation, shall be washed in water, and be unclean until the even. The woman also with whom a man shall lie with seed of copulation, —they shall bathe themselves in water and be unclean until even.

z Ex. 19. 15. 1 Sam. 21, 4, 5.

2. (19-33.) In woman.

[2] And if a [a] woman have an issue, and her issue in her flesh be blood, seven days shall she be in her separation, and whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean until the even. And every thing whereon she lieth in her separation shall be unclean; and every thing whereon she sitteth shall be unclean. And whosoever toucheth her bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even; and whosoever toucheth any thing whereon she sat shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. And if it be on the bed, or on any thing whereon she sitteth, when he toucheth it, he shall be unclean until the even. And if any man lie with her at all, and her uncleanness be upon him, he shall be unclean seven days; and every bed whereon he lieth shall be unclean. And if a woman have an issue of blood [b] many days out of the time of her separation, or if it run beyond the time of her separation, all the days of the issue of her uncleanness shall be as the days of her separation: she shall be unclean. Every thing whereon she lieth all the days of her issue shall be to her as the bed of her separation; and whatsoever she sitteth on shall be unclean,

a Gen. 31. 35. Lam. 1. 17. Ezek. 18. 6. Ezek. 22. 10.

b Luke 8. 43-48.

by His people? Grace is not less *holy* than law; it is far more holy,—nay, the perfection of holiness: and the difference otherwise consists in the ability which grace gives for that which the law, because of the hardness of men's hearts, could not even insist upon. "Sin shall not have dominion over you; because ye are not under the law, but under grace."

The sexes are the natural institution of God for the recognition of mutual dependence, for the establishment of special relationships among men, and for the enjoyment of spiritual intercourse—the communion of spirit with spirit—in the most intimate way. It is just here that sin, having entered, has wrought such destructive work as to pollute and poison the race at its fountain-head, and corrupt all the sweetest natural affections into impurity. Of this a large part of

as in the uncleanness of her separation: and whosoever toucheth those things shall be unclean, and he shall wash his clothes, and bathe in water, and be unclean until the even. And if she be cleansed of her issue, then she shall number to herself seven days, and she shall be clean. And on the eighth day she shall take for herself two turtle-doves or two young pigeons, and bring them to the priest, to the entrance of the tent of meeting. And the priest shall offer one as a sin-offering, and the other as a burnt-offering; and the priest shall make atonement for her before Jehovah, on account of the issue of her uncleanness.

Thus shall ye separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness, that they die not in their uncleanness, when they defile my [c]tabernacle that is among them. This is the law of him that hath an issue, and of him whose seed goeth from him, and who is defiled with it; and of the woman who is sick in her uncleanness, and of him that hath an issue; for the man and for the woman, and for him that lieth with her that is unclean.

[c] ch. 16. 16. Rev. 21. 3.

DIVISION 3. (Chap. xvi.–xvii.)

The purification of the heavenly sanctuary and the earthly people. Christ's appearing in the sanctuary and from the sanctuary.

The concord of peace and righteousness.

1. vv. 1-5.) What suffices to draw near.

(XVI.)

1. [1] AND Jehovah spake unto Moses [d]after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they drew near before Jehovah and died; and Jehovah said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at [e]all times into the sanctuary, within the vail before the mercy-seat that is upon the ark, that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy-seat. Thus shall Aaron come into the sanctuary, with a young bullock for a [f]sin-offering, and a [g]ram for a burnt-offer-

[d] ch. 10. 1, etc.

[e] *cf.* Heb. 9. 7. *cfr.* Heb. 10. 19.

[f] Ex. 29. 1. ch. 8. 2.

[g] ch. 8. 18.

the Levitical code is the necessary reminder. God's Word must reach to the secret holds of sin—there where the "shame" that came in with the fall most of all manifests itself and is witness of corruption. If we cannot say much to one another as to such things, may His Word yet have its place and show its power!

Div. 3.

WE now come to the central division of the book, and, in other ways than this, the heart of it. If Leviticus be the book of the sanctuary—that sanctuary in which was enshrined the glory of God, it was on the day of atonement that this sanctuary was justified in its abode among them, and their crowning blessing secured. It was also the day in which alone the sanctuary in its innermost recesses was opened, and man in some sense drew nigh to God.

True, it was still but the shadow, and not the very image. The high-priest alone, not Israel, not even the whole priestly family, drew nigh; and he but for a brief moment, covered with a cloud of incense, and in the power of the atoning blood which he presented to God. The vail which was before God was thus only temporarily lifted,—that vail which through all the dispensations of law declared that "the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest" (Heb. ix. 8), as grace,

ing. The holy [h]linen coat shall he put on, and linen breeches shall be upon his flesh, and he shall be girded with the linen girdle, and with the linen turban shall he be attired: these are holy garments, and he shall [i]wash his flesh in water and put them on. And of the assembly of the children of Israel shall he take two shaggy [j]goats for a sin-offering, and one ram for a burnt-offering.

[h] Ex. 28. 1. Ezek. 44. 17, 18. cf. Heb 7. 26.

[i] cf. Jno. 8. 29.

[j] Ex. 28. 7. ch. 4. 3.

founded on a better sacrifice, alone could manifest it. But for us that grace is revealed, and we are brought to God: we have the substance of the shadows; and for us, therefore, they can speak with a fuller meaning than they could have before. The epistle to the Hebrews is largely the exposition and application to us of this day of atonement; and we have thus an inspired commentary upon it of inestimable value, and which gives corresponding value to the type before us.

Israel's great day is for us also great; and we must seek with all possible care, and in dependence upon the teaching of the Spirit of God, to get understanding of it.

And for this it will be well to anticipate somewhat the teaching of the twenty-third chapter, and to see its dispensational place as there revealed. In this way many things of importance become clear to us, and the details alone capable of being grasped. The dispensational place is most intimately connected with its spiritual meaning.

In the twenty-third chapter, the year of the Lord's holy seasons (they are not all "feasts") gives us the cycle of blessing for the Church and Israel,—the heavenly and the earthly saints. It divides, therefore, into two parts: the passover, first-fruits, and the "feast of weeks" begin the year; then, after a pause, another cluster is found in the seventh month,—on the first day, the blowing of trumpets; on the tenth, the day of atonement; and on the fifteenth begins the feast of tabernacles. The first group we have no difficulty in recognizing as specially our own: the feast of redemption, the sheaf of resurrection, and Pentecost. The second group begins with the blowing of trumpets, which, as the gathering of the congregation, speaks of the reassembling of Israel; then the day of atonement shows them in repentance taking refuge under the work of Christ; and lastly, the feast of tabernacles brings in for them millennial blessing.

It is evident, therefore, that the day of atonement is here connected in a special way with the repentance of Israel in the last days,—the seventh month, or time of complete accomplishment of His purposes toward them; and this explains (whatever else may be found in it) the meaning of the scape-goat, and that while the first goat is killed and its blood brought into the holiest for them when Aaron goes in there, their sins are not confessed and sent away from them until he has come out again. Just so will it be with the nation of Israel. Whatever preparatory work has gone before, (and such there will assuredly be,) yet as to the nation we are told, "They shall look on Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. . . . And the land shall mourn, every family apart. . . . In that day shall there be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." (Zech. xii. 10, 12; xiii. 1.)

It might be thought, however, that this still left open the question of time, and that the looking upon Him whom they had pierced was only poetic imagery for conviction under the gospel. But this difficulty is quite removed by the New-Testament prophet, quoting and applying the older prophecy: "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and *every eye* shall see Him, and *they also which* pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth"—the exact words, really, for "all the tribes of the land," however capable of a wider significance,—"shall wail because of Him." (Rev. i. 7.) Here it is plain that it is in the day of Christ's visible glory

2. (6-10.) The presentation of the diverse offerings.

[2]And Aaron shall present the bullock of the sin-offering which is for himself, that he may make atonement for himself and for his [k]house. And he shall take the two

k cf. 1 Pet. 2. 5.

that Zechariah's prophecy will be fulfilled, and with it the scape-goat also shall find its antitype.

So much is clear, then, as to the application to Israel. Having obtained it, however, we find no less clearly that the day of atonement begins long before this, and contemplates the Lord's entrance into heaven as well as His return from it, thus stretching over all the present time; and its fullness of meaning for us the epistle to the Hebrews brings out and develops. Brought thus far, indeed, it is not difficult to discover that in the priestly house of the sons of Aaron we have here (what we have seen in them elsewhere,) our own type, and that the day of atonement gives us, thus, a most comprehensive picture of the fruits of atonement both for the Church and Israel. We have to insert into it from the New Testament the rending of the vail, and then we are prepared to look at the details of what must have the profoundest interest and instruction for us.

In the division of this part of the book, commentators in general unite the seventeenth chapter with those which follow, rather than with the sixteenth. It is, in fact, however, as an appendix to this that it finds its real place and significance. The statement of what makes atonement before God is its central feature, and its connection with the day of atonement should be easily seen. It is, in fact, fundamental to the whole subject; and as we have already had to appeal to its teaching, so we shall find a necessity for such appeal once more, in order that there may be full assurance as to the interpretation of what is immediately before us. It is strictly a supplementary note, but of the greatest possible moment.

1. As a first section here, it is easy to characterize the sixteenth chapter: it is surely of the concord of divine righteousness with peace toward men that the day of atonement speaks,—the theme of the epistle to the Romans, especially in its first part, where, in chap. iii. 25, the blood-sprinkled mercy-seat is brought before us: the word for "propitiation" there, which is rather "propitiatory," is the word used in the Septuagint and in Heb. ix. 5 for "the mercy-seat." The themes of Romans and of Hebrews are combined in this most expressive type.

(i.) And here, first, we learn with what the priest must come into the holy place: it is, as we know, Aaron the high-priest, and no other of the priestly family can come in at all. This does not deprive us of access; it was a figure for the time then present; but for us the vail is rent: we have "boldness to enter into the holiest through the blood of Jesus." (Heb. x. 19.)

All through the day of atonement, except only in leading away the goat, and in carrying the sin-offering without the camp, it is Aaron who does all. As high-priest, he is the representative of the people, as he is the representative-head of the priestly house. Even the slaying of the victims is accordingly his work. This makes it easier to apprehend the application of this to Christ, that Aaron must enter into the sanctuary only with the blood of sacrifice. Thus the apostle, translating the type, says of Him, that "neither by the blood of goats and bullocks"—not necessarily "calves,"—"but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption." (Heb. ix. 12.) The word here is *dia*—"by means of," and its force in connection with the Jewish high-priest is not a question. He could not have entered apart from the blood of sacrifice. Of course this could apply to the Lord only in the official character in which Hebrews presents Him: no one dreams that personally He could not enter at any time, but as High-Priest, the representative of others, and of such as we are, it was otherwise: "the Son of Man must be lifted up," He Himself says. (Jno. iii. 14.) Thus, "having obtained eternal redemption," He entered in once into the holy place.

While this is surely true, what our eyes are at present fixed on is Himself. The white linen with which the high-priest is to be clothed shows the perfect

goats, and set them before Jehovah at the entrance of the tent of meeting. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats, one lot for [t]Jehovah, and one lot for the

cf. Jno. 18. 8, 9.

righteousness which as man is His personal qualification to draw nigh. The robes of glory and beauty are not upon him. It is not a question of what He is officially, or even as the Divine Son. The first and all-important question is of His own ability to stand the test of the absolute requirements of divine holiness. Upon this amid the agonies of the cross every thing hung: "He was heard for His piety." (Heb. v. 7, *marg.*) Bearing the awful weight of sins not His own. He vindicated by entire submission the character of God in imposing a penalty which was but the necessary requirement of His own nature; and God thus glorified, that nature demanded the deliverance out of death of the blessed Sufferer: "by the glory of the Father" He was raised up from the dead. (Rom. vi. 4.) Thus the white linen garments are in necessary connection with the blood with which the high-priest enters the holiest.

Lastly, for the people also as well as for the priesthood He has an offering. These different offerings we are called to consider in that which follows.

(ii.) In the second subsection we have the presentation to Jehovah of the offerings: they are not actually yet sacrificed, but only presented to God. Scripture always distinguishes between this offering and the final offering *up*. It is the putting them into relation to Him and to their appointed work; and so Christ "through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God." (Heb. ix. 14.) We also read that "He offered *up* Himself." (Heb. vii. 27.) To offer to God was not in itself priestly work: here the high-priest does it because he is the people's representative, just as afterwards he kills the victim. The priest's work, as we have seen, begins after this, with the sprinkling of the blood, and the offering up upon the altar.

In the application of this we need the most careful discrimination. It has been contended by some, that thus the priest's work begins "the other side of death," and that Christ's priestly work did not commence therefore until after death. But the *offering up* was priestly, and Christ "offered up Himself:" this could not be after the cross. If it be contended that here the shadow of the law was "not the very image," we might as well (and better) argue that this applies to the slaying of the victim rather. But this cannot be justified either, and, if the principle were admitted, all certainty as to the interpretation of the types would disappear. There can be conceived no reason why, if the spiritual meaning require it, the *offerer* should not as well "offer up" as slay the victim; yet there was nothing in the law more stringent than the prohibition of any such intrusion into the priestly office.

The failure of the shadows of the law to give the perfect image of the reality is of two kinds, and it would seem two only. One example of this failure is familiar to us in the rent vail. It was not something of which no account could be given, but had a definite lesson of its own, and a needful one. Its meaning was that the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest: the law could show no way. Thus this class of examples, as the apostle says, were figures for the time then present (Heb. ix. 9).—needful assurances of the weakness and inefficacy of law in its very nature. Of the other class of examples we can find one which bears very directly upon the matter before us. The death of the animal *preceded* its burning upon the ground or on the altar: in the antitype it was the reverse, the judgment upon sin Christ endured *before* death, and not after it; and the inversion of the order here has helped to occasion the very misconception of the priestly work coming only after death. Yet it is surely clear that this inversion is simply a necessity of a sort easily to be recognized, although the Spirit of God has none the less turned it to account. Thus from some natural necessity or from the character of the law itself this want of correspondence between type and antitype seems to arise. To imagine it where there is no such need is on the other hand to introduce unmeaning and causeless confusion into the inspired

scape-goat. And Aaron shall present the goat upon which the lot fell for Jehovah, and make him the sin-offering; but the goat upon which the lot fell for the

Word: no example of such a kind can be produced, it is confidently believed, from the whole range of Scripture.

"Christ by the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God;" and we find this apparently as what was implied in His coming to John's baptism. It was the end of that private life of His for thirty years, in which in the fulfillment of His personal responsibility as man He was being manifested as the Lamb without spot. John's baptism of repentance had therefore no claim upon Him personally, and to have come to it on His own account would have been a denial of His own spotlessness. "I have need to be baptized of Thee," says the Baptist, from that point of view rightly,—"and comest Thou to me?" All thought of the Lord's doing this by way of *example* for us is therefore a grave as it is a gross mistake. Was *He* a penitent? or one taking refuge by faith in a Saviour to come? No, He could be neither; and therefore could not mean by His action to put Himself in such a place. What, then, could it mean?

His answer to John is, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." In His coming to it as a baptism of repentance He could not in righteousness own it for *Himself;* for others it obviously *was* the first step in righteousness that could be taken by sinners,—and for them how deeply significant! a baptism in Jordan, the river of death, a "baptism *to* death" therefore (Rom. vi. 4), to which the sins they confessed were their just title. Death was the righteous penalty of sin, which by grace they were thus permitted to anticipate, owning their guilt in view of "remission of sins" (Luke iii. 3) through Him whom John preceded. Now He was come, and owning *for them* the righteousness of this confession of their guilt and of the penalty under which they were, His own fulfillment of righteousness is in going into death for them as their Saviour and their sacrifice. He is moving therefore from His former position as One fulfilling righteousness for Himself; He is taking position as One fulfilling it for others. And this implies for Him death, which He speaks of afterward, as the baptism He was to be baptized with, "straitened" by His love, and in the manifestation of it, till it was accomplished (Luke xii. 50).

It is in this way, then, He takes His place under John's baptism. It is His offering Himself without spot to God, and as this He is immediately proclaimed by the Father's voice, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And now the Spirit of God openly descends upon Him. He is anointed without blood, as we saw in Aaron's case (Ex. xxix. 7; Lev. viii. 12), and thus He becomes the "anointed priest," to offer *up* the offering He had just presented.

All, therefore, is harmony, as in the Word of God it always is,—the offering first, and then the *priestly* offering *up*. From His baptism by John, the Lord goes forth as the Lamb reserved for sacrifice, and as the High-Priest whose offering up is of *Himself*. All glories unite in Him, and the pathway of suffering is indeed His glory.

And now returning to Leviticus, we find, along with the presence of the offerings, the *diversity* of the offerings insisted on, in their purpose and in their character alike. Of course they all have their fulfillment in His one all-comprehensive offering: but this is displayed for us here, in the different ends it is designed to answer, and in its diverse character as suited to those ends. And thus we must look at it.

First, we have the difference between the offerings for the people, and for the priestly house: for the former, two goats; for the latter, one bullock. We have seen the distinctive character of these—the goat and the bullock, and have only to see their appropriateness as offerings respectively for Israel and the Church. The goat is the sin-offering elsewhere prescribed for the prince and common person in Israel, as the bullock is for the high-priest, and the congregation at

scape-goat shall be set alive before Jehovah, to make atonement for him, to let him go for a [m]scape-goat into the wilderness.

[m] *cf.* Gal. 2. 20.

large; here for the congregation at large it is but the goat. Yet we must distinguish: for the congregation in Lev. iv. *includes the priesthood*, while here the priesthood are represented separately; thus we see the ground upon which the congregation here represents the people of Israel simply, while there it stands for the redeemed as a whole.

The bullock thus as the offering for the Church gives us, as we have already seen, the Lord as the blessed Servant of the Father's will: the goat speaks of simple substitution. Thus the bullock brings in *directly* the thought of the glorifying God as the goat does not. In the latter sin is seen as removed, and completely; but in the former case the incense-altar can be anointed in the sanctuary,—that is, in heaven (chap. iv. 7, 18). On the day of atonement indeed the blood of both goat and bullock is brought into the sanctuary, and put upon the mercy-seat before God, but the people are not brought in by it, and the scape-goat shows us the effect for Israel. But of this we must speak in its place.

For the people there are *two* goats, and here again is diversity; for they are separated to different work. This is given in some detail, and there are conflicting views as to the interpretation, which call for some examination.

Lots are cast as to the two goats, as to their destination: the one is said to be "for Jehovah;" the other "for the scape-goat." In the last place, the Revised Version, with many critical authorities now, substitutes "for Azazel," with an alternative in the margin, "or dismissal," which would bring it back nearly to the old translation. Azazel is mere adoption of the Hebrew word, as to the meaning and application of which there have been so many different thoughts, that some are content to leave it as an insoluble enigma. And yet it is certain that the first two letters of the word are those for "goat," and that it is a goat on which the lot falls; while the rest of the word is one which signifies to "go away," "depart," and this is exactly what the goat does: why then should there be any difficulty as to the meaning?

Keil contends, however, that "the words, one lot for Jehovah and one for Azazel, require unconditionally that Azazel should be regarded as a personal being in opposition to Jehovah;" but this is his affirmation only: no one that had no theory to support would see any such necessity. But a long line of commentators, Jewish and Christian both, declare Azazel to be a name for Satan, and with this Keil agrees, and that the goat is to be sent away to Satan, for what purpose they cannot decide, for the simple reason that Scripture says nothing about it. The two goats are one sin-offering (*v.* 5) and of course a double representation of Christ, and the great point is, that the sins for which the first goat dies are taken away from the people on the head of the second "into a land cut off"—where therefore they cannot be found. All is as simple as can be, and needs no such weird invention to introduce confusion into it.

The fact that the two goats are one sin-offering meets another difficulty which has been found in the words as to the second goat, "to make *atonement for him*, to let him go as a scape-goat into the wilderness." The common version escapes it by rendering "to make atonement *with* him," but this cannot be maintained. Others would translate, "to make atonement over him," but this is neither the force of the word, nor has it any plain significance that one can discern. The words mean regularly "to make atonement *for* him," and the meaning is simple when we consider that, the two being one sin-offering, the atonement is made entirely by the first goat, which therefore makes it for the other: this solution of the matter, simple as it is, seems to have escaped the commentators. Its importance is, that what is done with it is defined *not* to be "atonement," and inconsistent with the thought of its really making it; for atonement is made for it, *to* let it go. It shows also that the being let go is a real freedom, the *result* of

3. (11-19.) The holiest.

[3] And Aaron shall present the bullock of the sin-offering which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house, and shall slay the bullock of the sin-offering which is for himself. And he shall take a [n]censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before Jehovah, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small and bring it within the vail; and he shall put the incense upon the fire before Jehovah, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy-seat which is upon the testimony, that he die not. And he shall take of the [o]blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the front of the [p]mercy-seat eastward; and before the mercy-seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger [q]seven times. Then shall he kill the

n Ex. 30.35. cf. Song 1. 3, 13.

o cf. Heb. 4. 14. Heb. 9. 11, 12.

p cf. Rom. 3. 25. Rev. 5. 6.

q cf. Jno. 13. 10. Heb. 10. 14.

atonement made, and that the "land cut off" is not death or its equivalent, as I once thought. It is as the consequence of atonement that the sins are borne away, and their being on the head of the goat does not mean penalty for it, but freedom for the people—a freedom which involves their sins being no more found.

Thus too the meaning of "Jehovah's lot" becomes plain. The first goat is that, because it is the *real sacrifice*, while the other is "let go." It is not a question of two parts or aspects of atonement; for the first alone really makes the atonement, while the other expresses the result for the people.

(iii.) And now we are to see the actual entrance into the holiest. First, for himself and his house. Aaron slays the bullock of the sin-offering, and then fills the sanctuary with a cloud of incense, that it may cover the mercy-seat; afterward sprinkling the blood of the bullock upon the front of it, and seven times before it, thus making atonement for the priestly house. He then kills the goat which is for the people, and does with its blood as with the blood of the bullock, making "atonement for the sanctuary because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins," "for the tent of meeting which abideth among them in the midst of their uncleanness."

The first point of inquiry here must be as to the meaning of what is the central feature of all, the sprinkling of the blood upon the "propitiatory" or "mercy-seat." That it was for "atonement" is explicitly said, as in the next chapter the blood is stated to be given upon the *altar* for atonement. Here the mercy-seat takes the place of the altar, although afterward the blood is carried out to the altar, as we shall see; but the mercy-seat is first here and central, being indeed the "propitiatory" (as in Heb. ix. 5 it is literally) or the "place of propitiation or atonement."

The "propitiatory" was the cover of the ark, as we know, and with it represented Christ, in its two materials of wood and gold, just as the altar of burnt-offering represented Christ in *its* two materials of wood and brass. If the mercy-seat were the "place of propitiation," the altar (*mizbeach*) was literally "the place of sacrifice." The altar, as the Lord Himself tells us, is that which "sanctifieth the gift." (Matt. xxiii. 19.) The person of Christ is that which makes His work so precious and acceptable to God.

We have seen already that when Christ offered Himself to God for the baptism to death to which He was to be baptized, that then He was proclaimed of God the Son in whom He was well pleased, and anointed with the Spirit for His priestly work. Similarly the apostle connects God's acknowledgment of His Son with His call to the High-Priesthood (Heb. v. 5). Afterward we are shown Him in the suffering which was His wondrous obedience, offering up Himself (chap. v. 7, 8; vii. 27), perfected as the Saviour, and for His work in the heavenly sanctuary. He rose from the dead, and having "by Himself purged our sins," ascended into heaven, and "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high"

goat of the sin-offering which is for the people, and bring its blood within the vail, and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat and before the mercy-seat: and he shall make atonement for the sanctuary because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins, and so shall he do for the tent of meeting which abideth among them in the midst of their [r]uncleanness. And there shall be [s]no man in the tent of meeting when he goeth in to make atonement in the sanctuary until he come out: and he shall make atonement for himself and for his house, and for the whole congregation of Israel.

[r] ch. 26. 11. cf. Heb. 9. 23, 24.

[s] cf. Heb. 9. 7. Ex. 34. 3.

(chap. i. 3). He was "raised again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 25), His deliverance from death being the public acceptance of His work on our behalf, and the clearance from charge of all those who by faith are His. The living bird, dipped in the blood of atonement, first sprinkles the leper, and then takes its flight into the open field.

It is of this entrance into heaven after resurrection that the epistle to the Hebrews speaks,—an entrance by ascension, which the Lord in His words to Mary on the day of His resurrection denies having yet taken place: "Touch Me not," He says, "for I am not yet ascended to My Father." With His ascension is connected His session at the right hand of God: "He was received up into heaven," says Mark, "and sat on the right hand of God." This was necessarily a thing done once, not needing to be repeated, and so is spoken of always in Hebrews: "We have such a High-Priest who is set down on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens;" "by His own blood He entered in *once* into the holy place;" "but this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, sat down forever"—or "has taken His seat in perpetuity"—"at the right hand of God." This is the true force of the last verse, though in the *R. V.* only given in the margin.

From all this it is plain that the entrance contemplated in Hebrews is after resurrection and by ascension only, and therefore in the value of a work already accepted of God. But this being so, it ought to be as plain that the entrance of the high-priest into the sanctuary in Leviticus is a type of the same, and that the blood he carries does not wait for acceptance when it is put upon the mercy-seat, but is put there as already accepted, to make atonement *for the sanctuary*: the work already looked at as complete is *applied* to this particular purpose. Thus the same blood, in the language of the Old Testament, can *make atonement* again and again,—that is, for every fresh object to which it is applied.

The purpose here is plain: "he shall make atonement for the sanctuary, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins, and so shall he do for the tent of meeting which abideth among them in the midst of their uncleannesses." Thus in this picture we have exhibited what the epistle to the Hebrews calls the "purification of the heavenly things" (chap. ix. 23). It is seen that the blood of atonement is that which vindicates the abiding of the tabernacle—thus of the divine presence—in the midst of a sinful people. And so directly after is the altar also purified, that it may remain among them to sanctify their gifts.

For us there is a higher blessing. Christ has entered into heaven, not for a moment, but to take His place in the presence of God for us, "a High-Priest over the house of God." The vail rent in answer to His work accomplished, we have access ourselves to God in the holiest, and are invited to "draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (Heb. x. 22). The holy and the holiest are now one, and there is no "*first* tabernacle" (Heb. ix. 8).

And he shall go out to the [t]altar which is before Jehovah, and make atonement for it, and take of the blood of the bullock and of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about. And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse and sanctify it from the uncleannesses of the children of Israel.

[t] ch. 4. 25. ch. 17. 11. Ex. 30. 10.

4. (20–22.) The scapegoat: the result for Israel.

[4] And when he hath finished making atonement for the sanctuary and for the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall present the live goat; and Aaron shall [u]lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all

[u] ch. 4. 15.

But this connects with another thing, which Hebrews does not enlarge upon, though it lays the foundation, and other epistles of Paul are full of it. The high-priest is the head and representative of the priestly family before God, and we are "seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." This in the Old Testament is necessarily as yet a mystery hid in God; and here we can only indicate a connection. There is none with Aaron in the sanctuary in Leviticus, and *he* does not remain there. In making atonement he is of course alone.

(iv.) The numerical structure marks, as it would seem decisively, the scapegoat as giving the result for *Israel*, the earthly people. This we have seen emphasized in other ways: prophecy is abundantly clear that while provision has been made for Israel long since in the work of the cross, it is only when the Lord appears that their sins as a nation will be put away. In this way the meaning of the *two* goats is perfectly simple, the first only being the Lord's lot and the real atonement, the last being, however, in a sense and for a purpose quite evident, identified with it. Like the second bird, it typifies, therefore, the *results* of the work rather than the work itself,* the putting away of Israel's sin

*Questions have, however, been raised as to the connection of these goats respectively with propitiation and substitution, so important in their bearing upon the nature of atonement itself, that it is impossible to avoid the discussion of them. It has been sought to distinguish them in this way, that *propitiation* is the glorifying of God by the work of the cross,—the satisfying of His nature,—in such a manner as to enable the offer of grace to be made to *all* men; while *substitution* is that which unconditionally takes away the sins of His *people*. He is a propitiation for the whole world, it is said, but He *bears* only the sins of the latter: "The Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all" applies in this way, for those whose sins are borne could never have themselves to bear them. This, therefore, if true as to the world, would necessitate universal salvation. Let us look, then, at these questions, and what they involve.

First of all, if these views are true, they involve an atonement for the world different in character from that for believers. The work of the cross becomes a twofold work, and there is an atonement which saves and one that does not save. If the believer is only saved by his sins being borne by Another (and this is substitution), then if every one's sins are not borne, there can be no salvation, and no *provision* for the salvation, of any but the elect. Some, no doubt also, would accept this, and here is not the place to take it up: it is limited atonement of the most rigid kind, but does not allow of any "world" to which atonement can at all apply, except the world of the elect, nor of any propitiation which cannot save. As to this last, it is clearly right: a propitiation which cannot save is not in any true sense "propitiation."

But if, on the other hand, a propitiation without substitution still can save, then is substitution itself needless and meaningless: there is no place for it any where. So far is this, however, from the truth, that it ought not to need proof for those who have but their Old Testament before them, that in a substitutionary bearing of sin lies the very essence of sacrifice—of propitiation. Thus is God's righteousness in the sentence upon sin maintained, in that which puts away sin: and in the Son of God becoming the substitute, divine love is maintained in righteousness. This is what *propitiates*,—not turns God's heart toward us, which was never estranged, but enables Him to show mercy consistently with all that He is.

Then, as to the extent of atonement or propitiation, it is indeed "for the whole world" (1 Jno. ii. 2), but *not unconditionally*: as it is elsewhere said, Christ is "a propitiation *through faith*, by His blood." (Rom. iii. 25.) The word here is the word for the mercy-seat—the "propitiatory," which does not touch the meaning. He is thus a propitiation for the whole world, conditionally upon faith, thus in effect for believers—an unconditional propitiation for believers. And substitution is (as all allow) for believers: "a propitiation, through faith, by His *blood*," (as the *R. V.* rightly puts it,) binds together these two—propitiation and substitution—as equal in extent and upon the same condition for all.

"God so loved the *world*, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on

their transgressions in respect of all their sins, and put them on the head of the goat, and send it by the hand of a man that is in readiness into the wilderness. And the goat shall *bear with him all their iniquities into a land cut off, and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.

v cf. ch.14.7. Heb. 8. 12.

5. (23-25.) At the altar: Man with God, accepted in Christ.

5 And Aaron shall come into the tent of meeting, and put off the linen garments which he put on when he went into the sanctuary, and he shall leave them there.

at the time of the Lord's appearing from heaven, but in virtue of a work accomplished when He went in. The two goats figure in this way but one sin-offering, which is seen in its Godward side in that which is Jehovah's lot, and in its effect for the nation in the scape-goat.

For us all it avails to show that the blessed sacrifice puts away sin for none until it has been confessed to God by those whose hearts have turned to Him in that repentance which is never separate from faith. It is a condition of the gospel, that "if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 Jno. i. 9.)

(v.) The first four sections of this chapter complete the peculiar features of the day of atonement. The high-priest now puts off the white linen garments

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Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Here is the universality of the atonement, and the condition of faith wherever it shall avail. Election is a truth of Scripture, but it is never said that Christ died for the elect, either simply or in any special way. To the sinners at Corinth Paul preached as gospel that "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. xv. 3),—that is, of course, for the sins of those whom he was then addressing; and the effect being conditioned upon faith, "all who believe are justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 39), and "justified by faith,"—that is, *when* they believe. It is never said that Christ died for the elect, or that men are justified by their election, but by their faith. "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." (Rom. iv. 3.)

Believing sinners are thus the people for whom Christ died, a provision sufficient for the whole world, if the whole world would believe. Thus the offer of salvation can be truly made to all, and the responsibility of non-acceptance be truly pressed on all: "ye *will* not come unto Me, that ye might have life" (Jno. v. 40). All this seems clear; the only real difficulty remains to be considered.

How could it be said in this way, "The Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all"? or that Christ "bare our sins in His own body on the tree"? Here habits of thought, and not the words of Scripture, create the perplexity. There is really the thought in the mind of what has been justly called a "*commercial atonement*," a thought which if fully weighed will be found to lower the character of it, and which is foreign to Scripture, though built upon mistaken inferences from it.

In the day of judgment men will be "judged according to their works." Every sin will receive its just recompense: there will be the infliction of "few stripes" or "many stripes." Penalty will be strictly commensurate with desert.

Now, if Christ "bare our sins in His own body on the tree," this principle has been thought to involve the strict penalty of these sins in full measurement being laid upon Him—so much suffering for so much sin. Here it is easy to see that if this be so, atonement must be strictly limited. To atone for one sinner, nay, for one more sin, He must suffer more. Then too if He suffered for these sins, those whose sins they were *could not* suffer for them. The highest Calvinistic view results: an absolutely efficacious atonement for those whose sins He really bore, and for others none whatever.

But Scripture says nothing of all this, and what it does say is inconsistent with it: a propitiation for the whole world would in this way be impossible, and so would the *over-payment* which the trespass-offering insists upon. Was the value of the cross indeed only sufficient to save just so many? or if the whole world had been saved by it, would there not have been an over-payment still? Yes, surely: for the power of the atonement and the glory of the work accomplished were not in so much deserved suffering meted out to One who had not deserved it, but in that death and wrath which were man's portion proclaimed as the holy judgment of God by Him who went into them in a perfect love that was the full expression of divine love. The "substitute for penalty," which some speak of here would not have done this; and the "equivalent," which others advocate, could not be found. "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."

And if our sins brought Him to this, as they did, why should we not be able to say that "Himself bare our sins in His own body," as the sacrificial victim? or, looking at the whole multitude of the redeemed, that, "Jehovah laid upon Him the iniquity of us all"? The sacrifice is truly, fully efficacious for all His people, and that not merely for a certain defined number, but limitless save by the unbelief that can "neglect so great salvation."

And he shall wash his flesh in water in a holy place, and put on his garments, and come forth, and offer his [w] burnt-offering, and the burnt-offering of the people, and make atonement for himself and for the people. And the [x] fat of the sin-offering he shall burn upon the altar.

[w] ch. 1. 10, etc.

[x] ch. 4. 8.

6. (26–28.) Outside the camp: the way in which sin is overcome.

[6] And he that let go the goat for the scape-goat shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp. And the bullock of the sin-offering and the goat of the sin-offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the sanctuary, shall they carry forth [y] outside the camp; and they shall burn in the fire their skins and their flesh and their dung. And he that burneth them shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp.

[y] ch. 13. 46. ch. 24. 14. *cf.* Heb. 13. 11, 12. Ex. 33. 7. Jer. 4. 4.

7. (29–34.) A Sabbath of rest.

[7] And this shall be an everlasting statute for you: in the [z] seventh month, on the tenth day of the month ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all,—the home-born, or the stranger that sojourneth among you: for on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins shall ye be clean before Jehovah. It is a [a] Sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, as a statute forever. And the priest who shall be anointed and consecrated to be priest in his father's stead shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen clothes, the holy garments. And he shall make atonement for the holy sanctuary, and the tent of meeting, and for the altar shall he make atonement; and he shall make atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation. And

[z] *ctr.* Heb. 9. 25, 26.

[a] ch. 23. 32. *cf.* Heb. 4. 3.

with which he went into the sanctuary, and returns to his garments of glory and beauty, his usual official dress. In this he offers the burnt-offering and burns the fat of the sin-offering upon the altar. We have already seen the significance of these two things, which add the positive side of acceptance in Christ to the negative putting away of sin; and with this agrees the blooming out of color in the high-priest's robe. It is like Joseph's variegated coat, God's recognition in delight of His Son, and upon this footing is man now with God, the meaning, as I believe, of the numerical place of this section; and briefly though it is given, how much would be lacking if we had not this!

(vi.) Next we have, in the burning of the sin-offering outside the camp, the way in which sin is overcome and removed, and which Heb. xiii. links so decisively with the entrance of the blood into the holy place. This too, then, has its necessary place here: its exposition has been already elsewhere given.

(vii.) Lastly, in connection with all this, we have a sabbath of rest appointed, in which all work is solemnly forbidden. In connection with atonement the meaning is most simple. Whether for Israel or for the believer now, no work of man must supplement the glorious work which has been done for sinners. On the other hand, the rest so dearly purchased for us is not to be received with light and indifferent hearts: Israel were to "afflict their souls" on the day of atonement, just as on the passover they were to eat the bitter herbs with the lamb. A humble and chastened spirit alone becomes those who enjoy rest through His toil,—a peace made through the blood of the cross.

it shall be to you an everlasting statute to make atonement for the children of Israel with respect to all their sins once a year. And he did as Jehovah had commanded Moses.

(XVII.)

Of death as atonement; and the testimony of it to be maintained in daily life.

2. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, and to all the children of Israel, and say unto them, This is the thing which Jehovah hath commanded, saying, Whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel that killeth ox or sheep or goat in the camp, or that killeth it outside the camp, and bringeth it not to the entrance of the tent of meeting, to present it an offering unto Jehovah, before the tabernacle of Jehovah,—blood shall be imputed unto that man: he hath shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people, so that the children of Israel may [b] bring their sacrifices which they sacrifice in the open field, even that they may bring them unto Jehovah, to the entrance of the tent of meeting, unto the priest, and offer them as sacrifices of peace-offerings unto Jehovah. And the priest shall sprinkle the blood upon Jehovah's altar, at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and burn the fat for a sweet savor unto Jehovah. And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto [c] demons, after whom they go a whoring. This shall be an everlasting statute for them throughout their generations. And thou shalt say unto them, Whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among them, that offereth a burnt-offering or sacrifice, and bringeth it not to the entrance of the tent of meeting, to offer it unto Jehovah, even that man shall be cut off from among his people.

[b] *cf.* 1 Cor. 10. 31. Col. 3. 17. 1 Sam. 9. 12. 1 Kings 3. 2. 1 Kings 22. 43. Matt. 18. 20.

[c] Deut. 32. 17. 1 Cor. 10. 20.

2. The seventeenth chapter is strictly an appendix to the sixteenth, as has been already said. Its central thought is of atonement by blood, the testimony as to which, as a thing of surpassing importance, is enjoined to be maintained throughout the daily life.

Whenever ox or sheep or goat was slain by any, there was to be recognition of the need of atonement, and how it had been met. In fact, to one enlightened by the Word of God, all nature is full of such remembrances; but nothing speaks more clearly than this great natural ordinance that death should be the sustenance of life. Accordingly, every such meal God ordained to be in communion with the altar, a feast upon an offering. How blessed would it be for us if nature's real lessons were known and laid to heart after this manner continually, and our common every-day lives thus lifted into higher meaning! Thus would God make Christ to be ever before our eyes, and fellowship with Him to be confirmed and strengthened—the things seen and temporal to minister to the things unseen and eternal!

As a provision against the wandering heart after other gods also, there is in all this deep significance. In truth, it is the unoccupied part of our lives—whatever in them is not positively consecrated to God—that betrays us to the enemy. We need to realize that in an enemy's country as we are, and not only so, but on a daily battle-field, there can be no neutral ground. Whatever, as well as whosoever, is not *for* Christ is against Him. There is no place where sin will not gain

And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among them, that eateth any blood, I will even set my face against that soul that eateth [d]blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that maketh atonement by the life. Therefore I have said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, nor shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood. And whatsoever man there be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among them, that taketh in hunting any beast or fowl that may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood, and cover it with dust. For it is the [e]life of all flesh, its blood is all one with the life thereof: therefore I have said unto the children of Israel, Of the blood of no manner of flesh shall ye eat, for the life of all flesh is its blood: whoever eateth it shall be cut off. And every soul that eateth that which [f]dieth of itself or what is torn, whether home-born or stranger, he shall wash his clothes, and bathe in water, and be unclean until the even: then shall he be clean; but if he wash them not, nor bathe his flesh, then he shall bear his iniquity.

d ch. 3. 17. *ctr.* Jno. 6. 53, 56.

e Gen. 9. 4. *cf.* Jno. 10. 15.

f *ctr.* Jno. 10. 17, 18.

DIVISION 4. (Chap. xviii.-xxii.)

Holiness in practical walk.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. xviii.-xx.)

Precepts for the whole people.

"One flesh:" congruity in sexual relation.

(XVIII.)

1. (vv. 1-5.) A law of life.

1.[1] AND Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them, I am Jehovah your God. [g]After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do; and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I am

g *cf.* Eph. 4. 17. 1 Cor. 3. 3. Ps. 106. 35. Ezek. 20. 7, 8.

advantage over us except the presence of God. "Thou art my hiding-place," needs to be continually the language of our souls.

The eleventh verse, that in which we find the heart of the whole chapter, has been already considered. It shows us *how* it is the blood maketh atonement for the soul: it is because the life is in the blood; and to pour out the blood is therefore the sign of death, not of life, as some perversely take it: "He poured out his soul"—or "life"—"unto *death*," is the inspired interpretation.

DIV. 4.

THE fourth division shows so plainly its character that there is no need to insist upon it. Its two subdivisions also are absolutely simple in character, being divided by the range of address,—the first, to the whole people, including of course the priests; the second, to the priests only. From the nature of these commandments, while their importance is manifest, they require little exposition, such as comes within the scope of a work like the present, the less as it may be found in all the usual commentaries.

1. The first section takes up what is fundamental to all relationship, from

bringing you, shall ye not do; nor shall ye walk in their statutes. Ye shall execute my judgments and keep my statutes, to walk therein: I am Jehovah your God. Ye shall even keep my statutes and my judgments, [h] which if a man do, he shall live by them: I am Jehovah.

h Gal. 3. 12. Ezek. 20. 11.

2. (6–18.) The blood-relation limit.

[2] [i] None shall approach to any near of kin, to uncover their nakedness: I am Jehovah. The nakedness of thy father, even thy mother's nakedness, shalt thou not uncover: she is thy mother; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness. The nakedness of thy [j] father's wife shalt thou not uncover: it is thy father's nakedness. The nakedness of thy [k] sister, thy father's daughter or thy mother's daughter, whether born at home, or born abroad, their nakedness shalt thou not uncover. The nakedness of thy son's daughter, or of thy daughter's daughter, their nakedness shalt thou not uncover: their nakedness is thine own. The nakedness of thy father's wife's daughter, begotten of thy father: she is thy sister; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness. The nakedness of thy father's sister shalt thou not uncover: she is thy father's near kinswoman. The nakedness of thy mother's sister shalt thou not uncover: for she is thy mother's near kinswoman. The nakedness of thy father's brother shalt thou not uncover; thou shalt not approach his wife: she is thine aunt. The nakedness of thy [l] daughter-in-law shalt thou not uncover: she is thy son's wife; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness. The nakedness of thy brother's wife shalt thou not uncover: it is thy brother's nakedness. The nakedness of a woman and her daughter shalt thou not uncover; neither shalt thou take her son's daughter,

i *cfr.* Ruth 3. 9.

j Gen. 19. 32. Gen. 35. 22. Deut. 27. 20. 1 Cor. 5. 1. Ezek. 22. 10.

k 2 Sam. 13. 11, 12. Ezek. 22. 11.

l Gen. 38. 18.

which duty arises to one's neighbor. Relations of sex are the foundation of the family, as the family is the foundation of the state. The order is therefore perfect, as all Scripture is. The links thus formed are the strongest that exist amongst men naturally, and in their violation lead to the worst confusion.

(i.) We have here first the exhortation to obedience; a law given in which is *life*. Of this naturally there can be no just question. Men's vices are physically their destruction, and rob human life of all that makes it worthy of the name: "My son, forget not My law, but let thine heart keep My commandments: for length of days, and years of life, and peace shall they add to thee. . . . Fear the Lord, and depart from evil: it shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones" (Prov. iii. 1, 2, 7, 8). It must of necessity be so, if God be over all, and the "Lord's eyes are over the righteous."

(ii.) In the next place, we find the limit imposed upon marriage in regard to blood-relationship. Here abundant reasons evidence that character of the divine law which has been announced above. The laws of heredity show that in a fallen race, the inheritance of disease to which all are liable is intensified where similar tendencies are found in both parents. In the need also of looking outside the circle of near relationship for partners, the selfishness of man finds a divine restraint, and the bonds which unite man with man at large are strengthened and multiplied. Besides which the intimacies of the home and family are guarded from abuse.

nor her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness: they are her near kinswomen; it is wickedness. And thou shalt not take a [m] wife to her sister, to vex her, to uncover her nakedness, beside her, in her life-time.

3. (19-23.) Impurity.

[3] And in the [n] separation of her uncleanness thou shalt not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness. And thou shalt not lie carnally with thy [o] neighbor's wife, to defile thyself with her. And thou shalt not give any of thy seed to make them over to [p] Molech, nor profane the name of thy God: I am Jehovah. And thou shalt not lie with the [q] male as one lieth with a woman: it is abomination. And thou shalt lie with no [r] beast, to defile thyself with it; nor shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down with it: it is confusion.

4. (24-30.) "Lest the land cast you out."

[4] Defile not yourselves with any of these things; for with all these things the [s] nations have defiled themselves, which I am casting out from before you. And the land is defiled; therefore do I visit the iniquity thereof upon it: yea, the land [t] vomiteth out its inhabitants. But ye shall keep my statutes and my judgments, and ye shall not do any of all these abominations,—neither the home-born, nor the stranger that sojourneth among you; (for all these abominations have the men of the land done, who were before you, and the land is defiled;) that the land spue you not out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nation that was before you. For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people. But ye shall keep my charge, that ye practice not any of the abominable customs, which were practiced before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therewith: I am Jehovah your God.

(XIX.)

Duties flowing from the covenant relationship.

2. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto all the assembly of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy; for I Jehovah your God am holy. Ye shall [u] fear every one his mother and his father, and keep my [v] Sabbaths: I am Jehovah your God. Turn not unto [w] gods of naught, nor make yourselves molten gods: I Jehovah am your God. And if ye offer a sacrifice of [x] peace-offering, unto Jehovah shall ye

m Gen 29.27.

n ch. 15. 24.

o Ex. 20. 14. ch. 20. 10. De. 22. 22-24. Job. 31. 9. Jer. 5. 8. Jer. 29. 23. Ezek. 18.6.

p ch. 20. 2. 1 Ki. 11. 7. Acts 7. 43.

q Gen. 19. 5. Ju. 19. 22, 23. Rom. 1. 27.

r Ex. 22. 19.

s Gen. 15.16.

t cf. Num. 13. 32.

u Ex. 20. 12. Eph. 6.1-3.

v Ex. 20. 8-11.

w Ex. 20. 4. Zech. 11.17. Job 13. 4.

x ch. 7. 11, etc.

(iii.) Thirdly, impurities apart from the question of marriage are denounced,—confusions and abominations of which man can easily nevertheless be guilty, and of which in fact the heathen world was full.

(iv.) For these sins the land to which they were going was casting out its inhabitants; and they are warned that for such things if practiced, it would cast out them also. God's righteousness is equal to all His creatures; and Israel, now cast out of their land, are witnesses to it.

2. The nineteenth chapter shows the duties flowing from covenant-relationship: "I am Jehovah," fifteen times repeated, is the declaration by which every commandment is enforced. Fellowship with a holy God must be in holiness: "Ye shall be holy; for I Jehovah your God am holy."

offer [it] for your acceptance: on the day ye offer it shall it be eaten, and on the morrow; but that which remaineth till the third day shall be burned in the fire. And if indeed it be eaten on the third day, it shall be offensive: it shall not be accepted; and he that eateth it shall bear his iniquity, because he hath profaned Jehovah's holy things; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people.

And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the [y]corners of thy field, nor shalt thou gather the gleaning of thy harvest; nor shalt thou glean thy vineyard, nor shalt thou gather the scattered fruit of thy vineyard: but thou shalt leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I am Jehovah your God.

[y] ch. 23. 22. Ru. 2. 8.

Ye shall not [z]steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another. And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, and thou shalt not profane the name of thy God: I am Jehovah. And thou shalt not [a]oppress thy neighbor nor rob him. The [b]wages of the hired servant shall not abide with thee all night until the morning. Thou shalt not curse the deaf nor put a [c]stumbling-block before the blind, but fear thy God: I am Jehovah.

[z] Ex. 20. 15, 16.

[a] Mk. 10. 19. 1 Sa. 12. 3, 4.

[b] Jas. 5. 4. Jer. 22. 13.

[c] De. 27. 18. Mt. 15. 14. Job 29. 15. Ro. 14. 21.

Ye shall do no unrighteousness in [d]judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the great; in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor. Thou shalt not go about as a [e]talebearer among thy people; neither shalt thou be neutral in regard to thy neighbor's blood: I am Jehovah.

[d] De. 16. 19.

[e] Pr. 20. 19.

Thou shalt not [f]hate thy brother in thy heart; thou shalt surely [g]rebuke thy neighbor, and not bear sin on his account. Thou shalt not [h]avenge thyself, nor bear grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am Jehovah.

[f] 1 Jno. 2. 9, 11.

[g] Pr. 27. 5, 6.

[h] Rom. 12. 19, 20. Matt. 22. 39, 40.

Ye shall keep my statutes. Thou shalt not make thy cattle gender with a [i]diverse kind, thou shalt not sow thy field with diverse seed; nor shall a diverse garment of woolen or linen come upon thee. And if a man lie carnally with a woman, and she is a bondmaid betrothed to a husband, but not at all redeemed, nor freedom given her, there shall be chastisement: they shall not be put to death because she was not free. And he shall bring his trespass-offering unto Jehovah, unto the entrance of the tent of meeting—a ram of trespass-offering. And the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of trespass-offering before Jehovah for his sin which he hath sinned, and his sin which he hath sinned shall be forgiven him.

[i] *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 14. Deut. 22. 9, 11.

There is a mingling together of various conditions which have for most forbidden attempt to divide the chapter into sections; and where this has been made it is very little satisfactory. May there not be for us in this the lesson that the law as a whole is a web so woven as not to admit of separation, even as

And when ye are come into the land, and shall have planted all kinds of [j]trees for food, then ye shall count the fruit thereof as of uncircumcision. Three years shall it be as uncircumcised to you; it shall not be eaten: but in the fourth year shall all its fruit be holy, for praise to Jehovah; and in the fifth year shall ye eat the fruit thereof, that it may increase unto you its produce: I am Jehovah your God.

Ye shall eat nothing with the blood. Ye shall not practice [k]enchantments, nor use auguries. Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard. Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am Jehovah. Profane not thy daughter, to make her a harlot; lest the land fall to whoredom, and the land become full of wicked imaginations. Ye shall keep my Sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am Jehovah. Turn not unto familiar spirits nor unto wizards; seek them not, to be defiled: I am Jehovah your God. Thou shalt rise up before the [l]hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am Jehovah. And if a [m]stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not oppress him: the stranger that sojourneth among you shall be as the home-born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am Jehovah your God. Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in [n]meteyard, in weight or in measure: just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin shall ye have: I am Jehovah your God, who have brought you out of the land of Egypt. And ye shall keep all my statutes, and all my judgments, and execute them: [o]I am Jehovah.

(XX.)

The seal of penalty.

I. (1-8.) For the offense Godward.

3. [1]And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Also thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Whosoever he be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, that giveth any of his seed to Molech, he shall surely be put to death: the people of the land shall stone him with stones. And I will set my face against the man, and will cut him off from among his people, because he hath given of his seed unto Molech, defiling my sanctuary and profaning my holy name. And if the people of the land do [p]hide at all their eyes from that man, when he giveth of his seed unto Molech, and they put him not to death, then I will set my face against that man, and against his family, and I will cut him off, and all that go whoring after him to commit whoredom with Molech, from among their people. And the soul

j *cf* De. 26. 2.

k Deut. 18. 10-14. 1 Sa. 28. 7.

l Pr. 20. 29. *ctr.* Hos. 7. 9.

m Ex. 22. 21.

n Pr. 20. 10. De. 25. 10, 14. Ezek. 45. 10. Am. 8. 5. Mi. 6. 10. *cf.* Gal. 2. 11-21.

o Ex. 20. 2.

p ch. 5. 1. Deut. 21. 7. Deut. 13. 6-9.

the righteousness it enjoins, if fulfilled, would be like the priest's robe, woven without seam. There was but One who ever wore on earth this beauteous covering.

3. Then in the twentieth chapter we have the penalties by which the law just

that turneth unto familiar spirits and unto wizards, to go whoring after them, I will set my face against that soul, and cut him off from among his people. Sanctify yourselves therefore and be holy: for I am Jehovah your God; and ye shall keep my statutes and do them: I am Jehovah who sanctify you.

2. (9-21.) For the offense toward one's neighbor.

9 Every one that [q]curseth his father or his mother shall surely be put to death: he hath cursed his father or his mother; his blood shall be upon him. And the man that committeth adultery with a man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbor's wife, the [r]adulterer and adulteress shall surely be put to death. And the man that lieth with his father's wife, he hath uncovered his father's nakedness; they shall be surely put to death, both of them; their blood shall be upon them. And the man that lieth with his daughter-in-law,—they shall surely be put to death, both of them: they have wrought confusion; their blood shall be upon them. And the man that lieth with a male as one lieth with a woman, they have wrought abomination, both of them; they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them. And if a man take a woman and her mother, it is wickedness: they shall be burned in the fire, both he and they, that there be no wickedness among you. And the man that lieth with a beast shall surely be put to death; and ye shall slay the beast. And if a woman approach unto any beast, to lie down to it, thou shalt slay the woman and the beast: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them. And if a man shall take his sister, his father's daughter or his mother's daughter, and see her nakedness and she see his nakedness, it is shame, and they shall be cut off in the sight of the children of their people: he hath uncovered his sister's nakedness; he shall bear his iniquity. And if a man lie with a woman having her infirmity, and uncover her nakedness, he hath made bare her fountain, and she hath uncovered the fountain of her blood, and both of them shall be cut off from among their people. And the nakedness of thy mother's sister, and of thy father's sister shalt thou not uncover; for he hath made bare his near kin: they shall bear their iniquity. And the man that lieth with his aunt hath uncovered his uncle's nakedness: they shall bear their sin; they shall die childless. And if a man take his brother's wife, it is an unclean thing, he hath uncovered his brother's nakedness: they shall be childless.

q Pr. 20. 20. Mk. 7. 10.

r De. 22. 22. Jno. 8. 5.

3. (22-27.) Israel separated to God.

22 And ye shall keep all my statutes and all my judgments, and do them, that the land spue you not out, whither I am bringing you, to dwell therein. And ye

given is sealed, or *actualized as law*, for a law without penalty is none at all. The three divisions of the chapter are plain enough, but I cannot go more deeply into them.

shall not walk in the statutes of the nations which I am casting out from before you: for they have done all these things, and I abhorred them. And I have said unto you that ye shall possess their land, and I will give it to you to possess it, a land flowing with milk and honey: I am Jehovah your God, who have [s]separated you from the peoples. And ye shall separate between the clean beast and the unclean, and between the unclean bird and the clean; and ye shall not make yourselves abominable with beast or bird, or any thing that creepeth upon the ground, which I have separated for you as unclean: but ye shall be [t]holy unto me; for I Jehovah am holy, and I separate you from the peoples to be mine. A man also or a woman that hath a [u]familiar spirit, or that is a wizard,—they shall be surely put to death: they shall stone them with stones; their blood shall be upon them.

[s] Ex. 33. 16. Num. 23. 9. cf. Jno. 17. 19.

[t] cf. 1 Pet. 1. 16. Rom. 12. 1. Eph. 1. 4.

[u] Ex. 22. 18. 1 Sa. 28. 9. Gal. 5. 20. Acts 19. 19.

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. xxi., xxii.)

Precepts for the priesthood.

(XXI. 1-15.)

Conformity with position.

1. (vv. 1-6.) Individually.

1 [1]AND Jehovah said unto Moses, Speak unto the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say unto them, There shall none make himself [v]unclean for a [dead] person among his people, except for his kin that is near unto him, for his mother and for his father, and for his son and for his daughter, and for his brother, and for his sister a virgin that is near unto him, who hath had no husband, for her he may be unclean. He shall not make himself unclean, [being] a chief among his people, to profane himself. They shall not make any baldness upon their head, nor shave off the corner of their beard, nor make any cuttings in their flesh. They shall be holy unto their God, and shall not profane the name of their God, for they present Jehovah's offerings made by fire, the bread of their God; and they shall be holy.

[v] ch. 10. 6. Ezek. 44. 25. Is. 52. 11. 2 Chr. 30. 3.

2. (7-9.) In his relations.

2 [7]They shall not take a wife that is a [w]harlot or violated; neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband: for he is holy unto his God. And thou shalt sanctify him, for he presenteth the bread of thy God: he shall be holy unto thee; for I Jehovah am holy, who sanctify you. And the daughter of a priest, if she profane herself to be a harlot, she profaneth her father: she shall be burned in the fire.

[w] 2 Cor. 11. 2. *cfr.* Hos. 1. 2. Ezek. 16. 30-34.

SUBD. 2.

WE come now to the laws for the priesthood, in which we find a higher separation naturally required of those who draw near to God. It is well to remember here that all Christians are priests, and that as brought nearer to Him than Judaism could ever accomplish, indeed only now really nigh, the holiness required from us must have a character corresponding. In Israel much was merely typical and outward. We have to do with the realities of what was with them typical.

3. (10-15) The anointed priest.

3 And the [x] chief priest among his brethren upon whose head the anointing-oil was poured, and who is consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor rend his garments. Neither shall he come near any dead person, nor defile himself for his father or for his mother; nor shall he go out of the sanctuary nor profane the sanctuary of his God, for the consecration of the anointing-oil of his God is upon him: I am Jehovah. And he shall take a wife in her virginity: a widow or a divorced woman, or violated, [or] a harlot, these shall he not take, but he shall take to wife a virgin of his own people. And he shall not profane his seed among his people, for I am Jehovah who sanctify him.

[x] Jno. 17.19.

(vv. 16-24.)

Superfluity or defect.

2. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whoever he be of thy seed in their generations that hath a [y] defect, he shall not draw near to offer the bread of his God; for no man that hath a defect shall approach: a blind man, or lame, or mutilated, or that hath excess, or a man that hath a broken foot or a broken hand, or a hump-back, or a dwarf, or that hath blemish in his eye, or that hath the itch, or scab, or is overspread with tetter. No man of the seed of Aaron the priest that hath a defect shall approach to present Jehovah's offerings by fire: he shall not approach to present the bread of his God. He shall eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy and the holy things; only he shall not come in unto the vail, nor approach the altar, because he hath a defect,—that he profane not my sanctuaries: for I Jehovah sanctify them. And Moses spake unto Aaron, and his sons, and all the children of Israel.

[y] Heb. 7.26. 1 Pet. 2. 9.

(XXII. 1-16.)

Against the profanation of consecrated things.

3. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and to his sons, that they [z] separate themselves

[z] *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 28.

The five sections here are marked out for us each as a separate word of Jehovah. The first of these insists upon abstinence from defilement for the dead, except in the case of the nearest relatives, on the part of men who present Jehovah's offerings; also upon all impurity being refused in his relations, those especially which, being most important, are nevertheless most loosely, and at the dictates of mere passion, entered into. We have then the high-priest, specially characterized as one anointed with the holy oil, marked out for a still loftier separation.

2. The second section relates to personal blemish in the priest which would unfit for public ministration, though not for partaking of the holy things. Here we are reminded of the sacrificial victims, of which the same unblemished perfectness was required. A blemished priest would not suit an unblemished offering, for both the one and the other speak of Christ. If we approach to God, it can only be as in the perfectness of Christ before Him. On the other hand, lame legs do not hinder a Mephibosheth from being entertained at the king's table. So the poor lame priest "shall eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy and the holy things." Royal grace!

from the holy things of the children of Israel, and that they profane not my holy name [in those things] which they sanctify to me: I am Jehovah. Say unto them, Whosoever he be of all your seed among your generations, that draweth near unto the holy things which the children of Israel sanctify unto Jehovah, having his uncleanness upon him, that soul shall be cut off from before me: I am Jehovah. What man soever of the seed of Aaron is a leper, or hath an issue, he shall not eat of the holy things until he be clean. And whosoever toucheth any thing that is unclean by the dead, or a man whose seed goeth from him, or whosoever toucheth any creeping thing whereby he may be made unclean, or a man by whom he may become unclean, whatever be his uncleanness,—the soul that hath touched any such shall be unclean until the even, and shall not eat of the holy things, except he bathe his flesh in water; and when the [a]sun is down he shall be clean, and afterward shall eat of the holy things, because it is his food. Of a carcass and what is torn, he shall not eat, to defile himself with it: I am Jehovah. And they shall keep my charge, lest they bear sin for it and die by it, because they profane it: I am Jehovah who sanctify them. No [b]stranger shall eat of the holy thing: the sojourner with the priest, and the hired servant, shall not eat of the holy thing. But if the priest buy any soul for money, *he* shall eat of it, and he that is born in his house, they shall eat of his food. And the daughter of a priest who is married to a stranger, she shall not eat of the offering of the holy things. And if the priest's daughter be a widow, or divorced, and have no seed, and return to her father's house, as in her youth, she shall eat of her father's bread; but no stranger shall eat thereof. And if a man eat of the holy thing through inadvertence, then he shall add the fifth part to it, and give it unto the priest with the holy thing. And they shall not profane the holy things of the children of Israel which they offer to Jehovah, and cause them to bear the iniquity of trespass by their eating their holy things: for I Jehovah sanctify them.

[a] *cf.* Eph. 4. 26.

[b] Ex. 12. 43. Ezek. 44. 7.

(pp. 17-25.)

Blemished sacrifices.

4. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and his sons and all the children of Israel, and say unto them, Whosoever he be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers in Israel, that presenteth his offering

3. The third section legislates against the profanation of consecrated things, which was to profane God's holy name. Defilement of the priest cut him off from partaking of them while the defilement lasted. Nor could any stranger, not being of the priestly house, partake, nor even the daughter of the priest, married and living out of the priestly household.

4. The fourth section takes up the subject of blemishes in the sacrifice, and is addressed through Moses to all Israel. It concerned them all. All kinds of im-

for any of his vows or for any of his free-will offerings which they offer unto Jehovah for burnt-offering,—[ye shall offer] for your acceptance a male without [c]blemish, of the oxen, of the sheep, or of the goats. Nothing that hath defect shall ye offer, for it shall not be acceptable for you. And whosoever shall present a sacrifice of peace-offering unto Jehovah for the fulfillment of a vow, or for a free-will offering, whether of oxen or sheep, it shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect therein: blind, or broken, or maimed, or ulcerous, or with itch, or scabbed, these shall ye not present to Jehovah, nor make of them an offering by fire unto Jehovah, upon the altar. An ox or a sheep that hath excess or lack thou mayest offer for a [d]free-will offering; but for a vow it shall not be accepted. That which is bruised or crushed or broken or cut ye shall not offer unto Jehovah, and in your land ye shall not do [such things.] Nor from the hand of the stranger shall ye present the bread of your God of any of these. For that which is corrupt is in them, defect is in them: they shall not be accepted for you.

c Mal. 1. 8.

d ch. 7. 16.

(28-33.)

Conditions of acceptable offering.

5. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, When an ox or a sheep or a goat is brought forth, it shall be seven days under its dam; but from the [e]eighth day and thenceforth it shall be accepted for an offering made by fire unto Jehovah. And whether cow or female of the flock, ye shall not kill it and its young in one day. And when ye offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving unto Jehovah, ye shall offer it for your acceptance. On the same day shall it be eaten; ye shall leave none of it until the morning: I am Jehovah. And ye shall keep my covenants and do them: I am Jehovah. Nor shall ye profane my holy name; but I will be sanctified among the children of Israel: I am Jehovah who sanctify you, who have brought you out of the land of Egypt [f]to be your God: I am Jehovah.

e *cf.* Gen. 17. 12, etc.

f 2 Cor. 6. 8.

perfection are forbidden in the sacrifices, except only in a free-will offering, where, because such, something in defect or excess might be permitted. Nor was mutilation of God's creatures to be practised in the land.

5. Lastly, when all this had been complied with, there were still conditions of acceptable offering, which are here detailed. As to age, the law of circumcision is the law of offering, and for a similar reason: in its first seven days it was unclean, the stamp of the old creation was upon it—a thing of which, strikingly, nothing is said with regard to the dove or pigeon, the bird of heaven. Here the old creation is set aside; in the second commandment not to kill the young and its mother on the same day, the natural links are shown as recognized however; while in the third, the repetition of the commandment to leave none of the thank-offering to the second day, we are bidden to beware of the entrance of mere nature into the things of God.

Jehovah's set times,—holy convocations.

DIVISION 5. (Chap. xxiii.-xxvii.)

Man with God: the way and the end.

(XXIII.)

1. (vv.1-3.) The Sabbath, as the primary, governing thought.

1,[1] AND Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, The [2]set times of Jehovah which ye shall proclaim as holy convocations,—these are my set times. Six

[2] *ctr.* Is.1.14. Hos. 2. 11. Jno. 2. 13. Ex. 32. 5.

DIV. 5.

THE last division is, according to its numerical place, the summary of God's ways with men: in which also how His heart is with them is brought out fully. The way—devious as it may seem—leads to the end assured from the beginning: for it is the Almighty God with whom (often unknowing) man His creature is.

The contents of this division are of very various character, and the relation of the different parts to one another will be better seen as we take them up in detail, than from any outline that could be given here.

1. The first subdivision gives us Jehovah's "set times"—not "feasts," for they are not all this: God's ways conduct us through shadow as well as sunshine, and necessarily, not arbitrarily. They *end* in the perfect day, to which in His wisdom they have been ever leading on.

"*Set* times" are times of His appointment, to whom as the Eternal all times belong, and who is able to adjust them to His purpose. They speak of almighty power, and determinate counsel vindicating thus their place here. But they are "holy convocations" also, gathering times, when the voice of God arouses and assembles His people. His voice unites those who listen to it in obedience, and calls also to Himself.

They are as "set times" annual, together the sum of the sacred year, (the cycle of the divine dealings in this way,) the Sabbath, however, having an exceptional place, as occurring with much greater frequency, and on this account also, as well as for much deeper reasons, being put by itself at the beginning of the series, and in some sense apart.

Of these set times there are seven, the passover and the feast of unleavened bread being taken together, as in fact they were connected, as we know, in the most intimate way. This sevenfold division has, it will be seen also, the clearest numerical justification. The number seven tells of the completeness of these actings of grace, the sheaf of first-fruits as the type of the resurrection of Christ filling plainly the third place. The series divides also like other septenary ones, into four and three, the last three coming all near together in the seventh month, and applying to special dealings of God with Israel in the last days; while between the preceding ones and these there is a distinct pause, the former clearly speaking of Christ's work and resurrection, and of pentecostal blessing, when the Church began. Thus the $4 + 3$ is distinctly marked.

While this is true, there is another division which is indicated by the recurrence of the words, "And Jehovah spake unto Moses," the significance of which we have often seen. This, however, in no wise conflicts with the former division, but only parts the first four feasts into two and two, and thus connects respectively the Sabbath with the passover and unleavened bread, and the first-fruit sheaf with Pentecost. All these connections have their importance, and we shall miss something of the significance of the type if we overlook any of them; yet the septenary character is after all that which predominates, and gives the fundamental structure of the chapter, and this we might expect in God's set times. How beautifully does all this numerical division preach to us of the perfect command He has over all man's history, and of the spiritual order which shines through that, which at first sight seems to be but thorough disorder! And how good a lesson, this! The ragged end of God's creation lies always beyond

days shall work be done, but on the [h]seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, a holy convocation; there shall no work be done: it shall be the Sabbath of Jehovah in all your dwellings.

2. (4-8.) Redemption by the cross.

[2] These are Jehovah's set times—holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. In the [i]first month, the fourteenth day of the month, between the two evenings, is the passover to Jehovah. And on the fifteenth day of this month is the feast of [j]unleavened bread unto Jehovah: seven days ye shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day ye shall have a holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work. And ye shall present an offering by fire unto Jehovah seven days; on the seventh day shall be a holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work.

[h] Ex. 20. 8-11. Col. 2. 16. Heb. 4. 3. cf. Is. 56. 4, 6. Ezek. 20. 12. Ezek. 46. 1, etc.

[i] Ex. 12. 2. Nu. 28. 16. Deut. 16. 1. Josh 5. 10. 2 Chr. 30. 1. 2 Ki. 23. 21, 22. Ezra 6. 19. 1 Cor. 5. 7, 8. Ezek. 45. 21.

[j] Ex. 12. 18-20.

the microscope; and where His creation is, though the creature may be revolted, still His kingdom is. Blessed be God!

(i.) We begin with the Sabbath, which occupies, as has been said, a unique place among these times of Jehovah. We have seen at the beginning of Genesis what it prefigures: it is the rest of God into which we yet shall enter, as the apostle says: "there remaineth a rest"—a "Sabbatism," or Sabbath-keeping—"to the people of God." (Heb. iv. 9.) Though coming at the end of all (for everything else shall end but this shall not,) it is that which, to speak humanly, is first with God; and put first here as that which governs as final cause all the rest. All else are way-stages, anticipations of the final goal, into which they introduce successively the features which are thenceforth to abide with us in hope, and at last greet us as familiar things. Heaven is filled up thus for us: the rest becomes such as befits God, as satisfies His nature, therefore reflects Himself.

The frequency of the observance of the Sabbath, when compared with other feasts of the law, is proof of how God would remind His people of the truth which it enshrines; while the prophets characteristically insist upon its importance. It connects the rest of God with His delight in His work, through the disturbance which sin has caused only lifted to a higher sphere, and deepened into an infinite meaning. It is a "rest in His love," but a holy love, which has moreover displayed itself in sacrifice, in deed as well as word, that grace might reign through righteousness: and this is why the passover and the unleavened feast are linked, as we have seen them to be, with the Sabbath. Here too the labor which sin has brought in, (not *activity*, which is but the vigor of healthful life, but the enforced necessity of toil,) is to be set aside, as when it was first given to Israel we have seen the manna, which provided bread for them without labor, to have preceded it.

The Sabbath is thus the end seen from the beginning: as enjoyed by faith that wherewith we begin. God Himself taking His place in it for the soul as the One who controls the whole course of human history to bring His people to the appointed end, in which He is glorified and they are blessed forever.

(ii.) Now follow in the closest connection, but in an order which is deeply instructive, the passover and the feast of unleavened bread. The separation between them is singular, and must be for a purpose; for the actual eating of unleavened bread began with the passover itself, and so it is stated in Ex. xii. 18, "in the fourteenth day of the month at even,"—the passover-day. Here the passover comes prior to the feast: the lamb is assigned the first place, and even the feeding on the lamb; though in fact the leaven and the lamb cannot be permitted together on the same table.

All holiness is grounded on redemption, and the knowledge of it in the soul.

3. (9-14.) The resurrection of Christ.

[3] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them, When ye come into the land that I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then shall ye bring a sheaf of the [k] first-fruits of your harvest unto the priest. And he shall wave the sheaf before Jehovah, to be accepted for you; on the [l] morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. And ye shall offer in the day that ye wave the sheaf, a [m] he-lamb without blemish, a yearling, for a burnt-offering unto Jehovah. And the meal-offering thereof shall be [n] two tenths [of an ephah] of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering by fire unto Jehovah for a sweet savor; and the drink-offering thereof of wine shall be the [o] fourth part of a hin. And ye shall eat no bread, nor parched corn, nor fresh ears, until this self-same day, until ye have brought the offering of your God: it is an everlasting statute throughout your generations, in all your dwellings.

k *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 20, 23.

l *cf.* Matt. 28. 1-10.

m Nu. 28. 4, 5.

n *cfr.* Nu. 28. 5.

o Nu. 28. 7.

4. (15-22.) Pentecost: the Church on earth.

[4] And ye shall reckon unto you, from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that ye bring the sheaf of the wave-offering, [p] seven Sabbaths; they shall be complete; even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall ye reckon fifty days; then ye shall present a new meal-offering unto Jehovah. Ye shall bring out of your

p *cf.* Acts 2.

Christ's precious work is first and alone for salvation, and holiness is the fruit of it in the saved soul. Both are needed absolutely for that rest of God with which they are connected, but the importance of the order is what is insisted on in this character,—faith in Another that which, drawing the soul to God, draws it out of sin. There is no other way. And thus our rest already has God in it, righteous and holy, and for us absolutely, while we wait for the rest of God, not ours simply, but His own.

(iii.) The third section brings us to the land and to the first-fruits of the harvest. The corn of wheat has fallen into the ground and died, and here is the fruit of this, the easily read type of resurrection. "Christ is risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep," says the apostle. The first-fruits imply the harvest which is to follow. "The morrow after the Sabbath" is, of course, the first day of the week, and then it is waved before Jehovah, while a ram of the first year with its meal-offering and drink-offering is offered for a sweet savor. It is in all the value of what He is, and what His work is, that Christ was raised from the dead, and in this one sheaf is the acceptance of the whole harvest: He was "raised again for our justification."

(iv.) This is in the land, not in the wilderness: resurrection is necessarily connected with the land, our entrance, as typified in Joshua, into the heavenly places. It is as heavenly we enjoy this portion: accepted in Christ we belong to another sphere than that of earth; and that is what is brought out in the next feast, the fiftieth day after.—Pentecost. Seven Sabbaths are now complete, perfect rest as to all the past is found, and again the first day is come, the beginning of a new condition, the unvailing of a new creation,—a *fiftieth* day, (5 x 10,) in which man begins with Almighty God indeed, the "new meal-offering" speaking of a new measure of capacity in devotedness to the Lord. Two wave-loaves of first-fruits show us again what the "corn of wheat" dying has produced: it is the Church, although not in its unity as the body of Christ, but *two* loaves, implying, perhaps, the fellowship of Christ's people, a "fellowship with the Father and the Son."

dwelling two loaves as a wave-offering, of two tenths of fine flour shall they be; they shall be baken with [q]leaven, first-fruits unto Jehovah. And ye shall present with the bread [r]seven yearling he-lambs, without blemish, and one young [s]bullock, and two rams: they shall be a burnt-offering to Jehovah, with their meal-offering, and their drink-offerings,—an offering by fire of a sweet savor unto Jehovah. And ye shall offer one shaggy [t]goat for a sin-offering, and two yearling he-lambs for a sacrifice of peace-offering. And the priest shall wave them with the bread of first-fruits, a wave-offering before Jehovah, with the two lambs: they shall be holy unto Jehovah, for the priest. And ye shall make proclamation on the self-same day; it shall be a holy convocation to you,—ye shall do no servile work: it is an everlasting statute in all your dwellings throughout your generations. And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the [u]corners of thy field, nor shalt thou gather the gleaning of thy harvest; thou shalt leave it for the poor and for the stranger: I am Jehovah your God.

q *ctr.* ch. 2. 11. *cf.* Acts 5. 1-11.

r Nu. 28.26-31. *cf.* Heb.10. 14.

s ch. 1. 5.

t ch. 4. 23.

u De. 24.19. Ru. 2. 2. *cf.* Matt. 24. 14. Matt.25.32. Ro. 10. 12-15. Ps. 22. 27. Ps. 72. 11. Is. 2. 2-4. Is. 25. 7. Jer. 3. 17. Zech. 2. 11. Zech. 8. 22.

It is certain we are in the range of practical life, as the number of the section clearly intimates, no less than the number of the loaves. These do not speak of position, and almost the next words are decisive proof: "they shall be of fine flour," true, and so far like Christ Himself, (for we have had already this type,) but "they shall be *baken with leaven*," and here at once we know we have practical condition, and the condition of fallen men. The consequence is their *position* must be indicated otherwise, and the sin thus found in them met by a sin-offering, a shaggy goat, with two yearling he-lambs for a peace-, and with seven he-lambs, and a bullock, and two rams for a burnt-offering. Perfect acceptance is here very strongly emphasized, but the presence of sin in the accepted ones also, which does not touch their acceptance, God's grace, according to perfect righteousness, putting it away.

Here, then, are Christians, and according to God's ideal of them (for they are a wave-offering to Him.) but as redeemed, yet upon the earth. We find in them the nature of Christ, the fine flour, but sin in them also in the old nature; not indeed *working* (for it is God's ideal) but yet there. That the leaven *may* work, alas, and does, more or less, in all, we have from many scriptures ample assurances. Reckoning ourselves dead to it, it is subdued, not cast out, but yet not marring communion, as the *two* loaves seem beautifully to assure us. How perfect are these combinations of contrasted features; and how great a fullness is there in the type here!

The third and fourth sections are, as already said, united together as one communication from Jehovah, and it is easily seen how really united they are.

At the close of the fourth section we have a word dropped as to the harvest, which seems designed to intimate on the one hand that God's mercy to the Gentiles, which has been shown so fully in the Church, is not exhausted with this, but will shine out in blessing to them at a future day; while on the other hand it will not be the wondrous blessing which is manifested in those who are associated as first-fruits with the risen Christ. Here, when Israel's harvest is being reaped, the corners of the fields are left to the poor and to the stranger. It is in this way in the millennial day the Gentiles will participate in Israel's blessings. And this is plainly how the Old-Testament prophets every-where speak. Yet the least of these blessings are wondrous blessings, and the Lord's

5. (23-25.) Israel's due time.

[5] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the [v]seventh month, on the first of the month, shall ye have a rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. Ye shall do no servile work; and ye shall present an offering by fire unto Jehovah.

[v] Nu.29.1-6. Ps. 81. 3. Joel 2.1,12. Jer. 50. 4. Is. 58. 1.

6. (26-32.) The victory of grace both for and in them.

[6] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Also on the tenth of this seventh month is the [w]day of atonement; it shall be a holy convocation unto you, and ye shall [x]afflict your souls, and present an offering by fire unto Jehovah. And ye shall do no work in that same day, for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement for you before Jehovah your God. For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted on that same day shall be cut off from among his people; and whatsoever soul it be that doeth any work on that same day, that soul will I destroy from among his people. Ye shall do no manner of work: it is an everlasting statute unto your generations in all your dwellings. It shall be unto you a Sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: on the ninth of the month at even, from even to even, ye shall keep your Sabbath.

[w] ch. 16. Nu.29.7-11.

[x] *cf.* Ps. 51. Isa. 53. Jer. 31. 9, 15-19. Lam. chs. 1-5. Ezek. 20. 35-38, 43. Ezek.36.31. Hos. 6. 1-3. Hos. 14. 8. Jonah 2. Mi. 7. 9. Zech.12.10.

mercies to all are tender mercies. Tenderness is manifested in this special mention of the poor and stranger.

But Israel's own blessing has yet to be brought before us, and this notice brings us anticipatively to the end: another indication that with the fourth section one division of these "times" closes. As already said, an interval occurs here which still further separates between the two divisions, Pentecost being in the third, and the rest of the feasts together in the *seventh* month, the significance of which is easily recognized. It is the time of the consummation of blessing for Israel, according to the unchanging purposes of love regarding them.

(v.) The fifth section therefore is a memorial of blowing of trumpets on the first of the seventh month, the day of the *new moon*, that is, when in the due course, according to the divine order, the sun begins to shine on them once more, and they therefore to reflect its light. The number of the section may point to this due time in divine government, and also to its character, as when man in his weakness begins once more to walk before Almighty God—always the due time for blessing. In fact the little thread of silver light, suggestive in its sheen of that atonement through which alone the divine glory shines on man, suggests also the little remnant in Israel, in whom grace manifests itself, before the full national repentance and turning to God of Zech. xii. With a remnant only is this blowing of trumpets for remembrance, to make Israel think upon their ways and turn to Him they have forsaken. Indeed, here begins a note which is yet to waken a dead world: for the world's blessing waits on Israel's restoration. Here, then, restoration and an offering and a holy convocation come fittingly together. As soon as God begins working, faith may rest in assurance that He who has undertaken will go through with it. An unfinished work can be but man's reproach, and never God's.

(vi.) Atonement brings the glory back, but man must be made to know also his need, and to receive it humbly. This will be for the nation when "He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him;" and, when "they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son:" and "in that day shall there be a fountain opened" to them "for sin and for uncleanness." (Comp. Zech.

7. (33-44.) The consummation

[1] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, On the fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be a feast of [y] tabernacles for seven days unto Jehovah. On the first day shall be a holy convocation; no servile work shall ye do. Seven days shall ye present an offering by fire unto Jehovah; on the eighth day shall there be a holy convocation unto you: it is a solemn assembly; ye shall do no servile work.

These are the set times of Jehovah, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to present an offering by fire unto Jehovah, a burnt-offering and a meal-offering, a sacrifice and drink offerings, every thing upon its day; beside the Sabbaths of Jehovah, and beside your gifts, and beside all your vows, and beside all your free-will offerings, which ye give unto Jehovah.

Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye gather in the produce of the land, ye shall keep a feast seven days unto Jehovah: on the first day there shall be rest, and on the eighth day there shall be rest. And ye shall take you on the first day the fruit of goodly trees, branches of [z] palm, and boughs of thick-leaved trees, and [a] willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before Jehovah your God seven days. And ye shall keep it a feast to Jehovah seven days in the year; it shall be an everlasting statute throughout your generations: in the seventh month ye shall keep it. Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that in booths I made the children of Israel to dwell, [b] when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am Jehovah your God. And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the set times of Jehovah.

(XXIV.)

God's witness in contrasted ways of grace and judgment.

2. [1] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Command the children of Israel that they bring unto thee pure [c] olive-oil, beaten, for the light, to cause the lamp to burn continually. Outside the vail of the testimony, in the

[y] Num. 29. 12-38. De. 16. 13. 2 Chr. 8. 13. Ezra 3. 4. Neh. 8. 13-18. Jno. 7. 2, etc. Zech. 14. 16. Ezek. 45. 25. Hos. 12. 9.

[z] Ex. 15. 27. 1 Ki. 6. 29. Ezek. 40. 16. Jno. 12. 13. Ps. 92. 12. Rev. 7. 9. *cf.* Is. 35. Is. 52. 1, 2.

[a] Ps. 137. 2. *cf.* Ps. 110. 7. Is. 40. 1, 2.

[b] Ex. 12. 37.

[c] Ex. 27. 20.

xii.-xiii. 1; Rev. i. 7.) Beautifully all fits here with this day of atonement already entered into, when they have a Sabbath of rest and afflict their souls, and present their offering by fire unto Jehovah. Here indeed is our Joseph's victory over His brethren, the victory of divine grace.

(vii.) All closes, then, with the feast of tabernacles, which begins with the fifteenth day of the month (3 x 5) the due time in government, but of divine manifestation and glory. And the week of joy now passes over to the eighth day, that is, the new age; which is not a week but a "day," yet a day eternal. Here rest is complete, while offerings multiply, and the wilderness is only a memory, not marring, but helping, the constant praise.

With the eighth day the eternal Sabbath with which we began is reached, and the cycle of God's dealings is now complete.

2. The second subdivision comprises two sections which are in striking contrast with one another. We have learned that under this number we may look

1. (vv. 1-9. The perpetuity of grace (in Christianity).

tent of meeting shall Aaron order it from [d]evening to morning before Jehovah continually: it is an everlasting statute throughout your generations: upon the pure lamp-stand shall he order the lamps continually before Jehovah.

[d] *cf.* Gen. 1. 5, etc.

And thou shalt take fine flour and bake [e]twelve pierced cakes thereof; two tenths [of an ephah] shall be in each cake. And thou shalt place them in two rows, six in a row, upon the pure table before Jehovah. And thou shalt put pure [f]frankincense upon [each] row, that it may be for the bread for a memorial, an offering by fire unto Jehovah. Every Sabbath shall he order it before Jehovah continually on the part of the children of Israel,—it is an everlasting covenant. And it shall be Aaron's and his sons', and they shall eat it in a holy place; for it is most holy unto him of Jehovah's offerings made by fire,—an everlasting statute.

[e] Ex. 25. 30.

[f] ch. 2. 1.

for contrasts; and here the lesson before us is the contrast itself, which is yet in the ways of God necessarily a harmony, the twofold witness to Himself, as able to maintain the light and communion of His Spirit through the darkest night that man has known, while surely judging the impenitent transgressor. We are in the fifth division of the book, let us remember, in which God's ways are ever the subject.

(i.) In the first section, evidently, it is the *perpetuity*, as maintained by the priest, of the light and of the show-bread, that is insisted on, and this according to the command of God. His will, supreme, and which cannot lack ability to express itself, is that upon which all depends. Christ, ministering in the heavenly sanctuary, is the One to whom all is committed. In His hands there can be no failure; and blessed it is to know this. We must consider the two parts of this section, however, separately.

And first, the perpetuity of the light. The children of Israel are to furnish the oil by which it is maintained: blessed necessity! the people of God it is through whom the light of the Spirit is to be sustained, for it is through and in man the Spirit works. So the lamp burns from evening to morning before Jehovah continually: nothing is said but of the night, for in the world it is ever night; but there are other features in this picture that will lead us further. The light is in the house of God, and Israel were not that house; the lamp-stand that bears this light is Christ, the first-born from the dead; and Aaron's ministry in the sanctuary points to His present priesthood over the house of God. We are, therefore, typically in Christian times, and we see well that it is not only night in the world, but night in Israel. God, then, has indeed maintained the light while Israel has departed from Him; but He has not only maintained it, He has lifted it up to a higher and a heavenly sphere. Christianity has taken the place of Judaism; and this corresponds with the view given us in the chapter previous, in which the passover, the first-fruits sheaf and Pentecost tell us unmistakably the same thing. The line of truth is different here, but parallel to the former.

The second part speaks of the show-bread. As the light abides so does communion go on; and here the *twelve* loaves have led many to believe that Israel herself is represented. Undoubtedly these twelve loaves speak of the twelve tribes, but fellowship in the sanctuary does not pertain to the nation here but to the priests. To the priests the show-bread belongs, and the priests, as we have again and again seen, represent the people of God, who are *all* priests. Christians are the "holy priesthood" (1 Pet. ii. 5); and the twelve tribes represented in the show-bread may typify Christians also. Actually, the bread as the food of the priests must be Christ, and as the *presence*-bread (or show-bread) Christ gone

2. (10-23.) The breach with Israel.

[2] And the son of a woman of Israel, but who was the son of an [g] Egyptian, had come out into the midst of the children of Israel; and the son of the Israelitess and a man of Israel strove together in the camp: and the son of the woman of Israel blasphemed the Name, and cursed. And they brought him to Moses; (and his mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri of the tribe of [h] Dan;) and they put him in [i] ward, that it might be declared to them at Jehovah's mouth. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Bring forth him that cursed [j] without the camp; and let all that heard him [k] lay their hands upon his head; and let all the assembly [l] stone him. And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Whoso curseth his God shall bear his sin; and he that [m] blasphemeth Jehovah's name shall surely be put to death; all the assembly shall surely stone him: as well the stranger, as the home-born, if he blaspheme the Name, he shall be put to death. He also that [n] smiteth any man mortally shall be surely put to death. And he that smiteth a beast mortally shall recompense it, beast for beast. And he that causeth a blemish to his neighbor, as he hath done, so shall it be done to him, breach for breach, [o] eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he hath caused a blemish to a man, so shall it be done to him again. And he that smiteth a beast

g Gen. 34. 1. Hos. 7. 8.
h *cf.* Gen. 49. 17.
i ch. 13. 4.
j ch. 16. 27. etc.
k *cf.* ch. 16. 21.
l De. 13. 10.
m *cf.* Jno. 10. 32. Acts 7. 59.
n Ex. 21. 12.
o Ex. 21. 24. Matt. 5. 38, 39. *cf.* Ps. 103. 10. Mi. 7. 18.

up to God. We have seen that the table, equally with the ark of the covenant, speaks of Christ also, and glorified, maintaining communion, the loaves resting upon it; and here as we feed upon Him we are called to realize at the same time our identification with Him. It is *presence*-bread, with the incense of His acceptability upon it, and the *twelve* loaves making us to know His representation of His people, their identification with Him before God. Perhaps the "twelve" here, like the twelves of the heavenly city, may intimate that perfect rule of God which in our subjection to it shows the practical outcome of communion, as the joy of eternity—"God all in all."

(ii.) Thus the light and the show-bread, both in the house of God, both ordered by our risen Priest, tell the same tale of Christianity having replaced Judaism upon the earth—for this is upon the earth. Now on the other side what does the judgment of the blasphemer tell? "Israel themselves as a whole have fallen under this dreadful curse. . . . That is, we have the solemn fact that the people, who ought to have been the means of blessing to all others have themselves passed under this curse, and been guilty, in the most painful form, of blaspheming 'the Name.' We know how this has been; we know how they treated Him who is the Word of God and declared the Father, who was and is Jehovah Himself. We know how Israel, yielding to thoughts of the world (as it is said here, the son of an Israelitish woman whose father was an Egyptian) having fallen thoroughly a prey to carnal wisdom as to the Messiah, were guilty of rejecting God in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, and of blaspheming the Name. Accordingly they have fallen under the curse, which would be final but for the grace of God, who knows how to meet the most desperate case. But indeed, as far as regards the mass of the nation, that judgment is definitive. It is the remnant that will become a strong nation in the day that is at hand. On the apostates wrath will come to the uttermost."*

*"Lectures Introductory to the Pentateuch," by W. Kelly.

[mortally] shall recompense it; and he that smiteth a man [mortally] shall be put to death. Ye shall have one judgment, as well for the stranger as for the home-born; for I am Jehovah your God.

And Moses spake unto the children of Israel, that they should bring forth him that had cursed out of the camp, and stone him with stones. And the children of Israel did as Jehovah commanded Moses.

(XXV.)

Restoration.

I. (*vv.* 1-7.) Recognition of Jehovah's sovereignty, Israel's tenure of the land.

3. [1] And Jehovah spake unto Moses in Mount Sinai, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye shall come into the land which I give unto you, the land shall keep a Sabbath unto Jehovah. [p] Six years shalt thou sow thy field, and six years shalt thou prune thy vineyard, and gather its produce; but in the seventh year shall be a Sabbath of rest unto the land, a Sabbath unto Jehovah: thou shalt not sow thy

[p] Ex. 23. 10.

The addition to this of the punishment of him who should slay a man gives another feature of similarity to the case of those who slew the Lord of glory; and the name of Dan points forward to the apostasy of the last days. Thus the rejection of the nation of Israel during the present day of grace to the Gentiles seems plainly indicated, and the two sections of this twenty-fourth chapter are in perfect harmony.

Yet the rejection of Israel is neither complete nor final. There is still as the apostle says, an election of grace; while in the future, their unbelief being repented of, they will again be accepted of the Lord. Of this the next subdivision fully assures us.

3. The Sabbatical year and the jubilee are plainly in connection with one another, and with that septenary series which, whether in days or months or years, continually preached of a rest as to come which should be blessing to the people, holiness to Jehovah. But this for sinners must be found in grace and through redemption, and that is what the jubilee above all witnesses of, in which the land, lost through poverty (and poverty in Israel could only be through sin), was restored to him who had lost it according to the sovereign will of God alone. How this applies to Israel as a nation is quite evident. Just as every individual in all the tribes (save Levi) had birthright title in the land, in this very way, Israel as a whole had title to her land, and if she had not possession of it, it was for sin that she was dispossessed. Her present dispersion, without any room for doubt, means that for the present she is thus disowned of God. On the other hand, as the jubilee unfailingly restored his land to the individual Israelite, so does it speak typically of God's purpose that the land as a whole—and we may add, according to the full extent of the original promise never yet realized by them—will be restored to the nation, and they therefore be restored to the favor of God. Upon a passover, the antitype of the passover was fulfilled, as we well know; upon a pentecost came what we still call Pentecost; so assuredly will come a jubilee yet that shall be in the full meaning "jubilee," and Israel shall return to the undisturbed possession of her heritage from the Lord: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel. And it shall come to pass in that day that the *great trumpet shall be blown*, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mountain at Jerusalem." (Isa. xxvii. 12, 13.)

(1.) The relation of the Sabbatical year to the year of jubilee is in this way. The land was the Lord's, as all land is, but here the Lord asserts His claim to it.

field nor prune thy vineyard; that which springeth up of itself of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, nor gather the grapes of thine undressed vine: It is a year of rest unto the land. And the Sabbath of the land shall be food for you; for thee and for thy bondman, and for thy handmaid, and for thy hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourneth with thee, and for thy cattle and for the beast that are in thy land, all the produce thereof shall be food.

2. (8-55.) Jubilee: the trumpet of recall.

[2] And thou shalt reckon to thee seven Sabbaths of years, seven times seven years; so that the days of the seven Sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty-nine years. Then shalt thou cause the [q]trumpet to sound aloud on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the day of atonement shall ye send forth the trumpet throughout your land. And ye shall sanctify the fiftieth year, and proclaim [r]liberty throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you, and ye shall [s]return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you: ye shall not sow, nor reap that which groweth of itself, nor gather of the undressed vines. For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy unto you: ye shall eat the produce of it out of the field. In this year of the jubilee shall ye return every man unto his possession.

q ch. 16. 29. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19.

r *cf.* Luke 4. 18, 19. Gal. 5. 1. Ezek. 46. 17.

s *cf.* Gen. 17. 8. Neh. 11. 3. Ro. 11. 29. Is. 14. 1, 2. Jer 32. 7-15. Jer. 33. 10, 11. Ezek. 36. 8-14. Ezek. 47. 13. etc. Hos. 2. 14-23. Joel 2. 18-27.

In the yielding up the right of property every seventh year, the Israelite owned from whom he held it. For that year he was not proprietor the harvest belonged to any one as much as to him, and it was expressly as a Sabbath to Jehovah that this was appointed. That year Jehovah entertained all freely with that which sprang up under His hand apart from human cultivation. It was upon this recognition of the divine lordship Israel's tenure of it all depended. For the violation of this command the land was to enjoy its Sabbaths that had been wrested from it, lying vacant while the people were cast forth (chap. xxvi. 35). And this clearly gives meaning to the jubilee-restoration. Moreover in His parable of the husbandmen, the Lord expressly connects their rejection of Himself with the rejection of Jehovah's rights over the vineyard which He had let out to them. Here the idea conveyed in the Sabbatical year is extended and developed (Matt. xxi. 33-41). The prophets had been His servants sent to receive His fruits: "Afterward He sent unto them His Son, saying, They will reverence My Son. But when the husbandmen saw the Son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill Him, and let us seize on His inheritance." Hence comes the righteous sentence upon them.

But how blessed a foretaste of paradise restored, this whole year of enjoyment without toil, and community of blessing which banished poverty from the land! Though it be but a moment's glimpse of what is in His heart, how good to realize, such is our God! But we know Him how much better! and in this Son of His love, whom man's unbelieving greed rejected.

(ii.) The jubilee is the fiftieth year, following the seventh Sabbatical one, as Pentecost, the fiftieth *day*, followed the seventh Sabbatical day from the sheaf of resurrection. It is the Jewish Pentecost, as ours is the Christian. The effort that has been made to show it to be the forty-ninth year, or the seventh Sabbatical year itself, would, if successful, rob the type of much of its significance. Pentecost is the day after the Sabbath,—an eighth day, first of a new week, a

And if ye sell aught unto your neighbor or buy of your neighbor's hand, ye shall not oppress each his brother: [t]according to the number of years after the jubilee shalt thou buy of thy neighbor, according to the number of the years of produce shall he sell unto thee. According to the greater number of years shalt thou increase the price thereof, and according to the fewness of years shalt thou diminish its price, for the number of the crops doth he sell unto thee. Ye shall not therefore oppress one another, but thou shalt fear thy God; for I am Jehovah your God. And ye shall do my statutes and observe my judgments and practice them, and ye shall dwell safely in the land; and the land shall yield its fruit, so that ye shall eat your fill, and ye shall dwell safely in it. And if ye say, [u]What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we are not to sow nor gather in our produce: then I will command my blessing on you in the sixth year, and it shall produce [enough] for three years; and ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat of the old fruit until the ninth year,—until its produce come in, ye shall eat of the old. [v]And the land shall not be sold to alienate it; for the land is mine: for ye are strangers and sojourners with me; and in all the land of your possession ye shall grant a redemption for the land.

[w]If thy brother have become poor and sold some of his possession, and his near of kin come as his redeemer, then he may redeem that which his brother sold. And if the man have no redeemer, and his own hand have acquired and found sufficiency for its redemption, then let him count the years since the sale of it, and restore the overplus unto the man to whom he had sold it, and return unto his possession. But if his hand have not found sufficient to restore it to him, then that which was sold shall remain in the hand of him that bought it until the year of jubilee, and it shall go out in the jubilee, and he shall return to his possession.

And if a man sell a dwelling-house in a [x]walled city, then he may redeem it within a full year after it was sold; within a limited time may he redeem it. And if it be not redeemed within the space of a full year, then the house that is in the walled city shall be made sure in alienation to the buyer of it throughout his generations: it shall not go out in the jubilee. But the

t *cf.* 1 Cor. 7. 29. Heb. 10. 37.

u *cf.* Matt. 6. 31. Ex. 34. 24. 1 Tim. 6. 9. Heb. 13. 5.

v 2 Sam. 9. 7. 1 Kl. 21. 3. Pr. 22. 28. Is. 5. 8.

w Ruth 4. 1.

x *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 10-15.

type of new *creation* blessing. This Pentecost of years is similarly an eighth year, and the type of new *covenant* mercies. It is in the grace of the new covenant, the sweet expression of the "I will's" of God, that the nation can and will be restored; and thus it is, as the *eighth day* of the feast of tabernacles has assured us, that the blessing runs on without break from time into eternity.

And then this *fiftieth* year, how beautiful an overflow of the Sabbatic is it in its meaning (5 x 10), man with Almighty God, and *capacity* in grace to walk before Him!

houses of villages that have no wall round about them shall be reckoned as the fields of the country: they may be redeemed and they shall go out in the jubilee. But as to the cities of the [y] Levites, the houses of the cities of their possession, the Levites may redeem at any time. And if any one purchase of the Levites, then the house that was sold in the city of his possession shall go out in the jubilee; for the houses of the cities of the Levites are their possession among the children of Israel. And the field of the suburbs of their cities shall not be sold; for it is their perpetual possession.

[y] Josh. 21. 8-42.

And if thy brother be grown poor, and his hand fail with thee, then thou shalt strengthen him, [as] the stranger and sojourner, that he may live with thee. Take thou of him no [z] usury nor increase, but fear thy God: that thy brother may live with thee. Thy money shalt thou not lend him upon usury, nor give him thy food for increase. I am Jehovah your God, who have brought you out of the land of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan,—to be your God. And if thy brother beside thee be grown poor, and sell himself unto thee, thou shalt not make him serve as a bond-servant: as a hired servant, as a sojourner, shall he be with thee; he shall serve with thee till the year of jubilee, and then shall he depart from thee, he and his children with him, and shall return to his own family, and to the possession of his fathers shall he return. For they are my servants, whom I have brought forth out of the land of Egypt: they shall not be sold as bondmen. Thou shalt not rule over him with rigor, but shalt fear thy God. And as for thy bondmen and bondmaids that thou shalt have, of the nations that are round about you, of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids. Moreover of those who dwell as sojourners with you, of these may ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they beget in your land, and they shall be your possession; and ye shall make them an inheritance for your children after you, to hold for a possession; of them shall ye take your bondmen forever, but as for your brethren the children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another with [a] rigor.

[z] Neh. 5. 2. Ps. 15. 5.

[a] *ctr.* Ex. 1. 14. *cf.* 1 Pet. 5. 3. Eph. 6. 9. Philem. 15, 16.

On the day of atonement that trumpet of jubilee sounds, after the scape-goat has carried away the people's sins where they are never more found; and again, how beautifully its birthday shows its gracious character! Now the whole year is sanctified, and as such liberty is proclaimed to all; and still Jehovah entertains, without stint for any one, or restriction to the abundance, all the inhabitants of the land: spontaneously the fruits grow; there is no curse any where. "In the year of this jubilee shall ye return every man unto his possession."

Meanwhile, before it came, the jubilee regulated the value of all possessions of this sort that were not secured by *birthright* to the possessor. For so long only the purchaser possessed these, and much was he wronged who bought such things at a high price when the jubilee was near! Jubilee was after the high-priest

[b] And if a sojourner or stranger be grown rich with thee, and thy brother beside him be grown poor, and sell himself unto the stranger or sojourner by thee, or to one sprung from the stranger's family: after that he is sold he may be redeemed; one of his brethren may redeem him: either his uncle or his uncle's son may redeem him, or any that is near of kin unto him of his family may redeem him, or if he be able he may redeem himself. And he shall reckon with him that bought him from the year that he sold himself to him to the year of jubilee; and the price of his sale shall be according to the number of years, according to the days of a hired servant shall it be with him. And if there be yet many years, accordingly shall he restore the price of his redemption out of the money that he was bought for. And if there remain but few years unto the year of jubilee, then shall he reckon with him: according to his years shall he give back the price of his redemption. As a servant hired year by year shall he be with him: he shall not rule over him with rigor in thy sight. And if he be not in this way redeemed, then he shall go out in the year of jubilee, he and his children with him. For unto me are the children of Israel servants: my servants are they whom I have brought forth out of the land of Egypt: I am Jehovah your God.

[b] *cf.* Ju. 2. 14. 2 Ki. 17. 17. Is. 52. 3. 1 Cor. 7. 23. Is. 54. 5, with Ruth 2. 20. Heb. 2. 11.

(XXVI.)

Israel under test.

1. (vv. 1-13.) The blessings of obedience.

4. [1] Ye shall make you no idols, nor shall ye rear you up a graven image, or a pillar, nor shall ye set up any figured stone on your land, to bow down to it: for I am Jehovah your God. Ye shall keep my Sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am Jehovah.

If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my command-

appeared again out of the sanctuary, and is there nothing parallel for us? no buying too high things that (however secure our birthright possessions) are certain to pass when Christ our Lord appears?

Thus we see that God's principle as to the land is, that "the land cannot be alienated:" and why? for it is His, and He is gracious. True of Israel's land, so that they shall certainly return to it; true of our heavenly inheritance. We are "begotten again to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Pet. i. 3-5.) Israel for the land, and the land for Israel! is it not even now a fact evident? And just so the saint now for heaven, and heaven for the saint. Lord, keep us mindful of our jubilee.—Thy coming for us!

4. We have in the fourth subdivision Israel in plain words put under test. Blessing and curse are set before them, with a promise of restoration conditional upon repentance, even after their dispersion in their enemies' land. These three things plainly give us the three sections of the chapter. The perpetuity of the covenant with their fathers is affirmed at the end.

(i.) First, the blessing promised to obedience: abundance, peace, victory in conflict, God's tabernacle among them, His who has broken the bond of their yoke, and delivered them from other service.

ments and do them, then I will give you [c]rains in their season, and the land shall give its produce, and the tree of the field shall give its fruit. And your [d]threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing-time; and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. And I will give [e]peace in the land; and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid. And I will cause evil [f]beasts to cease out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land. And ye shall [g]chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you to the sword. And five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you put ten thousand to flight; and your enemies shall fall before you to the sword. And I will regard you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you. [h]And ye shall eat old store long kept, and clear out the old from before the new. And I will set my [i]tabernacle among you, and my soul shall not abhor you; but I will walk among you, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people. I am Jehovah your God, who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt from being bondmen to them, and have broken the bars of your yoke, and made you walk upright.

c Deut. 11. 14. Joel 2. 23. Hos. 6. 3. *cfr.* Jer. 5. 3. Am. 4. 7 Zech. 10. 1.

d Am. 9. 13.

e Ju. 3. 30, etc. Is. 48. 18. Ps. 72. 7. Hag. 2. 9. *cf.* Jas. 4. 1.

f Ps. 80. 13. Is. 11. 6. *cfr.* Ezek. 5. 17.

g Deut. 32. 29, 30.

h Mt. 13. 52.

i *cf.* ch. 16. 16. Ezek. 43. 35. Am. 9. 11.

2. (14–39.) The curse for the broken covenant.

[2] But if ye will [j]not hearken to me, nor do all these commandments, and if ye despise my statutes, and your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye do not all my commandments, breaking my covenant: I also will do this unto you,—I will appoint over you terror, consumption, and fever, causing the eyes to fail and the soul to pine away; and ye shall [k]sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be [l]smitten before your enemies, and they that hate you shall have dominion over you; and ye shall [m]flee when none pursueth you.

j Deut. 28. 15.

k Ju. 6. 4. Hag. 1. 6. Mi. 6. 15.

l Ju. 2. 14. 1 Sam. 4. 3, 10.

m Pr. 28. 1.

And if for these things yet ye hearken not to me, then I will increase your chastisement sevenfold for your sins. And I will break down the pride of your strength, and make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass; and your strength shall be spent in vain, for your land shall not give her produce, and the tree of the land shall not give its fruit.

And if ye walk contrary to me, and hearken not to me, I will increase your plague sevenfold according to your sins. And I will send the [n]beasts of the field among you, which shall make you childless and cut off your cattle, and make you few in number, and your [o]ways shall be desolate.

n 2 Kl. 2. 23–25.

o Ju. 5. 6. Lam. 1. 4. Is. 33. 8. *cfr.* Is. 35. 8.

And if by these things ye will not be corrected of me,

(ii.) Then the effect of the broken covenant detailed at length: graduated judgments, ever increasing as they continue unrepentant, ending in total dispersion, and consumption in their enemies' land.

but will walk contrary to me, then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will smite you, I myself, sevenfold for your sins. And I will bring on you a sword that shall avenge with the vengeance of the covenant; and when ye are gathered together to your cities, I will send [p]pestilence among you; and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy. When I break your [q]staff of bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and shall return you your bread by weight: and ye shall eat, but not be satisfied.

[p] 2 Sam. 21. 1. Jer. 21. 6. Ezek. 6.11. Am. 4. 10. Luke21.11.

[q] 2 Sa. 21. 1. 1 Kl. 18. 2. Jer. 11. 22.

And if for all this ye hearken not to me, but walk contrary to me, then I will walk contrary unto you in anger, and will chastise you, I myself, sevenfold for your sins. And ye shall [r]eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters ye shall eat. And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your sun-pillars, and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols; and my soul shall abhor you. And I will lay waste your cities, and desolate your sanctuaries, and will not smell the savor of your sweet odours. And I will bring the land to desolation, that your enemies that dwell therein shall be [s]astonished at it; and yourselves will I scatter among the nations, and draw out the sword after you; and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. Then shall the land enjoy her [t]Sabbaths, all the days of her desolation, when ye are in your enemies' land: then shall the land rest and enjoy its Sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it shall rest, whereas in your Sabbaths it did not rest, when ye dwelt upon it. And as to those that remain of you, I will send on them faintness of heart in their enemies' lands, that the sound of a driven leaf shall chase them, and they shall flee as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall, when none pursueth. And they shall stumble one over another, as before a sword, when none pursueth; and ye shall have no power to stand before your enemies. And ye shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall devour you. And they that remain of you shall waste away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; and also in their fathers' iniquities shall they waste away with them.

[r] Deut. 28. 53, 54. 2 Kl. 6. 28. Lam. 4. 10. *cf.* Gal. 5. 15.

[s] 1 Kl. 9. 8. Jer. 19. 8. Jer. 52. etc.

[t] 2 Chr. 36. 21. Jer. 25. 9-12.

3. (40-46.) Restoration.

[3] If they [u]confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, in their faithlessness wherein they were faithless unto me, and walked also contrary to me, so that I walked contrary unto them, and brought them into the land of their enemies,—if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept the punishment of their iniquity, then I will remember my

[u] 1 Kl. 8. 33. Neh. 9. Dan. 9.

(iii.) Then on their confession and humbling themselves before God, He will remember His covenant with their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and will remember the land. Utterly destroyed they never shall be, for their God is that Jehovah who brought them out of the land of Egypt, to be their God.

covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and I will remember also my covenant with Abraham, and will remember the land. For the land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy its Sabbaths, when it is in desolation without them; and they shall accept the punishment of their iniquity, because, even because, they despised my judgments, and because their soul abhorred my statutes. And yet, for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them nor abhor them, to make an end of them [v]utterly, to break my covenant with them; for I am Jehovah their God. But I will remember as to them the [w]covenant with their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt before the eyes of the nations, that I might be their God: I am Jehovah.

These are the statutes and judgments and laws which Jehovah made between himself and the children of Israel in Mount Sinai by the hand of Moses.

(XXVII.)

The moral summing up,—the feeble creature with the Almighty God.

1. (*vv.* 1-8.) The personal vow (in which Israel failed, as we all).

5. [1]And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them, When any one maketh a special [x]vow, the persons shall be Jehovah's according to a valuation. And the valuation shall be of a male from twenty years old even to sixty years old, even the valuation shall be fifty shekels of silver in sanctuary shekels; but if it be of a female, then the valuation shall be thirty shekels. And if it be from five years old to twenty years old, the valuation of the male shall be twenty shekels, and for the female ten shekels. And if it be from a month old even to

[v] Lam. 3.31. Ps. 89. 32, 33. Rom. 11. 25-27. *cf.* Esth. 8.

[w] Gen. 17. 2, 4, 7. Ex. 2. 24. Neh. 9. 32. Ps. 105. 8-10. Ps. 106. 45. Is. 61. 8. Jer. 33. 20, 21. Ezek. 37. 26, 27. Luke 1. 72. *cf.* Heb. 8. 8, 9. Heb. 10.16. Heb. 12.24. Heb. 13.20.

[x] Num. 30. Deut. 23. 21-23. Ju. 11. 30. Ps. 116. 14. Nah. 1. 15.

With the closing verse of this chapter the statutes and judgments at Mount Sinai end; so that the following chapter must be looked at as an appendix to the book.

5. The closing chapter speaks of special vows. These were voluntary in their undertaking, but not as to their fulfillment when undertaken. They were *then* necessarily a part of simple righteousness to fulfill, and their fulfillment was a matter subject to the judgment of Him to whom they were made. Man might repent of his promise and let himself off easily as to the performance. The estimation of his vow was not therefore left to the maker of it. God Himself, or the priest as His mouthpiece, settled all.*

With this *estimation* of the vow the chapter is largely occupied. If it were a personal dedication, it was fulfilled by paying the amount, and where there was poverty this was tenderly considered. So the vow of house or land could be settled by a money payment; only here, as a *redemption*, which the payment for the person is not said to be, a fifth part of the value has to be added. A clean beast for sacrifice on the other hand could not be redeemed or exchanged for another, even for a better: to attempt such an exchange was only to forfeit the substitute.

(i.) Now, in the adoption of the legal covenant, Israel had in fact made such a vow of self-devotion to the Lord; and God had fixed in those commandments as to sanctification which had been now laid down the estimate of what that vow

* *Thine* estimation" of the *A. V.*, though supported by the Revised, and what would seem the pronominal suffix, is at least questionable: see Gardner's Leviticus in Lange's Commentary. He quotes Horsley, and Delgado, in evidence that the *cha* is not in fact the pronoun, and cites the Septuagint, Onkelos, the Vulgate and Syriac versions as omitting it. There are difficulties with the common reading, for the estimation is after all fixed, where apparently referred to Moses, as in vers. 3-7, and then where there could be a need for personal judgment, it is referred not to Moses, but to the priest (*v.* 8). And so with the beast, the house, and the field.

five years old, the valuation of the male shall be five shekels of silver, and for the female the valuation shall be three shekels of silver. And if it be from sixty years old upward, if a male then the valuation shall be fifteen shekels, and for the female ten shekels. And if he be poorer than the valuation, he shall present himself before the priest, and the priest shall value him: according to his ability that vowed shall the priest value him.

2. (9-13.) The sacrifice.

[2] And if it be a [y]beast whereof men bring an offering unto Jehovah, all that they give of such unto Jehovah shall be holy. He shall not alter it nor change it, a good for a bad, or a bad for a good; and if he at all change beast for beast, then it and the exchange thereof shall be holy. And if it be any unclean beast, of which they do not bring an offering unto Jehovah, then he shall present the beast before the priest; and the priest shall value it as good or bad: according to the valuation of the priest so shall it be. But if he will needs redeem it, then he shall add the fifth part thereof unto the valuation.

y Mal. 1. 14. cf. Jno. 3. 14. Lk. 24. 26. Jno. 11. 50.

3. (14, 15.) The sanctification of the house.

[3] And when any one sanctifieth his [z]house to be holy to Jehovah, the priest shall value it as good or bad; as the priest shall value it, so shall it stand. And if he that sanctified it will redeem his house, then he shall add to it the fifth part of the money value, and it shall be his own.

z cf. Hag. 2. 9. 1 Cor. 6. 19, 20. Ro. 12. 1. Ro. 8. 23. 1 Tim. 3. 15.

implied. Nay, He had been gracious also to the poverty of the people, as all the provision as to *priesthood* specially assures us. The priest is, indeed, the special witness of such merciful consideration of spiritual poverty. Yet it was still a "law" that "made nothing perfect," and could not avail. Israel did not perform their vow, whatever might be the merciful release. On the legal ground they (and we) are but bankrupt and ruined sinners.

It is thus that in the sermon on the mount the Lord now distinctly forbids vowing: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths; but I say unto you, Swear not at all." And this is grounded upon that feebleness of man which the law demonstrated to be his moral condition. It is plain, then, that real sanctification by law was an impossibility; and what a light this sheds upon this chapter, and its relation to the whole book of Leviticus, whose theme is sanctification throughout! Grace is thus shown to be the only power for it: the weak must be with the Strong, the beautiful lesson of all these Deuteronomic summaries. May we learn it well!

(ii.) But now comes in the provision of grace in sacrifice. Man had after all his value, and though for himself he could not pay it, it might be paid. For man there might be escape; for the devoted Victim there was no escape. No substitute could be provided for Him, and who could estimate aright His value? To seek to stand where He alone could stand would be simple and hopeless forfeiture and ruin. The unclean might be redeemed—redeemed with more than the full value; not so the pure offering. How plainly and convincingly all here speaks to us of Christ!

(iii.) Next comes the dedicated house, and Israel had such a house, a holy and beautiful house, made, as we have seen, of the devoted things. It was the sign of their great distinctive blessing, the dwelling of God among them, that house sanctified to the Lord, and yet theirs, but only made so by redemption. Slight as the sketch is, its features can be recognized. And it is only after and through the sacrifice that their house can be, as it yet shall be, their own.

4. (16-25.) The land.

[4] And if any man sanctify unto Jehovah [a part] of a [a]field of his possession, the valuation shall be according to what may be sown in it: the homer of barley seed at fifty shekels of silver. If he sanctify his field from the year of jubilee, according to the valuation it shall stand; but if he sanctify his field after the jubilee, then the priest shall reckon him the money according to the years that remain until the year of jubilee; and there shall be an abatement from the valuation. And if he that sanctified it will needs redeem the field, then he shall add to it the fifth part of the money value, and it shall be assured to him. And if he do not redeem it, or if he have sold it to another man, it shall not be redeemed any more; but the field, when it goeth out in the jubilee, shall be holy unto Jehovah, as a field devoted: it shall be the priest's possession. And if he sanctify unto Jehovah a field that he hath bought, which is not of the fields of his possession, the priest shall reckon him the amount of valuation unto the year of jubilee, and he shall give the valuation in that day, as of a thing holy unto Jehovah. In the year of jubilee the field shall return to him of whom it was bought—to him to whom the land belonged. And all valuation shall be in the shekel of the sanctuary: twenty gerahs shall be the shekel.

a Ezek. 36. 33-35. Is. 62. 4.

5. (26, 27.) Provision for responsibility.

[5] Only the [b]firstling which is offered as firstling to Jehovah among the cattle, no one shall sanctify it, whether it be ox or sheep; it is Jehovah's. But if it be of an unclean beast, then he may ransom it according to the valuation, but he shall add a fifth part of it thereto; and if it be not redeemed, then it shall be sold according to the valuation.

b Ex. 13.11-13.

Thus all is in harmony; while for us also as Christians there is a house, a redeemed house, in which God dwells; but not a house made with hands,—a heavenly one, yet redeemed from earth: "whose house are we." Israel and Christ's people now thus answer to one another, so that we can scarcely say to which most fully the type belongs.

(iv.) Then we have the land; and Israel's land, though sanctified to the Lord, they had indeed sold to another; hence at the jubilee it shall be entirely Jehovah's and the priest's. Thus divine grace will take the inheritance they have so lost out of their keeping. It shall be Immanuel's land; and His arm shall henceforth preserve it. Nevermore shall it know desolation; never shall the finger of scorn be pointed at its waste places, nor at those who shall at last fly there to their rest as doves to their windows; when the unknown, well-known Voice shall say at last, "The land shall not be sold forever; for the land is MINE: for ye are strangers and sojourners with ME."

(v.) We now have a different set of commandments. As in all septenary series,—and this is one,—the last three sections have another character from the preceding ones. They give us things which *cannot be* the subject of vows, on account of their already belonging to the Lord. The first-born of beasts are the first class of these, His by birth and as the fruit of redemption, *claimed* by Him, and therefore His: free from the uncertainty attaching to man's will in the matter. *He* claims, who can make good His claim.

6. (28, 29.) Holiness victorious in judgment.

7. (30-34.) Complete sanctification.

[6] Notwithstanding, no [c]devoted thing that one hath devoted unto Jehovah, of all that he hath, of man or beast, or of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed: every devoted thing is most holy to Jehovah. Nothing devoted that is devoted from among men shall be ransomed: it shall be surely put to death.

[7] And all the [d]tithe of the land, of the seed of the land, and of the fruit of the tree, is Jehovah's: it is holy to Jehovah. And if any one will needs redeem his tithe, he shall add the fifth part to it. And all the tithe of the herd, of the flock, of whatever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy to Jehovah. He shall not search whether it be good or bad, neither shall he change it, and if he change it at all, both it and the exchange thereof shall be holy: it shall not be redeemed.

These are the commandments which Jehovah commanded Moses for the children of Israel upon Mount Sinai.

c *ctr.* Mk. 7. 11, 12. *cf.* Heb. 9. 14. Phil. 2. 10.

d Deut. 26. 12, 13. Mal. 3. 10. *cf.* Luke 18. 12.

Is not this too our certainty as to ourselves, in the sense of our responsibility, and in the consciousness of the weakness of our human wills to yield ourselves to Him? just that we are His by birth, His by redemption, formed for His service as the beast for man's, and claimed by Him who will not be defrauded of His claim? Thank God, we can look our responsibilities in the face with this assurance, that we are His, not in the weakness of our poor human wills, but in the might of His will for us! "*Created* in Christ Jesus unto good works;" "*chosen* to sanctification;" "God *working* in us to will and to do of His good pleasure;" "*kept* by the power of God through faith unto salvation!"

(vi.) But the same strong hand is also upon the evil; and this is the significance of the *cherem*, or ban, according to which that which was evil or defiled with evil was sanctified to God in its destruction. "For there can be no doubt that that which lay at the foundation of the ban was that of the compulsory dedication of something which resists or impedes sanctification; so that in all cases in which it was carried into execution by the community, or the magistracy, it was an act of the judicial holiness of God, manifesting itself in righteousness and judgment." (*Keil.*) Here ransom could not be. Things that are evil, and persons most unholy, shall thus in a coming day be holy to the Lord. All this also depends not on weak human will to accomplish it: it is the judgment of the Lord, and love will acquiesce in it as a necessity of holiness.

(vii.) We close here with the tithe. The tithe was the owning of the sovereign rights of God as to all their possessions. *Ten* we have seen to be the measure of capacity, and so of responsibility; of which *one* part given up owns divine sovereignty. This is the tithe; and here too God will have His claim. When this is accomplished the full blessing will have come. For God to have His own means all holiness, all joy, all stability. God shall be God, all and in all: and that is, as it were, the definition of the eternal state in the last book of Scripture. Let us remember that even now there is an application of this, which is not confined to Israel: "Bring Me all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in My house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room to receive it." (Mal. iii. 10.)

What, then, shall be the final blessing, when this is every where in fact accomplished? What tongue can speak aright the overflowing, eternal blessedness? And this too is not left to the weakness of man's "vow" to bring to pass. The arm of Him who bringeth salvation is that which shall accomplish it, and the day predicted hastens fast.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF NUMBERS.

LITERALLY, the book of Numbers is evidently the history of Israel's wilderness-life from Sinai onward,—that is, after their formal incorporation as the people of God under the legal covenant. It is a history of sad and terrible failure,—instead of a rapid march to Canaan, a sojourn of forty years in the desert, during which the entire generation that left Egypt as grown-up men (except two persons) perish under the judgment of God. But a new generation is led on to the borders of the land, conquerors over all opposition, until just opposite and ready to enter Canaan, the history ends; Deuteronomy being simply a review, and not a history.

Spiritually, its lesson is simple and obvious: it is the trial of the believer in the world; in which, alas! his failure becomes manifest,—and yet the grace of God does not fail; the resources of the priesthood, as found in Him in whom resurrection is the sign of competence, are brought out, the enemy is defeated, no curse can be on those whom God has not cursed, they go from strength to strength, until the good land of their inheritance is practically reached.

The Levites and their service are prominent through the book,—Christian responsibility to carry and exhibit Christ in the world, true ministry as indeed it is. The people also are seen as the Lord's host, united together for wilderness-warfare—not so much with personal enemies as influences, which develop murmuring, insubordination, and all the protean forms of unbelief. The evil does not break *in*, the power of God with them is too great for this,—but breaks *out*.

The divisions of the book are five:—

1. (Chap. i.-x. 10.) The Ordering of the Camp.
2. (Chap. x. 11-xvi. 35.) Growing departure from God: the testimony of history as to the people.
3. (Chap. xvi. 36-xxiv.) The resources of the priesthood, marked out by resurrection.
4. (Chap. xxv.-xxvii.) The testing in its consequences.
5. (Chap. xxviii-xxxvi.) The divine ways, and the end.

NUMBERS.

DIVISION 1. (Chap. i.–x. 10.)

The Ordering of the Camp.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. i., ii.)

The organization and muster.

The effective force.

1. (vv. 1-19.) The persons appointed for the work.

(I.)

1.[1] AND Jehovah spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tent of meeting, on the [a] first day of the second month, in the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying, Take ye the [b] sum of the whole assembly of the children of Israel, by their families, by their fathers' houses, with the number of their names, every male according to their polls; from twenty years old and upward, all in Israel going forth to [c] war, thou and Aaron shall number them by their hosts. And with you there shall be a man of every tribe—a man who is [d] head of his father's house. And these are the names of the men that shall stand with you: of Reuben, Elizur the son of Shedeur; of Simeon, Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai; of Judah,

[a] Ex. 40. 17.

[b] *ctr.* 2 Sam. 24. 1.

[c] Ex. 12. 41. *cf.* Josh. 5. 6. Eph. 6. 11.

[d] *cf.* Heb. 2. 10. Rev. 2. 7, etc. Heb. 12. 2.

NOTES.

DIV. 1.

IN the first division, then, we find the ordering of the camp. The people are to face the perils of the way, and the first requisite for this is to be in subjection to their Leader, not Moses, but rather the Lord Himself. Hence, first of all, this mustering and marshaling of what is to be the host of God. For a soldier to keep rank is an absolute necessity; and here a wisdom that cannot fail ordains for every one his place and his association. Thus divine foresight is able to manifest itself for them, and they are secured from uncertainty and anxiety. They have but to be *obedient*, and by obedience to cast all the responsibility of the future upon Him who has identified His glory with the fulfillment of His promises to them. These of course were as to Israel nationally only: they did not pledge the security of individuals, and in fact the generation that came as men out of Egypt perished, except two persons, in the wilderness. For us who are Christians, thank God, grace reigns, and we are individually "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." But on that very account it is said to us, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, *for* it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

SUBD. 1.

THE first two chapters are the first subdivision, the mustering of the people as a whole, even the place of the Levites being indicated in the second chapter, though these are separated from the body of the nation for a prescribed service in connection with the sanctuary. Apart from them, the number of the tribes is maintained by the incorporation of Joseph's two sons as tribal heads according to Gen. xlviii. In this muster the *organization* carried out is the natural one, by families or "fathers' houses:" two terms which appear to be coexten-

> Nahshon the son of Amminadab; of Issachar, Nethaneel the son of Zuar; of Zebulon, Eliab the son of Helon; of the children of Joseph—of Ephraim, Elishama the

sive, contrary as this is to the usual thought.* The difference between them is, that the word for "family" implies subjection to authority,† while the father's house shows that this authority has its grounds in the natural relation. Such is God's relationship to His people, of which the father is the image. Here rule should be as easy as obedience delightful. In family groups they were thus linked together in God's host, brother fighting alongside of brother, an army so compacted as to be, one might suppose, invincible. And what a means of encouragement, and of the impartation of energy, has God provided for us as Christians, who are members of one family, owning a common Father, and embarked together in a common cause! Alas! how much feebleness has come in through God's order having been departed from: so many among us who cannot show their names upon the register, and so few together of those undoubtedly akin! And yet, with all this, we are still able to realize in measure the blessedness of the divine thought for us, and the comfort and power that result from this family-organization, such as we find it in Israel.

1. The first chapter gives this enrolling, "the sum of all the assembly of the children of Israel," but only their effective force, those fit for warfare, not women or babes, but grown men. In Christ of course there is neither male nor female, and women do not escape from spiritual warfare: but the thought conveyed to us here is none the less plain and significant. It is not the simple fact of being Christians that makes us practically fit to be warriors. Any that are Christ's may of course have to fight, but to be properly a warrior is a different thing. For this we must have two things which indeed come near together, and are both covered by the number which marks the section. First of all, *maturity*, which in the Greek stands as "perfectness," "wholeness," (τελειότης,) the full harmony of all the faculties. For this as saints we need to be nourished up by the Word of God. And secondly, what the apostle gives as necessary for a "good soldier of Christ," *devotedness*, not to be entangled with the affairs of this life, which from another side brings us again to the thought of *entireness*, oneness. Thus to the Corinthians he complains that their *carnality* kept them still "babes in Christ." Here then is our title to enrollment among those "fit for war" in the spiritual Israel.

(i.) The persons able to do the work of numbering are, first of all, Moses and Aaron, the double type of Christ as King and Priest. He is indeed the One who knoweth them that are His, and under whose eye His servants are: the Lord who rules, and He who intercedes for and sustains them. Good it is to be under an eye like this!

Under Moses and Aaron there are certain princes of the people, each identified with his own tribe, and in due time coming to be head over it. Of these we have nothing noted but their own and their fathers' names, but just for that reason, if there could otherwise be doubt, we may be sure that their names are intended to speak to us. All these Bible names *should* speak; and their connection with the several tribes which they represent must be of importance: there must be a

* The "fathers' houses" are generally considered to be subdivisions of the "families;" but they are used in a way which would seem to forbid this. Thus, although the usual order here is "by families, by fathers' houses," yet we find this order reversed also (chap. iii. 15; iv. 22); and while on the one hand the numbering is sometimes by fathers' houses only, (as i. 45; ii. 32; xxvi. 2,) in the second registration there are specified *families* alone. Both terms are used also in the most general way, even for a whole tribe (i. 4; ii. 2; xvii. 2; Josh. vii. 17; Jud. xvii. 7). Chap. iii. 20, "These are the families of the Levites, according to their fathers' houses," seems to identify them as certainly the account to which it is appended only mentions "families;" and their identity is plainly stated, according to my translation of chap. iv. 38, 46.

† *Mishpach*, (from *shaphach*, to humble, to subject,) is so denominated from being subject to or under the authority of the master of the family. So in Latin, *familia*, a family, is from *famulus*, a servant.—(*Parkhurst.*)

son of Ammihud; of Manasseh, Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur; of Benjamin, Abidan the son of Gideoni; of Dan, Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai; of Asher, Pagiel

reason why Elizur, rather than Shelumiel or Nahshon, should be prince of Reuben; and it is in exploring Reuben's history that we should find it.

That history of Reuben, as of the other tribes, we shall find in a prophetic summary in Jacob's dying words, where divine wisdom has given the moral of it, the character of Reuben as therein shown, and the lessons we are to derive from it. We may turn then with confidence to the words of this grand prophecy, with which we are already familiar, to gather aid in the understanding of what is now before us.

Reuben stands first then here as in Genesis, and Reuben's prince is Elizur the son of Shedeur. The first of these names is unquestionable in its meaning, as it is beautiful,—"God is a Rock." And this seems at once plain when connected with the character which Jacob gives to his first-born, "unstable,—boiling over—as water, thou shalt not excel." How grandly in opposition to the instability of Reuben is the rocklike stability of God! And it is the learning of this, and how to build upon it, that imparts stability to the unstable. In ourselves there is never strength, and the way of strength for us is to know this: "*when* I am weak, then am I strong." An Abraham with whom the body is now dead, needs—and finds *because* he needs—the Almighty God.

Thus it is plain why Elizur is Reuben's prince and leader. He is one of God's royal family of overcomers, and he overcomes the evil, native in the tribe he represents. Faith with him has found refuge from himself, and found it in God. He is then the suited captain for the men fit for war in the tribe of the first-born.

But this is not the whole: for Reuben's instability is more than weakness. Too many excuse as that what is in fact willfulness, the lust of the flesh; and though there is weakness necessarily in such a case, nevertheless that word does not describe the case. So we have seen it to be in what is before us: lust and will characterize the first-born of Jacob, as they do the first outcome of man in general; and so, before one can find one's strength in God, the holiness of God must be known, and our wills must be brought into conformity with His holiness. And this is accomplished more or less for us all in the fire of purification, the fire at which He sits as a Refiner of silver, purifying to Himself His people from their dross. No marvel then is it that the Reubenite Elizur is "the son of Shedeur:" that is, "the Almighty is fire." Yes, "*our* God is a consuming fire:" and He truly is the Almighty who is this, so that there is no escape out of His hands, when in love He takes up with us this His gracious work. Thus is the lesson learned, and how good when one has learned it! yea, "the knowledge of the Holy is" indeed "understanding."

The next tribe, in birth order, perhaps in character, is Simeon; and the prince of Simeon is Shelumiel, "at peace with God." Again, how significant if we turn back to Jacob's prophecy, and hear him denounce on God's part Simeon's cruel wrath! His paths had not been peace, nor with Him who is "the God of peace:" hence peace with God, the deep, sweet rest of a mind conformed to His mind, Simeon could not know. Now with the Simeonite prince all this is changed; as to Simeon's special evil he too is an overcomer, and his also is the victory of faith: there is no evil which faith cannot overcome, because He with whom it links itself is the Almighty. And so in the process indicated here, Shelumiel is the son of Zurishaddai,—that is, "My rock is the Almighty."

We have had much this thought already in Elizur, for the very simplest truths that faith embraces are of the widest reach and deepest import. Here, though the thought is much the same, the connection is different, just as Simeon is different from Reuben in his character. While Reuben is, as Jacob says, "the topmost of my strength," Simeon's very alliance with his brother is the confession of weakness, but a weakness which he would remedy by a recourse to that

> the son of Ocran; of Gad, Eliasaph the son of Deuel; of Naphtali, Ahira the son of Enan. These are they that were called of the assembly, the princes of the tribes

to which at present so many are betaking themselves—confederacy. And here he does find it indeed, but only to make cruel use of it, and to walk in separation from God. On his part therefore it brings in the end division and scattering. This is a necessity for him, if he is to be saved from himself; that, having found what the strength of nature betrays one to, he may turn to Him in whom there is all-sufficiency and with whom is holiness. This is now the Simeonite prince's alliance, and such an one needs never to be broken up again. Out of such have all great movements come; and here in such an alliance, as nowhere else, that individuality which is essential to the integrity and perfection of all true manhood is maintained; heart, conscience, the moral nature, are exercised and developed. Thus Shelumiel, that true peace with God which is the result of communion, springs from Zurishaddai, the known and enjoyed strength of the Almighty.

In the third place we have Judah, and here a condition very different from that of the two preceding tribes. In Judah we find the worshiper, and the strength implied in the spirit of praise. For the lesson of the two former histories is learnt in this: the heart that rejoices in God Himself has ceased from its own will and found communion in the path of obedience. Thus there is strength: but here we may seem to have no room for the overcomer. Is it so in fact? and does the prince of Judah no more exemplify what we have found to be in the former ones? We may as well ask, what room is there for the overcomer in the church of Philadelphia, where (as in the other churches) there is a distinct promise to one? But the answer is, there is in Philadelphia, as elsewhere, still a tendency to slip away,—*not* to hold fast that which they have; and here then at least there is a need for overcoming. Just so with that which characterizes Judah. The spirit of praise may all too easily be lost, and Nahshon may teach us how to retain it. He may be in this sense an overcomer.

Nahshon then means "a diviner," not necessarily in a bad sense. It is a word used for diligent observation (1 Kings xx. 33); and divining, apart from the heathenism so much associated with it, is but the discernment in the present of the future: and so may the child of God divine. In that which makes him a worshiper he may find what will give him prophetic insight into the future. Nahshon is therefore the son of Amminadab, or, as the last word means, of "the people of the Liberal Giver." Here faith gets then its foresight, in the knowledge of His free grace to whom we belong. How beautiful is this genealogy of a prophet! and how this spirit breathes throughout the psalms, so largely Judah's! Still more should we be able to take as the ground of a happy confidence, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Thus the spirit of praise is nursed within us.

Issachar's prince comes fourth in the list, Nathaniel, the "gift of God:" again exactly suited to him whose name speaks of *hire*, and whose tendency is to stoop his shoulder to foreign yokes, and to pay his tribute from the love of ease. The spirit of legality takes up readily with such strange service, as it is self which it really serves, and a bribe will turn it from its true Master. Yet, though God may hire a Nebuchadnezzar (Ezek. xxix. 18), the bread in our Father's house is not for hirelings, though in the far-off country one might think so. As we have seen, at His redemption-feast no hireling sits (Ex. xii. 45). Yet the hireling spirit in the people of God themselves would turn His grace into legal compensation, and a true overcomer is this Nathaniel who has learnt that the "gift of God" cannot be purchased. Here, too, the genealogy speaks very simply of how grace is apprehended: he is the son of Zuar,—that is, "Little." For he who thinks of hire values himself necessarily at too high a rate, and he who estimates himself as really "little" is ready to appreciate the gift of God.

Yet there is a right thought of recompense—a reward, of "mercy" (2 Tim.

of their fathers, the heads of the thousands of Israel. And Moses and Aaron took these men who were expressed by their names, and they gathered the whole

i. 18) which love will not be denied in giving,—which is really but the gift of God. This can never become to the soul as hire, the *motive* to service, and for this reason, that it is the reward of true devotedness alone, and not self-seeking: to work *for the reward* is to lose it. Issachar's captain must in this way also be Nathaniel.

In the fifth place here we find Zebulon; and in Zebulon we have seen Israel forgetting her separation to God, and stretching out toward the Gentiles. How sadly has this tendency to departure shown itself in the Church with regard to her more vital and wider separation from the world! and who can sufficiently estimate the evil resulting? When Balaam afterward sees the people in the "vision of the Almighty," the first thing that he sees is a people that dwell "alone, and are not reckoned among the nations." When with satanic craft he is laboring to injure whom he cannot destroy, he seeks to seduce them from this position by Midianitish women. In the Church the "unequal yoke" was very early brought in, and the apostle's words show the magnitude of the evil resulting. "For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever? . . . . Wherefore come out from among them, and be separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and *will be a Father unto you*, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor. vi. 14–18.)

God *is* the Father of His believing people; but if they mix themselves with the world in forgetfulness of whose they are, they force *Him*, as it were, to forget their special relation to Himself. He cannot *be* to them a Father as He would. How terrible is this loss, then, little as many regard it! And how powerfully does Zebulon's captain witness to us in this way—Eliab, "*God is a Father!*" May it speak with all its solemnity, and with all its precious encouragement, to His people's hearts! Thus Zebulon, "dwelling," gets its right significance.*

Leah's children end with this, save Levi, whose place is elsewhere. We have now Rachel's, Joseph first claiming his double portion in his two sons. Of these, Ephraim comes first according to Jacob's prophetic destination to this place of the younger born. Ephraim's prince is Elishama, "God hath heard;" for the very "fruitfulness" of which Ephraim speaks may be a snare to us if we have not learnt reverently to ascribe it to One who heareth His people's prayer. The second name, Ammihud, "the people of Majesty," may intimate that conscious relationship to the infinite Greatness which is the warrant and stimulus of successful prayer. All these names breath a spirit of dependence and of nearness,—of lowliness, yet of intimacy,—things that go necessarily together. There is abundant access for the humble-hearted; "the proud He beholdeth afar off." The nearest intimacy with God cannot minister to pride or go with it: the assumption of nearness, where the will is not subdued, and the spirit is unchastened, is but a false assumption. Who that has fairly measured himself in the presence of God but must carry with him the crippling of his human strength, as Jacob carried from Peniel his halting thigh?

And now we come to Manasseh: "Manasseh" means, as we know, "forgetting." "God has made me to forget," says Joseph, "all my kindred, and my father's house." It is, translated into Christian experience, the spirit of the racer, who sees no more what is once behind him, as he presses on toward the prize before. And this last thought Manasseh's prince supplies. His name is Gamaliel.—"God is a rewarder." As it is said of Moses, "He had respect to the recompense of the reward." (Heb. xi. 26.)

* Of Helon,—the second name—the interpretation is so little assured, that I think it safer here to pass it by.

assembly together on the first day of the second month, and they declared their pedigrees after their families, by their fathers' houses, with the number of their names, [a] cf. Neh. 7. 64.

Here the interlacing of divine truth brings us back to Issachar; yet, as approaching it from another side, the truth itself is different. The danger is not now of legality: rather, as the future is faced thus, there is need of what shall give competency to meet with assurance of heart the thought of recompense. That competency is here in the second name, Pedahzur, "the Rock hath redeemed." Only from the conviction of the strength of our salvation can we start for the goal of divine recompense,—forgetting the things behind in the consciousness of what Eye rests upon us, and of a heart that forgets never: may we so press on!

Then follows Benjamin, who wherever we find him is the warrior, type of Christ Himself in the power that will put down evil in the earth in a day to come. For ourselves also in the meantime,—for us who are to be among the white-robed hosts that follow Him, when He comes forth as the white-horsed warrior to the judgment of that day,—a conflict with evil is appointed, not with carnal weapons, but so real and well-contested that we need all the panoply of God. From this no one that is Christ's can escape, save only by desertion of his post. How can he fittingly be with Christ in that day, who has never contended in the strife of this?

It will be said, perhaps, that all the tribes here are warriors, and just because the warfare is appointed to all, it would seem as if there could be no special warrior type among them; but Benjamin's presence here is sufficient proof that this is a mistake. Not only, as has been already said, may those be in the conflict who are not warriors, but there are also different kinds of warfare,—defensive as well as offensive, in the fort and in the field. Benjamin is the type of the aggressive soldier, not the shield-bearer, but the swordsman or the slinger, such as there were in Benjamin at another day,—"seven hundred chosen men, ... every one could sling stones at a hair's breadth, and not miss" (Ju. xx. 16). This God would have in His people also, not the mere holding of the fort, but the going out to war, as when the land is to be won, or brethren are to be delivered.

This, then, is the Benjamite, and the prince of Benjamin is Abidan, "My father is judge." Not according to men's judgment merely, least of all our own, but according to God's judgment, must every thing be conducted here; but not merely that even: the *Father's* judgment is what we who are His children are *ourselves* under, as the apostle admonishes us: "If ye call on the Father who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here with fear." (1 Pet. i. 17.)

What more needful admonition in the controversy with evil than this, to remember that we ourselves are under our Father's holy eye! How can we contend elsewhere with that whose power we are ignoring over our own hearts and ways? In the dark days which so quickly followed Israel's possession of the land, the *judge* was the *deliverer*: "and when the Lord raised them up judges, then the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; . . . and it came to pass when the judge was dead, that they returned and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, . . . and the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel." This then was the twofold office of the judge: as it was said of Othniel, "He judged Israel, and went out to war." Benjamin's prince then is Abidan.

But Abidan also is the son of Gideoni,—"the cutter down." For that from which proceeds all true after-judgment is the acceptance of that first judgment at the cross in which the tree of humanity had to be felled in order to construct the ark of salvation. Christ crucified is our deliverance, but Christ crucified is also the judgment of the flesh: "our old man was crucified with Him." Thus it is because Christ died to sin we are to reckon *ourselves* dead indeed unto sin;

> from twenty years old and upward, according to their polls. As Jehovah commanded Moses, so he numbered them in the wilderness of Sinai.

and to be so reckoning is power over it. If there be shoots from the stump, the knife and the axe have still their place; but for intelligent faith Gideoni has well done his woodman's work. We have not to *die* to sin; we are *dead:* not in experience, but "with Christ," therefore for faith. All self-judgment afterward proceeds upon this judgment of God upon us,—a judgment which when accepted by us is ability for all the rest. Gideoni is the father of Abidan.

The children of the two wives are now told out, and we come to the children of the bondmaids. The first of these is Dan, "judgment," the spirit of rule, which, as Dan's origin points out, is really service. Yet in man's hand how readily it is turned from this! "Man being in honor abideth not." Instead of using his place for the blessing of those entrusted to his care, he uses it for himself, feeds with it his ambition or his greed in some form, and becomes a rebel to the One from whom he derives authority. Thus in Dan, as we have seen in Jacob's prophecy, is found the apostate. But for this, as for all else, there is a remedy with God, and Dan is here in his place with his captain Ahiezer, —"brother of help," the son of Ammishaddai,—"the people of the Almighty." Let them be realized in this relation, and the ruler becomes according to God's design, the "helping brother" of those over whom he is appointed. Thus do the hills after their nature minister to the valleys, and God in His love serves all: for this is true greatness ever: "without contradiction the less is blessed of the better," and "it is more blessed to give than to receive." (Heb. vii. 7; Acts xx. 35.)

Asher follows Dan: his prince is Pagiel,—"event of God," the son of Ocran, —"afflicted." Strange names these in connection with Asher,—the "happy," and whose portion in Jacob's prophecy answers to his name. Yet "He maketh all things work together for good to them that love Him," and sorrow in His hands is turned into joy. To true happiness here, as well as for a guard against the dangers of it, some strain of sorrow seems of necessity to mingle with it, something wherein the soul has to submit itself to God,—to say it is the Lord, "the event is of God." The apostle's thorn in the flesh after his ecstasy in the third heaven may tell us this as to the most spiritual joys. Asher's prince is often a Pagiel, as Pagiel is truly Ocran's child: "tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope."

And now we have Gad, whose prince is Eliasaph,—"God hath added;" he is the son of Deuel,—"known of God." How good a thing it is to be known of God! For this does not of course mean merely such knowledge as God has of every thing, but the knowledge we have of one with whom we are intimate, and which implies approval. And this is truly the secret of spiritual increase such as Eliasaph speaks of, the last part of whose name is the same word as "Joseph." Leah's exclamation when Gad is born shows that this is the thought also in his name. Need we be told that increase is to be looked for in a child of God? Or how sad a proof it is of the lack of divine intimacy when there is not this? And yet there are those whose stagnant condition would imply that they have no thought of this: if they are safe, it is enough; they do not "grow in grace," they remain babes, a condition which the apostle traces in the Corinthians to their carnality.

We have but one tribe more, that of Naphtali. His prince is Ahira, "brother of evil," the son of Enan, which means apparently "eyed," or "having eyes." This is the most difficult name perhaps to interpret of all that we have had; the words also being susceptible of other meanings, though these are the simplest ones. May it be that in Ahira we find one whose eyes have affected his heart, like another Jeremiah (Lam. iii. 51), and made him a man of sorrows in sympathy with the sorrow around? Such a spirit one would suppose to need expression among these leaders of Israel, and thus the "brother of evil" would

2. (20–46.) The number.

[2] Now the children of [f] Reuben, Israel's eldest son, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of the names, by their polls, every male from twenty years old and upward, all that went forth to war; those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Reuben, were forty-six thousand, five hundred. f cf. ch.26.7.

Of the children of [g] Simeon, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, those that were numbered of them according to the number of the names, by their polls, every male from twenty years old and upward, all that went forth to war; those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Simeon, were fifty-nine thousand, three hundred. g cf. ch. 26. 14.

Of the children of [h] Gad, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that went forth to war; those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Gad, were forty-five thousand, six hundred, and fifty. h cf. ch. 26. 18.

Of the children of [i] Judah, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that went forth to war; those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Judah, were seventy-four thousand, six hundred. i cf. ch. 26. 22.

Of the children of [j] Issachar, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that went forth to war; those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Issachar, were fifty-four thousand, four hundred. j cf. ch. 26. 25.

Of the children of [k] Zebulon, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and up- k cf. ch. 26. 27.

come to be the "brother born for adversity," of which Proverbs speaks (Prov. xvii. 17). And this would not suit ill with the character of that Naphtali, whose own name is a memorial of "struggling," and whose "pleasant words" are noted in that prophecy of Jacob to which there seems constant reference all through.

These, then, are Israel's princes, able to muster and lead to victory the hosts of the redeemed, as being personally overcomers in regard to their surroundings or the tendencies to failure amid which they are. In the constant battle-field which this world is for us, we must indeed be overcomers or overcome. All the men fit for war must be ranged under these leaders, as in the addresses to the seven churches of Revelation, the promises are all for overcomers. Here is the test for us, and we cannot excuse ourselves from it: blessed be God, if we have the *spirit* of the overcomer, the evil round can never master us, any more than the darkness of night can keep the stars from shining. The darkness is their *opportunity* to shine!

(ii.) As to the number of the tribes which is now given to us, we must learn better the symbolism of numbers and the meaning of these tribal divisions themselves, before we can expect to find what is hid in it. Yet we may be well

ward, all that went forth to war; those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Zebulon, were fifty-seven thousand, four hundred.

Of the children of Joseph—of the children of [l] Ephraim, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that went forth to war; those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Ephraim, were forty thousand, five hundred. [l] *cf.* ch. 26. 37.

Of the children of [m] Manasseh, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that went forth to war; those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Manasseh, were thirty-two thousand, two hundred. [m] *cf.* ch. 26. 34.

Of the children of [n] Benjamin, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that went forth to war; those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Benjamin, were thirty-five thousand, four hundred. [n] *cf.* ch. 26. 41.

Of the children of [o] Dan, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that went forth to war; those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Dan, were sixty-two thousand, seven hundred. [o] *cf.* ch. 26. 43.

Of the children of [p] Asher, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that went forth to war; those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Asher, were forty-one thousand, five hundred. [p] *cf.* ch. 26. 47.

Of the children of [q] Naphtali, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that went forth to war; those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Naphtali, were fifty-three thousand, four hundred. [q] *cf.* ch. 26. 50.

These are they that were numbered, whom Moses and Aaron numbered, and the princes of Israel—twelve men: each was for the house of his fathers. And [r] all that were numbered of the children of Israel, by their fathers' houses, from twenty years old and upward, all in Israel that went forth to war,—all that were numbered were six hundred and three thousand, five hundred, and fifty. [r] *cf.* ch. 26. 51.

assured that there is here, as elsewhere, such deeper meaning, which should encourage attempt to seek it. God has forbidden idle words: can there be such in His own book? Assuredly not; it is impossible; and the first condition of successful search is the faith that accredits Him with a wisdom and love which has every where hidden in it the treasures which are to reward this.

3. (47-54.) The separation of the Levites to the tabernacle service.

[3] But the [s]Levites, according to the tribe of their fathers, were not numbered among them; for Jehovah had spoken unto Moses, saying, Only the tribe of Levi thou shalt not number, nor take the sum of them among the children of Israel; but appoint thou the Levites over the [t]tabernacle of testimony, and over all its vessels, and over all belonging to it: they shall bear the tabernacle and all its vessels, and they shall minister in it, and round about the tabernacle shall they encamp. And [u]when the tabernacle setteth forward, the Levites shall take it down; and when the tabernacle encampeth, the Levites shall set it up; and the stranger that cometh near shall be put to death. And the children of Israel shall encamp every one in his camp, and every one by his [v]own standard, according to their hosts; but the Levites shall encamp around the tabernacle of the testimony, that there be not wrath upon the assembly of the children of Israel: and the Levites shall keep the charge of the tabernacle of testimony. And the children of Israel did so: according to all that Jehovah had commanded Moses, so did they.

[s] ch. 4. 46.

[t] ch. 3. 5.

[u] ch. 10. 17-21.

[v] ch. 2. 2.

[w] *cf.* Ps. 48. 7. Ezek. 17. 10. Jonah 4. 8. Rom. 5. 3.

Divisions and associations of the host.

1. (*vv.* 1-9.) The camp of Judah: the spirit of righteousness, in the apprehension of grace, and of God as Father.

(II.)

2. [1] And Jehovah spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, The children of Israel shall encamp, every one by his standard, with the ensign of his father's house: fronting the tent of meeting round about shall they encamp. And those that encamp on the [w]east side toward the [x]sunrise shall be they of the standard of the camp of [y]Judah, according to their hosts: and the

[x] *cf.* Mal. 4. 2. 2 Tim. 4. 8. Heb. 9. 28.

[y] Gen. 49. 8-12. Ps. 68. 25. 2 Chron. 20. 21.

(iii.) The separation of the Levites to God for the work of the tabernacle is now declared. They are to be the body-guard of the divine King, and as the priests go in to God to perform their intercessory service in behalf of the people, so the Levites keep them from the wrath that would follow the intrusion of the stranger into the tabernacle of God, the holy things of which they bear through the desert in all their journeyings. They are thus the distinct types of ministry which addresses itself from God to man, as priesthood does from man to God. These things will, however, come fully before us in a little while, and we shall till then defer the discussion of them.

2. The people, being numbered, are next ranged round the sanctuary, the Levites, as we have seen, being in the innermost circle, and the rest of the tribes arranged in four large camps, three tribes in each camp, under the standard of one of them as chief. Here, as so commonly then, the twelve divide into 4 x 3, not with less significance here than elsewhere: the number of manifest sovereignty —for the Lord is in the midst of His people—may show how God transforms the place of trial into the means of the display of Himself in power over it.

The four camps lie to the four quarters, east, south, west, and north, from which come the outside influences, which, in a world like this may be any of them adverse, and which the people of God must meet in the power of Him who is among them. They must be independent of circumstances, carrying their resources, in this sense, within themselves. The whole order has reference to these outside influences, as we may see more shortly, the entire wilderness journey being a warfare, and the people's dwelling-place a camp.

prince of the children of Judah shall be [z]Nahshon the son of Amminadab; and his host, even they that were numbered of them, seventy-four thousand, six hundred. And those that encamp next him shall be the tribe of [a]Issachar: and the prince of the children of Issachar shall be [b]Nathaniel the son of Zuar; and his host, even those that were numbered thereof, fifty-four thousand, four hundred. [Then] the tribe of [c]Zebulon: and the prince of the children of Zebulon shall be [d]Eliab the son of Helon; and his host, even those that were numbered thereof, fifty-seven thousand, four hundred. All that were numbered of the camp of Judah are a hundred and eighty-six thousand, four hundred, according to their hosts. They set forth [e]first.

[z] ch. 7. 12. Matt. 1. 4. *cf.* Acts 20. 22 with Rom. 8. 28.
[a] Gen. 30. 18. Gen. 49. 14, 15.
[b] ch. 7. 18. *cf.* Rom. 4. 4. 5. Rom. 6. 23.
[c] Gen. 30. 20. Gen. 49. 13. Ps. 68. 27.
[d] ch. 7. 24. *cf.* Rev. 2. 13-17. 2 Cor. 6. 14-18.
[e] ver. 3. ch. 10. 14.

The divisions and associations of the tribes can only be understood aright as we study them in detail.

(i.) The first division is that of Judah, with whom, under his standard, are Issachar and Zebulon. The position of his camp is doubly indicated as "eastward, toward the sunrising," two expressions which we may be sure are not mere tautology, for there is nothing of this kind in the Word of God; and inquiry here, as elsewhere, will not be without result.

In fact the two expressions are in a sense in contrast. They both speak of the east, where of course the sun rises; but while the sunrise always conveys the idea of joy and blessing as connected with the returning day, the other word implies rather the opposite of this. This word is *qedem*, "what faces," or "confronts you," and thus as nearly as may be resembles our word adversity from the Latin, "what is *toward*" you, only in a hostile manner. The *qadim*, the "east wind," is the dry and parching wind from the desert, as the west wind is literally the sea-wind, bringing moisture and rain. Judah's position, then, contemplates two opposite things, the world as the place of malign influence, and the uprising of the Sun of Righteousness, which for us is the end of this. These two contrary thoughts to us as Christians so suggest one another that there is no difficulty in their connection. He who faces in earnest the evil of the world will have proportionately before him that appearing of Christ which will bring its long disorder to an end forever. The night is far spent, and the day is at hand; blessed be God, we who believe in Him are children of the day; "therefore," says the apostle, "let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light" (Rom. xiii. 12.) Here we are in Judah's camp toward the sunrise.

But why *Judah* foremost, the leader of all Israel in this way? His name and what we have seen of his history account for this. We have seen the light of the prophet in his eyes, and are all familiar with the fulfillment of the prophecy in his name in the psalms of his descendant David. We have read too his motto in the words of Jacob, "The spirit of praise is the spirit of power." Judah is foremost here for the same reason that Jehoshaphat in a later day put his singers and trumpeters in the forefront of the battle against the enemy; and when they began to sing and praise, the Lord went out against the foe and smote them. (2 Chron. xx.) So then it is here.

For the spirit of praise is the spirit also of obedience, and thus Judah is qualified to be the law-giver (Ps. lx. 7). Wherever the heart is filled with God His throne will be in the heart, and what an irresistible power is in this spirit of obedience to the all-wise "Captain of salvation"! Who or what can defeat the King's army, so long as it obeys orders? And what a triumphant enthusiasm, the presage of victory, swells in these loyal songs in the face of the battle!

This is what characterizes Judah, the spirit of obedience rising into the joyous

2. (10-16.) The camp of Reuben: the spirit of dependence governing communion and growth.

2 The standard of the camp of [f] Reuben shall be [g] southward, according to their hosts: and the prince of the children of Reuben shall be [h] Elizur the son of Shedeur; and his host, even those that were numbered thereof, forty-six thousand, five hundred. And those that encamp by him shall be the tribe of [i] Simeon: and the prince of the children of Simeon shall be [j] Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai; and his host, even those that were numbered of them, fifty-nine thousand, three hundred. Then the tribe of [k] Gad: and the prince of the children of Gad shall be [l] Eliasaph the son of Deuel;* and his host, even those that were numbered of them, forty-five thousand, six hundred, and fifty. All that were numbered of the camp of Reuben are a hundred and fifty-one thousand, four hundred, and fifty, according to their hosts. And they set forth second.

[f] Gen.29.32. Gen.49.3,4. Phil. 3. 7.

[g] Job 37. 17. Acts 27. 13. *cf.* Jas. 4.4. Gen. 12. 9.

[h] ch. 7. 30. 2 Tim. 2. 1.

[i] Gen.29. 33. Gen. 49. 5. *cf.* Tit. 3.3. Rom. 3. 15.

[j] ch. 7. 36. *cf.* Jno. 20. 21. Rom. 5. 1. Eph. 6. 15.

[k] Gen.30.11. Gen. 49. 19.

[l] ch. 7. 42. *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 5-8.

*This seems evidently right, and not "Reuel," as in the ordinary Hebrew. "Deuel" is found in chap. i. 14, vii. 42, x. 20, and here in a hundred and eighteen MSS., beside the Samaritan and Vulgate. (*Keil.*)

spirit of praise, as with him who says, "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." (Ps. cxix. 54.) This is the "shout of a King" which Balaam heard at a somewhat later day than this, and before which Moab quailed. How beautiful is this position of Judah, meeting the edge of the east wind with the song of loyal devotedness, his camp thrown forward into the darkness to meet the first rays of the coming day; his captain he with the prophet's eyes, and of the race of those who know the Liberal Giver as their God!

The last thought connects with Issachar, who, with Zebulon, fights under Judah's banner, with his captain Nathaniel, "the gift of God." They are both under the best of leadership evidently. The one will not seek his own, nor the other stray off to the world, while Judah leads.

Taken as a whole, then, the camp of Judah is the expression of the spirit of righteousness, the standard under which he gathers is that of righteousness, a spirit to which statutes are songs, free therefore from legality, and which maintains the enjoyment of relationship to God as Father, where Issachar and Zebulon give the complementary thoughts. How full and sweet an expression is it; and how clearly the New Testament shines out here in the Old!

(ii.) The next camp is that of Reuben, in which the rejected first-born takes humbly the second place. The subjugated will of man shows itself now, as we have seen in him, in the dependent cleaving to God, which is indeed "strength" and stability. "God is a rock"—(Elizur) is the principle which now victoriously leads him on. His place is on the south, which literally is "the right hand," the place of power and dignity, though in dependence: how completely does this mark the position of Reuben, again the *child's* place (Reuben, "see, a son!")

But he needs this place, for the influences of the south are relaxing ones. How good that he has to lean only upon Another! that the place of his strength is inaccessible to any possible attack! It is indeed in resisting the relaxing influences of what men count prosperity that the power of faith is most distinctly shown. How beautiful an example is that of Moses, who, "when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt"! This was the resolute will of faith, the spirit of the prince of Reuben, in the face of the world. And in truth, though the influences of the south are pleasant *for a season*, they end in fierce and furnace heat before which the fruits

3. (17.) The Levites: consecration.

4. (18-24.) The camp of Ephraim: experience.

[3] Then the [m] tent of meeting shall set forth, the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camps: as they encamp, so shall they set forth, every man in his place according to their standards.

[4] The standard of the camp of [n] Ephraim shall be [o] westward, according to their hosts: and the prince of the children of Ephraim shall be [p] Elishama the son of Ammihud; and his host, even those that were numbered of them, forty thousand, five hundred. And by him shall be the tribe of [q] Manasseh: and the prince of the children of Manasseh shall be [r] Gamaliel the son of

[r] ch. 7. 54; Phil. 3. 13.

[m] cf. ch. 10. 17.

[n] Gen. 41. 52. Gen. 48. 20. Gen. 49. 22 -26. Ps. 80. 2. Ps. 60. 7.

[o] cf. Gen. 1. 20.

[p] ch. 7. 48. cf. Phil. 1. 11, 12.

[q] Gen. 41. 51. Gen. 48. 20. Gen. 49. 22 -26. Ps. 80. 2. Ps. 60. 7.

of the earth are dried up and perish. How many have found the hot breath of worldly prosperity to be the destruction of spiritual fruit! The camp of Reuben if it be well maintained, is indeed here a place of honor, and the subjugated will of a Reubenite the first necessity to face the south.

Here, then, Reuben is foremost, and under him are Simeon and Gad. Simeon too has learned dependence upon the prayer-hearing God, and has the peace of conformity of his mind to God's. If Reuben's prince is Elizur ("God is a rock"), the father of the prince of Simeon is Zurishaddai,—"my rock is the Almighty." Thus they are suited companions. But the communion which Simeon represents must be under the lead of Reuben's will of adherence and subjection to God, that it may abide the desert warfare, and thus he fills exactly his place here. Gad also is in the same line of dependence with his captain Eliasaph,—*God* hath added,"—growth through faith, that is, by virtue of what faith embraces. Thus Reuben's camp is finished and furnished. Upon his standard we may read "*faith*."

(iii.) In the centre of the camp we have next the tent of meeting, with its Levite guard. As with Jerusalem at an after-day, "God is in the midst of her: she shall not be moved." (Ps. xlvi. 5.) The Levites, devoted to the sanctuary and surrounding it, present the thought of consecration: and this is at the heart of all successful warfare. There is little said about Levi here: it is his glory to be overshadowed by the glory of God. And this is morally the character of all true consecration: that which vaunts itself is none.

(iv.) Westward was the camp of Ephraim: "westward" being, in Hebrew, "toward the sea." And the sea is pre-eminently in Scripture, as in nature, the type of trouble and unrest, which the word itself implies in the original. We have seen it in the six day's work the type of the evil within us, and which remains in us though regenerate, limited, however, by divine grace. It is the evil, moreover, in its negative rather than its positive aspect, and the west wind, as the sea-wind, differs from the east wind, the wind of the desert in this way. It comes not to wither, but rather loaded with the moisture which revives and refreshes the earth. This is the answer of heaven to the appeal of man's misery, even though that misery be in a sense identified with his sin. As the heaven draws from the bosom of the sea itself the vapors which it pours out again upon the land, so grace is that with which God in sovereign goodness has answered our sin, and the *occasion* of which has been the very sin itself; for only in a world of sinners could He *show* grace. How full and exact are these natural types, when we come to analyze them!

Ephraim's camp, then, lies toward the sea,* and his name reads easily in this connection; for "fruitfulness" is dependent on the showers of heaven, spiritually as much as naturally. Nor only this, but plainly also the result of that which the heaving and stormy sea suggests—still under divine control—is what

* In the desert it must have been *north*-west to do this; but these distinctions are not made in Scripture, and the figure is more exact as Scripture gives it. We have not to consider the changes of locality to get the spiritual instruction, which is ever what is aimed at.

Pedahzur; and his host, even those that were numbered of them, thirty-two thousand, two hundred. Then the tribe of [a]Benjamin: and the prince of the children of Benjamin shall be [b]Abidan the son of Gideoni; and his host, even those that were numbered of them, thirty-five thousand, four hundred. All that were numbered of the camp of Ephraim are a hundred and eight thousand, one hundred, according to their hosts. And they set forth third.

[a] Gen. 35. 16-18. Gen. 49. 27. Ps. 80. 2. Ps. 68. 27.

[b] ch. 7. 60. cf. 2 Tim. 2. 3, 4.

the apostle has affirmed for us, that "tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope." (Rom. v. 3, 4.) Here is the key-word, I doubt not, to Ephraim's position among Israel's hosts. His camp is the fourth camp, and the standard under which it marches is that of *experience*.

In a warfare such as this, experience must needs have an important place: indeed such an one as that which we have just heard from inspired lips itself implies the wilderness warfare and the victory of grace. The "fruitfulness" of which Ephraim's name tells is also an experience of which another apostle makes use in his conflict with those who were seeking to seduce those to whom he writes (1 Jno. ii. 26). The consciousness of what the gospel works, arms us against those who would deprive us of it. The consciousness of our love to the brethren reassures us as to our having passed from death unto life (iii. 14). "Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments" (ii. 3). And "hereby do we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit" (iv. 13). These of course are not the things that give us peace at first, nor the foundation on which we build at any time. Christ alone is the foundation. And yet in the day of conflict we may find "Ephraim the strength of the head" (Ps. lx. 7): the experience of the fruitfulness of grace is like a helmet to resist the blows of skeptical argument, and preserve the mind quiet and undizzy amid the assaults of error.

Quite suited to this is the name of Ephraim's prince. "God hath heard" may be the conviction of faith, but it is also the realization of experience; just as Manasseh's prince, "God is a rewarder," may speak the confidence of hope, but may speak as well what is present realization. Indeed, it will be almost necessarily both, since God thus is continually meeting us with pledges and anticipations of the final recompense. Benjamin's Abidan, "my father is judge," implies also a practical experience.

Manasseh comes naturally under Ephraim's headship, according to Jacob's prophecy. Manasseh—"forgetfulness," is but negative when alone: as a means to an end it must be connected with and governed by the end, in order to have its proper character. The spouse of the psalms is bidden, like another Joseph, to forget all her people and her father's house, but it is in the absorption of her heart with her divine King and Bridegroom (Ps. xlv. 10). So that "to me to live is Christ," of him who proclaimed himself a Manassite, "forgetting that which is behind" (Phil. i. 21; iii. 13). It was not asceticism; it was absorption: a "counting all things but dung, that" he "might win Christ" (chap. iii. 8).

Benjamin also would lack the true spirit if not found under Ephraim. The spirit of controversy, apart from the eager desire of fruit for God, would be but that of Ishmael—warfare for its own sake,—a spirit to be abhorred. How different when it is a burning zeal for Christ and for His glory that animates one, and, as we have seen, Abidan is the captain of the host!

But Ephraim leads Benjamin also, because the experience of the fruit of grace as realized in the soul is necessary for the conflict in its behalf. This we have seen in the apostle's appeal to its testimony as against seducers. And all truth that is to be maintained in the face of an evil world must have like witness in the hearts and lives of its professors. The Benjamite warriors must be found in the camp of Ephraim under the standard of experience.

5. (25-34.) The camp of Dan under the standard of exercise.

[5] The standard of the camp of [u] Dan shall be [v] northward, according to their hosts: and the prince of the children of Dan shall be [w] Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai; and his host, even those that were numbered of them, sixty-two thousand, seven hundred. And those that encamp by him shall be the tribe of [x] Asher: and the prince of the children of Asher shall be [y] Pagiel the son of Ocran; and his host, even those that were numbered of them, forty-one thousand, five hundred. Then the tribe of [z] Naphtali: and the prince of the children of Naphtali shall be [a] Ahira the son of Enan; and his host, even those that were numbered of them, fifty-three thousand, four hundred. All that were numbered of the camp of Dan are a hundred and fifty-seven thousand, six hundred. They set forth last, according to their standards. These are they that were numbered of the children of

[u] Gen. 30. 6. Gen. 49. 17, 18.

[v] Is. 41. 25. Jer. 1. 14. Ezek. 1. 4. Job 26. 7. Ps. 48. 2.

[w] ch. 7. 66. *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 7.

[x] Gen. 30. 13. Gen. 49. 20.

[y] ch. 7. 72. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 6.

[z] Gen. 30. 8. Gen. 49. 21. Ps. 68. 27.

[a] *cf.* Heb. 12. 11.

(v.) And now we come to the last camp, fifth in order here—that of Dan. It lies to the north, and as we have found the other quarters of the heaven with significant names, so it is also here. The north (*tsaphon*) means "what is hidden," and the reason why the north is called so is because to those living in the northern hemisphere the sun travels through the southern heavens, and the north side of any thing is the dark side. Naturally the north itself would be contemplated as the seat of darkness, the abode of gloom and mystery. Striking it is, then, that the camp of Dan falls into the *fifth* place, the number five speaking, as we have so often seen, of *exercise* in connection with God's governmental ways. In this respect Scripture itself recognizes, and the heart of every man bears witness to, the mystery with which they are encompassed. Here still, as with Moses upon the mount, it is impossible to see God's face. Only after He has passed by can we see the glory of His back parts.

And this mystery, how it assaults us! From the north came the most frequent attacks upon the land, and from it will come the final attack. (Ezek. xxxviii., xxxix.) In the sides of the north the Babylonian apostate makes his seat and utters his defiance of the Almighty. (Is. xiv.) We must not imagine this to be without significance. Nothing in Scripture is; and it is by putting things together that we perceive a meaning which taken by themselves such things might seem to lack. Certainly in the place of mystery it is that apostasy and infidelity intrench themselves most securely; while upon the forehead of Babylon the great there is also written, "Mystery."

Dan, who fills the fifth position here, was also the fifth son of Jacob. Child of the handmaid as he is, he represents the spirit of rule or judgment. Strangely enough, in Jacob's prophecy he shows, as we may say, the northern character; and unites in his serpent symbol the two ideas of assailant and apostate. Is this when the influences of his position, which is by and by in the extreme north of Israel, have overcome and carried him away? Here, however, all is different: he is in his place every way, and his prince is Ahiezer, "brother of help." Dan is here, therefore, nearly connected with Abidan, prince of the tribe before him, Benjamin, and speaks similarly of that judgment of one's self according to God which is indeed the only spirit in which to meet without damage the mysteries which confront us. Where intellect merely is only perplexed and baffled, and speculation betrays us into error, or into that pride which is the most fatal error, there the spirit of self-judgment escapes without an effort, finding safe footing where the other falls. This is easily understood. An exercised *conscience* is the true remedy for over-exercise of *mind*, just as the apostle tells us of those on the other hand who, *not* "holding faith and a good conscience," "concerning faith have made shipwreck." (1 Tim. i. 19.) Here, too, Ahiezer finds his place:

Israel by their fathers' houses: [b] all they that were numbered of the camps, according to their hosts, were six hundred and three thousand, five hundred, and fifty. But the Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel, as Jehovah had commanded Moses. And the children of Israel did according to all that Jehovah had commanded Moses: so they encamped, according to their standards; and so they journeyed, every one, according to their families, according to their fathers' houses. [b] ch. 1. 46.

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. iii., iv.)

The designation.

The separation of the Levites to the service of the tent of meeting.

(III.)

1. (vv. 1-13.) The call of God.

a (vv. 1-4.) The priestly heads.

1. NOW these are the generations of [c] Aaron and Moses, in the day that Jehovah spake with Moses in Mount Sinai. And these are the names of the sons of Aaron: Nadab the first-born, and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. These are the names of the sons of Aaron, [c] *cf.* Eph. 4. 8-13.

those in practical lowly service to others are not easily mastered by the subtleties which carry away the theorist.

Dan's standard, then, is truly that of exercise, and under and next to him comes Asher, the "happy:" for happiness clearly depends upon this awakened conscience, and is found in the way of such brotherly helpfulness as Ahiezer speaks of: "if ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." (Jno. xiii. 17.) We have seen that Asher's captain indicates how God maintains us in happiness by the ministry of a chastening sorrow, which sufficiently accounts for Asher being under the standard of "exercise." All is simple here for those that have proved it even in a small measure, and what child of God has not? Only may we heed the admonition of it!

Finally, Naphtali comes under the same banner, his captain also, Ahira, manifestly near akin to Ahiezer. And here every thing tells of exercise, so that there is scarcely need to enlarge upon it. Thus the order of the camps is complete.

SUBD. 2.

THE second subdivision shows us the separation of the Levites to their own peculiar service in connection with the tent of meeting, and details the service itself with special reference to the wilderness condition. The Levites are evidently in as distinct relation to the book of Numbers as the priests are to the book of Leviticus. The latter belong to the sanctuary when set up, and have their place in it as intercessors and as worshipers; the former guard it from without, or attend upon it in its traveling dress. They face outward, as the priests in their service face inward,—that is, Godward: and this is the essential distinction at all times between ministry and priesthood. It must be remembered that in Christianity God's people are both; and not some of them, but all of them. "Ye are a holy priesthood" is said to all; and, in the prophetic wisdom of God, by him whom men have decreed to be the authoritative head of an exclusive priestly caste. Peter it is who is chosen of God to make this known to us (1 Pet. ii. 5): "Ye are a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." Here is the priestly attitude, the face Godward, although now the sacrifices are no longer propitiatory, Christ having offered Himself once for all for this; but "by Him" we are to "offer the sacrifice of *praise* to God continually,—that is, the fruit of our lips, confessing His name." And again we are exhorted, "But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such *sacrifices*, God is well pleased." (Heb. xiii. 15, 16.)

Our altar is, then, now not the brazen altar,—the work there has been done;

the anointed priests, whose hand had been filled to be priests. And [d] Nadab and Abihu died before Jehovah, when they offered strange fire before Jehovah in the wilderness of Sinai; and they had no children; but Eleazar and Ithamar ministered as priests in the presence of Aaron their father.

[d] Lev. 10. 1-3.

and we, having been accepted in the value of it, are introduced into the sanctuary itself,—to the *golden* altar, the vail also being rent, so that we are brought fully nigh to God. And as brought nigh, our lives are to be a thank-offering to Him, that which alone makes a life in its spirit Christian. Praise, intercession, all that in which we draw near to God is in its character thus priestly: the face is toward God.

On the other hand, Levite service is *from* God and *for* God toward men; and this is ministry, which is nevertheless of the most diverse kind: not open ministry of the Word only, although in some sense indeed always that; for when "*without* the Word" a woman wins her ungodly husband to the Lord, it is still by the Word as seen in its effect on her she does it, and she is truly more a minister of it in this than many a wordy preacher. All God's saints are thus ministers: if the priesthood is not among us a special class, but all are priests, so the ministry is not with us a distinct class either, though there are distinct kinds of ministry. Nor is there in this way among saints a special class, holier by their office than are others; *all* are saints, and holy, not one secular and another sacred: a thought which degrades *all* ministry. They who are brought to God in the holiest by the new and living way which Christ hath consecrated for us through the vail, that is to say, His flesh, are as holy as any *can* be: to deny it is to put dishonor on the work of Christ.

The children of Levi sprang, as we know, from the third son of Jacob, from whom came Aaron and Moses also, the double type of Christ. His name, "joined," suits perfectly with the history of the tribe, in their first father joined to Simeon in deeds of violence, which brings upon them as chastisement the sentence, "I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel." But it is in result true blessing. Levi, in whom this is more fully accomplished than in Simeon, is only thereby more fully blessed. He is joined to the Lord, and the Lord becomes his portion, and if scattered in Israel, it is as a spiritual seed to bring forth fruit to God all over the land. Moses' blessing in Deuteronomy speaks of their terrible proving at a time when, as we have seen, in the execution of divine judgment upon the idolaters, he "acknowledged not his brethren, and knew not his own children," and of the result in the divine approval, "they shall teach Jacob Thy judgments, and Israel Thy law." They are to *teach* the lesson who have learnt it; and so it ever is.

1. The first section gives their designation to the service, as the second gives us the service itself. God is sovereign in the choice of those who are to serve Him, which surely does not imply that the highest wisdom is not in the choice, but the contrary. All God's attributes are manifested in His every act; most conspicuously, therefore, where He is most sovereign.

(i.) His call of them is here distinctly given, although there have been intimations of it before this. As we see already, that of the priests must have taken place first, as the calling of the Levites depends upon that of the priests. Communion and worship must precede and introduce to service, if this is to be real and effectual.

(*a*) It begins with the "generations of Aaron and Moses," the spiritual heads of the tribe, though only the name of Moses is given, as his children fall into their place as simple Levites. It is all the plainer on this account that it is as heads of the tribe they are brought in here. Typically, Christ as Priest and King is seen in relation to ministry, the fount and director of it. Aaron is first, because it depends above all upon mediation, is the fruit of this. Aaron, too, is

b (5-10.) Ministry waiting upon priesthood.

And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Bring the [e] tribe of Levi near, and set them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him; and they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole assembly, before the tent of meeting, to do the service of the tabernacle. And they shall [f] keep all the furniture of the tent of meeting, and the charge of the children of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle. And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and his sons: they are [g] wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel. And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priesthood, and the [h] stranger that cometh near shall be put to death.

e cf. 1 Cor. 12.

f cf. 1 Pet. 4. 10, 11.

g cf. 2 Cor. 4. 5.

h ver. 38.

c (11-13.) God's possession.

And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel [i] instead of all the first-born that openeth the womb among the children of Israel; and the Levites shall be mine, because all the first-born are mine: on the day that I smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, I sanctified unto me all the first-born in Israel, both of man and beast; they shall be mine: I am Jehovah.

i ver. 45.

2. (14-39.) The numbering.

[2] And Jehovah spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, saying, [j] Number the children of Levi, by their fathers' houses, by their families: every male from a month old and upward shalt thou number. And Moses

j ver. 40.

the head of that priestly family which is typically our own. Here indeed we find terrible failure and the judgment of God, the first two sons cut off, and the third, Eleazar (the "help of God"), speaking in this way of that resurrection-power in which God acts when all human power is completely at an end. Ithamar, ("where the palm-tree is,") following Eleazar, seems to imply the uprightness and fruitfulness, constantly in Scripture associated with the palm-tree, like which the righteous flourish. (Ps. xcii. 12.) This, at least, is in the true order here; not the less so that in the history we find that when (as in Eli) Ithamar's descendants are exalted above Eleazar's then there is mournful failure and collapse. Together and in due order Eleazar and Ithamar minister as priests in their father's presence.

(*b*) The Levites are now bidden to be brought near, and to be given to Aaron and his sons, to minister to him, and keep the charge of the vessels of the tabernacle: a weighty service, for which they need to be in dependence on the Priest. Indeed, to the service of the priests they are wholly given, ministry belonging to those who worship, and its first and most imperative duty is to guard and care for the holy things with which they have to do. The tabernacle vessels we know to set forth the truth of what Christ is in all His offices; and all ministry must watch over and preserve this.

(*c*) But they are indeed Jehovah's possession, sanctified to Him instead of the first-born which He had sanctified to Himself when He delivered them in Egypt. Those whom He delivers He claims, and only in being His can deliverance be realized. This is the joy of salvation, that we then belong to Him, and that He obtains in us that which He has sought.

(ii.) Next, we have their numbering, in which also their divisions and relationships are made known to us. They are numbered from a month old and upward, as the first-born are, and for the same reason. If only men in their strength were to be redeemed or numbered, would it not appear as if God took

numbered them according to the word of Jehovah, as he was commanded. And these were the children of Levi, according to their names: Gershon and Kohath and Merari. And these are the names of the children of Gershon, according to their families: Libni and Shimei. And the children of Kohath, according to their families: Amram and Jitzhar, Hebron and Uzziel. And the children of Merari, according to their families: Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of the Levites, according to their fathers' houses.

Of [k]Gershon, the family of the Libnites and the family of the Shimeites: these are the families of the Gershonites. Those that were numbered of them, according to the number of all the males from a month old and upward,—those that were numbered of them were seven thousand, five hundred. The families of the Gershonites encamped behind the tabernacle [l]westward. And the prince of the father's house of the Gershonites was Eliasaph the son of Lael. And the charge of the children of Gershon in the tent of meeting was the [m]tabernacle, and the tent, the covering thereof, and the screen for the entrance of the tent of meeting, and the hangings of the court, and the screen for the entrance of the court, which surrounds the tabernacle and the altar, and the cords thereof for all its service.

And of [n]Kohath was the family of the Amramites and the family of the Jitzharites and the family of the Hebronites and the family of the Uzzielites: these were the families of the Kohathites. According to the number

k *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 11. Heb. 13. 14.

l ch. 2. 18.

m ch. 7. 7. Ex. 26. 1.

n Matt. 18. 20.

"pleasure in the legs of a man"? (Ps. cxlvii. 10.) But it is the soul He values, and the soul of an infant is precious in His sight: His "delight" is "in the sons of men."

The sons of Levi are Gershon, Kohath, and Merari, and these three are the heads of eight families. "Gershon" means "exile;" his two sons are Libni, "white," and Shimei, "my report:" names not difficult to unite into a meaning. For a true exile is indeed one conscious of exile, though it be but for a while, from the home of his heart; and it is from this spirit of strangership that springs power for purity and freedom from defilement; while the last name may speak naturally of what has in this case fullest value for him, the "report" of things not now seen.

Correspondingly the Gershonites have charge of all that which in the tabernacle speaks of practical righteousness, whether in Christ or in His people, as the tabernacle itself, the tent and its covering, the hangings of the court, and what connects with these. He is occupied with what is subjective, as we say, and illustrates the anointed foot. His prince is Eliasaph, "God hath added," a name we have had before in the prince of Gad, and near akin to Joseph. "Increase" is in the line of Gershon's practical bent, and that "increase" is from *God* is a good reminder to those in this way who may be in danger of self-occupation, meaning, as it always does, self-*confidence*. These princes we have noticed to be always overcomers. He is the son of Lael, "of God," or, "belonging to God," a name which seems as if it welled out of the deep joy of a soul that had found here the secret of its strength and progress.

Kohath comes next with his four sons, whose names (with his own) are much more difficult to read. His charge was the ark, the table, the lamp-stand, the

of all the males from a month old and upward, there were eight thousand, six hundred who kept the charge of the sanctuary. The families of the children of Kohath encamped on the side of the tabernacle [o] southward. And the prince of the father's house of the families of the Kohathites was Elitzaphan the son of Uzziel. And their charge was the [p] ark, and the table, and the lampstand, and the altars, and the vessels of the sanctuary wherewith they ministered, and the screen, and all the service thereof. And the prince of the princes of the Levites was Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest: he had the oversight of them that kept the charge of the sanctuary.

[o] ch. 2. 10.

[p] ch. 7. 9. 1 Chron. 15. 2.

altars, and the utensils belonging to all this, with the one linen article, which speaks, as we know well, of the humanity of Christ. Thus it is easy to see that typically the Kohathite ministry is objective; his occupation is with what is outside himself in Christ; the anointed *ear* is nearer his symbol than the anointed foot. His prince is beautifully Elitzaphan, "[whom] God hath hidden," for here it is indeed in the presence of God, and in occupation with Christ, that self is lost. He is the son of Uzziel, the "power of God." May we not take it as the realization of the apostle's prayer (Eph. iii. 16, 17) "that He would grant you according to the riches of His glory, to be *strengthened with might* by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith"?

What, then, of these first names, which after all are not uncertain in their meaning, but difficult in their application? "Kohath," all are agreed, means "assembly." He has indeed in his charge the ark, the centre of gathering. To lift up Christ as the One in whom, and as the fruit of His work, God reveals Himself to us, is to draw men, according to His assurance, unto Him. Here is indeed the glory of the Kohathite ministry: as when the Baptist out of the fullness of his heart, when looking upon Jesus as He walked, said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" and those who heard him speak left him to follow Jesus.

Kohath's first son is Amram, "people of the Exalted One," a beautiful name, if we connect it with that gathering to Christ of which his own name seems to speak to us; while the next is Jitzhar, "oil," the undoubted type of the Spirit as the Anointer; then we have Hebron, "union," as some put it, "communion," as we have elsewhere interpreted it; in either case, clearly the effect of the Spirit's work; lastly, we find the father of Elitzaphan, Uzziel, "the power of God." That these names run most naturally together, that they harmonize in a blessed presentation of the results of Kohathite ministry, is plain. Are they not the real significance of what must have significance if it be of God?

Last of Levi's three sons we find Merari, "bitter," with his two sons, Mahli, "sick," and Mushi, "yielding." Strangest words of all are these in connection with Levi's sons. These families have charge of the boards of the tabernacle and its bars, its pillars and sockets, and those of the court and the pegs and cords. Here it is evident that not so much Christ Himself as the people of the Lord occupy Merari. His is the anointed *hand*. His work is in the main what we may call ecclesiastical; and who that has engaged in this but has found the bitterness which expresses itself in Merari's name? Little fitted would he be for ministry who could not feel it; and this we must believe to be the reason of a connection which seems strange enough, and yet expresses familiar experience. Think of how Paul's epistles convey this to us from the full heart of a devotedness which went on, finding from men rather disappointment than recompense, —in his own words, "Though the more abundantly I love you the less I be loved."

Of [q] Merari was the family of the Mahlites and the family of the Mushites: these were the families of the Merarites. And they that were numbered of them, according to the number of all the males from a month old and upward, were six thousand, two hundred. And the prince of the father's house of the families of the Merarites was Zuriel the son of Abihail. They encamped on the side of the tabernacle [r] northward. And the appointed charge of the children of Merari was the [s] boards of the tabernacle, and its bars, and its pillars, and its sockets, and all its furniture, and all its service; and the pillars of the court round about, and their sockets, and their pegs, and their cords.

And those that encamped before the tabernacle [t] eastward, in front of the tent of meeting, toward the sunrise, were Moses, and Aaron and his sons, keeping the charge of the sanctuary, according to the charge of the children of Israel: and the [u] stranger that cometh near shall be put to death.

[v] All that were numbered of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron numbered at the word of Jehovah, according to their families,—all their males from a month old and upward, were twenty-two thousand.

3. (40-51.) Sanctification of the Levites instead of the first-born.

[3] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Number all the [w] first-born males of the children of Israel from a month old and upward, and take the number of their names. And thou shalt take the Levites for me—I am Jehovah,—instead of all the first-born of the children of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of all the firstlings of the cattle of the children of Israel. And Moses numbered, as Jehovah had commanded him, all the first-born of the children of Israel. And all the first-born males, according to the number of the names, from a month old and upward, of those that were numbered of them, were twenty-two thousand, two hundred, and seventy-three.

And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Take the Levites [x] instead of all the first-born among the children of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of their

q *cf.* Col. 1. 24. Phil. 1. 29, 30. Acts 9. 16. 1 Cor. 4. 8-13.

r ch. 2. 25. *cf.* 3 Jno. 9, 10.

s ch. 7. 8. *cf.* Eph. 4. 16.

t ch. 2. 3. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 12-23.

u ver. 10. *cf.* Acts 8. 21.

v ch. 26. 62. *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 6, 7.

w ver. 14. *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 19, 20. Acts 9. 20.

x ch. 8. 16.

Mahli may express on the other hand the faintness that results from excessive labor; while Mushi may denote that spirit of forbearance and gentleness that, where the truth permits, can yield all else,—a spirit how necessary in just such relation as is here intimated to the Church of God! The lack of it is as fruitful a cause of trouble among saints as perhaps can be found. Merari's captain is in striking, comforting contrast to these names, Zuriel, "my rock is God," the son of Abihail, "the father of valor,"—the "virtue" of 2 Pet. i.

It should be noted that Merari significantly encamps *north* of the tabernacle, Kohath to the south, Gershon to the west, while Moses, Aaron, and his sons encamp toward the east, filling thus Judah's place in the inner circle.

(iii.) We have next the numbering of the first-born, the sanctification of the Levites in their place, and the redemption of the overplus. We can add nothing of importance to what has been already said with regard to this.

cattle; and the Levites shall be mine: I am Jehovah.
And for those that are to be redeemed, the two hundred
and seventy-three of the first-born of the children of
Israel which are in excess of the Levites, thou shalt
take [y] five shekels apiece by the poll; in shekels of the
sanctuary shalt thou take them—at twenty gerahs the
shekel. And thou shalt give unto Aaron and to his
sons the money for the [z] redemption of those in excess
among them. And Moses took the redemption-money
of those that were over and above those redeemed by
the Levites: of the first-born of the children of Israel
he took the money,—a thousand, three hundred, and
sixty-five shekels, in shekels of the sanctuary. And
Moses gave the money of those that were redeemed
unto Aaron and his sons, according to the word of
Jehovah, as Jehovah had commanded Moses.

y *cf.* Ex. 38. 25, 26.

z Ex. 26. 19. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19.

(IV.)

Service of the Levites, and their numbering.

1. (vv. 1-33.) Their service ordered of God,

a (vv. 1-20.) Kohath: the testimony on the divine side.

2. [1]And Jehovah spake unto Moses and unto Aaron,
saying, Take the sum of the children of Kohath from
among the children of Levi, by their families, by their
fathers' houses, from [a] thirty years old and upward, even
unto fifty years old,—all that enter into the host, to do
the work in the tent of meeting. This shall be the
service of the children of Kohath in the tent of meeting:
it is most holy. And when the camp setteth forward,
Aaron shall come, and his sons, and take down the
covering [b] vail, and cover the ark of the testimony with
it; and they shall put on it a covering of [c] sealskin, and

a *cf.* Luke 3. 23. 1 Tim. 3. 6.

b Ex. 26. 31, *cf.* Heb. 10. 19, 20.

c Ex. 26. 14. *cf.* Jno. 1. 46. 1 Cor. 2. 8.

2. We have now the service of the Levites and the numbering of those of age for service. The service here is what the book of the wilderness would naturally insist upon, the form of it that which was peculiar to the wilderness, or to the time when there was as yet no settled location for the ark of God, no place in which was Jehovah's name. This service is the carriage of the holy things through the wilderness, the type for us of the presentation in the world, as we pass through it, of Christ and the heavenly truths of Christianity. These, it is true, are in their traveling dress, and as they are in themselves, in their innermost reality, faith alone can know them. Yet is this testimony of the highest possible value, counted so of God, who, if it be His good pleasure thus to go through the world, trusts Himself to the loving obedience of His people to bear Him through.

It is a testimony with the lips as in the life, in the life as with the lips, the truth uttered never to be divorced from the truth embodied in practice. The former without the latter would be empty words; the latter without the former (if such a thing indeed were possible) an enigma never to be solved, a lost hieroglyph. The two together fulfill our Lord's precept, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." This combined testimony alone places our good works in the *light*, in which when seen they glorify the Father.

(i.) This, then, is Levite service here. In the first part of this section the families of the tribe are put into their several places by God, He sovereign in His appointment as to it, every thing of course, therefore, in its place perfectly ordered,—Kohath with his precious vessels, Gershon with his fine linen, Merari with his boards and pillars. Service is gift, and therefore gift is the appointment to service, since the Giver can make no mistake. What an immense thing for the Church of God if it could rise up to this so simple truth, and every mem-

spread over it a cloth all of [d]blue, and put its staves in it. And on the [e]table of show-bread shall they spread a cloth of blue, and put on it the dishes and spoons and cups, and the flagons to pour out with; and the continual bread shall be thereon. And they shall spread upon them a [f]scarlet cloth, and cover it with a covering of sealskin, and put in its staves. And they shall take a cloth of blue, and cover the [g]lamp-stand of the light, and its lamps, and its snuffers, and its snuff-dishes, and all its oil-vessels wherewith they minister to it. And they shall put it and all its vessels within a covering of sealskin, and put it upon a bearing-frame. And upon the golden [h]altar they shall spread a cloth of blue, and cover it with a covering of sealskin, and put in its staves. And they shall take all the vessels of ministry wherewith they minister in the sanctuary, and put them in a cloth of blue, and cover them with a covering of sealskin, and put them upon the bearing-frame. And they shall take away the ashes from the [i]altar, and spread on it a [j]purple cloth, and they shall put upon it all its vessels wherewith they minister about it,—the fire-pans, the flesh-hooks, the shovels, and the basins,—all the vessels of the altar; and they shall spread over it a covering of sealskin, and put in its staves. And when Aaron and

[d] *cf.* Jno. 3. 13.
[e] Ex. 25. 23.
[f] *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 7. Jno. 1. 49.
[g] Ex. 25. 31. Jno. 8. 12. Phil. 2. 15, 16.
[h] Ex. 30. 1. Heb. 13. 10.
[i] Ex. 39. 1.
[j] *cf.* Jno. 19. 2. Heb. 2. 9. Rev. 5. 9.

ber of the body of Christ were to start out of the bands with which custom and tradition have enswathed him, into the healthful use of all the faculties and powers with which God has endued him! Does he question his title or responsibility to use any *other* faculties than spiritual ones? It would be thought strange indeed to do so. Here, and here alone, where the faculties are the highest, and the need for their exercise is the most urgent, *here* he questions.

It must not be thought, however, that because God has apportioned to the Kohathites one charge, to the Gershonites another, and to the Merarites still another, that Christians are in a similar way divided into corresponding classes. It is true that each Christian has undoubtedly some character of gift, or some proportion of gifts, special to himself. But this is not represented, as we see easily, by the special charges here. On the contrary, every Christian is Kohathite, Gershonite, and Merarite all in one: the objective cannot be divorced from the subjective, nor either from the necessary outflow to others, without fatal consequences.

(*a*) Kohath is another instance of which there have been so many, that the first-born naturally loses his place to another. Kohath is not the first-born of Levi, but Gershon is. Grace, not nature, rules.

Let us look, then, at Kohath's charge. Here first we have the ark, the throne of God in Israel, a throne typically of grace, the lid of the ark being the "propitiatory" or "mercy-seat," on which once a year the precious blood was sprinkled. Yet the ark with its mercy-seat was Christ, for it is in Christ, and through His work, that God can take His place in gracious government over a redeemed people. But the ark is wrapped in a covering vail; it is Christ as known in the flesh that is here, though hiding within Himself all His heavenly glory. Outside of this is a sealskin covering, the impenetrable holiness of His character; and outside of this again a cloth wholly of blue, the heavenly color.

Essentially, then, what we have is Christ in the grace of humanity, yet holy and heavenly, our redeemer and Lord. This implies on our part of course as a first principle obedience, and that the joyful obedience of the redeemed.

his sons have made an end of covering the sanctuary, and all the vessels of the sanctuary, when the camp is to set forward,—after that, the sons of Kohath shall come to bear; but they shall [k] touch no holy thing, that they die not: these things are the burden of the sons of Kohath in the tent of meeting. And the appointment of [l] Eleazar the son of Aaron, is the oil for the light, and the sweet incense, and the continual meal-offering, and the anointing oil,—the oversight of all the tabernacle, and of all that is therein, the sanctuary and all the furniture thereof.

[k] *cf.* 2 Sam. 6. 6.

[l] ch. 3. 32. Acts 2. 33.

And Jehovah spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, [m] Cut not off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites from among the Levites; but do this unto them, that they live, and die not, when they approach that which is most holy: let Aaron and his sons go in, and set them every one to his service and to his burden; and they shall not go in to see the holy things even for a moment, that they die not.

[m] ver. 15. *cf.* 2 Cor. 3. 5, 6. 1 Tim. 1. 12.

b (21-28.) Gershon: separation.

And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Take also the sum of the sons of Gershon, by their fathers' houses, by their families: from thirty years old and upward,

Next to this is borne the table of show-bread: Christ again, as maintaining us in communion, for this entered into heaven, so that a cloth of blue immediately envelops the table upon which are the furniture of the table and the vessels of the drink-offering, with the continual bread itself. The bread is primarily for God, the *presence*-bread, though the food of the priests afterward, and thus communion is maintained according to the value of the position which we have in Christ, fruit of that corn of wheat which, that it might not abide alone, has fallen into the ground and died. This is emphasized by the crimson cloth which covers all, covered itself only with the sealskin covering, like that "it is most holy," of the sin-offering.

Next, the lamp-stand is covered like the table with a cloth of blue, for Christ as the maintainer of spiritual light is passed into the heavens. For the world it is hidden: it is night, and the sun is down; but upon us who are in the sanctuary it shines still through the night. Outside the lamp is wrapped again in the sealskin covering: what is most apparent is the holiness of the truth.

Then we have, similarly covered with blue and sealskin, the altar of incense; and then the vessels of service. Then follows the altar of burnt-offering, covered with a *purple* cloth, for the Crucified is the One who reigns; and "if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him."

Thus typically it is with Christ in His relationship to God and to His people that Kohath is occupied, and this implies our place before God, communion with God, heavenly illumination, worship, and the way to glory by the cross. Practical in the highest way as all this is, the truth is yet essentially objective: it points the eye in the first place elsewhere than upon self, and than this very thing nothing can be more practical. Yet the testimony is that of God Himself, and not of man, though man may utter and re-utter it. We enter the heavens to be qualified for earth; we do not begin on earth, by and by to reach the heavens. Our simplest earthly duties require us to be conversant with things above.

(*b*) Gershon has a charge very distinct from that of Kohath. His is all the fine linen, whether of the tabernacle or the court, except the vail, together with the coverings of skin, and what pertains to these. We have looked at them al-

even to fifty years old shalt thou number them,—all that enter in to labor in the work, to do service in the tent of meeting. This is the service of the families of the Gershonites in serving and in burdens: they shall bear the [n] curtains of the tabernacle, the tent of meeting, its covering, and the sealskin covering which is upon it above, and the screen for the entrance of the tent of meeting, and the hangings of the court, and the screen for the entrance of the gate of the court which surroundeth the tabernacle and the altar, and their cords, and all the instruments of their service; and all that is to be done for these things shall they perform. At the word of Aaron and his sons shall be all the service of the sons of the Gershonites, as to all their burdens and all their service; and ye shall appoint unto them in charge all their burdens. This is the service of the families of the sons of the Gershonites in the tent of meeting; and their charge shall be under the hand of [o] Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

n ch. 3. 25. ch. 7. 7. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 11.– Heb. 13.14. Jno. 18. 36.

o ver. 33. Phil. 1. 11. Jas. 1. 27.

ready severally as they came before us in the book of Exodus, and we see readily that they all speak of practical righteousness or character in some way. In the curtains and coverings of the tabernacle itself they speak of Christ; in the hangings of the court they speak of His people, but still in a similar way. We have already said that he illustrates the anointed foot; but this scarcely seems to agree with the numerical place which Scripture assigns to Gershon: we should naturally have given him a fourth place rather than a second.

But Scripture is given to guide and correct our thoughts, not to be subject to them: it would be of no use to us whatever if it were. What, then, does the number point to with which is associated this second form of Levite service? The only possible thought seems that of *separation*, and as soon as we look a little carefully at Gershon here a certain connection begins to appear.

First, his name—"exile"—speaks very simply of separation from the place to which he is native, typically for us heaven, and Gershon belongs by birth to Canaan, while his life afterward in Egypt justifies his name. Is not this, too, to be our character, "strangers," as belonging to heaven, "partakers of the heavenly calling?" and does it not appeal to us as naturally following and dependent on that to which Kohath has introduced us? is not the heavenly objective truth, as just now said, the *governing* truth in this case, as it ought to be?

Then we may observe that the curtains, coverings, and hangings with which Gershon has to do are in fact all *lines of separation*. They define the tabernacle itself, or mark off and separate the court from the wilderness around. They speak therefore, easily and without strain, of the boundary-lines of God's special inclosure such as the Church is in the world.

Scripture insists upon such a separation every where: it is not strange to find it insisted upon here; and it is an essential part of *testimony* surely, which, we have seen, this Levite service is. What need, too, of enforcement of what Satan and the world from the outside, in league with the flesh within us, unite to break through and, if possible, destroy! Frail enough too for a wall these linen curtains look! That which is of God is constantly exposed to the contempt of unbelief; and this unbelief the event for long often seems to justify. To-day, the Church itself thinks little of separation; and yet he who holds by the Word of God will find the reckoning of eternity to be on his side.

Gershon's separation is not an imaginary one. It is not an air-line, but one maintained, as these linen hangings suggest, by practical righteousness. How much, in fact, depends upon it! If God cannot walk with the world, my walk-

c (29–33.) Merari: the testimony of union.

As for the sons of Merari, by their families, by their fathers' houses, shalt thou number them: from thirty years old and upward, even unto fifty years old shalt thou number them,—all that enter into the labor, to perform the service of the tent of meeting. And this is the charge of their burden, according to all their service in the tent of meeting: the [p] boards of the tabernacle, and its bars, and its pillars, and its sockets, and the pillars of the court round about, and their sockets, and their pegs, and their cords,—all their instruments, according to all their service; and ye shall number to them by name the instruments which are the charge of their burdens. This is the service of the families of the sons of Merari, according to all their service in the tent of meeting, under the hand of [q] Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

p ch. 3. 33. ch. 7. 8. *cf.* 2Cor. 11. 23-29. Phil. 2. 17. Col. 1. 24, 25.

q ver. 28.

2. (34–49.) Numbering for service.

[2] And Moses and Aaron and the princes of the assembly numbered the sons of the [r] Kohathites, by their families, and by their fathers' houses, from thirty years old and upward, even unto fifty years old,—all that enter into the labor, for service in the tent of meeting; and those that were numbered of them by their families were two thousand, seven hundred, and fifty. These are they

r ch. 3. 27.

ing with Him requires as its first necessity separation from it: what righteousness can there be apart from a walk with Him? There can at least be no right or Christian measure. The grace and peace which the apostle prays may be to us are "from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." (Gal. i. 3, 4.) The cross of Christ is that by which the world is crucified unto us and we unto the world; and for this he who wrote thus gloried in it. (Gal. vi. 14.) If times are changed, the cross of Christ at least has not, and those who "mind earthly things" are by that fact "enemies of the cross of Christ." (Phil. iii. 18, 19.)

(*c*) We come now to Merari's charge: after the testimony of separation follows that of union; for this is surely what the tabernacle frame-work suggests,—the boards, bars, pillars, and sockets, made for each other, and which Merari himself joined together wherever they encamped. The boards thus united speak of the Church, "builded together for a habitation of God in spirit," (Eph. ii. 22)—that is, a spiritual habitation corresponding to the material one which is here before us. The place of Merari in this way has been already indicated, and in so brief an outline as alone is possible to us now, there remains little to be added. Only we may note that while Kohath's charge is under the oversight of Aaron's son Eleazar, those of Gershon and Merari both fall under that of Ithamar. Eleazar, the *third* son, and whose name signifies "the help of God," naturally reminds us of resurrection-power, and in that way of the position into which the Risen Priest introduces us. The Kohathite ministry depends upon this new place which Christ has taken for us. Ithamar is the *fourth* son, and his name signifies "where the palm is." Practical walk (for the righteous is compared to the palm-tree) is easily read in him, and thus his connection is clearly with Gershon and Merari.

(ii.) Now comes the numbering of the Levites who are of age for service. Every one such finds his place in this reckoning. He enters it at thirty, the age of *realized capacity* (3 x 10); he leaves it, in its wilderness-form, at fifty, or typically only when the creature stands before his God in the day of account (5 x 10).

that were numbered of the families of the Kohathites,—all that served in the tent of meeting, whom Moses and Aaron numbered at the word of Jehovah by the hand of Moses. And those that were numbered of the sons of [s]Gershon by their families, even by their fathers' houses, from thirty years old and upward, even unto fifty years old,—all that entered into the labor, for service in the tent of meeting, even those that were numbered of them by their families, by their fathers' houses, were two thousand, six hundred, and thirty. These are they that were numbered of the families of the sons of Gershon,—all that served in the tent of meeting, whom Moses and Aaron numbered at the word of Jehovah. And those that were numbered of the families of the sons of [t]Merari, by their families, by their fathers' houses, from thirty years old and upward, even unto fifty years old,—all that entered into the labor, for service in the tent of meeting, even those that were numbered of them by their families, were three thousand, two hundred. These are they that were numbered of the families of the sons of Merari, whom Moses and Aaron numbered at the word of Jehovah by the hand of Moses. [u]All those that were numbered of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron and the princes of Israel numbered, by their families, even by their fathers' houses, from thirty years old and upward, even to fifty years old,—all that came to do the work of service and the work of burdens in the tent of meeting, even those that were numbered of them, were eight thousand, five hundred, and eighty. At the word of Jehovah by the hand of Moses did they number them, every one for his service and for his burden, and numbered by him as Jehovah had commanded Moses.

s ch. 3. 21.

t ch. 3. 33.

u ch. 3. 39. cf. Rom. 16. 1-16.

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chap. v., vi.)

The sanctification of the camp.

(V. 1-4.)

Life to be maintained in incorruption and congruity.

1. AND Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Command the children of Israel that they [v]put out of the camp every [w]leper, and every one that hath an [x]issue, and every one defiled by the [y]dead: both male and female shall ye put out,—without the camp shall

v Lev. 13. 45, 46. ch. 12. 10-15. Deut. 23. 9, 10. cf. 1 Cor. 5. 13.

w 2 Kings 7. 3.

x Lev. 15. 2.

y Lev. 22. 4.

As to the numbers of the respective families, one can only confess that lack of proper diligence is the reason of being able to say nothing of them. Assuredly there is meaning in it all worthy of Him who has inspired it; and those who seek in faith and humility, here as elsewhere, shall find.

SUBD. 3.

THE camp being thus ordered and arranged, the next thing is to have it cleansed from evil, that God, in whom alone their strength is, may be with them. The place of this, and its necessity, need not be dwelt upon: the details are full of interest, their connection with one another made quite plain only by their typical significance, according to which alone leprosy and contact with the dead would be defilement. How evidently are the things that happened unto Israel

ye put them, that they defile not their camps in the midst of which I [z]dwell. And the children of Israel did so, and put them out without the camp: as Jehovah spake unto Moses, so did the children of Israel do.

z Lev. 16.16. ch. 35. 34. cf. 2 Cor. 6. 16, 1 Tim.3.15.

(vv. 5-10.)

Restitution ordained with overplus.

2. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, [a]When a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit, to do what is unfaith-

a Lev.6.1-7.

types which are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages are come!

1. First, in the leper and the man with an issue we find, though in different degrees, the outbreak of the flesh. The taint of the natural life, poisoned by sin, is easily read in these things, which are in fact the penalties of sin. From this there would be no escape, for it no help, did we not receive a new life, divine, and so in itself incorrupt, untainted. With this comes the responsibility of judging what is of the old, which these two things show us unjudged. They who are thus marked as indulging sin are to be put out of the camp; and with them those defiled with the dead, for the life we have received is eternal. This eternal life is therefore to be maintained in incorruption, and dissociation from all that is incongruous with it. Our Lord's words are the New-Testament enforcement of this,—"Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." (Luke ix. 60.)

Defilement with the dead is characteristic of the book of Numbers: we have it again in the law of the Nazarite, in the provision of the second passover, and above all in the ordinance of the red heifer, which is specifically for purification from it. Thus the evil is one of great importance, and in close relation to the wilderness-journey. Nor is it difficult to see this connection. The wilderness, in its barrenness, in its lack of what would sustain life, naturally suggests death. On many an one the skeletons of animals and men lie far and wide, bleaching in sun and wind. The world in the same way has on it the stamp and seal of death, the evident mark of its distance and alienation from the living God. No wonder if all connected with it naturally should be thus associated with uncleanness in the Word of God. So that which dies of itself may not be eaten, though that which is slain and offered to God is, on the contrary, the food of both God and man.

The contact that defiles is of course for us spiritual. It is that cleaving to the world which the apostle laments, even weeping, in the professors of Christianity, and in its full development makes them such as "whose god is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." (Phil. iii. 19.) These he calls "enemies of the cross of Christ," for the cross of Christ is that by which we are crucified to the world and the world to us (Gal. vi. 14). And "in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation." "Our conversation"—our citizenship—"is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." (Phil. iii. 20.)

There are lighter grades, of course, and some forms of it that seem inevitable; yet in its lightest form it is a most serious evil. The world is all around us, the scene through which we pass, and in which we have our daily occupation, attractive still to the old nature, and an enemy's country, where "the prince of the power of the air," with unseen subtle influences, "worketh in the children of disobedience." Unlike Adam in Eden, here we are called to suspect everywhere the stratagems of an active foe, who makes the very place of tombs his stronghold. In it we have to be; of it we are not: we are a new creation—citizens of heaven, and to act in character with this, "as strangers and pilgrims," thus to "abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."

2. The second thing in this purification of the camp is the restitution enjoined for trespass—a restitution which we have already seen is to be in excess of the

ful toward Jehovah, and that soul be guilty; then they shall confess their sin that they have committed, and he shall make restitution in full for his trespass, and shall add to it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed. And if the man have no kinsman to whom to recompense the trespass, the recompense for trespass which is made unto Jehovah shall be the priest's, beside the ram of the atonement whereby atonement is made for him. And every [b]heave-offering of all the holy things of the children of Israel which they present unto the priest shall be his. And every man's hallowed things shall be his: whatever any man giveth unto the priest, it shall be his.

b Lev. 7. 32.

(11-31.)

The sanctity of marriage to be maintained: typifying the truth of sanctification in its innermost reality.

3. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man's [c]wife go astray, and act unfaithfully with him, and a man lie with her carnally, and it be hid from the eyes of her husband, and it be concealed that she is defiled, and there be no witness against her, and she were not taken in the act; and the spirit of [d]jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled; or if the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be not defiled; then shall the man bring his wife unto the [e]priest, and bring her

c *cf.* Ezek. 16. 15. 2 Cor. 11. 2.

d *cf.* Matt. 1. 18-21. Song 8. 6.

e Lev. 13 2.

injury inflicted by the trespass. It does not satisfy God to have the loss made up; there must be an overplus of gain to him who has suffered the loss, wherein God too is glorified. This is the positive side of blessing in the conflict with evil, not as before simply the banishment of it; and for this the work of Christ must come in, as seen in the accompanying sacrifice: it is a triumph of holiness which redemption alone can secure, and has secured, and which those redeemed from sin are called to imitate.

3. In the third case, there is not a dealing with known sin, but even the suspicion is not to be tolerated in the people of God. In the jealousy-offering, a direct appeal to God is provided in such a case, where indeed the sin suspected struck at the very foundation of that family relation which not only in Israel but elsewhere is itself the foundation of all other relation between man and man. Its place here, therefore, where the purification of the camp is in question, is perfectly simple, while the typical meaning adds to its significance. The relation of man and wife is that by which (as the nearest and most intimate of all,) it pleased God to set forth His own relation with His covenant-people (Isa. liv. 5; Jer. xxxi. 32). The Church is at present but *espoused* to Christ, not married (2 Cor. xi. 2; Rev. xix. 7); but as to the bond existing, Scripture treats it as the same in both cases (Deut. xxii. 23, 24). To the Church, therefore, also the type fully applies,—in its *details*, more completely than to Israel.

How grave a question, then, is here! and there must not be even a question. The Lord is jealous over us with a heart that never wanders, a love that does not admit a question. How it would spoil all if the suspicion here could be allowed as to the husband! but "I have loved thee with an everlasting love" is what is ever true on His side. The church, alas! may give herself to another, as Israel also did: the history of one is in sorrowful correspondence with that of the other.

When there is suspicion the man brings his wife to the priest, and for her a meal-offering of *barley*-meal, not the fine wheat-flour of the usual meal-offering.

offering for her—the tenth of an ephah of [f]barley meal; he shall [g]not pour oil on it, nor put frankincense thereon, for it is a meal-offering of jealousy, a meal-offering of memorial, to bring [h]iniquity into remembrance. And the priest shall bring her near, and set her before Jehovah. And the priest shall take [i]holy water in an [i]earthen vessel, and the priest shall take of the [k]dust that is on the tabernacle-floor, and put it into the water. And the priest shall set the woman before Jehovah, and [l]uncover the woman's head, and put in her hands the meal-offering of memorial, which is the jealousy-offering; and in the priest's hand shall be the bitter water that bringeth the curse: and the priest shall [m]adjure her, and say unto the woman, If no man have lain with thee, and if thou hast not gone astray in uncleanness, [in being with another] instead of thy husband, be free from this bitter water that bringeth the curse. But if thou hast gone astray [to another] instead of thy husband, and hast been defiled, and a man have lain with thee beside thy husband; (then the priest shall adjure the woman with the oath of curse, and the priest shall say unto the woman,) Jehovah make thee a curse and an oath among thy people, when Jehovah maketh thy thigh to sink and thy belly to swell; and let this water that bringeth the curse enter into thy bowels, to cause thy belly to swell and thy thigh to sink. And the

[f] *cf.* Ju. 7. 13.
[g] Lev. 5. 11.
[h] Lev. 5. 12. *cf.* Heb. 10. 3.
[i] *cf.* Ex. 40. 7. Heb. 4. 12, 13.
[j] Lev. 14. 5.
[k] *cf.* Ps. 22. 15.
[l] 1 Cor. 11. 15.
[m] *cf.* Deut. 21. 7. 1 Cor. 11. 29.

The reason for the substitution has been variously interpreted. The Rabbins took it as a sign that the adulteress had conducted herself like an irrational animal; but the woman is not yet proved to be an adulteress. Others suggest that "the persons presenting the offering were invoking the punishment of a crime, and not the favor of God," but this is not strictly true, nor would an offering for the supposed guilty person appear suitable for such a purpose. Knobel takes it to indicate that the offerer might be innocent, and in that case no offering at all was required. Keil, rightly rejecting all these, supposes it to represent the questionable repute in which the woman stood, or the ambiguous, suspicious character of her conduct; but the first of these the offering does not seem able to express, the second might not be really the truth: circumstances might arise beyond her own control entirely which might bring her into suspicion. Lange thinks that the "poor bond of union that still exists between the parties is designated by the inferior offering;" but the offering is the woman's, not the man's, though the man provide it: it represents in some way her alone. Oehler says, "As an accused person appears before the tribunal in mourning attire, without the question of his guilt or innocence being in any way affected, so may this sacrifice be said to exhibit a merely *gloomy character*." Which, however, would give no precision to the type at all.

The truth seems to be rather that the meal-offering of fine wheat-flour represents Christ, as we have seen; and although the Pentecostal wave loaves were an exception, figuring the Church, yet in this case the distinction is made plain by the introduction of *leaven* into the flour. In the case before us the leaven would have implied guilt, and the fine wheat would have been out of place: the barley-meal, coarser and commoner, might well typify a life which could not be professed to be very much, as in God's sight, yet not corrupted in a manner charged. This offered from the woman's hand would indeed call for God's remembrance as to its truth or falsehood. The omission of oil and frankincense

woman shall say, Amen, amen. And the priest shall write these curses in a book, and blot them out in the bitter water: and he shall cause the woman to [n] drink of the bitter water that bringeth the curse, and the water that bringeth the curse shall enter into her for bitterness. And the priest shall take the meal-offering of jealousy from the woman's hand, and wave the meal-offering before Jehovah; and he shall present it at the altar. And the priest shall take a handful of the meal-offering as a memorial thereof; and afterward, he shall cause the woman to drink the bitter water. And when he hath caused her to drink the bitter water, then it shall be, if she be defiled, and have been unfaithful to her husband, that the water that bringeth the curse shall enter into her for bitterness, and her belly shall swell, and her thigh shall sink, and the woman shall be for a curse in the midst of her people. And if the woman be not defiled, but she be pure, then shall she be clear, and shall conceive seed. This is the law of jealousies, when a wife goeth astray [to another] instead of her husband, and is defiled; or if the spirit of jealousy come upon a man, and he be jealous of his wife, then shall he set the woman before Jehovah, and the priest shall do with her according to all this law. Then shall the man be clear of iniquity, and that woman shall bear her iniquity.

[n] *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 27.

may indeed speak of one coming with a sad heart and not in the joyous spirit of praise.

Before this is offered, however, holy (that is, consecrated) water is put into an earthen vessel, and dust from the tabernacle floor mixed with the water. The dust is here, as usually, "the dust of *death*," which from the tabernacle-floor intimates that nevertheless God has come in for man. Death remains still, and as judgment to the flesh, and yet for blessing. The cross of Christ has made this familiar to us as Christians; and in it our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be annulled, that henceforth we should not serve sin. Christ has died to sin once, and in that He liveth He liveth unto God: so are we to reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God in Christ Jesus.

"The power of the Holy Spirit judging thus (according to the sentence of death against the flesh) the state of unfaithfulness which was thought to be hidden from the true husband of the people, makes the sin manifest and brings down the chastening and curse upon the unfaithful one, and that evidently by the just judgment of God. Drinking death, according to the power of the Spirit, is life to the soul. 'By these things,' says Hezekiah, 'men live, and in all these things is the life of the Spirit;' even when they are the effect of chastening, which is not always necessarily the case. But if any of the accursed things be hidden—if there be unfaithfulness toward Jesus, undetected though it may be by man, and God puts it to the test; if we have allowed ourselves to be enticed by him who has the power of death, and the holy power of God is occupied with death, and comes to deal with the power of the enemy—the concealed evil laid bare, the flesh is reached; its rottenness and powerlessness are made manifest, however fair its appearances may be." (*Synopsis.*)

Here, then, sanctification in its innermost reality is insisted on, separation as united to Christ, being His alone; and this prepares us for the section that follows, in which in the Nazarite vow the earth-side of this sanctification is insisted on.

The Nazarite vow, expressing the earth side of sanctification.

(VI. 1-21.)

4. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When a man or a woman shall make a [o]special vow, the vow of a [p]Nazarite, to [q]separate himself unto Jehovah, he shall separate himself from [r]wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine nor vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat fresh grapes or dried. All the days of his separation he shall eat [s]nothing that is made of the wine-vine, from the seed-stone even to the skin. All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head: until the days be completed for which he separateth himself unto Jehovah, he shall be holy; he shall let the locks of the [t]hair of his head grow. All the days that he separateth himself unto Jehovah, he shall come near no [u]dead person: he shall not defile himself for his father or his mother, for his brother or his sister, when they die, because the separation to his God is upon his head: all the days of his separation he is holy unto Jehovah.

o Lev. 27. 2.
p Ju. 13.5,7. Lam. 4. 7. Am. 2. 11, 12. Luke 1. 15. cf. Jno. 17. 19.
q 2 Cor.6.17.
r cf. Ps. 104. 15. Eph. 5. 18.
s 1 Jno. 2. 15-17.
t cf. Lev. 13. 3. Ju. 16. 17. 1 Cor. 11. 14, 15.
u Lev. 22. 4.

4. The very term, "Nazarite" speaks of "separation." The three things required of him are all this: separation from the fruit of the vine, from the dignity of manhood by his long hair, and from the dead. The vow was (as looked at here) voluntary, and for a limited time; and these are the things in which its character declares itself.

The vow was a special, extraordinary one; but we must not on that account imagine that it must typify what is special or extraordinary among Christians. The priesthood, the Levite-service, etc. were restricted to the few in Israel, while among Christians they represent what in responsibility and privilege is universal. The voluntary character gives here a special force, for all true sanctification must come from the heart freely devoting itself. There were Nazarites from their birth afterward, as in the case of Samson and of Samuel, a thing which typically is reconcilable with this; for we are saints from our new birth, and yet are free in our separation to Him who has won us to Himself. The limit of the vow on the other side is just as simple: for *separation* applies only to the present world which sin has defiled, while *holiness* will be ours forever.

The first point of separation is from wine and strong drink—from all that could intoxicate, or, as is said of wine, "take away the heart." (Hos. iv. 11.) Wine stands eminently for that which "maketh glad the heart of man" (Ps. civ. 15), by no means of necessity evil, for we are told it "cheereth *God* and man" (Jud. ix. 13): God, no doubt, in the drink-offering. It stands therefore for pleasure, which may be spiritual and heavenly, as when (his vow ended) the Nazarite himself drinks it, but here as often for the pleasures of the world which take away the heart from God and from the things of God. Strong drink is that which has still more plainly and decidedly this character.

But the separation is carried very far indeed, for he is to drink no vinegar of wine or of strong drink, nor liquor of grapes, nor eat grapes, fresh or dried. All the days of his separation, he is to eat nothing made of the *wine*-vine, from the seed-stones even to the skin. Here, the mention of the *wine*-vine would show that it is as producing the wine that the vine is condemned. Yet no intoxicating effects as of wine could be produced by any of these things. They are things pleasant to the taste, no doubt, and though not intoxicating, allied to that which does intoxicate: what do they typify, then, for us?

Now the Nazarite is a man separated to God, as the saint is whom he pictures.

And if any man die very [v]suddenly beside him, and he have defiled the head of his separation, then he shall [w]shave his head on the day of his cleansing,—on the

[v] cf. Gal. 6.1.
[w] Lev. 14.8.

And for the Christian Christ is to be his one sufficing joy. The knowledge of the new man is distinctly said to be in a sphere "where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free, but *Christ is all* and in all." (Col. iii. 11.) How much of the world's pleasures would that exclude? Only the intoxicating ones? Would it not exclude *all* in which one could not find Christ in some way? all that would be inconsistent with frank and unhesitating acceptance of that unspeakably gracious invitation, "If any man thirst, let him come unto ME and drink"? What less could result from the supreme conviction that "Christ is ALL"?

If this appear extreme, did not the separation of the Nazarite from the very skin of the "wine-vine" appear extreme? Or can it be that God's principles demand any thing less than being carried out to an extreme? Can there be a too absorbing delight in Christ? Or can we turn to Him too entirely for satisfaction?

Legality this is not. Legality is the spirit of self-righteousness, or of slavish dread, never of love, or desire after Christ, or of expectation from Him, such as that of which we have been speaking. Carry these ever so far, they can never land you in that in the direction of which they do not even point, but away from it. He who speaks of himself as doing but one thing, was neither a legalist nor an extremist. He was simply a man into whose heart, forever filling it, the glory of Christ had shined.

Let us not confound this, however, with the spirit of asceticism that has peopled monasteries with men fleeing vainly from the world, or scattered through the desert the abodes of the recluse. Nor let us imagine as involved in it any "death to nature," in which what God has made or instituted is branded as if it were unclean. It is striking that just in these two epistles in which Christian position is most emphasized (Ephesians and Colossians) the duties of earthly relationships are most largely dwelt upon. The lilies of the field could be seen by Him who as Son of Man was here on earth for us arrayed in glory beyond all Solomon's. His hands indeed had made them, and if not a sparrow fell to the ground without His Father, He could say, "I and My Father are one." Still as ever is it true that the Lord's works are manifold, and in wisdom has He made them all: the earth is full of His riches; yea, and His works are sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.

But the Christian Nazarite is *Christ's:* therefore in his pleasures, in his business, in his duties, Christ is before him, with him, over him. He has fellowship with the Father and the Son, and there is nothing for him outside this. Here is the principle which makes him of necessity a stranger to what *they* find pleasure in, who find none in Him. The world's "vine of wine," as a whole, he is separate from.

The second point of separation with the Nazarite, is from the dignity and rights of manhood. The long hair with the woman is the sign of authority under which she is, as the apostle teaches. If a man has long hair, it is a shame to him; but the Nazarite humbles himself to this, taking the dependent and subject place, and giving up the rights of man to consecrate himself wholly to God.

Man is indeed a ruined creature, and the first Adam headship is gone forever; the last Adam is the second Man, not the first: yet He also upon earth had not His rights nor claimed them, "came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and give His life a ransom for many." His people here also have to walk in His steps, and "he that will be great must be a servant." Yet it is power, none the less, and blessing,—love's privilege, in which again we have fellowship with Christ. Nor should we wonder that a Samson's strength should be in his hair, for the place of dependence and subjection is ever the place of power.

seventh day he shall shave it. And on the [x]eighth day he shall bring two turtle-doves or two young pigeons to the priest, to the entrance of the tent of meeting: and the priest shall offer one for a [y]sin-offering and the other for a [z]burnt-offering, and shall make atonement for him, because he sinned by reason of the [dead] person, and shall sanctify his head that same day. And he shall set apart to Jehovah the days of his separation, and bring a yearling lamb for a [a]trespass-offering; but the former days shall [b]fall out, because his separation was defiled.

And this shall be the law of the Nazarite, when the days of his separation are [c]completed: he shall be brought to the entrance of the tent of meeting; and he shall present his offering unto Jehovah, one yearling he-lamb without blemish for a [d]burnt-offering, and one yearling ewe-lamb without blemish for a [e]sin-offering, and one ram without blemish for a [f]peace-offering. And a wicker-basket of [g]unleavened bread, pierced cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and their [h]meal-offering and their [i]drink-offerings. And the priest shall present them before Jehovah, and shall offer his sin-offering and his burnt-offering; and he shall offer the ram for a sacrifice of peace-offering to Jehovah, with the basket of unleavened bread; and the priest shall offer also his meal-offering and his drink-offering. And the Nazarite shall [j]shave the head of his separation at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and shall take the hair of the

x Lev. 15. 14.
y Lev. 4. 2.
z Lev. 1. 14-17.
a Lev. 14. 21.
b *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 1, 2.
c Acts 21. 26.
d Lev. 1. 3.
e Lev. 4. 2.
f Lev. 3. 1.
g Lev. 2. 4.
h ch. 28. 5.
i ch. 28. 6.
j ver. 9.

The third point of separation we have already looked at,—separation from the dead. It is life in Christ we have, and eternal: it is to be maintained as such, free from defilement with that which has come under the power of death. All these three parts of Nazarite separation are plainly connected and in most perfect harmony.

As to failure, it is here in this last way that it is contemplated. To man's eyes it would seem but an accident, but there are none; the power of circumstances should never prevail against those sanctified to God. How naturally we excuse ourselves by our weakness and the unexpected assaults of the enemy! But true weakness is always strength, and there are no circumstances in which God is not. Nothing of this sort, then, is admitted. The defiled Nazarite goes six days unclean, and on the seventh, he must shave his head. On the eighth, he brings his offering, two turtle-doves or two young pigeons, for the heavenly One to whom the earth was the place of service and sacrifice must be before His eyes on this day typical of new creation.

The former days of his vow are lost days, and he must begin his vow entirely anew, because his separation had been defiled. This lack of fulfillment shows as to that time something which vitiated the whole of it, for if with God, there can be to the soul no lack of power in accomplishment. He brings also a lamb for a trespass-offering.

For us the vow is completed only when our course here is completed. Now *if Christ be in us*, "the body is dead because of sin" (Rom. viii. 10), and in consequence we are exhorted to present our bodies a living sacrifice (xii. 1)—a sacrifice in life, in contrast with the bloody sacrifice of the law. They cannot be suffered yet to have their freedom, for our bodies as yet do not partake in the power of

head of his separation, and put it into the fire which is under the sacrifice of peace-offering. And the priest shall take the boiled [k]shoulder of the ram, and one pierced cake unleavened out of the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and shall put them upon the hands of the Nazarite after he hath shaved off the hair of his separation; and the priest shall wave them for a wave-offering before Jehovah: it is holy for the [l]priest with the breast of the wave-offering, and with the shoulder of the heave-offering; and [m]after that the Nazarite may drink wine. This is the law of the Nazarite who hath vowed: his offering to Jehovah for his separation, [n]beside that which his hand can get; according to the vow which he vowed, so shall he do, according to the law of his separation.

(VI. 22-27.)

God with Israel.

5. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, Thus shall ye [o]bless the children of Israel, saying,—

Jehovah [p]bless thee and [q]keep thee;
Jehovah make his [r]face to shine on thee, and be [s]gracious to thee;
Jehovah [t]lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee [u]peace.

And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them.

k Lev. 7. 32.
l *cf.* Jude 24, 25.
m *cf.* Luke 22. 18.
n Lev. 23. 38.
o Lev. 9. 22. 2 Cor. 13. 14.
p Ps. 134. 3. Eph. 1. 3.
q Jno. 17. 11. 1 Pet. 1. 5.
r Ps. 31. 16. 2 Cor. 4. 6.
s *cf.* Eph. 2. 7, 8.
t Ps. 4. 6. Ps. 11. 7.
u Jno. 14. 27. Phil. 4. 7.

redemption: "we *wait* for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." (viii. 23.) Thus we have to walk in Nazarite separation from what is of ourselves, keep under our bodies and bring them into subjection. (1 Cor. ix. 27.) The liberty of grace is not deliverance from the need of this, but power to enable us for it: the liberty of glory will be alone complete deliverance; we may "drink wine," when there will be no longer in us any evil to arouse, and the pleasures that present themselves to us are the "pleasures" which are at God's right hand for evermore. (Ps. xvi. 11.) Yea, Christ shall "drink the wine new" with us in His Father's kingdom. (Matt. xxvi. 29.)

Then, too, we shall be presented to God in the full value of His work and person, as typified by the offerings with which the Nazarite is presented; separation will be ended in the joy of perfect communion; and the "shoulder" that bare us all the way through according to the full demands of divine holiness, we shall indeed "wave" before God in triumphant exultation.

5. With this, the purification of the camp is completed, and as thus purified, the divine blessing is now given to them and Jehovah's Name is put upon them. There are three pairs of related blessings with which this last is a seventh, making it perfect. The connection of the three parts of the blessing with the three Persons of the Triune God, often referred to, is indeed easy to be traced: that in the mouth of the apostle comes very near it,—"the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost." (2 Cor. xiii. 14.) For the first blessing here is that of preservation as from the Creator-Father; the second, grace in God as revealing Himself, as He has done in Christ; while the third speaks of inner experience and enlightenment, with the deep rest which flows from it, the work of the Spirit of God. All that God is is thus engaged for us; and His name upon His people makes them His representatives on earth. He identifies Himself with them, as One not ashamed to be called their God.

SUBDIVISION 4. (Chap. vii.–x. 10.)

Need met for the way.

(VII.)

The gifts of the princes: implying the unity of heart in Israel, and the equality of all with God.

1. AND it was so, on the day that Moses had completed [v] setting up the tabernacle, and had [w] anointed it, and sanctified it and all its furniture, and the altar and all its utensils, and had anointed them and sanctified them, that the [x] princes of Israel, heads of their fathers' houses, they being princes of the tribes, those that were over those that had been numbered, offered: and they brought their offering before Jehovah,—six covered wagons and twelve oxen,—a wagon for two of the princes, and an ox for each; and they presented them before the tabernacle. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, [y] Take it of them for doing the service of the tent of meeting; and give them unto the Levites, [z] according to their several service. And Moses took the wagons and the oxen, and gave them unto the Levites. [a] Two wagons and four oxen he gave unto the sons of Gershon, according to their service; and [b] four wagons and eight oxen he gave unto the sons of Merari, according to their service,—under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest. But unto the sons of Kohath he gave [c] none, for theirs was the service of the sanctuary: they bare upon the shoulder.

And the princes presented the [d] dedication-gift for the altar in the day when it was anointed; and the princes presented their offering before the altar. And Jehovah said unto Moses, They shall present their offering for the dedication of the altar, each prince on his own day. And he that offered his offering the first day was [e] Nahshon the son of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah; and his offering was one [f] silver charger, the weight thereof was a hundred and thirty [shekels]; one silver [g] bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of [h] fine flour mingled with [i] oil, for a meal-offering; one [j] gold spoon of ten shekels, full of incense; one young bullock, one ram, one yearling lamb, for a [k] burnt-offering; one shaggy he-goat for a [l] sin-offering; and for a sacrifice of [m] peace-offering, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five yearling lambs. This was the offering of Nahshon the son of Amminadab.

v Ex. 40. 33.
w Lev. 8. 10.
x 1 Chron. 29. 6. *cfr.* ch. 16. 2.
y 1 Chron. 29. 11-14.
z *cf.* 2 Cor. 7. 6.
a ch. 3. 25. ch. 4. 25,26.
b ch. 3. 36. ch. 4. 29-33.
c ch. 3. 31. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 10.
d Ezra 6. 17.
e ch. 1. 7. ch. 2. 3.
f *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 18. Ex. 25. 29. ch. 4. 7.
g 2 Kings 25. 15. Zech. 14. 20.
h Lev. 2. 1
i Lev. 2. 4.
j 1 Kings 7. 50. Ex. 30. 1-3.
k Lev. 1. 3.
l Lev. 4. 23.
m Lev. 3. 1.

SUBD. 4.

IN the last subdivision here we have now the need for the way met, beginning with the gifts of the princes, both for the Levite service and for the maintenance of the altar, and closing with the account of the method by which as their divine Leader Jehovah communicated to them His will. The connection of points here which at first seems difficult to trace, will be best brought out as we take them up in detail.

1. The gifts of the princes provide, as already said, for the Levite service and for the altar. As free gifts of the tribal heads they have special importance as showing the spirit animating the people, the unanimity prevailing among them,

On the second day offered [n] Nathaniel the son of Zuar, prince of Issachar: he presented his offering,—one silver charger, the weight thereof was a hundred and thirty [shekels]; one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meal-offering; one gold spoon of ten [shekels], full of incense; one young bullock, one ram, one yearling lamb, for a burnt-offering; one shaggy he-goat for a sin-offering; and for a sacrifice of peace-offering, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five yearling lambs. This was the offering of Nathaniel the son of Zuar.

n ch. 1. 8. ch. 2. 5.

On the third day, the prince of the children of Zebulon, [o] Eliab the son of Helon: his offering was one silver charger, the weight thereof was a hundred and thirty [shekels]; one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meal-offering; one gold spoon of ten [shekels], full of incense; one young bullock, one ram, one yearling lamb, for a burnt-offering; one shaggy he-goat for a sin-offering; and for a sacrifice of peace-offering, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five yearling lambs. This was the offering of Eliab the son Helon.

o ch. 1. 9. ch. 2. 7.

On the fourth day, the prince of the children of Reuben, [p] Elizur the son of Shedeur: his offering was one silver charger of the weight of a hundred and thirty [shekels], one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meal-offering; one golden spoon of ten [shekels], full of incense; one young bullock, one ram, one yearling lamb, for a burnt-offering; one shaggy he-goat for a sin-offering; and for a sacrifice of peace-offering, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five yearling lambs. This was the offering of Elizur the son of Shedeur.

p ch. 1. 6. ch. 2. 10.

On the fifth day, the prince of the children of Simeon, [q] Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai: his offering was one silver charger of the weight of a hundred and thirty [shekels], one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meal-offering; one golden

q ch. 1. 7. ch. 2. 12.

and the equal place they have before God. Their different places in the camp, and in relation to one another, do not affect this. They are the one people of God, alike in His love, and to serve in love, that is, freely, though in necessary obedience. This is strongly emphasized here in this long chapter, full of what may seem tedious repetitions, but which show how equally divine love values the response of man's heart to it, wherever found. Each prince has his day, each offering its record, nothing is omitted, nothing passed hastily over, and how important all this is is shown by the word itself. Assuredly, the Spirit of God would not take up so much space with what was of secondary importance: that in the inspired page would be impossible. We may be assured, therefore, if

spoon of ten [shekels], full of incense; one young bullock, one ram, one yearling lamb, for a burnt-offering; one shaggy he-goat for a sin-offering; and for a sacrifice of peace-offering, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five yearling lambs. This was the offering of Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai.

On the sixth day, the prince of the children of Gad, [r] Eliasaph the son of Deuel: his offering was one silver charger of the weight of a hundred and thirty [shekels], one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meal-offering; one golden spoon of ten [shekels], full of incense; one young bullock, one ram, one yearling lamb, for a burnt-offering; one shaggy he-goat for a sin-offering; and for a sacrifice of peace-offering, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five yearling lambs. This was the offering of Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

r ch. 1. 14. ch. 2. 14.

On the seventh day, the prince of the children of Ephraim, [s] Elishama the son of Ammihud: his offering was one silver charger of the weight of a hundred and thirty [shekels], one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meal-offering; one golden spoon of ten [shekels], full of incense; one young bullock, one ram, one yearling lamb, for a burnt-offering; one shaggy he-goat for a sin-offering; and for a sacrifice of peace-offering, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five yearling lambs. This was the offering of Elishama the son of Ammihud.

s ch. 1. 10. ch. 2. 18.

On the eighth day, the prince of the children of Manasseh, [t] Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur: his offering was one silver charger of the weight of a hundred and thirty [shekels], one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meal-offering; one golden spoon of ten [shekels], full of incense; one young bullock, one ram, one yearling lamb, for a burnt-offering; one shaggy he-goat for a sin-offering; and for a sacrifice of peace-offering, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five yearling lambs. This was the offering of Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.

t ch. 1. 10. ch. 2. 20.

there be question with us, how necessary this is as a provision for the road we travel together, that we should enter into and realize thoroughly that Father's heart which is toward His children, not to be measured by their different service or capacities or honors. The children of a king may be variously ranked and decorated, yet they are in absolute equality as his children. So for us who have our common place in the family of God, and our common acceptance in the Beloved. To appreciate this will do much to unite us in mind and heart together, and how much to fortify us for the various difficulties, peculiar to each, which we shall encounter in the way. Pursuing it with such assurance, our difficulties will not divide but unite us together, our different places and capaci-

On the ninth day, the prince of the children of Benjamin, [u]Abidan the son of Gideoni: his offering was one silver charger of the weight of a hundred and thirty [shekels], one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meal-offering; one golden spoon of ten [shekels], full of incense; one young bullock, one ram, one yearling lamb, for a burnt-offering; one shaggy he-goat for a sin-offering; and for a sacrifice of peace-offering, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five yearling lambs. This was the offering of Abidan the son of Gideoni.

[u] ch. 1. 11. ch. 2. 22.

On the tenth day, the prince of the children of Dan, [v]Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai: his offering was one silver charger of the weight of a hundred and thirty [shekels], one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meal-offering; one golden spoon of ten [shekels], full of incense; one young bullock, one ram, one yearling lamb, for a burnt-offering; one shaggy he-goat for a sin-offering; and for a sacrifice of peace-offering, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five yearling lambs. This was the offering of Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.

[v] ch. 1. 12. ch. 2. 25.

On the eleventh day, the prince of the children of Asher, [w]Pagiel the son of Ocran: his offering was one silver charger of the weight of a hundred and thirty [shekels], one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meal-offering; one golden spoon of ten [shekels], full of incense; one young bullock, one ram, one yearling lamb, for a burnt-offering; one shaggy he-goat for a sin-offering; and for a sacrifice of peace-offering, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five yearling lambs. This was the offering of Pagiel the son of Ocran.

[w] ch. 1. 13. ch. 2. 27.

On the twelfth day, the prince of the children of Naphtali, [x]Ahira the son of Enan: his offering was one silver charger of the weight of a hundred and thirty [shekels], one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine

[x] ch. 1. 15. ch. 2. 29.

ties furnish only the occasion of mutual ministry which will link us more and more to one another.

The gifts are first of all for the service of the Levites, such help as one may render to another, without interfering with any special responsibility. The wagons and oxen are divided to them according to their service, the Merarites getting two thirds of all, the Gershonites one third, while the Kohathites get none. This does not seem, and yet is, an equal distribution. The burden of the Kohathites is too sacred to be transferred to the oxen, who made bad work of it at a later time, and their shoulders cannot be released from the toilsome honor. So with us often: the heaviest-laden are but the most trusted, and in the distribution of burdens there is more equality than seems.

flour mingled with oil for a meal-offering; one golden spoon of ten [shekels], full of incense; one young bullock, one ram, one yearling lamb, for a burnt-offering; one shaggy he-goat for a sin-offering; and for a sacrifice of peace-offering, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five yearling lambs. This was the offering of Ahira the son of Enan.

This was the dedication-gift of the [y]altar, in the day when it was anointed, from the princes of Israel: twelve silver chargers, twelve silver bowls, twelve golden spoons: each silver charger of a hundred and thirty [shekels], and each bowl seventy: all the silver of the vessels was two thousand, four hundred [shekels], according to the shekel of the sanctuary; twelve golden spoons full of incense; each spoon of ten [shekels], according to the shekel of the sanctuary: all the gold of the spoons a hundred and twenty [shekels]. All the cattle for the burnt-offering were twelve bullocks, twelve rams, twelve yearling lambs, and their meal-offering; and twelve shaggy he-goats for a sin-offering. And all the cattle for the sacrifice of peace-offering: twenty-four bullocks, sixty rams, sixty he-goats, sixty yearling lambs. This was the dedication-gift of the altar, after it had been anointed.

y ver. 11.

And when Moses went into the tent of meeting to speak with him, then he heard the [z]Voice speaking unto him from over the mercy-seat which was upon the ark of testimony,—from between the two cherubim; and he spake unto him.

z Lev. 1. 1. 1 Sam. 3. 4-10.

(VIII. 1-4.)

The light upon the lamp-stand: the Spirit's testimony to Christ.

2. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron, and say unto him, When thou lightest the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light [a]over against the lamp-stand. And Aaron did so; he lighted the lamps thereof over against the lamp-stand, as Jehovah commanded

a *cf.* Jno.16. 14.

The second class of gifts is for the altar, which went to maintain the offerings, Israel's constant service of praise. These offerings again were, as we well know, types of Christ and His offering, which God saw thus in the offerings of His people, as they continually rose up to Him. Is it not so in fact still and ever that in His people's praise God sees afresh, as it were, His Son's glorious work? Our sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving are but the confession of His name. (Heb. xiii. 15.)

Here, then, we have the first need of the way met, oneness of heart upon the part of the people, a practical spirit of praise, which is answered on God's part with an equal love and acceptance that inwraps the whole people. A different place in service does not imply a difference in His favor, which in Christ is toward us all. How sweet an assurance with which to start! and how will the realization of it unite our hearts together!

2. The second thing we find here is a plain example once more of how the typical meaning governs all. Why should a commandment as to lighting the lamps come in at this place? ending, too, as it does, with a description in part of the lamp-stand itself! For the last Keil can only account as being "quite in keeping with the antiquated style of narrative adopted in these books"!

Moses. And this was the [b]work of the lamp-stand: [it was] of beaten gold; both its stem and its flower, it was beaten-work: according to the pattern which Jehovah had shown Moses, so had he made the lamp-stand. [b] Ex. 25. 31-36.

(VIII. 5-26.)

The purification of the Levites as the Lord's possession given to the priests.

3. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them. And thus shalt thou do unto them to cleanse them: sprinkle over them [c]water of purification from sin; and let them pass the [d]razor over all their flesh, and [e]wash their clothes, and cleanse themselves. And let them take a young bullock, and its meal-offering of fine flour mingled with oil; and take thou another young bullock for a sin-offering. And thou shalt present the Levites before the tent of meeting, and gather the [f]whole assembly of the children of Israel; and thou shalt present the Levites before Jehovah, and the children of Israel shall [g]put their hands upon the Levites. And Aaron shall offer the Levites as a [h]wave-offering before Jehovah from the children of Israel, that they may perform the service of Jehovah. And the Levites shall lay their hands upon the heads of the bullocks; and thou shalt offer the one for a [i]sin-offering and the other for a [j]burnt-offering unto Jehovah, to make atonement for the Levites. And thou shalt set the Levites before Aaron and before his sons, and offer them as a wave-offering unto Jehovah. And thou shalt separate the Levites from among the children

[c] Ex. 30. 18-21. [d] Lev. 14. 8. [e] Gen. 35. 2. [f] ch. 3. 45. [g] Lev. 1. 4. [h] Lev. 8. 27. [i] Lev. 4. 3. [j] Lev. 1. 3.

But how plain is it all when we reach the spiritual meaning which underlies it! For where must we find the pattern for our walk but in Christ Himself, realizing too that He is in glory, of which we have seen already the lamp-stand speaks? Thus the reference to the work of the lamp-stand is fully accounted for, coming as it does after the statement that it was the office of the lamps to throw their light upon the lamp-stand itself. This seems to be wholly misunderstood by the commentators, who would have it that the light was to be thrown out upon the part of the sanctuary *opposite* to the lamp-stand. It is rather that the lamps themselves on the end of the branches issuing from it are opposite the shaft, just in the place for lighting it up; and if that be a strange thing for the lamps, that their duty should be to light up the lamp-stand, the spiritual meaning is not strange at all, that it is the work of the Spirit to glorify Christ, and that this is the sure test of what *is* the true work of the Spirit any where, while it is that which we need for our wilderness-walk at all times. To have our eyes upon Christ in glory is to find sure guidance for the way, as well as power to walk in it: how completely, then, here does every thing find its place!

3. The consecration of the Levites takes place after this, for Christ's glory before our eyes must be our competence for such work as is represented here. First, they are purified typically from sin, the whole body shaved—the mere growth of nature removed, the clothes washed,—the habits purified according to the Word. They are then presented before Jehovah, and offered, on the part of the people, to do what as a whole they were responsible for. The Levites are thus the people's representatives, and their service (typically) belongs to the people of God at large. Thus they become the Lord's, being, as taken instead of the first-born, His in virtue of redemption, and then given to the priests for the service of the tent of meeting.

of Israel, that the Levites may be mine. And after that shall the Levites come in to do the service of the tent of meeting. And thou shalt cleanse them, and offer them as a wave-offering, because they are wholly given unto me from among the children of Israel; [k]instead of every one that openeth the womb—every first-born among the children of Israel—have I taken them unto myself. For all the first-born of the children of Israel are mine, both man and beast; in the day that I smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt I sanctified them to myself: and I have taken the Levites instead of all the first-born among the children of Israel. And I give the Levites as a [l]gift unto Aaron and his sons from among the children of Israel, to perform the service of the children of Israel in the tent of meeting, and to atone for the children of Israel, that there be no [m]plague among the children of Israel when the children of Israel approach the sanctuary. And Moses and Aaron and all the assembly of the children of Israel did unto the Levites according to all that Jehovah commanded Moses concerning the Levites: so did the children of Israel unto them. And the Levites purified themselves from sin, and washed their clothes; and Aaron offered them as a wave-offering before Jehovah; and Aaron made atonement for them, to cleanse them. And afterward, the Levites went in to perform their service in the tent of meeting before Aaron and before his sons: according as Jehovah commanded Moses as to the Levites, so they did unto them.

And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, This is that which concerneth the Levites: from [n]twenty-five years old and upward shall they enter the work of the host in the service of the tent of meeting; and from fifty years old shall they retire from the work of the host, and shall serve no more; but they shall minister with their brethren in the tent of meeting in keeping charge, and shall do no service. Thus shalt thou do unto the Levites with regard to their charge.

(IX. 1-14.)

Provision for the trials of the way, in the joy of redemption experienced; and for failure if it has come in.

4. And Jehovah spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the second year from their departure out of the land of Egypt, in the first month, saying, Moreover, let the children of Israel keep the [o]passover in its set time: on the fourteenth day of this month, between the two evenings shall ye keep it in its set time; according to all its statutes and according to all its ordinances shall

k ch. 3. 40-51.

l *cf.* Jno. 17. 10.

m ch. 8. 38.

n *cf.* ch. 4. 3.

o Ex. 12. 6.

The term of service is here extended on both sides of the twenty years of burden-bearing. They entered at twenty-five, and after fifty ministered with their brethren, but had no proper charge.

4. We have next the command to keep the passover, and the appointment of a second for those who were hindered by distance or defilement from keeping the first. For the trials of a wilderness-life, how necessary to carry with them the

ye keep it. And Moses spake unto the children of Israel to keep the passover. And they kept the passover in the first [month], on the fourteenth day of the month, between the evenings, in the wilderness of Sinai: according to all that Jehovah had commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did.

And there were men who were [p] defiled by a [dead] person, and they could not keep the passover upon that day. And they came before Moses and before Aaron on that day; and these men said unto him, We are defiled by a [dead] person: why are we kept back, that we may not present Jehovah's offering in its set time among the children of Israel? And Moses said unto them, [q] Stay, and I will hear what Jehovah may command concerning you. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If any one of you or of your generations be unclean by a [dead] person, or be on a journey afar off, yet he may keep the passover to Jehovah. In the [r] second month, on the fourteenth day, between the evenings, they shall keep it. With unleavened bread and bitter herbs shall they eat it; they shall leave none of it until the morning, nor shall they break a bone of it: according to every statute of the passover shall they keep it. [s] But the man who is clean, and not upon a journey, and forbeareth to keep the passover, that soul shall be cut off from his people: because he did not present Jehovah's offering in its set time, that man shall bear his sin. And if a [t] stranger sojourn among you, and keep the passover unto Jehovah, according to the statute of the passover, and according to the ordinance thereof, so shall he do: there shall be one statute for you—for the stranger and the home-born in the land.

[p] ch. 5. 2.

[q] Lev. 24. 12.

[r] 2 Chron. 30. 2, 18-20.

[s] *cf.* Heb. 10. 25. Jno. 20. 24.

[t] Ex. 12. 43, 48.

remembrance and joy of redemption,—the knowledge, therefore, of God for them in grace, whatever the difficulties through which they might have to find their way! This redemption, let us remember, was a matter of experience; and so for us, although it is true that it is an experience of faith. But the cloud of apprehension has gone from our souls: God has been realized for us; the lamb has been fed upon; the pillar of cloud and fire have been with us in the way. The power of such experience, for those whose walk has been maintained with God, no trials can wear out. They are a provision for the way sweeter and more assuring than was the passover for Israel.

Now if any thing has come in to hinder this joy with us,—distance (which for us, of course, must be moral), or defilement with that which is under death,—thank God, there is gracious provision for us. Partake in uncleanness, we cannot. God has ordained that joy in Christ shall not go on with looseness of life and unjudged ways. And yet He has not shut us out, nor would keep us out, from return. The principle of His words to Laodicea remains ever true, "If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in, and sup with him, and he with Me." For the heart that truly seeks *Christ*, there is no dreary pathway of penance enjoined by which to get back to His presence. He does not even say here, "Let him come to Me," blessed as that would be, but—oh the grace of it!—"*I* will come in, and sup with him."

(IX. 15—X. 10.)

God with us: our way to be with Him.

1. (Ix.15-23.) Personally.

5. [t]And in the day that the tabernacle was set up, the [u]cloud covered the tabernacle of the tent of testimony; and in the evening it was upon the tabernacle as the appearance of fire until the morning. So it was continually: the cloud covered it, and at night the appearance was of fire. And when the cloud went up from over the tent, then after that the children of Israel journeyed; and at the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel encamped. [v]At the word of Jehovah the children of Israel journeyed, and at the word of Jehovah they encamped: all the days that the cloud abode upon the tabernacle they [remained] encamped. And when the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle many days, the children of Israel kept Jehovah's charge, and journeyed not. And if it were so that the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle, at the word of Jehovah they encamped, and at Jehovah's word they journeyed. And if it were that the cloud remained from evening until morning, and the cloud were taken up in the morning, then they journeyed: whether by day or night the cloud was taken up, they journeyed; [w]whether it were two days or a month or many days that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, abiding over it, the children of Israel [remained] encamped, and journeyed not; but when it was taken up, they journeyed. At the word of Jehovah they encamped, and at the word of Jehovah they journeyed: they kept Jehovah's charge according to the word of Jehovah by the hand of Moses.

[u] Ps. 78. 14. Is. 4. 5.

[v] Ex. 13. 21, 22. Ps. 77. 20.

[w] Ex. 40. 34-38.

Such grace shines out for us in this second passover. It is not that any whit of holiness can be given up (in the type here the due order of the feast is fully preserved,—nay, insisted on), but that *grace* is the only way of cleansing as of keeping clean; and grace, thank God, *reigns*.

5. And now, in the last section of this subdivision, we find the people in possession of the unspeakable blessing of Jehovah's presence with them. Cloud by day and fire by night, still and ever in contrast with the world, and thus rendering them independent of it, that glorious Presence led them on. There was no way for them but that which thus was made for them. Where the Pillar stopped they stopped, and for whatever time; when it moved, they moved. For us, there is still what answers to such guidance: with us, though unseen, more wondrous. Do you know it, reader? Ah! not to know it is indeed to be astray, lost in a pathless wilderness! You may think even you have little need,—your circumstances shaped for you, or shrewd, careful judgment exercised as to all your steps; but there is never for any one of us a path in which we can do without Him, neither so hedged in nor so marked out. And who that has one right thought would desire it? Who would desire to be left to himself, or to government by others, or to chance guidance, when God is inviting to a walk with Him? Test us, of course, this will; but, on the other hand, what manifestations of God will it not afford us! Let us well understand: there *is* no walk with God but after this manner; faith needed for it ever; yet a path in light, not in obscurity; the least difficult really of all paths, just because of the infinite resources of Him who goeth with us, and of the tenderness of love which upholds the weakest.

2. (x. 1-10.) The silver trumpets: the testimony of His Word.

[2]And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Make thee two [x]trumpets of silver; of beaten-work shalt thou make them; and they shall be to thee for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps. And when they blow with them, all the assembly shall [y]assemble to thee at the entrance of the tent of meeting. And when they blow with one [trumpet], then the princes, the heads of the thousands of Israel, shall assemble unto thee. And when ye blow an [z]alarm, the camps that lie toward the east shall take their journey. And when ye blow an alarm the second time, the camps that lie on the south shall take their journey: they shall blow an alarm for their journeys. But when the congregation is to be gathered together, ye shall blow, but not sound an alarm. And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow with the trumpets: and [these things] shall be to you for an everlasting statute throughout your generations. And if ye go to [a]war in your land against the oppressor that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets, and ye shall be remembered before Jehovah your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies. And in the day of your gladness, and in your [b]set times, and in the [c]beginnings of your months, then ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt-offerings, and over your sacrifices of peace-offering, that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I am Jehovah your God.

x Josh. 6. 4. Ex. 19. 13, etc.

y Neh. 4. 18-20.

z ch. 2. 3, 9.

a Jo. 7. 18. 1 Cor. 14. 8. Joel 2. 1.

b Lev. 23. 24.

c Ps. 81. 3.

(ii.) It is very manifest how the silver trumpets connect themselves with this. There is a personal presence of God with His people, and a personal guidance as the result of that presence; but we need also the balancing-truth that this guidance is according to the Word, and that all that purports to be such must be tested by the Word. These trumpets, therefore, are two, as the number of sufficient testimony; "silver," as being the voice of the Redeemer; "of beaten work," because involving suffering on His part who has come down among men to fill that place. Then they have two special uses,—for journeying, and for assembling together. In the latter case, one blast is enough to gather the princes (are they expected to have quicker ears than the rest?), but for the whole assembly there are repeated blasts. Alas! do God's people now think of any need of the Word of God to summon them together? For the journeying, it was an "alarm"—a sustained note: Scripture does in fact prolong this strain.

But there were many other occasions for the silver trumpets, which were to be in priestly hands, for the spirit of worship alone can use the Word of God aright. In the day of the prevalence of the enemy's power, the sound of the trumpets would bring in the delivering hand of God. And in the day of rejoicing, no less than in the day of trial and oppression, in their set times, and the new moons,—the times of revival and renewed hope, over their burnt-offerings and peace-offerings (as justifying their acceptance and characterizing fellowship with God) the note of the silver trumpet was to be heard. All this is of easy interpretation no doubt; but there is still great need of calling it to mind. To know and do are, alas! by no means the same thing; yet all the blessing of the precious Word of God is found as it is received in the humble and obedient heart.

DIVISION 2. (Chap. x. 11–xvi. 35.)

Growing departure from God: the testimony of history as to the people.

Germs of departure: who is the Leader?

1. (*vv.*11–28.) The start.

(X. 11–36.)

1. AND it was so in the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth [day] of the month, that the cloud was [d] taken up from off the tabernacle of the testimony, and the children of Israel [e] set forward, according to their divisions, out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran. And they first took their journey according to the word of Jehovah by the hand of Moses. And in the

[d] cb. 9. 17.

[e] *cf.* Phil. 3. 14.

DIV. 2.

THE camp thus ordered, the provision for the journey now complete, the journey itself begins, the true *history* of the wilderness, that from the Red Sea to Sinai being very different in character from what is now before us, and dwelt on for another purpose. There we have seen that what is brought out is the grace that meets the need of the wilderness, although this implies, of course, the need itself being manifested, and *as* grace, the spiritual need, the weakness and failure of the people. But now, while grace is still shown, and in result to be better than ever known, yet the point of view is different: it is now the people themselves with whom we are to be occupied; it is in the full sense *their* history; we are to see by the evidence of this, what they are with whom the Lord has charged Himself. And a terrible witness as to them the history is.

Not that we are to suppose them worse than other people. We should miss altogether the instruction designed for us, if we gathered such a thought. They are exceptional only in this, as being brought into nearer visible relation to God than any other, and that their history is given us, written with the unerring pen of inspiration. "For what nation is there so great," asks Moses, at a later time, "who have God so nigh unto them, as Jehovah our God is, in all things that we call upon Him for?" (Deut. iv. 7.) Alas! this that was their exceeding privilege, was that also which searched out to the very bottom all that was in their heart. "God is light;" and "that which doth make manifest is light." If there be not full self-judgment, and whole-hearted yielding of ourselves to Him, His presence the more realized will be the more intolerable; His rule will be the more, even to His face, rejected and thrown off. "Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods?" He asks Himself; "but My people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit." (Jer. ii. 11.) Does this prove as to Israel, as it might seem, that they were worse than the nations? Alas! no: had *they* had but false gods, they would not have changed them either! "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world; and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." It is the light, as the light, which is necessarily rejected by those whose unchanged hearts desire the shelter of the darkness for their evil deeds. And though, of course, the power of God upon unconverted men, or the needs they have for which they seek His help, may bring individuals or even nations to yield Him homage, secretly or openly revolt again is sure to come. Israel's history is in its principles indeed a pattern one; and herein lies for us its admonition.

"As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man;"—the *heart*, not of necessity the *life*: there are, as to the latter, many God-given restraints and hindrances which prevent its being just what the heart is. Evil too has many forms, some of which look very different from others,—nay, in a true sense, which are: in the day of judgment coming there will be, as we know, the strictest individualization: Godward, at bottom, there is no difference naturally.

[f] first place went the standard of the children of Judah according to their hosts; and over his host was Nahshon the son of Amminadab. And over the host of the tribe of the children of Issachar was Nathaniel the son of Zuar. And over the host of the tribe of the children of Zebulon was Eliab the son of Helon. And the tabernacle was [g] taken down; and the children of Gershon and the children of Merari set forward, bearing the tabernacle. And the standard of the camp of Reuben set forward according to their hosts; and over his host was Elizur the son of Shedeur. And over the host of the tribe of the children of Simeon was Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. And over the host of the tribe of the children of Gad was Eliasaph the son of Deuel. And the Kohathites set forward, bearing the sanctuary; and [the others] set up the tabernacle before they came. And the standard of the camp of the children of [h] Ephraim set forward according to their hosts; and over his host was Elishama the son of Ammihud. And over the host of the tribe of the children of Manasseh was Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur. And

[f] ch. 2. 9. Ju. 1. 2.

[g] cf. ch. 2. 17.

[h] ch. 2. 18.

We shall find, thus, Israel's history here to be, in principle, the history of Christendom no less. So it is that Jude sees prophetically the end of false profession among Christians to be that they "perish in the gainsaying of Kore." Alas! not only so, but even when turned to God, there is still in us evil which, if we have eyes to see, we shall find here in its true character. The flesh is in us, and "the mind of the flesh is enmity against God." And in this, indeed, is the main profit of this history, if we are humble enough to learn *ourselves* from it: important in this above all, that thus it is we are able to learn God also in those ways of His which are divinely suitable to what we are.

This, then, is what the second division of the book of Numbers brings before us, the discovery of what the people are, as evidenced by their history, in which we find them, through several stages of declension, reaching at last the complete rejection of their divinely given leaders in the "gainsaying of Kore."

1. Upon the twentieth day of the second month of the second year, the cloud is taken up from the tabernacle, and they start. The equivocal 2 is prominent in the date of their departure, the number of responsibility, 10, alone being joined with it, making it more equivocal. Is it a path of fellowship with God (as the number might mean) upon which they are entering? or is it one which is to be marked by contradiction of His will, and conflict,—a terrible conflict that must of necessity be theirs who contend with God? In fact, the wilderness of Paran is as far as we look at present, and there the cloud abides: from wilderness to wilderness is the whole horizon yet, though as yet we see not plainly the obstacle to further vision, except as the number of responsibility may indicate it, and it surely does so sufficiently.

There may be, however, something more. If "Paran" is to have its natural meaning according to the Hebrew, it would mean, not "unclosing—opening," as Lange takes it, nor "abounding in caverns," as Simonis and others, but "adornment." From the wilderness of thorn (or barrenness) to the wilderness of decoration or adornment, (which would imply the exchange of barrenness for a place which, if a desert still, had become in the people's mind in some way attractive,) —this might foreshadow what in fact took place when Israel, upon the very borders of the land to which God was bringing them, turned their backs upon it, and chose rather the desert than what God had made their own.

over the host of the tribe of the children of Benjamin was Abidan the son of Gideoni. And the standard of the camp of the children of [i]Dan set forward, the rearguard of all the camps, according to their hosts; and over his host was Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai. And over the host of the tribe of the children of Asher was Pagiel the son of Ocran. And over the host of the tribe of the children of Naphtali was Ahira the son of Enan. These were the divisions of the children of Israel by their hosts: and they set forward.

2. (29-32.) Seeking the help of man.

[2] And Moses said unto [j]Hobab the son of Reuel, the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, [k]We are journeying unto the place of which Jehovah hath said, I will give it unto you: [l]come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for Jehovah [m]hath spoken good concerning Israel. And he said unto him, [n]I will not go, but I will depart to mine own land and to my kindred. And he said, [o]Leave us not, I pray thee, because thou knowest that we encamp in the wilderness; and thou shalt be [p]eyes for us. And it shall be, if thou come with us, that whatever good Jehovah doeth unto us, the same will we do unto thee.

i ch. 2. 25.

j Ex. 2. 18.

k cf. Heb. 11. 14-16.

l cf. Jno. 1. 46.

m ch. 23. 18-24.

n ctr. Gen. 24. 58.

o ctr. Heb. 13. 5.

p cf. ch. 9. 22. *ctr.* Ps. 121.

This may seem strained; and yet, alas! do not God's people still decorate the desert instead of entering in by faith into that which is their own? This surely might give in the opening verses of this division the moral of the whole; and it would be quite after the manner of Scripture to do so. The satire that appears in it is but the satire of truth; and what is keener? Israel were, in one way, no lovers of the desert, out of which their hearts turned back so readily to Egypt, and the evils of which they could so bitterly lament. But Egypt was barred to them: to it they could not return; and their choice was in fact between Canaan and the desert. So too for the Christian: he cannot go back to Egypt—to what he was before conversion; he realizes in some sense what the world is,—cannot sink into it without many bitter realizations of this; and yet how often refuses to enter upon his land of promise, hugging the earth till death comes to turn him out of it: and this is what we see in the picture here.

Yet Israel start in good order,—at the commandment of the Lord, and His presence with them, every tribe filling its place. So the Church had its Pentecost, too brief, and never to return on earth; but only the faint image of what shall be, when He who is last Adam shall present her to Himself "a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing."

(ii.) Yet at the very beginning there is a portent of the future, and the failure of him to whom the people have been committed. Here constantly failure begins, namely, with those in places of fullest responsibility, and upon whom, under God, all seems to depend. So Noah failed after the flood. And Scripture records these things that we may learn from them the needful lesson, that no man, be he who he may, can we trust implicitly. Leaders there must be, and confidence ought to be given them, but with the reservation always that we follow them *as* they follow Christ,—no farther. The sins of the most godly, the errors of the wisest, are in their consequences to be dreaded more than the greater follies and sins of lesser men; and the weak idolatry of those through whom God may have ministered to us largest blessing has been ever productive of the most disastrous results. "Esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake" is the Scripture rule, and "whose *faith* follow."

Israel were going forth under the guiding care of the Almighty. The first of

3. (33-36.) Jehovah the actual and realized Leader.

[3] And they departed from the mount of Jehovah [q] three days' journey; and the [r] ark of the covenant of Jehovah went before them in the three days' journey to seek out for them a place of rest. And the cloud of Jehovah was over them by day, when they went out of the camp. And it was so, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, [s] Arise, Jehovah, and let thine enemies be scattered, and those that hate thee flee before thy face! And when it rested, he said, [t] Return, Jehovah, unto the many thousands of Israel.

(XI.)

The manna loathed.

1. (vv. 1-3.) Murmurings: how they begin.

2. [1] And the people were as [u] murmurers of evil in Jehovah's ears: and when Jehovah heard it, his anger was kindled; and [v] fire from Jehovah burned among them, and consumed in the extremity of the camp. And the

q Ex. 3. 18.

r *ctr.* ver. 31, *cf.* Jno. 10. 4. Deut. 1. 33.

s Ps. 68. 1, 2.

t *cf.* Ps. 65. 1. Ezek. 43. 1-5. Ezek. 48. 35. Zeph. 3. 17.

u Ex. 16. 2. 1 Cor. 10. 10.

v Heb. 12. 29. Deut. 9. 22. Ps. 78. 21.

all duties was that of implicit confidence in Him; yet Moses turns to a child of the wilderness, that, with the competence derived from natural acquirements, he may be to them "instead of eyes." Commentators explain this as quite consistent. Followers of the "higher criticism" admit the contradiction, and of course see in it a sign of contradictory documents, which, if we will allow them, they will settle with the scissors. In truth, there is a contradiction; but the fault is not in Scripture, but in man, who so easily forgets his resource in God. Here, too, it is easy to see influences that are at work in Moses' natural link with the Midianite chief. Easy too it is to cover it with fair names, for "Hobab" means "lover," and he is the son of Reuel, "the friend of God." How often human piety and friendship come in as arguments with us in the wrong place! All this evidently illustrates the danger of which we were but just now speaking, in connection with "guides." Nay, the Midianite, as (according to his name) the "man of strife," may well remind us of the fierce controversialism of so many who assume this office. Controversy is often needed, but one *characterized* by a spirit of this sort is no fit leader for the people of God.

(iii.) Accordingly we never see Hobab in this place at all, and on the contrary, we have the divine comment on Moses' request in the ark moving out of its place in the midst of the camp and taking it at their head: "And the ark of the covenant of Jehovah went before them in the three days' journey, *to search out a resting-place for them.*" Thus the Lord vindicates Himself from the reproach which the unbelief of His people has cast upon Him. He is the actual and only and all-sufficient Leader, the Shepherd of Israel, whose eyes are never weary, whose heart is never at fault, "who never slumbereth nor sleepeth."

How thoroughly He has identified Himself with the people is seen in the prayer which Moses, as taught of God, utters as the ark sets forward. The enemies that he anticipates are now but Jehovah's enemies, and they scatter as He advances. And when it rests, and the cloud settles down once more, then His face is turned with satisfaction toward His own, who in that sheltering cloud-canopy recognize the brooding wings under which they may rest securely, and not a note even of alarm find how to penetrate.

2. (i.) Yet it is here, and thus early upon their journey onward, that the spirit of the people begins to show itself. There has been no unusual occurrence. No enemy has appeared. No need has made itself felt. The promised land lies but a few days' journey before them, and they are as yet fresh from their long halt at Sinai. It seems as if as yet they knew not themselves any cause for dissatisfaction. They murmur vaguely about "evil," to which they cannot give a name; yet already this murmuring is becoming chronic—begins to characterize them. Alas! there is a source of discontent within man's heart which needs not circumstances to develop; and it is important that this should be manifest at the

people [w]cried unto Moses, and Moses prayed unto Jehovah, and the fire sank. And he called the name of that place [x]Taberah, because the fire of Jehovah burned among them.

2 (4-15.) Manna rejected for flesh: the separation of the Christ who saves, from the "truth in Jesus."

2 [y]And the mixed multitude that was among them lusted; and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who will give us flesh to eat? We [z]remember the fish that we ate in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic: but now our [a]soul is dried up; there is nothing at all beside the manna before our eyes. Now the

w Ps. 107.13.
x *cf.* ch. 33. 16.
y Ex. 12.38. *cf.* Ju 2.2,3. Hos. 7. 8.
z Ex. 16. 2,3. *cfr.* Ex. 2. 23. Lam. 3. 20. Eph. 2. 11, 12.
a *cf.* Luke 12. 19.

beginning. In a world like this, trials will arise; evils there will be, and many, which God's Word never hides from us, but insists upon. The world is really a wilderness in God's account, and should be so in ours. The longing after Egypt shows, not that we have judged too deeply, but not deeply enough. Yet, apart from circumstances altogether, there is enough within us to make heaven itself a weariness, if we could carry it there. This is the meaning of this brief account, in which that there are no circumstances to narrate, no external cause to induce these murmurings, is not only significant for this time, but in connection with all that follows. Here is the underground root of all, the innate apostasy of the heart from God. Circumstances may arise; man will catch at them, and make them his plea in self-justification against God; enmity of heart is fertile in pretexts: they are but pretexts; that is what "Taberah" plainly indicates.

God's anger shows itself, and yet in a way that manifests its unwillingness to strike. A fire from Jehovah burns and consumes in the extremity of the camp: it does not appear that any of the people are consumed in it. The warning is mercy, yet of a judgment that, if it strikes, will be severe enough to testify of the holiness that acts in it. God may delay His judgment, but if it takes its course, righteousness must exact its due.

At Moses' prayer it sinks, but its memory is rightly kept alive. The place is called "Taberah," which means such a burning as does its work. Needful it is, not to confound God's grace or His long-suffering with mitigation of penalty: there was none on the cross, where the Son of God hung for us; there will be none wherever it is penalty that is exacted. Righteousness itself never requires more than it needs must.

These memorial-places in Israel's pilgrimage, have they their representatives in our own history, appropriately marked, as were theirs? Well will it be for us if it is so. Only, for a child of God, penalty in its true sense there can be none, while chastening is his on that very account. "If ye call on Him as Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear."

(ii.) Their lesson, however, Israel has not learned, and in a short time indeed the murmuring breaks out again, this time taking definite shape, as against the manna, the daily witness of Jehovah's daily care. Pathetically here, therefore, the inspired writer turns aside once more to describe the manna to us, and how it was continually ministered, falling on the camp as the dew fell,—type of the Spirit's ministry of Christ; the taste, too, being that of fresh oil. Variously prepared, the people fed upon it, though now they were crying out for the food of Egypt, with characteristic fickleness forgetting the misery of their bondage there. This lusting begins, indeed, with that mixed multitude which, though it had come out of Egypt with them, had not known in the same way that bondage, nor, therefore, the reality of redemption either. Thus from the mixed multitude also, within it and not of it, the Church has learned the unhallowed cry after the things of the world. Christ, God's only provision for His people, dries up the soul that feeds alone on Him! And true Christians also learn, in modified and more decorous language, to repeat this.

[b] manna was as coriander seed, and its appearance as the appearance of bdellium; and the people went about and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and boiled it in pots, or made cakes of it, and its taste was as the taste of [c] fresh oil. And when the dew fell at night upon the camp, the manna fell upon it. And Moses heard the people weep throughout their families—every one at the entrance of his tent, and the anger of Jehovah was kindled greatly. And it was grievous in Moses' eyes; and Moses said unto Jehovah, [d] Why hast thou done evil to thy servant? and why have I not found favor in thine eyes, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? Have I conceived all this people? have I brought them forth, that thou shouldst say unto me, [e] Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the suckling, unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers? [f] Whence should

b Ex. 16. 31. *cf.* Jno. 6. 32,33,66-71.

c *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 27.

d Jer. 20. 14-18.

e *cfr.* Is. 40. 11. 1Thess.2.7.

f Mark 8. 4.

But does the desire for flesh represent the craving for the pleasures of the world? There are some things that lie against this. For the scene at the *giving* of the manna at first cannot but recur to us, as in some sense parallel to what is before us here. We have there the same desire for flesh, answered in the same way—by a flight of quails; and this not judgment, nor connected with it, but preparatory to the manna, and in fullest harmony, as we have seen, with it. There we accepted the thought that the quails spoke of Christ, in His life yielded up for men, which the *evening*-flight of the quail, well known as characteristic of the bird, strengthens. But if this be so, how can we interpret it in the present case differently? Must not these Scripture-types be consistent throughout if we are to have confidence in the meaning given to them,—especially, as here, where there seem to be such evident links of connection?

But then, again, if it be Christ of whom the quails speak, of abundant grace in which death ministers to life, may it not be that this even, in the hearts of mere worldly professors, becomes a plea for indulgence, grace in this way taken as laxity—as license? Thus the very *death* of Christ may be put in opposition to His *life*,—to the heavenly Man in His own unworldly separateness upon earth, of which the manna speaks. And so the apostle, after exhorting the Ephesian saints against the lawlessness of the Gentiles, urges, "But *ye* have not so learned *Christ*; if so be that ye have heard Him, and have been taught by Him as the truth is in *Jesus*,—that ye have put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man." "Christ" is the Lord's official name, according to which He has done His blessed work, and is on high after having done it; "Jesus" is His personal name on earth. They would not have *so* learned His work for them as to give way to Gentile laxity if they had heard Him and been taught by Him as the Man "Jesus." They must keep the quails in connection with the manna, as God gave them first, not set them against one another, as the people were doing here. God's answer to which is, not to withhold the quails, but to give them in large abundance, for the cross and the grace of the cross are all His delight. But when the people, instead of being humbled and broken down by His goodness, take greedily for the indulgence of their lusts, the flesh between their teeth becomes a mortal plague of which they die. Christ dishonored must become, thus, the cause of divine judgment on those who dishonor Him.

This is every way consistent; and indeed what history, the history of the professing church, gives witness to abundantly. The profession of Christ and of the cross by carnal men, ignorant of the grace they vaunted and abused, untaught in the truth that is in Jesus, has wrought many a pestilential disorder of which it seemed as if the very Church itself would perish. The graves of Kibroth-hattaa-

I have flesh to give unto all this people? for they weep unto me, saying, Give us flesh, that we may eat. I am not [g]able alone to bear all this people, for it is too heavy for me. And if thou deal thus with me, [h]slay me, I pray thee, quite, that I may not look upon my misery.

3. (16-30.) Prophecy, the voice of recall.

[3] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Gather unto me [i]seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be elders of the people, and their officers; and take them to the tent of meeting, and they shall stand there with thee. And I will come down and speak with thee there; and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee and put it upon them, and they shall bear [j]with thee the burden of the people, and thou shalt not bear it thyself alone. And say unto the people, Sanctify yourselves for the morrow, and ye shall eat flesh; for ye have wept in the ears of Jehovah, saying, Who will give us flesh to eat? for it was well with us in Egypt. Now Jehovah will give you [k]flesh, and ye shall eat: ye

g *ctr.* Phil. 4. 13. 2 Cor. 3. 5.

h 1 Kings 19. 4.

i Ex. 15. 27. Ex. 24. 1.

j Ex. 18. 22.

k Ps. 78. 18-31. Ps. 106. 14, 15.

vah,—the "graves of lust"—lie all along the road by which we have reached our present station in the wilderness; and never were they perhaps more numerous than in the Laodicea of to-day. Let the question be honestly entertained by those who read this, *Have* we so learned *Christ* as to have been taught by Him as the truth is in *Jesus?*

(iii.) Connected with this, and as remedial for it, we find the ordinance of the seventy elders, whose special function as given here is that of prophecy—the extension of the spirit which is in Moses, and which in Eldad and Medad is introduced into the camp. We must consider these things in some detail.

In the first place, that they are "elders" is of primary importance; and elders, not simply officially, for that they are to be officers also is stated distinctly, as a thing apart. "Elders" belong to that patriarchal system, which is at least so eminently natural: men of years, and thus of gathered experience, and of weight in their generation corresponding to it: "Elders whom thou knowest to be elders," the Lord says to Moses; those who really answer in character to their years.

They are, moreover, to be "officers," or overseers, of the people,—those who as fathers are intrusted with the discipline to be maintained among the people of God. An exactly corresponding connection between "elders" and "overseers" we find in the New Testament, the function of the overseer being not teaching but "rule," although they might teach also if they had gift for it. No one would suppose that the power to teach would be only possessed by men in years, however suited it might be when found in them.

But the seventy chosen from among these are to have another talent intrusted to them: they are to share with Moses the burden of the people, and for this they are to share the Spirit that rests upon Moses. They too are to be prophets, to bring the word of God directly to the people of God, and by its means to stay departure from Him. Of what they uttered we have not, indeed, a single word. It is not any particular message that is intended to have significance for us, but simply the fact of their prophesying itself, the prophesying of elders who are overseers of the congregation. What are we to learn by this in this connection?

Prophecy we shall find to be the constant resource in days of apostasy. When the priesthood fail in the days of Eli, Samuel is thus raised up to stand between the people and God. When the kings have failed in Israel, the prophets come into ever-increasing importance. When the regular order is disturbed, and the usual channels of blessings are shut up, prophecy is the sign of the sovereign grace of God pouring itself forth through new channels of its own creation.

shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days; [but] even a month of days, until it come out at your nostrils, and be loathsome unto you: because ye have despised Jehovah who is among you, and have wept before him, saying, Why is it that we came out of Egypt? And Moses said, The people among whom I am are six hundred thousand footmen; and thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month! [l]Shall the flocks and herds be slain for them, to suffice them? or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to suffice them? And Jehovah said unto Moses, [m]Is Jehovah's hand become short? thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass to thee or not.

l 2 Kings 7. 2. Jno. 6. 5-7.

m Is. 59. 1.

And Moses went out and spake unto the people the words of Jehovah, and gathered seventy men of the elders of the people, and placed them round the tent. And Jehovah came down in the cloud and spake unto him, and [n]took of the spirit that was upon him and put it upon the seventy men, the elders; and it was so that when the Spirit rested upon them, they [o]prophesied and ceased not. But there [p]remained two of the men in the camp, the name of the one being Eldad, and the name of the other, Medad, and the Spirit rested upon them; and they were of those that were written, but they had not gone out to the tent; and they prophesied in the camp. And a young man ran and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp. And Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' attendant,

n ver. 17. 2 Kings 2. 9.

o *cf.* 1 Cor. 14. 1-3.

p *cf.* Luke 9. 49, 50.

It connects itself, moreover, with individual faith and the energy which stands for God in the midst of departure. The prophet—for we are not now discussing the exceptional case of Balaam—is the "man of God." James introduces Elijah in his first words in Israel, as the righteous man of fervent effectual prayer, which shuts the heavens and restrains the earth from fruit. And he has before this adduced "the prophets who have spoken to you in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience." Prophesying was not, as the priesthood was, something successional and heritable, but a distinct gift to each person who received it.

The blessing in it is, that the voice of the living God utters itself in the prophet, bringing home His word to the present condition and need of men, making them aware of His presence before which they stand, putting them in connection with Him, and under Him, to be guided and controlled by Him. Is not this just the recall of the people here to that wherewith they had started? Is it not the remedy, therefore, for that which has arisen? God thus comes out after His wanderers to make known to them afresh the care which is over them; and as thus seeking them with the intent to fill their lives with the power of His presence we can understand the special significance of Eldad and Medad, with their glorious names, "God hath loved," "Love," prophesying in the *camp*. The Spirit of God breaks over boundary-lines, and refuses distance, in witness of the overflow of His heart toward the people: the irregularity apparent, and which unintelligent zeal would have rebuked, only making more noticeable the action of God. Worthy of Him are all His ways.

But the voice of prophecy breaks out especially around the entrance of the tabernacle,—the voice of recall how truly in that place! yet one with the voice

one of his chosen, answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them! And Moses said unto him, Art thou envious on my account? [q] Would that all Jehovah's people were prophets, [and] that Jehovah would put his Spirit upon them! And Moses withdrew into the camp,—he and the elders of Israel.

4. (31-35.) The testing.

[r] And there brake forth a [r] wind from Jehovah, and brought over quails from the sea, and let them fall over the camp, about a day's journey on this side and about a day's journey on the other side round about the camp, and about two cubits [deep] upon the face of the earth. And the people stood up all that day, and all the night, and all the next day, and gathered quails: he that gathered little gathered ten homers, and they spread them all abroad for themselves round about the camp. The flesh was yet between their teeth, and was not chewed, when the wrath of Jehovah was kindled against the people, and Jehovah [s] smote the people with a very great plague. And they called the name of the place [t] Kibroth-hattaavah, because they buried there the people that lusted. From Kibroth-hattaavah the people journeyed to Hazeroth; and they abode at Hazeroth.

(XII.)

Prophecy and priesthood rise up against the divine leader: Miriam's leprosy.

3. And [u] Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses on account of the [v] Cushite wife that he had taken: for he had taken a Cushite wife. And they said, Hath Jehovah indeed spoken [w] only by Moses? hath he not also spoken by us? And Jehovah heard it. And the man

q *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 5. 1 Cor. 14. 31.

r Ps. 78. 26, 31. Ex. 15. 13.

s 1 Cor. 10. 5.

t *cf.* Jas. 1. 5.

u Ex. 15. 20. *cf.* Rom. 11. 14. Acts 22. 21, 22.

v *cf.* Song 1. 5.

w *cf.* Luke 9. 33-36.

in their midst. Those who draw near to the sanctuary of God hear it in its fullness, not as scattered voices, but the full harmony of the mind of God, much as the prophecy in the camp may have of special sweetness. As the prophesying of *elders*, it speaks in harmony with nature, in the wisdom acquired from experience, and in judicial utterances. Nature is here, in her highest and best, at one with the supernatural, as she always is, though in man grace must have restored him to his place, for this to be.

(iv.) Finally we find the quails sent, the mercy of God meeting abundantly the need of the people, but which, laid hold of without repentance or faith, the wrath of God falls upon them. The place of blessing becomes known as "the graves of lust."

3. The next stage of decline is a revelation. Truly one may say, The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint. That very prophecy, which we have just now seen as the remedy for the existing evil, fails as it were in Miriam, who drags down Aaron, the head of priesthood, with her in her fall. "Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses." The human leader of Israel is assailed from another side, and where he is most accessible. The matter of accusation is in a Cushite wife that he has taken; but the spirit of self-exaltation is manifestly in their murmurings: "Hath Jehovah indeed only spoken by Moses? hath He not also spoken by *us?*" Who had denied it? But the evident intention is, to put themselves on an equality with Moses, and thus depose him from the pre-eminent place of leadership which God had given him. The Cushite wife was clearly the proof to them that morally he was no higher than they, perhaps not so high. The effect is, to excuse themselves from obedience.

It should be evident that Miriam and Aaron here stand for the people of God in that prophetical and priestly character with which they are endowed accord-

Moses was very [x]meek, more than all the men upon the face of the earth. And Jehovah spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out, ye three, unto the tent of meeting: and they three came out. And Jehovah descended in the pillar of the cloud, and stood at the entrance of the tent, and called Aaron and Miriam, and they both came forth. And he said, Hear now my words; If there be a [y]prophet among you, I, Jehovah, will make myself known unto him in a vision, I will speak unto him in a dream. Not so

x *ctr.* ch. 20. 10. *cf.* Matt. 11. 29. 1 Pet. 2. 23. 2 Cor. 10. 1.

y ch. 11. 25.

ing to the grace of Christianity. Significant it is that God makes *Peter*, who has been by man exalted to the chief place of authority in the ritualistic church, to give utterance to the truth that destroys ritualism altogether: first, that we are "born again," not in baptism, but of the incorruptible seed of the Word of God, that Word "which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Pet. i. 23–25); and, secondly, that all believers are "a spiritual house, a *holy priesthood*, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (Chap. ii. 5.) Other priesthood in the Church of Christ can no man find than this, which is under the *high*-priesthood of Christ in heaven.

As for prophecy, the same apostle exhorts, "If any man speak, let him speak as oracles of God." (Chap. iv. 11.) And the apostle of the Gentiles desires for the Corinthians that all might prophesy. (1 Cor. xiv. 5.) While there was a distinct prophetic gift which belonged only to the few, there was, as one may say, a prophetic *spirit*, which should be found in all the people of God. To "speak as oracles of God" is to be God's mouthpiece in such sort as to be used of Him as those with Him, and having His mind,—capable, therefore, of uttering it distinctly: "If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as My mouth." (Jer. xv. 19.)

In Moses we find a prophet with whom as seen here none could compare among mere men, and whom we have seen acting in priestly character before the consecration of Aaron, the ruler also, under God, of the redeemed people: fit type, therefore, in these respects, of Him who is the Head and Leader of the New Testament. It is not difficult to see in this uprise of Miriam and Aaron against Moses, how the Church has asserted her own competency and independence of her Lord. And indeed His love to the stranger has been, in the eyes of those proud of their place of covenanted privilege, an offense unworthy of Him. So with Israel who believed not His mercy to the Gentiles; and so with the Gentile church itself, building itself up upon its dowry of the Spirit, and intrenching itself within lines of rigid sacerdotalism. The dispensational application is in both cases clear.

Individually also, when the soul has turned from its manna food, and its joy in Christ has waned and become low, how often does it stiffen into a hard ecclesiasticism which, while it may speak much of grace, ignores it, and practically refuses the rule of Christ. Indeed, if He suit us not, how can His rule do so? Yet, as the Spirit of God here, as with the manna before, pauses to remind us of the character of that which is rejected, we are bidden to mark the gentleness of that rule against which they revolt. God had chosen the very meekest man on earth as the ruler of His people. How can we fail to remember those words in precisely similar connection, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, *for I am meek* and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls"? This is not, as many think, the yoke He bears or has borne, that He invites us to share with Him, but the yoke which as Lord He imposes. The shepherd's rod is a sweet badge of authority for our Moses, and this is "the *good* Shepherd, who layeth down His life for the sheep." Who would not submit? *His* yoke means rest from restlessness, rest from the misery of our own ways,—green pastures and tranquil waters. Yet, alas! we can murmur.

[with] my servant Moses: he is [z]faithful in all my house. With him I speak [a]mouth to mouth, manifestly, and not in dark sayings; and the similitude of Jehovah he shall behold. Why, then, were ye not [b]afraid to speak against my servant Moses? And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against them, and he departed. And the cloud removed from off the tent; and, behold, Miriam was leprous, as snow. And Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was [c]leprous. And Aaron said unto Moses, Alas! my lord, lay not the sin upon us in which we have done foolishly and have sinned! Let her not be as one [d]dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb. And Moses cried unto Jehovah, saying, [e]Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee. And Jehovah said unto Moses, If her father had but [f]spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? Let her be shut out seven days [g]out of the camp; and after that she shall be brought in again. And Miriam was shut out of the camp seven days; and the people [h]journeyed not till Miriam was received in [again]. And afterward the people departed from [i]Hazeroth, and encamped in the wilderness of Paran.

z Heb. 3. 2-6.
a ch. 7. 89.
b *cf.* 2 Pet. 2. 10. ch. 16. 3.
c 2 Kings 5. 27. 2 Chron. 26. 19.
d *cf.* Lev. 13. 46.
e *cf.* Luke 22. 50, 51.
f Lev. 15. 8.
g ch. 5. 2.
h *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 26.
i ch. 33. 17, 18.

The espial of the land, and the failure to enter in.

(XIII., XIV.)

I. (*vv.* 1-25.) The charge and its fulfillment.

4. [1] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Send thou men, that they may [j]search out the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of [k]every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a prince among them. And Moses sent them from the wilder-

j *cf.* Deut. 1. 22-46.
k Josh. 3. 1. ch. 1. 4, 5.

God is holy in His grace. His anger is kindled, and He summons the three into His presence, to declare His approbation of Moses, faithful in all God's house: with him He speaks mouth to mouth manifestly, and the similitude of Jehovah he shall behold. Yet these words are not fulfilled but transcended by the greater glory of Him who has been indeed "faithful," not in relation to the earthly but the heavenly tabernacle, and who is "*Son over* God's house," not merely "servant in" it. "Whose house are we," adds the apostle (Heb. iii. 5, 6). "Jesus Christ the righteous" is He to whom God has given the people of His love, and of this we find the heart of the Lord full, where He speaks as One now going to the Father (Jno. xvii.). Faithful to us, faithful to Him,—this is He to whose care we are committed; this is He against whom we can murmur. He whose word is God's word indeed,—who not merely beholds Jehovah's similitude, but is Himself the "express image of the Father." (Heb. i. 3.) Dear Lord, wake up our hearts!

The cloud removes from the tabernacle; Miriam is discovered to be leprous. She who had been exalting herself among the people of the Lord is now excluded from them, and from approach to Him the organ of whose communications to the people she had vaunted herself to be. Israel is even thus fulfilling her seven days, shut out, yet to be restored. For Babylon, the false church, unrepentant to the last, there will be utter exclusion. The principle is always true: while for those humbled there is grace when they accept the humiliation.

4. We now come to the decisive point in the history of the wilderness, the refusal of the people to enter the land, when brought to its very borders, by which they incur the penalty of forty years of wandering, and the death of the whole generation (except two persons) in the wilderness. For these, therefore,

ness of Paran at the word of Jehovah: all the men were heads of the children of Israel. And [t]these are their names: Of the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur; of the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori; of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh; of the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph; of the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Nun; of the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu; of the tribe of Zebulon, Gaddiel the son of Sodi; of the tribe of Joseph, —[that is,] of the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi the son of

[t] *cf.* Ezra 10. 20–44.

the whole character of their life is altered. They are not pilgrims any more, but wanderers; if not aimlessly, yet their aim mere self-preservation for these forty years, so much so that the record of them is not given to us: we have only a few incidents carefully chosen, and which reveal a condition of things conformable to this beginning. Progress stopped does not stop declension, which ripens on the contrary into that rebellion of Korah and his company, which is the crowning sin of all. Of this period it is that God marks the character in Amos afterward in the inquiry, "Have ye offered unto Me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves." (Amos v. 25, 26.) Circumcision likewise ceases, as we see by the renewal of it when they enter Canaan. (Josh. v. 2–6.) Thus the very sign of their covenant with Jehovah is lost, and grace alone carries them at last through Jordan, and gives them possession of the land from which they turn back here.

And still "these things happened unto them for types, and are written for our admonition." The Christian church as "partakers of the heavenly calling" (Heb. iii. 1), have but too faithfully imitated the manners of an unbelieving generation, and instead of going on to possess themselves of a heavenly portion, have turned back to the world: a state of things so long and so well established now, that it has the prescription of antiquity. It is orthodox to speak of the Christian *world*, mysticism to talk seriously of being strangers in it. That the little seed of the parable should become a great tree is no more a wonder, and that Christians have "reigned as kings" even from the apostles' times can be proved clearly enough from Scripture: "*without us*" they have not as yet found manuscript authority to omit however.

Alas! the application of the chapters now before us is most easy: there is no skill required to hit so broad a target. Tears and prayers are more our need than satire, and an honest self-judgment which will not spare at home what we denounce abroad—will not cherish our own peculiar form of worldliness, while refusing other forms. May the Lord Himself apply, wherever conviction is needed, the story of failure here.

(i.) The commission of the spies and its fulfillment come first in place. We should not know from the account before us what we find in Deuteronomy, that this spying out the land originated with the people, and not with God. We need not wonder, therefore, that it ends disastrously. Yet God sanctions it: how much may He have in this way to sanction, as what must be because of what we are! and how much trial does our unbelief necessitate for us! He had told them all that they needed to know of the goodness of the land, and assured them of His gift of it to them, as of His casting out for their sins the present inhabitants. what more did they need to know? And yet this side of the matter is in this book entirely ignored, and the whole seems to proceed from God Himself, as if man had no part in it. In truth, the evil of it was in the state of their hearts only, the motive which with them was unbelief; faith finds encouragement in that which discomfits the unbelieving. each is confirmed in its own way.

The names of the spies are given us, each a prince in his tribe, and representing it. If we had skill to read their meanings aright, in the connection in which

Susi; of the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli; of the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael; of the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi; of the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi. These are the names of the men that Moses sent to search the land; and Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun Jehoshua. And Moses sent them to search the land of Canaan, and said unto them, Go up this way by the [m]south, and go up to the hill-country; and see the land what it is, and the [n]people that dwell therein, whether they are strong or weak, few or many; and what the [o]land is they dwell in, whether it is good or bad; and what [p]cities they are in which they dwell, whether in camps or strongholds; and what the land is, whether it is fat or lean, whether there are [q]trees in it or not: and be of good [r]courage, and bring of the fruit of the land. Now the time was the time of the [s]first-ripe grapes.

And they went up and searched the land from the wilderness of Zin as far as Rehob, unto the road to Hamath. And they went up in the south country, and came to Hebron; and there were Ahiman and Sheshai and Talmai, the children of [t]Anak: now [u]Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt. And they

[m] ch. 2. 10.
[n] Eph. 6.12.
[o] Neh. 9. 25, 37.
[p] Josh. 12. 9 24. 2 Cor. 10. 5, 6.
[q] *cf.* Rev. 22. 2.
[r] Josh. 1. 7, etc.
[s] *cf.* Song 2. 13. Song 6. 11.
[t] Josh.11.21.
[u] *cf.* Eph. 1. 4.

they stand, we should doubtless find light given us as to the reason of their failure for the most part, although they are unanimous at first as to the land itself. The significance of the names of the two faithful ones is plain, and should encourage us to look further. "Caleb" means, no doubt, "whole-hearted," as the man is; and he stands *third* among the *first* three of the twelve, his position being in exact accord numerically with his name. He is the son of Jephunneh, or "who is regarded with favor": the apprehension of grace being that which leads to devotedness. Joshua stands *second* in the *second* three, and it is remarkable that each of these three speaks of deliverance in some way: Igal, "he redeems;" Hoshea, "saviour;" Palti, "deliverance." Hoshea, whom Moses named Jehoshua, "*Jehovah* the Saviour," is the son of Nun, "son:" is it because as Son of God (*Jehovah* the Son) He saves? taking the place of Son of Man also, to bring us to obedience to the Father?

Joshua represents Christ in us, who leads His people into the land; Caleb the spirit of whole-heartedness which will not miss what God has made over to us. It is no wonder that in this account, therefore, the special emphasis should be laid on Caleb, in whom our responsibility is emphasized. In the searching of the land Hebron is prominent, Abraham's dwelling-place for so long, and it is no more a wonder that in it—("communion")—or in connection with it, the glorious fruitage of Eshcol should be found. Yet nowhere does the power of the enemy seem so great as there: three sons of Anak (the "long-necked") oppose possession of Hebron: children of pride, as we may easily conceive them, for what more effectually bars from communion with God than pride!

Here we are reminded that Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt, which chronologically means nothing more distinct than that it was of ancient date: spiritually read, it is of much greater significance. Zoan was at this time, as it was again in after-times, the capital of Egypt, though upon its borders, and on that account seems to have received its name, which means "a place of departure;" indeed, Mr. Poole tells us, "distinctly indicates the place of departure of a migratory people." How strange a name for the seat of Egypt's empire; and yet what a striking delineation of what the world is! its

came as far as the valley of [v] Eshcol, and they cut down thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it on a pole between two; and [they brought] of the pomegranates, and of the figs. That place was called the Valley of Eshcol, because of the cluster which the children of Israel cut down thence.

2. (v.26-xiv. 9.) The report and the gainsaying.

[2] And they returned from searching the land at the end of [w] forty days. And they went, and came to Moses and to Aaron, and to the whole assembly of the children of Israel, to the wilderness of Paran, to [x] Kadesh; and brought them back word, and to all the assembly, and [y] showed them the fruit of the land. And they told him, and said, We came to the land whither thou sentest us, and [z] indeed it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. [a] Only, the people are strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are fenced—very great, and we saw also the children of Anak there. Amalek dwelleth in the land of the south, and the Hittite and the Jebusite and the Amorite dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanite is dwelling by the sea and beside Jordan. And [b] Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. But the men that had gone up with him said, We are [c] not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we. And they brought to the children of Israel an [d] ill report of the land which they had searched, saying, The land that we went through to search it out is a land that [e] devoureth its own inhabitants; and all the men that we saw in it are men of great stature. And we saw giants there,—the sons of Anak are of the giants: and we were in our own eyes as [f] grasshoppers, and so we were in their eyes.

[v] *cf.* Eph. 3. 8.
[w] Ex. 24.13, etc.
[x] ch. 20. 1.
[y] *cf.* Eph. 1. 13, 14. 1 Jno. 1. 1 4.
[z] Deut. 1.25.
[a] *cf.* Eph. 6. 10 18.
[b] Josh. 14. 7, 8.
[c] *cf.* 2 Chr. 20. 12.
[d] Deut. 21. 28.
[e] *cf.* Lev. 18. 25.
[f] *cf.* Is. 40. 22.

place of highest eminence so near its border; its seat of dominion only a place of the most transient occupation, as it were a traveler's lodging, and no more!

But Hebron, built seven years before it, speaks of what was ordained for us in God's perfect plan, before this wheel of the world began its rounds. Well may it abide for us, after the history of the world is rolled up and passed away. What peaceful assurance is there in this, that all the sons of Anak shall not suffice to keep Israel out of her inheritance!

(ii.) The spies bring back their report: Yes, the land is good; here is the fruit of it: God has told the truth of it; it is a land that floweth with milk and honey. Only the people are strong, and their cities strong; and the land is filled with them. Faith in the true-hearted says, "Let us go up at once: we are well able to take possession." But the mass have not faith: the very men that had gone up with Caleb have no sympathy with him; the people are stronger than they,—true enough, no doubt, reckoning without God as they are doing. And then they doubly contradict themselves, as unbelief constantly does, and declare in spite of the strength of its swarming population, that it eats up its inhabitants.

Upon this, the unbelief of the people breaks out into irrepressible lamentation, and then into clamor against Jehovah Himself openly and by name. He who had miraculously led them hitherto had only taken this out-of-the-way course to

And the whole assembly lifted up their voice and cried; and the people [g] wept that night. And all the children of Israel [h] murmured against Moses and against Aaron, and the whole assembly said unto them, Would we had died in the land of Egypt! or would we had died in this wilderness! And [i] why doth Jehovah bring us into this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our little ones may be a prey? Is it not better to return to Egypt? And they said one to another, [j] Let us make a captain and return to Egypt! And Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the congregation of the assembly of the children of Israel. And [k] Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, of those that searched the land, rent their garments. And they spake to all the assembly of the children of Israel, saying, The land which we went through to search it, is an exceedingly good land. If Jehovah [l] delight in us, he will bring us to this land, and give it us, a land that floweth with milk and honey; only rebel not against Jehovah, and be not afraid of the people of the land, for they shall be bread to us. Their defense is departed from them, and Jehovah is with us: fear ye them not. And the whole assembly bade that they should be [m] stoned with stones.

3. (vv. 10-25.) Jehovah sanctified.

[3] And the glory of Jehovah appeared in the tent of meeting unto all the children of Israel. And Jehovah said unto Moses, How long will this people set me at naught? and how long will they not believe me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them? I will smite them with pestilence, and disinherit them, and will [n] make of thee a nation greater and mightier than they. And Moses said unto Jehovah, [o] Then the Egyptians will hear of it; for in thy might thou broughtest up this people from their midst; and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land, [who] have heard that thou Jehovah art in the midst of this people, that thou Jehovah art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them by day in a pillar of cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire. Now if thou kill this people as one man, then the nations that have heard thy fame will speak, saying, Because Jehovah was [p] not able to bring this

g *cf.* 2 Cor. 7. 10, 11.
h Ps. 106. 24, 25.
i Gen. 19 18. Ex. 13. 17.
j *cf.* Acts 7. 37.
k *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 11-14.
l *cf.* Matt. 3. 17 with Eph. 1. 6.
m 1 Sam. 30. 6. Acts 7. 54-60.
n Ex. 32. 10.
o Deut. 32. 27. Ex. 32. 12.
p Ezek. 20. 9, etc. Eph. 2. 7.

destroy them by the sword of the Canaanites in the land which was now before them. Well, they would defeat His purpose, make a new leader, and return to Egypt. In vain Joshua and Caleb interpose: unbelief is unreason itself. The multitude only bid them to stone them with stones. Then God must answer for Himself, and the glory of Jehovah breaks forth in the tent of meeting before the eyes of the rebellious people.

(iii.) Jehovah must sanctify Himself, therefore, in judgment, if there be no faith to entertain His grace. Thus it was at the end of the Jewish dispensation; thus it will be at the end of the Christian one; and so the earth will be filled with His glory, as He says here; "when His judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." (Is. xxvi. 9.)

people into the land which he had sworn unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness. And now, I beseech thee, let the power of the Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying, Jehovah is [q]slow to anger, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but by no means clearing [the guilty], visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and to the fourth [generation]. [r]Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt even until now. And Jehovah said, I [s]have pardoned, according to thy word. But, as surely as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Jehovah; for all the men who have seen my glory and my signs which I have done in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and not hearkened to my voice, shall in no wise [t]see the land which I sware unto their fathers: none that have despised me shall see it. But my servant [u]Caleb, because he had another spirit in him, and hath fully followed me, him will I bring into the land into which he went, and his seed shall possess it, and the Amalekite and Canaanite dwelling in the valley. To-morrow, [v]turn and take your journey into the wilderness, the way of the Red Sea.

q Ps. 103. 8.
r ch. 12. 13.
s Ps. 106. 23.
t Deut. 1. 35. cf. Heb. 3. 7-19.
u ch. 13. 30. cf. 1 Jno. 5. 4.
v cf. Jude 5.

4. (26-35.) The forty years announced.

[4]And Jehovah spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, How long [shall I bear] with this evil assembly, who murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel which they murmur against me. Say unto them, As I live, affirmeth Jehovah, I will do to you as ye have spoken in mine ears: in this wilderness shall your [w]carcasses fall; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number from [x]twenty years old and upward, who have murmured

w 1 Cor. 10. 5.
x ch. 1. 18.

Again, also, is the glory of Moses seen, as the one upon whose mediation, as type of the great Mediator, the blessing of the people depends. God had in fact, as Moses pleads, identified His glory with the salvation of His people and their being brought into the land, and in the wilderness declared Himself as the One who forgave iniquity, transgression, and sin, even while also He did not clear the guilty. The generation that had now tempted Him to the limit of His forbearance would perish in the wilderness. Caleb, on the other hand, as following Him fully, should enter into the land. Thus Jehovah is sanctified in judgment and in mercy.

(iv.) The forty years are announced in a distinct communication. In them, those that had desired to die in the wilderness should die there, while their little ones whom they had mourned over as to fall a prey to the enemy, should be brought into the land; in the meanwhile bearing the consequences of their fathers' sin, as needful for those who were children of such fathers: for each day of fruitless search a year in the wilderness. Thank God, however, for the very reason that these were appointed of Him, we cannot say that these were fruitless. Shall we say so at last of any of the Lord's ways with us here? Nay, the more painful even, the more profitable. Divine love could inflict no useless pain, even as it cannot withhold the pain that profits.

against me, shall in no wise come into the land concerning which I have lifted up my hand to make you dwell in it, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun. But your [y] little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. And as to you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall be shepherds in the wilderness [z] forty years, and bear your whoredoms until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness. After the number of the days in which ye searched the land,—forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, [even] forty years; and ye shall know my alienation. I, Jehovah, have spoken. Surely this will I do unto all this evil assembly which have gathered together against me: in this wilderness shall they be consumed, and there shall they die.

y ch. 14. 3.

z Heb. 3. 17.

5. (36–45.) Results.

[5] And the men whom Moses had sent to search the land, who returned and made the whole assembly murmur against him, by bringing up an evil report against the land, even those men who brought up an evil report of the land, [a] died of the plague before Jehovah. But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, of the men that went to search the land, remained alive. And Moses spake these words to all the children of Israel: and the people mourned greatly. And they rose up early in the morning and went up to the top of the hill, saying, Here are we, and we [b] will go up to the place of which Jehovah hath spoken; for we have sinned. And Moses said, Why is it that ye are [now] transgressing the word of Jehovah? and it will not prosper. Go not up; for Jehovah is not among you, that ye be not smitten before your enemies. For the Amalekite and Canaanite are there before you, and ye will fall by the sword: because ye have turned back from following Jehovah, Jehovah will not be with you. Yet they presumed to go up to the top of the hill; but the ark of the covenant of Jehovah and Moses did not depart from the midst of the camp. And the Amalekite and the Canaanite who dwelt in that hill came down, and [c] smote them, and routed them, as far as Hormah.

a Lev. 10. 2, etc.

b *cf.* 2 Chr. 35. 20–24.

c *cf.* Acts 19. 13–16.

(v.) Governmental results soon follow. The ten faithless spies perish of the plague. The people, smitten by Jehovah's words, and realizing the greatness of their loss, pass from despair into a burst of courage and determination, all too late. As not accepting the chastening of the Lord, Moses warns them that they are but rebelling under a new form, but his admonitions are as vain as ever. They presume to go up to the top of the hill, but the Amalekites and Canaanites come down upon them, and chase them as far as Hormah, the "place of ban,"—significant of the sentence which lay upon them.

Thus, "they could not enter in because of unbelief," as the apostle says; and here is the crowning failure also in the professing Church, the failure to enter into the heavenly portion, so as to become from pilgrims only desert wanderers.

Governmental ways, but the end in grace.

1. (vv. 1-16.) Congruity in the offering.

(XV.)

5. [1] [d]And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye are come into the land of your habitations which I give unto you, and will make an offering by fire unto Jehovah, a [e]burnt-offering, or a sacrifice for the performance of a [f]vow or a voluntary offering, or in your [g]set times, to make a sweet savor unto Jehovah, of the herd or of the flock; then shall he that presenteth his offering unto Jehovah bring as a [h]meal-offering a tenth part [of an ephah] of fine flour, mingled with a fourth part of a hin of oil, and of wine for the [i]drink-offering shalt thou offer the fourth part of a hin with the burnt-offering or with the sacrifice, for one [j]lamb. Or for a [k]ram thou shalt offer as a meal-offering two tenths of fine flour mingled with a third part of a hin of oil; and of wine for the drink-offering thou shalt offer a third part of a hin, a sweet savor unto Jehovah. And when thou offerest a [l]bullock for a burnt-offering, or a sacrifice for the accomplishment of a vow, or for a peace-offering unto Jehovah, then one shall present with the bullock a meal-offering of three tenths of fine flour mingled with half a hin of oil; and of wine thou shalt present for a drink-offering half a hin, an offering by fire, a sweet savor to

d cf. ch. 1. 1, etc. Rom. 11. 29.

e Lev. 1. 3.

f Lev. 7. 16.

g Lev. 23. 4, etc.

h Lev. 6. 20.

i Ps. 104. 15. cf. Phil. 2. 19.

j Jno. 1. 29.

k Lev. 9. 2. cf. Heb. 10. 5-10.

l Lev. 1. 3. cf. Phil. 2. 8-8.

Cain condemned to be this, in the land of his vagabondage built a city; and Christianity, when it has lost its heavenly character, takes but the more resolute hold of the earth. Thus comes into existence Babylon the Great.

5. Just at this point there is an interruption of the history, in what at first seems a strange manner, to introduce certain laws relating to sacrifices they should offer when they come into the land. In fact, however, while the reference to their possession of the land at this time (when they have just refused it and been turned back from it) is a plain encouragement to faith, and assurance of the unfailing grace of God toward the people,—there are also in it, if we look deeper, principles of divine government to be found which have the plainest application to the history, as they come undeniably in the right place according to the numerical structure. How God maintains His grace and yet His government we find very clearly, and it prepares us for the development of these things which so shortly follows in the third division of the book.

(i.) First, we have a law given as to the offerings which they should offer on their coming into the land. How comforting this quiet assurance that after all they would come into the land; and that with full hearts which would need to express themselves to God in free gifts and offerings such as are here referred to. When it would be in their hearts to bring such an offering, then God Himself prescribes the way in which it was to be done. For, alas! in our best moods and highest purposes we blunder sadly, and need as everywhere to be controlled and fashioned by His thoughts. Here it is prescribed that with every animal sacrifice of this sort, there shall be a meal-offering and drink-offering in due proportion to the value of the animal. Thus with a lamb a tenth part of an ephah of flour mingled with a fourth part of a hin of oil, and for a drink-offering a fourth part of a hin of wine. For a ram there were to be two tenths of flour, a third of a hin of oil and of wine. For a bullock, three tenths of flour, with a half-hin of oil and wine. We have seen that in the meal-offering Christ is presented in His life down here, as the sacrificial offering speaks of His atoning death. These have to each other, therefore, the same relation as the quails and the manna in Ex. xvi. In the second subdivision here, we have found Israel despising the

Jehovah. Thus shall it be done for one ox, or for one ram, or for a lamb, or for a kid: according to the number that ye offer, so shall ye do for every one, according to their number. And all these things shall every one that is home-born do after this manner, in offering an offering by fire of a sweet savor unto Jehovah. And if a [m]stranger sojourn with you, or whosoever may be among you throughout your generations, and offereth an offering by fire, a sweet savor unto Jehovah, as ye do, so shall he do. As to the congregation, there shall be one statute for you and for the stranger that sojourneth [with you], an everlasting statute throughout your generations: as ye are, so shall the stranger be before Jehovah. One law and one ordinance shall be for you and for the stranger that sojourneth among you.

m Ex. 12. 48, 49.

manna, while lusting for the quails. To such an error, therefore, this law of the offerings plainly applies. We must not divorce from the death that atones for us the realization of the value of Christ's precious life. Nay, the true apprehension of the one will correspond to that of the other. Again, though in a different connection, we are reminded that to "learn *Christ*" aright, we must be "taught by Him as the truth is in *Jesus*." Thus the law here given clearly contemplates Israel's failure and its lessons, as given in the preceding history. Let us learn from the repetition of the lesson how jealous God is, how jealous we ought to be, that we do not use Christ merely as a lightning-rod to keep off judgment from our houses, but that we enter into and lay hold of the ways of His life on earth. It is this which implies true fellowship and knowledge of the meaning of His death itself.

We must learn here sharply to *distinguish* what we must at the same time hold firmly together. The cross was *not* simply an incident in the life of Jesus. His life was *not* vicarious as His death was. The *suffering* of His life had, none of it, the character of His death. The cross stands alone in this sense, that there for the first time the Saviour of sinners stood in the sinner's place, and bore the burden of our sins in His own body. There and nowhere else did the wrath which was due to sin fall upon Him. How different what He could say up to the cross, "I know that Thou hearest Me always," from that which we find in the twenty-second psalm as fulfilled upon the cross, "I cry . . . and Thou hearest *not*"! What utter contrast between the light of God's favor in which He daily walked, and the darkness of withdrawal, interpreted by the cry, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?"! Had that shadow been upon all His life, we should not have had the blessed picture that we now have, of One representing God upon the earth, as on the cross He presented man—fallen and sinful man—to God. It was, of course, all through, the same blessed Person; yet in these two places with what a difference! There must be a strange blur upon the sight of him who cannot discern it.

We must distinguish, in order to retain both these precious things in all their preciousness. The lesson here is that we must, along with the burnt-offering which is for acceptance, bring to God the meal-offering also, which speaks of Christ in person and life; and the faith that does this will, if real, be fruitful: "He that sinneth," says the apostle, "hath not seen Christ, neither known Him."

Lack of proportion in these offerings shows at once the tendency to separate between them. Can we know better the work for us without increasing in the knowledge of Him who has done the work? And with the knowledge of Him, if real, grows also that joy in Him which is typified in the drink-offering, a joy not effusive in words merely, or sentiment, but in spending and being spent for Him. And the measure of the oil for the meal-offering is the measure of the

2. (17-36.) The different dealing with inadvertent and presumptuous sin.

2 And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto
the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye are
come into the land whither I am bringing you, then it
shall be, when ye eat of the bread of the land, that ye
shall offer a [n] heave-offering unto Jehovah: the first of
your dough shall ye offer, a cake, for a heave-offering:
as the heave-offering of the threshing-floor, so shall ye
offer this. Of the first of your dough shall ye give unto
Jehovah a heave-offering throughout your generations.
And if ye [o] sin in inadvertence, and should not keep
all these commandments which Jehovah spake unto
Moses, [even] all that Jehovah hath commanded you by

n *cf.* Rom. 12. 1.

o Lev. 4. 13.

wine for the drink-offering: the measure of the Spirit that is found in our apprehension of Christ is the measure of our joy and devotedness.

In all this, it is specially pressed also that there is one law for the stranger and for the home-born: the grace that is in Christ welcomes all alike. That which for the Jew can be only on condition of faith is for the Gentile also wherever there is faith.

(ii.) Most of the remainder of the chapter (to the end of ver. 36) is a new communication from Jehovah, the account of the Sabbath-breaker being only an illustrative case. And here the subject is clearly the difference between sins of inadvertence and presumptuous sins; to which the law of the heave-offering of the dough is but the preface. This law necessarily also contemplates their coming into the land. By its connection here it would not seem to have, like the sheaf of first-fruits or the loaves of Pentecost, any dispensational significance. Rather would it seem to enforce God's claim to first remembrance when partaking of the blessing which His hand has given. A very simple lesson; and yet there is more danger of forgetting Him amid our blessings than in our need. It is *more* simple for us to "pray" when we are "in affliction," than it is, when we are "merry," to "sing psalms." Thus it is His mercy also that reminds us of the claim of His mercy, and permits us to bring our gift to Him, and that He will thus partake with us in His own bounty. Certainly it is condescending love, not need, that makes Him do so. For us, it is the only thing that sanctifies and makes safe our blessing.

After all, where God was thus before the soul, and there was entire honest-heartedness, not only an individual but the whole congregation might err, and error would need atonement. Where God's Word is perfect, and able to furnish thoroughly to every good work, failure must be, no matter what the point, our own sin. If ignorant, yet why were we ignorant? Ignorance means negligence in some way: stupidity, want of ability to take in the truth, is not excused as if it were the fault of the mind only: God giveth wisdom to the simple. The "fool" is, in Scripture, he for whom God is not. (Ps. xiv. 1.) If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, and it shall be given him. (Jas. i. 5.) This, then, being true, the plea of ignorance only avails in one way,—to distinguish from presumptuous sin. Thus of the sin of his unconverted state the apostle could say, "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." (1 Tim. i. 13.) And so he says to professing Christians, "If we sin willfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." (Heb. x. 26, 27.)

There are doubtless sins also which come between sins of ignorance and such as in fact are the "willful" sins of those who, with "knowledge of the truth," show themselves "*adversaries*." Peter in the high-priest's palace is a clear example of this. When he denied with oaths and curses that he knew the Man,

the hand of Moses, from the day in which Jehovah commanded [you], and thenceforth throughout your generations, then it shall be, if aught be done through inadvertence, [hidden] from the eyes of the assembly, then the whole assembly shall offer one young bullock for a [p] burnt-offering, for a sweet savor unto Jehovah, and its meal-offering, and its drink-offering, according to the ordinance, and one shaggy goat for a [q] sin-offering. And the priest shall make atonement for the whole assembly of the children of Israel, and it shall be forgiven them: for it was an inadvertence; and they have brought their offering, an offering by fire unto Jehovah, and their sin-offering before Jehovah for their inadvertence. And it shall be forgiven all the assembly of the children of Israel, and the stranger that sojourneth among them, for it was an inadvertence on the part of all the people.

p Lev. 1. 3.

q Lev. 16. 9.

And if [r] one soul sin through inadvertence, then he shall present a yearling she-goat for a sin-offering; and the priest shall make atonement for the soul that doeth inadvertently, when he sinneth in inadvertence before Jehovah, to make atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him. For him that is home-born among the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them, there shall be one law for you, for him that doeth aught through inadvertence; but the soul

r Lev. 4. 27, 28.

certainly it was not ignorance that spoke in him; and yet he was not an "adversary." He had got, through self-confidence, into a place where circumstances were too much for him, and the fear of man wrung from him words base in their cowardice, and to be bitterly repented of. But an adversary he was not; and the grace of the Lord acts in its own blessed way toward the transgressor. This class of sins is not considered in the passage before us.

But from these sins of ignorance, who can declare that he is free? Not the Psalmist, when he makes the similar inquiry, "Who can understand his errors? cleanse Thou me from secret faults." (Ps. xix. 12.) Not the apostle, when he declares, "For I know nothing against myself, yet am I not thereby justified; but He that judgeth me is the Lord." (1 Cor. iv. 4.) Here is at once the integrity of one exercised and self-judged, free from all known offense, and yet the full acknowledgment that there might easily be things wrong, of which he was ignorant, and as to which in the confidence of His grace he could commit himself to Him who by and by will bring all to light. If none of us ought to be able to say less than this, who on the other hand can say more?

And yet these unknown sins are sins, and need, as we see here, the sin-offering. And the whole congregation might be thus guilty:—for us, the whole Church. As we look back, indeed, it is only too plain that the whole Church has been, in fact, involved in ignorance of things to us now so plain that we marvel how any one should be ignorant. Who shall then say that the whole Church of to-day may not be convicted yet of some similar error? We must not so take this, however as to make uncertain what we have really learnt from Scripture. It is the disregard of it that has been ever the cause of error. Scripture is not uncertain; nor, where God has really taught the soul, will it be in that uncertain. Rather, what we have to do is, to test all we may have learnt of man by that to which alone is the ultimate appeal, remembering that God, not the Church, is the Teacher,—His Word, not the Church's voice, the test of truth.

that doeth any thing with a [s]high hand, whether he be home-born or a stranger, revileth Jehovah, and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Because he hath [t]despised the word of Jehovah, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall surely be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him.

And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man [u]gathering sticks upon the Sabbath day. And they that found him gathering sticks brought him to Moses and Aaron and the whole assembly. And they kept him in [v]ward, because it had not been declared what should be done to him. And Jehovah said unto Moses, The man shall surely be put to death: the whole assembly shall [w]stone him with stones outside the camp. And the whole assembly led him outside the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died, as Jehovah commanded Moses.

3. (37-41.) Full consecration.

[3] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make [x]tassels on the borders of their garments throughout their generations; and that they put upon the tassel of the border a lace of [y]blue, and ye shall have the tassel, that ye may look upon it, and [z]remember all the commandments of Jehovah and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and after your own eyes, after which ye go a whoring,—that ye may remember and do all my commandments, that ye may be holy unto your God. I am Jehovah your God, who am bringing you out of the land of Egypt to be your God: I am Jehovah your God.

s Ps. 19. 13. *cf.* Heb. 10. 26, 27.

t *cf.* Acts 13. 41. Heb. 10. 28-31.

u Ex. 20. 8-11.

v Lev. 24. 12.

w Lev. 24. 14.

x *cf.* Luke 8. 44. Ex. 28. 37. 1 Pet. 2. 11.

y *cf.* Ex. 28. 37. Phil. 3. 20. Heb. 3. 1. Eph. 4. 1.

z *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 11, 12. 2 Pet. 3. 1, 2.

So for every inadvertence we must bring the sin-offering. Let us notice, however, that in the case before us the burnt-offering is *larger* than the sin-offering. While the guilt of ignorance is confessed, what is emphasized for the soul is the need of knowing better the fullness of the value of that in which we stand before God. It is in the nearness implied in this that we enter aright into the truth that God has given us: we learn better his mind as we draw nearer to Him, and the glory of Christ is revealed with more power to our hearts.

The doom of the Sabbath-breaker illustrates plainly what is presumptuous sin; but this form of it must be chosen with divine wisdom rather than any other, and it speaks most solemnly to us to whom God preaches a "rest" which He will not have dishonored. We are in the sabbatical rest of the day of atonement, and woe to him who refuses to accept what the work of Christ has procured, but must gather the sticks of his own "dead works," to be fuel for the fire on the day that shall soon come.

(iii.) And now again we have what the spiritual sense alone can interpret to us: the people are commanded to make upon the borders of their garments tassels, and upon the tassels a cord of blue, that they may look upon the tassels, and remember the commandments of Jehovah, and do them, that they may be holy to their God. The tassel is literally a "flower," from a root which means "to shine," and which is used of the plate upon the high-priest's forehead, which similarly is connected with a lace of blue. (Ex. xxviii. 36.) This, it is plain, is not a mere casual resemblance: as in the high-priest's diadem holiness becomes the crown of the garments, here we find it on the border of them, next the ground: the lace of blue, the heavenly color, reminding us that *heavenliness* is

The full manifestation of the evil in "the gainsaying of Korah."

I. (vv. 1-19.) The rebellion.

(XVI. 1-35.)

6. [1] And [a]Korah, the son of Jitzhar the son of Kohath the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of [b]Reuben, took and rose up before Moses with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty [c]princes of the assembly, called to the council, men of repute: and they gathered together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take [d]much on you; for [e]all the assembly,—all of them—are holy, and Jehovah is among them: why, then, do ye lift up yourselves above the congregation of Jehovah? And when Moses heard it, he [f]fell upon his face; and he spake unto Korah and all his assembly, saying, To-morrow will Jehovah show who is his, and who is holy, and will cause him to come near to him: even him whom he chooseth will he cause to come near unto him. This do: take you [g]censers, Korah and all his assembly, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, to-morrow, before Jehovah: and it shall be that the man whom Jehovah chooseth, he shall be holy: ye take much upon you, ye sons of Levi. And Moses said unto Korah, Hear now, ye sons of Levi: is it a small thing to you that the God of Israel hath [h]separated you from the assembly of Israel, to bring you near unto himself, to do the service of the tabernacle of Jehovah, and to stand before the assembly to minister unto them? And he hath brought thee near, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee; and seek ye the [i]priesthood also? Wherefore thou and all thine assembly are gathered against Jehovah; for what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him? And Moses

a Ex. 6. 21. cf. ch. 26. 11.

b Gen. 49. 3, 4. cf. Phil. 3. 4-6.

c cfr. ch. 7. 2. cf. Acts 20. 30.

d cf. 2 Pet. 2. 10.

e Ex. 19. 6. cf. Col. 1. 18. Heb. 2. 11-17.

f ch. 20. 6. Josh. 7. 6. 2 Cor. 12. 21.

g Lev. 10. 1. cfr. Lev. 16. 12. Heb. 13. 15.

h ch. 3. 6, etc. 1 Cor. 3. 4-7.

i 2 Chron. 26. 16-21. Heb. 10. 21.

holiness. This, where the garment touches the ground, secures the habits, as it were, from the invasion of earthliness. While the flowerlike form may attest the "beauty of holiness," and that it is a living growth where real. Full consecration is clearly the lesson of the tassel and its attachment.

6. We return to the wilderness-history, to pursue to the end, now just at hand, the course of decline and departure from God among the people. Korah's rebellion is the last stage here, as Jude prophetically sees it to be the end of the evil in Christendom, already begun in his day. Ungodly men, ordained of old to this condemnation, had already crept in among them, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only true God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. Their course would thus end, as the apostle Paul also foretells (2 Thess. ii.), in complete apostasy: "Woe unto them!" he says, "for they have gone in the way of Cain, and run greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Kore." As with the prophets of old, he sees the future as if it had already taken place, and gives the manner of the development of the evil: first, "the way of Cain,"—that is, self-righteousness, which has no need of the atoning sacrifice; then the hireling spirit of Balaam, seducing for reward, which we find again in Pergamos (Rev. ii.); finally, what we have here, the gainsaying of Kore,—the climax of their iniquity, in which they perish. This is not a picture merely of exaggerated ecclesiasticism: from the first, they were in spirit alienated from Christianity; then they could trade coolly with error for personal advantage; the final step is open opposition to God, and Him whom "God hath made both Lord and Christ:" thus their doom is assured.

sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab; and they said, We [f] will not come up. Is it a little thing that thou hast brought us up [k] out of a land flowing with milk and honey, to [l] kill us in the wilderness, but thou must play the [m] prince also over us? Moreover, thou hast [n] not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, nor given us [o] inheritance of field or vineyard! Wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up. And Moses was very wroth, and said unto Jehovah, Regard not thou their offering: I have not [p] taken one ass from them, nor have I done harm to one of them. And Moses said unto Korah, Be thou and all thine assembly before Jehovah,—thou and they and [q] Aaron, to-morrow; and take each one his censer, and put incense on them, and present before Jehovah every one his censer, two hundred and fifty censers, and thou and Aaron, each his censer. And they took each his censer, and put fire in them, and put incense on them, and stood at the entrance of the tent of meeting, as well as Moses and Aaron. And Korah gathered all the assembly together against them unto the entrance of the tent of meeting. And the [r] glory of Jehovah appeared unto all the assembly.

2. (20-35.) The separation of the people, and destruction of the adversaries.

[2] And Jehovah spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, [s] Separate yourselves from the midst of this assembly, and I will consume them in a moment. And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with the [t] whole assembly? And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the assembly, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. And Moses rose up, and went to

f 1 Sam. 15. 23.

k ctr. Ex. 20. 1, 2. Eph. 2. 11, 12. 1 Pet. 2. 9, 10. Lam. 3. 19-21.

l Ex. 14. 11.

m Acts 7. 27. *ctr.* Phil. 2. 9-11.

n cf. Ex. 13. 17, 18. Heb. 10. 36-39.

o cf. 1 Pet. 1. 4 with Eph. 1. 13, 14.

p 1 Sam. 12. 3. Acts 20. 33, 34.

q Heb. 5. 4-6.

r ver. 42.

s Gen. 19. 12-17.

t cf. 1 Cor. 5. 6

Korah is the Leader of a grand conspiracy: a Levite of the family of Kohath, a son of Jitzhar, in that line of ministry which has to do with the most precious things of the tabernacle, yet in spirit dead to all, as his name—probably "ice"—may intimate. His associates are in the first place the sons of Reuben, the rejected first-born, herein being a natural reason for their readiness to join the revolt against the divinely constituted leaders. Their names are Dathan, "laws, decrees," and Abiram, "my father is exalted." These are the sons of Eliab, "My God is Father." These meanings, while in themselves not evil, certainly suit well the pretensions which they support, which would have leveled priesthood and Levite ministry under the plea of the holiness of all the people. Dathan thus could speak of "laws" of ancient right, as that of the first-born, set aside in favor of the new restrictions. Abiram could point to his own father as exalted by this natural right. While their common parent's name might suggest that higher claim, which in fact they make, of equal relationship to God on all sides. They have a companion also, but who appears no more,—another Reubenite, whose name, "On," signifies "labor," or "distress," the son of Peleth, probably "separation," "distinction." In this, one might think that he heard the socialistic arguments of the present day.

All this may seem as if it were dreaming; yet not all names would fit the facts like these. And certainly the day that Jude speaks of, connected, as he connects it, with the judgment of evil in Christendom and the coming of the Lord,—a

Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel followed him. And he spake unto the assembly, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing that is theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins. And they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram on every side; and Dathan and Abiram came out and took their stand at the entrance of their tents, with their [u] wives and their sons and their little ones. And Moses said, By this shall ye know that Jehovah hath sent me to do all these works, —that they are not of mine own heart: if these die the [v] common death of all men, or if they be visited with the visitation of all men, [then] Jehovah hath not sent me; but if Jehovah make a new thing, and the ground open its mouth and swallow them up, and all that they have, and they go down alive to Sheol, then ye shall know that these men have reviled Jehovah. And it was so, when he had ceased speaking all these words, that the ground that was under them [w] clave asunder; and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them and their households, and all the men that belonged to Korah, and all their goods. And they went down,—they and all that were theirs, alive to Sheol; and the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the congregation. And all Israel that were round about them fled at their cry; for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up. And a [x] fire came out from Jehovah and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense.

u Josh.7.24.

v *cf.* Luke 13. 1-5.

w Rev.19.20.

x Lev. 10. 2. *cf.* Heb. 12. 29.

day too solemn to permit trifling about it, and which may well be near at hand, —has features with which it is in strange accordance. More broadly expressed only than in the party of Korah, "the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man" are already current phrases, which go not seldom with the rejection of Christ whether as Moses or as Aaron,—as Lord or Priest; and we have many a son of Levi heading this revolt. Nay, if we understand prophecy, and can believe before it comes to pass, we may even find a reason for On's disappearance, with this one brief notice, from the scene before us. For, assuredly, socialism, while it will have its part in bringing on the evil days of which we are speaking, soon will disappear, and give place to a worse despotism than it now laments. Korah may indeed say that "all the assembly are holy," when he seeks to destroy the authority of Moses and Aaron; but Moses' words show what is hidden behind this: and the last Antichrist who heads the apostasy on the eve of which, as it would seem we are, will be himself both priest and king, if Christ shall not. We cannot here enter on the proofs of all these things. They will be found elsewhere by those who need them; those who do not need, the shadow of the last days in Korah's revolt will be traced easily. It is but a shadow, and it passes quickly. According to Moses' word, the earth opens and swallows up the chief transgressors: Korah, Dathan, and Abiram go down alive into sheol, again the type of its more awful counterpart, when the beast and the false prophet are cast alive into the lake of fire. (Rev. xx.) The two hundred and fifty men who dare to test their title to priesthood by the offering of incense are consumed by fire.

DIVISION 3. (Chap. xvi. 36–xxiv.)

The resources of a priesthood marked out by resurrection.

(XVI, 36–XIX.)

Sufficient grace.

1. (xvi. 36–40.) One only priesthood.

1 AND Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak
1. unto Eleazar, the son of Aaron, that he take up the censers out of the burning, and scatter the fire afar; for they are sanctified, the censers of these who have sinned against their lives: and let them make them broad plates for a ᵞ covering of the altar; for they

ᵞ *cf.* Ex. 38. 8.

DIV. 3.

THE third division of the book opens suddenly at this point. The central truth is reached in this central portion, that man being what he is—what his history shows him to be—and in the people of God also humanity still being utterly untrustworthy, priesthood is his one resource, the priesthood of one marked out by resurrection-power and who can sustain the burden of the people, as even a Moses has confessed himself unable.

The spiritual meaning, here as in so much else, alone puts meaning into the history, while the type nevertheless on its side furnishes the means of the orderly display and enumeration of the truth in such a manner as to show the wonderful value of these typical representations. Such value they must have, or they have no sufficient reason for existence at all; and that they do exist, after all that these books have shown us, may be taken as so fully proved, that there can be no need for any further proof upon the subject.

Not meaning to anticipate what can be only fitly brought before us in the study of the succeeding sections, it will yet be well to introduce the subject by a brief statement of the doctrine of priesthood as we find it here emphasized and expanded for us. In itself, priesthood is not a new truth in this book, of course. We have had it in Exodus, still more in Leviticus, and in necessary connection with the whole doctrine of atonement; nor need we expect this to be repeated here: it is the foundation, however, and shown to be the foundation, of what is now before us. For a priesthood marked out by resurrection is of course the priesthood of One who has passed through death and come up out of it. Resurrection is the acceptance openly of the work done in death. Hence we find here *priesthood in a new phase of it*, and indeed, in general, in a new and significant person, Eleazar, who is already the one designated by name in the ordinance of the red heifer (chap. xix.), and to whom shortly afterward (chap. xx.) Aaron gives place. His connection with resurrection we have already noticed, in whom as the *third* son, after Nadab and Abihu have been cut off, the priesthood as it were revives. Even while Aaron is still before us in this very chapter we shall find a significant difference in his acts, which serves to connect him with the Eleazar ministry.

It is the priesthood in resurrection, then, that we find characteristically in Numbers. If it be said that we have had this already in the work of the day of atonement, when Aaron enters the sanctuary, it is true in a sense, no doubt; but his action there is distinct, it is the application of the blood to the mercy-seat. The consequent priesthood in heaven, with all that flows from this, is not there shown us. The distinct power and value of this, so far as we may be given to utter it, will be seen as we go on.

There are three subdivisions here. The first of these, to the end of the nineteenth chapter, gives us the provision of grace in this priesthood, and its application to the need of the way. The second (chap. xx., xxi.) shows us the progress which under it the people are now able to make. In it they are brought, in

presented them before Jehovah, and they are sanctified; and they shall be for a sign unto the children of Israel. And Eleazar the priest took the brazen censers which they that were burnt had presented; and they beat them out for a covering for the altar, to be a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no [z] stranger, who is not of the seed of Aaron, come near to burn incense before Jehovah, that he may not be as Korah and his assembly: as Jehovah had said to him through Moses.

z *cf.* Heb. 13. 10, 15.

2. (41-50.) Its confirmation in the healing of the people.

[2] But on the morrow, the [a] whole assembly of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of Jehovah. And it was so, when the assembly was gathered against Moses and against Aaron, that they looked toward the tent of meeting; and, behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of Jehovah appeared. And Moses and Aaron went before the tent of meeting. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, [b] Get you up from among this assembly, and I will consume them in a moment. And they fell on their faces. And Moses said unto Aaron,

a *cf.* ver. 22. Heb. 12. 15.

b ver. 21.

fact, really to their journey's end; not, of course, into Canaan itself, but just opposite it, and already in possession of the lands of the kings of the Amorites, Sihon and Og. The third subdivision, the prophecy of Balaam, starting from the present grace in which the people stand, looks boldly on into the future, to see the end of all enemies, and the rule of Him who is the Star out of Jacob, under whom their complete blessing shall be accomplished.

1. First, then, we have the sufficiency of the provision of grace. And here there are six sections, closely connected together, and as plainly separate from what follows, of which they furnish, however, the reason and justification.

(i.) First, this one priesthood is to be fenced off from all intrusion. Judgment has already manifested this in the destruction of the men that offered incense. But of this the memorial is to be preserved: Eleazar (notice how at once we come to Eleazar) is told to take up the censers out of the burning, and of them are to be made plates for the covering of the altar, to be a warning against any intrusion of one not of the seed of Aaron into the priestly place.

(ii.) Next, we have the priesthood of Aaron confirmed practically in another outbreak of murmuring on the part of the congregation, who gather against Moses and against Aaron, with the charge that they had killed the people of Jehovah. The glory of the Lord appears, and pestilence breaks out among the people, which is stayed by Aaron's putting on incense and making atonement in this way for them. He stands between the dead and the living, and the plague is stayed. At first sight, the action is a strange one; atonement, according to Leviticus, is by blood: here there is none,—no sacrifice of any kind, and yet atonement is made. Nor can the omission here be put along with such an offering as that of the fine flour, allowed for a sin-offering in the case of extreme poverty on the part of the offerer: here you would expect rather a bullock,—certainly not incense.

If we look more deeply, however, the strangeness of the action disappears, and we perceive how in a way beyond his own knowledge Moses was guided of God at this time. For the priesthood to which we have come, as we find in the next section, is marked by resurrection. Death, therefore, has been gone through; and this implies atonement in that sense to have been made; and once made, it cannot be, and never needs to be, repeated. Interpreted according to Christian truth, we should say that Christ is in heaven: He has finished completely the

Take a [c]censer, and put thereon fire of the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the assembly, and make atonement for them, for there is wrath gone out from Jehovah: the plague is begun. And Aaron took as Moses had said, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people; and he put on incense, and made atonement for the people. And he stood [d]between the dead and the living; and the plague was [e]stayed. And they who died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, besides those who died about the matter of Korah. And Aaron returned to Moses, to the entrance of the tent of meeting; and the plague was stayed.

[c] *cf.* Rom. 8. 34. Heb. 7. 25.

[d] *cf.* Ezek. 22. 30. Rev. 1. 17, 18.

[e] 2 Sam. 24. 25.

3. (xvii.) Manifested in resurrection power.

[3] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and take of them [f]rods, one for each father's house, of all their princes according to their fathers' houses, twelve rods: thou shalt write every man's name upon his rod; and thou shalt write Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi: for there shall be one rod for each head of their fathers' houses. And thou shalt [g]lay them up in the tent of meeting before the testimony, where I meet with you. And it shall be

[f] *cf.* Ex. 4. 2. Ps. 110. 2.

[g] *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 21.

work for sin, although He has not finished the work of intercession for His people. That intercession is just what is typified by the offering of incense; and thus all here is perfectly in place.

If it is asked, Why, then, is it called "making atonement"? this, from this stand-point, can be without much difficulty explained. We have seen that, according to the Old Testament, atonement could be over and over again made, and with the *same blood*. On the day of atonement it is put upon the mercy-seat and upon the altar alike, and in each case atonement is said to be made with it. This, to us so strange a thing, becomes simpler when we consider that the word "to make atonement" is the intensified form of the verb "to *cover*;" so that it would naturally take in the thought of the *effect* (as we should say) of atonement, as well as that of the *making* it. Thus the intercession of the risen Priest also, as effectually *covering* the sin of His redeemed, might in this sense be said to make atonement for it. Its power to do this does not set aside, but affirms, the value of His precious death.

To some, and those the most instructed in Christian truth, there may be here, however, a difficulty of another kind. They will think that this does not distinguish between priesthood and advocacy. Christ is, according to the New Testament, a Priest with *God* on account of His people's *weakness*,—an Advocate with the *Father* because of His people's *sins* (comp. Heb. iv. 16 with 1 Jno. ii. 2.)

But I apprehend that this is a distinction which in the Old Testament we should not expect to find, inasmuch as there is in the Old Testament no revelation of the Father. In such things, the shadows of the law are "not the very image." The fundamental truth of Christ's intercession on the ground of His death is yet sufficiently preserved.

(iii.) Thus, then, the priesthood of Aaron is confirmed in the deliverance of the people from the effect of their sin. The third section now shows us the distinctive mark of this efficacious priesthood. Jehovah bids them bring near to Him, in the tent of witness, twelve rods, each rod with the name upon it of a representative man in their several tribes, and the rod of him whom He chose should blossom; Aaron's name standing for the tribe of Levi. "And it came to pass that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold,

that the man's rod whom I [h]choose shall [i]bud, and I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel wherewith they murmur against you. And Moses spake unto the children of Israel, and all their princes gave him a rod, for each prince one, according to their fathers' houses, twelve rods; and the rod of Aaron was among their rods. And Moses laid the rods before Jehovah in the tent of the testimony. And it was so that, on the morrow, Moses went into the tent of the testimony, and, behold, Aaron's rod for the house of Levi had budded; it had even brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and ripened [j]almonds. And Moses brought forth unto all the children of Israel all the rods from before Jehovah; and they looked, and took every man his rod. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Bring Aaron's rod again before the [k]testimony, to be kept for a token against the children of rebellion, that thou mayest make an end of their murmurings before me, that they die not. And Moses did as Jehovah commanded him, so did he. And the children of Israel said unto Moses, [l]Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish: every one that cometh at all near to the tabernacle of Jehovah dieth: shall we ever have finished dying?

h *cf.* Is. 42. 1. Heb. 5. 4.

i *cf.* Is. 11. 1. 1 Cor. 15. 20.

j Ex. 37. 19. *cf.* Jer. 1. 11, 12 with Acts 13. 34.

k ch. 20. 9. Heb. 9. 4. Heb. 7. 8.

l Ex. 12. 33. *cf.* Acts 5. 5, 11.

4. (xviii. 1-7.) The iniquity borne by the priesthood.

[1]And Jehovah said unto Aaron, Thou and thy sons and thy father's house with thee shall [m]bear the iniquity of the sanctuary; and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood. And thy brethren also, the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, shalt thou bring near with thee, and they shall be [n]joined unto thee and minister unto thee; but thou and thy sons with thee [shall be] before the tent of the testimony.

m *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 1, 2.

n *cfr.* Gen. 49. 5-7.

the rod of Aaron, for the house of Levi, was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds."

The type of resurrection cannot be mistaken; but the almond gives more than this. We have already seen its significance in connection with the lamp-stand of the tabernacle. As the first tree that wakes up in the spring, its name in Hebrew signifies "the wakeful." It is the herald and pledge of the burst of life which follows. Christ risen is thus the "first-fruits of them that sleep:" rising alone, He yet cannot remain alone; and the risen Priest thus associates with Himself the great multitude of His own. Thus the virtue of the incense is explained by the fruitful rod: "it is Christ that died,—yea, rather, who is risen again, who also is at the right hand of God, who even maketh intercession for us." (Rom. viii. 34.)

(iv.) Here there is One who is competent to carry His people through. Now, therefore, we see the "iniquity of the sanctuary" made to rest upon Him, "that there be no wrath upon the children of Israel." In the work of intercession, Aaron's house may share with Aaron,—the under-priests with the high-priest, only remembering well that it is the high-priest's rod that budded, and that ultimately all rests upon him. Thus He who died for us carries us on to full, final salvation, "in the power of an endless life." "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." With the value of a work done which is of infinite efficacy, we have also a hand of power which sustains us,—all put into His hand who is

And they shall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the tent; only to the [o] vessels of the sanctuary and to the altar they shall not come nigh, that they die not, both they and you. But they shall be joined unto thee, and keep the charge of the tent of meeting, for all the service of the tent; and no stranger shall come near unto you. And ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary and the charge of the altar, that wrath come no more upon the children of Israel. And I, behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel: unto you they are a [p] gift, given unto Jehovah, to do the service of the tent of meeting. And thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priesthood for every thing concerning the altar, and within the vail; and ye shall perform the service: I give you your priesthood as a service of gift, and the stranger that cometh near shall be put to death.

o cf. Col. 1. 18.

p cf. 1 Cor. 12. 4-31. Eph. 4. 8-13.

5. xviii. 8-32.) The priest's recompense.

[5] And Jehovah said unto Aaron, And I, behold, I have given unto thee the charge of my [q] heave-offerings, of all the holy things of the children of Israel: I have given them to thee because of the anointing, and to thy sons, by an everlasting statute. This shall be thine of the most holy things [reserved] from the fire: every offering of theirs of all their meal-offerings, and of all their sin-offerings, and of all their trespass-offerings, which they render unto me: it is most holy for thee and for thy sons. As the most holy things shalt thou eat thereof; every [r] male shall eat thereof; it shall be holy unto thee. And this shall be thine: the heave-offering of their gift, with all the wave-offerings of the children of Israel: to thee have I given them, and to thy sons and daughters with thee, by an everlasting statute: every one that is [s] clean in thy house shall eat thereof. All the [t] best of the oil, and all the best of the new wine, and of the grain, the first-fruits of them which they give unto Jehovah, I have given them unto thee. The first ripe of what is in the land, which they shall bring unto Jehovah shall be thine: every one that is clean in thy

q Lev. 7. 31.

r Lev. 7. 6.

s 1 Cor. 11. 28.

t cf. Gen. 24. 36.

"Son over the house of God,"* every way divinely competent, at once "Jesus Christ the righteous, and the propitiation for our sins." (1 Jno. ii. 1, 2.)

Thus we have not simply the value of a work done which abides for us, nor even a living Person in whom we are accepted, although both these things are true; we have also One who, with abiding love in His heart toward us, measures out to us with holy and heavenly wisdom the riches that are in His gift.

(v.) We have next the priest's *recompense*. Nor need we think this a thing unworthy of Christ Himself. True, "love seeketh not her own:" it is the spirit of self-sacrifice, not of self-interest, and we need not to be reminded that this was indeed,—this *is*,—the spirit of Christ. Yet, none the less, love has its joys and thus its rewards, such as are fully worthy of it. "Who for the joy that was set before Him," says the apostle, "endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. xii. 2.)

* Heb. iii. 6; in the Greek, "His,"—*i. e.*, God's "house;" not "his own."

house shall eat of it. Every devoted thing in Israel shall be thine. Every thing that openeth the womb of all flesh which they present unto Jehovah, of man or of beast, shall be thine: only the first-born of man thou shalt in any case [a]ransom, and the firstling of unclean cattle thou shalt ransom. And those that are to be ransomed, at a [b]month old shalt thou ransom them according to valuation, for [c]five silver shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs. But the firstling of a cow, or the firstling of a sheep, or the firstling of a goat thou shalt [x]not ransom; they are holy. Their blood shalt thou [y]sprinkle upon the altar, and their fat thou shalt burn, an offering by fire, a sweet savor unto Jehovah. But their flesh shall be thine: as the wave-breast, and as the right shoulder, it shall be thine. All the heave-offerings of the holy things which the children of Israel offer unto Jehovah, have I given thee and thy sons and thy daughters with thee, by an everlasting statute: it is an everlasting [z]covenant of salt before Jehovah, to thee and to thy seed with thee. And Jehovah said unto Aaron, In their land thou shalt have [a]no inheritance, neither shalt thou have any portion among them: [b]I am thy portion and thine inheritance, among the children of Israel. And to the children of Levi I have given all the tithes in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they perform, the service of the tent of meeting. And the children of Israel shall no longer come near the tent of meeting, lest they bear sin, and die; but the Levites shall perform the service of the tent of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity: it is an everlasting statute throughout your generations. And among the children of Israel they shall possess [c]no inheritance; for I have given for an inheritance to the Levites the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as a heave-offering to Jehovah; therefore I have said unto them that among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.

And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Unto the

[a] Ex. 13.13.
[b] ch. 3. 40.
[c] ch. 3. 47.
[x] *cf.* Matt. 26. 53, 54.
[y] *cf.* Heb 12. 24.
[z] *cf.* Heb. 13. 20, 21.
[a] ch. 26. 62. Ezek. 44. 28.
[b] Ps. 16. 5. Lam. 3. 24.
[c] *cf.* Luke 9. 48. Heb. 13.13, 14.

We shall, in general, easily gather the meaning of what is here; in which we find also once more the priestly house sharing with the head of it. First, their dues of the offerings of the people: what belonged to God Himself, but instead of going up to Him on the altar, became the portion of those who attended upon His altar. Here is seen Christ's joy in what is the expression of His people's faith,—in a faith which receives and embraces His blessed work, and assimilates the soul to that which it embraces.

Then, the first-fruits, the sign of ready harvest and the recognition of its Giver, —the blessing, and what alone preserves it as a blessing. With this, every devoted thing, and the firstling among beasts. In the land itself the priests were to have no inheritance. Their inheritance was God only; and so we may hear Christ's voice in the Psalms: "Jehovah is the measure of my portion,"—so it should be read,—"and of my cup; Thou maintainest my lot: the lines are fallen to me in pleasant places; yea, my inheritance is fair to me." (Ps. xvi. 5, 6.)

Levites thou shalt speak, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for an inheritance, then ye shall offer up of it a heave-offering unto Jehovah, a [d] tithe of the tithe. And your heave-offering shall be reckoned unto you as the corn from the threshing-floor, and as the fullness of the wine-press. Thus ye shall also offer unto Jehovah a heave-offering of all your tithes which ye receive from the children of Israel, and ye shall give thereof Jehovah's heave-offering unto [e] Aaron the priest. Out of all that is given you, ye shall offer the whole heave-offering of Jehovah; of all the best of it shall be the hallowed part thereof. And ye shall say unto them, When ye heave the best of it, then it shall be counted to the Levites as the increase of the threshing-floor, and as the increase of the wine-press. And ye shall eat it in every place,—ye and your households; for it is your recompense in return for your service in the tent of meeting. And ye shall bear no sin on account of it if ye heave from it the best of it, and ye shall not profane the holy things of the children of Israel, that ye die not.

d Neh. 10. 38.

e *cf.* Phil. 4. 18. Matt. 25. 40.

f *cf.* Josh. 2. 18. 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19.

g Lev. 4. 28. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 21.

h Ex. 12. 5. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 22-24. Heb. 7. 26.

6. (XIX.) Purification from sin.

a (ver. 1-10.) The provision.

[6] (*a*) And Jehovah spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, This is the statute of the law that Jehovah hath commanded, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel that they bring unto thee a [f] red [g] heifer, without [h] blemish, wherein is no defect, upon which hath never come [i] yoke. And ye shall give her unto [j] Eleazar the

i Deut. 21. 3. *cf.* Jno. 10. 18.

j *cf.* Jno. 17. 19.

Lastly, the Levite tithe: for the ministry pays its tribute to worship, and that of its best. In all this, that Christ should covet and should receive His part, is sweet to think.

(vi.) The provision of the water of purification from defilement with the dead closes this part;—again a pregnant instance of the spiritual meaning governing the arrangement of the whole book. Lange follows Keil in connecting the institution with the mortality which ensued upon the revolt of Korah. The latter says, "Now, so long as the mortality within the congregation did not exceed the natural limits, the traditional modes of purification would be quite sufficient. But when it prevailed to a hitherto unheard-of extent, in consequence of the sentence pronounced by God, the defilements would necessarily be so crowded together that the whole congregation would be in danger of being infected with the defilement of death, and of forfeiting its vocation to be the holy nation of Jehovah, unless God provided it the means of cleansing itself from this defilement, without losing the fellowship of His covenant of grace. The law which follows furnished the means." So Keil; but if truly such a mere temporary expedient, the ordinance of the red heifer only shows the more how "all these things happened unto them for types, and are written for our admonition." Defilement with death is evidently a special feature of this wilderness-book, and we have thus met with it in the law of the Nazarite, and in the provision of a second passover. Death is, in fact, what characterizes the world as a wilderness, not a permanent abode, nor able to sustain life; and it defiles because it is the penalty of sin. In all over which death rules, therefore, it is the lesson here, there is defilement for the living—typically, for those that have what is really life before God; and this is what decline, in whatever form or degree, in the child of God bears witness of, that he has slipped away from the joy of his own heavenly portion, and that, as the apostle puts it (Phil. iii. 19), he "minds"

priest, and he shall bring her [k] outside the camp, and one shall kill her before his face. And Eleazar the priest shall take of her [l] blood with his finger, and sprinkle of her blood toward the front of the tent of meeting seven times. And one shall [m] burn the heifer before his eyes: her skin and her flesh and her blood, with her dung, shall he burn; and the priest shall take [n] cedar-wood and hyssop and scarlet, and cast them into the midst of the burning of the heifer. And the priest shall [o] wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp; and the priest shall be unclean until the even. And he that burneth her shall wash his clothes in water, and bathe his flesh in water, and be [p] unclean until the even. And a man that is clean shall gather the ashes of the heifer, and [q] lay them up outside the camp in a clean place; and it shall be for the assembly of the children of Israel, to be kept for water of purification: it is a sin-offering. And he that gathereth the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even. And it shall be unto the children of Israel, and to the stranger that sojourneth among them, for an everlasting statute.

k *cf.* Heb. 13. 12.

l Lev. 17. 11. 1 Jno. 1. 7.

m *cf.* Heb. 12. 29.

n Lev. 14. 4. *cf.* Gal. 6. 14.

o Lev. 1. 9.

p *cf.* Hab. 1. 13.

q *cf.* Rev. 1. 18. Rom. 6.

—he *affects*—"earthly things." It is this, and the remedy for it, that this ordinance of the red heifer sets before us: thus not a mere incidental matter, but the very thing which is in question all the wilderness-history through. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this," says another inspired writer: "to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to *keep one's self unspotted from the world.*" (Jas. i. 27.)

The "red heifer without spot, wherein is no blemish," of course, is Christ: there could be no other answering to this, nor capable of putting away defilement from the soul. The *female* animal is taken, no doubt, as the type of passivity, willlessness; in this, as the red color shows, "obedient unto death." In this, too, the patient servant of God, as the heifer intimates, yet, as without spot or blemish, so without yoke,—for a *yoke* implies always something of discipline and *enforced* subjection, impossible in Him. How beautifully all this speaks of One the opposite of those for whom He is offered, and whose obedience unto death is not only as sacrifice to put away our sins, but as example also, to endear obedience to our hearts!

The sin-offering character is plain: the heifer is brought forth without the camp and slain in the presence of Eleazar, its blood sprinkled toward the tent of meeting—presented in this way to God. The whole body, even with the rest of the blood, is burned; and into the midst of the burning are cast cedar-wood, hyssop, and scarlet, things the significance of which we have seen in connection with the cleansing of the leper in Leviticus. There, the glory of the world is viewed as stained with the blood of Christ; here, it disappears, for faith, in the judgment of the cross: the world is crucified unto us, and we unto the world. (Gal. vi.)

A man that is clean now gathers the ashes of the heifer, and they are laid up in a clean place outside the camp, to be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel, for a water of purification.

Here is the essential difference between this and all other offerings: it is an offering once offered which (ideally, at least,) never needs to be renewed. In all other cases, if any man sinned, fresh blood had to be shed, a fresh sacrifice to be made; but in this, the *virtue* remained of what had already been offered: the

b (11-22.) The application.

(*b*) He that [r]toucheth the dead body of any soul of man shall be unclean seven days. He shall purify himself with it on the [s]third day, and on the [t]seventh day he shall be clean; but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean. Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any soul of man who is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of Jehovah, and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of purification hath not been sprinkled upon him, he is unclean, his uncleanness is yet upon him. This is the law when a man dieth in a tent: Every one that cometh into the tent, and every one that is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days. And every [u]open vessel, that hath no covering bound on it, shall be unclean. And every one that toucheth one slain with the sword in the open field, or one dead, or the [v]bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days. And they shall take for the unclean of the ashes of the burnt sin-offering, and shall put [w]running water thereon in a vessel, and a clean man shall take [x]hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon all the souls that are therein, and upon one who hath touched a bone, or one slain, or a dead person, or a grave. And

r ch. 6. 6. *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 17.

s cf. Phil. 3. 10. Rom. 6. 4. Col. 3. 1.

t cf. 2Thess. 1. 11.

u cf. Prov. 4. 23. Song 4. 12.

v Ezek. 39. 15. Matt.23.27.

w Lev. 14.5.

x Ex. 12. 22.

ashes were the memorial of an already accepted work. How suited is this to the place in which we find this ordinance, where we have before us the resources of a resurrection-priesthood, such as we have seen Eleazar directly typifies, although care is taken also to identify it with that of Aaron. Eleazar accordingly appears throughout; *not*, surely, (as Keil and others conclude,) because the high-priest had to keep apart from the defilement of death; here as elsewhere it is the spiritual meaning which necessarily governs all. The reason can only be found in the character of the priesthood itself, which is here emphasized.

Death itself, in the wisdom of God, becomes the remedy for death, and deliverance from the power of it. In the death of Christ, the believer passes out of the region of death—out of the world,—is dead to it, and no more of it. But here, the power of resurrection must be known, in order that we may be practically cleansed from its pollution: for the cleansing from defilement here, running—literally, living—water was to be put into a vessel with the ashes, and a clean person was to sprinkle it upon the unclean on the *third* day and on the seventh day. The third day is emphasized as the resurrection-day: "if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean." The Spirit of God is, of course, as always, typified by the "living water:" He it is who, bringing the soul into the apprehension of association with Christ in resurrection, makes the death of the cross effectual in purifying us from the world. Still the man is not really clean until the evening of the seventh day,—that is, ready for the eighth. The eighth is the beginning of a new week, the entrance into new creation, the sphere into which resurrection brings us: old things are passed away, and the new eternal things have become our portion.

Vividly the defiling power of the world is set before us: "This is the law, when a man dieth in a tent: all who come into the tent, and all that are in the tent, are unclean seven days; and every open vessel, that hath no covering bound upon it, is unclean; and whoever toucheth one that is slain with the sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, is unclean seven days." Whatever the unclean man toucheth also is unclean. And so dangerous

the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean upon the third day, and upon the seventh day he shall purify him; and he shall wash his clothes, and bathe in water, and be clean at even. And the man that is unclean, and doth not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from the congregation, for he hath defiled the sanctuary of Jehovah: the water of purification hath not been sprinkled upon him; he is unclean. And it shall be for them an everlasting statute. And he that sprinkleth the water of purification shall wash his clothes, and he that toucheth the water of purification shall be unclean until the even. And all that the unclean person [y]toucheth shall be unclean, and the soul that toucheth [him] shall be unclean until the even.

y ver. 11. Lev. 15. 10.

(XX., XXI.)

Progress.

1. (xx.1-13.) Sufficiency and perpetuity of the provision.

2. [1] And the children of Israel, the whole assembly, came into the wilderness of Zin in the first month. And the people abode in Kadesh; and [z]Miriam died there, and was buried there. And there was [a]no water for the assembly; and they gathered together against Moses and against Aaron. And the people strove with Moses, and spake, saying, Would that we had died when our brethren died before Jehovah! And why have ye

z *cf.* Ex. 15. 20.

a Ex. 15. 22. Ps. 63. 1.

is the occupation with evil, even when in a right way and of necessity we have to do with it, that he who sprinkled the water of purification must wash his clothes; and he that touched the water was unclean until the even. All this should not need interpretation: it does imply a jealousy over ourselves to be needful, such as we are often little up to. And when, as now in the newspapers of the day, all that the world is full of is spread day by day before men, how great must be the effect of this for those that have not, as Job had, made a covenant with their eyes!

Here ends, then, the provision of grace,—six sections, not seven, ending with victory over that in us which tends to lead the child of God away from God, but not yet the Sabbath-rest that awaits us. We are only on a journey yet: now, however, to make progress in it,—speedy, as we shall see, and sure, although failure also there still may be. Scripture must be (as to its histories) a terribly disappointing book for a perfectionist. Thank God, it is full of a better glory, which he that has eyes for it may everywhere see.

2. From the first arrival in Kadesh until the period we now reach, almost the whole of the forty years have passed, which were entailed upon the people by their refusal at that time to enter into Canaan. The almost entire silence as to this time in the history is significant. It is the time of the dying out of the generation under sentence, and in it also (though not as involved in the same sentence) Miriam and Aaron pass away. But they pass to make room for those who now in the power of God are to take possession of the land of promise. In these two chapters, with a sudden energy, all enemies overcome, they press forward to its very borders, the land of Sihon and Og coming also into their hands. Thus we have seven sections, completing the journey.

(i.) "I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants," says God by Micah to the people; "and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam." But now death begins to deal with this trio of leaders. Miriam first departs; and shortly after, Moses and Aaron receive their sentence. The people are still in the wilderness, and murmuring as of old: there would seem no advance, no difference, yet now it is that the sufficiency

brought the congregation of Jehovah into this wilderness, to die in it,—we and our brutes? And why have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us into this evil place? It is [b] no place of seed or figs or vines or pomegranates, and there is no water to drink. And Moses and Aaron went from before the congregation to the entrance of the tent of meeting. And they fell upon their faces; and the glory of Jehovah appeared unto them. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Take the [c] rod, and gather together the assembly,—thou and Aaron thy brother, and [d] speak unto the rock before their eyes, and it shall give its water; and thou shalt bring forth for them water out of the rock, and shalt give the assembly and their beasts drink. And Moses took the rod from before Jehovah as he had commanded him, and Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock; and he said unto them, [e] Hear, now, ye rebels: are [f] we to bring you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand and [g] struck the rock with his rod twice, and [h] much water came out; and the assembly drank, and their beasts. And Jehovah said unto Moses and Aaron, [i] Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land that I have given them. These are the waters of [j] Meribah, because the children of Israel strove with Jehovah, and he sanctified himself in them.

[b] ch. 16. 14, 15.
[c] ch. 17. 8.
[d] *cf.* 1 Cor. 10. 4. Rom. 6. 10. Heb. 9. 25-28.
[e] *ctr.* ch. 12. 3.
[f] *ctr.* 1 Cor. 3. 5. 1 Cor. 15. 10. Eph. 3. 8.
[g] ver. 8.
[h] *cf.* Luke 22. 50-52.
[i] *cf.* Gal. 6. 7.
[j] ver. 3.

and perpetuity of the provision become apparent for them. The rod of priesthood which is before God He bids Moses take, and *speaking* to the rock, it will give forth its water. There is no need now of smiting: that has been done long since, and the efficacy of it abides. How this connects with the lesson of the incense, and the one offering of the red heifer, unrepeated, is seen easily. The sufficiency of priesthood results from the abiding efficacy of accomplished atonement, and he who dishonors this cannot bring the people into the land. As at the former Meribah, toward the people, spite their murmuring, all is grace,—a grace which Moses' ill-advised words and action seriously misrepresent. God's resentment of the interference shows how grace is yet supreme, and how jealously He upholds its supremacy. Moses even must be set aside if he is not loyal to it.*

Thus Jehovah was sanctified in the people when they strove with Him. Nothing is more holy than that grace which alone produces and secures holiness. "Sin shall not have dominion over you, because ye are not under the law, but under grace." The Spirit of God here typified in the water is the Spirit of holiness, and it springs for us from that work of Christ which bears most complete witness to the holiness of God: "But Thou art holy," is the utterance of the patient Sufferer, and the explanation of that forsaking of the Righteous One which in the ways of God had not its equal in mystery. But the Holy One must dwell among the praises of Israel. (Ps. xxii.)

* The resemblance of the scene at Kadesh to that in Rephidim is surely intended to be noticed, and brings the more into notice the points of contrast. May not the substantial typical identity account for the apostle's words, "They drank of that spiritual rock that *followed them*: and that rock was Christ"? while the difference between the first *smiting* and the after-*speaking* is thus brought out. For the believer, the abiding Spirit is thus witness that atonement is made once for all. That the rod used was here Aaron's rod of priesthood, not Moses', with which he had done signs in Egypt, the connection seems to show, as well as the fact that it was taken from before the Lord.

2. (14-21.) The opposition of Edom (the flesh) and the way of progress.

[2] And Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of [k] Edom, [saying,] Thus saith thy brother Israel, Thou knowest all the travail that hath befallen us,—how our fathers went down to Egypt, and we dwelt in Egypt a long time, and the Egyptians evil entreated us and our fathers. And we cried unto Jehovah, and he hath heard our voice, and sent an angel, and hath brought us forth out of Egypt; and, behold, we are in Kadesh, a city in thine uttermost border. Let us [l] pass through thy land, we pray thee: we will not pass through the fields, nor through the vineyards, nor will we drink of the water of the wells; we will go by the king's highway; we will not turn to the right hand nor the left until we have passed thy border. And Edom said unto him, Thou shalt not pass by me, lest I come out against thee with the sword. And the children of Israel said unto him, We will go by the highway, and if I and my

k *cf.* Gal. 5. 17.

l *cf.* Gal. 3. 3.

(ii.) Under grace like this, the people may go on their way. But as soon as they start, they find opposition also which they cannot directly overcome. Right in their path, as it would seem, lies the territory of Edom, and Moses sends messengers from Kadesh, claiming brotherly relation, and seeking a path by the king's highway through their land. They are ready to bind themselves by compact to do nothing but pass through. They will turn neither to the right nor to the left. If they drink of the water of their wells, they will pay for it. To all this they obtain for answer but a flat and surly refusal; and when it is thought they will press their suit in person, Edom comes out against them with a high hand.

"Edom" is only "Adam" slightly changed. The meaning is the same; the vowels change very easily in Hebrew. The flesh assumes many a disguise,—soon detected, however, by the infallible touch-stone, Christ. Edom is now a nation, under government, civilized, and what not; but it has no good will to the people of God. This long, narrow, mountainous strip of land looks like nothing so much as a barricade thrown up by giant hands to keep the pilgrim-people out of Canaan. It may indeed be asked, Why could not they have gone up by the way of the spies,—through the south, and by Hebron? and some have answered that by the flank march they followed, they cut the Canaanites in two at Jericho. Perhaps; but from our point of view, the scriptural canon is "Now all these things happened unto them for *types*;" and that the river Jordan,—the river of death,—though dried up for the people of God, is God's way for us into heaven. It is through the death of Christ, and as dead and risen with Him, that we find our place in the heavenlies. This it will be the fitting place, however, to take up elsewhere, if the Lord permit, when we come to their actual entrance in the book of Joshua.

In the way that they go now, Edom is evidently the great barrier. Less than twenty miles across, it is more than six times the distance to go round. And not only so, there were in this way a king's highway and wells of water; how pleasant an alternative to the pathless desert-route! But Edom is there in force, and he will not permit it. Nor can you change this enmity into friendship; and so exactly with the flesh: "the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed *can* be:" "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary, the one to the other." (Rom. viii. 7; Gal. v. 17.) Thus the barrier is there; and that, though many refuse to believe in any irredeemable old nature such as this within the Christian, and claim kinship, and would fain make a brother out of Edom. It cannot be.

cattle drink of thy water, then I will pay for it: I will only, without any thing else, go through on my feet. But he said, Thou shalt not go through. And Edom came out against him with much people and a strong hand. So Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border; and Israel [m]turned away from him.

3. (22-29.) Aaron gives place to Eleazar.

[3] And they journeyed from Kadesh; and the children of Israel, even the whole assembly, came unto Mount [n]Hor. And Jehovah spake unto Moses and unto Aaron in Mount Hor, on the border of the land of Edom, saying, Aaron shall be gathered unto his people; for he shall not go into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, [o]because ye have rebelled against my word at the waters of Meribah. Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up unto Mount Hor; and [p]strip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon [q]Eleazar his son; and Aaron shall be gathered [to his people], and die there. And Moses did as Jehovah

m cf. 1 Pet. 2. 11. 1 Tim. 6. 11. 2 Tim. 2. 22-26. Prov. 14. 7.

n ch. 33. 37-39.

o Ps. 99. 6-8. *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 11-15.

p etr. Heb. 7. 8; 23-25, 28.

q cf. Rom. 1. 4. Rev. 1. 13-18.

What, then, is the remedy? To force a passage through? For the conquerors of Canaan, that ought to be no supremely difficult task. Nay, with God with them, it is certain that every enemy *must* give place. So, too, with the Spirit of God dwelling in the Christian; who could deny the omnipotence of that Spirit against which the flesh lusts?

But the apostle's exhortation is different. It is not to war against the flesh, but "walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." Israel here were to walk where the cloud led; but the cloud never led them through Edom. Had this been His way, could He have allowed the enemy to have barred it? Of course not; and so exactly with the Spirit's leading now. It is a lesson we have had in other ways before, nowhere clearer and more distinct than here, where the path of progress is seen to be (all the more through Israel's vain overtures), not through Edom's territory, but around it. Reckoning one's self dead to sin is neither ignoring it nor fighting it: it is turning away. Conflict is not to be maintained with *Edom:* that with Amalek we have already discussed in its own place. (Ex. xvii.)

(iii.) And now Aaron passes away, and gives place to Eleazar: priesthood is seen henceforth wholly in its resurrection-form. We might have expected this, according to the type, before; but examination will show, as elsewhere, that all is perfectly in place. At the very beginning of the division, as we have seen, Eleazar takes a foremost place; yet it is Aaron who puts on incense and stops the plague. It is He who as Priest offered up Himself whose intercession avails with God. The continuity of the priesthood is thus maintained: otherwise there might seem to be a breach; Aaron is the head of priesthood, in fact, on this account, and it is *his* rod, therefore, that blossoms. Eleazar derives all from Aaron, —only continues Aaron's work in a new form, and Aaron may without loss of dignity give way to him. Eleazar, therefore, now is seen again at the preparation of the ashes of the heifer of purification. At the failure at Meribah Aaron again appears, but here only to share in his brother's sin and be set aside,—a failure which is only personal to himself, officially there is none; but it would not have done for *Eleazar* to have been cut off from Canaan. In the overtures to Edom, there is no place for either; and now, at Mount Hor, Aaron yields, as we see, his priesthood to Eleazar.

We have not to interpret his failure; alas! we are at no loss to understand this: but why is it at Hor that he departs? should there not be meaning in this? The canon which is alone worthy of Scripture is that there is meaning EVERYWHERE; and in this case it is striking enough that the names "Aaron" (which

commanded; and they went up into Mount Hor before the eyes of the whole assembly. And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there on the top of the mount; and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount. And when the whole assembly saw that Aaron was dead, they mourned for Aaron thirty days, [even] the whole house of Israel.

4. (xxi. 1-3.) The power of the world overcome.

4 And the Canaanite, the king of Arad, who dwelt in the south country, heard that Israel was coming by the way of the spies; and he fought against Israel, and took some prisoners. And Israel [r] vowed a vow unto Jehovah, and said, If thou wilt indeed give this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities. And Jehovah hearkened to the voice of Israel, and delivered up the Canaanites; and they utterly destroyed them and their cities. And they called the name of the place Hormah.

[r] Ju. 11. 30. Lev. 27. 28.

is really "Aharon" and "Hor" are from the same root. Thus "Hor" is oftenest interpreted as signifying "mountain," while "Aaron" is said to signify "mountainous." If these be the meanings indeed, I am able to discern no spiritual meaning in them; but there is an alternative: indeed, the fundamental meaning of the root from which they are derived is that of "swelling," and so "conception." "Aaron" has been suggested even to mean "progenitor,"—more literally, "pregnant," and "Hor" would be the same thing. Can it be that Aaron passing away at Hor *does but come to the significance of his name?*

For if Aaron's replacement by Eleazar be indeed but the manifestation of his own fruitfulness,—if the heavenly priesthood be but the fruit of the blessed work of the priesthood of the cross, then the names are indeed full of meaning, and fruitful Aaron becomes fruitful indeed in his successor: the priesthood shows its power in this transition from an earthly to a heavenly sphere.

It will be asked, perhaps, But was it not *Aaron* (not Eleazar) who went into the holiest on the day of atonement? Most certainly; for it is the power of the work on earth that has opened heaven, and sprinkled the mercy-seat. But Aaron, nevertheless, does not give us there the true heavenly Priest. He but does his work and comes out. Of course, the vail is never rent throughout Judaism: yet in another way Eleazar does typify the heavenly priesthood of the One risen out of death.

All, then, is significant; everywhere there is entire accuracy and perfect beauty, which will assuredly only come out the more, the more closely and believingly we examine it.

(iv.) The first victory of the new generation, a presage of many soon to follow, now takes place. The king of Arad, dwelling in the south of Canaan, himself a Canaanite, hears that they are coming into the land by the way of the spies; and he fights with them, taking a few prisoners. Israel then vow a vow unto Jehovah, that, if He will deliver them into their hands, they will destroy their cities. Accordingly they prevail against them, and put their cities under the ban.

The generation before had been beaten on this very battle-ground, and by this very people, as it would seem: at all events, Canaanites,—those with whom were to be the final battles for the land, in which Arad itself was. Hence Israel's victory now was not only the sign of recovery from their former state, but a pledge of the conquest of the land also. These Canaanites stand for those "spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. vi. 12, *R. V.*) who now seek to keep us from the possession in faith of what is ours in heaven; and who, as the "world-rulers of this darkness," use the world and the things of it

5. (4-9.) The compassing of Edom by the way of the sea; the cross as capacity to walk with God.

5 And they journeyed from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to [s] compass the land of Edom; and the soul of the people was [t] impatient on the way. And the people spake against God and against Moses, [saying,] Why have ye brought us up out of Egypt, to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, and no water, and our soul loatheth this [u] light bread. And Jehovah sent fiery [v] serpents among the people, and they bit the people, and much people of Israel died. And the people came unto Moses, and said, We have [w] sinned, because we have spoken against Jehovah and against thee; pray unto Jehovah that he take away the serpents from us; and Moses prayed for the people. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery [serpent,] and set it on a pole; and it shall be that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a [x] brazen serpent, and put it on a pole; and it

[s] ch. 20. 21. Ju. 11. 17, 18.

[t] Ex. 15. 24. *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 12, 13. Jno. 16. 33.

[u] *cf.* Jno. 6. 66-68. 2 Cor. 11. 3.

[v] Deut. 8. 15. 1 Cor. 10. 9. *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 20.

[w] Ps. 78. 34. 2 Sam. 12. 13. 1 Jno. 1. 9.

[x] *cf.* Ex. 27. 2. 2 Cor. 5. 21.

to deprive the soul of heavenly light. The book of Joshua introduces us fully to this conflict, which, according to God, is a conflict without compromise. Israel devote their cities to the ban, and God is with them and delivers up the Canaanites. Thus the first part of this septenary series concludes in victory.

(v.) But as yet there is no rest, and victory itself does not seem to accomplish much. They have had to turn from the near road through Edom, and exchange its prospect of ease and speedy progress for the waterless desert with its iron walls. Again murmuring breaks out in the host, and they speak against God and against Moses, and complain of the divinely given manna as "light bread." Thereupon "Jehovah sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died."

From the serpent's bite, indeed, man has got the poison which is in him and consuming him; and the judgment here, as all divine judgments, is a revelation of the evil upon which it comes. Not circumstances beget this murmuring, be the circumstances what they may: the seriousness of the evil is that it is from within, not from without, and that it is of the serpent—satanic. For Satan is the adversary and accuser, and we have learned from him to believe, not in God's love, but in His enmity to us. Hence the mystery of His ways—our opportunity to trust Him—becomes effectual argument for unbelief. The sands of the desert nourish serpents, if not much beside.

But now we have a word little heard in Israel, the word of confession: "We have sinned against Jehovah and against thee." How good when we can weigh ourselves thus in the sanctuary-balances, and bring to God our bekah of "half-weight"! (Ex. xxx. 13.) Now, then, God declares the remedy: "Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole; and it shall be that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live." Here our Lord's words in the gospel leave us in no doubt whatever of the interpretation: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so also must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This Lange strangely calls "the profoundest, but also *most obscure* application of the passage." There is, in fact, no other application worth mentioning than this, which illuminates the whole subject. How good it is that we should have an authoritative exposition of that the obscurity of which arises from this strange juxtaposition of Christ and the serpent. But the cross is indeed the obscurity which enlightens every thing.—the contradiction by which all things else are reconciled.

We may, nay, we *should* ask, How does Christ lifted up upon the cross compare with this serpent lifted up? If we take the clue that we have already got, and follow it whither it may lead us, we shall find assuredly how self-consistent

was so that when a serpent had bitten a man, and he [y] looked unto the brazen serpent, then he lived.

6. (10-20.) The journeying to the limits of the land.

[6] And the children of Israel journeyed, and encamped in [z] Oboth; and they journeyed from Oboth, and encamped at [a] Ije-Abarim, in the wilderness which is before Moab, toward the rising of the sun. From thence they journeyed, and encamped at the brook Zered. From thence they journeyed, and encamped beyond the [b] Arnon, which is in the wilderness that cometh out of the border of the Amorites; for the Arnon

y Jno. 3. 14-18. Jno. 12. 32. Gal. 3. 13, 14. cf. 2 Kings 18. 4 with Col. 2. 16, 17.

z ch. 33. 43.

a ch. 33. 44.

b ch. 22. 36.

is the truth, and how confidently we may intrust ourselves everywhere to these clues which are everywhere held out to us.

Lange indeed speaks of it as a "dead, mechanical principle of hermeneutics, according to which the same image (*e. g.*, the leaven) must always represent the same thing." This too must be understood aright, or one could not defend it. If Christ be compared to a lion, and Satan to a lion, it is plain that the same symbol may have in this way a good or evil application. That attribute of the lion, who "goeth about, seeking whom he may devour," could only be applied on the one side, and not on the other. But no one would be likely to mistake in this. On the other hand, when Lange takes the serpents here as indicating, "not the sins of Israel, but the counteracting agency of the sins—the punishment," he confounds the fact with the figure, and loses altogether the serpent out of the picture. Not being consistent in this either, it is true that he also introduces it again.

But we must adhere to this consistently throughout, that the serpent represents him who is the "old serpent, the devil, or Satan," God making the chastening judgment to reveal the evil which has necessitated it, as already said. The brazen serpent is, then, first of all, to quote Keil's words, "intended as a figurative representation of the poisonous serpents, rendered harmless by the mercy of God. For God did not cause a real serpent to be taken, but the image of a serpent, in which the fiery serpent was stiffened, as it were, into dead brass, as a sign that the deadly poison of the fiery serpent was overcome in this brazen serpent."

Disease and death were abroad among the people through the bite of the fiery serpent, corruption ending in eternal death is for men at large the result of the fall,—of Satan's venom infused into the race. Now the Son of Man is lifted up from the earth—separated from men in death, a passive Sufferer; on the other hand, the Son of God, the Only-Begotten, the Father's love-gift,—that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Death, as man's portion judicially from God, is met, for believers, by His sacrificial death.

Corruption of nature is met by that gift of everlasting life, a true life in the Son of God, which results, for man, in a new, divine nature, and the beginning of which is in a new birth. The remedy for the serpent-venom in our veins is this cross of Christ, in which He, lifted up, draws men to Him. Who can murmur at his circumstances with the patient form of the Son of Man before his eyes? who doubt his God who has given Christ for him? Thus the life which has come to us out of death is sustained and invigorated, the serpent paralyzed, and man is preserved to walk with God in peace. This is the way to "compass the land of Edom,"—the divine method of the circumvention of the flesh.

(vi.) And now we come to the account of the journeying, certain stages only being marked out, and the list, with few exceptions, different from that in chap. xxxiii., which has a different purpose. Here, the encampments give us, no doubt, stages of true progress, although (to our shame it must be said) we can tell little about them. They are, however, nine in number (3x3), the number of divine manifestation intensified. Gloriously they will speak for God one day,

is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites.
Wherefore it is said, in the book of the [c] wars of Jehovah,—

Vaheb in a storm, and the brooks of Arnon,
And the outpouring of the brooks which descendeth
toward the dwelling of Ar,
But stayeth at the border of Moab.

And from thence to Beer: that is the well of which Jehovah said unto Moses, Gather the people, and I will give them water. Then sang Israel this [d] song:—

Spring, O well!
Sing to it in response!
A well which [e] princes digged,
Which nobles of the people hollowed out,
With the ruler's wand,
With their staves.

c *cf.* Josh. 10. 13. Eph. 6. 10-20. Rev. 12. 7-12, etc.

d Ex. 15. 1, etc.

e *cfr.* ch. 16. 2.

as the history of our lives will. Meanwhile we have been busier fixing their places on the map (and failing) than in seeking in them any spiritual significance. As to all but two, we have little beside the names, which I give with their meanings, though even as to these there will be differences of judgment:—

1. Oboth: either "hollows" or "[water-] skins."
2. Ije-Abarim: "heaps of the passages."
3. Zared: "willow."
4. Arnon: "continual stream" (?) *Lit.*, "the stream that propagates itself."
5. Beer: "the well."
6. Mattanah: "gift."
7. Nahaliel: "the inheritance of God (El)."
8. Bamoth: "heights."
9. Pisgah: "survey."

The end, at least, is clear:—thank God, the end *is* clear!—they reach the spot where the land, their own land, stretches before them; and they are able to look back, too, over the desert passed.

For the rest, only the fourth and fifth stages are at all dwelt upon. The fourth is marked as the boundary of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites, the latter territory now to become their own. Here we have a fragment of song, little understood, and therefore giving much scope for criticism. From its being a quotation from the "book of Jehovah's wars," it would certainly seem a battle-song, especially coming in this place where in fact they had to do battle. Mere geography would be tame enough. Yet the common version is generally given up, with its reference (otherwise suitable enough) to the Red-Sea passage, and "Vaheb" is taken to be a proper name, though elsewhere unknown as such, and yielding no plain meaning. The Septuagint give "Zoob," from which some critics, comparing it with Dent. i. 1, infer that we should read "Zaheb," the "Di" of "Dizahab" being separable from the rest; and this may be the truth of the matter, the only difference being between v and z. In this case, it means "gold," and the full name "lord"—or perhaps "plenty—of gold."

The voice of song breaks out again at Beer; Israel's heart is filling up now, and new mercies awake it. They are now traveling in a land of frequent streams, and there is no more complaint of lack of water. They know God better also, and if there be apparent need, they have learned how near the water lies to them, and can be trusted more to their own labor to secure it for them. After all, the labor is but holiday-work; a ruler's staff can dig deep enough for the purpose. Here they celebrate the way the princes dug: happy employment

And from the wilderness [they came] to Mattanah; and from Mattanah to Nahaliel; and from Nahaliel to Bamoth; and from Bamoth to the ravine which is in the country of Moab by the top of [f]Pisgah which looketh toward the desert.

[f] Deut.34.1.

7. (21-35.) Possession and rest.

a (21-32.) Sihon: the hindrance to the spirit.

[7] (*a*) And Israel sent [g]messengers unto Sihon, king of the Amorites, saying, Let me pass through thy land: we will not turn aside into field or vineyard; we will not drink of the water of the wells; we will go by the king's highway until we have passed thy border. But Sihon would not suffer Israel to go through his border; and Sihon gathered together all his people, and came out against Israel into the wilderness, and came to Jahatz, and fought against Israel. But Israel [h]smote him with the edge of the sword, and [i]possessed his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, as far as the children of

[g] ch. 20. 14.

[h] Josh. 6.21, etc.

[i] *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 21-23. 1 Tim. 4. 8.

when rule is thus loving service, and the outflow of the Spirit is the issue of endeared ministry! Blessed are they that give and they that receive!

(vii.) In the last section, we go back, as is plain: the people have hardly, if at all, crossed the border of Moab before war breaks out. It is Jehovah's war, as we have seen; and now already Israel begin to take possession, before they have crossed Jordan. This is, again, a difficult section to read aright, and our difficulties display our little skill in these divine enigmas. Few even realize them to be that, and see little more in them than pictures of rude times and scraps of ancient history. The German commentators in general one might suppose to belong to some society of antiquarians; and the "higher criticism" among ourselves does but poorly, if not slavishly, follow these. Our very grammars and dictionaries, with which of necessity we have to work, are mostly compiled by rationalists and unbelievers; and those that are not such can yet scarcely escape from the pervading influence. What other book than the glorious Word of God could come through the ordeal of being left thus in the hands of half friends or undisguised enemies, and after all manifest the living power that it does to-day?

Right across their way now, and meaning to bar the way to Canaan, lie two Amorite kings—of the nations that they are to meet afterward in the land itself, —Sihon, king of the Amorites, who dwells at Heshbon, and Og, himself of the race of the giants, king of Bashan. Can we point out, even approximately, the spiritual powers that are indicated here?

Their lands do not lie in Canaan proper, which is all across the river, the type of the heavenly inheritance, the other side of death. When the two and a half tribes, therefore, at a later time, propose not to go over Jordan, but to take their inheritance in the fertile plains of the eastern side, Moses opposes it as rebellion against God. He afterward indeed withdraws his opposition; but the fact remains that these tribes settle down in what is typically the wrong side of death —*not heaven, but earth.*

Yet their possessions have been acquired by conquest, and according to God. "Behold, I have begun to give Sihon and his land before thee," is Jehovah's word to Moses: "begin to possess, that thou mayest inherit his land." (Deut. ii. 31.) Of their right to possess, then, there can be no question.

How, then, possess it? The final division, as it will be in the fast coming day, may surely enlighten us here. In Ezek. xlviii., we have the partition of the land among the tribes from *east to west:* each, therefore, pointing *across* the Jordan, the seat of the tribe being thus in the land, with a dependency, as it would seem, on the other side of the river. How perfectly is the earthly the type of the heavenly in this! In heaven our portion is; and yet, in the coming day,

Ammon; for the border of the children of Ammon was strong. And Israel took all these cities; and Israel dwelt in all the cities of the Amorites,—in Heshbon, and in all its dependencies. For Heshbon was the city of Sihon, the king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab, and taken all his land out of his hand, as far as the Arnon. Wherefore they say that speak in parables,—

Come ye unto Heshbon!
Let the city of Sihon be built and fixed firm!
—But fire is gone out of Heshbon,
A flame from the city of Sihon:
It hath consumed Ar of Moab,
The lords of the heights of Arnon.
[j] Woe unto thee, Moab!
Thou art undone, people of Chemosh!
He hath given his sons that escaped,
And his daughters into captivity
Unto Sihon, king of the Amorites.
—And we have laid them low!
Heshbon is perished even to Dibon!
And we have laid waste even to Nophah,
With fire, to Medeba.

[j] Is. chs. 15 & 16, etc.

to reign with Christ over the earth makes our allotments stretch in the self-same manner *across the river*.

But we belong to heaven: to settle down short of that is to do as the two and a half tribes did; and so has Christendom done: it has reigned on earth before it could reign with Christ, and has become earthly. Yet, as with Reuben and his brother-tribes, it reigns over what it has conquered: its conquests alone make possible its reign. Nay, it reigns, in a certain sense, by its own right; just as, by a perfectly natural evolution, the little seed becomes a tree, in our Lord's parable. None the less is the tree the type of Babylon the Great (Dan. iv.); and just as naturally the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches of it. (Matt. xiii. 4, 19, 32.)

In one application, therefore, the kingdoms of Sihon and Og represent the world that Christianity has conquered; and these two kings would represent the powers of the world in resistance to it. Thus far it is easy to go; but it does not help us much with the individual application except we can go further. Can we more nearly approach the ideas represented in Sihon and Og?

Alas! in man as gone astray from God, it is the whole man that resists the truth of God. The lusts of his flesh lead him away on the one hand, the darkened mind rejects the light on the other. The wisdom of the world is foolishness with God, while to it the heavenly wisdom of the cross is equally foolishness. And these two things—the wisdom of the world and the lusts of the flesh—are what, in the first epistle to the Corinthians, the apostle takes up as enemies to the Church of God, thus in conflict with the powers of evil. And this is truly man in his whole being, apart from conscience, which indeed will speak for God, where not stupified—"commending ourselves," says the apostle again, "to *every man's* conscience in the sight of God." (2 Cor. iv. 2.)

Mind, then, and heart,—spirit and soul,—in both these man is opposed to God. In both Satan rules, a double kingdom of the Amorites, may we not say? For these Canaanitish nations most surely represent, as the book of Joshua shows in detail, the "spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places," with which

So Israel dwelt in the land of the [k]Amorite; and Moses sent to spy out Jaazer; and they took its dependencies; and he dispossessed the Amorites that were there.

b (33-35.) Og: the soul-hindrance.

(*b*) And they turned, and went up the way to [l]Bashan; and Og, the king of Bashan, came out against them,—he and all his people, to battle at Edrei. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Fear him not; for I have given him into thy hand, and all his people, and his land; and thou shalt do unto him as thou didst unto Sihon, king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon. And they smote him and his sons and all his people, so that they left him none remaining; and they [m]possessed his land.

k *cf.* 2 Cor. 10. 5.

l *cf.* Ps. 22. 12.

m ver. 24.

we are in present conflict. Here it would seem as if we might have a clue which it would be well to follow.

"Amorites" nearly all the learned now follow the lead of Simonis in supposing to mean "mountaineers;" and this, says Grove, "is quite in accordance with the notices in the text, which, except in a few instances, speak of the Amorites as dwelling in the elevated portions of the country. In this respect they are contrasted with the Canaanites, who were the dwellers in the lowlands; and the two thus formed the main broad divisions of the Holy Land." Spite of the consensus of commentators, this does not, however, seem so sure. "Canaanite" can hardly be "lowlander" as distinct from "Amorite," "highlander," when Canaan is the father of all, and "Canaanite" is too firmly identified with the thought of "trader" to allow the separation. Keil disputes both derivations, saying that "the derivation [of 'Amorite'] from *amir*, 'summit,' is not established." Indeed, no such word is in the Bible, according to which the Amorites would rather be "talkers," a meaning to which the terrible words of the epistle of James are not needed to give a bad sense. "Our tongues are our own," is the very language of rebellion; "who is lord over us?"

If there be the difference between these two—Sihon and Og—that has been suggested, then it is hardly possible to doubt what is represented by Og, whose name, though taken generally to be "long-necked,"* (no doubt, because of its suitability to a giant,) can only rightly mean, as it would appear, "a cake baked in the ashes." He is king of Bashan, or *the* Bashan, "the fertile," and his strong city is Edrei, "plenty of pasture;" while he dwells in Ashtaroth, a city named after the Phœnician Venus, who was worshiped with shameful rites. When to this is added that the only relic of him is a monstrous *bed*, all is said of him perhaps that can be, and enough, it may be, to identify him with the spirit of luxury and effeminacy, the second enemy of the church at Corinth. That this Og is a giant, alas! we too well know: many a strong man has been cast down by him.

What, then, is Sihon? and can he correspond in any wise to the evil of the *spirit*, the wisdom of the world? There is not much agreement as to his name, though what seems to be most legitimately from the Hebrew root is "sweeping off," perhaps, "refuse," "offscouring," as the wisdom of the world is which would thus count God's wisdom. Or, it may be, actively "sweeping away," as pride of intellect would the things of God. He is constantly spoken of as king of Heshbon where he dwelt, a word which in our common version is only given as "account," "device," or "reason." It certainly gives the thought of mental work. He comes out to meet Israel at Jahatz, which from the Arabic is given by Gesenius as "a place trodden down," probably a "threshing-floor." While according to the song of victory, the pursuit ends at Medeba, "quiet waters."

* In this way, akin to Anak, but which requires to be from *Oneq* transformed to *Oneg*, and then contracted into *Og*.

(XXII,–XXIV.)

The people in the mind of the Spirit: God for them fully manifest.

i. (xxii. 1-38.) The prophet and the power over him.

3. [1] And the children of Israel journeyed, and encamped in the plains of Moab the other side of Jordan from Jericho. And Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. And Moab was sore [n] afraid because of the people, for they were many; and Moab was disquieted because of the children of Israel. And Moab said unto the elders of Midian, Now will this company lick up all around us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field. And Balak the son of Zippor was king of Moab at the time; and he sent messengers unto [o] Balaam the son of Beor, to Pethor, which is by the river of the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, Behold, a people is come out of Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the land; and they are settling upon my border. And now come, I pray thee, [p] curse me this people; for they are stronger than I: perhaps I may be able to smite them, and drive them out of the land. For I know that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed. And the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed, with the [q] rewards of divination in their hands; and they came unto Balaam, and spake unto him the words of Balak. And he said unto them, Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as Jehovah shall speak to me. And the princes of Moab abode

n Josh. 2. 9.

o Jude 11. Rev. 2. 14. 1 Cor. 13. 1, 2.

p 1 Sam. 17. 43. 2 Sam. 16. 5-12.

q *cf.* 1 Pet. 5. 2. Micah 3. 11.

Thus the meaning of the names (and we have little else to interpret by) would seem to justify the application we have suggested. Both of these kings—Sihon and Og—occupy a land which by the gift of God Israel may seize and hold,—nay, should do so. Reason is not to be given up because Satan is using it against the truth of God; and natural blessings are not to be refused because men make of them carnality and disorder. Whatever God has given may be taken from His hand without suspicion, *if it be indeed from His hand*. Here there is room for question,—yea, need of most jealous care. That which is not from His hand, whatever it be, is stolen goods, not honestly our own, and blessed it cannot be.

3. And now, the people being thus just at their journey's end, we find the glory that is their rearward (Is. lviii. 8) manifesting itself for them, the last challenge of the enemy thrown back,—yea, the unwilling mouth of a foe made to pronounce their blessing. The voice of prophecy awakes, and in a strange and startling manner, to make the triumph more complete, a divine oracle breaks forth out of the bosom of heathenism, announcing the fullness of the grace with which God has visited His people. That it is after the wilderness-journey has been completed,—after their sad history has testified to the uttermost against them,—when judgment upon judgment from God has made known His displeasure at their sins,—this makes only the wonder of the grace the more, and the perfectness of the salvation. After all this, seen in the vision of God, there is no stain upon them, no accusation can prevail against them. Only thus the more "shall it be said of *Jacob* and of Israel, What hath *God* wrought!" Blessed be this God of Jacob, who is *our* God! and this salvation in all its fullness is our own.

(i.) The subdivision has two sections, in the first of which we have a study, so to speak, of the prophet himself, in order that we may the more realize the greatness of the prophecy. We see the man, and the influences by which he is moved; and they are all of the earth, if not rather satanic; but over all this is a mightier power, the power of God Himself, in whose hands he may struggle, but unavailingly, whose will, spite of himself, he must accomplish. All the infatuation is

with Balaam. And God came unto Balaam, and said, Who are these men with thee? And Balaam said unto God, Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, hath sent unto me: Behold, the people that is come out of Egypt, it even covereth the face of the land; come, now, curse me them; perhaps I may prevail in fighting with them, and drive them out. And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt [r] not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people, for they are [s] blessed. And Balaam rose up in the morning, and said unto the princes of Balak, Depart unto your land, for Jehovah refuseth to let me go with you. And the princes of Moab rose up, and came unto Balak, and said, Balaam refuseth to come with us.

And Balak sent [t] again princes, more, and more honorable than they. And they came unto Balaam, and said unto him, Thus saith Balak the son of Zippor, Let [u] nothing, I pray thee, hinder thy coming to me; for I will put on thee exceeding honor,—yea, whatever thou sayest to me, I will do: come, then, I pray thee, curse me this people. And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of Jehovah my God, to do less or more. And now, I pray you, abide ye also here this night, that I may know

r *cf.* ver. 19, 20.

s ch. 6. 24-27. *cf.* Eph. 1. 3.

t *cf.* Matt. 4. 3, 5, 8.

u *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 10.

seen with which man labors to achieve his own everlasting ruin; the outbreak of conscience, and the strange softening of a heart that nevertheless persistently hardens itself against God: a mysterious, terrible struggle, in which the soul, without Satan being permitted to break in, decides for itself its destiny. Yet we see also how completely God is sovereign in a world of deadliest opposition to Him. The play of adverse forces are but as the balance-wheels of a perfect mechanism which submits itself entirely to the control of a master, so that he can look on and predict with unerring precision all that shall be.

Balak, king of the Moabites, it is who, alarmed at the victories of the Israelites, sends for Balaam to curse the people. "Balak" seems to mean "waster," a name in designed contrast, as it would appear, with his genealogy, being but *ben-Zippor*, "son of a sparrow." What grandiloquent titles do men assume to cover their real insignificance! and how much more do they glory in power for destruction,—in being a Cæsar or a Napoleon,—than in the angels' message of peace and good will! Balaam the son of Beor answers to this Balak as in all respects a fit associate. He is a "devourer of the people," son of the "consumer," sought for his skill in cursing, and ready for a bribe to destroy a nation out of hand. No doubt he professes fealty to Jehovah, but without real knowledge of Him, as his acts plainly show. In his efforts to destroy the people of God, it cannot be even pleaded that he hates them: he would only destroy them in cool blood for gain.

Balak's first embassy is, however, unsuccessful: Jehovah refuses, as he tells the messengers, to give him leave to go. He makes no secret of it that his own will is good enough, while he conceals the fact that God has shown him that the people are blessed. Balak has reason to suppose that with more pressure he will come; for it was notorious that the gods of the heathen could be made compliant. He sends more and more honorable representatives: Balaam must let *nothing* hinder him from coming; for indeed he will promote him to very great honor. Balaam protests that he is strictly bound by Jehovah's will; yet desires his own, and God leaves him to it, only making him understand that after all he must speak His word alone: and Balaam goes.

what more Jehovah will say unto me. And God came to Balaam that night, and said unto him, Since the men have come to call thee, [v]rise up, go with them; but only the thing that I say unto thee shalt thou do. And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab.

And the [w]anger of God was kindled because of his going; and the angel of Jehovah took his stand in the way as an adversary against him. And he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants with him. And the ass saw the angel of Jehovah standing in the way, and his drawn sword in his hand, and the ass turned aside out of the road, and went into the field; and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the road. And the angel of Jehovah stood in a hollow way between the vineyards, a wall on this side and a wall on that side. And the ass saw the angel of Jehovah, and she pressed herself against the wall, and pressed Balaam's foot against the wall; and he smote her again. And the angel of Jehovah went still further, and stood in a narrow place, where was no place to turn, either to the right or to the left. And the ass saw the angel of Jehovah, and she lay down under Balaam; and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with his staff. And Jehovah [x]opened the ass's mouth, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done to thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times? And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me: would there were a sword in my hand, and now I would slay thee. And the ass said unto Balaam, Am I not thine ass, whereon thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee? And he said, Nay. And Jehovah [y]opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the angel of Jehovah standing in the way, and his drawn sword in his hand; and he bowed his head, and fell upon his face. And the angel of Je-

v *cf.* ver. 12. ch. 13. 2.

w *cf.* Ju. 14. 3, 4.

x 2 Pet. 2. 16. *cf.* Luke 19. 40. Prov. 6. 6.

y 2 Kings 6. 17. Gen. 21. 19. Luke 24. 16, 31. ch. 24. 3.

Upon the road occurs that which has provoked the wonder of unbelief at all times. God's anger is kindled because he goes, and the angel of Jehovah takes his stand in the way as an adversary against him. There is no great need for wonder here. While on the one hand there were purposes to be served by Balaam's presence with the king of Moab, that did not in the least affect the state of soul which provoked the anger of God. Balaam needs a warning, and God deals with him much as He had dealt with Moses forty years before, only that now, instead of Zipporah and the stone of circumcision, He uses the ass, less insensate than himself, to save and rebuke him.

Of course, there is a miracle here, as there is not in the other case: for that it would be presumption to apologize. The strangeness of it was the more calculated to work upon a heart hardened to ordinary appeals, to humble him by making him realize how far he had sunk below the brute, whose actions were such things as his divinations assumed power to interpret; while the mercy of God, thus breaking through the natural boundary-lines to convict and save him, should have broken down with them every barrier of sin and unbelief. The extraordinary means used here are witness to the state of soul to which they were

hovah said unto him, Why hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? behold, I came out as an adversary to thee, because thy way is perverse before me: and the ass saw me, and turned from me these three times; had she not turned from me, I had surely slain thee, and preserved her alive. And Balaam said unto the angel of Jehovah, I have sinned, that I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me; and now, if it be evil in thine eyes, I will get me back again. And the angel of Jehovah said unto Balaam, Go with the men; but only the word that [z] I shall speak unto thee, that shalt thou speak. And Balaam went with the princes of Balak. And Balak heard that Balaam was coming; and he went out to meet him to the city of Moab, which is in the border of Arnon, which is in the utmost border. And Balak said unto Balaam, Did I not earnestly send unto thee, to call thee? why didst thou not come to me? am I not [a] able indeed to give thee honor? And Balaam said unto Balak, Behold, I am come to thee: am I now indeed able to speak any thing? the word that God putteth into my mouth, that shall I speak.

z *cf.* Ex. 4. 15. Jer. 1. 17. ver. 38.

a *cf.* Jno. 16. 10, 11.

2. (*v.* 39–xxiv.) The prophetic utterance.

a (*v.* 39–xxiii. 10.) A people unique and alone.

[2] (*a*) And Balaam went with Balak, and they came unto Kiriath-huzoth. And Balak [b] sacrificed oxen and sheep, and sent unto Balaam, and to the princes that were with him. And it was so in the morning that Balak took Balaam, and brought him up to the [c] high places of Baal, and he saw from thence the extremity of the people. And Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here [d] seven altars, and prepare me here seven bullocks and seven rams. And Balak did as Balaam had spoken; and Balak and Balaam offered up on [every] altar a bullock and a ram. And Balaam said unto Balak, Stand by thy burnt-offering, and I will go: it may be Jehovah will come to meet me, and whatever he may show me I will declare to thee. And he went to a bare height.

b Ex. 32. 5.

c *cf.* 1 Kings 12. 31. 2 Kings 17. 10, 11.

d ch. 29. 32, etc.

appropriate, and on the other hand to the infinite pity of God which could not use even one like this as a mere machine to accomplish His purposes without laboring after his soul. An ass's voice may indeed thus be made, not merely human, but *divine*.

(ii.) The prophecy of Balaam divides, as is evident, into four parts, the last part dividing again into four. Keil has rightly pointed out that the three points of view from which the blessings are pronounced are nearer and nearer to the camp, and in more and more complete view of it. In the first place, Balak takes him to the heights of Baal, that he may see from thence the utmost part, or "end" of the people. This does not mean, as some would make it, the whole of the people to their utmost end: it is not the fair sense of the words, and takes away, as we may easily see, from the spiritual significance which everywhere in Scripture governs all. Balak's first effort is to diminish them in Balaam's eyes, —he would not have him see too much. And this gives emphasis to what Balaam says, "Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the *fourth part* of Israel?" The end camp was just the fourth part, and instead of the partial nature of the view being allowed to diminish the greatness of the people,

And God met Balaam; and he said unto him, The seven altars did I prepare, and I have offered up upon [every] altar a bullock and a ram. And Jehovah put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, Return unto Balak, and thus shalt thou speak. And he returned unto him, and, lo, he stood by his burnt-offering,—he and all the princes of Moab. And he took up his parable, and said,—

From Aram hath Balak brought me,
The king of Moab—from the mountains of the east.
Come, curse me Jacob;
Yea, come, denounce Israel!
[e] How shall I curse? God hath not cursed!
And how shall I denounce? Jehovah hath not denounced!
For from the [f] top of the rocks I see him,
And from the hills I behold him:
Lo, a people that dwelleth [g] alone,
And shall not be reckoned among the nations.
Who hath counted the [h] dust of Jacob?
Even the number of Israel's fourth part?
Let *me* die the [i] death of the upright!
And let my last end be like his!

[b] (10-24.) Their justification and salvation.

(*b*) And Balak said unto Balaam, What hast thou done to me? I took thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast altogether blessed them! And he answered and said, Must I not take heed to speak what Jehovah putteth in my mouth? And Balak said unto him, Come, I pray thee, with me to [j] another place whence thou mayest see them; (thou seest but the extremity of them, and dost not see them all;) and curse them for me thence.

And he took him to the field of Zophim, to the top of [k] Pisgah. And he built seven altars, and offered up a bullock and a ram on [every] altar. And he said unto Balak, Stand here by thy burnt-offering, and I will go to meet —— yonder. And Jehovah came to meet Balaam, and he put a word in his mouth, and said, Return unto Balak, and thus shalt thou speak. And he came

[e] Deut. 33. 29. *cf.* Rom. 8. 33, 34. Is. 54. 17.

[f] *cf.* Rom. 8. 1. Col. 2. 9,10. 1 Cor. 1.30.

[g] Lev.20.24. ch. 6. 2. Deut.33.28. *cf.* Phil. 3. 20.

[h] *cf.* Rev. 7. 5-9. Gen. 13. 16.

[i] Deut. 32. 29. *cf.* Acts 7. 59. 60. Ps. 116. 15.

[j] *cf.*1 Kings 20. 23. Rom. 4. 6-8.

[k] *cf.* Deut. 32. 48-52.

it just moves him to say, "If only the 'end' is so much, what must be the whole?"

In the next place, Balak takes him to the field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah, —plainly the place for a good view; but here occurs a mistake in the common version, which has caused the blunder as to the extent of what was seen at first. Balak is here made to say, "Come, I pray thee, with me unto another place, from whence thou mayest see them: thou *shalt* see but the utmost part of them, and *shalt not* see them all." Now here Balak plainly at least makes the "utmost part" or "end" to be *not* the whole. But this is just what Balaam had seen before. A very simple alteration sets all right. Future and present are the same tense in Hebrew; and we have but, with Keil, to read the present instead of the future: "thou *seest* but the utmost part of them," instead of "thou *shalt*

> to him; and, lo, he stood by his burnt-offering, and the princes of Moab with him; and Balak said unto him, What hath Jehovah spoken? And he took up his parable, and said,—

see." From the place where he had been standing, he *had* seen but the utmost part of them; now Balak is going to show him *all*. He thinks he made a mistake before, and that was the reason perhaps he had not succeeded; for divination depended upon what was before the eyes. What force, then, does this give to the announcement when Balaam is looking over the *whole* camp, from one end to the other, "God hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob"! How it would spoil this to suppose that Balaam had here only got a partial view! Balak might have said, "Balaam, you may see no spot *there*, but there are plenty elsewhere." Now it is impossible to say so. Look where you will: those whom God has justified cannot be condemned.

But now he comes nearer still, and from the top of Peor, Balaam sees the people abiding in their tents according to their tribes; and the nearer he gets, the more profound is the impression made on him: now he says, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob!" The nearer vision you have of the people of God, the more fully you will realize the wonder of their blessing.

But we must take up the prophecy in order.

From the heights of Baal, little can yet be seen: it is a place entirely given to the worship of Satan under this name, with which the history of Israel afterward makes us terribly familiar. They worshiped demons upon such far-off heights, for they knew nothing of him who delights to dwell with his redeemed people. "Thou shalt call Me Ishi," my husband, Jehovah says by Hosea, "and thou shalt no more call Me *Baali*," my Lord; "for I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name." (Chap. ii. 16, 17.) How fain would God have us know that He has a heart!

Yet even from the stand-point of the enemy it is to be seen that the people of God are different from other people, and the curse that he would have hurled dies unuttered on Balaam's lips. Jacob, the supplanter, cannot be cursed; and Israel, God's prince, cannot be defied. El, the Mighty One, has not cursed! Jehovah—truth-keeping covenant-God—has not defied! And as he bows before God, right in the stronghold of the enemy, the top of the rocks give him unobstructed view. He sees with the vision of God, not from the low level, where the view is partial and obstructed by the things of earth, and he sees that the people dwell alone,—separate from others, because God has marked them off; they are not reckoned among the nations. This, of course, is said of Israel, and true of them; but how much more deeply significant of that Church of the living God whose type Israel is, and to which we belong! "Ye are not of the world," says the Lord Himself to us, "but I have chosen you out of the world." And to the Father He says of us, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." This not being *reckoned* among the nations is of course from God's side, His grace and His gift. The people might not be true to their calling; nor were they: the Church of God has not been true to hers. This does not lessen the value of a truth which comes foremost here in the vision of the people of God. "They dwell alone," says God. The many, alas! now seem anxious to deny this. In denying it, they leave out God, for God dwells with His people; but with the world He cannot dwell. "Can two walk together except they are agreed?"—a question asked by God Himself, and which He supposes can be answered only in one way.

Yet God is true, and He counts not His people with the world. Blessed be God, the cross of Christ is that by which we are separated from it irrevocably. There is a "great gulf fixed," though with a bridge over it yet, and a door that opens freely, yet only one way. The men of the world are not shut out from the city of refuge,—yea, God beseeches still to flee for refuge to the hope that the gospel gives.

Rise up, Balak, and hear!
Give ear to me, son of Zippor!
[t]God is not man, to lie;
Or son of Adam, to repent.
Hath he said, and will not perform?
Or spoken, and shall not make it stand?
Behold, I have commission to bless:
Yea, he hath blessed, and I cannot turn it.
He hath not [m]beheld vanity in Jacob;
Nor seen [evil] travail in Israel:
Jehovah his God is [n]with him,
And the [o]shout of a King in his midst.
God [p]bringeth them out of Egypt:
He hath [r]strength like that of the aurochs;
For [r]augury there is not against Jacob,
And there is no divination against Israel.
In its time shall it be said of Jacob and of Israel,
[s]What hath God wrought!
Lo, the people rise up as a lioness!
And as a lion he raiseth himself up!
He shall not [t]lie down till he eat of the prey,
And drink the blood of the slain.

t Mal. 3. 6. Heb. 13. 8. Jas. 1. 17. Rom. 11. 25-29.
m *cf.* Song 2. 2, 14. Song 4.1-7. Jno. 13. 10. Zech.3.3-5. 1 Jno. 1. 7.
n Ps. 46. 11. *cf.* Matt. 1. 23. Matt.28.20. Jno. 14. 3. Rev. 21. 3.
o *ctr.*1 Sam. 4. 5. *cf.* Josh. 6. 16, 20. 2 Cor. 2. 14.
p Ex. 20. 1, 2, etc.
q Ps. 18. 34. *cf.* Phil. 4. 13. Eph. 3. 16, 17. 2 Cor. 12. 9, 10.
r Is. 54. 17. Job 1. 12. Job 2. 6.
s *cf.* Ps. 126. 1, 2; Rom. 11. 33-36. t Gen. 49.27; Ps. 18. 37.

Now comes the increase: "Who can count the dust of Jacob?" Jacob, of course, is himself here compared to "dust." It is a figure of humiliation; but then he needs humiliation just as surely as he is Jacob. He finds it, too, because he needs it,—because God is faithful; but he increases in this way amazingly. Even in this way also he is separated from the world, enduring chastening because he is a son; and thus, in result, "Israel" comes forth with increase. And the picture of men to whom all things contrary work for good, moves even the heart of Balaam: "Let *me* die the death of the upright, and let my last end be like his." But, as Matthew Henry says, many would be saints in heaven who have no desire to be saints on earth.

The place of the second prophecy is the field of Zophim on the top of Pisgah. "Zophim" means "watchers," for whom Pisgah, with its width of view, was just the right place. Balak knew all about this place, of course; and many a keen and jealous eye, no doubt had watched the camp from thence. All the more, as we have seen, it suits the purpose of God to bring out His thoughts as to His people. And now Balaam comes back from his eager hunt after auguries, to proclaim the irreversibleness of His decrees: "God is not man, that He should lie; nor son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not perform? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it stand? Behold," says the abashed and confounded man, "I have received commandment to bless; yea, He *hath* blessed, and I cannot reverse it." And then comes the astonishing declaration as to the people whose history the Spirit of God has been tracing out in the way we have already seen: "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel: the Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a King is among them."

Of course, this is the blessed truth of justification. He does not say, There hath been no iniquity; God could not say that: He says He hath not beheld it. Every Christian heart knows why: it is because He *has* seen the precious blood which has been shed for sin. Could He speak of it as there, when the blood of Christ has blotted it out from before Him? Justification is of the ungodly; *ours*, therefore, that we have been ungodly. "Christ died for the ungodly:" that which declares the guilt removes it.

c (v. 25-xxiv. 9.) Their portion now as dowered with the Spirit.

(*c*) And Balak said unto Balaam, [t]Neither curse them at all nor bless them at all. And Balaam answered and said unto Balak, Did I not tell thee, saying, All that Jehovah sayeth, I will do? And Balak said unto Balaam, Come, I pray thee, I will take thee to [u]another place. Perhaps it will be right in the eyes of God that thou shouldst curse them for me thence. And Balak took Balaam to the top of [w]Peor, that looketh over the face of the waste. And Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven bullocks and seven rams. And Balak did as Balaam said, and offered a bullock and a ram on [every] altar.

And Balaam saw that it was good in Jehovah's eyes to bless Israel; and he went not, as at other times, to meet auguries, but set his face toward the wilderness. And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and saw Israel tabernacling, according to their tribes, and the Spirit of God came upon him. And he took up his parable, and said,

> The oracle of Balaam, son of Beor,
> Even the oracle of the man with eyes that had been [x]shut:

t *cf.* Rev. 3. 5 with Jer. 31. 3.

u ver. 13.

w ch. 25. 1-9. *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 1.

x ch. 22. 31.

But the words "iniquity" and "perverseness" of the common version are susceptible of a rendering closer to the original, and which gives a fuller significance to what is said. It may seem, indeed, otherwise, and that to substitute "vanity" for "iniquity" takes from the blessedness of what is here. Vanity, in our apprehension of it, is not at all the same as sin; and yet in Scripture it is often put for it. The "workers of iniquity"—a common expression in the Psalms—is literally, "workers of *vanity*." "Worthlessness," perhaps, comes nearer the double sense of the original, and here the fullest sense is true that we can give to it: sin, and that which sin has wrought, redemption has to say to; and in God's sight, His people have not spot or wrinkle. "Thou art all fair, my love," says the Bridegroom of the Song; "there is no spot in thee." And so it must be if Christ is the righteousness of His people,—if we are perfect in the comeliness that He has put upon us.

Then the other word, "perverseness," is rather "*labor*," or "travail." It is the word which, as we have seen, gives us the first part of the name "Amalek" —*amal*. It is not work: man in Eden was to work; but toil, the drudgery of work, most of all that which the heart away from God incites to. "All things are full of labor," says the preacher: "man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing." "All the labor of man is for the mouth, but the soul is not filled." And from this the grace of God in Christ would draw us off: "Come unto Me, all ye that *labor* and are heavy-laden, and I will give you *rest*."

Thus, then, the vision of God sees His people endowed with the portion He has given them; but there is more than this, they have Himself: "Jehovah his God is with him, and the shout of a King is among them." This is the filling up of the cup, and makes simple what has gone before.

A cypher in itself is worthless, and six cyphers are no more than one; but put but a unit before them,—now they are a million. So whatever Israel by himself may be, Israel with Jehovah with him is indeed a host. And "the shout of a King," in this case what a security that in joyful obedience to this easy yoke rest will be their portion! Redemption is the foundation of all: "God brought them forth out of Egypt." We know from Moses' plea more than once what that implies. He who thus interfered for them cannot without loss to His name

His oracle who heard the sayings of God,
Who seeth with the vision of the Almighty;
Falling, but his eyes uncovered:—
How [y] goodly are thy tents, O Jacob! [y] *cf.* Ezek. 48. Ps. 48. 2, 12, 13.
Thy tabernacles, O Israel!
As the valleys are they spread forth;
As gardens by the river's side;
As aloe-trees that Jehovah planted;
As [z] cedars beside the waters! [z] Ps. 92. 12, 13.
Water poureth from his buckets,
And his seed is in many waters;
And his [a] King shall be higher than Agag, [a] *cf.* Ps. 24. 7–10. Ps. 45. Ps. 72. etc.
And his kingdom shall be exalted.

now leave them. Thus strength is secured. Nor can there be augury against Jacob, nor divination against Israel: in the due time it shall be said of *Jacob* and of Israel,—for you must know the material if you would fully appreciate the workmanship,—What hath *God* wrought! A wholly different thing from "What hath *Israel* wrought!" Yet Israel will themselves now do much, therefore; if her enemies rouse the lion, let them now beware!

The third prophecy (and that which follows also,) is from the top of Peor that looketh toward the waste, and it is toward the wilderness that Balaam sets his face in uttering it. He is now at last persuaded, as his words have shown, that no enchantment will avail against Israel, and he goes no more, as he had hitherto done, to seek them. It is Jehovah's will to bless, and he yields himself now for the first time, without resistance, to that will. Then the Spirit of God comes upon him, not simply the word of God is communicated to him as before, but he is laid hold of, forcibly however, as one not in real sympathy, so that he falls, his eyes however, once shut, being now really opened; and himself taken possession of, and transformed, for the time, into another man. In this condition he is made to proclaim as a divine oracle the victory over him that God has gained, type of all other victories. The names, if translated, make this very striking:—

"The oracle of the people-devourer, the consumer's son!
Even the oracle of the man whose eyes had been shut!
His oracle who heard the sayings of God (*El*, the mighty),—
Who saw the vision of the Almighty!
Falling, but his eyes opened [now]!"

How useless to strive blindly against the Almighty! and yet this is what the world is doing to-day, as it ever did. Thus we need not wonder that the prophecy goes on to the world's collapse.

But, first, we have quite another thing—the portion of Israel, even in the world itself,—the wilderness: there the people of God are, camping in divine order according to their tribes. Their dwellings are not palaces, but only tents,—yea, Jacob's tents; and a prince of God dwells there. How goodly are thy tents! spread out in lowliness indeed, as the valleys are; but which all the streams of the hills water: for that is the law of nature, it is the ordinance of God, that that which is lowly should be thus ministered to. The next figure brings out this thought more fully: they are "as *gardens* by the river's side,"—yea, gardens planted by Jehovah Himself, with lign aloes, rare and fragrant exotics, or with cedars, elsewhere given us as the stateliest things in nature, and with unfading leaf.

Such is the wealth that the water nourishes: and this water, type of the living Spirit, sweetest dowry of heaven for the land that is married—Beulah land! plenteous it is indeed in the portion of the saints: "Water shall flow out of his buckets; and his seed shall be among many waters." Then the figure suddenly changes, although the spiritual connection is maintained: "and his King shall be higher than Agag; and his kingdom shall be exalted."

God [b] bringeth him out of Egypt;
He hath strength like that of the aurochs.*
He shall eat up the nations his adversaries,—
Yea, he shall break their bones,
And smite them through with his arrows.
He [c] couched, he lay down as a lion;
And as a lioness,—who will rouse him?
Blessed is he that blesseth thee,
And cursed is he that curseth thee!

b ch. 23. 22. cf. Rom. 8. 29, 30.

c Rev. 5. 5, 6.

d (10-25.) The prostration of the world before their King.

(*d*) And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together; and Balak said unto Balaam, I called thee to curse mine enemies, and, lo, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times. And now flee thou to thy place! I said I would very highly honor thee; and, behold, Jehovah hath kept thee back from honor. And Balaam said unto Balak, Did not I also speak unto thy messengers whom thou sentest to me, saying, If Balak will give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of Jehovah, to do good or evil out of mine own heart: that which Jehovah sayeth, I will speak? And now, behold,

In this picture of fullest blessing, supremacy over Amalek could not but be noted. We have seen what Amalek stands for (Ex. xvii.), and how in the previous prophecy the restlessness of the flesh is met and conquered by the rest-giving yoke of the meek King of Israel. Now, as the direct consequence, Amalek's king is brought down, the meaning of whose name as given by Simonis, "very high," seems most in agreement with the sense. Israel's King is higher than the highest. And is not self-exaltation that which gives the rein to the lusts of the flesh?

In the desert aspect, indeed, Amalek is not destroyed; for that, we must wait for the final prophecy; yet in the wilderness already Christ is the remedy for the power of sin: over him who is subject to Christ it has lost dominion. But it is not Israel that is exalted here, but Israel's King; and this is the style of Scripture: "Not I, but Christ that dwelleth in me."

Yet "Israel" is a name of power; but for this to be realized, we must come back again to the foundation. Here, therefore, comes back the refrain of redemption and its results. "*God* brought him forth out of Egypt: he hath as it were the strength of an aurochs:* he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows."

Balaam closes with two quotations from older prophecies which reaffirm the unchangeable word of God. The first is from Jacob's prophecy of Judah, here applied to the whole nation. The second is from God's promise to Abraham, which is thus fulfilled to his posterity. Both declare from an enemy's mouth how surely, how fully, every utterance of God shall come to pass.

But Balak hardens himself against the judgment of God, which has thus denounced the ruin of those that oppose themselves to His people. He thus accepts the curse, and has to hear it, and of the prostration of the world-power at the feet of Israel's King in the coming day. The unwilling seer, prefacing his utterance with the solemn asseveration once more of his competency to give forth a

*Tristram says, "The great-horned *auerochs* probably became extinct only in the middle ages. After careful examination of the subject, there cannot now remain a doubt on the identity of the *reem*, or unicorn, with the historic *urus*, or auerochs, now indeed the "ox of yore." " He quotes Cæsar's words in his Gallic war (iv. 29): "These *uri* are scarcely less than elephants in size; but in their nature, color, and form, are bulls. Great is their strength and their speed: they spare neither man nor beast when once they have caught sight of them."

I am going to my people; come, I will admonish thee
what this people shall do unto thy people in the [d] last
days. And he took up his parable, and said,— [d] cf. Gen. 49. 1. Is. 2. 2. Dan. 2. 28.

The oracle of Balaam, son of Beor,
Even the oracle of the man with eyes that had been shut!
The oracle of one that heareth the sayings of God,
And who knoweth the knowledge of the Highest;
Seeing with the vision of the Almighty;
Falling, but his eyes uncovered:
I see him, but not now;
I behold him, but not nigh:
There hath come a [e] Star out of Jacob, [e] cf. Matt. 2. 2, 9, 10. Rev. 22. 16.
And a Sceptre hath risen out of Israel,
And hath smitten through the sides of [f] Moab, [f] ch. 21. 29.
And dashed against each other all the sons of tumult.
And [g] Edom is a possession— [g] Is. 63. 1-6.
Seir also a possession,—his enemies;
And Israel doeth valiantly.
Yea, out of Jacob one hath [h] dominion, [h] Ps. 2. 6-9. Is. 11. 1-4.
And destroyeth what is left from the city.

And he looked upon [i] Amalek, and took up his parable, and said,— [i] 1 Sam. 15. 2, 3.

Amalek, first of the nations!
And his latter end [to go] to destruction!

divine oracle, adds to it now his "knowledge of the *Most High*"—God's well-known millennial title. Him who represents and makes good this title, he announces in those words which have been echoed ever since by expectant faith,—

"I see Him, but not now;
I behold Him, but not nigh:
There hath come a Star out of Jacob,
And a Sceptre hath risen out of Israel,
And hath smitten through the sides of Moab,
And dashed against each other all the sons of tumult."

Lange indeed protests, "It is not in this way that the ideal Messiah would be announced"! Is it not Messiah who has the rod of iron in the second psalm? But so is Scripture misinterpreted by our prejudices and misconceptions. On the other hand, it may be safely asserted that the Word of God is as full of a conquering as of a suffering Messiah, and most distinctly declares the judgment of the world at His hands. God "hath given Him authority to execute judgment also because He is the Son of man." The world itself groans for Him who will destroy the sons of tumult, who according to the parallelism of the passage are represented here by Moab, Israel's enemy at this time. Isa. xxv. 10, in like manner, associates the treading down of Moab with the coming of the Lord. Edom too, that refused Israel even a passage through their land, shall become the possession of their hated enemies; and out of every city in which the children of Esau dwell they shall be destroyed to the last remnant.

Not only so: Amalek shall be destroyed, the Kenite wasted and carried captive by Assyria, Assyria itself smitten by a power from the west, which shall smite

And he looked upon the [j]Kenites, and took up his parable, and said,— [j] Ju. 5. 24. Gen. 15. 19.

Firm is thy dwelling-place,
And thy nest fixed in the rock!
But the Kenite shall be wasted,
Until Asshur carry thee captive away.

And he took up his parable, and said,—

Ah! [k]who shall live when God appointeth this? [k] cf. Rev. 6. 17.
And ships shall come from the coast of Kittim,
And shall afflict Asshur, and afflict Eber,
And he also [shall go] to destruction.

And Balaam rose up, and went and returned to [l]his place; and Balak also went his way. [l] cf. Acts 1. 25.

Eber—the Hebrew—also, but then at last fall prostrate under the universal Conqueror. That this represents what will take place in the "end of days," Balaam distinctly says; it is at the coming of the Lord that the world is thus judged, and Israel vanquishes all her enemies. The names of ancient peoples that have disappeared being found in the prophecy, need not be a difficulty, as, when the world is preparing for judgment, the nations that were connected with Israel reappear. Moab has been referred to, and is found again with Edom in Isa. xi. 14, and Edom separately in chap. lxiii. 1; the Assyrian in chap. x. 12, and in millennial blessing in chap. xix. 23–25. Amalek and the Kenite we have not elsewhere. But the revival of the Roman empire to meet its doom from the coming Lord is clearly predicted in Rev. xvii., of which the restored kingdom of Italy is a forewarning. Greece too has taken her place once more among the kingdoms of the world, and every thing points to Israel's speedy revival as a nation. Here is not the place for long prophetic detail; but the student of Scripture will find even in these few hints enough to put him upon a track in following which he may satisfy himself of the truth of what has been stated.

Here, then, is the complete accomplishment of blessing for the people of God. The resurrection-priesthood is seen in the fulfillment of its wondrous work; and with this the third division of the book fittingly closes. In its spiritual application to ourselves, this fourth prophecy cannot be, as far as I am aware, interpreted as to details: we have too little knowledge as yet of what these various powers represent. But the final extinction of Amalek and of Edom, with the overthrow of all enemies, is associated, for the Church with the coming of the Lord, who is Israel's King also; and here, fittingly, the teaching of type and parable ends in and coalesces with the plain speech of prophecy: visions end when the full Vision comes, and twilight passes into the full glory of the day.

Div. 4.

The fourth division is, naturally, of smaller compass than usual in the book of Numbers, which is throughout characterized by this number. In this division, it is testing in its consequences that is put before us. And this has three parts:—

First, there is seen the necessity, in the high-handed departure from God that takes place, for such atonement as is made by Phinehas,—atonement to the *government* of God by judgment of the evil, for the zealous execution of which he gets the assurance of everlasting priesthood.

Secondly, the new numbering of the people shows how they have come through the wilderness, their increase or diminution, and God's faithfulness to His word, whether in grace or judgment.

Thirdly, it is seen that for the realization of the inheritance Moses must give place to Joshua,—Christ personally with us to Christ in Spirit—typically what

DIVISION 4. (Chap. xxv.–xxvii.)

The testing in its consequences.

(XXV.)

The everlasting priesthood of Phinehas: atonement by judgment.

1. AND Israel abode in Shittim; and the people began to [m]commit fornication with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people to the [n]sacrifices of their gods; and the people ate, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel [o]joined himself unto Baal-peor, and the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Take all the [p]heads of the people, and hang them up to Jehovah before the sun, that the fierce wrath of Jehovah may be turned from Israel. And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, [q]Slay every one his men that have joined themselves unto Baal-peor.

[m] Josh. 22. 17. 1 Cor. 10. 8. Rev. 2. 14, 20. 2 Cor. 11. 2, 3.

[n] 1 Cor. 8. 1 Cor. 10. 19–33.

[o] Ps. 106. 28–31. 1 Cor. 6. 15–20.

[p] ch. 16. 1, 2.

[q] Ex. 32. 26–29. Deut. 13. 6–9. 2 Cor. 13. 1, 2.

Christ declared to His disciples, when He said, "It is expedient for *you* that I go away; for, if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." The truth is not here that the law cannot bring us to heaven (as many think), true as, of course, this is, but one much less realized by the people of God than this; nor does Moses represent the law here. We shall speak of all this, however, better in its own place.

1. Israel abide in Shittim, no doubt, so called from its acacias; but the word literally means "things that turn aside," as the acacias with their strong thorns do. Yet the acacia is only spoken of with commendation in Scripture, and so takes its place in the promises of blessing for the renewed earth. (Isa. xli. 19, Joel iii. 18.) It furnishes the gum arabic of commerce, which, says Tristram, "exudes from the tree spontaneously, as I have often observed in hot weather, but is also obtained more systematically by making incisions in the bark; and the Arabs not only collect it for sale, but for food in times of scarcity. They also say that it allays thirst." "It flourishes most in the dry beds of extinct water-courses, and where no other tree can find moisture. It is a very conspicuous feature wherever it occurs. The timber is very hard and close-grained, of a fine orange-brown color, with a darker heart, and admirably adapted for fine cabinet work."

With so many precious reminders of Him who was indeed *before God* (not before man only, as so many think), "a root out of a dry ground," the type of a life independent of circumstances and overmastering death; yielding spontaneously, yet also to the hand of violence, the precious sustenance for our souls; we can understand why the shittim-wood should furnish material for the ark, for the table of show-bread, and other furniture of the sanctuary which speak of Christ.

Yet the acacia has its thorns to guard the treasure that it carries, and such is the lesson we are to gather from it now. The resurrection-priesthood, so glorious in its efficacy for the people, as we have already seen, develops here new characters, characters which may at first seem even contradictory of the grace which has gone before, but which are not,—are only the other side of it. The priesthood of Phinehas springs from, and is the continuation of, the priesthood of Eleazar, yet is perpetuated and sustained by judgment; nay, strange as it may seem, *atonement is made by judgment:* "Phinehas hath *turned away* My wrath from over the children of Israel, in that he was jealous with My jealousy among them, so that I consumed not the children of Israel in My jealousy. Wherefore say, 'Behold, I give unto him My covenant of peace; and it shall be unto him, and to

And, behold, a man of the children of Israel came and brought near unto his brethren a Midianite woman, in the [r] sight of Moses, and in the sight of the whole assembly of the children of Israel, and they were weeping at the entrance of the tent of meeting. And [s] Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, and he rose up from the midst of the assembly, and took a javelin in his hand, and went after the man of Israel into the tent-chamber, and thrust both of them through—the man of Israel and the woman through her belly. And the plague was stayed from the children of Israel. And those that died in the plague were [t] twenty and four thousand.

And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned away my wrath from over the children of Israel, in that he was [u] jealous with my jealousy among them, so that

[r] *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 1, 2. Phil. 3, 19.

[s] *cf.* Rev. 1. 14-16. Rev. 2. 18.

[t] 1 Cor. 10. 8.

[u] *cf.* Jno. 2. 14-17. *ctr.* 1 Kings 20. 9-14.

his seed after him, a covenant of everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and *made atonement* for the children of Israel.'"

A solemn and yet salutary theme, then, is before us. Again we see, at Shittim, the people of God in their constant liability to get away from God. They begin to give up their separation from the nations among which they are, and as this is no arbitrary thing, but needful separation from the iniquity in which these were plunged, a wild and awful license is the result. Idolatry, the degradation of God, issues (as always) in the degradation of man. "Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor, and the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel." Judgment, as is implied in this, goes forth: pestilence begins to do its deadly work, and to appease this anger the heads of the people are sentenced to be hung up to Jehovah before the sun.

But the zealous deed of an Israelite anticipates this sentence. In the midst of the outbreak of lamentation among the congregation, gathered now before Jehovah at the entrance of the tent of meeting, a man of the children of Israel shamelessly brings near before them all a Midianite woman to his tent. Now it is that the zeal of Phinehas awakes: he executes swift judgment, and God accepts this as atonement. It is God's wrath he executes, and the wrath is stayed from Israel: the plague ceases.

Notice how, each time that Phinehas is named, his relation to Eleazar and to Aaron is insisted on. It is what man would most of all have put out of sight. Priestly intercession we understand, but execution of judgment we do not ordinarily consider priestly work: yet the connection here is emphasized. "Phinehas" means "mouth of brass," and implies the firmness of the word of God which here he executes. So "Jesus Christ the *righteous*" is the title of Him who is our Advocate,—righteous, and the "propitiation for our sins." (1 Jno. ii. 1, 2.)

Righteousness, yea, divine righteousness, was shown in the manner of His work for us; and the cross is the solemn declaration of righteous judgment upon sin. So much every Christian bows to and delights in; and herein was propitiation alone possible for us. He bare our sins, that we might not have to bear them; being borne for us we cannot bear them for ourselves. "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" is now the unchangeable word of the same righteousness of God which the cross has so fully manifested and glorified.

But if so, what is the typical meaning of the scene before us? Why is Phinehas the executor of judgment, instead of bearing it? Why is the everlasting priesthood declared his on this very account? And why, above all, does Jehovah's own mouth declare, that in this execution of judgment he had "*made atonement*" for the children of Israel?

I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace; and it shall be unto him, and to his seed after him, a covenant of [v] everlasting priesthood, because he was jealous for his God, and made [w] atonement for the children of Israel. And the name of the man of Israel that was slain,—that was slain with the Midianite woman, was Zimri, the son of Salu, prince of a father's house among the [x] Simeonites. And the name of the Midianite woman was Cozbi, the daughter of Zur; he was tribal head of a father's house in Midian.

v *cf.* Ps. 45. 1-7 with Heb. 7. 24.

w *cf.* Heb. 12. 5-11. 2 Cor. 4. 17. Acts 14. 22.

x *cf.* ch. 26. 14. Hos. 7. 9.

God's Word is true and unchangeable, absolutely self-consistent throughout; and we need not fear to ask such questions. To shirk or shuffle over them would be to do grievous dishonor to His Word, and injury to our own souls. But what, then, are we to say of this certainly most exceptional aspect of atonement, by the *execution* of judgment, not upon a substitute for sinners, but upon the sinners themselves?

"For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily," says the apostle, "eateth and drinketh *judgment** to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. *For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.* For if we would judge ourselves we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, *that we should not be condemned with the world.*"

Note that he is writing explicitly to Christians, making no doubt of their Christianity, as we may see by his very language, "that ye should not be condemned with the world." This means, of course, that they are not of the world. What an unscriptural and unchristian doctrine would it be, that the temporal judgments falling upon unbelievers here deliver them from final condemnation! No, assuredly; nothing but the blood of Jesus can put away sin from before God, or justify the ungodly, so that he shall not be judged forever.

The judgment spoken of here is the judgment of children, for it is children who are alone entitled to it, so that "if ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? but if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." The thorn of tribulation grows for us thus on the shittah-tree: the cross it is that has procured for us a chastening so needful; and we surely see how the priest after all may have to do with it, how the work of intercession may bring it on. If we look back to that fundamental promise of God to Abram which we find in the fifteenth chapter of Genesis, there where Jehovah pledges Himself, by all the value of the sacrifice for Him, to fulfill the promise of inheritance, the emblems that represent Him in thus binding Himself are the *furnace of fire* and the burning lamp. This is the pledge that needful discipline shall not be wanting, where the "deep sleep" falling upon His people may require this. And to this afterward the burning bush answers, which is not consumed because God is in the fire. The Egyptian oppression was thus, on its reverse side, covenant mercy. And this is only an example of what is a constant principle of the divine ways.

And "when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." For though the cross is our salvation, God must be consistent with Himself. He must be holy in His ways,—must show that He cannot lightly deal with sin: His *government* must represent aright His character. Thus the cross cannot excuse from discipline, but secures it; as He says to Israel, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore will I punish you for your iniquities."

If it is asked still how this can be called "making atonement," we must re-

* See Rev. Vers., 1 Cor. xi. 29, and margin of the common version.

And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, [y] Harass the Midianites, and smite them; for they harass you with their wiles, wherewith they have beguiled you in the matter of Peor, and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of a prince of Midian, their sister, who was slain in the day of the plague on account of the matter of Peor. [y] ch. 31. 2.

(XXVI. 1—XXVII. 11.)

The second numbering, as contrasted with the first; and its witness.

2. [1] And it was so, after the plague, that Jehovah spake unto Moses and unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, saying, Take the [z] sum of the whole assembly of the children of Israel, from twenty years old and upward, according to their fathers' houses,—all that go forth to war in Israel. And Moses and Eleazar the priest spake with them in the plains of Moab, beside Jordan, near Jericho, saying, [Take the sum of the people,] from twenty years old and upward, as Jehovah commanded Moses and the children of Israel that came out of Egypt:— [z] ch. 1. 2, 3.

1. (vv. 1-18.) The camp of Reuben: the lesson of power.

a Reuben, the first-born, not able to maintain his place in nature, but finding it in *new* creation, and so with the Almighty.

(*a*) Reuben, the first-born of Israel: the sons of Reuben: of Enoch, the family of the Enochites; of Phallu, the family of the Phalluites; of Hetzron, the family of the Hetzronites; of Carmi, the family of the Carmites. These are the families of the Reubenites; and they that

member how in the sixteenth chapter atonement is said to be made by the incense also, and that the Hebrew word, which is the intensive form of the verb to "cover," is used with regard to every fresh *application* of atonement, as we should rather say. By his zealous action Phinehas, *in the line of the risen priesthood*, as is impressed upon us here, *covers* the children of Israel, NOT apart from the value of that death which a *risen* priest implies, but rather as insisting on its value. The cross of Christ it is by which we are crucified to the world. If we do not maintain this position, God is true to it and to us in maintaining it as to us; and in respect to His *government* this is necessary: *with regard to it* this judgment *covers*, though only in the hands of our Phinehas could it do so.

2. (i.) We have now the second numbering of the tribes, the wilderness-journey being accomplished, and in view of their speedy settlement in the land; to which the claim of the daughters of Zelophehad is evidently an appendix. This second numbering is, of course, intended also for comparison with the first,—a comparison which should furnish us with many lessons. We are dull, however, and slow in reading them; few of us, it is to be feared, to the very last of our lives here, could give much account of the meaning of the Lord's ways with us. There is a day coming, however, in which everything shall be told out, and its full meaning be apprehended.

The tribes come before us according to their relation to one another in their camps, the camp of Reuben, the natural first-born, being first, however, as in the former numbering, but here also Manasseh preceding Ephraim. It is accountability, not grace, that occupies us, although grace necessarily shines through all God's dealings with His people. The relation of the tribes in their camps has important connection with their history, as we are formed so much by our associations (though in this case they are not voluntary, but ordained by God Himself) and has therefore a fitness which, in its spiritual meaning for us, we have already considered. Individual responsibility is in no wise affected by it. Let us look now at what this numbering presents to us, in contrast with the former one, and in connection with what we may find of their history elsewhere.

(*a*) First, REUBEN. Reuben according to his name speaks of sonship, natural rather than spiritual, and yet upon which the spiritual may be grafted. Man,

were numbered of them were [a] forty-three thousand, seven hundred, and thirty. And the sons of Phallu, Eliab; and the sons of Eliab were Nemuel and [b] Dathan and Abiram. This is that Dathan and Abiram, called of the assembly, who contended against Moses and against Aaron in the company of Korah, when they contended against Jehovah; and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, when the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men; and they became an example. But the [c] children of Korah died not.

[a] ch. 1. 21.

[b] ch. 16. 1.

[c] *cf.* Ps. 88. title.

[b] Simeon: helpful association must be with God.

(*b*) The sons of Simeon according to their families: of Nemuel, the family of the Nemuelites; of Jamin, the family of the Jaminites; of Jachin, the family of the Jachinites; of Zerah, the family of the Zarhites; of Saul, the family of the Saulites. These are the families of the Simeonites—[d] twenty-two thousand, two hundred.

[d] ch. 1. 23, ch. 25. 14.

as the offspring of God, is in His likeness prominently by that *intelligent will*, in the possession of which his responsibility is realized. By it he may degrade himself below the beast, and in yielding it to God alone he is blessed and ennobled. These lessons we have had before in connection with Reuben. (Gen. xlix.; Num. ii.) His four sons we have also briefly looked at in Ex. vi. 14: Enoch—the "dedicated," Phallu—the "separated," Hetzron—"the "enclosed," Carmi—the "vine-dresser;"—all these are susceptible of a good meaning, although all these may be apart from fruit. They remain as permanent heads of families in the account before us, other names being added which are of great significance.

Thus the son of Phallu is Eliab—"God is Father,"—a meaning which, according to the peculiar ambiguity of these Reubenite names, may be either the claim of mere nature, forgetting the fall, or the true cry begotten of the Spirit in the heart of the child of God. That this is no mere fancy is proved by the names of those that spring from him. Dathan and Abiram have already shown us the spirit of rebellion which goes with the assumption of the merely natural claim. Nemuel, on the other side,—"circumcised of God,"—shows how, as brought to the realization of "no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. iii. 3), we may obtain the true claim of grace, in *new* creation: for every child born in Israel was circumcised on the eighth day. (Gen. xvii. 12.)

In Nemuel, then, is Reuben truly fruitful;—the promise of his name is fulfilled. And in the diminution of his numbers (from forty-six thousand, five hundred, at the beginning, to forty-three thousand, seven hundred and thirty, at the close), we may learn the loss resulting in our lives from fleshly reasoning and pretension. Let us notice, as in agreement with all that we have seen of Reuben, that he inherits Sihon's territory, Heshbon itself being rebuilt by the men of Reuben (chap. xxxii. 37), although later it became a Levite city in the tribe of Gad. Of these things we may see more in their place.

(*b*) Of SIMEON it is difficult to speak with clearness. The name given him does not seem to characterize him, and Jacob does not in his prophecy as to the tribe appear to refer to it. Moses, in his blessing leaves out Simeon entirely. There is little or no history attaching to them: they seem to be found generally associated with others; in the land, with Judah; and their inheritance falls within the portion of Judah (Josh. xix. 1): they have no individual man of any special prominence.

All this, if put together, tells a tale, however, of its own, and it does not seem as if we could be wrong, in characterizing Simeon as the Lot among the children of Israel. Always seeking companionship, he takes the color of the company he keeps, and never attains to individuality. In the matter of Shec-

c Gad: resurrection-power?

(c) The sons of Gad according to their families: of Zephon, the family of the Zephonites; of Haggi, the family of the Haggites; of Shuni, the family of the Shunites; of Ozni, the family of the Oznites; of Eri, the family of the Erites; of Arod, the family of the Arodites; of Areli, the family of the Arelites. These are the families of the sons of Gad, according to those numbered of them,—[e]forty thousand, five hundred.

e ch. 1. 25.

hem, he would seem to have imbibed fierceness from Levi, who, upon another occasion and in a different spirit, still shows the unflinching determination which we see in the Hivite massacre. On the other hand, in the Midianite snare, we may easily understand them to have been deeply involved as we see, in fact, that it is the conduct of a prince of Simeon that rouses the zeal of Phinehas. *Association* is the bane all through, a spirit of dependence which seeks help, not of God, but man; and which, while it may give them a transient appearance of prosperity, in the result shows itself as disastrous. In the beginning of their wilderness history they are fifty-nine thousand three hundred strong, third among all the tribes; but at the end they are but twenty-two thousand two hundred, absolutely the weakest of all. Nor do they ever after come into prominence: no name of note occurs among them; hasty maturity, as so often, has passed into a long decay, which, as far as history goes, is final, although it cannot avail against the grace which gives Simeon his place at last in the revived nation.

Of this grace of God, in contrast so great with their history, the names of the tribal families seem to speak in a remarkable way. Thus they begin with another Nemuel, "circumcised of God," which in Genesis appears as *Jemuel*, "may God circumcise him!" Here, indeed, Simeon's own name is fulfilled: a hearing God *hath* heard! Blessed be He! we know Him well.

Next comes Jamin, "right hand," the place of honor and dignity, to which grace alone can exalt the children of men. Then Jachin, "*He* shall establish." Then Zerah, in which the former, Zohar, "splendor," appears more significantly as the "sunrise." And lastly, Saul, even as the son of the Canaanitess, may remind us of how the Canaanite is made to illustrate, as here in his connection with the families of Israel, redemption from the curse.

(c) The third tribe here is GAD. Both from his name and history, Gad seems a warrior-tribe; though, as with the Arab now, they could unite the pastoral occupation with it. In Jacob's prophecy he is overcome before he overcomes, and thus knows how to turn defeat into a victory. In Leah's mouth his name is a prophecy of increase; and his seven sons all survive in families.

The names here do not, however, fall into ready sequence, and are some of them difficult also to interpret certainly; nor does the blessing of Gad by Moses do more apparently than confirm the character which we have already seen to belong to him. Connecting all together, and allowing its due emphasis to Jacob's original prophecy, it would seem that Gad represents the strength that is ministered when weakness and defeat have taught their lesson,—the *divine* strength thus found when our own has failed and broken down,—a practical power of resurrection, which suits well with the third place in which we find the tribe in this chapter.

Power seems to be indeed the lesson illustrated by this first camp all through—the camp of Reuben, whose standard we have seen to be faith. These two things, faith and power, are in necessary connection. In Reuben himself we find the source of it in God the Almighty, as declared in the covenant of circumcision, which affirms relationship to Him to be in grace, in *new* creation. In Simeon, next, the alliance that gives power is with God alone; though, of course also, if with God, we shall realize our relation, and be helpers to each other according to His ordinance. Here, however, we have to take exceeding care; for to lean upon each other is still weakness, and not strength. Here, therefore, as we find

2. (19-27.) The camp of Judah: illustrating *service*.

a Judah: whole-hearted?

[2](*a*) The sons of Judah: Er and Onan; and [f]Er died, and Onan, in the land of Canaan. And the sons of Judah according to their families were, of Shelah, the family of the Shelanites; of Pharez, the family of the Pharzites; of Zerah, the family of the Zarhites. And the sons of Pharez were, of Hetzron, the family of the Hetzronites; of Hamul, the family of the Hamulites. These were the families of Judah, according to those numbered of them,—[g]seventy-six thousand, five hundred.

f Gen. 38. 1-4.

g ch. 1. 27.

b Issachar: humbled to serve.

(*b*) The sons of Issachar according to their families: of [h]Tola, the family of the Tolaites; of Puah, the family

h Ju. 10. 1.

with Simeon now, the circumcised Nemuel must come first, that the Jamins and the Jachins may follow in due place. Thirdly, then Gad gives us the practical acquirement of the lesson, first of all by realized weakness and defeat, that God alone may be exalted,—a practical resurrection-lesson blessed to learn indeed.

(ii.) The second camp here is that of Judah, whose standard is righteousness, first in the order of march, as Paul names it in his epistle to Timothy (2 Tim. ii. 22), "follow *righteousness*, faith." Here there is a different thought, and another side of righteousness seen in the place assigned to Judah, which speaks, I believe, of *service*. All obedience is that, of course; even for those "who only stand and wait." That Judah comes first of the three associated tribes is simple enough. The outflow of the full heart manward is in service, as it is Godward in praise. The spirit of praise it is that banishes legality and makes the life a true offering to God. Then, indeed, Issachar may follow, and the husbandman that laboreth be partaker of the fruit; Zebulon speaking of that open, recognized association of God with us, which is the seal upon true labor. Let us look at Judah, then, from this point of view, and see of what the names found may remind us.

(*a*) First, then, we are carried back to Er and Onan, that we may remember what a history was that of Judah's family. In these the enmity to God, and the iniquity in which it displays itself find their condemnation and pass away. No fruit of righteousness—Tamar, the "palm"—can be from these. In the third son, Shelah, does Judah's seed find, as it were, its resurrection, and his name tells of "peace," now for the first time found.

Shelah is fruitful, but much more Tamar's seed; of which Pharez, the "breaker forth," breaks out into a multitudinous fruit, which fills up all the after history of Judah. Hence come her kings, and her great King; while twin with Pharez comes Zerah, or the [sun] rise, from whom come afterward singers, as Ethan, and warriors, as Shammah, Sibbechai, Maharai, stout defenders of the throne. A little care may easily find here the meaning.

Two families of Pharez have special mention, Hetzron ("inclosure"?), and Hamul ("compassionate.") They may perhaps represent tendencies which easily come into opposition with one another, and which should not, whose true meaning is seen in union, as with the walled palm-stem of which we have been led to think, and which supports its plenteous fruit.

These histories at least, we may be sure, are parables, even to the genealogical tables, which, as merely that, have been so utterly neglected, or worked in a fashion which has been barren of all profit. Let us only remember, God in all His Word is thinking of our souls; and we have the fullest warrant for the interpretation of names. "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing," says the wise man; "but the honor of kings to search out a matter." (Prov. xxv. 2.) Where are God's kings to-day? and who will listen to the voice that says, "Know ye not this parable? and how, then, will ye know all parables?"

(*b*) Issachar follows, looking, as his name imports, for *recompense*: so does every

of the Punites; of Jashub, the family of the Jashubites; of Shimron, the family of the Shimronites. These were the families of Issachar, according to those numbered of them,—[i] sixty-four thousand, three hundred.

[i] ch. 1. 29.

c Zebulon: the seal on service.

(c) The sons of Zebulon according to their families: of Sered, the family of the Sardites; of Elon, the family of the Elonites; of Jahleel, the family of the Jahleelites. These were the families of the Zebulonites, according to those numbered of them,—[j] sixty thousand, five hundred.

[j] ch. 1. 31.

laborer expect the fruitful fields which are to justify his work. Issachar has but four sons, the name of the first of which is that of apparently the sole great man of his tribe, Tola, the judge of Israel after the death of Abimelech. Tola's name is significant enough as a lesson to the great: it means "a *worm*," or rather, the coccus of the oak,* which produces the "scarlet" or "crimson" dye used in the East, and with which was produced the "scarlet" familiar to us in the vail of the tabernacle and elsewhere. Tola's name, first in the list of the families of Issachar, seems clearly to teach what is a fundamental principle for all who are to find from their labors the reward they seek. "Scarlet," or better "crimson," is the blood color, and the mode of its production speaks plainly in this respect. But how solemn, then, is the language of the twenty-second psalm, "I am (*tola*) a *worm*, and no man"! He whose this voice really is, went down indeed, to do for us His redemption-work, into a depth immeasurably below the place of man as God made him first, the place into which, simply as becoming man, He had descended. And the Tolas are they, who, having learned the depth of His humiliation, have learned in this to recognize their own, and so to take their place upon Job's dust-heap, conscious henceforth that for them recompense, if it be not in hopeless judgment, must be "mercy" merely. (2 Tim. i. 18.)

How fittingly, then, does Tola lead among the families of Issachar. Then first with Puah does "utterance" become safe. It will no longer be for the glory of man, but in truthful testimony to Him who is no longer heard about with the hearing of the ear, but whom the eye has seen, and seen in fullest glory in the abyss of sorrow. Not simply will the *lips* either "utter" this: the *life* will be utterance, or there is no real one. So Jashub, "he returns," following Puah, may indicate. So the prodigal; and this is what conversion in its true sense indicates, a turning back to God. Finally, and in the fourth place, suitably to the weakness of which it reminds us, we have Shimron with his warning note. "*On guard*" may better perhaps than any thing else express his name.

(c) This completes Issachar: Zebulon who follows is more difficult to interpret. In his name, and according to what he represents in Jacob's prophecy, he may seem to have close affinity with Simeon in character. But there is a difference: Leah's "Now shall my husband dwell with me" might well be the joyful language of Israel, in view of the relationship which He who dwelt in their midst had entered into with them. The separation to Himself implied by this, Zebulon, in Jacob's words, disregards for commerce with the Gentiles. It is not positive alliance with this nation or that, that seems so much indicated, as the passing out of God's enclosure to seek his own things outside untrammeled.

Here, on the other hand, Zebulon seems to rest in the shelter of the divine arms; and we think as we look at the names of his families of that association of God with us, which, where it is found, is the manifest seal of God upon the ways that please Him. What it implies in us can perhaps not be better expressed than just in *contentment to be there*,—the enclosing arms not felt as a restraint, but as a shelter, statutes but songs; with which we have traced the circle, and come back once more to Judah.

*Properly the kermes insect, *Coccus ilicis*, (Coccus of the oak); the cochineal being the *coccus cacti*, and American.

3. (28–41.) The camp of Ephraim: fruitfulness.

[3] The sons of Joseph according to their families: Manasseh and Ephraim. The sons of Manasseh: of Machir, the family of the Machirites; and Machir begat Gilead; of Gilead [come] the family of the Gileadites. These were the sons of Gilead: of Jeezer, the family of the Jeezerites; of Helek, the family of the Helkites; and of Asriel, the family of the Asrielites; and of Shechem, the family of the Shechemites; and of Shemida, the family of the Shemidaites; and of Hepher, the family of the Hepherites. And [k] Zelophehad the son of Hepher had no sons, but daughters; and the names of the daughters of Zelophehad were Mahlah and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. These were the families of Manasseh, and those numbered of them, [l] fifty-two thousand, seven hundred.

These were the sons of Ephraim according to their families: of Shuthelah, the family of the Shuthalhites; of Becher, the family of the Bachrites; of Tahan, the family of the Tahanites. And these were the sons of Shuthelah: of Eran, the family of the Eranites. These were the families of the sons of Ephraim, according to those numbered of them,—[m] thirty-two thousand, five hundred. These were the sons of Joseph according to their families.

k ch. 27. 1, etc.

l ch. 1. 35.

m ch. 1. 33.

The names of the three families seem to speak of the realization of this being with God, in its results in blessing: Sered, "escape," the joy of the dove which has fled from the stormy wind and tempest to be at rest in its sanctuary home; Elon, "oak," or "strength," which the oak typifies, and which God is to the weakest that have fled to Him; lastly, Jahleel, "expectation of God," the blessed result for one weaned from other dependences, in which the need of the creature finds its holiest expression, and its interpretation spiritually.

(iii.) The third camp now is Ephraim's, in which we find, however,—it is quite intelligible why—Manasseh foremost. This, as we have seen, is the order of progress, if Ephraim give us the governing thought. In this place Manasseh may represent *whole heartedness*, as with the apostle in Phil. iii. 13; and from him springs Machir, "one who recollects"? for as on the one hand forgetting is the fruit of remembrance, so also do we forget in order to remember: the resolute turning from things here is to occupy oneself with the things beyond: "set your mind on things above," says the apostle, (Col. iii. 2, *marg.*) "not on things on the earth." From hence springs again Gilead, the "rocky," hard, as it may seem, and rough, but strong; and Gilead branches out into six families: Jeezer, "where there is help;" Helek, "equal division;" Asriel, "divine bond;" Shechem, "shoulder,"—that which bears the burden; Shemida, "name of knowledge,"—speaking of that one Name, in the apprehension of which is indeed true knowledge? Lastly, Hepher, "a digging, a well,"—the series ending with that which provides for permanent refreshment and growth.

Zelophehad the son of Hepher is introduced here, not as the head of a distinct family in Manasseh, but as preparing the way for what follows in the next chapter.

Ephraim comes after Manasseh with three sons, and a grandson. Much difficulty is connected with these names, which need an intelligent believing study they have never yet received. I do not, therefore, attempt their explanation. And the same exactly is to be said of—

The sons of Benjamin according to their families: of Bela, the family of the Belaites; of Ashbel, the family of the Ashbelites; of Ahiram, the family of the Ahiramites; of Shephupham, the family of the Shuphamites; of Hupham, the family of the Huphamites. And the sons of Bela were Ard and Naaman: [of Ard,] the family of the Ardites; of Naaman, the family of the Naamites. These were the sons of Benjamin according to their families; and those numbered of them were [n] forty-five thousand, six hundred. [a] ch. 1. 37.

4. (42-51.) The camp of Dan: the trial?

[4] These were the sons of Dan according to their families: of Shuham, the family of the Shuhamites. These were the families of Dan after their families. All the families of the Shuhamites, according to those numbered of them, were [o] sixty-four thousand, four hundred. [o] ch. 1. 39.

The sons of Asher according to their families: of Jimna, the family of the Jimnites; of Jishvi, the family of the Jishvites; of Beriah, the family of the Beriites. Of the sons of Beriah: of Heber, the family of the Heberites; of Malchiel, the family of the Malchielites. And the name of the daughter of Asher was Sarah. These were the families of the sons of Asher, according to those numbered of them,—[p] fifty-three thousand, four hundred. [p] ch. 1. 41.

Benjamin, where the many questions that have been raised, had they been sought to be answered with a more spiritual end than a mere dry settlement of difficulties, would long since have put us in possession of that which would have not only conclusively solved the difficulties, but been for us fruitful in true blessing; as it is, we must pass on, having no place for criticisms as yet unfruitful, and with which now almost every one who has the desire and skill can easily become acquainted. The connection of Benjamin with the camp of Ephraim has been already briefly considered.

(iv.) We come now to the fourth camp, that of Dan. Dan, though only second in number of the tribes of Israel, has but one family, that of Shuham, just as only one son is ascribed to Dan in Gen. xlvi., Hushim. The natural inference is that Shuham and Hushim are the same, and that the one name by transposition has become the other; but then the *transposition itself must have a meaning*: the earlier name signifies "hastening," while the latter is "depression, humiliation." Dan, child of the bondmaid, stands yet for the spirit of rule—a rule which is rightly service, but which in man so easily becomes the tyranny of pride and self-interest. The first duty of government is *self*-government; and the ruler's school is therefore that of discipline. So with God's kings: the backside of the desert was Moses' school, where he who had once been hasty in judgment became the meekest of all men. David too had not only his shepherd training, but his affliction at the hand of Saul. And now for ourselves also the same rule holds good: "if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him."

The one name here may have a meaning then; and its change from the old form show how from the hasty spirit of self Dan grows into his proper shape and into a multitude. Abasement is God's way of exaltation; and there is no other way: the heart is exercised, the eye is cleared, the mists roll off; the testing has done its work in transforming Hushim into Shuham. Dan becomes a prince indeed, and fulfills his name.

Asher is also the child of a handmaid, and his place in connection with Dan has been already indicated; but neither in the case of Asher nor of Naphtali do

The sons of Naphtali according to their families: of Jahtziel, the family of the Jahtzielites; of Guni, the family of the Gunites; of Jetzer, the family of the Jetzerites; of Shillem, the family of the Shillemites. These were the families of Naphtali according to their families; and they that were numbered of them were [q] forty-five thousand, four hundred.

[q] ch. 1. 43.

5. (51-56.) The apportionment of the land according to the number.

[5] These were the numbered of the children of Israel,—[r] six hundred and one thousand, seven hundred, and thirty.

[r] ch. 1. 46.

And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Unto these shall the land be apportioned for an [s] inheritance, according to the number of the names: unto the many

[s] *cf.* Josh. 14, etc. Ezek. 48. *cfr.* 1 Pet. 1. 3-5.

the names speak as yet with clearness, while prophecy and history are comparatively silent also. Unwillingly, therefore, we must leave them without notice here.

(v.) With this closes the first part of what is clearly a septenary series; the last three parts being distinct from the first four, as even the numbering of Levi is distinct from that of Israel with whom they have no inheritance. This fifth section now provides that according to the number of the tribes their inheritance in the land shall be allotted them. These numbers evidently represent gains or losses for which they were responsible; and as they had thus flourished so should they inherit. The section fills, therefore, exactly its numerical place, and contains a very solemn warning for us. The "lot," according to which the division was to be, makes this still more directly from the Lord. (Prov. xvi. 33.)

So little complete—to our common shame—has the mere outline interpretation of this chapter been to us, that of necessity the lesson of the numbering itself could not be attempted to be given in detail. I add therefore here from another some remarks which are not only of much interest in themselves, but which may help to stimulate the zeal of others to look more believingly into the seemingly more barren places of God's precious Word. In barren spots it is that the ore is found by the miner's labor.

"Here, not less than elsewhere, numbers are significant, indicating prosperity (Gen. xlviii. 19) and strength (Luke xiv. 31).

"Reuben (Num. i. 20; xxvi. 5) heads the list,—the first-born, and therefore entitled, according to nature, to the leadership; but because of sin, he was not to have the excellency. In these forty years' wanderings, his numbers dwindle,—at the close, we see him weaker than at the beginning. Looking at his history for a reason for this, we come to the rebellion of Dathan and Abiram, who were of this tribe (Num. xvi. 1). Desiring to be leaders, under pretense of claiming their rights for the people, they rebel against God's authority in Moses, turn back in heart to Egypt, and murmur at the trials of the way. Swift judgment overtakes them,—the earth opens and swallows them up, but the leaven of their example spreads among the people, and rebellion is only checked when fourteen thousand are slain by the plague. (Num. xvi. 49.) How many, like these children of Reuben, rebel against God's authority, in pure self-will, and murmur at the trials of the way, only to weaken themselves and their brethren, finding that, instead of being exalted by their independence, they have become abased!

"In looking at Simeon, we are struck with the shrinkage from fifty-nine thousand, three hundred, to twenty-two thousand, two hundred,—his strength but little more than one third of what he had at the start, and we cannot help remembering that it was a prince of this tribe who was the leading offender at Baal Peor, upon whom also judgment was summarily executed (Num. xxv. 8); and doubtless his brethren (*v.* 6) who were sharers in his sin partook also of his judgment, leaving Simeon's ranks woefully depleted. But what was this sin

> shalt thou give the more inheritance, and to the few thou shalt give the less inheritance; to each shall be given his inheritance, according to the tale of those numbered of him. Notwithstanding, the land shall be apportioned by lot: according to the names of their fathers' tribes shall they inherit; according to the utterance of the lot shall his inheritance be apportioned to each, be it much or little.

that wrought such havoc? What Balak's efforts at cursing could not effect, mixture with the Midianites did, in measure. Rebellion, the sin of Reuben, does not leave the tribe so weak as mingling with strange people does Simeon. How many, alas! of God's people have proven, as Simeon did here, that mixture with the world saps their strength and destroys their spiritual prosperity! It is the Pergamos state of the Church—marriage with the world, and is so described in Rev. ii. Then, too, as though in solemn warning, it was at the *close* of the journey that Simeon thus sinned, and there was no time for recovery. Like Solomon afterward, and Lot before, the last thing mentioned is the sin, and their lamp (of testimony) goes out in obscure darkness. David failed grievously, but there was a good measure of recovery (though he bore his scars to the grave). Let us beware of the first symptoms of coldness or worldliness, lest we too, like Simeon, find our last days here blighted by irremediable failure.

"Gad also shows a weakening at the close. His outward history shows no reason for this, unless his close connection with Reuben and Simeon (Num. ii. 10–16) made him a sharer in their sin and judgment. Association with evil workers, even where one outwardly is not a partaker, has a weakening effect. How we can see this all around!—a repetition of Jonathan,—upright himself, yet linked with the house of Saul. Many of God's people are growing weaker, through ecclesiastical, business, social, or family relationships with those who drag them into worldliness.

"Secret causes sap the strength of Naphtali, and he comes out of the course weaker by eight thousand men than when he entered it. With nothing unusual laid to his charge, he has gone backward. Let us beware lest some 'little foxes' spoil our vines,—lest, while outwardly blameless—with nothing positive in our conduct to be condemned as in Reuben, or in our associations as Gad, we may show even greater deterioration than either. It is loss of *first love*, even where there are abundant works, which brings such weakness.

"Fruitful Ephraim seems to contradict his name, losing eight thousand men. It is one thing to have a name by grace, quite another to prove it in our walk.

"But this catalogue has also a bright side. Warnings alone might discourage us. Besides, it is not true that the wilderness is a place that only weakens: on the contrary, rightly gone through, the strength is renewed—'thy pound hath gained ten pounds.' There is Judah, who gains nearly two thousand in those forty years of trial. Did Caleb's faith stimulate them all? (Joshua was not, perhaps, so closely identified with Ephraim, though of that tribe, being the companion of Moses—Ex. xxxiii. 11.) Jonathan and David, and a host of others, show what the faith of one man can do in encouraging others. Companionship with a man of faith is helpful; unless, like Lot, we lean on him, instead of imitating his faith. Caleb, at the close of his journey, could say (Josh. xiv. 11), 'As yet, I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out and to come in.' So the numbers of Judah speak of vigor undiminished. May it be so with us at the close. Issachar and Zebulon, in the same camp with Judah, can bear the same testimony—that the wilderness does not necessarily weaken. Even here there is a difference,—Issachar's increase of nearly ten thousand being much greater than that of Zebulon. Those who succeed, do so in various degrees.

"Manasseh reverses Ephraim's experience, and is an illustration of the fact

6. (57-62.) Levi: the victory of grace.

[6] Now these are those numbered of the Levites according to their families: of Gershon, the family of the Gershonites; of Kohath, the family of the Kohathites; of Merari, the family of the Merarites. These are the families of Levi: the family of the Libnites, the family of the Hebronites, the family of the Mahlites, the family of the Mushites, the family of the Korahites. And Kohath begat Amram; and the name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt; and she bare unto Amram Aaron and [t] Moses, and Miriam their sister. And to Aaron were born Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar; and [u] Nadab and Abihu died when they offered strange fire before Jehovah.

[t] Ex. 2. 2.

[u] Lev. 10. 1, 2.

Now those that were numbered of them were [v] twenty-three thousand, all males, from a month old and upward; but they were not numbered among the children of Israel, for there was [w] no inheritance given them among the children of Israel.

[v] ch. 3. 39.

[w] ver. 53. Josh. 13. 14, 33.

7. (63-65.) The completed numbering shows the accomplishment of the divine word.

[7] (*a*) These were they that were numbered by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who numbered the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by Jordan at Jericho. And among

that 'many that are first shall be last, and the last first.' Many a sincere, quiet, plodding Christian, with nothing brilliant, will show at the close a brighter record than his brother who apparently had so much better prospects.

"Dan, already large, increases; while Asher, from being one of the smaller tribes, takes his place with the largest. 'Friend, come up higher' might be said of him.

"What varied results, both of failure and success! and to be explained by various reasons. Here are indications of little failures and great ones, of small progress and astonishing progress. Can we not take these two catalogues, and seeing in them a picture for ourselves, learn the lesson? God shows us that at the close, an examination will be made—'we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.' In these pictures, we can read the end from the beginning, and so be wise, and seek to gather daily gold, silver, precious stones, shunning all that would weaken us, and counting on that grace which bears us on eagle's wings.

"Though the way be long and dreary,
Eagle strength He 'll still renew;
Garments fresh, and foot unweary,
Tell how God hath brought thee through."

(S. R., *Help and Food*, vol. vii., pp. 253-257.)

(vi.) We now find separately the families of Levi, and their number. With the names we are more or less familiar. Beside the three main families of Gershon, Kohath, and Merari, into which the tribe as a whole was divided, we find in Gershon the family of Libni prominent, in Kohath, that of Hebron, while Merari's two sons have gained an equal rank; to these are added the Korahites, also of Kohath, but whom their history gives an exceptional place. Finally, of Kohath also come Aaron and his priestly house, Moses, and Miriam. Aaron's four sons are specified, and the death of Nadab and Abihu. Nowhere is evil more conspicuous than in the tribe of Levi; nowhere is the victory of grace over it more manifest. These depths and heights known are quite fitted to make effective ministers and joyful worshipers such as are represented in this tribe.

(vii.) The seventh section brings us to the impressive close, in which we find how surely God's word has been fulfilled as to the generation sinning in the

these, there was [x] not a man of those whom Moses and Aaron the priest had numbered when they numbered the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. For Jehovah had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness; and there was not left of them a man, [y] except Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.

x ch. 14. 22-24. *cf.* Heb. 3. 7-19.

y Josh. 14. 6-15. *cf.* Heb. 11. 39, 40. 1 Jno. 5. 4.

b Appendix. (xxvii. 1-11.) The succession of women.

(*b*) Then drew near the [z] daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph; and these were the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah and Hoglah, and Milcah and Tirzah. And they stood before Moses, and before Eleazar the priest, and before the princes and all the assembly, at the entrance of the tent of meeting, saying, Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not among the company of those that gathered themselves together against Jehovah in the company of Korah, but died in his own sin, and had no sons. Why should the name of our father be taken away from his family because he had no son? Give us a possession, therefore, among our father's brethren. And Moses [a] brought their cause before Jehovah.

z ch. 36. *cf.* 2 Kings 8. 1-6.

a Lev. 12. 12.

And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, The daughters of Zelophehad speak right: thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren; and thou shalt cause their father's inheritance to pass to them. And unto the children of Israel shalt thou speak, saying, If a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter. And if he have no daughter, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his brethren. And if he have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his father's brethren. And if his father have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance to his kinsman who is nearest to him in his family, and he shall possess it: and it shall be unto the children of Israel a statute of judgment, as Jehovah commanded Moses.

wilderness. So will the history of man at last show His faithfulness and truth all through, till the last "It is done" confirms the new heavens and new earth in eternal blessedness.

(*Appendix.*) The appeal of the daughters of Zelophehad is clearly an appendix to the twenty-sixth chapter, in which the people have been numbered in view of the inheritance. It is a supplement to the law of inheritance whereby God assures the faith that reckons upon Him without title (save that, surest of all, in His own nature) of His power and will to answer it.

3. We come now to what already anticipates what we only fully reach at the end of Deuteronomy. Joshua is appointed to succeed Moses, as Eleazar has succeeded Aaron; and it need not be strange to find that as Moses and Aaron were connected for the deliverance from Egypt, so now Joshua and Eleazar are connected for the entrance into the land. Their relation is different in this respect, that whereas Moses is every way foremost in the first case, now it is Eleazar, and

Joshua, in connection with Eleazar, to lead now: Christ in Spirit in connection with the risen Priest.

(XXVII. 12-23.)

3. And Jehovah said unto Moses, [b] Go up unto this Mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given unto the children of Israel. And when thou hast seen it, thou also shalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered. [c] For ye rebelled against my word in the desert of Zin, when the assembly strove, instead of sanctifying me at the waters before their eyes. That is the water of Meribah at Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin.

And Moses spake unto Jehovah, saying, [d] Let Jehovah, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the assembly, who may go out before them, and who may come in before them, and who may lead them forth, and who may bring them in, that the assembly of Jehovah may not be as [e] sheep that have no shepherd.

[b] Deut. 32. 49-52.

[c] *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 17.

[d] 2 Kings 2. 9, 10. *cf.* Acts 20. 29, 30. Heb. 13. 20, 21.

[e] *cf.* Jno. 10. 7-18. Mark 14. 7.

not Joshua. And here, again, the spiritual meaning so governs all, that we must have the typical significance clearly ascertained in order to understand this, which is then at once intelligible.

Eleazar we have already seen to represent Christ in His *heavenly* priesthood—as risen and gone in to God, as Aaron speaks of Him in connection with the *sacrificial* work of the cross especially, although there are links on either side with the other, which show the identity of the priest all through, and this naturally much more upon Aaron's side than Eleazar's. The cross is the fundamental priestly work, Aaron the head of the priestly house, and therefore *Aaron* it is who is seen entering the sanctuary on the day of atonement, while Eleazar is only once seen sprinkling the blood, in the case of the red heifer, where plainly the point of view suits with the "Minister of the sanctuary."

If we compare Joshua with Moses,—both, again, types of Christ,—we shall find Moses representing Him, as it would seem, in almost every possible way. He is, indeed, the type of Christ in *person;* Joshua, of Christ in *spirit*, not person,—acting *in* His people by the Holy Ghost; and thus it is that Joshua stands before Eleazar, the work of the Spirit being dependent upon the priesthood of Christ on high. Thus through the wilderness also Moses and Joshua are found together, but the latter the attendant upon the former; while Joshua it is who leads Israel into the land, figuring *present* realization of the inheritance by faith, as, in a somewhat different aspect, Abraham does.

As has been already said, the giving way of Moses to Joshua here is evidently, therefore, in type, what our Lord says to His disciples,—"It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." (Jno. xvi. 7.) This is a truth upon which we must pause, however, as even yet, for many Christians, there is no proper understanding of it.

The departure that He speaks of is quite plain, indeed. He was leaving His place on earth among His own, to depart to heaven from whence He had come. Sent by the Father into the world upon His glorious mission, His work was now just about completed, the cross being at the next step upon His path, to be followed then by His resurrection and ascension to the Father. It was a real personal departure, no one doubts; and the coming of the Spirit in His place is represented by Him as just as real and personal. The difficulty arising in our minds with regard to this seems to be twofold: first, that the Spirit of God, as a divine Being, is omnipresent; and secondly, that He has always been the Author of all spiritual work in those converted to God: both which things are undeniable by any who are subject to Scripture. But the first is not against a special "coming," such as is often in the Old Testament ascribed to God, when He manifests Himself here or there in any special way; and the second is quite con-

And Jehovah said unto Moses, Take [f] Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and [g] lay thy hand upon him; and cause him to stand before Eleazar the priest, and before the whole assembly; and give him commandment before their eyes. And thou shalt put of thine [h] honor on him, that all the assembly of the children of Israel may obey him. And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, and he shall inquire for him by the judgment of Urim before Jehovah: at his word shall they go out, and at his word shall they come in,—he, and all the children of Israel with him, even the whole assembly. And Moses did as Jehovah commanded him, and took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest and before the whole assembly. And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him commandment, as Jehovah had said through Moses.

[f] cf. Acts 2. 33.
[g] Acts 6. 6.
[h] Deut. 34. 9.

sistent with that indwelling in believers now, in which His "coming" finds its confirmation and interpretation.

That it is a thing of wondrous value, our Lord's words assure us: of how much value, if, that it might be, it were expedient that *He* should go away! How much would the presence of Christ with us in the world—such a presence as His disciples enjoyed—mean for us to-day! With it, they themselves were blest as none before had been; yet here is blessing for which it is worth while even to lose *that* blessing! Certainly no display of power, as in the miracles of Pentecost and after, could be intended. Such things had been before,—did not need Christ to be away that they might have them,—did not "abide" when they came, as He declared the Comforter should abide. But what miracles could be to us, if we had them, what Christ our Lord would be? But the presence of the Spirit of God within us, making our bodies the temples of the Holy Ghost; Spirit of truth, Spirit of holiness, Spirit of adoption, Comforter, fount of knowledge, spring of living water, so that we thirst not, but out of the belly shall flow *rivers* of living water! this is something far beyond any gift of miraculous power: it is the Church's endowment for the place to which she is destined,—her competency to enter into and to fill it. "We have received," says the apostle, "not the spirit that is of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God." (1 Cor. ii. 12.)

Here Christ's *absence* has its power for us also. He is gone to prepare for us the many mansions of the Father's house, because where He is we are to be also; and the Spirit of God, taking of the things that are Christ's to show them to us, develops in us the heavenly character, which is in effect our sanctification. Our hearts are drawn out of the world. The power of what is unseen and eternal delivers us from the whole scene in which are hid all the snares and entanglements of the subtle adversary. While in it, we are not of it: in faith is the victory over the world. The glory of Christ beheld in faith changes us from glory to glory. Christ thus before us, an object imprinted upon our hearts, becomes thus Christ in practical reality: Christ and the Spirit become practically one for us, and of this Joshua therefore is the type: the "Lord the Spirit" identified in this way with "the Spirit of the Lord," as the apostle shows us in Corinthians. (2 Cor. iii. 17.)

Thus we can see also why it is just at this point that Joshua is formally designated as the leader. In the wilderness, as to guidance, we are to walk as He walked. (1 Jno. ii. 6.) His living form is before us, as presented in the gospels, Moses rather than Joshua, though the latter, as we have seen, also has his place, and accompanies us all through. But when the wilderness is no longer in question, but the land, then Moses gives up his place, although his word still abides

DIVISION 5. (Chap. xxviii.–xxxvi.)

The divine ways, and the end.

The due offerings at the set times.

(XXVIII., XXIX.)

1. (xxviii. 1-10.) The perpetual offering: Christ Himself.

1.[1] AND Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, My offering, my bread of my offerings by fire, a [i]sweet savor unto me, shall ye take care to present to me at their set time. And thou shalt say unto them,

[1] Lev. 1. 9 with Eph. 5. 2. *ctr.* Lev. 4. 11, 12 with 2 Cor. 5. 21.

as guidance which Joshua himself follows. (Comp. Josh. i.) Every thing is therefore in harmony, as always in the precious, perfect, unerring Book with which we are occupied.

Div. 5.

THE last division of Numbers gives us (as always in the fifth part,) the moral of the book,—divine principles, in which the lessons of time become the wisdom of eternity. In these, of necessity, the ruin of man is owned; yet by learning which, however painful the learning, new and wondrous blessing is experienced. God is exalted, the heart brought back to Him, redemption tells out His heart, the songs of the night become the unfailing, unceasing praise of a day to which night comes no more. The furnace of trial has tried more than those who have been purified in it,—the word of God has been tried, and found pure absolutely; and in the fire has moved, in company with His people, a form like that of the Son of God.

The thread which unites characters like these is not, indeed, easy to follow; although the place of each may be without much difficulty vindicated, and their general character is very plain. We shall therefore go on at once to consider them in detail, without further introduction.

1. For man's own blessing, as for all else, God must have His place,—must *be* God. Otherwise there will be confusion, and the dissolution of all other bonds with that to Him. Hence, in this closing portion of the book, in which we have the Deuteronomic review and affirmation of divine principles, it is quite in place that we should have first of all insisted on the maintenance of what is due to God, as in sacrifice. The second verse is here the plain statement of what is the purport of the next two chapters: "My offering, My bread of My offerings by fire, a sweet savor unto Me, shall ye take care to present unto Me at their set time." It is His claim upon man that is expressed here,—a claim which grace affirms as well as law, while it provides also for the answer to it, as law cannot. And in sacrifice we have, as we know, just the grace which the symbols of the law inclosed and enshrined. It is *sacrifice* that is God's sweet savor! And how, then, is it provided? That Moriah had long before declared,—that God would provide Himself a lamb for a burnt-offering. But we have seen this done, and know the blessed Lamb that taketh away the sin of the world. We have thus the material for perpetual worship, and of His own we give Him.

This abides for us after all the experiences of the wilderness have been learned, the joy heightened, not lessened, by them. *Out of* the failure—in His provision for it—God has built for Himself an enduring name. This the due offering in its set time declares. For these set times we have seen to be the celebration of the steps of almighty power and wisdom on to final rest, and each step furnishing something whereby that rest itself shall be furnished, and made worthy to be the rest of God. Here naturally the sweet-savor offerings are those specially enjoined, although the necessity of a sin-offering is not forgotten.

(i.) And this is apparent in the first commandment here,—that as to the daily

This is the offering by fire which ye shall present unto Jehovah: two yearling lambs, without blemish, day by day, for a continual burnt-offering. The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning, and the other lamb shalt thou offer between the two evenings; and the [j] tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a meal-offering, mingled with the [k] fourth part of a hin of beaten oil. It is the [l] continual burnt-offering, ordained in Mount Sinai for a sweet savor, an offering by fire unto Jehovah. And its [m] drink-offering [shall be] the fourth part of a hin for the one lamb: in the [n] sanctuary shalt thou cause the drink-offering of strong drink to be poured out to Jehovah. And the other lamb shalt thou offer between the two evenings: [with the] like meal-offering as in the morning, and the like drink-offering, shalt thou offer [it], an offering by fire, a sweet savor unto Jehovah.

And on the Sabbath day, [o] two yearling lambs without blemish, and two tenths of fine flour for a meal-offering, mingled with oil, and its drink-offering: [it is] the burnt-offering of every Sabbath, beside the continual burnt-offering, and its drink-offering.

2. (xxviii.11-xxix. 40.) The successive feasts: His salvation-work.

a (vv.11-31.) For the Church.

[2] (*a*) And in the beginnings of your [p] months shall ye present a burnt-offering unto Jehovah: two young bullocks and one ram, seven yearling lambs without blemish; and three tenths of fine flour for a meal-offering, mingled with oil, for the one bullock, and two tenths of fine flour for a meal-offering, mingled with oil, for

j Ex. 16. 34-36. *cf.* Ezek. 46. 5.

k Lev. 2. 1.

l Ex. 29. 38.

m Lev. 23. 13. Ex. 29. 40.

n *cf.* Ps. 43. 4.

o *cf.* Ezek. 46. 4. 1 Cor. 13. 12. 1 Kings 10. 7.

p 2 Kings 4. 23. 2 Chron. 2. 4. *cf.* Is. 1. 14 with Gal. 4. 11. Ps. 81. 3.

offering. In this God emphasizes, as has been already remarked (Lev. vi. 8, *n.*) that which is the offering for acceptance, and which speaks of what is in the fullest way sweet savor to Him. To give this due expression, meal-offering and drink-offering must be added to the burnt-offering,—a full Christ in the preciousness of His self-devotedness. The "lamb" naturally speaks of this; *two* lambs, the number of testimony, a daily witness on the part of a redeemed people to Him who has redeemed them, and through whom, no longer "without God in the world," their hearts enthrone their glorious King.

On the Sabbath, this daily offering is doubled; for eternity confirms the joy of of time, while giving it new power of utterance. Our "hope maketh not ashamed."

These two ordinances, then, of the daily and the Sabbath-offering, fall into one section. Together, they give us the perpetual offering,—typically, the abiding preciousness of Christ for time and for eternity, eternity confirming and emphasizing only what every day of time has witnessed to before.

(ii.) The six ordinances which remain fall evidently into two parallel divisions, corresponding essentially to the two divisions of the feasts referred to, which represent the work of God in Christianity, and in the final blessing of Israel (the feasts of the seventh month). The parallelism is plain; both opening with a new moon, the second section of each giving the work of atonement, the third, the accomplished blessing resulting: thus,—

1. The beginning of months.	1. The feast of trumpets, beginning the seventh month.
2. Passover and the feast of unleavened bread.	2. The day of atonement.
3. Pentecost.	3. The feast of tabernacles.

one ram, and a tenth of fine flour for a meal-offering, mingled with oil, for each lamb: [it is] a burnt-offering of sweet savor, an offering by fire unto Jehovah. And their drink-offerings [shall be] half a hin of wine for a bullock, and a third of a hin for a ram, and a fourth of a hin for a lamb. This is the burnt-offering of every month, throughout the months of the year. And one shaggy goat shall be offered for a sin-offering unto Jehovah, beside the continual burnt-offering and its drink-offering.

And on the fourteenth day of the first month is the [q]passover unto Jehovah; and on the fifteenth day of this month is the feast: seven days shall unleavened

[q] Ex. 12. 21.

The offerings of the first three, as here enjoined, are precisely the same, except that during the seven days of unleavened bread they are repeated daily. Those of the first two of the seventh month differ from them by the reduction of one bullock from the burnt-offering, thus agreeing again together, and with that of the eighth day of the feast of tabernacles, after the abundant gifts of the first week are at an end. There can be no just doubt, therefore, that the division of these feasts (justified as it is in their typical application also) is to be observed in this place.

This double series, however, come together as the second section of this first subdivision, the salvation-work of Christ being celebrated in it, as in the perpetual offering it is rather Christ Himself, though seen as the Accomplisher of atonement surely. But here it is the salvation itself; first, as known by the Church, and then by Israel. Everywhere, therefore, the goat of sin-offering is found accompanying the other offerings, which in the perpetual offering is not the case.

Let us look now at the first series; and here, at the offerings at the beginning of months or new moon. This reappearance of the light of the moon,—that is, of the light of the sun upon her,—we find in the seventh month associated with the feast of trumpets, Israel's recall into the light of God, when the full time of her blessing shall have come. This shows us what the new moon signifies. The Church as such cannot, of course, be said to be recalled into the light; yet man in her, and characteristically the Gentile fallen away from God, is now brought back. Moreover, her history has shown how dependent she is on God for reviving grace. Like Israel's, it is a record of continual relapses into darkness, and of revivals, through sovereign goodness, again and again. Individually also, what debtors are we to God for constant renewal! Here, then, the two bullocks and the ram, with seven lambs, show the answer on man's part which this grace awakes; testifying of and reflecting what Christ has become to the soul, the subjective state answering to what has been objectively presented. Thus the bullock speaks of service; *two* bullocks, of adequate testimony in this way to God; the ram, of consecration; seven lambs, of the completeness of redemption apprehended. These things will be found to appear, in fact, in every true revival. Named by itself, the goat bears witness of Him who was our Substitute to effect this. God would have no doubt of the place in which His beloved Son stood, of judgment borne by Him, the "likeness of sinful flesh" assumed.

These offerings go with us through the whole double series, change being only in the number of either of the first three, with which the meal-offering accompanying stands in constant proportion, one tenth of an ephah for a lamb, two tenths for a ram, three for a bullock,—the apprehension of Christ's person growing with that of His work, if this be real. The measures themselves need yet an interpreter. Drink-offerings accompany the rest also in due proportion.

We have next to the new moon the passover and the feast of unleavened bread; a feast of seven days, during each one of which the offerings are as on the new

bread be eaten. On the first day shall be a holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work; but ye shall present an offering by fire, a burnt-offering unto Jehovah,—two young bullocks, and one ram, and seven yearling lambs; ye shall have them without blemish. And their meal-offering, fine flour, mingled with oil: three tenths shall ye offer for a bullock, and two tenths for a ram; a tenth shall ye offer for each lamb of the seven lambs; and one shaggy goat of sin-offering to make atonement for you. Ye shall offer these [r] beside the burnt-offering of the morning, which is for a continual burnt-offering. After this manner shall ye offer daily, seven days, the bread of an offering by fire, a sweet savor unto Jehovah: it shall be offered beside the continual burnt-offering and its drink-offering. And on the seventh day ye shall have a holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work.

[r] ver. 10, 31, cb. 29. 6, 11, 16, 19, etc.

And in the day of the [s] first-fruits, when ye present a new meal-offering unto Jehovah in your [feast of] weeks, ye shall have a holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work. And ye shall present a burnt-offering for a sweet savor unto Jehovah,—two young bullocks, one ram, seven yearling lambs; and their meal-offering of fine flour, mingled with oil, three tenths for each bullock, two tenths for one ram, a tenth for each lamb of the seven lambs; one shaggy goat to make atonement for you. Ye shall offer [them] beside the continual burnt-offering and its meal-offering; (ye shall have them without blemish;) and their drink-offerings.

[s] Lev. 23. 15-21.

[b] (xxix. 1-40. For Israel.) (*b*) And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have a holy convocation: ye shall do no [t] servile work; it is a day of [u] blowing of trumpets unto you. And ye shall offer a burnt-offering for a sweet savor unto Jehovah,—one young bullock, one ram, seven yearling lambs without blemish; and their meal-offering, fine flour, mingled with oil, three tenths to a bullock, two tenths to a ram, and one tenth to each lamb of the seven lambs; and one shaggy goat of sin-offering, to make atonement for you: beside the burnt-offering of the month and its meal-offering, and the continual burnt-offering, and its meal-offering, and their drink-offerings according to their ordinance for a sweet savor, an offering by fire unto Jehovah.

[t] Lev. 23. 7.

[u] Lev. 23. 24.

moon. The joy of Christ apprehended by the soul is indeed the necessary accompaniment of the holiness which springs out of redemption. These days begin and end, moreover, with a holy convocation, and freedom from servile work. All these unite easily in meaning, and scarcely need to be dwelt on more.

Pentecost has also its convocation, its enjoyed liberty, its offerings as before. This closes the Christian series.

The seventh month is the time of the accomplishment of God's purposes for Israel, with which is connected the blessing for the earth. Here, the feast of trumpets has as its special accompaniment but *one* bullock with the ram and

And on the [v]tenth day of this seventh month ye shall have a holy convocation, and ye shall afflict your souls: ye shall not do any work. And ye shall present a burnt-offering unto Jehovah for a sweet savor, one young bullock, one ram, seven yearling lambs: they shall be to you without blemish; and their meal-offering, fine flour, mingled with oil, three tenths for the bullock, two tenths for the ram, one tenth for each lamb of the seven lambs; one shaggy goat of sin-offering, beside the sin-offering of atonement, and the continual burnt-offering, and its meal-offering, and their drink-offerings.

And on the [w]fifteenth day of the seventh month ye shall have a holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work, and ye shall feast [x]indeed unto Jehovah seven days. And ye shall present a [y]burnt-offering, an offering by fire, of a sweet savor unto Jehovah, thirteen young bullocks, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs: they shall be without blemish; and their meal-offering of fine flour mingled with oil, three tenths for each bullock of the thirteen bullocks, two tenths for each ram of the two rams, and a tenth for each lamb of the fourteen lambs; and one shaggy goat of sin-offering; beside the continual burnt-offering, its meal-offering and its drink-offering.

v Lev.23.27.

w Lev. 23. 34, 39.

x *cf.* Ps. 95, 96, 100.

y *cf.* Col. 2. 9.

seven lambs; though, as the beginning of a month, these are in fact added to the regular offering, as is explained. Thus there are, in fact, three bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs,—the number, save as to the bullocks, of the first seven days of the feast of tabernacles. The fourteen lambs, as twice seven, may speak of redemption for Jew and Gentile,—separate companies, however, and no longer united, as in the body of Christ. The two rams may express similarly the consecration of both these. The three bullocks are less simple to be interpreted: may they not show that the service beginning now on earth is not merely outward and ritualistic, but internal and spiritual?

The day of atonement has also other offerings beside those commanded here, and as we know, it is these other that are characteristic of the day. The offerings here added are the same as on the feast of trumpets—one bullock, one ram, seven lambs, beside the goat of sin-offering. If they have decreased in number, as they have, this seems now to speak of absolute unity, as even the 7 does, in contrast with the 14. The glorious work accomplished is thus owned in its unique sublimity,—alone, unapproachable, ruling in human history; one wondrous act of service, one unequaled expression of absolute consecration, one perfect redemption, in Him who stood, the One for the many, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God. Distinction between Jew and Gentile has no place now in the thoughts of the worshiper: it is the same blessed work for all,—sufficient, infinite, for all; and of this the numbers speak impressively.

But now as if, after the hush of adoration, the out-burst of praise could no longer be restrained, on the feast of tabernacles the lambs double again to fourteen, the rams are doubled, the bullocks mount up to thirteen the first day. It is the exultant out-burst of millennial joy; not perfect as praise, yet rising up toward it, although from this point declining day by day, until on the seventh day there are seven bullocks—a true perfection, though not as full as at first seemed promised. Then on the eighth day (which marks eternity, not time,) suddenly the offerings return to the number of the day of atonement, and be-

And on the second day, twelve young bullocks, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs, without blemish, and their meal-offering, and their drink-offering, for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, according to their number, after the ordinance; and one shaggy goat of sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering, and its meal-offering, and their drink-offerings.

And on the third day, eleven bullocks, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs, without blemish; and their meal-offerings and their drink-offerings, for the bullocks, and for the rams, and for the lambs, according to their number, after the ordinance; and one shaggy goat of sin-offering; beside the continual burnt-offering, and its meal-offering, and its drink-offering.

And on the fourth day, ten bullocks, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs, without blemish; their meal-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, according to their number, after the ordinance; and one shaggy goat of sin-offering; beside the continual burnt-offering, its meal-offering, and its drink-offering.

And on the fifth day, nine bullocks, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs, without blemish, and their meal-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullocks, and for the rams, and for the lambs, according to their number, after the ordinance; and one shaggy goat of sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering, and its meal-offering, and its drink-offering.

And on the sixth day, eight bullocks, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs, without blemish; and their meal-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, according to their number, after the ordinance; and one shaggy goat of sin-offering; beside the continual burnt-offering, its meal-offering, and its drink-offering.

And on the [z] seventh day, seven bullocks, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs, without blemish; and their meal-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, according to their number, after the ordinance; and one shaggy goat of sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering, its meal-offering, and its drink-offering.

z *cf.* Rev. 4. 5.

On the [a] eighth day ye shall have a solemn assembly:

a Jno. 7. 37.

yond all power to praise, the uniqueness of the work is again celebrated. There eternity itself must leave it,—transcending praise.

Thus then, beyond all desert experiences, in the first part of this last division of Numbers God is seen enthroned, sin powerless to blur for a moment the brightness of His glory, which through sacrifice has only the more wondrously displayed itself. True, after all, man's heart is found unable worthily to take it in: he cannot, as he might be expected, answer to it; all the more is it proved that grace is what he absolutely needs, and that to grace he must be debtor. Grace, then, will be his song for eternity.

ye shall do no servile work; and ye shall present a burnt-offering, an offering by fire of a sweet savor unto Jehovah,—one bullock, one ram, seven yearling lambs, without blemish; their meal-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullock, for the ram, and for the lambs, according to their number, after the ordinance; and one shaggy goat of sin-offering; beside the continual burnt-offering, and its meal-offering, and its drink-offering.

These shall ye offer unto Jehovah at your set times, beside your vows and your free-will offerings, for your burnt-offerings, and for your meal-offerings, and for your drink-offerings, and for your peace-offerings.

And Moses told the children of Israel, according to all that Jehovah had commanded Moses.

(XXX.)

Of the confirmation or annulling of vows.

2. And Moses spake unto the heads of the tribes concerning the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing that Jehovah hath commanded: If a man [b] vow a vow unto Jehovah, or swear an oath, to bind his soul with a bond, he shall not make void his word; according to all that goeth out of his mouth shall he do. If a [c] woman also vow a vow unto Jehovah, and bind herself with a bond, in her father's house, in her youth, and her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father keep silence toward her, then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand. But if her father, when he heareth, disallow her, none of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she bound her soul, shall stand; and Jehovah shall forgive her because her father disallowed her. And if she had a [d] husband when her

[b] Lev. 27. 2. Deut. 23. 21. Ju. 11. 35.

[c] 1 Sam. 1. 11.

[d] cf. Eph. 5. 22-33.

2. And now we reach a new action of it: the thirtieth chapter treats of a subject, little connected, as it might seem, with what has been just now before us; yet in close connection really, as we may shortly see. The subject is, the confirmation or annulling of vows. If a man vow a vow to Jehovah, he must do without fail all that he has sworn to do. If a woman vow, however, there are conditions which determine whether it shall bind or not. Thus, if she be young and in her father's house, he may disallow the oath, and then it does not bind her; or she may be married, and her husband disallow it. But if these keep silence, or she be a widow or divorced, then her vow remains against her, and she is debtor to fulfill it.

The last chapter of Leviticus has already brought before us the subject of vows. The vow is clearly legal covenant, as such; and, because of our feebleness, forbidden in the New Testament. Israel took at Sinai such vows upon themselves, however, the result proving what a "rash utterance of the lips" it was. "The law made nothing perfect:" grace alone could do this. Yet God in the wisdom of His government, yea, in tender consideration for man himself, though "Father" and "Husband" to them, (Ex. iv. 22; Jer. xxxi. 32,) and though the vow was uttered in His hearing, did not disallow it: they have had thus to stand under it, and answer for its breach. Alas, when the gracious proffer of redemption came, though they had been even then long under the penalty of it, they refused redemption, held stubbornly to their broken contract, and remain under it to-day, the enduring lesson, published in every land, of what the law is for those who seek righteousness by it. Would that men would hear!

vows were upon her, or the rash utterance of her lips wherewith she had bound her soul, and her husband hear it, and keep silence toward her when he heareth it, then her vows shall stand, and her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand. But if her husband disallow her when he heareth it, then he shall make void her vow that was upon her, and the rash utterance of her lips wherewith she hath bound her soul; and Jehovah shall forgive her. But the vow of a widow, or of one divorced, every thing wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand against her. And if she vowed in her husband's house, or bound her soul with a bond by an oath, and her husband heard it, and kept silence toward her, [and] disallowed her not, then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she bound her soul shall stand. But if her husband made them entirely void when he heard them, then whatsoever hath come out of her lips, of [any] vow or bond of her soul, shall not stand: her husband hath made them void, and Jehovah shall forgive her. Any vow, or any binding oath to afflict the soul, her husband can confirm it, and her husband can make it void. And if her husband keep entire silence toward her from day to day, then he confirmeth all her vows, or all her bonds that are upon her: he confirmeth them because he keepeth silence toward her when he heareth them. But if indeed he make them void after he hath heard them, then he shall bear her iniquity. These are the statutes that Jehovah commanded Moses between a man and his wife, between the father and his daughter [being yet] in her youth in her father's house.

But there are vows not rashly undertaken by those too feeble to fulfill them, but by One upon whom, as one that is mighty, God has laid help. If the *woman's* vows stand, thank God, so do the Man's! Of Him it is that it is written, the true David, the man of affliction, "how he sware unto Jehovah, and vowed unto the Mighty One of Jacob: Surely, I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to my eyes, nor slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for Jehovah, a habitation for the Mighty One of Jacob." (Ps. cxxxii. 2–5.) If, then, Christ has gone up unto His rest, it is because His vow is accomplished: He has found a place for Jacob's God, and in Zion God will rest forever. But this involves the final blessing of those so long wanderers, Cainlike, from the land of Jehovah's dwelling-place; and so it is said again, "Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive, Thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." (Ps. lxviii. 18.)

Spite, then, of Israel's unhappy vow, they shall be brought back: the vow of a stronger One has secured it. And thus there will come a day when the "everlasting covenant" shall be made with them, "even the sure mercies of David" (Is. lv. 3;) and she who has been long a widow shall say in delight, "*Ishi*," my husband! to Him who has acquired power even then to cancel her vows, and bring her eternal release,—praise to the love that, though wounded, changes not, and which will be finally victorious over all hindrances! Then, indeed, shall Zion's priests be clothed "with salvation; and her saints shall shout aloud with joy."

(XXXI.)

Sanctification in judgment.

1. (vv. 1-6.) The commission.

3. [1] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, [c]Avenge the children of Israel upon the Midianites; afterward thou shalt be gathered unto thy people. And Moses spake unto the people, saying, Arm from among you men unto the war, and let them go against Midian, to execute the vengeance of Jehovah upon Midian. Of every tribe a thousand, of all the tribes of Israel, shall ye send unto the war. So there were levied out of the thousands of Israel a thousand of every tribe—twelve thousand armed for war. And Moses sent them to the war, a thousand of every tribe,—them, and Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, unto the war; and in his hand the holy instruments, even the [f]trumpets of alarm.

2. (7-12.) The war.

[2] And they warred against Midian as Jehovah had commanded Moses, and slew every male. And they slew the kings of Midian with the rest of their slain.—Evi and Rekem and Zur and Hur and Reba,—five kings of Midian; [g]Balaam also, the son of Beor, they slew with the sword. And the children of Israel took the women of Midian [h]captive, and their little ones; and all their cattle and all their flocks and all their goods they took for spoil. And all their cities, in the

c ch. 25. 16-18. Ju. 6. 1.

f ch. 10. 9. Ju. 7. 18.

g Josh. 13. 22.

h *cf.* 2 Cor. 10. 3-5.

The lessons and the principles abide for us also as fully as for Israel, whose glorious King is "*Ishi*" for us also, and whose vows have been paid for us no less. Israel's history is a lesson for all time; yea, for eternity. The law has occupied a large place in the probation of man, and must have an importance equal to the place. Its end is found in the setting aside of the creature in such sort as to establish him in eternal blessing. Law kept would be indeed his exaltation; but grace is much more this, while and because it is the exaltation and glory of God.

3. One of Balaam's last sayings was that the Sceptre to rise out of Israel should "destroy all the *sons of tumult*." The last official act of Moses—the last deed of the nation before they pass over Jordan into their own possession—is to destroy the Midianites, or as the word means, the *men of strife*. The correspondence is not merely casual: in the last subdivision we have had Israel's legal vow, and its implied consequences to themselves, under which they are now suffering. Under the heel of the Gentiles as they have been, God has used these as a rod of discipline for their backs; but when this shall have done its work, and their deliverance be come, He will break the rod which He has used, and avenge their cause against their adversaries. For *them* "the acceptable year of the Lord" and "the day of vengeance of our God" will be coupled together. (Is. lxi. 2.) So He declares who comes red in His apparel from treading the wine-press: "The day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come." (Is. lxiii. 4.) It is the time also of the earth's deliverance, with which that of Israel is bound up; the blow that smites the oppressor of Israel is that which destroys "those that destroy the earth." (Rev. xi. 18.) The purification and blessing of the earth are come; and when God's judgments are in the world, the inhabitants of the earth learn righteousness. (Is. xxvi. 9.)

Thus, just as before Israel take final possession of the land at last, the way of peace will be prepared by the execution of judgment and the "sons of tumult" be destroyed, so here, before Israel now pass over Jordan, the judgment upon Midian, the sons of "strife," takes place,—the shadow of the final one. Every thing shows the character of what is done: it is Israel's vengeance, yet Jehovah's none the less. Phinehas the priest, the "brazen-mouth," with whom the word

places of their habitation, and all their goodly dwellings, they [i]burned with fire. And they took all the spoil and all the prey, both of man and of beast, and brought the captives and the prey and the spoil unto Moses, and Eleazar the priest, and unto the assembly of the children of Israel, unto the camp at the plains of Moab, which are by the Jordan at Jericho.

[i] Josh. 6.24. *cf.* Gal. 6. 14.

3. (13-24.) Purification.

[3] And Moses, and Eleazar the priest, went forth, and all the princes of the assembly, to meet them without the camp. And Moses was [j]wroth with the officers of the host,—the captains of thousands and the captains of hundreds, who came from the service of the war. And Moses said unto them, Have ye saved all the women alive? Lo, these, at the word of Balaam, caused the children of Israel to fall into defection from Jehovah in the affair of Peor, so that there was a plague on the assembly of Jehovah. And now kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him; but all the children among the women that have not known lying with a man, keep alive for yourselves. And ye, encamp ye [k]without the camp seven days; every one who hath killed any, or touched the slain, purify yourselves on the third day and on the seventh day,—ye and your captives. And every garment, and every thing made of skin, and all work of goats' [hair], and every utensil of wood, shall ye purify. And Eleazar the priest said unto the men of war that had gone to the battle, This is the statute of the law that Jehovah commanded Moses. Only the gold and the silver, the brass, the iron, the tin, and the lead,—every thing that may pass the [l]fire, make to go through the fire, and it shall be clean; only it shall be cleansed with the water of separation; and every thing that cannot pass the fire, ye shall make to go through the [m]water. And on the seventh day ye shall wash your garments, and ye shall be clean; and afterward ye shall come into the camp.

[j] Gen. 6. 2. 1 Sam. 15. 3, 11.

[k] ch. 12. 14.

[l] *cf.* Heb. 12. 29. 1 Cor. 3. 12-15.

[m] *cf.* 1 Thes. 5. 21 with Eph. 5. 26.

4. (25-47.) The spoil.

[4] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Take the amount of the prey that was taken, [both] of man and beast,—thou, and Eleazar the priest, and the head fathers of the assembly, and divide the prey into [n]two parts,—between those that took on them the war, that went out to the battle, and all the assembly. And thou shalt levy a tribute unto Jehovah upon the men of war that went out to the battle, one soul out of five hundred,

[n] 1 Sam. 30. 24.

of God abides, whose unsparing zeal for it has been already proved, is sent as the leader of the expedition, and with him the silver trumpets. Each tribe furnishes its quota and takes its part. The blow falls, swift, irresistible, decisive. The seed of the wicked is cut off, (Ps. xxxvii. 28,) while not a man of the Lord's host falls; which they themselves as saved sinners recognize in their offering, not as a mere gift out of what He had given them, but as atonement for their souls.

of the persons, and of the oxen, and of the asses, and of the flocks: take it of their half, and give it to [o] Eleazar the priest, as Jehovah's heave-offering. And of the children of Israel's half thou shalt take one portion of fifty, of the persons, of the oxen, of the asses, and of the flocks, [even] of all the cattle, and give them to the [p] Levites, who keep the charge of the tabernacle of Jehovah. And Moses and Eleazar the priest did as Jehovah had commanded Moses. Now the prey, over and above the booty which the men of war took, was six hundred and seventy-five thousand sheep, and seventy-two thousand oxen, and sixty-one thousand asses, and of human souls,—of the women which had not known lying with a man,—thirty-two thousand in all. And the half which was the portion of those that went out to the war was in number three hundred and thirty-seven thousand, five hundred sheep; and Jehovah's tribute of the sheep was six hundred and seventy-five; and the oxen were thirty-six thousand, and the tribute of them for Jehovah, seventy-two; and the asses were thirty thousand, five hundred, and the tribute of them for Jehovah, sixty-one; and the human souls were sixteen thousand, of whom the tribute for Jehovah was thirty-two souls. And Moses gave the tribute of Jehovah's heave-offering to Eleazar the priest, as Jehovah had commanded Moses. And the children of Israel's half, which Moses had divided from [that of] the men that warred, (now the half belonging to the assembly was, of the sheep, three hundred and thirty-seven thousand five hundred, and thirty-six thousand oxen, and thirty thousand five hundred asses, and sixteen thousand human souls,)—of the children of Israel's half Moses took one portion of fifty, of man and of cattle, and gave them to the Levites, who kept the charge of Jehovah's tabernacle, as Jehovah had commanded Moses.

o *cf.* Rev. 4. 10. Phil. 2. 9-11.

p *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 13, 14.

5. (48-54.) The ransom of the men of war.

[5] And the officers who were over the thousands of the host,—captains of thousands and captains of hundreds, came near unto Moses; and they said unto Moses, Thy servants have taken the sum of the men of war, which were under our hand, and there lacketh not of us a man. And we have brought Jehovah's offering, that which each man hath found,—jewels of gold, ankle-chains, and bracelets, rings, earrings, and necklaces, to make atonement for our souls before Jehovah. And Moses and Eleazar took the gold from them, all wrought jewels. And all the gold of the heave-offering that they

And thus one of the principles which the history of the wilderness establishes is that God, though great in mercy, will none the less be sanctified in judgment also upon His adversaries; a judgment with which (in the day of it) His people will fully be. Not only will *Israel* be His battle-axe and weapons of war (Jer. li. 20,) but the "armies that are in heaven" also,—the heavenly saints, recog-

offered up to Jehovah was sixteen thousand, seven hundred, and fifty shekels, from the captains of thousands and the captains of hundreds. (The men of war had taken spoil, each one for himself.) And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and brought it unto the tent of meeting, as a [q]memorial for the children of Israel before Jehovah.

[q] Ex. 30 16. *cfr.* ch. 16. 36–40.

(XXXII.)

The failure of the two and a half tribes: earthly mindedness among the heavenly people.

1. (*vv.* 1-16.) Their choice and not God's lot.

4. [r]And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had much [r]cattle—a very great multitude. And they saw the land of Jaazer and the land of Gilead, and, behold, the place was a place for cattle. And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spake unto Moses, and unto Eleazar the priest, and to the princes of the assembly, saying, Ataroth and Dibon and Jaazer and Nimrah and Heshbon and Elealeh and Shebam and Nebo and Beon,—the land that Jehovah smote before the assembly of Israel, is a land of cattle, and thy servants have cattle. And they said, If we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given thy servants for a possession: bring us [s]not over Jordan. And Moses said to the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben, Shall your brethren go to war and *ye* sit here?

[r] *cf.* Gen. 11. 31. Jud. 5. 16. Josh. 7. 7. 2 Tim. 4. 10.

[s] *cf.* Col. 3. 1.

nized by their fine linen garments, shall follow the Lamb in the day of His wrath. (Rev. xix. 14, 15.) That which *He* can lead in, they can follow in; what God can command, they can execute.

4. And now we have a notable lesson. Reuben and Gad having cattle, and looking upon the breadth of pasture-land in the countries which had now been taken, desire their inheritance to be given them in Gilead and Bashan, and not to go over Jordan with the rest. Rebuked by Moses for divorcing themselves from the common interest, they still press the request; only they offer to leave their children in the fortified cities on the east side, and that their men of war shall go over armed before all the rest to help the rest of the tribes to their possession, and not return from the war until they are settled in it. Moses then grants their request, and gives the land to them and half the tribe of Manasseh, (who, it seems, had already taken possession of Gilead,) on these terms.

Commentators in general have little to remark upon this choice of the two and a half tribes, in which, apart from their first unwillingness to go over Jordan with the rest, they ordinarily see nothing wrong. Matthew Henry, however, with his keener spiritual perception, enters more into the truth of what is implied. He says,—

"Two things common in this world induced these tribes to make this choice, and this motion upon it, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. The land was pleasant to the eye, and it was good for pasturage. . . . . Too many seek their own things, and not the things of the public good, or of Christ, and *so take up short of the heavenly Canaan.* Their choice implied: 1. A contempt of the land of promise. 2. A distrust of the power of God. 3. A neglect of the interests of their brethren. 4. An undue consulting of their own convenience and wealth. . . . It is observable that as these tribes were now first placed, before the other tribes, so long afterward they were displaced before the other tribes."

The typical meaning should be plain; and Moses' comparison of their conduct

And why discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which Jehovah hath given them? [r] So did your fathers when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to see the land; for when they had gone up to the valley of Eshcol, and had seen the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, that they should not go into the land which Jehovah had given them. And Jehovah's anger was kindled at that time, and he sware, saying, Surely, the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall not see the land which I sware unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because they have not fulfilled the following me, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have fulfilled the following Jehovah. And Jehovah's anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until the whole generation was consumed that had done evil in Jehovah's eyes. And, lo, ye are risen up in your fathers' stead, an increase of sinful men, to add yet to the fierce anger of Jehovah toward Israel. For if ye turn away from after him, he will once more leave them in the wilderness, and ye will destroy all this people.

[r] ch. 13. 27-33.

2. (17-32.) Nevertheless they go to the war.

[2] And they came near to him, and said, We will build here sheepfolds for our stock, and cities for our little ones, but we ourselves will hasten armed in [u] front of the children of Israel, until we have brought them into their place; and our [v] little ones shall dwell in the fortified cities, because of the inhabitants of the land. We will not return unto our houses until the children of

[u] Josh. 1. 12-18. Josh. 4. 12, 13.

[v] Ex. 10. 10, 11. cf. Eph. 6. 4. 1 Cor. 7. 14.

with that of the spies clearly intimates it. They picture for us those who, as the apostle says, "a promise being left of entering into His rest, seem to have come short of it." (Heb. iv. 1.) Christians are a heavenly people, pilgrims and strangers upon the earth; but, according to the parable, the little seed, "the word of the kingdom," has struck its root firmly into the earth, and become a tree, Babylon-like, sheltering the powers of evil. (Matt. xiii. 31, 32; Dan. iv. 12.) The kingdom has become territorial, instead of individual, and may be marked out on a map. And note, that this territory has been acquired by conquest. The gods of the heathen have been fairly dispossessed by the God of Christianity. Og's territory has been attacked by way of Sihon's: truth has fought its way, and conquered by being truth. Who could desire it otherwise? Must not light of necessity banish darkness! Yes, in a sense: although that remains true on the other side, that there is a sphere in which "the light shineth in darkness," yet "the darkness comprehendeth it not." The unconverted heart yields no kingdom to the truth. If the world surrender in this way, it surrenders on conditions, and the professing kingdom of God becomes a compromise.

Such is Christendom to-day; and being such, where has been the victory? Such a condition could not be, except as it had sprung from the declension of the people of God themselves: "while men slept, the enemy came." And this sleep, what has induced it? Alas, the influences of the night upon those that are not children of the night; the power of the world upon those that are not of it, so that they "become blind, and cannot see afar off:" the land beyond Jordan lies in the gathering twilight; present things are those *seen*,—they heed little now that they are temporal;—they build here.

Israel shall have inherited every man his inheritance. But we will not inherit with them on the other side of Jordan and beyond, for our inheritance is come to us on this side Jordan toward the sunrise.

And Moses said unto them, If ye will do this thing; if ye will go armed before Jehovah to war,—if every armed man of you will pass over Jordan before Jehovah until he have driven out his enemies from before him, and the land be subdued before Jehovah, then afterward ye shall return, and be guiltless toward Jehovah and toward Israel, and this land shall be your possession before Jehovah. But if ye do not so, lo, ye sin against Jehovah; and be ᵐ sure your sin shall find you out. Build yourselves cities for your little ones, and folds for your flocks; and do what is gone out of your mouth.

ᵐ *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 20, 21.

And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben spake unto Moses, saying, Thy servants will do as my lord commandeth: our little ones, our wives, our flocks, and all our cattle shall be there in the cities of Gilead; but thy servants will pass over, every one armed for war, before Jehovah to battle, as my lord saith.

So concerning them Moses commanded Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel; and Moses said unto them, If the children of Gad and the children of Reuben pass over Jordan with you, every one armed for the war, before Jehovah, and the land be subdued before you, then ye shall give them the land of Gilead for a possession; but if they will not pass over with you armed, they shall have possession among you in the land of Canaan. And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben answered, saying, As Jehovah hath said unto thy servants, so will we do: we will pass over armed before Jehovah into the land of Canaan, and the possession of our inheritance on this side Jordan shall be ours.

3. (33. 42.) Possession.

[3] And Moses gave unto them,—unto the children of Gad, and unto the children of Reuben, and to the half

This is but the two and a half tribes again; a number which speaks of division and fracture to the very eye, the people of God divided against themselves. So they build cities the wrong side of Jordan, and nourish there their little ones, although their armed men may go a warfare with their brethren on the other side; yea, and may do praiseworthy deeds there.

But Moses apportions them the land! He does: but there is no *lot cast for them there*—thank God, there is not. *He* does not mean to consent finally, but will be better to them at last than their thought. Yet for the present there must be consent: they must be allowed, as often men must, to have their way. "Ephraim is joined to his idols; let him alone!" Yes, but not forever: "how shall I give thee up Ephraim?" "Ephraim shall say, 'What have I to do any more with idols'" God has given him his way until he is sick of it. Even so: yet "Oh, that My people had hearkened unto Me," says the Lord. Sorrow in the meantime,—"loss" in a real way forever,—come from that way of our own, to which yet, even finally to save us, He had to give us up.

tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph, the kingdom of [x] Sihon king of the Amorites, and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land according to the cities thereof within the boundaries,—the cities of the land round about. And the children of Gad built Dibon and Ataroth and Aroer and Atroth-Shophan and Jaazer and Jogbehah and Beth-Nimrah and Beth-Haran, fortified cities; and folds for sheep. And the children of Reuben built Heshbon and Elealeh and Kiriathaim and Nebo and Baal-meon (of which the names were changed,) and Shibmah; and they gave other names to the cities which they built. And the sons of Machir the son of Manasseh had gone to Gilead, and taken it, and dispossessed the Amorite who was in it. And Moses gave Gilead unto Machir the son of Manasseh; and he dwelt therein. And Jair the son of Manasseh went and took the small towns thereof, and called them Havvoth-Jair. And Nobah went and took Kenath and the villages thereof, and called it Nobah, after his own name.

x ch. 21. 25.

(XXXIII. 1-49.)

The way hither.

5. These are the [y] journeyings of the children of Israel, who went out of the land of Egypt by their hosts, under the hand of Moses and Aaron. And Moses wrote their places of departure, according to their journeys, at the commandment of Jehovah; and these are their journeys according to their places of departure. And they journeyed from [z] Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month: on the morrow of the passover the children of Israel went out with a high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians. And the Egyptians were burying all their first-born, which Jehovah had smitten; and upon all their gods Jehovah executed judgment. And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses and encamped in Succoth. And they journeyed from [a] Succoth and encamped in Etham, which is on the edge of the wilderness. And they journeyed from Etham and turned back to [b] Pihahiroth, which is before Baal-zephon, and they encamped before Migdol. And they journeyed from Hahiroth, and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness, and went [c] three days' journey in the wilderness of Etham, and encamped at [d] Marah. And they journeyed from Marah, and went to [e] Elim,

y Gen. 47. 9. Heb. 11. 13.

z Ex. 12. 37.

a Ex. 13. 20.

b Ex. 14. 2.

c Ex. 15. 22.

d Ex. 15. 23.

e Ex. 15. 27.

This, then, is another of those principles which, in connection with the wilderness, we find established; and the failure of the two and a half tribes is full of admonition for us.

5. We have now the record of Israel's journeyings through the wilderness just ended, and under the guardian care of Him who, spite of all their willfulness and folly, had ever "led them by the *right* way." This record, kept by Moses according to the distinct command of Jehovah, is to us a solemn reminder of how *our* ways have been marked by Him, and are by us never to be forgotten. The two things are in closest connection and dependence on one another, our ways with Him, and His ways with us, although so different; and who can doubt

and at Elim were twelve springs of water and seventy palm-trees; and they encamped there. And they journeyed from Elim and encamped by the Red Sea. And they journeyed from the Red Sea and encamped in the [f]wilderness of Sin. And they journeyed from the wilderness of Sin and encamped at Dophkah. And they journeyed from Dophkah and encamped at Alush. And they journeyed from Alush and encamped at [g]Rephidim, and there was no water there for the people to drink. And they journeyed from Rephidim and encamped in the wilderness of [h]Sinai.

And they journeyed from the wilderness of Sinai and encamped at [i]Kibroth-hattaavah. And they journeyed from Kibroth-hattaavah and encamped at [j]Hazeroth. And they journeyed from Hazeroth and encamped at Rithmah. And they journeyed from Rithmah and encamped at Rimmon-paretz. And they journeyed from Rimmon-paretz and encamped at Libnah. And they journeyed from Libnah and encamped at Rissah. And they journeyed from Rissah and encamped at Kehelathah. And they journeyed from Kehelathah and encamped at Mount Shapher. And they journeyed from Mount Shapher and encamped at Haradah. And they journeyed from Haradah and encamped at Makheloth. And they journeyed from Makheloth and encamped at Tahath. And they journeyed from Tahath and encamped at Tarah. And they journeyed from Tarah and encamped at Mithcah. And they journeyed from Mithcah and encamped at Hashmonah. And they journeyed from Hashmonah and encamped at [k]Moseroth. And they journeyed from Moseroth, and encamped at Bene-jaakan. And they journeyed from Bene-jaakan and encamped at Horhagidgad. And they journeyed from Horhagidgad and encamped at [l]Jotbathah. And they journeyed from Jotbathah and encamped at Abronah. And they journeyed from Abronah and encamped at [m]Ezion-geber. And they journeyed from Ezion-geber and encamped in the wilderness of Zin, which is [n]Kadesh. And they journeyed from Kadesh and encamped in Mount [o]Hor, in the border of the land of Edom.

And [p]Aaron the priest went up Mount Hor at the commandment of Jehovah, and died there, in the fortieth year after the children of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fifth month, on the first of the

f Ex. 16. 1.
g Ex. 17. 1-16.
h Ex. 19. 1.
i ch. 11. 34.
j ch. 11. 35.
k *cf.* Deut. 10. 6.
l *cf.* Deut. 10. 7.
m Deut. 2. 8. 1 Kings 9. 26. 1 Kings 22. 48.
n ch. 20. 1.
o ch. 20. 22.
p ch. 20. 23-29.

that the chapter before us gives (or *should* give) us both of these together. And what intense interest should this have for us! Alas, for the present, we can only to our shame confess that we have not ability to read it with any assurance. With how little clearness indeed do any of us perhaps realize the way by which the Lord has led us individually! How often must it be confessed that it has been but the leading of the blind by a way they know not. Yet the record is with God; and how much should we miss if we were not by and by to find the ability we have not now.

month. And Aaron was a hundred and twenty-three years old when he died on Mount Hor. And the Canaanite, the [q] king of Arad, who dwelt in the south in the land of Canaan, heard of the coming of the children of Israel. And they journeyed from Mount Hor and encamped in Zalmonah. And they journeyed from Zalmonah and encamped in Punon. And they journeyed from Punon and encamped at [r] Oboth. And they journeyed from Oboth and encamped at [s] Ijim-abarim, in the border of Moab. And they journeyed from Ijim and encamped at [s] Dibon-gad. And they journeyed from Dibon-gad and encamped at Almon-diblathaim. And they journeyed from Almon-diblathaim and encamped in the mountains of Abarim, before Nebo. And they journeyed from the mountains of Abarim and encamped in the plains of Moab by Jordan at Jericho. And they encamped by Jordan from Beth-jeshimoth unto Abel-shittim in the [t] plains of Moab.

[q] ch. 21. 1.

[r] ch. 21. 10, 11.

[s] ch. 32. 34.

[t] ch. 22. 1.

(v. 50—XXXIV.)

Commandment as to the conquest and limits of the land.

I. (vv. 50–56.) The land to be God's and theirs alone.

6. [1] And Jehovah spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordan at Jericho, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye pass over Jordan into the land of Canaan, ye shall [u] drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and ye shall [v] destroy all their figured stones, and destroy all their molten images, and lay waste all their high places; and ye shall possess the land, and dwell therein, for unto you have I given the land to possess it. And ye shall inherit the land by lot according to your families,—to the more ye shall give the more inheritance, and to the fewer ye shall give the less inheritance: where the lot falleth to him, there shall be each man's [inheritance]; according to your fathers' tribes ye shall inherit. But

[u] Deut. 7. 2.

[v] Ex. 23. 24.

We may say of this chapter, what has so often to be said of such lists as we have here, that while great pains have been taken—often vainly enough—to trace out such things as geographical position, even the meaning of the names have been examined with little care, and for the mass of expositors the very conception of any spiritual significance attaching to them seems not to have been in their minds. May the Lord wake up His people to the sad dishonor which we have thus done to God's holy Word, and which now is bearing but its fruit in those attacks upon its inspiration, no way so effectually answered as by the demonstration of that higher meaning in it which has so much escaped us. Unspirituality is the natural ally of unbelief.

6. We have come now to a part of Numbers which at first sight would seem scarcely to belong to it, and which is at least very distinct from all the rest. It is evident that it gives us neither the history of the wilderness, nor the moral of that history, but that it looks forward to the occupation of the land, and treats of the land itself,—how they are to deal with the Canaanites and the relics of idolatry in the land; where they are to draw the boundary-lines,—within what limits they are to make good their possession, and other things of like nature. Here, indeed, a mere historical view would find no difficulty: these ordinances come in very naturally at the point we have reached. Contrary to what is usually the case, it is the spiritual meaning which would seem to have to bear all the burden, and to justify itself as having real existence.

if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, those that ye let remain of them shall be "pricks in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and shall [w] Ju. 2. 1-3.

Just here too, unhappily, spiritual interpretation has had almost no enunciation: there has been no account given of the place held by these chapters in connection with the wilderness-book. Yet it must be given. The full perfection we claim for the inspired Word will not permit of the thought that here there should be no spiritual meaning,—that the things that "happened unto Israel" here did *not* "happen for types." And if such a meaning *be*, it ought to be capable of being produced, if "written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages are come."

We have indeed had chapters before which looked on to the occupation of the land, (as, for instance, the fifteenth chapter expressly does,) but in these the link with the wilderness was more easily to be discerned. Here it is not merely with something that is to be when they are in the land that we are occupied, but with the land itself,—a subject which seems even clearly outside that of the book of the wilderness. The perfection of God's Word does not admit a doubt. It is for us only to inquire reverently what the connection is, and some answer will surely be accorded us.

What, then, does Canaan as a type present to us? Here there would not seem perhaps much room for question. There is a general agreement among all classes of interpreters who are truly such, that Canaan represents heaven, as Jordan is the river of death which lies in front of it, and through which we pass to our rest. So much we may accept as truth without hesitation.

If we turn back, as we naturally do, to the history of Abraham, we find this view in the main confirmed; and yet, in striking contrast to the common thought, Abraham is *in the land*, a stranger and a pilgrim. Assuredly, this cannot be true of heaven when we actually get there, that we shall be pilgrims in it! And we see easily that the Spirit of God pictures for us, in fact, in him, not final rest in heaven, but a *present occupancy* of it now by faith, with which indeed a pilgrim walk is not only consistent, but is the *only thing* consistent: the certain result of a faith which enters into its heavenly portion is just this walk.

Canaan then, as seen in connection with Abraham, typifies for us indeed a heavenly portion, but heaven brought down to earth, as it were,—a thing with which the tabernacle in the wilderness has made us familiar, though in a somewhat different aspect. It will be thought, no doubt, however, that when, as now, we find Israel, after their wilderness-journey finished, going in to take possession of the land, *not to be strangers there*, but to find settlement and rest, that now this must speak of final rest. The thought is natural: we must take nothing, however, for granted here; Scripture must guide us step by step, or we are not safe: and the least mixture of our own thoughts uncontrolled by it, will bring in confusion into all our views, and envelop us in a fog which will forbid real progress.

Canaan as now to be possessed by Israel was at least to them no final possession, nor their enjoyment of it rest. They entered it sword in hand; they had to gain and to retain possession by the sword. Even now, when giving them the bounds of their inheritance, we find nothing like the full extent of the land promised them, which was "from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (Gen. xv. 18), or, as more precisely defined, "from the Red Sea unto the sea of the Philistines and from the desert unto the River" (Ex. xxiii. 31.) Their bounds at this time touched neither the Red Sea nor Euphrates; and the reason is plain: they were going into the land under a legal covenant, not as brought in (as yet they will be) according to the fullness of divine grace. If they continued in His covenant, God would enlarge their borders (Ex. xxxiv. 24; Deut. xii. 20), even to the full extent of the original promise (Deut. i. 7); but this depended upon what never took place. The narrowness of the land with which men taunt Israel now—scarcely the size of Wales,—does not repre-

> distress you in the land wherein ye dwell; and it shall be that as I thought to do unto them, I shall do unto you.

sent what grace has assigned them as their portion, but only *their inability to make good their title to it*. Even the bounds here assigned them, which included Philistia, Tyre, and all Lebanon, they have never yet possessed; though, with a gleam of coming glory, David's kingdom extended to the Euphrates. But that gleam quickly passed: Israel itself broke asunder, and from this they went down ever further into the ruin in which yet they remain.

On the other hand, when they shall be restored in grace and in millennial days, the land will be indeed the type of heaven. Let any one compare the picture in Ezek. xlvii. with that in Rev. xxii., where in the one case we have the earthly, in the other the heavenly, and see how they correspond; so much indeed that they have been confounded together, though for this there is no excuse. Here is not the place to go into it; but the establishment of the fact is enough to show us in what way Canaan, as we see it in the history before us, is the type of heavenly things. It is the type of them as enjoyed by faith and anticipatively; in conflict, not in rest. Canaan has been indeed hitherto the very centre of opposing forces, which, pouring themselves over the land, Egyptian, Ethiopian, Hittite, Syrian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, Roman, could be only repelled by One arm,—the arm upon which Israel were besought to roll themselves, and did not. God never meant rest to be to them in any other way,—a way simple to the simple, of strength to the weakest: but they would not listen.

Similarly the kingdom of heaven has been in conflict among men,—to those that have eyes to see, a constant battlefield of forces not merely earthly; and Christians have as little vindicated their title to their own possessions as Israel did to theirs. Even Romanists have led the way in announcing a Babylonish captivity of the church, Luther more clearly and convincingly following them. While the remnant that came out of this have in various ways repeated the history of Ezra and Nehemiah, of Haggai and Malachi's days.

Thus Canaan is, so to speak, *itself in the wilderness*, and it pertains to this book to mark out at least the limits of Israel's territory, lying, as it does, encompassed by foes, and subject to influences which are really, and not always plainly, adverse. The line of demarcation must be carried round, from the south-east border of the salt sea to the river of Egypt and the great sea, and then round Lebanon, by Jordan to the salt sea again. And is not this, in some sense, what the apostle is doing in the first part of 1 Corinthians?—defining boundary-lines, before he comes to the internal order of that Church which he addresses in Corinth, the type even among the heathen of that which the beloved disciple characterizes as the "world," "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life"?

The tabernacle, though the "patterns of things in the heavenlies," belonged to the wilderness, though marked off from it by its brazen pillars and white hangings of the court. So Paul marks off for the Corinthians the church from that which is of the world. He stretches out its linen curtains, hanging them by the silver hooks of atonement on the pillars of divine strength:—"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, . . . shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God."

This sixth section of the last subdivision of the book ordains, then, the conquest of the land and the limits of it,—limits which we have seen, however, to be enlarged according to their faithfulness, and the multiplication of the people under the blessing of God.

(i.) The land is to belong alone to God, and to the people as possessing it under Him; the Canaanites to be driven out, all traces of idolatry destroyed. Christianity according to God is similarly exclusive, as a true kingdom of God on

2. (xxxiv. 1-15.) Its boundaries.

2 And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come unto the land of Canaan, this is the land that falleth to you for inheritance,—the land of Canaan, according to its boundaries. And your [x] south limit shall be from the wilderness of Zin along by the side of Edom; and your southern boundary eastward shall be at the end of the salt sea. And your boundary shall turn from a south [course] to the ascent of Akrabbim, and pass over to Zin, and it shall go forth from the south at Kadesh-barnea, and go out at Hazar-addar, and pass over to Azmon; and the boundary shall turn from Azmon toward the river of Egypt, and its extremity shall be at the sea.

And for the [y] western border ye shall have the great sea and coast [-line]: this shall be your western border.

And this shall be your [z] north border: from the great sea ye shall mark out to you Mount Hor; from Mount Hor ye shall mark out the entrance to Hamath; and the extremity of the boundary shall be at Zedad. And the boundary shall go forth to Ziphron, and its extremity shall be at Hazar-enan: this shall be your north boundary.

And ye shall mark out for your [a] eastern boundary from Hazar-enan to Shepham, and the boundary shall descend from Shepham to Riblah on the east side of Ain; and the boundary shall descend and press upon the shoulder of the sea of Chinneroth eastward; and the boundary shall descend unto the [b] Jordan, and its extremity shall be at the [c] salt sea: this shall be your land, according to its boundaries round about.

x *cf.* Ezek. 47. 19.

y *cf.* Ezek. 47. 20.

z *cf.* Ezek. 47. 15-17.

a *cf.* Ezek. 47. 18.

b *ctr.* ch. 32. 1-5.

c Josh. 3. 16.

earth. Alas, Christians have been as little true to God in this as Israel of old; and like results have followed: God has been compelled to controversy with His people, the end of which is not seen yet.

(ii.) As to Israel's boundary lines, it is evident that, temporarily narrow as they were, they never filled them. We can little trace the spiritual meaning, save only in one part where it is so plain as to compel us to realize that this cannot stand alone,—that only insight is lacking on our part as to the rest. On the south-east Jordan and the salt sea divide the territory proper from Bashan and Gilead, the kingdoms of Og and Sihon, now possessed by the two and a half tribes. This was indeed intended to be held by the people, as Deut. ii. 24 proves conclusively, though none the less these tribes failed in choosing their *portion* there. There are things that are ours in which our portion is not: nay, the apostle puts the "*world*" in this category (1 Cor. iii. 22); where observe that it is a wholly different thing, nay, in contrast, to have the world belong to you, and *to belong to it*. In the one case you are its servant, in the other its master. There is nothing secular for the Christian, nothing which is not sanctified for those who are God's saints. And these kingdoms of Sihon and Og, we have found measurably to yield themselves to interpretation in this way. (See chap. xxi. 21-35 *notes*.)

Nevertheless, though the world itself in this sense ceases to be secular, yet it is another thing to have our portion in it; and just here between Canaan proper and the Gilead district, fertile as this may be, God has dug deep the trench of

And Moses commanded the children of Israel, saying, This is the land which ye shall inherit by lot, which Jehovah commanded to give unto the nine tribes and to the half tribe. For the tribe of the children of the Reubenites according to their fathers' houses, and the tribe of the children of the Gadites according to their fathers' houses, have received their inheritance, and the half tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance. The two tribes and the half tribe have received their inheritance on this side the Jordan of Jericho eastward toward the sunrise.

3. (*vv.*16-29.) Those set apart to apportion it.

3 And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, These are [d] names of the men who shall divide the land unto you: Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun. And ye shall take one prince of every tribe to divide the land; and these are the men's names; of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh: and of the tribe of the children of Simeon, Shemuel the son of Ammihud; of the tribe of Benjamin, Elidad the son of Chislon; and the prince of the tribe of the children of Dan, Bukki the son of Jogli; the prince of the children of Joseph,—for the tribe of the children of Manasseh, Hanniel the son of Ephod; and the prince of the tribe of the children of Ephraim, Kemuel the son of Shiphtan; and the prince of the tribe of the children of Zebulon, Elitzaphan the son of Parnach; and the prince of the tribe of the children of Issachar, Paltiel the son of Azzan; and the prince of the tribe of the children of Asher, Ahihud the son of Shelomi; and the prince of the tribe of the children of Naphtali, Pedahel the son of Ammihud. These are they whom Jehovah commanded to divide to the children of Israel their inheritance in the land of Canaan.

[d] Josh. 14.1.

Complete sanctification and rest.

4. (*vv.* 1-8.) Provision for the Levites.

7. 1And Jehovah spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordan of Jericho, saying, Command the children of Israel that they give unto the [e] Levites out of the inheritance of their possession cities to dwell in; and pasturage for the cities round about them shall ye give unto the Levites. And the cities shall they have

[e] Josh. 14.4.

the Jordan valley as a memorial, in which the rapidly descending river of death falls into the sea of judgment, out of which no stream passes nor returns! Salt and thus barren, and as if under the curse of God, that sea lies, a veritable "pit," more than thirteen hundred feet below the level of the Mediterranean Sea, its own greatest depth being as much again. "The depression of the lake, both of its surface and of its bottom below that of the ocean," says Mr. Grove, "is quite without a parallel."

7. We have now reached the conclusion of the book; and the appropriate conclusion of the book of trial, wandering and failure is rest in the inheritance made permanent by sanctification according to God. In the Levite cities scattered through the land, in the provision of the cities of refuge for freeing it from the stain of blood, and in the provision for the permanence of inheritance in the tribes, we have a combination of assurances that God is still sovereign in grace

to dwell in, and their pasturage shall be for their cattle and for their substance, even for all their beasts. And the pasturage of the cities that ye shall give unto the Levites shall be from the city-wall outward, a thousand cubits round about. And ye shall measure without the city, on the east side two thousand cubits, and the south side two thousand cubits, and the west side two thousand cubits, and the north side two thousand cubits, and the city shall be in the midst: they shall have this as [f] pasturage of the cities. And [among] the cities that ye shall give unto the Levites shall be the six [g] cities of refuge, which ye shall appoint for the man-slayer, that he may flee thither; and in addition to these shall ye give [h] forty and two cities. All the cities that ye shall give unto the Levites shall be forty and eight cities,—these and their pasturage. And the cities that ye shall give shall be of the possession of the children of Israel: from those that have much ye shall take much, and from those that have little shall ye take little,—every one according to his inheritance which he inheriteth shall give of his cities to the Levites.

[f] Josh. 21. 1, 2. Ezek. 45. 1, 2.

[g] Josh. 20.

[h] Josh. 21. 41, 42.

2. (9-34.) Deliverance from the guilt of blood.

[2] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye pass over Jordan into the land of Canaan, then ye shall appoint you cities to be cities of refuge for you, that the man-slayer may flee thither who smiteth a person mortally without intent; and they shall be to you cities of refuge from the avenger, that the man-slayer die not

above all man's sin,—a grace that secures holiness, and so perpetuates blessing. The very number of this closing section is a sign of this triumph of God which shall be achieved in spite of all apparent contradiction and defeat. It is the full gamut of music, the compass of all melody; which cannot be, except God be thus supreme.

(i.) First, in these Levite cities, scattered through the land, we have the fulfillment of the prophetic word as to Levi, "I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel." Yet how differently from what we should have thought, is it fulfilled in this case! Grace shows itself in absolute sovereignty over all the sin. What seemed but penalty has become blessing, and in complete accordance with God's way in grace, he who had been the subject of it becomes blessing to others. The number of the cities is thus noteworthy—forty-eight; which is not to be taken as 4 x 12, as Keil supposes, but as 6 x 8, with which the cities of refuge, six in number, are then in harmony. *Six* speaks here of discipline such as we see in the scattering; *eight*, of the new character which it assumes. The government of God is maintained, and for Levi's own sake he must be scattered. Seed must not lie in a heap, or it does not fulfill its office. Levi must be God's witness in Israel, and the seal of the sanctification of the whole land to God,—a people whose portion is God alone: "They shall teach Jacob Thy judgments, and Israel Thy law."

(ii.) Next we have, and in intimate connection with this, the ordinance of the cities of refuge. Blood was in an especial way—and here is contemplated above all one deed, yet in the future, which was to give the people their "field of blood," through centuries of banishment from the land into which they were now entering,—that which defiled the land before God. The design of the city of refuge was in no wise to turn away judgment from one who was in His sight

before he stand before the assembly for judgment. And the cities that ye shall give shall be six cities of refuge for you. Three cities shall ye give on this side Jordan, and three cities shall ye give in the land of Canaan: they shall be cities of refuge. For the children of Israel, and for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them, shall these six cities be a refuge, that any one who smiteth a person mortally without intent may flee thither.

And if he have smitten him with an instrument of iron so that he die, he is [really] a slayer: the slayer shall certainly be put to death. And if he smite him with a stone from the hand, mortally, and he die, he is a slayer: the slayer shall certainly be put to death. Or if he smite him mortally with a wooden weapon in the hand, and he die, he is a slayer: the slayer shall certainly be put to death. The avenger of blood himself shall put to death the slayer; when he meeteth him, he shall put him to death. And if he thrust him in hatred, or hurl at him when lying in wait, that he die, or in enmity smite him with the hand, that he die, he that smote him shall certainly be put to death: he is a slayer; the avenger of blood shall put to death the slayer when he meeteth him. But if he have thrust at him [f] without enmity, suddenly, or have cast upon him any thing without lying in wait, or [have smitten him] with any stone wherewith one may die,—not seeing him, and have cast it on him so that he die, (yet he was not his enemy, nor sought his harm,) then the assembly shall judge between the smiter and the avenger of blood, according to these judgments, and the assembly shall deliver the slayer out of the hand of the avenger of blood, and the assembly shall restore him unto his city of refuge whither he had fled, and he shall abide in it till the [g] death of the high-priest, who was anointed

[f] *cf.* Acts 3. 17.

[g] *cf.* Heb. 5. 1-3.

a "manslayer." (Comp. *vv.* 16–18.) Where it could be shown that there was intent to slay, the image of God in which He had made man effectually pleaded against pity. God had already long before pronounced in this case (Gen. ix.), and there has been, and can be, no revocation of it: "whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made He man." That ground remains, and the guilt upon the land that does not avenge it here affirmed may well be considered by those who in these days would annul the death-penalty: "the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it."

Where, on the other hand, there was not intent to slay, the mercy of God came in to save out of the hand of the avenger of blood; yet still with a gravity which shows what man's life is to Him. He could not, even after being adjudged in this way innocent, simply be set free, but was to abide in the city of refuge until the death of the high-priest; and only then could return to his inheritance in the land. Keil argues that the death of the high-priest was regarded as expiatory, and that this "is evident from the clause, 'who hath been anointed with the holy oil,' which would appear unmeaning and superfluous on any other view. The anointing with the holy oil was a symbol of the communi-

with the holy oil. But if the slayer come at all [k] without the bounds of his city of refuge whither he had fled, and the avenger of blood find him outside the bounds of his city of refuge, and the avenger of blood slay the slayer, he shall not be guilty of blood, because he should have remained in his city of refuge until the death of the high-priest; but after the death of the high-priest, the slayer shall return to the land of his possession. And these [things] shall be for a statute of judgment unto you, throughout your generations, in all your dwellings. Whoever shall smite a person mortally, at the mouth of witnesses shall the slayer be slain; but [l] one witness shall not testify against a person that he die. And ye shall take [m] no ransom for the life of the slayer who hath done evil worthy of death, for he shall surely be put to death. And ye shall take no ransom for him that is [n] fled to his city of refuge, that he should come again to dwell in the land till the death of the priest. And ye shall not [o] pollute the land wherein ye are: for blood, it polluteth the land; and there can be no atonement made for the land,—for the blood that hath been shed in it, save by the [p] blood of him that shed it. And ye shall not defile the land which ye inhabit, in the midst of which I [q] dwell: for I, Jehovah, dwell among the children of Israel.

k cf. 1 Kings 2. 36–46.
l Deut. 17. 6.
m cf. Ex. 34. 7.
n cf. Col. 1. 23.
o cf. Deut. 21. 8, 9.
p Gen. 9. 5, 6. cf. Acts 5. 28.
q Ex. 29. 45, 46.

cation of the Holy Ghost, by which the high-priest was empowered to act as mediator and representative of the nation before God." This, however, gives no particular meaning to the often long detention of the manslayer in the city of refuge, nor does it take in the thought that the blood which defiled Israel's land was above all the blood of Christ shed by them, on account of which they have been so many centuries kept from their inheritance. Yet nationally they have been spared,—the Lord Himself putting in for them the prevailing plea, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Blinded by their self-righteousness, and implicit following of human guides, they have denied and crucified the Sent One of the Father; yet God can say to them by the mouth of Peter, "I wot that through ignorance ye did it," and thus, though shut out of their inheritance in the meantime, the time shall come in which they shall be restored to it. And that time will be when the priesthood of the Lord as now exercised in heaven shall be at an end, and He shall come forth, Priest and King in one, to bring in the times of restitution of which the prophets speak. This, then, would seem to answer to the death of the high-priest, while it may be none the less true that his being "anointed with the holy oil" here points Him out as the One whose work has been to make atonement. The special high-priestly work of the "day of atonement" would seem referred to, with its ordinance of the scape-goat and its blessing for Israel, when he who went into the holy place comes forth. It is on the day of atonement that the trumpet of jubilee sounds, and every man returns to his possession. All, therefore, unites to convince us of the truth of this interpretation.

But it is not Israel alone who have crucified the Lord. Gentiles united with Jews in that awful deed. "Of a truth, Lord, against Thy holy Servant Jesus, *whom Thou hast anointed*, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done." (Acts iv. 27, 28.) Thus the cross is the guilt of the whole world, but a world which, when He was in it, "knew

3. (xxxvi.) The security of the inheritance.

[3] And the heads of the fathers of the family of the children of Gilead the son of Machir the son of Manasseh, of the families of the children of Joseph, drew near, and spake before Moses, and before the princes, the heads of the fathers of the children of Israel, and said, Jehovah commanded my lord to give the land for an inheritance by lot unto the children of Israel; and my lord was commanded by Jehovah to give the inheritance of Zelophehad our brother to his daughters. Now if they be married to any of the sons of the [other] tribes of the children of Israel, then shall their inheritance be taken from the inheritance of our fathers, and added to the inheritance of the tribe to which they shall belong; and it shall be taken from the lot of our inheritance. And when the jubilee of the children of Israel shall come, then shall their inheritance be added to the inheritance of the tribe to which they shall belong; and their inheritance shall be taken away from the inheritance of the tribe of our fathers.

And Moses commanded the children of Israel according to the word of Jehovah, saying, The tribe of the sons of Joseph hath said well. This is the thing which Jehovah hath commanded concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, Let them marry to whom they please; only they shall marry in the family of their father's tribe: so shall the inheritance with regard to the children of Israel not remove from tribe to tribe; for the children of Israel shall cleave each one to the inheritance of his father's tribe. And every daughter that possesseth an inheritance among the tribes of the children of Israel shall be wife unto one of the family of her father's tribe, that the children of Israel may possess every one the inheritance of his fathers. And the inheritance shall not [r] remove from one tribe to another tribe; for each of the tribes of the children of Israel shall keep to his own inheritance.

r *cf.* Luke 2. 4, 5.

Him not;" and on this account that which was inflicted by their hands may still avail for them as their atonement. The faith of the Gentile too can be accepted on this principle alone; and in the cities of the Levites, in the provision furnished by the gospel ministry, he finds his city of refuge. Yet he too, sheltered and safe though he be, is away from his inheritance. He too—we all—will get it only at the coming of the Lord. The jubilee-note will then sound for all alike: for the Jew is but the typical *man*: in his sin, in his exile, in his restoration, we all have personal interest.

Thus this grand type applies to all the redeemed; and as the fitting close to wilderness-wanderings, shows how the inheritance is made good to us after all, and where sin abounded, grace much more abounds. This the third witness now confirms with more than adequate testimony.

(iii.) Here the daughters of Zelophehad come again before us through the representatives of the chiefs of the families of Manasseh. The former decision in their favor has secured that the inheritance of their father shall become their own; but there is danger thus that, if they contract marriages outside the tribe, the inheritance may through them pass out of the possession of the tribe, and

Even as Jehovah commanded Moses, so did the daughters of Zelophehad; and Mahlah, Tirzah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad, were married unto their father's brother's sons: they were married into the families of the sons of Manasseh the son of Joseph; and their inheritance remained in the tribe of their father's family.

These are the commandments and judgments which Jehovah commanded to the children of Israel by the hand of Moses, in the plains of Moab by the Jordan of Jericho.

the whole stability of the tribal possession be overthrown. It is ordained, therefore, that in such a case as this the heiress of a father shall marry within the tribe, and the inheritance of each tribe be secured to it in perpetuity. Weakness may have come in, and the lack of male heirs seem to give the inheritance into the hand of others, out of whose hand again the very institution of the jubilee would prevent it passing. But all things must give way to the first great necessity that the inheritance allotted of God must remain with those to whom it was allotted. Nothing shall alter this: nothing, blessed be God, shall prevent any of His own from enjoying for eternity the inheritance prepared.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF DEUTERONOMY.

DEUTERONOMY, as the closing book of the Pentateuch, completes and sums up the law, impressing it upon the hearts and consciences of the people by the retrospect of their wilderness-history and the dying appeal of their prophet-lawgiver. It ends, manifestly, the first stage of Israel's history, the foundation and seed-germ of all that is to follow. Joshua is not the last book of a *Hexateuch*, as some would have it, but a distinct new beginning, as we shall fully see, if the Lord will, when we enter upon it. So also the spiritual, typical sense, which carries with it the highest assurance of inspiration, the power of prophecy, and reigns throughout the historical books, declares. Joshua, the entrance into Canaan, does not speak of our entrance into heaven at death or in resurrection, but of our entering by faith now. In the former way, not the wildest imagination could apply it in any detail; in the latter, it is full of meaning, and pregnant with most important instruction. In this way, it does not succeed, but runs parallel, with the earth-pilgrimage; while Deuteronomy winds up the wilderness-history, giving the moral intelligence and profit of the past as wisdom for the future, as the manifestation at the judgment-seat of Christ will do for our lives here. For the present life has its significance for heaven itself, and the light of heaven must illumine it all, not that we may then forget it, but that it may become a permanent possession.

Deuteronomy has but three main divisions, the second of which is the large part of the book. The first is historic; the second, legislative; the third, in the main, prophetic:—

Div. 1. (Chap. i.–iv. 43.) The righteousness and grace of the Almighty as persuasive to obedience.

Div. 2. (Chap. iv. 44–xxx.) The exposition and enforcement of the law.

Div. 3. (Chap. xxxi.–xxxiv.) The outcome, as revealed prophetically.

DEUTERONOMY.

DIVISION 1. (Chap. i.–iv. 43.)

The righteousness and grace of the Almighty as the motive to obedience.

God sovereign in spite of man's rebellion against Him.

1. (*vv.* 1-8.) A command which is promise.

(I.)

1. [1] THESE are the words that Moses spake unto all Israel [a] beyond Jordan, in the wilderness, in the Arabah, opposite Suph, between Paran and Tophel and Laban and Hazeroth and Dizahab. There are [b] eleven days' [journey] from Horeb, by way of Mount Seir, unto Kadesh-barnea. And it was in the [c] fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first [day] of the month, that Moses spake unto the children of Israel, according to all that Jehovah had given him in commandment unto them; [d] after he had smitten Sihon the king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, and in Edrei Og the king of Bashan, who dwelt at Ashtaroth:—beyond Jordan, in the [e] land of Moab, began Moses to [f] expound this law, saying,—

a ctr. Lev. 1. 1. Num. 1. 1. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 10.

b cf. Heb. 6. 12. Heb. 5. 12. Num. 20. 14-21.

c Num. 14. 33.

d Num. 21. 21-35.

e Ruth 1. 2.

f cf. Luke 24. 25-27.

NOTES.

Div. 1.

THE introduction to the "expounding" of the law is most naturally a persuasive to obedience; and this is found where it would be the strongest, in their recent history, fresh and vivid as it was in the memories of the people. They had shown themselves out fully in it; in this way it was a history full of sorrow. But God too had manifested Himself in surpassing majesty,—in holiness and in grace; and the double record might serve, if any thing would, to arouse the conscience and stir the heart, and produce fidelity to One whose favor to them had been so conspicuous, and whose discipline withal so uncompromising. Day by day He ministered to them; day and night His presence had been amongst them: He who slept not nor slumbered was the keeper of Israel; and if He smote, it was because He would not give them up, and could not give up His own character.

The wilderness was the place of education for the land. The word for 'wilderness,' "comes," says, Krummacher, "from a word which means both to 'speak' and to 'lead,' so that to be in the wilderness and under leading, in Hebrew, amounts nearly to one and the same thing."* All this long, and in so much of it sad history was not to be without its final profit: the wilderness in this sense was yet to have its harvest, and "blossom as the rose." All its painful experience was to be wisdom for the land. And so with all the lessons which day by day we are all learning. Time is not cut off from eternity in such a way as to make it our joy and profit to forget there what we have passed through here; nor will its scroll be then rolled up and cast aside. No, but it is rather then that its history shall be fully unsealed and stand out as prophecy. And as the assurance of this, between us and eternity, or just as we step into it, we have the judgment-seat of Christ, and "manifestation" at the

*Quoted in Schaff's Lange.

Jehovah our God spake unto us in Horeb, saying, Ye have [g] dwelt long enough in this mountain: turn, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorite, and to all the [h] neighboring places, Arabah, mountain and lowland, even in the south, and by the sea-shore, the land of the Canaanite, and Lebanon, as far as the

[g] Num. 10. 11, 12.

[h] Gen. 15. 18-25. Ps. 72. 8.

judgment-seat: "every one of us shall give account of himself to God," says the apostle. (Rom. xiv. 12.) And again, "For we must all appear"—literally, "be manifested"—before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. v. 10.)

Many have the strange thought that this does not apply to the Christian, and that so applied it would be contradictory to the gospel, as doing away with the assurance given by God, "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." (Jer. xxxi. 34; Heb. viii. 12; x. 17.) But this is not a remembrance of *sins*, in the divine sense: nothing is reckoned against the believer; all that can be rewarded comes up for reward, all that cannot be rewarded is "loss" as to reward (1 Cor. iii. 15.)—no more. The very triumph of God's grace will be seen in this, that, told out in the presence of God, there is no imputation of sins at all. Thus the work of Christ will appear in its full glory; and *we* shall be manifested, not as unsinning angels, but as redeemed men. Thus we have our song and our worship. Thus the robes granted us in that day—the "fine linen" which "is the righteousnesses" (in the Revised Version, "righteous *deeds*") of the saints,—are washed in the blood of the Lamb. (Rev. xix. 8, comp. vii. 14; xxii. 14, *R. V.*) Who would exchange these blood-washed robes for the most unspotted record that could be furnished by a creature?

And who would lose the apprehension of this grace in God for his own soul? or who would not desire to have it displayed before the universe? Who would take away the glory of Christ in this? Who would not rather say, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul"? (Ps. lxvi. 16.) There, in the ears of the most magnificent assembly ever gathered, God in Christ shall have His fullest praise; and "God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." (Eccle. xii. 14.)

How wondrous that day of revelation! All the darkness of God's dealings with us gone forever! All our record His fullest praise! Not His grace alone seen, but His wisdom, righteousness, truth—every attribute glorified forever! What would we miss, if we missed this? And that eternity may be to us the perfect, unchanging happiness which is grounded in holiness—inasmuch as God deals with His reasonable creatures according to the nature He has given them, by argument and proof—how much may depend upon this day of manifestation! His purpose is that "in the ages to come He may show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness to us through Christ Jesus." (Eph. ii. 7.)

Deuteronomy, then, as closing at once the history of the wilderness and the first Pentateuch of Scripture, has its fitting place. It is in some true sense the book of the judgment-seat, beginning with this recital of wilderness-history, and at the end expanding into that glorious "song," in which (as if already amid the concourse of the coming day) the heavens, along with the earth, are exhorted to hear the words of his mouth! "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: because I will proclaim the name of Jehovah: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. The Rock—His work is perfect; for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right, is He."

(i.) Israel are now, though still characteristically "in the wilderness," at their journey's end. They have taken, to accomplish a few days' journey, the life of a generation. They have come a long distance, with toil and hardship,

2. (9–18.) The service of rule, and Israel's humbling to the yoke.

great river, the river Euphrates. See, I have set the land before you: [i]go in and possess the land which Jehovah [j]sware unto your fathers,—to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and their seed after them.

[2] And I spake unto you at that time, saying, I am [k]not able to bear you myself alone: Jehovah your God hath multiplied you; and, behold, ye are this day as the [l]stars of heaven for multitude. (Jehovah, your fathers' God, make you a thousand times as many as ye are, and bless you, as he hath said unto you!) How

[i] Josh. 1. 2.
[j] Gen. 26. 3, 4. Mic. 7. 20. cf. Heb. 6. 17, 18.
[k] Ex. 18. 18. Num. 11. 14-17.
[l] Gen. 26. 4.

where faith in God would have easily and long since brought them. Still, over all this God triumphs, using it as a homily for them, and an encouragement to confidence. The forty years of trial are at length concluded, and their inheritance lies before them, the other side of the headlong river which alone intervenes. And now the lawgiver's voice, soon to be heard no more among them, as he and they alike well know, utters itself in a solemn last address, in which the fullness of his heart overflows to the people so long his care. Characteristic of the book are the opening sentences in which Moses' words are emphasized as the subject of it: not now any more Jehovah's words through him, not the law itself properly, but Moses' exposition and enforcement of it. And this is set in the frame-work of the circumstances which set it off and impress one with its significance. The names in the first verse cannot be those of stations on the way hither therefore from Sinai on, although two of them are identical with and two more resemble some of these; but they were not "beyond Jordan, in the Arabah," or in any relation to these such as could warrant the terms used. "Similarity of names," says Keil, "cannot prove any thing by itself, as the number of places of the same name, but in different localities, that we meet with in the Bible, is very considerable." Yet this similarity, where the name is often all we have about the place, may still be quite significant. Certainly the site of this memorable discourse is beyond Jordan and in the Arabah, the deep cleft in which both the river and the sea of salt are found. Suph is not necessarily the *sea* of Suph or weeds, the common title of the Red Sea; nor Laban Libnah. With Paran and Hazeroth we are indeed familiar; but Hazeroth ("enclosures") is only the plural of Hazar, of which there are many; while Paran was the name of a wide district. However, we can say little to purpose about these names.

"From Horeb to Kadesh-barnea" (the "sanctuary of the wanderer") is the first stage of the journey, as Moses recites it, a history of unbelief and rebellion, which avails only to illustrate the vanity of opposition to the power of God. But in the first place we have the land set before them, not in poetical rhapsody, exaggerating the much smaller territory which in fact they possessed, but according to the promise to their fathers, which we have in Genesis xv., and still more fully in Exodus xxiii. 31. But this promise was, as the last passage shows, to be fulfilled to them by instalments, and as they had faith to lay hold of it and make it their own,—and they had not faith. Yet grace will not be finally defeated of its intent, nor the promise be left unfulfilled; no more than will to us the better promise of a heavenly land, which now we are bidden to make ours, and so little do. This parallel, full of reproof, and full of encouragement to us, we shall have abundantly before us as we go on. Meanwhile, the command is for us, as it was for them, a promise, which individual faith may make much of, if it cannot accomplish what that of a host may.

(ii.) Moses next reminds them of the institution of officers for the host to bear with him the burden of so great a multitude. God had fulfilled to them, and under the most adverse circumstances, the promise to their fathers, and already they were as the stars of heaven for number. This necessitated the appointment of those who should be recognized as chiefs and magistrates among them;

can I bear, myself alone, the wear of you, and your burden, and your strife? Take you men, wise and understanding, and known, according to your tribes, and I will appoint them as your heads. And ye answered me, and said, The thing which thou hast spoken is good to be done. So I took the head [men] of your tribes—wise men, and known, and placed them as heads over you,—captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds, and captains of fifties, and captains of tens, and officers for your tribes. And I commanded your judges at that time, saying, Hear [causes] between your brethren, and judge [m] righteously between a man and his brother, and the sojourner with him. Ye shall not [n] regard persons in judgment; ye shall hearken to small and great alike; ye shall not be [o] afraid of the face of man, for the judgment is God's: and the matter that is [p] too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it. And I commanded you at that time all the things that ye should do.

m ch. 16.18. *cf.* Ps. 72.2.

n Lev.19.15. Prov.24.23. *cf.* Rom. 2. 11.

o Prov. 29. 25. *cf.* Gal. 2. 11-14.

p Ex.18.22.

rule in Israel being thus manifestly service; and they are invited to put their own hands to this work, in choosing from among themselves men that enjoyed their confidence, and deserved the confidence they enjoyed. And they do this, recognizing their need of the yoke, as all men ever have recognized it, spite of all abuses of authority. As Paul says of the magistrate, "He is the minister of God to thee for good" (Rom. xiii. 4), although, in the time in which he wrote, the abuse was everywhere evident.

We are mutually dependent and need each other's help, not simply against others but against ourselves. In our own cause we are not fit to be judges, and no laws, the world over, would allow this to be; yet there is no office we more naturally assume. Self-interest prompts and urges us to do that for which it is itself the disqualification. How good for us, then, to stand aside and allow those more competent for impartial judgment to give judgment. How good to see ourselves through the keener eyes of others, even sometimes of those not friendly. But in this way to what a height does Paul raise the Christian in that rebuke to the Corinthians, which it makes so keen,—"If then ye *have* judgments of things pertaining to this life, set those to judge who are *least* esteemed in the Church." (1 Cor. vi. 4.) This seems the exact opposite of Moses, nor does he of course mean that it should be literally carried out: "I speak to your shame. Is it so that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?" He would not have those judge who lacked in wisdom; but he considers on the one hand that "the least esteemed in the Church" ought to have an elevation and impartiality of spirit fit for such an office; and on the other, that those whose worldly matters are to be judged should be so above care, as to things of this kind, as to be ready to submit their cause to any of their brethren!

This is no doubt an unattained—we ought not to say, unattainable—ideal. Good it is yet to have the ideal before us. In truth, how blessed to be so before God, so in the joyful consciousness of that supreme will, to which, little as men may mean it, every other bows, as to be able to see in all a Father's hand, and to be subject without reserve to every expression of His will, though it were an enemy's voice that gave it utterance:—"The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?"

Good it is thus to serve,—to be in subjection; and it need be no wonder to find, therefore, in this place the mention of an institution by which human will is curbed, and that spirit induced which is true preparation for a divine inheritance: "the meek shall inherit the earth." Israel with their inheritance before them are to cultivate the spirit of heirs.

3. (19-21.) The land ready to be possessed.

4. (22-33.) The test and the failure.

[3] And we journeyed from Horeb, and went through all that great and [q]terrible wilderness which ye saw, on the way to the mountain of the Amorite, as Jehovah our God commanded us; and we came to [r]Kadesh-barnea. And I said unto you, Ye are come unto the mountain of the Amorite, which Jehovah our God giveth us. See, Jehovah thy God hath set the land before thee: go up, possess, as Jehovah thy fathers' God hath said unto thee; fear not, nor be dismayed.

[4] And ye came near to me, the whole of you, and said, [s]We will send men before us, and they shall search out the land for us, and bring us back word by what way we shall go up, and unto what cities we shall come. And the thing was good in mine eyes: and I took of you twelve men, one of a tribe; and they turned and went up into the mountain, and came unto the valley of [t]Eshcol, and searched it out. And they took of the fruit of the land in their hands, and brought it down to us, and brought us back word, and said, It is a [u]good land that Jehovah our God giveth us. But ye [v]would not go up, and rebelled against the voice of Jehovah your God; and ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because Jehovah [w]hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to give us up into the hand of the Amorite, to destroy us. Whither are we going up? Our brethren have [x]melted our hearts, saying, [They are] a [y]people greater and taller than we; the [z]cities are great and walled up to heaven; and we saw too the sons of the Anakim there. And I said unto you, Ye shall not shake, nor be afraid of them: [a]Jehovah your God, who goeth before you, he shall fight for you, [b]just as he did toward you in Egypt, before your eyes; and in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how Jehovah thy God bare thee, as a man [c]beareth his son, all the way that ye have come, until ye came unto this place. But in this thing ye did not [d]believe Jehovah your God,

q ch. 8. 15. Jer. 2. 6. Mark 1 13. *cf.* 1 Pet. 5. 8.
r Num. 13. 26.
s Num. 13. 1. Josh. 2. 1. Ju. 1. 23.
t Num 13. 23, 24.
u Num. 13. 27. Num. 14. 7, 8.
v Num. 14. 9, 10. Ps. 106. 24.
w Num. 14. 3. ch. 9. 28.
x *cf.* Josh. 2. 11.
y Num. 13. 28, 29. ch. 9. 1, 2.
z *cf.* Josh. 6. 1-5.
a Josh. 3. 11.
b Ex. 14. 13, 14.
c ch. 32. 11, 12. Is. 46. 3, 4.
d Heb. 3. 19.

(iii.) The incidents of the journey to Kadesh are passed over: "the great and terrible wilderness" is only mentioned to make them realize the power of the hand that led them. Trained to encounter difficulties, as accustomed to see them overcome by the power of God, how ready they might be expected now to face the only foe that was to be feared, when now at Kadesh their next step would be upon the land of so many memories, pledged to them by the full value of Jehovah's name. Unbelief alone could prevail against them; yet how could they disbelieve? So one might indeed argue; but the facts of history and of experience are alike against the argument.

(iv.) We pass on quickly to the result; and now we find, what had not appeared in the history itself, that the mission of the spies was primarily the people's own suggestion. True, Moses had entered into it, and God Himself had sanctioned it; for in Numbers they are sent out at His bidding. It is plain, therefore, that there was nothing wrong in the suggestion, while it does not follow that there was nothing wrong in the motive. Unbelief desires, as we know, to see the way before it, likes to know what there is to meet, and to have its plans beforehand. God might sanction it, as a new witness to them of the

who went before you in the way, to [e]search out for you a place for you to encamp in: by [f]night, in fire, to make you see the way in which ye were going, and in a cloud by day.

5. (34–46.) The judgment of God.

[5]And Jehovah heard the voice of your words, and was wroth, and sware, saying, [g]Surely, not one of these men of this wicked generation shall see that good land which I sware to give unto your fathers, save [h]Caleb the son of Jephunneh,—he shall see it, and to him will I give the land on which he hath trodden, and to his children, because he hath fulfilled to [i]follow Jehovah. Also with [j]me was Jehovah angry upon your account, saying, Thou too shalt not go in thither. [k]Joshua the son of Nun, who standeth before thee,—he shall go in thither. [l]Strengthen him, for he shall cause Israel to [m]inherit it. And your [n]little ones, who ye said should be a prey, even your children who this day have no knowledge of good and evil,—they shall go in thither, and to them will I give it, and they shall possess it. But ye, [o]turn you, and take your journey into the wilderness, the way to the Red Sea. But ye answered and said unto me, We have sinned against Jehovah: we [p]will go up and fight just as Jehovah our God commanded us. And ye girded on every man his weapons of war, and were ready to go up into the mountain. And Jehovah said unto me, Say unto them, Go not up, and fight not; for I am not among you, that ye be not smitten before your enemies. And I spake unto you, but ye would not hear, and rebelled against Jehovah's voice, and were presumptuous, and went up into the mountain. And the Amorite who dwelt in that mountain came out against you, and chased you, as the bees do, and beat you down in Seir, as far as Hormah. So ye returned, and [q]wept before Jehovah; but Jehovah would not hearken to your voice, nor give ear to you. And ye abode in Kadesh many days—as [many as] the days that ye abode.

[e] Num. 10. 33.
[f] Ex. 13.21. 22. cf. Jno. 14. 16, 17.
[g] Num. 14. 28. Ps. 95. 10, 11.
[h] Num. 14. 24. Josh.15.13, 14.
[i] cf. Jas.1.8.
[j] Num. 20. 12. Ps. 106. 32, 33.
[k] Num. 14. 30.
[l] ch. 31. 7, 8. cf.1Chron. 28. 9.
[m] Josh.14.1.
[n] Num. 14. 31.
[o] Num. 14. 25.
[p] Num. 14. 9, 10. ver. 26.
[q] Num.14.1. Gen. 27. 34 -38. 2 Cor. 7. 9-11.

goodness of the land, the fruit of which was evidence that could not be denied. But nothing is more senseless than unbelief: if men believe not Moses and the prophets, they will not be persuaded though one rose from the dead. If the Word of God fails, sense and sight cannot avail. There are walled cities and tall men: granted; and the power of God, at how much will one reckon that? Alas, with amazing hardihood, they dare to say that all His goodness and care hitherto have been but hatred, and that He has been at the pains to bring them across sea and wilderness to destroy them at last by the hands of the Amorites!

(v.) Plainly, argument is at an end. God can do no mightier wonders, nor convince those to whom love and hatred are indistinguishable from one another. Their unbelief excludes them from the land and ordains a long discipline for their children, whom yet at last He brings in according to His purpose. Their folly and evil cannot change the Immutable: it is only of avail against themselves. The sure Word which had been for them is now their doom; while their fatal unbelief finally stirs even the meek spirit of Moses, and shuts him also out from the land. Once more they rebel when the word is pronounced

(II. 1-25.)

Israel's progress, and different relation to the people round.

1. (*vv.* 1-8.) Esau, the natural first-born; "that which is first is natural;" flesh, and the natural man.

2. [1] And we turned, and took our journey into the wilderness the way of the [r] Red Sea, as Jehovah spake unto me, and we were many days going round Mount Seir. And Jehovah spake unto me, saying, Ye have gone round this mountain long enough: turn you northward. And command the people, saying, Ye are to pass through the border of your brethren the children of [s] Esau, who dwell in Seir; and they shall be afraid of you: take ye, therefore, good heed unto yourselves; [t] contend not with them; for I will not give you of their land, even so much as to set the sole of the foot upon, [u] because I have given Mount Seir unto Esau for a possession. Ye shall buy food of them for money, that ye may eat; and ye shall obtain water also for money, that ye may drink. For Jehovah thy God hath blessed thee

[r] Num. 14. 25.

[s] Gen. 36. 1-8.

[t] Num. 20. 14-21.

[u] Josh. 24. 4.

against them, and will go in without God, who just now could not go in by His help: a mere presumption, presently bitterly rebuked, when the Amorites come down from the hill, and chase them as a swarm of bees might, even to Hormah, the place of the ban. Then they break down in tears as vain before the Lord: His judgment is as faithful as His loving-mercy.

2. In the next section we find Israel upon the road in their strange roundabout journey, in which we have already traced them, round Mount Seir. But the path itself is little touched upon: what we have rather is their different relation to the different nations by which they pass,—Edom, Moab, and Ammon on the one hand, and the Amorites on the other. The one, they are strictly forbidden to meddle with; the other, they are bidden to make war upon, and their land becomes Israel's first possession. So, we may be sure, is it important for us to know, as we travel on, what to contend with, what simply to pass by. All this in Israel's history is still to be our lesson; we may be confident as ever, and shall find our confidence justified, that "the things that happened unto them happened unto them for types."

(i.) First of these nations we have the "children of Esau, who dwelt in Seir," and we have already got more than a hint of the typical meaning. Esau and Seir have a natural connection. "Esau" means "hairy," "rough," and so does Seir; which for this reason is one of the words for "goat,"—a "shaggy one." This last significance is striking enough, the goat standing in its fundamental meaning for the *sinner*, as in the Lord's use of it. The wild nature of Esau thus is shown in its affinity to the "far-off country" to which he belongs. Edom has thus another sign that it is Adam, if disguised, as in the child of God the flesh is often well disguised. And Edom lies here in Seir, as we have elsewhere seen, right across (as we might imagine) the whole path of progress. This is emphasized by Israel's attempt to pass through Seir, a passage which is refused and has to be given up. God's way is "round," not *across* it, and "by the way of the sea," under the shelter of the serpent of brass. This is the way of death, the way of the cross: "in the Arabah," God's furrow of death, cut through the land from sea to sea, we find our track, and no Mount Seir to stop us.* But the truth is further emphasized for us here. Esau is not to be dispossessed,—the flesh cannot be,—nor even warred against. Mount Seir is given them for a possession. It is the lesson of the sea, which is given its place on the third day of the six in which the earth was built up; or, again, the lesson of Cain, marked by God for life, not death. The flesh abides still in the believer, and has its place from God —therefore its use, as we may boldly say. What use has Esau in his stronghold at Seir? Just as a needful barrier, to force Israel into the path by the

*Those who may yet find this unintelligible are referred to notes on Num. xx. 14-21 and xxi. 4-9 for explanation.

in all the work of thy hand: he hath [v] known thy walking through this great wilderness; these forty years Jehovah thy God hath been with thee,—thou hast [w] lacked nothing. So we passed by from our brethren the children of Esau who dwell in Seir, by the way of the Arabah, by Elath and by Ezion-geber.

[v] *cf.* Heb. 2. 18.

[w] ch. 8. 4. *cf.* Phil. 4. 11, 12.

2. (8-23.) The brother-tribes of Lot; and the help of the Lord against the giants.

[2] And we turned, and passed by way of the wilderness of Moab. And Jehovah said unto me, [x] Distress not Moab, nor contend with them in battle, for I will not give thee of their land for a possession, because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot for a possession. (The [y] Emim dwelt therein aforetime,—a people great and many, and tall as the Anakim. They also were reckoned as giants, like the Anakim; and the Moabites called them Emim. Aforetime also the Horites dwelt in Seir; but the children of Esau dispossessed them, and destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their stead,—just as Israel had done in the land of their possession, which Jehovah gave them.) Now rise up, and pass over the brook Zered; and we passed over the brook Zered.

[x] Num. 21. 12, 13.

[y] Gen. 14. 5.

sea; so has the flesh its use to destroy self-confidence, to make the cross a daily necessity to us, to teach us to abide in Christ, and find our sanctification in occupation with Himself. If self-occupation could in Satan change an angel to a devil, worthy is it of God to make the ineradicable evil in us a means of turning our eyes from ourselves to Him, by whom, as we behold *His* glory, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory!

With the men of the flesh, the children of this world, we may have traffic, as we pass on heavenward: contend with them we may not; their land is not ours; our possessions are elsewhere,—a good land, which forbids coveting any other.

(ii.) Passing Edom, the children of Israel find themselves in the neighborhood of the brother-tribes descended from Lot, as to whom they are equally forbidden to make war upon them or to possess their land. "I have given Ar," says Jehovah, "unto the children of Lot for a possession." What is represented to us, then, by these children of Lot? Their descent is naturally the first thing which should help us. They are the posterity, in a way of shame and sin, of one who stands as the typical opposite to Abraham, the man true to the divine call. He is the man, who, though himself "righteous," is yet a settler in the world, sunk into it, ignoring what it is for God, saved through the fire at last, but never restored to the place from which he had departed. The child of Lot is the child of the "cover" under which Lot walked, and according to the inevitable tendency from bad to worse, inheriting the evil only,—alien and hostile to Israel and to Israel's God. His territory is outside Israel's, though a border-land, and which is named from its chief city Ar, which means but "city," carrying us back to that which one of old had gone out of the presence of the Lord to build. (Gen. iv.)

All seems to speak of that which is the natural result of the true church sinking into the world,—a profession which is *but* the world, alien and hostile to the true people of God, characterized largely by the principles of confederacy, mutual interest, etc., which the city, as it now exists, implies. In Moab, the "city" covers, as it were, the country. Thus we need not wonder that their God is not Jehovah. For Moab God is Chemosh, the "vanquisher," as the mere professor goes with what in fact is prevalent, what has gained the day. In Ammon he is Moloch,—*i. e.*, "king,"—in fact, whether or not in right. Nay, rather, fact *is* right: not God is King,—reigns *because* He is divine; but the

And the days in which we came from Kadesh-barnea until we passed over the brook Zered were thirty-eight years, until the whole generation of the men of war were [z]consumed out of the midst of the camp, as Jehovah sware unto them. And indeed the hand of Jehovah was upon them to destroy them from the midst of the camp until they were consumed.

And it was so, when all the men of war were consumed, and dead from among the people, that Jehovah spake unto me, saying, Thou art to pass this day over the border of Moab, Ar; and [when] thou shalt come nigh over against the children of [a]Ammon, thou shalt not distress them, nor contend with them; for I will not give thee of the land of the children of Ammon for a possession, because I have given it unto the children of Lot for a possession. That too was accounted a land of

z Num. 14. 33. cf. 1 Cor. 15. 50 Col. 3. 5.

a ver. 9.

king is God—is divine because he reigns. And this is no strange thing among men: the sect of Herodians has always been a large one. Hence again, (for this is a system connected in all its parts,) to both Chemosh* and Moloch they sacrificed *men:* humanity is immolated at such shrines constantly.

Between Moab and Ammon it is harder to distinguish. "The near relation between the two peoples indicated in their origin," says Grove, "continued throughout their existence: from their earliest mention (Deut. ii.) to their disappearance from biblical history, the brother-tribes are named together. (Comp. Ju. x. 6; 2 Chron. xx. 1; Zeph. ii. 8, etc.) Indeed, so close was their union, and so near their identity, that each would appear to be occasionally spoken of under the name of the other . . . . They are both said to have hired Balaam to curse Israel (Deut. xxiii. 4) . . . In the answer of Jephthah to the king of Ammon the allusions are continually to Moab (Ju. xi. 15, 18, 25), while Chemosh, the peculiar deity of Moab (Num. xxi. 29), is called 'thy god' (24.) The land from Arnon to Jabbok, which the king of Ammon calls 'my land' (13), is elsewhere distinctly stated to have once belonged to a 'king of Moab.' (Num. xxi. 26.)"

On the other hand he notices that but one city of Ammon (Rabbah) is spoken of, and that the allusions to the habits and circumstances of civilization, so common in connection with Moab, are absolutely wanting in regard to Ammon. The Ammonites have the fierce habits of marauders, cruelty to their enemies (1 Sam. xi. 2; Am. i. 13; Jer. xli. 6, 7; Ju. xi. 7, 12), "as well as a suspicious discourtesy to their allies, which on one occasion (2 Sam x. 1–5) brought all but extermination on the tribe. (xii. 31.)" "Taking the above into account," he says, "it is hard to avoid the conclusion that, while Moab was the settled and civilized half of the nation of Lot, the Bene-Ammon formed its predatory and Bedouin section. A remarkable confirmation of this opinion occurs in the fact that the special deity of the tribe was worshiped, not in a house, nor on a high place, but in a booth or tent designated by the very word which most keenly expressed to the Israelites the contrast between a nomadic and a settled life (Am. v. 26)."

In Moab, we may perhaps see, then, the mere quiet worldling, satisfied with the gains of his profession; in Ammon, the heretic raider upon Israel's possession. We have had a type of this nature in the Philistines of the sea-coast, Israel's enemies on the other side; but these are nevertheless different in what they represent. Every form of spiritual existence, good or evil, we may expect to find embodied in these types, which so vividly picture the life and warfare of the people of God.

*The Moabite stone has shown us this as to Chemosh.

giants: giants dwelt there aforetime, and the Ammonites called them Zamzummim;—a people great and many, and tall as the Anakim: but Jehovah destroyed them from before them, and they dispossessed them, and dwelt in their stead; as he did for the children of Esau who dwelt in Seir, when he destroyed the Horites from before them, and they dispossessed them, and dwelt in their stead even unto this day; and the Avvim, who dwelt in villages as far as Gaza, the Caphtorim who came forth of Caphtor destroyed them, and dwelt in their stead.

3. (24, 25.) The war for possession now at hand.

3 Rise up, take your journey, and pass over the river Arnon: see, I have [b]given into thy hand Sihon king of Heshbon, the Amorite, and his land; begin, take possession, and contend with him in battle. This day will I begin to put the [c]dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the peoples under the whole heaven, who shall hear report of thee, and tremble and be in pangs because of thee.

b Num 21. 21-26.

c Josh. 2. 9-11. Ex. 15. 14-16. cf. Matt. 28. 4.

(II. 26—III. 29.)

Possession.

1. (26-37.) Sihon.

3. [1]And I sent [d]messengers out of the wilderness of Kedemoth unto Sihon king of Heshbon with words of peace, saying, I am passing through thy land: I will go

d Num. 21. 21. ch. 20. 10.

It may at first sight seem strange, however, if this be true, that God should have distinctly provided a place for Moab and Ammon, and not suffer Israel to dispossess them. We have seen, however, the same to be the case as to Edom, and how the fact answers to the type. As to the tares in the field too, which would correspond essentially to Ammon, the word is, "Let them grow with the wheat unto the harvest," which is very similar to what we have here. If we find, too, that Lot's children have their use, and that they have been the means of destroying certain giants, the Emim and the Zamzummim, out of the lands which they have occupied, this is true also of Edom and the Horites, and the Avvim before the Caphtorim, who seem to have become united with the Philistines. It is no new thing for God to overrule the growth of one evil for the destruction of another, that the world may be at least more tolerable for those that inhabit it. Those that mean nothing less than to serve God are thus compelled to do it; just as "He maketh the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder of wrath He will restrain." (Ps. lxxvi. 10.)

As to these giants, of whom little except the names remains, even the names are at present too uncertain in their interpretation to be able to say anything reliable about them. Vocabularies of this sort need to have more of the intelligence of faith in them, before questions such as these can receive any proper treatment. In the meantime we must perforce be content with marking them as questions remaining for the patient explorer of the Word in a time to come,—if indeed there shall be for it time to come! For the end is surely near at hand.

(iii.) The war for possession is now about to begin, God's threatening as to the former generation being now accomplished, and the hindrance to occupation of the land removed. They are therefore encouraged to go forward, doubting nothing.

3. Possession, as we see plainly here, begins this side Jordan. Israel are directly bidden to possess themselves of the land of the Amorites, which is in fact a good land, and worthy of God to give. So with us: "godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." (1 Tim. iv. 8.) Yea, says the apostle, "all things are yours, whether . . . the world, or life,

only by the highway; I will not turn right or left. Thou shalt sell me food for money, that I may eat, and give me water for money, that I may drink: I will only pass through upon my feet; (*as the children of Esau who dwell in Seir did to me, and the Moabites who dwell in Ar;) until I shall pass over Jordan, into the land which Jehovah our God is giving us. But Sihon the king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him; for Jehovah thy God *f*hardened his spirit and made his heart obdurate, that he might give him into thy hand, as it is this day. And Jehovah said unto me, See, I have begun to give up Sihon and his land before thee: begin, take possession, that thou mayest possess his land.

e cf. Num. 20. 18-21.

f Ex. 9. 12.

And Sihon came out against us,—he and all his people, to battle at Jahatz; and Jehovah our God gave him up before us; and we smote him, and his sons, and all his people. And we took all his cities at that time, and put under ban every inhabited city, with the women and the little ones, we left none remaining. Only the cattle we took as booty for ourselves, and the spoil of the cities we had taken. From Aroer, which is on the bank of the river Arnon, and the city which is in the valley, and as far as Gilead, there was not a city inaccessible to us; Jehovah our God gave up to us all. Only unto the land of the children of Ammon thou approachedst not, the whole border of the river Jabbok, nor to the cities of the mountain, nor to whatever Jehovah our God had forbidden us.

or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." (1 Cor. iii. 21–23.) Here it is plain that we have possessions both sides of death, both banks of Jordan, yea, and Jordan itself.

Yet we may make very serious mistake none the less, as the two and a half tribes certainly did. What more natural for them than the language we have heard them use, when God had said to them, "Begin, take possession"? But Israel's land must be apportioned by lot; and they do not wait for the lot. The country suits them: it is fit for cattle, and they have cattle; thus, like Lot of old, they cannot trust God to choose for them,—they must choose for themselves. And they do choose peremptorily: they will not go over Jordan,—which they modify presently by undertaking to go and fight to give their brethren possession of the land which for themselves they refuse: to that refusal they hold fast.

The spiritual explains the natural here as so often elsewhere. As heavenly men the world belongs to us; but only to use as heavenly men. Gilead and Bashan may be ours as a dependency, but Canaan is the land of our inheritance and of our hearts. The world is ours, only as we are Christ's. It belongs to us, and therefore *we* do not belong to *it*.

(i.) The victory over Sihon, and the meaning of the whole history, so far as we could learn it, have been considered already. What is emphasized here, as suited to Moses' purpose, is, that *God* gave him into their hand, even the stubbornness which refused passage to the advancing host being of Him, the iniquity of the Amorites being now full, and so the ban upon them being dwelt on also, by which Israel became simply the executioners of the divine judgment. It was with them neither lust of possession nor passion for destroying which brought on Sihon and his people this merciless extirpation. The mercy was for the world, in rooting out of it a virulent evil. The indictment against them is given else-

2. (iii. 1-11.) Og.

[2] And we turned, and went up the way of Bashan; and [g] Og the king of Bashan came out against us,—he and all his people, to battle at Edrei. And Jehovah said unto me, Fear him not; for I have given him into thy hand, and all his people, and his land; and thou shalt do unto him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon. So Jehovah our God gave into our hands Og also, the king of Bashan, and all his people; and we smote him, until none were left to him remaining. And we took all his cities at that time; there was not a city which we took not from them,—sixty cities, all the region of [h] Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. All these cities were fortified with high walls, gates and bars, beside unwalled towns very many. And we put them under ban, as we had done to Sihon king of Heshbon, banning every inhabited city, with the women and the little ones. But all the cattle, and the spoil of the cities, we took as booty for ourselves. So we took at that time out of the hand of the two kings of the Amorites the land that is on this side Jordan from the river Arnon unto Mount Hermon ([i] Hermon the Sidonians call Sirion, and the Amorites call it Senir); all the cities of the level country, and all Gilead, and all Bashan, unto Salcah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan. But only Og king of Bashan remained of the residue of the giants: behold, his [j] bedstead was a bedstead of iron; is it not in Rabbah of the children of Ammon? nine cubits its length, and four cubits its breadth, after the cubit of a man.

3. (12-17.) The land acquired.

[3] And this land which we took in possession at that time, from Aroer which is on the river Arnon, and half Mount Gilead, and the cities thereof, gave I unto the [k] Reubenites and the Gadites. And the rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, the kingdom of Og, have I given unto the half tribe of Manasseh, all the region of Argob, even all Bashan; it was called the land of giants. [l] Jair the son of Manasseh took all the region of Argob to the border of the Geshurite and the Maachathite, and called them, even Bashan, Havvoth-Jair, unto this day. And

g Num. 21. 33-36.

h 1 Kings 4. 13.

i ch. 4. 48. Ps. 133. 3. Song 4. 8.

j 1 Sam. 17. 4. cf. Prov. 24. 30-34.

k Num. 32.

l Num. 32. 41.

where; and the execution of God's sentence put into Israel's hand was well calculated to impress them with a sense of divine holiness which should not leave them.

(ii.) The significance of Og and the conquest of Bashan has also been considered; nor does it seem possible here to add to it.

(iii.) The whole subject of the land will come before us, if the Lord permit, in the consideration of the book of Joshua, and we shall defer till then any attempt to read the significance of what we find here. That there is significance everywhere, we must not doubt: what Canaan was to Israel ought for us to find its parallel in spiritual import, surely. What must not this land, "the glory of all lands," "where the eyes of the Lord are continually," furnish to a believing study of it? Nothing has been done in this way as yet: has it been attempted? Shall we not find here certainly that "in all labor there is profit," and that "the soul of the diligent shall be made fat"?

I gave Gilead unto Machir. And unto the Reubenites and unto the Gadites I gave from Gilead even unto the valley of Arnon, the middle of the valley, and the boundary, even unto the river Jabbok, the border of the children of Ammon; the Arabah also, and Jordan, the boundary from Chinnereth unto the sea of the Arabah, the salt sea, beneath the slopes of Pisgah toward the sunrise.

4. (18-22.) Practical exhortation.

[4] And I commanded you at that time, saying, Jehovah your God hath given you this land to possess it: ye shall [m] pass over armed before your brethren the children of Israel,—all the men of valor. Only your wives, and your little ones, and your cattle (I know that ye have much cattle,) shall abide in your cities which I have given you, until Jehovah have given rest unto your brethren as unto you, and they also possess the land which Jehovah your God is giving them beyond Jordan; then shall ye return every man to his possession which I have given you. And I commanded [n] Joshua at that time, saying, Thine eyes have seen all that Jehovah did unto those two kings: so shall Jehovah do unto all the kingdoms to which thou passest over. Ye shall not fear them, for Jehovah your God is he that fighteth for you.

m Josh. 1. 14.

n ch. 31. 7, 8. Num. 27. 23.

5. (23-29.) God's way with Moses.

[5] And I [o] besought Jehovah at that time, saying, O Lord Jehovah, thou hast begun to show thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand: for what god is there in heaven or earth that can do according to thy works and according to thy might? Let me go over, I pray thee, and see that good land that is beyond Jordan,—that goodly mountain, and Lebanon. But Jehovah was [p] wroth with me on your account, and hearkened not unto me: and Jehovah said unto me, Let it suffice thee: [q] speak no more unto me of this thing. Go up to the top of [r] Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward and northward and southward and eastward, and see it with thine eyes; for thou shalt not go over this Jordan. But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see. And we abode in the valley over against [s] Beth-peor.

o cf. Matt. 26. 39.

p ch. 4. 21. Num. 20. 12.

q cf. 2 Cor. 12. 8, 9. 2 Sam. 22. 23.

r ch. 34. 1.

s ch. 4. 46.

(iv.) After the apportionment of the land already acquired, Moses reminds the people of the obligation of those entering into possession of it to take part with their brethren in the future conquest; to which Joshua also is encouraged with the assurance that the present success is but an earnest of the future. Jehovah is with them in unchanging strength and faithfulness.

(v.) And then, once more, he who had been Jehovah's instrument in bringing them out of Egypt seeks, with all the longing of his soul, to be permitted to go over Jordan, and see the good land beyond it. But there is no repentance with One who never speaks in haste, nor can mend what He speaks: Moses is refused, for the sake of the people, who must learn in him God's ways; but he is granted Pisgah, for there is no breach between holiness and love; and he shall see the land, with God.

(IV. 1-40.)

The exhortation of experience.

1. (vv. 1-8.) To wholehearted obedience, neither adding nor diminishing.

4. [1]And now hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments which I teach you, to do [them], that ye may live and possess the land which Jehovah the God of your fathers giveth you. Ye shall not [t]add unto the word which I command you, nor shall ye [u]take from it aught, that ye may keep the commandments of Jehovah your God which I command you. Your eyes have seen what Jehovah did because of [v]Baal-peor; for every man who went after Baal-peor Jehovah thy God destroyed out of thy midst, but ye who clave unto Jehovah your God are all of you alive unto this day. See, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as Jehovah my God commanded me, that ye might do so in the land whither ye are going to possess it. Keep, then, and do them: and it shall be your wisdom and your understanding in the eyes of the peoples that shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely a wise and understanding people is this great nation. For [w]what nation [so] great, to whom God hath come so nigh, as Jehovah our God is, in all we call upon him for? And what nation [so] great, that hath statutes and judgments so [x]righteous, as all this law which I set before you to-day?

2. (9-14.) The covenant.

[2]Only take [y]heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou [z]forget the things thine eyes saw, and that they depart not from thy heart all the days of thy life, but that thou mayest make them [a]known to thy sons and to thy sons' sons:—the [b]day that thou stoodest before Jehovah thy God in Horeb, when Jehovah said unto me, Gather the people together unto me, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn them and fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and teach them to their children. And ye

t Prov. 30.6. *cf.* Gen. 3.3. Rev. 22.18.

u *cf.* Rev. 22.19.

v Num. 25.1-9. Ps. 106.28. 1 Cor. 10.8. Gen. 6.1,2. 2 Cor. 6.14-18. 2 Cor. 7.1. Rev. 2.14, 20.

w *cf.* Rom. 3.1-4. Gal. 2.15. Rom. 11.1. *ctr.* Phil. 3.4-7. Col. 3.11.

x Ps. 19.7-11. *cf.* Rom. 7.7-16.

y ver. 15,23. chap. 11.16. Josh. 23.11. Ps. 119.9. Eph. 5.15.

z chap. 6.10-12. Ps. 106.13. *cf.* 2 Pet. 3.1,2.

a Ex. 12.26. chap. 6.20. Josh. 4.21-24. Eph. 6.4. 2 Tim. 3.14,15.

b Ex. 19.16-20.1.

4. The admonition follows, given by this experience. The history has a moral, as all man's history, indeed, when read aright; as all will be proved when it is first fully told out and accented right. Israel is a sample, not an exception: it is thus alone that it can have any voice for us, or be other than words spoken into the air.

(i.) The voice preaches obedience; but obedience is only that when it is uncompromising loyalty, never tampering with the statute-book. There must be no addition, which would exalt man's word to God's; no subtraction, reducing God's word to man's. For this there must be a single eye, so that the vision shall not be blurred: the commandment itself is light as it is life. This, experience had shown to Israel: where were the men that went after Baal-peor? But those who clave unto Jehovah lived. And what nation beside had ever such perfect statutes? What wisdom and understanding would be theirs who kept them!

(ii.) The people had met God, and they had His word:—two things that must go together for us also if we are to be adequately furnished for the path. The example of Job shows us the necessity of the first, for one beyond all others of his day in blamelessness of character. It was when his eye saw God that he came to abhor himself in dust and ashes. It is here man's will is broken, with his pride, and God's will becomes all in all to him. Then God, who is a consuming fire, speaks out of the midst of the fire, and the written Word becomes

came near, and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire to the heart of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness. And Jehovah spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of words, but ye saw no [c]form; only [ye heard] a voice. And he declared his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, [even] the [d]ten words; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone. And Jehovah commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the land whither ye are passing over to possess it.

3. (15-24.) They are to be separated to God, as the people of His inheritance.

[3]And take good heed to your souls, (for ye saw no form in the day that Jehovah spake to you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire,) lest ye [e]corrupt yourselves and make you a graven image in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any beast that is upon the earth, the likeness of any winged bird that flieth in the heavens, the likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters under the earth; and lest thou lift up thine eyes to the [f]heavens, and see the sun and the moon and the stars,—all the host of the heavens, and be drawn away, and worship them and serve them, which Jehovah thy God hath assigned unto all the peoples under the whole heavens. But you hath Jehovah taken, and [g]brought you forth out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be unto him a [h]people of inheritance, as at this day. And Jehovah was [i]angry with me on your account, and sware that I should not go over Jordan,—yea, that I should not go in unto that good land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance;

[c] Ex. 20. 18. 1 Kings 19. 11-13. 1 Tim. 6. 16. *cf.* Phil. 2. 6. Heb. 1. 3. Jno. 1. 18. Jno. 14. 8-11. Rev. 4. 2, 3. Matt. 18. 10.

[d] Ex. 34. 28. chap. 10. 4. *cf.* 2 Cor. 3. 2-11.

[e] Ex. 32. 7, 8. chap. 9. 12. chap. 32. 5. 2 Kings 23. 13. Rom. 1. 23-32.

[f] chap. 17. 3. 2 Kings 17. 16. 2 Kings 21. 3-5. Jer. 8. 1, 2. Ezek. 8. 16.

[g] Ex. 15. 17. Lev. 19. 36. Ps. 81. 10. *cf.* Col. 1. 13.

[h] Ex. 19. 4-6. *cf.* Tit. 2. 14. 1 Pet. 2. 9, 10.

[i] chap. 3. 26. chap. 32. 51.

the record of a living Voice, which has spoken, and which speaks to us. Nothing can possibly take the place of this real meeting with God,—this being face to face with His Majesty. Neither for Israel nor yet for Job was this a falling into a Father's arms,—the gospel had not been spoken, save in parables. But now there is a danger of God being *lost* in the Father, rather than (as He should be,) *manifested* in the Father. How much lack there is, among those too who have well learnt the gospel, of that broken spirit,—so priceless a thing with God,—and which is the unfailing consequence of having *met God!* For one who has done this, it is henceforth "*God* and the word of His grace:" the sweet and wholesome, childlike, not slavelike, "fear of God" will accompany the "comfort of the Holy Ghost," and the issue will be a persuasive witness for God, by which, as in the beginning, the Church will be "multiplied." (Acts ix. 31.) It is the glory of God in the face of him that has been with Him.

(iii.) After such a manner, then, as the day permitted, these two things appear in Israel's history. They were a people separated to God as His possession. *He* was toward them a jealous God, because of His love to them. They were to be His alone; and He was to be for them separate from all else, not confounded with any imagination of man's, or likeness of any thing in heaven or earth, who can be represented by nothing but Himself. For us, Christ as the "image of the invisible God" has only emphasized, not lessened, this unapproachable glory. God is indeed brought near; but if He draw near, the more we realize our nothingness in His presence.

but I shall die in this land, I shall not go over Jordan, but ye shall go over and possess that good land. Take heed to yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of Jehovah your God which he made with you, and make yourselves a graven image in the form of any thing that Jehovah thy God hath forbidden thee. For Jehovah thy God is a [j] consuming fire, a jealous God.

4. (25–31.) Failure forewarned.

[4] When thou shalt beget children and children's children, and ye shall have remained long in the land, and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image, the form of any thing, and do evil in the sight of Jehovah thy God, to provoke him to anger, I [k] call heaven and earth to witness against you this day that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whither ye pass over Jordan to possess it: ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall be utterly destroyed. And Jehovah shall [l] scatter you among the peoples, and ye shall be left few in number among the nations whither Jehovah shall lead you; and [m] there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither [n] see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell. And from thence ye shall seek Jehovah thy God, and thou shalt [o] find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. In thy distress, even when all these things shall come upon thee, in the [p] end of days, thou shalt return to Jehovah thy God, and shalt hearken unto his voice, —for Jehovah thy God is a [q] merciful God—he will not forsake thee, nor destroy thee, nor forget the covenant with thy fathers, which he sware unto them.

5. (32–40.) God with them their peculiar blessing above all people.

[5] For ask now of the former days, which were before thee, from the day in which God created man upon the earth, and from one end of the heavens to the other end of the heavens, whether there hath been any thing

j Lev. 10. 1–3. Num. 16. 35. Heb. 12.29. *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 12–15.

k chap. 30. 19. Is. 1. 2. Ps. 50. 4–6.

l Lev. 26.33. Jer. 9. 16. Ezek.22.15. 1 Kings 14. 15. Ps. 44. 11. Esth. 3. 8. 1 Pet. 1. 1. *cf.* Jer. 31. 10–12.

m Dan. 3. Jer. 44. 15–30.

n Ps. 115. 4–8. Ps. 135. 15–18. Dan. 5. 23.

o Dan. 9. 1–19. 1 Kings 8. 46–53.

p cf. Num. 24. 14–24. Is. 2. 2. Jer. 31. 8,9. Ezek. 38.8.

q Ex. 34. 6. Neh. 9. 17. Ps. 107.1–3. Mic. 7. 18.

We are His: if Israel were brought out of Egypt, the iron furnace, we are the subjects of a more wondrous and spiritual redemption. For Israel, this was the first argument of the law; for us, it is that which above all speaks of His title to us.

(iv.) But even as he speaks of that separation to Jehovah, which the love He had to them claimed at their hands, and in which lay all their glory and felicity, the shadow of the future sweeps over the soul of the prophet-lawgiver; and he sees their departure from Jehovah, their idolatry, to which God must give them up, only to enjoy it, not in the land which was devoted to Him, but scattered in that of strangers. There they would realize the miserable bondage they had chosen, until with their whole heart they should seek again the God of their fathers: seek, then to find; for such is the mercy of Him against whom they have rebelled, and His faithfulness to the unforgotten covenant.

Thus, before their actual possession of the land of promise, they are warned of how, though not forever, they will lose it. And so the Church, from the very beginning, was warned of like departure, the seeds of which already were found in the apostle's days, and would develop into a darker apostasy than that of Israel. Only the end here is the removal of her candlestick upon earth, while the true saints are caught up to heaven, that "*Israel*" may "bud and blossom, and fill the face of the earth with fruit."

(v.) God with them, that was their glory. Had any other nation heard His

such as this great thing, or hath been heard like it. Did [r] ever a people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? Or hath God assayed to go and [s] take him a nation out of the midst of a nation by trials, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand and by a stretched-out arm, even with great terrors, according to all that Jehovah your God hath done for you in Egypt, before your eyes? Unto thee it hath been shown, that thou mightest know that Jehovah he is God, there is none beside him. Out of [t] heaven hath he made thee hear his voice, that he might instruct thee; and upon [u] earth he hath made thee see his great fire, and thou hast heard his words out of the midst of the fire. And because he [v] loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and in person brought thee out by his great power, out of Egypt, to [w] dispossess before thee nations greater and mightier than thou, to bring thee in, to give thee their land for an inheritance, as at this day. Know therefore this day, and consider it in thy heart, that Jehovah he is God, in the heavens above and on the earth beneath: there is none else. And thou shalt keep his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may be well with thee and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest [x] prolong thy days upon the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee forever.

(*vv.* 41–43.)

How God can be with man.

5. Then Moses severed [y] three cities on this side Jordan toward the sunrising, that the slayer might flee thither

[r] ver. 7.
[s] Ex. 3. 8.
[t] Ex. 19. 18.
[u] *cf.* Heb. 12. 25.
[v] chap. 7. 8. chap. 23. 5. chap. 33. 3. 1 Kings 10. 9. Hos. 11. 1. *cf.* Jno. 3. 16. Eph. 5. 25–27.
[w] Ex. 23. 28–30. Ex. 33. 2. Josh. 13. 6.
[x] Ex. 20. 12. ch. 5. 33. ch. 11. 9, 21. Ps. 91. 16. Prov. 3. 16. Is. 65. 20. *cfr.* Ps. 110. 23, 24. Acts 7. 54–60. Phil. 1. 21–26.
[y] Num. 35. 9–14. Josh. 20. 7, 8.

voice out of the fire kindled by His presence, enabled to hear it and to live? Had any other people been taken to be His own, plucked out of the grasp of another nation with such a hand of power, with signs and wonders and mighty deeds? The question implies that there could be but one answer then. Now, we can speak of God more marvelously displayed,—of a salvation greater and more wondrous. How pregnant, then, should be for us Moses' conclusion here: "Know therefore, and consider it in thy heart, that Jehovah He is God, in the heavens above and in the earth beneath: He, and none else"! Do we always act as though we believed it? Are His commandments kept in simplicity, as if we did? *Absolute* obedience, is it so common among us yet? And this is the measure of faith, and of the love by which faith works.

5. This part of Deuteronomy is closed with a significant act on the part of Moses. He sets apart three cities of refuge for the land already in possession on the east of Jordan. The spiritual meaning of these cities of refuge has been already considered in general; here we shall find it extended and developed in a way full of the deepest interest to every spiritual mind. How full of interest that which, penetrating beneath a comparatively unattractive surface, discovers to us the thoughts of God, then hidden, (and of necessity hidden,) when the events passed into history, but preserved for us, nevertheless, in the record of them by the hands of those who, led of the Spirit, thus immeasurably transcended their own knowledge! Here, it is evident that it is the inner meaning that must illumine the history, and that those who stop short of this lose all the power of the history. We shall be easily content, for the sake of showing, as God may grant, this inner meaning, to be counted romancers and fabulists by the many

who should kill his neighbor [z] inadvertently, and hated him not in times past, and that, fleeing to one of these cities, he might live: [a] Bezer in the wilderness, in the level country, for the Reubenites, and [b] Ramoth in Gilead for the Gadites, and Golan in Bashan for the Manassites.

[z] Num. 35. 22. *cf.* Acts 3. 17. 1 Tim. 1. 13.
[a] Josh. 20. 8.
[b] 2 Chron. 18. 2. 2 Kings 9. 1.

(alas!) with whom divine history is nothing *more* than history, and with whom their "immanent deity" is too impartial to favor an Israelite chronicler beyond a Greek or Roman historian. Science may, for the purpose of anatomy, rejoice in the carcass rather than the living form; but for us, the breath of the Spirit of life is in these pages, and we will not give them up to that which, having used its knife upon them, will restore them to us in a state fit only for the charnel-house.

These cities of refuge, set at intervals through the land of Israel, are a garrison for it from God, which even still, in ruin, as the land is, watch over it, as ministers of unchanging grace, and prophets of now near-coming glory. This people of God, separated to Him in the wonderful way attested by their annals,—what, after all, has been their condition for many and long centuries of subjection to hostile races? They have been strangers and wanderers, Cainlike, and indestructible as Cain,—a nation surviving even in death, but as if to perpetuate only the memory of the doom under which they lie,—the doom of an awful fratricide. Such is, in fact, their condition,—a condition hopeless to most yet, though it may be now with a streak of gray dawn widening upon it. But these cities of refuge have all the time been watch-towers set to face eastward, ramparts round prostrate Zion, upon which the watchmen hold not their peace, and give Him no rest, till He establish it again,—yea, till He make it a praise upon earth. (Isa. lxii. 6, 7.)

They are His pledge, in view of what has in fact come to pass, that what He has foreseen cannot thwart His purposes, nor their sin His long-foreshown grace. Preach they may in sackcloth, but it is good tidings that they preach, of a place of security even for homicides,—for those for whom *His* plea shall yet avail, "They know not what they do."

Thus alone can their blessing come—can the favor which of old distinguished them be again shown them; thus only can God be with man at any time. The Crucified is our shelter from the avenger, and the pledge of full possession of our destined inheritance; and the more we contemplate the type here, the more we shall see the features of Christ and of our blessing in Him.

Six cities gird the whole land,—the land as far as Israel in the past enjoyed it: in their number thus speaking of the victory of divine grace over and in them. Three only are here: Jordan dividing equally the six into two threes, the number of testimony and that of the divine fullness. This victory is indeed such a witness: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as they are for the first time fully made known in the New Testament, so it is in personal activity in our behalf that they are manifested.

At present, we have only three to consider: first, for the Reubenites, Bezer, in the wilderness, in the table-land. "Bezer" means "fortification," a place inclosed, sometimes a "store" or treasure so inclosed. The application to our Lord scarcely needs enlarging on. God's inclosure can never be a mere defense; it must be planted, like the first garden, with "every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food." Or, better than all, when *we* are thus shut up, He makes us a "garden inclosed," out of which for Him north wind and south alike make the spices to flow out. In Him, we are not merely with evil and enemy shut out; we are *shut in* with blessing.

And this for the Reubenite, self-willed, impetuous against restraint as we have seen him,—a restraint which shall overcome and hold him fast, remould, deliver him from himself, make him fruitful. Blessed be God!

Bezer is "in the wilderness;" and it is even in this world that this great gift

DIVISION 2. (Chap. iv. 44–xxx.)

The Exposition and Enforcement of the Law.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. iv. 44–xi.)

The governing principle, or the law in its essence.

The text to be expounded.

(IV. 44–VI. 3.)

1. (iv. 44–v. 21.) The law at Horeb.

1. AND this is the law which Moses set before the children of Israel; these are the testimonies and the statutes and the judgments which Moses spake unto the children of Israel when they had come out of

is made our own. The life-boat is needed for the seas, the armor for the battle; and "as He is, so are we *in this world*."

Bezer is also "in the level country,"—the *mishor*,—a word which in Isa. xi. 4 and Mal. ii. 6 is used for "equity." It is indeed thus that Christ has become a refuge for us,—no mere escape, but *righteousness*.

Next, we have Ramoth in Gilead for the Gadites. "Ramoth" means "heights," as "Gilead" a "rocky" region. As security would be attained in a level country by a simple inclosure, such as we find in Bezer, so in a rocky district the natural place of security would be a *height*. The plural form may be, in Hebrew, only intensification. And here it seems scarcely possible to miss the application. Christ our refuge is indeed exalted to a height which renders it impossible for any earthly thing to assail or threaten our security in Him. In Him, risen out of death and ascended to heaven, *we* are "risen together," and "seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." No difficulties of the rough path we tread can affect for a moment our perfect peace in Him whose path is ended in the joy of victory and His work accomplished. Heaven can be no surer to us when we are in it than in Christ having gone in for us, our Representative Head. And this, how comforting for the Gadite assailed by a troop, and yet thus able and certain to conquer in the end! Jacob's wondrous prophecy, we can see, accompanies us all through, and, as a foundation, governs all the superstructure.

We have yet one of these cities remaining,—"Golan in Bashan for the Manassites." To Golan is assigned very diverse meanings: we take, as always in these cases, that which is in most harmony with its context, and has thus the sanction of fullest significance. The idea suggested by Bashan, the kingdom of Og, we have already considered (Num. xxi. 33–35). It speaks of pleasure, in a bad sense,—luxury, sensuous pleasure, with which even the common acceptation of "Bashan" as "rich soil" is not discordant. It contained then, probably,—does now certainly,—some of the richest land in Syria. "Golan," in keeping with all this, means "joy,"—even that which expresses itself in bodily movement, "exultation." We "rejoice in Christ Jesus," says the apostle: "boast," or "exult," is the better term. What more needful for a Manassite, especially, as here, one who has failed in steadfast purpose, than Christ in that character as a "refuge" from himself? Let us not make light of joy, if it be right joy,—that is, joy in the right Object; but let us remember that joy even in salvation is not enough, and may fail us in the time of need. Only that joy in Him "whom, having not seen, ye love, in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice" is "joy unspeakable and full of glory." (1 Pet. i. 8.)

Thus if our life-history, like that of Israel, afford us little material for boasting in ourselves, these cities of refuge fittingly remind us of what is our security and our full resource. Like the Nazarite with his vow fulfilled, the end of our course shall only make our divorce from self complete, and Christ in absolute attainment our occupation forever. Amen.

DIV. 2.

WE now come to that exposition and enforcement of the law which occupies evi-

Egypt, on this side Jordan, in the valley opposite Beth-peor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, whom Moses and the children of Israel smote, after they came forth out of Egypt; and they possessed his land, and the land of Og king of Bashan, two kings of the Amorites who were on this side Jordan toward the sunrising; from Aroer, which is on the bank of the river Arnon, even as far as Mount Sion, which is Hermon; and all the Arabah on this side Jordan, eastward even unto the sea of the Arabah under the slopes of Pisgah.

And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the judgments which I speak in your ears to-day, and learn them, and observe them to do them. Jehovah our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. Jehovah made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us,—us, all of us, who are here alive to-day. Jehovah spake unto you in the mount face to face, out of the midst of the fire,—I stood [c]between Jehovah and you at that time, to declare to you what Jehovah spake, (for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up unto the mount,) saying,

[c] Ex. 19. 20. Ex. 20. 19. Ex. 32. 30-35. *cf.* Gal. 3. 19, 20. *ctr.* 1 Tim. 2. 5, 6. Heb. 8. 6. Heb. 9. 15. Heb. 12.24.

dently the body of the book. In the first of its three subdivisions we have its governing principle,—that is, of course, its essence, and this is embodied in the first commandment of its first table. In the second, we have the illustration of it in special commands. In the third, its sanctions,—the rewards and penalties which actualize it as law.

SUBD. 1.

IN the first subdivision there are five sections; in which we find, first, the law itself, and in the repetition of this we are called back to the manner and circumstances of its first announcement. In the first two commandments of the law, by which God is enthroned in the affections of His people, the spirit of the whole is seen. For this, the testimony to Him, and to the salvation He has wrought for them, is to be constantly maintained,—kept before their own eyes, and taught their children. For this also all toleration of the false gods of the heathen and of their worship is forbidden: they are to be a people holy to their God, the only true God. Then they are to beware of self-righteousness, which the enjoyment of His favor might engender; and in this, the lessons of the wilderness,—of their humbling and discipline there, and of their need of it,—are to have their permanent use. Then responsibility is finally insisted on, and the issue of their conduct in blessing or in curse.

1. (i.) The exposition of the law begins with the place in which and the circumstances under which it is given,—after their deliverance from Egypt, Jordan reached, the land of the two Amorite kings already in possession. It is evident that these are motives and encouragements to obedience,—pledges of the full blessing yet to come.

In a similar interest, Israel are carried back to Horeb, and placed amid the solemn surroundings of the first giving of the law. Many of the eyes which were upon Moses now had beheld the glory of the fiery mount, as he reminds them. Face to face, out of the midst of the fire, God had talked with them. They needed no argument as to His being or power; but that power had been used in their behalf, and the first words of Him who spake declared Him their Deliverer out of Egyptian bondage. He did not claim their love without having done that which would secure it for Him. But this love must have reverence in it also:

[d] I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage: [e] thou shalt have no other gods beside me.

[f] Thou shalt not make thyself any graven image, [even] any form of that which is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor serve them; for I, Jehovah, thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, even unto the third and unto the fourth [generation] of them that hate me; and showing mercy to thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

[g] Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain; for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain.

[h] Keep the Sabbath day to sanctify it, as Jehovah thy God commanded thee. Six days thou shalt labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of Jehovah thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work,—thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy servant, nor thy handmaid, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: that thy servant and thy handmaid may rest as well as thou. And [i] remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that Jehovah thy God brought thee

d Ex. 20. 2. Ps. 81. 10. *cf.* 1 Pet. 3. 18.

e Ex. 20. 3. ch. 28. 14. 1 Kings 11. 4. 10. Jer. 25. 6, 7. Ju. 2. 12. 2 Chron. 28. 25. *cf.* Phil. 1. 21.

f Ex. 20. 4-6. ch. 27. 15. Ju. 17. 3, 4. 2 Kings 21. 7. Is. 40. 19-25. Ps. 78. 58. Ezek. 8. 3, 5. *cf.* Eph. 5. 5 with 1 Cor. 10. 7, 11, 14. Rev. 13. 14, 15. Rev. 21. 8.

g Ex. 20. 7. Lev. 19. 12. Lev. 24. 10-17. Ps. 139. 20. Prov. 30. 9. *cf.* Mark 7. 6, 7. Jas. 5. 12. Matt. 5. 33-37.

h Ex. 20. 8-11; Gen. 2. 1-3; Lev. 23. 3; Num. 15. 32-36; Neh. 9. 14; Neh. 13. 15-22; Is. 56. 2; Is. 58. 13, 14; Is. 66. 23; *ctr.* Col. 2. 16, 17; Rom. 7. 4; 2 Cor. 5. 17; Jno. 20. 1.

i ch. 15. 12-15; ch. 16. 2; ch. 24. 18, 22; Eph. 2. 11-17.

nothing is more offensive than that familiar tone assumed toward God by some who have been moulded upon the lax gospel often preached to-day. Yet God would have us near Him,—truly near,—the nearer, the more His majesty will impress us, the infinite distance between ourselves and Him will penetrate us.

True, it was here the fiery mount: for the people had accepted law, and put themselves under it; yet the fear with which God sought to impress them was preservative, and in that sense gracious. And there remains for us, after grace has fully come, a "fear of the Lord" which is not terror, but which allows no levity, and along with which "the comfort of the Holy Ghost" is ever found. (Acts ix. 31.)

Spoken before written, the law of the Lord is a living reality; and while it may be a "ministry of death," is never a dead letter. Our hearts may well delight to recognize in it all through, indeed, a "ministry" meant to blight only the pretentious pride and self-righteousness of man, and thus deliver him,—to shut him up among those "lost" for whom a Saviour is provided.

In the recapitulation of the law, it is evident, as especially in the fourth commandment, that Moses does not confine himself to a literal quoting of the divine words. The ground for the observance of the Sabbath is here, not the six days' making of heaven and earth, but the redemption of the people out of Egypt. Of course, the one reason does not conflict with the other; and indeed the latter is a needed supplement to the former. Man as the creature of God can only now by grace be sustained in this place, and at rest; and after his wilderness-history is closed, as it is in Deuteronomy, this comes in more naturally than in Exodus, where the people stand as yet under the unbroken covenant. God's Word is perfect and divine in every part.

out thence with a mighty hand and with a stretched-out arm: therefore hath Jehovah thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day.

[j] Honor thy father and thy mother, as Jehovah thy God commanded thee, that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may be well with thee in the land that Jehovah thy God giveth thee.

[k] Thou shalt not kill.

[l] Nor shalt thou commit adultery.

[m] Nor shalt thou steal. [bor.

[n] Nor shalt thou bear false witness against thy neigh-

[o] Nor shalt thou desire thy neighbor's wife; nor shalt thou covet thy neighbor's house; his field, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbors.

2. (v. 22-vi. 3.) In relation to God by a mediator.

[1] These words Jehovah spake unto all your congregation, in the mount, from the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice, and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone and gave them to me. And it was so, when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, while the mountain burned with fire, that ye drew near unto me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders, and ye said, Behold, Jehovah our God hath shown us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God may speak with man, and he [still] live. And now [p] why should we die? for this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of Jehovah our God any more, we shall die: for who is there of all flesh that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have done, and lived? Go [q] thyself near, and hear all that Jehovah our God shall say; and speak thou to us all that Jehovah our God shall speak to thee, and we will hearken and do it. And Jehovah heard the voice of your words when ye spake unto me; and Jehovah said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken unto thee: they have done well in all that they have spoken. [r] Oh that there were such a heart in them,

[j] Ex. 20. 12. Eph. 6. 1-3. ch. 27. 16. Prov. 30. 17. Luke 2. 41-51. *ctr.* Rom. 1. 30.

[k] Ex. 20. 13. *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 15. Acts 13. 15.

[l] Ex. 20. 14. Matt. 19. 9, 18. *cf.* Matt. 5. 28. Jer. 3. 9.

[m] Ex. 20. 15. Ex. 22. 1-4. Rom. 13. 8-10. Prov. 30. 9. Zech. 5. 3, 4. Eph. 4. 28.

[n] Ex. 20. 16. ch. 19. 16-19. Prov. 21. 28. Matt. 26. 59. Acts 6. 13, 14. *ctr.* Rev. 1. 5.

[o] Ex. 20. 17. Josh. 7. 21. 1 Cor. 6. 10. Col. 3. 5. Luke 12. 15. *ctr.* Acts 20. 33. *cf.* Heb. 13. 5, 6.

[p] Ex. 20. 19-21. *cf.* Rom. 4. 15.

[q] *cf.* Num. 12. 8. *ctr.* Eph. 2. 13, 14. Heb. 10. 19-22.

[r] Is. 48. 18, 19. *cf.* Luke 19. 41, 42. 2 Pet. 3. 9.

In the fifth commandment, the words, "as Jehovah thy God commanded thee," brought in, show clearly that Moses is not simply repeating. The same words are found in the fourth commandment, but might be thought in that place to refer to the first institution of the Sabbath, when the manna fell. He adds here also, "that it may be well with thee." Except in the fourth commandment, the differences are, however, slight.

(ii.) Moses, after the recapitulation of the law, dwells upon their need of a mediator,—a need met, obviously, only typically in himself. A greater than Moses speaks to us here through him; and we see how Deuteronomy presents to us the great features of the history as suited to us. Owning that Jehovah had actually spoken to them, and they lived, they yet declare this impossible to last; and God owns this (from *their* stand-point) as true. But then the legal covenant

to fear me and keep my commandments always, that it might be well with them and with their children forever! Go, say unto them, Return unto your tents. But as for thee, stand thou here by me, and I will speak unto thee all the commandments and the statutes and judgments which thou shalt teach them, that they may do them in the land that I give them to possess it. Ye shall therefore observe to do as Jehovah your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. In all the way that Jehovah your God commanded you shall ye walk, that ye may live, and it may be well with you, and ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess.

And these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments which Jehovah your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land which ye pass over to possess: that thou mightest fear Jehovah thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments which I command thee,—thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life, and that thy days might be prolonged. Hear, therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it, that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase exceedingly, as Jehovah, the God of thy fathers, hath spoken unto thee, in a land flowing with [s]milk and honey.

The exposition begins.

(VI. 4-25.)

1. (vv. 4, 5.) The first commandment, and its demand of the whole, man.

2. [t]'Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is [u]one Jehovah. And thou shalt [v]love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

[s] Ex. 3. 8. Lev. 20. 24. Num. 13. 27. ch. 11. 9. Josh. 5. 6. Jer. 11. 5. Ezek. 20. 6. *cf.* Cant. 4. 11. Joel 3. 18.

[t] Mark 12. 29, 30.

[u] 1 Tim. 2. 5. 1 Cor. 8. 5, 6. Eph. 4. 4-6. Zech. 14. 9. *cf.* Jno. 1. 1.

[v] ch. 10. 12. ch. 11. 1. ch. 30. 6. Ps. 31. 23. *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 8-21.

was plainly hopeless. One only reason can there be why God and His creature should not meet together in security. No necessary distance between finitude and the Infinite One could make His presence destructive to what His hands had fashioned. No, it is sin which absolutely demands judgment, unless Another can intervene in righteousness in his behalf; and here Moses can make no real atonement, as we know. He is a shadow, not the substance. Man's refuge is not from God, but in God Himself.

2. Such is the text, and now we come to the exposition. Moses sums up in two brief sentences what the law implies in its first table. First, the unity and immutability of God: "Jehovah our God is one Jehovah:" founded upon this, His claim to the undivided allegiance of man,—"Thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." If there be but one God, there is none beside to divide the heart with; and Jehovah claims in the most absolute way the whole of it. The words stand for the inner man, with all his affections, and in their full energy. And this is the reasonable claim of the Creator to the full answer of the heart to Him who created him, and in whose service alone all his faculties find their full occupation, rest, and satisfaction. All freedom apart from this is only slavery. All slavery here is only freedom; as he knew well who could say, "To me, to live is Christ," and who in his epistle to the Romans signs himself His "bondsman,"—"Paul, bondsman of Jesus Christ." (Rom. i. 1, *Greek.*) Yet none can insist more earnestly that "we have *not* received the spirit of bondage." (viii. 15.) To live in love, and serve Him who is love, is indeed the opposite.

2. (6-9.) The testimony to be maintained.

3. (10-15.) Its memory not to be lost amid the enjoyment of possession.

[2] And these words which I command thee this day shall be upon thy [w] heart; and thou shalt reiterate them to thy [x] children, and speak of them when thou [y] sittest in thy house, and when thou [z] walkest by the way, and when thou [a] liest down, and when thou risest up; and thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy [b] hand, and they shall be for [c] frontlets between thine eyes; and thou shalt [d] write them upon the posts of thy house, and upon thy gates.

[3] And it shall be, when Jehovah thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he sware unto thy fathers,—to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee,—great and goodly cities which thou [e] buildedst not, and houses full of all good things which thou filledst not, and cisterns hewn out which thou hewedst not, vineyards and olive-trees which thou plantedst not, and thou shalt eat and be full, take heed to thyself, lest thou [f] forget Jehovah who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Jehovah thy God shalt thou fear, and him shalt thou serve, and [g] swear by his name. Ye shall not go after [h] other gods, of the gods of the peoples that are round about you: (for Jehovah thy God in the midst of thee is a jealous God;) lest the anger of Jehovah thy God be kindled against thee, and he destroy thee from the face of the earth.

w Ps.119.11. Prov. 4. 23.
x Gen.18.19. Eph. 6. 4. *cfr.* 1 Sam. 3. 12, 13.
y cf. Ps. 1. 2.
z cf. Jno. 4. 6-26. Luke 24.13 -28.
a cf. Luke 8. 22-25.
b Prov. 7. 3.
c Ex. 13. 9, 16. ch. 11. 18. Gen. 20. 16.
d cf. Ex. 12. 7. *ctr.* Is.57.8
e cf. Rom. 4. 4, 5. Jno. 14.2,3.
f Ju. 3. 7. ch. 8. 11,14, 19. Heb. 2. 1.
g cf. 2 Kings 3. 14. Jer. 16. 14, 15. *ctr.* Amos 8. 14.
h ch.5.7,etc.

(ii.) Whose they were, they were to remind themselves and others at all times, and on all occasions. Their confession of God was to be of the most open character. How great a help and strength to the soul itself is this conspicuous putting God foremost! "I have set the Lord always before me" has necessarily for its companion-word, "He is at my right hand: I shall not be moved." (Ps. xvi. 8.) God's seal is for the forehead, not the back of the head; and how many are saved by it from the devil's locusts! (Rev. ix. 4.) Nor does the apostle hesitate to say, "With the mouth *confession* is made unto *salvation*." (Rom. x. 10.) Let us not think it legal to insist upon commandment, and to write upon every available space a "Thus saith the Lord." Such a consecration of things is the way to prevent the devil's scribbling, who has not the least hesitation or delicacy in appropriating every vacant spot. God's word is no intrusion, and never out of place. By it the heavens were framed, and the earth established; and still it establishes, harmonizes, gives fullest meaning, character, beauty, to every thing. It is no more out of place any where than a ray of sunshine is; and, like it, glorifies what it rests upon.

(iii.) But, alas! then as now, and now as then, the very fullness of the blessing enjoyed might cause forgetfulness of the gracious hand from which it came. "Fullness of bread" had of old been the destruction of Sodom. Trial and necessity awake the consciousness of man's need of God, while without want he may lose easily the sense of his still existing dependence. Egypt, the type of the world away from Him, we have seen to be fed by her unfailing river. Mercies thus may through our pride and willfulness become curses, so that plagues shall have to become our mercies. In this condition the gods which man's own heart has devised are more attractive than the glorious God who is our Creator, not our creature; and Israel can go after the idols of Canaan—of the nations they have seen driven out before Jehovah—away from Him who had given them these for a possession.

Of this, then, they are warned beforehand, that they may retain Him in their

4. (16-25.) The practical effect, and the personal experience.

[i] Ye shall not [l]tempt Jehovah your God as ye tempted him in Massah. Ye shall diligently observe the commandments of Jehovah your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he commanded thee. And thou shalt do that which is right and good in Jehovah's eyes; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest go in and possess the good land of which Jehovah sware unto thy fathers, to thrust out all thine enemies from before thee, as Jehovah hath spoken.

[i] Ex. 17. 2, 7. ch. 33. 8. Matt. 4. 5-7.

When thy son [j]asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies and the statutes and the judgments which Jehovah our God hath commanded you? then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's [k]bondmen in Egypt, and Jehovah brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand; and Jehovah gave signs and wonders, great and grievous, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his house, before our eyes. And he brought us out from thence [l]that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers. And Jehovah commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear Jehovah our God, always for our good, that he might preserve us alive, as at this day. And it shall be [m]righteousness for us, when we observe to do all these commandments before Jehovah our God, as he commanded us.

[j] ver. 7. Ex. 12. 26. Josh. 4. 21.

[k] ch. 5. 15.

[l] Ex. 3. 8.

[m] cf. Gal. 3. 21. Rom. 10. 5.

The sanctification of the land, by the extirpation of the Canaanite idolaters.

(VII.)

3. When Jehovah thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and shall [n]cast out many nations from before thee,—the Hittite, and the Girgash-

[n] Ex. 34. 24. Lev. 18. 24.

fear, serve Him, and swear by His name. The God who loves them is jealous of their affections. They must choose between that love heretofore so fruitful to them and the wrath which will alike be fruitful; for indifferent He cannot be.

(iv.) They must not tempt Jehovah, then, as they tempted Him in Massah. There, it was, in fact, belief in His indifference. They said, "Is the Lord among us, or not?" He had been, surely; but in their change of circumstances, they had imagined fickleness in Him, and that His shoulder had thrown off the burden it had assumed. How little we judge it our sin that we have not counted on Him, that we have judged Him capable of abandoning the objects of His choice! No: He would fill His place; let it be only their care to fill theirs. Let them diligently observe His commandments, which were also His testimonies, and the result could not but follow—that it should be well with them, and that they should go in to possess the land.

One blessed experience they had, and which was to be their testimony to the generations following. They had been bond-slaves in Egypt, and Jehovah had broken their bonds to bring them forth. This He had enshrined for their remembrance in those ordinances which, as they abode, should be testimonies that *He* abode still, their changeless God and Saviour. Thus was perpetuated among them the memory of a love which in all else manifested itself for them,—statutes which would be righteousness to those who observed them, and for their good alway: assurances of what He who gave them was in His own nature, as loving righteousness,—who commands love, because He loves. So in man also does conscience testify to the one of these, as the heart of parent, brother, friend testify to the other. In these, man cannot but be, however feebly, the reflection of his Maker.

ite, and the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite,—[o] seven nations greater and mightier than thou; and when Jehovah thy God shall give them up before thee, and thou shalt smite them,—then thou shalt [p] utterly destroy them: thou shalt make no [q] covenant with them, nor show them favor. And thou shalt make no [r] marriages with them: thou shalt not give thy daughter unto his son, nor take his daughter for thy son. For he will [s] turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods; and the anger of Jehovah will be kindled against you, and he will destroy thee quickly. But thus shall ye deal with them: ye shall [t] break down their altars, and shatter their pillars, and cut down their Asherah-[images], and [u] burn their graven images with fire. For thou art a people [v] holy unto Jehovah thy God: Jehovah thy God hath [w] chosen thee to be a [x] peculiar people for himself, above all the peoples that are upon the face of the earth. [y] Not because ye were more in number than any peoples did Jehovah set his love on you and choose you, for ye were fewest of all peoples; but because Jehovah [z] loved you, and because he would keep the [a] oath which he sware unto your fathers, hath Jehovah brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And thou knowest that Jehovah thy God, he is God, the [b] faithful God, keeping covenant and mercy to a thousand generations with those that love him and keep his commandments; and [c] repaying those that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not defer to him that hateth him; to his face will he repay him. Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them.

And it shall be, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep and do them, that Jehovah thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy that he sware unto thy fathers. And he will love thee, and bless thee, and [d] multiply thee: he will even bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy ground,—thy corn, and thy new wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and

o Acts 13.19.

p Ex. 17.14. *cfr.* Ju. 1. 27-36.

q Josh. 9.11. Ju. 2. 2.

r Gen. 6. 2. Ju. 3. 6.

s 1 Kings 11. 1-8.

t Ju. 2. 2.

u Ex. 32. 20.

v ch. 26. 19. Heb. 3. 1.

w *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 2. 1 Pet. 2. 9. ch. 4. 37.

x *cf.* Tit. 2. 14.

y *cf.* Rom. 9. 7-13. Eph. 1. 4. Eph. 2. 5.

z ch. 4. 37.

a Gen. 26. 3. Heb. 6. 16-20.

b ch. 32. 4. Mal. 3. 6.

c Ex. 20. 5.

d Lev. 26. 9. ch. 28. 63.

3. So far as to Israel, simply looked at as from within: a sterner duty awaited them as to the land into which Jehovah was about to bring them. They were completely to destroy out of it the Canaanite inhabitants, showing them no mercy, making no covenant or alliance with them. Over and over again the cause of this has been explained. They were a people whose iniquity was now full, as in Abraham's time it yet was not. (Gen. xv.) The land itself was spuing them out for their abominations, and Israel was in this respect but the executioner of divine judgment, not of their own passion or lust of acquisition. Instead of destroying them, as He might, by plague or famine, He chose Israel to perform this office, and thus gave His people themselves the most solemn lesson that could be given them, in the holiness of His own nature, and in what sin is before Him. They themselves would incur similar awful judgments if they

the ewes of thy flock, in the land which Jehovah sware unto thy fathers to give thee: blessed shalt thou be among all peoples; there shall not be male or female [e]barren among you or among your cattle. And Jehovah will take away from thee all [f]sickness, and he will put upon thee none of the grievous diseases of [g]Egypt which thou knowest, but will put them upon all that hate thee. And thou shalt consume all the peoples which Jehovah thy God giveth up to thee: thine eye shall not pity them, and thou shalt not serve their gods, for that will be a snare to thee.

If thou say in thy heart, These nations are [h]more than I: how can I dispossess them? thou shalt not be afraid of them; thou shalt remember well what Jehovah thy God did unto Pharaoh and unto all Egypt,—the great trials which thine eyes saw, and the signs and the wonders and the mighty hand and the stretched-out arm wherewith Jehovah thy God brought thee out: so shall Jehovah thy God do unto all the peoples of whom thou art afraid. And, moreover, Jehovah thy God shall send the [i]hornet among them, until those that are left, and that hide themselves from thee, are destroyed. Thou shalt not be afraid of them; for Jehovah thy God is in the midst of thee, a great God and to be feared. And Jehovah will put out those nations before thee [j]little by little: thou shalt not consume them quickly lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee. But Jehovah thy God shall give them up before thee, and shall discomfit them with a great discomfiture until they are destroyed. And he shall give their kings into thy hand, and thou shalt destroy their names from under heaven: and there shall not a man be able to stand before thee till thou hast destroyed them. The graven images of their gods ye shall burn with fire: thou shalt not covet the silver or the gold that is on them, nor take it to thee, lest thou be snared with it: for it is abomination to Jehovah thy God; and thou shalt not bring an abomination into thy house, and be under the curse like it; but thou shalt detest it utterly and abhor it utterly, for it is a cursed thing.

[e] Ex. 23. 26. Gen. 16. 1 with Gen. 17. 15, 16. Gen. 25. 21. 1 Sam. 1. 2. *cf.* Is. 54. 1-6.

[f] Ex. 23. 25. *cf.* Is. 33. 24.

[g] Ex. 15. 26. ch. 28. 60.

[h] ch. 4. 38. Ps. 18. 17. 2 Kings 6. 14-17. *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 4.

[i] Ex. 23. 28. Josh. 24. 12. *cf.* Ju. 7. 22.

[j] Ex. 23. 30. Ju. 2. 22. *cf.* Josh. 1. 3. Phil. 3. 15, 16.

followed them in their sin, of which their loathsome gods of lust and murder were the full outcome and expression. There must be no dalliance with this evil, no league of any kind with those infected with it. Axe and fire must deal with all its symbols, and Israel must be wholly devoted to Him who had set His love upon them in all their insignificance, and in that love, and faithful to His promise to their fathers, had now redeemed them to Himself. Thus they knew God, this true and faithful God,—faithful in holy judgment as in loving mercy.

How needful all this reiteration Israel's after-history shows abundantly. Here, therefore, follows the detail of various blessing, just such things as every man values, which would go with obedience; while the power of God, which they had witnessed in Egypt, would be against their enemies and consume them; if slowly, even this in tender mercy to them, lest the wild beasts should increase too much in the vacant land.

(VIII.–X. 11.)

Lessons of the wilderness.

1. (viii.) Jehovah's care.

4. [k]All the commandment which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which Jehovah sware unto your fathers. And thou shalt [k]remember all the way which Jehovah thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to [l]humble thee and [m]prove thee, to know what was in thy heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to [n]hunger, and fed thee with the [o]manna, which thou knewest not, nor did thy fathers know, that he might make thee know that [p]man doth not live by bread alone, but by whatever proceedeth out of the mouth of Jehovah doth man live. Thy [q]raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy [r]foot swell these forty years. And thou knowest in thy heart that as a man [s]chasteneth his son, so Jehovah thy God chasteneth thee; and thou shalt keep the commandments of Jehovah thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him.

For Jehovah thy God bringeth thee into a [t]good land, a land of [u]water-brooks, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of [v]wheat and barley, and [w]vines and fig-trees and pomegranates, a land of oil-olives and honey; a land where thou shalt eat bread without [x]scareeness, where thou shalt lack nothing; a land whose [y]stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou shalt dig [z]copper. And thou shalt eat and be full, and [a]bless Jehovah thy God for the good land that he hath given thee. Take heed to thyself that

t Ex. 3. 8; Num. 14. 7, 8; ch. 3. 25; Josh. 23. 13; Ezek. 20.6. *u* ch. 11. 10-12; *cf.* Jno. 7. 38, 39; Rev. 22. 1. *v* ch. 32. 14; Josh. 5. 11, 12; Ps. 81. 16; Ps. 147. 14; Jer. 31. 12; Joel 2. 24, 25; *cf.* Jno. 12. 24. *w* Num. 13. 23; *cf.* Jno. 15. 1; Rev. 22. 2. *x cf.* ch. 28. 47, 48; Luke 15. 17. *y* Is. 60. 17; *cf.* Dan. 2. 41. *z cf.* Zech. 6. 1; Ex. 27. 2; Micah 4. 13. *a* Ps. 103. 1, 2; 1 Chron. 29. 20; Ps. 135. 19-21; *cf.* Eph. 1. 3.

k ch. 2. 7. ch. 9. 7. Num. 33.

l ver. 16. *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 7-10. Phil. 4. 11-13. Phil. 2. 8.

m Gen. 22. 1, 2. Ex. 16. 4. Ps. 66. 10. Ps. 81. 7. *cf.* Rom. 5. 3-5. Jas. 1. 2-4. 1 Pet. 1.6,7. 2 Chron. 32. 31.

n Ex. 16.2,3. *cf.* Luke 4. 2.

o Ex. 16. 12. Num. 11. 7-9. Neh. 9. 20. Ps. 78. 24. Josh. 5. 12. *cf.* Jno 6. 31-35.

p Matt. 4. 3, 4. Ps. 19. 10. Ps. 119.103. Jer. 15. 16. *ctr.* Is. 44. 20. Hos. 12. 1.

q ch. 9. 5. Neh. 9. 21. *ctr.* Josh. 9. 13.

r cf. Eph.6. 15.

s Prov.3. 11, 12. Ps. 94. 12. Ps. 118. 18. Heb. 12. 5-11. *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 30-32.

4. Again, Moses returns to enforce all this with the ever-fruitful wilderness-lessons;—we too, in eternity, shall return to feast upon harvests gathered out of such barren soil. If these are lessons of humiliation, it is just this that is so needful for the proud heart of man. To the meek and contrite of heart God looks,—yea, dwells with these. Humility is the true undoing of the fall in one main feature; and thus the forty years of discipline have their justification.

(i.) They were to remember, then, all the way by which God had led them,—a way which had brought out for them, as His way still does for all, all that was in their hearts. This in its design was but their Father's care, whether He suffered them to hunger, or fed them with His strange food, still by man so little appreciated. Patient weaning from self it was, patient instilling of lessons of dependence, so easy-seeming, so hard to acquire. Ah, in the life that He has taught us to be our possession, how sure that God's Word is that which sustains it!—"By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God doth man live."

If there was trial, how God's tenderness was shown! Raiment never growing old; feet never swelling as they trod that flinty soil. We too have a robe of beauty that is fresh eternally; "feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace," of which the rough places only prove the abiding comfort. Discipline,—yes! but the tender discipline of a father for the son in whom he delighteth.

thou forget not Jehovah thy God, in not keeping his commandments and his judgments and his statutes, which I command thee this day; lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses and dwelt in them, and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and silver and gold increase with thee, and all that thou hast increaseth, then thy heart be [b]lifted up, and thou forget Jehovah thy God, who brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness,—[c]fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought without any [d]water; who brought thee forth water out of the flinty rock; who fed thee in the wilderness with manna which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy [e]latter end;—and thou say in thy heart, [f]My power, and the might of my hand, hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember Jehovah thy God, that he it is who giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may make good his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day. And it shall be that if thou indeed [g]forget Jehovah thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. Like the nations which Jehovah destroyeth from before you, so shall ye perish, because ye would not hearken to the voice of Jehovah your God.

2. (ix. 1-24.) The contradiction of sinners: a testimony.

[2] Hear, O Israel! Thou art to pass over Jordan this day, to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thou, cities great and walled up to heaven, a people great and tall, children of the Anakim, whom thou knowest, and of whom thou hast heard [say], Who can stand before the children of Anak? Know then, this day, that Jehovah thy God is he who [h]goeth over before thee: as a consuming fire he shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face; and thou shalt

b Hos. 13. 6. 2 Chron. 26. 16-21. 2 Chron. 32. 25. *cf.* Ezek. 28. 2, 5, 17. Dan. 5. 20, 23. 1 Tim. 3. 6.

c Num. 21. 6. Gen. 3. 1.

d Hos. 13. 5. Ex. 15. 22. Num. 20. 2. Ps. 63. 1. *ctr.* ver. 7.

e *cf.* Is. 40. 1, 2. Jer. 31. 17. Job 42. 12. Heb. 12. 11. 2 Cor. 4. 16-18.

f Ju. 7. 2. Dan. 4. 30, 31. *cf.* Rom. 3. 27.

g ch. 4. 9. ch. 6. 12. Ju. 3. 7. Prov. 3. 1. Hos. 8. 14. Heb. 2. 1.

h Ex. 13. 21. Num. 10. 33. ch. 31. 3. Josh. 3. 6, 11. *cf.* Jud. 14. 1-3. Heb. 6. 19, 20.

Beyond, the good land beckoning them,—"a land of water-brooks, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills," reminding us of the fullness of the Spirit which abounds at all levels for us; a land of grain and fruits, and stored within with precious metals. Alas! *there* lay for them dangers which the wilderness was meant to prepare them for; and they might say, "My power, and the might of my hand, have gotten me this wealth." Into *our* land, thank God! we shall enter with this lesson learnt; and yet how in this the wilderness may still be remembered as our teacher, and its teachings still be treasured up for endless blessing!

(ii.) Not only might there be the thought that their own hand had gained them what they had, a subtler one might use the very acknowledgment of God as having bestowed it to foster a spirit of self-righteousness. Moses goes on, therefore, to review their course, as far back as Horeb itself, the place of covenant, and where it was so soon and so terribly broken through. When Jehovah's power had cast out before them nations mightier than themselves, they might impute it to their own credit that He had thus manifestly favored them. No; but on account of the wickedness of these nations He had cast them out. And as to them-

dispossess them, and destroy them speedily, as Jehovah hath spoken unto thee. Thou shalt not speak in thy heart, when Jehovah thy God thrusteth them out before thee, saying, For my [i]righteousness hath Jehovah brought me in to possess this land, but for the [j]wickedness of these nations doth Jehovah dispossess them before thee. Not for thy righteousness, nor for the uprightness of thy heart, dost thou go in to possess their land, but for the wickedness of these nations doth Jehovah thy God dispossess them before thee, and because he would make good the word which Jehovah sware unto thy fathers,—to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. Know therefore that Jehovah thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness, for thou art a [k]stiff-necked people. Remember, forget not, how thou didst [l]provoke Jehovah thy God to anger in the wilderness: from the day in which thou wentest out of the land of Egypt until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against Jehovah. Even at [m]Horeb ye provoked Jehovah to wrath, and Jehovah was angry with you to destroy you, when I went up into the mountain to receive the tables of stone, the tables of the covenant which Jehovah was making with you, and remained in the mount [n]forty days and forty nights; I ate no bread and drank no water. And Jehovah gave unto me the two tables of stone, [o]written with the finger of God; and on them according to all the words that Jehovah had spoken with you in the mount out of the midst of the fire, in the day of the congregation. And it was so, at the end of forty days and forty nights, that Jehovah gave unto me the two tables of stone, the tables of the covenant. And Jehovah said unto me, Arise, go down quickly hence; for thy people whom thou broughtest out of Egypt have corrupted themselves; they have turned aside [p]quickly from the way which I commanded them, and have made them a molten image. And Jehovah spake unto me, saying, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people: let me alone, that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven; and I will [q]make of thee a nation mightier and more than they. And I turned and came down from the mount, and the mount burned with fire; and the two tables of the covenant were in my two hands. And I looked, and, behold, ye had sinned against Jehovah your God,—ye had made you a molten calf: ye had turned aside

[i] ch. 8. 17. Is. 42. 21, 25. Ezek. 20.9. Ezek. 36. 22. *cf.* Tit. 3. 4-7.

[j] Gen.15.16. Lev.18. 24, 25. ch. 18. 12. *cf.* Is. 10. 5-15.

[k] Ex. 32. 9. ch. 10. 16. 2 Chron. 30. 8. Neh. 9. 29. Is. 48. 4. Jer. 17. 23. Acts 7. 51. Prov. 29. 1.

[l] 2 Kings 21. 14, 15. Ezra 5. 12. Jer. 11. 17. ch. 31. 29. Zech. 8. 14. Heb. 3. 14, 15. 1 Cor.10.22.

[m] Ex. 32. 1-6. Ps. 106. 19, 20.

[n] Ex. 24. 18. *cf.* Matt. 4. 2. etc.

[o] Ex. 31. 18. *cfr.* 2 Cor. 3. 3. Heb. 8. 10.

[p] Ex. 32. 7, 8. Jud. 2. 17. Ps. 106. 13. Hos. 6. 4. Gal. 1. 6.

[q] Ex. 32. 10. Num. 14. 12.

selves, they had always been a stiff-necked people. And again he recites how he had gone up at first into the mount to receive the tables of the law, and how in that short space in which he had remained there, they had forfeited every thing, and provoked Jehovah so that His wrath threatened to destroy them all. Yet He had hearkened to his intercession both for them and Aaron. And from there to Kadesh-barnea they had constantly rebelled.

quickly from the way that Jehovah had commanded you. And I took hold of the two tables, and cast them out of my two hands, and shattered them before your eyes. And I [r] fell down before Jehovah as at the first, forty days and forty nights,—I ate no bread and drank no water,—because of all your sin which ye had sinned, in doing evil in Jehovah's sight, to provoke him to anger; for I dreaded the anger and hot displeasure wherewith Jehovah was wroth against you to destroy you. But Jehovah hearkened unto me at that time also. And Jehovah was very angry with Aaron to destroy him; and I prayed for Aaron also at the same time. And I [s] took your sin, the calf which ye had made, and burned it with fire, and crushed it, grinding it very small, till it was like fine dust; and I cast the dust of it into the brook which descendeth out of the mount. And at [t] Taberah, and at [u] Massah, and at [v] Kibroth-hattaavah, ye provoked Jehovah to wrath. And when Jehovah sent you from [w] Kadesh-barnea, saying, Go up and possess the land which I have given you, ye rebelled against the voice of Jehovah your God, and believed him not, nor hearkened to his voice. Ye have been rebellious against Jehovah since the day I knew you.

3. (Ix. 25–x. 11.) Restoration.

[3] And I fell down before Jehovah those forty days and forty nights in which I fell down; for Jehovah had spoken of destroying you. And I prayed unto Jehovah, and said, Lord Jehovah, destroy not thy people and thine [x] inheritance, which thou hast redeemed in thy greatness, which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Remember thy servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: [y] look not at the stubbornness of this people, nor at their wickedness, nor at their sin; [z] lest the land whence thou broughtest us out say, Because Jehovah was not able to bring them into the land of which he spake to them, and because he [a] hated them, he brought them out to slay them in the wilderness. They are indeed thy people, and thine inheritance, whom thou hast brought out with thy great power and with thine arm outstretched.

At that time Jehovah said unto me, [b] Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto me into the mount, and make thee an [c] ark of wood; and I

r Ex. 32. 31. Ex. 34. 28. Ps. 106. 23. Num. 16.4. *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 1, 2.
s Ex. 32. 20. 2 Kings 18. 4. 2 Kings 23. 6, 15. *cf.* Gal. 6.7.
t Num. 11. 1-3. Ps. 78. 21. Heb. 12.29.
u Ex. 17. 1-7. *cf.* 1 Cor. 10. 10, 11.
v Num. 11. 4-6, 18-22, 31-35. 1 Cor. 10. 6. Ps. 106. 14, 15. Ps. 78. 18-21, 26-31. *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 30. 1 Tim. 6. 8-10.
w Num. 13. 26. ch. 1. 19-26. Ps. 106. 24-27. *cf.* Heb. 3. 16-19.
x ch. 4. 20. ver. 29. ch. 32. 9. Ps. 135. 4. *cf.* Tit. 2.14. Eph. 1. 18.
y Hab. 1.13. *cf.* Num. 23. 21. Ps. 32. 1, 2. Ps. 84. 9. Luke 15.22. 2 Cor. 5. 21.
z Ex. 32. 12. Num. 14. 13-16. ch. 32. 26, 27. Josh. 7. 9. Ezek. 20.9, 14, 22, 44. *cf.* Eph. 2. 7.
a ch. 1. 27. *cf.* Jer. 12. 7-15. Rom. 9. 13 with Mal. 1. 2, 3. Hos. 9. 15. *cf.* Jno. 3.16.

b Ex. 34. 1, 2; 2 Cor. 3. 3, 7, 8. Heb. 9. 4.
c Ex. 25. 10, 16, 21; 1 Kings 8. 9; *cf.* Ps. 40. 8;

(iii.) It was divine mercy only that had restored every thing. In that extremity of theirs, the promise to their fathers and the glory of His own name had given Him ground to take them up again. The tables had been renewed, and this time to be received into the ark for safe-keeping; and there they still abode. Aaron died long after, transmitting the priesthood to Eleazar his son. While the whole tribe of Levi were separated to God to minister to Him and to bless the people in His name, having Jehovah alone for their portion and inheritance.

will write upon the tables the words that were on the first tables, which thou brakest; and thou shalt put them in the ark. And I made an ark of acacia-wood, and hewed two tables of stone like the first; and I went up into the mount with the two tables in my hand. And he wrote upon the tables according to the first writing, the ten words which Jehovah spake unto you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly; and Jehovah gave them unto me. And I turned and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark that I had made: and there they are, as Jehovah commanded me.

(And the children of Israel [d] journeyed from the wells of the children of Jaakan to Mosera: there [e] Aaron died, and was buried there; and Eleazar his son became priest in his stead. Thence they journeyed to Gudgodah; and from Gudgodah to Jotbath, a land of water-brooks.)

At that time Jehovah [f] separated the tribe of Levi to bear the ark of Jehovah's covenant, to stand before Jehovah to minister unto him, and to bless in his name, unto this day. Wherefore Levi hath [g] no portion nor inheritance with his brethren; Jehovah is his inheritance, as Jehovah his God spake unto him. And I stayed in the mount, according to the former days, forty days and forty nights; and Jehovah heard me at that time also,—Jehovah would not destroy thee. And Jehovah said unto me, Arise, take thy journey before the people, that they may enter in and possess the land which I sware unto their fathers to give them.

[d] Num. 33. 31.

[e] Num. 33. 38, 39. Num. 20. 22-29. Ps. 99. 6-8. *cf.* Heb. 7. 8, 23-25, 28.

[f] Num. 3.6. Num. 4.15. Num. 8.14, ch. 21. 5. *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 5-7. 1 Cor. 12. 12-31. Eph. 4. 8-13. Acts13.2,3.

[g] Num. 18. 20-24. ch. 12. 12. Josh.13.14. Ezek. 44. 28. *cf.* Luke 10. 3-7. 2 Jno. 5-8.

The statement as to Aaron is quite intelligible as showing the answer to Moses' prayer, to which without any doubt it stands related, the section closing as it began with this, and the reiteration that God had answered it. But there are, at first sight, difficulties nevertheless connected with it, which furnish a pretext for cavil by those ready to find it.

The main difficulty is, that the passage reads like a part of the itinerary of the wilderness, beginning before Mosera, at which Aaron died, and going on beyond to Gudgodah and Jotbath. The only other that can be really called so is that the time of the separation of the Levites seems to come after Aaron's death, which in fact it preceded thirty-eight years. But this is founded only upon the expression "at that time," coming after the account of Aaron's death, which it does, but does not necessarily refer to it. It is the "time" of his great intercession that is in Moses' mind; and to this he has before returned after going beyond it (as ix. 24, 25).

But the first difficulty needs more attention. It will be perceived at once that the death of Aaron, and the succession of Eleazar are the central points quite evidently; and that these are indeed in such relation to the whole history here, we have seen in Numbers. In Eleazar the priesthood of Aaron is maintained, spite of his death, and in the power of resurrection; and this connects significantly with the rapid advance of the people, who now press on through all opposition triumphantly to the very border of the land. Our great High-Priest, His work accomplished, and risen out of death, is able thus to lead on His people. In the passage before us indeed but a few stages of the journey are given: they are however a good sample; and those who realize the connection of the smitten Rock with the outflowing waters, and of Christ dead and risen with the gift of

(X. 12—XI.)

Israel's responsibility.

1. (x. 12-15.) As the elect of God.

5. [1] Now therefore, Israel, [h] what doth Jehovah thy God demand of thee but to fear Jehovah thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve Jehovah thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul,—to keep Jehovah's commandment and his statutes which I command thee this day, for thy good? Behold, unto Jehovah thy God belong the heavens and the heaven of heavens, the earth and all that is therein: yet Jehovah had [i] delight in thy fathers to love them, and chose their seed after them—yourselves out of all peoples, as it is this day.

2. (vv. 16-22.) As called to imitate Him.

[2] [j] Circumcise, then, the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked. For Jehovah your God, he is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, the mighty, and the terrible; who [k] regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward; who executeth the judgment of the [l] fatherless and the widow, and loveth the [m] stranger, giving him food and raiment. Therefore love ye the stranger, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. Thou shalt fear Jehovah thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name. He is thy praise, and he is thy God, who hath done for thee these great and terrible things which thine eyes have seen. With [n] seventy souls thy fathers went down into Egypt, and now Jehovah thy God hath made thee like the stars of heaven for multitude.

h Mic. 6. 8. cf. ch. 6. 13 with 1 Pet. 1. 17-21. ch. 5. 33 with Heb. 12. 1, 2. ch. 6. 5 with 1 Jno. 4. 10, 19. Rom. 8. 3, 4.

i ch. 4. 37 cf. Eph. 1. 4-6. Eph. 2. 4-10. Is. 42. 1.

j ch. 30. 6. Jer. 4. 4. Rom. 2. 28, 29.

k 2 Chron. 19. 7. Rom. 2. 11. Eph. 6. 9. 1 Pet. 1. 17. cf. Jas. 2. 1-6.

l Ex. 22. 22-24. Ps. 10. 14. Ps. 68. 5. Ps. 146. 9. Jer. 49. 11. Hos. 14. 3. cf. Jno. 14. 18.

m Ex. 22. 21. Ex. 23. 9. Lev. 19. 10, 33, 34. cf. Ruth 2. 10 with Eph. 2. 11-20.

n Gen. 46. 27; Acts 7. 14; Gen. 15. 5; cf. Rev. 7. 5-9.

the Spirit, will mark with interest, as others have done, the record (surely not purposeless) of what was indeed so important for their journey, the water which they found. First, before Aaron's death, and giving perhaps the meaning of the commencement here—the "wells of the (Horite) sons of Jaakan." After Mosera and when Eleazar has succeeded Aaron, Gudgodah, which has been said to mean "a well with much water." Then Jotbath, which (it is openly stated) is "a land of water-brooks." Thus there is progress: has there not at least been corresponding progress since Christ our High-Priest has entered the heavens? From the wells which indeed furnish water, but in Horite hands—they were cave-dwellers, as we know, these Horites—to first the rise of many waters in that of Pentecost, and then the far and wide-flowing streams among the nations?

5. This part is now closed with a solemn reminder of their responsibility to God. (i.) What did God require of them but a loving obedience to commandments which were always for their good? love to One who while infinitely great, heaven and earth belonging to Him, had nevertheless chosen them above all people in His love to them? Here was what made them so responsible beyond all men, while it should have made their duty easy of fulfillment. They had but to wear the light yoke of love, a thing which is indeed the moral power of the gospel: "We love Him, because He first loved us." How far, then, does our responsibility exceed that of Israel?

(ii.) They indeed knew God in His wonderful work for them, as well as in the commandments which displayed His character. They were called to imitate Him. If He cared for the fatherless and widows, and for the stranger, they too must care. And had they not known what it was to be strangers in that land out of which (marvelously multiplied amid all their suffering) He had delivered them with an outstretched arm?

3. (xi. 1-9.) His holiness.

[3] And thou shalt love Jehovah thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandment, alway. And [o] ye have knowledge this day; for [I speak] not with your children who have not known and who have not seen the chastening of Jehovah your God, his greatness, his mighty hand, and his stretched-out arm,—even his signs, and his acts which he did in the midst of Egypt unto Pharaoh king of Egypt and all his land; and what he did unto the force of Egypt, to its horses and to its chariots, over which he made the water of the [p] Red Sea flow, as they pursued after you, and Jehovah destroyed them unto this day. Also what he did unto you in the wilderness until ye came to this place; and what he did to [q] Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben,—how the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, and their households, and their tents, and every living thing at their feet, in the midst of all Israel. For your eyes have seen all the great work of Jehovah which he hath done. Keep, then, all the commandment that I command you this day, that ye may be strong, and go in, and possess the land, whither ye are passing over to possess it; and that ye may prolong your days upon the land which Jehovah sware unto your fathers to give them and their seed, a land flowing with milk and honey.

4. (vv. 10-21.) Their dependence on Him.

[4] For the land which thou goest in to possess is [r] not as the land of Egypt from which ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs; but the land whither thou goest over to possess it is a land of [s] mountains and valleys, which drinketh water of the [t] rain of heaven,—a land which Jehovah thy God careth for: the [u] eyes of Jehovah thy God are continually upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.

o ch. 7. 18, 19.

p Ex. 26.31. Ps. 78. 53. Ps. 106. 9-11. Ps. 136. 14, 15. *cf.* Heb. 2. 14. Gal. 6. 14. Rom. 6. 6.

q Num. 16. 1-35. Ps. 106. 16, 17. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 3-8. Rev. 19.20.

r Gen. 41. 1. Is. 19. 4-8. Ezek. 29.3. Zech.14.18. *cf.* Prov. 23. 5. Heb. 11.25. 26.

s ch. 8. 7-9. ch. 3. 25. Josh. 14. 12, 13. Ju. 1. 19. Ps. 78. 54. Ps. 72. 3. Ps. 125. 2. Ps. 133. 3. Is. 2. 2, 3. Ezek. 34. 13.

t ver. 14. Ps. 84. 6.

u 1 Kings 8. 29. 1 Kings 9. 3.

(iii.) In Egypt and at the Red Sea they had seen His signs, His anger, the more terrible for its holiness. And in the wilderness, when the earth acted for Him, and swallowed up the insolence of the stubborn transgressor. Now, the good land before them waited to receive them, and welcome them with all its wealth. But they must enjoy it holily or not enjoy it.

(iv.) Indeed, this land was a land not like the land of Egypt. There, independent, as they might think, of heaven, the overflowing river both watered and fertilized it, needing but guidance upon man's part, who with his foot could guide it as he would. Not so Israel's land of hills and valleys and rain from heaven. Here God had chosen for them the better part of creature-dependence, therefore of the Creator's care. "A land which Jehovah thy God careth for: the eyes of Jehovah thy God are continually upon it, from the beginning of the year even to the end of the year." Could those vigilant eyes overlook their need? No, assuredly; but their need might be, alas! of chastening, and He would give it. Israel's land might thus suffer where Egypt escaped. It is the secret of the seventy-third psalm, only to be read aright, and acquiesced in joyfully, in the presence of God, in the sanctuary. If the wicked are "not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued as other men,"—if, on the other

And it shall be, if ye will indeed hearken to my commandments which I command you to-day, in loving Jehovah your God, and serving him with all your heart and with all your soul, then I will give the [v] rain of your land in its season—the early and the latter rain, and thou shalt gather in thy corn and thy new wine and thine oil; and I will give [w] grass in thy fields for thy cattle, and thou shalt eat and be full. Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them, and the anger of Jehovah be kindled against you, and he [x] shut up the heavens, that there be no rain, and that the ground yield not its produce, and ye perish quickly from off the good land that Jehovah giveth you. And ye shall lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and [y] bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes, and ye shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest in the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up; and thou shalt write them on the door-posts of thy house, and on thy gates; that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which Jehovah sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of [z] heaven upon the earth.

[v] ch. 28. 12. Lev. 26. 4. Hos. 6. 3. Joel 2. 23. Jer. 5. 24. Zech. 10. 1. Ps. 72. 6. Ps. 65. 10 13. Jas. 5. 7.

[w] Ps. 104. 14. Joel 2. 22.

[x] 1 Kings 8. 35. 1 Kings 17. 1-14. 2 Chron. 7. 13. Is. 5. 6. Jer. 14. 1-6. Am. 4. 7, 8. *cf.* Jno. 12. 39, 40. 2 Thess. 2. 10-12.

[y] ch. 6. 8. Prov. 3. 3. *cf.* Rev. 22. 4.

[z] ch. 4. 40. Ps. 89. 29. Prov. 4. 10. Ps. 91. 16. Is. 65. 20.

hand, "all the day long have *I* been plagued, and chastened every morning,"—here is the meaning of it, that "I am continually with thee; thou hast holden me with Thy right hand." How blessed a reason! how glorious a compensation! "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in respect of Thee." The presence of the Holy One with us necessarily implies discipline; but it is a Father's discipline of the "son in whom He delighteth."

This, then, is what God appoints for Israel. They are perpetually to be upon His arm. They are to know the "living God" in the constant display of His resources for them, even as their land is to be not a dead level such as Egypt's, but a land of valley and hill, such as must needs have the direct "rain from heaven" upon it. And then with it what Pisgah prospects, and what a place for a hardy race such as mountaineers are! And what mines of wealth in the bowels of these hills,—"a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou shalt dig copper"! what "fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills"!

This is the creature-place—not a hard one, at its worst, when the opened eye beholds Him on whom all things wait. And at last its full meaning shall come out, how blessed! for in the creature it has been God's will to manifest Himself; and into the creature-place the Creator Himself has been pleased to come, and to know fully all that dependence upon Him which to us only unbelief makes hard. "I was cast upon Thee from the womb," is the word of Him, whom yet all nature shall put on its bridal dress to welcome,—the "MAN," God's "fellow"! (Zech. xiii. 7.)

Let Israel keep only in the place of dependence, taking from no hand but that of their God, serving Him with the only service fitting for Him to receive, then they have pledged a word that shall never be broken, for their full deliverance in the land. It is also pledged—and the pledge has been redeemed—that if they go away from Him, they shall learn in a closed heaven and a barren earth His faithfulness to the covenant they have despised. Let them only lay up in their

5. (22–32.) The blessing and the curse.

5 For if ye shall indeed keep all this commandment which I command you to do it, loving Jehovah your God, walking in all his ways, and cleaving to him, then Jehovah shall dispossess all these nations from before you, and ye shall dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourselves. [a] Every place that the sole of your feet shall tread on shall be your own: [b] from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the hinder sea shall be your boundary. There shall no man be able to stand before you: Jehovah your God shall put the [c] fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land whereon ye tread, as he hath said unto you. See, I [d] put before you this day a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if ye shall hearken to the commandment of Jehovah your God which I command you this day; and the curse, if ye shall not hearken to the commandments of Jehovah your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you this day, to walk after other gods which ye have not known. And it shall be, [e] when Jehovah thy God hath brought thee into the land into which thou goest to possess it, then thou shalt give the blessing on Mount Gerizim, and the curse upon Mount Ebal. Are they not on the other side Jordan, behind the way of the sun-down, in the land of the Canaanites who dwell in the Arabah, opposite Gilgal, beside the oaks of Moreh? For ye go over Jordan to go in to possess the land which Jehovah your God giveth you, and ye shall possess it and dwell therein. And ye shall take heed to do all the statutes and the judgments that I put before you this day.

a Josh. 1. 3. *cf.* Eph. 1. 3. Eph. 6. 10–18 with Phil. 3. 8.

b Gen. 15. 18–21. Ps. 72. 8. 1 Kings 4. 21–24. 2 Chron. 9. 26. Ps. 89. 25. Zech. 9. 9, 10.

c Josh. 2. 9, 24. Gen. 35. 5. Ex. 15. 15, 16. Ex. 23. 27. ch. 2. 25. 2 Chron. 14. 14. 2 Chron. 17. 10. 2 Kings 7. 5–7. Jas. 4. 7.

d ch. 30. 15, 19. 1 Kings 17. 21. Matt. 6. 24. *cf.* Acts 13. 38–41.

e ch. 27. 12, 13. Josh. 8. 33.

hearts His word, and confess it in their lives, in multiplied days they and their children shall enjoy the fullness of a blessing, of which He who knows heaven can say, "*As the days of heaven upon the earth.*"

(v.) A career of conquest was now before them, and the land is conditionally made over to them, not merely in the extent to which they actually possessed it, but expressly all Lebanon and the wilderness—east of it—as far as the Euphrates itself. In David's time a shadow of this was reached, but only in the way of supremacy over the nations that filled these countries. Israel is yet to have this in possession, and much more, for the southern limit is not defined here according to promise, and Edom, Moab, and Ammon were at present, as we have seen, excepted from the land assigned them. By and by these also are to be their own. Meanwhile, a large and plentiful land was put before them, which they did not possess, simply because of their own rapid declension and apostasy, their non-observance of the conditions so again and again insisted on.

The blessing and the curse were to be solemnly rehearsed in the centre of the land when God should give it them, from the slopes respectively of Gerizim and Ebal. The last words which point out the site, "beside the oaks of Moreh,"—full of touching recollections for an Israelite,—show that this is the place where Abraham first rested upon entering Canaan. "Moreh" means "teacher," as the oak itself suits well with the robustness of growth where the Word of God is that which teaches. The connection of Moreh with Shechem is seen in Genesis, and this lies between Ebal and Gerizim. "Shechem" means "shoulder," and there Israel as a nation, now brought into the land, were finally to take up the

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. xii.-xxvi.)

Application to the various relationships in which men stand to God or the world around them.

(XII.–XVI. 17.)

Godward: laws of the first table.

1. (xii.1-28.) One only centre of gathering to Himself in all the land.

1. THESE are the statutes and the judgments which ye shall observe to do, in the land which Jehovah thy fathers' God giveth thee to possess it, all the days that ye live upon the earth. Ye shall utterly [f] destroy all the places wherein the nations which ye dispossess served their gods—upon the high mountains, and on the hills, and under all green trees. And ye shall break down their altars, and shatter their pillars, and burn their Asherah-images with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy their names out of that place.

[f] Ex. 34. 13. Num. 33. 52. ch. 7. 5. Jn. 6. 25. 2 Kings 10. 27. 2 Kings 23. 4-6. *cf.* 2 Cor. 10. 5.

burden of the law; a law which is commonly *torah*, or "teaching," from the same root as Moreh. These are links which show us how God would carry back His people to the position of their great ancestor, so definitely the man of faith, and set them where he had been. Alas, they had accepted law, to stand in covenant-relation to Jehovah on that ground; and the shadow of this falls darkly over them. Ebal o'ertops Gerizim. Even this should have been but a voice of recall to Abraham's blessing through a faith like his: some surely heard it.

SUBD. 2.

THE essence of the law, then, is whole-hearted love to God, who has revealed Himself in such a way as to be fully entitled to it. He who was of old their Creator is now their Redeemer; and the law comes to them laden with the mercies of life which man so keenly appreciates, (if not, alas! as mercies,) and with the memories of broken bonds to enhance their appreciation.

But the love of God of necessity implies the desire of moral assimilation to Him; and thus the law becomes a means to this. In His commandments we learn Himself,—not, indeed, as Christ reveals Him, for there was yet, and in this sense, a vail over His face,—but in such measure as was at present possible. In the practical application of the "ten words," we find still more than in the tables themselves, that the law made nothing perfect, and that such and such allowances had to be made in view of the hardness of their hearts, as the Lord declares. (Matt. xix. 8.) Spite of this, the imitation of God Himself is plainly what the law requires. (chap. x. 18, 19.)

(1.) We have now the illustration of this in special commandments which amplify and apply the law to the special relationships of life, and in an orderly way, beginning once more with the first table though, of course, not with the first commandment which has been already dwelt upon and emphasized. The first section is thus marked out as applying to the first table,—to duties Godward.

(i.) And of these the first subsection gives one whose importance must be apparent by the way it is insisted on. It is emphasized too as imposed of the Lord's own will. He would choose one place out of all their tribes to put His name, and there they were to bring their gifts and offerings. There was to be one centre of gathering for all Israel: it is no question of what exceptionally God might Himself command, as in the case of Gideon (Ju. vi. 26), or of Manoah (xiii. 16), or of a prophet like Samuel (1 Sam. vii. 9; x. 8),—things which merely show that God was necessarily above His own law, and which might be argued as much to set aside the distinctive priesthood in Aaron's family, as the one place of sacrifice. How should a law for Israel as a whole take

Ye shall not do so unto Jehovah your God; but unto the [g]place that Jehovah your God shall choose out of all your tribes, to put his name there,—unto his dwelling-place shall ye seek, and thither shalt thou come. And thither ye shall bring your burnt-offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and the heave-offerings of your hands, and your vows, and your free-will offerings, and the firstlings of your kine and of your flocks. And there ye shall eat before Jehovah your God, and [h]rejoice in all ye put your hands to,—ye and your households, wherein Jehovah thy God hath blessed thee. Ye shall not do after all that we do here to-day—every one what is [i]right in his own eyes; for ye are not yet come to the rest and the inheritance which Jehovah thy God giveth thee. But when ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which Jehovah your God giveth you to inherit, and when he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, and ye dwell in safety, then there shall be a place which Jehovah your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there: thither shall ye bring all that I command you,—your burnt-offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave-offerings of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto Jehovah. And ye shall rejoice before Jehovah your God,—ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and the [j]Levite who is within your gates; for he hath no portion nor inheritance with you. Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt-offerings in [k]every place that thou seest; but in the place that Jehovah shall choose in one of thy tribes, there shalt thou offer thy burnt-offerings, and there shalt thou do all that I command thee.

g Lev. 17. 3. ver. 13, 14. ch. 16. 16. ch. 26. 2. 1 Kings 8. 29. Ps. 26. 8. Ezek. 43. 7-9. Ps. 132. 13, 14. cf. Matt. 18. 20.

h Lev. 23. 40. ch. 14. 26. ch. 16. 14, 15. ch. 26. 11. 2 Chron. 6. 41. Jer. 31. 12-14. cf. Phil. 4. 4. 1 Pet. 1. 6-8.

i Ju. 17. 6. Ju. 21. 25. Num. 15. 39. Prov. 3. 7. Prov. 16. 2.

j ver. 18. ch. 14. 29. ch. 16. 11, 14. ch. 26. 11-13. cf. Rom. 15. 27. 1 Cor. 9. 7-15. Gal. 6. 6.

k ver. 4, 5.

notice of such rare exceptions? In fact, to none of these places were the people to come, nor did they. Shiloh first after the conquest of the land, and then Jerusalem, were the chosen centres. Between the two was a time of ruin, in which, it is said, irrespective of law, "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." (Ju. xxi. 25.) In such a time God acted in His goodness, outside the established order.

These ordinances are expressly given for the land, and are in character often supplementary to those given at Sinai, (chap. xxix. 1.) This accounts for much of the seeming contradiction, out of which infidelity has sought to make capital in her own behalf. To these cavils there have been replies in abundance, and they need not be repeated here, where we have but too little room for what is directly for edification. For souls to be nourished up in the positive teaching of the Word of God is also the best preserver from the questionings of unbelief, so easy to multiply, and whose factories pay such poor wages to the workman.

Here as a first necessity in order to maintain that pure worship of God which their existence as a nation in the midst of surrounding idolatry was to conserve, He once more insists upon the absolute extirpation of idolatry out of the land. All signs, every memorial of it, they were to destroy; the very names of the false gods were to be forgotten. Heathenism had possessed itself of the land: hills, groves, everywhere had been associated with the pollutions of impure and cruel rites. From all these, Israel's eyes were to be called away to their one place chosen of God, where, without visible image or similitude, among all the

Only according to all thy soul desireth thou mayest sacrifice, and eat flesh according to the blessing of Jehovah thy God which he giveth thee, in all thy gates; the unclean and the clean may eat of it, as the gazelle and as the hart. Only thou shalt not eat the [l]blood; thou shalt pour it on the ground like water. Thou mayest not eat within thy gates the [m]tithe of thy corn, or of thy new wine, or of thine oil, or the firstlings of thy kine or of thy flocks, or any of thy vows which thou vowest, or of thy free-will offerings, or of the heave-offerings of thy hand; but thou shalt eat of them before Jehovah thy God, in the place that Jehovah thy God shall choose,—thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite who is within thy gates; and thou shalt rejoice before Jehovah thy God in all that thou puttest thy hand unto. Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite all the days that thou shalt be in thy land.

When Jehovah thy God shall [n]enlarge thy boundary, as he hath spoken to thee, and thou shalt say, I will eat flesh, because thy soul desireth to eat flesh, according to all the desire of thy soul thou mayest eat flesh. If the place be too far from thee which Jehovah thy God shall choose to set his name there, then thou shalt sacrifice of thy kine and of thy flock, which Jehovah hath given thee, as I have commanded thee; and thou shalt eat within thy gates according to all thy soul's desire. Even

l Gen. 9. 4. Lev. 7. 26. Lev. 17. 10-14. ver. 23-25. ch. 15. 23. cf. Jno. 6. 53-59.

m ch. 26. 12-15. ch. 14. 22, &c. Neh. 10. 37-39. cf. Luke 18. 12.

n Ex. 34. 24. ch. 19. 8. Is. 54. 2, 3.

creatures of His hand, Jehovah dwelt. There they were to bring all their offerings, and, filled with the blessing of the Lord, to eat and rejoice before Him,—themselves and their households.

A precious thing is this ability to rejoice before God. It is all power, all security for holiness,—the "joy of the Lord is your strength." (Neh. viii. 10.) Israel attached by the heart to this light- and heat-giving centre, their whole life was to revolve around it in the orbit of obedience, no more seeking release than the earth would of the sun. Here, then, God fixes the centre for them,—His sanctuary the heart of the land, from which should pulse and return the vivifying streams to every part. For He will be no man's debtor: of His own only can we give Him; and he who gives to Him indeed, enriches himself by giving. Has He hunger that shall be fed with Israel's offerings? Has He need that He ordains them to satisfy? Yes: the need of love for its object. He is Love. His "delights are with the sons of men."

In a lesser sense they are taught to make all taking of life a "sacrifice" to the Lord, the word being used here with regard to what is at any time used for food, the blood being poured upon the ground as the life which belongs to God. It is the application of the principle of Lev. xvii. (which in its full detail was only possible in the camp in the wilderness) to the land at large. Here, as there, the sacredness of life was to be realized, and their own life to be constantly lifted into spiritual meaning, and brought near to God. Each common meal was to have, as far as this could be given to it, the character of a peace-offering: it was to be enjoyed in communion with God.

Care for the Levite is also insisted on, for if we are with God, He is master of the table at which He sits, and His pensioners become ours. Finally, the extension of the boundaries of the land beyond their present assignment is distinctly contemplated and provided for.

as the gazelle and the hart are eaten, so shalt thou eat it,—the unclean and the clean shall eat of it alike. Only be sure that thou eat not the blood; for the blood is the life, and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh: thou shalt not eat of it; thou shalt pour it on the earth as water. Thou shalt not eat it, that it may be well with thee, and thy children after thee, when thou shalt do what is right in Jehovah's eyes. Only thy holy things which thou hast, and thy vows, thou shalt take, and go unto the place which Jehovah shall choose; and thou shalt offer thy burnt-offerings, the flesh and the blood, upon the altar of Jehovah thy God; and the blood of thy sacrifices shall be poured out on the altar of Jehovah thy God; and the flesh thou shalt eat. Observe and hearken unto all these words which I command thee, that it may be well with thee, and with thy children after thee forever, when thou doest what is good and right in the eyes of Jehovah thy God.

2. (xii. 29–xiii.) Of those going aside to serve other gods.

2 When Jehovah thy God cutteth off from before thee the nations whither thou goest to dispossess them, and thou hast dispossessed them, and dwellest in their land, take heed to thyself, that thou be not ensnared [to follow] after them, after they have been destroyed from before thee, and that thou °inquire not after their gods, saying,

o 2 Kings 16. 10–16. 2 Kings 21. 1–10. *cf.* Eph. 5. 11, 12.

The uses of this provision of one only centre of gathering in the land for a people exposed and prone to yield to the seductions of an idolatry which had connected itself with every part of the scene around them, are evident enough in turning their eyes away from these, removing as far as possible the old associations, so powerful as they prove themselves, and bringing the whole people together under one manifest allegiance. This one sanctuary, with its Levite guard, and the awful Presence which abode there, was a security against the introduction of man's will which for a people such as Israel nothing else could give. For her own purposes, and with evident wisdom, Rome has sought to imitate this. All she has lacked is that divine presence with her, which she has recognized indeed as necessary, and has not failed to claim. Metropolitanism in spiritual things has never been transferred from Jerusalem, though Jerusalem for centuries has been set aside from what was her glory,—what will again be this,—that she was the city of God. The city of God for Christianity is heavenly—"Jerusalem which is *above*, which is our mother." (Gal. iv. 26.) The dwelling-place of God on earth is the Church which is formed by the Holy Ghost of *living* stones, which Peter himself has with prophetic significance been made to announce to us. (1 Pet. ii. 5.) Practically, the presence of the Lord is with any "two or three gathered to" His "name." (Matt. xviii. 20.) Unity now is spiritual, not local. To put it better, the centre of gathering is One hid in heaven, whose "name" alone unites us upon earth. But thank God we are not thus at distance from our centre ever: *wherever* we gather to His name He is.

(ii.) As the first subsection has thus to do with the maintenance of the sovereignty of the one true God, the second naturally treats of those who should turn aside to follow other gods. And here the closing verses of the twelfth chapter seem clearly the beginning of the subject of the thirteenth. The prohibition of all thought of such service, or of mixing it in any way with the service of Jehovah, which they were jealously to adhere to without addition or diminution, leads on to the treatment of seducers in the shape of false prophets, or among kindred and bosom friends, and then where even a whole city might have gone astray.

How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto Jehovah thy God: for every thing abominable unto Jehovah, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their [p]sons and their daughters have they burned in the fire unto their gods. What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add to it nor diminish from it.

If there arise in your midst a [q]prophet, or dreamer of dreams, and give unto thee sign or wonder; and the sign or wonder come to pass whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods which thou hast not known, and serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams; for Jehovah your God is [r]proving you, to know whether ye love Jehovah your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after Jehovah your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice,—even him shall ye serve, and unto him shall ye cleave. And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to [s]death; because he hath spoken to turn [you] aside from Jehovah your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage,—to seduce thee out of the way which Jehovah thy God commanded thee to walk in: so shalt thou put away the evil from the midst of thee.

p Lev. 18. 21. 2 Kings 17. 17. 2 Chron. 33. 6. Jer. 32. 35. Ezek. 16. 20, 21.

q 1 Kings 13. 1-26. Jer. 2. 8, 26 -30. Jer. 5. 13, 31. Jer. 14. 13-16. *cf.* Matt. 24. 24. 2 Thess. 2. 9-12. Rev. 13. 11 -18. Rev. 19.20.

r Ju. 2. 22. *cf.* Gal. 1. 8 with 1 Jno. 4. 1-6.

s ch. 18. 20. Jer. 28. 1-17. Ezek. 11. 1 -13. *ctr.* 2 Chr. 24. 20, 21. Matt.23.35. Acts 7. 51, 52.

In the first place, there was to be no borrowing from the worship of false gods, much less going after themselves. A false god implies necessarily what is false and evil morally; for were not man's conscience defiled, he could not be away from God. The apostle's history of the development of idolatry (Rom. i.) is a true picture of every case, and the gods men take to themselves are a faithful picture of the lusts which call for them. It follows as a thing of course that their service gratifies these and develops them, remorse of conscience coming in, however, and claiming frightful penalties, until men offer the fruit of their bodies for the sin of their souls, passion and fear holding them alternately in bondage. God's will as proclaimed by His commandments is the only path of light and freedom: they were not to add or take away from it.

Secondly, they were to learn the supremacy of the moral in what might claim to be miracle, and thus decisive witness of what it was wrought to attest. This is a most important principle even now, when from Romanism to Mormonism and to Spiritualism, the supernatural is appealed to as establishing any thing as truth. Not so does the Word of God use it. Confirm the truth it may; awaken attention to it, it will: sound the alarm-bell in the conscience, summon response from the heart; but that which compels belief is the manifest truth.—truth which is always pure, always holy, always witnesses for God within the soul. "By their *fruits* shall ye know them," says the Lord as to the false prophets. No jugglery can bring forth grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles.

God may, it is plainly stated, allow a sign to come to pass as predicted. The "wicked one" of the last days comes with "all power and signs and *lying* wonders," things that shall take captive with strong delusion those that have "not received the love of the *truth*, that they might be saved." (2 Thess. ii.) There is a moral order in all this, and no cause for marvel that they that love lies, and will have them, should find that what they have embraced for truth has been a lie. Those that are *of the* truth hear the truth—Christ's voice,—none others.

If thy [t]brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend who is to thee as thy soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known,—thou nor thy fathers,—of the gods of the peoples that are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the [one] end of the earth even unto the [other] end of the earth,—thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him, nor shall thine eye pity him, nor shalt thou spare, nor shalt thou conceal him; but thou shalt surely kill him; thy hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he seeketh to seduce thee from Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. And [u]all Israel shall hear and fear, and do no more any such wicked thing as this in thy midst.

If thou shalt hear tell in one of thy cities which Jehovah thy God giveth thee to dwell in, saying, There are gone out from among you some worthless fellows, and have seduced the inhabitants of the [v]city, saying, Let us

t ch. 33. 9. 1 Kings 11. 4. Mic. 7. 5, 6. Prov. 1. 10. Luke 14. 26. Matt. 10. 34-39. 1 Cor. 5. 12, 13. 2 Cor. 5. 16.

u ch. 17. 3, ch. 19. 20. *cf.* Acts 5. 1-11. 1 Tim. 5. 20.

v Ju. 20. 1-16, etc. 1 Kings 15. 34. Jer. 2. 28. *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 6.

This is the unalterable and holy law of God's holy government: "there is a way that seemeth *right* unto a man, and the end thereof are the ways of death."

How deep this sends home to us the question, so necessary and so healthful as it is, where, and what are we? How well it assures us that if in any thing we deal untruly with our souls, we can make no covenant with the deceit we have invited—deceit will deceive all round! How well may the voice of Truth cry to the sons of men: "All they that hate *Me* love *death*"! (Prov. viii. 36.)

This does not displace the miracle, as some would have it, from its place of witness. It only fixes its place, and refuses to make a servant master; assures us that we everywhere have need of open eyes and conscience, lest we become the poor slaves of superstition that millions are, and from which our vaunted civilization in no wise delivers us.

This second warning is against deception; but "Adam was not deceived," yet was seduced. The wife gave to her husband, and with open eyes he fell. The third section here warns against this seduction. If it come from thy brother, the son of thy mother, or from the wife of thy bosom, or the friend who is as thine own soul, still the seducer to false gods must perish, and thou thyself have the responsibility of this, thy hand must be first upon him. This supposes public trial and full proof, of course,—sufficient witness, without which no life could be taken in Israel. The thing so proved, nothing remained but judgment: the judgment that fell upon Canaan and her gods must fall upon him who would bring back the gods and so the Canaan. It was God's judgment—amply just as God's must be; just, if ever judgment is just; and the smiting of a love which could not suffer the blight and canker to come upon His people whom He had saved from Egypt and brought home to Himself. Christianity does not smite thus, not because it is not just, but because Christianity is the spirit of grace in a world which has rejected Christ, and in which no divine throne any longer exists as it existed in Israel. But the judgment is reserved, only for the time that is surely coming, upon all who refuse still the grace. The tenderest lips that have ever spoken shall pronounce it, the hearts of saints shall say their amen to it, and the consciences of those condemned shall own its justice in that day.

The last case provided for is where a whole city is gone astray from God, in

go and serve other gods which ye have not known, then thou shalt [w]search and examine and ask diligently; and if it be truth, and the thing certain, that this abomination hath been wrought in the midst of thee, thou shalt surely [x]smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, devoting it, with all that is therein, and its cattle, to the edge of the sword. And thou shalt gather all the spoil of it into the midst of the street thereof, and burn with fire the city and all its spoil, every thing, unto Jehovah thy God: and it shall be a heap forever; it shall not be built again. And there shall not any thing cleave to thy hand of the [y]devoted thing, that Jehovah may turn from the fierceness of his anger, and show thee tender mercy,—even have mercy upon thee and multiply thee, as he sware unto thy fathers; because thou hearkenest to the voice of Jehovah thy God, to keep all his commandments which I command thee this day, doing that which is right in the eyes of Jehovah thy God.

[w] ch. 17. 4.

[x] Josh. 6. 17, 18.

[y] Josh. 6. 18. Josh. 7. 1.

3. (xiv. 1-27.) Personal consecration.

a No disfigurement of the sons of the living God.

[3] (*a*) Sons ye are to Jehovah your God: ye shall not [z]wound yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead. For a holy people art thou to Jehovah thy God, and Jehovah hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself out of all the peoples that are on the face of the earth.

[z] Lev. 19. 28. Lev. 21. 5. *cf.* Jer. 41. 4, 5. *cfr.* Acts 8. 2.

which case it comes under the ban, and is to be destroyed utterly, never to be rebuilt. Thus only could the mercy of God go forth in blessing once more for the land.

(iii.) We have now three things put together which seem to have little connection with one another or with the topic of consecration to God upon which the first commandment is here directly based. We have indeed to remember that (as has been already said) only illustrations are given us of principles much wider in application. Yet we shall find surely here, as always, that divine wisdom has ordered every thing, and that the illustrations are really such as this supposes. If we take from the passage the typical, that is, the prophetic, spiritual meaning, then indeed we may expect the meagreness which must result from such spoliation; but this will be our own fault entirely, and we do not so propose to treat the blessed Word of God. The New Testament must light up the Old; and in this we deal no more untruly with it than the light does when it floods a landscape with the day. For us the day is come, and we are children of it.

(*a*) Whatever may be the value of what follows, it is plain that it is based upon a wondrous place that Israel had, their being sons to Jehovah their God. This was their special place among the nations: they had, as the apostle says, "the adoption." It did not involve for them, what it does for us now their being children of God as new-born of the Spirit, although where faith was truly in the heart, there of course *was* new birth at any time. If we read this, then, in the light of God's desire for them, we may and must bring it in. By and by, it will be in fact accomplished as to the whole nation.

"Life," and that in its full sense, a life which the children of God have, gives evidently its fullness to the meaning here. Death is not to have power over the sons of God. "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." It would be to dishonor Him, therefore, to make cuttings in the flesh for the dead,—ineffaceable marks of grief for that which touched not the true life, and which the hand of God was to remove forever. Except we take in this thought of life,

b Distinction to be made of what was fit food to sustain life.

(*b*) Thou shalt not [a]eat any abominable thing. These are the beasts that ye may eat: the ox, the sheep, and the goat, the hart, and the gazelle, and the roe, and the wild goat, and the addax, and the oryx, and the mouflon. And every beast that [b]parteth the hoof, even completely dividing it into a double hoof, [and] that bringeth up the cud among the beasts, that shall ye eat. Only these ye shall not eat of those that bring up the cud, and of those that cleave the hoof completely,—the camel, and the hare, and the hyrax, because they bring up the cud, [c]but divide not the hoof, they shall be unclean to you: and the [d]swine, because it divideth the hoof but bringeth not up the cud, it shall be unclean to you: ye shall not eat of the flesh of these, nor touch their carcasses.

These shall ye eat of all that are in the waters: every thing that hath [e]fins and scales shall ye eat, and any thing that hath not fins and scales ye shall not eat; it is unclean to you.

Any clean [f]bird ye may eat; but these are they of which ye shall not eat: the griffon, the ossifrage, and the osprey, and the buzzard, and the kite, and the black kite after its kind, and every crow after its kind, and the ostrich, and the barn-owl, and the gull, and the hawk after its kind, and the little owl, and the eagle-owl, and the gallinule, and the pelican, and the vulture, and the cormorant, and the stork, and the heron after its kind, and the hoopoe, and the bat.

a Lev. 11. 2. *ctr.* Matt. 15. 11. Rom. 14. 1-3.

b Lev. 11. 3. *cf.* Prov. 4. 26, 27. 1 Jno. 2. 6. Ps. 1. 1, 2.

c Lev. 11. 4-6. *cf.* Luke 18. 18-22.

d Lev. 11. 7. Is. 65. 4. Matt. 7. 6. 2 Pet. 2. 22.

e Lev. 11. 9. Matt. 13. 47-50. *cf.* Jas. 1. 27.

f Lev. 11. 13-19. *cf.* Luke 17. 37. Gen. 15. 11.

who could refuse to own the power of that under which in fact all would be? Death brings things here to an end, and the more their value, the greater ruin accomplished. It is not to be endured, then, the notion that the Pentateuch is Sadducean, although only by the gospel indeed are life and incorruption fully brought to light. There is darkness, but to faith not impenetrable, as, in fact, we know it was not unpenetrated.

Israel must not disfigure themselves. They were wholly God's, and not to mutilate what He claimed for Himself. So a mere asceticism is a mere dishonor to Him whose we are, and to whom to give one's life is to make it full, perfect, exuberant. "Thou wilt show me the path of life," says the Psalmist, and then adds at once, "in Thy presence fullness of joy; at Thy right hand, pleasures for evermore." If it be answered to this, "Yes, but in heaven," Deuteronomy has enriched us already with the thought of "days of heaven upon the earth."

(*b*) It need not surprise us now that we find immediately upon this the insistance once more upon distinction of food, and that Israel shall only partake of what God pronounces clean. Food is the sustenance of life, and spiritually it is fully true that as the food is so the life must be. Christ is thus our Life itself, and the Bread of life. Strength cannot be ours without food, or without proper food; and if we only receive of Christ, it is He who says, "He that eateth Me, shall even live by Me."

Though the distinctions here insisted on have passed away as letter, as spirit they remain as things imperatively to be maintained. Would that we were careful always as to what we fed upon, and realized more fully that what we assimilate we are assimilated to. But in art, in literature, even for the Christian, genius is permitted to gild vice, and beauty of style to adorn error, until virtue in a rough garb is disdained, and evil in a fine coat welcomed. This has been in

And every [g] creeping thing that flieth is unclean to you: they shall not be eaten. Any clean bird ye may eat. Ye shall eat of nothing that [h] dieth of itself: thou mayest give it to the stranger who is within thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto a foreigner; but thou art a holy people unto Jehovah thy God. Thou shalt not [i] boil a kid in its mother's milk.

c The life put in connection with the sanctuary presence.

(c) Thou shalt surely [j] tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year. And thou shalt [k] eat before Jehovah thy God in the place that he shall choose to cause his name to dwell there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy new wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks, that thou mayest learn to fear Jehovah thy God always. And if the way be [l] too long for thee, so that thou canst not carry it, because the place is too far from thee which Jehovah thy God shall choose to set his name there, when Jehovah thy God blesseth thee, then thou shalt exchange it for money, and bind the money in thy hand, and go unto the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose, and thou shalt give the money for all thy soul desireth,—for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for any thing which thy soul demandeth of thee; and thou shalt eat there before Jehovah thy God; and thou shalt rejoice,—thou and thy house, and the Levite that is within thy gates: thou shalt not forsake him, because he hath no portion nor inheritance with thee.

g Lev. 11. 20-23. *cf.* Jno. 16. 28 with Phil. 3. 19, 20.

h Lev. 11. 39, 40. *cf.* Jno. 10. 15, 17, 18.

i Ex. 23. 19. Ex. 34. 26. *cf.* Prov. 12. 10.

j ch. 26. 12-15.

k ch. 12. 17. 18.

l ch. 12. 21.

measure true at all times, never perhaps more, however, than in the present day; and therefore the commandment here never needed enforcement more.

The lists of clean and unclean are shorter and more concise than in Lev. xi., with some differences also, of which we can at present unhappily give no account. All has been said already that we are able to say, in the notes upon Leviticus.

(*c*) In the third part of this chapter, the practical life of the Israelite is put in connection with the Sanctuary-Presence. An immense point it is that is here insisted on, although the reality is only faintly imaged in the legal statute.

The tithe spoken of is one of the supplementary laws of Deuteronomy, a second tithe, not the first, which belonged to God alone: while this was consumed, at the sanctuary, by the person whose land was tithed, with his household, and the Levite, never to be forgotten. He thus comes up to own before God His mercies and enjoy them with God.

The life is characterized by dependence—faith: and faith has its one object and need in God Himself. The psalms emphasize this need of God, the personal God, for the soul. "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" (Ps. xlii. 2.) The eighty-fourth psalm celebrates the blessedness of those who dwell in God's house, whose life is one perpetual praise; and the blessedness next to that, of him in whose heart are the "ways" that lead there, who goes from strength to strength, though through the vale of weeping, making it a well, and the rain of heavenly refreshment filling the pools.

What is faith indeed without the God in whom it is? what divine life that draws not up to its source and centre? The journeys of the Israelite to Zion

4. (v. 28-xv. 18.) The practical outgoing in mercy to the poor.

[1] At the end of [m] three years thou shalt bring all the tithe of thy produce in that year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates; and the Levite shall come,—because he hath no portion nor inheritance with thee,—and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates, and they shall eat and be satisfied, that Jehovah thy God may bless thee in all the work of thy hand which thou doest.

[m] ch. 26. 12.

At the end of [n] seven years thou shalt make a release. And this is the manner of the release: every creditor that lendeth unto his neighbor shall release it: he shall not exact it of his neighbor, even of his brother; for it is proclaimed Jehovah's release. Of a foreigner thou mayest exact it; but that which is thine with thy brother thy hand shall release. Only that there may be no poor among you, (for Jehovah shall bless thee indeed in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it,) if only thou wilt hearken indeed unto the voice of Jehovah thy God, taking heed to keep all this commandment which I command thee this day. For Jehovah thy God will bless thee as he hath spoken to thee, and thou shalt [o] lend to many nations, and thou shalt not borrow, and

[n] Ex. 21. 2-4. Ex. 23. 10, 11. ch. 31. 10. ver. 12.

[o] ch. 28. 12. Luke 6. 34, 35.

year by year, with their eating and drinking, and joy before Him, do indeed but feebly express the truth here: yet they shadow, and remind us of it.

(iv.) Of this joy in God the practical life is the outflow: on this we do not need to dwell, it is so manifest. Completely in place is it, therefore, that now we find every third year this tithe consumed at home, shared with the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. Not simply *given* to them, but *shared* with them;—a deeper thing. Christ does not give merely, that we may carry it away from Him; He *shares*. This is fellowship. We are called to joy in His joy, who came here to sorrow in our sorrow: "I will drink the wine new with you," He says, "in My Father's kingdom."

This is only the first illustration, however, of the mercy to be shown to the needy in Israel, the witness of His mercy who was Israel's God. We find beyond this two other cases of need.

First, the debtor, to whom the seventh—the Sabbatic—year brought "release" as to his debt. The comparison with Ex. xxiii. 11, where the same word as used for "release" here is applied to the land,—the letting it rest,—assures us plainly that this was not an absolute remission of all debt, but a temporary one during the time of the land-rest, which might hinder payment. This, which did not of course affect the foreigner, shows the reason of his exemption. God would have no poor among His people, although such there would always be, left to test and draw out the mercy of their brethren, who were to make them practically to cease by their care for them. (Comp. v. 4 with v. 11.) Nor need they fear to suffer by this liberty; for so they would be blessed in all they put their hand to. How tender a witness this sabbatic year to the bounty of His hand who supported all!

The other case is that of a person who through want might have been compelled to become a bondman: for him also the seventh year of his service was to bring release; nor was he to be sent empty away, but furnished liberally. They were to remember the bond-service in Egypt, and their redemption. Yet love might rather choose continued service; and we know Whose love is pictured here.

thou shalt [p] rule over many nations, but they shall not rule over thee. If there be among you a [q] poor man, one of thy brethren, in any of thy gates in thy land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thy heart nor shut thy hand from the poor thy brother; but thou shalt open wide thy hand to him, and thou shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need in that which he needeth. Beware lest there be a base thing in thy heart, saying, The [r] seventh year, the year of release, is at hand, and thine eye be evil toward thy poor brother, and thou give him not, and he cry to Jehovah against thee, and it be thy sin. Thou shalt surely give him, and thy heart shall not be sore when thou givest to him; for for this thing Jehovah thy God shall bless thee in all thy work, even in all that thou puttest thy hand unto. For the poor shall not cease out of the midst of the land; therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open wide thy hand unto thy brother,—unto thine afflicted and to thy poor in thy land.

If thy brother, a Hebrew man or a Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and [s] serve thee six years, then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go from thee free. And when thou lettest him go from thee free, thou shalt not send him away empty: thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy threshing-floor, and out of thy wine-press; of that with which Jehovah thy God hath blessed thee shalt thou give to him. And thou shalt [t] remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and that Jehovah thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to-day. And it shall be, if he say unto thee, I [u] will not go out from thee, because he loveth thee and thy house, and because he is well with thee, then thou shalt take an awl, and thrust it through his ear into the door, and he shall be thy servant forever. And also unto thy maid-servant shalt thou do likewise. It shall not seem hard unto thee when thou sendest him away free from thee, for double the worth of a hired servant hath he been to thee six years; and Jehovah thy God shall bless thee in all that thou doest.

p ch. 28. 13. Ps. 149.6-9. Is. 14. 1, 2.

q Matt. 5. 41, 42.

r Luke 14. 12-14. Jno. 12. 8. Gal. 2. 10. Acts 20. 35.

s ver. 7. Jer. 34. 14-17.

t ch. 5. 15. ch. 16. 12. ch. 24. 18, 22.

u Ex. 21.5,6. *cf.* Heb. 10. 5 with Ps. 40. 16.

This enforcement of mercy to the poor was the more needed because the law had promises of earthly blessing to him who kept it, which self-righteousness might abuse to justify another treatment. And for this reason the Lord's story of Lazarus and the rich man would come home to covetous Pharisees. In this, the *poor* man—one in utter destitution—is taken to Abraham's bosom, and the rich man shut out. But this is not legal right, but *salvation*, a very different thing, in the line of which comes the exhortation here in Deuteronomy to remember Egypt and their own redemption. To them all, and always, God's blessings were but mercy; and the lesson of the law was not learnt by those in ignorance of this.

(v.) The first section ends now with the repetition of that which is all through a governing thought—the going up to the sanctuary. The life which is of God

5. (xv. 19-xvi. 17.) The ways that lead up to God.

a The first-born.

[5] (*a*) All the [v] firstling males that are born of thy herd and of thy flock thou shalt sanctify unto Jehovah thy God: thou shalt not work with the firstling of thy bullock, nor shear the firstling of thy sheep. Before Jehovah thy God shalt thou eat it year by year in the place that Jehovah shall choose,—thou and thy house. And if there be any [w] blemish therein, as being lame or blind, any ill blemish, thou shalt not sacrifice it unto Jehovah thy God. Thou shalt eat it within thy gates; clean and unclean [may eat it] alike, as the gazelle and as the hart. Only thou shalt not eat the blood thereof; thou shalt pour it out upon the ground as water.

b The passover (redemption).

(*b*) Observe the month of Abib, and keep the [x] passover to Jehovah thy God; for in the month of Abib, Jehovah thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night. And thou shalt sacrifice the passover to Jehovah thy God of the flock or of the herd, in the [y] place which Jehovah

v Ex. 13. 2. Ex. 34. 20. Luke 2. 22-24. *cf.* Col. 1. 16-18.
w Ex. 12. 5. ch. 17. 1. *cf.* Heb. 7. 26.
x Ex. 12. 21-28. Num. 9. 1-5. Josh. 5. 10. 2 Kings 23. 21-23. 2Chron.30. 2. 5. Ezra 6. 19-22. Luke 22. 8-13. 1 Cor. 5. 7. Ezek.45.21.
y ch. 12. 5. *cf.* Matt.18. 20.

must be lived with Him, of which these goings up are an imperfect yet real expression. In accordance with the number of this subsection, we have the occasions insisted on on which they went up, which naturally typify the ways that lead up. Blessed indeed he in whose heart they are!

(*a*) First, however, and as introductory to these, we have a supplementary note—in this, quite in the style of Deuteronomy—as to the first-born of the herd and flock. They were not to be worked, nor used by man for his own profit, but to be the Lord's entirely, and eaten when they went up to the sanctuary, except there were some blemish; in which case, though not fit to be taken up, they were still to be eaten, as a portion from God in the family.

As supplementary to the former law (Num. xviii.), it is, no doubt, the priest who is to eat this in the way stated. Nor does it seem possible that even such a modification should be intended as that the people should share with the priests, as some have thought: nothing like this is said. As a supplement to what was well known, there would be no misunderstanding of what, if it stood alone, would naturally be otherwise taken than now we take it. In fact, the Jews seem to have had no question.

Nationally, there was no separate going up to Jerusalem to present the firstlings, yet the fulfillment of the law required them to go up. It is thus a suited introduction to that of the three feasts following. The first-born belonged to God, as having been spared in Egypt, and to eat it before God speaks for us of realizing that relationship to God which is founded upon birth and redemption. Israel had this double position,—are for the earth, as the Church is for heaven, God's first-born; and when they truly take it, it will be as born to God—newborn, as we,—a new birth, which implies the bringing home to Him, though the knowledge of redemption be the actual call. Perfectly in its place, then, is this introductory note as to the first-born. They must eat it at the sanctuary, therefore,—that is, if without blemish; if blemished, it was not a fit presentation of what God's work and gift must be; and thus it lost its place, and became mere ordinary food.

(*b*) We now come to the three feasts which actually brought Israel to the sanctuary. The first of these was the passover, in which, as seen here, the feast of unleavened bread is merged. Redemption is the prominent thought, though the putting away of leaven surely accompanies it. Unleavened bread is the "bread of affliction,"—the soul's self-humiliation because of the remembrance of the bondage out of which the mercy of God has delivered; for us, indeed, how shameful an one! a sorrow which is to be the subduing of pride forever, and thus, morally, our deliverance.

shall choose to cause his name to dwell there. Thou shall eat with it no [z] leavened bread; [a] seven days shall thou eat unleavened bread with it, bread of humiliation, for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt with haste, that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life. And there shall be no leaven seen with thee within all thy boundaries seven days; nor shall any of the flesh which thou sacrificest the first day at even [b] remain all night until the morning. Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover in one of thy gates which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, but in the place that Jehovah thy God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there shalt thou sacrifice the passover in the [c] evening, at the going down of the sun, at the time thou camest forth from Egypt. And thou shalt roast and eat it in the place that Jehovah thy God shall choose; and thou shalt turn in the morning, and go unto thy tents. Six days shalt thou eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day shall be a solemn assembly to Jehovah thy God; thou shalt do [d] no work [therein].

[z] Ex. 12. 15. 1 Cor. 5. 8.

[a] Ex. 13. 3-10. Num. 6. 8. *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 2.

[b] Ex. 34. 25. Lev. 7. 15. Ex. 16. 19, 20.

[c] Ex. 12. 6. *cf.* Mark 15. 33.

[d] Ex. 12. 16. *cf.* Rom. 4. 4, 5. Matt. 11. 28.

e Pentecost: the Spirit given.

(*e*) [e] Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee: from the beginning of putting the sickle into the corn shalt thou begin to number the seven weeks. And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto Jehovah thy God with a tribute of free-will offering of thy hand, which thou shalt give according as Jehovah thy God blesseth thee. And thou shalt [f] rejoice before Jehovah thy God,—thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are in the midst of thee, in the place that Jehovah thy God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and shalt observe and do these statutes.

[e] Ex. 23. 16. Lev. 23. 15-21. Acts 2. 1.

[f] ch. 12. 7. *cf.* Acts 13. 52. Rom. 14. 17. Zeph. 3. 17.

d Tabernacles: the wilderness from the land.

(*d*) The feast of [g] tabernacles thou shalt keep seven days, when thou hast gathered in from thy threshing-

[g] Lev. 23. 34-36, 39-44. Num. 29. 12-38. Ezra 3. 4. Neh. 8. 13-18. Jno. 7. 2-44. Ezek. 45. 25. Zech. 14. 16.

Here is the first direct call to the sanctuary, though new birth underlies it, as we know. In the knowledge of redemption it is that the new life comes to itself, and so to God. In its second-first place in this series, the passover-feast is found in perfect order, as all is order here.

(*e*) The feast of weeks, or Pentecost, comes next to the passover,—a type, as we well know, of the gift of the Spirit, but which is characterized here by its effects—the fruit produced, of which a free-will offering is presented to God according to the measure of the blessing realized.

Upon this as bringing to God there is no need to dwell at length. The Spirit of God is He by whom we draw nigh, and the Spirit in us will not acquiesce in distance. He is the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, "Abba, Father;" and it is good to notice, as connected with the type, the voluntary offering, and the joy before God, in which those who have special need are specially remembered and made to share. Such are the characteristics, indeed, of the work of the Spirit.

(*d*) Lastly, we have now the feast of tabernacles. This, as we have already

floor and from thy wine-press. And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast,—thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates. Seven days shalt thou keep a feast unto Jehovah thy God in the place which Jehovah shall choose, because Jehovah thy God blesseth thee in all thine increase, and in all the work of thy hands, and thou shalt be [h]altogether joyful.

[i]Three times a year shall all thy males appear before Jehovah thy God in the place that he shall choose: in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles; and they shall not appear before Jehovah [j]empty: each [shall give] according as it is in his power to give, according to the blessing of Jehovah thy God which he hath given thee.

Duties manward. 1. (xvi. 18-xviii. 22.) Headship in Israel. *a* (xvi. 18-xvii. 20.) The maintenance of justice and choice of a king.

(XVI. 18—XXV.)

2. [1](*a*) [k]Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, according to thy tribes; and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment. Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, nor take a bribe: for a bribe [l]blindeth the eyes of the wise, and perverteth the

h 1 Kings 8. 66. Ps. 5. 11. Ps. 89. 15, 17. Is. 12. 1-6.
i Ex. 23. 14-17. Ex. 34. 23, 24. Lev. 23. 5, 15, 34. Num. 28. 16, 26. Num. 29. 12.
j Ex. 23. 15. ch. 26. 12-15. *cf.* Heb. 13. 15, 16. 1 Cor. 16. 2. 2 Cor. 8. 12. 2 Cor. 9. 6-8. Neh. 8. 10.
k cf. Ex. 21. 6 with Ps. 82. 1-6. 1 Cor. 6. 1-7.
l Ex. 23. 6-9. Prov. 17. 23. *ctr.* Is. 1. 23. Acts 24. 26, 27. *cf.* 2 Chron. 19. 5-7.

seen, speaks of the perfected blessing, when, the harvest of the earth and the vintage of wrath being past, Israel, in the enjoyment of the land, shall remember all wilderness-experience as past forever, and the long joy wide-spread and unchecked shall reach on to eternal day. For us also, in a higher sphere, there are "pleasures at God's right hand for evermore."

This completes the picture. The perpetuity of blessing means God's unbroken delight in the work of His hands forever—God with us, we with Him, abidingly. Thus the three feasts that call Israel up to God do not speak of temporary or intermitting fellowship. That would be injurious to God as to man. "Emmanuel"—"God with us" can be of no mere temporary significance.

2. (i.) We pass now from the first table of the law to the second—from duties Godward to duties manward; in the first section, finding connection between the two by means of the fifth commandment, under which the duties to rulers naturally come, especially in Israel, where, as we have seen, the idea of the family, the natural order, underlies the whole national constitution. Authority here, as it is derived from God, represents Him, as it is plain: a principle which the apostle applies for the Christian in a most sweeping way (Rom. xiii.), and which is seen clearly in Scripture—"Calling those gods to whom the word of God came," (the judges in Israel, that is, who had divine commission,)—a phrase which the Lord seals with the emphatic assurance, "Scripture cannot be broken" (Jno. x. 35.)

Those who would put the fifth commandment into the first table may find here their strongest argument, as confirmatory of which they urge the special commandments as to idolatry which follow in this place. One would think this view, however, to be self-evidently wrong, the numerical stamp also justifying fully the common division, as we have seen. The fifth commandment does indeed by this means only stand as the first of the second table—the *representative* of the first in the second, and this most perfectly.

The duties *of* rulers also are implied in the duties *to* them, and come under the same head here.

(*a*) We have, first, the institution of civil authority, that righteousness may be

words of the righteous. Justice, justice, shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and possess the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee. [m] Thou shalt not plant thee an asherah of any wood near unto the altar of Jehovah thy God, which thou shalt make thee; nor shalt thou set thee up a pillar, which Jehovah thy God hateth.

Thou shalt not sacrifice unto Jehovah thy God ox or sheep wherein is [n] blemish, or any evil thing; for it is an abomination unto Jehovah thy God.

If there be [o] found in the midst of thee, within any of thy gates which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, man or woman who doeth evil in the eyes of Jehovah thy God, in transgressing his covenant, and goeth and serveth other gods, and boweth down to them, or the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I commanded not, and it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, then thou shalt seek diligently, and, behold, if it be true, and the thing certain, that this abomination hath been done in Israel, then thou shalt bring forth unto thy gates the man or the woman that hath done this evil thing—the man or the woman,—and thou shalt [p] stone them with stones, that they die. At the mouth of [q] two witnesses or of three witnesses shall he that is to die be put to death: he shall not be put to death at the mouth of one witness. The hand of the witnesses shall be first upon him, to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. So shalt thou put away the evil from the midst of thee.

Appeal in doubt.

If there be a matter [r] too hard for thee in judgment,

m Ju. 3. 7. 1 Kings 15. 13. 2 Kings 21. 3.

n Ex. 12. 5. cf. 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. ctr. Mal. 1. 8-14.

o ch. 12. 6-11.

p Lev. 24. 14. 1 Cor. 5. 5, 13.

q Num. 35. 30. Matt. 18. 16. 2 Cor. 13. 1, 2. Heb. 10. 28. cf. Jno. 8. 17, 18. 1 Jno. 5. 8-12.

r Ex. 18. 26. Lev. 24. 12. cf. Jer. 32. 17.

maintained throughout the land: judges everywhere, with a court for the settlement of difficult cases at the sanctuary, taking the place of the appeal hitherto to Moses himself; a king viewed as in the future in God's thought for them, and the choice of one provided for.

The judges sat in the gates of the cities, because every one going out or coming in was to be under their eye; and justice thus, as it was to be open-eyed, and toward all, would come under the eyes of all, as able to bear the light. There was to be no respect of persons, no taking of gift. Righteousness in Israel was to be the basis of every thing, the condition of life and of inheritance.

But in the maintenance of this, the claim of God was first, and thus the commandments as to idolatry follow this immediately. There was to be no toleration in such cases at all, but sharp excision by the sword of justice, the government being exercised by God openly among them, and the worship of other gods manifest rebellion. Church and state were here really one, and ecclesiastical penalties also civil ones. This is, of course, no justification of such a course in entirely different conditions under another dispensation. The kingdom of God is now "not of this world;" Christ's people reign not, but are patient sufferers; their weapons spiritual, and not carnal; and grace to be manifested by them while God in His grace forbears toward men.

In these cases, the law required sufficient witness, and of such sort as would be willing to put their hands to the confirmation of it: the witnesses must first execute the sentence of the judge.

In matters too difficult to settle by the ordinary procedure, the sanctuary became the place of final appeal, where the priest's voice could re-enforce that of

between blood and blood, between cause and cause, and between stroke and stroke,—matters contested, within thy gates, then thou shalt arise, and go up unto the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose; and thou shalt go unto the priests, the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and inquire, and they shall declare to thee the word of judgment. And thou shalt do according to the tenor of the word which they declare to thee, of that place that Jehovah shall choose; and thou shalt take heed to do according to all that they shall teach thee: according to the tenor of the word which they shall teach thee, and according to the sentence which they shall pronounce to thee, shalt thou do; thou shalt not turn aside from the word which they declare to thee, to the right hand or to the left. And the man that doeth presumptuously in not hearkening to the priest who standeth there to minister before Jehovah thy God, or unto the judge, that man shall die; and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel. And all the people shall hear, and be afraid, and act no more presumptuously.

The culmination in the king.

When thou art come into the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, and possessest it, and dwellest in it, and shalt say, I will set over me a king, like all the nations which are round me, thou shalt surely set over thee the king that Jehovah thy God shall choose; from among thy [e]brethren shalt thou set a king over thee: thou mayest not set over thee a stranger who is not thy brother. Only he shall not multiply [f]horses for himself, nor turn the people back to Egypt, that he may multi-

[e] 2 Sam. 5. 1. 1 Chron. 11. 1. *cf.* Heb. 2. 11.

[f] 1 Kings 10. 26. 1 Kings 4. 26. Ps. 33. 16, 17.

the judge; and this appeal was ultimate. A sentence so given none could resist without rebellion.

A king is contemplated in due time, when they should desire, in this, to be like the nations round about. But when the people make this very plea in Samuel's time (1 Sam. viii. 5), it is taken, not by him only, but by the Lord also, as the rejection of Him as their King. From this, it has been urged that this passage in Deuteronomy must have been the insertion of a later time. But why? Granted that it was failure on the people's part, (and that is clear,) it is surely not clear that God could not foresee this, nor that, foreseeing, He might not provide for it. Certainly, a desire to be like the Gentiles, in one of those things that mainly distinguished them from the Gentiles, could not indicate a right appreciation of their blessings. And yet the wisdom and grace of God are only the more, not the less, conspicuous in this provision. True, of Saul it was said, "I gave thee a king in Mine anger, and took him away in My wrath." (Hos. xiii. 11.) But this only brings out God's real choice—David, "the beloved," type of One who is indeed that, and in whom a King is found who reigns forever. He is the One of whom the king that Deuteronomy announces is the shadow. Brought forth when priesthood has failed in Eli, and prophet in Samuel, the true king is God's resource for Israel and the earth. For neither priesthood nor prophecy alone will set right the earth, or bring in the time when it shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. He must come to whom the throne belongs, and who shall bring back judgment to righteousness; He in whom Prophet, Priest, and King are one,—a threefold cord that never shall be broken.

ply horses; for Jehovah hath said to you that ye shall no more return that way. Nor shall he multiply to himself [u] wives, that they turn not his heart aside; nor shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold. And when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, then he shall write out for himself a copy of this law in a book, out of that which is before the priests the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear Jehovah his God, in keeping all the words of this law, and these statutes, to do them; that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment to the right hand or the left, that he may prolong his days in his kingdom,—he and his sons, in the midst of Israel.

b (xviii. 1-8.) Levite ministry.

(*b*) The priests, the Levites, [and] the whole tribe of Levi, shall have [w] no portion nor inheritance with Israel: they shall eat the [x] offerings of Jehovah made by fire, and his inheritance; but they shall have no inheritance among their brethren: [y] Jehovah himself is their inheritance, as he said unto them. And this shall be the priest's due from the people,—from them that offer a sacrifice, whether it be ox or small cattle: and they shall give unto the priest the [z] shoulder, and the two cheeks, and the maw. The [a] first-fruits of thy corn, of thy new wine, and of thine oil, and the first-fruits of the fleece of thy flock shalt thou give him; for Jehovah thy God hath [a] chosen him out of all thy tribes to stand to minister in the name of Jehovah,—him and his sons always.

And when a [b] Levite shall come out of any of thy gates out of all Israel, wherever he sojourneth, and come with all the desire of his soul to the place that Jehovah chooseth, and shall minister in the name of Jehovah his God, as all his brethren the Levites [do] that stand there before Jehovah, they shall have like portions to eat, besides the sale of his patrimony.

[u] 1 Kings 11. 1.

[v] Num. 18. 20-24. Num. 26. 62. ch. 10. 9. Josh. 13. 14, 33. *cf.* 2 Cor. 8. 9. 2 Cor. 6. 10.

[w] Num. 18. 8-20. *cf.* Phil. 1. 21.

[x] Ps. 16. 5. Rom. 8. 16, 17. 1 Pet. 1. 3, 4.

[y] Lev. 7. 31-34. *cf.* Luke 15. 5. Phil. 4. 13.

[z] Ex. 22. 29. Ex. 23. 19. 2 Kings 4. 42-44. 2 Chron. 31. 4-11. Neh. 10. 32-39. Ezek. 44. 30. Gal. 6. 6.

[a] Num. 16. 5. *cf.* Heb. 5. 4-6. 1 Tim. 1. 12-14.

[b] Num. 35. 2-8. *cf.* Mark 10. 28-31.

Here it is but the type, the mere human king, needing to be reminded of his dependence upon God, and liable to trust in horses and chariots, and to yield himself to the lusts which enslave the greatest. In Solomon, the wisest of kings, is found the failure which is here anticipated. He is but the shadow. The reins of absolute empire are reserved for One who alone can hold them aright.

(*b*) The rights of priests and Levites follow,—the ministers of Jehovah, ministering in His name: identified with Him, not in rule, but in that which attests rather His heart than, as before, His righteousness. To them the people were in turn to minister a recognized portion, they having none with the other tribes in the land.

There was also a special privilege accorded to these, wherever there was a longing desire in the heart to dwell near the sanctuary, there was no fixed location which would prevent the accomplishment of this. Such an one could come and minister among his brethren who stood there before Jehovah, and was to find his portion among these. A precious witness for us of how God delights in and welcomes the approach of one who, as a worshiper, would draw nigh, and abide in His

c (vv. 9-22.) The prophet, and his signs.

(c) When thou comest into the land which Jehovah thy God is giving thee, thou shalt not [c] learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you one that [d] maketh his son or his daughter pass through the fire, [or] that practiceth [e] divination, [or] that useth secret arts, or an augur, or an enchanter, or that useth spell, or consulteth a [f] familiar spirit, or a wizard, or a seeker to the dead. For every one that doeth these things is an abomination to Jehovah, and [g] because of these abominations doth Jehovah thy God dispossess them before thee. Thou shalt

c ch. 12. 29, 30. *cf.* Rom. 12. 2.
d ch. 12. 31.
e 2 Kings 17. 17, Acts 16. 16-18. Acts 19. 18, 19.
f Lev. 20. 27. 1 Sam. 28. 7-25.
g Lev. 18. 24, 25. Col. 3. 6.

presence. Oh for more of this longing of heart among us,—the importunate faith of one to whom God must say, Be it unto thee even as thou wilt!

(c) As the judge or the king represents God characteristically in His righteousness, and the Levite-priest represents Him in His love, the prophet now gives utterance to His voice as the Living One. Through the Urim and Thummim of the priest He could be sought indeed and would respond, as we know; but the prophet waited not for inquiry. God's word abode in him as a fire that must break out, urging him on in spite of fears and hesitation of nature and opposition of the evil around. It was the voice of holiness that spake to the conscience also, bringing all into the light because God is light. Hence the prophet was the man of God in days of reproach and apostasy, and the voice of revival wherever there were hearts yet to be reached.

Alas! the heart that drew away from God, and shunned Him, drew only the nearer, by this, to the living and active enemy of God; and the very needs which should have drawn him as of necessity to Him who could satisfy them, put him then the more completely in the power of the dark and dreadful apostasy in heavenly spheres. Thus the word as to the true prophet here is prefaced by the prohibition of all divination, witchcraft, necromancy, and recurrence to the supernatural apart from God,—if apart, then in sure and deadly opposition.

The one need in seeking God is the remembrance of the holiness of His presence, —the need of truth, therefore, in the inward parts. Where it was not openly another god that was sought, the false way revealed itself by its essential unholiness, and never more clearly than where apparently purification was insisted on. For this purification was but a mockery of it, cruel and terrible as it might be in its demands. Thus the list of forbidden things begins here with the "making son or daughter to pass through the fire," a form of expression by which is intended that giving the "fruit of the body for the sin of the soul" which has been practiced among most heathen nations in their sore perplexity away from God.*

Following this, we have "all the words which the language contained for the different modes of exploring the future and discovering the will of God" (*Keil*) practiced by the heathen, brought together under one general condemnation. Nor are we past the need of reviewing them, so constantly does the power of evil work through the need and corruption of man to the same results,—modified only and disguised by the manners of the age, but which in no wise affects their inner meaning. Spiritualism, clairvoyance, and theosophy to-day have only freshened our apprehension of what has been in some shape always at work, although now energetically working in proportion as the end approaches, and the enfeebled power of Christianity allows them to appear with boldness.†

* Comp. 2 Kings xvi. 3—"he made pass through"—with 2 Chron. xxviii. 3—"he burnt." That there were lighter modes of passing through the fire, however, is not to be denied; and they have survived in various parts of Christendom, as in the midsummer fires of St. John's Eve, in some places in England.

† 1. We have in this list, first, *qosem*, the "diviner," which seems the general term, including all the rest.

2. *Meonen*, in the common version, the "observer of times," predicting lucky or unlucky

be [h] perfect with Jehovah thy God. For these nations which thou dispossessest hearkened to those that use secret arts, and to diviners; but as for thee, Jehovah thy God hath not suffered thee [to do] so. A [i] Prophet will Jehovah thy God raise up unto thee from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken; according to all that thou didst ask of Jehovah thy God in the day of assembly in Horeb, saying, [j] Let me not hear any more the voice of Jehovah my God, nor see any more this great fire, that I die not. And Jehovah said unto me, They have well said that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from

[h] Matt. 5. 48. cf. Col. 4. 12. 1 Pet. 5. 10.

[i] Acts 3. 22, 23. Acts 7. 37.

[j] Ex. 20. 19. cf. Heb. 12. 18-24.

All who do these things are declared emphatically to be an abomination to Jehovah; not merely the things are such, but the people who do them. Christianity has not changed this, nor can subtly disguised names hinder divine judgment.

If the professing people of God turn to such things, it is not because God has refused them the joy and blessing of direct communication of His mind: it is because they have turned their back on Him. He would not even wait for the people to call on Him, but would come near to them Himself in the Prophet that He would raise up like unto Moses, and whom they were to hear; and of him who did not hear the Prophet it would be required.

"It should be as certain that Christ is the only complete fulfillment of this as, on the other hand, that every prophet raised up was a partial anticipatory fulfillment. The threefold form of headship in Israel—King, Priest, and Prophet—we have here complete, and of each we must say exactly the same thing. Christ it is alone to whom they all looked forward, and without him, any fulfillment would be trivial and unworthy. Yet the terms of what is said show plainly

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days from the observation of the heavens, is, in the *R. V.*, the "augur" in general. The Septuagint and the Syriac versions differ from these and from each other: the former giving κληδονιζομενος—"presaging from chance words;" the latter, "fascinating with the eyes," from which Pember conjectures perhaps a mesmerist, but which might refer as well to the power of the "evil eye." Neither of the last seem likely, however, here, nor does the derivation seem certain, whether it be part of the verb to "eye," (as 1 Sam. xviii. 9,) or of the verb to "cover"—"one who covers," or uses secret arts, which on the whole seems to give the simplest meaning.

3. *Menachesh*, in both versions, "enchanter." Pember well says, "The word is connected with *nachash*, 'a serpent,' and is usually explained to mean 'a hisser,' or 'whisperer,' and then 'a mutterer of enchantments.' But the use of the verb, of which it is the Piel participle, seems to point in a different direction. In Gen. xxx., Laban entreats Jacob to stay with him; 'for,' says he, 'I divine [or, more literally, perceive by observation,] that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake.' And again, when, to the pleading of Benhadad's servants, Ahab replied, 'Is he yet alive? he is my brother,' we are told that the men 'divined,' 'took an omen,' from what he had said. Hence the verb seems to have been used primarily of drawing an inference from rapid observation, and then of divining. From the first meaning comes *nachash*, 'a serpent,' on account of its quick intelligence; from the second, *menachesh*, 'an augur'—one who divines by observing signs and tokens, such as the singing and flight of birds, aerial phenomena, and other sights and sounds." (*Earth's Earliest Ages*, p. 156.)

4. *Mecashsheph*, constantly rendered, in the Septuagint, φαρμακὸς—"one who uses drugs," seems to be the enchanter proper, working through natural things endued, by magical formulæ or prayers, with supernatural power.

5. *Chober*, literally, "binding" as with a spell; "charmer" in the common version.

6. *Shoel obh*—"one who consults a familiar spirit." The *obh* was *in* the person, as Lev. xx. 27 literally reads, although it is also applied to the person himself in whom it is, and this generally. It means, primarily, "a (skin) bottle" (Job xxxii. 19), apparently from its dilatability, and its transference to the possessed person has been supposed to be either from the swelling of the body of which Virgil speaks (Æneid, vi. 46, etc.) with the demoniac inspiration, or from the ventriloquism attending, to which the rendering of the Septuagint refers it. From the demoniac, the term was transferred to the demon.

7. *Yidoni*—the wise one in unlawful wisdom, the wizard.

8. The necromancer—the seeker to the dead.

among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put [k]my words into his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I command him. And it shall be that the man that [l]hearkeneth not unto my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. But the prophet that shall [m]presume to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thy heart, How shall we know the word that Jehovah hath not spoken? [n]when a prophet speaketh in the name of Jehovah, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, it is a word which Jehovah hath not spoken, [but] the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

k Jno. 3. 34. Jno. 17. 8. *cf.* Jer. 1. 9. 1 Cor. 2. 13.

l *cf.* Jno. 12. 37-50. Heb. 10. 28-31. Acts 28. 26-28.

m ch. 13. 1-5. Zech. 13. 2, 3. *cf.* 2 Pet. 2. 1, 2.

n Jer. 28. 5-9.

that others are contemplated, as steps not unneeded by which we reach Him—certainly to Israel gracious helps by which in the meanwhile faith might be sustained and need ministered to.

It may be said by those who deny the lesser application, that neither king nor priest here are *prophesied of* in any direct way, while the prophet *is:* and this is true; yet the three offices are brought together surely for a purpose, each one to be filled by Christ at last, and each emphasizing one main attribute of Jehovah as Supreme Head in Israel,—righteousness, love, holiness,—as we have seen.

There is a reason also to be found for what is said of the prophet being more strictly predictive. For while the continuance of the priesthood and of the judgeship was provided for, and the king also when the time should come, the prophetic office was neither elective nor successional, but depended upon the mere good pleasure of God. Hence the promise, "God *will* raise up." A distinction of the prophet it is that even in Israel he existed only by the direct call and qualification of God only. Each one was therefore very distinctly the "man of God" in his day; and the "testimony of Jesus," which the "spirit of prophecy" was, was preserved from the corruption by which priest and king were overcome.

Thus the prophet marked the activity of the living God in behalf of His people, and throughout reign after reign of the later kings of Israel, the existence of the prophet is the one ray of light—the link still existing between God and the people who drew not near to God: in this way like Moses, although not of the full stature of Moses, no doubt, a fulfillment of what is here, though not *the* fulfillment; which easily reconciles the last saying of this book with such minor accomplishments, while it justifies the faith which even in Israel looked forward to "that Prophet" in whom, blessed be God, He has drawn nigh to us.

Christ has come: the Word of God is complete;—no new revelation need be or can be added to it. Yet in a minor sense the voice of prophecy should be found among us. The apostle, in writing to the Corinthians, after bidding them "desire spiritual gifts," adds as the chief of all, "but rather that ye may prophesy;" his reason for the preference, "he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification and exhortation and comfort." "Love edifieth;" and, he writes, "ye may all prophesy, one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted." We see that he is not thinking of uttering predictions, which is what so many think to be all the business of a prophet, but of that speaking from God and for God which he can do best who has not necessarily most knowledge or most utterance, but most communion with Him, and who most stands in His presence, waiting for His word. The Church of God has much need of such men as these to-day.

2.(xix.-xxi. 9.) Second commandment of second table: the salvation of life.

a (xix.) The individual life.

[2] (*a*) When Jehovah thy God hath cut off the nations whose land Jehovah thy God giveth thee, and thou hast dispossessed them, and dwellest in their cities and in their houses, thou shalt [o] set apart to thee three cities in the midst of thy land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee to possess it. Thou shalt prepare thee a [p] way, and divide the territory of thy land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee to inherit, into three parts, that any slayer may flee thither. And this is the case of the slayer that shall flee thither and live: whoso smiteth his neighbor unwittingly, and hated him not before,—as when he goeth into the wood with his neighbor to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the ax, to cut down the tree, and the iron slippeth from the wood and catcheth his neighbor, that he die: he shall flee unto one of these cities, and live; lest the avenger of blood pursue the slayer while his heart is hot, and overtake him, because the way is long, and slay him; whereas he was not worthy of death, since he hated him not before. Wherefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt set apart for thyself three cities. And if Jehovah thy God [q] enlarge thy bounds, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, and give thee all the land which he promised to give unto thy fathers,—[r] if thou observe to do all this commandment which I command thee this day, to [s] love Jehovah thy God, and to walk always in his ways,—then thou shalt add for thyself three cities more beside these three; that innocent blood be not shed in thy land, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and blood be upon thee. But if a man [t] hate his neighbor, and lie in wait for him, and rise up against him, and smite him mortally that he die, and flee unto one of these cities; then the elders of his city shall send and fetch him thence, and give him up into the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die. Thine eye shall not spare him; and thou shalt put away innocent blood from Israel, that it may be well with thee.

o Ex. 21. 13. Num. 35. 9-34. Josh. 20. 1-9.

p *cf.* Is. 35. 8-10. Is. 62. 10. Jer. 6. 16. Jno. 14. 6.

q ch. 12. 20.

r Lev. 26. 3-13. ch. 28. 1. *ctr.* 2 Cor. 1. 20.

s ch. 6. 5. ch. 10. 12. Josh. 22. 5.

t 2 Sam. 3. 27-30. 2 Sam. 20. 9, 10. 1 Kings 2. 5, 6, 28-34.

(ii.) The subsection following now confirms the previous one by its clear reference to the sixth commandment,—the salvation-ordinance, as we have already called it, of the life that is. On account of its clearness, there will be little for us to say about it. It falls naturally into three parts, which are indicated by the divisions of the chapters in our common version.

(*a*) Of these, the first respects the individual life, and divides again in three parts, as is quite plain. First, it is enjoined on them to carry out in the land into which God is bringing them the law of the cities of refuge, by dividing it into three portions, with roads prepared in each, and a central city as an asylum for the man-slayer innocently such, that the land may not be stained with innocent blood. Also if their borders should be extended, according to the promise made conditional upon obedience, then they were to mark off three cities more. This repetition of the number 3 cannot be without meaning, as indeed these cities had a notable significance for Israel themselves, as we have seen. Surely in them was the very secret of their future told out, and how God shall manifest Himself for them at last. In the meanwhile, by this provision human life is

Thou shalt not [a]remove thy neighbor's landmark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance, which thou shalt inherit in the land that Jehovah thy God giveth thee to possess it.

One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of [v]two witnesses or at the mouth of three witnesses shall a matter be established. If an unrighteous witness rise up against a man, to testify against him of revolt; then both the men between whom the controversy is shall stand before Jehovah, before the priests and the judges that shall be in those days; and the judges shall make diligent search; and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and have testified falsely against his brother, then ye shall [w]do unto him as he thought to have done unto his brother; and thou shalt put away evil from the midst of thee. And those that remain shall hear and fear, and no more commit any such evil in the midst of thee. And thine eye shall not spare: life [shall be] for life, [x]eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

b (xx.) The Israelite in war.

(*b*) [y]When thou goest out to war against thine enemies, and seest horse and chariot—a people more than thou, thou shalt not fear them; for Jehovah thy God is with thee, who [z]brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be, when ye approach unto the battle, that the priest shall draw near, and speak unto the people, and say unto them, [a]Hear, O Israel, ye are approaching this day to battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint; fear not, nor tremble, nor be afraid of them; for Jehovah your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save

[a] ch. 27. 17. Prov. 22. 28. Prov. 23. 10. *cf.* Lev. 25. 28. 1 Kings 21. 1-16.

[v] ch. 17. 6.

[w] Ps. 57. 6. Esth. 7. 9, 10. Dan. 6. 24. Rev. 18. 6.

[x] Ex. 21. 24. *etc.* Matt. 5. 38. Rom. 12. 19-21.

[y] Josh. 10. 8-11. Ju. 7. 9-14. 2 Chron. 20. 1-22. 2 Chron. 32. 7, 8.

[z] Ex. 15. 13-18.

[a] ch. 1. 30. ch. 3. 22. *cf.* Rom. 8. 37-39.

made known as the object of God's care, and cherished. The extension of the land waits their future possession of it.

Secondly, the law against the removal of landmarks comes in here, no doubt, as generally seen, because the land *was* their life, as sustaining it. They were to be a nation of husbandmen, each for himself cultivating the soil of that good land,—a much-needed lesson of what God would have His people to be spiritually now. Here is our wealth and sustenance indeed; and "*much* food"—would that we did believe it!—"in the tillage of the *poor*."

Thirdly, life is guarded by a retributive law of false witness,—a law under which the world that crucified Christ is crucified to the Christian. That precious life itself could not be preserved, and yet by being given up abides for us and becomes fruitful.

(*b*) The subject next taken up is war, and here we have again three parts; first, Israel themselves being regarded; then their enemies; then the land itself in which they might be.

As to Israel themselves, they were to rely upon God as with them. We are to remember that this supposes that they too are with God, and therefore their going out and coming in according to His word. Then their enemies would be indeed God's enemies, and resistance would be resistance to Himself. Had they indeed abode in His covenant, how evident would this have been to all the world! and with what irresistible might would they have been clothed!

you. And the officers shall speak unto the people, saying, [b] What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it. And what man is there that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not eaten of it? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man eat of it. And what man is there that hath [c] betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take her. And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and shall say, What man is he that is [d] fearful and faint-hearted? let him go and [e] return unto his house, lest the heart of his brethren melt as well as his heart. And it shall be when the officers shall have finished speaking to the people, that they shall appoint captains of the hosts at the head of the people.

When thou approachest unto a city to fight against it, thou shalt proclaim [f] peace unto it. And it shall be, if it give thee answer of peace, and open to thee, then all the people that are found therein shall be [g] tributaries unto thee, and serve thee. And if it will not make peace with thee, but will make war with thee, then thou shalt besiege it; and when Jehovah thy God shall give it up into thy hand, thou shalt [h] smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword; but the [i] women and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is within the city, all the spoil thereof shalt thou take as booty for thyself; and thou shalt eat up the spoil of thine enemies which Jehovah thy God giveth thee. So shalt thou do unto all the cities of the nations that are very far from thee, that are not of the cities of these nations. [j] But of the cities of these peoples which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth, but thou shalt put them entirely under the ban,—the [k] Hittite, and the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite, as Jehovah thy God commanded thee; that they teach you not to do after all their [l] abominations which they have done unto their gods, and ye sin against Jehovah your God.

[b] *cf.* Luke 9. 57-62. *ctr.* Heb. 10. 34. Phil. 1. 23.

[c] ch. 24. 5. *cf.* 1 Cor. 7. 32-35.

[d] Ju. 7. 3. *cf.* Eph. 6. 10. 1 Cor. 16. 13.

[e] *cf.* Acts 13. 13. 2 Tim. 4. 9-16.

[f] *cf.* Luke 10. 1-16. Acts 13. 38, 39.

[g] *ctr.* Ju. 1. 30. *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 20. Rom. 6. 19.

[h] Num. 31. 7. *cf.* Josh. 8. 25, 26. Mark 16. 15, 16.

[i] Num. 31. 15-18.

[j] Num. 33. 52. Josh. 6. 21. Josh. 11. 14, 15. *ctr.* Josh. 9. 3-27. *cf.* Gal. 5. 24.

[k] Gen. 15. 19-21. *cf.* Eph. 5. 18.

[l] ch. 7. 4. ch. 18. 9. Ju. 2. 11-13. *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 14-18. Rev. 2. 14.

God then being thus with them, there was to be no craven fear in their hearts: he who was afraid might stay at home. God's host must be, not conscripts, but volunteers. Then, too, if a man had built a new house and not lived in it, if he had planted a vineyard and not eaten of it, if he had betrothed a wife and not taken her, there was to be no sundering a man from what he was in pursuit of, no bringing home-sickness into the battle-field.

As to the enemy, a besieged town was always to have the offer of peace by submission. If it resisted, it suffered the penalty of resisting God, not man merely; but the non-combatants were to be spared. The Canaanites, as under the divine curse, are excepted from this. As to the land, the fruit-trees were not to be cut down, but left to minister to the support of life.

When thou shalt besiege a city many days, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the [m] trees thereof by wielding an ax against them, for of them thou eatest, and thou shalt not cut them down (for the tree of the field is [for] man,) to employ them in the siege. Only the trees which thou knowest are not trees for food, thou mayest destroy, and cut them down, and build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee, until it fall.

[m] *cf.* Gen. 23. 17. Ps. 96. 12 with Is. 61. 3. Cant. 2. 3. Rev. 2. 7. Rev. 22. 2.

c (xxi. 1-9.) The expiation of an uncertain murder.

(*c*) If one be [n] found slain in the land which Jehovah thy God is giving thee to possess, lying in the field, [and] it be not known who hath smitten him, then thine [o] elders and thy judges shall go forth, and [p] measure unto the cities that are round about him that is slain; and it shall be that the city which is nearest to the slain man, even the elders of that city, shall take a [q] heifer that hath not been put to work, that hath not drawn in the yoke; and the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer unto a perennial water-course, [to a place] which is neither tilled nor sown, and shall break the heifer's neck there in the water-course. And the [r] priests, the sons of Levi, shall come near, for them hath Jehovah thy God chosen to minister unto him, and to bless in Jehovah's name; and according to their voice shall every controversy be [settled], and every stroke. And

[n] *cf.* Acts 2. 22, 23.

[o] Lev. 4. 15.

[p] *cf.* Acts 3. 13-15. Acts 4. 10, 11, 27. Acts 5. 28. Acts 7. 52.

[q] Num. 19. 2. Lev. 4. 28. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 21.

[r] Lev. 13. 2. ch. 17. 8, 9. *cf.* Rev. 1. 14.

(*c*) Thirdly, we have the expiation of an uncertain murder. Yet is it an expiation? There is certainly no mention of blood poured out, still less presented to God. In the land, at any distance from the sanctuary, it could not, of course, be put upon the altar. But the murderer is not found; and if he were, for him there could be no atonement; the elders who represent the city profess innocence, not assume guilt: atonement in this way, therefore, it would seem as if there could hardly be.

On the other hand, the heifer unbroken to the yoke reminds us irresistibly of the red heifer of purification for sin (Num. xix.), and as plainly seems to speak of Christ; and here vicarious penalty seems to be shown forth, even to some who dispute it elsewhere. Through all this, the broken neck of the victim strangely unites the deed which has to be cleansed away with that which cleanses it,—as if it were Christ murdered and yet dying to put away the crime, though the law of the city of refuge assures us that it cannot be put away.

The man was murdered—murder attaches somewhere: Christ too was the Victim of an enmity with which men "hated," He says, "both Me and My Father." (Jno. xv. 24.) Yet, again, at the cross He cries, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Here we have what at least approaches the mystery of the case before us: there were those of whom the one thing must be said; there were those also of whom grace could say the other. Thus the nation can be spared, though shut out in the meanwhile from their inheritance, as he was whom the city of refuge sheltered, but who could not return home till the death of the high-priest (see Num. xxxv.). There is governmental penalty, though not death; and when the years of chastisement have run out, then it will be said of Jerusalem, "She hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins" (Is. xl. 2.) The "uneared, unsown land" indeed (how like Israel's for so long!) testifying to this. But then, at last, there will be a generation who, as to the guilt of Christ's death, can plead, with these elders of the city, that they "have not shed this blood, nor have" their "eyes seen it," the "perennial stream" of God's abiding love having carried it away forever.

all the elders of that city which is nearest to the slain man shall [s]wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the water-course, and shall say, [t]Our hands have not shed this blood, nor have our eyes seen it: be propitiated toward thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, Jehovah, and let not innocent blood be in the midst of thy people Israel. And the blood shall be expiated in regard to them. So shalt thou put the innocent blood away from the midst of thee, when thou doest what is right in Jehovah's eyes.

[s] Matt. 27. 24.

[t] *cf.* Luke 23. 34. Acts 3. 17. 1 Cor. 2. 8. 1 Tim. 1. 13.

3. (xxi. 10-23.) The third commandment: marriage and the family.

a (vv. 10-17.) The power of the man subjected to authority.

[3] (*a*) When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies, and Jehovah thy God giveth them up into thy hands, and thou carriest them away captive, and seest among the captives a [u]beautiful woman, and hast an attachment to her, and takest her to thee to wife, then thou shalt bring her home unto thy house; and she shall shave her head and pare her nails; and she shall put the garments of her captivity from off her, and shall abide in thy house, and bewail her father and her mother a whole month; and after that, thou shalt go in unto her, and shalt be her husband, and she shall be thy wife. And it shall be if thou have not delight in her, then thou shalt let her go according to her desire, and thou shalt in no wise sell her for money,—thou shalt not treat her as a slave, because thou hast humbled her.

[u] Num. 31. 14-18. *cf.* Cant. 6. 4-9. Eph. 5. 25.

How wonderful is this picture! how all parts unite to give expression to it when the key is once in our hands! even as all contrary-seeming things shall unite to accomplish His purpose at the last.

(iii.) The third subsection speaks of marriage and the family, in evident connection with the seventh commandment, although there are laws to follow which would seem as plainly so or more, if we had regard to them apart from their context. But the order of the decalogue can be traced as far as the end of the twenty-second chapter, the illustrations, however, becoming continually briefer, as, in fact, less needed. The internal connection also becomes continually more difficult,—which does not mean, however, that it is loose or wanting.

(*a*) The first part treats of marriage with a captive taken in war,—a distinct permission, of course, of marriage with a Gentile, where there was not the hindrance of such a ban as rested upon Canaan.

Here, as we know by our Lord's words, in the law of marriage, we find, more than any where, the failure of the law. The hardness of man's heart forbad, until grace should come, the full restraint of absolute righteousness. Polygamy and divorce, as practiced among the nations round, could only be modified by partial curbing of the will and prevention of mere lawlessness. It was reserved for Christianity to restore woman to her original place in creation by the side of man.

Yet here, where most of all (and that is surely the reason why the commandment takes the peculiar form it does,) the woman was in the hand and power of the man, he was fenced round with prohibition. She must be given the wife's place, allowed a month for natural sorrow over the separation from her kindred, perhaps to test also somewhat the reality of the affection that has sprung up in him. If the tie is formed, she can never be enslaved again; and should she be divorced, is free to go whither she please.

Thus it would seem that what is emphasized is the government of the will—the putting restraint upon desire, so that at least it shall not be lawless; and

If a man have [v] two wives, one beloved and one hated, and they have borne him children,—the beloved and the hated, and if the first-born son be hers that was hated, then it shall be in the day that he causeth his sons to inherit that which he hath, that he shall not make the son of the beloved [w] first-born before the first-born, the son of the hated; but he shall acknowledge as first-born the son of the hated, by giving him a [x] double portion of all that is found with him: for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the first-born is his.

b (18-21.) The rebellious son.

(*b*) If a man have an [y] unmanageable and rebellious son, who hearkeneth not to the voice of his father nor to the voice of his mother; and though they chasten him, yet will not hearken unto them; then shall his father and his mother lay hold upon him, and bring him forth unto the elders of his city, even unto the [z] gate of his place. And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is unmanageable and rebellious; he will not hearken unto our voice; he is riotous and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall [a] stone him with stones, that he die: and thou shalt put away evil from the midst of thee; and all Israel shall hear, and fear.

v Gen. 29. 30, 33. *cf.* Rom. 11. 25-28.

w Gen. 49. 3 with 1 Chr. 5. 1, 2.

x Gen. 48. 22. Ex. 4. 22. *cf.* Jer. 31. 9. Is. 62. 1-9.

y Prov. 10. 1. *cf.* Is. 1. 2, 3. Mal. 1. 6. Acts 7. 51-53.

z ch. 22. 15, 24.

a Lev. 24. 14-16. Num. 15. 35, 36. Josh. 7. 25. *cf.* 1 Kings 21. 10, 13. Jno. 10. 31-33. Acts 7. 58. Acts 14. 19. *ctr.* Luke 15. 20-24.

this, with regard to a captive, the legitimate property of the conqueror according to the customs everywhere else prevailing, is a witness to the character of Him who ruled in Israel, which we must estimate, not by the full light of Christianity now come, but as contrasted with what was around. Thus seen, it becomes indeed the dawning of the day.

We have now the recognition of polygamy as a fact, but a provision against one of its many evils. If a man had two wives, and children by both, the one loved, the other hated; and if the first-born were the son of the hated; in this case, the first-born was not to be displaced from his rights as such because of the father's preference for the mother of the later-born. In the case of Jacob, this might seem to have occurred,—Reuben gave place to Joseph, the son of the beloved Rachel; but then, as we know from Jacob's own words, it was Reuben's sin that forfeited the inheritance. (Gen. xlix. 4.) This, however, might single out this case for special legislation.

"Here too we have in God's ways another remarkable type; for, having first chosen Israel, He afterward (as we know, because of their sin,) was pleased to take the Gentiles to Himself. The Jews refused the testimony; and as for the Gentiles, it is said that they will hear. Nevertheless, here He gives a beautiful provision, to show that He has not done with that which shall come forth as the first-born son of the apparently hated one—of her He had first. On the contrary, this is the very one for whom the rights of the inheritance will be preserved when repentance will be wrought in their hearts. Thus it is evident that the godly remnant of the latter day will have its rights reserved, according to His own precious word in this chapter." (*Lectures Introductory to the Pentateuch*, by Wm. Kelly, p. 492.)

(*b*) But in contrast with this, we have the end of the disobedient son, given up at last by father and mother into the hands of the elders, by whose sentence he is stoned to death. The application is easy to the end of final disobedience on the part of those in Israel put in the place but not having the spirit of sons, as well as to those outwardly but not in heart sons among the Gentiles.

c (22, 23.) The curse of God.

4. (xxii.) Of inhumanity: the invasion of creature-rights. In which the rest of the commandments come under the fourth.

a (vv. 1-12.) Righteousness only found in mercy, in congruity to nature.

(c) And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and thou [b]hang him upon a tree, his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt surely bury him the same day; for he that is hanged is accursed of God, and thou shalt not defile thy land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

[a] (a) Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go [c]astray, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt surely bring them back to thy brother. And if thy brother be not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring it unto thy house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it to him. And so shalt thou do with his ass; and so shalt thou do with his garment; and so shalt thou do with every lost thing of thy brother's which he hath lost and thou hast found: thou mayest not hide

b Josh. 8.29. 2 Sam. 21.9. Jno. 19. 31. Gal. 3. 13.

c Ex. 23. 4, 5. *cf.* Matt. 5. 44. Rom. 12. 20.

(*c*) In connection with this, we have an unspeakably solemn yet precious word. If a man had committed a sin worthy of death, and were put to death, and he were hung upon a tree, his body was not to remain all night upon the tree, but to be buried, that the land might not be defiled, "for he that is hanged," it is said, "is accursed of God."

This is literally "a curse of God," which the apostle in Galatians takes as having the same meaning, for while he quotes it as "accursed" (iii. 13), he argues from this that Christ was "made a curse for us." The Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate similarly render it "accursed;" but the Jews, since the second century of our era, have mostly decided for a different meaning, viz., "an injury, insult, mockery to God," a meaning possible to the language, no doubt, but used in a very obvious interest, which cannot commend it to us. How Jews of old understood it we may see by the Septuagint. And the typical application as given in the New Testament puts the whole subject in a light by which it is illumined.

It should be noted that hanging, or crucifixion,—the Jews used the same word for either—was *not* a *mode of putting to death* by the law of Moses. It came *after* death, to express peculiar enormity, and put a special brand upon the one so treated. As "lifting up from the earth" (Jno. iii. 14; xii. 32), it expressed rejection from among men; as lifting up toward heaven, it might well challenge heaven's approval of that rejection, and thus imply the "curse of God" upon the sinner. We can in this way understand better the apostle's appeal to this passage in Deuteronomy, and distinguish the two elements of the cross, death and curse,—the forsaking of God, which we have already had before us in the ritual of the sin-offering. (Lev. iv.)

We see also why the body of one hanging on a tree could not be permitted to remain there. The burial was not in this case an end of penalty. Rather it expressed the defiling character of sin and the abhorrence with which God beheld it. It was to be put out of sight and away, buried not with honor, but in the grave of a criminal; and here we see at once the significance of the change in the Lord's case. His grave was appointed with the wicked; but this could not be suffered to take effect: He was with the rich in His death. Joseph's tomb was the only fitting receptacle for its brief sojourn there, of the body of the Holy One who could not see corruption—His providential justification until resurrection should justify Him openly.

(iv.) The last three commandments of the decalogue, more briefly illustrated than the former ones, are found together in the fourth subsection. At first sight indeed, this is not evident: one would say that each commandment would, here

thyself. Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fallen down by the way, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again.

There shall not be a [d]man's apparel upon a woman, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment; for every one that doeth these things is an abomination unto Jehovah thy God.

If a [e]bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way, in any tree or on the ground, with young or with eggs, and the mother sitting upon the young or on the eggs, thou shalt not take the mother with the young: thou

[d] *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 2-16. 1 Cor. 14. 34, 35. 1 Tim. 2. 15-18. *ctr.* Rev. 2. 20.

[e] Lev. 22. 28. ch. 14. 21. *cf.* Luke 6. 36.

as elsewhere, claim a subsection to itself. But the twenty-third chapter, which speaks of Israel as the congregation of Jehovah, has thus the plain character of a fifth part; and when we come to look more closely, we gain sufficient assurance of the correctness of this grouping.

We have first to ask, however, are these commandments really represented in the three parts of this subsection? This has been denied, though certainly we should look for some regular treatment of these, such as we find in the case of previous ones. No doubt our anticipations of what ought to be are often astray; but the twenty-second chapter begins with what is plainly an expansion of the eighth commandment, as *vv.* 13–21 speak of false witness, and the rest of the chapter applies the tenth. So much should be plain; and only *vv.* 5–12 can remain at all doubtful. These give the laws as to the confusion of sex, as in a man wearing a woman's garment, as to not taking the mother-bird with its brood, as to putting a battlement around the flat top of the house, the prohibition of certain mixtures as of seeds or of materials of a garment, and finally of putting fringes on a garment. These have been all by Schröder (in Lange's Commentary) reduced under the fourth commandment of the second table, though in some cases it would seem in a somewhat artificial manner.

But we must note now that we have in these three parts an evident reference to the *first* three laws of the second table, and each in its place. Thus *v.* 7 repeats the promise of the fifth commandment, and in a parallel case. Secondly, the false witness in the case mentioned would if it succeeded involve *murder*, the breach of the sixth; while the seventh and tenth come so plainly together in the third part, as to need no insisting on. Here, then, we have the relation of these three parts to one another clearly marked out. While as to their coming together under a fourth head, the beginning of the first part clearly must do so; the cases of violation of nature, as in the confusion of sexes, would do the same, as in the fourth section of the expanded second table of the decalogue in Ex. xxi.-xxiii. (p. 211); and the first law of this section gives the last case supposed in the third part of what is here before us.

Although there may be more or less difficulty in some of the details, yet the spirit of the eighth commandment—that is, the fourth of the second table—seems to run through the whole of this: the prohibition of plunder and theft, with that which connects with it, the lack of tenderness and mercy toward others. How near the fourth and last of these commandments come to one another needs not to be insisted on. Let us go through the chapter briefly now.

How much beyond the mere letter is to be read in the commandments is plain in the tenderness of the opening words. To fulfill the commandment not to steal, you must not consent to the destruction or loss of any thing that is your neighbor's. It must be cared for, guarded, and kept for him.

The disguise as to sex would plainly serve all kinds of fraudful and dishonest purpose, whilst it falsified the stamp which God has put upon nature, and mutilated, so to speak, the coin of His realm. The taking the mother-bird, held by her affection to her young, was shameful advantage used of natural instincts, and a violation of honor to parents in this reproduction of motherly love in the

shalt surely let the mother go, but the young thou mayest take, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest prolong thy days.

When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a [f]battlement for thy roof, and not bring blood upon thy house if any one fall from thence.

Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with [g]two kinds of seed, lest the whole of thy seed which thou hast sown be forfeited, and the produce of thy vineyard. Thou shalt not plow with an [h]ox and an ass together. Thou shalt not wear a garment of [i]mixed stuff—of wool and linen together. Thou shalt make thee [j]tassels upon the four corners of thy vesture wherewith thou coverest thyself.

[b] (13-21.) False testimony against the neighbor.

(*b*) If a man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her, and charge her with [k]scandalous acts, and bring an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came nigh to her, I found her not a virgin; then shall the damsel's father and her mother take and bring forth the tokens of the damsel's virginity unto the elders of the city, in the gate. And the damsel's father shall say unto the elders, I gave my daughter unto this man to wife, and he hateth her; and, lo, he chargeth [her] with scandalous acts, saying, I found not thy daughter a virgin; and yet these are the tokens of my daughter's virginity. And they shall spread the garment before the elders of the city. And the elders of that city shall take the man and chastise him; and they shall fine him a hundred [shekels] of silver, and give them unto the father of the damsel, because he hath brought an evil name upon a virgin of Israel. And

[f] *cf.* 2 Sam. 11. 2-4. 1 Cor. 10. 12, 13. Rom. 14. 13-15.

[g] Lev. 19. 19. *cf.* Matt. 13. 24, 25. Col. 2. 8. Gal. 1. 8, 9. 1 Pet. 1. 23-25.

[h] *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 14-18. 2 Chron. 18. 1-19. 2. 2 Chron. 20. 35-37. Neh. 6. 1, 2.

[i] *cf.* Luke 5. 36. Gal. 2. 11-21. Gal. 6. 11-15.

[j] Num. 15. 38. Luke 8. 44. Phil. 3. 20. Eph. 4. 1.

[k] *cf.* Num. 5. 11-31.

lower creatures. The repetition of the promise here is very striking. It shows how sensitive will be the really obedient heart, and how God has in nature encompassed us with remembrances as well as tests of our condition. The law as to the battlements for the flat roofs of houses is simple enough as a rebuke of that thoughtlessness which is really hardness of heart. The three laws which follow as much resemble one another as they differ from what goes before. As prohibitions of mixture they come naturally enough under the first head here. The interpretation of the "unequal yoke" is plainly given in 2 Cor. vi. 14. Christ's yoke cannot be borne by the unclean,—the unbeliever,—and for the believer there is no other. The garment of woolen and linen speaks similarly of mixed *habits;* while the sowing seed represents the necessity of keeping the truth unmixed. Failure in all these points involves a real robbery, not only of God, but of one's neighbor: we owe both to Christians and the men of the world the maintenance of our Christian simplicity and singleness of life and testimony. The last thing here, the tassels upon the garment, which we have had in Num. xv. 38, reminds us that this is to be true natural development—the development of the new nature, not artificial, for the word speaks primarily of flower-buds. How beautifully again does the spiritual meaning declare the perfection of the Word of God!

As to the ninth commandment we have but one case supposed, and that how shameful an one! What a heart is man's!—that is to say, ours! Schultz, as quoted in Lange, remarks that "Moses must have held a different view of unions in the face of great aversion from that prevalent among us."

she shall be his wife: he shall not put her away all his days. But if this thing be [t]true, and the tokens of virginity were not found in the damsel, then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die; because she hath wrought folly in Israel, in committing fornication in her father's house, and thou shalt put the evil away out of the midst of thee.

t cf. Ezek. 16. Hos. chs. 1-3.

c (22-30.) Wrongs against marriage.

(c) If a man be found lying with a woman [m]married to a husband, then they shall die, both of them,—the man lying with the woman and the woman; and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel.

m Lev. 20. 10. Jno. 8.2-11. Ps. 103. 10.

If there be a damsel that is a [n]virgin betrothed unto a husband, and a man find her in the city and lie with her, then shall ye bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and stone them with stones that they die,—the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city, and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbor's wife; and thou shalt put away the evil from the midst of thee. But if the man find in the field the damsel that is betrothed, and the man [o]force her and lie with her, then the man only that lay with her shall die; but unto the damsel shalt thou do nothing; there is in the damsel no sin worthy of death: for as when a man riseth against his neighbor and slayeth him, so is this matter; for he found her in the field; the betrothed damsel cried, and there was none to save her.

n Lev.19.20. cf. Matt. 1. 18-20. 2 Cor. 11. 2, 3.

o 2 Sam. 13. 11-14. cf. Gal. 6.1.

If a man find a damsel that is a virgin that is [p]not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found, then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty [shekels] of silver, and she shall be his wife: because he humbled her, he may not put her away all his days.

p Ex. 22.16, 17. Gen. 34. cf. Gal.5.19.

q Gen.35.22. Lev. 18. 8. ch. 27. 20. 1 Cor. 5. 1.

5. (xxiii.) The congregation of Jehovah: the moral results of His place with them.

A man shall not take his [q]father's wife, and shall not uncover his father's skirt.

r cf. Is.56.3. Acts 8. 27-40. Gal. 3. 28.

[5] (a) He that is an [r]eunuch, whether crushed or cut, shall not come into the congregation of Jehovah. A [s]bastard shall not come into the congregation of Jehovah: even to his tenth generation he shall not come into the congregation of Jehovah. An [t]Ammonite or

s cf. Ju. 11. 1-3. Gen. 38. 13 -26.

a (vv. 1-8.) In its constitution.

t Neh. 4. 7. Neh.13.1-3. Zeph. 2. 9.

The exemplification of the tenth commandment for our purpose needs no remark.

(v.) The methodical exposition of the "ten words" is thus complete; but there are yet three chapters more before the close is reached of the commandments, which now at first sight seem to be given without order or internal connection for the most part. Of course we know this cannot be, and that we only need more carefully to search it out. The most precious things often lie deepest; and our rule with Scripture is to believe in order to see—the opposite of the world's rule, but which will always have experience to confirm it.

If the three chapters following stand for real divisions, then with the four previous ones we shall have seven subsections in this second section—the second table of the law complete. That the first four parts should close one division of this is quite in accordance with what we have seen to be the rule in a septenary

[u] Moabite shall not come into the congregation of Jehovah: even to their tenth generation shall they not come into the congregation of Jehovah forever, because they met you not with [v] bread and water in the way, when ye came forth from Egypt; and because they hired against thee [w] Balaam the son of Beor, of Pethor in Mesopotamia, to curse thee. But Jehovah thy God would not hearken unto Balaam, but Jehovah thy God turned the curse into a [x] blessing to thee, because Jehovah thy God loved thee. Thou shalt not seek their peace or their prosperity all thy days forever. Thou shalt [y] not abhor an Edomite, for he is thy brother; thou shalt not abhor an [z] Egyptian, for thou wast a stranger in his land: the children begotten of them shall come into the congregation of Jehovah in their [a] third generation.

u Gen. 19. 37, 38. Ruth 2. 2. Am. 2. 1-3.

v ch. 2. 9-15.

w Num. 22. 1-6.

x Num. 23. 7-10. Is. 54. 17. Ps. 76. 10.

y ch. 2. 1-6.

z Ex. 22. 21. *cf.* Tit. 3. 1-7.

a *cf.* Ex. 20. 5.

b (9-14.) Israel in camp.

(*b*) When thou goest forth in the camp against thine enemies, then [b] keep thee from every evil thing. If there be among you a man that is [c] not clean from what hath happened in the night, then he shall go forth outside the camp, he shall not come within the camp. And it shall be, when [d] evening cometh on, that he shall bathe in water, and when the sun goeth down, he shall come within the camp. Thou shalt have a place also without the camp whither thou shalt go forth; and thou shalt have a paddle upon thy weapon, and it shall be, when

1 Cor. 15. 4. Col. 3. 1, 10, 11.

b Jas. 1. 27.

c Lev. 15. 16-18.

d *cf.* Jno. 3. 19.

series. In this case, we may expect the final three to form a whole, and the connection to be deeper, more spiritual and inward, than in the former case. And this seems indeed to be so.

The twenty-third chapter is in fact a fifth part, and, as already said, we have in it Israel as the congregation of Jehovah, the moral results of His place with them. Let us examine it.

(*a*) First, then, we have the assembly in its refusal of all discordant elements; and here the exclusion of the unsexed male is based on the need of maintaining the integrity of the creature. Mutilation was a reproach to God; and thus the whole spirit of asceticism is condemned and excluded both for Israel and for us to-day. The word for "bastard,"—"one born of corruption"—only occurs once beside in Zech. ix. 6, is explained by the Rabbins, and received by commentators in general as meaning "one born of incest or adultery." Typically, one corruptly born is not the mere child of nature; but rather one corruptly introduced among the people of God. "Baptismal regeneration," as the ritualist holds it, is such a birth; and the Moabite and the Ammonite following here emphasizes this thought, though it be true that they are not distinctly reprobated for their birth, but for their enmity to the true people of God and their employment of Balaam to curse. But even thus does the false professor, like an Ammonite or a Moabite, show his birth to-day. The Edomite is the simple natural man, and for him there is more hope, and the Egyptian is classed with him, though only in the third generation (dead and risen with Christ) could they enter the congregation of the Lord.

(*b*) In the next place, we have Israel going forth to war, and here men might plead the work in hand for lack of care as to minor things; but not so thinks God. The most scrupulous purity is insisted on: for is not God with them their strength? What is all their human might if, because of their ways, He is unable to manifest Himself for them? Very simple is the lesson, incontrovertible the argument here; and yet have His people learnt it?

thou sittest down abroad, that thou shalt dig therewith, and turn back, and cover that which cometh from thee. For Jehovah thy God *walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee, and thy camp shall be holy, that he see nothing shameful in thee, and turn away from thee.

e Lev. 26. 12. *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 16. Num. 5. 3.

c (15–18.) Israel the home of liberty in sanctification.

(*c*) Thou shalt not /deliver unto his master the slave which is escaped from his master unto thee. He shall dwell with thee, in the midst of thee, in the place that he shall choose in one of thy gates, where it seemeth good to him: thou shalt not oppress him.

f 1 Sam. 30. 15. *ctr.* Philem. 12–16.

There shall be no *g* dedicated harlot of the daughters of Israel, nor sodomite of the sons of Israel. Thou shalt not bring *h* harlot's hire or dog's price to the house of Jehovah thy God, for any vow: for both these are even abomination unto Jehovah thy God.

g Lev. 19. 29.

h cf. Gen. 14. 22. 3 Jno. 7.

d (19, 20.) Care of the poor.

(*d*) Thou shalt not take *i* usury of thy brother,—usury of money, usury of food, usury of any thing that is lent upon usury. Of a foreigner thou mayest take usury, but of thy brother thou shalt not take usury; that Jehovah thy God may bless thee in all that thou puttest thy hand unto, in the land whither thou goest to possess it.

i Ex. 22. 25. Ps. 15. 5. Prov. 28. 8.

(*c*) Next, Israel's home must be the refuge of the oppressed. True, slavery as yet was not banished from her midst,—perfection, we must ever remember, the Word itself asserts, could not be by the law,—yet it was greatly guarded and limited, so as to be another thing from that absolute subjection to the will of another which was every where recognized as lawful among the nations around. If, then, one of these human chattels broke its bands and fled, Israel was to be for such a secure asylum. In this way the enmity of the nations might be roused against them: this little people, nevertheless, were to extend their arms to the distressed whatever the consequences. According to the beauteous figure so often used. He under the shelter of whose wings they had come to rest could not destroy that confidence. Let it be a poor slave, he must yet be sheltered from the kings of the earth: there was one sanctuary of refuge for the oppressed; and it was in the bosom of the God of Israel.

The sanctuary—and such was all Israel compared with the world outlying—must indeed first of all be the place of freedom, in order that it may be the place of holiness; and this freedom must be found with God for it to be real and sanctifying: the heart is brought to Him. Hence, the enfranchisement of the slave comes in its right place here, and its connection is seen with what follows, and which for us has much fuller meaning, that there is to be no harlotry among the people of God. In plain, intentional antagonism to Israel's sanctification, the harlot is called here *kedeshah*, "consecrated," as indeed the heathen consecrated themselves in this abominable manner to the service of their gods. May not we, too, easily cover with a well-seeming name what is merely the straying of the heart from God? Here let us note also, though it be simple, that the *gain* of such prostitution with which we would vindicate it to ourselves, or compensate the Lord, is only abomination to Him.

(*d*) The need of the poor is next considered; and as, on the one hand, liberality to them had been enjoined, so to take usury from them is forbidden. The stranger, from whom it was allowed to take it, probably borrowed for purposes of trade, but Israel were not themselves intended to be a commercial people, and certainly not to thrive upon the necessities of their brethren.

e (21-25.) Relation to God in giving and receiving.

(e) When thou [j]vowest a vow to Jehovah thy God, thou shalt not delay performing it; for Jehovah thy God will surely require it of thee, and it will be sin unto thee. But if thou forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee. What is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and do, as thou hast vowed to Jehovah thy God, the free-will offering that thou hast promised with thy mouth.

j Lev. 27. 2. Eccles. 5. 4, 5. Ps. 66. 13, 14. Ps. 22. 25.

When thou comest into thy [k]neighbor's vineyard, thou mayest eat thy fill of grapes according to thy pleasure, but thou shalt not put any in thy vessel. When thou comest into thy neighbor's standing corn, thou mayest pluck the ears with thy hand, but thou shalt not put the sickle into thy neighbor's standing corn.

k Luke 6. 1.

6. (xxiv.) God's restraint upon the evil that cannot yet be removed.

a (xxiv. 1-5.) The bond of marriage.

[6] (a) When a man taketh a wife and marrieth her, it shall be, if she find not favor in his eyes, because he hath found something unseemly in her, that he shall write her a bill of [l]divorce, and give it into her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's [wife]. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorce, and give it into her hand, and send her out of his house,—or if the latter husband die who took her as his wife, her [m]former husband who sent her away may not take her again to be his wife, after she is defiled; for that is abomination before Jehovah; and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

l Matt. 5. 32. Matt. 19. 7.

m *cfr.* Is. 50. 1. Jer. 3. 1. Ezek. 16. 60-63.

When a man hath taken a [n]new wife, he shall not go

n ch. 20. 7. *cf.* Eph. 5. 29.

(e) Fifthly, relationship to God seems to be illustrated in a double way. First, the vow illustrates the freedom and yet the seriousness of this relation; while the other case reminds us of God's real ownership of the land, and of a bounty which would banish scarcity and hunger from it, yet respecting the rights of possession which He has given, and so allowing no lack to him whose fields were thus called to witness to the plenteous hand which has the fullness of the earth in it, and every good and perfect gift.

(vi.) In the last subsection, we have Israel as the congregation of the Lord, in the dignity of that relationship. Schröder gives as a heading to the whole three chapters—"The perfection of Israel;" but this is so little true of the twenty-fourth chapter that it might be entitled, rather, "The *im*perfection of Israel." As to the law, we know well that, in fact, there was not perfection under it; and the present subsection, strictly according to the numerical stamp upon it, speaks plainly of the evil, while also showing the limit set to it by God. Every part of the chapter seems to be in conformity with this. It has, like the last chapter, five divisions, its close being also naturally similar.

(a) The first commandment here has very plainly the character of a toleration of what could not be yet entirely done away, with a restraint upon it in the meantime, however. And of this the Lord's own words directly assure us. The numerical place seems even to affirm the unity which divorce sets aside; and this agrees with the law itself which treats the divorced woman as in some sense "defiled" by another marriage, and the broken bond in that case as incapable of being renewed.

The law of the "new wife," as supplementary to this, is a tender provision honoring the marriage tie, and bidding the man cherish the wife he has taken.

forth with the host, nor shall any business be imposed upon him: he shall be free at home one year, and cheer his wife whom he hath taken.

b (*vv.* 6, 7.) The limitation as to pledge and slavery.

(*b*) No man shall take the [o]handmill or the upper millstone in pledge, for he taketh a man's life in pledge. If a man be found who hath [p]stolen a person,—one of his brethren of the children of Israel, and who hath treated him as a slave, and sold him, then that thief shall die; and thou shalt put away the evil from the midst of thee.

[o] ver. 12. Job 24. 3, 9.

[p] 1 Tim. 1. 10. Ex. 21. 16.

c (8, 9.) Leprosy: its treatment and infliction.

(*c*) Take heed as to the spot of [q]leprosy, that thou observe diligently, and do according to all that the priests the Levites shall teach you: as I have commanded them, ye shall observe to do. Remember what Jehovah thy God did unto [r]Miriam on the way, after that ye came forth out of Egypt.

[q] Lev. chs. 13, 14.

[r] Num. 12. 10. *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 26.

d (10–15.) Mercy to the poor.

(*d*) When thou shalt lend thy brother any thing, thou shalt not go into his house to make sure his pledge: thou shalt stand without, and the man to whom thou lendest shall bring the pledge to thee outside. And if the man be [s]poor, thou shalt not sleep with his pledge: thou shalt surely restore him the pledge when the sun goeth down, that he may sleep in his own garment and bless thee: and it shall be [t]righteousness unto thee before Jehovah thy God.

[s] Job 22. 6. Ezek. 18. 7, 16. Ezek. 33. 15. Ex. 22. 26, 27. Amos 2. 8.

[t] ch. 6. 25. Gal. 3. 21. Rom. 10. 4, 5.

Thou shalt not [u]oppress a hired servant [who is] poor and needy, of thy brethren, or of thy sojourners, who are in thy land within thy gates. On his day shalt thou give him his hire; nor shall the sun go down upon it: for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it; lest he cry against thee to Jehovah, and it be sin unto thee.

[u] Mal. 3. 5. Jas. 5. 4.

e (16–22.) Perversion of judgment.

(*e*) The [v]fathers shall not be put to death for the sons, nor shall the sons be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin. Thou shalt

[v] 2 Kings 14. 6. Ezek. 18.

What could be more expressive of the mind of the lawgiver, or adapted for its purpose than such an injunction as this?

(*b*) In the next place we have two laws also, of which the first is again a concession with a limit. A creditor might take a pledge of his poor neighbor, but not the hand-mill which ground his corn from day to day: it would be taking a man's life as pledge. The greed that would actually steal a man was to be punished with death.

(*c*) And they were to take care not to bring the plague of leprosy upon them, as even Miriam had done in the wilderness. This was the typical punishment, as we know, involving banishment from God Himself, and directly announced here as His infliction. In this, Israel lost what was his most precious and peculiar privilege.

(*d*) The fourth part contains again two laws, once more contemplating the poor, whether as debtor or as creditor. In the first place, the pledge is again limited: the creditor must not intrude upon the debtor's house for it; and if it be something which he can spare but for the day, it must be returned by nightfall. On the other hand, the laborer's hire must not be kept back, lest he cry to the Lord about it, and the Lord visit it as sin.

(*e*) Next we have the perversion of judgment forbidden,—again two laws.

not [w] pervert the judgment of the stranger [or] the fatherless, nor shalt thou take in pledge a widow's garment. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and that Jehovah thy God redeemed thee thence; therefore I command thee to do this thing.

When thou [x] reapest thy harvest in thy field, and hast forgotten a sheaf in thy field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow; that Jehovah thy God may bless thee in all the work of thy hands. When thou beatest thine olive-tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward; it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt; therefore I command thee to do this thing.

7. (xxv.) Looking forward to complete blessing.

[7] (*a*) If there be a [y] controversy between men, and they come to judgment, and [the judges] judge them, then they shall justify the righteous and condemn the wicked. And it shall be, if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, then the judge shall cause him to lie down and to be beaten before his face, according to his wickedness, with a certain number [of stripes]. [z] Forty stripes shall they give him, and not exceed, lest if they continue to beat him with many stripes above these, thy brother shall seem [a] vile to thee.

a (vv. 1-3.) God's chastening not to degrade, but to maintain the honor of His people: thus for preservation in His grace who is yet righteous.

w Is. 1. 23. Jer. 5. 28. *cf.* Ps. 72. 4, 13.

x Lev. 23. 22. Ruth 2. 2. Ps. 67.

y 1 Kings 3. 16-28. *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 1-8.

z 2 Cor. 11. 24. *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 6, 7.

a *cf.* Gal. 6. 1. 1 Pet. 5. 3. Ezek. 34. 1-6.

First, the father must not suffer death for the children, nor the children for the fathers: a common thing among the nations round about. Secondly, there must be no oppression of the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow: their own Redeemer out of the oppression of Egypt bade them observe this.

These commandments close with the injunction to leave the gleanings of the olive and the vineyard for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, the cultivation of an opposite spirit to that of the oppressor,—the ready giver scarcely can be that,—and they are again reminded of their bondage in Egypt that they may show mercy to the poor.

(vii.) Thus much is said or implied of evil in Israel, which can as yet have only partial remedy. Still this is not, of course, to intimate any failure on God's part,—any less than perfect mastery of the evil at the last. God is strong, though patient, and provoked indeed every day. And now this seventh subsection, though it cannot, of course, after what we have seen, speak of any *present* perfection, yet prophesies, as one may say, of it. As the *third* of these closing chapters, it hints, as it were, at resurrection, and brings them to an end in peaceful confidence in God with its series of *six*,—the mastery number, which in subjection to the seven of the section speaks of what, being final, is perfect. God will show fully the *entire* supremacy which He had all through.

(*a*) First of all here, there was to be no excessive punishment; and that punishment would be excessive that made a brother to seem vile. This, in its application to Israel or to the Church, may tell us of the care which in all chastening He has for His people. They are to be preserved for honor, not cast away as refuse, "salted with fire," in the *gracious* sense of that.

b (v. 4.) The ministry of the Word, by which the separation of wheat from chaff is effected.

(*b*) Thou shalt not [b]muzzle the ox when he treadeth out [the corn].

b 1 Cor. 9. 9-11. 1 Tim. 5. 17, 18.

c (5, 6.) The resurrection of the house by the kinsman-redeemer (Christ).

(*c*) If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no son, the wife of the dead shall not marry [c]outside unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother unto her. And it shall be that the first-born that she beareth shall stand up in the name of his brother who is dead, that his name be not blotted out of Israel.

c Matt. 22. 24-30. Gen. 38. 8. Ruth 1. 11.

d (7-12.) The impotency of the law to redeem.

(*d*) And if the man [d]like not to take his brother's wife, his brother's wife shall go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto

d Ruth 4. 1-8. *cf.* Heb. 7. 10. Rom. 7. 1-4.

(*b*) The next commandment seems to come in very strangely; and the spiritual sense as given by the apostle alone explains it. Wordsworth rightly dwells upon the use he makes of it "not only as showing that the law has a spiritual sense, in which it is still binding upon all, but as giving us the key by which we may unlock the casket and take out of it its treasures." Gosman objects to this that it "opens wide the door to a very loose and fanciful exposition." No doubt this is to be dreaded, but the remedy is not to reject the principle, but guard rigidly the application. And when he further urges that the "apostle seems to use the words rather as illustrative of the truth he was teaching than assigning to them a figurative and spiritual sense," he surely is himself taking very loosely what the apostle says. We have only to look at it to see that, as plainly and definitely as can be, he asserts the very opposite: "Who goeth a warfare at any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the fruit of the flock? Say I these things as a man? or *saith not the law the same?* For it is written in the law of Moses, 'Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.' Doth God take care for oxen? or *saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes no doubt this is written:* that he that ploweth should plow in hope." (1 Cor. ix. 7–10.)

Language could scarcely be plainer; and it does justify us in believing that a spiritual sense governs all here. Even our imperfect outline certainly has proved it to be so; and here if the apostle has interpreted this for us of the laborer in the Word, the numerical stamp is accordingly 2, the number of service.

What is the real connection with the preceding verses may be still in question. The ministry of the Word is that by which judgment is wrought in the conscience, and even outward chastenings produce their fruit in blessing. The reference to the threshing-floor seems to confirm this as the connection. It is by the patient labor of the spiritual workman that the grain is sifted from the chaff and the product of the seed sown laid up in the store at last. In God's mastery of the evil,—in the victory of the good over it, could this be omitted? would it not have necessary place?

(*c*) Next follows the law which has so prominent a part in the story of Ruth. If a man die, and leave no issue, his nearest of kin was to marry his wife, and raise up seed to his brother, and the first-born son of this union was to succeed to the inheritance. In the story of Ruth we find a clear and beautiful type of the resurrection of Israel by means of the Kinsman-Redeemer, when the law, the nearest of kin, cannot take this place. The proof must be reserved until we come to Ruth, but the numerical place of the section is clear as a resurrection type, and in relation to the whole character of this part, as showing the resources that are in God Himself. But here also the spiritual meaning must come in for this, no strange or unwelcome thing to him who realizes the true dignity and glory of the law.

(*d*) But the failure contemplated as possible comes evidently under a separate

his brother a name in Israel: he will not perform the duty of a husband's brother to me. Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak unto him; and if he stand to it and say, I like not to take her, then shall his brother's wife come near to him before the eyes of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and answer and say, So is it done to the man that will not build up his brother's house. And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed.

[e] When men strive together, one with another, and the wife of the one draweth near to deliver her husband out of the hand of him that smiteth him, and putteth out her hand and seize him by his secret parts, then thou shalt cut off her hand,—thine eye shall not spare.

e (13-16.) Responsibility yet maintained (by grace).

(e) Thou shalt not have in thy bag [f] divers weights—a great and a small. Thou shalt not have in thy house divers ephahs—a great and a small. A perfect and just weight shalt thou have; a perfect and just ephah shalt thou have: that thy days may be [g] prolonged in the land that Jehovah thy God giveth thee. For every one doing these things, every one doing unrighteousness, is an abomination unto Jehovah thy God.

f (17-19.) The final conquest of Amalek (the flesh).

(f) Remember what [h] Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye came forth from Egypt: how he met thee on the way, and smote the hindmost of thee,—all the [i] feeble that were behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary: and he feared not God. And it shall be, when Jehovah thy God shall give thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land that Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt [j] blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven: thou shalt not forget it.

e *cf.* Eph. 5. 4. 1 Pet. 3. 2.

f Lev. 19. 35, 36. Prov. 16. 11. Ezek. 45. 10. Amos 8. 5. *cf.* Matt. 7. 3-5. Gal. 2. 11, 12.

g Ex. 20. 12. Ps. 91. 16. *ctr.* Phil. 1. 23.

h Ex. 17. 8-16. 1 Sam. 15. 1. *cf.* Gal. 5. 19-21.

i *cf.* Heb. 12. 12, 13. Rom. 14. 15. 1 Cor. 8. 11, 12.

j Num. 24. 20. Josh. 6. 21. *cf.* Gal. 5. 24.

head, and is, indeed, according to Ruth still, the failure of the law,—an ever-needed lesson, coming as clearly also into its right place. The law is really the next of kin to man; but he is dead, and it cannot raise him from the dead.

(*e*) But the fifth part shows that if the law be helpless as a saviour, righteousness is yet maintained,—a just weight and measure, and this is what assuredly grace does: "sin shall not have dominion over you, because ye are not under the law, but under grace." Simple enough this for us; but how beautifully is it put together, just when, under the guidance of the spiritual meaning, we consider that connection of one part with another, which while we take merely the letter, seems to be so perplexing and without a clue. Now we have only one thing more, entirely different from all the rest, and yet how perfectly in place!

(*f*) Sixthly and last, they are bidden not to forget Amalek, their wilderness-foe, and pointed onward to the time when, full rest in the land attained, and all enemies subdued, Amalek shall be blotted out from remembrance forever. A blessed time! when the lusts of the flesh shall no more have to be thought of at all,—their remembrance come practically to an end,—internal conflict passed away forever! Sweet note of triumph from the silver trumpets, sounding only for the gathering of assembly for the time to come,—no pilgrimage, no alarm! Sweet prophet art thou, Moses! for the greater Prophet than thyself is speaking through thee now!

The Israelite in possession, a worshiper before Jehovah.

1. (vv. 1-11.) The confession at the first-fruits.

(XXVI.)

3. [1] And it shall be when thou art come into the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein, that thou shalt take of the [k] first of all the fruit of the ground, which thou shalt bring in of thy land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee; and thou shalt put it in a basket, and go unto the [l] place that Jehovah thy God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there; and thou shalt come unto the [m] priest that shall be in those days, and shalt say unto him, I [n] declare this day unto Jehovah thy God, that I am come into the land which Jehovah sware unto our fathers to give us. And the priest shall take the basket out of thy hand, and set it down before the altar of Jehovah thy God. And thou shalt answer and say before Jehovah thy God, A Syrian [o] ready to perish was my father; and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with few men, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous. And the Egyptians ill-treated us, and afflicted us, and laid on us hard bondage: and we cried unto Jehovah, the God of our fathers; and Jehovah heard our voice, and regarded our affliction and our travail and our oppression. And Jehovah brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders. And he hath brought us into this place, and given us this land,—a land flowing

k Ex. 23. 19. *cf.* Luke 17. 11-18.

l ch. 16. 16, *cf.* Matt. 18. 20.

m *cf.* Heb. 10. 21. Heb. 13. 15.

n *cf.* Col. 1. 12-14. Heb. 12. 22-24.

o *cf.* Eph. 2. 1, 2, 12. Rom. 3. 9-19. 1 Cor. 6. 9-11.

3. We have now one closing section in which for a moment we see the Israelite in possession of the inheritance, and rich with the blessing of God, returning to God in confession and worship. This is the proper effect of the blessing, which else would not be that. It is the sign of the Spirit's work, of distance put away, of God and man once more together. It is the token of the satisfied heart, full with a spring of joy which needs must overflow. It is what Israel should have been as the people of the living God; it is what they shall be in the glorious time to come. It is what the Church of God, indwelt of the Spirit, should be,—*shall* be—in a higher sphere, and in a more wondrous relation; what it, too, has but little been, although, thank God, many in every age have learnt this and much more,—for the "Abba, Father" is not yet in this book of Deuteronomy: it waits for Him who is able to declare the Father's name.

(i.) The confession is very simple; yet, Christians as we are, we may learn much from it. The first thing that is owned is the faithfulness of God in the fulfillment of His word. It is one in the land who speaks in the consciousness of what he has. He is not hoping what will be; he is realizing what is. The Lord sware to give us this land: we have it; we are in it. Such is already the privilege of the child of God, whose worship is even now, not merely *at* the sanctuary, as the Israelite's was, but who has "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." How we dishonor the One who has so wrought for us if we take the place of one longing to draw nigh, instead of in fact drawing near: "let us draw near," says the apostle, "with *full assurance* of faith." For us it is faith, of course. The Israelite, one may say, could not doubt: but that makes him only the more impressive as a type for us. Neither can we doubt, if it be simply God's Word and Christ's work that are before us, and we are not arguing from what we have been or what we are. The sanctuary has been opened for us by blood shed for sinners, for all sinners: we may, if we will, draw nigh; what more do we need for drawing nigh?

with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the first of the fruit of the ground, which thou, Jehovah, hast given me. And thou shalt set it down before Jehovah thy God, and [p] worship before Jehovah thy God; and thou shalt [q] rejoice in all the good that Jehovah hath done unto thee and to thy house,—thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is in the midst of thee.

2. (12-15.) The outflow manward where God is thus acknowledged.

[2] When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thy produce in the third year—the year of tithing, thou shalt give it unto the [r] Levite, to the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow; and they shall eat in thy gates, and be filled. And thou shalt say before Jehovah thy God, I have brought that which was [s] hallowed out of my house, and have also given it to the Levite and to the stranger, to the fatherless and to the widow, according to all thy commandment which thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed any of thy commandments, nor have I [t] forgotten them; I have not eaten thereof in my [u] mourning, nor consumed any of it in [v] uncleanness, nor given aught of it for the [w] dead: I have hearkened unto the voice of Jehovah my God; I have done according to all that thou hast commanded me. [x] Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the ground that thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers,—a land flowing with milk and honey.

p *cf.* Ex. 4. 31. Ex. 12. 27. Jno. 4. 24. Phil. 3. 3. Jno. 9. 38.

q ch. 12. 7. *cf.* Ps. 4. 7. Phil. 4. 4. 1 Pet. 1. 6, 8.

r ch. 14. 28, 29. *cf.* Gal. 6. 6.

s *cf.* Mal. 3. 8-10.

t Ps. 119. 16. Jas. 1. 23-25.

u Lev. 21. 1, 11. Hos. 9. 4.

v Lev. 7. 20.

w *cf.* Rom. 13. 14.

x Ps. 80. 14, 15.

But then also there are fruits of the land; not of *their* labors either, let us remember. When Israel came into possession of Canaan, it was to enjoy great and goodly cities which they built not, houses full of all good things which they filled not, wells digged which they digged not, vineyards and olive trees which they planted not. (Chap. vi. 10, 11.) And so with the fruits of the land into which even now we are called to enter,—rich enjoyment, wondrous experiences, precious realizations, belong to us there, but faith must precede and bring us in where alone they can be ours. They cannot bring us in: we must have entered in by faith, in order to have them.

Having so entered, our apprehension of what we were will only fill our hearts the more with praise for what grace has done for us. "A Syrian ready to perish was my father; and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous." Then comes the bondage in Egypt, and how they were delivered: the types for us of a more glorious deliverance. The mere confession of this is praise; and we owe it to Him to confess with unhesitating simplicity, Christ has saved us. Is there presumption in this? No, it is His due. We have done nothing, except, indeed, incurred the penalty which Christ has borne in His own body on the tree. And the faith which gives Him the glory of this salvation is that which works in us also by the love which we have believed in. The first-fruits of this land are indeed His offerings: "sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving," which bring us to Him as priests to offer them.

(ii.) "And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given unto thee." Yes, He has given us nothing from the enjoyment of which He would keep us back. We cannot too frankly accept or too fully enjoy the blessings that are ours in Christ Jesus. This joy opens the heart, not shuts it up in selfishness and indifference: "thou shalt rejoice,—thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you." This is, therefore, now what follows,

3. (16-19.) Jehovah's acknowledgment of His people as peculiar to Himself.

[3] This day doth Jehovah thy God command thee to do these statutes and judgments; and thou shalt observe and do them with all thy heart and with all thy soul. Thou hast [y] declared this day that Jehovah is thy God, and that thou wilt walk in his ways, and keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and hearken to his voice; and Jehovah hath this day [z] declared thee to be a people peculiar to himself, as he hath spoken unto thee; and that thou shouldst keep all his commandments, that he may make thee [a] high above all the nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honor; and that thou mayest be a people [b] holy unto Jehovah thy God, as he hath said.

[y] Josh. 24. 22.

[z] Hos. 2. 23. Heb. 11. 16.

[a] ch. 4. 7, 8. ch. 28. 1, 13. Ps. 18. 43, 44.

[b] Ex. 19. 6. Is. 61. 6. Is. 26. 2. 1 Pet. 2. 9.

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chap. xxvii.–xxx.)

The rewards and penalties which actualize the law as such.

The perpetuity, power, and promise of the law.

(XXVII.)

1. (vv. 1-8.) Its authority proclaimed.

1. [1] AND Moses and the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, Keep all the commandment which I command you this day. And it shall be in the day when ye pass over Jordan into the land that Jeho-

account being to be rendered to God of those tithes of the third year which we have already had before us, and which are destined for the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. (Chap. xiv. 28, 29.) The dependence of the second table of the law upon the first it is not necessary again to insist upon.

(iii.) Thereupon the seal of God is openly put upon this people which is His:—"Thou hast avouched this day the Lord to be thy God, to walk in His ways, . . . and the Lord hath avouched thee to be His peculiar people, and to make thee high above all nations that He hath made, . . . and that thou mayest be a holy people unto the Lord thy God, as He hath spoken."

"God is not ashamed to be called their God." Alas, as yet for them this glory of theirs has been but a passing vision. And why? Because they had but too faithfully repeated the history of the generation of the wilderness, and it had yet to be said of all this blessing, "they could not enter in because of unbelief."

SUBD. 3.

THE law being thus ended, we have now in the next four chapters the rewards and penalties which are its sanctions,—by which it becomes actualized as law. And there are here three sections:—

1. (Chap. xxvii.) First, the perpetuity of the law under which they place themselves, and its power and promise are plainly signified by the monument upon Ebal.

2. (Chap. xxviii.) Secondly, the blessing and the curse are put before them in emphatic contrast, declared by the Word of One that will not lie.

3. (Chap. xxix., xxx.) In the third and concluding section we have the recapitulation of the covenant before the Lord, looking on to the predicted restoration of the people in the time to come.

1. The first section is of great significance. It is one of many proofs that not isolated passages, but the whole word here is prophetic, the things that happened unto Israel happened unto them for types. How much was here for faith in a humble and convicted soul to lay to heart, and in which to find most serious, in the end most blessed, lessons! Even if none learned them, there was no less in all of it God's faithfulness,—His witness to Himself, and which now for us ought to be without a cloud upon it.

vah thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great [c]stones, and plaster them with plaster; and thou shalt [d]write upon them all the words of this law when thou art passed over, that thou mayest come into the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee,—a land flowing with milk and honey, as Jehovah the God of thy fathers promised thee. And it shall be, when ye go over Jordan, that ye shall set up these stones which I command you this day, upon Mount [e]Ebal, and thou shalt plaster them with plaster. And there shalt thou build an [f]altar unto Jehovah thy God,—an altar of stones: thou shalt lift up no [g]iron [tool] upon them: of whole stones shalt thou build the altar of Jehovah thy God; and thou shalt offer up thereon burnt-offerings unto Jehovah thy God. And thou shalt sacrifice peace-offerings, and eat there, and [h]rejoice before Jehovah thy God. And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly.

c Josh. 8. 30-35.
d cf. ch. 6. 9, etc.
e ch. 11. 29.
f Gen. 12. 8
g Ex. 20. 25. cf. Rom. 4. 4, 5.
h ch. 26. 11, etc.

2. (9-26.) Its confirmation by the people.

[2]And Moses and the priests, the Levites, spake unto all Israel, saying, Keep silence, and hear, O Israel; this day thou art become the people of Jehovah thy God: and thou shalt hearken unto the voice of Jehovah thy God, and do his commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day. And Moses charged the

(i.) They are commanded, when they shall have passed over Jordan into the land, to set up great stones on Mount Ebal, plaster them with lime or gypsum, and write upon them all the words of the law. There also they were to build an altar of unhewn stones, and offer burnt-offerings and peace-offerings upon it, and eat and rejoice before God.

Mount Ebal, as we already know, and as is again directly stated, is the mountain upon which the curses of the law were to be proclaimed, as upon Mount Gerizim the blessings. How significant of the true power of the law, that it was to stand there permanently identified with the curse and not with the blessing! "As many as are of the works of law are under the curse," is here the language of the law itself. The Samaritans long afterward strove to reverse this sentence, and their copy of the Pentateuch puts Gerizim here in place of Ebal. Upon Gerizim their schismatic temple stood, a type and prophecy of much legal worship since. But the Old Testament unites in this its witness with the New; and the spiritual Samaritan is still at schism with the law, and a rebel against its sentence. The power of the law is thus lost, for its true power is to destroy self-righteousness, and humble men to the gospel.

But side by side with this monument of the law therefore, as if God would not have this connection even then mistaken, they were to build their altar and offer their burnt-offerings and their peace-offerings, and on the dreaded mount itself rejoice before God. They could do so, for this worship was sanctified by the law, the righteousness of the law being maintained by the death of the victim. This for faith completes the testimony.

(ii.) Gerizim and Ebal lay opposite to one another,—the mount of blessing to the south, the mount of cursing to the north, in the middle of the land of Canaan. Ebal, it is said, overtops Gerizim by about a hundred feet, and is the steeper and more barren of the two. Gesenius takes it to mean "stripped of foliage;" while Gerizim also approaches this in meaning, being given as signifying "dwellers in a shorn land." Between them in the valley lies Shechem, "shoulder,"—the place of obedience (Gen. xii. 6, *n.*), and where Jacob gets so

people the same day, saying, [h]These shall stand upon Mount Gerizim to bless the people, when ye are come over Jordan: Simeon and Levi and Judah and Issachar and Joseph and Benjamin; and [i]these shall stand upon Mount Ebal to curse: Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulon, Dan, and Naphtali. And the Levites shall answer and say unto all the men of Israel with a loud voice,—

[k]Cursed be the man that maketh a graven or molten image, an abomination to Jehovah, a work of the craftsman's hand, and putteth it up in secret! And all the people shall answer and say, [l]Amen.

[m]Cursed be he that maketh light of his father or his mother! And all the people shall say, Amen.

[n]Cursed be he that removeth his neighbor's landmark! And all the people shall say, Amen.

[o]Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way! And all the people shall say, Amen.

[p]Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow! And all the people shall say, Amen.

[q]Cursed be he that lieth with his father's wife: because he uncovereth his father's skirt! And all the people shall say, Amen.

[r]Cursed be he that lieth with any manner of beast! And all the people shall say, Amen.

[s]Cursed be he that lieth with his sister—the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother! And all the people shall say, Amen.

[t]Cursed be he that lieth with his mother-in-law! And all the people shall say, Amen.

[u]Cursed be he that smiteth his neighbor in secret! And all the people shall say, Amen.

[v]Cursed be he that taketh reward to smite to death an innocent person! And all the people shall say, Amen.

[w]Cursed be he that confirmeth not the words of this law to do them! And all the people shall say, Amen.

h ch. 11. 26. Josh. 8. 30. Ju. 9. 7.

i *cf.* Gen. 49. 3, 4. Gen. 30. 6-8, 11-13.

k Ex. 20. 4-6. ch. 4. 16.

l Ex. 19. 8. Matt. 27. 25.

m Gen. 9. 22. ch. 21. 18-21. Prov. 30. 17. Rom. 1. 30.

n ch. 19. 14.

o Lev. 19. 14. *cf.* Matt. 15. 14. *otr.* Job 29. 15.

p ch. 24. 17.

q Gen. 35. 22. 1 Cor. 5. 1.

r Lev. 18. 23.

s Lev. 18. 9. 2 Sam. 13. 11-14. Ezek. 22. 11.

t Lev. 20. 14.

u ch. 19. 11. 2 Sam. 20. 9, 10.

v Ezek. 22. 12. Luke 22. 3-6.

w Gal. 3. 10. Jas. 2. 10. *otr.* Matt. 5. 3-12. Eph. 1. 3. Rev. 22. 3.

thoroughly tested. (Gen. xxxiii. 18.) All this is easily suggestive. The tribes are to stand half on the one mount, half on the other,—not to utter, but to confirm for themselves the blessing and the curse: for the blessing, the children of Leah, and Rachel; for the curse, those of the bondmaids, with Reuben, the displaced first-born, and Zebulon, Leah's youngest son. But in fact, as all commentators notice, the blessings here are significantly never uttered. The law, as witnessed for the second time, is potent only for curse: and under this shadow Israel enter the land. That all this happened unto them for types, who can rightly question?

"As the whole ceremony and the special form of the curses are practical, so also the inward peculiar nature of the examples selected. Gross transgressions incur the penalty, but the more secret and refined meet with the curse, 'in order to show that God will in any case visit such sinners, and to instill into the hypocrite a terror of his works of darkness.'" (Schröder, Von Gerlach.)

(XXVIII. 1-68.)

The blessing and the curse in contrasted testimony.

1. (vv. 1-14.) The blessing.

2. [1] And it shall be, [x] if thou wilt indeed hearken to the voice of Jehovah thy God, in taking heed to all his commandments which I command thee this day, that Jehovah thy God will make thee [y] supreme above all the nations of the earth; and all these [z] blessings shall come on thee and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of Jehovah thy God. [a] Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the [b] field. Blessed shall be the [c] fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the offspring of thy kine, and the increase of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy [c] basket and thy kneading-trough. Blessed shalt thou be in thy [d] coming in, and blessed shalt thou be in thy going out. Thine [e] enemies that rise up against thee will Jehovah cause to be smitten before thee: they shall come out against thee one way, and seven ways shall they flee before thee. Jehovah will command blessing upon thee in thy barns, and upon all to which thou puttest thy hand: and he will bless thee in the land that Jehovah thy God giveth thee. Jehovah will [f] establish thee a people holy unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou keep the commandments of Jehovah thy God, and walk in his ways. And all the [g] peoples of the earth shall see that thou art called by Jehovah's name, and shall fear thee. And Jehovah will give thee abundance of good, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land that Jehovah sware unto thy fathers to give thee. Jehovah will open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the [h] rain of thy land in its season, and to bless all the work of thy hand; and thou shalt [i] lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. And Jehovah will make thee the [j] head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and not beneath: if that thou hearken unto the commandments of Jehovah thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and do [them]; and thou turn not aside from any of the words that I command thee this day to the right hand or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

2. (15-68.) The curse.

[2] But it shall be, if thou wilt [k] not hearken unto the voice of Jehovah thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee and overtake thee. [l] Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the [m] field. Cursed shall be thy [n] basket and thy kneading-trough. Cursed shall be the [o] fruit of thy womb and the fruit of thy ground, the off-

x Lev. 26. 3-13.
y ch. 26. 19.
z *cf.* Gen. 49. 28. Ex. 20. 24.
a Ps. 48.
b Ps. 67. 6, 7.
c Gen. 13. 2. 1 Chron. 29. 12, 28. Prov. 3. 16. *ctr.* Eph. 3. 8.
d Ps. 121. 8. ch. 33. 18.
e Lev. 26. 7, 8. Ps. 18. 37, 38.
f ch. 7. 6. *cf.* Tit. 2. 14.
g Zeph. 3. 20.
h Lev. 26. 4. ch. 11. 14. Jer. 5. 24.
i ch. 15. 6.
j ver. 1.
k Lev. 26. 14. Dan. 9. 11.
l ch. 11. 26-28. Is. 24. 5, 6.
m Hag. 1. 9-11. Mic. 6. 15. Amos 4. 9.
n Prov. 3. 33. Hag. 2. 16, 17.
o *ctr.* ver. 4. *cf.* 2 Sam. 16. 10, 11.

2. The blessing and the curse are now taken up by Moses, and spread out before the people's eyes, especially the curse, which has had long, sad fulfillment for many generations, and needed thus to be set before them for their conviction and

spring of thy kine and the increase of thy sheep. Cursed shalt thou be in thy [p] coming in, and cursed shalt thou be in thy going out. Jehovah will send upon thee cursing, confusion, and rebuke in all to which thou puttest thy hand to do, until thou be destroyed,—yea, until thou perish quickly, because of the wickedness of thy doings whereby thou hast [q] forsaken me. Jehovah will make the [r] pestilence cleave unto thee, till he have consumed thee off the land whither thou goest to possess it. Jehovah shall smite thee with consumption, and with fever, and with inflammation, and with scorching heat, and with drought, and with blight, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee till thou perish. And thy heavens which are over thy head shall be [s] brass, and the earth which is under thee iron. Jehovah will give as the rain of thy land powder and dust: from the heavens shall it come down upon thee till thou be destroyed. Jehovah shall give thee up to be [t] smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee before them seven ways; and thou shalt be driven hither and thither among all the kingdoms of the earth. And thy carcass shall be food unto all the birds of the heavens, and unto the beasts of the earth, and there shall be none to frighten them off. Jehovah will smite thee with the [u] sore of Egypt, and with boils, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed. Jehovah will smite thee with madness and blindness, and with astonishment of heart; and thou shalt grope in the noonday as the blind gropeth in darkness; and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways; and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled continually, and there shall be [v] none to save. Thou shalt [w] betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her; thou shalt [x] build a house, and thou shalt not dwell therein; thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not use the fruit of it. Thine ox shall be slaughtered before thine eyes, and thou shalt not eat thereof; thine ass shall be violently taken away from before thy face, and shall not return to thee; thy sheep shall be given unto thine enemies, and thou shalt have none to save. Thy [y] sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people, and thine eyes shall look and fail [with longing] for them all the day long; and there shall be no might in thy hand. The [z] fruit of thy ground, and all thy toil, shall a people that thou knowest not eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed continually; and thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see. Jehovah will smite thee in the knees and in the legs with a sore eruption of which thou canst not be healed,

p *cf.* Prov. 21. 4 with Jno. 3. 36.

q ch. 29. 25. Ju. 10. 13. 1 Kings 19. 10. Ezra 9. 10.

r Lev. 26. 25. 2 Sam. 21. 1. Amos 4. 10.

s Lev. 26. 19. *ctr.* ch. 11. 11, 12.

t Lev. 26. 17. Josh. 7. 5-8. 1 Sam. 4. 10.

u Ex. 9. 9. Job 2. 7. Rev. 16. 2. *cf.* Ex. 15. 26.

v *cf.* Is. 59. 16. Is. 63. 5. Lam. 1. 7, 8.

w ch. 20. 7. Jer. 8. 10.

x ch. 20. 5. Amos 5. 11. Zeph. 1. 13.

y 2 Kings 5. 2. Dan. 1. 1-3.

z Ju. 6. 1-5. Jer. 5. 15-17.

turning to God when overtaken by it. It was thus already a prophecy of what the legal covenant would bear as fruit; and it is God's love to His people that speaks in these terrible denunciations, yet insufficient to turn back the unbeliev-

from the sole of thy foot to the top of thy head. Jehovah will [a] bring thee, and thy king whom thou mayest set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and [b] there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone. And thou shalt become an [c] astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word among all the peoples whither Jehovah shall lead thee. Thou shalt carry [d] much seed out into the field, and shalt gather little in; for the [e] locust shall devour it. Thou shalt plant and cultivate vineyards, but shalt drink no wine, nor gather [the grapes]: for the worms shall eat them. Thou shalt have olive-trees throughout all thy bounds, but thou shalt not anoint thyself with oil; for thine olive shall cast its fruit. Thou shalt [f] beget sons and daughters, but they shall not be thine; for they shall go into captivity. All thy trees and the fruit of thy ground shall the locust possess. The sojourner in the midst of thee shall rise above thee higher and higher, and thou shalt come down lower and lower. He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the [g] tail.

And all these curses shall come upon thee, and pursue thee, and overtake thee, until thou be [h] destroyed; [i] because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of Jehovah thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee: and they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed forever. Because thou servedst not Jehovah thy God with [j] joyfulness and with gladness of heart for the [k] abundance of all things, thou shalt serve thine enemies whom Jehovah shall send against thee, in [l] hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all; and he shall put an iron [m] yoke upon thy neck until he have destroyed thee. Jehovah will bring a nation upon thee from [n] afar, from the end of the earth, as the eagle flieth, —a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; a nation of fixed countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favor to the young; and he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, till thou be destroyed; which also shall not leave thee corn, new wine, or oil, the offspring of thy kine, or increase of thy sheep, till he have destroyed thee. And he shall [o] besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and strong walls, wherein thou trustedst, come down throughout all thy land; yea, he shall besiege thee in all thy gates in all thy land which Jehovah thy God hath given thee. And thou shalt [p] eat the fruit of thine own body—the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters

[a] 2 Kings 17. 4-6. 2 Kings 24. 10-17. 2 Kings 25. 7. 2 Chron. 36. 4-10.
[b] ch. 4. 28. Jer. 16. 13. Dan. 3. 5, 6. Jer. 44. 15-30.
[c] Jer. 25. 9. Jer. 42. 18. Ezek. 5. 15-17.
[d] Hag. 1. 6. ver. 16.
[e] Joel 1. 4.
[f] ver. 32. Lam. 1. 5.
[g] Is. 1. 7, 8.
[h] Lev. 26. 33.
[i] ver. 15. Jer. 2. 19.
[j] ch. 26. 11. Neh. 9. 35-37. Ps. 100. 2.
[k] ch. 16. 13-15.
[l] Jer. 37. 21. cf. Ps. 137.
[m] Jer. 28. 14. Lam. 1. 14.
[n] Hab. 1. 6. Jer. 5. 15-19.
[o] 2 Kings 6. 24, 25. 2 Kings 25. 1-4. cf. Luke 21. 20. Zech. 14. 1, 2.
[p] Lev. 26. 29. Jer. 19. 9. Lam. 2. 20. Lam. 4. 10.

ing generation from the path of ruin. So is it with all the sorrow and evil of life, which God, alas, must so much dwell upon for us because souls are so largely born to Him in sorrow, and by night we see farthest into heaven. The blessing occupies but fourteen verses; the curse, fifty-four. It would carry us much be-

which Jehovah thy God hath given thee, in the siege and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee. The man that is tender and very delicate among you, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the rest of his children whom he saveth, so that he will not give any of them of the flesh of his children that he eateth, because he hath nothing left him in the siege and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates. The tender and delicate [q]woman in thy midst, who would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicacy and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and her son and her daughter, even because of her afterbirth which cometh out from between her feet, and her children which she shall bear; for she shall eat them secretly for want of every thing in the siege and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in thy gates. If thou shalt not take [r]heed to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, fearing this glorious and [s]awful name, JEHOVAH THY GOD; then Jehovah will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, great plagues and constant, and sore and constant sicknesses. And he shall bring upon thee again all the [t]diseases of Egypt, of which thou wast afraid, and they shall cleave to thee. Also every sickness and every plague which is not written in the book of this law, these will Jehovah bring upon thee till thou be destroyed. And ye shall be left [u]few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude, because thou didst not hearken unto the voice of Jehovah thy God. And it shall be that, as Jehovah rejoiced over you to do you good and multiply you, so will Jehovah [v]rejoice over you to cause you to perish and to destroy you; and ye shall be [w]plucked from off the land whither thou goest in to possess it. And Jehovah will [x]scatter thee among all peoples from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; and thou shalt there serve other gods whom thou hast not known,—neither thou nor thy fathers,—wood and stone. And [y]among these nations shalt thou have no ease, nor the sole of thy foot have resting-place; and Jehovah shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and pining of soul. And thy life shall hang in suspense before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have no [z]assurance of thy life: in the [a]morning thou shalt say, Would that it were evening! and in the evening thou shalt say, Would that

q 2 Kings 6. 26-29.
r Lev. 19. 37.
s Ex. 15. 11. Jer. 10. 7.
t Ex. 15. 26. ver. 27.
u ch. 4. 27. Neh. 7. 4. Ezek. 12. 16.
v cf. Rev. 18. 20.
w 2 Chron. 7. 19, 20. Jer. 16. 13.
x Lev. 26. 33. ch. 4. 27. Jer. 9. 16. Ezek. 22. 15. Ps. 44. 11.
y Ps. 137. Lev. 26. 36-39.
z Amos 9. 4.
a Job 7. 4. cf. Ps. 89. 46.

yond our limits to go into the details. As with him who is at peace with God all things are at peace, so, on the other hand, with the enemies of God, all things are hostile really; not the least so when there is the most fair-seeming prosperity, and gentle breezes and calm skies lure the ship on to destruction.

it were morning! for the fear of thy heart that thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes that thou shalt see. And Jehovah shall bring thee into [b]Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I said unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again; and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and for bondwomen, and there shall be none to buy [you].

[b] Jer. 43. 7. Hos. 9. 3.

(XXIX.-XXX.)

The recapitulation of the covenant.

1. (xxix.-1-15.) God's present goodness the incentive to obedience.

3. [1] These are the words of the covenant which Jehovah commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, [c]besides the covenant that he made with them in Horeb. And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have [d]seen all that Jehovah did before your eyes in the land of Egypt,—unto Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land: the great trials that thine eyes have seen, those great signs and wonders. But Jehovah hath not given you a [e]heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, to this day. And I have led you [f]forty years in the wilderness: your [g]clothes are not grown old upon you, and thy [h]shoe is not grown old upon thy foot. Ye have not [i]eaten bread, nor drunk wine nor strong drink, that ye might know that I am Jehovah your God.

[c] Ex. 19.5,6. ch. 5. 2, 3.

[d] Ex. 19. 4. ch. 11. 2-4.

[e] ch. 5. 29. *cf.* Is. 6. 10.

[f] ch. 8. 2.

[g] ch. 8. 4. *ctr.* Josh. 9. 13.

[h] *cf.* Eph. 6. 15.

[i] ch. 8. 3. Matt. 4.3,4.

Then ye came unto this place; and [j]Sihon the king of Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, came out against us to battle, and we smote them. And we took their land, and gave it for an inheritance unto the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of the Manassites. Ye shall keep, therefore, the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may [k]prosper in all ye do.

[j] Num. 21. 21-35. Num. 32. 33-42.

[k] Josh. 1. 7. Ps. 1. 3.

Ye stand [l]this day, all of you, before Jehovah your God,—your heads, your tribes, your elders, and your officers, all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that is within thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood to the drawer of thy water, that thou mayest enter into the [m]covenant of Jehovah thy God, and into his oath which Jehovah thy God maketh with thee this day, that he may establish thee this day for a people unto himself, and [that] he may be God unto thee, as he said unto thee, and as he [n]sware unto thy fathers—to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

[l] Josh. 24. 1-25.

[m] ver. 1.

[n] ch. 4. 31, etc.

3. We have now the recapitulation of the covenant, the people standing, as Moses warns them before God, a covenant far-reaching in its effects upon the generations to come; fruitful of blessing, if there were only a heart to respond to Him who had drawn near to them, and who would fain have drawn them near to Himself, but in their condition could not. For this, therefore, and that He may have this witness to Himself, they are pointed forward to a future day.

(i.) Once more the goodness of the Lord is brought before them as the incentive to obedience. From Egypt onward they had had abundant proofs of His power, as displayed against their enemies, and in tenderness toward themselves. Their clothes had not waxen old, nor the shoes upon their feet: for us the easily

Neither with you [o]only do I make this covenant and this oath, but with him that standeth here with us this day before Jehovah our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day.

2. (xxix. 16-29.) The repetition of the curse.

[2] For ye know how we [p]dwelt in the land of Egypt, and how we came through the nations that ye passed; and ye have seen their [q]abominations and their idols, wood and stone, silver and gold, which were among them: lest there should be among you man or woman or family or tribe whose heart [r]turneth away this day from Jehovah our God, to go and serve the gods of those nations; lest there should be among you a [s]root that beareth gall and wormwood; and it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he [t]bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have [u]peace, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart, to [v]add drunkenness to thirst. Jehovah will not pardon him, but then Jehovah's anger and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curse that is written in this book shall lie upon him, and Jehovah will [w]blot out his name from under heaven; and Jehovah will separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that is written in this book of the law. And the generation to come, your children that shall rise up after you, and the [x]foreigner that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses wherewith Jehovah hath made it sick, [that] the whole ground thereof is [y]brimstone and salt [and] burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, and no grass groweth in it, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, which Jehovah overthrew in his anger and in his wrath,—even all the nations shall say, Why hath Jehovah done so unto this land? what [meaneth] the heat of this great anger? And men shall say, [z]Because they forsook the covenant of Jehovah, their fathers' God, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt; and they went and served other gods, and bowed down to them, gods whom they knew not, and whom he had not apportioned to them. And Jehovah's anger was kindled against this land, to

o *cf.* Jno.17. 20.

p Ex. 1. 8-22. ch. 26. 5-8.

q ch. 18. 9. 1 Kings 14. 24.

r ch. 11. 16. 1 Kings 11. 3, 4. *cf.* Jno. 6. 66-71. Heb. 3. 12.

s ch. 32. 32. Acts 8. 23. Heb. 12.15. 2 Kings 4. 40.

t *ctr.* Is. 65. 16.

u Jer. 8. 11.

v Is. 30. 1. *cf.* Jas. 1. 14, 15. 2 Tim.3.13.

w ch. 9. 14. Ps. 69. 28.

x Lev.26.32. Ezek. 5.14, 15. 1 Kings 9. 8, 9.

y Gen. 19. 24-28. Is. 1. 9. *ctr.* Hos. 11. 8.

z Jer. 22.8,9. 2 Chron. 7. 19-22.

read types of better things. Already also they were in possession of part of their inheritance, the pledge of what was still to come. With the knowledge of all this, they stood that day before the Lord to renew their covenant, the whole people, for themselves and for the generations yet to come.

(ii.) If they turned aside from Him, God's threatenings would be as faithful as His promises. They had seen the abominations of the heathen, and could thus realize the wickedness which had brought down God's judgment. Let them not awaken it, then, against themselves by following in their steps; otherwise their own posterity and the stranger from a far country should see in the desolation of the land the manifest anger of the Lord against them for sins as manifest; and they would be rooted out of it.

bring upon it all the curse that is written in this book; and Jehovah rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into [a]another land, as at this day. [b]Secret things belong unto Jehovah our God; but the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

3. (xxx. 1-10.) The predicted return in heart to God.

[1]And it shall be, when [c]all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt take them to [d]heart among all the nations whither Jehovah thy God hath driven thee, and shalt [e]return unto Jehovah thy God, and shalt hearken to his voice according to all that I command thee this day,—thou and thy sons, with all thy heart and with all thy soul, that then Jehovah thy God will [f]turn thy captivity, and have compassion on thee, and will [g]gather thee again from among all the peoples whither Jehovah thy God hath scattered thee. Though thy dispersion should be unto the [h]end of the heaven, from thence will Jehovah thy God gather thee and from thence will he fetch thee; and Jehovah thy God will bring thee into the land that thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt [i]possess it; and he will do thee good, and [j]multiply thee above thy fathers. And Jehovah thy God will [k]circumcise thy heart and the heart of thy seed, to love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. And Jehovah thy God will put all these curses on thine [l]enemies, and on them that hate thee, who have persecuted thee. But thou shalt return and hearken unto the voice of Jehovah, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day. And Jehovah thy God will make thee abound in every work of thy hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, for good; for Jehovah will again [m]rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers; if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of Jehovah thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law; if thou turn unto Jehovah thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul.

4. (vv. 11-14.) The law a real test.

[11]For this commandment that I command thee this

a Lev. 26. 38. 1 Kings 14. 15. 2 Kings 17. 6, 23. Is. 5. 13. Amos 5. 27. Amos 7. 11.
b cf. Rom. 9. 19-33. Rom. 11. 33-36. cfr. Ps. 25. 14. 1 Cor. 2. 9, 10.
c Lev. 26. 40-45. Neh. 9. 36. Dan. 9. 13.
d ch. 4. 29-31. Lev. 26. 40. 1 Kings 8. 46-52. Neh. 1. 3-11.
e Jer. 4. 1, 2. Jer. 29. 12, 13. Jer. 31. 18-20. Dan. 9. 1-19. Hos. 6. 1. Hos. 14. 1. Rom. 11. 23, 24. 2 Cor. 3. 16.
f Ps. 85. 1-3. Ps. 106. 47. Ps. 126.
g Ps. 107. 3. Jer. 29. 14. Jer. 31. 8, 9. Ezek. 20. 33-37. Ezek. 34. 13-16. Mic. 2. 12. Zeph. 3. 13-20. Zech. 10. 6-12.
h Neh. 1. 9.
i Jer. 32. 6-15, 44. Hos. 11. 10, 11. Mic. 4. 4.
j Is. 27. 6. Hos. 1. 10, 11.
k Jer. 32. 37-42.
l cf. Ob. 10-15. Zeph. 2. 8, 9. Is. 11. 14.
m Jer. 32. 41. Zeph. 3. 17.

(iii.) And all these things would, in fact, come upon them, both the blessing and the curse. It would be as scattered among the nations, that their hearts would finally return to God, in whole-hearted obedience. Then He would have compassion on them, and gather as He had scattered them. He would circumcise their hearts, and that of their seed (the nation in continuance), so that they should love the Lord their God whole-heartedly and live indeed. Then would the blessing be for themselves, the curses only for their enemies; and He would rejoice over them for good, as He had rejoiced in their past deliverance. But this is of course grace, not law; and the grace of God cannot lack ability to display itself where the heart thus turns to God.

(iv.) Meanwhile, in the law itself was the test for them, a plain thing, not

day, it is not [n] too wonderful for thee, nor is it [o] far off. It is not in the [p] heavens, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up for us to the heavens, and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it. And it is not beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it? For the word is very [q] nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.

[n] ch. 10. 12. ch. 29. 29. Is. 45. 19. 1 Jno. 5. 3.
[o] Eccl. 7. 24.
[p] Rom. 10. 6-13.
[q] ch. 4. 7, 8.

5. (15-20.) The appeal to responsibility.

[5] See, I have set before thee this day [r] life and good, and death and evil, in that I command thee this day to love Jehovah thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply, and that Jehovah thy God may bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thy heart turn away, so that thou dost not hear, and art drawn away, and dost bow down to other gods, and serve them, I denounce unto you this day that ye shall surely perish; ye shall not prolong your days upon the land whither thou passest over Jordan to possess it. I call [t] heaven and earth to witness this day against you: I have set life and death before you, blessing and cursing: [u] choose then life, that thou mayest live,—thou and thy seed, in loving Jehovah thy God, in hearkening to his voice and cleave to him, (for this is life to thee and length of days,) that thou mayest dwell in the land that Jehovah sware unto thy fathers,—to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give unto them.

[r] ch. 11. 26.
[s] ch. 4. 26. ch. 8. 19.
[t] ch. 31. 28. Is. 1. 2.
[u] Josh. 24. 15. 1 Kings 18. 21. *cf.* Jno. 5. 40.

DIVISION 3. (Chap. xxxi.–xxxiv.)

The outcome, as revealed prophetically.

(XXXI. 1-29.)

Moses' last charge.

1. (vv. 1-8.) The appointed leader.

1. [1] AND Moses came and spake these words unto all Israel; and he said unto them, I am a [v] hundred and twenty years old this day; I can no more go out and come in: and Jehovah hath said unto me, thou shalt [w] not go over this Jordan. Jehovah thy God,

[v] ch. 34. 7. Josh. 14. 11.
[w] Num. 20. 6-13. ch. 3. 26, 27. ch. 4. 21.

hidden, speaking not from afar off, but very nigh, in the heart and in the mouth. The heart might refuse it, the mouth even disown it; yet, in fact, God had made all as simple as possible, and been as tender to man's infirmity as He could. Only man himself was to blame, if evil came. It was here indeed that man's state was fully made known. The test was not useless, but did its work well; and the law was holy and just and good; but it is Christ that is the "end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

(v.) Thus the way and the end on both sides had been put before them; and with one more solemn appeal to "choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live," the exposition of the law comes to an end.

DIV. 3.

THE substance of the third division of Deuteronomy is evidently prophetic—the song of Moses, and the blessing of the tribes, with which we have as intro-

he will go over before thee, he will destroy these nations before thee, and thou shalt dispossess them: [x] Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as Jehovah hath said. And Jehovah will do unto them as he did unto Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites, and to their land; whom he destroyed. And Jehovah will give them up before you, and ye shall do unto them according to all the commandment which I have commanded you. Be [y] strong and of good courage: fear not, nor be afraid of them; for Jehovah thy God, he it is who goeth with thee; he will not leave thee, nor forsake thee.

And Moses called Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be [z] strong and of good courage; for thou shalt go with this people into the land which Jehovah hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. And [a] Jehovah, he it is that goeth before thee; he will be with thee; he will not leave thee, nor forsake thee: fear not, nor be dismayed.

x ch. 1. 37, 38. Num. 27. 18-23.

y Josh. 1. 6, 7, 9, 18. 1 Cor. 16. 13. Eph. 6. 10. 2 Cor. 12. 9. Phil. 4. 13. 2 Tim. 2. 1. Neh. 8. 10.

z ver. 6, 23. ch. 1. 38. 1 Chron. 22. 13.

a ver. 3. ch. 9. 3. Num. 10. 33. *cf.* Heb. 6. 19, 20.

duction the leadership of the people committed to Joshua, and the law to the heads of the people. The last chapter, as an appendix to the whole, and of course by another hand, gives Moses' vision of the land from Pisgah, with his death and burial by the Lord Himself.

1. Again we find, along with the giving of the law to the people, and the inspiriting words to them and their new leader to go in and take possession of the land, the positive assurance of the apostasy that would come, and the judgment of that apostasy. Even so the Church started with the assurance of latter day perilous times, the power of godliness denied, and the coming of Antichrist. Nor, in either case, was the beginning of this state of things far off. One generation only of Israel was faithful under Joshua, and then we have the confusion of the book of Judges. Paul lives to speak of all those in Asia having departed from him, and to find none in Rome to stand with him. While John writes already that it is (in principle) the last time, and that there are many Antichrists.

So little confidence can be placed in man; so surely does testing mean failure, even with the saint. History is a terrible witness against the pride of man; and prophecy, which is but divinely given history written beforehand, emphasizes the lesson. Instead of hiding the darkness of the future from those in the glow of first enthusiasm, God does the very reverse. He holds it up; He bids us never forget it; He sings it in our ears, making with it strange funeral music which shall linger there sweetly though sorrowfully: and why? Is this indeed armor for warriors, strength for a pilgrim path? Yes, it is a SONG; nay, it is a song of praise: "I will publish Jehovah's name," says Moses, "ascribe ye greatness unto our God." Nor does He after all reign among ruins merely: He has a people whom He loves and cares for: "Jehovah's portion is His people." But the lesson needs to be well learnt, and emphasized with all the intensity of a prophet's utterance: "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is." (Jer. xvii. 5, 7.) Thus we may have still a song over the destruction of all mere human hopes when they leave us the Lord to trust in, and make it our one necessity to trust in Him.

(i.) They need not be afraid, then, though Moses' strength is now to fail, nor to faint if even he be stricken of God and set aside. Jehovah abides, and He will go over before them and subdue all their enemies; Joshua too shall go before them: they shall have a leader, that they may learn subjection, and yet it must

2. (9-13.) The Word, which measures all service.

[2] And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the [b] priests, the sons of Levi, who bare the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, and to all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every [c] seven years, at the set time of the year of release, at the [d] feast of tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before Jehovah thy God in the place that he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel, in their ears. [e] Gather the people together,—the men and the women and the little ones, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear Jehovah your God, and take [f] heed to do all the words of this law, and that their children which have not known may hear and learn to fear Jehovah your God all the days that ye live in the land whither ye pass over Jordan, to possess it.

b Neh. 8.2-8. Heb. 4. 12-16.

c ch. 15. 1-6. Neh. 8. 2.

d ch. 16. 13. Ezra 3. 4.

e *cf.* Jno. 7. 2, 14, 37.

f Eph. 5. 15

3. (14-29.) In the presence of God, where the future can be seen and faced with a song.

[3] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Behold, thy days approach that thou must die: call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tent of meeting, that I may give him a [g] charge. And Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the tent of meeting. And Jehovah [h] appeared in the tent in the pillar of cloud; and the pillar of cloud stood over the entrance of the tent. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, and this people will rise up and go [i] a-whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land whither they go to be among them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them. And my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will [j] forsake them, and hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them, and they shall say in that

g ver. 6, etc. 1 Kings 2. 1-9. 1 Tim. 1. 18-20. 2 Tim. 4. 1-8.

h Ex. 33. 7-11.

i Hos. 1. 2. Ezek. 16. 15.

j 2 Kings 21. 14, 15. Jer. 23. 33-40. 2 Chron. 24. 20. *cf.* Is. 54. 7.

be God to whom they are really subject. Leader and people, let them be strong: for feebleness dishonors Him whose they are. *He* will not fail nor forsake.

(ii.) But they must have the law ever in remembrance. How strengthening and inspiriting a thing is it to have one's life moulded by the declared will of God! What encouragement is there in the consciousness that one is simply obeying, and that the word we obey is perfect as it is authoritative! What a yoke is that which Christ gives, and which gives rest to the soul that takes it! We must not, of course, confuse the type and antitype here. But the principle has always been true, that the path of obedience is that of real strength and blessing and fruitfulness; and we need not wonder if the first psalm begins with this; for in this alone does God find His throne among men aright.

Moses therefore now gives them the law, and ordains it to be solemnly read to all the people every seventh year at the feast of tabernacles. In the midst of that which reminded them of the wilderness-course at an end for them and the land theirs by the favor of God, obedience could be most persuasively pressed upon them.

(iii.) Joshua is now called with Moses into the presence of the Lord Himself to receive his charge. It is thus with all true leaders. "Am I not an apostle? have I not seen the Lord?" Commissions must thus finally be given by the only One who has right to confer them, and who does not keep at a distance from Himself those whom He sends forth. Moses is also to write out the song which

day, [k] Have not these evils befallen me because my God is not in the midst of me? And I will surely hide my face in that day, for all the evils that they have wrought, in that they have turned unto other gods. And now write ye this [l] song, and teach it to the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a [m] witness for me against the children of Israel. For I bring them into the land of which I sware unto their fathers,—that floweth with milk and honey; and they will eat, and fill themselves, and grow [n] fat, and turn to other gods and serve them, and despise me, and break my covenant. And it shall be, when many evils and troubles have befallen them, that this song shall testify against them as a witness; for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouth of their seed; for I know the [o] imagination that they are forming already this day, before I bring them into the land of which I sware. And Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it unto the children of Israel. And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge, and said, Be strong, and of good courage; for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land of which I sware unto them; and I will be with thee.

And it came to pass, when Moses had ended writing the words of this law in a book unto their conclusion, that Moses commanded the Levites who bare the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it at the side of the [p] ark of the covenant of Jehovah your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee. For I know thy rebellion and thy stiff neck: lo, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against Jehovah; and how much more after my [q] death? Gather me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears, and take [r] heaven and earth to witness against them. For I know that after my death ye will utterly [s] corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way that I have commanded you; and the evil will befall you in the latter days: because ye will do evil in Jehovah's eyes, to provoke him to anger with the work of your hands.

The Witnessing Song.

(XXXI. 30–XXXII. 43.)

1. (v. 30–xxxii. 4.) The faithfulness and majesty of God.

2. [t] And Moses spake in the ears of the whole congregation of Israel the words of this [u] song, until they were finished:—

k Dan. 9. 12, 13.

l ver. 30.

m ver. 26. Josh. 24. 27.

n ch. 32. 15.

o cf. Gen. 6. 5.

p Josh. 24. 26. 1 Kings 8. 9.

q Josh. 24. 31. Acts 20. 29, 30. 2 Pet. 1. 13, 14. Jno. 17. 11, 12.

r ch. 30. 19. ch. 32. 1.

s Ex. 32. 7.

t cfr. Ex. 15. Ju. 5. 1, etc. 1 Sam. 2. 1–10. 2 Sam. 1. 19. 2 Sam. 22. Is. 12. Is. 26. Luke 1. 46–55, 68–80. Rev. 5. 9–14.

Israel is to learn,—the remedy against the evil it predicts for those who really learn it; so gladly would divine love have, if it were possible, its prophecy made untrue, and the unrepenting One repent of what He is forced to do. (Jer. xviii. 7, 8.)

Alas! the book in the side of the ark, and the words of the song, are alike witnesses against the people of His choice.

2. We come now to the Song itself, a song which was, as we see, to have a peculiar place of testimony for God, and of warning to His people. Yet it is a

GIVE ear, ye [u] heavens, and I will speak;
And hear, O earth, the utterances of my mouth.
My doctrine shall drop as the [v] rain,
My utterance run down as the [w] dew:
As small rain upon the tender herb,
And as showers upon the grass.
For I will proclaim [x] Jehovah's name;
Ascribe ye [y] greatness to our God!
The [z] Rock! his [a] work is perfect:
For all his [b] ways are judgment;
A [c] faithful God, and without deception,
Just and right is he!

2. (vv. 5-7.) The contradiction of His people.

[2] They have dealt corruptly with him,
Not children of his, [but] their blot,—
A false and [d] crooked generation.
Do ye thus requite Jehovah,
O foolish people and unwise?
Is he not thy father, who hath [e] purchased thee?
Hath he not made thee and established thee?
[f] Remember the days of old;
Consider the years of many generations;
Ask thy father, and he will show thee,—
Thine elders, and they will tell thee.

u Is. 1. 2. ch. 4. 26. Ps. 50. 4.
v Is. 55. 10, 11.
w Ps. 133. 3. Hos. 14. 5.
x Ex. 34. 5-7. cf. Phil. 2. 9-11. Rev. 19. 11-13.
y ch. 5. 24. Ps. 145. 3.
z ver. 15. 2 Sam. 22. 2. Hab. 1. 12. Is. 26. 4. Matt. 16. 18.
a Eccl. 3. 14. cf. Jno. 17. 4.
b Ps. 103. 7. Ps. 77. 13, 19. Dan. 4. 37.
c Ps. 89. 1, 2, 5, 8, 24, 33. cf. 2 Cor. 1. 19, 20.
d Ps. 95. 10. cf. Phil. 2. 15.
e Ps. 74. 2. cf. 2 Pet. 2. 1.
f cf. Is. 51. 1-3.

"song," and this we have seen to be significant. A "song" supposes in itself joy, and not sorrow; a battle-song, victory over enemies; a funeral song, victory over death. This of Moses unites these characters; and that it is above all a song of joy in God, explains all, assures that all must be. As joy, it is fitted to live in the heart; as a joy that does not ignore sorrow or make light of sin, the presence of these will only the more tend to preserve and give it power over the soul. It is truly a "song in the night," and for the night, such as God alone could give,—a witness to the Giver.

(i.) The real theme is in the first four verses: it is God Himself, the unchangeable One, faithful, just, and right. Well may the heavens hear, and the earth, the blessed words which drop as the rain, and distill as the dew of night, refreshing grass and herb. It is Jehovah's name they publish, that sweet and wonderful name which expresses truly what He is, and which man, dropped out of that knowledge, needs so much to learn. To Him they ascribe greatness; yes, to Him, O man, out of the clay, who hast ruined thyself by thy pretension to it. *He* is the Rock—the "dwelling-place in all generations," says our Moses elsewhere (Ps. xc. 1,)—safe as shelter, strong against storm, clear-shadowy in the noon-tide heat of a desert land. "His work is perfect"—though men and devils have combined in their own persons to dishonor it. "All His ways are judgment"—not wrath, but far-seeing, well-discerning righteousness. "A God of faithfulness without deceit, just and right is He."

(ii.) But Israel? Alas, they have dealt corruptly with Him. Man, most favored, most blessed, can turn all this into the occasion of deeper condemnation. Adopted as His family, they are no sons of His, but a blot upon them, a generation crooked and perverse.

And will men thus requite Jehovah? and He the Father who has purchased them from captivity for the love He bare them? Foolish and unwise as they were, did they not know Him to be that? Had He not made and established them? Let them look back, then, upon the past, the record of continuous generations. Or let them ask their fathers, and the elders hoary with age. There could be but one answer of whomsoever they inquired.

3. (8-14.) Who were His portion.

[3] When the Most High gave the nations their [g] inheritance,
When he separated the sons of Adam,
He fixed the boundaries of the peoples
[h] According to the number of the children of Israel.
For Jehovah's [i] portion is his people,
Jacob the lot of his inheritance.
He found him in a [j] desert land,
Even in the waste, howling wilderness.
He [k] compassed him about, he [l] watched over him,
He kept him as the [m] apple of his eye.
As the [n] eagle stirreth up its nest,
Hovereth over its young,
Spreadeth out its wings, taketh them,
[o] Beareth them on its feathers,—
So Jehovah alone did [p] lead him,
And no [q] strange god was with him.
He made him ride on the [r] high places of the earth,
And he ate the produce of the field,
And he made him suck [s] honey out of the rock,
And oil out of the flinty rock;
[t] Cream of kine, and milk of sheep, with the fat of lambs,
And rams of Bashan, and he-goats,
With the [u] fat of kidneys of wheat;
And thou drankest pure [v] wine—the blood of the grape.

4. (15-18.) Their apostasy.

[4] Then [w] Jeshurun grew [x] fat, and kicked:
Thou art become fat, thou art grown stout,
Thou art even [y] covered with fatness.——
He [z] gave up God who made him,
And dishonored the Rock of his salvation.
They moved him to [a] jealousy with strange [gods],
With abominations they provoked him to anger.

g Gen. 10. Acts 17. 26.
h cf. Ps. 48. 2. Ps. 100. 1. Rom. 11. 12-16.
i Ex. 34. 9. Is. 19. 24, 25. cf. Eph. 1. 18.
j ch. 26. 5.
k Ps. 32. 7.
l cf. 1 Pet. 5. 7.
m Ps. 17. 8. Zech. 2. 8.
n cf. ch. 1. 6, 7.
o Ex. 19. 4. Is. 40. 31.
p Ex. 13. 21.
q Ps. 81. 9, 10.
r Is. 58. 14. Hab. 3. 19.
s Ps. 81. 16.
t Gen. 18. 8.
u Ps. 81. 16. Ps. 147. 14.
v Ps. 104. 15. cf. Luke 22. 18.
w ch. 33. 5, 26. Is. 44. 2.
x cfr. Lev. 1. 8, etc.
y Job 15. 25-27. Ps. 119. 70.
z Ju. 2. 11, 12. 2 Chr. 7. 22. Neh. 9. 25, 26.
a Ex. 34. 14. Ps. 78. 58. Ezek. 8. 3-6. Song 8. 6, 7.

(iii.) The song carries them then back to a time beyond these experiences, before the nation existed at all, when the sons of Adam were finding the abodes assigned them of God. Even then, when the Gentiles were receiving their inheritance, He set their bounds according to the needs of such a number as the children of Israel would become. For in truth they were Jehovah's portion—His people, and Jacob (though but "Jacob") the lot of His inheritance.

Where had He found them? In a desert land, yea, a howling wilderness; but where the Lord's care had only the more opportunity for display. Compassed about, watched over, guarded as the pupil of the eye, they had proved this. By the law He had stirred them up like the eagle her nest, while with outstretched wings as in the pillar of cloud, He had sheltered and nestled them, then borne them up and carried them in His feathers. He, He alone did this, asking help of no strange god, and setting them upon the high places of Canaan, amid the abundance of that plenteous land.

(iv.) Then the song turns from past to future, but which is seen as the past, clear in the vision of God. Jeshurun grew fat and kicked: God's loved, upright one * became rebellious in prosperity—a strange, common case—and gave up his Maker, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. Then the heart

* *Jeshurun* is the diminutive of "Jasher"—"upright."

They [b]sacrificed unto demons, not to God,— [b] 1 Cor. 10. 19-22.
To gods they had not known,—
New—who came newly up,
Whom your fathers feared not.
Of the Rock that begat thee thou wast [c]unmindful, [c] ch. 8. 19. Is. 17. 10. Jer. 2. 32.
And hast forgotten God who brought thee forth.
5. (19-33.) Its recompense from God.
5 And Jehovah saw it, and [d]abhorred them, [d] Am. 6. 8. c/r. Lev. 26. 11.
Because of provocation by his sons and daughters;
And he said, I will [e]hide my face from them, [e] Hos. 5. 15.
I will see what their end shall be:
For they are a [f]perverse generation, [f] ver. 5.
Children in whom is no faithfulness.
They have moved me to jealousy with a god that is not,
They have provoked me to anger with their vanities;
And I will [g]move them to jealousy with a people that is not, [g] Rom. 10. 19. cf. Acts 22. 21, 22.
With a foolish nation will I provoke them to anger.
For a [h]fire is kindled in mine anger, [h] Jer. 17. 4. Lam. 4. 11.
And shall burn to the lowest Sheol,
And consume the earth and its produce,
And set on fire the foundations of the mountains.
I will [i]heap evils upon them, [i] 1 Thess. 2. 16. cf. Is. 40. 2.
I will spend my arrows upon them.
They shall be [j]wasted with hunger, [j] Jer. 14. 1-19.
And devoured with burning heat
And with bitter destruction,
And I will send the teeth of [k]beasts against them, [k] Ps. 80. 13. Ezek. 14. 21.
With the poison of what crawleth in the dust.
Without shall the [l]sword bereave, [l] Ezra 9. 7. Jer. 9. 18.
And within the chambers, terror,—
Both the [m]young man and the virgin, [m] Ps. 78. 62, 63. Jer. 9. 21. Amos 4. 10.
The suckling with the gray-haired man.
I would say, I will scatter them afar,
I would make their remembrance cease among men,
Were it not that I feared the [n]provocation of the enemy, [n] Ex. 32. 12. Num. 14. 13. Ezek. 20. 9.

estranged from Him turned to those that were His opposites. Strange gods came in, with their abominations, gods newly invented replaced Him who had brought them forth,—a thing continually repeated since, and under every imaginable form.

(v.) God could not forget, and be as man; but He could, and was forced to, hide His face. They had given Him up for gods that were not, and He would move them to jealousy by a people they disdained as none. It is here that the apostle sees the calling of the Gentiles. (Rom. x. 19.) But Moses'object is not to develop this; he goes on to the positive consequences of God's wrath, the wrath of slighted love, and which works out in the end the purposes of love. His anger burns to the bottom of Sheol, for there are cast the objects of it; and with that which reaches down to this the earth and its produce are necessarily consumed. The foundations of the mountains are set on fire by the volcano of wrath; the elements, the teeth of beasts, hunger and plague fight against them; the sword of the enemy bereaves: a full end of them seems impending, but the proud enemy would not recognize Him in this, but only the strength of His own

Lest their adversaries should misdeem,
Lest they should say, [o] Our own high hand,
And not Jehovah, hath done all this.
For they are a nation with whom counsel hath perished,
And there is [p] no understanding in them.
[q] Oh that they were wise, that they understood this,
That they would consider their latter end!
How should one chase a [r] thousand,
And two put to flight ten thousand,
Were it not that their Rock had [s] sold them,
And Jehovah had [t] delivered them up?
For their [u] rock is not as our Rock,
Even our enemies being judges.
For their vine is of the vine of [v] Sodom,
And of the fields of Gomorrah;
Their grapes are grapes of gall,
Their clusters bitter.
Their wine is dragon's poison,
And the cruel venom of asps.

6. (34–43.) Their discipline, which ends with the breaking of the rod.

[6] Is not this stored up with me,—
Sealed among my treasures?
[w] Vengeance is mine, and recompense,
For the time when their foot shall slip.
For the day of their [x] calamity is nigh,
And the things that come on them make haste.
For Jehovah shall [y] judge his people,
And [z] repent himself for his servants,
When he seeth [their] [a] power is gone,
And there is none [b] shut up or left at large.

o Is. 10.5-19. Jer. 50. 17, 18. Ps. 44. Ps. 137. 7-9.
p ver. 6. Is. 1. 3.
q Ps. 81. 13, 14. Is. 48. 18. Luke 20.41-44.
r Is. 30. 17. 1 Sam. 2. 2.
s Ju. 4. 12. Is. 50. 1.
t Ju. 6. 1. Jer. 21. 7.
u ver. 4. 1 Sam. 2. 2. Josh. 5. 1. 1 Sam. 4. 8.
v cf. Is. 5. 1, 2, with Is. 1. 10. Jer. 2. 21.
w Ps. 94. Rom. 12. 19. Heb. 10. 30.
x Is. 2. 10-21. cf. Rev. 22. 10, 11.
y Ps. 135. 14. Ps. 50. 5, 6.
z Ps. 106. 44, 45. Ps. 85. 1-3.
a Ps. 79. 8. Ps. 88.
b 2 Kings 18. 23.

hand. Such is man, the unconscious worker-out of purposes he knows nothing of; and so God reigns, amid unintelligent and hostile powers, yoked to His service in their own despite.

Yet He longs and yearns over them! Let the cross say if He does not. And here His pity breaks out in Moses' words. Oh, that they had been wise! that they had understood, that they had considered the end sure to come! Vanquished, broken by a contemptible enemy,—how should it be unless their Rock had sold them, and the unchangeable Jehovah delivered them into their hands! Was He less a Rock? Was it because their God was as poor a reliance as the common trusts of men? Ah, their bitter enemies could easily themselves decide this. No, alas! it was that the fruit He had looked for from them was but the vine of Sodom, bitter and poisonous; and He who was the Righteous had been forced to be against them.

(vi.) This is all plain; but the end has unexpected disclosures. There was a secret hidden with God, sealed up among His treasures! Not judgment therefore; which every bad conscience could predict, and which He loves not!

Yet vengeance is His, and recompense, and their feet shall slip, the day of their calamity shall come, judgment shall come, Jehovah shall judge His people. Yes, judge; but not destroy! For when He sees them stricken down, helpless, their power gone, none left to help them, and the vanity of their false gods is fully seen,—*then* will He call them to Himself, with whom no other can be or can compare, and the rod of their correction, having accomplished its work, shall be broken: He will turn His hand against their enemies.

And he shall say, [c] Where are their gods,—
Their rock in whom they trusted,
Which ate the fat of their sacrifices,
[Which] drank the wine of their drink-offering?
Let them rise up and help you;
Let them be a covert for you.
See now,—I, [d] I am he,
And there is no god with me:
I [e] kill, and I make alive;
I have [f] wounded, and I heal;
And there is none that [g] delivereth out of my hand.
For I lift up my hand to heaven,
And say, [As] I live forever,
If I whet my [h] glittering sword,
And my hand take hold on judgment,
I will render [i] vengeance to mine adversaries,
And will reward them that hate me.
I will make drunk with blood my arrows,
And my [j] sword shall devour flesh:
With the blood of the slain and the captives,—
From the hairy head of the enemy.
[k] Rejoice, ye nations, [with] his people,
For he [l] avengeth the blood of his servants,
And rendereth vengeance to his adversaries,
And maketh [m] expiation for his land, for his people.
(XXXII. 44–XXXIII.)

c Ju. 10. 14. 2 Kings 3. 13. Jer. 2. 28.
d Is. 45. 21, 22. ctr. Is. 47. 8. Zeph. 2. 15.
e 1 Sam. 2. 6.
f Hos. 6. 1. Ps. 51. 8. ctr. Jer. 8. 11.
g Heb. 10. 31. Is. 43. 13.
h Ezek. 21. 9-20. Zech. 13. 7. cf. Rev. 19. 15.
i Is. 34. 8. Is. 61. 2 Ezek. 25. 14.
j Is. 34. 5, 6.
k Ex. 18. 9. Rom. 15. 10. Ps. 67. 3-7. Ps. 100. Is. 2. 2-4.

The blessing and how realized.

1. (vv. 44-47.) Can the law be life?

3. [1] And Moses came and spake all the words of this song in the ears of the people,—he, and Hoshea the son of Nun. And when Moses had made an end of speaking all these words to all Israel, he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your [n] children to take heed to do, all the words of this law. For it is not a vain thing for you, but it is your [o] life; and by this means ye shall prolong your days in the land whither ye go over Jordan, to possess it.

l cf. Luke 18. 7, 8.
m Is. 1. 24-27.
n ch. 4. 9. Ps. 78. 1-8.
o ch. 5. 16, 33. Gal. 3. 12.

It is the judgment of the living nations when the Lord appears, and which will bring in blessing for more than Israel. Hence the nations too can be bidden to rejoice with Israel His people; the trumpet of their recall is the first note of earth's jubilee: "for if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" (Rom. xi. 15.)

Thus Moses' song vindicates itself as that; and what man is having been seen, evil looked in the face and triumphed over, its theme is fully looked at, and its argument maintained. Greatness belongs to God alone: He is the rock; His way is perfect. Let us remember but our littleness; let us ascribe to Him the greatness; let us hold fast to His perfection: then we have indeed a song which, begun in the night of time, shall last forever.

3. The blessing of the tribes is Moses' last public act, emphasizing what is in the heart of God toward His people; and this is always blessing. But there are two significant things linked with and introductory to this.

(i.) First, Moses and Joshua unite in reciting the song in the ears of the congregation, the old leader and the new being thus in that harmony in which all God's agents, all dispensations, ultimately are. The people are then urged to set

2. (48-52.) The witness of the law in Moses' death.

[2] And Jehovah spake unto Moses that same day, saying, [p] Go up into this Mount Abarim, Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, which is opposite Jericho; and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession, and die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother died on Mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people: because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not among the children of Israel. But thou shalt see the land before [thee], and shalt not go into the land that I give unto the children of Israel.

p Num. 27. 12-15. ch. 34. 1.

3. (xxxiii.) The fullness of blessing, which law cannot give: (therefore millennial, under the new covenant.)

[3] (*a*) And this is the [q] blessing wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death. And he said,—

q *cf.* Gen. 49. 28. Ps. 90 title.

a (*vv.* 1-5.) God their Leader, in power.

[r] JEHOVAH came from Sinai,
And arose from Seir unto them;
He shone forth from Mount Paran,
And he came with [s] myriads of the sanctuary;
From his right hand [in] fire a mandate for them.
Yea, he [t] loveth the peoples,
All his holy ones are in thy hand,
And they sit down at thy feet—
[Each] receiveth of thy words.

r Judg. 5. 4. Hab. 3. 3.

s Ps. 68. 17. *cf.* Jude 14. Dan. 7. 9, 10.

t ch. 10. 15. Jer. 31. 3.

their hearts to it, as the condition of the accomplishment of obedience, and therein of lengthened days. In fact, for the blessing to come, the song must have done its work. Man must learn his own nothingness and the might of God; and the blessing waits for this. Hence the section here is fully in its place as introductory to what is before us.

(ii.) Secondly, we have the death of Moses again announced, with the sin for which he was set aside explicitly stated. It was not surely merely casual the connection of this with the song and blessing. Moses is in his own person an example of the condemning power of the law. He can only see from afar, what he is forbidden to possess; and if Moses, whom will it not exclude? For the true blessing, therefore, we must go beyond law,—beyond the old covenant to the new; beyond all past dispensations to that under which Israel is really to enter upon her inheritance.

(iii.) And, accordingly, when we come to the blessing of the tribes, we find that, after the first, we have really before us their millennial condition, into which the first and the second introduce us. Apart from Reuben, who represents for us the nation on their national footing, all the rest give us unmodified blessing, and which has but only partial connection with the features of their past history. This has perplexed the sober commentators, while leaving much to exercise the imagination of the "higher critics." The real fact relieves all perplexity, while it is in perfect consistency with the character and purpose of all this closing portion of Deuteronomy, and with the general doctrine of Scripture also. It reminds us of the omitted blessings of the twenty-seventh chapter, and the emphasis upon the curse both there and elsewhere; of the memorial of the law set up on Ebal; and of how far already the Song has carried us.

The fullness of the blessing could not be under law, however modified. Here it is full, although Reuben may be an exception to be explained, and Simeon be omitted. This would not infer any omission of Simeon at the end, as the individual tribes, both here and in Jacob's prophecy, stand often for aspects of the

Moses commanded us a law,
The heritage of the congregation of Jacob.
And he was [u] king in Jeshurun,
When the heads of the people were gathered together,
The tribes of Israel.
(*b*) Let [v] Reuben live, and not die,
And his men be [w] few.

[u] *cf.* Ps. 45. 1. Ps. 72. 1.
[v] *cf.* Gen. 49. 3, 4. Is. 6. 13.
[w] Jer. 23. 3. Ezek. 5. 3. Rom. 9. 27.

b (6-11.) Israel's salvation by Him.

whole nation (comp. Gen. xlix., *notes*,) and may even, as in Joseph, contemplate it in its great Head and King.

The blessing divides into six parts, the first speaking of God as their Leader and His power for them, already there in the wilderness; the second, of their salvation by Him; the third, of their portion as thus saved; the fourth, of the Gentiles blessed through them; the fifth, the consequences in the government of God, no more against them; and lastly, the triumph of divine goodness over all their sin. The introduction may seem a strange one to a picture of millennial days. It may remind us in this of what is stated in the opening of the book, that from Sinai to Kadesh—from which they might have entered the land—was only eleven days' journey. In fact, it was nearly forty years that passed before they actually did enter. Even so the long time elapsing before the blessing comes to them has its necessity only in their own condition. He whose power and love had brought them through the wilderness, was even then ready to give them the full promise, but that they were not prepared for this. And when the time shall come, it will be the completion of what their passage through it then implied. The wings under which they at last come to rest are those that canopied over them in their journeyings of old. All, therefore, is in place, as ever.

Let us look at it in detail.

(*a*) It is the blessing of Moses, the man of God, poured forth with his full heart in it, but where above all God reigns; and thus the eyes are cleared and strengthened and the soul assured, so that what would be prayer becomes prophecy. He sees Jehovah advancing from Sinai with them, His glory flooding the wilderness, Seir radiating it from the east, Mount Paran from the North and West, angelic hosts around Him: out of His right hand came in fire to them the mandate of a King.* Yea, it is He who, God of all, loveth the peoples,† in whose hand His angels are ministering spirits for them, sitting at His feet, receiving, each one, of His words.

The law given to Israel by this glorious God, had yet a human mediator and interpreter; and thus Moses became, as it were, king in Jeshurun, the tribes receiving it from him, formally gathered under their heads. This position of Moses has been often before us; it typified that of the far more wondrous "Mediator of the *new* covenant." God, seeking to be near, addresses man in form as man.

(*b*) The blessing of the tribes follows, beginning with Reuben, the rejected first-born, who, as in Jacob's prophecy, receives what seems but little that. He is to live and not die, and his men be numerable. No one doubts that this is the regular force of the words, though exceptions have been pleaded. The argument for the opposite thought, "Let *not* his men be few" is simply that it appears more like blessing. When we take the whole prophecy into account,

* There are difficulties in this passage, well known to the critics, arising most of all from the abrupt poetic style. What is given above is literal according to the Hebrew, and consistent enough as it would seem with the whole character of what is here. The argument that the unusual word for "law"—*dath*, the "mandate of a King,"—is a word too recent for Moses' time is worth little, as literature of Pentateuchal date is not abundant enough to prove it. Haevernick looks at it as derived from *din*, to "judge." And Koenig as an Aramaism which may "testify as well of a very early, as of a late composition." (See Schroeder, in Lange's Commentary.)

† The plural form naturally looks beyond Israel; and this is in keeping with the blessing itself which, with all prophecy beside, connects that of the earthly people with that of the world at large.

And this as to [x]Judah: and he said,—
Hear Judah's voice, Jehovah,
And [y]bring him to his people:
Let his hand be sufficient for him,
And be thou his help against his oppressors.
And of [z]Levi he said,—
Thy [a]Thummim and thy Urim be with thy godly one,
Whom thou provedst at [b]Massah,
And with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah.
Who said of his father and of his mother, I have not seen him,
And owned not his [c]brethren,
And knew not his own sons;
For they [d]observed thy word,
And kept thy covenant.
They shall [e]teach Jacob thy judgments,
And Israel thy law:
They shall put [f]incense before thee,
And whole [g]burnt-offering upon thine altar.

x *cf.* Gen. 49. 8-12.
y *cf.* Is. 11. 12-14 Jer. 3. 18. Ezek. 37. 15-22. Hos. 1. 11.
z *cf.* Gen. 49. 5-7.
a Ex. 28. 30. Num. 27. 21. Ezra 2. 63.
b Ex. 32. 26, ch. 6. 16.
c Ex. 32. 29, *cf.* Matt. 10. 37.
d Mal. 2. 4-6, *cf.* Rev. 3. 8.
e *cf.* Neh. 9. 4, etc.
f Ex. 30. 7, 8 *etc.* Num. 16. 6, 7, etc.
g Lev. 1. 9, etc. 2 Chron. 29. 20-35.

however, the grammatical meaning justifies itself. For we have seen already in Gen. xlix. how the first-born of nature stands for the nation on the ground of the first covenant, which was really "natural," fleshly, because legal; and here nothing but the blessing of God (which of course is grace) could have preserved the existence of the nation at all. Under the sentence of the law, and rejecting their Deliverer, they have yet been marvelously kept from extinction, while also the subjects of a constant persecution,—"a sword drawn out after them,"—which has fulfilled the latter part of the prediction no less clearly.

Then follows Judah, not Simeon or Levi, as with Jacob. Simeon is not found at all, while Levi has gained a new and higher place. Judah, on the other hand, has fallen from that which Jacob pictured for him, and yet with a possible limit—"till Shiloh come." Shiloh, we know, has come, and Judah's staff of magistracy has been taken away. They knew not the day of their visitation. Moses' blessing implies the disastrous consequences. "And he said, 'Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah, and *bring him unto his people;* let his hands be sufficient for him, and be Thou a help to him from his enemies.'"

Judah, then, has been a wanderer, and separated from his people; his hand has brought him no sufficient help, and his enemies have been busy with him. All this suits exactly with what has long been history, and predicts the deliverance awaiting them in the near future. No tribal name, it is evident, would fill this place but that of Judah, connected with and following, as it does, that of Reuben. Numerically, they are in order, Reuben giving first the continuance, Judah then the deliverance of the people. Levi comes third, as showing the way of this deliverance to be by priesthood and sacrifice, the only way before God at any time for the restoration of the sinner.

We see, then, why Levi has such a special place in the blessing of Moses. We must look through the tribe and its individual history, to see, as in other cases, the One through whom the blessing comes for Israel. Christ is plainly the One with whom God's Thummim and Urim are, the Holy One, proved at the place of proof, and striven with where the waters of life gushed out. A Moses and an Aaron might give way under the pressure, but not the One for whom they stood. On the other side, the faithfulness of Levi at the scene of the calf-worship was more than found in Him who could say, "The zeal of Thy house hath eaten Me up." Here Levi falls so much behind that it is proportionately difficult to read the antitype in the type. But there is a double application, Israel as a whole

Bless, Jehovah, his substance,
And let the [h] work of his hands be well-pleasing to thee.
Crush the loins of those that rise against him,
And of them that hate him, that they [i] rise not again.

[h] Ps. 20. 1-4. Ezek. 20. 40, 41.
[i] Ps. 18. 37, 38.

e (12-17.) Their portion and His presence.

(*c*) Of [j] Benjamin he said,—
The [k] beloved of Jehovah shall dwell in safety by him:
He shall cover him all day long,
And he shall dwell between his shoulders.

[j] *cf.* Gen. 49. 27.
[k] *cf.* Is. 62. 4, 5. Ezek. 48. 35.

And of [l] Joseph he said,—
Blessed of Jehovah be his [m] land,
With the precious things of the [n] heavens,
With the dew, and the deep that coucheth beneath,
And with the precious fruits of the sun,
And the precious things put forth by the moons,
And with the chief things of the ancient mountains,
And with the precious things of the eternal hills,
And with the precious things of the [o] earth and its fullness,
And let the favor of him who dwelt in the [p] bush
Come upon the head of Joseph,
Upon the top of the head of him that was [q] separated from his brethren.
His majesty is [as] the firstling of his ox,
His [r] horns the horns of the aurochs,
And with them shall he [s] push the peoples together
To the ends of the earth;
And they are the myriads of Ephraim,
And they are the thousands of Manasseh.

[l] *cf.* Gen. 49. 22-26.
[m] ch. 8. 7-10. Ps. 65. 9-13.
[n] Gen. 27. 28. Gen. 49. 25.
[o] Ps. 24. 1. ch. 28. 3-5. *cfr.* Eph. 1. 3.
[p] Ex. 3. 1-9.
[q] Gen. 49. 26.
[r] Ps. 89. 17, 24. Ps. 92. 10. Mic. 4. 13.
[s] Ps. 44. 5. *cfr.* 1 Kings 22. 11-28.

having to turn to God in this spirit to receive their final blessing, while for them none the less, as their day of atonement witnesses, the sacrifice upon the altar is the one means of acceptance. Here Christ is both priest and sacrifice, and through Him alone Thummim and Urim return to the delivered people: divine "perfections" being manifested, divine "light" results, and the voice of God is heard in new and more familiar intercourse with His people than for Israel the past age of law could realize at its best.

And now it is no temporary deliverance that is effected: "Bless, Lord, his substance, and accept the work of his hands: smite through the loins of them that rise against him, and of them that hate him, *that they rise not again.*" Here, therefore, a day begins for them which does not set.

(*c*) Benjamin follows Levi: "And of Benjamin he said, 'The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety near Him: He shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between His shoulders.'" The reference conceived by some to the tabernacle at Gibeon, or to the temple in Jerusalem in this last expression, is surely a mistake. It is not the Lord who dwells between Benjamin's shoulders, (which would be an inversion of all right thought,) but the reverse. It is Benjamin who dwells in security, covered and sustained by his covenant-God. We see that Levi's sacrifice has opened the sanctuary to him; and this is the way of divine grace,—His redeemed God brings near to Himself. This is true in measure of the earthly as of the heavenly people; and will be Israel's special glory in the days to come. From this centre it radiates over the land, and thus the blessing of Joseph follows and unites with that of Benjamin. Under the smile of God the whole of the fruitful land breaks out into a manifold and continuous harvest. It is the good will of Him who dwelt in the bush that crowns as with

d (18, 19.) The extension of the blessing to the Gentiles.

(*d*) And of [t]Zebulon he said,—
Rejoice, Zebulon, in thy [u]going out,
And Issachar, in thy tents;
They shall call the peoples to the [v]mountain;
There shall they offer the sacrifices of righteousness;
When they shall suck of the abundance of the [w]seas,
And the hidden treasures of the sand.

e (20–25.) Governmental results.

(*e*) And of [x]Gad he said,—
Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad:
He dwelleth as a lion,
And [y]teareth the arm with the top of the head.
And he provided the first part for himself,
Because there was the [z]ruler's portion preserved;
And he came [with] the heads of the people,
Jehovah's justice and judgment he hath executed
in Israel.
And of [a]Dan he said,—
Dan is a young lion;
He shall spring forth from Bashan.
And of [b]Naphtali he said,—
Naphtali, [c]satisfied with favor,

t *cf.* Gen. 49. 13.
u ch. 28. 6. Ps. 121. 8.
v Is. 2. 2–4. Zech. 14. 16.
w Is. 44. 22, 23. Is. 60. 3–5, 11–16.
x *cf.* Gen. 49. 19.
y *cf.* Gen. 49. 27. Ps. 149. 6–9.
z *cf.* Ps. 72. 8–11.
a *cf.* Gen. 49. 16, 17.
b *cf.* Gen. 49. 21.
c Ps. 22. 26. Ps. 36. 8. Jer. 50. 19, 20.

a diadem the head of the Nazarite, separated to God and thus from his brethren. It is very plain that Christ it is who brings in this way the blessing down, and how Jacob's word is confirmed in that of Moses here. For it the intruding Gentiles must be banished from the land, giving way to the myriads of "fruitful" Ephraim, and the thousands of Manasseh.

(*d*) Zebulon and Issachar are joined together. In Jacob's prophecy we see the one stretching out toward the nations round, and the other couching underneath their yoke. We are reminded of this here, though how different is all now. Zebulon may now rejoice in going out, Issachar in the tents of her pilgrimage; and still they stretch out toward the nations; but they are now ambassadors of a present King, and with a joyful invitation to come up and do Him homage. "They shall call the peoples to the mountain: there they shall offer the sacrifices of righteousness." The millennial application of this is as clear as can be: and Isaiah and Micah both develop it: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many peoples shall go and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. For He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Is. ii. 2, 3.) We see in what a connected and orderly manner the prophecy proceeds also. It is another kind of commerce from what in the past has attracted Israel: now the nations are attracted, and Israel sucks of the abundance of the seas (comp. Is. lx. 5), and of the treasures hid in the sand of the seashore (the ports of its coasts?)

(*e*) Lastly, come the children of the bondmaids, but there is no longer any trace of what is servile in their condition. Their blessing is harder to interpret than what has gone before, although not always so, and that which is most obscure seems to be so from its brevity. In general, it seems to express the moral results of the relationship in which God now stands to His people. First, in Gad power and the ruler's seat, from which is maintained the righteousness of the Lord, and His judgment in the midst of Israel. The meaning of Dan's blessing is not so clear, but we may see in it power that makes itself feared round about: "thine enemies shall cringe before thee" (*v.* 29). Naphtali shows us the full

And full of the blessing of Jehovah,
[d] Possess thou the west and the south.
And of [e]Asher he said,—
Blessed above sons be Asher;
Let him be acceptable to his brethren,
And let him dip his [f] foot in oil.
Thy shoes shall be iron and brass,
And [g] as thy days shall be thy rest.

f (26-29.) The triumph of divine goodness.

(*f*) There is [h] none like the God of Jeshurun,
Who rideth on the heavens to thy help,
And in his majesty, upon clouds.
A refuge is the God of old,
And [i] underneath, the everlasting arms.
And he shall [j] drive out the enemy from before thee,
And say, Destroy [them].
And Israel shall [k] dwell in safety alone,
The fountain of Jacob,
In the [l] land of corn and new wine,
His heavens also shall drop down dew.
[m] Happy art thou, O Israel!
[n] Who is like thee, people saved by Jehovah,
The [o] shield of thy help,
And the [p] sword of thine elevation?
Even thine [q] enemies shall cringe before thee,
And thou shalt tread upon their [r] high places.

(XXXIV.)

The death of Moses.

4. And Moses [s] went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho. And Jehovah showed him all the land,—[t] Gilead as far as Dan, and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah unto the [u] furthest sea, and the [v] south country, and the plain of the [w] valley of Jericho, the city of palm-trees, as far

d *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 18. Phil. 3. 12, 13.
e *cf.* Gen. 49. 20.
f Job 29. 6.
g 1 Kings 8. 59.
h 2 Sam. 7. 22. 1 Kings 8. 23.
i *ctr.* Ex. 17. 12. *cf.* Heb. 13. 5.
j Ps. 80. 8.
k 1 Kings 4. 25. Is. 11. 6-9. Jer. 23. 6. Mic. 4. 4.
l Gen. 27. 28. Hos. 2. 22. Joel 2. 19.
m 1 Kings 10. 8. Ps. 144. 12-15.
n ch. 4. 7. 2 Sam. 7. 23.
o Gen. 15. 1. Ps. 84. 11.
p Ju. 7. 20. Ps. 45. 3-5.
q Ps. 18. 43, 44.
r Gen. 22. 17.
s Num. 20. 22-29. Num. 23. 14.
t Num. 32. 29. Ps. 108. 8.
1 Kl. 17. 1.
u Nu. 34. 6.
v Nu. 34. 3.
w Ju. 1. 16. Ju. 3. 13.

favor of God enlarging the old limits: they possess as never before the sea—the coast of the Philistines and Phœnicians—and the south—including Edom's territory as far as the Red Sea. Obadiah witnesses to both of these (*vv.* 19–21). Lastly, Asher completes the blessing of Israel by declaring its prëeminence over that of all else, yet not envied, but accepted by their brethren—the nations of the earth,—their feet dipped in the flowing oil which speaks the fatness of the bounteous land. The last two points are differently understood. Many for "shoes" read "bolts," which Keil interprets as "castles;" and the moderns against the ancients read "rest" instead of "strength." In these two there would be doubly expressed their abiding security: and though we may not be willing to give up what we are so familiar with, that "as thy days thy strength shall be," it is certainly not unsuited as the close of this wonderful blessing to have "as thy days shall be thy *rest*."

(*f*) The last words celebrate the triumph of divine goodness for them, before which all enemies are helpless and defeated. This is a thing of course: but blessed are the people who are the subjects of such a salvation! And who is like the God of Jeshurun? He rides upon the heavens to thy help. Thy refuge is the eternal God; and underneath are everlasting arms!

4. The last chapter of Deuteronomy is necessarily an appendix by another hand. It is the account of Moses' death on the mount, and his burial by God,

as Zoar. And Jehovah said unto him, This is the land that I [x]sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it: I have caused thee to [y]see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. And Moses the [z]servant of Jehovah died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of Jehovah. And [a]he buried him in the valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-peor; and [b]no man knoweth of his sepulcre unto this day. And Moses was a [c]hundred and twenty years old when he died; his [d]eye was not dim, nor his natural vigor abated. And the children of Israel [e]wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days; so the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended.

And [f]Joshua the son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands upon him. And the children of Israel [g]hearkened unto him, and did as Jehovah commanded Moses.

And there hath [h]arisen since in Israel no prophet like Moses, whom Jehovah knew face to face, according to all the signs and wonders that Jehovah sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land, and according to all that mighty hand, and according to all that great fear that Moses caused in the sight of all Israel.

x Gen. 15. 18-21.
y ch. 3. 23.
z Ps. 90 title. Heb. 3. 5, 6.
a *cf.* Jude 9.
b *ctr.* Acts 2. 29.
c *cf.* Josh. 14. 11.
d *ctr.* 1 Ki. 1. 1. Gen. 27. 1. 1 Ki. 11. 4. 1 Sam. 4. 18.
e Num. 20. 29.
f Num. 27. 18, 23. 2 Kings 2. 9, 10, 15.
g Josh. 3. 7. Josh. 4. 14.
h Num. 12. 6-8. *cf.* Heb. 3. 5, 6. Matt. 17. 1-8.

after being shown the land into which he cannot enter. Joshua succeeds him as Israel's leader; but as a prophet in the nearness to God to which he was called, he had no successor until He came who in His own Person stood alone, in life, in death, filling all the mediatorial types, and transcending them by the full measure of His infinite glory, in whose light indeed alone they shine.

THE BIBLE TRUTH PRESS, NEW YORK.

DATE DUE

JUN 15 1998

GAYLORD

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

BS491 .G761 v.1
The numerical Bible. : being a revised
Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library
1 1012 00057 5656

THE

NUMERICAL BIBLE

BEING

A REVISED TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES
WITH EXPOSITORY NOTES:

Arranged, Divided, and Briefly Characterized

ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THEIR

Numerical Structure

THE COVENANT HISTORY—Joshua to (2) Samuel

THIRD EDITION

NEW YORK
LOIZEAUX BROTHERS, BIBLE TRUTH DEPOT
1 East 13th Street

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PRINTED AT

THE BIBLE TRUTH PRESS, 1 & 3 EAST 13TH STREET,

NEW YORK

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THE OLD TESTAMENT.

1. THE BOOKS OF THE LAW :—
   1. Genesis.
   2. Exodus.
   3. Leviticus.
   4. Numbers.
   5. Deuteronomy.

2. THE COVENANT-HISTORY :—
   1. Joshua.
   2. Judges.
      Ruth.
   3. Kings :—
      First Book (*Samuel*).
      Second Book (*Kings*).
   4. Captivity-Books :—
      Ezra.
      Nehemiah.
      Esther.
   5. Chronicles.

3. THE PROPHETS :—
   1. Isaiah.
   2. Jeremiah.
      Lamentations.
   3. Ezekiel.
   4. Daniel.
   5. The Book of Minor Prophets :—
      1. *Hosea.* *Amos.* *Micah.*
      2. *Joel.* *Obadiah.* *Jonah.*
      3. *Nahum.* *Habakkuk.* *Zephaniah.*
      4. *Haggai.* *Zechariah.* *Malachi.*

4. THE PSALM-BOOKS :—
   1. The Psalms.
   2. Job.
   3. Solomon's Song.
   4. Ecclesiastes.
   5. Proverbs.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

1. THE GOSPELS :—
   1. Matthew. Mark. Luke.
   2. John.

2. THE ACTS.

3. THE PAULINE EPISTLES :—
   1. Romans.
      Galatians.
      Ephesians.
      Colossians.
      Philemon.
      Philippians.
   2. Thessalonians.
      First Epistle.
      Second Epistle.
      Corinthians.
      First Epistle.
      Second Epistle.
      Hebrews.
      Timothy.
      First Epistle.
      Second Epistle.
      Titus.

4. THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES :—
   1. Peter.
      First Epistle.
      Second Epistle.
   2. James.
   3. John.
      First Epistle.
      Second Epistle.
      Third Epistle.
   4. Jude.

5. REVELATION.

THE SYMBOLISM OF THE NUMERALS.

TO avoid the necessity of reference to the first volume, the meanings of the numerals there more fully given are appended here, with some slight rectification and enlargement also, such as naturally grow out of longer use and investigation. The natural meaning always underlies the spiritual; and this harmony is the justification of the latter, showing the symbolism to be real.

There are but 7 to be considered really, 7 being the well known number of perfection, and 8 symbolizing what is new in contrast with the old, simply showing that the series does end with the former. Larger numbers are but, in their signification, compounds of the smaller ones: as ten = 5 × 2; twelve = 4 × 3; forty = 4 × 5 × 2. Those which cannot be multiplied need more inquiry to determine, as scripture methods must be learned from Scripture.

One.

One always signifies unity, or primacy,—meanings strictly natural, but which may be applied variously, as is evident.

It excludes another; thus may speak of *soleness, singleness*, even of a single *state, barrenness.*

So, of *sufficiency*, competency without help of other, *power, omnipotence.*

Or, of *independency*, standing alone, whether competent or not: in a creature, *rebellion.*

Or, *unchangeableness, perpetuity, eternity*, as implied by these together: these are, in fact, but oneness in successive time.

It excludes *difference:* if altogether, this is *identity; truth* is identity of the affirmation with the fact.

If *internal* difference, then we have *harmony of parts or attributes, consistency, congruity, righteousness*, which is moral congruity with position; *integrity*, which is "wholeness, oneness."

If external difference, and in various aspects, *agreement, concord, peace*, the being at one.

All these are but, in different ways, the same idea fundamentally, and no doubt the number of its expressions might be increased; but "one" may stand also for its ordinal, *first*, primacy:—

Thus in time, the *beginning*, which may be, as with God, *causative*, and so speak of "source, cause, origin, paternity," easily passing into the thought of *supremacy, sovereignty, headship;* while in connection with *mind* it implies "plan, counsel, election, will."

Two.

Two is fundamentally the opposite of one: there *is* now another. Hence it speaks of *difference;* which in deepening grades becomes "con-

trast, opposition, conflict, enmity." It is the first number which *divides:* sin, evil, Satan's work, come naturally in under these heads.

This is the bad sense; in the good, however, it is equally significant. This our word "seconding" conveys in its main features. Analyzed, this gives as the first thought that of *help*, and along with this that of *taking an inferior place:* thus "salvation, ministry, service, humiliation," alike would come under it. Again, as "the testimony of *two* men is true,"—the one confirming the other,—so the number symbolizes "witness, the word." But this is connected also with the thought of *two*, side by side simply; and here we have "relation, fellowship," and, not far off from these, "addition, increase, growth." As a product of these thoughts (relation, addition, and the inferior place,) we get the further thoughts of "dependence, faith."

"It will be observed how these various meanings unite in Christ, the second Person of the Godhead, the second Man, and uniting these two natures, the divine and the human, in His own person,—the Saviour humbling Himself to death to serve us"; the true Witness also, and the "Leader and Finisher of faith."

Again, "death is *division, separation*, the last enemy; yet the death of the cross, in which the conflict between good and evil rose to its height, is once again salvation. Nowhere is there so great a contrast, such apparent contradiction, as in the Cross."

"Woman illustrates, too, this number, full of contrasts as she is: dependent on man, but his help-meet; the type of increase, yet through whom came sin, death, and, yet again, through her victorious 'Seed,' salvation."

Finally, the law, the legal covenant, comes under this number.

Three.

Three is the symbol of cubic measure, solid measure, solidity: it stands for what is solid, real, substantial,—for fullness, actuality. Three is the number of Persons in the Godhead, and with this alone God is fully manifested. The Holy Ghost, the third Person, realizes in the creature the counsels of God. Sanctification is His special work.

The sanctuary, God's dwelling-place, is a cube; the final city, which the glory of God lightens, is a cube: "the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal." In the sanctuary God manifests Himself; in resurrection, too, He is manifested: therefore resurrection is on the third day. "Renewal, recovery, remembrance," connect with this. *Glory* is the manifestation of God, and *heaven* His sanctuary; worship and praise glorify Him.

Possession, dwelling-place, seem to come under this number; and *fruit* manifests the tree.

Four.

Four is the first number which allows simple division; as *two* is the number which divides it. It is the symbol of *weakness*, therefore; and we are now outside the numbers which speak of God: we have here, then, the *creature* in contrast with the Creator. In Scripture, 4 divides either as $3 + 1$, the numbers of manifestation and creative sovereignty,

God being seen in the work of His hand; or it divides as 2×2, true division, and significant of strife and evil.

Four is also the number of the four corners of the earth, of *earthly* completeness and universality, which has still on it the stamp of weakness. It is the number of the four winds of heaven, the various and opposing influences of which the earth is the scene. Thus we have the thoughts of *testing* and *experience*, which with man connect themselves so constantly with *failure*. The earth-walk comes thus naturally under this number.

Five.

"In the cleansing of the leper and the consecration of the priest alike, the blood is put upon three parts of man which together manifest what he is,—the tip of the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, the great toe of the right foot. By the ear he is to receive the word of God; with the hand, to do the enjoined work; with the foot, to walk in His blessed ways. This is evidently man in his whole *responsibility*.

"Each of these parts is stamped with the number 5.

"The ear is the avenue to the higher part, and there are just *five* such senses, by which man is connected with the scene around,—the avenues of perception by which alone he can be appealed to.

"The hand of man is that by which he moulds and fashions the natural world around him. It is the expression of active power,—the four fingers, with the opposing thumb, the consecrated because the governing part. These on the two hands give *ten*, the number of the commandments in the two tables of the law, the measure of natural responsibility.

"The foot, the expression of personal conduct (the walk), gives a similar division, much less marked however; and the *two* feet a similar ten. Five stands thus as the number of man, exercised and responsible under the government of God."

Notice how carefully man's power is characterized as creature, dependent power. His hand is the instrument of it as the vicegerent of God in the world; no beast has in any proper sense a hand. Yet the power is in no way like divine power,—simple and without effort, but a co-operation of forces, in which (as he recognizes) "union is strength;" the *four* fingers, every way significant of weakness, helped by the single, strong opposing thumb; the two hands also assisting one another.

Agreeing with this, Scripture commonly shows us 5 as $4 + 1$, that is, man the creature in connection with the Almighty God his Ruler yet his Helper. Here the divine ways yet give him constant and needed exercise, and 5 will be found often associated with this thought of *exercise under responsibility*, but also with the kindred one, that man's way (4) under the control of God (1) according to its character leads to its ordained end. "Recompense, capacity, responsibility" are the most common thoughts connected with the number 5.

But "man in relation with God" spells in a higher sense "Emmanuel," and points once more to Christ.

Ten.

Ten is only the double *five*: I can see no real difference.

Six.

Six is the second number capable of true division. Divided, its factors are 2 and 3, which easily yield the thought of the *manifestation* (*or fullness*) *of evil*, or of the enemy's work. But evil is weakness, as again this divisibility teaches; and as such it must yield to God. Read in a good sense, the number of conflict (2) brings forth from it sanctification and the glory of God (3).

It is the number of man's *work-day week*, the appointed time of his labor, the type of his life-labor, his few and evil days, limited because of sin.

In its full meaning it speaks of sin in full development, limited and controlled by God, who glorifies Himself in the issue of it. The thoughts of *discipline*, and of *mastery*,—overcoming—will be found under this number.

Seven and Twelve.

Seven is well known as the number of perfection, and so of rest. But it may be applied to evil, and simply show "completeness" of any kind.

Twelve is in Scripture as commonly divided into 4×3 as *seven* is into $4 + 3$. The factors are the same; but whereas in the one case they are added, in the other they are multiplied. Seven and twelve should be in some sense, therefore, allied in meaning. It is only in the *relation* of its factors to one another that 12 differs from 7: "the number of the world and that of divine manifestation characterize it; but these are not (as in 7) side by side merely. It is God manifesting Himself in relation to the world of His creation, as 7 is, but now in active energy laying hold of and transforming it. Thus 12 is the number of manifest sovereignty, as it was exercised in Israel, for instance, by the Lord in the midst of them, or as it will be exercised in the world to come.

Turn now to the complete rest of the people of God,—to the 'new Jerusalem' which has the glory of God, whose light God is, and the Lamb the lamp of it; to which the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple. Here perfection and rest are found, if anywhere; the thought connected, as abundantly plain, with 7; yet what do we find? Look at the foundations of the city: they are *twelve* in number. Look at the gates: there are *twelve* gates. Measure the city: its length, breadth, and height, are equal,—*twelve* thousand furlongs each. Measure the height of the wall, 144 cubits—12×12. Behold the tree of life planted by the river that issues from the throne of God: it bears *twelve* manner of fruits, and yields its fruit every month—12 times a year. Everywhere this number 12 meets us where we might expect to find the 7. It has the factors of 7; it is, as it were, the expansion of 7; and the spiritual idea which shines through it, that God is everywhere the manifest Ruler, what does it speak of to our hearts but complete subjection to Him, which is indeed the perfection of the creature, and its rest?"*

* "Spiritual Law in the Natural World," pp. 74, 75. The application of numbers to the interpretation of nature I have sought to give in the book quoted here.

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

Second Pentateuch of the Old Testament:

The Covenant-History.

THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE BOOKS AS HERE GIVEN.

HAVING concluded, through the mercy of God, the five books of Moses, or of the Law, ordinarily known as "the fivefold book," or Pentateuch, we now enter upon what is in fact a second Pentateuch, answering in its main divisions to the first, not only in the number of books, but in their character also.

The historical books of the Old Testament, outside of the books of Moses, form a most natural division of it, and their unity in this way one would think impossible to be questioned did we not know that in fact among the Jews generally another order obtains. This we must consider presently. The order in our Bibles is that of the Septuagint, and we assume it for the present as the true one. According to this, there are nine historical books which follow Deuteronomy; but these fall easily into five divisions, Ruth being but a supplement to Judges, Samuel and Kings giving together the history of the monarchy, with the events which gave it birth, while the three books of the captivity, or the times of subjection to Gentile rule, similarly come together. Thus we have,—

1. Joshua.
2. Judges, with Ruth.
3. The Books of the Kings (Samuel and Kings).
4. The Books of the Captivity (Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther).
5. Chronicles.

But according to the rule (which we need not now undertake to establish) of numerical structure, it is not a mere division into five parts

that can satisfy us. It must be shown that these fill severally the place assigned to each by the significance of the numbers, the order being the necessary historical one, except that Chronicles comes last, as in fact a *resumé* of the history, with a very distinct moral attaching,—one may almost say, a judicial summing up.

Now this last is Deuteronomic in character, and at once confirms the place of Chronicles as the fifth and final division of a Pentateuchal series. The captivity books preceding it perhaps as plainly fill the fourth place; Israel being now in what Ezekiel calls "the wilderness of the peoples" (Ezek. xx. 35), under the power of the world, which God had put into the hands of the Gentiles. We have still three other divisions to account for. Of these, *Joshua* would stand as the Genesis; and we shall find in it, little as at first it would appear so, much of the fullness of Genesis,—of course, under the vail of type, which is common to all the Old-Testament histories.

The first book of Scripture is, as such, the introduction to the whole: Joshua is but the introduction to the history of Israel in possession of the land (the book of Esther being the only and brief exception for a special purpose). But to this history Joshua is as really the introduction as Genesis to the whole, and this is plain. It answers well, moreover, to its numerical place, as showing divine power acting according to promise for the people, who are at present, on the whole, obedient. *Judges* is farther from the breadth of Exodus than Joshua from that of Genesis: all through, we are on narrower ground. It is the little book of *Ruth*, which, in perfect keeping with the character of the legal covenant, brings in as a supplement, and under a vail, *in connection with the genealogy of David*, and thus of David's Son and antitype, the story of redemption by a Kinsman-Redeemer. Deliverances there are all through the book of Judges; but the picture is one rather of Canaanite alliances,—of breach, therefore, with God, Israel's unity broken up,—nay, man sundered from man. Of this double breach, the two supplements are the illustration: chaps. xvii., xviii. giving the establishment of idolatry early in the tribe of Dan; the three following ones, the social disorder, in the crime at Gibeah and the war with Benjamin. Nothing certainly could more truly fill its numerical place than does Judges. There remain only the books of the *Kings*, which include, as a first book, *Samuel*. This is the third section here; and as compared with Judges, it is, as to the first part, a real resurrection-history, though ending inevitably in the ruin and dispersion of the people. In inseparable connection with the Judah-dynasty of David's house, we have the history of the sanctuary—the dwelling-place and throne of God, which the king in Israel, only as His vice-gerent, filled (1 Chron. xxix. 23). This gives its significance to these books, Samuel giving the tabernacle-period, Kings the temple, the subversion of which by Nebuchadnezzar brings the section to a close.

Their Place in the Hebrew Canon.

Thus, while as history these books fill their place, and are (except, for a plain reason, Chronicles,) in necessary chronological order, the five divisions into which they fall are confirmed and explained by the numerical structure, which, in common with all Scripture, they thus exhibit. But we cannot pass on until we have fairly looked at and answered as we may the objection that will be raised on the ground of the different arrangement of the Hebrew canon. Is this authoritative? and if not, is there any that is so?

A reader of our English Bible finds one invariable arrangement of the books throughout, and is naturally apt to think this as much inspired as are the books themselves; but this is only the result of such a uniformity of copies as has been brought about by printing. The order in our books is, in general, as to the Old Testament, the order of the Septuagint, the Greek translation, which was in general use in our Lord's time among those that spoke Greek. But this is very naturally spoiled, for many, by the introduction of apocryphal books among the canonical ones. The Hebrew has also, as being such, quite intelligibly, the preference in the minds of most. In the Hebrew arrangement, there is a classification of books under three heads,—"the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings." Here, the Prophets come next to the Law,—*i. e.*, the five books of Moses; but the four historical books—Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings,—these, and no more than these,—are counted among these as "*former* prophets," clearly upon the ground of their being presumed to be written by such. The rest of these are referred to the *Kethubim*, or "Writings," as well as Daniel and Lamentations from the Prophets; and the "Writings" fall thus into three divisions: first, the Psalms, Proverbs, Job; secondly, the Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther; thirdly, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles.

The three great classes here are thought to be recognized by our Lord Himself in Luke xxiv. 44, where He says to His disciples that "all things must needs be fulfilled which are written in the Law of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms concerning Me." Here, there are three divisions; and the Prophets come, as in the Hebrew, before the Psalms. This much is clear; but it is not certain, from this, that He meant to put the historical books among the prophets, nor would they come so naturally to be mentioned where He is speaking of fulfillment of prophecy. And again, the mention of the "Psalms" still less sanctions the whole division of *Kethubim*, strangely composite as it is. The numerical arrangement recognizes the divisions in general, and the order, as the Lord appears to do, while it restores the two prophetic books to what surely seems their natural place, and the five historical books also to their natural connections.

How clear the place of Daniel is may be seen by considering that his

book stands *fourth* of the greater prophets, and that he is correspondingly the prophet of the world-empires,—that is, of Israel in subjection to Gentile rule, as Ezra and Nehemiah are the historians of the same period. Among the minor prophets, which are twelve in number, and like most Scripture twelves, a 4×3, the *fourth* triad—Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi are, again, representatives of the "times of the Gentiles."

Thus the Hebrew divisions and order, with the single exception of the Prophets preceding what we may fittingly call "the experience books," seem to transgress the natural; nor can any commentators justify them as a whole. Delitzsch, as good an authority on such matters as can be found perhaps, writes thus in his commentary upon Job:—

"As the work of the Chokma [the didactic class], the book of Job stands, with the three other works belonging to this class of the Israelitish literature, among the Hagiographa, which are called in Hebrew simply the *Kethubim*. Thus, by the side of the Law and the Prophets, the third division of the canon is styled, in which are included all those writings belonging neither to the province of prophetic history nor prophetic declaration. Among the Hagiographa are writings even of a prophetic character, as Psalms and Daniel, but their writers are not properly *prophets*. [?] At present, Lamentations stands among them, but this is not its original place; as also Ruth appears to have stood originally between Judges and Samuel. *Both Lamentations and Ruth are placed among Hagiographa, that there the so-called* MEGILLOTH, *or scrolls, may stand together;* the Song of Songs, the feast-book of the eighth passover-day; Ruth, that of the second Shabuoth-day; Lamentations, that of the ninth of Ab; Ecclesiastes, that of the eighth tabernacle-day; Esther, that of Purim . . . . The position which [the book of Job] occupies is, moreover, a *very shifting one*. In the Alexandrine canon, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Tobit, Judith, Esther, follow the four books of the Kings. The historical books, therefore, stand, from the earliest to the latest, side by side; then begins, with Job, Psalms, Proverbs, a new row, opened with these three, in stricter sense, poetical books. Then Melito of Sardis, in the second century, places Chronicles with the books of Kings, but arranges immediately after them the non-historical Hagiographa in the following order: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, Job. Here the Solomonic writings are joined to the Davidic psalter, and the anonymous book of Job stands last. In our editions of the Bible, the Hagiographa division begins with Psalms, Proverbs, Job, (the succession peculiar to MSS. of the German class); in the Talmud, with Ruth, Psalms, Job, Proverbs; in the Masora, and in MSS. of the Spanish class, with Chronicles, Psalms, Job, Proverbs. All these modes of arrangement are well considered."

They are at least very instructive, as they show us how little divine authority was even *supposed* to be in any one of them. They show us, moreover, how the original arrangement had been broken through, as in the case of the five Megilloth so called, for mere liturgic purposes. Thus we are surely free to accept an arrangement which, while it is substantially that of the Septuagint and of our present Bibles, seems to be as natural as it is conformable to the character and requirements of numerical structure.

It is indeed said of the five books which have been thus displaced

from the "prophetic" histories that they "are at once distinguished from the above-mentioned prophetic-historic writings by this characteristic, that they treat only of single parts of the history of the covenant-people from individual points of view." (*Keil.*) But this writer sees only in the book of Ruth "a charming historical picture from the life of the ancestors of King David." In his introduction to the book itself, he seems, indeed, on the point of discovering the higher significance; he says, "*But there is also a Messianic trait* in the fact that Ruth, a heathen woman, of a nation so hostile to the Israelites as that of Moab was, should have been thought worthy to be made the tribe-mother of the great and pious King David, on account of her faithful love to the people of Israel, and her entire confidence in Jehovah, the God of Israel." And he even notices the appearance of her name with those of Tamar and Rahab in the genealogy of the Lord in Matthew. Yet, from regarding the book as mere literal history, he does not see the really prophetic character which the typical, and therefore most spiritual, side of the book presents, and so gives it its place as little more than anecdotal among the *Kethubim*.

We hope to look more fully at the place and connection of the other books thus degraded, with Ruth, from their true rank as prophetic history. But we may clearly see how in this way their whole character is lowered, and orthodox commentators (such as Keil is) have undesignedly favored low views of inspiration by their mere and excessive literality. Let it be reiterated and emphasized here, that while Scripture history is, on the one hand, always true history, it is, on the other, *never simply that.* It is ALWAYS prophetic—having to do with Christ, and the divine purposes of which He is the centre; and the typical view—or what Paul calls (Gal. iv. 24) the "allegorizing" of the history—is pre-eminently that which lifts it up to its true plane, and so gives it its full value. While the complete and connected scheme which these histories, so interpreted, develop gives the most absolute conviction that the allegoric meaning is not something foisted upon them by human imagination, but innate and essential and divine. Those who do not receive it dishonor, and are compelled to dishonor, Scripture, and thus give the so-called "higher criticism" its fullest justification.

HIGHER CRITICISM AND THE HEXATEUCH.

WE have now reached a place from which it will be most convenient to review the pretensions of what assumes to be the "higher" criticism; lofty enough indeed in these, and manifesting abundantly the spirit of the latter days,—days which Scripture characterizes with sufficient plainness. To its advocates, that it should manifest this will not even be a reproach; for nothing is more the boast of these latter times than the scientific spirit, and here is but in their eyes the scientific spirit

in religion: where should it be more needful? The spirit of science being to-day evolutionist, the higher criticism will be found to be little else than Darwinism (morals and all) in another sphere,—a sphere which, so much the more important as it is, craves the more for it an earnest examination.

It is the well-known characteristic of Darwinism, that it substitutes a theory of the *how* for the *why*, with the effect of removing the appearance of design from nature. What appears like design may be but a consequence of the mode or conditions of production,—a *consequence*, not a *cause;* and the universe be the result of the operation of natural laws, apart from all supernatural superintendence or interference. As Huxley says, "For the notion that every organism has been created as it is, and launched straight at a purpose, Mr. Darwin substitutes the conception of something which may be fairly termed a method of trial and error. Organisms vary incessantly; of these variations, the few meet with surrounding conditions which suit them, and thrive; the many are unsuited and become extinguished." It is on account of this elimination of design out of the world that skeptics and materialists range themselves so unanimously under the leadership of Darwin; and this they proclaim a distinguished merit of his scheme. Others have, of course, taken it up who can by no means be classed with these, and thus it has received various modifications. But the original vice of the thing manifests itself through all, as far as possible from the spirit of Scripture, the attempt, which we have even been told is "the *duty* of the man of science, to *push back* the Great First Cause in time as far as possible." The beauty and blessedness of Scripture consists in its persistent effort to bring God *nigh*.

It is certainly a bold and subtle plan of the enemy to import in this sense the scientific spirit into Scripture itself, to fix our minds upon theories of its production which are proclaimed incapable of damage to our faith because merely that, until we find that unawares we have indeed "pushed back" God far into the distance. The "higher" criticism, as distinct from that of textual integrity, concerns itself, it is said, only with questions of "authorship, etc." *—where the "etc." will be found much the most important part—of the Bible books. "Its conclusions," says Prof. Driver, "affect not the *fact* of revelation, but only its *form*. They help to determine the stages through which it passed, the different phases which it assumed, and the process by which the record of it was built up. They do not touch either the authority or the inspiration of the scriptures of the Old Testament. They imply no change in respect to the divine attributes revealed in the Old Testament, no change in the lessons of human duty to be derived from it, no change as to the general position (apart from the interpretation of

*Sanday: "The Oracles of God," p. 30.

particular passages) that the Old Testament points forward prophetically to Christ.*"

Harmless as it thus looks, it is an admitted fact that the patchwork theory which the higher criticism accepts was born of infidelity, cradled in rationalism, and is to this day claimed rightly by professors of it such as Kuenen, for whom "the Israelitish religion is one of the principal religions,—nothing less, but also nothing more:" a "manifestation of the religious spirit of mankind." The babe has been stolen, taught a somewhat different accent, smuggled in among Christians, and passed off as Christian; but though made to appear lamblike, its voice is still the dragon's. Even as interpreted by Dr. Driver, it can contradict Christ to the face, as where, in His application of the hundred and tenth psalm to Himself He avers that "David in spirit calls Him Lord," while the higher criticism says, "This psalm, though it may be ancient, *can hardly* have been composed by David."† But, indeed, everywhere it contradicts Christ, who says, and just of these Old-Testament books, "Scripture cannot be broken" (Jno. x. 35), while these men are continually, to their own satisfaction, proving that it can, and their system could not be maintained apart from this.

The very criteria by which they distinguish the different documents that make up, for instance, the book of Genesis, involve the idea of contradictory statements, too inconsistent to be from one hand. Thus the order of creation in the second narrative (chap. ii. 4–6, *seq.*) is said to be "evidently opposed to the order indicated in chap. i."‡ True, the editor who, in their conception of the matter, put them together, did not see it, and thus has left (happily for them) the seams of his patchwork visible, when once the critical eye rests upon it. So the narrative of the deluge, where in one document "of every clean beast *seven* are to be taken into the ark, while in vi. 19 (*cf.* vii. 15) *two* of every sort, without distinction, are prescribed."§ Again: "The section xxvii. 46–xxviii. 9 differs appreciably in style from xxvii. 1–45, and at the same time exhibits Rebekah as influenced by a different motive in suggesting Jacob's departure from Canaan,—not to escape his brother's anger, but to procure a wife agreeable to his parents' wishes. Further, we find two explanations of the origin of the name '*Bethel*;' two of '*Israel*:' xxxii. 3, xxxiii. 16, Esau is described as already resident in Edom, while xxxvi. 6, *seq.*, his migration thither is attributed to causes which could only have come into operation after Jacob's return to Canaan."‖

"Scripture cannot be broken"?—why, here it *is* broken! All these are plainly given as statements contradictory of one another; for that is the only reason why one writer should not be supposed to have written them all. It is easier to suppose an editor who put them together not perceiving the contradiction between them, although

*Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament." Preface, p. xi.
†Introduction, p. 362, *n.* ‡p. 7. §p. 7. ‖p. 8.

strangely too, as none of these statements lie very far apart. But Scripture *can*, then, be broken: and "if we are forced to answer" how the Lord could make such mistakes as these, Dr. Sanday tells us piously "that the explanation must lie in the fact that He of whom we are speaking is not only God, but Man. The error of statement would belong in some way to the humanity and not to the divinity"!*

Can, then, He who for Christians is the Great Teacher, and who claims to be in some sense the only one (Matt. xxiii. 8) lead us astray? To prove the possibility, Dr. Sanday stamps the expression He uses, "He maketh the sun to rise" as "*imperfect science*" (!) and to those who, timidly enough, "maintain that questions relating to the authorship of the Old Testament touch more nearly the subject-matter of Revelation," he puts the question, "Are these distinctions valid? Are they valid enough to be insisted upon so strongly as they must be if the arguments based upon them are to hold good?"

He answers for himself: "I greatly doubt it;" and by and by undertakes to read us a lecture on humility: "In regard to these questions, I think we shall do better to ponder the words of the psalm, —'Lord, I am not high-minded; I have no proud looks. I do not exercise myself on great matters which are too high for me.'" (!!)

So Scripture is broken, and we must not be so haughty as to defend it. Dr. Sanday, with all the scientists of the day, have expunged the word "sunrise" from their dictionary, and of course never use it. Scripture, even in its most positive assertions may mislead us; only let us talk piously: "I should be loth to believe"—notice, my reader, it is Dr. Sanday who would be "*loth to believe* that our Lord *accommodated* His language to current notions, knowing them to be false. I prefer to think, as it has been happily worded, that He '*condescended* not to know.'"

Piously, however, or impiously, it is the same thing in result: Scripture has passed out of our hands. Even the author we have quoted confesses, as to these changes in men's thoughts about it, that "it must be admitted frankly that they *involve a loss*. . . . In old days, it was very much as with the Jews in the time of our Lord. When any question arose of doctrine or practice, all that was needed was to turn the pages of Scripture until one came to a place which bore upon the point at issue. This was at once applied just as it stood, without hesitation and without misgiving."† Dr. Sanday owns that this, according to their view, is gone, although he is not so candid as he seems, when he tells us *how far* it is gone. It is *not* merely that "the inquirer feels bound, not only to take the passage along with its context," which was always true, nor even "also to ask, Who was the author? when did he write? and with what stage in the history of revelation is the particular utterance connected?"—questions, some of them,

*Oracles, p. 10. †Oracles, p. 76.

which have no likelihood of being ever answered,—the much deeper question is now, Is the utterance true? and instead of our becoming as "babes" to have divine things revealed to us, we must be learned men, and that to no ordinary extent, in order to pass judgment upon the mingled truth and error presented in Scripture! By and by, Dr. Sanday hopes, with the help of specialists who are devoting themselves to this, we shall have an annotated—really, a purged—Bible, which will make things easier for simple souls. Practically, thus, another great principle that our Lord announces is taken from us. Scripture becomes like a morass—with firm footing, indeed, somewhere, if I could only find it; but, alas! without help, I cannot even know what is firm from what is treacherous! We are not to be delivered from the necessity of faith: "I, like them,"—the intelligent among his audience—"must take a great deal upon trust,"* says Dr. Sanday; but it is trust in the *competency of the critics!* The "open Bible" of which we have boasted is to be taken from us, and that more completely than by Romanism itself.

As to the historical books of the Old Testament, with which we are now concerned, they are, according to this view, "in many parts," (*how* many, we have no means of knowing, it would seem,) "*traditions*, in which the original representation has been insensibly modified, and sometimes (especially in the later books,) *colored* by the associations of the age in which the author recording it lived." No wonder, then, "(2) that some freedom was used by ancient historians in placing speeches or discourses in the mouths of historical characters. In some cases, no doubt, such speeches agreed substantially with what was actually said; but often they merely develop at length, in the style and manner of the narrator, what was handed down only as a compendious report, or what was deemed to be consonant with the temper and aim of a given character on a particular occasion. No satisfactory conclusions with respect to the Old Testament will be arrived at without due account being taken of these two principles"!†

"Scripture cannot be broken"!—how far have we got away from this! Perhaps, however, the Lord never said that. Perhaps it is some chronicler of a tradition, piecing and patching some musty manuscripts, who put that sentence into His mouth? They were very little careful about such things, those old historians. Man had not developed, at that age of the world, into the moral being that he is to-day. The criticism of the New Testament is steadily progressing. Völter, Visher, Weizäcker, Pfleiderer, hailing from authoritative German universities, have shown us, but a short time since, the composite character of the Apocalypse. Steck has done the same for the epistle to the Galatians, and has proved, to his own satisfaction, that neither this nor Corinthians nor Romans is of Pauline origin. Völler has found later still that Romans is made up of no less than seven different epistles; Spitta, only

* "Oracles," p. 7. † Driver, "Introduction," pref. xiii. *n.*

the year before last, that the Acts consists of two accounts, put together by a "redactor."* All these are Germans, are professors, or at least students, of colleges, and *of course*, competent men! Is it not safer to withdraw, while there is yet time to do so with honor, from the extreme position of verbal inspiration which all these and a host of others so determinedly attack? Is it not more reverent to believe that the Lord did not vouch for this, which, after all, these learned men cannot accept as fact?

Well, what is left us? It is impossible just yet to know. We shall, of course, have the *criticisms* left; but even the value of these is doubtful. Certainly, "to the poor," *their* gospel *cannot* be preached. With all their wisdom, they cannot distinguish a stone from bread, and know nothing of the need of the human heart,—of the sickening sense of having only uncertainty when the future is to be faced,—of the awful silence in the soul when what was held for the voice of God has died out of it. Is there no possibility of distinguishing what is really that from every merely human voice whatever? Drs. Sanday, Driver, and many of their fellows agree that He has spoken; but it is something in the air, which has not shaped itself in definite words: the *words* are *human!* Yes, and is there no possibility that He who *became* man, in His desire to be with us,—if that is among the things left still,—can speak *definitely* in a human voice? Oh, if I must yet "take a great deal upon trust," may I not trust this wondrous book, which, like the Unchangeable in whose name it speaks, is the Past in a living Present, rather than all the opinions of all the critics in the world? Can they reconstruct this life pervading it, which their dissections in vain search after? Can they give me, with all their wisdom, another Bible, or add a book to it, even? No, they cannot; and by that fact, Scripture is shown more authoritative than its would-be judges. I may have here to "take a great deal upon trust," but it is a trust which heart and conscience approve, and which gives rest and satisfaction to them. It has the witness of centuries to it, and of adoring multitudes in every century, who in every circumstance have found faith in the Bible the one thing sufficing them. Are these modern critics more to be believed than the living Christ this book has given me? No, says my highest reason;—no, ten thousand times: it is here I trust alone,—with the faith of a little child, if you will,—trust and rest here.

But we need not be afraid of their arguments. As with evolution in its other branches, the facts which the higher criticism produces—so long as they *are* facts,—are always interesting, and can be read with profit in the light of the "why." The "why"—the design—reveals the heart of the designer; and where the "how," if it can be ascertained, and while it is connected with this, may illustrate the wisdom of the designer, the purpose in it exhibits him in his whole moral character.

* Prof. Jacobus, in *The Hartford Seminary Record.*

If there is no design, the mere "how" of accomplishment is utterly trivial. If the apparent footprint in the sand be not human, and my solitude is to find no relief, how much to me is it to learn how winds and waves have mocked me? But think of men being frenzied with delight in being able to show that what seems *mind* in all around is not that, and that chance really rules in all the law and order that exist! This most certain truth that chance is nowhere makes every fact at once of interest: they are real footprints that are round about me,—and not of a human comforter, but a *divine!*

How many hands have contributed to make up Scripture is a thing with which Scripture itself does not concern itself or occupy us. Of the writers of most of the historical books we have no real knowledge; and if Moses compiled Genesis from existing records, such as are referred to in some of the later books, there would be nothing at all in this to stumble us. We are only concerned to know that where Moses is credited, in either Old or New Testament, with writing or speaking, —this, with all the rest, is absolutely true and trustworthy. But this is entirely contrary to Prof. Driver's canon, without which he thinks no satisfactory conclusions can be reached as to the Old Testament. Traditions, modified and colored by the historian, and interspersed with speeches fictitious to whatever extent one may desire,—this is what he conceives it to be.

The facts upon which the document-theory is founded are, as I have said, interesting where they *are* facts. Often they are not. The linguistic argument (or that from characteristic words,) has been well refuted by Vos,* and his book is accessible to all who desire it. The argument from discrepancies may be found, in part, there also. The few specimens already given from Driver are as forcible as most, and the readers of the present book can be at little loss to answer them. It is not difficult to see that the order of creation in the second chapter of Genesis is, so far as the plants and beasts are concerned, not an order at all; that the specification of pairs of living creatures in God's first communication to Noah is in no wise inconsistent with an after-specification of sevens for beasts that were clean; that Rebekah, just like one of ourselves, might easily have had a double motive for sending Jacob to Laban; while Esau's having been in Edom before Jacob's return to Canaan would not in the least affect the question of a later and final return thither. The double naming of Bethel and of Israel, glanced at in our notes (vol. i., p. 99), has a special significance, of which the higher criticism in general, being of the earth earthy, takes no account.

For any detailed reply to criticisms of this sort it would be impossible to find room here. The facility with which they can be made is as insnaring to those who would gain a cheap reputation as it is condemnatory of the whole. There is probably no book that could not be

*"Mosaic Origin of the Peutateuchal Codes." By Geerhardus Vos, N. Y.

cut up after the same fashion, and the smaller the fragments the more readily can it be done. A single verse, thus, in a section pronounced "Elohistic," if it has the name of Jehovah, proves itself to be from a "Jehovistic" source; and we have such dissections as this of Gen. xxx. from Prof. Driver, where verses 1–3^a, 6, 8, 17–20^a, 20^c–23, are given as Elohistic, so called from the use in it of "Elohim" (God), while the rest, including a fragment from the middle of the 20th verse, is Jehovistic!

Such attempts practiced upon any other book would find speedy and scornful relegation to the limbo of conceits that perish in their birth. Only the wondrous life of the book itself seems as if it kept alive the very enemies that seek its destruction. The interests that are involved beget an interest in the attack upon them; and in a world which has held the cross, the carnal mind still shows itself as enmity against God. As has been said, no detail can be ventured upon here,—and in truth the detail would be terribly wearisome; but we may look a little at the broad features of what is proposed to us as the Bible of the future, so far as it affects what we have already had before us.

We are to have no longer a Pentateuch, nor any books of Moses. Moses' part in the laws of Israel is an undefined and ever-vanishing quantity. The extreme party of critics cannot, of course, allow Israel to be any exception to the law of development which ordains man to have struggled on and up from the level of his ape-like ancestors unaided by any revelation of God. Prof. Toy, of Harvard, outlines the "History of the Religion of Israel" after this manner:—

"A comparatively large law-book was written (Deuteronomy, about B. C. 622); and this, in accordance with the ideas of the times, which demanded the authority of ancient sages and lawgivers, was ascribed to Moses . . . After various law-books had been written, they were all gathered up, sifted, and edited about the time of Ezra (B.C. 450), as one book. This is substantially our present Law (*Tora*), or Pentateuch. (*pp.* 6, 7.)

"Nations do not easily change their gods; it is not likely that Moses could or would introduce a new deity. But as the Israelites believed that he had made some great change, it may be that through his means the worship of Yahwe [Jehovah] became more general—became, in fact, in a real sense, the national worship. This would not necessarily mean that no other deities were worshiped . . . . Still less would it mean that there was only one God,—that is, that all other pretended gods were nothing. This is what we believe, and what the later Israelites (about the time of the exile and on) believed; but David, and generations after him, thought that Kemosh and Dagon and the rest were real gods, only not the gods of Israel. Exactly what Moses' belief was we do not know. (*p.* 24.)

"If we cannot suppose that the Pentateuch is correct history, then we do not know precisely what Moses did for his people . . . From all that we do know, we are led to believe that what Moses did was rather to organize the people, and give them an impulse in religion, than to frame any code of laws, or make any great change in their institutions." *

*Quoted from Dr. Armstrong's "Nature and Revelation."

The Harvard professor goes on to tell us that "we" know now that God did *not* give Israel the law at Sinai; but so long as we refuse that, he will allow us to believe that "the people, or a part of them, may have stayed there awhile." Moses' part in it all, he tells us, matters very little.

This is, of course, more than "down-grade:" it is near the bottom of the descent. Dr. Driver does not mean to land there. We do not always see where the road ends, and the mercy of God may prevent such a catastrophe; but there is, in fact, no practicable halting-place short of this. Between Dr. Toy and orthodoxy there is every degree of errancy, and the voices of the critics are not a little confused. It is contended that they are becoming more harmonious; and this, no doubt, is true and to be expected. The stream would naturally wear for itself channels, within which it would be henceforth confined. Some errors would be too manifest to be upheld, and others be found inconsistent with the purpose they were used for. This unification of the critics, while it will enable their arguments to be more concisely dealt with, does not imply any bettering of their position from the Scripture standpoint: the fact is the reverse; the tendency of error is to gravitate, and consistency necessitates ever a more complete departure from the truth. Thus Kuenen and Wellhausen, who are not badly represented by Prof. Toy, give us the latest phase of the documentary hypothesis. And it is striking enough to find how largely Driver builds to-day upon their foundations.

Yet it is plain that even for him the distinction between Jehovistic and Elohistic documents, with which these criticisms began, is fading away, so that he has often had to consider the question, "Is it probable that there should have been two narratives of the patriarchal and Mosaic ages, independent, yet largely resembling each other, and that these narratives should have been combined together into a single whole at a relatively early period of the history of Israel?" He answers, indeed, though with some hesitancy, that he believes it to be a fact that there were, "and that in some part, even if not so frequently as some critics have supposed, the independent sources used by the compiler are still *more or less* clearly discernible."

The period of this compilation he gives as "approximately, in the eighth century B.C.," or about Hezekiah's time! But that only carries us a few steps in the construction of the Pentateuch.

Deuteronomy comes next, which critics believe to be the "book of the law" found by Hilkiah in Josiah's day; but "how much earlier than B.C. 621 it may be is more difficult to determine. The supposition that Hilkiah himself was concerned in the composition of it is not probable; for a book compiled by the high-priest could hardly fail"—God, of course, being left out,—"*to emphasize the interests of the priestly body* at Jerusalem, which Deuteronomy does not do. . . . It is

probable its composition is not later than the reign of Manasseh."

The real "*priestly*" narrative—which does, of course, look sharply after their interests,—came later still. It is supposed to have added largely to Genesis, considerably to Exodus, including all about the special priesthood, the entire book of Leviticus, and much of Numbers. It belongs "approximately, to the time of the Babylonish captivity"! And now, with Ezra's revision, the Pentateuch is complete. But we must take notice, if we are to do justice to Dr. Driver's position, that he allows that there was a certain indefinable amount of tradition long before, and even, as we see, some written documents. The aggregate amount of these it is very hard to determine.

"Although, therefore, the Priests' Code assumed finally the shape in which we have it in the age subsequent to Ezekiel, it rests ultimately upon an ancient traditional basis, and many of the institutions prominent in it are recognized in various stages of their growth, by the earlier pre-exile literature, by Deuteronomy and by Ezekiel. The laws of P [the priestly code], even when they included later elements, were still referred to Moses,—no doubt because, in its basis and origin, Hebrew legislation was actually derived from him, and was only modified gradually."

This is how, it seems, the positive statements that "Moses spake" and "the Lord said to Moses" are to be interpreted. The issue is naturally such a romance as the following:—

"The institution which was among the last to reach a settled state, appears to have been the *priesthood*. Till the age of Deuteronomy"—which, we must remember, was that of *Manasseh*—"the right of exercising priestly offices must have been enjoyed by every member of the tribe of Levi; but this right on the part of the tribe generally is evidently not incompatible with the *pre-eminence* of a particular family (that of Aaron: *cf.* Deut. x. 6), which in the line of Zadok held the chief rank at the Central Sanctuary. After the abolition of the high places by Josiah, however, the central priesthood refused to acknowledge the right which (according to the law of Deuteronomy) the Levitical priests of the high places must have possessed. The action of the central priesthood was indorsed by Ezekiel (xliv. 6 *ff.*); the priesthood, he declared, was, for the future, to be confined to the descendants of Zadok; the priests of the high places (or their descendants) were condemned by him to discharge subordinate offices, as menials in attendance upon the worshipers. As it proved, however, the event did not altogether accord with Ezekiel's declaration; the descendants of Ithamar succeeded in maintaining their right to officiate as priests by the side of the sons of Zadok (1 Chron. xxiv. 4, etc.), but the action of the central priesthood under Josiah, and the sanction given to it by Ezekiel, combined, if not to create, yet to accentuate the distinction of 'priests' and 'Levites.' It is possible that those parts of P which emphasize this distinction (Num. i.–iv., etc.) are of later origin than the rest, and date from a time when—probably after a struggle with some of the disestablished Levitical priests—it was generally accepted." *

Think of a poor soul trying to read between the lines of his Bible after this fashion! or rather, of the revised one; for the present one,

* Driver, Introd. *pp.* 146, 147.

thank God, he cannot. Moses is thus "modified;" and God, who cannot be "modified," is left out,—except He is to be supposed to sanction this fraudulent speaking in His name! What is needed, to judge it all, is indeed rather conscience than learning, and here, it is comforting to think, the "babes" will not fare the worst.

Even the Pentateuch is not to be suffered to remain, and Moses being no longer credited with its authorship, the book of Joshua can be added to it, and the Pentateuch becomes a *Hexa*teuch. Here too they can find a Jehovist and an Elohist, a priestly writer and a Deuteronomist. But it is no great wonder if, according to the old belief, Joshua himself were the writer,—that one so long in companionship with Moses, and familiar with the books of the law, should use similar expressions, and write to some extent in the same style. That the writer was, in fact, a contemporary of the conquest is shown by his use of "we," and by his statement that Rahab was still dwelling in Israel (chap. v. 1, 6; vi. 25). Of course this can be as easily declared a fraud as the constant language of the Pentateuch itself. This can be denied also with equal ease,—and with this advantage, that we have the whole character of God against it.

But that the first five books are a real Pentateuch, we are able now to produce the structure of the Bible itself in proof. The five books of the Psalms are moulded on the Mosaic five, so that the Jews have named them "The Pentateuch of David." And that this is not a mere fancy of the Jews, but the real key to the spiritual meaning that pervades them, will be manifest the more the more deeply we look into them: we cannot, of course, enter here upon the proof.

Again: taking away from the Kethubim the historical and prophetical books, we have a didactic series of five, at the head of which the Psalms are found; Job, Solomon's Song, Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, completing another Pentateuch.

The Prophets, taking the minor twelve as one book (as was done of old), and Lamentations as an appendix to Jeremiah, fall, then, into another series of five—another Pentateuch. Nay, the historical books, as we have seen, fall into still another pentateuchal series; while the books of the New Testament easily divide into a similar one of Gospels, Acts, Pauline Epistles, Catholic Epistles, and Revelation. Thus the Pentateuch is the basis and model of the whole of Scripture.

Nor is this merely a form: on the contrary, the form but clothes and manifests the spirit that dwells in it. The spiritual meaning which the higher criticism ignores and would destroy, and which the apostle teaches us to find in the fullest way in the Old-Testament history,—which gives us the New Testament in the Old, prophecy in history, the divine seal everywhere upon its perfection,—confirms all this, and glorifies it. According to it, Joshua is not a continuation of the first series, but the beginning of a second. It is a true Genesis of the after-history,

and spiritually a new beginning, Deuteronomy having carried us beyond the wilderness, and, in principle, to the judgment-seat of Christ.

The numerical structure, of which this pentateuchal one is only a part, is indeed the key to the true higher criticism; only that one would not employ a term which implies the subjecting of the Word of God to the mere mind of fallen man. Faith's part it is to learn humbly from God, when once it realizes that it has to do with Him. While at the same time it purges the eye, not blinds it,—opens, not sets aside the understanding. Scripture itself, as the destructive criticism understands it, is not any more that which displays the Mind of all other mind, than is Nature under the withering blight of Darwinian evolution. "God in every thing" means wisdom in every thing. God thrust into the distance means the glorious Sun dwindled to a petty star. However much you may argue about its being in itself as bright as ever, it has no longer power to prevent the earth becoming a lifeless mass, whirled senselessly in a frozen orbit. The very law to which you may still vaunt its subjection is that which now surely condemns it to eternal darkness.

Against all this, the pentateuchal structure of the Bible utters emphatic protest. It is no mere arbitrary thing, then, but, like all that is divine, has a voice for us,—a voice which is of infinite sweetness and comfort also. For this number 5, which, as I have shown elsewhere,* is the *rest*-note of music, as well as the measure of its expansion, is that in which, as we have seen, man in his frailty is found in relation to the Almighty God. And while this implies responsibility on his part, and ways of divine government which may be to His creature

"Dark with excessive bright,"

and may give him exercise most needful, and fill him with apprehension too, yet it is that in which alone all blessing is, and to which Christ, in the wondrous mystery of His person, gives only adequate expression. Not only the divine seal is thus put upon all Scripture, but Christ is Himself that seal, from first to last the one Name that Scripture utters, —the assurance to us of an infinite joy with which we may face the history of the past, the mystery of the future. The book is in the hands of the Lamb slain; it is His; He is its interpreter and fulfillment both. With the chorus of the ages we say and sing, Worthy art Thou to take it!

The Covenant-History.

The books of the Covenant-History are the second great division of the Old Testament. The covenant itself is of course the Law, but not as at first given—pure law, under which it was not possible for them, as it is not for any, to abide for a moment. Before they had received it as written by God upon the tables for them, it was deliberately broken; and those tables never came into the camp. But the purpose of the law

* "Spiritual Law in the Natural World." p. 76.

could not be fulfilled in this brief trial of it. Man may readily own, "If Thou art *extreme* to mark what we have done amiss, O Lord, who may abide?" It is another thing to give up legal righteousness altogether,—to say with Job, when no outward evil has been proved, "I abhor *myself*," or with the prophet, "*All* our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." For this, there needs much searching out, and the second giving of the law was designed to do this. Dispensationally, it was designed to show that man was not only "ungodly," but "without strength." (Rom. v. 6.) The cross closed with the proof of a still more terrible indictment, that "the mind of the flesh is enmity against God." (Rom. viii. 7, *R.V.*)

As given the second time, the law in its proclamation of mercy and forgiveness allowed the trial to go on for many generations; and the divine long-suffering thus shown, with the interposition again and again of effectual help, only made it a more complete "ministration of death" and "of condemnation." (2 Cor. iii. 7, 9.) By it, it was to be absolutely settled, that man could not, upon any conditional footing of his own works, stand before God. Thus the law itself decides that justification must be, if at all, "without the deeds of the law." (Rom. iii. 28.)

Here, then, we may see the first meaning of these historical books; we might entitle them "*The Covenant in Progress*," or equally, according to the numerical stamp, "*The Testimony of the Law.*" We have seen fully already, and especially from the last part of Deuteronomy, that the conclusion is a foregone one. None the less did it need to be worked out, since man would not credit God's testimony, but must prove for himself if God be true. And who can say that the lesson has respect to man alone, knowing as we do the unseen principalities and powers under whose eyes we live, and the interest that they have in these disclosures? In both ways, it was needful that questions such as these should find their answer, not privately only in the individual conscience, but written broadly on the face of the world in the public history of the nations of the earth.

For this to be fully done, Israel is put into the most favorable position possible for the trial. The conditions of the experiment are carefully attended to. Brought out from Egypt, from the hard bond-service there, they are made to recognize in their Deliverer the Almighty, the God of their fathers—the faithful, unchangeable Jehovah. They have not by searching out to find Him: He is demonstrated to their ears and eyes and hearts. The pillar of cloud and fire leads them. The sea divides to give them passage through. The manna sustains, the water from the rock revives them. The discipline of His hand makes them to realize no less His inflexible holiness. The law, on the one hand, showers upon them without stint the blessings of obedience; while it curses the disobedient with equal severity. Yet it is only deliberate and willful transgression that is so cursed: if God cannot clear the guilty, He can yet show Himself "merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in

goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." (Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7.)

And now they are afresh to know Him in this double character, as brought into a land "the glory of all lands," to replace a people cast out for their sins, and upon whom their own hands inflict the sentence of God for their destruction. Joshua shows us thus the final conditions of the experiment carried out. The new beginning is fairly accomplished. Every book that follows carries us on one step toward the foreshown result.

But the typical meaning carries this further, as it makes of Israel's history the shadow of the history of another people, chosen of God as Israel, but with a higher destiny,—heavenly, not earthly; but whose failure is therefore only so much the more signal, so much the more disastrous. The Church of God, upon another plane, shows that "history repeats itself," as has been truly said, because each generation of men is but what the generation before was: "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." Yet, though true, that is no sufficient account of the parallel, extraordinary as it is, between Israel's history and our own. It is impossible to account for it, except as we see the hand of God over all, shaping events and inspiring their chroniclers, and realize to what an extent it is true that "all these things happened unto them for types, and are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come." (1 Cor. x. 11.) It may be difficult to follow this far into detail, yet what an interest must it give to these old records when we in any measure are enabled to see their prophetic character! Certainly we can neither have read history or Scripture with any right understanding except we have realized that the Church, no less than Israel, has had its Babylonish captivity and its partial return. This should prepare us to see more, and to seek with intelligence of what is before us.

Let us look briefly at the books individually now.

1. Joshua.

Joshua shows us, first of all, the new beginning: *the power of God working for the people, on the whole obedient, to give them the land of promise; and the throne established in what is now the manifest kingdom of God upon earth.*

The sovereignty of God is strongly affirmed in the first chapter; the law being His expressed will, in subjection to which they find strength and victory. By His power, Jordan is cut off, and entrance into the land given them over its dried-up bed. By His power alone, the walls of Jericho fall down. The failure of the people causes hindrance till the cause is judged; then the enemy is overthrown, the law is formally proclaimed at Ebal, and the tide of conquest rolls through the land. The tribes are apportioned by lot, and the tent of meeting is established at Shiloh.

Typically, we have in Canaan the heavenly things which are ours, and the bringing in of a *heavenly* people into their inheritance. It is the beginning of the *kingdom of heaven* upon earth, not seen in its earth-history, but in the position and portion of its heirs, which Christ's power has made ours, and we are called by faith to enter into and enjoy.

2. Judges.

Judges, in contrast with Joshua, begins the proper history of the people in disobedience, alliance made with the Canaanites, a breach with God. Hence soon division among the people and servitude to their enemies, with deliverances when they turn to God.

Typically, all this is easily read in its application to the heavenly people, who have here certainly repeated Israel's history.

The little book of Ruth, as supplementary to this, shows us the One to whom alone we can look to restore the inheritance, whether Jewish or Christian. For the Jew, how significant this famine in the land, the departure into Moab of the house of Elimelech ("My God is King"), "Naomi" changed to "Mara"—the return in sorrow, Ruth the Moabitess, the representative of Israel, now a stranger, and under the ban of law, yet united in grace to Boaz ("In Him is strength"), and thus securing the inheritance.

This, indeed, is a secret for faith; and for the Church too there must be the same grace, the same Kinsman-Redeemer, through whom the inheritance she has so failed to possess herself of shall be made good to her at last.

3. Kings.

Kings, as we have said, includes Samuel as its first book; Samuel and Kings being always, as in the old Hebrew Bibles, but one book each. They give us, of course, the times of the kingdom,—that is, of God's kingdom in the hands of man; David and Solomon, a double picture of the true King. With this, the history of the sanctuary, Jehovah's dwelling-place in the midst, which is restored by David, built up into a temple by Solomon, lost utterly by Israel under Zedekiah. Samuel shows at the beginning, through the failure of the priesthood, one Ichabod period; Kings, at the end, through the failure of David's line, a worse Ichabod still.

Thus the *sanctuary*, as the dwelling-place of the supreme King, governs, as one may say, in these books; and in accordance with this, another quite characteristic feature is the appearance of the *prophet*. Samuel the prophet, as we know, anoints both Saul and David; and, whenever a king is anointed outside of the regular line, it is by a prophet. The prophet thus gives out the word of the Throne, and often in opposition to priest and king alike, the more distinctly, the more decline and apostasy prevail.

The King fully after God's own heart is One in whom are united all

the three. He is the Prophet, Priest, and King. David represents Him in this respect more fully than any other. He sets in order the priesthood, and in his linen ephod dances before the ark. "The Spirit of the Lord," he says, "spake through me, and His word was in my tongue." (2 Sam. xxiii. 2.) But it was not yet a threefold cord that cannot be broken; separately, all fail, with all that depends upon them: they are but shadows of what shall be, when "He shall come whose right it is."

Thus the books of the Kings show us a resurrection-period in Israel, a work of divine power which lifts them as a nation into wonderful prosperity and power. Yet it fails, because not yet has the breath of God come into it, as it will in the day of which Ezekiel prophesies. (Ezek. xxxvii.) Like one of those in old time, brought up from death, yet again to succumb to it, the nation passes from her brief period of glory into disruption and decay; and this is only a still stronger witness that the law is a ministration of death, and not of life.

4. The Books of the Captivity.

The Captivity-Books are three in number—Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. We have in them no more the history of a nation, but of a fragment of one; and the history itself is a fragment. The return from Babylon is scarcely even a revival: they rebuild in tears over what they are rebuilding. The new temple has no ark, no Urim, no glory, as once: it is an empty building, which is to receive no inhabitant as yet: a witness to them of the sentence of Lo-Ammi ("Not My people") under which still they are. Alas! they too, as the Lord told them, were but an empty house, though they would now sweep and garnish it with the new Pharisaism soon to arise, to resist the sentence of condemnation which God was writing upon them.

The three books have, of course, each a distinct meaning.

Ezra shows us the temple rebuilt, God acting still as Sovereign over the earth, but simply swaying the minds of the Gentile rulers under which they are, to show them favor. And to the remnant returned Ezra preaches repentance, as already repeating their fathers' sins in mingling with the idolatrous nations round about.

Nehemiah restores the city by building its wall and encouraging people to inhabit it. His work is that of demarkation, separation, and defense. But he is in continual conflict, and with those within as well as without.

This closes the sketch of the returned remnant: in *Esther*, we are among those not returned. The character of the book appears in the fact that it is the only book in Scripture (except the allegory of Solomon's Song) in which the name of God is not found. Yet His providential care of the people with whom He cannot openly associate Himself is very plain. As to its numerical place, I believe this is given by the clear manifestation of their condition in this very way. In its typical or allegorical aspect, on the other hand, it looks on to the future, and

prophesies the resurrection of the people: the Jewish bride displaces the Gentile, and the Jewish Mordecai, like another Joseph, is exalted to the power of the throne; the enemies of Israel are defeated and overthrown.

This will suffice for the present as to the Captivity-Books; but one other historical book remains:—

5. Chronicles.

This, which is, like Samuel and Kings, but one book properly, is plainly the Deuteronomy of this division. As Deuteronomy rehearses Israel's ways with God in the wilderness, and correspondingly God's ways with them, so Chronicles rehearses, in a disguised manner, (in the genealogies,) history from the beginning, and openly the chief part of that of the books of the Kings. The purpose of enforcing obedience as the way of blessing is most evident. Keil says,—

"Now from these and other descriptions of the part the Levites played in events, and the share they took in assisting the efforts of pious kings to revivify and maintain the temple worship, the conclusion has been rightly drawn that the chronicler describes with special interest the fostering of the Levite worship according to the precepts of the law of Moses, and holds it up to his contemporaries for earnest imitation; yet . . . the chronicler does not desire to bring honor to the Levite and to the temple worship: his object is rather to draw from the history of the kingship in Israel a proof that faithful adherence to the covenant which the Lord had made with Israel brings happiness and blessing; the forsaking of it, on the contrary, brings ruin and a curse."

The special insistence on the sanctuary worship in Chronicles is not strange in connection with that view of Kings which has been taken, that the history of the Kings was in fact that of the sanctuary, a view which in its obvious relation to it the book of Chronicles so entirely confirms. And this notice may for the present suffice, until we have before us the books themselves.

The Dispensational Purpose of Israel's Separation from the Nations.

Much has been written upon the dispensational purpose of Israel's call and separation from the Gentile world. If our inquiry is to be answered from the Word of God, that answer may in part be readily found. A full reply it would of course be useless to pretend to give, when it is still true that, as to *any thing*, "we know in part." And especially in His governmental dealings with the nations is it true that "clouds and darkness are round about Him," while we must remember what the psalmist connects immediately with this, that "righteousness and judgment are the foundation of His throne." (Ps. xcvii. 2, *R.V.*)

But in order to a right inquiry, we must have rightly stated the facts about which we inquire, and the survey must be sufficiently wide also to put them in their proper setting.

If in the historical books before us we are to contemplate Israel as the chosen people of the Lord, shut off by peculiar institutions from the

nations round about, we must remember that when in the year 1451 B.C. they crossed the dry bed of Jordan, the world was already, according to the common chronology, over twenty-five centuries old. The book of Genesis, which gives the birth of the nation, speaks briefly of these preceding ages, but with sufficient clearness to let us know that God, as the Creator-Father of all men, had not hidden Himself from His creatures, but that (as the apostle says of the Gentiles,) they, "when they knew God, glorified Him not as God;" "they did not like to retain God in their knowledge:" "they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." Thus came heathenism, and the dark forms of idolatry,—not as men so often blasphemously feign, out of honest efforts to find God, when He had left them without witness, but from their having "*changed* the glory of the incorruptible God into an image like unto corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." (Rom. i. 21, 23, 28.)

From these corrupting influences God separated a people to Himself, but in doing this made Himself known decisively in a public testimony that should reach far and wide. Egypt was at once the chief centre of civilization, and the country fullest of bestial gods; and there God manifested Himself in judgments that humbled at the same time their monarch and multitudinous deities. "In very deed have I raised thee up for this," He says to Pharaoh, "that I might show by thee My power, and that My name may be declared in all the earth." "And upon all the gods of the Egyptians I will execute judgment," He says elsewhere to Moses. When the crowning blow fell at the Red Sea, the song of triumph speaks of its wide effect upon the countries toward which their faces were now set. The forty years' wanderings in the wilderness abounded in signs and wonders by which not Israel alone, but the nations also, were made to realize the presence of God. Then came the conquest of Gilead and Bashan, the prophecy of Balaam, the destruction of the Midianites; and after this long threatening of judgment, its execution upon the nations of Canaan, whose iniquity was now full, and the abominations of their worship a chief part of their iniquity.

Thus, when God took Israel to Himself, He proclaimed to the world His power and greatness, in contrast with the nothingness of all false gods. The land in which He placed them lay in the midst of the civilized world. Assyria, Babylon, Persia, lay north and east; Egypt, south-west; Sidon and Tyre, upon the coast-line of Palestine, were the traders with Greece and the whole Mediterranean coast. Placed in such a land, God's sanctuary, if men sought it, was in no obscure hiding-place, but on the intersection of well-known routes of travel, uniting the countries of the ancient world.

The sanctuary-door stood open. The presence of the stranger in the land was anticipated and provided for, as we have seen; and he, if he were needy, found his need cared for in Jehovah's land. If he and his

were circumcised, he could sit down with them at their most sacred feasts. Rahab, the Canaanitess, with all her family, part of the nations under ban from God, could yet by faith take her place among the elect nation, and have her name (with Ruth afterward) in the genealogy of David. The barrier, it is plain, did not exist to keep out those who sought the God of the whole earth, and of "the spirits of all flesh" upon the earth.

It is plain we must not judge of Israel's position toward the Gentiles by the narrowness of an after-day. If God had necessarily withdrawn from the abominations of heathendom, His sanctuary was still as a city of refuge with the ways kept clear and blazoned with welcome for those who fled to it. There was isolation, but not exclusion. While the marvels of His people's history were at once a challenge of the prevalent falsehoods round and a gospel for the man who sought the truth. That truth could not associate itself with falsehood was the true and profitable lesson of Israel's separation.

If now, instead of its aspect toward the generations of the Old-Testament times, we inquire as to the true *dispensational* meaning of Israel's call and isolation, we shall find it in that experiment of law which we have again and again seen that God was making in their case. The apostle shows us the end of it when he says (Rom. v. 6) that, "when we were yet *without strength*, in due time Christ died for the *ungodly*." The legal covenant, in the long trial under it, in the utter failure all through, permitted to come fully out at last, showed fully that this was man's condition; and this was the main purpose of it, as handmaid to the gospel, that the law should break down all pretension to human righteousness, and thus declare man's need of atonement, and of justification by Another's work.

To make this clearer still, we have only to put the dispensation of law in its connection with the dispensations that preceded it. For the law was not the first of dispensations among fallen men; and it is important to see this, and the meaning of it. The law was, as a dispensation, neither primal nor universal. That it was simply with Israel is declared fully in connection with the words of the tables, the ten commandments (Ex. xxxiv. 27, 28): "Write thou these words," says Jehovah to Moses; "for after the purport of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel; . . . and he wrote upon the table the *words of the covenant, the ten words*." The first commandment accordingly declares, "I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." The fifth commandment in the same, speaking directly to Israel, bids, "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land that Jehovah thy God giveth thee." Such words imply the covenant to be exclusively with Israel.

If the end of the law is admitted, this will be seen as in full consist-

ency with it. "Whatsoever the law saith," writes the apostle, "it saith unto them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God." (Rom. iii. 19.) This does not mean, as it might at first seem, that all the world was under the law. He had stated the opposite. The heathen Gentile he had characterized as "without law" (chap. ii. 12, 14)—"a law" merely "to themselves," which is the *opposite* of being under it from God. Their sins were open and undeniable. He turns then to the Jew (ii. 17): "But if," he says, "thou bearest the name of a Jew, and restest upon the law, and gloriest in God, and knowest His will, and approvest the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law." (*R.V.*) He goes on to convict him by his own conscience: why, the very Gentiles blasphemed the name of his God on account of the wickedness of the Jew. He then appeals to the verdict of the law. What had been said with regard to those under it? Then come the quotations—"There is none righteous,—no, not one," and so on. "Now," is his comment upon it, "we know that whatsoever the law saith, it saith unto them that are under the law, that *every* mouth may be stopped." The Gentile's mouth is stopped already: "You," he says, "you, who are no heathen,—you, the professing people of God,—yours is now stopped also: *every* mouth is stopped; the whole world is guilty."

Apart from this, if indeed "as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man," then it is evident that an experiment with one nation is as good as with the whole race, and proves the same as to the whole race. Nay, a small experiment, if sufficient, is better than a large one. It is *more manageable:* its issue can be brought more completely under the eye, and so be more completely demonstrated. We have seen how in the land of Israel God chose a theatre before the eyes of all, and thus the world would be more completely convicted, strange to say, by the trial of Israel, *than it would if the whole world were tried!*

This trial was of God assuredly. The creature needed the lesson, and it was given. For generation after generation the gospel waited: the "due time" for the sacrifice which it proclaimed had not yet come. Till then, the typical sacrifices had their place, and faith, though it saw dimly in the shadow, yet saw and rejoiced. Sacrifice, though incorporated into the legal system, was not of it, but older, dating, as we know, even from the gate of paradise. Abel's offering, Cain's rejection of it, divided men from the beginning into two classes, ever to be known by that test. But the world was Cain's, and not Abel's, and man's need had to be demonstrated to him; spite of conscience, under terror of an unknown God, forcing men into the devil's dark and abominable perversions of the precious symbols of the Christ that was to come. Human religion is always law in some shape; God's grace he has to be humbled to receive. Man's thought is founded upon the dream of his own competency. He can do something that will be accepted if he cannot pay

the full price. Hence God must enforce His claim, and the law become man's schoolmaster, grace only a whisper for the ear trained to receive it, though the father of circumcision manifestly finds righteousness by faith, and circumcision itself is the "seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised." (Rom. iv. 11.)

All, then, is in fullest harmony as to the meaning of the dispensation of law, while all through God was the God of grace, and the heart that sought God found Him.

Moreover, if the Gentile were given up in the meantime, even here there was to be given a needed lesson, as the apostle shows us. It was "when in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe." (1 Cor. i. 21.) It was in the wisdom of God, then, that the world should prove the value of that which it had acquired so painfully, and by disobedience to Him. Man had sought wisdom in self-exaltation that he might be as God; and the philosopher still deems that he can find Him with his mind, instead of with his conscience. The world is full of the weird and fantastic shapes that he has thus conjured up; but he has no *gospel* until it is revealed to him,—knows neither God nor himself. The Greek was the typical Gentile, and was known as the seeker after wisdom. At Athens it was that Paul declared the "unknown God."

If Jew was separated from Gentile, the Gentile too was separated from the Jew, for a need which in either case was a common human need. For the one and the other, the lesson to be learnt was, the worthlessness of what he trusted in. He that thinketh himself wise in this world must be stripped of his wisdom, and become a fool, that he may be wise. He that in ignorance of the righteous character of God would come to Him in the filthy rags of his own righteousness must, with Joshua the high-priest in the prophet's vision, have the filthy garments taken from him, that the robe from the Father's house may cover his nakedness. In either case, man must be humbled to be exalted; he must be made poor that he may receive "durable riches." He must come an empty-handed sinner to receive Christ. And this is still the education that the world most truly needs.

Even in Israel's shameful fall, then, from her place as the people of God on earth, God was still sovereign, and His purpose did not fail. In weakness and apparent defeat He is still Lord of all, and amid these almighty strength works on to its foreseen end. The cross is once for all the type of these ways of God.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF JOSHUA.

LITERALLY.—The new beginning: the power of God working for the people, on the whole obedient, to give them the land of promise; and the Throne established in what is now the manifest kingdom of God on earth.

TYPICALLY.—The bringing in of a *heavenly* people into their inheritance. The beginning of the kingdom of heaven upon the earth; not seen, however, in its earth-history, but in the position and portion of its heirs, which Christ's power has made our own, and we are called to enter into and enjoy.

As already said, if Canaan typify, as all Christians agree, our heavenly inheritance, it should be yet clear that Israel's taking possession here is not the figure of our entering it one by one at death, nor even of our glorious entrance together when Christ comes. If it were so, certainly the details would be to us past comprehension, and so without meaning; and the warfare upon entrance (though Rev. xii. 7 should be taken to explain it, as has been done,) would still be inexplicable from the first. On the other hand, the epistle to the Ephesians, as many now accept, in its doctrine of our warfare with principalities and powers in heavenly places (Eph. vi. 12) manifestly alludes to Israel's "flesh and blood" warfare here, and suggests the true explanation. We are called *now* to enter in by faith into our heavenly portion, and it is here that Satan seeks to hinder and baffle us, knowing well that it is only as we lay hold of what is ours in heaven that we can be truly pilgrims and strangers upon earth; this we have had, from the earth-side of it, in Abraham's life: we are now to see it from the heaven-side.

Joshua has but two main divisions, which exactly divide the book:—

1. (Chap. i.–xii.)—The Entrance into the Land.
2. (Chap. xiii.–xxiv.)—Its Division among the Tribes.

NOTES.

THE subject of the book must now be more fully considered, and in order to this it will be necessary to repeat some things that have been already before us, but in a disconnected manner. And first of all as to—

ISRAEL'S POSSESSION OF THE LAND

at the time the book of Joshua speaks of. As we have fully seen, the covenant according to which they now enter it, and according to which alone they have held it yet, was that legal covenant under which it was impossible that they, or any people that ever lived, could retain possession of it. Let law be ever so modified, it is still law; and as such it "worketh wrath," as the apostle declares. Most useful and necessary for its purpose, that purpose was not to enable man to stand in the righteousness of a fulfiller of it, but to give "the knowledge of sin." (Rom. iii. 20.) As a consequence, the blessing promised them in Abraham could not be in this way theirs, nor this covenant of law be added to the covenant of promise. The careful statement of this is in the epistle to the Galatians: "Brethren," says the apostle, "I speak after the manner of men: though it were a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth *or addeth thereto*. Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ. Now this I say, a covenant confirmed beforehand by God, the law, which came four hundred and thirty years after, doth not disannul, so as to make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no more of promise; but God hath granted it to Abraham by promise." (Gal. iii. 15–18., *R. V.*)

In his application of this, Paul dwells upon the *Gentiles'* part in the blessing of Abraham; but it is of course as decisive with regard to the Jews. The covenant of law could not, as being of an entirely contradictory character, be added to that covenant with Abraham, which was pure, free promise. And the four hundred and thirty years between the two show their absolute distinctness. Israel, therefore, when they passed under Joshua into the land, were not receiving it according to the original promise, which remains yet to be fulfilled to them in all its length and breadth. And so already Moses has shown us. (Deut. xxx. 1–3, etc.)

Accordingly, the small dimensions of the land that they received are in complete contrast with the "goodly land and *large*," which they are yet to enjoy, whose limits are only the Euphrates, the Red Sea, and the Nile. (Gen. xv. 18; Ex. xxiii. 31; Josh. i. 4.) The lands south and east, from which they were expressly excluded in Joshua's time, as Edom, Moab, and Ammon, are as expressly stated to belong to them at a future day. (Is. xi. 14; Amos ix. 12; Jer. xlix. 2.) Moreover, as now set conditionally in the land, their limits were not to remain in their present narrowness, but to be extended little by little, if only they remained faithful to their God, as in fact they did not remain. They shrank, thus, even within their present limits, neither the land of the Philistines, nor Sidon, nor Lebanon, being possessed by them.

Typically, God has overruled all this for our admonition. For God has opened to us also the land of our inheritance, and bidden us by faith enjoy our portion; the Spirit of God being come to take of the things of Christ and show them to us, and to make known to us the things that are freely given to us of God. But how little have we laid hold of! Thank God that our final possession is not to be according to the narrow limits of *present* possession! Israel is surely here our encouragement, and also our admonition.

THE CONFLICT

of which Ephesians speaks is as little apprehended by Christians in general as the book of Joshua in its typical meaning is, and for the same reason. Conflict with the *flesh* is considered to be, by so many, true Christian conflict, yet it is plain it is a conflict Christ could know nothing of, for there was in Him *no* sinful flesh. In us it is true that "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary one to another." (Gal. v. 17.) But the remedy is not in conflict, but in that which, in proportion as it is carried out in faith, will make conflict impossible: for we are to "reckon ourselves dead unto sin, and alive unto God in Christ Jesus." (Rom. vi. 11.) Conflict of this kind

we all, indeed, too much know, and we have had already the vivid type of it in Israel's with Amalek. (Ex. xvii.) True Christian conflict, however, is that which is presented here, with its dangers and its victories also: and we have need, as the apostle tells us, of the "whole armor of God; that we may be able to stand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand."

Even as against Amalek in the wilderness, we have seen Joshua as the leader. He who gives us possession of the heavenly things is He who gives power in the conflict with the lusts of the flesh. And Satan well knows that if he can deprive us of our joy in what is ours in heaven, our lives cannot be a fitting witness for the Lord on earth. What, then, must be the condition of those who know not even the *meaning* of the conflict? For without the struggle, Canaan cannot be ours.

These Canaanite inhabitants of the land, then, answer to the "principalities and powers in heavenly places" of which the apostle speaks; but his words throw more light than this upon what is in the book before us, and clear up what would be a difficulty in understanding it. They are, he says, "the rulers of the darkness of this world," or, as the Revisers read it with the best authorities, "the world-rulers of this darkness." God is light, and darkness is His opposite. In this Satan works, the evil of a world which is under his sway, and by which he resists the work of God. Our armor, the panoply of God, is thus the "*armor of light.*" We shall find, as we study the types of Joshua, that from Jericho and onward it is the power of the world that is set before us; and what more effectively blinds the children of God to heavenly things than the dust of the world?

The land into which Israel is passing over is distinctly the land of Canaan, and the general name for the people of the land is Canaanite, as Canaan was their common father. The word is derived from one which means, "to stoop," as most say, or, as Parkhurst, "to lay down," as a merchantman would do in exposing his goods. That Scripture attaches to it the meaning of "merchant" seems clear. Of Ephraim Hosea says (xii. 7), "He is a merchant (Canaan); balances of deceit are in his hand." And Ezekiel (xvii. 4), "He carried it into a land of traffic (Canaan); and he set it in a city of merchants." This is said generally to be a later meaning arising from the common occupation of the Canaanite nations, which is not at all proved to be the fact; while, in any case, the admitted identification of meaning in the prophets suggests, necessarily, spiritual interpretation all the way through. Here it is in perfect accord with the New-Testament application: we are to "take the whole armor of God, that we may be able to stand against the *wiles* of the devil." The devil's power is that of craft and deceit: he is the "father of lies;" and his lies are peculiarly those of a trader, who offers his worthless goods at a ruinous price. You shall have the world in whatever of it suits you best, as he offered to the Lord Himself all the glory of it,—a bait with a golden hook.

There is one thing more to be remembered in order to read clearly the type here, that, while the conflict is with spiritual powers, these are in strictness only the leaders in it,—the "principalities,"—while under their rule are found the men of the world as instruments through whom they work—human souls, who may, as Rahab, be delivered from their hand. While also the rulers themselves may be, and will be, often identified with, or represented by, the principles through which they gain and exercise dominion over their unhappy followers. Satan seldom openly appears as Satan; but lust, pride, ambition, maintain faithfully his kingdom, and sway the minds and hearts of men.

Div. 1.

The first twelve chapters of the book give us, evidently, the entrance into the land, as the second half has for its general subject, its apportionment among the tribes. The entrance has to be in power, in the first place, where no enemies can oppose. Conflict there is not until they are across the river, and in the

JOSHUA.

DIVISION 1. (Chap. i.–xii.)

The Entrance into the Land.

(I.)

Command and promise.

1. AND it came to pass, after the [a]death of Moses the servant of Jehovah, that Jehovah spake unto [b]Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' attendant, saying, Moses my servant is dead; and now arise, go over this Jordan,—thou and all this people, unto the [c]land which I give unto them,—to the children of Israel. [d]Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

a Deut. 34. 5. *cf.* Rev. 1. 18.

b Ex. 24. 13. Ex. 32. 17. *cf.* Eph. 1. 20, 21.

c *cf.* Eph. 1. 3.

d Deut. 11. 24, 25. *cf.* Eph. 1. 18.

camp at Gilgal. And after this, they themselves begin it. So with us, Christ's work it is that carries us through death, and gives us our place in heaven. Then if the land is to be practically ours, we must *conquer it.*

There are seven subdivisions, ending with rest attained: "the land had rest from war." (Chap. xi. 23.)

1. The first chapter is plainly introductory, and gives the principles which govern the advance of the people into the land.

Moses was now no longer in the midst of Israel, and the leader of the people is his minister Joshua. The spiritual significance of this has been already before us, and needs only to be briefly repeated. It is this spiritual significance found in the typical meaning which alone invests the whole history here with its true interest for the child of God. We are in the midst of things which "*happened unto them for* types" (1 Cor. x. 11, *marg.*): words which justify the fullest importance that can be given to them in this character, and magnify them in every detail given, amazingly beyond mere historical proportions.

Moses and Joshua, as we have elsewhere seen, both speak of Christ: Moses, of Christ down here in the world, living among men; Joshua, of Christ (in spirit, not in person,) acting by the Holy Ghost in His people. Thus Joshua it is who leads into the land; and while Moses is the "servant of the Lord," the picture of Jehovah's perfect Servant as given in the prophet (Is. lii. 13), Joshua is "Moses' minister," waiting upon and representing this personal Christ.

The divine call now summons the people of God to take possession of their inheritance, Moses' (Christ's) death being necessary to have taken place before the land can be opened and entered. To take possession there must be the energy of faith: "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread on shall be your own." Then come the definite limits in the meantime, which (though not the full final limits,) have been so narrowed in the thoughts of those who have taken what the people actually possessed as all that God promised them. In fact we are only beginning to realize that the "land of the Hittites" itself, which was yet less, not more, than the land of Canaan, went up far beyond Lebanon to the Euphrates itself; "all" of which to the sea-coast of the Mediterranean belongs to Israel by promise, and waits only faith on their part, to be made good to them. Keil even—an orthodox commentator, in one of the best of critical commentaries,—speaks of the "oratorical" character of the promise here! May we, then, without sin, ascribe exaggeration to God? What if the promise of a heavenly inheritance for us be equally "oratorical"? And though Israel has failed to lay hold of what is truly theirs, is it not simply what man has always done?

From the [e]wilderness and this Lebanon, as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your boundary. There shall not any man be able to [f]stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so will I be with thee; I will not fail thee nor forsake thee. Be [g]strong and of good courage; for thou shalt cause this people to inherit the land that I sware unto their fathers to give them. Only be strong, and very courageous, to observe to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded thee: [h]turn not away from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest do wisely whither-

[e] Gen. 15. 18. Ps. 72. 8, 9.

[f] Deut. 28. 7. *cf.* Jas. 4. 7.

[g] Eph. 6. 10. Deut. 31. 7. 1 Kings 2. 2. 2 Tim. 2. 1.

[h] Deut. 5. 32.

In fact they are, even in their unbelief, only the more fully our types. *Had* they taken possession of all that is here promised them as theirs, it would take much from the exactness of the picture which we may find of ourselves in them. How little have we indeed "apprehended that for which we have been apprehended of Christ Jesus" (Phil. iii. 12)! And if our final possession of what is ours in Christ were to be limited, as we have limited Israel's, by what we have, any of us, laid hold of in faith now, how little would be our portion! Thank God, His thoughts for us are far above our thoughts!

But we cannot pretend as yet spiritually to show these boundary-lines. As we go on we may trust that what our inheritance is will little by little dawn on us. This is the way ordinarily in which God teaches us, and we must go humbly, if we go in faith.

Enemies there are in this path, and we need therefore the encouraging exhortation which follows. "No enemy shall be able to stand before thee," God says to Joshua. And when we remember who our Leader is, it is simple that it must be so. Christ is the "Captain of our salvation," and in proportion as we identify ourselves with Him, we shall find strength given us which will not be wanting for any need; it will be not our own, but His who says, "I will not fail thee nor forsake thee;" words which the apostle teaches us so to apply to ourselves as boldly to say, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." (Heb. xiii. 6.) This strength of an arm which is not our own arm is the sweetest kind of strength that creature can know. It is companionship, communion, perfect security,—all holiness in it, all wisdom. God with us means all that God is.

Well He may say, therefore, "Be strong and of a good courage." And again, "Only be thou strong and very courageous." Just because the strength needed is not our own, we may be strong, and in this, honor Him who has identified His glory with our blessing. Courage is the virtue by which we walk according to His Word; as it is added here, "that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law that Moses My servant commanded thee;" and this is the condition of success,—"turn not thou from it to the right hand, nor to the left, that thou mayest do wisely whithersoever thou goest." And this is repeated with emphasis in the next verse. How needful for us this absolute insistance on the Word of God, so prone as we are to let expediency govern in divine things, to judge by results instead of by principles, and to count preciseness but Pharisaism. Indeed, in days such as ours, when the Word of God is spread abroad, and in a certain way there is much inquiry into it, how few are they who honestly, according to their light, carry out *all* that they know is enjoined! how few who have no questions in reserve which they dare not fully face! how many who do not wish to be disturbed by inquiries of which they cannot tell where they may end! Let us all—readers and writer—make it a personal question for ourselves, neither as ready to judge others, nor excusing ourselves by others, and a question entertained before Him who can answer it,—"Lord, is it I?"

soever thou goest. This [i]book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; and thou shalt [j]meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy way [k]prosperous, and then shalt thou do wisely. Have not I commanded thee? be strong, and of good courage; quake not, nor be dismayed; for Jehovah thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

[i] Ps. 119. 9. *cf.* Col. 3. 16.
[j] Ps. 1. 2.
[k] 1 Tim. 4. 15.

And Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, Pass through the midst of the camp, and command the people, saying, [l]Prepare yourselves provisions, for in three days ye shall be passing over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which Jehovah your God giveth you to possess it. And to the [m]Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to the half-tribe of Manasseh, spake Joshua, saying, Remember the word that Moses the servant of Jehovah commanded you, saying, Jehovah your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land. Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle shall abide in the land that Moses gave you on this side Jordan; but all your mighty men of valor shall pass over in array before your brethren, and help them, until Jehovah have given your brethren rest as he hath you, and they also possess the land that Jehovah your God giveth them; then shall ye return unto the land of your possession, and enjoy it, which Moses Jehovah's servant gave you on this side Jordan toward the sunrise.

[l] *cf.* Phil. 3. 13, 14.
[m] Num. 32.

And what a grand word is this to give strength,—"Have not *I* commanded thee?" How good to bow ourselves to this yoke, and to remember that where God has spoken we must be either servants or rebels; let the matter of the command be what it may. And then again the exhortation,—not a word, be sure, more than is needed, "Be strong, and of a good courage; be not afraid, nor be thou dismayed; for Jehovah thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

We have next the words of the leader himself, addressed to the people, and the first word is, to prepare food for themselves, for within three days they are to cross the river. One might think such an injunction scarcely needed, but the people of God undergo but too many willing fasts from spiritual food, whereby they are never strengthened, but weakened. The "three days" here make a difficulty for those whose critical wisdom these difficulties are to accredit. They wait for the spies who are detained three days across the river, and then take three days more mustering, as it would seem, before they pass over. In an ordinary history it would not have been necessary to invent three writers on this account, to make a patchwork of various accounts very indifferently put together. It would have been said simply that Joshua had not anticipated the delay which in fact took place. Why not say so? Is it necessary to accredit Joshua with infallibility, in order to *dis*credit Scripture with a mistake? Let the mistake be with Joshua, and it may still be no mistake with Scripture, possibly even some spiritual thought attaching to these "three days" three times repeated. Gleams of resurrection break out through all these scenes, for it is by resurrection-power alone that we can cross the river of death into our inheritance.

A special injunction is needed by the two and a half tribes, because of the divergence of their interests from that of the whole nation, from which they have in measure separated themselves. They are now to have the fighting with-

And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us we will go. According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee; only Jehovah thy God be with thee as he was with Moses. Every man that is rebellious against thy voice, and hearkeneth not unto thy words in all that thou commandest him shall be put to death: only be strong, and of good courage.

(II.)

The spies' testimony: the word of judgment and of salvation.

2. And Joshua the son of Nun sent out from Shittim two men as "spies secretly, saying, Go, view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into a harlot's house, whose name was Rahab, and lay there. And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came in hither

a Num. 13. 2.

out the personal reward; just as from the conflict with the power of Satan no Christian can be excused; and yet for many it may not have its true significance.

Nevertheless, even from these, in the flood-tide of present enthusiasm, there comes back an encouraging response. And that it is not mere excitement Joshua would surely realize, as their answer re-echoes the Lord's words. "We will hearken to thee as unto Moses," is their reply: "Jehovah be with thee, as He was with Moses; . . . only be strong and of a good courage."

2. We have now in Rahab's story, very plainly, the testimony of salvation, and the answer of faith. Joshua sends spies across Jordan to "view the land, even Jericho." Jericho, at the entrance of the land, presents the opposition of the enemy in those cities walled up to heaven which Israel before had spoken of so despairingly. But the power of the enemy, as we have seen, acts through the world, which, as darkness, opposes the light, in which is the inheritance of the saints. (Col. i. 12.) Jericho, at the entrance of Canaan, and significantly close by Jordan, the river of death, is the world, upon which faith must, as it were, execute the judgment of God before we can possess ourselves of our heavenly portion.

The story of Rahab, with its New-Testament comments, is so plain in its meaning that this is recognized by all who see any spiritual meaning in these histories at all. "Rahab" means "enlargement." As the psalmist says, "Thou hast set my feet in a large room," so could this Canaanitish woman say. Not in figure merely, but in fact, she is a sinner saved from impending judgment. One of those nations upon whom, as having filled up the measure of their iniquities, the curse was already pronounced; among these a harlot, sinner among sinners; she is a witness that from whatever "end of the earth" a soul looks to God, there is salvation for it. And how beautiful to see that in such a case as this it is, where the lesson is one so needful beyond all others, the vail, elsewhere maintained, drops almost altogether, and fact and type come together as one!

But why does the story of Rahab occur just here?

In relation to the literal history it showed that even the doomed Canaanites, according to a principle openly announced by the prophet afterward (Jer. xviii. 7, 8), might have escaped their doom, by such a repentance and turning to God as was found in Rahab. It was a gospel of *fact* for all and every nation, before a gospel of words there could be.

In relation to the typical meaning, it shows that if, on the one hand, Christianity proclaims, as it does, the judgment of the world, it has, on the other hand, its assurance of goodwill and blessing for all who out of this world turn to God.

It may seem, in some sense, a turning aside from the line of things before us here; but God is always ready to turn aside for such a purpose; or rather would show us that such a thing as this is never foreign to His purpose, as it is never absent from His heart.

to-night men of the children of Israel to search out the land. And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come unto thee, that are entered into thy house; for they are come to search out all the land. Now the woman had taken the two men, and [o]hidden them; and she said, True: the men did come unto me, but I knew not whence they were; and it came to pass, when the gate was to be shut at dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I know not; [p]pursue them quickly, that ye may overtake them. But she had taken them up to the roof, and hid them with the stalks of flax which she had arranged upon the roof. And the men pursued after them, the Jordan way, unto the fords; and when they who were pursuing after them had gone out, they shut the gate.

And before they were lain down, she went up to them upon the roof, and said unto the men, I [q]know that Jehovah hath given you the land, and that the [r]dread of you is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how Jehovah [s]dried up the waters of the Red Sea before you when ye came out of Egypt; also what ye did to the two [t]kings of the Amorites, which were on the other side of Jordan,—to Sihon and Og, whom ye destroyed

o Ex. 1. 19. Jas. 2. 25. Heb. 11. 31.

p 2 Sam. 17. 19.

q cf. 1 Sam. 25. 29, 30.

r Gen. 35. 5. Ex. 15. 14, 16.

s Ex. 14. 21, 22. Ps. 18. 15-19.

t Num. 21. 21-35. Ps. 136. 13-22.

"Jericho" means "fragrance;" and such is the world to the men of it, though it lies, as they own, too near the river of death. Indeed, though the earth be full of the Lord's mercies, and there is abundant testimony in it to the Creator-God, yet death is never out of view, and judgment lies the other side of death, as Israel's camp lay beyond Jordan. God is for its inhabitants in the enemy's camp, and how are they to distinguish Him from the enemy? nay, is He not the One upon whom all the power of the enemy depends? Yes, that is plain; and the hearts of the men of Jericho sink as they realize it. Alas, faint hearts may yet make stubborn resistance, and the power of sin and Satan is nowhere more fully seen than here. Where God is seen but as an enemy, and His judgment against sin treated but as an enemy's act, the soul hardens itself against Him, and would rid itself of the presence of those who are His people, and identified with the hated truth. The king of Jericho sends to apprehend those whom faith in Rahab welcomes as the means of deliverance. Yet they stand in the same relationship to her as to them; but faith argues, must there not be good in God? and there is the germ of repentance also, for if there be good in God realized, we must be with Him against ourselves.

Rahab hides the spies therefore, identifying herself at her own personal risk with those who are the people of God. Her works justify her as a believer, show by their character that she has faith, which is what James speaks of; not justify her as righteousness *before God*, which is what Paul denies absolutely as to Abraham. (Rom. iv. 2.) The harlot Rahab has no righteousness to trust in, no moral character to commend her to God. But she has the faith of a poor sinner that clings to Him; and that faith, as all true faith will, manifests itself as living and real, spite of her lying to the king of Jericho's messengers, in which we see at once her faith and the weakness of it.

Rahab's confession of God, and where He is, is full and clear: "Jehovah your God, He is God in heaven above, and in the earth beneath." And then she puts in her prayer for mercy, in which she includes all her father's house. And good it is to see how promptly and confidently the men of Israel are able to pledge themselves to the fullest extent that faith can ask. Theirs is no may-be gospel,

under ban. We heard, and our hearts [u]melted, and there remained no spirit any more in any man because of you; for Jehovah your God, he is God in heaven above and in earth beneath. And now, I pray you, swear to me by Jehovah, since I have dealt kindly with you, that ye also will deal kindly with my [v]father's house, and give me a true [w]token; and that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death. And the men said unto her, [x]Our lives for yours, if ye utter not this our business: and it shall be, when Jehovah giveth us the land, that we will deal [y]kindly and truly with thee. Then she let them down by a [z]cord through the window; for her house was on the city-wall, and she dwelt upon the wall. And she said unto them, get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers light upon you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned; and afterward ye can go your way.

u ch. 5. 1.
v Gen. 19. 12.
w Ex. 12. 13.
x *cf.* Heb. 6. 13–20.
y Gen. 24. 49.
z 1 Sam. 19. 12. Acts 9. 25.

And the men said unto her, We will be blameless as to this oath which thou hast made us swear. Behold, when we are come into the land, thou shalt bind in the window this line of [a]scarlet thread by which thou hast let us down. And thou shalt gather unto thee in the house thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's house; and it shall be, that whosoever shall [b]go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we shall be blameless; and every one that shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be upon our head if hand be upon him. And if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us swear. And she said, According to your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed; and she [c]bound the scarlet line in the window.

a *cf.* Heb. 9. 12–14.
b *cf.* Ex. 12. 22. Col. 1. 23. Heb. 3. 6.
c ver. 13, 18.

but positive enough to give confidence to a soul in need. And such is the gospel of God to-day: it is a gospel the reception of which gives peace to the soul. It is not yea and nay, but yea. For if "blessed are all they that put their trust in Him," self need not occupy or terrify me: the object of faith it cannot be. I am free to rest all upon a Saviour, and then not confidence is presumption, but the *lack* of confidence.

But Rahab wants a "token," and the spies are able to give her that. The line of scarlet thread by which she lets them down out of the window is bound in the window as a sign, not to herself of course, but to the messengers of judgment when they come, that judgment is not to fall upon any in that sheltered house. What has been the means of their own deliverance they give to her as hers; and the likeness to the blood-sheltered houses in the night of the passover is at once evident. The "scarlet" was in fact the blood of an insect (vol. i. p. 487, *n.*) the "worm" of Ps. xxii., and in this way how plain the reference to the Lord! There is but one thing that can secure the sinner in the day of judgment, and of that God gives us many assurances.

Still Rahab has another witness for her, and without this the scarlet line would be of no avail,—a living witness—two being, as we know, sufficient testimony—

And they went, and came unto the mountain, and abode there three days, until the pursuers were returned; and the pursuers sought them throughout all the way, and found them not. And the two men returned, and descended from the mountain, and passed over, and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all that had befallen them. And they said unto Joshua, Truly Jehovah hath delivered all the land into our hands; and all the inhabitants of the land even [d] faint because of us.

Through the river of death, to resurrection ground.

[d] ver. 9.

(III–V.)

1. (III.) The ark of the Lord in its peerless supremacy.

3. [1]And Joshua arose [e] early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan,—he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over. And it came to pass at the end of [f] three

[e] Gen. 22. 3. ch. 6. 12. ch. 7. 16. ch. 6. 10.

[f] ch. 1. 11.

in the camp of Israel. And this has its meaning for us: Christ risen from the dead is the living Witness for us before God. What would His death for us have been but the direst calamity, apart from resurrection? And thus if the apostle speaks of our "being justified by His blood" (Rom. v. 9), he no less speaks of Him as being "raised from the dead for our justification" (iv. 25). If His death be, as it were, *Christ* for us, His resurrection is *God* for us; and thus we "believe on Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead" (24), for this is what characterizes Him toward us as a Saviour-God. That the men tarry three days before they cross the river may be a further hint of this very thing.

3. We now come to another most impressive type of resurrection, most evident surely as this, the passage of the people through Jordan into the land. Our thoughts are necessarily carried back to the similar passage through the Red Sea which lay at the beginning of their wilderness-journey as this at the end of it, and of which it is thus, as it were, the completion. And so the history itself presents it, for when they have come to Gilgal Jehovah says to them, "This day have I caused the reproach of Egypt to pass from you;" and as then it was said that the "hosts of Jehovah went out of the land of Egypt," so at Gilgal the angel of Jehovah comes as Captain of Jehovah's host.

We shall find help, then, surely, in comparing these two passages, the one, the departure from Egypt and the entrance into the wilderness; the other, the departure from the wilderness and the entrance into Canaan. The wilderness was but necessary discipline by the way; the land is the end of the way, and rest.

We have already looked at the passage of the Sea, and found in it the vivid representation of the truth in Romans, that as dead with Christ we are dead to sin and to law. It is the backward glance at what we are brought out from; and resurrection with Christ, though implied, is not dwelt on. This is exactly the case in Romans: we have just suggested the "newness of life," "the likeness of His resurrection" in which we are called to walk; but we must go on to Colossians to find "risen with Christ" put in direct antithesis to "dead with Christ." Ephesians carries us on still further to "seated together in Him in heavenly places," and the side of truth in Romans, "dead with Christ," is now omitted. The New Testament, like the Old, takes these things, as it were, apart, that we may consider them better.

Resurrection with Christ is at Jordan very strikingly shown forth, but our being dead with Christ is not omitted; we go on also, as in Ephesians, into the land. Thus the whole truth is put together here.

We must examine it, however, now in detail.

(i.) Strikingly and beautifully, in the first place, we have the ark of the Lord put in its unique place, as that which alone does the work, and manifests its

days that the officers went through the camp; and they charged the people, saying, When ye see the [g] ark of the covenant of Jehovah your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it. Yet there shall be a [h] space between you and it of about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye go; for ye have not gone this way heretofore. And Joshua said unto the people, [i] Sanctify yourselves; for to-morrow will Jehovah do wonders among you. And Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people. And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people. And Jehovah said unto Joshua, [j] This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that as I was with [k] Moses, so will I be with thee. And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the waters of Jordan, ye shall [l] stand still in Jordan. And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither, and hear the words of Jehovah your God. And Joshua said, Hereby shall ye know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail dispossess from before you the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Hivite, and the Perizzite, and the Girgashite, and the Amorite, and the Jebusite. Behold, the ark of the covenant of the [m] Lord of all the earth passeth before you into Jordan. And now take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man. And it shall be, when the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of Jehovah, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, the waters of Jordan, even the waters that come down from above, shall be [n] cut off, and stand in a heap.

[g] Num. 10. 33. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 3, 4. Heb. 6. 20.

[h] *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 20-23.

[i] Ex. 19. 10. *cf.* Heb. 10. 22.

[j] ch. 4. 14. *cf.* Phil. 2. 9-11.

[k] ch. 1. 17. 2 Kings 2. 9, 10. *cf.* Jno. 16. 7.

[l] *cf.* Jno. 10. 11.

[m] Gen. 14. 19. Ps. 24. 1.

[n] *cf.* Rom. 8. 1 with Ps. 22. 1.

power in behalf of the people. This is jealously maintained. Two thousand cubits separate between it, and those that walk in the track it opens. This two thousand is, of course, 2×10^3, and may speak to us of *realized capacity for salvation*: this is indeed the impassable distance between the cross and all that would seem to approach it. Let us remember what this ark is: that it not merely represents the throne of the Lord, but that it carries the blood-sprinkled mercy-seat,—that it is the throne of grace founded on propitiation. How necessary to maintain in its full breadth this separation between that peerless work and all else! How else should we know the way by which we should go?

And now Joshua is to be honored in the sight of all Israel, and it is to be shown that God is with him. The link is plain enough spiritually; the living Christ glorified in what His death accomplishes. All enemies must give way when God manifests Himself for Christ, in behalf of His people. Seven nations here exhibit the complete power of the enemy, only to show the power of the Lord supreme above it.

The ark too is the throne of the "Lord of all the earth." We have seen that Satan acts through the power of the world to hinder our entrance into the heavenly portion. But though he has usurped power over the world through

And it was so, that when the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jordan, the priests that bare the ark of the covenant being before the people, and when they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the edge of the water,—and Jordan [o]overfloweth all its banks all the days of harvest,—the waters that came down from above stood [and] rose up in a heap, far away, at the city Adam, that is beside [p]Zarethan; and those that went down to the sea of the Arabah, even the salt sea, were completely cut off; and the people passed over opposite Jericho. And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of Jehovah stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all Israel passed over on [q]dry ground, until all the nation had quite passed over Jordan.

2. (iv. 1–18.) The memorial stones: "dead with Christ" in His death.

[2]And it was so, when all the nation had quite passed over Jordan, that Jehovah spake unto Joshua, saying, Take you [r]twelve men out of the people, from every tribe a man, and command them, saying, Take hence out of the midst of Jordan, from the place in which the priests' feet stood firm, twelve [s]stones, and carry them over with you, and lay them down in the lodging-place, where ye shall lodge this night. And Joshua called the twelve men whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, [t]out of every tribe a man; and said unto them, Pass over before the ark of Jehovah your God into the midst of Jordan, and take ye up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, that this may be a sign among you. When your [u]children shall ask in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? then ye shall say

o Ps. 42. 7.

p 1 Kings 7. 46.

q Ex. 14. 29.

r ch. 3. 12.

s *cf.* Matt 26. 26–29.

t *cf.* Ex. 28. 17–21. 1 Kings 18. 31.

u ver. 21. Ex. 13. 14. Ps. 78. 4. Eph. 6. 4.

man's lust to which he ministers, the earth is yet the Lord's, and owns His sway. He maketh all things work together for good to them that love Him, and godliness to have the promise of the life that now is, as well as that which is to come. Our home is not on earth, but who enjoys even things here as he who can look up to the Lord of heaven and earth as his Father? The bitterest pain is eased, the heaviest blow finds us shielded from it, the front of an enemy becomes the salutation of a friend, when God is seen as everywhere, and everywhere for us; and this is what Ephesians, the book of the heavenly places, itself reminds us of—"one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all" (ch. iv. 6): not an unsuited truth to keep the dust of the world out of your eyes as you march to the conquest of the heavenly places!

Jordan fills all its banks all the time of harvest: for Christ, when He rolled back its stream for us, death had all its terrors. But its flood is stopped, its waters are heaped very far off, so that they should not come near His people at their crossing. It was our death He bore: it is taken then out of the way; we pass over to our inheritance, untouched and unhindered by it.

(ii.) This passage is ever to be remembered. Effected once for all, it is to be continually recalled. Joshua therefore commands twelve men, one being chosen of each of the twelve tribes, so as to represent clearly the whole of them, to take up out of the bed of the river, from the place in which the priests' feet stand firm, twelve stones, to be placed as a memorial in the lodging-place they

unto them that the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of Jehovah; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be a memorial unto the children of Israel forever. And the children of Israel did so, as Joshua had commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, as Jehovah spake unto Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel; and they carried them over with them into the place where they lodged, and laid them down there. And Joshua set up twelve stones in the [v]midst of Jordan, in the place where the priests' feet stood, who bare the ark of the covenant: and there they are unto this day. And

v cf. Gal. 6. 14.

occupy that night. Twelve other stones Joshua has set up in the bed of Jordan at the same spot; but although they also clearly are representative, they are not connected with these *living* representatives: and in this the minute accuracy of the type is apparent. For the spiritual mind, the spiritual meaning, and the most perfect spiritual order, govern all.

Christ has been through death for us, and that death was our death: it was burdened with the weight of our sins, a death of wrath and curse, to deliver the children of wrath. Dying thus in our stead, we who believe in Him have died—are dead—with Him. It is not an individual experience; it is not *experience* at all: it is a fact independent even of our faith in it, but our faith in which imports much as to the character of our Christianity. We have died with Him, not die ourselves, but *are* dead,—"dead to sin," "dead to the law," "crucified to the world," "our old man crucified with Him" (Rom. vi., vii.; Gal. vi. 14): these are absolute statements of Scripture, true of every real Christian, and by faith to be translated into the sphere of practice: "reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus." (Rom. vi. 11, *Gk.*)

Here are the stones in the bed of the river, with which no living personality is connected, because they speak of death, not life; yet with which is connected the thought of representation, because it is in our Representative we died. We *reckon* ourselves dead, not feel or find: we impute that (upon God's warrant) to be true which experience does not assent to, for it knows nothing of it; it is not within its sphere to know. How can we *experience* the death of Christ? We believe in it, and rejoice believing; we believe what it has accomplished for us, and experience its practical value for our souls.

Alive in Christ before God, we can look back upon what we were, and own it, yet refuse it. It is *our old man* that was crucified with Christ. As in the resurrection-day that (not far off) beckons us, we shall be able to look back upon our present selves as the men that were, so are we able to look back upon what we were before conversion as "our old man." It is singular, however, not plural, for it is what we were in Adam that is intended by this, and there was no "second man" till Christ. We are now in Christ, a new creation, and so with a new standing. In Christ's death we died out of the old. The "flesh" is in us, and "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves" (1 Jno. i. 8), but we must distinguish between "flesh" and the "old man," which is never spoken of as in us, but as "put off" (Eph. iv. 22, *Gk;* Col. iii. 9), even as in natural death the "tabernacle" is put off. (2 Pet. i. 14.) The flesh is in us, but we are not in it (Rom. viii. 9), not identified with it before God: the *nature* is there, but the *person* has passed away; we are alive in Christ Jesus.

This, then, is what we find in the twelve stones in Jordan; how distinctly is shown the change that has taken place, when now twelve *other* stones are taken from the bed of Jordan to be set upon the dry ground. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor. v. 17.)

the priests who bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan, until all was finished that Jehovah had commanded Joshua to speak unto the people, according to all that Moses had commanded Joshua. And the people hasted and passed over. And it was so, when all the people had quite passed over, that the ark of Jehovah passed over, and the priests, in the presence of the people. And the [w]children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, passed over in array before the children of Israel, as Moses had spoken unto them: about forty thousand, armed for war, passed over before Jehovah unto battle, to the plains of Jericho. In that day, Jehovah magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him as they feared Moses, all the days of his life. And Jehovah spake unto Joshua, saying, Command the priests that bear the ark of the testimony, that they come up out of Jordan. And Joshua commanded the priests, saying, Come up out of Jordan. And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of Jehovah had come up out of the midst of Jordan, [and] the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry ground, that the waters of Jordan [x]returned unto their place, and flowed over all its banks as before.

w ch. 1. 12-18.

x Ex. 14. 26-28. cf. Jno. 3. 36.

But we must remember that it is in Christ he is looked at; and this alone can justify the absoluteness of the expressions. If we make it read, "If any man be converted," or born again, and think simply of condition as experience declares it to us, who can say, "*all* things"? There is a change indeed, a marvelous change, as "new creature" testifies: the man in Christ *is* a man born again, and a possessor of eternal life; but, as already said, he has still the flesh in him, even when he has the Spirit; "and the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye should not"—not "cannot"—"do the things that ye would." (Gal. v. 17.) Looked at in Christ, however, we are seen as only in the new nature, not the old; and thus "*all* things new" cannot be too absolute.

The living men, therefore, are identified with these stones, which are taken out of Jordan and put on the Canaan side of the river. We are risen with Christ out of death: once more what is true of Christ is on that account true of His people. They are associated with Christ in His triumph over death, and in the new place He has taken. Resurrection is more than receiving a new life,—not a deeper, but a *further* thing; and always distinguished from it: "He hath quickened us together with Christ," says the apostle, "and raised us up together." (Eph. ii. 5, 6.) And in Colossians we find *death* contrasted with *life* (quickening), as *burial* with *resurrection*. (Chap. ii. 12, 13.) Burial is the recognition of death; resurrection, of life out of it. Burial is putting the dead into the place of death and away from the living. Resurrection is, on the other hand, the bringing the living out of the place of the dead *into* that of the living. Christianity separates (as Judaism did not) the living from the dead, and the saint from the world. Christ is the Heavenly; and "as is the Heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." (1 Cor. xv. 48.) "They are not of the world," He says, "even as I am not of the world." (Jno. xvii. 14, 16.)

And these things are to be remembered. We *are* dead; we must *reckon* ourselves dead. The memorial stones were not intended more strictly for Israel's eyes than the admonition of them is for us. They "*happened* unto them for types, and are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are

3. (iv. 19-v.) Deliverance fully realized, as brought into the land.

a (iv. 19-24.) The place of power.

3 (*a*) And the people came up out of Jordan on the [y] tenth [day] of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, on the east border of Jericho. And those twelve stones which they had taken out of Jordan did Joshua set up in Gilgal. And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your [z] children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry ground. For Jehovah your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as Jehovah your God had done to the Red Sea, which he dried up from before us till we were passed over; that all the peoples of the earth might know that Jehovah's hand is mighty; that ye might fear [a] Jehovah your God continually.

b (v. 1.) The enemy quails.

(*b*) And it was so, when all the kings of the Amorites that were beyond Jordan westward, and all the kings of the [b] Canaanites that were by the sea, heard that Jehovah had dried up the waters of Jordan before the children of Israel, till they were passed over, that their heart [c] melted, and there was no spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel.

[y] Ex. 12. 3.

[z] ver. 6.

[a] 1 Pet. 1. 17-21.

[b] Ex. 15. 14.

[c] ch. 2. 11. ch. 7. 5.

come." We ought to know them: we are responsible to walk in the power of this knowledge.

Only for the people of God is Jordan dried: they having passed through, it returns to its strength, and flows over all its banks as it did before.

(iii.) The people are now, as it were, on resurrection-ground. What the passage through the Sea implied is now accomplished: deliverance is now for the first time fully realized. True, there are now enemies before them, while at the Red Sea they were behind them; and the river now behind them cuts them off from retreat. God's word to us is also, "Forward!" and in all the panoply of God which we are exhorted to put on, there is *no armor for the back*. All depends upon this for us, and with our faces to the foe we shall never be beaten.

(*a*) Gilgal is their first camp in Canaan, where the stones are pitched; and to it after their battles they constantly return. It is their impregnable stronghold, and base of support. How should they not be strong in the remembrance of that marvelous deliverance! God is for them: who shall be against them? who shall force them back into that flood through which He has so marvelously brought them? It would be *His* dishonor. The stones abide here solidly with their firm assurance: "Israel came over this Jordan on dry ground." Thus "as the hills are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people." To reach *them* their enemies must strike through *Him!*

For us also the place of resurrection is our impregnable defense: it is upon this Rock Christ builds His church, and the gates of hades cannot prevail against it. We are dead with Him, and out of the old creation; risen with Him, and beyond death itself. Nay, we are "seated together in Him in the heavenly places,"—we have a secure lodgment, whence not all the power of the enemy can drive us back. But from thence the pleasant land our portion lies before us, and if there are foes to meet, we have the assurance that wherever we plant our foot, the land is our own.

(*b*) The news of the passage of Jordan fills the kings of the Amorites and Canaanites with terror; their hearts melt, and there is no spirit left in them. Satan knows well with whom in all this conflict he has really to do, and before the strength of the Lord he cowers. When we go forth in our own, he lifts his

c (v. 2-9.) Circumcision renewed in the land: the new consecration.

(*c*) At that time, Jehovah said unto Joshua, Make thee flint knives, and [d] circumcise the children of Israel again a second time. And Joshua made him flint knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins. And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised [them]: all the people that came out of Egypt, [that were] males, [even] all the men of war, had [e] died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt. Now all the people that came out had been circumcised; but all the people that were born in the wilderness by the way, as they came forth out of Egypt, them they had [f] not circumcised. For the chil-

[d] *cf.* Col. 2. 11. Col. 3. 5.

[e] Num. 14. 29. Num. 26. 64, 65.

[f] *cf.* Gen. 17. 14. 1 Tim. 3. 4, 5.

head again; and thus we go on now to learn afresh the lesson of circumcision, as we need to realize it afresh in every new sphere on which we enter.

(*c*) And here we come to that from which Gilgal gets its name. It is when Israel is circumcised afresh at the hill of the foreskins that God says, "This day have I rolled away from you the reproach of Egypt:" and so the place is called Gilgal, "a rolling away."

But what was the reproach of Egypt? If we realize the whole connection here, there can hardly be a doubt that it was the reproach of their bondage there which circumcision now, the token of their covenant with Jehovah, rolls away. For us this is to be a type and an admonition, and well it may be.

The bondage in Egypt answers to the natural condition as experienced in its bitterness by the awakened man. Egypt is the world in its independence of God, walking by its own light, doing its own will, following its own way. And this is *sin:* "we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all." Our way is the way of death; and this death He had to take for our salvation. When the soul is once awakened by God's grace, the misery of our own way is felt as the bitterest bondage, but we cannot, at will, deliver ourselves. God must come in, and by redemption break our bonds, and set us free.

Israel had long left Egypt, however, and were then a circumcised people. Circumcision is the judgment of the flesh, the breaking of confidence in it, the putting it off as judged by the cross. (Phil. iii. 3; Col. ii. 11; Gen. xvii., *notes.*) But this, if real, is the breaking of our *wills* therefore, that we may be yielded up to Another's perfect will. It is the principle of holiness, of consecration; though in the consciousness of utter weakness, in which His strength alone can be perfected.

Israel came out of Egypt a circumcised people, as souls in the first joy of salvation devote themselves to God. But they came into a wilderness in which they lingered, refusing to go into the land; and in the wilderness lost largely their circumcised character. In the wilderness they had not circumcised: the toil of the way, as it seems, had pleaded excuse from a painful rite, and it had dropped out, as it would appear, unnoticed. Now, in the land, as soon as they reach it, the word of the Lord arouses them to their condition. Uncircumcised, they could only be, but for the Lord's grace, cut off as outside His covenant. Grace alone it is that here comes in for them, and restores the broken link: how blessed to see in the face of all this assurance of man's helplessness and ruin the grace of God thus shining forth!

Power for the mortification of the flesh,—power to keep it, that is, in the place of death that belongs to it,—cannot be maintained by the joy merely of salvation, of deliverance from Egypt. There must be entrance into the land, appropriation of a heavenly portion, the joy of what lies beyond that world, subject to death, through which we pass. Otherwise we get quietly accustomed to the fact of deliverance, and the grey hairs of the desert show that the vigor of life has declined. The uncircumcised cannot eat the passover: redemption fails

dren of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till the whole nation was consumed, [even] the men of war that came out of Egypt, because they obeyed not Jehovah's voice: unto whom Jehovah [g] sware that he would not let them see the land that Jehovah had sworn to their fathers to give us, a land that floweth with milk and honey. And their children whom he had raised up in their stead, them Joshua circumcised; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the way. And it came to pass when all the nation had been circumcised completely, that they abode still in their place in the camp till they were whole. And Jehovah said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away from you the [h] reproach of Egypt. And the name of the place is called Gilgal to this day.

d (v. 10-12.) The ceasing of manna, & the new experience.

(*d*) And the children of Israel encamped at [i] Gilgal, and kept the [j] passover the fourteenth day of the month at even, in the plains of Jericho. And they ate of the [k] old corn of the land the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn the self-same day. And the manna [l] ceased on the morrow, when they ate of the old corn of the land; nor had the children of Israel manna any more; and they ate of the produce of the land of Canaan that year.

g Ps. 95. 10, 11. Heb. 3. 18.

h etc. Heb. 11. 26.

i ch. 9. 6.

j Ex. 12. 21.

k cf. Col. 3. 1. 2 Cor. 3. 18. Heb. 2. 9.

l 2 Cor. 5. 16.

more and more to minister to us; the pilgrimage becomes a toil, less and less relieved.

For this there is no remedy till the land is reached, and the fullness of our blessing spreads itself before eager eyes. Then, as in a moment, circumcision is recovered. "If then ye be risen with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things that are upon the earth; for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God . . . *Mortify, therefore*, your members which are upon the earth." (Col. iii. 1–5.) Here is the ground of circumcision realized and maintained. Its power lies in the development of a life which is hid with Christ in God, and must find its satisfaction in that which is heavenly and eternal. Here, on the other side of Jordan, consecration becomes easy, and strength is renewed.

Cowles well calls our attention to this act of Joshua in circumcising the men of war at this point as, humanly speaking, "a *most unmilitary act*." "With apparently not the least fear lest the Canaanites should muster their forces, and fall suddenly upon them—with a deep feeling obviously that his first concern was to be right before God, and to have all his soldiers and people right in heart, and true to every precept of their God, he suspended all military movements; gave his enemies time to recover from their panic; halted his army, not only for some days of circumcision, but for the feast of the passover, seven days, —all as if religion was infinitely more than military strategy—as it truly was."

For us, how much more important that we should tarry here by the banks of Jordan, until we are in our place before God, and have our souls fed, and our spiritual strength renewed. All this connects with the truth before us: "We are the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

(*d*) Accordingly we have now brought together two things which give us the beginning and the end of the blessings of redemption, the passover and the old corn of the land. In the first, we are looking back to the work that sheltered

e (v. 13-15.) Jehovah with His people.

(e) And it came to pass when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, a [m] man standing over against him, with his sword drawn in his hand. And Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay, but as [n] captain of Jehovah's host am I now come. And Joshua [o] fell on his face to the earth, and worshiped, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto

m Gen. 18.2. Gen. 32.24. Ex. 15. 3.

n *cf.* Heb. 2. 10. Ex. 12. 41. Is. 55. 4.

o Ex. 3. 5, 6.

us in Egypt, feeding on the lamb of atonement, remembering to keep the feast with the unleavened bread also of sincerity and truth. But along with this there is a new experience: the manna ceases the day after the passover, and they eat of the old corn of the land to which they have come,—unleavened cakes and parched corn. It is still, of course, typically Christ, for He is all the food of the soul; but it is no more the bread from heaven, Christ humbled as come down into the world. This land being typically heaven, it is the produce of the land itself, a heavenly Christ *in* heaven. It is ours not merely to know Him as come down into the world, but to know Him also as gone up where He was before. He is the same blessed Person, whom circumstances cannot change, and this is our joy to know. Were He in glory *different* from the One we have seen on earth, then we could not know Him now at all, for our knowledge of Him was gained in His humiliation here; and this is what the manna carried into Canaan, the "hidden manna" of Revelation, emphasizes for us. Yes, He is the same, unchanged, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever; but for that very reason, what joy and satisfaction to the heart to follow Him in faith beyond the clouds that hid Him from the disciples gazing after Him as He went up, and to know Him in His present glory, with the divine glory in His face!

This, as the apostle tells us, is the only Christ that now we can know: "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; even though we have known *Christ* after the flesh, yet now we know Him so no more." (2 Cor. v. 16.) For there is but one Christ, not two: and He is in heaven: blessed be God, the very One who wrought redemption; Priest on earth to do it; Priest now within the sanctuary, and upon the throne.

That He is still Man this old corn of the land assures us; and what sustenance for our souls to know Him there, "faithful to Him that appointed Him," bearing us upon His heart, as the typical high-priest bore the tribal names on the jewels of the breastplate. What blessedness to know that He is there also God still incarnate, the "very image of the Invisible," "the effulgence of His glory"! This is indeed wondrous food for the sustenance of the new life; manna still, but in its golden vessel in the ark: food which from the hidden sanctuary makes the life of him who partakes of it practically a life hid with Christ in God,—a life which shall be manifested only when Christ who is our life shall appear, and we shall appear with Him in glory. (Col. iii. 4.)

(e) And now, before the beginning of a conflict which is imminent, the angel of Jehovah appears to Joshua as the Leader of Jehovah's host. Commentators in general seem to decide that this host is angelic, and Keil to the reminder that Israel are spoken of as the hosts of the Lord when they come out of Egypt, makes the strange reply that the Israelites are "never called the host of the Lord in the singular." Now in Dan. viii., Keil himself agrees that Israel are called the "host of heaven," and there is even seen a "prince of the host," as here, who is clearly Christ. All that can be said against this is, that it is figurative language: and that is no doubt true; but the figure seems to be more in their being called the host of *heaven*, that is, compared to this, which leaves the rest scarcely affected.

When he says "*never* called," moreover, it is only in Ex. xii. that they are called so in the *plural:* why then should they not be once called this here, and no more?

his servant? And the captain of Jehovah's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.

(VI.)

The fall of Jericho: of the world (foreseen by faith.)

4. Now Jericho was [p]shut up and barred because of the children of Israel: none went out and none came in. And Jehovah said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thy hand Jericho and her king, [and] the mighty men of valor. And ye shall go round the city, all the men of war, encompassing the city once: thus shalt thou do [q]six days. And seven priests shall bear before the [r]ark

p ch. 2. 7. 2 Kings 6. 25.

q Gen. 7. 4.

r ch. 4. 18.

We have seen, too, that this entrance into Canaan, completing the deliverance out of Egypt, recalls some of its features very distinctly. The reproach of Egypt is but now rolled off. The drying up of Jordan repeats the miracle of the Sea. What more natural than that the "hosts of the Lord" (which seems already to look forward to the warfare now at hand) should reappear after their long burial in the wilderness as the "host of the Lord" under their heavenly Leader?

Even a reason for the slight change from "hosts" to "host" may be suggested. In Egypt their number, to which they had so wonderfully increased, spite of all the opposition of the enemy, might naturally be implied by the plural. The wilderness, on the other hand, had not allowed even ordinary increase; but its discipline had at last compacted and unified them; the generation that went into the land with Joshua was in this respect superior perhaps to any other.

Israel, then, is Jehovah's host, at the head of which Jehovah is putting Himself. He has unsheathed the sword, and the conflict to follow He Himself leads His people into; the judgment they execute is His judgment. If Joshua already speaks of Christ in us, it may seem strange that we should have Another introduced here, higher than Joshua, and the real leader of the people. We have already found, however, double representations of Christ contemporaneous with one another. Here if Joshua represent Christ in us, it may be yet necessary, because of our readiness to mistake, to guard this by showing us another Christ external to us to whom that which we account to be the Christ within yields the first place. For in all this line of things we have to remember that we have to do with those subjective experiences in which we are prone to go astray, and need, perpetually, correction by the Word. If we speak of Christ in us, it may easily be that impulses not really of Christ may simulate His voice, and that we may need the warning emphasized that there is a Voice external to us altogether, to which before all we must be in subjection. Christ is every where the same, and His Voice, wherever heard, must be of equal authority; but just on that very account what is of Christ in us will conform itself to, and own, the authority of the Christ without us, speaking by His Spirit through His Word. Here, indeed, the lowliest spirit becomes us, prostration of self, and the unshod foot. Only so can we be led surely, preserved alike from rationalism and from fanaticism, in a path of steady progress and of assured victory.

4. The fall of Jericho follows. We have seen it to be a special type of the world: to man, a savor of a sweet smell, in truth, a most fertile and attractive place, yet by the river of death, and for which beyond death lay judgment in the camp of Israel. The judgment had now come near, and in the details of it we see evident reference to the judgment of the world that shall be, but which faith anticipating makes a present thing. "And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (1 Jno. v. 4.)

Thus we have a prophetic and a present significance. As to the prophetic, we have to remember that it is of course not the judgment of the great white throne

*seven trumpets of jubilee; and on the seventh day ye shall go round the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. And it shall be, when they make a long blast with the horn of jubilee, and when ye hear the voice of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a loud shout; and the wall of the city shall fall flat; and the people shall go up, every one straight before him. And Joshua called the priests, and said unto them, Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of jubilee before the ark of Jehovah. And they said unto the people, Pass on: go round the city; and let the armed men pass on before Jehovah's ark. And so it was, when Joshua had spoken to the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of jubilee before Jehovah passed on, and blew with the trumpets; and the ark of the covenant of Jehovah went after them. And the armed men went before the priests that blew the trumpets, and the rear-guard came after the ark: they blew with the trumpets as they marched. And Joshua commanded the people, saying, Ye shall 'not shout, nor let your voice be heard, nor shall a word proceed out of your mouth until the day I say unto you, Shout: then shall ye shout. And the ark of Jehovah went round the city, encompassing it once; and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp.

* Lev. 25. 9. Num. 10. 1. *cf.* Jas. 5. 7.

' *cf.* Matt. 12. 19.

that is presented here. Then the heavens and the earth shall flee away from before the face of Him who sits upon the throne, and the *dead*—that is, those not raised in the resurrection of the blessed, a whole millennium before—small and great, stand before God to be judged out of the books, according to their works. But there is a judgment of the *quick* (the living) also, at the former time, when the Lord appears; and here not only do the "armies that are in heaven" follow in the train of their glorious Leader, but Israel also take their own place once more as of old, as solemn executioners of God's sentence upon the ripened iniquity of the nations. (Comp. Rev. xix., xx. with Zech. xii. 6, xiv. 14; Mic. v. 7–9; Obad. 14–21.) Thus Israel in the book of Joshua may well be here a type of Israel in the coming day: a day which in the book of Revelation the *seven trumpets* usher in (chap. viii.–xi. 18), as here for seven days ring out the trumpets which precede the ark, the throne of the Lord, and on the seventh day, during seven circuits.

Note, too, that they are "trumpets of *jubilee*." The word used here is the regular word for that, and there is no real warrant for "rams' horns," though the revisers of the common version have retained it. The trumpet was, no doubt, a cornet or horn, and is expressly called "horn" in the fifth verse ("horn of jubilee"); but this very verse proves that *jobel* does not mean "ram's horn;" for "horn of ram's horn," would hardly do, and the revisers could only settle the difficulty by dropping one of the words. That it was a "horn" may, according to the recognized idea of power associated with this, direct our attention to the Word of God, which, whether men recognize it or not, is that by which all events are governed, and in obedience to which the lingering judgment surely comes at last.

But "jubilee" seems in unnatural association with this thought of judgment; and here, no doubt, has been the reason for discarding the word. The prophetic meaning, if grasped, clears up at once the difficulty, and converts it into one of

And Joshua arose [u]early in the morning, and the priests took up Jehovah's ark. And the seven priests, bearing the seven trumpets of jubilee before the ark of Jehovah, went on continually, and blew with the trumpets; and the armed men went before them, and the rear-guard came after the ark of Jehovah: they blew with the trumpets as they went on. And the second day they went round the city once, and returned unto the camp: so they did six days.

And it came to pass that on the seventh day they arose early, about sunrise, and went round the city after the same manner seven times: on that day only they went round the city seven times. And it came to pass, at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, [v]Shout: for Jehovah hath given you the city. And the city shall be under [w]ban,—it and all that is in it, to Jehovah. Only [x]Rahab the harlot shall live,—she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. But [y]keep yourselves in any wise from that which is under ban, lest ye come under ban in taking of that which is banned, and bring the [z]camp of Israel under ban, and trouble it. And all the [a]silver and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are holy unto Jehovah: they shall come into the treasury of Jehovah. So the people shouted when they blew with the trumpets; and it came to pass when the people heard the sound of the trumpets, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall [b]fell down flat, and the people went up into the city,—every man straight before him, and they took the city. And they destroyed [c]under

u ch. 3. 1. ver. 15. *cf.* Mark 1. 35.

v 2 Chron. 13. 14, 15.

w 1 Sam. 15. 3.

x ch. 2. 14. *cf.* Gen. 19. 29.

y Deut. 7. 26. *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 17. Jas. 1. 27 Jno. 17. 15-19.

z ch. 7. 11. 1 Cor. 5. 6.

a Num. 31. 50.

b Heb. 11. 30.

c Ex. 25. 19. 1 Sam. 15. 1.

the strongest arguments for the deeper view. Earth's jubilee not only lies beyond the judgment of the nations, but involves and calls for it. God's blessing cannot rest upon an unpurged scene; and with the casting out of the "prince of this world," the whole system of it, which he sustains and inspires, must come to an end. And in this end God's hand must be seen against it. To use the symbol of the prophet, the stone cut out without hands, the kingdom of Christ, which no human power can introduce, must first dash to pieces the image (of Gentile empire) before it becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth. (Dan. ii.)

Thus every voice of nearing judgment is yet a trumpet of jubilee. Upon the wreck of what at best is but the lifeless form of true humanity, is to be established the glory of the kingdom of the Son of Man.

On the seventh day, at the end of the seven circuits of the city, with the final blast of the trumpet and the people's shout, the walls fall flat; the breath of the Lord has smitten down their defense, and the city is taken. So in the last days will the Lord, as prophecy shows, Himself intervene for His people, and the power of the world be prostrate as in a moment. Yet, as we hear of a spared Rahab in the type, so in the antitype are there those spared among the nations (Is. lxvi. 19; Matt. xxv. 31–40); and the sessional judgment prophesied in Matthew reads much like the story of Rahab: "I was a stranger, and ye took Me in, . . . I was in prison, and ye came unto Me. Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me."

ban all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep and ass, with the edge of the sword. And Joshua said unto the two men that had spied out the land, Go into the harlot's house, and [d] bring out thence the woman and all that she hath, as ye sware unto her. And the young men, the spies, went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had: they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel. And the city they burned with fire, and all that was therein; but the silver and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, they put into the treasury of Jehovah's house. But Rahab the harlot, and her father's house, and all that she had, Joshua saved alive; and she [e] dwelleth in Israel unto this day, because she hid the messengers that Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

And Joshua charged them with an oath at that time, saying, [f] Cursed be the man before Jehovah who shall rise up and build this city Jericho! With his first-born shall he lay the foundation, and with his youngest son shall he set up its gates. And Jehovah was with Joshua; and his fame was in all the land.

[d] Heb. 11. 31.

[e] Matt. 1. 5.

[f] 1 Kings 16. 34. *cf.* Gal. 2. 18.

This judgment of the world by God stamps it for faith already with its character. The ground of judgment is, as with all the heathen, primarily the rejection of God, which leads them into idolatry, the changing the Creator into an image of the creature, for the gratification in fact of their own lusts and passions without rebuke. The rejection of Christ when He came was but this primal sin in a form aggravated in proportion to the display of His glory, in the fullness of grace and truth. Hence the cross was the judgment of the world, a sentence it pronounced upon itself long since, though the long-suffering of God has delayed its execution. But for him who believes upon the Crucified One as Son of God the world is overcome. (1 Jno. v. 5.) "God forbid," says the apostle, "that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal. vi. 14.)

Egypt indeed, which is the world, has been long since by Israel left behind; but as we have seen in other ways, here alone is the complete realization of this deliverance. Passing the sea, they had come into the wilderness, and such is the world for the redeemed of the Lord. But the wilderness in its very nature is not the place of satisfaction for the heart, which the land is; the land flowing with milk and honey, their inheritance and rest. Looked at as in the wilderness, the people of God are still in the world, and with all its barrenness the heart can seek its own in it. Power there must be found in that which is beyond it. We must be fully outside that which is to be judged, to accept heartily that judgment; and thus it is that what seems strange at first sight is most fully in order, that it is on the entrance into the land that Jericho falls.

It is the first thing also for the conquest of the land, because, as we have seen, the conflict in heavenly places is with the "rulers of the darkness of this world;" and therefore the judgment of the world is the first necessity for successful warfare. We shall have this illustrated for us and emphasized in the very next section; and we must remember it as a practical reality, if this book of Joshua is to be translated for us into living experience. God grant that it may be so; for otherwise all these things so blessed in themselves will be but a shame and reproach and witness against us.

The details of the fall of Jericho seem *not*, however, to be facts of present experience, but prophetic of actual judgment when it comes; and this is quite as we

Divine government: Achan and Ai.

(VII., VIII.)

1. (vii.) Israel's unity in responsibility, as shown by one transgression.

5. [1](*a*) But the children of Israel [g] acted unfaithfully about the devoted thing; and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of [h] Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the devoted thing; and the anger of Jehovah was kindled against the children of [i] Israel.

a (*v.* 1) The rebel.

[g] Acts 5. 1-11.

[h] Gen. 38. 30.

[i] Lev. 4. 13. Num. 16. 22.

might expect. We see by them, however, that the people of God have to maintain the testimony as to these things: compassing the city and blowing the trumpets until the city falls; although it be only in the meantime to awaken the scorn of the men of the world, as they hear the frequent alarm of that which seems never to come. But it comes, comes steadily nearer, is surely even now at the door, and how urgent should be our testimony, which, if of no effect upon the mass, yet helps to fill Rahab's house, where the true scarlet line, as despicable in men's eyes as that of old, shields with the power of the Almighty the prisoners of hope.

5. We have now a very different lesson, in which Ai and Achan are united together. Ai, in its meaning, a "heap,"—to the present time known as *Et-Tell*, "the heap,"—naturally enough connects it with Jericho, just reduced to one; still more when we remember that the "principalities and powers in heavenly places," with whom our conflict is, are the "rulers of the darkness of this world," and that these cities, therefore, naturally represent the world in some shape. Ai is the world seen in its ruin as faith sees it, which yet apart from God's presence with us we are not able to overcome. Unjudged evil in us will yet make the world too strong for us, and this the sin of Achan does for Israel.

(i.) The unity of Israel in God's sight is also clearly shown. As one sin ruined the world at first, so here one sin unjudged brings judgment upon all Israel. But it is plain also that there is carelessness otherwise, judging by the report of the spies instead of taking counsel of the Lord, and counting on their own strength for an enemy of little power,—our own behavior, alas! too often, and a simple reason why small difficulties often overcome us, while greater ones, casting us on God, are in His strength overcome.

But Israel's unity, as realized in this way, made them every one in very deed his brother's keeper, and enforced powerfully upon them a care for holiness such as hardly any thing else could be imagined to produce. While an habitual walk with God, step by step, according to his direction, would be the only possible rule for the detection of whatever stood in the way of blessing, the only condition of success.

(*a*) To come to details: we have first of all the rebel pointed out to us, with his genealogy, which is carefully repeated afterward when his sin is brought to light. Doubtless this has a meaning: whether we can trace it or not is another matter. But our own descent from Adam has much to do with our being sinners: "heredity," great word as it is now in the mouths of men of science so-called, is found in what it represents in Scripture just as much. The difference is that what is mere "natural" science takes account only of nature, leaves out God, and binds all together in a fatalistic succession under materialistic law. Upon this understanding of it, sin disappears: it is misfortune. God disappears on the other side: He would be anomalous in such a scheme; and, instead of accounting for any thing, would need Himself to be accounted for. The iron wheel grinds out man's destiny; and he is part of the wheel: how can he complain?

Heredity there is, however, and in the history of a sinner God counts his ancestry,—his birth, and, as men say now, his environment. For these, moreover, he is not condemned: thus far Scripture agrees with materialism. But when man acts *according to* the nature he is born with, and *according to* his environment, then for this it declares him guilty, and to be punished! Somehow man is responsible to live *contrary to* his very nature *morally*, and to stem

b (2-5.) Defeat.

(*b*) And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Beth-aven, in front of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and [j] spy out the land. And the men went up and spied out Ai. And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, [k] Let not all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai: make not all the people toil thither, for they are few. And there went up thither of the people about three thousand men; and they [l] fled before the men of Ai. And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty-six men; and they pursued them from before the gate to Shebarim, and smote them on the descent; and the heart of the people [m] melted and became as water.

c (6-15.) The thing revealed in the presence of the Lord.

(*c*) And Joshua [n] rent his clothes, and [o] fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of Jehovah until evening,—he and the elders of Israel; and they cast dust upon their heads. And Joshua said, Alas! O Lord Jehovah, [p] why hast thou brought, as thou hast, this people over Jordan, to give us up into the hand of the

[j] ch. 2. 1.

[k] *cf.* ch.8. 1. Judg. 20. 18-23. 1 Cor.10.12. *ctr.* Judg.7. 2, 4-8. 1 Sam. 17. 40-45. Phil. 3. 3. Phil. 4. 13.

[l] Deut.28.25. 1 Sam. 4. 2, 10.

[m] chap. 5. 1.

[n] Lev.13.45. 1 Sam.5.12. *cf.*1Cor.5.2. 2 Cor.12.21.

[o] Num.20.6.

[p] Ex. 5. 22.

the stream he is in. And Scripture not only declares this, but a voice within man, spite of all reasonings, adds its confirmation, and makes out the man obedient to his nature to be disobedient to his God!

And "the testimony of two is true." And God can appeal to man's reason and conscience against himself, that there is, after all, in him that which should be for God, and power that he should have from God, if he has not. That he cannot have power but from God, cannot have it in independency, is simple, and the law of creaturehood; and of this he has no title to complain.

Walking apart from God, his nature and his environment govern him absolutely: and thus a sinner's genealogy counts for much. Nay, a saint slipping away from God falls under the same iron rule, and his conduct may be accounted for after the "scientific" fashion, without any more excuse for the one than for the other. This much, without going further, Achan's genealogy as given here may preach to us.

(*b*) Next we hear of Ai. It is beside Beth-aven, the "house of vanity," and in front of Bethel, the "house of God." In Abram's time, when he first comes into the land, Bethel and Ai lie on either side of him, and thus opposed to one another. (Gen. xii.) Ai is known plainly by what it associates itself with and what it is opposed to, and the stamp of the world is evidently upon it.

Jericho the greater has been overcome: they think but little of Ai; if the world has been judged in gross, it may be supposed a little thing to overcome it in detail, in the little things in which it still presents itself in our path. Just here, and perhaps on this very account, we may suffer unexpected defeat. Israel's detachment of two or three thousand turn their backs before the men of Ai, who smite them on the descent—we are always apt to be smitten upon the descent,—and inflict a loss of thirty-six men, a number which, if small, yet plainly speaks of the government of God (3 x 12) against them. In this there is hope, however, for those that know Him.

(*c*) And Joshua turns to Him at once. Yet he is in dismay at so unforeseen a calamity; all the more as he knows no reason for it. Alas! how easily we slip out of communion with God, and are not aware of it! "Deliver me from secret faults," says the psalmist. How easily, too, with most of us, God's ways, if in the dark, provoke murmuring! How unbelief dogs faith, as if it were its shadow! After all God's glorious deeds, one little check, and the whole future darkens. Yet even with its burden of unbelief on its back, faith is seen in its turning to God; and in His presence finds deliverance.

Amorites, to destroy us? *q* would we had been content, and dwelt beyond Jordan! Ah, Lord! what shall I say, after Israel have turned their backs before their enemies? And the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear it, and will surround us, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do for thy *r* great name?

q Num. 32. 1. *cfr.* Num. 14. 6–8.

r Deut. 32. 27. Ezek. 36. 21–23.

And Jehovah said unto Joshua, Rise up! why is it that thou art lying upon thy face? *s* Israel hath sinned; yea, they have even transgressed my covenant which I commanded them, and have taken even of the devoted thing, and stolen it, and dissembled also, and put it even among their stuff. And the children of Israel cannot stand before their enemies: they turn their backs before their enemies, because they have come *t* under the ban: I will not any more be with you, except ye destroy from among you the devoted thing. Rise: sanctify the people; and say, Sanctify yourselves against to-morrow; for thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel: The devoted thing is in thy midst, O Israel: thou wilt not be able to stand before thine enemies until ye put away the devoted thing out of your midst. And in the morning ye shall be brought near by your tribes; and it shall be that the tribe Jehovah taketh shall present itself by families, and the family that Jehovah taketh shall present itself by households, and the household that Jehovah taketh shall present itself man by man. And it shall be that he who is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt in the fire,—he and all that he hath, because he hath transgressed Jehovah's covenant, and because he hath wrought vileness in Israel.

s ch. 22. 18. *cf.* 1 Sam. 14. 36–46.

t ch. 6. 18.

There is really no mystery about it. What has happened can have but one solution of it. Israel has sinned. All shadows that have darkened the world find their explanation in a similar manner. Own it, and the cloud begins to clear. "The humble He guides in judgment; the humble He teaches His way." "What wilt Thou do for Thy great name?" asks Joshua. The answer is simple: God is caring for it in the very thing which now perplexes the soul of the inquirer. What poor reasoners are we, when we do not begin with God! That He will care for His name is an axiom for faith, and needs no demonstration. How shall we prove that every event has a cause? The thing is plain: the difficulty is created by trying to prove it. Suggest the doubt, and reason itself is useless, except to recall faith to its vacated post.

Doubt it not: God will care for His great name. Let no man labor to get Him out of a strait which never existed; which, if it existed, all creature resources would be too little for. Let us despair indeed, if God cannot uphold the honor of His name! Nor will He give up His people: just on this account will He chasten them. Had they not chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then they would be bastards and not sons.

But all must learn this where the Psalmist did, in the sanctuary. And there it is we learn to kiss as well as to know the rod. "So foolish," he says, "was I, and ignorant; I was even as a beast before Thee. Nevertheless"—spite of all my doubts—"I am continually with Thee: Thou hast holden me with Thy right hand." (Ps. lxxiii.)

d (16-23.) The test applied.

(*d*) And Joshua arose [u]early in the morning, and caused Israel to present themselves by their tribes; and the tribe of Judah was taken. And he made the families of Judah present themselves, and he took the family of the Zarhites. And he caused the family of the Zarhites to present themselves man by man; and Zabdi was taken. And he caused his household to present themselves man by man; and [v]Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken. And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to Jehovah the God of Israel, and make confession unto him; tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me. And Achan answered Joshua, and said, [w]Of a truth have I sinned against Jehovah, the God of Israel, and thus it is I have done. I saw among the spoil a beautiful Shinar mantle, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a tongue of gold of fifty shekels weight; and I [x]coveted them; and I took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it. And Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent, and, behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it. And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them to Joshua, and to all the children of Israel, and laid them out before Jehovah.

e (24-26.) The judgment.

(*e*) And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the mantle, and the tongue of gold, and his [y]sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had; and they brought them up unto the valley of Achor. And Joshua said, How hast thou

u ch. 6. 15. ch. 8. 10. 1 Sam. 14. 41. *cf.* Deut. 21. 2.

v Num. 32. 23. *cfr.* 1 Cor. 11. 27-32.

w *cf.* Matt. 27. 3, 4. 2 Cor. 7. 10.

x Ex. 20. 17. Gen. 3. 6. Col. 3. 5. Jas. 1. 14, 15.

y Num. 16. 27. ch. 22. 20.

(*d*) Israel has sinned: but who is the actual offender? To discover this they are made to present themselves by tribes, by families, by individuals, the lot being cast and unfailingly determining all. This slow approach toward conviction, when it might rather have been expected that the sinner would have been at once named by Him under whose eye he was, seems perfectly suited to exercise the consciences of all, and to lead the guilty one to anticipate conviction by a free confession. But it comes all too late, pressed out at last, when concealment can no longer avail any thing. Then he owns: "I saw, I coveted, I took:" the old, ever-repeating story of sin, in which heredity clearly manifests itself, kleptomania from our first mother; but there is no justification on this account.

It was on the new earth, risen out of the flood of Noah's day, that Babylon was first developed. Here among Israel, on typical resurrection-ground, we find connected with this first sin, a "mantle of Shinar." With this, too, silver and gold are not difficult to associate, standing here, of course, just for what they represent to those who lust for them. Shinar is not indeed precisely Babylon, though more in name than in reality separate. It was the plain in which the city stood, in the same relation to it as Lot's coveted "plain of Jordan" to Sodom, into which he gravitated from it.

(*e*) Judgment follows the discovery of Achan's sin; and it is plain that his family suffer with him. As the law forbad the putting to death of children for their father's sins, we are shut up to the conclusion that they were involved with him in the guilt of what he had done, as the burial of the stolen things in the

troubled us! Jehovah troubleth thee this day. And all Israel [z]stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire, and stoned them with stones. And they raised over him a great heap of stones, [which is there] to this day. And Jehovah turned from the fierceness of his anger: wherefore the name of that place is called, The valley of [a]Achor, unto this day.

[z] Lev. 24.14, 23. *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 9-13.

[a] Hos. 2. 15. Is. 65. 10. Is. 1. 27.

2.(viii.1-29.) Conflict, & Jehovah's help.

[2] And Jehovah said unto Joshua, [b]Fear not, nor be dismayed: take with thee [c]all the people of war, and arise, go up to Ai; see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land; and thou shalt do unto Ai and her king as thou didst unto [d]Jericho and her king: only the spoil thereof and the cattle thereof shall ye take for a [e]prey unto yourselves: set thee an [f]ambush for the city behind it. And Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai. And Joshua chose thirty thousand mighty men of valor, and sent them away by night. And he commanded them, saying, Behold, ye shall lie in ambush against the city, behind the city: be not very far from the city, and be all of you ready; and I and all the people with me will draw near to the city; and it shall be when they come out against us, as at the first, that we will flee before them. And they will come out after us till we have drawn them away from the city; for they will say, They flee before us as at the first: therefore will we flee before them. And ye shall rise up from the ambush, and take possession of the city; for Jehovah your God giveth it up into your hand. And it shall be, when ye have taken the city, that ye shall set the city on fire: according to the word of Jehovah shall ye do: see, I have commanded you.

[b] ch. 1. 6.

[c] *cf.* ch. 7. 3.

[d] ch. 6. 24.

[e] Num. 31. 12.

[f] Jud. 20.29. ver.4,7,etc. 2Chron.20. 22 2 Sam. 12. 1-9. *cf.* 2Cor.12. 16. 1Thess.2.5.

And Joshua sent them forth, and they went to lie in ambush, and stayed between Bethel and Ai, westward of Ai; and Joshua lodged that night among the people. And Joshua rose up [g]early in the morning and mustered the people, and went up,—he and the elders of Israel, before the people, to Ai. And all the people of war that were with him went up, and drew near, and came before the city: and they encamped on the north of Ai, and there was a ravine between them and Ai.

[g] ch. 7. 16. 1 Sam.9.26.

midst of his tent would otherwise make probable. It would seem out of place to infer, as some have done, mob violence in a solemn judgment executed in the presence of Joshua and all Israel.

(ii.) And now what hindered God's power acting for them being removed, Joshua is encouraged to go up again against Ai. But their former presumption still needs rebuke; and thus they are made to labor in the capture of the city, spite of its littleness. All the people take part in it. An ambush is placed behind the city, and they are made to feign that they are fleeing as they fled before. All this is clearly humiliation for their pride. How much in that which is work that we do for God has to conform itself to the need there is in us! God shapes His instruments, even while He works with them.

And he took about five thousand men, and set them to lie in ambush between Bethel and Ai, on the west of the city. And when they had set the people, the whole camp, on the north of the city, and their ambush on the west of the city, Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley.

And it was so, when the king of Ai saw it, that the men of the city hasted, and rose up early, and went out against Israel to battle,—he and all his people, to the appointed place, before the plain: and he knew not that there was an ambush against him behind the city. And Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before them, and fled the way of the wilderness. And all the people that were in the city were called together to pursue after them; and they pursued after Joshua, and were drawn away from the city. And there was not a man left in Ai or in Bethel that went not out after Israel. And they left the city open and pursued after Israel.

And Jehovah said unto Joshua, [h] Stretch out the javelin that is in thy hand toward Ai; for I will give it into thy hand: and Joshua stretched out the javelin that was in his hand toward the city. And the ambush rose up quickly out of their place, and they ran, as soon as he had stretched out his hand, and entered into the city, and took it; and they hasted, and set the city on fire. And the men of Ai turned, and saw, and, behold, the smoke of the city rose up to heaven; and they had no power to flee this way or that; and the people that were fleeing to the wilderness turned upon the pursuers. And when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city, and the smoke of the city rising up, they turned back and slew the men of Ai. And the others came out of the city against them; and they were in the midst of Israel, some on this side and some on that side; and they smote them, so that they let none of them remain or escape. And the [i] king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua.

[h] Ex. 14. 27, 28.

[i] *ctr.* 1 Sam. 15. 8.

And it came to pass, when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the wilderness wherein they had pursued them, and they were all fallen by the edge of the sword until they were consumed, that all Israel returned to Ai, and smote it with the edge of the sword. And so it was that all that fell that day, men as well as women, were twelve thousand,—all the men of Ai. For Joshua drew not back his hand wherewith he stretched out the javelin until

Ai is taken, however, and destroyed, her king hung upon a tree, and then taken down, and a heap raised over him, as before with Achan. They had been indeed partners in evil; and Achan a worse trouble than the king of Ai could have been. Evil indulged among the people of God is the ally of the foe without, and the only true hindrance to continuous progress.

he had destroyed under the ban all the inhabitants of Ai. Only the cattle and the spoil of that city Israel took as booty for themselves, according to the word of Jehovah which he had commanded Joshua. And Joshua burned Ai, and made it a heap forever, a desolation to this day. And the king of Ai he [j]hanged upon a tree until the evening; and at the going down of the sun, Joshua commanded, and they took down his carcass from the tree, and cast it down at the entrance of the city, and raised over it a great heap of stones, [there] to this day.

j Deut. 21. 22. 23. 2Sam.21.9. Gal. 3. 13. Jno. 19. 31.

3.(vv.30-35.) The seal of the covenant set upon the land.

3 Then Joshua built an [k]altar unto Jehovah, the God of Israel, in Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of Jehovah had commanded the children of Israel, as it was written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones upon which [l]no iron had been lifted up; and they offered on it burnt-offerings to Jehovah, and sacrificed peace-offerings. And he wrote there on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel. And all Israel, and their elders and officers, and their judges, stood on this side and on that side of the ark before the priests the Levites, which bare the ark of Jehovah's covenant, the stranger as well as the home-born, half of them toward Mount Gerizim and half of them toward Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of Jehovah had commanded to bless the people of Israel, at the beginning. And afterward he [m]read all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded that Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, and the women and the little ones, and the strangers that went about among them.

k Deut. 27. 11-14. Deut. 28.

l Ex. 20. 25. *cf.* Rom. 4. 4, 5.

m *cf.* Neh. 8. 2-18.

(IX.)

The Gibeonites and the victory of guile.

6. And it was so, when all the [n]kings heard [it] that were on this side Jordan, in the hill-country, and in the lowland, and on all the shore of the great sea, over against Lebanon,—the Hittite and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, that they gathered themselves together, to fight with Joshua and with Israel, with one accord. And the

n ch. 10.1-5. *cf.* Ps. 83. 1-8.

(iii.) And now the seal of their covenant with Jehovah is set upon the land, according to Moses' commandment, an altar of whole stones being reared upon Mount Ebal, along with other great stones plastered, upon which the law was written. (Comp. Deut. xxvii.) The blessings were then read from Gerizim, the curses from Ebal. Thus the whole land was declared to be under the authority of the law, and sanctified to Jehovah.

6. Hardly, however, is this accomplished before we are called again to see the incompetence of the hands which have just graven the law upon the stones of Ebal. The "wiles of the devil" are in Ephesians that against which we are especially called to "stand." Canaanitish wiles we find here prevailing against the people of God; and once more the secret of failure is the lack of seeking guidance from God.

inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai; and they also did, in [o]subtlety, and went and made themselves [p]ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine-skins, old and rent and bound up, and [q]old shoes and patched upon their feet, and old clothes upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry, it had become mouldy. And they went to Joshua, unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, From a far country are we come; and now make a [r]covenant with us. And the men of Israel said unto the Hivites, Perhaps ye dwell among us; and how shall we make a covenant with you? And they said unto Joshua, We are thy servants. And Joshua said unto them, Who are ye? and whence come ye? And they said unto him, From a very far country are thy servants come, because of the name of Jehovah thy God; for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt, and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites that were beyond Jordan,—to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, who was at Ashtaroth. And our elders, and all the inhabitants of our country, spake unto us, saying, Take provision in your hand for the way, and go to meet them, and say unto them, We are your servants: make, therefore, a covenant with us. This [s]bread of ours we took hot for our provision out of our houses the day we came forth to meet you; and now, behold, it is dry, and is become mouldy. And these wine-skins which

o *ctr.* ch. 8. 2. *cf.* Eph. 6. 11. 2 Cor. 2. 11.

p *cf.* 2 Cor. 11. 13-15.

q *ctr.* Deut. 8. 4. Neh. 9. 21.

r Deut. 7. 2. Deut. 20. 15.

s Ex. 16. 14-36.

How hard it is to learn aright the lesson of dependence upon God! And our own wisdom, how continually does it deceive us! It is the last thing perhaps to which we apply the cross. Yet it is plain that Satan, with his thousands of years of acquired knowledge, will have immeasurable advantage over us, except as revelation is adhered to, and the Spirit of God gives us ability to use the point and edge of the Word. For "the sword of the Spirit" is not the "*Word* of God" exactly, but rather "the *saying* of God." (Eph. vi. 17, *Gk.*) We must have, not the book merely, but the text: and thus even the Lord, as a perfect example for us, met Satan in the wilderness.

The Gibeonites are able to talk piously. They have a certain kind of faith grounded on Jehovah's miracles, and concede to the people of God their title to the land. They are friends, not foes, and seek alliance. They have come a long way (if they are to be believed) to seek it, have endured privations, and brought themselves to destitution. The evidences of this are not indeed infallible, but their profession is without a flaw, and charity would accept it. This the Israelites do: Joshua and the princes swear to them in Jehovah's name, and in three days find that they are dwellers in the land and Canaanites.

Gained by deceit, must this covenant stand? Yes, it must: for had Israel been with God, no deceit could have prevailed against them. And thus there are yokes which, though unequal, we cannot escape from. If we may without injustice to another, then indeed we are bound to do so; as a matter of course, if the work for which we have yoked ourselves is itself evil. If I have married an unbeliever, the oath of the Lord forbids withdrawal from it; and there may be in like manner business relations, from which, after having contracted them, simple righteousness would forbid us to withdraw. But the spiritual yoke, the yoking of believer and unbeliever in the things of the Lord, is what the words

we filled were new, and, behold, they are rent; and these our garments and our shoes have become old by reason of the great length of the journey. And the men [t]took of their victuals, and did not inquire at the mouth of Jehovah. And Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them, to let them live; and the princes of the assembly sware unto them.

[t] Ex. 34. 12. Num. 27. 21. *cfr.* 1 Sam. 23. 10, 11. Prov. 3. 6, 7.

And it came to pass, at the end of [u]three days, after they had made a covenant with them, that they heard that they were their neighbors, and dwelling in their midst. And the children of Israel journeyed and came unto their cities on the third day. Now their [v]cities were Gibeon and Chephirah and Beeroth and Kirjath-Jearim. And the children of Israel [w]smote them not, because the princes of the assembly had sworn to them by Jehovah the God of Israel; and all the assembly murmured against the princes. And all the princes said unto all the assembly, We have sworn unto them by Jehovah the God of Israel, and now we cannot touch them. This will we do unto them, and let them live, lest wrath be on us, because of the oath which we sware unto them. And the princes said unto them, Let them live; and let them be [x]hewers of wood and drawers of water for all the assembly: as the princes had spoken unto them. And Joshua called them, and spake unto them, saying, Why have ye deceived us, saying, We are very far off from you, when ye were dwelling among us? And now ye are [y]cursed, and ye shall never cease to be bondmen, hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God. And they answered Joshua, and said, Because it was certainly told thy servants how that Jehovah thy God commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you; and we feared greatly for our lives because of you, and have done this thing. And now, behold, we are in thy hand; as it seemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us, do. And he did so unto them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, that they slew them not. And Joshua made them that

[u] *cf.* Gen. 40. 12, 13, 18–22.

[v] ch. 18. 25–28.

[w] 2 Sam. 21. 1–6. *cf.* Gal. 6. 7.

[x] Jud. 1. 28, 30, 33.

[y] Gen. 9. 25.

of the apostle in the fullest way apply to (2 Cor. vi. 14–18): "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father to you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

Had the Gibeonites come openly as what they were, to subject themselves to Jehovah's yoke, they in whose camp Rahab was, with her whole family, could not have refused it; but they came in craft, and though they may not be slain,

Complete possession.
1. (x-xi. 15.) The power of God.
a (vv. 1-5.) A confederacy.

day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the assembly, and for the altar of Jehovah, unto this day, in the place that he should choose.

(X.–XII.)

7. [1](a) And it was so, when [2]Adonizedek king of Jerusalem heard that Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it,—as he had done to Jericho and her king,

[2] *ctr.* Gen. 14. 18.

are subjected as bondmen to the service of the people of God, as hewers of wood and drawers of water for the sanctuary. So perforce must it be, thank God, that all must serve the glorious Lord we own: willingly or unwillingly, as free or bond, this is the only choice permitted: but how momentous are the issues of that choice!

7. Needful as are the lessons as to failure, the history as a whole is here full of abundant encouragement; and the last part of the first division, upon which we now enter shows us the complete subjugation of the land under Israel's feet. The power of their enemies is prostrated, although it is true that at the end of it we still find that there is very much land to be possessed,—much even that in fact they never do possess. But the work that needs the combined power of all the tribes is accomplished. The rest is left to individual energy, such as is so strikingly illustrated for us in the case of Caleb. What he achieved might have been achieved by all the rest: the thing needed for it was simply what his name and his history expressed,—"whole-heartedness." It was this which, as we are told, preserved in him to eighty-five the strength of forty, and to see dispossessed before him the giant owners of the land he had explored. It was of God that there should be such testing, though the result might be to make the failure sorrowfully apparent, a failure only briefly indicated in the present book, while Judges treats of it from end to end.

(i.) The first section alone gives the history, the second simply summing up the general results. In the history the principal lesson is evident, that their power was wholly of God, who demonstrates it by what has seemed to many even disproportionate miracles; but who can measure the magnitude of the necessity of what indeed *ought* to appear to us so simple a lesson! It is the first and foundation one for the Ephesian conflict which we are tracing in type here, —to "be strong in the *Lord*, and in the power of *His* might." The grace of it in the illustration is seen in its coming after the sin of Achan and the failure as to the Gibeonites. Yet does it display itself unweakened,—never more gloriously divine. This is the power which has acted for us to make the land our own, and which is ready to act *in* us, if there be but faith in it. We need it as much as they did, for our warfare is "not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and with powers, with the rulers of the darkness of this world, with spiritual wickedness in heavenly places." Yet of the meaning of this conflict even how many are not aware, who know it, as all must, but perceive not the object aimed at, to keep us out of the realization of our inheritance. Here we must remember the condition, "Every place that the *sole of your feet shall tread on* shall be your own." This is the need we have of an activity of faith which will call up to resist us all the power of Satan, and will make us prove the need we have of the "whole armor of God."

(*a*) The enemies seldom appear single: they are a mighty confederacy, leagued together by a common hatred to God and to His people. Canaan swarms with kings, which, independent of each other and often at strife, make peace and common cause against the "hosts of the Lord." So the jarring forces of evil are compacted together by the presence of that which is of God; and the first king of this company startles us with his evident apostasy: Adonizedek, "lord of righteousness," king of Jerusalem, "the foundation of peace," the awful mockery and antagonist to "that Melchizedek, King of Righteousness, King of Salem, that is, 'peace,' Priest of the Most High God, who met" Israel's forefather, "Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and *blessed*

so had he done to Ai and to her king,—and that the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them, that they [a]feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, as one of the royal cities, and it was greater than Ai, and all its men were mighty. And Adonizedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of [b]Hebron, and to Piream king of Jarmuth, and

[a] ch. 9. 24.

[b] ver. 36.

him." In what striking contradiction, made so evil by the resemblance, is this man and his attitude, an Antichrist (one might well say) to the true Melchizedek, the Christ of God! Not that we are to suppose any special Antichrist here, which would seem unsuited, but rather that primitive type which is found in Satan, the adversary, wherever Satan is found, enmity working in disguise and by imitation, "as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses." He is "lord of righteousness," as where on the ground of it, coming among the sons of God, he pleads against Job. And he is not "king of *peace*," as Christ is, but only of the "*foundation* of peace,"—which is righteousness again. (Is. xxxii. 17.) He can plead righteousness, but only *against*, not for men; therefore "priest of the Most High God" he is not: he is no saviour: readily discovered by this fact. His darts are "fiery darts," flaming with wrath, and putting distance between the soul and God, while Christ's voice, even in the discovery of sin, wins *to* God; *He* does not accuse, but is a refuge from the accuser. Therefore with the "shield of faith" shall we "quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one."

The next named to Adonizedek in the confederacy which he heads is Hoham king of Hebron, a city which we already know in connection with Abraham's history, and by that most interesting note upon it upon occasion of the visit of the spies. Hebron, which according to its derivation speaks of companionship, stands throughout as the symbol of "communion." But we have heard of it as in the hands of the Anakim, and even in Genesis as the city of Arba, the father of them all. The Anakim are the "long-necked," giants in stature, and children of pride, of whom the vain-glorious boast is uttered, "Who can stand before the children of Anak?" (Deut. ix. 2.) "Arba" is supposed by Fuerst to mean "hero of Baal," and this is accepted by many; but it seems too purely conjectural; while the word is common Hebrew for the numeral four, which has more easily the significance of "square, four-square," suited to the father of a giant race. That the number four is that also of the creature, and of weakness, is in no wise against this, but a divine comment on the other side. It is upon what is loftiest in nature that God puts the mark of nothingness and abases it.

Hebron is thus dedicated to man worship, the utter destruction of its true character; and the Hoham here is king but of the Anakite Hebron, where the enemy has massed his strongest force to keep out of it its divinely appointed possessors. The meaning of "Hoham" is variously given, but the last syllable has the same root idea with our similarly formed "hum," the confusion of sound as in the noise of a multitude, and from which it is transferred to the multitude itself. The first syllable seems most naturally to be abbreviated from *hovah*, another form of *havvah*, which speaks of "a sinking of the mind into a corrupt, depraved state, into a gulf of lusts and insatiable desire." (*Wilson.*) These two thoughts are certainly completely opposed to that of Hebron, most suitable therefore, to its Anakite usurpation. Hebron figures largely in the report of the spies,—largely again in the conquest of the land,—and we might expect its Canaanite king to figure in the resistance to its conquerors. Certainly we may expect that Satan will keep us off if possible from that communion with God in an enjoyed heavenly portion which Hebron represents to us; and that in no way could he better succeed than by stirring up in us that tumult of desires which are veritable sons of Anak, only to be subdued by such a spirit of "wholeheartedness" for God as was found in Caleb.

The third of these confederates is Piream king of Jarmuth; and as to neither

to Japhia king of [c] Lachish, and to Debir king of [d] Eglon, saying, Come up to me, and help me, and let us smite Gibeon, because it hath made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel. And they gathered together and went up, five kings of the Amorites—the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon,—they and all their hosts, and encamped against Gibeon, and made war upon it. And the men of Gibeon sent to Joshua, to the camp, to Gilgal, saying, Slack not thy hand from

[c] ver. 31.
[d] ver. 34.

of these names does there seem much dispute. Jarmuth signifies elevation; Piream is from *pere*, the wild ass. The latter is what man is born as (Job xi. 12), and it is his obstacle to finding wisdom. Free and independent, he brooks no yoke nor restraining hand. Nebuchadnezzar, forgetting in the pride of his heart Him who had raised him up, "was driven from the sons of men, and his heart was make like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses" (Dan. v. 21),—he was made to take his place with those which his moral state resembled. This may throw light upon the connection of the two names here,—the wild-ass king and his city of "elevation." Thus, "man being in honor abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish." (Ps. xlix. 12.) He who can abide is the one who recognizes and is subject to the hand that raised him. How completely does the glorious place that God has given us declare that such exaltation is of His grace alone! how simply, then, as owing all to His love should we act as in that place!

Japhia king of Lachish is the fourth confederate. Lachish is again a difficult word. Gesenius from the Arabic gathers the meaning "obstinate," as referring to its impregnability to assault. Young makes it similar to Jarmuth—"height;" but he has at least twelve other names of Israelitish cities translated in the same way: we may well suppose there is some difference of meaning among so many different words. In Hebrew we can only find a meaning, as it would seem, by dividing it. Lach-ish may then mean "walk (as) men." In fact Lachish stood longer than most cities of the land against Joshua, though not long; for it was taken the second day.

Japhia corresponds with his city: his name means "shining, resplendent." In the world at large the manly virtues are thus lustrous; but there is manifest danger when shining qualities are prized as such. When lustre is king then the king is surely Canaanite. Lachish comes thus into the confederacy against Joshua, and is not the least among the enemies of Israel. A world of show and splendor is such "darkness" for the people of God as the "principalities and powers" which are "rulers of" it love to work with. *Dazzle* is easily read as darkness: and alas! the children of God can both be dazzled, and love to dazzle. Eyes that see the glory of God are alone strong enough to meet the resplendent king of Lachish.

So far, then, we can realize meaning in these confederate kings. It will be seen too that they answer exactly to the numerical significance of their order, which is a test one could hardly have insisted on perhaps in this case. That they should so answer may encourage us to a closer and more complete application of the symbolism of numbers, which ought thus to be proportionately more fruitful. When we come now to the fifth of these confederate powers we shall need to avail ourselves of it, as we shall find here a deeper mystery facing us,—and even this is accordant with the numerical place.

The names, happily, are here simple. God has planted stepping stones firmly for us to prevent slipping, according to His constant mercy. First, "Eglon" is "round" or "circular," its root-meaning showing applicability either to form or motion. Thus the derivatives from it are words such as *agil*, "ring;" *agalah*, "chariot," "cart,"—which, as moving on its circular, revolving wheels, com-

thy servants; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us: for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the hill-country are gathered together against us.

b (7-11) The Conflict

(*b*) So Joshua went up from Gilgal,—he and all the people of war with him, even all the men of valor. And Jehovah said unto Joshua, [c]Fear them not, for I have

c ch. 8. 1.

bines form and motion; and from this, *maagalah*, the roadway for these wheels; *galgal* is the ordinary word for wheel, nearly identical with the *Gilgal* we have met before; *gal* is billow, wave; and so on.

How are we to take it here? The town very likely was circular, and it may have derived its name from this; but as in the wheel form implies motion, so may it be spiritually in this case. Indeed, the wheel itself is found in the visions of Ezekiel as that of the chariot of Deity, a prominent symbol in connection with the divine government. Five, the number attaching here to Eglon, *is*, let us now remember, the symbol of God's governmental ways!

In the book of Ecclesiastes we find the wheel in motion, but that it is the wheel of God's triumphal chariot is not seen. On the contrary, "vanity of vanities" is inscribed upon it; and that God has ordained the wheel is the cause of infinite perplexity. "One generation passeth away, and another cometh; but the earth abideth forever. The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place whence he arose. The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north: it whirleth about continually: and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full: unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again. . . . The thing that hath been is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done; and there is nothing new under the sun."

Thus "to every thing there is a season," and a season only; but the generations pass, and do not return: if they do, experience, at least, knows nothing about it; and thus the bat's wing of death throws its sombre and sinister shadow over every thing: beyond, "who knoweth?" Here God, who is light, can alone give light; and revelation is our one source of certainty. Then, indeed, still the wheel turns; but the wheel of destiny becomes the chariot-wheel of God, as in Ezekiel.

Now there is purpose in it,—a double purpose: man is abased, God glorified. Man needs abasement, and divine goodness has ordained it; otherwise that would be fulfilled which the psalmist declares, "Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God." (Ps. lv. 19.) But for man, too, there is a resurrection, not within the cycle of change, but beyond it; and "he that humbleth himself" to accept God's lesson, turning to Him thus, "shall be exalted."

Eglon speaks, I doubt not, of this wheel of destiny, which by its mystery exercises so man's heart, and which, while it has its good, and is meant for good, can yet bring out the rebellion that is in it, and urge man also to all kinds of secret arts to discover the mystery. From the heathen oracle of old to the Spiritism and theosophy of modern times Satan has used this craving of man to enthral him in the bonds of superstition and slavish dread, or to lure him by the fascination of unearthly spectacles. Thus Debir is the true king of Eglon: for "Debir" on the one hand may mean "speaker," while on the other it is the word used for "oracle" of the temple, out of which the voice of God was to be heard. Here indeed Debir has no evil sense. God *has* responded to the need of man in view of the mystery of existence, as we know, but there are Canaanite "debirs," and satanic mockeries of the divine answer. And thus we find the fifth confederate against Israel in the scene before us.

(*b*) It is not indeed directly against Israel that they gather, but against Gibeon which has made peace with Israel. Satan often, as it were, sides up to the attack. Gibeon, false all round, may well provoke the onslaught of the

given them into thy hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee. And Joshua came upon them suddenly: he went up from Gilgal all the night. And Jehovah discomfited them before Israel; and he smote them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and pursued them the way of the ascent of Beth-horon, and smote them as far as Azekah and Makkedah. And it was so, as they fled from before Israel, (they were at the descent of Beth-horon,) that Jehovah cast down on them great [f]stones from heaven as far as Azekah, and they died: more died of the hailstones than the children of Israel slew with the sword.

[f] Ex. 9. 22–25.

c (12-15.) Signs in the heavens.

(c) Then spake Joshua to Jehovah, in the day that Jehovah gave up the Amorite before the children of Israel, and said in the sight of Israel, Sun, [g]stand thou still over Gibeon, and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon! And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed until the nation had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jashar?

[g] Jud. 5. 20, Hab. 3. 11, ch 19. 42.

"lord of righteousness;" but Joshua, remembering the oath of the Lord, comes up against the Canaanite host with haste, and smites them with a great slaughter, pursuing them the way of Beth-horon (the "place of wrath"), as far as Azekah ("fencing round") and Makkedah ("bowing the head"). Thus God puts to defeat His enemies, and they are as cattle in the hands of the slaughterer. Beth-horon proves its title by the fall there of a great hail from heaven, slaying more than the swords of the Israelites.

(c) And here occurs the notable miracle which has awakened so much discussion and provoked so much the scorn of unbelief. The language of Scripture being so purely phenomenal every where,—dealing with things as they appear to us, rather than with the scientific explanation,—I see no reason for any actual stoppage of the sun and moon, which must in that case be rather of the earth's own revolution, and so not *literally* according to the description after all. The economy of miracle which the Bible shows to one who attentively considers it, notwithstanding the large actual amount, would suggest that, for the purpose Joshua desires to have accomplished, the extreme supposition need hardly be the fact. For him and for all beholders the sun and moon did actually stop, and that is all that the words fairly taken imply; and the miracle is mighty enough, if it were accomplished by means of refraction or mirage or what not: it is not worth the labor to speculate upon how it might be done. Whatever the means that might be used, the day stands alone in the world's history,—surely miracle enough. And there is no tampering with the record involved in this, no trifling with revelation, no giving way in the least to the infidelity of the day. It is *to us* the sun rises or sets, as to *them* it stood still in the heavens: why should language be pressed in the one case in a way which would be admitted to be straining it in the other?*

The spiritual lesson more concerns us here, and this seems to be the manifestation of divine power as acting for Israel. Sun and moon were both worshiped in many forms by the nations around them, Baal and Ashtoreth standing for

*The author of "Joshua's Long Day" believes, however, that he has demonstrated by the double aid of astronomy and chronology, the occurrence of the miracle in the full extent which many give it. But this involves a chronology from the creation of man exact to the very hour; a precision it can hardly be hoped even ever to attain. According to his view also the moon could not have been visible in the position indicated, and Joshua must have addressed what was to all observers but a blank spot in the heavens! This, although Joshua spake, it is said, "in the *sight* of Israel,"—evidently implying that the objects of his address were before their eyes.

And the sun stood in the midst of the heavens, and hasted not to go down about a full day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, in which Jehovah hearkened to the voice of a man; for Jehovah [h]fought for Israel. And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp, to [i]Gilgal.

h Ex. 14. 14.

i ch. 10. 43. ver. 7. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 7–10.

d (16–21.) The enemy prostrate.

(*d*) And those five kings fled, and hid themselves in the [j]cave at Makkedah. And it was told Joshua, saying, The five kings are found hid in the cave at Makkedah. And Joshua said, Roll great stones unto the mouth of the cave; and set men by it, to keep them; and ye, stay not, pursue after your enemies, and cut off their rear; suffer them not to enter into their cities: for Jehovah your God hath given them into your hand. And it came to pass, when Joshua and the children of Israel had made an end of smiting them with a very great slaughter till they were consumed, and the remnant of them that remained had entered into fortified cities, that all the people returned unto the camp, to Joshua at Makkedah, in peace: none moved his [k]tongue against the children of Israel.

j *cf.* Jud. 6. 2.

k Ex. 11. 7. *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 14.

e (22–27.) Retribution.

(*e*) And Joshua said, Open the mouth of the cave, and bring forth to me those five kings out of the cave. And they did so, and brought forth unto him those five kings out of the cave—the king of Jerusalem, the king

them respectively among the Canaanite population. Hence Israel's God was proclaimed here to be "God of gods." The very deities of Canaan lengthened the day to accomplish their destruction! as indeed they had in every generation been the destruction of their worshipers. But Israel warred not in their own strength, and it was not their right hand saved them. If they or their enemies imagined this, the significance of their victories was wholly lost and turned to the glorification of man. Hebron could never in this way have been redeemed from the Anakim, but would have been Kirjath-arba still. Lachish would have kept its resplendent Japhia; and Eglon's wheel have revolved but to grind out "vanity of vanities." So important is it that Israel's victories should be seen not as their own but God's!

But then how wonderful to be leagued with supreme and omnipotent power! Should not sun and moon standing still impress this upon us? How can it be sufficiently emphasized for us that it is really Jehovah who fights for Israel? All this magnificent blazonry upon the face of the heavens to convey to us what appears perhaps so simple a truth! The need, then, of the lesson must be great indeed, and hard it must be to raise to its proper height the enthusiasm of the Lord's host for the banner they fight under! a banner not to be dishonored by cowardice or half-heartedness or fleshly confidence. The quotation from the book of Jashar fittingly therefore is a song; and the appeal is to the joyful experience of the "upright" (Jashar). Songs like these are easily remembered: the heart retains what it has welcomed in this way.

(*d*) We have to see that the victory that the Lord has gained is followed up, and that the foe is not merely in retreat, but in rout. Many a victory has been lost by slackness of pursuit. The enemy must be pursued to his stronghold; and after all may escape.

(*e*) But the kings are in the caves of Makkedah. Now they are brought forth and judgment executed upon them. Our spiritual foes cannot indeed be slain as yet; and this is but the anticipation of faith: a picture such as we have seen

of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon. And it was so, when they brought forth those kings unto Joshua, that Joshua called all the men of Israel, and said unto the chiefs of the men of war that went with him, Draw near, [and] put your feet upon the *l*necks of these kings; and they drew near, and put their feet upon their necks. And Joshua said unto them, *m*Fear not, nor be dismayed; be strong, and of good courage; for thus will Jehovah do unto all your enemies against whom ye fight. And afterward Joshua smote them and put them to death, and hanged them upon five trees; and they were hanging upon the trees *n*until the evening. And it came to pass that at the going down of the sun, Joshua commanded, and they took them down from off the trees, and cast them into the cave where they had been hid, and placed great stones at the mouth of the cave, [there] unto this very day.

l 2 Sam. 22. 41.

m ch. 1. 18. ch. 23. 6.

n ch. 8. 29.

f (28–43.) Conquests.

(*f*) And Joshua took *o*Makkedah on that day, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and its king: he executed the ban upon them, even all the souls that were therein: he left no remnant; and he did unto the king of Makkedah as he had done to the king of Jericho.

o ver. 18. ch. 15. 4.

in the case of Jericho. Faith can pass its judgment upon them, foreseeing the divine one that shall be: branding them thus with their infamy.

It is a great thing to know enough to call Satan Satan; and to meet him with the assurance of with whom we are contending; to draw him forth from the darkness of the cave in which he may have taken refuge, and, in the light of day, convict and put him under the doom that awaits him.

(*f*) And now the strongholds yield, one by one. Six cities are marked especially here, exactly in the midst of which we find the attack and destruction of the king of Gezer. The series in this way becomes a septenary one, and the first four a 3+1, after the usual manner: three cities taken and one army destroyed. By such slight yet sufficient indications is the structure of a part made known to us.

The cities taken are not to be looked at simply as strongholds of the enemy. They belong by the gift of God to Israel, and many of them figure afterward in Israel's history: hence what they signify for us is of the more importance. Their meanings too will be essentially good, as we see in Hebron, which is called by this name continually, although to the Canaanites it was Kirjath-arba. Indeed, in general, the Canaanite possessors are of little account, except as hindrance to the true heirs, and their names even in most cases are not recorded. Nor are there here details given of the assault, nor any account save of the extirpation of the inhabitants. The names of the acquired cities seem to be alone significant.

The first is Makkedah, "bowing the head." It is the place where we have seen the five kings were forced to bow those proud Amorite heads which only divine power could humble. As an Israelite habitation it has a better significance, and as its place in this series may denote, the thing itself is a choice blessing and leading to many others. How good when the stiff neck first gives way, and man the rebel is subdued to allegiance! when God becomes God indeed, and man too, as he abases himself, rises from the level of the beast to real manhood. The use of the word is in connection with homage—the owning of a superior, though not always God. And Canaan, which sets forth the highest—heavenly—

And Joshua passed, and all Israel with him, from Makkedah to [p] Libnah, and fought against Libnah; and Jehovah gave it also and its king into the hand of Israel, and he smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that were therein; he left no remnant in it: and did unto its king as he had done to the king of Jericho.

[p] ch. 15. 42. ch. 21. 13.

And Joshua passed, and all Israel with him, from Libnah unto [q] Lachish, and encamped against it, and fought against it; and Jehovah gave Lachish into Israel's hand, and he took it on the second day, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that were therein, according to all that he had done to Libnah. Then Horam king of Gezer came up to help Lachish; and Joshua smote him and his people, till he left him not a remnant.

[q] ch. 10. 3. ch. 15. 39.

blessing, is just the place where we should find this acknowledgment constant and complete. Nearness to God produces of necessity, and may be measured by, the filial fear of Him and submission to Him. In Ephesians it is that God's will is emphasized in the strongest way.

The second city is Libnah, "whiteness:" which, read spiritually, and in connection with its numerical place, we may take as "separation from evil." Its following subjection to God guards it from pharisaism, and defines it according to the Word, a measure of evil much less observed among the people of God than is supposed; simple morality or popular conscience governing everywhere the mass. In their associations for benevolent, moral, and even religious purposes, how many permit themselves the greatest license that can be imagined, and on public platforms the friends and the enemies of Christ are found commonly together. Nay, as in Masonic lodges, for instance, they can even exclude Christ, that "good" fellowship may not be hindered. Libnah has, in fact, few citizens in the Israel of to-day.

The third city is Lachish, which we have seen under its Canaanitish king already, but which we have now to see as a possession of Israel. In this sense, and in its numerical place here, the spiritual application is easy. The number is that of resurrection; it is a city of the land beyond Jordan, the heavenly country: how else, then, can this "walk as men," which is the meaning of "Lachish," read but as "walk as in the risen Man,—not as of the world, but as heavenly, as Christ is"?

Thus the three cities here connect naturally in meaning, and at the same time fill their numerical place, while they develop in fullness and positiveness as they go on. But in the fourth place in this series, as usual under that number, we find what is not in the order of progression hitherto, but distinct and peculiar. Horam king of Gezer comes up to assist Lachish, and is smitten,—he and his people; but there is no taking of his city at this time. In fact, the Canaanites were not really expelled from it till Solomon's reign, and by that the city seems to have lapsed into separation from Israel. For it is Pharaoh king of Egypt who takes it then, and gives it to his daughter, Solomon's wife.

"Gezer" means a place "isolated," or "cut off." "Horam," according to its apparent derivation, most literally would mean "tumid, swollen." May not this speak of the pride of man's nature, which, maintaining itself in independence, refuses the judgment of the first Adam, even though it be for exaltation in the Second? Certainly this is no fictitious antagonist of Joshua, or of Israel in our day at least, and Lachish, the "walk as men," is still hotly contended for in behalf of the Canaanites, ignoring God's true Man, in whom all believers have a common place.

And Joshua passed, and all Israel with him, from Lachish to [r]Eglon; and they encamped against it, and fought against it; and they took it on that day, and smote it with the edge of the sword; and on all the souls that were therein he executed the ban that day, according to all that he had done to Lachish.

[r] ver. 3. ch. 15. 39.

And Joshua went up, and all Israel with him, from Eglon unto [s]Hebron, and they fought against it; and they took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king of it, and its cities, and all the souls that were therein: he left no remnant, according to all that he had done to Eglon; and he executed the ban on it, and on all the souls that were therein.

[s] ver. 3. ch. 15. 13.

And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to [t]Debir, and fought against it; and he took it, and the king of it, and all its cities; and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and executed the ban on all the souls that were therein: he left no remnant; as he had done to Hebron, so he did to Debir and to its king, as he had done also to Libnah and to its king.

[t] ch. 12. 13. ch. 15. 7–13.

So Joshua smote all the land, the hill-country, and the [u]south, and the lowland, and the slopes, and all their kings; he left not a remnant, but executed the ban upon all that breathed, as Jehovah the God of Israel commanded. And Joshua smote them from Kadesh-barnea even unto Gaza, and all the land of Goshen even unto Gibeon. And all these kings and their land did Joshua take at one time; for Jehovah the God of Israel fought for Israel. And Joshua

[u] ch. 11. 2.

In the allotment of the land, Gezer falls to Ephraim as a Levitical city of the family of Kohath, and in this differs again from the other cities named here, whether before or after, which are given to Judah. The enumeration of them now proceeds, Eglon filling the fifth place, as in the list of the confederate kings. We have seen already of what it speaks to us, and may easily perceive now how it connects with Horam and with Lachish. The wheel of destiny finds its place in the chariot of God's providence when Eglon is subdued by Israel, and the humiliation of man's changes gives us profitable exercise, but is no hopeless, no impenetrable mystery any longer.

Hebron comes next, and with its meaning we are quite familiar; but it fills another place from that we might expect,—the sixth instead of the second; for, as following Eglon, it shows us communion maintained amid all changes, which are but the fruitful discipline which is ordained "for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness." What is this—to be partakers of His holiness—but to be in practical communion with Himself?

Debir, therefore, ends this series,—the name that before we found attached to the king of Eglon, but which here is that of an Israelitish city: a wonderfully blessed name to end with, speaking as it does of the dwelling with man of Him who, if He be nigh, cannot be mute; whose voice has answered faith's questioning wherever faith has been,—yea, gone before to win men to Himself. How well the numerical place suits here! It is the voice that spake once openly to the winds and seas, and hushed them; and which gives rest still, whatever be the cause of trouble.

These are all the cities specified here, and of course for a special purpose. It is added to this now that Joshua took all the land (connected with these cities)—

returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to [v]Gilgal.

p (xi. 1-15.) The end reached.

(*g*) And it came to pass, when [w]Jabin the king of Hazor heard thereof, that he sent to Jobab king of Madon, and to the king of Shimron, and to the king of Achshaph, and to the kings that were northward in the hill-country, and in the Arabah south of Chinneroth, and in the lowland, and on the upland of Dor seaward, to the Canaanite toward the [sun]rise and toward the sea, and to the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite in the hill-country, and to the Hivite beneath Hermon in the land of Mizpah. And they went out,—they and all their hosts with them, a people many as the sand that is on the sea-shore for multitude, with horses and chariots very many. And all these kings met together, and came and encamped together at the waters of Merom, to fight with Israel. And Jehovah said unto Joshua, Fear them not; for to-morrow about this time will I give them all up slain

v ch. 14. 6, ch. 10. 15.

w Jud. 4. 1, ch. 10. 1.

the southern part of Canaan. "And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal."

(*g*) The northern part of the land remained yet unconquered. Excited and alarmed by the ruin that had come upon their kindred tribes, the kings of the north now gather together in a vast confederacy, of which the Spirit of God points out, however, only four, and names but two. Jabin king of Hazor is the leader now, Hazor being the head of all these kingdoms. "Hazor" means "inclosed;" "Jabin," "discerning." The city was strong in its defenses and in the wisdom of its king. The only other king whose name is given is Jobab, the "shouter," whose city is Madon, "contention." There seems no reason to doubt of these meanings. But what, then, do they represent? It would certainly seem that Jabin was the Sihon of this side Jordan,—the human wisdom which would intrude itself into the things of God, always hostile to faith and to God, and which always has its "inclosure" within which it permits neither the one nor the other. There is a charmed circle of science to-day which is thus agnostic, and from which it has made raids upon Scripture in the shape of "higher criticism." This is only illustration; but the rational spirit is one from which in all time—never, perhaps, more than now—Christians have suffered, and by which they have been deprived of much of the good land God has called them to possess. That it allies itself often with the spirit of strife which exalts mere noise rather than reason, is not difficult to see, and may be the meaning of Jobab's place here. Reason alone would soon have to submit to faith as to what is highest reason, if it were not for this. To these the king of Shimron—"keeping," from a word which is the common one used for the keeping of law, adds the thought of a spirit of legality, which readily unites with the reasoning of unbelief; while the king of Achshaph—"sorcery," supplementing the whole, speaks of the deep satanic spell which works with all this to give it a power that after all without it would be unintelligible still. "Who hath bewitched you," the apostle asks of the Galatians, "that ye should not obey the truth?"

These are the leaders; with them is gathered a multitudinous host of other powers less precisely marked, and which we cannot attempt to particularize. They gather at the waters of Merom, "the high place;" and with such enemies are not the highest levels of truth just what they would lay hold upon and deprive us of first of all? For what is highest is for that reason what mere reason can least grasp, and legality least believe our portion, and Satan envy us most.

before Israel; and thou shalt hamstring their horses and burn their [x] chariots in the fire. And Joshua, and all the people of war with him, came upon them at the waters of Merom suddenly, and fell upon them. And Jehovah gave them into Israel's hand; and they smote them, and pursued them as far as great Zidon, and as far as Misrephoth-maim, and as far as the valley of Mizpah toward the sunrise; and they smote them till they left them not a remnant. And Joshua did unto them as Jehovah had said unto him: he hamstrung their horses and burnt their chariots in the fire.

[x] Deut. 11. 4. Jud. 1. 19. 2 Kings 23. 11. Ps. 46. 9.

And Joshua returned at that time, and took Hazor, and smote the king of it with the sword; for Hazor was beforetime the head of all those kingdoms. And they smote all the souls that were therein with the edge of the sword, executing the ban on them: there was none left that breathed; and he burnt Hazor with fire. And all the cities of those kings and all their kings did Joshua take, and smote them with the edge of the sword, executing the ban on them, [y] as Moses the servant of Jehovah had commanded. Only all the cities that stood still upon their mounds Israel did not burn, save Hazor, that alone Joshua burnt. And all the spoil of these cities and the cattle the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves; but all the men they smote with the edge of the sword until they had destroyed them; they left none that breathed. As Jehovah had commanded his servant Moses, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua: he let nothing fail of all that Jehovah had commanded Moses.

[y] ch. 1. 7.

But Joshua, with the energy of faith, and specially encouraged by the divine assurance, falls upon them there, and inflicts upon them an overwhelming defeat, Israel pursuing them as far as Zidon and Misrephoth-maim, and east into the Lebanon-valley (?). They hamstring their horses and burn their chariots in the fire; for if "some trust in chariots and some in horses," they are to "remember the name of Jehovah their God." (Ps. xx. 7.)

Joshua then turns back to smite Hazor. "God will in no wise allow the world's seat of power to become that of His people; for His people depend exclusively on Him. The natural consequence of taking Hazor would have been to make it the seat of government, and a centre of influence in the government of God, so that this city should be that for God which it had been for the world; 'for Hazor before-time was the head of all those kingdoms.' But it was just the contrary. Hazor is totally destroyed. God will not leave a vestige of former power: He will make all things new. The centre and source of power must be His,—entirely and conclusively His: a very important lesson for His children, if they would preserve their spiritual integrity." (*Synopsis*, vol. i., p. 370, 371.)

The Word of God governs every thing for Joshua, and all that he does prospers. How needed a lesson, amid the constant temptations to self-will! It is precisely to obtain success that we are urged to adopt all sorts of unscriptural methods. Expediency is the constant plea for latitudinarianism.—a plea than which nothing could be more foolish: as if to depart from God's way would insure His blessing. "As Jehovah commanded His servant Moses, so did Moses command Joshua; and so did Joshua: he let nothing fail of all that Jehovah

2.(xi.16-xii.) The sum of results.

[z] So Joshua took all that land, the hill-country and all the south, and all the land of Goshen, and the lowland, and the Arabah, and the hill-country of Israel, and its lowland, from the [z] smooth mountain that rises toward Seir as far as Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon beneath Mount Hermon; and all their kings he took, and smote them, and put them to death. Joshua made war a long time on all these kings. There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites who dwelt in [a] Gibeon: they took all in battle. For it was of Jehovah, the [b] hardening of their hearts to meet Israel in battle, that the ban might be executed on them, that no favor might be shown them, but that they might be destroyed, as Jehovah had commanded Moses.

And Joshua came at that time, and cut off the [c] Anakim from the hill-country, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, from all the hill-country of Judah, and from all the hill-country of Israel: Joshua executed the ban upon them with their cities. There were none of the Anakim left in the land of the children of Israel; only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod some remained. And Joshua took the [d] whole land according to all that Jehovah had spoken unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel, according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land [e] rested from war.

And these are the kings of the land which the children of Israel smote, and of whose land they took posses-

z ch. 12. 7.

a ch. 9. 3, etc.

b Ex. 4. 21. Deut. 2. 30.

c Num. 13. 22. Deut. 9. 2. ch. 15. 13, 14.

d ch. 1. 3. *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 22, 23.

e ch. 14. 15. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8 with Phil. 3. 13, 14. Heb. 4. 8-10.

had commanded Moses." So according to the Word of God does our Joshua lead to-day. May we follow Him!

(ii.) The results are now summed up: the land within its limits for the time, from Mount Halak, the "smooth" or bald mountain bordering Seir upon the south, to Baal-gad, under Mount Hermon, in the north. Not a city except Gibeon that yielded itself to God: all were taken in battle. This was the effect of God's retributive justice, making the hearts firm in resistance to Israel's power that had shut themselves up against the God of Israel. Thus they met the judgment rightly decreed upon them.

The extirpation of the Anakim is specially recorded, and with reference once more to the seats of their power, Hebron and Debir, a connection so important that we are reminded of it again and again. Communion and the living voice of God, all the power of the enemy will be indeed employed to keep us from the realization of these. Both of these cities in Anakite hands, let us remember, had very different significance: they were Kirjath-arba and Kirjath-sepher, the city of man and of books respectively; we are soon to have their capture, by Caleb and Othniel, related to us. Yet the children of Anak are not wholly destroyed: there are some left in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, cities still held by the Philistines; and there we find them at a later time. All this has meaning, not obscure, if we consider who these Philistines are: their history is elsewhere. (Gen. xx., xxvi., *notes.*)

Now the land rests from war.

The enumeration follows of the kings dispossessed and slain on both sides of the river, by Moses and by Joshua.

sion, across Jordan toward the [f]sunrising, from the river Arnon unto Mount Hermon, and all the Arabah toward the [sun]rising:—[g]Sihon king of the Amorites who dwelt at Heshbon, ruling from Aroer which is on the bank of the brook Arnon, and from the middle of the ravine, and over half Gilead, as far as the brook Jabbok, the border of the children of Ammon; and the Arabah, as far as the sea of Chinneroth toward the [sun]rise, and as far as the sea of the Arabah, the salt sea, toward the [sun]rise, the way of Beth-jeshimoth, and southward under the slopes of Pisgah; and the territory of [h]Og king of Bashan, of the remnant of the Rephaim who dwelt at Ashtaroth and at Edrei, and ruled over Mount Hermon, and over Salcah, and over all Bashan, as far as the border of the Geshurites and of the Maachathites, and [over] half Gilead, as far as the border of Sihon king of Heshbon. Moses the servant of Jehovah and the children of Israel smote them; and Moses the servant of Jehovah gave it for a possession to the Reubenites and to the Gadites and to half the tribe of Manasseh.

And these are the kings of the land which Joshua and the children of Israel smote, on this side Jordan seaward, from Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon as far as the smooth mountain that rises toward Seir. And Joshua gave it to the tribes of Israel for a possession according to their divisions, in the hill-country, and in the lowland, and in the Arabah, and on the slopes, and in the wilderness, and in the south,—the Hittite, the Amorite, and the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite:—

The king of [i]Jericho, one; the king of [j]Ai, which is beside Bethel, one; the king of [k]Jerusalem, one; the king of [l]Hebron, one; the king of [m]Lachish, one; the king of [n]Eglon, one; the king of [o]Gezer, one; the king of [p]Debir, one; the king of Geder, one; the king of Hormah, one; the king of Arad, one; the king of [q]Libnah, one; the king of Adullam, one; the king of [r]Makkedah, one; the king of Bethel, one; the king of Tappuah, one; the king of Hepher, one; the king of Aphek, one; the king of Lasharon, one; the king of Madon, one; the king of [s]Hazor, one; the king of Shimron-meron, one; the king of Achshaph, one; the king of Taanach, one; the king of Megiddo, one; the king of Kedesh, one; the king of Jokneam on Carmel, one; the king of Dor, in the upland of Dor, one; the king of Goim at Gilgal, one; the king of Tirzah, one: all the kings, thirty and one.

f Num. 21.

g Deut. 2. 24-37.

h Num. 21. 33. Deut. 3. 11.

i ch. 6. 2.

j ch. 8. 17-29.

k ch. 10. 3.

l ch. 10. 36, 37.

m ch. 10. 31, 32.

n ch. 10. 34, 35.

o ch. 10. 33. ch. 16. 3.

p ch. 10. 38. ch. 15. 7.

q ch. 10. 29, 30.

r ch. 10. 28.

s ch. 11. 10.

DIVISION 2. (Chap. xiii.–xxiv.)

Division of the Land.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. xiii.–xxi.)

The Allotment of Inheritance.

(XIII. 1-7.)

Command to divide the land, though much is theirs yet only by the divine decree.

1. NOW Joshua was old, advanced in days, and Jehovah said unto him, Thou art old, advanced in days, and there [t]remaineth very much land to possess. This is the land that remaineth: all the circles of the Philistines, and all the Geshurites; from the Sihor which is before Egypt unto the boundary of Ekron northward, shall be counted to the Canaanite; the five princes

[t] ch. 13. 2. *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 5-11. Eph. 3. 14-21.

DIV. 2.

THE second division gives the division of the land among the tribes, with a supplementary part, which is a twofold witness and warning as to that which is to come. It involves, of course, a more or less detailed account of the land itself, which, if it be what perhaps all Christian hearts have believed, a type of our own heavenly portion, ought to be of amazing interest to every child of God. If we ask, then, what has been done in this field in all the centuries that they have had it in possession, it has to be answered, almost absolutely nothing! The commentators in general give plenty of verbal criticism, geography, and archæology, but practically declare it, as Fay in Lange does openly, as for the most part, "not suited for texts of sermons." He remarks, therefore, "here, once for all, that on this description of passages in our book, the homiletical and practical comments will be omitted." Yet the American editor complains of certain expositions as "too much inclined to *make gospel* where the revealing Spirit has only seen fit to put something else, perhaps equally good, in its place"! Such remarks, from either side of the ocean, have a sorrowful congruity, and explain each other. No wonder that those should find such parts of Scripture as that which now lies before us barren of practical edification, who decide, by instinct, as it would seem, that the inheritance of Israel's tribes of old can have no gospel in it! Who would commit himself to a search for it, if convinced that this is true? Yet the apostle assures us that things that happened unto Israel "happened unto them for types," and elsewhere that, "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." How can we decide *a priori*, then, that there are no types here? or believe that a map to illustrate an ancient history is all that is in the mind of the Spirit in this place? Is it not really presumption to decide so?

We believe it is; and that it is just such unbelieving dogmatism that is helping, Philistinelike, to stop the wells which God would have dug for the refreshment of pilgrims. In this wonderful field of Scripture, whenever we do not find water on the surface, we may be sure it is, at any rate, underneath the surface, and that "every one that" in a right spirit "seeketh findeth." The rule here, if any where, applies, "If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding,—if thou seekest for her as for silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God."

SUBD. 1.

THE first subdivision gives the inheritance of the tribes according to lot; the casting of the lot being characteristic of the apportionment on the west side of Jordan, that on the east side, as elsewhere remarked, being without it. By the lot, it is evident, was expressed, in a way more distinct than otherwise, the

of the Philistines,—the Gazathite and the Ashdodite, the Ashkelonite, the Gittite, and the Ekronite; and the "Avvite, in the south: all the land of the Canaanite, and Mearah, which belongeth to the Sidonians, as far as Aphek, as far as the boundary of the Amorite; and

u Deut.2.23.

mind of God: "the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord," says the voice of inspiration itself. (Prov. xvi. 33.) But the lot seems to have only determined the position, and not the extent of these possessions, room being left for the revision of boundary-lines according as individual tribes might, as the result of their faithfulness or unfaithfulness, increase or diminish. Had they been as a whole faithful, the enlargement of their territories would have necessarily led to such revision.

1. Meanwhile, Joshua being old, God commands him to distribute the land, although there remained very much land to be possessed, even of that which was but the first installment, as it were, of what had been originally promised. For what is now spoken of reaches neither to the Red Sea nor the Euphrates. (Ex. xxiii. 31.)

What remains is now carefully put before them, that they may be stimulated to the attainment of it. Attain to it they never did, though over much of it David ruled at an after time: but they never possessed it. It is theirs still, however, in the promise of God, with much else, to be fulfilled in a day now very near at hand. Our main interest in it to-day is as a shadow of spiritual things, a meaning which has shaped and gives the most exceeding value to what else might seem but a barren list of names and peoples passed away. Spiritually read, they become once more living and present realities, and the fact that they do so is the fullest justification for so reading them.

The lands enumerated have two principal divisions, in the south and in the north of that already subjugated. In the south there are those of the Philistines, with whom are named the Geshurites and the Avvites. Neither Philistines nor Geshurites were Canaanites, though their land is "counted to the Canaanites," and was no doubt originally theirs. The Avvites, from the relation in which we find them in Deuteronomy (chap. ii.) seem to have belonged to those monstrous races which were as gigantic in evil as in stature, and which were marked out specially for judgment. There is a certain association of these three together, and this we shall remember; as every fact of Scripture has significance. Here, as in nature, moreover, a full induction is necessary to a right deduction.

The Philistines have already come before us in the book of Genesis, and we have seen what they represent; but we can add something to what has been there said. They are descendants of Ham, the sun-burned one, the one darkened by the light; and next of Mitzraim, "double straitness," who seems rather to have received his name from than to have given it to the land of Egypt, for which in Scripture Mitzraim stands. Thus they are natural men, and as such under the control of nature, a thing for which they are, however, righteously held responsible by Him who is ever ready with His help to lift above it.

Between the Egyptian and the Philistine there is another and important link, the Casluhim, who are named next before the Caphtorim as springing from Mitzraim: Both of these are, though not equally, connected with the Philistines, who are said to have come out of Caphtor, and to be the remnant of that island, or coast. (Jer. xlvii. 4; Amos ix. 7.) According to their name, these are, in the Ethiopic, "emigrants," but in the Hebrew, "wanderers," the "way of the Philistines" being marked in Exodus as the "near" way out of Egypt to the land. It was as easy as it was near: no Red Sea to cross nor Jordan, the Sihor named here being a mere nominal boundary-line, but not a barrier. Thus the Philistines are natural men come into spiritual things, not by the power of God, but in a natural way. In Abraham's history and Isaac's, we find them in Gerar under their king Abimelech, "my father [was] king,"

the land of the Giblite, and all Lebanon toward the sunrise, from [v] Baal-Gad beneath Mount Hermon, as far as the entrance to Hamath; all the inhabitants of the hill-country, from Lebanon as far as [w] Misrephoth-maim; all the Sidonians: I will dispossess them from before

[v] ch. 12. 7.
[w] ch. 11. 8.

the picture of that successional authority which obtains in what claims most loudly to be the church to-day; Phicol, "the voice of all," the captain of his host, as Rome rules according to what is claimed as universal tradition, the voice of the Church. Achish of Gath, in David's time, is in Ps. xxxiv. "Abimelech," his name vaunting him "a man indeed."

Thus the Philistines represent plainly the church of tradition and assumed catholicism, and we are prepared for the important place they have with regard to Israel in the generations that follow that of Joshua. But what connection have they, then, with the Casluhim and Caphtorim, and what do these names mean? Casluhim seems to present special difficulty to the lexicographers, who seldom venture an interpretation; but this can only be because of the strangeness of the meaning, and its apparent unsuitability to be the name of a nation.* Yet there is no doubt that "as those forgiven" is the unforced meaning of the word, as there can be none that what characterizes largely the ecclesiastical systems of which Rome is head is a *quasi* forgiveness, instead of an actual one. The first thing necessary for peace and for conscious relationship to God, that is, that there may be a church at all, is forgiveness of sins; and Rome recognizes this. Upon nothing does she insist more than upon the forgiveness of sins; but it is ecclesiastical forgiveness, sacramental and priestly absolution, constantly repeated, and in that proportion valueless. "For," says the apostle, "the worshipers *once* purged would have had no more conscience of sins." (Heb. x. 2.) And from the inability of the Jewish sacrifices to purge once for all he urges their inability to put away sins at all. On the contrary he maintains that Christ hath "by one offering perfected *forever* them that are sanctified." (Heb. x. 14.) Here at the very beginning, then, Rome's system fails: her forgiveness is but a *quasi*-forgiveness; and, with the highest claim for herself, she preaches continual doubt to her vassals; she is Philistine, and descended from the Casluhim.

But she is also a "remnant of Caphtor," which we may read in the same way as "*quasi* interpreters." Two streams alike polluted mingle to produce both the ancient and the modern Philistine. As Rome builds upon her priestly absolution, so does she claim for herself to be the infallible teacher. Yet teacher she is not, for she shuts up the Word of God, and is afraid to give any free access to it, lest the fraud should be exposed. This double test shows that she is sham all through.

Has this to do with the unusual word for the Philistine districts, *gelîloth*, "circles" or "circuits"? Sinuosities like the windings of a serpent, and sometimes the perfect circle, mark the ground that Rome covers, and the lines within which she is intrenched. She will build the authority of the church upon the Bible, and then the authority of the Bible on the church. Or, with better skill, skill not her own, will run her lines in tortuous labyrinths of argument from which her perplexed victims have no escape. Her moral lines are no straighter, and the Spirit of Jesus has for her no better expression than in the blasphemous sophistries of Jesuitism.

The five cities of the Philistines give us in growing intensity their menace to Israel. Gaza, the "strong," to this day a greater city than Jerusalem. It is power that above all Rome seeks,—earthly power by whatever means acquired, and her spiritual power she uses for temporal aggrandizement. "I sit a queen,

*And this kind of reasoning evidently influences them so largely as to make the meaning of proper names as given by them very unreliable. Their derivations of them are often the most arbitrary, and are the more approved the more they favor the most commonplace rendering. Its being literal is of very slight account.

the children of Israel: only divide it to Israel by lot for an [x]inheritance, as I have commanded thee. And now apportion this land for an inheritance to the nine tribes, and to half the tribe of Manasseh.

[x] ch. 14. 1, 2. *cf.* Eph. 1. 14.

and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow," is her language; and to secure this she is content to be a harlot with the kings of the earth. (Rev. xvii.)

Ashdod, the "spoiler," shows us how she sustains and increases her strength. Hers is the parasite growth that saps the vigor of that which supports it. She may well be reckoned as a Canaanite who puts a tariff on sin itself, and shamefully sells every gift of God for money. The countries most Roman Catholic are those most spoiled, and that not of money only but of all that is really precious.

Ashkelon, the "fire of infamy," shows us next the lightest of her weapons against those that resist her sway. Curses, reproach of heresy, railings of all kinds, she has ever dealt in, blasting the good name of all she dare attack in this way. It is a necessity laid upon her to destroy the character of those whom she dooms to more serious penalties. And—

Gath, "the wine-press," goes on to this. It is used in Scripture for the infliction of wrath, even divine wrath (Rev. xiv. 19, 20; xix. 15); and this is what Rome feigns her own to be. Finally—

Ekron, "rooting out," carries this on to complete extirpation of all that differ from her.

These, then, are the Philistine cities. With them the Geshurites are associated. "Geshur," we are told, means "bridge;" but there is no mention of such a thing, and therefore no word for it, in Scripture. It may be a compound word, the first syllable much abbreviated, and mean "haughty observer," which, however, though suitable enough for associates of the Philistines, we cannot with any certainty apply.

The Avvites are said in Deut. ii. to have been living in villages as far as Gaza, and to have been destroyed by the Caphtorim out of Caphtor, who dwelt in their stead. Here the Philistines themselves, or those who by union with the Casluhim became afterward the Philistines, seem to be intended. The "Avvites," or "Avvim," mean "perverters" or "overturners;" and while God used the Caphtorim for the destruction of a people more evil than themselves, yet they seem not to have been fully destroyed, but mingled with their conquerors, who may have learned their ways. It is certain that a Christianity already corrupted has thus prevailed over forms of heathenism, to which it became itself assimilated; so that that which in one sense had been destroyed, in another, survived. And this seems to be the lesson here.

These are the southern foes, afterward to prove such thorns in Israel's sides. In the north were genuine Canaanites, especially the Sidonians. They were pre-eminently the merchant-race, the first-born of Canaan (Gen. x.), and had their characteristics. With them are joined the Giblites ("borderers"?) on the northern slopes of Lebanon, which belonged, all of it to Israel, though never possessed by them. Of all this we can say little to purpose here.

But how large a portion had Israel, thus, which they never claimed in faith, and never got, although the grace of God preserves it for them yet, with much more. And how little have Christians of the land that is their own, and of how much do modern Philistines and Canaanites dispossess them! We have of necessity not the material for working out such a problem. By and by we shall know, and judge ourselves for all our folly and unbelief. Happy are they who even now apprehend what they can of the glorious inheritance!

2. We now pass on to look at the inheritance of the two tribes and a half beyond Jordan, an inheritance here confirmed to them as having fulfilled the conditions stipulated by Moses. (Num. xxxii. 29, 30.) The peculiar way in which this section commences cannot but be noticed, almost obscuring as it does

(XIII. 8-33.)

Confirmation of the inheritance of the two tribes and a half.

1. (vv. 8-14.) The whole inheritance.

2. [1]With him the [y]Reubenite and the Gadite received their inheritance, which Moses gave them across Jordan toward [sun]rise,—as Moses the servant of Jehovah gave them; from Aroer which is on the bank of the brook Arnon, and the city which is in the middle of the ravine, and all the table-land of Medeba as far as Dibon; and all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, who ruled in Heshbon, as far as the boundary of the children of Ammon; and Gilead, and the territory of the Geshurite and the Maachathite, and all Mount Hermon, and all Bashan as far as Salcah,—all the kingdom of Og in Bashan, who ruled in Ashtaroth and in Edrei,—he remained of the residue of the giants: and Moses smote them, and dispossessed them. [z]But the children of Israel did not dispossess the Geshurite and the Maachathite, but Geshur and Maachah dwell amid the Israelites to this day. [a]Only to the tribe of Levi gave he no inheritance: the offerings by fire to Jehovah, God of Israel, are their inheritance, as he spake unto him.

2. (15-33.) The division of the land.

a (15-23.) The portion of Reuben: the subject will of adherence to God.

[2](*a*) And Moses gave to the tribe of the children of [b]Reuben according to their families. And theirs was the territory from Aroer which is on the bank of the brook Arnon, and the city that is in the middle of the ravine, and all the upland by Medeba; Heshbon and all her cities that are in the upland; Dibon, and Bamoth-

y Num. 32. 33-42.

z Jud. 1. 27.

a ver. 33.

b ch. 12. 2. Num. 21. 21-30. Num. 32. 37, 38.

the new beginning; but that there is this here is nevertheless plain enough upon even a slight consideration, and the reason for the peculiarity may be better considered when we come to look at the portion of Manasseh.

(i.) But first we are to view the whole inheritance, essentially as we know the two Amorite kingdoms of Sihon and Og. Along with these we have now the territory of the Geshurites and Maachathites, which were mentioned in Deuteronomy as bounding Argob in Bashan, but not explicitly as coming within the limits of the two tribes and a half. Geshurites we have just met with in the south-west, probably the same people, though divided into two portions; and if "Geshur" signifies "haughty observer," "Maachah" means "oppression." They are little noticed afterward, and we can say little or nothing about them. The Israelites did not dispossess them, and we find kings of both places in David's time; so that they must have soon drifted into independence.

(ii.) (*a*) It is in what was Sihon's kingdom that Reuben finds his portion, in the southern half of it, in close proximity to Moab. Indeed it had, as we know, belonged to Moab, and been lost by them to Sihon. All this has to do with the meaning of what is before us, little as we may be able to render the meaning.

Reuben ("see a son") we have seen to represent man as the offspring of God by creation, gifted with that intelligent will in which lies the natural image of God; but which as fallen has broken out in self-will and corruption. Humbled and restored by grace it becomes the will of dependent cleaving to God, of that faith by which alone we are truly sons, as we have seen in Reuben in the wilderness. It is in this aspect we must consider him here, forgetting even, as we may believe, the failure which has shown itself in choosing for himself his inheritance where now we find him. God is over it all, and has for us in it other lessons than that of failure: and this will be easily apparent as we proceed.

> Baal, and Beth-Baal-meon, and Jahzah, and Kedemoth, and Mephaath, and Kirjathaim, and Sibmah, and Zereth-shahar in the mountain of the valley, and Beth-Peor, and the slopes of Pisgah, and Beth-jeshimoth, all the cities of the upland: even the whole kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned at Heshbon, whom Moses smote,—him and the princes of Midian, Evi and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, the

For in the first place, if Reuben in this way speaks now of faith, how significant is it that his portion is found in Sihon's kingdom, and that it is he that builds up again Sihon's capital, Heshbon, which falls to him. (Num. xxxii. 37.) "Heshbon" means "the reason, cause, or ground of a thing as an object of thought or study." (*Wilson.*) It is rendered in the common version "device," "reason;" "In Heshbon they have devised evil against her," says the prophet, playing upon the name. (Jer. xlviii. 2.) Heshbon cannot be maintained by Sihon against Reuben, although the Moabite may have had to give it up to him; and so "reason" is not alien to faith, which only destroys it in its alien form, to build it up anew more securely. Its after-history we must consider later. Dibon also ("sufficiency of knowledge"?) falls to Reuben, whose boundary southward is Arnon, ("the perpetual stream,") the limit of "living water;" on the bank of which Aroer is the same word as that for the "heath" (or "savin") in the desert, which furnishes to the prophet the picture of the curse upon "the man that trusteth in man, and whose heart departeth from Jehovah." (Jer. xvii. 5, 6.) Then the "table-land by Medeba" ("quiet waters") characterizes in general Reuben's inheritance: a green upland pasture—"green pastures" and "quiet waters"! He too has the "slopes of Pisgah," and the "splendor of the dawn" (Zereth-shahar), and the places devoted to Baal he purifies and renames. If we cannot go further than this, is it not enough to show the excellency and suitability of Reuben's portion?

Nevertheless somewhat more may be attempted. It is divided evidently into four parts, the numerical character of which is easily recognized. The first section reminds us of the independence of faith; the second, of its dependence; the third contains twelve names, which ought thus to show how faith manifests itself in the establishment of the divine government everywhere, being itself, of course, everywhere subject; while the fourth is but a boundary-line.

The first begins also with a boundary-line, which is that of Moab; where Aroer, (literally, "laid bare") significantly shows the acceptance of the divine estimate of any merely human trust. This is, on the one side, clearly the secret of the independence of faith. Then we have a nameless "city by the brook," which in such connection may speak of busy activity content to be unknown to man; while the upland by Medeba ("quiet waters"), with the waters connected with both the previous places, shows how by the power and sustenance of the Spirit alone is all individuality maintained. Good and necessary lessons are these to-day! Never more needed.

The second section has but one name, though with many implied relationships; and while it shows the dependence of faith, stamps this as Heshbon, "*reason.*" This indeed it is, and not credulity,—not blindness, though at times and in a certain sense, as with Abraham, it may not know whither it is going. But unbelief *never* really knows,—knows least where it sees plainest; while faith sees even in the dark—sees God at least, and rests: walks in no vain show, but in the truth.

The third section has twelve names, as already said, a number speaking easily and beautifully, though some of the details may be obscure. 12 is 3 × 4, as we well know; and the four parts may indicate, (1) that the kingdom is above all; (2) yet now in conflict; (3) the fruit resultant; (4) its universality. To which, as a fifth part—though only an appendix to the rest—there is added a deutero-

princes of Sihon dwelling in the land. [c] Balaam also, the son of Beor, the diviner, did the children of Israel slay with the sword among those that were slain by them. And the boundary of the children of Reuben was the Jordan and [its] border. This is the inheritance of the children of Reuben according to their families, the cities and their villages.

[c] Num. 31. 8.

[b] (24–28.) Gad: spiritual growth and courage.

(*b*) And Moses gave unto the tribe of [d] Gad, [even] according to their families to the tribe of Gad. And their territory was Jaazer and all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the children of Ammon, as far as Aroer which is opposite Rabbah; and from Heshbon to Ramath-mizpeh and Betonim; and from Mahanaim to the border of Debir; and in the valley, Beth-haram, and Beth-nimrah, and Succoth, and Zaphon, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon, the Jordan and

[d] Num. 32. 34, 35.

nomic recital of how this land had become theirs by the overthrow of Sihon and of Midian, and of Balaam also.

(*1*) Dibon, "sufficiency of knowledge," or "discernment," shows first that the kingdom of God in the soul is by the truth. This is, indeed, its complete and moral supremacy. All error disappears. Bamoth-Baal, the "heights" whereon men adore their idols, fall thus into the hands of faith; as does Beth-baal-meon, the "house of the Baal of the dwelling," the abode of idolatry in the house and heart.

(*2*) But the kingdom is yet only recognized by faith, and is thus in conflict in the world. Jahzah, "treading down," Israel's battle-field with Sihon, implies other fields trodden by the feet of combatants; while Kedemoth speaks of "confronting" hosts. Mephaath, "shining" may intimate what in the Lord's eyes is the lustre of this "good fight of faith."

(*3*) There is fruit also: Kirjathaim, "double city," may imply the concentration of energy, and unification of diverse capacities,—that fitting together in one which comes naturally from the drill and discipline of war. Sibmah, if with some we render it "fragrance," may speak of that diffusion of sweetness, the unconscious ministry to others of that which is the fruit of personal character. And Zereth-shahar, the "brightness of dawn," as seen from the "mount within the valley," gives the anticipation from the high place to which the low may bring you, of that sure coming day which gilds for us already, thank God, the clouds of night.

(*4*) Beth-peor is, as to its import, doubtful. Pisgah must speak of faith's "survey" of the future inheritance; Beth-jeshimoth, the "house of the wastes," of provision for the wilderness. These together imply God's sovereignty over the future and the present. Does Beth-peor complete this by showing Him sovereign over that which led us captive in the past? This we must leave as but a question; certainly, however,—

(*5*) The recital of the victories by which they had gained possession of the land is quite in keeping with such a thought.

Finally, the Jordan is plainly, in one sense, the limit of faith. In the joy beyond, we shall be "face to face."

(*b*) Gad lies next to Reuben: Gad, the type of spiritual increase, and of a militant condition too. Both things are contained in Leah's exclamation, "A troop cometh." * Spiritual increase can hardly be without conflict in a world like this; and the men of Gad we find in David's time eminent as warriors. (1 Chron. xii. 8–14.)

* Which thus again vindicates this reading of the passage. (Gen. xxx. 11.)

[its] border, as far as the extremity of the sea of Chinnereth across Jordan toward the [sun]rise. This is the inheritance of the children of Gad, according to their families, the cities and their villages.

c (29-33.) Machir son of Manasseh: "he who recollects."

(c) And Moses gave unto the half-tribe of *Manasseh; and this was what belonged to the half-tribe of Manasseh according to their families: and their territory was from Mahanaim, all Bashan, all the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, and all the Havvoth-Jair which are in Bashan—sixty cities. And half Gilead, and Ashtaroth and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan [belonged] to the children of Machir the son of Manasseh, to half the children of Machir according to their families.

c Num. 32. 39–42.

Gad shares with Reuben the land of Sihon; and their possessions seem at first sight strangely intermingled. Gad builds Dibon, though it falls to Reuben; and though Reuben builds and is allotted Heshbon, yet we find it afterward given to the Levites as a city of Gad (chap. xxi. 39). It was on the boundary-line, and might easily belong to either; but in this interweaving of Reuben and Gad, do we not find how inseparable "increase" is from faith; and how, if faith build up reason, it will take growth and militant energy to hold it? And so Gad also builds for Reuben Dibon ("sufficiency of knowledge"), for so Peter gives the connection—"Add to your faith virtue (valor), and to virtue knowledge."

Suitable also it is that "all the cities of Gilead" (the "heap of witness")* should belong to Gad; and half of Ammon (see Deut. ii. *notes*), in the face of which they build another Aroer. Also that they should have Mahanaim with its memorial from Jacob's history. Would one could say more as to Gad! but as to what should be possessed, how much remains!

(c) We may pass, then, to Manasseh: and here how exquisitely suited is it that Manasseh, the one "forgetful" of things behind, and of Manasseh just the children of Machir, "he who recollects" (of course, that to which he is pressing on), should have the kingdom of Og in Bashan put into their hands! For the things of the world can only be rightly used by him who is pressing on to another; and this is the only one of the tribes found on the east side of Jordan that in fact inherits *on both sides of the river*. Is it not this that we are reminded of in that strange beginning of the second section, so connected with the first: "With him the Reubenite and the Gadite received their inheritance," where "with him" is with Manasseh, to whom with the other nine tribes Joshua has just been commanded to distribute the land west of Jordan? Reuben and Gad are on the east side, yet with Manasseh, who is both east and west. The oneness of the tribe is thus emphasized, spite of this: and thus indeed Manasseh approaches nearer the final division in the yet coming day, when each tribe receives its inheritance on both sides, the boundary lines running east and west across the river. Whatever, then, Manasseh's personal failure in all this, it seems clear that we are not to regard it here, but to see in him the competence to use the world as having the heart in heaven.

Among Machir's sons we find Jair active in the conquest of the land. He is, according to his name, the "enlightener," and the introduction of light is the way to conquer Satan's kingdom of darkness. Life comes into the soul with light, if it be true light: so the cities Jair conquers he calls the "*lives* (*havvoth*)

* Elsewhere (Num. xxvi. 29, *n.*), I have accepted, with most, Gesenius' suggestion of "hard, rocky;" but Fay, even while not altogether refusing it, urges a number of texts against this (Num. xxxii. 1; Jer. viii. 22; xlvi. 11; l. 19; Cant. iv. 1; vi. 4). Jacob's history governs so much in the scenes of his eventful life, that the connection of Galeed with Gilead strongly commends itself.

"All the cities of Gilead" here are all that belonged to the kingdom of Sihon.

This is that which Moses allotted for inheritance in the plains of Moab across Jordan from Jericho toward the [sun]rising. And unto the children of [f]Levi Moses gave no inheritance: Jehovah the God of Israel, he is their inheritance, as he spake unto them.

[f] ch. 14. 3, 4.

(XIV., XV.)

Judah: the spirit of praise.

1. (xiv.) How power to obtain the promise is perpetuated.

3. [1]And this is what the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, which [g]Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun and the chief fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel allotted them for inheritance: their inheritance was by lot as Jehovah had commanded by the hand of Moses for the nine tribes and the half-tribe. For Moses gave inheritance to the two tribes and the half tribe beyond Jordan, and to the Levites he gave no inheritance among them; but the children of Joseph were two tribes—Manasseh and Ephraim; and they gave to the Levites no portion in the land save [h]cities to dwell in, and their pasturage for their cattle and for their substance. As Jehovah commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did; and they apportioned the land.

[g] Num. 34. 17, 29.

[h] ch. 13. 33. ch. 18. 7.

And the children of Judah drew near unto Joshua at [i]Gilgal, and Caleb, the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the word which Jehovah spake unto Moses the [j]man of God concerning me and thee in Kadesh-barnea. [k]Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of Jehovah sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land; and I brought him back word as it was in my heart. And my brethren who

[i] ch. 10. 43. ch. 5. 7.

[j] Ps. 90.

[k] Num. 13. 30.

of Jair." Men call Og's luxury and self-pleasing "life," but Jair shows us what is really life.

Machir shares Gilead with Gad; and this needs no further interpreting. The lesson of Manasseh here is as simple to read as it is good to learn and practice. Only in practice can it be really learnt. The reminder as to Levi's portion closes fittingly this section. Reuben, Gad, Manasseh, Levi,—all belong to us.

Notice how the spiritual meaning in these three tribes connects together; how naturally the one develops out of the other; how really we are on the earth side of things all through. The more it is searched into, the more it will appear how consistent and harmonious is the whole of this.

3. We now cross the river, and come to the inheritance of Judah, as it would seem, the first possession on the west side, and by far the largest possession. The Spirit of God evidently marks it out for us with peculiar care, and when we consider the prominence of Judah in the after-history, and the spiritual significance (two things more closely connected than is usually imagined), we are at no loss to understand this. The spirit of praise must have precedence of all else in the land of the inheritance of the people of God, and will put us in possession, most of all, of our inheritance there.

(i.) The first few verses here emphasize the fact that the inheritance was all given by lot at the hands of Eleazar and Joshua, and the heads of the people; and that in the distribution Joseph's two tribes compensated for the lack of territory for the tribe of Levi. We have then a most important lesson which Caleb, the whole-hearted, is brought forward to give us. The man of eighty-five appears with the children of Judah before Joshua at Gilgal, to claim the inheritance promised to him forty-five years before. Save Joshua, all his gener-

went up with me made the heart of the people melt, but I fully followed Jehovah my God. And Moses sware in that day, saying, [l]Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance and thy children's forever, because thou hast fully followed Jehovah my God. And now, behold, Jehovah hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, since Jehovah spake this word unto Moses, when Israel walked in the wilderness; and now, behold, I am eighty and five years old this day: I am still as [m]strong this day as in the day when Moses sent me; as my vigor then, so my vigor now for war, to go out and to come in. And now give me this mountain of which Jehovah spake that day; for thou heardest that day that the [n]Anakim were there, and cities great and fortified. If Jehovah be with me, then I shall dispossess them, as Jehovah hath said. And Joshua blessed him; and he gave Hebron for an inheritance to Caleb the son of Jephunneh: wherefore [o]Hebron hath been the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because he fully followed Jehovah the God of Israel. And the name of Hebron before was Kirjath-Arba: [he was] the great man among the Anakim. And the land rested from war.

l Num. 14. 24.

m Deut. 34. 7. Ps. 92. 14. *cf.* 2 Sam. 21. 15

n Num. 13. 33.

o ch. 15. 13.

ation has passed away, but he remains, and with all the strength of that former time. The Anakim whom he saw at Hebron remained there yet; and they must be subdued by him, if he is to receive the promise; but he desires no less difficult task; and his faith is as strong as his body. No need of many words to enforce the lesson in this case. We see at once how spiritual strength is perpetuated; and have it pressed upon us how our promised portion must be laid hold of and enjoyed.

Caleb is here, as once before, the Kenezite, and there is a Kenaz elsewhere said to be his brother. We shall not discuss in this place the difficulties of his genealogy; but what does the name mean? At least as good as any thing given, and completely in the line of thought of Caleb's history, would be "receptacle of strength;" and in this way Othniel, of whom we hear in the next chapter and in Judges, would be the fitting son of Kenaz.

(ii.) The boundaries of the tribe of Judah are next marked out. It lies southern-most of all the tribes, bounded on the south by the land of Edom and the wilderness of Zin; on the east, by the salt, or dead sea; on the west, by the great sea, or Mediterranean; and only on the north by Israelitish territory. Thus Judah, lifted up upon her hills, has a most varied outlook. Within also she is divided into the south land, where a large number of her cities lay, the low-land, or shephelah, (which included the Philistine plain,) the hill-country, and the wilderness. How good is it thus to realize that one can face outside the world of the natural man, the wilderness condition, the awful lake of judgment, the sea of instability and distress, no less than the blessed portion of the people of God, and give praise in view of all! While also the most varied conditions affecting ourselves may give occasion not merely to contentment, but to adoration! And it is only in a spirit of praise that we can rightly view all this. Judah speaks of that kind of praise which is termed "*confession.*" It is the confession of *God*, of course, that is intended by it; and when as redeemed we know Him, then, as knowing that all things are in His hands, even where we know nothing more, and cannot penetrate the mystery of His dispensations, we have the fullest assurance that can be given us that all is well. Egypt, the Red

2. (xv. 1-12.) The boundary of Judah.
a (vv. 1-4.) The south border: separation from the spirit of independence.

[2](a) And the lot for the tribe of the children of [p]Judah according to their families was to the border of Edom, the wilderness of Zin southward, in the extreme south. And their [q]south border was from the end of the salt sea, from the bay that faceth southward; and it went out south of the ascent of Akrabbim, and passed on to Zin; and it went up on the south of Kadesh-

p Num. 26. 19, 55.

q Num. 34. 3-5.

Sea deliverance, the wilderness, with its miracles of care and its holy lessons, all lie southward from Judah: Judah fronts them all, and how can one look in this direction, from the land flowing with milk and honey to which we have been brought, without adoring confession?

No wonder, then, if Judah take the lead and be the "lawgiver." (Ps. cviii. 8.) In the hearts of His worshiping people God will be supreme; the spirit of praise governs the heart and rules the life for God. Here is the citadel, which if surrendered, all is given up: when Judah goes into captivity, the national life is gone.

(*a*) The southern boundary comes naturally first. It should have meaning for us: can we attempt to explain it spiritually? Critics of a certain kind will laugh their loudest very likely, but we have come hopelessly under their condemnation long ago, and the desire to show that every part of the Word of God is profitable for edification is more attractive than their condemnation is alarming. If we should make some mistakes, let those who have made none cast their stones.

Over the boundary lie Edom, the wilderness of wandering, and, at a greater distance, Egypt. Edom and Egypt are allied as types of the natural world,—in the one, wilder; in the other, cultured; but both alike in independence of God. The wilderness shows the unbelief of the people of God bringing them back to the same condition of independence in departing from the living God. Israel's boundary line may well show us, therefore, how God would separate His people from this sin.

In fact, we shall find lessons of this kind here, and in a certain connection with one another and progress of thought, such as a line traced in this way might suggest. The first three places here seem to give us the sin of independency as looked at in itself; the next two, the divine help against it; the three following, help of more internal sort; the fourth, and last, the witness of *nature;* and this division would be a true numerical one. The border throughout is nothing but an air-line, which requires, therefore, intelligence to discern, and obedience to maintain.

Of the first three, the first is the salt sea; and measurably we already know what this means. It is the awful similitude of the pit of woe, into which the river of death pours unceasingly without overflow or escape again. It fertilizes nothing, but abides under the curse of barrenness., which is but the perpetuation of what is in the nature of sin. Its first law, which we may most naturally see in this glimpse of one end of it (for we do not see it all), is just this utter barrenness which its waters, wherever they are, produce. This is only a first thought, and a negative one indeed; and yet in God's creation, which all was once made good, and for good, barrenness is of itself a terrible reproach and stain.

But we have a further development at Maaleh-Akrabbim, the "ascent of the scorpions." The sting of the scorpion is in its tail, and this is the way of sin, which may have its "pleasures for a season," but, like the enchanted wine-cup, "*at last* it biteth as a serpent, and stingeth as an adder." (Prov. xxiii. 32.) Sin,—independence of God,—is not only barren: it has poison in its bowels, and death as its end.

Thirdly, we have Zin, a "thorn;" and a thorn is the natural curse: "thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." The blight of divine judgment abides thus upon the sinner; and in this threefold picture this is the last feature: sin is in its nature what calls for and abides under divine wrath. This

barnea, and passed to Hetzron; and it went up to Addar, and turned to Karkaah, and passed to Azmon; and it went out at the brook of Egypt; and the border ended at the sea. This shall be your southern border.

b (v. 5.) The east border: the witness of salvation.

(*b*) And the [r]eastern border was the salt sea as far as the end of Jordan.

[r] Num. 34. 12.

is no arbitrary thing, but must be, unless there is redemption; and this the cry of the twenty-second psalm declares.

God's people *are* redeemed; but He must still show His holiness in His dealings with them; and of this, Kadesh-barnea, the "sanctuary of the wanderer," may now well remind us. God had His place of refuge for His people in the wilderness, but it was a "sanctuary," a *holy* refuge, and they for their sins were "wanderers." In making it a city of Israel He bade them take home both the grace and the holiness of this to their hearts.

Hetzron, "inclosure," may exhibit another kind of care, the hedge around His people which nothing but that which shall work blessing for them may come through. God guards them thus from what would from their feebleness be too much for them. This is a constant mercy, of which we need to be reminded, because we are necessarily so little conscious of it. "He will not suffer us to be tempted beyond that we are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that we may be able to bear it."

We come now to what speaks of deeper and more internal work. First, Addar, which means "glory," "honor," or else "a goodly *robe;*" such as are the white "garments" which those in Sardis had not defiled. (Rev. iii. 4.) These, of course speak, of *practical* righteousness: our righteousness in Christ is wholly beyond even the thought of defilement. The suggestion of such a robe is fully in the line of thought in this place, and may well be accepted as what is here. A robe to keep unspotted is a good argument against the seduction of sin.

We have next Karkaah, which is a word used for "pavement," but compounded of two words which together imply "extension of what is joined together." We need not think, then, of a pavement: the lesson may be of that mutual help rendered by those each severally feeble, which is indeed God's way of making His people realize their need of each other, and training them in lowliness: a barrier against independence surely.

And thus, last of the cities here is Azmon, "strong;" for God has strength for His people, to be found in the sanctuary, but in the way of lowliness and dependence, so that we reach it by the way of Karkaah, as we have said. Truth is here in most fitting order, and to take it thus gives it power and beauty.

Finally, the stream of Egypt becomes the boundary to the sea, as to which we have no great interest in this connection in deciding whether it is the *Wady el Arish* that is meant, as commonly believed, or rather, as Poole contends, the Pelusiac branch of the Nile. That in the promise to Abraham Israel's border is the Nile there is no right question; but there the Euphrates is the boundary at the other end. In the division here there is as yet no possession of so wide a region, and the limit seems to fall short every way. But enough has been already said with regard to this.

In any case, the "stream of Egypt" would suggest to us still the thought of that ministry of natural blessings, which, while to natural men they seem so much a matter of course, have in them, to any one whom faith has restored to proper reason, abundant witness of the hand from which they come, and thus against independence. This too would make a fourth division of this boundary line, strictly according to numeric symbolism. Thus it is completed.

(*b*) The eastern border was the salt sea in its whole length to the mouth of the Jordan. The east has its two aspects spiritually, let us remember, as there are two words which express it in Hebrew. It was the place of sunrise, in this way of hope, though it might be far off. In the second sense, it was what

c (5-11.) The north border: the manifestation of Judah in relation to Ephraim.

(*c*) And the border of the [a]north side was from the bay of the sea at the end of Jordan; and the border went up to [b]Beth-hoglah, and passed along from the north to Beth-arabah; and the border went up to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben; and the border went

[a] *cf* ch. 18. 15–19.
[b] ch. 18. 21.

immediately confronted one, and commonly evil. The sea of salt, or dead sea, suggests naturally the latter of these thoughts. From it Judah's possession rose rapidly and in sublimity until Jerusalem towered thirty-five hundred feet above its surface; how different from the long slope of the land toward the western sea, ending in the broad wheat-plains of Philistia!

The salt sea, too, however evil in suggestion, is but a "lake." You can look over it to the hills beyond: it is not interminable. And so also at the end we read of a "lake" of fire and brimstone; not a sea, with its shore out of sight, but defined and limitable, thank God! and even narrow in its limits, though in itself terrible, as it is meant to be.

Here there is no fire, not even a volcano-mouth; but stifling heat there is, and the smell of sulphur, which abounds in it. All living things that the Jordan brings into it die; but there is no breath of disease from its deep blue waters! Such is this type of sin's awful judgment, between which and Israel's blessed portion there is no middle ground at all. The shores of the land of Judah lie all along it, and the homes of "praise" rise in full view of the lake of judgment. There will be, and, thank God, there need be, no forgetfulness in heaven: our praise *here*, too, is founded upon knowledge, and the full light of eternity will but perfect it.

Thus the salt sea bounds indeed Judah's possessions; but guards, and not invades them; as from the cross, from One forsaken of God, there was the witnessing voice, "But Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." And how should not *they* praise who as the fruit of that work are saved and brought nigh to God? How can the view of the judgment of sin do aught but deepen in the soul the apprehension of salvation: "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood!"

The border on the second side is one of strict separation—of salvation: not an air-line now.

(*c*) Judah's border on the north is Israelite, the only part of it that is. From what, then, must it be looked at as really separating? or what is the meaning of the boundary-line here? As the *third* border, we may characterize it, I think, as one of manifestation, bringing out more distinctly what belongs to worship itself, its place and power in connection with what the other tribes stand for spiritually.

Of these other tribes only Ephraim and Manasseh get their portion at this time. Judah's boundary never touches Ephraim's; but as yet there is nothing between them but unappropriated land. Hence it would seem that this boundary of Judah has respect as yet to Ephraim, and this will be confirmed by further examination.

Joseph's two tribes we have already seen to be connected together in their spiritual meaning, as might have been anticipated. "Ephraim" speaks of "fruitfulness;" "Manasseh," of the energy that presses forward to the goal, "forgetting" what is behind; a spirit not ascetic, though it might seem so, but acquisitive, and which is the spirit that makes fruitful. Thus the two tribes are one.

Judah and Joseph take possession of their lots in distinct priority of all others on the west of Jordan, and thus are in some sense to be looked at as dividing the land between them. They afterward did, as it were, divide the land (alas! in opposition to each other) as heads of the respective kingdoms of Judah and Israel, the latter of which is often spoken of as "Ephraim." In reference to each other they do, in fact, represent typically two spheres of the spiritual life,

up to [u]Debir from the valley of Achor, and turned northward toward [v]Gilgal, which is opposite the ascent of Adummim, which is on the south side of the water-

[u] ch. 7. 26. ver. 15. ch. 12. 13.
[v] ch. 14. 6. Jud. 2. 1.

absolutely necessary to each other and to the maintenance of this, and which yet have strange tendencies to divorce themselves from one another. These are, of course, the objective and subjective spheres, of faith and of practice, of piety Godward and manward; though none of these terms fully distinguish what God would never have separated, and which never can be, without the destruction of both; as Israel's divided kingdom was her ruin.

Judah and Ephraim alike reach across the whole breadth of territory, from the Jordan to the sea; but at no point do they touch one another. Between them are afterward placed two tribes, who, on opposite sides—toward Jordan and toward the sea—fill up the gap, and join the separated lands together. As we look at them we shall find how truly they are intended to be holdfasts on either side, and how beautifully in their spiritual meaning they fill up the interval.

Benjamin comes first of these, and fills up the Jordan side. The root-meaning here we have in the first notice in the book of Genesis (chap. xxxv., see vol. i. p. 99, *n.*). "Benjamin" is "Christ in us," the "I, yet not I," of the apostle (Gal. ii. 20), the real power for a walk on earth. "Not I, but Christ liveth in me;" which, let us note, is not the same as, "Christ is my life;" nor is it either, "To me to live is Christ;" though nearer akin to the latter than the former. But the one is *aim*, while the other is that realization of faith upon which it is dependent. "Christ has been crucified for me," he says; "it was my death, though He bore it: I, then, am crucified with Christ; yet I live, really live now: death is behind me, not before me; I live beyond my death." Then he shows the practical effect of this: "I live because Christ lives; I live before God in Him; God sees me no more but in identification with the Son of His love, who appears in His presence for me. I also look where God looks; I see what God sees: it is no more myself I see; I have lost myself in my wondrous Representative, and even as I live down here, it is Christ that lives in me: I have exchanged myself for Him."

Now, if this is what Benjamin means, he certainly in an admirable way fills the gap between Judah and Ephraim. This is, as it were, the objective in the subjective: it is what is before the eyes wrought into practical life. It is the worshiping heart pulsating through the body of the worshiper.

But Benjamin nevertheless does not fill all the space here. Westward, toward the great sea, another tribe is found, very different in the significance attaching to it from that of Benjamin. It is Dan, the last of all to find his place, and the most unsatisfactory of all perhaps in his after-history. But the failure has nothing to do with what he represents; and Benjamin's history is also a sad one. Oftentimes the most blessed truths seem to be those that have the least influence over us. Dan in the wilderness is leader of one of the four camps there, and, as we have seen, though the son of a handmaid, represents "rule;" which is in fact service, where it is according to God.

But rule, to be exercised aright, must also be rule over one's self first,—self-judgment; and Dan's name, we know, means "judge." Judgment, which implies discernment, is the ruler's part. *Self*-judgment begins for the Christian with the apprehension of the cross, which is God's estimate of man, the most solemn, because not that of an enemy, but of One who so loved us as to bear for us in Christ the judgment He had pronounced.

We have come thus far, then, toward Benjamin, with whose territory Dan's joins toward the middle of the land. But Dan gives only the negative side of Benjamin, not the positive side. It is the judgment of self he emphasizes, which joins on, on the one side, to the "worship" of Judah,—every mind the least taught of God knows how,—and on the other, links with Ephraim's "fruitfulness" as intelligibly.

course; and the border passed to the waters of Enshemesh and ended at *w* Enrogel.

And the border went up to the valley of the son of

w 2 Sam. 17. 17. 1 Kings 1. 9.

The gap, then, is filled up in the most perfect way; and this should help us much in the study of the boundary-lines, which we find in the case of Judah's first part plainly having Ephraim rather in view than Benjamin, as already said. What shows this is the way in which places in Benjamin itself are used to mark the line, as Beth-hoglah, and Beth-arabah, and Jebusi, or Jerusalem. On the west end of the boundary-line there are named similarly places that afterward belonged to Dan.

The description divides the boundary into two parts, the first of which, rising from the mouth of the Jordan, ends at Enrogel, just outside Jerusalem. The second part passes from Enrogel to the sea. The first part, in accordance with its being such, shows the priority of Judah to Ephraim,—no fruitfulness being possible till God takes his right place with the soul,—till it worships.

In this first part there are again five divisions, indicated by the repetition of "the border," as if it started afresh. It will be seen too that the second of these contains Beth-hoglah and Beth-Arabah, while the fifth speaks of Enshemesh and Enrogel.

(*1*)* We are first of all directed to the point of commencement of the boundary: "*And the border of the north side was from the bay of the sea at the end of Jordan.*" "From judgment into which death brings" is clearly the typical meaning. Worship begins with the recognition of our natural lost condition, without which we might have an angel's praise, but not a saint's. That which begins here is the song of *grace*, of one who is a "brand plucked from the burning," as it were the fire already kindled, judgment already beginning to take effect: a "bay of the sea" being, one may suppose, like the antechamber of hell. Almighty power and sovereign grace alone could work here, and thus with these the song begins.

(*2*) Next, we have the way of salvation: "*And the border went up to Beth-hoglah, and passed along from the north to Beth-arabah.*" The places are both in Benjamin, as was before said. Beth-hoglah is interpreted by Simonis, from the Syriac and Arabic, as "house of the partridge;" for which last Young gives "magpie." Neither meaning connects with Scripture or yields any intelligible meaning that one can see. As Hebrew, taking Hoglah as two words, the first letter of the second being dropped because identical with the last letter of the first, it might mean "the revealed sacrifice," *hag* being either a feast or the sacrifice of the feast. The "*house* of the revealed sacrifice" would be specially fitting in reference to the passover.

The other name here, Beth-arabah, is undoubtedly "the house of the wilderness;" and passover and wilderness would in this connection remind us of that love and care which had delivered Israel from judgment in Egypt, and sheltered them on their journey to the land. For us the types speak easily and need no expounding. A salvation to the uttermost, or redemption and preservation through the Lamb of sacrifice, suit well the numerical place.

(*3*) Consecration follows: as we have had chapters from Exodus in the last section, so now, equally in order, we have one from Leviticus: "*And the border went up to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben.*" Bohan means "thumb;" and we have no trace any where else of the thing or of the man referred to here. What profit are we to find unless we are at liberty to interpret the name?

When we have the name, how are we to apply it? The way to learn this, one might suppose, would be to see what we can find in Scripture in connection with the "thumb." The search need not be long. With the exception of the story of Adonibezek in the next book, the only Scripture references to the

*These divisions are too minute for any corresponding notice in the text; but they are numbered to direct attention to their numerical structure.

[x] Hinnom, to the shoulder south of the Jebusite (that is Jerusalem); and the border went up to the top of the mount which is in front of the valley of Hinnom west- [x] 2 Kings 23. 10. Jer. 32. 35. Is. 30. 33.

thumb are found in connection with the consecration of the priests and of the cleansing of the leper in Lev. viii. and xiv.* Have we not here, then, a plain intimation of what this would remind us? The thumbs of the priests or of the leper touched with the blood of sacrifice, and then with oil upon the blood, were tokens of consecration, in this double way, to the service of God. (*Notes*, vol. i, pp. 310, 330.)

The stone of Bohan was naturally a memorial pillar such as that of Jacob at Bethel, and, as with him, a witness to some divine, not human, work: up to this time, we have no account of any man or human work so memorialized. Such a witness to God would suit well a consecrated hand, and that of a Reubenite, who speaks of the will that cleaves to Him. A stone would be meant to abide; and thus the stone of Bohan would be very plainly the memorial of consecration to God.

Every child of God is at the same time a "saint"—sanctified by the work of Christ and by the Spirit which dwells in him. He needs but to carry this in remembrance. We are set apart to God, not by any voluntary engagement of our own, but by Another's devotedness to death for us. We are bought with a price, and belong to Him who has paid the ransom.

(*4*) We have now what is more difficult: "*And the border went up to Debir from the valley of Achor, and turned northward toward Gilgal, which is opposite the ascent of Adummim, which is on the south side of the water-course.*" Here are two things, though connected: first, the ascent to Debir from the valley of Achor. Both words we are familiar with, though Debir is not the city of that name that we have before had; it has, however, the same significance, (either "speaker" or "oracle,") while Achor is the valley named "troubling," from the punishment of Achan. This part, therefore, seems simple, that while here in the world we have to meet the trouble which is the fruit of sin, yet there is a way of access (which is thus also an ascent out of it) to that oracular voice which (as in Achan's case) gives the meaning of it all. The number of this section governing it, shows where the emphasis is to be laid, and that the "oracle" has reference to the "troubling;" which the history too confirms.

The second part now completes the lesson: the border turns *toward* Gilgal, not reaching it indeed, for the words seem to indicate that Gilgal is on the *north* side of the water-course, opposite the way of ascent by which the border goes, which is on the south side. And this the modern investigations tend to establish.

Gilgal is the "rolling away" of the reproach of Egypt,—that is, of the bondage there—bondage to sin, and toward this the way of Debir turns. The oracle which enlightens as to the cause of the trouble points us to the deliverance from it already achieved, and which we have not again to reach but only to be reminded of; while our road lies on the south—the sunny ?—side of the water-course (the stream of living water) up the ascent of Adummim (the "quieted ones"), —up, ever up, refreshed and rested, toward the end at hand.

(*5*) For now we reach the first halting place, and we may be certain that refreshment is abundant there. So it is: we end now with two springs, in the beautiful language of Scripture, "*eyes*," in the purity and abundance of which God's eye, as it were, looks out at you, and you are reminded, as was Hagar at Beer-lahai-roi, of the "Living One who seeth." *Two* springs: the one Enshemesh, the fountain of the sun, because the sun is ever shining on it; the second, Enrogel, the fuller's fountain, where our garments are made white.

We have finished our journey now as pilgrims: we are on the top of the ascent, and the city of the great King, Jerusalem, is right before us. "Our feet stand within thy gates, Jerusalem." All this road speaks, then, of what we have as

*Prescribed indeed in Exod. xxix. 20, as to the priests, but only carried out in Lev. viii.

ward, which is at the end of the valley of [y]Rephaim northward; and the border was drawn from the top of the mountain to the spring of the waters of Nephtoah,

[y] 2 Sam. 5. 18.

the material of worship. Can even "fruitful" Ephraim show such a road? Is not the pre-eminence of Judah demonstrated by it? Does it not all through speak of God, God, God? Here we have indeed our "songs of degrees" or "ascents:" every step is a song!

But here the second part of the border commences, and we have to follow it by a longer descent to the western sea.

It is after the first three stages an almost continuous descent, the interruptions being notable as such. It represents the continuous self-humbling so naturally suggested by the connection with Dan, which the apprehension of God induces in the soul, and which unites itself with and manifests the spirit of worship. Here too the difference is plain between Judah and Ephraim. The practical truth which Ephraim presents to us, necessary as it surely is, needs carefully to be guarded lest a spirit of self-complacency be nurtured by it. Ephraim must be kept in connection with Judah, and in dependence also, or he will slip into idolatry of the creature; and so the after-history testifies in the calf-worship at Bethel and Dan.

As before, the language employed marks out for us certain divisions,—here, eight in number; but we must go on to find the significance of this.

(*1*) "*And the border went up to the valley of the son of Hinnom, to the shoulder south of the Jebusite, that is Jerusalem.*" Is it not strange, that as it began with the salt sea below, so it now begins again, though at the summit of the ascent, with the picture of hell? for this without question the Gei-ben-Hinnom—Gehenna—is.

Here as the "valley" speaks of the place, the "son of Hinnom" must speak of the people destined to it; and here solemn it is to find that "Hinnom" means "gratuitous, causeless." "Son of Hinnom" in Hebrew, would mean a person characterized as that. He is gratuitously what he is: there is no cause for it outside himself. And so Scripture puts it as to the penalty of the lost: God willeth not the death of a sinner. As the Lord says, weeping over Jerusalem, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

But there is a connection with the Jebusite, the "treader down,"—that is, with the city then possessed by them, afterward, as we are at once informed, Jerusalem, the "foundation of peace," which is righteousness. So that Gehenna is not the mere expression of power, as if Jebusite, but the execution of justice necessary for the establishment of peace (Is. xxxii. 17.) And here we may easily see that, though still going on with Benjamin, we are approaching Dan's border. This second part of the boundary-line leads us down the slope of humiliation, the needful humbling of man's pride; and this begins here with the recognition of divine righteousness in judgment,—yea, of the congruity with it of all divine attributes. The first part of the border beginning with the salt sea, with judgment also and man's lost condition, yet presented another truth in connection with it, the almightiness of the Deliverer. Thus they are distinct.

(*2*) "*And the border went up to the top of the mount which is in the valley of Hinnom westward, which is at the end of the valley of Rephaim northward.*" The mountain is not named: we do not therefore need to know its name; but it divides between the judgment of the self-ruined (Hinnom) and the valley of Rephaim, "those who dissolve" people with terror. These giant races, the enemies of God's people, overthrow one, as it were, with the mere sight of them: they are types of the enemy's power, monsters, and, so to speak, superhuman. Are we not taught then by this mount of separation, (unnamed, because we are simply to think of it as this) to distinguish the judgment of sin from the mere effect of the enemy's power? As connected with the judgment of sin it is necessary to remember that no mere lack of strength, to resist a foe however strong, or

and went out to the cities of Mount Ephron; and the border was drawn to *Baalah, that is Kirjath-jearim; and the border turned from Baalah seaward toward

*1 Chron. 13. 5, 6. Jud. 18. 12.

circumstances, (may we not say?) however pressing, must be confounded with that which is the cause of divine judgment. Hinnom here is emphasized from another side of it therefore: human responsibility is fully enforced.

(*3*) "*And the border was drawn from the top of the mount to the spring of the waters of Nephtoah, and went out to the cities of Mount Ephron.*" *Nephtoah* means "opening," and reminds us of the rock opened in the wilderness, and of God's words by Isaiah, "I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys" (xli. 18.) If the riven rock be alluded to, we need not wonder at the abundance that is indicated, "the spring of the waters of Nephtoah," the symbol, as always, of that fullness of the Spirit which is ours as the result of Christ's death for us. And how important is this as the third step in the self-judgment of a Christian, that the fullness of the Spirit is really his? For then there can be manifestly no lack of power at any time, except what is due to lack of integrity or to lack of faith. A spring will fill a vessel and overflow it, except the vessel be filled with something else. And here the necessity and blessedness of self-judgment are pressed upon us. "*Be* filled with the Spirit," says the apostle: it is an exhortation,—a duty which belongs to us; not something which God would withhold, or has withheld, but which, if not ours, we are not sincere, or else not simple, in making it our own.

"*And it went out to the cities of Mount Ephron,*" which may as a compound word in Hebrew mean "a thrill"—or "quiver"—"of joy." Ecstacy is what the apostle associates with the fullness of the Spirit, as we see by his antithesis: "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, *but* be filled with the Spirit." When they were all filled after this manner on the day of Pentecost, the people said, "These men are drunk with new wine." In some respects to be compared, yet how different! "If we be beside ourselves," says Paul again, "it is to God." And here the mount of rapture, of thrilling joy, in what significant company is it with the "spring of waters of Nephtoah!" But this is not something known merely in seclusion; there is a busy hum of life about it: cities—and the word used means places of busy concourse—cluster upon Mount Ephron; the activities of divine life go with the joy of the Spirit.

(*4*) "*And the border was drawn to Baalah, that is, Kirjath-Jearim.*" The number 4 is that which, from its being the first capable of true division, expresses weakness, and thus speaks of the creature, necessarily weak as such, and liable to failure. It is also the number of testing, which brings out failure, and of the practical walk in which it is displayed. These lines run into one another, and under this number we find in general these thoughts together, as we have seen in Moses' fourth book at large. From the third to the fourth of any series of this kind we expect generally a descent in character therefore, and are rarely mistaken. This makes it at first sight strange that at the fourth point of the border here we find nothing but the name of a city which seems to suggest other thoughts. Baalah means "mistress, possessor," the other name of which is Kirjath-Jearim, the "city of the woods." It is mainly noted in Israel's history as the place where the ark, after its return from the Philistines lay unhoused—of its proper house—and well nigh hidden, all the days of Saul. "At Ephratah we heard of it;" says David: "we found it in the fields of the wood." And from thence he brought it to Zion.

Baalah, though certainly meaning "mistress" in Hebrew, has been thought to mean "belonging to Baal;" and this seems supported by the fact that in the list of the cities of Judah (*v.* 60) it is given as Kirjath-Baal.—the "city of Baal." This *seems* as if it might set aside dispute; but one who has thought much on Scripture is slow to believe that there is in it any change without a meaning. That full inspiration, which we shall not here question, which we must leave the risk of questioning to those who dare to take it, surely requires

Mount Seir, and passed to the shoulder of Mount Jearim northward (that is Chesalon), and went down to [a]Beth-shemesh, and passed [b]Timnah; and the border

[a] 1Sam. 6.9.
[b] Gen. 38. 12-14. Jud. 14. 1.

us to believe as much as this; and we shall gain much by acting as if we believed it.

If Baalah be "mistress," it is at the same time a word little used in Scripture, and twice out of three times in ill connections, though *baal* the masculine form is freely enough used for "owner, master, husband." The "lady-" city is no strange conjunction of terms; and its import is easy enough; as that of queen-city, even in our own days.

Kirjath-Jearim, "city of the woods," does not seem readily to lend itself to interpretation in the way we seek. *Jaar*, "wood" primarily means "redundance, overflowing," and so a "thicket of trees," from the exuberance and luxuriance of vegetable life. But this in contrast with a fruitful field is used in Scripture as implying a useless prodigality (Is.xxxii. 15); and a city of woods or thickets would convey more strongly this thought of waste land *not* really barren but devoted to what was of little profit.

As connected with this it is used also as the symbol of pride doomed to destruction, to ax or fire, and thus it comes round to the thought contained in Baalah, a city of woods, and not of fruitful fields, barren of self-support, while it remains in haughty idleness, drawing from others what it does not repay,

So many of the lessons of Scripture have to do with pride, the great evil of man's fallen nature, by which in various ways and in very humble degrees of it, man would still be "as God;" can it be wondered that the number of failure and of creature-weakness is attached to it here? For weakness with us is strength, and strength is weakness: he that exalteth himself must be abased, while he that humbleth himself is exalted. And this is indeed one inveterate evil and cause of all failure, which, in this line we are upon, (drawing close now to Dan,) could not be omitted from the materials of self-judgment which are being furnished to us here. Ah, what spendthrift prodigality of human strength is there at the bidding of this Pharaoh, and how we toil to build pyramids, which when built are but sepulchres at last!

And after all Baalah and Baal-worship are but too closely united, so that Kirjath-Baal, as a synonym for Baalah can easily be understood. Baal is "lord," in that sense in which God disowns it for Himself. He will not be Baali, but Ishi, the title, not of mere authority, but of endeared relationship. (Hos. ii. 16.) Baal is force, power, and this is the god of pride, in the service of which it toils. How different the yoke of Him who, when He offers it to us, bids us "learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, that ye may find rest unto your souls"! (Matt. xi. 29.)

And now we reach the border of Dan—

(5) "*And the border turned from Baalah seaward toward Mount Seir, and passed to the shoulder of Mount Jearim northward, that is Chesalon; and went down to Beth-shemesh, and passed by Timnah.*"

Now for the first time, as we come to Dan, it is noticed that the border turns *seaward*. It is the regular word for "west," and of course the general direction has been west all through, but now it is directly so, and we are called to observe it. Of the two tribes that lie side by side with Judah to the north, Benjamin lies toward the Jordan, Dan toward the sea, and these are their respective limits. The sea is also Judah's western border, the fourth in order on this account. It is the picture of man fallen, in his restlessness and barrenness, and chafing against all restraint. Yet it is that out of which the influence of heaven can draw up the fertilizing rain, as God's mercy draws from man's misery its opportunity to display itself. The very picture of trial is found in "those who go down to the sea in ships, who have their business in the great waters;" but "these men see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep." (Ps. cvii.)

> went out to the shoulder of Ekron northward; and the border was drawn to Shichron, and passed by Mount Baalah, and went out to Jabneel: and the border ended at the sea.

Trial is needed because of what we are, is adapted to our condition, and in it God's governmental ways are often most clearly seen.

The line passes then *seaward* from Baalah to Mount Seir. Evidently the repetition of the last named, Baalah, is meant to show how it governs the next part of the road: pride must be abased, yet the road does not at once descend; on the contrary we find a "mount;" but we are going seaward, (the way of trial) and the mount is "Seir," the "rugged." The name certainly has no pleasant suggestion for an Israelite, though of course not Esau's mount, but only like it. It suggests hostility as well as roughness; and though God "gave Mount Seir to Esau," it was as a gift suited to the man,—a rough abode for a rough person. After all, an Edomite might flourish where an Israelite would starve.

A mount was not necessarily of evil significance, as we know. Mount Zion is to be the joy of the whole earth. Israel's portion was largely mountain. Yet to humble the pride indicated by Baalah, a "rough mount" would be more suited than a valley. If we seek high things God may give them to make us realize that adversity may easily come in this shape. Thus Mount Seir is "seaward" from Baalah.

God's guidance is for blessing in all this; and thus now we find the line passing to the shoulder of another mount, not rugged but leafy, the "mount of woods;" which cannot but recall the "city of woods," which was the other name for Baalah itself. But there is no city here; it is as if passed away; and only the woods remain, a mountain of woods, not perhaps as rough as Seir, but hardly pleasantly suggestive yet. The city is gone, the hum of busy intercourse is exchanged for the loneliness in which we come so often to a better mind; and there before us are only the "woods"—the profitless prodigality of pride, emphasized as this last by being a mountain forest.

We are traveling *northward*, facing mysteries which we have to learn; and the token that they are being learnt is naturally in the interpretation here—"that is Chesalon:" only a slightly changed form of the last word in the sentence of the Psalmist upon those whose "inward thought is that their houses shall continue forever and their dwelling places unto all generations, and" who "call the lands after their own names. This their way" he says "is their *folly*." The word means "confidence" as well as folly, the folly of a false confidence. But here we are surely not to take it as the sentence passed by another, but by a soul upon itself. The "city" that should have remained is passed; its houses have *not* continued: there is not *Kirjath-Jearim*, but only Jearim. It is repentance wrought by God in the soul; in evidence of which the line *now runs downward;* there is self-humbling; and the next place that is reached is how different! It is Beth-shemesh, "*the abode of the sun.*"

For the sun dwells in the valleys; though the spiritual truth goes beyond the natural type. But in the valleys its influence is most felt, even naturally. Of the spiritual truth, "thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a humble and contrite spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." (Is. lvii. 15.) Thus Beth-shemesh could not be reached but on the descent: how beautifully every turn of the line develops the meaning! how plainly the spiritual meaning governs all! Is there not in all this verbal inspiration? Surely no one who reverently examines it can longer question! But to proceed:—

"*And it went down to Beth-shemesh, and passed Timnah.*" Timnah means "apportionment," "what is measured out." A beautiful sign of true humbling and of one with whom the high and lofty One dwells, that he takes his portion now as measured out by Him and craves no more.

d (v. 12.) The west border: the sea (trial).

(*d*) And the [c]western border is the great sea and [its] coast. This is the border of the children of Judah round about, according to their families.

[c] Num. 34. 6.

(*6*) "*And the border went out to the shoulder of Ekron northward.*" Ekron seems to mean "rooting out;" and we have before met with it as a Philistine city. While the meaning of the word must of course be the same, its application, when Ekron became Israelite, would be naturally different. Ekron falls within Judah's boundary-line, and is named afterward as a city of Judah; yet it is given to Dan. If we are spiritually to apply it as the eradication of sin, it will indeed naturally fall to the latter as a necessary part of self-judgment; yet if Judah's "praise" be the "confession of Christ's name," His having suffered for sins is part of the confession, which Peter links for us with "ceasing from" them (1 Pet. iii. 18; iv. 1.) We must preserve this link with Judah, while we give Dan the city.

But what is meant by the eradication of sin? Not certainly the rooting out of the old nature, as some dream. The flesh lusts against the Spirit even in one who has the Spirit; and the remedy prescribed by the apostle is not, Root out the flesh, nor yet, Ask God to root it out, but "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil its lusts." (Gal. v. 16, 17.) It has been suggested by some, that the lusting of the flesh is only in such unspiritual men as the Galatians; but the apostle certainly had not a lower standard for such than for others. What kind of "eradication" then can one speak of? Well, the keeping one's garden clean of weeds, although one cannot destroy their germs out of the soil. We are not to be letting one kind alone, or even cultivating it while we root out others. And one may be so little skilled as not to know weeds from flowers. There the apostle's word comes in: "I *exercise myself* that I may have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men." (Acts xxiv. 16.) This earnest and absolute unsparing dealing with all sin is what seems to be meant by Ekron here.

(*7*) Under the number seven we expect to hear of the completion of this line of thought; and so we do: "The border was drawn to Shicron," "satiation with drink," not necessarily in a bad sense. "*Drink abundantly*, O beloved" (in Cant. v. 1), is the same word. "*And passed Mount Baalah, and went out to Jabneel.*" Baalah we have had before, and the repetition cannot be without meaning. Kirjath-jearim, its other name, is similarly repeated as to the last part of it, becoming also *Mount* Jearim, as here we have *Mount* Baalah. We are surely intended to draw these comparisons. Baalah is here not a city of man's making, but something of God's making. It does not exalt itself, as before: it is exalted. Then notice the last name, Jabneel; it means, "*God* is the builder"—not man. How plain, if we put all this together, the lesson seems to be, that the exaltation which man misses, when seeking it for himself, God has for him in His own way, and satiates thus man's thirst to the full! "I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness." (Ps. xvii. 15.)

(*8*) Here the border ends at the sea,—somewhat disappointingly at first sight. And why the number 8, which would be suited enough to remind us of eternity, but what is its object here?

(*d*) The sea is the west border of Judah throughout,—the fourth border,—most suitably stamped thus with what speaks of trial. But those whom the sea tries, brought to their wits' end by it, and crying to Him in their trouble, find the wonderful works of God. The shore which is Judah's limit is that also which He has given the sea, and it cannot pass it, nor turn again to cover the earth. Every way trial ends in the demonstration of the power of God, and that He is for His people. At the sea, Jabneel, "God is the builder," proves itself in this barrier of sand, so slight as it appears, in fact so mighty. In this lesson these two lines unite. The sea is not to exist forever: in the new world there will be none; but it will abide in the voice from it which will eternally proclaim the glory of God in His mastery of all circumstances, whereby all things

3. (13-19.) The realization of the possession.

13 And to [d]Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a portion among the children of Judah, according to the word of Jehovah to Joshua, the city of Arba the father of Anak, that is [e]Hebron. And Caleb dispossessed of it the [f]three sons of Anak, Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmai, who were born to Anak. And he went up thence to the inhabitants of [g]Debir, and the name of Debir before was Kirjath-sepher. And Caleb said, [h]Whosoever

[d] ch. 14. 15.
[e] 2 Sam. 2. 1.
[f] Num. 13. 22.
[g] vers. 7, 49.
[h] Jud. 1. 12-15.

work together for good, whatever their character. All conflict and trial past we shall praise God for the sea, and it will abide for us, as apostles and prophets abide, in the work that they have accomplished for us. May not this be the meaning of the number 8, with which the last section closes?

(iii.) And now we return once more to Caleb, whose history is so interwoven with this delineation of Judah's possession as to show plainly its great importance for us in connection with the general lesson. Yet it has been supposed, from facts which will have to be considered in another place, that he was not himself by right of birth a member of the tribe. And this seems confirmed by what is said here, that he was given a portion among the children of Judah according to the word of the Lord, although this last may relate to what follows rather than to what precedes. Caleb seems to have been of Edomite stock, one of those believers from among the Gentiles, of whom we find many prominent examples in the history of God's people, and of whom our Lord might have uttered the words concerning the Roman centurion, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Alas, the faith found among those brought up in a certain familiarity with divine things that have only availed to deaden the wonder of them, is so apt to be dulled to the average as it were between faith and unfaith; lacking the individuality that appears in those of whom we think as having lesser advantage.

Of Caleb's conquest we have no details. To those with whom God is, what is all the banded strength of the sons of Anak? Sheshai, Ahiman and Talmai are dispossessed, and Hebron is his own. The names of the three children of Anak are not easy to interpret, and one can only venture to suggest their significance. As Anakim, ("the long-necked") of whom it was said, "who can stand before the children of Anak?" they may well represent the different forms of the pride of heart from which God is far off, and which is therefore the most terrible hindrance to the believer's possession of Hebron, that is "communion." Sheshai, which means most probably "white," may in this way speak of self-righteousness, the pride of personal character; Ahiman, if we may take it with Fausset to mean, "who is my brother?" of the pride of station, birth, or worldly condition; Talmai, "my furrows," of the pride of work accomplished, of one's doings. This certainly might well represent the whole family of Anak. They all fall before whole-hearted Caleb; and they as surely will before every one like him.

Hebron is his own, but that is not his only possession. We hear at this point of another city which has already come before us, and of the meaning of which there is no question. Debir, we find, has had, like Hebron, its Canaanite name: it was Kirjath-sepher, the "city of the book;" and how striking it is that in Caleb's hands the city of the book becomes the place of a divine oracle! a written word merely is exchanged for a living Voice, the voice of Him who when the heart is right with Him, delights to draw near and speak to the heart of the worshiper. Is not Debir in fitting company with Hebron? is it not its rightful complement? For the Christian of course, the "oracle" is not divorced from the "book:" it neither displaces nor overrides it. Nay, the "living oracles" is the title of Scripture itself, which faith owns and finds true. God never sets aside His Word; but the Spirit of God works with it and energizes it that it may be this to us, giving us the full reality of the divine Presence. Alas! how few yet know this in the measure it should be known!

smiteth Kirjath-sepher, and taketh it, I will give him Achsah my daughter to wife. And Othniel took it, the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb; and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife. And so it was, when she came, that she had moved him to ask of her father a field; and she lighted from the ass. And Caleb said unto her, What wouldst thou? And she said, Give me

It is not however Caleb himself who takes Debir, but Othniel, either his nephew, or a much younger brother, who gets, according to promise, Achsah Caleb's daughter for his wife. Achsah would seem to mean "anklet," as Othniel is said to be "lion of God." What follows, however, is full of significance. Achsah on coming to him had* urged him to ask of her father a field, and she had got it, but in a south land—dry and needy: she boldly therefore goes further, and begs her father to give her springs of water. He gives her abundantly: upper springs and lower springs.

But who cannot see that, if these be "living oracles," there must be something deeper here? If only history, it would not seem very remarkable or worthy of preservation: and yet it is actually singled out from the midst of things apparently much more important, for repetition in the book of Judges. What is there so noteworthy in a young woman asking of her father a field and water? Yet we are warned carefully against looking for "gospel" in it! No wonder, if this be the temper of even orthodox commentators, that the "higher critics" should be encouraged, and God's people should be starved.

If we will only remember that "all these things happened to them for types," and that we have thus in type our own portion before us, how fruitful indeed, and well worth of double emphasis, Achsah's story becomes. Would only that we had her eagerness after a good portion, with every requisite for its enjoyment! would that we might be bold also to add prayer to prayer, making one gift the argument for another, until we had blessing indeed! Here we may be permitted to lose sight even of the large-hearted Caleb, and to think of One who surely gives with His "whole heart." Suppose Achsah had argued, "My father has given me already what he wished to give. I must not desire too much, nor reproach him as if his gift were not good enough,"—what would she have done with her south land, and no water? And just so God often gives what He knows necessitates more, and delights in the faith that says, *not* "It is enough," but "It is *not* enough." Of course, we are speaking of spiritual gifts, although the principle is of wider application, if we are only near enough to God to apply it rightly. But *our* land—our portion with Him—*is* a "south land." It faces the sun, and we need the Sun: we never can have too much of it; precious things are put forth by the Sun: all we need is water, springs of water, living water; and Caleb's liberality in this respect is but the faint image of God's.

Our portion is *workable land:* it calls for diligence, for labor upon it; and it will repay labor richly too. Would that the people of God would realize this more! Ah, how it needs to be insisted upon, to be repeated, not once only, but continually. And thus the precious Word of God, by which alone our portion is made our own, how we should search it, dig into it, not be content to leave it so much to a special class to assert patent rights as its interpreters, while thankful for every right thought that any can contribute to us. But we must seek and use the water above all; for the south land is one of all lands most dependent; and we know how to ask believingly from Him who giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not.

Then there are "upper springs and lower springs,"—those that spring out of valleys as well as out of hills,—wonderful high levels with large outlook, and low places, as in the valley of humiliation, where the streams linger, and fruits corresponding to each plane. There are glorious heights where, far above all

* So I think it should be read, otherwise the connection is very difficult.

> a blessing; for thou hast given me a south land: give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

storms, we gaze into clear, transparent, measureless infinity. And there are sweet recesses where we are shut in and see little, but where still there is the same Presence and the same Voice: "breadth and length and depth and height" are with all their variety still filled with one uniting, unifying blessedness, "the love of Christ that passeth knowledge."

(iv.) We have now a detailed list of the cities of Judah, in which we are evidently not to think (or but secondarily,) of the people that filled them. They stand rather for localities, varied circumstances, conditions, *experiences*, in and through which God is known, and the worship of His people ascends to Him. It is thus, as I believe, they fill the fourth place here.

It is but a list of names, which seem indeed to have little for us, except as we find it in the meanings of the names themselves. The best of commentators find here nothing but topography, and can give nothing but criticisms upon the language and historical references. There is surely room, therefore, for another treatment of them, which, if it can in any tolerable way give them consistent spiritual meaning, will demonstrate itself as true interpretation. If it speak to us in coherent language,—if it bring us lessons of holy wisdom,—why should we doubt that there is *mind* behind it? and then whose mind can it be but that of Him whom all His works confess?

We dread imagination; yet God has given us imagination, and appeals to it. We may abuse it—truly: not a good gift but may be abused. Have we not as much cause to dread the unbelief that carries with it its badge of weary dullness and inanity, which, because it is unbelief, can never "see the glory of God"? Scripture is fuller of this than even our imagination can easily suggest; and indeed it is imagination (for unbelief has its own,) that we have to oppose here with Scripture,—Scripture which asserts for itself that it is *all* "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," so that we must suppose even a list of Israel's cities should be that. Let us see if, by God's goodness, we may discover this: let us seek, that we may find. And Christians should be able to discern the difference between the day-dreams of the visionary and the clear sight of faith. "I speak as to wise men," says the apostle; "judge ye what I say."

One may freely confess that the subject is a peculiarly difficult one. The names are often hard to interpret, and the vocabularies give a bewildering variety of meanings. They are often capable of very different ones, and the difficulty is increased by conjectural vagaries of critics, who are as much troubled with imagination as any poor allegorical interpreter needs to be.

But there are difficulties with the text also, and some mistakes seem undoubtedly to have crept into the copies. These we shall have occasion to notice as we come to them. Here, if any where in Scripture, they would naturally be found. The numerical symbolism should be of the greatest help here, as it is all through, a check upon mere fancy instead of a loose rein to it, which brings in, indeed, something of the certainty of mathematical science into interpretation. If any one imagines otherwise, let him try any list of names in an uninspired book, and see how he will succeed, with the help of the liveliest fancy, in finding in it the faintest resemblance to what we trust to show to be here.

(*a*) The cities are gathered in larger and smaller groups, and sometimes numbered. Here again is a help to true interpretation, a guard against a false one. We have separately the cities in the south, (the *Negeb*;) in the *Shephelah*, or low-land; in the hill-country; and in the wilderness. The south (or *Negeb*, not the usual term for the south quarter,) we have seen already to speak of a dry land, yet productive, if its one necessity be met—that of water. As facing Edom, and the more distant Egypt, it is a land peculiarly dependent upon the rain of

4. (20-63.) The cities,—the various experiences which furnish praise.

'(*a*) This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families:—The cities at the extremity of the tribe of the children of Judah toward the border of Edom, in the south:—

Kabzeel, and Eder, and Jagur, and Kinah, and Di-

a (20-32.) In the south.

heaven. It was full of cities once, now shut up in desolation. As a needy land, it was well fitted to remind the dwellers in it of the divine Hand upon which they were dependent. It will be no wonder, then, if its cities preach specially to us of the power and work of God, as in fact they do; lying also more or less near to the southern border, the line of which we have followed throughout.

(*) The smaller divisions may be traced by the want of the usual conjunction, the first group in this way consisting of nine cities, which would again, according to the usual division of nine, fall into three threes. Thus already the structure is marked out for us before we have looked at a name, and we have a strict curb upon imagination. These are the numbers attached to the names and their divisions; if the symbolism of numbers is preserved here, then they will be justified by the significance throughout:—

1. { *1.* Kabzeel, *2.* Eder, *3.* Jagur; } 2. { *1.* Kinah, *2.* Dimonah, *3.* Adadah; } 3. { *1.* Kedesh, *2.* Hazor, *3.* Ithnan. }

We must take them up separately first, before we can see the meaning of this classification.

"Kabzeel" means "God gathers;" and the name of God (*El*) is that which speaks of *power*. A good thing for Israel to be reminded of, and a real foundation for a nation's praise. It affirms their unity as from God, the practical accomplishment of it as from His mighty hand. As a first thought, it is also a simple one, and numerically clear.

"Eder" is "flock," from a verb which according to Parkhurst means "to separate, sever, distribute:" "a flock of sheep or herd of kine, which are *separated* or *disposed* at the will of the herdsman." Such a flock too is Israel, to be distributed and disposed at the will of their Great Shepherd; and this is the natural sequence and supplement to the thought in "Kabzeel," in some sense antithetical also, as their numbers are.

"Jagur" means "he sojourns," the word used by the Psalmist for "abiding" in God's tabernacle. (Ps. xv. 1; lxi. 4.) The land of Israel was God's, and they were His guests—"strangers and sojourners with Me," He says. (Lev. xxv. 23.)

God's sovereignty shines in these three names, and is the thread that unites them together. He gathers them by His power, arranges and disposes of them in His wisdom, entertains them in sovereign goodness; and these are surely all materials for praise. These cities lie also near the border of Edom, and in a marked way characterize Israel as in opposition to the independence and profanity of Esau.

But if God is owned their Sovereign in the first three, He is seen no less as their Saviour in the second three; and this comes in natural as well as numerical order here. For "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Thus we have now—

Kinah, which, from *kanah*, may mean "purchase."

Dimonah, "sufficient numbering," the *terms* of the purchase: "He was numbered with the transgressors:" the full price paid.

Lastly, Adadah, which may most literally mean, "the prey has departed." For "therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong: because He hath poured out His soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors, and bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

monah, and Adadah, and Kadesh, and Hazor, and Ithnan;
'Ziph, and Telem, and Bealoth, and New Hazor, and Kerioth-hetzron, that [was] Hazor;

f 1 Sam. 23. 14. 1 Sam. 26. 2, etc. ver. 55.

The third series suitably begins, as a Leviticus one, with Kedesh, the "sanctuary." It is Kadesh-barnea that is meant, and which we know was on the southern boundary; but "barnea," "the wanderer," is rejected, as unsuitable to what is here, and only the first part retained.

Hazor also, "an inclosure," is, with Kadesh, on the boundary; but—

Ithnan is a place which is only mentioned here, and means, apparently, "he shall spread himself abroad." Thus we have again easily connected thoughts: a sanctuary—a safe retreat; an inclosure—a hedge around; and yet that only keeps out evil, does not prevent extension and multiplication. These thoughts all connect with sanctification, but speak, as all do here, rather of work done for one that this may be, than of the internal work, except in some measure the last, which gives the result, and which, as the third name in a third series, naturally emphasizes more what is internal. Here, then, the first group of cities is completed: in it divine power manifests itself throughout.

(**) The second series has but five names, and is a simple one. Young gives the first, Ziph, as "place of refining," and this seems to agree well with the general thought of the series, and to characterize it. Humiliation and its results seem to be here spoken of, and this is a deeper necessity for us, and a matter for more abundant praise, than it is easy to believe. Yet if pride was that by which an angel became a devil, the sin which alone seems possible to one in all the created perfection which Ezekiel ascribes to him (Ezek. xxviii. 15, 17), one may not wonder if even as saints we have to be guarded in every possible way against it.

Telem, "oppression,"—a strange word amid the rest—seems thus, however, intelligible; and from God's hand it may come sweetened, though an enemy for enmity alone be the oppressor.

Bealoth, "on the ascent," comes suitably in the third place; for with God there is always a way out; and a way *out* is always a way *up*. Then comes, under the number of weakness,—

Hazor-hadattah, a "new inclosure," a fencing about still for safety, while relieved from the past distress; and then—

Kerioth-hetzron, "*cities* of inclosure," which is, after all, old Hazor with a new meaning. When the fencing round is found to be the folding about of the everlasting arms, and that is consciously fulfilled to the soul, "Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance" (Ps. xxxii. 7), then begins the stir of busy, fruitful life of which the "cities" speak.

All this is Judah's portion; and we have only looked at a little corner yet.

(***) With the third group, another nine, we come to what is strictly internal work—divine work in the soul;* a theme for praise indeed, as that which alone makes competent for praise. These nine divide once more (as nine seems always to do) into three threes:—

1. { *1.* Amam, *2.* Shema, *3.* Moladah;
2. { *1.* Hazar-gadda, *2.* Heshmon, *3.* Beth-pelet;
3. { *1.* Hazar-shual, *2.* Beersheba, *3.* Biziothiah.

The first three begin with that with which all here must begin,—with new birth.

"Amam:" I take it to mean "their mother," and to refer to the common mother of us all. Eve fallen has involved in her fall all the children descended naturally from her: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Ps. li. 5.) With this truth, sad and humbling as it is,

* For full detail as to the nine names here, see my tract, "From Amam to Biziothiah."

Amam, and Shema, and Moladah, and Hazar-gaddah, and Heshmon, and [j]Beth-pelet, and Hazar-shual, and [k]Beersheba, and Biziothiah;

[j] Neh. 11. 26.
[k] Gen. 21. 22-34. 1 Chron. 4. 27-31.

we must begin, or we cannot understand the necessity for new birth. Two words, which we must connect together in order to apprehend their force, give us now this very simply.

"Shema," "report," and—

"Moladah," "birth," thus easily convey to us the truth which Peter emphasizes,—"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." (1 Pet. i. 23.) "Faith cometh by a report, and the report by the word of God." (Rom. x. 17, *Gk.*) Here the first triad ends; the first stage of the journey is reached.

"Hazar-gaddah," an "inclosure of conflict" begins the next three. This is now the internal strife which is found after new birth,—"I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." (Rom. vii. 23.) "Hazar," "inclosure," speaks, on the other hand, of the law of God, which while we are under it in conscience, holds us in for conflict. "The strength of *sin* is the law," though it condemns and urges us against it. This is the lesson of Pharaoh, Migdol, and the Sea, and which is acted out for us in that grand type. A new deliverance is needed, of which we have the method revealed in—

"Heshmon," "quiet reckoning." We do not conquer by fighting, but by faith: "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. vii. 25.) It is by learning our place before God in Christ, in full simplicity, and that God does not identify us with the evil in us, but with Him who by His cross has put it away, that we reach—

"Beth-pelet," "the house of escape," the sanctuary into which He has entered, and where He abides for us. How safe and complete a shelter! But it is in the third series that we find the full result. As in all three, the first of the triad is the most mysterious: it is—

"Hazar-shual," "the inclosure of the jackal"—"the jackal-pen." "Shual" is the word translated "foxes" in the common version, but for which, in general "jackal" is allowed to be better. Both are "burrowers," as the word means; but the jackal only is a carrion-feeder, as Ps. lxiii. 10, and gregarious, as Samson's exploit would imply. (Judg. xv. 4.) The two former habits, and the whole connection in which we find the word here, induce the belief that it is the symbol of the evil nature, the flesh, with its earthliness and its greed for corruption. This jackal-nature cannot be slain, moreover. It can be "*penned*," and thus practically "annulled," the real word in Rom. vi. 6, the fruit of faith in what the cross has done for us: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be annulled, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Faith indeed must *keep the pen*, even when deliverance is fully known; and so it is further written, "*Reckon* yourselves dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God in Christ Jesus;" and "*Let not* sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." (vv. 11, 12.) The knowledge of deliverance, however, by a soul practically in the faith of it, *pens the jackal-nature*.

So we come to "Beersheba," "the well of the oath," or "of the seven," the number of lambs by which the well that he had dug was secured to Abraham. So to the delivered believer the well of water is secured by divine promise, founded on the perfection of what Christ is for God. All the fullness of the Spirit belongs to him, and yet not without the need of diligence on his part, as the *well* implies: not a free-flowing spring, though this is the suited symbol at other times, but the need recognized of maintaining access to these living waters. The numerical place dwells upon the office of the Spirit as a witness to Christ.

Lastly, we have "Biziothiah," which Young gives as "the house of Jah's

Baalah, and Iim, [and Ezem, and Eltolad,] and Chesil, [and Hormah, and ‘Ziklag,] and Madmannah, ‘ 1Sam.27.6.

olives." It may be, more simply, "*among* Jah's olives;" but either yields a good sense. Not only is the believer granted access to the living water, he is himself a vessel of the Spirit, of which the oil of the olive is an undoubted symbol. The oil resides in the olive; and so the Psalmist: "But I am like a green olive-tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever." (Ps. lii. 8.)

How beautifully do these names tell out, from first to last, the internal work in the soul of the saint! The exact numerical significance may be traced just as fully, Hazar-gaddah, as the *first* of the *second* series, speaking of the reign of law; and the series itself, of deliverance from the law; Hazar-shual, the first of the *third* series, of the dominion of the Spirit; and the series itself, of realized sanctification. What could be more entirely appropriate and more beautiful? The other numbers are easy.

(****) We come now to the fourth group of these cities of the south, and which ends the catalogue. Here we have in our Bibles thirteen names, a number of which as yet we have no knowledge. The two final names, indeed, "Ain and Rimmon," says Keil, "are given as Simeonite towns, and, being written without the copula, are treated as one name in chap. xix. 7 and 1 Chron. iv. 32, although they are *reckoned* as two separate towns in chap. xix. 7. But as they were also called 'En-Rimmon' after the captivity, and are given as one single place in Neh. xi. 29, they were probably so close together that in the course of time they grew into one." Some would reckon them, therefore, as one here; and if that could be done, the number would be 12, which, according to what seems as yet the constant law, would be divided as four threes. Trying to divide them thus, however, there seems not a ray of light as to their meaning.

The whole number of these cities of the Negeb is given in ver. 32 as twenty-nine—"twenty-nine cities and their villages." But there are, in fact, thirty-six names, and not twenty-nine; and commentators have in general, with Keil, taken this as a textual error, the Syriac version reading thirty-six, which would be right. However, the correction would be very easy to be made, and quite likely to be a critical emendation only, as Fay allows.

But another alternative has been adopted by other commentators; and Hollenbeck suggests that the additional names have been interpolated from Neh. xi. This is unlikely enough, for the books are too far apart in time. A more likely interpolation, if we must (as seems plain,) suppose error somewhere, would be from Simeon's cities, as given in chap. xix. The cities of Simeon, who was to be "scattered in Israel," were all given him in Judah's territory; and some of them have been actually thus already mentioned, as Moladah, Hazar-shual, and Beersheba,—names which assuredly we could not afford to lose out of the places which they occupy. Moreover, if we would blot out *all* Simeonite cities out of the list, there would be now a deficiency as before an excess. Blot them out, however, *out of this fourth part only*,* the number becomes exactly right—twenty-nine cities.

Moreover, looking at the list so altered, light begins at once to dawn on us. There are thus but six cities left, if we retain Baalah, which may indeed very probably be the Balah of Simeon, filling the right place in the list in the nineteenth chapter; but which, if so, is essentially altered in meaning as well as in spelling, so that we cannot reckon it as the same really. 6 is a more likely number than 12 in such a record as the present, approaching, and indeed going beyond, 4 in its significance of evil, and yet, as we know, speaking of it always as under the curb of divine power, and of final victory over it. While 12, though related to 4—as 4 x 3—contains the 4 as the earth-number, being manifest divine government over the earth. 4, in the present case, speaks rather of the

* They are bracketed in the text above.

and Sansannah, [and Lebaoth,] and Shilhim, [and Ain, and Rimmon:] all the cities twenty-nine, and their villages.

weakness and failure of the creature, which, taken in connection with the 6 of victory, a distinct meaning emerges at once for the whole series.

And here, first, "Baalah," "mistress," whose lesson we have already in another Baalah upon the northern boundary. Its clear right to its numerical place, and its indication of that pride that goeth before a fall are equally plain.

Then "Iim," the plural of "Ai," "heaps of ruins," gives the fall itself; not, I think, that outward fall which is often but the judgment upon the sin, leading, as in Peter's case, to self-judgment and recovery from it, but rather a simply spiritual collapse, which may be startling often in its rapidity.

Thirdly—the number of manifestation,—"Chesil," when applied to man, is invariably, in our Bible, translated "fool." It is a word we have met before in but a slightly altered form, (in connection too with Baalah,) as Chesalon, on the northern boundary; and there, as significant of folly in a special form, "the folly of a false confidence." This is what ever, indeed, deceives man to his fall, a false faith being as potent for evil as the true for good, and this faith being constantly *self*-confidence in some form. "Having no confidence in the flesh" means, for the Christian, power in the Spirit; and in this sense, "happy is the man that feareth always, but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief." (Prov. xxviii. 14.) Here is the divine interpretation of failure.

Fourthly, "Madmannah" gives the open downfall which brings man into his native weakness, and so to himself. Most give it, indeed, as "dung-hill;" but in Jer. xlviii. 2 there is a play upon the name, though of another place: "Thou shalt be cut down, O Madmen;" perhaps, "Thou shalt be leveled, O leveler;" where the *R. V.*, "Thou shalt be put to silence," seems to miss the connection. The Septuagint and Vulgate agree in rendering the word as "cart" of a threshing-floor (Is. xxv. 10); and such a figure would be quite appropriate here. God has to humble and bring down when we have stiffened ourselves against Him, though the wheat is only helped by the threshing, and even Satan's sieve He uses to accomplish this.

"Sansannah," "palm-cluster," then speaks of peaceable fruits of righteousness found by exercise under God's chastening hand. And—

"Shilhim," "armed" men, in the sixth place, which speaks of victory, may remind us of how experience of the past prepares for the future, and the weapons of the enemy taken from his hand may be used against him.

Thus, in view of failure also, we can praise our unfailing God. The furnace of trial is secured by covenant for us, and, if we endure chastening, God dealeth with us as with sons. Here the enumeration of the cities of the Negeb ends, and the numerical structure, in the consistent exposition which it gives of the last portion, seems to prove the number 29 of the closing verse to be the true one, and therefore the interpolation of names from the Simeonite list, the order being also exactly similar in the two places.

(*h*) We come now to the cities of the lowland, a term which, though objected to by some, is only the simple rendering of "Shephelah." As a district, however, it includes both the Philistine plains and the low hills, and does not extend north of Carmel. In its designation it is already physically in agreement with the number attached to it. Whatever may be the connection, it seems to me, however, that *relationship* is what is pictured in the cities now before us; and here in the first place the need of new relations, because of the rupture of the old by sin. And these new relations, which are in and through Christ, meant for Him that wondrous humiliation which "shephelah" from "shaphel," to humble, would point out.

(*) The cities here are arranged in three larger groups; first, of which connection, fourteen names, "Gederah" and "Gederothaim" being only the singular

(*b*) In the lowland:—[m] Eshtaol, and Zoreah, and Ashnah, and Zanoah, and Engannim, Tappuah and Enam, [m] Jud.13.25. Jud. 16. 31.

and dual forms of the same word, and given as alternative names for the same place, and the connective "ve" being used for "or" as well as "and." Otherwise there would be fifteen cities, and the number given would be in disagreement with the facts, as some believe they are. But we are not at liberty to suppose changes in the text, when there is no absolute need of them, and there seems none here.

The arrangement of the names, as indicated by the presence or absence of the conjunction, is 5, 2, 2, 5, or thus:—

Eshtaol and Zoreah and Ashnah and Zanoah and Engannim;

Tappuah and Enam;

Jarmuth and Adullam;

Socoh and Azekah and Shaaraim and Adithaim and Gederah, or Gederothaim. And, first, "Eshtaol," a word, like many others, capable of diverse significations, means, if we may judge by the connection, "strong woman;" and this seems to lead us back, as in a previous group, to the beginning. "Strong woman" looks, indeed, like pure satire upon Eve, who fell at the first breath of temptation; yet, in fact she ventured upon her strength when the sense of weakness and insufficiency would have preserved her. Adam was not deceived, but she waited not for counsel from him to whom God had joined her. She acted in independence, and then proved her strength only to pull down her husband with her in her fall. Here, alas, she was strong enough, and how often since has this story repeated itself! Thus—

"Zoreah," "hornet," which derives its name from its virulent "stroke,"—a word closely related to that for leprosy, the well-known type of sin in its inward malignancy,—stands in ominous conjunction with this woman's strength. And this is what strength in man naturally connects itself with ever since, and the secret of overcoming still is, "When I am *weak*, then am I strong."

"Ashnah," next, may mean "returning," closely related to "shanah," "year," which is a revolution of the seasons, a circle returning into itself. And thus man's life has become but a brief cycle of development and decay, and the voice that called man from the dust, says, "Return, ye children of men." (Ps. xc. 3.) This is the seal divinely put upon man's condition, to manifest it to himself. His link with God is gone. The old relation is ended, and though man exists beyond death, it is naturally only in a state to which judgment has brought him.

But if man but accepts this judgment, there is mercy with God, and thus in the next place, under the number which speaks of weakness and of failure, "Zanoah" announces a "provision of rest." Not in the grave, thank God, but in restoration to Him. Then Paradise returns, and this the fifth name declares—

"En-gannim," a "fountain of gardens."—Eden, as it were, multiplied, and watered by living water, with the vision of which the revelation of God closes; the next thing is perfection—"face to face."

Is it but the old relationship restored? No, blessed be God again, it is not. This the next two names, held fast to each other, tell us:—

"Tappuah and Enam," as the lexicons say, "an apple" and a "double spring."

Common thought is that the "apple" was the instrument of man's fall. Here, at least, an apple may disclose the mystery of man's recovery. The simplest things in nature are full of divine secrets. We miss them because we so little care to find them. The world has abundant treasures to pour out at the feet of him who is not of the world, and it will be good if we find in this place a lesson of this kind.

"Tappuah,"—whether "apple," "citron," "apricot," or whatever the learned may decide it to be,—is named in Hebrew from its fragrance: it means

Jarmuth and [n]Adullam, [o]Socoh and Azekah, and Shaaraim, and Adithaim, and Gederah, or Gederothaim: fourteen cities and their villages.

[n] 1 Sam. 22. 1.
[o] 1 Sam. 17. 1. 2 Chron. 11. 7, & 28. 18.

"breather," its emitted fragrance being called its "breath." But what then has this for us? Let us meditate upon it and see. "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly unto them, that thy profiting may appear unto all."

"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and *breathed into his nostrils the breath of life*, and man became a living soul."

This is figurative language also. All the deepest things are expressed to us in figures. God's inbreathing into man, never said to have been with the beasts, is that which implies the new and peculiar relationship between Him and this new creature of His making. Man is the offspring of God, and thus in his image. His spirit is from the "Father of spirits;" and the word which answers to this in Hebrew, as in our own language, is in fact identical with the word "breath." But God's breath, what is it? Common air? And man's spirit, what is it? That which is in constant influx and reflux,—never at a stay? This rubbish of materialism the devil must laugh over, when he sees the flimsy structures men can build with it. No, this breath of God is man's true, personal, and eternal essence,—spirit from the Spirit, and "what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?" It is the permanent difference which exists between himself and every other being that exists upon the earth.

But the relationship which is here with God can only abide aright as man abides in moral likeness also. This the Lord affirms to the Jews, who claimed God for their Father. (Jno. viii. 42.) The competency for the place is lost by moral insolvency, and God must again come in by salvation and quickening from the dead, that men may be restored. Thus, again, having recourse to the figures by which God is pleased to communicate so often His deep things to us, the Lord, in the midst of His disciples, on the day of His resurrection from the dead, "*breathed on them*, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." (Jno. xx. 22.) As "last Adam" now, in contrast with the first, who as breathed *upon*, became a living soul, *He* is a "quickening Spirit." (1 Cor. xv. 45.) A new life from God in Christ brings His people into new and better relationship, and Christ is the Inspirer,—"Breather," "Tappuah," of whom the spouse may indeed say, "His mouth is most sweet." (Song v. 16.) Here, indeed, is fragrance from God and for God Himself.

And then we have "Enam," "a double spring,"—living waters. "He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the *Holy Ghost*." Here is surely the spring,—yea, the "double spring,"—for such was the pentecostal gift. It was not merely what all saints had enjoyed from the beginning, but a double portion and more, transcending that: but I cannot dwell upon it now. Thus does the new life attain its fullness for us.

From resurrection to ascension is the natural progress of thought, and we must remember that we do not lose Him from the place of representative which he took for us upon the cross, when we follow Him back to his eternal home in glory. He is gone "to appear in the presence of God for us." (Heb. ix. 24.) Thus the two names bound together next can present no difficulty. We have, first—

"Jarmuth," "elevation," "exaltation," a name with which we are already familiar, if not in this application; and then—

"Adullam," the most literal rendering of which word would seem undoubtedly to be "in very deed a witness." How simply applicable to Him who has gone in for men as Man, the testimony to the value of His completed work and of the acceptance therefore of His people! Our relation to God is characterized for us on the one side by the new life we have in Him, and on the other by the heavens opened and furnished by His presence there.

Zenan, and Hadashah, and Migdal-Gad, and Dilean, and Mizpeh, and Joktheel, [p] Lachish, and Bozkath, and [p] 2 Kings 18. 14-18.

The fourth group of five names is less plain as to the detail, though its *general* significance is surely warning,—so far as we have gone yet, the one exception of this kind we have found among the themes with which Judah's cities engage us. We have here—

First, "Socoh:" either "his hedge," or, as in Lam. ii. 6, "his tabernacle," and then—

"Azekah," "fencing round," or, as more generally taken, "breach," two nearly opposite thoughts. But "his hedge" with "fencing round," would seem mere tautology, and "his tabernacle," if it be applied to God, would seem to make the idea of being broken through less probable. Would not the thought be that God having thus, as all that goes before has shown, drawn near to men, He must "fence round" this grace from rash intrusion? To *treat* grace as grace is none. This glorifies God, and is His way of blessing for us. All may come freely who will come through Christ; but how many would draw near Cain-like without the shelter of the blood? Thus He Himself reminds us of the "strait gate" and the "wide," the "narrow way" and the "broad," and of these the next two names surely strikingly bear testimony:—

"Shaaraim," "two gates," and—

"Adithaim," "two ways!"

The fifth name, "Gederah," with its apparent variation merely, "Gederothaim," is again more difficult. The word means a wall or enclosure, generally, at least, of stone, such as was used often at night for the protection of sheep,—"a sheep-fold," or "two sheep-folds." The numerical place seems to speak of the end of the way and the dual form of the final word to carry the previous alternatives to their conclusion. The word is not always an enclosure *for sheep*, and there may be intentional ambiguity, significant as that. This seems not difficult to understand. But why the first "Gederah?" May it be that divine love would have but *one* enclosure—one happy fold at last, but that man's way necessitates two, how different? This is only a suggestion; but it is at least a sweet while solemn thought with which to end the series. God is calling men, whose old relationship to Him sin has broken, to new relationship with Him in a higher way. Man's will is, alas, a terrible factor in the final result; and, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life," are words that apply yet even to multitudes that are professedly Christ's own people.

(**) The second series of the cities of the Shephelah, sixteen in number, seems to represent the *service* implied in relationship, as the first series has shown us the *ground* of it. All relationship, of necessity, supposes *duty* as flowing from it, and that on both sides, and as various as are the aspects of the relationship itself. It is only as we come to look at the names that we shall be able to see just what the Lord has chosen to bring before us here.

There are three groups, of six, seven, and three names respectively:—

Zenan, Hadasha, Migdal-gad, Dilean, Mizpeh, Joktheel;

Lachish, Bozkath, Eglon, Cabbon, Lahmam, Kithlish, Gederoth;

Beth-dagon, Naamah, Makkedah.

The place of each number in this is again definitely determined for us, and we have no choice at all about it. For this we may be very thankful, for even the significance of the names is at times quite difficult to make out, and then they are in their nature symbolical—true hieroglyphs, and we need all the help that can be obtained to read them.

"Zenan," the first of the first group, signifies "sheep," or "a place of sheep." We are in a part of the land, and among names which remind us of these, as "Gederah" and "Gederothaim" in the first series, and another "Gederoth" further on in the present one. Standing where it does—at the head of the series,

Eglon, and Cabbon, and Lahmam, and Chithlish, and Gederoth, Beth-dagon, and Naamah, and [q] Makkedah: | q ch. 10. 28.

it would naturally suggest to us a relation of His people to their Lord, which He Himself emphasized strongly. As the "good Shepherd," He laid down His life for the sheep: as the "great Shepherd" "brought again from the dead, through the blood of the everlasting covenant," He guides them now. On their part the terms suppose docility and obedience, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." We have next—

"Hadashah," "new," where the only difficulty can be as to what it refers to. "Other sheep I have," says the Lord again, "which are not of this" Jewish "fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one flock,"—not "fold,"—"one Shepherd." One flock of Jews and Gentiles together, outside the legal fold, kept together by the one authoritative voice they know and follow. To this the word may well apply.

"Migdal-gad," "tower of the troop," may also have reference to a flock. Such towers were built for its safety; for better watching against beasts or men; and with Micah the "tower of the flock" is "the stronghold of the daughter of Zion." (chap. iv. 8.) The exalted Lord, with all power His in heaven and in earth, thus cares for His people, and none can pluck them out of His hand.

Thus they are provided for. But the fourth name suggests quite different thoughts, and yet in complete accordance with the number. "Dilean" signifies, as I believe, "weak with humbling," and brings back to our thoughts once more the condition in itself so healthful for us, yet to which we have often to be brought by such painful discipline. The sheep is naturally weak and defenseless enough, and no further image should be needed to convey such a thought to us; but we know well that we have to be reminded of and made to realize this condition, that we may be content to remain in the place of dependence, and follow without straying from the Great Shepherd.

Of this, I think, the next word, "Mizpeh," the "watch-tower," is intended to remind us. It comes in the fifth place, under the number of responsibility, and is surely not meant to repeat the thought of Migdal. The words of the Psalmist rather give the meaning, "In the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will *watch*." (Ps. v. 3;) or, those of the Prophet, "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what He will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved." (Hab. ii. 1.)

This watching is indeed the product of "Migdal" and "Dilean" together, as we may say,—of the apprehension of our weakness and of His wise and holy guardianship and guidance: "Behold, as the eyes of a servant look unto the hand of his master, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress, so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God." And how, indeed, apart from this attitude, can we be guided by *His* eye?

But it is to this we must be brought, and then will "Joktheel," "subdued by God," celebrate His love-triumph over us. Note that this is the sixth place we have reached, the number of victory, but the victory is His if the fruit is ours. Moulded to His will, brought into the attitude of habitual dependence upon Himself, what more can be wanting to us? And He, too, sees in us the fruit of the travail of His soul and is satisfied.

Thus, what we have in this first group is the Shepherd's service to the sheep; it is the fruit of this relationship in which He is to us. The second group has seven names, and begins on our side with—

"Lachish," which we have already twice over looked at, as signifying, "Walk as men;" not here of course in the carnal sense in which the apostle reproves it in the Corinthians, but as we have seen to be the meaning when the city becomes Israelite, "Walk as *the* man;" or, "Walk in Christ." The Second Man alone is man after God's own thought, and we are to "walk as *He* walked,"—a

sixteen cities and their villages.
[r] Libnah, and Ether, and Ashan, and Jiphtah, and

[r] 2 Ki. 8. 22. 2 Ki. 19. 8. 2 Ki. 23. 31.

heavenly man in the world. This alone is Christian obedience, too sadly forgotten, but of which the numerical place bears witness. The next name gives the character of this walk, as—

"Bozkath," "in being poured out." "Yea," says the apostle, "and if I be *poured out* upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." (Phil. ii. 17, *marg.*) "Poured out" is the word,—as a drink-offering; and the drink-offering *meant* joy; but it was, of course, as all offerings, an offering to God, not man. And this was the principle of Christ's life, "who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame." (Heb. xii. 2.)

The "Eglon" which we have before met comes in beautifully here. It is the wheel of man's destiny, but, as the third place shows, in the chariot of Deity; and as such it has nothing but good for the man of God. It is ordained for the abasement of man's pride, and writes vanity upon the world; but only as unbelief and pride refuse the judgment upon man as fallen, and shut themselves out from the revelation of the grace beyond. Faith, humbling itself before God, accepts the lesson, and finds God in it. The law of sacrifice consents to the losing life in this world as the way of keeping it to life eternal. And he to whom Christ's footsteps mark the road of his choice, realizes the very darkness and difficulty and need of the way as being like the wilderness, for Israel only the occasion for divine glory to manifest itself, and where faith too, as precious to God, is trained and exercised. The wheel of God's providence moves forward to the accomplishment of holy purposes, breaking up the stubble and sifting the wheat from the chaff: where all seems most confusion, God's granary garners most the precious grain.

And this may be the connection with the following word, "Cabbon," which seems to be "as one that understands,"—that, Christ's spirit received into the the life, and the enigma of the world solved, the discipline of its government accepted, men become really those that understand. Faith is not credulity, though to the "fool" it may appear so: it is the opening of all secrets, and the fitting practically for every position and function of life. And thus "wisdom" in Scripture has always a distinct and inseparable relation to godliness; there is not even the *beginning* of it without "the fear of the Lord."

Moreover, as it owns God, so it regards man: fellowship with Him who is Love must be love too: it is "in" godliness that is developed brotherly love, and "in" brotherly love, a love still wider. So Peter's words (2 Pet. i. 7.) really intimate. If Christ has found the door of the heart, He keeps it open, as His own is. And thus we find in the two names succeeding the fruit of a life devoted to God for others—

"Lahmam," "*their* bread;" the ministry, we may conclude, to the inward need of man, bread being the type of all other subsistence; while—

"Chithlish," "the beating down of the lion," speaks of other need, in deliverance from him who as a roaring lion goeth about, seeking whom he may devour;—

"Gederoth," again, closing the record here with a vision of securely folded sheep, preserved and rescued.

Thus the service of relationship is illustrated from the merely human side. Three names now seal the blessedness of all this:—

"Beth-dagon," "house of the fish," the last in Hebrew named from its fecundity. This in the fish is marvelous: and who shall tell the fruitfulness of a life given to God in accordance with His will? The numerical place would emphasize it, I think, as *obedience*,—no supererogatory work; nor left for the Christian either to carry out or not as he pleases. God has various places for us to fill indeed, and many members in the one body of Christ; but He has no different *grades* of that one life of which Christ is the measure always. What is short of this is only *sin*.

Ashnah, and Nezib, and [s]Keilah, and 'Achzib, and Mareshah: nine cities and their villages. [s] 1 Sam. 23. 1-5. [t] Mic. 1. 14, 15.

As the name recalls, Dagon was the Canaanite and Philistine fish-god; and to this day such as these represent worship *fish*, that is, a fruitful life: but Beth-dagon in Israelite hands was, of course, no more idolatrous. The light must "shine before men:" Christ must be testified to, that is, as the One who is the only true light; and thus, says the Lord, "they shall see your good works, and glorify your Father, which is in heaven." (Mat. v. 16.)

"Naamah," the second name, tells that this life is "pleasant." Such it is, as has been often testified even by those that have persecuted to the death those that lived it. Stephen's face, to all that looked upon it, shone like that of an angel. Yet they battered the glory out with stones.

Lastly, "Makkedah," "bowing the head," speaks of that subjection to God which glorifies Him, as making Him God indeed, and testifying how our hearts have been recalled to Him. This completes the blessedness.

(***) The third series of the Shephelah, emphasizes its number in the *nine* cities it contains, which are, according to what has proved hitherto the constant rule, a three by three. We should not be surprised to find, what is the fact, that they lead us into the sanctuary, and give us in one aspect of it, our relation to the Lord *there*. The first three speak plainly of His work as typified in what the apostle calls "the first tabernacle," the outer holy place; the second three of His entrance into the second, the inner one; the third, of our own realization of blessing in it. The lesson is from Hebrews throughout.

1. { *1.* Libnah, *2.* Ether, *3.* Ashan; } 2. { *1.* Jiphtah, *2.* Ashnah, *3.* Nezib; } 3. { *1.* Keilah, *2.* Achzib, *3.* Mareshah.

The place and number of every name are thus rigorously determined for us as before.

Libnah we are again familiar with: it means "white," and represents "purity." Moreover, in our former glance at it, we considered it to represent especially *separation from evil*. We shall now see how perfectly all this unites in the present application.

The high priest in Israel went into the sanctuary, not in the garments of glory and beauty, in which he appeared before the people, but in simple white linen garments only. All depends, as to him who draws near to God, upon the absolute purity of what we have seen the garments to represent, the personal ways—the *habits*. The unblemished victim spoke in another way of the same truth. Christ on the cross when heard by "Him who was able to save Him" —not "from," but—"*out of* death, was heard for His *piety*" (Heb. v. 7. *margin*.) He was "raised from the dead by the glory of the Father," (Rom. vi. 4,) God not suffering "His Holy One"—or rather "His Pious One," and thus in strict unity with Hebrews—"to see corruption." (Acts ii. 27.) The plain white garments of the high priest taught the same obvious but solemn truth.

But Libnah gives us an additional thought, which Hebrews exactly interprets: "For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, *separate from sinners*, and made higher than the heavens." (chap. vii. 26.) As the high priest's intercession in Israel was upon the ground of sacrifice, and for a (typically) redeemed people, so the Lord in heaven is for those of whom it is said, "By one offering, He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." (x. 14.) Of these He is now the Intercessor on high: "I pray for them," He says Himself; "I pray not for the world, but for those whom Thou hast given Me; for they are thine" (Jno. xvii. 9.) While the atonement is for all, in this sense, that all men are welcome, and besought to avail themselves of its full provision for them, His intercession in heaven is for His own, and Libnah presents the precise truth as to the High-priest in the Sanctuary. How absolutely perfect is the Word of God!

"Ekron and its dependencies and its villages. From Ekron and toward the sea, all that are by the side of [u] 1 Sam. 5. 1-10.

Ether follows Libnah, and is generally interpreted as "riches, abundance." There is a form in Scripture *athereth*, which means this: it occurs but once, while *Athar* in the simple form, occurs once as "thick" (Ezek. viii. 11) "a *thick* cloud of incense went up." The R. V., with the Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac, translates here "the *odour* of the cloud." Hengstenberg objects to this however, as "a meaning that rests on no ground whatever." He translates, "And the *prayer* of the cloud of incense went up," and adds, "The cloud of incense is called 'prayer,' because it was an embodied prayer." The same word is translated "suppliant" in Zeph. iii. 10; and the verbal root (*Athar*) is commonly used for "intreat, pray." Wilson defines *athar*, "to pray as a suppliant, to supplicate God, powerfully, abundantly, or successfully; being generally used in *Niphal* of intreaty that prevails with God." Surely this is what the word means in this connection, found as such in exactly the right place, and being exactly the right word to express the prevailing intercession of the Lord.

Ashan, "smoke," reminds us of the "incense" which we find in Revelation added to the prayers of the saints, and which typifies the fragrance of Christ's own acceptability with which He makes them a sweet savor to God.

Thus all here speaks of the sanctuary; and the incense-altar stood in the outer sanctuary, or what the apostle calls the *first* tabernacle. (Heb. ix. 2, 6, 8.) This remained through the whole legal dispensation separated by the vail from the holiest of all, in which was the mercy-seat and where the glory of God appeared. Only once a year, covered with the cloud of incense and to put the blood of propitiation before God, the high priest went in for a moment within the vail. The law which could not perfect the conscience of the worshiper could not therefore bring near to God: and this the intervening vail declared.

In Christianity the true blood of atonement *does* perfect the conscience and brings nigh the worshiper; the first tabernacle, as distinct from the second, is done away: and that is what we go on to in the second three names; the first of which is—

Jiphtah, "he openeth!" The veil is rent by that which provides the precious blood for the mercy-seat. Atonement is accomplished, the work which He undertook is done; the Son of God is gone up where He was before: which the single word—

Ashnah, which we met among the cities of the Negeb, not the same city, but the same name with the same meaning, "return," declares as His own proper home. Therefore, in contrast with the high priest's merely momentary entrance—

Nezib, "station," comes to assure us that He has taken His place there, and abides where He has entered—the numerical place affirming that now we have the *realization* of what the Jewish ceremonial only shadowed.

Here the second three end with the Lord's place taken in the heavens; the third three now coming to give *us* the realization of what has been done for us:—

First, "Keilah," which from the Arabic is said to mean "castle" or "refuge." Thank God, this place in the innermost sanctuary is both for us. We are urged, as "having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He has consecrated for us through the vail, and having an high-priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (Heb. x. 19-22.) Here, with such a welcome, we may well abide. What shaft of the enemy can reach us here?

We have also a witness of this place into which He is gone, and gone to appear in the presence of God for us:—

Achzib, is indeed generally considered to be the same as Chezib, and to mean "that which fails or deceives," as a winter torrent dried up by the heat of summer. And Micah (i. 14) is quoted for this, that "the houses of Achzib shall be

Ashdod, and their villages. Ashdod, its dependencies and its villages; Gaza, its dependencies and its villages,

(achzab) a lie unto the Kings of Israel." Yet the true meaning, and in perfect harmony with the prophet also, is almost the exact opposite of this. Taken as two words joined together, *ach zib* would be "a flowing indeed," such as the Holy Ghost as living water is, such as the "houses of Achzib," a mockery of their name, were not. It comes also in the *second* place, not the third, with perfect propriety, because the Spirit of God is looked at, as already said, as a witness of Christ's ascension and glory: "Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath *shed forth* that which ye now see and hear" (Acts ii. 33.)

Thus a third word now closes the whole with the full conviction of what is implied for us as to the sanctuary into which Christ has entered—

Mareshah, "possession." Let it remain for us a living word, no theory, no dream: here let us abide, in the consciousness of what grace has made our own.

(****) From this to the Philistine cities of the plain! But the number gives us to know that we are descending here. Moreover the practical reality of sanctuary life has to be testified in the world; and we may not shrink from it. Of course, the Philistine cities as Judah's possession are no longer Philistine. Nor are they dwelt upon in much detail now. Indeed some commentators reputed orthodox believe in some omissions here, or else, that these verses are but a fragmentary addition by a later hand. I think, however, arguing from what is the fact, that every detail falls into its place, and the whole seems to be really complete in spiritual significance, that we have no reason for any such supposition. It gives the practical result of what precedes it.

There are five divisions here:—

1. Ekron and her dependencies and her villages.
2. From Ekron and toward the sea, all that are beside Ashdod and their villages.
3. Ashdod and her dependencies and her villages.
4. Gaza and her dependencies and her villages, unto the brook of Egypt.
5. The great sea and its coast.

All the names have already received their interpretation, and the numerical place of each division is clear; so that we have narrow limits, as narrow as may well be, for the imagination. In fact, all this narrowing only simplifies our work, while it proportionately more confirms the result arrived at: a manifest mark of divine truth in it.

1. Ekron then means "eradication." We looked at the truth conveyed when we were surveying the border of Judah, and need not at length repeat it here. The numerical place is simple: it may well show us what is implied in "integrity" with God, the uncompromising judgment of evil: not turning the blind eye to things that we would spare, but judging with God, by His Word, not our own opinions, all that He judges. This is indeed a first principle for a true life, and the order here may well be considered a divine one.

3. To make out the second division, it is clear we must first of all look at the third. Ashdod, we have interpreted to be "the spoiler;" and again it is not hard to see that the heavenly things revealed, if received in heart, rob the earthly of their glory. We cannot enter into the heavenly except as we leave behind the things of earth: "if ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God; set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth: for ye are dead; and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 1-3.)

Thus Ashdod, as an Israelite city, clearly has its place under the resurrection number.

2. The second section is not so easy to interpret. It is simply characterized as places reaching from Ekron and the sea, alongside Ashdod. We may interpret it then as somewhat which takes its measurement from the "eradication" of evil

as far as the brook of Egypt, and the great sea, and its coast.

(c) And in the [v]mountainous country:—Shamir, and

[v] Luke 1.39.

and the paling of the world in the light of higher glory: and this, if we look at it in connection with the guidance of its numerical place, may well give us the thought of its being "growth" that is thus marked. Perhaps this is why we find no one city named also, because it is a thing so various in its manifestations, and so relative to other things—growth in this respect or in that. But it is of such great importance that we need not wonder to find a place reserved for it in such a catalogue as this. Growth characterizes life: even to meet daily wear and tear, there must be fresh production and renewal. And the life which is eternal, never reaching here its mature development, must surely *grow*. If any fresh knowledge be acquired, and it is by the truth that we are sanctified, must not this of itself necessitate it? Thus there seems full ground for believing that this is what is insisted on in this place, that a living soul must *grow*. While, if the lack of integrity and the sufferance of evil, with heart-occupation with the world, hinder this, then Ekron and the sea and Ashdod are of simple, easily read significance in connection with this.

4. In the fourth place—not first, as in the former list of Philistine cities, and for many reasons,—under the number which speaks to us of "weakness" also, it is no more strange, but most appropriate, to find Gaza, "*strength*." The connection and order are (as always) most important to observe. Such things can be little dwelt upon here, but those who study Scripture with practical intent cannot afford to pass over what is indicated in them.

5. Lastly, the sea and the sea-board, with their well-known meaning, and under the number that speaks of "exercise," fall also into Judah's portion. "Those that go down to the sea in ships," and learn there the wonders of the Lord, must not be lacking among Judah's worshipers.

Here the list of the Shephelah cities closes; and we go on to the cities of the mountain region. Shall we find the truth mount also, as we proceed?

(c) The cities of the mountain we may well suppose, from their position alone, to lift us up nearer to heaven and to God. The third place in which they come would confirm this, and suggest that they speak of the manifestation and glory of God Himself, although not as if apart from the blessing of His people: the names engraven upon the high-priest's breast-plate would be alone enough to assure us that this could not be. "In the ages to come, He," will "show forth the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." And this verse from Ephesians, the New Testament Joshua, we might expect to characterize in an especial way the section of the book which we have reached now.

There are five series of these cities according to our common Bibles, to which Keil would add from the Septuagint a sixth. This question we must consider in its place. The first series here consists of eleven cities. No groups are marked for us in this eleven; nor do we know as yet of any recognized Scripture way of dividing this, though no number so large as this would seem to be without it. We are left therefore to what the names in connection with the numbers themselves may indicate; and in this way there seems to be two groups of six and five respectively. The first seems to speak of *God* as manifested in the counsels of His grace, the second of the response of man to this manifestation.

The first group then consists of—

"Shamir, and Jattir, and Socoh, and Dannah, and Kirjath-sannah, which is Debir, and Anab."

Shamir is a word which, in the book of Isaiah, is translated "briar;" elsewhere, in three places "adamant" or "diamond." In either case the derivation is from *shamar*, to "preserve," and in the latter case, if not the former, implies "hardness" and thus "durability." In this sense, and especially as

Jattir, and Socoh, and Dannah, and Kirjath-sannah, that is Debir, and Anab, and [w] Eshtemoh, and Anim, [w] 1 Sam.30. 26-31.

standing for a durable precious stone, it fills undeniably its place in this series. It would speak thus of the unchangeability of God's attributes, which His counsels proclaim to us, the first necessity for the conception of God at all. Without caprice or uncertainty in His own nature, so also nothing from without can thwart His will or introduce confusion into His perfect ways. He is the "Father of lights, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning;" and as such the first of these mountain cities represents Him.

Jattir is an intensive form of the verb *jathar*, to "exceed, go beyond, excel." We must translate it, "He far excels;" and this would suit exactly the numerical place in which we find it. God goes beyond all knowledge and all thought. "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." And this also is necessary to our conception of God. He would not be that if we could compass Him in our thoughts. But that inscrutability which of necessity belongs to Him, while it affords room for faith, is not and cannot be aught but His perfection. We do not say even any more that He dwells in darkness: He dwelleth in the *light* inaccessible, One whom no man has seen or can see; not because there is obstruction to the sight, but because there is infinity before it. Hence alone come our difficulties; and therefore the humbler we are the less we have. The Cross presents and removes them; we see what darkness is, and it passes from us; we are "in the light, as God is in the light."

The third name we are familiar with, and that it is in its place cannot be questioned; it is Socoh, "His tabernacle." The word implies that He has come forth out of His eternity into man's *time*, and become with him a traveler. It is literally "His booth," a light temporary structure, put up for the care of a garden or vineyard, suggesting thus the object of this amazing condescension, those "delights with the sons of men," of which Christ is at the same time the expression and the justification. Hence in the fourth place here we have—

Dannah, a word not elsewhere found in Hebrew, but from the Arabic would mean, "pressed down," a meaning perfectly suited to its numerical place, but strange at first sight in connection with the display of God. Yet our hearts understand well the mystery of love which could constrain a divine being to take the creature place which this *Dannah*, found under this number four, the number of the creature, indicates.

Then we have in the fifth place, Kirjath-sannah, which we are told is Debir, evidently, from its position, the same Debir that we have already more than once met, and which was also called Kirjath-sepher. Kirjath-sannah, means "the city of instruction," and is thus allied in its significance to the former name; while Debir, the "oracle," and in this fifth place in which God and man meet together, repeats for us the assurance that it is God Himself who has become our teacher. "*God* has spoken to us in [the] Son," says the apostle (Heb. i. 2:) "the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He, hath told Him out." (Jno. i. 18, *Greek.*)

Thus Socoh, Dannah, Debir, agree in their testimony, proclaiming the fullness of the grace that has visited us; and now in connection with these, and in the sixth place, a number that speaks of victory over sin, we have Anab, "He has bound together." This ought not to be difficult: it signifies the Mediator's work complete, the triumph of divine love achieved. This closes the series on the Godward side.

The human response we find now in five cities more,—

"And Eshtemoh, and Anim, and Goshen, and Holon, and Giloh."

First, for there is absolutely no result as yet, where the spirit of it is not found, Eshtemoh, "obedience."

Secondly, Anim, which interpreters take as a contracted form of Enim, "springs;" but this suits neither the numerical place nor the connection. A

and Goshen, and Holon, and Giloh: eleven cities and their villages.

Arab, and Dumah, and Eshean, and Janum, and

better rendering, and one which agrees with both of these, is that of "responsive songs," the joy of man's heart echoing the joy of God's.

Thirdly, we have Goshen, "drawing near."

Fourthly, Holon, which is by some rendered "sandy," from *hol*, "sand." But the latter part of the word may well be a separate one, and the whole a compound, *hol-lon*, with the middle letters become one. The meaning then would be "lodging for the night upon the sand," and this in beautiful appropriateness to the wilderness-number, and to the connection, which the—

Fifth word, Giloh, "removing," strikingly confirms. Drawn near to God, the heart becomes that of a stranger here, of one who tarries but the night in the wilderness, and for whom there is to be "removal" in the morning; the number is that in which man is seen with God, and the desire in departure is fulfilled! How the numbers certify and fill up the meaning at every point!

Thus the first series of the cities of the mountains ends. The second has nine names which are once more a three by three. They lead us evidently beyond the present world and uncover the secrets of the state of the dead, who "sleep in Jesus." It is a wonderful picture of what was little known indeed in the Old Testament, but in the New Testament is clearly revealed. Yet not even the New Testament itself would seem to go further than what we find here in the heart of the Old! The names are—

1.	*1.* Arab,	2.	*1.* Janum,	3.	*1.* Humtah.
	2. Dumah,		*2.* Beth-tappuah,		*2.* Kirjath-arba or Hebron,
	3. Eshean;		*3.* Aphekah;		*3.* Zior.

Of these three groups, the first connects man with the body, though giving Christian hope as to the body itself; the second unveils hades, and shows us where the unclothed spirit is found; the third reveals in connection with this its internal condition.

The first word, Arab, means "a place of lying in wait." Generally used for the ambush of an enemy, the character of hostility is not necessarily in it. It is a place of hiding in expectancy; and such is the grave for the redeemed of the Lord.

The second word, Dumah, "silence," adds another character obvious enough. It, too, often implies expectancy, as where it is said, "It is good that a man should both hope and *quietly wait* for the salvation of the Lord" (Lam. iii. 26,) this word is used for "quiet expectancy."

The third word, Eshean, means "bed" or "couch;" and here the sleep is plainly temporary. Put these three words together, and there can be no doubt of what is referred to.

The second group carries us further: here the first name—

Janum, "he slumbereth," assures us that the sleep is only partial. It is the exact force of the word, though when applied to what is here before us, we must remember that this partial sleep is to be divided in this way, that as it is complete for the body, so it does not exist at all for the spirit or soul. Scripture never applies the term to these. Certainly for him who but dozes life still exists, and this may be the significance of the numerical place, especially when we connect it with the next word—

Beth-tappuah, the meaning of which has been already dwelt upon; it is the "house of the Breather," the term which we have seen to designate Christ as the last Adam, the communicator of life, and that a higher than natural. Thus the departed saint not merely *exists:* he lives the life which is eternal, and where Christ is, in His own dwelling place. And this is his—

Aphekah, "fortress" or "strong place:" how safe from all possibility of

> Beth-tappuah, and Aphekah, and Humtah, and Kirjath-arba, that is Hebron and Zior: nine cities and their villages.

harm, with Christ, where He is: "absent from the body, present with the Lord."

We go on now more deeply into the internal state, beginning with—

Humtah, the only word akin to which in the Bible seems to be *homet*, a word once used (Lev. xi. 30) to indicate a "lizard," in the common version "a snail." The verb from which it is derived exists in the Chaldee, with the meaning, "to bow down, prostrate," and this therefore we seem to be compelled to take as the significance here—"prostrate."

For the man departed, even to be with Christ, death, as that which deprives him of the companionship of the body, would seem to argue the end in the meanwhile of such activity as the body enables for. The separate state, as such, is necessarily an imperfect one. Resurrection alone can give the full powers of manhood, of course for the first time in their absolute perfection. The word here seems as if it meant to admit the prostration of strength in this respect, while in full view of it, rendered only more emphatic by the acknowledgment, there is the maintenance of the condition as being one of communion, as in the next name, so familiar to us as it is,—

Kirjath-arba, which is Hebron. And may not the introduction of the first name here, the Anakite name, be meant to remind us that, if death be the humbling of all human pride, that which is of God shall be more helped than hindered by it?

To be with Christ means nothing short of perfected communion, death smiting down for the Christian all foes that would keep us out of it. Yet, just because it *is* perfected, and because Christ Himself waits for His full joy yet, so the condition of the soul is still that which the last word here implies—

Zior, again a compound word, and which literally means "the ship of the watcher," the saint waiting still for the signal to be given to go forth, by Him upon whom his eyes are, and whose presence he will not leave when he goes forth in the beauty of resurrection to enjoy the inheritance of the co-heirs with Christ.

The third group contains ten cities in four smaller divisions:—

"Maon.

"Carmel, and Ziph, and Jutah, and Jezreel, and Jokdeam, and Zanoah.

"Caiu.

"Gibeah and Timnah."

What now does this third group bring before us? We most naturally expect perhaps that after this view of death and the separate state we should go on to resurrection and the heavenly condition. It would be strange indeed if these were omitted, and their omission would seem to cast a shade of uncertainty over the rest. While that is true, and we shall assuredly find them in their place, yet that place is not here, as we shall soon see. The numbers themselves seem to be against it: ten cities, four divisions, and the arrangement, 1. 6. 1. 2. Still this would not be decisive: the numbers, like notes in music, can play many tunes. But when we come to the meanings of the names, we have what is plainer. Such names as Ziph, "place of refining," Jezreel, "God sows," even Carmel, "God's vineyard," carry our minds away from heaven, and forbid the thought of a condition suited to it. Carmel suggests at once *Israel* as being refered to; for Israel was of old God's vine, and though He has for the present given it up, a day comes in which He will "sing unto her, a vineyard of red wine: I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day" (Isa. xxvii. 2, 3.) When seen as a picture of Israel as restored to God, risen as a nation from the dead according to the common fig-

*Maon, Carmel, and Ziph, and Jutah, and Jezreel, and Jokdeam, and Zanoah, Kain, Gibeah, and Timnah: ten cities and their villages.	x 1 Sam. 25. 2, etc.

ure in prophecy, all becomes easy, and the difficulties make not a discord but a harmony.

The first name stands here by itself, and indicates the character of what is before us. It is Maon, "dwelling-place," which in this first place and with this emphasis, naturally speaks of God dwelling in the midst of His people, which when it shall be again a reality for Israel, will be the seal of their perpetual blessing. Then will be fulfilled the prophetic word, that "the Lord has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His habitation: this is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it" (Ps. cxxxii. 13, 14.) No wonder if this stand by itself as Israel's special portion. It is the fore-taste of that which, in a wider and fuller meaning, is said of the new earth at last, "The tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God." (Rev. xxi. 3.)

The next section shows in its six names, His triumph in their salvation. First, Carmel, from a word which means to "prune," implies what is ever the need of a vineyard, if it is to bear proper fruit. God's long labor of centuries cannot be at last in vain. Israel will yet answer to His work upon it, and "the excellency of Carmel" shall once more be spoken of and with a fuller emphasis. But for this there is to be yet severer trial than they have known, and of which—

Ziph, "place of refining," is the assurance to us. Out of this they come with—

Jutah, "enlargement," their borders stretched out, and with corresponding spiritual increase. Thus blessed, the fruit of their previous scattering will be seen in them, as—

Jezreel, "God will sow," affirms. "I will sow her to Me in the earth," He says in Hosea (chap. ii. 23) "Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the earth with fruit" (Isa. xxvii. 6.) Then we have their worship as they realize what God has wrought, in—

Jokdeam, "the people are made to bow the head," and thus reach—

Zanoah, "a provision of rest." Thus ends the second section.

The third is again a single name—

Kain, "acquisition." There is an article with it which makes it more emphatic: "*the* acquisition" so long delayed; the fulfilment at last of so many centuries of deferred hope. No wonder if God mark it as something of special importance. How much for His glory and man's blessing are summed up in it! "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" "God shall bless us," said one of old, "and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him."

The fourth section has but two names:—

Gibeah, "hill, height," and

Timnah, "apportionment;" for God's will is to put this light for Him, the testimony at once of His grace and holiness, upon a candlestick, and to exalt Israel, as the number indicates, upon the earth. God indeed has a special "hill" of which He has written, that "it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it" (Isa. ii. 2.)

Naturally, every way, we go on now from Israel's blessing to that of the nations, a *fourth* group of six cities—

"Halhul, and Beth-zur, and Gedor, and Maarath, and Beth-anoth, and Eltekon,"—

Another triumph of divine grace. We must perforce go over it rapidly, but

Halhul, Beth-zur, and Gedor, and Maarath, and Beth-anoth, and Eltekon: six cities and their villages.
[Tekoah, and Ephrata, which is Bethlehem, and

would not be thought to make little of what sounds the note of God's evangel as to the world in the near future:—

Halhul, "travail-pain," necessarily preceding it, as the ordinance has been since the fall. No child is born without a pang; no spiritual birth takes place without a deeper pang; how great then when it is the world's labor-pain, as here: what a convulsion when those judgments of God are on the earth, in which the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness (Isa. xxvi. 9.) Man's day will end in terror and dismay; the day of the Lord will be upon all the pride of his heart and the work of his hands, to bring him into the dust out of which His grace shall new-create him. In the time when the earth trembles to its foundations—

Beth-zur, "the house of the rock," will be revealed to him, the firm shelter for faith which will not give way. Christ is of course this, and being found, Christ's arms are put about him, and we find in—

Gedor again the stone "enclosure" for a flock to keep them from wild beasts; and next—

Maarath, "meadow" for pasture. Thus the symbols of a shepherd's care come naturally up where Christ is in connection with men. But this is not enough: He must have hearts that answer to His heart, and thus now we find—

Beth-anoth, the "house of responsive songs." This is the *fifth* name; the sixth is a genuine note of triumph—

El-tekon, "God makes straight:" "I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight." (Isa. xlii. 16.)

Thus righteousness reigns, and the course of the world is no longer under the power of him "who worketh in the children of disobedience." Christ reigns, and the whole earth rejoices.

According to our common Bibles, the cities of the mountains end here, with the exception of two names only which stand together in a fifth division. These certainly do not furnish us with the heavenly things of which we are in search; and yet, if not the third, the fifth should, one would suppose, speak of them. Or, after all, can it be that we have not even a hint of these?

Now it is just in this place that the Septuagint introduces another group of eleven cities to which there has been found nothing corresponding in the Hebrew copies. Certain critics, and some of these, as Keil, quite orthodox, contend for the genuineness of this insertion; others refuse it. Is it possible that here may be that of which we are in search?

Those who refuse the testimony of the Septuagint, allege the many additions as well as omissions and arbitrary changes made by the Greek translators in this part: a thing which cannot be denied. Bunsen also objects that "The forms of many of these names are decidedly not Hebrew; besides, except Tekoa and Bethlehem, not one of the cities is elsewhere mentioned in the Old Testament." To which Fay replies that "the first reason is an assertion without proof; and the second has no weight, because very many of the cities mentioned in this chapter are named nowhere else in the Old Testament." Our own ability to use them depends upon the practicability of finding them in Hebrew, while other names than those given by Bunsen have at least their possible representatives elsewhere.

Keil says: "This group lay to the north of the fourth, and reached as far as Jerusalem. It comprised a district in which even now there are at least fifteen places and ruins, so that we have not an arbitrary interpolation made by the LXX., as Jerome assumed, but rather a gap in the Hebrew text." A number of the names can be identified with those of places found in this part of Judea at the present time.

Phagor, and Aitam, and Kulon, and Tatami, and Soresh, and Karem, and Gallim, and Baither, and Manocho: eleven cities and their villages.]

Interpretation for us however furnishes the only conclusive test; and this decisively confirms the addition. Spite of whatever difficulty there may be in transliterating the Greek names back to the Hebrew, we are easily able to show that there is a gap filled by it, which would be felt indeed in the spiritual much more than the literal application. Coming under that fifth number in which we find "man with God" as the fundamental thought, we find just what we looked for vainly in the third place; while the section which in the Hebrew stands fifth, and out of place as that, fills thus, as we hope to show, with perfect accuracy, the sixth and final place. We proceed therefore with assurance to the interpretation.

The eleven names seem to divide into two smaller groups of seven and four, and not as before into six and five. These giving essentially the Godward and manward sides of the eternal life with Him, ending with one sweet word which is the seal of it all,—that we "enter into *His* rest." Could anything be more perfect as a conclusion than just what is here expressed? But all in God's book is perfect: only our astonishing dullness, the fruit of indifference and indolence, and these springing out of unbelief, hinder our perception of it. When shall we awake?

With what does the series begin? With Tekoa, "the sound of the trumpet," —that which summons the dead in Christ from their graves, and the living to go forth to meet Him! as suitable a beginning as the ending. Divine power accomplishes the call, and the next word we have is—

Ephrata, "fertility," the wilderness exchanged for ever for the place of abundance, "which is Bethlehem," "the house of bread," the "Father's house," of which even far-off prodigals bear witness that there is "bread enough and to spare." Little need should there be to apply "the sound of a trumpet" and "the house of bread," as thus connected together! Next we have—

Phagor, (still found as Faghur between Hebron and Bethlehem, "the cessation of sojourning." Then—

Aitam (the Etam of 2 Chron. xi. 6,) "the ravenous beast consumed." And then—

Kulon, "the end of the night-lodging." These three, just in the style of Rev. xxi., picture for us in joyful negations the bliss that is begun. Then—

Tatami, "underneath them Jah:" the everlasting arms still needed by, and ever supporting, creature weakness. While—

Soresh, "the turning aside of fire," would indicate that the holiness of God, which must needs burn against the evil in us—and so it is written, "*Our* God is a consuming fire"—has done its work in this respect, and exists for us no more after this manner. This is the seven complete; and perfection and rest will then manifestly have come. The other numbers can be traced all through by one who desires to do so.

Now comes the manward side. First,—

Karem, "meetings:" the joy of mutual recognition not forgotten, the attachments begun on earth provided for, by Him who has already united us together for eternity, and who said of old to the sorrowing Martha, "*Thy brother* shall rise again."

Then Galem (Gallim?) reminding us of Gilgal, where the reproach of God's people of old was "rolled away." Now this shall be done completely; while—

Baither, or Bether, reminds us no less of those "mountains of Bether" ("separation, seclusion?") here amid the joy of heaven to let us know of that inner sanctuary of the heart which shall be kept ever sacred to the joy of One Voice that speaks there,—no more any babble of other sounds to keep it out.

Then comes the final word, Manocho, perhaps the Manahath of Chronicles

d (61, 62.) The wilderness.

Kirjath-baal, that is Kirjath-jearim, and Rabbah: two cities and their villages.

(*d*) In the wilderness: Beth-arabah, Middin, and Se-

(1 Chron. viii. 6), but yet with a termination which gives it all its distinctive beauty in this connection, "the place of *His* rest." Words would but take away from the fullness of meaning here.

Who will deny that the insertion of the Septuagint justifies itself, if spiritual significance is to count for anything? But a witness to it yet remains, that of the last two of the cities of the mountain, which, as already said, become now a *sixth*, instead of, as in the Hebrew, a *fifth* division. Six speaks of the full development of evil, yet as under the hand of Him who has power over it. And the names here are

Kirjath-Baal, which is Kirjath-jearim, and Rabbah.

One form of evil remains, as it would seem, for distinct notice now, and Kirjath-Baal, the city of Baal, brings it before us in the most vivid way. Idolatry, and where in the idol also the true God is not even pictured, is indeed the triumph of Satan over man, his deluded captive. But Satan is cast down; Kirjath-Baal becomes in Israel's hands Kirjath-jearim, the "city of woods." We have met this when tracing Judah's northern boundary to the sea, and we have seen that it there conveys no good suggestion. It is the abode of pride and prodigality, that on the one hand which betrays us into Satan's hand, and that in which as prodigals in a far country we bring ourselves into a want, out of which no power but one can ever rescue us. The change of Kirjath-Baal into Kirjath-jearim implies the judgment of it before God, its name declared with that which leads to it, and to which it leads. And this is God's sweetest triumph over it, when Satan's captives are thus set free by self-judgment, and judgment of what has ensnared them. Here we are, in fact, on the border of Dan. For the rest—

Rabbah, "great," sufficiently explains it. The power of God must needs prevail; the hand of God will cast down the enemy. This is not even formally said, nor needs to be. It is enough to know that God is God. What shall the wildest effort of men or devils accomplish against Him?

(*d*) Thus fittingly the cities of the mountain end. We have still six cities left, the cities of the wilderness, the number assuring us of another triumph on God's part; which would not be complete, unless the wilderness could furnish, with all else, its material of praise. After having seen, therefore, the end of all, we return now to see that not in vain were the steps that led to it. The sorrow and trial have been temporal, but the lessons are eternal. As we look back from the end we shall see how well suited all God's ways have been, and how completely He was master when we could discern little but man's wild will.

Beth-arabah, the "house of the wilderness," begins the list. It speaks plainly of a Father's sufficiency and care, which the wilderness is the very place to learn. Cut off from all natural resources, the heavenly bread, the water from the rock, the daily guidance, were a constant testimony of this to the people of old; and to educate them in it was a perfect argument for the path by which He led them. And these things are our types: the antitypes transcend them; only faith is needed to behold that which is spiritual; but the clear light of eternity will reveal it all.

We have next Middin, "measurement," the apprehension of things in relation to a standard, the discernment of difference. Here, again, the world, as sin has made it, is where such knowledge is to be attained. Here is the great field of conflict between good and evil. Here sin is seen in its growth and in its effects. Here in the child of God it is brought face to face with that which is of God, and there is learnt the secret of power over it. Here Christ, the Light of the world, has brought very darkness into light. Hence "measurement" of every kind is possible, and "by reason of use" the senses become "exercised to discern both good and evil."

Joseph: The practical spirit.

1. (xvi. 1–4.) The southern boundary: practice as viewed from the divine call.

cacah, and Nibshan, and Ir-hammelach, and [y]Engedi: six cities and their villages.

(*e*) But as for the [z]Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not dispossess them, and the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem to this day.

(XVI., XVII.)

4. [1]And the lot came forth for the children of [a]Joseph from the Jordan at Jericho, at the waters of Jericho on

[y] 1 Sa. 23. 29.

[z] 2 Sam. 5. 6.

[a] Num. 26. 35–37.

Secacah leads us further. It means "overshadowing," and, under the number which speaks of divine manifestation, naturally leads us to think of the cloud that overshadowed Israel in the wilderness, and was the token of the divine presence in their midst. Their need and His love had brought Him there to minister among them, which for us has been done in a transcendently blessed way. Only in one world has God become incarnate; and over it the heavens opened and poured out their multitudes when Christ was born in flesh. To be in the wilderness of this world is to be where the Son of God has walked and suffered and died; and to have consciousness of the need which He has met, and that He has met it for us, will give us songs the angels know not. Surely God has made the wilderness in this way to blossom for us, and made it good for us to have known its sorrows.

These become intensified in Nibshan, if it mean, as Young says, "furnace," which may refer to the glow of the *khamsin*, the desert wind. Such seasons, with all their trial now, have their commission from God, and so their blessing, consuming, as with the three of old, only the bonds that have bound us, while the Son of God is with us in the fire. It is not adversity we have to fear, though we do fear it, and court what we have rather cause to fear.

Fruit is again found in Ir-hammelach, "the city of salt," that diffusive power of holiness, the true aggressive spirit of Christianity, without which even gracious words fail to "minister grace to the hearers." (Eph. iv. 29.) Is it not that the world's furnace prepares this "salt" for use, or puts it into activity at least? And that he who realizes most the one will be most apt to manifest the other?

The last word here is Engedi, "the spring of the young goat," where Saul afterwards "went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats." (1 Sam. xxiv. 2.) The word in the last case means "climbers;" *gedi* is the young of the same race; and *en* the fountain which sustains them. "The high hills," says the Psalmist, "are a refuge for the wild goats" (Ps. civ. 18); and there the spring is found. The mountains nourish a hardy race, given to surmount difficulties, and the wilderness has water for them. Difficulties call for faith, and increase the faith they call for; while God has special cheer for special need. The number here is again the number of victory.

(*e*) Here the tale of Judah's cities is at last completed; save one, which, on account of Judah's failure, is not added to the rest. Jerusalem, the chief city of all, is yet in Jebusite hands; and there Judah and the Jebusite dwell in strange fellowship together. It is the first indication of that which in the book of Judges soon becomes the token of universal decline. The "could not" here speaks of divine government, as the numerical division does; and we shall have it dwelt upon when we come to Judges. The seed of the future was here at the beginning.

4. We now come to the inheritance of the double-tribe of Joseph, which we have already seen represents the practical spirit which springs from faith, and with this the numerical division is in precise accordance. It is divided again into four subsections, which can be only properly characterized after examination in detail.

(i.) The southern boundary is first given us as that of the whole tribe. As

the east, to the wilderness going up from Jericho to the mount of [b]Bethel. And it went from Bethel to Luz, and passed to the border of the Archite at Ataroth, and it went down westward to the border of the Japhletite, as far as the border of the [c]lower Beth-horon, and as far as [d]Gezer; and it ended at the sea. And the children of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, took their inheritance.

[b] Gen. 28.9.
[c] 2 Chron. 8. 5.
[d] 1 Chron. 7. 28.

this it may well represent to us practice from the divine side, or as obedience to the call of God. This the examination of it will, we think, confirm. The language suggests a further division into five parts, giving so many aspects of the practical life, in orderly relation to one another, as we may be sure. There is nothing haphazard in the Word of God.

(*a*) The first stage is from Jordan to the mount of Bethel. The line starts on the east from Jordan, for all true Christian, that is heavenly life for us begins where the waters of death have yielded to the ark of Jehovah's strength, and given us access to the land which is our possession. Then it begins from Jericho also, where the world has received its judgment for faith, and from the "*waters* of Jericho:" for the streams of divine blessing which are taken (as we have seen in Egypt) to nourish the spirit of independence in men away from God, are ours to use freely and without asceticism, yet as from Him and to His praise. Nevertheless, the way is then a "wilderness, which leads up from Jericho to the mount of Bethel," the house of God. The first stage even of our journey is sadly incomplete if it does not bring us there. With the lesson of this house we ought to be, from Jacob's history, already familiar.

(*b*) The second stage is scarcely one at all, and yet of vast importance. It is "from Bethel to Luz" only; and Luz is the old name of the city of Bethel itself. But Jacob's pillar was outside the city at the first, and only after a while, probably by natural outgrowth, they seem to become identified. From the Israelite point of view it was Bethel that absorbed Luz; and at the time of the apportionment the city and the place of the vision were still, it would seem, different.

At any rate, for our purpose it is enough that Luz follows Bethel here. Luz means "separation;" and however much it may exist apart from Bethel (and then it will have only heathen significance), when it is connected with and follows it, then it has its right and necessary place. To be with God as sons and daughters in His house, He has told us, we must not "touch the unclean thing." (2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.) And defilement must be estimated, not by natural conscience or our own conception, but by His word. It is here, in the very face of His word, that Christians can go so far astray.

(*c*) The third stage is that the boundary "passed over to the border of the Archite, to Ataroth." Archite is from *arach*, "to advance, make progress," and the Archite is therefore a man of progress. What is before him is very clearly told in the point where the line touches his border, Ataroth, which means "crowns;" and so the apostle says: "Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible." (1 Cor. ix. 25.) The lucidity of the text here makes it need little the interpreter.

(*d*) In the fourth stage the line descends, and under the number which tells, if any, of contact with the *world*, we reach the border of the Japhletite, "one who causes to escape," and "as far as the border of the *lower* Bethhoron" ("the house of wrath") and "as far as Gezer," "isolation:" words that, for those who are sent into the world with the Gospel of the Master, do not seem as if they should need much more interpretation than the former ones.

(*e*) Hence the border runs to the sea: for in this practical life there are exercises also, and the experiences of storm-tossed mariners, which make the haven more desired to which surely at last Jehovah bringeth them. The line ends here at the haven of the sea.

2. (vv. 5–10.) Ephraim's portion.

a (v. 5.) Southern boundary: governing principles.

b (6–8.) Northern boundary.

c (8, 9.) Possessions

[2](a) And the border of the children of Ephraim was according to their families: the border of their inheritance was toward the sunrise, [e]Ataroth-Addar, as far as the upper Beth-horon.

(b) And the border went forth westward to [f]Michmethah on the north [side]; and the border turned toward the [sun]rise to Taanath-shiloh, and passed by it toward sunrise to Janohah, and went down from Janohah to Ataroth, and to Naarah, and touched Jericho, and went out to Jordan. From [g]Tappuah the border went west to the brook [h]Kanah, and ended at the sea.

(c) This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Ephraim according to their families, together with

[e] ch. 18.13.

[f] ch. 17. 7.

[g] ch. 17. 18.

[h] ch. 17. 19.

(ii.) This is the southern boundary of Joseph. We are now called to look at Ephraim separately in the *second* sub-section, which should apparently in its numerical significance have to do with the name. Ephraim means literally "*doubly* fruitful," and may refer to his being the *second* son, through whom indeed Joseph attains the double portion of the birthright. Thus Ephraim in his name expresses the value of both Joseph's sons, and the double fruit would seem to be not only in what we commonly call that, but also in the Manasseh energy of character acquired which turns its back upon all that is "behind," in its racer-like eagerness for goal and prize.

(*a*) In the fifth verse we have the southern boundary of Ephraim given again, but in a fragmentary way, which has induced many criticisms and attempts at emendation. But we could hardly expect a mere repetition of what has just been given; and in the light of the spiritual meaning all is explained easily, distinctive beauty being found in the very points which before were most in question. Thus we have "addar" appended to Ataroth of the former account, and Beth-horon the *upper* given in place of the lower: a thing which to one commentator seems of small account, because the two were so near together! But this is to lose the perfection of the Word of God. The last change is of the most absolute importance for the spiritual significance which it ought not to need to be insisted on governs all. Geography may not need so much precision; but here assuredly is more than that, or I know not why we still take interest in it as Christians.

In fact in these two places on Ephraim's border we have two governing principles of practical life. Ataroth-addar means "crowns of honor;" and note that it is stated to be—not "eastward" merely, geographically, but—"toward the sunrise," *spiritually*. Beth-horon the upper is west from it, as we already know,—*seaward*,—and suggests rightly the exercises and experiences connected with the sea. Beth-horon is the "house of *wrath*;" but notice the importance, then, of distinguishing between the lower and the upper. Wrath *below* is the misery of hell, utter and irremediable; wrath *above*, speaks indeed of sin as the evil thing which God hates, and must hate, because He is holy: but which is not wrath against the *person*, but may be, as chastening, the most tender and paternal love toward him.

Hence Ataroth-addar and Beth-horon the *upper* are opposite thoughts, yet governing as a double star the course of the saint,—divine approbation or divine displeasure,—though divine *love* is for the redeemed in both. Beth-horon the *nether*, the threat of hell, would be for these quite unsuitable, and rob the salvation of Christ of its character as eternal, and our souls of all the peace which it now assures to them.

(*b*) We come now to Ephraim's northern border, which divides into two parts, in which it is traced in opposite directions,—two views in some sense opposite, therefore, though not in contradiction. The one gives, it would seem,

the cities that were set apart for the children of Ephraim in the midst of the inheritance of the children of Manasseh, all the cities and their villages.

d (*v.* 10.) Failure.

(*d*) But they did not dispossess the Canaanites that dwelt at [f]Gezer; and the Canaanites have dwelt in the midst of Ephraim to this day, and became tributary servants.

3.(xvii. 1-11) Manasseh in the land.

[f] Jud. 1. 29. 1 Kings 9. 16, 21.

a (*vv.* 1-6.) The heirs.

[3](*a*) And the lot came to the tribe of [j]Manasseh; and

[j] Num. 26. 29-34.

individual items of the practical life, looked at from its human side from conversion, facing sunrise, that is, in view of accountability at the coming of the Lord. The other, brief indeed, and the more striking for its brevity, gives us, as exercised by these things (looking toward the sea) the helping principle which carries securely through.

In the first case the line begins facing *westward*—merely the sea; in trouble and exercise of heart, we find ourselves at Michmethah, the "corruption of the dead;" then, as the line turns sharply round toward sunrise, we have the striking image of conversion; and in Taanath-Shiloh reached "access to Him who gives peace" to the soul. Thence we come to Janohah, "rest," still turning more toward the coming day.

And now the road descends: the path in which power and fruitfulness are to be shown is one that leads downward, as our Lord's did. But this is a *fourth* step, warning us by the number that trial will be found upon it: remembering which we may rightly interpret the Ataroth,—very different from the former one, to which we now come,—"crowns," before the end is reached, and which can be nothing but temptation to be put away from us; and then we find Naarah, "tossing"; we must needs "touch" Jericho, the world, and have to do in some way with Jordan also, death; and here the list closes on this side.

In the opposite direction we take it up again, to find first a name that has twice truly fulfilled itself to us where we have found it—Tappuah, the "Breather." Here is, indeed, a precious and inspiriting thought. Christ, the last Adam, has breathed into us the breath of a new, eternal life. We belong to a *new* creation: "old things are passed away." And we who thus live are no more to live unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us and rose again."

This is, in fact, the brook Kanah. Kanah means "He has purchased"; and is the thought needed to supplement even Tappuah. Yes, He has purchased us! Let us make it strictly individual, and say, He has purchased *me;* and may it be to us the inspiration that it was to the apostle: "the life which I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*."

But Kanah is a "brook"! Yes, for if this be in my heart, the Spirit of God delighting to glorify Christ, becomes a full flow of living water in my soul, which allows no want. The rest of the line is now nothing but the watercourse itself, until the end is reached. Blessed be God! How sweetly and powerfully, even though they rebuke us, do these "mere names" speak to a Christian soul!

(*c*) It is noted further that besides the cities inclosed within these boundary lines, there were certain others out of Manasseh's territory that were granted to Ephraim. This will come before us where shortly the names are given.

(*d*) But Ephraim does not escape the common failure; and Gezer is noted as a place where the Canaanites were suffered to remain, though becoming servants. Sins are but too often spared as serviceable; and among Ephraimites as much as any. And because a gracious God still blesses, we think He cares but little. Yet a day of reckoning comes at last.

(iii) We have now Manasseh's portion *in the land:* that across Jordan has been already given. He is here in some sense realizing that for which he "forgets" elsewhere. The number of the section may intimate this.

(*a*) The heirs are numbered first, and this is the case with no other of the tribes. Is it that the personal state is more before us,—the man himself as distinguished from his inheritance? The family of Machir have their inheritance

he was the first-born of Joseph. As for Machir the first-born of Manasseh, the father of Gilead, because he was a man of war, he had *Gilead and Bashan. There was also [a portion] for the rest of the children of Manasseh according to their families: for the children of Abiezer, and for the children of Helek, and for the children of Asriel, and for the children of Shechem, and for the children of Hepher, and for the children of Shemida: these are the children of Manasseh the son of Joseph that were males, according to their families. And †Zelophehad the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, but daughters; and these were the names of his daughters: Mahlah and Noah, Hoglah Milcah, and Tirzah. And they came near before Eleazar the priest, and before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the princes, saying, Jehovah commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brethren. And he gave them, according to the commandment of Jehovah, an inheritance among their father's brethren. And there fell ten portions to Manasseh, beside the land of Gilead and Bashan, which are beyond Jordan: for the daughters of Manasseh had an inheritance among his sons; and the land of Gilead belonged to the rest of the sons of Manasseh.

k Deut. 3. 13–15.

l Num. 27. 1–11.

b (7–13.) Their border: connection and separation.

(*b*) And the border of Manasseh was from Asher to Michmethah, which is opposite to Shechem; and the

already the other side of Jordan: six other, all spring originally from Machir, but are reckoned as Gileadites instead of Machirites. (See Num. xxvi.) Thus in different ways Machir and Gilead cover the whole territory of Manasseh. It is Machir the *family* that seems to be the "first-born of Manasseh," as the individual Machir is the father of the whole; and Keil takes "father of Gilead" here as equivalent to ruler of the *land* of Gilead. This interlacing of names must have its reason, and should help us to see that names count for something throughout the history. Even the women of Manasseh show the courage of faith, and gain an inheritance with their brethren. Their story is repeated here, to their praise. We do well to covet the portion God has given us. There is abundance for all, and to enjoy it to the full will only enrich and not impoverish others. Manasseh gains thus ten portions: for the single portion of Zelophehad swells into five through the inheritance of his daughters. "*Covet earnestly* the best gifts."

(*b*) We have now Manasseh's borders, only on one side really defined, and that the south, where Ephraim's line has already been traced. Yet this is repeated with variations from the former account, not surely a mere supplement on account of imperfection in the first, but something very different from this, and proving how little geography is in question. On the north there is no line given at all, simply the statement that it touched Asher on the north, and Issachar on the east, and that Manasseh had cities in both, which looks as if the undetermined line were left for progress,—of which Manasseh is surely the expression. On the south he too yields to Ephraim, expansion being the rule for the people of God. Had they been only faithful, their borders on all sides would have been similarly pushed out. God desired for them growth: they chose, alas, contraction.

The southern border is traced from east to west, not the whole of it, and with some addition in the part given. The starting-point is from Asher,—not the tribe, of course, but a place supposed to be still known, with the same meaning,

border went on the right to the inhabitants of En-tappuah. Manasseh had the land of Tappuah, but Tappuah on the border of Manasseh belonged to the children of Ephraim. And the border descended to the brook Kanah, south of the brook: [m]the cities here belonged to Ephraim among the cities of Manasseh. And the border of Manasseh was on the north side of the brook, and ended at the sea: southward it belonged to Ephraim, and northward to Manasseh; and the sea was his border.

m ch. 16. 9.

And they touched Asher on the north, and Issachar toward the [sun]rise. And [n]Manasseh had in Issachar and in Asher [o]Beth-shean and her dependencies, and Ibleam and her dependencies, and the inhabitants of Dor and her dependencies, and the inhabitants of [p]Endor and her dependencies, and the inhabitants of Taanach and her dependencies, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and her dependencies,—the three hilly regions. But the children of Manasseh [q]could not dispossess [the inhabitants of] these cities, but the Canaanites would dwell in the land. And it came to pass, when the children of Israel were strong, that they put the Canaanites under tribute, and did not entirely dispossess them.

n 1 Chron. 7. 29.

o 1 Sam. 31. 10.

p 1 Sam. 28. 7.

q *ctr.* ch. 1. 5.

4. (14–18.) Weakness.

[r]And the children of Joseph spake unto Joshua, saying, Why hast thou given me one lot and one portion for an inheritance, seeing I am a [s]numerous people, forasmuch as Jehovah hath blessed me hitherto?

r Jud. 8. 1, 2. Jud. 12. 1, 2. *cf.* Ro. 12. 3.

And Joshua said unto them, If thou art a numerous people, get thee up to the forest, and cut down for thyself there in the land of the Perizzite and the Rephaim, since the hill-country of Ephraim is too strait for thee.

"happy," man's original condition. Thence it passes to Michmethah, "the corruption of the dead," which is now marked as opposite to Shechem, "shoulder," already familiar to us as the type of obedience, the bearing of the yoke. So man, not ignorantly, but in full view of duty, turns away from God.

But there is a change: the border passes south, literally "to the right hand," the place of exaltation and honor, but in dependence, and so comes to the inhabitants of En-tappuah, a word we well know as significant of the Breather of new life, a new creation, and with a prefix "En," which means "spring," the living water that waters the new creation-life. Here we are stopped to have it explained that the land only belonged to Manasseh; Tappuah, itself upon the boundary-line, belonged to Ephraim: and so Paul, in New Testament style, tells us that we are "*Created in Christ Jesus* unto good works, which God hath before prepared, that we should walk in them." (Eph. ii. 10.)

Next we have again the brook Kanah to the sea, south of which the cities are Ephraim's, and north of it Manasseh's, although the boundary-line would have given it all to Manasseh. I do not know the meaning of this.

The boundary-line north, as already said, is not traced, except that it touched Asher on the north, and Issachar toward the sunrise, and that Manasseh possessed cities in both tribes. Yet the extension seems to go beyond their strength, an evil which too often accompanies energy; and the Canaanites retain these cities still, though they become tributaries. The lesson further will be considered in the book of Judges.

(iv.) The expostulation of the brother tribes with Joshua is a pleading of

And the children of Joseph said, The hill-country is [s] not enough for us; and all the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have [t] chariots of iron, both they that are in Beth-shean and her dependencies, and they that are in the valley of Jezreel. And Joshua spake unto the house of Joseph, even to Ephraim and to Manasseh, saying, Thou art a numerous people, and hast great vigor; thou shalt not have one lot only, but the hill-country shall be thine; for it is a [u] forest, and thou shalt cut it down, and it shall be thine to its extremities: for thou shalt dispossess the Canaanites, though they have chariots of iron, and though they be strong.

Responsibility measured and emphasized in the remaining tribes.

(XVIII.–XIX.)

1. (xviii.1.) The place of the throne.

5. [1] And the whole assembly of the children of Israel gathered together at [v] Shiloh, and set up the tent of

[s] *cf.* ch.19.9.
[t] Jud. 1. 19. Zech.4.6,7.
[u] Ps. 74. 5.
[v] ch. 19. 5. 1 Sam. 1. 3. Ps. 78. 60.

weakness such as can go with high pretensions, and that is but shame. Certainly they have no slight opinion of themselves; yet when it comes to meeting the enemy they are willing to take shelter under the most humiliating confession. It is "when I am weak, then am I strong," so that the true sense of weakness would have only given them encouragement by casting them upon God. Let us be well assured, the plea of weakness will never be used in this way by those who know rightly what their weakness is. They should have said, We are unbelieving, we dare not trust God: we are slothful, and do not want the trouble of clearing the mountain; but then they could not have faced Jehovah with this! How good a thing it would be to look honestly at all our excuses after this fashion; although the effect would surely be that we should find that we had not an excuse that would stand the test! *Can* we have an excuse for not taking possession of what God has made our own? Not unless God fails: if He be for us, who can be against us? Joshua, therefore, cannot admit the excuse. True it is, there is plenty of land for all, and their boundaries, as we have often seen, are quite open for enlargement where there is real need; but this cannot be until they are able to fill what has been already apportioned to them, and the enemies of God are dispossessed from their inheritance. The answer from their Captain is an exhortation with an encouragement. True, if we measure ourselves with difficulties, there is no hope at all: measure them in faith with God, and where have they disappeared?

But all this from the tribe of Joseph is mournful enough. Alas, when has there been a time in the history of God's people in which the seeds of departure were not manifest on every side? And how could there be confidence at any time about them, except in the way the apostle found it, "I have confidence in you through the Lord"?

5. We go on now to consider the portions of the remaining tribes, which are allotted them at one time in Shiloh, the tabernacle having been set up there. This surely is something not irrelevant, but in true relation to the apportionment itself, in which are illustrated God's governmental ways with a people in relation to Himself. And this, of course, implies that the tribes now receiving their apportionment illustrate also responsibility in a way in which previous ones do not. This is very evident as to Judah; while as to Joseph no less is it apparent, I think, that it is not responsibility that is emphasized in what is given as to them. On the other hand, in that which follows it *is*,—Benjamin first of all here giving the abiding in Christ (and therefore He in us), which enables us for it. It is therefore the first and most important duty so to abide. This is the responsibility to which Christ in us answers as the necessary result. And while every true Christian must in the first sense of this abide, yet there are degrees of practical realization none the less.

(i) The tent of meeting is established at Shiloh, "the place of rest" or

meeting there; and the land was subdued before them.

2. (xviii. 2-10.) Division of the rest of the land.

2 And there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes, to whom they had not yet apportioned their inheritance. And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, How long will ye be [w] slack to go and possess the land which Jehovah the God of your fathers hath given you? Supply three men for each tribe, and I will send them, and they shall arise and [x] go through the land, and describe it for the appointment of their inheritance; and they shall come unto me. And they shall divide it into seven portions: Judah shall remain in his territory in the south, and the house of Joseph shall remain in their territory on the north. And ye shall describe the land in seven portions, and bring it hither to me, and I will cast lots for you here before Jehovah our God. For the [y] Levites have no portion among you, because Jehovah's priesthood is their inheritance; and [z] Gad and Reuben and the half tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance beyond Jordan toward the [sun]rise, which Moses the servant of Jehovah gave them. And the men arose and went; and Joshua charged them that went to describe the land, saying, Go and walk through the land, and describe it, and come again to me, and I will cast lots for

w *cf.* Heb. 5. 11-14.

x Gen. 13.17. *cf.* Eph. 1. 15-23.

y ch. 14. 4.

z ch. 13. 8-12.

"peace,"—peace having been actually accomplished, and the land subdued before Israel. The tabernacle stood here from Joshua's to Samuel's days, when it was forsaken, the ark going into captivity into the Philistines' land, and never returning to its first abode. Jerusalem, afterwards the throne of the Lord, and now in its turn given up, is yet only abandoned for a time, and has the promise of being God's rest forever, but this very promise to the one assures us that the other is finally abandoned.

The things that happened unto Israel happened unto them for types, and so surely in this case. Like the choice of Saul before David the true king, the choice of Shîloh had no doubt a probationary purpose, as all the history connected with it indicates. The situation of Jerusalem between Benjamin and Judah will be realized by one who considers what we have seen to be expressed by these tribes respectively to be the ideal seat of the lawgiver; Jerusalem itself also being the "foundation of peace," that is "righteousness;" which is the foundation of God's throne no less. Shiloh, on the contrary, was in Ephraim the fruitful, to which men naturally accord the sovereignty. When the kingdom was divided Ephraim became, as we know, the seat of government, *ten* tribes uniting to give this place to her—the ominous number of responsibility. Shiloh in Ephraim seems evidently, therefore, much as Saul before David, or the law before grace, a needed concession to man's natural thoughts, ordained for the trial of them.

However, this scarcely appears as yet, save that the beginnings of failure are in fact seen all round, as we know, and at Shiloh itself the first word is of expostulation: "How long will ye be slack to go and possess the land?" Nor have we any outbreaking of song as when David afterwards brings the ark to Zion. These things speak to the attentive ear discouragingly: God for Himself "chose *not* the tribe of Ephraim" as the place of His throne.

Yet there in the mean time the tent of meeting is, and thither the assembly of Israel gathers.

(ii) Seven tribes have yet to find their portions, and for this Jehovah bids

you here before Jehovah in Shiloh. And the men went
8. (xviii.11.–xix. 51.) The inheritance.
and [a]passed through the land, and described it by cities
a ctr. 2 Sam. 24. 5-8.
in seven portions in a [b]book; and they came to Joshua
b Ps. 119. 111.
unto the camp at Shiloh. And Joshua cast lots for
a (vv. 11-28.) Benjamin: "abide in Me, and I in you."
them in Shiloh before Jehovah; and there Joshua di-
vided the land unto the children of Israel according to
their divisions.

* The border.
[3] (*a*) And the lot of the tribe of the children of [c]Ben-
c Num. 26. 38-41.
jamin came up according to their families; and the bor-
der of their lot went forth between the children of Ju-

them appoint three men of each of these tribes to survey the land and divide it into seven parts, the lot being that which is to determine the portion of each according to these divisions.

(iii) The lots come forth in an order which must, of course, have numerical significance:—

(*a*) First, Benjamin, who receives, as we have already noticed, his inheritance between Judah and Ephraim on the east side, filling up exactly the interval, and uniting these to one another.

Small as the tribe is, we see yet its importance in the care with which its boundaries are traced and its cities enumerated. Though its borders are necessarily those of Ephraim on the one hand and of Judah on the other, and have thus already been given, yet they are repeated now, with certain variations in the description, which are, of course, significant. Its cities, too, are given with care, and numbered like those of Judah, while those of Ephraim and Manasseh both are almost wholly passed over. These things do not merely *happen to be*, but are guided by the hand of God with careful consideration. We should only lose the edification designed for us, if we did not note all this carefully, so as to linger over that on which the Spirit of God lingers, emphasizing in due place, and giving all parts their balance and proportion.

If Benjamin speak of Christ in us, the *power* for a fruitful life in the world, it is easy to see why this should receive more attention and emphasis than the details of the fruitful life itself (Ephraim); and thus it is that Benjamin fills the gap between Judah and Joseph, and comes at the head of the seven tribes here finding their place. "Little Benjamin" is, in this sense, "the ruler" (Ps. lxviii. 27), having in it, in fact, Jerusalem, the city of the King, though Judah might supply the King himself. "Christ in us" is, as has been already said, the objective in the subjective, the personal Christ in His image in the soul; we must expect, therefore, that Benjamin will receive the greater consideration, and should expect ourselves to find the deepest instruction and edification in the details so carefully given here.

We have first the boundaries, then the cities. The boundaries tell us in detail what Benjamin is; for to limit and to define are the same things. They are given consecutively, the line being run completely from the northeastern extremity at the Jordan, west to the south of Bethlehem, giving the north side; south to Kirjath-Jearim,—the west side; east from thence back to Jordan,—the south side; Jordan itself being the east side.

The northern is, of course, at the same time the boundary of Joseph; it is given us also in the same way, from east to west, and thus presents itself for comparison throughout. For there is no mere repetition of what has been already given: the whole is restated, even although the parts may be the same. We have Benjamin now in view, not Ephraim; while, as already said, comparison is necessarily suggested all the way through.

The starting-point is Jordan, and this is given separately, to be considered by itself: "And their border on the north side was from Jordan." Ephraim, too, starts from the river of death, but does not linger there. The difference all through seems to be that in Benjamin we have identification with Christ, in

dah and the children of Joseph. And their border on the north side was from Jordan, and the border went up to the side of [d] Jericho on the north, and went up through the hill-country westward, and ended at the wilderness of Beth-aven. And the border passed from thence to Luz, to the side of Luz (the same is Bethel) southward; and the border went down to Ataroth-

[d] ch. 16.1-3.

Ephraim development of a life which is individual and distinct, although none the less springing from the life of Christ in us. Benjamin's border begins at Jordan, that is in identification with Him in death; but it is as having life in Him that we are thus identified. Benjamin and Ephraim thus begin together, but on different sides of the same line: if we say "life in Christ," Ephraim emphasizes the *life*, Benjamin that it is in *Christ*. These things are never to be separated, but they are easily distinguished.

But thus Ephraim does not, so to speak, tarry at Jordan; Benjamin does. For power upon earth it is of the most essential consequence to realize that we begin with identification with Christ in *death*, which is thus *my* death, the end of *me* for faith, that Christ may live in me. If this first identification be not well realized, the dead self, after all, survives; separate interests become necessarily distraction; the eye not single blurs the image of Christ; and instead of day there is but, at best, a twilight in the soul, which does not develop like the flush of the early morn, "from glory to glory:" for this you need, and only need, thank God, the Sun!

But now we go up: "And the border went up to the side of Jericho on the north"—the *shadowed* side, notice, of the world, but a world which thus (and only thus) becomes ours, Jericho coming, as we see, into the possession of Benjamin by this fact. But still we go up: there is no tarrying here—"and went up through the hill-country westward," nearer heaven and facing the sea, "and ended at the wilderness of Beth-aven"—"house of vanity." Not a cheerful road, one might think, for the feet of a Benjamite; but the cheer is elsewhere: identification with Christ is not that which makes the world bright or the path smooth. It makes the way a pilgrimage.

But that is only one stage of the road. "And the border passed from thence to Luz, to the side of Luz (the same is Bethel) southward." Luz, as has been already said, means "separation"; but Luz is here identified with Bethel, as in Joseph's border it is distinguished from it. It is the Luz aspect that is emphasized in connection with Benjamin, and no wonder: realized identification with Christ cannot fail in maintenance of true separateness, which in the Lord was fuller than the Baptist's, great as was he. But Luz is Bethel, as the apostle fully explains to the Corinthians (2 Cor. vi. 16–18). It is true Benjamite "separation" which makes us realize the blessedness of that home relationship with the Lord Almighty which is indeed what Bethel (the house of God) implies. And how *much* is implied in this! Let the Benjamite who is reviewing his border not pass hastily on from Bethel, not make it merely, in fact, a station by the way. Nay, with him who knows it, it will be no transient thing, as in the Lord's blessed assurance: "If any man love Me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him; and We will come unto him, and *make our abode with him*" (John xiv. 23).

The fourth portion of the line brings us to the end of the north border: "and the border went down to Ataroth-addar, at the hill which is on the south of the lower Beth-horon." Both these names we know, but the utter and solemn contrast is at first sight surprising. That the line goes *down* to "crowns of honor" need not surprise us: with the Lord it did, and thus the identification with Him is maintained. He "humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name." "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him."

addar, at the mount which is on the south of the lower Beth-horon.

And the border was drawn so that it turned on the west side southward, from the mount that is before Beth-horon on the south; and it ended at Kirjath-baal (this is Kirjath-jearim), a city of the children of Judah. This was the west side.

And the [e]south side was from the end of Kirjath-jearim; and the border went out westward, and went out to the spring of the waters of Nephtoah; and the bor- [e] ch. 15.5-9.

So much is simple: but what is "the mount which is on the south of the lower Beth-horon"? The mount unnamed must be simple elevation, and on the south side excludes Beth-horon from the portion of Benjamin. Does not the whole point simply and impressively to the day of the Lord in which the crown of glory and the judgment upon evil will be recompensed to saint and sinner?

Here the northern boundary ends, and we turn south along the western one. This is very short, and has but one portion of the line within it: "And the border was drawn so that it turned on the west side southward, from the mount that is before Beth-horon on the south, and it ended at Kirjath-baal (this is Kirjath-jearim), a city of the children of Judah." This is on the border of Dan, and it speaks correspondingly of judgment from its start to its termination. We have already seen in Kirjath-jearim the exposure of Satan and his overthrow. In what perfect connection do we find it here both with the border of Dan and the city of wrath! And we see in Benjamin's "mount" how identification with Christ and exaltation upon earth come at last into visible display together; and this is shown us just where Ephraim's border gives place to Dan! Who is the author of all these harmonies? Is any imagination equal to the feat of creating them? Every name here is a standing proof of verbal inspiration.

We are now come to the southern boundary, which is at the same time Judah's, and trace it *back* to Jordan. It is as if, looking back from the end, (to which in the previous part we have arrived,) we retraced, as we shall retrace, the way by which we have come thither; and in this Benjamin and Judah ("praise") will surely come together. Passing back over the way we have already traced, the landmarks will be the same substantially—almost exactly—all the way through, and the principal difference will be in the direction and in the stages of the journey, which will be numerically different, as indeed they are differently divided also.

The line is broken into five divisions, in the first of which we are bidden simply to consider the point from which we start: "And the south side was from the end of Kirjath-jearim." The number speaks of the righteousness and omnipotence of God, which are clearly shown in the detection, baffling, and overthrow of Satan, not one dupe duped any longer by him, and God supreme in all His excellency as God, every cloud removed. How wondrous will be the time! well may we be called to pause and consider it before we pass on—the time when the barrenness and misery of evil will be manifest to all, and the victory seen to be essentially one of goodness, not merely of power: thus only worthy of Him. This opens the meaning of the second portion:—

"And the border went out westward, and went out to the spring of the waters of Nephtoah." This second portion, under the number which speaks of Christ and of salvation, takes us to the Cross, Nephtoah, "the opening" of the Rock, whence flow the living waters. The connection with Kirjath-jearim is evident. In the Cross power was absent from the side of good, was present with the evil only, yet the victory was complete, as shown in the streams flowing forth, and which have ever since flowed forth. At the first, though on the southern border, and to go east, we find, in fact, the border going west! we are facing the sea of

> der went down to the end of the mountain that is before the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is in the valley of Rephaim on the north; and it went down the valley of Hinnom, to the shoulder of the Jebusite southward, and went down to En-rogel; and it was drawn northward, and went forth to En-shemesh; and it went out

trial, in which, also, the works of the Lord and His wonders appear: thus the character of what is here should be manifest. The bruised foot it is that, as such, bruises the serpent's head. In the day of triumph, it is the *Lamb* who appears.

The third division of the border is a much longer one, though with a number of smaller breaks. It is, in fact, that part of it in which is found the retracing, step by step, of the road traveled; the two former introducing us to it in the light by which it must all be read. Thus we begin again now with judgment:—

"And the border went down to the end of the mountain that is before the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is in the valley of Rephaim on the north."

Here we have already seen that hell is carefully distinguished from the enemy's power, which the valley of the giants represents. It is the power of God, and for the repression of evil. Satan does not triumph in a single soul cast into hell. If he could do so, heaven would be darkened forever, and the songs of the righteous turned into a wail. This first portion of the third division speaks in its number attached (as I think) of the *barrenness* of rebellion, accomplishing nothing but its own shame, while obedience is the incorruptible seed which really produces, and whose fruit abides.

"And it went down the valley of Hinnom at the side of the Jebusite on the south." The Jebusite stands here, as we know, for Jerusalem; but this is not named as it was when tracing Judah's boundary. The valley of Hinnom, distinguished from any mere effect of the enemy's power, speaks still of the doom of the sinner as not the will of God; as "causeless," save by the sinner himself. Thus it is at the *south* side of the "treader down," not in the shadow of the oppressor.

From thence the line "went down to Enrogel," the "fuller's fountain;" at the third step we find the place of cleansing of garments, going *down* to find it. Not the toil of climbing is needed to find the renewing of the Spirit for one's personal life; not labor nor the uplifting of self, but self-abnegation only. How guilty, then, is he who refuses to take the place in which the grace of God can minister to him!

"And it was drawn on the north, and went forth to Enshemesh," the "fountain of the sun"—a beautiful picture of the Spirit of Christ reflecting Christ; and this comes under the number which speaks of practical walk: what a testimony of the ease and simplicity of a true Christian walk, the power of which is from above, and which without effort reflects the beams that are poured around it! Man is still made nothing of, but in his weakness ministered to, as freely as the sun shines for all that will have it: and that is what the apostle really gives as the witness of Christ: "That was the true light which, coming into the world, shines for every man" (John i. 9).

But why this specification, "drawn on the *north*," just here? Is it because, with all its simplicity, there seems so deep a mystery in it for most? This is at least true, that legality and little faith, and want of devotedness, both cloud the sun and diminish the flow of waters, and Enshemesh often does not answer to the beauty of its name. "This is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation."

"And it went out toward Geliloth, which is opposite the ascent of Adummim." Geliloth here replaces Gilgal in the boundary of Judah: it is a plural, but otherwise very similar, meaning circuits or revolutions. Yet there must be

to Geliloth, which is opposite the ascent of Adummim; and it went down to the stone of [f]Bohan the son of Reuben; and it passed over to the shoulder opposite the Arabah northward, and went down to the Arabah; and the border passed over to the shoulder of Beth-

[f] ch. 15. 6.

a difference in meaning, answering to the difference of form, for no change can be without a purpose in the word of God. God Himself interprets Gilgal, applying it to the rolling away from Israel of the reproach of Egypt. Geliloth, as a plural, can hardly be so definite in application. With the number five attaching to it, the number which speaks of God's governmental ways, one would think naturally of the revolution of those wheels of Divine Providence of which we were reminded in the kindred Eglon, and which are full of intelligence and blessing for the man in Christ, while his place as this no revolutions can affect. Thus Geliloth is simply "opposite" the ascent of Adummim, the homeward path of the "quieted ones."

"And it went down to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben." This is the sixth point, a number which, as we know it is that of the overcomer, Bohan, the man of the consecrated hand, may show us the way of overcoming. Only the hands tipped with blood and oil can be expected to leave the Ebenezer stones upon the way; and these will do it.

And now we are nearly back to the beginning of the journey, and the next step brings us face to face with the desert: "and it passed over to the side in front of the Arabah northward." A singular seventh point, as it must seem; and the desert itself is the eighth: "and it went down to the Arabah." But, looking back as we are doing here, why should not the contemplation of the desert be in rest, and the desert itself become a prophecy of new creation? God does not *patch*, and will not have the wilderness forever: must He not, then, have "all things new"?

This after all may not be the interpretation: let it stand then only till a better is suggested. It is evident that this completes the journey, and that in the next division we have got to what in Egypt stood at the beginning of it for Israel, and without which not a step of the journey could have been taken: "And the border passed over to the side of Bethhoglah northward." Bethhoglah, if we have rightly interpreted it, means "the house of revealed sacrifice," and that the word means strictly "*festal* sacrifice" makes the reference to the passover only more complete. The new beginning, "and the border," occurs for the fourth time in this southern boundary, and so should signify that we have here a fourth division. This may be another surprise; but it must be remembered, that looking backwards, as we are doing now, things are seen naturally in new aspects. In this case the number of experience seems a beautiful assurance of how the shelter, the joy, the power of the sacrifice under which first we learned the blessing of redemption, have abode with us all the way. Redemption has been itself testified by the full strain of all the way on to the land before us, and it has more than borne the strain. Its song has not died out, and never will. Well may we bless our God, and joyful indeed may be our hearts, that the strain of the wilderness does really fall upon the redemption provided! The question, will the saint certainly come through, means really, is the salvation of Christ a complete salvation? is Christ our Lord a sufficient Saviour?

We are now back to the sea: "And the border ended at the north bay of the salt sea, at the south end of Jordan." The meaning can only be what we have before seen when looking at Judah's boundary, death bringing to judgment, and the number given here affirms it as God's government. That it is not the death of the sinner He desires, that we have seen most solemnly affirmed also. Judgment, we have been assured at the valley of Hinnom, is His "strange work;" here, we are equally assured, it is what nevertheless, when forced to it, He will execute.

hoglah, northward; and the border ended at the north bay of the salt sea, at the south end of Jordan. This was the south border.

And the Jordan bordereth it on the east side. This was the inheritance of the children of Benjamin, according to its borders round about, according to their families.

The cities. And the cities of the tribe of the children of Benjamin according to their families were: Jericho, and

The fourth boundary of Benjamin—the eastern one—is Jordan, where we began. Death as the penalty on men connects necessarily with death as the penalty borne for us by Christ, and our identification with Him in it. And Jordan as the fourth boundary is death as stamped upon the fallen creature,—the base line, so to speak, of Benjamin's portion, leaving all that he has to glory in to be CHRIST ALONE!

This is the inheritance, then, of Benjamin as defined by its borders. We have yet to look at its cities, which fill here a second place, not, as in Judah, a fourth. Is it because they do not speak of experiences, but of attributes, namely, of that divine government which "Christ liveth in me" implies? This would seem to be confirmed by the grouping of the cities also. There are two groups of these (an eastern and a western, although not noticed as such in Scripture), and the first consists of just twelve names, the number of manifest divine government. The second, indeed, has fourteen, and yet by division stands as twelve and two, so that the same number is shown in it also, though more obscurely.

The names themselves are, some of them, quite difficult, and do not recur. The words for "hill" are proportionately frequent, as Geba, Gibeath, Ramah, and agree with the character of the land of Benjamin, physically and spiritually: for God hath made the physical the pattern of the spiritual. Would that we knew only how to discern it better?

The twelves in Scripture seem, for the most part, if not always, to divide into four threes, and thus every city here will find its number. The first group of twelve seems to emphasize the *power* of the rule of Christ where the truth of identification with Him is known and recognized by faith. The first necessity for rule is power, and this in its various characters the cities here seem to express. They are thus arranged:—

1. 1. Jericho, 2. Beth-hoglah, 3. Emek-keziz;	2. 1. Beth-arabah, 2. Zemaraim, 3. Bethel;	3. 1. Avim, 2. Parah, 3. Ophrah;	4. 1. Chephar-ha-Ammonai, 2. Ophni, 3. Geba.

Two of the first three are familiar to us. The third, Emek-keziz, the "valley of cutting off," has been suggested by Grove, with great probability, to refer to the circumcision of the people after they had crossed Jordan, which certainly took place in this neighborhood. Together, and especially if Emek-keziz may mean "*deep* cutting," they may show us the *sufficiency* of Christ to meet the condition of the soul and govern it for God.

Jericho, the well-known type of the world, passes, as we have already seen, into the possession of Benjamin—a world which belongs to the Christian only as he belongs to Christ, and as it, too, is kept by him under the shadow of the cross. Joseph, Manasseh, Machir, have borne in various ways testimony to this truth before; and Scripture is not weary of putting us in remembrance. Thus, if Jericho be the shadow of Egypt here—

Beth-hoglah carries us back to the passover, to the judgment of Egypt on its first-born, to the day of deliverance and departure from it; while—

Emek-keziz gives us the circumcision of heart which is the "putting off the body of the flesh" (Col. ii.), and thus strikes at the root of all the power of the world. "We are the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." (Phil. iii.) This is *sufficient* power.

Beth-hoglah, and Emek-keziz; and Beth-arabah, and [g]Zemaraim, and [h]Bethel; and Avvim, and Parah, and

[g] *cf.* 2 Chr. 13.4.
[h] Gen. 28. 10-19.

The next three would naturally speak of it as *saving* power, but in the sense in which the apostle uses the term in Philippians, not in Romans. Salvation may have various applications; and that which the apostle speaks of in Philippians is not a salvation from wrath and condemnation merely. It is one agreeing with "my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that in everything, as always, so now also, Christ may be magnified in my body, whether by life or death." Here we have, first of all—

Beth-arabah, the "house of the wilderness," the world become that, a barren place, in which Christ is the need and *home* of the soul. This carries on clearly the truth of the first section, while it expresses in the most vivid way the reality of the world's power being broken. The next word—

Zemaraim, is one of the difficult ones. It has been supposed to refer to one of the families of the Canaanites, the Zemarites, tenth in the genealogical list in Genesis; but this gives no help of the kind we seek. It has been referred to an Arabic root meaning "to be weak, to languish," and to a Chaldee one signifying "to be hot." Yet there is a Hebrew word akin to it, *Zemer*, which means "wool," and was the chief clothing material in Israel. As a dual form, may it not speak of double garments, of protection from the cold which can be often keenly felt in Palestine? and this would not appear unsuitable to the line of truth beginning with Beth-arabah. We are bidden to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ," and the open testimony to Him implied in this is indeed an effectual safeguard from the chill of the world's night air. Lastly—

Bethel, the house of God, which, as we see in Jacob's history, infers also the discipline of the house, is a third security for the preservation of holiness in the soul, and of the soul in holiness.

The third three seem to speak of fruitfulness. Here we have, first—

Avvim, which was the name, we may remember, of a nation destroyed by the Caphtorim, and who seem characterized by their name as "perverters, overturners." It is not of necessity that they recognized this name themselves, or the character implied in it: such, alas, are the most quiet and respectable of those that are away from God. Their attitude is rebellion. They are not merely negatively fruitless, but positively corrupters and destroyers of what is good and godly. But what is the meaning of the insertion of this name among those of Benjamite cities? Is it, as with Israel's first name, to magnify the grace of Him who out of such material can make a vessel for His praise? So I think we must take it, the confession of what once the people of God were in contrast with—

Parah, in which the effect of grace is seen: "He hath become fruitful" is only rightly appraised when it is seen whom this "he" stands for. While in the third name,

Ophrah, "the female fawn," while still the central idea is fruitfulness, there seem added the thoughts of beauty, gentleness, even fear, which, when it is of God and not of man, can clothe a Benjamite warrior with the most attractive grace.

These three sections seem to yield consistent meaning, on the whole, not doubtful. When we come to the fourth, there is more room to doubt, especially as to the second word, which is in general taken to refer to one of those petty nations with which of old, as in Christian times, the land of Israel was overrun. But this, for one who seeks spiritual meaning, leaves the difficulty as great as ever. Confessing it where we find it, there is still room to suggest what seems to be in harmony with the rest, and not devoid of practical instruction.

The number speaks of testing, and the first name here is—

Chephar-ha-Ammonai, "the village," perhaps "covert," "of the Ammonites." If we have rightly characterized the Ammonite (vol. i., p. 531, *n*), he is just the especial enemy and snare of the Benjamite. Leave him but Christ, and he is

Ophrah; and Chephar-ha-Ammonai, and Ophni, and Geba: twelve cities with their villages.

safe. Filch Christ away from him, and he will be but a shorn Samson, weak as other men, and much more pitiable in his weakness. Now the Ammonite is, as we have conceived him, the heretic in doctrine, not openly but subtly ready to steal Christ away. And we need not wonder, so little are we competent to keep our choicest blessings, to find an Ammonite covert upon Israelite territory. Nay, it would seem they have associates, for such foes seldom work alone:—

Ophni is named from Ophnite, another stranger possibly, although also possibly not; for it is no new thing, alas, for one's foes to be they of one's own household. Ophni is variously interpreted, but the meaning which seems most to be in keeping with its position here is that which makes the derivation to be from a word which in Arabic and Syriac signifies "to become mouldy." Certain it is that it is where decay has come in, we find a soul ready to take part with the Ammonite. Decay shows already that the freshness of first love is gone. Christ is not what He was to it; and here is the enemy's opportunity to tamper with His image, and bring in something which seems, perhaps, at first, to be only a new point of knowledge. But it is leaven in the meal, and it works as leaven: by degrees the whole is leavened; there is another Christ, and not the old one.

What is the remedy? That surely must be in the third name, which has the number of revival, of restoration, and the third name is

Geba, "hill." Benjamin, as has been said, is full of hills. As places of comparative security, cities were largely built on them, and the hill of Geba might well suggest a refuge from an Ammonite "covert." A hill lifts one up above the common level, and gives largeness of view also. Spiritually, the resort to a hill is a confession of feebleness, of need to be raised above oneself, of consciousness that we are in an enemy's country; and, simple as all this is, it is really our effectual safeguard, and the only one. Pride and self-sufficiency are at the bottom of all going astray. They prevent our recourse to Christ: "the wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek." What snare could prevail against us, if we walked in self-distrust and humility with God? if, instead of from the common level of the world, we looked at things from the height to which He would lift us!

Thus the last three cities show us the simple condition which secures us against failure and defeat: it is but the abiding in the weakness of which the number of weakness, the number of the creature, reminds us. How, then, it might be thought, could we ever be defeated? Certainly from lack of power we never can.

The rest of the cities of Benjamin form a group, fourteen in number, in which we have presented to us, as it would appear, the *ministry* of Christ, as entered into by the one in whom Christ lives and rules. The spirit of Christ must surely be eminently a spirit of *service*. "I am among you as one that serveth" were His own words: "the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." This was His glory, that He had come down into the world to meet, as He only could, the need of the world. This characterized His whole life in its human aspect; and while atonement was His work alone, and it is made, yet he in whom Christ lives will be of necessity one in whom He will be carrying on the work for which He came, in the *spirit* of the wondrous sacrifice which was, in its full reality, His alone. Hence it is most interesting to see how in Benjamin now we have this thought dwelt upon; and in this respect also we see how he unites Judah with Ephraim, while filling his own individual place. Ephraim is fruitfulness, and here surely is fruitfulness; yet, on the other hand, in it the Judah character of "confession" is as clearly found;—the fruit is evangelical; not in personal life, which is Ephraim, but in testimony; while yet having to do in the closest way with personal life, and inseparable from power for it. Thus Benjamin's cities are 14, or 2 x 7, the

[i] Gibeon, and [j] Ramah, and [k] Beeroth, and [l] Mizpeh, and Chephirah, and Mozah, and Rekem, and Ir-peel,

i 1 Ki. 3. 4.
j Jud. 4. 5.
k 2 Sam. 4. 2.
l 1 Ki. 15. 22. Neh. 3. 7.

number of testimony united with that which speaks of a perfect and divine work; while, when divided, as it is divided for us here, it exhibits the numbers 12+2, again the number of testimony, with that which speaks of divine rule, as in the last series.*

Let us now look at this larger section, which as 12 we should find again to be a 4 x 3, and to begin with the work which stamps its character upon the whole of it, the work of the cross. The cities are thus arranged:—

1. { *1.* Gibeon, *2.* Ramah, *3.* Beeroth; } 2. { *1.* Mizpeh, *2.* Chephirah, *3.* Mozah; } 3. { *1.* Rekem, *2.* Irpeel, *3.* Taralah; } 4. { *1.* Zelah, *2.* Eleph, *3.* Jebusi (Jerusalem).

What does Gibeon mean? The almost unanimous assurance of lexicographers and commentators is that it is connected with Gibeah, a common word for "hill," the termination giving it a possessive form—"of a hill," a hill city. I confess I can make nothing of it if this be the interpretation: others may, no doubt, succeed better.

But there is an alternative. It may be a compound word, and so mean "pit of iniquity"; or the last part of the word may stand, as sometimes, for "*suffering* for iniquity." The latter meaning I believe to be the true one, and it connects then clearly with the history. The Gibeonites did suffer for the deceit they practiced upon Joshua and Israel, being reduced to bondmen for the imposition.†

But while there is thus a plain link with the history, the spiritual significance is a much deeper one; and here the Cross is surely the true Gibeon, the "pit of suffering for iniquity" indeed. In a series of names developing the significance which we should easily find in them, how divinely suitable is it that that which was the Lord's supremest act of ministry, in its full character quite inimitable, should lead the way!

Then the second name, Ramah, an "elevated place," under the number of salvation, points clearly to the acceptance of that wondrous work, the answer of God to the humiliation and suffering of His Son; and then the answer of the Holy Ghost follows in—

Beeroth, the "wells" of salvation, out of which, for the need of men, with joy we may draw abundant water.

Here, then, is the fountain-head as well as sublimest pattern of ministry, and that which constitutes our sufficiency for it. The next three contemplate the

* There is, however, lack of an "and" before "Eleph," which should be pointed out, and would suggest, as in other cases, a division here. The 14 would then stand as 10.2.2. I can only mention this and leave it, as the meaning seems to make it 12.2, as shown directly. The letter *v* may have dropped out, but I know of no evidence from MSS.

† A question naturally will be raised here which would equally apply to the interpretation assigned to many of these names, and for that reason deserves a special answer. It may be asked, Could one suppose the Gibeonites to have designated their city by such a name, a name which would have been a prophetic judgment upon their own condition? To this, however, there may be given more than one sufficient answer.

1. The name may not be exactly the original one, but somewhat altered by the Israelites, as we know to have been the case in other instances (as, *e. g.*, Deut. ii. 11, 20: comp. Gen. xiv. 5), as a comment upon the history.

2. With other names, it may be really ambiguous, and capable of a deeper meaning, which the Spirit of God develops for us.

3. It must not be overlooked that the hand of God *has* been manifestly over the history, and that numerous names *are* distinctly prophetic. All those of typical persons are of necessity so, and evidently without any thought of prophesying on the part of those who bestowed them. He without whom not a sparrow falls overrules men in their ignorance continually, leading them undesignedly and in spite of themselves to fulfill His will. These three considerations cover, as I believe, every case such as that before us; and not merely answer the questions, but give us deeper views of divine government than are commonly entertained among Christians to-day.

and Taralah, and Zelah, Eleph, and [m] Jebusi (the same is Jerusalem), Gibeath, Kirjath: fourteen cities with [m] ch. 15. 63.

enemy of this work, whose opposition we have to meet, and from the beginning.

Mizpeh, the "watch-tower," bids us cultivate the spirit that this implies, and be upon our guard against an observant, powerful, and unchanging foe. This is an imperative need for one who would follow in any measure the footsteps of the Saviour of men. We cannot afford for a moment to ignore this foe; only at our peril can we be "ignorant of his devices." Thus the second name here is—

Chephirah, a word which is from caphar, to "cover," and is but the feminine form of *chephir*, a "young lion," so called from his habit of constantly *lurking in the coverts*: "covert-lion" would be a just rendering, and combines the idea of treachery and craft with power and destructiveness. Here is the enemy, and in—

Mozah we have the mode of attack. Mozah means simply "going forth," and must refer to the attack simply, the lion leaving his covert. But this by itself would be almost insignificant: it is a matter of course that the lion will attack. Combine this thought with another, and you have a real warning. Mozah, as going forth, is by interpreters given as a "fount or spring-head"; and it is well known how the lion will look around such places to prey upon the thirst-driven herds that resort to the waters. Here, indeed, is the place, also, of Satan's special attack. Where the Spirit of God is working and souls are being ministered to, there he delights with his roar and the agonized cry of some victim to scatter those of whom God says, "Gather my people together, and I will give them water."

And what remedy? Faith in the great Shepherd whose watchful care is over His own. Vigilance and alertness on the part of His people. The knowledge of Satan's method of itself arms us against him.

We have now another three, which, as a third, should show us the Holy Spirit's work; and so it does. The first word is peculiar and touching: it is—

Rekem, "embroidery," a word that might be thought to have only a very fanciful connection with any spiritual work. Nor is it employed exactly in this way; but the verb is used in a striking passage in that wonderful psalm, the 139th, in which God's thought and care of man is traced from his beginnings in the womb:—"My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and *curiously wrought*"—"embroidered"—"in the lowest parts of the earth." And, indeed, the curious interweaving of nerves, veins, arteries, together can be compared to nothing more justly than to a marvellous embroidery. This, of course, in all men: and can God be wanting in consideration and tenderness for a being upon whom He has bestowed such wonderful care?

This is but the body; but the Psalmist rises up to the *a fortiori* argument—how much more, then, must *He* care for the soul!

But the body falls a victim to disease none the less, and in death all this elaborate workmanship becomes a prey to corruption. Yes; for the spirit, which is the crown and unifier of the body, has fallen away from God its life, and thus the unity which depends upon it tends ever to break up, too! None can restore the body but He who can restore and set right the spirit. Here the marvellous work of Christ alone can suffice to assure us that man is still unchangeably the object of divine regard. The ministry of Christ addresses itself to every one of these creatures that He has made, and the next word is—

Irpeel, "*God* healeth": *that* is the glorious news. It is the precious fact, which every true worker for God realizes in his own experience. The breach in man is healed, because the breach with God is healed, and thus there is

Taralah, "the turning away of curse." Simple all this is; how good to know that such blessedness as this to-day *is* simple. Yet, simple as it is, how great—as great as ever—the need of the proclamation of it still!

their villages. This was the inheritance of the children
b (xlx. 1-9.) Simeon: communion. of Benjamin according to their families.
(*b*) And the second lot came out for [n]Simeon,—for the
n Num. 26. 12-14. tribe of the children of Simeon according to their fam-

We have now come to the fourth three, the number of practical life, the number, also, as we are continually reminded, of creature weakness. Here we have, first—

Zelah, "rib," that which the Lord God at the beginning took from Adam, and built up into a woman, and ordained her to be the help-meet of man. Here the weakness of the creature was recognized and provided for. "It is not good that the man should be alone," God says; and yet he was then as he had been made exactly. The woman, weaker still than he, is ordained his helper. Was she not in some way that by her very weakness? Cast upon him in his strength, a being formed for affection, as an object for the heart to develop the heart in him, deliver him from self-occupation, and, by the help she needed, help her helper? Here is natural ministry, ordained at creation, by which we are linked together by the need we have of one another, and in giving receive, and receive more than we give. Thus, indeed, is ministry as mercy "twice-blessed": and this reflex influence of it Zelah seems to stand for and suggest.

Eleph, "ox," from *alaph*, "to learn," implies training, education, while it is the well-known type of the patient laborer. The number, which is that of addition, progress, emphasizes the former meaning. He who would teach must himself be taught; and he who would teach with God must have learnt with God. God's school is one how different from man's! and in it we must never disjoin "Master and Lord."

Thirdly, Jebusi, the "treader down," when synonymous with Jerusalem, "the foundation of peace," that is, with righteousness, leads us to think still of the laborer, and, indeed, of the threshing of wheat, which was done after this manner. After David had taken the city, so that it had really become Jerusalem, we find the Jebusite Araunah at this work. Threshing is *distinguishing* work: the wheat is separated from the chaff; and this not as mere classification, but because the wheat is wanted, and wanted free from chaff. "If thou take forth the precious from the vile," says God to Jeremiah, "thou shalt be as My mouth." And this is the sanctification of labor, when it is used to separate that which is of God for God; when the heart is on that which is precious, deals with evil only that God may have His place and glory—what is His. And thus the picture is complete.

But there are still two cities more, exceedingly simple in their names; simple, also, in their significance—

Gibeath, which is "hill," and

Kirjath, which is "city"—"*walled* city," really. What can be implied by this, except to show us what is the *help* of labor, what it looks toward and intends. Gibeath the hill is the foundation of the city: "His foundation is in the holy mountains" is said of Zion. (Ps. lxxxvii. 1.) There is but one foundation for the laborer with God, and that is Christ: "other foundation can no man lay;" let us maintain it in these darkening days.

Upon this foundation God is building a city; and, blessed be His name, we are permitted to be helpers therein. It is a city "compacted together," a place where, at last, the links begun on earth shall find their appropriate sphere and sweet acknowledgment. It will be seen, then, that God never intended man to be alone, and that the city, though not in His paradise of old, was His first thought. There, too, shall His delight in man of old find its expression. God shall dwell among them; His glory shall be over them forever, and the Lamb the lamp thereof.

(*b*) The second lot comes forth to Simeon, in perfect accordance with the character of the tribe, whose weakness we have seen to be in its readily formed asso-

ilies; and their inheritance was in the midst of the inheritance of the children of Judah. And they had in their inheritance [o] Beersheba, and Sheba [Shema?], and Moladah; and Hazar-shual, and Balah, and Ezem; and Eltolad, and Bethul, and Hormah, and Ziklag, and Beth-marcaboth, and Hazar-susah, and Beth-lebaoth, and Sharuen: thirteen cities with their villages.

[o] ch. 15. 21, etc.

ciations, and for whom God has now, it appears, associations after His own mind, while thus is fulfilled Jacob's prophecy as to them, "I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel." These two seemingly so opposite things are accomplished by their receiving their inheritance in the shape of cities scattered, more or less, within the territory already given to Judah—cities that they are unable to occupy by reason of their portion being too large for them. Alas, how little are we able to enjoy all the blessing God has made our own! But thus He makes the need of Simeon supply the need of Judah, and exhibits to us the dependence of communion (which Simeon stands for) upon worship—the dependence, too, (though with a characteristic difference,) of worship upon communion. Very much as the Levites were in Leviticus given to the priests, so here, we may say, is Simeon given to Judah.

Simeon has thus not a territory, properly, at all; and so no boundary-lines are drawn or spoken of. Communion has in fact, so to speak, no territory of its own—no boundary-lines. The cities speak, not of the things which it has for its own peculiar enjoyment, but of what God has provided for it that it may be maintained. Thus, for instance, Hazar-shual, the restraint upon the flesh, is necessary for the existence of communion, but ideally it belongs as much to Judah, as we have already seen; nor can that be a matter of communion which is not one of worship also.

There are questions about these Simeonite cities, even as to the number of them, the first series being given as thirteen, while there are in the Hebrew text fourteen. The names themselves, according to the commentators, are often represented differently in the Judean list, with sometimes a third difference in 1 Chronicles. For the most part, we may pass over all this, except as the spiritual meaning may be in question, and therefore shall address ourselves to this at once, believing assuredly that "all these things happened unto them for types, and" in this way "were written for our admonition." There are abundant commentaries upon the letter, so that it scarcely needs to add much to the mass that has been accumulated with regard to this.

The first and much the largest series of names, whether they are thirteen or fourteen in number, seems to divide again into four parts, the first three of these being again series of threes. They present to us that which is necessary for the existence of communion, the first three carrying us back to new birth itself. We have had the names before: they are—

First, Beersheba, the "well of the oath." This speaks to us clearly of the Spirit of God, ours as secured and justified by the value of Christ in His perfection as the sacrificial Victim—the seven lambs.

The second, in the common text, Sheba, seems to be an error of transcription for what the Septuagint substitutes for it, Shema ("report"), which in the list of cities of the south stands in the same way before—

Moladah, "birth," and with the same meaning. We are born of the Spirit, born of the Word; and this is the first qualification for communion, a nature capable of apprehending and enjoying the things of God.

The second three speak of the sin yet within, from the power of which there must be deliverance; and first therefore here—

Hazar-shual, "the jackal-pen," the restraint upon the flesh, which has been elsewhere more fully pictured to us. We have, then—

Balah, "withered, old," which, under the number which speaks both of the

> Ain, Remmon, and Ether, and Ashan: four cities with their villages.
> And all the villages that were round about these cities to Baalath-beer, Ramah of the south.

cross and of salvation, reminds us that "our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed (annulled), that henceforth we should not serve sin." (Rom. vi. 6.) And thus—

Under the number of the Spirit and of resurrection from the dead we have Azem, "strength"—ability to enter unhindered into the portion God has made our own, to enjoy it with God.

The third three now speak of realized consecration: first—

Eltolad, "God is begetter," which gives the divine claim over us as His children—no more absolute or endearing claim than this; and God is here El, "the Mighty," able, spite of all hindrances, to make good His claim. Hence, on the one side we have

Bethul, "separated to God," or, on the other—

Hormah, "ban," separated to destruction, if against Him. Here is absolute devotedness, that knows no indifference, no neutrality. He, and *that*, that is not for God is against Him; he that gathereth not with Him scattereth abroad.

The fourth section is more difficult, though not as to the meanings, except with regard to the first word, which is—

Ziklag. If the last syllable be, as some believe, inverted for the sake of euphony, then it may mean most fittingly "the pressure of the wave"; and this would suit well the number of the section at the head of which it stands. It would thus plainly indicate an hour of trial such as is permitted to test everything that purports to be of God. The next two words—

Beth-marcaboth, the "house of chariots," and—

Hazar-susah, the "horse-enclosure," remind one perforce, in such a connection, of the psalmist's words, "Some trust in horses, and some in chariots." (Ps. xx. 7.) The multiplication of either was forbidden to the Israelites on this very account. Both were used mainly for purposes of war; but Israel's reliance was to be the Lord their God.

Beth-lebaoth, the "house of lionesses," follows in the fourth place, in the Hebrew text. There does not seem the usual clearness, and there must be somewhere some mistake; for while Sharuhen, the "dwelling of grace," according to the dictionaries, would come not unsuitably in the fifth place, the number must then be fourteen instead of thirteen, as in the Hebrew text. The differences in the Septuagint and in 1 Chronicles do not lessen the perplexity, which we must leave, however regretfully, just where it is.

The next group is only of four cities. Two of them, Ether and Ashan, we have had already, plainly referring to our Lord's sanctuary work. Rimmon, the "pomegranate," was on the border of the high-priest's garment. Ain, the first, means "eye" as well as "spring"; and the eye of the priest was constantly in requisition. What we have here, then, is that priestly work of Christ for us, which is needed for the maintenance of communion, as of worship.

Ain comes in the first place, the "eye" which searches out perfectly the truth, in order that intercession may be according to the need, and so the grace ministered. This eye may well be courted, rather than feared: it is the eye of the physician and the friend, not of the judge or accuser; and for the maintenance of communion, what is more necessary than the cry, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me" (Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24)? The Psalmist knew not, as we know, the blessedness of One standing as the Mediator-priest, where Christ stands now; and that "throne of grace" to which *we* are bidden to "come boldly, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need," was not to him

This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families. Out of the portion of the children of Judah was the inheritance of the children of Simeon; for the portion of the children of Judah was [p] too great for them: therefore the children of Simeon inherited within their inheritance.

(c) And the third lot came up for the children of [q] Zebulon according to their families: and the border of

[p] ch. 17. 16. Ex. 12. 4.

c (xlx. 10-16.) Zebulon: consecration.

[q] Num. 26. 26, 27.

fair and full in view, and sprinkled with the blood of Christ, as to-day we know it. We can "draw near" as he could not; and what hinders in us the drawing near, except the fear that the light of the throne and the eye of omniscience may lay bare in its reality something we would not have exposed—that we do not wish to see just as it is?

Can there yet be in us such treachery toward Him whom yet we know we cannot deceive? or can there be in Christian hearts such power for self-deception? Let us face the question for ourselves—not in the abstract merely: "Lord, is there possibly such ingratitude, as well as self-deceit, in *me?*"

Ain has thus very special importance in the list of Simeon's cities.

There follows it Remmon, or Rimmon, the "pomegranate," beautiful in flower and rich in fruit, and packed with its many seeds; on the high-priest's garment it speaks of the gospel and its results, and here apparently of the same precious Word, which is indeed nothing else but gospel, and by means of which alone communion is maintained. In the pomegranate, though not of great height (which would make its treasures difficult of access), the leaf is evergreen, the flower and fruit are alike beautiful, the seeds of future fruit are found everywhere in the fruit: a precious picture of the word of divine testimony. And that which goes for communion, yet is not dependent on and maintained by that which is the communication of the grace of God, His mind for men,—is not communion. So important is this second city of Simeon, in this place.

The third is Ether, which has been before shown to speak of "prayer," and that the "effectual, prevailing prayer" of the *truly* "Righteous" One—"Jesus Christ the righteous." This the number marks as special sanctuary work: and hidden from us as it is, what we owe to it we shall only rightly know above.

The fourth city—reminding us once more of our weakness—is Ashan, "smoke," and which also we have seen to refer to the sanctuary incense. We are thus brought now to consider the need we have of prayer ourselves, and the virtue which Christ's perfection gives to it. With which this series seems to be every way, indeed, complete.

To these, as an appendix, are added many unnamed villages round about these cities to Baalath-beer, the Ramath of the south, names beautifully and simply expressive. The "mistress of the *well*" must of necessity be "the exalted one" of the dry "south," but which only needs the water to develop into magnificent fruitfulness. Blessed be God that for us there is this constant need of water from beneath and from above. Egypt, with its river of which they cannot see the source, is not our portion; we have *need* of the Spirit, and thus His gracious, patient, abundant ministry, as witnessed to us in the first of Simeon's cities, secured to us by oath. "He who can swear by no greater has sworn by Himself, saying, Surely, blessing, I will bless thee!" Be it so, amen, Lord; and may faith in Thy people grasp the blessing!

(c) And now we go on to Zebulon, whose significance is simple from his name and the way in which Leah uses it. She called him Zebulon (dwelling), saying, "This time will my husband dwell with me." The spiritual thought connected with Zebulon is dwelling in the relation which God has given us to Himself, which is the only true thought of consecration. And with this the number under which we find Zebulon here plainly agrees.

their inheritance was unto Sarid; and their border went up westward, even to Maralah, and touched Dabbesheth, and touched the brook which is before Jokneam, and it turned from Sarid eastward, toward the rising of the sun, to the border of [r] Chisloth-tabor, and went forth to Daberath, and went up to Japhia; and thence it

[r] Jud. 4. 6.

Zebulon's border is given in three divisions, not completely: why should it be assumed that it ever was, or was intended to be, complete? We touch everywhere here upon things that are beyond us; and they cannot always, perhaps, have—sometimes need not have—complete definition. The spiritual sense—spiritual profit—governs everything here as much as in any other part of the word of God; and this destroys entirely the value of much acute criticism: we must get the divine, not the mere human, point of view. Certainly it can hardly be supposed that all the deficiencies that are to be found in this respect in the enumeration of cities here or the tracing of the boundary-lines are mere gaps in the manuscripts! If so, they are more imperfect than we have had any idea of. On the other hand, that there is design in the omissions is evident to one who will reverently consider them in the light only of such imperfect study as we are pursuing now; and the deeper the study, if a believing one, the more will this be apparent.

Judging simply from the language used, the description of the border falls into three parts, the first of which goes no further than to name the starting-point. This must, then, be of intense importance. From it the boundary is traced both west and east:—

"And the border of their inheritance was as far as Sarid."

Sarid means "remnant"—"what is left"; and this, under the number which may imply singularity or solitariness, should be, indeed, sufficiently impressive. "Antipas," whom the Lord calls "my faithful martyr," according to the significance of a name evidently meant to be significant, had "every one against" him: and if we are to be truly consecrated men, we must, before all things, dare to be singular. God must control us, as if there were not another. I do not mean, of course, that He will desire to have us, even for a moment, *indifferent* to others. Yet, says the Lord, "If any man come after Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." (Luke xiv. 26.) This is simply uncompromising obedience, which to anything but a perfect will would be insanity, but which to God is the highest reason that can be. And this is insisted on, by the mere description of this boundary of Zebulon, in the most absolute way. "You must start," it says, "if you are going to define for yourself what consecration to God is, *by yourself alone*—a *remnant of one*, if need be"! How important is it to get the right starting-point!

The consequences are not hidden: "And the border went up westward, even to Maralah ('shaking'), and touched Dabbesheth (the 'murmuring of reproach'), and touched the brook which is before Jokneam ('the possession of the people')." *Before*, in front of, not *in* the possession of, the people: there is the refreshment God has provided for you; and alas, you will find, if you are on this track, that the mass do not share it with you! It is beyond them, not because God will have it so, but *they* will have it.

In this part of the line we have been going westward—*facing the sea*. But there is another way. However, we must return to Sarid first:—

"And it turned from Sarid eastward, toward the rising of the sun"—the double view of the east, meeting, like Judah in the wilderness, the breath of the desert with the song of the dawn—"to the border of Chisloth-Tabor" (the "loins," that is, the "strength of purpose").

Here there is a well-provided road: "And it went forth to Daberath ('pas-

passed eastward, toward the rising of the sun, to *Gath-hepher, to Eth-kazin, and went out to Rimmon, which reacheth unto Neah; and the border turned about it *2 Ki. 14.25.

ture'), and went up to Japhia," "shining." The splendor of the dawn already greets one on this higher land.

"And thence it passed eastward, toward the rising of the sun, to Gath-hepher (the 'winepress-digging'), to Ethkazin (the 'occasion for a captain'); and it went out to Rimmon," the "pomegranate," which we have seen but awhile since to symbolize the precious word of God—"which reacheth unto Neah" (the "wanderer")—thank God, it does! All this speaks easily of the activity and energy which characterize the Zebulonite who dwells with God. Notice that the word of God in its fullness, which the pomegranate so strikingly represents, furnishes and gives direction to these activities; and that the "captain" is, literally, "the outermost man," the one who stands out from the rest, which is really the thought with which we started here.

We have now come to the third and last part of the border, which seems as if it should speak of *inward realization* of the Zebulon portion. "And the border turned about it (Rimmon) northward to Hannathon, and ended in the valley of Jephtah-el." Hannathon means "obtained by grace," and the border clings to Rimmon in reaching it. Nothing, indeed, to the soul that walks with God, can be a deeper experience than that all is of grace; there is none with which the Word more unites itself than this. But why does the border turn northward here? Is it because this abundant grace is at the same time a great mystery? It ends at Jephtah-el, "God openeth," the word for God being El, the Mighty. But openeth *what?* Is it the way of access to Himself? Is it the deep things which His Spirit searcheth? Is it the way before us as we travel it? It may well be all these, as nothing here would seem to limit it. But with the man who dwells with God, the grace and power of God, with the fullness that is in His bounteous hand, seem to be spoken of as the sweet and certified realities. Correspondingly, the line ends in a "valley": weakness and nothingness are realized, not in dismay or discouragement, but the very opposite. Still they are realized: for "the High and Holy One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy," saith: "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." (Isa. lvii. 15.)

The list of the cities of Zebulon comes in the fourth place, not separated from the boundary, but apparently including those that have been mentioned in it: for they are said to be twelve in number, while only five are given apart from these. Keil owns that "after deducting Chisloth-Tabor and Dabrath, which belonged to Issachar, the names Sarid, Maralah, Dabbasheth, Japhia, Gath-hepher, Eth-Kazin, and Channathon, give just seven towns. Nevertheless," he adds, "there is very little probability in this conjecture." The only alternative being to imagine a gap to this extent in the text, impossible to fill up, or that five should replace twelve, as the number of cities, involving a merely conjectural alteration of it, let us see how interpretation may help us to decide the matter.

Now the number five, as that of man with God, is one that we might expect to find in relation to Zebulon. The twelve of the text, however, does not displace it as the number of cities in this fourth section, while it adds to it the thought of manifest divine control which suits Zebulon certainly, no less than Benjamin. But this is not enough to decide so doubtful a matter. Our only sufficient argument will be found in examining, in the light of the numerals, the names actually found here, and see how they will read on either supposition.

There is a difficulty as to the meaning of one, if not two, of the names also, which is disappointing, especially where a question of this kind is to be decided. Critics are, however, I believe, agreed that in Isa. vii. 19, the word

northward to Hannathon, and ended in the valley of Jiphtah-el. And Kattath, and Nahalal, and Shimron, and Idalah, and Bethlehem: twelve cities and their

which stands second here means, not "bushes," as our common version reads, but "pastures." The fourth word, Idalah, is much more uncertain. Simonis gives "God exalteth," but the etymology is not as clear as one would desire. Dr. Young gives "memorial of God," but of course says nothing of etymology, and is in general but little reliable on account of his common preference of an inferential for a literal rendering. The other names are clear, and the list will stand thus:—

1. Kattath, "little."
2. Nahalal, "pasture."
3. Shimron, "watch," or "watchful care."
4. Idalah, "God exalteth," "memorial of God."
5. Bethlehem, "house of bread."

If these, as Keil suggests, are part of a series of twelve, the numbers will be quite different. Twelve is always in Scripture, as far as I am aware, a series of three (4 x 3); but then we do not know the places of the five here in the twelve. You may interpolate names *ad libitum*, and give existing ones any imaginable place. If they are the closing fragment, the numbers would be 2. 3. 1. 2. 3, and would belong to the third and fourth sections of the whole. I think that they will be found to yield in this way no consistent interpretation.

Now let us read them as they stand. First, as a fourth division of the account of Zebulon, they give us things which test the truth of such consecration as we have seen that he represents. This thought of "tests" is the only one the number stands for, which links together these five names in one consistent meaning.

The first name is Kattath, "little," the number being that which speaks of integrity, whole-heartedness. Now it is just that which is *little* which tests us in this respect. "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much." (Luke xvi. 10.) The great things many motives may conspire to induce us to regard. Things that are in themselves moral or immoral command any ordinary conscience; but to that of which no account can be given but that it is the Lord's will, how many excuses can be found for disobedience! Thus, how many respect James's admonition as to rich and poor in the assembly (Jas. ii. 1-4)? and there are things in abundance, that can be found by any one who will seek for them, that are much keener tests than this.

The second name is Nahalal, "pasture"; and while, at first sight, there does not seem much in this to connect with the line of thought before us, it is a fact that there is scarcely anything, perhaps, that is a greater test of the soul's condition than that of where it seeks its food. The Israelite's restrictions as to food have here plain and serious application. (See Lev. xi.) He who finds his recreation in the novel or the newspaper, how can he seek or find it in the things of God? On the other hand, can there be a soul that is with God, to whom His word is not a constant necessity, and an unfailing source of interest and delight? Such questions have but one answer; and they completely justify the place of Nahalal among the Zebulon names: while the numerical place puts to us the apostle's admonition itself, so emphasizing the necessity we have just appealed to, "*As new-born babes*, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may *grow thereby*." (1 Pet. ii. 2.) How MUCH does a new-born babe need milk?

The third name is Shimron, "watchful care." And the habitual realization of the Lord's presence will surely be marked by habitual watchfulness over ourselves. Not that it will induce or promote legal self-occupation. Legality makes much of self, which is the centre of its hopes and fears. The presence of the Lord, where realized in the sense of His grace, occupies us with *Him*, but thus makes evil much more hateful and horrible, and throws over one the shield

villages. This was the inheritance of the children of Zebulon according to their families: these cities and their villages.

d (vv. 17-23.) Issachar: the walk on earth.

(*d*) The fourth lot came forth for [f] Issachar,—for the children of Issachar according to their families. And their territory was unto [u] Jezreel, and Chesulloth, and

[f] Num. 26. 23-25.
[u] 1 Ki. 18. 45. 1 Ki. 21. 1, etc. Hos. 1. 4, 14.

which repels it. The holiness of God's presence therefore furnishes the third test.

The fourth name is Idalah: and here Simonis gives, at least, the meaning which seems to furnish one of the most searching tests of all. When "*God* exalteth," how readily may we forget that native weakness of which the number reminds us! Even the apostle Paul needed in such a case a "thorn in the flesh"—Satan's buffeting to balance the tendency to self-exaltation. Here is the snare of one who may stand forth at the moment of need for a "captain"; and how great is the need of such leaders being remembered at the throne of grace!

The fifth and final name is Bethlehem, the "house of bread." We have before recognized it as the sweet and fitting title of the Father's house. There there will be no testing; but for the Zebulonite who dwells with God even here, where He is pleased to have a tabernacle in the wilderness, it will not surely be the less, but the more, a longing to dwell with Him where His own house is. The coming of the Lord is thus left as the final appeal to the heart in Scripture: "Behold, I come quickly." May our hearts answer, as did his to whom the announcement was made! The number here is five, that of God with man, and of the recompensing end! Could there be greater harmony?

I think that the demonstration is complete that the names of the cities are not a fragment, but a perfect whole. Yet the number twelve seems to me right also in the way that others have suggested, viz., by counting in the border cities. In this way the text of our Bibles is right in both respects.

(*d*) The fourth lot is that of Issachar. And while we have had little to show us the spiritual significance of the tribe, there is but one which can be attached to it in the place which it here occupies. Issachar must speak of the walk upon earth, of course to be distinguished from Ephraim, which is fruit developed in *character*. The character being *manifested* in the walk, and the *deeds* done in the body that of which account is to be given, and for which reward is received, very clearly explains the name Issachar, "there is reward." We see, too, why there is no real attempt to draw the boundary-line: little definition can be in this case needed.

There are three parts to the description, the first of which contains thirteen out of the sixteen cities. This first part considers the walk *in itself*, and is subdivided again into four parts, three of three, and the fourth of four names. It is the usual division of twelve with one name additional added to the last part.

Looking at the names, it is evident that they are very different in character from most of the former ones. They seem to be full of warnings, the first section to be little else; and the walk itself pictured as in a scene of danger and of sorrow, although there is, blessed be God, another side. The first section stands thus:—

1. { *1.* Jezreel, *2.* Chesulloth, *3.* Shunem;
2. { *1.* Hapharaim, *2.* Shion, *3.* Anaharath;
3. { *1.* Rabbith, *2.* Kishion, *3.* Abez;
4. { *1.* Remeth, *2.* En-gannim, *3.* En-haddah, *4.* Beth-pazzez.

The first three give us what we may call the harmony of the walk. The first,—

Jezreel, "seed of God," reminds us again of the new birth without which there can be no right walk at all, and which is of the incorruptible seed of the word of God. (1 Pet. i. 23.) This "seed," when truly received in the power of

[v] Shunem, and Hapharaim, and Shion, and Anaharath, and Rabbith, and Kishion, and Abez, and Remeth, and Engannim, and Enhaddah, and Beth-pazzez; and the

[v] 1 Sam. 28. 4. 2 Ki. 4. 8.

the Holy Ghost, carries the life in it, according to the natural type. God's work comes thus necessarily at the beginning of all else, and we have as the result developed in it—

Chesulloth, literally "loins," which are so called from their stiffness and strength, and stand spiritually for the confidence which gives strength, enabling the back to carry its burden and the whole man for his work. The stiffness here implied is an important feature, imaging an unyielding faith which is needed for the world we pass through; while—

Shunem, "conformity," literally "their being leveled" or "made like," speaks of the life being shaped by the word received. These three things are clearly at the basis of all right walk.

The next three warn us at once of the opposition to be met and of the possible result of much toil and eager expectation:—

Hapharaim, "double confusion," a word which "applies," says Wilson, "to being frustrated and disappointed of one's plans and expectations." Here it is in the dual number, and may perhaps imply disappointment both of present success and future reward. For even with the Christian, alas, not everything that seemeth right in his own eyes is really found to be so: how much is not conformed to the one only standard of the word of God, but, at the best, to what we may think reasonable! But reason cannot rise up to that "wisdom which is from above," and which, with "every good and perfect gift, cometh down from the Father of lights." (Jas. iii. 17; i. 17.) Here is what avails for every position in which one can be found; but alas, our own wills come in to obscure to us His perfect will; and may not this be what the numerical place indicates, the thing in which our danger lies so constantly—an independent will?

Shion, though generally given as "destruction," may mean, rather, "he who puts at ease," the link between the two meanings being that of "security;" in the sense of that false ease which often exposes to destruction. Here it would seem that we should have the better sense. Having given us already the "confusion" which may be ours from taking our own way, what should the names show us now under the number of salvation but the One Person who alone can give us rest and security, "quiet from the fear of evil"? Christ is unfailingly our safeguard in all doubtful matters, the Shepherd who "leads in paths of righteousness for His name's sake." (Ps. xxiii. 3.) And suitedly there would follow, under the number that speaks of holiness—

Anaharath, for which Dr. Young gives the meaning of the "narrow way." This seems to verify itself by its perfect appropriateness to all the connection. Truth is one, and the right way for us at any time is only one, for God has only one thing in His will for us at any one time. The Spirit of God says to us, "*This* is the way," and not "*any one of these* is the way." Thus it is narrow; but who that knows it would wish it to be broader? Who would desire to have a choice of his own, who could have instead God's choice for him?

The third three are more difficult. The numerical place may speak of realization or of manifestation, possibly both: at least the realization of many a hope makes manifest what it is, and the true nature of our desire after it. This seems to connect the three following names together in an intelligible manner, and to be the only thing which does so. The first name here, alas, gives the nature often of such hopes—

Rabbith, a "great place." Emulation is that which the training in all our schools to-day deliberately fosters, as the spirit of success in life; and it has how many religious forms! It was the spirit which the desire to sit on Christ's right and left hand in His kingdom showed in the sons of Zebedee, as well as in the other disciples by their murmuring at it. The Lord rebukes it by appeal to His

> border reached to Tabor, and Shahazum, and Beth-shemesh; and their border ended at the Jordan: sixteen cities and their villages. This was the inheritance of

own chosen place among them, "come, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." How little like the kingdoms of the Gentiles would be the kingdom of such a King!

And what must be the consequence of being permitted to realize these hopes of greatness? This seems to be answered in the two names that follow: first—

Kishion, "hardness," or perhaps preferably "hardening." For if self be in the desire, the "seeking our own things," which the apostle characterized as the condition general among the Christians at Rome when he wrote to the Philippians, what will the attainment of the desire naturally do but give opportunity for the indulgence of self which this implies, and in result harden the heart by shutting it up in self-gratification?

This is but the law of progress, and the stamp upon which the Spirit of God puts in the next name—

Abez, which seems akin to *bizzah*, "mire," and to be illustrated in Habakkuk's "Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his! how long? and to him that ladeth himself with thick clay!" A terrible weight upon himself may be thus accumulated by one who is yet Christ's, but who in the government of God must meet the consequences, though as a father's chastening, and for final blessing!

These three sections, while contemplating the earthly walk, keep the eye, however, fixed upon oneself; the fourth contemplates more the world through which the walk is, and this in perfect conformity with the number attached. Here we have, first—

Remeth, "height," the possession given us in God's grace being *above* the world. It is as taken out of the world we are sent into it, and the first necessity is to maintain the possession.

To be above the world is to be master over it; and the Lord has given us all this place, not of it, as He is not of it. We only need to fill that place—by faith to be living in it, and this will be "the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." "If any man be in Christ, it is *new* creation: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor. v. 17.) This is the vantage-point for us.

En-gannim, a "fountain of gardens," speaks of the Spirit's work in the world. A garden is a special inclosure, and implies the need of separation, protection, and a nurturing hand. The Spirit's work is thus to separate and nourish the people of God, as exotics in a strange country. The world around remains a wilderness. "A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed; . . . a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon." (Song iv. 12, 15.)

Thus we are above the world, but in it, and yet separated from it;—

En-haddah, the "fountain of exhilaration," makes us contemplate the Spirit as filling the soul with its proper joy. "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess," says the apostle, "but be filled with the Spirit"—wherein is *no* excess. (Eph. v. 18.) How important is it to ask ourselves, what is it that I look to for recreation? what is it that bubbles out of me when I am glad? To pray when we are afflicted, that is well; but if we are merry, do we sing psalms? (Jas. v. 13.) Is Christ our Deliverer from sin and wrath, and should He not be the the joy and brightness of our lives also—our very life? Certainly En-haddah is a most needed memorial to us, coming in the place it does; and we do well to give the most attentive heed to it.

Lastly, Beth-pazzez, the "house of disruption," reveals the world as the place of contradiction and of opposition, of the need of separation, and of the difficulty of the accomplishment of this; of a scene where the precious needs to be taken

the tribe of the children of Issachar according to their families, the cities and their villages.

e (24-31.) Asher: the happy.

(*e*) And the fifth lot came forth for the tribe of the children of *Asher according to their families. And their w Num. 26. 44-47.

from the vile; and where we ourselves have to experience the ruin which has come in, and opposition to Christ in our own homes and hearts.

We have now evidently a new division of Issachar's cities, and though a very small, yet a most interesting one. The language shows the new beginning:—

"And the border reached unto Tabor and Shahazum and Beth-shemesh."

"Crucified to the world" is, after all, the salvation-side of the practical walk; and that is what this second division emphasizes for us. The number is that of the cross, as we know. The names show us this as a practical reality wrought into the life. First—

Tabor, "purpose," for, while we can *promise* nothing to God, "purpose of heart," such as Barnabas exhorted the saints to (Acts xi. 23), is most needful. Next—

Shahazum, not a plural form, as most take it, and meaning "heights," but, as in Kethib, the written text of our Bibles, rather a compound word, and meaning "humbled with fasting." This is the practical carrying out of purpose, not so much in literal abstinence as in spiritual holding off from what incites the flesh. For the flesh is the world's advocate, and here the victory is to be really got.

The third name, Beth-shemesh, the "house of the sun," shows how little dark need be a life of this sort. Nay, we are children of the light and of the day, not of the night, nor of darkness: of a day, too, in which the sun never sets, and where the sky never need be clouded. A good name, this, with which to end the list of Issachar's cities. We have only, besides, that—

"Their border ended at the Jordan": where, of course, the earth-walk must end; but this is a *third* division, because for death there is a resurrection; nay, there is a resurrection-life *now*, to which the end of earth is but the entrance into heaven.

(*e*) The fifth lot falls to Asher, "the happy,"—if the thought answer to the name,—a singular idea, it might seem, to have distinct representation thus among the tribes of Israel. So far, we have had no indication of any other; and a deeper consideration will make it apparent that it is of immense importance that the people of God should be known as a "happy" people. If "the joy of the Lord is your strength," then happiness must have for the soul a large spiritual value. As a testimony to God it must be of no less. One of the characteristics of the true "circumcision," as given by the apostle, is that they "rejoice in Christ Jesus": and his exhortation to the same people is, "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, Rejoice." (Phil. iii. 3; iv. 4.) Such joy is one of the best signs that the knowledge of the gospel has reached the heart, and that the life will be governed by it. It is quite true that feelings may easily be put in a wrong place, as in the first quest of peace they are almost sure to be. There is plenty of need for insisting on the truth that we are not justified by feeling but by faith. Nay, it is certain that the reception of the gospel with *immediate* joy is made by the Lord Himself a sign rather of stony-ground hearing than of a fruitful reception of the Word. (Matt. xiii. 20.) Plowing up must be before the seed can spring up aright; repentance before God will accompany "faith in our Lord Jesus Christ," where the latter is real and effective. This is all true; yet, on the other hand, it is no less true that the effect of the gospel—the "glad tidings"—is to produce gladness, and that the apostle prays for believers that "the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing." (Rom. xv. 13). The third character of the "kingdom of God" he gives, after "righteousness and peace," is "joy in the Holy Ghost" (ch. xiv. 17). "The fruit of the Spirit is" said to be "love, *joy*, peace" (Gal. v. 22.) "And not only so, but we joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation." (Rom. v. 11.)

territory was Helkath, and Hali, and Beten, and Achshaph, and Alammelech, and Amad, and Misheal; and

These passages, of course, define the happiness which they speak of, so that it is impossible to confound it with the mere play of animal spirits, or even the happiness derivable from the hope of salvation. One might have this last, and and yet in fact be unsaved. "*Joy in God through Christ*" is something perfectly distinct, and infinitely higher. As manifested in Asher, we shall find it carefully distinguished from everything that could be confounded with it, as well as in relation to other features of the divine life which find expression in these living pictures. Noticeable it is that Asher occupies the *fifth* place in this series, as in the wilderness he does in connection with Dan (Vol. I., pp. 384, 393, *n*). There the meaning cannot be mistaken that exercise of heart and conscience have essentially to do with the maintenance of a happiness worthy to be called that. Here we may well suppose the numerical place to repeat and emphasize the same thought. Asher's territory runs up to the extreme north, between Naphtali and the sea, connecting on the south with Zebulon and Manasseh. All its relations speak thus of trial, exercise, and practical life. If Judah keeps guard at one end of the land, Asher does at the other. The territory assigned it by God is a proportionately large one, but it fails, alas, to fill its limits.

The boundary is described in three divisions of very unequal size. The first begins in the middle of its sea-board line, descends to below Carmel, and then turns eastward, and soon northeast and north, until it reaches its northernmost point at Zidon. The second division is along the sea, southward again, only as far as Tyre; and the third runs down to where it began, somewhere in the neighborhood of Accho or Acre, although the names are little to be traced as yet, and Asher's cities are almost altogether irrecoverable. The history of Asher corresponds with this but too well: Asher has no great names to memorialize what was once a large and important tribe.

The first division of the boundary defines happiness in the various elements which make it up, or which it implies; and the first part of this, which has seven names, more strictly still defines it in itself, as we shall see better when we examine them in detail.

Helkath, "portion, share," is the first of these. *Halak*, from which it is derived, means, according to Wilson, "to divide into parts, *each receiving his portion;* to part, distribute, especially by lot." It implies, therefore, that God has, in respect of happiness, given all His people their portion, each his own. He has shut none out. He has not made it difficult of attainment, the prize of great ability or great effort, either. Faith to receive, giving God credit for what He has done, for what He has said, for what He *is*, is all that is on our part needed.

But though with Christ the secret of happiness is ours, and we have it freely, it has been wrought out for us with infinite pains and cost; and this is what—

Hali assures us of. It means "an ornament curiously wrought with great labor and pains" (Parkhurst), the verb from which it is derived meaning "to faint with labor, to labor even to faintness." He who wears such an ornament is seldom the one who fashioned it; and so with the jewel of which we speak, Christ has made it, at what personal cost and sacrifice, and made it ours forever: of this how natural and needful to be reminded here. So in the "wine that cheereth God and man," we find at His table the memorial of His precious blood. Next—

Beten, "belly," speaks of the inward realization. The craving of our souls has been met,—so met, that, out of that which by its imperious demands becomes the "god" of other men (Phil. iii. 19), the refreshing streams pour out for the need of others. (John vii. 38.) Here we are reminded that happiness is *within*, in the inmost parts,—no outside circumstances can produce it; and Christ must be for this received into the heart: we have but to drink, for the living water to flow out. It is not effort, but we must first ourselves be filled, that

it reached *Carmel westward, and Shihor-libnath, and turned toward the sun-rising to Beth-dagon; and it *x* 1 Kl. 18-19.

there may be a genuine overflow. Christ received into the heart, what can be wanting for abundant happiness? The lack of it is surely proof that there is not heart for Him, or else not faith to entertain Him.

Achshaph is a stranger name in this connection. We have had it before, at the beginning of the eleventh chapter, where the king of Achshaph is one of Jabin's confederates. There we understand it to mean "sorcery," the use of natural things endued by magical formulae or prayers with supernatural powers, to enchant and captivate. In Israel's hands these cities lost their significance for evil; of which we have had many an example. Thus we may apply the Achshaph here without real difficulty to the subject before us. Faith in the soul will indeed exert a transforming power upon the things around. When all that comes is seen in the light of Christ glorified and upon the Father's throne, it is of necessity transformed. "All these things are against me," said Jacob of old; but faith says "He maketh *all things* work together for good to them that love Him." That which may have been done by an enemy's hand becomes thus the fruit of unmistaking love. "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" was the Lord's own and unanswerable question with regard to what was the worst of all iniquity and the most mysterious of afflictions. The cross has lifted the veil of all other mysteries, and shown us everywhere One well-known Face. This is, according to the number here, our happiness as to the world through which we pass: it is in this way transformed by it.

The last three of these seven names give us now in a clear and pronounced way the secret of this happiness:—first,

Alammelech: "God is King." This is the Old Testament version of the apostle's "Rejoice in the Lord," where, of course, Christ is the Lord. But this is only a more pregnant and intelligible way of saying, "God is King." Not only is Christ God, and upon the throne of God, but also Christ it is who has manifested God to us, and given Him in our hearts the glorious throne which now He has. He who knows Christ, with him is the "shout of a king" (Num. xxiii. 21); and to know who fills the throne is happiness indeed. This brings with it also the spirit of obedience; and such joy has in it stability and safety. God and man are at one indeed.

Amad confirms this from the other side: it means "an eternal people." Brought to God, we are His forever: sin and all its effects are triumphed over, and Christ a man is the eternal link with men, a pledge never to be taken back, a bond never to be broken or unclasped. This is the necessary complement of Alammelech; and yet there is for present happiness one thing more; and this we find in—

Misheal, "feeling after God," which gives us the energy of soul in one before whom God is, and whose heart is won by Him, who on this account, and realizing his little knowledge, seeks for more; yea, presses on after that being with Him "face to face" which is the unimaginable joy before us all. The Psalms are full of this longing after God, which in the epistle to the Philippians takes for the apostle the shape of seeking to "win Christ and be found in Him," that Christ whom he had seen in glory, and the vision of whom had stamped itself upon his soul, and henceforth led him, "doing one thing." This is the Manasseh spirit, and Asher touches Manasseh very near to Misheal,—how near, no one can yet say. But who doubts the happiness of so great an attraction in an object not uncertain of attainment, but most certain to be attained? It is the happiness which is the power.

The second portion of the main division gives us but three names, which all mark connection with Manasseh, whose border must be in contact with Asher near this point, although we cannot trace it with any exactness. But the spiritual meaning is in evident accordance with the trend of the boundary. Manas-

reached to Zebulon, and the valley of Jiphtah-el, northward of Beth-emek and Neiel; and it went out to Cabul

seh is, of all the tribes, that which speaks most of progress, and the three names here all imply this.

"And it reached Carmel westward, and Shihor-libnath, and turned toward the sunrise to Beth-dagon."

Carmel, "vineyard of God," suggests the thought of concentration, the very spirit of Manasseh, read in the light of the epistle to the Philippians. For a vineyard is, above all, that which exemplifies the need of pruning, and it is from a word of this meaning that that for vineyard here is derived. To have fruit such as is sought, a vine needs the knife to be applied unsparingly: "every branch in me that beareth not fruit" the husbandman "taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he pruneth it, that it may bring forth more fruit:" the lesson of which is the need of concentration—of turning all our energies into that which has profit in it; spending none upon what is merely of no harm. Nor is this legalism or asceticism: it is, as we may learn from the connection here, what makes for happiness, as well as fruitfulness." What can be more productive of joy than the continual pursuit of that in which Christ finds His own, and and in which we find fellowship with Him?

Shihor-libnath means "diligent search after purity,"—a thing not needless for those to be reminded of who are most diligently seeking fruit. Alas, there will not rarely be the danger of "doing evil," in some modified way, "that good may come"; and the over-anxiety about results may make one misjudge seriously what is the mind of God. God's seed may be a long time buried before it springs up, and the shallower sowing springs up all the quicker. Results will indeed speak truly at the end; but then there must be faith to leave things to the end: and for that the word of God must test all ways and methods, and guide us as to our course in the meantime. Here it is indeed true that "he that believeth shall not make haste." (Isa. xxviii. 16.) What life, with all the glory of it, must seem so vain as Christ's life? The corn of wheat, according to His own saying, had to fall into the ground and die, that it might not abide alone. "Then I said, I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain":—this would decide for many the failure of it;—"but surely," He adds, "my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God. (Isa. xlix. 4.)

And is not this the meaning of the third thing here, that the border from this point "turns *toward the sunrise*, to Beth-dagon"? The sunrise is emphasized by the full expression for it being given, as is not generally the case; and Beth-dagon, as we have already seen, speaks of abundant fruitfulness. But to realize this the day of account must be kept in view, that is, the sunrise, the day of Christ's appearing. And in this way the three names here are very complete in meaning.

We now reach the boundary of Zebulon, and should be prepared to find that in this third stretch of the border of Asher the names speak of the "dwelling" with God and its results:—

"And it reached Zebulon, and the valley of Jiphtah-el, northward at Beth-emek and Neiel."

The theme of Zebulon we have become already acquainted with: it is plain that Asher must be closely connected with it. In God's presence is "fullness of joy." (Ps. xvi. 11.) To know it in whatever measure here must be the bright side of our life; and Asher would be terribly incomplete without the names that follow. The valley of Jiphtah-el we have also had in connection with Zebulon; and the breadth of its significance—"God openeth"—may well be taken in all its fullness. In God's presence His word is opened, and our understandings also, to understand the Word (Luke xxiv. 45); and who that is Christ's does not know the joy attendant upon this? The words following are remarkable and blessed in this connection: the boundary strikes the valley of Jiphtah-el at—

on the left, and Ebron, [Abdon ?] and Rehob, and Hammon, and Kanah, as far as great Zidon; and the border

Beth-emek, "the house of the depth"; and "the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him, God hath revealed unto us," says the apostle, "by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the *deep* things of God." (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.) What happiness to be made at home by the Spirit of God in the deep things of God! But we come also to infinities where man as man cannot go further. He cannot be God, or "as God." He must be limited by his finite nature, and thus—

Neiel, "the shutting of God," in contrast with Jiphtah-el, His "opening," comes as a wholesome warning, to heed which is not without its importance to our happiness. Important it is also to get the right *spiritual* location of this Neiel, if its location on the map cannot be given. To know where we are free to inquire reverently, and where to recognize the limit which must belong to us, is a point of great and needed wisdom. But the whole range of what *is* revealed is ours: "Secret things belong unto Jehovah our God; but things which are revealed belong unto us." (Deut. xxix. 29.) To remain in uncertainty where God has really spoken is a shame and dishonor to the grace that has met us; and the plea that we cannot know is but too often the vain plea of indifference and spiritual sloth. Neiel *is* on the boundary of Asher; but we need to take the pains to locate it right.

The fourth and concluding section of the main boundary carries us along the border of Naphtali, northward, as far as Zidon. Naphtali is not, however, mentioned, and has not, spiritually, the nearness to Asher that Zebulon has. This is quite evident; and yet the presence of Naphtali on the northeast border has its significance. There are six names:—

"And it went out to Cabul on the left hand, and Ebron [Abdon?] and Rehob, and Hammon, and Kanah, as far as great Zidon."

The border runs now to the left hand, that is, in a general northerly direction. The first place on the line is—

Cabul, which, taken in connection with the gift of it to Hiram at a later day, is said to mean "given as a pledge [of friendship]," or, better, "in discharge of debt." We have not yet to consider the history, and Cabul itself means simply "bound." It is a significant word at the beginning of the fourth section, which naturally speaks of the walk through the world, and the frank acceptance of it is of great moment in connection with the spiritual happiness which we have seen Asher to represent for us. The constraint of love and gratitude is a sweet yoke to bear; and a life so inspired is of necessity a happy life. Christ died for us, "that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him that died for them, and rose again." (2 Cor. v. 15.) Thus is the misery of self-bondage broken, and the moral life set right. We are freest when the moral obligation is most felt; and the constraint of love is motive which ensures happiness. And thus the proposed reading of—

Abdon for Ebron would seem to find strong support. Ebron, akin to Eber of the genealogy of Shem (Gen. xii.) and not to Hebron in Judah, means "passing over." Abdon means "bond-service." Twenty MSS. support the latter, which occurs also in chap. xxi. 30, and in 1 Chron. vi. 74, as one of the Levitical cities of Asher, Ebron occurring nowhere else. The difference between them is only that which our Lord calls a "tittle" (Mat. v. 18), a slight projection or shoulder which distinguishes the "d" in Hebrew from "r." The numerical place speaks strongly for Abdon, as is evident, as does the connection, so that we may provisionally at least accept it. Cabul is thus the recognition of the "bond"; Abdon, the taking up of the "service" it implies; while—

Rehob, "breadth" or "broad way," shows how the soul of the enfranchised saint finds not straitness but largeness in the path with God: these three words fit well, therefore, together.

turned to Ramah, and as far as the fortified city [y] Tyre; and the border turned to Hosah, and ended at the sea, | y 2 Sam. 5. 11, 12.

Hammon, "sunny," comes next, under the number of experience, in a similarly beautiful manner; for, whatever the circumstances of the way, the sky ought always to be clear; the heavens cannot fail us.

Kanah, "He has purchased," is the explanation of the whole series here; and it comes under the number which speaks of responsibility, or of God with man;—

Zidon, the end of this part of the line, adding to this the thought of "taking the prey," which is here, as its number indicates, victory over the power of evil. Thus the first division of the border ends.

The second division must not be judged of as to its importance by its length. It has but two names; but it is that which puts Christ before us in direct relation to our happiness:—

"And the border turned to Ramah, and to the fortified city Tyre."

Ramah we have had already, though another city, and in Benjamin; but we have only to transfer the meaning there to find how perfectly it suits in this case also. The meaning is "an elevated place," and points to the acceptance of Christ's work, and the exaltation of Him who had been in the place of humiliation for us. The only difference is that instead of being as there the second city of a second group, it is the *first* city, but still of a second group. This first place speaks of supremacy (as I think), which is His there; and thus indeed the happiness of one who realizes this is secured. It is exactly what the apostle exhorts to, "Rejoice in the *Lord*." (Phil. iv. 1.) If *He* is supreme, surely our blessing is secure. Yet even this is expanded for us in the next name—

Tyre, which means "rock," and to which is added that it is a "fortified city." This, under the number of salvation, reminds us of how Scripture connects these thoughts together. A risen Christ is indeed the "Rock of our salvation," fortified against any possibility of successful attack. How important are these two names among the cities of Asher, and how sufficient as thus joined together!

The third division, as naturally now, speaks of the Spirit and of the work in the soul:

"And the border turned to Hosah; and it ended at the sea by the region of Achzib, and Ummah, and Aphek, and Rehob."

Hosah means "trust," or "taking refuge," clearly corresponding to what was just now said of Christ as the rock of salvation. And we need to be reminded that while "He abideth faithful," faith, too, on our part must abide. We must avail ourselves of our privileges; we must make that our own which *is* our own. How marvelous a thing thus is faith! and what an enriching for the soul of the poor and empty one!

The border now ends at the sea, in the region of Achzib, three names being added here, which are generally taken as from different points, and not belonging to the boundary at all. Aphek, we are told, is the modern Afka a good way to the north. On the other hand, Ummah is supposed to be the modern Alma, not very far from Achzib, and the names recur so frequently as to make their identification often doubtful. It would be quite possible that, as with Zebulon, these three names should be added to the rest, to complete the number of Asher's cities, though there is against this that, after all, this list does not apparently complete them, as Accho (now Acre) properly belonged to Asher, as is plain from Judg. i. 31, although, as with Zidon, Tyre, and other places allotted to them, they failed to get possession. After all, it seems that our appeal must be to the spiritual meaning, which certainly governs all, and that we are left free to accept what explanation of the facts may be thus afforded us.

If the three cities are to be detached from what precedes them, they do not form part of the boundary at all, but must come in, like those of Zebulon, as a distinct fourth section. If they form part of the boundary, then they will belong

by the region of Achzib, and Ummah, and [x]Aphek, and Rehob: twenty-two cities and their villages. This was the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families, these cities and their villages.

[x] 1 Sam. 4. 1. 1 Ki. 20. 30.

f (32-39.) Naphtali: the overcomer.

(*f*) The sixth lot came forth for the children of [a]Naphtali,—for the children of Naphtali according to

[a] Num. 26. 48-50.

to the third; and their meaning will accord with this: they will speak of the work of the Spirit in some way.

Now Achzib we have already seen to do this. Among the cities of the low country of Judah we found one of this name; and read it as "a flow indeed," referring it to the Spirit of God, as the witness—coming in the second place—of Christ's ascension and glory. It comes exactly in the same place here, and must in consistency receive the same interpretation.

Ummah means "union"; and "he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit." (1 Cor. vi. 17.)

Then Aphek, which is Aphik in Judg. i. 31, though given as "strength" or "fortress,"—there is a monotonous rendering of various names in this way—may rather mean "channel": it is the bed of a stream, whether full or empty.

Rehob, again, we are acquainted with in Asher itself as "breadth," or "broad way."

Now these names put together yield a very consistent sense: for thus it is, as united to Christ by the Spirit, we become channels for what the Lord Himself calls "rivers of living water." (John vii. 38.) Surely this yields so simple and good a meaning that it will hardly be worth while to go further to find another. These names seem to justify their place very fully as part of the third division of the boundary,—all four facing the sea, where it comes to an end. Have we not here full ability to face the sea of trial with the abundant happiness of which Asher speaks? "We glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by His Spirit which He hath given us." Asher only goes beyond this to the outflow which the passage in Romans explains but does not openly point out. He fulfills, then, his name all through: let us remember that it is ours also, and challenge ourselves that we fulfill it; for if we will, such is God's grace toward us, we surely may.

The number of the cities, twenty-two, seems here to be too small. There seem twenty-three. Keil suggests, as the only possible explanation, that Neiel in the border may be the same as Neah in Zebulon, and belong to the latter. But may it not be possible that the two Rehobs are in fact the same? The territory of these cities seems to have been sometimes considerable, and the breadth of Asher's portion at this point quite contracted; while the four cities named together may not have been all exactly on the border, which was simply "by" that district. If this suggestion be true, the number twenty-two is exactly right.

(*f*) Naphtali follows Asher in the sixth place: "with divine wrestlings"—wrestlings nerved by God?—says Rachel at his birth, "have I wrestled with my sister, and have prevailed." Hence his name, Naphtali, "my wrestling," which, in the sixth place here, speaks clearly of the *overcomer*. Thus overcoming is the subject presented to us now.

In the case of Naphtali, the boundary is distinguished from the cities of his possession. In the boundary we have, first, what overcoming is; for to define is to bound, to limit. In the second division (the cities), we have presented the helps and hindrances to overcoming.

The boundary is itself divided into two parts, which both end at Jordan. They divide the subject into two parts, the first reminding us of the steadfast-

their families. And their border was from Heleph, from [b] Allon-zaananniim, and Adami-nekeb, and Jabneel, to Lakkum, and ended at the Jordan; and the border turned west to Aznoth-tabor, and went out from thence

[b] Jud. 4. 11.

ness which belongs to overcoming; the second, of the progress which is implied in it. "Steady progress," in a world like this, *means* "overcoming."

"And their border was from Heleph, from Allon-zaananniim and Adami-nekeb, and Jabniel, to Lakkum; and ended at the Jordan." This is the first half.

Heleph means "renewal," and this is the first element of steadfastness. In the strife from which Naphtali warns us we never can escape, the wear and tear incident to it makes it impossible to hold our own, except the constant waste is as constantly repaired. "The inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Cor. iv. 16), says the apostle. This drawing from divine strength is necessarily the first thing.

"From Allon-zaananniim," the "oak of ladings," the place where loads are put upon the beasts: hence it means, also, "removals"; but the primary thought seems to be all that is needed here. We have a double picture: the oak, which is a type of strength, a strength sustained by just such a process of renewal as we have had already before us; the loading of the beasts of burden, which day by day repeat their tasks and offer themselves to what is laid upon them. Just such daily loads, limited to our strength, and with intervals of relief, have we; and to take up this daily duty,—drudgery as it may seem, and as the figure suggests,—is indeed an essential part of overcoming. In Christian life there are no drones, but all are workers,—no sinecures, but plenty everywhere to do. Earnest, serious application to duty is that which (in the apprehension of God's precious grace) already puts within our grasp the strength alone sufficing. No triflers can be overcomers, and daily duty is a daily discipline and training needed for the conflict that is the lot of us all. Here where the adjusted burden is taken up, the oaks of God are grown indeed.

Adami-nekeb, "the stigma of man," is an accompaniment we shall not miss, if duty have for us the right Christian character. They were the "marks of the Lord Jesus" that Paul bore in his body (Gal. vi. 17) from a world which had rejected Christ. Will any overcomer be without them? Is it not part of the overcoming, in faith to accept our place and portion with Him here, who has given us these with Him in a place where His name has its rightful honor? Without Adami-nekeb there could surely be no prevailing Naphtali at all.

Jabniel, "edification of God," then shows us the other side: in weakness we find how God can build up the soul; for Jabniel comes under the number of weakness. God can surely not fail more than the world in showing His thoughts as to His beloved Son: while beyond the present trial and weakness faith sees the things that are invisible, and looks on—

Lakkum, "to resurrection." "We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you." (2 Cor. iv. 13, 14.) The briefest reference to the place of this quotation will show how perfectly the names before us keep in the track of the apostle there. The spirit of the overcomer is very clearly, if briefly, expressed. The fifth number here is that which speaks of recompense, while under the sixth the border ends at Jordan, death being the limit of the struggle Naphtali pictures, and already triumphed over by divine grace.

We have now the second and concluding portion:—

"And the border turned westward unto Aznoth-tabor, and went out from thence unto Hukkok; and reached unto Zebulon on the south, and reached Asher on the west, and Judah of Jordan toward the sunrising."

Aznoth-tabor means "ears of purpose,"—hearing that has purpose in it: if

> to Hukkok, and reached to Zebulon on the south, and reached to Asher on the west, and to Judah upon Jordan toward the sunrising. And the fortified cities were Ziddim, Zer, and Hammath, Rakkath, and Chinnereth,

Job could speak of "making covenant with his eyes" (chap. xxxi. 1), a covenant with the ears is no less to be desired. "Take heed *what* ye hear," and "take heed *how* ye hear," are both exhortations from the Lord Himself. (Mark iv. 24; Luke viii. 18.) We are not to be open to all influences, but to be like sensitive plants, recoiling from the contact with evil. An unwalled town is easy of occupation, and a continued exposure to pestilence saps the power of resistance. The company we choose assimilates us to itself, and we are in a world where the "prince of the power of the air" is he who "worketh in the children of disobedience." (Eph. ii. 2). How necessary, then, to be at all times, and in all points, controlled by purpose! And this surely leads to—

Hukkok, a "well defined" path, clear cut and straight, to the point it aims at. "I have set the Lord always before me," is that which secures it from deviation and inconsistency. This path connects with Zebulon, "consecration," leads to Asher, "happiness," and finds Judah, "praise," at Jordan,—traveling with the dawn in view, "toward the sunrise." The uncertainty as to this Judah, which perplexes commentators, is, for our purpose, quite unnecessary to be removed, and has no practical existence as a difficulty: the moral lesson is the same. Good progress is there all along this boundary, and triumph all the way.

We now come to the cities, nineteen as they are numbered, sixteen in fact, except some of those upon the boundary are to be reckoned in. The sharp division between the two is against this, as the opposite of this, in the case of Zebulon, tells the other way for it. I know no way to settle this difficulty, the manuscripts and versions being in agreement here. The names seem to speak with less than their usual decisiveness, and it would be easy to imagine the addition of others in certain places without disordering the arrangement of those that we find. Yet it is hard to believe in an absolute loss of this kind, and more reasonable to suppose that the number should be changed.

The cities speak, as already said, of the helps and hindrances to overcoming; yet it is a happy thing to know that hindrances of an external kind may become even helps where there is decision of soul in meeting them. Every difficulty overcome gives fresh assurance for the future, and the wisdom and strength that grow out of experience. The hardiness of the mountaineer has its spiritual counterpart.

The absence of the conjunction, as in other cases, suggests four smaller divisions, one of which again, by its number (ten), would imply another. The *meaning* of ten undoubtedly implies its factors to be five and two; but that it does not follow that it must be so divided is evident by the division of the ten commandments into 4 and 6. We take it here, however, as 5 + 5; and the names will stand, therefore, thus:—

1. Ziddim.
2. Zer and Hammath.
3. { *1.* Rakkath, *2.* Chinnereth, *3.* Adamah, *4.* Ramah, *5.* Hazor; } { *1.* Kedesh, *2.* Edrei, *3.* En-hazor, *4.* Iron, *5.* Migdal-el. }
4. Horem, and Beth-anath, and Beth-shemesh.

Ziddim stands by itself at the head of the list, and means "lying in wait." It might well be the fourth in a series, and allow the three names which may be missing to come before it. As a first, it is indeed hard to characterize it, though, as "the *wiles* of the devil" are what the apostle bids us "stand against" (Eph. vi.), and for which he would have us "put on the whole armor of God," we

and Adamah, and Ramah, and [c]Hazor, and Kedesh, and Edrei, and En-hazor, and Iron, and Migdal-el, Ho- [c] ch. 11. 1, 10, 11. Jud. 4. 2.

might say that "lying in wait" is the governing thought in that which follows here. It would naturally be a prominent one, inasmuch as Satan is the great adversary, and he always prefers to fight under cover. Deceit and sudden surprises are his tactics: and by these he gains but too frequent advantage.

Zer and Hammath come together in the next place, and are in some respects contrasts. Zer means "strait," "adversity"; Hammath, "heat of the sun," prosperity: both seem, as we can easily understand, adverse really; and the latter often more so than the former: the sun may smite.

The third section is one more difficult to read: it is divided into two parts, and speaks, as it seems to me, of *realization*. Conflict is that by which many truths, perhaps hard for us to learn in the same degree apart from it, are impressed upon us. The two parts here give us, first, realizations as to ourselves with reference to God as *Creator;* second, with reference to God as *Saviour*. These are plainly the two great spheres of relationship. Both series are stamped with the number five, which is that of relationship between God and man.

First of the first five, Rakkath, "emptiness," "vanity." It is the fundamental lesson of all as to man.

Next, Chinnereth, which means "harp," suggests the music of which he may be the instrument, under the divine hand. The harp was used in Israel as the expression of joy and praise, not of lamentation; and this it is for which God made man. Among the Greeks, however, the same word essentially seems to have been used for "lamentation"; and man, yielding himself to other hands than the divine, has fulfilled abundantly this character. The number here may emphasize this contrast, simple to us indeed, and yet transcendantly important. Feeble as man is, He who chooseth the weak things of the world to glorify Himself with, will be at no loss to know how to make him a witness to Himself.

In the third place, Adamah, "ground," carries on the thought. Man is Adam, from *adamah*, "dust from the ground;" and in it every element of all flesh (as that) is found. God has to add to it a higher principle to make it such, and lift it thereby into a higher sphere. Instead of mere chemistry, it is now permeated by vitality, and displays powers wholly foreign to it before. Thus, as in man God has taken up the dust of the earth to raise it above itself and lift it into another sphere, so with man himself, what he is in the old creation is but the shadow of what he shall be in the new creation. The dust of the ground is, as exalted in man, a type and prophecy of man himself.

Ramah, an "elevated place," under the number of "weakness," which governs it (as the numbers govern throughout what they are connected with), gives us, as we might suppose, a very different line of thought. Here the elevation of what still retains the frailty of its origin, sufficiently points the lesson. "Man being in honor, abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish," says the psalmist. (Ps. xlix.) God uses this exaltation to point the lesson, uses it to abase pride; not for destruction, but that the creature may learn what is so needful for him. Let him accept it only, and he shall find strength: "to them that have no might He increaseth strength."

Thus Hazor, a familiar word to us, "inclosure," comes in the fifth place, where we find man with God once more. The arms of God are about this feeble creature. There is providential care, the "hedge" about Job, of which Satan so complains,—of which Eden itself was the type at first, and of which the memory survives as a witness to us, a witness for One who abides the same, however much His creature may have wandered from Him. Hazor is indeed not Eden, and yet God is none the less near; and here the first pentad ends, the second coming to re-enforce the teaching of creation with the teaching of redemption, that God may be fully known.

First of the second five, we have Kedesh, "sanctuary." At the southern

rem, and Beth-anath, and Beth-shemesh: nineteen cities and their villages. This was the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Naphtali, according to their families, these cities and their villages.

g (40:–48.) Dan the "perfect man."

(*g*) The seventh lot came forth for the tribe of the children of [d] Dan according to their families. And the

[d] Num. 26. 42, 43.

border of Israel we had Kadesh-barnea, the "sanctuary of the wanderer"; here we have Kedesh-naphtali, the "sanctuary of the *struggler*." It is akin, evidently, to Hazor, which we have just had, and in this redemption series implies the rest with which here we begin. Here are enfolding arms that wrap us round, dearer than all providences, however wonderful; and which *are* a "sanctuary,"—holy, and constraining to holiness.

Where our refuge is, there is also, as we know so well, entertainment: Edrei, "plenty of pasture," follows Kedesh, and we are at once reminded of a Shepherd's care. Then we have—

En-hazor, the "spring of inclosure," which in the third place we can have no difficulty in recognizing. Our pastures know no drought; our inclosure has, beyond Eden, its plenteous streams.

In the fourth place, Iron, "fearing," speaks of that which grace, beyond nature or the terrors of law, awakens in the creature brought thus nigh to God. How can it be otherwise? But this does not put at a distance, or make us desire distance: it is simply the creature conscious of creaturehood, as where else should it be so conscious? and which is its safeguard. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom": for God is kept in His place, and man in his; and this is the simple key to true understanding.

In the fifth place, then, we have Migdal-el, "a tower of strength," where El, "strength," is also "God": for, indeed, is there any strength apart from Him? Thus the second series, and the third division of Naphtali's cities, end.

The fourth division has but three names, and these speak, as commonly with the number, of practical walk. Here, first, as implying whole-heartedness, Horem, akin to Hormah, means "devoting to God," and that in general of what could only glorify Him in its destruction. The idols of the land were thus to be unsparingly destroyed by Israel; and there are idols of the heart as evil in God's sight which a true-hearted following of Him will doom no less. The names that follow are read without difficulty, as divine approval of this fidelity to Him:—

Beth-anath, the "house of response," and—

Beth-shemesh, the "house of the sun": neither of them needing interpretation, surely. Here Naphtali's cities end.

(*g*) Now, seventh and last of these tribes (for Levi comes apart, and is not numbered with them), Dan comes, in his own history almost entirely in contrast with what he stands for here. He stands for the spirit of rule,—of judgment in this sense,—which must necessarily begin with *self*-rule, self-judgment. His history, even as he appears in Samson in the next book, is but the expression of the utter want of it. But it is not the history with which we have now to do. We have now God's ideal; the departure from it will be told out in its own place.

Dan's original portion is in the south part of the land, upon the sea-coast, between Ephraim and Judah, some of whose cities come into his possession, and with both of whom he is spiritually connected, as we have already seen. On the east his border is on Benjamin; and the meaning underlies and interprets, as elsewhere, the physical fact. All this has been already briefly shown, and there is nothing that invites repetition in this place. The boundary is not given again, but only the cities: not, therefore, the definition of what he represents, but the contents, the *range* of the "judgment" of which he speaks; and this is broken into two parts, entirely separate, and unequal. For Dan, incompetent to take possession of much of his original allotment, lays hold of Leshem, or

territory of their inheritance was [e]Zoreah, and Eshtaol, and Ir-shemesh, and Shaalabbin, [Shaalbim] and [f]Aja-

[e] Jud. 13.25. Jud. 16.31.
[f] ch. 10. 12. 1 Sa. 14. 31.

Laish, in the north, and to it the name of the tribe (or of the father of the tribe) is given. Leshem becomes Dan, and the whole tribe seems identified with this its northern seat, and to put on the northern character. (See Vol. I., pp. 384, 392, *n.*) But this again is history; though here also we find Dan coming after the other northern tribes, as Asher and Naphtali.

Dan comes in the seventh place, as implying spiritual perfection. For the service of rule there must be self-government, and of him who offends not in word James says, "the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." (Chap. iii. 2.) Self-government implies the application of truth to the whole man; and thus we see why Dan follows Naphtali. No wonder, too, that the history should so little rise to the ideal, and that even comparatively the failure here should be so great. Not that there is any excuse to be found in this: for the power that man has not is to be found with God.

The cities of Dan's original allotment illustrate "self-government." They are not divided for us by any indication in the text, but are eighteen in number, which would easily divide as three equal series of six each, the number of "mastery" being thus upon the whole: and this is in perfect keeping with the spiritual meaning. For self-government, self-knowledge is a first necessity, knowledge of ourselves being also the knowledge of man everywhere, of the world to which naturally we belong. Thus the first section gives the moral identification of the world in the light of God, the truth convicting and giving power over it. Here, first, we find the names of two of Judah's cities already known to us, although in reverse order to that in which they appear there; in both places, of course, exactly right.

First, Zoreah (which in the common version is given also as Zorah and Zareah), the Hebrew word for "hornet," named from its virulent "stroke," and almost identical with that for leprosy, speaks with sufficient plainness of where all self-knowledge must begin, that plague which is "deeper than the skin," more inveterate and wide-reaching than poison in the blood—the sin that is inbred within us, as leprosy often is.

The second, Eshtaol, "strong woman," comes as the reminder of this. The number is that of succession and dependence (vol. i., p. 321, *n*), and Eve, in her assertion of strength for independence, shows herself, clearly enough, the mother of us all. The Nazarite character in which the man is taught to assume the long hair of woman, is the spiritual judgment of this sin; and Samson, the Danite judge of Israel, is a Nazarite.

But the world goes on merrily enough, heedless as it is helpless really: Ir-shemesh, "the city of the sun," shows it to us in its own way of recovery from the fall. Ir gets its name, according to Parkhurst, from the stir and bustle of the city, which the sun produces, and which dies, too, with the sun. So the world maintains itself with natural things, the goods of the Father's house, not caring that it is far from Him, or indeed glad to be that, and seeking to banish the thought of the night that must be. Poor "city of the sun"! how well the term characterizes it, in its brightness and its brevity, its ephemeral glitter, ignorant and careless of another brighter and eternal glory! One of the phrases of Ecclesiastes, the world's photograph, is a key to the language here—"*under the sun*"!

Shaalabbin, or Shaalbim,—"the MSS.," says Groves, "preponderate in favor of Shaalbim, in which form it is found in two other passages" (Judg. i. 35; 1 Ki. iv. 9),—gives us, under the number of testimony, the truth about it—"*hollow-hearted.*" How willingly men are hypocrites in this respect, while they deceive no one, and least of all themselves!

Ajalon, in the fifth place, speaks of relationship to God, responsibility and recompense; and here the "hart" can only be the figure of timidity and apprehensiveness. That it is used in a good application elsewhere does not in the

lon, and Jethlah, and Elon, and Timnathah, and [g] Ekron, and Eltekeh, and [h] Gibbethon, and Baalath, and

[g] 1 Sa. 5. 10.
[h] 1 Ki. 15. 27.

least prohibit, in a series like the present, one of a different character. This opposite use of the same figure is common enough in Scripture.

Jethlah, "he hangs," concludes as with a cry of pain this first series. It is the spiritual conclusion, for faith characterizing the world, and sealing man's condemnation. "He that hangeth upon a tree is accursed of God"; and the cross of Christ, while faith sees in it the curse taken and removed, shows fully what man is under, what he who believeth not the Son abideth under. Yet it is faith's victory over the world, and may well occupy therefore the place it does: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal. vi. 14.)

Thus the first series ends, the second coming now in contrast with it, a contrast to which the last name naturally leads the way. But the last name on this series is also characteristic, as it is that to which the preceding ones work on. Here Baalath, "mistress," is near indeed to "mastery." It is the competency given by redemption for self-government that is the subject of this series. The first name here,—

Elon, a name of the oak, or one of the oaks, of Palestine, signifies the "strong." The oak is everywhere a familiar type of strength. It is so near, also, to one of the names of God (El), as to suggest clearly where alone strength is found, as the number under which it appears also is that of supremacy, and which speaks in an eminent way of Him. To Him all power belongs, and the secret of having it is simply in the faith that lays hold of Him for it; and finds from Him—

Timnathah, "her measured portion." This does not imply, of course, any *scant* measure, but the reverse. *He* measures who knows absolutely our need, and who has full resources as well as love wherewith to meet it. This, then, is complete assurance that there shall be no lack. For our appointed path there can be none; and faith finds its portion along with all needful discipline, and not without difficulties which cast us continually on Himself, and make Him ever more known, ever dearer. How different from the independence of the world!

As to sin in us, the power of it is only thus met, and—

Ekron, "eradication," in the sense in which we have considered it before (page 92), becomes a possibility. Sin is judged, not allowed, does not overpower us. This is self-judgment, self-government, in practical attainment, and the name is central among Dan's cities: it is the heart of what they speak of. Its number in the smaller series is that of "realization."

Eltekeh, "God the object of fear," in the fourth place, that of the creature, shows the proper attitude of such toward the Creator, which the knowledge of grace confirms, not sets aside. "There is forgiveness with Thee," says the psalmist, "that thou mayest be feared." (Ps. cxxx. 4.) Such fear is the invariable accompaniment of nearness to God: he that knows it not has not been near Him.

Gibbethon, "height," stands in the fifth place, where relation to God is expressed. The place that He has given us in Christ makes no interpretation needed. Lastly—

Baalath, "mistress," ends the series in perfect harmony with its character, and the sixth place, in which we find it.

The third series shows us the fruit which is the outcome of this; and here now the first word is—

Jehud, "praise." There is no possibility of power without this, as we have abundantly seen from Jacob's prophecy as to his fourth son onwards. And it is well to remember that in this word "confession" is the form it takes. Confession of what He is is His sufficient praise. With praise in the heart comes activity, of which—

Jehud, and Bene-berak, and Gath-rimmon, and Mejarkon, and Rakkon, with the border opposite [1]Japho.

And the territory of the children of Dan extended beyond these. And the children of Dan went up

[1] 2 Chron. 2. 16. Ezr. 3. 7. Jon. 1. 3. Acts 9. 36.

Bene-berak, "sons of lightning," naturally speaks: no half-hearted or hesitating service, surely; but prompt, energetic, decisive. No dull moderation of speech is sufficient to express the enthusiastic devotedness which becomes the servants of the Most High God, and the followers of Him who was the perfect Servant. Men may think such speech as this extravagant; but it is not so: "a son of lightning" means, in the language of a Hebrew, one taught of this to do the will of God as the elements of Nature do it, which curb and humble the pride of man with the assurance of what is high above it: "who hath resisted His will?"

In the third place we have —

Gath-rimmon, "the wine-press of the pomegranate," a figure not difficult to understand. If the pomegranate speak of the gospel of God, the *wine* of the pomegranate is the reviving power of the Word, its sweet, refreshing, stimulating influence, in which, however, there is no excess. The soul of the believer, is it not just that which by meditation and communion with God becomes the wine-press of His Word? And Dan in his "rule," whether of himself or others, needs ever this Word to be in him in its strength. Without it there can be no ability to serve aright, with promptitude and decision such as the last word expressed.

Hence now, too, and in this way only, can we reach—

Mejarkon, or Mei-hajarkon, "waters of greenness, verdure," not waters themselves green, as the commentators mostly suppose, but which sustain greenness. Thus the connection with what has gone before is plain, while the figure of necessity changes. The connection is much as between the Lord's words to the woman of Sychar, and those to the people at the feast of tabernacles. To the one he speaks of "living water springing up" within the believer; to the others of "rivers of living water" flowing forth out of the belly — the inward parts. (John iv. 14; vii. 38.) The last is blessing for others, which naturally follows blessing for one's self. Here, too, Dan's service of rule is in as manifest relationship as the waters at Beer with the "ruler's staff" with which they were digged. (Num. xxi. 18.)

What follows is more difficult. The next word, "Rakkon," or, more exactly, Ha-Rakkon, has been supposed by Grove (in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible) to be a mere error, inexactly repeating the previous Ha-jarkon. The Septuagint omits it, but is itself so inexact in all this part as to be of no real authority if taken alone. Then the change of language "with the border opposite Japho": does this stand in a sixth, or as part of the fifth division? Does it mean that Dan's border *ends* opposite Japho (Joppa), or does "border" stand as sometimes for "region" or "territory"?

The last question seems as if it must be answered affirmatively, since there is no mention of a border elsewhere in Dan, and the *end* of a border has through all this part one form of expression, literally the "going out"; the spiritual interpretation also confirms the meaning of "territory," or "region."

Next Japho means, as I take it, "what is fair (beautiful) to Him," and would naturally come into a fifth place, not a fourth or sixth; while the clause in which it is found is surely a dependent, not an independent, one. Thus Rakkon would be required before it, and the omission in the Septuagint be an error, not an emendation. Thus, although there are still six *names* in this third section of Dan's cities, there are but five divisions.

Putting these names together, now, we shall find in them a contrast which is in perfect harmony. Rakkon means "leanness," and the sentence would read as "leanness, along with that which is before (or has respect to) what is fair to

against [j]Leshem, and fought against it, and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and took possession of it, and dwelt in it, and called Leshem Dan, after the name of Dan their father. This was the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families, these cities and their villages. [j] Jud. 18. 29.

[h] (49-51.) Joshua: Christ's portion.

(*h*) And they ended dividing the land for inheritance according to its borders. And the children of Israel gave to [k]Joshua the son of Nun an inheritance among them: according to the word of Jehovah they gave him the city that he asked, Timnath-serah in the hill-country of Ephraim; and he built the city and dwelt in it. [k] *cf.* Eph. 1. 18.

The Levitical garrison.

These were the inheritances that Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun, and the chief fathers of the

Him." That is, the soul, while conscious of its nothingness, seeks that which is pleasing in the sight of God.

These are the cities of Dan's original portion. Beyond these, however, they had another territory, which, in fact, their own inability to lay hold of what God had given them, compelled them to seek. The failure is, however, not related here, but in the book of Judges. Here we have only the fact of the conquest of Leshem (in Judges called Laish) in the north of the land. They call it Dan, as if in it, in some way more than elsewhere, the character of the tribe was expressed; and from its possession here, we find it, in fact, put along with the northern tribes in this enumeration.

But of what does this solitary city in the north speak? There is but one name, in fact, to add anything to what we have had before, and that name is one which is displaced and passes away before the later one with which we are familiar. Dan, as the name of true rule, is "judgment"; and this is but "discernment," the realizing of the nature of things and pronouncing accordingly. What, then, is the Canaanite city which passes away before it? It is Leshem, "glitter," the vain show of ambitious authority with which self-seeking man is charmed, the tinsel of greatness, which the glory of Christ has shamed forever for him who knows it. "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors; but ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth." (Luke xxii. 25–27.)

True rule is ever service, putting things in their place and giving them their proper meaning: the rod is the shepherd's rod, guided by love and beneficent; for which there must be reality—things taken for what they are. But this rule cannot be under the Zidonians, the takers of prey; the true Dan, the Judge of men, must come, and the world fall under Him, up to the last careless and secure as with the Canaanites in this case. "The day of the Lord shall come as a thief in the night." "As in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away, so shall the coming of the Son of man be." (Matt. xxiv. 38, 39.) Judgment thus must clear the scene, that true rule may be established: in Christ alone will it be seen in its perfection.

(*h.*) The assignment of an inheritance to Joshua closes the history of these apportionments. The word of Jehovah assigns to him the city that he asks, namely, Timnath-serah, in the hill-country of Ephraim. Timnath-serah means simply "an abundant portion." Who can say what Christ's portion is now —for of this the division at this time speaks,—as "anointed with the oil of

tribes of the children of Israel, divided by lot in Shiloh before Jehovah, at the entrance of the tent of meeting. And they ended the apportionment of the land.

(XX., XXI.)

a (xx.) The cities of refuge: grace preservative.

6. (*a*) And Jehovah spake unto Joshua, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Assign you the [l]cities of refuge of which I spake unto you by the hand of Moses, that the slayer may flee thither who smiteth a person mortally without intent, unwittingly; and they shall be a refuge for you from the avenger of blood. And he shall flee unto one of these cities, and stand at the entrance of the gate of the city, and declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city; and they shall take him unto them into the city, and give him a place to dwell among them. And if the avenger of blood pursue after him, they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hand: because he smote his neighbor unwittingly, and hated him not previously. And he shall dwell in that city, having stood before the assembly for judgment, until the death of the high-priest that may be at that time: then shall the slayer return, and come unto his own city, and to his house,—to the city whence he had fled.

[l] Ex. 21. 13. Nu. 35. 11. Dt. 19. 2. 9. *cf.* Heb. 6. 18.

And they sanctified [m]Kedesh in Galilee, in the hill-

[m] Jud. 4. 6.

gladness above" his "fellows?" That of Joshua is spoken of as but a barren inheritance; but how could anything be added to Him to whom already all things belong? It is satisfaction given to His heart that alone could recompense Him; and this He has, though as yet but the earnest of that which will be.

Yet the victory on His part is gained once for all; and He has entered into heaven itself, our Representative and Forerunner. This is the beginning of that which abides eternally; and this the number of the section marks.

(vi.) The ordinance of the cities of refuge, and the assignment of the Levitical cities evidently belong to one section. The cities of refuge formed a part of those given to the Levites, and were connected, as much in spiritual meaning as they were in fact, with Levite ministry. In both we find a provision for the control of sin: the Levitical cities thus scattered through the land being like a garrison of the Lord to maintain the people in the knowledge and fear of Him.

(*a*) There are, however, thus two quite distinct parts: the ordinance of the cities of refuge, and how it was carried out, being the first part; the assignment of the Levitical cities coming in the second. The order here is not hard to read, the cities of refuge being indeed the expression of the grace of God to Israel themselves, as we have seen, while applying to us also; the Levitical cities being for the maintenance of ministry, which would have been their salvation as a nation, had they hearkened to it, and had not the ministry itself betrayed its trust.

The law of Numbers xxxv. is with more brevity repeated here. We must refer to the notes upon the previous passage for the spiritual application. We have then the cities appointed in Canaan, with the enumeration of those beyond Jordan also, which have been already before us (see the notes on Deut. iv. 41–43). Comparing them together, we shall find, in the first series, the divine side of salvation, the display of God in it; in the second series, the human side, the salvation itself. Of the three Canaan cities we have —

First, "Kedesh in Galilee, in the hill-country of Naphtali." Galilee means "circle," or "circuit,"—reminding us of Eglon, and of Gilgal, to both of which

country of Naphtali, and [n] Shechem in the hill-country of Ephraim, and Kirjath-Arba, that is, [o] Hebron, in the hill-country of Judah. And beyond the Jordan of Jericho, toward the [sun]rise, they assigned [p] Bezer in the wilderness, in the tableland, out of the tribe of Reuben, and [q] Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and [r] Golan in Bashan of the tribe of Manasseh. These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them, that he who smiteth any one mortally without intent might flee thither, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood until he stood before the assembly.

b (xxi.) The designation of the Levitical cities.

(*b*) And the heads of the fathers of the Levites drew near unto Eleazar the priest and unto Joshua the son of Nun, and unto the heads of the fathers of the tribes

n Gen. 33. 18. ch. 24. 1. Jud. 9. 1, etc. 1 Ki. 12. 1. Ps. 60. 6.

o Gen. 13. 18. Nu. 13. 22. 2 Sam. 2. 1, etc.

p De. 4. 43.

q 1 Kings 22. 3, 4, 6. 2 Kings 9. 1, 4, 14.

r Deu. 4. 43.

it is near akin. The wheel of God's government, as we have seen in the case of Eglon (page 62), is for the abasement of man, writing vanity upon him, but for his ultimate blessing when he accepts what is the stamp upon and judgment of his sin. Thus Galilee speaks of God's ways with man to bring him to repentance; and Kedesh-Naphtali, the "sanctuary of the struggler," as found in Galilee, shows how God has met the restlessness of heart which He Himself has awakened, with a refuge and rest in which man is still and forever abased, and He is glorified. The prodigal's return to his Father is the fruit of a coming to himself, which the exhaustion of his own resources, the famine in the far-off land, the misery of hunger sought to be satisfied with swine's food, have all combined to bring about. But in these things also the Shepherd has been already seeking the sheep, and the Father devising means whereby His banished may be restored to Him. Man is blessed, but blessed in being humbled; and God's righteousness is owned in man's confession of unrighteousness.

The second city is "Shechem, in the hill-country of Ephraim." Here the names are simple enough, and have been again and again before us. Shechem is "shoulder," that which bears the burden, and is the easily read type of "service." On each side of it stood mounts Ebal and Gerizim, whence the curses and blessings of the law were published after Israel entered into the land. Here, therefore, the city of refuge speaks of Christ as the servant of God and doing His will, hearkening to the voice of the law, and even (though Himself perfect) to the curses for the breach of it: magnifying and making it honorable by His submission to a penalty which others had incurred. Thus again God was glorified in the cross, and the divine side of His work appears.

Thirdly, "Kirjath-arba, that is, Hebron in the hill-country of Judah," presents "communion" to us in a new and striking form. It is in this aspect, and in the third place among these cities, Christ, as the One in whom "all the fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily," and in whom thus

"All the mind in heaven is one,"

as we see it in the three parables of the fifteenth of Luke. That Kirjath-arba, the Anakite name of the city before Israel had it, and named from their great man Arba, should be still mentioned here, may be intended to point the contrast with this other Man, whose flesh was the tabernacle of Deity.

The second series of refuge-cities on the other side of Jordan plainly insist, as has been already said, upon the salvation side of the same story. The meanings will be found elsewhere. (Vol. I., p. 540–541, *n.*)

(*b*) The Levitical cities are next assigned by lot, as the Lord had commanded. We have first, separately, the mention of the respective tribes, out of which the different families of Levi received their portions, and then the enumeration of the cities in full. The priestly family receives thirteen cities out of Judah,

of the children of Israel, and spake unto them in Shiloh in the land of Canaan, saying, Jehovah commanded by the hand of Moses to give us [s]cities to dwell in, and pasturage for our cattle. And the children of Israel gave unto the Levites out of their inheritance, according to the word of Jehovah, these cities and their pasturage.

[s] Num.35.2. 1 Chron. 6. 54, etc.

And the lot came forth for the families of the [t]Kohathites:—and the children of Aaron the priest, of the Levites, had by lot out of the tribe of Judah, and out of the tribe of Simeon, and out of the tribe of Benjamin thirteen cities. And the rest of the children of Kohath had by lot out of the families of the tribe of Ephraim, and out of the tribe of Dan, and out of the half tribe of Manasseh, ten cities. And the children of [u]Gershon had by lot out of the families of the tribe of Issachar, and out of the tribe of Asher, and out of the tribe of Naphtali, and out of the half tribe of Manasseh in Bashan, thirteen cities. The children of [v]Merari by their families had out of the tribe of Reuben, and out of the tribe of Gad, and out of the tribe of Zebulon, twelve cities. [w]And the children of Israel gave by lot unto the Levites these cities and their pasturage, as Jehovah had commanded by the hand of Moses.

[t] Num. 4. 4.

[u] Nu. 4. 24.

[v] Num.4.31.

[w] Lev. 25. 32.

And they gave out of the tribe of the children of Judah, and out of the tribe of the children of Simeon,

Simeon, and Benjamin; and this is easy to understand, except as to the number. For the priests look Godward, as ministry, typified in the order of Levites, does manward; and these tribes (though with a certain difference as to Benjamin, which we shall find recognized in its place) do the same. The other Kohathites, typifying objective ministry, receive ten cities out of Ephraim, Dan, and half Manasseh, the reason for which as to the first and the last is evident; while Dan, too, subjective as the two others, requires the Kohathite ministry to maintain ability for self-judgment. Gershon, the subjective ministry, has thirteen cities in Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and half Manasseh: for practical walk, happiness, overcoming, need the lesson of strangership that he can teach them, while he has only to confirm in it the other and eastern half of Manasseh. Merari, finally, has his twelve cities out of Reuben, Gad, and Zebulon, to check the excess of individuality in all of them, and lead them into the apprehension of those relationships in which this finds its proper sphere and complement.

The cities are now enumerated according to these four divisions of the Levites, which are strictly three: the priestly, and the simple Kohathite, the Gershonite, and the Merarite.

First, the children of Aaron; and here the cities out of Judah and Simeon are distinguished from those out of Benjamin, for a reason which is easily to be discovered. Judah, as exemplifying worship, leads Simeon, that is, communion; and the two must not be separated. Benjamin, though holding fast to Judah also, yet extends toward Ephraim. Thus while the two former tribes furnish nine cities to the priests (the usual 3 x 3, the divine number emphasized), the number of Benjamin's cities is four, that of the creature. We shall see more as to this directly.

The cities of Judah and Simeon stand, then, as follows:—

1. { *1.* Hebron, *2.* Libnah, *3.* Jattir;
2. { *1.* Eshtemoa, *2.* Holon, *3.* Debir;
3. { *1.* Ain (or Ashan), *2.* Juttah, *3.* Beth-shemesh.

these cities which are mentioned by name, which the children of Aaron, of the families of the Kohathites, of the children of Levi had,—for theirs was the first lot. And they gave them the city of Arba the father of Anak, which is [x]Hebron in the hill-country of Judah, and its pasturage round about; and the fields of the city and the villages thereof gave they to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for his possession. And they gave to the children of Aaron the priest Hebron and her pasturage to be a city of refuge for the slayer; and [y]Libnah and her pasturage; and Jattir and her pasturage; and Eshtemoa and her pasturage; and Holon and her pasturage; and Debir and her pasturage; and Ain and her

x ch. 14. 14.

y ch. 15. 42.

The whole series is headed by a city of refuge, specially emphasized, as it would seem, by the repetition, first, as the city of Arba, the father of Anak, and then as the refuge for the manslayer. In the latter character we have just seen its meaning, where also it is called Kirjath-arba. A divine Man has taken the place of him who exemplifies the pride and independence of man's heart as fallen; and in Him the whole counsel of God is found. Hebron, as expressing thus the communion of the whole Godhead, naturally fills the first place in the series. How blessed and wonderful a portion for the priests of God!

The second name, Libnah, "whiteness," we have had like Hebron several times already. Where it first comes before us as a city taken by Joshua, it represents, as we have seen, separation from evil (page 66). Where we find it again, among Judah's cities in the lowland, it still retains this meaning, but applies to Christ entering into the sanctuary, clad in the white linen garment of the priest (page 106). Here it speaks similarly of the absolute purity of the Mediator, "the Man, Christ Jesus."

But there is in Him what no one can utter, the glory of Him who "dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see"; and this we have found to be the thought in—

Jattir, "he far excels," a town in the hill-country, notice, as Libnah is in the lowland. Had we not this name here, something would still be wanting to the expression of the glory of Christ: thus revealed as, in His own Person, the blessed portion of the priests of God.

The second three cities seem still to speak of Christ, but in His service among men. Here we have—

First, Eshtemoa, "obedience," the Father's will the motive and governing principle of His life.

Then, the number of humiliation brings us to Holon, "night-lodging on the sand."

Thirdly, Debir, "oracle," a familiar word, gives us what He was in the world, the one perfect divine voice in it. We must not separate what are united here, the absolute obedience to the will of God, with the personal knowledge of human circumstances and sorrows, which, so far as they are found in those who follow Him, will enable them also, in their measure, to "speak as oracles of God." So He declares of Himself, by the prophet: "The Lord God has given me the tongue of them that are taught, that I should know how to sustain with words him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as they that are taught." (Isa. l. 4, R. V.) How blessed and comforting for us this language of One who, God over all, blessed forever, is yet not ashamed to call us brethren! The three names here have a real inward connection.

The third three, on the other hand, in accordance with their numerical significance, go on to resurrection and the heavenly place. The first name here in Joshua is Ain, but 1 Chr. vi. 59 reads Ashan. Both are among Simeon's cities,

pasturage; and Juttah and her pasturage; Beth-shemesh and her pasturage: nine cities out of those two tribes.

And out of the tribe of [z]Benjamin, Gibeon and her pasturage, Geba and her pasturage, [a]Anathoth and her pasturage, and Almon and her pasturage: four cities. All the cities of the sons of Aaron, the priests, were thirteen cities, and their pasturage.

And the families of the children of [b]Kohath, the Levites that remained of the children of Kohath, they had of their lot cities of the tribe of [c]Ephraim. And

[z] ch. 18. 11. etc.

[a] 1 Ki. 2. 26. Jer. 1. 1. Ezr. 2. 23. Jer. 32. 7.

[b] ver. 4, etc.

[c] ch. 16.

but one would seem to be a mistake. Commentators generally prefer the latter, and the context inclines us to it. Ain, as we have there interpreted it (p. 100), does not seem appropriate; but Ashan, "smoke," referring, as it seems (see p. 107), to the smoke of incense, is perfectly so. He whom we have seen below in His ministry among men, is now above, still engaged for them; the number showing how that "obedience" of His below becomes a sweet savor in behalf of His own above.

Then Juttah, "enlargement," may speak of the coming in of the Gentiles, with the new hopes of a heavenly people, united with Christ above; while—

Beth-shemesh, "the house of the sun," may well represent divine glory in the face of Jesus, as we now behold it, by faith, in heaven. Thus the third series is complete.

We now come to the Benjamite cities, which are four in number, the number of the creature: for Benjamin, "Christ in us," unites, as we have seen, the subjective with the objective. Benjamin, even dispensationally, is thus Christ in power on the earth; and the truth individually applied is hardly different: the effect of Christ known in glory is seen in power for a walk on earth. Correspondingly, these four names divide as 2×2,—the first portion speaking of Christ Himself, the latter of the effect in us. Here—

First of the first two, Gibeon, "the pit of suffering for iniquity," represents, as before (p. 133), the cross. The second, Geba, "hill," we have also seen as the "hill that is higher than I," the recourse of the saint in trial, and which is, of course, Christ exalted. These two things are characteristic of the Benjamite condition. Christ crucified crucifies us to the world; Christ glorified lifts us above it. This is power for the walk on earth.

The next two are Anathoth and Almon, and they correspond respectively to the two former. Anathoth, "afflictions," answers naturally to Gibeon, the cross. We have to take up *our* cross,—how different to His, however,—and to follow Him. Almon, "concealment," answering to Geba, speaks of a "life hid with Christ in God," the effect of a heart occupied with a hidden Saviour. The world that knows Him not cannot know the life inspired by Him, though they may be quite conscious of a power they know not.

These are the priests' cities; those of the simple Kohathite-Levites follow next. Here, first, they have out of Ephraim four cities, a number which we have had in connection with Benjamin, and which now prevails with only one exception, that of Naphtali, which has three. Manasseh furnishes two to Kohath and two to Gershon.

The Kohathite cities give us the character of an *objective* ministry, such as we have before seen this family to represent. (Vol. I., pp. 397, 400, 401.) Those out of Ephraim declare it to us as a ministry of *power;* the Danite ones as a ministry of *confirmation;* the Manassite as one of *revival.* These characters unite easily together, and show objective ministry as what is typical ministry, ministry of the highest kind; and no one that has experience of it but knows it to be that; Gershon and Merari have their needful place, but with Kohath are the

they gave them Shechem and her pasturage in mount Ephraim, the city of refuge for the slayer, and Gezer and her pasturage, and Kibzaim and her pasturage, and Beth-horon and her pasturage: four cities.

And out of the tribe of [d] Dan, Eltekeh and her pas- [d] ch. 19. 40. etc.

ark and mercy-seat, the altars, the table of shew-bread, the lamp of the sanctuary, and even the veil, things of which we know in measure the meaning and value. They speak of Christ Himself in person and work, and upon this all else must depend.

The first name among the Ephraimite portion is again that of a city of refuge, Shechem, "shoulder," that which bears the burden, and which represents, as this, Christ as the Servant of God's will, for us the Burden-bearer, or indeed bearing us, as the Shepherd the lost sheep, according to His own parable. Here indeed is power, a power outside ourselves equal to all emergencies—to every possible demand upon it. Thus "the government is upon His shoulder," as fully competent.

Next we have Gezer, "cutting off, isolation," a word which directly reminds us of the "land cut off" to which the scape-goat bears the sins of Israel on the day of atonement. This goes beyond the city of refuge, a place of shelter, but no more. Here the sins themselves are gone, never to be found again. Justification is full and entire. Peace is made, never more to be broken. Hence a way is made for God to display the love that is in His heart, and to gather His people; and—

Kibzaim shows us a "double gathering," as also the day of atonement does. "He died for that nation (Israel), and not for that nation only, but also that He might gather together in one the children of God which are scattered abroad." (John xi. 51, 52.) The Church it is that comes now at the present time upon the ground of sins put away. And here power is realized by us; for the knowledge of grace is the attainment of power.

Yet sin is dealt with also, in the saint as well as in the sinner; and this Beth-horon, "the house of wrath," comes fittingly to assure us of. Beth-horon is *double*—there is an upper and a lower city; and we have had to distinguish these already (page 118.) The *nether* Beth-horon is judgment as it falls upon the impenitent and unbeliever. The upper is judgment (and thus wrath) against *sin*, though assuming for the believer the form of chastening mercy. "For if we would judge ourselves we should not be judged; but when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." (1 Cor. xi. 31, 32.)

This *double* city has thus the full character of witness-warning against the *abuse* of grace, while it limits not in the least the grace itself. The names thus closed show us in this way the real elements of a ministry of power, and are all *objective*, and suit Kohath well. They are guard and guide to fruitful Ephraim no less, as is easy to be seen.

But we come now to Dan, and shall find, according to what is expressed in him, the *subjective side* of an *objective ministry*. Dan is intensely subjective, and something of this must be found in all that is really ministry at all. We shall see how it is, in fact, that which comes in to *confirm*, not displace or modify, the former; and thus to confirm, also, the soul itself.

Here, first, Eltekeh, "God the object of fear," gives us the constant, only right, attitude of the soul in His presence. Whatever weakens this condemns itself. Does grace weaken this? Nay, it only gives it its proper character as filial, not servile, fear: "There is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayst be feared." God is not less on the throne, but more; for the rebellion of the will is vanquished, and the heart bows with the head. This character of grace needs to be well understood, and with many is not, simple as it really is. The main cavil against grace it is that is here overthrown indeed, and the gospel buttresses itself against all attack. Worthy is Eltekeh of a first place.

turage, Gibbethon and her pasturage, Ajalon and her pasturage, Gath-rimmon and her pasturage: four cities.

And out of the half tribe of [e] Manasseh, Taanach and her pasturage, and Gath-rimmon and her pasturage: two cities. All the cities were ten, with their pasturage, for the families of the children of Kohath that remained.

[e] ch. 17. 1, etc.

Next, Gibbethon, "height," which we have already found applying to our relation to God in Christ, comes in as a second bulwark against the moralist's objection. Our place in Christ gives us at once the basis of our walk, and power for it. To walk in Him is to walk as He walked, but it is to walk also as dependent upon and drawing from Him. It is that abiding of the branch in the vine that makes it fruitful. Occupation with Himself is deliverance from the power of the world and sin.

In the third place, Ajalon, "the place of harts," suggests the agile, yet firm, tread of this animal, with reference to which it is said, "He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and setteth me upon my high places." (Ps. xviii. 33.) The "high places" belong to the weakest believer; but we need to be made competent to occupy them,—the firm, sure tread of the hart upon the mountains. It is but the realizing power of faith that is needed for this; of which the number here may remind us. It is but to take God at His word; and if the blessed place be ours, to fill the place.

Then Gath-rimmon, the "winepress of the pomegranate," speaks to us once more of the animating power of the word of God, which can only, when the soul is thus established, do its proper work, and enrich and exalt all its faculties. The fourth place in which we find this name affirms these results as facts of experience. They are truly the experience of every one who lives and walks in communion with God. This closes the list of Dan's cities.

In Manasseh's possessions on the west of Jordan, Kohath has only two cities, Taanach and another Gath-rimmon. For the last, Chronicles substitutes Bileam, a transposition of Ibleam, as generally supposed: one of the towns that Manasseh receives from Asher or from Issachar, but fails to take out of the hands of the Canaanites. The Septuagint has a different name here from both, however, and criticism seems able to determine nothing: for Gath-rimmon may be another name for Bileam, the recurrence of names and the duplication of them being alike common, and we must not too readily suppose that a copyist's error which has in its favor all the Hebrew copies. Altogether, we are free to ask what the spiritual interpretation may have to say in the matter, and have no decisive reason for refusing to submit ourselves entirely to its guidance.

With the meaning of Manasseh we are well acquainted. Its "forgetting" is in order to pressing on, and is closely linked with Ephraim's "fruitfulness." Some connection with this should appear in these two cities, which, in becoming Levitical do not cease to be Manassite.

Again, as two is the number of contrast, a dual division like this will often be found to show this. Taanach and Gath-rimmon may thus give contrasted thoughts, as indeed "sandy soil" and the pomegranate naturally suggest. It does not need that Taanach should be a desert to suggest the thought of it; and besides, the sand of the desert is spiritually fruitful, and intended so to be. God meant the wilderness to teach Israel the grand lesson of faith; and for us He means the world as that to wean us from other dependencies than Himself, and make us look on to our rest. Thus Taanach's sandy soil may be really fruitful, and not the less typical on that account, while Gath-rimmon may show us where faith finds refreshment and stimulus for the way that leads to God.

The numbers are in accordance with such an interpretation: for *one* is the number of solitariness, and thus barrenness; while two is that of the Word and of ministry. Interpretation would thus, I judge, decide for Gath-rimmon as the

> And for the children of Gershon of the families of the Levites: out of the half tribe of Manasseh, Golan in Bashan and her pasturage, the city of refuge for the slayer, and Beeshterah and her pasturage: two cities.

true reading. Bileam and Ibleam have substantially the same meaning, and that the same as that of the unfaithful prophet. Bileam is only Balaam; and if this is substituted for Gath-rimmon I see no proper sense. Taanach and Gath-rimmon harmonize, also, perfectly with the lesson of Manasseh, as is manifest; and this cumulative witness may well be decisive of the question of criticism.

The Gershonite cities are thirteen in number, and they belong to four tribes—Manasseh, Issachar, Asher, and Naphtali. Manasseh comes first,—the half-tribe east of Jordan,—and again with two cities, Golan and Be-eshterah.

As with Kohath, so with Gershon, a city of refuge heads the list. Golan is "exultation," the fullness of joy in Christ Jesus that marks the true circumcision. (Phil. iii. 3.) Gershon, the "exile," is near akin in spirit, evidently, to Manasseh, "forgetter," and for each joy is a needful element of strength; the joy in One who is absent: as Peter expresses it, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." (1 Pet. i. 8.) For a Levite, also, how necessary a possession such as this! A joy in Christ that is "full of glory," is in itself a ministry of Christ to men; and we are admonished to be "teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God." (Col. iii. 16.)

Be-eshterah is given in Chronicles as Ashtaroth, and the mass of commentators follow Gesenius in considering the prefix "be" as an abbreviation of "beth," understanding the compound word to mean "the house of Ashterah," or "Ashtoreth." There *was*, as we know, an Ashtaroth in Manasseh, the old city of Og; and, according to the testimony of Eusebius and Jerome, more than one, so that the one before us need not have been the heathen capital. *Is* it the "house of Ashterah"? The abbreviation of "beth" into "be" is more than doubtful; no certain example can be given of such a change; and it is not likely that Israel, when they changed similar names because of their connection with idolatry (Num. xxxii. 38) would allow one like this to stand. It might be, indeed, here mentioned by its old heathen name after it had acquired another; but in such cases the new name would naturally, at least, be given with it, as with "Kirjath-baal, which is Kirjath-jearim" (ch. xv. 60).

But if it be not the heathen name, what is it? "Ashteroth" is, indeed, found four times in Deuteronomy (ch. vii. 13; xxviii. 4, 18, 51), translated in the common version "flocks," and in the revised version "young"; by others, again (much better), "ewes"; while Young gives "multiplications." Perhaps all consider it as a mere adaptation of the heathen word; which seems, however, strange enough as that. The greater probability would surely be that the heathen goddess took her name from, rather than gave it to, the ewes of the flock.

If this be admitted, the *be* may be what grammarians call the *beth essentiæ*, a simple emphasizing of the word which follows it; and which, in its idea, Dr. Young's translation gives as "multiplication." This agrees with the number of "increase," under which it stands, and yields a simple sense in connection with Golan: for the joy in Christ, which is "full of glory," is, indeed, nothing else than the sunshine of His face, while "*from* glory *to* glory" expresses the necessity of progress in the soul to whom Christ is thus unveiled. This is obviously, also, a thought quite in accordance with what is represented by Manasseh, and seems thus additionally worthy of acceptance as the thought here.

These two express, therefore, for Gershon, the "exile," that which separates his strangership from mere asceticism, and shows the spring of power which is in it. And now Issachar, who speaks of the earth-walk, furnishes to him in its

And out of the tribe of [f]Issachar, Kishion and her pasturage, Daberath and her pasturage, Jarmuth and her pasturage, Engannim and her pasturage: four cities.

[f] ch. 19. 17, etc.

And out of the tribe of [g]Asher, Misheal and her pasturage, Abdon and her pasturage, Helkath and her pasturage, Rehob and her pasturage: four cities.

[g] ch. 19. 24, etc.

And out of the tribe of [h]Naphtali, Kedesh in Galilee and her pasturage, the city of refuge for the slayer, and Hammoth-dor and her pasturage, and Kartan and her

[h] ch. 19. 32, etc.

four cities the means of preservation of this power amid the adverse influences of the world. These cities are—

First, Kishion, "hardening," which, as a Levitical and Gershonite city, naturally changes its significance, and shows us what the very opposition of the world may do for us, as begetting in us force of character and independent individuality, which dares to stand alone, in single obedience to the will of God. All difficulties are but a discipline to the soul in earnest. The habit of overcoming can be acquired, like other habits; and thus adverse circumstances may be none the less helpful,—God making, as He has promised, all things work together for good to them that love Him. Thus Kishion is, after all, not so strange a word to find beside—

Daberath, "pasture"; for there are "pastures of the wilderness," and the world being what it is only makes the refreshment He has provided for it sweeter and more satisfying. There is grace always equal to the need also, where the heart turns with its need to Him. Then we have—

Jarmuth, "height," which we have seen once to speak of Christ exalted, and once of our own exaltation in Him,—things that naturally go together. From this height, one may say, is fed—

Engannim, the precious "spring of" God's "gardens," where His plants are nurtured. With all these thoughts we are familiar; and their study in these new connections must be left very much to be worked out by those who care for it. Where there is not such care, volumes might be written in vain.

Asher follows Issachar; and here again all the names have been before us. We need not wonder that the first Gershonite town should be—

Misheal, "feeling after God"; nor the second—

Abdon, "bond-service"; the third is—

Helkath, "equal division"; and the fourth—

Rehob, "room." These four, where God is known and relation to Him established, are all blessedness, and worthy, therefore, of Asher. They show us the portion of the true Levite, which is in God Himself, and the heart of ministry such as the Levite speaks of.

Lastly, out of Naphtali Gershon has three cities. Naphtali, the triumphant struggler, and in the fourth place here, speaks clearly of *experience*, a thing quite necessary to the ministering Levite, and with which he, too, is called to minister. Here—

Kedesh in Galilee, a city of refuge, the soul's sanctuary-rest in self-humiliation before God, is the first sweet lesson of experience,—a lesson how blessed for the soul that has learned it,—how blessed, therefore, to enrich others with! Then—

Hammoth-dor, "heat of the dwelling,"—*sun*-heat. It may be the Hammath which we have had as one of the cities of Naphtali already (page 154), although here a plural, which intensifies the thought, and with Dor attached. The spiritual meaning is self-evident.

Kartan, in the third place, is considered to be a contraction of Kirjathaim, "two cities," or the double city, and would seem to speak of fellowship in

pasturage: three cities. All the cities of the Gershonites, according to their families, were thirteen cities and their pasturage.

And for the families of the children of Merari, the rest of the Levites: out of the tribe of [i]Zebulon, Jokneam and her pasturage, and Kartah and her pasturage, Dimnah and her pasturage, Nahalal and her pasturage: four cities.

[i] ch. 19. 10, etc.

And out of the tribe of [j]Reuben, Bezer and her pas-

[j] ch. 13. 15, etc.

activity; and this would not be unsuited, perhaps, as a name for any Levite city, but yet especially appropriate in this place. Here the Gershonite cities end.

The Merarite cities are twelve in number, and furnished by three tribes,—Zebulon, Reuben, and Gad. We have already (vol. i., p. 397, sq.) seen that Merari's ministry speaks of that which has to do with the maintenance of the Church itself; and this is why, perhaps, its cities are twelve, the number of *manifest* divine government. Alas, we have lost much this manifestation in the multiplicity of human rules and machinery that have been introduced, and the self-will that breaks all bounds continually. Few Merarites, in truth, seem to remain to the Church, but here in Joshua we have the divine thought, not the human failure; and the twelve cities are in accordance with this.

The first tribe that furnishes cities to the Merarite is Zebulon: for *dwelling with God*, which implies practical consecration to Him, is here first of all important for the upholding of His claim upon men. The cities are, first,—

Jokneam, "possession of the people,"—for the first need on the part of His people is to be put in possession of what is theirs from God. We have next—

Kartah, "city," which implies fellowship, living activity, and yet boundary-lines preserved, care being taken that these in the church of God are of divine establishment, marked out by the word of God alone. We have next—

Dimnah, "dung," for which, in 1 Chr. vi. 62, there seems to be substituted Rimmon (or Rimmono), a word with which we are familiar, and of much pleasanter suggestion than the word before us. The change in the Hebrew is such as might come through slight corruption of the text, but Keil rightly reminds us that in Chronicles we have but two cities here instead of four; and the other, Tabor, is not found here either. Remmon, or Rimmon, is found, however, in Zebulon, while Dimnah occurs nowhere else than in this passage: thus on both sides there are things to be considered.

Rimmon, standing for the "word of God," as the pomegranate typifies it, would imply the holy fruitfulness which it produces. Dimnah could only, as it would seem, point out the need of apprehension of that which defiles, as part of true Levite ministry in the church of God, most necessary for the Merarite. This would suit well, also, the numerical place which speaks of sanctification. On the whole, Dimnah seems to give the clearer spiritual thought; and which, being in the text also, we must prefer. The last word here,—

Nahalal, a "place whither they lead" cattle to pasture, suggests very different thoughts. *Nahal* means "to lead with gentleness and care" (Wilson); and such a tender helpfulness must, indeed, characterize the Merarite ministry. True love must govern all, acting oftentimes in ways that may seem even opposed to one another, but are not: it is the "bond of perfectness."

Reuben next furnishes her quota: the subject will of faith is, indeed, necessary to him who would stand for the rule of God over the people of God. But here—

Bezer at once shows how ample is the "store" of him who makes Christ his resource and treasure-house. Dependence on the living Lord, habitual reference to Him in all things, is the indispensable requisite for standing in the prophet's

turage, and Jahazah and her pasturage, Kedemoth and her pasturage, and Mephaath and her pasturage: four cities.

And out of the tribe of [k]Gad, Ramoth in Gilead and her pasturage, the city of refuge for the slayer, and Mahanaim and her pasturage, Heshbon and her pasturage, Jaazer and her pasturage: four cities in all.

All the cities for the children of Merari by their families, that remained of the families of the Levites, were [by] their lot twelve cities. All the cities of the Levites in the midst of the possession of the children of Israel were [l]forty-eight cities and their pasturage: these cities had every one of them their pasturage round about them; so it was with all these cities.

And Jehovah gave unto Israel all the land which he had [m]sworn to give unto their fathers; and they pos-

k ch. 13. 24, etc.

l Num. 35. 7.

m Gen. 15. 18.

place before men: and this is what, in his measure, every Merarite does. Then —

Jahazah, the same as Jahaz, where Israel met and defeated Sihon, with its meaning, "a place trodden down," reminds us of the resolute tread of the soldier of Christ, and of the well-contested fields in which he is to be found, as does —

Kedemoth, of "things that confront" him. But these are among his possessions, none the less, as things whereby faith is exercised and matured, which are "for" him, as to him that loves God all things are,— working together for good. Finally, here —

Mephaath, "shining forth," naturally speaks of the end which faith has before it, "the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ," which is also connected with the appraisement of the responsibility of disciples, and the rewards of grace. These four cities are a fit contribution, then, from Reuben to Merari.

One tribe alone remains now to be considered, and that is Gad, whose four cities are already familiar to us, save the last: Ramoth in Gilead, a city of refuge for the manslayer; Mahanaim, where of old Jacob met the host of God; Heshbon, Sihon's capital; and Jazer, "He shall help."

Gad, as we have seen, speaks of spiritual increase, as well as of activity, not apart from conflict either. Ramoth in Gilead shows the place of acceptance in the Beloved, of power as raised up with Him, in whom alone all increase finds its secure starting-point, and all activity its safeguard as well as power. Taken out of the world, we are sanctified and sent into it again by the Lord our Head, as He was sent into it by the Father. How necessary the knowledge of this for the Merarite who has to do with the Church on earth! Then —

Mahanaim, "two hosts," which speaks certainly, from its history, of heavenly succor, with an implication of warfare, for which the battle-cry is that "the Lord of hosts is with us!" Thus we are not only sent forth, but accompanied and sustained.

Heshbon, then, reminds us how, as restored by *faith* (for the children of Reuben rebuilt the city, Num. xxxii. 37), "reason" has its place and use for spiritual increase (Gad), and for Merarite ministry. While —

Jazer — which may be a contraction for Jah-ezer, "Jah is help," — closes, then, the whole series with the tender reminder of our weakness, and of the divine strength to which it appeals,— which the frank recognition of it ever brings in for us.

Thus the enumeration of Israel's cities ends; and of what a wealth of blessing may they not put us in possession, if in faith and patience we seek to possess

sessed it and dwelt therein. And Jehovah gave them [n]rest round about, according to all that he had sworn unto their fathers; and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them: Jehovah delivered all their enemies into their hand. There [o]failed not aught of any good thing that Jehovah had spoken unto the children of Israel; all came to pass.

[n] ch. 11. 23.

[o] ch. 23. 14. 1 Ki. 8. 56. *cf.* 1 Kings 10. 7.

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. xxii.–xxiv.)

Eph. 3. 20, 21.

Appended Warnings.

(XXII.)

(xxii.) As to the unity of Israel.

1. THEN Joshua called the [p]Reubenites and the Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh, and said unto them, Ye have kept all that Moses the servant of Jehovah commanded you, and have hearkened to my voice in all that I commanded you: ye have not left your brethren these many days unto this day, and have kept the charge of the commandment of Jehovah your God. And now Jehovah your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as he spake to them; and now return, and go unto your tents, into the land of your [q]possession which Moses the servant of Jehovah gave you, the other side of Jordan. Only take diligent heed to do the commandment and law which Moses the servant of Jehovah commanded you, in [r]loving Jehovah your God, and walking in all his ways, and keeping his commandments and cleaving unto him, even serving him with all your heart and with all your soul. And Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went unto their tents. (Now to the one half of the tribe of Manasseh Moses had given [possession] in Bashan, but to the [s]other] half thereof gave Joshua among their brethren on the other side of Jordan westward.) And also when Joshua sent them unto their tents and blessed them he spake unto them, saying, Return unto your tents with much [t]riches, and with very much cattle, with silver and with gold and with brass and with iron,

[p] ch. 1. 12. Num. 32. 28, etc.

[q] Num. 32. 32–42.

[r] Deut. 6. 5. Deut. 4. 9.

[s] ch. 17. 5.

[t] ch. 8. 2.

ourselves of it. This account of them, pitifully brief and incomplete as it is, is yet a witness of how much God has stored up here for the earnest-hearted. There has been shown, at least, the gleam of gold abundantly throughout; and little labor is required to make one possessor of it. Meditation and study are always needed, however, and here will be abundantly repaid. "The diligent soul shall be made fat."

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. xxii.–xxiv.)

Section 1. (Chap. xxii.)

We have in the last subdivision of the book what is plainly supplementary. We have no longer the history of the work of divine power by which the inheritance of the people of God is secured to them, nor the account of the land itself, of which they take possession. Out of this we pass into what is manifestly of another and lower order of testimony,—not to the power of God or His grace and gift, but to the people themselves and to their little competency even to hold the gift which has been made their own.

In fact, we have already had, even in the history of their first establishment

and with very much raiment: [u]divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren.

[u] Nu. 31. 27. 1 Sa. 30. 24.

And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh returned, and departed from the children of Israel out of Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan, to go into the land of Gilead, to the land of their possession, in which they had possession according to the voice of Jehovah by the hand of Moses. And when they came to the circuits of Jordan, which are in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh built there an altar by Jordan, a [v]great altar to behold. And the children of Israel heard say, Behold, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh have built an altar over against the land of Canaan, in the circuits of Jordan, opposite the children of Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, the [w]whole assembly of the children of Israel gathered themselves at Shiloh, to go up to war against them. And the children of Israel [x]sent unto the children of Reuben and to the children of Gad and to the half tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the priest, and with him ten princes, of each father's house a prince for all the tribes of Israel; and each one was head of their father's house among the thousands of Israel.

[v] *cf.* Deut. 12. 13, 14.

[w] *cf.* Jud. 20. 1. Gal. 6. 1. 1 Cor. 12. 26.

[x] De. 13. 14.

And they came unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad and to the half tribe of Manasseh into the land of Gilead, and they spake with them, saying, Thus saith all the assembly of Jehovah, What is this unfaithfulness that ye have committed against the God of Israel this day, in turning away from following Jehovah, building yourselves an altar to rebel this day against Jehovah? Is the [y]iniquity of Peor too little for

[y] Num. 25. 3.

in their land, the record of failure. One of the things most strongly insisted on in the charge entrusted to them was that they should dispossess the Canaanites; and herein they fail conspicuously; not merely for lack of strength, but when they *have* strength. But even the lack of strength meant only lack of faith and of heart. Nor is this merely a negative, a defect: it means always the cherishing of what is contrary to God, and thus a positive seed of evil which springs up and spreads, as we shall find it spreading in the Book of Judges. Thus Israel are no sooner planted in the land than they fail in it; and such failure has been found in the history of all dispensations, and equally from the first. In the Christian Church, above all, as its privilege and blessing have been most remarkable, so have been the failure and evil in it; carefully foretold, moreover, as in Moses' song that of Israel. God is not disappointed—has not deceived Himself; nor, if we will listen to Him, will He allow us to be deceived. *Corruptio optimi, pessima corruptio* has been long said: "the corruption of what is best is the worst corruption." And let anything be entrusted to man, it will be corrupted. Thus, with the completion of revelation has gone on the growth of evil, Jezebel and Babylon of old being only types of worse abominations in Christian times, iniquity developing to the day of harvest, when, fully manifested for what it is, it shall be reaped for the fire that shall consume it.

us, from which we are not cleansed to this day, though there was a plague in the assembly of Jehovah, but that ye must turn away this day from following Jehovah? And it will be, because ye rebel to-day against Jehovah, to-morrow he will be wroth with the [z] whole assembly of Israel. But indeed, if the land of your possession be unclean, pass over to the land of Jehovah's possession, where Jehovah's tabernacle dwelleth, and take possession among us; but rebel not against Jehovah, nor rebel against us, in building yourselves an altar beside the altar of Jehovah our God. Did not Achan, the son of Zerah, commit unfaithfulness about the devoted thing, and upon all the assembly of Israel there was wrath, and the man perished not alone in his iniquity?

[z] Num. ch. 7. 11. v. 20.

And the [a] children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh answered and spake unto the heads of the thousands of Israel, The God of gods, Jehovah, the God of gods, Jehovah, he knoweth, and Israel, he shall know, if in rebellion, and if in unfaithfulness against Jehovah, save us not this day! that we have built ourselves an altar to turn back from following Jehovah; and if to offer thereon [b] burnt-offering and meal-offering, and if to offer peace-offerings thereon, let Jehovah himself require it! and if we have not done it from fear of this thing, saying, In time to come your [c] children may speak to our children, saying, What have ye to do with Jehovah the God of Israel? Jehovah hath made Jordan a border between us and you: ye children of Reuben and children of Gad, ye have no portion in Jehovah. Even so may your children make our children cease from fearing Jehovah. [d] And we said, Let us now set to work to build an altar, not for burnt-offering, nor for sacrifice, but to be a witness between us and you, and between our generations after us, that we may perform the service of Jehovah before him, with our burnt-offerings, and with our sacrifices, and with our peace-offerings, that your children may not say to our children in time to come, Ye have no

[a] Num. 5. 3.

[b] Deut. 12. 26, 27. ver. 29.

[c] Ex. 13. 14. ch. 4. 21.

[d] *cfr.* 1 Kl. 12. 27.

The last three chapters of Joshua are not, however, a formal prophecy of impending evil, such as, for instance, Moses' song. And the twenty-second chapter is not even a direct warning as to this, as Joshua's address is afterward. It is but the story of a well-meant attempt to provide against a possible breach, at an aftertime, of Israel's unity. The two and a half tribes, sent back to their inheritance on the east side of Jordan, set up near the river "a great altar to see to," as a witness that they are of one faith with those upon the other side, and that their children of after generations might not be deprived ot a place with them in the worship of their common Lord. It is all well, and their brethren (even Phinehas with his unflinching zeal for God) are satisfied with their explanations. Yet it is plain an uneasy sense of insecurity is already haunting them. The danger may never practically present itself from the quarter they anticipate: we do not read that it ever did; yet the sense of danger may be a true presentiment none the less; and while the door is barred in one direction, it may be wide open in another.

portion in Jehovah. And we said, If it be that in time to come they say thus to us and to our generations, we will say, Behold the [e]pattern of the altar which our fathers made, not for burnt-offering nor for sacrifice, but as a witness between us and you. Far be it from us to rebel against Jehovah, and to turn back this day from following Jehovah, in building an altar for burnt-offering, for meal-offering, and for sacrifice, beside the altar of Jehovah our God that is before his tabernacle.

[e] *ctr.* 2 Ki. 16. 10-12.

And when Phinehas the priest and the princes of the assembly and the heads of the thousands of Israel that were with him heard the words that the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the children of Manasseh spoke, it was good in their sight. And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the children of Manasseh, This day we know that Jehovah is among us, because ye have not committed this unfaithfulness against Jehovah: now have ye delivered the [f]children of Israel out of Jehovah's hand. And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest and the princes returned from the children of Reuben and from the children of Gad, from the land of Gilead, unto the land of Canaan, unto the children of Israel, and brought them word again. And the thing was good in the eyes of the children of Israel, and the children of Israel blessed God, and no more spake of going up against them in battle, to destroy the land in which the children of Reuben and the children of Gad dwelt. And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the altar [Ed], because it is a witness between us that Jehovah is God.

[f] ch. 7.11,12.

Joshua's testimony; and the response.

1. (XXIII.) An appeal for integrity on the ground of Jehovah's faithfulness.

(XXIII., XXIV.)

2. [1]And it came to pass a long [g]time after Jehovah had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua was old, advanced in days. And Joshua

[g] ch. 13. 1.

They are right in realizing that their one Lord is the bond of unity. They do not anticipate that their danger, in fact, is not from their brethren, but *in themselves*. Their own slipping away from Jehovah is that which leads to their dispersion and captivity in other lands, after allowing city after city to fall into the hands of Moab. The enemy that they are facing in the west comes up, thus, really from another quarter, and where there is no bulwark erected to keep him out. For us the lesson is all-important. It is not by ability to keep in view the whole horizon of circumstance that we shall be effectually guarded from the approach of evil: it is by that spirit which is manifested in those who are the true circumcision—"no confidence in the flesh." (Phil. iii. 3.) This makes God a practical, continual necessity, and His all-sufficiency our complete safeguard and rest. This is the lesson with which the great altar of Ed impresses us, and a most useful one it surely is.

Sec. 2. (Chaps. xxiii., xxiv.)

The closing chapters are so plain that they require, in general, but little interpretation. Joshua's appeal, the renewal of the covenant, the limiting statement as to Israel's obedience in the days of Joshua and of those contemporary with

called for all Israel, for their elders, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers, and said unto them: I am old, I am advanced in days, and ye have seen all that Jehovah your God hath done unto all these nations for your sake: for Jehovah your God is he who fought for you. Behold, I have divided unto you by lot these nations that remain, for an inheritance unto your tribes from Jordan, as well as all the nations that I have cut off, unto the great sea toward the sunset. And Jehovah your God, he will expel them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight; and ye shall possess the land, as Jehovah your God hath said unto you. Be ye therefore very [h]resolute to observe and do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or the left; that ye go not among these nations, these that remain among you, nor make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear [by them], nor serve them, nor bow yourselves to them; but cleave unto Jehovah your God, as ye have done unto this day. For Jehovah hath driven out from before you great nations and strong; but as for you, no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day. [i]One man of you shall chase a thousand; for Jehovah your God is he who fighteth for you, as he hath said unto you. Take good heed therefore to your souls that ye love Jehovah your God. Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, these that remain among you, and make marriages [j]with them, and go in unto them, and they unto you, know certainly that Jehovah your God will no more drive out

h ch. 1. 7, 8.

i Lev. 26. 8, Deut. 7. 3, 4.

j Limited, Mat. 1. 5.

him, all show the decline that is imminent, and which faces us at once in the following book. Joshua's words, "Ye cannot serve Jehovah," show that, with all his heroism of individual obedience, he is not deceived as to the issue under that covenant which so often needs renewing on the people's side. How could he be, with Moses' song ringing in his ears? Only those willing to be deceived could be. And so with ourselves exactly: predictions of the Church's course have so little ambiguity that it is marvelous that the smooth preaching of peace, and the comforting assurance of progressive blessing, could ever gain credence with those who boast in an "open Bible." But the Bible can be but little "open," as long as man's pride and self-seeking hang their imaginative veil before it; and the Church, believing herself heir to Israel's promises, has largely refused to accept the lessons of Israel's career, which she has so closely followed. Thank God, we are near the end of the strange history of near two millennia; and for us the end is the coming of the Lord.

(i.) These charges are a double warning, at the pathetic moment when Joshua, their leader in victory so often, is passing away. Old, and stricken with the weight of the years he carries, he stands before assembled Israel, to remind them of the Lord's fulfillment to them of His promises, and to assure them that His threatenings would be no less perfectly fulfilled. The word given to himself at the beginning of the conquest of the land, he now exhorts them with in turn: "Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or

these [k]nations from before you, but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which Jehovah your God hath given you. And behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth; and ye know in all your heart and in all your soul, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things of which Jehovah your God spake concerning you; all have come to pass unto you; not one thing hath failed thereof. And it shall be that as all good things are come upon you, which Jehovah your God hath spoken concerning you, so shall Jehovah bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which Jehovah your God hath given you. When ye have transgressed the covenant of Jehovah your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods, and bow yourselves to them, then shall Jehovah's wrath be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land that he hath given you.

k Jud. 2. 3, 21.

2. (xxiv.) Jehovah or the heathen gods? The covenant confirmed.

[2]And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel unto [l]Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God. And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel: Your fathers dwelt of old on the other side of the River, Terah the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor; and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the River, and led him throughout the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac. And I gave unto Isaac Jacob and Esau; and I gave unto Esau mount [m]Seir, to possess it; and Jacob and his children went down into Egypt. And I sent Moses and Aaron, and plagued Egypt according to that which I did in the midst of it, and afterwards I brought you out. And I brought your fathers

l *cf.* Gen. 12. 6 Josh. 8. 33-35.

m Deut. 2. 5. *cf.* Amos. 9. 12. Obad. 19.

to the left." In truth it needs courage to stand for God and for His word in the face of all that this involves! Yet how strange to speak of any call for this as if it could be lacking! Courage, in standing for God! But such is man, even the best of men, that he needs to be urged to this, though only faith is lacking in this cause for one man to chase a thousand, yea, for two to put ten thousand to flight.

(ii.) Joshua's second address is at Shechem, a place memorable in so many ways from Abraham's time; and there the covenant with Jehovah is renewed. Joshua reminds them again of the mercies of God towards them, beginning with the call of Abraham himself, of whom we are now for the first told that he had been involved in the common idolatry of the times, along with his father Terah and his brother Nahor. With grace thus the tale begins, a grace their need of which their own history had so clearly testified. Divine power had been shown in the gift of Isaac, given when nature was dead in Abraham. Even Jacob and Esau were the seed of a barren woman. To Esau God had given Seir, while Israel endured the needed discipline in Egypt. Then came the marvel of their

out of Egypt, and ye came unto the sea; and the Egyptians pursued after your fathers with chariots and horsemen unto the Red Sea. And they cried unto Jehovah, and he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and he brought the sea upon them, and it covered them: yea, your eyes have seen what I did in Egypt: and ye dwelt in the wilderness many days. And I brought you into the land of the Amorites who dwelt beyond Jordan; and they fought with you, and I gave them into your hand, that ye might possess the land; and I destroyed them from before you. And Balak the son of Zippor arose and fought against Israel, and sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you; and I would not hearken unto Balaam, and he blessed you altogether; and I delivered you out of his hand. And ye crossed Jordan, and came unto Jericho; and the masters of Jericho fought against you, the Amorite, and the Perizzite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Girgashite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: and I gave them into your hand. And I sent the [n] hornet before you, which drove them out from before you, [as] the two kings of the Amorites: not with thy sword nor with thy bow. And I gave into your hand a land for which ye labored not, and cities which ye builded not; and ye dwell therein; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not ye eat. Now therefore, fear Jehovah, and serve him in integrity and truth: and put away the [o] gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt; and serve ye Jehovah. But if it be evil in your eyes to serve Jehovah, choose ye this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods that your fathers who were beyond the River served, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land ye are dwelling; but as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah.

n Ex. 23. 28.

o Gen. 35. 2.

And the people answered and said, Far be it from us that we should forsake Jehovah, to serve other gods; for Jehovah our God is he who brought us up and our fathers, from the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, and who did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way in which we went, and among all the peoples through the midst of whom we passed; and Jehovah drave out from before us all the peoples, even the Amorites who dwelt in the land:

deliverance, the days of sojourn in the wilderness, the dispossession of the Amorite kings, and the spiritual conflict when Balaam, after all the history of failure, sought how to curse and ended but in blessing them; finally, the possession of the land they now enjoyed. After all this, Joshua bids them, if there could be doubt, to make up their minds whom they would serve, the idols their fathers had served beyond the river, the gods of the Canaanites in whose land they dwelt, or else Jehovah: his own choice for himself and his house was already made.

In result the people renew the covenant, and a great stone is set up under an oak in memorial of it. It is still the legal covenant, and all is suspended

therefore we will serve Jehovah, for he is our God. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve Jehovah: for he is a holy God; he is a jealous God: he will not forgive your [p] transgressions nor your sins. If ye forsake Jehovah and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you evil, and consume you, after he hath done you good. And the people said unto Joshua, Nay, but we will serve Jehovah. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves, that ye have chosen you Jehovah, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses. Now therefore [said he] put away the strange gods that are among you, and incline your heart unto Jehovah, God of Israel. And the people said unto Joshua, Jehovah our God will we serve, and to his voice will we hearken. So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. And Joshua [q] wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under the oak that is by the sanctuary of Jehovah. And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of Jehovah that he spake unto us: and it shall be a witness among you, lest ye deny your God. And Joshua sent the people away, every man to his inheritance.

And it came to pass after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Jehovah, died, being one hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance, in Timnath-serah, that is in mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash.

And Israel served Jehovah all the days of [r] Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, and who knew all the works of Jehovah that he had done for Israel. And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel had brought out of Egypt buried they in Shechem, in the piece of ground that Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for a hundred kesitahs*: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph. And Eleazar the son of Aaron died, and they buried him in the hill of Phinehas his son, which was given him in mount Ephraim.

p Ex. 23. 21.

q Deut. 31. 22. 24.

r Acts 20. 29.

*A kesitah is supposed to be about four shekels.

upon an obedience at the best how fitful! The stone in its lifelessness would abide, more certainly far than the living tree under which it was set up, Israel's picture at that moment. For the present it is well, and they depart, every one in peace to his inheritance.

Joshua dies, his influence lasting till the end of his generation—a significant limitation. Joseph his father's bones are buried at Shechem. Lastly, Eleazar dies: and these three graves are a sign that the Great Deliverer has not yet come. The types are but the shadow, not the substance: which yet for faith they point on towards. Thank God, for us the Deliverer is come, although not even yet the full deliverance.

APPENDIX.

The Typical Interpretation, especially of the Cities, Boundaries, and Tribes of Israel.

For those who have carefully examined what has been before us, it can hardly be needful to insist further on the truth and necessity of the typical interpretation. To some extent, indeed, all who accept Scripture as inspired of God must, of course, accept this. The "holy places made with hands" are thus expressly declared to be "the figures of the true" (Heb. ix. 24); certain events in Israel's history are declared to have "happened to them for types" (1 Cor. x. 11, *marg.*); the law in general is said to have a "shadow of good things to come" (Heb. x. 1); and, in a similar way speak many well-known scriptures. Moreover, of some things plainly declared to be types, we have no inspired interpretation, as in the case of the passage of the sea, just as some of the New Testament parables are left for spiritual wisdom to interpret by the help of the context, and of truth found elsewhere.

In the application of Melchizedek's history (Heb. vii.) we find how minutely significant these histories may be. Names are translated, the very order of their occurrence insisted on, meaning is given to the omissions as well as the positive statements, in complete accordance with the idea of verbal inspiration, and the prophetic significance running through the whole. And on this verisimilitude between the Old Testament history and a pervasive typical meaning to be recognized in it, the apostle grounds his appeal even to foolish Galatians, who, if they desired to be under the law, should hear the law speaking to them in this way (Gal. iv. 21, seq.) The historical books, from Joshua to Kings at least, were thus by the Jews entitled "the former prophets."

The sketch of the Pentateuch already given is an absolute demonstration that the types contained in these books are not scattered at random through them, but arranged in an orderly manner, the books at large, and every section of them, illustrating this. They are the pictures of spiritual realities, needing and finding their explanation elsewhere; in general, in the New Testament: *as* pictures, speaking for themselves to the spiritual mind,—of course when the light is thrown upon them. They then become illuminated with a strange glory, are lifted from simple history into prophecy, while they confirm, in this way, the history itself, as written with the pen of divine inspiration. The Old Testament witnesses thus to the New; and the New also to the Old: what otherwise might seem trivial becomes invested with a new dignity; the past reveals the future, and admonishes and encourages the present.

To all this, moreover, the numerical structure adds its confirmation in every part, testing it by the imposition of conditions to which nothing but the truth could submit itself with success. And in Joshua, at least, we have found these symbolic numbers governing even catalogues of names and sections of a boundary line. The wonder of all which will be no doubt against it in the minds of many, producing a vague suspicion, at least, on the part of those even who are prepared, perhaps, to admit a certain truth in such spiritual mathematics within what they would deem safe bounds. Let us see, then, if the limits *are* safe: it is quite possible to test the matter in so rigid a way as to satisfy the most skeptical—where skepticism is not of the heart: for which no proof of this kind can be expected to avail.

I have elsewhere* brought forward nine names from among Judah's cities

* "From Amam to Bziothiah: A Record of the Soul's Progress, and a Witness to the Word."

as an argument in this way. For simplicity, both in the names and numbers, I can find no better now; but we can test them more exhaustively: let us do this.

The names are found, Josh. xv. 26-28; as cities of Judah, they should give material for "praise" on the part of the people of God. They are among the cities of the South which speak of the power of God in behalf of His own: as a *third* group of these, they give us the work of the Spirit in them. The names are nine in number; and nine seems always to be a 3 x 3: we have three stages, then, of this work, and three names on each stage. The first stage of the Spirit's work in us is undoubtedly that of new birth: the first three names are—

1. *Amam*, "mother," or "their mother,"—referring to our origin from Eve: "how can he be clean that is born of a woman?" Here is the *need* of new birth.

2. *Shema*, "report"; for "faith cometh by a report, and the report by the word of God." (Rom. x. 17, *Gk.*). And thus—

3. *Moladah*, "birth." For "we are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

Here the truth is simple, and the numerals exact. One is the number of *primacy*, so of paternity, beginning, origin; two is the number of testimony; three, of resurrection and of the Spirit. As to the meanings of the words, only the first can be for a moment questioned; "mother" is, however, strictly legitimate from the Hebrew, and, indeed, the only rendering that it would seem to countenance, and is mostly accepted.

The second stage is that of which the seventh of Romans speaks,—"deliverance from the law." And here we have—

1. *Hazar-gadda*, "inclosure of conflict," the dominion of law in the conscience shutting us up to this; next, the way of deliverance—

2. *Heshmon*, "quiet reckoning,"—faith, not effort, not fighting; and thus we find—

3. *Beth-pelet*, the "house of escape."

The doctrine it is not here the place to dwell on. The numbers emphasize, 1, the *dominion* of law; 2, *deliverance;* 3, the *dwelling-place*, the heart's home, which is in Christ, where Christ is,—in each case what is of main importance. As to the names, only Heshmon could there be any doubt of. I take it as a compound word from *hashah*, to be still, and *manah*, to "measure," or "reckon," in its participial form.

The third stage is that of "realized sanctification," or of being "in the Spirit," where we have—

1. As implied in the dominion of the Spirit, *Hazar-shual*, the "jackal-pen," the fettering of the flesh, though still in us; as it is said, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh."

2. *Beersheba*, the "well of the oath," naturally speaks of assurance as connected with the living water, the Spirit of God as "witness" for Christ in the soul; while—

3. *Biziothiah*, "among Jah's olives," reminds us of the *indwelling* of the Spirit in the Christian; for the olive is that in which the oil resides. Here the names of this section end. There can be no question as to the meaning, and that of the numerals is simple and clear.

Now let any one try but to put these words in a different order, what would be the result? Confusion at once, and in every way; nor could any power of imagination avail to rescue from this. Leave out but one of them, you will find there is a manifest gap in the meaning. Nay, I will go further, and say that, of all the many names upon these lists, I doubt whether there could be *any* substituted for any here, that would convey the meaning that these do: so little is there of chance or of guesswork about it. Every number has its place necessarily in connection with the name attached. Every name must fill its place in its

section; every section must similarly fill its place in connection with the series as a whole; this, again, finds its place as a third group among the cities of the South; these cities of the South have their meaning as the first division of the cities of Judah: and so we might go on. If this be chance, I confess I do not see why letters thrown out at random should not form themselves into words and intelligible sentences. If it be imagination, I cannot understand why it should be able to move so readily in certain ways, and not at all in others. Why should the imagination be so easily able to make "Amam, Shema, Moladah," speak intelligibly, but not Moladah, Amam, Shema; nor yet Shema, Amam, Moladah; nor Moladah, Shema, Amam; nor Shema, Moladah, Amam; nor Amam, Moladah, Shema? Of the nine names together there are 362,880 possible combinations, and just so many chances to one against their being found in this precise order.

And how is it that, burdened with so many conditions as we have found, imagination should be able to marshal hundreds of names in constant obedience to its desires, and transform a barren catalogue into images of exquisite beauty, bathed in heaven's own sunlight, and musical with anthems of devout worshipers?

But this is allegory; and it is decided by many, even in the face of Scripture itself, that allegorizing is but fancy, pure and simple,—specious and alluring, but dangerous, and to be shunned! It is certain that Paul says of parts of Abraham's history, "which things are an allegory." It is certain that one book of Scripture is either "allegory" or a love-song. On the other hand, it is most certain that there has been a profanation of allegory on the part of many, from Origen to the present time, which has roused many against all allegorical interpretation. They "concluded," says Calvin, "that the literal sense was too mean and poor, and that under the outward bark of the letter there lurked deeper mysteries, which cannot be extracted but by beating out allegories. God visited this profanation by a just judgment, when He suffered the pure meaning of Scripture to be buried under false interpretations. I acknowledge that Scripture is a most rich and inexhaustible fountain of all wisdom; but I deny that its fertility consists in the various meanings which any man at his pleasure may assign. Let us know, then, that the true meaning of Scripture is the natural and obvious meaning; and let us embrace and abide by it resolutely."

To which Schaff adds: "This style of interpretation is not *exposition*, but *imposition:* the meaning is not read *out*, but read *in*. History, the grammar, and the dictionary, are the proper aids in Bible study; not the subjective imagination." *

Yet he has to admit that "the apostle Paul himself gives instances of the sacred allegory, although his use of it is so exceptional and so restrained that it does not countenance it as a *method!*"

Is this true, that it is so exceptional and restrained?—or that any fair examination of Scripture will show that it does not countenance the method? If by that is meant, indeed, the setting aside of the literal sense, "the natural and obvious meaning," then, of course, it does not countenance this; but Paul's allegorizing did not either. If there is meant by it simply that there are often deeper meanings than the natural and obvious one, every type in the Old Testament stands really as proof. And going back of the legal system to the book of Genesis, we shall find, from the beginning, God both in speech and act choosing to convey truth to us after this manner. What else does the ordinance of the Sabbath show in the light of the "sabbatism that remains for the people of God"? (Heb. iv. 9.) What, the first paradise, in view of the "tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God"? (Rev. ii. 7.) Adam is thus, as head of his race, a type of Christ the last Adam (Rom. v. 14; 1 Cor. xv. 45); and the consequences, on either side, are compared by the apostle. So his relation to Eve

* Schaff-Herzog Encyclopædia: *s. v.* "Allegorical Interpretation of the Bible."

represents, we are told, that of Christ to the Church (Eph. v. 32). In the history of the fall, the serpent and his doom are not to be taken in the simple letter; nor is the bruised heel of the woman's seed; Abel's sacrifice, in being typical, is simply allegorical. Going on to the flood, the salvation of Noah and his house are declared by Peter to be typical (1 Pet. iii. 21); the rainbow is an allegorical "sign" of the covenant with the new earth. Abraham's history has connected with it the elaborate and minute allegory of Melchizedek; the covenant as to his seed is sealed by an allegorical vision (ch. xv.); Sarah and Hagar, Ishmael and Isaac, are all allegorical; circumcision is a sign; Isaac, after his offering is received back "in a figure" from the dead (Heb. xi. 19). Bethel speaks allegorically, by its ladder, to Jacob; as does the wrestling with the angel upon his return to Canaan. The names of Judah, Zebulon, Issachar, Dan, and Gad, are all allegorized in their father's prophecy. The dreams of the butler and baker, and of Pharaoh afterwards, are all pure allegory.

Yet allegorizing is not countenanced as a method! On the other hand, we may surely assert that to those who go so far it will not be possible to stop at this point. The limits are evidently not marked off: a Joseph separated from his brethren, exalted among the Gentiles, afterward receiving in the time of their necessity his brethren again,—a Benjamin, son of his mother's sorrow, but of his father's right hand,—compel us to go further; while the further we go the wider the field becomes. It is not those who have trodden this path who will be led to believe that it is not a practicable or a safe one.

The extension of the method is, at the same time, its safeguard. Partial views have been the hindrance, or a main one, to consistency; and the knowledge of the distinctive features of the book, with their divisions and numerical structure gives a unity of apprehension most favorable to clear vision. Every specific type finds its place in relation to the whole; and there are checks and counterchecks of all sorts to mere unbridled fancy. We have seen, as to the names of Israel's cities, how well they guard their meaning, and how impossible it seems to read what thoughts we please *into* them. They speak very definitely, in general; even as to the meanings of the words leaving very little margin for difference of understanding. The most part are beyond controversy, and every name ascertained preserves the same meaning in any after-recurrence, which in these lists is not at all infrequent. The cities given to Levi, at the close of all this part, are a rearrangement, almost entirely, of what is already familiar to us; and where, therefore, there is absolutely no room for any change of meaning anywhere: a most rigid and perfect test of accuracy, which they most perfectly endure.

It is earnestly hoped that the interpretation of all this part will receive the patient study which it demands, and which it will again so well repay. Only in this way can it be expected that any well-grounded conviction of its truth will be attained; which, when realized, will not only yield abundant instruction to him who seeks it, but also will confirm and deepen in him the apprehension of the perfect—minute—inspiration of Scripture, and make him better able to draw from the divine fullness which it everywhere contains. It had been intended, in further proof, to append here a brief review of the truths which the cities and boundaries of the tribes of Israel present to us, and the relation in which they are found to one another; but to do this aright would occupy almost as much space as has been already given to them. This must be left, therefore, to the student of the Word to follow out for himself, with the clue afforded,—a task which will be found one of peculiar interest: for it is in this connection and relation of divine truths to each other that these types find so much the power for instruction and blessing for the soul. May we have the diligent heart only that shall be made rich!

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF JUDGES.

JUDGES gives us the history of the people now brought into the land, but under the legal covenant which they have assumed to themselves—a covenant under which no man may stand. Joshua's day past, a breach with God is soon apparent, the effects of which show themselves more and more. The nation disintegrates. The tribes fall asunder, or are only one in bondage to a common enemy; and though God raises up judges and is with the judges for the work of deliverance, even these fail increasingly and their work becomes correspondingly partial and ineffective, Samson at the close even leaving them in captivity, which lasts to Samuel's day.

For us the typical application is but too plain. If Joshua has shown us the portion and blessing of a heavenly people, Judges gives us without any doubt the history of that people. The Church visible is here seen in its decline and corruption, its broken condition and captivity for its sins to different forms of error and evil, along with God's way of deliverance from these exemplified in many partial deliverances. The coming of the Lord, the only complete and final deliverance, could not, of course, be pictured here.

The divisions of the book are three only: —

Div. 1. (Chap. i.–iii. 4.) The Rebellion of the Chosen People.
Div. 2. (Chap. iii. 5–xvi.) Bondage and Deliverances.
Div. 3. (Chap. xvii.–xxi.) The Corruption at Heart manifest.

JUDGES.

DIVISION 1. Chap. i.–iii. 4.)

The Rebellion of the Chosen People.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. i.–ii. 5.)

Mingling with the Nations to be Dispossessed.

Judah: the sovereignty of God, and His sufficiency for faith.

1. (1–8.) God sovereign.

(I. 1–20.)

1. [1] NOW it came to pass after the [a] death of Joshua that the children of Israel asked Jehovah, saying, [b] Who shall go up first for us unto the Canaanite, to fight against him? And Jehovah said, [c] Judah shall go up: behold, I have given the land into his hand. And Judah said unto Simeon his brother, [d] Come up with me into my lot, and let us fight against the Canaan-

[a] Josh. 24. 29. Josh. 1. 1. Gen. 50. 24. *ctr.* Rom. 6. 9.

[b] *cf.* 1 Sam. 30. 7, 8 1 Chr. 14. 10. Acts 13. 1–3. Prov. 3. 5, 6. *ctr.* ch. 20. 18, 23, 28. 1 Ki. 22. 5–28.

[c] Nu. 2. 9. Nu. 10. 14. *cf.* 2 Chr. 20. 21.

[d] *cf.* Is. 31. 14. Eccl. 4. 9–12.

NOTES.

DIV. 1.

THE first division of the book, as introductory to the history of captivity and deliverances which fills the body of it, has evidently two parts. Israel had been warned that, if they mingled themselves with the nations, they would be led to serve their gods. The fulfillment of this is what is now shown: in the first part the mingling, in the second the open breach with the Lord and fall into idolatry. The truth of God abides amid the untruth of the people. He is justified in His sayings, and clear when He is judged.

SUBD. 1.

1. There are here five sections, in which the grading of the lessons is evident, and the commencing decline apparent even from the first. Judah, the leader in the wilderness, the leader, too, in the settlement of the land, the lion-tribe of Jacob's prophecy, comes before us as the leader now, and that by divine appointment; and yet to illustrate this. At the same time, the sovereignty and sufficiency of God are illustrated also in the most striking way, that we may see there is no failure upon His part. With the people it begins, indeed, at the highest,—not, as we might suppose, with the lowest: and this is noteworthy,—a thing of which we have many examples in Scripture; for high and low are alike dependent upon divine grace, and in the littleness of humanity not far removed from one another.

(i.) Israel are at first one; and in that subjection to God, which is true unity: "Who shall go up for *us* against the Canaanites first," they ask, "to fight against them?" And the Lord not only names the champion, but assures success: "Judah shall go up; behold, I have delivered the land into his hand." We have before seen what is the reason, spiritually, of Judah being thus in the front; and that the spirit of "praise" is the spirit of power. Necessarily: for it puts God first, and implies devotedness to Him,—a joy in obedience which gives courage and enthusiasm. The cause is God's, and it must prosper. If Judah be weak, Israel as a whole must languish.

But Judah *is*, in fact, weak already. The land is pledged to him by God, and to him alone. The word is precise, and none may add to it any more than diminish from it: to add to it is really to diminish from it. Yet Judah turns to Simeon, his brother, for help, as if the promise of God were not enough. "Come with me," he says, "into my lot, and let us fight against the Canaanites; and I will go with thee into thy lot."

ite, and I also will go with thee into thy lot; and [e] Simeon went with him. And Judah went up; and [f] Jehovah gave the Canaanite and the Perizzite into their hand: and they smote them in [g] Bezek, ten thousand men. And they found Adonibezek in Bezek, and fought against him, and smote the Canaanite and the Perizzite. And Adonibezek fled; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes. And Adonibezek said, Seventy kings, with their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gleaned under my table; [h] as I have done, God has requited me. And they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died there. And the children of Judah fought against [i] Jerusalem, and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and set the city on fire.

2. (9–15.) The activities of faith.

[2] And afterward the children of Judah went down to fight against the [j] Canaanite dwelling in the hill-country, and in the south, and in the low country. And Judah went against the Canaanite that dwelt in [k] Hebron, (now the name of Hebron before was Kirjath-arba,) and they smote Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmai.

[e] *ctr.* Gen. 49. 5. *cf.* Josh. 19. 9.

[f] ver. 19, 22

[g] *cf.* 1 Sam. 11. 8.

[h] *cf.* Lev. 24. 20. Esth. 7. 10. Esth. 9. 1-10. Rev. 18. 6. *ctr.* 1 Pet. 3. 9.

[i] *cf.* Josh. 15. 63. ver. 21. 1 Chr. 11. 4-7.

[j] Josh. 11. 21. Luke 1. 39.

[k] Josh. 15. 13, 14. *cf* Gen. 13. 18, etc. Nu. 13. 22.

A little thing this will seem even to most, in a day when men supplement God's word after their own pleasure. But is it not, in fact, unbelief in God's truth or power, that is at work in it? Simeon, Judah's brother in a special way, may be for him the most suited of all companions, and God even has linked their inheritance, in a special way, together: but all this is no argument, if God's word is to be followed, and be the perfect word that indeed it is. Simeon, "hearing," stands, as we have seen, for communion, which all right "hearing" surely is; and communion, can it not aid worship against the Canaanites,—in the spiritual warfare to which God's Israel is called? Yes, in its place, but not out of it; wherever the word of God is given its place also, for what communion can there be apart from this? And do we not need the reminder that communion and the authority of the Word must go together, and that what purports to be communion can never really be made to eke out a worship which has lost the simplicity of obedience which certifies it to be truly that. We shall find, accordingly, in due time, the loss of power which is the result.

Such things are not, however, always at once discovered. Judah and Simeon go together, and the Canaanites and Perizzites are delivered into their hand: they smite in Bezek a host ten thousand strong. In Bezek they find, also, Adonibezek, whom they pursue and maim, inflicting the judgment of God upon him for cruelties of this kind inflicted upon others. He himself owns it as this,—a remarkable witness to Israel of how and why God was against the Canaanites; and that He whose judgments they were executing was over all. His name goes with the lesson: Bezek* means "fettered," and so were these hosts that they destroyed; Adonibezek, "lord of Bezek," it being doubtless his chief city, but thus also and literally, "a lord in fetters." So it is with the freest, when in opposition to God, and with the mightiest, in His hand.

He is brought to Jerusalem, only to die there; and the city itself is smitten with the sword and burnt; for the "foundation of peace" must be righteousness, and the Jebusite city is only an hypocrisy, though few may believe this now.

(ii.) Judah proceeds to other victories; and here we have the repetition of a story familiar to us, mostly in the words in which it has been given us before.

* *Bezeq*, literally "in a fetter."

And from thence he went against the inhabitants of [l]Debir; now the name of Debir before was Kirjath-sepher. And [m]Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife. And Othniel, the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it; and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife. And it came to pass, when she came, that she urged him to ask of her father the field. And she sprang down from the ass; and Caleb said unto her, [n]What wouldst thou? And she said unto him, Give me a blessing; for a land of the [o]south hast thou given me: give me also springs of water. And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

3. (16.) The Kenite nest in Judah.

[3]And the children of the [p]Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up from the [q]city of palms with the children of Judah into the wilderness of Judah which is in

[l] Josh. 15. 7, 15.

[m] Josh. 15. 16-19.

[n] *cf.* Esth. 7. 2. Jno. 14. 13. Mat. 13. 12.

[o] *cf.* Psalm 126. 4. Ps. 63. 1.

[p] ch. 4. 11. 1 Sa. 15. 6. 1 Sa. 30. 29.

[q] Deut. 34. 3. ch. 3. 13. 2 Chr. 28. 15.

The taking of Hebron and the destruction of the Anakim, which had been before ascribed to Caleb, are here ascribed to Judah, the tribe to which Caleb belongs; but Caleb himself appears in the next incident, in which Othniel and Achsah also are found as before. Scripture is not afraid of a repetition which emphasizes God's delight in the achievements of His people, among which Achsah's request for the water-springs figures alongside of Othniel's capture of Debir. How little should we, perhaps, think of putting these things together! And, indeed, the spiritual interpretation must be found in order rightly to understand it. Then Othniel, the "lion of God," is the type of the heroism of faith, which, like the son of Kenaz, finds strength in Another, and its helpmeet in that simplicity which claims and receives the fullness of the Spirit for making good its portion in the land. These two must come together in the Canaan-dweller even now; and where they are found, a "book of remembrance" will not be wanting. And still the rule is, "Conquer, and work the land"; but it must be said to-day, there are few Othniels, fewer Achsahs, fewest of all those in whom the two are united. The Lord increase their race!

Thus, as we have had in the first part of this section the sovereignty and sufficiency of God for His people, we have in the second part the relationships of faith in those who apprehend it. And let us remember that Caleb, Othniel, Achsah, are Judeans—worshipers. Worship has to do intimately with the things here spoken of, which test and manifest it. With Caleb, the "whole-hearted," this is easily seen; but we have found, also, before, how Judah shines in the battlefield, and the quiet activity which Achsah implies — Achsah, or "anklet," she of the decorated *foot?* — is not less really intelligible. Altogether we have, on the whole, a bright picture to begin Judges with. Even in the next section, however, the clouds are gathering.

(iii.) We find here notice of the Kenite settling among the children of Judah in the South. They are the Midianite tribe out of which Moses' wife had come, thus descendants of Abraham by Keturah, linked in this double way with Israel, and who, upon Moses' invitation, had accompanied them into the land. But they never unite themselves with the people of God, though settling among them, and are viewed in Balaam's prophecy as separate to the last. The play upon the name there—"thou puttest thy nest (*ken*) in the rock"—shows, evidently, the meaning of it. They are Midianites, men of the world, but not at strife with Israel, as others of their race. Nay, they make a nest for themselves among them, and it is for the nest they are there. They come now and dwell on the southern border of Judah in the wilderness, their natural home, south of Arad, the place of the "wild ass." They keep their wilderness manners in the land,—are not at home there, though they may like the security it affords.

the south of Arad; and they came and dwelt with the people.

4. (17.) The world exposed.

4 And Judah went with Simeon his brother; and they smote the Canaanite dwelling at Zephath, and executed the ban upon it; and the name of the city was called Hormah.

5. (18–20.) Measure for measure.

5 And Judah took [r] Gaza and her territory, and [s] Ashkelon and her territory, and [t] Ekron and her territory. And Jehovah was with Judah, and he took possession of the hill-country, but [u] could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had [v] chariots of iron. And they gave Hebron to [w] Caleb, as Moses had said, and he drove out from thence the three sons of Anak.

(I. 21.)

The Benjamite with the Jebusite.

2. And the [x] Jebusite dwelling in Jerusalem the children of Benjamin did not drive out; but the Jebusite dwelleth [y] with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.

r ch. 16. 1.
s Zeph. 2. 4.
t 1 Sam. 5. 10.
u *ctr.* Josh. 1. 5. Phil. 4. 13.
v. Josh. 17. 16–18. *cf.* ch. 4. 3. Deut. 20. 1.
w Josh. 14. 6–14.
x *cf.* ver. 8.
y Deut. 20. 16, 17.

All this describes but too well the condition of many who attach themselves, in every dispensation, to the people of God, yet are not of them. The victories of the children of Judah invite them and make way for them; but their presence is no strength, and no sign for good.

(iv.) Next we find Judah with Simeon in his lot. Hormah here had been so named before, being in the territory of Arad when the children of Israel overthrew its king and executed the ban upon his cities (Num. xxi. 3). There we looked at it as the representation of the power of the world in Satan's hand to hinder the progress of the people of God. In the time that had elapsed it had revived again,—how easily the world recovers power!—and now is called Zephath, "overlaying." This is what the world is, indeed,—an overlaying, bright and glittering enough, of what is devoted to destruction, a crust over the curse. It is the part of Simeon (communion) to take off the false show and reveal the evil,—to make Zephath Hormah, as it really is.

(v.) Judah goes on to conquest; and now three of the Philistine cities fall,—Gaza, Ashkelon, Ekron. Jehovah is with him: but then, most strangely as it would seem, we hear of a limit to the power which he displays. "Jehovah was with Judah, and he obtained possession of the mountains, but the inhabitants of the valley were not to be driven out, because they had chariots of iron"! What a collocation that seems! Omnipotence was stopped, as it would seem, by chariots of iron; and so often it does seem,—nay, in a sense, even it is true; for the removal of difficulties is often conditioned upon the simplicity of a faith which (alas!) is so little simple. Had not God said that He had delivered the land into Judah's hand? Yes; and Judah had turned round to Simeon, his brother, for help, as if no promise had been given. Judah has *measured* the might of Jehovah; and *Jehovah measures* the strength put forth for him. Thus the divine ways are equal; and Judah loses the fullness of a blessing he cannot grasp. May we give heed to this!

On the other hand, it is in contrast, yet in conformity with this, that we are here reminded of Caleb's complete success against the terrible sons of Anak. Faith shall not suffer defeat, be men at large—be the people of God, even—unbelieving as they may.

(2.) Benjamin now follows Judah and Simeon, but has only one verse devoted to him here. And in it we find him—little as Judah may show us the ideal of faith—in contrast even with Judah. This is marked: for Judah has already taken Jerusalem and burned it with fire, as we have seen; while Benjamin, without an effort that we read of, permits the Jebusites to dwell there with

Luz transformed to Bethel, but revived elsewhere.

(I. 22-26.)

3. And the house of [z]Joseph, they also went up to Bethel, and Jehovah was with them. And the house of Joseph sent to [a]espy Bethel; and the name of the city before was Luz. And the guards saw a man coming forth out of the city; and they said unto him, Show us now the entrance of the city, and we will [b]show thee mercy. And he showed them the entrance to the city; and they smote the city with the edge of the sword; but the man and all his family they let go. And the man went into the land of the Hittites, and built a [c]city, and called the name of it Luz: that is its name unto this day.

z Josh. 16. 1, etc.

a Deut. 1. 22. Josh. 2. 1.

b 1 Sa. 30. 15.

c cf. Gal. 5, 9.

themselves.* This, too, while Benjamin was the warrior tribe, as is plain in all the notices of it. The failure is thus mere indifference; and the breach of the Lord's express command is as plain as can be.

No need for many words about it: yet how important that it should be here—that we should see the true condition of things as we open the book. That this failure is in *Benjamin* also, when we realize the spiritual significance of Benjamin as Joshua has declared it to us, deepens the meaning. Benjamin is the apprehension of Christ, as having our place in Him—being identified with Him; the knowledge of the new man, as expressed in Colossians, "where there is neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all." Benjamin in alliance with Canaanites is the utter contradiction and opposite of all this. The forgetfulness of our place in Christ is the core of all unfaithfulness to God, of refusal of His judgment upon the world, of toleration of what is evil in His sight, of false associations and inconsistency of walk. Thus the relation of this to the long tale of evil that follows in the book is unmistakably plain.

(3.) The third section seems to continue this assurance of Benjamin's weakness. Bethel belongs to Benjamin, as we know; yet it is the house of Joseph that takes it out of the enemy's hand. Lying upon Ephraim's border, there is, of course, a reason for this: but the spiritual reason always underlies the natural. Bethel, we are reminded, was, in Canaanitish hands, Luz; and the capture of the city was, of course, its transformation. "Separation," which Luz means, has many Canaanite forms. The selfishness of the natural heart makes necessarily for disintegration in the world; and while it may seek alliance for its own ends, this is in itself but a form of division. This is only the effect of being away from God: one must then, because without faith in Him, toil in self-service. But because the world is away from God, "separation" *is* necessary; "be not unequally yoked together" results from "touch not the unclean thing." The line must be indeed drawn, but so drawn that God shall be owned and honored, and then Luz becomes Bethel, as we have elsewhere seen, the relationship of God's house is capable of being realized (2 Cor. vi. 14-18). It is simple enough how Joseph may help Benjamin in this—Joseph, not simply Ephraim: Manasseh's earnest pressing on is needed to give the full Joseph-character. Seeking to win Christ, all alien things drop off; and in that path we shall find none but those who seek Him. Bethel with all its blessedness is thus surely attained.

But there is another lesson in this place also. One Canaanite is spared out of the city; and there is no similarity here to Rahab's case, no faith resembling hers. He does not take his place henceforth with Israel, but goes away into the land of the Hittites, and among these "sons of terror" a new Luz springs up. The tree, though cut down to the root, may revive from the root; and the old

* Jerusalem lay on the border, between these two tribes, the main part of the city, with the citadel, lying in Benjamin. It may have been only what lay within their boundary that Judah burned. The citadel was strong, as we see, in David's time.

(I. 27-36.)

1. Manasseh: failure in concentered energy.

4. [1]And [d]Manasseh did not take possession of Bethshean and her dependencies, nor Taanach and her dependencies, nor [drive out] the inhabitants of Dor and her dependencies, nor the inhabitants of Ibleam and her dependencies, nor the inhabitants of Megiddo and

d cf. Nu. 1. 34, 35 with Nu. 26. 34.

error, left as no longer formidable, may even go afar to sojourn, yet survive and have to be met once more. Indeed, with how many of these Canaanitish cities do we find it so!

(4.) What follows is a dismal story of failure. In part a repetition from the book of Joshua, it brings together the items of God's bill of account against the people, as divided among the tribes, six of which are here named. It does not follow that the rest were guiltless, however; indeed, Benjamin has been already spoken of; nor does it follow that all the failure even of the tribes mentioned is reported here. That Tyre is not among the cities named as remaining in the hands of the Canaanites, seems a proof against this, hardly to be doubted; Endor is found also in Joshua (xvii. 11), and not here. Those enumerated are given as representative, and with a higher meaning running through all: and this we think can be established, although some of the names are difficult to interpret.

(i.) Manasseh heads the tribes on this accusing list; significantly enough if we remember that Manasseh stands for progress, the forgetting what is behind and pressing on. Yet he has a record of five cities left to the Canaanite with depending villages, and that when he had the power also to drive them out. How could the loss of energy be more plainly shown?

The names are, of course, significant: first, Bethshean, "the house of quiet," which as connected with Manasseh and with Issachar (Josh. xvii. 11), would speak of that practical rest of heart which a right walk furnishes to the one who presses on. There is nothing to draw such an one back from the pursuit of what is before him: no entanglement with the world around, no alarm of conscience, or need of self-occupation. The loss of Bethshean is thus a most serious one; and yet how may, in fact, a failed Manasseh consent to such a loss, bribed by some dishonorable bargain with the Canaanite!

In the second place we have Taanach, "sandy soil," whose import may be seen in its connection with Gath-rimmon among the Levitical cities (Josh. xxi. 25). Taanach's lesson, as that of the wilderness, is the weaning from other dependency than upon God alone—a thing again of first importance for a Manassite. But Taanach must be retained or Bethshean cannot be: dependence and rest are linked inseparably together.

We have next Dor, the most obvious meaning of which is "generation." In its application it may naturally speak of that limiting of human life which it implies: "One generation goeth and another cometh." The word means in its first significance a "circle," and a collection of tents in a Bedouin encampment (generally circular) is called a *dowar;* from which Parkhurst supposes the application to contemporaries. Coming as it does, after a memorial of the wilderness, in which under the ban of God a whole Israelitish generation perished, it cannot but impress one the more, as intended to convey such meaning. And the brevity of human life may well impress deeply a Manassite: "So teach us to number our days," says the Psalmist, "that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." The loss of Dor implies the slipping back into the world's error, gross as it is, of ignoring what none can deny, and this is followed naturally by the loss of—

Ibleam, "it consumes the people," which in the fourth place and in connection with the last word, one cannot be at a loss to interpret. Sin is indeed the devourer of the people, mightier than the Balaam whose name here it bears, and alas, prevailing how much, against the people of God themselves. Can a child of Manasseh forget this also? Surely even too much. None of these cities were *wholly* gone from them, but a rabble of Canaanites had practical possession.

Megiddo is the last of these names, meaning, I believe, "the manifestation of

her dependencies; but the Canaanites [e] would dwell in that land. And it was so that, when Israel was strong, they made the Canaanites [f] tributary, and did not utterly drive them out.

2. Ephraim: failure in increase.

[2] And [g] Ephraim did not drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer, but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them.

3. Zebulon: failure in consecration.

[3] [h] Zebulon did not drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the inhabitants of Nahalol; but the Canaanite dwelt among them, and became tributary.

[e] Josh. 17.11–13.

[f] Josh. 16.10. 1 Ki. 9. 21. *cf.* Gal. 5.17.

[g] *cf.* Num. 1. 32. 33 with Nu. 26. 37. Josh. 17.14–18.

[h] *cf.* Nu. 1. 30. 31 with Nu. 26. 27.

it": and this, under the number that speaks of responsibility and recompense, carries us on, of necessity, to the day of account and manifestation. The realization of this must be lost, if the things of which the last names remind us have been. Megiddo must go with Dor and Ibleam. Plainly these names, the whole of them, are a series in close relation with one another: a meaning runs through them which must have guided in some way the hand of the writer. Was the wisdom in himself, or beyond himself then? Can these simple histories be, after all, prophetic? The Jews in fact speak of them as "the former prophets;" and we have proof that in them "holy men that were of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

(ii.) Ephraim's failure naturally follows Manasseh's, inasmuch as in the order of attainment, as we have seen long since (Gen. xlviii. *n*), Ephraim is dependent on Manasseh. Gad on the other side of Jordan stands in similar dependence upon Reuben, and indeed approaches Ephraim very nearly in this place. Ephraim loses but one place to the Canaanites, or at least there is but one loss recorded—that of Gezer. It is a most important place, however, being a Levitical city, and for what we have found it typify as that. Gezer means "isolation," "a place cut off;" as belonging to the Canaanites it is but the expression of natural independence, as away from God. But as Israelite and Levitical it speaks of that "land cut off" into which Christ has borne the sins of His people, and in which the independence of man is seen in its awful reality of isolation from God.* How the awful reality, if it be indeed entered into by the soul, will produce in it a horror of the liberty man loves away from God; and how this will turn to fruitfulness in joyful dependence upon Him who has brought us out of that darkness into His marvelous light, needs little telling. Alas for us, when the Canaanite hold upon Gezer has not been loosed! Ephraim's one city lost is no light loss!

(iii.) Zebulon loses two cities, Kitron and Nahalol; the first of which is nearly the same word as *Keturoth*, which in Ezek. xlvi. 22 is rendered by the Septuagint, Vulgate, Syriac, and Arabic, "small," and thus taken to represent Kattath, which in Josh. xix. 15 stands immediately before Nahalol. *Keturoth* is, however, generally taken, as in our common version, to mean "joined": which Hengstenberg (on Ezekiel) refuses again, for "fuming, smoking," undoubtedly the common, if not exclusive, sense in scriptural Hebrew. In the Chaldee (Dan. v. 6), however, the noun means "joints"; and the Talmudists use the verb in the same form as "joining."

On the whole, the Hebrew certainly favors the meaning of "fuming," either in the sense of perfuming or of using incense; above all, the latter. The identification with Kattath is very uncertain, and in the word of God every change in a name must have significance. In connection with Zebulon, where "dwelling in relationship" to God is plainly the thought, the lack of incense would have

* Will the reader note here a partial return to a former thought, disclaimed in the first line of the notes (Vol. I., page 342.), but which is not really inconsistent with the fact that atonement is not made or figured by the scapegoat. That it is not is plain from the passage in Leviticus; and yet it is not unsuitable, that where deliverance from the burden of sin is most fully proclaimed, there should be the tender and solemn reminder of the place in which this was borne and put away;—a thought which is needed to make the liberty derived from this a *holy* liberty, a deep and inward deliverance. Yet it is not in fact "death"—this "land cut off"—but a deeper thought.

4. Asher: failure in experience.

[i] "Asher did not drive out the inhabitants of Accho, nor the inhabitants of Zidon, nor of Ahlab, nor of Achzib, nor of Helbah, nor of Aphik, nor of Rehob; but the Asherites [j] dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: for they did not drive them out.

5. Naphtali: failure in enjoyed relationship to God.

[k] Naphtali did not drive out the inhabitants of Bethshemesh, nor the inhabitants of Bethanath; but he dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; and the inhabitants of Bethshemesh and the inhabitants of Bethanath became tributary to them.

i cf. Num. 1. 40, 41 with Nu. 26. 47.

j cf. Gen. 13. 11-13. Rev. 2. 13-17. Ps. 106. 35.

k cf. Nu. 1. 42, 43 with Nu. 26. 50.

sad significance indeed—the lack of prayer and praise, along with that also of which Nahalol speaks—"pasture." These things do indeed go largely together, are enjoyed or lost together.

(iv.) Asher, under the number of experience, follows with a long list of cities; and here we find, for the first time, an expression which reveals at once a still lower state of things. "The Asherites," it is said, "dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land"—not simply, bad enough as that would be, the Canaanites among the Asherites. It is easy to understand it, inasmuch as the Phœnician sea-board was in the inheritance of Asher, and the prosperous, mercantile cities were never, even in the days of David and Solomon, brought into even modified subjection to Israel. They were then friends and allies, but not servants, although of the race of which it had been long before said, "A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren."

Three of the seven names that are found here are absent from the list in Joshua, and this, with the doubt attaching to the meaning of two of these, makes the first three difficult of interpretation. Of these Accho, the first, is given by some from the Arabic as "hot sand," or "sand heated by the sun;" but if taken as Hebrew, it would be, rather, "straitened." Zidon means "taking the prey." Ahlab is said to mean "fatness," the meaning given also (and rightly) to Helbah. It might be a compound word and signify "brother in heart;" but of none of these can I speak with any assurance.

The last four are plainer, and connect more simply together, three of them occuring in similar connection in the list in Joshua. Of these Achzib, "a flow indeed," has been already taken as applying to the Spirit. With this Helbah, "fatness," Aphik, "a channel," and Rehob, "room," are easily associated, and the last two have been already considered in this way (page 151). Together, the loss of these cities implies much spiritual loss to the failing Asherite: the *experience* (Achzib is in the fourth place) of the Spirit's energy; the "fatness" which speaks of plenteous nourishment; the ability to convey to others the blessing we have received; and lastly, liberty and enlargement of heart. How necessary these things are to true Christian happiness needs little to be affirmed.

(v.) Naphtali comes in the next place with two cities, Bethshemesh and Bethanath, names which are simple enough as "house of the sun" and "house of response." They require not much interpretation either: for if still "there be many that say, Who will show us any good?" every believing soul will with the psalmist be able for himself to find it in the light of God's countenance. This is alone our sun, and "a pleasant thing" indeed "it is to behold" it.

Bethanath, the "house of response," speaks of what surely goes with this,—the *answer* of God to the soul that seeks Him; the answer, too, again, of the soul to God: that sweet and tender intimacy of fellowship which is strength for all the way.

The "Beths" in both cases imply what is settled and abiding. The "house" is, as we say, the *home*, the place of relationship and of the interchange of affection.

The greater the blessing here, the greater the loss, of course. Naphtali, the

6. Dan: overcome instead of overcoming.

[6]And the Amorites [l]forced the children of Dan into the hill-country; for they would not suffer them to come down into the valley; and the Amorites would dwell in Mount Heres, in Ajalon, and in Shaalbim; but the hand of the house of Joseph prevailed, and they became tributary: and the border of the Amorites was from the ascent of Akrabbim, from the rock and upward.

[l] *cf.* ver. 32.

(II. 1–5.)

Governmental recompense.

5. And the [m]angel of Jehovah came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said: I made you come up out of Egypt, and brought you into the land of which I sware unto your fathers; and I said, I will [n]never break my covenant with you; and ye shall make [o]no covenant with the inhabitants of this land: ye shall [p]break down their altars; but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this? Wherefore I also said, I will [q]not drive them out from before you, and they shall be in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare to you. And so it was, when the angel of Jehovah said these words unto them, the people lifted up their voice and [r]wept. And they called the name of that place Bochim; and there they [s]sacrificed unto Jehovah.

[m] ch. 6. 8.

[n] Gen. 17. 7.

[o] Ex. 34. 12. Deut. 7. 2.

[p] Deut. 7. 5. Deut. 12. 3. ch. 6. 25.

[q] Josh. 23. 13.

[r] 1 Sa. 30. 4.

[s] *cf.* Gen. 12. 7, etc. ch. 6. 18–21.

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. ii. 6–iii. 4.)

The Breach with Jehovah.

1. (II. 6–10.) The obedience in Joshua's day.

NOW [t]when Joshua had sent away the people, the children of Israel went every man to his inheritance to take possession of the land. And the people

[t] Josh. 21. 43.

struggler, needs this sanctuary home that he may be the overcomer that he is called to be. Alas, like the other tribes here, he is losing character; and the precious things which God has made his own are but witnesses of a glory which is now departed from him.

(vi.) Dan closes the tale of ruin with worse sorrow. He recedes from the seventh place in the Joshua list to the sixth in this; and the history shows the significance of the change. For the Danites are forced by the Amorites out of the valley, the low level so necessary for true spiritual judgment; and they dwelt, besides, in Mount Heres, the "mountain of the sun," in Ajalon and in Shaalbim. The last two speak, as we have elsewhere seen, of the judgment of the world, in its apprehensiveness of God, and in its hollowness at heart; if Mount Heres be in the same line with these, it would naturally speak of the world's self-glorification. The Danite would thus lose with these the ability for true judgment; and it is striking that it is to the Amorite (the "talker"?) that he loses them. The Amorite, we are told, had occupied all this land from its southern border.

(5) And now we find the pronounced judgment of God upon this wide-spread departure from His plain command. The angel of Jehovah who had in Joshua's day taken His place with them at Gilgal as Captain of the Lord's host, now comes from Gilgal to Bochim ("weepers") to announce to them His acceptance in righteous government of their own decision. They would not drive out the nations, and so He would not; and the consequences of this, again and again predicted, would come upon them. The people weep and sacrifice to Jehovah; but there is no real repentance: and this first step downward is soon followed by another in which the breach between them and Him is consummated.

SUBD. 2.

(1.) Idolatry had evidently never really been quite rooted out from among

"served Jehovah all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of Jehovah that he did for Israel. And [v]Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Jehovah, died, a hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in Mount Ephraim, on the north of the hill Gaash. And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and there arose [w]another generation after them who knew not Jehovah, nor yet the work that he had done for Israel.

2. (11. 11-15.) Israel's strange gods.

[7]And the children of Israel did the [x]evil thing in Jehovah's eyes, and served the Baals. And they forsook

u cf. Deut. 5. 3, 4. Josh. 24. 31.

v Josh. 24, 29, 30.

w cf. Ex. 1. 8. Deut. 6. 7, 20.

x ch. 3. 7.

the children of Israel. Long afterward God reminds them by Amos how in the wilderness they had borne the tabernacle of Moloch, and Chiun their images, the star of their god which they had made for themselves (Am. v. 26); and Joshua's exhortation at the close of his life to "put away the strange gods that were among" them, shows that even when they entered into the land, they had not fully cleansed themselves, nor turned to God with a perfect heart. True, externally no foreign worship was tolerated in Joshua's time, and in his days and those of the elders that outlived him, Israel generally served the Lord. But with the next generation decline became manifest. They had not seen the great works of the Lord, and the brief space that had elapsed was ample for forgetfulness. "Out of sight" was speedily "out of mind."

The Christian Church, in the same way, scarcely stood in any integrity during the lifetime of the apostles. Early in Paul's day he told the Thessalonians, "the mystery of iniquity doth already work;" and this, when John wrote his first epistle, had ripened into "many antichrists." The Church of uninspired history already retains but little semblance of its first condition. "As in water face answereth to face, so does the heart of man to man." And so in its general features does the Israelite history to that of the present dispensation. This is what makes the book of Judges so exceedingly important for us. We have here as in a glass, our own faces spiritually: a photograph of divine light that will not flatter.

There is a significant change in this connection of the name of Joshua's inheritance, from Timnath-*serah* to Timnath-*heres*. The one word is simply the reversal of the letters of the other, but the change of meaning is striking, if with Fuerst and others we take the latter to mean, not "sun," but "clay." An "*abundant* portion" becomes thus a "portion of clay." How striking if we think of the spiritual meaning! How indeed thus does the abundant heavenly portion into which Christ has entered vanish from sight, leaving Him only a "portion of clay"—an earthly one, expressed in its grossest form! And has not the Church in its decline lost sight of the heavenly portion and changed it, as it were, into mere earthliness? Or in its loss of the Lord as the Heavenly Man at the right hand of God, has it not, so to speak, left Him in the grave? All the more does this meaning come out in the position of this portion as given both in Joshua and here, "on the north of the hill Gaash," the *mystery* side of the "*quaking*" earth out of which the Lord rose! It is as we realize or not that of which this speaks, that we shall give our answer here. That quaking of the earth has its significance: that which is shaken can be removed. The "yet once more I shake, not the earth only, but also heaven," signifies, according to the apostle (Heb. xii. 26, 27), the "removal of those things that are shaken." For faith this was now taking place, and out of a judged world there was already beginning the call of a heavenly people.

(2.) Man must worship something. He has a religious instinct, an apprehension of some Power or Powers to which he is related, out of which he may per-

Jehovah the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and went after other gods, the gods of the peoples round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked Jehovah to anger. And they forsook Jehovah, and served [y]Baal and the Ashtoreths. And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and he [z]gave them into the

[y] Nu. 22. 41, etc.

[z] *cf.* Josh. 7. 12. Ps. 106. 41, 42.

haps reason himself, but which requires reason, however perverted, to accomplish this. Hence atheism is a disease of cultivation, and where it exists has still in general to do homage to what it denies, as in the Comtean worship of humanity itself. Hence fulfilling the well-known saying that if there were no God, it would be still necessary to invent one.

The Comtean worship reveals more than this: for in truth it is humanity that man, fallen away from God, everywhere worships. He may invest this with more or less of the attributes of deity: because he is not a being groping his way out of native darkness, as so many would persuade us; the inspired version of heathenism is more honoring to God, if more condemnatory of the creature, that "when they *knew* God, they glorified Him not as God, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." They had not to *invent God*, but rather to invent the god that they desired; and the god that they desired was one like themselves, a being who could sympathize with the lusts and passions of a corrupt nature. Hence "professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the image of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man."

Higher they could not go; but they could go lower. In the creatures below man they could find represented the lower instincts, cravings, appetites of man, with no check of conscience or morality. In the beast there is an *un*moral nature, which may appear to sanction what in man is *im*moral. Thus came in the bestial gods of Egypt and elsewhere: "birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things" (Rom. i. 23), became to them the images of the divine glory; and the infinite degradation degraded more and more the worshipers: they were assimilated to what they worshiped, and received back in divine government "that recompense of their error that was meet." The imagination of man was employed to throw a halo around what was utterly abominable. Taught by the sacred lips of parents, maintained by law, becoming more venerable continually with the passing of generations, conscience itself lost almost the power of protest against whatever enormities, and even came to confirm and enforce the putting of good for evil and evil for good, of darkness for light and of light for darkness.

Such was the devilish system to which Israel, with their back on God, now turned. "The children of Israel did the evil thing"—what was *emphatically* that—"in Jehovah's eyes, and served the Baals." "They forsook Jehovah, and served Baal and the Ashtoreths."

Their gods, being the product of their own minds, were necessarily many as their minds were. The plural in both cases, it is allowed, stands not for the multiplicity of images, but for different modifications of the deity himself. Baal was in no wise one, as Jehovah was; nor was even Ashtoreth the same goddess everywhere, although the general idea was one. Baal means "husband" and "lord," with the primary idea of ownership. A bird even is a "baal of wing"; and a hairy man a "baal of hair." It does not stand so much for the idea of one who rules therefore, which is rather *adon*, from *din*, to "discern," to "judge." Yet it has no necessary bad sense either: in that of "husband," God uses it of His own relation to the people: "thy Maker is thy baal;" "(though I was a baal unto them." (Isa. liv. 5; Jer. xxxi. 32.) Nevertheless, God finally repudiates the word. By Hosea He says, "Thou shalt call me *Ishi* [my husband], and thou shalt no more call me *Baali*: for I will take away the names of the Baals out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name." (Hos. ii. 16, 17.)

hand of spoilers, and they spoiled them; and he sold them into the hand of their enemies round about, and they could not any longer stand before their enemies. [a] Whithersoever they went out, the hand of Jehovah was upon them for evil, according as Jehovah had said, yea, as Jehovah had sworn to them: and they were straitened sore.

3. (ii. 16–18.) The judges as instruments of revival.

[3] And Jehovah [b] raised up judges, and they saved them out of their spoilers' hand; and yet they [c] hearkened not unto their judges, but went whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned [d] quickly out of the way in which their fathers had walked, obeying the commandments of Jehovah: not so did they. And when Jehovah raised up judges for them, then Jehovah was [e] with the judge, and saved them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for it [f] repented Jehovah because of their

[a] Deut. 28. 25.

[b] Acts 13.20. *cf.* Ps. 72. 2–4.

[c] Acts 7. 51, etc.

[d] Ex. 32. 8. Gal. 1. 6. Ps. 106. 13.

[e] Josh. 1. 5. 1 Sam. 3.19.

[f] Ps. 106. 45. Ex. 32. 14.

The difference here is not hard to be made out. *Ishi* is, literally, "my man"; woman being *Ishah*, as "taken out of man." (Gen. ii. 23.) *Ishi* speaks, therefore, of one who fills the due place implied by the relationship, man being divinely fitted to woman, and woman to man. The *baal* might be in the relationship, and not rightly fill it. When God says, "*I* was a *baal* to them," or "Thy Maker is thy *baal*," it is the fact of who it is that is in this relation which assures us of the blessing implied. But *baal* thus being at the best indifferent, it is at last disclaimed, with all the abhorrence due to the false gods that had usurped Jehovah's place.

Baal stands thus for the power implied in possession, apart from any thought of how it may be used, as Ashtoreth speaks (comp. Josh. xxi. 27) of fruitfulness here in the nature-sense. Both might be used (and were) in the vilest applications; and unitedly they reveal the mystery of iniquity that is native in the heart of man. Power he seeks,—to have things in his hand: that, without question of how he will use it,—irresponsible power; while, underneath, the "lusts that war in his members" hold him as a poor slave to their will. Baal and Ashtoreth are twin worships, the natural complements of each other: both meaning independence of God, and together self-bondage; in which is found the awful tyranny of a more malignant despotism, that of the adversary of God and man alike, the "spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience." (Eph. ii. 2.)

Satan is thus the "prince of this world," and, spite of Christianity,—man, alas, not accepting the deliverance,—"the god" also "of this *age*." (2 Cor. iv. 4, *Greek*.) This he will be until the Lord comes, and he is cast into the "bottomless pit." (Rev. xx. 2.) This makes the effort at world-reform so hopeless, and is the only thing that can account for the history of Christendom. The Baals and the Ashtoreths have no more been kept out of the Christian than out of the Jewish inclosure: "while men slept, the enemy came" has repeated itself in the history of every spiritual movement. And as surely as in Israel's history here the Lord's chastening hand has had to be upon His people. Spoilers had spoiled them, and they could no longer stand before their enemies; and this for us also is, "as Jehovah has said—yea, as Jehovah has sworn": nor is He "man, that He should lie; nor the son of man, that He should repent."

(3.) The means of deliverance was by the Lord's raising up judges—a remedy as plain as can be, though effectual only to a limited extent, the obstinate return to the old sins being consequent upon the passing away of the judge, if not before. Yet the remedy showed plainly the disease: deliverance could be only by *revival*, and this would be in self-judgment as to their condition, and return to

groaning by reason of those that oppressed them and crushed them.

4. (II.19-III. 4.) The nations left to prove Israel.

19 'But so it was, when the judge [g]died, that they returned and corrupted themselves beyond their fathers, in going after other gods to serve them and bow down to them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way. 20 And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and he said, Because this nation hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and hath not hearkened to my voice, 21 I also [h]will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died, 22 that through them I may [i]prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of Jehovah to walk therein, as their fathers kept it, or not. 23 And Jehovah left those nations, without driving them out hastily; and he gave them not up into the hand of Joshua.

3 Now these are the nations that Jehovah left, to prove Israel by them —as many as had not known all the wars of Canaan: 2 only that the generations of the children of Israel might know war by [j]learning it, such as before did not know it: 3 five lords of [k]the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, even the Sidonians and the Hivites dwelling in the Lebanon hill-country, from Mount Baal-hermon as far as the entrance to Hamath. 4 And they were to prove Israel by, to know whether they would hearken to the commandments of Jehovah which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.

g ch. 8. 33. *cf.* Acts 20. 29.

h *cf.* 2 Chr. 36. 16.

i *cf.* Deut. 7. 22. ch. 3. 4.

j *cf.* 2 Sam. 22. 35.

k Josh. 13. 2, 3. *cf.* Mat. 13. 24-30.

Him from whom they had departed. The "judge" plainly was not merely such between man and man, but above all was the leader in the people's repentance and return to God—the representative of Jehovah's law and sway in Israel.

(4.) Spite of all this, the course of things all through—apart from such interruptions—is ever downward: "when the judge died they returned and corrupted themselves beyond their fathers." Correspondingly, even the deliverances become less and less full, and the character of the deliverers deteriorates (although this not continuously), until they reach together their lowest point in Samson, whose death still leaves the people in captivity. In view of this God declares that He will not drive out the nations that remain, but will leave them for a trial to Israel, and that they may know war by experience, the war of conquest not having had its due effect. The very trial thus which comes in through sin, He makes a means of practising faith, for those who have faith. Since by the history of their fathers they had not learnt the need of obedience and reliance upon the living God, they should learn these by practically meeting these enemies that their fathers met. Their discipline should be a school of faith. This, it is evident, applies to many more than Israel in the book of Judges, or than to such wars as these of Canaan. All the long series of evils that have afflicted the Church as the result of multiplied departure from God and from His word, have furnished for faith the exercise by which it is made to overcome. The history in all alike becomes, however, thus largely individual. The people disappear as a whole from sight, or furnish a background in the front of which a few figures walk apart. There are men of God, indeed, but where are the *people* of God? Yet divine love cannot forget these, nor can the hearts therefore of those in whom this love has stirred.

DIVISION 2. (Chap. iii. 5–xvi.)

Bondage and Deliverances.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. iii. 5–11.)

The first step toward ruin—independence of God.

AND the children of Israel dwelt in the midst of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. And they [l]took their daughters to themselves as wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods. And the children of Israel did the thing that was [m]evil in Jehovah's eyes, and forgot Jehovah their God, and served the Baals and the Asherahs. And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and he [n]sold them into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia*; and the children of Israel served

l Josh. 23. 12. Ezr. 9. 2. 1 Ki. 11. 1–3. 2 Cor. 6. 14.

m ver. 12.

n Deut. 32. 30. ch. 10. 7.

* "Aram of the two rivers."

DIV. 2.

In the second division we have the history of the captivities and deliverances which fill the body of the book. In these we find the exemplification of the Lord's words that "he that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin." (Jno. viii. 34, R. V.) In the shadows of spiritual things which are presented here, we shall find how truly it is the sins committed by them that lead men captive. We shall find, also, as we might be sure beforehand, the deliverance in each case to figure what is truly that—the deliverer being, in fact, the divine Judge, and acting in this character.

SUBD. 1.

The first of these captivities gives us the root-principle of all, which is indeed but sin, and sin has but one definition in Scripture—"lawlessness" (1 Jno. iii. 4); rightly so given in the Revised Version, where the common one has "the transgression of the law." This the word does not mean; and the real thought is a much deeper one. Where law is, sin manifests itself in the transgression of it: of that there is, of course, no question; nay, it was the purpose of the law to manifest it, and "by the law is the knowledge of sin." (Rom. iii. 20.) "I had not known sin," says the apostle, "except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet"—"lust;" "but sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of lust" (vii. 7, 8). Sin therefore is deeper and more radical than even the "lust" which it works. Sin is the parent; lust is the child. "Lawlessness" is the unsubject spirit of self-will, which in the creature away from God shows itself as want, in cravings which find no satisfaction, and thus rule the man. "Their god is their belly," says the apostle, of such. (Phil. iii. 19.) This is the misery of the creature out of the creature's place, of independence on the part of one who is necessarily dependent.

This is what is seen in the people here. They forget Jehovah their God, form alliances with the people round them after their own will, and end in bondage to false gods—the Baals and the Asherahs, or images of Ashtoreth. Jehovah sells them therefore into the hand of Cushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, and they serve him for eight years.

This king of Mesopotamia, what does he represent? If it be indeed the chain of our own sins that holds us, then he should in some way be the reflection of the people's condition. His name is a remarkable one, meaning "blackness of double wickedness;" and the dual form here one can hardly avoid connecting

Chushan-rishathaim [o] eight years. And the children of Israel [p] cried to Jehovah, and Jehovah raised up for the children of Israel a saviour, and he saved them, [q] Oth-

o ver. 14. *cf.* Jer. 25. 11, 12. Lk. 21. 24.

p ver. 15, etc. Ps. 107. 13. *cf.* Zech. 12. 10-14. q ch. 1. 13. *cf.* Gal. 2. 11, 12.

with that of the country over which he rules, which is literally "Aram of the two rivers." Aram means "exalted," and is taken generally to refer to the "high land" of Syria, as contrasted with the Canaanitish "lowland;" but, whatever truth there may be in this, we may be sure it does not exclude that spiritual application for which we are in search all through, and which as such is necessarily of so much higher importance.

Aram was the fifth son of Shem, whose children taken together, and with his own, present a group of names of remarkable significance. Shem means "name," and his blessing is in his connection with Jehovah his God, who reveals Himself to him, makes him, that is, to know His Name. Shem is thus marked out as the vessel of divine revelation.

His sons' names seem to carry on this thought, the numerical order certifying it throughout. Here we have—

1. Elam, which, as a form of *olam*, is the ordinary Hebrew word for "everlasting." This is the first and simplest thought of God, the first word of revelation as to Him.

2. Asshur, "step," speaks of it as progressive. Only little by little has God, in fact, been able to declare Himself (Heb. i. 1); hindered, as is plain, by the needs of man himself, who had to be prepared to receive the revelation. Nay, when the dispensations were ready, man was not; and He in whom at length God spake to man face to face was taken by wicked hands, crucified, and slain. Yet this also was in the counsels of God for the meeting of man's deepest need, as we well know; and thus alone was accomplished the full manifestation of Himself.

3. Three is the number of manifestation, and if the names here speak as we credit them with doing, Arphaxad (properly Arphachshad) should give voice to this. It is confessedly a difficult word to interpret, and the meaning assigned by Ewald, "stronghold of the Chaldees," spite of its acceptance by some authorities, seems everyway strained and fanciful. "One that heals," or "releases," has been suggested with much more probability; but this in fact only accounts for the first two syllables of the name, to which the last would add the thought of pouring out, our own word "shed" being probably derived from it, and certainly its equivalent. But how clearly and appropriately would "remitting by shedding forth" speak of the great mystery of the Cross, the mystery in which God is truly manifest! How can it be accounted for, that every thing so perfectly fits together but by the truth of what is so consistently shown forth?

4. Then, in the fourth place, which we know to be that of the creature, we have what as fully agrees with it, yet how strangely in the revelation of God—Lud, "born"! Yet so must He be, who, being God, becomes the Saviour of men, to remit by shedding forth: and "without shedding of blood is no remission." Coming down, then, to man's estate, and as man dying for us, He rises up into the place of power—power acquired by suffering; and of this—

5. Aram, "exalted," under the number which speaks of *reward*, fittingly and finally speaks. Thus the series is evidently complete.

That we may adopt every safeguard against deception, however, let us, from the same genealogy in Genesis, consider in the same way the sons of Aram, who ought, one would say, to continue this line of thought, and speak of the fruits of this exaltation of the man Christ Jesus to the place where now we know Him. The sons of Aram are four: "Uz and Hul and Gether and Mash;" and this is as far as his line is continued in Scripture.

niel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. And the Spirit of Jehovah was upon him; and he [r]judged Israel and went out to war; and Jehovah gave Chushan- [r] *cf.* Josh. 7. 12

1. Uz, from atzah, "made firm." This is numerically plain, and plain also in its application to the risen and glorified Saviour. The abiding place He has taken as Man, He has taken also *for men*, His people. Our position is the fruit of His position: we are one with Him—identified with Him—accepted in the Beloved;" and this is evidently the fundamental blessing for us in connection with His exaltation. That is, Uz is, in spiritual order, as well as in the genealogical table, the first son of Aram.

2. Hul is the second son. And Hul (*chul*), from *chalal*, would mean "opened, penetrated, entered into." This under the number of association, fellowship, and in the connection in which we find it here, cannot be for a moment doubtful as to its meaning. Christ exalted has entered the sanctuary for us; the veil is rent, and God is in the light: our fellowship is with the Father and the Son. This too is in perfect spiritual order: Hul follows Uz at once, but could not precede him.

3. We have Gether—a very difficult word. Gesenius, collating with the Syriac, gives it the meaning of "dregs, sediment"—every way an unlikely and unsuitable one. If Hebrew, it would seem to be a contraction from two words, which may be *gahah* and *jether*. The first of these means to "heal, restore"; the second we have had in its intensive form in Jattir (page 110, *n*), and means "excellence," or "exceedingly more." If Gether might thus speak of a restoration going beyond the original condition, it would suit the number, which is that of revival, recovery, and the line of thought as well. Yet this interpretation is, of course, conjectural only, to be held only as long as there is nothing better.

4. Mash, from *mush*, is to "feel"—to "know by feeling"; and, in the fourth place, shows what the Lord as man has taken up with Him to His place of exaltation. Its appositeness in this series of names of the ascended Lord, none will deny. And thus the meaning of Aram, as we have taken it, seems confirmed on all sides.

Beautiful, however, as are these names thus joined together, we easily understand how in a world like this, and as connected with the human generations for which they stand, they soon scatter and fall away from one another, and thus lose their meaning and their beauty as united. The sentences become but broken words, capable of very different, even of opposite, suggestion. The Shemite families, as they scattered and multiplied into nations, lost almost entirely the promise of their origin. Their primitive worship became corrupted into a dark and debasing idolatry; and the Aram-naharaim of the book of Judges is ruled over by the ominous king whom we find now tyrannizing over Israel.

The resemblance of Mesopotamia to Egypt is striking enough. They are alike oases which interrupt a broad belt of desert land which stretches from West to East across Africa and Asia, "reaching from the Atlantic on the one hand nearly to the Yellow Sea on the other." It is a low level plain as far as the country we are speaking of, afterwards rising in high plateaus "having from 3,000 to near 10,000 feet of elevation." "Where the belt of sand is intersected by the valley of the Nile, no marked change of elevation occurs; and the continuous low desert is merely interrupted by a few miles of green and cultivable land, the whole of which is just as smooth and flat as the waste on either side of it." Egypt, as we know, is the product of its great river; and so also with the country with which we have now to do. "Known to the Jews as Aram-naharaim, or 'Syria of the two rivers;' to the Greeks and Romans as Mesopotamia, or 'the between-river country'; to the Arabs as Al-Jezireh, or 'the island,' this district has always taken its name from the streams which constitute its most striking feat-

rishathaim, king of Aram, into his hand, and his hand prevailed against Chushan-rishathaim. And the land was quiet 'forty years, and Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

s ver.30,etc. cf. Deut. 8. 2. ctr. Is. 2. 4. Heb. 4. 8,9.

ure, and to which, in fact, it owes its existence. If it were not for the two great rivers—the Tigris and Euphrates—with their tributaries, the more northern part of the Mesopotamian lowland would in no respect differ from the Syro-Arabian desert on which it adjoins, and which in latitude, elevation, and general geological character, it exactly resembles. Toward the south the importance of the rivers is still greater; for of lower Mesopotamia it may be said, with more truth than of Egypt, that it is 'an acquired land,' the actual 'gift' of the two streams which wash it on either side; being, as it is, entirely a recent formation—a deposit which the streams have made in the shallow waters of a gulf, into which they have flowed for many ages." (*Rawlinson.*) Thus both Lower and Upper Egypt are represented in what is indeed Aram of the two rivers.

And to this we may add the name of the king as a further link. Chushan and Cush are radically the same, and the Cushite kingdom of Nimrod had long before been established on the Euphrates. But Cush was the brother of Mizraim, the founder of Egypt, and the Cushites derived from Egypt their religion. One branch of them were the Ethiopians of history, whose name with those of Cush and Ham speaks of their dark complexion.

This Hamite kingdom among the Shemites is itself an evidence of degradation, which the emphatic title of "doubly wicked" for the king confirms and intensifies. As already said, one can hardly help connecting it with the "double river" of the land over which he reigns, and this would be strictly according to the similitude of Egypt, whose river became their dependence, sustaining them in their independence of heaven. Man's blessings lead him thus (how often!) away from the Giver of them; and the greater the blessing, the farther from God: the greater the goodness He has shown, the worse the corruption of it. Now Aram, as we have seen, speaks of humanity exalted in Christ, man in the fullest blessing he can know, and thus in the typical application the intensity of evil connected with it here may be accounted for. Even the apostle, after being taken up to Paradise, needed a thorn in the flesh to prevent self-exaltation. And the professing Church, how soon did it become lifted up with pride, to fall into depths of unimaginable wickedness! Babylon stood in lower Mesopotamia, and thus we may see how consistent are the surroundings of the picture put before us here.

In its fruits, however multiform, evil is, in its essential principle, absolutely one. The creature leaving the creature place—setting itself up in independence of God:—this is its character at bottom ever. Thus the light is darkened with us, and the terrible slavery to a depraved will results. We need not, therefore, be at a loss as to what Chushan-rishathaim represents. The first step on the downward path to ruin is always the same.

Othniel is here the suited deliverer. No details of the warfare are recorded at all; our eyes are kept fixed upon the man himself. It is repeated for us that he is in close relation with Caleb, the "whole-hearted," and the son of Kenaz, "recipient of strength." His own name is more doubtful: from the Arabic it has been taken to be "lion of God"; Jerome gave it as "my time is of God"; others again give "God is power." In any case the consciousness of dependence is emphasized, and its relation to single-eyed obedience; and thus we have what is the key-note of victory over the king of Aram. Let us remember, although we shall not have the mere repetition of this in after-deliverances, that this is really fundamental to them all. Not till we get back to this is the path of departure retraced to its beginning, and the restoration of the soul effected. Notice the order here: "and he judged Israel, and went out to war." Thus he prevails.

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. iii. 12-31.)

The Moabite and Philistine inroads: profession.

(III. 12-31.)

Moab: a barren profession.

1. AND [t]again the children of Israel did the evil thing in Jehovah's eyes, and Jehovah [u]strengthened Eglon king of [v]Moab against Israel, because they had done the thing that was evil in Jehovah's eyes. And he gathered unto him the children of [w]Ammon and Amalek, and went and smote Israel, and took possession of the [x]city of palms. And the children of Israel served Eglon king of Moab [y]eighteen years. And the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah, and Jehovah

[t] ch. 4.1, etc. *cf.* Hos. 6. 4.

[u] *cf.* Ex. 9. 16.

[v] Gen. 19. 37. *cf.* Gal. 5. 16.

[w] 2 Chr. 20. 1, etc.

[x] ch. 1. 16.

[y] ver. 8.

SUBD. 2.

1. In the second captivity it is Moab into whose hands they fall; and now we begin to see the definite forms of evil that have afflicted the church. Moab, if we have interpreted rightly, stands for mere profession (Deut. ii. 8 sq. *n.*); and it was not long before this condition, in fact, arose. The first parable of the kingdom (Matt. iii.) prepares us for it. The epistles show us the increase of the false disciples, for which the epistle of John provides tests. The book of Revelation shows us the church at Sardis already dead, and others in various not far removed conditions. Church-history, outside of Scripture, too sadly confirms what such things imply: the church proper soon becomes what is sorrowfully known as the church invisible.

Eglon is king of Moab at this time. His name we have seen as that of one of the cities of Canaan taken by Joshua, and it should have the same significance. There we saw it as reminding us of the perpetual revolution of earthly things, like that of the earth itself, swinging in its yearly orbit. So with the changing seasons all things change and pass—everything fair in its season, and only for its season. Now the church, becoming characteristically profession merely, comes under this law of change and decay, under which the world is. Earthly conditions influence and give it shape. Providences—"bit and bridle"—rule it, and not Scripture. It becomes the creature of circumstances, exalted by the favor of man, depressed if this is withdrawn. The world, under its law of change and decay, was no such mystery to the wise man in Israel as the phases of the church are to the man who has been taught of God its principles and privileges. And the fundamental reason for this condition, next to and proceeding from the root of independence which we have already looked at, is to be found in a Moabite conquest—such as here the history of Israel so vividly depicts.

With the Moabite, Ammon and Amalek come into the land; and this is perfectly simple and intelligible. An unconverted profession gathers to itself all heresies and makes room for all the lusts of the flesh. Then they take the "city of palms" (Jericho, without the name—Deut. xxxiv. 3), and the world revives there under Moabite protection and the cover of practical righteousness, which the palm-tree, as we know, represents. This is always the strong point for the professor: "He can't be wrong whose life is in the right."

Moab's limit, however, as we find presently, is at Gilgal.* The memorials of

* The *pesilim*, which I have translated "[boundary] stones", are mostly translated either "quarries" or "graven images;" but Dr. Cassel, in Lange's Commentary, says:—

"Boundary-stones" "is evidently the sense in which *pesilim* is to be taken. *Pesil* is always a carved image, γλυπτόν. The entire number of instances in which this word is used by Scripture writers fails to suggest any reason for thinking here of 'stone-quarries,' a definition which, moreover, does not appear to harmonize with the locality. But as the connection implies that the borders of Eglon's territory, which he had wrenched from Israel, were at the *pesilim*, we must understand by them the posts, στῆλαι, stones, *lapides sacri*, which marked the line. In consequence of the honors everywhere paid them, these were considered *pesilim*, idol-images. This border-line was in the vicinity of Gilgal, which had not fallen into the hands of Moab. Ewald has rightly insisted that Gilgal must have lain north-east of Jericho."

raised them up a saviour, Ehud the son of Gera, the Benjamite, a man [z]lamed of his right hand. And the children of Israel sent him with a present in his hand to Eglon king of Moab. And Ehud made him a [a]dagger which had two edges, a cubit long; and he girded it under his robe upon his right thigh. And he brought the present to Eglon king of Moab; now Eglon was a very [b]fat man; and when he had made an end of offering the present, he sent away the people that bare the present. But he turned back from the [boundary-] stones that were at [c]Gilgal, and said, I have a secret word for thee, O king. And he said, Be silent; and all that stood round him went out from him. And Ehud came to him; and he was sitting in the cool upper room which was for himself alone; and Ehud said, I have a word from [d]God for thee: and he rose from the seat. And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and struck it into his [e]belly. And the haft also went in after the blade; and the fat closed upon the blade: for he did not draw the dagger out of his belly; and it came out behind. And Ehud went out into the porch, and shut the doors of the upper room upon him, and fastened them. And when he had gone out, the [king's] servants came, and when they saw that the doors of the upper room were fastened, they said, Surely he is covering his feet in the cool chamber. And they waited till they were ashamed, and behold, he did not open the doors of the upper room; therefore they took the key and opened them, and behold their lord fallen to the ground dead. But Ehud had escaped while they were hesitating; he had [f]passed the [boundary-] stones and escaped to Seirath. And it was so, when he had come, that he blew a [g]trum-

z *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 9.

a *cf.* Heb. 4. 12.

b *cf.* Ps. 73. 7.

c Josh. 5. 2, etc. *cf.* Col. 2. 11. Col. 3. 5.

d *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 8.

e Phil. 3. 19.

f *cf.* Rom. 6. 2, etc.

g ch. 6. 34. *cf.* Nu. 10. 1–10.

death passed through and a resurrection standing will necessarily be outside of Moab's possession. All this is of quite simple interpretation to any who have learned the lessons of the book of Joshua.

As to the deliverer, he is Ehud, the son of Gera, a Benjamite; and it is Benjamin's territory upon which Eglon has obtained lodgment. This, again, is simple for a spiritual mind. For Benjamin, standing for Christ in us, it is here that we find what most of all the life of mere profession denies and sets aside. Thus, too, it must be with Benjamin that deliverance lies. Then he is Ehud, from the same root as Judah, which, as we have seen, speaks literally of *con*fession, the opposite of mere *pro*fession. Ehud is the "confessor," and the son of Gera —that is, as it would seem, "rumination," that heart-meditation by which the things of Christ are appropriated and become the possession of the soul. Ehud is, then, the God-prepared deliverer for Israel in their present emergency.

The details of the deliverance, however, are less easy to understand. The dagger or sword (according to the root-idea, the "implement of destruction") would stand, according to Eph. vi., for the "word of God." Ehud, like many other Benjamites of his day, was "bound of his right hand," and uses it with his left. Does this speak of the infirmity in which the man in Christ glories, that the power of Christ may rest upon him? From Gilgal, with its inspiriting memories, Ehud turns back to Eglon, and escapes beyond it again to Seirah,

pet in Mount Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mount, and he before them. And he said unto them, [h] Follow me: for Jehovah hath given your enemies the Moabites into your hands. And they went down after him and seized the fords of [i] Jordan toward Moab, and let [j] no man pass over. And they smote of Moab at that time about ten thousand men, all stout men, and all men of valor; and not a man escaped. So Moab was humbled that day under the hand of Israel. And the land was [k] quiet eighty years.

[h] *cf.* Phil. 3. 17.

[i] *cf.* Gal. 6. 14.

[j] *ctr.* 1 Sam. 15. 7-9.

[k] ch. 5. 31, etc.

(III. 32.)

Philistines: Judæo-Christianity.

2. And after him was [l] Shamgar the son of Anath; and he smote of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox-goad: and he too saved Israel.

[l] 1 Sam. 13. 19-22. *cf.* Eccl. 12. 11.

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chap. iv. v.)

The Canaanite revival: the spirit of gain.

(IV. 1-29.)

The cause of the conflict, and the forces arrayed.

1. AND the children of Israel [m] again did the thing that was evil in Jehovah's eyes; and Ehud was dead. And Jehovah sold them into the hand of [n] Jabin

[m] ch. 6. 1.

[n] *cf.* Josh. 11. 1 with 2. Pet. 1. 9.

"the rugged." Then he sounds a trumpet in Mount Ephraim, out of which the children of Israel hasten in response, and Jordan, which, by the power of God, Israel had passed over dry-shod, becomes the effectual doom of Moab, not a man of whom escapes their enemies' swords.

So much we may in some measure apprehend; but it is a meagre enough account of a great deliverance.

2. Next we hear of Shamgar, and a victory at great odds over the Philistines. Whether the Moabite inroad had encouraged their attack or not, it is given as something contemporaneous with or following upon it. And the spiritual connection is quite evident, if the Philistines represent the Judaistic development of the world-church, perfected in Rome. To this the Moabite condition of unconverted membership—impossible, of course, in the body of Christ—is a necessary preliminary. The Philistines, however, do but show themselves as yet: the time of the captivity to them is later, and ends the series. At present Shamgar's bold deed is decisive as deliverance.

Shamgar's name seems but the inversion of Gershom, and to have the same meaning—of a stranger (or sojourner) there. He is the son of Anath, which means "answer": here speaking, as it seems, of the response of heart to that deliverance call which invites us forth to pilgrimage. Such an one is surely the fit deliverer from the world-church, and for the present Shamgar's ox-goad avails.

SUBD. 3.

1. The third subdivision is the history of a great Canaanite revival, in which appear once more a Jabin and a Hazor, the reproduction of the leader and city of the old northern confederacy against Joshua of one hundred and thirty years before. Some have even attempted to identify these two kings, and to make Barak a contemporary of Joshua himself—an attempt which even Farrar (Smith's Dictionary of the Bible) regards with no disfavor. But on the contrary the very pith of the lesson lies in this being a *revival*, with which the numerical place perfectly corresponds. It is the only section in which we find Israel's sin in sparing and allying themselves with the nations under ban from God, bringing forth its perfect fruit. It thus should have an exceptional importance.

How easy is such springing up again from a root not destroyed, we have been already reminded of in the case of Hormah and of Luz. The application in

king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor, and the captain of his host was Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth of the nations. And the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah; for he had nine hundred [o] chariots of iron; and he mightily oppressed the children of Israel twenty years. And [p] Deborah, a woman, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time. And she was dwelling under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in Mount Ephraim; and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of [q] Kedesh-naphtali, and said unto him, Hath not Jehovah the God of Israel commanded, Go and draw towards Mount Tabor, and take with thee [r] ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulon; and I will [s] draw unto thee, to the stream Kishon, Sisera, the captain of Jabin's host, with his chariots and his multitude, and I will give him into thy hand. And Barak

o ch. 1. 19.

p *cf.* 1 Tim. 2. 12 with ver. 9.

q Josh. 20. 7.

r *ctr.* ch. 7. 2-7.

s Ex. 14. 4.

spiritual experience is most easy and abundant. The failure of Christian vigor permits once more the old besetments to appear again; and the new sins are but the old ones, though perhaps indeed with a certain disguise. The old character displays itself. The "Israel" of awhile ago is now again "Jacob." Indeed, deeper than all differences, and surely to be found amid all disguises, there is a moral unity in sin. "We have turned every one to *his own* way," shows at once both the unity and the diversity.

That it is Jabin, of all the Canaanite kings, that we find thus revived, must, of course, have its significance also. The revival of the Canaanite would naturally be shown in one who is, in some sense at least, the typical Canaanite. Nothing can be in Scripture which does not speak to the ear that is open. Jabin, too, is emphatically here, not merely, as in the book of Joshua, "king of Hazor," but, over and over again, "king of Canaan." The meaning of these names we already know. Jabin means "discerning"; Hazor, "inclosure." As the enemy of the people of God, it is the wisdom of the world with which we have here to do—a wisdom which reigns in its own "inclosure," shut up, as is the constant fashion, in cliques and parties and philosophies, by which it elevates itself over what is outside its boundary. The spirit of it is easily manifest as that of self: self-interest, self-assertion, self-satisfaction, the true "trader" or Canaanite spirit, that of gain. The inroad of this into the Church was early indeed. "All seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ," was said, in the apostle's days, of those at Rome. (Phil. ii. 21.) Of the Ephesian elders it was prophesied, "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." (Acts xx. 30.) But already at Corinth the sects and parties produced by such attempts were being formed, as we know, and the true people of God were becoming subject to Jabin's rule; and this has developed much more widely since, even until the Church of God has been broken up into various denominations, to the dishonor of the *One* Name which is upon us all. This, then, is the true Canaanite revival shadowed here.

The captain of Jabin's host is Sisera, whose name means, according to Gesenius, "battle-array"; and who dwells in Harosheth ("carving, cutting, artificers' work") of the nations. Such names should not be difficult to read in such a connection. The strife of sects, the *odium theologicum*, is notorious; and how the sects themselves are thus maintained needs no insisting on. Sisera is still captain of the host. The very truths of God's word are often arrayed against one another, and, allied with errors of greater or less gravity, become but the battle-cries of partisans. And when we realize whom the Canaanite leaders represent

said unto her, 'If thou wilt go with me, then I will go; and if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go. And she said, I will surely go with thee; nevertheless there will be no glory for thee upon the way thou goest; for Jehovah selleth Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose and went with Barak to Ke- *t cf.* Ex. 4. 13, 14.

—"the spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places"—how serious becomes the aspect of evil here! The assault of Satan is most of all against the truth, the power of which he recognizes well enough, and which he can no more easily prevail against than by dividing it, so to speak, against itself, and allying it with some deceit of his own devising. Thus what is of God is prejudiced in the eyes of His people by the associations in which they find it; while, on the other hand, many, seeing it to be truth, are put off their guard as to these, and receive along with it some deadly error. How, for instance, has the truth of the Lord's coming been mixed up with the abominations of materialism, the denial of eternal punishment, and many another thing, until the very one whose heart would welcome it, if otherwise presented, looks upon it as a synonym for heresy of this kind! How important, therefore, here is God's word to Jeremiah, "If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth." (Jer. xv. 19.) But, in general, how little are we able to find the truth in the creed of another! in another sense than the true, what one sees in the Shulamite is indeed "but the company of two armies." On both sides the truth suffers, while it is made the power and preservative principle of error itself, which, if simply that, would soon find at the hands of every Christian its merited judgment.

Yet it is the truth that must come in for deliverance here, as is quite plain; and Deborah the prophetess stands, according to the meaning of her name, for the "Word" itself, prophetic as in its office it truly is, the word of God which brings the soul into the presence of Him before whom all the secrets of the heart are laid bare, and with whom we have to do. But for this the Word must be, as Deborah was, united to another. She is the wife of Lapidoth, which means "burning torches," and reminds us of the Pentecostal tongues of fire, the manifest type of the Spirit in His utterance among men. Deborah judges Israel under the palm-tree of Deborah, the palm-tree being the well-known symbol of the righteous, fruit, as this character is, of such judgment by the Word, "between Ramah and Bethel in Mount Ephraim,"—an "exalted" Christ in heaven, and the "house of God" on earth.

There is fullness of meaning in such a picture: for here are the two things that give us the standard for self-judgment. Everything as to our position before God is implied in Christ's own position as exalted now. In the house of God we have implied the descent and indwelling of the Spirit, with the holiness that becomes that house. It is in view of these wondrous truths that the word of God addresses itself now to the people of God, to maintain in them that practical righteousness of which the palm-tree speaks. Certainly here is no hap-hazard association of thought.

While in all the book of Judges the necessity of self-judgment is shown in order to deliverance, this, then, is now especially emphasized in Deborah, as is plain. As there is on the one side manifest a peculiar power of the enemy in the Canaanite uprising, so there is on the other a dwelling on that which is, above all things, necessary to take one out of his hand, the lowly, self-judged spirit of him who "trembleth at the Word."

We have now the captain on the side of Israel: "she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh-Naphtali." Barak means "lightning,"—light (and God is light) revealed in judgment. To bring God in is the exposure and overthrow of error. The day of manifestation is the day of judgment, when all falsehood expires forever, and no self-deception is any longer possible. Barak is "the son of Abinoam," that is, "father of pleasantness": for the destruction of

desh. And Barak called Zebulon and Naphtali to Kedesh, and he went up with ten thousand men at his feet; and Deborah went up with him. And [u]Heber the Kenite had separated himself from the Kenites, of the children of Hobab, the brother in law of Moses, and pitched his tent near Elon-Zaanannim, which is by Kedesh.

[u] ch. 1. 16.

(IV. 12-24.)

The Conflict.

2. And they told Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor; and Sisera summoned all his chariots, nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him from Harosheth of the nations to the stream Kishon. And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which Jehovah hath given Sisera into thy hand: is not Jehovah [v]gone forth before thee? And Barak went down from Mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him; and Jehovah discomfited Sisera, and all the chariots, and all the host, with the edge of the sword before Barak; and Sis-

[v] 2 Sa. 5. 24.

error is that that which is pleasant may remain, the good and perfect and acceptable will of God. Love rejoices in this overthrow; and although where His creatures are in question, judgment is "His strange work," yet here also our comfort it is to know that, in its sternest and dreadest forms, the Lamb will execute it. Barak is still and ever the son of Abinoam.

Deborah calls Barak out of Kedesh-Naphtali, the "sanctuary of the struggler," which we have seen to speak of rest in self-abasement, and, as a city of refuge, of the work of Christ. Here is in fact that from which deliverance springs, and the condition also in which it can be made good to us.

Naphtali and Zebulon are the tribes used of God in the conflict, as their land is that in which the oppressor's power is found. What these speak of we already know. The enfeeblement of Zebulon, (the dwelling in that which is our own in the relationship which God has given us to Himself,) is a manifest result of the revival of that seeking of our own things which is, as we have seen, what is indicated by this Canaanite revival. It is no less true that Zebulon must have been enfeebled first, before Jabin could have got foothold there at all. These things are indeed an admonition for us. But Hazor itself is significantly in the territory of Naphtali, the struggler and the overcomer, being but the perversion of the true Naphtali spirit. How many are involved in the sectarian strife of tongues, supposing all the while that they are doing the Lord service! While, on the other hand, it is plain that Naphtali is thus prostrate where Jabin reigns. These things might be expanded largely and applied to the condition of things in the midst of which we are to-day; but we have not space for it. Those who desire to do so can without much difficulty trace them out: "the knowledge of the Holy is understanding."

Purpose of heart is required to be with Barak, who therefore is bidden to "draw toward Mount Tabor"—the "mount of purpose." It is here that one finds elevation to view the battlefield, and a place of strength against the adversary. Here God draws Sisera to the stream Kishon which is to sweep his host away. Sisera himself is reserved to fall by the hand of the woman. We shall look at all that is connected with this in the next section.

2. The conflict at once begins. The free and independent movement of the Spirit of God at once awakens alarm in the enemy, and Sisera summons all his forces together against Israel; but the battle is the Lord's, and the issue never doubtful. The host is discomfited and annihilated; and Sisera flees away by himself to the tent of Jael.

era came down from the chariot and fled away on his feet. And Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the nations, and all the host of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword: there was not left so much as one. But Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite; for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. And Jael went forth to meet Sisera, and said unto him, [w] Turn in, my lord, turn in to me: fear not. And he turned in to her into the tent; and she covered him with the rug. And he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink; for I am thirsty: and she opened the milk-skin, and gave him to drink, and covered him. And he said unto her, Stand at the entrance of the tent; and it shall be, when any man doth come to inquire of thee, and say, Is there a man here? thou shalt say, No. And Jael, the wife of Heber, took the [x] tent-pin, and took the hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and drove the pin into his temples, and it sank into the ground: for he was fast asleep, and weary. So he died. And behold, Barak pursued Sisera; and Jael went forth to meet him, and said unto him, Come, and I will show thee the man whom thou art seeking. And when he came to her, behold, there was Sisera lying dead, and the tent-pin was in his temples. So God subdued on that day Jabin king of Canaan before the children of Israel. And the

w cf. Josh. 2. 3-5.

x ch. 3. 31. cf. Heb. 11. 13.

A second woman now becomes prominent in the story. From the Kenites, whom we have seen making their "nest" in Judah, one man had separated himself with his family, and traveling north as far as the portion of Naphtali, had pitched his tent by Elon-zaanannim, "the oak of ladings," which is by Kedesh. We must put these things together in order to read them aright. Realizing the character of these Kenites, as we have traced it in the first chapter, we cannot but take it as a sign for good in Heber that he has separated himself from them. His name, however, "companion, fellow," or else like Hebron, "company, fellowship," would intimate that separation, as shown in him, is not to be taken as in the spirit of independency, but the opposite. Typically, at least, we may find in him another Abraham, whose break with his kindred naturally is in order to walk with God. Accordingly we find him in the territory of Naphtali, the overcomer, and at the "oak of ladings," the place of strength acquired in daily taking up the burdens of the day (see ante, page 152); in close connection, also, with Kedesh.

Heber's wife is Jael, which, while it is the word for "wild goat," means, literally, the "climber"—"one who mounts, or ascends." The women of Scripture (as in Sarah, Hagar, etc.) often stand, as another has remarked, for fruitful principles embraced by the men who represent the individual state. Here Jael, as the "seeking things above," is in beautiful connection with Heber's strangership and communion both. Nor need we wonder to find the tent-pin an effective weapon in her hands. Is it not a heart in heaven that destroys the spirit of sectarian strife, with that which secures the pilgrim's tent? Such things do not seem hard to translate into the spiritual; and there is a self-consistency in the whole meaning as so given which ought to secure for it respectful consideration. Even the peace between the house of Heber and Jabin, and Jael's deception of Sisera, seem quite capable of consistent rendering; and may connect together thus, as in

hand of the children of Israel waxed [y]continually heavier against Jabin king of Canaan, until they had cut off Jabin king of Canaan.

The prophetic song.

(v.)

1. Cause of the bondage.

3. [1]Then sang [z]Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam in that day, saying:

For the work of deliverance in Israel,—
For the [a]self-devotion of the people,
[b]Bless ye Jehovah!
[c]Hear, O kings, give ear, ye counsellors:
Unto Jehovah I, [even] I, will sing;
I will sing psalms to Jehovah, the God of Israel.
Jehovah, when Thou [d]wentest forth from Seir,
When Thou movedst out of the field of Edom,
The earth quaked; yea, the heavens dropped,
Yea, the clouds dropped water;
The mountains shook at the presence of Jehovah,
That Sinai at the presence of Jehovah, God of Israel.
In the days of [e]Shamgar, son of Anath,
In the days of Jael,

y Ps. 18. 37.

z Ex. 15. 1, etc.

a ver. 9. Rom. 12. 1.

b Ps. 149, etc.

c cf. Deut. 32. 1.

d Ps. 18. 7. Ps. 114. Deut. 33. 2.

e ch. 3. 31.

the history: for so, for the moment, through mere incompetency to understand the attitude of the Jaels and Hebers, peace may be kept on the side of the Church's bitterest oppressors toward those who are deemed but harmless and unpractical visionaries, with no weapon of power beyond a tent-pin, which in the end, however, breaks the peace, as did Jael's.

3. And now we come to the song, which, from the mouth of the prophetess, gives us the divine judgment, the manifestation of the spiritual condition as seen of God, and of God Himself in the whole matter. Those who feel it needful to apologize for the sentiments which it expresses, as well as those who view it simply as an interesting fragment of antique poetry, a relic of rough and barbarous days, forget surely the prophetic character ascribed to Deborah, as also the large place given to this song of hers in so brief a record. The place given in an inspired writing is an exact measure of the importance attaching.

(i.) The song divides naturally into three parts, the first of which goes back to the beginning, to show the origin of the whole matter—a lesson, not for Israel alone, but for kings and counsellors amid the nations round, to ascribe glory to Jehovah even for the humbling of His people, as now for their deliverance.

(*a*) Certainly His power had been known when in the midst of Israel He came forth from Edom. Edom is specially noticed, because it was thence that the people emerged at the end of the wilderness career, to threaten the nations with their might—a might that was not their own: for the earth quaked, and the heavens dropped at the presence of Jehovah, Israel's God. Sinai, before this, had done so, where Israel had come into covenant with Him; and there the secret of their strength and the conditions of its continuance had been declared. Now, awakened afresh to the blessedness of obedience, they had devoted themselves to their Saviour-God; and He who had declared Himself as "forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin," had interfered and delivered them.

(*b*) They had been brought low because of their departure from Him. They had chosen new gods, and thus war was in their gates: the land was stripped and desolate, the inhabitants, pent up within the walls of their cities, dared not venture forth into the open country, and travelers went to their destination by unused and circuitous paths. Up to the very gates swept the tide of war, for Israel was defenceless and unarmed.

And this was in the days of Shamgar, the deliverer of the south, whose victory had not shamed others into faith. It was in the days of Jael, by whom, though

The [f]highways ceased to be, [f] Lev. 26.22.
And the travellers went by winding ways.
The villages ceased, they ceased in Israel,
Until that I, Deborah, arose;
Till I arose, a mother in Israel.
They chose [g]new gods; then war was at the gates: [g] Deut. 32. 17. Jer. 2. 11.
Was there seen [h]shield or spear among forty thousand in Israel? [h] 1 Sam. 13. 19-22. cf. Eph. 6. 11-17.
My heart is toward the [i]governors of Israel, that devoted themselves among the people:
Bless ye Jehovah. [i] cf. Heb. 13. 7, 17. ctr. Acts 3. 17.
Ye that ride on white she-asses,
Ye that sit on carpets,
Ye that walk by the way, sing!
Away from the sound of archers,
'Mid the places of [j]drawing water, [j] Ps. 44. 1, etc. cf. Jno. 14. 26.
There they celebrate the righteous acts of Jehovah,
The righteous acts toward His villages in Israel:—
Then the people of Jehovah went down to the gates.
2. The tribes and the conflict. [2]Awake, awake, Deborah!
Awake, awake; utter a song!

but a woman, God had now once more delivered them. It lasted until Deborah herself rose up to be a mother to those who had forsaken their Father-God. How pitifully low had this great people fallen!

(c) With return of heart comes return of blessing. Bless Jehovah now, for peace is in the land. The spoil of their enemies is being divided where in quietness they draw water for refreshment, none making afraid. The people come down to the gates, and the open villages are once more everywhere; they celebrate once more the righteous acts of Jehovah, their covenant-God.

All this, while picturesquely told, is simplicity itself; and while here in an Israelitish garb, is subsequently what in the history of Christendom has been many times repeated. The cause of Israel's desolation is never far to seek, for the Lord their God is a sun and a shield, and with Him no power could prevail against them. We, too, while we may lose ourselves among various second causes if we undertake as philosophers to trace an evil condition to its origin, may reach, without any doubt, its first great cause, if we will but be honest and confess the truth before God. In Ephesus, the first of the seven churches, the Lord Himself puts before them (and before us) the root of all bad fruit that ever grew: "Thou hast left thy *first* love." Yet they had zeal, and works, and what not; but His word to them is only, "Repent." And, alas, Christendom will not repent: it abides under the doom, "I will come unto thee, and take away thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent."

There were partial returns, however, in Israel, in which God graciously met and encouraged, as He could, such a return. These are types for us, not, indeed, historically fulfilled, as in the churches of Revelation, but enfolding principles which illumine the history, and are of perpetual application all the way through. How striking is the picture here of such a state of things as the endless strife of sects induces! The highways ceasing, the peaceful travelers having to walk through devious ways; no possibility of dwelling anywhere save behind a wall of defence; the mass of true Israel left without weapons; and those who would draw water from the wells of salvation exposed to the attacks of the ready archers! Well might we celebrate deliverance from all this! But such deliverances have been but few and partial.

(ii.) We have now the conflict, and the various relation of the tribes to it: for Israel is no longer one. But a remnant of the noble come down to take part in

Arise, Barak! and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam!
Then came down a [k]remnant of nobles of the people; [k] *cf.* ch. 7. 7.
Jehovah came down [l]for me among the mighty. [l] *cf.* ver. 23.
Out of [m]Ephraim they whose root is in Amalek; [m] *cf.* ch. 1. 29, etc.
After thee [n]Benjamin, among thy peoples;
Out of [o]Machir came down governors, [n] *cf.* ch. 1, 21, etc.
And out of [p]Zebulon they that handle the pen of the scribe. [o] *cf.* Num. 32. 39, 40.
And the princes of [q]Issachar were with Deborah; [p] *cf.* ch. 1. 30, etc.
Yea, Issachar was the support of Barak:
[When] into the valley he was sent on foot.
In the divisions of Reuben were great [r]resolves of heart. [q] *cf.* Num. 1. 23, 29 with Num. 26. 25.
Why abodest thou among the [s]sheepfolds to hear the pipings to the flocks?
Among the divisions of Reuben were great deliberations of heart. [r] *cf.* Mat. 21. 30.
[s] Num. 32. 1, etc. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 10.
[t]Gilead abode beyond Jordan;
And [u]Dan, why did he remain in ships? [t] *cf.* Josh. 22. 19.
[v]Asher sat still by the sea-shore,
And abode by his creeks. [u] *cf.* ch. 1. 34–36.
[w]Zebulon is a people that jeoparded their lives unto death,
And [x]Naphtali on the high places of the field. [v] *cf.* ch. 1. 31, 32.
The kings came and fought;
Then fought the kings of Canaan [w] *cf.* ch. 1. 30. Acts 15. 26. Acts 20. 24.
In Taanach by the waters of Megiddo:
They took no gain of money. [x] *cf.* ch. 1. 33.
They fought from heaven:
The [y]stars from their courses fought against Sisera. [y] *cf.* Josh. 10. 11–14.
The stream Kishon swept them away,
A helpful stream was the stream Kishon.
My soul, thou hast trodden down strength!
Then stamped the horse-hoofs
With galloping, galloping of their mighty ones!
3. The divine oracle. [z]Curse ye Meroz, saith the angel of Jehovah: [z] *cf.* Mat. 12. 30.

the deliverance; and those that are noted here seem to include all that from first to last enter into the struggle: for in the first battle at Tabor only Zebulon and Naphtali follow Barak, and are thus specially distinguished in the song itself (verse 18). But many take no part at all. Reuben makes great resolutions, and then wavers. Gilead allows the intervention of Jordan to be sufficient excuse. Dan is otherwise occupied, and stays in his ships. Asher, without occupation, tarries at the sea-coast. All these varieties of indifference are easy to be understood. Among those that, sooner or later, do take part the distinction is not so easy; and for the present at least it must be left.

Next we have the actual conflict and overthrow of the enemy. Heaven and earth unite against the oppressors of the people of God. The stars from their courses fought against them above; the Kishon swept them away with its stream below. The mighty ones showed themselves such by the stamping of their frightened horses. Such is the strength of those that are with God: the mightier the foes, the mightier only is the overthrow.

(iii.) We have now, most suitably filling the third place, a directly announced

Curse with a curse the inhabitants thereof,
Because they came not to Jehovah's [a]help,— [a] *cf.* ver. 13. Mat. 25. 41–45.
To Jehovah's help against the mighty!
[b]Blessed among women [b] *cf.* 2 Sam. 19. 32, 39.
Shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be,
Blessed among women in the tent!
He asked for water, she gave milk,
In the nobles' bowl she brought forth cream.
She put her hand to the pin,
And her right hand to the workman's hammer;
And smote Sisera, struck through his head,
Shattered and pierced through his temples.
At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down;
At her feet he bowed, he fell;
Where he bowed, there he fell, overcome.
Through the window she looketh, and crieth aloud,
The [c]mother of Sisera, through the lattice, [c] Ex. 15. 9.
Why is his chariot so long in coming?
Why tarry the steps of his chariots?
Her wise ladies answer her,
But she repeats her words unto herself:
Have they not found—divided the spoil?
A damsel or two apiece?
For Sisera booty of dyed stuffs,
Booty of dyed embroidered stuffs,
Dyed stuff doubly embroidered,
For his neck as a spoil?
So let [d]all thine enemies perish, Jehovah! [d] Ps. 83. 9, 10.

divine oracle. It is twofold—the one part in solemn contrast with the other. The curse upon Meroz—"[built] of cedars"—is an awful warning for those who in the day of needed help against the enemy withhold their help. As if to cut off the excuse so readily made for indifference, it is distinctly declared to be Jehovah who requires help: certainly not on His own account; that could hardly be supposed; but yet He looks for real and active sympathy and putting one's hand to work in what His heart is. The name of the city at least suggests the hindrances to this, of which the world is full—pride, luxury, all that makes the world look stable, and the things of God thus to be unreal because unseen—which refuses to accept His judgment. "Built of cedar" may well remind us how "Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria say in pride and in strength of heart, The bricks are fallen, but we will build with hewn stone: the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars." (Isa. ix. 9, 10.) Of such God says in Malachi, "They may build, but I will throw down."

In contrast with the curse upon Meroz, we have next the blessing upon Jael, in which the iron warrior is seen in utter collapse at the feet of a woman. Meroz had failed in the plain path of duty; but Jael, who might have been excused, forgets her womanhood and her alien birth, forgets the ordinary claims of hospitality and the pity accorded to distress, and strikes for the Lord and for His people. There are times when the voice of nature must not be listened to, as when Levi "knew not his own kindred." On the other side, the unwomanly woman's voice that follows with the anticipation of the victory that was not to be, and of the spoil that was never to be handled, shows the degradation of nature in a soul away from God, and the tyranny under which Israel lay prostrate. After all, in behalf of nature itself was Jael's blow struck: that which is for God is no less for the creature, because God Himself cannot but be, in all the reality

And let those that love him
Be as the sun goeth forth in its might.
And the land was quiet [e]forty years.

e ch. 3. 11.

SUBDIVISION 4. (Chap. vi.–x. 5.)

The Midianite Test: the Church in relation to the world.

(VI.—VIII. 32.)

Gideon: The way of power.

I. (vi. 1-32.) The call of the man of might.

a (v. 1-10.) Rebellion and repentance.

1.[1a] AND the children of Israel did that which was [f]evil in Jehovah's eyes; and Jehovah gave them up into the hand of [g]Midian seven years. And the hand of Midian prevailed over Israel: from the face of Midian the children of Israel made themselves the [h]dens that are in the mountains, and the caves, and the fastnesses. And so it was, when Israel had sown, that Midian came up, and Amalek, and the children of the east, even they came up against them. And they encamped against them, and [i]destroyed the produce of the land until thou come to Gaza, and they left no sus-

f ch. 4. 1.

g Num. 25. 16-18.

h 1Sam. 13.6. 1Sam. 22.1. Heb. 11. 38.

i Lev. 26.16. cf. Hag. 2. 16, 17.

of what He is, for him whom He has made for Himself. The cause of God is the cause of all.

SUBD. 4.

The fourth subdivision gives us the Midianite oppression and the deliverance, with the failure of the deliverer himself, and its disastrous consequences, ending, however, in true and peaceful revival under Tola and Jair. The spiritual meaning, as we shall see, brings all this into a true unity. Israel sinks lower than ever before. Gideon also fails in the very hour of victory; and the reign of his son is a usurpation of Jehovah's rights, begun in fratricide and closed in Divine judgment. Even in this way, the numerical structure vindicates itself; but there is much more than this.

Midian, a son of Abraham by Keturah, is, as we have seen, in Gen. xxv., in common with his other children, the witness and pledge of how the nations of the earth will find blessing at last in him. It is a picture of blessing, where Ishmael, as another son, comes in also as representing Israel themselves in the same millennial day. The history, however, both of Ishmael and Midian (as man's history everywhere) speaks something very different from God's grace. These two also are connected—in some sense, identified—in Scripture (Gen. xxxvii. 28; chap. viii. 24), as we shall presently see. Midian in this way stands for the world, as its history has characterized it, and the name corresponds to this, meaning "strife." "The corruption that is in the world" is "through lust" (2 Pet. i. 4); and "whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts which war in your members?" (Jas. iv. 1.) And especially do the lusts in the members war against Christ, and thus against the Church of Christ. These Midianites—"Midian" is supposed by some to have real connection with the modern word "Bedouin"—were Arab raiders, wandering pillagers, locust-like devouring what they had no will to produce, as the story here shows; and this is what the world is when admitted into the professing church: it has no community of interest in it, but the reverse; the effect is mere desolation. The Israelites were forced by the Midianites into dens and caves and fastnesses; and so, literally, have the true followers of the Lord in the times of the world-church, when rule was ravage merely, and when the "produce of the land"—the heavenly fruits of life, and the seed of the word from which they spring—were the special objects of the spoilers' pursuit.

Notice, too, the connection with the Philistines, whose name we have seen is "wanderers," and who are the type so near to this, of earthly men intruding into heavenly things. "Until thou come to Gaza" is no mere geographical

tenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. For they came up with their cattle, and their tents, and they came up as grasshoppers for multitude: both they and their camels were without number; and they came into the land to destroy it. And Israel was brought [j] very low because of Midian; and the children of Israel [k] cried unto Jehovah. And it was so, when the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah because of Midian, that Jehovah sent a [l] prophet unto the children of Israel, who said unto them, Thus saith Jehovah, God of Israel: I brought you up out of Egypt, and brought you forth from the house of bondage; and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that were oppressing you, and I drove them out from before you, and gave you their land. And I said unto you, I am Jehovah your God: fear not the gods of the Amorite, in whose land ye dwell; but ye have not hearkened to my voice.

[j] Ps. 107. 39.
[k] ch. 4. 3.
[l] ch. 2. 1.

[b] (v. 11-24.) The Deliverer.

And there came the [m] angel of Jehovah, and sat under the terebinth that was in Ophrah, that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite. And his son Gideon was [n] beating out wheat in the wine-press, to hide it from Midian. And the angel of Jehovah appeared unto him, and said unto him, Jehovah is with thee, thou [o] mighty man of valor. And Gideon said unto him, Alas, my lord, if

[m] ch. 13. 3.
[n] *cf.* Prov. 2. 1-5.
[o] *cf.* Rom. 4. 20.

limit. "Gaza formerly, as in later times, was the great bazaar of stolen wares, brought together there by the Bedouins from their expeditions." (Cassel, in Lange's Commentary.) Philistines would naturally league with Israel's enemies, and typically are but another phase or aspect of the world-church. Other connections of the history here we shall find later in the story of Philistine-named Abimelech.

With the Midianites Amalekites also throng into the land. Familiar as we are with what Amalek stands for (see Exod. 17, *n*), we have no difficulty in seeing that here we are plainly reminded how the world and the lusts of the flesh are found together. The children of the East—a general term for nameless marauders—represent, probably, the similarly nameless host of evils that follow in the train of those already named. No wonder Israel was "brought very low"; but they are brought thus to cry to God, and He comes in for them. A prophet is sent to put them in remembrance of what is indeed so plain and yet so easily forgotten—the secret of their present condition to be in their false gods. With us all, such desolation from the Lord's hand means but this very thing, though it be in various ways disguised.

(*b*) Thus brought to repentance, the deliverer is now found for them. This deliverer is Gideon, the son of Joash, a Manassite; and it is simple enough, though none the less needful to be insisted on, that in Manasseh, the spiritual pressing on after the heavenly goal, is to be found the rescue from the spirit of the world. Gideon is the son of Joash the Abiezrite; and Joash may most simply mean "the despairing one," though taken generally, from the alternation of the two names in the case of two kings of the after-history, to be simply a contraction for Jehoash, a name of very different meaning. But even in their case, is it so sure that one name is but the contraction for the other? True reverence for the Word would assure us that even there there must be a reason for the difference, and therefore a corresponding difference of meaning. The change, one familiar with the style of Scripture would say, is a *paronomasia*, or slight change in the

Jehovah be with us, why is all this befallen us? and [p]where are all his wonders, which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not Jehovah bring us up from Egypt? but now Jehovah hath abandoned us, and hath given us up into the clutch of Midian. And Jehovah turned [his face] on him, and said, Go in [q]this thy strength, and thou shalt save Israel out of the clutch of Midian: have not I sent thee? And he said unto him, Ah, Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my thousand is the poor one in Manasseh, and I am the [r]least in my

[p] Ps. 89. 49.
[q] cf. Mat. 17. 20.
[r] Jer. 1. 6. 1 Sam. 9. 2. cf. Lk. 5. 8 -11. 1 Cor. 15. 9, 10.

name, given for the very purpose of conveying a different thought. Even here, though the double form does not occur, Joash, the "despairing"—meaning *self*-despair—might well become a Jehoash, whom "Jehovah supports." And this, indeed, seems conveyed here, only after another manner: for Joash is "the Abiezrite;" and Abiezer means, as commonly given, "father of help," or, more literally, "*my* father is help." Certain it is that the true Abiezrite, or he who is able to trust thus confidently in God as his support, will be one weaned from self-confidence—from the thought of self-help.

Gideon springs thus from Joash; and his name is almost identical with that of a Benjamite already interpreted (Num. i. 11), Gideoni, "the cutter down." The application made of it there is to the judgment of the flesh, which the more literal meaning, "*my* cutter down," may, indeed, more precisely indicate. This links Gideon and Joash in thought very closely together; but Gideon is more general: it is "the cutter down;" and if this imply in the first place the judgment of man as fallen, in the light of God, we can clearly understand that this is power over the world necessarily, and that Gideon is thus the proper name of the deliverer from the hand of Midian.

To Gideon the call is given in another manner from that to any former judge. To him the angel of Jehovah appears—one who everywhere accepts the title, with all that belongs to it, of Jehovah Himself. Gideon the Manassite is thus shown the goal toward which the Christian Manassite runs. It is in the Lord's presence alone that things take their true shape, and find their proper judgment. The angel appears sitting under the terebinth that was in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite. *Elah*, whether terebinth or oak, which is disputed, means, literally, a strong tree; Ophrah is generally taken as meaning "vigorous, nimble," and so a "fawn"; but from another root may mean "crumbling," akin to *aphar*, "dust." The angel's position may be thus another intimation of how, out of human weakness, strength is developed and maintained.

This is what is clearly before us, all through Gideon's history. He is found beating out wheat in a wine-press, to keep it out of the hands of the Midianites, and the angel salutes him with the words, "Jehovah is with thee, thou mighty man of valor." And when he objects their present condition as proof that Jehovah had abandoned them, the angel further bids him, "Go in this thy strength, and thou shalt deliver Israel out of the clutch of Midian." What is this "strength"? It is the apprehension of the Lord's presence as this,—the consciousness that without Him there is none. This realized, the spiritual vision clears: God is seen as the soul's one necessity, and clung to, whatever else must be given up; there comes real strength to stand in the face of a hostile world, or against the opposition of the people of God themselves; and to stand with God means victory. Then the glorious face of God is turned upon us, as is said here with regard to Gideon; and every one so energized finds his call in this to aid in the deliverance of His people from the enemy: "Go, and thou shalt deliver; have not I sent thee?"

But it is easier to learn to answer to our name Jacob than it is to appropriate in simple faith that of Israel which God has given us; and so Gideon, mighty man of valor as he is yet to prove, shrinks from the place to which the voice of

father's house. And Jehovah said unto him, Nay, but [a]I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite Midian as one man. And he said unto him, If now I have found favor in thine eyes, show me a [b]sign that it is thou who talkest with me: [c]depart not from hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring my present, and set it before thee. And he said, I will remain until thou return. And Gideon went and made ready a [d]kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour: the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out to him under the terebinth, and presented [it.] And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh, and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this [e]rock, and pour out the broth: and he did so. And the angel of Jehovah put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and the [f]fire rose up out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. And the angel of Jehovah departed out of his sight. And Gideon perceived that he was the angel of Jeho-

[a] Ex. 3. 12 with 1 Cor. 1. 26–29. 1 Cor. 2. 1–5.

[b] 2 Kl. 20. 8. Is. 7. 11–14. ver. 36, 37.

[c] ch. 13. 15, 16.

[d] cf. Lev. 4. 28.

[e] cf. Num. 16. 18. 1 Pet. 2. 4–8.

[f] cf. Lev. 9. 24. 1 Kl. 18. 38.

the Lord has called him, and opposes the very littleness which makes him a fit instrument in God's hand, as an argument against this! "Ah, Lord," he says, "wherewith shall *I* save Israel?" Why, with an ox-goad, as Shamgar once; or with a smooth stone from the brook, as David afterward. But it is not an inquiry merely as to the Lord's will, although now he owns it to be the Lord that is thus speaking with him. Alas, little "I" can be great enough as an obstacle to faith, and assert itself how pertinaciously in the very presence of the grace of God! And so he goes on to talk about his family, and his own place in his father's house. And how many are thus hindered from taking the place that God would give them by that littleness of theirs, which, after all, is of so much account! When shall we really learn that God's great men are all little ones, only made great by His use of them?—and leave off this shameful idolatry of means which is so continually putting the creature into the place of God, to its own dishonor and the wreck of all that we can wreck?

The Lord keeps to His grace, and Gideon must rise up to this: "Nay, but I will be with thee," He says; and there is all that need be said.

But Gideon's doubts are not settled: is it, after all, Jehovah that talks with him? Yes; is there not, after all, such a thing as fanaticism? Can we not make mistakes? And how, then, shall we be sure, at any time, we are not making one? Dull enough, surely, we are, when that voice which there is not another like, can be heard with doubt in the soul that hears it! May we not learn by the connection, too, that it is just the making so much of man that makes God so little, and disables us from distinguishing the voice of God? His thoughts are not as our thoughts; yet we may refuse His thoughts because they are so unlike our own. And often, indeed, we do this.

Gideon would prove, then, his visitor with an offering, and significantly brings him Abraham's offering of an ephah — that is, three measures — of flour; but Abraham's gift is of *fine* flour; and instead of Abraham's calf he brings a kid. Though less full a type than that in Genesis, Gideon's offering still speaks of Christ. And on the angel's part here there is more reserve than there, but still acceptance. At his direction it is placed upon the rock; and the angel touching it with his staff, it goes up in fire as an accepted offering. Then the angel himself departs: there is not power for sustained communion, as in Abraham's case; yet Christ, as Representative of His people, accepted in sacrifice upon the cross, is declared the ground upon which God can be with them in delivering

vah; and Gideon said, [y] Ah, Lord Jehovah! that I have seen the angel of Jehovah face to face. And Jehovah said unto him: Peace to thee; fear not: thou shalt not die.

[y] ch. 13. 20, 22. Is. 6. 5.

c (vv.25-32.) Worship restored.

(c) And Gideon built there an [z] altar to Jehovah, and called it Jehovah-shalom: it is yet this day in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. And it was on that night Jehovah said unto him, Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and [a] throw down the altar of Baal which thy father hath; and cut down the Asherah that is by it; and build an altar unto Jehovah thy God on the top of this strong place in the ordered way, and take the second bullock, and offer it up as a burnt-offering with the wood of the Asherah which thou cuttest down. And Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as Jehovah spake unto him: and so it was, because he feared his father's house and the men of the city, and could not do it by day, that he did it by [b] night. And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was broken down, and the Asherah that was beside it was cut down, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that had been built. And they said one to another, Who hath done this thing? And when they inquired and searched, they said, Gideon the son of Joash hath done this thing. And the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring forth thy son, that he may die, because he hath broken down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the Asherah that was beside it.

[z] Gen. 8. 20, Gen. 12. 7, 8, ch. 21. 4, etc.

[a] ch. 2. 2. cf. 2 Tim. 2. 19.

[b] cf. Matt. 2. 14. Jno. 3. 2.

them. And this is the true assurance of competence for the Gideons of any generation.

He is assured now that he has seen the angel of Jehovah face to face, yet fears on that account, till quieted by His word, that he will not die. There is, indeed, for us ever in the apprehension of the Lord's presence the apprehension also of the sentence passed upon the flesh; and here is the ability for all right walk, and energy for the warfare to which we are called. "Now mine eye seeth Thee, therefore I abhor myself." And Christ crucified is the affirming of this sentence and for deliverance from ourselves, that "crucified with Christ" we may yet live,—no longer we, but Christ living in us.

(c) Gideon, therefore, builds an altar, and calls it Jehovah-shalom,—"Jehovah is peace." It is not merely that there is peace *with* God, nor would this be the expression for it, for Jehovah is already the covenant name. No; but Jehovah *is* peace: it is found in Him; He has produced and bestowed it: from all fear whatever the soul takes shelter in Himself. And this being so, the altar itself is now a challenge of the idols; Jehovah's altar cannot abide in company with Baal's, nor Israel's deliverance be accomplished with a divided faith. Thus it was on the same night, the night of the day in which Jehovah had appeared, that Jehovah bade him throw down Baal's altar, and cut down the asherah,—a pillar of wood, the symbol of the Ashtaroth worship with which that of Baal was conjoined,—and, building an altar to Himself on the top of the stronghold (to which they were accustomed to retire from the face of the Midianites), to offer upon it his father's second bullock with the wood of the asherah he had cut down. Not to be interrupted by the unbelief of those around, he did it by night, and the next morning the challenge to Baal was apparent. Thus "to faith" Gideon had to

[c] And Joash said unto all that stood against him, Will *ye* contend for Baal? or will *ye* save him? He that will contend for him, let him be put to death while it is yet morning: if he be God, let him contend for himself, because one hath broken down his altar. And he called him Jerub-baal that day, saying, Let Baal contend with him, because he hath broken down his altar.

c *cf.* 1 Sam. 10. 27 with 1 Sa. 11. 12.

2. (Ch. vi. 33 –vii. 15.) Steps toward deliverance.

a (vi. 33–35.) The gathering.

[2] (*a*) And all Midian and Amalek and the children of the east were gathered together: and they passed over and encamped in the valley of Jezreel. And the [d] Spirit of Jehovah endued Gideon, and he blew the [e] trumpet, and Abiezer was called out after him; and he sent [f] messengers through all Manasseh, who also were called out after him; and he sent messengers into Asher, and into Zebulon and into Naphtali; and they advanced to meet them.

d ch. 3. 10. ch. 11. 29. ch. 13. 25, etc.

e ch. 3. 27. 1 Sam. 13. 3, etc.

f. ch. 4. 10.

b (vi. 36–40.) Signs for the refreshment of faith.

(*b*) And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou hast said, behold, I put a [g] fleece of wool upon the threshing-floor: if dew be on the fleece alone, and it be dry on all the ground, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou hast said. And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and pressed the fleece together, and wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowl-full of water. And Gideon

g *cf.* ver. 17. ch. 7. 10,11. Acts 17. 31 with 1 Cor. 15. 20, 58.

"add virtue,"—the boldness needed by every good soldier of Christ; and this boldness is God's means to awaken and embolden others, so that Joash, his father, steps into the ranks. To the cry for his son to be put to death, he answers that the pleader for Baal deserves that: it is for Baal himself to avenge the insult,—a sarcasm which smites down at once the opposition, and leaves to Gideon the title of idol-challenger, "Let Baal contend!" In the strife that is beginning, the very existence of the man of faith is a sign of victory already achieved, a pledge of one to come.

(ii.) The enemy now appears, and we are called to see, in the present section, the steps toward deliverance. There has to be preparation on Israel's part, as is evident; and the separation of those whom God can use in the accomplishment of this. Gracious He is, but none the less careful as to the associations of those who are His instruments, to whom He intrusts the honor of His name.

(*a*) The Midianites and their confederates spread themselves in the valley of Jezreel. We have already seen who these are, and for what they stand in the divine vocabulary. The Spirit of Jehovah now endues Gideon; for no mere wisdom or might of man is sufficient in this contest, and only in dependence are we safe. He blows the trumpet, and first Abiezer, and then all Manasseh, are gathered after him. The fitness of Manasseh for this place is apparent in Gideon, himself a Manassite. The world can only be overcome by him whose goal is beyond it; and this we have abundantly seen is what Manasseh represents. Asher, the "happy," Zebulon, the "dweller in relationship," and Naphtali, the "struggler" who overcomes, follow after Manasseh, and the Israelites' army of victory is gathered.

(*b*) But Gideon is not yet fully prepared, and urges upon the Lord his desire for a sign. He puts a fleece of wool upon the threshing-floor, and finds it in the morning wet with dew when all the ground is dry around. And again, at his further request, these conditions are reversed, and while all the ground is wet with dew, the fleece is dry. The fleece of the shorn sheep is the figure of forlorn Israel, which is to be filled with the dew of God's blessing amid the drought

said unto God, [h]Let not thine anger kindle against me and I will speak but this once. Let me [i]prove, I pray thee, this once with the fleece: let it now be dry on the fleece only, and on all the ground let there be dew. And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece alone, and on all the ground there was dew.

[h] Gen. 18. 32.
[i] *cf.* Mal. 3. 10.

c (vii. 1-8.) The consecration needed.

(*c*) And Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, and all the people with him, rose up early, and encamped beside the spring of Harod; and the camp of Midian was north of him, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley. And Jehovah said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are [j]too many for me to give Midian into their hand, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, [k]My hand hath saved me. Now therefore, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whoever is [l]fearful and afraid, let him turn away again from Mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty-two thousand; and there remained [m]ten thousand. And Jehovah said unto Gideon, The people are [n]still many: bring them down to the water, and [o]I will try them for thee there; and it shall be that of whom I say unto thee, This man shall go with thee, he shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This man shall not go with thee, he shall not go. So he brought the people down to the water; and Jehovah said unto Gideon, Every one that [p]lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth on his knees to drink. And the number of those that lapped, with their hand to their mouth, was

[j] ver. 4. *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 27–30.
[k] Deut. 8. 17. Dan. 4. 30, 31.
[l] Deut. 20. 8. 1 Cor. 16. 13, 14.
[m] ch. 4. 6.
[n] ver. 2.
[o] *cf.* 1 Sam. 16. 6, 7.
[p] *cfr.* 1 Sam. 14. 24–30. *cf.* 1 Cor. 7. 29–31 with 2 Tim. 4. 10.

upon the heathen around. But then this also may be of God, the while His mercies are refreshing the nations around, Israel for her sins may be left dry. This is, in either case, no mere natural occurrence: it is in His favor that there is life; He hideth His face, and we are troubled. To recognize His hand in all conditions, however opposite,—to own everywhere His power and sway: this is the secret of wisdom, and of strength no less. For the acts of His throne are not arbitrary. He is no mere personal fate, but righteous and holy in all His dealings, and desiring to be understood by His people, however men in their wanderings from Him may misconceive the One upon whom they have turned their back.

(*c*) With his faith refreshed, Jerubbaal, the challenger of the idols, who is thus Gideon, the "cutter-down," rises up early, with all the people with him, and encamps opposite the enemy by the spring of trembling (Harod). And there, right in the presence of the vast host of Midian he is made by God to dismiss more than two thirds of his small army (at its best not a fourth part of the number of their adversaries), and that in obedience to a law of Deuteronomy. And what a humiliation and distress that 22,000 Israelites, come out expressly to battle, should on the plea of *fear* turn their backs upon their leader and his diminished force! But the design was not merely to get rid of the faint-hearted: for God's hand to be manifest as He meant it to be, ten thousand men were still too many. At the word of the Lord they are brought down to the water, and tested there by their manner of drinking. Three hundred, instead of bowing down on their knees for a leisurely draught, merely, as in haste, lap the water from their hand. They are true Manassites, pressing on to what is before them; and "by the three hundred men that lapped will I save you," is the Lord's

three hundred men; but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. And Jehovah said unto Gideon, By the [q]three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and give Midian into thy hand; and let all the people go, every man to his place. And they took [r]victuals [for] the people in their hand, and their [s]trumpets; but he sent all Israel, every man to his tent, and retained the three hundred men.

d (vii. 8-15.) An experience among the host.

(*d*) And the camp of Midian was below him in the valley. And it was so in that night that Jehovah said unto him, Arise, go down to the camp: for I [t]have given it into thy hand. But if thou fearest to go down, go down thyself and Phurah thy servant unto the camp, and hear what [u]they say; and after that thy hands shall be strengthened to go down to the camp. And he went down with Phurah his servant to the outside of the armed men that were in the camp. Now Midian and Amalek and all the children of the east lay along in the valley, like [v]locusts for multitude, and their camels were numberless, as the sand that is on the sea-shore for multitude. And when Gideon came, behold, a man telling his comrade a dream. And he said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream, and lo, a round cake of [w]barley-bread rolled into the camp of Midian, and came to the tent, and smote it so that it fell, and turned it upside down, and the tent lay along. And his comrade answered and said, This is nothing else than the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, a man of Israel: into his hand hath God given Midian and all the camp. And so it was, when Gideon heard the tale of the dream and the interpretation thereof, that he [x]worshiped. And he returned to the camp of Israel and said, Rise up, for Jehovah hath given into your hand the camp of Midian.

3. (Ch. vii. 16-viii. 21.) Victory realized.

a (vii. 16-23.) The power in weakness: "that the excellency of the power may be of God."

[3](*a*) And he divided the three hundred men into three

q 1 Sam. 14. 6.

r ver. 5. 2 Tim. 2. 3, 4.

s ch. 6. 34. Neh. 4. 18.

t 2 Sam. 5. 19.

u Josh. 2. 9, 24.

v ch. 6. 5. Ps. 118. 12. Jer. 46. 23.

w Num. 5. 15. *cf.* Jno. 6. 9.

x Ex. 4. 29-31. Josh. 5. 13-15.

word to Gideon; "and let all the people go, every man to his place." They do not seem to be sent home, however, but to their tents, as not needed for the battle that was before them.

(*d*) The Lord recognizes, however, the strain of all this upon Gideon's faith, and Himself tenderly proposes now a means of encouragement. This the enemy themselves were to furnish. Going down with Phurah, his servant, to the outskirts of the camp, he arrives just in time to hear one of the men interpret to his comrade a dream. The dreamer had seen a round cake of common barley-bread roll against the tent and overthrow it; and his comrade interprets it of "the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, a man of Israel, into whose hand God has given Midian and all the camp." "Bread" and a "sword" seem most incongruous figures; and yet they are both figures of the word of God; and *barley* bread—bread of the poorest kind—may in this case either speak of it according to the estimation of its despisers, or more probably of even its simplest and lowest truths. For what more than these are needed as against Midian and Amalek; that is, the world and the lusts of the flesh, as here making inroad into the Church of God?

(iii.) (*a*) And now we come to realized deliverance, in which the hand of the Lord is most manifestly seen. The means of victory are so clearly inter-

companies, and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, and *y* empty pitchers, and *z* torches within the pitchers. And he said unto them, *a* Look on me, and do likewise; and behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be that as I do, so shall ye do: when I *b* blow with the trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpet also on every side of all the camp, and say, For Jehovah and for Gideon! And Gideon came, and the hundred men that were with him, to the extremity of the camp, in the beginning of the *c* middle watch, when they had but newly set the watch; and they blew the trumpets, and *d* brake the pitchers that were in their hands. And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and *e* held the torches in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow with; and they cried, Jehovah's sword and Gideon's! And they stood every man in his place round about the camp; and all the host ran; and they shout-

y cf. 2 Tim. 2. 20, 21.

z cf. Matt. 5. 14, 15.

a cf. 1 Cor. 11. 1. Phil. 4. 9.

b ch. 6. 34. Ezek. 33. 3. Zech. 9. 14. 1 Cor. 14. 8.

c 1 Th. 5. 3.

d cf. 2 Cor. 4. 6-12. 2 Cor. 12. 9, 10.

e cf. Phil. 2. 15.

preted for us by the apostle (2 Cor. iv. 4–12) that it is hardly possible to go astray, while it is true, and nowise strange, that the type is transcended by the antitype. The light, the earthen vessel, and the shining forth of the light, are sufficient points of resemblance; and while in the New Testament these are not looked at in connection with the discomfiture of the Church's enemies, but in the building up of the Church itself, these things are not so far apart as to prevent very easy and, indeed, instructive comparison and connection with one another. To build up the Church aright is impossible without freeing it from the domination of the world: how could Israel be built up in the midst of Midianite devastation? Nor will the Church, if not built up, be long free from a foreign yoke. The demonic rulers of this world rule it by darkness (Eph. vi. 12). The inheritance of the saints is in light (Col. i. 12), and their armor also is "the armor of light" (Rom. xiii. 12). But that armor is not a mere wholly outside thing: it is light that is in the face of Christ Jesus,—*objective* there, indeed, but which is received into the believer's heart, and received not simply for personal joy and blessing, but "for shining forth" (2 Cor. iv. 6, *Gk*). "The glory of God that is in the face of Jesus Christ," has nothing to express it in the type here: we could scarcely expect it; but there is no other light for the Christian: there would not be even torchlight without this.

That the light is in an "earthen vessel" is abundantly plain. This treasure is enshrined in mere humanity with its manifest infirmity, liable to suffering and to death. But this, too, has its design, says the apostle: it is "that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of man." This is in the very line of truth that the story of the Lord's man of might enforces here. And yet the vessel, like the pitchers of the three hundred, tends indeed to shroud and bury the light so as to prevent its shining. What is needed, then, that the purpose of God may be fulfilled in this way? How plainly we see the spiritual requirement ruling here, for the vessel to be *broken* that the light may shine! And so the apostle dwells upon the afflictions of the Christian, "always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body; for we who live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh." Thus it is light shining forth in life that is spoken of here; and this life not that of nature merely, but Christ our life, which, the more the outward man is consumed, becomes the more lustrous, the more convincingly of God.

When the world has invaded the Church, and Israel is scattered in dens and caves, this light may be little seen. Its display will always be the confusion of

ed; and they [f]fled. And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and [g]Jehovah set every man's sword against his comrade, and against all the host; and the host fled as far as Beth-shittah, toward Zererah, as far as the edge of Abel-meholah, by Tabbath. And the men of Israel were [h]called together out of Naphtali and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh, and pursued after Midian.

(*b*) (vii. 24–viii. 9.) Internal strife.

(*b*) And Gideon sent messengers through all the hill-country of [i]Ephraim, saying, Come down against Midian, and take before them the waters as far as Bethbarah and Jordan. So all the men of Ephraim were called together, and took the waters as far as Bethbarah and Jordan. And they took two [j]princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb; and they slew Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at the wine-press of Zeeb; and they pursued Midian, and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon beyond Jordan.

And the men of Ephraim said unto him, [k]What is this that thou hast done to us, that thou calledst us not when thou wentest to fight with Midian? And they contended with him vehemently. And he said unto them, What have I done now in [l]comparison with you? Are not the gleanings of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer? Into your hands hath God given the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb; and what could I do in comparison with you? Then their excitement against him abated when he said that. And Gideon came to Jordan, [and] passed over, he and the three hundred that were with him, [m]faint, yet pursuing. And he said unto the men of Succoth, [n]Give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people that follow me: for they are faint; and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian. And the princes of Succoth said,

[f] 2 Ki. 7.6,7. Is. 9. 4. Heb. 11. 32-34.

[g] 1 Sam. 14. 20. 2 Chr. 20. 23.

[h] *cf.* ch. 5.14-18. 1 Sam. 14. 20-23. 1 Sam. 17. 52.

[i] ch. 3.27,28. *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 21, etc.

[j] Ps. 83. 11, 12. Is. 9. 4. Is. 10. 26.

[k] *cf.* ch. 12. 1. 2 Sam. 19. 40-43. 1 Ki. 12. 16. *ctr.* Is. 11. 13, 14. Ezek. 37.15-22.

[l] *cf.* Prov. 15. 1 with Phil. 2. 3, 4. *ctr.* ch. 12. 1-6. with Gal. 5. 15.

[m] *ctr.* Gen. 25. 29. *cf.* 1 Sam. 30. 10. 2 Sam. 21. 15. Is. 40. 31.

[n] 1 Sam. 21. 3, 4. *ctr.* Josh. 2. 1-7.

Midian and its overthrow, accomplished as it must and will be by the voice of the trumpet, once so effective in the destruction of Jericho. The light *and* the trumpet — the testimony of the Word and the testimony of the life — this is the *double* testimony which is true, and so effective, and which is the destruction of the world-church. Face to face with it, the mere godless profession, self-condemned, dies by its own hand.

(*b*) Hardly is victory achieved, and the fruits of it remain yet largely to be gathered, when opposition shows itself on the part of Israel themselves. Ephraim is now called to take part in the contest, and they respond and gain a decisive battle, taking two princes of Midian—Oreb and Zeeb, the "Raven" and the "Wolf,"—and bringing their heads to Gideon, on the other side of Jordan. There is, indeed, a place for Ephraim in such a contest as this, though it is not the first place. The spiritual meaning again illumines the history; and the names of the princes slain would seem to show them to represent only the ruder and lower of Israel's—or the Church's—enemies; indeed, according to the plain word, "princes," and not "kings."

But Ephraim is notorious also for pride, and it is that very first place that they fain would have. They contend vehemently with their deliverer, because they were not called when he went to fight Midian, and are only appeased by

[o] Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thy hand, that we should give bread unto thine army? And Gideon said, Therefore, when Jehovah hath given Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, then will I thresh your flesh with thorns of the wilderness and with briers.

o *cf.* 1 Sam. 25. 10–13.

And he went up thence to Penuel, and spake in like manner unto them; and the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered. And he spake also unto the men of Penuel, saying, [p] When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower.

p *cf.* ch. 21. 8–10.

(c) (viii. 10–21.) Full deliverance.

(*c*) Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor, and their host with them, about fifteen thousand men, all that were left of all the hosts of the children of the east, for there had fallen one hundred and twenty thousand men that drew the sword. And Gideon went up by the way of them that dwelt in tents, on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah, and smote the host: for the host was [q] secure. And Zebah and Zalmunna fled; but he pursued after them, and took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and discomfited all the host. And Gideon the son of Joash returned from the battle, from the ascent of Heres. And he caught a youth of the men of Succoth, and inquired of him; and he wrote down for him the princes of Succoth and the elders thereof, seventy seven men. And he came unto the men of Succoth, and said, Behold Zebah and Zalmunna about whom ye taunted me, saying, Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thy hand, that we should give bread unto thy men that are faint? And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth. And he [r] brake down the tower of Penuel, and slew the men of the city. And he said unto Zebah and Zalmunna, What sort of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor? And they answered, Such as thou art they were: they each resembled the children of a king. And he said, They were my brethren—my mother's sons: as Jehovah liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you. And he said unto Jether his firstborn, Up; slay them! But the youth drew not his sword; for he feared, because he was yet a youth.

q ch. 18. 10–27.

r ver. 9. *cf.* Lk. 10. 14, 27.

Gideon's unpretending humility, who refers all to God, if in his eyes, in fact, Ephraim's gleanings seem more than Abiezer's vintage.

Thence he goes on to meet scornful refusal of even necessary food for his famishing company from the Israelite towns of Succoth and Penuel. But he does not pause for the retribution with which he threatens them: "faint though pursuing," they press on.

(*c*) Of the completion of the deliverance from Midian little can be yet said. Much depends here upon the names, the meaning of some of which is hard to determine. Zebah means "sacrifice"; Zalmunna apparently "shadow [shelter?] withheld." Karkor, from a root "to dig," expresses "deep, soft, level

Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, Rise thou, and fall on us: for as the man is, so is his strength. And Gideon arose, and slew Zebah and Zalmunna; and he [s]took away the moons that were on their camels' necks.

4. (viii. 22-32.) Gideon's failure and after-life.

[t]And the men of Israel said unto Gideon, [t]Rule thou over us, thyself, and thy son, and thy son's son also; for thou hast saved us out of the hand of Midian. And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: Jehovah shall rule over you. And Gideon said unto them, I would make a [u]request of you, that ye would every one give me the rings of his spoil. (For they had golden rings, because they were Ishmaelites.) And they said, We will willingly give them. And they spread a garment, and cast on it every one the rings of his spoil. And the weight of the golden rings that he had requested was a thousand and seven hundred [shekels] of gold, beside the moons and ear-rings, and the purple garments that were on the kings of Midian, and beside the chains that were upon their camels' necks. And Gideon made them into an ephod, and

s *cf.* Gen. 31. 19. ver. 24-26.

t *ctr.* ch. 11. 6-11. 1 Sam. 8. 4-8. *cf.* Is. 33. 22.

u *ctr.* Num. 31. 48-54.

ground" (Fausset)—generally is given as "deep ground;" Jogbehah, "elevation," or, "it is exalted;" Nobah, "barking." The scoffers of Succoth and Penuel meet their threatened judgment after Midian.

(iv.) Gideon's career, so bright and prosperous hitherto, ends yet, alas, in sudden and disastrous failure. What worm has been at the root of all this beauteous development, that collapse should be so immediate upon success? There must surely be in it deep lessons of utter self-distrust, that we are called to learn, lessons that so to learn would save us from how much, perhaps, of painful experience, much like that of the elders of Succoth, taught as with the thorns and briars of the wilderness, the fruit of the curse which has come through sin.

One test, and that a severe one, Gideon successfully resists. The people bid him rule over them, and would establish royalty in his family among them; but he declines so promptly as effectually to prevent any repetition of the offer: "I will not rule over you," he says, "neither shall my son rule over you: Jehovah shall rule over you." There it is plain he speaks out of the depth of strong conviction and loving obedience. And though God Himself had spoken permissively of a king for Israel some time in the future, Gideon had known too much of his own weakness, too much of the people with whom he had to do, and too well the Lord's abundant care and interest in Israel, to entertain for a moment the thought of anticipating this.

Yet in the same breath, it would seem, in which he rejects the kingship, he stretches forth his hand to take the priesthood: for nothing short of this can be meant by the use to which he puts the gifts which he now solicits from them, being the rings of the spoil. They had, it is added, golden rings, because they were Ishmaelites. The identification of these with the Midianites has been before noticed: they were Ishmaelites as men of strife, according to their name; not by descent, of course, but by habit. As warlike nomads it was natural for them to carry much of their wealth upon their persons. The use of all this gold shows clearly that it is a high priestly ephod that Gideon makes, not as intending to dispute the office with the high priest at Shiloh; and yet apparently claiming equal rank with his.

But what could lead a man like Gideon into such a course? That view is surely correct which finds this in a false interpretation of his past experience. He had actually offered sacrifice, as we remember, at Ophrah by the Lord's command; and there the altar he had raised still stood. It is simple that for

put it in his city Ophrah; and all Israel went thither [v] whoring after it, and it became a snare to Gideon, and to his house.

So Midian was humbled before the children of Israel, so that they lifted up their head [w] no more: and the land was quiet [x] forty years in the days of Gideon. And Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his own house. And Gideon had seventy sons who came out of his loins, for he had [y] many wives. And his concubine, who was in Shechem, she also bare him a son,

[v] ch. 2. 3. *cf.* Num. 16. 1-10.

[w] Num. 25. 16-18. Num. 31. 1-12.

[x] ch. 5. 31. ch. 10. 2.

[y] *cf.* Deut. 17. 17. 1 Ki. 11. 1-8.

this he was providing according to the Mosaic ritual, God having, as he might judge, already ordained him to this office: a plausible, and yet false, inference from a real experience. We need not wonder to hear that this became a snare to Gideon and his house, nor that all Israel went whoring after it. We can find in it what the generations of an after-dispensation have but too faithfully repeated, and thus types written for our admonition.

God had appointed but one high priest for Israel, and the ordinary priesthood was confined to the same line, the family of Aaron. The essence of this priesthood was that they were mediators for the people, and, by sacrifice, a special, peculiar link between the people and God: in this way alone could they draw near to God.

For us as Christians all this is changed. In Christianity people and priests are one, and on this account the *special* priesthood has passed away. We are no longer at a distance, but brought nigh: the effectual sacrifice has been offered once for all—as on the day of atonement, by the High Priest alone, who has thereupon, as for a moment Israel's high priest did, gone into the sanctuary, but a heavenly one, there to make intercession for us in the presence of God. The rent veil, the throned High Priest, the universal priesthood of the people of God, are essential characteristics of the period in which, through grace, we live.

But the Church has failed, and not proved able to retain for herself the apprehension of this grace. Mingled with and sunk into the world, the shadows of the past have been allowed to darken the light into which the goodness of God had introduced her. Distance has again come in between the people of God and God, the knowledge of the efficacy of the work of Christ has become obscured, and as a result the Jewish system, in the disguise of Christian names and forms, is found to-day firmly entrenched in the midst of Christendom. The old priesthood of a distinctive class, modified in various ways, is fully reinstated, and even exaggerated in the Romish and kindred ritualistic systems: an invasion of Christ's office in the direction of what Gideon's failure seems to point to typically in no uncertain way.

He had, indeed, been commanded to build an altar to Jehovah, and even to offer sacrifice upon it: and this was really putting him in a priestly place. But his sacrifice does not seem to have the mediatorial character which attached to the Aaronic priesthood, but to be rather eucharistic, or intended to vindicate the Lord's claim to the worship of Israel in opposition to Baal, whose altar had just been overthrown. Gideon's sacrifice, therefore, though in form such as that offered by the Aaronic priesthood, seems really different, and to approach in intent more truly to the "sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving" of the Christian man. But the ephod—clearly high-priestly—speaks far otherwise; the high-priest being manifestly the representative of the nation before God; and Israel going whoring after it, intimates how they understood it. Its being made with the spoils of victory—of which it would remain a perpetual trophy—may show how in Christendom, as faith lessened and grew rare, the very piety of individuals tended to put them into a place which, from being foremost, came to be official and representative. The ordinary Christians became the secular, the laity, dropped back into the old distance, needing a continually greater work to

and he called his name [z]Abimelech. And Gideon the son of Joash died in a good old age, and was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

[z] ch. 9. 1, etc.

(VIII. 33–IX.)

Abimelech, the false succession.

2. [1]And it came to pass, when Gideon was [a]dead, that the children of Israel returned and went whoring after the Baals, and set up Baal-berith as their god. And the children of Israel did not [b]remember Jehovah their God, who had delivered them from the hand of all their enemies round about, nor did they show [c]kindness to the house of Jerubbaal-Gideon, according to all the good that he had done to Israel.

[a] ch. 4. 1, etc. *cf.* Hos. 6. 4. Gal. 1. 6.

[b] Ps. 78. 11. Ps. 106. 13. *cf.* Rev. 2. 4, 5.

[c] ch. 9. 16–19.

1. (viii. 33–ix. 21.) Origin of his power.

And [d]Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem, to his mother's brethren, and spake unto them and to all the family of the house of his mother's father, saying, Speak now in the ears of all the lords of Shechem, Which is better for you, that seventy persons, all sons of Jerubbaal, rule over you, or that one man rule over you? and remember that I am your [e]bone and your flesh. And his mother's brethren spake for him all these things in the ears of all the lords of Shechem; and their heart inclined after Abimelech; for they said, He is our brother. And they gave him seventy pieces of silver out of the house of [f]Baal-berith; and Abimelech hired with them [g]worthless and reckless persons, and they followed him. And he went to his father's

[d] ch. 8. 31. *cf.* 1 Ki. 12. 1.

[e] *ctr.* 2 Sam. 5. 1.

[f] ch. 8. 33. ver. 46.

[g] ch. 11. 3. *ctr.* 1 Sam. 22. 2.

bring them nigh, until an official priesthood intruded upon the work of Christ without rebuke, and the process of Judaizing became as complete as may be seen in Romanism.

We need not wonder, then, to find this a snare to Gideon and his house, nor soon an Abimelech proceeding from the loins of Jerubbaal, the deliverer. This we are now called to consider.

2. Abimelech ("my father [was] king"), in his name, carries us back to the Philistines. It was that of their kings, and speaks, as we saw in Genesis, of that successional claim in the world-church, the falsehood of which he so plainly represents. His succession is from one who refused power when offered him, and he makes it good by treachery and murder of those who stood in his way. His typical connection with his father's ephod is easy to be seen, and confirms the application of the whole history here.

Israel had once again lapsed into idolatry, and taken Baal-berith to be their god. The words mean "lord of the covenant," which may be simply equivalent to "covenant-lord," and may go beyond this. The worship of Baal was at least a sign of covenant with the Canaanites, whose god he was, and the history here gives manifest proof of alliance with the heathen. The "men of Hamor, the father of Shechem," are known and in estimation among them (ix. 28); and the word for "lords" (*baale*), unusual in Hebrew, is "often found in the Phœnician dialect." It is applied, says Fausset, "to the men of Gibeah (ch. xx. 5), and the Canaanite citizens of Jericho (Josh. xxiv. 11), and to the men of Keilah (1 Sam. xxiii. 11, 12). The continual recurrence of this word (ver. 2, 6, 7, 18, 20, 23, 24, 25, 26, 39, 46, 47, 51) can hardly be accidental; it probably alludes to the majority of them being Canaanites, and connects with the Phœnician Baal-worship of Canaan"—Baalites, as it were. In this way, also, the name Jerubbaal is so often harped upon. Baal-worship and intermixture with the Canaan-

house at Ophrah, and [h]slew his brethren the sons of Jerubbaal, seventy men, on one stone; but there remained Jotham, the youngest son of Jerubbaal, for he [i]hid himself.

And all the lords of Shechem gathered together, and all the house of Millo, and went and made Abimelech [j]king, at the oak of the monument that is at Shechem. And they told Jotham; and he went and stood upon the top of Mount [k]Gerizim, and lifted up his voice and cried, and said unto them, Hearken unto me, ye lords of Shechem, and God shall hearken unto you. The trees once went to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive, Reign over us. And the olive said unto them, Shall I leave my [l]fatness, wherewith by me they [m]honor God and men, and go to wave over the trees? And the trees said unto the [n]fig-tree, Come thou: reign over us. And the fig-tree said unto them, Shall I leave my sweetness and my good fruit, and go to wave over the trees? And the trees said unto the [o]vine, Come thou: reign over us. And the vine said unto them, Shall I leave my new wine, which [p]cheereth God and men, and go to wave over the trees? And all the trees said unto the [q]thorn-bush, Come thou: reign over us. And the thorn-bush said unto the trees, If in truth ye are anointing me king over you, come and take shelter in my shadow; but if not, let fire come out of the thorn-bush, and [r]devour the cedars of Lebanon.

h *cf.* Gen. 4. 8–10.
i 2 Ki. 11. 1–3.
j 1 Sam. 8.5. Hos. 13. 10, 11. *ctr.* ch. 8. 22, 23.
k Deut. 27. 12.
l Ps. 104. 15.
m *cf.* Ex. 30. 23–33 with Acts 10. 38. 1 Jno. 2.2.7.
n *cf.* Matt. 21. 19.
o *cf.* Is. 5.1–6 with Jno. 15. 1–8.
p *cf.* Lk. 22. 17–20. 1 Cor. 11. 25.
q *cf.* Heb. 6. 8. Gal. 5. 13. 1 Jno. 3.18. Lk. 22. 27. Phil. 2. 3–11.
r *cf.* Gal. 5. 14, 15. Ezek. 34. 1–6.

ites are certainly found at their worst in the story of crime and bloodshed following here.

Idolatry and the reign of Abimelech are thus connected, as in the dispensational fulfillment; and Shechem, at the very spot where the law of Jehovah was proclaimed, is now the center of apostasy.

(i.) The sources of his power are plainly that he is half Canaanite, half Israelite, son of Gideon on the one side, though son of the bondwoman on the other. He is, in this respect, another Ishmael; and with the same typical meaning that the apostle (Gal. iv.) gives to the former one. How plainly we have in him, then, the Jewish-Christian-Pagan abomination that has arisen in the bosom of Christianity to lord it over the Israel of God. Naturally his way must be prepared by the extermination of Jerubbaal's true successors, although a remnant escapes into hiding at Beer, the "well,"—a good place for God's refugees,—in the person of Jotham, who yet is able to make heard his testimony against the usurper.

Jotham ("Jehovah is perfect") bears in his name the character of a true witness. The Shechemites, with shameless audacity, gather at the stone set up by Joshua, to make the fratricide Abimelech king; and there Jotham appeals to them from Gerizim in the fable of the trees.

The tendency of man's heart is to make another king than God, to put leaders in His place, and thus to destroy the use and blessing for which the olive, the fig, the vine, the various gifts of God, are given. But just those who are really worthiest will most surely refuse to leave their spheres of happy service, their sweetness, and their fruit, to go to "wave over,"—to flutter idly in the wind over the trees. Thus royalty comes naturally to the thorn-bush, which need give up nothing, but which has thus nothing in its gift but thorns,—such as, indeed, the men of Succoth were taught with. But worse would come than

And now if ye have acted in truth and integrity in making Abimelech king, and have done well toward
[s] Jerubbaal and his house, and have done to him according to the desert of his hands—for my father fought for you, and disregarded his life, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian; but ye are risen up this day against my father's house, and have slain his sons, seventy men, upon one stone, and have made Abimelech the son of his handmaid king over the lords of Shechem, because he is your brother—if you have acted in truth and integrity toward Jerubbaal and his house to-day, then rejoice in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you; but if not, then let [t] fire come out of Abimelech and devour the lords of Shechem and the house of Millo; and let fire come out of the lords of Shechem and the house of Millo, and [u] devour Abimelech. And Jotham ran away and fled, and went to [v] Beer and dwelt there, away from Abimelech his brother.

2. (ix.22–57.) Strife and destruction of Shechem and Abimelech.

[2] And Abimelech had power over Israel three years; then God sent an [w] evil spirit between Abimelech and the lords of Shechem, and the lords of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech: that the violence [done] to the seventy sons of Jerubbaal might come, and their blood be brought upon Abimelech their brother, who slew them, and upon the lords of Shechem, who strengthened his hands to slay his brethren. And the lords of Shechem set liers in wait for him on the tops of the mountains; and they [x] robbed all who came along by them in the way: and it was told Abimelech. And Gaal the son of Ebed came, and his brethren, and they passed over into Shechem, and the lords of Shechem put confidence in him. And they went out into the field, and gathered of their vineyards, and trod it, and made festival, and went to the house of their god, and ate, and drank, and [y] cursed Abimelech. And Gaal the son of Ebed said, Who is Abimelech? and who is Shechem, that we should serve him? Is he not the son of Jerubbaal? and Zebul his officer? Serve the men of

s *cf.* ch. 6.31, 32. ch. 7. 1, etc.
t ver. 24, 56.
u ver. 57.
v *cf.* Gen. 16. 7.
w *cf.* 1 Ki. 12. 15.
x *cf.* ch. 5. 6.
y *cf.* Ps. 109. 17. Ps. 7. 16.

this,—the fire of God's wrath, which, from this side and from that, would destroy both king and people.

(ii.) The Jothams are seldom listened to; and the men of Shechem and Abimelech go on to the end of which they have been warned. Three years pass, and the prediction is fulfilled: the people of Shechem act treacherously toward Abimelech, and Abimelech wars against and destroys Shechem. This is all described with a fullness of detail which shows that there is much more in it than the concerns of a petty Israelitish city; yet as little more than this do the commentators treat it. Nor can we expect that full light upon it all should be acquired at once. But taking Abimelech as depicting in brief the growth and catastrophe of Romish power in Christendom, we may perhaps see in Gaal, the son of Ebed, the "loathing" bred of "servitude," which is but indeed the translation of his name, and which incites the nations to cast off their allegiance to him whom they first lifted into power. Well may the descendants of the "wild ass" (Hamor) rebel against so harsh a yoke as they had put their necks into! But it is another matter to

Hamor—the father of Shechem! and on what account should *we* serve him? and [z] would that this people were under my hand! then would I remove Abimelech! And he said unto Abimelech, Increase thine army, and come forth!

[z] 2 Sa. 15. 4.

And Zebul the ruler of the city heard the words of Gaal the son of Ebed, and his anger was kindled; and he sent messengers craftily to Abimelech, saying, Behold, Gaal the son of Ebed and his brethren are come into Shechem, and lo, they urge the city against thee. And now rise up by night, thou and the people that are with thee, and [a] lie in wait in the fields; and it shall be that in the morning, when the sun is up, thou shalt rise early and set upon the city; and behold, when he and his people that are with him come out of the city, thou shalt do to him as thy hand shall find. And Abimelech and all the people that were with him rose up by night, and lay in wait by Shechem in four companies. And Gaal the son of Ebed went out, and stood in the entrance of the gate of the city; and Abimelech rose up, and the people that were with him, from their ambush. And Gaal saw the people, and said unto Zebul, Behold, there are people coming down from the tops of the mountains. And Zebul said unto him, Thou seest the shadows of the mountains as if they were men. And Gaal spake again and said, Behold, people are coming down from the highest point of the land, and a company are come by the way of the magicians' oak. And Zebul said unto him, Where is now thy mouth with which thou saidst, [b] Who is Abimelech, that we should serve him? Is not this the people thou hast despised? Go out, I pray thee, now, and fight with them. And Gaal went out before the lords of Shechem, and fought with Abimelech. And Abimelech [c] chased him, and he fled before him; and there fell many wounded up to the entrance of the gate. And Abimelech remained at Arumah; and Zebul drave out Gaal and his brethren, that they should not stay in Shechem. And it came to pass on the morrow that the people went out into the field, and they told Abimelech. And he took the people, and divided them into [d] three companies, and lay in wait in the field. And he looked, and behold, there were the

[a] *cf.* ch. 6. 27.

[b] ver. 28.

[c] Ps. 10. 2.

[d] *cf.* ch. 7. 16.

escape from it; and Zebul (which looks like Zebulon, but *a little clipped*), whose character throughout is that of craft, and who is Abimelech's officer to retain the city in obedience, may easily represent the apparent sanctity wherewith a power like that of Rome so well knows how to enforce its claims. Look but a little closer, and the ambiguity begins to appear. Zebul is nearly allied to Jezebel, still more evidently to Beelzebul,*—being identical, indeed, with the last part of this name, and thus may be really "*dung*," as it is there.

* The true reading, as is well known, of Matt. x. 25. Notice that Jezebel has also this sinister ambiguity: it may mean "chaste," her pretension, or "dung-heap," the reality. And this, too, is a symbol of Romanism!

people coming out of the city; and he rose up upon them and smote them. And Abimelech and the companies that were with him rushed on, and stood at the entrance of the gate of the city, and the two companies rushed upon all that were in the field, and smote them. And Abimelech fought against the city all that day; and he took the city, and slew the people that were in it, and brake down the city, and [e]sowed it with salt.

[e] *cf.* Jer. 17. 6.

And when all the lords of the tower of Shechem heard it, they entered the stronghold of the house of [f]El-berith. And it was told Abimelech that all the lords of the tower of Shechem were gathered together. And Abimelech went up to Mount Zalmon, he and all the people that were with him. And Abimelech took an axe in his hand, and cut a bough from the trees, and took it up, and laid it on his shoulder, and said unto the people that were with him, What ye have seen me do, make haste and do likewise. And all the people likewise cut off every man his bough, and followed Abimelech; and they put them to the [g]hold, and set the hold on fire upon them: and all the men of the tower of Shechem died also — about a thousand men and women.

[f] ch. 8. 33.

[g] *cf.* 2 Ki. 10. 24, ver. 20.

And Abimelech went to Thebez, and encamped against Thebez, and took it. And there was a strong tower in the midst of the city, and thither fled all the men and women, and all the lords of the city, and shut it behind them, and went up upon the roof of the tower. And Abimelech came unto the tower, and fought against it, and approached as far as the entrance of the tower, to burn it with fire. And a certain [h]woman cast an upper millstone upon Abimelech's head, and crushed his skull. And he called hastily unto the young man his [i]armor-bearer, and said unto him, Draw thy sword, and slay me, that men say not of me, A woman slew him. And his young man thrust him through, and he died. And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they [j]went every man to his place. Thus God [k]returned the wickedness of Abimelech which he did unto his father in slaying his seventy brethren, and all the wickedness of the men of Shechem did God re-

[h] 2 Sa. 11. 21. *cf.* ch. 5. 24–30.

[i] 1 Sa. 31. 4.

[j] 2 Sa. 18. 17.

[k] Ps. 94. 23.

It is not the power that makes Abimelech that can unmake him. He prevails against Shechem, only to perish by a woman's hand at Thebez.* Here the millstone reminds us of Babylon's overthrow, where, in Rev. xviii. 21, the symbol of the Old Testament prophet is taken up by the New. In these Babylon herself is figured by the millstone, as the hard and merciless grinder of God's wheat. In the story in Judges, the millstone is the cause of Abimelech's destruction; yet these two things are almost one: it is character that brings destruction from God; and the woman's hand, what is it but the Church of God whose cries have gone up to God, and who in this way brings the punishment? The mill-stone

*Suggested by another: Thebez, "brightness," aiming at glory: in contrast with a glorified church, Rome meets her doom.

The resurrection of Israel: looking on to the day of glory.

turn upon their heads; and upon them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal. *l* vers. 20,21.

(X. 1-5.)

1. (x. 1, 2.) Tola: authority in the hands of the obedient one.

3. [1]And after Abimelech there *m* arose to save Israel Tola, the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar, and he dwelt in Shamir in Mount Ephraim. And he judged Israel three and twenty years, and died, and was buried in Shamir. *m* ch. 8. 28.

and the woman's hand are thus really complementary thoughts that perfect the application.

3. Tola and Jair, following Abimelech, are in most marked and significant contrast with him. No warlike deeds are recorded of them: Israel seems to have enjoyed the most entire peace during the forty-five years of their united judgeship. Absolutely nothing is recorded of Tola except his descent, the place of his residence and burial, and the length of time during which he judged Israel. Of Jair personally even less is given; but the fact is noticed of his thirty sons who all attained to dignity in Israel. Out of these few and apparently not very important items we are to gather whatever spiritual lessons they can furnish.

That it is a flourishing period for the nation is quite consistent with there being but little history. Man's record is largely one of sorrows and crimes; and men whose names are written in large letters across the page get mostly their place there through either their own sins or those of others. Of these men their names are their sufficient witness, evidently because they answer to them: they are what they profess to be. Of each it is said that "he arose," and of Tola that he "arose to save Israel,"—more, perhaps, by what he was than by what he did; but the words mark, evidently, a resurrection time in Israel; the words "there arose after Abimelech to save Israel," seem to connect also in some way the previous section with the present; in what manner we may shortly learn.

(1.) The name of Tola has already been before us, as that of the head of a family in Issachar, to which tribe the present Tola also belongs. His name is that of the crimson "worm," the coccus of the oak, which yielded the "scarlet" or crimson employed in the tabernacle. The cry of the twenty-second psalm, "I am a *worm*, and no man," indicates the self-chosen humiliation of the blessed victim. The name Tola here, as that of the judge in Israel, shows at once the most striking contrast with Abimelech. It is lowly self-surrender, not self-exaltation, that marks this man of Issachar, a tribe which speaks to us also, as we have seen, of practical walk. He is the son of Puah, "utterance," who is himself the son of Dodo, "his beloved." Thus out of the consciousness of divine love in the soul comes the "utterance" which in the practical life becomes self-surrender to God. The Shamir in Mount Ephraim, in which he dwells, though different from that which we have before had, which was in Judah (Josh. xv. 48), should speak as that does of unchangeableness; yet not in God as in the Judean city, but rather, as its place in Ephraim would imply, of human character. If such were, indeed, that of Tola, it is easy to understand the twenty-three years' revival under his judgeship.

But is not this a prophetic glance on to the time when not Israel only, but the whole world, shall know the blessing of the rule of the incorruptible judge, of whom we cannot but have been reminded in this picture, and of whom we know that He transcends it? The reign of the thorn-bush has been all that yet man has seen, and the result of his choice of rulers will be nothing else until the Abimelechs have received their judgment. Then, indeed, the time of revival shall come with the presence of the Risen One, once crowned with the thorn, and now with glory forever. If Tola be a type, of whom else can he be a type but this? He who has "learned obedience by the things that He hath suffered," shall yet bring to obedience, and thus to blessedness in the time to which we hasten. Who but He can do this?

2. (x. 3-5.) Jair, and his dependent associates.

3 And after him arose [n] Jair, the Gileadite, and he judged Israel two and twenty years. And he had thirty sons, who rode on thirty ass-colts; and they had thirty cities, which are called unto this day Havvoth-Jair, which are in the land of Gilead. And Jair died, and was buried in Camon.

[n] ch. 12. 7.

SUBDIVISION 5. (Chap. x. 6–xii.)

Sowing and reaping: the Ammonite raids.

(X. 6–XII. 7.)

Jephthah: the head of Gilead.

1. (x. 6-18.) Rebellion and repentance.

1 AND the children of Israel did [o] again that which was evil in Jehovah's eyes, and served the Baals and the Ashtoreths, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook Jehovah, and served him not. And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of the [p] Philistines, and into the

[o] ch. 6. 1.

[p] Gen. 19. 38. ch. 3. 31.

(ii.) Jair, the Gileadite, seems now to confirm this witness. His name, "enlightener," is only to be applied in any full way to Him who is the One Light of men. And that he is the Gileadite may speak of the "heap of witness" (see Josh. xiii. *n.*) which Jair's burial would seem to remind us of, being buried in Camon (the place of resurrection) the grave that could not hold Him.

The thirty sons on thirty ass-colts, with their thirty cities, is in this case also plain. "They rode," says Cassel, "not merely as men of quality,—the usual explanation,—but as chiefs, governors, and judges. It was peculiar to such persons especially, that they made use of the ass, as the animal of peace. Their very appearance on this animal was expressive of their calling—to reconcile and pacify. The sons of Jair judged their thirty cities." The Lord's own riding into Jerusalem, and His parable of the pounds (Luke xix.) show us very simply the application here. Of the havvoth Jair, or "Jair's lives," we have spoken before (Josh. xiii. 11, *n.*).

Tola and Jair are thus the twofold witnesses of Him to whom yet the disorder of man's rule will give way, though it will be still and truly man's, the kingdom of the Son of man. For the Son of man cometh in the clouds of heaven, and henceforth they "shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending [in attendance] on the Son of man."

SUBD. 5.

The story of Jephthah and his successors comes in the fifth place among these captivities and deliverances; and where all show so strongly the divine government that is over all, it might seem little likely that this should specialize the lesson. Yet it seems really to do so when—and perhaps only when—we bring in the spiritual to interpret the literal. For if Ammon be typically what we have taken it to be, then we can see clearly how the Church, in its departure from God, sows in its own unbelief the seed of every heresy; or, to keep more strictly to the Lord's illustration, how when men sleep the enemy sows his tares. The Word neglected and despised, opens the way for every perversion of it. And this is righteous retribution.

But from first to last in this subdivision, the lesson seems especially enforced that as the sowing so is the reaping. Look at the Ephraimites in proof, where their own taunt is returned upon them to the full, as well as their harshness.

(i.) Again the story is repeated of Israel's departure from God, and their chastening by the hand of those after whose gods they had gone. Indeed, the gods of every nation round had now their worship, and Jehovah alone is de-

hand of the children of [q]Ammon. And they harassed and crushed the children of Israel [from] that year [r]eighteen years—all the children of Israel that were on the [s]other side Jordan, in the land of the Amorites, which is in Gilead. And the children of Ammon [t]passed over Jordan, to fight also against Judah, and against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim; and Israel was sore [u]distressed. And the children of Israel [v]cried unto Jehovah, saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served the Baals. And Jehovah said unto the children of Israel, [w]Did not I [save you] from the Egyptians, and from the Amorite, and from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines? And the Zidonians, and Amalek, and Maon, oppressed you, and ye cried unto me, and I saved you out of their hand. But ye have forsaken me, and served other gods: wherefore I [x]will not save you again. [y]Go and cry unto the gods that ye have chosen: let them save

q ch. 3. 13.
r ch. 6. 1. ch. 13. 1.
s *cf.* Nu. 32. 1, etc.
t ch. 6. 3.
u ch. 4. 3.
v ch. 3. 9. Ps. 107. 11–13.
w ch. 6. 7–10.
x *cf.* Josh. 7. 12.
y Deut. 32. 37, 38. 2 Ki. 3. 13. Jer. 2. 28.

prived of His. He sells them, therefore, again into the hands of the Philistines and of the Ammonites at once. The Ammonite scourge is spoken of in the section now before us; the Philistine bondage is not broken until we reach the book of Samuel, although Samson, as prophesied of him, *begins* the deliverance (ch. xiii. 5).

The Ammonites depict, as we have found reason to believe (Deut. ii. 19, sq. *n.*), what the "tares" do in the second parable of the thirteenth of Matthew, the fruit of the seed of Satan's sowing within the limits of the kingdom of heaven. The good seed is the word of God, and the product of it the children of the kingdom; but the word of God is not what Satan sows, but some corruption of the truth, and the fruit of this is in errorists of multiple forms. This interpretation is confirmed as to the Ammonites by the fact that we find them not content with the subjugation of Israel: they claim, on the ground of their own title to it, to *take away the land*. From Ammon to Jabbok, the kingdom of Sihon formerly, now the inheritance of Reuben and of Gad, they contend that Israel had robbed them of all this when they came out of Egypt; and they ask plainly for its restoration. Thus it is plain would heresy take away the portion of the people of God. And it is noteworthy that it is the land east of the Jordan which they *openly* demand, though, in fact, making this a vantage-ground for their attack upon the tribes across the river.

Now Sihon's kingdom we have taken to be the dominion of reason, which faith (Reuben) is to reconstitute and hold; and here is commonly where error begins the attack. Even in its superstitious forms it will be found to have its root in rationalism: the word of God is displaced from its authority, as we see in Romanism. Hence we find Jephthah quoting the Word against the king of the Ammonites: much of what he says being simply a quotation from the book of Numbers. The word of God has, indeed, given faith secure title to the whole province of reason, which rationalistic error has ever proved itself incompetent to hold, soon losing it to the Amorites, the infidel "talkers" against God. This is Jephthah's plea, in fact, against Ammon, that they had so lost it to Sihon before Israel had gained possession, and that from Sihon, in fact, Israel had wrested it. Faith is ever and only the fullest reason; and the word of God it is that is alone able to make the whole field of reason a fruitful and goodly portion. If we do not hold it, we expose Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim, to the Ammonite attack, and open a way to the loss of all heavenly blessings. "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not," says the Son of God Himself, "how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?"

you in the time of your distress. And the children of Israel said unto Jehovah, We have [z]sinned: do thou to us according to all that is good in thine eyes; only deliver us, we pray thee, this day. And they [a]put away the strange gods from among them, and served Jehovah: and his soul was [b]distressed with the travail of Israel.

2. (x.17-xi. 11.) The covenant with Jephthah.

[2]And the children of Ammon were called [c]together and encamped in Gilead; and the children of Israel were gathered together and encamped in Mizpeh. And the people, the princes of Gilead, said one to another, [d]Who is the man that will begin to fight against the children of Ammon? he shall be the head of all the inhabitants of Gilead. Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valor, but he was the [e]son of a harlot: and Gilead begat Jephthah. And Gilead's wife bare him sons; and the wife's sons grew up and they [f]drave out Jephthah, and said unto him, Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house: for thou art the son of another woman. And Jephthah [g]fled from his brethren, and dwelt in the land of Tob; and there were gathered unto Jephthah [h]worthless men, and they went forth with him. And it came to pass after a while that the children of Ammon made war against Israel. And it was so, when the children of Ammon made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead came to fetch Jephthah out of the land of Tob. And they said unto Jephthah, Come and be our captain, that we may fight against the children of Ammon. And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, Did ye not [i]hate me, and drive me out of my father's house? and why are ye come to me now, when ye are in distress? And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, Therefore turn we again to thee now, that

[z] ch. 2. 4, 5. *cf.* Dan. 9. 5, 6.
[a] 1 Sam. 7. 4.
[b] Ex. 2. 25. Ps. 106. 44, 45.
[c] ch. 11. 11, 29. Gen. 31, 49.
[d] *cf.* ch. 1. 1.
[e] *cf.* Gen. 38, 24, 25, 29, with Matt. 1. 3. Is. 53. 3.
[f] *cf.* Gen. 37. 4, 8, 27.
[g] *cf.* Ex. 2. 14, 15. 1 Sam. 21. 10, 11.
[h] ch. 9. 4. 1 Sam. 22. 2.
[i] Acts 7. 35.

Of how much importance is it to insist upon this, to-day! Scripture is true and trustworthy every where, or it is to be trusted nowhere. Let us take our stand boldly there, if we would retain anything of what God has given to us. And away with the unbelieving thought that Scripture is not meant to teach us science! Let us rather say that it is meant to teach whatever it *does* teach. It is light, not darkness; truth, and only truth; the soul of reason; the illumination of all it touches.

And here the name of the deliverer seems to be most significant. Jephthah is a word we have had already: it is the Jiphtah of Joshua xv. 43, and the Jiphtah-[el] of xix. 14, 27. It means "he opens," and in the first place we have taken it as applying to Christ opening the heavenly places for us; in the others, to *God's* opening—El being added—whether of spiritual truth, or of the heart to receive it. How simply does this show us the deliverer from the children of Ammon, whether we may apply it to Scripture as opening truth, or Christ as the subject of Scripture, and the true light everywhere. These things are practically one, and in closest relation to what we have just been saying. "Scripture opens" —is truth, is science, puts Sihon's king into the hand of faith. To maintain it thus is true deliverance from Ammonite heresy; while thus our portion in the land is covered from attack—Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, are made secure from every inroad of this kind.

thou mayst go with us and fight against the children of Ammon, and mayst be our [j]head over all the inhabitants of Gilead. And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, If ye bring me back to fight against the children of Ammon, and Jehovah give them up before me, [k]shall I be your head? And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, Jehovah be witness between us if we do not according to thy word. And Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people set him over them as head and captain; and Jephthah uttered all his words before Jehovah at Mizpeh.

[j] ch. 10. 18.

[k] *ctr.* ch. 8. 22, 23.

3. (xi. 12-33.) Realization of blessing.

[3]And Jephthah sent [l]messengers unto the king of the children of Ammon, saying, What is between me and thee, that thou art come against me to fight in my land? And the king of the children of Ammon said unto Jephthah's messengers, Because Israel [m]took away my land when they came up out of Egypt, from Arnon even unto Jabbok and to Jordan: now then [n]restore it peaceably. And Jephthah sent messengers again unto the king of the children of Ammon, and said unto him, Thus saith Jephthah, Israel took not away the land of Moab, nor the land of the children of Ammon; but when they came up out of Egypt, then Israel walked through the wilderness as far as the Red Sea, and came to Kadesh. And Israel sent [o]messengers to the king of Edom, saying, Let me, I pray thee, pass through thy land; but the king of Edom did not hearken. And in like manner sent they to the king of [p]Moab; but he would not: and Israel abode in Kadesh. Then they went through the wilderness and [q]compassed the land of Edom and the land of Moab, and came toward sunrise of the land of Moab, and encamped on the other side of Arnon, and came not within the border of Moab: for Arnon was the border of Moab. And Israel sent messengers unto [r]Sihon, king of the Amorites, king of Heshbon, and Israel said unto him, Let us pass, we pray thee, through thy land unto my place. But Sihon did not trust Israel to pass his border, and Sihon gathered all his people, and encamped toward Jahaz and fought with Israel. And Jehovah the God of Israel [s]gave Sihon and all his people into Israel's hand, and they smote them: and Israel possessed all the land of the Amorite who dwelt in that land; yea, Israel possessed all the border of the Amorite from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and from the wilderness even unto Jordan. So now the God of Israel hath [t]dispossessed the Amorite from before his people Israel; and shalt thou take possession

[l] 1 Sam. 11. 1. 2 Sam. 10. 2.

[m] *cf.* Num. 21. 24 with Deut. 2. 19, 36, 37.

[n] *cf.* Gal. 1. 6. with Gal. 2. 5.

[o] Num. 20. 14-21.

[p] Deut. 2. 9.

[q] Num. 21. 4.

[r] Num. 21. 21-31.

[s] Deut. 2. 26 -35.

[t] Deut. 2. 36

Jephthah, too, is a Gileadite, and thus a Manassite. His being made head of Gilead figures largely, as we see, in the deliverance. It is only he who goes on in the truth, making progress in the acquisition of the divine treasure, who can preserve from the Ammonite raider the treasure of the past. But as a Manassite also, let us remember, he enters into the things that are beyond, the heritage

of it? Wilt not thou possess that which [u]Chemosh thy God maketh thee possess? so whatsoever Jehovah our God maketh us to possess, that we will possess. And now art thou better than [v]Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he ever contend with Israel, or did he fight against them? Since Israel dwelt in Heshbon and her dependencies, and in Aroer and her dependencies, and in all the cities that are on the banks of Arnon, [it is] [w]three hundred years: why then have ye not recovered them within that time? I have not, then, sinned against thee, but thou hast done me wrong to war against me. Jehovah who judgeth [x]judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon.

But the king of the children of Ammon did not hearken to the words of Jephthah which he sent to him. And the [y]Spirit of Jehovah came upon Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh, and passed through Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead passed over to the children of Ammon. And Jephthah [z]vowed a vow unto Jehovah, and said, If thou wilt indeed give the children of Ammon into my hand, then it shall be that whatsoever cometh forth to meet me, coming forth from the doors of my house, shall be Jehovah's, and I will offer it up for a whole offering.*

And Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them, and Jehovah [a]gave them into his hand. And he smote them from Aroer even till thou come to Minuith, twenty cities, even to Abel Keramim—a very great slaughter; and the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.

4.(xi. 34–40.) Testing.

[b]And Jephthah came to Mizpeh, to his house, and behold, his daughter coming forth to meet him with timbrels and with dances; and she was [b]his only child: beside her he had neither son nor daughter. And it was so, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes; and he said, Ah, my daughter, thou hast brought me very low! yea, thou hast come to be of those that afflict me: for I have [c]opened my mouth to Jehovah, and

u ch. 10. 14. 1 Ki. 11. 7. Jer. 48. 7. *cf.* ch. 6. 31.

v Nu. chaps. 22–24.

w *cf.* Gal. 3. 17.

x Gen. 31. 53.

y ch. 3. 10.

z Lev. 5. 4. Lev. 27. 1–8.

a Num. 21. 2, 3. Josh. 10. 8–10, etc.

b *cf.* Gen. 22. 2. Lk. 9. 38. Jno. 3. 16.

c Num. 30. 2. Ps. 15. 4. Eccl. 5. 2–5. *cfr.* Matt. 5. 33–37. *cf.* Acts 18. 18.

* The same word as translated elsewhere "*burnt*-offering," but the idea of burning is not necessarily implied. Solomon's "*ascent* by which he went up to the house of Jehovah" (1 Kings x. 5) is the same word: it means "what ascends," and it seems well to avoid here the unnecessary difficulty connected with the use of the common English term. (See the Notes.)

across Jordan also, and connects it with the inheritance on this side. He who in the spiritual reality can hold these things together is the true deliverer from the raids of the Ammonite.

(iv.) As to Jephthah's vow, there seem haste and failure in it, but surely not the human sacrifice that many have imagined. Most recent commentators agree in this, and believe that his daughter was simply consecrated to God, to live an unmarried life, as verses 37–39 seem plainly to show. There is not a word about death in her case, save what is supposed to be involved in the 31st verse, "I will offer it up a burnt-offering." But Jephthah's words to the king of

cannot draw back. And she said unto him, My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth to Jehovah, [d] do to me according to what hath gone out of thy mouth; [e] since Jehovah hath done vengeance for thee upon thine enemies, upon the children of Ammon. And she said unto her father, Let this thing be done to me: let me alone two months that I may go and descend to the mountains, and [f] bewail my virginity, I and my companions. And he said unto her, Go. And he sent her away for two months; and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. And it was so, at the end of two months, that she returned to her father, and he did to her [g] according to his vow that he had vowed: and she knew no man. And it became a custom in Israel, for the daughters of Israel to go from year to year to celebrate the daughter of Jephthah, the Gileadite, four days in the year.

d Gen. 22. 7-9, but *cf.* ver. 39 with Gen. 30. 1.

e *cf.* 2 Sam. 19, 29, 30.

f *cf.* 1 Sam. 1. 6, 10, 11, 15.

g ver. 30.

Ammon show him to be acquainted with the law; and by the law such an offering was forbidden as an abomination. (Lev. xviii. 21, etc.) No altar could have been found for it; no priest would have performed it; and the two months of mourning on the mountains would have given ample time for the news of the contemplated sacrifice to have spread far in Israel. To suppose that under the circumstances he could have been ignorant of the law, or that, knowing it, he could have had such a passion to sacrifice the daughter he loved, as in the face of it to persevere in offering to Jehovah an abomination that He hated, seems incredible enough. Everything is against the perpetration of such a crime; and the Hebrew certainly allows the translation of "*or*" instead of "*and* I will offer it." "The great Jewish commentators of the Middle Ages," says Edersheim, "have, in opposition to the Talmud, pointed out that these two last clauses are *not* identical. It is never said of an *animal* burnt-offering that it 'should be to Jehovah,'—for the simple reason that as a burnt-offering it *is* such. But where human beings are offered to Jehovah, there the expression is used, as in the case of the first-born among Israel and of Levi (Nu. iii. 12, 13). But in these cases it has never been suggested that there was actual human sacrifice." He urges, as do others: "If the loving daughter had devoted herself to *death*, it is next to incredible that she should have wished to have spent the two months of life conceded to her, not with her broken-hearted father, but in the mountains with her companions."

After all, the word does not actually mean, in Hebrew, "*burnt*-offering," but simply an "offering that ascends"—*all* ascends—to God. And this makes a great difference. Jephthah did *not* pledge himself that the offering should be *burnt*, though that were the way in which an animal sacrifice would "ascend." I have felt a necessity, therefore, of omitting this word from the translation. It is probably all that is really needed to avoid the difficulty.

In any case the history remains a witness to and against the terrible legality of the human heart which could thus shadow the joy of such a deliverance at the moment of its being granted. Such vowing is now expressly forbidden by our Lord: "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths; but I say unto you, Swear not at all." God's will needs not man's will to supplement, but only to *obey*, it. To undertake obedience all uncalled for is only to subject one's self to bondage to one's own infirmity.

As tested, however, by the consequences of his vow, Jephthah, though smitten to the heart, abides the test, and proves his loyalty to Jehovah, a loyalty shared to the full by his noble daughter. Not even her name is inscribed upon the

5. (xii. 1-7.) Retribution.

[5]And the men of [h]Ephraim were called together, and passed over northward, and said unto Jephthah, Why didst thou pass over to fight against the children of Ammon, and calledst us not to go with thee? we will burn thy house over thee with fire. And Jephthah said unto them, I was at great strife, I and my people, with the children of Ammon, and I called you, but ye did [t]not save me out of his hand. And when I saw that there was no deliverance with you, I put my life in my hand, and passed over against the children of Ammon, and Jehovah gave them into my hand: why, then, are ye come up to me this day, to fight against me? And Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead, and [j]fought with Ephraim; and the men of Gilead smote Ephraim, because they said, Ye Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim in the midst of Ephraim [and] Manasseh. And the Gileadites took the fords of Jordan against Ephraim; and it was so, when [one of] the fugitives of Ephraim said, Let me pass over, that the men of Gilead said unto him, Art thou an Ephraimite? And he said, No. And they said unto him, Say now [k]Shibboleth. And he said, Sibboleth; for he did not frame to pronounce it rightly. Then they took him and slew him at the fords of Jordan. And there fell at that time of the Ephraimites [l]forty-two thousand.

And Jephthah [m]judged Israel six years. And Jephthah the Gileadite died, and was buried in [one of] the cities of Gilead.

h ch. 8. 1.

t *cf.* ch. 10. 9.

j *cfr.* ch. 8. 2.

k *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 10-15. Jas. 4. 1.

l *cf.* ch. 20. 21, 25. Gal. 5. 14, 15.

m v. 9.

Jephthah's successors.

(XII. 8-15.)

1. (*vv.* 8-10.) Ibzan; "purity."

2. [1]And after him [n]Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel. And he had thirty sons; and thirty daughters he sent

n ver. 7. *cf.* Matt. 2. 6.

record here, but she fully takes her place among the great historic women of Israel.

(v.) We have still to speak of the Ephraimite outrage and its chastisement. It is a more violent repetition of their conduct toward Gideon, but which meets in this case a terrible retribution. The pride of Ephraim is typically an admonition for us,—a much-needed one. How readily does "fruitfulness" get spoiled by the blight of self-complacency!—and what sore rebukes does it necessitate for us, that we may be delivered from that which was the condemnation of the devil! (1 Tim. iii. 6). Their taunting words as to the Gileadites became true to the letter as to themselves when they became, indeed, "fugitives of Ephraim among the Manassites," who, alas, do not spare them. The quarrels of brethren are, of all, the severest: in proportion to the closeness of the ties sundered is the bitterness aroused: civil strife is proverbially the most *un*civil.

2. Very briefly indeed we have now the account of Jephthah's successors. As the quiet for twenty-five years after his death was doubtless the result of his victory, so also do they seem to represent, in their names and connection, the consequences spiritually. We have scarcely anything *except* names here; so that, if these are meaningless, the history as a whole can be little else. Any escape from such a conclusion—any light where otherwise all must be darkness—cannot then but be welcome.

(i.) There are three successors, the first two of whom are Zebulonites; the third apparently an Ephraimite. Of Ibzan himself we have only the fact of his being a Bethlehemite. This Bethlehem is not that of Judah, but the one named

out of the house, and thirty daughters he took in from abroad for his sons. And he judged Israel seven years; and Ibzan died, and was buried in Bethlehem.

2. (*vv.*11,12.) Elon: growth.

[2]And after him [o]Elon the Zebulonite judged Israel; and he judged Israel ten years. And Elon the Zebulonite died, and was buried in Ajalon, in the land of Zebulon.

[o] ch. 5. 14.

3. (*vv.*13-15.) Abdon: consecration.

[3]And after him [p]Abdon, the son of Hillel, the Pirathonite, judged Israel. And he had forty sons and thirty grandsons, who rode on seventy ass colts. And he judged Israel eight years; and Abdon the son of Hillel, the Pirathonite, died, and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the mount of the Amalekite.

[p] ver. 11.

SUBDIVISION 6. (Chap. xiii.-xvi.)

Samson and the Philistines: victory, but not rest.

The announcement and birth of the man of power.

(XIII.) 1. [1]AND the children of Israel [q]again did that which was evil in Jehovah's sight; and Jehovah gave them into the hand of the Philistines [r]forty years. And there was a certain man of Zoreah, of the family of the

1. (*vv.* 1-7.) The first announcement.

[q] ch. 10. 6.

[r] ch. 6. 1.

in Joshua (xix. 15) as belonging to Zebulon. Of course it has the same significance. Ibzan is said to mean "labor," "great labor." This is from the near-akin Chaldee. If from the Hebrew directly, then we must decide for "white," perhaps "shining." Taking the first, and remembering that Jephthah speaks of "opening" the truth, "labor" in the "place of bread" seems nearly and naturally connected as a consequence. On the other hand, "white," the common symbol of purity, is no less natural; and more suitable, perhaps, in the place in which he stands here, first in succession. Sanctification is by the truth, and that satisfaction for the soul which "bread"—the "bread of life"—denotes, is a main element in sanctification. That he is a Zebulonite is quite in keeping; and the ties that we find spoken of as binding him with others may well imply the spiritual links that form where the word of God is felt in power and spread abroad. He is a fitting successor, then, to Jephthah.

(ii.) Elon, the "oak," comes next, implying strength as the product of life and growth. Growth by the truth fits well the second place,—Elon being again a Zebulonite. Nothing else is recorded of him but that he judged Israel ten years and was buried in Ajalon.

(iii.) The third judge is Abdon, "service," the son of Hillel, "praising," a Pirathonite, or dweller in "freedom,"—thoughts which are too coherent and too easily understood in their connection by every Christian heart to need either expansion or insisting on. That Pirathon is in Ephraim connects again liberty with fruitfulness; and "in the mount of the Amalekites" may refer to some past victory over them, or at least to a possession of the land on their part which no longer existed. In the whole of this the spirit of consecration speaks, and that is doubtless the truth presented here. The free service which is the fruit of praise has succeeded to the old Amalekite misrule of "lusts that war in the members": and this, with what has been brought before us in the judges preceding Abdon, gives us well the fruit of such victories as those of Jephthah typify,—for us the victories of the Word of truth.

SUBD. 6.

The story of Samson, the last of the judges in this book, is fittingly a sixth and not a seventh subdivision; nor have we a seventh. The number, we well know, to be significant of evil at its height, even though it speak also of limit set to and victory over it: and to this, in every particular, the history corresponds.

Danites, and his name was Manoah. And his wife was [s]barren, and did not bear. And the [t]angel of Jehovah appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren and bearest not; but thou shalt conceive and bear a son. And now, I pray thee, beware

s Gen. 11, 30. Gen. 25, 21. Gen. 29, 31. 1 Sam. 1, 2. Lk. 1, 7.

t *cf.* ch. 6, 12.

It is one of strange contrasts and of apparent contradictions: one in which the grace and purpose of God, so manifest in it, seem so little fulfilled in the result; in which the consecration of the Nazarite to God has so little correspondence to any spiritual condition that all through, if we are confined to the letter, there seems scarce a gleam of comfort for the Christian heart. The failure of man is plain, whatever the circumstances in which he may be placed: the greater privileges bestowed on him, the deeper only is his fall. Samson, in this way,—by the strength of the Lord which he manifests, and his loss of it when false to his consecration,—is a lesson impossible to be mistaken as to Israel's condition, who were themselves thus nationally separated to God, and untrue to their separation. The Church has failed more signally, inasmuch as she has been called to, and qualified for, a higher separation. Nor, though there have been, and may yet be, partial revivals, will there be for her any complete recovery. Her earthly history ends, as that of this book does, in Philistine captivity still in the main unbroken.

The reason is obvious as to Israel: we read of fresh departure, but of no return nor cry to Jehovah. He acts toward them, indeed, in goodness, and provides a deliverer; but the deliverance itself, being still conditioned upon their repentance, cannot be effected. Samson's victories bring about, at the most, but an alleviation of their distress; and he himself fails at the last, and dies, though slaying more of the Philistines at his death than in his life.

We have seen, abundantly, what these Philistines stand for. They are the ritualistic, traditional, element in Christendom,—the Judaism in the Church,—the earthly intrusion into what is spiritual and heavenly. We have seen them as hindrances in the path of Abraham and of Isaac, and traced them from the Egyptians by Casluhim and Caphtorim, the united people settling at last on the outward border of the land to which,—Palestine from Philistine,—though never possessing but a fraction, they have given their name. So has the world-church become the "catholic" or universal church.

From Philistine bondage the deliverer is a Nazarite; and thus Samuel, who completes Samson's work, is like him in this respect. For the Nazarite is the type of separation from the world, such as belongs to the true church,—from the intoxication of its joys and from its legal claims, as well as from its pollutions; and let this separation be lost, all strength is lost,—the conqueror becomes the slave, the clear sight of the judge becomes but blindness: the history of Samson is repeated. How many times has it been, in fact, repeated!

1. With Samson we are made to see, from the outset, the sovereign grace which prepares the deliverance. His birth is announced by the angel of the Lord, apart from any apparent seeking upon man's part. He is the son of a woman naturally barren; and the preparation for his coming antedates his birth. In this last it is implied that there are still conditions to be conformed to in order to deliverance.

(i.) The predicted deliverer is of the family of Dan. Dan speaks already of the service of rule, as we have seen,—a rule which must, for blessing, be first of all over one's self. Manoah is a man of Zorah, which reminds us of the sting of sin; while his name, "rest," nevertheless proclaims already victory over it. The victory is in subjection: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Here is the Danite spirit from which springs the helper.

It is to the woman, however, to whom the angel first appears, and her name we have not. She is reminded of her barrenness, that God's grace and power

that thou [u]drink no wine nor strong drink, and eat nothing unclean. For behold, thou shalt conceive and bear a son, and no [v]razor shall come upon his head: for the child shall be a [w]Nazarite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to save Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. And the woman went and said to her husband, A man of God came unto me, and his [x]appearance was like the appearance of the angel of God, very terrible; but I asked him not whence he was, nor did he tell me his name. And he said unto me, Behold, thou shall conceive and bear a son; and now, drink no wine nor strong drink, and eat nothing unclean: for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death.

2. (*vv.* 8-23.) The second announcement.

[7]And Manoah prayed unto Jehovah, and said, Ah Lord! let the man of God whom thou didst send, come again to us, I pray thee, and [y]teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born. And God hearkened unto the voice of Manoah, and the angel of God came again to the woman as she was sitting in the field; but Manoah her husband was not with her. And the woman hastened and ran and told her husband, and said, Behold, the man hath appeared to me who came to me that day. And Manoah arose and went after his wife, and came unto the man, and said unto him, Art thou the man that spake unto the woman? And he said, I am. And Manoah said, When now thy words come to pass, how shall we order the child, and what shall we do as to him? And the angel of Jehovah said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman, let her take heed. Of all the produce of the wine-vine shall she not eat, nor shall she drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing: of all that I said unto her shall she take heed. And Manoah said unto the angel of Jehovah, I pray thee, let us [z]detain thee that we may make ready a kid for thee. And the angel of Jehovah said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will [a]not eat of thy bread; and if thou preparest an

[u] Lk. 1. 15.
[v] 1 Sam. 1. 11.
[w] Num. 6. 1-12.
[x] Matt. 28. 3-5.
[y] *cf.* Gen. 18. 19. Eph. 6. 4.
[z] Gen. 18. 5. ch. 6. 18-23.
[a] *cf.* Gen. 19. 3.

may the more appear. She is herself nothing, her very name without importance, and that of her husband unnoticed in the message of the angel: for all here is of God. And agreeing with this is the special emphasis laid upon the woman's long hair of the Nazarite, to the man a shame, and the renunciation of his glory as such (1 Cor. xi.). Oh the blessing that results when *all* the glory is given to God, and man owns himself naturally to have forfeited all, that grace may *be* grace!

(ii.) In correspondence with all this, it is the woman who receives most readily the divine communication. Manoah, pious as he is, does not feel so sure of its character and meaning. But he looks to God, and is confirmed by the angel's second visit. This is still to the woman first, but who is permitted to call her husband, that he too may hear from the angel's lips. But Manoah as yet recognizes only a human messenger, even while recognizing the message. The angel insists simply upon obedience to the word already given; and when Manoah desires to entertain him, refuses to receive from him as man, but bids

offering, offer it unto [b]Jehovah. But Manoah knew not that he was an angel of Jehovah. And Manoah said unto the angel of Jehovah, What is thy name? that when thy words come to pass, we may do thee honor. And the angel of Jehovah said unto him, Why askest thou after my name, when it is [c]wonderful? And Manoah took the kid and the meal-offering, and offered it upon the [d]rock unto Jehovah: and he did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on. For it came to pass, when the flame went up to heaven from the altar, that the angel of Jehovah [e]ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife were looking on, and they [f]fell upon their faces to the ground. And the angel of Jehovah appeared no more unto Manoah and his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was the angel of Jehovah. And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely [g]die: for we have seen God. But his wife said unto him, [h]If Jehovah were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering and meal-offering at our hand; nor would he have shown us all these things, nor would he as now have told us things like these.

3. (*vv.* 24,25.) The word fulfilled.

[3]And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson; and the child grew; and Jehovah blessed him. And the [i]Spirit of Jehovah began to move him in Mahaneh-dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

[b] *cf.* Rev. 22. 8, 9.

[c] Gen. 32. 29. Is. 9. 6.

[d] ch. 6. 20. *cf.* Matt. 16. 18.

[e] *cf.* Lev. 1. 9

[f] Lev. 9. 24. Matt. 17. 6.

[g] ch. 6. 22. Is. 6. 5. *etc.* 2 Cor. 3. 18.

[h] *cf.* Gen. 8. 20, 21. Eph. 5. 2. with Heb. 10. 14.

[i] ch. 14. 19. 1 Sa. 11. 6. *etc.* Jno. 14. 16.

him offer a burnt-offering to Jehovah. Like Gideon, he is constituted thus a priest to the Lord: the unbelief of the believer is rebuked by his being brought into nearer intimacy; he is turned from man to God, and put into a place in which, in priestly fashion, he may approach God. But Manoah cannot yet understand, and would learn the name of the speaker, that when his word is fulfilled they may, as man, do him honor. Thus the angel's question, *why* he should ask after his name?—yet adding, what might well justify inquiry, that it was "Wonderful,"—a name which Isaiah afterward gives us as "Immanuel's" (ch. ix. 6); and here, indeed, God and man are brought together in one Person. But Manoah does not yet understand. Still, obedient, he brings his kid and the meal-offering which goes with it, the blessed type of Him in whom a perfect Man would be in due time the Substitute for man, and offers it upon the rock,—no unworthy altar. Then the angel of Jehovah acts according to His name, and ascends to heaven in the altar-flame. God in His holiness is indeed that which, while it consumes the sacrifice turns it to sweet savor, in which it ascends to Him. With this flame the angel, as it were, identifies Himself, and ascends up to heaven. Thus He is revealed to Manoah; thus in the truth of what is here He is made known to every believing sinner, and takes His true and heavenly place.

The woman still it is who enters into the mind of God, however; and her identification with the true Nazarite character, as in the Nazarite's long hair, is emphasized, as well as the connection of this preparatory part with the history that follows. Her reasoning is simplicity itself, and the truth of it a demonstration. Faith is indeed always simple; unbelief laborious and roundabout, for it is the effort of human will against God, and may well be labor.

(iii.) And now the prophecy is fulfilled, and Samson is born. The name is variously explained. While that of "sun-like" would be etymologically the most simple, and have some support from the words of Deborah's song (ch. v. 31),

Alliance which brings conflict.

1.(xiv.) The personal experience, unknown outside of him who has it.

(XIV., XV.)

2. And Samson [j] went down to Timnath, and saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines. And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the [k] Philistines: now, therefore, take her for me to wife. And his father said unto him, and his mother, Is there not a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, nor among

[j] ch. 16. 1, 4. *cf.* Gen. 12. 10.

[k] *cf.* Deut. 7. 3.

yet that of Josephus, "strong," seems rather to point to the lesson of his story.* It is the secret of strength that is shown forth in him, both in his victories and in his failure and defeat; and thus it is very far from true that (as Cassel thinks) such an explanation appears to be without historical motive.

Samson grows, and the Spirit of Jehovah begins to urge him in the camp of Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol. It had been that of the six hundred men, whose history is given us further on (ch. xviii), although the occurrence was much earlier than Samson's time, and who had gone forth, pressed by the narrow limits into which Amorites and Philistines had combined to crowd them, to found for themselves a new Dan in the north. Such a spot would naturally work upon the youthful mind of Samson, and be used of the Spirit to inspire him with eager patriotism,—a thing which in Israel had not alone nature to commend it. Israel were the people of God, the divine means of fore-ordained blessing for all the families of the earth, and to whom the revelation of God had been committed. The champion of Israel was, by this fact, and though he might have but little intelligence of the fact, the champion of the world's salvation.

2. As Keil rightly remarks, the story of Samson's deeds that follows is divided into two parts by the notice of his judgeship in Israel, which lasted twenty years. The first of these — the present section — gives evidently the heroic acts which win for him the place of acknowledged authority which he retains for the time; while the second shows his fall and ruin through being false to his Nazariteship, though in his death he is once more victorious. This descent and restoration, though but at the close of his career, mark the last as a true third section.

The present, as Keil again points out, "includes six distinct acts, which are grouped together in twos; namely (1 and 2), the killing of the lion on the way to Timnath, and the slaughter of the thirty Philistines for the purpose of paying for the solution of his riddle with the clothes that he took from them; (3 and 4), his revenge upon the Philistines by burning their crops, because his wife had been given to a Philistine, and also by the great slaughter with which he punished them for having burned his father-in-law and wife; (5 and 6), the bursting of the cords with which his countrymen had bound him for the purpose of delivering him up to the Philistines, and the slaying of a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of an ass." Of course it does not follow that these six acts sufficiently characterize the portions with which they stand connected; while yet, in this simple way, a numerical structure is shown to exist. This, we may be sure, must have its significance. The number 6 is itself, as we have seen, characteristic of the whole history of Samson; and this, broken up into 3 x 2, becomes the witness of the divine in the midst of all the human failure and sorrow attendant.

(i.) The story in all this part is a closely connected one, and all the events spring out of — what is sadly significant as to the final issue here — Samson's attempt to connect himself with the very people from whom he is to "begin to deliver" Israel. The alliance it is that is the occasion of the conflict: the

* "*Shimshon* (lxx. Samson) does not mean 'sun-like,' 'hero of the sun,' from *shemesh* (the sun), but, as Josephus explains it (Ant. v., 8, 4), ἰσχυρός, the strong or daring one; from *shimshom*, from the intensive form *shimshem* of *shamem*, in its original sense of 'to be strong,' or 'daring,' not 'to devastate.'"—(Keil.)

all my people, that thou art going to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, Take her for me, for she is [l] fair in mine eyes. And his father and mother knew not that it was [m] of Jehovah, that he was seeking an occasion against the Philistines; and the Philistines at that time were ruling in Israel. And Samson and his father and his mother went down to Timnath; and when they came to the vineyards of Timnath, behold, a young [n] lion roaring against him. And the Spirit of Jehovah came suddenly upon him, and he [o] rent him as one rends a kid; and he had nothing in his hand: and he told not his father or his mother what he had done. And he went down and talked with the woman, and she was right in

l *cfr.* Rom. 15. 1-3.

m *cf.* 1 Ki. 12. 15. 1 Chr. 21. 1. with 2 Sa. 24. 1.

n *cf.* 1 Pet. 5. 8.

o 1 Sa. 17. 34.

Philistine and the Nazarite cannot really unite, and the attempt to do so only brings out the essential incompatibility. The Nazarite stands for separation from the world, over which death reigns. The Philistine shows us the world brought in into the holiest things. The women stand here, as they do in the case of Sarah and Hagar, for principles by the embracing of which fruit is sought: and alas, how often do we seek to gain over the world by concessions to the world!—by the adoption of principles which compromise the whole truth of God. Timnath speaks, as we have before seen, of "apportionment," which, if the town were Israelite, would be divine,—a lot measured out to us from God; but being Philistine, where Dagon, "increase," has usurped His place, we have a striking confirmation of what has already been indicated as the meaning here. When we measure things by results, these must be, of course, palpable results: those divinely ordained are apt to be too far off, too slow in development, not to say too purely spiritual also, to admit of present discernment and of right appraisal. Thus one Nazarite in desire may be led by an impetuous longing for gains capable of speedy realization, to take up with methods which are worldly and carnal (Philistine), but which, on that very account, yield present fruit. How many souls, in fact, and these often the strongest and most earnest, are thus seduced into Timnathite marriages! How good to remember here the "long patience" needed by the husbandman in order to garner the precious grain; and that duty is ours, results are to be left with God, as they may be safely left. A Timnathite woman may "please" even a Samson "well," and elder Israelites be overborne, if not deceived, into acquiescence, as were Manoah and his wife; none the less is she Philistine,—the whole thing, indeed, tending directly to the snare of Dagon-worship. Let those who would be helpers in the deliverance of Israel beware of this.

It is quite natural that the Timnathite vineyards should contain lions also. Satan is here in this among his many forms; and the seduction may lead into the ambush, and so the open assault. But here he is to be less feared than elsewhere. The soldier of Christ is more easily lulled to sleep than overcome in battle. The Spirit of Jehovah at once comes upon Samson, and he awakes to his strength, gaining thus a personal experience which is to be fruitful for him afterwards. He rends the lion without a weapon in his hand, and as easily as one would a kid. It is the power of God, but realized in the living energy of man, stripped and bare of all other assistance. With such help the mightiest foe is as easily vanquished as the feeblest. No need to measure difficulties, save only to assure one's self that the greatest opposition means the greatest triumph; and again, it is the glory of the earthen vessel that the excellency of the power should be of God and not of us.

Yet, after all, spite of this display of strength, Samson is not right with God; and his history is most sadly instructive in this respect. He slays the open foe, and is deceived into the Philistine alliance; and how many are like him to-day.

Samson's eyes. And after a while he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcase of the lion, and behold, a congregation of bees in the carcase of the lion, and honey. And he took of it in his hands, and went on, eating as he went, and came unto his father and his mother, and gave to them and they did eat; but he told them not that he had taken the honey out of the carcase of the lion.

And his father went down unto the woman, and there Samson made a [p]feast: for so used the young men to do. And it came to pass, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him. And Samson said unto them, I will now put forth a riddle unto you: if ye can truly declare it to me within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then will I give you thirty shirts and thirty changes of garments; and if ye cannot declare it to me, then shall ye give me thirty shirts and thirty changes of garments. And they said unto him, Put forth thy riddle, that we may hear it. And he said unto them, [q]Out of the eater came forth food, and out of the strong came forth sweetness. And they could not in three days explain the riddle. And it came to pass on the seventh day that they said unto Samson's wife, [r]Persuade thy husband, that he may declare the riddle to us, lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire: have ye invited us to impoverish us? is it not so? And Samson's wife wept before him, and said, Thou but

p ctr. Jno. 2. 1-11.

q cf. Gen. 1. 20. Phil. 1. 12-18.

r ch. 16. 5.

People can quote the heroism, and use it to set off the Timnathite's son-in-law: God uses it in the end to break off the alliance. He is bringing the blind by a way he sees not.

But he comes to take the woman that pleases him, and a new experience awaits him on the road. A swarm of bees had hived in the sun-dried carcass of the lion. Death had made room for multitudinous life, and abundant and ordered* activities; and as the product of this there is the honey that, with milk, gave a special character to the land of Canaan. Thus "out of the eater had come forth meat, and out of the strong sweetness." Out of the power that was against us, met and subdued by the mightier power of God, comes ever sweetness and refreshment for the people of God: and this because of life that has come in in the place of death, and order that has arisen out of the hold of corruption. And this is true Nazarite experience of the transforming power of God, by which that which is contrary to us becomes ever for us. On the cross this was most gloriously manifest, where power was shown in weakness; and in the worst act of rebellion that the world has seen, grace came in to subdue and sanctify to God. So in measure it is in every defeat of the enemy, where the Spirit of God works in the living energy of the saint of God — the Nazarite. The battle-field becomes a banqueting-house; the table is furnished not only "in the *presence* of our enemies," but from that which they have provided. But this is the personal experience of faith, — a secret hidden from all but those who have the experience.

* "The swarm of bees is significantly spoken of as the *congregation* of bees. Commonly *edah* designates the congregation of Israel, as regulated by the law. . . . Horapollo, in his work on Hieroglyphics (lib. i. 62), informs us that when the Egyptians wished to picture the idea of a people of law, they did it by the figure of a bee." — (Cassel.)

hatest me, and *lovest me not: thou hast put forth a riddle to the children of my people, and to me thou hast not told it. And he said unto her, Behold, I have not told it to my father and mother, and shall I tell it thee? And she wept before him the seven days that the feast lasted: and it came to pass on the seventh day that he told her: *for she pressed him hard; and she declared the riddle to the children of her people. And the men of the city said to him on the seventh day, before the sun went down, What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion? And he said unto them, If ye had not plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle. And the "Spirit of Jehovah came suddenly upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took the *spoil, and gave the changes of garments unto them that had declared the riddle. And his anger was kindled, and he went up to his father's house. And Samson's *wife became his companion's who had attended him.

2. (xv. 1–8.) Open conflict.

2 And it came to pass after a time, in the days of wheat-harvest, that Samson visited his wife with a kid. And he said, I will go in to my wife into the chamber. But her father would not suffer him to go in. And her father said unto him, I verily thought that thou hadst quite hated her; and I gave her to thy companion: is not her younger sister fairer than she? let her be thine, I pray thee, instead of her. And Samson said unto them, This time I am blameless toward the Philistines, though I do them harm. And Samson went and

s ch. 16. 15. *cf.* 1 Cor. 7. 33. 1 Ki. 11. 1–4.

t *cf.* Lk. 18. 1–5.

u ver. 6.

v *cf.* 1 Sam. 18. 25–27.

w ch. 15. 2.

And this leads on to that which follows, in which the fundamental lack of fellowship between Nazarite and Philistine comes clearly out, and the inevitable strife begins. Samson goes on to accomplish his marriage; makes a feast, according to the custom; and receives thirty companions, all Philistines, to be with him. He who is contracting a life-union with a woman of this people cannot refuse a wider connection. Immediately we find the riddle proposed,—a thing common enough in those days, as a test of wisdom; and which, we have to remember, as in Scripture not simply what the world counts such, but what is such before God. The riddle, in its spiritual meaning, is a true test of this; and it is not to be imagined that a Philistine can explain it. Samson has no such thought: but if they can do this, then they shall have each one a change of garments: for he that can penetrate the secrets of a life with God must have "habits" changed in accordance with it. They could not penetrate it: by dishonest practicing on the Philistine wife they learn it, and are repaid with *Philistine* garments from Ashkelon, the "fire of infamy." Thus they are suitably arrayed, and with their own shame; and so the necessary strife commences. The marriage is broken off; and Samson goes up to his father's house.

(ii.) The second part of this story now begins, in which Samson is in open conflict with the Philistines all through. At first, indeed, he goes to visit his wife with a kid, ignorant of what has taken place, and finds she has been given to the one who had acted as his "friend,"—the "friend of the bridegroom": a custom to which afterwards the Baptist makes well-known allusion (John iii. 29). His wrath breaks out, not as private vengeance against the Timnathite, however, but against the Philistines as a whole. He catches three hundred

[x] caught three hundred jackals, and took torches, and turned tail to tail, and put a torch in the midst, between the two tails. And when he had set the torches on fire, he sent them off into the Philistines' [y] standing corn, and burnt up both the shocks and the standing corn as well, with the olive-gardens. And the Philistines said, Who hath done this? And they said, Samson, the Timnite's son-in-law, because he took his wife, and gave her to his companion. And the Philistines came up, and [z] burnt her and her father with fire. And Samson said unto them, If ye act thus, I will certainly be avenged on you; and afterward I will cease. And he [a] smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter. And he went down, and abode in the [b] cleft of the cliff of Etam.

3. (xv. 6–20.) Raised in the power of the Spirit to the judgeship.

[3] And the Philistines came up and encamped in Judah, and [c] spread themselves in Lehi. And the men of Judah said, Why are ye come up against us? And they

x *cfr.* 2 Sam. 5. 17–25. *cf.* Song 2. 15. Matt. 26. 51. 2 Cor. 10. 3, 4.

y 2 Sam. 14. 30, 31. *cf.* Deut. 20. 19, 20. Josh. 5. 11 with 2 Tim. 2. 8.

z ch. 14. 15.

a ch. 14. 19.

b *cf.* Ex. 33. 21–23 with 1 Cor. 10. 4.

c 2 Sam. 5. 17, 18, 22. ch. 6. 3–5. *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 9.

jackals, and joining them in couples by the tails, with a lighted torch between the tails, he lets go the terrified animals into the cornfields and olive-yards, just at the time of harvest. The destruction must have been immense; and the terror of Samson had already become so great, that, instead of revenging it upon the Israelite enemy, they take cowardly vengeance upon those that had provoked his wrath, and burn the Timnathite and her father with fire. But this does the very opposite of appeasing him. He smites them hip and thigh with a great slaughter.

The spiritual meaning of all this is more difficult than in the last case. The jackal we have seen elsewhere (Joshua, p. 98) to be the type of a nature that burrows in the earth, and feeds upon corruption. The fire behind might well represent the terror of divine wrath when breaking in upon such natures, working upon them, not to conversion and blessing,—mere wrath never does,—but to madness: in which the desire to escape only spreads abroad in a general devastation what they would escape from. The torches, though here very differently used, remind us of those in the hands of Gideon's men, which wrought the destruction of the Midianites, and would show us this wrath as what is proclaimed in the testimony of living men. Times of widespread alarm in this way have been known in the history of the external church: panics which have been but disaster, and the anticipation of sure coming doom.

Something akin to this seems to be shadowed here, though it may be hard to follow it into details; nor can we speak with any distinctness of the slaughter which ensues. But we may notice that Samson in his proper position of hostility to the power to which Israel is captive is never defeated; nor does he need alliances, or subtlety, or human wisdom, in any way. Alone, and unassisted by human arm, he is ever victorious, as leaning upon almighty power. The lesson of divine sufficiency is complete in him; his very enemies have to recognize it. And this, in its principle, is not an exception to the ways of God. It is only the universal rule *written large* that we may the more plainly see it: to make an exception of it is to lose the lesson.

(iii.) The third stage of this strange history is that in which Samson sinks to the lowest, as rejected and bound by his own people; and then rises, through a wonderful victory, to be ruler amongst them. The Philistines, now thoroughly roused by the blows he has inflicted upon them, invade Judah with a host, and pitch in Lehi. The place is named, in anticipation, from the "jaw" which he uses to discomfit them; and it becomes to them a place of crushing defeat. But Judah is completely spiritless and cast down. Almost as much afraid of their

said, To [d]bind Samson are we come up: to do to him as he has done to us. And three thousand men of Judah went down to the cleft of the cliff of Etam, and said unto Samson, [e]Knowest thou not that the Philistines are ruling over us? What is this that thou hast done to us? And he said unto them, As they did unto me, so have I done unto them. And they said unto him, We are come down to bind thee, that we may give thee into the Philistines' hand. And Samson said unto them, Swear unto me that ye will not fall upon me [f]yourselves. And they spake unto him, saying, Nay, but we will bind thee fast, and give thee into their hands, but we will not kill thee. And they bound him with two new [g]cords, and brought him up from the cliff. When he came to Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him. And the Spirit of Jehovah came suddenly upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax-threads that are burned in the fire, and his bands melted from off his hands. And he found the fresh [h]jaw-bone of an ass, and put forth his hand and took it, and slew with it a thousand men. And Samson said, With the jaw-bone of an ass I have made them asses; with the jaw-bone of an ass I have smitten a thousand men. And it came to pass when he had

[d] ch. 16. 21.

[e] ch. 13. 1. ch. 14. 4. 1 Cor. 7. 23.

[f] *cf.* Gen. 37. 26–28. Gal. 2. 5, 11–13.

[g] ch. 16. 11. *cf.* Gal. 6. 14.

[h] ch. 3. 31. *cf.* Nu. 6. 6. Nu. 19. 16.

God-sent deliverer as of the people under whom they are in bondage, they go down, to the number of three thousand, to the cleft of the rock of Etam, where he had withdrawn, as it would seem, just from such danger, to bind and deliver him into the enemy's hand. Things are thus with him at the lowest point, while, on the other hand, the grace on his part is beautiful. With the consciousness of divinely-given strength upon him, he cannot use it against the people whom he is called to deliver, but quietly submits to be bound in order to being handed over to the Philistines. It is Judah, the lion-tribe, which thus is seen in lowest humiliation.

When the Philistines shout in triumph, the Spirit of Jehovah once more comes upon Samson, and the new cords are but as flax in the fire: with one effort he is free. Once free, the jawbone of an ass arms him for the fight; and with this he slays a thousand men. He who had used before the mouth of a living ass to rebuke the madness of a prophet, uses now the jaw of a dead one as a weapon to defeat an army. The song of deliverance emphasizes this:—

"With the jaw of an ass I have made asses of them;*
With the jaw of an ass I have smitten a thousand men."

The ass is not, in Scripture, the expression of stupidity, as with us; but, generally, of intractability under the yoke: and so it seems here. The easy victory showed them to be rebellious to the yoke of divine sovereignty,—which, after all, it was bootless to resist. The mouth of the ass had rebuked the prophet, more stubborn than itself: his mouth had uttered rebellion, and by a beast's

* This seems the real force of the so-called paronomasia. The Hebrew, as now punctuated,—"*billechi hachamor chamor chamorathaim*,"—reads as in the margin of our common version, "a heap, two heaps," where the identity of words is altogether lost. The Septuagint, reading "*chamor chamartim*," translates ἐξαλείφων ἐξῆλειψα αὐτούς, "I have destroyed them," the Vulgate following this with *delevi eos*. It might be rendered "with the jaw of the turbulent I have troubled them," giving the ass its ideal character, and preserving the connection between noun and verb. It seems to me, however, that, taking advantage of this, Samson uses the verb as more strictly synonymous with the noun, as above. The expression has the disadvantage with us of seeming mere vulgar coarseness, which it is not.

ceased speaking, that he cast the jaw-bone out of his hand, and he called that place Ramath-lehi.

And he was sore [i]athirst; and he called on Jehovah, and said, Thou hast given this great deliverance by thy servant's hand; and now shall I die of thirst, and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised? And God [j]clave the hollow that was in Lehi, and there came water out of it. And he drank, and his spirit came again, and he revived. Therefore its name was called En-hakkore, which is in Lehi to this day.

And he [k]judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years.

[i] Ps. 63. 1.

[j] Ex. 17. 3-6 with ver. 8.

[k] ch. 12. 8, etc. ch. 16. 31. *ctr.* Acts 20. 18-35.

mouth was reproved. Here, where rebellion had been more open and utter, a beast's jawbone is used to smite it down. Here, indeed, is a folly that is made manifest to all.

He casts the instrument of destruction out of his hand, and calls the place the "Jawbone Height." The lesson is worthy of preservation in the name. But God, who cares for his poor servant, must make him realize his own need of the same lesson. The heat and fatigue of the encounter affect him with a mortal thirst; and he who had been dealing death to others realizes a danger from which his own hand is powerless to deliver him. He can only cry to Jehovah, and plead with Him His recent interposition on his behalf as argument for a new one. A good argument it is with the Unchangeable One, who is not a man that He should repent: yea, "with whom is no variableness, nor shadow of turning." The lesson, too, must be complete to *be* a lesson; and He who has just delivered Samson from the hands of the uncircumcised cannot possibly allow him now to fall into them. God, therefore, answers by cleaving the "Bruising place that is in Lehi," so that water comes out of it, and he revives. The likeness to the rock cleft in the wilderness can hardly—is surely not intended to—escape us. The cross and its results for us are needed to be held in constant remembrance; and the place of bruising—*machtesh*, the "mortar"—is not likely to make the reference here less plain. The connection with the scene that has just been before us is also evident: so plain that our common version speaks of it as the "hollow place"—"socket" it might mean—"that was in the jaw." That this is not right, the fact of its being "in Lehi unto this day" is sufficient witness: but the connection is also clear. And the bruising-place that is in Lehi reminds us surely of the Philistine defeat. Yet the spring of water is in marked contrast. Not by "bruising," but by *being* "bruised for our iniquity," did the Lord of glory bring forth living water for our death-faint souls; and here the soldiers of the cross find continually their admonition and refreshment. Here, too, is the secret of how alone Satan is bruised, and every enemy succumbs in turn. How necessary a lesson for God's Nazarites, if they are to know and preserve the secret of strength! Samson is now ready for the judgeship; and he judges Israel twenty years.

3. We now come to the final section of the story, in which we find a rapid descent on Samson's part to utter destruction, as far as he can accomplish it. Indeed, although recovered by divine grace, it is only by death that he breaks the bonds by which he has bound himself. His life goes out in one last victory, in which he perishes with the Philistines,—the link that he had forged with them still prevailing even over his recovered strength. While, on their part, as it has been ever with the enemies of the people of God, the victory of the Philistines over him becomes their worst defeat at last.

In this last section, Gaza, the place of their "strength," is the witness of their double defeat. The strength of God, which alone Samson's is, measures itself with that of the enemy, and prevails, spite of the mortal weakness found in the vessel of it. It is only thus the more manifested as divine; and in holiness

(XVI.)

Nazariteship lost and recovered.

1. (*vv.* 1-3.) The warning of grace.

3. [l]And Samson went to Gaza, and saw a harlot there, and went in to her. [And it was told] the Gazites, saying, Samson is come hither. And they compassed [him] in, and laid wait for him all night in the gate of the city, and were quiet all night, saying, Until morning light! then we shall kill him. And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight, and laid hold of the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and pulled them up with the bar, and put them upon his [m]shoulders, and carried them up to the top of the hill that faceth towards Hebron.

2. (*vv.* 4-22.) Facile steps to self-destruction.

4. [n]And it came to pass afterward, that he [n]loved a

[l] *cfr.* Matt. 5. 27, 28. *cf.* Jas. 1. 27. Jas. 4. 4.

[m] ver. 30. *cf.* Jer. 9. 23, 24.

[n] ch. 14. 1, etc. 1 Ki. 11. 1, etc.

also against sin wherever found: the lust which is the lawlessness of a heart away from God, and the pride which would pervert His grace into a shelter for such license.

(i.) In the first part of what we have here,—the divine gift of strength in Samson, so far from being recalled, is displayed in a way so signal as at first sight to obscure the evidence of the decline which has begun, and which is so soon to make itself disastrously apparent. For the moment he gains another brilliant triumph, as would appear, in the very presence of the enemy, appalled to utter inaction by the contemptuous daring of the Israelite. He walks into the place of strength, and breaks his way out of it again, leaving it dismantled, like a conquered city. He carries the gates in a direction pointing significantly enough toward Israelitish territory; and then drops them, with equal insult, where they can find them,—as if, after all, there were no need to deprive them of defenses so insignificant as they had proved. Even the moral decline which his presence there had demonstrated, and which (whatever their heathen manners might be), they could realize, no doubt, in a follower of Jehovah, seemed to have no effect in diminishing that wonderful strength which had long before carried shame and ruin into the midst of their broken ranks. All this, for them, was a warning they would have done well to listen to, and did not; and the last blow came upon them unawares.

But for Samson, also, there was a warning to which he listened no more than they. True, God had not left him to the consequences of his pride and lust, and the strength of the Nazarite had not deserted him. But while he had splendidly insulted the enemy, he had not harmed him; and the strength which should have delivered Israel had, in this case, been put forth only to deliver himself. *He* had been forced to flee, and not the Philistines. He had shown his strength, but gained no dignity. As between them and him God might still act for him, help him to escape by night even from the house of shame which he had entered, was there no warning for him as to that besetting sin of his which might yet make this gateless Gaza a steel trap to hold him? Oh, that he had heard! Oh, that men *did* hear!

From the first, the snare for the Nazarite had been a Philistine alliance. Then he had openly, and, in a sense, honorably, courted it. It was to be a *marriage*. The matured man seeks this no more; but alas, cannot restrain his *lusts*, though plainly unlawful. He can no more *vindicate* indulgence, but he can *yield* to it. How often is this, too, to-day the pit into which fall God's Nazarite strong men! Principles with which open alliance is refused are toyed with, and courted dishonorably, embraced and thrown off at will. Yet, for a while strength may still be shown and exploits done, the enemy's stronghold be dismantled, and the gates carried away to an indefinite somewhere, facing toward Hebron. This they never reach, nor do we find there Samson either.

(ii.) Grace resisted hardens the heart, and Samson, with his lesson all unlearned, is found now in the vale of Sorek, "entanglement?" No strong

woman in the valley of Sorek, and her name was Delilah. And the princes of the Philistines came up unto her, and said unto her, [o]Persuade him, and see wherein his great strength lieth, and how we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to subdue him, and we will [p]give thee, every one of us, eleven hundred pieces of silver. And Delilah said unto Samson, Tell me now wherein thy great strength lies, and wherewith thou must be bound to subdue thee. And Samson said unto her, [q]If they were to bind me with seven fresh cords that have not been dried, then should I be weak, and be as another man. Then the princes of the Philistines brought up to her seven fresh cords that had not been dried, and she bound him with them. Now she had liers in wait abiding in the chamber; and she said unto him, Philistines are upon thee, Samson! And he brake the cords as a thread of tow is broken at the breath of fire; and his strength was not known.

And Delilah said unto Samson, Behold, thou hast mocked me, and spoken lies to me: tell me now, I pray thee, wherewith thou mayest be bound. And he said unto her, If they bind me with new ropes wherewith no work has been done, then shall I be weak, and be as another man. And Delilah took new ropes, and bound him with them, and said unto him, Philistines upon thee, Samson! And there were liers in wait abiding in the chamber. And he brake them off his arms like a thread.

And Delilah said unto Samson, Hitherto thou hast mocked me, and spoken lies to me: tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound. And he said unto her, If thou shouldst weave with the web the seven locks of my head. And she fastened it with the pin, and said unto him, Philistines upon thee, Samson! And he awoke out of His sleep, and tore out the pin of the loom and the web.

And she said unto him, [r]How canst thou say, I love thee, when thy heart is not with me? These three times thou hast mocked me, and not told me wherein is thy great strength. And so it was, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him so that his soul was vexed to death, that he [s]told her all his heart, and said unto her, No razor hath come upon my head; for I am a [t]Nazarite of God from my mother's womb: if I were shaved, then my strength would go from me,

o ch. 14. 15. Nu. 25. 18. Prov. 2. 16–19. 1 Jno. 2. 15, 16.

p Nu. 22. 7. *cf.* ch. 17. 2. *ctr.* ch. 15. 6.

q *cf.* Prov. 5. 3–13. Jas. 1. 13–16. *ctr.* Matt. 4. 1–11.

r ch. 14. 16. 2 Cor. 6. 14, 15.

s Mk. 7. 5. *ctr.* Jno. 4. 29. 1 Kl. 10. 2.

t ch. 13. 5.

city is here to keep him in,—nothing but a weak woman's arms, and they are stronger than the gates of Gaza. Delilah means "exhausted, weak"; and it is by that which appears to us such we are often overcome: for in this respect, at least, we credit ourselves with strength, and do not find it. The blindness induced by sin is wonderful, and Samson here wonderfully illustrates it. He takes one step after another, drawing nearer and nearer to the precipice into which at last he plunges recklessly. Each step taken makes the next easier.

and I should be weak, and be like all mankind. And Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, and she sent and called the princes of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once; for he has shown me [u]all his heart. Then the princes of the Philistines came up to her, and brought the money in their hand. And she made him [v]sleep upon her knees, and called a man, and she shaved off the seven locks of his head: and she began to subdue him, and his strength went from him. And she said, Philistines upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, [w]I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself free. And he [x]knew not that Jehovah had departed from him. And the Philistines seized him, and [y]put out his eyes, and brought him down to [z]Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass, and he had to [a]grind in the prison-house.

3. (vv. 23-31.) The recovery: God manifesting Himself thus against Dagon.

[3] And the hair of his head began to [b]grow again after he was shaven. And the princes of the Philistines gathered themselves together to offer a great sacrifice unto [c]Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath given Samson our enemy into our hands. And when the people saw him they praised their god: for they said, Our [d]god hath given into our hands our enemy and the devastator of our land, who multiplied our slain. And it came to pass when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call Samson, that he may make us [e]sport. And they called Samson out of the prison-house, and he made them sport; and they set him between the pillars. And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Let me alone, that I may touch the pillars upon which the house standeth, that I may lean on them. Now the house was full of men and women, and all the princes of the Philistines were there, and there were on the roof about three thousand men and women, who were looking on while Samson

u vers. 7, 11, 13.
v ver. 14. cf. Prov. 6. 9–11. Rom. 13. 11–14.
w ctr. 1 Chr. 14. 10, 14. cf. 2 Cor. 12. 10 with Phil. 3. 3.
x cf. Ex. 34. 29. 1 Sam. 16. 14.
y cf. Gen. 27. 1 with 2 Pet. 1. 5–9. ctr. Deut. 34. 7 with Acts 7. 55, 56.
z cf. ch. 16. 1 with Gal. 6. 7.
a ctr. ch. 15. 5. cf. Deut. 28. 47, 48.
b cf. Gal. 6. 1. Matt. 26. 75 with Jno. 21. 15–17.
c 1 Sam. 5. 2. 1 Chr. 10. 9, 10. ctr. Col. 2. 15.
d Dan. 5. 4. cf. Nu. 14. 13–16 with Rom. 2. 24.
e cf. 2 Sam. 2. 14, 16. Heb. 11. 36.

With each his eyes are more completely sealed. Then, when his ruin is complete, he is unconscious of it until the consequences overtake him. The details are here exceptionally hard to translate into spiritual meaning, while we need not be less assured that such there is all through. On the other hand, it scarcely needs to moralize where moralizing is so easy. Such is the fatal power,—the hardening through the deceitfulness of sin!

(iii.) The Philistines make it the triumph of their god that Samson is delivered into their hands, and thus it is needful that Jehovah manifest Himself. Samson also, blinded, begins to see more clearly than when the lust of his eyes enthralled him. His bonds set him free; his darkness enlightens him. The goodness of God it is that thus leaves His people to the consequences of their sins, that the bitter fruit may condemn the tree; and they may, by experience, however painfully, find fellowship with Him. How much better, indeed, to learn by His word through faith! And this should be our profit from these sad and shameful histories. Still, if the Father's chastenings are needed, it is what must not be denied us: "He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness."

The application made by some of this history of Samson to the Lord seems too

made sport. And Samson called unto Jehovah, and said, Lord Jehovah, remember me, I pray thee, and [f]make me strong, I pray thee, only this once, O God! that I may take one vengeance upon the Philistines for my two eyes! And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood—for he supported himself upon them—one with his right hand and the other with his left; and Samson said, Let *me* die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with might: and the house fell upon the princes, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew in his [g]death were more than those that he slew in his life. And his brethren and all his father's house came down and took him, and brought him up, and [h]buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol, in the sepulchre of Manoah his father. And he had [i]judged Israel twenty years.

f ch. 14. 6. *ctr.* 2 Cor. 13. 4.

g *ctr.* Josh. 24. 30.

h *ctr.* ch. 8. 28, 32. 2 Tim. 4. 6–8.

i ch. 15. 20. *ctr.* Ps. 72.

DIVISION 3. (Chap. xvii.–xxi.)

The corruption at heart manifest.

Subdivision 1. (Chap. xvii.–xviii.)

Godward: will-worship in the typical "judge" (Dan).

(XVII.)

Its beginning, in the individual.

1. (*vv.* 1–4.) First origin.

1. [j]AND there was a man of Mount Ephraim, whose name was Micajehu. And he said to his mother: The [k]eleven hundred silver-pieces which were taken from thee, and about which thou cursedst, and

j ch. 19. 1.

k ch. 16. 5.

partial, too much contradicted by other parts, too little in harmony with the character of the book, and with its place in the book, to be accepted with any satisfaction. Partial applications of this nature are easy to be made, but tend to confusion of all interpretation, and have been the reproach of the allegorical, especially. Even although we can put nothing better in their place, it becomes our duty to reject them in the interest of clear and consistent exposition of the word of God. The close of Samson's history is a most solemn one; and, at the end of this series of declensions and revivals, comes in a most solemn place. We must leave it for the prayerful examination of the Lord's people, and as what calls for exercise of heart as well as for searching of Scripture. To introduce here a representation of the Lord's blessed work would seem to take the edge from the admonition it should convey to us, if at least this should be assumed to be the real object here of the Spirit of God. If it be simply meant as the *suggestion* by the history of the failed Nazarite of that true and perfect One who alone has never failed, this is no longer typical interpretation, and does not fall within the compass of these brief outline notes.

Div. 3.

We have now reached the last division of the book, in which we have the revelation of the internal condition of the people, Godward and manward,—the clear illumination of the whole history. For this, therefore, we go back before the history; for of this it is not the consequence, but the cause, and an abiding cause: for the Danite idolatry lasts, as we are told, quite through the whole period of the book. Not that this, by itself, is anything more than a sample of the state in general, having just its significance in this—that it is but a sample.

spakest in mine ears also: behold, the silver is with me: I *took it. And his mother said, Blessed of Jehovah be my son! And when he restored the one thousand one hundred pieces to his mother, his mother said, I had verily *dedicated the silver to Jehovah from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image: now therefore I will restore it unto thee. But

l Ex. 20. 15.

m *ctr.* Nu. 31. 48–54.

Another thing is manifested in connection with this—the need of a king. Men are, indeed, very far from doing even what is *right* in their own eyes; but to do this also is not enough. Give man a law, he cannot be trusted as to the interpretation of the law. It needs that there should be one apart from the influence of private ends and motives, to interpret for him, as well as with power adequate to the enforcement of the interpretation. This shows us how the book of Judges prepares the way for those of Kings; although in these, also, it is soon evident that among all that follow, the best are but the shadows of the true King, for whom all creation waits. Thus history becomes prophecy, and Messianic: for the longing born of the Spirit must have its accomplishment, and the "Desire of all nations" come. The Old Testament is but an unfinished and broken utterance apart from the New,—a witness to its own utter barrenness.

Yet though Christ has come, we are still typically in the days of Judges merely, as we have seen, and the want of a king is not less manifest now than then. Even Christianity has no perfection apart from the personal presence of Him whom it has made necessary to us. If the light has brightened—how much!—since those Old Testament days, the shadows, too, have darkened. We, too, that have the first fruits of the Spirit groan within ourselves, waiting for the manifestation of the power to be put forth when He who is to come shall come, and change our bodies into the likeness of His glorious body, and take the whole world into His almighty new-creative hands. "Amen! Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"

SUBD. 1.

The witness to man's condition here is, as commonly, a double one; and as the second table of the law is based upon the first, it is with the first that we must begin. The idolatry in Dan precedes in moral order, probably historically also, the Benjamite war, though the latter was early, for Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, was then high priest. On the other hand, the seizure of Laish or Leshem by the Danites is given in the book of Joshua (xix. 47). It is quite plain, therefore, that we have thus a new beginning, all the more significant as looked back to from the end, as God will one day require again the things that are past.

(i.) The idolatry in Dan is not original with them, but the transplanting of a sin begun in the house of a man no way prominent, as it would seem, in Israel. Leprosy will spread, in whatever member of a body it begins; and none may think himself too little or mean to become a propagator of disease that may infect a nation. There is, moreover, in sin a power of real and rapid evolution, a transmutability of species such as that it is certain that from one covetous act in Eden all the myriad forms of wickedness with which the world is filled to-day have been derived. Traced to its origin, as the Spirit of God would trace it for our profit, we have first a man's theft from his mother of eleven hundred silver pieces, which, terrified by her curses, but without any repentance toward God, he restores. Apparently on the impulse of the moment, soon regretted, she dedicates it to Jehovah for a purpose absolutely forbidden by Him, to which finally she applies less than a fifth part. It is the old sin of the wilderness that she repeats, a founder making of it a graven image and a molten image, and she solemnly passes them over from her hand for her son to Jehovah, making no doubt of the acceptability of this to Him.

he restored the silver unto his mother; and his mother took two hundred silver-pieces and gave them unto the founder, who made of it a graven [n]image and a molten image, and it was in the house of Micajehu.

2. (vv. 5-13.) Levite for priest.

[2] And the man Micah had a house of gods, and made an ephod and teraphim, and he consecrated one of his [o]sons, and he became his priest. In [p]those days there was no king in Israel: a man did what was right in his own eyes. And there was a young man out of [q]Bethlehem-Judah, of the family of Judah, who was a [r]Levite, and he sojourned there. And the man went out of the city, out of Bethlehem-judah, to sojourn where he might find [a place]; and as he journeyed he came to Mount Ephraim, as far as the house of Micah. And

n Ex. 20. 4.
o Num. 17. 1-11. Heb. 5. 4.
p ch. 18. 1. ch. 21. 25.
q ch. 19. 1, 2.
r Deut. 12. 12, etc.

Thus she is doing what is right in her own eyes, evidently; though of any movement of her heart to God there is not a trace. To make his own god and have it is the natural desire everywhere of the human heart away from Him. We need not use as much silver as did the woman here to make one. We may be less ignorant or more indifferent, possibly both; but will-worship is everywhere essentially of the same pattern. This is why the case before us is so instructive to us.

Morality and religion are sundered by superstition. The brigand has his crucifix and his rosary, and is still a brigand. "Nowhere is the Virgin more fervently adored than in the prisons [of Italy] by the malefactors and camorristi. The first demand made of a new-comer, immediately on his entry into the cells, is for a penny to furnish oil for the Virgin's lamp." This was the style of devotion of the mother of Micah, and the stream will rise no higher than its source. The man adopts his mother's religion, and the change is indicated in the clipping of his name, which, from Micajehu ("who is like Jehovah?") becomes Micah simply, meaning, probably, "who is dull of sight?"

Dull of sight he is, assuredly, keenly looking after his own interest all the while, for what more profitable than a god of your own manufacture and in your own possession? And all this takes place not in some remote corner of even the little Israelitish land, but in Mount Ephraim, quite near to Shiloh, where was the ark of God. Just so the golden calf was made under the shadow of Mount Sinai: for distance from God cannot be measured by latitude and longitude; heathenism is not the sigh of a heart that says, "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him!" No; it was "when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened,"—which is just the transformation of a Micajehu into Micah.

Mount Ephraim is the place where Micah dwells, as it is the home of the Levite also in the story that follows this. It is in the practical life that diseases of this kind break out. We have seen the pride of Ephraim already developing itself in relation to Gideon and to Jephthah. Afterwards the rival kingdoms are a more enduring memorial of it, and Jeroboam's calf-worship is established close upon its border. Even true fruitfulness has its danger in this direction, and pride and idolatry are never far apart. We do not know the forms of Micah's idols: no doubt this is left vague, as unimportant: what matter *what* supplants God in the heart?—the evil is only that He *is* supplanted.

(ii.) Yet there is development: the thing is a living germ that grows. Micah with his gods must have his *house* of gods. Then he must have his ephod and his priest, and his gods themselves must be supplemented with the teraphim. All this was still "right" in Micah's eyes. When we are thus committed to the guidance of our own minds, quite a system may be easily elaborated; the

Micah said unto him, Whence comest thou? And he said unto him, I am a Levite of Bethlehem-Judah, and I am going to sojourn where I may find [a place]. And Micah said unto him, Abide with me, and be unto me a father and a [s]priest; and I will [t]give thee ten pieces of silver by the year, and a suit of clothes, and thy sustenance. So the Levite went in. And the Levite consented to dwell with the man; and the young man became to him like one of his own sons. And Micah consecrated the Levite; and the young man became his priest and was in Micah's house. And Micah said, [u]Now I know that Jehovah will do me good, because a Levite hath become my priest.

[s] *cf.* ch. 18. 19. *cfr.* Nu. 8. 19.

[t] *cf.* Nu. 18. 21-24. *cfr.* 1 Pet. 5. 2.

[u] *cf.* ver. 5. Num. 4. 15.

The extension of idolatry to Dan. 1. (1-12.) The spies.

(XVIII.)

2. [1]In [v]those days there was no king in Israel; and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought for themselves an [w]inheritance to dwell in; for to that day [their lot]

[v] ch. 17. 6. ch. 19. 1.

[w] *cf.* ch. 1. 34-36. Josh. 17. 14-18.

further we advance, the more completely do we get astray. How careful need we to be as to beginnings!

The matter of priesthood troubles him. He first consecrates one of his sons to be his priest, but he is uneasy about it: some reminiscence of the law will not allow him peace. Strange that we find nothing to indicate any alarm of conscience about his rival tabernacle, or even about his carved and molten gods! And we often find this strange anomaly among men. Conscience may be alive and sensitive upon certain points, when upon others it seems dead or paralyzed. And it is often the minor thing to which it is sensitive, while to the greater it yields no response. Nor is this limited to unbelievers either, but the same thing is found among those that are truly the Lord's. In this case, however, as with Micah, it is generally the case that the awakened soul is easily quieted again, and with some half-truth which is but the perversion of truth. A Levite becomes his priest: and now he is radiant with satisfaction, and knows assuredly that Jehovah will do him good!

The Levite himself is another sign of the times. He is of the Levites of Judah, has been for a while in Bethlehem-judah, and wandered away again to find where he may another temporary resting-place. His is the restless foot of a stranger where he might have claimed inheritance, and he is ready to find a home where he should have been a stranger. Little solicitation prevails with him: his sustenance, a suit of clothes, a salary, has prevailed with many in all ages of the world, and the Levite exchanges his ministry for priesthood in the house of Micah, where the idolatry of the place is sanctified with Jehovah's name. All this is simple enough to read by those that care, and Christendom has exhibited every detail of this transformation,—not, alas, as it would seem, a long process: a manufactured priesthood for manufactured gods, all covered with a fair name of orthodoxy, and men doing with great satisfaction what is right in their own eyes!

(2.) And the evil does not stop with this. We are now to see how the private sin becomes a public sin, and roots itself in a tribe of Israel. The tribe of Dan we have seen long since as linked in Jacob's prophecy with apostasy. Dan is the typical judge, and it is here the failure begins, and is so disastrous. With Samson's failure the book ends; but here we see the Danite, from the first and all through, a failure. No tribe so signally fails to lay hold on its inheritance; and this is the only way in which we can understand that their lot had not fallen to them. They had suffered the Philistines to regain the cities upon the sea-coast, and the Amorites had forced them into the mountains. This loss of what is our own, and should be made our own, is often the reason of much restless activity

had not fallen to them for inheritance among the tribes of Israel. And the children of Dan sent of their family five men of their whole number, men of valor, from Zorah and from Eshtaol, to [x]spy out the land and search it. And they said unto them, Go and search the land. And they came to Mount Ephraim, as far as the house of Micah, and lodged there. When they were near the house of Micah, they knew the voice of the young man the Levite, and turned in there, and said unto him, Who brought thee hither? and what art thou doing in this place? and what hast thou here? And he said unto them, Thus and thus hath Micah done to me; and he hath hired me, and I am his priest. And they said unto him, [y]Inquire, we pray thee, of God, that we may know whether the way in which we go shall prosper. And the priest said unto them, [z]Go in peace: straight before Jehovah is the way in which ye go.

And the five men departed and came to Laish, and saw the people that were therein, that they dwelt confidently after the manner of the Zidonians, [a]quiet and secure, and there was no one in the land who possessed power to put them to shame in anything; and they were far from the Zidonians, and had no business with any men. And they came unto their brethren at Zorah and Eshtaol; and their brethren said unto them, What [say] ye? And they said, [b]Arise, and let us go up against them: for we have seen the land, and, behold, it is exceeding good: and are ye still? Be not slothful to go and enter in, to possess the land. When ye go, ye will come to a people secure, and the land roomy on both sides: for God hath given it into your hands,—a place where there is no want of anything on earth.

x Nu. 13. 2. Deut. 1. 22. Josh. 2. 1. ch. 1. 23.

y 1 Ki. 22. 5, etc. Hos. 4. 12.

z *cf.* 2 Chr. 18. 5.

a vers. 10, 27.

b *cf.* Nu. 13. 30.

among the people of God, and of much that looks like success in other directions. Their history, as far as their original possession is concerned, clings around Zorah and Eshtaol, significant names when cut off from the rest that God had allotted them. They are here seen forced by their own slothfulness or timidity to seek an inheritance elsewhere; and were then as violent and rapacious as before they were indolent. Human nature in fallen man commonly shows itself in extremes of this kind.

From Zorah and Eshtaol they send out spies to search the land. Refusing God's choice for us we have, of course, to search out for ourselves. This becomes a snare to them by means of Micah's images: the path that is not with God is always exposed to Satan's ambushes.

Micah finds his judgment also through the Levite who was to be the means of blessing to him from Jehovah. The wandering Levite had been known to these wandering Danites, and they learn from him all about his present employment. He is not ashamed to speak of his hired priesthood, and they are quite ready to consult his oracle. They get the usual ambiguous response, which they interpret according to their own desires: but the end of this is not yet.

So the five men come to Laish, and here find the opportunity they seek. The Canaanites are living quiet and secure, in lawless self-indulgence, which shows them ripe for the judgment of God. They are evidently an easy prey; and they

And there went from thence of the family of the Danites, out of Zorah and Eshtaol, six hundred men girt with weapons of war. And they went up and encamped at Kirjath-jearim in Judah: wherefore they called that place Mahaneh-dan unto this day; behold, it is behind Kirjath-jearim.

2. (vv. 13-26.) The robbery of the images.

2 And they passed from thence to Mount Ephraim, and came to the [c]house of Micah. Then answered the five men that went to spy out the country of Laish, and said unto their brethren, Know ye that in these houses are an ephod and teraphim and a graven and a molten image? now, then, consider what ye shall do. And they turned aside thither, and came to the house of the young man the Levite, the house of Micah, and asked him of his welfare. And the six hundred men who were of the children of Dan, girt with their weapons of war, stood beside the gate. And the five men that went to spy out the land went up, came in thither, [and] [d]took the graven image and the ephod and the teraphim and the molten image. And the priest took his stand at the entrance of the gate with the six hundred men girt with weapons of war. And when these went into Micah's house and took the graven image, the ephod and the teraphim and the molten image, the priest said unto them, What are ye doing? And they said unto him, Hold thy peace; lay thy hand upon thy mouth, and come with us, and be to us a father and a priest: is it [e]better for thee to be a priest to one man's house, or to be priest to a tribe and family in Israel? And the priest's heart was [f]glad; and he took the ephod and the teraphim and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people. And they turned and departed, and put the [g]little ones and the cattle and the goods before them. When they were a good way from

c ver. 2.

d *cf.* Gen. 31. 19, 34.

e *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 12, 13. Eph. 4. 11-13.

f *cf.* ch. 17. 11.

g *cf.* Gen. 32. 22, 23.

return with the good news to their expectant brethren. God's good news they would have it; for we see with keen eyes the sins of others, and pronounce God's judgments readily enough. Self-interest and self-flattery are potent in begetting a kind of religion; and the spies talk piously and fervently to their brethren. Soon there is a little army assembled at Kirjath-jearim, the forest city, which gives its suited character to the "Camp of Dan."

(ii.) The six hundred follow the road taken by the spies, and come to the house of Micah; and here the union of superstition with immorality once more manifests itself in a startling way. The spies recall their visit to the Levite, and the opportunity of securing the images for themselves seems to them all too favorable to let pass. Gods so helpless and so beneficent, whose virtue they perhaps supposed they had already proved,—for in idolatry it is vain to deny an efficacy attributed to the image, and thus the superiority of this to that Madonna, although as *representations* they are all the same. But blindness here is absolute: "they that make them are like unto them," says the inspired Word; "so is every one that trusteth in them."

The hireling priest shows himself but a hireling. A greater personal advantage to himself outweighs at once all obligations to his employer, and he is "glad" of the robbery by which he is to benefit. For the Danites, as with other sacer-

the house of Micah, the men that were in the houses beside Micah's house were gathered together and overtook the children of Dan. And they turned their faces and said unto Micah, What aileth thee, that thou comest with such a company? And he said, Ye have taken my gods which [h]I have made, and the priest, and are gone, and what have I more? how is it, then, that ye say to me, What aileth thee? And the children of Dan said unto him, Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest angry men run upon you, and thou lose thy [i]life and the lives of thy household. And the children of Dan went their way; and Micah saw that they were too strong for him, and he turned and went back to his house.

h ch. 17. 4, 5. Deut. 31. 29.

i *cf.* Ezek. 8. 17.

3. (*vv.* 27–31.) The seizure of Laish, and the idolatry set up.

[3]And they took what Micah had made, and the priest that he had, and came upon Laish, upon a people quiet and secure, and [j]smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire. And they had no deliverer: for it was far from Zidon, and they had no [k]business with any man. And it was in the valley which [reacheth] to Beth-rehob: and they built the city, and dwelt in it. And they called the name of the city [l]Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born to Israel: howbeit the name of the city was Laish at the first.

j ver. 10.

k ver. 7.

l Josh. 19. 47. *cf.* Gen. 14. 14.

And the children of Dan set up for themselves the graven [m]image: and Jonathan, the son of [n]Gershom, the son of [o]Moses, he and his sons were priests unto the tribe of the Danites until the day of the [p]captivity of the land. And they set up for themselves Micah's image that he made, [q]all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

m *cf.* 1 Ki. 12. 28, 29.

n Ex. 2. 22. o *cf.* 1 Sam. 8. 1–3.

p 1 Sam. 4. 11, 21, 22. 1 Sam. 6. 1 with Ps. 78. 60, 61.

q Josh. 18. 1.

dotalists to-day, it is not necessary to respect the man who by reason of his office is supposed to have the ear of God. Once again, morality is divorced from religion, and He is not glorified but dishonored in those that draw near to Him.

Little comment, surely, is needed here. The gainers have lost; the loser, if he knows it, has gained. The Danites depart with their booty in peace.

(iii.) The third part shows us, briefly, the end of this sad story. The surprise of Laish is complete; and the Canaanites, doomed of God before, are cut off. Laish becomes Dan. But there the idolatrous system begun by Micah is established, and abides till the captivity of the land; that is, as we are informed, as long as the house of God continued at Shiloh. When the ark went into captivity among the Philistines, the sanctuary at Shiloh came to an end (Ps. lxxviii. 60, 61); and with the reformation under Samuel, the idolatry under Dan was no doubt swept away.

But now we have revealed one of the saddest proofs of the decline in Israel that had already taken place. The name of the Levite priest is Jonathan ("Jehovah hath given,") the son of Gershom, the son of *Moses:* scarcely the grandson, but certainly a descendant not far removed, of the great lawgiver. Of this and not Manasseh, as the true reading, there is no doubt. Only respect for so honored a name as that of Moses induced the alteration,—the "n" alone needed for it being suspended also over, rather than written in the word. "The significance of the statement," as Cassel observes, "lies in the contrast between descendant and ancestor." So early and grave was the degeneracy of the people.

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. xix.–xxi.)

Breach between man and man: the Benjamite war.

(XIX.)

Lawless lust.

1. AND in those days there was [r]no king in Israel; and there was a certain Levite who sojourned on the far side of Mount [s]Ephraim, and he took himself a [t]concubine out of [u]Bethlehem-judah. And his concubine played the whore against him, and went away from him to her father's house, to Bethlehem-judah, and was there the space of four months. And her husband rose up and went after her to speak kindly to her, to [v]bring her back, and his servant was with him, and a couple of asses. And she brought him to her father's house; and when the damsel's father saw him, he rejoiced to meet him. And his father-in-law, the damsel's father, retained him, and he [w]abode with him three days: so they ate and drank and lodged there. And it came to pass, on the fourth day, when they rose up early in the morning, that he arose to depart: and the damsel's father said unto his son-in-law, [x]Refresh thy heart with a morsel of bread, and afterward ye shall go your way. And they sat down and ate and drank both of them together. And the damsel's father said unto the man, Be content, I pray thee, and [y]pass the night, and let thy heart be glad. And the man rose up to depart; but his father-in-law urged him, and he lodged there again. And he rose up early in the morning of the fifth day to depart, and the damsel's father said, Refresh thy heart, I pray thee; and they tarried till the day declined; and they ate, both of them. And the man rose up to go, he and his con-

r ch. 18. 1. ch. 21. 25.
s ch. 17. 1.
t *cf.* ch. 8. 31.
u ch. 17. 9.
v *cf.* Jer. 3. 1.
w *cfr.* Gen. 24. 55, 56.
x *cf.* 1 Ki. 13. 15, 16.
y *cf.* 2 Sam. 11. 1.

SUBD. 2.

We now come to the sins against the second table of the law. The breach with God sunders all links at once, and the whole framework of society shows itself as ready to fall to pieces. The story here is a sickening one; and if it is thus given us in detail, there must be corresponding need on our part. It does not follow that it will furnish proportionate material for such notes as these, the lesson being so strictly a moral one, and needing so little an interpreter. But what a world is this, in which such scenes can be! The thing we need is to trace them to their root, and let the shock which they produce make us cling close to those paternal arms, which, circling us all, alone can hold us fast to one another.

We hear once more of Mount Ephraim and of Bethlehem-judah: the figure of a Levite is again prominent, and not with honor; but the place of Laish is now filled by Gibeah, and the tribe connected with it in shame is not Dan but Benjamin. But all Israel is here, in one way or other, involved; and the shadow left upon the people is a dark and terrible one.

1. We have first the account of the awful deed at Gibeah. The Levite and his concubine are evidently intended to convey to us the general laxity. The woman is hardly lighter than the man. The five days of eating and drinking at Bethlehem have their moral significance: then the departure, when too late; the notice of Jerusalem as a Jebusite city, twice apparently recovered out of the hands of the Israelites, and Judæans and Benjamites having been driven out from their partial hold upon it. It is now a city of the stranger; but no more strange than

cubine and his servant; and his father-in-law, the damsel's father, said unto him, Behold, now, the day draweth toward [z]evening, tarry the night, I pray you: behold, the day declineth, tarry the night here, and let thy heart be glad; and to-morrow get you early on your way, that thou mayest go to thy tent. But the man would not stay the night, and rose up and departed, and came over against [a]Jebus, that is, Jerusalem; and there were with him two asses saddled, and his concubine was with him.

They were near Jebus, and the day was far spent; and the servant said unto his master, Come, I pray thee, and let us turn aside to this city of the Jebusites, and tarry the night there. And his master said unto him, We will not turn aside to the city of the [b]stranger, that is not of the children of Israel, but we will pass over to [c]Gibeah. And he said unto his servant, Come, and let us draw near to one of these places, and we will stay the night in Gibeah or in Ramah. And they passed on and went their way, and the [d]sun went down on them [when they were] by Gibeah, which belongeth to Benjamin. And they turned aside thither to go and lodge the night in Gibeah. And he went in, and sat him down in the open place of the city: for there was [e]no one who took them into his house to pass the night.

And behold, an old man came from his work out of the field at even, and the man was of Mount [f]Ephraim, and himself sojourned in Gibeah; but the men of the place were Benjamites. And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the wayfarer in the open place of the city; and the old man said, Whither goest thou? and whence comest thou? And he said unto him, We are passing from Bethlehem-judah toward the further side of Mount Ephraim: from thence am I; and I went unto Bethlehem-judah, and I am going to the [g]house of Jehovah; but there is not a man to receive me into his house. Yet we have both straw and provender for our asses, and I have bread and wine also for me and for thy handmaid, and for the young man who is with thy servants: there is no lack of anything. And the old man answered, Peace be to thee, but let thy needs be on me: only [h]lodge not in the open place. And he brought him into his house, and gave provender unto the asses: and they washed their feet, and ate and

z *cf.* Eph. 5. 11.

a Josh. 18. 28.

b *cf.* Deut. 17. 15. 2 Cor. 11. 26.

c *cf.* 1 Sam. 10. 26.

d *cf.* Eph. 4. 26.

e *cf.* ver. 12.

f ver. 1.

g ch. 18. 31.

h Gen. 19. 2.

Gibeah of Benjamin, with its ominous lack of common hospitality. The one who receives them at last is an Ephraimite; and touched, perhaps, by the recognition of one from his own locality. His Levite character seems not to be in the traveler's mind,*—though he is afraid, as well he might be, of the Canaanite city.

* Except with Keil and Cassel we translate verse 18, "I walk at the house of Jehovah," that is, "my walk in life" is there. But few accept this, however, and the expression seems a strange one. On the other hand, the mention of the house of Jehovah at all seems strange also, as he was simply going home. If he speaks of his calling, however, it seems mere wounded dignity.

drank. While they were making their hearts merry, behold, men of the city, sons of Belial, surrounded the house, beating at the door, and they spake to the master of the house, the old man, saying, 'Bring out the man that came into thy house, that we may know him. And the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, Nay, my brethren, I pray you, do not wickedly, seeing this man is come into my house; do not this folly. Behold, my [j]daughter, a virgin, and his concubine, them will I bring out now, and humble them, and do with them what seemeth good unto you; but unto this man do not so vile a thing. But the men would not hearken unto him; so the man took his concubine, and brought her out unto them: and they knew her and abused her all the night until the morning; and when the morning-dawn arose, they let her go. And the woman came at the dawning of the day, and fell down at the entrance of the man's house where her [k]lord was, till it was light. And her lord rose up in the morning, and opened the door of the house, and went out to go his way; and, behold, there lay the woman, his concubine, at the entrance of the house, and her hands upon the threshold. And he said unto her, Rise, and let us be going: but no one answered. And he took her up upon the ass; and the man rose up and went unto his place. And when he came unto his house, he took a [l]knife, and laid hold on his concubine, and divided her into twelve pieces, according to her bones, and sent her into all the country of Israel. And it was so, that all that saw it said, There hath been no such deed done nor seen from the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt to this day! Set it before you, consult, and speak!

(Gen. 19. 4-6, Lev. 20. 13.)

j Gen. 19. 8.

k *ctr.* Eph. 5. 25-30.

l 1 Sam. 11. 7.

(XX.)

The war. 2. And [m]all the children of Israel went out, and the assembly was gathered together as one man, from Dan even to Beersheba, with the land of Gilead, unto Jehovah in [n]Mizpeh. And the heads of all the people, of all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the con-

m Josh. 22. 12, etc. *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 26.

n ch. 21. 1. 1 Sam. 7. 5.

There follows the horrible outbreak, which makes him realize that the Israelite city is as bad as any Canaanite one. All through it is a repetition of the Sodomite outrage, but without the angel-guard that insured things there. The old man, their host, repeats Lot's offer. The Levite, for his own safety's sake, abandons his concubine to the insane fury of the crowd. The morning finds her dead, with her hands stretched, imploring and in vain, over the violated threshold.

Then comes the call for judgment,— itself brutal, and effective in its brutality. The doubly dishonored body makes its own ghastly appeal, and all Israel is summoned to give its answer.

2. And not in vain is the summons. Israel gather, by their representatives, from Dan to Beersheba, save only the tribe involved, and the Levite at Mizpeh recounts the awful story,— reticent, naturally, however, as to his own part in it. The people respond with prompt determination, and all the men of Israel are gathered against the city, knit together as one man.

gregation of the people of God, four hundred thousand footmen that drew sword. And the children of Benjamin heard that the children of Israel were gone up to Mizpeh. And the children of Israel said, Tell us how did this wickedness take place? And the man, the Levite, the husband of the woman that was murdered, answered and said, [o]I came to Gibeah that belongeth to Benjamin, I and my concubine, to lodge. And the lords of Gibeah rose up against me, and beset the house round about against me, by night. Me they meant to slay, and my concubine they humbled, and she died. And I took my concubine, and cut her in pieces, and sent her throughout the country of Israel's inheritance: for they have committed lewdness and folly in Israel. Behold now, ye are all children of Israel: deliberate and give here your counsel. And all the people arose as one man, saying, [p]We will not go any of us to his tent, nor will we turn any of us to his house, but now this shall be what we will do to Gibeah; we will go against it by lot, and take ten men out of the hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, and a hundred out of a thousand, and a thousand out of ten thousand, (taking victual for the people,) that they may do, when they come to Geba of Benjamin, according to all the folly they have wrought in Israel. So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, [q]knit together as one man.

And the tribes of Israel sent men throughout all the tribe of [r]Benjamin, saying, What is this wickedness that hath been done among you? Now, then, [s]give up the men, the sons of Belial, who are in Gibeah, that we may put them to death, and put away evil from Israel. But the children of Benjamin [t]would not hearken to the voice of their brethren the children of Israel; and the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together out of the cities unto Gibeah, to go out to [u]battle against the children of Israel. And the children of Benjamin were numbered at that time out of the cities, twenty-six thousand men that drew sword, besides the inhabitants of Gibeah, who were numbered seven hundred chosen men. Among all this people there were seven hundred chosen men [v]left-handed: all these slang stones to a hair['s breadth] and would not miss. And the men of Israel besides Benjamin were numbered [w]four hundred thousand men that drew sword: all these were men of war.

o ch. 19. 16.

p *cf.* Deut. 13. 12–16 with 1 Cor. 5. 1–5.

q *etr.* Col. 2. 2, 19.

r *cf.* Josh. 7. 16 with Deut. 29. 18.

s *cf.* 2 Sam. 20. 15–22.

t *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 6, 7. 2 Jno. 10 with Lev. 14. 33–47.

u *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 2.

v ch. 3. 15.

w *etr.* ch. 7. 2, 4, 7. *cf.* 2 Sam 17. 11, 12.

But Benjamin refuses the appeal to them, and gathers to the defense of Gibeah with sullen resolution. They are practiced warriors, and seem to build upon it, though but little more than a fifteenth part of the combined forces opposed. Israel has, too, the house of God; and it is not a moment doubtful on which side He will be. How fearful must be, then, the condition of those that can thus fling themselves into the adverse ranks!

And the children of Israel arose and went up to Bethel, and [x]inquired of God, and said, Which of us shall go up [y]first to the battle against the children of Benjamin? And Jehovah said, Judah first. And the children of Israel rose up in the morning and encamped against Gibeah. And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin: and the men of Israel put themselves in array to fight against them at Gibeah. And the children of Benjamin came forth out of Gibeah, and [z]destroyed to the ground of Israel that day twenty-two thousand men. And the people, the men of Israel, [a]took courage, and set their battle again in array where they had put themselves in array the first day. And the children of Israel went up and [b]wept before Jehovah until even, and inquired of Jehovah, saying, Shall I go up again to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother? And Jehovah said, Go up against him. And the children of Israel came near against the children of Benjamin the [c]second day. And Benjamin went forth to meet them out of Gibeah the second day, and destroyed again to the ground of the children of Israel eighteen thousand men: all these drew the sword.

Then all the children of Israel and all the people went up and came to Bethel, and wept, and abode there before Jehovah, and [d]fasted that day until even, and offered up [e]burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before Jehovah. And the children of Israel inquired of Jehovah (now the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days, and [f]Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days), saying, Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin, my brother, or shall I cease? And Jehovah said, Go up; for to-morrow I will [g]give them into thy hand.

And Israel set liers in wait round about Gibeah. And

x 1 Sam. 30. 8.
y ch. 1. 1, 2.
z Josh. 7. 4.
a *cf.* 1 Sam. 4. 8, 9. *ctr.* 1 Sam. 30. 6.
b 1 Sam. 30. 4.
c *cf.* Jud. 15. 5.
d 1 Sam. 7. 6.
e 1 Sam. 7. 9. ch. 2. 4, 5.
f *ctr.* Num. 25. 7, 8
g ch. 7. 9.

The united people, on the other hand, do not neglect to consult the divine oracle. They inquire as to who shall lead on the attack upon Benjamin, and are answered, "Judah shall be first." But to be fit to be used of God to deal with evil involves much more than readiness to be His instrument. They are *too ready*, as we see in the result. Their wrath is too prompt, too implacable, too unsparing. Theirs is the reckless haste of vengeance, and not the solemn discrimination of divine judgment. They remember not their own sins, bring no sin-offering to God, no tears of penitence. They build on their numbers; no doubt on the justice of their cause, also, but in self-righteousness and without self-suspicion. Thus they go up to smite, and they are smitten heavily, disastrously. Benjamin, the wrong-doer, is wholly victorious.

Then, indeed, they go up and weep before Jehovah, and seem to remember that Benjamin is their "brother," and inquire, shall they go up against him any more? They are answered, simply, "Go up"; and when they go are again smitten almost as heavily as before. Their losses in these two encounters far exceed the whole number of the men of Benjamin,—exceed them by half as many again.

the children of Israel went up against the children of Benjamin the third day, and put themselves in array against Gibeah as at other times. And the children of Benjamin went out to meet the people, [and] were drawn away from the city; and they [h]began to smite of the people, slaying as at other times in the highways, of which the one goeth up to Bethel, and the other to Gibeah in the field, about thirty men of Israel. And the children of Benjamin said, They are smitten down before us, as at the first. But the children of Israel said, Let us flee, and [i]draw them from the city to the highways. And all the men of Israel rose up out of their place and put themselves in array at Baal-tamar; and the [j]ambush of Israelites came forth out of their place, out of the meadows of Geba. And there came from opposite Gibeah ten thousand chosen men out of all Israel; and the battle was sore; and they knew not that evil was coming upon them. And [k]Jehovah smote Benjamin before Israel: and the children of Israel destroyed of Benjamin that day twenty-five thousand one hundred men: all these drew the sword. So the children of Benjamin saw that they were smitten. And the men of Israel gave place to Benjamin, because they trusted to the ambush that they had set against Gibeah. And the ambush hastened and spread themselves out against Gibeah; and the ambush advanced, and [l]smote the whole city with the edge of the sword. Now there was an appointed sign between the men of Israel and the ambush, that they should make a thick cloud of smoke rise out of the city. And when the men of Israel turned back in the battle, Benjamin began to smite, slaying of the men of Israel about thirty men; for they said, Surely, they are smitten before us as in the former battle. And when the flame began to rise out of the city, a pillar of [m]smoke, then Benjamin looked back, and, behold, the whole city ascended [in smoke] to the heavens. Then the men of Israel turned back, and the men of Benjamin were confounded, for they

h vers. 21, 25, 39.

i Josh. 8. 15, 16.

j Josh. 8. 2. *cf.* 2 Sam. 12. 1-9.

k ver. 23.

l *cf.* Deut. 13. 15.

m Josh. 8. 19, 20.

What a lesson as to the hasty and self-righteous judgment of real iniquity! Yet the word from Jehovah was, none the less, "Go up"; and such judgment of it is as imperatively necessary to-day. But it must be judgment all round,—*self*-judgment before any other. And now they come up once more before God, and weep, and offer at last burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, fasting that day till even: and they are heard of God, and obtain the assurance that to-morrow Benjamin will be given up into their hand.

Remembering the connection of Bethel with the life of Jacob, and the discipline to which he is made to bow—that it is here the ark of God is at this time, and not at Shiloh, the place of "peace,"—must be surely significant. And now we see on the part of Israel a self-distrust they had not before. The stratagem at Ai is repeated, and with a like result; for Benjamin, elated with their previous victories, easily fall into the snare, and are only awakened at last, too late, when they see Gibeah going up in flame to heaven. Destruction falls overwhelmingly upon them: only six hundred men escape to the cliff of Rimmon.

saw that evil was come upon them. And they turned before the men of Israel the way of the wilderness; but the battle overtook them; and they who came out of the cities destroyed them in their midst. They inclosed Benjamin, chased them, trod them down easily over against Gibeah toward the sunrise: and there fell of Benjamin eighteen thousand men, all these were men of valor. And they turned and fled toward the wilderness unto the cliff of Rimmon; and they gleaned of them in the highways five thousand men; and they pursued hard after them as far as Gidom, and slew two thousand men of them. And all that fell that day of Benjamin were [n] twenty-five thousand men that drew the sword: all these were men of valor. But [o] six hundred men turned and fled to the wilderness to the cliff of Rimmon, and abode at the cliff of Rimmon four months. And the men of Israel turned again upon the children of Benjamin, and smote them with the edge of the sword, [p] all the city, to the cattle, [even] all that was found; and all the cities that were found they set on fire.

n ver. 35.
o ch. 21. 13.
p ver. 37.

(XXI.)

The rebuilding of Benjamin.

3. Now all the men of Israel had [q] sworn in Mizpeh, saying, There shall not any of us give his [r] daughter unto Benjamin to wife. And the people came unto [s] Bethel, and abode there till even before God, and lifted up their voices, and [t] wept sore. And they said, Jehovah, God of Israel, why is it come to pass in Israel, that there should be one [u] tribe lacking to-day in Israel? And it came to pass on the morrow that the people rose early, and built there an [v] altar, and offered up burnt-offerings and peace-offerings.

And the children of Israel said, [w] Who is there among all the tribes of Israel that came not up with the congregation unto Jehovah? For they had made a great oath concerning him that came not up to Jehovah to Mizpeh, saying, He shall surely be put to death.

And the children of Israel repented them for Benjamin

q cf. ch. 11. 30.
r Deut. 7. 3.
s cf. Gen. 35. 1, 2, 19.
t ch. 20. 23, 26.
u ver. 15.
v ch. 6. 24.
w ch. 5. 23.

The rest — with women and children, everything in their cities — the merciless edge of the sword devours. For one awful crime of Gibeah, thousands of innocent lives pay forfeit. But the state, everywhere, we see is frightful. All this time the insult to God in Dan abides unnoticed: a web of heathen cities is suffered to entangle them with the abominations of Baal and Ashtaroth-worship, while indiscriminating judgment extirpates almost one tribe in Israel. The facts need here but the briefest comment.

3. At last, when the sword has done its reckless work, and a few hundred young men, stripped of all that they held dear in life, alone remain, the people wake up to realize the result of their own handiwork; and to inquire, as if of an inscrutable Providence, why this had come to pass. And now they find themselves bound by their own past acts, in which they must seem to have deliberately contemplated the extinction of a tribe, which they had almost accomplished, and of which they are quite ready to throw the blame on God. They had bound themselves, under a curse, not to give a wife to a Benjamite. And

their brother, and said, To-day there is one tribe cut off from Israel. What shall we do for wives for them that remain? for we have sworn by Jehovah that we will not give them of our daughters to wives. And they said, What one is there of the tribes of Israel that came not up to Mizpeh to Jehovah? And, behold, there came none to the camp from [x] Jabesh-gilead, to the congregation: for the people were mustered, and, behold, there were none of the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead there. And the assembly sent thither twelve thousand of the most valiant men, and commanded them, saying, Go and [y] smite the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead with the edge of the sword, and the women and the children. And this is the thing that ye shall do: ye shall utterly destroy every male, and every woman that hath lain with man. And they found among the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead [z] four hundred young women that were virgins, who had known no man by lying with any male. And they brought them unto the camp to Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan. And the whole assembly sent to speak with the children of Benjamin that were at the cliff of Rimmon, and to proclaim [a] peace to them. And Benjamin returned at that time; and they gave them the women which they had saved alive of the women of Jabesh-gilead; but even so they found not enough for them.

And the people repented them for Benjamin, because Jehovah had made a breach among the tribes of Israel. And the elders of the assembly said, What shall we do for wives for those that remain? for the women are destroyed out of Benjamin. And they said, [There must be] a possession for those of Benjamin that have escaped, that a tribe be not blotted out of Israel. But we [b] cannot give them wives of our daughters, for the children of Israel have sworn, saying, Cursed be he that giveth a wife to Benjamin. And they said, Behold, there is a [c] feast of Jehovah yearly in Shiloh, which

x 1 Sam. 11. 1-11. 1 Sam. 31. 11-13. 2 Sam. 2. 4-7.

y ch. 20. 37.

z Num. 31. 17, 18.

a *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 6, 7.

b ver. 1.

c 1 Sam. 1. 3.

now, instead of bringing this in penitential sorrow before God, and seeking to be loosed from their folly, they take the matter once more into their cruel hands.

The inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead had sent no aid to Israel in the war; and this, with another of their desperate oaths, they had adjudged a crime worthy of death. One oath is made the means of evading another; and they send an expedition against the unfortunate city to inflict the ban of utter destruction upon it, reserving only — by an exception which they had no right to make, but which condemned their wholesale and pitiless slaughter — four hundred young maidens for wives to Benjamin.

But this is not enough, and they must have another expedient. Scrupulous oath-keepers as they are, who must not give their daughters, they consider it all right that the Benjamites should *steal* them; and actually suggest a festival to Jehovah as a good opportunity for them to do this! Then they will intercede for them with the aggrieved relations: and this is the plan that is finally carried out.

is on the north side of Bethel, toward the sunrise from the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah. And they commanded the sons of Benjamin, saying, Go and [d] lie in wait in the vineyards and see, and behold, when the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in the dances, then come out of the vineyards, and [e] catch you every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh, and go into the land of Benjamin. And it shall be when their fathers or their brethren come unto us to complain, that we will say unto them, Gratify us in them, because we took not each man his wife in the war: for ye did not [f] give unto them this time, that ye should be guilty. And the sons of Benjamin did so, and took wives according to their number, of them that danced, whom they caught: and they went and returned unto their inheritance and built the cities and dwelt in them.

And the children of Israel departed thence at that time, every man to his tribe and to his family: and they went out from thence every man to his inheritance.

In [g] those days there was no king in Israel: every man did what was right in his own eyes.

[d] *cf.* ch. 20. 29.

[e] *ctr.* Gen. 24. 53.

[f] ver. 1.

[g] ch. 19. 1, etc.

This is Israel, the people of God: infirm and wavering where good is to be accomplished; quick and decisive where patience and forbearance would become them; tolerant of what is only against God; fierce and unsparing in judgment, save only of themselves; scrupulously keeping an insane oath, yet managing to evade it by a jesuitry that deceives no one. Such is the people of God, and such is Christendom to-day; and such it has been. Let us search our hearts as we read the record,—not given as a record without purpose in it. How solemn is the repetition at the end of what has been the text of these closing chapters: "In those days there was no king in Israel: *every man did what was right in his own eyes.*"

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF RUTH.

THE Book of Ruth is plainly a history of the times of the judges, while as plainly it looks on to David and the kingdom. Thus it naturally stands between Judges and Kings (Samuel). Its spiritual meaning as plainly connects these together.

In its literal sense it shows us how, spite of Israel's failure, God's salvation could go forward, even among the Gentiles themselves. For He does not leave Himself without witness, and where there is a heart susceptible to His grace, there will His grace be found by it. Thus Ruth, this Gentile woman, and under the ban of the law (a Moabitess), finds yet her place in the genealogy of Christ—is one of those who can say, "To us a child is born, to us a son is given" (Isa. ix. 6). Nor only this, but in this grace to her the Israelite also is built up again out of his ruin: only through such grace as this can the nation be at last restored and blest.

The spiritual sense, as it is founded upon the literal, follows this very closely. For Judges having shown us the failure of the heavenly people (which results on the one hand in the Lord gathering His own up to Himself in heaven, and on the other in the rejection of the now lifeless profession upon earth), Ruth shows us now the remnant of Israel coming like a mere Gentile, all claim forfeited, and under the ban of the law, converted, received, and built up in Christ (Boaz). And this prepares us for the view of David and Solomon as the double type of Christ in His coming kingdom.

For us also, Ruth may display the grace of God in salvation to the Gentiles, going on through all the time of failure depicted in the Judges. But the application here is only partial, and needs to be used with care. It is only the working of God's grace, being always in principle the same, and ministering to the same need, that makes the one case necessarily analogous to the other.

There are three divisions: which in a book so small as Ruth, and so connected, would class rather as sections:—

Sec. 1. (Chap. i.) Left Alone.

Sec. 2. (Chap. ii.) Help in humiliation: gleaning in the fields of him "in whom strength is."

Sec. 3. (Chaps. iii., iv.) Redemption realized.

NOTES.

It has been already noticed that the place of Ruth, in the present Hebrew canon, is quite different from that which it occupies in our own arrangement, which is that of the Septuagint and of our common Bibles. Enough has been said as to this, probably, there being nothing to assure us of any divine warrant for the incongruous mixture of books in the Kethubim, while the historical place of Ruth cannot be doubted. The spiritual significance is in complete accordance with this also, as will be perfectly evident as we go through the book.

Spiritually, the place of Ruth is clearly that of a supplement to Judges,—it not being meant by this that its lesson is of inferior importance, which, being the salvation side, it cannot be. Judges, as we have seen, has given us the failure of the heavenly people,—of Christianity, looked at as a dispensation. It is not, of course, meant that God's purposes in it could fail. He never ordained it to "bud and blossom, and fill the face of the earth with fruit"; but has expressly assured us that *Israel* shall do so. (Isa. xxvii. 6.) Of course people may, if they will, say that Christians are the true Israel of God, and inherit their promises; but the passage cannot be found in which Scripture asserts this. On the contrary, it is just the apostle of the Gentiles, after Christianity as a dispensation had already begun, who tells us that to Israelites, his "kindred according to the *flesh*"—as if he would not allow any escape from his assertion—"pertain the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the *promises*" (Rom. ix. 3, 4),—manifestly the Old Testament ones. Thus nothing can be much plainer than that Isaiah's words refer to no other than the nation now for their sins broken off and disowned. Israel's blessings are all upon earth. Christians are "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus." (Eph. i. 3.)

Christians are therefore taught "to wait for the Son of God from heaven," and that "those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord" shall then, together with the dead saints raised, "be caught up to meet the Lord in the air," and so, it is added, "shall we be ever with the Lord." (1 Thess. i. 10; iv. 15–17.) But this by no means ends the history of the world: it is plainly beyond this that Israel's promises are to find their fulfillment. "For I would not have you ignorant," says the apostle again, "that blindness in part is happened unto Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in, and so *all* Israel shall be saved." (Rom. xi. 25, 26.) That is to say, when God's purpose in the gathering of the Gentile Church shall be accomplished, and its number therefore complete, Israel will pass out of her present condition of partial blindness into that of a people *all* holy (see Isa. iv.), a nation wholly the Lord's, such as has never yet been seen. For this, then, plainly, the present dispensation must have passed away: "as it is written, there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins." (vs. 26, 27.) Read that new covenant in Jeremiah (xxxi. 33, 34), and how plainly does this new condition of the people appear! "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall *teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord:*"—just what we are doing now,—"for *they shall all know me*, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Thus, indeed, shall "all Israel" in that day "be saved." But what will accomplish this? "The coming of the Deliverer out of Zion," replies the apostle. But is not Christ the Deliverer?—and has He not come? Yes; but *not "out of Zion."* He has come out of Bethlehem, and out of Nazareth, and, thank God, out of the grave also; but not yet out of *Zion:* for Zion is the royal city, David's city; and when the King of kings reigns *there*, then, indeed, shall Israel's deliv-

RUTH.

SECTION 1. (Chap. i.)

Left Alone.

1. (*vv.* 1-5.) The barrenness of one's own way.

1 AND it was in the days that the [a]judges ruled, and there was a [b]famine in the land. And there went a man of [c]Bethlehem-judah to [d]sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. And the man's name was Elimelech, and the name of

[a] *ctr.* Judg. 19. 1, etc.
[b] Gen. 12.10. Gen. 26.1,2. 2 Ki. 8. 1. *cf.* Am. 8. 11-13.
[c] 1Sam.16.1. *ctr.* Mi. 5. 2-4.
[d] Jer. 42. 7-16. Is. 30. 1-7. *cf.* Jer.2.13, 17-19.

erance be accomplished. Clearly it stands written, that Israel's conversion nationally shall never be complete "until," says their gracious Lord, "they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son : . . . in *that day* there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." (Zech. xii. 10; xiii. 1.)

Now if one ask still, May not this be accomplished without any personal coming of Christ, by the preaching of the gospel? — the answer is given in Revelation (i. 7): "Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and *they who pierced Him;* and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him." This is just Zechariah's prophecy, and "all kindreds of the earth" is exactly what might be rendered "all the tribes of the land."

Thus it is when He comes in a way visible to all, that Israel will, as a whole, find forgiveness and blessedness : then, and not before. *Nationally*, they will not be converted by any preaching of the gospel now, and so says the apostle again, "As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes : for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

The change of dispensation, then, is obvious, when Israel is brought back; and the book of Zechariah, in the context of the passages quoted, and with many another prophecy, shows us that there will be a time of trouble, out of which they will be delivered only by the Lord's appearing, and which will be the time of their travail and new birth. In the midst of this it will be that a remnant which at last becomes the nation, will have their preparation, and in poverty and need find their way to Christ. This remnant, in their search and finding, have their fitting symbol in Ruth the Gentile : for on the ground of Gentile grace alone can they stand. For nearly two thousand years they have rejected the Lord : they have abode, according to Hosea's prophecy, "without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim,"— Gentiles in practical condition, disowning and disowned of God; with an empty *profession*, however, which may enable us to understand their picture to be that of the *Moabitess*. All the fitness of the history so allegorized will appear as we take it up in detail, until in Boaz is found the Kinsman-Redeemer, in union with whom riches and establishment are found. This, too, is our Redeemer; and many a precious view of Him shall we enjoy as we go through the book. To Israel is, however, as has been said, the first application; and the only way of true profit as to all Scripture is in maintaining the divinely intended meaning. Among the sheaves there will be found, for us as for Ruth, much more than a gleaning.

SEC. 1.

Israel in her faithlessness, her exile from her land, her widowed condition, is first presented to us in Naomi. All is in ruin with her: she is bereaved and

his wife, Naomi, and the names of his two sons, Mahlon and Chilion: Ephrathites of Bethlehem-judah. And they came into the country of Moab and continued there. And Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died; and she was left, and her two sons. And they took

desolate. To her, however, Ruth attaches herself, to share her fortunes. The meaning of this will be found in Micah (ch. v. 3). Israel's travail-time of sorrow is there referred to,— the fruit, on the one hand, of the gathering of the nations against Zion (ch. iv. 11, sq.); but, in a deeper sense, the fruit of the Judge of Israel having been smitten on the cheek (v. 1). Then we have, parenthetically, the glory of the insulted Judge: it is He who comes forth out of Bethlehem to be Ruler in Israel. This is the passage that the scribes quoted to Herod in answer to the question of the wise men at the birth of Christ; but they did not go on to speak of the great glory that is revealed here as His: "whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting." He is Israel's divine-human King, yet rejected; and being rejected, He rejects: "therefore doth He give them up." Here is the secret of their condition as a nation since,— a secret still, to them, alas, though so plainly declared; and here is the reason of their final sorrows. But there is a limit: He cannot always give them up: His promises to the fathers must find their fulfillment; so it is added, "He shall give them up, *until*." What is the limit?—"until she which travaileth has brought forth." Their sorrows are the birth-throes of a people, to be born as in one day; and "then shall the remnant of His brethren return unto the children of Israel."

What this last statement means should not now be difficult. If we have but intelligently grasped the Scriptures that have been before us, it will be plain that those whom the Lord counts His brethren, that is, those who do the will of His Father which is in heaven (Matt. xii. 50), have, during the time of His rejection of Israel, been outside of Israel. Even Jews by birth, when converted to Christ, and baptized of the Spirit into one body, necessarily give up Jewish hopes, although for better ones. When, however, the fullness of the Gentiles is come in, and this part of God's purposes has found its consummation, then Israel will be again, and more really than ever, the people of God; and those who are brethren of the King (according to the standpoint of the prophet, Israelite-born) will return to Israelite hopes and heritage.

Now if Naomi stand for Israel as connected with her sorrowful past, and yet with the land to which she is returning, we can easily see in Ruth's clinging to her the return just spoken of, of the children of the King. Yet, at first, all seems wrecked and hopeless: the return is in bitterness and sorrow: then comes the gleaning in strange harvest-fields, where the Lord of the harvest is met and becomes known in His bounty; and finally, redemption, and marriage-songs: and by Ruth, through the grace of Boaz, Naomi is "built up."

(i.) Fixing our eyes, then, upon Naomi as the central figure at the first, we find that her name is "pleasant,"— a terrible contrast, as she realizes it, to the Lord's dealings with her. Her husband is Elimelech, "my God," or, in the form here, "my Mighty One is King." Another contrast: for a famine in the land makes him leave it for the heathen land adjoining, and there he dies.

Thus Israel, self-exiled from her land through unbelief,— for the famine would not suffice for one who had heard the promise, "Dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed,"— has lost her enjoyed faith as well as her land, and is in Moab, the place of mere profession.

The names of the sons — Mahlon and Chilion — have been quite differently, indeed oppositely, interpreted: generally, in accordance with their brief lives, Mahlon as "sick," and Chilion as "pining." But it has been urged against this that in this sense they would be unlikely names enough to be bestowed by their parents in their happier days; and it might be urged more conclusively that they are not in keeping with those of their father and mother, both of them

them Moabitish [e]wives: the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the second, Ruth; and they dwelt there about ten years. And they [f]died both of them, Mahlon and Chilion: and the woman was left of her two children and of her husband.

2. (6-18.) Separation and adherence.

[2]And she arose, she and her daughters-in-law, that she might [g]return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab that Jehovah had [h]visited his people to give them bread. And she went forth from the place where she had been, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and as they were going on the way to return to the land of Judah, Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, Go, [i]return each to her mother's house; Jehovah deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me: Jehovah grant you that ye may find rest, each in the house of her husband. And she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and [j]wept. And they said unto her, [Nay,] but we will return with thee unto thy people. And Naomi said, Return, my daughters: why will ye go with me? are there still sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? Return, my daughters, go; for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say, I have hope, should I even have a husband

e Dent. 7. 3. cf. Nu. 25. 1, etc. Hos. 7. 8.

f cf. Is. 1. 7-9. Is. 50. 1. Lam. 1. 1-6. Ezek. 19. 10-14. Ezek. 37. 11-14.

g cf. Is. 31. 6, 7. Jer. 3. 8. Jer. 31. 18-21. Hos. 14.

h cf. Ex. 3. 16 with Lk. 1. 68 79. Ezek. 36. 8-12. Ps. 132. 15.

i cf. Josh. 24. 15. Jno. 6. 66-69.

j Deut. 25. 5.

in *contrast* with their after-lot. Cassel proposes, therefore, to derive Mahlon (properly, Machlon) from *machol*, a "circle-dance," and Chilion from *calal*, to "crown,"—thus "crowned." A third view is possible: that there may be a real ambiguity in the words, which we are intended to leave there, and which points the contrast between the beginning and the end in a way quite easy to be understood.

The names of the wives — Ruth and Orpah — are similarly in dispute. Orpah is taken by most to be the same Ophrah, "a fawn," but this is merely conjectural. Without the transposition it could hardly mean anything in Hebrew but "her neck," literally "the back of her neck"; and to give the back of the neck means to turn the back, either in stubbornness or in flight. Orpah's desertion of her mother-in-law cannot but make us incline to such a connection.

Ruth can only be understood as having a letter omitted by contraction. If this be an *aleph*, then it means "appearance," which has been freely taken as "beauty." If the letter dropped be *ain*, then it is taken as "friendship, female friend." This seems to agree with the story, but certainly adds nothing to it; while with a similar derivation it may mean "tended," as by a shepherd: this would seem every way appropriate.

That in the generation of Israel, to which Ruth typically belongs, there will be a portion that will turn their back upon the true national hopes and heritage, becoming finally apostate followers of Antichrist, is plainly predicted in the prophets. Orpah would naturally stand for these, as Ruth for the true remnant. Both widowed,—their first hopes ended, in the time of their distress they turn their several ways, and are separated forever.

(ii.) This is what we have in the next sub-section. Naomi, hopeless as to herself, yet drawn by her affections, sets her face to return to Bethlehem from the country of Moab. But she is unbelieving and bitter of soul, and manifests that strange self-contradiction which, in such states, is so common an experience. Herself on her way back to the land of which she had heard that Jehovah had visited His people to give them bread, she sees nothing for her daughters-in-law but that they must return to their people and to their gods, and prays *Jehovah*

band to-night, and should I also bear sons, would ye then tarry till they were grown? would ye stay on that account from having husbands? Nay, my daughters; for I am in much more bitterness than you: for Jehovah's [k] hand is gone out against me. And they lifted up their voice, and wept again; and Orpah [l] kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth [m] clave to her. And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back to her people and to her gods: return thou after thy sister in law. And Ruth said, [n] Intreat me not to leave thee,—to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried: Jehovah do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me. And when she saw that she was [o] steadfastly minded to go with her, she ceased speaking to her.

3. (19-22.) The return to the land.

[3] And they two went on till they came to Bethlehem; and so it was, when they came to Bethlehem, that all the city was [p] moved about them, and they said, Is this Naomi? And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi,

k *cf.* Ps. 38. 1-11. Mi. 7. 9. Lam. 3. 1-3.

l *cf.* Is. 29. 13, 14. Ezek. 33. 31, 32. Jer. 3. 10.

m *cf.* Is. 10. 20-22. Jer. 50. 4, 5.

n *cf.* Zech. 8. 23. 2 Ki. 2. 2. 2 Sam. 15. 21. Is. 26. 13, 14.

o *cf.* Deut. 30. 2, 3.

p *cf.* Lam. 2. 15.

to give them rest, each in the house of a heathen husband! This is the confusion of a darkened soul; for in darkness all is confusion. All that she is clear about is the ruin in which she is, and she can give counsel of nothing but her despair. Orpah, after a faint resistance, goes back; but with Ruth neither precept nor example can avail to turn her heart from the pursuit of what appeals to her with a power above all difficulties. It is truly with the *heart* that man believeth; and how manifest is the heart in that touching devotion of her's! "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

This is not the language of natural affection simply: *that* stops short of this last. And where this can be said, though it may come in in a subsidiary way, yet it cannot be a secondary thing. The faith of Ruth is, indeed, a beautiful thing to contemplate; and a striking proof of how that which God has planted can flourish in the midst of contrary circumstances and oppositions of all kinds. How little does Naomi here commend her God of whom Ruth speaks! The famine in Bethlehem, mocking it as the "house of bread"; the withdrawal of Elimelech, denying what his name expressed; his death; the Moabitish marriages, one of them her own; then the quick widowhoods; now the mother-in-law's appeal to go back, as Orpah had gone back, to her people and her gods: this is all we know of her surroundings, but which of them is favorable to faith? Ah, it is God that favors it and upholds it; and all the opposition only rouses it into a passion of longing and resolve. There might be little *encouragement:* was there not all the more a deep and deepening *necessity*, which found only in Israel's God the possibility of satisfaction, if not yet the satisfaction itself? Could such longing go *without* satisfaction, or could He who alone could meet it be a dream, or afar off from the need created?

And thus will a remnant be drawn to the God of Israel in times now surely drawing nigh, when around them faith will have vanished from the earth, when darkness covers it, and gross darkness the peoples. (Isa. lx. 2.) Brethren of the King, though as yet little deeming themselves that, they will cleave to the nation in its sorrows and widowhood, and following it be drawn into the land.

(iii.) So Naomi returns, and Ruth with her, at present only to feel the bitterness of this return. She owns that Jehovah has brought her back empty, and

call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out [q] full, and Jehovah hath brought me home again empty. Why call ye me Naomi, when Jehovah hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath done evil to me? So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her, that returned out of the country of Moab; and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of [r] barley-harvest.

[q] *cf.* Am. 5. 1-3. Lam. 1.12-17. Lam.4. 7,8.

[r] 2Sam.21.9.

SECTION 2. (Chap. ii.)

Help in humiliation: gleaning in the field of him "in whom strength is."

1. (*vv.* 1-17.) Power and grace.

1 AND Naomi had a [s] kinsman of her husband, a mighty man of valor, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was [t] Boaz. And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me go now to the field, and [u] glean among the ears of corn after him in whose eyes I shall [v] find favor. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter. So she went; and she came and gleaned in the field after the reapers; and her [w] hap was to light upon the portion of the field which belonged to Boaz, who was of the family

[s] *cf.* Heb. 2. 11-17 with Jno. 1. 14.

[t] 1 Ki. 7. 22. *cf.* Acts 3.3. Matt.28.18.

[u] Deut. 24. 19. Lev. 19. 9, 10. *cf.* Gen. 42. 1, 2.

[v] *cf.* Hos. 14. 2.

[w] *cf.* Gen. 24. 21-27.

that in doing this He has testified against her. But there is no light beyond. No Father's arms welcome her. No Father's house opens to let her in. She comes back, as Israel will come back, to have the finger pointed at her, and the question uttered aloud, Is this Naomi? And yet the cry, "I have sinned," is heard; and Bethlehem shall answer to its name. The fields are white, and the reapers ready: it is the beginning of barley-harvest.

SEC. 2.

In the next section we have help found for Ruth, and are introduced to the redeemer Boaz, the plain figure of Christ. Not at once is redemption found, however, nor even known about. Ruth is at first merely a gleaner in his fields, soon learning, indeed, his bounty, and receiving from his hand, but in humiliation. It is a middle state that souls often pass through, before the realization of redemption; and with Israel's remnant in the day to come, such a gradual dawning of light as to Christ, and their relationship to Him is natural, if not inevitable. The story of Joseph's brethren presents this to us from the side of conscience and their guilt in relation to Him. Ruth gives us rather the attraction of heart, with light gradually breaking in,—a gentler and quieter story, though not without connection with the older one.

(i.) First, we are made to know, though Ruth yet knows not, of Boaz and the relationship of Naomi to him. Boaz means "in him is strength," and he is spoken of as a mighty man of valor,—not of wealth, as in the common version, though the word may mean "wealth"; but not so probably in the connection in which it stands. It is the same expression which is used of the deliverers in the book of Judges, and has a good reason for its place in this sense here. The wealth which Christ has for the needy has indeed been attained by conflict; for though He was "rich" from eternity who "for our sakes became poor," yet the "riches of His grace" had to be acquired before they could be bestowed. It is fit that we should be reminded here, first of all, of that accomplished warfare into the fruits of which we enter, though this be not the subject of the book. Thus "in Him is strength" for our redemption.

Notice that Boaz is strictly only a relation of Elimelech's, and through him it is that Naomi has any claim. Israel has no relationship to Christ except through the faith that Elimelech represents. In fact, and on this account, it is only through Ruth that Naomi *can* claim; but this will come before us later. Of all this she knows nothing yet.

of Elimelech. And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and he said unto the reapers, [x] Jehovah be with you. And they answered him, Jehovah [y] bless thee. And Boaz said unto his servant that was set over the reapers, [z] Whose damsel is this? And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the [a] Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab; and she said, Let me glean, I pray you, and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came and continued from the morning even until now: her sitting in the house hath been but little. And Boaz said unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? [b] Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence; but abide here with my maidens. Let [c] thine eyes be on the field that they reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men not to touch thee? And when thou [d] thirstest, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn. Then she fell on her face, and [e] bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found favor in thine eyes, that thou shouldst regard me, and I a stranger? And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath been fully [f] shown me, all that thou hast done to thy mother-in-law, since the death of thy husband, and that thou hast [g] left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy birth, and art come unto a people that thou knewest not heretofore. Jehovah recompense thy doing, and may thy reward be full from Jehovah the God of Israel, under whose [h] wings thou art come to take refuge. And she said, Let me find favor in thine eyes, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast [i] spoken to the heart of thy handmaid, though I be not like one of thy handmaidens. And Boaz said unto her at meal-time, [j] Come hither and

[x] *cf.* Col. 4. 1.
[y] *cf.* Ps. 129. 7–9.
[z] *cf.* Gen. 42. 7. Jer. 31. 20.
[a] *cf.* Deut. 23. 3. Matt. 13. 1, 2 with Ezek. 16, 44–48. Hos. 1. 8, 9.
[b] *cf.* ch. 1. 14. Hos. 11. 4.
[c] *cf.* Jer. 31. 21.
[d] *cf.* Is. 12. 3. Isa. 55. 1, 2.
[e] 1 Sam. 25. 23.
[f] cf. 1 Ki. 8. 41.
[g] *cf.* Mat. 10. 28–31.
[h] Ps. 91. 4. *cf.* Matt. 23. 38.
[i] *cf.* Is. 40. 1, 2.
[j] *cf.* Song 1. 4.

But it is harvest, and Ruth proposes to go into the fields and glean,—a humble occupation and a poor one, but where, in the mercy that characterized the law, the poor and the stranger had special rights. These harvest-fields lead us once more to think of that work of Christ, the death of the corn of wheat, whereby the bread of life has been provided for us. Nature is full of its testimony to Him,—fuller than even His people ever cared to know.

But what a harvest-field is there in Scripture for us! And is it not true that, as surely as the whole of it is open to us now, so surely will the remnant of Israel, brought in after the Church is gone from earth, have but the gleanings? May not this even be a rightful application of the statute as to the gleaner, coming where it does amid the "set times" of Leviticus xxiii.? May not there be room left for a double application of such a principle?

But gleaning in the field brings Ruth into contact with the master of the field; and so it is with the precious word of God when sought as food for the soul: it brings us into the presence of Him before whose eyes "all things are naked and open," and who delights to minister to the necessity thus making itself manifest. How tender is His desire toward the seekers of the living bread that they should "go not to glean in another field, nor go from hence"! How soon do they find provision made for the inevitable thirst! How they are made to realize that here is One with knowledge of all their ways, and all the path by which they

eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers; and he reached her [k]parched corn, and she did eat and was satisfied, and [l]left [some] over. And when she arose to glean, Boaz charged his young men, saying, Let her glean even [m]between the sheaves, and reproach her not; and [n]draw out also out of the bundles, and leave it for her to glean, and check her not. So she gleaned in the field until evening, and [o]beat out what she had gleaned; and it was about an ephah of barley.

2. (18–23.) Confirmation and progress: a glimpse of redemption.

[z]And she took it up, and went into the city, and showed her mother-in-law what she had gleaned; and she brought out and gave her what she had left over after she was satisfied. And her mother in law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned to-day? and where hast thou wrought? [p]Blessed be he that regarded thee. And she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked, and said, The man's name with whom I worked to-day is Boaz. And Naomi said unto her daughter-in-law, Blessed be he of Jehovah, who hath not left off his [q]kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man is related to us, one of our [r]redeemers. And Ruth the Moabitess said, He said unto me also, Thou shalt keep with my young men, until they have finished all my harvest. And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter-in-law, It is well, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that

k 1 Sa. 17.17. 1 Sa. 25. 18. *cf.* Josh. 5. 11.
l 2 Ki. 4. 43. Ps. 107. 9.
m cf. Matt. 15. 21–28.
n cf. Gen. 42. 25. Hos. 11. 3, 4.
o cf. Judg. 6. 11.
etc. Prov. 12. 27.
p cf. Num. 24. 9, Matt. 25. 34–40.
q cf. Ps. 85. 1–3.
r Lev. 25. 25.

have come to where they are! Then there is nearer intimacy: we begin to learn what it is to take from His hand and to eat with Him till we are sufficed, and have something over. Then the gleaning goes on with more boldnesss and with more success: there is again and again what must have been dropped on purpose for us, until we find we have quite a store of precious grain. All this is the common history of seeking souls; while yet rest is not found, nor redemption known, nor relation established with the Lord of the harvest.

(ii.) It is from her mother-in-law that Ruth learns presently as to the man with whom she has found favor; but the knowledge she gains is, after all, indefinite. There is some relationship, she learns, and he is *one* of our redeemers, — a phrase which shows how little she has to give that is intelligent or that can be laid hold of. Joseph's brethren are long, as we have seen, before they know with whom they have to do, and who knows them so well, and learn from his own lips that he is Joseph. It is a secret that can only be learnt from his own lips. For the remnant, attaching themselves to Israel's hopes and going back along the lines of Israel's history, it seems as if there would be much groping in the darkness before the light will dawn. They look upon Him whom they have pierced, only when He comes manifestly to all. Yet He has been with them as with Nathaniel before they see Him; and the Lord's words in the great prophecy of Matthew xxiv. seem clearly to imply that there will be those in Judea before He appears who will listen to His voice, and obey Him. Are we to make a distinction here between different classes? — those with less light and those with more? — or is it true of all that they will be under the fog of Jewish teaching, learning from the mother-in-law, and counting Him but as "*one* of their redeemers"?

Thus Ruth, however, is brought into connection with Boaz; for the grace that is in him to make deeper impression continuously upon her. She abides through

they come not upon thee in another field. So she kept with the maidens of Boaz to glean until the end of barley harvest, and of wheat harvest. And she abode with her mother in law.

SECTION 3. (Chap. iii., iv.)

Redemption realized.

1. (III.) The claim of barrenness.

[1] AND Naomi, her mother-in-law, said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek a [s]resting-place for thee, that it may be well with thee? And now, is not Boaz of our [t]kindred, with whose maidens thou wast? behold, he winnoweth barley to-night in the [u]threshing-floor. [v]Wash thyself, therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and go down to the floor; [but] let not thyself be known to the man till he have done eat-

s ch. 1. 9. *cf.* Song 1. 7, 8. Zeph. 3. 17–20.
t ch. 2. 1, etc.
u *cf.* Jer. 30. 3–7 with Matt. 3. 12.
v *cf.* Ex. 19. 14. Ezek. 36. 24, 25.

the barley-harvest and through the wheat-harvest following. That which is gathered becomes naturally more valuable. But as to her own relations there is no change: Boaz is a kinsman,—*one* of her redeemers, and her home—a poor one yet—is with her mother-in-law.

SEC. 3.

All is now to be changed for Ruth; and thus, also, for Naomi. What follows is based upon two laws in Israel: the law as to the redemption of an inheritance (Lev. xxv. 25), and that of raising up a brother's name on his inheritance (Deut. xxv. 5–12),—things which are here brought together, and which in application to Israel belong clearly together. Heir and inheritance, in their case, need alike to be redeemed; yea, and the name of the dead raised up, which is accomplished for Israel by a true spiritual resurrection, the breath of a new life breathed into them, as in Ezekiel's vision of dry bones (ch. xxxvii). In Ruth the story is, indeed, differently told, but it is essentially the same, and here has a tenderness and beauty all its own.

(i.) In this section we find Ruth no longer a gleaner. She is putting forth new claims and cherishing high aspirations. And here her mother-in-law is her instructor once more. She has already pointed out Boaz as a kinsman of Elimelech, and one of their redeemers, but for some time this seems to have no practical significance for either of them. Now she is full of a new interest. Ruth must have a resting-place for herself, and to find it she must seek it. Very simply and naturally her mind turns to Boaz: ignorantly, indeed, and yet with a knowledge such as the heart teaches, and which in the end proves right. Ruth is bidden by her to put forth a personal claim upon Boaz, according to the law of Deuteronomy, and this she does,—to find in the first place that she has made an apparent mistake, but which in the end proves none. It is only upon the failure of a nearer kinsman than himself that Boaz can act. Naomi herself has called him *one* of their redeemers. It must be proved satisfactorily if there is more than one.

The remnant (whom Ruth represents) learns, first of all, from the nation (which is Naomi) certain lessons as to redemption, which personal experience, however, alone can interpret, and get right. The only religion that avails anything is that of experiment: in making which both heart and conscience get searched out, their needs thoroughly explored, and then met. The believing that avails for us is one that shows itself in coming to Him; yet the soul coming may find at first disappointment. The power of the "nearer kinsman" must be thoroughly and practically understood before Christ can show His power.

"Rest" can only come from a Redeemer. Naomi makes no mistake there. When Christ says, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest," He is declaring Himself this; and it is as such—the only and all-sufficient One—that He will

ing and drinking. And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where he hath lain down, and thou shalt go and uncover the place at his feet, and lay thee down; and he shall tell thee what thou shalt do. And she said unto her, All that thou sayest unto me I will do. And she went down to the floor, and did according to all that her mother-in-law had bidden her.

And Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, and he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn. And she came softly, and uncovered the place at his feet, and laid her down. And it came to pass that at midnight the man was startled and turned, and behold, a woman lying at his feet. And he said, Who, art thou? And she said, I am Ruth thy handmaid: [w]spread then thy wing over thy handmaid, for thou art a redeemer. And he said, [x]Blessed be thou of Jehovah, my daughter: thou hast shown more kindness at the end than at the first, inasmuch as thou followedst not after young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, [y]fear not: I will do for thee all thou sayest; for all the gate of my people knoweth that thou art a [z]virtuous woman. And now truly I am a redeemer; but there is a redeemer [a]nearer than I. Tarry the night, and it shall be in the morning, if he will act the redeemer to thee, well, let him redeem; but if he will not redeem thee, then will I redeem thee, as Jehovah liveth: lie down until the morning. And she lay at his feet until morning, and she rose up before one could know another: and he said, Let it not be known that

w cf. Song 1. 4. Jer. 3. 23-25. Hos. 6. 1-3.
x cf. Hos. 14. 4-7.
y cf. Is. 41. 10-14.
z cf. Ezek. 16. 60-63. Jer. 50. 4, 5.
a cf. Gal. 3. 18-21. Jer. 31. 31-34. Heb. 8. 8-13.

or can give it to us. This we must learn aright. Thank God, He has proved His power to fulfill this word of His, all the centuries down.

Boaz is winnowing barley at night in the threshing-floor. And Israel is such a floor, which the Lord is going to purge, according to the Baptist's testimony. (Matt. iii. 12.) A night of affliction is coming for them, in which He will winnow the chaff from the grain, that He may gather to Himself that which has value for Him. "The fan is in *His* hand." Judgment, alas, must come; but He means by it to take forth the precious from the vile. And this is the very time when the remnant, therefore, in the darkness of as black a night as the earth has ever seen, shall creep to His feet, and claim Him as their own. Assuredly it will be a bold act then, if even Ruth's seems so; yet this grace has been dawning upon them, and His voice has seemed to speak amid the voices of the prophetic promises, yet but beginning to be intelligible. At midnight, suddenly, just at the darkest, comes His voice with a question — how necessary a one, when it is redemption that is to be realized — "Who art thou?" How blessed to know that the right answer is but to own, "I am Ruth, thy handmaid," for this is the name of the barren woman whose natural hopes are dead. To such an one it is that the law applies and pledges itself: no other has any claim. "Spread, then, thy wing over thy handmaid," — this soul with its need of shelter, — "for thou art a redeemer."

But not yet can the prayer be answered fully. Always is there, indeed, encouragement for the needy from these lips that speak here. Still she must await the morning. She is to be answered; some way redemption will surely come: so much she knows, but is *he* — will *he* be — the redeemer? This question, is it not answered for the remnant also only fully in the "morning," — a morn-

a woman came unto the floor. And he said, Bring the cloak that is upon thee, and hold it. And she held it, and he measured [b] six [measures] of barley, and laid it on her: and he went unto the city. And she came to her mother-in-law; and she said, [c] Who art thou, my daughter? And she told her all that the man had done to her. And she said, These six [measures] of barley gave he me: for he said, Go not empty to thy mother-in-law. And she said, Remain quiet, my daughter, till thou shalt see how the matter will fall out: for the man will [d] not be at rest until he have finished the thing to-day.

2. (iv. 1-8.) The legal kinsman.

[2] And Boaz went up to the [e] gate, and sat him down there; and behold, the redeemer of whom Boaz spake passed by. And he said, Ho, such an one! turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside and sat down. And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit down here. And they sat down. And he said unto the redeemer, Naomi, who is returned from the country of Moab, hath sold the allotment of the [f] field that was our brother Elimelech's: and I thought to inform thee, saying, Buy it before those that sit [here], even before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem [it]; and if thou wilt not redeem it, tell me, that I may know: for there is none to redeem it beside thee; and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it. And Boaz said, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou buyest it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to [g] raise up the name of the dead upon his

b *cfr.* ch. 2. 17.

c *cf.* Num. 6. 27 with Is. 43. 4-7.

d *cf.* Is. 62. 1-5.

e Gen. 23. 10, etc.

f Lev. 25. 25.

g Deut. 25. 5, etc.

ing which He makes by His own coming, the glory of His presence. Ministered to they are, sustained by His hand, still sent back, as Ruth to her mother-in-law, to await the morning!

Ah, but His heart will not have its rest till the matter is finished, and redemption is found for Ruth,—"shepherd-tended" Ruth!

(ii.) Now we are to be introduced to the other kinsman: there is but one other in the story; and strange it is, when we know our Boaz, that *he* should have the prior claim! Is there, then, another redeemer? Does the word of God give any ground for such a supposition? Yes, *as a supposition*. Hypothetically, there is a mode of salvation other than by Christ: test it, and you find by experience (once more the teacher) that there is, and can be, only one.

"When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive." This is the voice of God by the prophet Ezekiel (xviii. 27), and every word of God shall stand. It is a way of salvation, too, that is declared,—not simply of a righteousness that needs none. It is the wicked man who is spoken of,—the man who can already be called that, and who as that needs salvation. Forgiveness of sins is announced for him: "All his transgressions that he has committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live" (v. 22). Thus the mercy of God is pledged to a returning soul: and, of course, one must say, in all sincerity and truth, or it could not be from Him.

Yet this is not the salvation which we find in Christ. Its condition is not of faith in Him, but of works: to obtain it one must have a righteousness which is of works. And these two principles—of faith and of works—are principles that

inheritance. And the redeemer said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I [h]mar mine own inheritance: do my [part of the] redemption for thyself, for I [i]cannot re-

[h] *cf.* Gal. 3. 10.
[i] *cf.* Ro. 8. 3.

cannot be united together, so that it will not do to say that although faith in Christ is not here formally made mention of, it must in fact be found. On the contrary, it is most certain that the principle here declared *excludes* faith in Christ in any evangelic sense. "For if it be of grace," says the apostle, "it is no more of work, otherwise grace is no more grace." (Rom. xi. 6.) As surely, then, as the principle here is that of righteousness by work, so surely is it not a righteousness by faith: it is contrastive and contradictory to faith.

It is the principle of the law as given the second time, after the people had sinned and made a golden calf. It is not pure law, but law modified and tempered by mercy, so as to give man as failed the means of self-recovery, if self-recovery were possible. But it was not possible for them, and is not possible for any. Of this law the mediator was Moses, and not Christ; and so entirely unavailing was it, that the very mediator of the law becomes of necessity the accuser of the people: "there is one that accuseth you," says the Lord to Israel, "even Moses, in whom ye trust." (John v. 45.)

Thus we see the redeemer who is not Boaz, but the redeemer who cannot redeem. The law is, indeed, the nearest kinsman that man has, and the one to which, apart from the teaching of divine grace, man naturally turns. One of the reasons of the delay in Christ's coming was that the law should first of all be tried; for this is but the trial of man's righteousness. And so in the history of a saved soul, the law's claim must first be set aside, that Christ may not be to it as "one of our redeemers," but the only Redeemer possible, the Boaz "in whom is strength."

It is a matter for judgment, and therefore Boaz goes up to the gate, where causes were habitually tried. Presently, behold, the redeemer of whom he had spoken passes by. Notice, the man is quite indifferent: he has none of the loving interest that we find in the heart of Boaz: he would pass by, as the priest and Levite did the man on the road to Jericho. And such is the heartlessness of the legal method. Law has no personal interest, and cannot have. It speaks in the third person: if one comes under the rule, be it so; this is its impartiality, its indifference. But thus it cannot represent the heart of God.

Boaz calls the man, and he sits down; then ten men of the elders of the city are called, and they sit down; the ten commandments are our Boaz's witnesses that the law is incompetent to do aught for a sinner's salvation. How soon and simply could the case be settled, if always the ten and no others were witnesses! But people make this great mistake, that, because, in fact, God is merciful, He will not require the righteousness which the law requires, which the ten commandments specify, but something, they know not how much, under this. Whereas, though He may be patient and give time, and give repeated opportunities, He *never* lowers His demand, never can accept less than "what is lawful and right." Above all, He has never proposed Christ as a makeweight for our deficiencies. "If righteousness come by the law," says the apostle, "then Christ is dead in vain."

Boaz begins with the question of inheritance: "Naomi, who is returned from the country of Moab, has sold the allotment of the field that was our brother Elimelech's. . . . If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it. . . . And he said, I will redeem it." We see here the connection between the land and the people of Israel. In fact, how carefully has the land been guarded for them, keeping sabbath while the heirs are exiled! God has given it by absolute promise to the seed of Abraham, and that according to the flesh. But here is the difficulty: "And Boaz said, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou buyest it also of Ruth, the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance. And the redeemer said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance."

> deem it. And this was the custom in former time in Israel, in cases of redemption, and in cases of exchange, to confirm the whole matter: a man drew off his shoe and gave it to his neighbor; and this was the attestation in Israel. And the redeemer said unto Boaz, Buy it for thyself; and he drew off his shoe.

Elimelech is dead, that is Israel looked at as identified with the faith of God as King; yet Israel, in fact, remains, though as Naomi, widowed and destitute. But there is a young life, a new generation, through whom the name of the dead may be raised up. Yet these are as the Moabitess, whom the law cannot bring in, but must keep out: for it is written that "a Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of Jehovah forever." Well may the kinsman fear, therefore, lest in taking Ruth he should mar his own inheritance.

Throughout the story this is the title that everywhere comes into prominence. Despite all Ruth's attractiveness and piety, she is always spoken of, emphatically, as *Ruth, the Moabitess*. And the law, in presence of this conceded truth, can make no exception in her favor. The law is against her wholly,—accuses, convicts, and cannot justify. So hopeless is Israel's case in the hands of Moses.

If we look at the genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ in the gospel of Matthew, we shall find there, without the stigma of her origin, the name of Ruth. She is the third of four women only who stand exceptionally in the record there. At a first glance, we might think, uselessly also: for of what use are they in establishing His title to be David's Son? None, clearly; and so they must have another purpose: for everything has purpose in the word of God; yet what purpose *in a genealogy?*

But the genealogy is not merely His as Son of *David;* the title of it adds to this that it is Christ's as Son of *Abraham*. And the three names that end with Ruth are in this part, as we see: can they have part, then, in showing that Christ is Son of Abraham?

Now here light breaks in at once: for the Seed of Abraham is He in whom all families of the earth are to be blessed,—Gentile as well as Jew; while these three names are *Gentile*. How vain, then, to think of denying the Gentiles their part in Christ!

But more: in each of these names we may discern what might be easily taken as a blot upon the genealogy. What was Tamar? what Rahab? what even Ruth, the Moabitess? But does not this, then, show us all the more the Seed of Abraham, the blesser of the nations? Yes, and each name tells out, and in perfect order, the reality of grace. Tamar, whose *sin* alone brings her into the list, begins the story; for sin is the fundamental fact for the gospel; and our sin owned gives us title to the Saviour of sinners. But then Rahab (no less the sinner) shows us *faith*, a faith that separates from judgment and brings into blessing: that is as clearly the second foundation.

What, then, does the name of Ruth emphasize in this series? Can it be anything but this, that the law therefore is not the way of blessing, does not furnish the redeemer, but grace only does?—for Ruth the Moabitess is debtor to the grace of Boaz! Here, surely, all is consistent, all is harmony. And how Ruth's character, so different from that of those who precede her in this list, assures us that not those whom men would class as sinners, but those also whom they might class as saints, are all together by the law convicted and condemned, and that for all who receive salvation grace must reign!

No, assuredly the law cannot raise up the name of the dead on his inheritance. The power of God in grace can alone meet the need that is here symbolized. The kinsman passes his shoe—the sign of entering upon possession—to him in whom power is. The law testifies and yields its rights to Christ, and He is declared the only possible Redeemer. Such will the remnant find Him in the day that comes.

3. (9-22.) "The resurrection of the name upon the inheritance."

[3]And Boaz said to the elders and to all the people, Ye are [j]witnesses this day, that I have acquired all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi. And Ruth also, the wife of Mahlon, have I [k]acquired to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not [l]cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye are witnesses this day. And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders said, [We are] witnesses. Jehovah make the woman that cometh into thy house [m]like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel; and make thee strength in Ephratah, and get thee a name in Bethlehem; and let thy house be like the house of [n]Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which Jehovah shall give thee of this young woman.

And Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife; and he went in unto her, and Jehovah gave her conception, and she bare a [o]son. And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed be Jehovah, who hath not left thee this day without a redeemer, and may his name be famous in Israel. And he shall be to thee a [p]restorer of life, and a support of thine old age: for thy daughter-in-law, who loveth thee, who is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him. And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became [q]nurse to it. And the women her neighbors gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to [r]Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he is the [s]father of Jesse, the father of David.

j cf. Jer. 32. 6-15, 37-44.

k cf. Ps. 107. 2, 3. Acts 20. 28.

l cf. Is. 65. 8, 9.

m Gen. 29. 32, etc.

n Gen. 38. 29.

o cf. Is. 11.

p cf. Is. 51. 22.

q cf. Is. 49. 13-23.

r cf. Is. 54. 1-10.

s 1 Sam. 16. 1, etc.

(iii.) Boaz proclaims his title and his grace. The inheritance becomes his by purchase; and Ruth also, once more and for the last time spoken of as the Moabitess, he acquires for himself. Israel's land is yet to be known as Immanuel's, for indeed He has bought it at its full value. The people, also, are the purchased of His love. In Ruth's case the figure falls necessarily short, and the word used does not positively convey the idea of purchase. All types must, indeed, fall short, whether as picturing our need or the way that He has met it. This we are prepared for. The outline may be slight, but is sufficient. When it is followed up in the day to come, how it will be seen that here is One who has strength in Ephratah, and His name in Bethlehem; and how will the remnant "break forth" like the house of Pharez, "breaker forth," as it is written, "For thou shalt *break forth* on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shalt inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited, . . . for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more." And how Ruth's story is transfigured here! "For thy Maker is thy husband, Jehovah of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel: the God of the whole earth shall He be called." (Isa. liv. 3–5.)

Naomi, therefore, is built up by Ruth, and her son becomes (in another sense, of course,) her redeemer, the restorer of her life, and the support of her old age. For the son's name is Obed, the "servant," and the sweet adoring service of the new generation of Israel will be in those days the restoring of life indeed. Fit it is that the "women, her neighbors," should give the name to this new seed, as the nations round (then neighborly!) will speak the praise of the new nation. For then for the first time shall they completely fulfill the word: "But thou,

Now these are the 'generations of Pharez: Pharez begat Hezron, and Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab, and Amminadab begat Nahshon, and Nahshon begat Salmon, and Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed, and Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David. ' Matt. 1. 3.

Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend. Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant, I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away." (Isa. xli. 8, 9.)

This is indeed a sign of perfect redemption, whatever the dispensation: "O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid: *thou hast loosed my bonds.*" (Ps. cxvi. 16.) Redemption is thus the spring of service, and gives character to it; and if we are indeed in the nearer and more wonderful place of sons of God, the service of sons is only the fullest, the most joyful service. Yea, the only-begotten Son, to the wonder and delight of heaven, has come forth and served; yea, and still serves; and in that day will serve; as He has Himself said:—

"Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them sit down to meat, and *will come forth, and serve them.*" (Luke xii. 37.)

THE BOOKS OF THE KINGS.

THAT the king is contemplated from the beginning of the book of Samuel is plain from the close of Hannah's song. Samuel himself anoints both Saul and David. And yet it is as plain, nevertheless, that he, as the prophet of God, and to whom the proposition of the people to make them a king is only a species of rebellion against God, (a view of it sanctioned by the Lord also,)—*he* is in some sort antagonistic to the kingdom. All through it the prophets abide as guard and balance. They are not of course hostile, because it has been legitimated by the authority of Him who is the source of all authority, but they watch it, none the less, jealously. No wonder, if it be the fact that "man being in honor abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish." They perish because they have no link with God, whom by their very nature they are incapable of knowing. Man is not incapable, and here is his responsibility; but he is capable, alas, of forgetting God, and the higher he is lifted up, the easier is it for him to do this. He becomes *like* the beasts: in which we see the suitability of Nebuchadnezzar's punishment to his sin (Dan. iv.)—made to take his place among the beasts till his pride is humbled, and he owns that "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men."

Here was indeed the prophet's voice to the monarch, and here is the prophet's place. He stands for the rule of the Most High, into collision with which the rule of man comes so readily. Here is his vocation at all times, and here is Samuel's antagonism to the kingship in Israel. He foresees and warns the people of what will be its character—a warning which, as we know, history so completely justifies.

And yet Judges has closed with the detail of evils which implied the need of a king. The judges were themselves but deliverers raised up temporarily by God to meet the condition into which the people were constantly falling, and which was but the issue of every man's doing that which was "right in his own eyes." How many can be trusted as judges in their own case? The very office of the judge testified, therefore, to the need of some stronger and more continuous rule than that they exercised.

Yet the dwelling-place of God was in the midst of Israel, as we know, with a priesthood organized that they might have access to Him, and that by Urim and Thummim His voice might be heard in their midst. In fact, save early in the history of the Judges, in the case of the war with Benjamin,—and how little rightly then!—we do not hear of one consultation of the divine oracle during all that period! In the beginning of the present book we are brought back to Shiloh and the priesthood, but only to show us everything in ruin there. The priests are corrupt, the offering of the Lord is despised. In their strait with the

Philistines indeed, the people have recourse to the ark, but as a charm, in such a way as only to show how entirely they have lost the sense of the divine holiness, and in result only to bring upon themselves a catastrophe by which for a long period all this medium of communication with God is practically set aside. Shiloh is deserted, the ark at one place, the tabernacle at another, while Samuel as prophet of the Lord offers sacrifice in different places, thus clearly recognizing the break-down of the legal ritual. The ark returns no more to the tabernacle, but is brought by David to Zion, and his son Solomon builds the temple for its abode.

All is in transition therefore in this book; and the king it is who comes forward as the restorer, and the establisher of the new order. Thus the need of the king is emphasized, and the divine sanction is put upon the institution.

Add to this that the provision had already been made in the law itself (Deut. xvii. 14–20) for just such need and request on the part of the people,—"When thou shalt say, I will set a king over me, like all the nations round about me." The whole style of this, and the desire to be like the nations, stamp it indeed as the will of man and unbelief. That it is foreseen and met, just as the Lord here meets it, in no wise shows it to be approved of Him. Yet that their request is granted shows that there is that in it which accords with what is in His mind, and by which His purposes will be carried forward toward fulfillment.

The first king is speedily set aside. But then David, a man after God's own heart, is promoted to the kingdom, which in his hand extends a long way toward the limits of the ancient promise to Israel, while he is promised the perpetuity of it in his seed, spite of all failure. Might it not seem as if now there would be no check or interruption to the blessing thus connected with the presence of the king?

Yet the following book shows us a wholly different, contrasted picture. Solomon indeed begins it with the building of the temple, and increased and manifold glories; but in his son's reign at once ten tribes are rent away, and thenceforth, though intermittent, decay creeps on. Finally, both thrones are leveled to the dust; and that of David which promised to be so stable has never yet been restored. The monarchy ends with an Ichabod completer than that which preceded it, and now protracted for nearly twenty-five hundred years.

What are we to gather from what seem such utter contradictions? Thank God, as Christians the key is in our hands. We know that David and Solomon were but shadows of the true King; that He is come, but, rejected of Israel, is gone up to take another throne on high; that He is David's Seed yet David's Lord; and that in His hands the kingdom is safe, though the time of its setting up once more is delayed for the accomplishment of other purposes which are now being fulfilled; that for this King the earth still waits, and will never have its blessing until He comes to bless it with a reign of power and righteousness.

Let us not deceive ourselves. This kingdom is not set up yet. We are, it is true, as Christians, "in the kingdom and *patience* of Jesus Christ" (Rev. i. 9); but not in His "kingdom and *glory*" (1 Thess. ii. 12). Nor are we to see this gradually ushered in by plenteous increase in gospel harvest-fields. No doubt there is blessing at home and the gospel is going to the heathen; on the other hand the mask of Christianity is almost dropped off the face of the mere profession, and revealing the dominant spirit of Christendom as that of unbelief. The Church of Christ has no more answered to its responsibility than did Israel of old. And the need—(although men know it not, all the social movements of the day proclaim it)—is for the KING! Yes, a true Potentate, safely to be trusted with power, and who will wield it. As the angels said to those men of Galilee, who gazed up after Him whom the cloud had just hidden from their sight: "This same Jesus shall come again in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." And when those blessed "feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives," whence He then went up,—when "the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee,"—*then* "the Lord shall be King over all the earth; in that day there shall be one Lord, and His Name One." (See Zech. xiv.)

But we are not now to dwell upon this blessed time. Even in its very failure and evil, the day of the kings of Israel anticipates and prophecies it. This we shall hope to consider in its place. So much as has been said will prepare us for the mingled promise and disappointment that fill the pages we are now to study. The ruin of man still, as ever, makes us to realize that from God alone must salvation come; and as this is realized, the assurance that from Him it shall come grows into a glorious certainty of expectation, which even yet beckons us on for the grand fulfillment, now so near to come.

The connection of the king with the ark, and the habitation of God on earth, is very clearly evidenced in the hundred and thirty-second psalm, where David is, as so commonly, the type of a greater, from whom he is yet, on that very account, distinguished. David's afflictions are pleaded, his zeal to find a dwelling-place for God on earth, and that for his sake the face of His anointed may not be turned away. The anointed is of course the king, but, I think, as standing in general for the kingly power in Israel. And this is answered in the promise, "Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." A conditional pledge as to his children follows, but there is One Seed, one special Anointed, or Messiah, who shines through all. He is the true David and his Seed alike. He it is who by His sufferings and His heart for God secures the abiding presence of Jehovah with His people. The shadows pass, because they are but shadows; but the kingship abides for the sake of the Man after God's heart, who alone also meets the need which exists in the heart of the people also, and who lives eternally to meet it. Wrongly interpreted as it has been before, the "Desire of all nations" is found at last in Him.

The next psalm gives us the complementary thought. There it is of Aaron we hear, not of David, and the unction that flows down from him. The Messianic interpretation alone unites these different things, by pointing to the "Priest upon His throne" (Zech. vi. 13), who thus doubly gives the habitation of God to be amongst and accessible to men. Thus alone the permanent temple shall be built, the partial type of which is seen in the reign of Solomon. The glorious reality transcends all types: the throne of God is His; the glory of God is seen in His face. And thus the books of the Kings (Samuel, as well as what is commonly called so) make good their claim to the Leviticus place among the historical books. In these books of Kings the sanctuary has plainly a proportionate importance beyond that which it has in any other of this second Pentateuch, except perhaps Chronicles, which is, as we know, the *resume* from another point of view of this very history. Joshua sees the ark in the parted Jordan, and in its temporary rest in Shiloh. In Judges we lose sight of it almost throughout. In the Captivity books, though the temple is rebuilt, the ark and the glory are alike gone. In the Kings, on the other hand, while prophet, priest and king for the first time appear together, all these are seen in their relation to that dwelling of God in the midst from which of necessity they gather all their significance. For while the priest is manifestly connected with it, the king is but the delegate of that throne in the sanctuary whose supremacy over all the prophet stands for and enforces.

The Books of the Kings therefore fill well the third place in the historical books, if we should not rather call them, with the Septuagint, the "Books of the *Kingdoms*": for this title gives the fuller thought, not merely of a succession of mortal because sinful men upon the throne of Israel, but rather of this "kingdom of *men*" upon the one side in its relation to the Kingdom of Him who ruleth over all, and in whose throne, as delegate, the king of Israel sat. Among these books of the Kings or Kingdoms, Samuel evidently has its place, as the first (where the Septuagint places it). Samuel and Kings, as we name them, should be, however, as they were originally, but one book each.

The scope and divisions may be more concisely stated:—

The Books of Kings show us the history of the Sanctuary-Throne in Israel, with Prophet, Priest and King as its interpreters among men: these, in the offices they fill, and in their own failure to fill them, pointing forward to the Three-fold Anointed One, whose glory it will be to sustain all these relationships in unbroken, perfect unity of power and blessing. Of these books—

1. *Samuel* shows us the sources and beginning of human sovereignty in Israel.
2. *Kings*, the progress of the kingdom: its increase; then its division and internal strife to final dissolution.

SAMUEL.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF THE BOOK.

SAMUEL, as just now said, shows us the origin of human sovereignty in Israel. It has two sources, apparently, and in some sense truly, quite diverse from one another, yet combining in the end harmoniously.

First, there is the will of the people, which is, as expressed by them, a real rejection of the Divine Sovereign as such. But there are needs which underlie, though these are all summed up in the evil heart of unbelief which departeth from the living God. Could the best provision that could be made avail against this?

Yet the need of a king had been recognized before, and illustrated by the terrible recitals at the end of Judges. Man being what he is, grace as seen in the priesthood will not accomplish by itself the end of righteousness. "Let favor (grace) be shown to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly. . . . When Thy judgments are in the earth the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." (Isa. xxvi. 10, 9.) The centralization of power in one hand strong enough to maintain this has always been a necessity, and in Christian times is seen as much as ever. But where is the man that shall unite power and righteousness after this fashion? Thus the world still waits for the reign of Christ.

The people's choice of the king is shown in Saul; God's choice in David: He too fails, and becomes but the type and prophet of Another in whom prophet, priest and king are united, and the divine and human kingdoms become one also.

There are six divisions:—

1. (Chap. i.–vii.) Samuel: the prophet as the agent of the Divine Sovereignty.
2. (Chap. viii.–xv.) Saul: the people's saviour.
3. (Chap. xvi.–2 Sam. ix.) David, the man after God's own heart.
4. (2 Sam. x.–xii.) His failure also.
5. (Chap. xiii.–xxi. 14.) The Divine Throne vindicates itself.
6. (Chap. xxi. 15–xxiv.) Overcoming.

SAMUEL.

DIVISION 1. (1 Sam. i.–vii.)

Samuel: the Representative of the Divine Sovereignty.

(1 Sam. I.–II. 10.)

Birth and origin. 1. (i. 1-8.) The barren woman.

1. [1] NOW there was a certain man of Ramathaim-Zophim, of [a] Mount Ephraim, and his name was [b] Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite. And he had [c] two wives; the name of the

[a] Judg. 19. 1. ch. 9. 4.
[b] 1 Chr. 6. 16, 22, 27.
[c] Gen. 29. 27, 28. *cf.* Gal. 4. 21–27.

NOTES.

Div. 1.

Samuel the prophet fittingly introduces the story of the kings,—fittingly crowns the first kings himself. He is the representative of the higher throne from which alone they derive their authority. The prophet (see Deut xviii. 15, sq., notes), as such, chosen from any class among the people, raised up of God as needed, not deriving his office from any of his predecessors, but from God alone, necessarily expresses the sovereign will of God. Samuel, in the circumstances of his birth, peculiarly does this; still more, under those in which he is brought forward by the Spirit of God, when the priesthood has failed, and the ark is no more sought after, and he has alone to stand in the terrible gap thus made.

But he is also thus the witness of the divine sufficiency. All else has failed, but God has not failed. In the very lowest estate, the Ichabod of the nation, Samuel, with nothing to help or accredit him except that God who spake into his ear, lifts up the nation into triumph and blessing.

And here a new title of God is found, which, in connection with those related and contrasted "kingdoms," which in the Septuagint give such fitting title to the books, claims for the divine not merely supremacy but totality of power. This is "Jehovah of Hosts," or "Jehovah, God of Hosts": where there is no need to speculate whether stars or angels, or even the hosts of Israel, are intended. "The God of Hosts" claims all these for Him. In this title the divine kingdom reveals itself in contrast with all others, which are sustained or confounded as they move in subjection to it or not. Thus the moral of the book is given at the opening of it.

1. Samuel's origin and birth are carefully given to us: we may be sure, not as matters of simply historical interest. What importance, in this case, can we attach to this genealogy of unknown names? Let us remind ourselves that we are in the kingdom of God, where wheel is adjusted to wheel in His chariot of progress. How good it is to be permitted to escape from the babble of the unmeaning into a world like this, where everything is significant! There may be, no doubt, here depths and heights which we cannot explore. Still we are encouraged onward, and at every step gain something in view. How wonderful are these Scripture histories in this way, as making us aware everywhere of the pervasive presence of the Almighty and All-wise!

(i.) Nothing, in fact, could be much simpler than is Samuel's genealogy here, or the steps by which we reach the Nazarite prophet. Reading the five names in reverse order, and remembering that we have thus to read the numerical order also backwards, we find in the fifth place, under the number of responsibility, Zuph, "the watcher," or "observer." It is the only name of which the mean-

one Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah: and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had [d] no children. And this man went up out of his city from year to year, to [e] worship and sacrifice unto Jehovah of Hosts in Shiloh; and there the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests unto Jehovah. And it was so, on the day that Elkanah [f] sacrificed, he gave portions to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters; but to Hannah he gave a double portion, for he [g] loved Hannah; but Jehovah had shut up her womb. And her adversary [h] provoked her sore also, to make her fret, because Jehovah had shut up her womb. And [as] he did so year by year, when she

[d] Gen. 11. 30. Gen. 25. 21. Gen. 29. 31. Judg. 13. 2. Lk. 1. 7.
[e] Deut. 16. 1, 2. Lk. 2. 41.
[f] Deut. 12. 17, 18.
[g] Gen. 29. 30.
[h] *cf.* Gen. 16. 4 with Gal. 4. 29.

ing is at all doubtful. Most, perhaps, would render it "honeycomb," the Hebrew word standing for this. On the other hand, the derivation is as simple for the other meaning; and the alternative reading in Chronicles (Zophai in 1 Chr. vi. 26, and Zuph or Ziph in verse 35), with its presumed connection with Ramathaim-*zophim*, leads us back to the former, also. In its spiritual connection, certainly, to be an "observer" in the sphere of responsibility is the beginning of all blessings. Zuph is an Ephrathite, therefore "fruitful"; and we cannot wonder that his son Tohu, under the number of experience, speaks of being "low, sunk down,"—humiliation; and this being ever the way of blessing and of the knowledge of the Lord, the next name, under the number of manifestation, is Elihu, "my God"—or my Mighty One—"is He." Still, in the way of progress, and under the salvation number, we have then Jeroham, "he is tenderly loved"; and we end here, under that of obedience and divine sovereignty, with Elkanah, whom "God has purchased," or "acquired." How easily, of such a stock as this, comes forth a Samuel!

Elkanah's town is that of Samuel afterwards,—Ramah, or ha-Ramah, "the height." The name we have had elsewhere, but not the place, which here we find in its full title to have been Ramathaim-zophim, "the two heights of the watchers." The prophet's place was always that of a watcher, and the prophet's face always toward the slowly coming dawn; and the "height" is in natural connection with the place: those who are in it are, by that very fact, lifted up out of the world. All this is in perfect keeping with Samuel's association with Ramah. For us, also, the connection of the dawn with the kingdom for which still we wait is necessary and obvious: but why "*two* heights"? May it not be that there is the *positional* height of our place in Christ, of which other Ramahs have already spoken to us (pp. 133, 150), and the *spiritual* elevation answering to this? Certainly God has thus provided for the Elkanahs, His "purchased" ones to-day; and this is the place for a Samuel—should there be any now—to exercise the judge's office in Israel. For any right judgment of things at large, the coming of the Lord must be before us, we must be watchers for Him! Is not the state of Christendom, and the cause of that state also, depicted in His own words,—"but if that evil servant shall say, in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken" (Matt. xxiv. 48, 49)? How unutterably solemn the warning that follows!

We are next told of Elkanah's two wives, who repeat in some respects the story of Sarah and Hagar. If Sarah be, as we have seen in its place, the principle of grace, the very name of Hannah is "grace." And she, too, is naturally a barren woman. Peninnah differs, however, in many ways, from Hagar. She is no bondwoman, and would not seem to stand for the principle of law; but is, on the other hand, the "adversary" of her rival, which could not in the same way be said of Hagar. Similarly she flourishes while Hannah is barren, but grows feeble after she has become fruitful. Her name, Peninnah, is of doubtful mean-

went up to the house of Jehovah, so she provoked her: and she wept and did not [i]eat. And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am I not better to thee than ten sons?

i Gen. 30. 1.

2. (9-18.) The covenant of separation in contrast with the declining priesthood.

[2]And Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. And Eli the priest sat upon the seat by the door-post of the house of Jehovah. And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto Jehovah, and wept sore. And she [j]vowed a vow, and said, Jehovah of Hosts, if thou wilt look indeed upon the affliction of thy handmaid, and wilt give unto thy handmaid a man-child, then I will give him unto Jehovah all the days of his life, and there shall no [k]razor come upon his head. And so it was, as she continued praying before Jehovah, that Eli watched her mouth. Now Hannah, she was speaking in her heart; only her lips were moving, and her voice was not heard; and Eli thought that she was drunken. And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? [l]put away thy wine from thee. And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord; I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before Jehovah. Count not thy handmaid for a daughter of Belial; for out of the abundance of my grief and provocation have I spoken hitherto. And Eli an-

j Num. 30. 3-16.

k Judg. 16. 17. Num. 6. 5. Lk. 1. 15. *cf.* Ps. 16.1, with Heb. 2. 13.

l *cf.* ch. 3. 2. with ch.14. 24-45. *cf.* Ezek.13. 22.

ing, but probably signifies "shining, glittering"; and she may represent the earthly objects which so easily distract the heart even of Christians from that which should alone hold it. Would that Elkanah's bigamy were less easily to be applied to Christians! That it was openly indulged as lawful, instead of marring, this does in fact only make the lesson more forcible: "happy is he who condemneth not himself in that which he alloweth." After all, Elkanah *did* love Hannah: but grace cannot be reconciled to a barren love without fruit.

(ii.) No wonder if the going up to worship the Lord always provokes afresh this sorrow. But now she can bear it no longer: out it bursts in a vow of Nazariteship — of separation to the Lord — of the child she covets. Would that all brought forth from us, even by grace, had thus the sign of consecration to God upon its head, the confession of entire dependence upon Him attached to that which is brought forth!

The last of the judges, Samson, who had "begun" to deliver Israel from the Philistines, had been, as we know, a Nazarite also; and we have seen (p. 239) the meaning of this. Here that alone is particularized in which Samson had so signally failed. How easily the strong man fails in this grace of dependence just by reason of his strength! Samuel is, in fact, the very opposite of Samson. If anything more than another characterizes him it is the spirit of prayer. Was he not himself the fruit of it? Is not that which is brought forth from us all naturally the incarnation, so to speak, of the spirit in which it has been conceived?

The first glimpse of the priest here is already a sad one. Eli, meaning "high," or "exalted," expresses the moral condition of the priesthood, as we are shortly to be made to see. Personally he had a heart for the Lord, but not sufficiently to stand for Him; and with him the whole order to which he belongs is becoming decrepit. His spiritual sense is blunt, as is his nature. He cannot discern the character of the sorrowing woman before him; sees, indeed, but the

swered and said, Go in peace; and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him. And she said, Let thy servant find grace in thine eyes. And the woman [m] went her way, and ate, and her countenance was no more [sad].

3. (19-11. 10.) The realization.

3 (*a*) And they rose up early in the morning, and worshiped before Jehovah, and returned and came to their house, to Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and Jehovah [n] remembered her. And it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, [saying] Because I had asked him of Jehovah.

a (1. 19, 20.) The birth of Samuel.

(*b*) And the man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer the yearly sacrifice to Jehovah, and his vow. But Hannah did not go up, for she said, [Not] until the child be [o] weaned; then will I bring him that he may appear before Jehovah, and there [p] abide for ever. And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what is good in thine eyes: tarry till thou hast weaned him; Jehovah indeed [q] establish his word! And the woman abode, and gave her son suck till she had weaned him. And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three [r] bullocks and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of

b (1. 21-28.) Weaned for service, and presented.

m Neh. 8. 10. Eccl. 9. 7. *cf.* Jno. 4. 50.

n Gen. 30. 22. *cf.* Heb. 6. 15.

o Gen. 21. 8. Ps. 131.

p Ex. 33. 11. *cf.* Ps. 27. 4.

q 2 Sam. 7. 25.

r cf. Ex. 29. 1, etc.

moving of lips, and misconstrues it; pronounces a judgment which has speedily to be recalled. Yet this awakens in him no self-judgment, no discernment of his own levity: and this we shall find in Eli all the way through.

The ordered way of blessing is being closed up, and God is finding new channels for His grace to be poured into. Such is His way; for His grace must not lack expression while the need is there that demands it. The cry of distress may be misinterpreted, even by His people; but His own ear cannot be stopped.

(iii.) We come immediately, therefore, to the realization of this: Samuel is born, and named by his mother "heard of God." What she says is evidently not the interpretation of the name, but the reason for her giving it him. The name speaks of God as *El*, the Mighty One, who in might has answered her; the reason speaks of *Jehovah*. Indeed, how much *beyond* her prayer has been the answer! For she does not appear to have looked on to this child becoming, as he does, the deliverer of Israel. Perhaps she never lives to see him in this character. God acts in the fullness of His own love and wisdom; and what a light will eternity throw upon the issue of our prayers!

Samuel is born to be in a peculiar way the servant of the Lord; but he must be weaned before he can become this, and we cannot refrain from thinking upon the one hundred and thirty-first psalm here: "Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, even as a child is weaned from his mother; yea, my soul is even as a weaned child." That is, says Perowne, "As a weaned child no longer cries, frets, and longs for the breast, but lies still and is content, because it is with its mother, so my soul is weaned from all discontented thoughts, from all fretful desires of earthly good, waiting in stillness upon God, finding its satisfaction in His presence, resting peacefully in His arms." This surely is what is required for proper service: the childlike spirit, but the spirit of a *weaned* child. Alas, how few, proportionately, of the professed servants of Christ have attained to this!

The weaning accomplished, Samuel is taken and presented to the Lord, with a bullock for a burnt-offering. The type of whole-hearted consecration in service is easily to be read in this; but it is Christ of whom it speaks, in whom alone

wine, and brought him to Jehovah's house, to Shiloh: and the child was young. And they slaughtered the bullock, and brought the child to Eli. And she said, Oh, my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, to pray unto Jehovah. For [s]this child I prayed; and Jehovah hath granted me the petition that I asked of him: therefore have I also given him to Jehovah: all the days that he liveth he is given to Jehovah. And he worshiped Jehovah there.

c. (ii. 1-10.) Hannah's song of resurrection and the anointed.

(*c*) And Hannah [t]prayed and said:—
My heart [u]exulteth in Jehovah;
My [v]horn is exalted in Jehovah;
My mouth is opened wide over mine [w]enemies,
Because I rejoice in [x]thy salvation.
There is [y]none holy as Jehovah,
For there is none beside thee,
And there is no [z]rock like our God.
Do not multiply, [do not] speak [a]pride! pride!
Let not loose talk come from your mouth!
For a God of [b]omniscience is Jehovah,
And by him actions are [c]weighed.
The [d]bows of the mighty are broken,
And they that [e]stumbled are girded with strength;
They that were [f]full have hired themselves for bread.
And the hungry are [so] no more:

[s] *cf.* Ps. 116. 1, 2 with Deut. 26. 1-11.
[t] Lk. 1. 68, etc.
[u] Lk. 1. 46. Ps. 34. 2.
[v] Ps. 92. 10.
[w] *cf.* Ps. 9. 6.
[x] Ex. 14. 13.
[y] Ex. 15. 11.
[z] Deut 32. 30.
[a] 2 Sam. 22. 28.
[b] *ctr.* Ps. 73. 11.
[c] *cf.* Dan. 6. 27.
[d] Ps. 46. 8, 9.
[e] Mi. 7. 8.
[f] Lk. 1. 53. Lk. 18. 14.

servant and service can be accepted of God. He who serves best will be most conscious of this. The servant, too, to serve aright, must be trained up in the sanctuary. There alone we can get clear eyes for it, and the light of heaven. So, as we will remember, the Levites were given to the priests; and the book of the Sanctuary, Leviticus, precedes the wayside service of the book of Numbers. The last words of the chapter refer, I suppose, and as the connection would imply, to Samuel. He would be, according to the commentators, about three years old, which in Palestine would be, however, proportionately older than with us.

Hannah's heart is full, and bursts out in prophetic song, in which God's ways with her are expanded into general principles, which, in the end, are applied to the purification and blessing of the earth under God's King — Messiah. The king and the kingdom thus are introduced at the beginning of the book, and yet go beyond David or any successor of his in the days that immediately follow, and take in the whole breadth of the earth, and the final rule of Christ over it.

The song has four parts,— the first of which celebrates as the God of her salvation the faithful, omnipotent, and omniscient God (verses 1–3). Her heart is joyful, her strength is raised up, her mouth utters boldly her challenge to all enemies. Jehovah is her joy and exultation: for it is He who has become her Saviour. None is holy as He; nay, none can be put beside Him: the rock is a faint image of His faithfulness, who is not simply *her* — but "our" — God. Well may man's pride be abased, and the loose ungoverned speech hushed before Him: for all knowledge is His, and actions are weighed by Him.

The second is the salvation part (verses 4, 5),— which includes in it, also, the humbling of the adversaries. The bows of the mighty are broken: their weapons of war are no more; they that stumbled for very weakness, are, on the other hand, given a strength that girds or braces them up for activity. They that were full to satiety with bread have now to hire themselves out to obtain it, while the hungry now are in turn filled. Now she comes to her own case,

So that the [g]barren hath borne seven,
And she that had many children is grown feeble.
Jehovah [h]killeth and maketh alive;
He bringeth down to Sheol and bringeth up;
Jehovah [i]maketh poor and maketh rich,
He bringeth low, he also lifteth up;
He [j]raiseth up the poor out of the dust;
From the dunghill lifteth up the needy,
To set them among [k]nobles,
And he maketh them inherit a throne of glory.
For the [l]pillars of the earth are Jehovah's,
And he hath set the world upon them.
He [m]keepeth the feet of his saints,
And the [n]wicked are silent in darkness,
For by strength shall [o]no man prevail.
They that [p]strive with Jehovah shall be broken in pieces,
Out of heaven shall he [q]thunder upon them;
Jehovah shall [r]judge the ends of the earth;
And shall give strength unto his [s]king,
And exalt the horn of his [t]anointed.

g Ps. 113. 9. *cf.* Heb. 11. 12.
h Deut. 32. 39. Hos. 6. 1.
i Job. 1. 21.
j 2Sam. 23. 1. Ps. 113. 7, 8.
k Job 36. 7. *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 1, 2.
l *cf.* Col. 1. 17. *cf.* Heb. 1. 3.
m Ps. 121. 3.
n Ps. 146. 9.
o *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 7–10.
p Is. 45. 9.
q 2 Sam. 22. 14.
r *cf.* Matt. 25. 31–46.
s Ps. 20. 9. Ps. 21. 1. Ps. 45. Ps. 72.
t *cf.* Ps. 89. 20–29 with Acts 2. 29, 30.

though not, of course, in the details: the barren has borne seven, and she that has borne many is grown feeble.

These, of course, are simply specimen deliverances; but we have to go further to find the full thought, and that *resurrection* is a principle of the Lord's ways: he is the God of resurrection. That He should abase pride and destroy the wicked, that is easy to understand; but resurrection means that for the righteous also the way of life must be first of all a way of death. Pride in *them*, also, must be abased: they must learn in themselves what man is, and the righteous penalty for what he is; in the prostration of human strength they must learn the power and grace that consist with holiness in the Lord's salvation. So now the third part (verses 6–8 *a*):—

Jehovah kills and makes alive, too: He brings down to Hades, and brings up out of it. And from the poor and needy—from the dunghill itself—He lifts up those that He makes His princes, and sets on a throne of glory.

These principles are of the widest application, and will receive the widest application in a coming day, when the strife between good and evil shall be coming to a final end: and this is the thought of the fourth part (verses 8*b*–10):—

For the pillars of the earth belong to Jehovah: that is, the foundations of the dry land which are set up in the deep, and upon which the world that men inhabit stands. All that sustains the present condition of things, she tells us, depends upon the will of Jehovah, unchangeably holy as He is. Thus these principles will finally and everywhere prevail. "He keepeth the feet of His saints, and the wicked are silent in darkness [such is the day that is rapidly drawing near]: for by strength shall no man prevail. They that strive with Jehovah shall be broken in pieces; out of heaven shall He thunder upon them; [now we see the day in its broad features]: Jehovah shall judge the ends of the earth; and shall give strength unto His King, and exalt the horn of His Anointed."

Here is plainly the day of Christ; and the regeneration of the earth will exhibit fully all these principles. Israel must herself go down into the depths, and come up in resurrection. All the pride of man shall be abased, and the Lord alone exalted in that day. To this Hannah, with her prophetic eyes, looks on, and the whole of the "books of the kingdoms." How clearly is their character marked by the song of this Ismelite woman!

(II. 11-36.)

The degradation of the priesthood in contrast with the true servant.

1. (11.) A new beginning.

2. (12-17.) The sin of the priests.

2. [1]And Elkanah went to Ramah, to his house. And the child [u]ministered to Jehovah before Eli the priest.

[2]Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial: they [v]knew not Jehovah. And the priest's custom with the people was, when any one [w]offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was being cooked, with a three-pronged flesh-hook in his hand, and struck it into the pan or kettle or caldron or pot: all that the flesh-hook brought up the priest took of it. So did they in Shiloh to all the Israelites that came thither. Even before they [x]burned the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; and he will not take sodden flesh of thee, but raw. If the man said unto him, They will surely burn the fat presently, and then take as much as thy soul desireth, then he would say, Nay, but thou shalt give it now; and if not, I will take it by [y]force. And the sin of the young men was very great before Jehovah; for men [z]abhorred the offering of Jehovah.

u ch. 3. 1.

v Jer. 9. 3, Mal. 2. 1-10.

w *ctr.* Lev. 7. 8, Ex. 29. 26.

x Ex. 23. 18, Lev. 3. 3-5.

y *cf.* Is 28. 7, Jer. 5. 30, 31, *ctr.* Heb. 2. 17.

z *cf.* Is. 1. 11.

2. We have now put before us, in manifestly contrasted paragraphs, the degradation of the priesthood and the rise of the prophet that is soon to be. God has thus provided that the link between Himself and His people should not be snapped even in the awful disaster that is about to overtake them. How good is He, and how righteous in His goodness! Yet how easily may we mistake Him, too! He who would judge with God must not judge by the appearance: the moral and spiritual are the only means of it; and this must seem a thing so evident as to need no enforcement; yet the apostle did not think so, and the history of Christianity in every generation shows abundantly the need.

The moral degradation of the priesthood is here shown as complete. The mercy of God warns repeatedly, in vain, of impending judgment. Eli is morally weak; his sons utterly profane; and alas, the people, save a small remnant, are away from God. Many are the lessons of such a contrast as is here presented to us.

(i.) This one verse, with its simple statement, may seem too insignificant altogether to form even the smallest section. But even this may serve to point a moral in such a connection as this. God concerns Himself with what is little: yea, there is nothing that is too little for Him. And here was a fresh affirmation in this new beginning,—His power to exalt and to abase, His refusal of evil wherever found, and the individuality also of each soul with Him. What a gospel in the Old Testament for children is in the notice and acceptance of this little child! A little child this, that ministered not to Eli merely but to Jehovah, and finding his record in the inspired Word!

(ii.) In contrast with Samuel's service is now shown us the sin of the priests, a profanity which, in its essential features, has been often enough repeated since. External nearness to God, without the knowledge of Him, has ever been the occasion of the worst departures from Him. To one away from the sanctuary some sense of the divine would naturally more attach to it, which in the daily intercourse with sacred things tends more and more to pass away. Eli's sons are thus practisers and preachers of a godlessness which at first shocks and then communicates itself to the people round. A holiness that is but external is the worst unholiness. Here nothing but the rites remained to speak of God; but even these were impiously violated by the rude hands of those whose duty it was to lead men in obedience. Shamelessly and openly they made themselves fat with the offerings of Jehovah's people, and that with violence which defied Him to His face.

3. (18–21.) The commencing manifestation of the man of God.

[3]And Samuel ministered before Jehovah, a child girded with a linen ephod. And his mother made him a little [a]robe, and brought it to him year by year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, Jehovah give thee seed of this woman in return for the gift that was asked of Jehovah. And they went to their own house. And Jehovah visited Hannah, and she conceived, and bare [b]three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before Jehovah.

4. (22–26.) The weakness and failure of the high priest.

[4]And Eli was very [c]old, and he heard all that his sons did unto all Israel, and that they lay with the women that did service at the [d]door of the tent of meeting. And he said unto them, Why do ye such things?

a Gen. 37. 3. cf. Eph. 6. 4.

b cf. Matt. 13. 12.

c ch. 8. 1. ctr. Deut. 34. 7.

d cf. Exod. 38. 8.

(iii.) The narrative returns, after this recital, which has shown the moral state leading to the collapse of the priesthood shortly in Israel, to show us Samuel, clothed anticipatively with the priestly ephod. This was, as we have seen (Ex. xxviii. 5–14, *n.*), essentially the shoulder-piece, and which held (in the case of the high-priest) the breastplate also. Girt about the person, it was the expression of a service whereby the people of God were sustained before God in a love which never forgot that which was due to Him. It was the mediator's robe, and the priests were thus characterized as those who "wore a linen ephod." (ch. xxii. 18.) No other did this besides the priest,* except here Samuel, and upon one great occasion (2 Sam. vi. 14) David, and these two cases are strictly parallel: in each it showed that the burden of Israel's maintenance before God had devolved upon the person wearing the ephod.

It is true that the materials were different: there was here no beauty of various color, nor gold, as in the high-priest's dress, the full blossom of the priestly. But on the other hand, the simple white linen† was that in which the priest went on the day of atonement into the holiest of all, and speaks of the absolute purity fit for the presence of Him who dwells in the sanctuary. Thus, while it points to Christ, the antitype all through here,— priest, prophet, king, alike,— it clearly marks the contrast between the man of God's choice and the licentious priesthood that gives way to him.

The coat, which year by year his mother brings to him, is in harmony with this. It is the *meil*, which was also part of the high-priest's dress, the "robe" of the ephod, although kings, nobles, and others wore it also. The robe of the high-priest, like the ephod, had its distinctive characters; as to that of Samuel we have nothing told us: the connection, however, cannot well be doubted. The ephod must have been furnished by the sanctuary; and thus two witnesses united here their testimony to him. The higher kingdom was thus already manifesting itself.

Hannah also, significant in her name and history, as we have seen, now becomes fruitful. She has three more sons,— four sons, therefore, and two daughters, the presage of the triumph of divine grace. None the less must the holiness of God's ways be affirmed, and the corruption of the priesthood have its answer in judgment. But "Samuel grew before Jehovah."

(iv.) The further fact is now developed that, the priesthood being such as we have seen, there is no power over them to stand for God, and restrain the evil. Eli is in the threefold relation to these wanton transgressors of father, high-priest, and judge in Israel; but he does nothing but expose his incapacity. Nor is it mere age that can account for this. It is significant that for the contempt

* Samuel is shown, in the book of Chronicles, to have been, by descent, a Levite (1 Chron. vi. 33-35); and thus, it has been asserted, could wear the ephod; but we have no hint in Scripture of the Levites doing this, but the opposite.

† As here, *bad* is the word for linen.

for I hear of your evil deeds from all this people. [e] Nay, my sons, for it is no good report that I hear: ye cause Jehovah's people to transgress. If one man sin against another, God shall judge him; but if a man sin against Jehovah, who shall entreat for him? But they [f] hearkened not to their father's voice, for Jehovah had in mind to slay them.

And the child Samuel grew on, and was in [g] favor, both with Jehovah and also with men.

5. (27-36.) The sentence of God.

[5] And there came a [h] man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith Jehovah: Did I plainly reveal myself unto thy father's house when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house, and [i] choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer upon my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? and did I give unto thy father's house all the [j] offerings by fire of the children of Israel? Why trample ye upon my sacrifice, and upon my offerings which I have commanded [in my] habitation? And thou [k] honorest thy sons above me, making yourselves fat with the best of every offering of Israel my people. Wherefore Jehovah the God

e *cf.* ch. 3. 13.

f Ex. 7. 13, etc. Prov. 29. 1.

g Lk. 2. 52.

h Judg. 6. 8.

i Ex. 28. 1. Num. 17. 1-11.

j Num. 18. 8-20.

k *cfr.* Ex. 32. 26-29. Deut. 33. 9.

of Jehovah's ordinances, which has been already before us, we do not even hear of a rebuke. When to this is added the immorality so naturally connecting itself with it, Eli argues with them and protests, but that is all. He uses not the rod which is put into his hands, and which might have even saved his sons themselves. He leaves them to go unchecked to the divine judgment which he foresees, but does nothing effective to avert; and, in fact, the judgment comes upon them.

Again Samuel is noticed, briefly but in comprehensive contrast. The record anticipates what, long after, is said of the Lord in His childhood, that he grew up in favor both with Jehovah and with men. He is thus every way the opposite of the God-forsaken priests. Though but a child, he is uncontaminated with the evil in the presence of which he grows up, a witness of the individuality that belongs to us, though amid a multitude, and apart even from the restraint and discipline of home. He is a child, but thus with his inheritance in the future, while the priesthood is failing and passing away.

(v.) The sentence upon Eli and his house is now pronounced. Of "the man of God" who now comes forward to utter it we know nothing more,—not even his name. The sentence is a decree of degradation for degradation, with the cutting off of Hophni and Phinehas, the chief offenders. God would raise up for Himself a faithful priest to walk before His anointed,—a second intimation of the coming kingdom. Joshua had stood before Eleazar (Num. xxvii. 21); and, for the time, the high priest had had the foremost place in Israel. This is to be changed, and even the "faithful priest" is to walk before the king. Priesthood has failed to maintain the link between God and His people. Now the king is to be the link, although he, too, will fail and pass: only the "threefold cord" of prophet, priest, and king, as found in Christ, will not be broken; and power put into *His* hand cannot fail or be forfeited any more. Toward this all these types point, though Christ is not directly spoken of here. The "faithful priest" was raised up in Zadok, as the representative of the line of Phinehas and Eleazar: Eli was a descendant of Ithamar, Aaron's fourth son, and not of Eleazar, who thus for a time had lost the high-priesthood promised to Phinehas forever (Num. xxv. 13.) Phinehas has thus the promise fulfilled to him, as it were, in resurrection and abidingly: in the kingdom yet to come, the sons of Zadok will again keep charge of the sanctuary. (Ezek. xliv. 15.)

of Israel saith, I said indeed, Thy house and thy father's house should walk before me forever; but now Jehovah saith, Be it far from me: for [l] them that honor me will I honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. Behold, the days come that I will [m] cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, so that there shall not be an old man in thy house. And thou shalt see straitness of dwelling-place amid all that doeth good to Israel; and there shall not be an [n] old man in thy house for ever. And the man of thine [whom] I shall not cut off from mine altar [shall be] to cause thine eyes to fail and grieve thy soul, and all the increase of thy house shall die in their vigor. And this shall be the sign unto thee, which shall come upon thy two sons, upon Hophni and Phinehas: in [o] one day they shall die both of them. And I will raise me up a [p] faithful priest, who shall do all that which is in my heart and in my soul, and I will build him a [q] sure house, and he shall walk before mine anointed continually. And it shall be that any one that is left of thy house shall come and crouch to him for a small piece of silver, and a loaf of bread, and shall say, [r] Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a morsel of bread.

l *cf.* ch. 15.10–31.
m ch. 4. 17. 1 Ki. 2. 27.
n *cfr.* Ps. 91. 16. Heb. 7. 24.
o ch. 4. 11.
p Heb. 3. 2.
q Heb. 3. 6. 2Sam. 7. 16.
r Lev. 21. 22.

The Prophet manifest. 1. (vv. 1–9.) Samuel's call.

(III.)

3. [s] And the child Samuel [t] ministered to Jehovah before Eli. And the word of Jehovah was [t] precious in those days: the vision was not spread abroad. And it came

s ch. 2. 18.
t Ps. 74. 9. *cf.* Am. 8. 11.

Through all, the typical meaning distinctly shines: for God throughout is thinking of His Son. Eleazar, as we have seen fully elsewhere, is as Aaron's *third* son,—in whom, also, after the death of Nadab and Abihu, the priesthood revives,—the distinct type of Christ as a *risen* Priest, whose intercessory place is the fruit of His work accomplished. His resurrection *means* the acceptance of His atoning death; and thus He is Eleazar, the true "help of God" for His dependent people.

Ithamar, the *fourth* son of Aaron, as that, and according to his name, "where the palm is," implies a practical righteousness, which is connected with practical walk. Now as long as Eleazar retained the high priesthood, Ithamar could serve in his lower place well and acceptably, for "to do good and to communicate," and thus the whole Christian life, are "sacrifices," which, as priests, we are called to offer up to God. But these are entirely dependent upon that one only *propitiatory* sacrifice which Eleazar, the risen priest, reminds us of. Let Ithamar displace Eleazar, then Ithamar himself loses himself hopelessly. Eli, the "exalted," Hophni, "my fist," and quite another Phinehas, "mouth of brass," from the one of the higher line, sufficiently characterize the history here; while the line of Eleazar, when it revives revives in Zadok, "the righteous one,"—*righteousness in the right line and Person*, "Jesus Christ, the righteous,"—and all is again secured.

Precious it is to see Israel's sorrowful history written in golden letters such as these! Thus the higher kingdom is in action all through the book, not merely in the lives of individuals, but in the ordering of the state at large. Unto it the lower, when it comes, must be in complete subjection, representing it in character truly among men, or pay the forfeit.

3. The priesthood being thus adjudged, we now find the prophet openly brought forward, God thus providing that there should be no lapse on His side,

to pass at that time, when Eli was lying down in his place, (now his eyes began to grow [u]dim, so that he could not see,) and the [v]lamp of God was not yet gone out, and Samuel lay in the house of Jehovah where the ark of God was, that Jehovah [w]called Samuel. And he said, Here am I. And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I, for thou calledst me. And he said, I did not call; lie down again; and he went and lay down. And Jehovah called again, Samuel! And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I, for thou calledst me. And he said, I did not call, my son; lie down again. Now Samuel did not [x]yet recognize Jehovah, and the word of Jehovah was not yet revealed to him. And Jehovah called Samuel again the [y]third time. And he arose, and went to Eli, and said, Here am I, for thou calledst me. And Eli perceived that Jehovah was calling the child. And Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down, and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, [z]Speak, Jehovah, for thy servant heareth. And Samuel went and lay down in his place.

u *cf.* ch. 2. 22.
v Ex. 27. 20, 21. *cf.* 2 Chr. 29. 6, 7.
w Num. 7. 89. *cf.* Is. 6. 8, 9. Jer. 1. 5, 6.
x *cf.* ch. 2. 12
y *cf.* Jno. 21. 14-17.
z *cf.* Gen. 22. 1, 11.

2. (10-18.) The announcement.

[2]And Jehovah came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. And Samuel answered, Speak, for thy servant heareth. And Jehovah said to Samuel, Behold, I [a]do a thing in Israel at which both ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house from beginning to end. For I have declared to him that I will [b]judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knew, [c]because his sons made

a 2 Ki. 21. 12.
b ch. 2. 31. *cf.* Ezek. 9. 5, 6.
c *cfr.* Gen. 18. 19. *cf.* Prov. 19. 18.

fail as all else may. Samuel is therefore now called, and established before all Israel as the mouthpiece of Jehovah to them, before the predicted judgment falls upon Eli's house.

(i.) The call comes suddenly at night, when men are asleep, but not the Shepherd of Israel. The dim eyes of the priest, the suggested near failure of the tabernacle-lamp, are no mere embellishments of the picture. Such was the state of things which necessitated the new interposition of the Lord. Eli was there in his place, but the Voice addresses not Eli,—not even though the message concerns him intimately and sadly. For the face of God is averted from him.

To Samuel we find the Voice is something audible,—not a simple intimation or impression on the heart. It is, at the same time, very *human:* the youth imagines it is Eli that is speaking; and that three times over, for he has not yet learned to recognize Jehovah. Eli himself is thus made also to understand that He is speaking, before the subject of the communication is made known to him, —though his heart, as we see afterwards, presages but too well.

Yet this divine-human Voice, how sweet it is! In all dispensations it is the same. Calling one, too, by one's name, for by name He knows His sheep. But may *we* not also, like Samuel here, mistake the voice divine because it is so human,—expect it as afar off, miss it because it is nigh?

(ii.) The message confirms the previously announced doom of Eli's house. But what need to repeat again what had already been so fully said? Is not once said enough for God? Does it not imply that God yet waits, even though the thing is said, upon man's repentance?—expects men to cry to Him, to give Him, as it were, opportunity to repent? Why should He warn at all, if not for this?

themselves vile, and he restrained them not. And therefore have I sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged by sacrifice or offering for ever. And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of Jehovah's house. And Samuel feared to tell the vision to Eli. And Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he said, Here am I. And he said, What is the word that he hath spoken to thee? I pray thee, [d] hide it not from me. God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide anything from me of all that he said unto thee. And Samuel told him all the words, and hid nothing from him. And he said, [e] It is Jehovah: let him do what is good in his eyes.

d ch. 2. 27, etc.

e Is. 39. 5–8.

3. (iii. 19–iv. 1.) Jehovah reveals Himself through Samuel.

[3] And Samuel [f] grew, and Jehovah was with him, and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was established to be a [g] prophet of Jehovah. And Jehovah continued to appear in Shiloh: for Jehovah revealed himself unto Samuel in Shiloh in the word of Jehovah. And the word of Samuel came unto all Israel.

f ch. 2. 26.

g ch. 9. 9. *cf.* Acts. 3. 24.

(IV.)

Collapse.

1. (*vv.* 1–11.) A vain promise, and an unchanging God.

4. [1] And Israel went out against the [h] Philistines to battle, and encamped beside Ebenezer; and the Philistines encamped in Aphek. And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel: and the battle spread; and Israel was [i] routed before the Philistines, and they smote in battle array in the field about four

h Judg. 13. 1, etc.

i Deut. 28. 25.

But Eli, though he bows under God's hand, does not turn to Him after this fashion. His spiritual sense is dulled, so that he cannot discern the undertone of pity in the threatening wrath; nor has he energy to take up the authority intrusted to him, and act for Him whom he has so long ignored. Thus judgment takes its course.

Samuel, though with a natural fear in which different elements would unite together, approves himself as able to stand for God, and tells him all. His first message is of evil, and to those with whom he has grown up. It is needed, perhaps, for himself, in view of the place that he is to take in the crisis at hand. And though he fears, he does not listen to his fears, nor refuse the burden laid upon him, but bears it faithfully.

(iii.) Thus Jehovah is with him, and his prophecy finds a wider field. Jehovah reveals himself through Samuel; and thus, on the very eve of judgment, appeal is made anew to the hearts and consciences of the people. It did not avail to prevent disaster; but it did surely to maintain faith in a remnant, and bring some hearts to the living God. But whatever might be the result as to the people, God at least glorified Himself in goodness, as He ever does, and has left us as witnesses of a love, which to us, indeed, has been how much more wonderfully displayed!

4. (i.) But now the day of inevitable ruin comes, and Israel is smitten before the Philistines. It would seem by the language as if Israel had provoked the conflict. In striking contrast, and yet in as plain congruity, with what takes place afterward, we are told that they encamped beside Ebenezer, doubly emphasized by two articles, "the stone of the help." Samuel, we know, actually set up the stone afterwards in commemoration of victory; and this makes the anticipative mention of the name so significant. According to the unchanging nature of God occurred the victory then, the defeat now. Self-confidence goes

thousand men. And the people came into the camp; and the elders of Israel said, [j]Wherefore hath Jehovah smitten us to-day before the Philistines? Let us fetch unto us the [k]ark of the covenant of Jehovah out of Shiloh, and when it comes into our midst it shall save us out of the hand of our enemies. And the people sent to Shiloh, and they brought from thence the ark of the covenant of Jehovah of hosts, who dwelleth between the [l]cherubim; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God. And it came to pass, when the ark of the covenant of Jehovah came into the camp, that all Israel [m]shouted with a great shout, so that the earth shook. And the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, and they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of Jehovah was come into the camp. And the Philistines were [n]afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe to us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore. Woe to us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty gods? [o]these are the gods that smote the Egyptians with every plague in the wilderness. Be strong, yea, be men, ye Philistines, that ye be not servants to the Hebrews, as they have been servants unto you; be men, and fight. And the Philistines fought, and Israel was [p]routed, and they fled every man to his tent; and the slaughter was very great, and there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. And the ark of God was [q]taken, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, [r]died.

j Josh. 7. 11, 12.
k ch. 14. 18. Josh. 3. 3–8, 11–17. Josh. 6. 4–13 with Nu. 10. 35.
l Ex. 25. 18–22. *cf.* Ps. 97. 2. Ps. 99. 1.
m 2 Sam. 6. 15.
n *cf.* Ex. 15. 14.
o Josh. 2. 9–11. Josh. 5. 1.
p ver. 2. 2. *cf.* Isa. 1. 4–7.
q Ps. 78. 56–64.
r ch. 2. 34.

along with departure of heart from Him, as generally is the case, and insures the issue. Once more smitten with considerable loss, they ask indeed why Jehovah has done this. They realize it to be from Him, and yet do not seriously inquire of Him, nor humble themselves in His presence. Stranger than all, they would bring this God who has smitten them, unappeased, into the camp to fight in their behalf! Perhaps their thought is that this very reliance upon the ark will propitiate Him. How vain, in any case, is such a hope! True, it is the "ark of the covenant of Jehovah"; and, as such, they appeal to it. But was there not the "vengeance of the covenant" as faithfully promised as the blessing for obedience? What a sign of disaster that, as it is written, "Hophni and Phinehas," with their already predicted doom hanging over them, "were there with the ark of the covenant of God"!

On the other hand, it is no wonder that the Philistines are as much disconcerted, for the moment, by the presence of the ark, as Israel are encouraged. With them the deity was inseparably connected with the symbols of His worship, and they remembered yet the power displayed in Egypt. Jehovah's witness to Himself there had not been in vain, though men might, after all, refuse it. Alas, they did! Alas, not they alone have done so! So they stiffen themselves in pride, and will be men,—yes, indeed, too surely, "men,"—and are unexpectedly successful: they gain a great victory, slay thirty thousand men, and capture the ark of God itself,—little imagining that they are but fulfilling His word, and instruments in His hand, after all: a lesson in "evidences," which should at least make us careful. Hophni and Phinehas are slain, and the priesthood necessarily collapses, and is for the time set aside.

2. (12–18.) The messenger of death.

12 And there *ran a man of Benjamin out of the ranks, and came to Shiloh the same day, with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head. 13 And when he came, behold, Eli sat upon the seat by the way-side, watching; for his heart *trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came to tell it in the city, all the city cried out. 14 And Eli heard the sound of the cry, and he said, What meaneth the sound of this tumult? And the man came in hast, and told Eli. 15 Now Eli was ninety-eight years old, and his eyes were set, and he could not see. 16 And the man said unto Eli, I am he that came out of the ranks; even to-day I fled out of the ranks. And he said, What is the matter, my son? 17 And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been a great slaughter of the people, and thy two sons also are dead, Hophni and Phinehas, and the ark of God is taken. 18 And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he *fell off from the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died; for the man was old and heavy; and he had judged Israel *forty years.

s 2 Sam. 1. 2. 2 Sam. 18. 19–23. *cfr.* Isa. 52. 7–10.

t cf. Ps. 26. 8. *cf.* Ps. 132. 1–8.

u cf. Josh. 7. 8.

v Judg. 16. 31.

3. (19–22.) Ichabod.

19 And his daughter in law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, near to be delivered, and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken, and that her father in law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself, and travailed; for her pains came upon her. 20 And as she was *dying, the women that stood by her said, Fear not; for thou hast borne a son. But she did not answer, nor regard it. 21 And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband. 22 And she said, The *glory is departed from Israel; for the ark of God is taken.

w Gen. 35. 16–18. *cf.* Eze. 19. 10–14.

x cf. Ezek. 10. 4, 18, 19. *cf.* Eze. 11. 22, 23.

(ii.) Eli's death ensues upon the news of the disaster. The circumstantial detail fixes the attention and impresses the heart, and is designed to do so. The old man, who has left the glory of God in the hands of his profligate sons, and let the ark go from him at the will of the people, yet manifests at the last the good that is in him, and is taken away from the evil to come. Shiloh passes also out of the history, and the sanctuary of God from Ephraim, the lesson of which has been already suggested (Josh. xviii. 1, *n.*)

(iii.) A woman's voice pronounces the word of distress, stamping it upon the fruit of her womb, Ichabod, "no glory." This was, indeed, what Israel had brought forth, the fruit of her departure from God: His glory had, in turn, been removed out of their midst. "For they provoked Him to anger with their high places, and moved Him to jealousy with their graven images. When God heard this, He was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel, so that He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which He placed among men; and delivered His strength into captivity, His glory into the enemy's hand." (Ps. lxxviii. 58–61.) All dooms presage the final doom, and so it is here. The "outer darkness" will be when those who have said to God, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways," shall have their awful prayer fulfilled! And who can imagine what this means? But "there," we are told, "shall be the wailing and gnashing of teeth."

(V.–VII. 1.)

The creature before the Creator. 1. (v. 1–5.) "God of gods."

5. [1]And the Philistines [y]took the ark of God, and brought it from Ebenezer unto Ashdod. And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it into the house of [z]Dagon, and set it by Dagon. And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon was [a]fallen with his face to the earth before the ark of Jehovah. And they took Dagon, and set him in his place again. And when they arose early the next morning, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of Jehovah; and the [b]head of Dagon, and both the palms of his hands, were cut off upon the threshold: only Dagon was left to him. [c]Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house, tread upon Dagon's threshold in Ashdod to this day.

y Ps. 78. 61.

z Judg. 16. 23. 1 Chron. 10. 10.

a Is. 46. 1, 2. Is. 48. 5.

b Is. 42. 8. Jer. 50. 2.

c *cf.* Is. 44. 13–20.

2. (6–12.) The progress of destruction.

[2]And the hand of Jehovah was [d]heavy upon them of Ashdod, and he destroyed them, and smote them with boils,—Ashdod and its territory. And when the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said, The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us: for his hand is sore upon us, and [e]upon Dagon our god. And they

d *cf.* Ex. 3. 19, 20. *ctr.* 2 Sam. 6. 11, 12.

e Ex. 12. 12.

5. The history goes with the ark into the Philistines' land. Their victory becomes their own defeat; which yet, as a testimony to them, might be mercy,—the only mercy that their hostility permitted. They themselves would find, and would have to own, the powerlessness and folly of their idols in the presence of God, with whom they also had to do; although we know of no permanent effect of it, except their restoration of the ark, with offerings for the trespass they had committed.

(i.) The ark is taken to the city of Ashdod, the "spoiler," and put as spoil into the temple of Dagon, the chief Philistine god. Though they know Jehovah's power as a reality, they look at Him as now subdued by the great might of Dagon: for the gods of polytheism could war against one another, as we know. In thus placing it beside their deity, there seems intimated, however, a certain respect. All the more would be their confusion on finding, the next morning, Dagon prostrate upon his face, as if worshipping before the ark. But they are willing to think it an accident, and they replace the idol in its old position. Next morning it is prostrate again, but not to be so easily replaced, for the human parts—the head and hands—of the composite fish-god are cut off, and lying on the threshold, and only the Dagon, the fish-part, is left him. The confusion man has made is thus undone; the human joined to the bestial is seen to be but contemptible and to be trodden under foot, and the creature is prostrate in the presence of the Creator. How well for them, if they had learnt these lessons! Instead of this, where the desecrated head and hands have lain, the worshipers in Ashdod no more dare to step! So little is idolatry a thing of the mind merely, that, face to face with God, they will pick up and reverence their mutilated idol. "When they *knew* God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened; professing themselves wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." This is the spiritual genealogy of idolatry, wherever it is found. And such is man!

(ii.) The Lord's hand falls, therefore, next upon the Philistines themselves; and they are smitten with boils or tumors, which cannot be, apparently, more clearly defined. As with the similar plague in Egypt (Exod. ix. 8–12, *n.*), the external plague may naturally symbolize and lay bare the inward condition, the

sent and gathered all the lords of the Philistines unto them, and said, What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? And they said, Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about to Gath. And they [f] carried about the ark of the God of Israel. And it came to pass, after they had carried it about, that the hand of Jehovah was against the city,—there was very great alarm; and he smote the people of the city, both small and great, and boils broke out on them. And they sent the ark of God to Ekron. And it was so, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, They have brought the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people. And they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, [g] Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it return to its place, that it slay us not and our people: for there was mortal alarm in all the city: the hand of God was very heavy there. And the men that died not were smitten with the boils; and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

[f] *cf.* Ex. 8. 25-28.

[g] *cf.* Ex. 12. 31-33.

3.(vi.-vii.1.) The return of the ark.

[3] And the ark of Jehovah was in the country of the Philistines seven months. And the Philistines called together the priests and the [h] diviners, saying, What shall we do with the ark of Jehovah? Tell us wherewith we shall send it to its place. And they said, If ye send away the ark of the God of Israel, send it not [i] empty, but return him in any wise a [j] trespass-offering; if then ye shall be healed, it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you. And they said, What shall the trespass-offering be that we return him? And they said, According to the number of the lords of the Philistines, five golden [k] boils and five golden mice; for one plague is on you all, and on your lords: so ye shall make images of your boils, and images of your mice that destroy the land, and shall give [l] glory to the God of Israel: [m] peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land. Why [n] harden ye your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? Did they not, when he wrought wonderfully among them, let the people go, and they departed? And now make a [o] new

[h] Ex. 7. 11, etc.

[i] Ex. 3. 21. 22.

[j] *cf.* Lev. 5. 16, 18.

[k] ch. 5. 6.

[l] *cf.* Josh. 7. 19-21.

[m] Ex. 32.30. *ctr.* Heb. 10. 1-10.

[n] Ex. 14. 17.

[o] 2 Sa. 6. 2.

corruption which consumes the sinner, and underlies all his departure from God. Unwilling to humble themselves fully under Jehovah's hand, they send the ark about from one place to another, only spreading the evil wherever it goes, until they end the unequal conflict by its restoration to the Israelite territory.

(iii.) Seven months the ark had been in the Philistines' land. At last they call together the priests and diviners, and inquire how they are to send it back. Their advice is to send back with it a trespass-offering, after their heathen fashion, five golden images of their boils, and five golden mice, which were at the same time ravaging their fields. But, after all, they speak somewhat doubtfully, for where will not unbelief find an argument?—and propose an expedient by which it may be tested whether possibly yet it might be a chance that had

cart, and take two milch kine on which hath come [p] no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them. And take the ark of Jehovah, and put it upon the cart, and the golden figures which ye are returning him for a trespass-offering put in the coffer by the side of it, and send it away, that it may go. And see if it go up by the way of his border to Bethshemesh, then it is he that hath done us this great harm; but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that hath smitten us, it was a [q]chance that happened to us.

And the men did so, and took two milch kine, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home; and they put the ark of Jehovah upon the cart, and the coffer with the golden mice and the images of their tumors. And the kine went straight forward on the way to Bethshemesh, they went by the one highway, [r]lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand or the left. And the lords of the Philistines went after them as far as the border of Bethshemesh. And [they of] Bethshemesh were reaping the wheat-harvest in the valley; and they lifted up their eyes and saw the ark, and [s]rejoiced to see it. And the cart came into the field of Joshua the Bethshemeshite, and stood there; and a great stone was there; and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a [t]burnt-offering to Jehovah. And the Levites took down the ark of Jehovah, and the coffer that was with it, wherein were the golden figures, and put them on the great stone. And the men of Bethshemesh offered up burnt-offerings, and sacrificed sacrifices that day unto Jehovah. And the five lords of the Philistines saw it, and returned to Ekron the same day.

And these are the golden tumors that the Philistines returned for a trespass-offering unto Jehovah: for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Ashkelon one, for Gath one, for Ekron one; and the golden mice were according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both of fortified cities and of country-

p *cf.* Jer. 31. 18.

q *cf.* Ex. 14. 5, 6. Is. 26. 11.

r *cf.* Mt. 21. 1-5.

s *ctr.* ch. 4. 5.

t Lev. 1. 3, etc. *cf.* 1 Ki. 19. 21.

happened to them. In result it is proved conclusively that Jehovah is the God of Creation, supreme above all the natural instincts: the kine, though unaccustomed to a yoke, take the cart with its sacred burden directly away from where their calves are shut up, even while lowing after them, and take the straight road to Bethshemesh, a priestly city near the Israelite border. There, at the border, they stop, still under the eyes of the Philistine lords, at a great stone upon which the Levites place the ark, and where the kine are offered up a burnt-offering to Jehovah.

Thus the Philistines have Jehovah's sovereignty demonstrated to them in the precise terms which they have themselves chosen,—the goodness of God thus meeting them with what should have turned them from idolatry forever, and brought them to His feet. But they go back, after all, to worship instead the humbled Dagon.

But the men of Bethshemesh also incur divine judgment for their profane

villages, even as far as the great Abel* on which they set down the ark of Jehovah: to this day [it is] in the field of Joshua the Bethshemeshite.

And he [u]smote of the men of Bethshemesh because they had [v]looked into the ark of Jehovah,—he smote even of the people seventy men.† And the people [w]lamented because Jehovah had smitten the people with a great slaughter. And the men of Bethshemesh said, [x]Who can stand before Jehovah, this holy God? and to whom shall he go up from us? And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, saying, The Philistines have sent back the ark of Jehovah: come down, and [y]fetch it up to you.

And the men of Kirjath-jearim came and fetched up the ark of Jehovah, and they brought it into the house of [z]Abinadab on the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of Jehovah.

u *cf.* ch. 5. 6. 2 Sam. 6. 6, 7.
v Ex. 19. 20. 1 Kl. 8. 9. with Gal. 3. 10. Ex. 25. 17, 21. with Rom. 3. 25.
w *cf.* Judg. 20. 26.
x Num. 17. 12, 13.
y ch. 5. 8.
z 2 Sam. 6. 3, 4.

(VII. 2-17.)

The Philistine scourge stayed. 1. (vii. 2–4.) The people serve Jehovah only.

6. [1]And it was so, that from the day that the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim were many days: for it was [a]twenty years. And all the house of Israel [b]lamented after Jehovah. And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye return to Jehovah with all your heart, [c]put away the strange gods from among you, and the Ashtoreths, and fix your hearts upon Jehovah, and serve him alone; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. And the children of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtoreths, and served Jehovah alone.

a *cf.* ch. 14. 18.
b Judg. 3. 15.
c Gen. 35. 2. Judg. 3. 10.

2. (5-14.) Deliverance.

[2]And Samuel said, Gather all Israel unto [d]Mizpah, and I will pray Jehovah for you. And they gathered

d Judg. 20. 1. ch. 10. 17.

* The Septuagint reads, "the great *stone*," *eben* for *abel*. This is probable, though others think *abel*, "mourning," to be intended, from the mourning connected with the judgment which follows.

† It is impossible to suppose that Bethshemesh had 50,000 inhabitants, still less "men"; and the Hebrew text shows signs of interpolation. Literally, it reads, "seventy men, fifty thousand men." Josephus, and a few of Kennicott's MSS., omit the larger number, with the approbation of Thenius, Keil, Erdmann, and others. Fausset would read, "seventy men, fifty out of a thousand men."

treatment of Jehovah's ark, and follow the example of the Philistines in sending it elsewhere. The men of Kirjath-jearim respond to their invitation, and there it abides for long in the house of Abinadab, kept by Eleazar his son. There David found it afterwards "in the fields of the wood (*jaar*)" (Ps. cxxxii. 6). Yet the long-suffering of the Lord endured. He had already provided, as we know, the instrument of deliverance.

6. (i.) Twenty years now elapse. A long discipline of sorrow is required before the humbled people turn with their heart to God. During all this time Samuel is patiently laboring for Him, urging upon them whole-hearted return, and the absolute putting away of all strange gods, the necessary hindrance to their deliverance. At last the Baals and Ashtoreths are put away, and throughout the land Jehovah alone is served. Then the deliverance, which would have been else but a letting loose for evil, is ready to be accomplished.

(ii.) Samuel now distinctly takes the place of mediator. He is, of course, ideally the prophet, not the priest; but in every type of Christ something of His

together unto Mizpah, and drew water, and poured it out before Jehovah, and they [e]fasted on that day, and said there: We have sinned against Jehovah. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpah. And the [f]Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpah, and the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And the children of Israel heard it, and were afraid before the Philistines. And the children of Israel said unto Samuel, Cease not to [g]cry for us unto Jehovah our God, that he may save us out of the hand of the Philistines. And Samuel took one sucking [h]lamb, and offered it up as a whole burnt-offering to Jehovah; and Samuel cried unto Jehovah in behalf of Israel, and Jehovah answered him. And it was when Samuel was offering up the burnt-offering, that the Philistines drew near to the battle against Is-

e Judg. 20. 26.

f Judg. 15. 9.

g Is. 37. 2–4.

h *cf.* Jno. 1. 29.

full place is seen. In connection with the prophet, who brings the message of God, the subjective side of salvation is emphasized — repentance and turning to God; but Samuel turns to God also for the people, and offers even the priestly sacrifice. There is not a hint of what some imagine—the intervention of a priest in this latter case; and in the case of Gideon and others, though not so formally, we have had already the performance of priestly acts. Samuel is the child of prayer, and he is ever also the man of prayer. The repentance of the people enables him confidently to take the place of intercession for them: "Gather all Israel to Mizpah," he says, (the outward manifestation of the heart-unity now existing among the people), "and I will pray Jehovah for you." He is, like Samson, the Nazarite, set apart from the womb to Jehovah, and in whom, as not in Samson, the spiritual side of this is shown. He is thus victorious in a strife in which Samson fails, and "not by might, nor by power," but through the Lord in whom he trusts. All Israel are gathered to Mizpah, and draw water and pour it out before Jehovah, acting out the piteous plea of the woman of Tekoah afterwards (2 Sam. xiv. 14): "We must needs die, and are as water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again." But here they own that the dissolution of their lives in vanity and misery is the consequence of their sin: "We have sinned against Jehovah"; and now, according to the principle which has been before announced as to the Lord's deliverances, that when He delivered He raised up a judge, the judge appears again: "Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpah."

This brings about the inevitable conflict. They had not gathered for battle; and were, in fact, in the extreme opposite condition to their former self-confidence in which they had provoked the Philistine attack. On the other hand, nothing more surely provokes the attack of the enemy than united Israel suppliant before the Lord. Accordingly, at once we hear of them in movement, while Israel, scarcely armed and helpless, can only urge on Samuel to cry ceaselessly to God for their deliverance. Happily they can say now, with truth of heart, "Jehovah our God": when did He fail to appear for those who could say so?

Samuel's reliance is not on spear or shield. He takes one sucking lamb, and offers it as a whole burnt-offering to Jehovah. This is his plea, and thus he cries to God for the people; and Jehovah answers. The offering does not, as most commentators say, represent the newly pledged obedience of the people, — poor ground of confidence as it would be in such a strait: but Christ, from his birth, the absolutely devoted One, the "*Lamb*," as in the perfect youth of glorious manhood. How blessed a Substitute for the tardy and spotted obedience of our best performances! While Samuel offers, the Philistines draw nigh. Who shall

rael. And Jehovah [f]thundered with a great voice on that day against the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel. And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah, and [j]pursued the Philistines, and smote them as far as below Bethcar. And Samuel took a [k]stone, and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, and said, Hitherto hath Jehovah helped us. So the Philistines were humbled, and came no more into the border of Israel. And the hand of Jehovah was against the Philistines [l]all the days of Samuel. And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were [m]restored to Israel from Ekron even unto Gath; and the borders of them did Israel deliver out of the hand of the Philistines. And there was [n]peace between Israel and the Amorite.

3. (15-17.) The prophet judge.

[3]And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.

[f] 2 Sam. 22. 14, 15.

[j] 1 Sam. 14. 21, 22.

[k] *cf.* Josh. 24. 26–28.

[l] *cf.* Judg. 2. 7.

[m] Judg. 11. 33.

[n] *cf.* Judg. 3. 11, etc.

convert the crowd of feeble and affrighted people into warriors? All the more shall the Lord, therefore, Himself be seen: "Jehovah thundered with a great voice on that day against the Philistines"; how would all His former witness in their land interpret to them this voice! "And they were smitten before Israel."

No great victory, after all, for Israel to boast of; except they will boast themselves in the Lord: a victory, therefore, safe and glorious,— the very best that could be. "And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them as far as below Beth-car,"— the "house of the [skipping] lamb": Israel, seen now as identified with the lamb sacrificed in their behalf, housed and happy.

So Ebenezer at last gains its name — the "stone of help." "The Philistines were humbled, and came no more into the border of Israel." The cities taken by them are restored; and Jehovah's hand is against them all the days of Samuel. With the rise of the king, matters assume, as we know, another aspect.

(iii.) Samuel is now the prophet-judge in Israel. The judge shadows the king, although not that; and thus we see in Samuel, as a type of Christ, the intimation of what in Him are united in full reality,— priest, prophet, king. It is only an intimation, not the reality, and thus points, as does the whole Old Testament, beyond itself. All types must, for this reason, be imperfect: the "shadow, and not the very image." (Heb. x. 1.) Yet the shadow has its proportional completeness: the high priest, as answering by Urim, became in so far the prophet and judge,— two things which naturally come together; the king, as we see him in David, is fully the prophet, while he orders the priestly service, and brings the ark to Zion. But here, for reasons we may see afterward, the type cannot be so complete.

There are four stations at which, in yearly circuit, Samuel judges the people. Let us notice, as illustrative of the exact method of Scripture, that three of the places are distinguished from the fourth, which is his own abode. They should thus stand the numerical test throughout; and being in circuit, show, perhaps, an orderly connection in their meanings also. Let us see if this hope be justified.

Naturally, as judicial stations, they will speak of different points of view, according to which judgment will be exercised; according to which Christ, as Son of man (for all judgment is committed to him as that) views the people He has redeemed. This will probably show us, also, why it is the *fourth* place at which he abides,— Ramah.

Bethel is the first station. It is a name which we are well acquainted with, as with what it stands for. Bethel is the "house of God" (El, the Mighty One),

> And he went from year to year in circuit to [o]Bethel and [p]Gilgal and [q]Mizpah, and judged Israel in all those places. And his return was to [r]Ramah; for there was

[o] *cf.* Gen. 35. 7.
[p] *cf.* Josh. 5. 2-9.
[q] *cf.* ver. 5.
[r] *cf.* ch. 1. 1.

and we see in Jacob the discipline connected with it, as well as the mighty work that is done by this—the transformation of Jacob into Israel. In the order of the Genesis-histories Jacob follows Isaac, in whom we have, as Paul in Galatians teaches us, the children of the free woman, born into the liberty of the sons of God. Bethel is thus a keynote word, which tells of the rule of God as Father over His house, with the blessed consequences of this.

But Christ is "Son over the house of God,"* and this character of judgment must belong to Him. We begin, therefore, first with that which is first of all our place. Children of God, and with the Spirit of adoption, we must *be* His children (Matt. v. 45), acting in character, and showing likeness to Him, as "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. i. 4). The Father's judgment is to develop and maintain this in us; and this, therefore, is plainly the first judicial station of our Samuel.

The second is Gilgal, where the reproach of Egypt was rolled off Israel; and this, as we have elsewhere seen (p. 43), was the reproach of slavery. In what we have just now considered, we have already had implied for us the liberty of sons (and this is the connection with the present); but it is circumcision that at Gilgal brings into practical liberty. Circumcision it is that *makes* Gilgal; and circumcision is the "putting off the body of the flesh" (Col. ii. 11, R. V.), "having no confidence in it." (Phil. iii. 3.) This goes with what is the positive side for the Christian, the worship of God in the Spirit, and glorying in Christ Jesus; and thus the free, holy, happy service of love is maintained.

The negative attainment without the positive is impossible; but it is the negative that is here insisted on: as the second place implies, the deliverance, the setting free. The judgment here is thus the complement of what Bethel has shown us.

The third station is one more difficult to realize in its exact meaning. Mizpah (or Mizpeh) means simply the "watchtower," and the general thought is susceptible of different applications. (See pp. 104, 134.) The third place, which naturally connects itself with the sanctuary and the presence of God, would suggest, however, that the *watching* is to be taken as in Hab. ii. 1, "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what He will say unto me." The gatherings to Mizpah in the book of Judges (ch. xx.), and just now, according to the word of Samuel, have both, more or less, this character. It would appear, therefore, that what is implied in it is the watchfulness of one to whom the path of faith is a reality, and thus the positive guidance of God from day to day. So were Israel guided, as we know; and even more does the promise on His part speak the need of it, "I will guide thee with mine eye." (Ps. xxxii. 8.) For this there must be patient and steady watching; and the whole difference between a right path and a wrong is implied in it. Abstract right and wrong are by no means the whole question, and do not settle the matter for us. Beyond this lies all the will of God, personally, for each one of His own, with which is involved His whole right over them, but also the display of His wisdom and goodness abidingly in their behalf. Here, then, is a distinct ground of judgment from either of the former, a third station for our Prophet-Judge.

The fourth is Samuel's own city, Ramah, the "height." The name is, in its full length, Ramathaim-zophim, the "two heights of the watchers." Here we are in connection clearly with the last thought. The meaning and application we have already had. It suggests the place in Christ, linked with his appearance as Man in the presence of God for us, the dwelling-place of the Son of *man*, that it is His as Man being emphasized by the *fourth* place here. Yet we have

* Heb. iii. 6, where we must read, with the Revised Version, "over his house,"—God's,—not "his own," as in the common version.

his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an [s]altar to Jehovah.

[s] *cf.* Gen. 12. 8.

DIVISION 2. (Chap. viii.–xv.)

Saul, the People's Saviour, but not the divine.

The king demanded. 1. (vv. 1–9.) A unanimous choice.

(VIII.) 1. [1] AND it came to pass, when Samuel was [t]old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. And the name of his first-born was Joel, and the name of his second, Abiah: and they were judges in Beer-

[t] 1 Ki. 1. 1. ch. 2. 22.

traveled, in fact, in circuit, as Samuel did: for this we cannot disconnect from His own saying, "My Father, and your Father; my God, and your God;" or from the end designed by God, "that He should be the first-born among many brethren." We are looking, therefore, toward Bethel again.

But here is the abiding ground of judgment, even as "walk ye in Him" is our peculiar responsibility as Christians. With this the circle of responsibility is complete. Here, too, is the altar to Jehovah, our place of acceptance and worship. The Lord make us realize in all this the fullness and depth of His precious word!

DIV. 2.

We come now to the demand of the people for a king, and the history of Saul, the king given them according to their request. Though pointed out by God, in the recognized way of ascertaining His will, namely, by lot, yet he is exactly the king they have in mind, as even his height of stature shows. In this way alone could their desire be tested aright, to have a king, like all the nations. He is not after God's heart, but after the people's heart, and so He says: "I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath." (Hosea xiii. 11.) The lesson was not for that generation only, however; otherwise, it would be of little importance. In all this proving of Israel, as we have again and again been called to realize, it is man as man that is proved, and the depths of his heart unveiled. As to the people, their choice here is really such as they displayed at a later day, when they cried, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" "They have rejected Me," says Jehovah.

It was not that God had not designed them to have a king. The express provision in Deuteronomy is at least proof that one was permissible (ch. xvii. 14–20). The song of Hannah has already anticipated it. God's purpose in Christ could only be so fulfilled. Moreover, we have already seen that this was to be expressed in the history anticipatively. The king also, when in truth He shall come, will not only be in full accord with the divine throne over all, but will be the complete expression of it. The evil was in the evident unbelief on the part of the people; and, as naturally connecting itself with this, the total opposition to God in the king they wanted. Saul, the *Benjamite*, carries us back indeed to the book of Genesis, where we have seen in Benjamin the type (when separated from Joseph) of that Messiah to which Israel clings, a deliverer by power merely. As such they would have received Christ, yea, "taken him *by force* to make him a king," a manifest sign of the king of their choice. Barabbas, had he had the power, would really have suited them, as Barcochba afterwards* *did* suit them. God, and the whole relation of their souls to Him, they would gladly have left out.

This is the significance, then, of Saul, and it is wider than any merely Jewish one, while yet the Jew is necessarily in the fore-front.

* An infidel Rabbi of this day owns fully that Barcochba, the leader of the Jewish insurrection under Hadrian, "had all the qualifications of a Messiah." "He was, barring anointment, a Messiah who tallied, every inch of him, with the hopes which his nation harbored concerning such a man."—(Messianic Expectations, by Solomon Schindler.)

sheba. And his sons walked [a]not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment. And all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel to Ramah, and said unto him: Behold, thou art become old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways; now set us a [b]king to judge us, like all the nations. And the thing was [c]evil in Samuel's eyes when they said, Give us a king to judge us; and Samuel prayed unto Jehovah. And Jehovah said unto Samuel, [x]Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have [y]rejected me, that I should not reign over them. According to [z]all the deeds that they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, in that they have forsaken me and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. And now hearken unto their voice; only [a]testify solemnly unto them, and declare unto them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

2. (10–22.) Warning as to the king.

[2] And Samuel spake all Jehovah's words unto the

a *ctr.* Gen. 18. 19.

b Deut. 17. 14. Hos. 13. 10, 11.

c Deut. 28. 36.

x *cf.* Deut. 1. 22, 23.

y ver. 25. *cf.* Jno. 19. 14–16.

z *cf.* Ex. 32. 1–6.

a ch. 10. 25.

1. (i.) The occasion of the demand for a king is the misbehavior of Samuel's sons, whom in his old age he had made judges in Beersheba. Joel and Abiah, corrupted by opportunity, take bribes, and pervert justice; a thing which comes into view in the last days also, in connection with the coming of Christ as King, to exercise the judgment of God among the people (Ps. lxxxix). Their names stand for what they were responsible as judges to maintain,—Jehovah as the Mighty God (Joel), and the Father of the people (Abiah).* The people should have reasoned better: if so it were with Samuel's sons, what hope of man at all? and should have fled to God as the only righteous One. But they do not: instead of this the whole nation, as represented by their elders, come to Samuel, seeking a king to judge them, like the nations round. Their peculiar privilege of direct leaning upon God alone they are more than ready to give up for an arm of flesh; and though their plea is "to judge us," they must have been well aware how far judgment was exercised among the nations by their kings. In fact, as comes out afterwards, there was another cause in the threatening attitude of the Ammonites again, as in Jephthah's time (chap. xii. 12). In any case there was lack of faith in Him who had so constantly, whenever they had turned to Him, come in for them. As they looked back they could, indeed, see many reverses, and long captivities. The holiness of God had shown itself as Joshua had declared it would. Doubtless they would rather have something that they could cling to, other than this which involved the necessity of persistent obedience. This has been found again and again among the people of God. They could not stand before "this holy Lord God," and they unanimously preferred distance. The story is so old as to have become a trite and common thing; but it has not lost its significance, though it may its power to impress.

There are prayers that have to be granted, but in judgment: so with this prayer for a king. But care is taken that even self-deception shall be hardly possible. They are to have testimony from the Lord Himself of what all that is around them bore patent witness also—the manner of this king that they desired. Samuel is instructed to declare all this to them, that their decision may be in the plainest light that can be given.

(ii.) The testimony is, after all, simple enough. Man being what he is, honor

* Joel, "Jehovah [is] the Mighty God"; Abiah, "the Father [is] Jah."

people that asked of him a king. And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your [b]sons, and appoint them for himself in his chariots and among his horsemen; and they shall run before his chariots; and he will appoint him [c]captains over thousands and captains over fifties, and [men] to plough his ground, and reap his harvest, and make his instruments of war and the equipment of his chariots. And he will take your daughters for perfumers, and cooks, and bakers. And your [d]fields, and your vineyards, and your olive-yards, the best of them, he will take and give unto his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed and of your vineyards, and give to his eunuchs and to his servants. And he will take your bondmen and your bondmaids, and your comeliest young men, and your asses, and use them for his work. He will take the tenth of your [e]sheep. And ye shall be his servants. And ye will [f]cry out in that day because of your king whom ye have chosen; and Jehovah will not answer you in that day.

And the people [g]refused to hearken to the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay, but there shall be a king over us, and we too will be [h]like all the nations, and our king shall judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles. And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and [i]spake them in Jehovah's ears. And Jehovah said unto Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city.

(IX.–X. 16.)

The king indicated. I. (IX. 1-10.) The overruling of God.

2. [1]And there was a man of [j]Benjamin, whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, the son of a Benjamite, a mighty man of valor. And he had a son whose name was Saul, in youthful prime, and [k]goodly: and there

b 1 ch. 14. 52.
c ch. 18. 5.
d 1 Kl. 21.7-16. ch. 22. 7. *ctr.* Eze.46. 18.
e *cf.* 1 Kl.4.7.
f *cf.* 1 Kings 12. 4. *ctr.* Ps.72.4.
g *cf.* Num. 14. 9.
h ver. 5. Lev. 18. 3. Deut. 4.7,8.
i ch. 12. 23.
j *cf.* Judg.20. 12. *ctr.* Gen.49. 10 with Micah 5. 2.
k *cf.* ch.16.7.

cannot be given him but he will debase himself with it. Put him in a place of service, he will serve himself first of all. Combine these two, as in the case of a king, self will shine out in him in the fullest way. This is nothing strange, alas, but the commonest experience. But here a people with Jehovah Himself the King, deliberately accepts the yoke of another!

2. (i.) The king in Israel, however, must be chosen of God, for he is to be the minister and viceroy of God. He must be pointed out to himself as the chosen of God, that he may realize aright his responsibility to Him, and be made to realize in quiet, before exaltation comes, the purpose of it. God will do everything possible to make untrue His own prophecy of the king that is to be: and to this end comes all this preparatory dealing with Saul.

Saul's genealogy is carefully given us for six generations back, himself being the seventh, *Shaul*, the "asked," complete in all that makes man naturally to be desired of man. This genealogy is surely in its meaning, therefore, moral, and scarcely favorable in its significance. Its interpretation is somewhat difficult, and yet may be suggested, and its numerical character, which by this time we may assure ourselves of, will help and test the attempt to understand it. Meant to be understood it necessarily is, appealing with all Scripture to

> was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he; from his shoulders and up he was taller than any of the people. And the she-asses of Kish, Saul's father, were lost; and Kish said to Saul his son, Take, I pray thee, one of the young men with thee, and arise,

man as the rational creature of God, who needs yet continually to be taught of God.

The numbers read naturally backward, according to the actual descent, Kish being the sixth and not the first in the line given here. To understand it, therefore, it would seem that we should trace it in the same order.

We begin, then, with one who is simply given as "a man of Benjamin," leaving more than the "higher critics" to wonder if the name has not dropped out. For the moral purpose, the omission of a name may itself have meaning. We have been taught of the Spirit Himself so to think of the omissions in the account of Melchizedek, and have seen it to be so with the nameless servant of Abraham (Gen. xxiv.) and the nameless city in Reuben (Josh. xiii. 16); and so it may well be here. The significance of Saul's descent from Benjamin we have briefly glanced at; and at the outset Kish is set before us here as a "man of Benjamin": the repetition here we may conceive, therefore, to have another meaning; and from what has been said, not in any sense an evil one. We may well be carried back to him who was before any failure, to show us the better the failure itself, and how it came about. A "man of Benjamin," as that, conveys no suggestion of evil, and there being no name beside, forbids the thought of any departure from the character implied in the tribal name. How good a sign of integrity for a child of Benjamin to be known only as that, with no intrusion of self to destroy simplicity! Here, then, we have got back beyond any evil development, if afterwards we should find this; while even here, however, we may have what enters into the making of Saul the "asked": for those who can build the sepulchres of the prophets whom their fathers slew, can take pleasure in saintly lineage while far from saintliness.

The second name in descent is that of Aphiah; and if we have been right thus far in interpretation, then we may find the initial point of departure in this second name, the contrast with the first. For Aphiah means most legitimately (as the causative of *puah*), "I will utter," or "speak out"; and if we think of that name unuttered which heads the genealogy, it is natural to put these things together. We have now in opposition to the lowliness forgetful of self, the self-importance which needs must find utterance. And is not this always the point of departure from God, the true fall of the creature,—which is, indeed, to take up the taunt of the enemy, ever a "fall *upward*,"—the creature lifting itself out of its place, in obedience to the suggestion, "ye shall be as God"? The step here, in such a history as this, vindicates itself, therefore, as at least the image of truth.

The third name, under the number of manifestation, reveals the true character of all self-assumption in a child of God. It is Bechorath, "primogeniture," the claim of nature, not of grace, of *first* against *new* birth. The order is "first, that which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual." (1 Cor. xv. 46). In the book of Genesis we are familiar with the fact that the first-born constantly thus *loses* the birthright,—Ishmael to Isaac, Esau to Jacob, Reuben to Joseph, Manasseh to Ephraim. If the child of God betray self-confidence, it is always and of necessity "confidence in the *flesh*." The principle of the new nature is faith, and faith's object never can be self. Even faith can, alas, be gloried in; but it cannot "glory," save in Christ.

Zeror, under the fourth number, which is that of the creature, means "tightly inclosed," or "pressed together." It is thus used for a "stone," because of the compression of its particles. It speaks here, therefore, as it would seem, of the narrow sphere and restricted limits of the old creation, shut in between birth

go seek the asses. And he passed through [l]Mount Ephraim, and passed through the land of Shalisha, and they found them not; and they passed through the land of Shaalim, and there they were not; and they passed through the land of Jemini, and found them not. When they were come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his

[l] ch. 1. 1. ch. 14. 22.

and death, confined to the things seen and temporal. Yet men hug these chains, alas, and deliberately shut out heaven and eternity, and count themselves wise in doing so. Here is the sphere of their "primogeniture," however, and they cannot, if they would, transcend it.

But in this sphere still how much space is there for self to display itself in. As an acre of ground may be an ant's world, so the contraction of man's desires gives him scope enough for the petty being into which he has shriveled up. If, moreover, the surface of the ground is actually narrow, he can do as in our modern cities,—build into the air. Great he must be, though it were only in imagination; and here, under the fifth number, that of capacity, we have Abiel,—not, as the name might signify, "God [is] my Father," but rather "Father of might": one whose strength is in himself. Such are the contradictions, such the possibilities and actuality of this strange being, man! With all its contradictions, this is still the character of the Sauls of whatever day. Kish ends the list with the assurance implied in his name, "ensnaring," of the magic for deception that abides in all this for those for whom the light of the divine presence has not dispelled the illusion, and brought face to face with the holiness of truth. This Saul, this man of the people, has, beside all this, many rightly attractive qualities. We shall find him shortly tested under the hand of God,—surely not unmercifully, that were absolute impossibility from Him; yet so that he collapses utterly, and shows himself the poor lost creature that he is,—even so, not turning to Him, nor seeking the honor that is of God only. As he is the man of the people, so before the people he lives the sham life that men count really life; when the bubble breaks all is gone, out of the wreck nothing saved, the freightage of a soul precious to God, and worth Christ's sacrifice to save it, gone irretrievably, and forever. "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

The overruling of God is clearly seen in the way Saul is led up to meet Samuel, ignorant of the hand that is guiding him,—ignorant of the very person of Samuel, as it would seem, and all his memorable history. Suited king for such a people, who were deliberately ignoring God's mercies to them in the past, of which the prophet had been the divine instrument. Saul is seeking his father's she-asses which have gone astray, and finds an intractable and rebellious nation, worse by far than these, put into his hand without seeking, to be brought back to God. In both cases he is unsuccessful: yet, had he sought the last with the same energy with which he had sought the first, he might have had the success which was now reserved for one to come after him.

A suggestion may be made as to the places of Saul's vain search. There are four places in which he *searches*, but these are divided into three stages only, Mount Ephraim and the land of Shalisha being put together. In the land of Zuph, which comes significantly, therefore, as a fourth stage (the number of testing and failure), he does *not* search, but abandons his quest; and the name Zuph means "honeycomb," the type of the sweetness of natural things, which have overcome many more than Saul. Thus there is a gleam of light which should encourage us to look further. The first stage gives us, under the number of obedience, Mount Ephraim, the "fruitfulness" which God seeks in us, with the "land of Shalisha," ("third part," or "divided into three,") which I cannot interpret. Here "they found them not." The second stage may speak of "humiliation," where confessed failure in obedience would naturally bring the soul; and the name agrees with this, Shaalim, probably "hollows" or "deep valleys": but "there they were not." The third stage is the "land of Jemini,"

servant that was with him, Come and let us return; lest my father give up about the asses, and be anxious about us. And he said unto him, Behold now, a [m]man of God is in this city, and the man is held in honor; all that he saith cometh surely to pass. Let us now go thither: perhaps he will tell us our way in which we should go. And Saul said unto his servant, But behold, if we go, [n]what shall we bring the man? for the bread is spent in our vessels, and there is not a present to bring to the man of God: what have we? And the servant answered Saul again, and said, Behold, I have here at hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver: that will I give to the man of God, to tell us our way. (In former time in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he spake in this way: Come, let us go to the seer: for he that is now called a [o]prophet was in former time called a seer.) And Saul said unto his servant, Well said; come, let us go. And they went unto the city where the man of God was.

m 1 Ki. 22.7.

n cf. 1 Ki. 14. 3, 2 Ki. 5. 15, 16.

o 1 Chron. 9. 22. Is. 30. 10.

2. (11-24.) A lesson of communion.

[2]As they were going up the ascent to the city, they found young maidens going forth to draw water, and said unto them, Is the seer here? And they answered them, and said, He is; behold, he is before thee: make haste now, for he came into the city to-day; for the people have a [p]sacrifice in the high place to-day. As

p cf. Lev. 17. 8, 9.

("my right hand,") the place of dependent exaltation to which the "valley of humiliation" so often leads, through grace: but there, too, "they found them not." Israel was, indeed, astray; nor could *he* find them whom the sweetness of nature beguiled from the search.

But at this point the servant's voice is heard, counseling, as the true servant will, to "ask of God." Saul does not think of this, nor know the man who can declare His mind. All this is characteristic; as it is that with the servant should be found the fitting present for the man of God: little enough, only the fourth part of a shekel, but still the "silver" of atonement,—current coin in the kingdom of God. So they are provided.

A parenthesis is introduced here to let us know the identity between the "prophet" and the "seer." The latter term simply implied the knowledge which the prophet had, not the source of it. The *nahbi*, the prophet, was the mouthpiece of God, whose word filled him and "bubbled forth" from him. The people of the time here indicated spoke but of the "seer." It was a day of decline, when carnal men thought at least much more of the effect than of the cause, and sought the one while they ignored the other. God had spoken long since of the "prophet"; the people cared but for the "seer." Saul, upon this low ground, approves what he could not initiate. He, too, seeks the "seer"; while the prophet, taught of God, is seeking for Him this blind man, brought by a way he knows not.

(ii.) To meet the seer they have to go up to a higher level, and Saul finds himself an inquirer in a strange place. First of all, there meet them on the ascent young maidens going forth to draw water, and from them they obtain their first answer. By the wells all through we have communications of grace, simple enough when we know for what the well stands. Those who draw water are, of course, those who seek and use the living waters of the Spirit; and with these is the knowledge of the things of God. From these Saul learns not only of the seer, but of the sacrifice, and a feast upon the sacrifice, the great lesson of

soon as ye be come into the city ye shall straightway find him, before he go up to the [q]high place to eat; for the people will not eat until he come, for he blesseth the sacrifice; afterward they eat that are invited. And now go up, for ye shall find him this day. And they went up into the city. As they were going into the midst of the city, behold, Samuel was coming towards them, going up to the high place.

[q] 1 Ki. 3. 2.

Now Jehovah had [r]informed Samuel, a day before Saul came, saying, About this time to-morrow I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be prince over my people Israel, and he shall save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have [s]looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me. And when Samuel saw Saul, Jehovah answered him, Behold the man of whom I spake unto thee: this man shall have authority over my people. And Saul drew near to Samuel in the midst of the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is. And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I am the seer: go up before me to the high place, and ye shall eat with me to-day; and in the morning I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thy heart. And as for the asses that were lost to thee three days ago, set not thy heart on them, for they are found; and on whom is all the [t]desire of Israel? is it not on thee, and on all thy father's house? And Saul answered and said,

[r] *cf.* ch. 3. 7. Amos 3. 7.

[s] Ex. 3. 7.

[t] ch. 8. 5, etc. *cfr.* ch. 13. 14.

communion for a king to learn. We have long since looked at the peace-offering (Lev. iii. and vii. 11, seq.) where God and men sit, so to speak, at a common table, brought together by the work of the cross, and with common delight in Him who has made peace by it. But this is the foundation of the reign of peace, the reign of God in righteousness and peace among men. When it really comes, the Lamb, the Victim, will be on the Throne; and upon this foundation only can there be the least anticipation of this blessed time. Of all this, therefore, Saul must learn, to be fitted for his kingdom. He must himself participate in this peace. The link that unites God and man is the only link that unites man and man.

God is speaking in His love, seeking to win for himself this goodly creature of His hand. He reveals to Samuel, the day before Saul comes, that He is sending him, and that He means through him to minister to His people's need. The prince shall be the saviour. And that he may be fully such, God would bring him to have first to do with Himself, before he comes to stand in the presence of the people. Thus by degrees He breaks to him His purpose: a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and made so by dreadful penalty exacted for a dreadful crime, He will take him with all the littleness which should keep him lowly, and mindful—as what Benjamite could be unmindful?—of the discipline through which they had all passed, and set him at the head of all the people. Samuel salutes him thus with the surprising news that upon him is fixed the desire of Israel. This can only mean that what they sought in a king he was the very man to answer to. He was in this way really the man of the people's choice, the very style and pattern of the king they craved. But being such, God would, if he met this desire, make him much more,—desired to have him for Himself and with Himself, and for this was meeting him after the manner here.

Am not I a Benjamite, of the [u]smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? why then dost thou speak such words to me? And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the chamber, and gave them place at the [v]head of them that were invited; and they were about thirty men. And Samuel said to the cook, Bring the portion that I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee; and the cook took up the [w]shoulder and what was on it, and set it before Saul. And he said, Behold what was reserved to set before thee! eat; for unto this time hath it been kept for thee, since I said, I have invited the people. So Saul ate with Samuel that day.

[u] Judg. 6. 15. ch. 15. 17. ch. 18. 18.

[v] *cf.* Lk. 14. 7–11.

[w] Lev. 7. 32–34.

3. (25–x. 16.) Saul anointed, and the signs that follow.

[3]And they came down from the high place into the city, and he spake with Saul upon the roof. And they [x]rose early, and when it was about day-dawn, Samuel called to Saul upon the roof, saying, Arise, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, into the street. As they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Tell the servant to pass on before us (and he passed on), but stand thou still now, that I may

[x] Josh. 3. 10. ch. 17. 20.

Now he is called to feast upon the sacrifice. To feast upon love's provision for one's need, freely partaking of what has cost so much to give, is the way of acquirement of the spirit of sacrifice — of service which is that. So the special part which has been reserved for him is the burden-bearing shoulder, the priest's portion (Ex. xxix. 27): for the priest's heart must go with the kingly office; in Him whose representative Saul is to be, king and priest are united together.

(iii.) Saul abides with Samuel for the night, and early in the morning is sent away. Samuel anoints him,—at once the assurance of power which he shall have, and the character of it, and the dependence upon the Spirit which it implies. Then the first kiss of subjection is on the part of the man of God, just now the judge of Israel. He gives him also three "signs," which, when they come to pass, he is to do as his hand finds, in the full conviction that God is with him. These signs are, of course, to be more than mere foreseen occurrences. They are to have in themselves a voice, which will, however, depend upon himself for its significance: he must have in himself the understanding heart, or he will miss the meaning. "How often there is a meaning, a language, perfectly intelligible to one who has ears to hear, but which escapes us because our gross and hardened heart has no spiritual intelligence or discernment! And yet all our future hangs upon it. God has shown our incapacity for the blessing it involved. Nevertheless the means were not wanting." ("*Synopsis.*") From this necessity on our part, moreover, divine grace itself cannot release us. It would not be grace to do so. Yet how much of our lives are barren of meaning because we have not had capacity to read this language, or quickness to discern the voice that was speaking to us! Nor is this only true of the facts of the world around us, or of the events of our own lives: Scripture itself, with all its wealth of blessedness, is given "that the *man of God* may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Even its plainest parts need spiritual discernment; and how much of it is written in a way that is *not* plain, but which needs and calls for spiritual intelligence and diligent inquiry, in order to any proper apprehension.

Saul then is left to his ability to read these signs; not as if the Lord were not ready to endue him with all the ability needed; of that we require no assurance:

cause thee to hear the [y] word of God. And Samuel took a vial of oil, and [z] poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not that Jehovah hath anointed thee to be prince over his inheritance? When thou goest from me to-day, thou shalt find two men by [a] Rachel's sepulchre in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah, and they will say unto thee, The asses that thou wentest to seek are found; and lo, thy father hath dismissed the matter of the asses, and is anxious as to you, saying, What shall I do as to my son? And thou shalt go on forward from thence, and shalt come to the oak of Tabor, and there three men shall meet thee going up to God, to [b] Bethel, one carrying three [c] kids, and another carrying three loaves of [d] bread, and another carrying a bottle of [e] wine. And they will ask of thy welfare, and give thee two loaves of bread, which thou shalt receive at their hands. After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where are the posts of the Philistines. And it shall be, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou wilt meet a company of [f] prophets coming down

[y] ch. 15. 16. [z] ctr. ch. 16. 3.
[a] Gen. 35. 19, 20.
[b] Gen. 28. 18, 19.
[c] cf. Lev. 5. 6. with 2 Cor. 5. 21.
[d] cf. Lev. 2. 4. with Jno. 6. 33.
[e] cf. Num. 28. 14 with Luke 22. 20.
[f] cf. ch. 19. 18–24.

but here is the mystery of that dependent, yet free and accountable being of which we are possessed. We share with Saul this nature, with all its privilege, and with all its responsibility; and the Lord's ways are equal, let us remember, with us all.

The first sign, in accordance with its numerical meaning, carries him back to Benjamin's *origin*. He was the son of his mother's sorrow,—she had died to give him birth; and where her grave stood there his inheritance began,*—at Zelzah more strictly, which interprets the thought as "shadowed brightness." The world is shadowed when heaven stands revealed; and so in the Cross, the deepest shadow ever cast upon it. He also that will save his life shall lose it; but he that loses it in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. The self-renunciation Saul so needed is here enforced for him; and here two men meet him to let him know that, apart from his labor, the asses that he sought are found, and his father's heart is yearning for his son. God can as easily work without us as He can with us; need of us He has not, but that heart of love to which our human affections, given of Him, truly, if feebly, testify. Many lessons, from different sides, concur here, evidently for one purpose—that Saul may be in the hand of God the free but devoted instrument He seeks.

The second sign yields its lesson in due order, that to the one so yielded up to God fellowship and help shall come from those who seek God. Here *three* men appeared instead of two, for they represent the whole Godhead, though seen in His people, acting in the strengthening of His servant; and they go up to God to Bethel, where Jacob learnt that God was—not simply *his* God, but the God of His own house, governing it for Himself. It is with those who seek God *there* that there will be found the apprehension of His mind; and with these, at the oak of Tabor, the living strength that unites with "purpose," the man of God will have recognition. These may be few indeed; they ordinarily *are* few; but they represent, as we have seen, the fellowship of God Himself. Their gifts—what they have for God—are to be noted: three goats, one for each man, for the sin-offering; the bread, which they can share with another; the drink-offering wine, which is to be poured out to God. Such a company speaks plainly of its faith, and may be recognized by those who have hearts for it.

The third sign shows the work of the Spirit of God, even in a scene in which

* This was not, of course, geographically exact, but near enough for the meaning which seems given to it here.

from the high place, and before them a lyre and timbrel and pipe and harp, and they prophesying. And the Spirit of Jehovah shall [g] come suddenly upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and thou shalt be changed into another man. And when these signs shall come to pass to thee, do thou [h] as thy hand shall find: for God is with thee. And thou shalt go down before me to [i] Gilgal; and behold, I will come down to thee, to offer up [j] burnt-offerings, to sacrifice sacrifices of peace-offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry until I come to thee, and show thee what thou shalt do.

And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him [k] another heart; and all those signs [l] came to pass that day. And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. And it was so, when all that knew him before saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What is this that hath happened to the son of Kish? [m] is Saul also among the prophets? And a man of that place answered and said, And who is their father? Therefore it became a proverb, Is Saul also among the prophets? And when he had ended prophesying he came to the high place. And Saul's uncle said unto

[g] ch. 11. 6.
[h] ch. 11. 7, etc. ch. 14. 1, etc.
[i] Judg. 3. 19. ch. 11. 14.
[j] ch. 13. 8–14.
[k] *cf.* ch. 16. 14. *cfr.* Jno. 3. 3–7.
[l] ch. 3. 19.
[m] ch. 18. 10. ch. 19. 24.

the Philistine has his posts at the very hill of God itself.* The presence of the enemy at such a place is the sad evidence of the state of things in Israel; but the remedy therefor is not, in the first place, by power, but by return to God and subjection to Him. He must be exalted where He has been dishonored; and this is what the spirit of prophecy does. Saul meets here, therefore, a company of prophets, and their various instruments of music show the joy and boldness that accompany the return of heart to God. How small a thing is the enemy in the presence of God! And this joy in Him is the sure sign of the overthrow of all that opposes itself to Him. Jehoshaphat's singers and trumpeters are in the forefront of the host, and it is to these that the Lord hearkens and gives victory. (2 Chron. xx. 22.) What a lesson for the Benjamite warrior, Saul!

At this point the Spirit of Jehovah would come upon him, and he would be changed into another man, gifted with needed ability for the occasion, according to the place in which God had put him for the blessing of the people. Then he was to act as his hand found opportunity, for God was with him.

But there follows a needed limiting of power, which might easily, in a time of such disorder, be carried too far. And here Samuel's words look on to a time of special testing for Saul after he shall have been confirmed in the kingdom. In fact, he failed then, and his failure forfeited for him the continuance of the royal power in his house. He was to go down before Samuel to Gilgal, and there wait for him to offer the offerings needed. Seven days he would have to wait, and God would guide him through the prophet as to what to do. From this it is manifest that Samuel remained the representative of the kingdom over all, even when Saul took the lower kingdom: and this was the more necessary to be insisted on in view of the spirit of prophecy coming upon Saul also. But the men themselves were total contrasts; and here the two kingdoms show their possible opposition to each other,—a possibility to become actuality at an after time.

* Why called so, we are not told, apparently; nor is it needed for the purpose of the lesson.

him and to his servant, Whither went ye? And he said, To seek the asses; and when we saw that they were nowhere we went to Samuel. And Saul's uncle said, Tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel said unto you. And Saul said unto his uncle, He told us for certain that the asses were found. But of the matter of the kingdom, of which Samuel had spoken, he [n] told him not. n *cf.* Luke 2. 19, 51.

(X. 17-XI.)

The king openly manifested. 1. (17-27.) The lot.

3. [1]And Samuel called the people together to Jehovah to [o]Mizpah. And he said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith Jehovah the God of Israel, *I* [p]brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians, and from the hand of all the kingdoms that oppressed you; but *ye* have this day [q]rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities, and have said unto him, [Nay,] but a king shalt thou set over us. Now therefore, present yourselves before Jehovah by your tribes and by your thousands. And Samuel caused all the [r]tribes of Israel to come near, and the tribe of Benjamin was taken. And he caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, and the family of Matri was taken; and Saul the son of Kish was taken. And they sought him, but he was not to be found. And they inquired of Jehovah further, Has the man yet come hither? And Jehovah said, Behold, he is [s]hidden among the baggage. And

o ch. 7. 5.
p Josh. 24. 6, etc.
q ch. 8. 7.
r ch. 14. 41.
s ch. 9. 21.

All these signs followed, as Samuel had foretold, and the same day. But "Saul among the prophets" became an ominous proverb in Israel, in spite of the prudent question of the bystander, who infers that God is the Source of the prophecy, thus the Father of the prophets. To his uncle's questioning he replies, without divulging the secret of the kingdom.

3. The third subdivision gives the open manifestation of the king: first, by the lot, the way in which the divine choice was ascertained; then in the deliverance actually effected by him,—the work, in part, which he was needed and raised up to do. This confirms him in the place which God had given him.

(i.) We have seen the lot used in the apportionment of their inheritance to the tribes of Israel, and to discover the guilty one in the case of the appropriation of that which was devoted to the Lord at Jericho. The account here is very brief: first, we hear of Benjamin being taken, then of the family of Matri (only mentioned here), and then of Saul, the son of Kish. Matri means, probably, "Jehovah is watching." The place of gathering being Mizpeh, the "watchtower," the significance of which we have seen as implying the people watching what Jehovah will say, here we may be reminded of the converse truth. Jehovah, in fact, was not speaking out His mind. He had done so, and they had given no heed. Now, even while He indicated Saul, it was as *their* choice, rather than *His*. He is forced to silence, and to await the result of their self-will. So Samuel once more warns them that in seeking a king they were rejecting the Lord. The lot has lost, therefore, its true meaning: it is not properly Jehovah's choice; and little can be said about it.

When Saul is announced, he is not to be found, until the Lord answers their inquiry by letting them know that he is hidden among the baggage. In truth he was,—a mere "vessel" among the dead, inanimate "vessels," (as the word means), which He can use, who can make all things serve Him, but without the

they ran and fetched him thence; and when he stood among the people, he was [t]taller than any of the people from his shoulders and upward. And Samuel said unto all the people, See ye him whom Jehovah hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people [u]shouted, and said, Live the king! And Samuel told the people the [v]manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before Jehovah. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house. And Saul also went home to [w]Gibeah; and there went with him a band whose hearts God had touched. But the children of Belial said, [x]How shall this man save us? and they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he was as a deaf man.

[t] ch. 16. 7.
[u] ch. 4. 5.
[v] *cf.* ch. 8. 10-17.
[w] Ju. 19. 12. ch. 13. 2.
[x] ch. 11. 12.

2. (xi. 1-11.) Saul the deliverer from Ammon.

[2]And [y]Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against [z]Jabesh-Gilead; and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us and we will [a]serve thee. And Nahash the Ammonite said unto them, On this [condition] will I make a covenant with you, that I put out all your right eyes, and lay it as a reproach upon [b]all Israel. And the elders

[y] Judg. 11. 4, 12. 2 Sam. 10. 2.
[z] ch. 31. 11. Judg. 21. 8.
[a] *cf.* Judg. 15. 11.
[b] *cf.* Josh. 7. 11. 1 Cor. 12. 21.

life and spirit of service. However, when he is brought out, for thews and sinews he is a man indeed, and towers over the heads of all the people. Samuel points out how well he answers the ideal that they seek, and the people shout in answer, "Live the King!" But it means as little as the king himself does. Just so far as Saul has risen above them they have shrunk. Their colossus is but a shadow over them. Could he be aught else, when they had put him between their souls and God!

But all is settled, and they must abide their choice. And indeed the godly can own God in it, and thus escape the shadow. Samuel tells them the manner of the kingdom, and writes it in a book, and it is laid up before the Lord. Then he sends them to their houses; and Saul returns to Gibeah, to his house. There is no exuberance of loyalty. What men set their hearts on, they often need only to have to find how little it is. *God* touches the hearts of some, that they follow Saul; else none would have done so! And the children of Belial ask now, what the men of piety would have asked before, "How shall this man save us?" *Before*, that question would have honored God; *now* it leaves Him out. With all "powers that be," faith recognizes, even in Saul, "a minister of God for good," and knows the omnipotent love that makes all things work for good. How could it "despise," as the men of Belial do, the "minister of God"?

Saul's new-found greatness sits well upon him too, just now. He is as a deaf man to all their murmurings.

(ii.) The deliverance from the Ammonites it is that shows Saul to be the deliverer for whom the people are waiting, and which confirms the kingdom in his hand. With the Ammonites we have been already made familiar, especially in connection with a former deliverance by Jephthah, and their significance cannot now be doubtful. We find them here once again attacking Israel, under their king Nahash, whose name, almost identical with that of Nahshon, prince of Judah in the wilderness, means "divination, augury." Nahshon, however, as we have seen in the book of the wilderness, is to be understood in a good sense, as Nahash the Ammonite cannot be. The divination of the heathen was assertedly the interpretation of a divine answer, though given through material signs, and the character of this is indicated in the identity of this word with that which was the general term for "serpent." The spirit of all doctrinal

of Jabesh said unto him, Give us seven days respite, that we may send [c]messengers into all the territory of Israel; and, if there be none to save us, we will come out unto thee. And the messengers came unto Gibeah of Saul, and spake the words in the ears of the people: and all the people lifted up their voice, and [d]wept. And lo, Saul came after the oxen, from the field; and Saul said, What [aileth] the people that they weep? and they told him the words of the men of Jabesh. And the [e]Spirit of God came suddenly upon Saul when he heard these things; and his anger was kindled greatly. And he took a yoke of oxen, and [f]hewed them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the territory of Israel, by the hands of messengers, saying, Whoso cometh not out after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the [g]fear of Jehovah fell upon the people, and they came out as one man. And he numbered them in Bezek, and the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of [h]Judah thirty thousand. And they said unto the messengers that had come, Thus shall ye say unto the men of Jabesh-Gilead, To-morrow, by the time the sun is hot, ye shall have help. And the messengers came, and told it to the men of Jabesh, and they were glad. And the men of Jabesh said, To-morrow will we come out

c *cf.* Josh. 10. 6.

d Judg. 21. 3. ch. 30. 4.

e ch. 10. 10. Judg. 14. 6.

f Judg. 19. 29, 30.

g *cf.* Josh. 3. 7. 1 Chr. 29. 25.

h *ctr.* Judg. 1. 2.

heresy (of which the Ammonite speaks) is indeed Satanic. As the Spirit of God is also the Spirit of truth, and by the truth it is that men are sanctified, so on the other hand, Satan is the father of lies, and destroys men with the poison of falsehood. Scripture, in entire opposition to the natural thought, emphasizes more strongly by far the condemnation of doctrinal than of moral evil, closely connected as these are; and it is not hard to understand why, if by the word of truth we are new begotten and sanctified. The lusts of the flesh bring with them—at least wherever the light shines—their own condemnation; but Satan's lie is the darkness which covers and shelters all the rest; or the false light that lures to shipwreck.

The attack of Nahash is naturally not upon the strongest part of Israel, but the weakest. Jabesh-gilead contributed no warriors to the Benjamite war, and was visited with ruthless destruction at the hands of united Israel at that time. Since then, it had recovered itself, but has here little strength of faith to oppose the enemy. Gilead, "the heap of witness," speaks of memory that should be fruitful; and in fact the country is so, even at the present day; but Jabesh, "dry," often "dried up, withered," speaks of the reverse of this, and it is there where the truth is not productive,—where decline has begun in the soul,—that the attacks of error are most easily effectual.

Jabesh will surrender, if that be all that is needed, and serve the king of Ammon; but the king will not agree, except they come to his terms, worthy as they are of an Ammonite. He must thrust out all their *right eyes*, and lay it as a reproach against Israel. Spiritually read, a reproach indeed, if we interpret, according to what we have had elsewhere (vol. i. p. 389, *n.*), the *right* eye as the eye of faith. Reason and faith are in fact the double witness in man which, where the soul is right with God, like the vision of the two eyes, accord in one image. But the following of man, which all heresy in its essence is, puts out therefore necessarily the eye of faith: for this sees God and not man. Nahash in his requirement speaks, therefore, quite intelligibly here.

unto you, and ye shall do unto us all that seemeth good in your eyes.

And it was so on the morrow, that Saul arrayed the people in [e]three companies, and they came into the midst of the host in the morning watch, and [f]slew the Ammonites until the heat of the day; and it was so that they that remained were scattered, so that two of them were not left together.

3. (xi.12-15.) The kingdom renewed.

[3]And the people said unto Samuel, [k]Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, and we will put them to death. And Saul said, [l]No man shall be put to death this day; for to-day hath Jehovah wrought deliverance in Israel. And Samuel said unto the people, Come, and let us go to [m]Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there. And all the people went to Gilgal, and there in Gilgal before Jehovah they made Saul king. And there they [n]sacrificed sacrifices of peace-offerings

e cf. Judg.7. 16, etc.
f Judg.11.32, 33.
k ch. 10. 27.
l ch. 14. 45. 2 Sam. 19. 22.
m ch. 10. 8. ch. 13. 4.
n cf. 2 Sam. 6. 17, 18.

But even the men of Jabesh demand a seven days' respite, to see if there be no deliverer in Israel yet; and this the arrogance of Nahash grants; for he has not a dream of any rescue. The messengers of the straitened city come, therefore, at once to Gibeah, Saul's city, with the news of these conditions.

As he hears, the Spirit of God comes upon Saul, and he summons the people with a threat to follow himself and Samuel. We see clearly that there is no energy in the people, and the energy in Saul is not of the highest kind. He leans on Samuel, and puts his name forth, though after his own, to enforce obedience, appealing to their fear as the most successful argument, and indeed not without cause; and in fact the fear of Jehovah it is that falls upon the people, so that they come out in mass. They gather (significantly) in Bezek, the place of the "fetter,"—under constraint, not willingly; and Saul sends word to the men of Jabesh that they shall have help.

(iii.) In result, the Ammonites are thoroughly beaten and scattered; and Saul becomes in this respect the people's saviour, who therefore go off into a vehement enthusiasm for the man they had despised. But the Ammonites are but an incident in the history here. They do not give character to the condition of things in Israel, and do not test the king of their choice. We shall see in a little while what does so, and then how entirely Saul fails. Speaking according to the spiritual meaning, the deliverance of the people of God from heresy, however necessary, does not put them right with God; for this, much more is needed than orthodoxy, even of the strictest kind.

Yet this is a deliverance, and the people rightly may rejoice. Saul, too, uses his triumph wisely and with moderation. Samuel uses it to draw the people to Gilgal and renew the kingdom there. Gilgal is where the "reproach of Egypt" of the bondage of the people there, was rolled away. Circumcision, the renunciation of all confidence in the flesh, there enabled them to be the "Lord's host," the free servants of His will in opposition to all the hosts of evil. Thus the Captain of the Lord's host,—greater even than Joshua, how much greater than Saul!—could take His place at their head for the career of victory now opening before them. The application is easy enough here. What should hinder things coming into their place as then? Let there be only subjection, all would be as then. Let Saul be as Joshua, the lower kingdom be in truthful obedience to the higher, God still remained for them Jehovah, the Unchanged, Unchangeable. Such, surely, was the thought in Samuel's heart, for people and king. Thus only could their "sacrifices of peace-offerings" have meaning. But alas! there were too plain indications of another spirit than this; and if "Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly," nothing is said of him whose joy would have

before Jehovah, and there Saul and all the men of Israel [o]rejoiced greatly.

(XII.-XIII. 16.)

Saul's probation. 1. (xii. 1-5.) Samuel's integrity.

4. [1]And Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you. And now, behold, the king walketh before you; and I am old and gray-headed; and my sons, behold, they are with you; and I have walked before you from my [p]childhood unto this day. Behold, here I am: [q]witness against me before Jehovah, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I injured? or from whose hand have I taken ransom, to [r]blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it to you. And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor hast thou injured us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand. And he said unto them, Jehovah is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found aught in my hand. And they said, [They are] witness.

2. (xii. 6-15.) His warning: their repetition of their fathers' sins.

[2]And Samuel said unto the people, [It is] Jehovah who appointed Moses and Aaron, and who [s]brought up

o *ctr.* 2 Sam. 1. 17 with ch. 13. 14.

p ch. 2. 18, 26.

q Acts 20. 33. Lev. 19. 13. Nu. 16. 15.

r Ex. 23. 8. ch. 8. 3.

s Ex. 6. 27, 28. Mi. 6. 4. *cf.* Ps. 99. 6.

been deepest had the material of it been there. If Samuel rejoiced, it must have been indeed with trembling. And so his words now show.

4. A new section opens here. For now the new king must abide the rule of the higher kingdom, and be tested as to his fitness to fulfill its requirements. So it has ever been. So, in regard to God's governmental dealings with man in this life, it ever must be. Even the Church, though the witness of divine grace in its fullest character, yet as the responsible vessel of this on earth, has not escaped, nor could escape, this testing. "Unto thee goodness, *if thou continue* in His goodness," says the apostle of the Gentiles, the special "minister" of the Church (Col. i. 25), "otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." (Rom. xi. 22.) How she has answered to this test, let her history, in the light of the word of God, decide. Saul did not stand, and we are called now, for our own profit, to consider the cause and manner of his fall. These things are written for our admonition: may we have open ears to receive the admonition!

(i.) Samuel now stands forth before the people, rejoicing because of their deliverance, to use the opportunity to effect one much greater, namely, from the sin which is always the degradation and destruction of a people. Their own had never yet been realized, in asking for a king; and now their rejoicing in the king they had got was likely to blind their eyes yet more, and God's mercy toward them become only an occasion of worse departure from Him. Samuel for this, therefore, first of all, makes them own the uprightness of his own conduct in the place which God had given him among them. They were thus without excuse as to that which they had demanded, for although they had pleaded that the prophet's sons walked not in his ways, such failure allowed of easy correction. Indeed, as he shows presently, without condescending to any direct notice of it, it was not the true ground for what they had sought at all, but their fear of the Ammonites, and their inability to trust Jehovah for protection. This cowardly unbelief would naturally be cowardly enough in self excuses, and he does not honor them by even noticing them.

(ii.) His integrity being allowed on all hands, he bids them stand forth while he reasons with them for his God. Jehovah's deeds were known well enough. He does not need to speak of them in order or at length. That they had been

your fathers out of the land of Egypt. Now, then, stand that I may reason with you before Jehovah of all the righteous acts of Jehovah, that he did unto you and to your fathers. When Jacob had come into Egypt, and your fathers cried unto Jehovah, then Jehovah [t]sent Moses and Aaron, and they brought your fathers out of Egypt, and made them dwell in this place. And they [u]forgat Jehovah their God, and he sold them into the hand of [v]Sisera, captain of the host of Hazor, and into the hand of the [w]Philistines, and into the hand of the king of [x]Moab, and they fought against them. And they cried unto [y]Jehovah and said, We have sinned, because we have forsaken Jehovah, and served the Baals and the Ashtoreths; but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve thee. And Jehovah sent [z]Jerubbaal, and Bedan,* and [a]Jephthah, and [b]Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies round about; and ye dwelt securely. And ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, and ye said unto me, Nay, but a [c]king shall rule over us! when [d]Jehovah your God was your king. And now behold the king whom ye have chosen, whom ye have demanded; and behold, Jehovah hath set a king over you. If ye will [e]fear Jehovah, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the voice of Jehovah, and [f]both ye and the king that reigneth over you be followers of Jehovah your God, [well]. But if ye will not obey the voice of Jehovah, but rebel against the voice of Jehovah, then shall the hand of Jehovah be [g]against you, even [as] against your fathers.

8. (xii. 16–25.) The seal of heaven.

[8]Now, therefore, stand and see this great thing that Jehovah doeth before your eyes. Is it not wheat-harvest to-day? I will call unto Jehovah, and he will send [h]thunder and rain, that ye may understand and see that your wickedness is great in the eyes of Jehovah, which ye have done in asking for a king. And Samuel called unto Jehovah, and Jehovah sent thunder and rain that day; and all the people greatly feared

t Ex. 4. 12–17.
u Judg. 3. 7. cf. Ps. 106. 13.
v Judg. 4. 2, etc.
w Judg. 13. 1.
x Judg. 3. 12.
y Judg. 3. 9.
z Judg. 6. 11, etc.
a Judg. 11. 1, etc.
b ch. 7. 3, etc.
c ch. 8. 5.
d De. 33. 2–8. Judg. 8. 23. ch. 8. 7.
e Josh. 24. 14.
f ver. 25. ch. 13. 13.
g Ps. 34. 16.
h 2 Sam. 22. 14.

* Probably a textual error for Barak, which is the reading of the Septuagint.

brought out of Egypt, brought into the land they now possessed, he had but briefly to allude to. After all this, they had left their own victorious Jehovah for the dead idols of the defeated Canaanites. In the land which was His gift they had forgotten Him, and that again and again, after repeated deliverances. Their present sin was but a repetition of that of their fathers: its root was in insubjection of heart, and unbelief.

(iii.) He appeals to God Himself for confirmation of this. In Israel they, as a matter of course, gathered in their wheat in peace, but now the wrath of God would be manifest in sending thunder and rain. These signs come to pass the same day, and produce a transient effect upon the people. In a spasm of fear they own their guilt, and deprecate the death which they anticipate. Samuel

Jehovah and Samuel. And all the people said unto Samuel, [t]Pray for thy servants unto Jehovah thy God, that we die not, for we have added evil unto all our sins in asking for ourselves a king. And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness; yet turn not aside from following Jehovah, but serve Jehovah with all your heart; and turn not aside after vain things that profit not nor deliver, for they are vain. For Jehovah for his great name's sake [j]will not forsake his people, because it hath pleased Jehovah to make you his people. As for me also, far be it from me that I should sin against Jehovah in ceasing to [k]pray for you; and I will show you the good and the right way. [l]Only fear Jehovah, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for see how [m]great things he hath done with you. But if indeed ye do wickedly, ye shall [n]perish, both ye and your king.

4. (xiii. 1–9.) The trial and fall of the king.

[1][Saul was . . . . .* years old when he became king: and he reigned two years over Israel;] and Saul chose

t ver. 23. cf. Deut. 5. 24–29.

j Ps. 94. 14. cf. Heb. 13. 5.

k cf. Ex. 32. 30–32.

l Deut. 5. 29.

m Mk. 5. 19.

n Josh. 24. 20. cf. Is. 1. 7, 8.

*One number is wanting here, and cannot be supplied from any known source; the other is questionable. The Septuagint omits the verse altogether, which on more accounts than this commends itself to me. But I have bracketed and left it. It seems an interruption in the course of the history, the second verse naturally connecting with the end of the last chapter.

reassures them, bidding them only fear Jehovah with a fruitful fear, productive of obedience, and He would be with them; on the other hand, if still they did wickedly, they and their king alike would perish.

(iv.) Saul is now fully installed: he is accepted of the people and in the flush of a first victory. But the testing time has thus now come, and he must stand the test or be set aside. He does not stand the test, for he has no true faith in God, and is thus under the power of circumstances. He is slow and undecided when prompt action is called for, and then is forced into doing when he ought to have waited. Thus he openly disobeys God, and is of necessity set aside.

In natural courage he is not deficient, but natural courage without faith only begets self-confidence, and leads astray, while just where needed it is apt to break down and leave one in the lurch. Here, too, a man's religion, which without faith is only superstition, becomes a hindrance, as we shall see in Saul.

His first act, after the victory over Nahash, judged by natural wisdom, is prudent enough. The rally in behalf of Jabesh-Gilead has brought together an ill-armed and undisciplined multitude, which, however effective under a sudden impulse, could not be trusted for a prolonged and regular war. To have kept so large a number together, had it been feasible, would have surely provoked a Philistine attack, and being unmanageable, the greater mass would have produced a worse defeat. Saul sends them all home, therefore, except three thousand men, too few to rouse the suspicion of those who had been rapidly assuming to be masters in Israel, and yet enough to occupy some central strong points, of which there were many in that mountainous land, and to be the nucleus of a trained and efficient army. The old days of Samuel had already passed away. The fruits of unbelief are not long in showing themselves. And in Saul's action we see not a return to faith, but the wise caution of worldly prudence and astute generalship. Every thing has to be calculated and provided for. God is left out, for He is a force not calculable; but being left out, He is still at liberty to come in and spoil these arrangements, as we shall see; though He act in mercy toward His people, as now He does; but just on that account the human machinery must be set aside.

him three thousand men out of Israel; and there were with Saul two thousand in Michmash and in Mount Bethel; and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin; and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent. And Jonathan [o]smote the post of the Philistines that was in Geba; and the Philistines heard [it]. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the [p]Hebrews hear. And all Israel heard say that Saul had smitten the post of the Philistines, and that Israel also had become in ill savor with the Philistines. And the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal. And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand [q]chariots and six thousand horsemen, and people like the sand which is on the sea-shore for multitude; and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Bethaven. And the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait (for the people were straitened), and the people [r]hid themselves in caves, and in

o *cf.* ch. 10. 5. ch. 14. 1.

p *cf.* Gen. 14. 13. ver. 7.

q Judg. 1. 19.

r Judg. 6. 2.

Two thousand men under Saul occupy the strong and important position of Michmash and Mount Bethel; a thousand are under Jonathan at Gibeah: and this introduces us to one in whom we have at this time—and Saul had also in close proximity to himself—the man of faith, through whom God works the deliverance which He has prepared for His people. Jonathan, or Jehonathan, means, "Jehovah hath given:" and he is truly the Lord's gift to Israel for the emergency; but also this is the language of his own believing heart, a sort of blank check, which can be filled up for every occasion. We shall find how fully he makes use of it now, though the first effect seems only to upset all the prudential device, and threaten disaster. But he is really with God, and we find in him what Saul should have been and was not. With him there is no tardiness, no prudence: put arms in his hands and he will use them. With one bold act of defiance, he precipitates the unequal conflict with those whose strength the nation had so often proved,—at this time comparatively at the strongest. He smites the Philistine post at Geba, and the Philistines hear.

Saul cannot now lead: he must follow; but he follows in a path of which he has no knowledge, acting in the dark where he imagines he has full light. There is no caution now, no seeking wisdom from God. He has just dismissed the mass that had gathered against the Ammonites; now again he summons them in haste with the trumpet; but God has no use for them: a general fear falls upon the people; those that gather after Saul melt away again; he is left to his dismay; and the actual victory is gained by two people whose absence is only in this way discovered! What an object lesson of faith is given us here!

While faith triumphs, as it ever does, things have gone disastrously with Saul. He sees not God, sees only circumstances; and where he moves most freely and confidently, is in fact moved helplessly by them. He must have a rising of the people to meet the wave of hostile invasion. He summons them as "Hebrews," not as Israelites; for of Israel, the people of God, he knows really nothing. They hear that *Saul* has smitten the post of the Philistines, leaving God out of the matter as Saul had left Him out. Unbelief awakens only unbelief; and then in opposition to Saul they naturally see the Philistines. Israel has come to be in ill savor also with the Philistines. They are called together after Saul to Gilgal. Where is the glorious Captain of the Lord's host that once met them there? Now they only realize the host of the Philistines, to their eyes innumerable, who presently take possession of the passes to the upper country. So seeing they are in a strait they scatter, hiding themselves in holes in the rocks and in the ground.

thickets, and in cliffs, and in strongholds, and in pits.
And Hebrews [s]went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. And Saul was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him [t]trembling. And he tarried seven days, [u]according to the set time of which Samuel [had spoken];* but Samuel had not come to Gilgal, and the people were being scattered from him. And Saul said, Bring me the burnt-offering and peace-offerings: and [v]he offered the burnt-offering.

5. (xiii. 10–14.) His sentence.

5 And it was so that, when he had finished offering the burnt-offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him. And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the [w]people were being scattered from me, and that thou camest not at the appointed time, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash, then I said, Now will the Philistines come down upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication to Jehovah. And I [x]forced myself, and offered the burnt-offering. And Samuel said unto Saul,

s *cf.* Num 32. 1, etc.
t ch. 14. 15.
u ch. 10. 8.
v *cf.* Lev. 1. 5. 2 Chr. 29. 16, etc.
w ch. 15. 24.
x *ctr.* ch. 14. 19.

*The word is not in the Hebrew copies generally; but several MSS. have it.

And "*Hebrews*" make their escape altogether out of the threatened district, going over Jordan to Gad and Gilead. A company remain with Saul, but they follow him trembling. In this direction there is no hope.

A grand opportunity for a man of God! and so it proves for Jonathan. It might have seemed that even Saul would be now driven to Him. Our extremity is still His opportunity, and this is what He would assure us of. The conviction of helplessness contains oftentimes in itself the seed of faith; and the famine and a world where no man gives, have been to how many prodigals constraining influences to bring about the cry, "I will arise and go to my Father!" But with Saul it is far otherwise, and the failure now is nothing incidental to the circumstances in which he is found, but the real and full manifestation of the man himself.

He is now in the position of which Samuel had forewarned him before his anointing, (chap. x. 8,) and in obedience to his injunction he waits till near the close of the seventh day,—till it has advanced so far, indeed, that it seems as if there was now no hope of Samuel's coming. The people are being scattered from him. His mind, sensitive as to external ordinances just in proportion to his inability to see beneath them, can only realize the failure (which was not his) in the matter of the sacrifice. In open disobedience he offers (or causes to be offered) the burnt-offering; and he has hardly done this before Samuel comes.

(v.) It was a plain breach of positive command. Saul might and does urge the scattering of the people, the failure of Samuel (too quickly assumed that), the gathered Philistines. With all this he had nothing at all to do. The king of Israel was but the representative of the heavenly King, whose people Israel really was, and whose will alone was absolute throughout all circumstances that might arise. How good, in fact, to have it so! How entirely at rest might a king be so governing! As to any lack of understanding of that will, there was given the utmost liberty of appeal to Him through known and readily available channels of communication. With consequences he had nothing whatever to do. Were ever any king's shoulders so entirely relieved of strain as those of the obedient king of such a kingdom?

Saul had not the spirit of obedience, and there was no harshness, no undue

Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not [y]kept the commandment of Jehovah thy God which he commanded thee: for now would Jehovah have established thy kingdom over Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not [z]stand: Jehovah hath sought him a man after his [a]own heart, and Jehovah hath appointed him prince over his people: because thou hast not observed what Jehovah commanded thee.

y ch. 15. 22.

z ch. 15. 28. *ctr.* 2 Sam. 7. 8-17.

a ch. 12. 13. Acts 13. 22. *cf.* Lk. 9. 35.

(XIII. 15-XIV. 46.)

Saul, the man under the government of God, and Jonathan, the man with God. 1. (xiii. 15-22.) Sufficiency must be of God.

5. [1] And Samuel arose, and went up from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin; and Saul numbered the people that were found with him, about [b]six hundred men. And Saul and Jonathan his son, and the people that were found with them abode in Geba of Benjamin; and the Philistines encamped in Michmash. And the spoilers went out of the camp of the Philistines in [c]three companies: one company turned by the way of Ophrah to the land of Shual; and another company turned the way of Beth-horon; and another company turned the way of the border that looketh over the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness. Now there was no [d]smith found throughout all the land of Israel, for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears.

b *ctr.* ch. 11. 8. *cf.* Judg. 7. 2, 7.

c ch. 11. 11.

d *cf.* Acts 18. 27, 28 with Eph. 4. 11, 12.

severity in his rejection by God. As yet even it does not amount to present personal rejection. It is announced only that his kingdom should not continue, and that God had sought Him a king after His own heart,—manifestly one who would govern according to His will, which, in the main, was David's character. The two kingdoms must be in harmony. But Saul is yet left to recover, if it may be, the ground he had lost. Such is the mercy of the divine government, which we may see afterwards, even with a king so exceptionally bad as Ahab. (1 Kings xxi. 29.) Yet this mercy of God allows, too, the development of evil in the unrepentant; and this we have to find in a striking manner in Saul. "Because judgment against an evil work is not speedily executed, therefore the heart of the sons of men is thoroughly set in them to do evil."

5. Side by side now, in contrasted development, we have in Saul the man without God, under the government of God, whose position as the ostensible, responsible head in Israel only emphasizes the lesson here. He is but the obstruction in the path of faith which we find in Jonathan, the man with God, whom Saul, though bound to him by every natural tie, would slay. Such is the essential opposition between what is natural and what is spiritual, even where, as here, it is not enmity, but a blind and superstitious zeal for God,—under which, however, all carnal and evil passions find ready lodgment. On the other hand, Saul's strength, such as it is, is easily seen to be based upon Jonathan's victories, which are crippled only by their connection with him, while Jonathan himself, though to the last attractive and interesting, soon ceases to have significance for the history at large, and at last expires under the shadow of a terrible humiliation upon the field of Gilboa. Impressive lessons, more than ever to be heeded to-day, when, through this very heedlessness, the history spiritually so often repeats itself.

(i.) In the first place, here we are made to realize the circumstances in the midst of which faith finds its opportunity. The land is prostrate. Unbelief has speedily completed its work. The deliverance wrought by Samuel is undone, and the Philistine spoiler is abroad over the country. Saul has, indeed, his six hundred men; but they are spiritless, and armed but with rustic and blunted weapons. This barrenness of resources is, however, only God's hand shutting

And all Israel went down to the Philistines, to get every one his plowshare [e]sharpened, and his hoe, and his axe, and his sickle, when the edges of the sickles, and the hoes, and the forks, and the axes were blunted; and to set the goads. And so it was that in the day of battle [f]neither sword nor spear was found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan; but there was with Saul and with Jonathan his son.

[e] *cf.* Judg. 3. 31.

[f] Judg. 5. 8.

2. (xlii. 23–xiv. 15.) The activity of faith.

[2]And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the pass of Michmash. And it came to pass upon a day, that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armour, [g]Come, and let us go over to the garrison of the Philistines, that is on the other side; but he [h]told not his father. And Saul lay in the uttermost part of Gibeah under the pomegranate which is in Migron, and the people that were with him were about six hundred men, and Ahijah the son of Ahitub, the brother of [i]Ichabod, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, Jehovah's priest in Shiloh, wearing the ephod. And the people knew not that Jonathan had gone away. Now between the passes by which Jonathan sought to go over to the Philistines' garrison, there was a [j]sharp rock on one side, and a sharp rock on the other side; and the name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other, Seneh. The one rock [formed] a pillar on the north opposite Michmash, and the other on the south, opposite Geba. And Jonathan said unto the young man that bare his armor, Come, and let us go over to the garrison of these [k]uncircumcised: it may be

[g] *cf.* ch. 26. 6.

[h] *cf.* ver. 27.

[i] ch. 4. 21.

[j] *cf.* Zech. 4. 7.

[k] ch. 17. 26.

them up to Himself. It is the prostration which makes Him their necessity; but, in general, there is no faith either to lay hold of Him. What would an army of such men accomplish? Nothing but their own defeat. Hence Jonathan, in whom faith is, will not burden himself with them: energized by God, he strikes with his own hand for deliverance, and strikes effectually.

(ii.) Jonathan knows well that "two cannot walk together except they are agreed," that faith can take no counsel with unbelief; and when he starts against the Philistine garrison at Geba, he tells not his own father. Saul and his six hundred are shown us for a moment as he turns his back on them, Saul lying under the pomegranate at Migron (the place of "overthrow"); and with the failed king, the head of the failed priesthood, Ahijah ("brother of Jah"), son of Ahitub ("brother of goodness"), but the brother of Ichabod ("where is the glory?"), the monument of the sad history of Eli and his sons. With him is the ephod, expressly for communication with Jehovah, but there is none; and none among the people even know that Jonathan is gone away. Victory may be gained *for* these, not *by* them. They may enter presently upon a path which others have opened: open it they cannot.

Jonathan therefore goes forth alone, with only his armor-bearer with him, in whom faith responds to his own faith. Two things, as we find by his words, animate him: that the Philistines are the "uncircumcised," the enemies of Israel, the people of God; and that "there is no restraint to Jehovah, to save by many or by few." He believes in an omnipotent God who loves His people, and upon whom to venture for their salvation can surely be no mistake. He has no express command, no open call to accomplish this: he *reasons;* but he reasons from premises which faith furnishes, and from the depths of his own self-

that Jehovah will work for us; for there is [l]no restraint to Jehovah to save by many or by few. And his armorbearer said unto him, [m]Do all that is in thy heart: turn thee; behold, I am with thee according to thy heart. And Jonathan said, Behold, we will pass over unto the men, and will discover ourselves to them. [n]If they say thus to us, Stand still until we come unto you, then will we stay in our place, and not go up unto them; and if they say thus, Come up to us, then will we go up; for Jehovah hath given them into our hand. And this shall be the sign for us. And they both discovered themselves to the garrison of the Philistines; and the Philistines said, Behold, the Hebrews are [o]coming out of the holes in which they have been hiding themselves. And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armorbearer, and said; Come up to us, and we will show you a thing. And Jonathan said unto his armorbearer, Come up after me; for [p]Jehovah hath given them into Israel's hand. And Jonathan climbed up on his hands and on his feet, and his armorbearer after him; and they fell before Jonathan; and his armorbearer slew after him. And that first slaughter which Jonathan and his armorbearer made, was of about twenty men, as it were on the half-furrow of an acre of land.

l 2 Chr. 14. 11.
m *cf.* Phil. 3. 17.
n *cf.* ch. 20. 21-23. Gen. 24. 12-14.
o ch. 13. 6.
p Josh. 6. 16.

sacrificing love to the people of God, which enables him sympathetically to realize the divine love. He does not at first speak with absolute assurance of success: he says, "it *may* be that Jehovah will work for us"; he knows God's heart better than His mind, gaining assurance as he goes on, willing to risk where the risk is all his own. Such believing love can never be unfruitful.

He finally accepts the enemy's own decision of the matter as the Lord's judgment. If they say, "Wait till we come down to you," the energy implied will, at least, not show that He is opening the way before him. But if they say, "Come up to us," then, whether it be indolence, indifference, or self-security, he will take it as the assurance that God has given them up into his hands.

There are abundant difficulties in those steep cliffs which overhang the bold adventurers' path. Two points, on opposite sides, are mentioned,—not surely as mere commemorative indications of the place for days to come, but with a deeper interest. One, Bozez, was named from its "shining" surface, which, on the north side, (that of the enemy's post,) would have the sun full upon it. The other, on Israel's, would be correspondingly in the dark, and was called Seneh, the "thorn," the sign of the curse. Israel was, indeed, in the shadow of God's judgment then, as, on this account also, their enemies were in prosperity: and such things have been difficulties in the path of many a Jonathan from that day to this. But there is a faith which can surmount all, working through the love of a devoted heart; and we find it in this son of Saul, not, clearly, by any assistances of nature there.

The two discover themselves to the Philistine garrison in open day: for darkness does not favor the people of God, but the reverse. They are taunted with the cowardice that is not theirs, but is their brethren's, as the sins of professors merely are hurled at all times at the true confessors; and are bidden, "Come up unto us, and we will show you a thing": for with Philistines there is a height and superiority of knowledge inaccessible, in their judgment, to the "Israelite indeed." They know not that this is the sign that Jehovah has delivered them up, and that the battle is gone against them.

And there was [q]trembling in the host, in the field, and among all the people: the garrison and the spoilers, they also trembled, and the earth quaked; and there was a trembling [from] God.

3. (xiv. 16–23.) The reviving of Israel.

[3]And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and behold, the multitude melted away, and went on breaking up. And Saul said unto the people that were with him, [r]Muster now, and see who hath gone from us. And they mustered, and behold, Jonathan and his armorbearer were not there. And Saul said unto Ahijah, Bring hither the [s]ark of God: for the ark of God was at that time with the children of Israel. And it came to pass that, while Saul spake with the priest, the noise that was in the camp of the Philistines went on and increased; and Saul said unto the priest, [t]Withdraw thy hand. And Saul and all the people that were with him were gathered together and came to the battle; and behold, [u]every man's sword was against his fellow [and] there was a very great discomfiture. And the Hebrews that were with the Philistines before that time, who had gone up with them into the camp round about, they also [v]turned to be with the Israelites that were with Saul and Jonathan.

4. (xiv. 24–35.) The intrusion of the creature into the work of God, ending in further and wider evil.

And all the men of Israel who had hidden themselves in [w]Mount Ephraim heard that the Philistines were fleeing, and they also followed hard after them in the battle. And Jehovah saved Israel that day; and the battle passed over beyond Bethaven.

[4]And the men of Israel were [x]distressed that day: for Saul had adjured the people, saying, [y]Cursed be the

q ch. 13. 7.

r ver. 40, etc.

s *cf.* ch. 4. 3.

t ch. 13. 12.

u Judg. 7. 22. 2 Chr. 20. 23.

v Judg. 7. 23.

w ch. 9. 4. 2 Sam. 20. 21.

x *cf.* Acts 15. 10.

y *cf.* Acts 23. 12. *ctr.* Ps. 132. 1-5.

Jonathan and his companion, therefore, climb on hands and knees to the attack: knees as well as hands are a grand necessity in climbing *spiritual* heights: and the Philistines fall before them. Fear and trembling fall upon the host; and the earth trembles and quakes; for God Himself is there: the victory is already accomplished.

(iii.) As yet but two men have wrought, even the little band with Saul unconscious of their departure from them; but now the Israelites around begin to be awakened and to follow in the track that has been opened to them. The watchmen of Saul begin to realize the commotion and disintegration in the enemy's camp, and Saul imputes it to some human agency; but when the company is mustered, only Jonathan and another being absent, so slight a cause seems inadequate to the effect, and now he thinks of consulting God. But the noise increases in the camp, and the disorder among the Philistines being manifest, he abruptly stops the priest in the midst of his inquiry. He is pressed to God by great necessity; but he prefers much to do without Him. The matter is sufficiently plain for action. He gathers his company and goes out to battle, only to find that dissension has already precipitated disaster in the hostile ranks. The "Hebrews" recreant or captive among them turn against them; the Israelites who have been in hiding around swarm after the flying host. The broken wave of battle ebbs away toward the west. It is Jehovah who that day saves Israel.

(iv.) But the spirit of Saul is in entire independence. If Jehovah work, it is for *him* He works; and in his short-sighted desire for vengeance upon *his* enemies, he freely imprecates Jehovah's curse upon the soul that does not obey *his* mandate

man that eateth food until the evening, and I be avenged of mine enemies; and none of the people tasted food. And all [they of] the land came unto a wood, and there was [z]honey on the ground. And when the people came into the wood, behold, the honey flowed: but no one put his hand to his mouth, for the people were afraid of the oath. And Jonathan had not [a]heard when his father charged the people with the oath, and he put forth the [b]end of the rod that was in his hand, and dipped it in the honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth, and his eyes were [c]enlightened. And one of the people answered and said, Thy father strictly charged the people with an oath, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth food to-day. And the people were [d]faint. And Jonathan said, My father hath [e]troubled the land; see now how my eyes have been lightened because I tasted a little of this honey. How much [f]more if the people had freely eaten of the spoil of their enemies which they found: for would there not have been to-day a much greater slaughter among the Philistines? And they smote the Philistines that day from Michmash to Ajalon. And the people were very faint. And the people [g]fell upon the spoil, and took sheep and oxen and calves, and slaughtered them on the ground; and the people ate them with the [h]blood. And they told Saul, saying, Behold, the people sin against Jehovah, in that they eat with the blood. And he said, Ye have done perversely: roll me now a great stone. And Saul said, Disperse yourselves among the people, and say unto them, Bring near to me every one his ox, and every one his sheep, and slay them here, and eat; and sin not against Jehovah by eating with the blood. And all the

z Lev. 2. 11. Prov. 25. 16, 17.

a *cf.* Num. 30. 1, etc.

b *cf.* 1 Cor. 7. 29-31.

c Acts 27. 3, 34.

d ch. 30. 10.

e ver. 24.

f *cf.* Judg. 7. 8. Col. 2. 20-23.

g Deut. 12. 16.

h Lev. 3. 17. Lev. 17. 10-12.

to abstain from food until vengeance is executed. He thus makes the might of Jehovah's name to work against the very thing he would accomplish; and limits, as far as he may, the effect of that which he had no part in producing. He can meddle and mar, if he cannot make. In his profanity he would have God curse where He means only blessing, heedless where the curse may fall. The people are faint, and the victory is incomplete. Jonathan, the instrument of the divine deliverance, is the one who falls under the futile curse. Too far away from the scene to have heard his father's adjuration, he takes a little of the wild honey which offers itself by the way, and is refreshed. Told of his father's curse he reprobates it, and shows its evil consequences. Honey is the sweetness of natural things, not to be ascetically interdicted to the people of God, though to be kept in due subordination. The world is, indeed, a place of warfare for the Christian, in which he may "not *entangle* himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please Him who has chosen him to be a soldier." (2 Tim. ii. 4.) We have need to watch lest we should be brought under the power of lawful things (1 Cor. vi. 12). But herein every one must judge for himself what is help, what hindrance, while it is grace alone that enables, and not law.

Saul's prohibition leads to further evil. The famishing people, wild with hunger, fall at last upon the prey, and slaughtering sheep and oxen, eat them with the blood, in plain disobedience to the divine command. Thus an undue restriction leads to license, and the imposition of an arbitrary human enact-

people brought every man his ox with him that night, and slaughtered it there.

5. (xiv. 35–46.) The end in divine government.

[5] And Saul built an [l]altar to Jehovah: the same was the first altar that he built unto Jehovah. And Saul said, [j]Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and spoil them till the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them. And they said, Whatsoever seemeth good unto thee, do. And the priest said, Let us [k]draw near hither unto God. And Saul asked counsel of God, Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will thou give them into Israel's hand? But he [l]answered him not that day. And Saul said, Draw near hither, all ye heads of the people; and understand and see wherein this sin hath been this day: for, as Jehovah liveth, which saveth Israel, [m]though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die: and none of all the people answered him. And he said unto all Israel, Be ye on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side. And the people said unto Saul, Do what is good in thine eyes. And Saul said unto Jehovah, the God of Israel, [n]Give a perfect [lot]. And Saul and Jonathan were taken, and the people escaped. And Saul said, Cast [lots] between me and Jonathan my son. And Jonathan was taken. And Saul said unto Jonathan, Tell me what thou hast done. And Jonathan told him, and said, I did but taste a [o]little honey with the end of the rod that was in my hand, [and] lo, I must die! And Saul said, God do so, and more also; for thou shalt [p]surely die, Jonathan. And the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this [q]great deliverance

[l] Judg. 6. 24.
[j] *cf.* ver. 1.
[k] ch. 9. 6.
[l] *cf.* ch. 28. 6.
[m] *cf.* Judg. 11. 34–36.
[n] Josh. 7. 17. ch. 10. 20.
[o] ver. 27.
[p] ch. 22. 16.
[q] ch. 11. 13.

ment to a transgression of the divine: and these things occur not seldom in this way.

(v.) Saul builds now an altar to Jehovah: he has need of Him, and formally acknowledges Him. He desires and proposes still to pursue the Philistines, and gains the consent of the people. It is the priest, who urges that God must be consulted first. Saul asks, accordingly, "Shall I go down after the Philistines?" and his proud spirit chafes at there being no answer to the question. He realizes that there has been sin somewhere, and evidently divines that it is in the transgression of his own rash prohibition; seems even to imagine (perhaps from Jonathan's having been away when it was uttered) that it may be he: yet, instead of being smitten into the dust by the thought, or showing the least repentance for his reckless haste, boils over in a furious vow by Jehovah, that if it were in Jonathan himself, he should die. The people gaze upon him speechless. He brings it to a brief decision by putting himself and Jonathan over against the people for the lot to point out the guilty. He and Jonathan are taken: at the next casting Jonathan is taken: and Saul is face to face with the consequences of his deed.

But he is still unsubdued: stonily he questions the deliverer of Israel, What hast thou done? and hears his simple, straightforward account: "I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in my hand, and lo, I must die," to answer with another imprecation upon the self, dearer loved than is his child, "God do so [to me] and more also, but thou shalt surely die, Jonathan!"

Then the people break out in a wave of astonishment and indignation, putting

in Israel? far be it! as Jehovah liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day. And the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not. And Saul went up from following the Philistines; and the Philistines went to their own place.

(XIV. 47-XV.)

Amalek overcome, overcomes. I. (xiv. 47-52.) Saul's might.

6. [1]And Saul took the kingdom over Israel, and fought against [r]all his enemies round about, against Moab, and against the children of Ammon, and against Edom, and against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines; and whithersoever he turned himself, he discomfited them. And he did valiantly, and smote Amalek, and delivered Israel out of the hand of them that spoiled them.

r ch. 12. 14. cf. 2 Sam. 8. 1-14.

with emphatic decision their oath against the king's oath. What! Jonathan, who has wrought, in the power of God, this deliverance of Israel? Jonathan die for the breach of a command he never knew, and by which Saul's own madness had snatched the full fruits of the victory out of the deliverer's hand? Nay, "as Jehovah liveth, there shall not a hair of his head fall to the ground!"

So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not; and Saul is left to his folly and shame. The whole matter, from beginning to end, has been one continued humiliation for the infatuated king. The man himself is unmistakably revealed; while on God's part how great is the mercy shown,—how tender, if solemn, is the rebuke administered! And the divine patience is not exhausted yet.

6. Another test is to be permitted Saul; and as, in the former case he was under the pressure of circumstances which might plead, if not convincingly, for him, so now he is forborne with till he has gathered strength. One readily perceives, indeed, danger for him in this; but it is the only alternative. What he is, and whether Jehovah's king for the people, must be proved; and nothing can prove so fully as when all constraint is taken off, and the will is allowed its fullest liberty. It is not meant, of course, but that he is under the commandment of God: this is, of necessity, wherewith he is to be tried: the kingdom on earth is to be the true representative and executive of the kingdom in heaven: but obedience is to be made a question of pure will, with no hindrance to it from outside, no resistance except it be from the will itself.

The means of the ordained trial we have in Amalek; and here, as elsewhere, to have the full lesson, the spiritual meaning of the people must be taken into account. In both Exodus and Numbers we have seen that as the offspring of Edom Amalek stands for the lusts of the flesh (Ex. xvii., Num. xxiv., *n.*). In Balaam's prophecy it is when the Scepter rises out of Israel, and out of Jacob comes one who hath dominion,—in other words, when Christ comes again,—that "Amalek shall perish forever." Till then his hand is "against the throne of Jah," and "Jehovah will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." Thus the destruction of Amalek is a sign of the true King having come to Israel.

The lusts of the flesh are indeed the very expression of the rebellious war against Jehovah's throne; and he in whom these are found can never be Jehovah's rightful king. There is but One, then, who can be this; and Saul is not even His typical picture,—no, not for a moment. Of the issue of Saul's trial here we shall have presently to speak.

(i.) But first we are given to see his might. After the deliverance at Michmash he takes, indeed, the kingdom over Israel, and wars against all his enemies round about, and discomfits them, Philistines and Amalekites and all. "He did valiantly, and delivered Israel out of the hand of them that spoiled them."

And the [s]sons of Saul were Jonathan, and Ishui, and Malchishua; and the names of his two daughters,—the name of the first-born Merab, and the name of the

[s] ch. 31. 2.

Externally he is thus a prosperous man; no enemy at this time prevails against him: but in all this prosperity we have no hint of any real dependence on the Lord, nor of the Lord's hand being stretched out for him. His resources are in himself. We read presently of his sons, his daughters, his wife, his cousin Abner, the captain of his host. There the record stops. He gathers no mighty men around him, as David does: he wins no heart, for he shows no heart. He is self-contained, self-centred; and thus the very king whom the people seek, though having found him, it is true he does not satisfy them. There is nothing in him to do so; and yet he is the perfect picture of what men applaud: "for men will praise thee when thou doest well to thyself." (Ps. xlix. 18.) The Sauls make up the history of the world, though a few souls may cluster around David.

Saul is a representative man, and thus we may well be interested in him. Not in vain does he occupy so many pages of an inspired history. His wars and his family relations, as given here, should all have meaning. As king of Israel he is in conflict with all the natural enemies of Israel, and here he shows his might. He discomfits them, but he does not destroy or subjugate them: even Amalek is not an exception to this, as we shall see. He is very far from leaving, as his successor does, "neither adversary nor evil occurrent." (1 Kings v. 4.) He dies in battle, defeated by the Philistines; an Amalekite claims to have given him his death-stroke; all the enemies have to be met afresh by the next king. He is under the law of nature simply, has his rise, culmination, and decline; but this with him, as with all under it, has a moral significance such as the psalmist attaches to it: "we are consumed by Thine anger, and by Thy wrath we are troubled." (Ps. xc. 7.) The secret is as to Saul in his growing alienation from God, which is manifest, an awful hardening of heart terrible to contemplate, yet not so exceptional as to make it in any wise unsuited for an admonition to us. For here is the man that the multitude crowns with glory, while for the true king they have the cross and the crown of thorns.

And thus it is that we are in Saul's reign still, and not in David's; and the world occupies itself with laws and forms of government, while it knows not Christ, nor sees glory in God's Beloved. A democracy under Satan would certainly have the suffrages of the mass to-day, rather than the sweet despotism of the Son of God. Yet men go frantic over wrongs that are only the twigs and branches from the root of this first great wrong. Saul, too, could lash at Israel's enemies, but they survived him, pulled him from his seat, and conquered him at last; and so will the world's efforts at self-government break down in hopeless anarchy and confusion before Christ comes to lay his right hand of power upon the strife, and still it into peace.

Saul's sons, as given here, are three, though we learn elsewhere of a fourth, who does not come into this picture, Ish-bosheth,—according to the meaning of of his name, the "man of shame," the only one who survives his father. The three here are his strength, but they all fall with him upon the fatal field of Gilboa.

Of Jonathan alone do we hear anything; and of him, the hero of Michmash and the lover of David, more often as in conflict with his father than otherwise. Yet Saul, with such heart as he had, loved Jonathan,—though, as we have seen, he would have sacrificed him to his superstition and pride, and afterwards to his rage against David. Jonathan means "Jehovah hath given," the principle upon which, as we have seen, he acts at Michmash. Jonathan thus seems to represent the sovereignty of God, which, in fact, upholds as ordained of Him "the powers that be," which Saul represents, though in themselves as little according to His mind as Saul was. This ordination is, therefore, not that electing love which originates what He approves, but that which takes them up simply as existent,

younger Michal. And the name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz; and the name of

in that sense is the *fruit* of their existence, (for the "powers that *be*" are ordained of God *as such*), and so can be rightly imaged as a *son* of Saul, his firstborn, as Jacob says of Reuben, his "might, the beginning of excellence and of power." Yet it is clear that in this case Jonathan cannot be against David, even while he owns Saul, and why he expires with him upon the field where he expires. All this is simple. The victory over the Philistines at Michmash, due to him, is less so. Yet, if the Philistines represent the power of the ritualistic world-church, this has long, as we know, been in conflict with — at first largely dominant over — what for the true people of God must be the rightful possessor of authority under God, even though as yet Saul, not David. The effort of the world-church, throughout the middle ages, was to put its yoke upon the kings of the earth; and the reformation was such a victory as that at Michmash, when the ordination of God of the secular power, realized in Israel — among the people of God — beat off the Philistine oppressor. Yet, alas, there was no David on *that* throne: it could but restore a Saul! All is consistent, therefore, throughout.

Saul's second son, Ishui, is much more scantily noticed in the history. In fact, even the name occurs only here, being replaced, where his death is spoken of, by Abinadab (ch. xxxi. 2).

Ishui, or Ishvi, from *shavah*, "to be equal," means "equal, equitable," and this, under the number of service, ministry, speaks unmistakably of one of the very reasons for which the powers that be are ordained of God: "he is the minister of God to thee, for good." (Rom. xiii. 3, 4.) "Do that which is good," says the apostle, "and thou shalt have praise of the same." This is the *general* truth, whatever exception there may be; and in striking contrast with Philistine oppression. When the "church," as the superior, delivered up its victims into the hands of the obedient civil power, there was no equity! The second son of Saul confirms thus the meaning of the first.

Malchishua, "my king is saviour," is the third son. Though in an inferior sense, of course, in fact Saul was saviour-king. And, in fact, also for society, and for the church also, the secular magistrate is a necessity. This is evident from what has just been said, and need not be considered further. These are the sons of Saul which strengthen him in his kingdom. That there is another side is true also, and an Ishbosheth, "a man of shame," among them; but it is in striking accordance with the view presented here that Ishbosheth should be in this place omitted.

Saul's daughters are but two, Merab and Michal. Their names have evident connection. Merab, from *rabah*, means "increase." Michal, though generally taken as "brook," seems properly to mean "who shall measure?" As *daughters* they naturally also speak of fertility, fruit. Do they imply the prosperity and wealth that are the result of established government? — as to which the Philistines are here also (as seen in their city, Ashdod) "spoilers" in every sense?

Next we have Saul's wife. She is Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz. The repetition of the first element in these names demands attention. Ahi means "my brother," or "brother, kin." *Noam* is "pleasure, that which pleases"; *maaz*, though by Gesenius taken to mean "anger," is rather (from *atzah*) "strength." "Pleasure," as the consort of a king, and the outcome of "strength," is simple enough reading. Among those set in high places, how natural and sure the abuse of strength that thence results! But pleasure may be sought *without* abuse. All depends here upon *what* pleases, and in some sort also upon what the strength is. In the case of Saul, and such as he, the double *ahi* marks this. The "*kin* of pleasure" is not pleasure; the "*kin* of strength" is not that. A false power, not of God, the source of all that is true, may be perverted for the enjoyment of pleasure, which is not true because not of Him. And here, alas, the Sauls find their affinities and ally themselves: they walk in the vain show of the world, and disquiet themselves, too, in vain.

the captain of his host was Abner the son of Ner, Saul's uncle. And Kish the father of Saul, and Ner the father of Abner, were sons of Abiel. And there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul; and when Saul saw any [t]strong man or any valiant man, he took him for himself.

2. (xv. 1-9.) The commission and war with Amalek.

2 [u]And Samuel said unto Saul, Jehovah sent *me* to [u]anoint thee king over His people, over Israel: now, therefore, hearken to the voice of the words of Jehovah. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, I have marked that which [v]Amalek did to Israel, how he set himself against him in the way when he came up out of Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and execute the ban on all that they have, and [w]spare them not, but put to death both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass. And Saul summoned the people, and mustered them in

t ch. 8. 11. *ctr.* ch. 22. 1, 2.

u ch. 10. 1.

v Ex. 17. 8-16. De. 25. 17-19.

w Josh. 6. 17, 18.

Thus we have Saul's sons, daughters, and wife: we are now called to consider the captain of his host; and this is Abner, the son of Ner. The peculiarity of the name strikes one at once; for Abner means "the *father* of Ner," while he is his *son*: there is an inversion of fact. Ner means "lamp," the receptacle of light, the symbol of joy, prosperity, and all that we naturally connect with the thought of illumination. David is thus spoken of as "the light [or lamp] of Israel." (2 Sam. xxi. 17.) And though Ishbosheth were a poor representative of this, yet Abner's support of him after Saul's death may well illustrate the assumption of his name, in which are marked the pride and self-sufficiency that characterize Saul himself. He was the suited general of such a king, though we find nothing really great done by or attributed to him: and that is in keeping with the rest. Both Abner and Saul trace their descent from a certain Abiel, "the father of might," and thus heredity exhibits itself clearly in them. But with men assumption largely carries the day; and "the father [or sustainer] of light" may well be Saul's ordinary commander-in-chief, if Jonathan or David do the real work. But here is the might of Saul.

(ii.) Saul being thus established in his kingdom, and having realized his power, he is now to be tested as to his fitness for the work of the kingdom, which is the expression of the heavenly one, on earth. With the mind of God so accessible as in Israel it was, all that is required for this is obedience; but this is absolutely necessary, and must be prompt, unhesitating. Samuel is therefore sent to Saul with the command to destroy Amalek. The reason of the command is given also, that he may intelligently enter into fellowship with God about it. "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts,"—the King, as he is thus reminded, of the higher kingdom,—"I have marked that which Amalek did to Israel, how he set himself against him in the way when he came up out of Egypt." The debt, long since contracted, had never been repented of, forgiveness had never been sought for it, the Amalek of that day remaining the same adversary of God and His people, and thus had only acquired interest in the lapse of time. Indeed, they had again and again appeared as enemies in the land since then. This is always the reason of divine delay in judgment, that there is yet opportunity of mercy, and "the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." Now the debt was to be exacted. "Now go and smite Amalek, and execute the ban upon all they have, and spare them not." They are sentenced, as God alone has right to sentence, to complete extermination, with all that they have, even to the cattle. Such object-lessons of divine wrath upon sin the world at large needed, as Israel themselves did; and we may be sure, in effect, were mercy.

Saul gathers his host, a large one, and sets out to execute his commission; nor do we read of any difficulty attending it. No details are given; the Spirit of

Telaim, [x]two hundred thousand footmen and ten thousand men of Judah. And Saul went to the city of Amalek, and lay in wait in the valley. And Saul said unto the [y]Kenites, Go, depart, get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I join you with them; and ye showed kindness unto all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt. And the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. And Saul smote Amalek from Havilah till thou come to Shur, which is over against Egypt. And he took Agag the king of Amalek [z]alive, and he executed the ban upon all the people with the edge of the sword. And Saul and the people [a]spared Agag, and the best of the sheep and oxen, (even the second-rate,) and the lambs, and all that was [b]good, and would not execute the ban on them; but every thing that was [c]bad and poor, on that they executed it.

x *ctr.* ch. 14. 2.
y Judg. 1. 16.
z 2 Sam. 1. 8.
a 1 Kl. 20. 32-34.
b *ctr.* Phil. 3. 3-9.
c *cf.* Lk. 18. 11, 18-30.

8. (xv. 10-23.) The divine oracle.

[3]And the word of Jehovah came unto Samuel, saying, It [d]repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king; for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my words. And it stirred Samuel; and he cried unto Jehovah all the night. And Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul; and it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he hath set him up a [e]monument, and turned about, and passed on, and gone down to [f]Gilgal. And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou

d Gen. 6. 6.
e *cf.* Dan. 4. 30.
f ch. 13. 8, 15, etc.

God passes to the one part of sorrowful interest here, that, in plain inexcusable disobedience to the command of God, "Saul and the people" spare Agag, the king of Amalek, with the best of all the sheep and oxen, executing the ban on what was bad and poor only,—wholesale rebellion against the Lord of hosts!

The lesson is a deeply solemn one, and wider in application than perhaps we would easily allow. If Amalek stand here as elsewhere for the lusts of the flesh, alas, is it not true that we measure our judgment of these often more by our own tastes than by the simple letter of the word of God? How easy it is to judge the multitude of things, and spare the worst of all, the Agag! And things which *minister* to the lusts of the flesh are unhesitatingly allowed, if only they are not what to common estimate would be considered vile. Our judgments, how apt are they to be those of the world at large rather than of God,—in the light of nature rather than of the sanctuary!

(iii.) The divine word announces to the prophet the failure of Saul once more. "It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king, for he is turned back from following me, and has not performed my words." God speaks as man that we may understand Him. He would rather have His wisdom called in question than His holiness. His repentance is one of act, founded on His reprobation of sin. The news "kindles" the fervent spirit of the prophet, and he cries to God all night.

The spirit of Saul advertises itself sufficiently. He sweeps in a circuit through the land from Carmel to Gilgal, setting up by the way a monument, literally a "hand," pointing to his own achievements. It is at Gilgal Samuel meets him, the place of national circumcision, the "putting away the body of the flesh," and where the captain of the Lord's host comes to meet them. How great a change now as to both host and leader! Yet such is the deceitfulness of sin that Saul comes confidently forward with the assertion, "I have performed Jehovah's

of Jehovah: I have [g]performed the word of Jehovah. And Samuel said, What, then, is this [h]bleating of sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of oxen which I hear? And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the [i]people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice to Jehovah thy God; and on the rest we have executed the ban. And Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what Jehovah said to me this night. And he said unto him, Speak. And Samuel said, Wast thou not [j]little in thine own eyes, when thou [becamest] head of the tribes of Israel, and Jehovah anointed thee king over Israel? And Jehovah sent thee on the way, and said, Go, and execute the ban upon the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them till they be consumed. Why hast thou not hearkened to the voice of Jehovah, but hast rushed upon the spoil, and done evil in Jehovah's eyes? And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have hearkened to Jehovah's voice, and gone in the way Jehovah sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have performed the ban on Amalek. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of what was under ban, to sacrifice unto Jehovah thy God in Gilgal. And Samuel said, Hath Jehovah [k]delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in hearkening to Jehovah's voice? Behold, to [l]hearken is better than sacrifice, and to give heed than the fat of rams. For [m]rebellion is the sin of divination, and stubbornness is iniquity and teraphim. Because thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah, he also hath [n]rejected thee from being king.

4. (xv. 24–31.) The creature rather than the Creator.

[24]And Saul said unto Samuel, I have [o]sinned, for I have transgressed against the voice of Jehovah and thy words, because I feared the [p]people and hearkened to their voice. And now, I pray [q]thee, forgive my sin,

g *ctr.* ver. 9.
h *cf.* Acts. 5. 1–6.
i ch. 13. 11.
j ch. 9. 21. ch. 10. 22, 23.
k Is. 1. 11–14. ver. 13.
l Prov. 21. 3. Jer. 7. 22, 23.
m Num. 16. 12.
n *cf.* ch. 13. 14.
o *cf.* 2 Sam. 12. 13.
p ver. 15, etc.
q *ctr.* Ps. 51. 4.

word." But there are many noisy witnesses in contradiction of this, the bleating of sheep and the lowing of oxen that they had brought from the Amalekites. Even the plea of sacrificing them to God is vain; for that which was already devoted could not be offered. Yet Saul again affirms this; when Samuel answers that to give heed is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams. How low, indeed, was Saul's conception of the God with whom he had to do! Rebellion was, indeed, the very beginning of the worship of false gods, to which in some way man ever turns when he gives up the true. With this word of Samuel the final sentence falls: "because thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah, He also hath rejected thee from being king."

(iv.) The soul strong in rebellion against God may be toward man most pitifully weak indeed; and this is what Saul now exhibits. The fear of God destroys every other fear, and sets free from the most degrading bondage. Saul owns, while evidently he would excuse himself in measure by it, that he has put man in the place of God: "I have sinned, for I have transgressed against the voice of Jehovah and thy words, because I feared the people, and hearkened to *their* voice." Manifestly, therefore, he is unfit for the place of king over Jehovah's people; and the sentence of displacement is the only possible one. Even now,

and turn back with me, that I may worship Jehovah. And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not turn back with thee, for thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah, and Jehovah hath rejected thee from being king over Israel. And Samuel turned about to go away, and he laid hold of the skirt of his mantle and it [r]rent. And Samuel said unto him, Jehovah hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbor of thine that is better than thou. Moreover, the Confidence of Israel will not lie nor repent; for he is not [s]man, that he should repent. And he said, I have sinned: [t]honor me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship Jehovah thy God. And Samuel turned again after Saul, and Saul worshiped Jehovah.

r 1 Kl.11.11.

s Num. 23. 19. Jas. 1. 17.

t cf. ch. 2.30.

5. (xv. 32-35.) The doom of Agag.

5 And Samuel said, Bring me Agag, king of Amalek. And Agag came to him daintily. And Agag said, Surely, the bitterness of death is past. And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel [u]hewed Agag in pieces before Jehovah in Gilgal. And Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his house, to Gibeah of Saul. And Samuel saw Saul [v]no more to the day of his death; but Samuel mourned for Saul; and Jehovah repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.

u Judg. 1. 6, 7.

v ch. 28. 11-19.

while he pleads with Samuel yet to turn back with him, that he may worship Jehovah, the fear of the people is still upon him. Samuel refuses, repeating the judgment just pronounced; and when, Saul laying hold upon the skirt of his mantle, the garment tears, he uses this to illustrate and confirm the fact that Jehovah has similarly rent the kingdom from him, to give it into the hand of one better than himself. Nor will He in whom Israel confides repent: for He is not like him whom Saul has preferred before Him.

Again Saul owns his sin, and again he shows the power that is upon him. Will not Samuel at least honor him before the elders of the people, by turning with him, that he may worship Jehovah? And Samuel, thus appealed to, turns and does so.

(v.) Samuel has yet another duty to perform. The judgment of God must be executed upon the king of Amalek, and he executes it: he hews Agag to pieces before Jehovah. With us, also, there must be the unsparing judgment of that which God has condemned. Faith must use resolutely "the sword of the Spirit, which is the saying of God," and hew down the fairest and most royal forms of flesh, which are on that account so often spared. The Sauls of every generation fail here. The powers that be may in some degree destroy what is vile and refuse; but they judge not as God judges: the sword upon Agag can be wielded by the prophet's hand alone.

Saul is for this set aside; and the powers of earth are doomed. Yet "a king shall reign in righteousness and princes decree justice." God has sought and found Him a king after His own heart.

DIVISION 3. (Chap. xvi.–2 Sam. ix.)

David, the king after God's heart.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. xvi.-xxxi.)

The obedience of the destined king.

(XVI.-XVII. 54.)

Unique sufficiency.

(I. xvi. 1-13.) The king elect.

1.[1] AND Jehovah said unto Samuel, how long wilt thou mourn for Saul, when I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill thy horn with oil, and go: I will send thee to Jesse the [w]Bethlehemite; for I have provided me a king among his sons. And

w Ruth 1. 1.

DIV. 3.

Of this glorious King David is but a type: an interesting and beautiful picture, but with many flaws and shortcomings even as that. We shall have to see, even in the case of David, the higher kingdom at issue with the lower, and having to vindicate itself in a decisive way from misrepresentation by its representative on earth. David is not set aside as Saul is, for he bows in truth of heart to the chastening hand upon him. He "hears the rod, and who has appointed it." (Mic. vi. 9.) He despises not the chastening of the Lord, nor faints when he is rebuked of Him. Nowhere do we find a deeper penitence, a lowlier self-confession, than in those psalms in which he pours out his soul to God. Still he is a penitent; and as such cannot represent aright the object of the Father's full delight. The shadow he is; but how far from the "very image"!

He is the man after God's own heart just because he is thus subject to Him. He is by no means perfect, but he is not a rebel. He has true faith in God, a heart that pants after Him; and that, finding Him, makes its boast in Him, and is glad. He is thus a true son of Judah, a worshiper, indeed the sweet psalmist of Israel, by whom the Spirit of Jehovah spake, and His word was in his tongue (2 Sam. xxiii. 1, 2). And as the joy of the Lord is strength, so does he find strength. Israel flourishes into such a kingdom as never before nor after do they attain. Its boundaries are lengthened out until the promise to Abraham seems nearly fulfilled; but this is not really so: from the Euphrates to the river of Egypt and the Red Sea David reigns over subject kings, but the people are far from possessing it as their own inheritance. Still it is the pledge and foreshadow of what shall be far more glorious, when "He shall come whose right it is," and whose reign shall be to the ends of the earth and for everlasting.

SUBD. 1.

For the king after God's heart suffering must precede glory. He must obey before he can rule; and, like his Antitype, learn obedience by the things that he suffers. But the need and manner of learning are as different as the persons are different. Here we must look beyond David to learn what David's history means.

In Christ there could be no need of the *discipline* of suffering. Trial did not perfect Him in obedience, but showed Him perfect. Yet "perfected through suffering" He was, but as the "Captain of salvation," the "Author and finisher of faith," the One who goes before on and initiates the path upon which He victoriously leads His followers.* For this in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, "tempted in all things, like as we are, sin apart." (Heb. iv. 15, *Gk.*) How wondrous, how inspiring, such an example! God Himself become man to lead our feet in obedience on the path His own have trodden! In the *peculiar* sufferings of the cross He has gone beyond us, where none could follow; in all else we are called to enter into the "fellowship of His

*Ἀρχηγός is the word for "Captain" and "Author" both.—(Heb. ii. 10; xii. 2.)

Samuel said, How shall I go? if Saul hear it he will kill me. And Jehovah said, Take a heifer with thee, and say, I am come to [x]sacrifice to Jehovah; and thou shalt call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show thee

[x] ch. 9. 12.

sufferings," and that as the way to share with Him, through His grace, the crown also: it is "if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." (2 Tim. ii. 12.)

The sufferings of David take up many chapters of the record here,—sufferings which exalt him in our thoughts much more than his after glories. We need, as knowing the deeper reality of which they speak, to search into them with special earnestness, and prayerfulness of spirit, and with the precious assurance that it is of Christ that the spirit of prophecy speaks through him: expecting ourselves, therefore, to find shining through the type the true David, God's "Beloved." The veil for us has been here, as elsewhere, really taken away: may there be not a remnant even of darkening veil over our hearts!

1. The first thing that we are called to see in David is his unique sufficiency for the hour of Israel's need. In the valley of Elah, even Jonathan, the hero of Michmash, has no help. All Israel are alike trembling and helpless in the presence of the Philistine champion, and David becomes indeed the captain of their salvation. The meaning of this we shall look at presently. Before it we are called to see him as the elect of God, qualified of the Spirit of God for the work before him. For it is never man simply that can accomplish anything: the creature was not meant to live apart from the Creator; man apart is man fallen, and in the ruin of that fall; his glory is to be nigh God, with God, and thus Christ is the only full and adequate thought of him as in the mind of God from the beginning; not an after-thought, but that to which creation from the beginning pointed.

(i.) If we have David before us, we shall not even mourn for Saul. This is what is contained in Jehovah's reproof of Samuel. It is not, of course, that he was wrong in manifesting such sorrow as the Lord Himself had over Jerusalem. It can never be aught but fellowship with Him, to weep the Redeemer's tears over human obduracy and its inevitable results. But put a Saul at his best outwardly,—and his best was but outward,—who could weep to see him displaced by a David on the throne of Israel? And much more when, as to man in general, we would lament for the crown of creation fallen from his head,—how can we do this when we see Christ assume it?

Samuel is bidden then to fill his horn with oil and go to Bethlehem, and anoint there one of the sons of Jesse to be king. The horn is the familiar type of power, as oil is of the Spirit: it is from Him who has power that the anointing comes, from Him who will make good all that it implies, and whose king must be not simply naturally but spiritually qualified,—with whom power will be, therefore, power with God, that is, spiritual power. Bethlehem we know well as the "house of bread"; and its connection with Him who is the "living bread" makes very plain its meaning. How plainly, also, for Israel was David to be the minister of sustenance for faith, as well as for God's people at all times! Christ's power for us has been manifested in more precise ministry. From the Father's house, the true "house of bread," He came, to open the stores of it, and meet earth's famine with the bounty of God. Thus Jesse the Bethlehemite witnesses in his name that "Jehovah exists." Man has sunk down low enough; hope in him rightfully there is none: the more completely that is cut off, the more surely we come to the Omnipotent and self-sufficing God, ever living, and out of whom all that is lost may be restored.

Samuel fears this errand; for Saul's character is but too well known. He is told, therefore, to take a heifer and go and sacrifice, and call Jesse to the sacrifice. Nor are we to look at this as merely a protecting veil thrown mercifully around the weakness of His servant. We have already seen such a sacrificial feast spread in connection with Saul's anointing, and know it as the sign of peace and com-

what thou shalt do; and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee. And Samuel did what Jehovah spake; and he went to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at meeting him, and said, Comest thou [y]peaceably? And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice to Jehovah; sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he [z]sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice. And so it was, when they came, that he looked upon Eliab, and said, Surely, Jehovah's anointed is before him. And Jehovah said unto Samuel, Look not at his appearance, nor at the [a]height of his stature, for I have rejected him: for [Jehovah seeth] not as man seeth; for man looketh on the eyes, but Jehovah looketh on the [b]heart. And Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel; and he said, Neither hath Jehovah chosen him. And Jesse made Shammah to pass by; and he said, Neither hath Jehovah chosen him. And Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel; and Samuel said unto Jesse, Jehovah hath not chosen these. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are these all the young men? And he said, There is one left, the [c]youngest; and behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said to Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither. And he sent and brought him in. Now, he was ruddy, and withal with beautiful eyes, and [d]goodly to look upon; and Jehovah said, Arise, anoint him, for this is he. And Samuel

y ch. 21. 1. 1 Kl. 2. 13.
z Ex. 19. 10.
a ch. 10. 23.
b 1 Chr. 28. 9. *cf.* Matt. 15. 1-20.
c *cf.* 1 Chr. 5. 1.
d ver. 18. *cf.* Song 5. 10-16.

munion between God and man. This is where Saul had failed so utterly. For him, too, all had been prepared, and he was an invited guest; but into the reality of this he had never entered. David therefore was to be now the guest, and to make up for Saul's deficiency. And the true King, when He comes, is more than David; for He is not only partaker of but spreads the feast.

Samuel goes, therefore, to Bethlehem, but the elders tremble at his coming. Things are out of course in Israel, and an uneasy conscience finds in the approach of one who walks with God a cause of distress. But Samuel quiets this, and calls them to the sacrifice, for which also he sanctifies Jesse and his sons.

They seem alone to have been present at the sacrificial meal that follows, when David is anointed. As the prophet sees the stately and striking form of Eliab, the eldest son, he imagines for the moment that this must be the one intended of the Lord; but Jehovah rebukes the thought. "Man looketh on the eyes,"—the deepest well of thought and feeling to him,—"but Jehovah looketh on the heart." Abinadab next comes before him, and then Shammah, and so seven of Jesse's sons, but all to be rejected; and there is only one remaining, away with the sheep. When he is brought, at once the voice of the Lord is heard by the prophet, "Arise, anoint him"; and David is anointed in the presence of all his brethren.

Can we gain anything from this, save that the Lord sees deeper than man, and that he chooses often for His instruments those little among men? That is true, and also important, for we are prone to forget it: but is that all that we are to learn from these details given? If not, shall we be over-bold in seeking to find meanings somewhat deeper than the surface? For here is a great type surely, and a question raised, which, if we think a little, we shall find occupies men to-day: Who is God's coming King of men? And what principle does He stand

took the horn of oil, and [e]anointed him in the midst of his brethren. And the [f]Spirit of Jehovah came upon

[e] ch. 10. 1. 1 Ki. 1. 39. 2 Sam. 2. 4.
[f] ch. 11, 6.

for or represent? Or what is the message that He brings with Him when He comes? If it is said, perhaps, It is a principle, and not a person, that men are expecting, even so it will be found that principles also wait for introduction by a person, who identifies himself with these, and is identified with them; and that men think this a valid and important subject of inquiry still. It should not be strange, then, if God have a Person in His mind who is to bring in the reign of truth and righteousness and peace which still men look for, though it be so long delayed; and that He is identified with principles of infinite importance, of which God's heart is full,—so full that it has been overflowing to communicate them, before there were ears open even to receive the report, or the time had come in which it could be fairly uttered.

Saul is yet upon the scene, and potent in his way too, we see, but doomed to be set aside. The man of the people has failed utterly under the test of God. *His* principle has been independence of God, reason such as he deems it unimpeded by revelation, the pursuit of his own ends by his own means, since God plainly cannot be trusted to secure these. Alas, all this is easily understood and confidently acted on all the world over, and will be, surely, (for at least there is no sign of change,) as long as human nature is what it is, or God does not come in to change by divine power the course of things.

Kings have failed, so that it is the glory of the present age to have either superseded or taken in hand to fetter them. Aristocracy fails, for it is only a diluted and more moderate kingship, many-headed and less easily made responsible in proportion as its power is less direct. And democracy also fails, both because the more complete it is the less really is it what it assumes to be, the more multitudinous the less available as power, the more heterogeneous. All forms of government that man has tried or that are available to him, are but the endeavor to balance contradictory self-interests, and to restrain the spirit of the wild beast ever seeking to be loose. And this is the scriptural picture: the vision of the powers of the earth which the prophet sees, and representing them until the Son of man comes in the clouds of heaven, is of *four wild beasts* (Dan. vii.). "Man being in honor, and understanding not, is like the beasts that perish." (Ps. xlix. 20.)

What, then, is the remedy? Nothing, plainly, but the *Son of man from heaven.* Laws, the best and the worst, fail to execute themselves, and the sons of men have no hope in them, so long as heaven is still and intervenes not. The Son of man *from heaven* is the only answer to the long unanswered question. "All judgment committed unto Him, because He is the Son of man"—perfectly intelligent and sympathetic as to man; but come to earth out of the open doors of heaven, in perfect sympathy up there, and so bringing heaven and earth into sympathetic union.

And why has the remedy been so long delayed? It was offered almost two millennia since, and was rejected! offered with amplest demonstration of its reality; rejected with the practical unanimity of all sorts and conditions of men: heaven's gift, earth's King, hung up in the face of heaven in utter scorn and face to face rejection! "He saved others," they shouted, "let Him save Himself! He trusted in God: let Him deliver Him!" And so the world has had its free field for experiments in political economy ever since. They are nearly ended now. The Son of man, thank God, is coming back again, and it will not be left any more to the world's arbitrament, whether they will have Him.

David's history shows us both these things, "the sufferings of Christ and the glories that shall follow." True history, it takes its place in the books of the "former prophets," and is prophetical, as indeed in some sense all *true* history is. But there is less of this than we are willing to admit, available to our inspection: in that day when the books shall be open we shall find the true.

The Christ? but who is the Christ? Saul, the man of the people, for faith is

(2. xvi. 14–23.) Contrasted conditions: David's ministry to Saul.

David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

14 And the Spirit of Jehovah [g] departed from Saul, and an evil spirit [h] from Jehovah troubled him. And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold, now an evil spirit from

[g] ver. 13. *ctr.* Jno. 14. 16.
[h] *cf.* 1 Ki. 22. 20–23.

passed away. Which of this long family of Jesse is worthy to succeed? Eliab is the first-born, and has a beautiful name and a stately presence. Eliab means "God"—or, "my God, is Father," and we have had the name before in the captain of Zebulon's host in the wilderness, and in very different connection as the father of that Dathan and Abiram who were conspirators with Korah against Moses. "My God is Father" is a glorious reality, which may be on the other hand most terribly abused. As Creator He is the "Father of spirits," and men are in general in that sense "His offspring." Undoubtedly also He would have all men know Him in such endeared relationship. Yet if we take our stand on the ground of creation we ignore the fall; and such was the sin of the sons of Eliab in the wilderness. Granting there be a Christ, is He to be, can He be, Head of the old creation, restorer of the old relationship within the old limits? Notice, again, that this Eliab is the first-born, David at the other end, the eighth: but this is against Eliab, though his goodly presence may appeal even to a prophet. He comes under the law of Genesis, and exemplifies the rule, "*first*, that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual." (1 Cor. xv. 46.) But there is no natural Christ, nor therefore of the old creation; the eighth speaks of the new, and Eliab must give place to David.

Abinadab therefore also is foredoomed; although as the *second* son, he speaks suggestively of help or of salvation. His name too is good, and in accord with this, "my father is a liberal giver." And why, man argues, should not God, who is good and the Father of men, freely, of His mere good pleasure, remit sin? Why must the Christ be a David, an *eighth* son, owning in Himself the ruin of man, and descending to the depth of his condemnation to redeem him? But it cannot be: for sin is the dark and fundamental opposite of God, and He cannot dwell with it. To ignore is not to remove it, but to go on with it, and Abinadab can therefore be no sufficient Saviour.

Shammah is the third son of Jesse, but his name is variously interpreted. It is also differently given in Chronicles (1 Chron. ii. 13) as Shimeah, or Shimma. This last word is near akin to Shimeon (Simeon), and should have the same meaning, "hearing," or "hearkening," which is often equivalent to "obedient." But Shammah is from another root, and means "desolation." If there be no mistake in the text,—and in the next chapter it is given again as here,—this, under the number that speaks of holiness, would naturally imply that the alternative of what Eliab or Abinadab expresses must be desolating judgment; but most certainly the Christ-King could not represent such a thought as this.

No other names are given till the last is reached in David, the "beloved," the eighth, taken from the shepherd's place to fill the kingly one,—in God's thoughts still the Shepherd's. As eighth, he shows us Christ as Head of *new* creation, as we have seen: God's holiness thus expressed in the link with a new life received from Him, itself the condemnation of the old. But the King is no less the One in whom the Divine Love is shown out toward men. The "Beloved" must be indeed the King after God's own heart, and in Him of whom the type speaks here the higher and lower kingdoms come entirely together.

David is anointed, and the Spirit of Jehovah comes upon him from henceforth. He is the king designate of God, although the road to the kingdom may be yet a long one, and lead deeply down into the valley of humiliation.

(ii.) But the Spirit of the Lord departs from Saul, and an evil spirit from Jehovah troubles him. Evil as well as good has its commission from God,—not its existence, but its liberty to act, and the limits of its action. So we see in Job in early times, and in Ahab's case later; and comfort it is indeed to know

God troubleth thee. Let our lord now speak; thy servants are before thee: they shall seek out a man, a skillful [i] player on the harp; and it shall be, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well. And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him unto me. And one of the young men answered and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is skillful in playing, and a [j] valiant man, and a man of war, and [k] prudent in affairs, and a [l] comely person, and Jehovah is with him. And Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, who is with the sheep. And Jesse took an ass [laden with] [m] bread, and a skin of [n] wine, and a [o] kid, and sent them by David his son unto Saul. And David came to Saul, and stood before him, and he [p] loved him greatly, and he became his [q] armorbearer. And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me, for he hath found favor in my sight. And so it was when the [evil] spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took the harp, and played with his hand;

i *cf.* Ezek. 33. 32.
j ch. 17. 34, etc. *cf.* Ps. 45. 3.
k 2 Sa. 23. 1. *cf.* Jno. 7. 46.
l ver. 12.
m ch. 10. 3. *cf.* Lev. 2. 4.
n cf. Num. 28. 14.
o *cf.* Lev. 5. 6.
p *ctr.* ch. 18. 1.
q *cf.* ch. 31. 4, 5.

this. It is thus the wrath of man is made to praise Him, and the remainder of it He restrains. Nothing can escape from the divine government by the fact or avowal of its being evil. How should it? Thus alone can we be at peace, assured that no waves can rise higher than the footstool of His throne. The work of the evil spirit with Saul was the execution of penalty, and had it led to self-judgment would have proved mercy also. The relief granted, with its known source, was surely that goodness of God which leadeth to repentance. The character of it shows that it was the tempestuous working of Saul's own spirit that gave the evil one his opportunity,—that brought Saul within the limit ordained him of God. David's harp does not act directly upon Satan, but upon Saul. By its strange power of softening and subduing, though but temporarily, the savage temper of the rejected king, the power that assails him is driven back and shut off; for the time he is set free.

The harp of David is the sign of nature even in its lowest and inanimate forms responsive and harmonious in the hand of man. It lies with him, the highest and intelligent creature of God, to bring out and express these harmonies, to make the silence vocal. If he take not his God-given place, the capacity of nature is not known, its depths are unsounded, God's design and glory in it are obscured and misconstrued. What will be its awakening when the earth is put into the hands of the Second, the ideal Man? How will our David make all nature His harp of many strings, and lead in the anthem of praise from all creation!

But even now it is in His hand, obedient to Him alone, and so harmonious; and it is this, however little understood and realized, that alone checks and restrains the spirit of disorder and anarchy to which at times the powers ordained of God seem given up. Here, too, it acts by the power of that sweet mysterious charm of our David's melody over themselves—strangers as they may be to Him personally. The Sauls do not become Davids, but they are under the influence of David; and the mere reflection of the glory that shall at last cast out the adversary of men prevails to baffle and turn him back. How vivid is the picture here, and how completely the history justifies itself as prophecy according to, though far beyond, the Jewish conception of these books as the "former prophets."

Saul and David will nevertheless yet separate, each to his final destiny: Saul

and Saul was [r]refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

3. (xvii.) The manifestation.

[s](*a*) Now the [t]Philistines gathered their hosts together to battle, and were gathered together at Socoh, which belongeth to [t]Judah; and encamped between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim. And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and encamped

[r] ver. 16. cf. Matt. 13. 20, 21 with Hos. 6. 4.
[s] ch. 7. 7.
[t] Josh. 15. 35.

to the fatal field of Gilboa, David to the thus emptied throne, which he will raise to its highest glory.

(iii.) We now come to the time of David's manifestation as the deliverer of Israel, the one who alone can meet their need in the day of distress. As a history it is a simple but glorious lesson of faith, and of what it can achieve with no help but that of God; as a type it is a deep and instructive parable of the wondrous salvation which Christ has wrought for His people. It is such an one as by no means carries its meaning upon its face. There are difficulties in it which seem always to have hindered the satisfactory exposition of what has been generally felt must be in it by those who believe at all in any rightful allegorization of these histories. There is a mingling together of different lines of truth which easily becomes entanglement if we do not discern with care. And the remedy for this will be found, not in simply picking out what seems consistent with the meaning we have given it, and dismissing the rest as belonging to the necessary faultiness of such allegoric method, a kind of reasoning which must be the reproach and ruin of the method itself, if it is to be accepted,—but on the contrary, in a fair and full induction of all the facts. While we may not be able to see meaning everywhere, we must not turn away from unwelcome difficulties or accept what is really contradictory to the evidence as a whole.

Difficulties are plain when we look at what is the back-ground of a picture of Christ's salvation. We find a Philistine war; the adversary met by David vaunting himself a Philistine, if perhaps in fact he be something more; but indeed his Anakite descent (Josh. xi. 22) does not emerge at all in the chapter before us. If the Philistines then be what we have represented them to be, and what so much scripture combines to assure us that they are,—the ritualistic and successional world-church,—how can it be a champion of this sort that Christ is seen here to meet and slay, and from which He delivers His people? The relation of David to Saul, and much else, if explicable, have yet at least to be similarly explained, before we have the elements of a proper exposition that can rightly challenge acceptance as to what is in the mind of God before us here. One thing is certain, if there be any truth whatever in the interpretation of this whole history as far as we have now arrived, then it is not against a blank wall that we have suddenly come: there is spiritual meaning here as elsewhere; and this belief will surely be justified as the result of the examination upon which we are entering.

(*a*) The Philistines are the enemies of Saul throughout his reign, and he perishes at last in conflict with them. At this we shall be called to look another time; but that ecclesiasticism as we have seen it in them is ever hostile to the "powers that be," as represented in Saul, is evident. Always open war there is not, but it is always threatening, if not existent: for the aim of the world-church is power on earth, and if it has an intoxicating cup for its kings, and can have wanton dalliance, even thus would it cast them down and prevail against them. "Her ways are changeable," says the wise man, "that thou shouldst not know them;" but ever one purpose abides through all.

At the time we have reached, the Philistines are at open war with Israel, have invaded Judah, and are gathered together at Socoh in its territory, camping between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephesdammim, "the boundary of blood." The names here may, though not beyond question as to their meaning, give us more than a glimmer of light. Socoh we have taken elsewhere (p. 103 *n.*) to mean,

a. (1–11.) The man of might.

in the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines. And the Philistines stood on the mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, and the ravine was between them. And there went out a champion from the camp of the Philistines, named [u]Goliath of Gath, whose height was

[u] ch. 21. 10. *cf.* 2 Sam. 21. 19.

as in Lam. ii. 6, "his tabernacle," and this is named as a principal point at which they aim, while their camp is between it and Azekah, the "fence" by which He would guard it.

Now this guard is by the maintenance of the truth (as we have seen in the place referred to) that there are "two gates," "two ways," and correspondingly two ends: Christ the gate and the way to life eternal,—no other way than Christ; but then, alas! a wide gate and a broad way trodden by the many, and by which there will as surely be reached another end than this. Such is the guard which God has appointed to His sanctuary, the holy conditions which the grace of the gospel affirms, not sets aside. But Philistinism, that is, ecclesiasticism, does set them aside. It has a gate and a way which are not Christ, but which assume His name; which are broader than the true, yet narrower; and by which they penetrate between God's "tabernacle," which they claim for themselves, and the guard which He has set about it. Sacraments are made to give the "life," which He alone can give, and to sustain it. People are born of God by "water," the "Spirit" being taken for granted, and made subject to the will of man—the officiating priest. Bread and wine by an equal magic become in his hands the very flesh and blood of Christ. Here, in this Babel of unrealities which pass for realities, where the depth of the mystery is only measured by its irrationality, where faith in a sensual superstition becomes a debasing credulity,—here is indeed the entrenched camp of Philistinism, between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephesdammim, the "boundary of blood:" for so thorough is the opposition between the grace of Christ and this legal ritualism that to cross the border-line is a question of life or death: "in her," as the divine record is of Babylon, "was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." (Rev. xviii. 24.)

Saul and the army of Israel are encamped in the valley of Elah, or "the terebinth," named like the oak from its strength,—if it be not rather the oak itself. Spiritually, the "valley" is indeed the place to find the power that is manifest in life. But it is one thing to be in the position, another to have realized the blessing of it, and this, under their failed head, the Israelites have not done. In the presence of the enemy they have no strength.

A formidable champion now makes his appearance on the side of the Philistines, no doubt one of the old Anakite race, some individuals of which we are expressly told, survived at Gath, the place from which Goliath comes. Spiritually apprehended, we shall find him a giant indeed, and needing, not the might of man, but the power of God to overcome. He is the champion of the Philistines, and must therefore represent them in what is prominent in the principles for which they stand; but he is more than merely a Philistine also: a darker shadow as of vapor from the pit is cast over the picture here.

The derivation of Goliath from *galah* has the consent of lexicographers; yet corresponding to the several meanings of the verb, there have been suggested several interpretations of the name, it being hard, as far as legitimacy goes, to decide between them. In such perplexity we are entitled to take that which brings light with it rather than what conveys no meaning. That which fits the lock will prove itself as ever to be the key of the lock, to those, at least, who are clear that there is a key somewhere.

Goliath means, then, we believe, "banishment, exile;" to which the city to which he belongs adds intensity of significance. Gath means the "wine-press;" and we have before connected it with what seems its only explanation here, the

v Deut. 3.11. cf. Dan. 3.1.
w cf. Deut. 28. 23. Judg. 16.21. Rev. 1. 15. Is. 10. 5-7.
x 1 Chr. 20.5.

six cubits and a span. And he had a helmet of [w]brass upon his head, and was clothed in a scale corselet; and the weight of the corselet was five thousand shekels of brass. And he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a javelin of brass between his shoulders. And the shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his [x]spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron; and the shield-bearer went before him. And he stood and cried unto the ranks of Israel, and said unto them, Why are

pregnant saying of the Apocalypse, "He treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of almighty God." "Banishment from God in His wrath," we may take as the true thought conveyed by the threatening figure of Goliath of Gath.

Now the essence of Christianity lies in this, that as the fruit of accomplished redemption we are brought nigh to God. This is what the apostle contrasts with the powerlessness of the law of Moses, for which that was set aside: "There is therefore the disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof (for the law made nothing perfect), and the bringing in of a better hope, by which *we draw nigh to God.*" (Heb. vii. 18, 19, *Gk.*) As he goes on to show (chap. ix., x.), the perfecting of the conscience so as to be able to stand in the presence of a holy God was thus what Judaism was wholly unable to effect. Of this the veil before the holiest bore constant witness. The work by which alone the conscience could be set at rest, was not yet done. But it *is now* done: "By one offering hath [Christ] *perfected forever* them that are sanctified." Hence there is rest and nearness. Only unbelief can bring in distance between the soul and God, for we are in Christ, "accepted in the Beloved" unchangeably.

But the knowledge of this is the destruction of Philistinism. The essential character of the false sacramental system is the revival of Judaism, the putting back under its shadows and into distance from God. Thus the church becomes the mediator between the unreconciled soul and God; the sacrifice and the priesthood, though with a juggle of Christian terms which are good for nothing but to conjure with, come back into the old place, but with a deadly falsehood now, such as in Judaism was not and could not be. The very essence of *that* was that it was predictive and preparatory: the old covenant was to give place to the new; there were "good things to come" that *had* not come: but this bastard Judaism claims *itself* to be that which was to come, connects itself with the precious realities of grace, only to degrade, contradict and displace them. It speaks of Christ, of His work, of His grace, ever to substitute its perversions for the truth, and in the name of the Lord rivet its chains upon the free. Here the Philistine leader becomes apparent. Goliath of Gath represents just the denial of reconciliation and nearness to God, which is so manifest in the modern Philistinism, with its Casluhite (p. 74) prate of forgiveness and grace, which is only the devil's wile to take all meaning out of such blessed words. The essence of Romanism and of all Romanizing systems lies in this, that there is no known and effectual reconciliation. You need the Church, and all the priestly train on earth,—you need the host of saints and angels up in heaven, as intercessors to bring you nigh; and with all this labor, as they quote from the funeral book of the Old Testament for their purpose, "no man knoweth whether he is worthy of favor or hatred." (Eccles. ix. 1, *Douay Version.*) The council of Trent condemned the assurance of salvation as the "vain confidence of the heretics." If you do not drop out of their hands into hell, you will certainly go to purgatory, and there pay to God the uttermost farthing for your sins.

"Exile from God because of His wrath:" this is indeed the champion of the Philistines. Heaven there is, but afar off, and with a dread uncertainty of ever reaching it. But how can the fear of this throw its shadow over the souls of the

ye come out to set your battle in array? Am not I the Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? choose yourselves a man, and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me, and smite me, then will we be your servants; but if I overcome and smite him, then shall ye be our servants and serve us. And the Philistine said, I [y]defy the ranks of Israel this day: give me a man, that we may fight together. And Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, and they were [z]dismayed, and exceedingly afraid.

y 2 Sam. 21. 20, 21. ver. 26. 2 Ki. 19. 1–4.
z ch. 13. 5–7.

b. (12-30.) The mission and words of David.

(*b*) Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem-judah, whose name was Jesse; and he had eight sons. And the man was old in the days of Saul, advanced among men. And the three eldest sons of Jesse followed Saul to the battle; and the names of the three sons that went to the battle were Eliab the first-born, and his second, Abinadab, and the third Shammah. And David was the [a]youngest; and the three eldest followed Saul. And David [b]had returned from being with Saul, to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem. Now the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and took his stand [c]forty days. And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched corn and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp to thy brethren; and carry

a ch. 16. 11.
b ch. 16. 21. ch. 18. 2.
c *cf.* Ex. 34. 28.

Israel of God? Alas! the type before us answers that sufficiently. Unbelief, the slighting of the word of God, the lack of any deep self-judgment, the mixture of the Church and the world: these are prominent and concurrent causes. Mid all the light that people vaunt to-day the shadows of superstition gather and their hosts stalk abroad, with the giant of Gath still champion of the host. Plain it is that it is the guilty conscience, ignorant of the power of the blood of Christ, that is the strength of all such systems. It is this that builds up priestly authority, and maintains the efficacy of sacramental "mysteries." Peace with God known, accepted consciously in the soul, the terror of wrath is gone, the giant of superstition slain, the arm of Philistia is broken: and thus we are led directly to the apprehension of the conqueror here, who is *David*, the "*Beloved*."

The height of the giant may be noted, six cubits and a span, though it is only the number which is plain as that of the full development of evil, and (we may add) unrest. He is in armor of brass, so often connected with the unyielding character of judgment; his heart is shut in with scales of brass: we are too little practised in divine symbolism to go safely further in the interpretation here. He proclaims himself emphatically "*the* Philistine," as he truly is; and defies any one in the host of Israel to contend with him. And Saul and all the host shrink back in terror.

(*b*) The history returns to David, and the memory is refreshed as to who he is. All this we are to keep in mind, and carry with us. The three eldest of his brothers follow Saul; but David has returned from Saul to his accustomed and significant occupation as shepherd of the sheep. God's king is in training, and not to be hastily detached from this.

Forty days the Philistine presents himself, morning and evening. The testing of ability to encounter him is to be fully made.

But now David, like Joseph of old—another type of royalty in Christ—is sent upon a mission. He is to seek out his brethren with food for their necessities, and see how they fare. Nor does our king yet disdain such service. He finds

these ten cheeses to the captain of their thousand, and [d] see how thy brethren fare, and receive their token. And Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel were in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines. And David rose [e] early in the morning, and left the sheep with a [f] keeper, and took, and went as Jesse had bidden him; and he came to the wagon-rampart, and the host was going forth to the battle-array, and shouted for the fight. And Israel and the Philistines put the battle in array, rank against rank. And David left what he was carrying in the hand of the keeper of the baggage, and ran into the ranks, and came and saluted his brethren. And as he spake with them, behold, the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, came up out of the ranks of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words; and David heard [them].

d cf. Gen. 37. 14.

e ch. 29. 11, ch. 9. 26.

f ver. 28.

them in the ranks, going forth to the battle for which they have so little heart or competence, and sees the Philistine come forth, and hears his challenge. He is intensely and indignantly interested, and no wonder, and again and again questions the people there, "What shall be done to the man that smiteth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel?" And again and again they tell him what the king will do.

If this is still to be applied typically, what is the meaning of it? What are we to say indeed of all this introduction of David into the reign of Saul and into the midst of such a conflict as has been already indicated between Israel and the Philistines? For all this has seemed, and with consistency hitherto, to speak of things that are or have been taking place in our own times and dispensation, and how could we introduce the Lord personally, as David would seem to represent Him, into scenes from which He is necessarily absent?

There is here a difficulty indeed, but not an insuperable one. Of course it is true that it would be insuperable, if we had to conceive of our Lord as being here in the body when we know that He is in heaven: this would be entirely inconsistent; yet it is said in the closing verses of the Gospel of Mark just after we have been told distinctly of His ascent into heaven and being seated on the right hand of God,—"And they went forth and preached every where, *the Lord working with them*, and confirming the word with signs following." Thus still also, we are sure, the Lord works on; and this is no figure of speech, nor even a synonym for the Spirit's work in men: there is a difference which it is well to be clear about, and which will make what we have here also clear.

Ministry is always under the Lord: "there are differences of administrations (ministries, *marg.*), yet but one Lord;" and this the apostle says just after he had said, "there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." (1 Cor. xii. 4, 5.) The two things are widely different: the *power* is of the Spirit; rule, superintendence, belong to the *Lord*.

This title, Lord, is moreover, if we may say so, His *David*, His royal, title; for He is never called king in relation to the Church, but to Israel or the nations,* while in fact the authority which He claims and exercises as "Lord" is fully royal. Thus we may rightly speak of His actings here, while He sits upon the Father's throne above; and these will show Him of course in the character of His rule, and make us realize the joy of being subject to Him. Such views of Him we may expect to realize in that which is before us.

As acting upon earth, it will be natural also, to find Him identified with and represented by the servants who serve Him, and even in their sufferings too. While we must carefully remember the limitations which types according to their

* Rev. xv. 3. should read "King of *nations*."

And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from before him, and were sore afraid. And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that cometh up? for to defy Israel he cometh up; and it shall be that the man who smiteth him the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his [g]daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel. And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that smiteth this Philistine, and taketh away reproach from Israel? for who is this [h]uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the [i]embattled hosts of the living God? And the people told him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done unto him that smiteth him. And Eliab, his elder brother, heard when he spake unto the men; and the anger of Eliab was kindled against David, and he said, Why hast thou come down hither? and with whom hast thou left those [j]few sheep in the wilderness? *I* know thy pride and the naughtiness of thy heart; for thou camest down to see the battle. And David said, What have I now done? is there not a [k]cause? And he turned from him to another, and spake after the same manner; and the people answered him again after the former manner.

g *cf.* Judg. 1. 12, 13.

h ch. 14. 6.
i Ex. 12. 41. 2 Kl. 19. 21, 22.

j ver. 20. *cf.* Jno. 7. 5.

k *cf.* ver. 11.

very nature have, and take heed not to strain the application beyond these. But as to all this we must speak of it in detail as the individual types come before us, and furnish the occasion.

But it is plain therefore that the visit of David to his brethren at this time is *not* to be interpreted like that of Joseph, of the Lord's assuming flesh and coming into the world. We must rather take it as applying to what men coldly call a providential visitation. If there took place for instance at the Reformation such a deliverance as we find here from the giant of the Philistines,—if at that time the revival of a gospel which gave assurance and peace to souls delivered men from the distance and estrangement from God which Romanism maintains, and by which it effects its conquests,—then we may rightly consider this to be such a gracious visitation. The true David, the son of Jesse, (of the living and unchanging God,) surely then visited His brethren with the bread of Bethlehem, the Father's house of bread. Then was the question raised which received in result such unsatisfactory answer, "what shall be done to the man that smiteth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel?"

The more this is examined, the closer will be found the application. Was not the answer too much in those days the assurance of what the *king* would do for Israel's deliverer? The failure of the Reformation—blessed work of God as there truly was in it—was it not largely in this that Saul, the secular power, and his promises were trusted in, and the princes of the earth sought to as the nursing fathers of the church? But what will they do, what have they done, for the Christ who delivered them? Alas, they sought not spiritual deliverance but temporal, though the means that could alone deliver them were in fact spiritual. The Davids were the divinely raised up champions of the truth, who descended solitary into the valley while the Sauls, yea, and Israel too, cowered in their places of shelter and looked on, to see the victory accomplished for them. In reality this victory was but one, and of One, One Christ acting in His poor followers, whom the Eliabs might insult for pride, and as leaving the few sheep to be exposed in the wilderness, while the work was being done. Yet there was a cause; and they had but to wait to see the vain seeming words become mighty deeds, the giant dead, and the Philistine host in flight!

c (31-37.) The realization.

(*c*) And the words which David spake were heard, and they told them before Saul, and he laid hold of it. And David said unto Saul, [l]Let no man's heart fail because of him: thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Thou art [m]not able to go against this Philistine, to fight with him, for thou art a youth, and he a man of war from his youth. And David said to Saul, Thy servant was feeding his father's sheep, and there came a [n]lion, and also a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock. And I went after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth; and when he arose against me, I seized him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear; and this [o]uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, because he has defied the embattled hosts of the living God. And David said, Jehovah who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of the Philistine. And Saul said unto David, [p]Go, and Jehovah be with thee.

d (38–40.) His rejection of the untested armor.

(*d*) And Saul clothed David with [q]his dress, and put a helmet of brass upon his head, and clothed him with a corselet. And David girded his sword upon his dress, and assayed to go; but he had not proved [them]. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these, for I have not [r]proved [them.] And David put them off

l Josh. 1. 6.

m ch. 16. 7.

n Judg.14.6. Jno. 10. 12.

o ver. 26.

p Judg.6.14.

q cf. ch. 31. 10. *ctr.* Eph. 6. 10-18.

r cf. 2 Cor. 10. 3-5.

(*c*) The words of David are reported to Saul, and though half believing only, he grasps at them. Incredulously he gazes at the stripling whose strength, such as he sees it, is little enough to be measured with that of the Philistine warrior; but David is not dismayed. He has had already his experiences of Jehovah's deliverances, and his conflict in behalf of the sheep of the flock: so the Lord trains in private those whom He brings forth at last for public use; "not a novice" is His rule for leaders; and David, young as he might be, was none. There was with him the shepherd's heart which had made him venture his life, not before the eyes of many, nor for a great result, but for a single lamb only. How could he now shrink when the issue was so vast, and the people of God were looking vainly for a deliverer?

His measure of the situation is the measure of faith. Here we find nothing of the gigantic stature of his antagonist, nor of his brazen armor, nor of his practiced soldiership: this has nothing to do with the matter; he is an uncircumcised Philistine, and has defied the embattled hosts of the living God. A very partial induction, it might be said; but for him it was ample. Faith has but to make one inquiry. Where is God in this matter? and having found this, nothing whatever on the opposite side can weigh against this.

Even Saul has to own so plain an argument. He assents, and dismisses him with a pious wish, Go, and Jehovah be with thee! That, indeed, is the whole matter: Israel is not with him, nor Saul, nor anything that flesh values, or the world has confidence in; happy is he who in the face of all this can say, "The Lord is with me! is it not enough?"

(*d*) But Saul shows that he does not realize this, and must at least clothe David with his own armor, that the battle may be upon more equal terms. And indeed, though not as he meant it, this would have been the case. Saul's armor was Philistine enough; and David clothed in it would have been novice enough. But he only puts it on to put it off again. He will not use what he has no ac-

him. And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him *s* five smooth stones out of the *t* brook, and put them in the shepherd's bag which he had, even into the pouch. And his sling was in his hand, and he drew near the Philistine.

s cf. Jno.6.9.
t cf. Ps.110.7.

c (41–47.) David and Jehovah.

(*c*) And the Philistine came on and approached David; and the man that bare the shield was before him. And the Philistine looked and saw David, and he *u* disdained him; for he was a youth, and ruddy, and fair of countenance. And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest unto me with staves? and the Philistine cursed David by his gods. And the Philistine said unto David, Come unto me, and I will give thy flesh to the bird of the heavens, and to the beast of the field. And David said unto the Philistine, *v* Thou comest unto me with sword and with spear and with javelin, and I come unto thee in the name of Jehovah of hosts, the God of the battle-array of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will *w* Jehovah deliver thee up into my hand, and I will smite thee, and take thy head from off thee, and give the *x* carcases of the host of the Philistines this day to the bird of the heavens, and to the wild beast of the earth, that all the earth

u ver. 10. *cf.* 2 Cor.10. 10.
v Deut. 20. 1–4.
w ch. 14. 10.
x cf. Rev.19. 17.

quaintance with. So he goes forth, a shepherd, not a warrior, not as one with whom war is a profession, though he may fight when the flock is in peril: with his staff and sling, and five smooth stones only, out of the brook.

The means we use will largely tell the spirit we are of. In themselves of small importance, our making much of them will in fact make them much, though in a different sense from that which we imagine. Paul came not among the Corinthians "with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring the testimony of God." And in this there was not mere human weakness, but the distinct purpose that their "faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." All supplements of spiritual power necessarily carnalize the effect produced; and even where God is working, the result will show itself, perhaps not till after many days. Meanwhile, as with stung fruit, the ripening may seem quicker, while in fact the proper ripeness never is attained.

David had tested his means before the battle. This let us remember, but apply it rightly too. For the word of God is that which must test everything for us, if our experience even is to be of any value. Little should we count it, comparatively, when we have unfailing wisdom of Him who sees the end from the beginning, to whom all things are naked and opened. How we should rejoice, indeed, in the unspeakable blessing of His word—His mind made known to us! As to the weapons of David, we shall see what they mean directly; but we may notice that the *five* stones already speak in the number of man in relationship with God, which accomplished, as even the person of Christ bears witness for eternity, the issue of the conflict before us is not doubtful.

(*c*) The combatants now approach to the encounter, and the spirit of each is manifest. With David there is confident assurance, but it is in Jehovah, in whose name he acts, and who is with him, meaning to show Himself as the living God to all the earth, and to make Israel know that He saves neither by sword nor spear, but the issue of the battle is in His hand alone. So, indeed, has God wrought, and for such a purpose, in those great crises of human history in which His hand has been stretched out to break the power of the enemy and deliver men out of his grasp. But above all, when the deliverance has been from

may know that the [y]God of Israel exists; and that all this congregation may know that Jehovah saveth not by sword and by spear: for the battle is Jehovah's, and he hath given you into our hand.

[y] Josh. 4.24. 2 Chr. 20.15.

[f] (48-54.) The victory.

(*f*) And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted and ran toward the ranks to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand into his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, so that the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell upon his face to the earth. And David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine and slew him; and there was [z]no sword in the hand of David. And David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it from its sheath, and slew him, and [a]cut off his head with it. And when the Philistines saw that their mighty man was dead, they [b]fled. And the men of Israel and Judah arose, and shouted, and [c]pursued the

[z] 2 Sam. 23. 21. ch. 21. 9.
[a] ch. 31. 8. *cf.* Heb. 2. 14.
[b] Judg. 7.21.
[c] 2 Sam. 22. 38.

spiritual oppression and darkness, and the result of it the bringing of souls into the joy and peace of the gospel, how has God declared His being and name, and how clearly has victory been the result not of human effort or carnal means, but His handiwork alone!

(*f*) But we must now consider more particularly the means of the giant's overthrow. This smooth stone from the brook, what is it? may we expect to find a definite meaning in it? It has evidently a most important place in the history; ought it not to have as much in the interpretation, if this is to be consistent, so as to have upon it the stamp of truth?

A smooth stone from the brook is one which has been fashioned by the stream of running (which in Scripture is the same as living) water; and this last we know as constantly a figure of the Spirit of God. Here should be a beginning of understanding for us.

Then a *stone* shaped by the Spirit of God would naturally make us think of the "*living* stones" of which Peter speaks, expanding for us the significance of his own name; stones built up into the spiritual house which is built upon the foundation of living stone, which is Christ Jesus. As stones, they are true and divine material for the house of God in contrast with Babel's bricks of human manufacture (Gen. xi), and are types of permanence and solidity. God's living stones will abide in their God-given place forever, a sanctuary of praise that will never be taken down or cease to manifest His glory eternally.

If, then, we simply follow Scripture in interpreting Scripture, how well may this smooth stone from the brook in our David's hand destroy the dread shadow of wrath and alienation from God which the giant of Gath expresses! The stone speaks of divine work and a divine position, of settled nearness to God and indwelling glory! What a salvation indeed is this, and what a triumph over all the power of the enemy! The giant falls, and is slain with his own sword; for by death Christ has destroyed him that had the power of death (Heb. ii, 14): here the work of the cross finds its place in this grand type; what victory can be accomplished without it? and how plain that every victory of this kind is really His, who alone could handle such a weapon!

At once the Philistines flee, and Israel has only to pursue a defeated foe. As has been said, the whole power of ecclesiasticism is broken for those who have seen the giant fallen. The apprehension of the true Church, and of our individual place in it, in abiding nearness to and joy in God, of necessity overthrows the would-be mediation of the false church with all its hosts of empty

Philistines until thou come to the ravine and to the gate of Ekron; and the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way of Shaaraim, even as far as Gath, and as far as Ekron. And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they [d] spoiled their camp. And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to *Jerusalem, and he put his armor in his tent.

The Breach between Saul and David. 1. (xvii. 55-xviii. 5.) The period of favor, and apparent harmony.

(XVII. 55-XIX. 17.)

2. [1]And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, [f] whose son is this youth? And Abner said, As

[d] 2 Kings 7 7, 8.

[e] 2 Sam. 5 4-9.

[f] *cf.* ch. 16. 19-23.

intercessors. The imposing array becomes at once but a routed rabble, who proclaim in their very creed their ignorance of God and of His Christ. Ominous now are the names of the places where the Philistine wounded fall.—Shaaraim, "two gates!"* Gath, the "wine-press" of wrath; Ekron, "rooting out." Not a name here but has its tale to tell; the picture is complete even in its minutest features. And how much would the people of God learn of His mind, if they would but set themselves in faith to understand these histories as "prophetic scriptures" (Rom. xvi. 26. *Greek.*) given by Him who sees the end from the beginning, for our instruction and admonition, to whom all the ages are appointed to minister, but who alas, so little heed the wondrous grace of God!

In all this part we can see, whether Christ *personally* be before us or not, how it is He Himself governs all. If He be pleased to identify Himself with human instruments, yet they are only this,—the force, the power, is in Christ alone. Only so far as they hide themselves in Him can they fill their place or do their work at all. No wonder therefore if, just in the crises of the history, as here in the victory over Goliath, the Sun break through all veils, and the direct glory of the Lord shine on us. We think of the way of the Cross as the true valley of Elah, of him that had the power of death in the Philistine giant, of the resurrection as that which, enabling God to be with us, is the foundation of the Church itself, and the defeat of the foe, putting the sword of death into the Champion's hand for death's destruction. If we pursue this further we soon find the veil-cloud closing in again: yet here is the hiding of its power; and the connection with after events of human history only manifests this power as henceforth the ruling factor in the history of man. It is His own voice saying, as of old, "And behold, I am ever with you," and the cloud is but His chariot,—the Christ once humbled is now seen as throned.

2. Between the true king thus manifested and the one rejected of God there cannot be, for a moment, any true fellowship. The nearer they are brought together the more must the essential opposition between them be manifest. On the side of Saul it ripens into enmity which soon breaks through all disguise, and David is obliged to flee from the man to whom he has rendered such important assistance, a wanderer and an outlaw. It is only one form of that spirit which has been in the world since the day of Cain, of which the cross was the full, ripe fruit; and which, under whatever partial disguises in professedly Christian lands, exists to-day the same as ever. Saul may sacrifice to Jehovah, and fill the role of an Israelitish king; but a true Israelite, a "prince with God," he cannot be. Christian governments to-day there are not, though they make their bow to Christianity and bring their offering: the true King and His representatives can never be in heart welcomed by them, though they may appreciate certain advantages received, and rejoice in some deliverances accomplished for them. These things we shall be called to consider in the fruitful history that lies before us.

(i.) At first there is naturally a period of favor and acceptance. There has

* See page 103, notes.

thy soul liveth, O king, I do not know. And the king said, Inquire thou whose son this young man is. And when David returned from the smiting of the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul, with the Philistine's head in his hand. And Saul said unto him, Whose son art thou, youth? And David said, I am the son of thy servant [g]Jesse the Bethlehemite. And it came to pass when he had ended speaking to Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was [h]knit unto the soul of David; and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him in that day, and suffered him [i]no more to return to his father's house. And Jonathan and David made a [j]covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan [k]stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it unto David, and his garments, even to his sword and to his bow and to

[g] Ru. 4. 22.
[h] ch. 20. 17. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15.
[i] ch. 17. 15.
[j] ch. 20. 16.
[k] *cf.* Phil. 3. 7, 8.

been undoubtedly a great deliverance, and there is on every side the joy of it. David is in honor with Saul himself. Such a time was realized when the gospel gained its great victories in Reformation times. The papal yoke was broken from the neck of kings and governments; and it seemed as if they must joyfully bow their necks to Christ's yoke. Nations accepted evangelical creeds, and kings became protectors of the Church. It was not a sign for good, in reality; and yet it was quite natural to accept it as such. In fact, the Churches, in their zeal against popery and ill-considered enthusiasm over the favor of kings, assumed really the position with which the Philistine had reproached Israel, of being "servants to Saul." Nor does Romanism fail still to fling the taunt in the face of Protestantism.

From the beginning, however, Saul shows how little David has been to him. Before the battle in the valley of Elah he had, as we know, been already debtor to him. His harp had broken the power of the evil one again and again, and set him free; and Saul, it was even said, had "loved him greatly." But there is nothing, perhaps, of more various quality than love; and nothing that more takes its color from the subject of it. What need the apostle feels to define for Christians what true love is! We "love" those who please our tastes,—perhaps gratify our mere selfishness; and this love can turn into thorough enmity as soon as self has to be yielded up to it in any wise. True love, on the other hand, "seeketh not her own": it is the very spirit of self-sacrifice; of such love Saul was not capable.

It is not intimated that he has forgotten David: he asks whose son he is. He had known that also, but it had slipped away from him, because he had valued him for his services merely, never had that personal interest in him which makes all belonging to one an interest. In such a case, how easy to forget!

If we think of the spiritual significance, Jesse's name is full of meaning. The "living God" is indeed the One whom the princes of the earth willingly forget, and the relationship of Christ to Him fades quickly out of remembrance. Hence Christianity becomes for them, at the best, a lifeless orthodoxy; and the captain of the host knows nothing aright of the infinitely greater "Captain of salvation."

But the soul of Jonathan is at once knit to the soul of David. Here is a harmony of soul with soul, which of necessity brings such together; and for David Jonathan strips himself,—a type of true and devoted love. Saul may give David an honorable place,—advancing, of course, his own interests thereby; but Jonathan abases self to exalt him. "He must increase, but I must decrease," declares in the words of the Baptist the law which is written in the heart, according to the terms of the New Testament.

his girdle. And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him: he behaved himself [l] wisely, and Saul set him over the men of war: and he was accepted in the sight of [m] all the people, and in the sight of Saul's servants.

2. (xviii. 6-16.) Saul's jealousy aroused: the breach begun.

[2] And it came to pass as they came, when David was returning from the smiting of the Philistines, that the [n] women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with rejoicing, and with triangles. And the women answered one another as they played, and said, [o] Saul hath smitten his thousands, and David his ten thousands. And Saul was very wroth, and this saying was evil in his eyes; and he said, They have given David his ten thousands, and to me they have given the thousands, and what remaineth for him but the [p] kingdom? And Saul eyed David from that day forward. And it came to pass on the morrow, that the [q] evil spirit from God came suddenly upon Saul, and he prophesied* in the midst of the house, and David was playing with his hand, as at other times; and a javelin was in Saul's hand. And Saul threw the javelin, and said, I will [r] smite David even to the wall. And David gat him out of his presence twice. And Saul was afraid of David, because Jehovah was with him, and had departed from Saul. And Saul [s] removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people. And David prospered in all

l vers. 15,30.
m ver. 16. cf. Mark 12. 37.
n cf. Ex. 15. 20, 21. Jud. ch. 5. Ps. 68. 25.
o ch. 21. 11. ch. 29. 5. cf. 1 Cor. 3. 3-9.
p cf. ch. 13. 14.
q ch. 16. 23.
r ch. 19. 10.
s cfr. ch. 16. 21.

* Erdmann and others translate "raved." The word is the identical one for prophesying, not necessarily as prediction of future events, but as speaking by inspiration, whether from God, or, as here, from an evil spirit.

Typically, the ordination by God of the secular power, which Jonathan represents, has, as we know, respect to Christ: in its very failure bearing witness of Him who must needs to come to fill aright the throne on earth; stripping itself, as it were, to invest Him with royal garments. With Him is its covenant; and it perishes to make way for Him.

Meanwhile our David consents still to the servant's place; and in that place serves wonderfully, even to the blessing and glory of the kings of the earth; doing battle for them, also in behalf of the people dear to Him, with whom He is ever "accepted," sometimes also in the sight of Saul's servants, but only as a "man of war."

(ii.) Saul's favor could not last long. His jealousy is awakened by the songs of the women, who exalt David in his deeds above himself. It was only the truth artlessly spoken, which is not because of that more agreeable to a jealous mind. What can he have more, except the kingdom? he argues. The anger of his soul exposes him once more to the attacks of the evil spirit, which for a while seem to have ceased, and now David's harp has lost its power: Saul casts the javelin that was in his hand to smite him to the wall, and twice David escapes out of his presence. Then fear comes upon Saul: he realizes that Jehovah is with David, and not with himself, and he gives him an inferior place away from him; but thus he is brought still more before the people, and into favor and acceptance with them: and Saul fears the more.

All this may be difficult to interpret with exactness. The general thought it is not hard to see,—the jealousy which in fact the secular power has manifested of the spiritual, to which it nevertheless owes a great deliverance. It is not

his ways, and Jehovah was with him; and when Saul saw how very prosperous he was, he was afraid of him. But all Israel and Judah [t]loved David, because he went out and came in before them.

3. (xviii. 17–30.) David's marriage.

[3] And Saul said unto David, Behold, my elder [u]daughter Merab, I will give her to thee to wife; only be valiant for me, and fight Jehovah's battles: and Saul said, Let not [v]my hand be on him, but let the Philistines' hand be on him. And David said unto Saul, [w]Who am I? and what is my life, my father's family in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king? But it came to pass, at the time when Saul's daughter Merab should have been given to David, that she was given to Adriel, the Meholathite, to wife. And Michal,

t *cf.* ch. 10. 24. 1 Chr. 11. 1, 2.

u ch. 17. 25.

v *cf.* Gen. 37. 27. *cf.* 2 Sam. 11. 15. ver. 25.

w ch. 9. 21. 2 Sam. 7. 18.

within our aim to enter into the history, for instance, of the Reformation churches, which would prove this. Escaped from ecclesiastical control, the states which owed this to the gospel of Christ have speedily enough exhibited their jealousy of Christ's word, and even in moments of insanity launched the javelin against those who, first of all, would obey Him. The annals of dissent from nationalism and subservience to the state are full of evidence of this, which all who care may find. After which has come uneasy toleration, and perhaps distant patronage, designed to promote state-interests, but at bottom leaving still the breach unhealed. Alas, to heal this, the world must cease to be the world, as Scripture characterizes it, by its passions and its lusts away from God.

(iii.) The next section has much greater difficulties. The first of these is: are we, or not, to see in David's marriage to a daughter of Saul a lesson of failure? Is the type a type of that? That Saul meant it for evil is plainly stated, though the Lord did not suffer what he hoped to come to pass; but the after-history shows but little good. She is said to have "loved" David, and we find her shielding him shortly after from Saul; but her justification of herself in that matter is not calculated to raise her in one's estimation. Her words might well leave Saul to conceive that there would be no obstacle found on her part to her union with another man; nor does anything that we hear of her lead us to imagine it. She is restored by Abner to David after years of dwelling with Phaltiel, only to be seen again mocking the king of Israel for his self-abasement before the ark, and to be heard of as under penalty for this for the rest of her life. On David's part we do not realize special failure, it is true; but neither do we find God's blessing on him in it: the history, with one exception, is one of evil and not of good. This being so, we naturally connect it, even as a type, with evil, and not with good.

And this again would prevent us seeing in it a type of the Lord Himself, though it must be assuredly of that or those linked with Him and representing Him in the time of His absence now; and here, alas, even abundant failure is readily conceivable.

Saul's promise had been given before the victory to make a conqueror of the giant his son-in-law; but that seemed to be forgotten. He renews it only in his enmity against David, to bring about his death at the hands of the Philistines. Even so, his offer of Merab again falls through, and she is given to Adriel the Meholathite, a chapter in history with a terrible ending.

Merab, we know, means "increase," and speaks not of what is spiritual, but of temporal prosperity, which is indeed much of the strength of the Sauls, the kings of the earth, wherever found. But this could not be united with our David, or with those standing for Him in the day of His rejection. Yet Adriel, to whom she is given, has a name which sounds well, signifying "the flock of God"; yet here we should expect as a type a woman and not a man. Christ is

Saul's daughter, loved David; and they told Saul, and the thing was right in his eyes. And Saul said, I will give her unto him, that she may be a [x]snare unto him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be upon him. And Saul said unto David the second time, Thou shalt now be my son-in-law. And Saul commanded his servants, Speak ye to David secretly, saying, Behold, the king delighteth in thee, and all his servants love thee; and now be the king's son-in-law. And the servants of Saul spake these words in David's ears; and David said, Is it a light thing in your eyes to be the king's son-in-law, and I a poor man, and lightly esteemed? And Saul's servants told him, saying, After this manner did David speak. And Saul said, Thus shall ye say unto David, The king careth not for dowry, but for a [y]hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies: for Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. And his servants told David these words, and the thing was right in David's eyes to be the king's son-in-law. And the days were not expired, when David arose and went, he

x *cf.* Judges 16. 5, etc. ch. 19. 17.

y ver. 17. 2 Sam. 12. 9.

the Man; the Church espoused to Him the woman: even "Babylon the great" is that. If then the flock of God be represented here (and the meaning of the name is precise), there must be significance in this also: the woman stands for dependence, the man for independence; and independent indeed must that be which can receive its Merab from the kings of the earth, when she is taken also from the true David to be bestowed upon it.

To this we can add that Adriel is a Meholathite; and *meholah* signifies a "circling dance." So that all seems to agree in conveying the thought of a church which, without being Philistine, has become separate in interest from and out of fellowship with a rejected Christ; and such as a Saul can afford to honor. Adriel is under no obligation to fight the Lord's battles, to obtain the king's daughter.

But Saul has another daughter, and for her he can yet make his bargain with David. There is much difficulty, however, as to what Michal stands for, or even the meaning of her name. Lexicographers in general give it that of "brook," from 2 Sam. xvii. 20. But that is the only occurrence, and the meaning is only gathered from the context. According to its apparent derivation it might mean "what holds," and then the word "water" following be needful to explain the application. A word, *michla*, near akin, means "sheepfold," and such a significance for Michal would seem more appropriate to the type than any: for many a David has been seduced by such an offer of protection for the sheep of Christ, which many a Saul has made and sought to fulfill. But a fold of this kind would be but a snare, and its connection with David loose enough in result. The ambiguity of Michal's name, which might be, interrogatively, "who can hold?" would thus have its appropriateness also.

Nor need this contradict the force or application of the word as given before, there vaguer and more general, here specific. The names of Scripture, as we have seen elsewhere, have often a fullness and sometimes an ambiguity of meaning that adds to their force. Here to "hold" and to "measure" are meanings near akin. To "hold" God's sheep in the sense intended is in fact to "measure" them. Yet all this as to the interpretation of Michal is only put forth as suggestion; the difficulty of reading it consistently throughout is great, and this makes against it: verisimilitude is the only law of verification for a type.

That this offer necessitates another encounter with the Philistines is, however, quite congruous with this meaning, and scarcely needs to be explained. During

and his men, and smote of the Philistines two hundred men; and David brought their foreskins, and delivered them in full to the king, that he might be the king's son-in-law. And Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife. And Saul saw and [z]knew that Jehovah was with David; and Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him. And Saul was yet the more afraid of David, and Saul became David's enemy continually. And the princes of the Philistines went forth; and it was so, as often as they set forth, that David prospered more than all Saul's servants: and his name was greatly esteemed.

z ch. 23. 17. ch. 24. 20.

4.(xix.1-17.) The failure of this also.

[4]And Saul spake unto Jonathan his son and to all his servants, about putting David to death. But Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted much in David: and Jonathan [a]told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to put thee to death. Now, therefore, take heed to thyself, I pray thee, in the morning, and abide in a secret place and hide thyself. And I will [b]go out and stand beside my father, in the field where thou art, and I will speak to my father of thee; and what I see I will tell thee. And Jonathan spake well of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David, because he hath not sinned against thee, but what he hath done to thee hath been very good. For he put his [c]life in his hand, and smote the Philistine, and Jehovah wrought by him a great deliverance for all Israel: thou sawest it and didst rejoice; why then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to put David without cause to death? And Saul [d]hearkened to the voice of Jonathan; and Saul sware, As Jehovah liveth, he shall not be put to death. And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan told him all these things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as in times past.

a ch. 20. 12, 13, 35–41.

b ch. 20. 24, 28, 29.

c ch. 17. 40–50.

d *cf.* ch. 24. 16–22. ch. 26. 21.

And there was [e]war again: and David went out and fought against the Philistines, and smote them with [f]great slaughter; and they fled from him. And an evil spirit from Jehovah was upon Saul; and he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand; and David was [g]playing with the hand. And Saul sought to smite David with the javelin, even to the wall; but he broke away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the javelin into the wall. And David fled, and escaped that night.

e ch. 23. 1.

f ch. 17. 52. etc.

g ch. 18. 11. ch. 20. 33.

all these wars. moreover, David must be ever the great conqueror. The gospel and those who are identified with it are alone able effectually to deal with modern Philistinism; and in this way, in a wider circle than that of true disciples David's name is "much set by."

(iv.) All this fails as a means of conciliation; and victories over the Philistines only inflame the king's anger. He is soon openly plotting David's death; though this is for the time stopped by the intercession of Jonathan, the true friend of both. Saul swears by Jehovah, the most solemn oath possible, that David shall not die; and again they are brought together. But a new victory over the Philis-

And Saul sent [h]messengers unto David's house, to watch him, and to slay him in the morning; and Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, If thou save not thy life to-night, to-morrow thou wilt be slain. And Michal [i]let David down through the window; and he went, and fled, and escaped. And Michal took the teraphim, and laid it in the bed, and put the net of goats' [hair] at its head, and covered it with the coverlet. And when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, He is [j]sick. And Saul sent the messengers to see David, saying, Bring him up unto me in the bed, that I may slay him. And the messengers came, and behold, the teraphim in the bed, and the net of goats' [hair] at its head. And Saul said to Michal, Why hast thou deceived me so, and sent away mine enemy, and he is escaped? And Michal said unto Saul, He said unto me, Let me go: [k]why should I kill thee?

h Ps. 59. Title.

i Acts 9. 25.

j *cf.* Josh. 2. 3–6. 2 Sam. 17. 19.

k *cf.* vers. 11, 15. *ctr.* John 18. 3–5.

Jehovah manifests Himself for David, and priest and oracle unite themselves with him. I. (xix. 18–24.) The power over Saul.

(XIX.18–XXII.)

3. [l]And David fled and escaped, and came to [l]Samuel, to Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done unto him; and he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth. And it was told Saul, saying, Behold, David is at Naioth at Ramah. And Saul sent messengers to take David; but when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying,

l ch. 15. 34, 35. ch. 16. 13.

tines arouses Saul once more, and the old scenes are repeated. David flees again from the murderous hand of Saul, and only escapes by the strategy of Michal, who deceives Saul's messengers with an image in the bed. But David is now a wanderer, and a new phase of his history is that which is for long to occupy us.

3. Cast out by man, David is the more cast upon God, who appears for him, and identifies Himself with him more and more, as Saul also ripens into more open defiance of God. By the slaughter of the priests and the escape of Abiathar, the means of consulting the divine oracle come into David's hands, of which he avails himself at Keilah and elsewhere. This time is one in which, as we know, many of his psalms were conceived and uttered, the fruit of exercise and manifold experiences, both of himself and of the goodness of God toward him,—a time of truest sanctification and blessing therefore, the spiritual education of the King that is to be.* Here, typically, we shall assuredly find, with outshinings of the glory of Christ Himself, much of the spiritual history of those who have stood most truly for Him, in the day of His rejection: not a dispensational view probably, or the picture of any special period, but of what has been realized in the lives of those in all periods of Christianity faithful to the word of the Lord. And here, no doubt, the lessons will be best learned by those who have most the path to tread.

(i.) At the first step upon it the power which is over Saul is plainly evidenced. David flees, naturally enough, in the first place to Samuel, by whom he had been anointed, and who stood forth before all men's eyes in those days as, by his nearness to God, apart from all other men. Samuel, if any, had power to stand against Saul himself, and that he would do it there could be no question. Few characters in all Scripture equal Samuel's for that consistent walk with God, and ability to act for Him, which beget confidence on the part of others. David therefore makes known to Samuel all that Saul has done; and Samuel comes

* We shall not, however, attempt here to fit the psalms to the history. This needs an examination of the psalms themselves, which could not be given in this place. We must reserve it till, the Lord willing, we come to these.

and Samuel standing [as] set over them, the [m] Spirit of God came upon Saul's messengers, and they also prophesied. And it was told Saul, and he sent other messengers, and they also prophesied. And Saul sent messengers again, the third time, and they also prophesied. Then went he also to Ramah, and came as far as the great cistern that is at Sechu: and he asked and said, Where are Samuel and David? And one said, Behold, at Naioth in Ramah. And he went thither, to Naioth at Ramah, and the Spirit of God came upon him also, and he went on and prophesied until he came

[m] ch. 10. 6, 10. cf. Rev. 2. 5.

with him to dwell at Naioth,* the collected "dwellings" of the prophets, who gathered around Samuel. The word is a plural, and signifies both "dwellings" and "pastures," suiting well therefore that thought of a prophetic "school" with which tradition ekes out the scanty notices of Scripture. Here we might imagine David's language to be what he generalizes in the psalm as to all those that trust in God: "Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence from the pride of man; Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues." (Ps. xxxi. 20.) Yet hence he is driven, to realize a better "hiding-place" in God Himself. (Ps. xxxii. 7.) To his retreat Saul pursues him: after sending three times in vain his messengers, he follows them himself. But upon all alike the Spirit of God comes, subjecting them perforce to itself, so that they prophesy; and upon Saul before he has even reached the place, and with effect deeper and more lasting,—reviving the saying which had earlier gone forth about him, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

And how must Saul's mind also have gone back to those earlier days, before yet the Spirit had been grieved away from him, and when all the possibilities of the divine call to the throne of Israel were opening before him! What tender recollections to touch the heart with, and to bring, if it might be, this wanderer to himself! Then, how vain to contend with power such as this! Who ever hardened himself against God and prospered? On the other hand, what an assurance of One ready still to receive,—who would, even by force if it were possible, put Saul among the prophets! Yet against all this, as we know, Saul did harden himself, and became necessarily more evil in proportion to the grace resisted, according to the constant and inevitable law of cause and effect.

For David himself what an assurance of the eternal arms, though invisible, that were around him! Yet he goes forth, for deeper experiences of God's living care, in the rough scenes beyond, than he could find even in that sheltered retreat, and in that atmosphere thrilling with His voice. Yet here we see for a moment, in a vivid picture, how brightly the spiritual life might manifest itself in Israel in a time such as this, and how near God drew even then to His people that sought Him. Is it too much to say, with the apostle's words in view (1 Cor. xiv.), that now, when Moses' desire that "all the Lord's people were prophets" has found its practicability of accomplishment in the fulfillment of its other part,—"that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them,"—there should be in every Christian assembly a display of divine power as great as this, and a glory of the divine presence fuller and nearer far? Oh that it were indeed so! Here we find that even then there were many more prophets than those whose voices have come down to us. Now that "ye may *all* prophesy" is limited only by the unbelief that cannot understand this, or the coldness of heart that has no response to it. Alas for the privileges unenjoyed that will one day rise up against us! Rather let us take now the reproach, and find in the grace of our God the available remedy.

The typical meaning is not so hard to understand, as the application may seem slight and trivial. But the secular power has, in fact, in its relation to the divine

* Or, as in the Kethib (the "written" text), Nevaloth.

to Naioth in Ramah. And he too stripped off his garments, and he too prophesied before Samuel, and prostrated himself naked all that day, and all that night. Wherefore they say, [n]Is Saul also among the prophets? n ch. 10. 11, 12.

2. (xx.) The breach confirmed, and the separation of friends.

[2]And David fled from Naioth at Ramah, and came and said before [o]Jonathan, What have I done? what is my iniquity? and what my sin before thy father, that he is seeking my life? And he said unto him, Far be it: thou shalt not die. Behold, my father will do nothing either great or small, but he will show it unto me: and why should my father hide this thing from me? it is not so. But David sware moreover, and said, Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found favor in thine eyes, and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved; but truly, as Jehovah liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a [p]step between me and death. And Jonathan said unto David, Whatever thy soul may say, I will even do it for thee. And David said to Jonathan, Behold, to-morrow is the [q]new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat; but let me go, that I may hide myself in the field until the third evening. If thy father should really miss me, then thou shalt say, David earnestly asked leave of me to run to Bethlehem his city: for there is a yearly [r]sacrifice there for all the family. If he say thus, It is well, then thy servant shall have peace; but if he be very angry, then be sure that evil is determined by him. Deal kindly, then, with thy servant, for thou hast brought thy servant into a [s]covenant of Jehovah with thee; but if there be iniquity in me, kill me thyself; for why shouldst thou bring me to thy father? And Jonathan said, Far be it from thee: for if I really knew that evil was determined to come on thee by my father, would I not tell it thee? And David said unto Jonathan, Who shall tell me? or what if thy father answer thee roughly? And Jonathan said unto David, Come, and let us go out into the [t]field. And they went out both of them into the field. And Jonathan said unto David, Let Jehovah the God of Israel, when I have sounded my father about this time to-morrow [or] the next day, and behold, it is good to

o ch. 19. 2.

p ch. 18. 11.

q Nu. 10. 10. Nu. 28. 11. 2 Ki. 4. 23. Amos 8. 5.

r ch. 16 2.

s ch. 18. 3.

t ch. 19. 3.

King, such different phases. It can prophesy falsely under evil inspiration, or truly under that which is of God: it can favor for the moment the true King and those identified with Him, or bitterly persecute them. All this is perfectly plain, — so plain we need not dwell upon it. It can even, under the spiritual impulse, strip itself of its royal robes, and prostrate itself as the feeble creature it is, in the dust before God. But its general course is little affected by this: the world abides still the world: it may be Protestant, — not Romanist; Israelite, — not Philistine; but still it is the world, and the man in honor in it is not the man after God's heart, but the people's, — away from God.

(ii.) A more sorrowful scene still is that which follows. The breach with Saul is realized to be no temporary one, and its effect is found in the separation of

David, if I then send not to thee and show thee,—let Jehovah do so, and much more to Jonathan! If it be good to my father to do thee evil, then I will show it thee, and send thee away, and thou shalt go in peace: and Jehovah be with thee as he has been with my father. And thou shalt not only, while I live, show me the [u]kindness of Jehovah, that I die not, but thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house forever, no, not when Jehovah shall have cut off the enemies of David, every one from the face of the earth. So Jonathan made [a [v]covenant] with the house of David, [saying,] Let Jehovah even require it from the hand of David's enemies. And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him: for he loved him as he [w]loved his own soul.

[u] 2 Sam. 9. 3.

[v] ch. 18. 3. ch. 23. 18. 2 Sam. 21. 7.

[w] ch. 18. 1.

And Jonathan said unto him, To-morrow is the new moon, and thou wilt be missed, because thy seat will be empty. And on the third day thou shalt go down quickly, and come to the place [x]where thou didst hide thyself when the work was in hand, and abide by the stone of Ezel. And I will shoot three arrows on the side of it, as though I shot at a mark. And behold, I will send a lad, [saying,] Go, and find the arrows. [y]If I expressly say to the lad, Behold the arrows are this side of thee, take them, then come, for there is peace to thee, and nought [else], as Jehovah liveth. But if I say unto the young man thus, Behold, the arrows are beyond thee, go thy way, for Jehovah hath sent thee away. And as [touching] the matter that we have spoken of, I and thou, behold, Jehovah be between me and thee forever.

[x] ch. 19. 2.

[y] *cf.* ch. 14. 9, 10 with ver. 12.

So David hid himself in the field, and when the new moon was come, the king sat down to eat meat. And the king sat upon his seat as at other times, even on a seat by the wall, and Jonathan arose that Abner might sit by Saul's side, and David's seat was empty. But Saul spake nothing that day, for he said, Something hath befallen him: he is not [z]clean; surely, he is not clean. And it came to pass the next day after the new moon, the second [day], that David's place was empty; and Saul said unto Jonathan his son, Why cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, either yesterday or to-day? And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked leave

[z] Lev. 7. 20, 21. Lev. 15. 1, 2. *cf.* ch. 14. 38, 39.

those who are brethren. The long account which fills a chapter of our Bibles shows how the Spirit of God would emphasize this. The fact is a very familiar one indeed: the sorrow of it every heart taught of God must realize.

Jonathan and David part! But what then does Jonathan stand for in this connection? Clearly if in the first place he represent, as we believe, that ordination of God by which the "powers that be" become the objects of recognition on the part of Christians, Jonathan would represent here those who make this recognition govern them in their position ecclesiastically. They love David, but they cling to Saul. They interpret God's sanction of the civil power so as to

of me [to go] to Bethlehem; and he said, Let me go, I pray thee, for our family have a sacrifice in the city, and my brother he hath commanded me [to be there]; and now, if I have found favor in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, that I may see my brethren. Therefore he is not come to the king's table.

And the [a]anger of Saul was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of a perverse rebellious woman, do I not know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thy shame, and to the shame of thy mother's nakedness? for as long as the son of Jesse [b]liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he is doomed to die. And Jonathan answered Saul his father and said unto him, Why should he be put to death? what hath he done? And Saul [c]cast the javelin at him, to smite him, and Jonathan knew that his father had determined to put David to death. And Jonathan rose from the table in fierce anger, and ate no meat the second day of the new moon: for he was [d]grieved for David that his father had done him shame.

And it came to pass in the [e]morning that Jonathan went out into the field, at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him. And he said unto his lad, Run now, and find the arrows that I shoot. As the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. And when the lad came to the place of the arrow that Jonathan had shot, Jonathan called after the lad, and said, Is not the arrow beyond thee? And Jonathan called after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master. And the lad knew not anything: only Jonathan and David knew the matter. And Jonathan gave his weapons to his lad, and said unto him, Go and carry them to the city. The lad went, and David arose from the south side, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times; and they kissed one another, and wept with one another, until David [f]exceeded. And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of Jehovah, saying, Jeho-

a ch. 19. 17.

b ch. 19. 1. *cf.* Mt. 21. 38.

c ch. 19. 10.

d *cf.* Lk. 23. 50, 51.

e vera. 19-22.

f *cf.* Gen. 42. 24. Gen. 43. 30. Gen. 45. 1, 2, 15 with 1 Jno. 4. 19.

make it in some sense a spiritual power as well. They use Jewish analogies to illustrate Christian relationships, and make a theocracy out of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom. The state-church Protestantism developed many Jonathans, whose hearts and consciences were in opposition to one another; and where the state church survives such will still be found.

Jonathan is forced to realize for himself the enmity of Saul against David,—not a momentary paroxysm of madness, but a malignant spirit, which would once more sacrifice Jonathan himself for thwarting its stubborn pride. He has to acquiesce in David's departure, for the arrow does not fall within the limit of safety to him. So they part: Jonathan to place and honor, and then the fatal conflict at Gilboa; David, through present suffering and rejection, to a throne.

vah be [g]between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever. And he arose and departed; and Jonathan went into the city.

3. (xxi. 1-9.) The holy things by which faith is recruited.

[3] And David came to Nob to Ahimelech the [h]priest; and Ahimelech [i]trembled at meeting David, and said unto him, Why art thou [j]alone, and no man with thee? And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The [k]king charged me with a matter, and said unto me, Let no man know aught of the business upon which I send thee, and with which I have charged thee; and I have directed the young men to such and such a place. And now, what is there under thy hand? give me in my hand five loaves, or what may be found. And the priest answered David and said, There is no common bread under my hand, but there is [l]holy bread; if the young men have [m]kept themselves at least from women. And David answered the priest, and said unto him, [Nay,] but women have been kept from us about these three days, since I came out, and the vessels of the young men are holy; and it is in a manner common, yea, even when it is sanctified that day in the vessel. And the

g vers. 15, 16.

h ch. 22. 20-23.
i ch. 16. 4.
j ch. 18. 5.
k *cf.* ch. 19. 14.

l Lev. 24. 5-9. *cf.* Mt. 12. 3, 4.
m Lev. 15. 16. Lev. 22. 14.

The appointed path for us also is found here: "if we suffer we shall also reign with Him."

(iii.) The next incident in David's life is noticed in each of the synoptic gospels, as used by the Lord to illustrate and enforce His affirmation that "the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." (Luke vi. 5.) Here David is lord of the shew-bread, which, though holy according to the law, is, under the circumstances, common; and which he not only takes, but gives to those that are with him.* Everything was in ruin in Israel. Since the captivity of the ark in the Philistines' land, it had never returned to the sanctuary, which had been itself shifted from place to place, till now it was at Nob, not even a priestly city according to the original designation of these by lot in Joshua's time, and from which it was soon to be again violently dislodged. The absence of the ark involved that of the mercy-seat or "propitiatory" which covered it, and this again complete inability to carry out the ordinance of the day of atonement, all-important as this was for Israel's acceptance with God. Nor does there seem to have been any realization of the greatness of their loss: "we inquired not at it"—the ark—says David himself, "in the days of Saul." (1 Chron. xiii. 3.) Yet it was the throne of the Lord, where was His dwelling-place between the cherubim.

God had indeed raised up Samuel as an extraordinary link between the people and Himself. But Samuel too had been finally rejected by the people, as we have seen. Nor had Saul, the people's choice, though permitted to them by God, ever stood even in Samuel's place. He in turn having been rejected, David had become the anointed of the Lord; and now David was fleeing from the face of Saul, an outcast and a wanderer. In this state of things, what virtue could remain for them in the old institutions? Upon David alone everything now depended, and thus we can understand his words, enigma as they are still to most interpreters, "it"—the shew-bread—"is in a manner common; yea, even when it is sanctified that day in the vessel."† David says "in a *manner* common," because

* In the history these are not spoken of except by David himself, and where he is bent upon misleading the high priest; but it does not therefore follow that this was part of the deceit, and the Lord's assurance is warrant enough for every Christian.

† This has been also very variously rendered by translators and commentators in most strained and awkward fashion. "It is a hurried, excited sentence," says the American editor of Lange, "almost utterly obscure." Rather, it has been obscured by lack of intelligence on the part of the interpreter.

priest gave him holy [bread], for there was no bread but the shew-bread, which was taken from before Jehovah, to put hot bread [there] in the day that it was taken away. And a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, [n]detained before Jehovah; and his name was Doeg the [o]Edomite, the chief of the shepherds that Saul had. And David said unto Ahimelech, And

n cf. Matt. 15. 8.
o ch. 22. 9.

after all God had not done with these institutions, which soon were to be revivified, and endure for the appointed time. They were "common," as subject to his needs, just as, according to the Lord's own comparison, the Sabbath ordinance was of no force to set aside the higher obligation of the temple services. (Matt. xii. 5.)

The priest may only partially have understood David: we, however, can understand him without difficulty. But we can go far beyond even what David knew, and see in all these things shadows of things that were to come. We can see in David rejected the type of a greater, who as such has abrogated Jewish and legal ordinances in order to give His people that communion with Himself beyond these, of which the "bread of presence" speaks. But we must look at this more closely.

It is striking indeed that, while the shew-bread is spoken of and commanded in the book of Exodus, we have to wait till nearly the end of Leviticus before it is particularly described. Where we should naturally expect to find it, it is omitted; and the place in which it is actually found is in that fifth part of the book, in which, as the Deuteronomy part, the *ways* of God are set before us. It comes, in fact, immediately after the typical account of those "set times" in Israel, which represent those dispensational "ways," that, while they include Israel, go far beyond His purposes toward her. (Lev. xxiii.)

But not only so, the institution itself,—most strangely, as it would seem, for an Israelitish ordinance,—is found in that chapter immediately following this, in which, in contrast with Israel's rejection (seen in the punishment of the blasphemer), God's maintenance of light and communion with Himself in Christianity is shown. (Lev. xxiv., *notes.*) And the latter of these is what the shew-bread represents! How plainly it is what our own rejected David may claim by special right!

When we come to look at the details, how fitly do they unite with such a thought! For we have seen how this "bread of presence" speaks of Christ for us on high, the true "corn of the land" upon which His people feed, and in whom they are brought to God and accepted of Him. "It is *presence*-bread, with the incense of His acceptability upon it, and the *twelve* loaves making us to know His representation of His people, their identification with Him before God." But this is special *Christian* position, as well as communion. How justly again may our David distribute such bread as this among His own!

Thus the Lord vindicates the title of His followers, who follow Him in His poverty and rejection, to that which is indeed ennoblement and enrichment passing thought. Here we find the food with which faith, obedient to His call, is recruited and sustained; and it is received from the priest's hand, who is Ahimelech, "the king's brother." In Christ the King and Priest are thus in close relationship, and such a ministry of blessing as we have been thinking of must of course come from the great High Priest. His mediatorial work is that from which of necessity all this comes.

Now we have noticed the presence of the enemy, the Edomite, whose name, if names have meaning, seems at first sight a strange enough one in such a connection. It is Doeg, "the fearful"; but are not our fears the greatest enemies that can be to our David and His followers, when being Himself rejected, to follow Him means to share His rejection? Who is not conscious of it? Nor need we wonder to find him chief among such shepherds as a Saul might have. His

is there not here under thy hand spear or sword? for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business was urgent. And the priest said, The [p]sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou smotest in the valley of Elah, behold, it is wrapped in the covering behind the ephod. If thou wilt take that, take it; for there is no other save that here. And David said there is none like that; give it me.

[p] ch. 17. 51.

4. (xxi. 10–15.) The experience of weakness.

[4] And David arose and fled that day from the face of Saul, and went to [q]Achish king of Gath. And the servants of Achish said unto him, Is not this David the king

[q] ch. 27. 3. c/r. ch. 17. 4.

presence, "detained before Jehovah," not of his own free will we may be sure, will be found to have its disastrous effects on the future near to be. Meanwhile we can trace a more than superficial connection with what follows here, where David, in answer to his request for spear or sword, has put again into his hand Goliath's sword, with which he had slain the giant. The death which has annulled death, and which abides in perpetual memory with God, what a defense is that for the people of God, in all the attacks of the enemy! What a weapon against fear itself! Thus they are both fed and furnished.

In all this nothing has been said of David's deception, fraught with such evil consequences as we know it was to him who at this time succored him. The man whose life yields us, more perhaps than any other, the most fruitful types of the Lord Jesus Christ, shows himself thus how far removed from the perfection which he shadowed. But who is not? Upon such things Scripture itself in general makes no comment. Such is man! "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of"?

(iv.) And this is manifest in the next act of David: with the sword of the Philistine champion in his hand, he flees to the Philistines, and to Gath, the city of the giant, from the face of Saul.

The experience of weakness is one with which God would have us thoroughly well acquainted. It is the healthful condition of a creature, necessary to him as such, and no distress but the opposite, in proportion as we know God as the One in whom "we live and move and have our being." Then we can be still and let Him show His might, and under the shadow of His wings find refuge. Sin has made such experience more than ever necessary for us, by the very fact that it has made distress of weakness, which could never be were the breach between us and God fully healed. Faith implies this healing; but we must know ourselves little indeed, if we know not how weak faith is. Every fresh need demonstrates it, and thus the manifold experiences are ordained to us, which, whatever shame they may cause us by the way, are to end in glorifying Him in all things, and thus in truest blessing for ourselves.

David is indeed now brought low, into just the place of glorious revelations of the living God, or painful revelations of the flesh in man. He finds for himself the latter, just by taking counsel of his own wisdom and his fears. We do not know by what strange or plausible arguments he succeeded in persuading himself that refuge was to be found in Gath, among the enemies of Israel, against whom he had gained all his victories and his fame. The human heart is so subtle an advocate that it can make its way through the plainest and most contradictory array of facts to its conclusion; but it cannot bring the event to harmonize with this. David thus finds at Gath his own history against him, and the glorious achievements of God by him his bill of impeachment in the court of Achish. What else could he expect? Could he even desire that they should accept him as an apostate from those convictions that had nerved his arm and strengthened his heart in those days but a short time past? or suppose that, this pressure over, he would not return to be the same enemy of the Philistines that he had been before? Yet what an account to give, that he must be a debtor to Philis-

of the land? did they not sing of him one to another in dances, saying, [r]Saul hath smitten his thousands, and David his ten thousands? And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore [s]afraid of Achish king of Gath. And he [t]changed his behavior before their eyes, and acted like a madman in their hands, and scratched on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard. And Achish said unto his servants, Lo, ye see the man is mad: why do ye bring him to me? have I need of madmen, that ye have brought this one to rave against me? Shall this [fellow] come into my house?

5,(xxii.1-5.) Training for the kingdom.

5 And David went from thence, and escaped to the [u]cave of Adullam; and his [v]brethren heard of it, and all his father's house, and they came down to him thither. And there gathered themselves unto him every one that was in [w]distress, and every one that was in [x]debt, even every one that was [y]bitter of soul, and he became [z]captain over them: and there were with him about [a]four hundred men.

r ch. 18. 7.
s *ctr.* ch. 17. 32.
t Ps. 34. Title.
u Jud. 6. 2. Ps. 57. Title. Ps. 42. Title.
v *ctr.* ch. 17. 28.
w *cf.* Lk 4. 17-19. 2 Sam. 23. 8-39.
x *cf.* Lk 7. 41-43.
y *cf.* Mt. 11. 28-30.
z Jud. 11. 3. *cf.* Heb. 2. 10.
a ch. 23. 13.

tine compassion for that refuge which the God of Israel had failed to be to him? How inconsistent and miserable is unbelief!—only consistent in tending to gravitate to a continually lower depth. Is there possibly a place in which God is not sufficient? Thence it is easy to reach the question, Where is He then sufficient? Faith, to justify itself at all, must take and keep the highest level,—an omniscient, omnipresent, all-sufficient, ever available God; and then how does the nothingness of man only give occasion to the display of the power and glory of God!

But in a Philistine refuge to maintain faith at this level is not possible: there is inevitable, therefore, the collapse which follows. The mention of his own great deeds makes him sore afraid before Achish, king of Gath; and to save himself he sinks yet lower, acting the madman in the presence of them all, and escaping under cover of what in the East was considered in some sense a divine possession. Thus a real shame must be made to retrieve from a false shame, and a sham folly rescue from the consequences of the real one. Openly the Lord does not interfere: He cannot honor unbelief by doing so: yet to shame it is to give real help. Still there is no victory over the Philistine here: the victory is rather on his side.

(v.) But David has escaped, and that every way: we find him next back again in Israel; and, though still a fugitive, yet with God, and gathering strength. At Adullam a company begin to gather round him, at first apparently as poor in character as bankrupt in resources; yet out of these are developed the mighty men of whose exploits by and by we shall hear much, and who encircle David when he rises to the throne. Disciplined by danger and strife and adversity, they go in and out with one who has the power of winning men to himself, and are won, and modeled upon the pattern of their great leader. What is represented here is simple enough for those who realize Christ to be still rejected by the world; to others it will not be. Scripture still, however, asserts, whether the days be changed or not, that "if we *suffer*, we shall also reign with Him"; and again, that we are "joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we *suffer* with Him, that we may be also glorified together." (2 Tim. ii. 12; Rom. viii. 17.)

Thus, though Christ is gone from the earth, there is still possible, still necessary, a fellowship with Him in His sufferings,—a fellowship of those whose hearts have been won by Him in such sort as to make them practically associates with Him in a life not of the world, and with which the world therefore has no sym-

And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab; and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my [b]father and my mother, I pray you, come forth, [and be] with you, until I know what God will do for me. And he brought them before the king of Moab, and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold.

And the [c]prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee into the land of [d]Judah.

b *cf.* ch. 27. 11.

c *cf.* De. 18. 15. ver. 20. with Zech. 6. 13.

d Ps. 63. Title.

pathy. It may be true that only exceptionally they are found now "in dens and caves of the earth," and that the time is past when "witness" and "martyr" were but the same word, as implying the same thing. Satan changes his tactics without ceasing to be Satan; and the world may adopt the Christian dress without ceasing to be the world. Still, under whatever exterior, the essential opposition remains.

Adullam we have already taken to mean "a witness indeed," and appropriate enough is such a meaning here. A witness that cave was to the state of things in Israel: the anointed king with such a poor little handful of followers round him, and these brought to him by their necessities. Yet here was the path with God, though of even the people of God but few indeed were there. How plain that majorities decide nothing in the things of God,—and that we must guard ourselves, at all costs, from being carried away with them! The faith that cannot walk independent of man has little indeed to evidence itself to *be* faith. And yet how sadly does the tendency to go in droves manifests itself among the people of God. Conscience thus loses its place as what is before God alone, and the whole character of life is lowered.

Once more David's faith seems to waver now. His family has fled to him; and lives more precious to him than his own are in his hand. How often does this dependence of others upon us test more the simplicity of faith than anything simply affecting ourselves! The thought of Moab as a refuge for his father and mother would be most natural indeed to a descendant of Ruth; but her history, nevertheless, had a widely different lesson for him. Strikingly similar, in effect, are those two names—Elimelech, "my God is king," and Jesse, "Jehovah exists." Elimelech and Jesse, fugitives in Moab, how contradictory to the import of their names! And the Moabitess, who left her country to come into poverty and reproach in Bethlehem, would *she* have counseled a return to Moab? No; for the word is—David's own word, when he had learned the lesson—"*Dwell in the land*, and verily thou shalt be fed." (Ps. xxxvii. 3, Heb.) The land was Israel's inheritance, God's gift, of which nothing therefore could deprive the faith that laid hold of it. Of this we have warning directly: for when he had safely deposited his father and mother with the Moabite king, how natural, when rest allures, and the cords of a new relationship are felt, for David to make himself also a "hold" there! But the prophet's voice—a new prophet, whose name speaks of militant energy, Gad, like the patriarch's—drives him forth again: "Abide not in the hold: depart, and get thee into the land of Judah."*

How readily we seek escape from trial! And indeed we do well not to seek trial, or brave it. Being what we are, the right prayer is naturally for us, "Lead us not into temptation." Distrust of self is right, and a proper spirit to face trial itself with. Then if, after all, He appoints this to us, we go into it clinging fast to Him, and we are safe and blessed: for "my brethren," says James, "count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations: knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience; but let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." (James i. 2–4.) How wonderful a reward!—and how simple a way, apparently, when we know in Whose hands we are! But, ah, the many hands in which we *seem* to be,—the Sauls', the Doegs', the people of whom we have deserved quite other things! How hard to accept

* Which shows that the "hold" was not at Adullam, which was in Judah.

And David departed, and came into the forest of Hareth.

6. (xxii. 6–23.) The massacre of the priesthood.

6 And Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that were with him. And Saul was abiding in e Gibeah under the tamarisk upon the height, and his spear was in his hand, and all his servants were standing about him. And Saul said unto his servants that were standing about him, Hear now, ye f Benjamites: will the son of Jesse g give you all fields and vineyards? will he make you all captains of thousands and captains of hundreds, that ye have all conspired against me, and there is no one of you to show me when my son maketh [covenant] with the son of Jesse; and not one of you is h sorry for me, or showeth me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me to lie in wait as at this day. And i Doeg the Edomite, who was standing with the servants of Saul, answered and said, I saw the son of Jesse come to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub; and he inquired of Jehovah for him, and gave him victuals, and the sword of Goliath the Philistine he hath given to him. And the king sent to call Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, the priest, and all his father's house, the priests that were in Nob; and they came all of them to the king. And Saul said, Hear now, thou son of Ahitub, And he said, Here am I, my lord. And Saul said unto him, Why have ye j conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread and a sword, and hast inquired of God for him, that he should rise against me as a lier in wait, as at this day? And

e ch. 14. 2.

f *ctr.* ch. 18. 16.

g ch. 8. 14, 15.

h ch. 23. 21.

i Ps. 52. Title.

j *cf.* ver. 8.

these cruel and remorseless hands as the tender hands of God! There lies the victory of faith for us; there is the inlet of rest and assurance into the soul. This is our true inheritance also, from which we *may* not be driven, and *must* not wander, our "land of Judah," which is "praise."

"And David departed, and came to the forest of Hareth:" Hareth means "cutting," as of engravers' work. It occurs but once in the Old Testament, and that with reference to the handwriting of God upon the tables of the covenant (Ex. xxxii. 16): a precious link of connection, surely; for thus was it that God was graving His law, His holy will for him, upon David's heart. Slowly it might be, and painfully; for so the different material of the tables of the new covenant implies; but the work done will be the greater and more glorious.

(vi.) Saul in the meanwhile pursues the path to ruin; and by the massacre at Nob cuts off with a violent hand all that yet links him with God and the sanctuary. No doubt he believed in the treason of Ahimelech, for he was in no mood for due consideration or the weighing of evidence. He is possessed with enmity against David, and the uneasy sense that he is striving with the inevitable. Caution and reserve are gone. He freely imputes to others, even to those of his own tribe with whom he has surrounded himself, only the self-interest which alone he can appreciate. Of necessity he is not sure of them, and can only hope to keep them as long as he can make the better offer.

Of course he does not lack those who for their own gain will act as ears and hands for him, and nurse his suspicions into more assurance. He hears of David's movements; he learns of his son's covenant with him; he finds, through Doeg, how David has been succored at Nob. What a curse to one in Saul's condition the ready sympathy with which it meets,—the many arms outstretched

Ahimelech answered the king and said, And who is so [k]faithful among all thy servants as David, who is the king's son-in-law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honorable in thy house? Did I then begin to inquire of God for him? be it far from me: let not the king impute anything to his servant, [nor] to all the house of my father; for thy servant knew nothing of all this, little or much. And the king said, Thou shalt [l]surely die, Ahimelech, thou and all thy father's house. And the king said unto the couriers that were standing beside him, Turn and slay the priests of Jehovah, because their hand also is with David, and because they knew when he fled, and showed it not to me. But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to strike Jehovah's [m]priests; and the king said unto Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the priests; and Doeg the Edomite turned and fell himself upon the priests, and slew that day eighty and five persons that wore a linen ephod. And Nob, the city of the priests, he smote with the edge of the sword, [n]both men and women, children and sucklings, and ox, and ass, and sheep, with the edge of the sword.

And one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub escaped, and his name was [o]Abiathar, and fled after David. And Abiathar told David that Saul had slain the priests of Jehovah. And David said unto Abiathar, I knew that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul: I am accountable for all the lives of thy father's house. [p]Abide with me; fear not: for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life; but with me thou art in safeguard.

k ch. 18. 5.
l ch. 14. 44.
m *cf.* ch. 20. 33.
n *cfr.* ch. 15. 7–9.
o ch. 23. 6. 2Sam.8.17, 1 Ki. 1. 7.
p ver. 5. *cf.* 1 Ki. 2. 26.

Experiences. I. (xxiii. 1–13.) The rod of power the shepherd's rod.

(XXIII.–XXVI.)

4. [q]And they told David, saying, Behold, the [r]Philistines fight against Keilah, and they rob the [r]threshing-floors.

q ch. 4. 1, etc. r *cf.* Judges 6. 4, 11.

to pull down over the precipice one blindly seeking it! Such is the shadow that dogs the powerful,—the retribution that the world has for the sinner. With Saul now the kingdoms whose history is here before us are drifting far apart: until the end we have only to say to him as he crosses the path of David.

The massacre at Nob throws the priesthood with Abiathar upon the side of David. With him, therefore, prophet, priest, and anointed king are found together; as yet, however, rejected of the people. Divine resources are his, though the path of obedience is that of trial still; and that we are to find in a new series of trials.

4. We have thus seen David furnished for the path: he has followers to about the number of 600 now, by whom we shall soon find him doing service in Israel, and God is openly with him, according to His manner of showing this in the days we are looking back to. Yet he is not, on that account, spared the trial by which he is exercised and fitted to be the true Shepherd-King of Israel when the fullness of time is come. These experiences come now more fully before us, which, while putting before us Him who was in all things tempted like as we are, apart from sin, speak necessarily, therefore, also of those who tread the wilderness-path after, yet with, Himself. The history of David here is, of course, largely that of His followers also.

(i.) First of all, we see the power that is his from God; but power only to be

And David [s]inquired of Jehovah, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And Jehovah said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah. And David's men said unto him, [t]Behold, we are afraid here in Judah; how much more, then, if we go to Keilah, against the ranks of the Philistines? And David inquired of Jehovah yet again; and Jehovah answered him and said, Arise, go down to Keilah, for I will give the Philistines into thy hand. And David went, with his men, to Keilah, and fought against the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and smote them with great slaughter: and David [u]saved the inhabitants of Keilah.

And it came to pass, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, that he came down with an ephod in his hand. And it was [v]told Saul that David had come to Keilah; and Saul said, God hath abandoned him to my hand; for he is shut in by entering a city that hath gates and bars. And Saul summoned all the people to battle, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men. And David knew that Saul devised evil against him, and he said to Abiathar the priest, [w]Bring hither the ephod. And David said, Jehovah, God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city on my account. Will the lords of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? Will Saul come down, as thy servant hath

s *cf.* ver. 10, ch. 14. 37.

t *cf.* John 11. 8.

u *cf.* ch. 30. 26-31.

v ver. 19, etc.

w ch. 30. 7.

used against the enemies of Israel, and not against Israel themselves. The Philistines fight against Keilah, and rob the threshing-floors. The sanctuary "refuge," which we have taken Keilah to figure (p. 107, *n.*), will naturally be an object of attack by those whose whole power depends upon keeping the people of God out of their place of acceptance and blessing in Christ in heavenly places. No way so effectual, either, as that of robbing the threshing-floors! For the provision of bread being cut off, the word of God and He who is the true Word, being no longer ministered, this would of necessity starve them out even of such a vantage-ground. Saul, too, could not be expected to work any deliverance here: we do not find him even attempting it. A secularized religion scarcely favors more such blessedness than the ritualistic one would do. Thus David is evidently the whole resource of Keilah. By the Lord's guidance, therefore, and with His assurance of success, he quiets the fears of his men, and leads them against the foe; and Keilah is delivered,—a glorious and important victory.

Saul soon hears that David has come to Keilah: nothing is heard or accounted of the essential service he has rendered there; for, in fact, Saul is quite ready to sacrifice Keilah itself, if only in this way he can gratify his hatred against David. David is the representative of that higher kingdom which Saul must obey or fall before it, and disobedience has become with him now a frenzy of despair, in which he maintains a hopeless fight with forces that are known to be beyond him utterly, though he will not own or act as if they were so. How solemn, how tremendous, is such a struggle of the creature with the Creator, where the creature puts forth all its power of self-deception to prevent for a little time the collapse that is inevitable, and which will only be in this way more utter and irretrievable when it comes!

David, on the other hand, is more than ever completely intelligent as to the Lord's will, and in subjection to it; and for him the end is not doubtful, nor one

heard? Jehovah, God of Israel, I pray thee, tell thy servant. And Jehovah said, He will come down. And David said, Will the lords of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? And Jehovah said, [x] They will deliver [thee]. And David arose, and his men, about [y] six hundred, and they went forth from Keilah, and went about whither they could go. And it was told Saul that David had escaped from Keilah; and he forbare to go forth.

[z] And David abode in the [z] wilderness, in strongholds. And he abode in the mountain in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul [a] sought him continually, but God gave

x *cf.* Psalm 109. 4.

y ch. 22. 2. ch. 30. 9.

2. (xxiii. 14-28.) Ziph: the process of refinement; and the "rock of divisions."

z ch. 22. 5.

a ver. 26. ch. 25. 29.

that he must disguise from himself. The power that works through him is as much master of Saul as of the Philistine enemy; but it is power held back by long-suffering mercy. The shepherd-rod is the type as much of service as of authority; and the shepherd-ruler is the incarnation of self-sacrifice, as Saul is of self-seeking. The people are not yet ready for the kingdom that shall be, and the men of Keilah will, under pressure, deliver up their saviour. David and his men evacuate the city, therefore, to take up again their wandering life, going whither they may; and Saul is still, as it may seem, the master. But master he cannot be who is not, before all things, master of himself; nor he master of himself who has not God his master. God is the harmony of all things: in the first revolt against Him are unloosed the forces of intestine strife, the issue of which is dissolution.

(ii.) David has escaped his enemy once more, and is now at Ziph; not escaped from the trial which is needful, and which is, under God's hand, carefully controlled for blessing,—a blessing which, in the Psalms, he acknowledges many times with a full heart. Ziph means, according to what we have before seen, "refining." (See pp. 97, 113, *n.*) We shall find it in this place also answering to its name. The precious metals—the gold and the silver of this world—need such processes to display their character; and all the elect of God—save One, the chief Elect—need and undergo this process. In David we have to recognize, as often said, not simply the One who never needed purification, but also those who are identified with Him by His grace, and who, on their way to share with Him His kingdom and glory, share with Him too the sufferings that lead on to this. Thus the apostle, after giving us the precious examples of those who have "obtained a good report through faith," and bidding us in like manner "run with patience the race set before us," puts before us the absolutely perfect example, "looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith." He does not say or mean "of *our* faith," but that He it is who has led in and perfected in His own Person the whole course of faith: "who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down on the right hand of the throne of God."

He goes on to inspirit us with His example: "for consider Him who endured such great contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds; *ye* have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin."

With Him who was perfect, this sin against which He strove was something external to Himself, the very contradiction of *sinners* to the Holy One, the necessary contradiction of natures utterly opposed. But for those who but feebly follow Him in this path, and thus partake also of His sufferings, even the very opposition and persecution of men are overruled for a purpose which there could not be with Him; and so the apostle goes on: "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the *chastening* of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." (Heb. xii.)

him not into his hand. And David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life; and David was in the wilderness of Ziph, in a wood. And Jonathan the son of Saul arose, and went to David into the wood, and [b]strengthened his hand in God. And he said unto him, Fear not, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt [c]reign over Israel, and I will be next to thee: and that Saul also, my father, knoweth. And they two made a [d]covenant before Jehovah. And David abode in the wood; and Jonathan went to his house.

And the [e]Ziphites came up to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Is not David hiding himself with us in the strongholds in the forest, in the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south side of the waste? Now then, O king, come down according to all the desire of thy soul to come down, and it shall be our part to deliver him into the hand of the king. And Saul said, Blessed are ye of Jehovah, for ye have [f]compassion upon me. Go, I pray you, make more sure yet, and know and see his place, where his haunt is, who hath seen him there: for they tell me he acteth very [g]subtly. See, then, and take knowledge of all the lurking-places wherein he hideth himself, and come again with certainty, that I may go with you; and it shall be, if he be in the land, that I will search him out among all the thousands of Judah. And they arose and came to Ziph before Saul; but David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the Arabah, south of the waste. Saul also and his men came to search; and

b *ctr.* ver. 18. *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 12. Jno. 9. 34-38. Heb. 13. 10-13.
c ch. 24. 20.
d ch. 20. 16.
e Ps. 54. Title. ch. 26. 1, 2.
f ch. 22. 8.
g *cf.* ch. 18. 30.

David thus could not represent the Lord in the "place of refining," for in Him there was no mixture, no dross to be purged away; but there are those identified with Him on earth, witnesses for Him, and thus sharers of His sufferings, and who, even as this, do need their Ziph, and find it; aye, even, the foremost that have stood for and represented Him, and with whom He has stood. So that Ziph has its place in this picture.

In regard to its numerical position also, let us notice that "refining" is a process of *separation*, of division, for which the number stands; and so the conflict between good and evil tends to necessary separation of one from the other. Men and things come to show themselves according to their affinities: as here, a Jonathan for, a Saul against; and by reason of use we have our senses exercised to discern both good and evil. This discernment is the result of the light, the judgment that takes place in the presence of God, who is Light.

Accordingly, the story of Ziph divides into two parts, what is evidently for, what is apparently against. In reality, *all* is for, both the one and the other. But we begin with what is evidently so when, while Saul is seeking for his life, Jonathan comes into the wood where David is hidden, and strengthens his hand in God. How blessed is thus the meeting of faith with faith, and how great the confirmation which we can bring each other! This is mentioned first also, the strength of it being needed for the encounter soon to come. And this is part, too, of the process of refinement, the encouragement in God without which we could not so abide the separation and strife. A tender hand is laid upon this poor human material, to hold it steadfastly in the place of necessary testing.

The Ziphites are recreant Judæans; but they, too, do the work they are permitted. From the hill of Hachilah to the wilderness of Maon Saul pursues the object of his hatred, just being on the point, as it would seem, of getting him into

they told David, and he went down the [h]cliff, and abode in the wilderness of Maon. And Saul heard it, and he pursued after David to the wilderness of Maon. And Saul went on the [i]one side of the hill, and David and his men on the other side of the hill; and David made haste to get away from Saul, and Saul and his men were surrounding David and his men to take them. And there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Make haste and come; for the [j]Philistines have invaded the land. And Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines; therefore they called the place Sela-hammalekoth.

3. (xxiii.29-xxiv.) Engedi: the "spring of the leaper."

[3] And David went up from thence, and dwelt in strongholds at [k]Engedi. And it came to pass when Saul had returned from following the Philistines, they [l]told him, saying, Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi. And Saul took [m]three thousand men, chosen out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats. And he came to the sheep-cotes on the way, and there was a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet: and David and his men were abiding in the recesses of the cave. And David's men said unto him, [n]Behold the day of which Jehovah said unto thee, Behold, I give thine

h ch. 25. 2.
i *cf.* Ps. 118. 12. Ps. 38. 12.
j ver. 1.
k ch. 24. 22.
l ch. 23. 19.
m ch. 26. 2.
n ch. 26. 8.

his hand, when the Philistines become God's hands to fence David around, and Saul turns from his prey at the "rock of divisions," to go against the national enemy. Plainly not David's "subtle dealing" has saved him, but a divine intervention; and this is of the greatest importance, not only for Saul, but for David himself. He has been brought to an end of all his own wisdom and power, to find himself held fast in the hand of God, and covered by the hand that holds him. And this realization of the nothingness of man and of the greatness of God, with the joy of knowing that this God is for us, what is it — stated, indeed, in its mere elements — but that which every refining process is designed to bring us to?

(iii.) We next find David at Engedi, once more pursued by Saul, but who now falls into the hands of the one he persecutes, only to experience, however, from him the mercy he had never shown, and to be shamed into a confession of his sin, which for the time ends the pursuit.

Engedi means "the spring of the young goat," the force of the latter word being really "leaper." The spiritual thought has been already indicated (p. 117, *n.*); and there should be such agreement between the name and the history before us as we have been able to trace in similar cases. Engedi reminds us of how the wilderness and the hill of difficulty become, in the wisdom of God, schools of training and begetters of strength. The tread and leap of the wild goat are the very symbols of strength gained by practice and ready surmounting of difficulties; and the name is interpreted and emphasized for us where it is said that "Saul went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats (climbers)." They were in the same circumstances with the same results. Trial and hardship were forming character, as we know, and mighty men were being produced, masters of themselves and of their circumstances, by the exigencies they were called to face from day to day.

This is, in fact, what we find as to David here. The unexpected visit of Saul to the cave, putting him so completely into his power, the murmured suggestion of his followers that here now was his God-given opportunity, the moment call-

enemy into thy hand, and thou shalt do unto him as it is good in thine eyes. And David arose, and [o]cut off the skirt of Saul's robe secretly. And it came to pass afterwards that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt. And he said unto his men, Jehovah forbid that I should do this thing unto my lord, the anointed of Jehovah, to put forth my hand against him: for he is the [p]anointed of Jehovah. And David checked his men with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul. And Saul arose out of the cave, and went on the way. And afterward David arose and went forth out of the cave, and cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king! And Saul looked behind him; and David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself. And David said unto Saul, Why dost thou hearken to men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt? Behold, thine eyes have seen to-day, how that Jehovah gave thee to-day into my hand in the cave; and they spake unto me to slay thee, but [it] spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth my hand against my lord, because he is anointed of Jehovah. And see also, my father, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand; for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see that there is neither evil nor [q]transgression in my hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou [r]huntest my life to take it. Jehovah [s]judge between me and thee; and Jehovah avenge me of thee; but my hand shall not be on thee. As saith the proverb of the ancients, From the wicked proceedeth wickedness; but my hand shall not be on thee. After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? after a [t]dead dog, after one flea. Jehovah therefore shall be judge, and judge between me and thee, and he shall see, and plead my cause, and do me justice from thy hand. And it came to pass, when David had ended speaking these words to Saul,

o ch. 26. 11.
p 2 Sam. i. 14.
q Ps. 18. 20.
r ch. 25. 29.
s Ps. 7. 3-5. Ps. 26. 1.
t 2 Sam. 9. 8.

ing for the briefest possible decision,—all needed the alertness and self-command of habitual exercise, such as befitted the divinely appointed ruler of Israel. And David displays remarkably these qualities. You see the evident effect of continual waiting upon God, in the abhorrence of the thought of injuring Jehovah's anointed, the tender conscience which smites him for even cutting off Saul's skirt; while yet his heart throbs in the impassioned appeal which for a moment melts down all Saul's pride and enmity, and might seem to have found beneath it a true and quite other man than the Spirit-forsaken, spirit-haunted despot of the past sad years.

And in all this David shows us also the source of this spiritual power which he manifests, or in the language of the symbols here, the "spring" at which the "leaper" has renewed his strength. One sees manifest in his utterance the supreme assurance that he has, that all things are absolutely subject to Him to whom he has committed himself entirely, who will in His own time and way act for him, and whose acts he will not anticipate. "Jehovah shall be judge, and judge between me and thee; and He shall see, and plead my cause, and do me justice from thy hand. My hand shall not be upon thee." This seems but the

that Saul said, "Is this thy voice, my son David? And Saul lifted up his voice, and [v]wept. And he said unto David, Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast [w]recompensed me with good, and I have recompensed evil unto thee. And thou hast declared this day the good thou doest unto me, in that when Jehovah delivered me into thy hand, thou didst not slay me. For [x]if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? therefore Jehovah recompense thee good for what thou hast done to me to-day. And now, behold, I [y]know that thou shalt certainly be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thy hand: now [z]swear unto me therefore by Jehovah that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, nor destroy my name out of my father's house. And David sware unto Saul; and Saul went unto his house; and David and his men went up to the [a]stronghold.

4. xxv.) The experience of failure. The type returns to Israel, tested by a new message from the king.

[4]And Samuel [b]died: and all Israel were gathered together, and lamented him, and they buried him at his house in Ramah. And David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran. And there was a man in [c]Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel. And the man was very [d]great, and he had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. And he was shearing his sheep in Carmel. And the name of the man was Nabal, and the name of his wife Abigail: and she was a woman of [e]good understanding and of a beautiful countenance; but the man was churlish and evil in his doings: and he was of the house of [f]Caleb. And David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep: and David sent ten young men; and David said unto the young men, Go up to Carmel, and when ye come unto

u ch. 26. 17.
v *cfr.* ch. 20. 41.
w 1 Pet. 3. 9.
x Num. 35. 26, 27. *cfr.* Matt. 5. 44.
y ch. 23. 17.
z 2 Sam. 9. 1. 2 Sam. 4. 10.
a 2 Sam. 5. 17.
b ch. 28. 3.
c ch. 23. 25.
d *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 26.
e *cf.* vers. 18–31.
f *cf.* Judg. 18. 30.

lesson of Ziph learned,—a simple but a great one indeed; and the two sections are thus naturally connected.

Saul is more than touched; he is broken down,—seems, indeed, won: owns everything, realizes the mercy that has spared his life, declares his own conviction that David should be king,—engages him, even with an oath, not to cut off his seed after he is gone: alas, in a short time has forgotten all this, and is as if it had never been! How terrible is that process of self-hardening in a human soul, wherein "all things work together for" ruin and destruction, as they do "for good to them that love God"!

Spite of Saul's confession, David can no more trust him, nor can Saul even expect him to do so: he abides still in the wilderness.

(iv.) David has gained a great victory: he has conquered Saul; he has done much more,—he has conquered himself also. Nay, he has shown the habitual self-mastery of one walking before God indeed. Alas, the next time we are called to contemplate him, it is as an example of thorough failure, and that in the very way in which he has just proved himself so strong and competent.

Saul was not only unmistakably his enemy,—he was a most powerful one; and David had suffered at his hand the loss of most things that men count dear. Nor had his will and power to inflict evil come to an end, when just now he had been so magnanimously spared, and dismissed in peace. Nabal, with whom he has now to do, is proud and niggard and insolent. But he cannot be considered

Nabal, greet him in my name, and say thus unto him, [Long] life! [g]Peace be to thee, and peace be to thy house, and peace to all thou hast! And now I have heard that thou hast shearers: now thy shepherds were with us; we [h]hurt them not, nor was aught missing of theirs, all the while they were in Carmel. Ask thy young men, and they will tell thee. Let therefore the young men find favor in thine eyes; for we come in a good day: give, I pray thee, what thy hand may find unto thy servants, and to thy son David. And David's young men came, and spake unto Nabal according to all these words in the name of David, and ceased. And Nabal answered the servants of David, and said, [i]Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there are many [j]servants nowadays, that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take [k]my bread and my water, and my meat that I have killed for my shearers, and give them unto men whom I know not whence they are? And David's young men turned to their way, and went back, and told him according to all these words. And David said unto his men, [l]Gird on every man his sword. And they girded on every man his sword, and David girded on his sword; and there went up after David about [m]four hundred men, and two hundred remained with the baggage.

And one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wil-

g *cf.* Lk. 10. 5. *cf.* Matt. 21. 33–42.

h ch. 30. 31.

i *cf.* Ex. 5. 2.

j *cf.* Is. 53. 2, 3.

k *cf.* Lk. 12. 16–18.

l *ctr.* Lk. 9. 52–56.

m ch. 23. 13.

in the same sense an enemy; and if he were, he is comparatively a contemptible one. David has no cause whatever to fear him, nor does he for a moment suppose he has. With such an one how easy to show the magnanimity that, in Saul's case, cost so much to show! Yet it is precisely here that David fails entirely. He is not merely not magnanimous; he is terribly severe and unjust. Denied that to which he might have a moral but no legal claim, and his well-meant advances answered with insult, he blazes out into a passion of wrath which would involve with Nabal every male of his house in indiscriminate slaughter! Can this be the same man that we have been just admiring for his noble control and self-forgetfulness? Can this be the shepherd-king of Israel, the ruler in the fear of God, the man who himself has felt the unrighteousness of men, the man disciplined in the school of suffering? It is the same, and not the same. It is David, no longer under the control of the presence of God: and at once all that is sweet and gracious, all that is of God, all the fruit of His training, all the good of having been under His yoke, seems suddenly to have passed away. Is there, then, a Saul existing even beneath a David, ready to show itself as soon as the gnard upon it is removed, unchanged from what it was before faith came? Yes, it is even so; and our best remedy is to be conscious of it, that we may realize our utter dependence at all times upon God. Not as sinners, but as saints it is that we are called to "have no confidence in the flesh." Prayer is a constant necessity to us; and, waiting upon the Lord, our strength shall be renewed. What a lesson have we here in David! No ephod was needed or used when the four hundred started on their dread errand to Carmel! But the message he had not sought came to him from the faithful grace of God through the lips of a woman.

Yet everything now depended upon David: Samuel had just passed away, and at Ramah the watch of the prophet was kept no more. If our interpreta-

derness to greet our master, and he flew at them. But the men were very good to us, and we were not hurt, nor missed anything, as long as we companied with them, while we were in the field. They were a [n]wall unto us both night and day, all the while we were with them, keeping the sheep. And now understand, and see what thou wilt do: for evil is determined against our master, along with all his house; and he is such a son of Belial, that one cannot speak unto him.

[n] ver. 7.

And Abigail hastened, and took [o]two hundred loaves, and two skins of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five sacks of parched corn, and a hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them upon asses. And she said unto her young men, Pass on before me; behold, I come after you. And she [p]told not her husband Nabal. And as she was riding on the ass, and descending by the covert of the hill, behold, David and his men coming down opposite her: and she

[o] *cf.* Gen. 43. 11. 2 Sam. 16. 1.

[p] ch. 14. 1. *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 14.

tion of Ramah has been in anywise correct, then the end of the long watch there must be as significant, typically, as the death of Samuel was, in fact, for the nation of Israel at the time. Samuel is Christ as Prophet, before the true King has come to His rights on earth; and thus, with his gatherings of prophets round himself, would correspond to David as the rejected King, with his gathering also of those who maintained his kingship: both in entire subjection to the will of God which ordained a time of patience and long-suffering. Both, therefore, look on to the present Christian times, as we have seen, when Christ, though not personally on earth, watches here with the company of His prophets, and is in the midst of those who confess Him Lord. Ramah, then, being gone, should imply the end of the present night-watch, which would imply also a related and yet far different change at hand for the confessors of Christ's Lordship. His reign is now at hand, which they are to share with him; and the facts of the history answer to this.

David arises, therefore, and goes down to the wilderness of Paran, which has before been interpreted to mean "adornment." (Num. x. 12, *n.*) As to application, however, everything is different here from there; and in the line of things now before us we should naturally think of how "the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." (Isa. xxxv. 1.) But this is only nearing, and not accomplished.

A very difficult part of the history is now before us, if we are still to find, as we ought ever to find, a spiritual meaning underlying the literal, and if this is to be traced also in consistent relation to the whole connection here. But such a meaning assuredly there is, and therefore we may go forward with confidence in the promise to him that seeks. The need of this consistency is as much a help as it is a safeguard to interpretation; and it were better to acknowledge entire failure than to wrest from its proper force the blessed word of truth.

We are now introduced to a man of Israel, who lives in Maon, and whose possessions are in Carmel, but who is Nabal, "a fool," and is smitten for his folly. We shall find these places together in a portion of Judah which we have already taken as memorializing for us Israel's blessedness,—Maon, "dwelling-place," the habitation of God, and Carmel, "vineyard," His place of fruit. But yet the man, though of the house of Caleb, has fallen away wholly from the character of Caleb. He is, as already said, Nabal, the word used where it is written, "The *fool* hath said in his heart, There is no God." Indeed this is what in Scripture "folly" mostly connects or is identified with, just as, for Scripture also, "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

met them. Now David had said, Surely in [q] vain have I kept all that belonged to this [fellow] in the wilderness, and there was nothing missed of all that was his; but he hath returned me evil for good. So may God do, and more also unto the enemies* of David, if I leave by morning light of all that belonged to him a single male. And when Abigail saw David, she hastened, and descended from the ass, and [r] fell down upon her face before David, and bowed herself to the earth, and fell at his feet, and said, [s] Upon me, even me, my lord, be this iniquity; but let thy handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine ears, and hearken to the words of thy handmaid. Let not my lord now regard this man of Belial, Nabal: for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him; but I thy handmaid saw not my lord's young men whom thou sentest. And now, my lord, as Jehovah liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing that [t] Jehovah hath withheld thee from coming with bloodshed and from helping thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies and all that seek thy hurt be as Nabal. And now this blessing which thy servant hath brought unto my lord, let it be given to the young men that follow my lord. Forgive, I pray

q *cf.* Ps. 73. 6–13.

r Gen. 24.64. Ruth 2. 5.

s ver. 28.

t Ps. 51. 14.

*One might imagine an interpolation here, and the Septuagint omits "the enemies of"; the Vulgate and Chaldee versions, however, agree with the Hebrew, and indirectly the Syriac and Arabic. See Lange's Commentary.

In contrast with this apostate Israelite is his wife Abigail, the "father (or source) of joy," as most would render it; but this, for its application, must look forward.

Nabal is shearing his sheep in Carmel, and indulging himself after his manner, when David sends ten messengers to salute him, and to seek from him an acknowledgment of the care which had been taken of his shepherds in the wilderness. Nabal answers, reviling David as a runaway servant, and his company as people of whom he knows nothing; and flatly refuses. David's men return to convey the message and the insult to their master.

If we take all the surroundings here, the death of Samuel and the altered position of David, the character and connections of Nabal, we seem naturally to find in him a picture of Israel in its apostate condition in the last days. The demand of David's messengers would then speak of the last divine testimony to them, which finds them in ignorance and rejection of Christ and of His claims, but which calls out from them, however, a remnant figured in Abigail, who, by their faith avert judgment from the nation, though divine judgment comes indeed on the apostate part. The remnant, severed thus from their old relation, are united to Christ as King of Israel.

That Abigail pictures the Christian Church is a view which has most of these points against it, while it seems to involve a dislocation of the period at which it is presented. Abigail has, in fact, much that reminds us of Ruth, widowed also by the judgment of God, and united to her deliverer,— while, of course, there are in either case features entirely different.

That there are no difficulties in this view one could not affirm, but they are found to the full as much in any application to the Christian Church, and are precisely the same difficulties. The principal one seems to be the failure so manifest in David on this occasion, and out of which Abigail is herself the means of his deliverance. This, in any view of this kind must, of course, be left out of

thee the trespass of thy handmaid; for Jehovah will indeed make my lord a [u]sure house, because my lord fighteth Jehovah's battles, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days. But a man hath risen up to [v]pursue thee, and to seek thy life: but my lord's life is bound in the bundle of life with Jehovah thy God, and the life of thine enemies shall he sling out, as out of the middle of a sling. And it shall be when Jehovah shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall appoint thee [w]ruler over Israel, that this shall be for thee no stumbling-block, nor offense of heart for my lord, to have shed blood causelessly or for my lord to have helped himself with his own hand. And when Jehovah shall have dealt well with my lord, then [x]remember thy handmaid.

And David said unto Abigail, [y]Blessed be Jehovah, God of Israel, who sent thee to-day to meet me, and blessed be thy discernment, and blessed be thou, who hast kept me this day from coming with bloodshed, and from helping myself with my own hand. But in very deed, as Jehovah the God of Israel liveth, who hath restrained me this day from doing evil to thee, except thou hadst hastened and come to meet me, before morning light there had not been left to Nabal any male. And David received of her hand that which she had brought him, and said unto her, [z]Go up in peace to thy house: see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and accepted thy person.

And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held a [a]feast in his house like the feast of a king; and Nabal's heart was merry within him, and he was very drunken: so she told him nothing, little or much, till morning

u 2 Sam. 7. 16.

v *ctr.* ver. 10. ch. 24. 11.

w *cf.* 2 Sam. 4. 9, 10.

x *cf.* Gen. 40. 14. *cf.* Lk. 23. 42, 43.

y *ctr.* 2 Chr. 16. 7-10.

z Lk. 7. 50.

a Dan. 5. 1, etc.

all significance in relation to the type, as simple failure of the human representative. Such things we have elsewhere, though scarcely one, perhaps, where the failure comes into such prominence. And David must, of course, in this case stand for Christ personally,— could not represent any who might be identified with His claims on earth,— so that the incompatibility cannot in this way be accounted for.

The failure seems manifest in David, even to the end: the double marriage at the close cannot impress one favorably as to him, though here the type would not be affected by it. Ahinoam, the Jezreelitess, may, indeed, in this way, as in the case of other double types, confirm the significance. For here, again, we have the name of a city finding place with Maon and Carmel in the same section of Judah's territory, and one which has a manifest relation to Israel's restoration. Thus, when she is united to the Lord in the coming day, Ahinoam, the "kin of pleasure," may be a not unsuited name, while Jezreel reminds us of the promise then to be fulfilled, "I will sow her to me in the earth." To the Christian Church the latter could hardly apply.

The faith of Abigail recognizes in David, the king in Israel, his personal blamelessness, his zeal for Jehovah. She foresees his actual reign and the establishment of his house, with the destruction of all that would oppose itself. She prays to be remembered of him in that day. Nothing seems to indicate more than Jewish hopes.

light. And it came to pass in the morning, when the wine had gone out of Nabal, and his wife told him these things, that his heart [b]died within him, and he became like a stone. And it came to pass in about ten days that Jehovah [c]smote Nabal, and he died. And David heard that Nabal was dead, and he said, Blessed be Jehovah who hath pleaded the cause of my reproach at the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his servant from evil; and Jehovah hath [d]returned Nabal's wickedness upon his own head. And David sent and spake with Abigail to take her to be his [e]wife. And the servants of David came to Abigail to Carmel, and spake unto her, saying, David hath sent us unto thee, to take thee to be his wife. And she arose and [f]bowed herself with her face to the earth, and said, [g]Behold, thy handmaid is a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord. And Abigail hastened, and arose, and rode upon the ass, with her five damsels that went after her, and she went after the messengers of David, and became his wife.

And David took [h]also Ahinoam of Jezreel: and they became both of them his wives. But Saul had given [i]Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti the son of Laish, who was of Gallim.

Governmental results. I. (xxvi.) "Righteousness as the light."

(XXVI.-XXXI.)

5. [1]And the [j]Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah,

b Josh. 2. 9.
c Lk. 12. 20.
d 1 Ki. 2. 44. Gal. 6. 7.
e *cf.* Ex. 2. 21. Eph. 5. 25.
f ver. 23.
g *cf.* Lk. 1. 38.
h *cf.* Deut. 17. 17.
i ch. 18. 20, 21.
j ch. 23. 19.

The numerical division seems to be also in accordance with this, the number (4) being on the one hand that of testing and failure, while it is also that of the earth, and thus of the earthly people, Israel. Whatever the moral lessons, therefore, the typical application seems, after all, clear.

5. If the double marriage of David shadow the union of Israel with the Lord, then we have reached in it beyond the time of trial, and David's sufferings would seem as if they should now end. But this they do not, although we do not find him in the same distress again. Still Saul once more pursues him, though now only to fall more openly into his hand, and to be braved and shamed in the very midst of his people. We have, in fact, reached an end, and begin a new section with the twenty-sixth chapter, from which to the end of the thirty-first we have put before us, according to the Deuteronomic character of a fifth part, the results in divine government, this open shame and self-condemnation of Saul, with the corresponding justification of the man he persecutes, being but the first of these. The sojourn of David in the Philistines' land, parallel with the full apostasy and judgment of Saul at the hand of the Philistines, claims, even as history, a new section for itself; and to this his last pursuit of David is clearly the preface. Even in his words to Saul he already speaks of being driven out from the inheritance of Jehovah among the worshipers of other gods, as it is immediately afterwards that his resolution to escape into the Philistines' land is definitely announced; and this is the end of Saul's pursuit of him.

The section as a whole is clearly retributive, and illustrative of the divine ways in government. Even Saul's lapse into witchcraft is of this nature, and the end is so, beyond question. David, too, finds his discipline from God, though the end with him is tender mercy. As a direct type of Christ he does not appear in it, while even in his failure he may but too well typify those witnesses for Him upon earth with whom He identifies Himself ever, as in His words to a later Benjamite, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?"

(i.) David is hiding himself in the hill of Hachilah ("obscurity"?), and the

facing the waste? And Saul arose and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, and with him [k]three thousand men, chosen men of Israel, to seek for David in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul encamped at the hill of Hachilah which faceth the waste, by the way-side; and David abode in the wilderness. And he saw that Saul had come after him to the wilderness: now David had sent out spies, and knew that Saul had come indeed. And David arose, and came to the place where Saul was encamped. And David saw the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay within the wagon-rampart, and the people pitched round about him. And David answered and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, the brother of Joab, saying, [l]Who will go down with me unto Saul, unto the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee. So David and Abishai came unto the people by night, and behold, Saul lay [m]sleeping within the wagon-rampart, with his javelin stuck in the earth at his head; and Abner and the people lay round about him. And Abishai said unto David, [n]God hath to-day delivered thine enemy into thy hand; and now let me smite him, I pray thee, with the javelin, even to the earth once, and I will not do it the second time. And David said unto Abishai, Destroy him not; for who can put forth his hand against the [o]anointed of Jehovah, and be guiltless? And David said, As Jehovah liveth, Jehovah shall surely smite him, or his day shall come and he shall die; or he shall descend to [p]battle and be taken off: Jehovah forbid that I should put forth my hand against Jehovah's anointed. But now take away, I pray thee, the [q]spear which is at his head, and the cruse of [r]water, and let us go. So David took the spear, and the cruse of water from Saul's head, and they departed, and no man saw, nor knew it, nor awakened: for a deep sleep from [s]Jehovah was fallen upon them.

And David crossed over to the other side, and stood on the top of a hill afar off, a great space being between them. And David [t]cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner? And Abner answered and said, Who art thou that criest unto the king? And David said unto Abner, Art not thou a man? and who is like thee in Israel? and why

k ch. 24. 2.

l cf. ch. 14. 6, 7.

m cf. Judg. 4. 21.

n ch. 24. 4.

o Ps. 105. 15. ch. 1. 15.

p ch. 31. 5.

q cf. ch. 18. 11.

r cf. Eph. 5. 26.

s cf. ch. 18. 14.

t ch. 24. 8.

Ziphites once more carry the news to the king. The sight of the messengers, with the memories connected, should have been enough to hinder Saul's pursuit, but it does not; and this time, therefore, he is made to proclaim openly his own shame and David's righteousness. The man he seeks seeks him in turn, and in the very midst of his camp has once again his life at his disposal; only again to spare it, however, while yet stripping him of his spear, the emblem of his sovereignty, and carrying off the pitcher of water at his head. What a realization for Saul of the vanity of the conflict in which he is engaged!—and what an

hast thou not guarded thy lord, the king? for one of the people came to destroy the king thy lord. It is not good, the thing that thou hast done; as Jehovah liveth, ye are worthy to die, because ye have not guarded your lord, the anointed of Jehovah. And now see where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water which was at his head. And Saul knew David's voice, and he said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And David said, It is my voice, my lord the king. And he said, Why doth my lord pursue after his servant? for [u] what have I done? and what evil is there in my hand? And now let my lord the king hear his servant's words: if [v] Jehovah have stirred thee up against me, may he accept an offering; but if they be children of men, cursed be they before Jehovah: for they have [w] driven me out this day from cleaving to the inheritance of Jehovah, saying, Go, serve other gods. And now, let not my [x] blood fall to the earth away from Jehovah's face! for the king of Israel is come out to seek one [y] flea, just as they hunt the partridge in the mountains. And Saul said, I have [z] sinned: return, my son David; for I will no more do thee harm, because my life has been precious in thine eyes to-day: behold, I have played the fool, and erred exceedingly. And David answered and said, Behold the king's spear! and let one of the young men come over and fetch it. Jehovah render to every one his righteousness and his faithfulness; for Jehovah delivered thee into my hand to-day, and I would not put forth my hand against the anointed of Jehovah. And behold, as thy life was highly esteemed in mine eyes to-day, so may my life be highly esteemed in Jehovah's eyes, and may he deliver me out of every strait! And Saul said unto David, [a] Blessed be thou, my son David! thou shalt certainly do [great things], and shalt surely prevail. And David went his way; and Saul returned unto his place.

u ch. 20. 1.
v 2 Sam. 24. 1.
w ch. 27. 1.
x *cf.* 1 Kl. 2. 10.
y ch. 24. 14.
z *cf.* 2 Cor. 7. 10, 11.
a *cf.* Nu. 23. 20.

2. (xxvii.-xxviii. 2.) David in the ranks of the enemy.

[2] And David said in his [b] heart, I shall now one day [c] perish by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better

b *cf.* Deut. 15. 9.
c *ctr.* ch. 17. 32.

anticipation of the time when the secrets of the heart, developed in and moulding the life, shall be exhibited in the light,— a light in which already he found himself thus revealed! One more attempt of divine mercy this to bring into subjection this human heart, but which, even while owning the folly which has possessed it, proves itself absolutely unreceptive of it, and thus unrepentant. Saul thus draws one step nearer to his doom,— when, indeed, unsceptred, and without water for his thirst, he must meet and give account to God! Alas, how can this be so forgotten?

For David, his righteousness is brought forth in the light, and proclaimed by his persistent enemy and accuser, in the ears of all the people. Fuller justification he could not get, with the spear and cruse also for a double witness on the other side. And God has wrought this, by means of the very persistency of the persecutor himself. How ought every fear to be now at rest when again He has manifested Himself after this manner!

(ii.) Again, however, after a signal triumph, and a wonderful display of God's

for me than to [d]escape indeed into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me any more in any border of Israel. So shall I escape out of his hand. And David arose and passed over, he and the [e]six hundred men that were with him, unto [f]Achish the son of Maoch, king of Gath. And David abode with Achish at Gath, he and his men, every man with his household,—David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's wife. And it was told Saul that David had fled to Gath, and he sought for him no more.

And David said unto Achish, If now I have found [g]favor in thine eyes, let them give me a place in one of the country-cities that I may dwell there: for why should thy servant dwell in the royal city with thee? And Achish gave him [h]Ziklag that day: wherefore Ziklag pertaineth to the kings of Judah unto this day. And the time that David abode in the country of the Philistines was a [i]year and four months.

And David went up with his men, and they [j]invaded the Geshurites, and the Girzites, and the Amalekites: for those were of old the inhabitants of the land, as thou goest unto Shur, and as far as the land of Egypt. And David smote the land, and left [k]neither man nor woman alive, and took the sheep and the oxen and the asses and the camels and the apparel, and returned

d cf. Gen. 12. 10.

e ch. 25. 13.
f ch. 21. 10.

g ch. 29. 8, 9.

h Josh. 15. 31, ch. 30. 1.

i ch. 29. 3. *cf.* Gen. 27. 43, 44.
j cf. ch. 30. 1, ch. 15. 7.

k etc. ch. 15. 8.

goodness to him, the faith of David collapses, and he sees nothing before him but one day perishing at the hand of Saul. He forms a resolution, therefore, in which certainly he is guided by no wisdom from God, and leaves the inheritance of the Lord for the land of their heathen enemy. He goes not even to Moab, but to Gath, the city of the giant he had overcome by faith, and where, also, he had once before, through unbelief, failed so pitiably: but from the higher height the deeper depth; and, once having given way to unbelief, one false step necessitates another, one lie another to confirm it; cruelty has to be added to deceit, many lives having to pay forfeit for the preservation of his own. How dastardly a thing is unbelief!

Details here may be difficult enough, while the moral lesson is unmistakable; and it is this which, in all this part, seems most to be emphasized. We may note, however, how a child of God away from God may be a very zealous destroyer of evils that are unquestionably such,—all the while remaining as far as ever away; nay, increased zeal against what is external to us often accompanies a state in which self-judgment is proportionately deficient.

David's plea for himself we have already heard. He simply puts the blame of where he is upon others: "they have driven me out," he says; and he has no consciousness of aught but truth in saying it. Yet while it was true that they had fully the responsibility of this, it is not true that a saint of God, walking with God, can be "driven" to anything. To be led of God and to be driven of men are two different, contrasted, and, in this case, incompatible things. It was but a dishonor done to the Lord's care and love to imagine the possibility of falling into Saul's hand, and perishing without coming to the kingdom, when the divine anointing was upon his head. Saul himself, in his moments of sanity, knew better. The fruits of this lapse of faith did not fail to declare sufficiently its character; and mark it out, not as the sin of others, but his own.

Ziklag, "the pressure of the wave," (p. 137, *n.*), becomes thus suitably his resi-

and came to Achish. And Achish said, Whither have ye made a raid to-day? And David said, Against the south of [t]Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites. And David saved neither man nor woman alive to bring to Gath, saying, Lest they should tell of us, saying, So did David. And this was his custom all the while he abode in the country of the Philistines. And Achish believed David, saying, He hath made his people Israel utterly to [m]abhor him: and he shall be my servant forever.

t *cf.* ch. 23. 22. ch. 19. 15.

m *cf.* Gen. 34. 30.

And it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare, to [n]fight with Israel. And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly, that thou shalt go out [o]with me in the army, thou and thy men. And David said unto Achish, Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do. And Achish said unto David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of my head perpetually.

n ch. 23. 1, etc.
o ch. 29. 23.

3. (xxviii. 3–25.) Saul, seeking to the dead, finds an oracle of doom from Samuel's lips.

[3]And Samuel was [p]dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had [q]familiar spirits and the wizards out of the land. And the Philistines gathered together, and came, and encamped in Shunem. And Saul [r]gathered all Israel together, and they encamped in Gilboa. And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was [s]afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. And Saul inquired of Jehovah, but Jehovah [t]answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. And Saul said unto his servants, [u]Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said unto him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor. And Saul [v]disguised himself, and put on other garments, and went, with two men with him, and they came to the woman by night. And he said, Divine unto me, I pray thee, by the familiar spirit, and bring up him that I shall name to thee. And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, and how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits and the wizards out of the land: why, then, layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die? And Saul sware unto her by Jehovah, As [w]Jehovah liveth, there shall no guilt attach to thee for this thing. And the woman said, whom shall I

p ch. 25. 1.
q Ex. 22. 18. Lev. 20. 27. Acts 19. 18, 19. Rev. 22. 15.
r ch. 13. 3. *cfr.* Judg. 7. 2–8 with Lev. 26. 8.
s ch. 17. 11.
t ch. 14. 27.
u ver. 9. *cf.* Rom. 2. 21–24.
v 1 Ki. 14. 2.
w *cf.* ch. 19. 6.

dence. Circumstances have, indeed, been too much for him: he is not now an overcomer. Let him pursue but a little farther the road on which he has entered, and he shall be captain of the body-guard to a Philistine king forever!

(iii.) Meanwhile Saul, in terror of the gathering Philistines, and forsaken of God, sinks to the lowest, and consults one of those dealers with familiar spirits whom he had sought in time past to cut off out of the land. Disguised and under cover of the night, he steals with two others to the dwelling of the witch at Endor. Nor does he hesitate to swear by Jehovah Himself to protect her in

bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. And when the woman saw Samuel, she [x]cried with a loud voice; and the woman spake unto Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? thou art even Saul. And the king said unto her, Fear not: but what hast thou seen? And the woman said unto Saul, I see a god ascending from the earth. And he said unto her, What is his form? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel; and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself. And Samuel said unto Saul, Why hast thou [y]disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul said, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war upon me, and God is [z]departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets nor by dreams: and I have called thee, that thou mightest make known unto me what I shall do. And Samuel said, Why, then, dost thou ask of me, seeing Jehovah is departed from thee, and become thine enemy? Jehovah hath even done for himself as he [a]spake by me, and Jehovah hath rent the kingdom out of thy hand, and given it to thy neighbor, [even] to David. Because thou didst not [b]hearken to Jehovah's voice, nor execute his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath Jehovah done this thing to thee to-day. And Jehovah will deliver Israel also with thee into the hand of the Philistines; and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be [c]with me; and Jehovah will give the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.

And Saul fell straightway his full length on the earth, and was sore afraid because of the words of Samuel; and there was no strength in him, for he had eaten no bread all the day nor all the night. And the woman came unto Saul, and saw that he was sore troubled, and said unto him, Behold, thy servant hath hearkened to thy voice: I have even put my life in my hand, and have hearkened to thy words which thou spakest unto me. And now, I pray thee, hearken thou also to the voice of thy servant, and let me set a morsel of [d]bread

x *cf.* Ex. 8. 18, 19.

y *ctr.* Luke 9. 30, 31.

z ch. 16. 14.

a ch. 15. 10-30.

b *cf.* Num. 27. 14. 1 Chr. 10. 13, 14.

c *cf.* 2 Ki. 16. 20.

d *ctr.* ch. 21. 3-6.

the violation of Jehovah's law. He bids her bring up to him Samuel; and to the woman's own consternation Samuel in reality appears. This was beyond her art, and shows her plainly a higher power overmastering it: the "keys of hades" were in no witch's hand; and while he appears alone to her, to her discomfiture, he speaks directly to Saul while he hides his face from him; and in brief judicial words announces his doom at hand. To-morrow would the Lord give Israel into the hand of the Philistines, and he and his three sons would be with him (in death). The kingdom torn from him would pass over to David, according to what had long since been pronounced, when he had openly disobeyed the divine word as to Amalek.

That the judgment of Amalek—that is, of the lusts of the flesh (Ex. xvii. *n.*)—is the test which that must abide which stands for true and divine government on earth, is so clear that there is no need to dwell very much upon it. Here "the powers that be" fail, and have failed from the beginning, although they are still

before thee, and eat, that thou mayest have strength when thou goest on the way. And he refused, and said, I will not eat. And his servants, with the woman also, compelled him, and he hearkened to their voice: and he arose from the earth, and sat upon the couch. And the woman had a fatted calf in the house; and she hastened and killed it, and took flour and kneaded it, and baked of it unleavened bread. And she brought it before Saul, and his servants, and they ate, and rose up, and went away that night.

4. (xxix.) David's further lapse.

4 And the Philistines gathered together all their armies unto Aphek; and Israel encamped by the spring which is in [e]Jezreel. And the lords of the Philistines passed by hundreds and thousands, and David and his men passed on in the rear with Achish. And the princes of the Philistines said, What are these [f]Hebrews? And Achish said unto the princes of the Philistines, Is not this David, the servant of Saul, king of Israel, who hath been with me these days or these years, and I have found no fault in him since the day he fell [unto me] unto this day? And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him; and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, Make the man return, that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an [g]adversary to us: for wherewith should he make himself acceptable to his lord, but with the heads of these men? Is not this David, of whom they sang to one another in dances, saying, [h]Saul hath smitten his thousands, and David his ten thousands?

e Judg. 6.33. 1 Ki. 18. 45. 46.
cf. Hos. 1. 4. 5, 11.
cf. Hos. 2. 22.
f ch. 13. 3.
g ch. 14. 21.
h ch. 21. 11

a great mercy, and upheld of God as such. That with them also, as with Saul, much has come in upon the heels of this, there can be no right question either. The form and the extent of that opposition to Christ which has been manifested by them have varied with various times and various places, and will be judged of differently, according to individual standpoints, also. We have found such differences in the history of Saul himself, the precise application of which will be naturally correspondingly difficult. At the end Scripture distinctly shows that the kings of the earth will turn from God in a more direct and outward way, and seek to seducing spirits; Saul's conduct here being only a hint, as it were, of the dread reality. This it would lead us too far to enter upon here: to those who are acquainted with the prophecies of the last days, however, it will be plain that Saul's history will be in this respect more than re-enacted in that of the Gentile powers. That it is according to the principles of divine government that, turning away from God, men should fall of necessity into the power of Satan, is again plain,—plain as is the revival of demonism in many forms in our own days, and in that of necromancy especially, along with a decline of faith in the word of God too marked for any but the willingly blind to doubt. All this should make the close of Saul's reign and life here exceedingly solemn for us.

(iv.) In the next chapter David, also, is seen once more in terrible failure. Actually starting out to accompany his leader to the war, the Philistine lords with keener instincts than the unsuspecting Achish, refuse point-blank such doubtful auxiliaries. Naturally enough they cannot believe that David is going

And Achish called David, and said unto him, As Jehovah liveth, thou art upright, and thy going out and coming in with me in the host is good in mine eyes: for I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming to me to this day; but thou art not acceptable in the eyes of the [i]lords. And now return, and go in peace, that thou displease not the lords of the Philistines. And David said unto Achish, But [j]what have I done? and what hast thou found in thy servant so long as I have been with thee unto this day, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king? And Achish answered and said unto David, I know that thou art good in mine eyes as an angel of God; but the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go up with us to the battle; and now rise up early in the morning with thy lord's servants that are come with thee; and, as soon as ye are risen early in the morning, and have light, depart. And David [k]rose up early, he and his men, to depart in the morning, to return into the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

[i] ver. 4, ch. 6. 4.

[j] *ctr.* ch. 20. 1.

[k] ch. 17. 20.

(5. xxx.) The government of God in action.

5 And it was so, when David and his men came to [l]Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the South and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag and burned it with fire; they had even taken [m]captive the women that were in it, both small and great: they had slain none, but carried them off, and gone their way. And David and his men came to the city, and behold, it was burned with fire, and their wives and their sons and their daughters were taken captive. And David

[l] ch. 27. 6, 8.

[m] *cf.* Gen. 14. 11, 12.

to turn his back upon his whole history, nor doubt that he will take advantage of his opportunity to reconcile himself to his master with the heads of his allies. God has thus, in His mercy, opened to David a way of escape from the snare in which he has entangled himself; and with what fervent satisfaction might we expect to find him accepting it. How full of praise and thankfulness will he be for such a deliverance! Yet, alas, he is here nothing but a hypocrite. Israel are only the "enemies of my lord the king," against whom it is his right and privilege to fight: and he dares to appeal to his unspotted conduct while with Achish, knowing the absolute insincerity of it all! But such is the saint away from God, and so easy it is to become "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin"! Should not our constant cry be, "Search me, O Lord, and try me!"?

(v.) Thus man is fully shown for what he is. David, no more than Saul, can claim anything on the ground of personal righteousness: grace can be alone his confidence, as with any child of man. Thus as to all Israel the new throne established in Zion is a throne of grace, though it be true that grace has not the dimensions which attach to it with us: in this way it is but a type; and, indeed, a faint one.

But if grace is to be shown, it must be according to holiness; there could be none apart from this. And so the government of God must act now in chastening; David must be searched out thoroughly, and made to realize his condition. Accordingly, there is an irruption from the south: some of that very tribe upon which God had pronounced judgment, a judgment which Saul had been deposed for not rightly executing, make a raid upon Israelites and Philistines alike, burn Ziklag while deprived of its defenders, and carry away everything in it. When

and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and [n]wept, until they had no more power to weep. And David's two wives were taken captive, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. And David was in a great [o]strait, for the people spake of stoning him; for the soul of all the people was bitter, every man for his sons and his daughters; but David [p]encouraged himself in Jehovah his God.

And David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, I pray thee, [q]bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought the ephod to David. And David inquired of Jehovah, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he said unto him, Pursue! for thou shalt surely overtake and without fail recover. And David went, he and the [r]six hundred men that were with him, and came to the brook Besor, and those that were left behind stayed. And David pursued, he and [s]four hundred men, and two hundred remained behind, who were so [t]faint that they could not go over the brook Besor. And they found an [u]Egyptian

n ch. 11. 4.
o Ex. 17. 4.
p Ps. 56. 3, 4. Heb. 13. 6.
q ch. 23. 9. 2 Sam. 2. 1.
r ch. 27. 2.
s ch. 25. 13.
t Judg. 8. 4, ch. 14. 28.
u *cf.* Deut. 23. 7.

we know what Amalek means, we can easily understand, the soul having wandered from God, this irruption of Amalek: and even in this way to such the outbreak of the lusts of the flesh may be used of Him to startle and convict the conscience; and so for recovery in the end. Absent in the Philistine camp, and while parading his mock zeal against the people of God, David little knew that the hand of the destroyer was upon his most cherished possessions, that the Amalekites had already stripped him bare, and all that were with him. He and they return to find but the blackened remnants of their city, and wives, children, and all that belonged to them, swept away. More than this, he has to prove that when not walking with God, the tie between man and man also is loosened: his own devoted followers, stung with the misery into which his late course had brought them, murmur about inflicting on him death by stoning,—the judgment of an Achan,—and he is, indeed, "in a great strait."

But then it is, that out of its heavy stupor David's soul awakes. Faith proves its power amid the wreck of nature. The very fact that the judgment is so manifestly of the Lord brings him back into the glorious Presence from which he has wandered, and it is—blessed be God—the old sweet familiar Presence. The surge of bitter distress has landed him in the haven of rest. The shadow has proved but the shadow of His wings; and David, humbled, and so purified, has become once more the master of his circumstances because of himself: "David encouraged himself in Jehovah his God."

Immediately Abiathar and the ephod are his resource: "and David inquired of Jehovah, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop?" Nature had, of course, decided this already; but the man of faith will not move at the bidding of nature. Faith questions when all seems plain; as it finds a plain road, also, amid all perplexities. "Shall I pursue after this troop? Shall I overtake them?" He recognizes now the judgment of God: he must humbly ask of the depths of the divine compassion, Is it irrevocable? And how prompt and tender is the answer: "Pursue! for thou shalt surely overtake, and without fail recover." Then at once he is a man of activity again, the energetic and courageous leader of men: by the time they have reached the brook Besor, one third of his little army are prostrate with the speed they make. They are but four hundred now, with the stamp of weakness upon them, therefore; and themselves, we may be sure, weary and wayworn; but the battle is to be Jehovah's.

Now there is cast in the way an Egyptian, spent with hunger and thirst, whom

in the field, and brought him to David, and gave him bread and he ate, and they made him drink water. And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two cakes of raisins; and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him; for he had not eaten bread nor drunk water three days and three nights. And David said unto him, To whom belongest thou, and whence art thou? And he said, I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite, and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick. We invaded the south of the Cherethites, and that which belongeth to Judah, and the south of Caleb, and burned Ziklag with fire. And David said unto him, Canst thou [v]bring me down to this troop? And he said, Swear to me by God, that thou wilt neither kill me, nor [w]deliver me into my master's hands, and I will bring thee down to this troop. And he brought him down; and behold, they were spread abroad over all the land, [x]eating and drinking and keeping festival, because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines and out of the land of Judah. And David [y]smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day; and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men who rode upon camels and fled. And David rescued all whom the Amalekites had taken away; and David rescued his two wives. And there was [z]nothing missing of theirs, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, nor spoil, nor anything that they had taken to them: David brought back all. And David took all the flocks and the herds, [which] they drave before the [other] cattle; and they said, This is David's spoil.

And David came to the two hundred men who were so faint that they could not follow David, whom they had made to stay at the brook Besor. And they came forth to meet David, and to meet the people that were with him; and David drew near to the people, and saluted them. And all the wicked men, and men of Belial, of those that had gone with David, answered and said, Because they [a]went not with us, we will not

v Judg. 1.24.

w *cf.* Rom. 6. 6, 7, 14.

x *cf.* Matt. 24. 38, 39.

y *cf.* ch. 23.5.

z Gen. 14.16. *cf.* Is. 1. 26.

a *cf.* Acts 15. 38, 39. *cf.* Matt. 20. 12.

they restore to life, and comfort with the assurance that he shall not be put back in bondage to the Amalekite, his master. A natural man brought anew to life at the brook of "good news" (Besor), and freed from the lusts of the flesh, which he has served,— this is the very one to guide the hand of judgment which falls now on the Amalekites. All is recovered out of their hand, as the divine oracle had promised; and with this they fall heirs to an immense booty besides: for in the goodness of God a *mere* recovery seems impossible. He brings us back to Himself with more than we had lost,— fruitful experiences and knowledge of God's ways in government and in grace. All this is the law of restitution, according to God,— of the trespass-offering which Christ makes good to us.

So David and his four hundred return to the brook Besor. There those who were too exhausted to go over the brook had remained with the baggage. They

give them aught of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead them away, and depart. And David said, Ye [b]shall not do so, my brethren, with that which Jehovah hath given us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the troop that came against us into our hand. And who will hearken to you in this matter? for [c]as his portion is that goeth down to the battle, so shall be his portion that tarrieth with the stuff: they shall share alike. And so it was from that day forward; and he made it a statute and ordinance for Israel unto this day.

And David came to Ziklag, and he [d]sent of the spoil to the elders of Judah, his friends, saying, Behold, a present for you of the spoil of Jehovah's enemies: to those that were in Bethel, and to those that were in Ramoth of the South, and to those that were in Jattir, and to those that were in Aroer, and to those that were in Siphmoth, and to those that were in Eshtemoa, and to those that were in Rachal, and to those that were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, and to those that were in the cities of the Kenites, and to those that were in Hormah, and to those that were in Chorashan, and to those that were in Athach, and to those that were in Hebron, even to [e]all the places amongst which David went, he and his men.

8. (xxxi.) Catastrophe.

[6]And the Philistines were [f]fighting against Israel; and the men of Israel [g]fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in Mount Gilboa. And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines smote Jonathan and Abinadab and Melchishua, Saul's sons. And the battle went sore against Saul, and the [h]archers hit him, and he writhed sore because of the archers. And Saul said unto his armor-bearer, [i]Draw thy sword and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through and abuse me. But his armor-bearer would not, for he was sore afraid: and Saul took the sword and [j]fell upon it. And when his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell upon his sword, and died with him. So Saul [k]died, and his three sons, and his armor-bearer, and all his men, that same day together. And when the men of Israel that were on the other side of the plain, and they that were beyond Jordan saw that the

b *cf.* 2 Sam. 19. 22.

c Josh. 22. 8. Nu. 31. 27. Ps. 68. 12.

d *cf.* ch. 25. 6–8.

e ch. 25. 7.

f 1 Chr. 10. 1–12.

g ch. 4. 10.

h 2 Sam. 1. 18. Gen. 49. 23.

i Judg. 9. 54.

j *cf.* 2 Sam. 17. 23.

k ch. 28. 19.

come forth with joy to greet their victorious comrades; but here, untouched by the mercy they had experienced, there were those who refused to recognize their right to share the spoil. But the sense of grace is too strong to permit this.

(vi.) In contrast with David's recovery and victory Saul perishes in Mount Gilboa, and Israel suffers a sore defeat. The Philistines take possession of the neighboring cities, and all is in complete collapse in the land. Three of the sons of Saul perish with him. There is now no anointed of the Lord but David. Typically it is the end of rule on earth as owned of God, and that in immediate anticipation of the true King, whose reign follows. Ishbosheth has no title,

men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they *l*forsook the cities and fled; and the Philistines came and *m*dwelt in them.

l Judg. 6. 2.
m etr. ch. 7. 14.

And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen in mount Gilboa. And they *n*cut off his head, and stripped off his *o*armor, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to publish it in the houses of their *p*idols and among the people. And they put his armor in the house of Ashtaroth, and they fastened his body to the wall of Bethshan.

n ch. 17. 51.
o ch. 17. 38.
p ch. 5. 1, 2.

And the inhabitants of *q*Jabesh-gilead heard of what the Philistines had done to Saul, and all the valiant men arose, and went all *r*night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Bethshan, and came to Jabesh, and *s*burned them there. And they took their bones, and *t*buried them under the tamarisk at Jabesh, and *u*fasted seven days.

q ch. 11. 1. 2 Sam. 2. 4–7.
r cf. Gen. 14. 15.
x cf. 2 Chr. 16. 14.
t 2 Sam. 21. 11–14.
u Gen. 50. 10.

SUBDIVISION 2. (2 Sam. i.–iv.)

The growth of David's Kingdom.

1. (1.) The crown brought to the God-ordained king, to reign in righteousness.

1 NOW it came to pass after the *v*death of Saul, when David had returned from *w*smiting the Amalekites, that David abode at Zik·lag two days. And it came to pass on the *x*third day, that, behold, a man

v 1 Sam. 31. 3–6.
w 1 Sam. 30. 10–20.
x cf. Gen. 22. 4, etc.

but is in distinct rebellion against the will of God, for all Israel knows that David is the true anointed: and thus will "man's day" end upon earth, in open revolt "against the Lord, and against His Christ." (Ps. ii. 2.)

That Philistinism has sought persistently the subjection of the powers of the earth is familiar history. That it will accomplish their final ruin is not, perhaps, plainly prophesied. Yet the view of the woman Babylon, which is given us in Rev. xvii., shows her riding upon the "beast" of civil empire, as the eleventh verse seems clearly to show, in its last form. But this last form (under the eighth head) is that in which it becomes openly apostate, and "goes into perdition"; and the woman's supremacy over it then, though not preserved to the end, (for it finally throws off the woman and destroys her, ver. 16,) would seem at least quite consistent with the view of its having brought the former character of rule to an end, or helped essentially to do so. But I leave this now for the consideration of those who have understanding in the word of prophecy: at another time it may demand a fuller notice.

The lesson in divine government here is obvious. The body, in its ghastly dishonor, fastened to the wall of Bethshan,—quiet, indeed, at the "house of quiet,"—his armor in the house of their female deity, these things are the heathen satire upon such an end. Amid all this the prompt action of the men of Jabesh-Gilead is like the resurrection of a good deed from the mass of corruption. They save, however, but the bones for burial: the rest can only be given to the fire. Thus the hope of man in man comes to its end with Saul,—the "asked for," the people's choice. All now depends on David; but here, also, how poor a dependence, except as God is pleased to work with and through this feeble instrument. The crown brought to *Zik·lag* (the Philistine guerdon for feigned unfaithfulness to the crown itself) speaks more loudly than the defeat at Gilboa, of human instability and untrustworthiness. Even so the light of a brighter dawn could shine through David,—a glory far beyond his own. For "all these things happened unto them for types."

came from the camp, from Saul, with his garments [y] rent and earth upon his head; and it came to pass that when he came to David, he fell to the ground and did obeisance. And David said unto him, Whence comest thou? And he said unto him, Out of the camp of Israel have I escaped. And David said unto him, [z] How went the matter? I pray thee, tell me. And he said the people were [a] fled from the battle, and that many also of the people were fallen and dead, and moreover Saul and Jonathan his son were dead. And David said unto the young man that told him, How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son are dead? And the young man that told him said, I happened by chance upon Mount Gilboa, and behold, Saul was [b] leaning upon his spear, and lo, the chariots and horse-

y 1 Sam. 4. 12. ch. 13. 24-33.

z *cf.* Col. 2. 1. *cf.* 1 Thess. 3. 1-5.

a 1 Sam. 31. 1.

b 1 Sam. 31. 3, 4.

SUBD. 2.

We have closed thus the story of David prior to his reception of the throne to which he was destined. We are now to see him in a new character, in which he becomes plainly the type of the One true King that is to be,—King not over Israel only, but to the ends of the earth. Here it will be no great wonder, however, if, while the general truth is clear, the details should be to us often obscure, if only from their very brightness. David is not, indeed, as we soon find, by any means a perfect reflection of the glory of Christ as King. We could not rightly expect him to be. Often he seems to show us, as in designed contrast, just those blots and disfigurements which would suggest the interpretation to be by opposite application to the Lord of glory. Yet all this brings additional difficulty into it, if in the end it may tend, perhaps, as one may readily conceive, to fullness of vision. Assuredly we have, in any case, what the Spirit of God designs for our instruction, with the fullest command of the material, we may be sure, which will fill out the picture. It is our privilege to inquire what the wisdom of God has given us in it, with the certainty that it is perfect wisdom.

At the outset there seems a very serious difficulty, which, however, lessens as we take it to Scripture for a solution. All our views of Christ's coming kingdom must, of course, be derived entirely from Scripture. We are not prophets, but simply interpreters of prophecy; and our partial understanding of this is apt to lead us into what we find afterwards to be in contradiction with other statements which we had known, yet overlooked. So, no doubt, it is here. Christ coming in the clouds of heaven, to set up His kingdom and glory over the earth,—with this we naturally associate the thought of rapid, almost instantaneous, action, all enemies at once put down by divine power exerted throughout all the world, all nations summoned at once before the bar of His judgment-seat: and to this last the separation of sheep and goats, as given in our Lord's own prophecy of His coming (Matt. xxv.), seems to give strong confirmation. But in this case the history presented here would be quite unintelligible. With the setting aside of Saul, David by no means comes to an uncontested throne, nor is the opposition even in Israel at once put down. For seven years and a half he reigns at Hebron over Judah only. Another king of the house of Saul carries off the allegiance of the other tribes, until first his supporter Abner, and then himself, are cut off by the hand of violence. After this there are long wars with surrounding nations, making the reign of David an emphatic contrast to that of Solomon, who is himself the type of the "Prince of peace." All this, at first, seems entirely against all correspondence between the history and the prophecy.

But the cloud lifts measurably as we gaze upon it. It will be necessary, however, to take up in some detail the consideration of this subject,—all-important to the interpretation of the book in which we now are, and try to realize what Scripture teaches.

men followed hard after him. And he turned round and saw me and called unto me; and I answered, Here am I. And he said unto me, Who art thou? And I said unto him, I am an [c]Amalekite. And he said unto me again, Stand over me, I pray thee, and slay me: for anguish hath possessed me, because still my [d]life is whole in me. And I stood over him and slew him; for I knew that he could not live after he was fallen; and I took the [e]crown that was on his head, and the bracelet that was upon his arm, and have brought them hither to my lord. And David took hold on his clothes and [f]rent them; and all the men that were with him [did] likewise. And they mourned and wept and fasted until even, for Saul and for Jonathan his son, and for Jehovah's [g]people, and for the house of Israel, because they were fallen with the sword.

c *cf.* 1 Sam. 15. 8, 9.

d *cf.* 1 Sam. 31. 4, 5.

e *ctr.* 1 Sam. 21. 9.

f ch. 3. 31, 32. ch. 13. 31. *ctr.* Mt. 26. 65.

g *cf.* Jer. 8. 21. Jer. 9. 1.

And first, let us remember that, with all the strength of the divine hand, God's dealings have been hitherto characterized by a patience which seems to us often extreme slowness. In the cherubic figures of the book of Revelation, which picture the features of the divine government over the earth, the slow ox succeeds the impetuous lion; and the order here and throughout seems to be corrective of the conceptions we might entertain from that which was earlier in the series. Power that cannot be turned aside (Prov. xxx. 30) is what is indicated in the lion; and this is the first necessity for any true thought of government at all; but we should go far wrong if we supposed that this was the characteristic method in God's governmental dealings, to leap at once to the end with one resistless spring. Thus, as I have said, the patient ox succeeds the lion. While the lion, moreover, would naturally suggest power hostile in character, the ox is the very type of the minister to man (1 Cor. ix. 8–10). Following this, again, "the face of a man" assures us that this apparent slowness is not unintelligent, but the contrary: it is God seeking to manifest Himself to us, as in humanity He has done, that we might have knowledge of His ways. It need not then surprise us if when the Lord acts even in such crises of judgment as when He appears in the clouds of heaven to judge the world, there should be nevertheless an entirely different procedure from what we might imagine.

Again, let us remember, that prophecy, as it is fore*seen*, so it is fore*shortened*, history. The element of time is, perhaps, most of all what is absent from it,—except, of course, as to order of succession. The seventy weeks of Daniel are a conspicuous example of this, the seventieth being separated from the rest by a long gap of time, into which comes the whole present dispensation. In the passage which the Lord quotes in the synagogue of Nazareth (Isa. lxi. 2), from the proclamation of "the acceptable year of the Lord," with which he closes what was in that day fulfilled, the prophecy goes on without a break to "the day of vengeance of our God,"—not even yet come. And similarly the events of the New Testament dispensation were hidden from the prophets of the Old Testament (Matt. xiii. 35).

That when the Lord comes again in the clouds of heaven it will be in visible glory, so that "every eye shall see him," is pressed too far when it is taken to mean that He will then be visible to all the world. This the Lord Himself, by Isaiah, assures us: for after He has said that "the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire," and "it shall come that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see my glory"; yet the prophecy goes on immediately to add, "And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, . . . to the isles afar off that have not heard

And David said unto the young man that told him, Whence art thou? And he said, I am the son of a stranger, an Amalekite. And David said unto him, How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thy hand to destroy the [a]anointed of Jehovah? And David called one of the young men, and said, Come near [and] fall on him. And he [f]smote him that he died. And David said unto him, Thy blood is on thy head: for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the anointed of Jehovah.

[a] 1 Sam. 26. 23.

[f] ch. 4.10-12.

my fame, *neither have seen my glory;* and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles." (Isa. lxvi. 15–19.) Thus we find that "every eye shall see Him" only intimates (what in connection with any other event it would be taken to intimate) a visible personal appearing of Christ, and not that the whole world will at that time see Him.

And again, though He come in visible glory to set up His kingdom upon earth, we are not anywhere told, that I am aware, how far He may continue or continue to be seen upon the earth during His reign here. It is certain that over the land of Israel there is to be a "prince," the laws for whose guidance are carefully given by Ezekiel (xliv.–xlviii.); and that the glory appears in the temple in the same manner as of old (xliii. 1-9).

To come nearer to what is before us here, while there are judgments that are executed by the Lord personally when He comes (Isa. lxiii. 1–6; Zech. xiv.; Rev. xix. 15, 21), yet we read of Israel also in action, and of human wars in which they take possession of the lands destined for them (Jer. li. 20–24; Obad. 18–21; Mic. v. 7–9). After which, as it would appear, Gog with his great confederacy can still come up, not knowing with whom they are contending, and think to find the restored nation an easy prey (Ezek. xxxviii., xxxix.).

All this is very different from what our own thoughts would be of a kingdom such as is prophesied of in the hands of Him who has the "rod of iron." Yet Scripture alone can be trusted to give us right thoughts in a matter like this, and we need do no more than point out the texts which decide very plainly what the truth is. They certainly enable us better to understand the typical application of this part of David's reign, whether or not we may apprehend the details. To these we must now turn, believing that the promise given shall be fulfilled to us, "To him that knocketh it shall be opened."

In this first subdivision, then, we find David in possession only of part of a divided kingdom. We trace the growth of his power, spite of enemies and hindrances, until by the death of Ishbosheth the way is prepared for him to the throne of all Israel. During all this time (seven years and a half) his throne is in Hebron, that place of many and cherished memories, linked forever with the faith of his pilgrim fathers, from Abraham to Jacob. "Communion," with all that it implies, must be the power of a kingdom; and it is not without meaning that here the tribes come up, Judah first and then united Israel, to make David king. Even the divine kingdom can only have its rightful character when God dwells among the praises (and necessarily united hearts) of His people. Here, also, we see why it is in *Judah* that David begins his reign. The spiritual meaning certainly holds here; and, indeed, is very easy to be traced. Literal as the history is, of course, this in no way hinders the deeper thought, in which we see how all through it God moulds the very facts of history that they may speak to attentive hearts. Jacob's prophecy as to Judah here begins to be fulfilled.

(i.) But, before even Judah, God acts: for the people's choice this time must follow His. David is in the first place the divinely appointed king, although yet only the figure of the true: the Anointed, as we know, long since, he is now owned of God, the crown put into his hand by one of a strange and hostile race, who seeks but his own personal ends, to find judgment alone his recompense.

And David [j] lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son; and he bade them teach the children of Judah the [k] bow; behold, it is written in the book of Jashar:—

[l] Glory of Israel, slain on thy heights!
How are the [m] mighty ones fallen!
[n] Tell not in Gath,—
Tell not the good news in the streets of Ashkelon;
Lest the daughters of the Philistines [o] rejoice,
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph!
Mountains of [p] Gilboa, let there be no dew,
[q] Let there be no rain upon you,
Nor fields of wave-offerings!
For there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away,
The shield of Saul, [r] unanointed with oil.
From the blood of the slain,
From the fat of the mighty,
The bow of [s] Jonathan drew not back,
And the sword of [t] Saul returned not vainly.
Saul and Jonathan [were] [u] lovely and pleasant in their lives,
And in their death they were not divided.
They were swifter than griffons;
They were stronger than lions.
[v] Daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,
Who clothed you in scarlet with delightful things,
Who put on ornaments of gold on your apparel.
How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!
O Jonathan, slain upon thy high places!
Distressed am I for thee, my brother Jonathan;
Very [w] pleasant hast thou been to me:
Wonderful was thy love to me,
Beyond the love of women!
How are the mighty fallen,
And the weapons of war destroyed!

j ch. 3.33,34
k *cf.* 1 Sam. 31. 3.
l *cf.* ch. 21.17.
m ch. 3, 38.
n Mi. 1. 10. 1 Sam. 31. 9. *cf.* Nu. 14. 13.
o Ju. 16. 23.
p 1 Sam. 28. 4. 1 Sam. 31. 1.
q *cf.* 1 Ki. 17. 1.
r ver. 14, etc.
s *cf.* 1 Sam. 14. 1-14.
t *cf.* 1 Sam. 14. 47, 48.
u cf. 1 Sam. 20. 2.
v *cf.* 1 Sam. 18. 6. Prov. 31. 21.
w 1 Sam. 18. 1. 1 Sam. 20. 17. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 14.

For the king, to whom all here points, is that One of whom it is written that He is "first of all . . . king of righteousness [Melchizedek], and after that king of Salem, that is, king of peace" (Heb. vii. 1): who is David and Solomon, therefore, both in one.

The order is most important: the effect cannot come before the cause, "and the *work* of righteousness shall be peace; and the *effect* of righteousness quietness and assurance forever." (Isa. xxxii. 17.) But righteousness will not be established upon the earth except by power: "let favor be shown to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord." Thus, judgment alone will answer; and "when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." (Isa. xxvi. 9, 10.) Thus we are to read David's wars, then; and thus the judgment of the Amalekite in this first chapter.

Personal profit does not seduce David into any overlooking of the crime of lifting up the hand against the Lord's anointed. Nor, on the other hand, does personal injury received prevent his recognition of all that was noble and good in the fallen king, and of the way in which God had used him for blessing to His

2. (ii.) The divided kingdom, and the war.
a (1-7.) David king in Judah.

2 (a) And it came to pass after this, that David [x]inquired of Jehovah, saying, Shall I go up to one of the cities of Judah? And Jehovah said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto [y]Hebron. And David went up thither, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. And his men that were with him did David bring up, every man with his household; and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron. And the men of Judah came, and there [z]anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, It is the men of [a]Jabesh-Gilead that buried Saul. And David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh-Gilead, and said unto them, Blessed be ye of Jehovah, who have shown this kindness unto your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him. And now Jehovah show kindness and truth unto you; and I also will requite you

x 1 Sam. 30. 8. *etc.* 1 Sam. 27. 1. *cf.* Ps. 23. 3.

y Gen. 13. 18. Josh. 15. 13.

z, *cf.* 1 Sam. 16. 13 with Matt. 3. 16, 17. ch. 5. 3.

a 1 Sam. 11. 1. 1 Sam. 31. 11-13.

people. The reference to the book of Jashar (of the "upright") seems in striking harmony with this, though we may be unable to explain it in any proper manner. The pathos of the lament speaks to the heart as from the heart.

(ii.) We now come to the divided condition of the kingdom, the anticipation of that into which it lapsed again in the second generation after David. In a world like this, that which is of God is sure to awaken opposition. As to Saul, though some might despise him, there was no thought of division. As regards David, every one must have known long since God's choice of him, and that Saul's house had been set aside with Saul himself. Yet Abner is able to make the feeble Ish-bosheth king over the rest of the kingdom, gradually recovering itself out of the hands of the Philistines. Two years he reigns over the whole of Israel, while David remains for all the time (seven years and a half) king over Judah only. In the last two years it must have been that Abner found himself at last strong enough to attempt the conquest of Judah also.

(*a*.) At the outset we have seen where David's strength lay. We still find him clinging to God, and guided by divine wisdom. He is assured of being Jehovah's anointed king. Saul is now dead, and his army defeated. The crown has come, in a way little to be expected, into his hand. Yet he will not be guided by providences, but must have the plain word of God to direct him, not merely whether he shall go up to Judah, but to what part. He is bidden to go to Hebron; and there he goes, allowing his men to scatter into the towns around, and there he quietly waits for whatever God has next. Good it is, this ability to wait on God on the part of a spirit so brave and energetic, in the very hour when circumstances invite to action. He is not left, however, to long patience now: the men of Judah, without waiting for the co-operation of the other tribes, assemble at Hebron and anoint him king.

That this was obedience to the divine will by which David had been long set apart to this position, saves them from the imputation of independence, with which otherwise it might have been justly charged. The Lord was the Supreme king over Israel; and therefore, when His mind was clearly known, obedience was that which alone would make for any proper unity. The course of Abner and the other tribes was mere rebellion.

Anointed long before by Samuel, this fresh anointing by the people had yet its rightful place. God's will as to this awaits the glad concurrence of human hearts to make the reign of His king truly what He would have it. For this reason, also, David makes no movement to extend his dominion over the rest of Israel. Love can be satisfied only with love. Thus also he acknowledges sympathetically the act of the men of Jabesh in their respect and gratitude toward

this good, because ye have done this thing. And now [b] let your hands be strong, and be men of valor; for Saul your lord is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them. [b] Josh. 23.6.

b (8-32.) The anti-king and war.

(*b*) And [c] Abner the son of Ner, prince of the host which had been Saul's, took Ishbosheth the son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim, and made him king unto Gilead, and to the Ashurites,* and to Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over all Israel. Ishbosheth the son of Saul was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and he reigned two years; but the house of Judah followed David. And [c] 1 Sam. 14. 50.

* Probably, with the Chaldee version, we should read "Asherites," a mere change of a vowel-point; though the Vulgate, the Syriac, and the Arabic, read "Geshurites."

Saul, and informs them of Judah having made him king, but goes no further: does not even hint at the higher and wider title he possesses.

(*b.*) Abner has no such scruple, and asks no counsel of God: as the "father of light," his wisdom is from himself,—inspired, of course, by that ready prompter, self-interest, or what appears to be this. As prince of the host that had been Saul's, he had opportunity also, and in Ishbosheth one who represented such shadow of title as could be derived from Saul. Ishbosheth means "man of shame," a name that might easily be supposed to be derived from his history, rather than to be his original one. We know from Chronicles (1 Chr. viii. 33) that, in fact, his original one was Esh-baal; and we have a similar change in the case of Jonathan's son Meribbaal, changed into Mephibosheth (1 Chr. ix. 34; 2 Sam. ix. 6), and even in that of Jerubbaal, changed into Jerubbesheth (2 Sam. xi. 21). In Hos. ix. 10 Baal himself is called "that shame," and it cannot be reasonably questioned that the sense of this shameful character of idolatry led to these substitutions. That there was any idolatrous meaning in the names connected with Saul's family it would be impossible to prove, the word *baal* being itself so variously applied. We have elsewhere seen it as of old even a title of God, which at last He is forced, because of its misuse, to disclaim (p. 194, *n.*).

Typically, however, the case is otherwise. When we consider the rivalry to David in its typical significance, Ishbosheth might seem a figure of Antichrist, and these idolatrous connections would then have their full force. Israel is yet to accept such a king, we know, at the time of the end, who will be consumed by the breath of the Lord's mouth, and destroyed with the brightness of His coming. Yet in Ishbosheth himself, and in his history also, there are many difficulties in the way of such a view. The weak son of Saul is but a tool in the hands of Abner, who is all through the real heart and soul of the opposition to David. He it is, we find, who "took Ishbosheth, and brought him over to Mahanaim, and made him king." Mahanaim was the place of Jacob's vision of angels, where "God's host" and his own represented, as we know, "two camps." (Gen. xxxii. 2, *n.*) This ends in his own camp being divided into two, as Abner had in fact now divided Israel; where the camps were, moreover, hostile to one another. So had reliance on human strength wrought in all the intermediate history: for God will not be content to be a mere force among other forces; and the half-way dependence on Him, which is more than half independence, works quickly, alas, into real hostility. Abner and Ishbosheth were thus now very openly at issue with God, who had manifested very plainly His purpose in David, as Abner owns (ch. iii. 9). Spite of this, Ishbosheth's kingdom grows from its beginning in Gilead, spreading to Asher, to Jezreel, and on, till there is a united Israel in opposition to the one tribe of Judah that cleaves to David. So readily does the leaven of rebellion spread!—so sure is there ordained to that

the [d]time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

And Abner the son of Ner went out, and the servants of Ishbosheth the son of Saul, from Mahanaim unto [e]Gibeon. And Joab the son of Zeruiah and the servants of David went out; and they met together by the pool

[d] *cf.* Heb. 2. 8 with Matt. 25. 31.

[e] *cf.* Josh. 9. 3, etc., with ch. 21. 1, 2.

which is of God a time of patience and of apparent failure. In each day of God there is an evening first and then a morning; for God is a God of resurrection.

David's reign of seven years and six months in Hebron is just about the length of that interval of time,—the last week of Daniel's seventy,—which intervenes between the removal of the Church to be with Christ, and His appearing openly as Son of man to take the kingdom. It is scarcely the place here to argue that such a period there is,—the broken off "end of the [Jewish] age" (Matt. xxiv.), and earth's harvest-time, the crisis of the conflict between good and evil, the time of preparation for millennial blessing: every way, therefore, of such prophetic importance that we cannot wonder to find prophecy in fact full of it, as it is. It is the time in which arises *the* Antichrist, the culmination of the "many antichrists" that have preceded him (1 John ii. 18–22). This would harmonize with such a meaning, therefore, in Ishbosheth. During this time Christ has actually begun His reign, but not at Jerusalem, and Hebron and Judah might represent an acknowledgment of Him as the King by a remnant of Israel, before the time in which the nation at large shall acknowledge Him.

During this time conflict also will go on between the servants of the true King and of the false: Mahanaim will indeed characterize the rival kingdom. The place of strife, Gibeon, seems also significant. If Gibeon, "the pit of suffering for iniquity" (Josh xviii. 25, *n.*), remind us of the Cross, the Cross has been ever the battlefield—Helkath-hazzurim, "the place of sharp swords," between faith and unbelief, the place of victory in the end for David. For it is the Lamb slain, who is the lion of Judah; and as the Lamb He has title over the world. (Rev. v. 6, 7.) Abner, the false pretension to self-competency of knowledge is easily seen as the leader on the one side; but Joab, on David's, is not such an one as we look for here, or, at least, so we should think at first sight. Who and what, then, is this Joab?

Joab is usually taken to be a contracted form of Jehoab, "Jehovah is Father." It is difficult to separate the man, such as we see him in the history,—crafty, self-seeking, unscrupulous, the murderer of men more righteous than himself, from any typical significance of history, so as to imagine any congruity in such a name. Yet God can overrule men and things so as to work out His good by that which is evil,—the evil being in the minds of others, the good in His. And we find shortly, in the history that follows, Amnon, "faithful," Absalom, "father of peace," Adonijah, "my Lord is Jah," acting in most distinct and undoubted contradiction to their names. Thus Joab would not stand alone in this. On the other hand, as the commander of all David's forces, there could not, it would seem, be a more suited name than "Jehovah is Father." Was it not Christ's mission on earth to declare the Father's name? Do not His people rally joyfully, triumphantly, under the inspiration of that revelation, "Jehovah is the Father"? And so will it be in that day also, when in the place in which it was said to Israel, "Ye are not my people, there they shall be called the sons of the living God." (Hos. i. 10.)

With this meaning, also, it is in striking correspondence that Joab is the son of Zeruiah, and that this last word means "balmy"; or rather, one would say, "the balm of Jah." The exact substance to which the word was applied in Scripture is still disputed, but its use as a sovereign remedy for wounds, itself being obtained by a wound in the tree from which then the precious sap flowed out, is not disputed. Nor can we fail to find here once more the image of the Cross. That for us, or for any, Jehovah is Father, is, as we own adoringly, the

of Gibeon. And they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool. And Abner said unto Joab, Let the young men now arise, and [f]play before us. And Joab said, Let them arise. And there arose and crossed by number twelve of Benjamin [who pertained] to Ishbosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David. And they caught every one his fellow by the head, and [thrust] his sword in his fellow's side, and they [g]fell down together. And the place was called Helkath-hazzurim, which is by Gibeon. And the battle was very sore that day; and Abner was [h]routed and the men of Israel before the servants of David.

[f] *cf.* Jas. 4.1.

[g] *cf.* Gal. 5. 15.

[h] ch. 3. 1.

And there were three sons of Zeruiah there, Joab and Abishai and Asahel. And Asahel was as light of foot as one of the gazelles in the field. And Asahel pursued after Abner; and as he went he turned neither to the right nor to the left from following after Abner. And Abner looked behind him and said, Art thou Asahel? And he said, I am. And Abner said unto him, Turn thee aside to thy right hand or to thy left, and lay hold of one of the young men, and take thee his armor. But Asahel would not turn from following him. And Abner said again to Asahel, Turn thee aside from following me: why should I smite thee to the ground? how then should I hold up my face to Joab thy brother? But he refused to turn aside; and Abner [i]smote him with the hinder end of his spear in the belly; and the spear came out behind him; and he fell down there and died in the same place. And it came to pass that as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died stood still.

[i] ch. 3. 27. ch. 4. 6.

And Joab and Abishai pursued after Abner, and the sun went down when they came to the hill of Ammah, that is before Giah on the way of the wilderness of Gibeon. And the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together after Abner, and became one troop, and stood on the top of a hill. And Abner called to Joab, and said, Shall the sword devour forever? Knowest thou not that it will be [j]bitterness in the latter end?

[j] *cf.* Judges 21. 2, 3. Isa. 9. 19–21. *ctr.* Isa. 11. 13.

fruit of the Cross,— of which how constant are the memorials in these precious types!

Thus the captains on either side seem plain, and they meet with their respective hosts at the pool of Gibeon,— literally, and strikingly once more, the "*blessing*" of Gibeon, the "living water" issuing from the Cross, with regard to which the combatants still find themselves on opposite sides. In the conflict following they fall of both parties: but with what different significance we must interpret this! Christ's servants have fallen, many; but death has not harmed them: on their adversaries the shadow of death is other and deeper, for they have rejected the Lord of life.

Three sons of Zeruiah are in the battlefield. The second is Abishai, whose name means "father (or source) of gift." This, under the number of service,

how long shall it be then ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren? And Joab said, As God liveth, if thou hadst not spoken, then in the morning the people had gone up every one from following his brother. And Joab blew a trumpet, and all the people stood still, and pursued after Israel no more; and they fought no more. And Abner and his men went all that night through the Arabah, and passed over Jordan, and went through all the broken country, and came to [k]Mahanaim. And Joab returned from following Abner, and gathered together all the people, and there lacked of David's servants nineteen men and Asahel. But the servants of David had smitten of Benjamin and of Abner's men so that three hundred and sixty men died. And they took up Asahel, and buried him in the sepulchre of his father which is at Bethlehem. And Joab and his men went all night, and came to [l]Hebron at break of day.

[k] ver. 12. *cfr.* Gen. 32. 1, 2.

[l] ver. 1. 1 Sa. 22 1, 2.

[m] *cf.* Is. 42 4. *cf.* Gal. 5. 16–26.

[n] 1 Chr. 3. 1–4. *cf.* Gen. 25. 1–6.

[o] ch. 13. 1. etc.

[p] 1 Sam. 25. 43. 1 Sam. 27. 3.

3. (III. 1–5.) David's marriages, and their fruit.

[3]And there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David; and David waxed [m]stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker. And unto David were [n]sons born in Hebron: and his first-born was [o]Amnon, of [p]Ahinoam the Jezreel-

may speak of the Cross as the inspiring cause of gift offered to God, the homage of a life which has been redeemed by it. While Asahel, the third son, plainly means "God has made" or "done,"—emphasizing God as the worker, as the Cross surely does.

Abner is beaten and driven off, though Asahel perishes at his hand in the pursuit,—a thing which, however much an act of self-defense, has bitter consequences in the near future. Of all this I can say nothing, however.

(iii.) The war goes on, but we have no further incidents of it; only that David's house waxes continually stronger as that of Saul grows weaker. After the manner of an eastern king, we see that David strengthens himself by marriages which the law found no ability to forbid, and in which the self-indulgence of his nature manifests itself. The great sin of his life was thus already preparing, which was to darken with its shadows so much his later days.

But this does not affect the typical meaning, as has just now been insisted. The moral lesson is fully enforced and inheres in the letter of the history, quite apart from the prophetic teaching which the Spirit of God has inwoven into it. At times this last seems to give way indeed to the first, to make prominent the moral: the sin and failure are seen to belong simply to the individual, and to *unfit* him to be, for the moment, in any way suitable to represent any divine thought save that of God's holy judgment; while again sometimes the Spirit seems to refuse to be turned aside from His higher purpose, and the glory of the light streams through, as incapable of corruption or contamination by the evil to and beyond the end of which it looks.

David's sons in Hebron are six, by as many mothers; and as the son represents the father, so they seem to represent the various characters of Christ in His kingly government and the principles of which they are the manifestation, or which occasion their display. We have learnt, too, the guard that numerical symbolism gives, as well as the help yielded by it to interpretation. The narrower the limits we have here, the more certainly shall we find our way. The divine marks cannot be too numerous.

Amnon is David's first-born; and his name, "constant," or "faithful," is

itess; and his second, Chileab, of [q]Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite; and the third, [r]Absalom, the son of Maacah, daughter of [s]Talmai king of Geshur; and the fourth, [t]Adonijah, the son of Haggith; and the fifth,

q 1 Sam. 25. 14-42.
r ch. 13. 20, etc. ch's 14-18.
s ch. 13. 37.
t 1 Kl. 1. 5.

simply enough applicable in this manner, and in harmony with the first place he takes. He is the son of Ahinoam, the "kin of pleasure,"—not exactly "pleasure," for that might seem at least to be in opposition to the underlying principle of constancy which is indicated in the expression, "he that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not." One may suppose that "*congruity*," what is according to its own nature, is that of which this "constancy" is born, and that this is what is looked for, yea, of prime necessity, in that which "God soweth," or Jezreel. Israel was once, as Isaiah tells us (v. 2), planted as "the choicest vine," but proved wholly untrue to that beginning. When the Lord looked for it to bring forth grapes, it brought forth *wild* grapes. Thus there was no seed yet to sow upon the earth (Hos. ii. 23); but He shall have it: Israel in the latter days shall be true to its new beginning; and shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit." (Isa. xxvii. 6.)

Constancy is Christ's, for He is the unchangeable, Himself Jehovah; and such, through all their own unfaithfulness, will Israel prove Him in the days that are at hand.

The second son is Chileab, and the number expressive of service is well filled here with a name that seems to mean "the instrument of the Father." He is the son of Abigail, "father (or cause) of exultation," as Israel will be to Christ, when redeemed and brought out from former relationship, here therefore most suitably and pointedly referred to: "Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite,"—the impious dresser of God's vine. Put together, these names have the very obvious meaning, that the salvation of His own is that which has made Christ the instrument of the Father's will. This salvation, for its complete realization, requires Him on the throne. He is the true Malchishua, whom no Gilboa can overthrow,—the "Saviour-King."

The third son is Absalom, the "father of peace." Here the number may prepare us to expect what is a more inward realization of blessing, and the fruit of the Spirit's work. He is the son of Maachah, "bruising": for "He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him" (Isa. liii. 5); how surely does the question of peace find for its answer the work of the Cross!

But Talmai the king of Geshur: what can *he* represent? Let us remember only that it is Maachah alone, the "bruising," that has to do with him, and we need not wonder at the Anakite name (Josh. xv. 14). Talmai, "my furrows," has been already read thus as "our own doings"; and these have indeed been that from whence Christ's "bruising" sprang. Thus, though we may not be able to interpret the "king of Geshur" aright, the meaning as a whole is obvious.

The next three sons are more briefly characterized. The fourth, Adonijah, means "my Lord is Jah," and he is the son of Haggith, "festive," one who keeps Jehovah's feast. This, under the number of experience and practical walk, shows us how the taste of Jehovah's grace brings us into subjection to Him as Lord over us; and this is how the Lord's rule is endeared to His own. How precious must it have been to faith in Israel in those days of old, when Jehovah gathered His people, three times in the year, around Himself! Jehovah's feasts were times of gathering thus to and around Himself. Now, much more plainly, He is cultivating intimacy with us; and the more we respond and enter into this, the more will His rule be established over us. The nearer we are to Him, the greater He is to us: must it not be so? The indecent familiarity with God which some regard as intimacy is but an unholy mockery of it. Adonijah is still the son of Haggith.

The fifth son shows his number in his name, Shephatiah, "Jah judges." He

Shephatiah, the son of Abital; and the sixth, Ithream, of Eglah, David's wife. These were born to David in Hebron.

4. (iii. 6–39.) The defection of Abner, and his end.

4 And it came to pass, while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, that Abner made himself strong among the house of Saul. And Saul had a concubine; and her name was [u]Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah. And Ishbosheth* said unto Abner, Why hast thou gone in unto my father's concubine? And Abner was very wroth because of the words of Ishbosheth, and said, Am I a dog's head, who against Judah am showing [v]kindness to-day to the house of Saul thy father, to his brethren, and to his friends, and have not delivered thee into the hand of David, that thou chargest me to-day with wrong about a woman? So do God to Abner, and more also, except, as Jehovah hath sworn to David, so I do to him, by [w]transferring the kingdom from the house of Saul, and setting up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beersheba! And he could not return Abner a word, because he feared him.

[u] ch. 21. 8.

[v] *ctr.* ch. 9. 1, etc.

[w] 1 Chr. 12. 23.

And Abner sent messengers to David to represent him†, saying, Whose is the land? saying [also], Make thy covenant with me, and behold, my hand shall be with thee, to bring round all Israel unto thee. And he said, Well, I will make a covenant with thee; but I require one thing of thee, namely, that thou shalt not see my face except thou bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when thou comest to see my face. And David sent

* The name is absent from nearly all the Hebrew copies, but is found in all the versions, except the Chaldee, and is evidently required.
† Literally, "in his place."

is the son of Abital, "father (or source) of cover," or "protection." The thought is simplicity itself; and this is what true judgment is appointed for,—what, when judgment shall return to righteousness, it will be found to give, the protection (alas, that it should be needed), of man from man. When Jehovah judges in the earth openly and manifestly, as He will do, how will the earth rest and be secure? Oh, to see the time!

Finally the sixth son gives us the effect of all this in blessing,—Ithream, "the abundance of the people," for "in the multitude of the people is the king's honor." (Prov. xiv. 28.) But this "abundance" implies more than "multitude." Ithream, too, is the "son of Eglah," "heifer," the double type of labor and of fruitfulness; and therefore Eglah is in some special sense denominated "David's *wife*"! Yes, our David has indeed linked himself in an especial way with service,—service in which all fruit is found! Blessed be His name, He has; and a goodly house is this our David has, when the spiritual interpretation is allowed to flash the luster out of an otherwise dull string of names. This, then, is David's house.

(iv.) The history turns now to show us the commencing collapse of Ishbosheth's kingdom. There was but, as we know, one pillar upon which it rested, Abner; and we can gather from elsewhere that the spirit of defection was at work in Israel. Abner now himself heads the defection, and there is no strength nor will to resist on the part of the people. But Abner's motive is no worthy one,

messengers to Ishbosheth, Saul's son, saying, Give me my wife Michal, whom I espoused to me for a hundred foreskins of the Philistines. And Ishbosheth sent and took her from her husband, from Phaltiel, the son of Laish. And her husband went with her along weeping behind her to Bahurim. And Abner said unto him, Go, return; and he returned.

And Abner had communication with the elders of Israel, saying, Ye sought for David in times past to be king over you; now then do it: for [x]Jehovah hath spoken as to David, saying, By the hand of my servant David will I save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies. And Abner spake also in the ears of Benjamin; and Abner went also to speak in the ears of David in Hebron all that seemed good to Israel, and that seemed good to the whole house of Benjamin. And Abner came to David to Hebron, and twenty men were with him; and David made Abner and the men that were with him a feast. And Abner said unto David, I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel unto my lord the king, that they may make a covenant with thee, and that thou mayest reign over all that thy soul desireth. And David sent Abner away, and he went in peace.

[x] 1 Sam. 16. 1-3. Ps. 89. 35-37.

And behold, the servants of David and [y]Joab came from an expedition, and brought in a great spoil with them.

[y] ch. 2. 13. *cf.* ch. 11. 1.

And Abner was not with David in Hebron, for he had sent him away, and he was gone in peace. When Joab and all the host that was with him were come, they told Joab, saying, Abner the son of Ner came unto the king, and he hath sent him away, and he is gone in peace. And Joab came unto the king, and said, What hast thou done? behold, Abner came unto thee; why is it that thou hast sent him away, and he is gone? Thou knowest Abner the son of Ner, that he came to [z]mislead thee, and to know thy going out and thy coming in, even to know all that thou art doing. And Joab went out from David, and sent messengers after Abner, who brought him again from the well of Sirah; but David [a]knew it not. And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside into the middle of the gate, to [b]speak with him quietly, and smote him there in the belly that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother. And when David afterward heard it, he said, I and my

[z] *ctr.* vers. 8-10.

[a] ver. 37. *cf.* De. 21. 6, 7.

[b] ch. 4. 6. ch. 20. 9, 10.

and it is not by such means as this that David is to attain the throne of Israel. The hand that prevents it may be more unscrupulous than his own; and the deed done by which it is stopped is treachery and murder. Still, over all this was a righteousness higher than its human instruments. David is feeble, and the sons of Zeruiah strong: every way there seems but contrast with the throne which David's merely typically presents, but is not; and the type seems to lapse here in order to emphasize the more the contrast. Whether that be really so or

kingdom are guiltless before Jehovah forever from the blood of Abner the son of Ner; let it [c]rest upon the head of Joab and on all his father's house, and let there not be cut off from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is a leper, or that leaneth on a crutch, or that falleth by the sword, or that lacketh bread. So Joab and Abishai his brother slew Abner, because he had slain their brother Asahel at Gibeon, in the battle.

[c] 1 Kings 2. 31–33.

And David said to Joab and to all the people that were with him, [d]Rend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner. And King David followed the bier. And they buried Abner in Hebron; and the king lifted up his voice and wept at the grave of Abner, and all the people wept. And the king [e]lamented over Abner, and said,

[d] ch. 1. 11.

[e] ch. 1. 17.

Dieth Abner as a fool dieth?
Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put in fetters:
As a man falleth before wicked men, thou fellest.

And all the people wept again over him. And when all the people came to make David to eat bread while it was yet day, David sware, saying, So do God to me, and more also, if I taste bread or aught else till the [f]sun be down. And all the people took notice of it, and it pleased them; as whatsoever the king did pleased all the people: and all the people and all Israel understood that day that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner. And the king said unto his servants, Know ye not that there is fallen this day in Israel a [g]prince and a great man? And I am this day weak, [though] anointed king, and these men the sons of Zeruiah are [h]too hard for me: Jehovah shall [i]recompense the doer of evil according to his evil.

[f] *cf.* Lev. 15. 5, 6, etc. Judg 20. 26.

[g] ch. 1. 27.

[h] *cf.* ch. 11. 15–25.

[i] 1 Kings 2. 5, 6. *cf.* Gal. 6. 7.

5. (lv.) The death of Ishbosheth.

[5]And when Saul's son heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, his hands became [j]feeble, and all Israel were troubled. And Saul's son had two men that were captains of bands: the name of the one was Baanah, and the name of the other Rechab, sons of Rimmon a Beer-

[j] ch. 8. 1.

not,—whether it is only ignorance that says so,—we shall surely sometime understand; but it does seem the method of this book to present these alternate glimpses of the glory to come, and of the mere sorrowful history of "man's day," sorrowful even at its best. We shall but too soon come to darker scenes in which David himself will be found the near kinsman that he is to Joab, and the day of the true Anointed be seen to be far off yet.

(v.) The death of Ishbosheth quickly follows that of Abner; and it in some respects resembles his. Commentators have suggested that, in this case also, the blood-vengeance which Joab and his brother had professedly taken for their brother Asahel, was probably at least once more the pretext. Baanah and Rechab, the slayers of Ishbosheth, were Beerothites, and belonged therefore to one of those Canaanite cities originally leagued with Gibeon, and with it having made peace with Israel by fraud. These Saul had sought to slay, in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah (ch. xxi. 1, 2), and had in fact slain some. Whether Beeroth had suffered at this time we know not; but we learn in this

othite, of the children of Benjamin: for Beeroth also was reckoned to Benjamin. And the Beerothites fled to [k]Gittaim, and have been sojourners there unto this day.

And Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son that was [l]lame of his feet: he was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurse took him up and fled; and it was so, as she made haste to flee, that he fell and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth.

And the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went, and came about the heat of the day, to the house of Ishbosheth; and he was taking his midday sleep. And they came thither into the midst of the house, fetching wheat; and they [m]smote him in the belly; and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped. When they came into the house, he lay on his bed in his bed-chamber, and they smote him and slew him and beheaded him, and took his head, and went by the way of the Arabah all the night. And they brought the head of Ishbosheth to David at Hebron, and said to the king, Behold the head of Ishbosheth the son of Saul thine enemy, who sought thy life; and Jehovah hath this day [n]avenged my lord the king of Saul and his seed. And David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite and said unto them, As Jehovah liveth who hath [o]redeemed my soul out of ev-

k *cf.* Neh. 11. 31–33.

l ch. 9. 3, 13.

m ch. 2. 23. ch. 3. 27. ch. 20. 9, 10. *cfr.* Ju. 3. 21.

n 1 Sam. 25. 8, 9.

o 1 Kings 1. 29.

place that for some cause "the Beerothites had fled to Gittaim," and were still sojourning there. It is quite natural to put these things together; and if so, to understand that there might be special enmity on the brothers' part to Saul's house on this account. But if so, the history gives no plain proof of such connection; though, *if* it were so, Joab's unpunished deed might have encouraged theirs. But they are mistaken, and fleeing to David with the head of the unhappy king, find summary judgment at his hands.

This is, at best, but history. Have we any sign in it of deeper meaning? In connection with Ishbosheth as a possible type of Antichrist, the circumstances of his death are among the things of which I have spoken as difficulties in accepting this. Antichrist is destroyed only at the coming of the Lord, and with the "beast" or head of the Gentile empire, is cast alive into the lake of fire. Yet here the names have apparent significance which (as realizing their constant value elsewhere) cannot but make one pause and question.

Beeroth we have already had among the cities of Benjamin (Josh. xviii. 25), and taken it as significant of the "wells" of salvation out of which the redeemed "with joy draw water." Rimmon, the "pomegranate" is a figure of the fruitful and many-seeded word of God (compare p. 138, *n.*). Baanah, "in answer," son of Rimmon, would speak naturally of something sent in response to prayer, thus the fruit of the word which had awakened faith; while Rechab, "rider," is used to designate that "upper millstone" which is several times found in connection with destructive judgment from the Lord's hand (Judges ix. 53, Matt. xviii. 6, Rev. xviii. 21). If, therefore, we take these two together we have judgment inflicted in answer to prayer and according to the Word, which is itself pictured as the sharp two-edged sword proceeding out of the mouth of the white-horsed Rider, with which He smites the nations (Rev. xix. 15). Nay, according to the Hebrew also, as we have seen, "millstone" and "Rider" are one!

ery strait, when one told me, saying, [p] Behold, Saul is dead, thinking he brought good tidings, I took hold of him and slew him in Ziklag to give him recompense for his tidings; how much more when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his bed? shall I not therefore now require his blood at your hand, and destroy you from the earth? And David commanded his young men, and they slew them and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged them up at the pool at Hebron. And they took the head of Ishbosheth and buried it in the sepulchre of Abner in Hebron.

[p] ch. 1. 5-16.

The throne set up, in accord with the divine decree.

1. (v. 1-16.) King in Zion over united Israel.

a (1-5.) The people own Jehovah's choice.

SUBDIVISION 3. (2 Sam. v.-ix.)

David in the fullness of power and glory.

(V., VI.)

1. [1](*a*) AND [q] all the tribes of Israel came to David to Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy [r] bone and thy flesh. Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, it was [s] thou who leddest out and broughtest in Israel; and Jehovah said to thee, Thou shalt [t] tend my people Israel, and thou shalt be captain

[q] 1 Chr. 11. 1, etc. 1 Ki. 4. 1. *cf.* Zech. 10. 3-7. *cf.* Ezek. 37. 21, 22.

[r] ch. 19. 12. *cf.* Heb. 2. 11-14.

[s] 1 Sam. 18. 5-9.

[t] ch. 7. 8. Ps. 78. 70-72. *cf.* Is. 40. 11.

If, moreover, we remember the Lord's parable of the unjust judge (Luke xviii.), we shall realize very clearly how the final judgment of the earth, which includes Antichrist and his followers, comes "in answer" to the prayer of God's elect, the groans of suffering saints which have gone up to Him so long from a world whose "prince" is Satan and not the One who made it. Certainly in all this there is a congruity, a fitting together of things, which one cannot hastily dismiss because of apparent incongruity elsewhere. Let it be but a flash of light which expires again in darkness, still even a flash of light may be a true revelation. At least it is well for the reverent student of Scripture to have before him what materials can be given for the founding of judgment; and so we must leave it.

It may be well, also, to remark that Ishbosheth's evident weakness of character is no conclusive proof that he could not be such a type as has been suggested. The wisest, strongest, most self-assertive of creatures, what is he before God his Maker? And this is often insisted on in the types themselves, as we have seen. The moral character of a typical person, also, has often apparently little or nothing to do with the place he fills in this way. Joab, and some noted ones among the sons of David are proofs near at hand of the truth of this.

SUBD. 3.

What follows in the next subdivision, though most certainly a picture of a glorious day to come, is yet but a gleam of light also, and no more. What earthly history could furnish any more stable one of the reign of the divine-human King? If past or present could furnish more than this, it would not be the unique wonder and glory that it is. Ah, no! We may be sure that the clouds will soon return after the sun. And so it is. The man after God's own heart falls from his proud position, all the lower for the height from which he falls. Amnon, Absalom, Adonijah, become but the living contradiction of what their names express. And so all mere human glory passes, to leave only the harp of prophecy to take up the broken notes of songs that have been, and weave them into a harmonious anthem of a joy that yet shall be.

But let us seek to possess ourselves of what is here, remembering that even typically it is only half the story of that glorious reign, which we must go on to the books of Kings and Solomon to find completed. Here we have the establishment of the kingdom, there its after-character; here Melchizedek in the signif-

over Israel. And all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and King David made a covenant with them in Hebron before Jehovah, and they [u]anointed David king over Israel. David was thirty years old when he began to reign, [and] he reigned [v]forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.

b (6–12.) David smites the Jebusites and builds Zion.

(*b*) And the king and his men went to [w]Jerusalem, unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land. And they spake unto David, saying, Thou shalt not come in hither, except thou take away the [x]blind and the lame; as much as to say, David shall not come in hither. But David took the stronghold of [y]Zion: the same is

u ch. 2. 4.

v 1 Chr. 29. 27.

w Josh. 15. 63.

x *cf.* Is. 35. 8, 9.

y *cf.* Ps. 2. 6, etc.

icance of his name as "king of righteousness," there the "king of Salem, that is, king of peace"; here, therefore, the man of war, though far from being merely that. But as "judgment shall return to righteousness," so, conversely, righteousness shall return to judgment. The kingdom will be a display of power such as the world has never witnessed; the king, the "lion of the tribe of Judah"; the sceptre, a "rod of iron." And this indicates, indeed, the "regeneration" of the earth (Matt. xix. 28), when righteousness shall *reign;* but not the "new" state, in which righteousness shall "dwell." (2 Pet. iii. 13.) The millennium is the last of earthly dispensations, not the fixed eternal blessedness beyond. The millennium has an end; and that which has its end and passes away shows by that fact its imperfection. Still the hand that rules lacks no element of perfection; and the end of the millennium is the subduing of all things to God in such sort that the separate kingdom having attained its purpose, all things can be delivered up into the hands of God the Father, that God may be all in all. (1 Cor. xv. 24–28.)

Sec. 1.

There are three sections here: the first showing us the throne of David set up, in accord with and subjection to the divine throne (ch. v., vi.); the second, its establishment and growth under his hand (vii.–viii. 14); the third, its internal administration and character (viii. 15–ix.).

(i., *a*.) To pursue now the story here. What Abner was not permitted to accomplish is now done by the united voice of the people. All the tribes now, as that of Judah before, assemble at Hebron to make David king. They own at last what he had been to them even in Saul's reign, and Jehovah's promise concerning him, so that their acknowledgment of David is a return of heart to Jehovah also. He makes a covenant with them before Jehovah,—it would have spoiled the type to say that *they* made a covenant with *him*,—and they anointed him king over them. Thus it will be when they own Christ their King in days to come.

David is thirty years old when he begins to reign, the time in His days on earth when Christ was anointed and thus came to His title,—"Christ" and "Anointed" being the same thing. It was the recognized time for entering on Levite and priestly service. This 30 is 10 x 3, the number of responsibility multiplied by that of divine manifestation. This is indeed what, whether as King or Priest, He assumes as His task, and nothing less could have accomplished anything for man. Forty years David reigns: for, as we know, the millennial reign he represents is not the eternal state, and *is*, therefore, as dispensational, a time of testing for man still. As to the other numbers I have no knowledge of their meaning.

(*b*.) The taking of Zion follows immediately after the anointing; and Zion becomes the city of David, permanently associated with his name. Not only so,

the city of David. And David said on that day, Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites, and reacheth the watercourse, and the lame and the blind, hated of David's soul,—Therefore they say, The blind and the lame shall not come into the house. And David dwelt in the stronghold, and called it the city of David. And David built round about, from Millo and inward. And David went on and waxed [z]great; and Jehovah the God of hosts was [a]with him.

And [b]Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar-trees, and carpenters and masons; and they built David a house. And David [c]knew that Jehovah

z ch. 3. 1.
a *cf.* Gen. 39. 2.
b 1 Ki. 5. 1, etc. 1 Chr. 14. 1, 2.
c *cf.* 1 Sam. 16. 1.

it is named in Scripture as the place of the divine choice and abode. David, as we find presently, brought the ark to Zion; and in the 132d psalm, in answer to the prayer, "Arise, Jehovah, unto thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength," the divine answer is, "Jehovah has chosen Zion: He hath desired it for his habitation; this is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it." The royal throne and the divine throne are thus in the same place, although they may also be distinguished as by Micah, for whom Zion and the mountain of the house have their separate designation. (Micah iii. 12.)

The name Zion is generally given as "sunny"; but it may just as well signify "fixed." Either sense may be quite appropriate; while the last connects more plainly with what the voice of the Lord has declared regarding it. In contrast with Ephraimitic Shiloh, and consequent upon the failure of the nation and the priesthood there, Zion with David himself are emphatically marked out as objects of Jehovah's choice, in the seventy-eighth psalm: grace manifests itself thus amid the ruin, to the people of God.

But again the Jebusite, the "treader-down," has been at work, and the Lord used the term to express the condition of Israel's city during the times of Gentile supremacy: "Jerusalem shall be *trodden down* of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled." (Luke xxi. 24.) Thus the Jebusite period has come back, and will last until the true David shall come in power. But what is that which has maintained Jebusite dominion over the place of Israel's and Jehovah's throne? But one answer is possible here: it is sin which alone can have done so, the sins of God's people themselves. And so inveterate has sin proved in their case, that the Jebusite may seem justified in his taunt, "*Except thou take away the blind and the lame*, thou shalt not come in hither," as much as to say, "David shall not come in hither." Here is, indeed, the real question. Blind has Israel been as to all God's dealings with them: lame, for any walking in paths to which the voice of God for so many generations has been calling them! Well might it seem as if their doom were settled now, and their hope gone. Yet the very name of Zion is a perpetual reminder of promise that abides and which will be fulfilled yet in David's victory. God has said of Zion, "Here will I dwell, for I have desired it": it is the "fixed" place of His abode.

The smiter of the Jebusite must smite, therefore, the blind and the lame, and reach the watercourse, the stream of living water. Let us note, however, that in the text the order of the two latter is inverted: the watercourse is the way of reaching the blind and the lame, as spiritually it surely is. It is remarkable that it has been found quite recently that by the watercourse (by its subterranean channel) the place of the citadel can yet be, though with difficulty, reached. Thus nature bears testimony with Scripture still. David, therefore, takes the stronghold and dwells in it, and builds it up anew. And he goes on and becomes great, for the God of hosts is with him: the higher kingdom and the lower are now united.

Following this we have the first brief notice of Hiram, in which we find a Gentile power greeting and sending aid to the king of Israel. "The daughter

had established him to be king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake.

c (13-16.) More marriages, etc.

(*c*) And David took him [d] more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem, after he had come from Hebron, and there were yet sons and daughters born to David. And these are the names of those that were born unto him in Jerusalem: Shammua, and Shobab, and [e] Nathan, and [f] Solomon, and Ibhar, and Elishua, and Nepheg, and Japhia, and Elishama, and Eliada, and Eliphelet.

d *cfr.* Deut. 17. 17.

e *cf.* Zech. 12. 12. *cf.* Lk. 3. 31.

f ch. 12. 24.

of Tyre is" here "with a gift." But this is to find more prominence and significance in the day of Solomon.

(*c.*) There are still more marriages contracted by David, and sons and daughters born to him in Jerusalem. Eleven are named, but without mention of their mothers. There are but two of whom we find anything recorded afterwards, and only one in the present history. None the less must there be purpose in their enumeration here.

Of these eleven sons, judging by their numerical significance, there are two series, 4 and 7; and this is confirmed by 1 Chron. iii., where we find that the first four were all sons of Bathshua or Bathsheba: the latter means "daughter of the oath"; the former "daughter of salvation." But the two are one, as Zacharias' song declares: "the oath which He sware to our father Abraham, that He would grant unto us, that we being delivered from the fear of our enemies, might serve Him without fear." Notice that, with one exception, the names of mother and children are practically here:—

1. Shammua, "heard," or "obeyed":—"might serve Him."
3. Nathan, "he has given":—"that *He* would grant unto us."
4. Solomon, "peaceful":—"that we being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear."

One name only remains unaccounted for in the song, and that the history accounts for fully. It is the second name, Shobab, "turning back," which the cry of the Psalms acknowledges as God's work: "Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts; cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved." (Ps. lxxx. 19.) Altogether it is clear, therefore, that these four names express, as Bathsheba's sons should do, the fruits of the "covenant of promise": and this is also what a *first* series, as such, might express. They show us Christ as "Minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers" (Rom. xv. 8), and that in the full character of One who has now "the government upon His shoulder." (Isa. ix. 6.) All this is in perfect keeping.

The remaining seven sons seem to give the testimony borne by that salvation which the people experience; and this is a great point: we are thus "in the ages to come" to "show forth the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." (Eph. ii. 7.) This reflex influence of His work is thus a ministry of grace to the whole universe; and the number of perfection, 7, is exactly the number to express this. We may be sure, however, that *we* shall be able but poorly to give even the outlines here.

The first son now is Ibhar, "election," or "He chooses." The fountain of all blessing is in God Himself, in His will alone. This is evidently the fundamental necessity, if He is to be glorified at all. What is merely casual, or what is otherwise produced, we cannot trace to Him, cannot glorify Him for: this needs no argument.

The second son is Elishua, "my God is salvation": the method as well as the will is from Him. It is the blessedness of the gospel that God is thus exalted in it.

The third son, Nepheg, "sprout," shows the activity of life, and therefore of the Spirit of life. Thus the subjective work in the soul is also His,—the internal work is a salvation, as well as the sin-bearing work of the cross.

2. (17-25.) Conflict with the Philistines.

[2]And the [g]Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, and all the Philistines came up to seek David; and David heard it, and went down to the [h]stronghold. And the Philistines came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. And David [i]inquired of Jehovah, saying, Shall I go up against the Philistines? wilt thou give them into my hand? And Jehovah said unto David, Go up, for I will certainly give the Philistines into thy hand. And David went to Baal-perazim; and David smote them there, and said, Jehovah hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, like a water-burst: therefore he called the name of the place Baal-perazim. And they left there their [j]images, and David and his men took them away.

And the Philistines came up yet again, and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. And David inquired of Jehovah, and he said, Thou shalt [k]not go up:

[g] ch. 21. 15, etc.

[h] 1 Sam. 24. 22.

[i] ch. 2. 1. ver. 23.

[j] *cf.* Judges 8. 21-27. *ctr.* 1 Sam. 4. 11.

[k] *cf.* ver. 19. *cf.* Acts 16. 6-10.

The fourth son, Japhia, is "lustrous, shining," the *creature* clothed with the glory of the light, the reflection of that which has shone upon it. Christ Himself is the pledge and assurance of this, and by occupation with Him it is that it is produced. In it we are still in the weakness of creaturehood, receptive merely: the experience on our part is of what He is. And what a testimony to His grace that He can thus stoop, in the delight of His love, to glorify the objects of His choice!

The next three names all speak directly of God: first—

Elishama, "God heareth"; the creature, thus laid hold of by His love, is for Himself; and, having heard His creative voice, is privileged to respond and be heard again. Thus the joy of such intercourse begins, no more to end, and—

Eliada, "God knoweth," carries it on to full communion. For such "knowing" is approbation, as when the "Lord *knoweth* the way of the righteous; and *hearing* with such knowledge implies the victory found over the evil that has brought in distance between the soul and Him, as it does also the nearness bred of likeness. And of such victory the last name seems now to remind us—

Eliphelet, "my God is escape," or complete deliverance. How the complete end gained will emphasize that escape! All words are utterly feeble here.

(ii.) We have next David's conflict with the Philistines, Israel's constant enemies from the times of the judges, and who had given Saul his final overthrow. David, on the other hand, gains two great victories, each of which has surely its lesson for us. In each case they "spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim," the giants with whom we find them so much associated, and who give a monstrous, satanic character to them. When man looms large, even heathenism imagines its God-defying Titans, if these are not rather the distorted traditions of true history. David, in meeting them, clings to God and to His word, and Jehovah breaks forth upon them like a water-burst. In truth that is the way in which the power of error is to be met. When the heavens are opened and pour down their spiritual floods, then the hosts of superstition and formalism are defeated, the blocked channels are cleared, and the barriers reared by ecclesiasticism swept away.

David names the place Baal-perazim, the "place of breaches," or "burstings forth"; and he and his men take away the images of the Philistines, thus returning upon them the captivity of the ark in Samuel's day. But the dumb idols can be treated as the useless lumber that they are, and can make no reprisals.

The second battle is still in the valley of Rephaim; but David is now commanded to make a circuit round the Philistines, and come upon them over against the baca-trees (trees of "weeping"), and the sound of marching in the

make a circuit behind them, and come upon them over against the baca-trees. And it shall be, when thou hearest the sound of [l] marching in the tops of the baca-trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself; for then will Jehovah have gone out before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines. And David did so, as Jehovah had commanded him, and smote the Philistines from Geba till thou comest unto Gezer.

3. (VI.) The ark brought to Zion.

[3] And again David [m] gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him, from Baale of Judah, to [n] bring up from thence the ark of God, who is called by the Name,—the name of Jehovah of hosts, who dwelleth between the cherubim. And they set the ark of God upon a [o] new cart, and brought it out of the

[l] *cf.* Ex. 13. 21. *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 14.

[m] 1 Chr. 13. 5-14.

[n] 1 Ki. 8. 1. Ps. 80. 1. Ps. 132.

[o] *cf.* 1 Sam. 6. 7.

tops of the trees would show him when to attack, Jehovah having gone out before him. The baca-trees are said to be so called from exuding a tear-like sap wherever a leaf is torn from them. Can these weeping trees be a symbol of how the life of Christ is manifested as to the present state of things in sorrowing, not rejoicing?—this thus revealing the Lord as against the world-church, which suffers not with Him, but reigns?

These two battles would show us, then, the twofold controversy between Christ and the modern Philistinism which is against His Spirit in its dry form and externalism, and against His sympathies in its contentment with a world that crucified Him. Thus it cannot come into blessing, but must be swept away. David smites his enemies, therefore, from Geba to Gezer, as judgment from the Lord will come upon that which exalts itself and is in independence of Him. (See p. 66, *n.*)

(iii.) And now we have the ark established in its place in connection with the throne in Zion; not, indeed, its full place,—the temple could not yet be built, nor by David: the reason of which we shall find in the next chapter. But the ark is the throne of the Lord; and it must be shown that the throne upon earth is in accord with and in subjection to the higher throne. Thus David becomes but a servant in the presence of the ark.

Yet servant as he really desires to be, he makes a great mistake, which involves serious consequences. It is strange, indeed, that, in a matter such as he had now before him, David should neither inquire of God, nor think of the directions given in the law as to the carriage of that with which it was known that God had been pleased so intimately to connect the manifestation of His presence. It is stranger still, and reveals sadly the state of things in Israel, that of all those set apart to the service of the sanctuary, there was no priest or Levite to inform a well-intentioned king regarding the prescribed way of acting. Terribly had the Philistines suffered for dishonor done the ark. Terribly had the men of Beth-shemesh suffered. Yet the Philistines' own expedient—confessedly only that—for ascertaining in the best way they knew whether it was Jehovah's hand that had smitten them, is what David adopts in bringing the ark to Zion! True it was that He had allowed the Philistines to get their lesson in this way; and this, there can be little doubt, encouraged the adoption of it: but there could be no justification of such imitation. God had spoken: there was the most shameful ignorance or carelessness as to it; and this just where, in the most solemn manner, they were professing to put themselves under His yoke! How could He, in this great object-lesson before the eyes of the whole nation, allow this to be as a precedent for the future, and make light of His own dishonor?

They go beyond the Philistines even, as such imitators generally do. The Philistines had assumed, at least, that if Jehovah were God, the cattle would act

house of Abinadab that was on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, [p]led the new cart. And they brought it with the ark of God out of the house of Abinadab that was on the hill; and Ahio went before the ark. And David and all the house of Israel [q]played before Jehovah on all manner of [instruments made of] cypress wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on sistra, and on cymbals. And when they came to a prepared threshing-floor, Uzzah [r]reached forth to the ark of God, and took hold of it, for the oxen [s]shook it. And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Uzzah, and God [t]smote him there for the error; and he died there by the ark of God. And David was displeased because Jehovah had broken out against Uzzah; and he called the name of the place Perez-uzzah to this day. And David was [u]afraid of Jehovah that day,

p *ctr.* 1 Cor. 14. 26–33.

q *cf.* ver. 14. Ex. 15. 20. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 8.

r *cf.* Acts 21. 20–24.

s *ctr.* 1 Sam. 6. 12.

t *cf.* Lev. 10. 1, 2.

u Ps. 93. 5. *cf.* Acts 5. 11.

obediently to Him without their guidance, and even in contradiction to their own natural instincts. But the Israelites, having committed the ark to the ox-cart, must have Uzzah and Ahio to guide the oxen. They had not faith in their own contrivance, and are already committed to the perilous work of trusting to their own management of difficulties that may arise. Alas, had they not learnt more in all the years that the ark had been in the house of Abinadab? And what, then, does this argue as to them?

Yet all for a while goes well. There are rejoicings and abundant demonstrations of loyalty on the part of the people, till at the prepared threshing-floor the oxen stumble, and Uzzah puts forth his hand and takes hold upon the ark to steady it. Uzzah means "strength": he had not measured himself before God, nor learnt the source of strength. The act revealed what the ark was to him, the habit of a soul ignorant of God and of itself, while most self-conscious. He is smitten; and the "prepared" threshing-floor becomes Perez-uzzah, the "breaking of strength."

It is strange that in the service of the sanctuary one like David should be so more than dull; yet similar things abound with us to-day. The fact of good intention, of a thing, too, right in the main being before the soul, oft hinders even the need being felt of seeking the mind of the Lord or of testing everything by the word of God. If the thing sought be in itself good, why scrutinize methods so severely? How little do we understand the irreverence that lurks under the appearance of honest devotedness, where man's wisdom is assumed competent to think for Him, or man's strength competent to work His will! How often thus we have our Uzzahs smitten, just when we imagine our service must be accepted of Him!

Then comes the reaction upon this vain confidence: "David was afraid of Jehovah that day, and said, How shall the ark of Jehovah come to me?" So we pass from one extreme to the other; and in proportion to the buoyancy of our first confidence is apt to be the depth of our despair. The consciousness of having sought to do the Lord's will in that which has turned out so unhappily shrouds His dealings with us in gloom and mystery. Where we expected to find the signs of gracious acceptance and approval, on the other hand we have been smitten by Him. And how shall we stand before a God like this?

Yet the matter is simple, as we have seen. How could He accept the complete setting aside of His word, the adoption of Philistine methods and worse, where He had plainly intimated His will?—and this done in the most public way, and by the whole body of His people? "If thou shalt take forth the precious from the vile," is the principle that applies here. The desire to serve Him is ever precious to Him, and yet there may be that in the service which He can

and said, How shall the ark of Jehovah come to me? And David would not remove the ark of Jehovah unto him to the city of David, but David carried it aside to the house of [v] Obed-edom the Gittite. And the ark of Jehovah remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite

[v] *cf.* 1 Sam. 17. 4.

only testify against. Oh that the church of God would listen to this voice to-day, amid the innumerable self-imagined plans whereby it is sought to serve God, but whereby His word is improved upon and supplemented until it is lost and set aside, and His name dishonored in the very offering we bring to Him.

But can we define more closely the special form of evil that is presented here? What does the ark of God upon the ox-cart speak of precisely? The ark was the throne of God in Israel: He dwelt, or had His seat, between the cherubim; there the glory rested, and thence the voice of the Lord gave forth its utterances. The dictates of this throne were addressed to men, to a redeemed people, separated from the apostasies of the nations round to know and serve Him alone, as alone worthy to be served, His service not slavery but the most ennobling freedom. As His people they had been brought out of darkness into light, out of debasing impurity into "holiness of truth," the reproach of Egypt rolled away from them. Hence the only suited carriage for the ark was upon the shoulders of the Levites, the willing yoke-bearers of His glorious chariot of salvation. Redeemed men, subject to Himself alone, are still those who occupy a place of which that in Israel was but a type, a shadow. To these He has in His precious grace committed Himself, that their willing hearts may bear Him through the world. To them He still says, "Take my yoke upon you: my yoke is easy, and my burden light."

The ox-cart was a human invention, in place of this. It was dead machinery instead of living service. At least there was no intelligence, no moral principle, no spiritual consecration in it. The beast might and did, according to this idea, need a director; and this was proved in the most unhappy way in Uzzah: the man was more out of his place than the beast was; and the bolt of divine judgment fell on him. Directors and machinery are common enough to-day, whereby the work of the Spirit is assumed by those who heedlessly intrude into His place; and *men*, alas, oftentimes are compelled to become machines, their consciences subjected to other heads than Christ, their work made task-work, often the "burden" anything but "light." Let honest hearts apply this, as they surely may.

The ox is indeed the type of the laborer in the Word, as the apostle assures us (1 Cor. ix. 8–10); but the ox treading out the corn is a totally different thing from bearing the ark of the Lord. The *substitution of beast for man* is what is here in question; and thus the beast must be taken *as beast*,—as implying what, if man come into it, speaks of degradation for him. This is perfectly clear. And yet the very threshing-floor to which the apostle and the law in Deuteronomy refer is that which would appear to be the occasion of the catastrophe. The blind animal instincts cause the oxen to swerve aside. The leader, seeing no more than the machine, supposes all to be in danger; and now the judgment falls.

Thus for the present the ark is not brought to Zion, but carried aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. The names here are so remarkable, both in themselves and in their connection, that one cannot but believe them to be designed to attract our notice and furnish a spiritual lesson. Obed-edom, as we see by the reference to the blessing on him elsewhere (1 Chron. xxvi. 4, 5), was a Korahite Levite, and thus his house was not unsuited for the reception of the ark. Yet his name means "servant of Edom" (typically of the flesh), and his place of former residence or birth, most probably the latter, is Gath, the "wine-press,"—type, as we know, of divine wrath.* That we were indeed "by nature

*Gath-*rimmon* has been suggested, as being a Kohathite city of the tribe of Dan: but why should he not have been born in Gath, the Philistine city? This, while surely possible, would be much more likely to mark him as an individual.

three months; and Jehovah [w]blessed Obed-edom and all his house. And it was told King David, saying, Jehovah hath blessed the house of Obed-edom and all that is his, because of the ark of God; and David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David with gladness. And it was so, that when they that [x]bare the ark of Jehovah had gone six paces, he [y]sacrificed oxen and fatlings. And David danced before Jehovah with all his might; and David was girded with a linen [z]ephod. And David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of Jehovah with [a]shouting and sound of trumpet. And as the ark of Jehovah came into the city of David, [b]Michal, Saul's daughter, looked through the window, and saw King David leaping and dancing before Jehovah; and she [c]despised him in her heart. And they brought in the ark of Jehovah, and set it in its place in the midst of the tent that David had spread for it; and David offered up [d]burnt-offerings before Jehovah, and [e]peace-offerings. And when David had ended offering the burnt-offerings and the peace-offerings, he [f]blessed the people in the name of Jehovah of hosts. And he [g]distributed to all the people, to all the multitude of Israel, both men and women, to every one a cake of bread and a measure [of wine] and a raisin-cake. And all the people departed, every one to his house. And David returned to bless his household. And Michal, the daughter of Saul, came out to meet David, and said, How [h]glorious was the king of Israel to-day, who uncovered himself to-day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself! And David said unto Michal, It was before Jehovah, who [i]chose me rather than thy father and all his house, to appoint me prince over the people of Jehovah, over Israel; yea, I have played before Jehovah. And I will be yet [j]more vile than this, and will be low in mine own eyes; and of the handmaidens of

w Num. 6. 22-27.

x Num. 3. 30, 31. Num. 7. 6-9.
y *cf.* Num. 7. 15-17. 1 Ki. 8. 5.
z 1 Sam. 22. 18. *cf.* Zech. 6. 12, 13.
a Ezr. 3. 11. 1 Sam. 4. 5.
b ch. 3. 13.
c Gen. 16. 4. *cf.* Gal. 4. 29, 30. *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 14.
d Lev. 1. 3, etc. 1 Ki. 8. 64.
e Lev. 3. 1, etc. 1 Ki. 8. 63.
f *cf.* Lev. 9. 22, 23. 1 Ki. 8. 55-60. *cf.* Ps. 85. 1, 9, 10.
g Neh. 8. 10-12. *cf.* Ps. 132. 15.
h ver. 16. *cf.* 1 Sam. 19. 24.
i 1 Sam. 16. 1, 12.
j *cf.* Acts 2. 13. with 2 Cor. 12. 9, 10.

children of wrath" is no strange thing to be told of any of God's Levites; and the apostle adds (Eph. ii. 3), "fulfilling the desires of the flesh,"—we were Obed-edoms. Thus also we are now Korahites, saved as the children of Korah were in the wilderness, from their father's penalty.

How beautiful it is to see that while David asks, in fear, "How shall the ark of Jehovah come to *me?*" the house of an Obed-edom can receive it, with nothing but blessing! "Jehovah blessed Obed-edom and all his house." How His grace rebukes our unbelieving fears with blessing! And once again David is encouraged to bring up the ark to the city of David; but there are now those that bear the ark: God's word kept, everything prospers.

Burnt-offerings and peace-offerings are the due accompaniment, for without that which these signify there could be no dwelling of God with man. David himself, girded with a linen ephod, dances before the ark. He is now the link between Israel and God, and in glad subjection to the higher kingdom. At the end he blesses the people, therefore, in the name of Jehovah of hosts, and distributes to them all portions. We see the shadow of the Melchizedek king,

whom thou spakest, of them shall I be had in honor.
And Michal the daughter of Saul had [k] no child to the day of her death.

k ctr. Gen. 11. 30.

(VII.-VIII. 14.)

Establishment and growth of David's kingdom. 1.(vii.) The promise of perpetuity to his line.

2. [l] And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and Jehovah had given him rest round about from all his enemies, that the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, and the ark of God dwelleth within [m] curtains. And Nathan said unto the king, Go, [n] do all that is in thy heart; for Jehovah is with thee. And it came to pass that night that the [o] word of Jehovah came unto Nathan, saying, Go and say unto my servant, unto David, Thus saith Jehovah, Shalt thou build for me a house to dwell in? for I have [p] not dwelt in a house since the day that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt even to this day, but have been walking in a tent and in a [q] tabernacle. In all [places] wherein I have walked among all the children of Israel, spake I a word with any of the rulers of Israel whom I commanded to tend my peo-

l 1 Chr. 17. 1, etc.

m Ex. 26. 1.

n cf. 1 Ki. 8. 18.

o cf. Acts 9. 13–17.

p 1 Ki. 8. 16.

q Josh. 18. 1. Judges 18. 31.

the opposite of Saul and his independence, whom we find reproduced in the pride of his daughter. But Michal is therefore without children to the day of her death. The spirit of independence is, of necessity, barren: that of service is the truly royal spirit, as surely as "the less is blessed of the better."

Sec. 2.

The next section shows us the establishment and growth of David's kingdom: on the divine side, the promise of perpetuity to his line,—an absolute promise, in view of all human instability and failure; on the human side, its extension by the putting down of enemies on every side. The first is not that chronologically merely, but in importance, and the foundation of all the rest.

(i.) David is on his throne and in peace; he has rest from all his enemies round about. He dwells in his house of cedar, and thinks it an unseemly thing that Jehovah's ark should dwell within curtains. We see once more how a man's heart may be right with God, and his thoughts wrong. He discloses his mind to Nathan the prophet, and Nathan at first approves his purpose: "Go, do all that is in thy heart; for Jehovah is with thee." But the word of God is something very different from the best thoughts of the best people; and Nathan has presently a very different word put into his lips by the Lord. Here too the Lord shows David that his thoughts are wrong, spite of all the piety of them, by this conclusive fact, that they had not been formed upon any previous intimation of His will. Can a man think for God? Can we anticipate His mind? It is impossible: all that the most fervent spirit can rightly do is reverently to follow it. Hence David *must* be wrong, and every one else, who would add one jot or tittle to the perfect word of God. How easy, in this way, to decide at once concerning multitudes of thoughts that fill men's minds to-day! And yet how little is such a principle accepted, even with the children of God! "Add not to His words, lest He reprove thee," is as important as "do not diminish": and, indeed, to do the former we must do the latter. Is Scripture able to furnish the man of God "*thoroughly*" and "to *all* good works"? As surely as this is true, so surely must we refuse whatever even man's piety may put forth, if the word of God is not the source of it.

Thus Jehovah says: "Shalt thou build me a house to dwell in? for I have not dwelt in a house since the day that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, but have been walking in a tent and in a tabernacle. In all places wherein I have walked among all the children of Israel, *spake I a word* with any

ple Israel, saying, Why build ye me not a house of cedar? And now thus shalt thou say to my servant David, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, I [r]took thee from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be prince over my people, over Israel; and I have been [s]with thee wherever thou walkedst, and have [t]cut off all thine enemies from before thee, and have made thy name [u]great, like the name of the great ones that are on the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will [v]plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and be disturbed no more, neither shall the sons of perversity afflict them any more as formerly, and as since the time that I commanded [w]judges to be over my people Israel; and I will cause thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also Jehovah telleth thee that Jehovah will make [x]thee a house. When thy days shall be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy [y]seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a [z]house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a [a]father to him, and he shall be to me a son. If he commit iniquity, I will [b]chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men; but my mercy shall not [c]depart from him, as I took it from [d]Saul, whom I put away from before thee. And thy house and thy kingdom shall be [e]steadfast forever before thee: thy throne shall be fixed forever.

According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so spake Nathan to David. And King David went in and [f]sat before Jehovah; and he said, [g]Who am I, Lord Jehovah? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And yet this has been little in thine eyes, Lord Jehovah; but thou hast also spoken of thy servant's house to a time [h]far off: and is this the [i]manner of man, Lord Jehovah? And [j]what can David say more unto thee? for thou [k]knowest thy servant, Lord Jehovah. For thy word's sake, and according to

r 1 Sam. 16. 11, 12. Ps. 78. 70, 71.
s 1 Sam. 18. 14.
t ch. 22. 1, 2. Ps. 89. 19–23.
u ch. 5. 11, 12. *cf.* Phil. 2. 9–11.
v *cf.* Ps. 80. 8–11. Jer. 24. 5–7. Am. 9. 11–15. Is. 27. 2–6 with Is. 11. 1, etc.
w Judges 2. 14–19.
x 1 Ki. 11. 38. *cf.* Is. 9. 7. Is. 55. 3.
y Ps. 89. 34–37. *cf.* Acts 2. 29–36.
z 1 Ki. 5. 3.
a Ps. 89. 26, 27. *cf.* Heb. 1. 5.
b 1 Ki. 2. 4. Ps. 89. 30–33. Jer. 33. 14–17.
c 1 Ki. 11. 38, 39. *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 32.
d 1 Sam. 11. 28, 29. Hos. 13. 11.
e 1 Sam. 2. 35. 1 Sam. 25. 28. ch. 23. 5.
f *cf.* 1 Ki. 10. 4–7.
g 1 Sam. 18. 18. ch. 9. 8. *cf.* Matt. 8. 8.
h *cf.* Ps. 72. 7, 17.
i *cf.* Rom. 5. 6–8; Is. 55. 8, 9.
j *cf.* Is. 38. 15; Ps. 126. 1–3.
k *cf.* Jno. 21. 17.

of the rulers of Israel whom I commanded to tend my people Israel, saying, Why build ye me not a house of cedar?"

How fruitful a principle, if we would consider it! And not having its application, as so much else, to the cold and indifferent, for they are not the people who come forward of themselves to build a house to the Lord; but to the earnest and zealous-hearted.

But this does not mean that the earnestness and zeal are not acceptable to God: they surely are. He goes on therefore here, while refusing the offer of David, to give Himself to David an assurance that what *he* had thought to do for Him, Himself would do for David: "also Jehovah telleth thee that *He* will make *thee* a house." A son shall be raised up to him, in whom the kingdom shall be established, and who shall fulfill the desire now in David's heart; and his line shall be continued, and his throne established forever.

Solomon is first in view in this promise, as we know; but Christ the only One

thine [l]own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know it. Wherefore [m]thou art great, Jehovah God: for there is none like thee, nor any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears! And [n]what single nation is there in the earth like Israel thy people, which God went to redeem for a people to himself, even to make him a name, and to do for them * great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people which thou redeemedst to thyself from Egypt, from the nations and their gods? Yea, thou hast established for thyself thy people Israel to be a people for thyself forever; and thou, Jehovah, art become their God. And now, Jehovah God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, fulfill it forever, and [o]do as thou hast spoken. And let thy name be [p]magnified forever, saying, Jehovah of hosts is God over Israel, and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee! For thou, Jehovah of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee a house: wherefore thy servant hath found in his heart to pray unto thee this prayer. And now, Lord Jehovah, thou art very God, and thy words are truth, and thou hast spoken of this good for thy servant; and now, let it please thee to bless thy servant's house, that it may be before thee forever; for thou, Lord Jehovah, hast spoken, and with thy [q]blessing shall the house of thy servant be blessed forever.

2. (viii.) Extension of the kingdom over the nations round.

[2]And after this it came to pass, that David [r]smote the Philistines, and subdued them; and David took the bridle of the metropolis out of the hand of the Philis-

l *cf.* Eph. 1. 5, 6.
m 1 Ki. 8. 23.
n Deut. 33. 29.
o *cf.* Luke 1. 38.
p Ps. 35. 27.
q *cf.* Ps. 45. 1, 2.
r 1 Chr. 18. 1, etc. 1 Sam. 17. 52.

* In the Hebrew text, "for you,"—a difference of one letter.

in whom it can be properly fulfilled, even to the building of a house for the Lord. The son near at hand is but the shadow of the greater One afar off; and the house made with hands only a brief anticipation of the glorious House against which the gates of hades never shall prevail. Thus we see how the instability of the mere human seed cannot avail to alter the word which has gone out of Jehovah's lips. Chastening with the rod of men would as surely come as the need for chastening on their part; but the house and the kingdom abide forever, as sure as the pledged word that never fails can make it.

The declaration is so plain that there is little to be said about it in such interpretative notes as we are giving here. It is plain that we have such a full declaration of divine grace in a promise which, ministered through David, is the only hope of the world as well, that man's self-righteousness so ready to manifest itself even in a saint, is abashed and humbled. David, from a would-be worker, is brought to sit before God in rest and adoration. Even his prayer is only now, "Do, Lord, what Thou hast said Thou wilt do!" He can suggest nothing, add nothing, to dim the glory of this abundant grace.

(ii.) We are now shown the extension of David's power over the nations round. However great, it is but the faint and passing image of what will be, when the King of glory comes. Still it is a type, and must be read as that; or what great interest is there for us in the list of these powers subdued? Nor is this to set aside the letter, which is only certified to us the more as we see the divine wisdom which has guarded and guided the historian. This verification

tines. And he smote *Moab, and measured them with a line, making them lie down on the ground: and he measured *two lines to put to death, and one full line to keep alive; and the Moabites became David's servants, bringing gifts. And David smote Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to extend his power to the *River. And David took from him a thousand seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen: David *houghed all the chariot-[horses], but reserved of them for a hundred chariots. And the Syrians of *Damascus came to succor Hadadezer king of Zobah; and David smote of the Syrians twenty-two thousand men.

a Num. 24. 17.
t cf. Deut. 30. 15, 19.
u cf. Gen. 15. 18 with Ps. 72. 8.
v Josh. 11. 6, 9. *cf.* Deut. 17. 16. *etc.* 1 Kl. 10. 26–29.
w cf. ch. 10. 6.

of the outward fact by the manifestation of the inner spirit which gives it vitality and organic place in connection with the whole revelation of God, has been sadly lost sight of through the abuse and contempt of allegorization: that is, of the prophetic character of divine history.

The first conquest is that of the Philistines: "David took the bridle of the metropolis out of the hand of the Philistines." This cannot mean that he took away their dominion over Israel, which was certainly already at an end. It must speak, one would say therefore, of their internal *self*-government, one city having a controlling power over the rest. The loss of this would deprive them of their internal unity, of such coherence as would make them formidable. It is striking to find in Chronicles (1 Chron. xviii. 1) that this metropolis was Gath, whose champion David had long before defeated. And what could have the place among the Philistine cities that Gath, the "wine-press" of wrath would have? Let Goliath be slain, their arms are defeated; let Gath be taken, their strength is prostrate.

The second conquest is that of Moab: "and he smote Moab, and measured them with a line, making them lie down on the ground: and he measured two lines to put to death, and one full line to keep alive; and the Moabites became David's servants, bringing gifts." It is certain that mere *profession* (which Moab represents) will not come to an end at the appearing of Christ: "Strangers shall feign to me; as soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me: strangers shall fade away, and be afraid out of their close places." So says, prophesying of Another, this very David (2 Sam. xxii. 45, 46); and here there is a line to put to death and to keep alive; but the exposition of this naturally comes elsewhere.

We have now, in the third place, the conquest of Syria, by which the empire of David is extended as far as the Euphrates. And indeed it seems to have been with him a deliberate purpose to take possession of the country as far as the limit of the promise to Abraham (Gen. xv). This seems the real meaning of what even the Revised Version gives as "went to recover his dominion at the River," but which most certainly says nothing of the kind. It is literally "to extend his *hand* to the River." I have merely substituted "power" for "hand," as plainly its force. With this meaning it becomes clear that the expression would rather apply to David than to Hadadezer, as with the other it must read the reverse way. David had no dominion to *recover* at the River, while, on the other hand, the Syrian king's territory was at least close by; and while Hadadezer's extension of his territory *northward* to the Euphrates would hardly have brought him into conflict with David, whose kingdom was to the south, it is quite easy to see that David, coming north to the River, would find the kingdom of Zobah in his way.

The occasion of the attack seems given later as arising out of the Ammonite war. Here we have but a general summary of conquest, hardly chronological. Whatever its historical significance, a spiritual one we have the amplest reason to expect. This career of subjugation and spoil, one can see indeed how another

And David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus: and the Syrians became servants to David, bringing gifts. And Jehovah *preserved David whithersoever he went. And David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem. And from Betah, and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, king David took exceeding much brass. And Toi king

x ver. 14.

witness would be given in it, such as Egypt, the wilderness, and Joshua's victories, had given before, to the power of one true God over the multitudinous and degrading deities of the heathen. A rude hand was needed to break these barriers to the reception of the truth, of which Israel was the divinely ordained depository; and the judgments inflicted by their means was a mercy, after all, which every thinking mind must recognize as that.

Typically we have already traced, to some extent, what Aram or Syria represents (p. 198–200, *n.*). It is man, whom God has exalted in Christ, in His own gracious and wonderful way, but who, on the other hand, by self-exaltation debases himself to his own ruin. This last is what we are made to see in the historical Aram. The world is indeed ever illustrating it in different ways: "man's day" is a day of human aggrandizement with that of which he has robbed God, and of self-exaltation by that with which God's mercy has enriched him. And therefore the day of the Lord must be "upon all that is proud and haughty, and upon all that is lifted up, . . . and the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be brought low; and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." (Isa. ii. 12, 17.)

Aram, the "high," seems even specifically to point out the various qualities of self-exaltation. Aram-naharaim, or Mesopotamia (Aram of the two rivers), like another Egypt, shows us, as already pointed out, that which is bred of the constant stream of mercies by which man is sustained, their continual flow unknown as from those far-off heavens from which they come: so that they can even say, at last, "My river is mine own, and I have made it."

Aram-Rehob or beth-Rehob, near akin to this, speaks of "enlargement," growth of resources, influence, power;—

Aram-Zobah, of establishment, "stability";—

Aram-Dammesek, Syria of Damascus, if we may accept Gesenius as to it, of "activity";—

Aram-Maachah, of "bruising," oppression, the tyranny of power.

There is no need to dwell upon these here. It is easy to understand that the world in this form must be brought down in the day of Christ, and be compelled to yield what it has falsely claimed as its own. Its riches must be dedicated to the Lord; its glory pass to Him who is the "King of glory."

Hadad-ezer (in other places Hadarezer) is a worthy king of Zobah. The variation, slight as it is in Hebrew (the lack of a mere shoulder to a "d" makes it "r,"), I cannot but believe to be designed. Hadar means "glory, honor," and is the more common form; but Hadad is "shouting, noise": *vox et præterea nihil*,—sound, and nothing else. This kind of satire is often found in the changes in Hebrew names. Hadarezer means "glory is help," the first word being perhaps the name of their sun-deity, while certainly there has been always abundant idolatry of this kind among men. He is the son of Rehob, "enlargement," and has a plentiful following, and gold shields upon his servants; but his gold is this time no defense; it is sanctified to the Lord, with much brass from his towns Betah, "security," and Berothai, "my hewings."

Nor can the Syrians of Damascus help: in Damascus itself David puts garrisons. How differently will the world's "activity" manifest itself in the day that our David does this!

Toi, king of Hamath, however, has been in conflict with Hadadezer, and has evidently suffered at his hand. Toi means "wanderer," the very opposite of

of Hamath heard that David had smitten all the host of Hadadezer; and Toi sent Joram his son unto king David to [y] inquire of his welfare, and to congratulate him, because he had fought against Hadadezer, and smitten him: for Hadadezer had had war continually with Toi. And [Joram] brought with him vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and vessels of brass. These also did king David [z] sanctify to Jehovah, with the silver and the gold which he sanctified of all the nations which he had subdued: of Syria, and of Moab, and of the children of Ammon, and of the Philistines, and of Amalek, and of the spoil of Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

And David made himself a [a] name on his returning from smiting Edom* in the valley of salt, eighteen thousand [men]. And he put garrisons in [b] Edom: throughout Edom he put garrisons: and all they of Edom became David's servants. And Jehovah preserved David whithersoever he went.

(VIII. 15-IX.)

Internal character of David's reign. 1. (viii. 15–18.) The administration of justice.

3. [c] And David reigned over all Israel; and David executed [d] judgment and justice unto all his people. And

[y] *cf.* Ps. 18. 44, 45.

[z] 1 Chr. 18. 9–11. 1 Chr. 29. 1–5.

[a] Ps. 60. Title.

[b] 1 Ki. 11. 15. Ps 60. 8. 9.

[c] *cf.* Jer. 23. 5, 6.

[d] *cf.* Ps. 72. 2.

* In the Hebrew copies here, "Aram," (Syria,) a difference only of the shoulder of a "d," which if lost would make it "r." Syria was not near the valley of salt, which is at the south end of the Dead Sea. The Septuagint reads, "Edom," and 1 Chron. xviii. 12, and Ps. lx., title, evidently speak of the same event.

the stability of Zobah; Hamath is generally taken to mean "inclosure, fortress." Joram, his son's name, I cannot take as the mere equivalent of Jehoram: it signifies "caused to be exalted." The consciousness of instability and wandering prepares the soul for the apprehension of the grace that exalts, and makes the inclosure of sheltering strength most needful to it. Thus the names combine easily, and we need not wonder to find Toi, the "wanderer," seeking David. All the gifts and spoil of the world are consecrated to Jehovah by him: for the kingdom of Christ subdues all to God at last, "that God may be all in all."

Edom comes last for judgment, which, from our knowledge of its spiritual significance, is not difficult to understand. Edom, the old "Adam" nature in man, is the evil hardest and last of all to be subdued. In the barren valley of salt Edom is finally subjugated and garrisoned throughout; and the Edomites become David's servants. As at the beginning we all were Edomites that now know Christ, there need be no difficulty about this. This is the end of the general sketch of the extension of the kingdom. "And God preserved David whithersoever he went."

Sec. 3.

We come now to look at the kingdom internally; and we have first the administration of righteousness, and the order established for that; and then, at more length, its *salvation*-character,—of which Mephibosheth is a beautiful illustration.

(i.) United Israel is under his hand, and to all his people judgment and justice are dispensed. This is, above all, the character that David represents to us, as we have seen. Alas, that he fails signally at times in this, we know too; but it is the general character of his reign, and that which he stands for typically; the lessons of his failure we shall find in full elsewhere. Here, for the type's sake, all this is excluded.

As to detail here, we have but the names of those put in charge in their

[e] Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the host; and [f] Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder; and [g] Zadok

e ch. 20. 23–26.
f 1 Ki. 4. 3.
g ch. 15. 24–29.

various departments; and if we have not skill to read the names, or refuse this "allegorizing," these will be barren enough, nay, would lead us sometimes in an opposite direction. We already know, and shall more fully as we read on, how different might be the actions of the men from the beauty of their names. But the history is at this point purposely idealized, for it is Christ who is before the mind of the Spirit; and thus His inspired mouthpiece is kept from the intrusion of what would spoil the picture.

Take, for instance, the very first name here in proof; a name of chief importance, if its position counts for anything: what is Joab, the son of Zeruiah, according to his acting in the history? Yet the thought represented by his name is exactly according to its foremost place in this catalogue. Joab means "Jehovah is Father," and as the son of Zeruiah, "balm of Jah," speaks, as we have seen, of the cross as the procuring cause of such relationship being enjoyed. It is striking that here is one of those double meanings which often confirm and throw light upon each other; for Zeruiah may also mean "straitened" or "distressed of Jah": and so in both ways the Cross is indicated.

Joab is over the host: for all the wars of the kingdom of Christ are governed by this one aim, to bring in the *Father's* kingdom. The prayer that He taught His disciples was "*Father*, thy kingdom come!" The iron sceptre having done its work, He will "deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father." Thus that which He bids them pray for He Himself accomplishes. For this He puts down all rule and all authority and power. "And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject to Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." (1 Cor. xv. 24–28.) Joab is surely, then, without possibility of contradiction, "over the host."

Secondly: "Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder." The office here intended is not certain, but the word is literally "remembrancer," which might be equivalent to or include that of historian; but would seem, first of all, to be that of king's referee and counselor. Jehoshaphat means "Jehovah has judged," and answers admirably to his office: Jehovah's judgment thus being the rule for guidance at all times. But Jehoshaphat is himself the son of Ahilud, which means "the brother," or "kin of the one born," a blessed and wonderful thought; in this connection how tender an one! that as man is even naturally the "offspring of God," so He is in that sense akin to the feeble creature He has made. His judgments are, indeed, the fruit of this kinship: He remembers this link of His own establishment in all His dealings with them. How should His judgments be thus endeared to us!

Thirdly: we have the priesthood, twofold, embracing the lines of Eleazar and Ithamar both (see p. 298, *n.*), and Eleazar's given the first place in Zadok, a fact which shows the ideal picture that is given us here: for Zadok really only acquired the first place in the beginning of Solomon's reign, after Abiathar had joined the conspiracy of Adonijah. Yet for the type Zadok had to come first,—who, as the "righteous," reminds us from this side of the Melchizedek character of priesthood in Christ. As heir of Eleazar's line, he is also the true representative of the *risen* Priest; while a descendant of Ithamar would have been entirely out of place here.

Zadok is the son of Ahitub, "brother of goodness," as the Lord's priesthood as the righteous One is yet the fruit of his human kinship with us assumed in love.

In the line of Ithamar, where we expect to find "Abiathar the son of Ahimelech," we find instead "Ahimelech the son of Abiathar," and this is supported by 1 Chron. xxiv. 6, where the same inversion obtains. Fausset suggests that father and son had both names, which Mark ii. 26 may in part confirm. Ahimelech means "brother of the king," Abiathar, "father of excellence."

In the fourth place, the scribe's name is Seraiah, "Jah rules."

the son of Ahitub and [h]Ahimelech the son of Abiathar were the priests; and Seraiah was the scribe; and [i]Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons were chief rulers.

2. (ix.) The salvation side.

2 [j]And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the [k]house of Saul, that I may show him [l]kindness for Jonathan's sake? And there was of the house of Saul a servant whose name was [m]Ziba: and they called him unto David; and the king said unto him, Art thou Ziba? And he said, Thy servant is he. And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show the [n]kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, who is [o]lame

h 1 Sam. 22. 20-23.
i ch. 23. 20.
j *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 10, 19.
k *cf.* 1 Sam. 19. 10. 1 Sam. 23. 14-29. *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 13.
l 1 Sam. 20. 14-17.
m *ctr.* ch. 16. 1-4.
n *cf.* Tit. 3. 4. *cf.* Eph. 2. 7.
o ch. 4. 4. *cf.* Acts 8. 2. etc.

In the fifth we find Benaiah the son of Jehoiada over the Cherethites and Pelethites, or, probably, as Gesenius says, "executioners and couriers." Here again divine names are prominent: Benaiah, "Jah has built"; Jehoiada, "Jehovah knows." Do they show us that the execution of judgment is controlled by His purpose to build up and bless, this building up being the fruit of His own perfect knowledge? All these names, it is evident, speak as with one consent of righteous, wise, and beneficent government; and when it is added that "David's sons were chief rulers"—*cohanim*, the same word as for "priests," but here applied to the representation of another in civil affairs, as the priest in sacred (see vol. i. p. 227, *n.*)—we have only to turn back to the meanings of these sons' names (ch. iii. 1-5, v. 13-16, *n.*) to find a host of witnesses to the character of the kingdom represented here. As has been said, the history is carefully *idealized* that the type may not be marred. When we come to the details of actual history, things will be seen far otherwise; but the Spirit will not be hindered from presenting to us this view of a perfect kingdom, which Christ alone will actually consummate. That to which Scripture uniformly looks on is the glory of Christ.

(ii.) But Christ's kingdom is not simply a reign of *righteousness;* it is emphatically for *salvation.* As in the grand picture of the 72d psalm: "He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. . . . He shall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy." This salvation side of the kingdom must now be represented in the picture, or it would not be an adequate representation at all. What worthy idea of God but must take in His *grace?* And so it is, accordingly: we have one of those touching exhibitions of what David himself calls "the kindness of *God*," with which all Scripture is full. May it wake up our hearts to praise!

"And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

How had the house of Saul collapsed, when it was necessary even for David to ask such a question! But a few years since, Saul was the king of Israel, able to speak of his power to give fields and vineyards to his followers, and to make them captains of hundreds and of thousands. Now his own place knows him no more; and the one who sits on his throne, and desires to do kindness to his house, does not know where to find a member of it!

Saul had been the enemy and bitter persecutor of David, and this desire is the expression of grace indeed, although, as he says, there is one for whose sake he acts, and to whom he had pledged himself in covenant. But this covenant itself was the fruit of love alone. Jonathan had made no great sacrifice for David,—had not shared his fortunes, nor procured for him any mitigation of his sufferings. But David is faithful to his oath and to his love: he could not have been in any wise the figure even of our David, had he not been so.

of his feet. And the king said unto him, Where is he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lodebar.

And King David [p]sent and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lodebar. And Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came unto David, and [q]fell on his face, and did obeisance. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he said, Behold thy servant. And David said unto him, [r]Fear not; for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will [s]restore thee all the land of Saul thy father, and thou shalt eat bread at [t]my table continually. And he bowed himself and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a [u]dead dog as I am?

And the king called Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that belonged to Saul and to all his house. And thou and thy sons and thy servants shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in [the fruits,] that thy master's son may have food to eat; and Mephibosheth, thy master's son, shall eat bread alway at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. And Ziba said unto the king, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so will thy servant do.

p *cf.* Luke 15. 4. *cf.* Eph. 2. 17.
q *cf.* Lk. 18. 13, 14.
r *cf.* Is. 43. 1. 1 Jno. 4. 18.
s *cf.* ch. 19. 29, 30. Lev. 25. 23, 28.
t *cf.* Lk. 15. 22, 23.
u 1 Sam. 24. 14. *cf.* Matt. 15. 27.

His question elicits a reply from a certain Ziba, a servant of Saul's house: "Jonathan has yet a son, who is lame of his feet." And in answer to further inquiry, he learns that he is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel in Lodebar. Thus Mephibosheth is introduced to us.

Mephibosheth, in perfect harmony with what we hear from him on this occasion, means "shame out of the mouth." He is the picture of one convicted and self-condemned, impotent and corrupt, as his own figure is, "a dead dog." His impotence is still further emphasized in his lameness,—lame of both feet. In his infirm and solitary condition, he is a perfect contrast with the servant Ziba, with his fifteen sons and twenty servants, but who is still himself, as is the legalist ever, a servant only; and with that curious ambiguity about his name, which Scripture uses so often and so forcefully; for this may mean "planted," or as two words, "drought comes": and this is the legal contingency.

Mephibosheth is of the house of the failed Saul, and yet the son of Jonathan, whose name, "Jehovah has given," reminds us of the unrepenting call and gifts of God, who calls still the "weak things of the world," yea, the base, the despised, and "things that are not," so that he "out of whose mouth" is the confession of his "shame" is still the Mephibosheth, the heir of the covenant of grace.

He is found in the house of Machir, "one who recollects," (and so comes really to himself,) the son of Ammiel, of "the people of God," in Lodebar, where "the word is his"*—applies itself, and comes home to him. Brought into David's presence, he hears the word of restoring grace that enriches him, and bows his heart in gratitude. His place is henceforth to be at the king's table, as one of his sons. This is the communion to which God brings us as His people; while the mere servant remains the servant. How beautiful in its simplicity is the repetition at the close of this story, "Mephibosheth dwelt at Jern-

* Lo-debar is given in the lexicons as "no pasture," and might translate the word in ch. xvii. 27, but not here, if we allow the ordinary reading, where twice over the "lo" means "to him" or "his." The spiritual meaning seems to agree with this.

And Mephibosheth [said the king] shall eat at my table as one of the [v]king's sons. And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Micah. And all who dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants to Mephibosheth. So Mephibosheth dwelt at Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and he was lame in both his feet.

[v] *cf.* Gal. 4. 4–7.

SUBDIVISION 4. (Chap. x.–xii.)

Failure of David also.

1. (x.) Beginning in blessing.

a. (1-5.) Origin of the war with Ammon.

1 (*a*) AND it came to pass after this, that the king of the children of [w]Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his stead. And David said, I will show [x]kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash, as his [y]father showed kindness unto me. And David sent by the hand of his servants, to comfort him concerning his father. And David's servants came into the land of the children of Ammon. And the princes of the children of Ammon said unto Hanun their lord, [z]Is it in

[w] 1 Chron. 19. 1, etc. *cf.* Judg. 10. 7, etc.

[x] *cp.* ch. 9. 1.

[y] 1 Sa. 11. 1. *cf.* 1 Sa. 22. 3, 4.

[z] *cf.* Matt. 21. 33–41.

salem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and he was lame in both his feet."

Thus are saved the poor and needy; thus David shows the "kindness of God"; of which, however, all these things are but the faintest shadows. Yet they remind us of that by which, in the ages to come, He shall "show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

SUBD. 4.

The account of David's greatness is, as we have seen, a summary in some respects anticipative of the after-history. The first four sons given as born to him in Jerusalem are sons of Bathsheba, and yet the sorrowful history of their mother has not been given; so also apparently with the account of the victory over Hadadezer. The last seems evidently connected with the Syro-Ammonitish war, which now follows, and with which is interwoven the shameful fall of David himself. The story of this latter begins, therefore, with that of the war, the first successes of which are the preface to it, as the hour of prosperity is so often the prelude to some fleshly manifestation. The fall that seems most sudden is only the witness of decay that has begun before, or at least of some inherent weakness, some lack of self-judgment, which exposes one to it. Walking really with God in humility and dependence, we are safe,—safe as His strength can make us.

(i.) The beginning is in blessing,—the victory over the Ammonites and their hired allies. Along with this, however, we may find, perhaps, some hint of another beginning, such as has just been intimated, an unjudged link between the Ammonite and the Israelite, such as we should not have imagined in David. Was it the fruit of alliances in time past, when in his distress he had gone to the king of Moab and the king of Gath, for help that faith would have found much nearer? If so, this would show us how surely, if not prevented by true self-judgment, the sins of our past pursue us. The Ammonite, with the Moabite and the Philistine, were all special enemies of Israel, upon whom, as such, the divine sentence rested. Faith, as in Ruth, would surely at any time have found grace, as she did: but in none of these was there any faith; and Nahash the Ammonite was apparently the same as he whose insolent reproach upon Israel Saul had in the beginning of his reign been called to avert from the men of Jabesh. That very contention with Saul may have led him (for his own ends), as it did Achish, to "show kindness" to David; but real ground of fellowship, we may be sure, there was not. Favor shown to the Ammonite could not have the blessing of God, and so in the end it proves. Hanun means "favored," and thus empha-

thine eyes to honor thy father that David hath sent comforters unto thee? Is it not to [a]search the city and spy it out and overthrow it, that David hath sent his servants unto thee? And Hanun took David's servants, and [b]shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the midst as far as their buttocks, and sent them away. And they told it to David, and he sent to meet them, for the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, Tarry at [c]Jericho till your beards be grown, and then return.

b. (6–14.) The confederates and the conflict.

(*b*) And the children of Ammon saw that they had made themselves stink before David, and the children of Ammon sent and [d]hired the Syrians of Beth-rehob, and the Syrians of Zobah, twenty thousand footmen, and the king of Maacah [with] a thousand men, and men of Tob, twelve thousand men. And David heard of it, and sent Joab and all the host, the [e]mighty men. And the children of Ammon came out, and put the battle in array at the entrance of the gate; and the Syrians of Zobah and of Rehob, and the men of Tob and Maacah were by themselves in the field. And Joab saw that the front of the battle was against him before and behind; and he chose out of all the [f]choice men of Israel, and put them in array against the Syrians; and the rest of the people he delivered into the hand of Abishai his brother, that he might put them in array against the children of Ammon. And he said, [g]If the Syrians be too strong

[a] *cf.* Gen. 42. 19.

[b] *cf.* Lev. 14. 8, 9. Lev. 19. 27.

[c] *cf.* Josh. 6. 26, with Gal. 6. 14.

[d] Prov. 11. 21.

[e] ch. 23. 8, etc.

[f] ver. 7.

[g] *ctr.* 1 Sam. 14. 9.

sizes the lesson, "Let favor be shown to the wicked, yet will he not learn uprightness." Hanun, quickly persuaded by his counselors, adopts their suspicions as his own, repays the courtesy of David with contempt and ignominy, and then, anticipating the resentment he has provoked, seeks allies and rushes into open war.

Nahash would have thrust out the right eyes of the men of Jabesh, but to an Israelite this can never be done *but by his own consent.* Hanun, with a lighter reflection of his father's scorn, takes away from David's ambassadors half their beards and half their garments. At Jericho, the place of the world's judgment, they must tarry till they have recovered their dignity as men: so they return.

(*b.*) The Ammonites betake themselves to their natural allies. The pride of the world, in its various forms, which the Syrians picture, goes in full harmony with that perversion of the truth which we recognize in the Ammonite. In all error will be found some association with a heart in insubjection to God. Nor need we wonder if the men of Tob ("good men," as the world speaks,) join themselves in numbers to this company: what a contrast to the discreditable one that came to Adullam before, to shelter themselves with David! But "ye see your calling, brethren," and will understand well the reproach which grace has had at all times to meet. Just these Adullamites are now the "mighty men" that come with Joab against this array!

Joab, after all, ("Jehovah is Father,") is the suited leader of such. The "elder son" of the parable — a genuine "man of Tob" — never knew the gladness of the Father's house, never knew the Father's arms or the Father's kiss. An Adullamite that has known these grows quickly into a "mighty man" that has hearth and home to fight for: such links of love knit thews and sinews for the battlefield, as is well known. Nature still speaks in echo, though far off, of sweet tones with which the gospel has familiarized us.

for me, then thou shalt help me; and if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then will I come to help thee. Be [h]strong, and let us show ourselves strong for our people and for the cities of our God; and [i]Jehovah do what is good in his eyes! And Joab drew nigh, and the people that were with him, unto the battle against the Syrians, and they [j]fled before him. And when the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians fled, they fled before Abishai, and entered into the city. And Joab returned from the children of Ammon and came to Jerusalem.

c. (15-19.) The fully realized victory under David.

(*c*) And when the Syrians saw that they were smitten before Israel, they [k]gathered themselves together. And Hadarezer sent and brought the Syrians which were beyond the River: and they came to Helam; and Shobach the prince of the host of Hadarezer was before them. And it was told David: and [l]he gathered all Israel, and passed over Jordan, and came to Helam. And the Syrians set themselves in array against David, and [m]fought with him. And the Syrians fled before Israel; and David slew of the Syrians seven hundred men [in] chariots, and forty thousand horsemen; and Shobach the prince of their host he smote, and he died there. And when all the kings that were servants to Hadarezer saw that they were smitten before Israel, they made [n]peace with Israel and served them. And the Syrians [o]feared to help the children of Ammon any more.

2. (xi.) David's sin with Bathsheba, and slaughter of Uriah.

[2] And it came to pass at the return of the year, at the time when [p]kings go forth, that David sent Joab, and

[h] Josh. 1.18.
[i] 1 Sam. 1. 23.
[j] ch. 5. 20.
[k] Josh. 9.1,2.
[l] ch. 6.1, etc.
[m] ver. 13.
[n] ch. 8. 6.
[o] *cf.* Josh. 2. 24.
[p] *cf.* Prov. 30. 29-31.

Victory depends upon defeating the Syrians, and against them Joab leads the choice men of his host. We know both sides, and understand the spiritual meaning here. In fact the Syrians are vanquished, and fly, and so the Ammonites: and these battles are repeated to this day, with the same result, that all is found to depend upon the Syrians,—a secret which the "mighty men" know well.

(*c.*) But the final victory waits for David in person, that is, for Christ in the day of His appearing. The pride of the world will not be smitten down effectually until He comes; and when He comes, the day of Armageddon will find it in Helam, the place of "their strength," banded together in opposition against Him. The full height of human pride will then be reached, the opposition in man's heart will come fully out, the confederacy which has existed ever since "Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together" against the Lord and against His Christ, will have reached its highest power and most imposing front, when the beast and the kings of the earth "shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them." Then Shobach, the "shedder" of blood, the prince of Hadarezer's ("Glory-help's") army shall himself be slain, and war between man and man be ended. "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

(ii.) From this hint of future blessing for the earth we turn back to trace in the executor of God's judgment upon others the course of sin which henceforth darkens with its shadow all David's life. Truly the king for whom Israel waited

his servants with him, and all Israel. And they wasted the land of the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah; but David [q]remained at Jerusalem. And it came to pass at [r]eventime, that David arose from his couch, and walked on the [s]roof of the king's house, and from the roof he [t]saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful. And David sent and inquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the [u]wife of Uriah the Hittite? And David sent messengers and took her, and she came in to him, and he lay with her; and she [v]purified herself from her uncleanness and returned to her own house.

[q] *cf.* Deut. 25. 17, 18.
[r] *cf.* Jno. 13. 30.
[s] *cf.* ch. 16. 22.
[t] Job 31. 1. Matt. 5. 28
[u] Ex. 20. 17.
[v] *cf.* Lev. 15. 18, 19. *cf.* Prov. 30. 20.

had not yet come; and for Him ("the desire of all nations") the earth and Israel still are waiting. Of this sin in David we may not think either, as if it were the one black spot in his history, or as the result of a sudden and violent temptation too strong for resistance, or as anything unaccountable at all. It is rather the breaking out of tendencies easily to be discerned in him before this; and which, unchecked by heartfelt humbling before God, only waited for opportunity to display themselves, and work disaster. We know there was sudden temptation, and all the facilities afforded by despotic power and the license of the times; but it would be poor comfort to suppose that God's saints, if walking *as* saints, are liable to such sudden overthrows. The moral is not this; it is almost the very opposite of this: it is rather the certainty with which evil permitted in the heart works outward in the life at last; it is that sin is sin, and works as sin, however fashion may yield it license, and call it by another name. David's sin is not exceptional or unaccountable, else it would in that measure cease to have warning for us; and even as to himself would appear as much a misfortune as a crime; whereas nothing could more strictly follow law; cause and effect are as plain here as they may anywhere be traced.

The custom of the times favored polygamy; nor could the law itself as yet plainly and in terms forbid it. The law in its abstract form was perfect as exhibited in the tables of the covenant. In its concrete expression, as in the detailed commandments, "it was weak through the flesh." Grace alone could bring in power for perfect restraint, and therefore alone (as in Christianity) plainly declare the mind of God. In the precepts and walk of Christ our pattern, and in the competency of a known salvation and the indwelling Spirit, perfection absolutely is reached, but only thus. There has been, therefore, "the disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof, (for the law made nothing perfect,) and the bringing in of a better hope, by which we draw near to God." (Heb. vii. 18, 19.)

The law could not directly forbid polygamy. Early had the human race escaped from the divine law of creation in this matter (Gen. iv. 19), but in the race of Cain, and in the family of him whose song to his two wives so taken is in justification of homicide. At the new beginning after the flood, Noah and his three sons are found maintaining what began in Paradise.

Generations pass, and the world has traveled far from God: in the story of Abraham the next lesson is given us of a patriarchal household distracted by a sin of this kind, but to which his wife had urged, against faith, the man of faith, apparently to fulfill by carnal means a divine promise. Thus there is the most plausible pretext in the world, and urged in the most plausible way. It ends, however, not in the fulfillment of the promise, for which God needs no help, but in the casting out both of Hagar and her son, while her son, begotten in lawlessness, becomes the father of a lawless race.

Next Leah is foisted upon Jacob in deceit, and has to be supplemented with Rachel, the loved and bargained for. But here again strife and distraction follow,

And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I am with child. And David sent to Joab, [saying,] Send me Uriah the Hittite. And Joab sent Uriah to David. And when Uriah was come unto him, David inquired how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered. And David said unto Uriah, [w]Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet; and Uriah went forth from the king's house, and there followed him a [x]portion from the king. But Uriah slept at the entrance of the king's house with all his lord's servants, and went not down to his own house. And it was told David, saying, Uriah went not down to his house; and David said unto Uriah, Art thou not come from a journey? why didst thou not go down to thy house? And Uriah said unto David, The [y]ark and Israel and Judah are dwelling in booths; and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord camp in the open field; and shall I go unto my house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? as thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing. And David said unto Uriah, [z]Remain this day also, and tomorrow I will let thee go: and Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the morrow. And David invited him, and he ate and drank before him, and he made him [a]drunk; and at even he went out to lie upon his couch with the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house.

w cf. ch. 20. 9, 10.

x cfr. Gen. 43. 34.

y cf. ch. 7. 6.

z ver. 1. *cf.* Judges 19. 6.

a cfr. Gen. 19. 32, 33.

and the sisters' rivalry increases the misery of it with two concubines additional. This very marriage of two sisters at the same time, which, standing where it did, might be a snare to Israel, the law (Levit. xviii. 18) specifically points out afterwards, to prohibit it.

In general, there were obvious hindrances which would limit the practice of polygamy; and it was yet reserved for a far future day and in the midst of the full light of Christianity, to put a premium upon it, as the Mormons do. On the contrary, where most temptation might meet with opportunity, as in the case of a king in Israel, such as David was, it was distinctly said, "He shall not multiply wives to himself, that they turn not his heart aside." (Deut. xvii. 17.) The perversion of the heart from God is here declared to be the result of such a practice; and the pregnant example of this we find in Solomon; but Solomon was himself the son of David and Bathsheba! Heredity, as men say, tells; but only where divine grace has not lifted the heart above it.

David had not fulfilled the injunction of the law. He had not realized his own weakness, as is shown by his many marriages. He had not made, as Job had, a covenant with his eyes. Walking in self-indulgence, the height to which he was raised precipitated his fall. In the warm sun of prosperity, the fruits of permitted license ripened into bitter vintage; and there was no resource, for none was sought! So he fell; and so will all who follow in this course.

At the time when kings go forth to war, and there being war, David remains at Jerusalem. These things which Scripture puts together tell their own tale as so put together. David was seeking ease and ungirding himself when circumstances called for activity and energy. What a contrast with the behavior of the Hittite soldier, whom for his faithfulness he presently condemns to death! "The ark and Israel and Judah dwell in booths; and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord camp in the open field: and shall I go to my house?" What a wound for the conscience from this Hittite sword! David is at his house, and on his couch,

And it was so in the morning that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah; and he wrote in the letter, saying, [b]Set Uriah in the front of the fiercest battle, and retire from him, that he may be smitten and die. And it was so, when Joab observed the city, that he put Uriah in the place where he knew that men of valor were. And the men of the city came forth and fought with Joab; and there fell some of the people of the servants of David; and [c]Uriah the Hittite died also. And Joab sent and told David all the matters of the war, and charged the messenger, saying: When thou hast finished speaking to the king of all the matters of the war, it shall be, if the king's anger rise, and he say unto thee, Why did ye approach so nigh the city to fight? did ye not know that they would shoot from the wall? who smote [d]Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? did not a woman cast a piece of mill-stone on him from the wall, and he died in Thebez? why went ye nigh the wall? then say, Thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also. And the messenger went, and came and told David all that Joab had sent him for. And the messenger said unto David, The men prevailed against us, and came out against us into the field, and we were upon them as far as the entrance of the gate; and the shooters shot from off the wall upon thy servants, and some of the king's servants are dead, and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also. And David said unto the messenger, Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, [e]Let not this thing be grievous in thine eyes, for the sword devoureth one as well as another: make thy battle strong against the city, and overthrow it,—and [f]encourage him.

b 1 Sam. 18. 17.

c ch. 12. 9.

d Judg. 9. 53.

e *cf.* ch. 14. 9, etc. ch. 18. 13, 14.

f *cf.* ver. 1. ch. 12. 28.

and then walking upon the roof of his house, when he is snared through his eyes. The woman he finds is a wife, and of one of his own heroic men now at the war for Israel and for him; but nothing stops him. He is a king, and everything yields to him with the facility which is the curse of power. She returns—purified, alas!—to her dishonored home.

But the consequences follow, and to escape them sin follows sin. He sends for Uriah, plays the deceiver, is balked by the devotedness and honesty that contrast so manifestly with his own conduct here, and at last, wrought into madness by the thought of his own shame and what may come of it, sends back the unsuspecting man with his own death-warrant in his hand, to be put into execution by the unscrupulous man he knows so well, and who is to serve him by it.

Strange it seems to find all this dwelt on and lingered over as it is in the history! the awful accusation of one who finds the place in it that David finds! The account of a crime by which truly the enemies of the Lord have been made to blaspheme, as Nathan says, from that day to this. There it is, clear and sharp-edged, to the last word of smooth hypocrisy: "Let not this thing be grievous in thine eyes, for the sword devoureth one as well as another:—encourage him!" There it is in the light, and to be ever in the light, published in the book of inspiration, handed down from generation to generation, to be read by all eyes that will, and by the people of God assuredly, as long as the word of

And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she [g] mourned for her husband. And when the mourning was past, David sent and fetched her to his house; and she became his wife and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done [h] displeased Jehovah.

3. (xii.1-25.) The divine oracle.

[3] And Jehovah sent [i] Nathan to David; and he came unto him, and said unto him: There were [j] two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding [k] many flocks and herds, but the poor man had nothing save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up, and it grew up together with him and with his children: it ate of his morsel and drank of his cup, and slept in his bosom, and was to him like a daughter. And there came a [l] traveller to the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd to dress for the wayfaring man that had come unto him, and took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that had come unto him. And David's [m] anger was kindled greatly

[g] *cfr.* ver. 4.

[h] *cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 6.

[i] ch. 7. 2, 3. 1 Ki. 1. 24.

[j] *cf.* 1 Ki. 20. 38–42. *cf.* Lk. 20. 9–16.

[k] *cf.* ver. 8. ch. 5. 13, etc.

[l] *cf.* Rom. 7. 21–23, with Gal. 5. 16–21.

[m] *cf.* Ro. 2. 21, 22.

God shall last! Yes, down to the seven days of mourning of the wife for her husband by her sin done to death, after which "David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife."

David, too, has faced that ever since, and faces it still: he will face it ever. It is put away, that sin, yet it remains, and will remain, type of all sins of His people, and of God's dealing with them: out of the holy light of eternity they will never pass,—out of our memories never! Here is man, here is his condemnation,—redeemed, saved, justified man! Thyself, reader; myself. Cease ye from man forever!—from ourselves, sinner or saint! Turn we to God forever, and let us ascribe greatness and salvation to Him alone.

This is what an unexercised conscience can bring a David to. This is what lack of self-judgment, with temptation and opportunity, may make of a saint! Shall we not cry afresh, with David himself, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting"?

(iii.) "Lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Even among Christians, paralysis of conscience is not rare. Not, indeed, *general* paralysis, which would be as fatal spiritually as it is naturally, but a *local* paralysis. Touch a man at one point, he is all alive; he can feel acutely; he can denounce earnestly: touch him at another, there is no response; it is not even that he feels, but governs himself and gives no answer: no, he does not even *feel* it. Take two things judged by the Word alike as contrary to God, how differently will the minds of even true Christians be affected by them! Take the question of moral evil, with the mass, perhaps, of Christians to-day, how little are they affected by the most serious *doctrinal* evil in comparison with this! They would league readily with Unitarians or any others for the suppression of drunkenness, when if you asked them to league with drunkards for the suppression of Unitarianism, they would open their eyes with astonishment. And they would be quite right in the latter case, of course; but is the denial of Christ less serious? If we are to judge by the Word we shall have to say that, if the one is fleshly, the other is *devilish*; if the truth it is that sanctifies, the denial of the truth is to prohibit sanctification. And who in the light of Christianity will stand up to defend drunkenness? while as an angel of light Satan can propagate the other.

It is true that this may be urged upon the other side, that what the conscience of men almost universally condemns must be the most pernicious evil; and that

against the man, and he said unto Nathan, As Jehovah liveth, the man doing this is worthy of death; and he shall [n]restore the lamb fourfold, because he hath done this thing, and had no pity. And Nathan said unto David, [o]Thou art the man. Thus saith Jehovah the God of Israel, *I* [p]anointed thee king over Israel, and *I* delivered thee from the [q]hand of Saul; and I gave thee the house of thy lord, and the wives of thy lord into thy bosom, and gave thee the [r]house of Israel and Judah, and, had that been too little, would further have given thee such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the word of Jehovah to do evil in his sight, and [s]smitten Uriah the Hittite with the sword? thou hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. And now the [t]sword shall never depart from thy house, because thou hast despised me, and taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. Thus saith Jehovah, Behold, I will [u]raise up against thee evil out of thine own house, and will take [v]thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun: for thou didst it secretly, but I will do this

n Ex. 22. 1. Luke 19. 8.
o *cf.* Ps. 50. 21. Jno. 4. 16-18. *cf.* Ro. 3. 19.
p 1 Sa. 16. 13.
q 1 Sa. 26. 17, etc.
r ch. 22. 1, 2.
s *cf.* Gen. 37. 27.
t ch. 13. 28. ch. 18. 33.
u ch. 16. 11.
v ch. 16. 21. Deut. 28. 30. *cf.* Gal. 6. 7, 8.

to get men to Christ you must first reform them: but this is mere natural judgment only, and the denial of the gospel and of the power of Christ.

It will be found, one must fear, that with the highest possible standard of judgment, those who accept the word of God as that are practically far below it, and walk not in the light of the sanctuary, but in the common light of men. And how easily, if at any time the walk is not with God, does the standard lower itself to something much nearer the level of the walk! Adepts as we are at self-deceit, if the eye be not single and the whole body be not full of light, and if we can no longer see, we *dream*,—*shaping* our dreams also in a way which will show clearly (to others, at least) the *quality* of our slumber: "if the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

Thus David's sin, with all its aggravation, does not seem to have been like a blow that wakes one with a start to consciousness and pain, but like the heavier blow or fall that brings unconsciousness. His demeanor before Nathan does not betray at least the convicted sinner, while he listens to the story, so much less grave than his, of the rich man, with his flocks and herds, singling out for slaughter for his pleasure the one pet ewe lamb of the poor man his neighbor. At the end he is wrought into a passion of justice, which falls, one can see plainly, in the most unlooked-for way, upon himself at the disclosure, "Thou art the man." Then comes the summing up, item by item, of his guilt, the word of Jehovah that breaks the rocks asunder, and makes the mightiest and proudest quake before it; until humbled, silenced, all the fire gone out of him, not the judge now but the criminal, he bows to receive the sentence of the Lord. Out of his own house, that house of which once so differently, and "not after the manner of men," had Jehovah spoken,—out of that house should evil now arise, the blessing banned, because he had profaned it. He had struck at the holiest of nature's ties; and nature in his own cherished ties should strike him. Think of how he would look now into the faces of his children, and shudder, asking himself, which of these was to be the destined wrath of God upon his sin,—which of these sons of his strength should smite his father!

But the sentence is passed, and is not to be revoked: it has smitten him with a divinely directed blow right on the head of his sin; yea, it is his sin that smites him. But he does not say, "I have sinned against myself," though that

thing before [w]all Israel, and before the sun. And David said unto Nathan, I have [x]sinned against Jehovah. And Nathan said unto David, Jehovah hath also [y]put away thy sin: thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because by this thing thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of Jehovah to [z]blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall [a]surely die.

And Nathan departed to his house. And Jehovah [b]struck the child which Uriah's wife had borne to David, and it was very sick. And David [c]besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the ground. And the elders of his house arose [and went] to him, to raise him up from the ground, but he would not, nor did he eat bread with them. And it came to pass on the seventh day that the

w ch. 16. 22.
x *cfr.* 1 Sa. 15. 24. *cf.* Ps. 51. ch. 24. 10.
y *cf.* 1 John 1. 9. *cf.* 1 John 2. 1, 2. Ps. 32. 5.
z Rom. 2. 24. Ezek. 36. 20-23. 1 Tim. 6. 1.
a Ex. 32. 35. *cf.* 1 Ki. 17. 18.
b *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 30-32.
c *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 8. *cf.* Deut. 3. 26.

be true; nor does he plead against his sentence. He does not say, though that be plainly true, "I have sinned against my brother." Nor does he profess his penitence even, adding to his confession what is meant as some balance, however slight, over against it. His mouth is stopped as to all this: he knows God and himself too well. "I have sinned against Jehovah" is now all that he can say; and the flash of divine light which has revealed this to him is more, as one sees, than the thunder-peal which follows it. Such is true conviction.

Accordingly, the voice of divine mercy is not delayed: "Jehovah has also put away thy sin: thou shalt not die." For sin such as his, there was in the law no offering or sacrifice: death was the righteous penalty, which only could be remitted directly by the Throne above the throne. And this is the meaning of what he declares in his psalm of penitence: "for Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: Thou delightest not in burnt-offering"; and then, in contrast with that, he shows what God had accepted as of more value with Him: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." (Ps. li. 16, 17.)

This is not, of course, a denial of the worth and need of sacrifice, but only of such as were in his hand to bring, or the law could ordain. The blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin; and for sins like David's these were not spoken of at all. What really availed to prevent the extreme sentence, when nothing else could, was just the "broken heart," divinely convicted, which God saw in him. This is no question of atonement: there was no atonement made with God by this conviction; the *atonement* — for David and for all others — was made on Calvary alone; only through this could the mercy of God prevail against judgment. The contrite heart was only, as a "sacrifice," upon the footing of the legal sacrifices, as having efficacy through the work to which they pointed; — though *more* efficacious than these because it testified of real faith on the part of him in whom it had produced this, and which linked him with that in which the efficacy truly was.

Yet the government of God is not displaced by the grace shown, nor would it be grace that did displace it. The throne becomes a "throne of grace," but is no less — one may reverently say, all the more — a *throne*. God reigns, through Christ's work, in the joyful hearts of the redeemed. The knowledge of Him who reigns makes His reign to be the one necessity, and rest, and joy. His acts are light and love. If there be evil, He must be seen to be in opposition to the evil, even as He seeks in His love to deliver men from it. His chastenings are needed by His children, because they are children; they are needed, also, as witness to the world of what He is. Thus for David the government of God is not hindered but necessitated by the relation that David bears to Him: "because by this thing thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of Jehovah to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die."

child [d]died. And David's servants feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken to our voice; and now, if we tell him that the child is dead, he will do harm. And David saw that the servants whispered, and David perceived that the child was dead: and David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? and they said, He is dead. And David [e]arose from the ground, and washed and anointed himself, and changed his clothes, and entered into the house of Jehovah, and [f]worshiped: and he went to his own house, and he asked, and they set bread before him, and he ate. And his servants said unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the living child; and when the child was dead, thou didst rise up and eat bread. And he said, While the child was still alive I fasted and wept: for I said, Who knoweth whether Jehovah will be [g]gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, why should I fast? can I bring him back again? I am [h]going unto him, but he will not return to me.

And David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her, and she bare a son; and he called his name [i]Solomon, and Jehovah [j]loved him. And he sent by the hand of [k]Nathan the prophet, and called his name Jedidiah, on account of Jehovah.

4. (xii. 26-31.) The fall of Rabbah.

[l]And Joab fought against Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and took the royal city. And Joab [l]sent mes-

[d] 2 Ki. 4. 20.
[e] *cf.* Job 1. 20, 21.
[f] *cf.* Heb. 12. 11.
[g] *cf.* ch. 24. 14.
[h] *cf.* 1 Sa. 28. 19, with Phil. 1. 23.
[i] Matt. 1. 6.
[j] Deut. 33. 12.
[k] vv. 1, 14. *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 1-11.
[l] *cf.* ch. 19. 5-7.

To remove this sentence, therefore, all David's fasting and prayer are ineffectual. The king mourns but submits, and to the question of his servants as to his change of conduct on hearing of the child's death he answers by showing that it was not mere natural grief that had actuated him, nor would he fret against the Lord by useless sorrow. The child had gone whither David himself would follow, and where he would find him: in this certainly he expresses the comfort that remains for him of meeting in eternity the babe of a few days' existence upon earth.

The birth and naming of Solomon shows us, on the other hand, how complete was the divine forgiveness, and how completely David's heart was possessed by it. "Peaceful" could he be and call this child of Bathsheba, spite even of the unrevoked declaration as to the sword upon his house. The future is not untroubled, and yet his heart is. There is a true peace in submission, where God is known in His perfect love: *that* "perfect love casteth out fear"; and how else is this ever attainable?

And to this faith Jehovah answers: not *hence* is the blow to come, though it might well be thought so. Where our sin has been met and healed by the grace of God in self-judgment, there are we strongest against attack; the enemy will rather select another part. This son of Bathsheba, son of peace as he is to his father's heart, God seals to him as His gift, with a love the barrier of which cannot be broken through: "Jehovah loved him; and he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet, and called him Jedidiah," "beloved of Jah." Let us bless God for a love that can so triumph over sin.

(iv.) And now the chief city of Ammon falls,—Rabbah, the "great." Were we in the line of former symbolism, the connection of this with what immediately precedes would not be doubtful. Let God's great remedy for sin be

sengers unto David, and said, I have fought against Rabbah, and taken the city of waters; and now gather the rest of the people, and encamp against the city and take it, lest I take the city, and it be called after [m] my name. And David gathered all the people, and went to Rabbah, and fought against it, and took it. And he took their king's [n] crown from off his head, the weight of which was a talent of gold, with precious stones: and it was [set] on David's head; and he brought forth the spoil of the city in great abundance. And the people that were therein he brought forth, and put them under the [o] saw, and under iron harrows, and under iron axes, and made them pass through the brick-kilns. And so did he to all the cities of the children of Ammon. And David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

m *cf.* 1 Sam. 18. 6-9,

n 1 Chr. 20. 1.

o *cf.* Gen. 49. 27, with Ps. 149. 6-9.

SUBDIVISION 5. (Chap. xiii.–xxi. 14.)

The Divine Throne vindicates itself.

Consistent recompense.

1. (xiii. 1-19.) The out-break of lust.

(XIII., XIV.).

1. [1] AND it came to pass after those days that [p] Absalom the son of David had a fair sister, whose name was Tamar, and Amnon the son of David [q] loved her. And Amnon was so troubled that he fell sick on ac-

p ch. 15. 1, etc.

q *etr.* ver. 15.

understood and realized in souls, the stronghold of heresy (of which the Ammonite speaks) is surely taken, and the power of it destroyed. The mind wanders from God because the heart has wandered.—if indeed it has ever known Him. The apprehension of grace it is that keeps the heart, and delivers therefore from the dominion of sin, putting one under Him in whose presence is our sanctuary from it. Grace maintains the sovereignty of God for the soul; while he who is not at peace with God in the knowledge of it invents, or is ready to accept the invention of, a God with whom he can be at peace. The son of Bathsheba being born, Rabbah falls. For Bathsheba here attains the power of her name, which, we have seen, is "daughter of the oath," and equivalent to what she is also called, Bathshua, the "daughter of salvation." Thus all is of a piece.

A gleam of typical meaning would, in fact, seem to flash out here, most appropriately, surely. And in this way we need not find fault with our David, if he deal however severely with the Ammonite. Scripture is severe enough against doctrinal evil, which is the dishonor of God and the perversion of the truth which alone sanctifies. The knowledge of God in Christ is not consistent with indifference to that which affects His glory. The crown which the Ammonite king usurps belongs to David's head, which alone can easily sustain the weight of it: the error must meet its judgment.

Historically we are in no way inclined to justify the king of Israel. There may have been retaliation for Ammonite barbarities, such as Nahash's threatening of the men of Jabesh would prepare us for. Nothing of this, however, is in the history, which leaves all moral questions of this kind in general to the conscience of the reader. David has not shown himself in any way beyond criticism; and the word of God does not, as we know, cover up anything. The customs of the times were barbarous. We leave all this as really outside our province, and beyond our power to deal with aright. The instruction that we need lies in another direction.

SUBD. 5.

The public vindication of the divine throne now follows. It had, as we know, been already declared to David that evil should rise up to him out of his own house, and the sword never depart from it; the grace to himself personally did

count of his sister Tamar; for she was a virgin, and Amnon thought it hard for him to do anything to her. And Amnon had a friend whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother; and Jonadab was a very [r]subtle man. And he said unto him, Why art thou, a [s]son of a king, so lean morning by morning? wilt thou not tell me? And Amnon said unto him, I am in love with Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister. And Jonadab said unto him, Lie down on thy bed, and [t]feign thyself sick; and when thy father shall come to see thee, say unto him, I pray thee, let Tamar my sister come and bring me food, and dress the food in my sight, that I may see it, and eat it from her hand. And Amnon lay down and feigned himself sick, and the king came in to see him; and Amnon said unto the king, I pray thee, let Tamar my sister come, and make a

r *cf.* Gen. 3. 1, etc.
s 1 Ki. 21. 4-7.
t *cf.* ch. 11. 8-12.

not alter this. The throne at Jerusalem was, as none other, responsible to be the expression of that higher one which belonged to Him who, while heaven and earth could not contain Him, was pleased to be known as dwelling between the cherubim. God's righteousness would be compromised indeed, if He went on with David without adequate vindication of His character against the sin of His representative. The prophetic word would therefore be carried out.

Chastening arises for David from his own house. The uncontrolled evil in his own character reflects itself in the passions of his sons, in whom the power of heredity unmistakably shows itself. Heredity, one of the cant words of the day, expresses nevertheless a truth of which the word of God is full, and human history, from Adam downward. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" was a question of Job's day, the statement of impossibility being only made the stronger by its form as a question. There is thus evil in our natures, but we are responsible to govern our natures, and grace and the power of God are stronger than these. Apart from the grace of God, therefore, or His restraining hand, nature will manifest itself, and here was the hound in leash ready to pursue David. We are now to see with what fatal effect.

1. With David himself the outbreak of lust, permitted in clear violation of the law of God, had led to murder. The king, the pattern of righteousness as he should have been, became thus the oppressor. In the recompense following here, as when a stone disturbs calm water the circle loses height as it widens, so now the lust and the murder are on different sides, but both within the ordained sphere of his own house. Two of his sons are reciprocally the injured and the injurer, and David is made to feel the pain on each side, his sympathy now with this and now with that. He is distracted, torn asunder, on both sides dishonored. The mockery of their names gives meaning to the whole, and proclaims it to all: Amnon, the "faithful," violating all fidelity; Absalom, the "father of peace," the slaughterer of his brother! With what other hopes had these names long since been given!

These too are his eldest, for the second son, Chileab, seems to have died, at least we read no more of him: they are those upon whom the hopes of his house most of all depended. They are the *first*, the leaders: what will be the history of those that come after them?—conflicting sons with the various interests of rival mothers, the awful confusion wrought by polygamy brought home to him!

Again, that the remembrance of his own sin has weakened his ability to execute judgment on it in others is plain by his conduct; or else that natural affection rendered him helpless. The effect was, in either case, the same: the unjudged evil worked on in family and kingdom, till they were filled with the leaven of it; Absalom recalled becomes a conspirator; and Ishbosheth's Maha-

couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat from her hand. And David sent to Tamar, to the house, saying, Go, I pray thee, to the house of Amnon thy brother, and prepare food for him. And Tamar went to the house of Amnon her brother, and he was lying down; and she took the dough and kneaded it, and made cakes in his sight, and baked the cakes. And she took the pan, and poured them out before him; and he refused to eat. And Amnon said, Have every man out from me: and they went out every man from him. And Amnon said unto Tamar, Bring the food into the chamber, that I may eat it from thy hand. And Tamar took the cakes that she had made, and brought them to Amnon her brother, into the chamber. And when she handed them to him to eat, he [u]took hold of her, and said, Come, lie with me, my sister. And she said to him, Nay, my brother, do not humble me; for such a thing is not to be done in Israel: do not this [v]folly. And I, where shall I carry my reproach? and thou wilt be as one of the fools in Israel. And now, I pray thee, speak to the king, for he will not withhold me from thee. But he would not hearken to her voice, and was [w]stronger than she, and humbled her, and lay with her.

u *cf.* Gen. 39. 12.

v Lev. 18. 9. Lev. 20. 17.

w Deut. 22. 25-27.

naim has soon a new tale to tell. The rebellion is stopped, and Absalom dies, smiting the father's heart with a new pang. David is recalled, but only to have revived the memory of the past in what proves by and by to be a prophecy of the future: the bond between Ephraim and Judah shows itself almost broken; and so at last, amid returning spasms of violence, the storm for the present passes away.

But who can tell when the effect of one sin ceases? Adam's, like David's, was one sin,—in outward seeming not so evil;—its effect is only multiplied to-day, by all the seed that it has ripened, sown again, and reaped, and again sown! As men have of late discovered disease and pestilence to be living germs that subsist upon corruption, and mature and multiply on the decay they bring, so is sin vital and prolific with the germs of bitter harvest. Blessed be God that He has provided a remedy for sin!

(i.) It will not be expected that there should be much comment upon Amnon's sin. The first-born of a despotic king, this had doubtless helped to nurture in him the growth of unrestrained will; while the atmosphere of a polygamous household, loosening family ties, could not but at the same time encourage the rambling inclinations of a luxurious temper. The very fence—not such but that it might be leaped—around the object of his pursuit might encourage it: prohibition broken through has its own charm with it,—"the pleasures of sin, for a season": "stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant; but he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell."

Nor can it be doubted that the influence of his father's sin had, with one like Amnon, been without the check upon it of his father's repentance. Sin gathers its arguments at its will, and refuses what makes not for its purpose. The highest unreason, it finds in will its reason. Its subtlety is that of a maniac, with large gaps for self-deception. Nor has the natural man ability to estimate spiritual values, as of faith, or of repentance. Amnon would only see that his father had sinned, and had not suffered: he could not know that his own vices were to be the scourge upon his father's sins. There is a necessary blindness that must be theirs who reject divine wisdom, and which therefore excuses none.

Then Amnon [z]hated her with exceeding hatred, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said unto her, Arise, begone! And she said to him, There is no cause for this evil, greater than the other thou hast done me, in driving me away. But he would not hearken to her, and called his servant, that waited on him, and said, [y]Put ye now this [woman] out from me, and bolt the door after her. And she had on her a garment of many colors; for with such robes were the kings' daughters that were virgins appareled. And his attendant brought her out, and bolted the door after her. And Tamar put [z]ashes on her head, and rent her garment of divers colors which was on her, and put her hand over her head, and went on, crying out as she went.

[z] ver. 1.

[y] *ctr.* ver. 10.

[z] Josh. 7. 6. ch. 1, 2.

2. (xiii. 20-36.) The stroke of the sword.

[2]And Absalom her brother said unto her, Hath Amnon thy brother been with thee? but now, my sister, be still; he is thy brother: lay not this thing to heart. And Tamar remained, [a]desolate, in her brother Absalom's house. And king David heard all these things, and was very [b]wroth. But Absalom spake unto his brother Amnon neither good nor bad: for Absalom [c]hated Amnon, because he had humbled his sister Tamar. And it came to pass after [d]two full years that Absalom had [e]sheep-shearers in Baal-hazor, which is beside Ephraim, and Absalom invited all the king's sons. And Absalom came and said unto the king, Behold now, thy servant hath sheep-shearers; let, I pray thee, the king go, and his servants, with thy servant. And the king said to Absalom, Nay, my son, let us not all go, lest we be burdensome to thee; and he pressed him, but he would not go, but blessed him. And Absalom said, If not, I pray thee, [f]let my brother Amnon go with us. And the king said, Why should he go with thee? And Absalom pressed him, and he let Amnon go with him, and all the king's sons.

[a] ch. 20. 3.

[b] *cf.* ch. 12. 5.

[c] Lev. 19. 17.

[d] ch. 14. 28. *cf.* Gen. 27. 41.

[e] Gen. 38. 12, 13. 1 Sam. 25. 4.

[f] *cf.* ch. 11. 15.

All this had worked together to make Amnon the coarse, sensual, cruel despot that he was,—a spectre that might well terrify the father of such a son, and who had done so much to make him what he was.

Amnon, too, has his "subtle" adviser, Jonadab, with his beautiful name, "Jehovah freely gives," and his satanic spirit. Everywhere here names are in opposition to things; the piety in David, spotted, alas, with the flesh, seems to have worked for the loss of piety in others.

Across this scene, with ashes on her head and her rent garment of divers colors, flees Tamar, a childlike figure of wronged innocence, to her refuge in her brother's house. A king's court is no refuge, no safeguard. The king may be wroth, but it avails not: has he not himself introduced this shadow of uncompensated wrong that now pursues him? Did he not work the first dishonor to his home, and dig through its wall with his own hands?

(ii.) So vengeance comes into Absalom's hands, and they are hands that spare not. The wrong is bitter, and the future has its possibilities of worse. Amnon, first-born and natural heir, may soon be lord both of Absalom and Tamar. Yet for two years he has to hide and nurse in secret the wrath that will be sure be-

And Absalom commanded his servants, saying, Mark now when Amnon's heart is [g] good with wine; and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon, then slay him; fear not: have not I commanded you? be strong, and brave. And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom had charged them; and all the king's sons arose, and rode each one upon his mule, and fled. And it was so, while they were on the way, that a report came to David, saying, Absalom hath smitten all the king's sons, and there is not one of them left. And the king arose, and [h] rent his clothes, and lay upon the ground; and all his servants stood by with their clothes rent. And Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother, answered and said, Let not my lord suppose that they have slain all the young men the king's sons; for Amnon only is dead: for by the [i] appointment of Absalom this has been determined, from the day that he humbled his sister Tamar. And now let not my lord the king take the thing to heart, saying, All the king's sons are dead: for Amnon only is dead. And Absalom fled. And the young man that watched lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, much people coming from the road behind him, from the hill side. And Jonadab said unto the king, Behold, the king's sons are come: as thy servant said, so it hath been. And so it was, as he ceased speaking, behold, the king's sons came; and they lifted up their voice and wept; and the king also and all his servants wept very sore.

[g] *cf.* 1 Thes. 5. 3.

[h] ch. 12. 10.

[i] ver. 3.

3. (xiii. 37–xiv.) The bringing back of Absalom.

[3] And Absalom [j] fled, and went to Talmai the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur; and [David] mourned for his son every day. And Absalom fled, and went to Geshur, and was there three years. And king David [k] longed to go forth unto Absalom; for he was comforted concerning Amnon, because he was dead. And Joab the son of Zeruiah knew that the king's [l] heart was to-

[j] *ctr.* Num. 35. 11.

[k] ch. 13. 5. 33.

[l] ch. 13. 39.

fore it strikes. Then he finds his opportunity. You see his heart in its depths, as he prepares his feast and the daggers of his servants. Amnon shall be smitten in the pleasure that he loves, when his heart is merry with wine, unrepenting and unabsolved. And it is done! In the midst of a carouse,—in the midst of the circle of the king's sons, Amnon is smitten and slain. The sword is upon David's house, as was predicted. Who has brought it there? Who has opened the door for it? The hand is the hand of Absalom; the sword is the sword of Uriah the Hittite!

(iii.) But the story is not yet half told; and David's own moral weakness, which is soon apparent, produces a disaster which presages the ruin of the kingdom. This may be long delayed,—may even seem for a time to be entirely averted, and the peace of Solomon's reign a greater triumph than David's victories: but this is no sooner closed than the long-threatened evil breaks out suddenly in a disruption of Israel's unity into hostile powers, working for mutual overthrow. And this they at last accomplish.

We have quite full detail here. The principles that work the evil are amply given us, the main actor being now the unscrupulous Joab. He knows well the weak side of David's nature,—knows enough of divine grace also, and of its

ward Absalom; and Joab sent to Tekoa, and fetched thence a [m] wise woman, and said unto her, I pray thee, feign thyself to be a mourner, and put on the garments of mourning, I pray, and anoint not thyself with oil, but be as a woman that hath mourned long time for the dead, and go to the king, and speak to him after this manner: and Joab put the words into her mouth.

m cfr. 1 Ki. 14. 2.

And when the woman of Tekoa spake to the king, she fell on her face to the ground, and did obeisance, and said, [n] Help, O king! And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she said, I am indeed a widow, and when my husband died, thy handmaid had two sons; and they two [o] strove together in the field, and there was no deliverer [to come] between them, and the one smote the other, and slew him. And behold, all the family rose up against thy handmaid, and said, Give him up that smote his brother, that we may put him to death for the life of his brother whom he slew: and we will destroy the heir also: so they will [p] quench my coal that is left, and will not leave my husband name nor remnant on the face of the earth. And the king said

n cf. ch. 12. 1–6.

o Ex. 21. 12–14.

p cf. Ru. 1. 5.

power over a soul that has learned its debt to it, to use it with effect in behalf of what is not grace. Yet he has no evil design against David, and does not join, as we know, in the after revolt of Absalom. He seems even to mean well to the king, to give him justification for doing what he knows is in his heart to do: he makes what would be ordinarily considered but a well-intentioned blunder,—goes wrong because, alas, he has no divine wisdom, does not seek it. His is the misery of a soul at its best away from God, and thus of necessity leading others (even involuntarily) away from Him. David's is the misery of having a counselor like this, who has made himself after his fashion useful to him, and who, spite of the demur of conscience, has to be accepted as such. Joab is to David like an unjudged sin, against which he has, of course, no power, and who is always at hand to strengthen the worse and defeat the better nature. Let us earnestly pray and seek that we have no Joabs.

He hides himself behind his instrument, the woman of Tekoa, who will work more effectively upon the heart of the king. The appeal is all to the heart, and for this purpose the pity roused by the widow's tale will be the most powerful means that can be devised. He borrows, possibly, Nathan's method; but Nathan sought through the heart to reach and work upon the conscience; Joab seeks, on the contrary, to override and set it aside. He has hardened his own and prospered: he is no prophet, to foresee the end; the future does not trouble him: he cannot see why conscience should trouble another to this extent. Absalom has sinned; but so had Amnon; and the thing is done,—cannot now be recalled,—why keep up the remembrance?

The woman's story need not be too like the story of Absalom: that might be dangerous. The emotions have a storm-like impetuosity of action, which when roused does not respect the channels of sober judgment, mental any more than moral. David's affections, once acted on by the needful stimulus, will catch all the similarities of the case suggested, and let slip the rest. Thus the sudden strife in the field is better for his purpose than the two years' murder hidden in the heart which was the reality behind the picture, and the pitiful condition of the widow with her "coal that is left" ready to be quenched can be thrown in for the sake of the impression. When the king has pledged himself to the woman, it is assumed that he has judged his own case, and that he cannot draw back from his pledged word. The net is not spread in vain, though almost in sight of the bird.

unto the woman, Go unto thy house, and I will give charge concerning thee. And the woman of Tekoa said unto the king, Upon me, my lord the king, be the iniquity, and on my father's house, and let the king and his throne be guiltless. And the king said, He that speaketh unto thee, bring him unto me, and he shall not touch thee any more. And she said, I pray thee, let the king remember Jehovah thy God, that the avenger of blood do not increase destruction, and that they cut not off my son. And he said, [q]As Jehovah liveth, there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the ground. And the woman said, I pray thee, let thy handmaid speak a word to my lord the king. And he said, Speak. And the woman said, Why then hast thou thought such a thing against the people of God? because the king in saying this thing is as one guilty, in that the king does not bring back his banished. For we must [r]needs die, and are as water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; and God taketh not away the life, but [s]deviseth plans that the banished be not [still] banished from him. And now that I am come to speak of this thing unto my lord the king, [it is] because the people have made me afraid, and thy servant said, I will now speak unto the king: it may be the king will perform the request of his handmaid. For the king will hearken to deliver his handmaid out of the grasp of the man that would destroy me and my son together out of the inheritance of God. And thy servant said, The word of my lord the king be now for rest: for as an angel of God, so is my lord the king to discern good and bad, and Jehovah thy God be with thee.

And the king said unto the woman, Hide not from me now the thing that *I* am asking thee. And the woman said, Let my lord the king now speak. And the king said, Is the hand of [t]Joab with thee in all

q *cf.* Prov. 18. 13.

r *ctr.* ch. 13. 23.

s *cf.* Rom. 3. 24–26.

t ver. 1.

In application, the justice of the case is cleverly made to be sin against the people of God: the king is guilty in not bringing home his banished. Nay, the grace of God, so signally proved as it had been by David, is urged against him: God Himself "deviseth plans that the banished be not [still] banished from Him." Thus he is walled off from the appeal of conscience, and hedged in on every side.

Two things are entirely ignored, however: the need of atonement to the broken law, and the guarantee as to the future of the forgiven sinner. God's plan whereby the banished are restored includes both these things, and therefore makes for righteousness, as it must do to be grace. Mercy to the merely impenitent is only license to sin, and the fruit of this David finds in the end; and to allow the law to be violated without reparation enfeebles all the power of government. It is not therefore grace according to God that the woman urges; it is only grace according to Joab; and he, like so many more, misunderstands and perverts it. Yet David himself accepts the perversion; but he is blinded by his affection for his son. He discerns the part of Joab in the matter,—knows that it is a plot, and knows well the plotter, who was as far as possible from being any represent-

this? And the woman answered and said, As thy soul liveth, my lord the king, there is no turning to the right hand or the left from aught that my lord the king hath spoken: for thy servant Joab himself bade me, and he put all these words into thy servant's mouth. For the purpose of changing the appearance of the matter hath thy servant Joab done this thing, and my lord is wise with the wisdom of an [u]angel of God, knowing everything that is upon the earth.

And the king said unto Joab, Behold now, [v]I have done this thing: go therefore, and bring back the young man Absalom. And Joab fell to the ground upon his face, and bowed himself, and blessed the king; and Joab said, To-day doth thy servant know that I have found favor in thy sight, my lord the king, in that the king hath fulfilled the request of his servant. And Joab arose, and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. And the king said, Let him turn to his own house, and [w]let him not see my face; and Absalom turned to his own house, and the face of the king he saw not.

And in all Israel there was not a man so much to be praised as Absalom for his [x]beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. And when he shaved his [y]head (for it was at every year's end he shaved it,—because it was heavy on him therefore he shaved it) he weighed the hair of his head, two hundred shekels by the king's weight. And there were [z]born to Absalom three sons and one daughter, and her name was Tamar: she was a woman of beautiful appearance.

u ver. 17. *cf.* Prov. 29. 5.
v *cf.* Matt. 14. 9.
w *ctr.* Luke 15. 20. *ctr.* Heb. 10. 19-22.
x *cf.* 1 Sam. 10. 23. *cf.* Matt. 23. 27.
y *cf.* ch. 18. 9.
z ch. 18. 18. ch. 13. 2.

ative of divine grace. He seems to catch at the idea that he has been made to do this without knowing what he had done, and that he really cannot go back; yet he cannot act consistently upon the idea of grace, he cannot receive Absalom as the penitent he was not, and dare not open his arms after the divine way with a returning prodigal. There is no ring nor fatted calf, nor sight even of his father's face, for the unhappy man whom the captain of the host brings back from Geshur. "Absalom returned to his own house, and the face of the king he saw not."

At this point we are told of the great beauty of Absalom. It is one of the miseries of a soul away from God, that every natural gift becomes evil instead of good; and among these there is none more ensnaring than that of personal beauty. Just as what is merely external, it is what is most surely appreciated both by its possessor and those around. Spite even of our better judgment also, it is hard to believe that this fair exterior does not represent aright the soul within. Absalom was conscious certainly of his power in this respect: who that has it is not? And if any, the exception would not be in this self-willed favorite of his father and of the people, whose vanity is shown in the long permitted growth and weight of his luxuriant hair.

One sees easily indeed in him the consciousness of this possession, to be yet so fatal to him, while for two years he is allowed to fret vainly at the restraint under which he is put. We know already how long he could nurse in secret a dangerous resolve. Here evidently was the beginning of resentment against his father, and of ambitious projects soon to work disaster to many beside himself.

And Absalom dwelt [a] two whole years in Jerusalem, and saw not the king's face. And Absalom sent for Joab, to send him to the king, and he would not come to him; and he sent again the second time, but he would not come. And he said unto his servants, See, Joab's lot is beside mine, and he hath barley there: go and set it on [b] fire. And Absalom's servants set the lot on fire. And Joab arose, and came to Absalom, to his house, and said unto him, Why have thy servants set my lot on fire? And Absalom said unto Joab, Behold, I sent unto thee, saying, Come hither, that I may send thee to the king, to say, Why am I come from Geshur? it would have been well for me to be there still. And now, let me see the king's face; and if there be [c] iniquity in me, let him put me to death. And Joab came unto the king, and told him. And he called Absalom, and he came unto the king; and he bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king: and the king [d] kissed Absalom.

[a] ch. 13. 23.

[b] *cf.* Jud. 15. 4, 5.

[c] *ctr.* ch. 12. 13.

[d] *cf.* ver. 24. *cf.* Prov. 17. 15.

(XV.-XIX. 8.)

Absalom's conspiracy, I. (xv.-xvi.-14.) Gatherings on either side. *a.* (xv. 1-12.) Absalom king!

2. [1] (*a*) And it came to pass [e] after this that Absalom prepared him a chariot and horses, and fifty men to run before him. And Absalom rose up early and stood beside the way of the gate; and it came to pass that every man that had a cause to come to the king for judgment, Absalom [f] called him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel. And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good

[e] *cf.* Matt. 18. 27, 28. *cf.* Is. 26. 10.

[f] *cf.* Luke 16. 5-7.

Finally he delivers himself from the restriction under which he lies in his own impetuous and imperious manner: forces Joab to come and see him, forces himself into his father's presence. There is the complete opposite of any confession of sin: if he has committed iniquity he is ready to suffer for it; and his father's kiss of peace becomes thus not even the mercy of the woman of Tekoa, but the seal upon his own claim that he has no need of mercy.

(2.) The conclusion of this story is natural from such a beginning. He is no sooner restored to his father's favor than he becomes a conspirator against his father. There is little doubt that he was now the eldest surviving son of David: for of Chileab, the son of Abigail, we hear no more. As the grandson of a king upon his mother's side, the idea of rule would have familiarized itself with him, while the deed which had placed him in the line of succession to his father had yet compromised such claim to a most serious extent. The throne in Israel was not like that of any of the nations round: it was Jehovah's throne, and he who sat on it was the anointed of Jehovah. But Bathsheba's son had already received his name as the "beloved of Jah"; and it was no long step from that to the kingdom. It is simple to see how all these things would influence the bold and arrogant son of Maachah to strike for the coveted prize, which his father's sin and demonstrated weakness had brought also so much nearer to his grasp.

(i. *a.*) Hence now we find the leaven working. Absalom begins by assuming state, and fixing men's eyes upon himself. And from his standpoint this was natural, and according to the world's principles it was wise: one must believe in one's self, act for one's self, there is no safe waiting upon others: this is the necessary alternative of waiting upon God. In the next step we can realize once more how David's sin must have weakened faith in the righteousness of all his government. To stop the mouth of friends, to open the mouth of the assailant, what an effectual argument was the case of Uriah the Hittite! And who could

and right, but there is no one on the king's part to hear thee. And Absalom said, [g]Oh that I were made judge in the land, that any one who had any controversy or claim might come unto me, and I would do him justice! And it was so, when any man came near to do obeisance to him, that he put out his hand and took him and [h]kissed him. And in this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came unto the king for judgment: and Absalom [i]stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

And it came to pass at the end of forty [? four]* years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee let me go and pay my vow which I have vowed unto Jehovah, in Hebron. For thy servant vowed a [j]vow while I abode in Geshur in Syria, saying, If Jehovah indeed shall bring me again unto Jerusalem, then I will serve Jehovah. And the king said unto him, Go in peace. And he arose and went to [k]Hebron. And Absalom sent emissaries throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the [l]trumpet, say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron. And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, who were called and went in their simplicity, and knew not anything. And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's

g Jud. 9. 29.
h *cf.* ch. 5. 1.
i Rom. 16. 18.
j *cf.* ch. 13. 5.
k *ctr.* ch. 2. 1.
l *cf.* ch. 18. 16.

* "Forty" can hardly be the true reading, although the Hebrew and some principal versions have it. "Four" is found in the Syriac, Arabic, and some copies of the Latin versions, and in Josephus.

resist such charges of lax justice, when it was his own cause that was being pleaded by this brilliant and gracious son of the king with his readiness to do the right, and his kiss for every one that did him honor? So no wonder if the hearts of the Israelites were stolen, and the conspiracy gathered strength.

The end is reached by an infamous piece of hypocritical falsehood. Absalom forsooth had dedicated himself to Jehovah in Geshur, conditionally upon His bringing him again to Jerusalem; and now he has a vow to be fulfilled in Hebron. The king, unsuspicious as ever, sends him away in peace, and the concerted cry is raised that "Absalom reigns in Hebron."

The place is chosen well, being full of associations of the most endearing character for every Israelite. There Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had lived and walked with God, and there they were buried. Thence the fruit of the land had been brought to the people in the wilderness, and Caleb the man of faith had driven out the Anakim. More suggestive, perhaps, than all this, at Hebron David had begun his reign; and the new kingdom, it might be hoped, was not other than a return to those principles of right and truth with which the throne had been then established.

The two hundred men that went with Absalom in ignorant simplicity are but a type of the many who can be swept into the track of a revolution in the train of some leader in whom they have confidence. How many, even among Christians to-day, follow *men* rather than principles! There is little individuality of faith anywhere, and thus sects are formed and maintained. It is startling to think how many follow the truth itself, at bottom because some one else is following it, or again is following some one else who follows it! And this has therefore again and again to be tested; and again and again a fresh putting forth of truth which has nothing but the authority of truth to commend it, sifts and breaks into these mere human followings.

Ahithophel the Gilonite was moved in a very different way. The father of

counsellor, from his city, Giloh, while he offered [m]sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; and the people increased continually with Absalom.

b. (xv. 13–22.) David's departure from Jerusalem.

(*b*) And there came one that told David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom. And David said unto all his servants that were with him in Jerusalem, Arise, and let us [n]flee: for we shall not [else] escape from Absalom: make haste to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword. And the king's servants said unto the king, Behold, thy servants [will do] whatsoever my lord the king shall choose. And the king went forth, and all his household after him; and the king left ten women that were concubines, to keep the house. And the king went forth, and all the people after him, and stayed at a house far off. And all his servants passed on beside him; and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men that came after him from Gath, passed on before the king.

And the king said to [o]Ittai the Gittite, Why dost thou also go with us? return and abide with the king; for thou art a [p]stranger, and an exile moreover [as] to

m cf. Is. 1. 11.

n cf. 1 Sam. 21. 10.

o ch. 23. 29. ch. 18. 2.

p cf. Luke 17. 18.

Eliam and grandfather of Bathsheba,* we are left indeed to infer the personal animosity to David, which is easily recognized in his after-proposal himself to pursue and only to smite *him*. He has been David's counselor, listened to (we are told) as a divine oracle, yet according to his name, the "brother of folly." And such is ever the worldly wisdom which we find in him. But again we see how, in the government of God, David's sin is following him now. It is this that is the dissolution of kingdoms, and the disruption of all social bonds; and he who has not accepted this in faith must find it true in bitter experience.

Absalom offers his sacrifices at Hebron, and at the same time sends for Ahithophel. The conspiracy appeals to heaven, and forecasts its devices against the divinely constituted order,—in this mad world a thing not so uncommon as to need any special remark. It is here more grossly done than usual; that is all.

(*b.*) David has now to prove how his sin has disorganized his kingdom. That defection could have gone so far before he had any knowledge of it shows how widely the old attachment to him had given way: "there came one that told David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom." How pitifully alone he must have been for news of this kind to break in on him after this manner! He finds quickly,—conscience, no doubt, depriving him also of his customary boldness,—that his only resource is flight. God is behind this, and resistance is in vain: to bow is the only hope. He immediately leaves the city with some well-proved followers, and his household, and the way is open for Absalom into Jerusalem.

But the hearts of men are now to be revealed; and there are still found those who have attachment for life or death to the fallen king. The first of these, the head and sample of others with him, is one who seems to come strangely here, Ittai the Gittite, or man of Gath. David, it seems, has done more than destroy the Philistine giant: he has captured, and in the most signal way, the men of the city. But a gleam of light flashes upon us with his name, Ittai, "*with* Jehovah." No wonder if one once abiding in the distance from God, a

* It is not directly stated that Eliam the son of Ahithophel (ch. xxiii. 34) is the father of Bathsheba (xi. 3), but the indirect evidence is of the strongest.

thy place. Coming [but] yesterday, shall I to-day make thee go up and down with us? and I going whither I may! [q] Return, and take back thy brethren: mercy and truth be with thee. And Ittai answered the king, [r] As Jehovah liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or in life, there shall thy servant also be. And David said to Ittai, Go and [s] pass over. And Ittai the Gittite passed over, and all his men, and all the little ones that were with him.

c. (xv. 23–29.) The return of the ark.

(*c*) And all the land [t] wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over; the king also passed over the brook [u] Kidron, and all the people passed over towards the way of the wilderness. And behold, Zadok also, and all the Levites with him, bearing the [v] ark of the covenant of God; and they set down the ark of God; and Abiathar went up until all the people had done passing out of the city. And the king said unto Zadok, carry [w] back the ark of God to the city. If I shall find favour in the eyes of Jehovah, he will bring me again, and show me it and his habitation. And if he say, I have no delight in thee, behold, [here am] I: [x] let him do to me as seemeth good to him. And the king said unto Zadok the priest, Thou art the seer: return to the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar. See, I will tarry by the fords of the wilderness, until there come

q *cf.* Ru. 1. 8.

r Ru. 1. 16. *cf.* John 6. 67–70.

s *cf.* Ro. 16. 10.

t *ctr.* ch. 6. 12.

u *cf.* John 18. 1.

v *cf.* 1 Sam. 14. 18.

w ch. 6. 12.

x *cf.* 1 Pet. 5. 6.

"child of wrath," now brought nigh, should follow the One who has been the Victor in the conflict which that in Elah represents; nor can we refuse a type which shines with its own light. Pass on, Ittai, with thy six hundred: who can doubt the faithful service thou wilt give to thy master? Stranger and exile, we know where thy heart is: thou art fit to bear witness to a rejected king.

(*c.*) And now Zadok and Abiathar appear with the ark of the covenant, ready to accompany David in his flight; but this David realizes to be impossible. He is under chastening for his sin, and he will bow to the chastening. The ark of old accompanied Israel in the wilderness, but they were then on their way to the land of their possession, which could not again be lost, but because God had in the mean time rejected them as His people. This was in fact the meaning of the Babylonish captivity: Lo-ammi was written upon the nation (Hos. i. 9). But the time had not come; nor, if it had, could the ark abide with them. The Philistine possession of it had marked the end of the priestly headship, and had not God raised up Samuel, all had then been ended. Now the king stood where the priesthood once had been, but a time of forbearance had been announced, and the continuance of David's house. This stroke was personal to himself, and the ark of the covenant of God must not leave its habitation. If he still find favor in Jehovah's eyes, He will bring him back to it; if not, how vain and foolish were resistance; or to claim the token of a favor which had in fact departed!

This is characteristic of David. Forget God, alas, he does; and great are the evils and miseries that result from this: but he is not a rebel, nor can he despair of the divine mercy. He cleaves to and justifies the hand that smites him; and that hand will not go on to smite the penitent and submissive man.

The ark returns, therefore, with its attending priesthood, and David gains a post of observation in the forsaken city. In this there was, of course, nothing

[y] word from you to tell me. And Zadok and Abiathar carried again the ark of God to Jerusalem; and they abode there.

d. (xv. 30–xvi. 14.) Testings.

(*d*) And David went up by the ascent of the [z] Olives, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered; and he went up barefoot; and all the people that were with him covered every man his head, and went up, weeping as they went up. And one told David, saying, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, [a] Frustrate, I pray thee, the counsel of Ahithophel, Jehovah. And it came to pass, when David had come to the summit where he worshiped God, behold, Hushai the Arkite came to meet him with his coat rent and earth upon his head. And David said unto him, If thou pass on with me, thou wilt be a burden unto me; but if thou return to the city, and [b] say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king: as I have been thy father's servant hitherto, so now will I be thy servant; then mayest thou for me [c] defeat the counsel of Ahithophel. And are there not with thee Zadok and Abiathar the priests? and it shall be [that] whatever thou hear out of the king's house thou shalt tell to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. Behold, there are there

y ch. 17. 15, 16.

z cf. Jno. 8. 1. Ps. 3, title.

a 1 Cor. 1. 19. Ps. 55. 9, 12–14.

b cfr. 2 Cor. 10. 4.

c Ro. 12. 21.

but what was according to truth and righteousness. The priests of the Most High owed no allegiance to the usurper and willing parricide, while they *did* owe allegiance to the divinely sanctified king. But of the counterplots that follow one must judge very differently.

(*d.*) David goes up by the ascent of Olivet with all the external signs of penitential sorrow. He is told now of Ahithophel's accession to the conspiracy, and prays Jehovah to frustrate the counsel of Ahithophel, the acuteness of which he knew so well. Presently a help in this direction offers itself, of which he is not slow to avail himself. Hushai the Arkite comes to meet him with the usual manifestations of distress, but David represents to him that he will be but an additional burden upon the fugitive band, whereas if he attach himself to Absalom, with professions of service, he might for him defeat Ahithophel's counsel. Means of communication will be found by him in the sons of the priests.

David thus thinks that conspiracy can justify conspiracy, and, in the war that has begun, deceit may rightly counterwork deceit. Evil with a good end will thus become good; or at least we may do it that good may come: a conclusion which the apostle declares to subject to just judgment those who hold it. Yet it is still maintained under all the light of Christianity, and practically followed by how many in how many forms! This principle is one that David has himself acted on, as we remember, in the old days of Philistine refuge; and these things, if not judged, may easily revive after a long time of dormancy.

It is true that Absalom could have no rights to be respected in the position which he has taken. As far as *he* is concerned, treachery is his just due, and that is what gives its color to an immoral argument. If Absalom has ever so much forfeited his rights, God has not on that account forfeited *His;* and our lives are to be lived *to Him.* To leave out God is to bring confusion into all reasoning.

Hushai means "hasty," while (remarkably enough) his Gentile name, the Arkite, is from a word which speaks of lengthening, and so "protraction" and "delay." And indeed there is a haste which, because it overlooks God, can do nothing else but delay all divine help and blessing. It is the first word that is

with them their two sons, Ahimaaz, Zadok's [son], and Jonathan, Abiathar's [son]: and by them ye shall send to me everything that ye hear. And Hushai, David's friend, came to the city, and Absalom came to Jerusalem.

And when David was a little past the summit, behold, [d] Ziba, Mephibosheth's servant, met him with a couple of asses saddled, and upon them [e] two hundred loaves of bread, and a hundred raisin-cakes. and one hundred cakes of figs, and a skin of wine. And the king said unto Ziba, What meanest thou by these? And Ziba said, The asses are for the king's household to ride upon, and the bread and the figs are for the young men to eat, and the wine for such as are faint in the wilderness to drink. And the king said, And where is thy master's son? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem: for he said, To-day shall the house of Israel [f] restore me the kingdom of my father. And the king said unto Ziba, Behold, [g] thine is all that belonged to Mephibosheth. And Ziba said, I bow myself down: may I find favor in thine eyes, my lord the king.

And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, there came out thence a man of the [h] family of the house of Saul, and his name was Shimei the son of Gera: he came out, cursing as he came. And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David; and all the people and all the mighty men were at his right hand and at his left. And thus said Shimei as he [i] cursed, Out, out, thou man of blood, and thou man of Belial! Jehovah

d ch. 19. 26.

e *ctr.* 1 Sam. 25. 18.

f *cf.* ch. 9. 8, 13.

g *cf.* ch. 9. 10. ch. 19. 29.

h ch. 19. 16, 18-23. 1 Ki. 2. 8, 9, 36-46.

i Ps. 109. 17-19, 28.

used there, where it is said, "he that believeth shall *not* make haste." (Isa. xxviii. 16.) How beautifully, with what delicate precision, does Scripture stamp the unbelieving devices of even men of faith! It is that Jacob policy which so miserably disappointed the man who practiced it so long, and of which the dislocated thigh symbolized the end. Not till then did he become Israel, a "prince with God."

Next we have Ziba and his slander of Mephibosheth, and again we find David making saddest "haste." He judges in the absence of the accused, on the faith of a most improbable story, told by one who might naturally suppose the traducing of his master to be the stepping-stone to his own advantage. The help he brings to David is thus credited to himself, and he finds royal recompense for it at his master's cost.

In all this David is surely not with God. He is still protracting the discipline which he is under, has not listened aright to the divine Voice under it, even though he knows and owns it to be of God. Yet in the next case he acts beautifully. In the case of open enemies, like Shimei, he seems to be more upon his guard, more ready to see meaning; and so it is often that the worst troubles seem to test us least.

Shimei is the spectre of Saul's house, risen up against the one who has taken possession of its estate and honors. Shimei means "my fame," or "my reputation," and he is the son of Gera, which we have elsewhere taken as "rumination": he is from Bahurim also, "choice or chosen ones." All this helps to link him with the house which he represents. But from Saul and from his line David may seem to have nothing whatever to fear. What charge can be brought against him with regard to these? Shimei's accusation of "the blood of the

hath returned on thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned, and Jehovah hath given the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son; and behold, thou art in thy calamity, because thou art a man of blood. And [j]Abishai the son of Zeruiah said unto the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head. And the king said, [k]What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? yea, let him curse, for [l]Jehovah hath said unto him, Curse David; and who shall say, Why doest thou so? And David said unto Abishai and to all his servants, Behold, my [m]son, who came out of my bowels, seeketh my life; and how much more now shall not the Benjamite? Let him alone, and let him curse; for Jehovah hath bidden him. It may be that Jehovah will look on mine affliction, and that Jeho-

j ch. 19. 21.
k ch. 3. 39.
l Ps. 17. 13, 14.
m ch. 14. 33.

house of Saul" seems really the most senseless clamor. In the mind of an enemy only could the death of Abner or of Ishbosheth be attributed to him. Saul had justly forfeited the throne, and Ishbosheth had never any right claim to possess it. Shimei's curses were therefore empty noise, to which a magnanimous spirit could afford to give no heed.

But is this the whole account to be given of this attack? Are we to see in it merely the unrighteousness which would heap upon the great in their misfortune every inconsiderate calumny, and take delight in abasing further those whom God has already abased? Certainly, if we view it in this way, no one can forbid it to us. The thing is of every-day occurrence; the application so easy and obvious that it is scarce worth while to make it. The lesson is so elementary, it can scarcely be thought of as a lesson. And this is against it as any sufficient explanation of the place it occupies in the inspired history.

David also himself seems to recognize more than this in it. While the malice is plain, and as to Saul and his house personally he can easily justify himself, he still realizes that in some sense this rude Benjamite has his commission from Jehovah, "—Jehovah hath said to him, Curse David." Jehovah has permitted it, for a deeper purpose than Abishai in his resentment could possibly understand, or than Shimei could of course himself imagine.

David had not injured Saul or any of his house. But Saul's house had been removed to make way for David and his house,—that house already fallen into ruin. What, then, had been the value of this substitution? Saul had pursued David in his own intent to death, and David had actually caused Uriah to be slain,—not even in jealous fear of his own safety, but to cover the sin of his invasion of Uriah's house! Which was the better? Did it not seem as if for this David, the blood of Saul's house had been vainly, and so wrongly, shed?

True, Saul had not been really a theocratic king: he had disobeyed the command as to Amalek. But did not this even seem to make it worse, that *this* should be the theocratic king, now proved no better? Was not the judgment of God upon him now the proof that, after all, this was no help? The royal saint hunted as a criminal from his throne! Had he not, indeed, thus brought the blood of Saul's house, as it were, upon him?

And, in truth, if the remedy for man's ills be sought in this way, it is vain to exchange a Saul, even for a David. The hand of power is needed, and of absolute power, too: but where shall we find him to whom such power can be safely trusted? The answer of the world is being given to-day in the most decisive manner: the answer is, There is none: we can trust none! The constitutional king succeeds the despotic; democracy follows hard upon the constitutional kingdom: there must be a balance of wills and of interests; each separate interest

vah will requite me good for his cursing this day. And David and his men went on the way, and Shimei went along on the hill's side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust. And the king and all the people that were with him came to Ajephim,* and refreshed themselves there.

e. (xvi. 15–xvii. 23.) The government of God.

(*e*) And Absalom and all the people, the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him. And it came to pass, when Hushai the Arkite, David's friend, was come unto Absalom, that Hushai said unto Absalom, [n]Live the king! live the king! And Absalom said unto Hushai, Is this thy kindness to thy friend? why wentest thou not with thy [o]friend? And Hushai said unto Absalom, Nay, but whom [p]Jehovah hath chosen, and this [q]people, even all the men of Israel, his will I be, and with him will I abide. And again, whom should I serve? [should it] not [be] in the presence of his son? As I have served in thy father's presence, so shall I be in thy presence.

n *cf.* ch. 13. 5, etc.

o Prov. 17. 17.

p ch. 5. 12.

q ch. 5. 1–3.

* The word means "weary," and is so translated in the common version; but in this case no place would be named. The "Bible Commentary" suggests that it was a caravansary; for which the name would be appropriate.

must have its measure of control upon the ruling power: the clash of interests, the "struggle for life" goes on; but it is no sign of hope or confidence in man, but the reverse: rightly interpreted, it is the sign of the world's despair!

And well may the world despair! Were it not that the heart perverts the head, and we are slow indeed to look the inevitable in the face, the end would long since have been reached. As it is, the language is read backward, and men still hope! Nay, the spirit of hope which breathes in Christianity has formed strange alliance with the optimism of the world, and brought into it an air of piety and faith that makes despair of the world a heresy. But for this the *spirit* of hope, which is truly Christian, has been separated from its embodiment in Scripture, the true and glorious hope of the coming king! Were it not for this, David and David's house must indeed inevitably follow Saul's into the gulf of ruin. Not David, but David's Seed is the hope of men: and this is what Shimei's curse at bottom points to: truly all would be under it, only that in self-despair is faith found, and the divine remedy for this and every other ill.

(*e.*) The wheel of God's government still turns, bringing Absalom to the highest point of prosperity, and David to the lowest; but from that moment David begins again to rise, and Absalom to fall, and from this he never recovers.

First, we find Hushai at his meeting with Absalom entering upon the part prescribed for him with a subtlety which makes us understand David's confidence in him. His repeated salutation is met coldly enough by the new king, who, arch-traitor as he is himself, is surprised at another's desertion. But the "king's friend" had doubtless earned the title by acts that were unmistakable, and Absalom's surprise had ground much deeper than his after-confidence. Indeed all through this scene there is a certain ambiguity which seems to intimate to us how unwilling was even the appearance of this desertion with him. "Nay, but," he says, "whom Jehovah hath chosen, and this people, even *all* the men of Israel, his will I be, and with him will I abide." And in the strict sense this was only true of David: his own counsel afterwards was founded on the assurance that *not* all the men of Israel (and much less Jehovah) had chosen Absalom. Again he says, "Whom should I serve? Should it not be in the presence of his son? As I have served in thy father's presence, so shall I be in thy presence."

And Absalom said unto Ahithophel, Give ye your counsel what we shall do. And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Go in unto thy father's [r]concubines, whom he hath left to keep the house; and all Israel shall hear that thou art become loathsome to thy father, and the hands of all that are with thee shall be strong. And they spread Absalom a tent upon the roof; and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in the [s]sight of all Israel. And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he counseled in those days, was as if a man inquired of the word of God: so was all the counsel of Ahithophel, both with David and with Absalom.

And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Let me now choose out twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue after David this night; and I will come upon him while he is [t]weary and weak-handed, and will make him afraid, and all the people that are with him shall flee, and I will smite the king only. And I will bring back all the people unto thee: the man whom thou seekest is as if all returned; [and] all the people shall be in peace. And the saying was [u]right in the eyes of Absalom, and in the eyes of all the elders of Israel.

r Gen. 35. 22.

s ch. 12. 11, 12.

t ch. 16. 14.

u ch. 16. 23.

Now faithful service of the father would make one look for faithful service with the son certainly; but only if the father's days were at an end. So Absalom interpreted it, of course, and was meant to interpret it, as if for Hushai David's reign were at an end. But if this were not so for him, then even in the son's presence the faithful service would be to the father still. But Absalom's speedy success and abundant vanity make all this what he desires it. Treacherous himself, he has no reason for refusing treachery; and he had doubtless covered it with fine words enough, not to look too closely at the words of others. Thus the evil he has indulged works evil for him.

Ahithophel's advice, with all its wickedness, reminds us again that he is the grandfather of Bathsheba. David shall be himself dishonored in the way that he has dealt dishonor; and upon the very roof from which the lust of his eyes had carried him into open sin. But this was, as we know, the fulfilling of God's word as to him. Wherever man's sin may carry him, it cannot find the place where God shall not be governor. But what a state of things in Israel when the wisdom of an Ahithophel sees only advantage in wickedness so gross and open! Can he suppose that they have so forgotten God that they will forget the due of such things with Him? Or that they will see but the punishment of David's sin, as if it cancelled the enormity of sin in Absalom?

What he does see clearly is that the breach between father and son must not be healed, must be rendered irrevocable, for the safety of the conspirators; and thus they must use him for their purposes as he has used them for his. The power of evil thus augments by the irreversible law that what we have made our servant shall become our master: "he that committeth sin is the servant of sin." Through whatever door it enters, it becomes master of the house.

But Ahithophel is, after all, "brother of foolishness." He does not see that the wheel swung round so far will come up again for David. God has glorified Himself in view of his sin, and openly: He can now therefore appear for him, as is soon manifest, and Ahithophel has to find. For his next counsel is that, with twelve thousand chosen men, he should be allowed to follow after David, scatter his attendants, and kill the king alone. All would then be assured: "the man whom thou seekest" being put to death, it is "as if all *returned*,"—speaking as if these had strayed from their allegiance, rather than the men of Absalom.

And Absalom said, Call now Hushai the Arkite also, and let us hear what he also saith. And Hushai came to Absalom, and Absalom spake unto him, saying, Ahithophel hath spoken after this manner: shall we do after his saying or not? speak thou. And Hushai said unto Absalom, The counsel that Ahithophel hath given this time is not good. And Hushai said, Thou knowest thy father and his men, that they are mighty men, and that they are [v]chafed in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field; and thy father is a man of war, and will not lodge with the people: behold, he is [w]hid now in some pit, or in some such place; and it will be, when some of them fall at the first, that he that heareth will hearken and say, There is a slaughter among the people that follow Absalom. And even the valiant man, whose heart is as the heart of a lion, shall utterly melt: for all Israel knoweth that thy father is a mighty man, and that they that are with him are valiant men. But I counsel that [x]all Israel be fully gathered unto thee, from Dan even unto Beersheba, as the sand that is by the sea for multitude, and that thou go to battle in thine own person. And we shall come upon him in some place where he shall be found; and we will light on him as the dew falleth on the ground; and of him and all the men that are with him there shall not be left so much as one. And if he be gotten into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the watercourse, till there be not one small stone found there. And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Arkite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For Jehovah had [y]appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, in order that Jehovah might bring evil upon Absalom.

And Hushai said unto [z]Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, Thus and thus did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel, and thus and thus have I counseled. And now send quickly, and tell David, saying, [a]Lodge not this night at the fords of the wilderness, but pass over entirely, lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people that are with him. And Jonathan and Ahimaaz were staying at Enrogel, and a maidservant went and told them, and they were to go and tell

v Ju. 18. 25.
w 1 Sa. 22. 1.
x ver. 24.
y ch. 15. 31.
z ch. 15. 28.
a *cf.* Gen. 19. 17.

But the limit is reached, and the wise and heartless counsel, though at first approved, is finally defeated by the opposition of Hushai. Exactly adapted to the man he is addressing, his speech works upon the fears and upon the vanity of Absalom. Nothing indeed could be wiser than his recommendation, if only one thing were granted which the new king does not stay to question, that the will of the nation as a whole has placed him where he is. Ahithophel knows better: hence his despair when Hushai's counsel is preferred before his own. While the ready messengers start off, not without personal risk, to bring David the news, Ahithophel quietly returns to Giloh, puts his affairs in order, and hangs himself,— the first suicide of which we read in Scripture.

king David: that they might not be seen to come into the city. But a lad saw them, and told Absalom. And they went both of them quickly, and came to a man's house in Bahurim; and he had a well in his court, and they went down into it. And the woman took and [b]spread the covering over the well's mouth, and spread ground corn upon it: and the thing was not known. And Absalom's servants came to the woman, to the house, and they said, Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan? And the woman said to them, They are gone over the brook of water: and they sought and found them not, and returned to Jerusalem.

b Josh. 2. 5, 6. Ex. 1. 19.

And it came to pass, after they were departed, that they came up out of the well, and went and told king David, and said unto David, Arise and pass quickly over the water, for thus hath Ahithophel counselled against you. And David arose, and all the people that were with him, and passed over [c]Jordan: by morning-light there failed not one of them that had not passed over Jordan.

c cf. Ps. 42. 6.

And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and rose, and gat him home to his city, and gave charge to his house, and [d]hanged himself and died, and he was buried in his father's sepulcre.

d Matt. 27. 5 ch. 18. 10.

2. (xvii. 24-xix. 7.) The civil war.

[2]And David came to Mahanaim. And Absalom passed over Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him. And Absalom made Amasa captain of the host instead of Joab: which Amasa was the son of a man whose name was Ithra the Israelite,* who went in to Abigail the daughter of Nahash, sister of Zeruiah Joab's moth-

* Probably, "Ishmaelite," as the Alex. text of the Septuagint here, and 1 Chron. ii. 17.

David passes over the fords of Jordan, and is in the mean time safe. His plan of defeating Ahithophel by Hushai has been completely successful; and, if success can do this, it is justified by it. How many, openly or secretly, scarcely perhaps allowing it to themselves, would accept such justification?

In this case there can be no real question. If deceit and treachery are evil,—if evil may *not* be done, that good may come,—if God therefore cannot lead his people in such a path,—then the success of a thing can be no sufficient test of fitness or expediency at any time. We have not to look the less carefully at the question of right because it can be demonstrated that a measure will be successful.

That David escaped by Hushai's means is certainly true. How much did he miss by it of seeing God's hand stretched out for him? How willingly do we deprive ourselves of many such glorious visions in the same way! By so much as we are richer in resources, by so much poorer do our lives become!

(ii.) Mahanaim once more answers to its name. Israel is again divided into "two camps." Absalom passes over Jordan and encamps in Gilead.

The benefit of delay to David's cause is soon realized in the rallying to him of many: so that his hundreds swell rapidly into thousands; and the quality of these adherents, as we may well believe, gives them rank beyond their number.

er. And Israel and Absalom encamped in the land of Gilead.

And it came to pass, when David was come to [e]Mahanaim, that Shobi the son of Nahash, of Rabbah of the children of [f]Ammon, and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lodebar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim, [g]brought beds and basins, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched [corn,] and beans, and lentiles, and parched [pulse,] and honey, and curds, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David and the people that were with him to eat: for they said, The people [have been] hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness.

And David mustered the people that were with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them. And David committed a third part of the people into the hand of Joab, and a third part into the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and a third part into the hand of [h]Ittai the Gittite. And the king said unto the people, [i]I will surely go forth with you myself also. But the people said, Thou shalt not go forth: for if we should ever so much flee, they will not care for us, and if half of us die, they will not care for us; but *thou* art worth [j]ten thousand of us, and now it is better that thou aid us from the city. And the king said unto them, What seemeth best to you I will do. And the king [k]stood by the gate side, and all the people went forth by hundreds and by thousands. And the king charged Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Deal [l]gently for my sake with the young man Absalom. And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom.

And the people went out into the field against Israel, and the battle was in the wood of Ephraim. And the people of Israel were [m]smitten there before the servants of David; and there was there a great slaughter that day of twenty thousand men. And the battle there was scattered over the face of all the country; and the [n]wood devoured more people that day than the sword

[e] ch. 2. 8, 12.
[f] *cf.* ch. 10. 1.
[g] ch. 19. 31.
[h] ch. 15. 19–21.
[i] ch. 21. 17.
[j] *cf.* Acts 21. 13.
[k] *cf.* 1 Sam. 4. 13.
[l] ch. 14. 33.
[m] Judg. 20. 35.
[n] *cf.* Ex. 14. 3.

We see in Shobi the Ammonite another example of that attractive power in David by which enemies by nature became his friends. With Shobi, Machir and Barzillai, Gileadites, contribute to his necessities at Mahanaim. Here he comes to a stand, and the forces on either side prepare for the conflict imminent.

David divides his army into three parts, under three tried leaders, the Gittite one. The tenderness and prudence of his followers restrain him from going forth with them to the battle. His love for the son that would have doomed him to death without remorse, is shown in his charge to the leaders in the hearing of all, for *his* sake to spare Absalom.

Of the battle itself there are no details; but of Absalom's men there are 20,000 slain, the wood of Ephraim entangling them after their defeat. Here Absalom meets his end in a way which speaks solemn judgment of the career it closes.

devoured. And Absalom met the servants of David; and Absalom was riding upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great terebinth; and his [o]head caught hold of the terebinth, and he was taken up between heaven and earth, and the mule that was under him went away. And a certain man saw it, and told Joab, and said, Behold, I saw Absalom [p]hanged in the terebinth. And Joab said unto the man that told him, And behold, thou sawest, and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground, and I would have given thee ten silver [pieces] and a girdle? And the man said unto Joab, Though I were to receive a thousand silver [pieces] in my hand, I would not put forth my hand against the king's son: for in our hearing the king [q]charged thee and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Beware that none touch the young man Absalom. Otherwise I should have dealt falsely with my own life, for there is no matter concealed from the king, and *thou* wouldst have taken thy stand against [me]. And Joab said, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three spears in his hand and [r]thrust them into Absalom's heart while he was yet alive in the midst of the terebinth. And ten young men that bare Joab's armor compassed about and smote Absalom and slew him. And Joab blew the trumpet, and the people [s]returned from pursuing after Israel, for Joab held back the people. And they took Absalom, and cast him into the great pit in the wood, and laid a very great [t]heap of stones upon him; and all Israel fled, every one to his tent. But Absalom in his life-time had taken and reared up for himself the pillar that is in the king's dale: for he said, I have [u]no son to keep my name in remembrance; and he called the pillar after his own name, and it is called unto this day, Absalom's monument.

And Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said, Let me now [v]run, and bear the king tidings that Jehovah hath given judgment for him out of the hand of his enemies. And Joab said unto him, Thou shalt not bear tidings this day, but thou shalt bear tidings another day; but this day thou shalt bear no tidings, because the king's son is dead. And Joab said unto the Cushite, Go, tell the king what thou hast seen. And the Cushite bowed himself unto Joab and ran. And [w]Ahimaaz the son of

o Gen. 40. 19. Deut. 21. 22, 23.
p ch. 17. 23.
q ver. 5.
r *ctr.* ch. 14. 1, etc.
s ch. 2. 28.
t Josh. 7. 25, 26.
u *cf.* ch. 14. 27. *cf.* Ps. 109. 13.
v 1 Sam. 4. 12.
w ch. 17. 17.

Caught in the branches of a terebinth, he is lifted by his head between earth and heaven; that which supported him passing away from under him. There he dies at the hand of Joab and the young men that follow him, and is flung into a pit in the wood, with a great heap of stones heaped over him as over an executed criminal,—in striking contrast with the monument he had prepared for himself elsewhere.

The conveyance of the news to David is described with unexpected detail: the two messengers, one of whom so persistently seeks the service while he with-

Zadok said yet again to Joab, But however, let me, I pray thee, also run after the Cushite. And Joab said, Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing thou hast no tidings ready? But however, [said he,] let me run. And he said unto him, Run. And Ahimaaz ran by the way of the [river-] circuit, and outran the Cushite.

And David was [x]sitting between the two gates; and the watchman went up to the roof of the gate, unto the wall, and he lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, a man running alone. And the watchman called and told the king. And the king said, If he be alone, there is tidings in his mouth. And he came on and drew near. And the watchman saw another man running; and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold a man running alone. And the king said, He also bringeth tidings. And the watchman said, The running of the foremost appeareth like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok. And the king said, He is a [y]good man, and cometh with good tidings. And Ahimaaz called and said unto the king, Peace! And he fell down to the earth on his face before the king, and said, [z]Blessed be Jehovah thy God, who hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king. And the king said, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Ahimaaz said, [a]When Joab sent the king's servant and me thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but knew not what it was. And the king said, Turn aside, stand here. And he turned aside and stood still. And behold, the Cushite came; and the Cushite said, Let my lord the king receive the good tidings, for Jehovah hath given judgment for thee this day from the hand of all them that rose up against thee. And the king said unto the Cushite, Is the young man Absalom safe? And the Cushite said, The [b]enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee for evil, be as that young man. And the king was much moved, and went up to the upper chamber of the gate, and wept, and said thus as he went, [c]O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would that I had died for thee, Absalom, my son, my son!

And it was told Joab, Behold, the king weepeth and mourneth for Absalom. And the deliverance that day was turned into [d]mourning for all the people: for the people heard say that day, The king is grieved for his son. And the people stole that day into the city, as people steal away ashamed when they flee in battle. And the king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son,

x 1 Sa. 4. 13.

y 1 Kings 1. 42.

z *cf.* ch. 16. 12.

a vers. 14–17.

b ch. 23. 38.

c ch. 12. 10.

d *cf.* Judg. 21. 2.

holds the distress of which he knows; the king's watch in the city; his pathetic tender inquiry after the "young man, Absalom"; then the burst of passionate grief, from which the people steal away abashed, as if *they* had suffered the defeat instead of having gained the victory; then the bold and effectual rebuke of Joab,

my son! And [e]Joab came into the house, unto the king, and said, Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants, who this day have saved thy life and the lives of thy sons and thy daughters, and the lives of thy wives and the lives of thy concubines: in that thou lovest those that hate thee, and hatest those that love thee. For thou hast declared to-day, that princes and servants are naught to thee: for I know to-day that it would have been right in thine eyes if Absalom had lived, and all we had died. And now, arise, go forth, and speak comfortingly to thy servants: for I swear by Jehovah, if thou go not forth, there will not [f]tarry a man with thee to-night; and that will be worse to thee than all the evil that hath befallen thee from thy youth till now. And the king arose and sat in the gate. And they told all the people, saying, Behold, the king sitteth in the gate. And all the people came before the king; but [g]Israel had fled every man to his tent.

[e] ch. 18. 14, etc.

[f] ch. 12. 28.

[g] ch. 20. 1.

(XIX. 9-40.)

The return of the king.

3. And all the people were at strife throughout the tribes of Israel, saying, The king delivered us out of the hold of our enemies, and he rescued us from the hold of the

which brings the king once more to the gate, where the people come again before him.

It is a touching history, with a general moral intent which is so obvious that it needs no special comment; but we leave it with a profound feeling that we have merely touched the surface, and that there are everywhere meanings that we have failed to reach. The typical significance which we have found through all the Old Testament history hitherto, here seems largely to fail us; but perhaps we ought not to wonder much at this. The history here is one of continuous sin and evil, on the part of the main actors in it, and of the government of God in view of this: and the very purport of it is to show the break-down of all hope for man, save in Christ Himself. David is here, therefore, not the likeness but the unlikeness to his Son and Lord. No doubt there may still be typical teaching; but if so, it will be incidental, partial, and supplementary to the general purport of the narrative. As yet we have not found this; but those who seek need not be discouraged on that account. The deeper meanings here have been yet but little sought: what has been yielded to the search as yet is only the beginning of what may be looked for by the patient inquirer.

(3.) We pass on then to the return of the king,—a fruitful subject, one would naturally deem it. David is now rising up out of his distresses; the government of God has vindicated itself, and is no longer against him; his rejection is over, and, except one brief revival of dangerous feeling, his throne is now to be established over a reunited people. It is natural to think here of Him who is soon to come in glory as the antitype of David in circumstances such as these; still, though types are often and variously repeated, it is well to remember that we have had already, much earlier in David's history, the types of Christ's rejection and His reign alike, and that we are here in a very different subdivision of the book. God loves to surprise and delight the ready heart with constant reminders of the glory of His Son; yet we may expect here probably a larger mingling of what is simply David's personal history, and what is unlikeness, as well as what is likeness.

Thus the opening sentences here show us the tribes of Israel at strife among themselves about bringing back the king. The king's own tribe holds back, and

[h] Philistines, and now he is fled out of the land because of Absalom; and Absalom whom we anointed over us is dead in battle; and now why are ye silent as to bringing back the king? And king David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, saying, Speak unto the elders of Judah, saying, Why are ye the [i] last to bring back the king unto his house? for the word of all Israel is come unto the king, unto his house. *Ye* are my brethren; *ye* are my [j] bones and my flesh: and why are ye the last to bring back the king? And say ye to [k] Amasa, Art not thou my bone and my flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if thou shalt not be captain of the host before me continually, instead of Joab. And he inclined the heart of all the men of Judah as one man; and they sent unto the king, [saying,] [l] Return thou and all thy servants.

And the king returned, and came to Jordan: and Judah came to [m] Gilgal, coming to meet the king, to conduct the king over Jordan. And [n] Shimei the son of Gera, the Benjamite, who was of Bahurim, hasted and came down with the men of Judah to meet king David. And there were with him a thousand men of Benjamin, and [o] Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; and they forded the Jordan before the king. And the ferry-boat went over to carry over the king's household, and to do what he thought good. And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king as he crossed over Jordan; and he said unto the king, Let not my lord impute iniquity to me nor remember what thy servant did perversely in the day that the king went forth of Jerusalem, the king taking it to heart. For thy servant knoweth that I have sinned; and lo, I am come this day the first of all the house of Joseph, coming down to meet my lord the king. And [p] Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered and said, Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the anointed of Jehovah? And

h ch. 8. 1.
i ch. 15. 24-26.
j ch. 5. 1.
k ch. 17. 25.
l ch. 16. 18.
m 1 Sa. 15. 33. ver. 40.
n ch. 16. 5. 1 Ki. 2. 8.
o ch. 16. 1.
p ch. 16. 9.

David sends to Zadok and Abiathar to urge them to press upon these the state of feeling of the other tribes, and his own kinship to themselves. Amasa, captain of the host so recently come against him, he urges similarly, promising him the same place as under Absalom, instead of Joab. Judah is thus gained, and with their usual impulsiveness, without seeking the co-operation of the rest of Israel, they send their message of recall to the king: "Return thou, and all thy servants." There is no confession or sorrow for the past; and the independence works for evil in the state of jealousy already subsisting between the tribes. In all this David shows little of the dignity of faith, and perhaps on this account is allowed to suffer at least what may convince him of his folly. Sheba's insurrection and the murder of Amasa — who seems little qualified for the position to which he is raised — both spring apparently out of David's unbelieving "haste" on this occasion.

Nor does his mercy to Shimei seem to have sustained sufficiently the righteousness that should characterize the throne. So evidently he believed afterwards, as we see by his recommendation to Solomon with regard to him. To relax the

David said, [q] What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be adversaries to me? Shall any one be put to death to-day in Israel? for do I not know that I am to-day king over Israel? And the king said unto Shimei, Thou shalt not die: and the king [r] sware unto him.

And [s] Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king: and he had not [t] done [anything to] his feet, nor done [anything to] his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day that he came [again] in peace. And it was so when he came to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said unto him, Wherefore wentest thou not with me, Mephibosheth? And he said, My lord the king, my servant [u] deceived me: for thy servant said, I will saddle me the ass and ride upon it, that I may go to the king: for thy servant is lame. And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king. But my lord the king is as an [v] angel of God: do therefore what is good in thine eyes. For all my father's house were but as [w] dead men before my lord the king, and thou didst set thy servant among them that eat at thy table: what right any more, then, have I to cry unto the king? And the king said, Why speakest thou any more of thine affairs? I have said, Thou and Ziba [x] divide the land. And Mephibosheth said unto the king, [y] Let him even take all, since my lord the king hath come unto his house in peace.

And [z] Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim, and went over Jordan with the king, to conduct him over Jordan. And Barzillai was very aged, being eighty years old; and it was he that had maintained the king when he abode at Mahanaim: for he was a very great man. And the king said unto Barzillai, Pass thou over with me, and I will maintain thee

q ch. 16. 10.
r cf. ch. 14. 11.
s ch. 9. 6.
t cf. Luke 5. 34, 35.
u ch. 16. 3.
v ctr. ch. 14. 20.
w ch. 9. 8.
x ch. 16. 4. ctr. ch. 9. 7.
y cf. 1 Cor. 6. 7.
z ch. 17. 27. 1 Ki. 2. 7.

extreme penalty might well suit the day of David's restoration to the throne, especially in view of his professed repentance. But there seems to have been no reality such as would have harmonized with this fuller grace.

As to Mephibosheth, David's treatment of him is that of a man unable to resist conviction of his former rashness, and yet unwilling to face fully the injustice of which he had been guilty. Tricked by his servant and compelled to inactivity by his helpless condition, Mephibosheth has been plainly mourning for his benefactor and friend. David compromises with his conscience and his promise to Ziba, his irritable peremptoriness showing him to be ill at ease. The son of Jonathan manifests the spirit of his father, the affection which is not to be bought and cannot be changed by the undeserved change he experiences: "Let him even take all, since the king has come unto his house in peace." It would be good to think that the cloud could be lifted from David as to this matter, but the history leaves him under it, and we must. The "I have said" is meant to intimate finality; and we have no hint of its recall.

Barzillai's leave-taking we must pass over, simply as having nothing to add to the Scripture account. Save some natural analogies, there does not after all seem much to compare with the great event for which as Christians we are taught

with me in Jerusalem. And Barzillai said unto the king, [a]How many are the days of the years of my life, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem? I am this day eighty years old: can I discern between good and bad? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing men or of singing women? and why should thy servant be yet a burden to my lord the king? Thy servant goeth a little way over Jordan with the king; and why should the king recompense it to me with this reward? Let thy servant turn back again, I pray thee, that I may die in mine own city by the grave of my father and my mother. But behold thy servant Chimham: let him go over with my lord the king, and do to him what seemeth good to thee. And the king said, Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do for him what seemeth good to thee; and whatsoever thou shalt require of me I will do it for thee. And all the people went over Jordan, and when the king had gone over, the king kissed Barzillai and blessed him; and he returned to his own place. And the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him.

a *cf.* Ps. 90. 10.

(XIX. 40–XX. 36.)

The weakened kingdom. 4. (xix. 40–xx. 36.)

4. And all the people of Judah conducted the king over, and also half the people of Israel. And behold, [b]all the men of Israel came unto the king, and said unto the king, Why have our brethren the men of Judah stolen thee away, and brought the king and his household and all David's men with him, over Jordan? And all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, Because the king is near [of kin] to me; and why then art thou angry for this matter? have we eaten at all at the king's cost? or has he given us any gift? And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah and said, I have [c]ten parts in the king, and I have also more right than thou in David: why, then, hast thou despised me that my advice was not first had in bringing back my king? And the words of the men of Judah were [d]harsher than the words of the men of Israel.

b vv. 9 10.

c *cf.* 1 King. 11. 31.

d ch. 3. 1.

And there happened to be there a man of Belial,

to look, while the whole narrative seems part of a history of human failure and governmental dealings of God in view of it, such as its place in the book would intimate. We go on, not to scenes of peace and prosperity, but of fresh strife and sorrow. The very aim and purport of it all seems to be, how little the world can find from king or government, short of Christ's own rule. Since then it has been making long experiment as to the truth of this, hoping to prove it false, but has not.

4. Not yet has the king reached Jerusalem before there appears the shadow of that which, little more than a generation later, was to be the beginning of the end for Israel's independence. The strife between Israel and Judah breaks out in the very presence of the king; and Sheba the son of Bichri, a Benjamite, heads a fresh revolt against David. The men of Israel, gathered to do honor to David, follow him; and the spark of rebellion thus kindled threatens to grow into a speedy

and his name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a [e]Benjamite. And he blew the trumpet, and said, We have no [f]part in David, and we have no inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel. And all the men of Israel went up from after David, [and] followed Sheba the son of Bichri; but the men of [g]Judah clave unto their king, from Jordan to Jerusalem.

And David came unto his house at Jerusalem; and the king took the [h]ten women, his concubines, whom he had left to keep the house, and put them in ward, and maintained them, but did not go in to them. So they were shut up to the day of their death, living in widowhood.

And the king said to [i]Amasa, Assemble me the men of Judah in three days, and be thou here present. And Amasa went to assemble Judah; but he tarried longer than the set time which he had appointed him. And David said to Abishai, Now will Sheba, the son of Bichri, do us more harm than did Absalom: take thou thy lord's servants and pursue after him, lest he get him fortified cities, and escape out of our sight. And there went after him Joab's men and the Cherethites and the Pelethites, and all the [j]mighty men; and they went out of Jerusalem to pursue after Sheba, the son of Bichri.

When they were at the great stone which is in Gibeon, Amasa came towards them. And Joab was girded with his coat, his dress, and over it the girdle of a sword fastened upon his loins in its sheath, and as he went forth, it fell out. And Joab said to Amasa, Art thou in [k]health, my brother? And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand, to kiss him. And Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab's hand; and he [l]smote him with it in the belly, and shed out his bowels on the ground, and struck him not again: and he died. And Joab and Abishai his brother pursued after Sheba, the son of Bichri. And one of Joab's young men stood by him, and said, He that favoreth Joab, and he that is for David, [let him go] after Joab. But Amasa wallowed in blood in the midst of the highway; and when the man saw that all the people stood still, he removed Amasa out of the highway into the field, and cast a cloth over him, when he saw that every one that came by stood still. When he was removed out of the high-

[e] ch. 19. 16. ch. 16. 5.
[f] 1 Ki. 12. 16.
[g] ch. 2. 4.
[h] ch. 16. 21, 22.
[i] ch. 17. 25. ch. 19. 13.
[j] ch. 10. 7.
[k] *cf.* Ezek. 33. 31.
[l] ch. 3. 27. 1 Ki. 2. 5.

flame. The king calls Amasa to gather the tribe of Judah in pursuit of Sheba; but he is tardy, where everything depends on speed: David therefore intrusts Abishai with the commission to pursue Sheba at the head of his standing guard. The special troop of the dispossessed Joab goes with the rest, and Joab at the head of these. Here was at once material for discord again, and the murder of Amasa restores Joab to his old place at the head of the troops, where his success in the capture of Sheba keeps him. Politic and brave as he is unscrupulous, the figure of Joab dominates all this latter part of David's reign.

way, every man went on after Joab, to pursue after Sheba, the son of Bichri.

And he went through all the tribes of Israel unto Abel and to Beth-maachah, and all the Berim, and they gathered together, and went also after him. And they came and besieged him in Abel-bethmaachah; and they cast up a bank against the city, and it stood at the rampart; and all the people that were with Joab were sapping the wall to throw it down. And a wise woman cried out of the city, Hear, hear! say, I pray you, unto Joab, come near hither, that I may speak with thee. And he came near unto her, and the woman said, Art thou Joab? and he said, I am he. And she said unto him, Hear the words of thy handmaid; and he said, I do hear. And she spake, saying, They were wont to speak formerly, saying, They will surely inquire in Abel; and so they ended. I am of the [m]peaceful and faithful in Israel: thou seekest to destroy a city and a [n]mother in Israel; why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of Jehovah? And Joab answered and said, Far be it, far be it from me to swallow up or destroy. The matter is not so, but a man of [o]mount Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, hath lifted up his hand against the king, against David: [p]give him up only, and I will depart from the city. And the woman said unto Joab, Behold, his head shall be thrown to thee over the wall.

[m] ch. 2. 28.
[n] Judg. 5. 7.
[o] 1 Ki. 11. 26. 1 Sa. 14. 22. 1 Ki. 4. 8.
[p] *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 6, 13.

This section terminates with another list of the officials under David, such as we have had already in the eighth chapter in connection with the most brilliant period of his history. It is natural to see in this later list the record of David's later years, and in the differences between the two, those which the lapse of time has made. But the question for us is, supposing this to be correct, is it a sufficient account of the matter? Is there any practical use — any significance worthy of consideration — in the two lists being given us? Are they intended for comparison? In an inspired history, can it be vain to imagine that spiritual interests are subserved by their place in it? Upon the answer given to such questions depends much of the value of these records to us, and of the attention they will meet with at our hands. If they are simply facts of history, let them be ever so accurate as facts, they will assuredly be of very little value for the generality of readers. If, on the other hand, it be true here, as with Scripture everywhere, that they are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," at once our interest in them will be excited, and we shall examine them with an earnestness corresponding to our expectation of such results. If we believe in verbal inspiration,— as it is most certain Christ our Master did,— then we shall think no investigation too minute, too microscopic. Such a claim will not allow in us a mere indolent acceptance of it. It will produce an intelligent activity in the pursuit of truth which will require much from an inspired writing, and will assuredly be bitterly disappointed if results are not found to justify the claim.

We have already — partly, at least — examined the first list in its place, connected as it is with the first and glorious portion of David's reign, the history of which we have spoken as in some sense idealized in order that it might the better represent the higher glories of the one perfect kingdom. As so connected, it speaks of the character of that government in which the divine and human meet for the first time in absolute harmony. The second list, connected as distinctly

And the woman went unto all the people in her [q]wisdom; and they cut off the head of Sheba, the son of Bichri, and cast it out to Joab. And he blew the trumpet, and they dispersed from the city, every man to his tent. And Joab returned to Jerusalem unto the king.

And [r]Joab was over all the host of Israel; and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and over the Pelethites; and Adoram was over the tribute; and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder; and Sheva was scribe; and Zadok and Abiathar were

[q] *cf.* Eccl. 9. 15.

[r] ch. 8. 15. ch. 23. 20.

with David's failure and sin, would seem as if it must intimate, in contrast with this, the failure of what is merely human; not, of course, in its worse forms (or there would be no lesson), but in its better,—not Absalom's but David's reign.

Yet the lists, after all, are very much alike,—too much, we might think, to serve any such purpose. They are the same list, with (as has been already said) such changes as the lapse of a few years might make. To see the differences fully we must take into account, not merely those of the names but of their places also,—numbers counting, as we know, for much. We must believe, in short, in inspiration as to every "jot" and "tittle"; and so believing, we shall not be disappointed.

(1.) The lists begin much alike:—"And Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the host"; "And Joab was over all the host of Israel." The significance of Joab, typically, lies in his name, as we have seen. Joab means "Jehovah is father"; and "son of Zeruiah" shows us this as the fruit of the cross. The one point of difference—most significant it is—between the two lists here is that in the second this last is omitted: *the cross as the foundation of all is removed.*

Now we are familiar with the fact that where atonement is denied the "fatherhood of God" may be yet insisted on, and indeed widened in its application to all, upon the natural basis of creation, the fall and its consequences being denied. Grace, faith, and a peculiar relationship of these to one another are thus necessarily set aside also: and this is evidently the condition of the best human governments, which, as governments of the world, cannot act upon Christian rules or principles, which are for Christians only. The omission in the second list is therefore the expression of a simple fact by which all governments to-day, however much Christian in profession, are distinguished from Christ's coming one. Look at the judgment of sheep and goats (Matt. xxv.), the judgment of the living when that kingdom is set up on earth,—and note the difference. Christians may be kings, judges, governors, they cannot any the more, *as such*, act in character as Christians; nor can they find in the New Testament a single word addressed to such. "My kingdom is not of this world" is decisive for the followers of Him who spake after this manner.

(2.) The second place in the second list is filled by "Benaiah the son of Jehoiada," who is "over the Cherethites, and over the Pelethites," that is, the "executioners and couriers." He is moved up from the *fifth* place on the first list to the second here: another important difference, though the name and office are the same; still more when we find "Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud the recorder," (literally, "the remembrancer,") with all that is implied here, displaced to a *fourth* position. Judgment is God's strange, however necessary, work: the fifth place, that of governmental recompense, is what plainly belongs to it. It is therefore here *out* of place, and *in* that of confirmation, help, salvation: it is an arm upon which the weakness of the kings of the earth has manifestly to support itself; and how often is judgment rendered merciless by this very weakness,—by the necessity of self-preservation. Divine government needs no such help.

(3.) In the third place of the first list are found the priests, plainly again in their proper order. Here they are *sixth*, three places lower down, while the third

priests; and Ira also the Jairite was a chief ruler about David.

Retribution for the slaughter of the Gibeonites.

(XXI. 1-14.)

5. And there was a [s]famine in the days of David three years, year after year. And David [t]sought Jehovah's

[s] ch. 24. 1. Lev. 26. 26.
[t] 1 Kings 8. 37, 38.

place here (the number of manifestation and glory) is filled by an officer entirely unknown in the former list, and the cause of woeful disaster at a later day, "Adoram," who is "over the tribute." Who can fail to see the significance of the priest (the intercessor and mediator) giving way to the tax-collector? And who can but realize the burden of the best human governments in this respect, compared with the mercy of the divine? Here is a difference, central and pervasive.

Adoniram, "my lord is exalted," is here contracted, probably by the popular mouth, into Adoram, "their glorifying."

(4.) Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud is still "recorder" or "remembrancer," but now in the *fourth* place, that of weakness and failure; while—

(5.) Instead of Seraiah, "Jah has dominion," Sheva is scribe; whose name is taken generally to mean "vanity." Because the world has, as far as possible, escaped from under the dominion of Jah, vanity is written upon it.

(6.) Under the sixth head are found, with shorn honors, Zadok and Abiathar, the priests; the number that in which the uprise of evil is indicated, being the exact opposite of that which belongs to them of right. Priest, as we see, is far separate from king here, while in the perfect rule at last these shall be joined together. The one who is *over* shall be the one who is *for* his people, and nothing shall be able to separate these things any more forever.

(7.) Lastly, under the number of rest, Ira the Jairite is named as a chief ruler; the names being suggestively significant of the opposite of rest, as "watcher, the enlightener." How clearly is indicated the disturbed condition of the world's kingdoms, with their constant restlessness and suspicion of change. This perfects the vivid picture: and yet it describes not a Saul's rule, but a David's!

Certainly, slight as has been the present sketch of it, we have no reason to doubt that the two official lists here are in designed and significant contrast with one another. Yet their meaning is not blazoned on their front, but indicated by slight touches, and left to be brought out by such inquiry as seems never to have been given them; one reason for this, however, being plainly neglect of that symbolism of numbers which, however it may be ignored, yet runs through Scripture and illumines it. If a worthy search were made, it would be found, I doubt not, that instead of exaggerating the importance of this, all that has been said in its behalf has been far too little.

The lists manifestly seal the interpretation of the several portions of this history of David, the typical and the natural, which it is according to the purpose of the book to put in contrast. It is, as we find, really a book of the "kingdoms," in which the higher is always in contrast with the lower, until He come who joins them together; and here David, greater than himself, bids us look on in faith to what has been in the mind of God from the beginning. Into this the kingdoms of the world will never grow: they will pass away, that the kingdom of the heavens may replace them. He shall come whose right it is, and God will give it Him.

5. The last section of this subdivision is an appendix to the previous history. *When* what is narrated here took place we are not informed, but the very vagueness of the specification, "in the days of David," implies that it is not in continuity with the things we have been looking at. It is classed with them because of its similar moral bearing, not because of its connection in time. Its theme, like theirs, is the government of God; and, as another "fifth," emphasizes responsibility as under this government, which the failure manifestly (and in very real connection thus with the preceding history) confirms very solemnly.

There is a famine for three years, year after year, which *at last*—for it takes

face. And Jehovah said, It is for Saul and for his bloody house; because he slew the [u]Gibeonites. And the king called the Gibeonites, and said unto them; (now the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites, and the children of Israel had sworn to them; and Saul sought to slay them in his zeal for the children of Israel and Judah.) And David said unto the Gibeonites, [v]What shall I do for you? and wherewith shall I make atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of Jehovah? And the Gibeonites said unto him, We will have no silver nor gold of Saul, nor of his house; neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel. And he said, What ye shall say, that will I do for you. And they said to the king, The man that consumed us, and that devised against us that we should be destroyed from remaining in any region of Israel, let seven men of his [w]sons be given up to us, and we will hang them to Jehovah in Gibeah of Saul, the chosen of Jehovah. And the king said, I will give them. And the king [x]spared

[u] Josh. 9.26.
[v] *ctr.* ver. 1.
[w] *ctr.* Ezek. 13. 20.
[x] 1 Sam. 20. 16.

three years to do it — drives David to God to inquire the cause. He is answered that "it is for Saul and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites." A deed of the past reign is thus charged against the present, the deed of a former king upon the whole people of Israel. They were responsible as the people of God for having suffered the iniquity, profited by it, perhaps, — gone on, at least, without any acknowledgment or repentance for it.

With the history of the Gibeonites we are well acquainted. They were of the original inhabitants of the land, and had gained, by deceit, exemption from the doom which these were under. An oath by Jehovah had been given them that they should live, and thus the name of the Lord was pledged for their preservation. Saul, however, "in his zeal for the children of Israel and Judah," had sought to destroy them, and had actually slain some.

The motive is given at its best, designedly. Without questioning the motives which might have been hidden under the ostensible one, nothing of this sort could avail to remove the dishonor from the Lord's name which they had permitted to remain there. The famine showed that, spite of the time that had elapsed, He had not forgotten nor could pass over this; and this should have instruction for us in the ways of God, and give us to realize our need of exercise with regard to them.

But here again David seems sadly to forget the privilege of which he has just availed himself; and having turned to the Lord for the *cause* of the judgment, he turns to the *Gibeonites* to learn the method of atonement. "David said unto the Gibeonites, What shall I do for you? and wherewith shall I make atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of Jehovah?" Surely that was not, after all, the first consideration; and to put himself into the hands of those who had been wronged was not in reality the way of righting it. Was there then no law in Israel which would apply to such a case? And if there were none, how much more had they need to seek from the highest Wisdom for help in a matter so exceptional as this?

Instead of which he makes an absolute promise, "What ye shall say, that will I do for you," and then on hearing their demand for seven of Saul's sons to be hung up to Jehovah in Gibeah of Saul, he still answers, "I will give them." There is no sign of any fresh appeal to God in the matter; and indeed there is no need of it to refuse the Gibeonite request. It had been already distinctly announced in Israel's statute-book: "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children,

Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, because of Jehovah's oath that was between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul. And the king took the two sons of [y] Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bare to Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth, and the five sons of [x] Merab] the daughter of Saul, which she bare to Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite, and he gave them up into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they [a] hanged them on the hill before Jehovah. And they fell all seven together, and were put to death in the first days of harvest, in the beginning of barley harvest.

And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took [b] sackcloth,

y ch. 3. 7.

x *cf.* 1 Sam. 18. 19.

a De. 21. 23.

b ch. 3. 31.

neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for *his own* sin." (Deut. xxiv. 16.) In Ezekiel xviii., long after this, when the children of Israel were perverting similarly the utterances of the law itself, God solemnly reasserts the principle of Deuteronomy, in vindication of the righteousness of His ways: "As I live, saith the Lord God: ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine: as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: *the soul that sinneth*, it shall die."

It is impossible, therefore, to quote Numbers xxxv. 33 against this,—a passage which in itself is as plain as need be. True, "the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it"; but "the blood of him that shed it" means the very opposite of the blood of his descendants. The word of God does not so contradict itself; and the Spirit of God emphatically disowns the principle.

True, the actual shedder of this blood had passed from the reach of human judgment-seats, and there was a difficulty in this that only God could meet. The Gibeonites sought to meet it honestly, no doubt, but according to the common maxims of blood-revenge, as it obtained among the nations round about, and which the whole legislation as to the cities of refuge had replaced and shut out for the people of God. That these had admitted them again is more than probable, and as here, they would naturally seek to throw the solemn sanctions of the law around them. Scripture does not ordinarily comment upon such things, but leaves us with the word of God in our hands to disentangle the confusion, and pass judgment for ourselves according to God.

Some have thought that the first verse of the chapter here shows us Saul's "bloody house" as being really involved with him in the guilt of the Gibeonite slaughter. In a certain way this, no doubt, was true. As the blood-stain rested upon the whole nation until cleansed away, so especially did it rest upon the house of Saul. Upon them it rested specially to do what might be done in reparation, and by unmistakable manifestation of sorrow and humiliation for the crime before God. *Individuals* of Saul's house might have been really accessories to it; but then their guilt as that would be specific and individual: and *we find no such charges brought.* It is not likely that the children of Merab were such; it seems very certain that Mephibosheth was not; and yet he is spared, not in virtue of his innocence, but because of David's sworn covenant with Jonathan his friend. This shows that, *as to the others*, it was not a question of personal guilt. The Gibeonite requisition was "seven of Saul's sons,"—no matter who. David looks round and selects out of those so indicated. The specification of number, like all else, shows what is in their mind. They all, and David most, follow their own thoughts, and neither go to God nor are governed by His word. As we must surely read it, it is again the failure of human government, even where recognizing the divine one,—blindness in the things of God, for which the causes are spiritual, and alas, deep as they are wide.

The pathetic action of Rizpah seems to have a place here beyond that which

and spread it for her on the rock from the beginning of harvest until water should be poured upon them out of the heavens, and suffered neither the bird of the heavens to rest on them by day, nor the beast of the field by night. And it was told David what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done. And David went and [c]took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from the lords of Jabesh-gilead, who had stolen them from the open place of Beth-shan, where the Philistines had hanged them, when the Philistines had slain Saul in Gilboa; and he brought up thence the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son; and they gathered the bones of them that had been hanged. And the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son buried they in the land of Ben-

[c] 1 Sam. 31. 11-13.

the ordinary interpretation of the whole matter can assign it. The bodies are left, contrary to the law with regard to those hanged,—the only law which we know in such a case (Deut. xxi. 22, 23),—hanging day and night before God. The reason that has been suggested for this (as by Keil and others) is that "this law had, however, no application whatever to the case before us, where the expiation of guilt that rested upon the whole land is concerned. In this instance the expiatory sacrifices were to remain exposed before Jehovah, till the cessation of the plague showed that His wrath had been appeased." This, as a human account of why they left them there, is no doubt the truth. That it had any ground in the law, or therefore in the right reason of things, is another matter. The tentative character of the whole proceeding, on the contrary, has no mark of God's dictation, as it is against the whole spirit of the law. God never ordains a way of approach to Him, and at the same time brands it as of doubtful efficacy. He never appointed a sacrifice, and bade the offerer wait until he found out if it were acceptable. How different the positiveness of His word from the uncertain speculations of the wisest of men!

The thought to which Keil gives expression is easily gathered from Rizpah's action, who "spread sackcloth for her upon the rock until water *should be* poured upon them out of the heavens." So I think we must translate the words, not as the record of fact but of expectation. The *fact* does not seem to have answered to the expectation; for it was after the bones were buried, with those of Saul and Jonathan, that "God was entreated for the land," or, in other words, that the drought ceased.

This, however, sets aside the efficacy of the act itself, and brings Rizpah into corresponding prominence: Rizpah, whose act with the whole force of the motherly instinct, refuses participation in the awful doom, and with her feeble womanly strength would shelter the victims. Strangely enough, while she protects them from the birds of prey, she is herself a daughter of Aiah, "vulture," or "kite,"—in either case one of the keenest-eyed of these. And, while she refuses this sacrifice, her own name, Rizpah, is that of the "live coal," which, taken by the seraph from off the altar, purges the unclean lips of the prophet! (Isa. vi. 6, 7.) Is this *double* reference to the matter in hand only a double accident? Rizpah does even prepare the way for blessing, touching the heart of David to do what poor justice can even yet be done to the dishonored dead, with whom Saul and Jonathan themselves come into remembrance also. The keen eye that sees things as they are, the glow of living righteousness, are with this stricken woman, not with king David or the Gibeonites in this matter; and not till things are set right here can God be entreated for the land!

What, then, is the lesson here but the failure, as already said, of human government, even when, aroused by the divine acts, it addresses itself to the settle-

jamin, in Zelah in the sepulchre of [d]Kish his father; and they performed all that the king commanded; and after that God was entreated for the land. [d] 1 Sam. 9. 1.

DIVISION 6. (Chap. xxi. 15–xxiv.)

Overcoming.

(XXI. 15-22.)

The seed of the giant.

1. (15-17.) Ishbibenob: the "dweller in Nob."

1. [1] AND the [e]Philistines had war again with Israel; and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines; and David became [f]faint. And Ishbibenob, who was of the children of the giant, the [g]weight of whose spear was three hundred shekels of brass, he being girded with a new [sword], thought to have slain David. And [h]Abi- [e] ch. 5. 17-19. [f] *ctr.* Josh. 14. 11. Ju. 8. 4. [g] 1 Sam. 17. 7. [h] ch. 23. 18.

ment of the most fundamental questions? — the endeavor to fulfill righteousness ending in the most complete unrighteousness, and the blind effort to please God in the refusal of His plainest commandments, — a woman's heart seeing clearly, with instinctive wisdom, what the king of Israel, with his delight in the law of God, is utterly blind to. How more than ever it is plain that one hand alone can rightly wield the sceptre of the world! How it shows us the moral of the book to be in the cry, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

DIV. 6.

The book is not suffered to close in mere distress. Even the present evil is not without its good: for God is good, and Master in every scene and circumstance. This is the closing lesson here: the number of this division is that of mastery, of overcoming; and not only is it God who overcomes, but man also, wherever taught of Him. Faith is the spirit of the overcomer; it is the assurance of victory: "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." In the midst of difficulties and trials such as sin has occasioned, faith finds its exercise and opportunity; as Adullam showed itself in David's time the training-school of heroes. Here let us notice, however, that, as soon as we come once more to the bright side of the history, the typical meaning is that which alone gives it illumination. How much interest is there for us in these conquerors of giants and troops of aliens, except as we read in them the spiritual lessons which everywhere make Scripture what it is? This is the value and glory of the allegorizing method of interpretation, which Scripture itself insists upon and illustrates so fully. Let those who make little of it show us how else the same results "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," can be attained.

1. The first series of overcomings here is of the seed of Rapha or the giant, the kindred of Goliath of Gath, met and overcome, as *he* was, in the wars with the Philistines. The notion of a giant in Scripture is always connected with evil, the lifting up of man against God, the symbol of pride and self-sufficiency, as well as of oppressive power. He is the opposite of the little and the lowly, the humble in heart, with whom God delights to dwell; but thus may stand for the tyranny of a lust, as in the case of Og, or of a Satanic delusion, as with Goliath himself. In those before us we must see, what we have seen in their kinsman, the monstrous delusions which abide in a system of error such as Philistinism depicts, the ecclesiastical "mystery of lawlessness" of Christian times.

(i.) Of these Ishbibenob may well represent the grand pretension, foundation and support of every other error. The name means, according to the lexicons, "his seat (or dwelling) is at Nob," while Nob is generally given as "hill," from *nabah*, "to be prominent," not used in scriptural Hebrew. But there is another *nabah*, which is in frequent use, and from which *nabi*, "prophet," is derived: so that Nob may be more probably rendered "prophecy"; a not unsuitable name for the priestly town which Saul desolated, where the high priest had lived, and from which, therefore, divine oracles were given.

shai the son of Zeruiah helped him, and smote the Philistine, and slew him. Then the men of David sware unto him, saying, Thou shalt go out [e]no more with us to battle, that thou quench not the lamp of Israel.

2. (18.) Saph. [2]And it was so after this, that there was [f]again a battle with the Philistines at Gob, when Sibbechai the Hushathite slew Saph, who was of the children of the giant.

[e] ch. 18. 3.

[f] ch. 5. 22.

When we find, therefore, in the Thyatiran assembly, which those skilled in Apocalyptic interpretation do not doubt to foreshadow the Romish church, "the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a propheteſs," and realize how much is based for Romanism on the claim of divine inspiration for the church, we need not wonder that Ishbibenob should be the first Philistine giant for faith to overcome. And here it is intelligible why Abishai the son of Zeruiah should have to succor David and slay the giant. Abishai is the "source of gift," which is Christ risen, but thus the fruit of the cross (of which Zeruiah speaks), but which, more than anything in Christianity perhaps, the church of Rome sets aside and dishonors by constantly repeated offerings which make it vain. "For Christ is not entered into the *holy places made with hands*, which are the figures of the true,"—into which Rome's masses would keep Him continually entering,—"but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; NOR YET THAT HE SHOULD OFFER HIMSELF OFTEN, . . . *for then must He often have suffered* since the foundation of the world,"—which yet they agree He has not; "but now ONCE in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." (Heb. ix. 24-26.)

No offering without suffering, then; one offering once offered putting sin away; a Christ gone into heaven, not entering into holy places made with hands; and He "the father of *gift*" to His ransomed Church! Whereas in Rome none of these things are found.—Rome that would force Him to multiply His work on countless altars, put Him into the foul hands of worthless priests to answer to their wills, and as the sure result deny to His people all true knowledge of forgiveness, and, instead of "gift," *sell* them their meager pittances of church absolution, unavailing to keep them from paying in purgatory at last "the uttermost farthing."

No wonder that when Abishai comes to help in the strife, Ishbibenob's "new" sword should be unavailing! New-forged it is, for all the antiquity of which it boasts, and not "the sword of the Spirit, which is the saying of God." This sword it cannot and dare not handle.

(ii.) Saph, as in common use in Hebrew, denotes "basin," or "door, threshold," and this (I suppose) is commonly accepted as the meaning of the second giant's name. Young, however, gives "preserver"; while Simonis, collating with the Ethiopic, translates "extended, long, tall." If its derivation be from *saphah*, however, a meaning emerges so entirely in agreement with the connection here that we cannot hesitate to prefer it. *Saphah* has two meanings, opposed to one another, and yet in perfect spiritual harmony: it means either "to add," or "to take away." Saph may in this way stand for "addition," or "subtraction."

Now, in the case of Ishbibenob, we have had before us the false claim of modern Philistinism to the inspiration of the prophet,—to be the infallible oracle of God; and we should naturally expect in his brother giant to find some related pretension. Certainly, then, nothing is more nearly related to the claim of infallibilty than that of "adding" from time to time to the authoritative standard of Christian truth. Thus the apocryphal books were added to the canonical; tradition was added to Scripture; and doctrines many have been successively added to the creed of Rome, as the centuries have moved on. Saph is thus clearly another Philistine giant in close affinity with Ishbibenob. That these "additions"

3. (19.) Lahmi.

[5]And again there was a battle in Gob with the Philistines, and Elhanan the son of [Jair] smote [Lahmi the brother* of] [6]Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam.

k cf. 1 Chr. 20. 5.

* The bracketed words are from 1 Chron. xx. 5. The common text of Samuel has inserted: "Jaare-oregim, a Beth-lehemite, smote." See the notes.

are real "subtractions" from the authority of Scripture, no one instructed in the Word can doubt. They are used to subvert some of its plainest teachings, as well as to take it out of the hands generally of the adherents of Rome. The numerical structure, again, is in perfect agreement with this meaning, as is plain: the number two is at once the number of addition and contradiction.

The slayer of the giant is more difficult to interpret; but "entanglement from Jah" seems to be the most satisfactory meaning of Sibbechai, and which would not be unsuited in application here: for this contradiction of what is added to what they are made to supplement is indeed an entanglement from which the Romanist cannot escape. His "universal consent of the Church" cannot be found. "Fathers" contradict "fathers"; councils are against councils; pope against pope. It is only by bridling the witnesses that any evidence in favor of consent can be made to appear. Sibbechai is thus fairly the overcomer of Saph, and the type so read has consistency of meaning.

(iii.) In the case of the third giant the text of Chronicles is against that of Samuel, which seems to be an alteration from the other. In Samuel "Jaare-oregim," which means "forests of the weavers," does not seem like the name of a man; while in Chronicles Elhanan is called the "son of *Jair*," and the "oregim" ("weavers") may have crept in from the after-part of the sentence. It is *possible*, of course, that there may have been another Goliath the Gittite beside the one slain by David, but not very likely that Elhanan should have slain both him and (as in Chronicles) his brother also, and that these two exploits should be told separately, one in each book; while *Beth-halahmi*, "the Bethlehemite," in the one, comes suggestively near to "eth Lahmi"— Lahmi, in the objective case— in the other passage. Altogether, Chronicles would seem to give the correct text, though the Septuagint maintains both. A measure of uncertainty seems thus to be thrown over either reading, while some critics still hold to Samuel in preference to the other.

The numerical structure unites, however, here with the spiritual meaning to approve that text of Chronicles, which on other grounds and by the most satisfactory criticism is accepted as the true one. We must remember, as our guide in interpretation, that we are still in the line of the Philistine giant here. In this case Lahmi, which means "my bread," and under the number of sanctification,— *consecrated* bread, brings before us another of the gigantic errors of the Roman Babylon, and makes, with all that we have had before of these Philistine types, the picture well-nigh complete. A very small thing in itself may seem the matter of consecrated bread, but who knows not how largely it bulks in Rome's idolatrous system? *Her* consecrated bread becomes, by that very fact, as she blasphemously asserts, the very flesh and blood, soul and divinity of Christ Himself; and upon every altar every priest of hers, with a grossness that is perhaps nowhere else equaled, makes and then eats the god he worships!

The special notice of relationship here may at first sight not be intelligible. Why should Lahmi be pointed out as the "brother of Goliath the Gittite," rather than Saph or Ishbibenob, who seem alike to have been his brethren? Remembering what Goliath stands for, the awful distance from God which is the fruit of unappeased wrath against sin, the magical results of consecration of the bread, however insane and evil in their nature, may seem little akin to this. In fact, it will be found that they are specially near akin. No part of Romanism more than this enables the Church to shadow the consciences of its devotees with awe

4. (20–22.) The six-fingered.

The song of deliverance.

1. (xxii.) The identification of David and Christ.

a. (1–4.) God the rock of faith.

[4]And again there was a battle in Gath, and there was a man of [great] stature, who had on each hand [l]six fingers, and on each foot six toes, four and twenty in number; and he also was born to the giant. And when he [m]defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimeah the brother of David slew him. These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.

2. [1](*a*) And David spake unto Jehovah the words of this [n]song, in the day that Jehovah had delivered him out

l cf. 1 Sam. 17. 4. Prov. 30. 6.

m 1 Sam. 17 10. Ps. 42. 10.

n 1 Sam. 2. 1, etc. Ex. 15. 1, etc. Ps. 18.

and mystery, and subject mind and heart to a tyranny which knows no compassion, and whose penal sanctions are gathered from time and eternity alike.

Hence the destroyer of Lahmi is Elhanan, "God hath shown grace," and he the son of Jair, who "awakens." These two things, a soul awake and established in the grace of God, give deliverance from the visions and the terrors of darkness. It only needs courage to approach such spectres, and they vanish.

(iv.) The fourth giant has no name, but is distinguished by his form. The numeral (4) would indicate that we come now to practical walk, and a nearer view confirms this. The hands speak of work; the feet of walk; in both respects there is something supernumerary, like a sixth finger or a sixth toe, and this is eminently characteristic of Romish piety*; the "*religious*" life is something more than needful, and not *super-* but *un*natural. It has not victory over the world, but flees it. It calls marriage a sacrament, but refuses it as a profanation; while another "sacrament"—penance—is only obtainable through sin! The number 5 is that of the feeble creature (4) with the almighty Creator (1), and of this the hands and feet, in their normal condition, bear witness; but this Romish 6, the number of Antichrist, destroys this relation: the creature walks not with his Creator, but subject to every kind of human and invented rule; and conscience is not before God but man. Thus again the destroyer of this perversion of nature is that which brings in God and His unrepented-of goodness to His creatures,—Jonathan, "Jehovah"—the Unchangeable—"has given"; and he the son of Shimea, "hearkening,"—obedience to God alone. Here the series of giants and their overcomers alike is ended.

2. We have now David's song of the deliverance to come, to which his "last words" are a necessary sequel. The first is, with but slight differences here and there, identical with the eighteenth psalm, and has, of course, the character of the psalms, in which prophecy is, as generally in the historic books also, typical, not formal, not announced as such, but is developed by the Spirit of God out of experiences in the soul and in the practical life, which are used as men use earth-distances to measure the heavens. In this, therefore, the *identity* between type and antitype is used and drawn out, while in the "last words" we have the *contrast* between these: they are distinguished from one another. We know well that both these things are needed throughout such histories, and require careful adjustment. The one encourages us by present realization of the blessing to come; the other prevents unfounded expectations from this, and carries us on in patience of hope to the divine fulfillment.

(i.) The character of the psalm already spoken of accounts for a necessary dimness of outline when applied simply to David and the circumstances of his life and reign. These seem often exaggerated, and so far falsified, and the language used is often brought forward to disprove the Davidic reference, or else is ascribed to mere oriental hyperbolism. In this way the word of God is dishonored doubly, and a principle established by which all prophecy is degraded by mean and trivial interpretations, which are justified by the plea of eastern conceptions and manners of thought. It is plain that the question comes to be whether

* "*Ad majorem Dei gloriam*,—"for the *greater* glory of God,"—the motto of the Jesuits, would illustrate this.—(S. R.)

of the grasp of all his enemies, and out of the grasp of [o] Saul. And he said,—

Jehovah is my [p] rock, and my fortress, and my [q] deliverer!
My God, my rock, in him do I [r] trust;
My [s] shield and the [t] horn of my salvation, my [u] high tower and my [v] refuge:
My [w] saviour! from violence thou savest me.
I call upon Jehovah who is [x] worthy to be praised,
And I am saved from mine enemies.

b. (5-7.) The sorrows of death.

(*b*) For the [y] waves of death had compassed me:
The streams of Belial made me afraid.
The cords of Sheol surrounded me:
The snares of death confronted me.
In my [z] strait I called upon Jehovah:
Even on my God I called;
And he [a] heard from his temple my voice,
And my cry was in his ears.

c. (8-20.) The manifestation of God.

(*c*) And the earth [b] shook and trembled,
The foundations of the heavens moved,
Yea, were shaken, because he was wroth.

o *ctr.* 1 Sa. 27. 1.
p De. 32. 4. Ps. 28. 1.
q Ps. 34. 3.
r Ps. 16. 1.
s Ps. 84. 11. Ps. 119.114. Gen. 15. 1.
t Luke 1. 69.
u Prov. 18. 10.
v Ps. 46. 1.
w Is. 45. 21.
x *cf.* Rev. 4. 11. Rev. 5. 12.
y Ps. 42. 7.
z Ps. 107. 6.
a Ps. 34. 6.
b Ps. 114. 7.

Scripture is the word of Him that cannot lie, or the very fallible word of men who had not even learned the soberness of nineteenth century thought and diction. No true faith will hesitate for a moment in its answer to this.

We propose a fuller examination of the psalm when, the Lord willing, we come to it in the book of Psalms. It will be sufficient here, therefore, to indicate its general meaning. There are seven sections, beginning and ending with the praise of God as the rock of faith and the great Deliverer of His people. Between these two we have the sufferings and deliverance of David from His enemies idealized and enlarged so as to speak of the Great Sufferer and the deliverance in which we rejoice all, and forever shall rejoice, culminating in the rule of an absolutely righteous King over both Israel and the Gentiles: One whom in this character David will presently assure us he too little resembles. To this rule we yet look forward and not backward: it is, thank God,—though David's may be the shadow of it,—not a memory of the past but a vision of the future.

(*a.*) Like the song of Moses, the song of David begins and ends with God. Every true song must. "Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things"; and there can be no true joy which does not recognize the truth of this. In the flux and reflux of things here, God is alone what His name Jehovah recognizes, the One abiding. If the permanency of natural laws alone saves us from confusion of mind and uncertainty as to all our actions, the abiding confidence and security of faith are that God is a rock. The deliverances of one's life are but the freshly emphasized assurances of this: the refuge remains to us while the storm still rages; the Voice that calms it says to our importunate cry, "O ye of little faith, wherefore did ye doubt?"

(*b.*) In the second part David, hunted by Saul, is only the foreground of a darker picture in which Messiah may be discerned in Gethsemane and on the cross. With David the deliverance was *from* death, for the Lord *out* of death; and such a death as for a righteous man had not a likeness. Here the indefiniteness of details helps the fuller application.

(*c.*) But, in the third section, and with the resurrection of Christ before us, we find it still more impossible to stop short of Christ. The banded powers of

A [c]smoke arose from his nostrils:
And fire out of his mouth devoured;
Coals were kindled at it.
And he [d]bowed the heavens and came down,
And thick [e]darkness under his feet.
And he rode upon a [f]cherub, and did fly,
And was seen on the [g]wings of the wind.
And he made darkness pavilions round him,
Gathering of waters, thick clouds of the skies.
At the brightness before him
Were kindled [h]coals of fire.
Jehovah from heaven [i]thundered,
And the [j]Highest uttered his voice;
And he [k]sent out arrows and scattered them,—
Lightning, and discomfited them.
And the [l]channels of the sea appeared,—
The foundations of the world were discovered,—
By Jehovah's [m]rebuke,
By the blast of the breath of his nostrils.
He reached from on high, he took me,
He [n]drew me out of many waters.
He delivered me from my strong enemy,
From them that hated me—for they were [o]too strong for me.
They confronted me in the day of my calamity,
But Jehovah was my [p]stay.
And he brought me forth into a [q]large place:
He delivered me, for he [r]delighted in me.

c Ex. 19. 18.
d Is. 64. 1.
e Ps. 97. 2. 1 Ki. 8. 12. *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 16.
f Ps. 80. 1.
g Ps. 104. 3.
h ver. 9.
i 1 Sam. 2. 10. 1 Sam. 12. 17. Ps. 29. 3.
j Ps. 7. 17.
k Hab. 3. 11.
l Ex. 15. 19.
m Ps. 106. 9. Is. 50. 2.
n Jonah 2. 3-6.
o Ps. 3. 1.
p Ps. 55. 22.
q Ps. 118. 5. Ps. 66. 17. *cf.* Eph. 2. 6.
r Num. 14. 8.

d. (21-28.) Tested and approved.

(*d*) Jehovah hath [s]rewarded me according to my righteousness,
According to the [t]cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.
For I have [u]kept Jehovah's ways,
And have not wickedly departed from my God.
For all his [v]judgments were before me,
And as to his statutes I did not depart from them.
I was also perfect before him,
And [w]kept myself from mine iniquity.
And Jehovah hath recompensed me according to my righteousness,—
According to my cleanness before his eyes.
With the [x]merciful thou showest thyself merciful;

s Ps. 7. 8.
t Ps. 24. 4.
u Prov. 8. 32.
v Ps. 119. 7, 30.
w *cf.* 1 John 5. 18, with 1 Pet. 1. 5.
x *cf.* Lev. 26. 21.

earth and hell were there scattered; the quaking ground and the rent graves bore witness to the intervention of God. There is nothing in this description which cannot be, without strain, applied to the true David, the Beloved, who could indeed say, "He delivered me because He delighted in me."

(*d.*) In the fourth section, under the number of testing and practical walk, we have the reason for God's intervention, and the justification of His delight. And here the clear and emphasized declaration of righteousness suits, in fact, only One. He alone could say of God, "I do *always* the things that please Him"; and this is, above all else, what is needed for the King that God approves, and

With the perfect thou showest thyself perfect;
With the pure thou showest thyself pure;
And with the perverse thou showest thyself tortuous.
Yea, a people that is [y]low thou savest,
But thine eyes are on the [z]lifted up to bring them low.

[y] 1 Sam. 2. 7, 8.
[z] Dan. 4. 37.

e. (29–43.) The judgment of the nations.

(*e*) For thou art my [a]lamp, Jehovah;
Yea, Jehovah enlighteneth my darkness.
For by thee I run through a troop,
And by my God I leap over a wall.
[As for] God, his [b]way is perfect:
Jehovah's saying is proved;
A [c]shield is he to all that trust in him.
For who is God, beside Jehovah?
And who a [d]Rock, beside our God?
God is my fortress of strength,
And directeth the perfect in his way.
He maketh his feet like [e]hinds',
And maketh me stand on my high places.
He [f]teacheth my hands to war,
And mine arms bend a bow of brass.
Yea, thou hast given me the shield of thy salvation,
And thy [g]gentleness hath made me great.
Thou hast made room for my steps beneath me,
And my ankles have not [h]wavered.
I have [i]pursued mine enemies and destroyed them,
Nor [j]turned back till they were consumed.
And I have consumed them, and dashed them in pieces:
And they did not arise, but fell under my feet.
Yea, thou [k]girdedst me with strength for the battle;
Thou subduedst under me those that rose up against me.
And thou hast made mine [l]enemies to turn their backs on me,
That I might destroy them that hate me.
They looked, but none was there to save,
To Jehovah, but he answered them not.
And I [m]beat them small as the dust of the earth,
I stamped them as the mire of the streets, I spread them out.

[a] Ps. 119. 105.
[b] De. 32. 4.
[c] ver. 3. Prov. 30. 5.
[d] ver. 2. Is. 26. 4.
[e] Hab. 3. 19.
[f] Ps. 144. 1.
[g] Ps. 103. 4, 13.
[h] Ps. 73. 2. Ps. 37. 31.
[i] 1 Sam. 17. 52.
[j] *cf.* 2 Ki. 13. 18, 19.
[k] Eph. 6. 14.
[l] Ps. 9. 3.
[m] Ps. 2. 9.

the world needs. Spite of what might be the general character of David's reign, we know well that he could not pretend to this. Here, again, David was but the shadow, and not the perfect image of the true.

(*e.*) Now we have the execution of judgment, and the putting of enemies under His feet, and thus from the resurrection go on to the appearing of Christ. We have but to look at the book of Revelation to see how the Lamb will be the warrior; and this is in accord with Isaiah and the prophets generally. Not only is the Lion of the tribe of Judah the Lamb slain, but the Lamb slain is no less the Lion. We think this in opposition, perhaps, to the character of Christ, while yet we recognize that all judgment is given to Him because He is the Son of man. Judgment is what the world needs and must have. Those that destroy the earth

f. (44-49.) The rod of power.

(*f*) Thou hast also delivered me from the [n]strivings of my people,
And hast preserved me to be [o]head of the nations:
A people I had [p]not known serve me.
Strangers cringe to me,
As soon as they hear, they hearken to me.
Strangers [q]fade away,
And are afraid out of their close places.
Jehovah [r]liveth, and blessed be my rock,
And exalted be God, the rock of my salvation!
The God that [s]avengeth me
And bringeth down the peoples under me.
And bringeth me forth from mine enemies,
And thou hast exalted me above my adversaries,
Thou hast [t]delivered me from the man of violence.

g. (50, 51.) Praises.

(*g*) Therefore will I give [u]thanks unto thee, Jehovah, among the nations,
And will sing praise unto thy name.
[He is] the tower of salvation for his [v]king,
And showeth mercy to his anointed,
To David and his seed for [w]evermore.

2. (xxiii. 1-7.) The contrast between David and Christ.

[2]And these are the [x]last words of David:—
David [y]the son of Jesse saith,
Even the man [z]raised up on high saith,
The [a]anointed of the God of Jacob,
And the [b]sweet psalmist of Israel:—
The [c]Spirit of Jehovah spake in me,
And his word was on my tongue.

n cf. Is. 11. 1, 13.
o cf. Is. 49. 6, 7.
p cf. Is. 55.5. *cf.* Ps. 72. 9-11.
q cf. Micah 7. 16, 17.
r cf. Ex. 3. 14.
s De. 32. 35.
t Ps. 86. 14-17.
u De. 32. 43. Rom. 15. 9.
v cf. Ps. 2.6.
w Acts 13. 34. Ps. 72. 7,17
x Ps. 72. 20.
y Ruth 4. 17-22. *cf.* De.26.5.
z 1 Sam.2.8.
a 1 Sam. 16. 13.
b cf. Ps. 45. 1, 2.
c Acts 13. 33-35.

must be destroyed. Love can strike in behalf of the loved. And here again the judgment goes beyond the type in David, to reach the Antitype.

(*f.*) Finally here we have One delivered from the strivings of "My people" (Israel), and becoming the Head of the nations. Power is there before which all must bow, even strangers in heart, who finally are exposed and doomed: "Strangers fade away, and are afraid out of their close places." It is to be remembered that the spirit here is Davidic and not Solomonic,—righteous rule putting down evil, rather than the peace that follows it. As a consequence—

(*g.*) The seventh section is rather indicated than outlined. The continuance of blessing is "to David and his seed for evermore,"—the maintenance of the throne in the hands to which it has been trusted. Safe and blessed hands we know these are, and rest to the heart it is to recognize them: but we read this into the picture from elsewhere; we must go elsewhere to find it.

(ii.) David's last words, as already said, show us what the song does not, the contrast between type and antitype; and there is correspondingly much greater brightness. It is when David becomes simply a Voice like the Baptist, to speak of Another, that all the sweetness and melody and divine character of this voice is found. David reminds us here of his own lowly origin, and of the grace that raised him up. He is the anointed of the God of *Jacob*, the One whose glory it is to bring out of the poorest material a vessel for His praise. *As* the anointed thus, he is rather Israel's "sweet psalmist" than her king. And so assuredly our hearts deem of him: what is the king in comparison with the psalmist? And no wonder: for here David is but the channel through which God's own living water has flowed to the lips of the thirsty ever since: "The Spirit of Jehovah spake in me; and His word was on my tongue."

The God of Israel said,
The Rock of Israel spake to me:
A [d]righteous Ruler over men,
A ruler in the [e]fear of God;—
Even as the [f]morning-light when the sun ariseth,
A morning [g]without clouds:
From the brightness after [h]rain
The [i]herb [springeth] from the earth.

d Ps. 45. 7. Is. 32. 1, 2.
e Is. 11. 1, 2.
f *cf.* Mal. 4. 2.
g *cf.* Is. 30. 26.
h Ps. 72. 6.
i Is. 35. 1, 2.

Sweeter now therefore than the former utterance, though it may be the same theme still, is this of a "righteous Ruler over men, a ruler in the fear of God!" It is now not even simply the Spirit of God speaking through the experiences and in the faith of a divinely constituted instrument, but a direct revelation: "the Rock of Israel spake to me." Upon that divine revelation David himself rests in faith amid all within and around that may seem adverse to it.

Yet the vision is abrupt, enigmatical; not in itself, indeed, but in its application. This it receives from the lips of the dying king, with the sunset radiance in his eyes. As the world darkens heaven brightens: can he mistake whence the darkness, whence the brightness, is? We shall hear presently his testimony.

"A righteous ruler over man!
A ruler in the fear of God!"

The second thing is here the first foundation of character, as is plain: the only morality worth calling that is the fruit of godliness; the creature place truly kept, the right relation of a soul with its Creator insures all other relations to be right.

When we consider WHO it is that will fulfill this, we may well be amazed. The Word made flesh, a Divine Being in this creature place to teach us the goodness of it: not simply on the throne, but filling the lowliest places on the road to this, which is the reward of absolute perfection in all these; proved Master of Himself, and so fit to be, as none else, the Master of others. And there is much more than this behind it, a deeper depth than ever known by a righteous man beside, a motive of divine love to reach and bring up the captives of sin and the heirs of death, and bring them by his sacrifice to glory!

What must be the kingdom of such a king? Is there — has there ever been — a kingdom of earth that could be in anything but contrast with it? His own words have presented this contrast between the prizes for ambition found in the one and the love-service of the other: "ye know that the princes of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones use authority over them; but it shall not be so among you, but whosoever desires to be great among you, let him be your minister, and whosoever desires to be first among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Thus the blessed consequences:—

"Even as the morning-light when the sun arises,
A morning without clouds;
From the brightness after rain
The herb springeth from the earth."

No more absolute lordship is there than the sun exercises over the earth, none in its sphere more beneficent. The tenderest plant is served by it. By it the showers that refresh are drawn up from under the whole heaven and rained down again. With it rule is surely service. And the sun is Christ's image, the glory of the light (which God is) upon a material candlestick. But the sun exists not for itself, and the tiniest creature bathes as freely in its brightness as the mightiest.

David's heart is in his eyes as this vision beckons him. He sees clearly that all his glory and the glory of his house count for nothing here. Ammon, Absalom,

[Although] my house be [j]not so with God,
Yet he hath made me an [k]eternal covenant,
Ordered in all and [l]sure;
For this is all my [m]salvation and all of delight,
Though he make it [n]not to grow.
But [the sons of] [o]Belial [shall be] all of them as thorns thrust away,
Because they cannot be taken in the hand;
And the man that will touch them provideth himself iron and wood of a spear,
And they shall be [p]burned up with fire so as to cease.

Manifestation. 1. (8-12.) The power of God.

3. [1]These are the names of the [q]mighty men that David had: Josheb-basshebeth a Tachmonite, head of the

[j] cf. Matt. 25. 41.
[k] ch. 7. 16.
[l] Is. 55. 5.
[m] Gen. 49. 18.
[n] cf. Is. 6. 11-13.
[o] Ps. 9. 17.
[p] cf. Matt. 25. 41.
[q] 1 Chr. 11. 10-25. cf. 1 Sam. 22. 1, 2. cf. Heb. 11. 37, 38.

have died their deaths of shame; his successor is the child of his own transgression. What hope in nature? None, save from the covenant of the unchanging God:—

"Although my house be not so with God,
Yet He hath made me an eternal covenant,
Ordered in all, and sure:
For this is all my salvation and all of delight,
Though He maketh it not to grow."

For there seems indeed no hope: less and less only as man's history lengthens. The power of sin, the subtlety and might of Satan, have seemed after all divine deliverances and triumphs again to revive and make of the fairest work the saddest ruin. Every successive dispensation has ended in worse failure than the previous one. Does it not seem as if the salvation of the earth, and the long desire of good in it, were a plant which even God "made not to grow"? Could David have looked over the long gap of time since his day, would he have been encouraged with the progress made? No, it is but the covenant, the eternal covenant, that encourages us yet. God must intervene; judgment, long delayed, must come:—

"And the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away,
Because they cannot be taken in the hand;
And the man that will touch them provideth himself iron and wood of a spear,
And they shall be burned up with fire, so as to cease."

Thus faith and love acquiesce in the judgment which alone can free the earth from its long chain. "Let grace be shown to the wicked, yet will he not learn uprightness." "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world shall learn righteousness."

3. We have now the list of David's mighty men, with some special examples of their prowess, mostly against the Philistines. They read, when spiritually rendered, like a leaf out of the book of accounts in the day fast approaching, when every one shall have his praise from God. The words of the apostle, when referring to it, are much more penetrating than appears in our common version of 2 Cor. v. 10. It is not simply, "we must all *appear* before the judgment-seat of Christ," but "we must all be *manifested*." And this is what the record here suggests. Most of it is simply a list of names, which, of course, therefore, as we must read them, stand for *persons*, not merely for *deeds*. And the deeds themselves which are related are such as we realize cannot be exceptional or accidental, but show what the men were that did them. They are, of course, *David's men*, and their deeds are deeds of war entirely. They are not in that way a full sample even of what will come out in the day of Christ. Probably no sufficient sample could be given us. Probably, also, in the condition of the world in which we are, the most characteristic exhibition of Christ's people that

captains. He is the Eznite: [he lifted his spear] against
r eight hundred, slain at one time. r Ju. 3. 31.

could be given would exhibit them as *soldiers*. In their power over the terrible power of the enemy is proved their devotedness to Christ, (against whom all his efforts are directed,) and thus to His people, His representatives in the world. Not that the spirit of strife is the Christian spirit: far from it. The dove would flee far, if it were not held by its affections; and these brought the Lord Himself into the place of sorrow and conflict, who is still the Captain of salvation, and leads His people through fields He Himself has passed through. The very table He spreads for us is "in the presence of our enemies." His love is a banner over us. The inheritance which belongs to us can be attained only by a struggle, not indeed with flesh and blood, but with "principalities and powers, with the rulers of the darkness of this world, with spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places." Bye and bye, how the lists will shine with the names of God's heroes whose histories have never been written in this world, but whom the King will greet as friends to Him well known!

When we turn to the record here, however, it is disappointing to find how little we can make of it. The record itself seems as if it had been torn out of the hands of contestants, and come down to us with the marks of war upon it. There are difficulties as to the text, difficulties as to the parallel accounts which we find in Chronicles, difficulties as to the meanings of words and of names. Little meaning of any value seems ever to have been seriously attached to what is here; and accordingly as we find here, the mistakes of copyists and commentaries have been allowed to accumulate, and little believing work has been done to rectify them.

(i.) In the case of the first and highest in rank here, in the single verse which relates his deeds, almost every word is in question. The name, if it be a name, here Josheb-bassheb'eth, or, as in the common version, "he that sat in the seat," is in Chronicles (1 Chron. xi. 11) Jashobeam, "the people return," or "shall return." The "Tachmonite" is there written "Hachmonite," or rather "the son of Hachmoni," (the wise). The words "he is Adino the Ezrite" are variously read or disputed over. "His delight is in the spear," "his brandishing of" or "smiting with the spear" have been suggested, but the meaning of the last word is quite doubtful, and its strongest support is from the parallel place in Chronicles, where the word used is quite different. "he brandished his spear." If we do not accept this, then the connection with the following words "against eight hundred" has to be arbitrarily supplied. Finally, Chronicles substitutes three hundred for eight hundred.

Out of all this it is hard to gather any meaning fully to be relied on. The text in Chronicles is easy, and the substitution of it as a whole would simplify things; but who can assert that the one passage was ever identical with the other? Names especially varied much among the Hebrews, and seem to have been used with a certain latitude, so that no one could say that Jashobeam and Josheb-bassheb'eth were not alternative names for the same person. In this case there arises a possible spiritual significance for the foremost of David's warriors so suitable apparently to all the connection, that it claims at least to be suggested. It is the spiritual meaning that should surely give us largest help amid difficulties so great and many as we find in this place.

"One sitting in the seat," (or "abiding in the abode,") is the meaning of the first name here; and the numerical place would easily attach to this the thought of power shown in persistence,—continuance in the place belonging to him. If we think, as we must in connection with the typical meaning, of Christian warfare in its highest character, then we must undoubtedly go to the epistle to the Ephesians for the account of it: thus to that conflict with principalities and powers in the heavenly places, of which the epistle speaks. But as the prelude to this and the necessary introduction to it, Ephesians brings into the place itself which is, as it were, the place of the conflict. God "has raised us up"—with Christ

And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo the son of an Ahohite: he was one of the three mighty men with David, when they defied the Philistines that were gathered together there to battle, and the men of Israel were gone up. He arose and smote the Philistines until his hand was [s]weary, and his hand [t]clave to the sword; and Jehovah wrought a great salvation that day; and the people returned after him only to [u]spoil.

And after him Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite: the [v]Philistines were gathered in a troop,* and there was a plot of ground there full of lentiles, and the people had [w]fled before the Philistines; and he stood in the midst of the plot and delivered it, and smote the Philistines, and Jehovah wrought a great salvation.

2. (13-23.) Fellowship with Christ.

[2]And three of the thirty chiefs went down, and came to David in harvest time, to the [x]cave of Adullam; and the troop of the Philistines was encamped in the valley of Rephaim. And David was then in the hold; and the

s Ju. 8. 4.
t *cf.* Eph. 6. 17, 18.
u 1 Sam. 30. 24, 25.
v ch. 21. 15.
w 1 Sam. 17. 24.
x 1 Sa. 22. 1.

* Or "to Lehi."

from the dead, says the apostle, "and *made us sit* together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Eph. ii. 6.) Here is undeniably a "sitting in the seat" essential to the highest, that is the Christian, warfare: and the maintaining of this place,—the abiding in it,—is the grand necessity for spiritual triumph. The *place* every believer has. The practical abiding in it,—ah, how little is this to be seen! How few among Christians know the meaning of it! How few among those who know it as a doctrine, know its power in the soul! How few of these, once more, *abide* in the place in which divine grace has set them!

Josheb-basshebeth, then, may well be the Hachmonite, the "Wise," and with that the prince of warriors. Who will question, that know in any wise, what these things mean?

The second name is that of Eleazar ("help of God") the son of Dodo ("his Beloved") the Ahohite (brotherly?) Here, also, Chronicles differs from Samuel. Instead of being only "one of the three mighty men with David, when they defied the Philistines,"—in which case one would expect the others to be noticed in the action,—Chronicles simply represents him as being "with David at Pas-dammim, and the Philistines assembled there" to battle. Here, however, Chronicles seems to have a gap in the text, which thus ascribes the action of Shammah (whom it omits) to Eleazar. Single-handed, as it would appear from the narrative here, he smites the Philistines till his cramped hand cleaves to his sword-hilt. The people, who were absent from the battle, returned only to the spoil. Thus Jehovah through him wrought a great deliverance; and this the number seems to emphasize.

Shammah's deed, on the other hand, in accordance also with the numeral, is a work of resurrection. The Israelites are not merely absent: they have fled. His own name means "astonishment," and he is the son of Agee, perhaps "sprout," the Hararite, or "mountaineer." Words such as these are capable of easy combination in relation to the lesson of his acts. The power of revival is found in him who has learned amid the difficulties of a rugged path the awe of the God of resurrection.

(ii.) The power of God is manifest indeed in the exploits of these first three; we now find a second three, at first unnamed, but the two names that follow, Abishai and Benaiah, reveal two of the number. The third is unknown, and probably not one of the thirty-one that follow, who thus with these two threes make up the total of thirty-seven given at the end.

Philistines' garrison was then at Bethlehem. And David [y]longed, and said, Oh that one would give me to drink of the [z]water of the well of [a]Bethlehem, which is by the gate! And the three mighty men [b]brake through the camp of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David. But he would not drink of it, but [c]poured it out unto Jehovah. And he said, Be it far from me, Jehovah, that I should do this thing! Is it not the blood of men that went in [d]jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it. These things did the three mighty men.

y cf. John 4. 6, 7.
z cf. John 7. 38, 39.
a cf. John 6. 33–35.
b cf. Acts 21. 13.
c cf. Phil. 2. 17.
cf. Phil. 4. 18.
d cf. Acts 15. 26.

But this second three should thus have a different lesson for us from the first. Accordingly, while the power of God is still manifested, it is less prominent in these, while the tender sympathy with David shown in the next exploit may well speak to our hearts of Christ's delight in our fellowship with Himself. It is striking, too, that now first we find, instead of merely individual exploits, fellowship with one another. The chivalry of the act (as men would say) is magnificent. There is no common need that appeals to them; there is no danger such as would make men brave a world in arms; David's thirst even could be as effectually quenched with water from many another well beside that of Bethlehem; even that expressed wish would never, with the risk involved in its fulfillment, have been seriously uttered: it was but the sigh of a heart escaping from the burdens and sorrows of late so heavy, back to the days that were, to the fresh breezy hours of simple childhood, and the joys that, after all, never could be revived. It was not the water of Bethlehem, after all, that could satisfy David's soul. Ask him did he really mean it, it would be found but one of those passing illusions by which for a moment a strong man may willingly allow himself to be deceived, but which can last but for a moment. An impassable gulf separates the man of to-day from the child of yesterday: could you bring back the whole surroundings you would accomplish nothing, except you could bring back, as you cannot, the child that moved among them. Bring them back, and you only make him realize the more, with a sharpened pain, that it is only in his sorrow he can be now the child: its joys are passed forever.

They do not stay to think of all this, nor ask if he means it seriously, as he does not. With a devotion sublime in its utter recklessness, they think but that they can give this water he so longs for to the lips of the "beloved" one they serve, and serve now the more joyfully in a service he never has commanded,—which he never would command. What is the Philistine host, that it should stand between David and the well of Bethlehem? The very slightness of the object of desire makes it perhaps seem but the more impossible that it should be denied him. With dauntless heroism they break through the enemy's camp, and the water for which David longed is here: let him drink and be satisfied.

But David dares not drink. The glory of that deed of love falls on him with an awe that humbles as with the sense of the divine presence. This love stronger than death,—this peril of life to gratify but a passing desire of his heart,—he is not worthy of it, must not accept it: God alone is worthy of it, God alone should have it. He pours it out before Him with disclaiming words that come to us with the claim of another "Beloved" upon us, carrying us from type to Antitype, to One human and yet divine, to One who has shown us Himself a love, which is henceforth the pattern of all other: "hereby perceive we love, because He" not risked, but "laid down His life for us." David disappears from our gaze, and Christ our Lord is before our souls.

Passing from type to Antitype, we see how great the contrast is and must be, amid all the resemblance. All that is trivial, passing, mistaken even, and that even in that very character appeals to and affects us in the story before us, can

And [e]Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief of the three. And he lifted up his spear against three hundred, and slew them, and had the name among the three. Was he not most honorable among the three? and he was their captain; but he did not [f]attain to the [first] three.

And [g]Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man of Kabzeel, who had done mighty deeds. He slew two Ariels of Moab; and he went down also and slew a [h]lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow. He slew also an Egyptian, a goodly man; and the Egyptian had a spear in his hand; and he went down to him with a staff, and [i]plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and slew him with his own spear. These things did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and had a name among

[e] ch. 21. 17.

[f] *cf.* Luke 19. 15-19.

[g] ch. 20. 23.

[h] *cf.* 1 Pet. 5. 8, 9.

[i] 1 Sam. 17. 51.

of course have no place in the higher application. Yet this only makes the lesson for us so much the fuller, so much the more solemn, so much the sweeter. Our David has cravings and longings of heart, which need also the water of the well of Bethlehem for their satisfaction;—no passing desires, but, as His nature is, abiding, perfect, necessary to His perfection. Is it not the water, living water, whose spring is at the outgoing of the Father's "house of bread,"—which He longs to receive from us; wherein He finds but the fruit of the travail of His soul, and with which alone He can be satisfied?

Moreover, like this expressed wish of David, which never was a command, nor intended to be, if we are to reach any worthy thoughts at all, we must distinguish between commands that are laid upon us (which there are), and His "word," which shows us what is in His heart, and in receiving which we come into intelligent communion with Himself. So the Lord in His last words with His disciples expressly distinguishes. (John xiv. 21, 23.) Commands may be given to servants only, who are never admitted into the secrets of the heart, but the words which are spoken as to friends claim also response, and will find response, from the truly devoted. Not "what must I do?" but "what *may* I do?" is the expression of attachment to His Person; and so only can we be in sympathy with the act of the mighty three.

But then, if we will act in this spirit,—if we *have* this spirit,—we shall find the world a hostile world to Christ. Yes, and not the *world* only—but right in the way, *barring* the way, to the well of Bethlehem, we shall find the Philistine camp, the host of natural men that have intruded into spiritual things. We must be prepared to break through the intrenchments of tradition, formality, worldliness in religious guise, if we are to gratify the Lord's longing for us. And shall men take their lives in their hand for men after this manner, and the world have its heroes of self-sacrifice, and the love that passeth knowledge have no fit return?

Abishai and Benaiah, as two of these three mighty men, express in their names correspondingly this fellowship with Christ. The "father of gift," as we have already seen, may speak even of Christ Himself in resurrection receiving gifts for men. And there are almost always in these histories secondary applications of such things in which it is shown how those who look on Christ's unveiled face are changed into His image. Thus the knowledge of Christ as the source of gift becomes in us fruitful in forming in us this image. A dewdrop may thus shine with the image of the sun. Nor need we wonder that still what is recorded is a history of conflict. It must needs be so while Satan rules the world.

Benaiah the son of Jehoiada means "Jah builds" with all the perfection of "Jehovah's knowledge"; but the least of His people are called now to be builders too. As to his exploits we may be little able to speak at present. We are moving among things that have been so little supposed in general to contain any

the three mighty men: he was honored above the thirty, but he did not attain to the [first] three. And David set him in his counsel.

3. (24-39.) Names of the thirty.

[3] [j]Asahel, the brother of Joab, was one of the thirty; [k]Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem, Shammah the [l]Harodite, Elika the Harodite, Helez the Paltite, Ira the son of Ikkesh the [m]Tekoite, Abiezer the [n]Anathothite, Mebunnai the Hushathite, Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite, Heleb the son of Baanah the Netophathite, Ittai the son of Ribai of Gibeah of the children of [o]Benjamin, Benaiah a Pirathonite, Hiddai of the brooks of [p]Gaash, Abialbon the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Barhumite, Eliahba the Shaalbonite, the sons of Jashen Jonathan, Shammah the Ararite, Ahiam the son of Sharar the Ararite, Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai the son of the Maachathite, Eliam the son of [q]Ahithophel the Gilonite, Hezrai the Carmelite, Paarai the Arbite, Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah, Bani the Gadite, Zelek the [r]Ammonite, Naharai the Beerothite, the armourbearer of Joab the son of Zeruiah, Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite, [s]Uriah the Hittite: thirty seven in all.

God's overcoming of His creatures' sin.

4 And [t]again the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and [u]he moved David against them, saying, Go, [v]number Israel and Judah. And the king said to Joab the captain of the host, who was with him, Go, I pray thee, through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even unto Beersheba, and number ye the people, that I may

j ch. 2. 18.
k *cf.* 1 Chr. 11. 26–47.
l Judg. 7. 1.
m ch. 14. 2.
n Jer. 1. 1.
o *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 12–14.
p Josh. 24. 30.
q ch. 15. 12.
r *cfr.* ch. 10. 1, 4.
s ch. 11. 3.
t ch. 21. 1.
u *cf.* 1 Chr. 21. 1, etc. with 2 Cor. 12. 7.
v Nu. 26. 2. Ex. 30. 11–16.

spiritual meaning, that the only wonder is with the light and little labor thus bestowed on them, to have seen so much. More and more, as we learn nevertheless to question, will the answer come.

(iii.) Of the thirty (thirty-one), known only by their names, little can be said also till they have been more minutely studied. Chronicles, it is well known, though giving practically the same list (1 Chron. xi.), with additions at the end, differs yet very considerably when we come to details. It is just in such lists as this also, dry and barren as they have been suffered to remain through our negligence, that we may expect to find textual errors abounding. There are evidently many, though variations in lists in general identical are, of course, not necessarily such. Let the people of God study His word; dig deep, and expect much; and we shall soon have few such utter gaps in our knowledge as for the present we have to lament here.

4. We end with the *divine* overcoming of man's sin,—a suitable and beautiful ending for such a history. God is the great Overcomer. The Lamb is the perfect expression of this, and in that double way in which God works, governmentally and in the nearer personal action of His grace. Both things we find in the chapter before us.

The state of Israel is such that God is provoked to anger against them, and out of this comes the thought which God permits to be suggested to David, to number the people. It is a military order, clearly having respect to their strength for war, and which shows the spirit dictating it, a spirit in which king and people shared alike. The victories abroad, the growth of a petty kingdom hardly able to preserve its independence of the nations round it, into an empire,—had no doubt intoxicated them with pride and ambition. And pride is the giant sin of a fallen nature, the essential evil, man lifting himself up, even against God. It is the typal sin, therefore; and against which God must, in very mercy, show

know the number of the people. And [w]Joab said unto the king, Jehovah thy God add unto the people, how many soever they be, a hundredfold, and that the eyes of my lord the king may see it; but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing? But the king's word prevailed against Joab and against the captains of the host. And Joab and the captains of the host went out from the presence of the king, to number the people of Israel. And they [x]passed over Jordan, and encamped in Aroer, on the right side of the city that is in the midst of the valley of Gad, and toward Jaazer. And they came to Gilead, and to the land of Tahtim-hodshi; and they came to Dan-jaan, and about to Zidon, and came to the stronghold of Tyre, and to all the cities of the Hivites and of the Canaanites; and they went out to the south of Judah, unto Beersheba. So when they had gone all through the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days; and Joab gave up the sum of the number of the people unto the king. And there [y]were in Israel eight hundred thousand warriors that drew sword; and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men.

And David's heart [z]smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto Jehovah, I have sinned greatly in that I have done; and now, I beseech thee, Jehovah, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly. And when David arose in the morning, the [a]word of Jehovah came unto Gad, David's seer, saying, Go and say unto David, Thus saith Jehovah, I offer thee three things: choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee. And Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of [b]famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou [c]flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or shall there be three days' [d]pestilence in thy land? now, advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me. And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the [e]hand of Jehovah, for his mercies are great; and let me not fall into the hand of man.

w *ctr.* ch. 14. 1, 2.

x Josh 18. 9.

y *cf.* Nu. 26. 1, etc.

z ch. 12. 13.

a ch. 12. 1.

b ch. 21. 1.

c Josh. 7. 4–8.

d Num. 16. 46–50.

e *cf.* Heb. 10. 30, 31, with Heb. 13. 6.

Himself. He therefore exhibits it, and smites upon it. So plainly is it manifest, and yet so blind is the one actuated by it, that Joab sees at once the evil which David cannot see. He demurs to the numbering, shirks it as far as possible, but is overborne by the king's mandate. The sum of the people is delivered to the king; and only then does his conscience awake to the meaning of what he has done. Little, after all, would it seem in man's eyes; but God seeth not as man seeth.

Word comes, therefore, to David through Gad his seer, offering him his choice of three modes of chastisement: three years of famine, three months of flight before his enemies, three days of pestilence. The number is that of divine holiness and manifestation. David beautifully chooses (yet how could he do otherwise?) to fall into God's hand, the mercies of which he knows; and the pestilence comes upon the land.

And Jehovah sent a pestilence upon Israel, from the morning even to the time appointed; and there died of the people, from Dan even to Beersheba, seventy thousand men. And when the [f]angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, Jehovah [g]repented him of the evil, and said unto the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thy hand. And the angel of Jehovah was by the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite. And David spake unto Jehovah, when he saw the angel that smote among the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these [h]sheep, what have they done? let thy hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house.

And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an [i]altar to Jehovah in the threshing-floor of Aranjah the Jebusite. And David, according to the saying of Gad, went up as Jehovah commanded. And Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him; and Araunah went out, and bowed himself before the king on his face toward the ground. And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come unto his servant? And David said, To buy the threshing-floor of thee, to build an altar unto Jehovah, that the plague may be stayed from the people. And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king

f Ex. 12. 23.
g Joel 2. 13, 14.
h Jonah 4. 11.
i Ju. 6. 24.

The blow is heavy, for it is needed; and yet rightly has David counted on his Lord. It is from the Lord's own grace that the staying of the evil comes. "When the angel stretched forth his hand over Jerusalem to destroy it, Jehovah repented Him of the evil, and said unto the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thy hand. And the angel was by the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite."

Government has done its needful work, and now the story of divine grace begins. And where should grace be shown as God would show it, but in the case of one of the chief of sinners? Araunah is a Jebusite, one of the Canaanite races of the land, long since under the curse, and a Jebusite, a "treader down" of God's royal city.

Now God was treading down; not ruthlessly as a destroyer, however, but as threshing is accomplished under the feet of the patient ox, where, with all the roughness of the process, the precious grain is sought and secured,— God's harvest, if man's the blessing. Judgment thereafter goes not beyond the "threshing-floor." There it halts, stayed by the pity of God, and Araunah ("filled with lamentation"?) receives his divine name *Aranjah*, "the singing of Jah"! How gloriously is the Lord's story of God's reception of His prodigals anticipated here!—a joy, not of man, but of God: "He will rest in His love; He will joy over thee with *singing*"! What music, touching all the chords of nature with the ecstasy of its blessedness, and penetrating with its divine sweetness all the harmony that it awakens round, this music in the heart of God! What a close for a history such as this has been! God's victory it surely is, over man's sin,— over man's enmity and pride and unbelief. God is God, and all that man has done against Him only has brought out the more the meaning of this. Not in Israel alone, not alone in the full tide of the earth's praise hereafter,— no, not alone in the songs of the redeemed in heaven, will be the sufficient answer to this, which shall fill the universe of the unfallen also with ceaseless joy and praise. The throne of God shall be thus forever also the "throne of the Lamb."

take and offer up what seemeth good unto him: behold, here are oxen for burnt-offering, and the threshing instruments and the implements of the oxen for wood. All doth Araunah, O king, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, Jehovah thy God accept thee. And the king said unto Araunah, Nay, but I will surely [j] buy it of thee at a price; nor will I offer burnt-offerings unto Jehovah my God of that which doth cost me nothing. And David bought the threshing-floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. And David built there an altar unto Jehovah, and offered [k] burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. And Jehovah was entreated for the land, and the [l] plague was stayed from Israel.

[j] Gen. 23. 4.

[k] Lev. 1. 3, etc.

[l] Nu. 16. 48.

If the glory of God be seen in its splendor in the Jerusalem of God, the Lamb shall be the lamp of its display.

To one who knows the inefficacy of the legal sacrifices, and yet how God by this very inefficacy only pointed men forward to the true offering that was yet to come, it will not be strange to find that David does not here offer sin- or trespass-offering. Burnt-offerings and peace-offerings only are enjoined and offered. The place of offering is purchased for fifty shekels of silver, in which we once more see the full responsibility of man recognized, and the debt to divine government completely met. David for a moment here stands forth again as the type of Christ our Lord, meeting, as alone He could, the whole claim of God, the whole due of sin. Thus the book closes fitly, with the lustre of such a vision for the anointed eyes of faith.

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NUMERICAL STRUCTURE

FOURTH EDITION

THE PSALMS

NEW YORK
LOIZEAUX BROTHERS, BIBLE TRUTH DEPOT
1 EAST 13TH STREET

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LOIZEAUX BROTHERS

THE BIBLE TRUTH PRESS
1 EAST 13TH STREET, NEW YORK

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

ORDER AND DIVISIONS OF THE BOOKS

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

1. THE BOOKS OF THE LAW :—

1. Genesis.
2. Exodus.
3. Leviticus.
4. Numbers.
5. Deuteronomy.

2. THE COVENANT-HISTORY :—

1. Joshua.
2. Judges.
   Ruth.
3. Kings :—
   First Book (*Samuel*).
   Second Book (*Kings*).
4. Captivity-Books :—
   Ezra.
   Nehemiah.
   Esther.
5. Chronicles.

3. THE PROPHETS :—

1. Isaiah.
2. Jeremiah.
   Lamentations.
3. Ezekiel.
4. Daniel.
5. The Book of Minor Prophets:—

   1. *Hosea.*
      Amos.
      Micah.
   2. *Joel.*
      Obadiah.
      Jonah.
   3. *Nahum.*
      Habakkuk.
      Zephaniah.
   4. *Haggai.*
      Zechariah.
      Malachi.

4. THE PSALM-BOOKS:—

1. The Psalms.
2. Job.
3. Solomon's Song.
4. Ecclesiastes.
5. Proverbs.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

1. THE GOSPELS :—

1. Matthew.
   Mark.
   Luke.
2. John.

2. THE ACTS.

3. THE PAULINE EPISTLES :—

1. Romans.
   Galatians.
   Ephesians.
   Colossians.
   Philemon.
   Philippians.
2. Thessalonians.
   First Epistle.
   Second Epistle.
   Corinthians.
   First Epistle.
   Second Epistle.
   Hebrews.
   Timothy.
   First Epistle.
   Second Epistle.
   Titus.

4. THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES :—

1. Peter.
   First Epistle
   Second Epistle.
2. James.
3. John.
   First Epistle.
   Second Epistle.
   Third Epistle.
4. Jude.

5. REVELATION.

PREFACE

IN sending forth the present volume of the Numerical Bible, I desire afresh to call attention to that structure of Scripture which its title indicates. The Book of Psalms furnishes a test as to the reality of this, the severity of which can hardly be exceeded. The Psalms are divided, by the very fact that they are such, into 150 portions, arranged (as is well-known) in five books. This, to begin with, must be taken as it is, and meaning found for it: we are not at liberty to alter anything. But this is the smallest matter: each *psalm* also is divided into verses, every one of which must be similarly respected as a divine landmark, not to be removed. But these amount in number to near 2,500 divisions more.* Then we have the alphabetical arrangement of certain psalms, notably the 9th, 10th and 119th. Besides all this, many of the psalms will be found to be grouped together by their titles, as the eight psalms of the "sons of Korah" (xlii–xlix,); the four Maskil-psalms (lii–lv,); the five Michtam-psalms following (lvi–lx); the eleven psalms of Asaph (lxxiii–lxxxiii); and the fifteen "songs of degrees" (cxx–cxxxiv). All such boundary-lines have been respected absolutely.

See then what is the problem before us. We have to find an interpretation of the Book of Psalms which will *accommodate itself*—to use, perhaps, as poor a word as one could find—to all these restrictions of the imagination, and in spite of all show itself to be *really* an interpretation. Moulding itself also in all parts to a numerical symbolism, to which every book, every division, every psalm, every verse, must be conformed! Imagine such an intricate web as this implies thrown over Scripture, and then to find that not only is the meaning not obscured by this, but actually brought out more clearly and enforced.

Let my reader test this for himself through any sufficient portion of the volume before him, and he will hardly fail with us to thank God for such a confirmation of the uniform inspiration of His holy Word, in days

* Exactly 2461.

like these when the denial of it is rampant. But more, he will thank Him also for such a help to fixed interpretation.

For the help of some who may be more disposed to receive it in this way, I have printed "The witness of arithmetic to Christ," as a first appendix, in the lecture-form in which it was first given. The symbolism of numbers—more fully worked out than hitherto—will be found in the second. The third applies it more systematically than I have attempted to do before, to the literal meaning of the first chapter of Genesis. The fourth may need more apology for its introduction here, while I am convinced of its very great importance for Christians everywhere: it is a plea for the study of the *whole* revelation of God, including in this not only the many sadly unfamiliar parts of Scripture itself, but of Nature also, a book which God Himself has published in every language. A short summary of the Messianic psalms is the last appendix.

The references are, as in the other volumes, by Mr. SAMUEL RIDOUT.

May He without whom nothing has any power or value, be with this attempt to set forth the meaning of His precious Word.

F. W. GRANT.

December 4th, 1896.

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

Fourth Pentateuch of the Old Testament

The Experience Books

THE Psalms, with their kindred books, Job, Solomon's Song, Ecclesiastes, and Proverbs, make up the last division of the Old Testament,—a fourth Pentateuch, the utterance of the human heart in response to the divine revelation which in the former books has been made to it. In this way they fill their numerical place without any possibility of question.* They are thus also manifestly the utterances of *experience*,—characteristically this throughout, whatever other character (even at first sight opposed to this) they may at times exhibit.

Take as the most striking example of this the book of Psalms. In this we find, as all are aware, many evident prophecies of Christ in His Person and work; and prophecy and experience might seem insusceptible of any proper combination. Yet in fact it is mainly from personal experience that the web of prophecy in them is woven; the historic type which is found in the earlier books being here transferred from the external sphere to the internal. David thus fittingly becomes the author of prophetic psalms, in which the Spirit of God spake by him, and His word was in his tongue. Divine inspiration was here necessary in the fullest sense, that, as with all other prophets (1 Pet. i. 11), he might be guided better than he knew. How *much* better, the twenty-second psalm alone would be sufficient witness, where sufferings peculiar to Christ, and things that could be only said of Him, are found, and yet the voice is that of the unique Sufferer, the language still that of experience, even while we cannot believe that David or any other possible speaker of the time had in fact that experience. The discussion of such points will be found when we come to the psalms themselves with which they are connected: it is enough here to remind ourselves

* According to the Hebrew, rabbinic, arrangement, (for it is really no more,) they form, however, part of a *third* division, the *Kethubim*, or "writings"; and they are there associated with historical and prophetical books, as elsewhere noticed (Vol. II., p. 5), in a disorder which has nothing to recommend it to a spiritual mind. Upon this there is no need to dwell again.

of that remarkable experimental character which at least cannot be denied to run through the book.

Job, the Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, all plainly give us experiences also, the fruits of which are harvested for us in Proverbs, and the grain beaten out. Proverbs is thus the experimental Deuteronomy, the fresh giving of the law as ascertained and justified by experience; and is thus the fitting close of the Old Testament as a whole. Its peculiar form is thus perfectly explained.

The Order of the Books,

as given by their numerical significance, is different from that found in our common Bibles, which seems based upon the age of the (supposed) authors. Job, thus, by whomsoever written, is the oldest and comes first; the Psalms next, as characteristically the Psalms of David; and last come the three books of Solomon—Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song. But there is no uniform arrangement of these books in the MSS, and no trace of a divine order in any of them. If the Pentateuchal analogy and the numbers do not help us, then we have no help. Thank God, they speak here plainly, and thus with the most absolute authority. Let us look at them briefly in this way.

1. Psalms.

We have seen that the first book of any series has a comparative largeness of character such as above all therefore, naturally, the book of Genesis will be found to have. The number is that of precedence and sovereignty, and thus of the divine counsels, though not necessarily manifested yet as in direct prophecy, which we find in its place as *third* of the great divisions of Scripture. This exactly agrees with the character of prophecy as found in the Psalms, and which has been already glanced at, while their fullness of meaning will be thus easily intelligible. The book will thus be found full of divine mysteries,—of secrets only spoken in the ear of faith.

This peculiar prophetic character is found more or less throughout the whole of it, and distinguishes it at once from every other book except one, which could not however by any possibility fill the first place here, being destitute entirely of the fullness which we find in the Psalms. This is the Song of Solomon. The persons here are typically prophetic, and the book is a "mystery" throughout; but the Song falls naturally into the third place as we shall see, and the breadth of the divine counsels cannot be contained in its eight brief chapters, wonderful as indeed these are.

The second characteristic of the Psalms is just that they *are* "psalms." The Hebrew word means rather "hymns" or "praises" (*tehillim*); but everywhere the swell and harmony of poetry and music link themselves with this. The soul in its various moods and most opposite circumstances is controlled and harmonized by the felt presence of God. The

one God over all, in all, brings all seeming discords into unity. Change and movement are but the rhythm of a central Life, pulsating in true heart-beats through the whole frame of nature. And thus even inanimate things are bidden to join in the song which heaven to earth sends forth, and earth to heaven. God dwells amid these praises, reigns in them: they are the witness of how stable His kingdom is; "the world" too "is established that it cannot be moved."

Thus in its praise and prophecy alike the reign of God is seen in the book of Psalms. The voices of the universe speak *of* and *to* Him. Exercises and experiences leave Him Master still. And thus the Psalms fill the first place in this Pentateuch, and could fill no other.

2. Job.

Job as a name has two permissible meanings according to the lexicographers, both of them also suiting well his history. It may mean "one assailed" or "treated as an enemy." It may mean "one who turns,"—by implication the "penitent." This last word naturally connects itself with the grand crisis in his history which opens the way for his restoration to full blessing (ch. xlii. 6). The former better connects with his history throughout. Let us consider them.

The "penitent" presents Job in a most important character when we remember that he is certified by God Himself as the best man of his time on earth. And yet this repentance of his at an after-time is not simply his judgment of himself for wild words uttered or thoughts indulged under the pressure of calamities which have overtaken him. His own words show that it was a true turning-point in his life. Up to that time he had heard of God by the hearing of the ear only; now his eye saw Him. He was brought for the first time really into the light of His presence, which now for the first time therefore revealed him to himself. Hence the spotlessness of his conduct which he once had built upon could not now satisfy him: the depths of his heart had been revealed: he abhors—not his sins, but—*himself*, and repents in dust and ashes.

But this will have deeper significance if we compare it with a lesson prominent in Ecclesiastes, where the *wisest* man is unveiled to us, as here the *best*. Solomon's wisdom also is accredited by God, just as Job's goodness is; only in result to be shown folly, as Job's goodness is owned vileness. The comparison here must be surely intended to be made, and be of some universal interest; and so it is: for here in fact is the moral question settled which was left to be settled respectively by Jew and Gentile. For the Jew the law raised Job's question, "How shall man be just with God?" to which the death of the Lord was the only possible answer: "When we were yet without strength in due time Christ died for the ungodly." The Gentile question was different, though Christ was still the answer: "When, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of the

preaching to save them that believe: . . . we preach Christ crucified . . . the wisdom of God."

Notice that in these two books, Job and Ecclesiastes, the questions are worked out differently: Job, the Gentile, works out, apart from law, that which for the Jew was settled under the law—the unrighteousness of man. Solomon, the Jew, with his God-given wisdom, and revelation too in his hand, fails nevertheless, equally with the Gentile who had neither, to find by searching the wisdom needed by the world.

The questions are thus shown to be as universal, as the answers when found are found for all. Job and Ecclesiastes in this way have a world-wide interest and significance.

And yet it does not seem as if Job had its full meaning in that important lesson given, the vileness of the world's best man. Job the "penitent" is hardly the whole truth here. It does not sufficiently explain either the attack of the enemy, the various and diffuse reasoning as to the government of God, and least of all the closing vision and appeal of God Himself; although it connects itself with all these. The subject of the book is larger than this, while it includes it; and here the other meaning of the name, Job "the assailed," agrees with the numerical place of the book, while it suggests a subject which is large enough to cover all its argument, and important enough to claim the separate consideration which is here afforded it.

That subject is "the mission," or perhaps better still, "the ministry of evil;" Job, the saint of God, yet "assailed" by the enemy, the example of it. *Part* of its ministry is seen in this that it helps to bring Job to the knowledge of himself, though not without that personal vision of God to which he himself ascribes it: Satan's sieve and the Lord's look are similarly related in the gospel story, as means whereby the self-confidence of Peter is broken down in bitter tears of repentance.

Job fills then, clearly, the second place among the "books of experience."

3. Solomon's Song.

The Song of songs gives us experiences of another order. It is a song of the heart, a *marriage* song, which has been held by faith in all ages to be an allegory of spiritual things. The natural relation is used in Scripture itself as thus figuring that of Jehovah with Israel according to the Old Testament, that of Christ and the Church in the New Testament application. As a book of the Old Testament, we must take the bride primarily to be the earthly bride, but with the higher and heavenly application everywhere shining through. With such a theme as this, we need not wonder at the difficulties of interpretation with which the book abounds. It is a song for the sanctuary: it is only in the sanctuary we can read it aright. There is no need to enter into it further here. It most evidently fills the third place.

4. Ecclesiastes.

As clearly the book of the "Preacher" fills the fourth. It is the *testing of the world*, by one who has full knowledge of it,—the search into a problem with which man's heart is ever exercised, but the solution of which is never found in the way sought. He would fain find good where it is not to be found, and where the search only results in bitter disappointment, "vanity and vexation of spirit." He is a king, with all the absolute power of a king. The treasures of earth are in his lap. He has will to find what he is in quest of. He has wisdom to back his will. "What shall the man do that cometh after the king?" The experiment is thus made once for all: it can never need to be repeated. The end finds him as bankrupt in wisdom as in material resources,—humbled, so as to find it now with God; but the world fallen and away from Him; under the stamp of death therefore, and passing away; man's good in it to fear Him and to do His will, whom presently he is to meet in judgment.

That is no gospel, surely; nor is the faded king to be the preacher of this. He has one text only, and cleaves to it; simple, yet needing to be pondered, and emphasized by its isolation from all else. And we need still to ponder it.

5. Proverbs.

Only Proverbs remains, and already we have remarked upon its Deuteronomic character. The will of God is here declared in short, clear-cut sentences, not indeed as law, but as maxims of experience, suited to the books among which we are, and which show the path through the world for him who seeks it. It is a human voice permitted, for our encouragement and exhortation, to come after and set its seal to the divine. "Yet how plainly do we see, in this book of moral results, the Deuteronomy, in a sense, of the whole Old Testament, that, except in type and shadow, the heavenly things are not yet come! The glory shines not yet on a road tracked by pilgrim feet. Prophecy and promise do but beckon us onward; and the Old Covenant testifies, in its brightest revelations, to what is beyond itself."

RESULTS OF THIS HUMAN VOICE IN INSPIRATION.

"The human element in inspiration" has been sufficiently dwelt upon of late by the "higher criticism" of the day. It has been given indeed so great a prominence—set, we may say, in so great authority—as to enfeeble and bring everywhere into subjection to it the divine. We have been given to know so fully—what was never doubtful—that the writers of Scripture were *men*, that now the doubt has come to be on the other side, whether we may safely any longer call what they have written the "word of God."

On the other hand, for some who are as far as possible from this, it may be needful to point out, in the books to which we have come, a

peculiar feature due to the fact that they are, as we have seen, in a sense in which the previous books were not, really the voice of man. They are largely the utterances of human experience; they are often the records of human searching; they are sometimes the expression of human ignorance, of doubt, of error, of unbelief. All is given us as permitted and controlled of infinite Wisdom for our instruction and blessing: there is nothing at random, not a word that has escaped from this control. Yet we are in fact on very different ground when we are listening to the arguments of Job and his friends, or to the recital of what the "preacher" had once "said in his heart," while he was "proving" it with mirth or with folly, or "seeking out by wisdom" the solution of the problem of the world, from what we are on when we listen to Isaiah's prophecies, or even trace out the language of an inspired historian.

This should be quite evident, and it may seem to some useless to spend words upon such a matter as this. No one is in danger of believing that what the devil says is true, because we find it recorded in the pages of inspiration. And as to Job's friends, we are told by God himself that they had not spoken of Him the thing that was right, as His servant Job had. (Job xlii. 7.) Job had also failed surely, as his own confession implies (xl. 5); so that of much of the book it is clear that it contains thoughts and reasonings of men instead of the certain truth as God gives it. It has pleased Him that the workings of the human heart should be told out freely before Him, to find needed answer from Him. In Job we have it in Elihu and the words of God Himself ere the book closes.

Ecclesiastes, still more than Job, gives us these reasonings; but which the writer himself works out for us to a right conclusion. Infidelity, materialism, and what not, show themselves in his first thoughts therefore, and materialism especially has sheltered itself under some of his words, but without a shadow of justification when the character of the book is realized. Indeed everywhere, we may be sure, God has given us the clearest marks of distinction between what is of Himself and what is only the working of man's mind. But this last is also of the greatest interest, and profit to us too, to have before us; they come under the apostle's general rule as to inspired Scripture, and are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." We may be sure of this beforehand; we shall have the detailed proof as we go on.

The three remaining books are of a different character from these two; and in them the human voice is not simply controlled by but harmonized with the divine wisdom; and are thus either true songs, as are the Psalms and the Song itself, or precepts, as the Proverbs. The allowance of human thoughts is necessarily limited, as it is plainly marked off from the rest; but we have cause to thank God for what has been permitted.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF THE PSALMS

THE PSALMS, then, are the uttered harmony of the soul of man under all experiences, a harmony which has its source in God himself, the free obedience of the heart to Him. The unity of God as Creator ensures the unity of creation as His work: man therefore, as obedient to Him through grace, returns into this unity of creation, finds in Him his oneness with himself, his voice in the universal song: for him not without speech, but moral and intelligent. His heart is itself the harp from which the divine hand brings richest music; and that in adversity as in prosperity, in sorrow as in joy. Thus every kind of trial finds its place in the Psalms: there is the minor key as well as the major; ending at last in a tide which carries everything before it, and sweeps out of time into eternity, a perpetual anthem of immortal praise.

That the counsels of God should have their place in this, and make the Psalms largely prophetic as they are, is a matter of course. The blessing that flows back to God has flowed forth *from* God. The thought that has shaped the ages was that of a Divine Mind before the ages were. The creature has done his best (or worst) against it. The patience of God has given evil its time; that it might be seen in its full character, and judged fully as thus shown. It has uttered its last word and made its plea before the court of the universe, and failed. Goodness has only the more been displayed; grace has become the wonder of eternity: the throne of God has become that also of the Lamb; to God and His creature wedded in the Person of the Redeemer, henceforth never to be sundered, every knee bows and every tongue confesses Jesus Christ as Lord to the glory of God the Father.

For the mysteries of God as made known in Christianity, however, we have still to go to the New Testament. The horizon of the Psalms is earthly. The people of God in it are earthly people. Jehovah's bride is Israel, not the Church. Not even does the Spirit in the believer cry "Abba, Father;" God's fatherly relation to *Israel* being quite different from this: for it is not founded upon new birth, nor contemplates eternity, but time and the earth. Christian unity is not that of a nation, but a communion of saints.

Yet in fact the writers of the psalms *are* saints, and in all that is fundamental to this, whatever the dispensation, we are upon common ground. Beyond this the typical character of Israel comes in to enlarge in every direction the spiritual view, and make the Psalms often fuller in meaning for the Christian than for believing Israel they could ever be.

None the less must we heedfully acknowledge the Israelite character. As Old Testament prophecy the blessing of the Psalms connects itself with the future blessing of Israel according to the new covenant; the

nation becoming the channel of grace and mercy to the nations around; the centre from which it radiates being the temple-throne of God in Jerusalem, His law going forth from Zion, and the kings of the earth bringing *there* their willing tribute of praise and worship. In connection with this final condition we find the whole history of the chosen people entered into, the special interest concentrated upon two crises of controlling significance, the first and second coming of Messiah to them: the first time, though rejected, to accomplish that which is, for them and for us, the righteous and only foundation of all blessing; the second, to bring in for them nationally the blessing itself, after a disciplinary trial of short duration but unprecedented severity, in which they are brought in repentance and faith to receive their King. This is the "time of Jacob's trouble," the travail-time in which they are new born in order to enter the kingdom of God. These are the prophetic events to which the Psalms give all the pathos of their profound emotion, all their variety of ethical expression, all their glow of divine light. They live and move before us, riveting our attention, inviting our judgment, rousing our affections, interpreted everywhere into the language of the conscience and the heart.

It will naturally follow that the Psalms cannot rightly be treated, as they too generally are, as if independent of one another, or without systematic order, or a well-defined basis of fact or doctrine. On the contrary, they will only be read with due intelligence when it is seen that each individual psalm has its suited place and organic connection with reference to the whole, and to the doctrine and prophecy of the Old Testament,—nay, of the entire word of God. The psalms are individually much what the words in a sentence are to this, and must be studied with reference to the whole. And here once more the numerical structure comes to test and give precision to the meaning in every part. The arrangement is such as that, if it will bear the numerical test, it must needs be pronounced divine. We propose with the utmost stringency to submit it to this test.

It is well known that the Psalms are in Hebrew divided into five books, which the Jews have called "the Pentateuch of David." Delitzsch admits that there appears in these a certain imitation of the Thora (the law). We have had so many instances of this as to expect rather than be surprised at it. These divisions are as follows:—

1. (Ps. i.–xli.)—Christ in the counsel of God the source of all blessing for His people (Israel).
2. (Ps. xlii.–lxxii.)—Their ruin, but redemption in the latter days.
3. (Ps. lxxiii.–lxxxix.)—The holiness of God in His dealings with them.
4. (Ps. xc.–cvi.)—The failed first man replaced by the Second, and the world established under His hand.
5. (Ps. cvii.–cl.)—The moral conclusion as to the divine ways, in which God and man are found at last together.

NOTES.

MANY things that are usually put in an introduction we shall consider probably better as we come to them. Gems look better in their settings—God's gems assuredly do: the connection of psalm with psalm, so necessary for the knowledge of them individually, makes much plain as to their application; the numerical symbolism, here as elsewhere, gives precision to and confirms the meaning. Best it seems, therefore, to settle as little as possible at the beginning, and to make our notes take the shape very much of an inductive study, looking at each question as it arises, and as the means of settling it are in our hand. We shall find thus, I doubt not, that God has provided, in the orderly arrangement of the matter, for the progressive understanding of it, though we shall have always to say with the apostle. "We know in part, and we prophesy in part."

The divisions (or Books) of the Psalms are given in the Revised Version; and it will be seen that the first three books (ending with Ps. xli., lxxii., lxxxix.,) are closed with a double Amen; the fourth, with "Amen, Hallelujah;" the fifth ends with five Hallelujah psalms. The number five clings to the whole book; five being, as we have seen, as 4 + 1, the weak with the Strong, the creature with the Creator, but thus bringing in the governmental ways of God with man, and his responsibility and exercise under this government. The Psalms are 150 in number (3 x 5 x 10), and the five books are a perfect Pentateuch, as we have said.

THE FIRST BOOK,

as giving the counsel of God as to Christ, does not on that account contain *all* the Messianic psalms, as we see at once. In fact there are more outside than within it; but those found here are the leading ones as regards His office, person, and work. His kingship in Israel, affirmed in the second psalm, widens in the eighth into full earth-empire as the Son of Man. The sixteenth shows the perfection of His life among men, the ground of appeal to God against His enemies in the seventeenth, which is answered in the eighteenth, His foes being put under His feet. The twenty-second reveals the sin-offering character of His work, as the fortieth does its perfection as the burnt-offering. The forty-first closes the book by showing the double and opposite result for faith and for unbelief respectively. These psalms govern and give character to all the others, as we see; and thus the book as a whole gives us "Christ as the source of blessing for His people."

The plan of the book, and, more or less, of the whole of the psalms, is, as another has remarked, that "some great truth or historical fact is brought forward as to Christ or the remnant."—the faithful in Israel.—"or both, and then a series of psalms follows, expressing the feelings and sentiments of the remnant in connection with that truth or fact." (*Synopsis.*) Thus the human exercises are seen in relation to such truths, often embodied in the historic facts, and which the historic fact also embodies. This involves a very distinct and purposive grouping of the psalms, as is plain, and prepares us to see spiritual order throughout them. Nor are the series thus formed hard to be discerned in general, often being marked off by their authors, as those of Asaph or of the sons of Korah,—sometimes by their character as "Maschil" or "Michtam" psalms, or "Songs of degrees,"—often the subject alone being quite sufficient for the purpose, as soon as we begin fairly to entertain the thought of such divisions. That the titles should be found to have such uses goes far to prove their trustworthiness, so much in dispute; but this will be examined as we go on.

The first book has three subdivisions:—

1. (Ps. i.–viii.) Christ ordained King in Zion, and, after rejection by His people, to wider rule as Son of Man.
2. (Ps. ix.–xv.) The enemy and Antichrist, with the conflict and final deliverance.
3. (Ps. xvi.–xli.) Christ in the midst of the people, manifesting God for them, and sanctifying them to God.

Thus in these three subdivisions the character of the first book is made clear; the two main ones being separated by one which shows us the opposition in man and the evil to be overcome, without which the view of Christ Himself could not be rightly seen.

Let us notice that in the first of these subdivisions we have, first of all, *two* parts, which give us the theme, and of which the second at least is strictly Messianic; the third section, with only one psalm, is again Messianic; the middle section, which expresses those exercises of the faithful-hearted which are the result of the rejection of the King, consisting of *five* parts, the number which speaks of exercise. In the second subdivision (ix.–xv.), which speaks of the strife with evil, there are but two sections: two psalms in the first again, giving the theme; *five* once more giving the exercises. But in the third subdivision we return to an arrangement similar to that of the first, though larger: here *nine* psalms (xvi.–xxiv.) are characteristically Messianic; the remnant psalms are increased correspondingly to *three* fives (xxv.–xxxix.); and two Messianic psalms close the book. (xl., xli.) Certainly in all this there is order, and the numerals are significant throughout, or as suited as if *meant* to be significant. Shall we not find in each psalm, as we study it, proof of a divine wisdom which has put each in its place as definitely as the earth into its orbit, and arranged its every detail to convey to us clear and consistent meaning?

Is it not good to have this assurance of a divine hand, just there where we are most in danger of seeing only the human? And may we not with corresponding earnestness take up what God has in His grace thus elaborated, to make us realize His handy-work in it?

SUBD. 1.

The first eight psalms are naturally an introduction, not merely to the first book of the psalms, but to the whole. We have Christ as King on *Zion*, but rejected by the handed nations, the threatening of wrath to come for this, but the time of long-suffering too, which is salvation to those who in submission "kiss the Son." We find that, though rejected by the nation of Israel, the people with whom He is in connection are still Israel, if only a remnant of them. Judgment is drawing nigh for the world, the evil which is growing to a head, and its opposition to God and to His own is becoming ever fiercer: so that at last the prayer of the righteous is turned into a cry for judgment, which is not reproved. Yet the fire through which this people pass is to them a necessary purification. They are made to face and bottom the question of sin, until mercy becomes their only plea. It is the time of Jacob's trouble, and Joseph's brethren begin to realize their soul-hunger which will yet bring them penitents to Him. But in this introductory part all is touched as yet with a light hand. We see them humbled that He may exalt them, and we realize that they are accepted, their prayer is answered. But for this deliverance judgment must take its course, and now it does so: Jehovah is praised according to His righteousness, which has acted in the overthrow of the wicked, and is now manifested as in truth "Jehovah most High."

So ends the seventh—the fifth remnant psalm. It is followed by a totally different strain, as an *eighth* psalm, that of a new period, the celebration of a Man and the Son of man, through whom, set over the whole earth, Jehovah's Lordship is realized and His Name made excellent in all the earth, and man himself is seen as worthy of the original place to which God the Creator destined him. The application can only be to One, and to Him the epistle to the Hebrews accordingly applies it. (Heb. ii. 6–9.)

Thus we have reached the point beyond which the Psalms do not go, and the next is therefore plainly a retrogression. The first series is in this way clearly marked off, and is complete in itself. The details we are presently to consider; but it should be plain at once that here is no fortuitous collection of ill-assorted lyrics. Whoever wrote, whoever gathered them, there is a common life that unites them all; they are organically joined together.

Moreover, the scheme to which they are related is distinctly prophetic; purpose, and a divine purpose, rules the whole: whether written in exilic or pre-exilic times, to classify them in this way would give no clue to their meaning,—shed upon them no ray of light. The *how* of their production is of very small importance compared with the *why* of their design. They contemplate the last days and the nearing judgment. They project themselves beyond the immediate horizon of the times in which they were written and link together days which are for us now already past, and which have confirmed them as true prophecy, and days which are even yet to come. Every detail throughout is in accordance with this.

Sec. 1.

The first section here shows us Him who is in the purpose of God King in Zion, with whom the destinies of His people are bound up. For "the Redeemer shall come unto Zion, and to them that turn from transgression in Jacob" (Isa. lix. 20): which the apostle paraphrases with "Out of Zion shall come the Deliverer, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob." (Rom. xi. 26.) That is, the king must actually be in Zion for deliverance to come: the kingdom of Christ must be openly established in power upon the earth.

But in the second psalm, while the purpose of God abides unrepentingly, Israel and the earth are not yet ready. The powers of the earth are in coalition against Christ, and among these we find "both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the *people of Israel.*" (Acts iv. 27.) Thus the controversy begins, in the days in which we still are, the long-suffering mercy of God delaying judgment, and the gospel going out among men, while Satan is still the "prince of this world," yea, "the god of this" entire "age." (2 Cor. iv. 4.)

But with the kingdom in this "mystery" form, or what we call the Christian dispensation, the book of Psalms, as part of the Old Testament, has nothing directly to do (Matt. xiii. 10, 11, 35); and in the third psalm and those following, a remnant of Israel is still, as we shall find, before us. All the present period is passed over, and we are in the "end of the age"—the *Jewish* age—concerning which the Lord taught His disciples in the great prophecy on the mount of Olives. (Matt. xxiv.) This we shall see more of presently: just now we have only what reaches down to the rejection of Christ by the Jews.

The first psalm may give us also the King of Israel, not as such but in His personal character, upon which, of course, all depends for blessing. So looked at He is the perfect Israelite, and the psalm speaks in the most general way of the blessedness of an obedience which is naturally linked in them with faith in Christ Himself, which the second emphasizes. Christ also was "Leader and perfecter of faith" in His own Person, but here it is the faith of others in Him; and the two psalms together show us what must be the foundation of blessing for Israel in the last days, the spirit of obedience and faith,—which the apostle connects together in their true relation to one another as the "obedience *of* faith" (Rom. i. 5, Gk.), as necessary to Gentile as to Jew, but in these two psalms applying to the Jew. Herein they proclaim this to be the way of safety and blessing for Israel, though but a remnant,—for every individual soul among them.

PSALM I.

The first psalm has only six verses, which are manifestly divided into two triplets; in the first of these the godly man is seen in the blessedness of being this; in the second, as contrasted with the character and portion of the wicked. Every verse moreover answers to its numerical place. Let us look briefly at this before we take up the psalm more deeply.

First, then, we have the blessedness of the godly looked at by itself. In the first verse we see his *consistent independency* of all the various forms and degrees of ungodliness by which he is encompassed. He shakes them off from him, to walk, as far as their advocates are concerned, alone. Such is in fact the necessary commencement of a true walk with God. The first step with Him must be outside of all that is contrary to Him; and to be indifferent is to be contrary!

PSALMS

BOOK 1. (Ps. i.–xli.)

Christ in the counsel of God the source of all blessing for His people (Israel).

SUBDIVISION 1. (i.–viii.)

Christ ordained King in Zion, and (after rejection by His people) to wider rule as Son of man.

SECTION 1. (i., ii.)

The destined King, and the blessedness of obedience and trust in Him.

[1]PSALM I.

The Blessedness of Obedience.

1 (1-3): The godly

(i.) in his independent steadfastness.

(ii.) in his dependence and communion.

[a]HAPPY the man who [b]walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly,
nor [c]standeth in the way of sinners,
nor [d]sitteth in the seat of scoffers!
But his [e]delight is in the law of Jehovah,
and in his law he [f]meditateth day and night.

a Ps. 2. 12. Ps. 32. 1, 2. Ps. 41. 1. Ps. 119. 1, 2 Matt. 5. 3-12.
b Prov. 1. 10-15. Prov. 4. 14, 15.
c *cf.* Jno. 18. 18.
d Jer. 15. 17. Ps. 26. 4.
e Ps. 40. 8. Jer. 15. 16. Ps. 119. 162. Job. 23. 12.
f Josh. 1. 8. Ps. 119. 97. Col. 3. 16.

In the second verse the godly one is seen in his dependency and communion with God. His delight and meditation are in Jehovah's law, which term, while it may include the whole of the inspired Word existing at the time, yet shows the deep subjection of the soul required and rendered.

In the third verse we have the fruitfulness resulting.

The second part contrasts the wicked with this in character and in end. First, their lightness and barrenness—mere chaff. Secondly, they are separated from the godly by the coming judgment in which it is impossible for them to stand. Thirdly, Jehovah's approbation of the way of the righteous manifests itself thus for them; and the path of the wicked breaks down in ruin.

The thread of numerical structure runs evidently through the psalm, and certifies it to be a good note from the King's treasury. One might trace it, I believe, more fully and minutely; but this may suffice us now. The psalm claims, however, from us more detailed exposition.

The psalm has no special title, as one perhaps not suggested by any special occasion, and its principles being of the widest application. Nor is it needful to speculate as to an author, whom Scripture itself has not made known. As to such things, the higher criticism has set itself to most unnecessary work, and necessarily been led astray by its own wisdom. Faith in the word of God — which, indeed, they will not call it — would have made them approve its silence as well as its speech, and found profit from both. Would it not have rather lessened than enhanced the authority of such words as these, to have them commended to us as from David, or from any other? Conscience alone is needed to respond to them, and will do so with the upright in heart.

The description of the godly man is first negative, then positive. He is first seen in his refusal of any link with the ungodly, whatever be the phase of their ungodliness. The words certainly show us a down-grade of evil, and how its hold strengthens upon those drawn into its vortex. It begins with "counsel," which simply leaves out God. Walk by it, and you shall find that it leads into

(iii.) the fruit realized.

He is even like a [g] tree,
planted by the [h] water-streams,
that giveth its [i] fruit in its season,
and its [j] leaf withereth not:
and all that he doeth he [k] carrieth through.

[g] Ps. 52. 8. Ps. 92. 12-14. *cf.* Jer. 17. 7, 8 with Jno. 15. 4, 5.
[h] Is. 44. 3, 4. *cf.* Is. 58. 11 with Jno. 7. 37-39.
[i] Hos. 14. 8; Prov. 11. 30; Jno. 15. 8, 16; Gal. 5. 22, 23.
[j] *cf.* Ezek. 47. 12; *ctr.* Is. 1. 30.
[k] Ps. 90. 17.

the way of sinners,—practical and open rejection of righteousness in deed and word. And this has for its natural consummation the brazen hardness of the scoffer, who says, "Depart from me, for I desire not the knowledge of thy ways!" (Job xxi. 14.) This is the way in which many travel, who strengthen each other by their mutual unbelief, and become for each other the authority which God has lost in their souls. Thus the mass hardens as it compacts together; and this is more and more being seen in days of widespread confederacy such as these are,—confederacy which for the Christian, in its lightest form, means compromise, the overthrow of conscience, of that which is the witness to God's supremacy over man, the divine throne to which alone he is really subject.

The positive side of this description of the godly man is just this subjection of conscience and heart to God. A dependent creature, realizing his relationship to a Being of unchanged perfection, his delight is in conformity to His blessed will, to Jehovah's law. He is exercised by it, occupied with it, meditates upon it day and night. As the psalms themselves even are quoted as "the law" in Scripture (Rom. iii. 19), there is no possible reason for limiting this here even to the books of Moses; and the soul delighting in God will seek to possess itself of all that He has communicated. "*All* Scripture . . . is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness"; so there is nothing unpractical in the whole range of that which God has given to us: if we neglect any of it, this may result in serious misunderstanding of the rest. It is a Jew, of course, who is contemplated here, and with the necessarily limited revelation that had as yet been made; and how much the more does this diligent study upon his part speak to us to whom so much more has been vouchsafed! "Labor not," says the Lord, amid an audience of the hard-working poor, whose poverty and need He so well knew,—"*Labor not* for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give you." And did not these wondrous psalms of praise themselves grow largely out of such day and night study of Jehovah's law as characterizes the godly here?

We are next shown the fruit found and produced by one in such a course: "He is even like a tree, planted by the water-streams, that giveth its fruit in its season." No *special* tree is named; except that it has fruit, we have no further knowledge of it; the vegetable kingdom furnishes the great types of *production*, as the beast is the typical *consumer;* the fruit-tree is the natural figure here.

Like all other living things, the tree is also a growth from seed, the development of an organic unity; and this is what the believer is, himself the fruit of seed of God's sowing, and so far as this goes, at one with himself and with the creation of God *as such;* an *organic* unity, mind, heart, and moral nature, in response to one another.

This, it is true, is not the whole picture of what the believer is, looked at as a man down here, in whom sin dwells, if it does not *reign*. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John i. 7); and yet the same apostle who says this gives us afterwards the picture of one born of God, as fair as this is (iii. 9). It is the truth of what the child of God is, *as that;* it is the *ideal* regenerate man: for God, when He puts such pictures in His gallery, does it to win us to better imitation. He does not, therefore, in this case put the defects before us for such a purpose, or to dispirit us, as if we were given up to a blotched life, but the contrary. He paints what we dare not say, with the Spirit within us, is not possible, and so encourages us on to make it actual. The sin in our lives in no wise comes from the seed of His sowing.

2(4-6): In contrast with the ungodly. (i.) in his barrenness. (ii.) separation between them.

Not so the [l]ungodly,
but like the [m]chaff which the wind driveth away.
Wherefore the ungodly shall not stand in the [n]judgment,
nor sinners in the [o]assembly of the righteous.

l ver. 1. Ps. 9.16, 17. *m* Ps. 35. 5. Hos. 13. 3. Is. 17. 13. *n cf.* Matt. 25. 31,32,41. *o cf.* Ps. 22. 22, 25; Ps. 35. 18; Ps. 40. 9, 10; Ps. 149. 1.

Some have argued, from what I have called the *idealizing* of the picture, that it must be the king of Israel alone, the Lord Jesus Christ, that is portrayed in it. That He alone has fully answered to it, we may be sure is true; but it is not, therefore, untrue as a generalized type of the believer. Here is the happiness of the man who does so and so; and in doing this he becomes like so and so. So far as the previous conditions are fulfilled, so far is the likeness found to be *like;* there is no difficulty in understanding this.

To return: he is "like a tree planted by the water-streams." Here the figure is of tender care and ministry. The fruit-tree is not a natural growth of the soil: a Hand has planted it, and that amid the divided streams of an irrigated land. The "living water"—and we know this living water—prepares soil for root and root for soil; and not without such care will this dependent life be sustained.

Notice, that it is the man meditating day and night upon Jehovah's law of whom this is said: the Spirit of God acts through the word of God; there is no other way than this. As, to handle the Word without the Spirit is but rationalism, so the dream of the Spirit ministering apart from the Word is delusion and fanaticism. The word of God is the work and gift of the Spirit in man's behalf, and He cannot be expected to set aside the very instrument that He has prepared. It is by "all Scripture, inspired of God," that "the man of God" is to be perfect, "thoroughly furnished unto every good work." Let us take care not to sunder what God has joined thus together.

So nurtured, the result is sure: he "giveth his fruit in its season." There is no crude prematurity about it: truth has to be digested and assimilated; but the activity and energy of life are there, and progress day by day. That which presents itself as of God must needs meet the challenge of the conscience ere the heart is free to yield itself to it, and the life is cast into the mould of the doctrine. But the seasonable fruit is found which God can take pleasure in. It is not for the tree itself that the fruit is produced, and it is not what we find in ourselves that is the point, but what the Lord finds. Even when, with the apostle, "I know nothing by myself,"—am conscious of nothing wrong,—"yet am I not hereby justified, but He that judgeth me is the Lord." (1 Cor. iv. 4.) The soul that is thus able to say nothing for itself is just that in which the Lord will find the fruit He seeks.

And "his leaf shall not wither": it is impossible to forget, as we think of this, that tree upon which once the Lord sought fruit; and finding none, He said, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth for ever," and presently the fig-tree withered away. Thus the leaf withered *because* the fruit was not to be found, for in the case of the fig-tree the putting forth of leaves takes place after the fruit. "The time of figs" in general was, indeed, as we are told, "not yet"; but on this tree, however precociously, there was already the leaf of profession, and the significance of the judgment is therefore apparent.

Not yet was there sign upon earth of subjection to God, save in one nation, to which, therefore, the Lord came. Israel was just as this fig-tree, covered with leaves, zealous of the law, parading their obedience to their "One Jehovah." Surely, then, they would recognize and reverence Him whom Jehovah had openly proclaimed His Son. So the Lord had just, in public fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy, entered the city amid the homage of the multitude, rebuking those who would have rebuked them for it. But He entered to find the temple, His Father's house, made a den of thieves, and to meet the dogged, desperate oppo-

(iii.) Jehovah manifests Himself.

For Jehovah [p] knoweth the way of the righteous,
and the way of the ungodly [q] perisheth.

[p] Ps. 37. 18. [q] Ps. 146. 9. *cf.* Phil. 3. 18, 19.

sition of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians, all the leaders of the parties that divided the people, united only in refusal of Himself. Thus they had pronounced sentence upon themselves, and His upon the fruitless fig-tree was but the manifestation of their self-assumed position.

How evident the application of this psalm, then, to the real "time of figs" that yet shall be, when the remnant of true believers in Israel shall expand into a nation of rejoicing converts, born as in a day! The fruit being at last found in its season, their "leaf shall *not* wither"; the perpetuity which is in God's favor shall be theirs. "Thy people shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I Jehovah will hasten it in his time." (Isa. lx. 21, 22.)

It is plain, then, that we have Israel before us in this introductory psalm, and in the time of the end; and this is confirmed by the closing verses. It is equally plain that this does not hinder the widest possible application of principles that are ever true, and must abide while God abides. The practical use that all generations have made of the psalms, from the day that they were written, has not been mistaken, except indeed where the necessary differences between Jewish and Christian apprehension and experience have been lost sight of or never appreciated. Upon this there will be need to remark more particularly and frequently enough as we go through the book: we shall not at this time, therefore, dwell upon it.

The second part of the psalm shows the character and doom of the ungodly in contrast with the blessing of the godly. Brief enough is their description, and the image used with regard to them carries us once more onward to the gospels. The Baptist, in his denunciation of judgment to come, draws, as the psalmist does, his similitude from the threshing-floor: "He will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather the wheat into the garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Here the figure is not pursued so far; "they are like chaff which the wind driveth away." The rootless, fruitless vain-doer is shown in the judgment of God in his own nothingness, chased away out of the world, as the wind, from the top of the hills on which the threshing-floors were placed, carried off the useless husk of the grain.

The separation is dwelt on in the next verse, and in plain words, Israel thus becoming what it never yet has been, an "assembly of the righteous." And this once more Isaiah declares will be: "And it shall come to pass that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem; when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning." (ch. iv. 3, 4.)

In this Jehovah manifests Himself at last, from under the clouds and darkness which often now are round about Him. That which He approves abides, His seal upon it never will be broken. And thus He "knows" the way of the righteous,— knows it well as what is His own: it is the way in which He too walks, and in which communion is found with Himself. "But the way of the ungodly perisheth."

We have, then, in this introductory psalm the blessedness of a righteous remnant in Israel, cleaving to God in subjection while others wander from Him, and in view of coming judgment which shall leave the whole nation an assembly of the righteous. But this evidently is but a partial view of the matter: the word "faith" has not as yet been uttered; the Object of faith has as yet not been seen. The second psalm must complete, therefore, the picture by presenting these.

Ps. ii.

1 (1-3): the rebellion of the nations.

(i.) its emptiness.

(ii.) their confederacy.

[2]PSALM II.

Christ rejected by the banded nations, but His long-suffering salvation to those that trust in Him.

[r]WHY do the nations rage,
and the races [of men] meditate [s]vanity?
[t]Kings of the earth set themselves,
and rulers take [u]counsel together
against [v]Jehovah and against his [w]anointed:—

r Acts 4. 25-28.
s Ps. 4. 2.
t *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 6. *cf.* Rev. 19. 19.
u *cf.* Rev. 16. 12-16. *cf.* Rev. 17. 12-14.
v *cf.* 1 Sam. 8. 7. *cf.* Ex. 5. 2; Job. 21. 15.
w Ps. 45. 7; Luke 2. 26; Acts 2. 36.

PSALM II.

As already said, even in the first psalm it is Christ who alone perfectly fills out the description. The law, too, was specially to be the study, naturally, of the king of Israel: "it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear Jehovah his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them." (Deut. xvii. 19.) To this, even to the "learning," the Lord was pleased in taking manhood to conform. It is He who speaks thus by the prophet, uniting together in the grace of His humiliation things that seem contrary to one another, the power and wisdom of an almighty Saviour, with the lowly obedience of His creature man: "Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? When I called, was there none to answer? Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? Behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness: their fish stinketh because there is no water, and dieth for thirst. I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering." This upon the one side; now hear how the same voice goes on: "The Lord Jehovah hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learner." (Isa. l. 2–4.)

Thus He magnified the law, and made it honorable. But though the king of Israel has filled this place, and necessarily in perfection, He is not specifically before us in the first psalm. The second, however, is as explicit as the first is reticent in this respect. In this we find Christ as the God-ordained King, though resisted by the banded power of rebellious nations, and His salvation for those who trust in Him. And thus we find completed the character of the godly ones in Israel, who are, in order to be this, believers also in Christ. The blessedness here, not to be divorced from that of the first psalm, is of all those that take refuge in Him.

The psalm has twelve verses, the number of manifest government, which are divided as twelve is usually,—we may say, almost universally in Scripture, when divided at all,—into *four threes*. The first three show us the rebellion of the nations; the second, Jehovah's opposing attitude and testimony; in the third, Christ is declared to be the Son, with all things in His hand; the fourth is the warning-test for the world, by which the godly are made known. In each of these we find a different speaker.

1. The folly of rebellion is seen at the outset: "who hath hardened himself against Him and prospered?" (Job ix. 4.) So great, indeed, is it, that men have to hide from themselves the truth as to what they do, and the "heart is" indeed "deceitful above all things" that can deceive the man himself with a lie that can deceive no other. It is God who asks "who can know it?" and happy is he who will take God's account. The only reason that can be given for the insanity of rebellion against Him is that "the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed *can be*." (Rom. viii. 7.) Satan is the determined enemy of omnipotence, and knows it. Man can bring himself to disbelieve in God, but "the devils believe and tremble." Yet that has no controlling power to bring to an end an opposition which continually increases the judgment they anticipate. How fearful a thing is the power of sin!

(iii.) the open issue.
2 (4-6): Jehovah's opposition & testimony.
(i.) emptiness of rebellion against the Lord.
(ii.) the overthrow.
(iii.) the establishment of the king.

"Let us [x]break their bands asunder!
and cast their cords from us!"

The [y]sitter in the heavens [z]laugheth;
the Lord derideth them;
Then speaketh he to them in his [a]anger,
and [b]confoundeth them in his wrath.
"And I, I have stablished [c]my king,
upon [d]Zion my holy mount."

x Luke 19. 14. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 3–12.
y Ps. 9. 7. Ps. 99. 1. Is. 40. 22.
z. Ps. 37. 13. Ps. 59. 8. Prov. 1. 26.
a Ps. 76. 7.
b *cf.* Ex. 14. 24.
c *cf.* Is. 11. 1-5; Ps. 45. 1; Ps. 72. 1; *cf.* Matt. 2. 2. d Ps. 50. 2; Is. 2. 2-4; Rev. 14. 1; *ctr.* Eph. 1. 20-23.

The opposition to Jehovah and His Christ is markedly that of the kings and rulers of the earth. The kings desire no "king of kings." They take counsel and confederate together; and Herod and Pontius Pilate of old will have their representatives to the end (fast hastening) of "man's day." That Christ has come on God's part and been rejected and cut off is a fact which remains with all its significance to-day. It is not a thing of the past only, but has stamped its character upon the world. Not till He breaks it in pieces with the rod of iron will the opposition cease; and at no time will it be more open, earnest, and intense than in those last days, when Jewish unbelief and Christian apostasy will culminate in the reception of him who (as our Lord warns the Jews) "comes in his own name," with no manifestation of the Father, and no heaven-sent message, and is received. (John v. 43.)

It was no partial outbreak of human passion that caused the crucifixion. Satan, "the prince of this world," manifested as this by it, was able to unite Jew and Gentile, high and low together, against the One in whom God was reconciling the world unto Himself. Different motives might incite to the deed, and did; but, however the motives differed, the deed was that of all. How rightly could the Lord say of it "Now is the judgment of this world"! It was the final expression of the enmity of man's heart to God: "Now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." (John xv. 24.)

And is the world now other than it then was? The psalm before us shows that its opposition will continue until the rod of iron breaks it down. "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." Even now there is no such thing really as a Christian world. Nay, the most bitter enmity to Christ and Christians has come forth out of the heart of Christendom itself. "I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration."

Thus it remains true still (for "Scripture cannot be broken") that all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim. iii. 12.) But when the thin veil of profession, now fast wearing out, shall be finally flung away, who shall attempt to depict the reality, when the very powers that "make the whore desolate and naked" shall with the "beast" to whom they give their strength, "make war with the Lamb"? (Rev. xvii. 12–17.)

The last hours of nearly exhausted patience will be running out, and the lingering judgment at the very doors, when (the saints of the present dispensation having been removed to heaven) the remnant of Israel enter upon the scene, to encounter the full fury of the final storm; and it is with their sufferings and sorrows that the Psalms are filled. The opposition will then be at its height, and it is this crisis which most fully answers to what is here, the nations having thrown off the last semblance of a Christian yoke. It will be then, indeed, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us!" There will be then near in sight the "battle of that great day of God Almighty": "they shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them."

2. The three verses following give us now Jehovah's attitude in view of this hostile gathering. Sitting in the heavens, far above the greatest of their puny efforts, He laughs at their dream of independence and resistance. But presently He too speaks out in His anger, and confounds them in His wrath: "And I,"

3 (7-9): the manifestation of the Son, who is to have all for His possession.
(i.) the decree.
(ii.) all dependent on His word.

I will declare the [e]decree;
Jehovah hath said unto me,
[f]Thou art my Son,
I [g]this day have begotten thee.
[h]Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance,
and for thy possession the ends of the earth.

[e] *cf.* Ps. 110. 1, 2. *cf.* Ps. 132. 11. [f] Heb. 1. 5. Acts 13. 33. Matt. 3. 17. *ctr.* Jno. 1. 14, 18. [g] *cf.* Luke 1. 35. *cf.* 2 Sam. 7. 14; *cf.* Ps. 89. 27. [h] *cf.* Is. 49. 1-7; Ps. 72. 8-11; *ctr.* Heb. 2. 8, 9 with Phil. 3. 20; Jno. 18. 36.

He says, "I have established my king, upon Zion my holy mount." It was as king of the Jews they wrote His title upon His cross: His claim was His condemnation. The ages have passed, and men might think that the long lapse of time had sufficiently voided *that* title at least; but it is not so. God had even long before declared, as if done, what is as sure as if it were done: "I have established my king on Zion." He calleth the things that are not, as though they were. The might of His voice had brought the worlds into being. The King on Zion is established by the same omnipotent Voice.

3. The King thus ordained comes forward now Himself to announce who He is, and the dominion which is intrusted to Him. As to His Person, He is by nature the true Son of God. The statement by the apostle in his address in the synagogue of Antioch (Acts xiii. 33, 34) has been taken by some to mean that it is in resurrection, as "first-begotten from the *dead*" (Rev. i. 5) that these words apply to Him. But the apostle carefully distinguishes there God's "raising up" to Israel "Jesus as a Saviour," and His raising Him up from the *dead*. To the last he applies the expression, "I will give you the sure mercies of David"; to the former only "Thou art my Son." Had Christ not been already the Son of God in nature, resurrection could not have made Him such; and the angel's words to Mary (Luke i. 35) show distinctly how the title applies: "The Spirit of God shall come upon thee," he says, "and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: *therefore* that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

Thus the Lord's human birth fitly answers to what He was in Deity. In that He was, as John spake of Him, the *only*-begotten Son, with no "brethren," whereas in human nature it is "among many brethren" that He is "First-born." (Rom. viii. 29.) The one title as distinctly excludes any share with others, as the second implies it. Of course it is of His human generation alone that it could be said, "*To-day* have I begotten Thee"; and thus He is Son of David also, and King in Zion.

As such, however, the nations, even to "the ends of the earth," are under His dominion; and He has but to ask to have. *When* He asks,—the nations being in rebellion,—He must subdue the opposition with "the rod of His strength" (Ps. cx. 2), which the psalm before us shows us to be yet a *shepherd's* rod. The uniform translation of the words in the New Testament (Rev. ii. 27; xii. 5; xix. 15, *Gk.*) proves that the true rendering here is "thou shalt *shepherd* them," not "break," which the parallelism in the latter part of the verse has commended to many. But a *shepherd's* rod can smite, and with severity, just because there is heart behind it,—in care of the flock; and we are reminded of Moses, when that rod of his, which had been turned into a serpent, returned to his hand. Forty years he had been in training as a shepherd when he was sent, with that sign of the power entrusted to him, to be the deliverer of Israel, and that rod smote Egypt, so that the nations trembled. Here now is the antitypical Moses, far greater, yet only the more the true "Shepherd of Israel," who appears for the redemption of His people, and to whose hands is committed therefore the judgment of the world.

But how different is the realization of His inheritance here from that quiet overspreading of the earth by the gospel which so many still imagine! But "as

(iii.) the realization of the possession.

4 (10–12): the warning-test for the world.

(i.) wisdom for kings.

(ii.) a message of humiliation.

(iii.) the sanctuary-refuge.

Thou shalt [e]shepherd them with an iron rod;
as a potter's vessel thou shalt [f]shatter them.

And now, be [k]wise, ye kings!
be admonished, ye judges of earth!
Serve Jehovah with [l]fear,
and rejoice with trembling.
[m]Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and ye perish from the way,
for in a [n]little will his anger kindle!
[o]Happy all they that take refuge in him.

e Rev. 12. 5. Rev. 19. 14–16. cf. Rev. 2. 27 with 2 Tim. 2. 12. Ps. 149. 6–9.
f cf. Luke 20. 18. Dan. 2. 34, 35, 44. 2 Thess. 1. 8.
k cf. Ps. 18. 44.
l Heb. 12. 28, 29. Ps. 33. 8. Jer. 8. 6, 7.
m cf. Gen. 41. 40; cf. 1 Ki. 19. 18. n Hag. 2. 6; Heb. 10. 37. o Ps. 1. 1; Jer. 17. 7, 8.

concerning the gospel, they are *enemies* for your sakes" (Rom. xi. 28), is said of Israel now, and with Israel's blessing that of the world is bound up. The prophet Zechariah has shown us very clearly how in the midst of Jerusalem's extreme distress, compassed with enemies and just falling into their hands, "then the Lord shall go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. . . . And His feet shall stand in that day on the mount of Olives," —how familiar a spot! . . . "and Jehovah my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." (ch. xiv. 3–5.) The blessing flows out consequent upon this, and "one Lord" is owned throughout the whole earth; but again (though in how different a manner from the cross!) it is from the rock smitten that the waters flow out: the judgment of the world is that in which men learn the righteousness of God, and to submit themselves to it.

4. All therefore depends upon His will and word. If He asks, all things are put in His hand, and His enemies are made His footstool. But He has *not* asked, and the time is that of His "kingdom and *patience*." He reigns, but on His Father's throne, not yet His own (Rev. iii. 21),—His *human* throne. His saints, therefore, as yet cannot reign with Him, but suffer; and this will be true for Jewish saints even after those of the present period are caught up to meet Him. For as to the earth it cannot yet be said that He has taken His great power and reigned, or that "the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ"; and, as we have seen, the sorest time of distress for saints in Israel will be just before the time when He shall appear.

Still, therefore, the warning word goes out to the kings of the earth: wisdom for them will be to submit themselves to Jehovah before the stroke comes that shall effectually humble them,—too late for blessing to them then! Well may those even who do this "rejoice with trembling" for the great peril to which they have been so near. Let them give the Son* at last the homage-kiss of peace and reconciliation now when the slumbering wrath, slumbering so long, is just about to burst out in a blaze that shall sweep all that is exposed to it to destruction.

One sanctuary refuge is there only. None *from* Him; nowhere but *in* Him. Happy all they who take refuge there!

Thus the two psalms before us are complementary to one another, and together a suited introduction to the rest of the book. In the two, the Old and New Tes-

* The word in the last verse for "Son" is not the same as that in verse 7, and is claimed as Aramaic, and not pure Hebrew. Exception has been taken to it on this score, and many commentators, following most of the ancient versions, read instead of "kiss the Son," "worship purely," "yield to duty," etc., or give wholly conjectural emendations of the text. Cheyne now accepts the "brilliant conjecture" of Lagarde, "Put on [again] his bonds," making a parallel with verse 3. Delitzsch observes that the clearness of the passage "seems to have blinded the translators." No doubt in many cases it is the great offense. *Bar*, Delitzsch observes, "has nothing strange about it when found in solemn discourse, and helps one over the dissonance of *ben pen*."

The context makes "kiss the Son" the only fitting rendering. This is, as is plain, the controversy of which the psalm speaks, and it would be unnatural for the warning not to contemplate this.

taments, as it were, join hands,—the double testimony of God is given. After the warning of their long captivity for disobedience to the law, Moses leaves Israel with the assurance, "when thou shalt return unto Jehovah thy God, and shalt hearken to His voice according to all that I command thee this day,—thou and thy sons, with all thy heart and with all thy soul, that then Jehovah thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion on thee, and will gather thee again from among all the peoples whither Jehovah thy God hath scattered thee." But that has respect only to one controversy; there is now another, and a far more serious one; and this is what the second psalm brings out: thus they are both needful, and exactly in place. Whoever the writers may be, whoever it may be that has arranged and given them their place in the collection, there has been *somewhere* the most perfect intelligence as to Israel's condition in times which must have been yet future. Neither as to the psalms nor to their position is there anything haphazard or out of harmony. Order rules in every part; every verse even is in place: the fitness being doubtless little known even to those who were used of God to write and arrange them, and such as even Christians themselves have been slow to appreciate. Whose is this wisdom? And if this be inspiration, what kind of inspiration is it? Most certainly the patchwork of the higher criticism it is not; and probably the more we ponder it, if there be a spirit of reverence in our hearts, the less we shall hesitate to call it "verbal."

Sec. 2.

Five psalms follow, which give us, according to the meaning of the number, the exercises of the faithful remnant in Israel, while yet the day of Christ's rejection lasts, although the end, as we have already seen, is contemplated as nigh. Indeed, for there to be a Jewish remnant, with Jewish hopes and expectations, owned as such, *after* Christ's rejection, means that the present dispensation is over, that the heirs of heavenly blessings are removed to heaven, and that that "end of the age" (not world) is nearly reached, which the disciples in their question on Olivet (Matt. xxiv. 3) connect, as the after-prophecy does, with the personal appearing of the Lord in glory. It is certain they could not be thinking of a *Christian* "age"; of Christianity itself, and a long delay of the Bridegroom, they knew nothing. It is clear also that we find in the prophecy following a people implied of whom they themselves could be, and were in fact taken as, representatives. For them there would be a recognized "holy place," the danger of being led away by a false Messiah appearing in the midst of Israel, a Jewish sabbatic law, and all this in the land of Judea, and in days, as already said, quite near the end to be brought by the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven.

This nearness may be very definitely proved: for the abomination in the holy place begins a time of trouble for these disciples of His (who must be that, as ready to obey His word) unexampled at any time before or since. It is to be as brief as it is severe: except those days were shortened, no flesh should be saved; but for His elect's sake whom He has chosen He has shortened the days. Here, then, is but a short period; immediately after which the sun is darkened, and then the sign of the Son of man appears, and they "see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

Thus, as clearly as possible, we have depicted here a Jewish remnant in the last days,—Jewish in all their connections and prospects, and yet disciples of the Lord as well. The reference to Daniel which we find here still further defines the period, and shows us this as itself (to speak broadly) "the end of the age,"—the broken-off last "week" of the seventy announced to him; but all this will come before us necessarily, as we go through the psalms, and need not be dwelt on now.

The five psalms before us give us then the exercises of such a remnant; as still introductory to the book as a whole, they outline moreover these in general, with reference to the end to which they lead, and for which indeed they are per-

mitted. It is plain enough, from many scriptures, what the end is of all their trials. God's double controversy with the nation is upon them. The broken law has its claim on the one side; their rejected Messiah faces them on the other. When the light begins to rise on Israel, the darkness of an awful eclipse has fallen upon the rest of the world. Christ has gathered all that are truly His in Christendom to Himself. Nothing remains but a rejected mass,—corrupt, and rapidly hastening to apostasy. Israel are in unbelief, and ready, in their refusal of the true Messiah, to receive a false one soon to rise. The conflict of good with evil might seem to have come to an end, and the strife now beginning to be only of the different forms of evil with one another. Without other restraint than that of these collisions, the waves of a new deluge are abroad upon the earth; and yet over this "raging deep," and, in fact, for a new creation, the Spirit of God begins to brood once more.

The five psalms here give us this work of the Spirit in a remnant of Israel, gradually separated by it from the apostatizing mass, at whose hands they suffer increasing persecution until, after God's end is reached for them, the coming of the Lord brings deliverance. The trials through which they pass are used to bring them to the knowledge of themselves, and thus to the apprehension of the mercy of which they have found the need; and this is what we find developed here: not fully, indeed, but sufficiently to serve as the introduction which it is. The eighth psalm, which is of course beyond this series, shows the end reached which we have in the prophecy in Matthew also, the Son of man, deliverer from "the enemy and the revengeful," and set over all the works of God's hands. This finishes the brief introduction, which enables the larger details, worked out afterwards in various ways, to be assigned to their place. For, while the introduction is as to its order historical, the body of the book has a doctrinal basis, the experiences everywhere being connected with the great truths which faith embraces, and by which spiritual life is shaped and sustained.

The Psalms, like all other Scripture, have thus their perfect order and relation to one another, the want of apprehension of which deprives them of definite individuality also, and thus of very much of their power for edification and blessing for our souls. The "higher criticism" would classify them, indeed, but according to theories of authorship and times of composition, for which they have little but conjecture, and that outside of Scripture itself. The meaning given them in this way generally, as we might expect, is of the earth earthy, and lowers their whole character. The application for which we find the warrant in Scripture itself reveals their inspiration, while maintaining them at their highest spiritual value, and justifying their widest use and extension to the needs of practical life. Were it not for this, one could indeed well understand the question, and be prepared both for surprise and incredulity in the asking why the Spirit of Christ in the Psalms should link itself thus with the feeble remnant of a yet future day, in this close and peculiar manner? Certainly the unbelief would be not only natural but justifiable, if it were implied at all that, in the link with these, the intervening generations of God's saints had been forgotten. Their own hearts are, and have been in all time, witness that this is not so. Nay, in the wonderful wisdom and goodness of God, this link with a latter-day remnant of His people is made in a very simple and intelligible way, to minister only the *more* effectually for being this, to the comfort and blessing of every generation.

A people are taken up at the lowest ebb of hope, into whose cup of sorrow every bitter ingredient is crowded. All the foundations of the earth are out of course. God's four sore plagues are there (Ez.14. 21); death in all that makes death terrible; the enemy without, intestine strife within; seduction, and open-handed violence; the wrath of man, the dread of divine wrath; the consciousness of sin aggravated and accumulated: a time of trouble such as never was and never again will be. Surely the hearts that bear this burden have need of special comfort, and from God; while that which *can* be comfort in the bitterest hour of human trial will

SECTION 2. (iii.-vii.)

The education of faith in a day of rejection and conflict.

Ps. iii.

1 (1-4): Known sufficiency.

(i.) power of the enemies.

(ii.) whose words cut off from salvation.

[1]PSALM III.

The sufficiency of the unchanging God.

A psalm of David when he [p]fled from the face of Absalom his son.

JEHOVAH, how are they [q]multiplied that straiten me!
many are rising up against me!
Many are [r]saying of my soul,
There is no salvation for him in God. Selah.

p 2 Sam. 15. 14, 30.

q 2 Sa. 15. 12. *cf.* Ps. 118. 10-12.

r *cf.* 2 Sam. 16. 8. Ps. 71. 7, 11.

be comfort at least equally in any other. Hence the peculiar provision for those in such peculiar need is no less gracious consideration of all lesser need. He who stoops to have mercy on the *chief* of sinners is not thereby refusing but extending mercy to all grades of such. And He who stoops, as here, to the need of the neediest, is showing heart and resources equal to the need of the less needy.

Looked at in this way, the book of Psalms gets its full character, and the widest possible application to saints everywhere and at all times. While the actual predicted deliverance for those in that unequalled tribulation lies so near at hand, is so mighty, so complete, so altogether of God, that the prophetic anticipations of it which support the faith of the remnant of that day, furnish for the day of trial everywhere those strong and blessed expressions of hope and confidence which faith in all ages has laid hold of as God-sent for its need, and found no delusion. For what are all mornings but the anticipation of that final one whose brightness shall never fade? Or what is the light of that unclouded day but just the full manifestation of that love which, not then beginning, but spanning, as it does, eternity, is as true for faith now as it will be for sight by and by?

But another thing with regard to that day, so brief and yet so often the theme of prophecy: its transience cannot be thus the true measure of its importance; no *time*-measure can be of human history. The Cross is the glory and wonder of eternity, but how short the time of its continuance! And in this last hour of "man's day," before the day of the Lord has abased all the pride of the creature in the presence of God,—the time of the harvest, when every seed upon earth is permitted to bring forth, that it may manifest itself for what it is,—when the bridle upon evil is removed, and it is allowed to gather all its forces for the final conflict,—what interest for us all attaches to the questions which then reach their final solution,—to the forms of evil which will then receive judgment from the Lord Himself!

What various exercises, then, may we not expect to meet with in the Psalms! And what need shall we have of patient discrimination in seeking to realize the features of a time such as that presented to us! May our God give wisdom; and may we find abundant blessing from the study of this precious book!

PSALM III.

The third psalm is, in its title, ascribed to David, when he fled from the face of Absalom his son. "Search the story of David's life from end to end," says Cheyne, "and you will find no situation which corresponds to these psalms" (III. and IV.). On the other hand, Delitzsch says "All the leading features of the psalm accord with [the inscription], namely, the mockery of one who is rejected of God (2 Sam. xvi. 7, seq.); the danger by night (2 Sam. xvii. 1); the multitudes of the people (xv. 13, xvii. 11); and the high position of honor held by the psalmist."

1. The psalm itself is simple enough in character. It is the first and most

(iii.) but Jehovah Himself about me.
(iv.) the test of experience.
2 (5-8): Help which is salvation.
(i.) peace in truth.
(ii.) and in presence of enemies.

But, thou, Jehovah, art a [s]shield about me;
my [t]glory and the [u]uplifter of my head!
I [v]cry unto Jehovah with my voice,
and he answereth me from his [w]holy mount. Selah.

I [x]laid me down and slept;
I awaked,—for Jehovah sustaineth me.
I will [y]not be afraid of myriads of the people
that have set themselves against me round about.

s Prov. 30. 5.
t Ps. 62. 7.
u Ps. 27. 6.
v Ps. 34. 6.
w Ps. 2. 6.
x Ps. 4. 8. cf. Mark 4. 37-39.
y Ps. 27. 1-3. Is. 12. 2.

elementary thing in a believer, what indeed makes him such, that is expressed in it,—confidence in the Unchangeable. Here is the soul's sufficiency, and the growing danger has no argument to shake it. As the waves rise, the soul is only driven up higher upon its rock of refuge.

Yet around they murmur, "there is no help for him in God." The many that rightly see God in the circumstances, often wrongly judge of Him by the circumstances alone. There is an easy faith, which was that of Job's friends, that simply accepts the clouds and darkness that are "*round about* Him," as if they *revealed* instead of *hiding* Him. It is a straightforward theology, to which the sufferer himself is often tempted to become a proselyte, that love with Him wears no disguises; whereas it is indeed His delight to find a soul familiar enough with Him to *penetrate* the disguise, and mount through the darkness to the perfect Light above.

With this shield of faith the psalmist fortifies himself. Nay, better than that, it is God who is his shield; no partial defense, therefore, but "round about" him: perhaps he had not realized Him so near, had not the need been so great. Thus, though the cloud be a reality too, he can say of Him, "my glory," as in the cloud itself for Israel, and in the darkness, the glory had shone out. So he can add, "the Uplifter of my head": for it is not pride or obstinacy that will not give in, or natural courage merely that sustains him, but the sweet apprehension of the "I AM" of God. "*I am* has sent me to you," was the deliverer of old to say; and with the divine words, when faith admits them into the heart, deliverance might seem already to have come.

At the back of this confidence lie how many experiences! what answers to prayer have already come! how well the present faith is justified by the test of experience! This living intercourse has made familiar to us a living God; nor is He man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent. I cry, and He answers me! and this is not a possible delusion. The Voice out of the *holy* mount, the *holy* Voice that speaks ever from the more wondrous sanctuary of the divine nature, how impossible for it to have been but the mere feeble echo of my own!

2. The psalm passes on from the general to the particular,—to the present distress and the needful deliverance. Here already there has been obtained a foretaste of this, in the peace that has entered and possessed the soul. "I have laid me down and slept," he says; not evidently the sleep of one merely worn out, to whom it has become a necessity: men have been known to sleep on the deck of a ship in action; but not such the sleep that is spoken of here. It is the peace of the known rampart round about which qualifies for this. Night has its special dangers in the midst of warfare, and the imagination pictures in the darkness more than may be found; yet faith can rest and be quiet under the watchful eye of God, and the morning justifies this assurance: "I awaked, for Jehovah sustaineth me."

The multitude of enemies are then but witnesses of Jehovah's care of one that trusts in Him. They remain, but faith has already triumphed over them. The cry to God for deliverance is answered in the soul by memories of the past that are at the same time prophetic of the future. The enemies are the same "ungodly" who have been so often before defeated, and gape upon him with jaws that have, as it were, been already broken. They are harmless, and only

(iii.) a prophetic memory.

(iv.) the lesson of experience.

Arise, Jehovah! save me, O my God!
for thou hast [z]smitten all mine enemies upon the jaw,
thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.
[a]Salvation belongeth to Jehovah;
thy [b]blessing is on thy people. Selah.

[z] *cf.* 2 Ki. 19. 35–37.

[a] Jonah 2. 9. Ex. 14. 13.
[b] Ps. 67. 1. Ps. 115. 13–15.

[2]PSALM IV.

Confidence in Jehovah's distinguishing care.

Ps. iv.

1 (1–3): The Righteous for the righteous.

(i.) a cry to the God of righteousness.

For the [c]chief musician; on [d]stringed instruments. A psalm of David.

[e]ANSWER me when I call, O God of my [f]righteousness!
Thou [who] in straitness [g]didst make room for me,
be gracious to me, and hear my prayer!

[c] *cf.* Ps. 22. 22. Heb. 2. 12.
[d] *ctr.* Ps. 5, Title. *cf.* Ps. 6. 54. 55. 61. 67. 76. Titles. Hab. 3. 19.
[e] Ps. 27. 7.
[f] Ps. 7. 8. Ps. 35. 24.
[g] Ps. 63. 7.

make indeed Jehovah better known. To Him belongs salvation; upon His people invariably His blessing rests.

All this is simplicity itself, as long as no questions arise from within to disturb the conclusion. God is the same, and from *without* no question need be for a moment entertained. Beautiful as this faith is, and real, and fully warranted, and sure to be fully justified at last; yet as we follow these psalms to their close, we shall find how many painful experiences may intervene before this childhood instinct becomes maturity of manhood knowledge,—before "I will not be afraid" becomes the abiding realization of the soul. It will become so, for this is true and Spirit-taught confidence, and God cannot be less to it than faith deems of Him. But it is another thing whether faith will be equal to the encounter of all challenges itself has made. This process in some way do we not all pass through? Yet through fire and water we are brought at last into a wealthy place. Such is God's way; and His way is ever perfect. He must needs have His people answer to what His heart craves that they should be. Hence come their trials, and His issue both.

Psalm IV.

We have for the first time here a musical inscription, "To the Chief Musician; on stringed instruments," as psaltery and harp. A gentler, quieter strain is indicated than in the psalm that follows, with its accompaniment of flutes. The themes certainly correspond to this difference, though we may not be able to define it more closely. And who is meant by "the chief musician"? Is it indeed a note of relation to Him who has led in these experiences, "the Leader and Finisher of faith," as Scripture declares Him, and who at the end, "in the midst of the congregation," leads the praises of His people with the gladdest heart among them all? It is surely natural to think so, even though we can give no account why this is found in some of these psalms and not in others. The spiritual sense has had perhaps too little training with us for this.

The psalm corresponds perfectly with its place as *second* in this series, being so far like the second psalm itself, a contrasted picture of the righteous and the wicked. God has set apart the godly for Himself, and the effects of this are seen, not in outward deliverances, but in the joy of an inward experience beyond telling: the first pleads with the sons of men to make proof of it for themselves. This is an advance evidently upon the last psalm, while it leads on to new ground which by and by may give room for question and experiences of another kind. At present all is confidence.

1. The psalm has two main divisions; the first giving the theme, the second the confirmation of the doctrine of the first. The first declares the righteous One to be for the righteous. The key-note here is righteousness. The "God of my righteousness" is the God to whom all my righteousness has respect, as it *must* have, to *be* righteousness. God apprehended by the soul is alone the basis of all

(ii.) human contradiction.
(iii.) the godly set apart for Jehovah.

2 (4-8): Confirmation on either side.
(i.) of personal sincerity.
(ii.) the invitation to faith.

O [h]sons of men, how long shall my glory be for shame?
will ye love [i]emptiness, seek after a lie? Selah.
But know that Jehovah [j]hath set apart the godly for himself:
Jehovah will [k]hear when I call to him.

[l]Tremble and sin not;
speak with your own [m]heart upon your bed, and be still!
Offer the [n]sacrifices of righteousness,
and put your [o]trust in Jehovah.

h cf. Gen. 6. 2. Ps. 31. 19. Ps. 57. 4.
i cf. Ps. 2. 1. Ps. 5. 6. Is. 29. 8.
j Ps. 31. 20. Ps. 83. 3.
k Ps. 34. 4-6.
l Ps. 99. 1. Is. 32. 11. Joel 2. 1
m Ps. 39. 2-4. Ps. 45. 1. Ps. 63. 5, 6.
n Ps. 51. 17, 19;
ctr. Is. 1. 11-17; cf. Ps. 40. 6-10. o Ps. 9. 10; Ps. 37. 3.

right, and ensures it. Apart from this, all virtues are but ciphers, which with a preceding figure only become valuable. Men are themselves, apart from God, such ciphers, and what is duty to them, if He is not regarded in it?

This God of righteousness is a living God, actively interposing in behalf of His own, the godly ones, whom He distinguishes as such. When they call, He hears. Faith is exercised, but answered, and strengthened by the exercise. In the consciousness of this experience of the divine favor, the psalmist turns to plead with the sons of men, who, while ignorant of this, are yet not ignorant of an opposite experience in the paths that they have chosen. He can appeal to them as even consciously loving vanity, and seeking after a lie,—after that which never fulfills the promise that it gives. Surely this is knowledge enough to prevent men mocking at and insulting the believer's glory, which is founded upon experiences of which *they* can know nothing.

2. The second part of the psalm confirms this on both sides with facts of experience. He bids them only to shut out the vain thoughts that allure them, to retire into themselves, and consult only their own hearts upon their bed in the night. Pursuit of *pleasure* only manifests that there is not the enjoyment of *happiness*. It may kill time and keep from reflection; whereas, did they reflect, they would find that the weariness and emptiness experienced were but the necessary fruit of departing from God, of sin which had ruined all. This secret their own hearts held, and would reveal, if they would only take them for their counsellors. Conscience would then convince them of the reality of sin which no forms of ritual service could ever meet: they must offer the sacrifices of *righteousness*, and put their trust in Jehovah,—two things which are very much the lesson of the first two psalms.

The language seems to intimate that while practical ungodliness abounds in Israel, and the righteous are the subjects of reproach and persecution, the apostasy of the mass is not yet consummated,—the "sinners" are not yet full-length "scoffers." The forms of Judaism are yet going on; there are sacrifices, but not "sacrifices of righteousness," nor conjoined with any practical faith in Jehovah. The next step may be into open apostasy; but it is not yet taken.

Thus there is still room for the appeal in the psalm. There is hope that they may be yet touched with the need of a condition in which the wearying question of good that is not found ends surely in the discovery of the vanity of what they have set their hearts upon,—a need which no increase of corn and wine can meet. On the other hand, God is the satisfying portion of His people; not merely a "shield about" one, but a "light," a glory within the soul, true gladness, not the product of the soul itself, nor of man's labor. Yet this gladness how impossible for a soul out of God's presence to imagine! Men have dropped so far away from God as to have lost even the sense of good in Him to be sought after or enjoyed. God's salvation is only for them the sad alternative of hell; God's presence, alas, almost hell itself! So the appeal to the sons of men turns perforce into a prayer: "Lord, lift up the light of Thy countenance upon us"—the light in which alone we see light. "Thou hast put gladness into my heart more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased."

(iii.) realized blessedness in the light of God's face.
(iv.) the test of experience.
(v.) the recompense in the divine ways.

[p] Many are saying, Who will show us good?
Lift up on us the [q] light of thy face, Jehovah!
Thou hast put [r] gladness in my heart
[s] more than in the time when their corn and their fresh wine increased.
I will both lay me down in [t] peace and sleep,
for thou alone, Jehovah, makest me dwell secure.

p Ps. 3. 2. cf. Eccl. 1. 12-18.
q Num.6.26. Ps. 16. 11. Ps. 89. 15. cf. 2 Cor. 3. 18.
r Ps. 43. 4. Ps.30.11,12. Ps.97.11,12.
s cf. Lev.23. 39, 40. t Ps. 3. 5; Prov. 3. 24-26; Jer. 31. 25, 26.

For us, blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, accepted in the Beloved, known to and knowing God in Him, that light has indeed fully shone. Children of the day, no more of night, nor of darkness, "God has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." We are His living witnesses that in His presence is fullness of joy. And this joy is power for walk, for holiness, for service, as nought else is. The joy of the Lord is your strength. How well may we enjoy a possession secured to us as is ours, without one disturbing care! "I will both lay me down in peace and sleep."

This psalm, then, is in evident advance of the previous one, as has been said. There it is God a shield; here it is God a portion. There what He does for me; here what He is to me. Yet we may easily perceive how the ground taken here may permit an after-question in the soul. "Jehovah has set apart the *godly* for Himself." If that be the root of confidence, will it always be held so certain that "Jehovah will hear when *I* call upon Him"? At present there may be no doubt, and rightly none; yet will it be as plain through the cloudy and dark day as in the sunshine now? Who that has known what it is to be upon this ground but has felt its instability? When the storm brings up the depths of the heart, will all that is brought up be "godliness"?

Yet the principle is true, quite true. Grace does not set aside righteousness, but confirms and reigns through it. But for this grace must be known as that which secures all; and ere this be apprehended some bitter experience may yet be gone through. Bitter assuredly will theirs be whom these psalms prophetically contemplate; yet shall they return, after all the questioning is over, with only fuller assurance to the blessed reality that the light of His countenance, with all the gladness that it pours into the soul, is theirs forever.

PSALM V.

The fifth psalm is, in many respects, the converse, and in some the opposite of the fourth. He who has set apart the godly for Himself, of necessity "hateth all the workers of iniquity." And here, for the first time, the pleading is *against*, and no longer *with*, them. It is one of those psalms whose language most Christians have found difficulty in appropriating as their own. No wonder that they should not be able to assimilate "Destroy thou them, O God," with their Lord's "Father, forgive them," or with Stephen's "Lay not this sin to their charge"! Judaism and Christianity are, in this matter, essentially different; and however people may try to blend them together, their own consciences will bear witness against the attempt. Alas, that the law which says "eye for eye and tooth for tooth" should be brought back to contravene the contrasted words of the Master, "But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: . . . love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for those that despitefully use you and persecute you."

But the question will be asked, why should that be right and according to God upon the lips of a Jew, which would be wrong and to be condemned upon the lips of a Christian? The answer is, first, the prayer, "Destroy thou them, O God; for they have rebelled against thee," is not wrong as measured by the test of intrinsic morality. If it be right for God to destroy, as it surely is, it is not wrong *in itself* to ask Him to do so. Nay, this is here a Spirit-taught prayer, and answered of God, as the Lord says: "And shall not God avenge His own elect who cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will

Ps. v.

[3]PSALM V.

The holiness of God's presence.

To the chief musician; upon the [u] flutes. A psalm of David.

1 (1-3): A cry to God the King.
(i.) Jehovah!
(ii.) thy suppliant.
(iii.) with words ordered as before Thee.

GIVE ear to my words, Jehovah!
consider my [v]meditation.
Attend to the voice of my [w]cry, my [x]king and my God!
for unto thee do I pray.
Jehovah, in the [y]morning shalt thou hear my voice;
in the morning will I order [my prayer] unto thee,
and [z]watch.

[u] *cf.* Ps. 4. Title. 1 Chron. 23. 5.
[v] Ps. 39. 3.
[w] Ps. 4. 1.
[x] *cf.* Ps. 2. 6. *cf.* Ps. 20. 9.
[y] Ps. 4. 8.
[z] *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 7. *cf.* Col. 4. 2.

avenge them speedily." (Luke xviii. 7, 8.) So, when Elijah asked for fire from heaven to consume those that were sent to take him, *the fire came.* God put His seal upon that prayer, terrible as it was. Yet, when the disciples asked, in the case of the Samaritans, "Lord, shall we call down fire from heaven to consume them, even as Elias did?" they met with rebuke, not sanction: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." But why should that which was right in Elias be wrong in them? On this account: "for the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

In other words, they were out of sympathy with the mind of God. When Christ had come to save, how altogether unsuited a prayer for judgment! The Lord does not speak of any comparative difference between the Samaritans and the Israelitish companies of old, but reminds them that *God was showing grace.* How strange and sad that they should not enter more into the spirit of what He was doing, and rejoice in this grace being shown to men. On the other hand, were the day of grace passed, and the time come for judgment to take its course upon the despisers of that grace, what more evident than that the invoking of judgment would be the only right thing, and the prayer for grace itself totally unsuited?

Thus, when the Rider on the white horse comes out to smite the nations, the very saints now praying for God's mercy upon men will come out after Him as the "armies in heaven" to the judgment of the earth, and there is not, and could not be, a solitary cry of intercession.

If Christians, then, are with Christ in the mercy that is now being shown, they will find it difficult indeed to pray, "Destroy thou them, O God"; but when judgment is at the doors, and the foredoomed followers of the beast and of his prophet are arrayed in open, blasphemous opposition to the Most High, the King of kings and Lord of lords, the prayer of the Jewish remnant of that future day will be in accordance with God's mind, "Cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions, for they have rebelled against Thee."

These considerations may account also for the change of tone in the fifth psalm as compared with the fourth. *There* there was, as we have seen, an appeal to the sons of men to consider. Here that is over, and they are treated as having definitely taken their place in rebellion against Jehovah. Entreaty lasted while it might avail. That being found in vain, judgment takes its course. The very purposes of love and goodness, against which the evil is arrayed in opposition, call for the unsparing removal of what hinders the display of that goodness. The "Lamb" will thus be the "Lion." (Rev. v.) The Great Shepherd will "shepherd with an iron rod." Love will smite, and yet be love: yea, because it is.

The Psalm therefore has the governmental character, and the twelve verses which speak of this; in general, also, the 4 x 3 structure which 12 ordinarily has. Yet there is a difference, the third section being divided again, so that the psalm has five divisions instead of four: all which must be in harmony with the theme.

2 (4-6): On the ground of His hatred of evil.
(i.) a God wholly self-consistent.
(ii.) a hater of boasting.
(iii.) the full issue.

For no Mighty One that hast [a]pleasure in wickedness art thou:
evil cannot sojourn with thee.
[b]Boasters shall not take a stand before thine eyes;
thou [c]hatest all workers of vanity.
Thou [d]destroyest the actors of a lie:
the man of bloodshed and deceit Jehovah abhorreth.

3 (7): Personal assurance of the true worshiper.

But I, in the abundance of thy [e]mercy, will come unto thy house:
I will worship [f]toward the temple of thy holiness in thy fear.

a Hab. 1.13.
b Ps. 1. 5.
c *cf.* Ps. 139. 21, 22.
d *cf.* Rev. 21. 8. *ctr.* Is. 63.8.
e Ps. 51. 1.
f *cf.* Dan. 6. 10. 1 Ki. 8. 44, 48. Jonah 2. 4. *ctr.* Heb. 10. 19.

In fact, though showing governmental numbers the psalm is not in the governmental place: it is a psalm of the sanctuary; and its subject, therefore, is the *holiness* of God, which indeed necessitates the judgment of evil, but the main bearing of it is upon the education of the remnant themselves, as suits the place it has in this series; and this we must go on to consider.

1. The first part is a cry to God the King: the power of evil manifesting itself continually more, the heart rises above it for relief to the divine supremacy. God has not yielded to man the sceptre of His omnipotence. It is Jehovah the Unchangeable on whom he relies as hearkening to his words, and invites to consider even the heart-musing from which they spring. How man, the creature of a moment, sinks into nothing here, in presence of the Eternal!

Yet in this very contrast faith finds its claim upon God. The appeal of our weakness to His strength, of our ignorance to His wisdom, of our sinfulness to His grace, can never be in vain. To those that wait upon the Lord as such, how many are the promises! And here, "if patience has its perfect work," we are "perfect and entire, lacking nothing." (James i. 4.) Thus the plea is here only that of dependence—"I am Thy suppliant"; and there is no sense of its inadequacy: man taking his place before God,—God, too, has His, and relationship is owned between them.

But God being such as He is, the prayer of the suppliant has respect necessarily to His character; the words become "ordered" words, as in His presence: there is earnestness, and expectancy of the mercy sought.

2. In the second part, His nature as against evil is dwelt upon. He is not like one of the mighty ones of the nations, in whom power is conjoined with pleasure in wickedness: not for the briefest moment can evil dwell with Him; even the boaster, with his pretension to more than what is true, cannot maintain himself before the searching eyes of omniscience; and the doers of what is unprofitable and vain He hates. In the issue the actors of a lie perish, and the violence with which men associate their deceit is shown as the abhorrence of the righteous Judge.

3. The third section, or what would have been that in the ordinary division of the number 12, is here divided, as already said, so that only the first verse remains to it; the two others being detached as a plain fourth section. In this one verse the personal assurance of the worshiper expresses itself; but briefly, and without the joyousness that has marked the previous psalms when God's revelation of Himself to the soul has been the theme; and this seems a sign of transition to the psalm that follows. The sense of the divine holiness induces fear of the Holy One, and it is abundant mercy to be permitted to come unto God's house. He worships "toward" it. A certain shadow seems to pass over the soul, rather than the "thanksgiving" being heard, which we have elsewhere "at the remembrance of His holiness." And this agrees well with the abrupt shortening of the section already noticed, if it be not rather the explanation of it. And how, indeed, shall we have "boldness to enter into the holiest," or to draw

4 (8, 9): Prayer for a right walk under the eyes of the wicked.
(i.) for guidance in righteousness.
(ii.) "the contradiction of sinners."

5 (10–12): A prayer for the judgment that shall deliver the righteous.
(i.) a righteous end.
(ii.) the deliverance.
(iii.) Jehovah manifested in it.

Jehovah, [g]lead me in thy righteousness because of those that watch me:
make thy way straight before my face.
For in their mouth is nothing [h]certain:
their inward part yawning depths,
their [i]throat an open sepulchre,
[while] they make [j]smooth their tongue.

Let them [k]bear their guilt, O God!
they fall by their own counsels;
cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions,
for they have [l]rebelled against thee!
And all those shall be [m]glad that take refuge in thee:
they shall ever sing for joy that thou protectest them;
and they shall exult in thee who [n]love thy name.
For thou shalt bless the [o]righteous one, Jehovah:
with favor wilt thou compass him as with a [p]shield.

g Ps. 25. 4, 9. Ps. 27. 11.
h *cf.* Matt. 15. 8.
i Rom. 3. 13.
j Prov. 28. 23. Prov. 29. 5. *cf.* Dan. 11. 32.
k Ps. 9. 16.
l Ps. 2. 3.
m Ps. 40. 16.
n cf. Rev. 3. 8.
o Ps. 4. 1, 3.
p Ps. 84. 11.

near to God at all, save "by the blood of Jesus"? It is this, I doubt not, toward which God is bringing His people in this psalm; and for this there is just beginning, and no more, that self-revelation of the soul that must come, for the need and efficacy of the blood to be known aright.

4. At present there is but an intimation of this. The psalmist is still too much in the presence of others whose wickedness, which is evident, comforts him, as it were, with the consciousness of his own uprightness. Yet he feels his weakness under the gaze of those keen and sinister eyes that watch for his halting, and prays to be led in God's path as made straight before his face, the only way of security and peace and power, for God is in it.

Around lie these enemies of the righteous, with a smooth but slippery tongue, their throat a yawning sepulchre, abysses within that none can fathom. Such is the divine picture—we may be very sure, therefore, no exaggerated one—of man away from God. What a morass to engulf the unwary! What a contradiction to the fixed clear certainty of the truth of God!

But let us notice again that all this, right as it is in desire, is nevertheless an intrusion into the third or sanctuary part of the psalm. What would have been completely in place as a proper fourth part,—that is, in the last three verses,—here takes away the larger part of the third, while it is itself diminished also in this way. How perfect is the very disorder that seems here! How full of meaning, and evidently designed! For with a soul not at rest, and for which the abiding presence of the Lord is not known, is it not just the walk, the practical conduct, that is the disturbing element; and that to its own damage? Where Christ is not thus rightly known, self is sure to intrude; and with peace holiness is marred, and God is little honored, though we desire it.

The enemies and hindrances here loom large also invariably, while the sanctuary has not power — because not in truth enjoyed — to shut them out. From how many exercises — only needed because we must be driven to it, if without this we do not lay hold of it — would the apprehension of the perfect grace of God deliver the soul!

5. And God must interfere for His own. Can it be a question, when wickedness is leagued against the righteous, with which side He will be? Can He give up the world to riot and misrule? No: He has promises to fulfill, blessings for the earth itself, which can only consist with the destruction of the wicked out of it. These promises are Israel's, as the apostle has very plainly told us. (Rom. ix. 4.) These blessings the faithfulness of God, spite of their present condition,

Ps. vi.

[s]PSALM VI.

The trial at its deepest felt as divine displeasure against sin, and the need realized of mercy.

To the chief musician, on [q]stringed instruments, upon [r]Sheminith: a psalm of David.

1 (1-3): Me! (i.) the cry of repentance. (ii.) wasting away! (iii.) the reality at bottom.

1 JEHOVAH, [t]rebuke me not in thine anger!
and chasten me not in heat of wrath!
2 Be [u]gracious to me, Jehovah, for I am wasting away:
heal me, Jehovah, for my [v]bones are shaken.
3 And my [w]soul is shaken exceedingly:
but thou, Jehovah, [w]how long?

[q] Ps. 4. Title.
[r] 1 Chron. 15. 21. Ps. 12. Title.
[s] Ps. 38. 1. *cfr.* Ps. 4. 8.
[t] Ps. 25. 7.
[u] Ps. 31. 10. *cf.* Ps. 22. 14, 17.
[v] Ps. 42. 6.
[w] Ps. 13. 1, 2. Jer. 12. 4. Dan. 8. 13. Dan. 12. 6. *cf.* Zech. 1. 12.

will fulfill to them. Let us not wonder, then, at the cry for judgment which we hear in this psalm: all the interests of man himself are bound up with the answer. The last verse gives once more the reason for this governmental interference, as well as the ground for the joy that He does thus interfere: "for Thou, Jehovah, wilt bless the righteous: with favor wilt Thou compass him as with a shield."

Yet, when God's terrible judgments are at hand, not theirs,—righteous in a true sense as these Jewish saints may be,—not theirs the attitude of the white-robed elders, peacefully seated on their thrones amid the lightnings and thunderings of the Throne which they surround. Needful, however painful, is the exercise of heart to which we shall find them now subjected. They are under His hand for good and not for evil; and though He lead the blind by a way they know not, He will at length make darkness light before them. The shadow of death shall be turned to morning,—"a morning without clouds."

Psalm VI.

The flutes are silent, and the music of the stringed instruments, better fitted to express the deeper emotions of the heart, follows them: and, indeed, in the bass notes, *al-sheminith*, "upon the octave" [below]. For, as far as this first series of psalms can go, which are but the beginning, we touch bottom here; and it is no accident that in this *fourth* of these hymns of experience, which emphasizes the "testing" of a soul, we find also just ten verses,* the responsibility number, according to the full measure of the law, the "ten words." In this psalm there is felt the pressure of that responsibility, and the failure and guilt realized when man is searched out as to the fulfillment of it.

1. For here is no longer vengeance invoked on others, no longer is there even the same comfort in the thought that "Jehovah has set apart the godly for Himself." It is, instead, "Jehovah, rebuke *me* not in Thine anger; and chasten *me* not in heat of wrath!" The malice of enemies is at work; nay, it is, as we may clearly see, what God has used to bring the soul where it is; but it is as *His* displeasure that it is realized, and when this presses, the anguish of the thought leaves room for nothing else, the enemies themselves are well-nigh forgotten. It is a cry of repentance and brokenness of heart: for Jehovah's wrath cannot be causeless, any more than powerless. And it *is* Jehovah,—it is the Unchangeable: this word, so full of comfort at another time, and to which he clings, too, to the end, for all his hope is in it,—has *it* not, nevertheless, an aspect of another kind in this time of distress? As Job says, "He is of one mind, and who can turn Him?" And yet how could there be any confidence apart from this?

So the soul pleads, and pleads on, for He is gracious, baring its grief and the effect of it even upon the body. Is He not Creator? Has He not made the body? Does *He* not feel, who has given the very capacity of feeling? The wasting flesh,

* As elsewhere, the title and musical inscription form no part of the psalm proper, as should be plain; and the verses should be numbered apart from this, as is the case in our common versions. That this is right is proved by the alphabetic psalms, such as psalms ix. and xxxiv., where the alphabet begins only with the numbered verses.

2 (4-7): The valley of deathshade.
(i.) the plea for mercy.
(ii.) death as separation from God.
(iii.) the realization.
(iv.) weakness.

[x] Return, Jehovah, rescue my soul:
save me for thy mercy's sake!
For in [y] death there is no remembrance of thee:
in [z] Sheol who shall give thee thanks?
I am [a] weary with my sighing:
every night I make my bed to swim;
I flood my couch with my [b] tears.
Mine eye is shrunk with vexation;
It is grown old with all that [c] straiten me.

x Ps. 90. 13, *cf.* Is. 38. 18, 19. *ctr.* Phil. 1. 23.
z Ps. 88. 10–12. *cf.* Eccl. 2. 15–17. *ctr.* 2 Cor. 5. 6–8.
a Job 10. 1.
b Ps. 42. 3.
c Ps. 9. 6. *cf.* Luke 18. 3.

the quaking of the very bones, all the strong helpers bowed with this distress: what it speaks of a faith that, more than it might seem, knows the tender pity of Him with whom it has to do! Blessed be God, it *is* so: underneath all the doubt, and amid the darkness, the groping arms turn to the God that *is*. The cry may be, "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him!" But of Him that it would find it dares not doubt. Grace He has, heal He does, though as yet it sorely feels there is no healing; and as to itself the grace appears not.

And it is this delay that searches out the humbled and stricken one. This "how long?" which it is meant that one should feel, and is a question rightly entertained, how it tests the one who has to ask the question! The help so needed, how can it tarry so long, when His messengers are "angels that excel in strength," and the elements wait upon Him? "How long?" What conditions must be first fulfilled? What survey of the heavens and earth it implies, if to ourselves we would answer it! And this exercise is itself what is wrought in the silence and the darkness,—all the soul awake and alive to its centre, the conscience stirred, the heart attent, the whole man in activity. The travail is, after all, for fullest blessing; the doubtful questioning will at last find assured answer; the heart will be enriched with knowledge of the highest kind, in the joy of which it shall be glad forever.

2. Spite of its crying, the soul descends yet deeper into the darkness,—truly a valley of the shadow of death: for this it is, and as the curse of the broken law, which throws its pall over a living man. And who can plead exemption from death? Here the cry can be only for mercy,—mercy which must be free and sovereign, the bounty of God alone. This is the point to which Israel's remnant, naturally clinging to covenant-privileges, must be brought. According to covenant they can claim nothing but the *covenant-curse*. If they are to be saved, it must be upon the same ground as the merest Gentile. Pharisaism, which crucified the Son of God sent to them, must be swept out of existence; the cross they gave Him must be their only hope. Well may the sky darken and the lightnings flash from the dread mount by which they have chosen to abide, and from which divine mercy alone can save them. That is plainly the key to what we have here, while the lesson remains for every one, of every time, who needs it.

Death is seen as the curse of the law, as it truly was. Thank God, it does not dominate eternity, nor shut out the mercy of God as to that. As He never said "Do this, and thou shalt go to heaven," so neither did He ever say "Break this, and thou shalt go to hell."* The law itself was handmaid to the gospel, and God had ever in His purpose salvation, through His Son, for believing sinners. Yet as to what was beyond death, the soul that knew no more than law felt, of necessity, its shadow; and from the lips of such as those contemplated in this psalm, the language used in it has no special mystery. To these, and such as these, death as the curse of the law would be the hiding of God's face, the stilling of the voice of praise, the silence of outer darkness. But this is not the uniform language, even of the Old Testament, as to death,—far from it: it is the language of a special class in a certain state of soul, and that is all.

*It is well known that what is translated "hell" in the Old Testament is "Sheol," or "hades," the abode of the spirits of the dead.

3 (8-10): The revival.
(i.) vain strength.
(ii.) confirmation of soul.
(iii.) a prophecy of the end.

[d] Turn aside from me, workers of vanity!
for Jehovah hath [e] heard the voice of my weeping.
Jehovah hath heard my supplication;
Jehovah receiveth my prayer.
All mine enemies shall be [f] ashamed and shaken sore:
they shall turn back, they shall be put [g] suddenly to shame.

[d] Ps. 119. 115. Ps. 139. 19.
[e] Ps. 116.1,2.
[f] *cf.* Ps. 40. 14.
[g] Ps. 64. 7. *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 3.

Ps. vii.

[5] PSALM VII.

A pleading for righteous judgment upon the persecutors of the innocent.

[h] Shiggaion of David, which he sang unto Jehovah concerning the words of Cush a [i] Benjamite.

1 (1,2): Abiding in the Abiding.

JEHOVAH my God, in thee have I taken [j] refuge:
save me from all my [k] pursuers, and rescue me!

[h] Hab. 3. 1.
[i] *cf.* 2. Sam. 16. 11.
[j] Ps. 11. 1.
[k] Ps. 10. 2.

The effect of this is utter desolation and dismay. We surely see that it is not the ordinary picture of death for all that the psalmist has been drawing. There is no courage to meet what threatens, in which the separation from Jehovah is the overpowering thought. There is no manliness, as we say; no silent submission, even, to the inevitable: and he lets out freely all his emotion, the grief that convulses and unmans him. In the realization of it he floods his couch with tears. He fades away, and shrivels in premature decay. But this is the lowest depth, and having reached and taken it before God, the shadow passes from the soul.

3. In the last portion of the psalm we find this. The enemies are still around, so that circumstances seem not to have appreciably altered. The answer is from God in his heart: what now are the enemies? They are but "workers of vanity," —powerless with all their seeming might. His supplication is heard, and his soul confirmed. He can then calmly assure himself of the defeat of his enemies, and their final confusion.

But in this conclusion there is a lack which makes itself felt. We have nothing of the ground upon which — little of the manner in which — God's mercy meets the man who has justly merited His displeasure. The work of Christ is not yet unfolded. What grace implies cannot therefore yet be expressed. All is of the most elementary character: we simply see that it *is* mercy which alone can be man's confidence; when that is his plea God comes in for him. Yet even the full and adequate confession of sin as yet there is not, and it is most interesting to see how, after the revelation of the true sin-offering (Ps. xxii.), that confession is at once found. (Ps. xxv.) At present we have but the indication of what is to follow in the book: the finger points the way, but the road is not yet trodden.

Psalm VII.

The fifth psalm of this series closes it with another appeal for judgment upon the persecutor. This is now at hand, and the last verse celebrates Jehovah in millennial character as the Most High. The next psalm, as we have seen, carries us beyond the judgment to see the Son of man making God's name excellent on all the delivered earth. Thus all these psalms are linked together.

The word Shiggaion is said to mean a "wandering ode,"—perhaps a loud enthusiastic hymn, in which the writer is carried away with his enthusiasm; and this would not be unsuitable to the character of the composition. Of Cush we know historically nothing; with which the descriptive "a Benjamite" agrees, not "*the* Benjamite,"—any noted person. On the other hand, Cush, the "black," or sun-burnt, may be a symbolic name, an enigma to be read *through*; and so in any wise we must take it. The Benjamite was, as we know, in power in those

(ii.) from the destroyer.

Lest he tear like a [l]lion my soul,
rending in pieces, with none to rescue.

[l] Ps. 10. 9. *cf.* Ps. 17. 12.

2 (3-5): The persecution of mere enmity.

(i.) the plea of innocence.

Jehovah, my God, [m]if I have done this,
if iniquity be in my hands,
If I have requited evil to him that was at peace with me,—
yea, I have [n]delivered him that without cause oppressed me,—

[m] *cf.* Ps. 15. 2, etc. with Ps. 25. 11.

[n] *cf.* 1 Sam. 24. 3, 4.

(ii.) yea, of having delivered the oppressor.

Let the enemy pursue my soul and overtake it;
yea, let him tread down my life to the earth,
and lay my glory in the dust! Selah.

(iii.) the seal upon this.

3 (6-8): Let Jehovah appear!

(i.) show Thyself supreme!

[o]Arise, Jehovah, in thine anger!
lift up thyself amidst the rage of my oppressors,
and awake for me to the judgment thou hast commanded.

[o] Ps. 10. 12.

days of David to which the psalm belongs; and thus far, at least, Cush was connected with the unhappy Saul. In the days to come a darker power will have arisen in Israel, whose "words" will be against both God and His people alike. This "wicked one" is to be consumed with the breath of the Lord's mouth and destroyed with the "manifestation of His presence." (2 Thess. ii., *Gk.*) The fear and the triumph that this psalm expresses, though not confined to him, are such as might well be called forth by the tyranny and overthrow of this antichristian oppressor.

1. In the first division of the psalm, faith takes refuge in God from man, sheltering itself as in a rock in the immutability of its covenant-God. All through the last psalm, when that very immutability might seem to be against it, Jehovah was the name clung to and pleaded; and now it abides in its shelter in the Abiding. Will He cast off this soul that trusts Him? No; "the name of Jehovah is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe."

Outside, the "lion" lies in wait, and *there* there is "none to rescue." Only Jehovah can avail to deliver from those cruel and remorseless jaws; and surely the experience will be repeated, "Thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the jawbone: Thou has broken the teeth of the ungodly."

2. There follows the protestation of innocence as far as these enemies are concerned, and that is a matter of immense importance in view of the government of God. "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you" is still true under the reign of grace itself, and the lips of perfect grace they were that said it. The apostle also says, "If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here with fear; knowing that ye are redeemed . . . with the precious blood of Christ." (1 Pet. i. 17–19.) So then it is the *redeemed* who are in this way under the Father's government, as who should be if not the children? Happy are they, then, who can plead what the psalmist here does, that it is absolutely unprovoked, this malice of the enemy. There are no dues to be made up, as far as *he* is concerned. Nay, he can say more than this, and we recognize clearly David's conduct toward Saul as that which furnishes the text here,—he can say, "I have delivered him that without cause oppressed me." He then puts his seal upon this in the solemn appeal to Him who knows the truth to let the enemy have his way with him if this be not so,—tread down his life upon the earth, and lay his glory in the dust.

3. Now he breaks out in an ardent prayer for Jehovah to come in, set up His throne in judgment, gather the nations round Him, and in this great assembly judge openly his cause, and do him right. In fact, this is what is to take place at the close of the period to which prophetically the psalm looks on. But the

(ii.) amid the gathering of the nations.
(iii.) and manifest the reality of this.

And the [p]assembly of the races [of men] shall compass thee about,
and over it return thou on high!
Jehovah shall judge the peoples:
[q]right me, Jehovah, according to my righteousness,
and according to my integrity upon me!

4 (9, 10): The trial of hearts and reins.
(i.) by a righteous God.
(ii.) The Saviour of the upright.

Oh let the [r]evil of the ungodly cease!
and [s]establish thou the righteous;
even [t]trying the hearts and reins,
a righteous God!
My [u]shield is upon God,
who saveth the upright in heart.

5 (11-13): The government of God.
(i.) power on the side of the righteous.
(ii.) ready to intervene.
(iii.) the realization.

God judgeth [the cause of] the righteous,
and the Mighty hath [v]indignation every day:
If one turn not, he whetteth his [w]sword;
he hath bent his bow and made it ready;
And for him prepareth the weapons of death,
setting his arrows aflame.

6 (14-16): The course and end of the wicked.
(i.) a barren labor.
(ii.) with opposite end.

Behold, he [x]travaileth with vanity:
yea, he hath conceived toil,
but brought forth deception.
He hath [y]digged a pit, and holloweth it out,
and falleth into the ditch he is making.

p *cf.* Ps. 22. 28, 29.
q Ps. 26. 12. Ps. 72. 4.
r Ps. 9. 5, 6. *cf.* Ps. 89. 4.
s *cf.* Ps. 89. 4.
t Ps. 11. 4, 5. Zech. 13. 9.
u Ps. 3. 3.
v *cf.* Rom. 1. 18.
w Deut. 32. 41. *cf.* Rev. 19 15.
x *cf.* Jas. 1. 15.
y Esth. 9. 25. Ps. 9. 16. Prov. 1. 31.

judgment will not be a sessional one, but an outbreaking of divine wrath like the flashing of the storm to which the Lord Himself compares His coming. (Matt. xxiv. 27.)

4. The psalmist turns from the thought of his own vindication and deliverance to cry out for the cessation of evil upon the earth, the righteous being established in it, God with perfect knowledge of men making proof of all in the innermost truth of heart and reins. The great tribulation, of which our Lord speaks in the same prophecy, will accomplish this, not only in Israel, which will be in the centre of it, but largely also in the nations round, which will be affected by it. The day of the Lord of hosts will be upon all the pride of man to abase it, and upon all the objects with which he fain would satisfy the void in a heart that has turned from God. "The idols he shall utterly abolish." "And it shall come to pass that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem, when Jehovah shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning." (Isa. ii. 18; iv. 3, 4.)

Well may the soul rejoice if it can say, as to that day, "My shield is upon God, who saveth the upright in heart"! Who, indeed, but He could use the shield for any at such a time?

5. The psalm goes on to contemplate the government of God, which is for righteousness, though patient in a way that may be misunderstood on both sides, — by righteous and wicked alike. Though patient, His anger burns against the impenitent, day by day stored up, until at last it flames forth. The sword is being sharpened, the bent bow makes no sound until the arrow is discharged: then it is a weapon of death, all aflame with divine vengeance.

6. The result as to the enemy of the righteous shows the hand that is over him. He toils to produce what is vain labor, has his toil for his pains, an end which deceives the laborer. It is not merely vain, it is his own undoing: the ditch dug

(iii.) the fruit reaped.

His toil returneth on his own head:
and on the crown of his head his violence descendeth.

7 (17): The end in praise.

I will [z]celebrate Jehovah according to his righteousness,
and sing praises to the name of Jehovah [a]most High.

z cf. Ps. 109. 29, 30.

a Ps. 9. 2.

SEC. 3. (Ps. viii.)

The Son of man in possession of His inheritance glorifies Jehovah in all the earth.

Ps. viii.

PSALM VIII.

To the chief musician, upon the [b]Gittith: a psalm of David.

b Ps. 81, 84. Titles. cf. 1 Sam. 27. 2, 3.

1 (1): Jehovah supreme: His glory above the heavens.

JEHOVAH [c]our Lord,* how [d]excellent is thy name in all the earth,
who hast [e]set thy glory above the heavens!

c cf. Isa. 26. 13.

d Ps. 148. 13. Phil. 2. 9–11.

e Ps. 57. 5, 11.

* Here, and in verse 9, a "plural of majesty."

for another is the trap to catch the digger. And thus the fruit of his toil he harvests in unwelcome fashion and most perfect retribution: for God is Master of all, and will be glorified in all.

7. So the psalm ends in praise to Him who is righteous and Supreme as well. And the millennial name—the "Most High," King of kings and Lord of lords,—shows, as already said, whereto we have arrived. The series is manifestly complete, and its moral purpose is as manifest. The way of the Lord is seen in the abasing of the proud, in the lifting up of the lowly. Therefore the lesson which we find the remnant of Israel here learning. The "sacrifices of righteousness" which we have heard them press on others, include and imply the "sacrifices of God," which "are a contrite spirit," the "broken and contrite heart" which He will "not despise." This is produced in them by the discipline of the awful day which seems now so near at hand for Israel and the earth. They "endure," bow under the rod, and are saved at the end when the rod smites.

All this is the utterance of the remnant that shall be, in which the Spirit of Christ has anticipated for them their need, and ministered to it beforehand, showing His intimacy with all their condition, and providing for its expression in words which they will have no difficulty in appropriating, and which lead on to the answer of peace of which the same psalms assure them. How gracious is this special ministry to special need; while the need of any at any time is provided for also. These psalms give us, as others have pointed out, a morning (ps. iii.) passing into evening (iv.) and night (v.),—a night at its deepest in psalm vi., but in the seventh showing the commencement of the dawn. The full day is come in the psalm following.

Sec. 3.

The third section contains only one psalm, quite distinct in character from the series before it, and which yet leads up to it, as we have seen. But it is (as they are not) Messianic,—a revival, as it were, of those claims of the Son of God to the throne, which, being rejected by the nations, He has forborne as yet to make good in power, as He will surely do. His time of patience has accomplished, in the mean while, the fulfillment of other purposes, even those in which "to the principalities and powers in heavenly places, is made known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God." (Eph. iii. 10.) Of this we must not expect any intimation here. We are here (as in Old Testament prophecy generally) in the line of Jewish hopes and promises.

Still we have not here the King on Zion, but the wider title of Son of man.

2 (2): Deliverance from the enemy.

2 /Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou established praise
because of thine *g*adversaries,
that thou mightest *h*still the enemy and the revenger.

/ Matt. 21. 16. *cf.* Matt. 11. 25. *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 26, 29.
g Ps. 74. 10. Is. 59. 18.
h cf. Ps. 18. 17, 48; Isa. 51. 13.

This, of course, implies the taking of His other glories, and we shall have many a psalm later on that will present these. Here at the outset we need expect little detail, but the general features sketched of a picture that is to be filled in afterwards. The outline is given with a few bold touches sufficiently comprehensive. Not the King on Zion nor the Son owned of God is here, but the ideal man, the answer to the question, "what is man?"—God's head over the earth, and with gleams of higher glories,—Son of man, nevertheless, (decisively different in this from the first Adam,) through whom God is glorified on earth, and His glory set even above the heavens. Such is the wonderful scene that is here opened out to us.

It is a psalm of David, "upon the Gittith." Two interpretations of this are given, which practically are not far apart, however. "Some Hebrew scholars," says an anonymous writer whom we may often quote, "would regard it as the name of a musical instrument peculiar to Gath, where David once sought shelter from the unrelenting persecution of Saul. Just as there was among the Greeks a Dorian lyre, which had a wide celebrity on account of its excellent sweetness, so, it is suggested, this psaltery, Gittith, was borrowed by David from the citizens of Gath, and thence introduced by him on account of the superior sweetness of its tone and the beauty and elegance of its form. If this be the true interpretation, it suggests also a deeply spiritual reflection: for how often from the saddest occasions of temptation and distress in the devout life arise the gladdest songs of praise! The wild storm often makes the sweetest music on the Æolian harp.

"But a more likely derivation may be found for this title, Gittith, in a Hebrew root, signifying "wine-press." And now it is an autumnal song chanted by the vine-dressers at the joyful vintage-season, when the blood of the grape is poured into the wine-vat. Still the same idea is prominent: sorrow and anguish, like the trodden clusters, are fruitful in the wine of a holy joy."

Whether it be Gath the city, or *gath* the wine-press, the root-word, and so the meaning, is the same, and the thought suggested acquires its fullest significance when we connect it with the cross. The wrath borne for men, the blood outpoured, were there for us the cause of a joy that shall never cease. And how simply it brings before us the apostle's quotation of this psalm, and the note which he makes upon the quotation: "we see Jesus, made a little lower than the angels *for the suffering of death*, crowned with glory and honor." (Heb. ii. 9.) One might easily imagine that the apostle had in mind the "*al haggittith*" of the psalm from which he quotes.

1. So brief yet so comprehensive as it is, the psalm has comparatively many divisions. It begins and ends with the glory of God, Jehovah's name being now excellent in all the earth. But there is more than this: He has set His glory also above the heavens.

It should be evident when we consider what is the great subject before us, that all this has a deeper meaning than at first sight we might give it. The Lord as Son of man, taking possession of the earth as His inheritance, makes everywhere Jehovah's name excellent in it. When, as Zechariah prophesies, "the Lord my God shall come, and all His saints with Thee," His feet standing upon the mount of Olives, from which He went up, then "Jehovah shall be King over all the earth; in that day there shall be one Jehovah, and His Name one." (Zech. xiv. 3, 5, 10.)

The application in this way is simple, and it throws light upon the rest of the verse: for then surely we can see that the glory that is set above the heavens is

3 (3-5): Once humbled, crowned with glory.
(i.) the power of God so great.
(ii.) the wonder of man's relation to Him.
(iii.) his exaltation.

When I [i]behold the heavens, the work of thy fingers,
moon and stars which thou hast [j]established,
[k]What is man, that thou rememberest him?
and the [l]son of man, that thou visitest him?
And thou makest him a [m]little lower than the angels,*
and with glory and honor thou [n]crownest him.

i Ps. 19. 1. Isa. 40. 25, 26. Ps. 147. 4. Job 38. 31-33.
j Gen. 1. 14-19.
k Heb. 2. 6-9. Ps. 144. 3.
l cf. Jno. 5. 25. cf. Jno. 1. 51.
m cf. Phil. 2. 6-11; cf. Jno. 1. 14; cf. Ps. 102; 23-27 with Heb. 1. 10-12.
n cf. Ps. 21. 1-4; cf. Heb. 1. 3; cf. Rev. 19. 12.

* Elohim, God or gods, sometimes applied to angels; and so the Septuagint and Heb. ii. 6. (See notes.)

connected with the work of this same blessed Person. It is not the glory of moon and stars spread *over* the heavens, such as the psalmist speaks of in the third verse, but a glory *above* all created things, however wondrous. Jehovah it is who is manifest in this Son of man, in whose lowly position just the wonder of His condescending love appears. Supreme in power, He is as supreme in moral glory, and in Christ how does this shine out! Thus the praise of earth ascends to Him, owning His rightful rule: "Jehovah our Lord, how excellent is Thy Name in all the earth!"

2. Its deliverance has come, therefore, from the oppressor: it is not merely that the voice of calumny has been stopped, as interpreters have taken this verse to mean, but the enemy has passed away. In a fuller sense than could be said of Solomon's peaceful reign, "there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent." So then it is by more than the *praise* of babes and sucklings that the enemy is silenced, and the Lord's quotation of the passage with reference to the hosannas of the children does not at all entail such a consequence as this. It is He Himself who will "smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips destroy the wicked." But yet for this He will establish praise out of the mouth of babes and sucklings; that is, I doubt not, of new-converted souls, humbled and brought down to such conscious littleness and weakness as this implies. We have again from His lips such a comparison in the well-known words, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." Thus we see clearly why He must produce such praise in order that the kingdom may come: the heirs of it must be made ready.

The little children in the temple foreshadowed such praise as this, and in this way the language could be suitably used with reference to them. The actual fulfillment will be in those future days to which, as we have seen, these psalms look on.

3. The third section brings us to the central subject of the psalm, a spiritual enigma, no doubt, scarcely read in its true meaning until the New Testament light was thrown upon it. At first sight it is just man—the race—of which the psalmist speaks; and the question asked is really of this nature: but the answer is a secret for the ear of faith, like much more that we shall find as we go on with him. Man (the race) is, in fact, but what the fall has made him; and what can be really said for him? What can justify God's regard for this ruined creature? Go back to his creation,—put him in the seat from which he fell,—think of the earth as subjected to him,—alas, he seems but to mock the approving words with which his Maker greeted him. Restore him, if it were possible, even to that original excellency, how shall the scepter be again intrusted to hands that have failed so signally to wield it? How, then, could God go on with such an one?

Really you have no answer till you have a *Second* Man,—until you can find one unruined, and with better pledges for the future: no use in mere restoration, in mending such a broken vessel as the first; set him aside, and let another take his office; if, indeed, that other can be found.

Here Christ then comes in, really a Second Man. Yet "Son of Man" also,

4 (6-8): All the earth put under Him.
(i.) his rule.
(ii.) his subjects.
(iii.) the heavens and the deep.
5 (9): man with God.

Thou makest him [o]rule over the works of thy hands;
thou hast [p]put everything under his feet:
[q]Sheep and oxen, all of them,
and also the [r]beasts of the field;
[s]Bird of the heavens, and [t]fish of the sea,
whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.
[u]Jehovah our Lord:
how excellent is thy name in all the earth!

o Gen. 1. 28. Gen. 9. 2. *cf.* Rom. 5. 14.
p 1 Cor. 15. 27. Eph. 1. 22. Heb. 2. 6. Col. 1. 15. 1 Pet. 3. 22.
q *cf.* Dan. 2. 38. *cf.* Lev. 1. 2. *cf.* Isa. 60. 7.
r *cf.* Isa. 11. 6-9. s *cf.* 1 Ki. 17. 4-6. t *cf.* Jonah 1. 17; *cf.* Jno. 2. 10; *cf.* Matt. 17. 27. u ver. 1.

linked with the race in that manner, so as to be able to stand before God the representative of those who in faith look to Him,—the "Seed of the woman," who should bruise the serpent's head.

Thus He is "made a little lower than the angels," as the apostle explains, "on account of the suffering of death." It is not merely that man's condition is by creation a little lower, but Christ as become Son of man is made that. It is a true descent that we are to think of here, and the word used for "angels"—really "gods," and the ordinary word for "God" (*Elohim*)—has thus in its very ambiguity peculiar significance. God He indeed was, who had come down to be a little lower than God,—lower even than those habitually representing Him to men,* and so identified with Him, as the angels are; the apostle accepts the Septuagint translation, therefore, "angels."

"On account of the suffering of death" He had to come down there. Man was under death as penalty, and therefore One had to come in who by voluntary submission to the penalty could glorify God as righteous in it, manifest the holiness of His nature as against sin, but thus also manifest His love in providing escape. And for this, humanity had to be taken; immeasurably exalted indeed, by that which was His humiliation, but now how wondrously in His exaltation! For He laid down only to take up again that "body prepared," and as a Man forever is risen and gone up to God. What meaning is in this way given to the words, "with glory and honor Thou crownest Him"!

4. Now we have his dominion, the first man's rule being repeated and emphasized in the Second Man. "Thou makest Him rule over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put everything under His feet." Here again, as we take earth-angles to measure the heavens, so the earth-kingdom of Adam is made to indicate an empire that is universal. And the apostle teaches us that we may take the expressions here in the uttermost truth of them: "in that He put all things under Him, He left *nothing* that is not put under Him."

The psalm naturally, however, clings to earth, though the things mentioned are not forbidden a deeper meaning: "sheep and oxen" give us, of course, the domestic animals; the "beasts of the field," what we speak of as untamed. The spiritual meaning may without difficulty be found by those that will. The heavens and the deep speak of spheres above and below the earth, as the spiritual ranks of the higher heavens serve with delight the Son of man on the one hand, while He has also on the other "the keys of death and of hell."

5. In all this we are dull scholars, but the general thought is plain. It is no wonder that the psalm ends with that with which it begins; the whole clasped, as it were, together with the uniting bond that has joined God with man, and thus made His name excellent in all the earth,—with a glory, too, which is set above the heavens!

SUBD. 2.

In the second subdivision of the first book, upon which now we enter, we find not Christ but Antichrist, though not indeed explicitly as that, but as the enemy

* See John x. 34, 35: where, though the principle is the same, the application is to the judges in Israel.

of God and man; and in Israel the persecutor of the righteous, the lawless one. There are also other and outside enemies from the *goyim*, the Gentiles,—Antichrist, the false Messiah being a Jew, and owned by the apostate mass as King of the Jews. These things, forming the circumstances of the last days before the coming of the Son of man, and in the midst of which the remnant whose sorrows and whose faith we have been listening to are found,—are not entered into in detail as yet: they will be more and more developed as we go on with the book. We have only here the broad lights and shadows of the picture,—the time, as we have seen, of Jacob's trouble, ended by full and abiding deliverance. Meanwhile faith is exercised; and we have these exercises, in which also to a greater or less extent, every generation of God's saints has shared, and into which, therefore, all may enter. Their character is distinct from that of the last series: the question is that of the power and prevalence of evil upon earth, and of the oppression practised; but although the soul may cry, "How long wilt Thou forget?" it does not dread, as before, the anger of God. Conscience is not now ploughed up as it was before, and the sense of relationship to God is not perplexed.

Sec. 1.

There are but two sections in this subdivision: the first giving the theme, the second the exercises; and this last, we may notice, is again a series of *five* psalms.

The first section has but two psalms, which in the Septuagint and Vulgate are united together, as in a real way they are by an alphabetic arrangement which, though irregular and even defective, can be distinctly traced, and which runs through them both,—psalm ix. ending with the first half of the alphabet, while psalm x., with a significant omission, carries it to the end. This does not show that they are one psalm, however, nor are they: the subjects are different, though so closely connected: two parts of one theme.

The alphabetic character of the two psalms being admitted, as it generally is, the irregularity of structure, as well as the absence of at least seven out of the twenty-two letters, should be accounted for in order to any full rendering. The doctrine of verbal inspiration, with all that it implies, cannot allow us to lose sight even of letters, when these are brought before us so prominently as they are in this case. *Mind*—the divine mind—must be realized as governing everywhere, if we would consistently maintain this: if we do not look for it, the loss will be our own; and how great a loss! Yet interpretation after this manner has scarcely as yet been even an ideal; and attempts to realize it have to meet all that indifference and unbelief, supported by the long habit of neglect, can urge against them. For this reason we feel constrained to look the more closely at the problem presented here,—a problem which manifestly makes more intricate that of numerical structure,—*if* it be not, on the other hand, really a divine help toward intelligence: any way a test for it of the severest character. The ordinary psalms are severe enough: the verses here not the mere artificial human device which in the prose books we have examined we had to disregard in the very interest of the sense, and to which no one attaches any importance. Here, on the contrary, no one has any doubt as to there being, quite as much as in most poetry of our own day, a reality to be taken account of. In ordinary versification, indeed, this is but a question of style: the verses are only, to an extent quite uncertain and irregular, a division of the subject. On the other hand, in Scripture, where the human hand has been overruled—guided better than it knew—by the divine Spirit, we cannot be permitted such a refuge from inquiry. Numerical structure, it would seem, must account for the division of verses, in the same way that it accounts for the larger divisions of the books; the larger and smaller having, of course, proportional importance, but still all of them having *some* importance. At least this is the question we have set out to seek answer to, with the conviction beforehand, such as animates the microscopist in his explorations into nature, that there *is* meaning to be found.

In these two psalms alone there will thus be thirty-eight divisions, with the

addition of those represented by the letters, which amount to fifteen larger ones. Besides this, the very gaps in the alphabet will probably furnish more; while even so the *primary* divisions, largest of all, are not thus reached. It will be found that there are, as given in our analysis above, fifty-seven divisions to be accounted for and put into meaning,—all these to be united into one consistent whole, which itself fills its own significant place, as one seventy-fifth part of the book of psalms. Certainly, if this be done, if even it be defectively, with any *appearance* of success, one can only account for it by the fact of the divine inspiration of the psalmist, as one writing *much better than he knew*, which was, as we know well, only the ordinary manner of the prophet. (1 Pet. i. 12.)

The defective and irregular character of the alphabetic structure has naturally elicited some effort to explain it on the part of a few, who have thought so small a matter to be worth their while. Thus one commentator writes:

"These two psalms manifestly constitute one alphabetical composition, comprising twenty-two stanzas, each a quartet, according to the number and order of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet; of these twenty-two stanzas, seventeen now remain. Five stanzas, equivalent to twenty lines, are now wanting. To supply this deficiency, there are thirteen lines, equivalent to three stanzas and one line, which cannot now be arranged in the psalm, because their initial letters correspond not with the missing stanzas. Whenever Hebrew manuscripts shall be brought to light, by their various readings enabling us to insert these lines in their proper place, there will still remain a deficit of seven lines to constitute and complete the missing quartets. It would seem that this division of this alphabetical composition into two psalms *was intentional*, to conceal the alphabetical arrangement, and to blind men to the deficiency of these seven lines, and to the misplacing of the thirteen lines above. No such division exists in the LXX. or Vulgate versions. Of the 718 Hebrew MSS. and Editions of the Psalms collated by Kennicott and De Rossi, and of the ancient versions, none afford light or authority for the correction of the irregularities, transpositions and deficiencies of this alphabetical psalm."

Thus, according to this writer, the psalm, or psalms, here have got somehow into a disorder, which would seem hopeless, and which copyists, in their hopelessness (it is to be presumed), have striven to cover up. This is hardly to be believed. Such disorder, in an alphabetic psalm of all others, would have been easily detected, and, at the first, quite easily set right. It is impossible to suppose that such wholesale error should have corrupted all other manuscripts and versions; and if we could think it, the question of the Hebrew text to-day would be indeed a serious one. Nor upon the face of these psalms does there appear any answering confusion of meaning to correspond with such an hypothesis. All is supposition merely, founded upon another supposition as baseless—that the alphabetic structure must have been intended to have perfect regularity; but this is not found completely in some other of the acrostic psalms.

May not the irregularity be itself designed? True, if it be only a (questionable) taste that has given this form to the psalms,—if it be but a help to memory, or even have, as Moll suggests, "symbolic reference to their completeness and wholeness, since only instructive poems and psalms of lamentation present this alphabetic arrangement,"—*then* it seems impossible to see reason for a disturbance of that regularity which alone would suit such ideas. Nor can one well understand why no more psalms than these should take this form, nor why these specially; nor indeed why a psalm of *lamentation* should require such completeness or wholeness at all. But we have already seen, in Psalm V., how the breaking in upon the ordinary symmetry of the 4 x 3 arrangement there can have thorough and spiritual significance. And why not equally the disturbance here?

It is surely natural to see in the alphabetic arrangement a symbol of *order impressed by a governing mind*. A numerical structure by itself expresses this; and an alphabetic one, making use of all the elements of human speech, seems as if it were indeed intended to make that order vocal. Whatever else it may express, it is at least competent to express this.

Now, if we consider the subject of these two psalms as already briefly intimated, and as we shall more fully have before us as we go through them in detail, both the relation of this structure to them, and the reason of its partial derangement also, come at once into the light. The subject is the crisis of Israel's history and the world's: a time in which the conflict of evil with good will have risen to its height, when all foundations may seem to be destroyed, and yet when shortly will be demonstrated, as never before, how thoroughly under divine control all is. The convulsion will be found but the throes and travail of a childbirth, out of which a new Israel and a new world will issue. Thus the general order and control of the alphabetic arrangement, broken in upon (as to its *expression*) in the gap of six letters which seem to be fallen out near the beginning of the tenth psalm, but then once more coming into sight and maintained to the end.

So the structure vindicates itself, and is in perfect harmony with the contents all through; and examine this more minutely,—put it more fully to the proof,—it will abide the proof, and still more incontestably reveal the design that is in it. For notice where this apparently structureless gap occurs: not in the ninth psalm, throughout which the reign of the Most High is celebrated, but, as already said, near the beginning of the tenth, *where the man of sin is described.* As soon as the description is ended, and the appeal begins afresh, "Arise, Jehovah!" the alphabetic structure is resumed. It is this wicked one who seems for a time to resist the government of God, and prevail even against the Most High; but this cannot be really so,—soon and finally his power is gone, and the clouds too from around the everlasting Throne, and Jehovah is, as He has always been, the Eternal and Unchangeable.

Six letters here have dropped out; but in this fact—in the number here—is there not again significance? For what does this number symbolize but just evil risen to its height, and yet limited and controlled by God? and what number then would be just so right as this is to convey the exact truth of what is here,—the needed corrective of the unbelief which the rampant energy of evil must provoke?

We see then that the psalm is as it should be, and that its irregularity as well as its regularity are alike of God. Is there not pardonable a little enthusiasm over the possession of such a revelation from God with its seal upon its front, as thus has come to us? The Lord arouse His people to understand aright the portion He has given them!

Psalm IX.

We come now then to the consideration of these psalms in detail. The ninth has for its subject the contemplation of that throne of righteousness which the earth has so long desired to see and found not. Christ as the King of righteousness has been refused, and the world has sought all kinds of substitutes for Him in vain. It must be but in vain! Yet the "desire of all nations" shall come, and shall be found in Him. He shall be "King of kings and Lord of lords."

The inscription is considered a difficult one, and has had, as usual in such cases, many interpretations. *Muth-labben* means most naturally, however, and is most commonly taken to be, "Death for the son." Remembering the Egyptian oppression out of which Moses and the people of Israel as a whole were saved, and which God remembered against Egypt on the passover night of their deliverance,—and remembering, too, that here we have the final and worst tribulation of the same people Israel, when out of the bitterest persecution they shall be delivered,—there is no great difficulty in the application of the inscription in this way. So taken it confirms from another side the meaning of the psalm.

1. The psalm begins with an outburst of praise to the Most High—that millennial name of God with which the seventh psalm ended. Israel's tongue is loosed, the whole heart united in this praise. It is Jehovah, the covenant God, the Living and Unchangeable, who is now manifested as this, whose wondrous works have made Him known, and these as being the means of their own deliv-

SUBD. 2. (Ps. ix.–xv.)

The remnant in relation to the enemy and the transgressors in Israel.

SEC. 1. (Ps. ix., x.)

The theme: The Supreme, and the Lawless One.

Ps. ix.

[1]PSALM IX.

The throne of righteousness.

To the chief musician. Upon [v]Muth-labben. A psalm of David.

(*Aleph.*)
I WILL [w]praise Jehovah with [x]all my heart;
I will [y]declare all thy wondrous works.
I will rejoice and [z]exult in thee:
I will sing psalms to thy name, O [a]Most High.

(*Beth.*) When my enemies turn back,
they [b]stumble and perish from before thy face.
For thou hast [c]maintained my right and my cause:
thou sittest on the throne, [d]judging right.
(*Gimel.*) Thou hast [e]rebuked nations, thou hast [f]destroyed the wicked,
thou hast [g]blotted out their name for ever and aye!
(*He.*) The enemy—[his] desolations are come to a perpetual end;
and thou hast rooted up [h]cities, their remembrance is perished with them.

1 (1, 2): Celebration of the most High.
(i.) Jehovah! with all the heart.
(ii.) confirmation.
2 (3-6): Deliverance from the enemy.
a (3, 4) righteousness for the righteous.
(i.) efficient power.
(ii.) witnessing for me.
b (5); destruction of the wicked.
c (6); full restoration.

v cf. Ex. 1. 22. Ex. 11. 4, 5.
w Ps. 107. 1, 2.
x Ps. 111. 1.
y Ps. 105. 2.
z Ps. 5. 11. Ps. 34. 2.
a Gen 14.18, 19, 20, 22. Deut. 32, 8. Ps. 7. 17. *cf.* Isa. 14. 13, 14.
b Ps. 18. 38.
c Ps. 18. 20. Ps. 43. 1.
d vers. 8, 16.
e vers.19,20. Ps. 68. 30.
f Ps. 10. 16.
g cf. Josh. 6. 21, etc.
h cf. Josh. 8. 28.

erance, and with their new-opened mouth, Israel will declare. David the Israelite has long since led, and still leads, in such strains as these; and Christ, the antitype of David, will lead "in the midst of the assembly," in the days to come.

The speaker repeats, confirms, and amplifies the song of praise. It is God Himself in whom he rejoices, and whom His works make known; it is His name which he celebrates in psalms. This is indeed the joy of joys, that, as is not the case with changeful man, what He has done is the real manifestation of Himself, His nature,—and that is what His "Name" implies. Thus we can know Him better than we can know ourselves: for the heart of man, "who can know it?"

What a joy indeed, to have Him manifestly reigning—Christ the perfect expression of what He is, and Christ upon the throne!

2. Deliverance from the enemy is what now their hearts are full of: righteous deliverance for the righteous, as the seventh psalm has declared it as far as the oppressor is concerned: *he* has no claim that the divine government can recognize. There is efficient power, and when the work of deliverance begins, it is fully accomplished: when the enemies turn back, they stumble and perish, for God is there. Israel can now say, "Thou hast maintained my right and my cause;" and it is One who plainly sits upon the throne who does so.

Nor is this deliverance local merely. It connects itself with the judgment of the earth, and the destruction of the wicked out of it: even their name is blotted out and disappears; and this involves a moral change of the face of the world, which makes haste in this way to forget them. More than this, the desolations wrought by the reign of evil are over: the "times of restitution" are come,—summer and fruitage for all the earth, with quiet rest under the care of the good Shepherd. For He it is who reigns, and the iron rod has destroyed those only who destroy the earth.

3. Jehovah dwells in Zion, and His rule has all the character of divine benefi-

3 (7-12): The Holy One dwelling in Zion.
a (7-10): abiding the Righteous One.
(i.) His eternal throne.
(ii.) His ministry of judgment.
(iii.) Himself a refuge.
(iv.) tested and proved.
b (11, 12): Testimony to the nations.
(i.) of the King in Zion.
(ii.) answering the blood-cry.
4 (13,14): The experience.
(i.) the cry for grace.

(*Vau.*) But Jehovah [t]abideth for ever:
who establisheth his [j]throne for judgment.
And *he* shall [k]judge the world in righteousness:
he shall give judgment in uprightness to the races [of men.]
And Jehovah shall be a [l]stronghold for the oppressed,
a stronghold in seasons of strait.
And they that [m]know thy name will trust in thee;
for thou, Jehovah, hast [n]not forsaken them that seek thee.
(*Zain.*) Sing psalms to Jehovah who [o]dwelleth in Zion:
[p]tell his deeds among the peoples:
That he who [q]searcheth out blood hath remembered them:
he hath not [r]forgotten the cry of the afflicted.
(*Cheth.*) Be [s]gracious to me, Jehovah;
behold my affliction from them that hate me:
[t]lifting me up from the gates of death!

t Ps. 29. 10 Ps. 102. 26, 27.
j Ps. 103. 19.
k Ps. 50.3-6 Ps. 96. 10, 13. *cf.* Matt.25. 31-46.
l Ps. 37. 39. Ps. 71. 3.
m Ps. 91. 14. *cf.* Jno. 17. 26.
n ctr. Ps. 22. 1.
o Ps. 2. 6. Ps. 50. 2.
p 1 Chr. 16. 24. *cf.* Is. 66.19.
q cf. Matt. 27. 25. Gen. 4. 10.
r cf. Lk. 1. 68-71. *cf.* Lk. 18. 1-8.
s cf. Ps. 6. 2.
t Ps. 107. 18, 19.

cence. Man is no longer a stranger and an exile from God. The earth returned to her orbit circles round her central sun.

(*a*) It is the rule of the Eternal: while other kingdoms arise and fall, this endures: "Jehovah abideth forever." No danger of a failure in the succession; no uncertainty from transmission through many hands: the glorious Priest-King never resigns or forfeits His throne to others; He is Himself the dynasty, and its character will never change: He "establisheth His throne for judgment; and *He* shall judge the world in righteousness, He shall give judgment in uprightness to the races of men." Thus there is no fear either of the clashing of party interests or of national prejudices, or of aught else. One King is King to all, ministering incorruptible justice to all alike. Rule is now true service, and the oppressed is secure of a ready hearing in the one ever-accessible court of appeal. He is their refuge, their sanctuary,—"a stronghold in seasons of strait." This is no theory merely: there is no contradiction between the ideal and the real. It is known by experience, affirmed by the consciousness of all His people: for "they that know Thy Name will trust in Thee: for Thou, Jehovah, hast not forsaken them that seek Thee."

(*b*) Israel is naturally the witness of all this in her own experience, and by her deliverance will "tell out His deeds among the peoples"—the nations brought at last to be His own. The persecution even to death of the chosen nation He has now remembered: their cry has come up into His ears. Now He dwells in Zion, and forever; the wings that long since would have sheltered them, are now stretched over them,—at rest in the love that has drawn them nigh.

4. After all this—strangely as it seems, no doubt,—we have the actual cry of distress; and to the end of the psalm, though there are outbursts of triumphant anticipation, the deliverance contemplated is seen not to be really come as yet. And this character of the psalm we shall find repeated in many future ones. The realization of faith comes first, and then the actual circumstances are seen, out of which faith looks to the fulfillment of precious promises, which are indeed as sure as if fulfilled. The stand-point of the psalm is thus that of those for whom it has been specially prepared, and their faith is strengthened by such Spirit-inspired glimpses as we have had into the then so near future, the bright fulfillment of the longings and prayers of successive generations of saints, who died with its light-glow in their faces. And this hope too is ours, with its bright-

(II.) and that salvation may be declared.
5 (15-17): Governmental ways.
a (15, 16): consistent righteousness.
(I.) suicidal course of the wicked.
(II.) the testimony to Jehovah.
b (17): death of the wicked.

That I may [u]declare all thy praise in the [v]gates of the daughter of Zion;
that I may [w]exult in thy salvation.

(*Teth.*) The nations have [x]sunk in the pit that they made;
in the net that they hid is their [y]own foot taken.
Jehovah is [z]known [by] the judgment he hath executed:
the wicked is snared in the work of his hands.
[a]Higgaion. Selah.
(*Jod*) The wicked are turned into [b]Sheol;
all the nations that [c]forget God.

u ver. 1. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 9.
v *cf.* Ps. 116. 17-19.
w Ex. 14.13. Ps. 13. 5.
x Ps. 7.15,16.
y Ps. 141.10.
z Ex. 7. 5. *cf.* Isa. 26. 8-10.
a Ps. 19. 14. Ps. 92. 3.
b *cf.* Rev. 19. 20 with Matt. 25. 46. *ctr.* Ps. 30. 5.
c Ps. 50. 22; Ps. 10. 4.

ness only intensified by the fact that ours too are *heavenly* promises, and that as "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ" we are to see and rejoice in the earth's bridal-glory, when the Bridegroom-King shall be "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." Our interest in these things is not likely to be spoiled by the fact of *fuller* entrance than Israel herself into this ineffable joy.

Here then we have the experience of Jacob's hour of trial once again, the cry—though with the confidence begotten of previous anticipations—from the very "gates of death." Yet they expect to change this yawning shadow for the "gates of the daughter of Zion," and to praise Jehovah there, exulting in His salvation—not surely a mere temporal deliverance. We have seen already (Ps. vi.) what death is linked with in their minds; and corresponding with this is the meaning of deliverance from it for the hearts of these worshipers—a praise that shall be led of Messiah Himself.

5. Thus again faith descries the future from its firm ground in the prophetic word, and rehearses the righteous ways of divine government in quite a similar manner to the seventh psalm. These things need the emphasis of repetition for men's careless ears. The nations sink into a pit their own hands have prepared, and are taken in the net they have hid for their own entanglement. And this is Jehovah's judgment, the unswerving ways by which Jehovah is made known. Higgaion: here is "meditation" for those who do not refuse it: let them "ponder it in their own hearts upon their beds, and be still."

And "the wicked are turned into Sheol,—all the nations that forget God." This is still, of course, the judgment of the world that is in question: final it is, as far as the world goes, but yet not the full eternal judgment which the New Testament reveals. For this, sheol or hades must deliver up its dead, (held by it only as prisoners for the assize,) and the "resurrection of judgment" introduce them to "the great white throne" for discriminating sentence. (Rev. xx.) This we have not here, nor generally in the Old Testament. Death—what we ordinarily call that—is, as we see it everywhere, the *legal* penalty, though still with the shadow of divine wrath therefore in it. It is here the doom of "outer darkness," outside the day of earth's festival and joy; the doom of those who "forget God;" and thus we understand the cry of the sixth psalm, though there in the lips of those to whom forgetfulness of God is the misery they dread: "for in death there is no remembrance of Thee; in Sheol who shall give Thee thanks?" It is the doom of those who have *chosen* to forget God, but as contemplated by those with whom, according to the well-understood parallelism here, to "remember" is to "give Him thanks." Alas, it is the portion they have chosen they will have—aye, and *must* have, because they have chosen it, *not* because *He* has chosen it for them. From so awful a thought as this He has interposed his oath to save us: "*As I live*, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth: therefore turn yourselves and live ye."

6. The psalm concludes with prayer, mingled with the assurance which he who prays whispers to his heart. Frail man, thrusting himself across the path

6 (18-20): Frail man.
(i.) not for ever.
(ii.) prayer for deliverance.
(iii.) the self-manifestation.

(*Caph.*) For the [d]needy shall not be perpetually forgotten:
the expectation of the meek shall not perish for aye.
[e]Arise, Jehovah! let not frail man be strong:
let the nations be judged before thy face!
Put them in [f]fear, Jehovah!
that the nations may know themselves to be [g]frail men.

d *cf.* Ps. 31. 12. Rom. 11. 1, 2. Prov. 23. 17, 18.
e Ps. 7. 6.
f Ps. 14. 5.
g Isa. 40. 15, 22.

Ps. x.

[1]PSALM X.

The wicked one, and the deliverance.

1 (1, 2): The cause of the cry.
(i.) appeal to Jehovah.
(ii.) the persecution.

(*Lamed.*)
WHY standest thou [h]afar off, Jehovah?
hidest thyself in seasons of [i]strait?
In the [j]haughtiness of the wicked doth he hotly pursue the humble:
they are being [k]taken in the plots that they have devised.

h Ps. 35. 22. Ps. 71. 12. *cf.* Ps. 27. 5.
i *cf.* Jer. 30. 7.
j *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 4. *cf.* Dan. 11. 36.
k Ps. 7. 15. Ps. 9. 16.

of the almighty purpose! what must be the end? God's people may be indeed the "needy," and with no spirit of self-assertion, scarcely turning as the worm upon the foot of him that treads on it—the "meek." Aye, but it is because, not their despair, but their "expectation" quiets them. "My soul, wait thou upon God," is the reminder with which they control themselves. Shall they be forgotten perpetually, though for a time it seem so? shall *such* expectation come to naught? shall they who have *no* hope but in God be disappointed by Him? No: it is impossible to entertain the thought. And so out of that conviction comes the cry—

"Arise, Jehovah! let not frail man be (thus) strong!" has not his success reached already the ordained bound? "let the nations be judged before Thy face!" They have forgotten Thee, and so can boast themselves: let Thy presence convict them of their folly, and rebuke the vain pretension; "put them in fear, Jehovah! that the nations may know themselves to be frail men!"

Thus the psalm ends. Though irregular in its construction, the alphabetic arrangement only lacks one letter, so far as it goes, which is just half-way through the alphabet. Thus, instead of eleven letters, there are *ten*—the psalm clinging, indeed, to what this number indicates—human responsibility and recompense; while the omitted letter, *daleth*, standing for the number 4, which speaks of creature weakness and failure, may find in this the reason of its omission from a psalm which throughout so strongly emphasizes the indefectible righteousness of the divine government. Reason will certainly be found everywhere for every "jot and tittle" of the inspired word which we are considering. Believing research will find that every claim that has been made for it on that score fails only in feebleness of statement, not in excess.

Psalm X.

The tenth psalm, linked too closely with the ninth to have any separate title, is occupied largely with the description of the wicked one, as we have seen; and this is the cause of a gap in the alphabetic arrangement, six letters (from *Mem* to *Tzaddi*) being absent. Delitzsch would find, however, six strophes standing here to represent them, but the numerical division is into five parts, which are very unequal. The larger divisions are three: it is in fact a sort of resurrection psalm.

1. The first division gives us only the cry to Jehovah with the cause of the cry, this being the persecution of the humble by the wicked one. "Why standest Thou afar off, Jehovah? [why] hidest Thou Thyself in seasons of strait?" The previous psalm had declared God to be a stronghold in just such seasons

2 (3–11): The enemy of God and man.
a (3, 4): his pride.
(i.) as independence of God.
(ii.) as denial of God.
b (5, 6): his security.
(i.) self alone in sight.
(ii.) his self-assurance.
c (7): out of his heart.

For the wicked one [l]boasteth of his soul's desire;
and the covetous renounceth, he scorneth, Jehovah.
The wicked in his disdain [saith], He will not [m]seek it out:
there is [n]no God in all his plots.
Sure are his ways at all times:
high are thy judgments [o]out of his sight;
all his adversaries, he [p]puffeth at them.
He saith in his [q]heart, "I shall not be moved:
from generation to generation one in no calamity."
His [r]mouth is full of cursing and deceit and oppression:
[s]under his tongue are trouble and vanity.

l Ps. 94. 4. Ps. 52. 1–4. *cf.* Dan. 8. 9–12, 23–25.
m ver. 11.
n Ps. 14. 1. *cf.* Dan. 11. 37.
o Isa. 55. 9.
p Ps. 12. 5. *cf.* Isa. 36. 4–9.
q ver. 11. Deut. 29. 19.
r *cf.* Rom. 3. 14. *cf.* Rev. 13. 11.
s Ps. 140. 3. *cf.* Dan. 8. 25.

cf. Dan. 11. 21, 23; *cf.* Rev. 13. 14.

(verse 9). Why such dissimilarity between the faith and the experience? But in truth faith in no wise rests upon experience here, but confesses that, as to His government, clouds and darkness may be round about Him. True, at last experience will come round to faith, and the exercise meanwhile be found needed and helpful. But faith is in the invisible,—sees Him indeed who is so,—has its ground, its arguments, is not credulity, but has sure evidence, all its own.

2. (*a*) Now we have the picture of the wicked one, the enemy of God and man. Pride and lust characterize him, the tokens of a soul out of the presence of God, but here in distinct and awful rejection of Him. He boasts of his soul's desire, —of having his own way; pursuing it, he refuses all the check of Jehovah's will; he renounces, he scorns Him, is in entire independence: like a "wandering star", he is bound to no orbit, by that very fact indeed showing himself to be in earth-bonds that he knows not, a meteor to be quenched in darkness; safety and permanency are only in the orbit.

He is not only independent of God, he denies Him; but he denies Him in the interest of his own lawless acts. "He will not search out," he says. His plottings, the weaving together of his purposes, are atheistic therefore. His pride and his lusts mutually support each other.

(*b*) Security is the natural outcome of his pride: God's judgments are out of his sight altogether. If faith has to own often that clouds and darkness are about Him, it is in no wise strange that he should refuse all cognizance of One thus removed out of all natural ken. Nay, if God acts most clearly, the very fact that He makes all things serve Him in it still conceals Him amid the multiplicity of instruments. Then the scale in which God weighs things is too spiritual; the balances are "balances of the sanctuary": a careless and callous conscience cannot appreciate them; the handwriting on the wall needs an interpreter, and who knows if it were correctly given?

He knows not God then, and he derides men: "all his adversaries, he puffeth at them." These things do not always go together: it does not follow that he who has emancipated himself from the restraint of conscience is necessarily free from the fear of man. Man is more intelligible, and yet not always more calculable; he is as to tangibility nearer; and the mystery of one's own heart is dark enough to threaten one with the likeness of other hearts to ours. And yet over this also pride can lift the heart; and it is so here. Nay, he of whom this is spoken can look on indefinitely to the future as one not to be subject to the ills that afflict other men,—"from generation to generation one in no calamity."

(*c*) Being thus secure, all that is in his heart comes out: "out of the heart the mouth speaketh"; and "his mouth is full of cursing and deceit and oppression." What is "*under* his tongue," hidden, and yet ready to show itself, is "trouble" for others, "and vanity" in itself. A short description, indeed, but an effective one. If God be displaced it is to make room for man; and what is the man, then, for whom this is to make room?

d (8-10): his ways.
(i.)
(ii.)
(iii.)
e (11): as to God's government.

3 (12-18): faith's realization of God rising up.
a (12, 13): the appeal to the living God.
(i.) because of the righteous.
(ii.) because, too, of the wicked.
b (14): the confidence of faith.
c (15, 16): purification realized.
(i.) from the power of the evil one.

He sitteth in [t]ambush in the villages:
in secret places doth he [u]slay the innocent;
his eyes lurk after the wretched.
He lieth in wait in secret, like a [v]lion in his thicket:
he lieth in wait to seize the humble;
he seizeth the humble, drawing him into his net.
He croucheth, he boweth down,
and the [w]wretched fall by his strong ones.
He hath said in his heart, the Mighty hath [x]forgotten:
he hideth his face, he hath never seen it.

(*Koph.*) [y]Arise, Jehovah! Mighty One, lift thy hand!
[z]forget not the humble!
Why doth the wicked one scorn God?
he hath said in his heart, thou wilt not seek it out.
(*Resh.*) [a]Seen it thou hast: for *thou* beholdest trouble and vexation,
to requite it with thy hand;
the wretched [b]leaveth himself to thee:
thou hast been the helper of the [c]orphan.
(*Schin.*) Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil one:
thou shalt seek out his wickedness till thou find none.

t *cf.* 1 Sam. 18. 11. Mi. 7. 2.
u *cf.* Rev. 13. 15.
v Ps. 7. 2. Ps. 17. 12.
w *cf.* Deut. 25. 18.
x Ps. 73. 11. Ps. 59. 7.
y Ps. 7. 6.
z Ps. 13. 1.
a Prov. 15. 3.
b Ps. 7. 1.
c Ps. 146. 9. *cf.* Jno. 14. 18.

(*d*) So we have now his ways,—a monotony of wickedness which the psalmist, seeking to describe, can only do so by repeating himself in various ways. The figure is that of a wild beast and a beast of prey,—human so far only as there is with it the cunning and forecast of the hunter. Man without God is only such a beast; the spiritual part sunk into the animal only giving to it preternatural potency for evil. This process of degradation a Nebuchadnezzar is witness to; while in the prophet's vision, the imperial powers following him inherit his shame: they are but "four wild beasts."

Even the numerical structure seems in the minor sections to fall through here, which, considering that the alphabetic has already done so, and yet with design, may make us realize design here also,—the *three* verses manifesting what is yet a nameless horror, like the fourth of the imperial beasts in Daniel's vision. (Dan. vii.)

(*e*) One closing comment takes us back to his attitude toward the divine government, which yet has its hold upon him: "he hath said in his heart, The Mighty hath forgotten: He hideth His face; He hath never seen it."

3. (*a*) The alphabet is resumed with *Koph*, and now continues to the end. Let us notice that this letter is 100 in numerical value, the years of Abraham's life before the promise is fulfilled, and to one "as good as dead" Isaac is born. So now it is time for God to arise and act: this consummation of denial and defiance is the index-hand which points to the last possible limit of divine long-suffering. The living God must show Himself. The Mighty One must put forth might. The suffering of the righteous calls for it; and so does the cool contempt of the wicked. Patience will be no longer forbearance, but the aggravation of the evil.

(*b*) Faith holds confidently yet to an All-seeing One, interested as He is observant, sure to interfere. The wretched one, plunged in affliction, yet abandons himself to Him, who has proved Himself the helper of those destitute of natural help. The height of the evil is but the supreme necessity which God must respond to, and with which He directly charges Himself. With all help beside cut off, is not the soul in this condition just this "orphan" to whom He is pledged?

(*c*) Then with the cry comes the flash of recognition: "Break Thou the arm

(ii.) the deliverance.
d (17, 18): the experience of faith.
(i.) strength given.
(ii.) in confidence of coming deliverance.

Jehovah is [d]King for ever and aye:
the nations are [e]perished out of his land.
(*Tau.*) The desire of the humble thou hast [f]heard, Jehovah:
thou confirmest their heart;—
thou causest thine ear to hearken,—
To [g]judge the orphan and the oppressed,
that frail man of the [h]earth may no more alarm.

d Ps. 29. 10.
e Ps. 9. 5. Ps. 45. 5. *cf.* Ps. 18. 43.
f Ps. 6. 8, 9.
g Ps. 72. 4.
h ctr. Ps. 8. 4–8.

of the wicked and the evil one! Thou shalt seek out his wickedness till there is no more to find." And then the glorious accomplishment seems before the sight: "Jehovah is King for ever and aye: the nations are perished out of His land." Purgation is effected, the evil is cast out; the intrusive presence of the nations in the land that is Jehovah's land is found no more. It is only faith still that realizes this, but it is realized. Faith can be as sure as if the thing were done, and while there may be for it at times the struggle upwards through the mists of the valley, there are also the clear air of the mountain-top and the perfect vision.

(*d*) And the soul goes on strengthened on its way. There is an experience of faith, braced and energized by communion with God, which makes already the path to shine with the glow of far-off skies, and lifts up the feet with energy and purpose. So it is now, as the soul sings:—

"The desire of the humble Thou hast heard, Jehovah: Thou confirmest their heart; Thou causest Thine ear to hearken, to judge the orphan and the oppressed, that frail man of the earth"—whose abode the earth is—may no more alarm." Thus with a strain of joy and confidence the tenth psalm ends.

Sec. 2.

There follows now a second series of remnant psalms, their exercises in view of the prevalent evil and power of the enemy. There is not the same ploughing up of the soul or question of relationship to God that we found in the first; for even the complaint of forgetfulness is not the dread of wrath; nay, is in fact almost the opposite of that: for the plea is, Canst Thou forget *me*—Thine own? On this account the connection of the psalms with one another is more difficult to trace; there is not the same process in the soul to be detected which gave each its place in the former case; the eyes of the remnant are more upon their circumstances, less upon themselves. This does not, however, make the psalms less simple to understand individually: they are, on the contrary, quite easy to be read; and orderly connection, too, there surely is; but it is not that of life-development.

We begin, however, at the same point in each series, with faith in an absolute God who governs all, the eleventh psalm being broader and fuller in character than the third, as it is less personal. In the next psalm, the twelfth, we have the words of Jehovah as the resting-place of faith, amid the empty clatter and worse of human tongues. The thirteenth—third of the series—is a cry of distress, Jehovah's face hidden and the enemy prevailing, though with realized blessing in the end. The fourteenth sees the ignorant folly of the oppressor, and moralizes on it, though salvation has not yet come. While the fifteenth, thoroughly Deuteronomic in its character, declares the indispensable moral condition of those who at last dwell with God.

These psalms are all very brief, the longest only of eight verses; they are plainly still introductory: outline-sketches to be filled in at a later time.

PSALM XI.

The first psalm, though but of seven verses, is of varied character, and has five divisions,—is of itself a little pentateuch. Its theme is the sovereignty of God, as faith owns it, His complete control when things are at their worst, and all foundations in appearance gone. Amid the abysmal sea, He is the one thing

SEC. 2. (Ps. xi.–xv.)
In view of the evil and the enemy.

Ps. xi.

[1]PSALM XI.

Jehovah on the throne, and ordering all for blessing.

To the chief musician, [a psalm] of David.

1 (1): Jehovah, the soul's stability.

2 (2, 3): The elements of unrest.

(I.) personal danger.

(II.) ethical confusion.

3 (4): Jehovah in the heavenly sanctuary.

4 (5): The trial.

IN Jehovah have I taken [i]refuge;
why say ye to my soul, [j]Flee [as] a bird to your mountain?
For lo, the wicked bend the bow,
they fix their arrow upon the string,
to shoot in darkness at the [k]upright of heart.
If the [l]foundations are destroyed,
what can the righteous do?
Jehovah is in his [m]holy temple:
Jehovah—his [n]throne is in heaven;
his eyes [o]behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.
Jehovah [p]trieth the righteous;
but the wicked and lover of violence his soul [q]hateth.

i Ps. 7. 1. *cf.* Ps. 16. 1 with Heb. 2. 13. Heb. 12. 1, 2.
j cf. 1 Sam. 26. 19, 20.
k Ps. 7. 3, 4. Ps. 15. 2.
l Ps. 82. 5. *cf.* Matt. 24. 6, 7, 21, 29. *cf.* Rev. 6. 12-16. *cf.* Rev. ch. 13.
m Hab. 2. 20. *cf.* Mal. 3. 1-3.
n Ps. 103. 19. *cf.* Dan. 4. 25.
o Ps. 14. 2. Heb. 4. 13.
p cf. Gen. 22. 1, etc.
q Ps. 5. 5.

that abides; and abiding, bears the soul up and through all surges to the shore. Yet, necessary as this truth is, and blessed as is the assurance of it, there is abundance that will try it in a scene like this, God consenting also, as the psalm says, that it should be tried, that patience may be wrought and have its perfect work: for "tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, a hope that maketh not ashamed"; and if "patience have her perfect work," then are we "perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Thus the psalms that follow find their reason and justification.

1. Naturally we begin with Jehovah as the one sufficient stability of the soul. He the living, the unchanging God, is the sure refuge of the faith that cleaves to Him. Yet because no eye but that of faith discerns this refuge, men may mock and threaten the feebleness which alone they see, and see not the inclosing arms that compass about the feeble one. But he publishes his security, and the grounds of it. It is something of which we never can be deprived, while cleaving to it; and confidence grows in the confession of it. "Why say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain? In Jehovah I have taken refuge."

2. But now we see the elements that breed unrest. They are of two kinds mainly. The first, in such a day as we have seen the psalms look onward to, looms large and grave enough: it is that of personal peril: "for lo, the wicked bend their bow, they fix the arrow upon the string, that they may shoot in the dark at the upright in heart." The danger is there, and yet, just where is uncertain; but the evil grows, and the moral question of this uprise under the government of God becomes the deepest: "if the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?" The path seems lost in this uttermost confusion.

3. But we have the correcting truth. If Jehovah's sanctuary is to be found no more on earth,—and we must remember that it is Israel to whom the earthly sanctuary is the expression of the distinguishing favor enjoyed by them, which marked them as His people,—yet in His heavenly temple He is; and thence no sin of man can drive him. Thence He still rules the earth; and when, because He is quiet, men little deem this, He exercises the most perfect oversight over them all. Left indeed thus, they show fully what they are; and He remains, too, what He is, the throned and Holy One.

4. But He trieth also the *righteous:* just those He loves, and because He loves them, for the sake of what the trial works, in them and through them for His glory. And this may make the wicked, the instruments of this trial, forget or ignore that the "wicked and the lover of violence He hates." Not yet is the day

5 (6, 7): The recompense. (i.) the fruit of righteousness. (ii.) fruit of fellowship.

Upon the wicked he [r]raineth snares,
[s]fire and brimstone and a scorching wind,—
the portion of their cup.
For Jehovah is righteous, [t]loving righteous acts:
the [u]upright shall behold his face.

Ps. xii.

[2]PSALM XII.

Man's lying words contrasted with Jehovah's pure ones.

To the chief musician, upon [v]Sheminith. A psalm of David.

1 (1-4): Self wholly. (i.) The mass one.

SAVE, Jehovah! for the [w]godly hath ceased;
for the faithful are vanished from the children of men.

r cfr. Ps. 78. 24.
s cf. Gen. 19. 24-28. *cf.* Ex. 9. 23-26. Rev. 8. 7. Ezek. 38. 22.
t Ps. 33. 4, 5.
u Ps. 4. 6. Ps. 17. 15. *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 2.
v Ps. 6 Title.
w Isa. 57. 1. Mi. 7. 1, 2. *cf.* Rev. 14. 13.

of manifestation, when the truth will all come out; but he that will may nevertheless know this now. Conscience alone, if truly listened to, is competent to declare it.

5. But the psalm carries us on to the day of retribution, from its standpoint very near at hand; "upon the wicked He will rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and a scorching wind,—the portion of their cup." The imagery is borrowed from the description of the destruction of Sodom, so solemn a picture of the world's judgment, and referred to by our Lord in connection with His own coming. (Luke xvii. 28–30, 32.) The "snares" are evidently the fire and brimstone themselves, rained down from heaven,* laying hold of men before they are aware of their danger, as with Lot's wife: "while they say, peace and safety, sudden destruction cometh upon them."

On the other hand, as surely as "Jehovah is righteous, loving righteous acts," "the upright shall behold His face." Fellowship here leads on to the fellowship hereafter. Thus the first psalm of this series ends.

Psalm XII.

The second puts in sharp contrast the lying words of men with Jehovah's pure ones, which bring moreover with them the assurance of salvation to the soul. The outlook otherwise is dark enough, and the psalm is in the same low notes (*al sheminith*) as the fourth of the former series (Psalm VI.). It is characteristic of antichristian times that deception should be so marked a feature, and that they should say, "With our *tongues* will we prevail." Not that such words have reference necessarily to the poison of false doctrine; but that, as during an epidemic, other diseases take on more or less the prevailing form, so under the shadow of one great deception every form of deception may be hid. And yet, remembering what for the inspired writer the tongue is, we need not be at much loss for the application of the psalm before us to the world round about us to-day, and indeed take home to ourselves also its warnings.

1. It divides into two equal parts, in the first of which man is the subject, in

* Dawson has shown that the instrument of divine judgment upon Sodom was no doubt a "bitumen or petroleum eruption, similar to those which, on a small scale, have been so destructive in the oil-regions of Canada and the United States of America. They arise from the existence of reservoirs of compressed inflammable gas along with petroleum and water, existing at considerable depths below the surface. When these are penetrated, as by a well or bore-hole, the gas escapes with explosive force, carrying petroleum with it, and when both have been ignited, the petroleum rains down in burning showers, and floats in flames over the ejected water, while a dense smoke towers high into the air, and the inrushing draught may produce a vortex, carrying upward to a still greater height and distributing still more widely the burning material, which is almost inextinguishable, and most destructive to life and to buildings. . . . Now the valley of the Dead Sea is an 'oil-district,' . . . and it is well known that petroleum exudes from the rocks both on the sides and in the bottom of the Dead Sea, and, being hardened by evaporation and oxidation, forms the asphaltum referred to by so many travelers." (Modern Science in Bible Lands, pp. 486–488.) The word used here and in Genesis xix. for "brimstone" may include "any kind of mineral pitch or oil, and possibly sulphur as well." And the "scorching wind" is therefore not the "simoom" of the desert, as generally supposed.

(ii.) false and double-hearted.

(iii.) the judgment of holiness.

(iv.) creature weakness.

They [x]speak falsehood each with his neighbor;
with [y]smoothest lips, with a double heart, they speak.
Jehovah shall [z]cut off all smooth lips,—
the tongue that speaketh great things:
Who have said, With our [a]tongues will we prevail;
our lips are our own:
[b]who is lord over us?

2 (5-8): Jehovah's words of help.

(i.) the promise.

(ii.) the confidence of faith.

Because of the oppression of the afflicted,
because of the [c]sighing of the needy,
now will I arise, saith Jehovah,
I will set [him] in [d]safety at whom they puff.
The words of Jehovah are [e]pure words:
silver [f]tried in the furnace of earth, seven times purified.

x Ps. 4. 2.
y Ps 10. 7. Ps. 28. 3. Jer. 9. 8.
z Ps. 144.7,8. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 8.
a *cf.* Jude 16. *cf.* Dan. 7.8.
b *cf.* Ps.10.4. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 8, with 1 Jno. 3. 4.
c *cf.* Ex.2.23. Ps. 13. 1.
d Ps. 27. 6. Ps. 4. 8. *cf.* Lk.21.17, 18.
e Ps. 19. 8. Ps. 119.140.
f *ctr.* ver. 3.

the second God is before us. With man, his misery and his evil are, that, fallen away from God, believing in His love and care no more, he is become himself the object of his own self-love and care. Self rules him, subjects him, degrades, corrupts him, turns him from the minister of blessing that he should be into the oppressor and scourge of all creation under him.

Here the mass are one, there is no godly man left, the faithful are gone from among the children of men. Their mouth is filled with falsehood, they have the smoothest of lips, and a double heart. Against all such Jehovah will manifest Himself, and against the tongue that speaks great things.

What is it that they say? According to Delitzsch and others we should read, "To our tongues we will give strength," that is, we will talk as loudly as we please; but such a meaning might, one would think, be more simply conveyed. Holding by the common translation, which the Revised Version retains, there results a possible meaning, which for its folly might be discarded as *im*possible, and which yet may be the meaning here. Nothing can, after all, be too foolish for the lying lips which are the outcome of a deceitful heart, capable of deceiving the very man who is its possessor. Do not men know that they must die? Yet is it not the business of the mass to ignore it, forget it, make the truth untrue? And so the forty-ninth psalm speaks: "Their inward thought is that their houses shall continue forever, and their dwelling-places to all generations; they call the lands after their own names. . . . This their way is their folly; yet their posterity"—or "the men that come after them"—"approve their sayings."

Is not this in effect to say—is it not the real meaning of—"by our words we will prevail,"—"we will have the thing so by mere effrontery"? The untrue shall be true if we pronounce it true?

Doubtless a man would never say this openly; would not proclaim so openly a battle with the fact; would not even frame such a thought in speech. But that is just the desperate deceit of the heart, that it can so prevail over the reason; and the numerical structure may just point to the weakness underlying the boasting of the tongue,—this mere puff of breath, as it is,—*vox et præterea nihil*. And he may be fitly made to say what in fact he would not care to say, who yet in his life makes just this folly his.

Lips and heart here have broken loose from the curb of divine authority: "who is lord over us?" is the cry. What more than a mere puff of breath is this, save for its wickedness?

2. Jehovah's word comes here into swift opposition to all this; yet it is love and pity that move Him to action,—the oppression of the poor, the sighing of the needy. His promise pledges His interference; whereupon faith celebrates, before this comes, the "pure" words of the Lord, unmixed with any alloy of insincerity or untruth,—words that are like silver, the current medium of exchange, completely purified.

(iii.) the actualization.
(iv.) the universal ruin.

Thou, Jehovah, [g]keepest them:
thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.
The wicked [h]walk on every side,
when vileness is exalted among the children of men.

[g] Ps. 121.
[h] Ps. 17. 9, 13.

Ps. xiii.

[3]PSALM XIII.

Brought up from the gates of death.

To the chief musician, a psalm of David.

1 (1, 2): A loue.
(i.) perpetually?
(ii.) conflict.

[i]HOW long wilt thou [j]forget me, Jehovah? perpetually?
how long wilt thou [k]hide thy face from me?
How long shall I take [l]counsel in my soul,
with sorrow in my heart daily?
how long shall my [m]enemy be exalted over me?

[i] Ps. 6. 3, etc.
[j] Ps. 10. 12. Ps. 42. 9. *ctr.* Is. 49. 15, 16.
[k] Ps. 44. 24.
[l] Ps. 39. 3.
[m] Ps. 25. 2.

In fact, this is realized. Jehovah keeps His people, yea, preserves them forever from the generation of the false-hearted. Yet the wicked walk around; and so it must be when "vileness"—what should be shaken out and cast away—is held in a place of honor among men. This is the condition of things now among the people once the special people of Jehovah.

PSALM XIII.

The third psalm of the series is a resurrection psalm, as agrees well with its position. In it the soul goes down into the depths, but only to find renewal of strength, and fuller blessing. For is it not so in the case of any difficulty met with God, and mastered, as, thus met, it *will* be mastered? And thus, as it would seem, upon every dealing of God with us, and in every stage of His new-creative work, the stamp of resurrection will be found. We must face nature's ruin, bury the dead, acquiesce in the setting aside of creature strength entirely, that all power may be ascribed where it belongs—to God.

How interesting, in this respect, to find in each of the six days' work wherein, in Genesis i., we have seen the type of just this new creative work, this same stamp exhibited! On the Sabbath of rest it can be at last omitted. Thus "the evening and the morning" constitute each "day." The day begins with light indeed, but with *evening*-light, destined, as it would seem, only to make haste to die out and disappear, but to have ere long its resurrection "morning." Here, one would say, the sole purpose of the psalm is to affix this stamp: God thus snapping the ties of nature in all that sin has blighted, ending all *creature*—so all *self*—dependence, that all our trust may fasten on Himself. Then, when we make Him all, we find Him all; the *natural* truth, that "in Him we live and move and have our being," becomes a spiritual truth, spiritually discerned and enjoyed. As here, the soul beginning with a groan ends with a song. We have passed through a tunnel of earth to the unveiled glory of heaven.

1. The six verses fall into three couplets, so that the *six* is really a 3 x 2. It is at once a discipline and a lesson in mastery that we have in them. The cry here is of one desolate indeed, although, as has been noticed, conscience is not accusing as in the sixth psalm. The psalmist cries a strange cry, bred at once of intimacy and estrangement, that Jehovah—the Unchanging—has forgotten! Then will His forgetfulness now not change? Will it be perpetual? Who, indeed, can read such a riddle as this? Clouds have hid the sun, but who would then identify the sun and the cloud? The cloud passes, but the sun abides.

Simple, all this,—to see and say as to another! With the chill and the shadow upon us, is it always so easy? "Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands; thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees: but now it is come upon *thee*,

2 (3, 4): The prayer. (i.) for light. (ii.) in view of the enemy.

Consider—answer me, Jehovah my God:
lighten mine eyes lest I [n]sleep—death;—
Lest mine enemy say, I have [o]prevailed against him,
[and] mine adversaries exult that I am moved!

n Ps. 6. 5.

o Ps. 35. 19. Ps. 38. 16.

and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled." (Job iv. 3-5.) So it is indeed with more than Job: at the critical moment, when demand is made upon us to show strength, there is naught but weakness; the arguments that we ourselves have used with others stand where they did, but they avail not; they have not been refuted, but they do not comfort us. Ah, we need more than argument: the living strength of the God of strength alone suffices in the day of personal need; and a terrible thing it is, perhaps, then to realize how much of the energy that has carried us on has not been that!

Argument? What use in argument, when a soul says, God has forgotten! He used to speak to me, He used to bless me, I used to find Him when I sought; but now! And here is one who has known the favor of Jehovah, and whose prayer has entered into His ears, telling Him he is not the same; asking, Will He remember me no more?

So comes the weary "taking counsel," the strife of thought, of little use indeed, if God be the changeable being we have made Him. All the counsel in our hearts cannot lift care indeed, if God be no more God; "if," as Luther's wife asked him, "God were dead." But He is not, or we would not be at His feet, even to groan out these faithless fears.

2. And at His feet the soul grows bolder: "Consider,—answer me, Jehovah, my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep—death." Aye, the despair of all else shows that faith is about to revive; despair of all else absolutely makes God the one grand resource. We grasp with one hand some unbreakable holdfast, and with the other some poor weed or fragile thread that could not support one for a moment; and then, when this has snapped, we cry, "Oh, the holdfast has given way," when all that is needed is to put *both* hands upon it! This is now the lesson; and immediately the soul gets the right argument, not with itself but with God: "Lighten mine eyes," it says: "Lord, Thou knowest, Thou art the light of them: yea, the light of life itself; if Thou art not with me, it is only death."

This is the argument; this is the thicket that caught for us the horns of the ram of sacrifice. (Gen. xxii. 13.) Our feebleness laid hold of the unique power of Christ — power that only was in Him — to bring Him in for us. He *had* the power, and there was none else, and He knew it: "He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore His arm brought salvation to Him." (Isa. lix. 16.) What an argument to infinite Love to tell Him, if truthfully we can, "Lord, Thou art my one necessity: the light of these poor eyes, the light in which alone we see light; the Life without whom there is only, only death!" This is a prayer taught by the Holy Ghost Himself,—by Him who "maketh intercession for the saints according to God." (Rom. viii. 27, Gk.) We put both arms round Him when we say so; and it is a prayer so possible for us all, a child's prayer,—an infant's,—never to be refused by the tender pity of God.

He is the Light and He is the Life: simple truths indeed, yet how needful to remember. The wise of this world, with all the subtlety of human intellect, can never succeed in anything but in deceiving themselves and all that trust in them. Christ alone is wisdom, what can be ever rightly counted such,—true wisdom, because in it alone are found "righteousness and sanctification and redemption." (1 Cor. i. 30, Gk.) * Men are lost, and must come to God not as philosophers but as sinners. All cannot be the first; the last of these all *are*.

* Almost all versions have obscured the meaning here: the words should read, "who is made unto us wisdom from God: righteousness as well as sanctification and redemption." The Revised Version has in the margin "*both* righteousness and sanctification and redemption,"—a right meaning, in bad English.

3 (5, 6): The realization. (i.) the truth of God. (ii.) the help of God.

But I have [p] trusted in thy mercy;
my heart shall exult in thy [q] salvation.
I will sing unto Jehovah,
for he hath dealt [r] bountifully with me.

[p] Ps. 11. 1, etc.
[q] cf. Ps. 21, 1.
[r] cf. Ps. 116, 7.

Ps. xiv.

[s] PSALM XIV.

The universality of evil and its folly: God's experience of man.

To the chief musician, [a psalm] of David.

(i.) the multitude one.

THE [s] fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.
They have corrupted themselves, they have done abominable works:
there is [t] none that doeth good.

[s] Ps. 53. 1. Ps. 10. 4. cf. Lk. 12. 20.
[t] Rom. 3, 10.

Yet I do not say how deep the psalmist goes here. There may be more in his words than realized by himself. Death physical had not lost its shadow yet for the saint; for He had not come who has "abolished" it. The pressure of the enemy is felt all through these experiences, though by it also God is working blessing as in all things: "He maketh all things work together for good to those that love Him." Here the psalmist pleads that the enemy may not triumph, nor his adversaries be able to exult in his being moved.

3. The third couplet gives the resurrection from the depths. First, faith finds the solid ground under its feet. It has not an elaborate argument, but a very simple one: "I have trusted in His mercy, therefore deliverance shall come!" Perhaps a little more than that: "I have trusted in His mercy: so then I will be glad at once, for deliverance is sure!" It is good to be able to honor Him thus *before* it comes, and not to be taken by surprise by it. Sorrowful, even in the deliverance itself, never to have given Him credit for it beforehand!

Then the last verse celebrates (I think) the actual deliverance which surely follows. And now in proportion to the distress is the liveliness of the joy. The sigh becomes a song. There are no details all the way through, that we may have before us just the fact which the psalm emphasizes, that God is the God of resurrection, and that so, weaned from all self-trust, He Himself becomes the one sufficiency,—the *all*-sufficiency of the believing soul.

Psalm XIV.

The distress is over: it does not revive. Is it not always true that of what is thoroughly gone through with God, the result abides: true victories are permanent ones? And good reason: for the victory is really found in the judgment and elimination of that confidence in false trusts which leaves us instead with God our confidence, with a strength that the hour of need but justifies and manifests. Faith, faith, faith: that is the lesson of lessons; that is the effectual worker, and in every part of the Christian life and walk.

The soul can now, in peace as to itself, contemplate its surroundings; the enemy, once so formidable, becomes now as weak and foolish as once he seemed strong and prosperous. Jehovah has appeared, is seen to be with the generation of the righteous, and that at once changes everything with regard to their persecutor, who is only dashing himself against the rock. A terrible scene indeed it is to contemplate, and man is seen with the "madness in his heart" of which the preacher speaks. The floods are abroad, and the "floods lift up their waves," but in vain necessarily: they break themselves against the limit God has affixed. God Himself has taken man's measure, and what is he? But a fool, that knows not His maker.

There are seven verses, a real septenary of 4 + 3; the first four being the testing of man; the last three the manifestation of God,—and this very plainly marked. The estimate is complete, as it is brief. The verdict is easily reached, soon uttered. It is a judgment from which no appeal is possible.

(i.) These are emphatically the evil days, and the moral unity of the mass,

(ii.) Jehovah Himself the witness.

Jehovah [u]looked down from heaven upon the children of men,
to see if any one understood, [or] was [v]seeking after God.

(iii.) the result.

All of them have turned [w]aside;
they have together become corrupt:
none doeth good, no, not one.

(iv.) its folly.

Have all the workers of vanity no knowledge?
[x]eating up my people, as if they ate bread?
they have not [y]called on Jehovah.

(v.) God with the righteous.

There were they in [z]great fear,
for God is with the generation of the righteous.

u Ps. 33. 13, 14. *cf.* Gen. 18. 20, 21.
v *ctr.* Lk. 15. 3-7.
w Rom. 3. 11, 12.
x Ps. 27. 2, Mi. 3. 3.
y *cf.* Gen. 4. 26.
z *cf.* 2 Ki. 7. 6, 7.

already seen in the twelfth psalm, is still more solemnly asserted. The fool who says in his heart there is no God, is not an exception to the rest, though it be true that there will be a great leader in this direction, one who "opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped." (2 Thess. ii. 4.) But here the "fool" of the first sentence becomes a multitude in the very next, who "have corrupted themselves, have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good." This is, indeed, but what man away from God naturally comes to; for God is the true life of man; and, as the body apart from the soul which is *its* life, corrupts, so does the soul, if it be apart from God. There cannot be exception here; no law is surer than is this: "there is *none* that doeth good."

(ii.) But Jehovah Himself will give His testimony. Knowing perfectly all hearts beforehand, He is yet not content to pronounce, save from actual experience. Looking down from heaven, He considers every soul of man among the children of Adam, to see if there is any one who truly understands,—who, aroused by the want and misery of his condition, seeks after Him whom men's sins have shut off from them.

(iii.) Alas, no! they have not sought nor cared: they have turned aside; they have gone after their lusts; none doeth good, no, not one. This the apostle long afterwards applies as a general truth, condemning absolutely the whole world. What the grace of God does is another matter. Apart from this there is a monotony of evil, one generation following another, only to add their own sins to their fathers'. This is the result then, God Himself being witness, certifying it from actual inspection of every individual among men.

We may gather this comfort, even from so terrible a condition, that if there be one who *does* understand enough even to *seek* after God, God's grace has wrought, He Himself has been the first seeker; and what an encouragement this for him who yet has not found, but only "seeketh." We can realize then how it must be that, as the Lord has said, "*every one* that seeketh findeth." Even amid the darkness, One to whom there *is* no darkness is on the way to find him whom by need and famine He has sought before.

(iv.) But the workers of vanity, have they no knowledge, then? They would eat up God's people just as they eat bread: in every respect like beasts, for these, too, "call not on Jehovah." It is man's privilege to know God; not knowing Him, he has *no* right human "knowledge." "Workers of vanity," therefore, they assuredly will be. The whole description is of a piece: the whole thing goes together. But the human beast here shows his fallen condition by his antipathies: he is *against* God and His people, as we see; he is such a beast as the serpent was when the devil got into him. Alas, that is really the case, that he has admitted the devil.

(v.) With the fifth verse, as already said, God Himself comes into the scene; and man is with Him, "God is with the generation of the righteous." That is the real fear that comes upon the persecutor, the shadow of his approaching doom. These weak, despised people, how often have they, just by the light that shone out of them and around them, thrown a panic into the host of their adver-

(vi.) His limit.
(vii.) the complete end.

Ye would put to [a]shame the counsel of the humble;
but Jehovah is his [b]refuge.
Oh that Israel's [c]salvation were come out of Zion!
when Jehovah bringeth back the [d]captivity of his people,
Jacob shall [e]exult, Israel shall be glad.

[a] *cf.* Ps. 11. 1.
[b] Ps. 46. 1, 2.
[c] Ps. 53. 6. *cf.* Rom. 11. 26, 27.
[d] Ps. 126. 1–3.
[e] Ps. 85. 1–3.

Ps. xv.

[5]PSALM XV.

The character of those who dwell with God.

A psalm of David.

1 (1): The question of congruity.

JEHOVAH, [f]who shall sojourn in thy tent?
who shall abide in thy [g]holy hill?

[f] Ps. 24. 3–5. *cf.* Ps. 27. 4, 5.
[g] Ps. 2. 6.

saries! It is in effect what Peter says of the Christian: "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you." (1 Pet. iv. 14.) When Jehovah looked out from the fleeing Israelites upon the ranks of the pursuing Egyptians, He troubled the host of the Egyptians; and from the Red Sea down through the long march of history, this has been many times repeated. Without weapon lifted or hostile array, the people of God have forced upon the mightiest the conviction, "The Lord fighteth for them." Well may they be afraid then! "They that be with us are more than they that be with them." (2 Kings vi. 16.)

(vi.) Here, then, is the enemy's limit. "Ye would put to shame the counsel of the humble; but Jehovah is his refuge." "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people." (Ps. cxxv. 2.) Blessed security! He who gave His life for the flock is with them, now "in the power of an endless life." And He says Himself, "Because I live, ye shall live also." (John xiv. 19.)

(vii.) But the psalm ends with the salvation of Israel only in sight. It comes out of Zion, by the Deliverer there to come, the King once rejected, then to be greeted with the homage of a willing people. Suddenly this will be accomplished, and then their captivity will be turned as in a moment! "Jacob shall exult, Israel shall be glad."

PSALM XV.

The deuteronomic character of the fifth psalm will not be questioned. In it we have no longer experiences, but a moral conclusion,—the character asked and given of those who are to dwell with God. Its connection with the other psalms of this series proves, in opposition to the thought of many, that it is not Christ Himself who is before us in it, but the remnant of Israel in the latter day, with whom already we have seen Jehovah taking part. "God is with the generation of the righteous," as the last psalm has declared; and here we find, in necessary harmony with this, that they are to be with Him. It is, of course, true that their righteousness is defective, and that on the ground of it they could in no wise stand before God; but nothing is said here of the ground of acceptance, and though it be only grace that could accept them, yet they have none the less a positive righteousness of their own which is the work of the Spirit in them, and which He owns as such. Thus it is, then, that they are characterized here.

1. The psalm consists of a question and answer which clearly divide the five verses into two parts. This the numerical structure very distinctly shows. Let any who doubt its reality try the very simple experiment of dividing the psalm differently, and so as to preserve even the show of numerical significance. It seems impossible to do this.

In David's reign the ark abode in a tent on Zion, but this is here only the veil through which we look forward to the future. The "tent" in this way, and the thought of sojourn in it, do not imply anything temporary, but must be viewed as paralleled by that of *abiding* in God's holy hill. So rightly argues Delitzsch.

2 (2–5): The answer.

(i.) the righteous.

(ii.) doing no evil.

(iii.) before God.

(iv.) tested by opportunity.

He who walketh in [h] integrity, and doeth righteousness,
and speaketh the [i] truth with his heart;
Who [j] gaddeth not about with his tongue,
who doeth not ill to his companion,
who taketh up no [k] reproach against his neighbor.
In his own eyes he is despicable, is contemned;
but he [l] honoreth them that fear Jehovah;
he [m] sweareth to his own hurt, [but] changeth not.
He putteth not out his money to [n] usury,
and taketh no [o] bribe against the innocent:
he that doeth these things shall never be [p] moved.

h Ps. 11. 2, 7. Ps. 37. 37. Ps. 97 11.
i Zech. 8. 16.
j Lev. 19. 16. 1 Tim. 5.13.
k *cf.* Ps. 69.7. 9, 10.
l *cf.* Ps. 16.3.
m Nu. 30. 2.
n Deut. 23. 19, 20. Neh.5.7,10. Ezek. 18.8.
o Deut. 27. 25. Matt.26.15.
p Ps. 62. 2. *cf.* Ps. 16.8.

Each expression supplies something to the full thought. The grace of the wilderness-journey shines out in the first; and God's dwelling among His creatures must in one sense be ever but a tent, though the "abiding" takes away the fear that, after all, He may depart again.

The question is plainly a question of congruity. Let God's grace be all that He has shown it to be, yet He cannot dwell with those who are alien to His nature. Grace itself can only avail to bring us nigh to God by bringing into His likeness also those it brings nigh. Thank God that it really does this, and we have now the character of those who thus are fitted by grace to dwell with Him.

2. The answer has, brief as it is, four parts, the first of these being necessarily that integrity of heart which manifests itself in the walk and ways, the doing of righteousness, the speaking of truth with the heart. These three things are plainly but manifestations of the same spirit governing the whole practical life.

The first thing is righteousness then, which must be the basis of all else. The second is love, for, as the apostle says, "love worketh no ill to his neighbor." That is almost in words what we have here; and to this it is added, "who taketh not up a reproach"—the reproach of another—"against his neighbor." The first thing here, "who gaddeth not about with his tongue," is in our common version "backbiteth not"; and the connection, at least, with what follows, is evident.

The *third* part of this description shows us a soul in the presence of God; and here the translation given by Delitzsch seems preferable to our common version or the revised. The sign of a soul before God Job illustrates for us in this way, though the best man of his day on earth; and the antithesis, as Delitzsch remarks, is well preserved with the following clause, "he honoreth those that fear Jehovah." How beautiful this spirit of self-judgment, along with the honor given to another for the very thing that marks himself! Then if he vows to the Lord to his loss, yet he cannot go back or change it.

Finally, he is tested by the opportunity to make gain of his neighbor's poverty, and refuses it: usury was absolutely forbidden as between Hebrew and Hebrew; and he rejects the ready bribe to pervert justice. This completes the picture of the perfect Israelite. "He that doeth these things shall never be moved."

Subd. 3.

The third subdivision of the first book contains by far the largest portion of it, twenty-six psalms, and these also larger and more various, on the whole, than those preceding it. When we consider its subject, this is not to be wondered at. We are led in them into the very heart of the book, that being in reality the heart of Christ Himself, which is here unveiled for us in some sense as it scarcely is in the New Testament even. The twenty-second psalm is an illustration of this. The Spirit of Christ that spake in David is indeed here most manifestly declared.

The quotation from Colossians, which I have taken as expressing the theme of this subdivision, seems quite apt to do this. We have not, indeed, in this part of the Psalms the express declaration of Christ's deity, which we *do* have, for

example, in the hundred and second. Yet we have had already, in the second, His divine sonship as born into the world; and we have here, in this glorious Person, God brought nigh to man and ministry to his need in such sort as only divine fullness can explain. And this goes on, as we see, to atonement and its results,—to the complete character of it as sin-offering and burnt-offering both, with iniquity forgiven and sin covered, and the glorious hiding-place of the sinner in God Himself. (Ps. xxii., xl., xxxii.) In the application of this blessed work we of course stop short of the full Christian position, and this will be plain as we go through what is here; but in the revelation of Christ personally, in the wonder of that unique humanity which the New Testament shows us in actual fulfillment in the living Jesus, we shall find what in all Scripture seems not transcended, and in the mystery of the cross itself. May we realize fully, as we take it up, that it is "the mystery of *godliness*"; and find our hearts afresh warmed, aroused, energized, inspired by it. May He who has written it unfold and use it for our blessing and His praise!

Sec. 1.

The structure of the third subdivision is markedly parallel to that of the first (Ps. i.-viii.). It begins with a Messianic section, which is followed by one giving the exercises and experiences of faith, in a latter-day remnant of Israel specifically, though susceptible of the widest application to believers generally. Finally it closes with a still briefer Messianic section. Thus we begin and end with Christ, as God does; while between come in a multitude of human thoughts, feelings, and experiences, some true and good, some of a very mixed nature, but which in the end find Christ once more as the goal they lead to and their answer and rest.

The first section here consists of nine psalms, a number which we have found generally — which is perhaps *always* — a 3 x 3, the divine number intensified. So we find it here. The whole section speaks of Christ as the source of blessing to His people, giving in fact nearly the entire theme of the subdivision, only two Messianic psalms remaining for the close.

Series 1.

The first series, therefore, is of three psalms only: "Christ identifying Himself with the people, and identified with them by God." This is plainly the key of all that follows, although as yet we have not atonement, which is its necessary outcome. The principle is announced in the very beginning of the next (the sixteenth) psalm, and it is gradually developed in the succeeding ones.

PSALM XVI.

The first psalm here gives us Christ as the obedient One on earth. That He is Himself the speaker we may see from the tenth verse, which exclusively applies to Him. He alone is that "holy" or "pious one" who, as such, could not "see corruption" in the grave. So Peter conclusively argues, and he who knows Christ should recognize the features of his Beloved all through the psalm. The fourth verse is a difficulty, no doubt, although idolatry in its various forms was around the Lord, above all in His Galilean ministry. Galilee was then "Galilee of the Gentiles," and Israel too was far from clear. But the background also seems always that of the last days, or at least these are in prospect; and thus their peculiar features — for Israel will fall again into idolatry in the last days — are specialized accordingly. Perspective in the prophets is often greatly foreshortened; but this feature was not absent during the Lord's sojourn in Israel.

Considering the psalm as a whole, a brief glance will show how fully Christ is told out here. The psalm has five divisions,— is therefore a little pentateuch: for the Pentateuch in the new light of Christianity covers, as we know, the whole of man's spiritual life here, a divine "pilgrim's progress"; and in this case we have the One perfect pilgrim seen all through.

First, in one verse, you have the character of His whole life,—so strange for Him indeed, if we consider what He was; and yet on that very account brought

SUBD. 3. (Psalms xvi.–xli.)

"In Him all the fullness was pleased to dwell, and by Him to reconcile."

SEC. 1. (Ps. xvi.–xxiv.)

Christ the Source of Blessing.

SERIES 1. (Psalms xvi.–xviii.)

Christ identifying Himself with the people, and identified with them by God.

Ps. xvi.

[1]PSALM XVI.

The all-Obedient One.

q Michtam of David.

1 (1): Power only in God.

PRESERVE me, O Mighty! *
for in thee have I taken [r]refuge.

q Ps. 56, 57, 58, 59, 60 Titles.
r Heb. 2. 13. Heb. 12. 2.

* *El*, God, but also "power, strength."

into prominence here. His life a life of dependence, a life of faith, Himself "Leader and Finisher of faith." "Preserve me, O God! for in Thee do I put my trust."

Then, two verses show Him taking distinctly His place, not as God in divine supremacy, but as Man with men, and for men,—for the saints, in whom is all His delight.

Next, three verses proclaim Jehovah Himself His portion; His lot therefore being maintained by Him in pleasant places.

Fourthly, two verses speak of Him as in His path, content to be led, a learner, taught of divine wisdom, the object before Him being only God; and thus of the unfaltering steadfastness ever of His steps.

While, lastly, three verses trace this path to its end in glory; a way of life found through death itself into the presence of God — the pleasures at His right hand for evermore.

The Lord enable us with wisdom and with reverence to look at these things more in detail; and may our "meditation of Him be sweet" indeed.

This psalm is the first with the inscription "Michtam"—"Michtam of David." For this there are three different meanings given, the common one being the marginal one, "a golden psalm"; but some say, "a hidden" one, a psalm with a hidden meaning; and some say "engraved," so as not to pass away. Delitzsch gives "a psalm with pithy sayings," an "epigram." There are five others similarly inscribed, lvi.–lx., but of very different character from the present, to which one might conceive either of the first meanings being appropriate; but they add nothing that one can realize as of value to the understanding of the psalm.

1. If the sixteenth psalm be pentateuchal, the comparison with the first pentateuch should have interest for us. The theme of the first book, Genesis, is *life*, and that not simply of fallen and ruined, but much more of restored and renewed man. Of this not only the typical side of the six days, but also those biographies of which it is so largely composed, very plainly speak. This new life, as developed in a world departed from God and under death, manifests itself in a practical life of *faith*, whose springs and resources are in the unseen things, which are, in contrast with the seen, the things eternal.

In us, because fallen, life begins with a new birth; and where it exists, it is found in contrast with another principle within us, Cain-like, the elder born. The "works of the flesh," too, alas, are found disfiguring, how much, the life of faith. We are now to contemplate the perfection of One in whom nature was never fallen, in whom there was no principle of evil, and upon whom (after thirty years passed in the world) the Father could set the seal of perfect approbation. There is no dark preface to His spiritual history; and yet as truly as—

2 (2, 3): Taking the inferior place for man's salvation.
†1.) the obedient one.

I have said unto Jehovah, †Thou art my Lord*;

s cf. Phil. 2. 5-8.

* Adonai, which is the ordinary word for "Lord" when a title of God, but which is a plural form, just like that in Psalm viii, but with the suffix of the first person singular; and so I have translated it, as does the common version.

more truly than — with any of us, His life was a life of faith. Hard as it is (just because of what we know Him to be) to realize this, Scripture assures us of it in the fullest way. The epistle to the Hebrews, in giving the brotherhood of the sanctified to Him by whom they are sanctified, brings forward as applying to Him, a text exactly similar to the one before us: "I will put my trust in Him." (Heb. ii. 13). And again, in a passage to which we have referred, asserts Him to be the "author"—rather "leader"—"and finisher of faith," (Heb. xii. 2), the One who in His own Person completed the whole course of it. The glory of His Godhead must not, therefore, obscure for us the truth and perfection of His manhood. He is the One of whom it could be said, "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given," while at the very same time "His name" was to be called "the Mighty God." (Isa. ix. 6.) And the gospel of Luke declares Him as a child to have *grown in wisdom* as in stature. How impossible for any uninspired writer to have given us such an account of Him who is "God over all, blessed forever"! But God is earnest to have us know the full grace thus expressed. "Descended into the lower parts of the earth" to reach us, He is seeking intimacy. He is assuring us of His ability to sympathize with us in every sinless human experience, "in all things tempted like as we are, sin apart." (Heb. iv. 15.)

This, too, is His perfection, which could not be manifest in the same way, if not subject to real and full trial. To explain or reconcile it with His Godhead, we may be quite unable: we are not called to do it. The blessed truth we need, and can accept, reverently remembering that "no one knoweth the Son, but the Father." (Matt. xi. 27.) The depths of His love are revealed in the abysses of His humiliation; and here we find our present satisfaction and our joy forever. We must, not for a moment, suffer ourselves to be deprived of it; we must not allow its reality to be dimmed.

"Preserve me, O Mighty: for in Thee have I taken refuge," is the language of One as absolutely in need of God, and hanging upon Him, as any one whosoever. He is in man's world, such as sin has made it, not to hide Himself in any wise from its sorrows, but to know them all. Power may be in His hand, and manifested without stint in behalf of others; but for Himself He has none, will use none: to satisfy the hunger of forty days He will not make for Himself the bread which the need of others shall gain from Him without seeking. Conscious of the bleakness and barrenness of the scene into which he has come, "in Thee," He says, "I have taken refuge." The "dove in the clefts of the rock" is not *our* emblem only; it was His in days of keen distress when, "though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things that He suffered," (Heb. v. 8);—learned, as a new thing for Him, what obedience was.

Precious assurance for us! Christ the very pattern of faith in its every character, in every circumstance of trial: feeling all, indeed, with His capacity for feeling, where was no callousness, or dullness, or incompetence of any kind. With this, then, the "golden" sixteenth psalm begins.

2. In the next two verses the speaker declares Jehovah to be His Lord. He to whom obedience was a strange thing takes expressly the place of it. We had swerved from the path, even where it began, in Eden, as soon as put on it: had turned every one to his own way, as if it were well proved that our wisdom was more than God's, and as if we owed Him nothing who created us. He, the Creator, comes therefore now Himself to take up and prove the path of His own ordinance,—not as He had ordained it, however, but far otherwise; amid all to show us that it was still no worse than He was content to walk in;—to show how for *Him* it could be meat and drink to do His Father's will: to approve and vindicate it at His own cost, when it cost Him all.

(ii.) in goodness to men.

my [t]goodness [extendeth] not to thee.*
[It is] for the [u]saints that are upon the earth,
and the [v]excellent, in whom is all my delight.

t *cf.* Heb. 2. 16. *cf.* Heb. 5. 8.
u Ps. 30. 4. Ps. 79. 2.
v *cf.* Luke 1. 5, 6. *cf.* Lk. 2. 25-38 with Matt. 3. 13-15.

* This and the following verse are very variously translated. The knowledge of what is in the mind of the Spirit is of more value than mere critical acumen. If we see David only or principally, the difficulty of consistent rendering is very great, (as see Moll in Lange's Commentary, who even denies *tobhathi* to be possibly moral goodness.) The translation here follows the common version, which the revision impoverishes into "I have no good beyond thee"; but that is found, and more strikingly expressed in the fifth verse. The next verse also keeps near to the common version. The "I have said," which seems allowable, and adopted by most to-day, cannot be connected with "to the saints," as many suggest, because the construct form *addirei*, "the excellent," requires "in whom" rather than "in them." And the sense would be again greatly impoverished.

"Lo, I come to do Thy will, O my God," was the one purpose of His heart on earth. *We* allow ourselves many objects. We shrink from the intolerable thought of an absolute sovereign will with a claim upon us at all times, and one strictly defined path from which there is to be no wandering. But God revealed as He is now revealed makes that sovereignty the joy of a soul that knows that His will can only be according to His nature. For us, love, able to show itself as that, characterizes all His ways with us. But what was it for Him who had (as we have not) to meet the prior demands of righteousness upon us, that love might be *free* to show itself toward us? *His* path was not that which the Father's love to *Him* would have dictated. Would not a man "spare his own son that serveth him"? But *He* "spared *not* His Son, but delivered Him up for us all." How wondrous a Leader have we, then, in the path of obedience, who came expressly to fulfill this: "by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all"! (Heb. x. 10.)

Thus He says now to Jehovah, "my goodness extendeth not to Thee,"—words which are explained by that which follows: "it is for the saints that are upon the earth and the excellent." That is, it is not to profit me with Thee: it is, in fact, the expression of that divine goodness, the "love" that "seeketh not its own," but the blessing of others; and this, while the Speaker takes His place distinctly as the Servant of Jehovah, to do His will. Here, evidently, then, is the keynote of all that follows: how important that we should realize its meaning!

No doubt it will be objected that David could not have used the words intelligently in this way. But he did speak of the resurrection of Christ in the tenth verse, as is plain, and as Peter bore witness to the Jews in his day (Acts ii. 30, 31), and there there can be no plea of any typical fulfillment or experience of David himself at all. The prophets spoke better than they knew, and did not always understand what they foretold, as the same Peter insists (1 Pet. i. 11, 12). Therefore to limit things to David's intelligence is not intelligent, even if we knew (as we do not know) just how much that was.

Christ alone, then, could be the real Speaker here; and thus moved by Divine love toward men, He does not take the place before God to which His perfection would entitle Him. It is not to avail for Him, to give Him the place due to His absolute obedience: otherwise the death of the cross—death in any way—could never have been His portion. This obedience of His—this goodness manifested in obedience—was for the saints, the excellent of the earth, in whom was His delight. For this it must be "obedience unto death,"—going as far as that. (Phil. ii. 8.) He must empty himself of all,—sell all that He hath, if He would have what to Him is "treasure." (Matt. xiii. 44.)

Thus He dignifies His poor people with such titles as the "saints, the excellent." Nothing but grace in Him could account them so. Not that there is not in them true spiritual worth and moral beauty: they surely are, they must be, what He calls them. Yes; *but they are made so by His call.* And His heart looks on to

3 (4-6): Jehovah his portion.
(i.) to the exclusion of all others.
(ii.) his dependence and support.

Their sorrows shall be multiplied who run after [w] another:
their drink-offerings of blood will [z] I not offer,
nor take their names upon my lips.
Jehovah is the measure of my [y] portion and my [x] cup;
thou maintainest my lot.

[w] *cf.* Is. 42. 17. *cf.* Rev. 13. 14, 15.
[x] *cf.* Matt. 4. 8-10.
[y] *cf.* Gen. 15. 1. *cf.* Deut. 18. 2.
[z] *cf.* Jno. 6. 38; *cf.* Lk. 22. 42; *cf.* Lam. 3. 24.

the time of perfect consummation, when the glory of His workmanship shall be seen in them. "According to the time shall it be said of Jacob and of Israel, What has God wrought!" Thus shall we be not only, as Jacobs, "to the praise of the glory of His *grace*," but as Israels also, "to the praise of His glory," (Eph. i. 6, 12), which then shall be seen upon us.

Thus, then, the Lord descends to a path which displays His love to His own, and in which His personal claim on God is given up, that we might *have* claim. These two verses, therefore, give fittingly the Exodus section of this psalm,—which, as applied to Him, exhibits, not redemption, but the Redeemer. Not yet, indeed, is it seen how low His grace must stoop: the twenty-second psalm, for the first time, fully discloses that. Here it is the personal love which puts Him upon the path which, to accomplish such a purpose, cannot end but with the Cross.

3. Now comes the Leviticus section, which shows us what God is to this perfect man. He is His all: most beautifully told out in the words, "the *measure* of My portion and of My cup." As it was said of the Levites, "The Lord is their inheritance," so Christ is seen here as the true Levite.

But first we have, what has been objected as fatal to any Messianic interpretation of the psalms, the emphatic denunciation of those who "run after another" god. When we consider Israel's history, it is not to be wondered that what is emphasized as the sin of the legal dispensation, Jehovah's controversy with His people, even from the deliverance out of Egypt until their captivity in Babylon, should be denounced by the lips of Messiah. To say that in the days of the Herods and of heathen governors, the land swarming with the heathen, this evil was wholly extinguished even in Israel, so that it should be inappropriate for Him to utter His abhorrence of it, would surely be to go beyond the proof. Nor was the Lord's prophecy of an "abomination of desolation, standing in the holy place," fulfilled by the idolatrous ensigns of the Romans after the capture of the city, but looks forward to a form of idolatry yet to be found in the midst of Israel, in days preceding, by a short time only, His coming again. (Matt. xxiv.) Why, then, such a warning as this should be unsuitable to a Messianic standpoint it would be difficult to say.

To the law which prohibited all other gods, not only does His full heart respond; but he declares Jehovah to be His entire portion,—the *measure* of it,—its whole content. But who, then, can measure this? It is a measure immeasurable, leaving room for nothing beyond, nothing more to be added to it.

"My portion and my cup:" what is the difference? My portion is what belongs to me,—what is mine, whether or not I enjoy it. My cup is what I actually appropriate, or make my own. Eating and drinking are significant of actual participation and enjoyment. Many a person has in this world a portion which he *cannot* enjoy; and many a one has a portion which (through moral perversity, it may be,) he *does* not enjoy. With the Lord, indeed, His portion and His joy were one: Jehovah was the measure of both. He *had* nothing beside; He *wanted* nothing beside. These two things should be found, through grace, in the Christian also. For all it is true, that God is the measure of our portion,—we have no other. Oh, that it were equally true that He was the measure of our cup,—of our enjoyment!

How strange and sorrowful that for us both should not be realized! How wonderful that we should seek elsewhere what cannot be found, while we leave unexplored the glories of an inheritance which is actually our own. We covet

(iii.) a glorious inheritance.
4 (7, 8): In the path.
(i.) the source of truth.

The [a]lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places:
yea, fair is [my] [b]inheritance to me.
I bless Jehovah who [c]giveth me counsel:
yea, by [d]night my reins instruct me.

a cf. Heb. 12. 3 with Luke 2. 49.
b cf. Matt. 4. 4.
c cf. Is. 50. 4, 5.
d cf. Ps. 40. 8.

a wilderness, while we neglect a paradise. "My people have committed two evils," says the Lord Himself; "they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water, and they have hewn out to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, which can hold no water." (Jer. ii. 13.)

And this is the reason why, when we turn to God, and would fain comfort ourselves in Him, we do not find the comfort. Our portion does not yield us for our cup. Would we wonder if we saw an Israelite returning from the worship of Baal refused acceptance at Jehovah's altar? "Covetousness is idolatry," says the apostle. But what is covetousness? It is just the craving of a heart unsatisfied with its portion, for which the thing sought becomes the end that governs it: their lust, as you may see in many a heathen deity, becomes their god. "Their god is their belly"—the craving part—says the apostle again, "who mind earthly things." (Phil. iii. 19.)

And "the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." So here the voice of our blessed Forerunner: "Thou maintainest my lot." It is a sure abiding possession that does not leave the heart to unrest. And how blessed a portion! "The lines are fallen unto Me in pleasant places: yea, my inheritance is fair to Me." Yet it is the Son of God down here in a fallen world, who says this: at the same time a man of sorrows because of what the world was. And for us, be the wilderness what it may, God surely is undiminished by it. Yea, in the wilderness were wrought those miracles which made God known as a living reality. Where else did the manna fall morning by morning? Not even in Canaan, when they entered there! And where else did the pillar of cloud and fire, changing its aspect for their need, go before them ever in the way, to find the path for them? Child of God, is it an evil path in which the Lord leads *thee*, and where these wonders are but signs for thee of deeper realities?

4. But the wilderness path itself is what now follows, the proving by the way: and again, how truly a man is He! "I will bless Jehovah, who has given me counsel; my reins also instruct me." It is the same Person who speaks in the prophetic word of Isaiah: "The Lord God has given me the tongue of the learned, that I may know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learner." * How real thus was His dependence, walking by the daily counsel of God, His ear early wakened to receive it! We remember how in His temptation in the wilderness, He applied to Himself the saying in Deuteronomy, that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God shall man live." So did He live, then, even as we; only in a perfection all His own. On the one hand there was the direct guidance of the word of God; on the other, His own Spirit-led thoughts, the fruit of that Word digested and assimilated, by which all His practical life was formed. What a place with Him had the Word! "Scripture which cannot be broken," as He said of it once in the face of unbelief. What a place should it not have with us!

This retirement with God, this meditation by night, this daily sought, daily found guidance of God,—how much of it do we really know, in days of so much outward activity as these? The sweet communing of soul with a living Counselor and Lord, how much it is to be feared that this less characterizes the Christian's life than it did of old,—in days that we deem much darker. Yet nothing can really make up for such a deficiency. It is in secret that the roots of faith lay hold of the sustenance that can alone mature into fruit in the outward life.

*The word is the same as for learned, before; but the sense requires the change.

(ii.) the confirmation of progress.

I have set Jehovah before me [e]continually:
because he is at my right hand, I shall not be [f]moved.

5 (9-11): The way and end.

Wherefore my heart [g]rejoiceth and my glory exulteth:

(i.) sufficiency.

yea, my [h]flesh shall rest secure:

(ii.) in death itself.

For thou wilt not [i]leave to Sheol my soul:
thou wilt not give up thy [j]pious one to see corruption.

[e] Acts 2. 25-28.
[f] Ps. 15. 5. Is. 50. 7-9. 1 Tim. 6. 13.
[g] Heb. 12. 2.
[h] Lk. 23. 46.
[i] Acts 2. 24. 31.
[j] *cf.* Heb. 5. 7.

"The secret of the Lord," which is "with them that fear Him," may we not say, is imparted in secret? How much does the Lord insist upon this secret life before God in His sermon on the mount,—"before your Father who seeth in secret"? Surely, there is little of this, as there should be; and must we not fear that it is becoming less?

It is literally, "my reins *bind* me,"—my thoughts hold me fast: those deep inner thoughts, in which what we are in inmost reality expresses itself. Do such thoughts hold *us* fast? And if so, what is their character? Do they speak joy or sorrow? Peace or anxiety? Of earth or of heaven? Does the Word of God blend with them in harmony, or reprove them? In that season of quiet whose continual recurrence God has ordained for us, to withdraw us from alien influences into ourselves, does the soul freely, gladly, rise to Him? Or where does it wander? Where else does it seek a more congenial companionship? Can we say, with the delight of one of old, "When I awake, I am still with Thee"?

Look now at the purpose which all this implies: "I have set Jehovah always before Me." These are the words of the same perfect Exemplar; and "he that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself to walk even as He walked." And who can doubt how the Man Christ Jesus walked? If we have other ends before us,—money, or reputation, or a life of ease, or what not,—is not our life, in its whole principle, different from His? If it be said, we all fail,—true: but failure in the carrying out of a right principle is one thing, and having a wrong one is quite another. "I have *set* Jehovah before Me" expresses purpose, the choice of the heart; and He could say "*always*," which we cannot. The essence of sin is, "we have turned every one to his *own* way"; and, if "Jehovah has laid on Him the iniquity of us all," this is not that, delivered from the curse of it, we may go on under its bondage; still less, as freely following it. No: if this be iniquity, "let him that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

For Him who could say, "I have set Jehovah always before Me," what was the result? "Because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." There was no tottering, no unsteadiness in His steps: no circumstances, no power of the enemy, could hinder or turn Him aside. All other aims may be defeated, all other hopes frustrated; but where God is before the soul, it can never miss its aim: this is the secret of all prosperity and success. If we have set the Lord before us, we may go forward with the fullest and most assured confidence. And this is, in fact, found in such a course. What hinders faith like a double mind? What strengthens it like a single eye? How can we trust God for a selfish project? How doubt that He will fulfill His own mind? In the path of faith it is that we find faith for the path; and there alone.

5. And now we have the final, the eternal result. The principles of divine government secure the blessing or the curse, as the contrary goals of obedience or disobedience: and this is what Deuteronomy insists upon. For Him whom we have now before us, the government of God could have no mingled results, no doubtful or hypothetical blessing. If death were before Him, we know it as what He found simply in the path of obedience, and in love to men. From it, therefore, the Father's glory necessitated the resurrection of His holy One: "Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest

(lit.) resurrection and the presence of God.

Thou wilt show me the *path of life,
the fullness of joys, thy †presence;
mpleasures at thy right hand perpetually.

cf. Lk.9.51.
†*cf.* Jno. 14. 28.
m *cf.* Ps.36.8.

secure: for Thou wilt not leave to Sheol"—hades—"my soul; Thou wilt not suffer thy Pious One* to see corruption."

There was but One who could come up out of death upon such a ground: He who, not for His sins, but in His matchless grace, went into it. "Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him out of death, and was heard for His piety;† though He were Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and, being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him." (Heb. v. 7-9.) Thus as Captain of our salvation was the One always personally perfect perfected. In the psalm we do not see, indeed, this descent into death as an atoning work, but we do see it as part of a path into which His love to the saints had made Him enter. But thus we recognize it as indeed "the path of life," trodden by Him as Forerunner and Representative of the host of His redeemed. "Thou wilt show me," He says, "the path of life."

The path of life is the path that leads to this: for life in its full reality can only be enjoyed where God, its Source, is. Death is separation from the source of life. When the soul departs, the body left behind is dead; for soul and life are in Scripture one. So, man departed from God—for here the departure is on the reverse side—spiritual death becomes his condition. And the world takes its character from this: it is out of correspondence with God. The breach is witnessed of through its whole frame; on account of it the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together; and we too who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we also groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption—to wit, the redemption of our body. Thus, though we have life in us, it is a life whose proper display cannot yet be, a "life hid with Christ in God," until "Christ our life shall appear." Meanwhile our path leads up to this: opened for us through death itself by Him who going into it has abolished it, and brought life and incorruption to light by the gospel.

"In Thy presence fullness of joy." What, indeed, to Him who says this,—the Son of the Father, in His self-assumed exile, His face now toward the glory which He had with Him before the world was! There is really no "in," and to leave it out brings out better, perhaps, the force: "fullness of joys, Thy presence! At Thy right hand"—the place of approbation—"pleasures for evermore."

So for us the joy of heaven is defined in this: "we shall be ever with the Lord"; "where I am, there ye shall be also." The knowledge of the Father and of Jesus Christ whom He hath sent, characterizes now for us eternal life. Life in its fullness means for us, then, this knowledge in its own proper home. "In My Father's house are many mansions," says our Lord to His disciples; "*if it were not so, I would have told you:* I go to prepare a place for you." He would not have suffered them unwarned to have enjoyed so dear an intimacy with Himself, if eternity were not to justify and perpetuate it. And for us, every taste of communion now, every moment of enjoyed intimacy is the pledge of its renewal and perfection in the joy beyond. If it were not so, He would not permit it. The glory into which He is gone could not change the heart of Him who once left it for our sakes. The One who descended is the same also who is ascended up. The Glorified is the Crucified. We shall see in His face above the tender lowly condescension of the days of His flesh: "we shall see Him as He *is*," only to find Him as He *was:* nearer as better known.

* "Holy One" is not the sense, and "Pious (or godly) One" is very feeble; but we do not seem to be able to find a better word in English. *Chasid* speaks of tender, overflowing affection, in relation to God or to parents, and again of mercy overflowing from God to His creatures.

† A different word, however, from that which is used in Greek for the Hebrew one of the psalm, and implying reverent fear of God.

At His right hand, too, we shall all be; whatever special rewards there are, there will be gracious approbation for all. It is sweet to know that whatever differences may obtain among us, the *common* joys will also be the deepest and greatest. Fruit of our own work which we may have, what can it be, compared with the fruit of *His* work, which we shall enjoy together? Children of God alike, the Father's heart and home will be for all. To be members of Christ, His bride, joint-heirs with Him, will be our common portion. "Kings and priests unto His God and Father," He has made our common privilege. There is an unhappy legal tendency to make special rewards mean what is real distortion of all this, as if some of His own, after all He has done for them, might be left in comparative distance from Him. Even the "many mansions" of the Father's house have been made to minister to such a thought. Nothing could be less like the real purport of those blessed, assuring words, which just emphasize the *room for all*, the taking in of all, and for eternity.

Psalm XVII.

The sixteenth psalm, then, has shown us the perfect obedience of One who has come into the path of it in love toward the saints, a path which has led Him as far as death itself, but to find through it a way of life, a way into the presence of God, and the eternal joy there. Now in the seventeenth, we have the effect of this, the identification of Christ with His people, making His appeal against the enemy, grounded upon His personal perfection, to avail for them. The psalm, taken by itself, would but obscurely express this, the work of atonement not having as yet been brought out, as later it will be, when immediately the fullness of grace toward others becomes manifest. Here, for the most part, the psalm is apparently an individual appeal,— Christ, who is most surely the Speaker, pleading in His own behalf. In the seventh verse first a plural is introduced, but in such a way as at first sight only to enunciate the general principle under which His individual case would come; and the common rendering (which is a legitimate one) would make this clearly the meaning. After this again all is individual until the eleventh verse, where we find again a plural, "*our* steps," but with which, strangely enough, the written text in the Hebrew joins a singular, "they have surrounded *me*," though the *K'ri* (the "spoken" amended text) substitutes "us," which the modern translations generally accept.* But the Septuagint has preserved the "me," and gives the first part of the verse quite differently.

Thus there have been evident difficulties with this abrupt plural,— which is found no more to the end of the psalm. If we realize no divine order in the series, we lose the clue by which to penetrate the mystery, or more likely see no mystery. If it be of God, on the other hand, that the seventeenth psalm has its place between the sixteenth and the eighteenth, then these verses acquire special importance, and not only become themselves intelligible, but give light upon the whole character of the psalm. And this is constantly so with the "dark" things of Scripture, which in this very way claim special attention from us: the Spirit of God would by this awaken interest on our part, and never, we may be sure, without some special reward for the search to which it prompts. Nor is there anything of this sort so small but that it may cover a great treasure.

When it is seen, by this absolute perfection which He claims unchallenged, Who the Speaker in this psalm is, then the association of others with Him must have very special interest. It has been noticed by others how careful in this particular Scripture is. "My Father and your Father," the Lord says to His disciples; never "*our* Father": that would really falsify the relationship. So He prays *for* them, and invites them to *watch* — but never to *pray* — with Him. All this is perfect in its place. So in this psalm the cry is single, individual; the perfection is His alone who cries; it is "give ear unto *my* prayer; incline thine ear unto Me; Thou answerest Me." But, if the way in which the seventh verse

* It involves only the continuation of the stroke of the *jod*, by which it becomes a *vau*.

Ps. xvii.

[2]PSALM XVII.

An appeal against the enemy: on the ground of the perfection of Christ, the Intercessor for the people.

A prayer of David.

1 (1-5): The appeal of the perfect One.
(i.) hear righteousness.
(ii.) confidence of faith.
(iii.) manifested before God.
(iv.) testing men by the Word.
(v.) the result in divine government.

HEAR [n]righteousness, Jehovah! attend to my loud cry:
give ear unto my prayer, from no [o]deceitful lips.
My judgment shall come forth from thy presence:
thine eyes regard equity:
Thou hast [p]tried my heart; thou hast visited me by [q]night:
thou hast assayed me; thou findest nothing:
my [r]mouth goeth not beyond my thoughts.
As for the works of men, by the [s]word of thy lips
I have kept me from the paths of the violent.
My steps [t]holding fast to thy ways,
my footsteps have not swerved.

n Ps. 7. 8. *cf.* Jno. 8. 46.
o etr. Matt. 15. 8.
p Ps. 7. 9. *cf.* Heb. 4. 15.
q Ps. 16. 7. *cf.* Lk. 6. 12.
r cf. 1 Pet. 2. 22. *etr.* Jas. 3. 8-10.
s cf. Matt. 4. 4, 7, 10. Ps. 119. 105.
t cf. Jno. 8. 29. *cf.* Acts. 10. 38.

is rendered here be the right one, then the prayer is for the salvation of all who "take refuge" in God,—that is, of all believers. And then even that which seems most individual in the prayer becomes possible to be read in the light of the truth of the identification of the believer with his Representative before God,—of his being "in Christ Jesus."

How this psalm, then, displays the Mediator will be evident. It at once takes its place with the other psalms of this series; and we are able to see in it the love which has manifested itself to men, as well as the strength of their salvation. Christ is not here asking for Himself; but is the great Intercessor in behalf of His people. Let us take it up in detail.

1. The psalm divides into three main parts, the first of which gives the appeal of the Perfect One on the ground of that perfection. He asks, not for mercy but for righteousness, and in entire confidence in God claims Him as Judge in His behalf. He knows Him,—knows that His eyes regard equity.

It is One with whom He is not meeting for the first time. The all-searching eyes have been upon Him; and in the silence of the night, when truth, freed from the conflict of the world's voices, makes itself most clearly heard, God had been with Him; the Light of light, in the presence of which the slightest breath of evil had been a dense and darkening cloud, had shone down to meet a perfect response. "Thou hast assayed me; Thou findest nothing!" This is the Voice that said on earth: "I do always the things that please Him"; and there was but One: "my mouth goeth not beyond my thoughts," is the answer of perfect Truth to perfect Light.

Around Him there was only contradiction to all this: "the works of *men*" He puts all together, making no distinction, giving them no other name but that. "As for the works of men, by the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the violent,"—the breaker forth: that is the character of men at large: God's word, God's will, they persistently break through. Alas, there is nowhere a timid woman,—nowhere the child of a few years,—who could not be characterized in this way.

Let us notice how distinctly He affirms the word of God to be His guide and guard. If a perfect moral nature were enough, He had surely that,—"holy" from His very birth. If there were any who might be supposed superior to the need of a "book" to guide, here was One; yet how perfectly he held to, and upheld at all times the "word of Thy lips." And how great our need, then, of it! How thorough should be our subjection to it! "The word of Thy lips,"—the very utterance of God Himself! It is as if the psalmist would utterly refuse to be hindered by that "human element in inspiration," of which in the present

2 (6-12): For deliverance from the enemy.

(i.) power and truth in God.

(ii.) the Saviour.

(iii.) my sanctuary.

(iv.) the trial.

(v.) self-hardened.

(vi.) their attempted mastery of the righteous.

(vii.) the complete picture.

I have [u]called upon thee, for thou wilt answer me, O Mighty:
incline thine ear unto me; hearken to my word.
Show marvelously thy [v]loving-kindness:
saving those taking [w]refuge from those rising up [against them,]
with thy right hand.
Keep me as the reflection in the [x]eye,
hide me in the shadow of thy wings,
From the [y]wicked that oppress me,
my enemies [that] with desire encircle me.
In their own [z]fat are they closed up:
with their mouth they [a]speak proudly.
At every step of ours,* now are they [b]round us:
they fix their eyes to bow [us] to the earth.
Each† is like a [c]lion greedy to tear,

u *cf.* Ps.40.1. *cfr.* Ps.22.2.
v Ps. 31. 21. Ps. 63. 3.
w *cf.* Ps.16.1.
x Deut. 32. 10. Zech. 2. 8. *cf.* John 14.9, 10.
y *cf.* Ps.10.2. etc.
z Deut. 32. 15. Ps. 73. 7.
a Ps. 10. 3. Obad. 12.
b *cf.* Ps. 118. 10-12.
c Ps. 7. 2. Ps. 10. 9.

* *Literally*, "[at] our steps." † *Literally*, "his likeness is of a lion."

day we hear so much, from drawing near to Him who would thus draw near, and who cannot be hindered by any creature-limit drawn about Him, from accomplishing His ends.

The result of this divinely guided course is a steadfast and unswerving step. To be with God is, of necessity, to have God with us, and to introduce His unchanging character into our ways. Thus the apostle, preaching no "yea and nay," but a "yea and amen" Christ, can affirm for himself that with him also there is not yea and nay. (2 Cor. i. 17–19.) Yet though He did not now repent of his previous letter, he had repented. (chap. vii. 8.) Only One has trodden perfectly this perfect path, and "left us an example that we should walk in His steps."

2. Thus we have had the ground of the appeal. Now we have the nature of the appeal, as a cry for deliverance from the enemy, so commonly before one in these pages. God is invoked as the God of power, and trusted as the God of truth. Answer, He will; and the certainty of this has drawn forth the cry. What confidence, too, may be ours, with the name of Him whom the Father ever heareth by which to draw near to God.

Yet it is an appeal to "*marvelous* loving-kindness," because of those for whom, as if entirely for Himself, it is made: for it is a prayer for sinners who not in weakness merely but in the consciousness of unworthiness "take refuge" in the mercy as well as the might of God. This is surely no common ground upon which He as well as they are to find acceptance, but far different from that. He does not associate Himself with these suppliants, but prays *for* them; and then again His voice is heard as for Himself alone. He is not associating Himself with them, so as to say, "Keep *us*," but identifying Himself with them, so that He can say, "Keep *Me*,"—they being covered with the perfection of His beauty, and God to act toward them as to Himself. Such language we shall find elsewhere in the Psalms: words of a Substitute and Representative of His people,—a glory of Christ, to be found, as we surely know, everywhere in Scripture, though here presented in the peculiar manner of the Psalms, a secret for faith to penetrate and possess.

For Who is it in the fortieth psalm, who, coming into the world simply to do the will of God, and to offer to Him the one offering, now to take the place of all others, cries out "*Mine* iniquities have taken hold upon Me"? And Who, as the Trespass-offering in the sixty-ninth psalm, "restoring what He took not away," says yet again, "My trespasses* are not hid from Thee"? Such things we are

* *Ashmothai;* not "sins," as in the common version.

3 (13-15): The portion of the men of the world and of the saint. (i.) supremacy of God.

and like a young lion couching in the coverts.

[d] Arise, Jehovah; confront him, cast him down:
rescue my life* from the wicked one, thy [e] sword;

[d] Ps. 10. 12.
[e] *cf.* Is. 10.5. *cf.* Jer. 50. 23.

* *nephesh*, both "soul" and "life."

forced, if we apply them (as we must) to Christ, to interpret rightly. Yet here we have only that same truth of representation of which substitution is but the result in suffering and sacrifice,—the Cloud-Pillar of ministrant Glory.

Looked at as the intercession of Christ for His own,—the saints in whom all His delight is,—how tenderly does He speak of them! "Keep Me as the reflection in the eye,"—which is literally, "the little man," the human figure, "the daughter" or product "of the eye." It is the image of *Himself* which God sees, as it were in the eyes of His beloved Son, ever having Himself before them! will He not preserve *that?*

Then He draws near to the Father's heart for refuge: "hide me in the shadow of Thy wings." It is the image so familiar to us in the breathings of the Lord's own heart over Jerusalem; but there love that was refused.

"From the wicked that oppress me,—my enemies that with desire [literally, "in soul,"—the seat of desire] encircle me: in their own fat are they closed up,"—shut up in their own luxurious selfishness; and this is the most evident penalty of sin, which even here begins to stiffen and harden the heart into the unchangeableness of eternity: sin being the coffin, the grave, the final prison of the soul!

Now you see them in their settled enmity against the righteous; and here the plural comes in again, as we have seen. The wicked associate the Lord's people with Himself; or at least hate His reflection in them. What they do to them, they do really therefore to Him. With the savage intensity of bloodhounds they are here seen dogging the steps of their victims; fastening their eyes on them, ready to pull them down to the ground. Their whole figure is just that indeed of a ravenous beast of prey: humanity is lost with the casting off of God, and the beast made to be taken and destroyed is his only likeness.

3. The third part, from an Israelite standpoint, is a very striking one. It contrasts the portion of the saint, now suffering at the hands of the wicked, with that of the wicked at whose hands they suffer, and who, completely under divine control, and used of God for the accomplishment of His purposes, has from His hand a present portion, soon to pass away. Beyond it lies that of faith, with God and eternal.

We see that this is not the standpoint of law, which "is not of faith," (Gal. iii. 12), and which distinctly has its blessings in the present, but answers rather to our Lord's story of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke xvi.), where the one accepted of God is yet unable to claim anything under law,—is but a beggar (comp. Ps. xxxvii. 25), while the man careless of God is the "man of this world." For the Jewish believer of the period to which these psalms have special reference, in the short crisis of trouble so often brought before us, and with millennial days in immediate prospect, the portion of faith is not necessarily—not even nominally—in heaven; but rather in the scene which the psalm last referred to pictures, when the meek will possess the earth and the wicked be cast out of it. For the Christian the blessing to be enjoyed is, of course, heavenly; and of the Jewish remnant of the future, of whom these psalms speak, many will be slain, and thus find their place with the heavenly instead of the earthly people. These are the martyrs who, in the final visions of the Apocalypse, are seen to join the company of the throned saints of the first resurrection. (Rev. xx. 4-6.)

This part begins with an urgent cry once more for God to interfere. "Arise, Jehovah, confront him, cast him down: rescue my life from the wicked one, thy sword." So (rightly, I believe,) the common version. The revised puts "*by* thy sword"; remanding the older translation to the margin. But there is no preposition in the Hebrew, though that is often the case where we should put one:

(ii.) the wicked: their service and portion.

From men, thy hand, Jehovah:
from [f]men of time, whose portion is in life,
whose [g]belly thou fillest with thy store:
sons have they to the full,
and [h]leave their superfluity to their babes.

(iii.) the portion of the saint.

For me, in righteousness shall I [i]behold thy face:
I shall be [j]full, awaking in thine image.

[f] Ps. 10. 18.
[g] *cf.* Phil. 3. 19. *cf.* Jas. 5. 5.
[h] Ps. 49. 10, 11. [i] Ps.16.10,11. *cf.*1 Jno.3.2.
[j] Ps. 65. 4. *cf.* Is. 53.11 with Heb. 12. 2.

the sense given by the common version, however, is more in accordance with the context, and gives the fuller thought. If the lawless persecutor be, after all, God's sword, then how simple for Him to turn it aside! His supremacy is manifest; and this is carried into the next verse, where, however, the same question is raised, shall we say "from men thy hand," or "*by* thy hand"? But that their portion is from God there *is* no question. Acting for Him, although they mean it not, indeed mean nothing less, yet He gives them for their work, as He paid Nebuchadnezzar for his blind service against Tyre. (Ezek. xxix. 18, 19.) But this is not His grace or in the things that His grace bestows. They are but men of the world, or of time, as I have rendered the word, because the sense of transitoriness inheres in it;* they have their portion in a life that passes away. "Full" they may well be, therefore, for a time, and who shall envy them? though they may leave what is more than they can themselves enjoy, with the brief lives in which to enjoy it,— to their babes.

The saints' portion, too, can be expressed in a few words; but who can estimate it aright? "For me, in righteousness shall I behold Thy face; I shall be full, awaking in Thine image."

Here in the first place, that it is Christ's own voice is evident. The hope before Him is objective and subjective. On the one hand, as come out of His voluntary exile from it, the beholding of the Father's face in the place of full and supreme manifestation; on the other, His own emerging from all the conditions of manhood in the humiliation in which He had assumed it, so as to be in manhood itself the manifest image and glory of God. We know, indeed, how little of what this implies; but it is the path of His humanity we trace in it, and thus we know that in measure we too are to share it with Him. Even of man in the old creation it could be said that "he is the image and glory of God." (1 Cor. xi. 7.) And if this be sadly obscured by the fall, it is, even apart from this, the shadow only of the ultimate purpose of God with regard to man. And while Christ is its perfect expression, the breadth of this expression must take in all redeemed humanity in some sense. No doubt that here also there are degrees of such glory,—glory celestial and glory terrestrial, as in nature. Thus again God, who is light, is the "Father of lights,"— many-hued and many-toned, in order that the light itself may have more adequate expression.

The objective and subjective, while different, are in close connection. "We know that we shall be like Him," says the beloved apostle; and this is the reason he gives for it, "for we shall see Him as He is." (1 John iii. 2.) On the other hand, "the world knew Him not," (John i. 10,) because morally it had wandered far from Him. Could untruth apprehend the perfect Truth, or Love be understood by what was "enmity against God"? For us, when the long conflict with sin within us shall be over, how wondrous shall be the soul's vision out of its now undimmed eyes, how shall the "pure in heart" find the blessedness predicted for them, that "they shall see God"!

For the Lord, there could, of course, be no change in this respect. The days of His youth were as holy as His manhood; those of His life on earth no less so than His life in heaven. Such limitations, however, there were assumed in His assumption of flesh as made possible a life of faith, nay, the pattern life. Here we know indeed nothing except that of which the word of God assures us, and

* As in Psalm lxxxix. 47: "Remember how short my time is,"— literally, "how transitory I am"!

Ps. xviii.

[3]PSALM XVIII.

God manifesting Himself for His Anointed.

To the chief musician: [a psalm] of [k]David, the servant of Jehovah, who spake unto Jehovah the words of this song, in the day when Jehovah had delivered him out of the grasp of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul. And he said:—

1 (1-3): Jehovah the rock of faith.
(i.) my strength.
(ii.) my Saviour.

I DO fervently [l]love thee, Jehovah, my strength,
Jehovah, my [m]cleft of the rock, and my [n]fortress,
and my [o]rescuer!
my Mighty One, my rock, in whom I take [p]refuge!

k *cf.* 2 Sa. 22.
l Ps. 116. 1.
m Ps. 31. 3. *ctr.* Obad. 3, 4.
n Ps. 31. 3. *cf.* Phil. 4. 7.
o *cf.* Ps. 40. 17.
p *cf.* Heb. 2. 13.

would be careful in any reasoning at all upon it. Yet we may be sure that whatever were these limitations they would make possible for Him also a looking forward to behold the face of God, as on earth He had not beheld it. Wonder as we may and must, His humanity was in these respects such as ours, "apart from sin." He abode in it, though divine, subjecting Himself to its conditions, so that He could be really a babe, a child, a man, and then again under the awful shadow of the desertion of the cross! What perfect love—what utter reverence—do we owe Him, for such inconceivable self-humiliation as was this!

PSALM XVIII.

We come now, in the third psalm of this series, to the manifestation of God in behalf of Messiah, whose deliverance and exaltation involve the deliverance and blessing of the people with whom He has linked Himself. But the result is wider than this also: He is made the Head of the nations, and a people that He had not known before serve Him.

But a large part of the psalm is taken up with the way in which God has displayed Himself in all this,—His personal intervention, His character as manifested,—all that makes Him the object of His people's praise. And this revelation of Himself is, as this implies, their blessing and happiness forever, as it is that of all His creatures,—unfallen and redeemed alike.

This psalm is found also at the end of David's history in the book of Samuel,* the occasion of it being given similarly in each place, and the end of the psalm itself assuring us of its application to David in the first place, though a greater than he shines through continually. At this we have no possible cause to wonder, knowing him to be in his life so largely typical of God's "Beloved" and King, for whom we look.

In perfect accord with its character, the first forty-five verses of the psalm are in triplets throughout; these dividing into six main portions, the seventh closing with five verses of praise.

1. The psalm begins, as it ends, with praise. Jehovah, the living and unchanging God, is celebrated in it as the Rock of faith, and that in double character: the first word "means properly," as Delitzsch observes, "a cleft in a rock, then a cleft rock"; the second, "a great and hard mass of rock." Accordingly, in the first, "the idea of a safe (and comfortable) hiding-place preponderates"; in the second, "that of firm ground and inaccessibility. The one figure calls to mind the well-watered Edomitish *Sela*, surrounded with precipitous rocks, . . . the other calls to mind the Phœnician rocky island *Tzur* (Tyre), the refuge in the sea." The cleft Rock is a figure for the Christian full of tender, wonderful associations; the firm, impregnable, eternal Rock, yet cleft for a refuge to the soul fleeing to it for escape. And this double thought is varied and expanded through all these epithets with which the psalmist declares the good cause he has for fervent love toward his God. They are capable also of double applica-

*A comparison with Samuel will show, however, many differences, for the most part slight, which the known MSS. give us no help in removing, and which, therefore, we may suppose to be designed, even though we may not have read our Bibles carefully enough to apprehend their meaning.

my [q]shield, and the [r]horn of my salvation, my [s]high tower!

(iii.) how realized.

Upon the object of my praise,—upon Jehovah do I [t]call,

2 (4-6): Confronting death.

and from my [u]enemies I am saved.

(i.) lawlessness.

The [v]toils of death faced me about,
and the [w]torrents of Belial put me in fear.

[q] ver. 30.
[r] *cf.* 1 Sam. 2. 10. Lk. 1. 69.
[s] Ps. 144. 2.
[t] Ps. 105. 1.
[u] ver. 40.
[v] Ps. 116. 3.
[w] Is. 59. 19. Ps. 93. 3.

tion, as the language of the Lord, or of those whom we have seen that He here identifies Himself with and represents. We shall find, of course, in this as in other psalms, passages in which One personality shines out, forbidding association of any other with it. We may find, perhaps, those in which it is easier at least to recognize the many for whom He stands (or some of these), than it is their Representative. This we may expect. One passage (verse 23) which, as it reads in the common and other versions, *could* not be applied to Him, should receive, it is believed, another meaning. In general, we may expect to find unmistakably through these psalms the Voice like which there is no other, while yet we shall sufficiently discern that He who speaks has linked Himself with others, so that His cause and theirs are one.

The third verse gives the realization of Jehovah as the rock of the soul: "I call upon Jehovah, the object of my praise, and I am saved from my enemies." This is what he who speaks has found; and all that follows here is the expansion of it.

2. Accordingly we go back to the "strait" out of which he cries to God, and is answered. And once more we find that it is the shadow which darkens the world which he is facing. The toils of death are round him, escape shut off; and it is death as we have seen it, and as the conscience recognizes it,—death as the doom of sin.

The words are simple enough, but all the more has their meaning to be gathered from their context and connections, rather than learned directly. And this is characteristic of the psalms, as it is of much of the Old Testament. We have to bring in the light of the New in order to be able to see what is hidden in it for us: it is the Old Testament itself that bids us remember that "it is the glory of God to conceal a thing," as it is "the honor [or glory] of kings to search out a matter." (Prov. xxv. 2.) Would that in this research into Scripture "kings" were more plentiful!

Here the person of the speaker is of all importance; and however He may identify Himself with others, in this psalm it is Christ who is this throughout. Thus, when *He* says "the torrents of Belial put me in fear," we have to consider in what sense it would be possible for Him to say this. Belial — though it seems better to anglicize than to translate the Hebrew word — means, evidently, "worthlessness," the "ungodly men" of the common version, which the revised changes into "ungodliness."* The word is, indeed, much more than the English one, of a moral significance very positive, and not negative merely. In the moral and spiritual spheres, there is nothing merely negative: simple indifference here is crime. Thus Belial is used in the New Testament as standing for the direct opposite of Christ; and the "sons of Belial," in the language of the Old, are always those lawless ones who, whenever the occasion arises, manifest themselves as law-breakers, hostile to God and man. The "torrents of Belial" are undoubtedly such corrupt and lawless men; only marking their wickedness as that which produces fear in Him who speaks here. Their power, whatever it were, surely could not, any more than death could in its physical suffering, or in aught beyond it. For Him, the sting of it would be as judgment from God; and such it was, of necessity, for Him who took it as the Sin-bearer and Substitute for sinners.

* "Perdition," "the abyss,"—adopted by Delitzsch and others, are not justified by the texts appealed to, such as Ps. xli. 8, Nah. i. 11, and 2 Cor. vi. 15: these do not depart from the regular meaning.

(ii.) death in itself.
(iii.): God from His temple.
3 (7-18): The appearing of God.
a (7-9): the Almighty.
(i.) His power.

The toils of [x]Sheol encompassed me:
the snares of death confronted me.
In my [y]strait I called upon Jehovah,
and cried out unto my God:
out of his [z]temple he heard my voice,
and my cry came before him—into his ears.

And the [a]earth shook and quaked:
and the foundations of the hills trembled
and were shaken, because he was wroth.

x Ps. 6. 5. Ps. 16. 10.
y Ps. 118. 5.
z *cf.* Ps. 20. 2.
a Ju. 5. 4. Ps. 114. 5-7. *cf.* Matt. 28. 2.

Thus wrath was in it, separation from Him who was of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, though this was *upon* Him only.

"The torrents of Belial" must then have "put Him in fear," by the horror of what sin was to Him, as He realized it in the light in which He lived with God, from the joy of that well-known, glorious Presence, earth itself but the footstool of Deity. He had come into it but to do, amid sorrow and suffering, the Father's will, which man could violate at his pleasure, and count it pleasure, and imagine it freedom to do so! For this He was to die, taking the sinner's place; men like these — His creatures, with His stamp defaced in them — driving the nails which fastened Him to the cross, plunging the spear into His side, sealing Him up in His grave, defying Him to come out of it again! Giving Himself up freely to all this, while struck with the awful horror of it all, well might He exclaim, "The torrents of Belial put me in fear!"

Sin itself,—just to know it aright, could it be known fully,—in a soul where there was no callousness such as it induces,—what a supreme agony would it be!

And the due of sin,—to bear *that* death, as no saint has known,—as no sinner could ever know it,—the living death of the Heir and Fountain of Life; the Life eternal proving the nameless woe of the shadow of death, where faith could no more say, "But Thou art with Me."

It is impossible to speak of it aright. Scripture itself leaves the veil upon it. Those who, moved by the Spirit of God to give us the story of the cross, as from their various points of view they regard it, stand in the hush of the night that falls, pointing, as it were in silence, to the sacred Figure "lifted up from the earth," and upon its head the crown of thorns.

"I cry . . . and Thou answerest not," are the words of the psalm of atonement; but then again, "when He cried unto Him, He heard." (Ps. xxii. 2, 24.) Both things, of course, true: each suited in its place. The psalm here celebrates the hearing, and that out of the sanctuary,—the answer of God in His holiness to the Holy One: with that answer, and its result in blessing for the people of God (that is, for Israel and the millennial nations,) the rest of the psalm is occupied.

3. We have now therefore the appearing of God in behalf of His suffering Holy One. But when we come to the detail of this intervention, while it may well apply to the accompaniments of the resurrection of Christ, and no doubt has this in view, on the other hand the description as a whole irresistibly reminds us of the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt. Indeed the actual theophany, the heavens bowed as God comes down, the judgment executed upon the enemies, ending with the exaltation of Christ over the nations of the earth,—all this connected as it is together, carries us on to events yet future, when God will out-do the wonders in Egypt in a new deliverance of Israel from the hands of the nations their enemies, and bring in the final blessing of which prophecy is full. (Mic. vii. 15.) This accounts for the apparent glance back at the exodus; while it is really the answer of God to Christ's work of atonement, which accounts equally for His voice being heard as it is, all through. Thus we find the same representative character of the Lord as in the previous psalm, and the confirmation of the view of that which has been already taken.

(*a.*) The twelve verses of this section, one might expect to have the usual 3 x 4

(ii.) the destroying wrath.

Smoke went up from his nostrils,
and [b] fire out of his mouth consumed:
coals were set aflame by it.

(iii.) Himself from the bowed heavens.

And he [c] bowed the heavens and came down,
and thick [d] darkness was under his feet.

b (10–12): the Judge.

And he rode upon a [e] cherub, and flew:
yea, he swooped upon wings of [f] wind.

(i.) In righteousness.

He made darkness his [g] covert,
his pavilion about him darkness of waters,
thick clouds of the skies.

(ii.) His obscuration.

From the brightness before him his thick clouds passed,—

(iii.) His display.

[h] hail, and coals of fire.

c (13–15): the full manifestation.

And Jehovah [i] thundered in the heavens,

b Ps. 97. 3–5.

c Ps. 144. 5. *cf.* Mi. 1. 3, 4.

d Deut. 4. 11. *cf.* Am. 5. 18, 20.

e *cf.* Ezek. 10.

Ps. 99. 1.

f *cf.* Ezek. 1. 4.

Ps. 104. 3.

g Is. 45. 15. Ps. 97. 2.

h Ex. 9. 24. Is. 28. 17. Rev. 8. 7.

i Ps. 77. 18. Rev. 4. 5.

division, and so they have. The first three show us God as the Almighty, the earth and the heavens bearing witness to His power alike. The earth to the foundations of the hills trembles before Him; His wrath is a consuming fire; the heavens are bowed under Him as He comes down. This witness of nature to His presence, readily as we understand it, and simple as it really is, has yet lessons for us which would serve us well if they were better learned. Creation is not only a mirror of divine perfections: it is pervaded by His power, and sensitive to His slightest movement. There is an intimate sympathy thus between the natural and spiritual, which we feel far better than we can explain, and which makes the face of nature a constant parable of spiritual things. This, superstition has misused on the one hand, while on the other the growing wisdom of the day, with its continual fresh discovery of governing laws, loses sight of or refuses what it helps to demonstrate. For laws governing without a governor are themselves an irrational superstition, no less so because a profane one. There is in nature, as they own, an inscrutable power which transcends it; and this, too, a "power that makes for righteousness." Christianity alone tells us *Whose* this power is.

(*b.*) In the second triplet of verses the Almighty becomes the Judge.* The cherub, from the first view in Eden to its Apocalyptic representatives in the last book of the New Testament, is always connected with divine government,—the throne of God as ruling over the earth. The ark and mercy-seat are still this throne in relation to Israel, and the cherubim there are of one piece with the latter, their faces looking to the place where the atoning blood is sprinkled before God. He was said to dwell between the cherubim; and these express the executive righteousness of the throne; and in their fourfold character as lion, ox, with the face of a man, and flying eagle, we find represented power, patient service, intelligence, and yet inscrutability. (Prov. xxx. 19.) The riding upon the cherub here, therefore, indicates judicial action, and the "wings of the wind" combine the speed and power of the storm blast, a figure which the next verses carry on.

Yet in judgment God is rather hidden than displayed: it is His "strange work." Thus He makes the darkness His covert. It is His contrary, inasmuch as He is love and light; and yet He uses it as His pavilion, and, while not it, is *in* it. The judgment, where it comes, is in fact, in its most awful feature, separation from Him,—from the Light; while it is yet not merely that. From these thick clouds the light flashes forth,—hailstones and coals of fire (see Exod. ix. 13–35, *notes*); for God is displayed even in the judgment that separates from Him.

(*c.*) The third triplet gives the full display. It is now plainly Jehovah who thunders in the heavens, and the Most High who gives His voice. And we see where the bolt strikes: His arrows are lightnings, with which Messiah's enemies

* A new symbolism for the number two: but "judgment" is in fact *discernment;* that is, division, separation, putting a difference, and thus comes rightly under this number.

(i.) the Supreme.

(ii.) the defeat of the enemy.

(iii.) the revelation of the earth.

d (16-18): The experience

(i.) of divine sufficiency.

(ii.) of dependence.

(iii.) Jehovah Himself the stay.

and the *j* Highest gave his voice,—
hail and coals of fire.
And he sent his arrows, and *k* scattered them,
yea, he shot out lightnings and discomfited them.
And the *l* channels of the waters were seen,
and the foundations of the world were uncovered:
at thy *m* rebuke, Jehovah,—
at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.
He reached from above, he took me,
he *n* drew me from many waters.
He *o* delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them that hated me,
for they were *p* too strong for me.
They confronted me in the *q* day of my calamity:
but Jehovah was my stay.

j Ps. 21. 7.
k Ps. 144. 6. Isa. 30. 30. Ps. 68. 1, 14.
l Ex. 15. 8, 19.
m Nah. 1. 4 Isa. 50. 2.
n *cf.* Ex. 2. 10. *cf.* Ps. 69. 1, 2 with Rom. 4. 24.
o ver. 48.
p *cf.* 2 Cor. 13. 4.
q *cf.* Ps. 20 1. *cf.* Ps. 22. 11.

are scattered and discomfited. The earth is laid bare to its foundations, and the channels of waters are seen: words which remind us of Israel's passage of the Sea, and which may find in the future also their fulfillment in the drying up of the Euphrates. (Rev. xvi. 12.)

The judgment of God is also the revelation of the earth at all times, and will finally declare the moral character of all its history. This is one great end of prophecy, to enable us beforehand to judge with God the condition of things through which we are now passing, according to that final judgment in which we find them to end. And that final disclosure, will it not be in some sense also the eternal safeguard of His people from all the power of evil, the springs of which will be then laid bare? Scripture speaks of that day as the day of manifestation; and this will not be surely of the individual merely to himself, but of all in the presence of all; making all to see light in God's light. Will not the "holiness of truth" be thus fully confirmed and established for eternity, sealed with the broad seal of God, and demonstrated by the example of all, evil and good alike? Will not the books that are opened then be in effect and effectively the Deuteronomy of the land so reached for every pilgrim?

(*d*) We now come to the experience of the deliverance, in which we find expressions of weakness, which might at first make one doubt as to its being the Lord's voice that is heard at all here. But the connection would assure us of it, and the place of thorough human dependence is that which He takes all through the psalm. Thus it was that, having assumed the burden of sin, and laying down His life, He committed Himself in peace into the Father's hand, to take again from Him the life laid down. The language of the sixteenth psalm we have seen to be the expression of this confidence: "therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest securely: because thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol; nor wilt Thou suffer Thy pious One to see corruption." Thus resurrection is His justification from God, the seal put upon His completed work; the justification, therefore, of all for whom He stands,—of all who through grace believe in Him. In this identification of Himself with them, He comes for the moment into the place of weakness and simple dependence upon the arm of Another for deliverance.

"He reached from above, He took me: He drew me out of many waters." In the last clause of the sentence we have a word only used once beside in the explanation of the name given to Moses, and from which that was derived; but the reference is only by way of comparison; for a greater than Moses is here. "He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them that hated me: for they were too strong for me." Thus the deliverance is the manifestation and glory of Jehovah Himself. "They confronted me in the day of my calamity: but Jehovah was my stay."

4 (19-27): Tested and approved.
a (19-21): as the obedient One.
(i.) the divine complacency.
(ii.) the witness.
(iii.) the holy One.
b (22-24): measured by the Word.
(i.) wholehearted.
(ii.) without perverseness.

And he brought me forth into a [r]large place:
he delivered me because he had [s]delight in me.
Jehovah [t]recompensed me according to my righteousness:
according to the [u]cleanness of my hands he hath returned to me.
For I have [v]kept Jehovah's ways,
and have [w]not wickedly departed from my God.
For all his [x]judgments were before me:
nor did I put his statutes from me.
I was also [y]perfect with him,
and kept myself [z]from perverseness being mine.

3. 5; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 19.

r Ps. 31. 8. *cf.* Ps. 40. 2. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 21.
s cf. Matt. 3. 17. *cf.* Prov. 8. 30.
t cf. Isa. 53. 12. *cf.* Isa. 49. 6.
u cf. Ps. 24. 4. *cf.* Lk. 23. 41.
v cf. Jno. 8. 29. *cf.* Ps. 17. 5.
w etc. Dan. 9. 15.
x Ps. 16. 8.
y cf. 1 Jno. 3. 5; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 19.
z cf. Heb. 2. 18.

Jehovah's character is thus brought out, as it is the glory of the gospel in every part, that it reveals Him. We "believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." Thus we know Him to be for us, in His righteousness as well as in His love, and that very attribute which we had most reason to dread as sinners, is that upon which, because of the work of Christ for sinners, we can rest with undisturbed security. It is His *righteousness* that justifies the believer in Jesus. It is His righteousness that we are "*made*" to be now "in Christ." (2 Cor. v. 21.)

4. But we are now to be shown the character of the One for whom God thus comes in; and in this section, under the number which speaks both of testing and practical walk, we have (set side by side with the character of God Himself) His assured and perfect claim to be heard and answered. Nothing is more unmistakable in the Lord, as we see Him in the full truth of manhood upon earth, than the distinct and emphatic assumption of unspotted perfection at all times. "Meek and lowly in heart" though He was, and clear in His enunciation of man's fallen condition, He never for a moment takes His place among men in any sense that could imply the slightest resemblance to them in this respect. His separateness is indeed so plain that He need not much assert it. Yet He can say as the ground of the Father's constant presence with Him (manifested as it was by His mighty works),—"I do always those things that please Him." And to His opposers even can put as a question admitting but of one answer, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" (John viii. 29, 46.)

The psalmist maintains here for the One he personates a similar perfection, which David for himself, in his "last words," disclaims. So, indeed, might any among mere men. It is He in whom, opening the heavens to do so, the Father proclaims His delight, who is, as we have seen, the real Speaker,—the true David, who is also David's seed.

(*a*) The divine delight in Him has its ground and justification in His perfect obedience. He is righteous not only in intent, but in the cleanness of His hands also. With Him is not the misery of shortcoming of the end of His desire and aim. What He designs He carries through. As He speaks so He is; and His speech is with fullest knowledge. Thus He can say, "I have kept Jehovah's ways"; and His recompense is according to His righteousness.

(*b*) The measurement of all with Him is not by His own thoughts either. He is not a law to Himself, nor does He do simply what is right in His own eyes. Knowing what He is, one might perhaps expect that; and if inspiration were the weak and fallible thing which men now make it, you could not account for the absolute respect which He who even as man had the Spirit given Him without measure, ever paid it. "But how, then, should the Scripture be fulfilled?" was with Him a decisive argument. On the cross, with the parching thirst of the crucified upon Him, it is only "that the Scripture might be fulfilled," that He gives voice to this craving. Truly could He say, then, "All His judgments were before Me; nor did I put His statutes from Me." This was no desultory

(iii.) before God Himself.
c (25-27): the God before whom he is.
(i.) faithful with the faithful.
(ii.) in relation to evil.
(iii.) the God of resurrection.

And Jehovah hath returned me according to my righteousness,
according to the cleanness of my hands before his eyes.
With the [a]merciful thou showest thyself merciful *;
and with the perfect man thou showest thyself perfect.
With the pure thou showest thyself pure;
and with the [b]perverse thou showest thyself tortuous.
For *thou* wilt [c]save a humble people,
and bringest low the lofty looks.

5 (28–42): The judgment of the nations.
a (28–30): the Source of power.
(i.) God my light.

For it is thou that [d]lightest my lamp:
Jehovah my God enlighteneth my darkness.

a Matt. 5. 7. 1 Ki. 8. 32.
b Lev. 26. 21–31. Prov. 3. 34. Matt. 7. 2.
c Ps. 34. 18, 19.
d Ps. 97. 11. Ps. 112. 4.

* "Merciful" is not an adequate rendering for *chasid*, nor do we seem able to give the antithesis in English; "pious" cannot be applied to God, nor is "holy" the force as applied to Him. The term as suiting God and man together here should express the affectionate sense of relationship on man's part towards God, and on His part towards man.

or fragmentary or unbalanced obedience. All was in due proportion and perfect symmetry. *It was obedience:* the will of God recognized and governing Him in all things.

"I was also perfect with Him," He says: "and I kept myself from perverseness being mine."* The word rendered "iniquity" in the common version, it is agreed means "perverseness,"—the spirit that would distort or turn aside the force of the divine commands. And again He affirms that Jehovah has recompensed Him according to His righteousness, and according to the cleanness of His hands before those holy eyes.

(c) Now the character of God is put side by side with this. He deals with men according to what He sees them to be. The disposition they show toward Him He shows in like manner toward them: the attitude which they assume He assumes; while of course His grace beseeches them to change that which is estranged and hostile, and to be reconciled to Him. But this last has no application to Him who is before us here, and does not therefore come in.

Then He brings low the lofty and saves the humble; and death is that by which God levels all the pride of man, bringing up from death itself those who have accepted its sentence in the practical meaning of it. Thus we have the principle of resurrection, in which the power of God acts *beyond* the sentence, so affirming it, and yet showing His grace. And this grace, after this manner, He has shown in Christ, and shown also to a people identified in grace with Him.

This is the God, then, before whom Christ is, and who answers Him,—though He stoop to death to find the answer, because of His identification with the need of others.

5. We are now carried on into the future, in order to see this answer, as it takes effect in the judgment of the nations who have rejected God and His Anointed. The present time we must not expect to find in Old Testament prophecy; and thus in that to which the Lord appeals in the synagogue of Nazareth (Isa. lxi. 1, 2), "the acceptable year of the Lord," which He was there to proclaim, passes on immediately to the "day of judgment of our God," and so to the restoration of Israel. The psalm here is in the same way connected with Jewish hopes and promises. The suffering Christ becomes, in exaltation, the

* The translation here, which differs from that adopted in 2 Sam. xxii., though not the simplest, is, I think, the real meaning of *me-avoni*. Geier, Delitzsch, and Cheyne agree that this is the sense, and there does not seem any way of reconciling "*my* iniquity" with the perfection of the man, Christ Jesus.

(ii.) help against foes and hindrances.
(iii.) His character.
b (31-33): the girded Servant.
(i.) none beside Jehovah.
(ii.) my help in progress.
(iii.) and giving possession of the land.

For by thee I [e]run through a troop:
and by my God I leap over a wall.
The Mighty—his [f]way is perfect:
Jehovah's word is tried:
he is a [g]shield to all taking refuge in him.
For [h]who is God beside Jehovah?
and who is a rock except our God?
The Mighty, who [i]girdeth me with strength,
and maketh perfect my way!
That maketh my feet like [j]hinds' feet:
and maketh me stand upon my heights.

e cf. Ps. 68. 18. *cf.* Ps. 45. 3, 4.
f Dan. 4. 37.
g Ps. 115. 9-11.
h Deut. 32. 31. Ps. 115.1-8.
i Ps. 45. 3. Isa. 11. 5. ver. 1.
j Hab. 3. 19. *cf.* Gen. 49. 21.

Conqueror and Judge. As Son of man He comes in the clouds of heaven; as Son of man all judgment is committed to Him. Thus He still maintains His dependence: "Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." We need not wonder, then, that at the beginning of this section, He as the Speaker ascribes in a similar way His power to God.

(*a*) Besides being a fifth section of the psalm, this has again five subsections, the verses still being in triplets, God manifesting Himself still in all, Jehovah being known in the judgment that He executes.

"For it is Thou that lightest my lamp: Jehovah my God enlighteneth my darkness." So may *He* say, who, though the Son of God, has been in the darkness of desertion at the cross. We think, naturally, of the tabernacle lamp and its identification of divine glory (the gold) with the almond fruit of resurrection, the sign of coming summer, and we remember how He is presented in the Apocalypse as the "Faithful Witness, and the First-born of the dead, and"—as He is going to be manifested directly—"the Ruler of the kings of the earth." (Rev. i. 5.) Just so where He is coming out as this last, we are permitted first of all to see Him as come out of the darkness, where He has removed all hindrance to earth's blessing, that we may rejoice in His assumption of power and possession of the inheritance which is now His.

All enemies and obstacles are now to give way before Him: "For by Thee I run through a troop: and by my God I leap over a wall." And then we have affirmed the character of Him whom the King represents and in whose power He acts: the Mighty One, perfect in His way; the Unchangeable, whose word is tried; and the sure defense of all who take refuge in Him.

(*b*) And who beside is God? Where else is the Rock of confidence for faith? This is the question that will be pressed for speedy settlement when Christ appears. For now is the time of which it is predicted that "Jehovah shall be King over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Jehovah, and His Name one." (Zech. xiv. 9.) Heathenism is swept away at once; all forms of idolatry are brought to an end together; infidelity will cease from the earth, and agnosticism be no more: even though man's heart may as really refuse the known, as it once did "the unknown God."

This Mighty One girds with strength the One whose place is still therefore one of loving service to Him, and makes His way perfect as is His own. His progress is uninterrupted, therefore. "He maketh my feet like hinds' feet,"—able to surmount all difficulties,—"and setteth Me on my heights," the mountains of the chosen land. For in that day "the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established in the tops of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." (Isa. ii. 2.) For Jehovah's throne in Zion shall once again and finally be filled with a human tenant, who shall perfectly represent Him; and "the government shall be upon His shoulder," whose "name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Father of eternity,* the Prince of peace." (Isa. ix. 6.)

*Not "everlasting Father," which has led to wrong thoughts, but "Father of eternity": the One who brings all things into the condition in which they will abide forever.

c (34-36): the way of the realization of this.
(i.) trained strength.
(ii.) defence and enlargement.
(iii.) liberty.

That teacheth my [k]hands for war,
and mine arms bend a bow of bronze.
Yea, thou givest me the [l]shield of thy salvation,
and thy right hand sustaineth me:
thy [m]condescension also hath made me great.
Thou makest room for my steps under me,
and mine ankles have not wavered.

d (37-39): the prostration of enemies.
(i.) steadfast purpose.
(ii.) their humiliation.
(iii.) God the reality.

I [n]pursue mine enemies and overtake them;
nor do I [o]turn till they are made a full end.
I [p]crush them, that they cannot rise:
they fall under my feet.
For thou girdest me with strength for the war:
thou castest beneath me those that rise against me.
Thou hast given me also the [q]backs of mine enemies,
and those that hated me I destroy.

e (40-42): the consummation.
(i.) God giving them up.
(ii.) no savior for them.
(iii.) the result.

They [r]cry for help, and none saveth:
to Jehovah, and he answereth them not.
And I [s]beat them small as the dust before the wind:
as mire of the streets I pour them out.

6 (43-45): The rod of iron.
(i.) headship of the nations.

Thou givest me escape from the [t]contentions of the people;
thou settest me as [u]head of the nations:
a [v]people I have not known, they serve me.

k Ps. 144. 1.
l Ps. 3. 3.
m 1 Ki. 19. 11, 12.
n cf. Ju. 8. 4-12.
o cf. Nu. 23. 24.
cf. Isa. 42. 4.
p cf. Ps. 45. 5.
q Ps. 68. 1.
r cf. Prov. 1. 28.
Mi. 3. 4.
s cf. Ps. 1. 4.
t cf. Dan. 7. 2-14.
u cf. Isa. 49. 5-7.
cf. Isa. 60. 3.
cf. Ps. 72. 17.
v cf. Is. 55. 5.
cf. Is. 60. 1-11.

(*c*) But the way this is realized is not, as one might think, by the preaching of the gospel of peace. It must be the "effect of righteousness," and the Davidic phase of the kingdom must precede the Solomonic. We return, therefore, to see Him as the warrior-King: His hands trained for war; Himself covered impenetrably with the shield of God's salvation; sustained by His strong right hand; and withal, as meek as a Conqueror as in His life of grace of old, He says, "Thy condescension also has made Me great." His steps are still directed by Him who makes room thus for each one He takes; and His ankles waver not.

(*d*) Thus we see His enemies now prostrate before Him: He pursues and overtakes them; they fall and rise not; and again it is God who girds Him with the strength He manifests, and casts the pertinacious foe beneath His feet.

(*e*) The end is reached in the fifth section. His foes turn their backs and flee in vain: God has given them up into His hand. They cry in despair at last, even to Jehovah now; but there is no reality in it, and they find no Saviour. They are beaten down as dust, and poured out as the mire of the streets.

6. The "rod of iron" of the second psalm is now sketched in three brief but emphatic verses. He is delivered from the strivings of the people — in Samuel, "my" people — Israel, in their old rebellious state, and made head of the nations, a people formerly unknown to Him. These are obedient as soon as they hear of Him; and there is a manifest power which forbids opposition. Strangers in heart bow perforce, though remaining such: and here we see already the cause of that fresh uprising of evil with which the millennial kingdom ends. And this condition of things shows why Satan, bound in the abyss for a thousand years, is permitted to come out of it at the close to bring out the reality. The visible power of God with the blessing attendant upon Messiah's sway is proved vain to bring man to God. Opposition to Him is no mere fruit of ignorance. In that day there will be none: "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea"; and yet of very many it will be said, as it was of those in the day of Christ's previous sojourn among men: "Now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father." (John xv. 24.)

Thus the devil is permitted to do His final work. The awful inveteracy of sin

(ii.) at the mere report.

(iii.) the manifestation at the end.

As [w]soon as they hear, they hearken to me:
sons of the [z]stranger cringe unto me.
Sons of the stranger fade away,
and are [y]afraid out of their close places.

7 (46-50): Closing praises.

(i.) Jehovah the living Rock.

Jehovah [z]liveth, and blessed be my Rock,
and [a]exalted be the God of my salvation!
The Mighty, who [b]avengeth me,
and subdueth peoples under me;

(ii.) the Judge.

Who giveth me escape from mine enemies:
yea, thou liftest me up above those that rise against me:
thou deliverest me from the man of [c]violence.

(iii.) the God of resurrection.

(iv.) praise among the nations.

[d]Therefore will I praise thee, Jehovah, among the nations,
and will sing psalms unto thy name.

(v.) man with God.

[It is he] who giveth great deliverances unto his [e]king,
and showeth loving-kindness unto his anointed,
unto David and his [f]seed for evermore.

w cf. Ex. 18. 1. *cf.* Ps. 45. 9, 12. *cf.* Isa. 66. 18-20.
x cf. Josh. 9. 3, etc. *cf.* Zech. 14. 16, 17.
y cf. Mi. 7. 16, 17. *cf.* Jer. 33. 9.
z Jer. 4. 2.
a Ex. 15. 2.
b cf. 1 Ki. 2. 5-10.
c Ps. 10. 2, 3
d cf. Ps. 22. 25-29.
e Ps. 2. 6.
f cf. Jno. 7. 42. *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 8. *cf.* Ps. 72. 5, 17.

is manifested. He comes out of a thousand years' restraint; and with his doom at last before his eyes, to work out still unrepentantly the ruin of others and his own. And men on their side turn from the blessedness in which they have shared to listen to his deception. Thus the last verse finds its fulfillment: "sons of the stranger fade away, and are afraid out of their close places." All is manifest at last, and the work of probation is over: eternity, in fact, has come.

7. The last five verses are an ascription of praise to God, in the same character as at the beginning of the psalm, and summing up in brief the mercies which have been recounted. He is the living and unchanging God, the Rock of faith, the Saviour; the avenging Judge, subduer of the peoples; the God of resurrection, thus lifting up above all enemies. For this cause He is praised among the nations. And the close celebrates the whole as loving-kindness to Jehovah's King, to David and his seed alike.

Thus, it is plain, the first series of these psalms ends; and in the nineteenth we go back to find a new beginning.

Series 2.

The second series accordingly manifests at once a different character from the former one. Christ is no longer in it the speaker; nor in the nineteenth psalm even the subject. We have instead creation and the law, the great testimonies of God before Christ came,—though these had, surely, Christ in view, and were intended to lead on to Him. Thus the twentieth and twenty-first psalms following complete the divine testimony with the witness of Christ Himself in His work and its consequences for men. The real depth of the atoning work remains indeed to be explored in the well-known psalm which follows; but we have here His work as sacrificial, and the result in some sense for the faith that accepts it. In this section we have therefore "faith embracing the testimony of God, and laying hold of Christ's salvation."

Psalm XIX.

The nineteenth psalm gives us, then, the prior witness before Christ came, but which faith realizes as what the apostle calls the law,—the "word of the beginning of Christ." (Heb. vi. 1, *marg.*) If the knowledge of the new man is that "Christ is *all*," (Col. iii. 10, 11.) then He must be found in creation and law alike, or these must be thrown aside as unworthy of contemplation or regard.

SERIES 2. (Psalm xix.—xxi.)
Faith embracing the testimony of God, and laying hold upon Christ's salvation.

Ps. xix.

[1]PSALM XIX.

The power of creation and of the law.

To the chief musician: a psalm of David.

1 (1-6): Creation.
(i.) declaring the Mighty.
(ii.) a progressive testimony.

THE [g]heavens declare the glory of the Mighty,
and the [h]expanse telleth the work of his hands.
[i]Day unto day poureth out speech:
and [j]night unto night breatheth knowledge.

[g] Job. 9. 9. Am. 5. 8. Isa. 40. 25, 26.
[h] Gen. 1. 6-8. Ps. 150. 1.
[i] Gen. 1. 14-19.
[j] Ps. 8. 3.

And in fact with the many this seems to have been very much the case; the retribution having now come — who can wonder? — in the one falling into the hands of the higher critic for exposition, the other into those of the Darwinian evolutionist. Scripture has not the responsibility of this, we may be sure; and our only hope is in coming back to Scripture.

1. Even the creed, which has been long called the apostles', and which, though not that, has expressed since the ninth century the faith of the western church, — nay, the Nicene, five centuries earlier, and put forth to maintain the divine glory of Christ, — both of these ascribe the work of creation only to the Father. The apostle Paul, on the other hand, declares of the Son, that "all things were created by Him, and for Him," (Col. i. 16); and the apostle John, that "by Him," as the "Word of God," the Revealer, "all things were made; and without Him was not anything made that was made." (John i. 3.) Thus if "the expanse telleth the work of *His* hands," we may well expect it not to be silent as to Him in whose Person only there has been full revelation made of God. And it *is not* silent: for the very orb that brings the day is, as we have long since learned, His symbol; and the night is constituted by the absence of this.

Creation is the earliest witness of God to man, though, as soon as man fell, he had need of, and in the mercy of God found, addition to it. If men turned their back on that, or corrupted it with their own folly, the witness of creation still remained, and they could not silence this. "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead: so that they are without excuse." (Rom. i. 20.)

Here it is the heavens alone that are brought forward in testimony, — those heavens so suggestive of infinity and power, to which in their paths the stars move in orderly subjection. "The heavens declare the glory of God," — *El*, "the Mighty"; "and the expanse telleth the work of His hands."

The testimony is continuous and progressive. One day adds its tale to that of another, and one night likewise to that which is gone before it. Never exhausted, the story never ends. The day with its multitudinous voices, subdued each by the very multitude of them, is like a river of speech flowing on continuously: while the night, with its quiet breathing, speaks in the hush perhaps more intelligibly to the more attentive ear.

Speech, then, the psalmist ascribes to creation; and he is earnest about it: he would have us know that he means fully what he says. It is "speech" and it is "words," he says, — really that: words, in spite of the sneer of the skeptic, — in spite of the dullness of the people of God themselves, — words really to be heard by those that listen for them. A poor, flat, unprofitable thing to say, affirms the higher critic of the day: out with it! what use in letting us know that words have meaning?* But, indeed, there is signal use in insisting upon

* So Cheyne, in his pretentious book upon the Psalms, in which the whole parade of modern learning is turned out to assure the simple believer how impossible it is for him to understand them aright apart from this. This writer has a gift for scenting the air of a certain period — especially the Maccabean — about a psalm, and knows by an instinct that cannot deceive him how impossible it is for a writer to rise — or be raised — above his "period." "Tempora mutan-

(iii.) to be realized.

(iv.) its universality.

It is [k]not speech nor words, whose voice cannot be heard.
Their [l]line* is gone out into all the earth,
and their words to the end of the habitable earth:
in them hath he set for the [m]sun a tent;

[k] *cf.* Rom. i. 19, 20.

[l] *cf.* Rom. 10. 18.

[m] *cf.* Mal. 4. 2.

* The Septuagint gives "sound"; and this the apostle quotes in Rom. x.

that which, after all, is so feebly realized, or even understood. Granted there is something known as "natural theology" which students of divinity are supposed to study, and a few others know something about,—how much does the average Christian hear of this continual witness to God of the multitudinous voices of the day and night? How far are the natural sciences converted to God to-day? Still more must we ask, how far are they *Christianized?* What another thing would our lives be, if this were so!

True, the language here is parabolic: as such the Lord used it; in this way He took up nature, without apology,—sometimes without explanation. And when on a certain occasion He had done this, and the disciples appealed to Him for explanation, He rebuked them for their need of it. "Know ye not this parable?" He asked: "and how, then, will ye know *all* parables?" (Mark iv. 13.) Wonderful words, which show what He expects from us!—which show also what a wealth of understanding may be ours. If nature be in this way the very realm of parables, how then should nature lie open to us throughout its wide extent! How familiar, after all the centuries of acquaintance with it, should its voices sound to us! But, if we will not let Christ be the Teacher of natural things to us, it is not hard to prophesy who will slip into His seat, and teach us. For the strife between Christ and the devil allows of no neutrality: that which is not *for* Christ is

tur, et nos mutamur in illis." We will let him give us a specimen of his method and results, as we find it in his recent volume of Bampton Lectures (pp. 191, 192):—

"Let this lecturer then say for himself that he cannot divide sharply between the age of David, and that, say, of Isaiah. The latter is no Christian, nor is the former a heathen. It is possible, that if we had a sufficient number of the more religious psalms of David, we might detect in them some real affinities to the religion of Isaiah [?!]. But it may be questioned whether these affinities would have struck an uncritical observer; and, above all, whether either David (who was not a church leader like Zoroaster) or even Isaiah could have dreamed of church hymns such as those contained in the Psalter. That David was a gifted musician is indeed attested, not only by the prophet Amos (vi. 5, but not according to the Septuagint), but by one of the very earliest historical traditions (1 Sam. xvi. 14-23), and we may assume that he could also, like the Arab prince-poet, Imra al Kais, as a 'sweet song-maker' (2 Sam. xxiii. 1) fascinate his half-primitive people. His poetry would, of course, be chiefly occasional in its character. The early races quickly fell into the moods of joy and grief, both of which required the services of the poet;" [for the services of the critic, now so essential, they could, it seems, somehow afford to wait!] "but, strange to say, passionately as the Israelites loved dancing (cf. 1 Sam. xx. 11, Jer. xxx. 19, xxxi. 4), the only two indubitably Davidic compositions are in the elegiac style. You know them full well: one is in 2 Sam. i. 19–27, the other in 2 Sam. iii. 33, 34. . . . But though these may be the only authentic specimens of David's work, and his posthumous fame rested chiefly upon his secular poetry (Amos vi. 5), we need not assume that all his compositions had a non-religious character." ! !

This is from an "Oriel Professor of the *Interpretation of Holy Scripture*" at Oxford, and a Canon of Rochester. We do not propose to review it: it is a pyramid which will hardly stand upon its apex, as the audacious theorist imagines. It is solemn, indeed, to know that for a system which everywhere eliminates from Scripture that which makes it to be indeed "the word of God," the writer claims "the continual guidance both of the Church and of each faithful Christian by the Holy Spirit." (Bampton Lectures, p. xxv.) This, and "the principle of the Kenosis [or, as it has been lately paraphrased, the self-limitation] of the Divine Son" seem to Prof. Cheyne "the only possible foundation for a reform of apologetics suited to our English orthodoxy." One shrinks from putting this into the plain English necessary to convey it to any simple Christian. It means just this: that the only way of saving the mutilated Bible which may be left us by the critics from the contempt of infidelity, is to refer its *mutilation* to the Spirit of God acting in the critics, and leading them to a more advanced point of view than the Lord Himself, with the limitation of human ignorance to which He was pleased to condescend, ever attained!! This is, alas, to be now "our English orthodoxy"; and fearless criticism of the kind adduced is now to be urged as "fearless FAITH in the Paraclete." Surely the enemy of truth is "coming in like a flood." May the Spirit of the Lord lift up a standard against him!

(v.) capacity.

(vi.) divine control.

And he is as a [n]bridegroom coming forth from his chamber:
he rejoiceth as a [o]strong man to run [his] course.
His going forth is from the end of the heavens,
and his [p]circuit unto the ends of them;
and nothing is [q]hid from the heat thereof.

n *cf.* Is. 62. 5.
o *cf.* Ruth 2. 1. *cf.* Matt. 28. 18.
p *cf.* Ps. 72. 8.
q *cf.* Ps. 139. 7-12.

against Him; the unoccupied ground grows weeds and thorns and briars. Nature itself may teach us things like these.

Let us take the shame, then, of needing so simple a thing to be enforced, as that nature's speech is intended to be heard. As the universal witness, its doctrine is not intended to be esoteric, but for all. As a matter of fact, perverted though it be, the speech of all people is in nature's words. The rudest and the simplest use most its picture-signs. "Their line is gone out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."

Across these heavens, from his chamber in the ends of them, goes forth the unfailing sun; in perpetual vigor, spreading around the joy which is associated with his presence: for "a pleasant thing it is to behold the sun." His seems indeed the joy of strength,—the joy that springs out of realized competency. Always filling his place,—always full-orbed,—always the centre of light, though the clouds of earth may gather and shut him in,—always the centre of warmth, though the winter may build up its barrier of frost against him,—darkness and cold and death the sure result of his absence: if this be a parable then, is there any possible way but one in which to interpret it? Or does Scripture fail to reveal its meaning?

The Bridegroom coming forth of His chamber, who is at the same time the "Sun of righteousness" that "shall arise with healing in His wings," source of light, of life, of fruitfulness, to the whole earth rejoicing in His beams: shall we look at this picture and yet find Theism indeed, but not Christology, in nature's lessons? Or shall we speak slightingly of "parables" as after all merely the ingenious play of fancy, brilliant perhaps but unreal, not rooted in the nature of things? able to give, therefore, no deep, true, (if you will,) scientific glance into that nature? Nay: this is their real spiritual equivalent, and spirit is the essence of things, and gives the law of external nature. As it is said of Israel's history, that "all these things *happened* unto them for types," so it is true of nature that all these things are arranged and ordered so that it should be the true reflection of the glory of God;—so that its voices should tell Him forth. And instead of being unscientific, to follow this out would give us truest science, would relieve us of much that causes sorest perplexity, would bring the material and spiritual into perfect reconciliation, and God into everything that He has made. Is this to be desired? It is the one thing which gives all knowledge value. It is that which alone can establish science itself; nay, lift it up into the sphere of the eternal! It will be its immeasurable exaltation. Finally, it will make our Bible the unifier and key of every kind of knowledge, and Christ, in result, the sum of it. Is this, Christian reader, a thing desirable? Is it to you a thing *credible?* It is that of which the apostle assures us, that the knowledge of the "new man," "renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him," is that "Christ is ALL, and in all." (Col. iii. 10, 11.)

If this were apprehended, how would our minds be opened and enlarged to take in truth by every avenue open to us! What a guide should we have in those depths unexplorable by mere human intellect,—"the Spirit" that "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (1 Cor. ii. 10.) What a standard by which to judge of all the principles of science! What a confirmation of each by each as these two witnesses (His word and work) were brought into one harmonious testimony! What a satisfaction of the desires of the heart that pants after God!

Not in vain, then, has the psalmist put into his contemplation of the heavens

2 (7-11): The testimony of law.
(i.) consistency and certainty.
(ii.) discernment of difference.

The [r]law of Jehovah is perfect, restoring the soul:
the [s]testimony of Jehovah is sure, making wise the simple.
The [t]precepts of Jehovah are right, rejoicing the heart:

[r] Ps. 1. 2.
[s] Ps.119.111.
[t] Ps.119.128.

this picture of the Ruler of the Day, this glorious source of energy for the earth, as the science of the time would not hesitate to speak of it. In doing this, he has but been preaching Christ to us from a text broad writ in the heavens. And it is sweet to turn back from this to the first chapter of Genesis, and to see how the books of nature and of Scripture begin together thus with the unfolding of Christ! The "light" of the first day, (which God is, in its spiritual significance,) put, on the fourth, upon its material candlestick, as the Old Testament revelation of God, becomes for us in the New the glory of the Only-begotten in the Man Christ Jesus. And here is what may assure us of the *science* of Moses, that it is sealed thus with the seal of the King of kings. Christ is in it, a living picture, a likeness speaking for itself as drawn by the Author of nature Himself, and so really still, day by day, pouring forth speech. Moses has only been the scribe recording this utterance; but a faithful one.

Service is blessed work when it is true, and Christ least of all disdains this character of Servant. In the fifth verse we see Him as this, keeping to His God-ordained course, His "circuit," which brings Him back to be in His place in the morning, the earth's timekeeper, as all else. Look but a little deeper, this may seem all upset: it is the earth that is turning upon itself, even while it circles around him; and this only establishes the true relation, after all, between the soul and Christ: to Him it owes its obedience, and revolves around Him, and fidelity to Him is the path in which we find Him, "faithful and true." Yet after all, the first thought was not untrue,—in some sense it was the truest. The tie between the earth and sun is mutual, as the law of gravity assures us, strongest upon the sun's side, which continually pours out upon the earth its fructifying light and heat, "nothing hid from the heat thereof." The "less is blessed of the better." Servant of God for us, Servant even to us in His love, this and His Lordship are not opposed or contrary in the Christ of God. While all our changes, (which, without due self-knowledge, may seem His,) all that they make known of us, do but approve His faithfulness to the ordained path of perfect wisdom and right government.

This is, of course, but an illustration,—a typical example of nature's teaching. It is all we can expect in this place. We are now to listen to another testimony.

2. Creation bears witness to God, who as Creator knows no difference of nations or of classes. Jew and Gentile are equal in His eyes, and men as a whole "His offspring." But they—not He—have got away from this. Hence, even in the interests of men at large, the call of Israel out from the nations, to be the conservator of truth from which on all sides they had departed, otherwise destined to be lost out of the world. Hence her necessary isolation, while yet in the centre of the great lines of the world's traffic: like one of her own cities of refuge, with its roads kept open on every side, and its safe keeping for the man who fled to it.

Israel's law was thus a testimony to Jehovah, Israel's God; who is of course also the Creator, the God of all, but driven, as it were, by the unbelief of men, into this exceptional place. Thus it is that with Israel alone is found the pure record of creation itself, which we find in Assyria and Babylonia overlaid with the perversions of men turning from the truth, and given up to fables. Abundant evidence is there in the comparison of these, that in the beginning the account was one, and that thus the truth they had, which they had given up. "When they *knew* God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."

(iii.) the realization in the soul.

the [u]commandment of Jehovah is pure, enlightening the eyes.
The [v]fear of Jehovah is clean, enduring for aye:
the [w]judgments of Jehovah are truth; they are righteous altogether.

[u] Ps. 12. 6. Ps. 34. 5.
[v] Ps. 34. 11. Ps. 111. 10.
[w] Ps. 119.75. Ps. 119.137.

Israel were in themselves no better, and not because of any betterness in them did God take them up. Among them also, if the truth were found, it was found in continual strife with the evil and unbelief of man. If it were maintained, it was maintained with a strong hand which chastened for iniquity. Their history is, as Moses testified against them, that of a stiff-necked and disobedient people; and to our own day what else has been the history of the professing people of God?

But He had in His heart purposes of love to man that must be fulfilled, which the ages slowly, because everything should be written large and fully before the eyes of the universe, and fixed on the tablets of eternal remembrance,—slowly indeed, yet continuously, were to work out. Israel in those purposes were the elect of God; and Jehovah, His covenant name with them, throws up, as a rampart against the power of evil, the pledge of His immutability and truth. His law is thus inflexible, as founded upon the holiness of His nature, and yet wedded indissolubly to these purposes of His grace. If it condemned and humbled, it was yet a "ministration"—a ministry of love—in doing this,—a "*ministration* of death" and "of condemnation." (2 Cor. iii. 7, 9.) In itself "holy, just, and good," it was the delight of the renewed nature. But the effect was, on this very account, the humbling of man before God, the abasement of all self-righteousness, and thus in the end the preparation for the gospel of salvation.

The testimony of the law has then its right place just here in this nineteenth psalm, where it is found; and found in this double character also, as testimony to the holiness of God, and so searching the heart before God. In the next psalm we go on to the salvation for the reception of which the way is thus prepared.

"The law of Jehovah is perfect, restoring the soul": "converting," in the broader sense of the word, would not be wrong,—that is, turning it from any wrong path. *Torah*, "the law," means literally that which points out the way; and as "perfect" it is an infallible guide. Its certainty for guidance is therefore what is here declared. The soul as the impulsive part of man's nature is that which needs to be turned or restrained from following its own inclinations, and so is named here. How blessed to have the certainty which is found in listening to God's voice. It is the first point of all, clearly, for blessing. Apart from this, wisdom and folly, holiness and unholiness, are names, and nothing else. We seek to please God, and know not but we offend Him. The road we take to heaven may, after all, be the road to hell: for "there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, and the end thereof are the ways of death." (Prov. xiv. 12.) When God has spoken, and we have heard His voice, our path then becomes that of simple obedience; we are not left to prove it by results, which come all too late for help as to what is before us. Results, so far as these can be depended on even, testify but of what, being past, is already beyond recall.

But in God's path,—realizing that we are there,—results are in His hand. "The servant knoweth not what his lord doeth"; but the servant of God may be well assured that power is in His hand to carry out the purposes of unfailing wisdom. He may be at rest therefore. "Great peace have they that love Thy law, and nothing shall stumble them." (Ps. cxix. 165, *marg.*)

This is what, first of all,—priceless boon it is!—the law of the Lord secures: a heart at rest. One may not know the future; but he knows his present Guide: and the future can have no disappointment or surprise for Him who sees the end from the beginning.

And to this the second part of the verse here corresponds. "The *testimony* of Jehovah" takes quite different ground from that of the "law." Its appeal is not, as that of the latter, to *authority*, but to fact and truth; and "the testimony of

(iv.) the testimony of experience.

(v.) exercise and reward.

More desirable are they than [x]gold—than much fine gold:
sweeter also than [y]honey, even the dropping of the combs.
By them also is thy servant [z]warned:
in keeping them the [a]reward is great.

3 (12-14): The fully realized result.

(i.) conviction.

[b]Who understandeth his errors?
free me from things [c]hidden [from me].

x Ps. 119.72. 127. *cf.* Acts 3.6. *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 10.
y Ps. 119.103. *cf.* Rev. 10. 9.
z *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 16. 17.
a *cf.* Rev. 3. 8, 10, 12. *cf.* Rev. 22. 7.

cf. Jno. 14. 23, 24. b *cf.* 1 Jno. 1. 10; *cf.* 1 Cor. 4. 4. c *cf.* Lev. 4. 2; *cf.* Ps. 90. 8.

Jehovah is *sure*," beyond possibility of overthrow. His are the lips of truth: to Him who is the Omnipotent it is yet an impossibility to lie; day to day, night to night, gather a constantly increasing experience which proclaims His faithfulness. So that His testimony "maketh wise the simple" or inexperienced, with the wisdom of experience. Faith, then, is not credulity. It is not necessary to it to shut one's eyes. He who is Light leads in the light. Question, scrutinize, use every faculty that He has given: they shall not be put to shame; only o'erpassed, as finite by the Infinite, and blessed and drawn out by the very overpassing. Not a soul brought to God but the intellect expands as the heart does. Christ dwelling within must needs enlarge the place of His dwelling. His testimony received makes wise the simple.

The next couplet speaks of moral discernment, putting a difference; but the terms used are not exactly what we are accustomed to, and need to be put together according to the parallelism, in order to be clearly seen. We have here on the one hand, not the law as a whole, but its "precepts,"—the details in which, with "line upon line," the application of its principles is made to all the circumstances of daily life. These concrete forms more clearly show us the principles they embody, and the "commandment of Jehovah," though not a plural, is only meant in this way to individualize more thoroughly the single precept.

The precepts of Jehovah are right; the commandment of Jehovah is pure: thus we have now moral character. What connects itself with these respectively is that the right precepts "rejoice the heart," the pure commandment "enlightens the eyes." The parallelism is here thought to be maintained by the latter phrase being taken as indicating revival, refreshment, as when Jonathan tasted the honey in the wood, it is said that "his eyes were lightened." The numerical structure seems to plead for a different meaning, and one more consonant perhaps with the parallelism itself, which should not be mere repetition but advance in significance. In Ephesians we find (ch. i. 18, R. V.) "having the eyes of your heart enlightened."—an expression which connects the two parts of this together. The heart is indeed that which largely governs the eyes; and the joy of the heart in Jehovah's precepts enables the eyes to discern aright. From the opposite of this all error, in fact, proceeds.

In the third parallel, in harmony with its numerical significance, we come to the principle which underlies all this, which is "the fear of Jehovah" Himself, and which is "clean,"—frees from the defilement which forbids approach to or communion with Him. Thus it has the real elements of endurance in it: for the favor of God has that; what is in harmony with His mind abides. So also the judgments of Jehovah, to which the fear of Him causes us to cling, are truth; and thus, according to the primary meaning of the word, firm and stable. "They are righteous altogether": and "the righteous is an everlasting foundation." (Prov. x. 25.)

From all this comes the value that experience sets upon these divine words.—"more desirable than gold."—much of it and refined; and for enjoyment, sweeter to the taste than the purest honey, that which drops and is not pressed out of the comb.

Conscience also is exercised by them: a thing which the true servant of God is able to appreciate. Happy is he who can invite the light of God's word to

(ii.) fear of presumptuous sin.

Keep back thy servant also from [d]presumptuous [sins];
let them not have dominion over me:
then shall I be [e]upright:
I shall be innocent of great revolt.

(iii.) desire of sanctification.

Let the [f]utterance of my mouth and the [g]meditation
of my heart be acceptable before thee,
Jehovah my [h]Rock and my Redeemer.

[d] Nu. 15. 30.
[e] Ps. 7. 10. Ps. 33. 1.
[f] Ps. 34. 13. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 22.
[g] Ps. 49. 3. Ps. 104. 34.
[h] Ps. 18. 2.

search out all his heart, shunning no ray of it. The "reward" found is both one present and to come,—in that day when no reserve will be possible any longer.

3. The third and last section of the psalm is a prayer to God Himself, into whose presence the soul has thus been brought, to find itself naked and open to Eyes that see beyond all that the fullest self-consciousness can be aware of. And these inaccessible depths, what are they? What may appear in them, when the secrets of all hearts shall be exposed? Alas, it is not because of their profundity, but because of their tortuous labyrinths comes the difficulty—the impossibility—of exploration: "the heart is deceitful above all things . . . who can know it?"

Our comfort, then, must be in turning away from ourselves to Him in whom we can have a confidence that in ourselves we cannot; and in the knowledge that He fully knows us, yet turns not from us because of what He knows. We can understand the joy of the woman of Samaria, who had found the Christ in Him who had told her all things she had done. But He had first opened to her the heart of God, and assured her of her welcome to Him. Grace had heralded the truth to her, and made her glad to have it told her.

So here, with the conviction "who understandeth his errors?" the psalmist turns in confidence to God with the prayer, "Free me from things hidden from me." Sins are not harmless because unknown. They are still *sins*, as witness the law of sacrifice. (Lev. iv. 2, 13, etc.) The dust of a defiling world settles down on us silently, and the mirror of conscience is dulled ere we are aware. The basin and towel in the Lord's hand (John xiii.) are requisite, not when we are conscious of evil merely, but because we are too little conscious. Hardening is not only by the open front of sin: for the Christian it is more generally through its deceitfulness. (Heb. iii. 13.) Satan does not in general present himself as Satan, nor sin as sin; but the dress changes nothing of its character.

Between sins of ignorance and presumptuous sins there is, of course, an immense difference. While all sin is, as already said, sin, and the want of knowledge can never justify us, with God's word in our hand, and Himself so accessible for our enlightenment, yet a sin committed in real ignorance does not shut out God as a sin against conscience does. If it were so, communion would be impossible to any, short of practical perfection. But He is tender and merciful, and of infinite compassion. It would not be this to pass over that which argues a spirit of "revolt," which trifles with His known will. Here, too, we must take care; for we may trifle with His will by refusing to *seek* the light, as well as by refusing to walk by it when we have it. And this, one must fear, is the cause of many blighted lives among the children of God. They do not know, indeed, the evil paths they are in, but they have, nevertheless, as it were instinctively, turned from and *refused the knowledge*. Not willing to be disturbed, or to abide the cost of truth, they give up seeking it,—at least, in the dreaded line. But they cannot so escape from the consequences, terrible as some day they will find them, of real disobedience.

We can find our safeguard only in the sanctuary. The Lord Himself is our constant necessity; and the self-distrust is wholesome that keeps us close to Him. So the cry here now: "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins: let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright; I shall be innocent of great revolt." And the psalm ends with the longing desire for positive sanctification,—the acceptance of heart and mouth before God,—this God, known in the power of His salvation ever (John iv. 22),—"Jehovah, my Rock and my Redeemer."

Ps. xx.

1 (1-3): God for Christ.

(i.) in consistency with His grace.

(ii.) twofold help.

[e]PSALM XX.

Christ and His salvation.

To the chief musician: a psalm of David.

JEHOVAH shall answer thee in the [f]day of strait:
the name of the God of [g]Jacob set thee on high:
He shall send thee help from the [h]sanctuary,
and uphold thee out of [i]Zion!

[e] Ps. 22. 11.
[f] *cf.* Is. 41.8, 14.
[g] 1 Ki. 8. 27-30. *cf.* Rom. 6. 4. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 21.
[h] Ps. 2. 6. Ps. 3. 4.

Psalm XX.

With the last word of the nineteenth psalm is struck the key-note of that which follows. This is truly a blessed psalm, and its beauty will be seen the more, the more we contemplate it. Not that there is much wonder about that: the lustre of all God's jewels is only dimmed by our indifference.

The two psalms now before us are Jewish, no doubt: and the lack of the apprehension of this causes much of the difficulty of discerning their true character. We have to distinguish between the form and the essence,—or rather, to give frankly to the ancient people of God all that belongs to them; and by so doing we shall surely find what is our own, and of how little we have deprived ourselves by this mere justice. The Gentile's Christ is also Israel's Messiah; and wherever we find Him we have our inalienable title to and interest in Him. On His head are many crowns; but these can surely not obscure the features with which we are familiar.

The twentieth psalm speaks of Christ and His salvation, objectively given, as contemplated by the people, and not, as in the twenty-second, subjectively, as the language and experience of the Lord Himself. This, as has been said before, is the manner of the middle three of the nine psalms of which this is the central one, and which show us faith's reception of the Messiah. The prophecy is here as direct as Isaiah's picture of Jehovah's Servant, (chap. lii. 13–liii.,) and should be given as direct announcement, and not, as in our common version, as a prayer. The nine verses are, as usual with this number, 3 x 3, the symbol of divine fullness and manifestation intensified by repetition: from which the importance of its contents may be anticipated.

1. The first section declares God to be for "His Anointed," who is seen in the day of His "strait," which is that of His "offering." This Anointed is the King of Israel, whose deliverance is in some way the salvation of His people, and seems to bring their hearts back to the remembrance of Jehovah their God; and thus they "rise and stand upright." There is no difficulty in seeing that, however else the psalm may have had partial fulfillment, Christ alone is the complete one. And this interpretation it is that gives it its place in the series of psalms that we are considering. The partial ones, taken as the whole, if they could be satisfactorily and not merely conjecturally made out, would break up the unity of the book, as well as lower immeasurably the character of the fragments remaining. How insignificant these "offerings" and this "burnt sacrifice" of a king in his "strait," were it Uzziah or Asa or David himself, compared with that *one* sacrifice of the glorious King, who is always the great subject of the Spirit's testimony.

Looked at in this way, a flood of light is thrown upon the psalm which transfigures it completely. In the very first verse thus, where the king is seen in his strait, it is the "*name* of the God of Jacob" that sets him on high. This is then only another reading of the New Testament text that "Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father." (Rom. vi. 4.) God's "name" is His glory: it is the display of Himself. It is this that is the blessedness of the gospel, that God is displayed in it in His grace. Here, too, the God of Jacob, when we realize the meaning of this name, Jacob, and remember the history in connection with it, which the book of Genesis so dwells upon, may well stand for—indeed can stand for nothing else but—the God of grace. Grace alone could

(iii.) In remembrance of His offering.

He shall remember all thine [m]offerings,
and accept thy [n]burnt offerings. Selah.

2 (4-6): His deliverance involving that of His people.

(i.) the counsel of His heart.

He shall give thee according to thy [o]heart,
and fulfill all thy counsel.

(ii.) faith linking itself with Him.

We will rejoice in [p]thy salvation,
and in the name of our God set up our [q]banners:
Jehovah shall fulfill all thy [r]requests.

m Lev. 2. 1, etc. cf. Heb. 7. 26.
n Lev. 1. 3, etc. cf. Eph. 5. 2.
o Ps. 21. 2. cf. Jno. 17. 24.
p cf. Ps. 18. 17–19 with Ps. 18. 43.
q Ex. 17. 15. Ps. 60. 4.
r cf. Heb. 7. 25.

take up the "supplanter" to make of him an Israel, a "prince of God." Thus it is for the declaration of God's grace,—of the gospel in its essence,—that the One seen here is delivered from His strait,—is set on high. The resurrection and ascension of Christ give to this its full and blessed significance. The story is that of God's grace, whether it be in the going forth of the gospel in its fullness now, or in the deliverance of Israel in days to come. It is still the work of Christ that is the foundation of all blessing, and by which the glory of God is displayed in abounding grace.

In the second verse there is a twofold answer implied; for the sanctuary and Zion are in different lines of thought. The one is the place of priesthood; the other the seat of royal power. Christ is both Priest and King; but then, in connection with Him, the sanctuary in the midst of Israel can be no more than "the figure of the true:" and this is plainly declared in the sixth verse, where the answer of God is "from His holy heaven." This is the answer with which we are now, blessed be His name, familiar. But we have taken it in such a way as to discredit the other, and to make a difficulty where there is absolute simplicity. Christ is yet to be answered out of Zion,—the kingly power in Israel put into His hand. Indeed in that day the two answers will be brought into fullest agreement: the "priest after the order of Melchizedek" will be a "priest upon His throne." The grace implied in priesthood will be manifested in Him who reigns with absolute power; and this will be full blessing for the people of His choice.

The third verse, Leviticus-like, shows us the basis of all this in sacrifice. The whole range of offerings here comes in; for what less could show the various perfection of the one offering that has once for all put away sin for every soul that trusts it? but yet the burnt-offering holds before God its special place. No wonder! It is that which tells of the perfectly tried obedience found perfect, all of its sweet savor brought out by the fierceness of the flame consuming it.

How blessed a picture is given us then in these three verses! how impossible for it to *be* the picture of any other than the One whom it so admirably portrays!

2. We have now the effect of this interposition of God for Him in the deliverance and blessing of His people. This is not, however, what we shall find, when His work is fully told out—forgiveness and salvation from sin. He is their King, and His being raised up naturally connects itself with their deliverance. That this is, and must be, in grace, we have already seen; but this is, as yet, more national than individual, and the depths of their need are not as yet explored.

We find at once, however, that there are counsels of His heart, though what these are is left to be inferred by what follows. They are worthy of that work which lays the ground of their accomplishment; and the people, rejoicing in His deliverance, set up their banners in that Name which has been declared to them,—the name of Jacob's God, the God of grace. There is certainly here a national movement, in the face of enemies, but with confidence; and evidently in His advocacy with whose requests their hearts go out in sympathy. Faith in them has linked itself with Him, and that faith expresses itself in joyful certainty, in the voice of a believing nation in the latter day. These are now receiving the testimony with which the psalm began, and the faith of the prophet in the first part of it is answered at last by that of a generation to be new born to God in days yet to

(iii.) the answer from heaven.

Now know I that Jehovah saveth his [s]anointed:
he answereth him from his holy heaven
with the saving power of his right hand.

3 (7-9): Israel remembering God.

(i.) God alone.

(ii.) contrasted issues.

(iii.) the King manifested.

[t]Some [boast] of chariots, and some of horses,
but we will remember the name of Jehovah our God.
They are [u]bowed down and fallen:
but we are risen and stand upright.
Save, Jehovah!
let the [v]king hear us when we call.

[s] Ps. 2. 2.

[t] Ps. 33. 16, 17. Isa. 31. 1. *cf.* Judg. 4. 15.

[u] Ps. 18. 38.

[v] *cf.* Ps. 2. 6. Ps. 21. 1.

come. The transition here will be no difficulty to those who have noted the similar style of prophecy elsewhere.* Thus Israel will yet awake to the acceptance with God of Him whom as the Crucified they have refused and scorned. They have heard as yet but the Voice which cried, "Thou hearest not," and to that which presently said, "Thou hast heard Me," they have been deaf and unbelieving. At last the "Ephphatha" will be uttered which will give ears and tongue alike their office, and they will say, "Now I know that Jehovah saveth His Anointed! He answereth Him from His holy heaven, with the saving strength of His right hand."

3. The third section must be characterized as the resurrection of Israel. We see them in fact brought back to God, as through faith in Christ they will be, with the necessary effect of this, that they find God for them. The last verse, if we are to read it according to the common punctuation, goes on to the further discovery, full indeed of blessing, that Messiah, their King, and Jehovah are the same: a truth certainly not beyond the Psalms to give, and which we shall find fully before us in the fourth book.

The name of God is once more uttered by them here. Well may they be glad to remember it now, after so long a time of forgetfulness. Now no earthly confidence will they boast in, but only in Jehovah. The sure result follows: while other hopes deceive, Jehovah manifests Himself for them. Their enemies (these boasters) are brought down and fallen. Israel rises from her sorrow and degradation; and not temporarily merely: they rise and stand upright.

The psalm ends with a prayer, in which Jehovah is invoked still to deliver, a prayer which the "King" is besought to hear. Jehovah and the King are one!

Psalm XXI.

The third psalm of this intermediate series now pictures Christ in His glory; although, when we look first at it in this light, there is natural disappointment. The view is still Jewish; and the glory, while indeed heavenly, or it would not be His, is seen, however, from an earthly stand-point. As in the Lord's words to Nathanael, Israel sees heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending [in attendance] upon the Son of man. A blessed thing to see, and which many Christians scarcely reach, and yet which is not entrance into those opened heavens themselves. But there is the joy of seeing One on whom the angels wait, who is still "Son of *man*," who speaks of Himself in this way, is not ashamed of it, not ashamed of human "brethren" in those who are sanctified by His blood! Is it not true that hazy, indistinct views of Christ as man in heaven cause many to lose how much of such joy as this? Yet upon this depends the distinct realization of our place in Him, which cannot be as God but as Man only.

Of this place "in Him" also the Psalms (along with the Old Testament generally) make no explicit mention. (Eph. iii. 4–6.) It is here the Anointed King,

* Thus in Isaiah lii. 13-liii. 3 there is a similar transition from the future and the personating by the prophet of the unbelief (as here the faith) of a generation to come.

Ps. xxi.

[3]PSALM XXI.

Christ appearing in His glory.

To the chief musician: a psalm of David.

1 (1-3): The King's might. (i.) Jehovah His strength. (ii.) His desire met. (iii.) crowned with glory.

A [u]KING rejoiceth in thy strength, Jehovah:
and in thy salvation how greatly shall he exult!
The desire of his [z]heart hast thou given him,
and hast not withholden the request of his lips. Selah.
For thou meetest him with blessings of prosperity:
thou settest a [y]crown of pure gold upon his head.

u cf. Ps. 20. 9. Ps. 45. 1. Ps. 18. 2, etc. Ps. 40. 1, etc.
z Ps. 20. 4.
cf. Isa. 53. 12.
y cf. Heb. 2. 7, 9.

King of Israel and the earth,—a glorious thing, too, to contemplate! to have the whole world obedient to Him, and the precious fruits of the obedience found. We too can sing with Israel here, and ought to be able to take a note above them.

As to the structure of the psalm, there are three parts in it: two of three verses each which show us His higher glory; and then a third and longer one of seven which speaks of His manifestation upon earth, which is the day of manifestation also as to the earth itself, and of putting things straight; the wicked, His enemies, being rooted out of it.

1. The first section speaks of His might, which is that of Jehovah also. He joys in Jehovah's strength, and exults in His salvation. We see that His manhood is still insisted on, all judgment being committed to Him because He is the Son of man. (John v. 27.) He has given in Himself the perfect pattern of obedience, and thus has moral title to receive obedience. He requires no more than He yields; nay, He has yielded more than He ever requires. His path to the throne has been by the way of the Cross. The thorns gathered out of man's path have made a crown for Him. He has not sought exaltation for Himself, who needed it not, but has stooped with infinite condescension to accept the government which is laid upon His shoulders, and which He takes that He may minister in it to the needs of men His creatures, and fulfill the Divine counsel of grace and blessing.

Thus the might of God is His. He knows the secret of power, and has acquired it; as we also, in our measure, may acquire it. For who can lack power whose simple and supreme desire is to do the will of God in the conviction of its absolute goodness, and to glorify Him? Alas, we seek power, and make impossible the attainment of it by reason of the motive for which we seek it. If we had it, and used it not for Him, we should use it against Him,—use it therefore for mischief every way, and for misery to ourselves. Why then should He who is as wise as good impart it to us? Would we put the energy of steam into an engine off the track? Is He less wise than we?

But here is One fully proved and perfectly trustworthy; "the desire of His heart hast Thou given Him, and hast not denied Him the request of His lips." Nothing simpler possible than that! "If ye abide in Me, and *my words abide in you*, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." (John xv. 7.) That is positive enough, and simple; a perfect account of prevailing prayer. His words form the desires and govern the heart; the will is perfect and so the prayer prevails. Christ the Lord, even upon the throne, is an Example for us, exceptional only as His perfection is exceptional.

It is this satisfaction of His desires that we see, therefore, in the third verse. He is met on God's part with blessings that are really such; a crown of pure gold is set upon His head. What is this but the glory of God, which it is His, as now enthroned, to accomplish? for this was the desire of His heart, and this is what the figure naturally means: (figure, of course, it must be, as a prophecy of Christ). This is in fact the very meaning of His reign, that as by man sin had entered to His dishonor, so by man also shall the evil be undone, to His eternal praise. Thus too shall His work in creation be vindicated, and the creation itself be linked to God forever. Christ is thus the "Father of eternity."

2 (4-6): The *shared* blessings of His dependence.
(i.) eternal life.
(ii.) the greatness of His salvation.
(iii.) the presence of God.

3 (7-13): His manifestation.
(i.) the cause of His unchanging strength.
(ii.) His hand upon His enemies.
(iii.) the day of His manifestation.
(iv.) rooted out of the earth.
(v.) the reason in divine government.

He asked [z]life of thee,—thou hast given it him:
length of days for [a]ever and aye.
His glory is great in thy salvation:
[b]honor and majesty thou puttest on him.
For thou settest him [in] [c]blessings for aye:
thou dost [d]gladden him with joy in thy presence.

For the king is he that [e]trusteth in Jehovah:
and in the loving-kindness of the Highest he shall not be moved.
Thy hand shall [f]find out all thine enemies:
thy right hand find out those that hate thee.
Thou wilt set them as [in] a [g]fiery furnace in the time of thy coming:
Jehovah shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them.
Their fruit shalt thou [h]destroy from the earth,
and their seed from among the sons of men.
For they spread out [i]evil for thee:
they devised a plot they could not [effect.]

z Ps. 61. 5, 6, 7. *cf.* Col. 3. 3, 4.
a *cf.* Ps. 72. 15, 17. *cf.* Heb. 1. 11.
b *cf.* Heb. 2. 9. *cf.* Phil. 2. 9.
c *cf.* Ps. 72. 17.
d *cf.* Ps. 45. 7. *cf.* Acts 2. 28. *cf.* Heb. 12. 2.
e *cf.* Ps. 16. 1.
f *cf.* Ps. 18. 37, 38.
g Ps. 2. 12. Mal. 4. 1. Matt. 3. 12.
h Ps. 109. 13. *cf.* 2 Thess. 1. 8, 9.
i *cf.* Acts 2. 23, 24. *cf.* Ps. 2. 1.

2. The second part insists on this dependent place which He has assumed as man. Gone down into death, even life itself He receives as the gift of God; a life eternal, which becomes thus the portion of the new creation, to which He is Head. "His salvation" becomes in the same way a true salvation of myriads of people, by which it becomes great indeed, and great His glory. And these eternal blessings find their consummation in the presence of God which He for them enters, and to which they find access also in Him. Thus, in this second part, the effects are seen of that dependent place which He has taken: for all these, unlike those of the first section, are *shared* blessings, blessings which are such to Him in the very fact that they are earned for others. And though this is left for us to discover, and not plainly interpreted; yet in the light of the New Testament interpretation is easy. In all these things He is the Representative of others; and to be this—the Saviour of multitudes who shall adore Him forever.—this without question is that wherein "His glory is great in Thy salvation." We pass on now to what is very different from all this.

3. Yet even in His appearing in glory we are kept in mind of the place He has taken, a dependent place, of which He is not ashamed. His unchanging stability of glory is the answer to that trust in Jehovah's steadfastness which in the depths to which He descended never for a moment wavered. As He believed, so is it done to Him. His sure faith finds the Rock it rests on, and is answered, as one may truly say, by a faith in Him on God's side which can commit all divine interests to the care of Him in whom the Father's delight is. How all through this psalm the "Leader and finisher of faith" is seen, even in the most unlikely places! The principles which are indicated all through apply to us as to Him, only to Him are principles ever declaring His supreme excellency; and this is as it must be.

Now His hand finds out all His enemies: none can escape, when the eye that seeks them is omniscient. The time of His coming is that which is ordained for the destruction of the banded opposition against Jehovah and His Christ which we have found in the second psalm, and which will be then, as all prophecy witnesses, in fullest activity. The destruction will be sudden and complete, as pictured in these vivid images. Fruit and seed shall alike perish from the earth, for the time of its deliverance from oppression is now come,—the time to "destroy those that destroy the earth." (Rev. xi. 18.)

The cause of this action of the divine power is stated in the eleventh verse: it

(vi.) baffled. For thou makest them [j] wheel around*:
against their face thou preparest thy bowstrings.
(vii.) Be thou [k]exalted in thy strength, Jehovah:
we will [l]sing and praise thy power.

[j] Ps. 18. 40.
[k] Ps. 57. 5, 11. Ps. 108. 5.
[l] Ps. 95. 1.

* *Literally*, "turn their shoulder."

is their malice against Christ, which, as we know, may be shown in the persecution of His people. (Acts ix. 4, and comp. Matt. xxv. 45.) In fact, the Israelitish remnant will be plucked from the very jaws of their adversaries at the appearing of the Lord. (Zech. xiv.) The following verse may well speak of the discomfiture of these baffled foes.

The psalm ends with a prayer that Jehovah would display His strength after this manner; and His people will praise Him for delivering power.

Series 3.

We have now come to the final series of these psalms, the Leviticus part, in which, as in that book, the heart of atonement is laid bare to us, which is indeed, though in so strange a manner, the heart of God Himself: God in His holiness; God in His wondrous love. In both respects the first psalm here declares Him; and the joy of this sounds out to the ends of the earth. In the second psalm, the present ministry of love is dwelt upon, the great Shepherd of the sheep, having been brought again from the dead through the blood of the everlasting covenant, those led of Him find overflowing blessing. In the third psalm, the end is reached: not heaven, for these psalms contemplate, as we know, the earthly people, but what is nearest it on earth, the entrance into Jehovah's house, and standing in His holy place. With this the whole series of Messianic psalms here naturally closes.

Psalm XXII.

The twenty-second psalm is in some respects the most remarkable in the whole book of Psalms. The absorption of the psalmist into the person of Him whom he represents is so complete that from hence arise the difficulties of interpreters, with whom the mere human element has darkened all the glory of the divine. Let the meaning of the first six verses of the psalm be really grasped, there is but One to whom it can refer: David himself is as entirely out of the question as any other. If it be the essence of atonement that is here before us, is it David or any other, save the Christ of God who could make atonement for my sins? Here to look round for any partial anticipation or suggestive circumstances is entirely out of place: the fact here is unique in human history. If the psalm be David's, David is lifted entirely off his feet here, is taken out of all his surroundings, by the power of that Spirit who, he tells us, spake by him, and whose word was on his tongue. And this is an instructive warning, that the Spirit of God is not bound by the limits of the human instrument He is pleased to use. The New Testament applies the psalm thus in the most positive and exclusive way to the Lord Himself; and His adoption of the opening words, with the way in which these are connected in Scripture, and the connection of the psalm itself here with the surrounding psalms, all these unite to fix the interpretation in such a way as that none shall be able to take from it its rightful meaning, except as wresting it manifestly. It is a keystone in the divine foundation upon which the whole structure of truth is built; and God has taken care to have an immovable foundation.

It shows us, as already said, the very essence of atonement, the concord of divine righteousness and grace in the work of the Cross, which it is the very glory of the gospel to proclaim, but which is the result of unique suffering. The foundation of peace is laid in the lowest depths of darkness, that it may support a structure reaching to heaven itself, and giving access to God in confidence and joy of faith. May we enter into all the fullness of what is here opened to us!

The title of this psalm is noteworthy. *Aijeleth Shahar*, which our common version leaves untranslated, means the "hind of the dawn," a very peculiar expression, of which, apart from its context here, one might well doubt the significance. It refers, however, as Delitzsch remarks, according to traditional definition to "the early light preceding the dawn of the morning, whose first rays are likened to the horns of a hind." He adds that "there is a determination of the time to this effect, found both in the Jerusalem and in the Babylonian Talmud, 'from the hind of the morning's dawn till the east is lighted up.'" Nor is the application which is so simple to us as Christians, strange to Jewish exposition. As Delitzsch says again, "Even the synagogue, so far as it recognizes a suffering Messiah, hears Him speak here; and takes the 'hind of the morning' as a name of the Shechina (Israel's glory-cloud), and as a symbol of the dawning redemption." "And the Targum recalls the lamb of the morning sacrifice, which was offered as soon as the watchman on the pinnacle of the temple cried out, 'The first rays of the morning burst forth.'"

Certain it is that this psalm points to the true meeting-place of the darkness and the dawn; and the added figure of the hind, while not directly speaking of sacrifice, suggests naturally the suffering of one chased by the hunters, the picture of meek innocence exposed to the fury of such persecutors as the psalm images by dogs and lions. And yet in a mystery which invites our reverent inquiry, that which is thus connected with the darkness, is no less identified with the uprise of the blessed day. How many tender and wonderful associations are there here for us! And to whom alone do they lead us as the subject of contemplation in this most precious scripture, indited by the Holy Ghost?

I. There are twenty-one verses in the first part of the psalm, which gives us the atoning work itself: a number surely significant, especially when we compare it with the thirty-six verses of the trespass-offering psalm, the sixty-ninth. The trespass-offering, as we have seen when looking at it, is the *governmental* offering, as the idea of restitution in it shows, and that according to a precise estimate of the injury made; and thirty-six—the number of the books of the Old Testament, or "law,"—gives us, as 3 x 12 (the divine and governmental numbers), "God in government." The present psalm speaks of the *sin*-offering, in which the divine nature is in question, not the divine government; and 21 is naturally 3 x 7, the emphatic expression of a divine and perfect work.

It does not follow from this, however, that the subdivision of these twenty-one verses will correspond with this; and, in fact, it does not. There is much else to be expressed, as we shall find; and the minor divisions here are five in number, the verses standing respectively to these as 3.5.3.7.3; the *threes* guiding us to the divine aspect of what is here, as we might suppose. Every feature is perfect, we may be sure. If we are not able to discern it, let us not charge God with what is due to our shortsightedness, and nothing else.

This first division of the psalm is best characterized by one word which at the same time reveals the depth into which the Lord has descended for us, and along with this His glory who could descend there, charged with the fulfillment of all the divine counsels, with the revelation in that utter darkness of all the glory of God; standing where no foot but His could stand, and laying there the foundations of new creation, never to be disturbed; giving the creature steadfast happiness and God His rest. "*Alone*" He did this: in human weakness, yet in divine strength, "alone" in a place where no foot had trodden before, which none will tread again. To Him only could there be such desolation; the very height of His essential majesty made but part of the infinite horror, which no soul beside could have room for but His own. Let us bow our heads—let us challenge the deepest reverence of our hearts—while we gaze but at the outside of that into which we can never enter, even within but its outer margin; which it is the glory of His work to have made it impossible for us ever to enter.

(*a*) In the first three verses the meaning of what follows is declared to us: the nature of the suffering as distinguishing it from all other; the cause of it.

SERIES 3. (Ps. xxii.–xxiv.)
Atonement and its Results.

Ps. xxii.

[1]PSALM XXII.

The concord of divine righteousness and grace through the work of a Unique Sufferer.

To the chief musician, concerning the *m*Hind of the Dawn; a psalm of David.

1 (1–21): Alone.
a (1–3): the ground of the whole.
(1.) why?

[n]MY God,* my God, [o]why hast thou [p]forsaken me?
far from saving me—[from] the [q]words of my groaning!

* In both places "El", elsewhere translated "Mighty."

m cf. Gen. 49. 21 with 1 Cor. 15. 20.
n Matt. 27. 46. Mk. 15. 34. *etr.* Lk. 23. 46.
o cf. Is. 53. 5. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 21.
p cf. Zech. 13. 7. *cf.* Mk. 15. 33. *cf.* Heb. 13. 11, 12.
q cf. Heb. 5. 7.

The Sufferer Himself puts and answers the question. Why is this? And it is strange, indeed, how little has been understood of what is so clearly put before us. Yet not to understand it is to miss the full meaning of atonement itself. The cry here the Lord made His own, as all know, in the hour of His agony upon the Cross, a time exceptional wholly in its character, and not to be confounded with any other in His earthly history. Nowhere else was He the sin-bearer. Not thus in that blessed life of His, which such a shadow would have changed how sorrowfully for us, did He stand in our place, our Substitute, but "bare our sins in His own body *on the tree*." (1 Pet. ii. 14.) Surely, one would imagine, this for Christians scarcely could need statement, much less emphasis; and yet it *does* need. For what does it mean or imply, this bearing of sin? Joy, peace, communion, the light of God's countenance? Or darkness, agony, the awful horror of being "made a curse"? Could these things go on together? Or are they so near akin that one could be confounded with the other?

Here, then, from lips that could not possibly mistake, and in the hour of His greatest need, when rejected, scorned, abused, crucified by man, He needed all the enjoyment of that favor of God, in the sense of which He had walked continually;—here, in the presence of those who in the malice of their hearts were saying, "There is no salvation for Him with God":—here, beyond their uttermost thoughts, as if to justify all that they had done against Him, is His own testimony that God had forsaken Him! Yet He had said beforetime to His enemies, "And He that sent Me is with Me; the Father hath not left Me alone: for I do always the things that please Him." (John viii. 29.) Now was the time which He had seemed to have before Him then: they had with bold and insulting hands "lifted up the Son of Man" (ver. 28); they had, as it were, with their judgment pronounced upon Him, offered Him up to God for His ratification of their deed. "Let Him deliver Him," they said, "if He will have Him": and the heavens had darkened, not (as, after all, they had dreaded) in anger against *them*, but, as His own voice now interpreted it for them, in sign that God had forsaken *Him!*

Yet the voice asked, "Why?" Did He expect, then, some answer from that God who had forsaken Him? But answer had not come: they at least heard none. Still the awful burden hung upon the tree. He had saved others: yes, they knew that! Nevertheless now the hands hung powerless. He could not save Himself. Yet *why* could not He who had saved others save Himself? Had *they* not some interest in that unanswered question of His?

They might have turned back to this twenty-second psalm, and found the answer: He had left the key in the lock, where they (and we) might find it. But it is true that God had forsaken Him: the Mighty One; *His* Mighty One; and power there was not on His side. Plenty of power against Him, and the battle was not to be gained by might at all. Yet it was the crisis of the conflict which had been going on incessantly, ever since man fell away from God. Here was the battle of battles, the sum of all battles,—the strife between good and evil in its fiercest. And here, too, was once more the good apparently pros-

(ii.) the conflict.

My God, I cry in the day-time, and thou answerest not!
and in the [r]night, and cannot be silent.

(iii.) the manifestation.

But thou art [s]holy:
dwelling amid the [t]praises of Israel.

r *cf.* Jno. 13. 30 with Matt. 27. 45. *ctr.* Ps. 42. 8.
s Isa. 6. 3. Isa. 57. 15. Hab. 1. 13 *cf.* Heb. 7. 26 with 2 Cor. 5. 21.
t *cf.* Ps. 150; *cf.* 2 Chr. 20. 21.

trate, defeated, heaven uttering no sound, blood flowing again like Abel's (if so much better than Abel's), which had cried so long unavenged.

But here triumph is defeat: the rule of the battle, "they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Goodness is to conquer by submission and without encouragement;—conquer, not with extraneous aid, but by itself as goodness simply; trusting in a God who gives no sign.

Power can do nothing here for another reason, and a deeper one. Power can create a world or a universe; it cannot cancel sin, cannot act as if God were indifferent to sin, cannot take up the sinner and justify him, or bless him while unjustified. Power in God cannot act, nor love act, as if these were His sole attributes, or could act alone. If God act, He must act with all that He is; nay, if He justify, here it is for righteousness to pronounce: it is its place to do so; questions of righteousness can only be settled by righteousness, and it is written, "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to Jehovah." (Prov. xvii. 15.)

But thus the cry goes up, even from the lips of a Job,—a wail which has no answer: "How shall man be just with God?" (Job ix. 2.) Here One, standing in the place of men, cries with like result. In this awful place heaven is sealed to Him: there is no answer, nor escape from the full exaction of penalty. This is in effect Job's question, though taken up by Another, who, if there be escape, will surely find it. The conflict is real; the agony is intense: to find no way but that the cup must be drunk forces from Him the sweat as it were of great drops of blood, and an angel has to come from heaven to strengthen Him. But to strengthen Him for *what?* Only to go forward from the "day" in which still He could cry "Abba, Father!" into the awful "night" beyond. Even in the garden already, as to the drinking of the cup, He cried and was not heard; and the cross also, as we know, had its "daytime" as well as its "night," when the darkness fell upon it. And there no angel comes! No habitant of heaven comes into the "void" of that "raging deep," where out of darkness light is to be made to shine, but as yet is no ray of it.

There is no answer from God: who else, then, can give it? Listen! It is His own voice amid the still unrelieved darkness,—His voice giving answer to Himself, and proclaiming God in that desolation where He is not, and justifying Him in that awful abandonment which is the supreme agony of His soul.

"But Thou art holy!"

This, then, is the answer "why": it is not something apart from this; it is not what remains true, spite of there being none. *It is the answer itself;* the solution of the mystery; that which gives intelligence as to what is here, and alone gives any proper intelligence. It is *because* of the holiness of God that Christ is in that darkness of which the "darkness over all the land" is but the external sign. It is because "He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look at iniquity" (Hab. i. 13); and because upon Him who is here the true Sin-offering has been laid the iniquity of us all. Thus, and thus alone, it is that He "dwelleth amid the praises of Israel": these two things together more clearly reveal the deeper reality here than the blood on the mercy-seat on the day of atonement did for Israel how the tent of meeting could remain among them in the midst of their uncleanness (Lev. xvi. 16). Yet here is what corresponds, as is plain, with this.

How blessed to think of this lone Sufferer in the outside place contemplating the worship of glowing hearts with which God should encircle Himself forever! Here was Job's question answered for faith forever: man blessed, God glorified

b (4-8): the contrast. (i.) the fathers. (ii.) faith that was not confounded. (iii.) the portion of the Sufferer. (iv.) from man. (v.) the reproach of God's government.

Our [u]fathers trusted in thee:
they trusted, and thou didst [v]deliver them;
They cried unto thee and were delivered:
they trusted in thee and were not [w]confounded.
But I am a [x]worm, and not a man;
a [y]reproach of men, and despised of the people.
All they that see me [z]laugh me to scorn:
they shoot out the lip, they [a]wag the head.
"He trusted in Jehovah,—he will deliver him;
he will rescue him, for he delighted in him."

u cf. Gen. 22. 12. cf. Heb. 11. 32-37.
v Job 4. 7. Ps. 37. 25, 28.
w Ps. 34. 5.
x cf. Job 25. 6. cf. 2 Cor. 8. 9.
y cf. Ps. 69. 7,9,10,19,20. Isa. 53. 3.
z Matt. 27. 29. 39-44.
a Ps. 109. 25; Ps. 69. 12.

for evermore. How plain that only One could fulfill the meaning of this psalm; as only One could stand in the place which is indicated by it.

(*b*) But the nature of this place is further to be made plain, and put in contrast with any other, that any, of even the comparatively righteous among men, had ever occupied. "Our fathers trusted in Thee," the Voice goes on: "they trusted, and Thou didst deliver them." There was no similarity in this forsaking of God to the experience of any in times before this. "*They* cried unto Thee and were delivered; they trusted in Thee, and were not confounded." Yet it had been no strange thing for faith to have its martyrs. If being forsaken of God simply meant the being given up to death at the will of their enemies, there was an abundant record of such martyrs, those "of whom the world was not worthy." To reduce the cross of Christ to this is simply to take out of it that which constitutes true atonement. If this were being "made sin," then not a martyr that ever died but was made sin — or a sin-offering — also. For it is not here a question of the dignity of the Sufferer, but of the place in which He suffered, and this the psalm itself affirms to be perfectly and utterly exceptional. Just this being forsaken of God was for Him the unspeakable difference.

Exceptional it was not for man to suffer and die. Every form of death that one can imagine, perhaps, man has undergone. "But I," says this unique Sufferer, "am a worm, and not a man": gone down to a depth far below that of any man whatever. The word (*tolaath*) applies especially to the coccus from which the scarlet dye of the tabernacle was obtained, of course by its death: in that way, how significant of the One before us! But only as suffering under the judgment of sin could this be true of Him: indeed the word is used (Isa. i. 18) for the color of sin, and that of a heinous kind; and thus the application is still clearer: "He was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Cor. v. 21.)

No act of man could make Him sin for man,— no suffering from men could make atonement with God: that was what was wrought by what passed between God and His burdened soul within that curtained chamber, never to be penetrated by any foot but His, and from which no cry emerges but that one pregnant one, the meaning of which is here revealed as far as may be for the satisfaction of our conscience and the adoring worship of our hearts. What man wrought could only naturally bring judgment upon man. What *He* wrought with God, and God through Him, brings out from the smitten Rock the river of divine, omnipotent grace.

The "reproach of men" pursued Him into this place which He had taken for men, "despised" even "of the people" (Israel) to whom specially He had been sent. Yea, He was the common mockery of all who saw Him. The gospels distinctly note this wagging of the head on the part of those passing by, and the very words of the psalm used by the chief priests with the scribes and elders in their derision of Him. Outwardly it would seem as if it were the government of God that furnished them with this reproach: in fact it was their hardness and unconsciousness of their own desert, as well as of the holiness and mercy of God, which blinded them to the meaning of the scriptures they were so manifestly fulfilling.

c (9-11): the innermost reality. (i.) God His sufficiency. (ii.) His dependence. (iii.) the longing of the heart after Him.

But thou art he that [b]took me out of my mother's womb,
making me confident upon my [c]mother's breasts.
I was cast upon thee from the womb:
from my mother's belly thou hast been my God.*
Be not far from me, for [d]trouble is near:
for there is [e]none to help.
Many [f]bulls have compassed me:
strong ones of Bashan have beset me round:
They opened wide their mouth upon me,
like a [g]lion tearing and roaring.

b Ps. 71. 6. cf. Lk. 1. 35.
c cf. Lk. 2. 40–49.
d cf. Ps. 102. 2.
e cf. Ps. 69. 20.
f Ps. 68. 30.
g Ps. 7. 2. Ps. 10. 9. cf. 1 Pet. 5. 8.

d (12-18): the trial from man. (i.) the strength arrayed. (ii.) for destruction.

* Eli, "my Mighty One."

(*c*) Three verses now show us the inmost heart of the Sufferer, and bring us back to the anguish above all others that He is experiencing. From His birth as Man, God has been His sufficiency and strength. Continuously He has been dependent upon Him. Now in the time of His sore distress, it is for Him that His soul craves. Perfect dependence upon the All-sufficient God: this is the perfection of manhood, and the absolute guarantee of an unstained and spotless life. What leads astray but our own wisdom? What is sin but the working of our own wills? If dependence upon Him were complete, for care, for guidance, for all good, what room would there be for evil or for error? Clearly it would be impossible. Faith, then, is the great work, of necessity; working by love which is implied in confidence such as this. And here was One in whom faith and love were in full possession everywhere, to whom God was all, and who, not having Him, had nothing. Yet in the hour of His distress He cried, and got no answer.

(*d*) We have now, in seven verses, the completeness of His suffering at the hands of man. As to it all, though we may go over it and give, as it were, the items, who can estimate the reality for Him who had not His like in capacity for sorrow, as for apprehension of all that can exist in the human heart? Yet this, after all, was not even part of the peculiar agony which really characterizes the psalm of atonement. Nothing here enters into the cry with which it begins: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

We are called first to realize the strength of the adversaries. They are bulls, with their horned front and reckless rush; strong beasts fed up on the fat pastures of Bashan,— men whom "fullness of bread" had filled with pride and insolence. That Caiaphas, the Sadducee, the unconscious prophet, inspired *consciously* only with the instinct of self-preservation, yet with eyes as dull to eternity as keen to present things, was a type of many more like this. How these would eye this Man of another sphere and another law, so unintelligible to such as they were! And if He were this to them, how terrible indeed would they be to Him, so fallen as they were and debased, that from being men they had become mere beasts of pasture!

But the figure changes, and we have instead of the bull the lion. The bull will crush what is in its way or toss out of it; but the lion *devours*. It is the picture of strength, but along with this of ferocity and rapaciousness,—"like a lion tearing and roaring." His enemies pursue him with a wrath that will be satisfied with nothing less than His destruction. There is a specific hatred toward Him, the opposition of those, not blind, but who "have both seen and hated both Himself and His Father."

And He who meets all this, in what condition is He to endure it? He is come from the agony of the garden; He is facing the worse agony of the Cross. Their "hour" is that of the "power of darkness," and of the forsaking of God. What strength can there be to oppose, when the Father's hand itself is giving Him the cup? His "heart is melted like wax" in the sacrificial fire of wrath against sin.

(iii.) the inner condition of the Sufferer.

Like water I am [h]poured out,
and my bones are all disjointed:
my heart is like wax,
it is melted in the midst of my bowels.

(iv.) weakness.

My [i]strength is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws;
and [j]thou hast laid me in the [k]dust of death.

(v.) exercise.

For [l]dogs have compassed me:
the assembly of evil-doers have inclosed me;
[m]piercing my hands and my feet.

(vi.)*

I may tell all my [n]bones:
they gaze, they stare upon me.

(vii.) complete rejection.

They [o]part my garments among them,
and upon my vesture they cast the lot.

h *cf.* 2 Sam. 14. 14.
cf. Dan. 5. 6.
i *cf.* Ps. 102. 23.
cf. 2 Cor. 13. 4.
j *cf.* Ps. 69. 26.
k *cf.* Lev. 17. 13.
l *cf.* Phil. 3. 2.
cf. Rev. 22. 15.
m *cf.* Jno. 19. 37.
cf. Jno. 20. 20.
n *cfr.* ver. 29.
o Matt. 27. 35. Jno. 19, 23.

* I do not find it easy to characterize this verse according to number, while yet I believe the divine sense of what is here is truly expressed by it. It unites closely with the next verse, while yet distinct. Compare the notes.

Thus His strength fails, His tongue cleaves to His jaws: He is as one already in the dust of death, but in fact alive to realize it, and that it is the hand of God. God, and *not* man, has placed Him where He is.

Then there is the exercise resulting from the floods of iniquity permitted to assail Him. How perfectly man was revealed in the presence of the Cross! "dogs," heartless, shameless, unclean and offal-feeding, hunting in packs like "the assembly of evil-doers" here: gathered by the spectacle of distress unequaled, for which they had no pity, and from which there was no escape: hands and feet pierced, nailed with insufferable agony to the tree of shame!

Exposed—every bone to be counted—to such eyes as these, that gaze and stare and blench not: not ashamed in the presence of their Judge and Maker. Parting among them the garments they have stripped from Him, and casting the lot—in Israel sacred to Jehovah (Prov. xvi. 33)—to decide the ownership of that seamless priestly robe which marks Him as what He is, "the Mediator between God and men," upon whom all the blessing of man depends. But this is, of course, to make the Gospels interpret the psalm, or at least give fullness to the interpretation. Does it not, however, answer well to that final number which stands opposite the verse,—this complete stripping of Christ, in the very insanity of passion and unbelief, of all that shows Him to be—and to be qualified to be—man's tender and compassionate Saviour?

The meaning of the priestly robes has been elsewhere looked at. (Exod. xxviii. *notes.*) But on the day of atonement it was not in the garments of glory and beauty, but in the simple white linen robe of unstained purity, that the high-priest entered the holiest of all. So Christ, in the power of His own perfection, (tested and brought out in the awful place to which He stooped for man) entered the heavens, never to be closed henceforth for us. Was it not, in fact, then, a sign of the most solemn character, men divesting Christ of His raiment, holding Him up thus stripped to the scorn of men? And what more suited to the deed than as it were taking the lot which belonged to God—the sign of His sovereignty even in what man calls "accident"—to dishonor and degrade with it Him for whom God had decreed the highest honor?

Thus the story of the human side of the Cross ends. Man has told himself fully out in it. What more, alas, could be said of him?

(*e*) Thus all has been gone through before God, and it is seen, indeed, how the high-priest enters the holiest in the white seamless robe of perfect righteousness. The time is come for hearing that hitherto unheard prayer; and He is "heard," as it is expressed in the epistle to the Hebrews, "for His piety." (Heb.

e (19–21): the end reached and the answer given. (i.) the appeal to Power. (ii.) salvation to be of God. (iii.) the realization.

2 (22–31): *Not* alone.

a (22–24): in the midst of the congr'n. (i.) Himself begins the praise.

But thou, Jehovah, be not far from me:
my Strength, [p] haste quickly to my help.
Rescue my soul from the [q] sword:
my only one from the paw of the dog.
Save me from the [r] lion's mouth:
yea, from the [s] horns of the aurochs thou hast answered me.

I will [t] declare thy name unto my [u] brethren:
in the midst of the [v] congregation will I praise thee:

p *cf.* Ps. 40. 13.
q *cf.* Zech. 13. 7 with Isa. 34. 6.
r ver. 13. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 17.
s Isa. 34. 7. *cf.* Acts 4. 27.
t Heb. 2. 12. *cf.* Jno. 17. 26.
u *cf.* Jno. 20. 17. *cf.* Rom. 8. 29.
v Ps. 1. 5.

v. 7.) He has gone into the place of utmost probation under the burden and penalty of sin not his own, resigning Himself into the hands of God to suffer according to His will what none beside Himself could suffer. We are permitted to hear now His final appeal to God, and to rejoice in His announcement of the answer, which was made upon the Cross and recorded for us in the gospel of John, where (as in Matthew and Mark the cry of abandonment shows the Lord's entrance into the darkness), the words "It is finished" show His emergence from it. Righteousness now claims His deliverance from the place, where God has been glorified by unfailing obedience on the part of Him who went into it for others, and for the glory of God Himself. "God has been glorified in Him; and if God be glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will straightway glorify Him." (John xiii. 32.)

After the words that speak of the exhaustion of the special "cup," He has indeed to die: for death is part of that which is upon man, which it is given Him by submission to it to lift off. This also is necessary, therefore, for atonement to be complete. But, for His *soul*, what is death, when He can once more cry, "Father," and commit His spirit in peace to Him?—when He can Himself now take power into His hands again, even in dismissing it?*

Once more, then, in this psalm, the appeal is made: "But Thou, Jehovah, be not far from Me!" After all that man has done or can do, and without making light of this, (though it be for man himself that this is so unutterably grave), still Where is God? is the question of questions. To this, therefore, He returns, pleading that God, His strength, shall appear in His behalf. Power He refused for Himself to save Him from this place; "by might can none prevail" when in it. But the victory reached, power at last comes to be necessarily and fully on the Victor's side. "Rescue my soul from the sword; my only one from the power of the dog." This is the deliverance in full, for it involves all else, though it be the outward enemies that are contemplated. "My soul," as we see by its use elsewhere (Num. xxiii. 10), is the equivalent in Hebrew of "*myself*," and "my only one" answers to it in the parallel, though some would give it as "my solitary one," and see in it another reference to what is indeed the controlling thought in all this first part of the psalm. Outcast, however, is the Speaker to be no longer: He has been tried to the utmost; He has committed Himself and all that with which He is identified into the hands of God; the decision is to be from Him; all power is with Him: now from the very horns of the aurochs He is answered.

2. The first part of the psalm is ended: the work is completed, and accepted by God as complete. Blessed be God, He who was alone in the sorrow is not alone in the joy that springs from it: He will never be alone again. The corn of wheat for this has fallen into the ground and died. We are now to see the fruit of it: God's grace is to flow out in widening circles, and the knowledge of the

* The expression in Matthew is really "He *dismissed* (ἀφῆκε) His spirit" (ch. xxvii. 50). See for the comparative place in atonement of death and wrath-bearing, and the way the New Testament speaks of these, the notes on the sin-offering, Lev. iv. (vol. i., p. 289–291).

(ii.) the testimony to Israel.

(iii.) the matter for praise revealed, (which is in fact the resurrection of Christ.)

Ye who [w]fear Jehovah, praise him:
all ye seed of Jacob, glorify him:
and reverence him, all ye seed of Israel.
For He hath [x]not slighted nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted one:
nor hath he [y]hid his face from him;
but when he [z]cried unto him, he heard.

[w] Ps. 34. 2. *cf.* Ps. 40. 3.
[x] *cf.* Rom. 1. 4.
[y] *ctr.* vers. 1, 2.
[z] *cf.* Heb. 5. 7, ver. 21.

Lord to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. In what follows there seem to be three parts: in the first, the Lord is in the midst of the congregation, which at first that of a remnant, widens into the nation of Israel, revived and converted to God; in the second, the "*great* congregation" gathers in from the whole world. In both there utters itself the voice that cried once in forsaken sorrow and was not heard; while the joy that fills all hearts, and the praise that goes up to God on every side spring out of the blessed fact that at last He *was* heard. The work of the Spirit to maintain the truth, and a generation for the Lord as the fruit of it, is given in the third part.

(*a*) In the time of His bitterest distress we have learned how the Lord's heart still could turn to the thought of Jehovah dwelling amid the praises of His people, and we remember that the day of atonement, which is so linked with this precious psalm, emphasizes the same thing. It is no wonder, therefore, that now, immediately His prayer is heard, He is found declaring Jehovah's Name among His *brethren*, and praising in the midst of the congregation. The apostle John it is who gives us the beginning of this in the message entrusted to Mary Magdalene and His after appearance among the gathered disciples. Suited it is that a woman should be the first to have made to her the glorious announcement of His resurrection and its results: "Go and tell *my brethren* that I ascend unto my Father and unto your Father, and to my God and your God."

Here is relationship established and the Divine Name declared; declared *in* relationship, the name of Father, with just that necessary distinction preserved between Himself and His people,—"*my* Father and *your* Father," not "*our* Father," which reminds us of His infinite glory who has been pleased to take us into such kinship with Himself, while it intimates also that it is through Him that this place is given to us. Here is the value of His work told out, and in terms which embrace all the people of God, although saints of the present period are the "first-born ones" (Heb. xii. 23) in this relationship. Blessed it is to know that the greatest blessings are also the widest: just like fresh air and sunlight which, from God's side at least, are free to all. And so the apostle argues that "both He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." (Heb. ii. 11.) How sweet and wonderful to be of the number of those of whom, because of their origin, *He* is "not ashamed"!

The "assembly" here, as being an assembly of this character, has had no fulfillment, except in Christian times. In Judaism there was no gathering of such a nature: the children of God were scattered abroad by the necessity of a legal system which could give no nearness to God in that it could purge no conscience, give no abiding-place to the worshiper before God. Under the new covenant, however, Israel will be an assembly of this character, an assembly of righteous ones in which the ungodly shall no more stand; and to Israel now the psalm goes on. Those who have but "feared" Jehovah hitherto are now to praise Him, *all* Jacob's seed to glorify Him, all Israel's seed to reverence Him. For the way of the Lord is being prepared after Isaiah's manner,—the mountains leveled, the valleys filled. The lowly are to find wondrous exaltation; and the very grace of God is to make Him feared. Blessed, indeed, is the self-abasement produced by the knowledge of the marvelous salvation of the Cross. And so it must be: he who treats this grace lightly can but lightly know it.

For this is, indeed, the subject-matter of this song of praise. It is the song of those who have learned the mystery of this strangely afflicted One, and have found

b (25-29): progress—the great congregation.

(i.) His vows.

(ii.) the humble ministered to.

(iii.) remembrance and return.

(iv.) the creature in the creature place.

Of thee shall be my praise in the [a]great congregation:
I will make good my [b]vows before them that fear him.
The [c]humble shall eat and be full.
they shall [d]praise Jehovah that fear him:
your heart shall live for aye.
All the [e]ends of the earth shall remember and turn to Jehovah:
and all the families of the nations shall worship before thee.
For the [f]kingdom shall be Jehovah's,
and he shall be ruler among the nations.

a Ps. 35. 18.
b *cf.* Ps. 116. 14.
c *cf.* Ps. 69. 32.
d Ps. 33. 1.
e *cf.* Ps. 45 12. *cf.* Isa. 49. 6. *cf.* Isa. 60. 3.
f Ps. 24. 10.

in His afflictions the judgment of sin before a holy God; yet have found, too, in the answer of God to Him the way discovered by which the righteousness of God is declared, and His love at the same time made known. Christ risen was, in fact, this answer; and the gospel now to go forth to the ends of the earth. Christ risen and exalted is now the Revealer of God in His full glory,—all the "glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

(*b*) Israel brought thus to God, her fruit has the seed in itself for the nations of the earth. The grace shown to her is "life from the dead" to these. Thus the glorious Voice is heard in a wider sphere. The "great congregation" of millennial nations becomes the sphere in which Christ fulfills His "vows" of glorifying Jehovah. Yet we cannot but notice that there are lacking apparently the fullness and intimacy of that first declaration of Jehovah's Name which takes place within the smaller circle. Nor is it difficult to account for this. *Israel* will be entirely a congregation of the righteous, as we have so often been assured; but we have been equally assured that such will *not* be the condition of the nations beyond. With many here there will be still but a forced semblance of worship,—obedience rendered because it dare not be withheld; sin will be restrained, and yet not banished; and the final outbreak, when Satan is let loose, will be a terrible one.

Hence not yet can there be an unchecked flow of blessing, such as eternity has in store for all the redeemed. And the words here seem to indicate a certain lack of response, as a whole, which acts necessarily as a restraint upon the communications of His love: "I will make good my vows *before* them that fear Him."

Yet there is abundant blessing for those who *do* respond, while its limitation to a certain character—always, of course, true—is yet here insisted on with an emphasis which is obvious. "The *humble* shall eat and be full; they shall praise Jehovah that fear Him." The reference is, doubtless, as Delitzsch observes, to the peace-offering which accompanied vows; and here Messiah's vows furnish forth, indeed, a royal banquet upon which, in communion, the humble feed to fullest satisfaction. "Your heart shall live for aye," becomes thus the assurance of the Entertainer to the guests,—an assurance full of blessing.

And this is the voice of recall to man, so long a wanderer: "all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to Jehovah: and all the families of the nations shall worship before Thee." And so shall come the universal kingdom, the creature in the creature-place with God,—just to keep which is perfect blessing.

For this the pride and self-satisfaction of man may well come down: "the fat upon the earth have eaten and worship." What are they, apart from Him, but "those going down to the dust"? and on account of which *He* went Himself to the grave: He "who did not preserve alive His own soul." * This joy and worship of men under condemnation, and who owe their all to His blessed work, is indeed a recompense of love like His,—"the fruit of the travail of His soul."

* An interpretation which Pridham says "is due, I believe, originally to Mr. Boys."

(v.) Messiah's recompense.

c (30, 31) the setting apart a seed to proclaim this.

(i.) the seed of the Lord.

(ii.) the testimony.

All the [g]fat upon earth have eaten and worship:
all those going down to the dust shall kneel before him,
—even [him who] [h]did not preserve alive his soul.
A [i]seed shall serve him:
it shall be reckoned to the Lord for a generation.
They shall come and shall declare [j]his righteousness,
to the people to be [k]born,—because he hath [l]done [this].

g *cf.* Ps. 72. 11.
h *cf.* Jno. 10. 18.
i *cf.* Isa. 6. 13. *cf.* Zech. 13. 7–9.
j *cf.* Rom. 3. 21, 22.
k Ps. 102. 18.
l Ps. 118. 23.

(*c*) The closing part here shows the provision God has made for the perpetual preservation of this upon the earth. Alas, be the work all that it really is, and its fruit ever so necessary and glorious for men, yet except there be a corresponding work of the Spirit, and in sovereign power, there will be no effect. But God has purposed to glorify His Son, and that He should be the Firstborn among many brethren. The announcement of this suitably ends the psalm of atonement. "A seed *shall* serve Him: it shall be counted to the Lord for a generation." Literally, "*the* generation": that, I suppose, which is indeed such: a people begotten of God, although the full expression of that thought waits for the New Testament. But they are *reckoned* as His: He owns them such; and with them it lies to maintain the testimony of the grace they have experienced: "they shall come and shall declare His righteousness to a people that shall be born, because He has done this."

This again comes very near the language of the New Testament. The apostle Paul it is that has taught us that a central truth of the gospel is "the righteousness of God." It is this which the sinner dreads, which the gospel reveals to be for him through the work of the Cross. The righteousness of God as against sin that Cross proclaims (Rom. iii. 25, 26); and equally as against a world that knows not the Father, by His being taken out of it, to be seen by them no more. (John xvi. 10.) But this involves the answer of the psalm before us, and the acceptance of that work to fulfill which He hung upon the tree. And thus Divine righteousness it is that has a gospel for us. (Rom. i. 16, 17.) Justification can be by righteousness alone, and the justification of the ungodly only by penalty in fact endured. (Rom. iii. 21–24.) Then, Christ dying for the ungodly, the acceptance of the sinner on the ground of this is really righteousness: "He was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Cor. v. 21.)

Thus the psalm of atonement, though it comes too early for God to speak fully out, touches in its closing strain the very keynote of the gospel.

Psalm XXIII.

The apostle prays for the Hebrew Christians to whom he writes, that "the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, may make" them "perfect in every good work to do His will." (Heb. xiii. 20, 21.) Coming after the story of atonement,—the blood of the everlasting covenant,—we have no difficulty in recognizing Christ, brought again from the dead, as the Divine Shepherd of His people now.

Like the latter part of the previous psalm, the present speaks of salvation as the fruit of the Cross. There it was its *extensive* value, reaching out to the ends of the earth, and from generation to generation upon the earth. Here its value is *intensive*, affecting the individual life,—comforting, renewing, fortifying the believing soul,—leading it on from present communion with its Saviour-Lord, even amid opposition and hostility, to dwell in Jehovah's house where no power of the enemy can penetrate, no distracting voice can mar the sabbatic rest.

Yet even in this spiritual idyll, of which Christian sentiment has so completely possessed itself, there is sufficient witness that its *primary* application is

Ps. xxiii.

1 (1-3): Unchanging care. (i.) sufficiency. (ii.) sustenance.

[2]PSALM XXIII.

Salvation in progress.

A psalm of David.

JEHOVAH is my [m]shepherd:
I shall not [n]want.
He maketh me [o]lie down in [p]green pastures:
he [q]leadeth me beside [r]quiet waters.

m Is. 40. 11. Jno. 10. 11. Heb. 13. 20.
n Phil. 4. 19. Ps. 34. 9.
o Matt. 11. 28.
p Ezek. 34. 14.
q *cf.* Rev. 7. 17.
r *cf.* Isa. 8. 6.

not Christian; and this is seen, of course, most plainly just where the end is contemplated, even though that end be Jehovah's house. For this — interpreted for us as it is in the psalm following, is not a heavenly but an earthly portion, and quite distinct from that "*Father's* house" which the Lord has left to be the hope of His people now, even though, and most clearly because, the one is the type of the other.

It is plain that even in the gospel of John itself (ch. ii. 16) the *temple* is spoken of by the Lord as His "Father's house." That house, though for the time destroyed, is to exist again and to continue on through those millennial times, beyond which the book of the Psalms never carries us. The same prophetic scriptures which anticipated that desolation, now so long realized, look on to the glorious restoration of what is always regarded as the same house. (Mic. iii. 12; iv. 2.) But these were but "patterns of things in the heavens," and "figures of the true" (Heb. ix. 23, 24), and it is in this way the Lord uses them in those memorable words which have shone ever since for the hearts of pilgrims, bright with the glory of that other sphere.

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you." (John xiv. 2.)

In the earthly house there were chambers of small size for the priests and Levites (1 Chron. xxviii. 11-13) as they came up to serve in their courses; and to these, but by way of contrast, the word translated "mansions" refers. It is a noun derived from the verb "to abide,"* much used in the gospel, which emphasizes the eternal and divine; itself only once used besides, where it is said, "We will come unto him, and make Our *abode* with him" (xiv. 23). The chambers of the temple were only for temporary use; the mansions are abodes for eternity. The first are earthly; the latter heavenly. These are "where," He says, "I AM": His eternal dwelling-place; and therefore He comes to receive us there.

The prior application of this psalm to an Israelitish remnant does not, of course, in the least deprive us of our own right in it, to whom belong the antitypes of Israel's earthly inheritance, and who rightly read in it for ourselves the fuller and higher blessings. This method of interpretation of the psalms, as of the Old Testament at large, only enhances their preciousness; while it neither takes from God's ancient people what is theirs, nor confounds the dispensations by attributing to one the characteristics of the other.

1. As with the first psalm, the six verses divide into two sections of three verses each; the first of which dwells upon the unchanging care of the Unchanging God, Jehovah, the Shepherd of His people, to us made known in the tender intimacy of manhood. To know Him aright in this relationship He has taken toward us is to be at rest: "Jehovah is my Shepherd: I shall not want." To prophesy here is easy and safe. Here can be no lack of power, of wisdom, or of love. Anxiety is only unbelief: faith is happiness, in exact proportion to its simplicity. It is no question of what we are, of our ability to meet anything that may arise: confidence in ourselves is only that which robs Him of His glory, who is Saviour to the uttermost, and has pledged to us that word by which

* μονή, from μένω, unhappily disguised by various renderings in our common version: "abide, dwell, continue, remain, endure."

(iii.) restoration for His name.

He [s]restoreth my soul:
he leadeth me in paths of [t]righteousness for his name's sake.

[s] *cf.* Jno. 21. 15-19.
[t] Ps. 5. 8.

heaven and earth are sustained in being. The terms of the new covenant admit no intrusion of creature assurance among the glorious "I wills" of a covenant God.

But there is the experience which surely follows to him who walks with God. "I am the Door: by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." Here is the soul's answer to that: "He maketh me lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside quiet waters." The words picture peaceful enjoyment of that which the Spirit of God ministers in unfailing freshness to the soul. The sheep, like other ruminants,—the clean animals of the law,—does not simply swallow its food and make an end of it. Lying down at rest, the gathered food is brought up again and deliberately and perfectly triturated and reduced. How much this process counts for with God, the Mosaic law bears emphatic testimony. The spiritual reality it is, of course, that counts. The lying down is not mere rest, but has to do with the assimilation of that which these "green pastures" indicate, and to which the "quiet waters" add how greatly! Restful employment with the soul-satisfying treasures of God's word, divinely provided, divinely ministered,—how little does it characterize even the people of God in the present day! And how little "clean" are their ways and thoughts, by reason of this!

But then, too, "He restoreth my soul,"—*not* simply He refreshes or renews it, but brings it back from wandering, as the parallelism seems to assure us: for "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake." These last words give us the principle of these tender and holy ways,—a principle which guarantees their consistency absolutely. He does this "*for His Name's sake.*" His Name is that by which we know Him; it is the manifestation of what He is. God desires to be known by us: known, that we may trust Him; known, that we may delight ourselves in Him. This knowledge of God is that which is all power and blessing for our lives here,—that which awakes and sustains the worship of eternity. If He who is light and love is acting thus in us to make us the vessels of this display of Himself, how gladly should we yield ourselves up to Him for it! How perfectly confident may we be as to the result!

The "restoration" of the soul, as connected with His leading us in righteous paths, would naturally be, therefore, correction by His grace of that continual tendency to wander, which the more we "hunger and thirst after righteousness" the more we shall discover and confess to be in us. How greatly we are His debtors for this "keeping" grace of His, eternity alone will tell. Our resource is that tender ministry of His which He invites us to receive, not simply when we are conscious of straying, but when we may be still unconscious. The dust of evil settles easily, and without giving alarm, in a world in which Satan is "the prince of the power of the air"; and the mirror of conscience becomes quickly dimmed. Thus our constant need of recourse to Him who, girded and ready, desires to use the water and the towel on our behalf, and whose word is, "Except *I* wash thee, thou hast no part with Me." Was it because *they* knew the need? or because *He* knew it? And the words with which we come to Him are not, "Lord, I have searched and tried myself, and I *have seen*," but rather, "Search *me*, O Lord, and try me; and *see* if there *be* any wicked way in me; and lead me in the way everlasting." (Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24.)

Does any one imagine this is legality, to affirm the constant need we have of Him? No; this continual recourse to Him is perfect happiness. To be kept in His presence, to be made to realize this perfect and holy love, is a precious necessity. If we feel it humbling, all the more do we need it. The life which we have in Him is in all its practical manifestations a life of dependence; and in dependence is it nurtured and sustained. "And when He has found it, He layeth it upon His shoulders, rejoicing." This is a text upon the care of the

2 (4-6): in view of enemies.

(i.) peace.

Even [u]though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death, I will fear no evil:
for thou art [v]with me:
thy [w]rod and thy [x]staff, they [y]comfort me.

u *cf.* Acts 17. 24, 25.
v Isa. 43. 2.
w *cf.* Ex. 4. 17, 20.
x *ctr.* 2 Ki. 18. 21.
y *cf.* 2 Cor. i. 3, 4.

good Shepherd indited from the lips of the Shepherd Himself. Shall *we* do less than rejoice, that we are to be kept thus by His grace and power,—always the burden upon His heart and arm?

2. We have in the second part of the psalm the difficulties of the way before us, though fully met, and in the end leaving not a mote in the summer sunshine of the soul. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of death-shade, I will fear no evil." The valley of death-shade is the world as darkened with that which is the sentence upon man universally, and of which the law of necessity rather deepened the shadow than removed it. We have heard already (Ps. vi. 5) the apprehension of saints in Israel in view of death; very different indeed from the assurance expressed here: and by this we may better appreciate the change which the knowledge of atonement has brought in. There is absolute contrast between the former "in death there is no remembrance of thee," and the thankful acknowledgment now, "Thou art ever with me." Yes, there is remembrance, and more than remembrance: there is the presence, and not the mere memory, of the Beloved of the heart. This shall never be lacking. The sun that permits not darkness shall never go down. The Good Shepherd will not leave to itself the sheep that He has recovered, and whose recovery has caused Him such delight of love.

It is not, however, to be understood as if death alone were in question here. This may well stand rather as the concrete expression for all that which stamps the world as fallen away from God. Death is that which speaks God's necessary dissatisfaction with it, while yet He lingers over it in patient love. And the Cross is the fullest confirmation of both these things: at once His judgment of it and His salvation for it. The sin and its attendant misery have indeed brought out this love in completest utterance, so as to make the song of the redeemed in response the highest and the fullest praise of all.

The humanity of Christ is the assurance of the truth from man's lips here, "Thou art ever with me"; and in what follows—"Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me"—while the original figure of the shepherd suggests the language, it would seem as if the full truth had burst through this envelope, and we were made to feel the human tenderness which sought its objects among the sons of men. The rod, it is true, is still the symbol of authority; but the "staff" is, according to the derivation, "what one leans upon," and can hardly apply to the Shepherd in this way, though it be still *His* staff. It is His word which is thus the stay of the soul; that which, going with us into the furnace of trial, is proved by the same furnace as we ourselves are. Every believer's experience is full of assurance as to this.

But the "rod" is no less a comfort: to be "under authority," and taking the road marked out by Him: knowing that the "sea" will part its waters at His bidding, and Amalek will be defeated as He stretches it forth; knowing also that the discipline of it is the tenderness of His love, and that the lion and the bear have fallen under it already. Who would be without that rod which is the necessary accompaniment of His presence, who is Master in every place in which He is found, and over every circumstance of the varying path?

The figure changes once again, and the Shepherd-Lord becomes the Host. How many figures must be used to "set the Saviour forth"! "Thou spreadest a table for me in the presence of mine enemies." There is quiet satisfaction and communion which the foes may look upon, dumb and without ability to disturb it. "Thou anointest my head with oil"—as was done for the banquet; "my cup runneth over:" no element is lacking to make the joy complete: it is the anticipation of the eternal blessedness when there shall be enemies no longer.

(ii.) overflowing abundance.

(iii.) the soul's dwelling-place.

Thou spreadest me a [z]table in the [a]presence of mine enemies:
thou [b]anointest my head with oil; my cup [c]runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall [d]follow me all the days of my life:
and I will [e]dwell in Jehovah's house to [f]length of days.

z ctr. Ps. 78. 19.
a cf. Phil. 1. 12-18.
b Ps. 92. 10. *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 20.
c cf. Ps. 16. 5. *cf.* Eph. 3. 17-20.
d cf. Heb. 13. 6.
e Ps. 27. 4; *cf.* Jno. 14. 2. *f cf.* Rev. 3. 12.

Already they are as if they were not. In the East, when any one has assumed in this way the place of the host, he has by this fact assumed at the same time the protection of his guest; and this is what is implied in the words here. How precious and ample the assurance thus given by communion with the King of kings! Anointed with the Spirit of God, sharing the fullness of the divine store with Him whose love has opened all its blessing to me, surely my cup will overflow, and lips and life bear testimony to the grace that has done this for me! It is the pledge as well as the anticipation of the joy to come; and so we are taught to argue:—

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in Jehovah's house to length of days."

This introduces the subject of the following psalm, and closes the present with the foretaste of the fullest bliss conceivable by the soul. For us the blessing is, as already said, to be enjoyed in a higher sphere than could be known by the Israelite. "The Father's house"! what does it mean for us? All that we know of joy already must go into the conception; then to be expanded on every side,—all limits and all that would seem contradictory taken away; leaving then the consciousness that but a shadow of the substance has been reached, a knowledge which, face to face with the reality, will be accounted none. Yea, "he that thinketh that he knoweth anything, knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know."

Psalm XXIV.

The last psalm of the series is self-evidently now before us: we cannot go beyond the dwelling in Jehovah's house; and this is worthily the third psalm of the third section of the nine which open the third division of this Psalm-Genesis. It is the fruit of atonement. It is the expression of that love which has sought man, which in the depth of his need atonement expresses. Christ down here, a man amongst men, has made the grace of it as simple as it is yet ineffable. In the new earth, and so eternally, the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and He will dwell with them. (Rev. xxi. 3.) The present psalm does not reach as far as this: no psalm does; it is millennial, but in principle the same. God has chosen Zion to be the place of His rest forever (Psalm cxxxii. 13, 14); and though its present desolation may seem a long argument against this, He will yet fulfill His purpose. "I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation; and Jehovah shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even forever."* (Mic. iv. 7.) Thus the end of the seventy weeks of Daniel, which is to bring in the blessing for his people and his holy city, anoints the Most Holy Place. (Dan. ix. 24.) But the city itself, like the camp in the desert of old, will be canopied by the cloud of glory, the sign of Jehovah's presence: for "Jehovah will create upon every dwelling-place on Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flame of fire by night." (Isa. iv. 5.) This, by the very terms of it, is not the eternal state; but it is the prelude of it.

The subject of the psalm is plainly the character of those that draw near to God, a people, as the sixth verse would show, not wholly Israelitish; and this is simple, if in the first we understand—what is certainly the fact—that the whole

* *Le-olam va-ed:* the strongest expression for eternity in the Old Testament.

Ps. xxiv.

1 (1-5): Creator-Father.
(i.) the whole earth His.
(ii.) who hath established it in separation from the waters.
(iii.) who shall dwell with Him?

[3]PSALM XXIV.

The dwellers in Jehovah's house, and Jehovah entering it.

A psalm of David.

THE [g]earth is Jehovah's, and the fullness of it:
the habitable world, and they that [h]dwell therein.
For he hath [i]founded it upon the seas,
and established it upon the floods.
[j]Who shall ascend to Jehovah's hill?
and who shall stand in his holy place?

g Ex. 19. 5. 1 Cor. 10. 26.
h *cf.* Isa. 40. 15-17.
i Gen. 1. 9. Job 38. 6, 8-11.
j Ps. 15. 1. Isa. 33. 14, 15.

earth is now become His, His name owned everywhere in it. In the last part Jehovah of hosts enters the sanctuary as manifested "King of glory." The bringing in of the ark to Zion in David's time would naturally seem to be the occasion of the psalm,—*as* naturally made a prophecy of the fuller and abiding blessing in the time yet to come.

1. The history of Israel and of the earth are inseparably bound up together. The national promises are to be fulfilled to them on earth, and their blessing involves that of the earth at large. As the Christian Church is the "church of the first-born ones written—enregistered—in heaven" (Heb. xii. 23), Israel is God's first-born (Ex. iv. 22) upon earth; and in both cases this term "*first*-born" implies a wider relationship. God as seen in Israel is the "God of the whole earth," though, because of sin, redemption here also must make it good, and to know it fully, the earth itself must pass by regeneration (Matt. xix. 28) and, as it were, bodily reconstruction (2 Pet. iii. 10–13) into the eternal glory of the "new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness."

In this breadth, and under these conditions, God appears in Israel as the Creator-Father; and in the first verse claims as Jehovah the whole world as His. The time is come of that "regeneration" of which the Lord has spoken; and now "the earth is Jehovah's, and the fullness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein." And He has the best of titles to it: "for He hath founded it upon the seas, and established it over the floods."

We see, of course, that it is of that dry land which upon the third day God separated from the waters, and called "earth," that the psalmist is speaking; and not of the earth as a globe. Plainly this foundation is a separation, and the water has ever since been working at this earth of God's establishment, seeking, as it were, to overthrow it; but has not been able. Apt type it is, this struggle, of the fortunes of His people, against whom the strife of centuries has been waged, to overthrow the barrier of God's purpose with which He has hedged them round, and could not. Now is in fact in Israel the time of that later psalm (the ninety-third) in which they sing of the rebuke of such waters which have risen up against the throne of God:—

"Thy throne is established of old:
Thou art from everlasting.
The floods have lifted up, Jehovah,
the floods have lifted up their voice:
the floods lift up their waves.
Jehovah on high is mightier than the noise of many waters:
yea, than the mighty waves of the sea."

Not without such significance is it here that Jehovah has founded the earth upon the seas, and established it over the floods. The reckless will of man has met its rebuke from God, and what is to be fruitful for Him is rescued from the destroyer. What more natural than this as the introduction to the question which follows? Rampant evil has been put down: "who" now "shall ascend into Jehovah's hill? and who shall stand in His holy place?" The answer is evident: it is he who has clean hands and a pure heart,—the practical life no Pharisaism, but the real index of the man himself,—"who has not *lifted up* his

(iv.) their practical character.
(v.) the recompense.
2 (6): The remnant.

He that is [k]clean of hands and pure of heart;
who hath not lifted up his soul to [l]falsehood,
nor sworn [m]deceitfully.
He shall receive the blessing from Jehovah,
and [n]righteousness from the God of his salvation.

This is the generation of them that seek him,
that [o]seek thy face, O [p]Jacob.

k 2 Sam. 22. 21. Matt. 5. 8.
l Ps. 4. 2.
m Ps. 15. 4.
n *cf.* Ps. 22. 31.
o Ps. 27. 8. Isa. 2. 2, 5.
p Isa. 41. 14.

soul to vanity," (for it is pride that most of all connects and ends with this: as one has said, "the moment we step out of our nothingness, we step into it,") "nor sworn deceitfully."

The recompense follows: "He shall receive the blessing from Jehovah, and righteousness from the God of his salvation." The preceding psalms have given us the ability to interpret this aright. Righteousness absolutely, as we know, in himself can no man find, nor therefore can God award it. Righteousness in a mere comparative way will not do for the presence of God. For this there must come in two things: one of these has been already before us; the other is not revealed clearly in the Old Testament at all. One is the work *for* men—atonement; the other is the work *in* men, the communication of a divine nature, perfect in itself as such, though with many hindrances in this life to its perfect manifestation. In both these ways the righteousness is indeed a gift received from the God of our salvation. From first to last all is of grace, and thus of God, more perfectly than the Old Testament could express it; and we cannot be wrong in reading into it from the fuller revelation what is necessary for its perfect explanation. So read, we can understand how God is true to the requirement of His own character, while yet it is grace all through that alone can be man's sufficiency.

This is the true end of this section of the psalm, although the verse that follows seems, and really is, so closely connected with it. But it is not, in its significance, a real sixth, as the remainder of the psalm is not, what in that case it would have to stand for, a second section. The sixth verse is in fact itself the second section; and has in that position much more to tell us than merely, what is so clearly evident, that those now described are those who are given to stand before Jehovah.

2. The parallelism of this verse does not seem at first sight a true one; and as a consequence, the margin of our common version has seemed to some at least practically right. "This is the generation of them that seek Him (Jehovah): of them that seek Thy face, O [God of] Jacob." But so important a change would have to be supported by more authority than the two MSS. adduced for it, even though aided by the Septuagint and Peshito versions. It is too easy, too likely to be read in by one freely translating.

On the other hand, "Jacob" can hardly be taken as the name of those who seek their God. Its place in the sentence is awkward to convey this meaning, as the name itself seems unsuited to the connection. Taken in the simplest way of reading it, the verse is also most intelligible,—indeed, perfectly clear. God dwells in Jacob—will do so in those coming days to which the psalm refers: those who seek His dwelling-place necessarily therefore seek the people among whom He dwells. And they are Jacob,—such as owe this distinguishing privilege, not to goodness in themselves, but to grace in Him; grace which invites the approach of those to whom in like manner grace can be the only plea.

The consequence follows that not the tribes of Israel alone but Gentiles also are contemplated here; probably Israel in the first clause, "them that seek Him," and Gentiles in the second, those who seek Jacob's face. And this distinction gains support from the *different* words used for "seek" in these two clauses. The first, *darash*, means, primarily, to "tread a place, *i. e.*, to go or come to it, to frequent," thus implying common, habitual recourse, as of those near to and acquainted with God. While the second, *baqash*, means rather "to

3 (7–10): The manifestation.
a (7, 8): Jehovah, the Mighty God. (i.) the summons of the King. (ii.) mighty in war.
b (9, 10) Jehovah of hosts. (i.) the summons of the King. (ii.) the question answered.

[q] Lift up your heads, ye gates:
and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors;
and the [r] King of glory shall come in.
Who is this King of glory?
Jehovah, [s] strong and mighty; Jehovah, mighty in
[t] war.
Lift up your heads, ye gates:
and lift them up, ye everlasting doors,
and the King of glory shall come in.
Who is this King of glory?
[u] Jehovah of hosts: he is the King of glory.

q Isa. 26. 2. *cf.* Heb. 9. 24.
r cf. Ps. 2. 6.
s Ps. 50. 1.
t Ex. 15. 3. Ps. 68. 1.
u Ps 46. 7, 11.

seek that which is uncertain and doubtful, with desire of obtaining, and with care and attention." Thus the words exactly suit the respective cases; and all this is again in accordance with the opening of the psalm, in which Jehovah claims, as we have seen, the whole earth as His. Thus the words of the Lord by Isaiah are fulfilled: "Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to Jehovah, to serve Him, and to love the name of Jehovah, to be His servants . . . even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt-offerings and sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." (Isa. lvi. 6, 7.)

This second section shows us, therefore, the extension of the class of accepted worshipers beyond the nation of Israel, and that, as was said of Cornelius, "in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him." (Acts x. 35.)

3. We are now made to see Jehovah Himself enter His temple, to rest at last, after the long strife is over, the glorious King, so long refused or ignored, now clothed with irresistible might. The gates are challenged that had been shut against Him, and bidden to lift up their heads to admit a more exalted Visitant than ever they had known before. The answering question comes, however, as if they who gave it were still unconscious of His majesty, "Who is this King of glory?" To which again it is replied, "Jehovah strong and mighty; Jehovah mighty in war." No doubt, as Delitzsch puts it, the reference here may have been to the conquest of Zion by David in the power of God. But this, as we have seen elsewhere, has also its typical significance (see 2 Sam. v. 6, *notes*); and the psalm looks onward to the fulfillment of the type. The true David has come forth, the Christ in divine glory, and yet as the apocalyptic Rider on the white horse (Rev. xix. 11), the Warrior-King. He has shown Himself for the deliverance of His people and of the earth, "Jehovah mighty in war." The hostile powers of the nations have been smitten down, and the victory is achieved which has made peace—a long peace—possible. He has scattered the people that delight in war. The Jebusites, the "treaders down," are they that have been trodden down, and Zion is now to be His "fixed" abode.

So the reiterated appeal is made: "Lift up your heads, ye gates; and lift them up, ye everlasting doors! and the King of glory shall come in." But from the gates yet again the question comes: "Who is He, this King of glory?" As when of old, in the presence of the risen Lord, the disciples "believed not for joy, and wondered," so here the wondrous truth is too great for sudden admittance; it is not easy for the gates to lift themselves so high. But it must be: His grace will take no denial; with the magnificence of His universal title He will put down all resistance to His will. Listen, long desolate Zion! Listen, O earth, planet that hast been indeed a "wanderer" among the stars, lost prodigal, darkened with the dust of thy servitude, and stranger to the heart of God: there is to be merriment and gladness over thee, restored prodigal, brought back into the brotherhood of stars that shine forever. Listen: "Jehovah of hosts! HE is the King of glory."

Sec. 2.

There follows in the second section once more a series of remnant psalms, in which their experiences and exercises are told out as before, but into which now the apprehension of divine grace enters in a manner before unknown. This shows again in how orderly a manner the psalms are grouped; and the number of them here bears striking witness to it. For as we have had in each of the two preceding subdivisions *five* such psalms, testifying by their number to their character as giving the exercises of the heart under divine government, this number is here found *multiplied* by that number *three*, which, intensified by *self*-multiplication, characterises the Messianic psalms preceding as manifesting God. There are now *fifteen* instead of *five;* and these are actually divided into 3 x 5: the first five giving the ground of the soul's confidence in God; the second five, the salvation itself, in its detail of various blessing; while the third maintains the holiness of God, both in His judgment of the wicked and in His grace to the saint. Thus the section as a whole gives the witness of faith to the salvation already announced: there seen objectively, it is now subjectively experienced.

Series 1.

The grounds of the soul's confidence are first of all put before us. First of these, we have necessarily the righteousness of God in grace, which atonement has established as the principle of His ways with those who turn to Him. All is surely in place here. Yet we must not look for the same apprehension of the gospel as is found under the full revelation of it now. Principles may be accepted without the knowledge of their complete application; and the blessedness of a place in Christ remained in Old Testament times a mystery still unrevealed (Eph. iii. 5, 6). The foundation has been laid upon which the whole superstructure of blessing shall in due time be built: the building upon it we must not expect to find as yet in an advanced state. We are here in the midst of a remnant of Israel, not a company of Christians, dowered with the witnessing "Spirit of adoption." But this difference we shall be better able to appreciate as we go through these psalms.

Psalm XXV.

God's grace apprehended by the soul brings it the light which manifests it to itself, and opens the heart for its reception. So "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (Jno. i. 17). And so in the thirty-second psalm we find the one "to whom the Lord will not impute sin" is (as a consequence) one "in whose spirit there is no guile." This is simple enough to understand: we cannot refuse confidence, where love like this invites it. And thus it is that in this psalm first we find the full and unreserved confession of sin. God, it is seen, acts "for His name's sake,"—to declare what He is: and it can thus be pleaded, "Pardon mine iniquity: *for it is great.*" The greatness of the iniquity will only magnify the grace that puts it away. He to whom much is forgiven, the same will love much. Thus fullest grace is what does—and alone does—the work of holiness: the heart set free is bound forever to God by the deliverance.

The psalm is alphabetic, two letters being omitted, however,—*vau* and *koph*, answering numerically to 6 and 100*; in place of which *resh* (200) has two verses, and one verse with *pe* is added at the end; or else *tau*, the final letter, is to be taken as a two-versed section. But we shall be better able probably to inquire as to the significance of these changes, as we go through the psalm. Meanwhile the imperfect alphabet may remind us of the imperfection cleaving to all human apprehension of divine grace, and which is manifest in the psalm itself, while a defective life will be the sure accompaniment of this defective apprehension. All human failure—all the blots and disfigurements of a Christian life—are traceable to this: as surely as it is written, "Sin shall not have dominion over

* Each letter in the Hebrew standing also for a numeral, as in the Greek alphabet.

SEC. 2. (Ps. XXV.-XXXIX.)
The Testimony of Faith in this Salvation.

SERIES 1. (Psalms XXV.-XXIX.)
The grounds of confidence.

Ps. xxv.

1 (i-3): The Faithful and Unchangeable.

(i.) a cry to Jehovah.

(ii.) The plea of faith.

[1]PSALM XXV.

Righteousness in grace.

[A psalm] of David.

(*Aleph.*)
UNTO [v]thee, Jehovah,
I lift up my soul.
(*Beth.*) My God, I have [w]trusted in thee; let me not be [x]ashamed:
let not mine [y]enemies exult over me!

v Lam. 3.41.
w *cf.* Ps.16.1 with Heb. 12. 2.
x Ps. 31. 1. Rom.10.11.
y Ps. 35. 19. Ps. 27. 2.

you, because ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. vi. 14). Most important it is to realize this.

A common thought is that at least the *unbalanced* apprehension of grace tends to license; and in proof they would quote Jude's comment upon those who "turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness." But Jude's word is better translated "*changing* the grace of God;" and he is speaking, not of erring saints, but of "ungodly men." The common conception is that it is grace itself which, by an unguarded use of it,—a want of putting it under due conditions,—becomes thus capable of injuring the soul that too frankly and unreservedly commits itself to it. This is a great error, and one that leads to most mischievous results. One might as well think that too much holiness leads to wickedness, or too entire love to God to the casting off of holy fear of Him.

When the apostle speaks of the dominion of sin being taken away from the soul under grace, he is clearly speaking of this very apprehension of grace. He goes on to show us the contrary effect of law, and plainly to one apprehending himself under it. The effect is the discovery of a law of sin to which he is in bondage: thus sin *has* dominion for the man under law.

Grace is the opposite of law, and the *effect* is therefore the exact opposite. It is the antidote to the law of sin, the setting free from bondage to it: it is power for holiness, inasmuch as it establishes the sovereignty of God over us: God who is "love," and whose kingdom in the heart can only be realized as the heart is laid hold of for Him—is bound to Him by every faculty of its being. This is what faith produces—the response of the heart to the grace that seeks us,—the grace that in Christ has revealed God in His glory to us, so that He should *be* God: the light in which we see light evermore.

"Grace reigns"—is sovereign, absolute, to the children of God. *Not* to the setting aside of government, of holy government, but the very contrary. Grace, declared to us in Christ, in the awful, glorious atonement through the cross, secures to us even the needed discipline of a Father's hand, by which He shows Himself as such: for "what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?" This too is grace, divine favor, taking account of all that it sees in us that is contrary to God; *not* to bring it against us, but to separate us from it, and work in us conformity to His nature and will. Nothing else would *be* grace but this sweet, holy, divine action of a Love, for us, just while against the evil in us, wise beyond all our apprehensions of it, strong, so as never to be defeated in its purpose, which is perfect unending blessing. How could any one imagine ill to come, or unholiness to be the fruit, of entire self-committal to such a grace as this? Ungodly men they are, and must be, that *change* this into licentiousness. Grace needs no balancing with conditions, no modification with another principle, to make it holy: it is that in its essential nature.

1. The psalm is throughout a prayer, except in the third section, which is almost entirely statement, a declaration of what Jehovah is, in those dealings

(iii.) an appeal to holiness.

2 (4–7): Dependence for salvation. (i.) the spirit of obedience (ii.) acquired in the knowledge of salvation as with God.

(*Gimel.*) Yea, [a]none that wait on thee shall be ashamed:
[a]they shall be ashamed, who deal falsely without cause.

(*Daleth.*) Make me to know [b]thy ways, Jehovah!
teach me thy paths!
(*He.*) Direct me in thy [c]faithfulness, and teach me;
for thou art the God of my [d]salvation:
on thee I wait [e]all the day long.

[a] Rom. 9.33.
[a] Ps. 6. 10. Ps. 31. 17. 18.
[b] Ex. 33. 13. Ps. 103. 7. ver. 12.
[c] Ps. 143. 1. Ps. 32. 8.
[d] Ps. 27. 1,9.
[e] Ps. 27. 14. cf. Ps. 35. 28.

with men which make known the glory of His name. Jehovah is, as that, the God of redemption and of covenant, the living, unchanging God whom man in his feebleness and inconstancy needs so to be with him. All the way through this first book of the Psalms, this Name therefore is pre-eminent. Faith anchors itself in this fastness, and the great mountains of God's faithfulness rise all around its shelter. He so far above, to Him the soul lifts up itself, with felt distance enough to make it yearn, and yet while and because it knows Him after whom it yearns. Enemies too are in view, but faith says and sings that it shall not be ashamed; yea, that none that wait on Jehovah shall be ashamed, while it sees in God's holiness the doom of transgressors. For itself it can only say, (and it is enough to say,) that it "trusts" and "waits."

2. The second section is still prayer; and in the nature of this it reveals that difference between the old dispensation and the new which is so often facing us. The consciousness of sin and need, however, is met by the assurance of God's mercy, which in the third section is expanded into a much fuller and more satisfying statement.

In the first verse here the spirit of obedience is expressed, the necessary effect of divine grace, and of any true and living faith in the soul. Even when, in darkness yet as to the gospel, it makes its vows and resolutions of service to the Lord, with all the deplorable self-righteousness that is in this, yet, if truly seeking after God, this spirit will be found. The legality in it will be purged out; but the spirit of obedience will grow and develop just in proportion as God Himself is known and the freed heart rests and delights itself in Him.

"Make me to know Thy ways, Jehovah! teach me Thy paths!" These are not simply ways in which He would have us walk, but ways which are in principle His own ways. We are called and privileged to "be imitators of God, as dear children" (Eph. v. 1, *Gk.*). And even the "obedience," which is for us an essential element in this, the Son of God has "learned," and learned in suffering, too, down here among us (Heb. v. 8). What an incentive and encouragement for us!

And this God, whose ways we are called to know, is the "God of salvation." This is the spring of worship, as the Lord showed at the well of Sychar (Jno iv. 22); and the spirit of worship is of necessity the spirit of obedience also. This needs no demonstration. Nay, the salvation itself is, of course, a salvation from *sin*, or it were none at all. How suitable then is the argument, "Direct me in Thy faithfulness, and teach me; for Thou art the God of my salvation"! Faithful He must be to this purpose of His heart; and the glad soul may without weariness "wait upon Him all the day long." Thus it gathers strength, for waiting on Him is itself rest: His patience is that of Almighty power, to which nothing can be ever lacking.

The next verse breathes of the freedom of soul resulting from such knowledge. The psalmist can venture to put God in mind of those unchanging loving-kindnesses which are but the display therefore of His own nature. And thus it may seem but childishness to be putting Him in mind at all. Will the Unchangeable change? Can the Eternal forget? The very prayer avows itself to be mere human weakness, which, however, itself so strongly appeals to these "tender compassions" of God. Nor are we to make His perfections a restraint upon our

(iii.) remember.

(*Zain.*) Remember, Jehovah, thy [f]tender compassions and thy mercies;
for they are from everlasting.

(iv.) mercy because of sin.

(*Cheth.*) The [g]sins of my youth, and my revoltings, remember not:
according to thy mercy remember me;
for thy [h]goodness' sake, Jehovah.

3 (8-14): God acting for His name.

(i.) self-consistent.

(*Teth.*) Good and upright is Jehovah:
therefore will he [i]guide sinners in the way.

[f] Ps. 42. 8. Ps. 103. 4.

[g] Job 13. 26. Jer. 3. 25. *ctr.* Heb. 8. 12.

[h] Ps. 51. 1. Ps. 103. 1-3.

[i] Ps. 31. 3.

prayers, but the contrary,—our encouragement to them. Otherwise all prayer would cease at once: for think of influencing the Unchangeable, or even of telling anything to the Omniscient! And yet He must be both of these, or the wings on which we rise would be crippled at once.

How truly we may be thankful then for these prayers, taught of that Spirit who "maketh intercession for the saints according to God!" He then "maketh intercession"! and perhaps in the feebleness even of a "groaning which cannot be uttered"—to *us*, of course, unintelligible (Rom. viii. 26). We are not competent to argue in this way from infinity; and for us what a loss it would be to stifle the utterance which presses so to be uttered, and which, if it be the "fervent, effectual prayer of the righteous, *availeth much*" (Jas. v. 16). So the word of God itself assures us.

Let then our prayers bear witness of our feebleness, yet may we, with crippled Jacob, have "power with God and prevail." It were the destruction of freedom to restrain with His perfection the pouring out of our hearts before Him to which we are invited. He knows all that is in ours, who yet invites us.

But how good to have the requests to make of Him, which, if He but remember His own perfections, He will surely grant! And in all the matter of salvation, which is the matter here, this is assuredly the case. Salvation is the issue of His own counsels, the outflow of His love, the very display of His own righteousness and holiness. Thus all that He is, pledges itself at once to the lost one who puts himself as such into His hands for the fulfillment to him of this glorious purpose. This we shall find directly more fully expressed.

And now comes the confession. There are "sins and revoltings" *not* to be remembered: and we know the provision which divine mercy, in the new covenant, has made for this. In Israel, year by year, the scape-goat carried away the sins of the people into a place cut off; and the new covenant, in the mouth of Jeremiah, explicitly declares, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." No specifications here,—no exceptions: how blessed the wide sweep of a statement like this! the universality from which nothing is excluded. Thus well may the soul say, "According to thy mercy remember *me*, for thy goodness' sake, Jehovah!" The thief on the cross could say as much; and the Lord *more* than answers that bold, confiding prayer: "Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." When ever did the answer come from God: "You have counted on Me too much: you have imagined in Me a mercy that I have not"?

3. Now therefore the soul can confess something more than its "sins." It can speak of the "virtues of Him who hath called it out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Pet. ii. 9). God in the salvation He has provided manifests Himself; for He has indeed acted for Himself, to satisfy Himself, to give way to His love; and this is the power of the gospel to reconcile—strange words as to the relation between a creature and its God!—to reconcile the heart to Him. The work of the Cross itself is not to present a *motive* to save, but to *enable* Him to do it consistently with His own righteousness. God acts for His own Name: to display Himself, which is just the supreme blessing of His creatures, that we should know Him. To "know Him, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent" (Jno. xvii. 3) is the true pulse-wave in our souls of eternal life.

(ii.) the humble taught judgment.
(iii.) holiness manifested.

(*Jod.*) The [j]humble will he guide in judgment:
and the humble he will teach his way.
(*Caph.*) [k]All the paths of Jehovah are mercy and truth,
toward those who [l]observe his covenant and his testimonies.

[j] Ps. 22. 26. *cfr.* Amos 2. 7.
[k] Ps. 65. 11. Prov. 4. 18.
[l] Ps. 103. 17, 18.

Thus the psalmist now begins: "Good and upright is Jehovah: *therefore* will He guide sinners in the way." If there be but the least real desire after that which is good, it is impossible for Him to be indifferent to it. The need of atonement is not spoken of here, nor indeed, as we shall see, in the whole psalm; but the provision of atonement only shows how thoroughly God is for the soul that turns to him. But there is none the less a condition required upon man's part: "the *humble* will He guide in judgment; and the humble He will teach His way." This is as right as the other, and it accounts for our being such poor learners at the best. Humility is the necessary condition of learning in every department of knowledge. To know that we know not marks and makes the true inquirer. And above all must we come to God, not as critics or philosophers, but as babes and weaklings: and this is the plainest judgment of reason itself. Yet this does not mean that He disregards or confounds the faculties He has given. He is light; and He leads in the light. Even so, we have to remember, not our littleness only, but our sinfulness, which tends largely to pervert reason itself. But God does not on this account set aside these enfeebled powers; He does not in this sense "lead the blind by a way they know not"—which is true of *providential* guidance only: here, on the other hand, He "*opens* the blind eyes", purges and rectifies the vision of those that wait on Him; and even the depths that transcend our knowledge are seen not as if filled with a fog that *shuts out* vision, but as the infiniteness between the stars, where the sight itself—welcomed while it lasts—fails through feebleness, because of the greatness of what it surveys.

For "the humble will He guide in *judgment*"—discernment, that is, of difference. The understanding is *opened;* as it was said to the disciples, "then opened He their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures." Ignorance is not for us the "mother of devotion"; no, nor the child either: it is true that for superstition it is mother and child both; but sanctification is through the truth, and therefore by what is known as truth. Ah, in this way, we may easily indeed dishonor our faculties, and dishonor God in them; yea, dishonor Him of whom it has been said, "He shall lead you into *all* truth" (Jno. xvi. 13). So then as Christians to doubt our capacity for this, is to doubt the promise of Christ, and the power of the Holy "Spirit of truth."

The moral character of such guidance distinguishes it from the mere working of the natural intellect. "The knowledge of the *holy*" it is that "is understanding" (Prov. ix. 10). And so here: "all the paths of Jehovah are mercy and truth toward those who observe His covenant and His testimonies."

Here indeed was a serious difficulty for the Israelite—the nature of that "covenant" under which he was with God. The law, as the apostle declares (2 Cor. iii.) and the experience of every honest-hearted man confirms, was but the "ministration of death" and "condemnation." None could face its requirements without the cry which we find in the Psalms themselves, "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord; for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified." (Ps. cxliii. 2.) If then the law as thus confessed could justify no one, plainly faith, to find courage or comfort at all, must draw this from the foresight of Him whose image was in the sacrifices which the law itself ordained. The believers of those days were, as we are told, "kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed" (Gal. iii. 23), with a certain knowledge surely, though variable and fluctuating, of the grace that was to come. This we shall be able to estimate better in the future. Meanwhile the "covenant"—whatever supplement might by and bye be made to it—remained the expression of relationship to Jehovah, their heart able even to delight in the law

(iv.) the plea of the sinner.

(*Lamed.*) For thy [m] name's sake, Jehovah,
pardon mine iniquity; for it is [n] great.

(v.) the soul under government.

(*Mem.*) What man is he that [o] feareth Jehovah?
he shall guide him in the way he chooseth.

m Ps. 79. 9. Jer. 14. 7, 21.
n *cf.* Is. 1.18. *cf.* Lk. 7.47. *cf.* Rom. 5. 20.
o Ps. 128. 1, etc.

as holy, just, and good, spite of the certainty that by it they could not stand before God. The condition was an anomalous one; but the practical state of many a child of God to-day is not less anomalous, and depends too upon the same thing, the mingling together of contradictory elements, which will not really mingle,—a law by which God "can by no means clear the guilty," and a grace in which He "justifieth the ungodly."

For us, however, the perplexity is gone, for the old covenant is gone; and for Israel, when once more they become the people of God, it will be under that new covenant which is grace absolute and unclouded. The remnant, however, for whom these psalms make specific provision will inherit the perplexities of preceding generations; and here they will find how mercy has anticipated their need, and furnished them with the "steps" needed by which they will be able to pass the "slough of despond," and reach the firmer ground beyond. They will find here expressions of confidence in God on the part of those owning themselves sinners in the fullest way, and who could speak, as in this case, at the same time of the "covenant." They will have also—as David had not—Jeremiah's announcement of a future "*new* covenant."

Whatever the darkness, the faith that clings to God makes no mistake, nor can He be wanting to it. And so this verse itself declares. "Mercy" is pledged to, as it is needed by, those who in their hearts "observe Jehovah's covenant and His testimonies." Holiness is thoroughly maintained, while grace is manifested. "Mercy" leads to and introduces "truth"; and "*all* the paths of Jehovah" declare these things unitedly. "Mercy and truth" thus "met together", "righteousness and peace" will "kiss each other." The eighty-fifth psalm shows this accomplished.

It is in confidence then that the prayer is uttered: "for Thy name's sake, Jehovah, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great." Great sin is great need; great sin pardoned is great grace; consciousness of great sin pardoned makes the heart love much. All this the Lord has Himself shown out in the case of the sinful woman in the Pharisee's house. The fullest gospel we thus find to be the holiest gospel. *Grace* we see to be the effectual conqueror of sin. Thus, even, the Lord makes known and glorifies His Name in its forgiveness.

We must not expect the Psalms to go beyond this. Justification and the place in Christ were as yet unknown: even in the New Testament we have to wait for the apostle Paul and his gospel to find these developed; but the consideration of what is involved in all this will more naturally come before us when we reach the nearest point of view from which to contemplate it: and that will be found in the thirty-second psalm.

The fear of Jehovah is the next thing dwelt upon, and is that to which the knowledge of His grace, where real, will surely lead. "There is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be *feared*." We might imagine, perhaps, that it would be rather said "*loved*;" but we may be assured that there is no mistake. The intimacy to which grace leads—the knowledge of God thus acquired by one brought to Him—dispels, of course, not produces, *slavish* fear. And so it is written: "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment: he that feareth is not made perfect in love" (1 Jno. iv. 18): he is like a scholar with an ill-learned lesson, not perfect in that which God in the gospel has been teaching us earnestly.

On the other hand, the light and flippant carelessness by which some would show us their intimacy with God, their knowledge of His grace, proves to absolute demonstration their ignorance of what they profess. He who has seen the Alps but at a distance, may think but little of their majestic height. The nearer

(vi.) mastery.

(*Nun.*) His soul shall dwell in [p] prosperity,
and his seed shall [q] possess the land.

(vii.) perfect blessing.

(*Samech.*) The [r] secret of Jehovah is with them that fear him,
and his covenant, to show it to them.

[p] Ps. 119. 165.
[q] Ps. 37. 11, 29. Prov. 2. 21. *cf.* Ezek. 48. 1, etc.
[r] Prov. 3. 32. *cf.* Jno. 15. 15.

we approach, the more they put on grandeur; at their very foot, they tower up in masses which scale the heavens, and make us realize our utter insignificance. How much more, then, will the awful majesty of God be felt by one who has stood in His presence! The little reverence shown to-day, even by Christians, the freedom of their bold speculations, their critical proficiency in sacred things, the prominence assigned to the "human element" everywhere, reveal plainly enough the citizen of the world's cities, rather than the one who in the stillness of the desert or the mountain top has drawn near, with unshod feet, to God. And thus the man who professedly has the fear of the Lord, cares little to be guided "in the way HE chooseth." He must walk, as he recognizes, in ways morally right; nay, what is this must be estimated from a general Christian stand-point, which means perhaps even something somewhat higher than the average conscience of the special Christian community to which he is attached; but "the way HE chooseth,"—how little is this anywhere regarded! how little is even the lack of it known!

Take the Word as guiding: how generally—almost universally—is it too accepted just as interpreted by the people among whom we are (I may say) *thrown;* how few venture to differ from the fashion in which it is read by these! And the *personal* guidance day by day as to the details of life, how little, it is to be feared, is this found by "watching daily at the gates" of infinite Wisdom, "waiting at the posts of her doors" (Prov. viii. 34)! Yet of such is it said that the man is "blessed." For each of us there is *individual* guidance: God loving to have us thus apart for Himself; to each one of us the Lord says, "Follow thou Me!" Real communion with the Lord involves this necessarily.

The connection of the next verse with this seems to be what stamps it with its number 6, which must here speak of mastery. For Israel the possession of the land was originally to be won from the Canaanites, and much of it slipped shortly out of their hands after being thus won. Philistines and Amorites pushed back Dan into the mountains; Hazor became after Joshua's time the seat of the kingdom of another Jabin; Reuben lost his cities to Moab. After David and Solomon, the broken kingdom began gradually to yield piecemeal to its foes, until first Assyria and then Babylon carried the whole people captive. After the return, but a fragment of the land was repossessed. The Assyrian captives did not return at all. Samaria was schismatic and hostile. Galilee remained characteristically "Galilee of the Gentiles." Then at last came One who would have gathered them, and they would not, and they bought Aceldama with the price of their Lord's betrayal. Again they were scattered, and the whole world has been to them since, according to the terms of their dread purchase, "a burial-ground for strangers." Thus the possession of the land has been for Israel more plainly than for any other people, a question of mastery, but in which the fear of Jehovah was ever the real condition. Did they fear Him, *their* fear was upon their enemies. When finally their heart turns to the Lord, and the veil upon it is removed, then the word will be fulfilled, "I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor"—of self-judgment—"for a door of hope" (Hos. ii. 15).

All this has an application for us also, and a *present* application, just as Ephesians, interpreting the book of Joshua, has shown us a present possession of our land which is to be made good by faith, and against the might of handed enemies. Israel's history has here its solemn instruction for us. Never yet has the full extent of the divine gift been realized by them, and for the most part they came sadly short. Have Christians done better as to their spiritual inheritance? Yet not for discouragement, but for encouragement, would one urge this.

4 (15-20): The way of trial. (i.) constant looking to Jehovah. (ii.) the external evil. (iii.) the inward distress. (iv.) man. (a) self. (b) enemies. (v.) the weak with the mighty.

(*Ayin.*) Mine [s]eyes are constantly toward Jehovah:
for he shall bring my feet out of the net.
(*Pe.*) Turn thee unto me, and be gracious to me,
for I am [t]solitary and afflicted.
(*Tsaddi.*) The distresses of my heart are [u]increased:
bring thou me out of my troubles!
(*Resh.*) Look on mine affliction and travail,
and take away all my [v]sins!
Look on mine enemies, for they are multiplied;
and they hate me with violent hatred.
(*Schin.*) Keep my soul, and [w]deliver me:
let me not be ashamed, for in thee have I taken refuge.

s 2 Chr. 20. 12. Ps. 123. 1, 2. Ps. 141. 8.
t Ps. 102. 7. Ps. 38. 11.
u Ps. 3. 1.
v ver. 7. *etr.* Ps. 7. 3-5.
w Ps. 6. 4. Ps. 140. 1.

"There remaineth very much land to be possessed"; and the promise here is strictly individual: what may not faith, in any one of us, even now attain to? what mines of treasure unworked, what fields ready to be harvested, await the man earnest enough to press on after them, whole-hearted enough to take possession!

And again the word pursues us here: "The *secret* of Jehovah is with them that fear Him; and His covenant, to show it to them." Think of being, as it were, the bosom friends of God, to whom He can speak freely of what is hidden from the rest of men! Here is surely complete blessing. Herein is communion perfected. "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secrets unto His servants the prophets." (Amos iii. 7.) Is it of Him if we should have to say, "We see not our signs; there is not a prophet any more"? (Ps. lxxiv. 9.) Is there no connection with this when the apostle exhorts us all to "*covet* to prophesy"? (1 Cor. xiv. 39.)

4. And now we are to face the way of trial. The world is unfailingly that, and Satan himself the sifter of God's wheat. Here we find it, and find it, spite of all that has been said, a very real thing. Indeed it must be felt; for trial that is not felt is not trial; and God has a work to be wrought in us by this, "tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope" (Rom. v. 3, 4). And James urges, "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience; but let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." (Jas. i. 2–4.)

"Sweet," then indeed, "are the uses of adversity," if they can accomplish for us anything like this. And we see clearly what the great use is. "Patience"—the subjection of our wills, "man's weakness waiting upon God," is the unfailing argument to bring Him in. Only to learn this, this is to be perfect and entire! How easy, one would think, if this be all, just to abide in the place of nothingness, and let God care and minister and show His wisdom and His power and love! Blessed it is, and *should be* easy; but here it is we prove the will that works in us, the lack of faith which allows will to work. Faith is, in all of us, the great worker of all good: it is no wonder if God try it, call for it, ordain the path to be such as shall require it constantly; while yet He encourages, sustains, answers it with a love which more and more makes the experience of the way an experience that works hope. "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us."

The pathway of the remnant of Judah in that day towards which prophecy so often turns is one of peculiar trial. "It is the time of *Jacob's* trouble," revealed thus as special discipline: a time of trouble "such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matt. xxiv. 21). We can understand therefore the character of what follows here, even while the first words declare the blessing it is working for them: "Mine eyes are *constantly* toward Jehovah; for He shall bring my feet out of the net." This constant look

5 (21, 22): way and end. (i.) integrity. (ii.) redemption.

(*Tau*) [x]Integrity and uprightness shall preserve me:
for I wait on thee.
Redeem [y]Israel, O God,
out of all his distresses!

[x] Ps. 7. 3, etc.

[y] Ps. 130. 8. Ps. 14. 7.

Ps. xxvi.

[z]PSALM XXVI.

Separation from sinners.

[A psalm] of David.

1 (1-3): The plea of integrity. (i.) conviction of truth.

JUDGE me, Jehovah, for I have walked in mine integrity:
I have [a]trusted also in Jehovah:
I shall not slip.

[z] Ps. 7. 8. Ps. 35. 24.

[a] Ps. 31. 1. Ps. 34. 8. Ps. 37. 31.

upwards: how much blessing does it import, whatever the stress of circumstance that produces it! The net is at the feet, and yet the eyes are not there, but constantly above. A brighter object is before them than the earth can furnish, and the heart is steadied and brightened by it. The feet also are better kept than by any possible human wisdom: "*He shall* bring" rings cheerily out from a man not ignorant of his danger, but who has learned how much more positive he may be in the third person than in the first.

Yet the evil presses hard, and matters seem as if God were looking away: "*Turn* thee unto me, and be gracious to me: for I am solitary and afflicted." Sorrow individualizes us all, and that is part of the good of it: for thus grace and God become individualized also. The evil presses for attention. God suffers it to be felt, and even to increase: enlarged distresses—when working under the good hand of God—purify and enlarge the heart. This is by no means their necessary effect, however: apart from Him, they may harden and narrow it. But then apart from Him, prosperity will do the same: nothing is good, save as He works in it and through it for good.

In result, man is sifted and known: *oneself*, in whom affliction and travail connect themselves ever more closely with the sins of which the soul is ever more conscious. The enemies also are there, multiplied and violent. Jehovah is besought to regard it all, and not to make ashamed the faith which can find refuge only in Himself.

5. Two verses express finally the principle upon which the blessing comes. Integrity, uprightness, faith on the soul's part; the redemption from His hand who alone can effect it. In the last verse the speaker links the redemption of Israel with his own.

Psalm XXVI.

The twenty-sixth psalm is much shorter, much simpler in character, and in every way less attractive in its theme. Yet it has its place, and fills it, in the divine wisdom—a place the importance of which is seen in its being only next to the very first. We must, first of all, necessarily, learn the grace which alone gives confidence to lay hold of God at all; but having learned this, we have thus passed the line which divides the world into two companies. We have become His, and the mass of men are, alas, hostile to Him. Henceforth separation from evil-doers becomes the necessary condition of going on with God. This is the principle of the psalm before us, conformity to it the plea advanced by the soul: I have separated myself from sinners; unite me not with them:—a true ground of confidence before God, although plainly secondary only. Association is made much of in Scripture, though even Christians (save with the grossest forms of evil) make light of it to-day. Yet "Scripture cannot be broken:" God will be found to be what His word declares Him.

The twelve verses again show the soul under divine government, although there is once more, as we found in the case of the fifth psalm, a departure from

(ii.) discern & pronounce! (iii.) fruit of realization of the divine character.

2 (4, 5): Testified by association, (i.) which requires truth (ii.) and refuses evil.

3 (6-8): In true sanctification to God, (i.) approaching Jehovah in innocency, (ii.) to testify of Him.

Try me, Jehovah, and [b]prove me:
assay my reins and my heart!
For thy [c]mercy is before mine eyes,
and I have [d]walked in thy truth.

I have not [e]sat with men of falsehood,
and do not go with dissemblers.
I have [f]hated the congregation of evil-doers,
and do not sit with the wicked.

I will [g]wash my hands in innocency,
and compass thine [h]altar, Jehovah:
To publish with the voice of [i]thanksgiving,
and tell of all thy wondrous works.

b Ps. 139. 1, 23, 24. Jer. 12. 3. Mal. 3. 3.
c Ps. 25. 6.
d Gen. 17. 1. 1 Ki. 2. 4. 1 Ki. 3. 6.
e Ps. 1. 1. Jer. 15. 17.
f Ps. 31. 6. Ps. 139. 21, 22. Ps. 5. 5. Ps. 11. 5. *cf.* Hos. 9. 15 with Jno. 3. 16.
g Ps. 24. 4. 1 Tim. 2. 8. *ctr.* Matt. 27. 24.
cf. Deut. 21. 6. h Ps. 84. 3. i Ps. 106. 1; Ps. 107. 1; Ps. 118. 1.

the usual 3 x 4 division. This time it is the second section which is shortened by one verse, in order to supply a fifth section at the end. Governmental *ways* are thus emphasized, as well as the fact that God has become Lord, in the heart made captive by the grace exhibited.

1. The psalm is so simple as not to need lengthened comment. We have first the plea of integrity which is the accompaniment and fruit also of faith. With the conviction that this is truly his condition, he can appeal to God to try him: to make proof of his reins, (his inmost thoughts,) and his heart. He has learned in the mercy of God to fear Him, and in the truth which he realizes in Him he has walked himself.

2. Hence of necessity his path is now with those only who follow what is true. With the false and dissembling he does not go; and gatherings of evil-doers, brought together by their common wickedness, he refuses and abhors.

Scripture, whether in the Old Testament or the New, makes much of association, and necessarily, for it is a principle of the greatest moral significance, and the world notes it after its manner, and comments upon it as the Scripture does. "Birds of a feather flock together." "Tell me who are your companions, and I will tell you who you are." Our associations are thus a kind of self-classification; and the spiritual life is specially sensitive to the air it breathes. We all know that in Christ's name, and for His sake, we may enter boldly the worst dens of iniquity, if He call us to it; and we all know enough to distinguish this from association with evil. But the least voluntary link is a most serious thing. The *two* verses of this section may remind us of *testimony;* which equally defines our liberty and its restrictions.

3. The third section is a very clearly marked Levitical one. It shows the nature of the separation just declared and the spirit in which alone it can be rightly observed. We cannot bring defilement into the presence of God. We cannot force the holy into communion with the unholy. We can, alas, in the effort to do so, fall ourselves from communion. True separation from evil is in order to separation to God. It springs out of and unites itself with all real sanctification.

The first point then here is "innocency," the washing of the hands being an expression derived from the ordinance in Deuteronomy (xxi. 6), where the elders wash their hands to attest their innocence of a murder in the neighborhood of their city. The psalmist means therefore to assert his readiness to pledge himself in like manner that he is not bringing defilement to Jehovah's altar, where his praise-offering is to be offered (Lev. vii. 11, *sq.*). But who could praise Jehovah, lifting up unclean hands to Him? And this is with the psalmist no mere outward homage. His heart is won: he has loved the habitation of Jehovah's house, and the place where His glory dwells.

4. On this the plea is based: unite me not then with those from whom I have separated myself; "gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with the very

(iii.) loving His habitation.
4 (9-11): Tested by the walk.
(i.) Unite me not with sinners,
(ii.) whose works testify against them.
(iii.) to me, set apart to Thee, let Thy grace be manifested.
5 (12): the governmental result.

Jehovah, I have loved the habitation of thy [j]house,
and the place where thy [k]glory dwelleth.

Gather not my soul with [l]sinners,
nor my life with men of blood:
In whose hands is mischief;
and their right hand is full of [m]bribes.
But as for me, I walk in mine [n]integrity:
redeem me and be [o]gracious unto me!

My foot standeth in an even place:
in the [p]congregations will I bless Jehovah.

j Ps. 23. 6. Ps. 27. 4. Ps. 84. 1.
k 2 Chr. 7. 2. Isa. 6. 1-4. *cf.* Hag. 2. 7-9.
l Ps. 28. 3. *cf.* Matt. 24. 51.
m Deut. 16. 19. *etr.* Num. 22. 7. *cf.* Rev. 13. 16, 17.
n ver. 1.
o Ps. 25. 16. Ps. 56. 1. Ps. 57. 1.
p Ps. 1. 5; Ps. 111. 1.

men that would destroy my life: whose hands are full of mischief to those who refuse their alliance, or whose spoil they crave;—full of bribes to those whom they would corrupt." The practical test gives clear result in their case: it is as clear, he says, in his own: "As for me, I walk in mine integrity: redeem me and be gracious unto me."

5. The psalm closes with the answer declared. The issue is found; the government of God manifests itself: the foot of the suppliant is made to stand in an even place (*mishor*), the word, however, having special and significant relation to the portion of Reuben,*—in type the "upland" pastures of faith (Josh. xiii., *notes*). There, in the sunny and unobstructed high levels in which the child of God finds his inheritance and blessing, the foot that goes not in the company of evil-doers stands firm now; and in the congregations of Jehovah's people the soul can freely praise the One in unchangeable covenant with them all. Thus he has his company, and, choosing where God has chosen, his voice is heard in the concert of praise where none can be silent,—where every separate note is in harmony with the universal song.

Psalm XXVII.

The third psalm of this series emphasizes the positive side of the separation from evil, that which makes it true sanctification, the longing desire after Jehovah Himself. This has been already expressed in the previous psalm, but here it is the theme. And this being the fruit of Jehovah's own work in the soul,—the response to His own invitation and command to seek His face,—how could the faithful and unchangeable One possibly deny or draw back from him who now drew near to Him? He had said, "Seek ye My face!" could He have said that in vain? Here then is a third ground of confidence for the heart; and it is a sure one at all times. He who has said, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest," has added to this no limiting word, to be a means of doubt and self-torture to him who would gladly obey His invitation. Nay, He has taken care rather to give special assurance to the laboring and heavy-laden, to those consciously sinners, to the "lost," that His salvation is for them. And to *all* that come, without exception, He has declared: "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out." Well may this then be a perfect ground of confidence for the soul that turns to Him for refuge from sin and self, from the judgment to come, from the uncontrollable evil within. Here is the one Haven of refuge, the Shelter from the storm, the Rock of defence: and "blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."

1. The psalm begins with a joyous strain of confidence, in which all fear is dismissed as unworthy and impossible. "Jehovah is my light and my salva-

* "It occurs in the Bible in the following passages:—Deut. iii. 10, iv. 43; Josh. xiii. 9, 16, 17, 21; xx. 8; 1 Ki. xx. 23, 25; 2 Chron. xxvi. 10; Jer. xlviii. 8, 21. In each of these, with one exception, it is used for the district in the neighborhood of Heshbon and Dibon—the *Belka* of the modern Arabs, their most noted pasture-ground." (Grove, in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible.)

Ps. xxvii.

[3]PSALM XXVII.

The heart's desire after Jehovah's house and face.

[A psalm] of David.

1 (1): Jehovah, the soul's strength and peace.

JEHOVAH is my [q]light and my [r]salvation: of [s]whom shall I be afraid?
Jehovah is the [t]stronghold of my life: of whom shall I be in dread?

2 (2, 3): In the midst of conflict. (i.) the sufficiency of God. (ii.) the assurance of faith.

When [u]evil-doers came upon me, my oppressors and enemies, to eat up my flesh,
they [v]stumbled and fell.
Though a [w]host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear:
though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.

q Ps. 34. 5. *cf.* Jno. 8. 12. *cf.* Rev. 21. 23.
r Ex. 14. 13. Job 13. 15, 16. Ps. 62. 2. Isa. 12. 2, 3.
s Ps. 3. 6.
t Ps. 28. 8. Isa. 25. 4. *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 9.
u Ps. 3. 1.
v *cf.* Ps. 22. 11–13 with Jno. 18. 1–6. *ctr.* Jno. 18. 11, 12.
w *cf.* 2 Ki. 6. 14–17.

tion: of whom shall I be afraid? Jehovah is the stronghold of my life: of whom shall I be in dread?" The argument is short and complete; all the more complete that it does not look round or take account of any special evils, but looks up, and only needs to look up, into Jehovah's face. The "light" not merely manifests what is around me: it is God Himself who is manifested in it; and thus His own character becomes the conscious security of the soul. What an assurance—what a joy and blessing the light is! Beauty, warmth, the vigor of life itself, are all found in it; and thus salvation is closely connected with this primary thought. The light of the first day meant salvation out of its ruin for that world which it disclosed yet buried under the waters; the first pulsation of its rays was the throb of a new life which had come in for it. And with God known the light apprehended is the dawn of an endless day, the power of an eternal life begun, which is but the inner process accomplishing of His salvation.

2. Now we have the testimony of deliverance experienced and the argument from that experience. But the argument transcends the experience: the enemies that he has seen defeated swell into a host, the single battle lengthens into a war, and the sounds of strife which he imagines awaking around have no power to disturb his perfect tranquility. Experience has only called forth the intuition of faith which is not to be measured by it: to which indeed all experience must and does conform, because the law which underlies it has no exception. How grandly is Jehovah, the Unchangeable, realized in these abiding laws of His, which pervade the spiritual realm as they do the natural!

3. Thus the heart reposes in God its strength; and God becomes its one desire and sufficiency. "One thing have I asked of Jehovah; this do I seek after: that I may dwell in Jehovah's house all the days of my life, to behold the graciousness of Jehovah, and to inquire in His temple." One can imagine the attraction for a true Israelite of that place where Jehovah dwelt in the midst of the people, even though the inner sanctuary could not be penetrated. Faith would still, as it were, penetrate it, and God not withhold Himself from the heart thus longing after Him. These longings the Psalms exhibit to us, and they constitute largely the charm of this precious book. To us the "graciousness of Jehovah" has been displayed in a way which makes all that was known before to be only rudimentary knowledge. He has unveiled His glory. He has come out to walk amongst men. He has given us boldness to enter into the holiest, and an abiding place in His presence as priests and worshipers. And yet how little are we beyond the admonition of these yearnings of the men of an elder time! This "one thing" which some of them could speak of,—this burning, seraphic longing after One to sense the Invisible,—have we no need of self-questioning whether to us it is the passion that these psalms express? Ah, have we not need of it? Think of the complete revelation of God now made to us; think of the open vol-

3 (4-6): Sanctuary possessions.
(i.) God Himself the one thing sought.
(ii.) security.
(iii.)sacrifices of praise.

[x] One thing have I asked of Jehovah; this do I seek after:
that I may [y] dwell in Jehovah's house all the [z] days of my life:
to behold the [a] graciousness of Jehovah, and to inquire in his temple.
For he shall lay me up in his pavilion in the [b] day of evil:
in the secret of his tent will he [c] secrete me;
he will lift me high upon a [d] rock.
And now shall my [e] head be lifted up above mine enemies around me;
and I will sacrifice in his tent [f] sacrifices with joyful sound;
I will sing,—yea, I will sing praises to Jehovah.

x *cf.* Lk. 10. 42. *cf.* Phil. 3. 13. James 1. 8.
y Ps. 65. 4. Ps. 84. 4. Lk. 2. 37.
z Ps. 23. 6.
a Ps. 90. 17.
b *cf.* Ps. 20. 1. *cf.* Ezek. 7. 5-7. *cf.* Jer. 30. 7.
c Ps. 31. 20. Isa. 25. 4. Isa. 26. 20, 21.
d Ps. 18. 1, 2.
e Ps. 3. 3.
f *cf.* Lev. 7. 11-18. *cf.* 1 Kl. 8. 63, 64.

ume of Scripture in our hand; think of how of necessity the soul thirsting after God must turn to these stores of heavenly treasures, infinite yet accessible, and exult in the search, with the Spirit given to us, of the "deep things of God" (1 Cor. ii. 10); think of the intercourse, the communion, enjoyed by those who will come together to compare their individual gains in this way, sharing with others that which in being divided increases the more we divide it. There is no need to ask the extent to which all this is realized; and there can be only deepest humiliation in thinking of how little beyond the surface of Scripture we are or care to be. "To inquire in His temple," when its roof is the whole arch of heaven,—when its length stretches from the beginnings of history to the end of prophecy,—when His word and work unite in Christ as the Life-Centre and glory of all!—ah, how is it possible to imagine how little in eighteen centuries of a completed Bible and the indwelling Spirit has been attained!

The security of the sanctuary the psalmist dwells on next. "He shall lay me up in His pavilion in the day of evil; in the secret of His tent will He secrete me: He will lift me high upon a rock."

The immediate application here is to human adversaries, though the literal sanctuary furnishes, as is evident, only the figure of spiritual truths of much wider range. For us how surely it is true that the way of escape from spiritual foes is just what is here indicated! God has indeed lifted us high upon the rock-foundation of Christ's blessed work; and in Him entered into the heavenly sanctuary, we are securely hidden from the enemy. "Because I live," He says, "ye shall live also" (Jno. xiv. 19). He there too is our sanctification; and "we all, beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory" (2 Cor. iii. 18). Thus the sanctuary is our safe retreat at all times: it is the place where the world takes its true shape for us, where the entanglement with it is loosed, the darkness and mists disappear, sin is rebuked and banished, the holiness of truth is found. The peace of that serene Presence incloses us as with the glory of an eternal summer, unvexed by even the threatening of a storm. Here the head is lifted up over all enemies therefore, and the sacrifice of praise becomes the necessary relief of a full and grateful heart.

4. From all this blessing and joy we drop into a state of trial, in which the voice of supplication is heard instead of praise, and that in tones of distress and uncertainty. Such alternations are common enough and rapid enough in the Psalms, and in the experience of those whose utterance the Psalms are. But the depths that the soul is plumbing are not bottomless. In the place of testing, the ground of his confidence is tested and found firm; and the language of faith becomes thus the language of experience also.

The cry is still to the Unchangeable (Jehovah), and this is the bottom in which faith's anchor alone can hold. The cry is for grace and needed answer,

4 (7-10): Tested & testing. (i.) the cry to the Unchangeable.

Hear, Jehovah; with my voice I [g]call:
be gracious to me, and answer me!
To thee hath my heart said, "Seek ye my face"?—
thy face, Jehovah, I do [h]seek.

(ii.) the confidence.

'Hide not thy face from me!
put not thy servant away in [i]anger!
thou hast been my help:
cast me not off, and forsake me not, O God of my salvation.

(iii.) remember therefore!

(iv.) the experience foretold.

But when my [k]father and my mother forsake me,
Jehovah taketh me up.

5 (11-14): The weak with the Strong. (i.) for guidance.

Teach me thy [l]way, Jehovah;
and lead me in an [m]even path, because of those watching me.

(ii.) for deliverance from enemies.

Give me not up to the desire of mine oppressors:
for [n]false witnesses are risen against me,
and those that breathe out violence.

(iii.) the realization of the unseen.

—[o]If I had not believed to see Jehovah's goodness
in the land of the [p]living!—

(iv.) the moral of experience.

[q]Wait on Jehovah!
be strong, and let thy heart take courage!
yea, wait upon Jehovah!

[g] Ps. 5. 3.
[h] ver. 4. Ps. 4. 6.
[i] Ps. 143. 7. Ps. 89. 46. Is. 45. 15. *cfr.* Rom. 8. 28.
[j] Ps. 6. 1.
[k] Ps. 103. 13. Is. 49. 15. Matt. 10. 36.
[l] Ps. 25. 4.
[m] Ps. 139. 24. Ps. 25. 10. *cf.* Jer. 6. 16.
[n] Ps. 35. 11.
[o] *cf.* Ps. 73. 2. Ps. 94. 17.
[p] Ps. 116. 9. Ps. 142. 5.
[q] Ps. 62. 1, 5. Lam. 3. 25, 26.

and then what gives confidence is declared and pleaded. This is Jehovah's own invitation and command to seek His face; to which faith has answered earnestly and gladly. The suppliant could say, "I do seek Thy face, Jehovah." And would *He* now hide that glorious face, and repel with anger him that sought Him? nay, would He, as it were, deny the help that He had given, and though the God looked to for salvation, cast off and forsake? No, assuredly; this could not be: the ground is firm, and the anchor holds; experience will confirm and not put the soul's confidence to shame: father and mother might forsake, but not He from whom came these relationships, with all their tender affection. *They* might forsake; not He: and if they did, all the more would Jehovah's pitifulness be shown out. Such an outcast would be the object of His special care.

5. Thus relieved and quieted, even though the circumstances remain unchanged, these can be made all the more an argument with the Lord to manifest His care. First of all, to make known His way: for there no pitfall is, and there He, the Wise and Strong, is. The real sense of weakness will not suffer us to seek our own will, but the contrary. What wisdom of our own can be like His? what tenderness like His? And under the eyes of those watching for one's halting, the path with Him will be found really the smooth one, for before Him the mountains are leveled to a plain.

Oppressors are still there, false witnesses, those whose panting eagerness breathes out violence: these the suppliant points out to the Guide and Guard with whom He goes. But he walks firmly, if humbly, counting on deliverance. And the pressure felt in the soul is only made known in the outburst which at the same time reveals the confidence which supports it,—"If I had *not* believed"—but then I do!—"to see Jehovah's goodness in the land of the living!"

And now a lesson of experience fitly closes the *fifth* section of this psalm. It is a very brief and a very simple one; yet it is a lesson of perfection, declared in the Word to be that: for "let patience have her perfect work," and we shall be "*perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*" (Jas. i. 4.) What a glorious result of so simple a matter! "Wait on Jehovah!" wait, and not weakly and timidly, for the call to patience is no cause for fear: "be strong, and let thy heart take courage!" Such, thank God, is the wisdom derived from an "experience" that

Ps. xxviii.

[r]PSALM XXVIII.

The test of experience.

[A psalm] of David.

1 (1,2): A cry to Jehovah.
(i.) Jehovah my rock!
(ii.) hear the dependent one.

UNTO thee I cry, Jehovah;
my [r]rock, be not silent to me!
lest, if thou be silent to me,
I be like those that go down to the [s]pit.
Hear the voice of my supplications when I cry unto thee;
when I lift up my hand unto thy holy [t]oracle.

2 (3, 4): Plea for the destruction of the wicked.
(i.) not to be identified with them.
(ii.) their contrasted portion.

[u]Draw me not away with the wicked, and with workers of vanity,
that speak [v]peace with their neighbors, while evil is in their heart.
Give them according to their works, and [w]according to the evil of their practisings:
give them according to the work of their hands,
render them their reward.

r Deut. 32.4. Ps. 18. 2. Is. 26. 4.
s *cf.* Ps. 88.4. Ps. 143. 7.
t *cf.* 1 Ki. 8. 33, 34.
u Ps. 26. 9. *cf.* 1 Sam. 25. 29. Ps. 141. 10.
v Ps. 55. 21. Ezek. 33. 31.
w Is. 3. 11. Matt. 25.41–46.

"worketh hope." (Rom. v. 4.) This harvest is assured to him that quietly will sleep and rise, and let it grow. Test it, prove it, whoever will! who is there that may not prove it for himself? there is none! Let the glad, sure hope cheer the darkest hours with its comfort:

"Wait—wait—on Jehovah."

Psalm XXVIII.

We have now in the fourth psalm of this series the ground of experience itself: "I trusted in Him and am helped"; a good argument in its place, and the necessary result of a life lived with God. How can we ignore all that has been gained in this way of practical acquaintance with Him? The richer we are in such experiences the brighter our lives will be, the more energetic, and the more fruitful. In the nature of things experience cannot be the first foundation; and it does not come in that place here.

1. The circumstances are still those of the last days, in which enemies and evil-doers surround the righteous. Jehovah is their one resource: if He interfere not, they will be like those going down to the pit. The psalmist cannot say that he will be *among* those going down to the pit, but *like* them. Yet the shadow of death is upon their souls: they fear it. The national deliverance looked for is, of course, not the other side of death,—not *out* of it, but *from* it. Death would, of course, end for the individual all hopes of this, though God will, in fact, for those who endure martyrdom, reserve a better place—a place with the heavenly saints of the first resurrection. (Rev. xx. 5, 6.) But this does not come into view here. The "pit," however, is for that reason more than the grave, though in the imagery of it. Confidence is based upon the Unchangeable God, and the dependence itself which the needy one has on Him. The prayer of Solomon for all those that pray towards the temple is remembered here, and made a ground of hope (1 Kings viii. 30). The mercy of the Lord is ever toward those that fear Him, and toward those that hope in His mercy, which He cannot deny; for He cannot deny Himself.

2. But the judgment of the world is come, and only by judgment can the deliverance of Israel be effected: so again we have the remnant's prayer for the destruction of the wicked. Evil has come to its height, and, in that which threatens because of it, it might well seem that none could at all escape, but that evil and just would alike be swallowed up in undistinguishing ruin. We can

3 (5): the full manifestation.

Because they [x]discern not the works of Jehovah,
nor the operations of his hands,
he shall [y]destroy them, and not build them up.

4 (6, 7): The experience. (i.) Unchangeable. (ii.) faith answered with deliverance.

Blessed be Jehovah!
for he hath [z]heard the voice of my supplications.
Jehovah, my [a]strength and my shield!
my heart [b]trusted in him, and I am helped;
and my heart exulteth;
and with my song I celebrate him.

5 (8, 9): The weak with the Strong. (i.) the way of strength. (ii.) Israel express their faith in the Deliverer.

Jehovah is their strength;
and a stronghold of salvation to his [c]Anointed he.
Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance!
even be their [d]shepherd, and bear them up forever!

x Is. 5. 12. Ps. 92. 5, 6.
y Is. 13. 9. 2 Thess. I. 8-10.
z Ps. 116. 1.
a Ps. 18. 2.
b Ps. 16. 1.
c Ps. 20. 6, 9.
d Ps. 80. 1. Ps. 77. 20.

well understand, therefore, the cry, "Draw me not away with the wicked!" with whom the smoothness of the outside only disguises the treachery of their hearts. Their works testify against them; their reward, in contrast with the grace to the righteous, is prayed to be according to their works.

3. This is their character manward; but the fountain of all the evil is in their thorough ignorance of Jehovah. His works are before them; the operations of His hands are all around them: ignorance means only alienation from Him; moral incapacity to discern what is of Him is just the sign of the inveterancy of the evil, and which, because incurable, must be extirpated with the sharpest surgery in very mercy to mankind. The prayer changes therefore here to prophecy: he who does discern what God is, has the surest ground for anticipating the future of these stubborn sinners.

4. We have now the experience which works hope: along the way, before the end has come, Jehovah yet manifests Himself in signal interventions, which are the anticipation of the full deliverance to come. How blessed are the foretokens of the dawn, though it has not come. How good the help by the way, sent from Him who awaits us at the end of the way!

So here, Jehovah has heard and helped; Jehovah has shown Himself both strength and shield; prayer has been answered, and praise follows it.

5. But more: the heart is led on to realize the security of the abiding blessing, the necessary issue of what God is to His anointed. He upon whom, because of what He is, the Spirit rests in His fullness (Matt. iii. 16, 17) is the One who enlists all the power of God in His behalf, in the conflict between good and evil that must last as long as evil lasts upon the earth. "A stronghold of salvation to His Anointed He!" Thus to be under Him is to find deliverance assured. He is the "Captain of salvation," saving to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. Thus at the close of the psalm faith in the remnant, soon to be the nation, turns to Him, to put the burden of Israel's need upon His strong shoulder. It is a suited close to the series of psalms we have been considering; for the next psalm, though the final one, is in many respects different. Saviour and Shepherd they own Him now, themselves His people and His inheritance: for the *lost* sheep recovered, the place is upon His shoulder, according to the tender picture which He has Himself drawn. Once again it will be said, in view of this part of their history,—and they will be made to know it too, as never yet,—"He bare them and carried them all the days of old."

Psalm XXIX.

It will be noticed how all the psalms of this series have led one into another. The "integrity and uprightness" which "shall preserve me", at the end of the twenty-fifth, commences, and is the main theme of the twenty-sixth. This again, in its "Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy house," gives us the theme

Ps. xxix.

[5]PSALM XXIX.

The judgment-storm with which God comes into the world, to give it the "expected end."

A psalm of David.

GIVE unto Jehovah, [e]sons of the mighty,
give unto Jehovah glory and strength.
Give unto Jehovah the [f]glory of his name;
worship Jehovah in the [g]beauty of holiness.

The [h]voice of Jehovah upon the waters!
the God of glory thundereth:
Jehovah upon the great [i]waters!
The voice of Jehovah is with [j]power;
the voice of Jehovah is with [k]majesty.
The voice of Jehovah [l]breaketh the cedars;
yea, Jehovah breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.

1 (1, 2): Jehovah above the mightiest. (i.) ascribe supremacy to Him. (ii.) as yourselves dependent on Him.

2 (3–9): The utterance of His voice. (i.) controlling the storm. (ii.) the growth of the storm. (iii.) its onset.

e Ps. 96. 7-9. Ps. 103. 20-22.
f cf. Rev. 4. 8-11. Rev. 5. 11-14.
g 1 Chr. 16. 29. 2 Chr. 20. 21.
h Ps. 18. 13. Job 37. 4, 5. cf. 1 Ki. 19. 11-13.
i Ps. 93. 3, 4.
j cf. Ex. 20. 18, 19.
k cf. Hab. 3 3-16.
l Is. 2. 12, 13.

of the twenty-seventh. The twenty-seventh, with its experience of Jehovah's kindness and the closing moral of this, makes way for the twenty-eighth, in which the test of experience is the subject. The twenty-eighth prays for and prophesies the judgment of the wicked, and now the twenty-ninth shows us the passage of that clearing storm which, manifesting and leaving Jehovah supreme over the earth, leaves His people to peace, henceforth undisturbed forever.

This twenty-ninth psalm celebrates therefore the day of the Lord in its prostration of human strength and display of Jehovah's might, which after all are the central lessons for man to learn, when once He has learned what Jehovah Himself is. It is this with which the twenty-fifth psalm opens the series, the display of righteousness in grace, which known gives God His throne in the hearts of His redeemed people. Henceforth the process of sanctification is in the subjecting of the soul to Him,—the anticipation in faith of this day of the Lord in its inner meaning,—the result being perfect blessing and abiding peace: "Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me; and ye shall find rest to your souls." (Matt. xi. 28.)

The psalms following the twenty-fifth give us in order, first, the separation of the saint from sinners; secondly, that it is a separation to God; thirdly, to live a life of experimental realization of His presence in the circumstances and conditions of it. The final psalm here shows us the conditions of the realization itself, which is only to say, His governmental ways with us: simple enough if we know but a little who are these two who have come to walk together; God with all His grace forever God; and man His creature, only (and then how fully) capable of blessing so. This shows how suitably this psalm ends the present series; while its dispensational form brings it into relation with the prophetic character of the Psalms in general, which has been abundantly established in our study of them.

1. The psalm begins with the exhortation to the "sons of the mighty" to give Jehovah His place of supremacy over all. It is surely not an address to angels, as perhaps mostly held, but to the mighty of the earth, in view of what follows. —a message like that of Rev. xiv. 6, 7, the message of the "everlasting gospel," which proclaims the coming kingdom of God. They are to ascribe glory and strength to Jehovah as the only Source of these. They are to give Him the glory of His Name, the Ever-living, the Unchanging, abiding the same amid all creature changes; and to give Him allegiance in the only possible way in which He can accept it, adorned with the beauty of the holiness He requires.

2. Now Jehovah's voice is heard approaching, the sound of an impending storm, but no mere storm. Jehovah's voice is heard above the watery canopy of the expanse, controlling and directing the judgment in its path. It is the God

(iv.) prostration of creature strength.
(v.) the flash of judgment.
(vi.) the limit of the storm.
(vii.) the end.

He maketh them also [m]skip like a calf:
Lebanon and Sirion like a young aurochs.
Jehovah's voice cleaveth the flames of fire.
The voice of Jehovah shaketh the wilderness:
Jehovah shaketh the [n]wilderness of Kadesh.
The voice of Jehovah maketh the [o]hinds to calve,
and strippeth the forests:
and in his [p]temple all of it speaketh of glory.

3 (10, 11): The revival.
(i.) the King.
(ii.) the ministry to a people brought into relation with Himself.

Jehovah sitteth at the flood:
yea, Jehovah [q]sitteth King forever.
Jehovah giveth [r]strength unto his people:
Jehovah blesseth his people with [s]peace.

m Ps. 114. 1-7. Ps. 68. 16.
n Nu. 13. 26.
o Job 39. 1-3. *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 3.
p *cf.* Is. 6. 1-4. *cf.* Hab. 2. 20.
q Ps. 10. 16. Is. 40. 22, 23.
r Ps. 28. 7, 8.
s Ps. 72. 3, 7.

of glory who thundereth; and the waters gathering are indeed "great waters." We see it rise and spread: we hear the voice of "power" increasing to awful "majesty." Then the crash comes, and the cedars of Lebanon, the type of loftiness of creature stature, receive the force of the blow, and are shivered and broken down before it. So the prophet announces the on-coming "day of the Lord" (Isa. ii. 11–14): "The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low; and upon all the cedars of Lebanon that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan; and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up." This last the psalm goes on to now: "He maketh them also to skip like a calf: Lebanon and Sirion like a young aurochs." It is no hyperbolism, nor untruth to nature, nor are we to think of an earthquake, which would introduce another element from that with which we are occupied. The storm is not a common storm; and the hills themselves tremble and start like a frightened beast, before Jehovah. The governments of the earth seem to be represented here, as the trees represent the individual potentates: all that is most stable quakes. Amid all this comes the terrible forked flame,—the light, and God is light, but God manifest in judgment,—pure wrath upon the evil. The next verse shows the limit of the storm. Coming from the north of the land of Israel, from Lebanon and Hermon (Sirion), it sweeps to beyond the territory of Judah in the south, disappearing in the wilderness of Kadesh-barnea, the place in which the people had wandered so long after the exodus. Thus it covers the land in its breadth and length, while, of course, it does not follow that it is spent with this. This is, however, the limit of the prophet's observation;—for true prophet he is,—and the course of the storm is that of the invasion of Israel's foes in the last days,—an invasion with which the day of the Lord is identified in its early part (comp. Joel ii.). God uses the foe as His rod in a chastisement which works repentance; coming Himself then for their deliverance. It is the "great and terrible day of the Lord", but it ends in refreshment, revival, and eternal salvation.

The final verse here gives us the end in a twofold way. In the first place, the hind is made to calve: the new birth comes for the nation, hastened by that awful visitation which God uses to accomplish blessing. On the other hand, the forests are stripped, which is the judgment-work itself. This is the double aspect of the work of Him who is perfect in it all, and in whose temple—the place where He is seen and known—"all of it" (not, I think, the temple itself or those in it, which would not be in the line of the truth here; but) all His work itself proclaims His "glory." This is itself the perfect end of all.

3. But yet the psalm is not ended. He who delights not in judgment, but in blessing, is yet shown in two final verses in His mastery over the evil and in the abiding blessing that succeeds. The "flood" (*mabbul*) is here a word only

used in Scripture for that which destroyed the world in Noah's day. It does not follow that the direct application is to that; and yet the reference must not be slighted. Here is now a second Flood, of which that old flood was, in fact, a type. Another world has now come to an end, and a wholly new state of things follows. At this flood too Jehovah has sat enthroned; and Jehovah now sitteth (openly) as King forever. But He who is on the throne is still—oh, bless Him for it!—the patient Minister to His people's need. Still they *have* need; for the smooth path now as for the rough one hitherto, they need, and He "giveth strength," and "Jehovah blesseth His people with" unending "peace." Amen.

Series 2.

The second series is, like the former, of five psalms; which give us in various detail the salvation which is of God. Of course, it is that as realized by *Israel;* the Psalms never contemplating Christianity, or the blessing of a heavenly people. Their inheritance is in the land long assured them, and to which at last we are given to see their steps returning. The enemies who seek to keep them out of possession are, naturally therefore, human; although Satan's power works in and through them. The full deliverance is by the Lord from heaven, when His feet stand upon the mount of Olives, and "Jehovah my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee" (Zech. xiv. 4, 5). They are blessed *under* Christ, but not *with* Him; and these blessings, however great, fall short of that of the "Church, which is Christ's body," in a way corresponding to this.

Still their salvation is, of course, not merely temporal, but spiritual, and thus eternal. They are sinners saved by grace, needing as we the precious blood of Christ to cleanse them from sin and give them a righteous standing in the favor of God; although this in its security and complete blessedness the Psalms cannot free fully from the shadows cast upon it by the legal dispensation. Yet we are made to realize how much, after all, faith could enjoy, and how God could give assistance to faith, which would be realized in proportion to the simplicity of it. We shall find all through how much, even now, we are on common ground with the saints of old, and can enter even into their experiences; our own blessing being not defined by theirs on this account, but wonderfully greater. We must take care not to magnify this difference in such a way as to take from them what grace really made them to enjoy, or limit it to what may be argued from the legal nature of the dispensation simply, as if God had no secrets reserved for the ears of His people, which *He* had liberty to utter, or power to enable them to receive, even though the time were not come in which they could be openly made known.

The blessings of this salvation are, in these five psalms following, detailed as, first (psalm xxx.) in its being a salvation of God, having its roots in His own unchanging nature, and thus secure, whatever the circumstances may be. In the next psalm (xxxi.) it is seen as deliverance from the enemy; which for Israel, as already said, is the human foe and not the spiritual, though the spiritual foe be behind this. In the third psalm of this series (xxxii.) we have God as the sanctuary, the hiding-place of the soul, involving cleansing from sin and guidance for the way, personal and not merely providential. Fourthly (psalm xxxiii.), this God of redemption is the God of the whole world also, all circumstances shaping themselves at His bidding therefore: so that finally, in the thirty-fourth psalm, one can bless Jehovah at all times, and His praise be continually in the mouth. This last is a governmental psalm, and fittingly an alphabetic one, though not quite perfect: the *perfect* praise will be that around the Throne.

PSALM XXX.

For the title here we seem to have no explanation in the history of David; nor can we therefore decide from it whether "the house" be that of Jehovah or David's own. The Septuagint and many commentators accept the last of these applications as the true one; but the king himself does not appear in the psalm,

SERIES 2. (Psalms XXX.–XXXIV.)
The detailed Salvation.

Ps. XXX.

[1]PSALM XXX.

Whatever else changes, an unchanging God.

A psalm (a song of [t]dedication of the house) of David.

1 (1-3): God my sufficiency. (i.) whose power has intervened. (ii.) answer of my prayer. (iii.) the God of resurrection.

I WILL extol thee, Jehovah, for thou hast [u]lifted me up,
and hast not made my enemies [v]rejoice over me.
Jehovah, my God! I [w]cried unto thee, and thou hast [z]healed me.
Jehovah, thou hast [y]brought up my soul from Sheol:
thou hast quickened me from among [z]those going down to the pit.

2 (4, 5): The testimony (i.) of His consistency with Himself.

Sing psalms to Jehovah, ye [a]godly ones of his;
and give thanks at the [b]remembrance of his holiness.

[t] *cf.* 2 Sam. 5. 11. 2 Sa. 6. 17 with 2 Sa. 7. 1-13.
[u] Ps. 27. 6.
[v] Ps. 35. 19. Ps. 38. 16. Micah 7. 8.
[w] Ps. 28. 1, 2.
[x] Ex. 15. 23. Ps. 41. 4. *cf.* Is. 38. 1-5.
[y] Ps. 56. 13. Ps. 86. 13.
[z] Ps. 28. 1.
[a] Ps. 33. 1.
[b] Ps. 29. 2. Ps. 93. 5. Ps. 97. 12.

and the "glory" spoken of in the closing verse, as well as the general reference to Israel's last deliverance, speaks strongly for the former.

The psalm has twelve verses, and its normal structure would be therefore 4 x 3; but in fact, the second section loses one of its verses to the third, which is thus increased. The reason of this I cannot clearly give.

1. The psalmist begins with a song of praise to Jehovah for His effectual help. He had lifted him up, and had not allowed his foes to rejoice over him. Moreover it was the answer of God to his cry of distress when smitten, and death was before him; nay, when all seemed over with him. He was already numbered with those going down to the pit, and only the God of resurrection could have brought him up. This we can easily understand as applying to the deliverance of the remnant of the Jews: it exactly describes it. They are saved at the last moment of distress, when their enemies seem to have them in their grasp, and hope is gone. The whole language shows moreover that this condition of theirs is understood and acknowledged to be the effect of sin. The "pit," though it refers to death, is death in the anger of God; and this is plainly stated in the fifth verse. Thus this deliverance is a true salvation.

2. This thanksgiving to Jehovah is followed by testimony for Him; as it will indeed be in the day which is here anticipated. Delivered Israel will be His great witnesses upon the earth; and their deliverance abundant blessing to the Gentiles. But as Judah's deliverance precedes that of the ten tribes, who are afterwards joined to them, and is also out of more extreme distress, it is possible that the "godly ones" here addressed are these tribes of Israel. They are exhorted to sing psalms to Jehovah, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness. *Holiness* had to bring them low in order to raise them up; and they can now rejoice, and bid others rejoice, in that very dealing of God with them, so severe as it might seem, but so effectual, which had wrought in bringing them to repentance, and so to God. He had acted but in consistency with Himself; and this is always a necessity for blessing for any.

Now the cloud had passed, the wrath was gone; after all, it was but for a moment indeed, and in His favor following there had come, in the fullest sense, "life." This is stated here as a principle of widest application to all those who turn, in like manner, to Him. "Weeping may lodge with us at even-tide," and a night of darkness and distress succeed; but God's order is, first evening and then the morning; and for the morning is prepared, instead of sorrow, "a song of joy."

God works for eternity; man is the creature of time. Thus it is sure that man

(ii.) the contrast between His anger and His favor.

3 (6-9): The heart of the matter.

(i.) self-sufficiency.

(ii.) the humiliation.

(iii.) the recall to God.

(iv.) the plea of the failed: shall Thy praise fail?

For his anger is, a [c]moment; in his favor is [d]life:
[e]weeping may lodge [with us] at eventide,
and for the [f]morning there be a song of joy.

And I, in my [g]prosperity, had said, "I [h]never shall be moved:"
Jehovah, in [i]thy favor thou hadst made my mountain to stand strong:
thou [j]hiddest thy face; I was troubled.
I cried unto thee, Jehovah:
even unto Jehovah made I supplication.
What [k]profit is there in my blood,
if I go down to corruption?
will the [l]dust give thee thanks?
will it declare thy truth?

[c] Is. 26. 20. Is. 54. 7, 8.
[d] Ps. 63. 3. Ps. 27. 13.
[e] cf. Is. 54. 11.
[f] cf. Ps 126. cf. Is. 52. 1-10.
[g] Job 29. 18. cf. Is. 39. 1-7.
[h] cf. Matt. 26. 31-35.
[i] Ps. 119. 117. cf. 1 Pet. 1. 5.
[j] Ps. 27. 9. Ps. 104. 29. cfr. 2 Cor. 3. 18.
[k] cf. Is. 38. 9-20.
[l] Ps. 6. 5. Ps. 88. 10-12. cfr. Phil. 1. 21-23.

will misconceive Him as long as he clings to his own thoughts. Faith alone brings rest and deliverance; and brings it at once in proportion to its simplicity. Alas, how frequently is the soul even of the saint at issue with Him! and this is what of necessity brings darkness over it. When the conflict of will passes, the morning is at hand. Then we realize for what God works, that it is for His eternity; that night is but the womb of nature out of which the day is born, with its multitudinous voices and its golden fruits.

3. And now the heart of the subject is reached. It is perfectly simple, and yet how difficult to learn in full practical application, where it must be learned: "And I in my prosperity had said, I never shall be moved: Jehovah, in Thy favor Thou hadst made my mountain to stand strong." How hard it is to have a mountain standing strong, and not put our confidence in it! And if the heart refers this to the favor of God, all the more may it be a snare, a false confidence which comes in between it and immediate confidence in the Lord. And how hard it is to resign this (real or supposed) "favor," thus attached to what makes something of us! Privileges, circumstances, experiences, we cling to, only to find them fail us in the day of trial,—everything allowed to be shaken, that that which cannot be shaken may remain. When the eye is turned away to Christ, then in the joy of Him who bare our sins, brought up out of death, we can in a deeper way than Israel here say, "Thou hast brought my soul out of Sheol: Thou hast quickened me from among those going down to the pit." As sinners, in a work done for sinners, we find an immovable foundation, and can no more say, "Thou hidest Thy face," for that to the soul hid in Christ is gone through —He has endured it,—and God can no more hide His face from His Beloved, nor from those who in that Beloved find unchangeable acceptance.

In this psalm, no doubt, all this is not made plain, nor could yet be; nor can we attribute such knowledge to the Jewish remnant until, brought through their deep distress, they have looked upon Him whom they have pierced, their rejected and crucified Messiah. But the prophets prophesied with a knowledge far beyond their own, and we can find in them, as Peter assures us, more than they could understand; while yet there could for them also be thus furnished principles and truths upon which faith could stay itself, whatever the dispensation. Here it is to Jehovah, Jehovah the Unchangeable, Himself, that His people are turned, even by the very hiding of His face. What good in a mountain if that Face were hidden? In fact, it is gone: it cannot abide, if He abide not. But must not He abide who is Jehovah the Abiding? and has He not known, all through, the sin, the folly, the vanity, of the creature? Can it be pleasure to Him, or profit, or glory, to exact the just sentence of death from so frail a being? Will the dust—even though He has said, "Unto dust thou shalt return,"—really declare His truth? Will He be satisfied with the curse upon one who, be he what he may, clings to Him for blessing?

4 (10-12): The experience. (i.) a cry for grace. (ii.) the answering change. (iii.) glory to God!

Jehovah, hear and be gracious to me!
Jehovah, be my helper!
Thou hast [m] turned my mourning into dancing for me:
thou hast loosed my [n] sackcloth, and girded me with gladness:
To the end that [o] glory may psalm to thee, and not be silent:
Jehovah my God! I will give thee thanks [p] forever.

m ver. 5. Is. 61. 3.
n Is. 52. 1, 2. Jer. 32. 4, 10-14.
o *cf.* Is. 54. 1.
p Ps. 72. 5, 15.

Ps. xxxi.

[2] PSALM XXXI.

Deliverance from the enemy.

To the chief musician: a psalm of David.

1 (1-3): Jehovah the rock of faith. (i) in righteousness.

IN thee, Jehovah, have I taken [q] refuge:
let me never be ashamed; in thy [r] righteousness rescue me!

q *cf.* Ps. 16. 1. Ps. 28. 7. Ps. 71. 1.
r *cf.* Ps. 17. 1. Ps. 26. 1. Ps. 143. 1.

Here it is not the death of Christ that is pleaded, as we see, while yet it is the death of Christ which justifies, and how much more than justifies, the plea that the Spirit of God here puts into the heart of the suppliant. Can He desire man's death, who has given up His Son to death to redeem him? Yet God has found thus a way of making death itself a wonderful display, not of His truth simply, but of the love which is His Nature. He has got thus a ground upon which He can show and justify unchanging grace towards one who finds in his very sins his title to the Saviour of sinners. Thus God manifests how safe the plea is, that rests upon what is in Himself. For Israel the end will fully show this; to us it is already fully shown. Would then that for every Christian, "my mountain" were no more the confidence, but Christ the unclouded confidence of the soul! that "Thou hiddest Thy face" were referred wholly to that one darkness which in its endurance has rent the veil of the sanctuary for us, and set God in the light for evermore!

4. Now comes at last the experience which shows that the plea is good. Faith is not to be made to conform to experience; for we cannot be trusted thus to read experience right, and God in Christ transcends all possible experience: but experience will at last surely approve faith; and so it is in this case. The cry for grace and help to Jehovah is answered at last by that which turns mourning into dancing, takes off the sackcloth garment, and girds the loins for glad activity in praise.

The expression, "that glory may psalm to Thee," is not to be reduced to the commonplace of most expositors: another psalmist has declared that "surely His salvation is nigh them that fear Him, that *glory* may dwell in our land" (Psalm lxxxv. 9). This is the display of God Himself in the midst of Israel, in the very time to which we have now reached. This will bear blessed witness to what He is, waking up all nature in accompaniment of praise. This is what glory *psalming* to Him may well mean. The whole land—the whole *earth* in measure—responds in harmony, as an instrument to the skilled fingers of the player. Alas, it has found none hitherto to bring out its dormant capacities. Now it awakes, to be silent no more.

We can understand then how this psalm is "for the dedication of the house," —the sanctuary which the end of Daniel's seventy weeks will see anointed to Jehovah. The end of salvation is that God and man may be at last together.

PSALM XXXI.

We have now what is in itself very simple, but which on that account may seem to have less instruction for us, with whom circumstances are so different, and whose attitude towards those who persecute them is to be so different. For Israel at the time of the end a psalm like this has, of course, the deepest impor-

(ii.) for deliverance.
(iii.) for His name.

Bow thine ear down to me! [a]speedily deliver me!
be to me a rock of strength; a house of defence to save me!
For my [f]rock and my fortress thou art;
and for thy [u]name's sake lead me and guide me!

2 (4–6): Dependent relationship.
(i.) to God as strength
(ii.) by redemption.
(iii.) by character.

Draw me out of the [v]net they have privily laid for me:
for thou art my stronghold.
Into thy hand I [w]commit my spirit:
thou hast [x]redeemed me, Jehovah, God* of truth.
I have [y]hated them that observe lying vanities:
and *I* have trusted in Jehovah.

3 (7, 8.) Realization.
(i.) God knowing
(ii.) and delivering.

I will be glad and [z]rejoice in thy mercy:
for thou hast seen my trouble; thou hast [a]known my soul in straits.
And thou hast not shut me up in the enemy's hand:
thou hast set my feet in a [b]large place.

4 (9–13): The trial.
(i.) a cry for grace.
(ii.) wasting away!

Be [c]gracious to me, Jehovah; for I am in strait:
mine eye is [d]shrunk with vexation,—my soul and my belly.
For my life is spent with [e]grief, and my years with sighing:
my strength faileth because of [f]mine iniquity, and my bones are shrunk.

a *cf.* Ps. 40. 13, 17.
f Ps. 18. 2.
u Ps. 25. 11, 12. Ps. 23. 3.
v Ps. 25. 15. Ps. 141. 8–10.
w *cf.* Lk. 23. 46. Acts 7. 59.
x Ps. 26. 11. Ps. 71. 23.
y Ps. 26. 5. Ps. 139. 21, 22.
z Ps. 9. 2.
a *cf.* Ex. 3. 7. *cf.* Heb. 4. 15.
b Ps. 18. 19. Ps. 118. 5.
c Ps. 56. 1. Ps. 57. 1.
d Job 17. 7. Ps. 6. 7. Lam. 5. 17.
e Ps. 38. 8.
f Ps. 25. 11. Ps. 38. 4. *cf.* Ps. 40. 12.

* El, "Mighty."

tance. For ourselves spiritual enemies may be imaged in these human ones, and no doubt are: the conflict between good and evil is, in its principles, the same, whatever the part of the field in which we may be engaged.

1. Certain basis-truths are constantly repeated in these psalms; and, simple as they are, the repetition must be as wholesome as it is inevitable. That Jehovah—God in His unchangeable self-consistency—is the rock of faith, needs not, of course, to be proved, nor is it. It is used with God Himself as a prevailing argument for Him to show Himself in that character. Must He not be to the soul that trusts Him all that it counts upon Him for? The suppliant can plead His righteousness even in his own behalf; for does He not encourage faith to lay hold upon Him? "Be to me" therefore, he cries, "a rock of strength, a house of defence, to save me: for my rock and my fortress Thou art." And would He not be known for what He is? that is, act for His Name's sake,—lead and guide His people in conformity with this?

2. Relationship to God is one of dependence necessarily on the side of His creature: it is the relation of the weak to the strong, of the foolish and short-sighted to the Infinitely Wise, of those prone to sin to the Ever-Holy. It implies that He is to be their resource and help, even against themselves, and against every form of real evil. Thus the psalmist commits himself into Jehovah's hand, as his mighty and faithful Redeemer; his heart cleaving to Him in opposition to every false confidence and senseless superstition of man.

3. Now he realizes Jehovah's mercy. He has seen his trouble, known his soul in straits. How comforting to know that; though deliverance yet there is not! What comfort is there in the presence of one who loves us, even though powerless to bring us other help! But the psalmist can say more than that. He is not shut up in the enemy's hand; his feet are set in freedom, in a large place.

4. After the manner of the Psalms, and indeed according to numerical symbol-

(iii.) an open reproach.

I am become a [g]reproach because of all my oppressors,
even exceedingly to my neighbors, and a dread to mine acquaintance:
they that see me without flee from me.

(iv.) gone utterly.

I am [h]forgotten, as a dead man out of the heart:
I am become like a broken vessel.

(v.) "terror on every side."

For I have heard the murmur of many—terror on every side—
while they took [i]counsel together against me,—
plotted to take away my life.

5 (14-18): In Thy hand.

But as for me, I have [j]trusted in thee, Jehovah:
I have said, Thou art my God.

(i.) God of my choice

My [k]times are in thy hand:

(ii.) deliver me!

deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and my persecutors!

(iii.) make Thy face to shine!

Make thy [l]face to shine upon thy servant:
save me for thy mercies' sake!

(iv.) make not my hope ashamed.

Jehovah, let me not be [m]ashamed, for I have called upon thee:
the [n]wicked shall be ashamed;
they shall be silent in Sheol!

(v.) reward the lying lips.

Be dumb the [o]lying lips,
which insolently speak against the righteous with pride and contempt!

6 (19-24): The victory.

(i.) The faithfulness of God.

How great is thy [p]goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee,
[which] thou hast wrought for those taking [q]refuge in thee
before the sons of men!

g Ps. 39. 8. Ps. 44. 13. Ps. 38. 11. *cf.* De. 28. 37.

h Ps. 88. 4,5. *cf.* Ru.1.19.

i Jer. 18. 23. *cf.* Matt. 27. 1.

j ver. 1. Ps. 7. 1.

k *cf.* Deut. 33. 25.

l Num. 6. 25, 26. Ps. 67. 1.

m Ps. 80. 3, 7, 19. Ps. 119.135.

n ver. 1. Ps. 25. 2, 3.

o Ps. 4. 2. Ps. 12. 2–4.

p *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 9, 10. 1 Sam. 2. 5–8. *cf.* Phil. 4. 19.

q Ps. 46. 1. Ps. 142. 5.

ism, to which the Psalms, as well as all other scriptures, are conformed, the trial comes after the deliverance, or at least the anticipation of this by faith. The whole trouble is spread out before God, with every circumstance of sorrow and distress. The speaker is in strait; his eye shrunk with vexation, yea, his soul and inmost parts; his life is spent with grief, and his years with sighing; his strength fails, the solid bones themselves are shrunken. Nor is this even private misery: all around, his neighbors and acquaintances, realize his condition beset with eager enemies, and avoid him as not willing to share his lot. Even more, like a dead man, or a broken vessel cast upon the refuse-heap, he has dropped out of the memory,—worse, out of the hearts that once held him in affection. And even yet this desolate and cast-off life men cannot leave alone, but have conspired to take it: the extremes and opposites of sorrow meet and are reconciled in the forms of "terror round about."

5. But out of it all he turns to God again. The waves but fling him higher on the rock. "But as for me, I have trusted in Thee, Jehovah: I have said, Thou art my God! My times are in Thy hand." Oh what a song the wind's wild music makes, when that can be said really from the heart! And though the prayer still goes on, "deliver me from the hand of mine enemies," yet the perplexity is gone. "Make Thy face to shine," he says; but its rays are already lighting up his heart when he says so. Then he sees the pillar-glory turn its terror upon his enemies: "the wicked shall be ashamed; they shall be silent in Sheol." And he puts his consenting Amen into a prayer: "Be dumb the lying lips, which proudly and contemptuously speak against the righteous!"

(ii.) in preserving.	Thou [r]hidest them in the secret of thy presence from the conspiracies of men: thou concealest them in a pavilion from the [s]strife of tongues.	[r] Ps. 27. 5. Ps. 9. 9. Ps. 32. 7. [s] Job 5. 21. Ps. 55.6–11.
(iii.) fenced around.	Blessed be Jehovah: for he has shown me wondrously his mercy in a [t]fenced city.	[t] *cf.* Is. 26.1.
(iv.) the experience.	As for me, I said in my alarm, I am [u]cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou hast heard the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.	[u] *cf.* Ps. 3.2. Is. 38.10,11.
(v.) recompense.	Oh, [v]love Jehovah, all ye godly ones of his! Jehovah preserveth the faithful; and plentifully [w]recompenseth the proud doer.	[v] Ps. 69. 36. Ps. 97. 10. Ps. 34. 9. [w] Ps. 28. 14.
(vi.) the spirit of victory.	Be strong, and let your hearts take [x]courage, all ye that hope in Jehovah!	[x] Ps. 27. 4.

6. The whole ends with a song of victory. The goodness of God was but "laid up" for those that fear Him, when as yet experience there was none; and, though in unseen Arms, His refugees too are laid up,—hidden from conspiracies and the whole strife of tongues; fenced round as in a fortressed city. Alas, there had been alarm, and unbelief had misconstrued God's silence; yet He had heard, all through: and the unburdened heart breaks out in earnest exhortation, bred of this experience. "Oh love Jehovah, all ye godly ones of His! Jehovah preserveth the faithful, and plentifully recompenseth the proud doer." Thus may the hearts of His own be animated with the courage of assured victory: "Be strong, and let your hearts take courage: all ye that hope in Jehovah."

Psalm XXXII.

The psalm to which we now come is a bright testimony to the terms upon which, even under the shadow of the legal covenant, the souls of His true people were with God. It is striking also as the first of the Maskil psalms, of which there are thirteen altogether, a title which means, according to the margin of our common Bibles, "giving instruction." The Revised Version omits this, and the meaning is disputed.* Delitzsch objects that "there are only two (xxxii. and lxxviii.) which can be regarded as didactic poems;" but it is not necessary, as we shall see, that they should be, in any formal way, didactic. There are many lessons to be learned apart from the professional schoolmaster.

It is, I have no doubt, to prophecy, and to prophecy of the times we are considering so often in the Psalms, the prophecy of the days of Israel's final tribulation which God uses to bring her to Himself, that we must look for light as to the proper significance of the title. From the prophet Daniel, to whom the Lord refers in His own picture of the times preceding His coming (Matt. xxiv. 15, 21), we learn much of this time (comp. ch. xii. 1); and he speaks of "those that *understand*"—the same word, *maskilim*—"among the people" (xi. 33, 35), who "shall instruct many," the "wise" (margin, "teachers")—still the same word—who "shall shine as the brightness of the firmament," and who, according to the parallelism, and what is said of them before, are the same "that turn many to righteousness" (xii. 3). Of these it is further said (ver. 10), that while "none of the wicked shall understand," "the *wise* shall understand." The word *maskilim* means either "those who understand" or who "make (others) to understand"; and thus we realize the connection between the way it occurs in Daniel and in the titles of the psalms.

* "The meaning is questioned, but the old interpretation, which connects it with the word *askil*, which occurs ver. 8, 'I will instruct thee,' is probably correct. A didactic song, intended for instruction; thus the lxx., συνέσεως; Jerome, 'eruditio.'" (Speaker's Commentary.)

Thus we see — what, indeed, is simple enough in itself, when we realize the mercy of God to His people — that, in the midst of the darkness and confusion of the terrible troubles of which we are speaking, God raises up helpers for them, men gifted with special wisdom for the times, realizing what the word of prophecy predicts, and seeking to turn the people to their God. They must get for themselves the instruction they impart to others, and (however God may come in to give direct oracular testimony) this, one would say, according to His regular methods of dealing with His people, through His precious — to those in such straits, how precious—Word.

Now, apart from the direct prophecy such as we find in Daniel, *where* should we expect such help to be provided, rather than in these very psalms? And why should not these *Maskil* psalms be marked thus as special instruction for these *Maskil men* so linked together by the inspired word for each, — whether instruction for themselves, or for others through them?

If we take up the Lord's prophecy of this very period already referred to (Matt. xxiv.) we find clearly directions given by Him, which, of course, are to be recognized and acted on by the remnant of those days: "when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (*whoso readeth, let him understand*), then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains." Notice the special, Daniel-like, reference, — nay, the appeal to be "men of understanding," *maskilim*, — certain to arouse the attention of those exercised in that time of trial, and acquainted with Daniel.

This involves, of course, the recognition of Christ, and the use of the New Testament among the Jews of that day; and this is most natural, and what, one would say, would be certainly the case. How could the taking away of the multitudes of Christians to be with their Lord have transpired,* and they be ignorant altogether of Him and the Christian Revelation? And yet the light they have may be very partial and uncertain; and we have full reason to expect this. With all God's word open to us to-day, — open for nearly two millennia, — and with the gift of the Spirit bestowed upon us in a manner and with a measure they will not have, — how contradictory are the thoughts of Christians, even on well-nigh fundamental points, in spite of this! In the day we speak of, those whose case we are considering will be permitted to go through thorough exercise of heart as to all the questions of the past, and learn of Him who meets their need as the need itself is realized. Amid all this individual exercise of heart so necessary for them we may be able to give little account to ourselves of their progress in divine truth—different, as it will naturally be, in different persons—until they look upon Him whom they have pierced, and one repentant wave of sorrow prostrates the whole people before God.

But when we turn to the book of Revelation, which† from ch. 6–19 occupies itself with the same scenes as those in Daniel and in the prophecy of the Lord, we find another significant connection with Daniel, and another sign of the use of the New Testament by these Jewish saints. The picture of the "beast" in Rev. xiii. must inevitably attract the students of Daniel's prophecy, and there, at the close of the chapter, they will find this special note for the *maskilim*: "Here is the mind which has wisdom: *let him that hath understanding* count the number of the beast." No plainer address could there be to those specially marked out in this way by the Old Testament prophet; no inquiry more significant for such as to the signs of the times, than this as to the great enemy and

* See pp. 13, 22, 23, and Notes in the beginning of Ruth. For fuller and more orderly detail, consult the prophetic writings of J. N. Darby, W. Trotter, W. Kelly, T. B. Baines, and others.

† In chapters I.–III. we have the Lord's judgment of the churches, the present Christian state; toward the close of which His coming is announced with more and more urgency. In the beginning of the fourth chapter the apostle is caught up to heaven, as the saints will be, and there sees the crowned elders before the Throne, and hears them sing the song of redemption (ch. v.). The Lamb is now the Lion of Judah (King of the Jews), and with chapter vi. the judgments of the day of the Lord begin on earth. (See Kelly, Baines, and the so often referred to "Synopsis of the Books of the Bible," by J. N. Darby.)

Ps. xxxii.

1 (i, 2): The blessedness of righteousness imputed.
(I.) grace.
(II.) its ministry.

[3]PSALM XXXII.

The soul cleansed and God its sanctuary.

[A psalm] of David, [y]Maskil.

[z]HAPPY is he* whose [a]revolt is [b]forgiven,
whose sin is [c]covered!
Happy the man to whom Jehovah [d]imputeth not perversity;
and in whose spirit there is no [e]guile!

* A mere change of the vowel points would make this plural, as in the apostle's quotation, Rom. iv. 7.

y Ps. 42. title, etc.
z Ps. 1. 1. Ps. 41. 1.
a Is. 1. 2. Jer. 2. 8.29. Hos. 7. 13.
b Rom. 4. 6-8. Ps. 85. 1, 2. cf. Eph. 1. 7.
c cf. Zech. 3. 4. cf. Is. 40. 2.
d cf. Acts 7. 60 with Rom. 4. 22-25.
e cf. Lk. 18. 13, 14; cf. Acts 15. 9; 1 Pet. 2. 1.

oppressor of the people. Hence the reference is too plain to need any further insistence on it.

All this surely, then, prepares us to understand the *maskil* psalms; and when we take up these individually, we shall find the view that they contain special "instruction" for the last days abundantly sustained. Thus the present psalm is, as such, of the most vital importance, speaking of God's way of forgiveness and a hiding-place with Him, before the forty-second, the second of these, gives the comfort of those cast away from the earthly sanctuary. Next, the forty-fifth celebrates Messiah and His victory, and Israel's blessing under Him. Then a series of four (iii.–lv.) describe the wicked one and his followers; the seventy-fourth pleads for the violated sanctuary itself; the seventy-eighth recounts the cause of it, the many wanderings of the people from their God; the seventy-ninth mourns again over the desolation of Jerusalem; the eighty-eighth expresses the terror of the broken law; the eighty-ninth reveals "the sure mercies of David;" while the 142d closes the list with the thankful acknowledgment that when other refuge failed and none cared for their souls, Jehovah Himself had known and cared.

Thus, though we may not be able to recognize the distinctive value of each psalm in this way, as a whole they certainly give us what is needed wisdom for the day of Israel's trial. The other psalms link readily with these, for complete "instruction."

The eleven verses of the psalm divide into five parts, in which we learn how God can be with man; not, however, atonement, which we have had before, but the consequences of it. Of these fifteen remnant psalms which come together in the three series, it is the middle one, and the hinge upon which all turns.

1. It is the doctrine of "righteousness without works" that David, as the apostle says (Rom. iv. 6), here declares. There is no such text as "happy is the man that keepeth the law," because such a man cannot be found, and the law cannot be satisfied with fragmentary obedience. On the contrary, it proclaims, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." (Gal. iii. 10.) Nor is this altered when it is given the second time; for the returning sinner, though met with forgiveness, must still "do that which is lawful and right" to "save his soul alive." (Ezek. xviii. 27.) Thus faith it is that establishes the law (Rom. iii. 31), when it owns the impossibility of being righteous by it, and flees for refuge to the hope set before men in the gospel.

And after all the happiness of the sinner saved by grace is far beyond that that could have been known by any one standing in his own righteousness, though this were stainless and flawless in its perfection. For if, in the one, man were exalted and honored, in the other all the heart of God has been poured out upon him. Christ's work it is that has opened heaven to us, and given us blessedness beyond possibility of creature claim. How much is lost by speculations as to the future of an unfallen Adam, going quite beyond the record, and to the constant belittling of the "fifth part more" of the trespass-offering, the exceeding glory of Christ and of His blessed work!

2 (3-5) Conflict and deliverance.
(i.) barren conviction.
(ii.) conflict.
(iii.) the sin exposed.

While I kept [f]silence, my bones wasted,
because of my roaring all the day.
For day and night thy [g]hand was heavy on me:
my sap was turned into a summer drought. Selah.
I [h]acknowledged my sin unto thee,
and my perversity have I [i]not covered:
I [j]said, I will confess my revolting* to Jehovah:
and *thou* [k]forgavest the perversity of my sin. Selah.

[f] Prov. 28. 13. *cf.* Job 27. 5, 6. *cf.* Job 13. 15. *cf.* Lk. 18. 18-23.
[g] Ps. 38. 1-6. Ps. 39. 10, 11.
[h] 2 Sa. 12. 13. 2 Sa. 24. 10. 1 John 1. 8-10.
[i] *cf.* ver. 1. *cf.* John 4. 16-18, 29.

* A plural in the original; but I take it that "my revolting" has the force of a plural.

Jno. 8. 1-11. [j] Lk. 15. 17-19; *cf.* Is. 65. 24 with Lk. 17. 14. [k] Lk. 15. 20-22; Ps. 85. 2; Ps. 130. 4; Lk. 7. 40-50; Mi. 7. 18.

Happy then, indeed, is he whose revolt* is forgiven, whose sin is covered! First, we have that which God's heart would feel first, and which sin is, in its essence, a "revolt" from Him. It is this, therefore, which specially needs, and is met with, forgiveness; then the outcome, the full sad issue of it all, is "covered,"—put out of sight. We know how God has provided for this in that precious "blood that maketh atonement for"—covereth—"the soul." But the word used here is not the same as this, for our attention here is fixed, not upon *what* covers, but upon the fact itself, what leads to it, and what follows from it. The *heart* is appealed to in the forgiveness; the shame and occasion for charge are removed by the covering. Happy then, again, the man to whom Jehovah imputeth not iniquity,—or "perversity," as the word literally is, and surely in direct connection with what follows, that in his spirit there is now no longer "guile," which *is* perversity. The latter is the effect of the former: the non-imputation is the moral remedy; grace is that which sets the soul right, enabling it for the honest judgment of sin, and winning it to God, so as to divorce it from this. Such is the power of the gospel! Such is its sweet ministry of salvation, certified in the experience of the saved soul.

2. But the psalmist is not satisfied with declaring the blessedness of grace: he goes on to tell us how he attained this blessedness,—just *where* grace met him and conquered him, after stubborn resistance to it. He tells us of the conviction that pressed on him to confession, and he would not confess. He kept silence, yet with the deep in his soul roaring for the tumult, till the very bones, the most solid parts of the body, wasted under the strife. It was with God, too, as he knew: God's hand lay heavy upon him, and his sap was dried up as by a drought in summer. Truth in the inward parts was wrought at last: "I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and my perversity have I not covered: I said, I will confess my revolting to Jehovah: and *Thou* forgavest the perversity of my sin." How the promptness of this mercy reminds us of the Lord's illustration of His Father's love to the returning prodigal! Not even, "I *did* confess, and Thou forgavest," but the forgiveness anticipating the confession itself. Just as when he who, far off indeed from his father, turned in his need to him with words prepared, seeking but a servant's place,—to find his father's kiss anticipating in like manner the confession, and forbidding the thought of that which denied him a father's heart.

3. Thus the sanctuary is found: for God, as we know, will give full way to His grace, and justify it against all cavils of those who will dispute it. What another reminiscence is it of the Lord's parable, "Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance"! Wherever we find God really, be it in the Old Testament or the New, we find Him the same. And so here at once is it declared that this is no exceptional mercy to a David, but a way common to all the

* In the common and revised versions "transgression." The Septuagint has (in the plural) ἀνομίαι, "lawlessness." There is no necessary implication of transgression of the *law:* it is rather the root from which all sin springs,—what sin is, therefore, in its essence, as in 1 John iii. 4 (R. V.), "sin is lawlessness."

3 (6, 7): The sanctuary:
(i.) one for all, and one only.
(ii.) its security.

For this shall [l]every godly one pray unto thee,
in a time when thou [m]mayest be found:
surely in the [n]flood of many waters they shall not reach unto him.
Thou art my [o]hiding-place:
thou shalt [p]preserve me from strait:
thou shalt compass me about with [q]songs of deliverance. Selah.

4 (8, 9): For the way.
(i.) divine light, and personal guidance.

I will [r]instruct thee and teach thee in the way thou goest:
I will counsel [thee, with] mine [s]eye upon thee.

l *cf.* Ps. 16. 3 with Matt. 3. 5, 6. 1 Tim. 1. 15, 16.
m Is. 55, 6. Matt. 25. 11, 12. Jno. 7. 34. Hos. 5. 6.
n Ps. 27. 5, 6. Matt. 7. 24, 25.
o Ps. 31. 20. Is. 32. 2. *cf.* Gen. 3. 8-10.
p Is. 25. 4. Ps. 59. 16.
Jer. 30. 7-9. q Ex. 15. 1, etc.; Zeph. 3. 17; Lk. 15. 23, 24. r Ps. 25. 4, 5, 8, 12; Ps. 86. 11; Is. 2. 3. s Ps. 11. 4; Prov. 15. 3; *cf.* Lk. 22. 61, 62.

"godly," who by grace alone are won and rendered such. "For this shall every godly one pray unto Thee in a time when Thou mayest be found." A time may come, it is implied, when He may *not* be found; and thus "the floods of many waters" which we are now warned of remind us of the ark and of those alone saved when the Lord shut them in. To these no flood could reach; while no others could escape them. Between those inside and the flood, by this that Jehovah had done for them, there stood pledged for their security all the power of Jehovah's arm, all the glory of Jehovah's Name. Thus He was really their hiding-place. Could any flood of waters break through such a barrier? And now that we know Christ as the Antitype of this ark, the glorious Refuge upon whom the storms beat and the floods raged, but who has borne His full freight of blessing safely to the shore,—the soul in Christ can triumphantly say this. In Christ, as Christ: living because He lives; accepted in His acceptance; privileged to turn away even from ourselves, to rejoice in His perfection and delight ourselves in unchanging love. Here all that God is is indeed pledged to us, and with what songs of deliverance are not they encompassed, whom the Ark of their salvation has thus already brought to shore!

But still there comes a flood of waters for the earth, a day of tribulation such as never was,—a day of doom for the rebellious, such as these Psalms continually warn us of, when (the saints of the present already safely sheltered with their Lord above) it will be said to Israel: "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." And the rescued nation will sing, after the manner of this thirty-second psalm, of the Lord their hiding-place: "For Thou hast been a stronghold to the poor, a stronghold to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall." (Isa. xxvi., 20; xxv. 4.) Whatever the day of need may be, there is one way of blessing only,—One only in whom refuge is ever found.

4. According to the constant order in Scripture, which is the moral order also, after the lesson of the sanctuary comes the lesson for the way. "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way thou goest: I will counsel thee with mine eye upon thee." The last part of the verse is variously rendered and understood by commentators; and even as to the former part, according to Moll, "almost all recent interpreters, with Calvin and Geier, regard these verses as the words of David, which point all sinners to the God who has pardoned him." But this reduces "mine eye upon thee" to a mean and paltry pleonasm. *David's* eye upon the person he is instructing is of very small account; God's, of immense significance. Here, too, the numerical structure gives decisive help in favor of the fuller meaning. Even when God is rightly taken as the instructor, all commentators breaking the last part into two—"I will counsel thee; mine eye shall be upon thee"—while unnaturally affecting the structure of the verse, impoverishes the meaning; while the fuller is also the simpler rendering of the words. How blessed,

(ii.) not restraint.

Be not as the [t]horse [or] mule, which have no understanding;
whose trappings must be [u]bit and bridle for restraint,
[or] it will not come near thee.

δ (10, 11): Governmental ways.

(i.) their congruity.

Many [v]sorrows shall be to the wicked;
but he that [w]trusteth in Jehovah, mercy shall compass him about.

(ii.) the moral.

Be [x]glad in Jehovah, and exult, ye righteous:
and shout for joy, all ye [y]upright in heart.

[t] Prov. 26. 3. James 3. 3. *cf.* Nu. 22. 22-35 with 2 Pet. 2. 16.
[u] *cf.* Jonah 1. 4-10. Jon. 4. 4-11.
[v] Prov. 13. 15. Prov. 1. 24-32.
[w] Ps. 7. 1, etc.
[x] Ps. 33. 1.
[y] Ps. 28. 1, etc.

as well as inevitable, is it, that He in whom the soul has found its rest and shelter, must now concern Himself with all its future course. He to whom it is come is now its Lord, but also its most tender Counsellor. It is to act in freedom, but yet in subjection,—two things which go most perfectly together. God's eye is upon the blest and happy object of His favor; and this implies His perfect interest, true; but if the last clause reads, as naturally it should, as a connected whole, this Eye that occupies itself continually with us—with all that concerns us—becomes at the same time a positive guidance for us, which sheds light upon all the intimacy and responsibility of the new relationship. It implies not only on His side the interest of love, which is holy and purposeful; but, on ours, nearness to Him, intelligence of His mind, and prompt responsive activity: things which are full of comfort for us, and as full of earnest admonition.

His interest is the first thing to consider: "He never withdraweth His eyes from the righteous." And this even a Job might find, in the time of his strait, a sore trial rather than a gain: "What is man," he cries in his anguish, "that Thou shouldst magnify him? and that Thou shouldst set Thy heart upon him? and that Thou shouldst visit him every morning, and try him every moment? How long wilt Thou not depart from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle?" (Job vii. 17–19.) But Job, with all his outward perfection, had not yet seen God as he was to see Him; and the whole process by which we are won to delight in His constant occupation with us, the 139th psalm will by and by reveal. How blessed, then, when we have seen Him indeed, to know that every step we take in the way is a matter of concern to Him!—that there is not an hour of the day but He has some thought as to how we should spend it!

This is not legality, though it is true we may turn it into this. But he who knows best the folly and misery of his own ways will be most profoundly thankful for the love that has shown itself in this constant care, for a wisdom of which we are free ever to avail ourselves, and which is as perfect and far-seeing as the heart can crave to know.

In the wilderness "there is no way," except as it is marked out for us by the Living Guide Himself. Our path, therefore, must not be merely one of "righteousness," but one of "faith," all through. (2 Tim. ii. 22.) We can see, therefore, how unceasing prayer must be with us, and how God would nurture in us a constant dependence, most helpful to our whole development in the new life that is ours. That "we had turned every one to his own way" is the scripture account of sin. (Isa. liii. 6.) Alas, naturally we prize this, and count it freedom; but that "in Him we live and move and have our being" is the necessary creature condition, violated by every act of independency, and conformity to which is rest and blessedness.

But this dependency must be free and intelligent, as well as in the intimacy to which He has called us with Himself; and all this is implied in guidance with the eye. Nearness: for the glance of the eye is not intended for those far off, and cannot be read by them. Intelligence: for such guidance supposes that already we have a knowledge of His mind, or we shall not be able to interpret a look. With all this, a constant promptness of attention, as of those waiting to anticipate His will, or we shall not be ready for, or catch it. All this is plain:

Ps. xxxiii.
1 (1-3): Jehovah.
(i.) praise comely for the upright.
(ii.) the accompaniment.
(iii.) a resurrection-song.

[a]PSALM XXXIII.

This God the God of the whole earth.

SHOUT for [z]joy in Jehovah, ye righteous!
for the upright [a]comely is praise.
Praise Jehovah with the [b]harp!
psalm to him with the [c]ten-stringed lyre!
Sing unto him a [d]new song!
play skillfully with loud sound!

z Ps. 32. 11.
a Ps. 147. 1. Ps. 92. 1.
b 1 Sam. 16. 16. Ps. 43. 4. Rev. 5. 8.
c Ps. 92. 3. Ps. 144. 9.
d Ps. 96. 1. Ps. 98. 1. Ps. 149. 1. Is. 42. 10. *cf.* Rev. 5. 9.

but how it speaks of our need of acquaintance with Scripture, that we may be "filled with the knowledge of His will"; and of our greater need even of a devotedness which shall make God the real object of our life continually, and fill it with and sanctify it wholly to Himself.

And this gives force to the exhortation following, in which is contrasted the unintelligent intractability of horse or mule who need the restraint of bit and bridle, or you cannot make them approach or yield themselves to your guidance. And how many of the people of God have lives as little yielded up to Him, who must be governed by circumstances, rather than by the eye of God. His desire for us is not the drudgery of a stopped will, but the freedom of a changed one.

5. The next verse speaks plainly of God's governmental dealings with the wicked and the man of faith; which put a song of praise into the mouth of the righteous, exultation and a shout of joy into that of the upright in heart.

PSALM XXXIII.

The psalm following shows us now that Jehovah, the God of redemption, is the God of the whole earth. If this God, then, be for us, all else must be; and this opens the way to the closing praise of the thirty-fourth: "I will bless Jehovah at all times." The theme here, in what is the fourth psalm in the series, anticipates what is more fully brought out in the fourth book, where also Jehovah and the Second Man are shown as One; and thus the security of the earth in blessing is gloriously assured.

1. The psalmist begins with an exhortation to praise Jehovah, the one theme of praise for the righteous. The first verses here are but the expansion of the closing verse of the previous psalm, where we have found that the righteous are such only by redemption. And Jehovah is the name of God as the Redeemer,— the special name under which He takes up the people in the book of Exodus (see Ex. iii., notes); and thus the covenant Name of blessing for the redeemed. It is true that with Israel the legal spirit which inheres in man, and which had to be yielded to in the covenant of bondage at the mount of law, prevailed to obscure for them the glory of this Name, and still obscures it; yet in it, though veiled, their blessings are nevertheless wrapped up, and will be found in the day that is at hand.

Jehovah is the living and unchanging God, acting from Himself necessarily as independent of all else, finding in Himself the sufficient argument for what He does. Thus no consideration of man has to come in, to hinder the fullest blessing for him. If man came in, it would be only to hinder God acting from Himself, for the glory of His Name, His purpose stands.

Thus the exhortation may well be now, "Shout for joy in Jehovah, ye righteous! Praise is comely for the upright";— for those delivered from guile by the grace that has wrought conviction of sin, and met with salvation the convicted sinner.

This praise, as will be fully the case when Israel becomes the giver of it, will find its response in all creation round. This is what the harp and lyre in Israel's hands declare, who, as the earthly people, will awaken this response. If we knew better what these instruments were,— which is disputed,— we should be able to realize, no doubt, distinctive meaning in them. All that we can say now

2 (4 9): The testimony of His word and work.
(i.) right and faithful.
(ii.) bounteous.
(iii.) Maker of the heavens.
(iv.) the sea.
(v.) man with God.
(vi.) successful might.

For right is Jehovah's [e]word:
and in faithfulness all his [f]work.
He loveth [g]justice and judgment:
the earth is [h]full of the goodness of Jehovah.
By Jehovah's word were the [i]heavens made;
and all their host by the breath of his mouth.
He masseth as a [j]heap the waters of the sea;
he layeth up the depths in treasuries.
Let all the earth [k]fear Jehovah:
let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.
For *he* [l]spake, and it was done:
he commanded, and it stood fast.

e Ps. 19. 8, *cf.* Prov. 8. 6–8.
f Ps. 36. 5, *cf.* Gen. 8. 22 with Jer. 33. 19–26.
g Ps. 11. 7. Ps. 45. 7. Ps. 97. 2.
h Ps. 104. 24. Ps. 119. 64.
i Gen. 1. 1, 6, 7, 14–19. Job 26. 13. Ps. 8. 3.
j Gen. 1. 9. Job 38. 8–11.
k Ju. 5. 4. Ps. 114. 7. Ps. 104. 32; Is. 64. 1, 2.
l Gen. 1. 3, 6, etc.; 2 Pet. 3. 5; *cf.* Matt. 8; 26, 27.

is that the harp was certainly peculiarly connected with strains of joy; while the "ten strings" of the lyre or psaltery would *seem* to associate it with the more solemn strains of recompense and judgment, all of which must praise Him too.

But no *special* instrument is connected with the "new song" of the third verse, which will be, assuredly, both for Israel and the earth, what the numeral probably intimates, a *resurrection* song. And this, like all resurrection of the higher kind, is not a mere restoration to the primitive condition, which would mean almost certainly that it was a mere turning of the wheel, the beginning of the old cycle of transition and decay, but a new and higher and fixed condition reached, in which the thought of God will now be realized, and His purpose from the beginning attained. No wonder that for the accompaniment now there should need skillful playing with loud sound!

2. We have now the testimony given to Him by His work and word; His work being indeed the product of His word, the creation of His mind and will, bearing the impress, therefore, of His character. The *written* word does not seem here in question, although of course the same must be true of it, and more manifestly, sin having come in to obscure the witness of creation. But sin also does not come as yet into the picture, except quite inferentially.

"For right is Jehovah's word, and in faithfulness all His work": as in truth the fixed laws that pervade it are a proof,—so fixed, so pervasive, that in all material points we soon get familiar with, and learn to rely on them. And this is an inestimable blessing which only our being so accustomed to it tends to hide from us. Suppose, even, they *were* certain, and yet so intricate as to make the knowledge of common effects difficult to obtain, what uncertainty would attend all our actions, and what disasters would arise! Instead of this we are in a world generally stable, and with only enough uncertainty to promote dependence. And all this is "faithfulness" to His creatures, the work of His hands who can apprehend these laws; while instinct guides even more surely, though in a more humble manner, the lower races. But moreover,—

"He loveth justice and judgment";—it is not here in question how *men* pervert it, but of these same laws in their moral character, which testify for Him. The power which earth manifests is a power that "makes for righteousness." And "the earth is full of the *goodness* of Jehovah." This is that diffuse benevolence which everything displays in nature, the eye, the ear, the senses generally, provided for and gratified; and beauty, melody, variety, showing with much else, (even though we are outside of Eden,) how God has cared for us. Life could go on without what only their prevalence and their inability to pall and injure us, forbid us to call the *luxuries* of life.

The heavens and their host were called forth by Jehovah's word; a majestic spectacle to arrest attention, wake up wonder and inquiry, and lift our thoughts above the earth. Preachers to us of our littleness and dependence, their testimony is manifestly in the line of His redemptive work. The philosopher Kant,

3 (10-12): The realization of His name. (i.) power against which none can stand. (ii.) contrasted with the fleeting generations of men. (iii.) the portion of His people.

4 (13-17): The weakness of the creature. (i.) in the light of His presence. (ii.) closely discerned. (iii.) by Him whoknoweth the hearts. (iv.) the weakness of the mighty (v.) even to escape.

Jehovah bringeth to [m]naught the counsel of the nations:
he disalloweth the thoughts of peoples.
The [n]counsel of Jehovah standeth forever:
the thoughts of his heart from [o]generation to generation.
[p]Happy is the nation whose God Jehovah is:
the people he has chosen for his [q]inheritance.

Jehovah regardeth from heaven:
he [r]beholdeth all the sons of men.
From the place of his habitation,
he looketh narrowly upon all the inhabitants of the earth:—
He who [s]fashioneth their hearts together:
who understandeth all their works.
There is no [t]king saved by the multitude of a host:
by great strength is no mighty man delivered.
The [u]horse is a vain thing for safety:
and by his great strength he shall not deliver.

m Ps. 2. 2-4. Is. 8, 9, 19. *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 19-21.
n ctr. ver. 10. *cf.* Rom. 11. 29.
o Deut. 7. 9. *cf.* Eph. 3. 10, 11.
p De. 33. 29. Ps. 144. 15.
q Deut. 32.9. Ex. 19. 5. *ctr.* Eph. 1. 18.
r Ps. 11. 4. Ps. 102. 19. Jer. 16. 17.
s cf. Gen. 2.7. Prov. 22. 2
t cf. Is. 37. 36-38.
u Prov. 21. 31. Is. 31. 1-3.

whose critical spirit was not checked with any excessive reverence, unites "the starry heavens" with the "moral law" as that which filled him with unfailing admiration and reverence. And how easily might they have been shut out from our view, if God had not pleased to fling aside the veil, and bid us gaze! Whatever else those brilliant spheres were made for, they have surely been unveiled to impress us with the sight. They are an open Bethel: as, in the mind of the old patriarch, "the gate of heaven" is "the house of God."

Under these—their earthly reflection—stretches the great sea, whose waters, massed as a heap under Jehovah's hand, still more, as with closer application, reduce man to nothingness before Him (Psalm cvii. 23–30). The number of testing and of weakness points unmistakably to the meaning here, as does the word for "depths," the plural of that in Genesis i. 2, *tehom*, literally, the "raging deep." These depths He layeth up beneath the quiet and smiling surface, in treasuries from which He bringeth them out whenever He has use for them, with decisive effect. Thus were the heathen sailors who carried Jonah, and Jonah himself, taught the folly of endeavoring to escape from Jehovah's power.

After this, therefore, comes the exhortation, "Let all the earth fear Jehovah: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him": literally, "sojourn," be as sojourners with Him, to whom alone belongs eternity. The argument is given in the next verse: "for He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast:" these mighty and stable powers came into existence by His mere fiat. The number is here the number of mastery; for He who brought them into being manifestly has them still in His control.

3. From this contemplation of creation we are next brought naturally to consider Jehovah as realizing His name (the Unchangeable) in His dealings with His creatures. Against His counsel the counsels of the nations cannot stand. Nor, since the world is away from Him, and in opposition to Him, the thoughts of peoples either. The last would include, as the first does not, even Israel His "people" also. On the other hand, *His* counsel stands forever: the thoughts of *His* heart "from generation to generation." The contrast here only results in more abiding comfort for those whose feebleness is anchored to the rock of His stability, "the nation whose God Jehovah is, and the people chosen" by Him (as Israel is) "for His inheritance."

4. From this safe harbor the world of living men is now reviewed. Jehovah Himself regards them: He not only beholds, He scrutinizes narrowly; and He is

5 (18-22): the weak with the Strong.
(i.) under His eye.
(ii.) for preservation.
(iii.) realized.
(iv.) the experience.
(v.) divine government.

Lo, Jehovah's eye is toward them that [u]fear him:
toward those who hope in his mercy,—
To [w]rescue their soul from death,
and to keep them alive in [x]famine.
Our soul hath looked for Jehovah:
our [y]help and shield is he.
For our heart is glad in him;
because we have [z]trusted in his holy name.
Let thy mercy, Jehovah, be upon us,
according as we [a]hope in thee.

u Ps. 34.9,15. Ps. 147. 11.
w Ps. 68. 20. Ps. 103. 4.
x *cf.* 1 Ki.17. 1-7. *cf.* Jer. 37. 21.
y Ps. 115. 9-11. Ps. 28. 7.
z Ps. 13. 5. 1 Pet. 1. 8.
a Ps. 25. 2, 3. *cf* Heb. 6. 18, 20.

[5]PSALM XXXIV.

Ps. xxxiv.

Jehovah with us, and its consequences in divine government.

[A psalm] of David when he [b]changed his behavior before Abimelech, who drove him away and he departed.

1 (1-4): Jehovah!
(i.) the constant theme.
(ii.) a witness which the humble hear.

(*Aleph.*)
I will bless Jehovah at [c]all times:
continually shall his praise be in my mouth.
(*Beth.*) In Jehovah my soul shall [d]boast:
the [e]humble shall hear of it and be glad.

b 1 Sam. 21. 10-15.
c Ps. 84. 4. *cf.* Eph. 5. 20. *cf.* Col.3.17.
d Jer. 9. 23, 24. Ps. 44. 8. 1 Cor. 1. 31.
e Ps. 66. 16. *cf.* Lk.2.38.

the One who fashioned them, who has perfect knowledge of all they do. But the result is only that man's nothingness is once more realized. Not the host that encircles a king can save him, nor the strength of a hero. Nor, even to escape, can the strength of a horse suffice to deliver him. But this is only the necessary prelude to another witness to God Himself.

5. "Lo, Jehovah's eye is toward them that fear Him,—toward those that hope in His mercy, to rescue their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine." And they who speak have realized this: "our soul hath looked for Jehovah: our help and shield is He." The experience is briefly but sufficiently told, that has established the truth of this: "for our heart is glad in Him; because we have trusted in His holy Name." The faithfulness of the divine government is finally invoked: "Let thy mercy, Jehovah, be upon us, according as we hope in Thee."

Thus that Jehovah, the God of redemption, is also the God of creation, is plainly the theme of the psalm; and that He shows Himself the Redeemer by His dealings with the people whose trust is in Him; against whom no creature-strength can possibly avail. This last is taken up and expanded (after the manner of these psalms) in the joyful song of praise with which this series ends.

Psalm XXXIV.

The thirty-fourth psalm, according to its title, was written when David escaped from Gath, from Achish, here called Abimelech, which seems to have been a common title of the Philistine kings. He had failed sadly, as we know, and as on Philistine ground he always did; and, not honoring Jehovah, had not been honored by Him. This is itself a general principle of divine government, of which the psalm speaks, and which needs little insisting on. Yet God had in mercy delivered him, and he had learned, no doubt, for the time, a lesson from it, though the root of failure, we may well believe, had not been reached. The circumstances seem thus to suit the psalm, though we may be able to point out no precise link of connection between them.

The theme of the psalm, as already said, is that Jehovah is at all times to be blessed, for, whatever the circumstances, He abides the unfailing help and sanctification of His people. As Governor of all things, they too are subject to His government, for what blessing every step of the way the subject soul shall realize, but the end shall declare to all.

1. In the first section it is what Jehovah is that fills the heart and mouth. He

(iii.) His name to be magnified.
(iv.) the experience.

(*Gimel.*) Oh magnify Jehovah with me;
and let us exalt his name [f]together.
(*Daleth.*) I sought Jehovah, and he answered me,
and [g]rescued me from all my fears.

[f] *cf.* Mk. 5. 19, 20. *cf.* Lk. 15. 6, 7.
[g] vers. 17. 19.

2 (5–10): His salvation.
4 (i.) light.
(ii.) salvation from all [4] straits.
(iii.) walled round about.
(iv.) appeal to experience.
(v.) governmental help.
(vi.) mastery of circumstances.

(*He.*) [Men] look unto him, and are enlightened,
and their faces are [h]never ashamed.
(*Zain.*) This poor man [i]cried, and Jehovah heard him,
and saved him out of all his straits.
(*Cheth.*) The angel of Jehovah [j]campeth around them that fear him,
and delivereth them.
(*Teth.*) [k]Taste and see that Jehovah is good:
happy the man that taketh [l]refuge in him.
(*Jod.*) O [m]fear Jehovah! ye his saints:
for there is no want to them that fear him.
(*Caph.*) The young [n]lions lack, and suffer hunger;
but they that seek Jehovah shall not want any good.

[h] Ps. 25. 2, 3.
[i] Ps. 50. 15. Ps. 107. 6.
[j] 2 Ki. 6. 17. Acts 12. 7–11.
[k] *cf.* Jno. 1. 38, 39, 46. 1 Pet. 2. 3.
[l] Ps. 2. 12. Ps. 84. 12.
[m] Ps. 19. 9. Prov. 22. 4. 1 Pet. 1. 17–19.
[n] Job. 4. 10, 11. *cf.* Dan. 6. 22, 23.

is and shall be the constant theme of the soul—its perpetual praise. For this "all times" are alike; all seasons have their summer fruit. The exhortation of the apostle in the New Testament agrees with this resolve of the psalmist in the Old Testament: "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I will say, Rejoice." If the eye is fully upon Him, this will be realized.

There is a testimony in praise like this, which will be felt. No doubt, it will awaken opposition; but that is not what is spoken of here: it is that the *humble* will hear, and be glad. "No flesh shall glory in His presence," and we have need thus to be brought down, to receive testimony of such a character.

The heart that is filled with praise will seek associates also in it; and His Name will be common joy: for His Name is but the revelation of Himself. The exhortation to magnify His Name is followed by the experience which makes the text, as it were, of the exhortation. The living God had heard and answered him, and delivered him from *all* his fears.

2. Now we have this salvation of God, which makes Him known, displayed in its various features. There is first of all in it light, for God is light. Things appear as they are, and we learn to recognize them,—to have truth in the inward parts, and certainty as to the way. And this is not an exceptional experience,—it is the universal rule for those that look to Him. They are enlightened; and their faces are never "ashamed." Confusion as to one's thoughts and ways naturally leads to confusion of face as to the result. Where the soul truly seeks God, this is impossible; and thus there is provision made for the simplest and poorest, amid all the babble of tongues that the world is witness of. Nor could it be otherwise, God being what He is.

Again he recurs to his own deliverance. He in his poverty had been heard and delivered: not simply from his fears now, but in fact. And he will go further and maintain that round about those that fear Jehovah the angel of Jehovah camps: and this is deliverance from all that may come, from any quarter.

Then he appeals to men to make the experiment for themselves: let them taste and see that Jehovah is good; for happy is the man (*gebher*, the strong man,—evidently finding his strength in this) that takes refuge in Him. And then His saints are exhorted to His fear: there is no want to them that fear Him. Finally this is affirmed in the fullest way with regard to those who seek Him; the number showing, no doubt, their "mastery" of circumstances, as the parallel, too, implies: for the lions might seem, amid the lesser animals by

3 (11-16): The holiness of divine government. (i.) the fear of Jehovah as the beginning of wisdom. (ii.) preservation. (iii.) the mouth (as index of the heart.) (iv.) the walk. (v.) the righteous favored. (vi.) the wicked cut off.

4 (17, 18): The experience of trial. (i.) the universal rule. (ii.) the humble delivered.

(*Lamed.*) Come, ye children, hearken unto me:
I will [o]teach you the fear of Jehovah.
(*Mem.*) Who is the man that [p]desireth life;
that loveth [many] days, that he may see good?
(*Nun.*) Guard thy [q]tongue from evil,
and thy lips from speaking deceit.
(*Sameeh.*) [r]Depart from evil, and do good:
seek peace, and pursue it.
(*Ayin.*) The eyes of Jehovah are [s]toward the righteous,
and his ears are toward their cry.
(*Pe.*) The face of Jehovah is [t]against them that do evil;
to cut off their [u]remembrance from the earth.

(*Tsaddi.*) [Men] cry, and Jehovah heareth,
and [v]delivereth them out of all their straits.
(*Koph.*) Jehovah is [w]nigh to the broken of heart,
and the contrite of spirit he saveth.

o *cf.* Ps. 51. 12, 13.
p 1 Pet. 3. 10-12. *cf.* Phil. 1. 20.
q James 1. 26. James 3. 2-12.
r Ps. 37. 27. Is. 55. 7.
s Ps. 32. 8. Ps. 33. 18.
t Lev. 20. 3. Jer. 21. 10. *ctr.* Ps. 31. 16.
u Prov. 10. 7. Eccl. 8. 10. Ps. 9. 5, 6.
v Ps. 107. 17-19.
w Deut. 4. 7. Ps. 145. 18. Ps. 138. 6. Is. 57. 15.

which they are surrounded, to be masters if any are. Yet *they* might lack; but not the man who seeks Jehovah.

3. The third section emphasizes the holiness of the Lord in His ways: a holiness to which he must be conformed with whom He goes. As supreme over all, the fear of Him is for His creature the "beginning of wisdom." A government, to be respected, must first of all be strong; and it is by the exhibition of His power that God humbles Job. He must maintain His place, or all would be lost. We are in His hands, and He will have His way; but then His goodness will make us delight that He should have it. "The fear of Jehovah is clean, enduring forever;" and the psalmist now proposes to instruct men in this fear. If a man wants life, and to see good days, here is the divine preservative for him. Let him keep, then, his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking guile. For "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," and the government of the tongue is the sign of the perfect man. (Luke vi. 45, Jas. iii. 2.) Let him order his walk so as to depart from evil—the negative side—and do good—the positive. Let him seek peace thus, as "the effect of righteousness" (Isa. xxxii. 17), and earnestly "pursue it." And the psalmist urges the blessing for the righteous, and the end of the wicked: the first, in the continual favor of Jehovah; the last, to be cut off, even in remembrance.

4. This is the holy way of the Lord, then; and this is the portion of the righteous. True as that is, it is not all the truth. There is trial also, and that for the righteous; and, as he presently acknowledges, even much of it. What then, is the meaning of this? Well, first, that it is in being brought down by it that men cry to God, and learn His delivering grace. And then it is to the broken of heart that He is nigh; and the contrite that He saveth. There is thus abundant reason for all the trial of which the world is full.

5. But that is not recompense: it is really mercy. When we think of recompense, it is true that even the righteous suffer; nay, their afflictions are many; but the principle already given applies to them also, and in result it is not forgotten who they are: deliverance out of *all* awaits them. Suppose they die even: Jehovah guards their bones, and suffers them not to be broken,—an example of such perfect care, as in the case of the Lord was shown in the fullest way, and under circumstances which mark Him as the absolutely Righteous One. None could claim such care in the same sense as He; and so it became for Him a *prophecy* that needs must be fulfilled (Jno. xix. 36), and that to the letter. To others it applies, one would say, in the spirit of it. The application to the Lord

5 (19-22): Governmental recompense.
(i.) the universal rule.
(ii.) preservation even in death.
(iii.) the full realization.
(*a*) a congruous end.
(*b*) salvation of those that trust Him.

(*Resh.*) [x]Many are the afflictions of the righteous;
but out of them all Jehovah delivereth them.
(*Schin.*) He keepeth all his [y]bones:
not one of them is broken.
(*Tau.*) Evil shall bring death to the [z]wicked:
and the haters of the righteous shall bear [their] guilt.
Jehovah [a]redeemeth the soul of his servants;
and none shall bear guilt that take refuge in him.

x Ps.129.1-5. *cf.* Matt. 5. 10-12.
y Ps. 35. 10. *cf.* Jno. 19-36. *cfr.* Ps.51.8.
z Ps. 55. 23.
a Ps. 25. 22.

SERIES 3. (Psalms xxxv.-xxxix.)

The holiness of God, whether in judgment or in grace.

Ps. xxxv.

[1]PSALM XXXV.

The appeal of the righteous for righteous judgment upon the persecutor.

I (1-6): The appeal to power.
(i.) for congruous treatment of them.
(ii.) and deliverance.

[A psalm] of David.

[b]STRIVE, Jehovah, with them that strive with me:
fight against them that fight against me.
Take hold of [c]shield and buckler,
and rise up for my help.

b Ps. 26. 1. Ps. 43. 1. 1 Sam. 24. 15.
c Ps. 18. 2.

in this way does not, of course, make the psalm as a whole Messianic, but the contrary: everything seems as general as possible, though His unique perfection makes it seem intended for Himself alone.

The full realization of these governmental ways of God is given in the last two verses, which manifestly go together as paired opposites, and in a striking way. They remind one of the apostle's language (Rom. vi. 23), that "the wages of sin is death; but the *gift* of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." So here the judgment of sin is, as it were, mere congruity: "Evil shall bring death to the wicked; and the haters of the righteous shall bear their guilt." But the deliverance of the soul of His servants is on Jehovah's part a true salvation work,—congruous, of course, with His holiness, and yet only by the grace which shines through all: "Jehovah redeemeth the soul of His servants; and none shall bear guilt that take refuge in Him."

Thus fittingly the second series of these remnant psalms is closed.

Series 3.

The third series displays the holiness of God, whether in judgment or in grace, the middle psalm of the series—again a third,—showing this in an especial manner, as might be anticipated, and in both ways. Almost the whole psalm is thus divided by the alphabetic structure into couplets of verses, which develop the contrasted portions of righteous and wicked, and with special reference to the inheritance of the land by the righteous only. The psalms on either side of this, take up respectively (psalms xxxv., xxxvi.) God's dealings with the wicked; and (psalms xxxviii., xxxix.) those with the righteous. The whole of them are simple in character, as is natural, for they are intended to make things plain. Thus comment will be naturally briefer also.

PSALM XXXV.

The thirty-fifth psalm gives us that of which the Lord speaks in the gospel of Luke (chap. xviii. 1–8), the cry of God's elect, suffering since Abel's time, at the hand of the persecutor, and for which judgment yet will be poured out. Often a voiceless cry, sometimes exchanged, as in Stephen's case, and the many of Christian times of which he was the proto-martyr, for the prayer, "Lord, lay

(iii.) God Himself the salvation of His own.

Draw out also the [d]spear,
and stop the way against my pursuers;
say unto my soul, I am thy [e]salvation.

(iv.) for their prostration.

Let them be put to [f]shame and confounded, that seek after my soul:
let them be turned back and put to confusion, that desire my hurt.

(v.) for divine pursuit of them.

Let them be as [g]chaff before the wind;
and let the [h]angel of Jehovah chase [them].

(vi.) and a speedy end.

Let their way be [i]dark and slippery,
and let the angel of Jehovah pursue them.

2 (7-10): The plea against the enemy.

For [j]without cause have they hid for me their [k]net in a pit:
without cause have they digged it for my soul.

(i.) of personal righteousness.

Let [l]destruction come upon him unawares:

(ii.) for his self-destruction.

and let his net which he hath hidden, [m]catch himself:
into destruction let him fall therein.

(iii.) that Jehovah may be the joy of the soul.

And my soul shall [n]exult in Jehovah:
it shall rejoice in his salvation.

(iv.) as the experience of the needy.

All my [o]bones shall say, Jehovah, who is like unto thee,
who deliverest the afflicted from him that is [p]stronger than he:
yea, the afflicted and needy from him that spoileth him?

d cf. Josh. 8. 18, 19, 26. Hab. 3. 11.
e Ps. 27. 1. Ex. 15. 2.
f Ps. 40. 14-16. Ps. 70. 2. Ps. 71. 13.
g Ps. 1. 4. Isa. 17. 13. Hos. 13. 3. Dan. 2. 35.
h ctr. Ps. 34. 7. *cf.* 2 Chr. 32. 21.
i Jer. 13. 16. Jer. 23. 12.
j cf. 1 Sam. 19. 5. Ps. 119. 161. Prov. 1. 11. *cf.* Jno. 15. 25.
k Mi. 7. 2. Ps. 9. 15.
l cf. Ps. 69. 22-28. *ctr.* Lk. 23. 34.
m Ps. 10. 2. Prov. 5. 22.
n cf. Ex. 15. 1, 21. *cf.* Rev. 12. 10-12. *ctr.* Lk. 15. 7.
o Ps. 34. 20. Ps. 51. 8. *ctr.* Ps. 32. 3.
p cf. Ps. 18. 17.

not this sin to their charge!" it finds at last full expression at the lips of the Jewish remnant of the last days. The long-suffering of God is then fast running out, and the prayer is in full harmony with the mind of God. In this psalm it is a fully argued plea, and one which He admits and acts upon. It shows how fully God's judgment is in sympathy with all that is good and true, in the unequal conflict between good and evil in a fallen world, and in the interests of the earth itself, to destroy those that destroy it (Rev. xi. 18).

1. The whole psalm is thus a cry, but especially the first part is purely this, an appeal to power in their behalf. The argument comes later in the character and acts of those against whom judgment is sought. The cry is, however, measured carefully, and the numerical structure is as marked as elsewhere. "Strive, Jehovah, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me:" give them treatment congruous to their own behavior. Then we see how needed is the help he craves: for his first thought is of "shield and buckler"—of course, to be interposed between him and his foes. But he soon advances to offensive weapons, and seeks Jehovah to stand in the way, with leveled spear between him and his pursuers: to be Himself his salvation. All that God is would thus be pledged in his behalf. Then he is free to think more of the enemies, first of all praying for their prostration and overthrow; then chased by the angel of Jehovah as the wind chases the chaff; finally that their way as thus pursued may be dark and slippery, so that they will fall and rise no more.

2. Now he brings his plea for their destruction: first, the causelessness of their plots against him, their net hid carefully in the pit into which he is to fall; then, that it will only be to let their own trap catch them,—themselves to be the cause of their own destruction: for which none surely will be to blame but they themselves. Jehovah will thus become the exultation of his soul, and that as found in the experience of one needy and afflicted, having no other helper. The righteous and the wicked, God and his creature man, will thus be all in their right

3 (11-16): The case brought out in behalf of the saint.

(i.) personal righteousness.

(ii.) evil for good.

(iii.) the heart toward God for them.

(iv.) outward behavior.

(v.) the recompense they made.

(vi.) the limit against which they chafed.

(vii.) the case completed and put into the Lord's hand.

(viii.) the new condition awaiting the answer.

Unrighteous [q] witnesses rise up:
they lay to my charge things that I know not.
They recompense me [r] evil for good,
to the bereavement of my soul.
But as for me, when [s] they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth:
I humbled my soul with fasting,
and my prayer returned into mine own bosom.
I behaved myself as though he had been my [t] friend —my brother:
I bowed down heavily, as mourning for a mother.
But at my halting they [u] rejoiced and gathered together:
the slanderers gathered together against me ere I knew:
they tare me, and ceased not.
With profane [v] jesters for bread,
they [w] gnashed upon me with their teeth.
Lord, [x] how long wilt thou look on?
rescue my soul from their destructions,
my [y] only one from the lions!
I will celebrate thee in the [z] great congregation:
I will praise thee among much people.

q *cf.* 1 Sam. 22. 9. *cf.* 1 Kl. 21. 13. *cf.* Acts 6. 13-15. *cf.* Matt. 26. 59-62.
r Ps. 38. 20. *cf.* Ps. 109. 4, 5. Jno. 10. 32.
s Job 30. 25. *cf.* Jas. 1. 27.
t *cf.* Matt. 5. 43-48. *cf.* Rom. 12. 19-21.
u *cf.* 2 Sam. 1. 20. Ps. 94. 3, 4.
v Jer. 20. 7. Lam. 3. 14.
w Lam. 2. 16. *cf.* Acts 7. 54.
x Ps. 13. 1, 2.
y *cf.* Ps. 22. 20.
z *cf.* Ps. 22. 25.

place. The plea, brief as it is, has thus in it all the elements of successful prayer.

3. But, while these are the principles, the case needs to be more fully stated; and this is done in the two sections that follow: here, in behalf of the saint; while in the next, that of the sinner alone is in question. And here again, first, personal righteousness is affirmed: unrighteous witnesses—literally, witnesses of violence, violently wresting things to make out their charges—laid against him things of which his conscience was entirely free. Instead of this, he was conscious only of good that he had done them, which they now recompensed with evil, so that his soul stood alone, bereft of the support it might have counted on from it. Then he shows what in reality had been his state towards them, and that before God Himself. When they were sick, he had fasted and prayed, even in sackcloth. He had mourned them as for friends,—yea, brother or mother. And now, at the least sign of evil upon his part, the tongues of evil rang out against him, wholly unprepared for it; and with mocking parasites, they gnashed their teeth—in vain, for God had set them their limit. (This is what the gnashing of the teeth, I think, implies, as the numeral does,—a limit against which they chafed: conscious, as it were, of the fence not permitted them to pass, although invisible, which God had put round His beloved.)

This is the case on his side, in attestation of his integrity, which he thus spreads out and puts into the Lord's hand as supreme, urging whether He can any longer be content, knowing it all, merely to look on. There had been indeed a limit: was it not ready now to be overstepped? "Rescue my soul," he cries, "from their destructions! my only one from the lions!" It is the cry of the twenty-second psalm (ver. 20) again: the cry of the chief Sufferer wrung out of others here, as we find features like His in other parts of this description. Is it not intended to remind us that God is Himself linking in this His Well-beloved with these also beloved? putting upon them, as it were, the frankincense of the meat-offering? And so the Priest-Angel of the Apocalypse (Rev. viii. 2–5) adds to the prayers of the saints the incense, which find answer then in the judgments by which the earth is to be cleansed and made ready for the coming blessing. Here, too, the blessing is looked on to, the "great congregation" and the "much

4 (19-23): The sin that calls for judgment.

(i.) against right.

Let not those that are wrongfully mine enemies [a]rejoice over me!
[let them not] wink with the eye that hate me without cause!

(ii.) against peace.

For they speak not peace:
but against the [b]quiet in the land devise deceitful things.

(iii.) against reality.

And they opened wide their mouth against me:
they said, [c]Aha, aha! our eye hath seen it.

(iv.) the appeal to Him who tests all things.

Thou hast seen it, Jehovah; keep not [d]silence:
Lord, be not [e]far from me!

(v.) the appeal to government.

Stir up thyself, and [f]awake for my right:
for my cause, my God and my Lord.

5 (24-28): The judgment sought.

Judge me according to my [g]righteousness, Jehovah my God:
and let them not rejoice over me.

(i.) according to right.

Let them not say in their heart, Aha, so would we have it!

(ii.) for deliverance.

let them not say, We have [h]swallowed him up.

(iii.) for reality.

Let them be ashamed and [i]confounded together, that rejoice at my ill:
let them be clothed with shame and dishonor, that magnify themselves against me.

(iv.) for the blessing of the earth.

Let them shout for joy, and [j]rejoice, that delight in my righteousness:
yea, let them say continually,
let Jehovah be [k]magnified that hath delight in the prosperity of his servant.

(v.) man with God.

And my tongue shall talk of [l]thy righteousness,—
thy praise all the day long.

a Ps. 25. 2. cf. 1 Sam. 2. 3.
b cf. Ps. 120. 5-7.
c ver. 25. Ps. 40. 15.
d Ps. 83. 1. Ps. 109. 1.
e cf. Ps. 22. 11. Ps. 10. 1.
f Ps. 44. 23. cf. Ps. 121. 3, 4.
g Ps. 7. 8. Ps. 26. 1.
h Ps. 14. 4. Ps. 56. 2. cf. Lam. 2. 16 with Lam. 2. 5.
i Ps. 40. 14, 15. Ps. 70. 2, 3.
j Ps. 40. 16.
k Ps. 34. 3.
l Ps. 71. 16, 24.

people" before whom redeemed Israel shall celebrate the God who has come in for them. And this is another link with the twenty-second psalm (ver. 25).

4. Now follows the more distinct statement of the sin that calls for judgment, to which, we shall see in the next section, the judgment exactly answers. First, once more, the causeless hatred of the righteous, which, being causeless, has in fact its cause in their righteousness itself. For righteousness, therefore, must the judgment come: evil must not be permitted to rejoice over it.

Next comes the sin against peace,—the spirit of conflict and war which has so long possessed itself of the earth and cursed it. To those of such a spirit, the quiet in the land would be themselves the cause of opposition. But the Prince of peace comes, who is to restore peace.

Next comes the sin against reality,—here still in the form of opposition to the righteous. But this is linked with all the falsehood elsewhere, the spirit that puts evil for good and good for evil, and miscalls and confuses things all over the world.

Now comes the appeal to Him who knows the reality of things.—whose Presence makes all things at once come to their true form. "Keep not silence: be not far from me! Stir up Thyself and awake for my right: for my cause, my God and my Lord!"

5. The appeal for judgment extends through all the remainder of the psalm, and characterizes this last section, which the twenty-third verse only leads on to, after a manner very common all through this series, and which has been remarked upon before. The appeal here is, first of all, in behalf of righteousness; then for

Ps. xxxvi.

[z]PSALM XXXVI.

The alienation of the wickedfrom God contrasted with Him in whom the sons of men take refuge.

To the chief musician: [a psalm] of David, the [m] servant of Jehovah.

1 (1-4): The rebel.
(i.) his insubjection to God.
(ii.) his flattery of himself.
(iii.) the fountain of his heart.
(iv.) his way.

THE [n] revolt of the wicked assureth me within my heart,
there is [o] no fear of God before his eyes.
For he [p] flattereth himself in his own eyes,—
to find [at last] his iniquity to be [q] hateful.
The words of his mouth are [r] vanity and deceit:
he hath [s] left off wisdom and doing good.
He [t] deviseth vanity upon his bed:
he setteth himself in a way that is not good:
he [u] abhorreth not evil.

2 (5-9): God the Preserver.
(i.) His faithfulness.
(ii.) His surpassing care.

Thy [v] mercy, Jehovah, is in the heavens:
thy [w] faithfulness unto the skies.
Thy righteousness is like the [x] mountains of strength;
thy judgments are a great [y] deep:
thou [z] preservest man and beast, Jehovah.

m cf. Ps. 90, Title.
n ctr. Ps 32. 1.
o Rom. 3.18. *cf.* Prov. 1. 7. 1 Pet. 1. 17, 18.
p cf. Lk. 18. 11, 12.
q cf. Nu. 32. 23. *cf.* Prov. 23. 32.
r Ps. 4. 2.
s cf. Ps. 106. 13. *cf.* Gal. 1. 6. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 10.
t Prov. 4. 16. *ctr.* Ps. 149. 5.
u ctr. Ps. 97. 10.
v Ps. 103. 11. Ps. 57. 10.
w Lam. 3. 23. 1 Pet. 4. 19.
x Ps. 125. 2.
y Ps. 77. 19; Hab. 3. 15. *z* Ps. 104. 20, 21; *cf.* Gen. 6. 19-21; *cf.* Jonah 4. 11.

deliverance from those who were just ready to rejoice as having swallowed up the object of their enmity; then for shame and dishonor to be put where they belong, that is, upon the foes of righteousness. And then, as it seems to me, Israel being manifestly the speaker, it is urged that the nations should be made to rejoice in delivered Israel's joy, as we know they will do. While they themselves, the people of God once more, and with no temporary return to God as so often before, will talk of His righteousness and of His praise all the day long.

Psalm XXXVI.

The thirty-sixth psalm is a yet more simple one. It is by David, specially marked here as the "servant of Jehovah," looking at the condition of those who refuse that pleasant service, and putting in contrast with their infatuation the blessedness of those who find their refuge and satisfaction in His abundant goodness. The last three verses pray for the continuance of this blessedness, and foresee the casting down of the wicked, without power to rise again.

There are twelve verses to the psalm, but quite exceptional in their division as such; nor can I at present give any reason for this.

1. Four verses give us the complete description of the wicked: Godward, selfward, in his words, and in his ways. His revolt—his lawlessness—is (literally) as a divine utterance, an oracle, within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes. And as, where God is hidden, we may be sure it is self that hides Him, so it is that with the poorest flattery that can be, he flattereth himself; to find surely at last the evil of his success, and the iniquity he has loved, to be really hateful. His words, which are here, as always, the index of the heart, are necessarily therefore vanity and deceit. The wisdom that has become discredited with him he has left off, and with it the well-doing which is its sure accompaniment, and assurance for what it is. The folly he has planned upon his bed—at the very time when naturally there would be most sobriety—he carries out in a way that is not good, but which is good to him, for "he abhorreth not evil." There the description ends: the principles are given of his life; all else would be only detail.

2. All this is the result of departure from God; the psalmist, therefore, turns now to speak of God—this God from whom men depart. What is He, that they should do this? do it so simply and naturally, as a thing of course? God!

(iii.) Himself the Shelter.
(iv.) human experience.
(v.) life and light of man.

How precious is thy mercy, O God!
and under the [a]shadow of thy wings the sons of men take refuge.
They are abundantly satisfied with the [b]fatness of thy house:
and thou makest them drink of the river of [c]thy pleasures.
For with thee is the [d]fountain of life:
in thy [e]light do we see light.

[f]Continue thy mercy unto them that know thee:
and thy righteousness to the upright in heart.
Let not the foot of [g]pride come against me:
and let not the hand of the wicked drive me away!
There are the workers of vanity [h]fallen!
they are cast down, and unable to rise.

a Ps. 57. 1. Ps. 91. 4. *cf.* Matt. 23. 37.
b Ps. 63. 5. Ps. 65. 4. *cf.* Lk. 15. 23.
c Ps. 16. 11.
d Jer. 2. 13. Jer. 17. 13. *cf.* Ezek. 47. 1. *cf.* Rev. 22. 1.
e 1 Jno. 1. 5-7. Jno. 8. 12.
f *cf.* Ps. 90. 16, 17.
g Ps. 10. 2. Ps. 123. 4.
h Ps. 9. 6.

3 (10-12): The realization sought and found.
(i.) mercy and righteousness constant to the upright.
(ii.) deliverance from the wicked.
(iii.) the accomplishment.

[3]PSALM XXXVII.

The manifestation of God for the righteous in their possession of the earth.

[A psalm] of David.

Ps. xxxvii.
1 (1-11): The perpetuity of the blessing of the righteous.
a (1, 2): who may be at peace about the wicked.
(i.)
(ii.) the wicked to be destroyed.

(*Aleph.*)
[i]FRET not thyself because of evil-doers:
[j]envy not him that worketh unrighteousness.
For they shall soon be [k]cut down like grass,
and wither like the green herb.

i Prov. 24. 19, 20. vers. 7, 8.
j Ps. 73. 3. Prov. 3. 31. Prov. 23. 17. Prov. 24. 1.
k Ps. 90. 5, 6. Ps. 103. 15. Isa. 40. 6-8.

His mercy is in the heavens.—that is, the *bounteous goodness* which, for Him, is but what His relationship to His creatures implies, and which sun and moon in the heavens preach of daily. His mercy is His faithfulness, firmer than, while expressed in, those laws which bind those glowing orbs to their constant and beneficent circuit. The mountains and the deep, again, speak variously of His stable righteousness and His judgments which are deep—no wonder: for the care of the whole earth is His; man and beast both He blesses and preserves. But for the sons of men alone there is nearer intimacy, the shadow of fostering wings under which they take refuge, blessed and blessing Him who has thus brought them nigh. With the provision of His house He satisfies them,—the world being but this for those who realize His gracious presence in it, His government of it, the treasures with which He has filled it. He makes them to drink of the river of His own pleasures, lifting them up thus to communion with Himself. For with Him is the fountain of creature life; and the light which gives light as to everything is from Himself alone.

3. In the sense of all this, the psalmist commits himself, and all with whom he is linked, to God. He prays for the continuance of this bounteous mercy to those who know Him, and His righteousness to the upright. In the necessary conflict with evil, he prays for deliverance from the foot of pride and the hand of the wicked. And he foresees the necessary collapse of the workers of vanity; an overthrow as complete as final.

Psalm XXXVII.

The thirty-seventh psalm, the third and middle one of the series, has already been noted as the hinge or pivot upon which the rest turn, the full blessing brought in for the righteous in Israel, in their possession of the land. And in this Jehovah manifests Himself, and glorifies Himself upon the earth.

The structure has been noted also as alphabetic; and it is almost perfect in this respect, not quite, if the present division of the verses is correct, as, after all,

b (3, 4): the blessing of faith.
(i.) the faithfulness of God.
(ii.) the answer of love.
c (5, 6): realization and manifestation.
(i.) Jehovah's sufficiency.
(ii.) His testimony in thy favor.
d (7): the strain to be met.
e (8, 9): the government of God active and sure.
(i.) be at peace with thyself and as to all.
(ii.) the diverse portions of evil and good.
f (10, 11): the end of the wicked and the triumph of the righteous.
(i.) the righteous alone in the land.
(ii.) and in abundance.

(*Beth.*) [a]Trust in Jehovah, and do [m]good:
dwell in the land, and [n]feed on faithfulness.
[o]Delight thyself also in Jehovah,
and he shall [p]give thee the requests of thy heart.
(*Gimel.*) [q]Commit thy way unto Jehovah:
trust him also, and he shall [r]accomplish.
And he shall bring forth thy [s]righteousness as the light,
and thy right as the noon-day.
(*Daleth.*) [t]Rest in Jehovah, and [u]wait patiently for him:
fret not thyself because of him that prospereth in his way:
because of him that bringeth mischievous devices to pass.
(*He.*) Cease from [v]anger, and forsake wrath:
fret not thyself, [w]only into doing evil.
For evil-doers shall be [x]cut off:
and they that [y]wait on Jehovah shall [z]inherit the earth.
(*Vau.*) Yet but a [a]little while, and the wicked shall not be:
yea, thou shalt consider his place, and he shall not be.
But the [b]meek shall inherit the earth,
and delight themselves in the [c]abundance of prosperity.

l *cf.* Ps. 16.1. Ps. 25. 2.
m Ps. 34. 14.
n *cf.* Gen. 26. 1-3. *cf.* 1 Ki. 17. 8-16. *cf.* Mt. 4. 4.
o *cf.* Ps. 16. 5, 6. Ps. 43. 4. Ps. 73. 25.
p *cf.* Phil. 4 4-7. *cf.* Ps. 20. 4. *cf.* Ps. 21. 2.
q Prov. 3. 6. *cf.* 2 Chr. 20. 12-17.
r *cf.* Josh. 21. 45. *cf.* Josh. 23. 14.
s *cf.* Esth. 6. 1-11. *cf.* Gen. 39. 20-23 with Gen. 41. 39-45. *cf.* Dan. 6. 7, 22.
t 2 Chr. 14. 11.
u Ps. 27. 14. Ps. 62. 1, 5. Heb. 6. 15.
v *cf.* Eph. 4. 26, 31. Prov. 19. 11.
w Prov. 14. 29. Prov. 15. 18. Prov. 17. 19.
x Ps. 12. 3; Ps. 101. 8. *y* Lam. 3. 26; Ps. 130. 5, 6. *z* vers. 11, 22, 29; Ps. 105. 12, 43, 44. *a* Job 24. 24; Ps. 2. 12; *cf.* Hag. 2. 6. *b* Matt. 5. 5; *ctr.* 2 Cor. 6. 10; *ctr.* Jas. 2. 5 with Phil. 3. 20. *c* *cf.* Deut. 28. 47; *cf.* Deut. 33. 23; Ps. 72. 7.

I believe it is, though I had doubted it. This will be examined in its place (verse 28).

The letters, with three exceptions only, have each a couplet of verses attached, in which we are intended perhaps to realize the markedly antithetical character of the psalm—present and future, righteous and wicked, being thus put in contrast.

Contrary to the general character of the psalms of this series also, there is no prayer heard throughout the present one. All is definitely assured, predictive, and admonitory,—prophetic, that is, all the way through, though couched in general terms only, and in this way more suited to the admonitory purpose.

1. The first section insists on the perpetuity of the blessing of the righteous, in contrast with the speedy and perfect end of the wicked: and makes this an argument for entire rest of heart in committing oneself to God. The present apparent success of wickedness naturally excites to fretfulness and envy of him who seems thus to have so much the best of it as to the things here. But this is to forget that faith's part is necessarily in the unseen: "they shall soon be cut down like grass, and wither like the green herb."

Faith is next exhorted to, in view of Jehovah's faithfulness. The soul may be pastured upon this, and dwell secure;—the peaceable fruits of righteousness being thus encouraged. Let the heart cleave to the Lord in love, and love will be sure to respond, and the requests of the heart so purified be fulfilled.

Let the way too be committed to Him, and difficulties will disappear before Jehovah's sufficiency. Not only will one's purposes thus be realized, but thy righteousness too will be made plain as the light, and thy right as the noon-day.

But patience will be needed also; and one *may* be patient when the end is

2 (12-15): They that take the sword shall perish with the sword.
a (12, 13): the Lord supreme.
(i.) the counsel ag'nst the righteous.
(ii.) the judg't of the Lord.
b (14, 15): the conflict.
(i.) the determination.
(ii.) destruction.

(*Zain.*) The wicked [d]plotteth against the righteous,
and [e]gnasheth on him with his teeth.
The Lord [f]laugheth at him:
for he seeth that his [g]day is coming.
(*Cheth.*) The wicked have drawn the sword, and bent their bow:
to bring down the [h]afflicted and needy;
to slay the upright in way.
Their sword shall enter into their [i]own heart:
and their bows shall be broken.

(*Teth.*) A [j]little that the righteous hath
is more than the abundance of many wicked.
For the arms of the wicked shall be broken:
but Jehovah [k]upholdeth the righteous.
(*Jod.*) Jehovah is he who [l]knoweth the days of the perfect:
and their inheritance shall be forever.
They shall not be ashamed in the [m]time of ill,
and in the days of famine they shall be [n]satisfied.
(*Caph.*) But the wicked shall [o]perish, and Jehovah's enemies be as the fat of lambs:
they have consumed,—into [p]smoke have they consumed away!

3 (16-20): The portion of the righteous.
a (16, 17): abides with Jehovah.
(i.) their superiority.
(ii.) in contrast with the wicked.
b (18, 19): their salvation.
(i.) perpetuity.
(ii.) preservation in evil days.
c (20): the devoted.

d Ps. 10. 8-10. *cf.* Dan. 6. 4-9.
e *cf.* Acts 7. 54. Lam. 2. 16. Ps. 35. 16.
f Ps. 2. 4. Ps. 59. 8. Prov. 1. 26 with Luke 19. 41, 42.
g *cf.* Lk. 16. 25. 1 Sam. 26. 10.
h Ps. 10. 9. Ps. 9. 12. *cf.* Ps. 11. 2.
i Ps. 7. 15, 16. Ps. 9. 15.
j Prov. 16. 8. Prov. 17. 1. *cf.* Heb. 13. 5, 6.
k ver. 24. Ps. 145. 14. 1 Pet. 1. 5.
l Ps. 31. 15. Isa. 65. 22. *cf.* Rom. 14. 7-9.
m Jer. 17. 7, 8. Ps. 33. 18, 19.
n Ps. 36. 8. Ps. 63. 5, 6. Ps. 65. 4.
o Ps. 1. 6. Ps. 9. 3.
p Ps. 68. 2; Isa. 9. 18, 19; Hos. 13. 3.

certain. Let the wicked prosper as he is permitted, and even his mischief prosper. Rest in Jehovah Himself: He is still Jehovah.

The government of God is active still, and sure in the end toward which it works. Cease then from anger and forsake wrath, the only result of which is to make one copy the evil he resents. Evil-doers shall be cut off at last; and the quiet waiters upon Jehovah, these shall inherit the earth (or land).

The last couplet simply develops this,—the end of the wicked, completely rooted out of the land, and the meek inheriting the land at last, satisfied with abundant prosperity.

2. The second section, which is a short one, occupies itself only with the wicked His enmity against the righteous is noted, his plots, with still their limit. The Lord derides his folly, and foresees his end. His sword, already drawn, enters his own heart; his bent bow snaps, instead of discharging itself. It is an illustration of the Lord's words, that they that take the sword shall perish with it, and, of course, a pregnant example of divine government.

3. The third section contrasts the portion of the righteous and the wicked. If the righteous have but little, it is better than the abundance of *many* wicked: one is for a time; the other has the enduring support of Jehovah. Jehovah marks and knows the days of the perfect, and even in the evil time they shall not be ashamed, and in famine they shall be satisfied. As for the wicked, they shall be consecrated to the Lord in their death, who would not be in life, and consume away like animals under the ban, consumed by the fire of wrath and not accepted.

4. We have now, contrasted as before, the *ways* of each,—a longer detail. First, the bounty and grace of the righteous is contrasted with the greed and injustice of the wicked. But those blessed of Jehovah are those in due time to possess the

4 (21–29): The ways of the righteous and the wicked.
a (21, 22): the grace which finds grace.
(i.) the righteous giver.
(ii.) a contrast.
b (23, 24) steps established.
(i.) Jehovah does this.
(ii.) preservation.
c (25, 26) realization.
(i.) the universal rule.
(ii.) his ministry maintained.
d (27–29) the admonition for the walk.
(i.) perpetuity of the right's.

(*Lamed.*) The wicked [q]borroweth, and payeth not again:
but the righteous showeth [r]grace, and giveth.
But those [s]blessed of him shall possess the earth:
and those [t]cursed of him shall be cut off.
(*Mem.*) The [u]steps of a man are established of Jehovah;
and he [v]delighteth in his way.
Though he [w]fall, he shall not be utterly cast down:
for Jehovah is he who upholdeth with his hand.
(*Nun.*) I have been young, and now am old:
yet have I not seen the righteous [x]forsaken,
nor his seed begging bread.
He is always gracious, and [y]lendeth:
and his seed is for blessing.
(*Samech.*) [z]Depart from evil, and do good:
and dwell for evermore.

q cfr. 2 Kl. 6. 5.
r Matt. 5.42. Ps. 112. 5,9.
s cf. Num. 24. 9. Gen. 27.33–36.
t cf. Josh 6. 26 with 1 Kl. 16. 34.
u Prov. 3. 6. *cf.* Ps. 40. 2.
v cf. Col. 1. 10 with Matt. 3. 17. *cfr.* Prov. 24. 16. Mi. 7. 8. *cf.* Jno. 21. 15–17. *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 4–10.
x cf. Job 4.7. *cfr.* Ps. 22. 1 with Rom. 8. 35–39.
y ver. 21. Lk. 6.30,35; Deu. 15. 7–11.
z Ps. 34. 14; Is. 1. 16, 17; *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 19, 21.

land, while the wicked, grasp as he may, shall be cut off under His curse. This seems to me the evident meaning of the verse, although I may be, perhaps, alone in thinking so. To make the cause of the wicked man's not repaying to be his poverty, and that under the curse of God, while the righteous gives as already possessing the earth, seems an entire inversion of the facts as the psalm presents them, as well as a justification of the "wicked," such as in no wise commends itself.

Next we have the steps of a man (like Psalm xxxiv. 8, *gebher*, implying strength), his firm and prosperous steps are "established of Jehovah." It is from Him they get their strength. "And He delighteth in his way"—a way so blessed and strengthened. Thus, if such a man falls, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the hand that he lifts to Jehovah is upheld by Him. He "affords it," as Delitzsch puts it, "a firm point of support or fulcrum, so that he can rise up again."

The psalmist adds to this the realization of it in his own experience. From the days of his youth to his present old age he had not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. The character of the righteous is again given as that of one showing grace and ministering—little righteousness has he who can forget the claims of the needy when his own needs are so many—and this the Lord delights to maintain: "his seed is," not merely blessed, but "for blessing,"—the blessing of others; his ministry is perpetuated in those who spring from him, and learn his ways.

Thereupon the psalmist, naturally enough, turns from this encouraging assurance to admonition: "Depart from evil and do good: and dwell forevermore. For," he adds, "Jehovah is a lover of judgment, and forsaketh not his godly ones: they are preserved forever, but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off. The righteous shall possess the earth (or land), and dwell therein forever."* With this the fourth section of the psalm ends.

* The middle verse here, it will be observed, is of unusual length, and instead of two verses under the *Samech*, there are three: which does not occur under any other letter in the psalm. This of course might very easily be an intentional irregularity, along with the omission of one letter of the alphabetic structure, which is seldom perfectly preserved in these compositions. The two things coming together, however,—the omission of the letter, with the unusual lengthening of the one verse, which if divided in the middle would make four verses here (the regular number if the letter were inserted), naturally raises a question as to the true division. But this seems more than question when we find the omitted letter (*Ain*) standing thus, with only a prepositional letter before it, at the head of the verse so made. The interposed letter (ע) is no doubt still an objection; yet but a slight one: for the 39th has also a letter (the copulative ו) before the *Tau*, which in a similar way is not to be reckoned. The critics mostly therefore correct the division of the psalm accordingly.

(II.) Jehovah's love of judgment preserves them.
(III.) their possession of the earth.

5 (30–40): The ways of God.
a (30, 31) with the obedient.
(I.) the counsel of the righteous.
(II.) confirming his steps.
b (32, 33) preserving him from the wicked.
(I.) the plotting of the wicked.
(II.) the opposition of Jehovah.
c (34): the way of the realization of the inheritance.

For Jehovah is a lover of judgment,
and [a] forsaketh not his godly ones:
they are [b] preserved forever;
but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.
The righteous shall [c] possess the earth,
and dwell therein for [d] ever.

(*Pe.*) The mouth of the righteous [e] meditateth wisdom,
and his tongue speaketh judgment.
The law of his God is in his [f] heart:
his steps shall not [g] slide.
(*Tsaddi.*) The wicked [h] watcheth the righteous:
and seeketh to put him to [i] death.
Jehovah will not [j] abandon him to his hand,
nor condemn him when he is judged.
(*Koph.*) [k] Wait on Jehovah, and keep his way:
and he shall [l] exalt thee to possess the land:
when the wicked is [m] cut off, thou shalt see it.

a ver. 25.
b Ps. 121. 8. *cf.* Jude 1. Ps. 34. 21, 22.
c *cf.* Gen. 15. 7. Ps. 105. 8–12.
d *cf.* Isa. 60. 10-20. *cf.* Ps. 72. 17.
e Ps. 1. 2. Ps. 10. 14.
f Ps. 119. 11. *cf.* Heb. 8. 10-13.
g Prov. 10. 9. ver. 23. Ps. 26. 1. *cf.* Deu. 32. 35.
h *cf.* 1 Sam. 18. 9. *cf.* Lk. 11. 54. Ps. 10. 8.
i *cf.* Jno. 11. 47-53. *cf.* Jer. 38. 4-6.
j *cf.* Acts 12. 4-11;
cf. 2 Tim. 4. 16-18. k Ps. 27. 14, etc. l Ps. 113. 7, 8; Ps. 85. 1, 2. m ver. 9; Ps. 91. 8.

5. The last section, as a deuteronomic one, sums up these ways of God, whether with the righteous or the wicked. They are simple enough, while reqniring for the present faith to realize them: for still, in the government of God, "clouds and darkness are round about Him." But the day comes, to which the psalm looks on, in which all will come out fully. In that day "the righteous shall be recompensed on the earth; much more the wicked and the sinner" (Prov. xi. 31). This is the Old Testament side of the truth, let us remember; and we shall fall into great error, if we take it as the *whole* truth. So taken, it has been used, and is quite competent to prove, that there is no heavenly portion for the saints of the present and the past, and only annihilation of personal existence for the wicked. I do not imply that this would be a light penalty, however light man may be disposed to make of it; but it is not what such texts mean. If "the future of the wicked is, to be cut off," this does not mean that he is to have *no* future,—that his portion is extinction; but simply that the earth is to be freed from his presence, and thus from the misery caused by that presence. Even the Old Testament shows us, as we have seen in the Psalms themselves, a *Sheol* which man passes into out of the bodily condition; and the New Testament clearly reveals the Gehenna of the lost on the one hand, the paradise of God for the saved on the other.* I cannot enter into this here, of course: but the "cutting off" and destruction of the wicked are distinctly stated to be "*from the earth*" (Ps. civ. 35; Prov. ii. 22, etc.). All application of these earthly judgments to that judgment which is "*after*" death (Heb. ix. 27) involves a necessarily materialistic use of terms which is foreign to Scripture.

We have six subsections here. First, we are given to see the righteous in that obedience of heart to God which makes his mouth meditate wisdom—that is, utter what his heart has meditated. His tongue, therefore, speaketh judgment

But, on the other hand, the numerical structure decides against this, and maintains the common division. The *Ain* couplet thus restored might be indeed a *fifth* subsection (a governmental lesson); but the first verse would be but a poor first, if it could be taken as such at all; and the 29th could not stand as a second, while the number 3 is stamped upon both clauses of it. The Septuagint addition, which would make the *Samech* begin with "the unjust shall be punished," leaving "they are preserved forever" in the previous section, while it shows that what the critics now accept was not then accepted as the true division, would still less suit the numerical structure.

* See "Facts and Theories of a Future State," *passim*. Loizeaux Brothers, New York.

d (35, 36) the passing away of the wicked.
(i.) his strength and stability.
(ii.) the contrast.

(*Resh.*) I have [n]seen the wicked in great power,
and [o]flourishing like a green tree native to the soil.
And I passed by; and lo, he [p]was not:
and I sought him, and he was not to be found.
(*Schin.*) Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright:
for the future of that man is [q]prosperity.
And the revolters shall be destroyed together:
the future of the wicked is, to be cut off.

e (37, 38) the end.
(i.) with the upright.
(ii.) the destruction of the wicked.

(*Tau.*) But the [r]salvation of the righteous is of Jehovah:
he is their [s]stronghold in the time of strait.
And Jehovah shall help them and rescue them:
he shall [t]rescue them from the wicked, and save them,
because they have taken refuge in him.

f (39, 40) the victory.
(i.) Jehovah their strength.
(ii.) and salvation.

n Job 5. 3. Jere. 12. 2.
o *cf.* Lk. 12. 13–21.
p Ps. 34. 16. Ps. 73. 19, 20.
q *cf.* Job 42. 10–17. *cf.* Jer. 31. 15–17.
r Ps. 3. 8.
s Ps. 18. 2.
t Ps. 107. 2, 3.

—practical discernment of things in their moral or spiritual difference. It is the law of his God in his heart that has thus enlightened him; and walking in the light, he walks securely: his steps do not slide.

But just because he is thus obedient to God, he has his enemies in the wicked, who watch him, and even seek his death. They may even go through the form of trial, and encompass themselves with the similitude of justice, to accomplish their cruel ends; but Jehovah is against them, and, spite of all that may seem to be the case, cannot abandon the righteous to their hand, nor condemn him because they do this. Nay, He will surely justify him.

But the way to the inheritance is in a path of patience; yet the righteous shall possess the land, and see the wicked cut off out of it. In the meanwhile, a partial experience will leave the wicked in power, flourishing like a green tree in its own congenial soil. But this is not the end; and every one can furnish examples of the rapid uprooting and passing away of all this show of strength. Presently he is not; and the ends of the two—the wicked and the upright—how different! The end of the one is peace—or prosperity; and of the other, as rebels against God, to be cut off. Victory is for the righteous; their salvation is of One who cannot fail them. Even in the time of strait He is their stronghold; and what a fortress to be beleaguered by the enemy! He shall help and rescue them as surely as they have fled to Him for refuge.

Psalm XXXVIII.

The two psalms that close the series here take up the question of the holiness of God in connection with the sufferings of the righteous, which confessedly are many, and which, at the time which is continually before us, will be of such exceptional severity. Still they are both of the most general character, containing no special references to that time which would narrow their application in any way. The present one speaks of sin in the believer as that which necessarily entails suffering for him; the judgment of this being *now*, that in the *day* of judgment he may escape it (1 Cor. xi. 32). The New Testament shows us this as the *Father's* judgment, the chastening of His own children that they may be partakers of His holiness (Heb. xii. 10). Not that this is the whole account, however, as the former passage shows; for God must needs maintain His character as the Governor of His creatures before all. So the apostle Peter warns us that "the time is come when judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely"—or "with difficulty"—"be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Pet. iv. 17, 18.)

Ps. xxxviii.

[a]PSALM XXXVIII.

The trial of the righteous which is the result of sin in them.

A psalm of David, to bring to remembrance.

1 (1-4): Conviction.
(i.) the cry of repentance.
(ii.) conflict.
(iii.) the inward realization.
(iv.) the burden of sin.

JEHOVAH, [u]rebuke me not in thy wrath,
nor chasten me in [v]heat of wrath!
For thine [w]arrows stick fast in me;
and thy [x]hand presseth down upon me.
There is no [y]soundness in my flesh because of thine indignation:
there is no health in my [z]bones because of my sin.
For mine [a]iniquities are gone over my head:
as a heavy [b]burden, they are too heavy for me.

2 (5-8): Humiliation.
(i.) the source.
(ii.) the humiliation itself.
(iii.) the inward realization.
(iv.) the burden.

My wounds [c]stink [and] fester,
because of my foolishness.
I am bent, I am [d]bowed down sore:
all the day long I go [e]mourning;
For my [f]loins are full of burning:
and there is no soundness in my flesh.
I am [g]benumbed, I am crushed sore;
I have [h]roared because of the disquiet of my heart.

3 (9-15): Refuge found in God.
(i.) divine knowledge.
(ii.) self-forsaken.
(iii.) isolated by the stroke of God.
(iv.) the outward trial.
(v.) passive and dumb before God.

Lord, before thee is all my desire:
and my sighing is not [i]hid from thee.
My [j]heart throbbeth, my vigor hath forsaken me,
and the [k]light of mine eyes, it too is not with me.
My [l]lovers and my friends stand aloof from my stroke:
and my kindred stand afar off.
But they that seek after my life lay [m]snares [for me]:
and they that are bent upon my hurt speak depths,
and all the day long meditate deceptions.
And I, like one [n]deaf, hear not;
and as a dumb man openeth not his mouth.

[a] Ps. 6. 1. Ps. 39. 11.
[v] *cf.* Lam. 2. 1-10. *cf.* Mi. 7. 9.
[w] Deut. 32. 23. Job 6. 4. Lam. 3. 13.
[x] Ps. 32. 4. Isa. 5. 25.
[y] *cf.* Isa. 1. 5, 6. ver. 7.
[z] Ps. 6. 2. Ps. 32. 3. Lam. 1. 13. Lam. 3. 4.
[a] Ps. 25. 7, 11. Ps. 88. 7. *cf.* Ps. 40.12 with Isa. 53. 5, 6.
[b] Job 23. 2. Ps. 119. 28. *cf.* Mat. 24. 21, 22.
[c] *cf.* Isa. 3. 24. ver. 3. *cf.* Ps. 69. 5.
[d] Ps. 44. 25. Ps. 57. 6. *cf.* Ps.146.8.
[e] Ps. 42. 9. *cf.* Am. 8. 8.
[f] Ps. 66. 11. *cf.* Isa.21.3.
[g] Lam. 1.13, 14. Lam. 5. 17.
[h] Ps. 32. 3. Is. 59. 11-13.
[i] Ex. 3. 7. *cf.* Rom. 8. 26, 27.
[j] Ps. 31. 10, 11. *cf.* Ps. 73. 26.
[k] Ps. 31. 9.
[l] Job 19. 13, 19;

Ps. 88. 8. [m] *cf.* Ps. 10. 9, 10; *cf.* Jer. 5. 26. [n] *cf.* 2 Sam. 16. 10, 11.

1. The first section shows us therefore the soul under conviction, and in dread of the divine anger. We must not expect, notwithstanding the grace realized in the thirty-second psalm, that there will be here the clearness of knowledge which the New Testament has brought to us. Sin is felt and owned, and God's anger is dreaded. Nay, already His arrows stick fast in the sufferer, and the mighty hand of God presses down upon him. He feels it in his whole condition, taking soundness from his flesh, and health from his bones. His sin is the burden upon him, a burden he has not strength to carry.

2. We have next the humiliation and misery of it. The wounds become open sores, which stink and are corrupt. But this corruption has its root in "folly," the opposition spiritually to divine wisdom. He is bent and bowed down under the pressure: mourning all the day long. Again, he cries out of the disease that fills him, no soundness anywhere at all; and again he complains of his feebleness, with an anguish that continually increases.

3. But in the very One who smites faith finds its refuge. He, the Omniscient, is not regardless of his desire, nor ignorant of his misery. To Him he turns when he is, as it were, forsaken of himself, and when his intimates avoid him as under the stroke of God; only his enemies remain, busy with plots against his life. With all this he is like a man deaf and dumb; his mouth stopped, as one before God (xxxix. 9). Self-restrained, he has no reproofs, though their wicked-

(vi.) restraint.
(vii.) rest.

Yea, I am become as a man that heareth not,
and in whose mouth are no [o]rebukes.
For in thee, Jehovah, I [p]hope:
thou shalt answer, O Lord my God.

4 (18–20): The trial.
(i.) supremacy of evil,
(ii.) and my humiliation.
(iii.) which is real.
(iv.) the outward trial.
(v.) rendering evil for good.

For I said,—Lest they [r]rejoice over me:
when my foot [s]slippeth, they magnify themselves against me.
For I am [t]ready to halt,
and my sorrow is before me continually.
For I [u]declare mine iniquity:
I am [v]alarmed for my sin.
But mine [w]enemies are lively; they are strong:
and they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied.
And they that [x]render evil for good are adversaries to me,
[y]because of my following that which is good.

5 (21, 22): The appeal to divine government.
(i.) Jehovah my God!
(ii.) my salvation.

[z]Forsake me not, Jehovah!
my God, be not far from me!
[a]Hasten to my help,
O Lord, my [b]salvation!

o cf. 1 Pet. 2. 23. *cf.* Mat. 5. 38–41.
p Ps. 25. 2. *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 19.
q cf. Lk. 18. 1–8. Ps. 13. 3–6.
r Ps. 30. 1. Ps. 35. 19, 24.
s cf. Prov. 24. 16. *cf.* Mi. 7. 8. *ctr.* Ps. 94. 18.
t cf. Ps. 73. 2. *cf.* Isa. 40. 28–31.
u Ps. 25. 11. Ps. 32. 5.
v cf. Acts 2. 37. *cf.* Acts 6. 26–30.
w Ps. 27. 2, etc.
x cf. Ps. 109. 3–5. *cf.* Mat. 5. 10–12.
y Ps. 35. 12–16;
cf. Jer. 18. 20, 21; *cf.* Jno. 15. 18–25. *z* Ps. 27. 9, 10. *a* Ps. 141. 1; *cf.* Jno. 11. 3. *b* Ps. 32. 7; Isa. 12. 2.

ness is transparent. But he has left all to God, in whom he anchors himself and is at rest. God shall answer for him.

4. But to Him he can speak therefore, and put it all before Him: and accordingly we find now the trial so put, but more the external part of it, the worst having found relief. First, the attitude of the enemies, ready to use every slip of his to exalt themselves by it. Himself too, so conscious of his readiness to halt, humbled and discouraged by his failure, the reality of his sin which he could not hide, and at which his soul trembled. And that which had abased and cast him down had strengthened and multiplied too his enemies, who persecuted him in fact, not for the failure which he confessed, but for the good which, spite of the failure, he had really followed. Common enough, we all know, is such conduct on the part of those who would fain hide under a cloak of righteousness what is mere hatred of righteousness itself! But how bitter then to the soul those sins of the righteous which give them their desired opportunity! But they use these to their own ruin, while God uses them to the humbling of His people, that He may come in for them.

5. So the psalmist turns to Him once more. The unerring government of God will make no mistake. He knows, after all, those who own Him God, their God; who cling in the consciousness of weakness and worthlessness to Him as Saviour. Their sins cannot make their need of Him less as that, nor change the Unchangeable, who, undeceived from the beginning, and for no good in them, has taken such place of relationship toward them. So the cry that ends the psalm has in it these tokens—so simple as they are—of answer and acceptance, "Jehovah my God"; "Lord, my salvation"! He who can cry from the heart thus will certainly find God no less than his faith accounts Him.

Psalm XXXIX.

The closing psalm of this threefold series is most general in its character. It shows us sin as the cause, under divine government, of the frailty and vanity of human life; and the heart of the righteous, exercised by this, coming to realize and acquiesce in it with all its humiliation. Thus, spite of its gloomy theme, it is for Jeduthun, the "praise-giver," that the psalm is appointed, and this is so according to rule that all the strangeness has passed out of it.

Ps. xxxix.

[5]PSALM XXXIX.

Man's frailty seen in the light of divine government.

To the chief musician, to [c]Jeduthun: a psalm of David.

1 (1-6): The barrenness of life.

(i.) the resolve.

(ii.) the conflict.

(iii.) the heart utters itself.

(iv.) asking to know its frailty.

(v.) the weak with the strong.

(vi.) the evil of the limit.

I SAID: I will take [d]heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue;
I will [e]keep my mouth with a muzzle, while the [f]wicked is before me.
I was dumb in silence; I held my peace [even] from [g]good:
and my sorrow was stirred.
My heart was [h]hot within me:
while I mused, the fire kindled—
I spake with my tongue:
Jehovah! make me know mine [i]end,
and the measure of my days, what it is:
that I may know how [j]frail I am.
Lo, thou hast made my days [but] [k]handbreadths,
and my short space * is as nothing before thee:
surely, every man, the [most] stable, is but a [l]breath. Selah.
Surely, man walketh in [m]unreality; †
surely, they are [n]disquieted in vain:
he [o]heapeth up [treasures], and knoweth not who shall gather them.

[c] 1 Chr. 25.1. Ps. 62,title. Ps. 77,title.
[d] Ps.141.3,4.
[e] Ps. 34. 13. *cf.* Col. 4. 4, 5. *cf.* Lk. 11. 54.
[g] *cfr.* 1 Pet. 3. 15,
[h] Job 32. 18 –20. Jer. 20. 9. *cf.* Acts 4. 19, 20.
[i] Ps. 90. 12. Ps. 119. 84. *cf.* Lk. 12. 13-21. Jas. 4. 13-15.
[j] Ps. 146. 3,4. Isa. 2. 22.
[k] Ps. 90. 5,9, 10. Job 7. 6-10. Job 9. 25. *cf.* Ps. 102. 11, 23 with Jno. 14. 19.
[l] ver. 11. Ps. 62. 9.
[m] Ps. 144. 4. 1 Chr. 29. 15.
[n] *cf.* Mat. 6. 19-34. Ps. 127. 1, 2.
[o] Ps. 49. 10. *cf.* Eccl. 2. 18-26.

* *Cheled*, "transitoriness." † *Tzelem*, "image."

The psalm divides naturally into two parts, the first of which is an Ecclesiastes dirge over the misery of man's "short space," while the second gives the judgment of its cause, the recognition of God's chastening because of sin, and that His "looking away" from man is his only hope. This, of course, is a very partial view of things; but the exclusion of the evangelic treatment of this—of which the psalmist, as we have seen, cannot be thought so ignorant as might appear—only brings more prominently into sight the matter which occupies him, which is, in fact, the evil and not the good; although it be true, and what is sought in it, that the complete judgment of the evil is itself a good, and allows the ever-ready grace to come freely in. The next psalm returns to Christ, and to His work of propitiation.

1. The sorrow into which he is plunged provokes the psalmist to thoughts that are so full of question, that in the presence of the wicked, ever fretting against God, he is afraid to utter them for fear of sin. He muzzles himself, therefore, and is dumb, even as to good, for he dare not trust himself. But the fire in his heart breaks out at last, and he cannot refrain. He speaks, but to the Lord alone.

He cries, then, to know his end, his days that are measured, and yet he knows not the measure. Alarmed at his frailty, he is alarmed also at how little he realizes his frailty. His days are handbreadths merely, and God has given them their limit, a short space which is really nothing before the Eternal. It is the common condition of man: take the most stable, what is he? a puff of air—a breath.

Then the unreality this gives to things, even while they last! vain disquietude; vain heaping up of what has presently to be left to others, he knows not whom. This is a trite story; but we are too certainly actors in it to allow its triteness to abate its interest for us.

2 (7-13): The judgment as to it.
(i.) the Source of hope.
(ii.) to whom faith looks for deliverance.
(iii.) in the presence of God.
(iv.) prostrate.
(v.) the chastening of God.
(vi.) the limit pleaded
(vii.) complete recognition.

And now, Lord, what [p] wait I for?
my [q] hope is in thee.
Deliver me from all [r] my revoltings:
make me not the [s] reproach of the fool.
I was [t] dumb, I opened not my mouth:
because [u] thou didst it.
Remove thy stroke from off me:
by the blow of thy hand I am [v] consumed.
When thou with rebukes dost [w] correct man for perversity,
thou makest his [x] beauty dissolve like the moth:
surely, every man is breath. Selah.
Hear my [y] prayer, Jehovah:
and give ear unto my cry!
hold not thy peace at my [z] tears!
for I am a [a] stranger with thee:
a sojourner like all my [b] fathers.
Look [c] away from me, that I may recover strength,
before I go hence, and be [d] no more.

p Gen. 49. 18.
q Ps. 38. 15. Lam. 3. 24. *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 1.
r Ps. 25. 7, 11, 18. Ps. 103. 9, 10.
s *cf.* Deut. 28. 37. Ps. 44. 13. Ps. 123. 3, 4. *cf.* Lam. 1. 21.
t Ps. 38. 13. ver. 2. Lam. 2. 10.
u Job 1. 21 Heb. 12. 6-11.
v Ps. 90. 7. Lam. 2. 1-5.
w Ps. 6. 1. Ps. 94. 12.
x Ps. 32. 3, 4. Isa. 51. 8. *cf.* Lam. 4. 7, 8.
y Ps. 17. 1.
z Ps. 42. 3;

Ps. 80. 5. *a* Job 14. 1, 2; Lev. 25. 23; 1 Pet. 2. 11. *b* Gen. 47. 9; Heb. 11. 9, 10, 13-16. *c* Ps. 130. 3; Ps. 143. 2. *d* Job 7. 7-10; Job 14. 10-12; Ps. 103. 15, 16; *ctr.* 2 Cor. 5. 1 with 2 Tim. 1. 10.

2. He turns once more to the Lord, to express the hope he has in Him. He has no expectation elsewhere; but here at once the remembrance of his sins confronts him; he needs deliverance from these: he prays that on this account he may not be made the reproach of the fool—the impious—with whom, spite of all, he is not. Conscious of the chastening hand upon him, he was dumb, his mouth stopped, for he could not open it against God. Yet he can make supplication for the removal of the stroke, the blow of His hand under which he is being consumed. And such is man's condition: his beauty ephemeral as the moth, but as the correction of perversity: for, with his Father's goods on his hand, he uses them to enjoy himself away from Him, and thus must find the famine in order to be brought back. Every man is therefore but a breath.

Now he breaks out into prayer again, turning his condition into an argument for the pity of the Merciful One. A "stranger" had careful provision made for him in Israel; and a "sojourner," like David's Moabitish ancestress, could reckon upon the shelter of the wings of the God of Israel. "I," too, he cries, "am a stranger with Thee, and a sojourner, like all my fathers." A stranger and sojourner is the guest of God, and to prove the largeness of His hospitality.

But he goes further than this, and in a prayer that seems at first to be contradictory to it. "Look *away* from me," he says, "that I may recover strength," (or, more literally, "brighten up,") "before I go hence and be no more." But why "look away"? Certainly not that he wants God to forget him, but the contrary; but he is conscious of his sinfulness, which is the cause of all the sorrow and evil of his life; if a holy God is to look at *that*, what hope can there be for him? Surely none; and he and sin are so identified, God must look away from *him*—must not regard him—that he may have peace or comfort at all. The psalmist can elsewhere supplement this thought with what is necessary to explain it rightly. He can say, "Look upon the face of Thine Anointed"—Thy Christ (Ps. lxxxiv. 9); and thus it is that, according to the gospel paradox, God can regard us, just as *not* regarding us. Here, as already said, it is the very purpose of the psalm to give expression to the sense of the evil in us: we shall have no difficulty in fitting to it then the compensating and glorious truth. Repentance and faith are but the opposite sides of all real conversion. With the back on self, the glory of Christ is ever manifest.

Sec. 2.

The first book closes with two psalms which are in emphatic contrast with one another; the second containing in itself also a contrast of very significant character, a most fitting close to those counsels of God as to Christ which the first book has so largely for its theme. Such contrasts, when really, as in the present case, complementary to one another, are contained in all competent witness, and necessary to it; and the two psalms here become thus an inspired *nota bene*,—a moral to which our attention is called, and worthy of the deepest possible consideration.

As a third section of the third subdivision of the book, these psalms lead us into the holy of holies,—the sanctuary of the divine thought. And in the fortieth psalm it surely is so. We have here the heart of Christ laid bare to us, the ark of the covenant opened, and the foundations of the throne of God among men, as a veritable "mercy-seat," discovered. "Thy law," says the One coming forward to take up His predestined path of suffering to maintain it,—"Thy law is within my heart." Thus the meaning of sacrifice becomes apparent also, just where Israel's shadows fade away; that which God could have no delight in being replaced by that which is now His complete satisfaction,—which has in it therefore the savor of eternal rest and the assurance of perfect blessing. As the twenty-second psalm is that of the sin-offering, as we have seen, and the sixty-ninth, as we shall see, if the Lord will, hereafter, is that of the trespass-offering, so here we have plainly the burnt-offering,—that which, tried fully by the fire of divine holiness, has nothing in it but sweet savor, and *all* goes up to God therefore as such. The number of the psalm, as that of perfect trial, may have to do with this, even though it is but seldom that in the whole series of the Psalms, the separate numbers shine out as this does. They may yet do so, if the Lord give competency to interpret the higher arithmetic involved. We shall not, however, prophesy as to this, but simply call attention to its suitability in this case.

The forty-first psalm, as already said, is in entire contrast with the preceding one. Here the heart of man is opened to us indeed, but it is not that of the perfect Man, but of men, either conscious of their need, and turning to Him whose grace alone can meet it, or else hardened and ignorant, and misinterpreting what grace has done. The perfect Man is, however, in this psalm also, but in a guise which to unbelief is sure to be a stumbling-block,—a guise which faith alone can penetrate. And it is not an arbitrary decree which has made it so: it is a necessary result of man's false judgment of himself. Repentance and faith go necessarily together: only the lost soul needs and finds the Saviour of the lost.

Psalm XL.

The fortieth psalm has plainly for its theme that one perfect obedience of the Man, Christ Jesus, which sets aside and replaces all the sacrifices of the law,—is therefore that in which the believer finds acceptance before God, the obedience whereby many are made righteous. And this, though essentially what all offerings speak, is what the burnt-offering explicitly brings before us. The sin-offering shows the place of distance and wrath from God necessitated by the holiness of God, if atonement is to be wrought by it. The trespass-offering presents the thought of restitution, the amends made by it to the government of God. The peace-offering dwells upon the effect, the breach repaired, peace made, communion with God enjoyed. But the *burnt*-offering alone exhibits the voluntariness of the offering, the perfection of the sacrifice in its inner reality, the full trial according to divine holiness, the Offerer being in view as well as the offering, and the sweet savor resulting. It is thus the offering which fulfills the purpose of the altar, and gives it its character as the "altar of burnt-offering," being indeed that which goes up to God continually upon it.

1. The psalm divides into two parts, the first of which gives us the blessed obedience itself; the second, the contrasted consequences for friends and enemies:

Ps. xl.

SEC. 3. (Ps. xl., xli.)

The manifestation of the heart of Christ, and the hearts of men.

[1]PSALM XL.

The one obedience by which many are made righteous.

To the chief musician: a psalm of David.

1 (1-12): The obedience.
a (1-5): Divine faithfulness and sufficiency.
(i.) endurance.
(ii.) deliverance.
(iii.) worship.
(iv.) the experience resulting.

I [c]WAITED patiently for Jehovah:
and he inclined unto me, and [d]heard my cry.
And he [e]brought me up out of the [h]pit of destruction,
out of the [i]miry clay,
and set my feet upon a [j]rock, [and] established my [k]goings.
And he put a new [l]song into my mouth,
praise to our God.
[m]Many shall see it, and fear, and [n]trust in Jehovah.
[o]Happy the man that maketh Jehovah his trust,
and [p]respecteth not the proud, nor those who turn [q]aside to lies!

m Ps. 22. 26; *cf.* Jno. 20. 9, 20; *cf.* Lk. 24. 25-33. *n* Ps. 2. 12. *o cf.* Ps. 16. 1, 8-11. *p cf.* Ps. 16. 4. *q cf.* Ex. 32. 7, 8; Josh 23. 6.

e cf. Jno. 10. 18 with 1 Pet. i. 21.
f Ps. 116.1,2. *cf.* Heb. 5. 7, 8.
g Ps. 22. 21. *cf.* Acts 2. 24. *cf.* Heb. 13. 20.
h cf. Ps. 69. 15. *cf.* Ps. 28.1. *cf.* Isa.53.5.
i cf. Ps. 69. 2, 14 with 2 Cor. 5. 21.
j cf. Gen. 8.4 with Rom. 6. 9, 10. *cf.* Rev. 1. 18.
k cf. Lev. 14. 7. *cf.* Gen. 49. 21 with Acts i. 9.
l cf. Ps. 22. 22-25.

the world being thus indeed divided necessarily by the reception or rejection of that which in its own intent is peace to all. This is seen also in the psalm that follows, as already noted, but in a different manner, as will be realized on taking them up.

(*a*) The first section gives us, according to what we have seen to be so commonly the manner in the Psalms, the deliverance out of the sorrows which the rest of the psalm then takes up and describes. Jehovah's faithfulness and sufficiency are here the theme: manifested in answer to the patient endurance of One who has been in the very "pit of destruction," but to be delivered out of it necessarily by this very faithfulness. He leaves his case wholly in Jehovah's hands. All is to be determined by Him, and thus effectually and forever.

Self-deliverance is indeed impossible for any beside Himself, in this place into which He has come. The "miry clay" would prevent any effort of this kind being effectual. But this patient Sufferer meditates no escape. The deliverance being of God, will be for the bringing of many to the blessedness of confidence in Jehovah, and to delight in His wondrous ways. "We believe," says the apostle, "on Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead: who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 24, 25). This resurrection of Christ identifies God with this suffering Saviour, and bears witness to the salvation as complete and accepted. Where those blessed feet have found the "rock," the feet of every poor sinner may find it now. His resurrection is the clearing from guilt of all those whose sins He bore, and has borne away. He is in heaven, all the shadow passed from His blessed face, and the glory of God shining there instead. What a "gospel" is this "glory of Christ"* for one who apprehends its meaning!

And thus the song of the Risen One is truly a "new song" begun: the song of accomplished redemption,—of God able to tell out all His heart; and having told it out, awaking the eternal echoes with His praise; "many shall see it and fear, and put their trust in Jehovah." Now, how blessed is the man that does so! And how blessed will be his portion in those dark days of prophecy which the Psalms continually look on to, when "the proud and those who turn aside to lies" will be found on every side! the days of Antichrist, "the liar" (1 John ii. 22), and of the "strong delusion" to be sent on those who "believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. ii. 11, 12).

* As 2 Cor. iv. 4 should be translated. The translators have rendered it as a mere Hebraism, "glorious gospel," instead of "gospel of the glory," as the Revised Version rightly gives it.

(v.) wonder of the divine ways.

Many, Jehovah my God, are the [r]wonderful works thou hast done,
and thy [s]thoughts toward us:
they cannot be set in order unto thee;
if I would declare and speak [of them],
they are [t]more than can be numbered.

b (6-10): Service and testimony. (i.) unique obedience.

[u]Sacrifice and offering thou hadst no delight in:
[v]ears hast thou digged for me:
[w]burnt-offering and [x]sin-offering thou hast not demanded.

r Ps. 92. 5. *cf.* Ps. 8. 3. *cf.* Ps. 46. 8, 9. *cf.* Ex. 14. 29-31.
s Isa. 55. 8, 9. *cf.* Eph. 1. 4-11. *cf.* Rom. 11. 33-36.
t Ps. 139. 17.
u Heb. 10. 5-10. *cf.* Ps. 51. 16, 17. *cf.* Heb. 9. 9-14.
v *cf.* Ex. 21. 1-6; *cf.* Heb. 10. 5 with Luke 1. 35; *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 24.
w *cf.* Lev. 1. 3 with Eph. 5. 2.
x *cf.* Lev. 4. 3, etc., with Heb. 13. 11, 12.

This section ends with the joyful ascription to God of wondrous works, and gracious "thoughts to us-ward," quite beyond utterance. It reminds us of John's similar declaration as to the works of Christ, which, "were they all written every one, even the world would not contain the books that should be written." Suitable, indeed, to awaken such thoughts, that interposition in behalf of men which both the psalmist and the evangelist have before them. It is the theme of eternity, and time is all too narrow for it.

(*b*) We now go back to see the path that led into these depths, and the principle which carried Him on and sustained Him in it to the end. We find it is a path of service and testimony to God, which reminds us of the characteristic bullock of the burnt-offering. The ox we know to be the type of the patient laborer (1 Cor. ix. 9, 10). And here first we have that reference to the sacrificial offerings, the true meaning of which is so perfectly in contrast with that given it by so many of the blind critics of the day, who see in it the disclaiming of the divine institution of sacrifice in Israel. Leave out Christ indeed out of the passage,—make it simply David, or some nameless Maccabean writer, or any one else you please,—then the consequences of this unbelief will naturally follow, and darkness result from leaving out the light. But we may well take the apostle's application, with the consistent unity which the whole psalm gains by it, as a sufficient justification for the omission of all the reasoning on that side. It is true that the One personated by the psalmist here *does* represent Jehovah as having no delight in "sacrifice and offering"; but it is because He has in view, not the fragmentary and spotted obedience of any ordinary man, but the glorious Antitype of these sacrifices, who could say in a sense no other could, "ears hast Thou digged for Me," and anticipate thus the time when "burnt-offering and sin-offering" would be no more required. To put the past for the future is the common style of Old Testament prophecy; and the preceding "ears hast Thou digged for Me" is of course as much a past of this kind as is that which follows it.

The apostle accepts the reading (or interpretation) of the Septuagint, "A body hast Thou prepared Me," as at least the fair equivalent of the Hebrew here. The "ears digged" are to hear the divine Word; the "body prepared" is to do service with. In either case it is the perfect humanity that is before us of One in whom was no taint of evil, and no consequence of sin inherent. The reference in the Hebrew seems not to be to the bored ear of perpetual service, as in Exod. xxi.; although it *is* Christ that is typified there, surely, and the line of truth is here so remarkably akin. But the expression is not the same in this case, and we have the plural and not the singular, while "a body hast Thou prepared Me" could not be derived from, or given as the rendering of, such an expression as this. It is generally agreed therefore that "ears hast Thou digged for Me" speaks in fact of creative gift. And yet it is surely true that this perfect humanity, this body prepared, is in fact the sign of a service which is not taken to be given up again. *Man* the Lord is still; and Man He will ever be. And this truth conveys to our hearts the precious assurance of His desire to be

(ii.) as written.
(iii.) the innermost heart.
(iv.) the public testimony.
(v.) testimony to Jehovah's ways.

Then said I, Lo, [y]I am come:
in the [z]roll of the book it is written of me.
I [a]delight to do thy pleasure, my God:
yea, thy law is [b]within my heart.
I have [c]preached righteousness in the great congregation:
lo, I have not withheld my lips,
Jehovah, [d]*thou* knowest.
I have not [c]hid thy righteousness within my heart;
I have declared thy [f]faithfulness and thy [g]salvation:
I have not hid thy loving-kindness and thy truth
from the [h]great congregation.

y *cf.* Matt. 3. 16, 17. *cf.* Jno. 1. 29.
z Lk. 24. 27, 44–46. Acts 17. 3, 11.
a *cf.* Jno. 4. 31–34. *cf.* Jno. 10. 17, 18 with Lev. 1. 9.
b *cf.* Deu. 10. 1–5. Ps. 1. 2.
c *cf.* Jno. 7. 27, 28, 37, 38. Ps. 22. 25.
d *cf.* Jno. 17.

4–6. *e ctr.* Ps. 39. 2. *f cf.* Jno. 11. 41, 42; *cf.* Jno. 17. 26. *g cf.* Jno. 5. 24; *cf.* Jno. 20. 19, 20; *cf.* Lk. 24. 46, 47. *h* ver. 9.

near us, with us, and to serve us still. Thus this difference seems after all to be scarcely in result a difference.

The ears are digged, the body is prepared: He then presents Himself for the accomplishment of the divine purpose, according to all that Scripture had foreshown of Him. The point of time—"*then* said I"—can only be, as the context shows, after manhood has been assumed. The words spoken also show this: not, as in the common version, "Lo, I come," but, as in the revised, "Lo, I *am* come."* He is already in the world, in the scene in which the purpose of God is to be fulfilled by Him, and signifies thus that He takes up His mission. The words that follow do not, I believe, refer to the book of divine counsels for eternity, (counsels which, however, are sufficiently declared by them,) but to the volume of inspiration which He opens for us: "in the volume of the book," He says, "it is written of ME." That is, "This very institution of sacrifice, in which, in the mere ceremonial fulfillment of it, Thou couldst have no delight,—this is written of *Me:* I am the One to whom it looked forward; my work is its true fulfillment."

This surely completes the thought as to the insufficiency, and now the abrogation, of these legal sacrifices, while it puts honor upon them by showing their divine end. A most important statement it is, and from lips so manifestly inspired of God, that this law of sacrifice was *written with regard to Christ!* And this links with the next verse as plainly: "I delight to do Thy pleasure, My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." No doubt, this cannot be confined to the law of sacrifice; and yet it shows, as connected with what has gone before, what in fact the will of God which He came to do has specially in contemplation here: as the apostle applies it, "By the which will we are sanctified through the *offering of the body* of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. x. 10).

How this declares the way in which the Lord yielded Himself to the will of God as witnessed in Scripture! showing us at once the Author of those ritual observances held by many now in such dishonor, while at the same time giving them their true significance and power. It is the same glorious Person of whom we read in the gospels, saying to His disciples, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer," and then, "after they had sung a hymn," going forth to that suffering by which the passover was to be fulfilled.

His public testimony corresponded with this inmost desire of His heart. Spite of the pressure of evil, righteousness in Him uttered itself aloud, and the world hated Him because He bare testimony of it that its deeds were evil. "I have preached righteousness," He says, "in the great congregation: lo, I have not withheld my lips, Jehovah, Thou knowest."

But most of all, it was to God He bare witness. "I have not hid *Thy* righteousness within my heart; I have declared Thy faithfulness and Thy salva-

* *Bathi;* in the Septuagint and the Epistle to the Hebrews, ἥκω, not ἔρχομαι.

c (11-12): The realization.

(i.) appeals to Jehovah's faithfulness.

(ii.) the bearer of sins.

Withhold not thou, Jehovah, thy [t]tender mercies from me!
thy loving-kindness and thy truth continually shall [j]preserve me.
For [k]innumerable evils press on me:
[l]mine iniquities have taken hold on me, so that I cannot [m]look [up];
they are more than the [n]hairs of my head, and my heart hath [o]failed me.

2 (13-17): Contrasted consequences.

(i.) a cry to the Unchangeable.

(ii.) the defeat of enemies.

(iii.) they shall realize their shame.

(iv.) the test of experience.

Be [p]pleased, Jehovah, to deliver me!
[q]hasten, Jehovah, to my help!
They shall be [r]ashamed and confounded together, that seek after my soul to destroy it!
they shall be driven [s]backward and put to dishonor that delight in my harm.
They shall be [t]desolate on account of their shame, that say unto me, [u]Aha! aha!
All those that [v]seek thee shall be joyful and glad in thee:
those that [w]love thy salvation, shall say continually, Jehovah be [x]magnified.

t cf. Heb. 5. 7, 8.
j cf. Ps. 16.1. *cf.* Lk. 23. 46.
k cf. Lk. 22. 42–44.
l cf. Ps. 41.4 with 2 Cor. 5. 21.
m cf. Mk.15. 33, 34. Ps. 69. 3.
n cf. Is. 1. 18 with 1 Jno. 1. 7.
o Ps. 22. 14. *cf.* 2 Cor. 13. 4.
p Ps.70.1,etc
q Ps. 22. 19.
r Ps. 35. 4. *cf.* Ps. 69. 22-28.
s cf. Jno. 18. 6 with Lk. 23. 34.
t cf. Ps. 109. 5–20.
u cf. Mk.15. 29–32.
v cf. Ps. 69.6. *cf.* Ps. 22.3.
w cf. ver.10.
x Ps. 35. 27.

tion: I have not hid Thy righteousness and Thy truth from the great congregation." Such was He then for whom man decreed as His reward the cross; and for whom God's good pleasure meant also the cross! God and man strangely at one in this, with yet most opposite thoughts and purposes; while He, with perfect consciousness of it all, moved onward toward the place which Satan alone—and he, with the knowledge which men had not, of His personal glory—would have forbidden Him!

(*c*) Behold Him then in the "pit of destruction"! there where innumerable evils press upon Him, and that as the righteous wrath of God upon iniquities as innumerable! He is suffering for that which, as He apprehends it, lying with its hideous shadow over Him, its awful weight pressing Him down, makes His heart fail, and His eyes unable to look up. These iniquities He confesses as His own, while yet He can appeal, not only to God's "loving-kindness," but to His "truth," to deliver Him. We can understand this of the Sin-bearer alone. The two verses that come together in this section of the psalm are both needful in order to explain the character of what is here. It is One of whom indeed the Levitical law of sacrifice was written; whose perfect obedience in the sinner's place sets it aside by complete and glorious fulfillment once for all. The salvation of which He had testified is here wrought out; God glorified, sin utterly condemned, in that which in the place of utter abandonment brings in the testimony to His righteousness and love. Righteousness and love can therefore come in in answer, and in behalf of those for whom this sacrifice is offered.

2. The second part of the psalm presents the contrasted consequences of this glorious work, according as men accept or are found in hostility towards it. The repetition of this part, with very slight changes, as an independent psalm (Ps. lxx.), will be better considered when we shall have reached it; but it was to be expected that the fact of this repetition should awaken conjecture, as it has done. But all is so perfectly in place, that there is not the least need to concern ourselves about it. *There* it follows the trespass-offering psalm, as here it forms the last part of the psalm of burnt-offering,—occupying thus an analogous place in regard to the corresponding view of the Lord's work, and answering to the last ten verses of the sin-offering psalm (the twenty-second).

We have here first the cry to Jehovah, the Unchangeable, the appeal being to

(v.) the weak with the strong.

But I am [y]poor and needy, [yet] the Lord [z]thinketh upon me:
thou art my [a]help and my deliverer;
make no [b]tarrying, O my God!

Ps. xli.

[1]PSALM XLI.

The cross as seen by faith and by unbelief.

To the chief musician: a psalm of David.

1 (1-3): The knowledge that is peace with God. (i.) Jehovah's sufficiency. (ii.) Deliverance from enemies.

[c]HAPPY is he who understandeth as to the [d]weakened one:
in the evil day Jehovah will [e]deliver him.
Jehovah will preserve him, and keep him alive:
and he shall be made happy in the land;
and thou wilt not give him up to the will of his [f]enemies.

y *cf.* Ps. 41.1 with 2 Cor. 8. 9.
z *cf.* Phil. 2. 9.
a *cf.* Acts 3. 13.
b ver. 13.
c *cf.* Ps. 32.1. *cf.* Ps. 1. 1.
d *cf.* Ps. 40. 17. *cf.* Ps 69.29. *cf.* Ps. 102. 23. *cf.* Ps. 109. 22 with 2 Cor. 8. 9. 2 Cor. 13. 4.
e Ps. 7. 1. Ps. 34. 4,17. *cf.* Mk. 13. 19, 20.
f *cf.* Ps. 13. 3, 4. Ps. 27. 2, 3.

His faithfulness as such, as we have seen before. Thereupon the Speaker realizes the confusion of His enemies, and sees the utter shame of those that mock at Him. On the contrary, those that seek God shall be joyful in Him, and those that love His salvation glorify His Name. He is poor and needy, yet the Lord hath regard to Him; and He concludes with a confident appeal for speedy deliverance.

PSALM XLI.

The first book closes now with the double view of the Cross, as seen by faith or by unbelief, with the occasion and the true ground of the latter. The work is accepted of God, who raises up the Worker, and sets Him before His face forever, while faith finds in it that which brings help and deliverance in every kind of trial and evil. The book ends with the ascription of praise, as the numerical structure indicates, from all the earth.

The psalm has three parts essentially; the fourth being but the praise with which all ends. The first part gives us the blessedness of the knowledge of that Poor Man, whose poverty makes many rich. Only with such an application can we see the true significance of this blessedness. To make it the recompense of mere benevolence, as is the common thought, would be not merely unevangelic, but render the body of the psalm wholly unintelligible. The Lord's own application of the ninth verse to Judas (Jno. xiii. 18) would seem almost, at first sight, to necessitate that of the Speaker to Christ Himself. But the fourth verse, on the other hand, seems just as plainly to forbid this. How could *He* say, as the psalmist does, "Heal my soul; for I have sinned against Thee"? But the subject of the psalm, as even the first verse shows, implies a mystery. There is something which needs an understanding heart, and that something concerns in some way the "poor man," to whom we may then naturally expect our attention to be directed. Faith penetrates the mystery, and finds unspeakable blessing. Unbelief reads it in quite another way, and its recompense is in correspondence with this, an opposite one.

This word "poor," although a possible rendering of the Hebrew, is not the only one possible, nor (I believe) its significance in this case. The meaning of the original is "swinging, waving to and fro," hence "wavering, weak, exhausted," and thus may be used as synonymous with "poor;" but this weakness may, of course, be produced in a very different way,—as by injury or by sickness; and here the enigma of the psalm begins. "Weakened" the Sufferer is, but from what cause? Look on to the fourth verse, and his own words seem to make it still more equivocal: "I said, Jehovah, be favorable unto me: heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee." Indeed, this seems more than equivocal: healing must, no doubt, be as needful in the case of "bruising" as of disease;

(iii.) Inward refreshment.

Jehovah will [p]sustain him on a bed of languishing:
thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.

2 (4-9): The enmity of unbelief.
(i.) the occasion of unbelief.
(ii.) the enmity.
(iii.) the heart manifested.

I said, Jehovah, be favorable to me:
[q]heal my soul; for I have [r]sinned toward thee.*
Mine [s]enemies speak evil of me:
when will he die, and his [t]name perish?
And if he come to see me, he speaketh [u]deceit:
his heart gathereth falsehood to itself;
[when] he goeth without, he [v]speaketh [it.]

*Gen. xliv. 32: *chatathi lo.*

[p] Ps. 55. 22. *cf.* 2 Cor. 7. 5, 7.
[q] *cf.* Ps. 103. 3 with Isa. 53. 4-7.
[r] *cf.* 1 John 3. 5 with 1 Pet. 2. 22-24.
[s] Ps. 22. 6, 7. Ps. 69. 10-12.
[t] *ctr.* Phil. 2. 9-11.
[u] Ps. 55. 21.
[v] *cf.* Lk. 22 3-6.

but how explain of the Sinless One, "I have sinned against Thee"? Strong as the expression is, even this is not decisive; and, if we cannot easily accept it as suitable from the lips of the Substitute for sinners, Bishop Horsley has well reminded us that the same word exactly is used by Judah, in the book of Genesis, where we must unquestionably render it, as the common version does, "bear the blame" or "sin" (Gen. xliv. 32).

The words, then, may be equivocal, and designedly so, and yet all the more suit the application to the Lord here. For here is just the mystery which faith is called to penetrate. Granted that this suffering implies sin, and is owned to do so, yet is it "in," or only "on," the One who suffers? Think of the darkness on the Cross, and the awful cry that God had forsaken Him,—the *seeming* justification of the accusations of His enemies! How natural to the heart, ignorant of its need, to say, "A thing of Belial cleaves to him," which the common version renders, "an evil disease": unbelief so interpreting this "heal my soul"; while faith, adoring, sees the atoning sacrifice!

Thus, then, the meaning of the psalm emerges, completely in accordance with its connection with the preceding one, and its place at the conclusion of the book. It is the *moral* conclusion: unbelief the result of hostility in heart to Him who has in the very revelation of God to man, revealed him to himself. Thus "Me the world hateth," He says, "because I bear witness of it, that its deeds are evil." Unbelief is the issue of unrepentance, and fatally misinterprets all the divine ways. Grace is an offense to it; the humiliation of Christ a stumbling-stone; the cross an inconceivable requirement on God's part: the whole mystery of "God manifest in flesh" is utterly rejected.

1. "He weakened my strength in my journey," says the Sufferer of the 102d psalm; "He shortened my days." Yet this is He who of old laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of His hands. They, therefore, may pass, but He remaineth (comp. Heb. i. 10–12). We can realize, therefore, the happiness of the man who understandeth as to the Weakened One. It is the clear sight of faith which discerns the glory of Christ under the veil of His sufferings: therefore "in the evil day Jehovah will deliver him." Whatever the character of the evil, grace will manifest its sufficiency. Enemies, though there may be many in a hostile world, cannot prevail against him: "Jehovah will preserve him, and keep him alive; and Thou wilt not give him up to the will of his enemies." Be the attack from within, and upon the forces of life, "Jehovah will sustain him on the bed of languishing: Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness."

2. These, then, are blessings attendant upon faith, though in their character as here given, they have the external aspect so marked in the Old Testament. The psalm, then—though the Speaker may be the same—takes voice as the utterance evidently of the Weakened One Himself,—faith's mysterious object. And here is the text with all its mystery, upon which unbelief now comments after its own manner: "I said, Jehovah, be favorable to me: heal my soul, for I have sinned [or, borne sin] toward Thee." There is the mystery: "sinned," "borne sin,"—which is it? And this is that which the heart-stricken cry upon

(iv.) the ways.

(v.) the imputation of the ways of God.

(vi.) the full height of the evil.

All they that hate me [n]whisper together against me:
against me they [o]devise evil for me.
"A [p]thing of Belial," [say they,] "cleaveth to him fast;
and now that he lieth, he shall [q]rise no more."
Yea, mine own [r]familiar friend, in whom I trusted,
who did [s]eat of my bread,
hath lifted up his [t]heel against me.

n Ps.142.3,4.
o *cf.* Mt. 26. 3-5.
p *cf.* Ps. 69. 26. *cf.* Ps. 71. 10, 11 with Isa. 52. 14. Isa. 53. 2-5.
q *cf.* Mt. 27. 62-66.
r Ps. 55. 12-14; *cf.* 2 Sam. 16. 22.
s Jno. 13. 18, 26-30; *cf.* Matt. 26. 21-25.
t *cf.* Ps. 109. 5-8 with Acts 1. 20; *cf.* Lk. 22. 3-6.

the cross involves. Even now, multitudes of even true believers have never realized its true meaning. Was that forsaking simply His being given up to death? was that the unequaled sorrow,—unequaled only because of the glory of Him who endured it? Here that very glory which faith discerns in Him, seems as if it had blinded it to the depths into which He must descend. In the darkness over the cross at mid-day, they see not the outward expression of the Light of light withdrawn, but nature's sympathy with the dying Saviour. They talk of "equivalent penalty"; nay, of "substitute for penalty;" and of His death as but the "close of His life-work." From this descent has been made through every possible phase of unbelief to the complete denial of atonement, in any true sense of the word. But we will not follow this now: look back only at the sin-offering (Lev. iv.–v. 13), and see how great may be the "poverty" of apprehension, to which God has been pleased yet to come down, because in the Christ that faith confesses there is a divine sufficiency, where the apprehension of the work itself is yet all-*in*sufficient.

But we turn to look back at the awful enmity of his maddened adversaries. "Mine enemies speak evil of me: When will he die, and his name perish?" True it is, they are strangers to His glorious Name, or they could not ask such a question. As the apostle says, "Whom none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory" (1 Cor. ii. 8). Of course: they would not have *dared*. None the less had they seen in Christ the image of God, and seen it to hate it only. He who hates goodness hates of necessity the God of all goodness, and yet may not know that it is God he hates. Thus Christ in the world tested the world, and "the world knew Him not" (John i. 10); and yet "light had come into the world, and men *loved* darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (iii. 19). Thus, in either way, the story may be truly told; and in either way be the *same* story: for evil knows not good,—cannot fathom it, or believe in it; "the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not" (i. 5). Faith in the light is only coincident with a new birth—a new nature.

In the next verse the hypocrisy that links itself with this real enmity is manifest: "And if he come to see me, he speaketh deceit: his heart gathereth falsehood to itself; when he goeth without, he speaketh it." Thus he finds just what he looks for; his heart is a magnet that, by a terrible principle of natural selection, attracts wickedness to itself,—wickedness which it has forged first. Then he goes out and proclaims his acquisition; but indeed to show himself out for what he is.

Then come plots and treacherous whisperings, and they persuade themselves that God is against the One they would make their victim. "A thing of Belial," they say, "cleaveth fast to him; and now that he lieth, he shall rise up no more." How readily the cry upon the cross would be for such an implication of guilt! God Himself confessedly against the holy Sufferer; and this was but the last, doubtless, in their eyes, of many similar things. The betrayal of Judas closes the story of man's uttermost wickedness with the spurning heel of a false friend. The sop dipped in the dish was the sign of friendship: he receives it, and goes out; love's last witness finding no response,—"after the sop, Satan entered into him" (John xiii. 27).

3 (10-12): God manifests Himself.
(i.) the cry to Jehovah.
(ii.) the witness of His delight.
(iii.) set before His face.

4 (13): The voice from the earth.

But thou, Jehovah, be [u] favorable unto me,
and raise me up, that I may [v] recompense them.
By this I know that thou [w] delightest in me,
because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.
And *me* in my [x] perfectness thou holdest up,
and settest me [y] before thy face forever.

[z] Blessed be Jehovah, God of Israel,
from [a] everlasting unto everlasting!
[b] Amen, and Amen.

u Ps. 40. 11 with Acts 13. 33-35.
v Ps. 109.16-20. *cf.* Rev.1.7.
w *cf.* Acts 4. 10, 11.
x *cf.* Acts 2. 24, 27.
y Ps. 16. 11. *cf.* Heb.2.9. *cf.* Heb.1.3.
z Ps. 72. 18-20. Ps. 89. 52; Ps. 106. 48; Ps. 150.
a Ps. 90. 2.
b Rev. 5. 13, 14.

3. Such, then, is man, and towards Him who in grace has come to be his Deliverer. But if *he* is thus in his innermost heart revealed, God manifests Himself at length in behalf of the object of his enmity. This is not needful here to be told at length, for it has been again and again the subject of these psalms; but it is clearly enough shown out in the words of the same Speaker who has been heard throughout. He is answered in resurrection, raised up for the recompense of friends and foes alike. The enmity of His adversaries cannot prevail against Him in whom Jehovah delights. His perfection is owned, and in it He is sustained, and set before the face of God forever. There is but One of whom all this could be said, and the psalm as a whole speaks of Him, as we have seen. It is thus a most suited close to this precious first book of the divine counsels as to Christ.

4. The formal close in the last verse is, I believe, indicated by the number as the voice of man universally at last, giving praise to the God of Israel, the Eternal, *from* that eternity before time began, and now on to eternity—a praise therefore which contemplates all *time* from first to last, the period of the creature and his failure, and of the dishonor done to the glorious Creator by his means. It is sealed with the Old Testament "verily, verily," which the Christ of the New has taken up and made His own.

BOOK 2.

The subject of the second book—as in some sense with every second book in the Bible—is that of ruin and redemption; the one the display of man, the other of God. We have still before us, prophetically, Israel in the latter days, and that more exclusively than hitherto, the first book, as giving the counsels of God as to Christ, being naturally much larger in scope.*

The faithful remnant are seen at the commencement in the most complete distress, driven out of Jerusalem, and therefore from the places sacred to God there: a loss of immense significance to those for whom the relationship of God with Israel as a nation is connected with His dwelling in the sanctuary. It is in this way that the covenant-name Jehovah is found so little in the book;† although the loss of the covenant title which it implies leads them at last, as cast upon the mercy of God alone, to know Him better in His own essential nature.‡ And thus the larger use of the word *Elohim*—God—is found, not

* Dr. Bullinger has added to the many proofs of the Pentateuchal character of these books, that "all the figures and illustrations" of the first book are from Genesis, as in the second book they are from Exodus: a very interesting and important fact which (not having myself verified it) I give upon his authority ("Names and Order of the Books of the Old Testament," p. 36.)

† "The second book of Psalms consists entirely of Elohimic psalms; for whilst in the first book Jehovah occurs two hundred and seventy-two times and Elohim only fifteen, the relation is here reversed: Elohim occurs one hundred and sixty-four times and Jehovah only thirty, and in almost every instance by a departure from the customary mode of expression for reasons that lie close at hand." (Delitzsch, Com. on the Psalms, vol. ii., p. 51.)

‡ The typical history of Ruth has already shown us the salvation of Israel in this view of it. (See Notes on that book.)

merely in the psalms which speak of the ruin, but in those that speak of the redemption also; in fact, throughout this second book. And this is a principle in His dealings with His people: every experience of need and distress is suffered to be, in order finally to bring out that which in Him meets it,—to give knowledge which shall abide for eternity, and be of unspeakable value for the soul.

The banishment of the remnant from Jerusalem shows that we have here the time of the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, the time when they are warned to flee (Matt. xxiv. 15, 16), the power of Antichrist being now established there. It is the time, therefore, of unequaled tribulation (comp. Dan. xii. 1), which is closed for them by the revelation of the Lord from heaven (Matt. xxiv. 30, and comp. Dan. vii. 13, Zech. xiv. 3, *seq.*); a time upon which so much of prophecy is concentered, as that in which the conflict between good and evil reaches its crisis, and the issues are reached and realized; which Scripture therefore entitles the time of "harvest." The harvest is reaped by angelic hands (Matt. xiii. 39, 41, 49).

The book is divided, very similarly to the first book, into three main parts, the first and third of which are, in their main features, Messianic; while the second consists mainly of remnant psalms, which give the experiences and exercises of the faithful in Israel, to which the Spirit of Christ furnishes expressions of faith which (even where transcending their intelligence) will be their comfort and stay in those days of "rebuke and blasphemy" which precede their deliverance.

Subd. 1.

The truths, then, that are characteristic of this book are, ruin in responsibility, and redemption in grace. The first subdivision, giving as such the introduction to the whole, exemplifies this fully. It consists of *ten* psalms, the responsibility number, but which are divided again into *eight* (xlii.-xlix.) and *two* (l., li.). These *eight* psalms give us thus the new covenant number, which is, as that, the fullest expression of grace, and of the ruin of man under the old. These psalms are, moreover, Korahite psalms; psalm xliii. has no title, but is only an apparent exception, its character showing it to be practically a continuation of the preceding one. The sons of Korah are mentioned in the book of Numbers as having escaped the judgment that fell upon their father in the wilderness. They are suited witnesses therefore to that divine grace which is now their theme. The two psalms which follow bring us back to the consideration of the people's sin, which had brought them into the condition of outcasts from Jehovah's presence, which the first psalms of the book so touchingly lament.

But the subject that has pre-eminent place in this subdivision is the coming of the Deliverer-King to Zion, with the deliverance implied by this, whether from external evils or worse internal ones, for which repentance is God's way of escape. The person of the King, as both divine and human, is shown out here also with the most absolute simplicity, displaying the faith of those saints of old in Him who would bring redemption to them, in bright relief to the dishonoring unbelief of the nation afterwards.

Sec. 1.

Redemption finds its place in this book in its twofold character, as redemption by blood and redemption by power. Both are needed—the ransom-price, which is, of course, for God, and the actual coming in of power, which knocks off the shackles of the slave, and sets at liberty. *Redemption* has always in it the thought of deliverance accomplished, which takes place spiritually for all who as the people of God come into the value of that already accepted ransom. But they must be really and in heart, not nominally or probationally this, and thus participants of faith; and Israel only in this way find redemption. Thus it is the remnant only, not the nation, the remnant being in result the nation. Re-

demption by power sets them manifestly in this place; and this is the theme of the first section here.

The first two psalms are in structure and in theme so alike, that—the second psalm also having no separate title as the other psalms of this series have—it is no wonder that they should have been looked upon as one. Delitzsch, after quoting for this Eusebius and a Jewish Midrash, says: "The similarity of the situation, of the general impress, of the structure, and of the refrain, is decisive in favor of these psalms, which are commonly reckoned as two, being one. The one psalm consists of three parts: thrice his pain breaks forth into complaint, and is each time again overcome by the admonitory voice of his higher consciousness. In the depicting of the past and the future there is unmistakable progress. And it is not until the third part (Ps. xliii.) that complaint, resignation, and hope are perfected by the language of confident prayer which supervenes." Yet there is a difference between the two psalms which (with their connection also) the numerical arrangement indicates. It is not needful to do more here than to refer to it.

Psalm XLII.

This with the following psalm gives the cry of the solitary,—that in the deepest sense, as cut off from Jehovah's presence. "The land of Jordan (the river of death) and of the Hermons" is here very significant. "Hermon" is a word which seems only capable of one meaning. Some would make it mean "prominent, high," which, of course, would suit well enough a mountain that is seen over nearly all the land of Israel. But spiritual meaning in this case would be difficult to find, and the derivation is also merely conjectural. On the other hand, the name seems evidently akin to "Hormah" and *herem*, the "ban", or dedication to God in the judgment of that which was evil. "For there can be no doubt," says Keil, "that that which lay at the foundation of the ban was the compulsory dedication to God of something which resists or impedes sanctification; so that in all cases in which it was carried into execution by the community or the magistracy, it was an act of the judicial holiness of God, manifesting itself in righteousness and judgment." If this, then, be the meaning, how clear is the connection between Hermon, the ban upon evil, and Jordan, the river of death, which has in fact its highest source in Hermon! And how the two together characterize the psalm! Israel will indeed, in the day we are contemplating, be in the land of death, and the day of the Lord is just the time of the enforcement of the ban upon evil, so imperatively necessary that blessing may at last come for the distracted earth! And this white-capped mountain, clothed with the light of heaven reflected from her snows, may well represent both the dread and the promise of that day. For the blessing will be through and after judgment.

Hermon might well be thus a prominent feature in the land in Israel's past history, as well as in the future crisis before us now. The land was the land of Canaan,—of nations sentenced to extermination for their iniquity; a sentence which Israel was to put into execution as a condition of their own blessing. It was a condition which, as we know, they failed to fulfill; and thus they came themselves under judgment, as having identified themselves with the objects of it. Hermon, as we may say, still dominated the land, the witness of a principle of government necessarily founded upon the holiness of the divine nature.

"The hill Mizar," which is associated with these, may speak of the condition to which, by this dealing of God with it, the soul is brought. It is literally "hill of littleness," which need not be the equivalent of "little hill." The hill may dwarf instead of being dwarfed; and in this way all would be in harmony. God brings down, that He may exalt, and thus the purport of His bringing into the place of judgment may be well expressed.

Hence, then, comes the cry of the soul, shut out from its place of refuge. God has become to it its one necessity; and here we may well find the second of those psalms of instruction, or Maskil psalms, of which we had the first in the memor-

BOOK II. (Psalm xlii.–lxxii.)

Israel's ruin and their redemption in the latter days.

SUBDIVISION 1. (xlii.–li.)

The King in Zion.

SECTION 1. (xlii.—xlix.)

Redemption by power.

Ps. xlii.

[1]PSALMS XLII., XLIII.

The cry of the solitary.

a XLII.

God the one need of the soul.

To the chief musician, *c* Maskil of the sons of *d* Korah.

1 (1-5): The cry after God.
(i.) God my life!
(ii.) away from Him.
(iii.) the realization of this.
(iv.) past experiences.

AS the *e* hart panteth after the water-brooks,
so panteth my soul after thee, O God!
My soul *f* thirsteth for God,—for the *g* living God*:
when shall I come and *h* appear before God?
My *i* tears have been my food day and night:
while they say to me all the day long, *j* Where is thy God?
When I remember these things, I *k* pour out my soul within me,—
how I *l* passed along with the multitude,—
how I went on with them to the house of God,
with the voice of song and praise,—a multitude keeping festival.

* *El*, the Mighty.

c Ps. 32, etc., titles.
d Ps. 44, etc., titles.
e *cf.* Lam. 1. 6.
cf. Ps. 63. 1, 2.
f Ps. 84. 2. Ps. 143. 6.
g Deut. 5. 26. Matt. 16. 16.
h Ps. 84. 3-7. *cf.* Jer. 50. 4, 5.
i Ps. 80. 5. Lam. 1. 2, 12-17.
j ver. 10. Ps. 79. 10. Ps. 115. 2. Joel 2. 17. Mi. 7. 10. *cf.* Ps. 3. 2.
k 1 Sam. 1. 15. Ps. 142. 2, 3.
l *cf.* 2 Sam. 6. 12-15. Lam. 1. 7. Ps. 137. 1-6.

able thirty-second, the song of grace which imputeth not iniquity. Yes, it is grace itself which secures to us the deep and profitable lessons of God's holiness. Israel's covenant-God is acting here, though in disguise, and the sons of Korah are chosen with perfect suitability to give the instruction. Let us give heed none the less because the schoolmaster is one of ancient time.

1. "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God! My soul thirsteth for God,—for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" This is the effect which God has brought about by that withdrawal of Himself which is now to the awakened heart so intense a bitterness. God has become to it the One great Circumstance. And this is no exaggerated estimate, but the simplest reckoning that can be. The Living One is also the Life-giving One, and the very life itself of the soul. The water-brooks are the fit type, as we well know, of the Spirit of God, who both awakens these desires and satisfies them.

To the agony of such absence is added the presence of enemies, who, though they know not God themselves, realize the distress with which they taunt the object of their malice. Naturally, judging by outward signs largely, they even go beyond the truth, unable to understand the mystery of God's dealings with the people that He loves. And the forsaken one, though he refuses the taunt, has yet no answer to it. With Israel the possession of the land and God's dwelling-place in it were the necessary signs of divine favor toward them. Where else could the blood of atonement for their sins be sprinkled, or the intercessory priesthood appear for them before Him? No doubt, in the "many days" in which they have abode, according to Hosea's prophecy, "without a sacrifice, and

(v.) faith yet cleaving to God predicts the end.

[m] Why art thou cast down, my soul?
and why disquieted within me?
[n] hope thou in God:
for I shall [o] yet praise him
[who is] the health of my [p] countenance and my God.*

2 (6-11): The breach.

(i.) the cry of the solitary.

My soul is [q] cast down within me:
therefore do I [r] remember thee,
from the [s] land of Jordan and the Hermons,
from the hill Mizar.

(ii.) conflict.

[t] Deep is calling unto deep at the sound of thy cataracts:
all thy breakers and [u] billows are gone over me!

(iii.) reassurance.

[Yet] Jehovah will command his [v] loving-mercy in the day-time:
and in the [w] night shall his song be with me,
[x] prayer to the God† of my life.

m ver. 11. Ps. 43. 5. *cf.* 1 Sam. 30. 6.
n Lam. 3. 21–26. Ps. 33. 18, 22.
o Ps. 71. 14. *cf.* Jer. 33. 6–13.
p Ps. 4. 6. Prov. 16. 15.
q Ps. 38. 6. Ps. 44. 25.
r Ps. 121. 1, 2. Ps. 130. 5–8.
s *cf.* 2 Sam. 17. 22. Ps. 63. 1. *cf.* Matt. 24. 15–21.
t Jer. 12. 5. Josh. 3. 15. 2 Sam. 22. 5.
u Jonah 2. 3–6.
v Ps. 56. 3. *cf.* Jer. 32. 6–15, 36–44. Isa. 54. 7, 8.
w *cf.* Acts 16. 25. Ps. 77. 6. Job 35. 10.
x Ps. 141. 2.

* The Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate versions read here uniformly with verse twelve and xliii. 5, which is found also in the Hebrew by a change in the division of the words and verses. As they commonly stand, the words produce no proper closing cadence; while one old Hebrew MS. points out the erroneousness of the division here (comp. Delitzsch, Comm.).

† *El.*

without an ephod" (iii. 4), they have got accustomed to such a condition, and hardened themselves against the accusation which it implies. Nay, they can go further, and look at themselves as suffering for the sins of others, rather than for their own. In the days to which we look forward here, and with the remnant in whom God is working, afresh cast out of the land of which they have had brief possession, such arguments will be impossible. Conviction of sin will be doing its bitter but salutary work among them, prophecy and promise emphasizing the contrast of their forlorn condition with the national hopes. Distance from the city with which these are all bound up will not be measured by the few miles which sum it up in space. No, it is moral—spiritual.

Past experiences throng in, to intensify the bitterness. We are made to realize the gladness with which some at least of this people, exiled for so many generations, will return to set up again, as in Ezra's time, their altar to the God of their fathers, under the protection of that covenant with Gentile power (Dan. ix. 27) so soon to be broken, and the altar itself devoted to the "abomination" of worse than heathen idolatry. That gleam of sunshine has in this psalm been already swallowed up in the blackness of a tempestuous eclipse. It abides as a memory of distress; "how I passed along with the multitude, how I went on with them to the house of God, with the voice of singing and praise—a multitude keeping festival." And yet the soul cannot let it go as a mere transient vision: faith stirred by it lays hold with its resolute will of this past, to recall it, and make it abiding; the soul rebukes its own despondency: "Why art thou cast down? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in *God*." Yes, here is what is permanent, what is eternal: hope in God, even though thou canst not find Him; though clouds are round about Him, and thou canst not come unto His seat; though His ways are in deepest mystery; though even thou couldst not find a promise that thou couldst claim undoubtedly. He Himself is promise! In His own all-pitying love—in the goodness of His nature, passing all that we can tell or think,—in *Himself* thou canst find refuge, a door wide open, and strong fortress walls that close around the one who has fled to Him. Can He say, you have trusted Me too much? Nay, He cannot. Here is His word at last that applies, if nothing else does: "Blessed are *all* they who put their trust in Him."

(iv.) the conflict in experience.

I will say unto God* my [y]rock, Why hast thou [z]forgotten me?
why go I mourning because of the [a]oppression of the enemy?

(v.) taunted with the divine ways.

[As] with [b]crushing of my bones, mine oppressors reproach me,
when they say all the day long to me, [c]Where is thy God?

(vi.) the rally of faith.

[d]Why art thou cast down, my soul?
and why art thou disquieted within me?
hope thou in God:
for I shall yet praise him,
[who is] the health of my countenance and [e]my God.

[y] Ps. 18. 2.
[z] Ps. 13. 1. Ps. 44. 24.
[a] Ps. 43. 2. Ps. 56. 1, 2. Ps. 17. 9.
[b] Ps. 94. 4-6.
[c] ver. 3. Ps. 79. 10. Mi. 7. 10.
[d] ver 5. Ps. 43. 5.
[e] Ps. 38. 21.

Ps. xliii.

[b]PSALM XLIII.

Deliverance sought from Antichrist and his adherents.

(i.) the rebellious mass.

[f]JUDGE me, O God!
and plead my cause against an [g]ungodly nation;
rescue me from a man of [h]deceit and iniquity.

[f] Ps. 26. 1.
[g] Ps. 4. 3, 4. *cf.* Isa. 1. 4.
[h] Ps. 10. 7. *cf.* 2 Jno. 7. *cf.* Rev. 13. 11-18.

* *El.*

From this point the soul poises itself for a flight, and a song. "For I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance and my God." You can see that the face has already brightened. There is no argument that a soul that knows not God can at all discern: "the secret of the Lord is" only "with them that fear Him; and *His covenant*, to show it to them."

2. Would not one say, then, that the trouble would be over now? And how often we think it is, when in fact we have but been lifted up on the crest of a wave, which presently sinks deeper than before. Thus the second part of the psalm reveals worse perplexity than the first. The distance between the soul and God is more evident; there seems a more positive breach; though the eye is turned as ever imploringly toward Him. It is here that we can localize the place of distance as "the land of Jordan and the Hermons, the hill Mizar." The significance of this we have already seen. "My soul is cast down," says the speaker; and the voices of nature which surround him seem full of a might by which he is confounded and cast down: "deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy cataracts: all Thy breakers and billows are gone over me."

But again he rises with more assured confidence. "Jehovah"—and here for the first time the covenant-Name, the pledge of unchangeable faithfulness, is used—"Jehovah will command His loving-kindness in the day-time; and in the night shall His song be with me,—prayer to the God of my life."

Still the conflict is real; experience is against experience. God is his Rock; and yet God has, as far as experience goes, forsaken him. He urges it to God Himself, and the bitterness of the oppression of the enemy, who with his unanswerable taunts reproaches him with this forsaking of God,—crushing his bones with it, as he says; making his strength collapse at the thought. Yet even while he says it, faith rallies and turns defeat into victory with its old self-rebuke, "Why art thou cast down?" and he reaffirms his former confidence.

Psalm XLIII.

The forty-third psalm goes back to Jerusalem and the state of things there. In the former one, the "enemy" seems naturally to be rather the outside foe, the Gentile. In the present, it is the ungodly nation and the man of deceit and iniquity, with whom they are identifying themselves,—that is, Antichrist. He

(ii.) cast off of God and under the hand of the enemy.

For thou art the God of my [s]strength:
why hast thou cast me off?
why go I [j]mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

(iii.) but restoration predicted to God's tabernacles.

Send out thy [k]light and thy truth,
they shall lead me:
they shall [l]bring me to thy [m]holy hill and to thy [n]tabernacles.

(iv.) and a future experience like the past.

And I will go unto the [o]altar of God,
to God* my [p]exultant joy:
and upon the harp will I [q]praise thee,
O God, [r]my God!

(v.) cleaving to God, faith sees the end.

[s]Why art thou cast down, my soul?
and why art thou disquieted within me?
hope thou in God:
for I shall yet praise him,
[who is] the health of my countenance and my God.

s Ps. 73. 26.
j Ps. 42. 9. *cf.* Mt. 5. 4.
k *cf.* 2 Chr. 6. 34-39.
l Ps. 126. 1.
m Ps. 15. 1.
n Ps. 84. 1,2.
o Ps 84. 3.
p *cf.* Rom. 5. 11.
q Ps. 27. 6.
r Ps. 43. 14.
s Ps. 42. 5,11.

Ps. xliv.

[z]PSALM XLIV.

Faith building on the testimony of past deliverances, and sustained, though in contrasted circumstances.

To the chief musician, Maskil of the sons of Korah.

1 (1-3): The power that wrought was God's alone.

(i.) former days.

O GOD, with our ears we have [t]heard,
our fathers have told us,
the work thou wroughtest in [u]their days,—in days of old.

t Ps. 78. 1-4.
u Is. 51. 9,10.

* *El.*

is "the liar," as the apostle John says, who denying altogether the Father and the Son,—that is, the *Christian* revelation,—denies also, as to the Jewish, not that there *is* a Christ (a Messiah), but "that *Jesus* is the Christ" (1 John ii. 22). Thus the psalmist now prays. "Send out Thy light and truth" and "*they* shall lead me; they shall bring me to Thy holy hill and to Thy tabernacles." Gloriously will these be indeed displayed when the true Christ shall be revealed from heaven, and with the breath of His lips destroy the wicked one. Deliverance will then have come for the godly ones among the people, as in a moment; Israel's holy places be restored, and their worship be resumed, never again to know interruption.

As to the rest of the psalm, it is largely a repetition of the previous one; and in these outline-notes we need hardly dwell upon it.

Psalm XLIV.

In the forty-fourth psalm, faith goes back to the testimony of days long past, to build itself up on this, amid circumstances which yet are in such utter contrast. And this is what faith supposes, that the circumstances are, at least, not such as one can build upon. Faith is in "things unseen," making that substantial which to mere sight and sense have no reality. Not that it has not foundations, but that these too are beyond natural sight, in the sphere of the spiritual, and thus, to the carnal, dreams.

1. The history of those days so long gone has indeed for Israel to bear the reproach of the meantime experience. Its testimony is of God acting in triumphant power, in behalf of a people now for long scattered and under the heel of the Gentiles, for whom how many vain hopes have kindled, only to be dis-

(ii.) the testimony.

(iii.) God manifest for them.

Thou with thy hand didst [v]dispossess nations, and [w]plantedst *them*:
Thou didst [x]break up races and [y]cast them out.
For not with [z]their swords did they possess the land,
nor did their own arm save them:
but [a]thy right hand, and thine arm, and the [b]light of thy countenance;
for thou hadst [c]accepted them.

2 (4, 5): Faith applies the testimony. (i.) the same God. (ii.) our Deliverer now.

Thou art he—my [d]King, O God!
command [e]deliverances for Jacob.
Through thee will we push down our [f]oppressors:
by thy name will we [g]tread down those that rise against us.

3 (6-8): Shut up to God (i.) as only sufficient.

For I will not [h]trust in my bow:
nor shall my sword save me.

v Josh. 11. 18-20. Josh. 12.
w Ps. 80. 8-11. Ex. 15. 17.
x Ex. 15. 14-16.
y Deu. 7.1.2.
z Deu. 8. 17. Judg. 7.2-7.
a Ex. 15.6,7.
b *cf.* Hab. 3. 3-7. *cf.* Ps. 89.15.
c Deu. 7. 7,8. Deu. 10. 15.
d Ps. 84. 3.
e Ps. 18. 50.
f Ps. 60. 12.
g *cf.* Zech. 10. 5-7.
h Ps. 20. 7. *ctr.* Ps. 78. 9.

persed and put out in worse darkness than before. None more intense can be than that in which the period to which these psalms apply will find those whose exercises are recorded in them. The nation is lapsed into a condition of utter apostasy, for which the hand of God is necessarily upon them, and the remnant remaining true are yet under the shadow of this. From it they emerge at last, with the fruit of needed exercise secured by a discipline which divine love has ordained for them, into the apprehension of favor never to be lost again.

The lesson here is of absolute dependence on God, which to a feeble and oppressed people is the only possible source of encouragement. To leave man out of the question is to leave out an incalculable element, always causing uncertainty and disappointment. To make God all is to make reckoning simple, safe, and the balance sheet an immense surplus, whatever the expenditure. Let things be as they may, His grace is such as to give one amplest title to reckon upon Him. Here boldness of faith is only simplicity of obedience.

If this God is our God, we may claim Him wherever we find Him. All histories of His past ways become light for us. No laws of His in nature are so unchangeable as He Himself is. As He has ordained for us as His creatures a world of fixed realities amid which to walk, this spiritual world in which we find ourselves, living, and walking, and having our being in Him, is still as far beyond it as eternity beyond time, or heaven beyond earth. Here there is no caprice, but immutability itself, inviting absolute confidence. No dispensations—though they may variously reflect Him—change the Eternal. And this is how the very histories of Scripture become for us types and prophecies, and (in another sense than the Preacher meant it) "that which has been is that which shall be."

So the remnant go back here to the beginning of their national history, to that which had come down to them from their fathers, who not with their own swords took possession of the land. God had dispossessed the nations and planted them; He had broken up races, and cast them out. His right hand, His arm, the light of His countenance, had manifested His acceptance of them. All this abode with them for present wisdom. Man's nothingness was just as certain; God's sufficiency was just as perfect.

2. And so now they claim and proclaim this God as theirs. "Thou art He,"—Thou art the same,—"my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob." Yes, Jacob, this worm of the dust, can only be delivered by Him who can *command* deliverances for him. And then, falling upon that arm of strength, there is at once an outburst of confidence: "Through Thee will we push down our oppressors; and by Thy name will we tread down those that rise against us." Here is the application of that past history; and a reckoning like this has in it no element of deception.

3. The remembrance becomes fruitful in the production of character. In self-

(ii.) testified by deliverances.
(iii.) to His praise.

For thou didst save us from our oppressors,
and put to [h]shame those that hated us. [h] Ps. 6. 10.
In God do we [j]glory all day long, [j] *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 31. Ps. 34. 2.
and thy name will we praise for ever. Selah.

6 (9-14): The testing of present experiences.
(i.) alone, without Him.
(ii.) nay, He in opposition.
(iii.) the full realization.
(iv.) failure even for Him!
(v.) governmental ways.
(vi.) the full evil.

But thou hast [k]cast off and put us to confusion, [k] Ps. 89. 38.
and [l]goest not forth with our hosts. [l] Ps. 60. 10.
Thou makest us [m]turn back from the oppressor; [m] Deu. 28. 25.
and those that hate us [n]spoil for themselves. [n] Ps. 74. 1-8.
Thou hast given us up like [o]sheep to [be] meat, [o] ver. 22.
and hast [p]scattered us among the nations. [p] Lev. 26. 32, 33.
Thou [q]sellest thy people for naught, [q] Jer. 15. 13, 14.
and got no [r]increase by the price. [r] *cf.* Nu. 14. 13, 14.
Thou hast made us a [s]reproach to our neighbors, [s] Ps. 79. 4. *cf.* Jer. 24. 9.
mockery and derision to those around us.
Thou makest us a [t]proverb among the nations, [t] Deu. 28. 37.
a shaking of head among the races [of men].

5 (15-21): Exercised, yet cleaving to God.
(i.) constant, entire self-consciousness.
(ii.) in view of the slanderer and persecutor.
(iii.) God still remembered.
(iv.) and no apostasy.
(v.) spite of His ways.
(vi.) innocence as to full evil
(vii.) claimed in view of God's perfect knowledge.

My [u]confusion is before me all the day long, [u] *cf.* Dan. 9. 7, 8.
and the shame of my face hath covered me,
Because of the voice of the reproachful and blasphemer,—
because of the [v]enemy and the revengeful. [v] *cf.* Ps. 8. 2.
All this is [w]come upon us, [x]yet we have not forgotten thee, [w] *cf.* Neh. 9. 32. [x] *cf.* Dan. 9. 13.
nor dealt [y]falsely with thy covenant. [y] Ps. 7. 3, 4.
Our [z]heart is not turned back; [z] *cf.* Acts 7. 39.
nor have our [a]steps declined from thy path; [a] Ps. 37. 31.
Though thou hast crushed us in the place of [b]jackals, [b] Jer. 9. 11.
and covered us with the [c]shadow of death. [c] Ps. 107. 10, 14.
If we have [d]forgotten the name of our God, [d] ver. 17.
or stretched out our palms toward a [e]strange god,— [e] Ps. 81. 9.
Shall not God [f]search this out? [f] Zeph. 1. 12.
for he knoweth the [g]secrets of the heart. [g] Ps. 139. 1-4.

distrust like theirs, the children of those conquerors of old proclaim their genealogy. "I will not trust in my bow: nor shall my sword save me." Testified by deliverances all along their history, which only His hand could have effected, the divine sufficiency is their only and constant boast, and His name shall be their praise forever. This is that for which He works, that His people may know Him, to their ceaseless joy, this joy in Him being the spring of power in them, and what unites His creatures to Himself forever. The worship of eternity is the seal of its blessing and perfection too. God is in His place, and the creature in his happy place with God.

4. But now we have the testing of faith by those circumstances which seem so thoroughly in contrast with this claim of the divine favor. Here there scarcely needs comment. The facts are plain to all and speak for themselves. The recital naturally goes on gathering gloom as it proceeds. First, though their hosts still go forth, God is no longer with them, as of old. Then there follows necessarily defeat and spoiling. Then they become mere sheep for the slaughter, scattered among the victorious nations. God too acquires no glory by the giving up of His people: those who should have been for His honor have become a reproach; nay, far and wide, an evil proverb and a shaking of the head.

5. These are the circumstances; now they speak of their inward state, exercised by all this, feeling it keenly, covered with shame and confusion of face,

6 (22–26): Is not the limit reached?
(i.) complete integrity.
(ii.) yet still rejection.
(iii.) and hiding of face.
(iv.) prostration of strength.
(v.) be once more with us.

Because for [h]thy sake we are killed all the day long:
we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.
[i]Awake! why sleepest thou, O Lord?
arise! cast not off for [j]ever!*
Why [k]hidest thou thy face?
[and] forgettest our affliction and our oppression?
For our soul is [l]bowed down to the dust:
our belly cleaveth to the earth.
Arise for our help,
and [m]redeem us for thy [n]mercies' sake.

h Rom. 8.36. cf. 2 Cor. 4. 11.
i Isa. 51. 9.
j Ps. 13. 1.
k Deu. 31.17, 18. Ps. 88. 14.
l Ps. 57. 6.
m Ps. 25. 22.
n cf. Ps. 51. 1.

* *Literally*, "for perpetuity."

able to answer nothing in the presence of those who reproach and blaspheme, of enemies and vengeful men. Yet in spite of all, they cleave to God, neither their heart nor their steps turned aside from Him, though crushed in the place of prowling jackals, covered with the shadow of death. Had they forgotten Him, would they, they ask, be able to conceal it from Him? Their appeal is to One perfect in knowledge.

6. Must there not be, then, a limit to this sorrow? can He forget forever? When *their* enemies are *His* enemies, and for His sake they are being slaughtered? Can the hiding of His face continue, and their affliction as if unknown to Him? Now in the utter prostration of their strength, they cry to Him to arise and for His mercies' sake to redeem them.

The next psalm shows the glorious answer to this prayer.

Psalm XLV.

Suddenly the Lord will appear. As Zechariah shows (chap. xiv.) when Jerusalem is compassed by her enemies, and just falling, nay, has fallen into their hands,—the city taken, the houses rifled, and half of the city gone forth into captivity, while "the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city,"—then "shall Jehovah go forth, and fight with those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle." This might be, and has been, taken as a providential visit; but what follows shows conclusively, and in agreement with many other prophecies, (Dan. vii. 13, 14, etc.) that it is—though indeed Jehovah—the Son of Man who comes: for "His *feet shall stand* in that day on the Mount of Olives . . . . and Jehovah my God shall come, and all the holy ones with Thee."

"Saints" it is in our common version; but we must not press this as necessarily implying *men*. "The holy ones" may be angels, and more naturally: for it is not till the New Testament that we have it revealed that "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 4). But a personal coming, with at least angels, is clearly announced; and then it is that "Jehovah shall be King over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Jehovah, and His name one."

The psalm before us gives us no date nor details of the coming of the Lord; and the veil over its teaching is thick enough to have blinded the critics who with so much pains seek to put themselves back into the Old Testament darkness in order to get the true light thereupon. Here we may choose, if we will follow them, between Solomon, Ahab, Joram, the Syrian Alexander, a Persian monarch, or wander, if we please, further still. With all this we gain no help to spiritual conception, if even we are not led to patch and mutilate after the manner of Cheyne, in order to get rid of any possibility of holding what is in disrepute as the "traditional" one. May not, after all, this traditional one be just the effect of the glory of Christ shining out of Scripture all down the centuries? and thus tradition be but a poor name for the continual witness of eyes that have seen it?

The psalm is another *Maskil*, or psalm of instruction,—pointed out to us thus as having special wisdom for the time to which all these psalms refer. If it be

Ps. xlv.

[3]PSALM XLV.

The glory of the Messiah, united to His people.

To the chief musician, upon [o]Shoshannim, [p]Maskil of the sons of [q]Korah: a [r]song of the [s]Beloved.

1 (1, 2): The King's pre-eminence. (i.) unison of heart and tongue in praise. (ii.) the Witness.

MY heart [t]overfloweth [u]good matter:
I speak what I have made, touching the [u]king;
my tongue is the pen of a [u]ready writer.
Thou art [x]fairer far* than the sons of men:
[y]grace is poured into thy lips;
[z]therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.

* A reduplicative form, which makes it emphatic.

o Ps. 69, 80, titles. Song 6. 3.
p Ps. 32, etc., titles.
q Ps. 42, etc., titles.
r Song 1. 1.
s Song 5. 8.
t *ctr.* Ps. 39. 2–4.
u *cf.* Eph. 3. 8.
v Ps. 44. 4.
w *cf.* Col. 1. 13–20.
x Song 5. 10–16.
y Lk. 4. 22.
z *cf.* Phil. 2. 5–10.

the appearing of Messiah which is the people's deliverance from all their sorrows, we must see how necessarily this must have its place in such a series.

The psalm is also (along with the sixty-ninth and eightieth) entitled, "*al-shoshannim*," or, "upon lilies," which has been given various conjectural references to instruments or current songs, so purely conjectural and so entirely without spiritual meaning, that we can lose nothing by ignoring them altogether. But the home of the lily, if we may so say, is in the Song of songs, where we shall find it undoubtedly with such spiritual significance emphasized, and in various details, as found in the valleys, growing among thorns, the roes (or gazelles) pasturing among them; as to which Dr. Thompson says,—"Our flower delights most in the valleys, but it is also found on the mountains. It grows among thorns, and I have sadly lacerated my hands in extricating it from them. Nothing can be in higher contrast than the luxuriant velvety softness of this lily, and the crabbed, tangled hedge of thorns about it. Gazelles still delight to feed among them; and you can scarcely ride through the woods north of Tabor, where these lilies abound, without frightening them from their flowery pasture."

The lily is the ideal thus of purity, beauty, and attractive grace, which may be found (though not necessarily) in lowliest circumstances, and indeed encompassed with the signs of the curse, though foreign to its own nature. Such an emblem may well suit the Lord Himself in His character as Man; and His people too, as by grace partaking with Him in it. In the psalm before us both these are seen together, and to both it may well refer.

Corresponding to this, we have, as the designation of the whole psalm, "a song of loves," or "of the beloved"—"beloved one," in the Septuagint; persons (Olshausen); objects (Delitzsch). The variation is not, after all, a very great one, whether it express the affection of the heart, or the object of the affection; and whether this be simply Christ, or Christ and His people together. The true heart has always found the meaning here, and whether in the Synagogue of old, or the Church of the later dispensation, it has been recognized as a prophecy of the Christ of God.

1. Heart and tongue are in unison in the speaker here. His theme possesses and carries him away. He has to declare his delight in it, how full he is of the "good matter" he pours forth. Even while he speaks he turns from those he is addressing, to the glorious Presence which shines upon him, to pour out his praise directly to Him.

"Thou art fairer far," he says, "than the sons of men"—Son of man, but transcending them all; and with this personal excellence joins itself a divine quality of speech,—"grace is poured into Thy lips." In this he discerns the ground, not of temporary blessing, as when God brought forth man at the beginning and blessed them, (Gen. i. 28,) but of eternal. For here is a perfection which shall not pass away, and One qualified perfectly to communicate between God and man. There is but One such Man: there has never been another—a

2 (3–5): Conflict with His enemies.
(I.) preparation.
(II.) a Warrior-Saviour.
(III.) accomplishment.

[a] Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O [b] mighty one,
[with] thy [c] glory and majesty.
And in thy majesty [d] ride prosperously,
on account of [e] truth and meek* righteousness;
and thy right hand shall teach thee [f] terrible things.
Thine [g] arrows are sharp—[h] peoples fall under thee—
in the heart of the king's [i] enemies.

* Or "suffering."

a *cf.* 2 Thes. 1. 8.
b *cf.* Is. 9. 6.
c *cf.* Heb. 2. 9.
d *cf.* Rev. 19. 11-16.
e *cf.* Ps. 15. 2.
f Ps. 46. 8.
g Ps. 2. 9. Ps. 110. 6.
h Ps. 18. 43, 44.
i *cf.* Lk. 19. 27.

true "Second Man," in every respect. Therefore there is but this One to whom such language can refer. Although he does not bring out the full meaning of the passage, we must agree with Alexander, that "on any hypothesis except the Messianic one, this verse is unintelligible."*

2. Thus the subject of the psalm is defined. But the King thus glorious and owned of God is not on that account welcomed in peace to His throne by the world's homage. No: He has to conquer His kingdom, as had David. The next three verses therefore speak of the putting down of His enemies. He is invited to gird His sword upon His thigh with glory and majesty, and to ride forth, as He is seen in the Apocalyptic vision. Truth and the cause of meek (or suffering) righteousness demand the judgment which He comes to execute. Grace has been shown and been rejected: only judgment therefore remains; and "when Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. xxvi. 9, 10). The "grace poured into His lips" is exchanged therefore for a sword. It is the answer to the cry of the previous psalm; and in fact the battle is soon over when once the day of long-suffering has reached its limit. The peoples fall under Him: but this is only the prelude to a very different and contrasted scene.

3. The third section flashes out the full glory of the King. The apostle's comment and quotation, in the epistle to the Hebrews (i. 7–9), expressly contrast it with what is angelic merely: "Of the angels it† saith: "He maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire; but of the Son: Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom."‡

* The perplexity of commentators in rendering this text is strange enough: not indeed when they would apply it to a Persian monarch, or even an Israelitish king, but even when they discern its Messianic reference. The reason is that dull literality which by its dullness even ceases to be literal. "Fairness" or "beauty"—the same word—is ascribed to "wisdom" by the prophet, (Ezek. xxviii. 7,) and so need not be "physical" merely: and it is naive enough, after so interpreting it, to enlarge then on the difficulty, which is of one's own making, how can mere physical beauty be the ground of eternal blessing; and then to affirm the passage itself in proof!

Then "grace poured into the lips" is surely not the same as "grace playing round the lips," and the former expression is not unnatural as expressive of speech that has divine unction. A King of Israel, who finds eternal blessing on this account,—pre-eminent above all the sons of men, can only be the "King Messiah" of whom the Targum understands it here.

† "It" seems preferable to "he": it is simply Scripture to which he appears to refer. And even if God be referred to as the Speaker, this can only be as the true Author of Scripture, as the passage from the psalm before us is clearly no direct divine address.

‡ The meaning, one would suppose to be thus settled for the Christian. Alas, to-day there are so many Christians who are not Christian, that no apostolic authority can settle it for them; and wherever Christ is in question, whether in the Old Testament or the New, there Satan is now permitted to show his skill in exegesis. As it needs to be known of what high dignitaries in the Church are capable, let us once more quote the Oxford professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture, Cheyne. He translates [and supplements] as follows:

"As for thy throne, [firm is its foundation,]
God [hath established it] for ever and ever:
a sceptre of equity is the sceptre of thy kingdom."

And he accepts it as probable that the psalm refers to Ahab! "though of course, no editor of temple-songs would have admitted such a poem into his collection had he supposed that it referred to Ahab, or indeed to any king of (northern) Israel. But *if he mistook* the psalm for a hymn to some typically Messianic king of Judah, or *why not say at once, to the Messiah of the future*, he might well have admitted it, especially if he read *verse* 13*a* in its present *most probably* corrupt form, misinterpreted by him.

3 (6-8): His manifestation in glory.
(i.) a throne righteous, divine, eternal.
(ii.) yet the King has fellows in dependence.
(iii.) spiritual graces of the Risen One.

Thy [j]throne, O [k]God, is for ever and aye:
the [l]sceptre of thy kingdom is an even sceptre.
Thou [m]lovest righteousness, and [n]hatest wickedness:
therefore God, [o]thy God, hath [p]anointed thee with
the oil of [q]gladness
[r]above thy fellows.
All thy [s]garments are [t]myrrh and aloes [and] cassia;
out of [u]ivory palaces stringed instruments have
made thee glad.

j Heb. 1.8,9. Ps. 93. 2.
k *cf.* Jno.1.1. *cf.* Heb.1.8.
l Ps. 89. 14.
m Ps. 11. 7.
n Jer. 44. 4.
o *cf.* Ps.22.1.
p *cf.* Ps. 2. 2.
q Ps. 21. 6.
r Ps. 89. 27. *cf.* Col.1.18.
s *cf.* Ps.22.18.
t *cf.* Mt. 2.11 with Jno. 19. 39, 40.
u *cfr.* Amos 3. 15.

Yes, the kingdom of God is indeed come, never to pass away. Human hands they are that take the empire; but that is a mystery and marvel of the Divine ways. "To us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Father of eternity, the Prince of peace" (Isa. ix. 6). How blessed the announcement! how clearly has it been made! and that trumpet of jubilee is soon to sound which shall call the saints of every time to enter upon their inheritance. When He inherits, they too shall begin to inherit who are heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ. God "hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man" (John v. 27); and here also they share (through His grace) with Him, in ways suited (of course) to creature-capacities. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me upon My throne; even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on His throne" (Rev. iii. 21).

Here is careful discrimination, with abounding grace. Upon the Father's throne none could surely sit, except Himself. And let us observe that, while here, as soon as His kingdom is announced, we hear—strange as it may seem—of "fellows"; yet the same necessary discrimination is observed. Man Himself, and exalted as Man by God, it is added, "God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness *above* Thy fellows."

Striking it is how in this Jewish psalm of Christ, and with millennial glory now in view, we should find just in this place, more than a hint thrown out of what is outside of Jewish blessing altogether. No doubt it is something which, apart from the New Testament, we should not be able to realize; and even with it, we may take it loosely as referring to men at large who as saints are brought into relationship with Him who sanctifies them. But the word "fellows," or "associates," seems to go further than this, and especially if we consider the place in which we find them spoken of here. The "queen" of this psalm, and *her* companions, are certainly earthly, and not heavenly saints. Here are those who

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"For my own part, I have no doubt that the psalm was preserved in the Psalter on the theory of its original Messianic reference—a theory which *few will maintain now*."

Coming to the verse before us, he tells us, "If we accept the text"—which he prefers not to do,—"Elohim may here be a title of the king," without the need of admitting that it implies a divine person. This because "the title Elohim is applied to the judicial authority (Ex. xxi. 6, xxii. 8), to Moses (Ex. vii. 1), and to the apparition of Samuel (1 Sam. xxviii. 13), and that a prophet, looking into the future, declares the Davidic family to be 'as Elohim, as the (or, an) angel of Jehovah' (Zech. xii. 8)." Still, he refuses this: "The one conclusive objection to this view is, that in the very next verse Elohim is used with distinct and sole reference to Jehovah (unless indeed, with St. Jerome and Bishop Pearson, we take Elohim there too as a vocative)—a use which corresponds to the pervading tendency of the Korahite psalms. It would be unnatural to interpret the word differently here."

Dismissing this idea, there remains but to read "Thy throne is God," meaning "thy throne is God's throne"; and this again meaning "as permanent as God's throne." But this also he rightly rejects as impossible, and then is brought face to face with the apostle's rendering in Hebrew, (which however he never notices as that); and then his unbelief comes plainly out:—

"The sum of the matter is that the only natural rendering of the received text is that of the versions, 'Thy throne, O God,' and the only natural interpretation that of the Targum, 'Thy throne, O Jehovah'. But is such an abrupt transition to Jehovah conceivable?" The end is that, the application to Christ being inconceivable (to him) also, he must interpolate! Such is the spirit of much of the higher criticism of the day!

4 (9-12): Earthly relations (i.) to the throne. (ii.) separation.

[v] Kings' daughters are among thine honorable women:
the [w] queen standeth on thy right hand
in [x] gold of Ophir.
[y] Hearken, daughter, and see, and incline thine ear;
and [z] forget thy people and thy father's house.

v cf. Song 6. 8.
w Is. 62. 3-5. *cf.* Jer. 3. 1.
x ver. 13.
y Gen. 24.57-61.
z cf. Gen. 12. 1, 2.

seem to occupy another place, and are spoken of by a title most suited for those whose home is with Christ above; filling thus, too, what *for us* would be otherwise an unfilled gap, even in this scene of glory. All this would naturally suggest such a view as we are taking.

This glorious King reigns then by divine right on the highest of thrones, and yet is a Man, and as such subject, even upon the throne which here He takes. What a guarantee of stability, and of the perfection of that Will that governs all! Freedom and obedience are only different sides of the perfect blessedness found in such a kingdom for the soul that has truly entered it.

Once more we are reminded of the personal excellences of the King. His "garments" are, of course, as always, that practical righteousness which He has loved and manifested in His human life. They are so perfumed with precious spices that they seem to consist of the very spices themselves. The myrrh and cassia (though the word used for this last is a different one) are principal ingredients in the holy anointing oil (Ex. xxx.), and therefore certainly typify graces of the Spirit which are found in Him. The aloes are reckoned among the "chief spices" (Song iv. 14). The myrrh is a gum which distills spontaneously from the plant, though it may be procured also by incision. Cassia seems to be a kind of cinnamon, and a bark; aloes also a fragrant wood. But it is hazardous to say more about them until the two latter have been more definitely determined. Perhaps these different characters of the spices may at least present to us more distinctly the whole manhood of our Lord as alike fragrant with spiritual perfection.

Difficulty also attends the rendering of the last part of the verse, as may be seen by the various translations. That which commends itself etymologically, and is most accepted perhaps to-day, furnishes also a meaning in sweet accord with what is here the theme. We may be able to say little about the "ivory palaces", although Solomon's ivory throne may give us perhaps the thought of regnant righteousness,—may appear like a symbol of the "great white throne" itself—needing but little transfer of application from a throne to a palace,—the *abode* of rulers. From such homes of purity, the sound of "stringed instruments" may well gladden the King's heart. They show man's power over inanimate nature, to fashion it to harmony of praise. Man's hand it is that draws the music out. Set over nature, he has largely yet made discord of it. Now the glorious King hears other strains. Here is what is now the result of His own work: He finds in it the fruit of the travail of His soul,—reconciliation carried fully out. And this the "*stringed* instruments"—controlled by man's *hand* entirely—best expresses.

4. The *fourth* section, as that, defines for us (not without need, if we think of many interpreters) that the relations in which the King is now to be seen are *earthly* relations. The figure of marriage is, as we know, used to image to us the union of Christ with His Church in glory; it is also used similarly to convey to us the relation of Jehovah to Israel, both in time past and in that to come,—suspended for the present through national unfaithfulness (Isa. l. 1; Hos. ii. 2). The relation in the first case is heavenly—to be enjoyed there; in the latter, earthly. The earthly may be also a figure of the heavenly; but the two are thus entirely distinct, and must be kept distinct in our minds, or we fall into confusion. Just so, there are two Jerusalems, put in contrast by the apostle in Galatians (iv. 25, 26), but the earthly in her glorious days to come being again an evident type of the heavenly one (comp. Ezek. xlvii. 1-12; xlviii. 30-35; with Rev. xxi., xxii.).

(iii.) to Him, the object of thy worship.
(iv.) the nations.

And the king shall [a]desire thy beauty:
for [b]he is thy Lord, and [c]worship thou him.
And the [d]daughter of Tyre is present with an [e]offering:
the rich among the people [f]intreat thy favor.

a *cf.* Song 4. 9.
b Is. 54. 5.
c *cf.* Gen. 24. 64.
d *cf.* Is. 49. 6, 22, 23.
cf. Is. 55. 5.
e *cf.* Is. 60.
f *cf.* Ps. 72. 9-11.

The Psalms are in their whole horizon earthly (cxv. 16); and, while there may be hints, as we have already seen, of a higher sphere of blessing, the common Old Testament character attaches to the book throughout. The "queen,"—the bride of the King—as all connections show, is therefore the earthly and not the heavenly bride. The "king's daughters" show us, in a not unusual figure, the representatives of the nations attendant upon One who is Lord of the whole earth. Israel alone has the place of bride, and to import the polygamy of ancient times into this scene of future blessedness not only occasions moral disquietude but is contrary to Scripture statements as to Israel's distinctive place. The "daughter of Tyre" in the twelfth verse is in fact but one of these "kings' daughters," and indicates their place.

The queen* stands at the right hand of the King, adorned with gold of Ophir: divine glory displayed in "fruitfulness"† from a naturally barren soil. How glorious will God manifest Himself at last in such fruit brought forth from the obdurate heart of man! How will it be "said of Jacob and of Israel"—comparing one with the other—"What hath God wrought!"

Now she is called, in view of the grace that has been shown her, to be a Manassite, forgetful of her kindred and her father's house. There must be no turning back to what has been left behind—to a condition wholly incompatible with her relationship to the glorious Person who desires her for Himself. He is indeed the Lord, and claims the entire affection and worship of the soul. It is in yielding Him this that all the sweetness of such a love as His is proved and enjoyed; and if we make Him all, we shall find how more than enough He is for all that heart can seek in Him. This is the knowledge of the new man, that "Christ is all"; all other competing objects having to disappear and give place to Him (Col. iii. 10, 11).

A simple truth, therefore, this should be to the Christian, and scarcely needing much enforcement. Yet it *does* need. How few of those who have turned to Him, yea, and found answer from Him, in the deepest need of their souls, have yet frankly taken Him for all other needs! How many have to find cistern after cistern of their own cracked in the hewing, before they apply themselves in full earnest to their own free fountain of living water! How little is it understood that Christ *and nothing else* will more than satisfy, when Christ and a great deal else to supplement Him will only bring one down to near starvation! Yet should it be difficult to see that a Christ honored and trusted as all-competent will justify that trust, when a Christ dishonored by other makeweights will seem to justify nothing but the *distrust*?

So it will be found as often as we try it; verification will surely be found by experience on either side. And that is why so often a man's happiest time comes when circumstances should make him most miserable; when, other dependences having broken down, the Voice is heard which says, "Whosoever is athirst, let him come unto ME and drink!" But what a sorrow and what a shame, not to have heard that Voice before,—not to have known that HE was worthy of ALL trust, as surely as He was worthy of *any!*

Oh for an utter dependence upon Christ for all things! a dependence which shall realize itself as independence of all else beside Himself! How blessed to know that here is a fullness within reach of any man, and of which nothing can deprive the man who seeks it! For it we must be Manassites, with our faces

* *Shegal* is a queen by marriage, a queen consort, not in her own right (Wordsworth).
† Ophir is probably from *parah*, to be fruitful.

5 (13-17): Man with God.
(I.) the King's daughter.
(II.) brought to the King.

The king's daughter is all [g]glorious within:
her [h]clothing is of interwoven gold.
She is [i]brought in broidery unto the king:
the [j]virgins that follow her, her companions, are brought unto thee.

g cf. Mt. 5.8. *cf.* Heb. 8. 8-13.
h cf. Zech.3. 3-5.
i cf. Is. 18.7.
j cf. Zech.14. 16.

towards heaven, Christ our goal and prize, to win Christ and be found in Him. This is the path of progress and of victory—of enjoyed competency all the way.

Israel shall find what He is for her also in the day which this psalm anticipates,—shall find Who this Joseph is who unknown has fed them in famine. And when the glory of the Lord shall thus have risen upon them, "the Gentiles shall come to their light, and kings to the brightness of its rising." This we find therefore now: "The daughter of Tyre is present with an offering: the rich among the people intreat thy favor." Tyre, the queen city of commerce, whose merchants are princes, and who knows well the value of all earthly things that can be bought, is now attracted by what no riches can purchase. She is here, not with a price, but with an offering. The rich intreat for what is greater riches. This is evidently a typical example of how the "Desire of all nations" will be found in Christ, Tyre, as the great trafficker, being the suited power to illustrate this. The facts here have all of them spiritual significance.

5. So now man is seen with God as never yet: the earth has caught the rays of the Sun of righteousness; the night is over and gone, the golden day is come. But this supposes, on the part of those brought near, the necessary requirements met of the divine nature. The number of this section which speaks of man with God, is that therefore which speaks also of responsibility and exercise, and of a way by which God's destined end is reached.

Accordingly we now return to look at the bride after another manner. She is now not only a king's bride; she is also a "king's *daughter*." Her birth is royal also: her husband need not be in this respect ashamed of her: as it is said in Hebrews (ii. 11), "For both He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are *all of one*"—from one, of one paternity,—"for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." They are born of God,—as to the *new* nature, born again; *He* was Son of God from the Virgin's womb, without taint of sin at all. Enough of difference here, one would think, to make Him ashamed to call them brethren; yet He is *not* ashamed. So the bride here has, as looked at from one side, kindred she must forget, and yet on the other side, as a king's daughter, is "all glorious within." The spiritual significance illumines the whole, and alone makes it worthy.

This guides as to the disputed meaning of "within." Is this within the palace, or within the litter that is conveying her, when she is "brought unto the king"? or is it "inwardly": is she all-glorious not merely externally, but within *herself?* Certainly the latter is the most consistent with the context. Is it not really most consistent with the use of the word itself, without any indication of the litter or house or palace? Whose palace? Not the king's: for her being brought to him follows this. Her father's, say Delitzsch and Moll, or her own chamber, before she is brought forth. If so, it is mere scenery, too much imported into the word to gain so little.* Spiritually there is no gain at all: "the king's daughter" leads us naturally to think of what she is herself spiritually, to which the clothing with its interweavings of gold, as glory put *upon* what is already in *itself* glorious, is most perfectly suited. This clothing may be identical with the "embroidery" in which she is brought to the king; or is it possible that the reference here may be, as in psalm cxxxix. 15 it certainly is, to the body "curiously wrought" or "embroidered" (the same word) in its variegated structure of muscles and vessels and nerves, an organic web which may well picture the more wondrous interlacing of faculties and powers in the spirit-

* Cheyne, as common with him, escapes by a correction. He follows Krochmal in turning *penimah*, "within," into *penínim*, and reading—"of *pearls* in ouches of gold is her clothing."

(iii.) In the house.
(iv.) order established in the earth.
(v.) the end reached.

With [k]gladness and rejoicing do they [l]stream in:
they are brought into the [m]palace of the king.
Instead of thy [n]fathers thou shalt have [o]children:
thou shalt make them [p]princes in all the earth.
I will make mention of thy [q]name in [r]all generations:
therefore shall the [s]peoples praise thee for [t]ever and aye.

Ps. xlvi.

[u]PSALM XLVI.

The test of experience,—the God of Jacob.

To the chief musician: [a psalm] of the sons of Korah. A song upon [u]Alamoth.

1(1-3): Divine sufficiency.
(i.) a *present* help.
(ii.) confirmation of heart.

GOD is our [v]refuge and [w]strength:
a very [x]present help in straits.
Therefore will we not [y]fear though the [z]earth be removed,
and the [a]mountains be carried into the heart of the seas,

k *cf.* Is. 54. 1–3.
l *cf.* Is. 60. 8–10. *cf.* Mi.4.1,2.
m *cf.* Mt. 25. 34.
n *cf.* Ps. 22. 30, 31.
o *ctr.* Ps. 44. 1. Is. 54. 13.
p *cf.* Deu. 28. 13.
q Mal. 1. 11.
r Ps. 72. 17.
s Ps. 67.
t Ps. 72. 7. *cf.* Is. 65. 17–19.
u 1 Chr. 15. 20.
v Ps. 142. 5.
w Isa. 25. 4.
x Isa. 43. 2. *cf.* Zech.14. 1–3.
y *cf.* Is. 35.4.
z *cf.* Is. 24. 17–23.
a *cf.* Rev. 6. 14; Isa. 54. 10.

nal part? How will the perfect being at last show the painstaking care of God in a marvelous piece of handiwork—a creature that shall glorify Him in its mere existence for ever and ever!

The virgins that follow her, her companions, I have again a difficulty in interpreting according to the polygamous relationships of ancient times. Israel's exaltation to a special place of blessing and nearness to her heavenly King seems rather to discountenance than favor such application; while the joy that is awakened among the nations of the earth may well account for the queen's "companions." Nor do I forget, in the moral difficulty suggested, that the wives of David and others are plainly typical of Messianic or divine relationships; the evil being in no wise sanctioned by this overruling of them for good. All that is different, as it seems to me, from what is implied in current interpretations here, and that just because, were they necessarily to be received, they *would* seem, in a psalm such as the present, to imply some real sanction of polygamy itself, and not a mere toleration of it. Difficulties there are as to this in other connections, and here is not the place to attempt explanation: they must be looked at as we come to them. In this place the interpretation in this way seems more than disputable.

The fruit of Messiah's union with Israel is found in rulers established in all the earth. And the psalm ends with the mention of the blessed King to be in their mouth throughout all generations, and, through this, eternal praise from the subject peoples.

Psalm XLVI.

The forty-sixth psalm is a psalm of experience,—a joyful utterance of heart in view of conflict ended and the earth at rest; and in the clear apprehension of the grace that is in the God of Jacob—a God who can take up and glorify Himself in the poverty and weakness and failure of the creature. It is perfectly simple in its meaning, as it is joyous and bright in expression; the repetition of the seventh verse as the conclusion of the whole matter showing where the emphasis is to be laid.

There are three points: the first, the strong expression of the divine sufficiency and of confidence in it: the second, the testimony of the deliverance which shows the safety at all times of the city of God; the third sees God's glory accomplished in it, all that exalts itself against Him being swept away; ending with this refrain that Jehovah of hosts is Jacob's God; He is with us: the entrance into an unspeakable joy.

(iii.) The actual state.

The waters thereof [b] roar and foam,
[and] the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.

2 (4-7): The deliverance.
(i.) provision of blessing.

There is a [c] river, the streams whereof make glad the [d] city of God:
the sanctuary of the [e] tabernacles of the [f] Most High.

(ii.) preservation.

God is in the [g] midst of her; she shall not be moved:
God shall [h] help her at early morn.

(iii.) realized.

The nations [i] raged, the kingdoms were moved:
he [j] uttered his voice, the earth melted.

(iv.) the experience of Jacob.

[k] Jehovah of hosts is with us:
the God of [l] Jacob is a high place for us. Selah.

3 (8-11): God glorified.
(i.) in acts of power.

Come, behold the [m] deeds of Jehovah:
the [n] desolations he hath made in the earth.

(ii.) the war against war.

He maketh [o] wars to cease to the end of the earth:
he [p] breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear asunder;
he burneth the chariots in the fire.

b *cf.* Lk. 21. 25.
c *cf.* Gen. 2. 10. *cf.* Ps. 36. 8. *cf.* Ezek. 47. 1-5.
d Ps. 48. 1. Isa. 60. 14.
e Ezek. 37. 26, 27.
f Ps. 47. 2.
g Isa. 12. 6. Ezek. 48. 35.
h Zeph. 3. 15-17. *cf.* Mal. 4. 2, 3.
i Ps. 2. 1. Rev. 19. 19.
j Isa. 30. 30, 31. Hab. 3. 2-6.
k *cf.* Zech. 8. 23. ver. 11.
l Isa. 41. 14.
m Ps. 66. 5.
n *cf.* Isa. 25. 1-5.
o *cf.* Mi. 4. 1-4.
p Ezek. 39. 9, 10; Josh. 11. 6.

The psalm is a "song upon Alamoth," which means, no doubt, "with maidens' [voices]," and may well remind us of Miriam and the women of Israel in their accompaniment of Moses' song of triumph at the Red Sea (Ex. xv.). Or as the sixty-eighth psalm: "the Lord gave the word; great was the company of the [women] that published it. Kings' armies did flee apace; and she that tarried at home divided the spoil." Good cause is there for such praise as this from delivered Israel; and the particular word here used, which is in its primitive sense the "hidden ones," and refers to those hidden as yet in the seclusion of their father's house, may well be applied to the remnant of godly ones who become at last the nation, brought out of their obscurity and owned by their King as His.

1. The first section then here expresses their entire confidence in the divine sufficiency. This has been tested by experience and amply proved. "God is our refuge and strength," is the happy cry; "a very present help in straits." They are bold in utterance of this: "therefore will we not fear though the earth be removed, and the mountains be carried into the heart of the seas." And the actual state of things which they look back upon might have seemed (morally at least) to indicate such engulfing of another deluge: "the waters roar and foam; and the mountains shake with the swelling thereof."

2. But this is past, and only revived in memory, to contrast with it the present condition of things. The threatening floods are gone: in their stead is a glorious river, whose divided streams in many channels make glad the city of God. Jerusalem, blessed with the abiding presence of the Supreme, cannot lack the nurture of grace, the vivifying streams of His blessed Spirit. God in the midst of her is abundant security; she shall not be moved: God shall help her at early morn. And so we know the day cannot come for the earth, but to usher it in Israel must get their blessing. And this is what has actually taken place: "The nations raged; the kingdoms were moved; He uttered His voice,—the earth melted." Yes, "Jehovah of hosts is with us": all things then, moving at His bidding, are for us also. Spite of folly and frailty, such is His grace: He is the God of grace,—"the God of Jacob is our refuge."

3. And He has glorified Himself, and will. The desolations of the earth are witness of His right hand of power. Edom (Isa. xxxiv.) and Babylon (xiii. 20), as lands that have nurtured His enemies, will be thus condemned to desolation.

(iii.) the soul in the sanctuary.

(iv.) the experience of Jacob.

Be [q]still, and know that I am God:
I will be [r]exalted among the nations;
I will be exalted in the earth.
[s]Jehovah of hosts is with us:
the God of Jacob is a high place for us. Selah.

[q] Ex. 14. 13.
[r] Isa. 2. 17-19.
[s] ver. 7.

Ps. xlvii.

[t]PSALM XLVII.

"The peoples of the God of Abraham."

To the chief musician: a psalm of the sons of Korah.

1 (1-5): The supremacy of Israel.

(i.) the shout of a King.

(ii.) the argument.

(iii.) the manifestation.

(iv.) the inheritance of Jacob.

(v.) the end.

ALL ye [u]peoples, [v]clap your hands:
shout unto God with the voice of triumph.
For Jehovah [w]Most High is to be feared:
a great King over all the earth.
He [x]subdueth the peoples under us,
and the races [of men] under our feet.
He chooseth for us our [y]inheritance,
the excellency of Jacob whom he [z]loved. Selah.
God is [a]gone up with shouting:
Jehovah with trumpet-sound.

[t] Ps. 100. 1, 2.
[u] Ps. 97. 1.
[v] Ps. 50. 14.
[w] *cf.* Ps. 18. 39-43.
[x] *cf.* Ezek. 47. 13-21.
[y] Deut. 4. 37, 38. Deu. 10. 15.
[z] *cf.* Nu. 23. 21.
[a] *cf.* Josh. 6. 5, 20.

He will make war against war, and the very implements of it shall exist no more. Blessed display of power, which shall everywhere make Him known as God,—make the nations at last perforce to realize this, and exalt Him over the whole earth! For the God of hosts, the Unchangeable, who has shown Himself thus for Israel, is after all the God of grace,—the God of Jacob.

Psalm XLVII.

"The peoples of the God of Abraham" give us, I believe, the character of the forty-seventh psalm, which is a suited *fifth* psalm thus, as showing the peoples in connection with God. These are, of course, more than simply the nation of Israel, who naturally occupy the foreground of the picture. Their pre-eminence is strongly insisted on in the first part; but the second shows the praise that their praise awakens in the hearts of the people around made ready by divine grace. The promise is thus made good to Abraham; and he by his faith becomes the "father of many nations." It is not, as in the last psalm, simply that power humbles and subdues, so that men are forced to submit. While that will be true as to many, here is another and a sweeter compulsion. Divine love works and has its way; and God sits upon a throne in this way for which Christ has wrought, and which is the fruit of His work.

1. These "peoples," then, are exhorted at the beginning (in an anticipative way, characteristic of the beginnings of psalms, as we have seen) to clap their hands and shout unto God with a voice of triumph; for Jehovah, now manifestly the Supreme, is to be feared—with no slavish fear, as the words preceding show: He is a great King over all the earth.

Israel it is whose voice is heard here; and in Israel it is that He has manifested His power,—yea, His grace and truth: for He has come in in fulfillment of many promises, and had mercy upon those of old His people. "He subdueth the peoples under us, and the nations under our feet. He chooseth [also] our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob, whom He loved." Jacob is the united name all through here, failing, crippled Jacob, saved then not for his own "excellency", though his inheritance be excellent or exalted—better than any other upon earth.

It is accomplished; the work is done: He who came down to the visitation of the earth, has gone up again to His throne over all: He "is gone up with a shout: Jehovah with trumpet-sound." It is the sound of recall from the battle-

2 (6–9): The testimony of Israel.
(i.) psalm to God the King.
(ii.) psalm for instruction.
(iii.) the holy throne.
(iv.) the earth at large.

[a] Psalm unto God, psalm!
psalm to our King, psalm!
For God is [b] King of all the earth:
psalm ye an instruction.
God reigneth over the nations:
God [c] sitteth on the throne of his holiness.
The [d] willing-hearted of the peoples are gathered together,—
the people of the God of Abraham;
for the [e] shields of the earth [belong] unto God:
he is [f] greatly exalted.

a Ps. 81. 1, 2.
b Ps. 45. 1, 6. Ps. 97. 1.
c Ps. 89. 14.
d *cf.* Ps. 110. 3.
e Ps. 33. 20. *cf.* Isa. 4. 5.
f Ps. 108. 5.

field, because the victory is won. The first part of the psalm is therefore here complete.

2. But this only leaves room for a new movement which now begins. The newly-restored nation bursts out with exultant praises, to which one excites another: "Psalm unto God, psalm! psalm to our King, psalm! For God is King of all the earth: psalm ye an *instruction.*" The last word is one that we were considering in the thirty-second psalm—"a *maskil*"; and we have seen that there are a number of these maskil psalms, but for instruction, it would appear, in Israel itself, before the time of their deliverance is reached. The psalm now urged would seem, on the other hand, in accordance with the character of what is here, an instruction of the nations. It is not a strange thought in Scripture: "teaching and admonishing one another," says the apostle, "*in psalms* and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. iii. 16). Joy in the Lord out of one's own heart is in fact a most effectual teaching and admonition of others; and this Israel delivered and restored to God will find. The wave of blessing and praise will flow outward from its centre in Zion, winning hearts on every side to join in it; while *holiness*, manifest in His dealings as to sin, will be the theme, no less than grace—but nothing is holier than grace,—and make the joy deep and serious. "God reigneth over the nations: God sitteth upon the throne of His holiness." Now we see the response: "the willing-hearted of the peoples are gathered together"—grace is gathering them, as is plain; faith has taken effect in their hearts; they are unitedly thus "the (one) people of the God of Abraham." The closing words of the psalm ("the shields of the earth belong unto God")—though there is difficulty in them—look like an allusion to that assurance to Abraham, given just before the promise: "Fear not, Abraham; I am thy *shield*, and thy exceeding great reward." Now the shield has grown into many shields,—the protective screens from danger which, whatever may be their nature, all are to be ascribed to Him.

Thus the earth rests: God is known in His power, known in His truth, in His holiness, in His goodness to man. Men look up joyfully, reverently, with worship in their hearts to Him: "HE is greatly exalted." Amen.

Psalm XLVIII.

We have now the celebration of the final victory over the enemies of Israel, which leaves them in peace and gladness to realize the goodness of God, according to all that they had heard from their fathers of His works of old. The victory is plainly that of Ezek. xxxviii., and not the deliverance of Zech. xiv., which precedes it. In the one case the city is in the extreme of distress, already partly in the enemy's hands, and on the brink of ruin, when the Lord interferes. Clearly it is not yet the glorious city of God, of which this psalm speaks, but in the misery which is the result of sin and departure from Him. It is saved by the appearing of Christ from heaven, the triumph of the enemy turned into defeat and overthrow. We should naturally conclude that this would be the end of all attempts of this kind; but our conclusions are often mistaken, even when we

Ps. xlviii.

[6]PSALM XLVIII.

The victory over the last confederacy.

A Song: a psalm of the sons of Korah.

1 (1-3): The city of God.
(i.) where He Himself is.
(ii.) relationships.

[g]GREAT is Jehovah, and greatly to be praised
in the [h]city of our God, his holy hill.
Beautiful in elevation, the [i]joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion,
[ou] the sides of the [j]north, the city of the [k]great King.

(iii.) a manifest God.

God is known in her palaces
as a [l]high place.

2 (4-7): The conflict.
(i.) the gathering of the kings.
(ii.) arrested.

For lo, the [m]kings were assembled:
they passed by together.
They saw, [and] so they marveled;
they were put in a hurry of fear, they started to [n]flee.

g Ps. 47. 2.
h Ps. 46. 4. Ps. 87.
i Zech. 8. 3.
Isa. 65. 18, 19. Ps. 122. 3,4.
j Isa. 14. 13. Jer. 1. 13, 14.
k Mat. 5. 35.
l Ps. 46. 1.
m *cf.* Ezek. 38. 1-17.
n *cf.* Ezek. 38. 18-23. *cf.* Ezek. 39. 1-7. *cf.* Isa. 37. 33-38.

think them quite secure. The attack of Gog as prophesied in Ezekiel is against the "land that is brought back from the sword and gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel which have been constantly"—not "always"—"waste, but is brought forth out of the nations, and they dwell safely, all of them." Here the state of things is quite different from that pictured in Zechariah; and correspondingly there is no hint of any disaster to the people of God, but the contrary: when he comes up against the land of Israel, the Lord says, "my fury shall come up in my face, . . . and I will call for a sword against him through all my mountains." So in the psalm here: the glorious city of God, strong in the might of Him who dwells in her, laughs the invader to scorn. The kings see, and marvel, and are smitten with fear and overthrown. All the circumstances are in this way different.

1. The first section here therefore begins with the celebration of the city of God, the place where He dwells, His holy mountain. The numerical structure indicates, I doubt not, the blessed unity which the city, indwelt of God, manifests. What a contrast to the strife and corruption hitherto found in her at the best of times! Now she is the home of peace and concord, man fitted to man in the realization of that sweet mutual dependence and ministry of each to each which God has ordained to His creatures for their blessing and comfort and moral invigoration. So in the heavens the home of the redeemed is again a city, the new Jerusalem, "Jerusalem which is above," the "city which hath foundations,"—those glorious foundations of light-jewels, Urim and Thummim, the Lights and Perfections of God Himself; and which abides therefore as surely as He abides.

Where He is, there is unity,—intelligent subjection to Him in love, whereby each being occupies his own place in ceaseless activity of service without weariness. And great is Jehovah here, and greatly to be praised. No wonder that this city, beautiful in its elevation, spiritually as physically, should be the joy of the whole earth. It is Mount Zion, the "fixed" place of Jehovah's rest (see 2 Sam. v. 7, *notes*). There shall be no more alienation from Him, no more Jebusite treading down of holy places forever. Who shall disturb the place of *His* rest?

"On the sides of the north," adds to this great significance. There is no need to quarrel with any topographical reference that may be suggested, for the typical meaning never displaces the literal and external, but shines through it, and gives it beauty and enforcement. We must not make matter the enemy, but the servant and shrine of the Spirit. Let Mount Zion be actually and literally on the sides of the north, this is the beautiful symbol of a deeper reality. The

(iii.) seized with fear.
Trembling possessed them there:
°anguish as of a woman in travail.
(iv.) the breach.
With an east wind
thou ᵖbreakest the ships of Tarshish.

3 (8–11): Realization.
(i.) the city eternal.
As we have ᵍheard, so we have seen,
in the city of Jehovah of hosts,
in the city of our God:
(ii.) divine love.
God will ʳestablish it for ever. Selah.
We have thought of thy ˢlovingkindness, O God:
(iii.) praise according to His Name.
in the midst of thy temple.
According to thy ᵗname, O God, so is thy praise
(iv.) the exhortation of experience.
to the ᵘends of the earth:
thy right hand is full of righteousness.
Let Mount Zion ᵛrejoice, let the daughters of Judah exult:
4 (12–14): Make full proof.
because of thy judgments.
(i.) survey her as a whole.
ʷWalk about Zion, and go round about her:
number her towers.

o *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 2, 3.
p Isa. 2. 16.
q *cf.* Ki. 10. 6, 7.
r Ps. 87. 1, 5.
s Ps. 103. 4.
t *cf.* 1 Ki. 8. 41–43.
u *cf.* Ps. 22. 27.
v Zech. 2.10. Zeph. 3. 14.
w *cf.* Gen. 13. 17.

north—*tzaphon*—is "what is hidden," because the north side of anything is the dark, the hidden side. The north therefore is the place of mystery, and of opposition to the light, and "God is light." From the mysterious in nature, the mysteries of God's providence, the clouds and darkness which are round about His throne,—full as all these must be of His wisdom and goodness really,—infidelity derives its arguments, and with these makes its attacks upon the truth of God. In the sides of the north therefore it is that the Babylonian scoffer means to sit (Isa. xiv. 13) in defiance of the Most High. But here now Mount Zion stands, God's bulwark against the foe, who is (let us note) a *northern* foe. God opposes to him the grace of His promise, His immutable word, Himself, in short, as that against which the wave of national madness must first break, and break itself to pieces.

And how grandly Mount Zion rises "on the sides of the north," the answer at last to all the mystery of God's dealings with His people, the fulfillment of promise, the sign of peace for the earth itself; God's ways now to be open, in the sight of men, day having succeeded to night, sight (in some sense) to faith; Jerusalem now the city of the great King, for whom the expectant ages have been looking. Yes, God is known in her palaces as a high place,—Zion itself His symbol.

2. Now the brief passage of the storm-cloud is recited,—how the kings assembled, how in their collective might they passed and were gone! They but looked and marveled, and in the haste of fear started to flee. Fear seized upon them, the pangs of a woman in travail; and then sudden shipwreck, as of vessels broken with an east wind.

3. Zion emerges in her beauty from under this passing cloud. She is untouched. And now they realize in the present what they had in faith received from their fathers as to the days of old. As they had heard, so now they have seen, in the city of Jehovah of hosts as it truly is: God establishes it forever. In the sanctuary of His presence restored to them, they think upon His love. His praise is now, even to the ends of the earth, in accordance with His Name,—that is, with the revelation of Himself. Power has acted in righteousness so as to declare what His right hand is. Experience may well exhort them to exultant joy.

4. The next verses, while easy to understand on the whole, are difficult to particularize. They are urged to make full proof of this city of strength: survey her as a whole, I take it,—consider her points,—to tell it to the generations

(ii.) her parts.

(iii.) God so displayed is our God.

Mark well her [x]bulwarks;
consider her [y]palaces:
that ye may tell it to the [z]generation following.
For this God is our God for [a]ever and aye:
he will be our guide evermore.*

[x] *cf.* Isa. 26. 1. *cf.* Isa. 60. 18.
[y] Ps. 45. 15.
[z] Ps. 78. 4.
[a] Ps. 72. 8.

Ps. xlix.

[1]PSALM XLIX.

Completed histories.

To the chief musician, a psalm of the sons of Korah.

1 (i–iv): A prime truth.
(i.) a lesson for all.
(ii.) in the most opposite conditions.
(iii.) "holiness of truth."
(iv.) in the language of experience.

HEAR this, all ye [b]peoples;
give ear, all ye [c]dwellers in time!†
Both men of [d]low and men of high degree,‡
[e]rich and poor together!
My [f]mouth speaketh wisdom,§
and the [g]meditation of my heart is discernment.§
I incline mine ear to [h]proverbial speech:
I will propound my deep saying on the [i]harp.

[b] *ctr.* Ps. 47. 1.
[c] Ps. 39. 4, 5. Jas. 4. 14.
[d] *cf.* Ex. 11. 5. *cf.* Isa. 2. 9.
[e] Prov. 22. 2.
[f] *cf.* Ps. 45. 1. Prov. 8. 6.
[g] Ps. 19. 14.
[h] Ps. 78. 2. Prov. 1. 1–6.
[i] *cf.* Ps. 101. 1.

* A difference only of pointing from the common reading, as to which MSS. more or less differ, and expositors decidedly. That given is found in the LXX., and is one of three suggested in the Jerusalem Talmud.
† Or "transitory world," *cheled*; comp. Ps. xvii. 14.
‡ "Sons of Adam, and sons of Ish."
§ Literally, "wisdoms," "discernments."

afterwards. For the God who has taken all this abundant care for His people, such as He has shown Himself in it, is their God forever,—the guide of His flock forever. This is the glorious portion of His people, a portion which, after all measurements, remains unmeasured.

Psalm XLIX.

The last psalm of this series is an inspired "psalm of life," completed, as only revelation could complete it, by a glance at what is beyond this. Thus the folly is apparent which makes the incomplete story all, and in the face of incontrovertible facts, lives as if death were not, and time were eternity.

We must remember, however, that we are still in Israel, and that we have neither resurrection nor a heavenly portion presented, although one verse at first sight does seem to give the former. But it speaks rather of the delivered people as represented by the psalmist himself, their enemies being destroyed, and the "morning" of the millennial day brought in by the uprising of the "Sun of righteousness" (Mal. iv.) and dominion given to the "upright." This is the completion of the story on that side, as death with its Sheol mystery is on the other. In neither case have we resurrection.

1. The first section calls all people to hear a truth which has, in the events depicted in previous psalms, received a striking commentary. The psalmist characterizes those he addresses according to what is his theme in it, as dwellers in time. Whatever their various conditions, this is a condition common to all, and bringing all to more equality than commonly apprehended. He premises that he has "wisdoms"—fullness of wisdom—to communicate; and that it is not a mere message, but what has been the meditation of his own heart, and is personal discernment (once more a plural). He uses "proverbial speech," such as his own ear has been attentive to, and the accompaniment of the harp to propound his deep sayings—nature being in fact in harmonious accord with all he utters.

2. The rest of the psalm is, of course, the deep saying itself. It is divided into two equal parts, both ending in a similar refrain. The first gives the false confidence of man which leaves him ashamed at last, transparently the dupe of

2 (5-12): Confidence that makes ashamed.
(i.) a right independence.
(ii.) false confidence of the rich.
(iii.) manifested.
(iv.) universal failure.
(v.) In view of divine government.
(vi.) man's limit.
(vii.) at rest here.
(viii.) the turn of the page.

[j] Why should I fear in days of evil,
  [when] the perverseness of those that would [k] trip me up encircleth me?
They that [l] rely upon their wealth,
  and boast themselves in the abundance of their riches,—
None can by any means [m] redeem his brother,
  [nor] give unto God a ransom for him:—
(For the redemption of their soul is [n] costly,
  and must be [o] let alone for ever:)
So that he should [p] live on perpetually,
  [and] not see corruption.
For one seeth that [q] wise men die:
  likewise the [r] fool and the brutish perish,
  and abandon their wealth to [s] others.
Their [t] inward thought is that their houses shall be for ever,
  [and] their dwellings from generation to generation:
  they call the [u] lands after their own names.
And man lodgeth not the night in [v] honor:
  he is like the [w] beasts that perish.

3 (13-20): Realized portions.
(i.) men all one in folly.

This their way is their [x] folly:
  and they that come after them [y] approve their sayings.* Selah.

* Literally, "mouth."

[j] Ps. 3. 6. Ps. 27. 1.
[k] Ps. 10. 9. Ps. 38. 12.
[l] Prov. 11. 28. Mk. 10. 24. *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 17.
[m] *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. *cf.* Mi. 6. 6-8. Job 36. 18, 19.
[n] *cf.* Mt. 16. 26.
[o] *cf.* Lk. 16. 27-31. Eccl. 8. 8.
[p] *cf.* Gen. 2. 17 with Rom. 5. 12. Ps. 89. 48.
[q] Eccl. 2. 15, 16.
[r] *cf.* Lk. 12. 13-21.
[s] Ps. 39. 6. Eccl. 2. 18, 19, 26. Jer. 17. 11.
[t] Lk. 12. 17.
[u] Gen. 4. 17. *ctr.* Ps. 103. 5, 16.
[v] ver. 20. *cf.* Ps. 82. 6, 7.
[w] *cf.* Eccl. 3. 18-20.
[x] *cf.* Prov. 12. 15. *cf.* Prov. 14. 12.
[y] *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 32.

his own perversity. The last contrasts it with the reality for sinner and for saint.

He begins with a question, which is answered by what follows to the end of the psalm. If man with all his self-confidence is yet the poor creature which this represents, why then should he be afraid in days of evil, though encircled by the perversity of those that would trip him up? Thus it is a psalm of cheer and encouragement for a day that is not yet over when he utters it. The deliverance is not accomplished; but it is assured, and about to come. Faith predicts it and the destruction of the wicked,—inspired by the morality of nature itself, which proclaims throughout the judgment of sin and the triumph of righteousness. Folly is not wisdom, and cannot be followed by the effects of wisdom. He sees easily through these men of abundant resources, confident in what is so manifestly incompetent as against the might of that death which baffles them all. God in His holy government has ordained this for one only possible reason —sin. Let any one of these throw his shield about his brother, and give God a ransom for him, so that he may perpetuate his precious life. Plainly he cannot; it is too costly: he must let that alone forever. He sees and knows, himself,—every one does,—that as to wise and fools alike death knows no difference, makes no exception. It is the point of Ecclesiastes, there greatly enlarged on: a simple, obvious matter indeed, but which makes more astonishing the willful blindness which permits men to dwell securely in possessions held on such a tenure, and call the solid earth by the names of its passing generations. The wheel turns, and they are shaken from it. Man does not, as a rule, lodge for the little night that belongs to him, in honor. He passes, and goes down to silence like the beast.

3. Follow him now to the other side,—where is he? what of his senseless say-

(ii.) contrasted with their destruction in death.

Like sheep they are laid in [z]Sheol:
[a]death tendeth them;
and the [b]upright shall rule over them in the [c]morning;
and their form shall be for Sheol to [d]consume,
so that it shall have [e]no habitation.

(iii.) the redemption of the saint.

But God will redeem [f]my soul from the hand of Sheol:
for he shall [g]receive me. Selah.

(iv.) testing.

Be not [h]afraid, when one is made rich,
because the glory of his house [i]increaseth;

(v.) the end.

For when he dieth he shall [j]carry away naught:
his glory shall not descend after him.

(vi.) evil that comes short.

Though in life he [k]blessed himself;*
and [men] will [l]praise thee because thou doest good to [m]thyself.

(vii.) the end that perfects it.

[His soul] goeth to the generation of his [n]fathers:
no more shall they see [o]light.

(viii.) the turn of the page.

Man that is in [p]honor and [q]understandeth not,
is like the [r]beasts that perish.

* Literally, "his soul."

z *cf.* Lk. 16. 22, 23. *ctr.* Ps. 16. 10.
a *cf.* Isa. 38. 18. *cf.* Ezek. 32. 20-23.
b Ps. 37. 34. *cf.* Dan. 7. 22. *cf.* Ps. 149. 6-9.
c *cf.* 2 Sam. 23. 4 with Mal. 4. 2.
d Ps. 37. 20.
e Job 4. 19-21.
f Ps. 116. 8, 9. Hos. 13. 14.
g *cf.* Ps. 91. 14-16.
h *cf.* Ps. 37. 1, etc.
i Ps. 37. 35.
j Job 27. 16-19. 1 Tim. 6. 7. Eccl. 5. 15.
k De. 29. 19.
l ver. 13.
m *ctr.* Rom. 14. 8, 9.
n 1 Ki. 14. 31, etc.
o Ps. 56. 13.
p ver. 12.
q De. 32. 29.
r Eccl. 3. 19; *cf.* 2 Pet. 2. 12.

ings, which yet those who follow him—before whose eyes he passes away—approve! They all like sheep with meek subjection are made to lie down in Sheol; death is the shepherd tending there, and in the morning (after the night of death) no deliverance is there for them: it is the day of dominion for the upright. For them, their very form wastes under the sway of Sheol, so as to find no habitation.

Sheol and the grave are not here confounded: the one is as distinctly the recipient of the soul, as the other is of the body. But Sheol having mastered and retaining the soul, this necessarily entails the wasting destruction of the form that is left behind, so that by and by it needs no habitation. Yet they had thought their dwelling-places should be forever! they—themselves soon to need none!

On the other hand the psalmist professes for himself his confidence: God shall redeem his soul from the power of Sheol: words which, no doubt, would apply to resurrection for those going down to death; but the connection seems rather to show the application to the deliverance of living men from that which might seem to have had them in its grip,—a hold marvelously and miraculously loosened. The further words "for He shall receive me" have been urged in behalf of resurrection, as being used of Enoch when "God *took** him." But the word is of various use, and by itself could decide nothing: the occurrence in Psalm lxxiii. 24, ("and afterwards receive me to glory,") is perhaps really the most favorable to this view; but it needs to be examined in its connection there. The context in fact, in all cases, is that which will be found to have controlling influence upon interpretation. A largeness belongs to Scripture in such matters which will leave room (and was surely intended to leave room) for application to both Jewish and Christian verities, and these in more ways than one. Those who "are alive and remain to the coming of the Lord," and of whom Enoch is a real type, will be caught up without seeing death, to meet the Lord in the air. They will surely be "redeemed from the power of Sheol" and received by God, as fully as any that go into it; and so with Jewish saints of similar classes.

* *Laqach*, "receive" and "take."

After this outburst of glowing confidence, the moralizing of the psalm subsides to its lower and accustomed level. Riches give a transitory glory: death dispossesses the owner of it all. Alas, the effect may not be transient; life with this brilliancy about it tends to dazzle the eyes doubly—to what is beyond and what is around alike. Every way shut up within the narrowest limits, man is ignorant of these, blesses himself, and is praised by others. He passes to the generation of his fathers, his taper-light quenched with theirs, never to revive. Alas! "Man that is in honor, and understanding not, is like the beasts that perish."

Sec. 2.

After the full external deliverance thus accomplished, we have the complete internal salvation. Sin is searched out, challenged and confessed, so that there is moral clearance. The two psalms which are brought together in this section are easily seen to be, as in other cases of such pairs, largely a contrast. In the first, God proclaims His righteousness; in the second, man confesses his sin. There is perfect moral harmony, while it is a harmony of opposite things. It is plainly needed, this complete clearance of the moral question, in order that the salvation itself may be complete; and the two sections are similarly in contrast as these psalms are, and with the same fundamental unity. Thus the first subdivision of the book is filled and rounded to a perfect close.

PSALM L.

In the fiftieth psalm there are two things emphasized: the righteousness of the Judge, and the righteousness required by Him. God Himself, in a world fallen away from Him, has come into question; and no heart amongst mere men, but has more or less admitted the question. In fact the perfect settlement of this on man's part would be his own perfect restoration to God and complete ability to walk with Him. It would mean absolute faith in God; and faith is that which accomplishes the whole work in man, working by love and purifying the heart. Faith enthrones God on an absolute throne, and yields up to Him all the faculties and powers of the whole being. The fall began with a question of God; and Satan, who first uttered it, knew well its fatal import. Man, entertaining it, lost, with his confidence in Him, his place of dependence, and became necessarily a seeker of his own things, an assertor of his own will, the slave only of his captor who beguiles him by the lusts awakened within him. The disorder produced by the sin which has come in adds to his questions about the government of One who is "far above, out of his sight;" and so the mind works with the heart to increase his alienation.

We need not wonder, then, that in the working of God to bring back the soul to Him, a first point should be to make the soul realize the just judgment of its sin,—the righteousness of God who judges it. Only here it must be noticed that already, for those called to do so at this time, deliverance has come in; God's heart has been already told out in a wonderful salvation which has filled their hearts with joy and their tongues with praise. It is "out of Zion, the perfection of beauty," God's glory shines. Yet they still need the full searching out which here they find. They need apparently also as yet the knowledge of atonement; but this we do not find in the present psalm, and we shall examine it in its evident place in connection with the next one.

It would seem also certain by this psalm that there will be a sessional judgment in Israel, after the appearing of Christ, answering to that among the Gentiles which the Lord pictures in Matt. xxv. Here, too, among the people just delivered, there will be "goats"—the wicked—to put upon His left side, and separate from those really His. This the fourth section of the psalm surely intimates, though it be true that there is difficulty in constructing prophetical details out of psalms which are yet clearly prophetical.

This psalm is not one of the Korahite series: that is ended. The singer now is Asaph, "the gatherer," from a word used for the gathering of fruit and also

SECTION 2. (Ps. l., li.)

The testimony of God and the confession of man.

Ps. l.

[1]PSALM L.

A righteous God requiring righteousness.

A psalm of [s]Asaph.

1 (1-6): The summons of God.
(i.) a universal call.
(ii.) of One in relationship.
(iii.) His Presence in holiness.

[1]THE [t]Mighty One, [u]God, [v]Jehovah, hath spoken,
and called the earth from the [w]rising of the sun
to the going down thereof.
Out of [x]Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath
shined.
Our God doth [y]come, and shall not keep silence:
[z]fire devoureth before him;
and it is very tempestuous round about him.
He calleth to the [a]heavens from above,
and to the earth, to [b]judge his people.
Gather my [c]saints* together unto me:
those that have [d]made† covenant with me by sacrifice.
And the [e]heavens declare his righteousness:
for God is judge himself. Selah.

(iv.) the testing of man.

(v. of those in covenant with Him.

(vi.) overcoming in judgment.

* *Chasidim*, "pious ones." † Literally, "cut."

[s] 1 Chr. 16. 4, 5, 7. Ps. 73-83, titles.
[t] Is. 9. 6. Jer. 32. 18.
[u] Ps. 46. 10, etc.
[v] Ps. 48. 1.
[w] Ps. 113. 3. Isa. 59. 19. Mal. 1. 11.
[x] Ps. 48. 2. *cfr.* Lam. 2. 15.
[y] Ps. 96. 10-13.
[z] Ps. 9. 3. Hab. 3. 5. *cf.* 2 Thess. 1. 8.
[a] Deu. 30. 19. Deu. 32. 1. Isa. 1. 2. Jer. 2. 12. Jer. 6. 19.
[b] Deu. 32. 36. Heb. 10. 30. *c cf.* Deu. 7. 6. Deu. 33. 3. *d cf.* Gen. 15. 9-13. *cf.* Jer. 34. 18, 19.
[e] *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 21 with Eph. 2. 7. Ps. 97. 6.

of men (as ver. 5). Twelve psalms are ascribed to Asaph, whether this be the singer of David's time, or (as most think) his family be included under it. The character of these psalms is plain in a general way by the place occupied by the other eleven, at the commencement of the third or sanctuary-book. They are saturated indeed with the thought of God's *holiness;* and the character and position of the present psalms are perfectly similar. Holiness indeed is an absolute necessity for the gathering of God's people, if it is to be with Him; and that is a principle which this psalm declares.

1. We have in the first section of it the summons of God, who appears in full majesty. The Mighty One (*El*), God (*Elohim*), Jehovah, the Unchangeable,—and this we know to be His covenant-name with Israel,—summons the whole earth to hear His voice. He shines out of Zion, which He has chosen as the place of His rest, and which accordingly is blooming out for Him in bridal attire, "the perfection of beauty." Thus they can claim Him as their own God, who comes out of the sanctuary, and not to maintain silence. The fire of His holiness consumes before Him, and a tempest gathers around Him,—signs that show His holiness can not yet be exhibited in the serenity of complacent love. Nay, it is judgment for which He comes, and heaven and earth are summoned as His witnesses. Let His saints—those that are positionally that, at least,—be gathered unto Him: those who have covenanted by sacrifice to be His own. And the heavens shall declare His righteousness: for God Himself it is who is the Judge.

This gathering of covenanted saints is not, as some have suggested, the saints of the present time. This neither suits the character of the Psalms, nor the connection in this case. The "sacrifice" by which they have made a covenant with Him can hardly be the work of Christ upon the cross, while those spoken of a little later are plainly only the legal ones. Nor is it according to Scripture, and in conformity with the gospel, to speak of *our* making a covenant with God by the work of Christ. God has covenanted with *us* by it, if you please to use the expression; at least, the blessings of the new covenant are ours through the "blood of the covenant"; but that is not a covenant which has two parties to it, as its terms prove conclusively (Heb. viii. 10–12), but one alone. Those gath-

2 (7-13): The controversy negatively.
(i.) God Himself witnessing.
(ii.) not for legal service.
(iii.) nor as coveting their possessions.
(iv.) The God of creation.
(v.) with whom it all is.
(vi.) limit?
(vii.) the complete argument.

3 (14,15): The heart of the matter.
(i.) as righteousness.
(ii.) consequent deliverance.

Hear, O my people, and I will speak;
O Israel, and I will testify concerning thee:
I am God, thy God.
Not for thy [f]sacrifices do I reprove thee:
nor as to thy burnt-offerings being continually before me.
I will not take a bullock out of thy house,
[nor] he-goats from thy folds.
For [g]every beast of the forest is mine,—
the cattle on a thousand hills.
I know all the [h]birds of the hills,
and that which moveth in the fields is with me.
If I were hungry, I would not tell thee:
for the [i]world is mine, and its fullness.
Am I an eater of bulls' flesh?
or shall I drink the [j]blood of goats?

Sacrifice to God [k]thanksgiving,
and pay to the [l]Most High thy vows:
And [m]call upon me in the day of strait:
I will deliver thee, and thou shalt [n]glorify me.

f *cf.* Ps. 40. 6-8. Ps. 51. 16, 17. Mi. 6. 6, 7.
g 1 Chr. 29. 11-14. *cf.* Gen. 1. 24. *cf.* Gen. 6. 19-21.
h *cf.* 1 Ki. 17. 4-6.
i Ps. 24. 1. 1 Cor. 10. 26.
j *cf.* Heb. 9. 12-14.
k Ps. 95. 2. Ps. 116. 17.
l Ps. 46. 4.
m Ps. 91. 15. *cf.* Judges 3. 9.
n Ps. 116. 16. Ps. 30. 11, 12.

ered here are plainly those He calls His people in the seventh verse, and are Israel, gathered for judgment: that is, not for the execution of wrath upon them, but that He may plead with them as to their sin. And the "covenant by sacrifice" clearly refers to Exod. xxiv., when they had as a nation taken upon them to keep all the Lord's words, and the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled upon them. If the heavenly saints come into this psalm, it may be in the next verse, in a much more obscure, but more beautiful way. For "the heavens shall indeed declare His righteousness," when sinners like ourselves shall be seen through the manifestation of this in the cross, in their place in glory, "made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21). How the utter failure of man, and the righteousness of God, will be thus declared together, in grace more marvelous, and yet in principle the same as that shown in the deliverance and blessing of Israel in the day here contemplated!

2. But God's controversy with them must now be declared: the *legal* controversy, not yet as to the rejection of Christ, which we find however from another side in the psalm following. First, negatively, He declares what it is *not* about. It is not about their ritual services—peace-offerings or burnt-offerings. He desires no bullock or goat, no flocks or herds of theirs,—He to whom all that exist belong, and who is well acquainted with all His possessions. Were He, as this implied, limited as they, and hungry, why should the Owner of the world bring His wants to them to be satisfied? But did they really think Him an eater of bulls' flesh, or that He drank the blood of goats? What were they, in fact, who needed such arguments? But they are not conceptions too gross for men, as abundant testimony declares.

3. He goes on to the positive side: what He really sought was thanksgiving, the sign of conscious dependence, and of their realization of the bounties of His bounteous hand. A vow was of a higher character than an offering of thanksgiving (see Lev. vii. 11, *sq. notes*), as the expression of more positive faith in God under the pressure of circumstances. Here the distinct assertion which has been made of the non-requirement of sacrifice shows that it is the New Testament "sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving" upon which He insists; with which also must be joined that faith which must underlie this if it be real, which in the day of distress draws nearer to Him instead of wandering off in paths devised by one's own wisdom, or yielding to the pressure. The most encouraging assurance

4 (16–21): The failure in practical walk.
(i.) barren profession.
(ii.) with hatred of God's words.
(iii.) the real portion.
(iv.) practical conduct.
(v.) sin against the fifth commandment.
(vi.) the limit reached of God's restraint upon Himself.

But unto the [o] wicked God saith,
what hast thou to do with recounting my [p] statutes?
or that thou shouldst take my covenant into thy mouth?
Seeing thou hast [q] hated correction,
and cast my words behind thee?
When thou [r] sawest a thief, thou hadst pleasure in him;
and thy portion was with adulterers.
Thou hast let thy mouth loose in evil,
and thy [s] tongue frameth deceit.
Thou sittest [and] speakest against thy [t] brother:
against thy mother's son thou dealest out scandal.
These things thou diddest, and I kept [u] silence:
and thou thoughtest me just [v] like thyself;
[but] I will [w] reprove thee,
and set them in [x] array before thine eyes.

o cf. Lk. 13. 25–27.
p cf. Rom. 2. 17.
q Prov. 1. 24–30.
r Ps. 1. 1. Prov. 1. 10.
s cf. Ps. 52. 2.
t cf. Gen. 37. 4 with Rom. 9. 3. Ps. 69. 8.
u Is. 26. 10. Rom. 2. 4.
v Nu. 23. 19. *ctr.* Ps. 115. 4–8.
w Ps. 39. 11.
x Ps. 90. 8. *cf.* Mt. 25. 41–46.

is connected with this: "call upon Me in the day of strait: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me."

The legal sacrifices had not, of course, passed away in the psalmist's day; nor will those thus addressed in the future time to which this transports us, know how (as for us) the type has yielded to the antitype. This is really also, and necessarily, a looking back over the past time when Israel was fully under the legal covenant, and does not speak of change just initiated. What is insisted on is what always had been really the question,—what had always been in the heart of God for them: what in the sin-offering psalm comes out as to be the fruit of the cross, the Holy One inhabiting the praises of Israel. Could less than this possibly yield Him satisfaction?—the whole heart His, and the whole being filled with the joy of what it has found in Him.

4. The practical life will be as the heart is, and the second table of the law share the fortunes of the first. To this the Lord goes on therefore now. A barren profession may consist, alas, with hatred of correction and contemptuous rejection of the words of God; the heart finding its secret delight in that in which there may be no open indulgence, for there are fences put about men which may hinder this. The tongue will constantly be freer than the steps here, and show whereon the heart is set. Yet with a mouth let loose in evil, the tongue will cover this license with deceit. Nothing appears more like righteousness often, than what is really the voice of slander,—never far off from the ready proclamation of another's evil, while this is really thus rejoiced in. The slipping of the righteous is used as against righteousness, often to lower the standard of it practically, and favor that which is not this.*

All this going on under the eye of God, and with no interference upon His part, the patience of divine government comes to be misread as if it were indifference—misread, alas, not only on the side of the wicked, but the cause of gravest exercise on the part of the righteous also, sufferers under it. But the wicked readily believe it to be indifference; for it is as natural for wickedness to believe in wickedness, as it is for goodness to believe in goodness. The accusations made against the righteous are not thus always mere malice. The hypocrite comes easily to believe in the hypocrisy of others; the deceiver may make transparent honesty a mirror in which he only sees deceit. The world knew not

* This twentieth verse gives us in the plainest way the sin against the fifth commandment (of the second table of the law), and thus vindicates its numerical place as a *fifth* verse of the fourth section of the psalm. But I cannot characterize it further, and feel that this does not go to the root of the matter. Why is this fifth commandment such? Probably we have to learn more as to the symbolism of the number itself; as we have learned as to other numbers since this study of the Psalms began: their fullness of meaning is not exhausted yet.

5 (22, 23): the way and end.
(i.) the way of independence.
(ii.) the way of salvation.

Now consider this, ye forgetters of God*,
lest I [y]tear [you] in pieces, and there be none to deliver.
He that offereth [z]praise glorifieth me;
and to him that [a]ordereth his way will I show the [b]salvation of God.

[y] Mt. 24. 51.
[z] ver. 14.
[a] *cf.* Ps. 15. 2.
[b] Ps. 14. 7.

Ps. li.

[2]PSALM LI.

The confession of blood-guiltiness (nationally of the blood of Christ, under which they yet find salvation).

To the chief musician, a psalm of David: when [c]Nathan the prophet had come to him, after he had gone in to [d]Bathsheba.

[c] 2 Sam. 12. 1–14.
[d] 2 Sam. 11. *cf.* Mt. 1. 6.

1 (1–4): Conviction.
(i.) a plea for grace in consistency with Himself.

BE [e]gracious to me, O God, according to thy [f]loving-kindness:
according to the abundance of thy compassions,
[g]blot out my revoltings.

[e] *cf.* Lk. 18. 13.
[f] Ps. 25. 6, 7. Ps. 88. 11.
[g] Is. 43. 25. Is. 44. 22. Acts 3. 19.

* *Eloah*, singular of *Elohim*, "God."

Christ, and has never known God,—cannot with all its searching find Him out; and yet "He is not far from every one of us."

So here: "These things thou diddest, and I kept silence: thou thoughtest Me just like thyself." But the limit of patience has been reached: "I will reprove thee, and set them in array before thine eyes."

5. The way and the end are clearly put before all in the closing verse. The simple leaving God out of account is fatal to the one who does this. Nothing beside this is necessary to secure the condemnation, which, if it be slow to come, is no less certain to arrive. On the other hand, the best life cannot avail without *salvation*. We are not to expect in the book of Psalms the full declaration of the gospel, as we know it; nor would this be just the place in which to find it. But the need of salvation by all, is emphasized, and it is made plain by the contrast with what has just preceded it, that this is no mere temporal deliverance. The close here is a finger pointing to the psalm that follows.

Psalm LI.

The fifty-first psalm is a spiritual enigma. Bishop Horsley, nearly a century ago, rightly discerned it to be "the penitential confession of the converted Jews." He adds: "The subject-matter of this psalm can have no reference to the Hebrew title prefixed thereto, because David, polluted with adultery and murder, could not say, 'Against Thee only have I sinned,' and because the prayer for the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem would have been an inappropriate petition in the days of David. The application of the psalm to restored, repentant Israel, is self-evident. I view this fifty-first psalm as a precomposed form of penitential prayer, afore designed and prepared by Infinite Wisdom for the use of penitent and believing Israel, in the perilous times of the last days."*

While we may safely accept this prophetical view, agreeing, as it does, with the whole character and scope of the book, and suiting perfectly the place in which we find it, the negative side as to the rejection of the Hebrew title is by no means so clear, and certainly perilous in the adoption of a principle which makes a difficulty of this kind a reason for correction of the text of Scripture. Others have, viewing the psalm as really a psalm of David, preferred to suppose the last two verses a "later, perhaps liturgical, addition."† But what is the value of such speculations as to unnamed authors? It will be said that there is not the same assuredness as to the *titles* of the psalms that there is as to the

* Quoted from Coleman's "Revision of the Book of Psalms," p. 130.
† See Moll, in Lange.

(ii.) and for separation from his sin.
(iii.) which he realizes.

Wash me thoroughly from my perversity,
and [a]cleanse me from my sin.
For I am conscious of my revoltings:
and my [b]sin is constantly before me.

[a] *cf.* Zech. 3. 3, 4 with 1 Jno. 1. 7.
[b] 2 Sam. 12. 13. *cf.* Dan. 9. 5, 6; *cf.* Gen. 42. 21.

psalms themselves, and that the Septuagint has many differences.* Yet we have found so far the Hebrew titles to recommend themselves by their general suitability, sometimes to have most unique significance, as in that to the twenty-second. Here it is true that there is difficulty in tracing the connection between David's sin with Bathsheba and the prophetic application to Israel in the latter days. Nor does it seem as if there were or could be typical meaning in this awful blot upon the history of the king. But there may be connection of another nature; and there seems no difficulty as to the details of the history, though here "blood-guiltiness" be the only specified sin. The fourth verse, which is objected, really makes none; and as to the closing prayer, can we undertake to say what shall be the limit of a prophet's vision in predicting the future?

The psalm is enigmatical in more ways than this; nay, it is full of deep meanings which are little more than hinted at. When we consider its latter-day application, this is not so strange. It is in the meanwhile a mystery for faith; but with Christ revealed to us, the key of all mysteries is in our hand.

The psalm is throughout a prayer,—the utterance of a human voice, as that of the last psalm is largely a divine. It answers the challenge there with the confession of sin; but the sin confessed here does not appear a direct answer to the charge before. There are, however, other links of connection between the two psalms: "The same depreciation of the external sacrifice," says Delitzsch, "that is expressed in Psalm l. finds utterance in Psalm li., which supplements the former, according as it extends the spiritualizing of the sacrifice to the offering for sin." But this spiritualizing needs careful consideration, and to be governed by the inspired canon of Psalm xl., 7, which we have already considered, "In the volume of the book it is written of Me." Nor can we admit Cheyne's assertion that the psalmist holds a different theory of sacrifice from the writer of Psalm l. In such ways as these, which quite take Scripture from us, how many are following each other, according to the moment's whim, to-day! But let us study the psalm.

1. The psalmist begins with the expression of deep conviction, which is not without the accompaniment of a faith that discerns in God Himself that which answers to the need of which the soul has been made conscious. He supplicates grace from Him with whom is the fountain of grace, abundance of compassions and loving-kindness: that He should act therefore in conformity with His own nature and blot out his revoltings. He calls these by a strong name, which stamps the outward acts with their true character as emanating from a spirit of rebellion,—not defective obedience, but revolt. He prays for complete removal of all this as defilement,—to be thoroughly washed from his perversity, and cleansed from his sin. He represents how conscious he is of it: his sin is always before his eyes. Experience of it has brought him where his rebellious spirit has been humbled to realize every word of God as righteous, and the spirit which would judge even man's almighty Maker is humbled and broken down before Him.

"Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned" is never true in an absolute way of any sin that man can commit. We are too closely united together in the world for this to be possible. If I have another god than Jehovah, does this hurt no one but myself? If I degrade Him by an idol, or take His Name in vain, is there no reflex influence of such acts upon others around me? Who that was truly convicted of sin could say this or believe it? and how above all the man who has need to plead for deliverance from the guilt of blood-shedding!

* Here, however, it agrees with the Hebrew.

(iv.) the test of experience.

Against [j] thee, thee only, have I sinned;
and done this evil in thy [k] sight,
that thou mayest be [l] justified when thou speakest,
and overcome when thou art judged.

2 (5-8): The salvation.
(i.) sin of origin.

Behold, in perversity was I [m] born:
and in sin did my [n] mother conceive me.

j *cf.* Gen. 39. 9. *cf.* Lev. 6. 2.
k *cf.* 2 Sam. 12. 12.
l Rom. 3. 4, 19.
m *cf.* Rom. 5. 12. *cf.* Eph. 2. 1-3.
n Job 14. 4; Job 15. 14; *etr.* Lk. 1. 35.

On the other hand, as Delitzsch well says, "Every relation in which man stands to his fellow-men, and to created things in general, is but the manifest form of his fundamental relationship to God:" at every point at which we touch His creatures, we touch God Himself; every blow struck at them is struck at Him, just as obedience to Him necessitates harmonious relationship to all His creatures. The guilt of every sin is fundamentally the same, revolt against God: this is, in a true sense, the only sin.

2. In the next four verses, we find the extent and character of the salvation needed. Here the psalmist begins with the corruption of origin, as to which Job asks the solemn question, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" This is often pleaded as in large measure an excuse, as we well know; though an awakened conscience cannot satisfy itself with this. Here it comes in to show how great is the salvation needed. Just as in Romans the apostle begins with personal sins and judgment in view of these, not of the fall of Adam; but afterwards, where he enters upon the subject of the completeness of the remedy, then he begins with Adam and the corruption of our nature (chap. v. 12, *sq.*). So here we shall find it: "Behold," says David, "in perversity was I born,"—with a moral twist; "and in sin did my mother conceive me"—not inside Paradise, but outside. Thus sin is a leprosy, a communicable disease,—so to speak, in the blood; and needing a remedy of corresponding energy to meet it. God turns it to corresponding blessing. The "inward parts" are the reins, the kidneys,—hidden in the centre of the body and enveloped in fat,—the very type of excretory organs, for this is their whole function. In them we have going on continually the purification of the blood from what, if retained, would destroy life. Their special relation is to the processes of nutrition and disassimilation, and thus their work presents to us the plainest analogy to that work of moral discrimination and rejection of the evil which goes on under the oversight of the conscience in the quiet chambers of meditation within the inner man. There God desires "truth" or steadfast fidelity; and in the hidden part makes us to know "wisdom" (*chokhma*), the word used being one "applied to the discrimination of good and evil" (*Wilson*).

Thus we find how in God's sovereignty over all things, He turns this close and necessary acquaintance with evil in the innermost recesses of our being into an exercising of our spiritual senses to discern and separate it from that which is of God and good (Heb. v. 14). Would that we knew better this "exercise" which would make us adepts in this work of spiritual discrimination! Here the new nature begins to manifest itself in the quickening of the conscience as the heart is turned to God. Blessed sight, the tender sensitiveness of one new born, thus searched out and exercised, even though yet the gospel be not known so as to give rest before God! and that is the condition here.

But we come now to the gospel, although in that veiled way in which the Old Testament of necessity so largely spoke, and still, as all through this psalm, in the language of prayer for the blessing, not yet as realizing it. "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Here nothing is mentioned that had real power to cleanse, even in the Mosaic ritual! The hyssop was of course only that by which the sprinkling that really cleansed was effected. It was used to sprinkle the passover blood upon the doorposts (Exod. xii. 22). It was that which, along with cedar and scarlet, was dipped with the living bird in the blood of its fellow, which then was sprinkled

(ii.) turned to its contrary.

Behold, thou desirest [o]truth in the inward parts:
and in the hidden [parts] thou wilt make me to know [p]wisdom.

(iii.) cleansing of the leper.

Purge me with [q]hyssop, and I shall be clean:
wash me, and I shall be [r]whiter than snow.

o *cfr.* Mt.23. 25.
p *cf.* 1 Cor.1. 22-24.
q *cf.* Nu. 19. 2-10, 17-19.
r Isa. 1. 18.

upon the leper, to cleanse him (Lev. xiv. 6, 7). It was used in the case of one defiled with the dead to sprinkle the water of purification upon him (Numb. xix. 18). There is no other use of hyssop given us in the Old Testament; and to one of these it must refer.

We can have little difficulty in deciding which is here to be understood. The passover is out of the question. Besides its relation to one special feast, which would hardly make it appropriate to an individual case like this, the blood of the paschal lamb was not sprinkled upon the person, but on the door-posts of the houses within which the feast was being kept. Of the two other occasions, the sprinkling upon the leper might seem to be most appropriate to the case of one so deeply affected with sin, and in a state so naturally incurable, as the fifth verse has shown. In the case of the leper, however, the hyssop has no distinct relation to the cleansing: it is simply dipped in the blood, along with the cedar and scarlet and the living bird, and then it is said only that "he"—the priest—"shall sprinkle." On the contrary, in the ordinance of the red heifer (Num. xix.) the hyssop comes again, as at the passover, into unmistakable prominence as the means of sprinkling the blood; while, in contrast with the passover, this *is* sprinkled upon the person, to cleanse him. Thus the reference in the psalm would naturally be to this. Thus defilement *with the dead* is expressly what is before us here; while the deliverance sought from blood-guiltiness (in the fourteenth verse) shows us how far beyond ordinary defilement the case here goes. The finger, as it were, points in a certain direction to show us what is in question, but there is still an enigma to be solved: how can the law of the red heifer apply? was it ever ordained for cleansing from the guilt of blood-shedding? The only answer that can be given is necessarily in the negative.

The truth is that the law necessarily fails to meet the case. No sacrifice was, or could be, ordained to put away the guilt of murder.* The soul was cast for this on the sovereign mercy of God alone. The types here, as just now said, might point in a certain direction, but that was all. The one supreme Sacrifice, to be offered by Him of whom it was all "written in the volume of the book," alone answers all questions, sets the conscience at rest, purging the soul "to serve the living and true God." Hence the failure of all typical sacrifices in such a case as this is full of instruction and blessing. The sinner here was brought face to face and left alone with God; the types as fingers pointing to that which would do what they could not do—expressly disclaiming virtue to be in them.

So the psalmist is beyond law here: it is from God and not from man must come the purging; and yet with a plain reference to the law also, which sends us to it for instruction. Thus viewed, the type of the red heifer, with its confessed incompetency to give us more than the shadow—"*not* the very image"—may yet help us to find "the very image."

In this way another apparent failure must be carefully considered. The ordinance of the red heifer was for the *restoration*, simply, of a defiled person. It does not in any way speak of the first bringing of a soul to God. But the case here, as we are viewing it, is that of souls brought for the first time to God; and these two things—the salvation of a sinner and the restoration of a saint—are, of course, very different things: how are we to reconcile this difference? or what are we to learn by it?

As reinforcing the reference to the type, the fact of the sin in question being *David's sin* is very significant and helpful. The very subject of the psalm then

* See the notes on the sin-offering, Lev. iv.

(iv.) the experience resulting.
3 (9-13): Internal cleansing for the sanctuary.
(i.) beginning with righteousness.

Make me to hear [s]joy and gladness:
that the [t]bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

Hide thy [u]face from my sins:
and blot out all my perversities.

[s] ver. 12. Ps. 32. 11.
[t] Ps. 32. 3.
[u] *cf.* Num. 23. 21. *cfr.* 2 Cor. 3. 18.

is, after all, the failure and restoration of a saint: for, spite of the enormity of his offence, no one would doubt David to have been this. The type referred to becomes therefore really in harmony with the theme of the psalm.

But does it not lead us away from the application we have made of it? If it apply to Israel in the last days and their confession of the awful murder of the Son of God sent to them, is not this the time of their conversion to God and being brought into a new place of blessing, and *not* their restoration as saints to a state of blessing enjoyed before? How can "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation" be a suited prayer in *their* mouth?

Consider it again, and this inconsistency will disappear. For, while *of that generation* it will undoubtedly be true that they will be then for the first time brought to God,—theirs will be in every respect just the salvation of sinners,—yet, if we remember that this is *Israel* seeking the Lord, we shall realize that, as to the *nation*, it is in fact a case of *restoration*. Thus the two things are not in this case contradictory to one another. As *Israel's* sin, the rejection of their Messiah looks back to their national history.

Another harmony develops from this view of the type. The ordinance of the red heifer provided for the cleansing of one defiled with the dead, *not a new offering*, not the shedding of blood afresh, but recurrence to an offering before offered;—as far as we have any knowledge, *once for all offered*. How striking a correspondence is here between the type in question and Israel in the end of her long wilderness journey, cleansed by an offering long before offered! in fact, by that very death on its divine side, of which on its human side they were the responsible and guilty instruments! Thus we find in this application of the water of purification the same recognition of a lapse of time between the offering and its effect in cleansing as we find in the type of the day of atonement and its ordinance of the two goats (Lev. xvi., notes).

It is surely the voice of Israel, then, that is heard in the cry, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean." The hyssop itself may speak of Christ as man in the lowest place. It is used thus in contrast with the cedar (1 Kings iv. 33) as the type of littleness,—"the hyssop that groweth out of the wall,"—while, as with the shittah-tree (or acacia), it grows in the wilderness, as a "root out of a dry ground,"—growing indeed in the clefts of the rock and the driest of places. If it be a caper, as Royle and Tristram agree, then, like the shittim-wood, it has the thorns of the curse upon it. Contrariwise, its name is perhaps derived from a word which means "to shine." One would expect that the hyssop in this connection should give us some memorials of the Lord: "purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean." Then how blessed to be said by a poor sinner; and yet it is only confidence in God's work being, as it must be, well done: "wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

Gospel this is, and he realizes it as such: "make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice." It is only prayer as yet however, but a divinely taught prayer surely. We too, if the gospel be "good news," ought to have the joy of the gospel; and healthful, medicinal it is, even for crushed bones. "The joy of the Lord is your strength."

But we pass on to look more deeply at this inner work.

3. The third section, as we have learned to expect, leads us into the sanctuary, and naturally with this speaks of the sanctification needed for the presence of God. But in the first verse we are reminded that this roots itself in, and builds itself up by, the knowledge of complete acceptance. "Hide Thy face from my

(ii.) steadfast separation from sin.
(iii.) the presence of God and His Spirit.
(iv.) a suited experience.

[v] Create in me a clean heart, O God:
and renew a [w] steadfast spirit within me.
[z] Cast me not away from thy presence:
and [y] take not thy holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the [z] joy of thy salvation:
and let a willing spirit sustain me.

v cf. 2 Cor. 5. 17. *cf.* Gal. 6. 15. *cf.* Eph. 2. 10.
w Ps. 86. 11.
x cf. Esth. 4. 15-17. Esth. 5. 1, 2. *ctr.* Heb. 10. 14, 19.
y ctr. Eph. 1. 13; *ctr.* Eph. 4. 30.
z cf. Mt. 26. 75 with Jno. 21. 15-17; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 8.

sins," he says, "and blot out all my perversities." He must have no cloud upon that glorious Face, into which he contemplates looking. For this is the life of holiness itself, the manifestation of God to the soul, the entrancing joy of which the apostle spoke: "whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God" (2 Cor. v. 13). But this would be impossible if in that holy Presence a single stain of sin were discoverable. Here this thought is expressed only negatively and as prayer: but he knows well no spot must be found. The Christian finds it realized in positive "acceptance in the Beloved," all the value of Christ being accounted to him. Not even the thought of a "Face hidden" is worthy of this. The Face beams with radiant appreciation of Him in whom we are represented, and find unchanging, unchangeable perfection. No cloud can come over this sky, save as unbelief darkens it. The veil being rent that so long prevented it, now, says the apostle, "let us draw nigh."

"Let us draw nigh"! what, need of exhortation? Here is One to know whom is to have all things,—to be without whom is the "outer darkness" of hell! God, Creator, Preserver, Redeemer of men,—Light, Life, Love,—revealed in Christ, His love-gift to us,—opens to us the Sanctuary of His Presence. It is not merely possible to draw nigh, there where Moses could not, and seraphs veil their faces; but God has brought us in,—giving us an abiding-place in the Holiest of all; free right of citizenship in the New Jerusalem of God. Here it is lawful to covet and possess, as far as faith can penetrate,—God's word being the inventory of all that which He has given us richly to enjoy; His Spirit in us "searching the deep things of God:" so that what "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered (naturally) into the heart of man," He "hath revealed unto us by His Spirit," "that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." (1 Cor. ii.) After all this, do we need exhortation to possess ourselves of it, or to draw near to Him who had drawn near to us?

What hinders us? What hinders any one of us? Nothing, let us speak it plainly, but lack of heart, and unbelief that goes with this,—goes before it, and springs from it as well. "The vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver unto one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee, and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed; and the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee; and *he* saith, I am not learned." (Isa. xxix. 11, 12.)

But we have got beyond our psalm. The psalmist realizes at least, as has been said, that God's face—God Himself—is his one necessity; and that one sin discerned by the holy Eye would be impossible for Him to go on with. Does he not realize something of what the ashes of the sin-offering mean, by which just now he has been in reality asking to be purged? We, at least, know this well. But along with the need of sacrifice, there is need of an initial work also, which none but God can effect,—which needs nothing less than the power of the Creator: "*Create* in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a steadfast spirit within me." And we have learned that we are "*created* in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before prepared, that we should walk in them" (Eph. ii. 10). He does not speak formally of the new birth, nor was this clearly known until New Testament times; but he despairs of any effectual change by any effort of his own; he, like the apostle, with a groan of anguish turns from an impractical "body of death," to find a Deliverer outside himself altogether. To possess a "clean heart," for such as he has discovered himself to be, God must "create a creation," and for the psalmist as for us, the light of heaven must be

(v.) the end.

I will [a]teach revolters thy ways:
and sinners shall return unto thee.

4 (14-17): The failure of sacrifice.

Deliver me from [b]blood-guiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation:

(i.) righteousness in grace.

[and] my tongue shall [c]sing of thy righteousness.

a *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 12-16. *cf.* Ps. 126. 1-3.

b *cf.* Mt. 27 25. *cf.* Acts 5. 28. *cf.* Zech. 12. 10;

c *cf.* Isa. 53. 4-6 with Isa. 54. 1.

made to break out in self-revealing, God-revealing power, over the yeasty confusion of the barren and restless deep. O blessed and beauteous Light of heaven, though Thou showest us but the fury of the untamed swell of passion and unrest! Even so communion has begun, if fitfully, with God. The soul begins to side with Him, even against itself; and there, I suppose, a "clean heart" has begun. But a "steadfast [or fixed] spirit" goes beyond this, just in the removal of that fitfulness: the heart being at rest for communion as the calm lake mirrors heaven. But we miss here the Christian *how* of this: the need is felt, but the manner of accomplishment is not known.

The next verse shows the believer, while it shows also the conflict with doubt. He prays not to be cast away from the divine presence. He has known it, but knows not the conditions of its permanence. Many Christians do not know them to-day. So, too, he prays, "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me"; and many would be in agony over this. There is no need to think of anything special to the king of Israel. To the whole work of God in the soul the Holy Spirit was always necessary, in every saint of every time. The Spirit of God as indwelling in the Christian, the Spirit of adoption by which we cry, Abba, Father, and the *baptism* of the Spirit by which the body of Christ is formed,—*these* are distinctive blessings of the dispensation to which we belong (John xiv. 16, 17; Gal. iv. 1-6; Acts i. 5; 1 Cor. xii. 13). The Spirit of God Himself could teach David such a prayer as this: for us it would be unbelief to utter it; for by the Spirit we are sealed unto the day of redemption (Eph. iv. 30).

But how do we value blessings so inestimable as these? The breathing after God Himself, so characteristic as it is of the Book of Psalms, may well put to shame the coldness of our hearts in view of it. Where are the souls that pant and long after the presence of God as do these men of another and darker time? We may not use some of their prayers, and can thank God we do not: yes, but do we breathe their longings? Or shall we give men to think that the increase of knowledge and the apprehension of grace chill the heart, and that the more abundantly God has shown us love, the less He is to be loved?

Again the psalmist cries:—

"Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and let a willing spirit sustain me." For heaviness of heart enfeebles both walk and work: the joy of the Lord gives strength and courage. We may not make light of emotion. Our care is to be that it be justified with knowledge and connected with practical result. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace" (Gal. v. 22); but then "long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance," follow after these and sustain them.

So too the practical result is promised here: "I will teach revolters Thy ways, and sinners shall return unto Thee." Israel in fact will lead the nations in obedience. Israel shall become Jezreel, "the seed of God." "And I will sow her to Me in the earth," says the Lord God (Hos. ii. 23).

4. The theme of the second part of the previous psalm now comes up again, but from another side. The failure of the sacrifices is now proclaimed by the lips of man, the sinner who has found them fail in his own need, and realizes the divine meaning of this failure. The psalmist returns to the thought of his own sin, which he now names distinctly, and from the guilt of which God alone can be the deliverer. As the God of his salvation, his tongue shall sing of His righteousness. This seems too evangelic, if we take it in the Pauline sense of God's righteousness revealed in the gospel, a note of which, however, we have

(ii.) testimony.

(iii.) the heart of God.

(iv.) the failed creature in his place as such.

Lord, [d]open thou my lips,
and my mouth shall declare thy praise.
For thou desirest not [e]sacrifice, or I would give it:
thou delightest not in [f]burnt-offering.
The sacrifices of God are a [g]broken spirit:
a broken and crushed heart, O God, thou wilt [h]not despise.

[d] Isa. 32. 4. Isa. 35. 6.
[e] Ps. 50. 8. Ps. 40. 6-8.
[f] *cf.* Lev. 1. 3-17. *ctr.* Eph. 5. 2.
[g] Ps. 34. 18. Hos. 6. 6. Isa. 57. 15.
[h] *cf.* Lk. 18. 9-14.

heard in the twenty-second psalm. But to measure the depth of an inspired statement by the intelligence (real or supposed) of the writer, would be a folly that would really leave God out of His Word, and make the meaning of it often an impractical attainment for us. He has in the beginning of the psalm been pleading for mercy according to the known compassion of God, that is, in consistency with His own character. This then is already the "righteousness," of which when delivered he will sing; and thus the righteousness spoken of is as the God of his salvation. The cross is the full explanation of this, and that, as we have seen, is in the psalm also, though veiled under the type referred to in it. He then speaks again of the testimony which in fact restored Israel will render to His praise, when their dumb lips shall be opened.

Now comes the disclaiming of legal sacrifices. "For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: Thou delightest not in burnt-offering." In fact, as has been already said, none could be prescribed for sin like this, a thing which limits very much therefore the absoluteness of this disclaimer. Here the "sacrifices of God" could only be "a broken spirit!" Not as if this were the true antitype of the legal offerings, a supposition of which there has been given explicit denial in the words of Christ Himself by His Spirit in the fortieth psalm: "In the volume of the book it is written of ME." Nor can a broken spirit be the justification of God's grace in salvation, though it may define the condition morally necessary to the sinner's acceptance. And this is the only possible thought here. That would not be a broken spirit which could estimate itself as having atoning value in the sight of God. It is the very confession of sin and worthlessness which makes it possible for Him to come in in mercy; and in *this* way indeed to come to God may have attaching to it all the certainty which the bringing of sacrifice ensnred in those cases in which they were prescribed. In this comparison with the legal sacrifices, the failed creature taking his place must necessarily, with God, far outweigh the ritual service, and in fact permit God to come in in his behalf. He will act according to His heart, and we can trust His heart. The case is in His hand; and divine wisdom will be able to conserve divine righteousness in meeting so desperate a condition. Christ is the answer of wisdom as to this: and now it can indeed be said: "a broken and *crushed* heart"—so it literally reads—"O God, Thou wilt not despise."

5. In the last section, it is openly Zion's cause that is pleaded: the place in which sovereign grace will act toward Israel, and therefore the place of God's eternal rest. "Do good in Thy good pleasure unto Zion: Thou shalt build the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt Thou be pleased with sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt-offerings and whole burnt-offerings: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar."

The cessation of animal sacrifices is not implied then in what has gone before; and according to Ezekiel they will be offered even in millennial days. (chap. xliii. 18-28, xlv. 15-25.) If this is not according to our thoughts, we must always be ready to correct our thoughts by Scripture. The millennial has not the perfection of the eternal condition; and the senses will be again appealed to in a way that does not accord with the present dispensation of faith. Of this there are many examples; and there is no surer way of getting into confusion in our thoughts than by judging of what is suited to one dispensation by the analogies of another. The numerical structure seems here indeed to emphasize the *confirmation* of sacrifice, as before it did its failure; and both things are suited,

5 (18, 19): Israel with God. (i.) His pleasure in Zion. (ii.) confirmation of sacrifice.

Do good in thy good pleasure unto [i] Zion:
thou shalt build the [j] walls of Jerusalem.
Then shalt thou be pleased with [k] sacrifices of righteousness,
[l] burnt-offering, and whole burnt-offering:
then shall they offer up bullocks upon thine altar.

[i] *cf.* Ps. 50. 2. *cf.* Ps. 102. 13, 14. *cf.* Ps. 122. 6, 7.
[j] Isa. 60. 10, 18. Isa. 26. 1.
[k] Ps. 27. 6. Mal. 3. 3.
[l] Ezek. 43. 18-27; Ezek. 46. 12-15; Isa. 60. 7; *cf.* 2 Chr. 7. 4-7.

each in its place. Their retention and revival are, no doubt, God's witness to the world of His way of acceptance and blessing ever, at which unbelief has so largely scoffed. As the carcases of the enemies (Isa. lxvi.) in their doom before men's eyes will be the open testimony to the judgment of hell for the ungodly, —of that Gehenna of which it has already furnished the illustrative images,— and as the city of God will be the perpetual witness of the joys of the blessed, — so it will be good in the Lord's sight to have this commemorative witness of the way by which the joy of His favor can be realized or attained.

Thus these sacrifices will be now "sacrifices of *righteousness*," because offered with a true heart and with hands "washed in innocency," as David has elsewhere expressed it (Ps. xxvi. 6). And the whole tenor of these closing verses confirms the prophetic character of the psalm as the national confession which will be the necessary pre-requisite for national blessing. This also makes clear the connection with the previous psalm, which is certainly a divine challenge of the nation and of the thought that sacrifices without righteousness could be acceptable to God. The two psalms together give us the double controversy between Israel and the Lord, of which the second part of Isaiah (the second Isaiah of the rationalizing critics) treats at large—the controversy as to the law and as to Christ; of the Old Testament and of the New. One might imagine, from the way that these are presented here, that they would be questions which would be raised with restored Israel in this same order, and that here they have been in the presence of the true Joseph, who has manifested Himself to His brethren; but it may be also that the order is only grounded on the history, and not itself to be thus fulfilled in the history of the future.

Subd. 2.

The second subdivision of the second book, like that of the first, speaks at length of Antichrist, as its numerical place might lead us to expect it would; but it goes on, according to the character of the book as a whole, to speak more largely of the deliverance, its grounds and features. There are but two sections, nine psalms altogether; the book hastening on to the manifestation of Christ Himself, which we find, not here, but in the third subdivision.

David is the only writer named as the composer of these psalms; but the titles are again found accurately to divide the two sections from each other; the first four being *Maskil* psalms, or psalms of instruction, and the five following *Michtams*: each of these titles being in perfect relation to the contents of the series so designated.

Sec. 1.

The first section, then, is composed of these *Maskil* psalms, the character of which we have already considered (see Ps. xxxii. *notes*). With one exception (Ps. liv.) they all convey instruction as to the Lawless One, the rebel king and false Messiah in Israel in the last days,—the very subject which the "mind that has wisdom," the *maskil* among men, is called to consider in Rev. xiii. 18. "The identification of the Lawless One" is therefore the general theme of this first section.

Psalm LII.

The fifty-second psalm first of all depicts him in this independent character. He is the mighty one who maketh not God his strength"; the deceiver also, according to the description of the apostles Paul and John. The latter marks

SUBDIVISION 2. (Ps. lii.–lx.)

Steps on to Deliverance.

SECTION 1. (Ps. lii.–lv.)

The identification of the man of sin.

Ps. lii.

[1]PSALM LII.

The strong man who made not God his strength.

To the chief musician: Maskil of David; when *m* Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said unto him, David came to the house of Ahimelech.

1 (1-7): The lawless. (i.) the mighty. (ii.) his words. (iii.) his heart.

WHY *n* boastest thou in evil, O *o* mighty man?
the *p* mercy of the Mighty God [endureth] daily.
Yawning depths thy *q* tongue deviseth:
[it is] like a sharpened razor, O worker of *r* deceit!
Thou hast *s* loved evil rather than good:
lying instead of speaking right. Selah.

m 1 Sam. 21. 7. 1 Sam. 22. 9, 17-22.
n Ps. 10. 2,3.
o ver. 7. Ps. 33. 16.
p Ps. 6. 4. Ps. 13. 5.
q Ps. 10. 7-10. Ps. 55. 11.
r Ps. 38. 12. Mi. 6. 12.
s *ctr.* Ps. 45. 7. Ps. 4. 2.

him out as "the liar," who denies the Father and the Son (1 Jno. ii. 22); the former (2 Thess. ii. 9–11) speaks of his "coming as after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders (power and signs and wonders, of falsehood) and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness." It is natural therefore that this should be what is set before us in this first "maskil."

The reference to the history of David is, like that in the title of the last psalm, difficult to understand. We have no cause to reject it on that account, confirmed as it is again by the Septuagint. Doeg the Edomite is doubtless but a feeble representative of the great enemy of God and man at the time of the end; and yet there are evident features of resemblance. The "Edomite" in itself implies the enmity, so unnatural as it is, which derives its bitterness from the rupture of natural relations, and this may easily represent that of outward relations which have professedly a more spiritual character, as that of Judas to the Lord. This is brought out in its application to the great final enemy in the fourth psalm of this series (lv.). Then the herdsman of Saul may seem very little the mighty man of the present psalm; but through his words (which is what is dwelt upon) he was in fact mighty enough to cause a wholesale slaughter of the priestly family. And it is by his words that, as already said, Antichrist will prevail, whatever "power" may accompany his words. The allusion to the "tent" may also borrow significance from the history, as we shall see.

1. The psalm is divided into two parts, which are in contrast with one another, the first seven verses being faith's challenge of this mighty one, as the last two verses give us the man of faith himself and his portion from God. The "mighty man" who uses the little might he has in bitter persecution of the saints is here put in contrast also with El, the "Mighty" God, whose attribute is mercy—mercy enduring daily. How blessed is this gentle goodness of Almighty power. And it is not contradicted either by the presence of this wicked one himself: for even such an one "the goodness of God" would "lead to repentance." The awful end of unrepented evil makes this slowness of dealing with the evil man unspeakably solemn; while he may use it for "storing up wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." Meanwhile faith knows that this power of God, with all its apparent slowness, has things completely under its control: so that "He maketh the wrath of man to praise Him; and the remainder of wrath He will restrain." Nothing escapes from this all-seeing, perfect control, which maketh all things work together for good, to them that love Him.

And yet it is "man's day" in which we are; and man avails himself of it. His tongue is indeed his mightiest member, and by his words he may well be justified or condemned. Alas, his tongue, as James declares, is "a world of

(iv.) his weakness.

Thou lovest all [t]devouring words:
tongue of deceit.

(v.) his end.

The [u]Mighty One shall likewise smite thee down for ever:
he shall seize thee, and pluck thee out of the tent,
and [v]root thee out of the land of the living. Selah.

(vi.) the victory.

The righteous also shall see it, and [w]fear;
and shall [x]laugh at him.

(vii.) the summing up.

Behold the [y]strong man that made not God his strength,
but [z]trusted in the abundance of his riches,
[and] strengthened [a]himself in his deep practice.

[t] Prov. 19. 28.
[u] Ps. 50. 1. *ctr.* ver. 1. *cf.* Ps. 2. 4, 5.
[v] *cf.* 2 Thes. 2. 8. *cf.* Rev. 19. 20.
[w] *cf.* Ps. 40. 3. *cf.* Ps. 64. 9.
[x] Ps. 58. 10. *cf.* Is. 66. 24.
[y] Ps. 33. 16. Ps. 44. 6. *ctr.* 2 Cor. 12. 8–10.
[z] Ps. 49. 6. Ps. 62. 10.
[a] *cf.* Job. 15. 25; *cf.* Ezek. 7. 13.

iniquity"; "yawning depths" of it, as it is put here, "his tongue deviseth": in which, how easily, the unwary may be engulfed. Changing the figure, though the implications are no less murderous, this tongue of the wicked is "like a sharp razor,"—cutting before one is aware. And out of the heart the mouth speaketh: "thou hast *loved* evil rather than good; lying instead of speaking right." How the great enemy of man is discerned in all this! for "he is a liar, and the father of it." Truth will not serve his purpose: that is, the whole, full truth; he is fond of using it, so far as it will give color and attractiveness to his lie,—a film of varnish over a rotten interior,—or like an ice-film of purity over his cavernous iniquity,—itself but a deception, a lure, a deeper lie.

Yet this deceit is itself the confession of weakness: power that is equal to its end has at least no need of it. And this confession that is in it makes it thus far unpalatable to the pride of strength. In its love to devour, the tongue may become a "tongue of deceit"; but this humiliation it does *not* love. Thus it carries with it the witness of its own frailty and mutability: the seed of mortality is in it, the witness of the judgment of God upon it; and so it is foreseen. "The Mighty One shall likewise smite thee down forever: he shall seize, and pluck thee out of the tent, and root thee out of the land of the living."

There is an expression here, which we must consider in the light of the application of the psalm to the Wicked one of the last days. Moll unites with Delitzsch in interpreting the "tent" out of which the mighty one is to be plucked, as the dwelling-place of Doeg, with an allusion to his herdsman's tent. A much older application is that by Kimchi, adopted by Grier and others, to the holy tent or tabernacle at which Ahimelech ministered, and where we find in the history that Doeg was "detained before Jehovah." Delitzsch says, if this were meant, it would have been "*His* tent"; but how can we be sure always of just the language which an inspired writer might see fit to use? Nay, one may see reasons for the less distinct expression even in the history itself, and far more in the prophetic reference. Thus, if the shew-bread were but common bread while David was in rejection (see notes on 1 Sam. xxi.) why should not the very house of God itself be less distinctly owned as that on the same account? And if we think of Antichrist's connection with it in the future time, how much more appropriate still would this disclaimer of its being God's house, when invaded by idolatry—the abomination that maketh desolate,—be perfectly in place?

One cannot but regard, then, the words here as a fresh indication of what is before us in the psalm. If Doeg alone were contemplated indeed, the application might seem as strained; as it is generally perhaps considered. But we can see how the Spirit of God, in contemplation of the future, might seize upon such a connection and use it to suggest that all important one in the history of the Wicked one which could hardly be omitted in such a sketch as the present, and which yet, in the history of David at least, would seem to find elsewhere nothing to suggest it.

Now comes the triumph of the righteous: "the righteous also shall see it and

2 (8, 9): The believer in contrast.
(i.) planted.
(ii.) confirmation of faith.

But I am like a [b]green olive in the house of God:
I [c]trust in the mercy of God for ever and aye.
I will [d]praise thee for ever because thou hast done [this]:
and will wait on thy [e]Name; for it is good before thy saints.

Ps. liii.

[2]PSALM LIII.

The progress of evil and the throwing off of God.

To the chief musician, upon Mahalath: Maskil of David.

i.) the multitude one.

THE [f]fool hath said in his [g]heart, There is [h]no God.
They have [i]corrupted themselves, and have done [j]abominable iniquity:
there is [k]none that doeth good.

b Ps. 92. 12, 13. Jer. 11. 16. Hos. 14. 5–8.
c Ps. 25. 2.
d Ps. 50. 23. Ps. 51. 15.
e Ps. 54. 6. Ps. 61. 8.
f Ps. 14. 1, etc. cf. Jer. 17. 11. cf. Lk. 12. 20.
g Ps. 49. 11. cf. Deu. 29. 19.
h cf. Ps. 10. 4. Ex. 5. 2.
i Deu. 32. 5. cf. Ezek. 28. 17.
j Job 15. 16; Rev. 21. 8.
k Rom. 3. 10–12, 23.

fear, and shall laugh at him. Behold the strong man that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his deep practice." The last word in the Hebrew here is the singular of the first word in the second verse, and there translated "yawning depths." The correspondence would seem to show correspondence of thought, although in the first case it is his words, in the latter his practice that is refered to.

Thus we have his case summed up. It is but that of fallen man "writ large;" "being in honor, he abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish." Putting away God from him, he puts away his link with life and blessedness; he is not a beast, nor does he come to an end as the beast does. Self-condemned, for him perdition is an evil which to the beast it is not, and which links itself with the eternity of his spirit-nature.

2. The believing remnant are now seen in contrast with this passing of mere human strength: "But I am like a green olive in the house of God,"—the tree in which abides that which typifies the Spirit of God, green in its freshness of life eternal, and in the house of God, which gives another help to understanding that "tent" out of which the wicked one is cast. Here it is openly named, and suitably to the permanence of all the blessing, a "house," not a "tent." Faith enters it with sure confidence: "I trust in the mercy of God forever and aye." Their praise too abides; and God is known by His glorious Name. Upon this for all developments of the future, he can wait and fear not: it is a Name that is good before the worshiping saints.

Psalm LIII.

The fifty-third psalm shows us the growth of the evil, both in breadth and intensity. God is here altogether thrown off, and the wicked one gathers after him a multitude of followers.

The title is a peculiar and significant one: "It is prefixed to two psalms, the fifty-third and the eighty-eighth: 'To the chief musician upon *Mahalath*.' Some Hebraists have supposed it to intend that the psalm was to be accompanied by an ancient musical instrument which bore such a name; or that, being derived from 'Machol,' it denoted a choral song to be sung in the Levitical service. But this last interpretation would be very unsuitable to the psalms in the inscriptions of which the word occurs. Since psalm eighty-eight is the gloomiest of all the psalms, and psalm fifty-three, although having a bright border, is still also a dark picture, the signification of *Mahalath*,—'sickness, sorrow,'—which is capable of being supported by Exod. xv. 26, must be retained. 'Upon Mahalath' signifies after a sad tone or manner, whether it be that *Mahalath* itself is a name for such an elegiac kind of melody, or that it was thereby designed to indicate the initial word of some popular song. So that we may regard

(ii.) God the witness.

God [l]looked down from heaven on the children of men,
to see if any one [m]understood [or] [n]sought after God.

(iii.) the result.

Every one of them is [o]turned back:
they have together become corrupt:
none doeth good, no, [p]not one.

(iv.) the folly of the workers of vanity.

Have the workers of vanity no knowledge?
[q]eating up my people, as if they ate bread!
they have not [r]called upon God.

l Gen. 6. 5,6. Ps. 33. 13. Prov. 15. 3.
m cf. 1 Cor. 1. 19-21.
n cf. Prov. 2. 4, 5. cf. Isa. 55. 6. o cf. Ex. 32. 8. cf. Jer. 2. 13.
p cf. Is. 6. 5. cf. Phil. 3. 4-7.
q Ps. 27. 2. Prov. 30. 14: Am. 8. 4; Mi. 3. 3.
r cf. Gen. 4. 26; Ps. 79. 6; Isa. 64. 7.

Mahalath as equivalent to *mesto*, and *piano*, or *andante*."* The best reason for this strangely sad title is found, indeed, in its mystical fitness to the psalms of which it is the inspired prefix.

"It is to be interpreted, therefore, 'upon Sickness,' a title of direction that the words should be accompanied by some soft, sad, melancholy flow of sound, in accord with their deeply sorrowful tone."†

The fifty-third psalm is, for the most part, a repetition of the fourteenth; and as such has provoked various criticism. In both psalms the divine Name is found seven times; but in the former one four times it is Jehovah, while in the present *Elohim* (God) is used in every case. This is, of course, in keeping with the general character of the second book. In either case the sevenfold affirmation of God in the presence of the multitude of the ungodly who deny Him, surely has significance.

(i.) As in the fourteenth psalm, the general mass of men, and not merely Israelites, are seen to be deniers of God. As to Antichrist, the man of sin, it is said of him that "he opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped." (2 Thess. ii. 4.) And of the lawless one in Daniel, that "he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, . . . neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, . . . nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all" (xi. 36, 37). John also declares that he shall deny "the Father and the Son." This does not prevent him honoring, instead of the true God, "the God of forces" (Dan. xi. 38); even as the second "beast" of Rev. xiii. (who is the same person) causes men to worship the first beast (the head of the revived Roman empire) and his image in the temple. This last—idolatry set up in the temple—is the fullest challenge to Him whose throne is there.

Thus he does not abandon all worship of God openly, but uses it for his purpose, and is, of course, atheist in heart. The mass who follow him have the same character. Even the Comtist has his worship of the *Grand Etre;* but he knows perfectly well that this "Great Being" of Humanity is only a play of imagination,—a concession to the emotional side of his nature, and no real god. So also may the followers of the "beast" have their political god and yet be godless. Their works show what they are at heart, and that to dethrone God there is much easier than to make another.

(ii.) All the time while they regard not God, He is regarding them. Patiently He searches among them so as to know if there be one that understands or seeks after Him. This anthropomorphism as to God is beautiful. Put it how you will, you must not believe that the living God is careless of His creatures. He will not judge hastily, or in a lump, but with careful discrimination.

(iii.) But there is not one that can be found: they have turned aside, all of them; they have together become corrupt; none doeth good, no, not one. These statements the apostle applies, as (apart from the grace of God) they must be applied, to the whole human race. That does not show that the design here is not more limited than this. The psalm as a whole,—each psalm as a whole—

* Delitzsch on the Psalms.
† "Christ the Key of the Psalter." By an Oxford Graduate.

(v.) the judgment of God.

There were they in great [s]fear, [where] no fear was:
for God hath [t]scattered the bones of him that [u]camped against thee:
thou hast put [them] to [v]shame, because God hath despised them.

(vi.) the victory.

Oh that Israel's [w]salvation were come out of Zion!
when God bringeth back the [x]captivity of his people,
[y]Jacob shall exult, Israel shall be glad.

Ps. liv.

[z]PSALM LIV.

God realized as manifesting Himself according to His Name.

To the chief musician, on stringed instruments; Maskil of David: when the Ziphites came and said to Saul, Doth not David hide himself with us?

1 (1-3): The power of God invoked.

(i.) according to righteousness.

(ii.) hear my testimony.

[a]SAVE me, O God, by thy [b]Name,
and right me with thy [c]might.
O God, [d]hear my prayer!
give ear unto the sayings of my mouth.

1-25. *a* Ps. 7. 1, 10; Ps. 71. 2, 3. *b cf.* Ps. 20. 1; Ps. 79. 9; Prov. 18. 10. *c cf.* Ps. 20. 6; Ps. 80. 2; *cf.* Is. 63. 15. *d* Ps. 4. 1.

s Lev. 26.17, 36. Prov. 28. 1. *t* Ps. 59. 11. Ps. 68. 30. Ezek. 6. 5 with 2 Ki. 23. 16. *u* Ps. 27. 3. *v* Ps. 44. 7. Ps. 71. 24. *w cf.* Gen. 49. 18. Ps. 98. 2, 3. Is. 46. 13 with Is. 62. 11. *x* Ps. 85. 1. Jer. 30. 3, 18. Jer. 31. 23. Ezek. 39. 25. Am. 9. 14, 15. *y cf.* Is. 41. 14. Ps. 126. *z* 1 Sam. 23. 19-26. 1 Sam. 26;

has plainly indeed such a limited application; but "as in water, face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man;" and this abundantly justifies the apostle's "no difference" doctrine. The place of the psalm in this series it is that shows the prophetic application.

(iv.) The next verse accordingly speaks of those whom God calls His people, and who are not to be confounded with these. They are being eaten up like bread by these scornful men here depicted. Yet are these workers of vanity merely,—without knowledge, not knowing even the feebleness, which would have brought them to call upon God.

(v.) But the panic of their doom at last and as in a moment falls upon them; and here the present psalm turns away from the fourteenth, which speaks of the general principle, to announce, as if it were accomplished, the doom of those encamped against Jerusalem. "God hath scattered the bones of those that encamped against thee." The feeble remnant also become the executors of divine judgment: "thou hast put them to shame, because God hath despised them."

(vi.) The psalm ends, as the fourteenth does, with the expression of longing desire that the salvation of Israel had indeed come; and that what faith foresees and declares were already a fact in experience.

Psalm LIV.

The third psalm of this Maskil series seems to turn aside from the direct subject of them, to show the encouragement given to faith under the trial, in the anticipation of the intervention of God in behalf of His people, suffering under the cruel hands of their persecutors. It is a psalm of the simplest character; for God does not hide His consolation deep in dark speeches from those who have need of it. The Name of God, that is, His revelation of Himself, is that which secures salvation for them. God acts so as to glorify Himself, by the display of His character; and in His salvation all His nature is declared: only the salvation here is an external one, from enemies; though it be true that for Him thus to come in for them their sins must be put away. But this is not before us here.

The occasion of the psalm is difficult in application to the last day trials; which only means that we have little skill in such applications. We know just enough to make us realize our shame that we know no more.

(iii.) the state of things.

For [e]strangers are risen against me,
and the violent [f]seek my life:
they have [g]not set God before them. Selah.

2 (4-7): The help.
(i.) in God Himself.
(ii.) against the enemies.
(iii.) the sacrifice of praise.
(iv.) the experience.

Behold, God is my [h]helper:
the Lord it is that [i]upholdeth my cause.
He shall [j]requite evil to those that watch me:
in faithfulness [k]destroy thou them!
I will freely [l]sacrifice to thee:
I will [m]praise thy Name, Jehovah; for it is good.
For out of all strait he hath [n]delivered me:
and mine eye hath [o]seen [its fill] upon mine enemies.

e Is. 1. 7. *cf.* Is.25.2-5.
f Ps. 38. 12. Ps. 86. 14.
g *ctr.* Ps. 16. 8.
h Ps. 10. 14. Ps. 30. 10.
i *cf.* Ps. 118. 6, 7.
j Ps. 94. 2. *cf.* Obad.15. Mi. 5. 9.
k Ps. 94. 23.
l *cf.* Ps. 51. 19, etc.
m Ps. 135. 1.
n Ps. 44. 4.
o Ps. 59. 10. Ps. 112. 8.

1. Short as it is, the psalm is divided into two parts; the first of which gives us the cry to God, the invocation of His power in behalf of the sufferer. Deliverance for him will be according to righteousness, that is, in consistency with God Himself; which implies no legal righteousness on the psalmist's part. God's righteousness we have learned to recognize in a gospel to sinners: and this is what the work of Christ has accomplished for us. The Name of God has only been revealed in Him: and when we know it, we have fuller ground of confidence than any righteousness possible to man could give. Here also, as regards the enemy, there is right that can be pleaded against him; and so the psalmist can say, "Right me with Thy might." His enemies are also God's enemies,—"strangers" in heart, though (as in David's case) they may be Israelites in the flesh; and violent men, who have not set God before them.

2. The second part anticipates in faith the help that has been sought. God Himself is the Helper: the Lord it is who upholds his soul. The result is then foreseen; simple enough from such premises: "He shall requite evil to them that watch me" with malignant eyes; "in Thy faithfulness," he can ask, "destroy Thou them." The time prophesied of for the earth's judgment is at hand, and God's faithfulness is pledged to fulfill His word.

Then indeed will delivered Israel with a full heart bring her sacrifices to God, and praise Jehovah's Name, once more and now fully made known in their redemption (see Exod. iii. 13–17, *notes*). The last verse gives the experience of this: "He *hath* delivered me out of all strait; and mine eye hath seen its fill upon mine enemies."

Psalm LV.

With the fifty-fifth psalm we reach the close of this Maskil series, and find the last word as to the wicked one. He has been seen in a certain relation to the dwelling-place of God, the "tent" in which He has sojourned among men. We have seen him also among the mass of the godless—atheists in heart—who carry to its height the lawlessness and rebellion of the last days. Here we go back to see how he has broken the bands and cast off the yoke of the Most High. Once an associate of the godly, and moving among the throng of worshipers in the house of God, he is become the persecutor of the righteous, the profaner of his covenant with God and man, his profession all through is shown to be mere subtlety and treacherous wickedness, under which Jerusalem itself becomes like another Babel, and its inhabitants invite a corresponding doom.

These psalms share the character of all prophecy in needing to be put together in order to their full understanding. They are not meant for "private" or "*separate* interpretation" (2 Pet. i. 20). They are connected together by the common title of Maskil as instruction for the men of understanding, the wise who are to instruct others (Dan. xi. 33; xii. 3). Put together, the awful figure of Antichrist emerges clearly enough, and in harmony with prophecies elsewhere, both Christian and Jewish. Like some image formed in the rock, you must

Ps. lv.

[s]PSALM LV.

The apostate.

To the chief musician, on stringed instruments: Maskil of David.

1 (1-3): The invocation of God.
(i.) be present to me.
(ii.) conflict.
(iii.) the evil bared.

GIVE [p]ear, O God, unto my prayer:
and [q]hide not thyself from my supplication.
Attend unto me, and [r]answer me:
I [s]toss to and fro as I complain, and groan.
Because of the voice of the [t]enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked:
for they cast iniquity upon me,
and in anger [u]persecute me.

2 (4-8): Longing for escape.
(i.)
(ii.)
(iii.) the spirit of the dove.

My heart is writhing within me:
and the [v]terrors of death are fallen upon me:
Fear and [w]trembling is come upon me:
and horror hath wrapped me round.
And I said, Oh that I had [x]wings like the dove!
I would fly away, and be at rest.

p Ps. 54. 2.
q *cf.* Ps. 42. 9, Ps. 44. 24.
r Ps. 65. 5, Ps. 86. 7.
s *cf.* Is. 54. 11.
t Ps. 56. 2, etc.
u Ps. 10. 2.
v Ps. 116. 3.
w *cf.* Deu. 28. 65.
x *cf.* Job 3, 17.

catch it at the right angle to discern it; while when there, its features are too marked and many to be possibly mistaken.

The accompaniment of "stringed instruments" is justified as the psalm goes on; though it begins with a wail of sorrow and an inward tumult under which the numerical structure for awhile seems to be lost, but to manifest itself again as faith more firmly lays hold upon divine strength, and the light of a new day begins to penetrate the gloom.

1. The first three verses give us the cry to God, with the cause of the cry,—the voice of the enemy and the oppression of the wicked, by whom the suppliant is traduced as well as met with open violence. The conjunction of these things is too common to need much comment. Slander makes malice take the form of righteousness; and the strongest tyranny finds the necessity of justifying itself after this manner. Involuntarily it does homage to the moral government of God, even while its homage is itself immoral. "They cast iniquity on me," says the sufferer, "and in anger persecute me."

2. The next section dwells upon the misery of the remnant amid the general departure from God. They long to escape from the city which is yet to them the city of God; but defiled, profaned, the Spirit of Christ makes them cry out for separation from it. Accordingly opportunity is given them, as we know (Matt. xxiv. 15 *seq.*), and they are found outside it in the first psalm of this book.

The distress is extreme, and the confusion of mind seems to affect the numerical structure itself, which here at least I am unable to trace in two out of the five verses. This may be, of course, only from dullness of sight on my own part, or because the numbers themselves have not been traced out sufficiently in their application in the sphere of human emotion. Yet the only other place in these psalms in which we have hitherto found such an absolute failure (Ps. x. 8–10) is so near akin to this one as at least to suggest a designed connection between them. The former psalm, like the present, gives us a picture of the wicked one; and there the *alphabetic* construction fails, as well as (and to a greater extent than) the numerical. Thus there seems purpose manifest in this. In the present psalm, however, there is this difference, that the failure is not found in that part of it which speaks of Antichrist himself, but in that which speaks of the effect of the evil in the awful horror and dread which well-nigh overwhelm the godly. This is plainly a great difference, and must justly raise the question again, Is it anything more than a failure of discernment, such as here and there may well be expected in a first endeavor to trace out the numerical clue. On

(iv.) the wilderness-earth.
(v.) the judgment coming.

Lo, I would wander far off;
I would lodge in the [y] wilderness. Selah.
I would hasten my [z] escape
from the rushing wind—the tempest.

3 (9-11): The profanation of the holy city.
(i.) congruous dealing.
(ii.) a city of strife.
(iii.) iniquity manifest.

[a] Swallow [them] up, Lord! divide their tongue!
for I have seen violence and strife in the [b] city.
Day and night they [c] compass it upon the walls thereof:
vanity and travail are in the midst of it.
[d] Yawning depths are in the midst of it:
[e] oppression and deceit depart not from its streets.

4 (12-15): Apostasy.
(i.) of one at peace with him.

For it was [f] not an enemy that reproached me;
then I could have borne it:
nor was it one that had hated me that magnified himself against me:
then I might have [g] hid myself from him.

y cf. Mt. 24. 15-21. cf. Rev. 12. 14.
z cf. Is. 26. 20, 21.
a Ps. 21. 9.
b Is. 1. 21.
c Ps. 59. 6.
d Ps. 10. 8-10.
e Mt. 10. 36. Am. 4. 1.
f Ps. 41. 9. cf. Jno. 5. 43.
g cf. 1 Sam. 18. 11.

the other hand, it is still possible that as in the tenth psalm the moral disorder is reflected in the structural one.—God's government appearing for a while to be lost in the uprising of human will against it,—so here may be intimated the blur of vision that may be induced by the contemplation of successful wickedness, even on the part of the righteous, and against which the thirty-seventh psalm warns us. In this case, may not the *irregularity* of the alphabetic structure of both the ninth and tenth psalms (even where it does not fail) point to a similar perturbation? especially as only in the mind of man can the government of God lapse at all, even for a moment.

And is not this indeed an evil so great and so universal as to make it necessary to enforce the warning upon us in an exceptional manner? Alas, how the disorder manifest in the world tends to induce a similar disorder, even among those who dread and abhor it! as with an infectious disease, the dread of which increases the susceptibility of infection. How the simple lesson needs to be continually repeated in our ears, that "God sitteth upon the throne, judging right." How little frankly do we accept this first postulate of faith! and if there be but hesitation here, how the vision fails, how the heart sickens and faints, what a collapse is there of strength! And is it not so in the psalm before us?—

"My heart is writhing within me; and the terrors of death are fallen upon me! Fear and trembling is come upon me; and horror hath wrapped me round!"

Then notice how in the next verse the numerals appear again: for not without meaning is it that the dove, the type of heavenly purity and love and sorrow,—the symbol of the Spirit of Christ, as in the gospels,—is named here rather than any other bird. The wing of the dove bore Christ indeed into the scene of sin and misery to deliver men; but here, when grace has been rejected, and the sin of men has ripened as just ready for the harvest, the dove is preparing for her flight away. Holiness now means only separation from stubborn rebellion and implacable enmity to God; and now the solitude of the wilderness attracts her: the earth is become truly that; and judgment is foreseen,—a tempest of wrath, from which she would hasten the escape of those that sigh and cry for these abominations.

3. And now the city is brought before us—Jerusalem; though her name cannot now be named; she does not answer to it. Rather is she now Babylon, and with the doom of Babylon upon her. Violence and strife issue naturally in divided tongues, into which her whilom unity is broken up. Strife characterizes her, and with violence goes about her walls, which instead of shutting out the evil, shut it in. Cavernous depths of wickedness yawn in the midst of her; and openly in her public streets stalk all the time oppression and deceit.

(ii.) an associate.
(iii.) in the house of God.
(iv.) cut off.

But thou, a man [held] as mine [h]equal,
mine [i]associate, and mine intimate!
We took sweet [j]counsel together;
we [k]walked in the house of God amid the throng.
Death shall surprise them;
[l]alive they shall go down to Sheol:
for wickedness is where they sojourn—
in their midst.

5 (16-18): God with His own.
(i.) true to Him.
(ii.) and confident.
(iii.) hedged round.

As for me, I [m]call upon God,
and Jehovah shall [n]save me.
Evening, and morning, and noon, I make [o]complaint and groan:
and he will hear my voice.
He hath [p]redeemed my soul in peace that they could not come nigh me;
for [q]many were they about me.

6 (19 21): The evil at its height.
(i.) the Unchangeable and the men who change not.

The Mighty heareth and shall afflict them:
even he that [r]abideth of old: (Selah.)
[men] who have no [s]change at all,*
and [t]fear not God.

h cf. 2 Sam. 15. 31.
i cf. 2 Sam. 15. 12. cf. Jer. 9. 4, 5.
j cf. 2 Sam. 16. 20-23.
k cf. Ps. 42. 4.
l cf. Rev. 19. 20. cf. Nu. 16. 31-35.
m Ps. 50. 15.
n Ps. 7. 1.
o ver. 2. Ps. 42. 9.
p Ps. 31. 5.
q Ps. 118. 10-12.
r Ps. 90. 1-4. Ps. 102. 12, 25-27.
s Ps. 49. 11.
t Ps. 36. 1. Rom. 3. 18.

* *Literally*, "no changes."

4. Now we come to the apostate. Not an open enemy had he been; in that case it would have been easy to turn away from him as such. But he had been one admitted to terms of equality, an associate, an intimate; nor that only, but professedly also among the godly, and among the throngs frequenting the house of God. Thus we see what bonds had been broken through—Godward as well as manward. For him and those with him the psalmist predicts the sudden calamity of the apostates in the wilderness, death surprising them in such a way that Sheol might seem to swallow them up alive. This is another link with prophecy: for it is written of the two great confederates in evil in the fast-hastening day of the Lord, that they shall be taken and cast alive into the lake of fire (Rev. xix. 20).

5. The fifth section of the psalm displays in contrast with all this the assured hope of the righteous. He calls upon God, from whom the wicked had departed; he knows that God will save him. Complain and groan though he may, it is to One who hears his voice. And redemption is realized at last from the midst of many enemies, who are incapable of doing him the harm they seek to do.

6. But again he returns to speak of the wicked one and his company. He sees the Unchangeable and Eternal setting Himself against the unchanging stubbornness of impenitent sinners. Again he singles out one special one among these, marking him out by another sign which is very distinct in prophecy, the breach of the covenant. So the angel says to Daniel of the "prince that shall come," that "he shall confirm a covenant"—make a binding agreement—"with many for one week"—of years; "and in the midst of the week shall he cause sacrifice and oblation to cease." Idolatry takes the place of the worship of the true God: "for the overspreading (or 'wing') of abominations there shall be a desolator" (Dan. ix. 27, *Heb.*). Thus we have the "abomination of desolation" afterwards referred to (chap. xi. 31; xii. 11; Matt. xxiv. 15); and the nature of the broken covenant is plainly shown. Israel back in the land is sheltered by it in the setting up again of their old ritual worship: the "prince" or his representative in the land takes his place with the rest in apparently heartfelt homage to the King of kings. For the first half of the week he is the smooth-tongued hypocrite described in the psalm. Then comes a change; the cessation of pre-

(ii.) breach of the covenant.

He hath put forth his hands against those at [u]peace with him:
he hath profaned his [v]covenant.

(iii.) the heart exposed.

[w]Smooth were the butter- [words] of his mouth,
and his heart was [x]war:
Softer than oil his words,
yet were they drawn [y]swords.

7 (22, 23): The rest at the end.

(i.) faithful to the righteous.

[z]Cast thy burden upon Jehovah, and he shall [a]sustain thee:
he shall [b]never suffer the righteous to be moved.

(ii.) destruction of the wicked.

But thou, O God, shalt bring them down to the [c]pit of destruction:
men of [d]blood and deceit shall not live [e]half their days;
but I will [f]trust in thee.

u vv. 13, 14.
v *cf.* Dan. 9. 27.
w Ps. 62. 4. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 9, 10. *cf.* Mk. 13. 5, 6.
x Ps. 57. 4.
y Ps. 64. 3.
z *cf.* 1 Pet. 5. 7. *cf.* Phil 4.6, 7.
a Ps. 3. 5. *cf.* Is. 43. 2.
b Ps. 37. 24, 25.
c Ps. 9. 17.
d Ps. 5. 6.
e Prov. 10. 27. Ps. 37. 35, 36. *cf.* Is. 38. 10, 11.
f Ps. 31. 1. Ps. 84. 12.

scribed legal offerings; the setting up of idolatry in its place: "he hath put forth his hands against those that were at peace with him; he hath *profaned* the covenant." This completes the instruction of these Maskil psalms.

7. The seventh and last section closes therefore now with the contrary portions of the righteous and the wicked; in which God appears at last as Jehovah—Israel's God. How the covenant-Name here shines out in contrast with all human dependence! That treacherous covenant they had trusted in, and it had deceived them; now, "cast thy burden on Jehovah, and He shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." On the other hand, "Thou, Jehovah, shalt bring *them* down to the pit of destruction: men of blood and deceit shall not live half their days; but *I* will trust in THEE."

Sec. 2.

As the psalms of the former section were connected together by their common *Maskil* character, so those of the present are by the fact that they are all *Michtams*, a title which only occurs elsewhere in connection with the sixteenth psalm. Of the various meanings there referred to, the last two seem best to suit as applied to these. They are epigrammatic, the sharp-cut maxims of faith, which here strengthens itself by them. And that connects plainly with the derivation from the word *catham*, to "engrave," such epigrammatic writing being that found in inscriptions, while it is fitted to engrave itself durably on the memory, as these maxims need to be engraved.*

"Hidden" their meaning certainly is not. We have only as Christians to remember that it is Israel's voice to which we are listening, and therefore Israel's promises that are before us in them, and they are then in general simple enough. In truth God's comfort is not far to seek; whether men will take it or not is another question. "The confirmation of faith" may well be the title of the whole section, as I have given it; and in this way it fitly follows that description of the wicked one with whom the mass of the nation in the latter days will identify themselves. From the contemplation of that terrible scene, the soul needs to withdraw itself into its strongholds, and comfort itself with the assurance of the goodness and the might of God. And these psalms are of this nature, not forgetting the evil, but bringing it into the presence of God, that it may be seen in its weakness and mutability. Then are its instruments so truly "workers of vanity," that it can even be asked, "Shall they escape by vanity?"—this nothingness which belongs to them: are they too feeble to be taken notice of?

*The sixteenth psalm, having to do, as it has, with the wondrous path of the "Leader and Finisher of faith," may well be a Michtam in this way, as furnishing what are to be thus maxims for the life of faith, to be graved upon the heart of the disciple.

SECTION 2. (Ps. lvi.-lx.)
Confirmation of faith.

Ps. lvi.

[1]PSALM LVI.

God's faithfulness His people's strength.

To the chief musician, upon Jonath-elem-rechokim: Michtam of David, when the Philistines took him in [g]Gath.

1 (1-3): Strength in God. (i.) the constant occasion. (ii.) the multitude of foes. (iii.) the sanctuary.

BE [h]gracious to me, O God, for man [i]panteth after me:
all the day long he fighting [j]oppresseth me.
They that [k]watch me pant after me all the day long:
for [l]many are they that fight proudly against me.
What time I am [m]afraid,
I will [n]trust in thee.

2 (4-9): In deliverance and destruction. (i.) the faithfulness of God.

Through God will I [o]praise his word:
in God I have trusted; I fear not:
[p]what can flesh do to me?

[g] *cf.* 1 Sam. 21. 10-15 with Ps. 34, title. *cf.* 1 Sam. 27. 2.
[h] Ps. 57. 1. Ps. 86. 3.
[i] Ps. 57. 3. Ezek. 36. 3. Am. 8. 4.
[j] Ps. 42. 9.
[k] Ps. 5. 8. Ps. 59. 3, 10.
[l] Ps. 3. 1, 2.
[m] *cf.* 1 Sam. 21. 12 with Ps. 34. 1, 2.
[n] *cf.* 1 Sam. 30. 6. *cf.* Lk. 8. 33-35.
[o] vv. 10, 11. *cf.* Ps. 19. 7-11.
[p] Ps. 27. 1. Is. 51. 12. Heb. 13. 5, 6.

PSALM LVI.

The special title of the fifty-sixth psalm, "Upon Jonath-elem-rechokim," the "dove of silence of far off places," has naturally suggested Christ to many interpreters. But the whole connection of the psalm, as well as the contents of it, seem to me against the personal application. The connection with the cry of the last psalm—"Oh that I had the wings of a dove"—(and which is evident) is also, I think, against it. The *Spirit* of Christ is surely in both psalms; but that is a very different thing. The Septuagint is nearer the truth, with its rendering, "Upon the people driven afar off from the holy place"; while the Targum paraphrases it, "Concerning the congregation of Ismel, which is like to a silent dove, at the time they are removed far off from the cities." If we remember that in the previous psalm we have seen the remnant of Israel in Jerusalem with antichristian wickedness risen to such a height, as to force upon them the necessity of flight, we shall easily realize in the "dove of far-off places" the remnant escaped and outside the city. They are still in danger, but from an outside enemy, they are wandering (ver. 8), and not shut up.

The historical occasion of the psalm is given us as during David's first flight to Achish, "when the Philistines took him in Gath." Delitzsch says of it that it "exhibits many points of the closest intermingling with the psalms of that period, and thus justifies its inscription." But the connection of the history with the prophetic application is more difficult. The Philistines were of course an outside enemy; and David had against him both these and the people of Israel as well, so that he was a wanderer between perils on either hand. In these respects the remnant's experiences resemble his.

The burden of the psalm is the faithfulness of God as being the strength of His people; and, spite of sorrowful circumstances, the confidence expressed is very bright.

1. The circumstances and the strength found to stand under them are given briefly in the first three verses. The enemies are round about, and men are constantly contending with him and oppressing him. The psalmist describes them as wild beasts panting after him. He hears their loud breathing in pursuit, but checks his fears with the thought of what God is for him: "What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee." Perfectly suited to the persecuted people of God at any time. I cannot recognize in such language the experience of the Lord Jesus. For it is here fear of men that is expressed, though checked—the purely personal fear of enemies around, and not the horror of their wickedness. Nor

(ii.) perverters of words.
All the day [q]long they [r]torture my words:
all their [s]devices are against me for evil.
(iii.) the realization.
They [t]band together,—they [u]hide themselves,—
they watch [at] my heels as they [v]wait for my soul.
(iv.) their vanity.
On account of [w]vanity shall they escape?
in anger [x]cast down the peoples, O God!
(v.) divine sympathy.
Thou countest my [y]wanderings:
my [z]tears have been put into thy bottle;
are they not in thy [a]book?
(vi.) victory.
In the day that I [b]call, shall mine enemies [c]turn back:
this I know, because God is [d]for me.

3 (10–13): The glory of God resulting.
Through God will I [e]praise the word:
through Jehovah will I praise the word.
(i.) faithfulness.

q cf. Ps. 42. 3. cf. Ps. 55. 10.
r Ps. 35. 11. cf. Mk. 14. 55–59.
s cf. Jer. 11. 19. cf. Lam. 3. 60–63.
t Ps. 59. 3. cf. Jer. 18. 18–23. cf. Acts 9. 23.
u Ps. 10. 8.
v Ps. 59. 3. Mi. 7. 2.
w Ps. 4. 2. Ps. 10. 7. Prov. 22. 8.
x Ps. 140. 11. Prov. 12. 7. cf. Ps. 18.

36–42. *y cf.* Heb. 11. 37, 38: *cf.* Mt. 24: 16–22. *z cf.* Ex. 3. 7: *cf.* Is. 63. 9. *a cf.* Mal. 3. 16: *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 12–14. *b* Ps. 55. 16. *c cf.* Is. 37. 31–37. *d* Ps. 54. 4; Rom. 8. 31; Ps. 118. 6. *e* ver. 4.

could the blessed Lord have need to still a fear that was never present by calling up a faith that was never absent.

2. But the psalmist rises to a higher altitude, and the faithfulness of God becomes his triumphant assurance. His word is his dependence, which in its fulfillment by Him will surely gain for itself praise. The living word can never stand without a living God behind it; and it fears not to pledge Him to the fulfillment of its promises. Faith may be timid, but not Scripture; and when we realize the riches it guarantees us, we shall fear no poverty for evermore. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" And so here: "In God I have trusted; I fear not: what can flesh do to me?"

The enemies are still there, but they are powerless: torturing his words; plotting evil against him; uniting together, consulting in secret, dogging the heels, intent on his life. Even so, in all this there is a consciousness of weakness which strangely contrasts with their number and apparent power. After all, they have uneasy suspicion—they fear a fear, as a former psalm expresses it, for God is in the generation of the righteous: for how much may not that count?

Vain it all is, this malice: they are in bands to which they yield at every point, even where most seemingly triumphant. "He maketh the wrath of man to praise Him; and the remainder of it He restrains." So impotent are they, that it can be asked with Elihu (Job xxxv. 6), "If thou sinnest, what doest thou against Him? and if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto Him?" But if this be so, "on account of" this "vanity, shall they escape?" Can He let it go on, unmoved by it? Nay, he replies, not so: show, Lord, that it is not so; "in anger cast down the peoples, O God!"

And this shall be; but the psalmist does not here go on to it. He turns back to think of the tenderness of divine sympathy towards him, amid all the roughness and sorrow of the way. Here is a comfort to which Christianity has added so much that it seems as if it could not rightly have been known before. The Son of man down in our world, and not in a sheltered place, but in the bitterest blast that ever blew there,—this has changed all for him that has seen it. Yet the Spirit of Christ was in the Old Testament, and the revelation of God clothed itself already in the human form, in anticipation of the Word made flesh. "Thou countest my wanderings; my tears have been put into thy bottle: are they not in Thy book?" Tender counterpart, these tears preserved by Him now, to the future wiping them away with His own hand! But they are noted also in His book, just as they fall!

Now the psalmist looks on to the end; and he can be nothing else but confident. God is for him: therefore when he calls, his enemies shall turn back. This he knows.

3. The psalm ends accordingly with the fullest assurance and praise to God.

(ii.) a challenge.

(iii.) the sacrifice of praise.

(iv.) the fruit in walk.

In God have I trusted; I fear not:
what can man do unto me?
Upon me are thy [f]vows, O God:
I will render thank-offerings unto thee.
For thou hast [g]delivered my soul from death;
hast thou not [also] my feet from [h]falling?
that I may [i]walk before God in the light of the [j]living.

Ps. lvii.

[1]PSALM LVII.

Faith's present shelter and final deliverance.

To the chief musician, [k]Al-tashcheth: Michtam of David, when he [l]fled from Saul into the cave.

1 (1-5): Present grace.

(i.) in harmony with faith.

(ii.) in dependence.

(iii.) the foresight of deliverance from heaven.

BE [m]gracious to me, O God! be gracious to me;
for in thee hath my soul taken [n]refuge:
yea, in the [o]shadow of thy wings do I take refuge
until [these] depths be [p]overpast.
I cry unto God [q]Most High:
to the Mighty that [r]accomplisheth for me.
He shall [s]send from heaven, and save me:
[whom] he that [t]panteth after me hath reproached.
Selah.
God shall send forth his [u]loving-kindness and his truth.

f Ps. 50. 14. Ps. 116. 12-14.
g Ps. 116.8,9
h Ps. 37. 23, 24.
i *cf.* Gen. 17. 1.
j Ps. 27. 13. Ps. 142. 5.
k Ps. 58, 59, 75, titles.
l *cf.* 1 Sam. 22. 1. *cf.* 1 Sam. 24. 1-3. *cf.* Ps. 142, title.
m Ps. 56. 1. *cf.* Lk. 18. 7, 8.
n Ps. 46. 1. Ps. 62. 7.
o *cf.* Ruth 2. 12. Ps. 91. 1, 4. *cf.* Matt. 23. 37.
p *cf.* Is. 26. 20. *cf.* Jer. 30. 7-9. *cf.* Matt. 24. 21, 22.
q Ps. 46. 4. Ps. 83. 18.
r *cf.* Is. 38. 14; *cf.* Deut. 32. 36 with Ps. 126. 2, 3. s *cf.* Is. 64. 1-3; Ps. 18. 16. *cf.* Rev. 12. 15-17. t Ps. 56. 1, 2; u *cf.* Ps. 40. 11; *cf.* Is. 63. 7; Ps. 43. 3.

The former strain of confidence is renewed and amplified. He repeats, "Through God will I praise *the* word,"—more abstractly than "*His* word": perhaps, as if there were no word that could be named but His. And then he varies this, claiming God fully as His by the covenant-Name: "Through *Jehovah* will I praise the word." Then he once more puts forth his challenge: "In God I have trusted; I fear not: what can man do to me?" His vowed thank-offerings are ready, too; and he will not fail to have his life also a thank-offering. Like the apostle, who, when he has urged that by Christ we should "offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of the lips, confessing His Name," adds also: "but to do good and to communicate forget not: for with *such sacrifices* God is well pleased" (Heb. xiii. 15, 16). So here, the psalmist realizes that the deliverance of his soul from death, and his feet from falling, is that he "may walk *before God* in the light of the living." This does not mean merely, as Moll says, that he may walk under "divine protection," however much the last phrase may infer this. Nay, he is to walk *before God* who has protected him. And this means what to "walk with God" meant for Enoch, and means for all in the same path ever since,—the simplest expression for a life suited for such companionship.

Psalm LVII.

The Al-tashcheth ("Destroy not") which is in the title of the two following psalms, and the Asaphic seventy-fifth, as well as the present, is hard from its brevity to understand, as well as from its apparent applicability in so many ways. The historical occasion of the psalm also, while there is no difficulty attending it, has, in the same way, no special noteworthiness that I can discover. An opportunity this which men will take to disparage Scripture in favor of their own ignorance; but the stars do not the less shine because our sight may be too dull to behold them. Thank God, they do not!

In the psalm itself, there is no peculiar difficulty. It goes on from present shelter to future deliverance; and these are (speaking broadly) the two parts into which it is divided, each part being closed with the refrain.

1. In the first part the soul casts itself upon divine grace, as that which will

(iv.) tested.

My soul is [v]among lions:
I lie among them that are on [w]fire,—
children of men, whose [x]teeth are spears and arrows,
and their tongue a sharp sword.

(v.) God with men.

Be thou [y]exalted above the heavens, O God!
thy glory over all the [z]earth!

2 (6-11): The testimony of salvation.

(i.) congruous dealing.

They had prepared a [a]net for my steps,—
my soul was bowed,—
they had digged a [b]pit before me:
they are [c]fallen into the midst of it. Selah.

(ii.) confirmation of heart.

My [d]heart is [e]fixed, O God, my heart is fixed:
I will [f]sing and psalm.

(iii.) the worship of Israel.

[g]Awake, my glory!
awake, psaltery and harp!
I will [h]awake the dawn.

v Ps. 7. 2. Ps. 10. 9. *cf.* Ezek. 22. 23–27.
w *cf.* Is. 9. 18, 19.
x Prov. 30. 14. Ps. 52. 2. *cf.* Rev. 13. 2, 11.
y ver. 11. Ps. 108. 5. *cf.* Is. 30. 18–26. *cf.* Ps. 8. 1.
z Ps. 72. 19. *cf.* Is. 6. 3. *cf.* Hab. 3. 3.
a Mi. 7. 2. *cf.* Mk. 13. 5, 6.
b *cf.* Mt. 22 15–46.
c Ps. 7. 15, 16. Ps. 9. 15. *cf.* Esth. 7, 10; *cf.* Dan. 6. 4–8, 24.
d Ps. 108. 1–5.
e Ps. 112. 7; Ps. 86. 11.
f Ps. 27. 6.
g Ps. 30. 12.
h *cf.* Is. 26. 19; *cf.* Lk. 9. 32; *cf.* 2 Sam. 23. 4.

surely meet the faith that takes refuge in it. The bird that, according to the ancient story, would shelter itself from the pursuer in the bosom of man may have cause to repent its confidence; but who shall ever say that his confidence in God has deceived him? Nay, rather, when all other trust is found to be in vain, this becomes the only and all-sufficient one. "Depths" of evil and abysses of sorrow there are indeed on every side; but the shadow of Jehovah's wings is not merely a place of escape but a home rest, where the Eternal Light subdues itself to our weakness, and yet is an infinite glory of truth and holiness and fostering care.

How sweet then may be the self-abandonment to Love so competent: "I cry unto God most High: to the Mighty that accomplisheth for me." Where He has charge of all one's concerns, how surely shall they all prosper; how deep may be the peace resulting.

But there is not merely an indefinite confidence. The future has been marked out for us by Him to whom all His works are known from the beginning; and Israel's portion glows in the page of prophecy, for faith to possess itself beforehand of it. David is himself the forerunner of the later prophets, the leader of that magnificent choir of divine song. Here he foresees the intervention of God for His people: "He shall send from heaven and save me"—"God shall send forth His mercy and truth." In the meanwhile, however, there is plenty to test this confidence; and patience must have its perfect work. "My soul is among lions: I lie among them that are on fire,—children of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword."

But he cries in distress no more. His heart is full of another longing, in which prophecy and prayer are found together, and God fills the whole scene. But then, and thus only, man's blessing is accomplished, as it is indeed by Man—the Son of man—that the prayer is fulfilled. "Be Thou exalted, O God, above the heavens" has its answer in the psalm of the Son of man, the eighth psalm, "Thou hast set Thy glory above the heavens," while "glory over all the earth" is the well-known result of the uprising of the Sun of righteousness in the appearing of the same blessed Person. God is with men—in Man: a consummation to which these psalms are leading on.

2. Accordingly the second part is occupied with the salvation of Israel—personated by the psalmist—and the blessing following for the earth. It begins with the recompense awarded to their enemies in divine righteousness. They have dug a pit and fallen into it. According to the eternal law of retribution, they have been taken in their own craftiness. Israel is delivered, and their

(iv.) among the nations.
(v.) God with men.
(vi.) the victory of God.

I will praise thee, Lord, among the [i]peoples:
I will sing psalms to thee among the races [of men.]
For thy mercy is [j]great unto the heavens,
and thy [k]truth unto the clouds.
Be thou [l]exalted above the heavens, O God!
thy glory over all the earth!

Ps. lviii.

[3]PSALM LVIII.

God manifested in judgment.

To the chief musician, [m]Al-tashcheth: Michtam of David.

1 (1, 2): The cause.
(i.) the question of righteousness.
(ii.) deceit and violence.

IS righteousness indeed [n]silent? do ye speak it?*
do ye [o]judge uprightly, ye sons of men?
Yea, in heart ye work [p]deceitfulness:
ye weigh out the [q]violence of your hands in the earth.

2 (3-5): The hostility of evil.
(i.) innate.
(ii.) hardening in malignity.
(iii.) shut up from external influence.

The wicked are estranged from the [r]womb:
they go astray as soon as born, [s]speaking lies.
Poison have they, like the [t]poison of a serpent:
[they are] like the deaf adder, that [u]stoppeth her ear:
Which hearkeneth not to the voice of the [v]charmers,
of one using skillful enchantment.

* Or else, "Do ye indeed speak the silence of righteousness?" or "in silence speak righteousness?" Some, to escape the difficulty, alter the pointing of one word, and say: "Do ye indeed speak righteousness, ye gods!" *i. e.*, "judges." I follow the London Translation of the Old Testament, on the basis of the French and German of J. N. Darby.

i Ps. 126.1,2. *cf.* Is. 2.1-3. *cf.* Is. 66.19.
j Ps. 36. 5. Ps. 103. 11. Mi. 7. 18.
k Ps. 119. 89, 90. *cf.* Jer. 33. 20, 21.
l ver. 5.
m Ps. 57, title.
n Is. 1. 21-23. Is. 59.14,15. Ps.94.20,21.
o Ps. 82. 2-8. Is. 59. 4. Jer. 5. 4, 5.
p Jer. 9. 1-8. Mi. 7. 3-6.
q Is. 10. 1, 2. Mi. 3. 8-12.
r Ps. 51. 5. *cf.* Matt.15. 19, 20 with Jno. 3. 3-7.
s Ps. 52. 3. Jer. 6. 13.
t Ps. 140. 3. Rom. 3. 13. *cf.* Gen. 3. 1 with John 8. 44.
u *cf.* Is. 6. 9, 10. *cf.* 1 Tim.4. 2.
v Jer. 8. 17. *cf.* Ezek.33. 31, 32. *cf.* Lk. 7. 31-34.

heart, already turned to Him, is established as His by the grace shown them. "They will sing and psalm": not only themselves praise, but make the mute things vocal;—which is just man's office as head of the lower creation. Israel's worship accordingly begins: her glory awakes; psaltery and harp awake; and this music of hers awakes the dawn of day for the whole earth. She is the herald of salvation for the nations also, the "first-born," to be followed by the later-born. She praises among the gathered peoples, and sings her psalms among the races of men.

God is with men. His *mercy* is great *unto* the heavens:—not, as before and afterwards said, His glory *above* them. The heavenly people will be witnesses of this mercy; and the parallel of His "truth unto the *clouds*" would seem to speak of heavenly influences for the earth,—whether the rule of the saints with Christ specifically, or in general the windows of heaven open, no restraint of those ministries from above, upon which all blessing for the earth depends. God is with men; but the supreme triumph of divine love is found even beyond and above this, God *in* Man, the visible glory and consummation of grace in Christ set *above* the heavens, while embracing all the earth in the lustre of His beams.

Psalm LVIII.

We have now the manifestation of God in judgment, judgment in man's hand having altogether failed. One would say that this had regard in the first place to the mass in Israel, where especially righteousness should have been found; but there does not seem any reason for confining it to these, except what may be derived from the fact of the next psalm plainly contemplating the judgment of the nations. The present one, like the last, is of very simple character, and therefore cannot receive any extended examination.

1. The first two verses show us the cause of this manifestation. Righteousness

3 (6-11): The manifestation.
(i.) in power.
(ii.) in defeat of the enemy.
(iii.) fully realized.
(iv.) vanity of the wicked.
(v.) the recompense.
(vi.) control of the evil.

O God, [w]break their teeth in their mouth:
break out the cheek-teeth of the young [x]lions, Jehovah!
They shall [y]melt as waters that run off:
when he aimeth his arrows, they shall be as [z]blunted.*
They shall be as a slug that [a]dissolveth as it goes:—
[as] the [b]untimely birth of a woman, that hath not seen the sun.
Before your pots can [c]feel the thorns,—
green or burning, they are [d]whirled away.
The righteous shall be [e]glad when he seeth the vengeance:
he shall wash his footsteps in the [f]blood of the wicked.
And men shall say, [g]Verily, there is fruit for the righteous:
verily, there is a God who [h]judgeth in the earth.

w Job 4. 8-10. Job 29. 17. Ps. 3. 7.
x Ps. 57. 4.
y Ps. 37. 9, 20, 36. Ps. 112. 10.
z Ps. 46. 9. Ps. 76. 3.
a cf. Am. 2. 9. Mal. 4. 1.
b Job 3. 16. cf. Eccl. 6. 3.
c Is. 5. 24. Ps. 64. 7. Is. 29. 5.
d Ps. 1. 4. Prov. 14. 32.
e Ps. 64. 10. cf. Jer. 51. 48. cf. Rev. 18. 20.
f Ps. 68. 23. cf. Gen. 27. 29. cf. Gen. 50. 27. cf. Esth. 9. 15, 16. Ps. 149. 6-9; Zech. 10. 5; cfr. Rom. 12. 19, 20.
g Ps. 107. 42, 43; Is. 34. 1-8.
h Is. 26. 9, 10, 11; Ps. 9. 16.

* Literally, "cut off."

is silent upon earth; and that where men profess it most, in judgments given to maintain it. God must thus Himself arise for judgment. Deceit has taken the place of uprightness in the heart; and violence is carefully weighed out, as if it were justice.

2. Then the inveterate hostility of the wicked to what is good is shown. Evil is innate in them. They are aliens from God from birth, the falsehood in which they live being wholly in opposition to His truth. The old serpent was "a liar from the beginning, and a murderer"; and with these also there is poison, serpent-like; and they harden themselves in malignity, as the adder which is reputed to stop the ear and render itself inaccessible to the charmer's voice, whatever might be his skill.

3. The judgment of God is then denounced on them. He is prayed to break out the teeth of the lions and make them powerless. And at once the psalmist foresees and predicts the judgment for which he has prayed. The hostile army melts away like waters running off; they have fought their lost battle but with headless arrows. True, a defeated army may recover itself and regain its ground; but this is like the melting of a slug, which is its irremediable dissolution; or like the untimely birth of a woman, which disappoints all the hopes that have been raised by it, and has no future. Nay, they are like thorns which have scarcely warmed the pots under which they are placed, before the sudden violence of a tempest scatters them abroad. The result is that for the righteous recompense is found at last; and men learn that there is fruit for such, and a God who in judgment can put down the rampant evil.

Psalm LIX.

The next psalm presents the visitation of the world, the last being apparently thus (and as the opening verses would seem to indicate) the judgment in Israel. Its scope is therefore far wider than its occasion would suggest, as the fifth verse plainly shows, where God is appealed to visit all the nations, and that as Jehovah, God of Israel. This agrees with their being seen where the prophecy of Zechariah and others shows them to be gathered when the Lord appears—around the city (impliedly Jerusalem).

The ninth and seventeenth verses compared show, more plainly than the last psalm, the Michtam character.

Ps. lix.

[h]PSALM LIX.

The visitation of the Gentile world.

To the chief musician, [i]Al-tasheheth, Michtam of David, [j]when Saul sent, and they watched the house to put him to death.

1 (1-5): The occasion.
(i.) the uprise.

DELIVER me from mine [k]enemies, my God:
[l]set me on high from them that are rising up against me.

(ii.) men of blood.

Deliver me from [m]workers of vanity:
and save me from [n]men of blood.

(iii.) the case laid before God.

For, lo, they [o]lie in wait for my soul:
the violent are [p]gathered against me,
[q]not for revolt or sin of mine, Jehovah.

(iv.) testing invited.

They run and prepare themselves without fault [of mine];
[r]awake to meet me, and [s]examine.*

(v.) the nations with God.

Thou, therefore, [t]Jehovah, [u]God of hosts, the [v]God of Israel, awake to visit [w]all the nations:
show not grace to any [x]plotters of iniquity. Selah.

2 (6-8): Opposed.
(i.) the disappointed pack.

They return at [y]evening; they make a [z]noise like a dog;
and they go [a]round about the city.

(ii.) their words swords.

Behold, they belch with their mouth;
[b]swords are in their lips:
for [c]who is he that heareth?

(iii.) as before Jehovah.

But thou, Jehovah, [d]laughest at them:
thou hast all the nations in derision.

* *Literally*, "see."

a cf. Ps. 48. 4, 5; *cf.* Mi. 4. 11-13; *cf.* Zech. 14. 2, 3. *b* Ps. 57. 4; *ctr.* Rev. 19. 15, 21. *c cf.* Ex. 5. 2; Ps. 10. 11-13; Ezek. 8. 12; Ezek. 9. 9. *d* Ps. 2. 4; Ps. 37. 13 with Is. 37. 22-36.

h Ps. 58, etc.
i 1 Sam. 19. 11-17.
k Ps. 64. 1. *cf.* Is. 62. 8 with Is. 66. 5, 6.
l Ps. 27. 5, 6. *cf.* Is. 33. 14-16.
m Ps. 64. 2. Ps. 92. 7, 9.
n cf. 2 Sam. 21. 1. Ps. 5. 6. Ezek. 7. 23-27.
o Ps. 10. 9. Mi. 7. 2.
p Ps. 56. 6. Ps. 140.1, 2.
q Ps. 7. 3-5. *cf.* Ps. 43. 1.
r Ps. 35. 23. *cf.* Is. 51. 9.
s cf. Ps. 139. 23.
t Ps. 50. 1.
u cf. Jer. 38. 17. *cf.* Am. 4. 13.
v cf. Jer.7.3, 21.
w Jer.10. 25. Ob. 15. Mi. 5. 15.
x Ps. 25. 3. *cf.* Is. 24.16. *cf.* Hab. 1. 13.
y cf. Zeph.3. 3, 4. *cf.* Jer. 6. 4. ver. 14.
z cf. Is. 17. 12-14.

1. The first section gives the cause (or at least the immediate occasion) of the judgment. Enemies are rising up against the psalmist, workers of vanity and men of blood. He lays his case before Jehovah, Israel's covenant-God, declaring his blamelessness in the matter. He reiterates this, and invites Him to come in and see if it be not so. Jehovah is then again invoked, and specifically as the God of Israel, to visit all the nations, and to stubborn plotters of iniquity to show no grace.

2. Then a brief section puts in contrast the parties opposed. On the one hand the enemies, like a pack of dogs, howling with disappointment, as they roam about in the evening gloom, the words upon their brave lips swords, because they apprehend no hearer. But on the other side is One who hears nevertheless, and, if He keep silence, does so as counting all the restless attempts of men for His dethronement at their proper worth. He "laughs" at them: His appreciation of their folly being put, as commonly, in strong human language. Here, then, are the contestants in this strange, abhorrent warfare of the creatures with their God.

3. They have not sanctified Him: He must therefore, perforce, for He is holy, sanctify Himself in them, and at their cost. And this, as we have seen elsewhere, and more than once, is the meaning of the "ban" (Lev. xxvii. 28, 29, *notes*). We have seen it in Hermon (Ps. xlii., *notes*) dominating, in some sense, the land of Israel. The principle of it has been enforced in Israel in the last psalm. Here we find it in the wider sphere of the Gentile nations. God hears the cry of His people, suffering at the hands of those who have cast off all restraint,—a cry which the psalmist here utters in direct appeal to Him. "My

3 (9-13): The ban upon evil.
(i.) God my strength.
(ii.) His help.
(iii.) that they may be remembered.
(iv.) their indictment for sinful ways.
(v.) and final recompense.

My strength! I [e]wait upon thee:
for God is my [f]high tower.
My God will be before me with his [g]mercy:
God shall [h]make me see [my desire] on those that watch me.
[i]Slay them not, lest my people [j]forget:
make them [k]wander, by thy power;
and bring them down, O Lord our [l]shield.
[For] the sin of their [m]mouth,—[for] the word of their lips,—
let them be taken in their [n]pride;
and for [o]cursing and lying [which] they utter.
Make an [p]end in wrath, make an end, that they be no more:
and let them [q]know that God ruleth in Jacob,
unto the [r]ends of the earth. Selah.

4 (14-17): The experience.
(i.) the disappointed pack.
(ii.) craving prey.

And so in the [s]evening they return:
they make a noise like a dog,
and go round about the city.
They wander about for [t]food,
and stay the [u]night if they be not satisfied.

e Ps. 62. 1, 2, 5. *cf.* Is. 40. 28-31.
f Ps. 9. 10. Ps. 94. 20-22.
g Ps. 57. 3. Is. 55. 3.
h Ps. 54. 7. *cf.* Is. 66. 23, 24.
i *cf.* Is. 16. 12-14.
j Ps. 106. 13.
k ver. 15. *cf.* Ezek. 29. 12-16.
l Gen. 15. 1, etc.
m *cf.* Ps. 12. 4. *cf.* 2 Pet. 2. 18. *cf.* Dan. 11. 36.
n Ps. 10. 2. *cf.* Is. 25. 11, 12.
o Ps. 10. 7.
p Is. 10. 23. Rom. 9. 28.
q Ps. 58. 11.
r *cf.* Ps. 72. 8. *cf.* Zech. 9. 9, 10.
s ver. 6. t *cf.* Ps. 14. 4; *cf.* Ps. 27. 2. u *cf.* Is. 29. 7, 8.

Strength," he cries, "I wait upon thee: for God is my high tower." Safe he will be here, lifted up upon that glorious elevation, far above the rage of his adversaries, though to human eyes right amongst them; and therefore he says, "My God will be before me with His mercy; and God shall make me see my desire on those that watch me,"—the keen-eyed wild beasts ready for a spring.

But he cares not for mere extermination; nor is it enough that the enemies should be removed. He realizes the lesson that Israel had to learn in these enemies of theirs, who both in their presence and their removal are but signs, either of divine anger or its passing away. Hasty removal would not do, therefore. The lesson must be rightly learned, so as to abide in them; for it is the lesson of sin and its bitter fruit. "Slay them not," therefore, he says: not meaning that that is not to be in the end, for presently he will be found saying the opposite of that; but keep them sufficiently before the eyes of the people so that the lesson of their doom may take effect: for it is still the lesson of divine holiness and of sin's necessary judgment. "Slay them not, lest my people forget: make them wander by thy power; and bring them down, O Lord our shield." Thus it would be their own doom for so many centuries, that would be repeated in the case of these their enemies.—an impressive reminder of God's equal ways.

Their indictment follows, *their* ways, which invite and necessitate judgment: the sin of their mouth, the pride of their heart, their profanity and falsehood. For this comes at last the full recompense, not indeed the eternal judgment, but as to the earth which they have polluted with their misdeeds, and which now in its own interests casts them forth. At last it shall be known, even by them, in the blow that falls upon them, that there is a God who rules in Jacob—none the less plainly when he is seen as "Jacob"; and also to the ends of the earth. In this utter consumption from the earth, the ban is fully executed.

4. In the last section of the psalm we have the experience, the brief rehearsal by delivered Israel, of the story in its simplest elements. Again we see the hungry dogs uttering in the twilight their howl of disappointment; the lusts that crave and conquer and madden them for the prey that after all passes out of their reach. The evening deepens into night, and still the dogs are there; but morning comes and joy, and the phantoms of the night are vanished. In the

(iii.) the morning-praise.

But *I* will [v]sing of thy power:
yea, I will sing aloud in the [w]morning of thy mercy:
for thou hast been my high tower and refuge,
in the [x]day of my strait.

(iv.) of One tested and proved.

Unto thee, my strength, will I psalm:
for God [hath been] my [y]high tower, my merciful God.

v Ps. 27. 6.
w Ps. 49. 14. Ps. 57. 8. *cf.* Hos. 6. 1-3.
x Ps. 9. 9. Nah. 1. 7.
y ver. 9.

morning they sing aloud of the mercy that has been with them. God has abundantly fulfilled their prayer. He has been their high tower and refuge in the day of their strait. Well may the "Michtam" ending speak of it as what shall now be forever on their hearts: "Unto Thee, my Strength, I will sing: for God *has been* my high tower,—my merciful God."

Psalm LX.

The closing psalm of this Michtam series fills very plainly its place as a fifth psalm. It speaks on the one hand of disciplinary dealings of God with His people under which they have suffered, and on the other, of God turning again to be with them, after the discipline has done its work. Again, it is a Deuteronomic psalm, as contemplating restored Israel, like the Israel of the wilderness of old, just ready to enter upon her inheritance in the land, to "divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth." This also shows, as we saw in the last one, how far beyond the immediate occasion which prompted them, these prophetic psalms reach. To "*divide* Shechem" supposes a new occupancy of the land, such as could not, one would say, at all connect with the Syro-Edomitish war to which the title refers; and such inapplicable things in an inspired composition may well have been permitted expressly to prevent the thought of the immediate application being the whole or the main thing. And this is the case probably with all prophecies. The Spirit of God makes the object which is immediately in view to stand for some object connected with that final consummation, to which as a matter of hope or warning He is constantly directing our attention,—on which all prophetic lines converge. Thus it is that Peter gives us as of primary importance his noted canon of hermeneutics, that "no prophecy of the Scripture is of private"—literally, "its own"—"interpretation." To detach it from the general body of the prophetic Scripture is necessarily to misread it, and pervert it from its proper place and use.

Shushan-eduth, "the lily of testimony," in the title here, naturally carries us back to the forty-fifth psalm, with its "lilies"—*shoshannim*. And it is as natural to think of the fourth verse here in explanation of the "testimony": "Thou hast given a banner to them that fear Thee, that they may stand up because of the truth." As the forty-fifth psalm also is "a song of the beloved" or "of loves," so here the fifth verse follows the fourth with the prayer, "that thy beloved ones may be delivered." Israel is evidently the "lily of the testimony"; and it is "among the thorns,"—in tribulation, out of which it is brought in triumph by the power and grace of God.

"*Michtam* of David, to teach," is surely not difficult to understand, if the character of every *michtam* was epigrammatic, and to give maxims of faith, worthy to be durably engraved upon the memory. If this be the purport of it also, some special emphasis must be put upon the "teaching" in this case, which would suit well also with the character of this psalm, previously noticed, as a deuteronomic fifth.

The psalm has twelve verses, altered from the usual division into 4 x 3 by the shortening of the second section by one verse, which is added to the last one.

1. The first section is the language of conviction on the part of the latter-day remnant, speaking for the nation. They own that in the ruin into which they have been brought, God's hand has been against them. It is He who has cast

Ps. lx.

[5]PSALM LX.

The presence of God with His people after disciplinary dealings.

To the chief musician, upon [z]Shushan-eduth: Michtam of David, to teach: [a]when he strove with the Syrians of Mesopotamia, and with the Syrians of Zobah: when Joab returned, and smote of Edom in the valley of salt, twelve thousand.*

1 (1-3): Conviction. (i.) of abandonment. (ii.) convulsion. (iii.) the inner realization.

O GOD, thou hast [b]cast us off, thou hast [c]scattered us:
thou hast been [d]angry: [e]restore us again!
Thou hast made the land to [f]tremble,
thou hast rent it:
[g]heal the breaches thereof, for it shaketh.
Thou hast made thy people experience† hard things:
thou hast given us to [h]drink the wine of trembling.

2 (4, 5): The appeal for deliverance. (i.) on account of identification with the truth of God.

Thou hast given a [i]standard to them that fear thee,
that they may [j]stand up because of truth. Selah.

* In 2 Sam. viii. 12 (*q. v.*) the victory is in the Hebrew copies over Aram (Syria), but "Edom" is manifestly right. It is ascribed there also to David as king, instead of Joab as general; of whom Abishai (named in 1 Chron. xviii. 12) was probably the lieutenant. The difference in numbers also (Sam. and Chron., eighteen thousand) may be the difference between those slain in the main battle, as compared with the whole contest.

† *Literally*, "see."

z Ps. 80, title.
a *cf.* 2 Sam. 8. 1–14. *cf.* 1 Chr. 18. 1–13.
b Ps. 44. 9. Ps. 89. 38–45. *cf.* Rom. 11. 1–5, 25, 26.
c *cf.* Is. 5. 5–7.
d Ps. 74. 1–3. *cf.* Is. 12. 1.
e Ps. 85. 1–7. Jer. 12. 15. Zech. 10. 6–12.
f *cf.* Is. 24. 18–20. *cf.* Jer. 4. 23–29. *cf.* Ezek. 38. 19–23.
g Is. 30. 26. Jer. 30. 17. Hos. 6. 1–3.
h Ps. 75. 8. Is. 51. 17 Jer. 25. 15–18. Ezek. 23. 31–35. *ctr.* Is. 51. 21–23.
i *cf.* Ex. 17. 15; *cf.* Is. 11. 10–12; *cf.* Is. 49. 22.
j *cf.* Zech. 9. 16.

them off and scattered them: *He* has been displeased. They own it,—own, therefore, their guilt, and plead for restoration.

The figures of the second verse are those of an earthquake which has rent the land, and with which it is still shaking. An earthquake is a common figure of social convulsions, which, though they come from beneath, are signs of divine displeasure. All the bonds that unite men together have their security in that which unites them to God. Let this be broken through, there must be "breaches" between man and man; the blow which shatters the political fabric coming from below—from the volcanic heavings of fermenting elements that lie everywhere below the surface, the passions of men ready always to discharge themselves, if the repression of the divine hand be removed. "Earthquakes in divers places" the Lord associates with other signs of the approaching end (Matt. xxiv. 7); and the sympathy between man and nature (which has been commonly recognized, but which the occupation with mere material causes leads men to overlook or deny) may well manifest itself in literal outbreaks of this nature. God warns man who will not otherwise hear, by such appeals to his grosser senses; real intelligence would find in them, beyond this, the parables of divine speech.

The convulsions of the land the psalmist interprets in their inner meaning. It is the wine of trembling which God has been causing His people to drink. He has given them up to intoxication, to find the strength of a cup sweet enough to the taste at first, in result the confusion of all their faculties.

2. But there is still ground of appeal to God, and that in effect because of His whole nature. His truth and His love abide, and may be the sure confidence of His people in their distress. The psalmist has already uttered that word, "Thy people," a relationship which for long Israel has had no right to claim. But when they shall accept the punishment for their iniquity, then shall their faithful God be ready with His mercy, as He has promised. For "it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations whither Jehovah thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto Jehovah thy God, and shalt obey His voice according to all that I have commanded thee this

(ii.) save Thy beloved.

That thy *beloved ones may be delivered,
save with thy †right hand, and answer me.

k Deu. 7. 7, 8. Deu. 33. 3. Hos. 11. 1, 4. Jer. 31. 3; Zeph. 3. 17; Ps. 108. 6-13. *l* Ps. 17. 7; Is. 41. 10.

day, thou and thy children, with all thy heart and with all thy soul, that then Jehovah thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee" (Deut. xxx. 1-3).

Thus and in these circumstances will Israel be able to claim God as their God in the days to which these psalms, as we have seen, look forward. And thus the psalmist can now speak of a "standard" which God has put into the hands of those that fear Him, that they may "up-standard themselves," as Delitzsch puts it, "because of the truth." It is hard to express the thought without circumlocution, in English; but the giving them a standard acknowledges them in their corporate relationship,—puts them together, makes of a defeated rabble an army,—and, by His doing it, takes them once more as His own. So that now in lifting the standard, they lift themselves up,—they stand up: they are nationalized again, as really the people of God.

The last words here, "because of truth," are difficult because of their abstract character. The word (*qoshet**) occurs only once beside (Ps. xxii. 21), where it is translated "certainty"; and the Chaldaic form is found twice in Daniel (ii. 47; iv. 37), in both cases rendered "truth." These passages favor the meaning suggested by the context, that it refers to the absolute fidelity of God to the word He has spoken. His immutable promise is indeed itself a standard under which they may gather with perfect assurance: it is "exact, precise truth," as Schultens renders it, "weighed, as it were, in the evenest balance."

But *truth* does not dwell alone, with God. His heart goes with it. So the psalmist has another plea,—an appeal to the other side of the divine nature: "that Thy *beloved* ones may be delivered, save with Thy right hand, and answer me." How good to know that God has a heart; and that, not a Master, but a Father's arms, welcome the wanderers! It is the same story essentially, whether we read it in the Old Testament or in the New: for God is the same; only in the New Testament the sun has burst through all the clouds. God was always Light: He now is "*in* the light."

3. Possession of the land is at once anticipated. "God has spoken in His holiness: I will rejoice; I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth." God has spoken in His *holiness:* in His grace to them surely, but grace has brought them into true-hearted subjection to Him, so that it is in holiness He can act for them. Israel is in fact now to be the proclaimer of divine holiness to the ends of the earth. But divine favor towards Israel is inseparably connected with their possession of the land; at once therefore they anticipate this. They are going to divide Shechem on the west of Jordan, and the valley of Succoth on the east side: to take possession of both sides of the river. Only these two places are named; but these imply that all the rest is theirs. Shechem and Succoth do not indeed at first sight seem like representative places, especially the latter; and yet in some sense they must be: there must be some special suitability in them to express the divine thought as to this re-possession of what they had lost before. They are not again to lose it; and notice, to begin with, that they are now in the track of their father Abraham. Jacob's name connects itself with both places; but his record in connection with them is one of failure, and has no pleasant memory attaching to it. In Abraham's case it is far otherwise. Shechem is the first place in which he rests after reaching the land, and there it is that he has the first promise *of the land itself.* Shechem means "shoulder," which Issachar afterwards (like the nation hitherto) "bowed, to bear, and became a servant for tribute," imposed by masters which he had preferred to God.

* The Septuagint reads "the bow" (*qesheth* instead of *qoshet*), and of course changes the whole meaning: "Thou hast given a token to them that fear thee, that they might *flee from the bow.*" This it is needless to discuss, as it has no probability in its favor; though the Vulgate follows it, and such critics as Cheyne naturally prefer it.

3 (6-8): Possession anticipated. (1.) from the divine promise.

God hath spoken in his [m]holiness:
I will exult, I will [n]divide [o]Shechem,
and mete out the [p]valley of Succoth.

19. 51 with Ezek. 47. 13-23. Josh. 13. 27; *cf.* Is. 40. 1, 2.

o Gen. 12. 6, 7; Gen. 33. 18-20; *cf.* Ps. 110. 3.

m cf. Ps. 89. 35. Ex. 15. 11. Ps. 93. 5.

n cf. Josh.

p Gen. 33. 17;

Abraham bows his shoulder to God at the oak Moreh, ("instructor,") to learn of Him, and to find blessing at His hand. Shechem stands thus for the spirit of obedience, as it was in fact afterward the place at which Israel heard the law, with its blessings and curses, proclaimed when they entered the land under Joshua. The history soon showed indeed that they knew not the meaning of it; but when they enter the land under the *new* covenant, it will be with the law written upon their heart. The spirit of obedience will now therefore be fully theirs; so that they will for the first time be able to take complete possession of (or "divide") Shechem. How could their tenure of the land under the "new covenant," and in fulfillment (for the first time really) of the promise given to Abraham *there*, be better expressed?

But what of the "valley of Succoth"? There seems no reference here to the history at all: there is no notice of it except in that part of Jacob's which seems to be failure throughout. On the other hand, the types speak with the clearest and most beautiful significance. Succoth means "booths" or "tabernacles"; and it is the word used for that "feast of tabernacles" which is the last of Israel's sacred year, and which, as the commemoration of their wilderness wanderings as ended, by those now in the land, carries them on in figure to those millennial days in which their longer wanderings as strangers among the Gentiles shall be over forever, and their final rest be come. Thus Succoth follows Shechem here in a most beautiful manner, and the two together establish the prophetic meaning of the psalm conclusively.

But now the tribes appear as if gathering to enter upon their inheritance. Again, only representative names are given. "Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of my head; Judah is my lawgiver." Four names only are here; and of these Gilead is only part of Manasseh. They must be surely significant, as those preceding them have been seen to be: as, let us rather say, everything in Scripture is. Let us try to learn the significance.

Gilead is given by Gesenius as meaning, "hard, rocky"; but there seems, on the other hand, reason for connecting it rather with Jacob's Galeed (Gen. xxxi. 47), "a heap of witness." It would be thus in remarkable antithesis with Manasseh, with which it is linked, and which means "forgetting." A heap of witness is for the very purpose of making forgetfulness impossible.

Manasseh as the natural first-born of Joseph we have read elsewhere (Gen. xlviii., *notes*) as the first principle of spiritual "increase.": "*forgetting* that which is behind," says the apostle, "I press on." But Manasseh has a son, Machir, who is the father of Gilead, and whose name approaches his as closely as possible, meaning "one who recollects." Spiritually, there is no incongruity with all this contrariety: we forget what is behind in order to keep in remembrance what our goal is; and thus one springs out of the other. "The memorial heap" also, as Fausset well observes, "marked the crisis in Jacob's life, when he became severed from his Syrian kindred, and henceforth a sojourner in and heir of Canaan."

Gilead it is we have here, and not Machir; and then it is to be considered that Gilead is not just Galeed, even though the meaning be identical, as indeed the words are. A heap of witness is that we may not forget, but the tribe-name means forgetting: here, as we have seen, Israel is ending her long history of sin and sorrow, to enter into possession of her glorious future—her home with God. On the one hand, what more natural than the desire to forget so sad a story? And this, too, the God of grace has provided for by the sweet assurance pictured for Israel in her day of atonement, when the scapegoat bears the sins of the people into a "land cut off." And this brings once again the new covenant before us, in which God says, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

(II.) the allied tribes.

[q] Gilead is mine, and [r] Manasseh is mine;
[s] Ephraim also is the strength of my head;
[t] Judah is my ruler.

[q] Gen. 31. 47–53. Num. 32. 39, 40. cf. Zech. 10. 10; cf. Ezek. 16. 60–63; cf. 2 Cor. 5. 10. [r] Josh. 17. 1–11; cf. Ezek. 48. 4; cf. Gen. 41. 51 with Is. 65. 16–18. [s] Josh. 16; cf. Is. 11. 13; cf. Jer. 31. 9, 18–20; cf. Hos. 14. 8. [t] Gen. 49. 10; Josh. 15; cf. Joel 3. 1; cf. Is. 60. 6, 18.

And many have a difficulty in reconciling this with such a scripture as that which Ecclesiastes ends with, that "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." This is, of course, the Old Testament: but the New has what is similar, and in express application to Christians: "For we must all appear"—or "be made manifest"—"before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. v. 10).

That this is a very different thing from the judgment of the person "according to his works," which is the principle of the final judgment at the "great white throne" (Rev. xx. 11, 12), should be well known to every reader of his Bible now. "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me," says the Lord, "hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life" (Jno. v. 24, *Gk.*). And the same chapter of Revelation shows that a thousand years before the great white throne those that belong to the first resurrection have found their blessed "part" with Christ, and reign with Him. This has been so often repeated, that I only refer to it in this place. Scripture never confounds, as many Christians do, the saint with the sinner with regard to judgment to come, nor the "resurrection of life" with the "resurrection of judgment" (John v. 29).

Yet there will be a judgment of works for the saint, though not a judgment *by* works; a review of things done in the body, and proportionate reward or loss, according as the works which "come into judgment" abide or cannot abide that solemn manifestation. Just in this way will the precious blood of Christ be manifested also, in all its saving power, for the believer. Nothing need be hidden, nothing shall be hidden: grace shall be seen in its full glory in the presence of the sins which have stained the best life ever lived among mere men. Reward that might have been may not be, but that which depends upon the work of Christ alone cannot be lost, if that work fail not.

All shall be manifested:—to ourselves how great a gain! when the story of our lives shall be fully told, and all God's ways with us seen in view of our own ways. Then to have the lives of others bared before us as our own lives, and to see the equal yet various dealings of God with all! The wisdom of all time,—the harvests of all seasons,—the full store garnered up of all that had seemed to be passed away,—who would lose such riches, that once knew their value? Nay, we shall never lose them: nothing passes, nothing is lost in all eternity; our memories will be as deathless as all else: how else could knowledge of redemption itself be left to us? or how could the praises of the redeemed go on without diminution?

The psalm does not go beyond time, the earth, and Israel; but the same principles are found in it: Gilead and Manasseh abide together. Divine love will put away their sins in such sort that the sunshine of God's favor towards them shall never know the shadow of a passing cloud; and yet the lessons of their past shall abide with them ever: the "heap of witness" shall do its blessed work. The psalmist's voice, representing that of the nation, claims both Gilead and Manasseh. The perfect memory of the one and the forgetfulness of the other,—learned both of Him who unites them in His necessary perfection—shall be found characterizing those who go back into the land to possess it according to the perfect grace of His covenant of promise.

This unites itself, moreover, with the present verse in a very striking way: for of what does "the valley of Succoth" speak, but of the *past*, as looked back upon from the full blessing reached? Succoth, the "booths," refers to the wilderness-

(iii.) the full inheritance.

"Moab is my wash-pot:
upon *Edom I cast my shoe:
*Philistia, cry out because of me!

u Num. 24. 17, 18. Is. chps. 15 and 16. cf. 1 Cor. 5. 1-13 with 2 Cor. 7. 8-11. v 2 Sam. 8. 14; Obadiah; cf. 2 Cor. 10. 5 with Rom. 6. 6. w Jer. 47. 1-7; Zech. 9. 5-8; cf. Gal. 6. 12-16.

history which is for them now ended; and in these they lived, as it were, their life there over again. Their Succoths were, in short, a kind of Gilead for them.

"Ephraim also is the strength of my head," continues the speaker. "Fruitful" Ephraim, with her "myriads" of people, assured her by her prophet-lawgiver, would enable Israel to lift up the head. "As arrows in the hand of a mighty man," says one of the songs of degrees, "so are children of the youth: happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them; they shall not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate." The blessings on the head of Joseph, enlarged upon both by Jacob and Moses, show how perfectly Ephraim fulfills the name.

But the spiritual meaning shines through here also, and will be realized when Israel, redeemed from the barrenness of her past history, shall bring forth fruit to God. The barrenness of the past has been a fruitful argument only on the lips of scoffers, as the apostle assures them, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you" (Rom. ii. 24): a principle of universal application to the barren professor. Conversely, the apostle brings forward the fruitfulness of divine grace in the soul to establish it, and to "assure our hearts before Him. For if our heart condemn us," he urges, "God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight" (1 John iii. 19-22). Thus every way "Ephraim is the strength of the head."

But "Judah is my ruler;" and this, too, carries us back to Jacob's blessing. The spirit of worship, of which Judah speaks, is that which alone gives God Himself His throne among men. How these psalms themselves, which the arrogant folly of a critic like Cheyne would deny to David, show this character—a praise which ever enthrones God! And this is what fits him for his own place on that *representative* throne, which was, as such, the "throne of Jehovah" (1 Chron. xxix. 23). Thus also the "Son of David" who is also David's Lord, is He whose voice is heard saying, "In the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee." In Him the two thrones come together in a perfect concord, never to be broken.

Israel is now in condition to receive, therefore, the full inheritance which she has never yet received. In her most triumphant days, Moab, Edom, the Philistines, lay within what was her territory according to the original promise. The first two, indeed, were expressly spared by their divine Leader, along with Ammon, the other son of Lot, and the lands they then possessed were retained to them. But this was only temporarily; for they never turned to God; and their judgment is denounced upon them by the prophets from Balaam on. "The residue of My people shall spoil them, and the remnant of My people shall possess them," says the Lord by Zephaniah (ii. 9).

Ammon is not mentioned here; but Moab, Edom, and Philistia, are; and, first of all, Moab: "Moab is my wash-pot."

When they were just upon the border of the land, at the time of their first entrance, Moab had been the guilty defiler of the people of God. Upon Midian, its ally in this, summary judgment had been executed, as we know; but Moab had escaped at that time.

"God," however, "requireth that which is past," and the deed of ancient times seems to come here into remembrance. There had, of course, been meanwhile no repentance. Israel, by summary judgment upon the seducer, washes herself clean at last.

In fact also, that which Moab seems to answer to passes away from Israel in judgment at this time. If Moab stands, as I doubt not, for mere profession (see

4 (9-12): Weakness waiting upon God. (i.) the strength to be met. (ii.) the breach that has existed. (iii.) shut up to God. (iv.) the experience looked for.

Who will bring me into the [x]strong city?
who will lead me into Edom?
Wilt not [y]thou, O God, who didst cast us off?
and didst [z]not go forth, O God, with our hosts?
Give us [a]help out of strait:
for [b]vain is help of man.
Through God we shall do [c]valiantly:
and *he* shall [d]tread down our oppressors.

x Ps. 31. 21. Ezek. 25.12-14.
y ver. 1. *cf.* Is. 63. 1-6.
z *cf.* Josh. 7. 11, 12. *cf.* Is. 59. 1-19.
a Ps. 44. 26.
b Ps. 146. 3. Is. 2. 22; Jer. 3. 23.
c Ps. 118. 15, 16.
d Ps. 44. 5; Zech. 10. 5.

Deut. ii. 8–23, *notes*), then we have the express statement of Isaiah to that effect. "And it shall come to pass that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem, when the Lord shall have *washed away* the filth of the daughter of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning" (chap. iv. 3, 4).

How great a defilement indeed is the mere presence of unbelievers in the midst of the people of God! A wonder it is that, even in dead Sardis, a few should be found who had not defiled their garments (Rev. iii. 4). And the mere touch of death defiled in Israel. Familiar the word is, (but oh how it requires to be repeated in dull ears to-day!) "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? and what part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever? . . . wherefore come out from among them, and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father to you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor. vi. 14–18.) Measure the defilement here by the penalty implied, and what must it be in the sight of God?

Israel is cleansed now in this respect, and of necessity growing into her inheritance. Edom must next give place. The casting the shoe upon it is the sign of taking forcible possession. Edom, the enemy-brother, yields and is displaced. Typically, the old man yields to the new. And with Edom conquered, Philistia bursts into a cry of pain. Typically, this is simple: for Philistia, as we have seen in constant and progressive pictures, (Gen. xx., xxvi., Josh. xiii., Judges ix., 1 Sam. xvii., 2 Sam. v. 17–25; xxi. 15–22; *notes*) is the religion of the flesh, which passes away with the "old man's" judgment. These things would take long to unfold in any proper manner, and scarcely need, for one who has learned the meaning of the scriptures just referred to. They will be found to give one consistent meaning throughout—consistent as truth ever is, and with this consistency on every side, as only truth can be.

That Israel is beginning to fill out her divine limits is plain in the letter of it; but this is only the anticipation of faith, as we see by the final section.

4. The sudden *drop* in the closing part, as a fourth section emphasized in its four verses, need not surprise us. Nor is it needless, this emphasis that is laid upon the human weakness which shuts us up to God for the accomplishment of every hope. It is the creature taking the creature-place, which is, after all, its perfection as such. God is *able* now on His side to come in and act for us.

All is very simple here. The strength of the enemy is first glanced at: Petra, the rock city of Edom, being pre-eminently strong. They must be *led* into it by One who has the key to its closed door. But He! alas for the breach that has come in there! Yet, this owned, will He not act for them, shut up to Him as they are, in the vanity of all other hope? Surely He will: when did *He* fail those whom all else had failed? Nay, out of this utter weakness comes our strength; and the apostle is here one with the poor remnant of Israel. Experience shall make good their confidence:—"Through God we shall do valiantly: for *He* shall tread down our oppressors."

With this, the assurance of faith is complete: the Michtam series of psalms ends.

SUBD. 3. (Ps. lxi.-lxxii.)

Christ the Restorer.

SECTION 1. (Ps. lxi.-lxviii.)

The Head of Blessing.

Ps. lxi.

[1]PSALM LXI.

The King's vows.

To the chief musician; upon a stringed instrument: [a psalm] of David.

1 (1-4): The King identifying Himself with the remnant. (i.) His claim. (ii.) rejected of the people.

HEAR my loud [e]cry, O God;
attend unto my prayer!
From the [f]end of the earth do I call unto thee when my heart is [g]oppressed:
lead me to a [h]rock that is higher than I!

e Ps. 17. 1.
f *cf.* Ps. 42. 6 with Heb. 4. 15.
g Ps. 102, title. Ps. 142. 2,3. *cf.* Lam. 2. 11, 12, 19.
h Ps. 18. 2. Ps. 40. 2. *cf.* Ps. 42. 9.

SUBD. 3.

The third subdivision now returns to Christ as its theme, but to present Him in a very different way from the first. He is here the Restorer, as we see especially in the sixty-ninth psalm, which is in fact the trespass- or restitution-offering: He there restoring what He took not away. But from the very first psalm here we see Him identifying Himself with His people, taking up their lost cause, and ending with blessing for them of which men unfallen never could have dreamed. In the sixty-eighth psalm, which closes the first series here, He ascends up on high, leading captivity captive, and receiving gifts for men; and on earth, we find in the sixty-fifth, Immanuel fulfilling His Name, and the resulting blessing.

There are two sections in this subdivision: the first, of eight psalms, in which we have Christ as the Representative Head of His people, undertaking for them, and bringing them into the fruit of this: while the second shows once more, in the sixty-ninth, the Cross as the foundation of all for men; with, in the psalms following, Israel renewing her youth, and the glorious reign of her great King, which is the consummation of David's prayers, and of the promise to him. With this the book ends.

Sec. 1.

In the eight psalms of the first section we have the new covenant number; and they carry us fully into the new covenant blessing; while the Mediator of the New Covenant is seen throughout. Of the eight verses of the first psalm here the same thing may be said. It is the inspired introduction to it.

PSALM LXI.

In this, accordingly, we find the King's vows—vows taken up and fulfilled in place of Israel's, which have failed so utterly of fulfillment. The thirtieth chapter of Numbers will be found instructive as to this (see the notes). The title of the psalm has significantly here, *al neginah*, "upon a stringed instrument," instead of the usual plural, *al neginoth*. One Hand alone is upon the strings at this time. We may be assured, it is the hand of One who is a Master in harmony, amply sufficient to make all creation responsive. We have already heard Him say, "In the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee." And that this is in direct connection with His vow, both the twenty-second psalm (ver. 25) and the present one assure us: "So will I psalm unto Thy Name for aye: that I may daily perform my vows."

1. The identification of the King with His people is the explanation of the first part of the psalm. The voice is like that with which the book began, as being the cry of an outcast, "from the end of the earth," which may be "of the land," but is perhaps better given its whole depth of meaning. We find as we

(iii.) God the sanctuary.

(iv.) a Sojourner in the Tent.

2 (5-7): Answered with help.

(i.) the vows of the Head.

For thou hast been a [f]refuge for me:
a tower of strength from the face of the [g]enemy.
I will sojourn in thy [k]tent for ever:
I will take refuge in the [l]covert of thy wings. Selah.

For thou, O God, hast heard my [m]vows:
thou hast given me the [n]possession of those that fear thy name.

f Ps. 62. 7, 8. *cf.* Joel 3. 16.
g Ps. 17. 9. *cfr.* Mt. 26. 53, 54. *cf.* Jno. 19. 10, 11.
k *cf.* Ps. 15. 1. *cf.* Is. 33. 20-22. *cf.* Rev. 21. 3.
l Ps. 17. 8; Ps. 63. 7; Ps. 91. 4; *cfr.* Matt. 23. 37.
m *cf.* Lev. 27. 1-33; *cf.* Num. 6. 2, etc.; *cf.* Num. 30. 1, etc.; Ps. 22. 25.
n *cf.* Is. 60. 21; *cf.* Is. 65. 8-10.

go on, that the voices are not the same; but the connection between them is full of significance. The Speaker here is pleading to be heard, to gain attention, to be led to a Rock that is higher than He. As the Representative of those whose case He has taken up, we can understand this, and we have heard Him thus crying out of lower depths than this. And immediately God is owned as His sanctuary-refuge, "a tower of strength from the face of the enemy." As one exposed to danger, He finds His shelter where man must ever find it, "under the covert of Thy wings."

When we realize the Person that is here, there is a remarkable and blessed word which He utters, which cannot be left unnoticed. "I will sojourn in Thy tent for ever," He says. The last word is *olamim*, "ages," but which is applied to the ages of eternity; and there can hardly be a doubt of its meaning in this case. The use of the plural form is, I think, as we may say, pictorial,—to make emphatic that measureless duration; all the more significant in contrast with the thought of a "tent" and "sojourner," in the same sentence.

But the tent is God's, and must contemplate that which He pitches among men, and which, though it be a "tent," in view of the glory of Him who dwells in it, does not necessarily imply any transience of the abode of the glory in it. For in relation to the new earth, and therefore the eternal state, we have in Revelation exactly the same expression: "The tent of God shall be with men, and He will tent among them" (chap. xxi. 3, *Gk.*): the thing said over twice, after the peculiar emphatic manner that we find in John, and which is the sweet divine assurance of what might seem for man too good to be true.

Thus God abides forever in a "tent," manifesting Himself in infinite condescension to His creatures in such a manner as that they shall know Him in the intimacy of perfect grace. This indeed the humanity of Christ already pledges to us. The Word made flesh could be no temporary condition, nor an isolated, however glorious, witness to the love of God. Rather must its witness be maintained and justified in all things being made conformable to it. The very throne is characterized thus as "the throne of God and the Lamb." The Lamb thus governs all; and the tent of God among men shows how this is to be realized, not simply by the saints in heaven, but by the inhabitants of earth also,—when once the banishment of sin from the earth shall make this possible.

But if this "tent" of God speak of final earthly blessing, how sweetly does the voice of Him who in this psalm is seen acquainted with the trials and sorrows of men, echo and confirm this grace! "I," He says, "will sojourn in Thy tent for ever": if Thou art pleased to have a tent, and sojournest, I too will be a sojourner; and not apart from this, but in the tent in which Thou sojournest, there will I sojourn! Blessed Lord, no wonder that when Thou wast born upon earth, the angels heralded Thee with "on earth peace, good pleasure in men"!

2. In the three verses following, which are thus the normal division of a seven, the eighth verse following not interfering with this, as we know, the same Speaker declares therefore the answer to His vows, in the "possession of those that fear God's Name" being given to Him. His vows are in behalf of these; He takes His place as their Head and Representative; and their blessing comes

(ii.) prolonged years.

(iii.) In the presence of God.

3 (8): The vows fulfilled.

Ps. lxii.

1 (1-2): God only, (i.) as source of salvation. (ii.) and assurance of the soul.

Thou wilt °add days to the ᵖking's days:
his years [shall be] as [those of] ᑫsuccessive generations.*
He shall ʳdwell in the presence of God for ever:
appoint loving-kindness and truth to ˢpreserve him.

So will ᵗI psalm unto thy name for aye:
that I may daily ᵘperform my vows.

ᵛPSALM LXII.

God his dependence for deliverance from men, his enemies.

To the chief musician; to ᵛJeduthun: a psalm of David.

MY soul ʷwaiteth only upon God:
from him is my ˣsalvation.
He only is my ʸrock and my salvation:
[he is] my high place; I shall not be ᶻmuch moved.

o Ps. 21. 4.
p Ps. 20. 9. Ps. 21. 1, 7. Ps. 45. 1. Ps. 72. 1. Is. 32. 1.
q Ps. 45. 17. Ps. 72. 17. *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 17.
r Ps. 16. 11. Ps. 23. 6.
s Ps. 16. 1. Ps. 40. 11.
t Ps. 21. 1. Ps. 22. 22.
u ver. 5.
v 1 Chr. 16. 39–42. Ps. 39, 77, titles.
w Ps. 40. 1. Ps. 69. 3.
x Ps. 21. 1, 5. Ps. 69. 29. *cf.* Lk. 22. 39–45.
y Ps. 61. 2, etc.
z *cf.* Mt. 26. 38, 39; *cf.* Jno. 12. 27; *cf.* Heb. 5. 7, 8.

* "Generation and generation."

through Him who has interposed for them. He openly takes accordingly the King's place, with days "added" to the "shortened days" (Ps. cii.) of a life that was for their sake "taken from the earth" (Acts viii. 33). The prophet Isaiah, of whose words this is the Septuagint version, beautifully supplements and explains these "added days," which at first have a strange look in connection with this glorious Person: "Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him: He hath put Him to grief: when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, *He shall prolong His days*, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in His hand" (liii. 10). And these prolonged days are not to be simply the still limited days of a merely human life lengthened beyond the natural time: "His years shall be as those of successive generations." The peculiar words show how He still clings to men.

The next verse shows how the kingdoms of earth and of heaven, for so long separated, have come together. "He"—this blessed King—"shall dwell in the presence of God forever." No fear of a breach any more. And the latter part of the verse intimates that this is the voice of the people breaking in. Well may they, not doubtfully, but with the full accord of hearts filled with the prospect before them, cry: "Appoint loving-kindness and truth to preserve Him!"*

3. With the eighth verse the original voice takes up the word again, and the concord of different speakers has fitness and beauty. "So will I psalm unto Thy Name forever," He says: "that I may daily perform My vows."

For it is to glorify God in the face of sin and rebellion that He has come in, lifting up the fallen and sustaining in its place the new creation, with henceforth no failure. Thus His "vows," which began to be fulfilled in His life on earth, and then in His atoning death, shall still be performed by Him as the Leader of the unending praise that shall fill eternity. And there shall not be a dull note there: no heart but shall be tuned to full harmony with His. Blessed be God!

Psalm LXII.

The first psalm of the series has already brought us to the end of it; and this is the common way with Scripture introductions: the beginning has in it the

* The verse as it stands in the ordinary text has, however, some difficulty. A few Hebrew MSS. put *min* instead of *man*, but then the preposition cannot stand alone, and Coleman therefore proposes a different division of the letters of the two words that come together (originally written *without* division), and to read thus, "mercy and faithfulness *from Me* preserve Him." It would thus be the divine voice and not that of the people. The Septuagint reads again differently, and other alterations have been proposed.

2 (3, 4): Man in hostility.
(i.) united.
(ii.) deception.

How long will ye [a]assail a man?
—break him down, all of you,
as a [b]bowing wall, a tottering fence?
They only [c]consult to thrust him from his [d]elevation:
they delight in [e]lying:
with their mouth they [f]bless, and inwardly they curse. Selah.

3 (5-8): God the sanctuary-refuge.
(i.) God only,
(ii.) Saviour.
(iii.) refuge.

Only upon God [g]wait thou, my soul:
for my [h]expectation is from him.
He only is my rock and my salvation:
[he is] my high place; I shall not be moved.
With God is my salvation and my [i]glory:
the rock of my strength, my [j]refuge is in God:

a cf. Mt. 12. 14.
b cf. Ps. 41. 8. cf. Ps. 71. 10, 11.
c cf. Jno. 11. 53.
d cf. Mt. 22. 15-46. cf. Mt. 4. 1-11.
e Ps. 4. 2. cf. Mt. 26. 59, 60.
f cf. Ps. 28. 3. cf. Jer. 9. 8. cf. Mt. 22. 16. cf. Mt. 26. 49.
g vv. 1, 2.
h Ps 71. 5. cf. Lk. 23. 46 with 1 Pet. 1. 21.
i cf. Acts 3. 13.
j Ps. 16. 1.

final issue; the fruit is in that sense in the seed. God, who sees the end from the beginning, brings it out.

But here, therefore, we go back, and are in very different circumstances. We may infer from the general character of the series that the speaker is the same; but there is nothing apparently to indicate it. As a second psalm it is full of contrast, affirming his dependence on God alone, and the reason of this dependence; which makes him emphasize what man is, whose enmity he is experiencing. The psalm is thus very simple in character, and only bright in its confidence in God. It resembles in its lament over the vanity of man the thirty-ninth psalm, with which it is united by its title; here, however, not "to" but strictly "upon Jeduthun," (the praise-giver); though this is taken as the equivalent of the other. It is indeed one of those "songs in the night" which show God's mastery over the evil, and which yet men care so little to learn.

The psalm has twelve verses, which divide into four sections; but a verse is taken from each of the first two sections, and added to each of the last two, making the structure quite different from the usual one; the number three entirely dropping out. This, which must have a reason, I am not, however, able to explain.

1. The psalm begins with God, as the only expectation and confidence of the soul; and this is repeated and expanded in the third section. This is indeed the rock-bottom for a foundation; but how much sifting out of abundant sand is there, before we get down fully to it! Trust in Him we may have, and blessed it is to have it; but how long, in general, it takes to learn the power of this "only"! The dealings of God with us have to be therefore very much directed to this end, and how sorrowful are the experiences through which we are brought in this way! Yet we so willingly accept experience as our master, rather than the sure word of truth, which would lead us by a pleasanter and safer path!

2. The hostility of man is seen in the second section, as by and by it will be revealed when the restraint upon it is removed, in those dreadful days which the Jewish remnant will pass through, or as brought out by the Light of the world when in it. How the gospel of John especially reveals this murderous opposition,—the plottings and endeavors to cast Him down from His elevation, who was this Light, and whose personal glory only displayed the darkness of the world through which He passed. It is not changed at all, this world, although it may change its outside demeanor, the more thoroughly to deceive; and alas, our little faithfulness to a crucified Lord permits us an easier path through it.

3. From the contemplation of this the psalmist turns to realize the more his refuge and his joy in God. He re-affirms and expatiates on what God is to him, —what God only is. The words are so simple that they need no commentary: it is the heart-felt satisfaction in them that we may well all covet; and this, as he proceeds to testify, is for all, so that he invites all people to find it where he

(iv.) for all men.

Trust in him at [k]all times, ye people:
pour out your heart before him:
God is a refuge for [l]us. Selah.

4 (9-12) Man as tested.
(i.) all alike.

Surely [m]men of low degree* are breath,
and men of high degree* a lie:
they go up in the balances;
together they are [lighter] than [n]breath.

(ii.) trusts that deceive.

Trust not in [o]oppression;
and become not vain in robbery:
if [p]wealth increase, set not your heart [upon it].

(iii.) the divine oracle.

God hath [q]spoken once;
twice have I heard it:
that [r]power [belongeth] unto God.

(iv.) the test universal.

And unto thee, O Lord, [belongeth] [s]loving-kindness:
but thou [t]recompensest a man according to his work.

Ps. lxiii.

[3]PSALM LXIII.

Breathing after the Sanctuary.

A psalm of David, when he was in the [u]wilderness of Judah.

1 (1-4): God for His own sake.
(i.) God alone sought,

O GOD, thou art [v]my Mighty One;
[w]early do I seek thee:
my soul [x]thirsteth for thee,
my flesh pineth after thee,
in a [y]dry and thirsty, waterless land:—

* Literally, "Sons of Adam, sons of Ish."

k *cf.* Ps. 34. 1. *cf.* Ps. 16. 8. *cf.* Jno. 8. 29.
l *cf.* Heb. 2. 10-13.
m Ps. 49. 2. Ps. 39. 5, 11.
n Is. 2. 22. Jas. 4. 14.
o *cf.* Is. 30. 12. *cf.* Is. 33. 15-17.
p *ctr.* Ps. 52. 7. *cf.* Lk. 6. 20-25. 1 Tim. 6. 7-10, 17-19.
q *cf.* Ps. 50. 1.
r Ps. 59. 16. Ps. 66. 3.
s Ps. 61. 7. Dan. 9. 9.
t Is. 3. 11. Ezek. 33. 20. Rom. 2. 6-12.
u 1 Sam. 22. 5. 1 Sam. 23. 14, 15.
v *cf.* Jno. 20. 17.
w *cf.* Mk. 1. 35.
x *cf.* Ps. 42. 1, 2. *cf.* Jno. 4. 7, 34. *cf.* Jno. 14. 28.
y *cf.* Ex. 15. 22; *cf.* Ex. 17. 1-7.

has found it. How blessed to know, when we have reached this sanctuary-refuge, that the door is not closed behind us, and that we have now a gospel for all men, in the assurance that the door is open!

4. But this does not relieve the darkness as to man himself, and without respect to differences of which he makes so much. All alike are vanity—breath! emptier, when weighed in truthful balances, than the breath they spend so freely in their boasting and defiance of God. He addresses them,—he with his own sure confidence in God,—upon the vain trusts which deceive so utterly: power, which they use in tyrannic oppression; wealth, which enwraps the heart away from God. In his ears a divine oracle repeats itself, which, though it be so simple, faith after all alone it is that hears,—that power belongs to God alone; and that this God, so mighty, while to Him belongeth loving-kindness too, as has been already witnessed in the door of escape still open, will yet, in the day of judgment which approaches, give to every man according to his works. Thus the psalm closes: the song of the "praise-giver," like the song of Moses, levels all other confidence, to ascribe greatness and goodness to God alone.

Psalm LXIII.

It is entirely natural that, after this displacing of every false confidence, that God might have His true place as the whole rightful confidence of men, a psalm of the sanctuary should follow,—the breathing of the soul after God as this. "David in the wilderness of Judah" might well be the writer of such a psalm; but his circumstances could be but the occasion, and there is evidently contemplated a much greater King.

1. The first section shows us God as thus sought, the only and eager desire of the soul. He seeks early for Him, his soul thirsting, his flesh pining, in a dry,

(ii.) in repetition of past experience.
(iii.) the realization of the worshiper.
(iv.) going through the life.

As I beheld thee in the [z]sanctuary,
to see thy [a]power and thy glory.
Because thy [b]loving-kindness is better than life,
my lips shall [c]praise thee.
Thus will I bless thee [d]while I live:
I will lift up my hands in thy name.

2 (5-11): Confirmation of the trust on both sides.
(i.) sufficiency.
(ii.) bearing reflection.
(iii.) safe sheltered.
(iv.) in practical life.
(v.) the end of the enemy.
(vi.) victory over them.
(vii.) the consummation.

As with marrow and fat my soul is [e]satisfied:
and my mouth shall praise thee with jubilant lips;
When I [f]remember thee upon my bed,
[and] meditate on thee in the night-watches.
Because thou hast been my [g]help,
in the shadow of thy [h]wings will I rejoice.
My soul [i]followeth hard after thee:
thy right hand [j]supporteth me.
And those that [k]seek my soul to destroy [it]
shall go into the [l]depths of the earth.
They shall be given over unto the power of the [m]sword;
they shall be a portion for [n]jackals.
And the [o]king shall rejoice in God:
they shall glory, [p]every one that sweareth by him;
for the mouth of those that speak [q]falsehood shall be stopped.

z *cf.* Jno. 17. 5. *cf.* Phil. 2. 6. *cf.* Prov. 8. 22–31.
a 1 Chr. 29. 11. Rev. 5. 13. Ps. 145. 11.
b *cf.* Ps. 36. 7. Ps. 40. 10, 11. Ps. 69. 16.
c Ps. 22. 22, 25.
d Ps. 145. 2. *cf.* Ps. 146. 2 with Rom. 6. 9.
e *cf.* Ps. 16. 5, 6. *cf.* Ps. 17. 15.
f *cf.* Ps. 16. 7. *cf.* Ps. 17. 3.
g Ps. 16. 8.
h Ps. 61. 3, 4.
i Ps. 16. 4, 5. *cf.* Heb. 12. 2.
j *cf.* Ps. 16. 8. Ps. 18. 35. Ps. 20. 6.
k *cf.* Ps. 22. 12, 13 with Mt. 26. 47.
l *cf.* Nu. 16. 30–32; Ps. 55. 15; *cf.* Rev. 19. 20.
m *cf.* Is. 11. 4 with Rev. 19. 15, 21.
n *cf.* Lk. 17. 34–37.
o Ps. 21. 1. Ps. 45. 1; *ctr.* Is. 30. 33; *ctr.* Dan. 11. 36.
p *cf.* Deu. 6. 13; *cf.* Is. 65. 16.
q Ps. 101. 7, 8; *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 22; *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 10–12.

thirsty, waterless land. The epithets increasing in emphasis show the intensity of the conviction, how thoroughly the truth in the last psalm has been apprehended by the soul. He recalls what he had once seen of the divine power and glory in the sanctuary:—think here of Him who had left the glory which He had with the Father before the world was!—and he longs for this again, praising Him for loving-kindness better than life itself, a joy that makes God supreme in the heart that holds it. And this cup has in it no excess, while it never fails. A joy found in the unchanging nature of God, it shall endure because He endures: so that the heart can say, "Thus will I bless Thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in Thy Name."

2. The second section shows the double confirmation of this joyous confidence, in his own experience and in the end of his adversaries. For himself he can testify to perfect satisfaction of soul; which will bear reflection in those quiet hours when the shadows fall upon all other things, and one is apart from all influences that would hinder realization of the truth. Then in the consciousness of divine succor, the very darkness shall be like the shadow of sheltering wings: rest shall send forth with renewed energy in the track of the glory moving on before, and not without the support of the right hand of strength.

The same hand acts for him against all enemies. While seeking to destroy his life, they themselves go into the depths of the earth. We think of Korah and the great enemies of Christ, the beast and false prophet, gulfed in a living death; while their followers are slain with the sword as here, and left upon the battle-field to the jackals.

And then the King is seen in His victory. It is no mere triumph of strength, but of right and truth, the end of the unceasing warfare since the world began. It is the triumph of faith that has clung to and followed, amid suffering and apparent defeat, the bruised heel of the Captain of salvation. "They shall glory, every one that sweareth by Him" who is the living Truth: "for the mouth of those that speak falsehood shall be stopped."

Ps. lxiv.

[a]PSALM LXIV.

The vanity of evil-doers.

To the chief musician: a psalm of David.

1 (1–6): The wicked in power.
(i.) the cry of the righteous.
(ii.) the allied wickedness.
(iii.) "out of the heart."
(iv.) the trial.
(v.) *their* exercise.
(vi.) the limit.

[r]HEAR my voice, O God, in my plaint:
from the [s]terror of the enemy preserve my life.
Hide me from the [t]conspiracy of evil-doers:
from the tumultuous throng of the [u]workers of vanity.
Who whet their [v]tongues like a sword:
who aim their arrow—a [w]bitter word;
That they may shoot in [x]secret at the perfect:
suddenly they shoot at him, and [y]fear not.
They [z]encourage themselves in an evil matter:
they calculate as to the hiding of [a]snares:
they ask [b]who shall see them.
They [c]search for iniquities:
we have perfected [they say] a carefully sought out [d]plan:
and the inward part of man and [his] heart is [e]deep.

r Ps. 61. 1.
s Ps. 91. 5. *cf.* Mt. 24. 8–13.
t Ps. 31. 13. Ps. 71. 10. *cf.* Dan. 6. 4–9.
u Ps. 5. 5. Ps. 53. 4. Mt. 7. 23.
v Ps. 11. 2. Ps. 57. 4. Jer. 9. 3.
w *cf.* Mt. 5. 11.
x Ps. 10. 8. Lam. 4. 18, 19.
y Ps. 36. 1, 4.
z *cf.* Jer. 26. 8–11. *cf.* Jno. 11. 47–53. *cf.* Jno. 16. 2.
a Ps. 62. 4.
b Ps. 10. 11, 13. Ps. 59. 7. Ps. 73. 11.
c *cf.* Mk. 14. 55–64.
d *cf.* Acts 13. 12–15.
e Is. 29. 15; Is. 30. 1.

Psalm LXIV.

The next psalm is a very characteristic fourth, the vanity of the creature being its theme: as shown, of course, in those who are away from Him, and who therefore are left to the experience of this. The common term for them, indeed, throughout the psalms, is that of "workers of vanity;" and so it is in this psalm. The close of it, which is in the judgment which so fully proves this, makes us think naturally of the last days; but the lesson is intended to be as general as possible, and therefore is given in terms according to this. There is nothing in the title which is distinctive. The ten verses exhibit the number that reminds us of responsibility and recompense, ideas which are, of course, main ones in the psalm; and these are divided into two portions of 6 and 4, as the ten commandments are into 4 and 6, in contrast with one another; the first showing us the wicked in power, the last his humiliation.

1. The first section begins with the cry of the righteous, alone, and suffering at the hands of men. These are they with whom we have seen the Lord identifying Himself in the sixty-first psalm, and thus their sorrows are brought before us here, their cry, as we have often seen before, bringing down the judgment at last upon their adversaries. Whether the Lord Himself is found in it, is, I think, very doubtful; the single expression (ver. 4) the "perfect" is surely used in too large and general a way to prove this; and the tone of the prayer seems distinctly lower than we could attribute to Him. But the world which is against His people is in this against Him, and their cause is fully His.

Wickedness of this kind loves company, and the presence of a multitude in sympathy favors sinning with a high hand. Even for the believer there is need for the exhortation, "Go not with a multitude to do evil:" for evil may be attenuated in our minds very much by the many with whom we share it. Wickedness is naturally cowardly, and loves to share its responsibility with others, even though it may scout the idea of responsibility; while faith walks singly, even amid a multitude. Conscience too is individual, and has a wide reputation for making men stiff and angular, and unfitted for much companionship. Yet a walk with God will be in company with those who walk with Him; but how many are they who unreservedly do this?

Among a multitude the tongue is a mighty instrument, and oratory deals with men's passions and loves emphasis. The "whetting of the tongue" is a thing

2 (7-10): Their humiliation.
(i.) God against them.
(ii.) themselv's against themselves.
(iii.) God manifest in it.
(iv.) shown in the ways of men.

But God [f]shooteth an arrow at them:
suddenly are they wounded.
And they are made to [g]stumble,—their [h]own tongue being against them:
they [i]flee away, all that see them.
And all men shall [j]fear and tell of the work of God,
and think wisely of his doing.
The righteous shall be [k]glad in Jehovah, and take [l]refuge in him:
and all the [m]upright in heart shall glory.

[f] Ps. 7. 12,13.
[g] Ps. 27. 2.
[h] Prov. 18. 7. *cf.* Lk. 19. 22.
[i] *cf.* Ps. 31. 11.
[j] *cf.* Acts 5. 11.
[k] Ps. 32. 10, 11. Ps. 58. 10.
[l] Ps. 9. 10.
[m] Ps. 33. 1.

perfectly familiar to those who affect the crowd. Yet the arrow flies too in secret, and the perfect is above all its mark. The voice of slander, which catches its inspiration from the first tempter, loves insinuation and suggestion, where open assault would be repelled and a specific charge might establish the integrity attacked. "Hath God said?" might be the voice of innocence itself.

Such arrows fly tentatively, need no justification, are not seen at their work till they have done it; hide their mischief even from one who scatters them, and no sting of conscience results. "*Say we not well*, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?" So "they shoot at him, and fear not."

Then they encourage themselves to further evil, and hide snares, as those who brought the adulterous woman to the Lord, or questioned Him about Cæsar's penny, as One who "taught the way of God in truth." Here the number of the verse, which speaks of exercise under the government of God, is surely in designed contrast with this nice calculation of successful devices, forgetful of any Eye upon them. The limit is reached in the next verse, where, after searching for iniquitous contrivances, their perfected plan is a consummation of unfailing villainy, in which are seen the awful depths that can be found in the human heart. But now God, who has waited till their scheme is perfected, is ready to interfere.

2. In a moment, as if with the rebound of their own arrow, they are struck by an unerring hand. And it is indeed, after all, the rebound of their own arrow: this is the righteous way of Divine government, as other psalms have presented it to us. Their deeds, their words, come back upon them. "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant," is true in many ways and spheres. God is glorified in this judgment: "all men fear and tell of the work of God, and think wisely of His work. The righteous are glad in Jehovah, and take refuge in Him, and all the upright in heart shall glory."

The day is coming in which these ways of God shall be open to the eyes of all. Meanwhile how dear unto Him beyond expression are the "patience and faith of the saints"!

Psalm LXV.

As to the general scope of this psalm, I quote from another, to whom I am constantly and largely indebted.*

"That this psalm," he says, "is the restoration of the Jews, or, more properly speaking, the replacing of the remnant (now a nation) in their old place with God, on the mediation of Immanuel, as introducing millennial blessedness, is, I think, evident. The Jewish portion of this is stated in verse 1, as expected and appointed, and that in the most beautiful manner possible, in the union, if one may so speak, of God's interest and man's in it, according to the promises. In

* The writer of the "Synopsis," so often referred to, in which, however, though more recent, he does not develop it after the same manner, the reference to Christ in it being omitted. There would seem, therefore, to have been some doubt in his mind as to it, after all, in later years; and in the paper from which this is taken, there is a tendency to apply many psalms directly to the Lord, in a way contrary to his after judgment. The present one, however, belongs to a series in large part Messianic; and I cannot but agree with the older interpretation. ("Heads of Psalms," in Collected Writings of J. N. Darby, Critical, Vol. I.)

Ps. lxv.

1 (1, 2): Zion the beginning of perpetual concord.
(i.) the vow the cause.
(ii.) the attachment.

[5]PSALM LXV.

Immanu-El.

To the chief musician: a psalm of David,—a song.

PRAISE [n]waiteth for thee, O God, in [o]Zion:
and unto thee shall the [p]vow be performed.
O thou that [q]hearest prayer!
unto thee shall [r]all flesh come.

n Ps. 62. i.
o Ps. 48. ii. Ps. 97. 8. Is. 12. 6.
p *cf.* Ps. 61. 5, 8. *cf.* Nahum i. 12-15 with Ps. 22. 25.
q Ps. 22. 24. Ps. 40. i.
r Ps. 22. 27. Is. 49. 6.

verse 2 it is the Gentiles. In order to this, Christ must take it up; accordingly that which has prevented is stated in verse 3, but in Christ's Person, as for the Jews, (as in Isa. liii.)—the latter part being the expression of this by the Jewish remnant. This leads them to celebrate their acceptance in the Beloved, the Man whom God chose. Then comes the manner of their deliverance as in answer to their faith; the extent of this ('over all the earth') and the fruition of blessedness by the removal of the curse from the earth. Such is the scope of this beautiful psalm. The Psalms here open out more into the glorious results of the union of Immanuel with men."

If this be true, then "God with us"—Immanuel—may well be the title of the psalm: and this is in fullest accord with the place, numerically and otherwise, that it has in this series. Let us notice that, to the end of this now, the psalms are also "songs." Thank God, this for us will soon be the end also, that all the psalms shall be songs.

1. The first section is a very simple one. The praise of God from the whole earth, as the second verse shows it is, waits for Him in Zion. Millennial blessing has, as we well know, its beginning and its centre there. While Jerusalem is down-trodden and desolate, the earth cannot come into its rest. Zion is God's rest forever (Ps. cxxxii. 14), and there can be no rest, except as He rests: the principle is always true, whatever the apostle's application of it in the passage in question, that we enter into *His* rest (Heb. iv. 5, 11).

Zion is the place which, as we see from another psalm (lxxviii. 68), illustrates God's sovereignty in grace, when man has done all he could to produce utter ruin; and the apostle, in his comprehensive view (Heb. xii. 22) of the things which (by faith) we are "come to," places it thus, as the earthly centre, opposite to the New Jerusalem, the heavenly one. Zion itself means "fixed," and the first place in which it is mentioned (2 Sam. v. 7) is when David takes it out of the hand of the Gentile "treader down"—the Jebusite (see *notes*). It becomes then "the city of David," which, we rejoice to remember, means "Beloved," and it will be yet the city of the infinitely glorious One, when the time of Jerusalem's "treading-down" is over.

"Fixed" empire in the hands of the Beloved may well awaken praise to the ends of the earth. Man, alas, rejecting Him at His first coming, in behalf of Cæsar, has had proof of all kinds of Cæsarism ever since. And though it put on, as indeed at Rome itself it did, the forms of democracy, the character of rule is none the less apparent. How blessed now the fulfillment of the Oracle which the first David received, just as the sceptre was falling out of his well-proved to be incompetent hands! and which seems so fully to answer to the present psalm:—

> "A righteous Ruler over men,
> A ruler in the fear of God;—
> Even as the morning-light when the sun ariseth,
> A morning without clouds:
> From the brightness after rain
> The herb springeth from earth."

This is the inspired picture, and the psalm brings us manifestly to Him whose picture it is, in the latter part of the first verse, which would seem to make the whole utterance here His own. The first psalm of the series opened with the King's "vows," which we long before heard of in the twenty-second also, where

2 (3-5): The hindrance and the help. (i.) righteousness in grace, (ii.) the Beloved.

Iniquities have *prevailed against me:
our *revoltings, *thou* purgest them away.
Happy is he whom thou *choosest and makest to
*draw near,
to *dwell in thy courts!
we shall be *satisfied with the goodness of thy
house,—
thy *holy temple.

x cf. Ps. 40. 12 with 2 Cor. 5.21.
t Is. 53. 4-6. Mi. 7.18-20.
u cf. Ps. 89. 3, 19. *cf.* Is. 42. 1. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2.6.
v cf. Heb. 9. 24 with Heb. 10. 19-22.

w cf. Heb. 10. 12; *cf.* Ps. 23. 6; *cf.* Ps. 16. 11. *x* Ps. 36. 8. *y* Ps. 15. 1.

there is but One possible to whom they could be ascribed. Vows they are on the part of One competent to utter, because competent to fulfill them; and whose lips could say, like His, "Unto Thee shall the vow be performed"? They are the lips of Him by whom God has found a dwelling-place among men such as He desires, a habitation amid the praises of a redeemed people, and a throne of grace upon earth,—the Mercy-seat sprinkled with His own precious blood. How intimately is this "vow" of His, then, connected with the praise which is to awaken on Zion and to the ends of the earth!

"The Desire of all nations" comes, the Answer to the unspoken wants of myriads that have never known the provision for them. Is HE not the heard prayer of the next verse, which brings "all flesh" to the sanctuary to worship? "I, if I be lifted up from the earth," He says, "will draw all men unto Me" (John xii. 32). Thus shall the vow be indeed fulfilled, and God in Christ be the joy of every one who has had divinely awakened in him the knowledge of his need. "O Thou that hearest prayer! unto Thee shall all flesh come."

2. But the second section comes now to confirm the first, by carrying us back from the glory now near to come, to show us the hindrance that stood in the way of the blessing, and how it has been removed. The structure of the next verse must not be hastily passed over, nor the changes which it exhibits be confounded with the varying speech of mere poetry. It is by slight notice, and confounding divine inspiration with mere human composition, that much of Scripture becomes necessarily closed to us, as the righteous penalty of unbelief. Notice, then, the change from singular to plural, and the emphatic "Thou" of the second part:—

"Iniquities have prevailed against Me!" cries the single Voice.

And many voices take up what may well be the answer: "Our revoltings, *Thou* purgest them away." Yes, this is surely the lesson of the Cross learnt at last: that which every sacrifice of the countless sacrifices in Israel pointed to and declared. "Purgation" is by blood-shedding: "without shedding of blood is no remission." And these "iniquities" which "prevail against" the innocent Sufferer are "*our* revoltings." That seeming disaster and defeat, the prevailing of *our* iniquities over Him, is but their purgation: "*Thou* purgest them away." How these two lines, then, show us at once in a divine way the hindrance and its removal, the faith also being manifest in them that works with repentance, in the acknowledgment of the sins and of the glorious Substitute! When Israel do this, then indeed the fountain will be opened to them for sin and for uncleanness, as Zechariah shows them (xii., xiii.). And now, therefore, their mouths are opened to declare the effect for them of Christ being their propitiation:—

"Happy is He whom Thou choosest and makest to draw near, to dwell in Thy courts! *We* shall be satisfied with the goodness of Thy house,—of Thy holy temple."

Here we have the same singular and plural as in the previous verse; the same partial disguise which we must be prepared for always in these mysteries of faith as they are given us, especially in the Psalms: a veil easily to be penetrated, if we only have our eyes open, and look carefully, that is, reverently, at what is before us. Put all that has gone before along with this,—let it speak as a whole;

(iii.) the realization.

[By] [z]terrible things in righteousness thou answerest us, O God of our salvation!
the [a]confidence of all the ends of the earth,
and of the [b]distances of the sea!

3 (6-8): God manifest.
(i.) stability for the earth.
(ii.) stilling of conflict.
(iii.) the inner work.

Who by his strength [c]setteth fast the mountains,
being girded with power:
Who [d]stilleth the roar of the seas,—
the roar of their waves, and the tumult of the races.
And the dwellers in the ends [of the earth] [e]fear at thy tokens:
thou makest the outgoings of the morning and the evening [f]sing for joy.

z Ps. 46. 8. *cf.* Is. 40. 2.
a Ps. 22. 27. Is. 45. 22.
b Is. 42. 4. Is. 51. 5.
c *cf.* Ps. 46. 2, 3. *cf.* Hab. 3. 6 with Ps. 30. 7. Is. 33. 6.
d Ps. 46. 10. Ps. 89. 9. *cf.* Ps. 93. 1–4.
e Ps. 22. 27. Ps. 72. 9.
f *cf.* Ps. 96. 9–13.

let the psalm find its place with the other psalms of the series; observe how the deeper meaning brings out a lustre, a glory, where otherwise there is what is comparatively commonplace; and you will realize that the Spirit that has inspired it all is the Spirit of Christ, and that you must get the point of view which is always His, to realize aright the inspiration.

"He whom Thou choosest" might by itself, of course, be that election of which every saved sinner is an example; and so, naturally, do most take it here. But who is it of whom God in Israel says: "Behold My Servant, whom I uphold, *Mine Elect*, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put My Spirit upon Him; He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles"? (Isa. xlii. 1.) God's "choice" is no less, although far differently, manifested, when Christ is spoken of as the Object of it, than when a poor sinner is taken up in divine sovereignty. In Christ it is all the fullness of His delight in that which is completely according to His mind and nature,—His Beloved, in whom He is well pleased. And thus the acceptance of any poor sinner is, as we are given to know, "in the Beloved."

"And makest to draw near" would thus imply His priestly access, which is the result of the acceptance of His work in behalf of others; and thus immediately the voice of His people is heard, the third person exchanged for the first, and the singular once more for the plural. "*We* shall be satisfied with the goodness of Thy house,—of Thy holy temple." This house will be Israel's grand distinction and privilege in millennial days.

There follows the intimation of how their acceptance is shown, the answer to their prayer in the day of their distress. "By terrible things in righteousness Thou answerest us, O God of our salvation." But then, for the earth also, the sun glints through the storm: "the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of the distances of the sea." Thus the effect of righteousness is quietness and assurance forever" (Isa. xxxii. 17); and we go on to see, in the earth delivered from the curse, the full blessedness of this.

3. The next three verses, therefore, go on to show us, not simply a sanctuary in restored Israel, but the earth, so long disfigured with the marks of sin and distance from Him, now pervaded with this glorious Presence. It is not, as we might at first think, the common testimony of nature to Him. It is the time of peace after conflict, when "His tokens" are seen in the very "ends of the earth," and acknowledged with reverent fear on the part of men. The condition of the earth is but the index of its new peace and reconciliation; as we see in the second verse here, where the stilling of the roar of the seas is connected with the stilling of the "tumult of the races." And so the Lord manifestly connects things in looking at the tumult itself which is here referred to: "And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars, and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, *the sea and the waves roaring*" (Luke xxi. 25). Now they are stilled: the earth is brought into a stability as yet unknown; the mountains are set fast, human governments now being established by the power of God. He, coming out of the silence and stillness in which the

4 (9-13): The earth blessed.
(i.) the sufficient source.

Thou hast [g] visited the earth, to make it overflow:
thou greatly [h] enrichest it:
the [i] river of God is full of water:
thou preparest their [j] corn, when so thou hast prepared it:

(ii.) the earth prepared for increase.

Soaking its furrows, leveling its ridges,
thou makest it soft with [k] showers,
thou [l] blessest its growth.

(iii.) the heavens.

Thou hast [m] crowned the year with thy goodness;
and thy paths drop [n] fatness.

(iv.) the wilderness.

They drop upon the pastures of the [o] wilderness,
and the hills are girded with [p] gladness.

(v.) the final end.

The meadows are clothed with [q] flocks,
and the valleys covered over with corn:
they [r] shout for joy, yea, sing.

g Ps. 80. 14-19. Deut. 11.10-12.
h Ps. 67. 6. cf. Ezek. 34. 26, 27.
i Ps. 46. 4. cf. Ezek. 47. 1-12. cf. Zech. 14. 8.
j cf. Lev. 23. 39-44. cf. Ps. 4. 7.
k cf. Ps. 72. 6, 7. Zech. 10. 1. cf. Is. 55. 10-13.
l Is. 41. 18-20. cfr. Ps. 129. 5-8.
m cf. Deut. 16. 13-15; cf. Ps. 85. 1-3, 9-13; cf. Is. 27. 2-6.
n Ps. 63. 5; cf. Jer. 31. 10-14.
o Is. 35. 1, 2; cf. Is. 32. 15, 16.
p Ps. 98. 8.
q cf. Ps. 107. 41; cf. Is. 65. 8-10; cf. Ezek. 34. 20-25.
r Ps. 96. 12, 13. Ps. 148. 7-14.

things of earth so often have seemed as if matters strange to Him, girds Himself now with power in which He is manifestly active. Faith may so see Him now, but can little justify itself to men at large. They talk of "laws" as if they were an iron fence around Him, and nature merciless. Now He comes forth from this obscurity, hushing the fury of men's passions, and quieting the earth that these have vexed. And men fear, in the uttermost parts of the earth, at His tokens: for a strange new gladness pervades all the changes of the day: morning and evening sing alike with joy!

4. The fourth section speaks more distinctly of the earth itself; the curse removed, its paradisaic beauty coming back to it; and all plainly at the touch of His hand to whom nature is still and ever perfectly obedient. It is God's visitation: Egypt's fertilizing flood, the type of that bountifulness by which its exhaustion is continually met and its strength renewed, is outdone by the ever full "river of God," which knows no failure, no stint at any time, and which awakens everything to life and activity. The "living"—not stagnant—water is always in nature truly the "water of life." It is what is needful for the activity of every organism, in every part. It is therefore the type of the Spirit in its cleansing, renewing energy, and that which does its transforming work in the land of Israel in the days to which we are looking forward (Ezek. xlvii.), and answers thus (though not in full measure) to that which laves with its glorious stream the New Jerusalem and the paradise of God (Rev. xxii.). From the sanctuary-throne they both flow, not like Egypt's river, from a distant, perhaps unknown, source. God, enthroned among an obedient people, is the spring of this blessing, deep, wide, perpetual: His necessary, bounteous ministry to creatures who "live and move and have their being in Himself."

Fully it is traced here to Him, the power working everywhere, first preparing the land, then preparing the corn. This is traced more minutely in the following verses: first, the influence upon the land itself (ver. 10); then the seasons of the year arranged with bountiful care (11); then the wilderness receives its bounty (12); and then we have the result everywhere in flocks and crops in which nature with its lavish beauty sings and rejoices (13). Ah, how we, with our sinful independence of God, have stopped this song in nature, and then proclaimed it lifeless, joyless, godless! It is never this; and the day is coming in which such divorce of God from His works shall be no more permitted,—shall be no more possible.

Psalm LXVI.

The sixth psalm of the series celebrates on the part of Israel the discipline of God, now effectual, in which the nations are to learn His holiness, themselves

Ps. lxvi.

[s]PSALM LXVI.

The Discipline of God.

To the chief musician: a song-psalm.

1 (1-7): The power of God.

(i.) common praise.

SHOUT aloud unto God, all the [a]earth!
Psalm the [b]glory of his Name:
make [c]glorious his praise.

(ii.) testimony to His Name.

Say unto God, How [d]terrible are thy works!
for the greatness of thy power do thine enemies [e]cringe before thee.

(iii.) the power realized.

[f]All the earth shall worship thee:
and they shall psalm to thee—shall psalm unto thy Name. Selah.

(iv.) the whole earth subject.

(v.) governmental dealings.

Come and see the [g]works of God!
terrible [has been] his doing towards the children of men.

(vi.) victory.

He turned the [h]sea into dry ground:
they went over the [i]river on foot:
there did we [k]rejoice in him.

(vii.) a reign of perfect power.

He [l]ruleth by his power for ever;
his eyes keep watch over the nations:
let not the [m]rebellious exalt themselves! Selah.

2 (8-12): Israel's testimony.

(i.) our God.

Bless [n]our God, ye [o]peoples!
and make the voice of his praise to be heard.

[s] Ps. 65. 13. Ps. 100. 1.
[t] Ps. 34. 3. Ps. 86. 9.
[u] Ex. 15. 11.
[v] Ps. 65. 5. Ps. 68. 35.
[w] Ps. 18. 44. *cf.* Ps. 81.15 with Zech. 14. 16–19.
[x] Ps. 65. 5, 8. Is. 49. 6.
[y] Ps. 46. 8. Ps. 86.8–10.
[z] Ex. 14. 21–31. Ps. 78. 13.
[a] Josh. 3. 9–17.
[b] Ex. 15. 1–21.
[c] Ps. 10. 16. Ps. 29. 10.
[d] Ps. 60. 12.
[e] Ps. 48. 14.
[f] Ps. 67. 5.

being brought to submission by the display of His terrible power. In the third part the voice of the King is heard proclaiming His thanksgiving vows as now to be performed; and in the fourth the result of His own trial, in which He (so different in this from all others) endured perfectly the test of perfect holiness.

1. The first section celebrates the power of God which has been put forth in terrible deeds on behalf of Israel. But, with Israel, it is the earth's deliverance, and the nations are exhorted to shout aloud to God for what He has done, and urged to bear witness to what He has shown Himself to be, in psalms. His terrible works are to be at least for them the display of irresistible power under which the stoutest enemies must humble themselves. Thus all the earth shall worship, even though by and by it may be found that not all of this is true. The Psalms do not go beyond the millennium, and therefore do not give the uprising at the end, which brings in final judgment, as the book of Revelation shows; but they do intimate in several places, as already in psalm xviii., the mere external subjection of many among the millennial nations. Israel alone is all holy (Isa. iv.), and their celebration of God comes in the last three verses. His terrible doings toward the children of men have been abundant mercy to themselves. His love to them has triumphed over all obstacles, and nature has owned the might of His presence with them, as the bed of the dried up sea has shown, and the "river": whether this be Jordan, as of old, or that which is more commonly and emphatically called the River—the other boundary of their land as it shall be—Euphrates (Rev. xvi. 12).

Power has been abundantly shown, then: He rules, and who shall dispossess Him? Omnipotence and omniscience are found together, with Him whose eyes without ceasing watch over the nations. Let not, then, the rebellious vainly exalt themselves!

2. But again the voice of Israel is heard, and this time to tell the story of their own trials, ended, at last, for them so joyfully. "Bless *our* God," they say, "ye peoples." They, at least, can own Him that, with a full heart: His laws

(ii.) His preservation.

(iii.) but purification.

(iv.) the trial.

(v.) governmental ways.

Who hath set our soul in [g] life;
and suffereth not our [h] feet to be moved.
For thou, O God, hast [i] proved us:
thou hast tried us as silver is tried.
Thou broughtest us into the [j] net:
thou laidest a heavy burden on our loins.
Thou [k] madest men ride over our heads:
we went through [l] fire and through water;
but thou [m] hast brought us out into abundance.

3 (13–15): The fulfillment of the King's vows.

(i.) burnt-offerings.

(ii.) of His humiliation.

(iii.) the fullness of praise.

I will go into thy house with [n] burnt-offerings:
I will perform my [o] vows to thee,
Which my lips uttered and my mouth spake
in my [p] strait.
I will offer up to thee burnt-offerings of fat beasts,
with incense of [q] rams;
I will offer [r] bullocks with [s] he-goats. Selah.

4 (16–20): The voice of His trial.

(i.) divine power in His behalf.

[t] Come, hear, and I will declare, all ye that [u] fear God,
what he hath done for my soul.

g Mal. 3. 6.
h Ps. 121. 3. Hab. 3. 19. *cf.* Ezek. 37. 22–28.
i Ps. 11. 4. Is. 48. 10.
j Lam. 1. 13. *cf.* Is. 51. 19, 20.
k Ps. 129. 1–4. Is. 51. 23.
l Zech. 13. 9. Is. 43. 1, 2.
m Ps. 85. 1–3. Ps. 126. 1–3. Is. 54. 2–10.
n Ps. 20. 3.
o Ps. 61. 5, 6. Ps. 56. 12.
p *cf.* Ps. 22. 1, 25.
q *cf.* Ex. 29. 19–28 with Eph. 2. 14.
r *cf.* Lev. 1. 3 with Eph. 5. 2.
s *cf.* Lev. 4. 22–26 with 2 Cor. 5. 21.
t Ps. 22. 22.
u Ps. 22. 23; Ps. 135. 20.

written upon their hearts, He has become their God in full reality, according to the terms of the new covenant. Thus they claim Him and speak of Him, declaring Him to the nations for their praise. He has, spite of all trials, brought them through, preserved their souls in life,—nay, more, perhaps, set them in what is really that. For "this is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." Such knowledge they now have, assuredly, and thus such life: although as doctrine the Old Testament could not formally develop it.

This "setting their souls in life" is that of which naturally their hearts are full, and thus too their feet find steadfastness. But the way by which they had been brought had been one painful to themselves, while the holiness of God had made it necessary. As silver God had assayed and purified them. Their foes had been made, all unwittingly, to serve them thus. Affliction had been to them, if a severe, yet an effectual teacher; and, the end accomplished, only gains were now to be counted: "we went through fire and water; but Thou broughtest us out into abundance."

3. But now the "we" changes for "I"; and we realize that it is another Speaker. "I will go into Thy house with burnt-offerings; I will pay Thee my vows, which my lips uttered and my mouth spake in my strait." It is not hard, surely, to recognize this Voice, which, immediately upon Israel's tale being told, takes up their praise to utter it before God, as the fulfillment of His own "vows." We know these vows, the King's vows: King of Israel, while much more. And dull must be the eyes that do not see whose are these burnt-offerings. The sweet savor of a perfect life presented to God in an infinite trial, in which the holiness of God searched out all the inward parts of such an One as had not His like among men, but whom, He who commanded the "sword" to "awake" against Him, declared at the same time His "fellow" (Zech. xiii. 7). Now we understand how Israel's praise itself is discerned as the perfume of this blessed work,—the fulfillment of His "vows": all the fullness of which is presently told out to us in familiar forms, as bullocks, rams, goats, specially connected with burnt-, trespass-, and sin-offerings. (Comp. Lev. i., iv., v., *notes*.) This is, in fact, what all our praise is,—what we ourselves are: *we* are but the fulfillment of *His* vows; all is but the fruit of His work. To owe our redeemed selves to Him shall be the fullness of our joy forever.

4. But now we are to have *His* testimony—how different from Israel's or that

(ii.) the spirit of service.

(iii.) the conditions of holiness.

(iv.) the test of experience.

(v.) the end.

Unto him I [v]called with my mouth:
and he was [w]extolled with my tongue.
If I [x]regarded vanity in my heart,
the Lord would not hear.
But God hath [y]heard:
he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.
[z]Blessed be God, who hath not turned away my prayer,
nor his [a]loving-kindness from me!

[v] Ps. 40. 1, 2.
[w] Ps. 22. 3.
[x] *cf.* Jno. 9. 31.
cf. Jno. 11. 41, 42.
[y] Ps. 18. 4–6. Ps. 116. 1. *cf.* Phil. 2. 9
[z] Ps. 40. 3.
[a] Ps. 69. 13.

Ps. lxvii.

[1]PSALM LXVII.

Complete blessing and rest.

To the chief musician; on stringed instruments. A psalm-song.

(i.) the source, grace, which is Israel—

(ii.) is a testimony of salvation to all.

GOD be gracious unto [b]us, and bless us,—
make his face to [c]shine upon us. Selah.
That thy way may be known upon [d]earth,
thy [e]salvation among all nations.

[b] Ps. 66. 8. *cf.* Rom. 11. 12, 15.
[c] Ps. 80. 3, 7, 19.
[d] Ps. 22. 27. Ps. 72. 11.
[e] Is. 49. 6.

of the redeemed at any time! He would have all those who fear God to listen, for the matter is of the deepest possible concern for every one. If Christ is for men, what more important than to know that God is for Christ!

The second verse seems to speak of the character of His service. God was His constant appeal and dependence; God was also the One exalted by Him. But, taking this place, the conditions of divine holiness had to be maintained, and in what circumstances, into which His zeal for God as well as His love to man had brought Him! If that fearful trial had brought out anything but sweet savor! Had there been aught of all that the Word stamps as being under the brand of "vanity" regarded in the heart! But the test was made, and the event has shown with what result. "In the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications unto Him that was able to save Him"—not "from," but—"*out of* death, He was heard," says the apostle, "*for His piety*" (Heb. v. 7). All hung upon what He personally was, and being what He was, who for the glory of God had come so low, "He could not be holden of death": "He was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father." "Verily God *hath* heard Me: He hath attended to the voice of My prayer." Well may we join with the praise of Him who, freighted with all our blessings, set His feet on the rock of resurrection! "Blessed be God, who hath not turned away my prayer, nor His loving-kindness from Me!"

Thus the psalm is linked together in its various parts, and each of them throws light upon the other, until what at first seems ordinary and unattractive even, is lighted up with beauty. The world, Israel, Christ, the future and the past, are linked together; and He is seen to be the bond and soul of history, as well as the one link with blessing and with God, the Mediator between God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus. Simple truths indeed, but they are light and life to us; and like the sun, which, for all its shining on the world so long, will be no less welcome when he shines to-morrow.

Psalm LXVII.

The sixty-seventh psalm is a bright and beautiful *seventh:* the number being emphasized as that of the verses also, of which the central one again, by its three lines instead of two, is marked out as the hinge upon which all turns, which is the reign of God upon earth. The grace of God flows through Israel, as the channel of it to the nations; they being the living example of it before the eyes of all. This the first two verses show: "God be gracious unto *us*"—His people Israel—"make His face to shine upon *us*, that Thy way may be known

(iii.) awaking praise from all.
(iv.) and for glad experience of creature blessedness.
(v.) Immanuel.
(vi.) curse removed.
(vii.)

[f] Peoples shall praise thee, O God:
all the peoples shall praise thee!
The races [of men] shall be glad and [g] sing for joy:
for thou shalt [h] judge the peoples righteously,
and the races upon earth, thou wilt [i] lead them.
Selah.
[j] Peoples shall praise thee, O God:
all the peoples shall praise thee!
The earth hath [k] yielded her increase:
God, [l] our God, doth bless us!
God shall bless us:
and all the [m] ends of the earth shall fear him.

f Ps. 66. 4. Ps. 72. 9-11.
g Ps. 100. 1.
h Ps. 96. 10-13.
i *cf.* Ps. 2. 8, 9.
j ver. 3.
k Ps. 85. 9-13.
l Ps. 66. 8.
m Ps. 72. 8.

upon earth, Thy salvation among all nations." There follows the prediction of praise from all the earth: "Peoples shall praise Thee, O God: *all* the peoples shall praise Thee." And then we have the subject-matter of their praise, the joyfulness of what it is, freed from the misery of self-will and from the wills of others, to serve God and be subject to Him.

This is true blessedness at any time. How strange that it should take so long to learn it; yea, that the world should have at last to be brought by judgment into subjection! But it is the proof which all history gives of the reality of the fall. Simple it is, that creature-blessedness is found just in *being* creatures.—in letting God be God. "Thou shalt judge the peoples righteously, and *lead* the races upon earth." How necessarily that last expression fixes our thoughts upon Shepherd care, and upon the "good Shepherd," in whose hands the sceptre is.

The next two verses are a good example of the fullness of meaning which the numerical structure brings out of the text. The fifth verse is but an exact repetition of the third, and its character as a third is evident. Praise belongs to the sanctuary; and in this verse there is nothing but praise. Yet precisely the same words come before us now as a fifth, and no possible division of the psalm could make *both* verses thirds. A fifth is most akin, by reason of its fundamental suggestion of "man with God"; and this can only be aright when God becomes enthroned in the heart, the object of his praise. Thus the fifth verse indicates that Immanu-el ("God with us") has become the real characteristic of the new condition of humanity, although this is only beginning and not perfected, in the millennium itself. But it is no longer to take a people *out* of the Gentiles that God is working, but to produce that condition which the new earth will see accomplished, when "the tabernacle of God shall be with men."

The sixth verse, as such, speaks of the limitation and control of evil; and evil may be, as we know, either moral or physical. The last is also a check upon the first—a means of restraint, of which we all are conscious. Now the previous verse has shown us, in the winning of man's heart to God, the power which has come in to bring about the eradication of physical evil. This therefore is now passing away: the earth is yielding her increase; the curse is removed from the ground;—the blessing of God is operative in antagonism to it.

The last verse gives the general result summed up: God is blessing Israel; all the ends of the earth shall fear Him now!

PSALM LXVIII.

The sixty-eighth psalm is characterized by its eighteenth verse; and this is authoritatively interpreted for us by the apostle (Eph. iv. 8), though there, with specific application to the Church alone. He does not therefore quote the last clause of it, which clearly refers to Israel: "yea, for the rebellious also, that Jah Elohim might dwell among them."

As the eighth and final psalm of this series, therefore, Israel is seen under the new Head of blessing, the ascended Christ, triumphant over all the power of the enemy, and, for this, over the sin which shuts men up in the great adversary's

Ps. lxviii.

[8]PSALM LXVIII.

Under the new Head.

To the chief musician: a psalm of David, a song.

1 (1-6): God before His people.
(i.) irresistible might.
(ii.) enemies destroyed.
(iii.) the praise of the righteous.
(iv.) the way of the desert-Rider.

LET God [n]arise, let his enemies be scattered!
let them also that hate him [o]flee before his face!
As [p]smoke is driven, thou shalt drive them away:
as [q]wax melteth before the fire, the wicked shall perish
from the presence of God,
But the [r]righteous shall be glad:
they shall exult before God,
yea, shall leap for joy.
[s]Sing unto God, psalm to his Name!
[t]cast up [the way] for him that rideth in the deserts:
Jah is his Name, and rejoice before him.

n Num. 10. 35. Ps. 132. 8.
o Is. 33. 3. ver. 12. cf. Is.41.15, 16.
p Hos. 13. 3. Dan. 2. 35.
q Judg. 5. 5. Mi. 1. 3, 4. Nah. 1. 5. Ps. 58. 7-9.
r Ps. 52. 6. Ps. 107. 42.
s Ps. 95. 1. Is. 12. 5. Zeph. 3. 14, 15.
t Is. 57. 14. Is. 62. 10. Is. 40. 3-5.

hand. Under Christ, therefore, Israel fulfills all her by-gone promises of glory; for here is the One to whom all these point. All the wealth of the divine names is poured into the song, for their meaning is now justified and made good. "All that is most glorious in the literature of the earlier period," says Delitzsch, "is concentrated in it: Moses' memorable words, Moses' blessing, the prophesies of Balaam, Deuteronomy, the song of Hannah, re-echo here. But over and above all this, the language is so bold and so peculiarly its own, that we meet with no less than thirteen words that do not occur anywhere else." These various connections, which seem to have led expositors away in different directions, are intelligible when we recognize their relation to Israel's inheritance in Christ, to which they all look forward.

1. The psalm begins with Moses' invocation in the wilderness, when the ark set forward (Num. x. 35), *Elohim* (God) being substituted for Jehovah. In fact Israel is beginning again her triumphant progress under her divine Leader of ancient times. We go back of all her history in the land, which has been but failure, to see her now on the path of steady advance, all the causes of error and failure being removed, and a new covenant replacing the old, disastrous one, which in their wilfulness they had chosen.

Their enemies are now "the wicked," the enemies of God. It is the conflict between good and evil that is approaching its crisis. The labor of ages to end it, so long ineffectual, will now be compressed into one sharp, decisive encounter. Like wax before the fire, the foes shall melt away before the presence of God. But the righteous shall be glad and exult, yea, leap for joy.

God is now seen as beginning His triumphant march, and as in Jehoshaphat's successful war, the singers go in the forefront of the host. They are to cast up the way before the advancing King. This, of course, is spiritual preparation, and connected in Isaiah (lvii. 14; lxii. 10) with the removal of stumbling-blocks. The spirit of praise is the spirit of power. The joy of what God is, is holiness itself, the atmosphere of heaven, that which will allow nothing contrary to the character of Him whom it proclaims by His Name Jah, the One who is,—the great Reality, for faith (though not in the pantheistic sense) the One Existence. Ah, if God only were all to us after that manner, as in that scene to which the knowledge of the new man introduces, (as the apostle tells us,) "Christ is all"—how would such joyous faith prepare God's glorious way!

The way of Him "that rideth in the *deserts*," says the psalmist; and the number here accentuates this. It is not, however, the common word for the wilderness, but that which is the specific name for the deep groove from the lake of Galilee to the Red Sea, in which the Jordan runs down to the Salt Sea, and in

(v.) governmental ways.

(vi.) His hand upon evil.

A [u]father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows
is God in his holy habitation.
God setteth the [v]solitary in families:
he bringeth out the [w]prisoners into prosperity;
but the [x]rebellious dwell in a dry land.

2 (7-12): Relationship according to the legal covenant.

(i.) God at the head.

(ii.) the witness of nature.

(iii.) divine refreshment.

(iv.) the experience of the poor.

O God, when thou [y]wentest forth before thy people,—
when thou movedst through the waste,— Selah—
The earth [z]quaked, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God,—
yon Sinai, at the presence of God, the God of Israel.
Thou didst send a plentiful [a]rain, O God, on thy heritage,
and strengthenedst it when it was [b]weary.
Thy community dwelt therein:
thou preparedst in thy goodness for the [c]poor, O God.

u Ps. 146. 9. Hos. 14. 3. Is. 54. 5.
v 1 Sam. 2. 5. Ps. 113. 9. Is. 54. 1-8. Is. 49. 14-23.
w Ps. 107. 10-14. *cf.* Is. 42. 6, 7 with Mt. 5. 25, 26.
x Is. 30. 8-17. Ezek. 2. 3-8.
y Is. 52. 12. Hab. 3. 10, 13.
z Judg. 5. 4, 5. Ps. 114. Job 9. 5, 6. *cf.* Hag. 2. 6, 7.
a Deu. 11. 11, 12. 1 Ki. 18. 41-45; *cf.* Is. 55. 10-13; *cf.* Ps. 72. 6.
b *cf.* Jer. 31. 23-26; *cf.* Hos. 6. 3.
c Ps. 72. 2, 4, 12-14; *cf.* Zeph. 3. 12, 13.

which the Sea itself lies,—the Arabah: here in the plural, which may stand for the different parts of one depression, or for all that is similar to this. The word means a "parched, dry place," which in its specific application, Jordan, the river of death, and the salt sea, the lake of fire and brimstone, sufficiently characterize. Death is in itself the stamp of man's condition, his removal from the place which through sin he has forfeited, and thus, if there be no remedy, from the face of God. But it is when he is brought to the realization of this, into the dry, parched place, he finds One that moves there, sovereign over what may seem insurmountable difficulties. It is here the work of Christ manifests itself in all its glorious power; and it is suited therefore to a psalm which brings Israel into blessing under the new Head, Christ, that Jehovah should be revealed as "He who rideth in the Araboth,"—who moves serenely in the plenitude of power among these places where human resources are dried up. Fitting too is it that just in this connection the reminder of death should be found accompanied by the assurance of His tenderness and resources for those who suffer from this:—"a Father of the fatherless, and a Judge of the widows, is God in His holy habitation." And similar things are those that follow also: "He setteth the solitary in families,"—removing the curse of barrenness and the sorrow of isolation. Again, "He bringeth out the prisoners," not into liberty merely, but "into prosperity"; while "the rebellious" only, but they assuredly, "dwell in a dry land" still. Thus His character both in grace and in righteousness is declared.

2. In the last word we have reached the only cause of the failure of Israel's bud of promise so long ago; and this recalls the psalmist to their history already referred to. There was then on God's part assuredly no lack of power; nor of testimony to it was there any lack: "O God, when Thou wentest forth before Thy people,—when thou movedst through the waste,"—not *Arabah* now, but *jeshimon*, "desolation, waste,"—"the earth quaked, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God; yon Sinai at the presence of God, the God of Israel." They had had the fullest assurance of Who was with them. It was God, and their own God, to whom nature had done homage. Sinai had witnessed the wonderful covenant established between God and His creatures. In the fulfillment of it He had carried them into the land, and showered His gifts upon them in what was His inheritance, but in which He settled them. There they dwelt as His community,* Himself to be their life-bond, and preparing thus in His bounty

* *Chajah*, "living thing"; but used also for a "company" resembling a living organism, and thus even for a "troop" of soldiers.

(v.) man with God.
(vi.) victory.
3 (13-19): Sanctification for the sanctuary.
(i.) grace the source.

The Lord giveth the word:
the [d]women that publish the good news are a great host.
Kings of [e]armies are fleeing—fleeing:
and she that stayeth at home [f]divideth the spoil.

Though ye [g]lie between the hurdles,
the [h]wings of a dove [are there]:
covered with [i]silver,
and her feathers with green-tinted [j]gold.

d *cf.* Ex. 15. 20. *cf.* Judg. 11. 34. *cf.* 1 Sam. 18. 6.
e Ps. 48. 4, 5. *cf.* Zech. 14. 2, 3.
f *cf.* 1 Sam. 30. 24. *cf.* Is. 33. 22–24.
g *cf.* Gen. 49. 14, 15. *cf.* Judg. 5. 16.
h *cf.* Ps. 17. 8; *cf.* Ps. 63. 7. i *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. j *cf.* Is. 60. 7-9.

for a people dependent, in their poverty, upon Him. This characterized His dealings with them ever, while they remained indeed His community and only kept the place of dependence. Were there enemies to be encountered, His word was the effectual routing of the enemy: there were needed, then, only women to spread the glad tidings of the victory. Kings with their hosts were at once in flight; and women—the quiet stayers at home—were sufficient to take the spoil. Such was Israel when with God; and such had been the goodness of God to Israel.

3. The words change now into a direct address to the people. But the passage is so difficult, largely from its elliptical character, and it is yet so important to be clear about it, that I shall examine it at more than usual length. It is a good example of the difficulties which sometimes beset both the interpreter and the translator, as well as of the only way in which they can be satisfactorily settled, that is, by Scripture itself, one part being explained by another, as a divine and necessarily self-consistent whole.

The rapidity of transition is very characteristic of the Psalms, and indeed of the prophets generally. From the third person in the preceding verses, we come here to a direct address in the plural, which is exchanged for the third person singular in the following one, and this once more in the second verse after it, for a direct appeal again, but in an entirely different quarter. The elliptical construction is, however, the great difficulty, as already said. "Though ye lie between the hurdles . . . wings of a dove, covered with silver," etc. There is no verb to the latter part, and no "as," as in the common version. Whatever is put in, as something must be, partakes necessarily of the nature of interpretation.

Then one of the words is doubtful, *shephattaim*, which only occurs again exactly in this form in Ezek. xl. 43, where the common version suggests variously "hooks, end-irons, hearth-stones," and the margin of the Revised has "ledges." But that passage is more difficult than the one before us. In the present one there has also been suggested "hearth-stones," in the common version "pots," by others "borders," but by most now, with the Revised, "sheep-folds," or better "hurdles," pens or stalls for cattle. The word is from a verb, "to place," and as a dual form has as its primary idea two things placed over against one another (*Wilson*). The reference seems to be to Gen. xlix. 14 and Judges v. 16, where a word only slightly different in form is used (*mishpethaim*), and which is generally agreed to mean "hurdles" or "sheep-folds;" and we shall presently find this confirmed by comparison of the passages.

But what must we supply in the gap which follows this? In the common version the "as" is as hypothetical as is the "yet shall ye be"; and one naturally asks, why should Israel be compared to the "*wings*" of a dove? what special force has "wings" there? It is said, for their special beauty; and Cheyne quotes Miss Whately's description: "Seen in the bright glow of the sun's slanting rays, the outspread wings of a dove might fitly be described as 'yellow gold'; then, when the bird has wheeled round, and is seen against the light, they might as fitly be called 'molten silver.'" But though this is satisfactory enough, yet there seems more needed for any proper explanation. The wing

(II.) twofold salvation.

(III.) the sanctuary.

When the Almighty [a]scattereth kings on her account,
thou makest [as it were] snow in Zalmon.
The mount of God, is it mount [b]Bashan?
a mount of peaks, mount Bashan?

[a] ver. 1. Ezek. 39. 1-7.
[b] cf. Nah. 1. 4, 5. cf. Zech. 11. 2.

implies, one would say, action in some way, and the color of the wing can hardly be the whole matter.

The gap is best supplied also in its simplest form, though we can hardly read as simply as Moll, "The wings of a dove *are* covered," which (besides joining together a plural and a singular in a questionable manner) disconnects this too much from what precedes it, even though that be put in the form of a question: "would you lie between hurdles?" itself unsatisfactory when we consider, as we must now do, the significance of the passage as a whole.

Looking on but a verse or two, we see that we are coming to the thought of the sanctuary which God has chosen for Himself in Zion, and then to see Israel (in the characteristic verse of the psalm) under the new Head, Christ, ascended on high. Looking back, we have seen them under the covenant at Sinai, a covenant which had so conspicuously failed in securing blessing for them. How, then, shall they now be blessed? The answer to this is evident: it can only be by the work of Christ, by redemption and the work of the Spirit in them. We must look therefore for some reference to this at the point at which we have now arrived.

The connection of the opening words with similar expressions in Genesis and Judges has been already referred to. In the latter case Deborah describes the listless indifference of Reuben to the common welfare, when Zebulon and Naphtali were periling their lives in the field against Jabin, king of Canaan. "Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks?" she asks. It might be more literally rendered, "Why sattest thou between the hurdles?" It is the expression of indolent self-seeking which kept them amid the abundant pasturage of their grassy plains. In Genesis, it is Issachar that is spoken of, and the words come still nearer to what is in the psalm before us: "Issachar is a bony ass, lying down between two hurdles: and he saw that rest was good, and that the land was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant for tribute." Here indolent self-seeking is complete, even though it may miss its end, as so often it does. And in Jacob's prophecy (as we have seen when examining it) the separate tribes represent conditions of the nation, whose remarkable history is pictured in it from the beginning, through the present time, and on into the future to which our psalm also carries us. The nation is before us in both cases, and in the same condition. Hence the application here must be what it is there, or would naturally be so. Issachar shows us the process by which the people of Jehovah became the poor drudge of the Gentiles; and here they are beheld in the same spiritual condition, listless, subject, degraded; in the opposite state to that of blessing, and to that which their own prophecies assure us shall be.

But this is just where grace finds every one of us,—where they too will be found; and therefore we need not wonder at the sudden change which is now indicated as taking place. And here the dove becomes a very striking figure.

The dove is a common figure in the Song of songs, and there doubtless represents Israel. We shall not forget this, while yet we remember that its first and fundamental significance carries us away from this, although there is an easy connection between the different applications.

It is plainly in the New Testament the symbol of the Spirit of God: "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove," says the Baptist, "and it abode upon Him." This necessarily, therefore, is an application which every one accepts; but even in this place it suggests another: the dove, the bird of heaven, the bird which is at once realized as the bird of love and as the bird of sorrow, and which Scripture speaks of in this double character, is so manifestly the representative of Christ Himself, the Man of sorrows, (sorrows that flowed from

(iv.) the failure of the world.

Why look ye askance, ye mountain-peaks?
[on] the mount God hath [m]desired for his abode?
yea, Jehovah will dwell perpetually [there].

m Ps. 78. 67-69. Ps. 87. 1, 2. Ps. 132. 14.

love, and into which love brought Him down,) that this application is no less evident than the other. Necessarily the symbol is thus a double one: for the dove could only come and abide on Him because here was a congenial home; and conversely, the Spirit of Christ must characterize Christ.

But Scripture confirms this further and without possibility of doubt, in that the dove is (in its two varieties of dove and pigeon) the only specified *sacrificial* bird. In this way it could, of course, apply, not even to the Spirit of God, but only to the Lord. How at once, then, there gleams upon us the glory of its matchless "wings"! Here the application to Israel even in the psalm before us seems at once excluded. What would be the force of any such to them? But if to Christ, then they may well be emphasized,—"wings" that brought a Saviour down! And all is plain: the wings covered with *silver*, reminding us of the redemption-money; and that presented first; then, as the light strikes differently, the glory of the "green-tinted gold,"—divine glory, with the hue of reviving nature in it, as in the "rainbow like an emerald, round about the throne" (Rev. iv. 3).

Thus Israel is most unlike these wings of a dove, while they speak of Christ with the clearest evidence. But how then do they come in here? The answer is surely not far to seek. "In the shadow of Thy wings I will take refuge;" "I will trust in the covert of Thy wings;" "in the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice:" are expressions which we have had in the Psalms elsewhere: what difficulty, then, in seeing Israel here under such covert? And from the New Testament comes one sweet, pathetic word which clasps this from the other side: "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

They are rejecting no longer now, and the wings of redeeming love are over them. The effect is seen in the following verse, though difficulties are still found in the language. Most translators have: "when the Almighty scattered kings *in it*"—meaning the land; but that is surely too far off the reference. "On her account" is abrupt, if referring to the people; but in any case there is a change to the third person. Why not, however, a reference to the dove just mentioned? which would account, moreover, for the impersonal form of the next line: "Thou makest as it were snow in Zalmon," or else, perhaps, "there was as it were." The language, if not the mere history some would make it, must be quite boldly figurative. If it be prophecy of a distant future, then we need not wonder if it be enigmatic. But there is, as we are reading it, consistent meaning, and one worthy of a divine oracle. If it be, on the other hand, merely the defeat long ago of no one knows who, at a place disputed about, then it is hardly worth while to concern ourselves about it.

The truth is, no doubt, that here we have Israel's twofold salvation: from the nations which will be gathered against her when deliverance comes; and this as a sign of a more perfect deliverance which will make her shine out of the darkness which has fallen upon her as snow upon the sides of a "shadowed" mountain.* If this scattering of kings be taken as on her (Israel's) account, there is a very suitable sense in this; if it be on account of the "dove" under whose wings Israel has found refuge, then the sense is one more manifestly evangelic and beautiful. The most commonplace meaning is *not*, let us be assured, when Scripture is concerned, the best or truest: it is far otherwise; for "the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (1 Cor. ii. 10.)

When now the hindrances have been removed, God is free to give full expression to His love; and, as of old He dwelt among the people brought out of Egypt, now that redemption has done its full and final work, immediately we

* *Zalmon* means "shady."

(v.) Adonai enthroned.

The [n]chariots of God are twenty thousand,
thousands upon thousands:
the Lord is among them, [as in] Sinai, in the sanctuary.

(vi.) the victory which sets aside evil.

Thou hast [o]ascended on high,
thou hast led captivity captive,
thou hast received gifts on account of man;
yea, even the [p]rebellious,
that Jah Elohim might [q]dwell [among them].

(vii.)

[r]Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us [with benefits],
the Mighty One, our salvation. Selah.

4 (20-23): The prostration of the enemies.

(i.) the Mighty.

He that is our Mighty One is mighty for [s]salvation:
and unto Jehovah the Lord [belong] the [t]issues from death.

n Deu. 33. 2. Dan. 7. 10. 2 Ki. 6. 16, 17. cf. Rev. 19. 11-21.
o Eph. 4. 8-10. Ps. 110. 1. cf. Acts 9. 4-6, 13-16.
p cf. Ezek. 2. 3-8 with Ezek. 44. 6-8. Is. 65. 2-10.
q Zech. 2. 10. Zech. 8. 3 Ezek. 48. 35.
r Ps. 72. 18, 19. Ps. 103. 1-5.
s Ps. 3. 8. Jer. 3. 21-23. Jonah 2. 9
t Deu. 32. 39; cf. Ps. 116. 3-9; cf. Ezek. 37. 11-14.

hear of His sanctuary. But where is it to be? Not in the mountain-range of Bashan, with its imposing and basaltic peaks, or in any similar heights. The mountains of Bashan, towering up from its level plains, might well suit and symbolize power as it is held by the great ones of earth who lord it over their fellows; but not such is Zion, a mount indeed, but most accessible, raising up men, His worshipers, to the level of His own desires, where condescending grace could meet them. There His desire has brought Him, and there He will abide.

There, too, the chariots of God are round about Him, the living forces which from the centre of His glorious presence go forth to all the earth. Angelic power thus manifested itself at Sinai, though there, necessarily, in a hidden sanctuary, where earthquake and fire shut Him in. Zion is the opposite of this, with all its glory but no fringe of fire. And Sinai was but temporary, for a purpose; Zion is His eternal rest.

But we penetrate closer, and into the presence of this glorious King. He has descended: blessed be His Name, He has descended; that is evident; but "He who hath [now again] descended is the Same also that ascended up." The voice of praise breaks out, but which is but the confession of what He has accomplished: "Thou hast ascended on high; Thou hast led captivity captive; Thou hast received gifts on account of man: yea, even for the rebellious, that Jah Elohim might dwell among them."

Here then the glory of Christ is fully displayed. He it is who having first come down into the lower parts of the earth, "ascended up, far above all heavens, that He might fill all things." Here is the tender sympathy of One who has been in every possible human position, and even under the weight of sin itself, that He might be near us, with us. The frowning sublimity of Bashan or Sinai would not indeed suit such an One, but only the "mount Zion which He loved."

Victor in the necessary conflict between good and evil, He has led captivity captive—put an end, that is, to the tyranny of Satan, and released those under his power. But it is not enough for Him to set free: He must enrich these, but now the poor slaves of Satan. He has "received gifts on account of man:"—which the apostle carries on to its result, "gave gifts unto men." He applies it to the Church; the psalmist goes on to speak of Israel: "yea, for the rebellious also, that Jah Elohim might dwell among them."

This part ends here with an ascription of praise: "Blessed be the Lord who daily loadeth us with benefits: the Mighty One, our salvation."

4. There are now to the end of the psalm four brief sections of four verses each. The present one shows us now the prostration of the world, out of which God

(ii.) destruction of the enemies.

(iii.) restoration.

(iv.) utter prostration.

But God will smite through the head of his enemies,—
the hoary scalp of one that [a]goeth on in his trespasses.
The Lord said, I will [b]bring again from Bashan;
I will bring again from the depths of the sea.
That thou mayest dip thy [w]foot in blood;
that the tongue of thy dogs may have its portion from [thine] enemies.

5 (24-27): Israel with God.

(i.) the Divine King.

(ii.) testimony in communion.

(iii.) Israel's heart in overflow.

They have seen thy [x]goings, O God;
the goings of my Mighty One, my King, into the [y]sanctuary.
The [z]singers went before;
the players on stringed instruments afterward,
in the midst of the [a]maidens playing with timbrels.
In the [b]congregations, bless ye God:
the Lord, from the fountain of Israel!

a Prov. 29. 1. cf. Lk. 19. 14, 27.
b Ps. 85. 1, 2. cf. Is. 49. 22. cf. Jer. 30. 18. cf. Joel 3. 1, 2.
w Ps. 58. 10. Ps. 149. 6-9.
x cf. Ex. 13. 21. cf. Ex. 14. 19.
y Ps. 24. 7-10. Ps. 77. 13.
z cf. 2 Chr. 29. 16-22. cf. 1 Chron. 15. 16-28.
a cf. Ex 15. 20.
b Ps. 22. 22. cf. Ps. 74. 2.

delivers his people. Israel's Mighty One has been shown Mighty for salvation; and as to death itself, the issues from it are His. Destruction must be the portion of His enemies, who persistently, spite of His warnings and His mercy, pursue their evil way. The Lord has said He would bring again His people from Bashan, which has just been used as a figure of the world; yea, if it were from the abysses of the sea: and that to see the utter prostration of their foes, left as carcases upon the battle-field.

5. We go on to a very different scene. Israel is now with God, at the end of all her sorrows, in a union never to be broken; and as the ark of old was ushered into its sanctuary-rest amid rejoicing of the people, so now is the divine King Himself welcomed with the heartfelt praises of the delivered nation. The psalmist paints it as an actual scene before his eyes: "They have seen Thy goings, O God,"—a plural, which takes in the movement of the whole joyous crowd, and so Delitzsch renders it "procession,"—"the goings of my mighty One, my King, into* the sanctuary." This is the very point of what is here, that God is taking His place in the old (and yet how much more than the old!) relationship to His people; and this God is He who is also Man, the glorious King, long since come in humiliation, only to be rejected.

The singers come at the head of the procession. The human voice leads all instruments. This, though but what we recognize as natural, and may overlook because we are so familiar with it, contains a precious and yet solemn truth, that man's heart must be turned Godward before nature will give her true responsive praise; and then, too, his hand must be upon the instrument, as we have often seen. Here, too, we find the maidens with their passionate emotion, soul going with spirit in the glorious outburst of harmonious rapture. Well may the virgins celebrate the Virgin's Son!

They incite each other to praise, now! How often have they incited one another to sin and to rebellion! But henceforth in Israel human association will be found and prized at its true value. They shall have no need to say to one another, "Know the Lord"; for all shall know Him, from the least unto the greatest. There shall be no "counsel of the ungodly" by which to "walk," no "way of sinners" in which to "stand"; all this will be entirely passed away. But praise will awaken praise, which will pour out from "the fountain" (the overflowing heart) "of Israel."

The enumeration of tribes that follows has peculiar difficulties. "Little Benjamin, their ruler,"† seems unsuited every way. A reference to Saul is most

* *B'* after a verb of motion. Neither the grammar nor the context necessitates "in holiness," as Delitzsch, Moll, and others, maintain.
† There is no "with," as in the common version: the revised is as here.

(iv.) the practical condition.

There is little [c]Benjamin, their conqueror;
the princes of [d]Judah, their close compacted band;
the princes of [e]Zebulon;
the princes of [f]Naphtali.

6 (28-31: The conquest of the earth. (i.) Israel empowered. (ii.) the nations dependent.

Thy God hath commanded thy strength:
[g]confirm, O God, what thou hast wrought for us.
Because of thy [h]temple at Jerusalem,
kings shall bring [i]presents unto thee.

c Num. 2. 22. Ps. 80. 2.
d Num. 2. 3.
e Num. 2. 7. 1 Chr. 12. 34.
f Num. 2. 29. 1 Chr. 12. 34.
g *cf.* Ps. 20. 2. *cf.* Phil. 1. 6. Ps. 138. 8.
h *cf.* Is. 60. 13, 14.
i Ps. 72. 10.

improbable; and the word implies at least a strict, if not a severe rule. In that future day to which the psalm refers, Benjamin will certainly not be the ruling tribe. I must agree with Moll, therefore, in translating "their conqueror," literally, "their treader down," but this as meaning Israel's warrior-tribe. Benjamin was certainly and typically this, as Jacob's prophecy from the first declared him. "Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf," says the dying patriarch; and this character was strikingly shown when they braved, though nearly to their own destruction, the united strength of Israel.

The typical meaning cleaves to this, as we trace it on from Genesis to Joshua. In the story of Joseph, who is Christ separated from His brethren and rising to power among the Gentiles, Benjamin represents Messiah in that form in which He abides among *them*—in which they recognize Him, "son of the right hand," not suffering, but reigning. This power he has not openly taken yet. But when the true Joseph reveals Himself to His brethren, Benjamin shall be united to Him—He shall take power after this manner upon the earth. "*Little* Benjamin"—made little of by the Gentiles, and by the Jews unknown in His true greatness,—shall become the conqueror of the nations, and may well therefore for his typical significance come foremost here. Yet is he, as such, *only in the train* of that greater glory which waits to be revealed to them, to which their eyes are now so absolutely closed. What an awakening will be theirs! And these thoughts may well underlie the mention, first of all, of "little Benjamin."

But now the princes of Judah have their place. Again a most difficult word is connected with them; a word found only here. But we need not go through the various conjectures as to it, as the most suitable meaning has also the best support.* Judah has, through all her history, and even spite of scattering over the earth, been always more or less a "close-compacted band." Nor shall aught dissolve the tie that binds them to one another. That tie also has always been what their name indicates—their *worship*; and when this was the *true* worship, it was the bond that united them into a nation and a kingdom. At the time to which the psalm looks forward, its power will be seen more gloriously than ever; nor will it relax again.

Next come the "princes of Zebulon," "dwellers in relationship," the thought again clearly answering to the condition upon which Israel are entering now. And lastly, "the princes of Naphtali," the "wrestlers," who have learned with Jacob, their father, the strength that is made perfect in weakness. They are really, as coming in the fourth place here, the "weak wrestlers." The lesson is surely not hard to be deduced.

How perfect is the inspiration breathing through all this! Every word is in place; every line tells in this vivid picture: "which things also we speak," says the apostle, "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth."

6. We have seen in the fourth section the prostration of the enemy's power; we have now the conquest of the earth, its being brought as a whole into subjection to God. Israel has come into a place of power as the seat of divine rule over the earth; and the psalmist seeks confirmation of that which has been wrought

* The meaning in the text is that given by Gesenius, Delitzsch, and Moll, following some Jewish expositors.

(iii.) the full realization.

[j] Rebuke the wild beast of the reeds,
the assembly of bulls, with the calves of the peoples,
[every one] [k] submitting with pieces of silver:
he hath scattered the peoples that delight in encounter.

(iv.) the world yielding.

Dignitaries arrive out of [l] Egypt:
Cush quickly stretcheth out her hands unto God.

7 (32-35): Closing praises.

Sing unto God, ye [m] kingdoms of the earth:
psalm unto the Lord:— Selah.—

(i.) God the Lord.

Unto him that [n] rideth on the heavens of heavens that are of old:

(ii.) His witness to Himself in word and deed.

lo, he [o] uttereth his voice, a voice of power.
Ascribe ye [p] power unto God:

(iii.) now manifest in Israel.

his majesty is over Israel,
and his power is in the clouds.

(iv.) praise from the whole earth.

O God, thou art [q] terrible, out of thy sanctuaries:
the Mighty One of Israel!
He it is that giveth [r] power and might unto the people.
[s] Blessed be God!

j cf. Ps. 22. 12, 13.
k cf. Ps. 45. 12. cf. Is. 45.14.
l cf. Is. 19.19–25.
m Ps. 100. 1.
n ver. 4. Ps. 104. 3.
o Ps. 29.3-9. Ps. 46. 6.
p Ps. 29. 1. cf. Rev. 5. 13.
q Ps. 46. 8. Ps. 65. 5.
r Ps. 29. 11.
s Ps. 72. 18, 19.

for them. God is in His holy temple at Jerusalem, and the kings of the earth bring of course their tribute there. But there are still adversaries who have not submitted. "The beast of the reeds," whether crocodile or hippopotamus, is naturally Egypt; the assembly of bulls is a general figure for defiant strength. The calves are the people following these leaders. But there is no help where the creature strives against the power of God; and all in turn submit themselves. War is at an end with this submission, and the reign of peace ensues. Egypt sends its dignitaries; Cush (or Ethiopia) thrusts out the hands imploringly to God. Altogether it is a different picture from that which men have drawn of the peaceful triumphs of the gospel; but such is the resistance of man's heart to God that (to use the figure of a well-known writer) Mansoul must in any case be taken by siege. Good it is when in any way its pride is humbled, and it is made to sue for peace to Him who is of infinite mercy. "When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world shall learn righteousness."

7. The psalm ends with an exhortation to all the kingdoms of the earth to praise Him. As at the beginning He was seen riding upon the Araboth, the places of man's need and extremity, so now He is seen riding upon the heavens of heavens, high over all created things. Through all He sends out His voice of power, making Himself known in word and deed as Lord of all. All power belongs to Him, whose majesty is seen over Israel, and His power in the lightest tracings of the ever changing clouds.

The last verse is the response from all the earth. The Mighty One of Israel is owned as terrible—the object of reverential fear—out of His (heavenly and earthly) sanctuaries, giving power and might unto His people.

Sec. 2.

The four psalms that close the second book show us the salvation-work of Christ once more: first, in the cross as its basis, though in a different aspect from those in which we have seen it before; then in the revival of Israel, as the people of God; and lastly, in the rule of the King over the whole earth in truth and righteousness. Salvation is here seen therefore in its national and earthly aspect, and the view of the Cross in the sixty-ninth psalm agrees with this. In it we have the governmental side of atonement,—the trespass-offering,—as we had in the twenty-second the sin-offering, and in the fortieth the burnt-offering. The seventieth psalm, following this, is (with but some slight changes) the cut-

SECTION 2. (Ps. lxix.–lxxii.)
Christ's service of salvation.

Ps. lxix.

PSALM LXIX.

The Source of salvation.

1 (1–6): Christ identifying Himself with His people in His offering. (i.) the occasion of the cry. (ii.) death in view. (iii.) the inward distress

To the chief musician, upon *t*Shoshannim: [a psalm] of David.

"SAVE me, O God!
for the *v*waters are come in unto the soul.
I sink in deep *w*mire, where there is no standing:
I am come into deep waters, and the flood *x*overfloweth me.
I am *y*weary with my calling, my throat is dried:
mine eyes fail while I *z*wait for my God.

t Ps. 45. title.
u cf. Ps. 22. 21 with Heb. 5. 7.
v ver. 2, 14, 15. Ps. 42. 7. *cf.* Lk. 12. 50.
w cf. Ps. 40. 2 with 2 Cor. 5. 21.
x cf. Jonah 2. 3 with Matt. 12. 40.
y cf. Ps. 22. 2. *cf.* Ps. 102. 3.
z cf. Ps. 40. 1.

off end of the burnt-offering psalm itself. But into the meaning of all this we shall have to inquire, as we take up these psalms in detail.

PSALM LXIX.

The sixty-ninth psalm is more frequently referred to in the New Testament than any other, except the twenty-second; and always as fulfilled in relation to the Lord Himself or in the fruits and consequences of His rejection. And it is plain, as Delitzsch says, that "The whole psalm is typically prophetic, in as far as it is a declaration of a history of life and suffering, moulded by God into a factual prediction concerning Jesus Christ, whether it be the story of a king or a prophet; and in as far as the Spirit of prophecy has even moulded the declaration itself into the language of prophecy concerning the future One."

It will not be strange, however, to find, according to the title which we have had already in connection with the forty-fifth psalm, *al-shoshannim*, "the lilies," (so different as these are,) Christ is not seen alone, but with those for whom He suffered. There is not merely "a lily," but "lilies." For a moment—and it is one of the difficulties of the psalm,—in the twenty-sixth verse, "Thy wounded ones"* are seen, as it were, side by side with "Him whom Thou hast smitten;" and this, with the judgment denounced upon the human persecutors, has been a difficulty in the minds of some in seeing the work of atonement in it at all, though the cross is certainly here, for nowhere else could Christ be smitten of God. But there is no forsaking of God, and "though the fact of smiting is referred to, its expiatory power is not at all treated!"

Now, it is surely true that the deepest suffering of the Cross, and absolutely necessary for atonement, was the forsaking of God (see Lev. iv. *notes*); yet not all the sacrifices speak of this, but only the sin-offering; and that too, only in its first and highest grades. Yet atonement is said to be made by the lower grades also, as well as by the burnt- and trespass-offerings.

Then, the burnt-offering psalm closes, as has been already mentioned with the denunciation of judgment upon the rejectors of Christ, which is here appended, as the seventieth psalm. So that the present one may be as well the trespass- as the fortieth, the burnt-offering. Two things are plainly in accordance with this, that the One who here suffers, owns, not "sins," as in the common version, but "trespasses;" and that He restores that which He took not away. This is not simply vicarious penalty, but that restitutive form of it which the trespass-offering presents.

Moreover the association of others with the Unique Sufferer here comes not, in what may be called the body of the psalm, but late in it, among the denunciations of the persecutors.

Admitting thus in the most distinct way that we have neither the full presen-

* One Hebrew MS. is referred to by Coleman, as well as the Syriac version, (which is perhaps as old as the first century A. D.), as having the singular "him," in both places.

(iv.) the trial from man.

More than the [a]hairs of my head are they that hate me without cause;
they that would cut me off—mine enemies wrongfully—are [b]mighty:
what I took not away, I then [c]restored.

(v.) the trespass-offering.

O God, thou knowest my [d]foolishness:
and my [e]trespasses are not hid from thee.

(vi.) the plea for limit.

Let not [f]those who wait on thee be put to shame in me, Lord, Jehovah of hosts:
let not those be confounded in me, who seek thee, God of Israel.

2 (7-12): In the midst of the strife between good and evil,

(i.) identification with God.

Because for thy sake I have borne [g]reproach:
shame hath covered my face.

(ii.) separated from his brethren.

I am become a [h]stranger to my brethren,
even an alien to the children of my mother.

(iii.) zeal of Thy house.

For [i]zeal for thy house hath devoured me:
and the [j]reproaches of those that reproached thee are fallen upon me.

(iv.) a reproach for weakness.

And I [k]wept while my soul fasted:
and it became a reproach to me.

a *cf.* Ps. 22. 16 with Matt. 27.39-44.
b *cf.* Ps. 18.17 with John 18. 4-6.
c *cf.* Ex. 22.1. *cf.* Lev. 5.14-16 with Isa. 53. 5,6.
d *cf.* Ps. 40. 12 with 1 Pet. 2. 22-24.
e *cf.* Ps. 41. 4 with 1 Jno. 3. 5.
f *cf.* Ps. 22. 4-6 with Jno. 18. 8,9. *cf.* Matt. 26. 31, 32.
g *cf.* Ps. 42. 10. *cf.* Ps. 109. 25. *cf.* Isa. 53. 3, 10.
h *cf.* Jno. 3. 21. *cf.* Matt. 26. 56.
i Jno. 2. 13-17; *cf.* Lk. 12. 50.
j *cf.* Ps. 89. 50, 51; *cf.* Lev. 16. 11; Rom. 15. 3.
k *cf.* Isa. 53. 3, 4 with Lk. 22. 41-44; *cf.* Ps. 35. 13-15.

tation of atonement, nor the fullness of divine grace flowing forth through this, and that these things are connected together as cause and effect, yet this seems not inconsistent with the character of offering set forth; while the governmental aspect of atonement which it expresses (see Lev. v. 14 *sq.*, *notes*) prepares us to find here, more strongly emphasized than elsewhere, the judgment upon rejectors.

1. In the first section we have that identification of Christ with His people which is necessarily involved in vicarious suffering. He is heard in His distress, as the waters of affliction penetrate even to the soul. He is sinking beneath the floods, and into the deep mire where there is no standing ground. The "strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him out of death," of which the epistle to the Hebrews speaks, is emphasized in what follows; and then the countless enemies, with their causeless enmity, while He is paying the debt due by others, not by Himself,—restoring what He took not away.

And here, in the light before God, He sees the awful reality of the evil He has taken upon Him,—hating it, the folly (or impiety) and the trespasses which spring out of this,—with the hatred with which God hates it; even while He owns it His, and bears in His soul the anguish of it.

But to this, then, there must be a limit, that those who wait on God in faith and in desire seek Him—Jehovah, God of hosts and God of Israel, their covenant-God through the sacrifice that He is offering—be not put to shame and confusion, in Him in whom are centred all their hopes. For upon His acceptance depends their salvation for whom He stands, their Representative before God. The work accomplished, righteousness in Him can safely appeal to divine righteousness,—and to righteousness in their behalf.

2. In the next section we go back to His previous life among men, to see Him in the constant strife between good and evil in the world, taking His part with God and therefore suffering. "For Thy sake," He says, "I have borne reproach: shame hath covered my face." And that not only among strangers; for here was the true Joseph, separated from His brethren, a stranger and an alien, refused as Israel's Messiah, and to become the Gentiles' Christ. And yet that dwelling-place of God in Israel, and which His work is to secure for them in a time near at hand, was that for which His zeal devoured Him. Twice He vindicated the holiness of what, until His last decisive rejection by them, He spoke

(v.) a proverb.
(vi.) the evil at its height.

I made sackcloth also my garment:
and I became to them a [l]proverb.
The [m]sitters in the gate talk of me;
and [I am] the music of the [m]drinkers of strong drink.

3 (13-18): The Sanctuary-refuge.
(i.) an accepted prayer
(ii.) for deliverance.

But as for me, my [o]prayer is unto thee, Jehovah, in a time of acceptance:
O God, in the abundance of thy [p]loving-kindness answer me, in the truth of thy salvation.
[q]Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink:
let me be delivered from those that hate me, and from the deep waters.

(iii.) for resurrection.

Let not the [r]water-flood overflow me,
nor let the deep swallow me up;
and let not the [s]pit shut her mouth upon me!

(iv.) according to former experience

Answer me, Jehovah, for thy loving-kindness is good:
according to the multitude of thy [t]tender mercies turn unto me.

(v.) and the ways of divine government.
(vi.) the extremity.

And [u]hide not thy face from thy servant,
for I am in strait: answer me [v]speedily.
Draw near to my soul,—redeem it;
because of mine enemies, [w]set me free.

l cf. Mk. 15. 29.
cf. Jno. 1. 46.
m cf. Deu. 21. 19 with Matt. 26.57–66.
n cf. Mt. 27. 27–30.
o cf. Heb. 5. 7.
cf. Ps. 22. 21.
p Ps. 61. 7.
q Ps. 40. 2, 13.
r ver. 1.
s cf. Ps. 16. 10, 11.
t Ps. 109. 21.
u cf. Ps. 22. 1. *cfr.* Ps. 17. 15.
v Ps. 70. 1, 5.
w cf. Isa. 48. 20.
cf. Hos. 13. 14.

of as His Father's house, and which He would have cleansed from the abominations which were driving Him away from them. In fact, through evils such as these, that house was already empty; and they well knew it, yet repented not of the evil, nor recognized the Deliverer who would have restored all, but was rejected: "the reproaches of them that reproached Thee," He says, "fell on Me." Thus it was then that He became a reproach, because He felt the misery of their condition, wept and fasted in His soul because of it. They looked for power simply to be used on their behalf: they found weakness, for in fact the power that He had He could not use for them. Yet in that weakness which they found in Him He could serve them better, and He did—"crucified through weakness." Yet they understood not this sin which He so lamented; and His sackcloth made Him a "proverb"* to them. They reckoned as ways of men merely, and indeed of evil men, the ways of divine holiness in love which mourned for them. And this contemptuous misunderstanding of Him was found among the elders sitting in the gate, and with the drunkards who made music out of Him: all far from God alike.

3. From these therefore He turns to God; and though in sorrow, yet with the assurance of acceptance. He is in distress, yet doubts not His goodness nor faithfulness; in view of which last He can expect and claim deliverance at His hand. He prays, therefore, for deliverance from that in which He is sinking, and from the enemies that surround Him. He seeks that the flood may not overflow Him, which, as this has already taken place (ver. 2) must mean, not continuously overflow Him, but give place again. So, "let not the deep swallow me up," implies irrecoverable disaster; and "let not the pit shut her mouth upon me" is similar again in this respect. The expressions therefore correspond well with that in Hebrews, "to Him that was able to save Him," not "from," but "*out* of death: that is, by resurrection (Heb. v. 7. *Gk.*). This was how the Lord was actually answered.

He appeals to experience: He has tasted that "loving-kindness" which "is

*Notice how the "proverb" has to do with divine government, the moral of God's ways with men; to which, I suppose, every proverb can be referred. The *book* of Proverbs thus comes under the number five, as the verse does here.

4 (19-21): His human feelings.
(i.) in the light.
(ii.) no helpers.
(iii.) the realization of this.

Thou hast [x]known my reproach and my shame and my dishonor:
mine [y]oppressors are all before thee.
Reproach hath [z]broken my heart, and I am death-sick:
and I [a]looked for sympathy, and there was none;
and for comforters, and found [b]none.
Yea, they gave me [c]gall for my food,
and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

5 (22-28): Retribution.
(i.) In their peace and prosperity.

Let their [d]table before them be a trap,
and while they are at peace, a snare.

x ver. 5. Ps. 40. 9.
y Ps. 22. 12, 13, 16. Ps. 109. 3, 4.
z ver. 7. *cf.* Ps. 55. 12-14.
a Ps. 142. 4. *cf.* Matt. 26. 36-45.
b *cf.* Mk. 14. 29, 37, 50.
c *cf.* Jno. 19. 29, 30.
d Rom. 11. 9, 10. *ctr.* Ps. 23. 5.

good," and the "tender mercies," of which He knows that there are a multitude. And He beseeches that God hide not His face from One who is His servant, in this the hour of His strait: an appeal indeed, when we know what this service that He is fulfilling is.

The last verse of this section shows us the extreme point reached. Indeed the two words for redemption used here may seem to present difficulty in any application to the Lord. But there is a redemption by *power*, as well as by blood, and the application of the first word to the "avenger" (*goel* from *gaal*) shows that the latter conception of it is not necessary to the word. It has as its root-thought the demanding back of what has got away from one, and here (as the soul is the life) it is urged that God should intervene in power to restore the life which was His, and had yet passed, or was passing, away. Its restoration would be its "redemption."

The second word also is used for rescuing, setting free, as when it is said that the "people *rescued* Jonathan, that he died not" (1 Sam. xiv. 45). In both cases, therefore, it is the *kind* of redemption we are to consider, rather than the word simply.

4. There are now three verses which as a fourth section speak briefly of His human feelings under the pressure on Him. The reproach, the shame, the dishonor, are all felt and referred to God, as known to Him. His oppressors are before Him. Around there are none to sympathize with or minister comfort to the Sufferer. Yea, "they gave Me gall for My food," He says; "and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink." This was, as we know, the last indignity before He died: and this was the last scripture that the dying Saviour saw to be unaccomplished, and to fulfill which He uttered aloud His need. These verses, which evidently stand by themselves bring to an end the account of His sufferings, which now manifestly close in death.

5. The solemn denunciation follows, of retribution upon the enemies of Christ and of His people. It will be realized in an entirely different manner according to our conception of the speaker, and of the spirit which breathes in it. If these are the words of mere personal feeling, we shall naturally put them in contrast with the words of Him who at the cross itself prayed for His murderers. This was what was in His heart, and the plea He makes for them, that they knew not what they did, was the sanction of such a prayer. But then there would be those for whom plainly it could no more be uttered. Divine love itself would have to affirm the righteous doom of those who respond to it but with hatred, and this is the character of those before us here. Hence there is nothing incongruous in this being the language of the Saviour Himself, though not historically His utterance; nay, it is its being His that makes it all so perfectly and manifestly right. In the words of no other is the truth of retribution so strongly emphasized as in His own. Who so competent to speak of it as He who had come down to save men from it? Who could warn so solemnly as He who is the incarnation of divine love itself? Does not that same love speak here when

(ii.) the cutting off of their confidence.
(iii.) God revealed.
(iv.) desolation.
(v.) governmental reason.

Let their eyes be [e]darkened, that they see not;
and make their [f]loins continually to shake.
Pour out thine [g]indignation on them;
and let the fierceness of thine anger seize on them.
Let their camp be [h]desolate;
let there be no dweller in their tents.
For they have persecuted him whom [i]thou hast smitten,
and they talk to the suffering of thy [j]wounded ones.

[e] *cf.* Jno. 12. 39–41. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 11, 12.
[f] *cf.* Lk. 21. 25, 26.
[g] *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 16.
[h] *cf.* Mt. 23. 38. *cf.* Lk. 21. 20–24.
[i] *cf.* Ps. 22. 1, 15. *cf.* Isa. 53. 10.
[j] *cf.* Isa. 63. 9.

it is heard saying, Let that be, which as the sentence of the Throne at last will actually be?

There is this difference, however, which may be pleaded: that the judgment is in fact that which overtakes men here, and (except by implication) it does not reach into eternity. This is, as we know, the character of Old Testament judgments generally. They are such as come upon men here, the visible witnesses of that which is invisible and eternal. But that alters nothing as to their essential nature, while it gives an additional reason why it should be brought before us in this manner. The visible government of God on earth, even though clouds and darkness are about it, has its attestations and evidences as that which (to use the words of a noted unbeliever) "makes for righteousness." And the dealings of God with Israel in their disobedience and rejection of Christ are a special example of this kind. Thus God's dealings with men on earth are fitly to be put before us as anticipations and pledges of what in a coming day will come out more manifestly.

Thus we cannot put the Christ of the Old Testament in contrast with the Christ of the New. The grace of the gospel itself exhibits its glory against a back-ground of "eternal judgment." And we need no apology for the language of the psalm, though we may need an explanation of it. If it were not a judgment Christ Himself could affirm, then there could be no justification of it at all, from any lower platform. It would be but the language of human passion and infirmity, susceptible of no further interpretation than as that, and to be left to the condemnation of the enlightened conscience.

The snare of peace and prosperity is what is first insisted on: not, of course, the mere well-filled table of a glutton or an epicure, but this as the image of that enjoyment of present things which for the carnal shuts out what is spiritual and eternal. Thus it is indeed a trap and a snare. How busy, even among Christians, is Satan in shutting out the things of God just by the occupation with and pressure of things which in themselves may not be evil, but which we have not learned to connect with God and to use for God. Alas for the secular part of our lives which in the stealthiest fashion filches away from us so much of "what is really life" (1 Tim. vi. 19: "the life which is life indeed," R. V.). And for the man whose heart is set on earthly things, what a silken snare is their possession! We murmur at the evils and miseries that face us everywhere; but what would it be if men were fed to the full! Judgment may come as well in the smiling abundance which fattens and narrows the heart, as in the rougher fashion in which it is easier to discern it.

The time yet comes in which the eyes darken, and that in which was men's confidence is removed. Then the "loins" begin to "shake." The dread of the unseen, never anything else but a dread, comes upon them. God begins to be manifested, but in wrath which lays hold upon the guilty. Presently a desolate camp in the desert, a "wall," as the idea is,—a mockery of protection for the feebleness that sought once to it for shelter, but is gone; the tents there, but empty;—becomes the figure of their doom: themselves, where are they?

These four verses bring us to the natural pause in a septenary series, as this is. The last three unveil, as usual, the spiritual meaning. The fifth gives the

(vi.) the limit reached.

(vii.) the end.

Impute iniquity according to their iniquity;
and let them not [k]come into thy righteousness.
Let them be [m]blotted out of the book of the living:
and let them not be enrolled among the righteous.

6 (29-33): Victory.

(i.) the cause of praise.

(ii.) God magnified by testimony.

(iii.) replacing the old sacrifices.

(iv.) to the joy of the afflicted.

(v.) on account of His ways.

But I,—[l]poor and suffering;—
thy [o]salvation, O God, setteth me on high.
I will [p]praise the name of God with a song,
and magnify him with confession.
This also shall please Jehovah,
better than an ox—a [q]bullock having horns and hoofs.
The [r]afflicted see it [and] are glad;
ye that [s]seek God, let your heart revive.
For Jehovah [t]listeneth to the poor,
and hath not despised his [u]prisoners.

* Literally, "give."

k *cf.* Ps. 109. 7 with Matt. 27. 24, 25. *etc.* Lk. 23. 34 with Ps. 22. 22–31.
l *cf.* Ps. 109. 14.
m *cf.* Ps. 109. 13.
n Ps. 102. 22. Ps. 40. 17.
o ver. 1.
p Ps. 22. 22. Ps. 40. 3. Ps. 109. 1, 30, 31.
q Ps. 40. 6–8. *cf.* Ps. 51. 16, 17, 19.
r Ps. 22. 26.
s *cf.* Is. 65. 8–10.
t Ps. 61. 1.
u *cf.* Is. 53. 8.

reason according to divine government; and here alone it is—in a most fitting place, surely,—we see that there are other sufferers than the One great figure here. The part of the guilty ones whose judgment is here detailed,—*their* part in the Cross was only persecution: with the divine mystery of it, to which we owe all our blessing, they had naught to do. Yet that "they have persecuted Him whom Thou hast smitten," adds surely to the horror of their crime,—a crime for which they would in this very fact seek its justification rather. Why should they not persecute where God had smitten? When that cry that God had forsaken Him reached the ears of those who stood round the cross, would it not indeed seem like such a justification? They had done as they would, and no intervention of God had come in for Him: God had not smitten them, but Him! Just so do things conspire often to seal the delusion of those who invite delusion. Is it not a sign of such a judicial sentence recorded against them as the next verse speaks of,—their iniquity imputed *as* iniquity, so that they are given over to what they have chosen? All divine grace is to them now but as the utterance of parables which may have more than one interpretation, and be fatally misconstrued.

The association of others with the Lord in this respect, or the mention of them side by side with Him, need not, as I think, be of any special difficulty here. They are not associated with Him in that which was His atoning work, but only in the persecution by His enemies, which could not possibly have wrought this. It was important, on the other hand, to bring them in, just because the actual persecution of the Lord Himself belonged to one generation only by the necessity of the case, but the persecution of His people is, in one way or other, repeated through all generations. In convicting of this guilt, it was important to show that these things are by the Lord Himself classed together: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?"

Moreover, there is a difference in the experiences: "Thy wounded ones" is not just the same as "whom Thou hast smitten"; and nothing but the parallelism found in the poetry of Scripture could have suggested the rendering of the former as the common version has given it. But the parallel does not require to be carried to this extent.

"Add iniquity to their iniquity" is not also the necessary rendering of the twenty-seventh verse; and the moral argument seems against it in any way that this can be explained. The word is not "add," but literally "give," which may be rendered "put," and which in Jonah i. 14 is used for, "*lay* not upon us innocent blood," that is, "impute" it not. We may safely translate it here, "impute iniquity according to their iniquity,"—reckon it for what it is. They

7 (34-36): The consummation.
(i.) a concord of praise.
(ii.) for salvation.
(iii.) and inheritance by the lovers of His Name.

Let the [v]heavens and earth praise him:
the seas, and all that moveth therein.
For God will save [w]Zion, and build the cities of Judah:
and they shall dwell there, and have it in [x]possession.
And the seed of his servants shall inherit it,
and those that [y]love his name shall dwell therein.

v Ps. 96. 11, 12.
w Ps. 48. 1-3. Is. 52. 7-10.
x Is. 44. 26. Jer. 30. 16-22.
y Ps. 70. 4.

Ps. lxx.

[z]PSALM LXX.

Contrasted Consequences.

To the chief musician: [a psalm] of David to bring to [z]remembrance.

z Ps. 40. 13-17.

(i.) a cry to the Unchangeable.
(ii.) defeat of enemies.

[H]ASTEN,] O God, to [a]deliver me;
hasten, Jehovah, to my help.
They shall be [b]ashamed and confounded that seek after my soul:
they shall be driven [c]backward and put to dishonor that delight in my harm.

a *cf.* Ps. 71. 12.
b Ps. 35. 4, 26.
c *cf.* Jno. 18. 6.

have reached in fact the limit of forbearance: let the judgment now proceed. In the next verse, therefore, it is argued that the death-penalty is their desert: "let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written (enrolled) among the righteous."

6. The victory of Christ and righteousness is now briefly celebrated. It is the victory of God, and His Name is declared and glorified in it. The One who was just now the poor and sorrowful One is set on high; and the song of praise begins with the voice of Christ Himself, filled with the joy of God being magnified in the testimony of this deliverance. What does it not imply of joy that shall never end, that work accepted, sin put away, death annulled, Satan overcome! Now has come the substance of the past shadows. The sacrifices are replaced by that which pleases God better than all these. Balm for the afflicted is here; the seekers of God have a heart-reviving message: for the poor are not neglected by Him, and the prisoners—though justly suffering—are not despised by His grace, when they turn to Him. It is the gospel already beginning to be heard in the synagogue of Nazareth (Luke iv. 18, 19).

7. Heaven and earth, with the seas and all that are therein, are bidden therefore to praise the Lord together: for Zion shall be saved, the throne of His kingdom upon earth, and the witness of its salvation. Judah too (the worshiper) shall have his cities rebuilt, and dwell in them. And the inheritance shall be for the seed of Jehovah's servants, and for the lovers of His Name. Amen.

Psalm LXX.

The seventieth psalm, as has been said, is but (with slight modifications) the last five verses of the fortieth psalm, the burnt-offering psalm, here put by themselves as an appendix to the trespass-offering. Is not this repetition explanatory of what is in the title: "to bring to remembrance"? Assuredly David's heart was not so poor in praise as to be in any need of repeating himself after this manner, except "remembrance" could be in this manner better secured. And assuredly it is not a "fragment accidentally detached," as Cheyne views it, and, of course, accidentally inserted! It is a wonder that such blunders, as this would indicate them to be, should after all give the critics so much labor.

The numerical structure shows that it is as perfectly in place, as the title shows the one who placed it here to have known what he was doing. It is so completely in place that it can be transferred here from the place it fills in the fortieth, with its numbers and their indications all unchanged; and so I have transferred it. Its following the trespass-offering here, as there the burnt-offering, argues something else than chance in such an arrangement. Leave it out

(iii.) they shall realize their shame.
(iv.) the test of experience.
(v.) the weak with the Strong.

They shall turn back on account of their shame,
that say, [d] Aha! Aha!
All those that [e] seek thee shall be joyful and glad in thee:
those that love thy salvation shall say continually,
Let God be [f] magnified.
But I am [g] poor and needy: make haste unto me, O God!
my help and my deliverer art thou:
Jehovah, make no [h] tarrying.

[d] cf. Mk. 15. 29.
[e] Ps. 69. 32.
[f] Ps. 34. 2, 3.
[g] Ps. 69. 33.
[h] Ps. 141. 1.

Ps. lxxi.

[3] PSALM LXXI.

The Revival of Israel.

1 (1–5): Perpetual sufficiency.
(i.) In the Unchangeable.
(ii.) for salvation.
(iii.) and dwelling-place.

IN thee, Jehovah, have I taken [i] refuge:
let me never be [j] ashamed.
In thy [k] righteousness deliver me and cause me to escape:
incline thine ear unto me, and save me.
Be unto me a dwelling in the [l] rock whither I may resort continually:
thou hast given commandment to save me;
for my cleft of the rock and my fortress art thou.

[i] Ps. 31. 1-3.
[j] Ps. 25. 2, 3, 20. Is. 29. 22-24. Joel 2. 26, 27.
[k] Ps. 7. 8-11. Is. 54. 17.
[l] Ps. 62. 2, 7. Is. 26. 3, 4.

of this place, and the two psalms following it are displaced also, and it would be difficult to adjust them satisfactorily to their altered relations.

The psalm *is* for a remembrance; and therefore the repetition is of much more importance than the differences, which are but slight. The Cross is so central in human history, its consequences are so all-embracing and enduring, that such a reminder as this, appended to each form in which it comes before us, is in no wise strange or to be wondered at. *And the strangeness of the manner only calls attention to it the more.* Even the apparent clumsiness, as men would account it, —the first word omitted, as if the leaf had been hastily torn out,—to one who believes in inspiration, fixes the eye upon it. The unbeliever scoffs, as he did at the Cross itself; faith inquires, and not only finds answer, but learns to recognize God in what seems most human,—God that was in Christ, most gracious, where in humblest form.

The psalm is so simple as scarcely to need an exposition; and in this also it is suited to its work. It only needs to be put in connection with the psalm it follows. The Lord is then realized to be the Speaker, as is quite clear in the fortieth psalm. The contrary lot of those who are His enemies, and those who love His salvation, is then apparent.

Psalm LXXI.

The third psalm of this series is plainly, in accordance with its place, a resurrection psalm. Israel is seen—although anticipatively—renewing her youth. God is glorified in one who has been of old His witness, and who now witnesses for Him in self-abasement, in the old age that is upon her, but in which she finds Jehovah's strength and righteousness her sole confidence and boast. The psalm is almost throughout a prayer, but which turns in the end into joyful assurance and praise.

1. The first section is a simple appeal to God as the confidence of faith, the one sufficiency. As an introduction it gives us, as very commonly, the theme, which the rest of the psalm expands and illustrates. Faith is the expression of self-renunciation, which as such leaves God Himself in what He is, to be its all, and thus occupied with Him without distraction, its plea is founded on His very

(iv.) in the trial from man.

(v.) the weak with the Strong.

2 (6-11): Israel, God's witness, in her conflict.
(i.) God their strength from the beginning.
(ii.) preserved through vicissitudes.
(iii.) glorifying God.
(iv.) fall not when I fall.
(v.) exercise.

(vi.) in extremity.

O my God, [m] rescue me out of the hand of the wicked one,—
out of the grasp of the [n] unrighteous and cruel man.
For thou art my [o] hope, O Lord Jehovah,
my confidence [p] from my youth.

By thee have I been [q] upheld from the womb:
thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels:
my [r] praise shall be continually of thee.
I have been as a [s] wonder unto many:
but thou art my strong refuge.
My mouth shall be [t] filled with thy praise,
with thy glory, all the day.
Cast me not off in the time of [u] old age:
forsake me not when my vigor [v] faileth.
For mine enemies speak against me:
and they that watch for my soul take [w] counsel together,
Saying, God hath [x] forsaken him:
pursue and take him, for there is none to deliver.

m Ps. 17. 12, 13.
n *cf.* Zech. 14. 1-3. *cf.* Ps. 10. 18 *cf.* Is. 51. 13.
o ver. 14. Ps. 78. 7. Jer. 17. 7, 17.
p ver. 17. *cf.* Jer. 2. 2, 3. *cf.* Ezek. 16. 8, 22, 60, 61. *cf.* Hos. 11. 1-4.
q Is. 46. 3. Is. 63. 8, 9.
r Is. 65. 1.
s *cf.* Deut. 28. 37. *cf.* Is. 18. 7. *cf.* Ps. 126. 2, 3.
t Ps. 35. 28. Ps. 113, 1-3.
u ver. 18. *cf.* Hos. 7. 9. *cf.* Is. 46. 4.
v Ps. 73. 26. *cf.* Is. 40. 28-31.
w Ps. 31. 13. *cf.* Ps. 83. 3, 4.
x *cf.* Is. 36. 10; *cf.* Dan. 9. 10-14.

nature. It is a safe argument, if a true one: "I have put my trust in Thee, let me not be put to confusion." And thus God's righteousness can be pleaded by a sinner, the Cross of Christ being the full declaration and justification of this. The psalmist, divinely taught, goes to the full extent of this, claiming God as his rock-dwelling, to which he can resort whatever the danger. And His word assures him—the prophecies of God concerning Israel?—that He has given commandment to save him: "for Thou," he repeats, "art my cleft of the rock and my fortress."

. But Israel is in the sore trial of the last days, and the hand of the wicked one presses sorely upon them. He can only repeat that the *Lord Jehovah*—the immutable One, supreme over all opposing force, is his hope and his confidence "from his youth."

This last expression in its application to Israel, is an interesting one, reminding us, as it does, of that "remnant according to the election of grace" which has always been among the people, and which is a proof advanced by the apostle, that even now God has not "cast them away." At the time these psalms carry us on to, the Christian dispensation being over, these which are the true "brethren" of the King born in Bethlehem, "will return," according to Micah's prediction (chap. v. 2, 3), "to the children of Israel,"—to take their place upon the ground of God's promises to her. This voice of theirs now, then, as heard in the psalm, connecting itself with the long line of faith from the beginning, is itself a witness of God's returning favor to her. Israel is awaking from her sleep of centuries: the resurrection of the nation is begun.

2. Accordingly we find now, in mystical expression, what God has been to His people from the beginning, from their birth as a nation; brought through the various and chequered history in which they have been in so many ways "a wonder to many:" amid all their perils from without and from within, the Lord having shown Himself their "strong refuge." Their preservation is indeed to-day the standing miracle of history, and a testimony to God, spite of (nay, in) their very unbelief. Now they are openly to glorify Him: "My mouth shall be filled with Thy praise,—with Thy glory all the day."

Yet as in the mystery of spiritual things, the soul which is awaking from the sleep of death, awakes to realize the "body of death" which clings to it, so the remnant brought to God in those days will find themselves amid the national

3 (12-15): Drawing near to God.
(i.) the cry for God.
(ii.) to destroy enemies.

O God, be not [y] far from me:
my God, hasten to my help.
Let them be [z] ashamed [and] consumed that are adversaries to my soul:
let them be covered with reproach and dishonor that seek my hurt.

(iii.) reassurance.

But for me, I will [a] hope continually,
and will [b] praise thee yet more and more.

(iv.) experience.

My mouth shall tell of thy [c] righteousness,—
of thy salvation all the day:
for I know not how to [d] reckon it.

[y] Ps. 35. 22. Ps. 10. 1.
[z] Ps. 70. 2, 3.
[a] ver. 5.
[b] ver. 8.
[c] ver. 2.
[d] *cf.* Ps. 40. 5.

decay which might well be the signs of speedy dissolution. It is the time of old age, and strength has failed: the spiritual life is well nigh departed. As the ravens watch the expiring struggles of their anticipated prey, their enemies congregate and consult together. "God has forsaken him" is a verdict that looks so like the truth as to be agony to the soul that seeks Him. Such agonies are often to men the birth-throes of a new life; and so will Israel find it in her day.

3. A grand thing it is when, in the dissolution of all other things, God is found to be the one necessity of the soul. We can reason this out at any time; but to have got it in experience is quite another matter. Thus come to us those days of famine, which may by no means be openly that. The food may be there that does not feed us; the sun may shine as of old, but it does not warm us: the change is in ourselves. Everything seems unreal, but it is the real into which we are entering, and which is only demonstrating for us the unrealities in which we have lived. No man that knows not God has hold of reality; and it is the mercy of God when we wake up to the truth that the possession of God is the possession of what is real, and, in a true sense, of all that is real.

Israel has been, for long, according to Hosea's prophecy, "without a sacrifice, and without an ephod," ignorant of the better sacrifice that has come, and unable to present the prescribed offerings of their law; and when, with some dawning light among them, they begin to seek approach to God according to the old ritual, Satan will make his last and decisive attack to turn them away from Him to whom the Spirit of God would lead them on. "Another," a false Christ, "will come in his own name," as our Lord predicted, and "him they will receive." Cast out of the land, and with the abomination of desolation in their holy place, the remnant of true-hearted ones may indeed be tempted to think that "God has forsaken them." It is a crisis in their history for which, as we know, the Lord has specially provided in that discourse after His own decisive rejection, when their house had now to be "left unto them desolate." And may it not be that just by all this their hearts may be wrought upon and led back to Him whose sheltering wing would (how often!) have been stretched over them, but *they* "would not."

"Upon the wing of abominations," according to the literal translation of Dan. ix. 27, "the desolator" comes! How affecting the contrast! As the desolation follows in answer to the idolatrous challenge from Israel's holy place, will not hearts be opened to respond more intelligently to the love that seeks them? will it not be like the look which awakened Peter to the outgushing of repenting sorrow for having denied His Lord?

Then will the cry go forth indeed, "O God, be not far from me!" and that in intimate connection with the cry against those "adversaries to their soul" that are covering the land. But where faith is begun, the tug upon the heart-strings tunes them to music; and it is not at all incomprehensible, that speedy reassurance: "But for me, I will hope continually, and will praise Thee more and more." Can we not understand, too, as the fruit of this exercise,—perhaps, as a sorrow deeper than their own has been gaining upon them—that return to what, in the first section, we have spoken of as so much the theme of the psalm: "My

4 (16–18). The creature-place.
(i.) Jehovah's might and righteousness.
(ii.) taught and teaching.
(iii.) renewal of strength.

I will go in the might of the Lord Jehovah,
I will make mention of thy righteousness, of thine alone.
O God, thou hast taught me from my [e]youth,
and unto this time I tell of thy marvelous works:
Now, also, when I am [f]old and grey-headed, O God,
forsake me not,
until I have [g]declared thine arm to [this] generation,
thy might to every one that is to come.

[e] vers. 5, 6.
[f] ver. 9.
[g] Ps. 78.1-7. cf. Lk.2.25-32.

5 (19–21): Israel with God.
(i.) who like thee?
(ii.) the salvation.
(iii.) fullness of blessing.

Thy righteousness, also, O God, reacheth to the height,
who hast done great things:
O God, [h]who is like thee?
Thou who hast shown us many and sore [i]troubles
shalt [j]revive us again,
and bring us up again from the depths of the earth.
Thou shalt increase my [k]greatness,
and comfort me on every side.

[h] Deut. 32.31. Mi. 7. 18.
[i] cf. Jer 30.7. cf. Matt.24.21, 22.
[j] cf. Ezek. 37. 1-14. cf. Hos.6.1-3.
[k] Is.54.1-10. Zech.10.10.

mouth shall tell of Thy righteousness, and of Thy salvation, all the day: for *I know not how to reckon it*"?

4. Thus they are ushered into the place of blessing: so simple as it is, after all! Just the creature place, from which man departed at the first, seeking to be as God, and thus coming into independence of God: now to take up again dependence, and with the confession of the infinite sin of departure,—the need of salvation already owned.

Now then the place of strength is found, but Whose strength? How significantly do those titles come in again, found in the first section with such thoughts as these, but still more closely and more triumphantly joined together: "I will go in the *might of the* LORD JEHOVAH; I will make mention of Thy righteousness, of THINE ALONE." Yes, the refreshing stream runs low, but oh, the refreshment! The creature place and the creature privilege are never disjoined. If the creature is for God, God is for the creature: and which is it that finds the blessing here?

Intensely interesting, too, is it to find that now they begin to understand how God has been teaching them from the beginning: "Jehovah, Thou hast taught me from my youth:" and they enter into His purpose through them to declare His own marvelous works. It is now that they are beginning intelligently to fulfill this. His witnesses they have ever been in fact, but now in integrity and uprightness they are this.

Still, and because of this, the consciousness of feebleness and decay is with them, and they cry to God as alone their ability to fulfill what is in their heart. And this is no less than to be the witness of God's power to all succeeding generations. This they will assuredly be. Sustained in perpetual strength by this same power, they will be henceforth on earth His living testimony. Age and decay gone, they will abide as in resurrection strength and beauty. The stump of the cut-down tree shall send forth fresh shoots, the holy seed being the sap of it. "Israel shall bud and blossom, and fill the face of the earth with fruit."

5. Israel is now with God. The language of prayer is changed for that of praise and confident expectation. "Thy righteousness, O God, reacheth to the height, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto Thee?" Who indeed? And yet that simple truth, surely and whole-heartedly believed, is the end of all evil, the assurance of all blessing to every soul that receives it. It is the fall overcome, the tempter's suggestion vanquished.—"ye shall be as God," —the restlessness of man's will at an end; sabbatic rest and peace have come

6 (22-24): The song of victory.
(i.) the faithfulness of God.
(ii.) deliverance.
(iii.) the ban upon evil.

I will also [l]praise thee with the psaltery—thy truth, my God:
I will psalm unto thee upon the harp, thou Holy One of Israel.
My lips shall [m]sing aloud when I psalm unto thee, and my soul which thou hast set free.
My tongue also shall talk of thy [n]righteousness all the day:
for they are put to [o]shame, for they are confounded, that sought my hurt.

l Ps. 92. 1-3. Ps. 147.
m Ps.132.16. Is. 54. 1.
n vers. 2,19.
o ver. 13. Is. 45.17,24.

where and as far as this is realized. Israel here strikes the key-note of the world's praise.

The full salvation of the people is involved in this. The same hand that humbled will now exalt, and "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." The full truth of the past condition is owned: the nation is quickened and brought up from the depths of the earth—from its living tomb. Nor is this enough for the plenteous grace of God: "Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side."

6. The triumph is now celebrated. It is God's victory, as we have seen. If it were not that, the whole tone and character of what is here would be lowered immeasurably. Israel has been, however she may have failed in real subjection to God, His witness upon the earth. And if men also have failed in discerning this. Satan, the great adversary, has no less used them according to his knowledge, in his opposition to God's purpose in them. This strife has gone on through a large part of human history. Now, thank God, the adversaries are overthrown. The rejoicing is not a mere personal or national one, but in the removal of that which has hindered man's blessing and the glory of God: and these two things are inseparably joined together. Hence the triumph may well be celebrated.

The truth—or faithfulness—of God is the first note of the song; with that accompaniment of stringed instruments, the meaning of which we have in some measure learned. We ought to know, and yet do not, what is the difference between psaltery and harp in this way. If they had been treated as more than curious questions of technical knowledge or antiquarian research, we should no doubt have known. But sheer unbelief has prevailed with us to make the word of God as dull and barren as it first of all concluded it to be; and we have had our reward.

Then, as connected with this truth of God, the soul that God has set free sings aloud to God of this deliverance. Nature, the nations of the earth, as well as Israel, have all their part in this; and if it is not mentioned, it should not need to be. Every reader of Scripture ought to know what is connected with Israel's redemption—in the strong language of an apostle, the apostle of the Gentiles, "if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but LIFE FROM THE DEAD?" (Rom. xi. 15).

For this the ban upon evil must be carried out, and "true and righteous" are the judgments of the Almighty. No weak woman's wail must mingle with this triumph. Nay, "my tongue shall talk of Thy righteousness all the day long: for they are put to shame, for they are confounded, that sought my hurt."

PSALM LXXII.

The last psalm of the salvation-book of the Psalms shows the full extent of the salvation in its earthly aspect, in the Melchizedek reign of Christ, King of righteousness and peace; peace being the effect of righteousness, and thus abiding. And this is a true picture of what is come, although there are things which the New Testament adds to it, which are not seen here, nor in the Old Testament at all. For the Old Testament does not reveal the full and final, eternal

Ps. lxxii.

[s]PSALM LXXII.

Salvation for the Earth.

For [p]Solomon.

1 (1–4): Righteousness effecting peace. (i.) the righteousness of God in a King of men. (ii.) discriminative. (iii.) the effect realized. (iv.) meeting the need of men.

GIVE the [q]king thy judgments;
and thy righteousness to the king's [r]son.
He shall [t]judge thy people in righteousness:
and thine [u]afflicted with judgment.
The [v]mountains shall bring peace unto the people,
and the hills, by righteousness.
He shall do justice to the afflicted of the people:
he shall save the children of the needy,
and shall [w]break in pieces the oppressor.

p Ps. 127, title. cf. 1 Chr. 29. 1-25. cf. Matt. 12. 42 with Is. 9. 6, 7.
q Ps. 21. 1-4. Ps. 45. cfr. Is. 30. 33.
r Ps. 132. 11. cf. Matt. 1. 1. cf. Matt. 22. 41-45. cf. Rev. 5. 5. cf. Rev. 22. 16.
s cf. Is. 11. 1-4;

Ps. 94. 15. t ver. 13; cf. Ps. 82. 3, 4; cf. Is. 25. 4; cf. Zeph. 3. 12, 13. u Is. 52. 7; cf. Is. 2. 2, 3; cf. Jer. 31. 5, 6, 23. v Is. 49. 24-26; Jer. 30. 18-22.

condition of things, even for the earth, as the New Testament reveals it, save in that brief intimation of "new heavens and a new earth," with which Isaiah closes. Types and dark sayings, of course, there are, but no plain speech otherwise. For the Old Testament the kingdom of Christ ends all; which is true in a most important sense, but incomplete: for we have not the millennial limitation, the uprise of evil at the end, the judgment of the dead, and the change of the kingdom of the Son of man into the kingdom of the Father, when, having brought all things into the full final condition of blessing, the Son gives up that preparatory millennial rule into the Father's hand. All this could scarcely be revealed till Christ had come; and it is the manner of revelation to increase in fullness to the end. Yet, as Christ, after all, does reign for ever and ever,—the eternal throne being still "the throne of God and the Lamb," the kingdom to which the Old Testament looks on is, after all, eternal; and its view is simply (and necessarily) incomplete, not (of course) wrong. Yet this merging of the millennial in the eternal is that which no doubt has confused the minds of some who think they see more clearly, and have lately come to believe in two successive kingdoms of Christ as man: the millennial being merely introductory (as the Davidic) to the true Solomon reign of uninterrupted peace and much longer duration which yet precedes the eternal blessedness. But the twentieth of Revelation certainly finds no place for such a reign in the brief interval between the millennium and the judgment of the great white throne; while we are told that "*when* all enemies shall be subdued under Him,"—and the last enemy to be subdued is death,—"then shall the Son also Himself be subject to Him that put all things under Him" (1 Cor. xv. 28): thus excluding this reign of glory from the other side of it. However, let us take up the psalm.

1. The first section shows the principle of the kingdom,—peace as the effect of righteousness. This is what the apostle speaks of in relation to the antitypical Melchizedek, and which he draws from the language of the history in a way so deeply instructive for the interpretation of Scripture, and so declaring the divine perfection which is found throughout this. "For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, . . . *first* being by interpretation 'king of righteousness,' and *after that*, king of Salem, that is, 'king of peace.'" Melchizedek being as the translation of his own name "king of righteousness," this must come before his official title, "king of Salem," which being similarly translated means "king of peace." The meaning and order of these two Hebrew names are made in this way to define for us the principle that "righteousness" must go before "peace." This is only what Scripture elsewhere declares (in plain words) of that glorious time "when the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever" (Isa. xxxii. 17). But the apostle thinks evidently that there is no need of confirmation of what these two names declare. What an insight into the breadth of

2 (5-11): Progress of the kingdom.
(i.) perpetuity.
(ii.) ministry.
(iii.) the effect realized.

They shall [w]fear thee as long as the sun,
and while the moon endureth, for all generations.
He shall come down like [x]rain on the mown grass,
as showers that water the earth.
In his days shall the righteous [y]flourish,
and there shall be abundance of [z]peace till the moon be no more.

w vers. 7,17. Ps. 89. 36, 37. Is. 66. 22, 23.
x 2 Sam. 23. 4. Ps. 65. 9-13. Zech. 10. 1. Prov. 19. 12.
y *ctr.* Ps. 73. 1. Is. 27. 6.
z Ps. 122. 5-9; Is. 32. 17, 18; Is. 55. 12, 13; Mi. 4. 1-7.

Scripture, and what a revelation of its glory, he gives us by this method of proof!

This first section of our psalm, as we shall see, declares the same thing. First of all, in a prayer, the psalmist asks: "O God, give the king Thy judgments; and Thy righteousness unto the king's Son." Christ is both, as we know. Son of David, He takes the throne of David legally as that. But He is King also in a far higher way, and as such, divine righteousness belongs to Him by nature. No merely human hands can be trusted to hold in perfect equipoise this sceptre: and yet they are truly human hands: His of whom as Man, after a life of thirty years in this world, God could give testimony, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Now we have His careful discrimination in judgment, the first line speaking of strict equity; the second, bringing in (as lexicographers tell us), or at least allowing in it, the element of mercy also: "Thine afflicted, with judgment."

Then the effect is found: "The mountains," types of firmly established power, "shall bring peace to the people; and the hills" (the smaller magistracies), "*by righteousness.*" The perfect equity of the Head reflects itself in all that are His representatives.

And while no persons are favored in the judgment, the "afflicted" are tenderly considered, and "the children of the needy" cared for; while He breaks in pieces the oppressor.

2. Such is the character, then, of this government, so unique as it is among the sons of men. We now are called to see the kingdom in progress. Years do not change it: "They shall fear Thee as long as the sun, and while the moon endureth,—for all generations." Those glowing orbs of heaven are indeed the typical representatives of such power as this, the underived and the reflected; lights that have never erred from their appointed place since the day they were commissioned to "give light upon the earth." But no figures suffice to show Him forth aright; the next verse speaks of tender and reviving ministry: "He shall come down like rain on the mown grass"—the field that needs replacement of that which has been removed: "as showers that water the earth." There is no sweeter figure of spiritual influence than this which is the Spirit's own type. And the Spirit indeed it is, who works in unity with this glorious King; so that again we have righteousness and peace, though after a different manner, connected together: "In His days shall the righteous flourish, and there shall be abundance of peace till the moon be no more."

All this is as simple as it is blessed to contemplate: this is the progress of the kingdom in *time;* now we are to see its progress in extent; and here we naturally begin from the centre—from the land itself. The fourth verse of this section plainly defines the limits of the land itself, of Israel's land. "From sea to sea" is not the way in which dominion over the whole earth would be defined; nor again "from the River to the ends of the earth." The River, without any other definition, naturally means the Euphrates; and this was Israel's limit in one direction, according to the promise given to Abraham (Gen. xv. 18). From this point, the "ends of the *land*"—for so we should evidently understand it—reach to Egypt in the one direction, and to where the land ends, in the opposite direction eastward from this. And there is in this direction, and southward from it, everywhere a coast-line which is its "end." If the number of the verse (4), as that of earthly universality, seems to speak rather of world-wide dominion, all

(iv.) over the whole land.
(v.) governmental competence.
(vi.) conquests.
(vii.) complete rule.

And he shall have [a]dominion from sea to sea,
and from the [b]River unto the ends of the land.
The dwellers in the [c]desert shall bow before him,
and his enemies shall [d]lick the dust.
The kings of [e]Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents:
the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.
Yea, [f]all kings shall bow down before him:
all nations shall [g]serve him:

a *cf.* Gen. 15. 18. Zech. 9. 10.
b *cf.* Ex. 23. 31. *cf.* Ezek. 47. 13–21.
c Is. 35. 1, 2.
d Ps. 18. 43–45. Is. 49. 23. Mi. 7. 16–20.
e Is. 60. 9, 10. Ps. 45. 9, 12.
f *cf.* Rev. 19. 16.
g Is. 49. 1, 6, 7; Ps. 2. 8–11.

the terms of the description are against this. Must we not take it, then, as what there is little difficulty in applying it to, the *whole land?*

This, let us remember, is what Israel never yet has got—the land according to the promise to Abraham,—supplemented and explained by many an after-assurance. "From sea to sea," cannot be here from the Mediterranean to the Salt Sea, which would not be in any case a definition save for the very southernmost portion of her narrow possessions,—a straitness to which she limited herself, through unbelief. This could not be the extent of what is spoken of to them as "a good land and a large." The land of the Sidonians, which was promised to them, they never did possess, nor Mount Lebanon, which was a part of it. Edom, Moab, Ammon, Philistia, are all to belong to them, and never did. Though David's empire reached at one point to the Euphrates, it was only over tributary kings, and that land never was Israel's possession. And finally, if we are to interpret (and how can we avoid it?) "all the land of the Hittites," by what we are beginning to realize of what their land was, how far northward in that direction must we carry their boundary-line? (Comp. Gen. xv. 18–21; Ex. xxiii. 31; Josh. i. 2–4; Ezek. xlvii. 13-xlviii.)

It is not for us here to attempt a solution of the many difficulties which beset this subject, and which (if the Lord permit us to take up the book of Ezekiel) we must do there; but it ought to be evident already that as a definition of the land "from sea to sea" can be no less than from the Mediterranean to the Persian gulf. It is meant to be, and is, a wide dominion; from the Euphrates to the Nile and the Red Sea giving other limits.

But this land, as we find it to-day, contains many different people, and wide desert tracts. Notice, therefore, in connection with this, the perfect naturalness of the next verse, which speaks of the competency of the King to take possession of this wide and varied tract: "The dwellers in the *deserts* (or parched lands) shall bow before Him; and His enemies shall lick the dust;" how well does this account for the special mention of such as these in connection with the progress of a victorious King, when one would expect rather to find mention of strong peoples,—foes that it would need special might to subdue! A glance at the map will show its appropriateness, and this "desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose" (Isa. xxxv. 1).

Naturally, now, we are told of "conquests" (as the number would show) in foreign lands. "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts." Tarshish and the isles lie west from Palestine; Sheba and Seba south-east. The "isles," at least, speak of Japhet; Sheba may be Joktanite—Shemitic; Seba, Cushite—Hamitic: all the families of the earth seem thus to be represented in the homage rendered here. The conquests may be entirely peaceful ones. Nothing else is suggested. The names have no certain meaning. The people represent apparently the commerce of the world, which now, for the first time in its history, owns Christ. Its gain is consecrated unto the Lord of the whole earth.

But the tide of homage swells: "all kings bow down before Him: all nations serve Him." The universal empire is at last complete. The cross is really at last the symbol of power and imperial sway, under which the earth reposes, quiet in sabbatic rest.

3 (12-20): The full blessing.
(i.) faithfulness.
(ii.) compassion.
(iii.) Himself a sanctuary.
(iv.) tenderness to human need.

For he shall [h]deliver the needy when he crieth,
and the afflicted, that hath no helper.
He shall have [i]compassion on the impoverished and needy;
and shall save the souls of needy men.
He shall [j]redeem their souls from [k]oppression and violence:
and precious shall their blood be in his sight.
And he shall [l]live; and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba:
and prayer shall be make for him continually:
all the day shall he be blessed.

h vers. 2, 4.
i Ps. 111.4,5. Mi. 7.19,20.
j Ps. 107.1-3.
k Ps.10.7,14. Ps. 101.7,8. Zeph. 3.13.
l Ps. 116. 9.

3. Again, before the book closes, we are called to look at the blessing of a rule which is service,—a glory unflecked with stain or shadow,—a David who is free to show the "kindness of God" to the maimed and ruined children of shame wherever they may be found. "For He shall deliver the needy when he crieth, and the afflicted, and him that has no helper." That is what the sign of the cross denotes, and by this we know the Lord. None that has owed salvation to Him but must know that there was no help possible for him beside, and that it could be found in no other. And "He shall have compassion on the impoverished and needy, and shall save the souls of needy men." Faithful, compassionate, He is thus the sanctuary refuge from the evil of the world, "deceit," the sin of the weak, and "violence" of the strong: and as the refuge-cities of Israel declared of old, "precious shall their blood be in His sight."

Such is He, and such was He in all essential reality, when He was among men, and in their hands, to do with Him as they would. Such was He whom they crucified: and now, though He be Lord of all, how do their hearts respond to this glory of His? How, but as is appreciated the need which He is always meeting,—the grace, therefore, which has come in to meet it. And this is what the fifteenth verse (the fourth of this section) gives, as I believe; although, as so frequently in the case of Old Testament evangel, there is a certain mystery about it, which the loose grammatical structure of Hebrew favors, and with which the character of the psalm as prophecy, and especially as typical prophecy, harmonizes; by which we must not be thrown back, but only made to look more closely at what is before us.

It seems impossible that the whole of the verse can be applied to the Lord. Whether we translate, "he shall live," (with the common version,) or "let him live," as many others, it seems trivial,* and out of keeping with the context, if so applied. On the other hand, the connection with the verse before is too obvious to have escaped notice, even where the full meaning has not been grasped. The revised version gives even "*they* shall live," which is the meaning, although in a verse like the present, too interpretative, perhaps, to be adopted, especially as it makes a similarly interpretative rendering necessary in the remainder of the verse.† But the "he" is merely a specific example of the delivered ones just spoken of, whose blood was precious in the sight of the King.

But if this be what we start with, to *whom* shall he give of the gold of Sheba (as the Hebrew literally), and who is this "he?" If it be the delivered one who gives to the King, this (remembering Who the King is) is surely feeble enough, though the expression of thankfulness; and if it be indefinite, there is the loss of connection with what precedes altogether. The receiver of the gift

* With Cheyne, for instance, it is hardly to be doubted as merely the court phrase, "Let the king live!"

† As in the case of the Revised: "*They* shall live, and to *him* shall be given of the gold of Sheba: and *men* shall pray for him continually; *they* shall bless him all the day long." Yet in the first and last instance "he" is given as an alternative in the margin.

(v.) the government of God in response.

There shall be [m]abundance of corn in the earth to the top of the mountains:
the fruit thereof shall shake like [n]Lebanon;
and they of the city shall [o]bloom like the herb of the earth.

(vi.) the victory of God.

His [p]name shall be for ever,
his name shall continue as the sun:
and [men] shall bless themselves in him: [q]all nations shall call him blessed.

m Ps. 67. 5-7.
n Ps. 92. 12. Is. 35. 2.
o ver. 7. Is. 66. 12-14.
p Ps. 8. 1. *cf.* Phil. 2. 9-11.
q *cf.* Ps. 22. 28, 29. *cf.* Is. 60. 3. *cf.* Is. 66. 10, 11.

would then be the delivered man; and this is not unsuited to our King of kings. Nay, we have heard of Him in the end psalm of the previous series, as One who has "led captivity captive, and received gifts for men," and understand it to be His manner to enrich those whom He delivers; and the "gold of Sheba" will be still better fitted to express this, if it mean, as seems to be the fact, "the gold of the 'Captor.'"* Typically we take "gold" to be the revelation of divine glory; and this is just the Captor's gold, with which He enriches those whom He sets free. The spiritual application therefore furnishes a consistent and worthy sense all through. Does any other?

But we have still the second part of the verse to interpret and account for: and here the general consent of commentators seems to apply both clauses to the King. It is the King then that is prayed for, and the King that is blessed. In application to a merely human king, also, this would be simple enough, and by such as fully hold the Messianic one it is urged that "'prayer shall be made continually for him' shows simply that the blessings enjoyed through Him raise the desire and request for His glory and continuance in power." But both this interpretation and the request, even so interpreted, seem to me unnatural. If men know who the King is,—and this, surely, cannot be unknown,—how can they doubt the continuance of it? how can they imagine that the kingdom of God, once come, will pass, save as dawn, perhaps, into full day?

I have no other alternative, therefore, but to believe that we have here expressed the priestly office of the true Melchizedek. Would it not be strange if this were altogether omitted? And if we have had at the beginning of the psalm, and variously through it, the plain reference to this character of royalty, is it not even to be expected that we should have somewhere in it the intercessory work of the "priest of the most high God"?

The same objections do not apply to the common understanding of the last clause of the verse. Consistent rendering throughout would seem to make this also the blessing of the needy one; and thus it would be the answer to the prevailing intercession of the Royal Priest on his behalf. The whole verse would thus be uniform, and any apparent inconsistency be taken away.

Such then being the glorious Mediator who stands for man Godward as for God manward, it is no marvel to find the divine government in response, with marvelous fertility of the ground, and men filling the cities with corresponding increase. The fields of corn shall rustle like the forests of Lebanon. Who can picture the blessing when the earth shows to the full the powers that now lie almost dormant in it?

Thus the King's Name which guarantees all this blessing, shall endure for ever: His name shall continue like the life-giving Sun, His image; and men shall bless themselves in Him, as being the highest possible thought of blessing. All nations shall call Him blessed.

Thereupon follows that out-burst of praise with which the second book ends: every line of truth having its natural end and outcome in this joy in God and worship. The Eternal God, the God of Israel, is He who alone doeth wonders.

* Sheba in Hebrew, would be undoubtedly akin to the words used in lxviii. 18: *shabhitha shebhi*, "thou hast led captive captivity."

(vii.)

(viii.) for eternity.

[r]Blessed be Jehovah Elohim, the God of Israel,
who alone doeth [s]marvelous things!
And blessed be his glorious name for ever;
and let the [t]whole earth be filled with his glory.
[u]Amen and Amen.

The [v]prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.

r Ps. 41. 13. Ps. 89. 52. Ps. 106. 48.
s Ps. 77. 14.
t Is. 6. 3. u Rev. 1. 6, 7.
v 2 Sam. 23. 1–7. *cf.* 1 Chr. 29. 25–28.

May the whole earth be filled with His glory! In this, as an eighth verse, there is perhaps an intimation of the overflow of this blessedness beyond the bounds of time and into the true eternity which, as we have seen, the Old Testament can hardly be said to enter. The double Amen is here appended to the prayer in testimony of the steadfast longing of the heart for it. The Lord takes it up as His "verily, verily," to make it the token of the steadfastness of the blessed truths with which He connects it, the assurance and rest of the heart which enters into them.

Does not this show us also the character of that final word which has been surely so much misunderstood by the great body of critics, who have shown in the way they have taken it up, how much they are critics of manuscripts—*biblio-technics*, if I may coin the word for them,—rather than judges of the spirit which pervades Scripture. What simpler way of reading the *end of David's prayers* than by comparison with the "*last words*," as we find them in the history? He even calls himself, there as here, "David the son of Jesse," and there also the "*sweet psalmist of Israel*." And of what are his last words full! Of

"A righteous Ruler over men;
A Ruler in the fear of God;"

and then in some of the images which this very psalm suggests,—

"Even as the morning-light when the sun ariseth,
A morning without clouds:
From the brightness after rain
The herb springeth from the earth."

Nor did he speak with any thought of his mere human house; for he tells us directly that that house was "*not* so with God." Yet he speaks of "an eternal covenant" as to the future, "ordered in all, and sure;" and he adds: "for this is all my salvation and all of delight, though"—as yet in that sorrowful house that he had had, "He maketh it not to grow."

All David's heart then was wrapped up in that glorious prospect: the very same that he has shown us here! What wonder, then, that when he has poured his heart out in the contemplation of this glorious scene, he should express himself in this thankful ejaculation: "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended"! What more simple, heart-felt, and natural?

These are not, we may be sure, the words of a collector who thought he had got together in these first two books of the Psalms all that David had written, and *was mistaken*. This is but their mistake who have not learned that "the foolishness of God is wiser than man," and that "the Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain."

BOOK III.

The third book of the Psalms speaks, like Leviticus, of the sanctuary, and thus of God revealed in holiness. Hence, while we find in it, as before, Israel's deliverance in the latter days, it is constantly in view of this. Naturally in connection with this we have also Israel's history as a whole more entered upon: God is seen to have been consistent with it in all His dealings with them from the beginning.

The book is much smaller and less various in its range of subjects, having only seventeen psalms; eleven of which are ascribed to Asaph, being generally similar also to the fiftieth, which is the only other, and has been already before us. These psalms form the first subdivision of the book, and like those of the second book, are Elohistic, God (*Elohim*) being found in them, almost to the exclusion of Jehovah. This first subdivision consists also characteristically of "Remnant" psalms, while the last is predominantly Messianic. This conformity to the natural divisions, helps to confirm the authority of the titles, which has been disputed. The Asaphic psalms give us the holiness of God in grace toward Israel; the other six, the requirements of divine holiness met in Christ.

SUBD. 1.

The psalms of Asaph have again two sections: the first, of five psalms, gives the general principles; the second, of six psalms, their application to Israel's history.

Sec. 1.

The first psalm here (Ps. lxxiii.) shows, after the usual manner, the general character of the book. It speaks of the suffering of the righteous in contrast with the often seen prosperity of the ungodly,—a thing painful to consider, and hard to understand, until, in the sanctuary, in the presence of God, we find on the one hand the end of the wicked, and on the other that these sufferings are a discipline, the necessary result of the holiness of His nature with those who are ever with Him:—"for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness." Then the soul acquiesces with delight in its portion: holden by His right hand, guided by His counsel, what remains for us but Himself in heaven or earth?

The second psalm (lxxiv.) shows us this chastening rod for Israel—the enemy in the very sanctuary itself. At first sight, it looks as if God had entirely cast them off; but the enemy is so evidently God's enemy, that they realize He must finally appear against him. The adversary reproaches His name: can He give up into his hand the people He redeemed, yea, His own dwelling-place? His anger against them may be manifested in this rage of the enemy, but it cannot last. He will finally turn it against the oppressor, and break the rod He is using.

In the third psalm, the great day of manifestation is just at hand. All foundations may seem gone, but Messiah bears up the pillars of the earth. All is in the hands of God who puts down and sets up as He will. The horns of the wicked shall be cut off and the righteous shall be exalted.

In the fourth (Ps. lxxvi.), accordingly, all the might of the creature is prostrate before God. He shines out gloriously from the mountains of prey, where the weapons of war have been destroyed. God has arisen to judgment and for the deliverance of the meek; and the wrath of man is shown to praise Him, the rest of it being restrained.

While the fifth psalm (lxxvii.) gives the moral of all this, whatever the exercise of heart, to trust Him in the dark as in the light. His way is in the sea, and His footsteps oftentimes unseen; but His way all through is in the sanctuary also; and so, through storm and flame, He has, spite of all, led His people as a flock.

We must now look at these psalms in detail.

BOOK III. (Psalms lxxiii.–lxxxix.)

The holiness of God in His dealings with man.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Ps. lxxiii.–lxxxiii.)

Holiness in grace.

SECTION 1. (Ps. lxxiii.–lxxvii.)

The general principles.

[1]PSALM LXXIII.

Consistency of divine holiness with the sufferings of the righteous.

A psalm of [w]Asaph.

TRULY God is [x]good unto Israel,
unto the [y]pure in heart.
But as for me, my feet were [z]almost gone;
my steps had well-nigh slipped.
For I was [a]envious of the boasters,
[when] I saw the [b]prosperity of the wicked.

For there are no [c]pangs to their death,
and their strength is well-fed.
They have not the [d]travail of mortal man,
nor are they stricken like [all] mankind.

Therefore [e]pride is as a chain about their neck:
violence covereth them as a [f]garment.
Their eyes stand out with [g]fatness:
they [h]out-do the imaginations of their heart.
They [i]scoff, and speak oppressively in malice:
they speak loftily.
They have set their [j]mouth in the heavens,
and their tongue goeth through the earth.

Ps. lxxiii.

1 (1-3): The question of this consistency. (i.) the principle. (ii.) conflict. (iii.) the meaning of the conflict.

2 (4, 5): The apparent contradiction as to the wicked. (i.) their peace. (ii.) their security.

3 (6-9): Their corruption. (i.) pride. (ii.) confirmed by prosperity. (iii.) manifested in their words. (iv.) their vanity.

w Ps. 50. title. Ps. 74 to 83, titles.
x Ps. 34. 8. Ps. 119. 68.
y Ps. 32. 2. Matt. 5. 8.
z vers. 21, 22. *cf.* Ps. 94.18 with vers. 23, 24.
a Ps. 37. 1. Prov. 23. 17. Prov. 24. 1.
b Ps. 37. 35. Jer. 12. 1,2. Lk. 12. 16-21.
c Lk. 16. 19-22.
d Ps. 17. 10, 14. Job 21. 7-14.
e Jas. 5. 5. Am. 6. 1. Ps. 123. 4.
f cf. Ps. 109. 18. *ctr.* Col. 3. 12-14.
g De. 32. 15. Job 15. 27. *cf.* Lk.6.24, 25.
h cf. Eccl. 2. 1-10.
i cf. Ex. 5.2. *cf.* 1 Sa. 25. 10, 11.
j Ps. 12. 4. *cf.* Rev. 13. 5, 6.

PSALM LXXIII.

1. The question raised in the lxxiii. psalm is stated in the first three verses, "Truly God *is* good to Israel," the psalmist affirms; and then adds that, (according to the holiness of the divine nature,) this is "to the pure in heart." That is the truth; but it is not always easy to realize and maintain. *He* had not found it so: his feet had well-nigh gone, his steps slipped. The prosperity of the wicked, of which they had boasted, had moved him to envy of them; and the ways of God had darkened with him, as their lot seemed bright.

2. Indeed, to his eyes they seemed not merely no worse off than other men; much more than this, they were exceptionally peaceful and secure. Death threw no shadow over their lives. They were strong, comfortable and well-fed. The travail which besets the lives of men who are mortal because of sin, and accessible to all that that implies, did not trouble them. The strokes with which all mankind are smitten seemed not to fall upon them. Their circumstances justified apparently their boastings.

3. Yet this blessing blessed not: it only confirmed them in their evil. Pride they displayed, as if it were an ornament upon their necks, erect with self-consciousness. Their violence sought no concealment, but was like the garment upon them, manifest to all. Their insolent eyes stood out with fatness.

4 (10–14): The apostasy of the people through this.
(i.) license.
(ii.) the denial of God.
(iii.) the plea of success.
(iv.) with a vain opposite experience.
(v.) governmental ways.

5 (15–20): The government of God in the end of the wicked.
(i.) conviction.
(ii.) conflict.
(iii.) realization in the sanctuary.
(iv.) their fall.

Therefore his people [k] turn hither,
and waters to the full are drained by them.
And they say, [l] How doth God* know?
and is there knowledge in the Most High?
Behold, these are the wicked, and ever at [m] ease:
they increase in wealth.
Surely in [n] vain have I cleansed my heart,
and washed my hands in [o] innocence.
Even I, one [p] stricken all the day,
and chastened [q] every morning!

If I say, I will speak thus,
behold, I should be [r] faithless to the generation of thy children.
When I thought to know this,
it was [s] too hard for me,
Until I went into the [t] sanctuary of God,*—
[then] understood I their [u] end.
Truly, thou settest them in [v] smooth places:
thou castest them down to [w] destruction.

* El, "the Mighty."

k *cf.* Dan. 11. 35 with Matt. 24. 24.
l Job 22. 13. Ps. 59. 7.
m vers. 3–5.
n Job. 34. 9. Mal. 3. 14, 15. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 32.
o Ps. 26. 6.
p *cf.* Ps. 6. 1–3.
q Ps. 77. 1–4.
r *cfr.* Ps. 69. 6.
s *cf.* Eccl. 2. 15, 16.
t Ps. 77. 13. *cf.* 1 Sa. 16. 7.
u Prov. 16. 25. *cf.* Ps. 37. 37, 38. Phil. 3. 19.
v Ps. 35. 6. Jer. 23. 12.
w *cf.* Lk. 16. 22–26. *cf.* Ps. 11. 6 with 1 Thess. 5. 3.

They exceeded even their own imaginations of success. And this put them beyond bounds, making them scoff at the idea of being checked in the malicious thoughts they vented in violent words, as if above all other men: "they set their mouth in heaven," so lofty are they; "and their tongue goeth through the earth," as if they had possession of it all,—though this infatuation only made manifest their emptiness.

4. It was not only them whom their prosperity intoxicated. The effect of it was that people fell to them from among the professing people of God, who, encouraged by it, gave themselves up to license. For, they argued, how can God know? how can the Most High have any knowledge? Are not these confessedly the "wicked," whom He denounces? and yet, see how they live at ease, and their wealth increases? Of what use, then, is it to have cleansed my heart, and washed my hands in innocency, to live a life under the constant stroke of God, chastised every morning?

5. Alas, men might speak thus, who never knew what it was, really to be with Him! But if I joined them in this speech, says the psalmist, what injustice would I not be doing to the generation of Thy children! He speaks of Israel according to their birthright, for God had said, "Israel is my son, even my first-born," and the apostasy of others only leads to the realization that "they are not all Israel, that are of Israel;" therefore to the appropriation of this to a true remnant, though the Christian "Spirit of adoption" has not come.

He cannot go with these apostates: and yet his soul is in conflict. For a Jew with his covenanted blessings and the legal curses upon iniquity, hard indeed would it be, to understand this flourishing of the wicked, while the godly suffer, —a state of things not always simple to the Christian, who is taught to take up his cross and follow Christ. But if he does not understand, he draws nearer to God that he may do so. In the sanctuary of His presence the secret is disclosed: he sees the end that is coming for the wicked. The "smooth places" in which God sets them are not signs either of His favor or of His indifference. They are the prelude to an awful fall, which comes as in a moment, and they are brought to an end, consumed with terrors. Their prosperity, while it deceives them, is but the image of a dream, vanishing when men awake;—is but this, when the Lord arises and shows it as their folly and shame.

(v.) their end.
How are they desolate as in a [x]moment!
they are brought to an end, consumed with [y]terrors.
(vi.) the triumph over them.
As a [z]dream when one awaketh,
Lord, when thou arisest, thou [a]despisest their image.

6 (21-26): Disciplined.
(i.) independence.
When my heart [b]fermented,
and I was pricked in my reins,
Then was I [c]brutish and ignorant:
(ii.) distance from God.
I was a beast with thee.
(iii.) in the sanctuary.
But I am [d]continually with thee:
thou hast [e]holden my right hand.
(iv.) the way.
Thou wilt [f]guide me with thy counsel,
and afterwards in [g]glory thou wilt receive me.
(v.) man with God.
[h]Whom have I in the heavens [but thee?]
and there is none upon [i]earth that I desire beside thee.
(vi.) victory at the end.
My flesh and my heart [j]fail:
God is the [k]rock of my heart and my [l]portion for ever.

x *cf.* Lk. 12. 20. *cf.* Dan. 5. 30 with Prov. 29. 1.
y *cf.* Rev. 6. 15-17. Prov. 1. 24-28.
z *cf.* Is. 29. 7, 8. Ps. 73. 65.
a Ps. 2. 4. Ps. 37. 13.
b *ctr.* Ps. 45. 1.
c Ps. 92. 6. Ps. 94. 8. *cf.* Ps. 49. 20.
d *cf.* Heb. 13. 5, 6.
e *cf.* ver. 2 with Ps. 94. 18.
f Ps. 32. 8-10. Ps. 48. 14.
g Ps. 97. 11. Is. 4. 5.
h *cf.* Jno. 14. 2, 3. *cf.* Rev. 21. 23.
i *cf.* Gen. 15. 1. j *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 16. k Ps. 27. 5. l *cf.* Ps. 16. 5.

6. The psalmist turns from this to deplore his own folly in his having been so moved as he had been by this short-lived triumph. He owns it as the ignorance of a beast who leaves out God. After all, he cannot, in the face of faith's record through all generations, take the circumstances of the life here as giving cause to doubt that God is with him: circumstances which would plead against the "generation of His children" in every age. And that one thing realized, that after all God is with him, is the controlling circumstance: it may well stand in the place of all other good. Is it not this also which will account for chastening and humiliation, the fruit of the holiness of Him who has come to walk with this poor creature of His? But support cannot be wanting either, in such a case; and so he owns: "But I am continually with Thee; Thou hast holden my right hand." From this the whole future may be certainly predicted; for God can be fully reckoned upon. The way will be with Him, and the end too with Himself: "Thou wilt guide me with Thy counsel; and afterwards in glory* Thou wilt receive me." The face to face vision of God has been for faith necessarily, in every generation and under every dispensation, the end—short of which complete satisfaction cannot be found. The cry in the Psalms from end to end is after God. After Him the soul longs and pants, as the hart after the water-brooks. Its question is continually: "When shall I come and appear before God?" Here this is quietly contemplated with the reassured confidence which is the end of all faith's exercises at all times. Here is the abiding joy, the source of all that can be: "whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee!" Nature may fail, but this failing strength only reveals the might of that "strength," which "is made perfect in weakness." "God is the rock of my heart, the foundation upon which it builds, and my portion forever."

7. The last two verses sum up finally the contrasted results for the righteous and the wicked: the way of independence which ends in destruction; the way

* It is to be acknowledged that the simplest translation of the text here would be, "after [the] glory Thou wilt receive me." The difficulty is as to the meaning of this. For though the acceptance and blessing of Israel as a nation will be when the Lord appears, and not before, yet the psalm is so individual in its character that it seems hard to apply it in this way. I do not discuss the point however, but leave it to the judgment of the reader with this acknowledgment. The translation, as given above, is accepted with slight modifications by Hebraists generally, the words in question being both treated as adverbial forms. As so translated, the national hope of Israel is not lost in what has larger meaning.

7 (27, 28): Summing up. (i.) the way of independence. (ii.) the way of dependence.

For lo, they that are far from thee shall [m]perish:
thou destroyest those that go wantonly from thee.
But as for me, it is [n]good for me to draw near to God:
I have put my [o]trust in the Lord Jehovah,
that I may [p]declare all thy works.

[m] Ps. 16. 4.
[n] Ps. 65. 4.
[o] *cf.* Ps. 16. 1.
[p] Ps. 26. 7.

Ps. lxxiv.

[2]PSALM LXXIV.

The enemy being God's enemy a plea for deliverance.

Maskil of Asaph.

1 (1-3): The cause of the cry. (i.) left solitary perpetually. (ii.) the plea of relationship.

WHY dost thou [q]cast [us] off, O God, [r]perpetually?
[why] doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?
Remember thine assembly which thou [s]purchasedst of old:
[which] thou hast redeemed [to be] the rod of thine [t]inheritance,—
mount Zion wherein thou hast dwelt.

[q] Ps. 44. 9, 23. Ps. 108. 11, 12.
[r] *cf.* Rom. 11. 1, 2, 15 with Is. 54. 7, 8. *cf.* Jer. 31. 37.
[s] Ex. 15. 16. 2 Sam. 7. 23. Neh. 1. 10. Is. 43. 1.
[t] De. 32. 9. Ps. 79. 1. Jer. 10. 16.

of dependence, in which already the goodness of drawing near to God is tasted; and in confidence, the ready tongue declares His works.

Psalm LXXIV.

In the second psalm of the Third Book we have the *enemy* in the sanctuary, and the destruction of that with which all blessing for the nation was connected, around which its religious life clustered and intertwined itself. Thus the desolation of the sanctuary was the casting off of the people of God,—the writing Lo-Ammi on them. It is difficult for us as Christians to put ourselves into the position of a man of that dispensation, where all spiritual blessings were sealed and symbolized to them by outward means. To say, "I am continually with Thee," was itself comparatively easy while Jehovah's tent was in their midst; but with the sanctuary desolated, how different would this be! Yet this might be used of God to bring the individual soul, after all, nearer to Him,—to make faith more fully aware of that personal link with Him which never could be broken. In Judaism, with all things right, the personal link founded itself upon and grew out of the corporate one. In Christianity, where things are right, the personal link is the foundation of all, and it is the union of those who believe which forms the body. The Judaized, ritualistic Christianity reverts to the old order, which was but probationary, and leaves the soul's personal interests secondary and doubtful. God, to bring His people into the blessings He designs for them, suffers the collapse of the Jewish system. That which was of course on the one hand the penalty of their national sins (and indeed apostasy), becomes in the mercy of God, through individual exercise and the conviction of legal unrighteousness, a wholesome and effective discipline for the remnant of His ancient people, who find their way to Him, not on the ground of the Jewish covenant, but as mere "sinners of the Gentiles." We have had their picture before us in the touching history of Ruth.

No wonder, therefore, that this is another Maskil psalm,—a special "instruction" for Israel in the last days; although it needs for full understanding to be put in connection with the thirty-second psalm, which as the first of these *maskilim* is the beginning of all true intelligence, and in living relation to them all. (See *Notes*.)

1. The psalm begins with a cry to God, as thus (as a people) abandoned by Him. They are—not "forever," as if they were predicting the future, but "perpetually," that is, as a matter of day by day experience,—forsaken of Him. They beseech Him, as it were, to "lift His feet," that is to come and look at these perpetual desolations: they are indeed the terrible and demonstra-

(iii.) the forsaken sanctuary.

Lift up thy steps to the perpetual ruins:
everything hath the enemy [u] broken to pieces in the sanctuary.

2 (4-9): The enemy's work.

Thine adversaries roar in the [v] midst of thy place of assembly:
they set up their [w] signs as signs.

(i.) their signs as signs.

It looked as if they lifted up [x] axes in a thicket of trees.

(ii.) mere destruction.

And now all the [y] carved work thereof together
with hatchets and hammers they break down.

(iii.) the profanation.

They have set on [z] fire thy sanctuary:
they have profaned to the ground the dwelling-place of thy [a] name.

(iv.) cast to the ground.

[u] *cf.* 1 Ki. 19. 10.
[v] *cf.* Lam. 2. 7.
[w] *cf.* Dan. 9. 27. *cf.* Matt. 24. 15 with Rev. 13. 14. 15. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 4.
[x] *ctr.* Judg. 6. 25.
[y] *cf.* 1 Ki. 6. 18, 29, 32, 35
[z] 2 Ki. 25. 9. Is. 64. 11.
[a] *cf.* 1 Ki. 9. 8. *cf.* Lk. 13. 35. *cf.* Matt. 24. 1, 2.

tive proof of their abandonment; for they are the ruins of His own dwelling-place among them. But who could have accomplished this, so long as He owned it as that in any wise? how impossible for an enemy to prevail against God!

But they are "the sheep of His pasture," whom He has thus forsaken! Not that by this is meant to assert any righteousness on their part. It is not that they have been tractable, docile, obedient to government: who could assert this for them? No, it is privilege that they are thinking of,—of His provision for them; of that into which He had brought them, little as they might have responded to His care. They were His assembly, His in a relationship which Himself had formed with them: for *He* had purchased them, *He* had redeemed them: whatever *they* might be, would the unrepenting One deny His work! He had chosen Zion and dwelt there: could He altogether forsake it?

Thus we see that there is no self-righteousness in this plea that is made with God. It is really founded on that covenant name, Jehovah, though this does not, with good reason, appear. But in the power of that name it was that He redeemed them out of Egypt at the first. He will be true to it: He will act according to His own nature, not as if He repented, or changed because men changed. And this ground taken is really that of grace—of the thirty-second psalm—of purchase and redemption, which implies the putting away of sin.

2. But the psalmist goes on to picture the enemy's work in all its desperate profanity as against God. Not the least sign was there of fear, or of regard: "Thine adversaries roar in the midst of Thy place of assembly." There is worse abomination: there, where the tokens have been seen of the worship of the true God only, "they set up their signs as signs." "By 'signs,'" says Delitzsch, "we must not understand military insignia; the scene of the Temple and the supplanting of the Israelite's national insignia to be found there, by the substitution of other insignia, requires that the word should have the religious reference in which it is used of circumcision and of the Sabbath (Ex. xxxi. 13); such heathen 'signs' which were thrust upon the Temple and congregation of Jehovah as henceforth the lawful ones were those which are set forth in 1 Macc. i. 45–49, and more particularly the so-called 'abomination of desolation' mentioned in verse 54 of the same chapter." The application therefore to the time of the end, to which all these psalms look forward, is evident.

Mere malice seems to guide the hands and strengthen the arms of the invaders of the holy places. They seem like men leveling trees in a thicket; but no, it is the carved work of the sanctuary which is ruthlessly demolished with axes and hammers. Then they set it on fire and burn it profanely to the ground. And this flame spreads far and wide throughout the land against every place of gathering that owns the Name of the "Mighty One," thus assailed by the pitiful weak arms of men His creatures.

And who knows the limit? There is no prophet any more: there is none

(v.) the weak with the Mighty!

(vi.) the limit.

3 (10, 11): Glorify Thy Name.
(i.) in view of the rebellion.
(ii.) prepare to strike.

4 (12-17): Nature yielding to God: experiences.
(i.) God the eternal King.
(ii.) the cleaving of the sea and defeat of the enemy.

They have said in their [b] heart, Let us make havoc of them together:
they have burned up all God's* places of assembly in the [c] land.
We see not our signs; there is no more any [d] prophet,
nor is there among us one who knoweth [e] how long.

How long, O God, shall the adversary [f] reproach?
shall the enemy perpetually treat with scorn [g] thy name?
Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy [h] right hand?
get it ready from inside thy bosom!

And God is my King of [i] old:
working [j] deliverances in the midst of the earth.
Thou didst in thy might [k] cleave asunder the sea:
thou [l] brakest the heads of the monsters on the waters.

b Ps. 83. 4. Ps. 53. 1.
c *cf.* Matt. 4. 23. *cf.* Matt. 24. 21.
d *cf.* 1 Sa. 3. 1. *cf.* 1 Sa. 28. 6, 15. *cf.* Am. 8. 11, 12.
e Ps. 6. 3, etc.
f Ps. 44. 13. Ps. 79. 4.
g *cf.* Is. 37. 4.
h Ex. 15. 6. *cf.* Lam. 2. 3.
i De. 32. 7. Ps. 44. 4.
j Ex. 14. 13. Ex. 15. 2.
k Ex. 14. 21. Is. 63. 12.
l Is. 27. 1. Is. 51. 9, 10. Ezek. 29. 3–5.

* El.

who knows how long. But here the extremity of evil rouses afresh the appeal to God, who does know.

3. He must appear; He must vindicate Himself, for His name is openly reproached. The fool scoffs at it; and though he show himself by this a "fool," yet how can God suffer it? "Why withdrawest Thou Thy hand?" aye, "Thy right hand?" why is the blow, which seems so often about to fall, so constantly delayed? "Get it ready from inside Thy bosom!"

4. The psalmist now goes back to the history of old, to comfort himself with the experience of God's wonders in behalf of the people, when He led them out of Egypt into this very land, where now so terrible a calamity has fallen upon them. "For God is my King of old," he says, "working deliverances in the midst of the earth,"—there where the eyes of men would be most upon them. Egypt, of which he goes on to speak, was such a place; and the haughty king of it was just the person in whom God could make His power known, and declare His name throughout all the earth. "Thou didst in Thy might cleave asunder the sea: Thou brakest the heads of the monsters on the waters. Thou brakest the heads of leviathan* in pieces: and gavest him for food to a people,—dwellers in the desert." These last, spite of the objection that the word used only conveys the thought of animals of the desert, surely refers to Israel; to whom, though for a time only dwellers in the wilderness, their enemies became a spoil. Similarly, Caleb and Joshua speak of the Canaanites afterwards: "they shall be food for us" (Num. xiv. 9); and the words "to a people" seem to be put to guard us from the usual meaning. Delitzsch urges the application of "a people" to the ants in Prov. xxx. 25; but the figurative use is there quite plain, while here it would have no meaning. Israel's difficulties only become God's opportunities; their adversaries only furnish them with food: "happy are the people that are in such a case!" but so it is with all the people of God.

The experiences of the onward way are given only in two instances, in some sort evidently contrasted with each other, and chosen on that account, to show nature's various acting under the power of God. In the first instance in the presence of human need, a "place of springs and brooks" is cleft in the flinty rock, and the people are nourished from the barren breast of the desert. In the

* The crocodile, often the symbol of Egypt. "Leviathan" is from *lavi*, "joined," referring to its scales, and *than*, almost the same as the word for "monsters," *tannin*, in the previous verse.

(iii.) made their portion.

(iv.) on the way.

(v.) the ordered government of "God with us."

(vi.) the limits, His.

Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces,
and gavest him for food to a people—
dwellers in the [m]desert.
Thou didst [n]cleave a place of springs and brooks:
thou [o]driedst up never-failing rivers.
Thine is the [p]day, thine also is the night;
thou hast prepared luminary and [q]sun.
Thou hast [r]fixed all the limits of the land:
[s]summer and autumn, *thou* hast arranged them.

m De. 32.10.
n Ex.17.5,6. Is. 48. 21.
o Josh. 3.13-17. Ps.114. 3, 5.
p *cf.* Jer. 31. 35-37. *cf.* Jer. 33. 20-25.
q Ps. 19. 2-4.
r De. 32. 8.
s Gen. 8. 22.

other case the impetuous Jordan—no winter-torrent merely, and at its flood-tide—is dammed back and dries up. The long journey ends with the same display of power with which it had begun.

From these special interventions of God in history, the psalmist passes on to His general and orderly government in creation. Israel's God is the Creator; and His general government is in harmony with His gracious relationship to His people. The stars in their courses fight against Sisera, and all things work together for good to them that love Him. And yet no less does He make His sun to rise upon the evil and upon the good, and send His rain upon the just and unjust. These things are, of course, in no wise contradictory, for it is unbelief itself which makes that which otherwise would be blessing turn to its very opposite. So Christ in the world, in fashion as a man, was fullest, richest blessing for every one, the source of all blessing: yet men stumbled over Him, and to that, says the apostle, (1 Pet. ii. 8.) "they were appointed." There can be no blessing for faith, but unbelief will stumble over it. In the nature of things, faith and unbelief being contraries, there can be nothing that shall be blessing for faith, but unbelief shall take it for the opposite; and He who appoints, therefore, the blessing for faith, appoints thereby the stumbling-block for unbelief. How terrible a thing is sin, then!

But to know that our Father is the Lord of heaven and earth, what unspeakable joy! The day and the night are His alike; and the night unveils a peopled heavens, which even the glory of the day, as that, shuts out. So it has been for us spiritually, as we know. The very going down of Eden glory has but been the occasion of the display of manifold glory. And for us all the night of sorrow has revealed the luminaries with which God has lighted it. For us the day comes only with the sun: it is not earth-manufacture but heaven's gift.

The next verse, according to its number, speaks of *limits*. In a world of contraries, and of perpetual conflict, what need for One who shall put limits to this. The limits of the land itself are in this way fixed by God, and a little knowledge of physical geography will teach us its importance. Compare land-locked Siberia, with its mountains cutting off the south, and the countries laved by the currents from the equator. And this therefore, is intimately connected with that "arrangement" of summer and autumn, so necessary to man's subsistence. When the expected time of blessing for the earth shall come, it may take but an extra throe of earth-quake to send man's wheat-harvests far up towards the pole!*

Thank God, these physical limits are but signs of power in His hand used in other than material things to restrain and bound; and so we are to read them.

5. From this the psalm goes on to appeal to this strong and stable government of God for recompense to those that are His adversaries as well as theirs,—theirs even on His account. The occasion calls for His intervention now. It is Jeho-

* The coal-beds of the polar regions, and even the name of "Greenland" are witness to a very different climate once in those ice-bound tracts. And it was Lyell's belief, with which many have expressed their concurrence, that a different arrangement of sea and land would suffice to account for so great a difference as that between its present condition and the subtropical one argued by the presence of coal and coral.

5 (18–23): Recompense!

(i.) the occasion.

(ii.) give not up Thy people.

(iii.) their refuge.

(iv.) the plea of the poor.

(v.) the end reached.

(vi.) conquer!

Remember this, that an enemy hath [t]reproached Jehovah,
and that a [u]foolish people hath treated with scorn thy name.
Give not up thy [v]turtle-dove to a community* of sensual men:
forget not the community* of thine afflicted ones [w]perpetually.
Have respect unto the [x]covenant:
for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of [y]violence.
O let not the oppressed return [z]ashamed:
let the poor and needy praise thy name!
Arise, O God! [a]plead thine own cause!
remember how the fool reproacheth thee all the day!
[b]Forget not the voice of thine adversaries!
the tumult of those that rise against thee ascendeth continually.

t vers. 10, 22.

u cf. De. 32. 6. Ps. 39. 8.

v cf. Song 2. 14. cf. Hos. 7. 11 with Hos. 11. 11.

w Ps. 77. 7. ver. 1.

x Gen. 17. 7. Ex. 2. 24. Is. 55. 3. cf. Gal. 3. 15–18 with Rom. 11. 29.

y Ps. 55. 9. ctr. Is. 60. 18.

z Ps. 25. 2. a Is. 3. 13. Mi. 6. 2.

b Ps. 89. 50, 51. Ps. 9. 12.

* *Chajath*, as in lxviii. 10: literally, a "living creature"; but used for a "troop, company," also: a body of people, as it were, inspired with one spirit, living one life. It must surely be translated alike in the two parts of one verse, and in measure is so in the common version; the revised, with most, disconnects them by rendering them "wild beast" and "life." With the rendering I have given, however, the *nephesh* following, usually rendered "soul," is better taken as qualifying *chajath*, (which is in the construct,) and like the similar ψυχικός of the New Testament, Jas. iii. 15; Jude 19.

vah Himself whom the enemy reproaches! it is that glorious and terrible Name that the fool scorns and defies. Then with Israel's Redeemer the psalmist pleads that it is His turtle-dove—defenceless, and as far as the enemy is concerned, innocent—that is in danger. Can He give it up to men inspired in common only by their lusts?—His community, now in a common condition, indeed, in their affliction: can they be perpetually forgotten?

Their hope, their refuge, still could be the "covenant." Not, indeed, that terrible legal one which they had violated, and which pleaded only against them; but rather that, back centuries before Sinai, and which in its sign of circumcision spoke of the incapacity of the flesh to accomplish anything towards the fulfilment of the divine promise. Like their father Abraham, with his "body now dead, when he was about a hundred years old," they could still believe in the God of resurrection, and fall back upon that "covenant of promise" given, when as yet there was no law to saddle it with conditions (Gal. iii. 15–17). Thus in all their forlorn state they could rise to be truly children of their father Abraham; and the divine mercy had here foreseen and provided for the destitution and helplessness in which they are now found. "How good is the God we adore!"

Though, therefore, in the darkened earth, the habitations of violence are everywhere round about, their need shall be an effectual plea with One able to show Himself fully out to such humbled ones. They can plead that the oppressed shall not turn back ashamed,—that the poor and needy shall be made to praise His Name. And again that brings back the realization of how the fool is scoffing at it. Let Jehovah plead, then, His own cause, and remember these reproaches, in which surely in divine government the end must be reached. The tumult of rebellion rising up continually to heaven challenges the power of God to show itself supreme above it.

Ps. lxxv.

[3]PSALM LXXV.

Christ the Interpreter of God in the day of manifestation.

To the chief musician: [c]Al-tashcheth; a psalm of Asaph, a song.

c Ps.57,title.

1 (1-5): Christ the King. (i.) power bringing in the day. (ii.) the Servant Ruler. (iii.) the re-establishment.

UNTO thee we give [d]thanks, O God, we give thanks:
and thy name is [e]near:
thy wondrous [f]works declare [it.]
For I will take the [g]set time;
I will judge [h]uprightly.
The [i]earth and all its inhabitants are dissolved:
I set up its pillars. Selah.

d *cf.* Ps. 22. 22. *cf.* Ps. 65.1, 2.
e Is. 50. 8. Is. 51. 5.
f Ps. 19. 1.
g Ps. 102. 13.
h Ps. 45. 7.
i *cf.* Is. 24. 19-23.

Psalm LXXV.

The seventy-fifth psalm is the announcement of the divine answer to this prayer, presently to be given in the day of manifestation; and Christ is the Interpreter of God, upon the throne of the world,—the anti-typical Joseph of days near to come. The psalm is easily understood as "a psalm of Asaph," and "a song." The *Al-tasheheth* "Destroy not," which we have had also in the title of Psalm lviii, I cannot apply with any more certainty here than there.

The ten verses of the psalm divide into two sections of five verses each; in the first of which Christ, whose voice is heard throughout the whole, anticipates the kingdom that is to be His at the appointed time. In the second we find Him as the "faithful Witness," the Representative of God on earth, testifying for God: as Judge exalting and abasing, according to grace and holiness alike. But His heart is only manifest in blessing, and the heart of the saved goes forth to Him in joy and praise.

1. Accordingly in the first verse, as the connection with the second shows, He it is who is the Leader of Israel's praise. The name of God is near: that is, it is going to be displayed. The wondrous works of His hand are what shall declare it. During all this time, God has been declaring His name in the grace of the gospel, but men at large will not hear: "Let favor (or grace) be shown to the wicked," says the prophet, "yet will he not learn uprightness;" "when Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness (Isa. xxvi. 9, 10). The gospel dispensation therefore passes away, and with it the day of man: the day of the Lord follows, putting in the dust the glory of man, and forcing his reluctant ear to hear.

Messiah now speaks alone:——

"For I will take the set time," He says: "*I* will judge uprightly." The common version has "when I shall receive the *congregation;*" but the word, though capable of this, is the regular one for Israel's "seasons" or "appointed times," and has here the deepest significance. The typical Ruler among men is Himself the obedient One, and as such speaks in the gospel of Mark,—the gospel of the Servant,—as not knowing this "time." "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels that are in heaven, *neither the Son*, but the Father" (Mark xiii. 32). It is as the Son in service, that He speaks here, and thus the words are omitted in the parallel place in Matthew: for (as His own words are) "the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth." In this character, His Father's will is (as it were) not His business: He waits until His enemies are made His footstool. When the appointed hour has struck, He takes it and comes forth: the perfect Servant still, to do the will of God upon the throne now, as He has waited upon it hitherto.

Thus, indeed, will He "judge uprightly." He has not a separate interest to divert Him from it,—not a thought that is not in harmony with the divine mind. And so, if the earth be in dissolution with its corruption,—men's hearts away from God, and therefore at strife with one another, He can set up again its pillars in truth and righteousness. Thus the license given to vanity is

(iv.) prostration of the vain-doers.
(v.) man before God.

I said unto the boasters, [j]Boast not:
and to the wicked, Lift not up the horn.
Lift not up your horn on high:
speak not with an [k]impudent neck.

2 (6–10): His testimony in separating judgment.
(i.) barren resources.
(ii.) the diverse judgment of God.

For not from the east,
and not from the west,
and not from the south, is [l]exaltation:
For God it is that judgeth:
he [m]abaseth one and exalteth another.

[j] Ps. 52. 1. *cf.* Dan. 7. 25–27.
[k] *cf.* Ezek. 2. 3, 4.
[l] *cf.* 1 Sa. 2. 7, 8.
[m] *cf.* Jer. 27. 6. *cf.* Dan. 2. 21. *cf.* Dan. 4. 37.

at an end: "I have said,"—using the prophetic style of anticipation,—"I have said unto the boasters, Boast not; and to the wicked, Lift up not your horn." Man out of his creature place, exalting himself, has led to all the misery in the world. How perfect is the rebuke of it by the One who took up obedience voluntarily in a world which disobedience had ruined, by this to redeem it!

The next verse, though it be so similar, carries this to its necessary issue; and observe with what definite precision the numerical structure emphasizes the point here. The previous verse, as the fourth, simply speaks of the frailty and vanity of this poor creature, boasting himself to be what he is not. The present, as a fifth, shows him in relation to *God*, and thus points out his lifting his horn *on high* (comp. Ps. vii. 7; lxviii. 18),—his exalting himself against God, and his impudent neck. And this, let us remember, is shown out in the fullest way in the man of sin, the wicked one, whom at the very time that He comes forth, "the Lord shall consume with the breath" (not "spirit") "of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His coming" (2 Thess. ii. 8).

Thus Christ the Lord, then, comes into His kingdom.

2. Now we have His testimony, given in judgment, discriminating and diverse, to destruction or to exaltation, from this throne which He is taking. And first of all, as is clear, the people for whom He interferes is addressed: "For not from the east," ("the going forth" of the sun,) "and not from the west," ("the place of evening,") "and not from the wilderness," (which lay south of the land,) "is exaltation." The position of Israel is most plainly marked here, at the time of the attack of the king of the *north* upon Jerusalem (Dan. xi. 45). The north, therefore, is not mentioned, because from the north there is no hope. In other directions help might possibly be found; but in fact it is not coming from any point of the compass. *God* is coming in: "for God it is that judgeth; He abaseth one and exalteth* another."

But who will be able to stand when God comes in? All the earth will be consumed with the fire of His jealousy: "for a cup is in Jehovah's hand, and the wine foameth: it is full of mixture, and He poureth out of the same; surely the dregs of it,"—that which remains for the last, and is the strongest part,—"shall all the wicked of the earth drain off and drink." It is the day of wrath and of the ban upon iniquity,—the day which abases all the pride of man. Abasement one can understand, but how can there be "exaltation?" and is it not written: "the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day?"

Ah, but when the Lord is exalted, all His character must be exalted. If this be the day of the manifestation of His Name, judgment alone can surely not manifest it. Judgment is the strange work to which He is forced, but where He is free to express what is in His heart—what then?

Here then the voice of Christ breaks out into distincter utterance. He must not leave it for a moment doubtful with what the joy of His soul links itself.

* This word, so often recurring in different forms in this connection (*larimu*, 4, 5; *marom*, 5; *harim*, 6; *jarim*, 7) is the key to the meaning of verse 6, which the Septuagint, Targum, Syriac, and Vulgate, with Delitzsch, Moll, Cheyne, etc. translate "not from the desert of the *mountains*" (*harim*). The verse in this case would be abruptly broken off.

(iii.) His holiness displayed.

For a [n]cup is in Jehovah's hand, and the wine foameth:
it is full of mixture, and he poureth out of the same:
surely the [o]dregs of it shall all the wicked of the earth drain off [and] drink.

(iv.) the God of Jacob.

But *I* will [p]declare for ever;
I will psalm unto the God of Jacob.

(v.) recompense.

And all the horns of the wicked will I cut off:
the horns of the [q]righteous shall be exalted.

[n] Ps. 60. 3. *cf.* Is. 51. 17. *cf.* Jer. 25. 15-29.
[o] *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 18.
[p] *cf.* Ps. 26. 7.
[q] Ps. 89. 17, 24. Ps. 148. 14.

Ps. lxxvi.

[t]PSALM LXXVI.

The prostration of the creature.

To the chief musician, on stringed instruments: a psalm of Asaph, a song.

1 (1-3): The reign of peace begun.

(i.) God known.

(ii.) in relationship.

In [r]Judah is God known:
his [s]name is great in Israel.
In Salem also is his [t]tabernacle:
and his dwelling-place in Zion.

[r] Ps. 48. 1.
[s] *cf.* Ezek. 36. 21-24.
[t] Ps. 78. 67, 68. Is. 4. 3-6.

If the shepherd's rod has beaten down the enemy, there are sheep of His in whose behalf He has acted, and a people with whom that God whom He represents has linked His Name: "But I will declare forever," He says; "I will psalm unto the God of Jacob." Here is a people whose God He is not ashamed to declare Himself. Who, then, is this Jacob? and what is he, that such a portion should be his? Nay, his name speaks of nothing but what is poor and lowly; it speaks not of strength but of weakness. More than this, it speaks of sinfulness; not merely of the weakness of the creature, but of a *fallen* creature. It speaks of one with whom God had had to strive and to cripple him, and put him into the place of weakness, that, no longer striving but clinging, he might have "power over the angel and prevail," and acquire that new name "Israel" in which his new link with God could be expressed.

For there is a strange power with God in human weakness, and He who is the Creator has a marvelous respect unto His creature, just in that place of creature. Nor does sin itself affect this, when only the arms of conscious need are flung upwards towards God. Notice again that this is just what the numerical structure once more emphasizes here, the creature weakness which, even in his craft, makes itself felt in him. And this name he must own, to get the blessing: "and he said, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel." He must acknowledge the name first, that he may lose it. And yet God delights to recall it still, and link Himself with it, and as here, be called the "God of Jacob." And this is the Name that Messiah now declares, and which He celebrates in psalm—that is, making all nature sympathize with Him. And this as the King in glory.

Righteous and wicked get thus a definition here. The nature of God is not sacrificed, but shown out in His grace; and the work of the Mediator in its necessity and power for men; while still the government of God is maintained in its eternal principles: "All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off; and the horns of the righteous shall be exalted."

Psalm LXXVI.

Thus, then, for blessing, man has to be put down into the place of need. With God's judgments upon the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness. We see, therefore, the need of what this psalm presents to us, which naturally follows, also, the one before it. As a psalm of divine government, manifestly exercised, it has the regular 12 verses, and with the regular division also, into four sections of 3 verses each; for there is plainly nothing to disturb

(iii.) peace realized.

There [u]brake he the flashings of the bow,—
shield, and sword, and battle. Selah.

[u] Ps. 46. 9. *cf.* Is. 2. 4. Ezek. 39. 9.

2 (4-6): The humiliation of the warrior.
(i.) the Light shining.

Thou art [v]shining forth, glorious,
above the mountains of prey.

[v] *cf.* Is. 63. 1-6.

(ii.) the defeat of the foe.

The [w]stout-hearted are spoiled;
they have drowsed into their [x]sleep:
and none of the valiant men have found their hands.

[w] *cf.* Ex. 15. 9.
[x] *cf.* Is. 37. 8-13, 33-36.

(iii.) the sanctuary-refuge.

At thy [y]rebuke, O God of Jacob,
both chariot and horse are cast into a deep sleep.

[y] Ps. 80. 16. Is. 66. 15, 16.

3 (7-9): Wrath revealed from heaven,
(i.) the resistless wrath of God,

Thou—thou art to be [z]feared:
and who can stand before thee, when thou art [a]angry?

[z] Am. 3. 8. Jer. 10. 6, 7.
[a] *cf.* Ps. 2. 12. Nah. 1. 6.

(ii.) discriminative,

Thou didst make judgment heard from the [b]heavens;
the earth feared, and was [c]still,

[b] Ps. 50. 1-4.
[c] Ps. 46. 10. Hab. 2. 20.

(iii.) and holy.

When God arose to judgment,
to save all the [d]meek of the earth. Selah.

[d] Ps. 22. 26. Matt. 5. 5.

this. Again, it is a psalm of Asaph, and a song, which the stringed instruments accompany, for the earth is now tuned and ready for its Maker's praise.

1. The first section shows us the inauguration of the reign of peace. God is known in Judah, the worshiper-tribe, and His Name is great in Israel. The once-divided kingdom is now impliedly united and at rest, in obedience to Him whom so to serve brings into harmony with all His universe.

And thus there is relationship between Him and His people never to be disturbed. His tabernacle is at Salem, Jerusalem gone back to the meaning of its older name as Melchizedek's city—"Peace." Another Melchizedek now rules in her, "Priest of the Most High God" in full reality, and in Zion is His "fixed" abode (*meonatho*), "His rest." And because He is to be at rest, He has broken up all the instruments of war together: the "flashings"—the arrows flashing from—"the bow," the shield and the sword, and all that makes up war.

2. Never will war have been more pronounced, more deadly, than in that last spasm in which it expires. As we think of the diligent perfecting of the machinery of it now, which leaves the old "flashings" of the bow to be but the types of its far-reaching artillery, how good it is to think of its collapse which is impending when the Prince of peace makes war upon war! Serene, beautiful, like the breaking forth of morning at the end of a night of storm, the glory of the Lord shines forth there where all had been but the prey of the spoiler hitherto. The "mountains of prey" are not any indefinite allusion to the fastnesses of robbers generally, but Jerusalem itself, the city of so many sieges, the constant "prey" of the enemy. The contrast expressed (for which the "more than" of the common version is inadequate) is between the city in its recent awful desolation, and the Light that now enfolds and glorifies her, wrapping all her dwellings in its bright, yet chastened lustre (Isa. iv. 5). The new day is come, that shall have no decline, the "morning without clouds" of prophetic vision (2 Sam. xxiii. 4).

On the other hand, night is fallen upon the children of night. Like nocturnal birds of prey, the morning has sealed their eyes, and sunk them in helpless sleep from which there is no waking. It was the necessary doom of such as they were.

But there is another reason: and here we have the assurance, once again, of the grace which can consist with holiness. It is the *God of Jacob* who has thrown His arms around the feeble objects of their attack. And here, notice, it is *chariot and horse* upon which sleep has fallen. The enemies find their doom

4 (10–12): The prostrate earth, (i.) in these almighty hands, (ii.) may do Him service, (iii.) to whom it manifestly belongs.

For the [e] wrath of man praiseth thee:
the remainder of wrath thou [f] restrainest.
Vow and [g] pay unto Jehovah your God:
let all that are round about him bring [h] presents
unto him that ought to be feared.
He [i] cutteth off the spirit of princes:
he is [j] terrible to the kings of the earth.

[e] *cf.* Ex. 14. 17. *cf.* Phil. 1. 12–18.
[f] *cf.* Gen. 31. 24. *cf.* Dan. 6. 22.
[g] *cf.* Ps. 61. 5.
[h] Ps. 72. 10.
[i] Mi. 5. 9.
[j] Ps. 66. 5.

Ps. lxxvii.

[5] PSALM LXXVII.

God's way in the sea and in the sanctuary.

To the chief musician, to [k] Jeduthun, a psalm of Asaph.

[k] Ps. 39, 62, titles.

1 (1–3): The occasion of question. (i.) at peace. (ii.) conflict, though dependent.

MY [l] voice is unto God, and I cry:
my voice is unto God, and he hath given ear
unto me.
In the day of my [m] strait I sought the Lord:
my hand was [n] stretched out in the night, and
slackened not:
my soul [o] refused to be comforted.

[l] Ps. 3. 4.
[m] Ps. 50. 15.
[n] Ps. 130. 1–6. Ps. 143. 6.
[o] *cf.* Jer. 31. 15.

because of what they are: here it is simply the means of attack that fail, because God has sheltered His people.

3. In the next section, therefore, it is God Himself who is before the soul: but God revealed in judgment, which is openly manifested from heaven, in omnipotent, discriminative, holy wrath. His power is such that He must needs be feared: who can stand before Him, when He is angry? His judgment is discriminative, as the word used here (*din*) implies: wise, therefore, and searching, and recognized by the still awe of earth. It is holy, also, for it is in behalf of the meek of the earth, for whose salvation God at last, after long patience, rises up.

4. The fourth section shows the earth entirely in His hands. So complete is His government of it, that the wrath of man, which has just been at its wildest, nevertheless praises Him. Whatever could not be made to do this He could not permit to be. Men are bidden therefore to vow and pay their vows to Him who is the Eternal and their God; and to bring presents in sign of their subjection to Him who is truly to be feared. For that to Him it belongs is plain by His judgment of its kings, just now executed. "He cutteth off the spirit of princes: He is terrible to the kings of the earth."

PSALM LXXVII.

The last psalm of the series gives us that character of the divine government which causes it to be so fruitful of exercise to the soul of man. Even for the Christian, in this respect, clouds and darkness are about Him still; the revolving wheel of the world, with all its remorselessness of change for the fleeting generations, is yet God's chariot wheel, as indeed the Preacher sees it, only to the increase of his perplexity; and the height of the wheel—so high as to be dreadful, in Ezekiel's vision,—hides with its mystery Him who sits above it. This is what this fifth psalm here presents: God's footsteps in the sea, and there unknown, with the difficulty for faith engendered by it:—a difficulty pressing for solution, or at least some answer; and which is here answered, measurably at least. It could not yet have the settlement which Christianity has given to it, nor can there be settlement, even with this, which shall leave us with no more exercise of this kind. Faith must still reckon with the unseen, in some sense, as Asaph did; and the psalm will have its use still for every pilgrim. Comforting it is, too, to note that it is for Jeduthun, i. e. "the worshiper," and that it is, notably also, a sanctuary-psalm. If God's way is in the sea, His steps unknown, it is no less in the sanctuary also, in the holiness which must be His, and it is

(iii.) remembrance of God.

I remembered God, and I [p]moaned:
I complained, and my spirit was [q]overwhelmed.
Selah.

2 (4-6): Conflict. (i.) held to the question. (ii.) history.

Thou hast held mine [r]eyelids open:
I am so agitated, that I cannot speak.
I have considered the [s]days of old,—
the years of ancient times.

(iii.) memories.

I [t]remember my music in the night:
I [u]commune with my heart,
and my spirit made diligent search.

3 (7-10): Interpretation and solution. (i.) for ever?

Will the Lord [v]cast off for ever?
and will he show favor no more?

[p] Ps. 42. 4,5.
[q] Ps. 142. 3. Ps. 143. 4.
[r] *cf.* Lam. 2. 11.
[s] Ps. 143. 5. Is. 51. 9.
[t] Ps. 42. 4, 8.
[u] Ps. 4. 4.
[v] Ps. 44. 9, 23.

from what is known of Him—changeless as He is in nature,—that what is unknown must be determined.

The psalm, as it is a fifth, so it has five parts, the first three of which are taken up with the problem and its solution, while the last two expand the general thought of it, as we have seen.

1. In the first part we have the occasion of the question, but with the preliminary assurance that the psalmist's cry to God has been answered: "My voice is unto God, and I cry: my voice is unto God, and He hath given ear to me." He then points out how the question which was troubling had risen for him. External difficulty it was that (as commonly) produced the inward perplexity. We are apt to take with calmness enough the difficulties of others, until these become our own: as Eliphaz said to Job, "it toucheth *thee*, and thou art troubled." So here: "in the day of my strait I sought the Lord"—not Jehovah, but the Almighty Ruler of all: "my hand was stretched out in the night and slacked not: my soul refused comfort." The remembrance of God also only made the distress more poignant, for here it was that doubt was assailing him: "I remembered God, and I moaned; I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed." We have not as yet, however, the special character of this distress made known.

2. In the second section we realize more the nature of the conflict, as having to do with questions which, as Ecclesiastes has it, "God has given to the sons of men to be exercised with." "Thou hast held mine eyelids open," he says: "I am so agitated that I cannot speak." He is occupied with the history of man, with "the days of old,—the years of ancient times"—God's dealings with men are exercising him; and from these he turns to review his own experience. He remembers his "music in the night," but he is not disposed to music now. He is busy, communing with his own heart, and his spirit making diligent search. But with all this, at present, rest is not attained.

3. The next section brings us however to the interpretation of it all. We find the riddle and its solution also. We see clearly that it is a question which Israel is above all concerned with, and which a latter-day remnant would certainly be exercised about; while the answer concerns His people at all times, it being the assertion of the faithfulness of God to His own Name, for which He ever acts, and in which they find their resource and refuge.

The question is: "Will the Lord cast off forever? and will He show favor no more?" Here the "Lord" is not "Jehovah;" nor is the covenant-Name mentioned until after this question is answered. Covenant they cannot plead: the answer has to come from what God is in Himself, not from relationship, which is the very thing in question. But the "Lord" (*Adonai*). He in whose hand all power is, has in effect cast off when that power no more acts in their behalf. Will He cast off, then, "forever" (*leolamim*, "for the ages")? "and will He show favor no more?" There was no doubt, at least, of what He had been to them. Could

(ii.) His love and word.
(iii.) Himself.
(iv.) but human weakness.

Is his loving-kindness come to a [w]perpetual end?
hath his word [x]failed for all generations?
Hath the Mighty One [y]forgotten to be gracious?
hath he shut up in anger his [z]compassions? Selah.
And I said, This is my infirmity:
[there are] [a]years of the right hand of the Most High.

4 (11-15): God in experience.
(i.) Jah.
(ii.) His work.

I will make mention of the [b]works of Jah:
for I remember thy wonders of old.
And I will [c]meditate on all thy work,
and talk of thy doings.

w cf. Is. 38. 10, 11. *cf.* Mal.3.6.
x cf. Is. 64.9. *cf.* Is. 54.7-10.
y cf. Is. 49. 13-16.
z cf. Ps. 71. 18.
a Ps. 31. 22. *cf.* Ps.73.21, 22.
b cf. Ps. 102. 12, 24.
c Ps. 1. 2. Ps. 143. 5.

it be, then, that He would act in opposition to this? A temporary "forsaking" would not be opposition: for chastening means present interest and future blessing; and was this, then, chastening, or renunciation of the favor that He once had shown?

In his next two questions the psalmist weighs his evidences. The divine loving-kindness, can that be at an end—exhausted? is the fountain of love dried up? This is of course an impossibility; and he is arguing that it is an impossibility. And yet *in application* to themselves, how many are tempted to believe it! How many admit the suggestion of some sin possibly unpardonable to him who sincerely turns to God about it, and would find his refuge in the blood of Christ! But no: there stands as the complete denial of this the unfailing word of divine inspiration: "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth from *all* sin." Here is no limit, and who shall make one? Whatever may be true as to unpardonable sin, it cannot mean that any such can be to one who has recourse to the blood of Christ; or that He will cast out, for any cause whatever, any one who in the day of present grace shall come to Him (1 Jno. i. 7; John vi. 37).

But this brings us to the second question of the psalmist: "has His word failed for all generations?" Here, too, is an impossibility; but let us see what it implies. It is "His word" that is in question, not "His promise"; and this makes it much more weighty. God has been pleased to give us His word, and this indeed is "loving-kindness" to do so, and the parallelism of the verse is complete. He has written *Himself* out on the page of Scripture,—given us to see His heart, His mind: it may be in His dealings with this or that person, in His announcement as to this or that event. All this rests (as to its blessing to me) upon the immutability of His nature, the assurance that I shall find Him for myself the self-same God that He has been to others. Were He changeful, capricious, limited, I could argue nothing, find comfort in nothing:—for all generations His word would be practically gone. Were His "loving-kindness" anything but the infinite fount of blessing that it is, no declarations of it for another would help me, no words of other times would avail me now. But blessed be God, this cannot be. He is Himself, always Himself, no attribute at strife with another in His changeless and perfect nature. How I can rejoice, then, that Abraham's God is mine; and what unfailing assurance any one that will, may gather from His word!

Here then is the point of the argument: it is God Himself in whom we can trust, and that, whatever the present circumstances. "Has the Mighty One (*El*) *forgotten* to be gracious? Must any circumstances whatever be allowed to argue infirmity in Him? "Has He shut up (contracted) in anger His compassions?" No, be assured. His very anger is the effect of love itself: cast yourself upon His love, this anger will not harm you; His chastening shall but purify and bless.

And thus we come to a point: shall we argue infirmity in Him or in *ourselves*? Here there can be no question, and the trouble is ended: "And I said, This is

(iii.) Himself.

Thy way, O God, is in the [d]sanctuary:
[e]who is the mighty one so great as God?

(iv.) experience among the peoples.

Thou art the Mighty One that doeth [f]wonders:
thou hast made [g]known thy strength among the peoples.

(v.) man with God.

With thine arm hast thou [h]redeemed thy people,
the sons of [i]Jacob and of Joseph. Selah.

5 (16–20): God in the sea. (i.) owning His power.

The [j]waters saw thee, O God,
the waters saw thee, they were afraid;
the depths also trembled.

d Ps. 73. 17. *cf.* ver. 19.
e Ps. 86. 8.
f Ps. 78. 4.
g Ps. 67. 2. Ps. 9. 11.
h Ex. 15. 16.
i *cf.* Is. 44. 1, 2. Ps. 80. 1. Ps. 81. 4, 5.
j Ex. 14. 21. Ps. 114. 3, 5.

my infirmity"—"my *malady*," it might be rendered: "there are *years* of the right hand of the Most High;"—an inadequate statement, which is all the more effective. "God has had years of experience," he says to himself: and that so feebly represents the truth, and yet in that enfeebled form, so forbids doubt, that immediately he is master of himself again, and can only praise Him.

4. Back he can go now at once to Scripture, to those old experiences of God, now once more so available for him. "I will make mention of the works of Jah," he says: "for I remember Thy wonders of old; and I will meditate on all Thy work, and talk of Thy doings." "Jah," the contracted form of Jehovah, speaks in the most energetic, decisive way of the One who is, as if He were the only reality. And so, in a true sense, He is: for "in Him we live and move and have our being," and He governs absolutely where most his authority seems set aside. Had we eyes purged from all films, where would we find a thing which might not be a text from which to descant upon the "works of Jehovah?" and with what blessing to our own souls, as well as to the souls of others. Even the "wonders of old" are but as it were the visible signs and tokens of a manner of work which everywhere has the stamp of the same Author. Indeed that is what gives them their main charm and interest. Oh for eyes without a film! we shall have them: but do not let us be so satisfied with that assurance as to put away from us the present opportunity of learning such glorious things.

But he goes on: "Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary"—not simply, I think, "in holiness," though that be the main thought. But the sanctuary suggests more than this,—suggests already even, what the next section more develops, the hidden character of His ways, which are yet not hidden of *His* will, for He is ever seeking to make them known, but of necessity, by reason of men's estrangement from Him. The sanctuary, thank God, does not to us, as to Israel, so much speak of this: for it is what characterizes Christianity that the veil of it is rent from top to bottom; and we have "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus" (Heb. x. 19). Blessed it is to know this! but beyond measure blessed to *draw really near* because we know it! Practically still the measure of our knowledge must depend upon that purging of the eyes, of which we have been speaking. The light shines, and here is our responsibility, and here is our privilege. What we see is a question to be answered, each one for himself.

But it is in holiness God's way is, and "the knowledge of the Holy is understanding": therefore we enter into His mind as His mind enters into us. And then indeed shall we realize: "who is the mighty one (*El*) so great as God?" And if He be thus necessarily hidden by His own perfection, yet is He not outside the knowledge of men everywhere: for "Thou art the Mighty One that doeth wonders: Thou hast made known Thy strength among the peoples." And here especially in Israel—through His relationship to these—He is made known, and in the grace which this declares: "with Thine arm hast Thou redeemed Thy people, the sons of Jacob and of Joseph."

5. Here the fifth section opens, and we find in the way in which God manifested Himself as with His people and for their deliverance, how the powers of nature in which He so much hides Himself, are nevertheless perfectly at His dis-

(ii.) elemental activity.

The [k]clouds poured out water;
the skies sent out a sound;
thine [l]arrows also went abroad.

(iii.) manifestations.

The voice of thy [m]thunder was in the whirlwind;
the lightnings lightened the world;
the earth [n]trembled and quaked.

(iv.) in nature-forms.

Thy way is in the [o]sea,
and thy paths in the great waters,
and thy footsteps* are [p]not known.

(v.) with His people.

Thou leddest thy people like a [q]flock
by the hand of [r]Moses and Aaron.

* Literally, "heels."

k *cf.* Gen. 7. 11, 12. Ps. 18. 11.
l Ps. 18. 14. Ps. 144. 6.
m Is. 30. 30. Ps. 29.3–11.
n 2 Sa. 22. 8. Ps. 97. 4.
o Ex. 14. 21. Hab. 3. 15. *cf.* ver. 13.
p *cf.* Is.45.15. Is. 42. 16.
q *cf.* Num.9. 18. Ps.78.52,53. Ps. 80. 1. *cf.* Is.63.11–14.
r *cf.* Ex. 4. 14, 27, 28; Ps. 99. 6.

posal, and work in behalf of those with whom He is. The psalmist is drawing the picture manifestly of the deliverance at the Red Sea, although of the convulsions of nature described, the history gives no account. The moral drawn from it is of the widest application.

"The waters saw Thee, O God; the waters saw Thee, they were afraid; the depths also trembled." Nature owned His power, while men doubted the Arm upon which they leaned, or else defied it, after abundant experience. But not only did nature tremble and give place, but the elements yielded themselves to His will: "the clouds poured out water; the skies sent out a sound; Thine arrows also went abroad." But there was that which has ever to man been more like the manifestation of God, and which Scripture recognizes in this way: "The voice of Thy thunder was in the whirlwind; the earth trembled and quaked."

And now comes the moral of God's clothing Himself in these nature-forms: "Thy way is in the sea, and Thy paths in the great waters; and Thy footsteps are not known." True as that may be, yet this "way" is with His people and in their behalf: "Thou leddest Thy people like a flock, by the hand of Moses and Aaron." Thus in the dark as in the light He is the same; and in the dark, we can yet trust Him.

Sec. 2.

We have had, then, in the first section, the individual principles which manifest themselves in God's dealings with men in general. The present one gives their application in detail to the history of Israel. The difference between the two sections is plain upon a brief examination. The very first psalm here (the seventy-eighth) takes up the history at large in this way. The eightieth and eighty-first are similar, though more partial in their review. The eighty-second is the setting right of government in Israel, that it may correspond with the divine one: while the last (the eighty-third) gives the great final confederacy against them, which is that He whose Name alone is Jehovah may be manifested as Supreme over all the earth.

On the other hand the lack of generalization in this second section is as manifest as is its prevalence in the first. Along with this there lacks also the distinct Messianic character which we have in the seventy-fifth psalm; even God's controversy with the people as to the rejection of Christ being found elsewhere, and the testimony given here being necessarily the Old Testament history and not the New; this ending, however, in times which are still before us, (in prophecy therefore, not in history,) that "end of the (Mosaic) age" which we have often had presented to us as being of such intense interest and importance in connection with Israel's blessing, and God's disciplinary ways with them in connection with it.

The principles brought before us in the first section are, briefly, these: in the seventy-third psalm, the mysterious suffering of the righteous, while the wicked

SECTION 2. (Ps. lxxviii.-lxxxiii.)

The principles applied to Israel's history.

Ps. lxxviii.

[1]PSALM LXXVIII.

The consistency of God's ways, in which His grace is sovereign still.

Maskil of Asaph.

1 (1-8): God's provision.
a (1-4): A call to obedience.
(i.) a law.
(ii.) words that need discernment.

[a]GIVE ear, O [i]my people, to my law:
incline your ears unto the sayings of my mouth.
I will open my mouth in a [ii]parable;
I will pour out [v]deep things of old:

s *cf.* Psalms 105, 106. Deu. 32. 1.
t *cf.* Dan. 9. 20.
u Ps. 49. 4. *cf.* 1 Cor. 10. 6-11.
v *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 10.

so often flourish: a mystery understood only in the sanctuary, where God's presence with us is realized on the one hand, and the holiness of His character who is thus present with us, on the other. In the seventy-fourth psalm the wicked one is not only flourishing, but seen in active hostility to God and to His people: a fact which gives, however, assurance of his final overthrow. In the seventy-fifth, all the foundations of the earth being in this way out of course, He must come who will govern for God in consistency with His character, and we must wait for Him. In the seventy-sixth, the whole earth is prostrate before Him: and this realized by faith beforehand, the wrath of man even now is seen to praise Him, nothing being suffered that will not do this. Lastly, the seventy-seventh psalm, in a deuteronomic summing up as to the divine ways, answers the deep perplexity of the soul occupied with these with the assurance that, while they are indeed in the sea at present, so that His footsteps are not known, they are yet in the sanctuary also: that is, not only holy, but in grace towards His people.

Essentially, thus, God's character is maintained as love and light; while it is seen also that as to the world all things are in disorder, and that faith is needed to discern the government of God, which yet exists and has absolute control over every single thing that transpires, and therefore makes all things work for good towards every individual among His people. Love acts, but often in disguise; the allowance of evil becomes a wholesome exercise and discipline for the soul; faith is practised and strengthened; we are called, as Peter tells us, "by glory and virtue" (valor), God developing in us the character which those must have who are by and by to be associated with Him who Himself takes the glory as the end of a path of suffering.

Such principles apply, as is evident, to the life of faith in all dispensations, whatever the differences which result from the difference of these. We are to look at them now in their application to Israel's history, taking in the past and the future for this, as necessary to its completeness. The rejection of Messiah, and the results of this to them, do not indeed appear: the reason for which we may in some measure apprehend, perhaps, but which it is not necessary to enter into now. That there is valid reason for it we may be sure beforehand; and this subject has had already some treatment in both of the preceding books of the Psalms.

PSALM LXXVIII.

The seventy-eighth psalm is most fittingly entitled a "Maskil"—an instruction. It surveys the history from Egypt until David; a sufficient sample, man being, as he is, the same at all times; and David's history being also the type, as we are well aware, of that of his Son and Lord. We can understand, therefore, why with this gleam of brightness the psalm ends; grace in him seen sovereign and victorious, after the long course of failure, as it will be in the end foreshadowed by it. The six sections mark this victory of God's grace, which is seen in measure all through, while everywhere His holiness and consistency with His character are conspicuous also.

(iii.) remembered and realized.
(iv.) and tested in experience.

Which we have heard and known,
and our [w] fathers have told us.
We will not hide [them] from their [x] children,
showing to the generations to come the [y] praises of Jehovah,
and his [z] strength, and his wonderful works which he hath done.

[w] Ps. 44. 1.
[x] Ex. 10. 2. Josh. 4. 21, 24. cf. 2 Tim. 1. 3, 5.
[y] Ps. 145. 4.
[z] Ps. 71. 18.

1. The first section gives us God's provision for His people, illustrated by the one who here addresses them. God is not satisfied with giving a written word to them, necessary as this is, and the basis of everything. His will is that there should be preachers of the Word and of all the works of the Lord of which it testifies and from which it draws its precious instruction. Preachers were to be in every family in Israel, and these preachers not an official class, but the heads of the families themselves. Practically, those who were competent to speak, spoke: the things they heard and knew they were not to hide, and such capacity is always responsibility, and in the nature of things must be,—a responsibility which none can devolve upon another. But let us hear the psalmist.

(*a*) He speaks with the authority of one speaking for God,—with the consciousness of the importance of what he utters. The language of conviction will ever be authoritative, and on that account held for assumptive and dogmatic by those who are either not near enough to God to know the secret of it, or not conscious enough of being afar off to want to change the confusion of twilight for the clear outlines of the day What comfort can there be for the soul, apart from the certainty of what it holds for truth? what happiness in the path, except there is full assurance of this being with God? Surely, none whatever. And the apostle Peter expresses what the goodness of God intends for us when he says: "If any one speak, let him speak as oracles of God," that is, as God's mere mouthpiece: while for the walk the Lord Himself declares: "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Thus the blessedness to which we are called is manifest. Oh that we may live up to the full privileges that are ours!

He begins then with an exhortation to obedience:

"Give ear, O my people, to my law"; or "instruction," some would say; and that is, indeed, the primary meaning of the word; yet it is that regularly used for "law" (*torah*), and we must take it at least as implying the authority which truth ever has for the true. This is, in fact, what the numerical structure lays emphasis on, the number being that which speaks of sovereignty, supremacy. Therefore, "incline your ears unto the sayings of my mouth."

This "instruction" needs, however, penetration and discernment: "I will open my mouth in a parable; I will pour out deep things of old."

It is not, therefore, that only which is unmistakable at first sight that is authoritative. But how many excuse themselves from obedience on just such grounds! Thus Scripture, which is professedly oftentimes "deep," as here, becomes a thing so far which may be unknown, nay, slighted, without blame. "Deep" things are for the deep, the people who have mind for it, or taste, or learning, or leisure, or all of these! Parables, types, prophecies, the larger part of what they too, with the rest, call "the word of God," become so much spiritual bric-à-brac, which it is rather a proof of sobriety of mind to do without, or, at least, to value at a low rate. But is the psalmist commending to us these things, or the reverse, when he speaks of them as "deep things" or "parables"? Does he address himself to the many or to the few? to the people as a whole, or to some spiritual aristocracy? after all, not an aristocracy by spiritual qualities, but by natural, or even by circumstantial differences? For there *is*, let it be known, a spiritual aristocracy, (if you please to call it so,) but it is defined by *devotedness and diligence of heart:* and where these are found, the race of the prophets still is found, to whom the words of Amos will apply (chap. iii. 7):

b (5-8): The testimony to be maintained.
(i.) appointed of God.
(ii.) for transmission

And he established a [a]testimony in Jacob,
and appointed a law in Israel:
which he charged our fathers to show unto their children;
That the generation following might know [them],
the children that should be born:
[who] should arise and tell [them] to their children;

(iii.) the reason that they should remember.

And they should put their [b]confidence in God,
and not forget the works of the Mighty One,
but [c]keep his commandments;

(iv.) and not fail as their fathers.

And not be as their [d]fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation,
a generation that prepared not their heart,
and their spirit was not [e]steadfast with the Mighty One.

a Deu. 6.6,7.

b cf. 1 Pet.1. 21.

c Deu. 4. 2,6. *cf.* Neh.1.7, 9.

d cf. Num. 32. 8-14. Acts 7. 51-53. Matt. 23.34-36.

e ver. 37. Hos. 6. 4.

"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets."

When we go on to look at the psalm which is thus characterized, however, we may have difficulty in discussing how it fulfills the titles which are thus given to it. From beginning to end it is *historic*,—an appeal to facts which we already have in books that are devoted to the "wonderful works" of the Lord in relation to Israel. For God never left such things to tradition merely. What would tradition be in the hands of those whose incompetency every way the history itself demonstrates so absolutely? But this history, being what it is, and *of* what it is, is just what is suited to utter divine secrets to the heart that is attentive. It is the ways of God put in connection with the men and their ways, to which these apply. Thus, since we are men, and the same God is ours and theirs, the history becomes a parable or similitude,—something by which, as we compare things together, what we are and what God is to us will be brought out. Thus the very history becomes a mirror for us, not merely of ourselves, but of *ourselves in the light of God*. How good thus to know ourselves!

Then indeed, our own history and the history of God's people at all times, become united in one glorious whole, which fills the soul with light and blessing. "What we have heard and known," and what "our fathers have told us" come into the most instructive agreement. Our lives are seen not to be broken and disjointed, and so far, meaningless fragments, but are lifted into significance and power. The actors in all this human history become friends and counsellors. The precepts of the Word are powerfully enforced, illustrated, and fastened in their place by these vivid pictures, all the more fitted to lay hold of us by the exceptional magnitude of the events which come before us in them,—*only made plainer, and not distorted by their magnitude.*

Were we thus more realizing the ways of God with us, the natural consequence would follow that we should be (how much!) more competent witnesses to those that come after us in the same path. "What we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us, we will not hide from their children, showing to the generations to come the praises of Jehovah, and His strength, and His wonderful works that He has done." This is what secures the blessing that is in it, that it is His praises that are being thus sustained and spread abroad. God is in His place, and thus all else, in the same proportion that He is so.

(*b*) The second part here declares this perpetual testimony to be designed of God, to maintain the memory of His acts and the authority of His commands, in view of the constant proneness upon man's part to forget. The living voice of the preacher was to make, in the lower sense of this, the Word living. And the preacher was not to be official, but, as we may say, the one everywhere

2 (9-16): Contrasted ways.
α (9-11): Rebellion.
(i.) sufficient to have stood.
(ii.) their refusal.
(iii.) the reason.

The children of [f]Ephraim, archers [g]equipped,
turned back in the day of encounter.
They kept not the [h]covenant of God,
and refused to walk in his law;
And they forgat his works,
and his [i]wonders that he had shown them.

f cf. Gen. 49. 3, 4 with 1 Chr. 5. 1, 2. cf. Gen. 48. 17-20 with Is. 2. 22.
g cf. Num. 14. 1-10. cf. 1 Sam. 17. 45-47.
Josh. 7. 8. h cf. Deu. 29. 25. i Ps. 106. 13; Ps. 107. 8.

installed by nature. God, as the Author of nature, confirms its appointment. We may now pass on to the history.

2. The second section shows us now, in brief but decisive contrast, the ways of the people and the ways of God. As to the people, this is put in the most general terms, the tribe of Ephraim being taken as their representatives, for reasons which we shall have presently to consider. The ways of God are shown by reference to the great features of His intervention for them in Egypt and the wilderness. The miracles in Egypt are only referred to, and come up for review more fully afterwards; the others are not spoken of again in the psalm.

(*a*) On the people's side there is not seen merely failure. It is carefully explained that what might seem that was in reality much more. *With God*, they could not fail. If they did so, it was because they refused to walk in His law. At first sight, what is said of Ephraim also appears as if it were an incident only, but it is not so. Ephraim is but representative of the conduct of all the tribes; their action as typical as they themselves are.

When Israel entered the land, it was under the Ephraimite, Joshua. When the ark came first to rest in the land, it was in Ephraimitic Shiloh that it rested. "Shiloh" is the name given to Messiah in Jacob's prophecy as to the tribes (Gen. xlix.), and means "He who gives peace": the rest of the ark might well seem to intimate that that peace was now at hand.

The tribe of Ephraim, the younger of the brother tribes of Joseph, but in Jacob's prophecy concerning these (Gen. xlviii.) exalted to the first place, might well therefore in Joshua's time claim the leadership in Israel. Reuben had lost the birth-right which was his originally, and Joseph, the first-born of Rachel, had gained it: these two sons of his taking place with the sons of Jacob themselves, showing him to have the double portion of the first-born. Every way, therefore, in title as in fact, the preeminence then belonged to Ephraim.

But the title under which they inherited the land at that time had, as we well know, one fundamental defect: it was this, that it was held according to the covenant of law,—the covenant which, in ignorance of themselves and of God, they had taken upon themselves to keep. Their failure therefore to hold this title was inevitable; although only by degrees did this become apparent. In Jacob's blessing of the tribes Judah occupies a large place; but Joseph, it might be claimed, one still larger. If Shiloh is spoken of in connection with Judah, the Shepherd and Stone of Israel is spoken of in connection with the other: *what* the connection, might still be doubtful. In Moses' blessing, Joseph again has undeniably the larger place. No other tribe could claim precedence, if Judah failed.

Apart from all typical significance, (which, of course, could not be pleaded in the case,) Joshua, therefore, was the natural leader in taking possession of the land, and might well seem to emphasize the claim of Ephraim. Thus Ephraim comes into the psalm here as the representative tribe: but it is no longer said of him, as of Joseph it had been, "his bow abode in strength." The language might seem in designed opposition to this: "the children of Ephraim, archers equipped, turned back in the day of encounter." Equipped they were, and therefore sufficient to have stood. God had not failed them; circumstances were not too strong for them. Nor lacked there any assurance of successful issue. They stood upon ground secured to them by the divine promise: "every place that the sole of your foot shall tread on shall be your own." Yet in spite of all

b (12-16) His deliverances. (i.) the beginning. (ii.) the division of the sea. (iii.) His presence in the midst. (iv.) in the wilderness: need met. (v.) living waters. (?)

In the sight of their fathers he had done wondrous things
in the land of [j] Egypt, the field of Zoan.
He [k] clave the sea, and caused them to pass through,
and made the waters stand as a heap;
And he [l] led them with a cloud by day,
and all the night with a light of fire.
He [m] clave the rocks in the wilderness,
and gave them drink as from the depths abundantly.
And he brought [n] streams out of the rock,
and caused waters to run down like rivers.

j Neh. 9. 10. ver. 43. Ex. chaps. 5–14.
k Ex. 14. 21. Neh. 9. 11. Ps. 136. 13.
l Ex. 13. 21. Num. 9. 15–23.
m Ex. 17. 6. Num. 20. 11.
n Ps. 114. 8.

3 (17-32): In the presence of God so manifested. a (17–22): sin against His power. (i.) who is Supreme. (ii.) lust. (iii.) speech against God.

And they [o] sinned yet against him,
provoking the Most High in the desert.
And they [p] tempted the Mighty One in their heart,
by asking food for their lust*:
And they spake against God:
they said, [q] Can the Mighty One prepare a table in the wilderness?

o ver. 56.
p Num. 11. 4-6. Ex. 17. 2. Deu. 6. 16.
q Ex. 16. 1-3. cf. Ps. 23. 5.

* *Nephesh*, soul.

this, they turned back: it was no mere failure: "they kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in His law; and they forgat His works, and His wonders that He had shown them."

(*b*) This is a common history, and it was that of the whole nation. Yet what had He not done for them! It was no unknown God who laid claim to their obedience. He had manifested Himself to them in mighty miracles by which He had shaken to its centre what was then the greatest kingdom upon earth, which held them in its cruel grip relentlessly. He had made the sea to yield a path for their escape, the waters standing as a heap while they passed through. He had Himself led them by that which, always the opposite of nature, answered to their need, a cloud by day, the light of fire by night. In the wilderness He had cleft the rocks for them, at Horeb and at Meribah, and given them drink abundantly, as out of the depths. Nay, He had brought streams out of the rock, and caused the waters to run down like rivers.*

3. (*a*) The third section shows how the people had sinned in the very presence of God so manifested to them. It was not a later generation merely that did so, with whom the knowledge of these things had grown dim in the years that had elapsed since their recurrence, but the very generation among whom such miracles had been displayed. People scoff now, because they see no miracles; but so they did when the miracles were before their eyes: "they sinned yet more against Him, and provoked the Most High in the desert,"—there where His supremacy over all nature had been unequivocally demonstrated in their behalf. Miracles did not repress the craving of hearts away from God, for which one thing denied could turn the bounteous Giver into one incompetent to secure the blessing of those with whom He had charged Himself. Yet in the same breath they own what He had already done in bringing water out of the rock. To

* The last two verses refer, of course, to the same two miracles, though these are differently emphasized. The fourth verse speaks of need met simply, though abundantly met; the fifth of what in the language of Scripture would be called "living", *i. e.*, "running" waters. The typical interpretation would give here a gleam of light as to the structure: for, while 4 is the number of the creature, 5—that is, 4 plus 1,—brings into connection with this the thought of God in relation to the creature, which the "living water" as the type of the Spirit of God (Jno. vii. 38, 39) would answer to. But this involves, of course, interpretation of this character, and as ruling where the literal meaning seems the first thing. The natural constantly is the basis of the spiritual, as we have often seen; but I can only suggest the question and leave it.

(iv.) the reproach of weakness.
Behold, he smote the rock, and waters gushed out,
and streams overflowed:
can he give bread also?
will he provide flesh for his people?
(v.) government.
(vi.) the evil manifested.
Therefore Jehovah heard, and was [r] wroth,
and fire was kindled against Jacob,
and anger also went up against Israel;
b (23-25): against their Preserver.
Because they [s] believed not in God,
and trusted not in his salvation.
(i.) whose power had acted for them,
And had commanded the clouds from above,
and opened the [t] doors of the heavens;
(ii.) to sustain with manna;
And had rained down upon them manna to eat,
and given them of the corn of the heavens:
(iii.) provision to the full.
Man ate the [u] bread of the mighty:
he sent them provision to the full.

r Num. 11. 1-3.
s cf. Ps. 106. 12, 13, ver. 32.
t Ex. 16. 4.
u Neh. 9.15. cf. 1 Ki. 19. 5-8 with Deu. 33. 25.

provide flesh, they thought, was a more difficult thing, and transcended His ability. Thus they turned His hand against themselves: "fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger went up" in the flame that rose "against Israel." Unbelief was the only sin with them, as it always has been the sin that provoked judgment: unbelief that came not from lack of evidence, for of that there was abundance, but from wills that rebelled against His easy yoke.

(*b*) As in the book of Numbers, when the people are murmuring about the food which God has given them, and craving flesh, as we are here reminded, the Spirit of God turns to describe this manna which they are rejecting, so now does the psalmist, though in a different manner. He especially dwells upon it as bread from heaven, and then upon the strength given by it, for that is surely what is meant by calling it "the bread of the mighty"—bread that *produces* might. Nor are we to think of any figurative sense of the words, or any typical significance of the manna itself. The purpose to which he applies the history forbids any thought of this in the case, as is evident. The marvel was great indeed, and fitted to appeal to the heart, that the food which the desert soil denied should come to them from heaven! When we think of the precisely measured quantity, on the sixth day double every other day, following them wherever they journeyed for forty years, until it ceased, just after passing Jordan,—it was a stupendous miracle. No wonder that imagination should picture it, (as the Septuagint, but *not* the Hebrew, does) as "angels' food." No wonder that it should be really—prepared in such a manner, with such abundant care,—"bread of the mighty"; like the food in the strength of which Elijah went forty days and forty nights, through this same wilderness, "to Horeb, the mount of God." "Provision to the full" it was, excluding any possible need of any other. And that is the point here.

God had provided for them; and how then could that provision be other than perfectly adapted to their need? In fact, it was the food to nourish a race of mighty men. Yet that wilderness-food was but the type of ours. This spiritual manna, what ought it not to produce in us in the way of strength and courage! what spiritual heroes ought we not to be! Nay, we should say rather, what *will* there not be in this way, if God's food be really partaken of in faith and simplicity. Communication with Christ,—the entering into that self-sacrificing love which brought Him down to us, and gave Him for our sins! what manner of men *must* this make of us, in all holy conversation and godliness! If this be lacking, it is not that God's provision has failed, for that cannot be, but that *we* have despised and turned away from it: and who can doubt that this is largely the case now? Plenty of activity in benevolent work there may be, where this is true; and the very enthusiasm for this work which leads professing Christians to associate for such ends with the deniers and despisers of Christ Himself, is the surest evidence of this.

c (26–28): complete manifestation. (i.) power acting. (ii.) the answer to their cavil. (iii.) brought fully home.
d (29–32): the failure under the new test. (i.) sufficiency, (ii.) joined to their lust. (iii.) the action of holiness. (iv.) and departure still.
4 (33–39): The fallen creature. (i.) under the hand of God.

He caused the [v]east wind to blow in the heavens,
and by his power brought the south wind.
And he rained flesh on them like dust,
and winged fowl as the sand of the seas;
And he let it fall in the [w]midst of their camp,
round about their habitations.
And they ate and were well [x]filled,
and he gave them their longing.
They were not estranged from their longing;
their food was yet in their mouths,
When the anger of God went up against them:
and he [y]slew their fat ones,
and smote down the choice men of Israel.
For all this, they [z]sinned yet,
and believed not his wondrous works.

And he [a]consumed their days in vanity,
and their years with terror.

v Num. 11. 31, 32.
w *cfr.* Ex. 5. 10–13.
x Num. 11. 20. Prov. 30. 8, 9. *cf.* Ezek. 16. 49.
y Num. 11. 33, 34.
z Neh. 9. 16, 17. Num. 14. 9, 10.
a Ps. 95. 7–11. Num. 14. 29–35. Num. 17. 12, 13.

(*c*) The people, however, have turned from the manna: they desire flesh; and, their craving being ungratified, they have questioned even the ability of God to give it. He will not therefore permit this. They shall see that His hand is not shortened, and that the creatures that He has made are subject to Him, though sin has made man a rebel. Once more the powers of heaven therefore are in activity: the east wind unites with the south wind to accomplish His will, and flesh is rained upon them more plentifully than manna was. Nor is there the least trouble in procuring it: it is all round about them, at their very doors: "He let it fall in the midst of their camp,—round about their habitations." The manifestation of His power and goodness is complete.

(*d*) But this necessarily becomes a new test for the people. God cannot be manifested to them without its being that. What will they do now, when His power and love to them are so perfectly demonstrated? Will they judge themselves for all these murmurings, and give Him the glory due to Him? Have they hearts capable of being touched by this new grace, which comes so entirely in the way which they have themselves indicated for it?

Alas, there is no response. This mercy is to them only the satisfaction of their lust. They eat to repletion of the food, hardened and stupefied by it, instead of blest; and the judgment of God falls upon them. It is, in fact, now the only remedy which even mercy knows. Judgment therefore picks out the fat ones, and the choice men of Israel are stricken down: and with what effect? "For all this, they sinned yet, and believed not His wondrous works." The genesis of unbelief, as rather in the heart than in the head, is perfectly apparent.

4. This ends the detailed story of the wilderness, to which we have only a general reference again (verses 40, 41), and the place is reached in which we may now survey man, this fallen creature, and ask, what is he? It is a question very necessary to be faced and answered, if we ourselves are to go on with God. If we trust in man, it is ourselves we trust in: for we are men. If we trust in ourselves, in that exact proportion will God's ways be dark to us, and Himself unknown. The Cross it is in which together man finds his judgment, and God manifests Himself in the glory that is His. If it be not man's due, then is the cross mere martyrdom, and Christ at best but Prince of martyrs. If it be man's due, and by a death under His wrath on sin God alone could save us, then how completely must man be put out of sight, in order that there may be a righteous ground for our salvation,—that God may be righteous in it. And Christianity is not the restoration (even by grace) of this ruined creature. It is the setting aside—the crucifixion of the old man, that Christ may be now the New Man, in whom God sees us, and in whom we see ourselves,—that I may live, no longer

(ii.) their response to it.
When he slew them, then they [b]sought him,
and returned, and sought diligently after the Mighty One;

(iii.) the memory of their Refuge.
And they remembered that God was their [c]Rock,
and the Mighty One, the Most High, their Redeemer.

(iv.) false still.
But they [d]flattered him with their mouth,
and lied unto him with their tongue:

(v.) in relationship to Him.
And their heart was not [e]firm with him,
and they were not steadfast in his covenant.

(vi.) the limit put by His compassion.
But he was [f]compassionate:
he forgave [their] perversity and destroyed [them] not,
and [g]often turned away his anger;
and did not stir up all his wrath.

(vii.) the complete account of man.
And he remembered that they were [h]flesh:
breath that goeth and returneth not.

[b] *cf.* Ex. 33. 5–7 with Hos. 5. 15.
[c] Deu. 32. 4, 15,18,31,32.
[d] *cf.* Jer. 3. 10. *cf.* Ezek. 14. 1.
[e] *cf.* Ezek. 33. 31 with Ex. 19. 8.
[f] *cf.* Ex. 34. 5–7. *cf.* Num. 14. 15–20.
[g] *cf.* Is. 43. 24. Deut. 9.
[h] Is. 2. 22. Gen. 6. 3. Is. 57. 16.

I, but Christ in me (Gal. ii. 20). Faith, which is but the turning of the back on self, being now the only principle of fruitfulness and power, we walk in Christ as we live in Christ. They are the true circumcision who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have *no confidence in the flesh* (Phil. iii. 3).

The review here is of the greatest importance, and we have it with such completeness as man's history thus far could give it, in seven sections, in which there is not omitted the pitifulness of God's estimate, while He is truthful in it. True, "He consumed their days in vanity, and their years in terror;" yet it was the only thing that would in any wise recall them to Himself: for "when He slew them, then they sought Him, and returned, and sought diligently after the Mighty One." It was might that they needed to be put forth for them, and the memory of former deliverances wrought with them: "they remembered that God was their Rock, and the Mighty One, the Most High, their Redeemer."

Something now was surely accomplished. Their need had been most real, and the remembrance of God was also real; the days of the Judges come to our mind, when "the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah, and Jehovah raised them up a deliverer." Yet how constantly had fresh captivity followed deliverance! Alas, it was manifest that when they turned to God it was but half-heartedly: the greatness of their need had constrained them, and not a love responsive to the love that had been shown them. "They had flattered Him with their mouth, and lied unto Him with their tongue, and their heart was not firm with Him, and they were not steadfast in His covenant."

What hope then in man, whom judgment brings but to a forced and temporary amendment, and mercies move but to forgetting Him altogether? Yet He went on still in mercy manifest, or chastening with what was mercy in disguise: "He was compassionate, and forgave their perversity, and destroyed them not; and often turned away His anger, and did not stir up all His wrath." And why? Ah, "He remembered that they were flesh: breath that goeth and returneth not." Frailty and transience could not be more perfectly characterized than by that which is the sign and accompaniment of the life within man. Flesh, too, is that which in all its waste and renewal teaches the same lesson; while as the lowest part of him, and yet into which he seems altogether sunk, it speaks of ruin, which, to be such for a creature such as man, must be *moral* ruin. The Lord's argument from this condition is, that he "must be born again."

5. The following section shows Israel's history in conformity with this; and God's dealings with them until everything seems gone; His link with them broken, the ark in captivity, the priests that served it slain. It is the history of centuries of long-suffering on His part, though compressed in so brief a space.

5 (40-64): The way and the end, as to the people.
a (40-43): A rebellious people.
(i.) from the beginning.
(ii.) the contradiction of sinners.
(iii.) remembering not.
(iv.) His signs in Egypt.
b (44-50) His ways in their deliverance.
(i.) nature rebels against God's rebels.
(ii.) abasement by the humblest means.
(iii.) the fruit of labor under ban.
(iv.) nature itself smitten.

How oft they [f]rebelled against him in the wilderness,
and [g]grieved him in the desert!
And they turned back, and tempted the Mighty One,
and set [k]limits to the Holy One of Israel.
They [l]remembered not his hand,
the day when he redeemed them from the oppressor:
How he set his [m]signs in Egypt,
and his miracles in the field of Zoan.
And he had turned their rivers into [n]blood,
and their streams, that they could not drink;
He sent [o]swarms among them which devoured them,
and [p]frogs that brought destruction on them;
And he gave their produce to the caterpillar,
and their labor unto the [q]locust.
And he killed their vines with [r]hail,
and their sycamores with hail-stones.

f Is. 63. 10. Num. 14. 11.
g Ps. 95. 10.
k vers. 19, 20. *cf.* Gen. 18. 14.
l ver. 11.
m vers. 11, 12. Ex. chaps. 7-12. Ps. 105. 27.
n Ex. 4. 9. Ex. 7. 19-25. Ps. 105. 29.
o Ex. 8. 20-32. Ps. 105. 31.
p Ex. 8. 1-15. Ps. 105. 30.
q Ex. 10. 12-20. Ps. 105. 34.
r Ex. 9. 18-35. Ps. 105. 32, 33.

But in truth the elements are few and simple, and the history in its general character monotonous enough. It is prefaced by a longer detail of how he had acted on their behalf in Egypt to deliver them: showing to them and to men at large in impressive detail the complete dependence of all things upon Himself. Hence in the world's insubjection to Him, the subjection of things to man is lost, and the course of nature is turned against him. Such lessons learned at the start, how much would have been spared them! How strange that each generation must needs learn by experience what the combined experience of the race has been ineffectual to teach it! Israel is in all this a constant example to us.

(*a*) The wilderness is first of all glanced at, to remind us how they rebelled against Him there,—how "they turned back, and tempted the Most High, and set limits to the Holy One of Israel." One would imagine rather that it would be said, that they set limits to the *Mighty* One,—that is, to His power; but the thought is that it is His holiness which, in view of their sin, hinders Him from coming in for them. Is it not so, that God's "delights are with the sons of men," and that, as we see in Christ come down among us, He would give free way to His love, but that unbelief on our part forces Him behind the veil, puts "bounds around the Mighty," in His very love to us? Alas, so can His redeemed ones act, though partakers of a better redemption, that Israel of old should be their sign: for "*they* remembered not His hand,—the day when He redeemed them from the oppressor: how He set His signs in Egypt, His miracles in the field of Zoan." Signs of this kind are for His people to read, that they may escape them. They take effect as to the *world*, the state of which they reveal as away from God, and the contrast between it and His people; who are yet warned by them of the things "on account of which the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience."

(*b*) Such an application of the plagues of Egypt follows in the next section: in the very first of which we see, as before remarked, nature rebelling against those in rebellion against God. The river, in its various channels by which the land was watered, and which was the very sign of their independence of heaven,—which they adored as a god, and yet could claim as their own making (Ezek. xxix. 3)—things which to all idolatry agree well together,—the river was turned into blood, so that they could not drink of it. The support of life becomes the very symbol of death, and of death by violence, the infliction of the penalty. It is, in fact, not merely the insurrection of nature that is here, but penalty from the Creator of nature—death from the Life-giver.

(v.) nature in its sympathy with man.
(vi.) fullness of evil.
(vii.) the consummation.
c (51-55): Israel put in possession of the land.
(i.) the strength of Egypt (the first-born) smitten.
(ii.) deliverance.
(iii.) their refuge.
(iv.) the land.
(v.) in governmental award.

And he delivered up their cattle to the hail,
and their flocks to the [s]hot thunderbolts.
He sent on them the fierceness of his anger,
wrath and indignation and distress,—
a mission of messengers of ill.
He leveled a road for his [t]anger:
he spared not their soul from death,
but delivered their life to the pestilence.
And he smote all the [u]first-born in Egypt,
the topmost of their strength in the tents of Ham.
And he [v]led forth his people like sheep,
and [w]guided them in the wilderness like a flock.
And he led them safely, so that they feared not,
but the [x]sea covered their enemies.
And he brought them to his holy [y]border,
this mountain, which his right hand acquired.
He [z]drave out also nations before them,
and allotted them for an [a]inheritance by line,
and made Israel's tribes to dwell in their tents.

s Ps. 18. 13.
t Ex. 9. 17.
u Ex. 11. Ex. 12. 29, 30. Ps. 105. 36. Ps. 136. 10.
v Ps. 77. 20. Ps. 80. 1.
w Ps. 136.16. cf. Is. 40. 7.
x Ex. 14.23–28. Ps. 106. 11.
y Ex. 15. 17. cf. Deu. 1. 1-3, etc.
z Ps. 44. 2. Ps. 80. 8.
a Num. 34. 16-29. Josh.chps. 13-19.

Next, in another order from that in Exodus, and two miracles being classed together to make the lesson clear,—the pride of Egypt is abased by two of the meanest instrumentalities, the "swarms" (no doubt, of insects) and the "croakers of the marsh," as the word for frogs seems to mean in Hebrew.

Then the fruit of their labor, as that of unclean hands, is put under the ban and destroyed by what Joel calls the army of the Lord. And then nature itself is smitten by that which speaks of the withdrawal of God from it. Afterwards nature as in subjection to and sympathy with man, of which the cattle naturally speak.*

Next, we find "a mission of messengers of ill," the more open manifestation and fullness of evil as from Him. And then death itself, and by pestilence, as the end of all, closes the list. No doubt, the death of the first-born is here included, though this is given in another connection, separately, as it stands in the book of Exodus itself, apart from the other plagues.

(*c*) We now find Israel put in possession of the land, toward which the death of the first-born is the first decisive step; the deliverance of the people follows, with which is connected God's guidance of them in the wilderness. The wilderness is no more mentioned. Then we have their safety from the presence of God with them, their enemies being buried in the sea; and then at once they are at the land: "He brought them to His holy border, this mountain which His right hand acquired." Last comes the governmental award of the land, of which for their sins He dispossessed the nations of Canaan.

All this is briefly told, but more effectually for its very brevity. God is now for them, and nothing can even delay His progress, except the unbelief and folly of those with whom He has charged Himself. In fact there was on this account a delay during the lifetime of the whole generation; but this is not now in question, and has indeed been already considered. The psalmist designs all this but as introduction to the story of their defection in the land, after all this power displayed for them.

* "The number five, as applied to man, speaks of man with God, the 4 of the creature being added to the 1 of the Creator. . . . But in the lower sphere in which we now are—penetrated everywhere as it is, however, with divine meaning—the 1 represents man instead of God, but man as His vice-gerent and in His image. Thus this last character of the rasorial type, as described by Mr. Swainson, the 'aptitude and disposition of those accomplishing it to submit to his dominion,' is surely as remarkable as unexpected an illustration of the number before us. Man with God means man subject to Him, under His dominion: here we have the image of that in the lower creatures." ("Spiritual Law in the Natural World," p. 137.)

d (56–58): departure again, in the land. (i.) rebellion, negatively. (ii.) active transgression. (iii.) in worship.

But they [b]tempted and rebelled against God Most High,
and observed not his testimonies;
But drew back and dealt faithlessly [c]like their fathers:
they turned aside like a [d]deceitful bow.
And they provoked him to anger with their [e]high places,
and moved him to jealousy with their [f]graven images.

e (59–61): governmental recompense. (i.) from God Himself. (ii.) changed relations. (iii.) Ichabod.

God heard, and was wroth,
and he greatly [g]abhorred Israel.
And he [h]forsook the tabernacle at Shiloh,—
the tent he had pitched among men.
And he gave his strength into [i]captivity,
and his beauty into the hand of the oppressor.

f (62–64): chastening. (i.) given up of God. (ii.) death the consumer. (iii.) the desolation of the sanctuary.

And he delivered his people to the [j]sword,
and was wroth with his inheritance.
The fire consumed their young men;
and their [k]maidens had no [marriage] song.
Their [l]priests fell by the sword,
and their widows made no lamentation.

[b] Judg. 2. 2, 11-15.
[c] ver. 8. *cf.* Acts 7. 51-53.
[d] Hos. 7. 16.
[e] Deu. 12. 2-7. *cf.* 1 Ki. 3. 3 with 1 Ki. 11. 6-9. 2 Chr. 33. 3, etc.
[f] Ex. 20. 4, 5.
[g] Ps. 106. 40.
[h] *cf.* 2 Chr. 7. 21, 22.
[i] 1 Sa. 4. 10, 11. 1 Sa. 5. 1, 2.
[j] 1 Sa 4. 17.
[k] *cf.* Jer. 7. 34. *cf.* Hos. 2. 11.
[l] 1 Sa. 4. 11, 19-22.

(*d*) The departure is now, still in the concisest manner, told out. There is nothing new in their course except the new opportunities afforded by the high places of the land: the departure is, first, negative rebellion, "they observed not His testimonies." Then, more positively and decisively, "they turned back, and dealt faithlessly, like their fathers: they turned aside like a deceitful bow." The next verse shows a direct attack upon the central worship: high places which the one sanctuary was intended to displace rose up again, and graven images moved the Lord to jealousy.

(*e*) The recompense follows in the next two sections: first of all, in His removal of the profaned sanctuary. Shiloh is given up, and the tent He had in wondrous loving-kindness pitched among men. And He gave His strength—"the ark of His strength" (Ps. cxxxii. 8) into captivity among the Philistines; and His beauty (or splendor)—still the ark, but in another aspect of it,—into the hand of the oppressor of Israel. Thus God, in every visible sign of relationship, had departed from Israel, and Ichabod, according to the declaration of the dying wife of Phinehas, was written upon the nation at large. Every regularly constituted link was snapped asunder. God might still speak by a prophet, and in fact did so, for this depended upon a grace which was sovereign with Him, His inalienable prerogative, whenever He was pleased to exercise it. But the established order of things was at an end. Nor was the ark restored to its place till David's time (1 Chron. xiii. 3; Ps. cxxxii. 6).

(*f*) If things went on otherwise well, man might feel little, alas, the loss of his great treasure. But because God will not give them up to this, more sensible chastening must ensue. Therefore, in very acknowledgment that in the thoughts of His heart they were still His people, He delivered them up to the sword; their young men were consumed in the fire of His anger, so that the maidens went unwedded. Their priests also fell by the sword, making the sanctuary doubly desolate; and their widows were dumb with a grief that went beyond the grief of widowhood.

This is the end, then, in fact, of the legal covenant, in one important aspect of it. The people had failed under it as first given—failed utterly at Sinai itself. Priesthood was then a resource, and with a modification of the first unsparing severity of law, they were put under it a second time, in the hands of a mediator: first, Moses, but then the family of Aaron. Now these, too, had utterly

6 (65-72): The victory of grace.
a (65, 66): The Lord awakening. (i.) in might. (ii.) defeated enemies.
b (67-69): changed relation. (i.) the first-born rejected. (ii.) the relation of love. (iii.) the restored sanctuary.
c (70-72): His Anointed. (i.) the chosen King. (ii.) transferred service. (iii.) the realization.

Then the Lord [m]awaked as one out of sleep,
like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine;
And he [n]smote his adversaries backward,
an everlasting reproach he inflicted on them.
And he [o]rejected the tent of Joseph,
and chose not the tribe of Ephraim;
But he chose the tribe of [p]Judah,
the mount [q]Zion which he loved.
And he built his [r]sanctuary like the heights,
like the earth which he hath founded for ever.
And he chose [s]David his servant;
and took him from the [t]sheepfolds.
From following the ewes that give suck he brought him
to be [u]shepherd to Jacob his people
and Israel his inheritance.
And he [v]tended them after the integrity of his heart,
and guided them with the skillfulness of his hands.

m *cf.* 1 Sa. 5. 3, etc. *cf.* Ps. 44. 23, 24.
n 1 Sa. 7. 3-14.
o ver. 60. 1 Sa. 7. 1, 2.
p *cf.* Gen. 49. 8-12.
q Ps. 48. 1, 2. Ps. 132. 1-8. Ps. 87.
r Ps. 132. 13, 14. Ps. 48. 12, 13.
s 1 Sa. 15. 28. 1 Sa. 16. 11-13.
t 1 Sa. 17. 20.
u 2 Sa. 7. 8. 1 Chr. 11. 2. *cf.* Is. 40. 11.
v Ps. 28. 9.

failed, and all was gone once more. Samuel may be in this strait another Moses, and introduce one last method of trial after the legal sort, by the king. But the issue cannot now be any more doubtful, for "as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." The song of Moses had indeed foreseen it all from the beginning; and he who would take God's estimate of things could never at any time have been in doubt. Now it was proved, however, by ample experience, in the national history. Thus a momentous conclusion had in fact been reached. Man is "flesh," and of man in the flesh here is an end. Though David follow therefore in this psalm, this is not put now as if it were a new trial. David is but the expression of a grace in God which will need indeed Another in whom rightly to manifest itself; but the grace is here, and with David in this way seen, the psalmist ends. For faith there is left an open secret, to which his own last words bear witness. (2 Sam. xxiii. 1-7.)

6. The sixth section is clearly therefore a fresh division of the psalm, and not a continuation of the former one. It is also, beautifully, as we know, a trumpet-note of victory after defeat, but the Lord's victory, and not man's. And so, exactly, its opening words declare. Two verses are devoted to this thought.

(*a*) The Lord—not Jehovah, but Adonai, the Sovereign Lord—awakes, as the strong figure puts it, as one out of sleep; and His full strength is manifest at once with Him. He is "like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine." The excited energy of man is needed to furnish the figure: "He smote His adversaries backward; an everlasting reproach He inflicted upon them."

(*b*) But the new grace must have new experience. It must be seen that this is not a reinstating of the old conditions. The first-born, the primacy of nature, is once more rejected. The tent of Joseph is not restored; God's sovereignty of choice cannot be properly shown out in the taking up again for His abode the tribe of Ephraim. His new relation is one that depends solely upon the love that is in His own heart, and thus Zion becomes unchangeably the destined seat of His earthly kingdom, and Judah the tribe with which this is connected. And now the "tent" correspondingly gives place to a permanent dwelling. He builds as for eternity: "He built His sanctuary like the heights,—like the earth, which He founded for ever."

From these thoughts He has not departed. From this free choice he could not depart. In His counsel Zion is still, according to its name, the "fixed," and Judah the worshiper. Yet a little while, and His old abode shall be revisited in His love, in a favor no more to be withdrawn, as all the prophets witness. And thus we see how true a beginning of grace is exhibited here.

Ps. lxxix.

[2]PSALM LXXIX.

The plea against the invasion of the enemy.

A psalm of Asaph.

1 (1-4): The occasion.

(i.) against Thee.

(ii.) the dead bodies of Thy servants.

(iii.) "unburied"—the crime manifest.

(iv.) our shame.

O GOD, the [w]nations are come into thine inheritance;
thy holy [x]temple have they defiled:
they have laid Jerusalem in heaps.
They have given the dead bodies of thy servants
as [y]food to the birds of the heavens,
the flesh of thy saints to the beast of the earth.
They have shed their [z]blood like water round about Jerusalem;
and there was none to bury [them.]
We are become a [a]reproach to our neighbors:
a mockery and derision to those round about us.

w cf. Ps. 74. ver. 6.

x cf. Dan. 9. 27.
cf. Lam. 1. 10.

y cf. Jer. 7. 32-34.
cf. Jer. 19. 7.
cf. Matt. 24. 15-22.

z cf. Lam. 2. 21.
cf. Lk. 19. 43, 44.

a Ps. 80. 6. Lam. 2. 15, 16.

(*c*) The psalm ends with the "Anointed." The structure emphasizes this, and not merely the King: though he *is* King, and must be anointed, to be this. The eyes of the prophet are afar off, though David is in immediate sight: David, the "Beloved," here too God's heart has chosen, and will not give up its choice. David, first of all, *His* servant, proved in the lowly service of the flock, by and by to serve His true flock on the throne: to be shepherd to Jacob—well known as that, yet "His people," and "Israel His inheritance."

And God's thought was realized—though but partially indeed—in David. It is easy to hear the Voice that speaks to us in it with how much deeper meaning: "And he tended them after the integrity of His heart, and guided them with the skilfulness of His hands."

Psalm LXXIX.

The seventy-ninth psalm is strikingly similar to the seventy-fourth; and these occupy the same position in their respective sections. The one is the second psalm of the first section, as the other is of the second. In both it is the invasion of the enemy that is the subject, and in both they have profaned the very sanctuary of God. But in the seventy-fourth this and the similar destruction of the places of assembly in the land are the whole topic, while here it is still more the slaughter of the people of God themselves. But both are before us, and we have evidently such a state of things as that in the last psalm, when God removed His tabernacle from Shiloh, and His people were oppressed and slaughtered by the Philistine foe. Here it is the time of the end, and the desolation is still worse, and plainly hopeless, save to God Himself. But the greater the distress the greater the remedy; and as in the former case God raised up David, it is now a greater than David that is to be their resource, as we have seen in the psalms that follow. In the present we have only their prayer, the pleading which shows the ground they are on in their souls with God, and what is effectual with Him. Essentially, this ground is always in Himself, and the utter break-up of self-confidence it is which gives us a bolder and more confident appeal to Him.

There are thirteen verses in the psalm, which is divided otherwise as a twelve-versed psalm would be; the additional verse finding its place in the first section.

1. We have first the occasion of their prayer, the case spread out before God. It concerns Him. The nations have invaded His inheritance, defiled His temple, laid Jerusalem in heaps. They have given the dead bodies of His servants as food to the birds and beasts of prey. No doubt their sins—and they own it to be so—have provoked the Lord to anger; but here are enemies to Himself who have come in to slaughter those who at least were His servants, worshipers

2 (5–7): Thine anger! (i.) perpetual? (ii.) pour it out on aliens to Thee.

(iii.) manifested such.

[b] How long, Jehovah? wilt thou be angry perpetually?
shall thy jealousy burn like fire?
Pour out thy [c] wrath upon the nations that have not known thee,
and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy Name.
For they have [d] devoured Jacob,
and laid waste his habitation.

3 (8–10): "For the glory of Thy Name!" (i.) look not on our fathers' sins.

(ii.) deliver us and put away our sins.

(iii.) manifest Thyself.

Remember not against us the [e] perversities of [our] forefathers:
let thy [f] compassions come speedily to meet us,
for we are [g] brought very low.
Help us, O God of our salvation, for the [h] glory of thy Name!
and deliver us, and [i] put away our sins for thy Name's sake!
Why should the nations say, [j] Where is their God?
let there be known among the nations in our sight
the [k] avenging of the blood of thy servants that hath been shed.

4 (11–13): their experience in their helplessness shall make their lives His praise.

(i.) give life.

(ii.) answer the adversaries.

(iii.) we will show forth Thy praise.

Let the [l] groaning of the prisoner come before thee:
according to the greatness of thine arm, preserve those appointed to die.
And [m] render to our neighbors sevenfold into their bosom
their reproach with which they have reproached [n] thee, Lord.
And we, thy people and the [o] sheep of thy pasture,
will give thee [p] thanks for ever:
from generation unto generation we will [q] show forth thy praise.

[b] Ps. 6. 3. Ps. 85. 5.
[c] Jer. 10. 25. cf. Is. 10. 5–19. cf. Mi. 4. 11–13. cf. Ob. 10–16.
[d] Ps. 14. 4.
[e] Ps. 25. 7. cf. Dan. 9. 8, 9.
[f] Ps. 86. 15.
[g] Ps. 86. 1. cf. Deu. 32. 36.
[h] cf. Ezek. 36. 22, 32. cf. Jer. 7. 14, 21.
[i] Ps. 85. 1, 2. cf. Is. 1. 25–27.
[j] Ps. 42. 10. cf. Joel 2. 17.
[k] cf. Rev. 6, 9–11. cf. Is. 63. 1–6.
[l] cf. Ps. 102. 20. cf. Ps. 94. 1–7.
[m] cf. Jer. 50. 17–20.
[n] Ps. 74. 18, 22. cf. Is. 37. 23.
[o] Ps. 95. 7. Ps. 100. 3. Ezek. 34. 11–16.
[p] Ps. 75. 1.
[q] Ps. 9. 14.

of His, and "saints," sanctified by His Name upon them. Their blood has been shed like water round the city of peace, so that none was left to bury them. Yet thus they were left to appeal to God in the open sight of heaven,—the crime manifested, earth refusing to cover it (comp. Job xvi. 18; Ezek. xxiv. 8). But so too was the reproach of their helplessness to those round about but without pity for them.

2. They now impute this rightly to Jehovah's anger: but will it be, then, perpetual? These are aliens who disown Him altogether: will He not rather pour it out on these? these who have shown their hostility by devouring Jacob, and laying waste his habitation?

3. Thus for the glory of His Name they can appeal to Him to come in. They acknowledge the sins of their fathers and their own: but the glory of His Name still appeals for their salvation. The nations taunt Him as One not to be found in the day of need: let the avenging of the blood of His servants make Him known.

4. The last section pleads their helplessness. They are as prisoners shut up and under the death sentence: they plead that His mercy may give them life, and that He render seven-fold the reproach with which His adversaries have reproached Him. As His people, the sheep of His pasture, their thankful hearts, from generation to generation, shall show forth His praise.

The psalm is of the simplest character, and needs little labor to make it plain.

Ps. lxxx.

[s]PSALM LXXX.

Revival sought and restoration of the glory of God through the Revived Branch, the Man of His right hand.

To the chief musician; upon a [r] Shoshannim-Eduth: a psalm of Asaph.

1 (1-4): A cry to the divine Shepherd of old. (i.) take the throne. (ii.) in the old relationship, for salvation. (iii.) turn us and shine on us! (iv.) who wait on Thee.

GIVE ear, O [t]Shepherd of Israel, that leddest* Joseph like a flock:
thou that [t]sittest* [above] the cherubim, shine forth!
Before [u]Ephraim, and Benjamin, and Manasseh,
stir up thy strength, and come for our salvation.
[v]Turn us again, O God!
and cause thy face to [w]shine, and we shall be saved.
Jehovah, God of hosts,
[x]how long shall thine anger smoke against the prayer of thy people?

r Ps. 45, 69, titles.
s Ps. 77. 20. Ps. 78. 52.
t 2 Sa. 22.11. 2 Sa. 6. 2. Ps. 99. 1.
u Nu. 2. 18-23.
v verses 7, 19. Lam. 5. 21.
w Nu. 6. 25. Dan. 9. 17. Ps. 67. 1.
x Ps. 79. 5.

* Present participles in both cases—"leading," "sitting": but the reference is to the past.

Psalm LXXX.

The outburst in the eightieth psalm is singularly beautiful. It is still a prayer, and as to much of it a lamentation, but Israel has caught sight of the way of blessing, and is proportionately expectant of the blessing itself. Even the Targum finds Messiah in it, and the title "upon Shoshannim-Eduth," or "concerning the lilies of testimony," reminds us of what we have had, with some variations, in the forty-fifth, sixtieth, and sixty-ninth psalms, already. Christ and His people are here together again, and their testimony, while so different as to the witnesses themselves, combines in absolute perfection in the final result, in which God does indeed, according to the burden of the repeated prayer, "shine forth,"—and for more than Israel. Her revival—the turning of her heart to Him,—and the preparation of the Branch in and through which the nation alone revives,—are all of Him. He is the Saviour-God, the God and Father of Him in whom salvation is wrought out and comes into their possession, as into ours.

1. The psalm opens with a cry to the Divine Shepherd who of old led Joseph like a flock. The reference is to the wilderness journey to the promised land, and the mention of Joseph in this prominence has nothing to do with the divided kingdom of Israel long afterward, which by the fact of its division separated itself from the cherubic throne as here referred to. The true reason of Joseph's prominence has been already shown in the seventy-eighth psalm. After Reuben's loss of the birth-right for his sin, it came naturally to Joseph, Rachel's first-born, the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh being the two-fold witness of this, as well as the tabernacle in Shiloh in the land of Ephraim. This lasted till the captivity of the ark in Eli's time, when Ichabod was written upon the nation; and out of this ruin emerged a new state of things, the prominence of Judah and the divine choice of Zion and David. It is no wonder, therefore, that Asaph, going back to the beginning of the nation, as he does, should make Joseph prominent. With the kingdom of the ten tribes, with which many would for this reason connect these psalms, Asaph had nothing to do.

It is natural for the psalmist to go back to the wilderness, when the tribes advancing under their Almighty Leader were preparing to take possession of their land. He is looking now to another possession of it, when the whole nation would come into line once more, following their great Shepherd. But for this He must take the throne as of old, and in the old relationship, as when the ark went before the tribes of Rachel's offspring, its accustomed place. But for this they too must be turned to Him; and, (just because they are in fact turning, but

2 (5-7): The breach! (i.) Thy gift! (ii.) the breach man-ward. (iii.) turn us and shine on us!

3 (8-11): The people set apart to God. (i.) the beginning, in divine power. (ii.) rooting and increase. (iii.)elevation and glory. (iv.) territorial completeness.

4 (12-16): Ruin: (i.) the cause.

Thou hast [y]fed them with the bread of tears,
and given them tears to drink in large measure.
Thou hast made us a strife unto our neighbors,
and our enemies have us in [z]derision.
[a]Turn us again, O God of hosts,
and cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.

Thou broughtest a [b]vine out of Egypt:
thou didst [c]cast out the nations, and plantedst it.
Thou preparedst room before it,
and it took [d]deep root and filled the land.
The [e]mountains were covered with its shadow,
and its branches were [like] mighty cedars.
It sent out its boughs unto the [f]sea.
and its roots unto the river.

Why hast thou [g]broken down its inclosure,
so that all who pass by the way may pluck it?

y Ps. 42. 3. cf. Is. 30.20.
z cf. De. 28. 37. Ps. 44. 13.
a verses 3, 19.
b Is. 5. 1-7. Ex. 15. 17.
c Deu. 7. 1. Ps. 44. 2.
d cf. Josh. 24. 14. cf.1Ki.4.29.
e cf. Josh.17. 14-18.
f cf. Ps. 72.8.
g Ps. 89. 40. Nah. 2. 2.

in the consciousness of their own feebleness of will and waywardness, with their old history facing them—starting aside as a deceitful bow,) they ask, in the person of the psalmist, to *be* turned. God alone could make effective this desire of theirs. The work in them, as the work *for* them, must be His: the two, therefore, are joined together in the cry, "Turn us again, O God! cause Thy face to shine on us, and we shall be saved."

But with this comes also the consciousness of His present and long-continued anger. How long shall it continue to smoke against those who cry to Him? Their present circumstances are a sorrowful contrast to that glorious time to which they are looking back.

2. This leads to a sorrowful pleading of their condition. He who was once their Shepherd has fed them with the bread of tears, and given them in abundance tears to drink. And this breach has made them a matter of contention to their neighbors, a derision to those hostile to them. And again they utter their sad, yet expectant cry: "Turn us again, O God of hosts; and cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved."

3. This is, however, but a preface to a longer pleading, in which their case is set before God. They go back to the deliverance out of Egypt, in which He had separated them to Himself for fruit. The vine is good for nothing else but fruit, and with its trailing branches is the very image of dependence. The prophet Isaiah (chap. v.) uses the same figure in the same way, although speaking from the divine side, as the psalmist does from the human; and the brief appeal in Jeremiah (ii. 21) is similar to Isaiah. Here the appeal is to God on the ground of what He had done for them, that that work should not be in vain.

He had brought a vine out of Egypt.—brought it out, as is implied, to yield Him fruit: shall it not yield Him fruit? He had dispossessed nations, to make way for it; and He having made room, it rooted itself and filled the land. Next, we see its glory: it rose, shadowing the mountains, with a growth as solid as the mighty cedars. Lastly, we have its extension to the sea and to the River (Euphrates),—in these directions its divinely-given boundaries.

4. But in spite of all this progress, ruin had followed where success seemed fully assured. The causes of this are shown in Isaiah to be moral and spiritual failure on the part of the people. It was not possible that the failure could be in God. He could appeal to themselves whether He could have done anything for His vineyard that He had not done. Yet when He looked for His vine to bring forth grapes, it brought forth wild grapes. All His care and cultivation of it had gone for nothing in the result: why, then, should He go on with it? He tells them, therefore, what He will do in consequence of all this: "I will

(ii.) enemies.
The boar out of the wood doth [h]ravage it;
and the wild beasts of the field feed on it.
(iii.) return!
Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts:
look down from heaven, and behold, and [i]visit this vine;
(iv.) to Thy creature.
And the stock which thy right hand hath planted,
and the branch that thou madest strong for [j]thyself.
(v.) governmental dealing.
It is burned with fire, it is cut down:
they perish at the rebuke of [k]thy countenance.

h *ctr.* Lev. 26. 6. *cf.* Is. 18. 5, 6.
i *cf.* Ex. 3. 16. Ps. 65. 9. Zech. 10. 3.
j *cf.* Ezek. 20. 9, 14, 22. *cf.* Is. 61. 3. *cf.* Is. 44. 23.
k Ps. 6. 1.

take away the hedge thereof," He says, "and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down, and I will lay it waste." It is this action of God which the psalmist sees, and which he laments. He says nothing directly of the moral causes: they are implied, no doubt, in the very need which they now have of Him; but his argument goes back of all this, to the Immutable God and His purposes. He leaves out the people, as if they were of no account. Certainly, when God took them up, He knew what was in man: He could not be deceived. He had brought this vine out of Egypt; He had taken abundance of pains with it. He had linked Himself openly, before the eyes of men, with this people of His choice. After all, could *He* be defeated? It is the argument of Moses in the wilderness, when God proposes to him that the people should be consumed as a stiff-necked people, and He would make of Moses himself a great nation. Nay, says Moses, "then the Egyptians shall hear it, (for Thou broughtest up this people in Thy might from among them,) and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land, . . . and the nations that have heard the fame of Thee will speak, saying, Because Jehovah was not able to bring this people into the land which He sware unto them, therefore He hath slain them in the wilderness" (Num. xiv. 13–16).

Here is the same effectual argument, in which the sin of the people itself is omitted, to plead with God as to the undoing of His own acts, as if it were mutability in the Immutable, or powerlessness in the Omnipotent. "Why hast Thou broken down its inclosure, so that all who pass by the way may pluck it? The boar out of the wood doth ravage it, and the wild beasts of the field feed on it."

So he cries now to God as the all-powerful, "the God of hosts" ready at all times to execute His will, to return and visit this vine, which through His power alone had been all that it had ever been—"the stock which Thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that Thou madest strong for Thyself." It is here that the Targum renders, "and upon the King Messiah, whom Thou hast established for Thyself." Literally it is "the son," but which in relation to a vine would be a branch, according to Hebrew usage. Delitzsch and Moll apply it still to the nation, as they do also the expressions in verse 18; the Christian here falling behind the Jewish expositor, and the point and power of the closing appeal being lost. The psalm thus becomes tame and colorless enough.

Doubtless, "the Son of man, whom Thou madest strong for Thyself," is intended to remind us of the previous "branch" or "son, whom Thou madest strong for Thyself": but the argument can work also the other way. God does, as we know, call Israel His son, and the first passage could in that way be explained of the nation; but the Son of man, and Man of God's right hand, cannot be made so to apply according to Scripture, while the first title expressly and the second by the easiest possible inference apply to Christ: who is also as plainly the "Branch" which is strengthened of God for Himself. And here is Israel's hope, as well as the hope of any. The place of the psalm in this series, and the numerical structure also, are in the fullest confirmation of this application, which alone gives worthy meaning to the whole.

Yet the "branch" of verse 15 may not be directly Christ, but David's house, with

5 (17-19): Immanuel. (i.) power in Him.

Let thy hand be on the [l]man of thy right hand:
upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself.

(ii.) and security.

So will we not go back from thee:
[m]quicken us, and we will call upon thy Name.

(iii.) turn us and shine on us!

[n]Turn us again, Jehovah, God of Hosts!
make thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.

l *cf.* Ps. 89. 21. *cf.* Is. 42. 1-4.

m Ps. 85. 4.

n vers. 3, 7.

the desolation of which the promise connected with it would seem in danger of being lost; and this interpretation preserves consistency throughout. With the seed of David the national hope is plainly identified; and Christ is, according to the flesh, the seed of David.

All seems to be over: "it is burned with fire, it is cut down: they perish at the rebuke of Thy countenance." God seems to be against Himself, undoing the work which He has done. But it is the sense of man's ruin which, after all, enables the soul to rise to the conception of the divine thoughts, and the psalmist concludes with renewed confidence.

5. The number 5, in its essential significance of "man with God," breathes here, assuredly, the Name of Names, "Immanuel." And it is with this that the fifth section begins. While the language is still that of prayer, yet faith has risen to clear sight of the answer. "The Man of Thy right hand" may connect itself with Benjamin, but only as Benjamin is connected typically with Christ. Benjamin speaks indeed, as we have elsewhere seen, of Christ in power upon earth, and God's hand upon Him cannot surely be in wrath, as some have suggested, but to strengthen or put Him in the place which is His due. The direct reference is to the 110th psalm, "Sit Thou on My right hand," for Christians a scripture easy enough to read in this connection, even if we had not the confirmation of the latter half of the verse.

"The Son of man" was, as we know, the title which the Lord most commonly assumed. It was that which proclaimed Him in wider sympathy than merely with the Jew, His nature truly human, and come into humanity by the lowly entrance by which other men come, though that for Him indeed implied a miracle. Thus He was fit to be also the Judge of men (Jno. v. 27), and as such comes in the clouds of heaven to His kingdom. Here is One whom God has indeed "made strong for Himself"; and God's hand setting Him in His place is the proclamation of the hour that strikes for Israel's deliverance.

Thus all is in harmony. Power is in His hands for them, and in His hands only who has made atonement in the Manhood He has taken; and in Him, too, is security for the future which nothing else could give. Saved with so marvelous a salvation, they may now say without self-confidence, "So will we not go back from Thee"; and in recognition of the need of the Spirit's work,—"quicken us, and we will call upon Thy Name."

Once more the cry, but with increased confidence to Him who has made the Son of man strong for Himself:—"Turn us again, Jehovah, God of hosts! make Thy face to shine on us, and we shall be saved."

Psalm LXXXI.

The connection of the eighty-first psalm with the preceding one is as simple as it is beautiful. Israel has been crying for God's face to shine upon her as of old: here it does shine upon her. As the result *she* shines: for this new moon, clothing itself again with the glory of the sun, is her own symbol. The blowing of the trumpets at the beginning of the seventh month is the first of the series of set times which speak of *Israel's* blessing (Lev. xxiii., *notes*). Passover, the Sheaf of First-fruits, Pentecost—that is, the Cross, the Resurrection, and the Coming of the Holy Ghost, (the Christian endowment,)—are some time past; and the seventh month speaks of the time for the completion of the divine purposes having arrived, which necessarily, therefore, brings Israel once more to the

Ps. lxxxi.

[1]PSALM LXXXI.

The new ways that go with the new experience.

To the chief musician: upon the [a]Gittith: [a psalm] of Asaph.

1 (1-3): The beginning of the year. (i.) power in grace. (ii.) accompaniment. (iii.) the renewal of Israel.

SING joyously unto God our [p]strength:
make a joyful noise unto the God of [q]Jacob.
Take up a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel:
the pleasant harp with the lute.
Blow the [r]trumpet in the new moon:
at the set time*, for our [s]feast-day.

a Ps. 8, title.
p Ps. 28. 7-9. Ps. 140. 7.
q Ps. 84. 8.
r Nu. 10. 10. Lev. 23. 24. cf. Ezra 3. 10.
s Nu. 29. 1, 7, 12. cf. Is. 27. 13. cf. Joel 2. 15-32.

* Or, perhaps, "at the full moon."

fore-front. In the blowing of trumpets we hear the voice of her recall; in the day of atonement—though this naturally links itself with the past, for the day of atonement has *really* begun long before they come into it,—their sins as a nation are taken away from them in the ordinance of the scape-goat; and in the feast of tabernacles we find them in permanent blessing in the land, remembering their wilderness-wanderings (which for so many centuries now have been renewed to them) as past forever.

The new moon, therefore, is Israel's own symbol. The light is beginning to shine upon her: she, therefore, is beginning to reflect it; and here the beauty and evangelical character of this eighty-first psalm become fully apparent. As a *fourth* psalm of this series, it speaks of man's walk,—of the practical life,—and this is evident in the psalm itself: it speaks of what Israel's ways should have been, and of what, alas, they were; but the God who spake to them of old is afresh speaking to them, afresh inviting them to obedience. But how, then, is that obedience to be rendered? how are they to escape the recurrence of that terrible departure from Him, under the shadow of which they have been for so many generations? Here the psalm itself can give us no plain speech. It simply gives and ends with the invitation. For us who have realized the law to be only the condemnation of man, there can be no hope if we think of man. He has been weighed in the balances and found wanting. And there is no difference between men; "as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." The gospel thus comes to us as helpless—"lost"—and casts us altogether upon grace,—that is, upon God, for all that is to come. If the blood of Christ avails alone for our sins before God, it is this also which, applied in the power of the Spirit, reconciles the heart to God, and makes the life the expression of the reconciliation. Grace becomes, not only our deliverance from condemnation, but our sufficiency for all the way. And this the beautiful type of the new moon expresses; the life must be the outshining of that which has first *shone in*. It is not by effort, and it is not a peradventure, if the moon shine. Men can predict it, and know certainly how it is effected. The light is derived—dependent: that which is received is reflected and shed abroad; and this is the light of all God's witnesses.

1. The feast of trumpets is the beginning of Israel's civil year; and this naturally connects itself with that national restoration which is implied in its three "set times." The jubilee, when it occurred, began on the tenth of the same month, after their sins had been removed by the scape-goat carrying them into a "land cut off." The civil year waited for these *national* feasts, and thus was parted from the sacred year, which presents God's order, and began with the passover. But the passover was a *family* ordinance, not (in the strict sense) national. All the nation did not keep it at the same time, but there was a second day appointed for those defiled with the dead or on a journey. Its aspect, therefore, is what the apostle's word to the jailer declared: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and *thy house*." Israel, as a nation, refused the passover, and thus the disjointing between their civil and religious years.

2 (4, 5): The testimony. (i.) an ordinance of grace. (ii.) in view of their deliverance.
3 (6, 7): A divine putting in remembrance. (i.) power that wrought for them. (ii.) in answering deliverance.

For this is a statute for Israel,
an ordinance of the God of Jacob.
He [t]appointed it in Joseph [for] a testimony,
when he had gone out against the [u]land of Egypt;
[where] I heard a [v]language that I knew not.

I removed his shoulder from the burden:
his hands were [w]freed from the basket.
Thou calledst in [x]distress, and I delivered thee;
I answered thee in the secret place of [y]thunder;
I proved thee at the waters of [z]Meribah. Selah.

t *cf.* Lev. 23. 2, etc.
u Ex. 11.4,5.
v Ps. 114.1.
w Ex. 3.7, 8.
x Ps. 50. 15. Ps. 107. 6.
y Ex. 19. 16.
z Ex.17.1-7. Nu.20.1-13.

In the prophetic application of this psalm, therefore, Israel's national life is now truly beginning. Praise is in their heart and on their lips: God is celebrated as their strength and as the God of Jacob. Power has come in for them in grace, and this is the key-note of their joyful song; with which, as we have so often seen in the case of Israel, nature finds its voice in accompaniment.

Let them sound the trumpet, then, in the new moon, at the set time, for their feast-day.* The blowing of trumpets may be itself the feast here spoken of; or this feast may be the feast of tabernacles. This last was but the fulfillment of the promise of the former, and therefore the passing over of the day of atonement (which Delitzsch objects against this interpretation) is readily accounted for. The feast of tabernacles was, so to speak, really the fullness of that which in the new moon was beginning to appear. In the time spoken of in it, Israel would be enjoying the presence of God; the brightness of His glory would be upon her: and this at the "set time" which proclaimed the foresight and purposes of eternal Wisdom, which could not be disappointed, because they could not be defeated. Therefore the trumpets may indeed be blown, and the whole earth, now to come into blessing, echo Israel's joy.

2. The ordinance itself bears witness of the God of grace, who would thus keep that which His goodness would accomplish for them and in them before the eyes of His people. Looking back to the beginning of the nation, as is so constantly the case in these psalms, Joseph is still the representative of the tribes, and we have seen for what reason. The past deliverance out of Egypt is naturally connected with it, as the anticipation and pledge of the deliverance to come; as the foreign language that they had heard there is the suggestion of the many languages they have since had to learn in the many lands in which they have been made to sojourn since. But in all these at last they shall praise Him with joyful lips.

3. The Lord's voice now makes itself heard, and to the end of the psalm it is He that is heard alone. The psalmist becomes here a prophet in the highest sense, therefore. The two verses that follow are an appeal to their hearts by putting them in remembrance of that old deliverance. It becomes more direct as it goes on.

"I removed his shoulder from the burden," says their divine Redeemer:

* Here, however, there are different renderings and interpretations to be considered. Instead of "at the set time," most, perhaps, would now say, "at the full moon": and this is a point very difficult to decide. Happily, it is also not very important. If we take it so, the "feast-day" spoken of will be in the middle of the month, whether it be the passover or the feast of tabernacles. This only adds to the significance (if it be correct) of what the new moon promises.

The passover is contended for on account of the fifth verse. Neither new moon nor tabernacles was instituted at the time that Jehovah "went forth against," or "over," "the land of Egypt"; but that verse in no wise requires to be understood in this way. The exact expression, with only a change of pronoun (*betzehtham*; "in *their* going forth," instead of *betzehtho*, "in his going forth"), occurs in Josh. v. 4, where the common version has "*after* they came out of Egypt," and that is certainly the sense.

The reference to the time of their deliverance does not at all necessitate that the feast should be that of the passover, as the exposition of the psalm as given above, should be enough to prove.

4 (8-12): The test under which they failed of old. (i.) the call to obedience. (ii.) in refusal of other gods. (iii.) their portion with Him. (iv.) their apostasy. (v.) the recompense.

5 (13-16): Israel with God. (i.) a persuasive to obedience. (ii.) results as to their enemies.

Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee:
O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me,
There shall no [a]strange god be with thee:
nor shalt thou worship any foreign god.
[b]I am Jehovah thy God,
who brought thee up out of the land of Egypt:
[c]open wide thy mouth, and I will fill it.
But my people did [d]not hearken unto my voice,
and Israel would none of me.
So I [e]gave them up to the stubbornness of their hearts,
and they walked in their [f]own counsels.

Oh [g]that my people would hearken unto my voice,—
that Israel would walk in my ways!
I should soon [h]subdue their enemies,
and turn my hand against their [i]oppressors.

a Ex. 20. 3. Josh. 24. 14. *cf.* Ps. 16. 4, 5.
b Ex. 20. 2. Lev. 26. 1, 13.
c Is. 55. 1-3.
d Ps. 95. 10.
e Hos. 5. 15. *cf.* Hos. 4. 17.
f *cf.* Rom. 1. 24, 26, 28.
g Deu. 5. 29. Deu. 32. 29. Is. 48. 18. *cf.* Matt. 23. 37.
h *cf.* Ju. 2. 1-3.
i *cf.* Lev. 26. 7, 8.

"their hands were freed from the basket" (the task-basket for the removal of clay and bricks). From such hard and servile labor He had freed them, from a distress in which their cry had gone up to Him by reason of their bondage. They had cried, and He delivered them: He had answered them in the Cloud of His Presence from which He looked in wrath upon their enemies—"the secret place of thunder," which they themselves had heard at Sinai. At the waters of Meribah also, where the smitten rock had poured out water for them, He had proved them by an intervention which answered their very murmurings with the witness of abiding love.

4. Thus they had been cared for up to Sinai itself; and these were the circumstances under which He spoke to them, demanding but (what should have been so easy to them) their allegiance to One who had manifested His power over the false gods of the nations, and in such perfect goodness toward themselves. He repeats now the essence of it, in a new appeal: for grace of necessity calls for obedience, and without this no blessing were possible. Grace, too, it had been with them of old, until their fatal self-sufficiency had made them take up a legal covenant to their ruin; but for grace they were not ready.

Yet the terms were made all that divine love could make them: love appealing in them for that answer of love for which it had wrought; and still love appeals for that without which it cannot be satisfied. "Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto Me; there shall no strange god be with thee: nor shalt thou worship any foreign god. I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open wide thy mouth, and I will fill it."

How blessed to know that still, if we but yield Him our heart, we may assure ourselves of the fullest satisfaction from Him! "Open wide thy mouth" is what He bids us; and it is but obedience, therefore, to do this. Love will believe Him, and satisfy itself at this free fountain.

Israel, alas, fell away, as the Lord now reminds them: "My people did not hearken unto Me; and Israel would none of Me." It was not merely failure: it was *revolt*. And the recompense could not but follow: "So I gave them up to the stubbornness of their hearts, and they walked in their own counsels." The saddest thing that men can be left to is what is here expressed.

5. But now He returns to the yearning of His heart over them: "Oh that My people would hearken unto Me" now, He says,—"that Israel would walk in My ways!" And then He proceeds to speak of the blessed consequences. How soon would their enemies be put down. Jehovah, a living fence around them, would make those cringe before Him who, in being *their* haters, would be His; while their time would be forever (comp. 1 Jno. ii. 17). Finally, the land

(iii.) Jehovah round about.

(iv.) the experience of the creature.

The haters of Jehovah would [j] cringe before him,
but their time would be for [k] ever.
He would feed them also with the [l] fat of the wheat,
and with [m] honey from the rock I would satisfy thee.

[j] *cf.* Ps. 18. 44. Ps. 66. 3. Ps. 68. 30.
[k] *cf.* Deu. 7. 9.
[l] Ps. 147. 14.
[m] Deu. 32. 13, 14.

Ps. lxxxii.

[5] PSALM LXXXII.

God judging among the judges.

A psalm of Asaph.

1 (i. 2): The challenge as to righteousness. (i) "gods," (ii.) in contradiction with their position.

GOD [n] standeth in the assembly of the Mighty One*:
he judgeth among the gods.
How long shall ye judge [o] unjustly,
and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah.

[n] *cf.* Ps. 50. 1, 6.
[o] Lev. 19. 15. *cf.* 1 Sa. 8. 1-5.

* El.

would yield them fat of the wheat and honey from the rock, the tender care of the Creator for the creature He had made.

There the psalm ends, and we are left to find the assurance of the actual blessing that we look for from that prophetic ordinance with which it began. The new moon with its returning light speaks, as we have seen, not only of the favor of God toward Israel returning, but of the nation also reflecting back the light. And that is the method of grace in producing holiness, love begetting love. "God," says the apostle, "who made the light to shine out of darkness, hath *shined in our hearts*, to *give out* the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6, *Gr.*).

But there is another witness to the evangelical character of the psalm that is found in the title. We have already had "upon the Gittith" in that of the eighth psalm, and saw reason there to believe that in its fullest significance it speaks of the joy born from sorrow in the work of the Cross (p. 38, *notes*). If this be so, there is exact accordance between the two psalms in this respect. The work of atonement is not explicitly referred to in either of them, while it underlies both; and thus the grace which is seen in the re-appearing of the moon here finds its only stable foundation. It is the power and value of the blood of the Lamb that the joy of Israel's New Year's Day attests. Thus can the glory of God shine forth again upon them: it is in very deed the "glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ": and the salvation so attained is neither a merely external nor a temporary salvation. It is that salvation to the uttermost which every soul receives that comes in its ruin and helplessness "unto God by Him."

PSALM LXXXII.

Because God is returning in grace to Israel, however, judgment must take its course against stubborn wrong-doers; and these are (alas) especially they who have occupied the places of rule and judgment among them. The wresting of judgment must be stopped with a strong hand, and the places of authority purged from their defilement with evil. And for this God Himself must take the judgment-seat and rule among men: and this He is ready to do, not alone in Israel, though beginning there, but over all the earth.

1. He stands, therefore, in the midst of what is His own assembly, and which is now to be the seat of power upon earth, the assembly of El, the Mighty One, in truth. He is there for judgment among the "gods," a term which the Lord defines for us from this very psalm (ver. 6) as "those to whom the word of God came" (Jno. x. 35),—that is, who were commissioned to represent Him—the judges of Israel. They were thus identified with Him whom they represented, and were responsible in the most solemn way to represent Him in His character also, both in His righteousness and in His love to men.

Here then is the ground of His challenge to them, and in the first place as to

2 (3, 4): The challenge as to salvation. (i.) in righteousness, (ii.) from the wicked.

Judge the [p] weak and fatherless:
do justice to the afflicted and destitute:
[q] Rescue the weak and needy:
deliver them out of the hand of the wicked.

3 (5): The reality.

They know [r] not, neither do they understand;
they walk on in darkness:
all the [s] foundations of the earth are moved.

4 (6, 7): Falling, they fall. (i.) their position. (ii.) contrasted doom.

I had said, [t] Ye are gods:
even children of the Highest are ye all;
Nevertheless ye shall [u] die like men,
and fall like one of the princes.

5 (8): Let God Himself judge!

[v] Arise, O God! judge the earth:
for *thou* shalt [w] inherit all the nations.

[p] *cf.* Ps.72.4.
[q] Is. 58. 6, 7. *cf.* Is. 1. 23.
[r] Ps. 14. 4.
[s] Ps. 11. 3. *cf.* Jer.5.30, 31.
[t] Jno.10. 34–36. Ex. 22. 28.
[u] Ps. 49. 20. Is. 1. 31. Is. 2. 22.
[v] Ps. 74. 22. *cf.* Ps.96.12, 13.
[w] Ps. 22. 28. Zech. 14. 9. *cf.* Ps. 2, 8.

what is first—the fundamental thing in judgment: it must be *righteous* judgment. Here is what must govern in the manifestation of love itself. And so the first appeal is: "How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked?" Their conduct was in flagrant contradiction to their position as representatives of the Righteous God, and with whom is "no respect of persons."

2. But this cared for, they must manifest Him also on His *salvation* side, in His regard for the poor, the weak, the defenceless, and the oppressed. "Judge the weak and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and destitute." It must be still justice: that must not be violated even in pity to the poor; and there was a special commandment as to this (Exod. xxiii. 3). Yet his poverty should nevertheless make him an object of special and tender interest: "Rescue the weak and needy: deliver him out of the hand of the wicked."

3. But the state of things is apparent. There is no heart, and therefore no knowledge: "they know not, neither do they understand": they are in darkness, for they are not with God, and God is light. But they do not need light for their course: their want of knowledge does not bring them to a stand;—"they walk on in darkness." Thus "all the foundations of the earth"—judgment and mercy which establish it—"are removed." There is nowhere any moral stability.

4. Thus failing in justice, the perverters of it must themselves fail and pass away. Their position is a lofty one. They are, as it were, gods: children of the Highest, every one of them. But that will be no security: they shall fall like the mere earthly princes that are anywhere found. The movement of the foundations must bring down—little as they may believe it,—their own house in ruins also.

5. Who shall succeed them? Is there to be only an endless succession of men like these? Nay, the earth groans and longs for God Himself. *He* must arise; and He will. There is no resource but in Him: no refuge for the creature but in God. "Arise, O God! judge the earth." And that is what shall be: the earth is His; and He shall take His inheritance; not Israel only; but with Israel, all the nations. Thank God, that blessed time is surely almost at the doors.

Psalm LXXXIII.

Israel being now set right within, the tempest may roar against her; but there is no rotten core any more, to make the tree break. Still, she must find, but she shall find, her resource in God. The eighty-third psalm closes the series with a great confederacy of the nations hurling itself against Israel's shield, only to be dashed in ruin from it; and Jehovah is thus made known in all the earth in His supremacy of power.

Ps. lxxxiii.

[6]PSALM LXXXIII.

Victory over the last assault of evil.

A Song, a Psalm of Asaph.

1 (1-4): Rebellion. (i.) the appeal to power.

(ii.) enemies astir.

(iii.) against His hidden ones.

(iv.) that Israel fail from the earth.

2 (5-8): The alliance. (i.) against God with one heart.

(ii.) races kindred to Israel?

(iii.) possessors of the inheritance??

O GOD, keep not silence:
[x]hold not thy peace, and be not still, O Mighty One.
For lo, thine enemies make a [y]tumult:
and they that hate thee have lifted up the head.
Against thy people they take [z]crafty counsel:
and consult together against thy [a]hidden ones.
They have said, Come, and let us [b]cut them off from being a nation:
that the name of Israel be no more remembered.

For they have consulted together with one heart:
against thee do they make a [c]covenant:
The tents of [d]Edom and the [e]Ishmaelites;
of [f]Moab and the Hagarites;
[g]Gebal, and [h]Ammon, and [i]Amalek;
[j]Philistia with the inhabitants of [k]Tyre.

x Ps. 35. 22. cf. Ps. 50. 3, 21.
y cf. Ps. 2.1. Ps. 46. 6.
z Ps. 71. 10.
a cf. Ps.27.5. cf. Ps.31.20.
b cf. Jer. 10. 24. 25 with Jer. 46. 28.
c cf. Zech.14. 1-3.
d cf. Obad. 7 -10.
e Gen. 16.11, 12.
f cf. Is chps. 15, 16.
g cf. Ezek. 27. 9.
h cf. Ezek. 21. 28-32. cf. 2 Chr. 20. 1.
i cf. Ex.17. 8 -16.
j cf. Ps. 60.8.
k cf. Is. 23.

1. In the first section the case is stated which demands the intervention of God. The nations of the earth are in rebellion against Him, and the psalmist cries for Him to act and not be still. His enemies are all astir, and full of anticipated triumph. They are in movement against the people of God, through whom alone they can attack Him; but who are hidden from them in a safe place of shelter, which they discern not,—which they must be made to realize. They mean nothing less than to cut off Israel as a nation from the face of the earth, and cause the very memory of them to be lost.

2. The allied foes are now enumerated, compacted together in covenant against God Himself. They are Israel's immediate neighbors, as far as we know them, and indeed, largely their kindred, with Philistia and Tyre, who were in the borders of their land. One power only beyond these is mentioned, as aiding and abetting, rather than instigating, the attack: and that is Assyria. Israel's foes are thus all round her: Edom, Ishmael, and Moab in the south; Ammon and Amalek on the east; the Philistines and Tyrians on the west coast; and Assyria to the north. There are two not certainly known.—Gebal and the Hagarenes or Hagarites. The last stand, in the second member of the sixth verse, over against Ishmael in the first place, and in the same connection with Moab as Ishmael with Edom. Were they, perhaps, as their name might intimate, but a branch of the Ishmaelites themselves, which had attained a similar independence of the original tribe to that which the Amalekites held in regard to Edom? This, which is easily conceivable of these wandering peoples, seems the most probable conjecture, though it is but that. Gebal is only mentioned here, if that in Ezek. xxvii. 9 (and which was the seat of the Giblites of Josh. xiii. 5.) is different.

The names, as a whole, are difficult to connect, as is generally sought, with any event in Israel's past history, which (if it could be established) would not, of course, prevent an application to that prophetic future with which these psalms are so evidently connected. It is, as we know, the commonest thing, if not the rule, to make some impending historical event the text of a prediction as to the latter days. But it is also difficult in many ways to connect an irruption of these peoples, most of whom have disappeared long since, with Israel's prophetic history, as far as we have yet come to an understanding of it. That there is a revival of many of the old nations in the last days, and a replacement of them in

(iv.) the world-power as such.
3 (9-12): Treat them as the revival of the old seizers on the dwellings of God.
(i.) in congruous righteousness. (ii.) their destruction (iii.) their "anointed." (iv.) the conduct provoking this.
4 (13-15): Prove their weakness. (i.) before Thy might.

[l] Asshur also is joined with them ; *l cf.* Mi. 5. 5, 6.
they have helped* the children of Lot. Selah.

Do unto them as unto [m] Midian ; *m cf.* Ju.7.7, 8.
as to [n] Sisera, as to Jabin, at the brook Kishon, *n cf.* Ju.4.15, 16.
Who perished at Endor :
they became dung for the ground.
Make their nobles like [o] Oreb and like Zeeb ; *o* Ju. 7. 25.
and all their leaders† like to [p] Zebah and Zalmunna : *p* Ju. 8. 4-12.
Who said, Let us take to ourselves in possession
the habitations of God.

O my God, make them as a whirling thing—
as [q] stubble before the wind. *q* Ps. 68. 1, 2. Ps. 35. 5.

* *Literally*, "been an arm to." † "Anointed ones."

the positions they occupied of old, is clear, and has begun even to be fulfilled before our eyes, as in the case of the Greek and the Italian kingdoms. Many of the scattered tribes which are classed in general under the common name of Arabs, may be Moabites, Ammonites, and such like. In all this there is no very great difficulty. On the other hand, while the Assyrian is prominent in Isaiah in connection with Israel's troubles in the latter day, the list of the nations that come with Gog against her (as given in Ezek. xxxviii., xxxix.) is plainly different, and they are much further off than what are enumerated here. We must leave the precise application of what is here, therefore, in uncertainty. The day will declare it ; for of its being a prophecy of the last times there can be no reasonable doubt. Rather than an attack of distant enemies, however, it is an attempted settlement of old scores with Israel on the part of neighboring and kindred races. With the exception of Assyria, Israel is to possess herself of all this territory ; and such an attack on their part may naturally lead to this.

As to the numerical structure, it is not strange that (with so much else uncertain) there should be room for much uncertainty as to the meaning of it. If the Hagarenes are really but an independent section of Ishmael, then those named in the second verse are all of Israelitish kin. The third verse is much more doubtful, as Ammon had her land expressly preserved for her, along with Moab and Edom. This is the main difficulty; for Gebal may after all be the Phœnician Gebal of Ezekiel and Joshua, and would then be within the limits of Israel's original inheritance ; and Amalek, being condemned to utter extinction, would forfeit her land to Israel, and so be within her limits. As to Philistia and Tyre, there can be no question. Finally, the fourth verse seems to have no difficulty in relation to Asshur.

Edom and Moab will (with Ammon) lose what had been reserved for them, and Israel possess their territory also, which comes plainly into their final inheritance ; but the very attack upon Israel here predicted would be, as beforesaid, a sufficient reason for this, and thus all would be in harmony. But the exceptional place of Ammon in this enumeration is a difficulty as to all this, to which I have no key, and must leave it as an evident objection.

3. The confederacy is paralleled with Midian's overflow of the land in the days of Gideon, and with Sisera and Jabin, in the time of Deborah. The psalmist prays that their destruction may be like theirs ; and their "anointed ones," set apart to special place among them, be like the kings that fell by Gideon's hand. They too would have seized upon the dwelling-places of God in the land, and possessed themselves of His inheritance.

4. He prays that, in the hands of the Mighty God, they may be like chaff or thistle-down whirled by the wind;—that, as the fire catches hold of a wood, or the flame of the volcano sets on fire the mountains, so the anger of God may pursue them and His presence terrify them like the breath of the hurricane. But—

(ii.) in anger—
(iii.) realizing Thy presence

5 16-18): That men may come into their place with God.
(i.) congruous dealing.
(ii.) the destruction of foes.
(iii.) that Thy glory may be displayed.

As the [r]fire that burneth a wood,
and as a flame setteth the mountains on fire,
So pursue them with thy tempest,
and terrify them with thy hurricane.

Fill their faces with [s]shame,
that they may seek thy face, Jehovah.
Let them be ashamed and troubled for aye:
yea, let them be confounded and perish;
That they may [t]know that thou, whose name alone is Jehovah,
art the Most High over all the earth.

r *cf.* Is. 9.4,5. *cf.* Is. 66.15, 16.

s *cf.* Ps. 48.4-7.

t Ps. 59. 13.

5. The end is to be the blessing of man in the exaltation of God,—that man may find his place with God. He must needs be abased for this, and the pride hid from him, that hides the face of God. Yea, the destruction of His foes is to make Him known as Supreme, who is alone Jehovah, the Immutable because the Perfect One. Thus fittingly the psalms of Asaph close.

Subd. 2.

The second subdivision completes the third book. It shows us this holiness of God, which the book speaks throughout, as maintained in the final salvation of Israel through Christ the Mediator. There are but six psalms, and these are divided into three sections of two psalms each. The first section shows us how in the salvation itself God's attributes are displayed united (Ps. lxxxv.), the foundation of their blessing being that God looks upon the face of His Anointed (lxxxiv. 9). In the second, Christ is seen taking the servant's place for this, and owned of God in it as the Unique Man; while the voice of universal praise owns all springs of divine blessing to be in Him. In the third we have, in contrast, the curse under a broken law, and the "sure mercies of David" of which the prophet (Isa. lv. 3) and the apostle speak (Acts xiii. 34); mercies which are unchangeable, because in Christ. The detail we are presently to consider.

Sec. 1.

The two psalms of the first section are both psalms of the sons of Korah, eight of which we had at the commencement of the second book, the suited witnesses of divine grace.

Psalm LXXXIV.

Israel are still away from the courts of Jehovah's house, but their faces and their hearts are thitherward; and if they have not yet the blessedness they long for, they have that of those in whose heart are the ways which lead there. For such the vale of tears becomes a place of springs, and the rain overspreads it with blessings. They go from strength to strength until they all appear at last before God in Zion. But whence comes this security? whence this confidence of heart in God? It is revealed in this, that God is looking on the face of His Anointed. Indeed, we cannot but think, as we read the psalm, of Him who had left the glory which He had with the Father, and has returned to it; though here it is the earthly house of God's rest in Israel that is the goal of these pilgrim feet. Still, whatever be the surroundings, it is God Himself that is sought, as by every soul that has been touched by divine grace; and we have never found any difficulty in translating these intense longings into Christian speech. The Spirit of Christ breathes in them, and unites the hearts of His own in one desire, whatever may be the variety in its expression.

Another testimony to what is in this psalm is found in the *al-haggittith* of the title; which here, as in the eighth and eighty-first psalms, speaks of the joy that springs out of sorrow,—nay, of the surpassing joy that has come to us out of the

SUBDIVISION 2. (Ps. lxxxiv.-lxxxix.)

The holiness of God manifested by Christ as Mediator.

SECTION 1. (Ps. lxxxiv., lxxxv.)

Christ uniting the divine attributes in the salvation of His people.

Ps. lxxxiv.

[1]PSALM LXXXIV.

Jehovah supreme and sufficient for the soul; and Christ the foundation.

To the chief musician, upon the [u]Gittith: a psalm of the sons of [v]Korah.

1 (1, 2): Jehovah of hosts! the living God. (i.) where Thou art! (ii.) heart-longing.

HOW [w]lovely are thy tabernacles,
Jehovah of hosts!
My soul [x]longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of Jehovah:
my heart and my flesh cry out for the [y]living God*.

2 (3): Longing answered.

Yea, the [z]sparrow hath found a house,
and the [a]swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young:
thine [b]altars, Jehovah of hosts, my King and my God.

* El.

[u] Ps. 8, 81, titles.
[v] Ps. 42, etc., titles.
[w] Ps. 26. 8. Ps. 27. 4.
[x] Ps. 42. 1, 2. Ps. 63. 1.
[y] *cf.* Jer. 10. 10. Ps. 115. 1-7.
[z] Ps. 102. 7. *cf.* Mt. 10. 29-31.
[a] *cf.* Is. 38. 14. *cf.* Jer. 8. 7.
[b] Ex. 27. 1, etc. Ex. 30. 1, etc.

One great Sorrow (see p. 38). Thus again we recognize the "Anointed," upon whose face Jehovah is besought to look. And this agrees with all that precedes and follows, while it gives fullness of meaning to much that otherwise would lack in definiteness and unity of purpose. This distinctness of outline shows when we have got the focus duly adjusted to the object before us.

1. The cry of heart is after the "living God"—a simple and even a poor expression, one would say; for the least truth to affirm about God is that He is "living." But this only shows how poor are we, who need to remind ourselves that He is this. He, Jehovah of hosts, around Whom move the myriad forces of the universe in sympathetic obedience;—He in Whom, we and all else His creatures, "live and move and have our being,"—He Himself *lives!* Yes we are poor enough even to need the being reminded and to find the consolation of this. And how good a thing is it, in the midst of a world in which evil seems oft to be gaining the day, and when He is silent and still, and we cry, "How long?" but He stirs not.—how good is it then to stay our souls with the assurance, "Yet God liveth"!

The soul here knows, too, that this God is One who draws near to men; yea, in the memory of the past and in the sweet vision of the future, tabernacles among them. Lovely, indeed, the tabernacles of Jehovah of hosts! The very thought of it tells what He is,—that He is—how unspeakably!—gracious. Yet there is distance now, and he who speaks longs, yea, faints with desire, to pass it and to be with Him. His heart and his very flesh cry out for the living God: it is a longing so intense that the body feels and thrills with it.

2. It is a fact "well-known in history, that small birds lived undisturbed within the precincts of the temple" (Moll). How suited a testimony to the Maker of all, who dwelt there! The spirit of the psalmist carries him there now, as if he were one of those unchecked dwellers in Jehovah's courts; and the sparrow and the swallow become figures by which he would have us know what answers there the longings of heart which he has been expressing. He himself is the sparrow that has found a house, the social bird which, as found alone upon the house-top, is the very image of desolation (Ps. cii. 7), but which now has all that heart can desire in nearness to its Maker. How wonderful to know, as we now know, that He, in truth of manhood, has drawn near to *us*, to seek

3 (4): The worship of the House.

4 (5-7): The way thither. (i.) strength for it in God. (ii.) the way transformed.

(iii.) the realization.

Happy are the [c]dwellers in thy house:
they will [d]still be praising thee. Selah.

Happy is the man whose [e]strength is in thee:
in whose [f]heart are the ways.
Passing through the [g]valley of Baca, they make it a
place of springs;
yea, the [h]early rain covereth it with blessings.
They go from [i]strength to strength:
every one appeareth before God in Zion.

c Ps. 65. 4. Ps. 92. 13.
d Ps. 63. 3, 4. Ps. 46. 1, 2.
e Ps. 27. 1.
f *cf.* Ps. 77. 13, 19.
g *cf.* Ps. 23. 4.
h *cf.* Joel 2. 23. *cf.* Lev. 26. 4.
i *cf.* Is. 40. 30, 31.

our companionship! and that we are to be with Him, in all that this implies, forever! Who would not give Him—alas, rather, who *does* give Him aright, that which He seeks for from us and in us? and which we are not to wait for in eternity, but to yield Him now. "I call you not servants," He says, "for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you *friends:* for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you" (Jno. xv. 15). Have we at all entered into this? What would the word of God be to us, if indeed we had! How would its "deep things" delight us, as the Spirit of God within us searched them out! How many of its inmost recesses would be left unpenetrated! And what ecstatic joy would there not be for us! what assurance of faith, of hope, of understanding, would we not gain!

Yet the "sparrow"—two of which are sold for a farthing—speaks also of something else in us which the presence of God would work, and which is every way of the greatest importance, the sense of littleness, yea, of nothingness before Him. The abasing of pride is the surest accompaniment and sign of being brought nigh to Him; "the proud He beholdeth afar off."

The swallow is, according to the meaning of the word (*deror*) the bird of freedom. Its bold, dashing flight and migratory habits naturally speak of this. But this free-roaming bird can be held by its affections; and the "place where she may lay her young" claims her effectually. But the nest here is in a place where no swallow could place hers: faith finds its satisfaction and rest in Jehovah's altars, and these have no prohibition for it, but a welcome and a home.

Thus the link with the title becomes again apparent, and we find how truly it is a psalm "upon the Gittith" which is here. For every Christian heart knows surely what these altars of the sanctuary represent for us. The one efficacious work by which we are reconciled and brought to God is the work of the altar. The blood given upon the altar is that by which atonement for the soul is made; and thus Christ is seen as the answer to the deepest need that we can have, and the One by whom the priestly altar of incense becomes ours, with its sacrifices of praise and of a devoted life.

The happy cry rings out then: "Jehovah of hosts! my King and my God!" How blessed to know that this is our God, on the absolute Throne eternal, changeless in all those attributes upon which faith triumphantly lays hold, and in which it shelters itself from all possible ill.

3. From this it is hardly a transition to the next verse, in which is contemplated the happiness of such dwellers in Jehovah's house. Their constant occupation is that which certifies their blessedness: "they will still be praising Thee." Praise is but overflowing happiness in the soul conscious of whence this comes; and this continually is but joy continual—a perpetual overflow of it. Such will heaven be: and here on earth we find the beginning of it.

4. Israel is not yet at home with God; but they are on the way there, and already experiencing a happiness which is the result of this. The psalmist proceeds to speak of this with assurance. The way *with* God is the way *to* God; and the strength that is found in Him is found in and for the way with Him. "Happy is the man," he says, "whose strength is in Thee: in whose heart are the ways,"—*what* ways the verses following make evident: "who, going through

5 (8-12): Immanu-El. (i.) the God of grace. (ii.) Christ the assurance. (iii.) the Sanctuary.

Hear my prayer, Jehovah, God of hosts:
give ear, O God of [j]Jacob. Selah.
Behold, O God our [k]shield;
and look upon the face of thine [l]anointed.
For a [m]day in thy courts is better than a thousand:
I had rather stand at the [n]threshold of the house of my God,
than dwell in the [o]tents of wickedness.

j Ps. 81. 1.
k Gen. 15. 1.
l Ps. 2. 2.
m cf. Ps. 23. 6.
n cf. Ex. 38. 8.
o cf. Lk. 16. 19-31.

the valley of Baca, make it a place of springs; yea, the early rain covereth it with blessings. They go from strength to strength: every one appeareth before God in Zion."

The ways of pilgrims leading up to the city of God are certainly, therefore, what is meant. The valley of Baca is no literal place, but figurative, just as is that which is spoken of it. And so, if the name be taken from the *baca*-shrub, from which, if wounded, a tear-like liquid exudes, there is none the less clear an intentional connection with *bacah*, "weeping." The "place of springs" and the "rain" are naturally also an antithesis to this; and altogether they furnish such a picture as will appeal to any one of God's pilgrims in any dispensation. For all, His miracles of grace are wrought; just as for all who seek strength in Him alone, that strength must prove its sufficiency for all demands upon it. Trial is found, and sorrow, and humiliation; but amid all this are found the sources of plenteous refreshment. How but in a world of sorrow could we have fellowship with the Man of sorrows! How else could we realize the perfection of His path who has "left us an example, that we should walk in His steps"? And then, what spiritual transformations are effected by the direct out-pouring of the rain of heaven!

So "they go from strength to strength:" in the experience of strength all through, even while it leave us in ourselves the consciousness of perfect weakness—and it will, and ought; for so is it plain that the strength is ministered, and is of God; and the tenderness of divine love gains on us continually:—the power *for* us is also power *over* us.

Divine grace is full and assured: "every one of them appeareth before God in Zion." There is no uncertainty or ambiguity about this.

5. The last section shows us now, as it appears, a soul embarking on this pilgrimage. His face is set toward the house of God, and he starts with a prayer to Him on whom he realizes his dependence. He addresses Him moreover not only as "Jehovah, God of hosts," whom he needs to be a defence about him, but also as "the God of Jacob," recognizing his need of the grace which this term expresses. And now we come to see afresh the ground of his assurance: "Behold," he says, "O God our shield; and look upon the face of Thine Anointed." "The confirmation in ver. 11," observes Delitzsch, "puts the fact that we have before us a psalm belonging to the time of David's persecution by Absalom beyond all doubt. Manifestly, when his king prevails, the poet will at the same time be restored to the sanctuary." Even taken in this way, the typical significance is not difficult to discern. How much more when we realize the application to the latter days: for what anointed beside One can then be thought of? There will be no king in Israel then, and to speak, as some do, of Israel as this is entirely strange to Scripture. On the other hand, that the doctrine of acceptance in Christ should take the form of prayer in the Old Testament, is no real difficulty. Israel looked in hope for what we, more favored, see as already accomplished.

Thus now the psalmist's heart bursts out afresh with desire towards the sanctuary from which he is yet absent. He would rather stand even at the threshold of the house of God, than dwell in the tents—the mere temporary dwellings—of the wicked. "For a sun and a shield is Jehovah Elohim"—not a sun which smites, but which shields: and this is true of the natural sun even, in a

(iv.) the experience of the way.

For a [p]sun and shield is Jehovah Elohim:
Jehovah giveth [q]grace and [r]glory;
[s]no good will he withhold from those that walk [t]uprightly.

(v.) the recompense.

Jehovah of hosts:
[u]happy is the man that trusteth in thee!

Ps. lxxxv.

[1]PSALM LXXXV.

"Things that accompany salvation."

To the chief musician: a psalm of the sons of [v]Korah.

1(1-3): Grace. (i.) Jehovah its source. (ii.) sin put away. (iii.) the inner meaning.

JEHOVAH, thou hast shown [w]favor to thy land:
thou hast [x]brought back the captivity of Jacob.
Thou hast put away the iniquity of thy people:
thou hast [y]covered all their sin. Selah.
Thou hast taken away all thy wrath:
thou hast turned from the heat of thine anger.

p *cf.* Is. 60. 19. *cf.* Mal. 4. 2.
q *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 9.
r Ps. 73. 24.
s Ps. 34. 9, 10. Ps. 37. 3.
t Ps. 33. 1.
u Ps. 2. 12.
v Ps. 84, title.
w *cf.* Ps. 102. 13.
x Ps. 126. Jer. 31. 23.
y *cf.* Is. 40. 1, 2.

way we feebly realize. Cholera will take the sunless side of a street, and the other will escape it. But the image (only found here in Scripture) necessarily reminds us of Him in whom God has manifested Himself—in whom the glory of the Light has clothed a body, to become for us the Luminary of the day. Who can resist here the thought that Christ is again thus designedly brought before us? if not in that of the writer, yet in the thought of the Spirit, as moved of Whom he writes.

Naturally it follows that "Jehovah giveth grace and glory": only as grace could He give glory; and glory is the crown, not of our ways, but of His ways with us. Yet it is to the upright in heart and walk; for grace makes such: "*no* good will He withhold from those that walk uprightly." Well may the conclusion be: "Jehovah of hosts; happy is the man that trusteth in Thee."

Psalm LXXXV.

We now find in the other psalm of this couplet the attributes of God united in the salvation of His people. Personally, Christ is not seen in it, but we know well that it is only through the work of Christ that this can be. It is, as we see everywhere, by putting the psalms together that the full character of each becomes apparent. The heading of the psalm may well be, in the words of the epistle to the Hebrews, "things which accompany salvation." The glory of God displayed in it is indeed the great, the unspeakable blessing which it brings, and which is its practical power in the reconciliation of the soul to God.

1. The connection of the first section with that which follows it has been a difficulty to many. How can the psalmist say, "Thou hast taken away all Thy wrath," and then almost immediately cry out, "cause Thy wrath toward us to cease"? One might escape this by saying in the first case "hadst," instead of "hast." But I apprehend that this is not the real way of understanding it. Nor is it to be explained by what is not uncommon in the psalms,—the first three verses giving the full blessing, from which the psalmist returns to the sorrow which preceded it. I believe the true explanation is that he is pleading rather that the blessing which has in fact come, may be abiding,—in view of the former seasons of refreshment and deliverance which had again and again passed away in returning gloom and distress,—returning displeasure for repeated departure from God. Now, he asks, let this go on no more: let the anger vanish forever, and the goodness shown remain at last. And this is a prayer which is answered, for the blessed time of which the angel spake to Daniel is now at hand, "to finish the transgression and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness" (Dan. ix. 24). It

2 (4-6): Deprecation of further anger. (i.) let peace be perpetual. (ii.) and no further anger. (iii.) revive us for sanctification.

3 (7-9): Predicted accomplishment. (i.) Jehovah's grace. (ii.) assurance of what God will speak. (iii.) the glory returning.

[z]Turn us, O God of our salvation:
and cause thy wrath toward us to cease.
Wilt thou be angry with us for [a]ever?
wilt thou protract thine anger generation after generation?
Wilt thou not turn and [b]revive us,
that thy people may be glad in thee?

Show us thy [c]loving-kindness, Jehovah:
yea, thy salvation thou shalt grant to us.
I will [d]hear what the Mighty One, Jehovah, will speak:
for he will speak peace to his people,
and to his godly ones, that they [e]turn not to folly again.
Surely his salvation is [f]nigh them that fear him,
that [g]glory may dwell in our land.

z Ps. 80. 3, 7, 19.
a Ps. 74. 1.
b Ps. 80. 18. Hab. 3. 2.
c *cf.* Is. 14.1.
d *cf.* Ps.50.7. Is. 57. 19.
e *cf.* Ps. 78. 11, 40.
f Is.46.12,13. Is. 51. 5. Is. 56. 1.
g *cf.* Is. 4. 5. *cf.* Ezek.43. 1-7. *cf.* Is.60.19-21.

is for *Israel*, as in this prophecy, that these blessings are now to be accomplished.

Jehovah is praised, then, for showing favor to the land, and bringing back the captivity of Jacob. The name used (Jacob) may indeed remind us of the grace of God, but it may speak no less of the untrustworthiness of the people. But now their iniquity is put all away, their sin all covered. The blessing is in the changed relation of Jehovah Himself, whose anger is passed away; a blessing indeed, for in His favor is life—eternal life.

2. Upon this the psalmist appeals to Him whom he owns as the God of their salvation, and beseeches that they may be truly returned to Him, so that His wrath may cease and rise no more. Shall there be, he asks, the perpetual recurrence (so I read it), generation after generation, of the judgment that sleeps but to come forth with renewed energy again? Wilt Thou not turn and revive us, so that Thy people shall by their joy in Thee be kept from straying—from the sin that provokes Thine anger thus?

3. Then he encourages himself with the assurance of mercy and blessing that are indeed come to abide. He prays that the loving-kindness of the Unchangeable One may be shown them, and immediately comforts himself with the conviction that it is indeed salvation that He will grant to them. He waits for what the God of power, the Eternal, shall speak, anticipating that it shall be peace to His people,—to those brought to respond to His grace,—and which will prevent them from turning to folly any more. He realizes that salvation is nigh, with that which it means when fully wrought for Israel, the glory of God returned to its ancient home, and now to abide there. This is essentially also what redemption means for all the subjects of it—God no longer at a distance, but come nigh. Nought but sin could put practical distance from Him who "is not far from every one of us."

4. The fourth section, as such, marks what follows as the experience which makes good—or is to make good—all that heart can desire or think in the way of blessing. Here we find, therefore, first of all, that concord of the divine attributes displayed, which is the assurance of stability for that with which it is connected. Loving-kindness is first and ruling, one may say, and yet without setting aside,—rather, maintaining with full emphasis the demands of truth. Righteousness is absolute, and yet in full and loving consent with peace towards man: they kiss each other. There was that, evidently, which had hindered, and kept them apart; but it is removed, and that which was ever in God's heart toward men is free to show itself. We cannot but realize in this the work of the cross, though divine government has acted also in the judgment of the rebellious and impenitent. Phinehas has again, as it were, done his zealous work,

(10-13): The experience.
(i.) the divine concord.
(ii.) earth and heaven respondent in salvation.
(iii.) the fruit of the land.
(iv.) the ways that follow.

Loving-kindness and truth are [h] met together:
[i] righteousness and peace have kissed each other.
[j] Truth springeth out of the earth,
and righteousness looketh down from [k] heaven.
Yea, Jehovah giveth that which is [l] good:
and our land shall give its [m] increase.
Righteousness shall go before him,
and shall set [us] in the way of his [n] steps.

h cf. Rom. 3. 24. cf. 1 Jno. 1, 5 with 1 Jno. 4. 8, 9.
i Ps. 72. 3. Is. 32. 17. Is. 52. 7, 8. cf. Heb. 7. 2.
j cf. Is. 45. 8.
k cf. Hos. 2. 21-23.
l Ps. 84. 11.
m Ps. 67. 6. n Is. 11. 16; Is. 40. 3; Is. 49. 10, 11.

and in this way made atonement to offended holiness (Num. xxv. 11–13, *notes*). Here then is the foundation laid of permanent blessing. Truth is seen in the fulfilment of glorious promise, as well as in the execution of necessary judgment. Righteousness is not only consistent with, but insures the blessing of those who as sinners take refuge in the sacrifice for sin.

Thus salvation is actually found by them: for heaven and earth, God and man, are now in real and stable relationship and correspondence. Truth springs out of the earth,—man owning God, and owning, too, his own need and sin; while righteousness—for him still otherwise impossible—looks down from heaven: for Christ is the only righteousness for man at any time. Thus Israel is truly converted and saved. She is with God according to the indefectible terms of the new covenant; and all is indeed divinely secure.

Fruitfulness follows as to the land. The curse is removed from it: "Jehovah giveth that which is good; and our land shall give its increase." And ways of righteousness are found among His people, respondent to the perfect rule of Him who now reigns over them in righteousness.

Sec. 2.

In the second section it is that Christ is seen in His servant-character, the Head in this respect and Lord of many servants taught and inspired of Him to glorify God in the path of obedience. That the saved are, as that, servants, shows, of course, the holiness of salvation; while the Son of God in service is above all that which displays and glorifies God. He is seen in it in unswerving righteousness and glorious holiness, while His love so learned bows and subdues the most stubborn will to Him. Thus it is no difficulty here that we have the Servant and the servants, though in the details of its working out there may be difficulty, which we shall have to consider in its place. The connection of the two psalms now before us with the third book as a whole, and with the subdivision in which we find them is simple enough.

The two psalms of the section are (as so commonly where there are just two) in contrast with one another, and in ways which can only be fitly seen as we take them up for separate consideration; but in the first it is clear that we have the *Lord* owned—*Adonai*, which is the title of God as such; in the second, we find the *Servant* owned. In both we have the Servant and the servants; identified in some sense, in others distinguished, as naturally must be the case. Both these, the identification and the distinction, are necessary to bring out His glory who is ever before us in the word of God.

Psalm LXXXVI.

The eighty-sixth psalm has, however, peculiar difficulties which we must now consider. As already said, its theme may be said to be *Adonai*, the Lord. The servant's path is, of course, the owning of God as such; and Adonai is here found *seven times*, which of course must have its significance where, as in Scripture, all is significant. The only other psalm in which we find it as often—and indeed, the very same number of times, is the sixty-eighth; but there "God" is found so often (thirty times), and other names of God, as Almighty, Jah, Jehovah, as quite to prevent its having there the same proportionate value. Here

SECTION 2. (Ps. lxxxvi., lxxxvii.)

The Servant and the servants.

Ps. lxxxvi.

[1]PSALM LXXXVI.

Adonai.

A prayer of [o]David.

1 (1, 2): The plea (i.) with Jehovah (ii.) of the dependent servant.

[p]BOW down, Jehovah, thine ear,—answer me!
for I am [q]poor and needy.
[r]Preserve my soul, for I am [s]godly:
save thy [t]servant, O thou, my God!
him who [u]trusteth thee.

o cf. Ps. 72. 20.
p Ps. 31. 2. Ps. 71. 2.
q cf. Ps. 40. 17 with Ps. 72. 4.
r cf. Ps. 16. 1 with Ps. 97. 10.
s cf. Ps. 16. 10 with Ps. 4. 3.
t cf. Is. 42. 1-3 with Is. 42. 17-20. Is. 65. 8-15
u cf. Ps. 16. 1 with Is. 26. 1-4.

Jehovah is found four times, and God only four; a very small number compared with the frequency of these in general.

Adonai is then the theme of the speaker: the servant proclaims his Lord. But who, then, is this servant? A glance at the title might seem to give us the answer; indeed, must, one would say, have some significance in this respect. It is "a prayer of David," imbedded between Korahite psalms, and the only psalm ascribed to him in the third book. We immediately, necessarily, think of David's more than royal Antitype, and expect to find Christ's voice throughout the psalm.

But here there is at once great and apparently insuperable difficulty. The eleventh verse, as it stands in the Hebrew, "unite my heart to fear Thy Name," could never have been the prayer of our Lord, whatever His humiliation. The Septuagint, Syriac and Vulgate indeed, by the help of another punctuation, substitute for this, "my heart shall rejoice": but this is rejected in general, and would only partially relieve the difficulty. The fifth verse bases the confidence of the suppliant towards God on His being "good and ready to forgive," for which again the Septuagint uses the vaguer term "gentle," but the verb in Hebrew is always—as far as Scripture is concerned—"to forgive, remit." The fifteenth verse again seems to take similar ground.

Thus it would seem that only indirectly could this be the "prayer of (the antitypical) David"—His as being the fruit of His work in those whom He leads in the path in which He Himself has alone been perfect. But in this way the title may be a necessary supplementary note of interpretation as to the psalm, just as we have seen "on the Gittith" to be to the three psalms to which it is prefixed (Ps. viii., lxxxi., lxxxiv.). Only in this way also does the connection with the next psalm become fully clear, as we shall see.*

1. In the opening section, the psalmist takes his place with Jehovah as poor and needy, but godly, not unmindful of his creature-relation to Him in whom he believes and whom he serves. This is his plea for help and preservation. The want of originality in the psalm has been noticed by many. "Familiar expressions and phrases from the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets," says Moll, "loosely connected [?], are found throughout." "But," adds Delitzsch, "although for the most part flowing on only in the language of prayer borrowed from earlier periods, this psalm is not without unmistakable significance and beauty."

If, however, it be the expression of a faith which, wherever it is found, brings the soul into this relation to God as the obedient servant of His will, how striking is it that it should be thus a harmony of many voices and of different periods in one connected whole! Its very want of originality is in this way itself in remarkable accordance with what it is intended to convey to us. And the argu-

* There is also a beautiful connection with the latter half of Isaiah, where from chap. xl.-xlviii. Israel is seen as the servant, and unfaithful; then from xlix. to lx. Christ is the perfect Servant, and standing under the load of the sins of others; and finally, from lxi.-lxvi., the remnant are now seen and accepted as the servants.

2 (3-7): Help in the way.
(i.) constant grace for constant need.
(ii.) joy for service.
(iii.) God his refuge.
(iv.) the need experienced.
(v.) but God with him.

Be gracious unto me, O Lord!
for I call unto thee, [t]all the day.
Make [u]glad the soul of thy servant:
for [x]unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.
For thou, Lord, art [y]good and ready to forgive,
and full of loving-kindness to all that [z]call upon thee.
Give ear unto my [a]prayer, Jehovah:
and attend unto the voice of my supplications.
In the day of my [b]distress I will call upon thee:
for thou wilt answer me.

3 (8, 9): The fruit in worship.
(i.) the only God.
(ii.) increase.

There is [c]none among the gods like thee, Lord:
and there is nothing like thy [d]works.
All the [e]nations whom thou hast made shall come
and worship before thee, Lord,
and [f]glorify thy Name.

t Ps. 25. 5.
u Ps. 4. 6, 7.
x Ps. 25. 1.
y Ps. 145. 9. Mi. 7. 18.
z Ps. 145. 18.
a Ps. 88. 2.
b Ps. 50. 15. Ps. 77. 2.
c Ex. 15. 11. Ps. 89. 6. Is.40.18-26.
d Deu. 3. 24. *cf.* Job, chps. 38,39.
e Ps. 72. 10, 11. Zech. 14.16-19.
f *cf.* Is.60.12, 13.

ment that it cannot be really a psalm of David, because "the writer cannot be compared for poetic capability with David," turns the other way when we think of the spiritual meaning of the harmonizing of such scattered utterances of the people of God by One—the true David—who Himself has trodden in His perfection ("Beginner and Finisher of faith") the whole of this path! How the apparent blemishes of Scripture, when we see the real meaning of them, become themselves witnesses to its absolute inspiration!

2. In the second section we find the help needed—the education of faith, we may perhaps say, by continual exercise. When God brought His people out of Egypt and into training for the land, He brought them into the wilderness, and made them thus for everything dependent upon Himself: and this is still His way; for these things are our types. So now with the psalmist: grace is needed in answer to calls that go up to Him all the day. And joy in Him one serves is that which alone can give strength for all the daily wear and tear of contact with a world such as this. "Rejoice in the Lord alway" is the apostle's rule and admonition: and we with our eyes lifted up to Him whom we have learned to call that, have reason indeed for this that the psalmist could not know. The path we are upon is the same path *He* traveled to the throne; and upon the Throne He is who knows all the need of the way we travel.

Apart from this, what a comfort is it to have a path known to be God's path for us, a path we travel in obedience simply, so that consequences are all His, and He may be trusted for them. The roughest path, if known to be His, can never lack a song.

But we are frail indeed, who walk in it. How blessed, then, to have our refuge in One who is "good and ready to forgive, and full of loving-kindness to all that call upon" Him! With this need may be faced, and (if we have faith for it) gloried in, that means constant proving of the living God; and when with trial the assurance increases: "I will call upon Thee: for Thou wilt answer me."

3. Thus the song arises: the need and its answer both make God alone glorious, and destroy all other trusts, vain as the senseless gods of the heathen. "There is none among the gods like Thee, Lord: and there is nothing like Thy works." Thus he foresees that of necessity the world must be brought to realize this: "All nations whom Thou hast made shall come and worship before Thee, Lord, and glorify Thy Name." This is truest prophecy, what the knowledge of God in this practical way ensures. The time has been long protracted indeed; and even yet the end (so long after the prophet's time) may seem as far off as ever; and yet it shall, it must be, true: the Lord Himself hasten it, as He will.

4. Now we have the path itself with its trials and experiences, in which these principles are practically realized. First of all, the sufficiency for it, which is

4 (10-14): The path. (i.) the sufficiency for it. (ii.) utter dependence.

For [g] great art thou, and doing [h] wondrous things:
thou art God [i] alone.
[j] Teach me thy way, Jehovah:
I will walk in thy truth;
[k] unite my heart to fear thy Name.

[g] Ps. 48. 1. Ps. 135. 5.
[h] Ps. 136. 4.
[i] Deu. 32.39. Is. 45. 5, 18, 22.
[j] Ps. 25. 4. Ps. 27. 11.
[k] *cf.* Mt. 6. 22; *cf.* Phil. 3. 13, 14; *cf.* Jas. 1. 8 with Judg. 5. 15, 16; *ctr.* Ps. 16. 5.

in God alone: this is but the application of what has been already said; but it is the necessary foundation on which alone a life with God can be based. And our utter dependence upon Him is expressed in the next verse, in which with the full purpose of heart to walk in His truth the psalmist confesses his need, not only of instruction as to the way, the one way which is Jehovah's, but also of his own deliverance from the infirmity which nevertheless yields so to distraction: "*unite* my heart," he says, "to fear Thy Name." This is indeed what is everywhere the great lack among the people of God. How much of our lives is, not spent in positive evil, but frittered away and lost in countless petty diversions which spoil effectually the positiveness of their testimony for God! How few can say with the apostle, "This *one* thing I do!" We are on the road—not, at least, intentionally off it—but we stop to chase butterflies among the flowers, and make no serious progress. How Satan must wonder when he sees us turn away from the "kingdoms of the world and the glory of them" when realized as his temptation, and yet yield ourselves with scarce a thought to endless trifles, lighter than the thistle-down which the child spends all his strength for, and we laugh at him. Would we examine our lives carefully in such an interest as this, how should we realize the multitude of needless anxieties, of self-imagined duties, of permitted relaxations, of "innocent" trifles, which incessantly divert us from that in which alone there is profit! How few, perhaps, would care to face such an examination of the day by day unwritten history of their lives!

"We must not be legal": with such an excuse, how we pass over the "little things" which come in everywhere unchallenged by reason of their littleness. "We must not make religion too severe": and so we take off our armor on the battle-field. "We must not have a morbid conscience": and so we forget to *exercise* ourselves, that we may have one void of offence toward God and man. Concentration of purpose is what most of all the devil dreads for us as Christians, and the air is full of whispered plausibilities and lullabies to deprive us of this. Thus Christ Himself as "all" for us is looked at as somewhat not to be too seriously taken; the glorious sunshine is to be helped to be brighter by men's taper-lights; or carefully shaded from eyes too infirm to enjoy it in its brightness or too continuously.

How perfect a lesson there is for us here in the Lord's words as to the vine-branch and abiding in Him (Jno. xv.)! The branch abides in the vine without intermission: a moment's intermission would be fatal to it. And "as the branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine, no more can ye," says He, "except ye abide in Me."

But then for *what* are we to abide in Him? The whole purpose of the vine is *fruit;* and this is what rules in the ways of the husbandman with it. He prunes unsparingly, that he may have fruit: one might think, to look at him, that he was making but a wreck of the whole plant. What harm in all this wood and leaf that he is paring away? In itself none; and yet in relation to its fruit-bearing, very much. Not the parasites that destroy it from without can do it much more harm than just these fruitless stems and this exuberant foliage. The precious sap is drawn off by them by which the fruit is to be filled out and perfected; and, if they are spared, not simply will there be less fruit, but (worse than all) *the whole character of that which is produced is deteriorated.* And so with the toleration of much that is merely evil in its power to draw off and scatter the energies which should be yielding fruit for Him and are not. It is the "one thing I do" that as a principle characterizes the whole man, and marks him out as Christ's, glorifies Christ in him. It means seriously "Christ is all." It

(iii.) fruit in praise.
I will [l]praise thee, O Lord my God, with my whole heart,
and I will [m]glorify thy Name for ever.
(iv.) experience.
For thy [n]loving-kindness is great toward me
and thou hast [o]delivered my soul from the nether Sheol.
(v.) appeal to divine government.
O God, the [p]insolent are risen against me,
and the assembly of the violent [q]seek after my soul,
and have not [r]set thee before them.
5 (15–17): With God.
(i.) a sufficient resource.
But thou, Lord, art the Mighty One, merciful and gracious,
[s]slow to anger, and abundant in loving-kindness and truth.

[l] Ps. 111.1.
[m] Ps. 34. 3.
[n] Ps. 103. 4.
[o] *cf.* Ps. 16. 10 with 1s. 38. 17.
[p] Ps.123.3,4.
[q] Ps. 54. 3.
[r] Ps. 36. 1–4. *ctr.* Ps.16.8.
[s] Ps. 103.8,9.

proclaims Him the sunshine of life, not shadow; and sunshine is what the fruit needs. It says that for progress every moment of life is valuable, saves the life from dilettanteism and superficiality, makes Christ Lord, not casual adviser: no wonder that in the servant's psalm we should find, as nowhere else in them, this prayer, "Unite my heart to fear Thy Name."

And no wonder that this spirit declares itself directly as the spirit of praise which indeed it is: praise from the whole life. "I will praise Thee, O Lord my God, with my whole heart; and I will glorify Thy Name for ever." Who doubts that the life of that man of one idea, Paul, was a sunny life? Who can afford to pity him because of its vicissitudes? With his feet fast in the stocks in the inner prison, he will be singing, just at midnight, his praises to God. That life of his began under the glory of an opened heaven, with a vision which shut out all other brightness, and became to him in place of all other. Such a life we perhaps may find in all its fulness nowhere else among mere men: but covet it, we may, and reach out after it, and see how much God will deny us of it; whether, rather, we do not ourselves limit and cut ourselves off from it, by the poorest, saddest, most insane and disastrous form of self-denial that can be found.

"With my whole heart," and "for ever"! These are two things very closely connected: just as the seed that roots itself deeply in the earth becomes the enduring plant. Let the whole soul be thus taken up for God, vantage-ground is not given to the thorns and weeds to spring up and choke the early promise.

The voice of experience is heard in the next verse: "For Thy loving-kindness is great towards me; and Thou hast delivered my soul from the nether Sheol." Thus with confidence can he appeal now to God when the insolent are risen up against him and the assembly of the violent seek after his soul. "They have not," he says, "set Thee before them:" thus they are meet for Divine judgment.

5. The closing section shows the grounds of the soul's confidence in God as present with him, which are, first of all, in what God Himself is, and then in the relation subsisting with Him. "Thou, Lord, art the Mighty One, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in loving-kindness and truth." This is God's own testimony to Himself (Ex. xxxiv. 6), upon the giving of the law the second time; but it is the testimony to the grace which came in to modify the law as far as practicable, while the legal element, which could not after all be modified by it so as to be effectual for man's salvation, is omitted. This shows how faith could penetrate the disguise in which love veiled itself, and find it, even while under the shadows of that dispensation. Here then is its resource and rest.

But there is also relationship, though it be not yet the full joyous relationship into which the gospel brings. It is that rather which the whole psalm contemplates: "give Thy strength unto Thy servant, and save"—not Thy son, but—"the son of Thy *handmaid*." This was what the law was, typically, the Hagar,

(ii.) dependent relationship.

(iii.) manifest Thyself.

[t] Turn to me and be gracious unto me:
give thy [u]strength unto thy servant,
and save the [v]son of thy handmaid.
Appoint me a [w]token for good,
that those who hate me may see it and be [x]ashamed:
because thou, Jehovah, hast [y]helped me and comforted me.

[t] Ps. 25. 16.
[u] Ps. 71. 16, 18.
[v] *cf.* Ps. 116. 16.
cf. 2 Tim. 1. 5.
[w] *cf.* 2 Ki. 20. 8–11.
[x] Ps. 70. 2.
[y] Ps. 54. 4.

Ps. lxxxvii.

[z]PSALM LXXXVII.

His testimony to His servants.

A psalm-song of the sons of [z]Korah.

1 (1-3): Zion, (i.) the foundation. (ii.) the object of Jehovah's love.

HIS [a]foundation is in the holy mountains:
Jehovah [b]loveth the gates of Zion
more than [c]all the dwellings of Jacob.

[z] Ps. 84, etc., titles.
[a] Ps. 48. 1, 2, 12, 13. Ps. 125. 1, 2. Is. 26. 1. *cf.* Is. 28. 16.
[b] Ps. 78. 67–69.
[c] Ps. 122.

who though but the nurse and instructress of the children of God, taught them to call her mother. But faith, that taught the Syrophenician woman to make her argument out of the very term of reproach, and to plead for the crumbs which even the "dogs" might be permitted, teaches the speaker here to urge the very servant position which was his as a child of the dispensation, as it were, —by God's appointment, not his own. He yet, in the confession of helplessness could fall back upon strength not his own, and find it: not of course to make good a self-righteous claim, but the very opposite: "Turn to me and be gracious unto me: give Thy strength unto Thy servant, and save the son of Thy handmaid." All is perfect lowliness and self-distrust.

But the Lord must appear for him, and appoint him a token for good. It is a necessary result of this position of servant merely, which has in it no absolute assurance of abiding favor (as the servant's has none, Jno. viii. 35), that one in it should be more dependent upon manifest interventions and assurances of an outward character. Our "token for good" is once for all the sign of the cross, and by this we recognize the divine favor towards us, although the living God is of course, as fully to be counted on as ever. The enemies can only recognize the interventions. Jehovah's "help and comfort" have been provided for us in a manner which makes them as unchangeably to be relied on, as that immutable nature of which it is the expression.

Psalm LXXXVII.

The eighty-seventh psalm, short as it is, is by its very conciseness open to different interpretations, and is essentially a "deep saying"—a problem to be resolved by the spiritual mind alone. Almost any translation of it must have more or less of the character of interpretation: as, for instance, if we only translate in verses 4 and 6, "that [*man*]," man is not in the original, and most, perhaps, would rather understand for it, "nation." The result would be to make the psalm a celebration of the conversion of the world to God: each people named being assigned to Zion as its spiritual birth-place. Similarly the ascription of the seventh verse would be to Zion. Cheyne says: "'Born there' is of course to be explained by the familiar Jewish saying that a proselyte is like a new-born." In this way of considering it, there would be a certain connection with the previous psalm in its ninth verse: "all nations whom Thou hast made shall come and worship before Thee." But there are two objections to this: the first, that the connection here seems rather incidental than essential; the second, that (according to the prophecies of the period referred to) there is no promise of Babylon and Philistia being converted to God; but the reverse, as we may see directly. We shall have, however, to take up the psalm, as is evident, with more than ordinary care.

The seven verses have an unusual division into 3. 3. 1: which seems how-

(iii.) His dwelling-place.

2 (4-6): The testimony.

(i.) to single individuals.

[d] Glorious things are spoken of thee,
O [e] city of God. Selah.

I will make mention of [f] Rahab and [g] Babel to those that know me;
behold [h] Philistia and [i] Tyre, with [j] Cush:
[k] this [man] was born there.

[d] *cf.* Is. 2. 1-5. *cf.* Is. 51, 17-23. *cf.* Is. 52. 1-10. *cf.* Is. 60. [e] Is. 60. 14. *cf.* Rev. chps. 21, 22. [f] Ps. 89. 10. Is. 51. 9, 10. [g] Ps. 137. [h] Ps. 108. 9. [i] Ps. 83. 7. [j] *cf.* Is. 18. 1. [k] *cf.* Ex. 1. 8; *cf.* 2 Kl. 24. 1; *cf.* Isa. 17. 4; *cf.* Ezek. 28. 1-19; *cf.* Ezek. 32. 17-32.

ever to be that of the very first seven in Scripture,—the creative days (Gen. i.–ii. 3).

1. The first three verses plainly speak of Zion as the object of Jehovah's love, Zion itself means "fixed:" and that is what stands out clearly as to the time contemplated. Like Jerusalem which is above, it is the "city which has foundations"; and these are in the holy mountains, images of the fixed, enduring holiness of God Himself. The foundations of the heavenly city are like the jeweled breast-plate of the high-priest, the Urim and Thummim, the "lights and perfections" of Him who is Perfect Light. The stability of the city depends upon there being in it the display in glory of all that God is. It exists because He exists. It abides because He abides. So, on its lower level, with the city below. It is the place of His rest; and rest He never can, except as the requirements of His nature are met and satisfied: there is nothing to produce a note of discord. On the holy mountains is His foundation.

There then His heart is free; and, being so, is poured forth in love: "Jehovah loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob." His love is active; and these gates are the symbol of activity,—the place of ingress and egress,—the place where wisdom cries and justice is transacted, and which stands for all its busy life,—the city itself, as it were. Zion the royal city is in closest connection with those "dwellings of Jacob" which also—every one of them—Jehovah loves, and therefore loves most of all what is their supremest expression. The "dwellings of *Jacob*" imply, as we know, not human righteousness but divine grace; and Zion is *royalty* in grace, as the seventy-eighth psalm has pointed out to us (68-70). "Glorious things" may indeed well "be spoken" therefore of the "city of God."

2. The second section now speaks of a certain testimony which God is giving: "I will make mention of Rahab (pride) and Babel (confusion) to them that know Me: behold Philistia and Tyre, with Cush: this [man] was born there." Here comes, however, the question of interpretation before pointed out. Moll with others would translate, "*as* those that know Me," which it is allowed it may be rendered; and Delitzsch similarly remarks that the meaning is "for what purpose, or as what these kingdoms, hitherto hostile towards God and His people, shall be declared: Jehovah completes what He Himself has brought about, inasmuch as He publicly and solemnly declares them to be those who know Him, *i. e.* those who experimentally know Him as their God. Accordingly it is clear that 'This one was born there' is also meant to refer to the conversion of the other three nations to whom the finger of God points. . . . 'This one' does not refer to the individuals, nor to the sum-total of these nations, but to nation after nation, by fixing the eye upon each one separately. And '*there*' refers to Zion . . . nations which are born in Zion. The poet does not combine with this the idea of being born again in the depth of its New Testament meaning: he means, however, that the nations will attain a right of citizenship in Zion as in their second mother-city, that they will therefore at any rate experience a spiritual change which, regarded from the New Testament point of view, is the new birth out of water and the Spirit."

This is happily not a question of the language used; and therefore all are capable of deciding it by plain Scripture. The first of these nations, Rahab, is Egypt; and of Egypt God has indeed prophesied blessing as well as of Assyria.

(ii.) Zion's many.

(iii.) the reality with Jehovah.

And of Zion it may be said, [l]'This man and that was born in her,
and the Highest himself [m]establisheth her.
Jehovah counteth, when he [n]writeth down the peoples,—
[o]'this [man] was born there. Selah.

[l] *cf.* Is. 60. 21, 22.
[m] *cf.* Is. 54. 1.
[n] ver. 1. *cf.* Mal. 4. 16-18. *cf.* Ezek. 13. 9.
[o] *cf.* Is. 53. 1-3 with Is. 63. 1-6; *cf.* Ps. 45. 1-8.

These will be, in days to come, conterminous with Israel's territory; and "in that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: whom Jehovah of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel Mine inheritance" (Isa. xix. 23–25).

Thus Scripture predicts with perfect plainness the blessing of Egypt; and had it been Assyria that we found connected with her, there could have been no question raised as to the suitableness of the interpretation given by the writers mentioned, as far as these two were concerned. But where we might have expected Assyria, we find Babel, and a very different future is assigned to Babel: "For I will rise up against them, saith Jehovah of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name and remnant and son and nephew, saith Jehovah. I will also make it a possession for the bittern and pools of water, and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith Jehovah of hosts" (Isa. xiv. 22, 23). The definiteness of the prediction in the one case shows that this in the psalm is not one.

Philistia is also threatened to be destroyed without inhabitant (Zeph. ii. 5; Amos i. 8), her land to be possessed by Judah. This is another witness that the psalmist does not prophesy the conversion of these nations to God. This interpretation being purely conjectural and opposed to other scriptures, cannot be maintained; while to apply it merely to *individuals* out of these nations in the same way would be to deprive it of any particular importance, and from another side destroy it as a prophecy.

But if not a prophecy, then it can only be a contrast that is drawn here, between the countries named and their great men, and Zion and hers in the next verse; and this is perfectly natural, after dwelling upon the glory of Zion itself. The world boasts its heroes, and has ever boasted: the fame of the men of Egypt and Babylon is in our ears to-day—of kings, conquerors, builders, who speak to us in perished languages, from their uncovered monuments. Really, it would seem as if God were permitting all these nations to tell their own story of the men born in them, and that we may contrast it with the voices of the men of Zion, men of a feeble, despised, and scattered people, which yet strangely move us as no others do. On the one hand, the dead past speaks to us from its unsealed sepulchre, a memorial of doom which its own words justify and we cannot regret: there is in it no title to resurrection. On the other, there are voices that never die,—living and life-giving,—that proclaim not their own praise, but ascribe greatness unto God, and live eternally by their own hold of the Eternal. On the one hand, the voice is single—in each generation but a single voice; some king for whom his kingdom seems alone to have existed, and who tells us how many he has slaughtered, that he might have room to dwell in. On the other, the voice of many in chorus, the king of Israel with the gatherer of sycamore fruit, each having his part in a strain which, though it may be often sad, is never discordant, and which ends in triumphant harmony. Aye, "of Zion it may be said that *this man and that* was born in her, and the Highest Himself establisheth her." How else, indeed, can the mystery of this be explained? And it shall be fully seen in the day to which the psalm looks on.

But this is not all; nay, all would be left out, if this were to be taken as all. Jehovah's voice has not been heard directly yet; and plainly we shall never get a perfect knowledge of things, except He guide us. He too is the One who

3 (7): The spring of worship.

And the [p]singers as well as the players on instruments [shall say],
All my [q]springs are in thee.

[p] *cf.* Is. 51. 11.
[q] *cf.* Jer. 2. 13 with Jno. 7. 37-39.

"writeth down the peoples."—takes account of all with no mere local or national partiality, but in absolute righteousness and truth. Strange then it may seem that now, when we have His reckoning of things, even Zion's count of her great men is gone. In all history there seems now but One Name. One Person takes the place of every other. "Jehovah counteth, when *He* writeth down the peoples, that THIS Man was born there."

3. An enigma, is it? Couched in abrupt, enigmatical language, indeed: but as a secret which He expects that we should fathom. And suddenly there bursts out as from a multitude, in songs and with instruments to swell the melody, another voice as enigmatical, and yet with the same appeal to our intelligence,—as if there were no possibility of going wrong in the interpretation of it; a voice which is one and individual, and yet the voice of all; a response echoing Jehovah's claim for the One Man of His approval: "All my springs are in Thee."

The Christian heart can translate this, and the Christian only. It is not that the Lord whom they have served does not appreciate the service of His people. It is not that their names can be forgotten with Him. But it is the Old Testament version of what has come out in full reality in the gospel of our salvation,—the truth that, *for* salvation, the cross of Christ had to be our all: death and judgment had to do their awful work upon our Substitute and Saviour; and thus God pronounced upon man, thus He had to put him away from His sight, that He might show us mercy. Those who believe are now therefore by the cross "dead with Christ" and "buried with Christ," so as to be accepted in Another raised from the dead, His work accomplished.

How plain, therefore, that there is but One Man, whom God sees, the perfect Servant of His perfect will; and that Zion's great men can only come in before God thus. How well may they sing, and how surely they know to Whom they sing, "All my springs are in Thee"! The glory of Zion, the dwelling-place of God in Israel, is found in Him.

Thus the two psalms here come into their place with one another. The servants' path in the one finds its recognition from God in the other; and the One perfect Servant is distinguished from, while seen to be the sufficiency and boast, of every other. Thus the work of salvation is seen once more to be for holiness.

Sec. 3.

The third section closes this part, and the whole book, by showing how, in the work of salvation, man is realized for what he is, lost and undone, and help only to be found in Another; accordant truths, in which nevertheless the usual contrast of subjects in these pairs of psalms is seen. The eighty-eighth is an awful picture of almost unrelieved despair. The eighty-ninth is strong and confident in its assurance of God's fulfillment of His covenant with David, even though adverse circumstances seem to plead against it. And through this we can clearly read a better hope. The two together give us essentially the lesson of the dispensations—of all human history: setting aside all creature confidence to set this upon God alone. And in this true sanctification, the "holiness of truth," is attained. Thus we have a fitting end to the third book.

PSALM LXXXVIII.

The title of the eighty-eighth psalm is peculiar: and its two parts have been pleaded as contradictory; Heman the Ezrahite being of the tribe of Judah, and not a Korahite Levite. There was, however, a Levite of the name of Heman, and it is contended that this is the same person, finding his place by intermarriage among the men of Judah. On the other hand, it has been suggested that while really the work of a Judahite, the psalm may have been written "*for* the sons of Korah," as we may read it. Such reasonings show, at least, that it is

SECTION 3. (Ps. lxxxviii., lxxxix.)
Realization: "the holiness of truth."

Ps. lxxxviii.

[1]PSALM LXXXVIII.

The outcome as to man, in righteousness.

A psalm-song of the sons of [r]Korah: to the chief musician; upon Mahalath Leannoth.

[s]Maskil of [t]Heman the Ezrahite.

1 (i–7): In the hands of God.

(i.) a perpetual cry.

(ii.) answer!

(iii.) a full cup.

(iv.) prostration.

(v.) under judgment.

JEHOVAH, God of my [u]salvation,
I have cried by [v]day [and] in the night before thee.
Let my prayer come before thee:
[w]bow down thine ear to my loud cry.
For my [x]soul is filled with evils,
and my life draweth near to [y]Sheol.
I am [z]counted among those that go down to the pit:
I am as a man that hath [a]no strength.
Free among the [b]dead, like the slain that lie in the grave,
whom thou [c]rememberest no more,
and who are [d]cut off from thy hand.

r Ps. 87, etc., titles.
s Ps. 32, etc., titles.
t *cf.* 1 K. 4, 31 with 1 Chr. 6. 31–38.
u Ps. 27. 9. Ps. 79. 9.
v *cf.* Ps. 22. 2. Ps. 32. 4.
w Ps. 86. 1.
x Ps. 6. 3. Ps. 44. 25.
y Ps. 107. 18. Is. 38. 10–13.
z Ps. 28. 1. Ps. 143. 7.
a Ps. 38. 8. Ps. 39. 10, 11. *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 9.
b Ps. 31. 12.
c *cf.* Ps. 49. 14.
d *cf.* Ps. 90. 5, 6.
d Lam. 3. 54.

unsafe to reject even part of a title in an inspired book, without plainly confirmatory evidence; and that we are free at least to take it as it stands, and inquire as to its possible meaning.

Mahalath Leannoth means "sickness for humiliation": a very suitable and suggestive title, surely. We have need of such humbling, and therefore God permits such suffering as this psalm shows, that there may be truth in the inward parts before Him. Then, it is, with its fellow, a Maskil, or "instruction"; belonging to that series of such psalms to which the thirty-second introduces us. Most necessary truth here for the "wise" in Israel, or anywhere else, who is to be worthy of the name. And Heman was one of the special sages of Israel, compared with Solomon (1 Kings iv. 31), and his name ("faithful"), according to its derivation, may well point out to us both wisdom and faithfulness to agree, in putting their "amen" to the sayings of God.

The Ezrahite, again, is what is "indigenous," or springs up from its native soil; and the experience that follows is indeed home-born, and natural enough to such as we are; nay, what is proper to the whole race outside of paradise; though, thank God, to face it is to find deliverance from it; and this connects once more these closing psalms.

1. But eighteen verses altogether in the one before us; and yet what misery is shut up in them! Not that God is not looked to; for it is to Him that all is poured out. It is when we begin to live that the meaning of death becomes possible to understand. He who cries cries to One in whose hands he knows himself to be, and in no other's. God is the God of his salvation: nowhere else is salvation to be found. He cries aloud for Him to hearken, baring to Him all the misery with which his soul is filled and bowed down even to Sheol; already to be reckoned among those going down to it, prostrate, nerveless, and impotent. Nay, he is like one for whom the business of life is over, discharged from it, "free among the dead," like one cut off from God's remembrance and His help. Not that he will say, this is so, but that so it seems. And God Himself has done this, laid him in the lowest pit, in the awful darkness of His prison-house—in the depths.

Ah, it is all His anger: that is the utter misery from which there is no escape and no relief. Heat of anger and the overwhelming waves that break, wave after wave, upon him: all figures are used, and all figures fail to convey the

(vi.) the lowest pit.
Thou hast laid me in the [e]lowest pit:
in dark places, in the depths.
(vii.) all Thy wrath.
Thy hot [f]anger lieth hard upon me;
and thou hast afflicted [me] with all thy [g]breakers.
Selah.

2 (8-12): Dependence.
(i.) alone.
Thou hast put mine [h]acquaintance far from me,
thou hast made me an [i]abomination to them:
I am [j]shut up, and cannot come forth.
(ii.) in prayer.
Mine [k]eye pineth because of affliction:
Jehovah, I have called upon thee all the day long;
I have [l]stretched out my palms unto thee.
(iii.) Thy praise?
Wilt thou do [m]wonders unto the dead?
shall the shades arise? shall they praise thee?
Selah.
(iv.) the test of experience.
Shall thy [n]loving-kindness be recounted in the grave?
thy [o]faithfulness in destruction?
(v.) exercise.
Shall thy wonders be known in the [p]darkness?
and thy [q]righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

3 (13, 14): No sanctuary found.
(i.) Jehovah his resource.
But I have cried unto thee, Jehovah,
and in the [r]morning shall my prayer be toward thee.*
(ii.) yet forsaken.
Jehovah, [s]why castest thou off my soul?
[why] [t]hidest thou thy face from me?

[e] ver. 4. cf. Jonah 2. 2.
[f] Ps. 6. 1.
[g] Ps. 42. 7. Jonah 2. 3.
[h] ver. 18. Ps. 31. 11.
[i] Job 19. 13-19.
[j] Job 3. 23. Lam. 3. 7.
[k] Job 17. 7. Ps. 6. 7. Is. 38. 14.
[l] Ps. 143. 6.
[m] Ps. 6. 5. Ps. 30. 9. Is. 38. 18.
[n] Ps. 115.17. cf. Ps. 116.1-5.
[o] cf. Ps. 40.1-3.
[p] Ps. 89. 1,2, 5, 8. Job 10. 21, 22.
[q] cf. Ps.71.15-18.
[r] Ps. 5. 3. cf. Ps. 30. 5.
[s] Ps. 43. 2. cf. Ps. 22. 1.
[t] Ps. 44. 24. Job 13. 24.

* *Literally*, "come to meet thee."

dread reality, when it is God whose wrath is upon us. For "if God be for us, who can be against us?" and then conversely, if He be against us, where can be found help or hope?

2. But he turns to the Hand that afflicts him,—the Hand that has shut him up in isolation from all others, as a leper, an abomination to his acquaintance,—and he pleads his misery to the Heart that still he knows must be behind the Hand: how the eye wastes with its sorrow as it looks and sees not. "Jehovah, I have called upon Thee all the day long; I have stretched out my palms unto Thee." God dwells among the praises of His people, amid the music of happy hearts tuned in accordance with His own: will He do wonders among the dead? he asks: "shall the shades arise? shall they praise Thee?" It is of course a Jew with his earthly hopes that speaks so: "shall thy loving-kindness be recounted in the grave? Thy faithfulness in destruction?" shall this be the experience of one who looks to Thee? "shall thy wonders be known in the darkness? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?"

It is clear that this is a Jew under the shadows of a law of which death was the penalty, and cut off from the earthly hopes of the nation: for whom death was a perplexity, a "land of darkness," into which the light of life had not yet descended. Job, outside of Israel, utters the same wail; but the earthly promises by their very brightness only made it darker, as a gospel out of reach, a mockery of hopes which it raised and scattered.

3. Here accordingly, he turns to his sanctuary, to find but the veil unrent, and the One Face which has brightness for him hidden. Like Another Sufferer, but from a different stand-point, he asks "why?" but the answer is not here. *He* answers it who goes into the outside darkness to dispel it for others, and who asserts it to be the necessity of divine holiness in regard to sin.

4. The psalm ends without relief. The experience here is but a monotony of distress. From his youth up there has been nothing else—a living death, a distraction of terrors. Wrath gone over him, terrors around him, the undoing of

4 (15-18): The experience of a fallen creature. (i.) from the beginning of life, (ii.) wrath. (iii.) compassing round. (iv.) the creature side.

From my [u]youth have I been afflicted and ready to die:
I suffer thy [v]terrors [and] am distracted.
Thy wrath goeth over me;
thy terrors have brought me to [w]silence.
They have surrounded me like water, all the day;
they have [x]compassed me about together.
[y]Lover and friend hast thou put far from me,—
mine acquaintance into darkness.

[u] *ctr.* Ps. 71. 17.
[v] Job 6. 4. Ps. 77. 3.
[w] Ps. 39. 9-11. Ps. 77. 4.
[x] Jonah 2. 5.
[y] ver. 8. Ps. 38. 11.

[z]PSALM LXXXIX.

Help in Another.

[z] Maskil of [a] Ethan the Ezrahite.

Ps. lxxxix. 1 (1-37): The covenant of promise. 1 (1-17): Jehovah the Maker. *a* (1, 2): inviolability of blessing founded on righteousness. (i.) Jehovah's faithfulness.

I WILL [b]sing for ever of Jehovah's loving-kindness:
with my mouth will I make known thy [c]faithfulness to all generations.

[z] Ps. 88, etc., titles.
[a] *cf.* 1 Ki. 4. 31. 1 Chr. 2. 6.
[b] *ctr.* Ps. 88. 2, etc.
[c] Ps. 71. 16.

every social bond even. Such is the hopeless misery of man as regards self-help, and apart from a Mediator.

Psalm LXXXIX.

We have now, however, in the last psalm of the book, what is in entire contrast with the previous one, the grace of God as revealed in His covenant with David, upon which the blessing to Israel as a nation rests. These "sure mercies of David" to which the apostle at Antioch refers, quoting Isaiah, (chap. lv. 3) are fulfilled, as he declares, in Christ, and in Christ raised from the dead, His work accomplished, which is what makes them "sure." That Christ is the true David, he, with Peter at Jerusalem, proves from the sixteenth psalm. If David had there said, "Thou wilt not suffer Thy Pious One to see corruption," he had himself yet surely seen corruption. Only Christ, the antitypical David, had not seen it. Here, then, is the "Pious One" of the nineteenth verse. God is speaking in the typical language so constantly used in the Old Testament, and thus the glorious assurances given in His Name are fully justified.

The psalm is another Maskil, and no wonder; and it is the maskil of another Ezrahite, Ethan, whose name means, in full accordance with his subject, "constant, durable." And here too we find what is "proper to the soil" it springs from, the covenant of promise rooting itself in what God is; "durable," because Jehovah endures, the "same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

1. The two main divisions are strongly contrasted in their character. The first enlarges on the covenant of promise itself, and its inviolable nature is strongly insisted on. The second shows us how, nevertheless, the promise might seem to have failed; and this, which is brought forward in solemn appeal to God, goes on to what may be considered the end of the psalm; the closing verse being the usual ascription of praise to Jehovah, with which the third book ends. It is, however, plainly suited as this to be the third division of the psalm, and can scarcely be anything else than this; while its energetic brevity, coming after the long plaint of sorrow, seems even to give it emphasis as the resurrection of faith, which needs no argument, and precedes the answer on God's part: an answer that is fully given in the fourth book.

(i.) The first division has also two subdivisions: the first of which dwells upon Jehovah as being the Maker of the covenant; necessarily (inasmuch as it is a covenant of promise) the only party to it. Thus, if He be faithful, and at the same time all-powerful, all is secure. The argument is so simple and complete, that nothing can be simpler.

(*a*) Accordingly the first section declares the inviolability of the promise, founded on Jehovah's righteousness. "I will sing for ever," says the psalmist,

(ii.) established in loving-kindness.

For I have said, [d]Loving-kindness shall be built up for ever:
in the very [e]heavens shall thy faithfulness be established.

[b] (3-5): Said and sworn.

I have made a [f]covenant with my chosen:
I have [g]sworn unto David my servant:

(i.) a covenant with His Chosen One.

Thy [h]seed will I establish for ever,
and build up thy [i]throne from generation to generation. Selah.

(ii.) its progress.

(iii.) the praise of the heavens.

And the [j]heavens shall praise thy wonders, Jehovah,
and thy faithfulness in the [k]congregation of the holy ones.

[d] 1 Chr. 17. 23, 24.
[e] Ps. 119. 89.
[f] 2 Sa. 23. 5. Is. 55. 3.
[g] *cf.* Gen. 22. 16, 17. *cf.* Ps. 110. 4. ver. 35.
[h] vers. 29, 36. 2 Sa. 7. 12.
[i] 2 Sa. 7. 13. *cf.* Ps. 122. 5. *cf.* Is. 9. 6, 7.
[j] Ps. 50. 6. Ps. 97. 6. Ps. 150. 1.
[k] *cf.* Ps. 22. 25.

"of Jehovah's loving-kindness: with my mouth will I make known Thy faithfulness to all generations. For I have said, Loving-kindness shall be built up for ever: in the very heavens shall Thy righteousness be exalted." This is what he says in view of the covenant which the next verse declares. Upon earth, indeed, things may seem for the present to be in conflict with this; and from the Jewish stand-point the testimony of many generations now might seem to be against it. The tree of David's house is leveled to the ground and Israel are wanderers among the nations. But the heavens have for faith another story to tell, since the Crucified has become the Glorified; and they will have a marvelous witness to give when the fruits of the cross shall be seen in the multitude of the redeemed in heaven, soon to be seen in His train as He comes forth from thence, not merely King of Israel, but King of kings.

(*b*) The covenant is now affirmed as from Jehovah's lips: it is said and sworn. The wondrous tenderness of God's oath for such as we are, the apostle bids us consider, in his epistle to the Hebrews (chap. vi. 16–18). In fact, the whole idea of "covenant" is one which speaks of gracious adaptation to our infirmity. The covenant with David here—while a greater than David is surely to be seen in it—has its reason in this, that it is to David himself that it is given, and for the assurance of others with him. We must not go back of this, and argue, as so many have, a covenant in eternity between the Father and the Son, as if such could be needed between the Persons of the Godhead, one in eternal counsel. Surely, spite of its large adoption by theologians, this is only the introduction of human thoughts into a sphere to which they cannot belong. A contract of such sort would naturally imply some diversity of thought where none is possible, and help to foster the unworthy notion of the cross being the reconciliation of the Father to us, instead of God's love to the world being declared in the gift of His beloved Son. Of such a use of covenant Scripture knows nothing—can know nothing. Covenant with David we can understand well enough, and bless God for His tenderness to men in such a pledge. A pledge *to Him* Christ *could* not need. Yet that in no way hinders our seeing in David the One who is the Centre of the eternal purposes, the One expression and justification of Divine grace.

David was indeed the chosen of God, as the seventy-eighth psalm has emphasized; and this, not without a certain character in him which is pointed out there also, spite of his dreadful failure. He is in this only the mere shadow of the King that was to come, but still the shadow. In Christ "David" is indeed, in fulfillment of that name, the "Beloved"; and "My Servant" was all through, the character in which He acted, who exchanged the "form of God" for this "form" (Phil. ii). It is in this way that God Himself announces Him in the fullest prophecy of Him that can be found in the Old Testament (Isa. lii. 13–liii). And it is in that prophecy as here that His "seed" is spoken of: "He shall see a seed; He shall prolong His days; and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand." Here, His seed also is to be "established for ever, and His throne be built up from generation to generation." But we shall have more of this later in the psalm.

c (6-8): the glory of God.
(i.) none like Him.
(ii.) a relation of contrast.
(iii.) the full realization.

For [l]who in the expanse can be compared to Jehovah?
[who] among the [m]sons of the mighty can be likened to Jehovah?
God is greatly to be [n]feared in the council of the saints,
and to be reverenced above all round about him.
Jehovah, God of hosts, who is [o]mighty like thee, Jah?
and thy [p]faithfulness is round about thee.

d (9-12): nature prostrate.
(i.) He rules the rebels.
(ii.) defeats enemies.
(iii.) possesses what is His.
(iv.) His creation.

Thou rulest the pride of the [q]sea:
when its waves arise, *thou* [r]stillest them.
Thou hast crushed [s]Rahab, as one that is slain:
with thy strong arm thou hast [t]scattered thine enemies.
Thine are the [u]heavens, thine also is the [v]earth:
the world and its fullness, *thou* hast [w]founded them:
The [x]north and the [y]south, *thou* hast created them:
Tabor and Hermon [z]sing for joy at thy Name.
Thine is an arm with might:
[a]strong is thy hand, exalted thy right hand.

e (13-17): His government.
(i.) in power.

l Ps. 86. 8. Ps. 113. 5.
m Ps. 29. 1. Ps. 82. 1.
n Ps. 96. 4. Heb. 12. 28.
o Ps. 50. 1. 1 Sa. 2. 2.
p ver. 2. Mal. 3. 6.
q Ps. 65. 7. Ps. 93. 3, 4. Job 38. 8–11.
r Ps. 107. 23–29. *cf.* Matt. 8. 23–27.
s Ps. 87. 4. Is. 51. 9, 10.
t Ps. 68. 1, 2. Ex. 15. 6, 7.
u Ps. 8. 3.
v Ps. 24. 1, 2.
w Job 38. 4–6. Ps. 104. 5.
x Job 26. 7.
y Job 9. 9.
z Ps. 148, 9. Is. 44. 23; Is. 55. 12.
a Ex. 15. 6; Ps. 118. 16.

Again the heavens come in with their witnessing praise, and the "congregation of the holy ones" would at first thought be, for a Jew inevitably, the angelic host. When we take into consideration the deeper meaning here, they may be in this application the "seed" that has been spoken of, royal and heavenly, who will, as that, proclaim His faithfulness and the wonder of His grace.

(*c*) From this the psalmist turns to consider the glory of God. To put the question is to answer it—where is one like Him far as infinite space extends? and the sons of the mighty—perhaps rather of might (a "plural of majesty")—who among them can be compared to Jehovah? Think of Him in connection with the assembled wisdom of the holy ones, He is an object only of reverent fear to and above them all. Nay, he is the Immutable God of hosts, whom they all serve: where then can there be might like that of Jah? using the strong, decisive word: and His faithfulness—here is the comfort of it all—is all about Him, commensurate with the outgoing of His glorious power.

(*d*) From thence the psalmist looks round upon nature, to claim it all for Him. The sea is the very type of unruled strength and pride; but He stills the tossing of its angry waves. Rahab, that name of pride, Egypt—and here history furnishes him with the experience,—lay before His might crushed and as if slain: enemies to Him, He scattered them. The heavens too are His,—the earth; yea, the inhabited world with all that men count to be their treasures: the north with its darkness, and frost; the south with its teeming plenty: they are His as Creator of them. And they exult—Tabor and Hermon, the visible types before the eyes of Israel—sing for joy in His Name.

(*e*) Thus having seen all nature prostrate at His feet, the psalmist turns once more to consider the character of the divine government upon earth. This power of which he has been speaking is its first essential: absolute power is a necessity for perfect and universal government. "An arm with might" is therefore here put foremost.

But right rule is service, and love is the spirit of service; which to be effectual must be discriminative—must have respect to all differences, all relationships. And such is the character of divine rule which is now announced: righteousness and judgment—not a sentiment of right merely, but maintained executively—are the basis of this government; while loving-kindness and truth, in corresponding activity, go before the face of the glorious King. As the type and expression of this the perfect Servant will be upon the throne in the days to which all these

(ii) in discriminating love.
(iii.) in manifestation.
(iv.) the experience.
(v.) the issue for those with God.
2 (18-37): The covenant defined.
a (18-23): the power given.
(i.) the King Supreme.

Righteousness and judgment are the [b]basis of thy throne:
[c]loving-kindness and truth go before thy face.
Happy are the people that know the [d]signal-sound:
they shall walk, Jehovah, in the [e]light of thy countenance.
In thy name shall they [f]exult all the day,
and in thy righteousness shall they be [g]exalted.
For thou art the glory of their strength,
and by thy [h]favor shall our horn be exalted.
For Jehovah is our [i]shield;*
and the Holy One of Israel our [j]King.

b Ps. 97. 2.
c Ps. 85. 13.
d *cf.* Nu. 10. 1-10. Ps. 81. 3-5. Ps. 98. 6.
e Ps. 4. 6. Ps. 80. 3.
f Ps. 34. 1, 2.
g Ps. 37. 34. *cf.* Is. 60. 13, 14.
h Ps. 30. 7. Ps. 75. 10.
i Ps. 84. 9.
j Ps. 74. 12. Ps. 95. 3.

* Or, "our shield belongeth unto Jehovah, and to the Holy One."

psalms look forward: all judgment His because He is the Son of man (John v. 22, 27).

And in this, too, the third feature is anticipated: it is a government in which the divine Ruler does not withdraw Himself from His people, but on the contrary seeks to be known and manifest Himself to them: the people who know the signal-sound—the trumpet-call by which as in the wilderness Israel was summoned to attention—shall walk in the light of His countenance. Blessed indeed are such: "in Thy Name shall they exult all the day; and in Thy righteousness shall they be exalted."

The issue of their being thus with God is stated in the last verse in this section, and applied to Israel: "For Thou art the glory of their strength"—the One through whom it becomes so great, and so real a cause of rejoicing; "and by Thy favor shall *our* horn be exalted." Israel, conformed to the divine conditions of blessing, shall find this fulfilled to them.

(ii.) We now come to look at the terms of the covenant which Jehovah, the True and Faithful and Almighty, has made and sworn. And these are declared with a fullness and earnestness of detail which show how much the heart of the divine Speaker is in His words.

(*a*) First, the Mighty One on whom Jehovah has laid help is brought before us, and His might is seen to be God-given might. He is true man and dependent,—a thing which, as to David himself, needs no argument, but which is true also of Him who has taken the place of Man upon earth, to hold it not in mere semblance, but reality. In Him the higher and lower kingdoms, of which the books of Samuel and Kings so preach to us, come together, and the King sits (as is said of Solomon) "on the throne of Jehovah," but here as the true Image as well as Representative, of Jehovah Himself. This is as far as the psalm before us goes, but still it permits us to see a Figure greater than that of David, One whom David in Spirit owns to be his Lord, even though after the flesh He is his Son.

But the first verse here shows us, in connection with what follows, the action of the higher kingdom, of which the last section has spoken. "For Jehovah is our Shield; and the Holy One of Israel is our King." The David upon whom help is laid takes not away—as many an Israelitish king did—from the simplicity of this. The man after God's own heart was this, in that with all his failure, he never swerved from the confession of God. His psalms tell us what God was to him. And He whom he represents in this picture is the One who in His blessed work has given God such a throne as alone He could delight in on the earth. "Jehovah our Shield—the Holy One": never could such things have been joined together, had not He, the Mediator, joined them. Thus the ark of the covenant, with its double material, holding and enshrining Jehovah's law, declares Him, as well as the golden mercy-seat, which was His throne in the midst of the people.

(ii.) the Helper.

Then spakest thou in vision of thy pious one, and saidst,
I have laid help upon a [k]mighty one:
I have exalted one [l]chosen from the people.

(iii.) anointed.

I have found David my [m]servant:
with my holy oil have I [n]anointed him;

(iv.) experience.

With whom my hand shall be firm,
and mine arm shall [o]strengthen him.

(v.) the issue.

No [p]enemy shall exact from him,
nor son of perversity afflict him.

(vi.) mastery of foes.

And I will [q]beat down his adversaries before his face,
and smite down those that hate him.

b (24–28): the establishment of his power.

And my [r]faithfulness and my loving-kindness shall be with him,
and in my name shall his [s]horn be exalted.

(i.) representative authority.

And I will set his hand in the [t]sea,
and his right hand in the rivers.

(ii.) its extension.

He shall cry unto me, Thou art my [u]Father,

(iii.) God His sanctuary.

my Mighty One and the [v]Rock of my salvation.

k cf. Is.63.1-5.
l Ps. 78. 70.
m Ps. 18, title.
ver. 3.
Ps. 116. 16.
n 1 Sa.16.12, 13.
o Ps. 80. 17. *cf.* Is. 42. 1.
p Ps. 18. 17-19, 37, 38.
q 2 Sa. 7.1,9. *cf.* Ps.110.1.
r vers. 1, 2.
s Ps. 132. 17.
t cf. Ps. 72.8.
u cf. 2 Sa. 7. 14. *cf.* Ps. 2. 7.
v Ps. 18. 2.

And may not this be the reason for the "then" of the next verse, which otherwise seems without sufficient connection with what goes before it—"*then* spakest Thou in vision of Thy Pious One"? that is, as being Israel's Shield and King, *then*, when the need discovered itself, Thou showedst Thou hadst provided for it? This was, of course, true of David, while faith with its longer sight can see much more. This title—"pious one"—which we have often met before, speaks directly of heart for God, the character needed by one who steps forth for Him. And thus was David in his time the "mighty one," and in this way alone can any find true might. He, too, was "one chosen from the people"—that is, from the mass undistinguished in men's eyes. Among these in grace, our blessed Lord was found.

Next we see Him as the Anointed One—the Christ: the Spirit of God being the Unction in His case. As "servant" He is marked again; for this is how the Spirit of God comes upon Him, rising up from those Jordan-waters, in which John's hearers had taken their place, "confessing their sins" and death the due of them. Into death, then, He (to fulfill all righteousness) must come for them; and thus He must now be anointed for His work. The Father's voice declares His delight in Him, and John then proclaims as the Lamb of God, the unblemished Sacrifice. How perfectly all this unites together to proclaim what He has done!

But what follows carries us on into what is future yet—His manifest kingly glory. Jehovah's hand is firm with Him, His arm strengthens Him; no enemy exacts upon Him, no son of perversity afflicts Him: His adversaries are beaten down before His face. Yet "David and his afflictions" were as true a type of Him as was David in his glory; and what seems but in contrast with His glory here is in fact but the manifestation of His fullest glory.

(*b*) We have now the establishment of His power, first defining it as representative authority: His horn being exalted in *Jehovah's Name*. He is the true King of Israel, acting for and glorifying God in all things; so that His faithfulness and loving-kindness are ever with Him. Then His kingdom fills the full limits of God's gift to Abraham, as far as the Sea (the Mediterranean) and the rivers (the Euphrates and the Nile). His relation to God is that of Son with a Father, in whom is His sanctuary of strength, His might and His salvation. Yea, He is first-born Son, and thus His kingdom swells into universal empire: He becomes supreme over the kings of the earth. With Him God's covenant stands fast

(iv.) His earthlyplace.
(v.) God with Him.
c (29–32): holiness manifested.
(i.) perpetual favor.
(ii.) If breach come in—
(iii.) and profanation.
(iv.) they shall taste of holiness.
d (33–35): but no failure.
(i.) with God.
(ii.) nor change.
(iii.) holiness itselfpledged.
e (36, 37): the issue.
(i.) stability.
(ii.) which establishes.

Also I will make him [my] [w]first-born,
supreme as to the [x]kings of the earth.
My loving-kindness will I keep for him for [y]ever,
and my [z]covenant shall stand fast with him.
And his [a]seed I will establish for ever,
and his [b]throne as the days of the heavens.
If his children [c]forsake my law,
and walk not in my judgments,—
If they [d]profane my statutes
and keep not my commandments,—
I also will visit their revolt with the [e]rod
and their iniquity with strokes,
But my loving-kindness will I not [f]utterly take from him,
nor belie my [g]faithfulness:
My covenant will I not profane,
nor [h]alter what is gone out of my lips.
Once by my holiness have I sworn,
that I will not [i]lie unto David.
His seed shall endure for ever,
and his throne as the [j]sun before me:
As the moon shall it be established for ever,
and [as] the witness in the expanse is firm. Selah.

w *cf.* Heb. 1. 6.
x *cf.* Ps. 72. 10, 11. *cf.* Rev. 19. 16.
y *cf.* Ps. 72. 17. *cf.* Ps. 55. 3.
z ver. 3.
a vers. 4. 36. *cf.* Acts 2. 30. Ps. 132. 11.
b *cf.* Ps. 45. 6.
c 2 Sa. 7. 14. *cf.* 1 Ki. 11. 1-13.
d *cf.* Dan. 9. 8.
e 1 Ki. 11. 31.
f 1 Ki. 11. 32. 2 Sa. 7. 15.
g vers. 1, 2.
h *cf.* Rom. 11. 29.
i *cf.* Nu. 23. 19. Tit. 1. 2.
j *cf.* Ps. 72. 17. Jer. 33. 20-22.

forever, His love being unchangeably with Him. David is evidently here only a faint, though true, type of wider glory.

(*c*) When His seed are contemplated, and not as to Himself, as if there could be doubt as to Him,—the necessary conditions of divine holiness appear. Yet His seed too shall be established for ever, even as His throne unchangeable. But here failure is foreseen as possible, and such an event provided for. In this case, holiness must be manifested in chastening: the character of God must be maintained. Christ is not contemplated here, but David's posterity in general, spite of whose unfaithfulness, the throne will be preserved. In fact in millennial days there will be a "prince" in Israel, of whom Ezekiel speaks, who will doubtless be of David's seed; for the house of David is distinctly mentioned for blessing at that time (Zech. xii. 7, 8, 10, 12). That he is prince only is of course due to the fact that he is but the vice-gerent of the real and glorious King.

(*d*) But with Christ, the true David, there can be no failure—no breach therefore of covenant in His case. Here holiness itself is pledged on His behalf, for by it God has sworn to Him, and cannot recall it.

(*e*) The promise to the seed is therefore reiterated, and the stability of His throne again positively assured; the comparisons made naturally carrying up our thoughts as Christians to the heavens to which that throne belongs, and where also a glorious fulfillment of this seed shall be found in the days to which all this points forward, when the thrones around the Throne shall be filled with a company which John in Spirit foresees and pictures for us;—a company that shall cast their crowns at the feet of the Lamb and cry: "Thou art worthy, for Thou hast redeemed us to God out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign over the earth."

Does there not even seem to be contained in the symbols that are used a reference to the kingdom of Christ in its full sun-like glory, as He represents it, and then in those lesser planetary thrones around the throne, where the light is but reflected, like the moon's, and yet where stability is assured also? as it is said

2 (38-51) b: The adverse side. a (38–41): God the adversary. (i.) to His King. (ii.) to His servant. (iii.) his fences gone.

And *thou* hast [k]rejected and cast off:
thou hast overflowed [with wrath] against thine anointed.
Thou hast made [l]void the covenant with thy servant:
thou hast profaned his crown in the earth.
Thou hast broken through all his [m]fences:
thou hast brought his strong-holds to ruin.

k Ps. 44. 9. Ps. 74. 1.
l *cf.* Ps.78.59-64. *cf.*Gal.3.15.
m Ps. 80. 12. Is. 5. 5.

of Israel's blessing in that day, "Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for Jehovah shall be thine everlasting Light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended" (Isa. lx. 20).

Here, plainly, the sun being stable establishes the moon, which as it cannot shine without him, with him cannot but shine.

2. We are now suddenly, however, plunged in darkness so extreme, that the very brightness before seems to add intensity to it. Of course it is unbelief: for there is no darkness like this, but through unbelief. Of course, the world is always a dark place, which the One Light itself shines on without illuminating, as it is said, "the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." But that too is the darkness of unbelief, and it is only too easily thus accounted for.

But here we have to see, not the darkness of the world, but of those who are not of the world, not of darkness,—the unbelief of believers, than which nothing else can be so distressing,—so humiliating to realize. Not that it had not plenty of arguments, no doubt: arguments that contradict what are first principles,—for him who believes in God at all, not to be argued about, but to be received as self-evident. It was but a question about God, entertained as a question, which darkened paradise itself to our first parents; and then they too in paradise even had arguments. Why a forbidden tree at all? why the knowledge of good and evil forbidden? why forbidden to be as God in knowing this? So the devil became man's trusted teacher, and has been such ever since.

Arguments! that begin in a suspicion, which "makes the meat it feeds on"! arguments drawn from a world that is out of course, forgetting what has put it out of course! and that are meant at best honestly to prove whether men it is that are fallen or God is! Ah, how the eyes are cleared by the simple apprehension of what is so obvious, that "God is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man, that He should repent"; and that "clouds and darkness are round about Him" is not the *first step* in disproof that "God is light."

How strange, perhaps, to find arguments of this kind in an inspired psalm! but how good that God has permitted thus all the conflict and contradiction that can be in the hearts of His people to come out, as it were with a strange, unconscious simplicity, and to be poured out to *Him*, who in the serene glory of His presence, not so much meets the arguments, as shines forth in His own blessedness, and they are gone, as a dream on waking. Job-like, our eyes see Him the Unrepenting, and we it is who abhor ourselves, and repent in dust and ashes. So it is here: the unbelief is poured out here,—seems to find no answer, passes and is gone, and in one single, joyous, out-burst at the end we learn that it is gone. No argument is there at all, but the sweet adoring rapture which says all—

"Blessed be Jehovah for ever!
Amen and Amen."

But we must go through the strange dark road that leads us thither.

(*a*, *b*) "And *Thou* hast rejected and cast off: Thou hast overflowed with wrath against Thine anointed. Thou hast made void the covenant of Thy servant: Thou hast profaned his crown to the ground." Absalom's rebellion might furnish the occasion for such complaint; but for the full meaning we must go beyond this. David's seed has long apparently been set aside, and the earthly throne has had no tenant: it might seem as if it would never have again. So have argued Christians themselves who should know better, appealing to Christ being upon

All that [n]pass by the way plunder him:
he is become a [o]reproach unto his neighbors.
Thou hast exalted the right hand of his [p]adversaries:
thou hast made all his enemies [q]rejoice.
Thou hast also turned the edge of his sword,
and not made him to [r]stand in the battle.
Thou hast made his brightness to cease,
and [s]cast his throne down to the ground.
Thou hast shortened the days of his prime:
thou hast covered him with [t]shame. Selah.
[u]How long, Jehovah, wilt thou hide thyself? for ever?
shall thy [v]wrath burn like fire?
Remember how [w]short-lived I am:
why hast thou created for vanity all the children of men?
What man liveth that shall not see death?
shall he deliver his soul from the [x]power of Sheol? Selah.
Where, Lord, are thy [y]former loving-kindnesses,
[which] thou swarest unto David in thy truth?
Remember, Lord, the [z]reproach of thy servants—
that I bear in my bosom [that of] all the many peoples—
Wherewith thine enemies, Jehovah, have reproached,—
wherewith they have reproached the steps of thine [a]anointed.

[b]Blessed be Jehovah for ever!
[c]Amen and amen.

(iv.) weakness, so that any can plunder.
b (42-45): other adversaries.
(i.) but whose strength is from God.
(ii.) the battle against him.
(iii.) his glory gone.
(iv.) his vigor gone.
c (46-51): remember, Jehovah!
(i.) for ever?
(ii.) subject to death.
(iii.) with no power of resurrection.
(iv.) failure with Thee?
(v.) of Thy government?
(vi.) the limit reached.
3 (52): The worship of faith.

n cf. Lam. 1. 12.
o Ps. 79. 4. Ps. 80. 6. Jer. 19. 8.
p etc. ver. 22. cf. Lam. 1. 5, 10.
q Lam. 1. 21. Lam. 2. 15, 16.
r cf. Ps. 78. 9. Deu. 28. 7, 25.
s cf. Jer. 52. 10, 11. ver. 39.
t Ps. 44. 9.
u Ps. 79. 5.
v Ps. 6. 1.
w cf. Ps. 71. 18.
x Ps. 49. 7-9. cf. Ps. 86. 13.
y vers. 20, 21, etc.
z ver. 41.
a Ps. 2. 2.
b Ps. 41. 13. Ps. 72. 18, 19. Ps. 106. 48. Ps. 150.
c cf. Rev. 1. 6.

the throne of heaven as if that were the fulfillment of the covenant here. But David's throne is not the throne of heaven; and the greater glory yet cannot, as that, include the less. Man's sin has here come in to interrupt and delay a blessing which, through the changeless grace of God, it cannot set aside; and the divine declaration has already provided for the understanding of the present suspension of the promise, though the delay be long. Meanwhile the utter collapse of the nation has caused the gap in the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy which God has filled in with New Testament blessing and much wider and fuller grace.

(c) What follows here is the picture of a ruin familiar to us all. Only instead of being an argument against God's faithfulness, it is an illustration of it. In the end that is approaching the remnant of the Jewish people will undoubtedly take up and plead with God the words which the Spirit of God has prepared for them in this psalm. Their fleeting generations passing away into Sheol without power of recovery from it, and under the wrath of God against sin, are put before Him, to plead in their need and hopelessness, save through Him, the renewal of those loving-kindnesses sworn to David in His truth. They too, His servants, though under the reproach of all the nations round, shall they not be remembered by that holy but merciful government—the reproach under which they now are being also the reproach of Christ Himself? So it will be necessarily when antichrist is carrying away the multitudes with the "strong delusion" in which apostate Christendom and apostate Israel will come to a common end. Here the limit of God's patience will in fact be reached, and in their extremity the true Joseph, the rejected of His brethren, will be made known to them as their Deliverer.

3. But nothing of this is here. Only the pleading of the covenant, David's covenant, those "sure mercies," whose fulfillment to them has been so long delayed. Here in place of that fulfillment is, as already said, the out-burst of joy and praise with which now the book ends. Jehovah! Blessed be He for ever! Even though as yet upon earth all seems to be contradiction to the promise and faithfulness of God,—Jehovah He is, the covenant-God,—the Unchangeable. Not merely when we see, but when we see not, let us bless His Name. Faith *is* where we see not: here is its glory to God and its victory; for victorious it is and must be: shout it in the face of all His foes,

"Blessed be Jehovah for ever!
Amen, and Amen."

BOOK IV.

The fourth book of the Psalms corresponds in this way with the book of Numbers; and it opens manifestly with a strain of the wilderness, a prayer of Israel's divinely-appointed leader, and in which is heard the lament over the generation dying there, but expanded and interpreted for us as a broad general lesson as to man's condition, sad enough, but most profitable to be learned. From this, however, as its starting-point it goes on to very different themes. Failed man does not occupy us, as he does not where his judgment is realized aright, but Another displaces him, and the results begin to be put before us from the next psalm on. The earth has found a new Adam, in glorious contrast to the first; and, put into His hand, it bursts out into the glad spring-time of eternal summer. Man is recovered to God, and the bond that unites him is one that cannot now be severed.

In the most beautiful way is this mediatorial link put before us. In the first subdivision of the book it is His spiritual perfection, abiding in Him from whom all others have departed, and this bringing in for Him the Creator, and making all nature subject to Him, which thus comes into sabbatic joy and is established in its new Head: "the world also is established that it cannot be moved."

Thus the breach with God being removed, in the second subdivision Jehovah, banished by man's sin, comes back to it, to fill it with blessing. He reigns gloriously, amid universal gladness.

But this is evidently not as yet the complete view; and therefore we begin again in the third subdivision of the book. Here, in the first psalm (the 101st) the Ruler of the earth for God is seen and the character of His righteous rule. But where is He to be found? In the next psalm, the time of blessing is looked at as at hand. Jehovah ready to appear in glory, and build up Zion, and execute His purposes of blessing for the earth. But He who sees all this, and with his heart full of it, is Himself under the hand of God, nay, His wrath. His days are shortened, and (quite after the manner of the ninetieth psalm with which we began) He contrasts His brief years coming to their end with the eternity of God. He seems one involved Himself in the ruin of the old creation, and, if *He* be the King of Zion, with no hope of filling that place. His voice comes to a close with this appeal to the Eternal. We wait for the answer: an astonishing one it is. This suffering, dying Man is *Himself* the Eternal: God and man are one in Him; all creation is in His hand, and the children of His servants serve Him in all their generations.

So the 103d psalm follows with its song of forgiveness and redemption; the mercy of Jehovah being from age to age on them that fear Him; and the next psalm celebrates Him as Creator also. The last two psalms of the book close it with Israel's praise and heartfelt confession of their past, now cleared away.

SUBD. 1.

The first subdivision has already been sufficiently characterized. Christ is here seen as the perfect and unfallen Man, the uniting bond of Creator and crea-

BOOK IV. (Psalms xc.–cvi.)

The failed first man replaced by the Second, and the world established under His hand.

SUBD. 1. (Ps. xc.–xciii.)

Christ the uniting-bond of Creator and creation.

Ps. xc.

[1]PSALM XC.

The first man.

A prayer of [d]Moses, the man of God.

1 (i, 2): The Lord of life. (i.) ever. (ii.) contrasted with all else thus.

LORD, *thou* hast been a [e]habitation for us
in all generations.
Before the [f]mountains were brought forth,
or thou hadst formed the earth and the world,
and [g]from age to age art thou, O Mighty!

d Deu. 33. 1. *cf.* Num. 14. 26-39.
e Deu. 33. 27. *cf.* Ps. 71. 3.
f Prov. 8. 25, 26.
g Ex. 3. 14, 15. *cf.* Jno. 8. 58. *cf.* Ps. 103. 17.

tion. In it we have the personal link; the second being the actual salvation of the earth by Jehovah coming back to it again, the renewal of relationship thus with it, and in a more manifest and glorious way than ever.

PSALM XC.

The preface to this is necessarily the picture of man as fallen away from God—the first man, as Adam's seed may be most justly called, if Christ be in His day but a Second. The history of the world has fully proved this fall, and the broad fact of death being upon all the race has put God's seal upon it. It is this last upon which Moses naturally dwells as the most concise and clearest argument. It is what the law also has demonstrated by experiment, conclusively, in saying, "the man that doeth these things shall *live* in them," and "the soul that sinneth, it shall *die*." The current views of the law have removed all this from the field of practical observation and common knowledge into the unseen future, so that men may dream and speculate upon it as they list. God's purpose is that it should be present, definite certainty, that "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified." The very effectiveness with which it gives this has been by the strange perversion of unbelief made an argument *against* its having a meaning which is too plain to be the right one!

1. But if death be that which has come in through sin, then life—immortal existence here—is the alternative; and for this man was originally created. It was necessarily conditional upon his continuing with God in the uprightness which he had at the beginning. Dependent he was, and must remain; for without this no creature-blessing is possible. "In God we live and move and have our being," and the recognition of this is uprightness for us. This is the key to the statement with which the psalm here begins.

"Lord, Thou hast been a habitation for us, in all generations": not, as in the common version, "*our* habitation"; for, alas, man has not profited by that which God has kept ever open to him. Paradise indeed has vanished from the earth, but the door of the Father's house, which he has left,—for naturally, God being the "Father of spirits," "we are also His offspring" (Heb. xii. 9; Acts xvii. 28),—has never been closed against him. "The Lord"—not here Jehovah, but the Ruler of the earth and men—is always the Lord of life; and He is the Mighty and Eternal One: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, and from age to age, Thou art, O Mighty" (*Et*). Here then is abundant resource, the Fountain of life ever open; the link with eternity in the Eternal God Himself, never distant from His creatures. How has it availed for man? how, after all, has he profited by it?

2 (3-6): Man under death.
(i.) by His will.
(ii.) contrasted with Himself.
(iii.) the realization.
(iv.) frailty.

Thou makest frail man to [h]return to dust,*
and sayest, Return, ye children of men!
But a [i]thousand years in thy sight are as yesterday when it is past,
and [as] a watch in the night.
Thou carriest them away as a [j]flood:
they are [as] a [k]sleep:
in the [l]morning they are like grass [that] groweth up;
In the morning it flourisheth and groweth up:
by the evening it is [m]cut down and withereth.

3 (7-10): The holiness of it.
(i.) the cause.
(ii.) in judgment.
(iii.) full realization.

For we are consumed in thine [n]anger,
and by thy hot wrath are troubled.
Thou hast set our [o]iniquities before thee:
our [p]secret [sins] in the light of thy countenance.
For all our days pass away in thine [q]overflowing [wrath],
we spend our years as a [r]thought.

h Gen. 3. 19. Eccl. 12. 7. *ctr.* 1 Cor. 15. 50-57.
i 2 Pet. 3. 8.
j *cf.* Gen. 6. 17.
k Job 20. 8. Ps. 73. 20.
l Ps. 103. 15, 16. Is. 40. 6-8.
m Job 14. 1, 2. *cf.* Ps. 102. 11.
n *cf.* Ps. 95. 10, 11. Ps. 39. 10-13.
o Ps. 50. 21.
p Ps. 19. 12. *cf.* Jno. 4. 16-19.
q *cf.* Gen. 5. 29.
r Jas. 4. 14.

* "Crumbling."

2. The answer is plain: it is no matter of speculation. *Once*, and but once, in the days before the flood, a man had walked with God 365 years of life, and then, without seeing death, been removed to heaven to walk with Him there. That life of Enoch, on which the shadow of death had never fallen, might suffice to show the possibility. Practically it might be left out in such an estimate as this: the answer remains really unaffected, or made the more solemn only by that possibility unavailed of: "Thou makest frail man (*Enosh*) return to dust; and sayest, Return, ye children of men." So God had to decide. It was His will, yet not of His will. And there remained but as contrast with His feeble creatures, that eternity of His into which they entered not: the thousand years that transcended even the life of a Methuselah, in His sight as but the *remembrance* of the past yesterday"; and in its darkness of shadow, only "as a watch in the night."

But however brief, there is a long lesson in that brevity, and in that shadowed life, which is from God. The psalmist is pondering it before Him, and cannot let it go. "*Thou* carriest them away as with a flood"—"—"washest them away," literally—no doubt it is of the deluge he is thinking: manifest judgment, and yet generalized here, as the lot of every one, though he go singly. "They are a sleep": what is appointed for man's refreshment, though a sign of his frailty and dependence, yet but an incident, becomes, as it were, the whole thing. They themselves are that—a sleep without awaking!

The images of nature over which he was once appointed lord, nay, of the grass under his feet, become images in which he may see himself, now leveled to the general condition of that which was his kingdom only, and subject to him. "Like grass which groweth up:—in the morning it flourisheth and groweth up; by the evening it is cut down and withereth."

3. Such then is, very obviously, man's condition: too obviously, it might be thought, to need the comment. But this is not ended yet; and the reason of it is now dwelt upon, and owned to God. The cause of it is His anger, which is consuming us, His hot wrath, which distresses us. But why such anger? Ah, it is not the unreasoning glow of passion, but discriminating judgment that weighs things in the evenest balances. "Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee:" and, with knowledge from which nothing can escape, "our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance." Thus in the full realization of what is here—"all our days pass away in Thine overflowing wrath:" upon us with that steady per-

(iv.) vanity.

The [s]days of our years are seventy years;
and if by reason of strength they be eighty years,
yet is the [t]pride of them but travail and vanity:
for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

4 (11-17): The practical use of the experience.
(i.) the truth of fear.

Who knoweth the [u]power of thine anger?
even [v]according to the fear of thee is thine overflowing [wrath].

(ii.) the service rendered.

So make us to know the [w]number of our days,
that we may acquire a heart of wisdom.

(iii.) return, Jehovah!

Return, Jehovah! [x]how long?
and let it [y]repent thee concerning thy servants.

(iv.) for true creature-experience.

[z]Satisfy us with thy loving-kindness in the morning,
that we may sing for joy and be [a]glad all our days.

(v.) compensation.

Make us glad [b]according to the days thou hast afflicted us,
and the years in which we have seen evil.

[s] *cfr.* Gen. 5. 27, etc.
[t] *cf.* Ps. 49. 11, 12.
[u] Ps. 76. 7.
[v] *cf.* Job 42. 5, 6.
[w] Ps. 39. 4. Deu. 32. 29.
[x] Ps. 6. 3.
[y] Ps. 135. 14.
[z] Ps. 36. 8. Ps. 63. 5, 6.
[a] *cf.* Phil. 4. 4.
[b] *cf.* Is. 40. 2.

sistence under which a Job might plead, "How long wilt Thou not look away from me?" and the psalmist, "Look away from me, that I may recover strength." "We spend our days as a thought": perhaps, rather, "a moan."

Then comes the reiterated statement of man's vanity, the experience, now shrunk from near a thousand to seventy or eighty years, in which man's pride, if it last so long, goes out in travail. Soon cut off indeed, we fly away.

4. But this experience has, therefore, its practical use, to which the rest of the psalm is devoted; and here it turns from contemplation and confession into prayer. "Who knoweth," the psalmist asks, "the power of Thine anger?" One might think He had pressed it heavily upon man; but how could He do less? look, after all, at the folly that is bound up in man's heart! He only strives to banish thought, "kill time," put away conviction, do Satan's work for him as completely as possible. And yet no thought can exceed the truth of God's anger against sin: "even according to the fear of Thee is Thine overflowing wrath."

Let us not shun, then, the reality of things, he asks: let us profit by it: "so make us to number our days, that we may acquire a heart of wisdom." Here is the "beginning of wisdom"; for here is the "fear of the Lord," which is that. Here the soul finds the need it has of Him, turns to Him, seeks to have Him turn to it: and so the psalmist: "Return, Jehovah"—not simply "Lord" now, but the nearer name of covenant-goodness,—"and let it repent Thee concerning Thy servants." For as soon as man repents, God has declared that He will repent of the evil that He thought to do to them (Jer. xviii. 8); and the story of Jonah and Nineveh is a precious illustration of His mercies in this way.

But to avert His judgment is comparatively a little thing. The heart truly touched longs after Himself. How can a creature be satisfied apart from his Creator? "Satisfy us with Thy loving-kindness in the morning, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days." This joy in God, how rarely is it to be found after this fashion! our days come generally clad in much soberer apparel than is implied in this. And yet this is not less than we may all of us possess, and should possess. Nay, the soul taught of God in His wondrous ways of grace, claims compensation even for the affliction it has known before. "Make us glad according to the days Thou hast afflicted us, and for the years in which we have seen evil." Think of compensation from a judge for just judgment inflicted! But rather it is a Father's heart that is free to show itself in wiping off the tears that for a time were salutary. It was a discipline which he prays now may be effectual, the "work appear," and His "glory" shine out after the storm is passed; aye, and even "upon the children" afterwards.

(vi.) the result and limit of discipline.

(vii.) the perfect blessing.

Let [c]thy work appear unto thy servants,
and thy [d]glory upon their children:
Yea, let the [e]beauty of Jehovah our God be upon us
and [f]establish the work of our hands with regard to us,—
even the work of our hands, establish thou it.

[c] *cf.* Is. 52. 10.
[d] *cf.* Is. 40. 5.
[e] Ps. 27. 4.
[f] *cf.* Ps. 138. 8. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 58.

Ps. xci.

[g]PSALM XCI.

The Second Man.

1 (1, 2): The principle of perpetuity. (i.) the promise. (ii.) the response of the Dependent One.

HE that [h]abideth in the secret place of the [i]Most High
shall lodge under the shadow of the [j]Almighty.
I will say of [k]Jehovah, [He is] my [l]refuge and my [m]fortress:
my [n]God; I [n]trust in him.

[g] *cf.* Jno. 3. 12, 13.
[h] *cf.* Gen. 14. 18.
[i] *cf.* Gen. 17. 1. *cf.* Ps. 17. 8.
[j] *cf.* Ex. 6. 3.
[k] Ps. 142. 5.
[l] Ps. 18. 2.
[m] *cf.* Ps. 22. 1.
[n] *cf.* Ps. 16. 1.

The last verse closes with the prayer for perfect blessing, "the beauty of Jehovah our God upon us," nay, "the work of our hands" established, too. And this he is emphatic about: for "whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected" (1 Jno. ii. 5). The glory of God is indeed accomplished in finding not only a free way for His love to show itself, but fruit also from the reconciled heart, upon which He can put the seal of His own approbation.

Psalm XCI.

Thus the ruin of man has been seen, and it is utter. As a being made for a dependent life of immortal blessing, he has failed to maintain this; and death is the seal of condemnation, his taking from the earth in which he was placed. What follows death does not come into view, for it is not in question. It is death itself that is so complete an assurance that God has judged and set aside the creature He has made. Thus he has lost God as his habitation; and, though he take to heart the lesson of his judgment, and look back with desire of heart to the place whence he has fallen, the way is not yet found by which he shall be reinstated in it.

It is this that the ninety-first psalm begins to open up to us. The whole is not by any means told in it; but a commencement is made, and with what is first and central in its relation to it. We learn here of a *Second Man*—not called so, indeed, but most evidently in opposition to the universal condition of men as shown us in the preceding psalm, and designedly set before us in this character. It is One who *has* "made Jehovah, even the Most High, His habitation," and who can claim rightly all the consequences of this. No plague can come near Him, no power of the enemy prevail against him; heaven provides Him with a watchful and powerful escort; all nature is in agreement with Him: thus there is a Man who is entitled indeed to be called a "Second Man," though but a part of the truth about Him has yet been told.

1. The principle of perpetuity in life and blessing is first of all stated, and in terms which directly refer to the previous psalm. "He that abideth in the secret of the Most High shall lodge under the shadow of the Almighty." That is, the protection of One all-competent to protect is assured to the man who abides in the secret—or "dwells in the secret place"—of the Most High: the God who is going to take His place as that, in those millennial times which are to come for the earth,—King of kings and Lord of lords.

Manifestly, this is the "Lord" of the previous psalm, who has been a "habitation for us in all generations"; and, as plainly, this "habitation" is that very "secret," "or secret place"—of the Most High which it has shown us to have become such: man having dropped out of the knowledge of it, and lost the resulting blessing.

2 (3-8): The answer in preservation and deliverance.
(i.) from God.
(ii.) in the love of relationship.
(iii.) inward realization.
(iv.) nature at peace.
(v.) divine government.
(vi.) the end of the wicked.

For he shall deliver thee from the [o]snare of the trapper,—
from the destroying [p]pestilence.
He shall [q]cover thee with his feathers,
and beneath his wings shalt thou find refuge:
his [r]truth shall be shield and buckler.
Thou shalt not be [s]afraid of the terror of the night,—
for the [t]arrow that flieth by day:
For the [u]pestilence walking in darkness,—
for [v]destruction that wasteth at noon-day:
A [w]thousand shall fall by thy side,
and ten thousand at thy right hand,
[but] it shall not come [x]nigh thee.
Only with thine eyes shalt thou [y]behold,
and see the [z]reward of the wicked.

o *cf.* Mat. 22. 15, etc.
p ver. 6.
q Ps. 61. 4. *cf.* De. 33. 12. *cf.* Ruth 2. 12.
r *cf.* Ps. 40. 10, 11.
s *cf.* Jno. 18. 3-9. Ps. 112. 7.
t *cf.* Jno. 9. 4. *cf.* Jno. 11. 7-9.
u *cf.* Mat. 4. 1, etc.
v *cf.* Lk. 13. 31, 31.
w *cf.* Ps. 34. 9-14. *ctr.* Ps. 22. 4-6.
x *cf.* Rom. 6. 9, 10.
y *cf.* Ps. 37. 34. z *cf.* 2 Thess. 1. 7-10.

When God appeared to the man who was to bring Israel out of Egypt, and gave him his commission to do so, Moses desires to know by what name he is to declare God to them. And the Name of God to-day is hidden from multitudes by a worse confusion than that which began at Babel. The day is yet to come when in all the earth "there shall be One Jehovah and His Name One" (Zech. xiv. 9). But these many names only reveal the practical estrangement of men from Him whose character His Name reveals. Little hope can there be naturally as to a creature who permits even the name of his God to slip away from him! But who abides in the secret place of the Most High? We have already had the answer.

Yet in the next verse a response is heard, which at first indeed may not seem to be as distinctly indicative of the Speaker as it afterwards is found to be: "I will say of Jehovah," he replies, "He is my Refuge and Fortress: my God: I trust in Him." Faith in all times would have answered in similar terms, it might be said: and this is true. The Spirit of Christ in all His people has indeed used the language of Christ, and of course, truly; yet how different after all is the One Voice from the others! That the voice of absolute Truth has spoken here is made known by the echoes it awakens around, and presently by that of God Himself which attests it. That this psalm was written of the Messiah, Satan surely knew when he quoted to Him the eleventh and twelfth verses with the comment, "If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down." And the whole structure of the book, as we have considered it, and shall do more at large, proves the same thing.

2. The words used are those of absolute dependence; and now another voice, which is that surely of the Spirit of prophesy, answers again with the assurance of how completely this faith is justified and made good. He has made God His refuge, and shall find it a perfect and absolute one: from the snare of the trapper and the pestilence alike He will deliver; and in the tender love of endeared relationship, covering with His feathers and the broad shelter of His outstretched wings,—love pledged to Him who has cast Himself entirely upon it, so that His truth becomes a shield and buckler.

The inward realization answers to this perfect care: no terror of the night, no arrow flying openly by day, alarms. Nature is at peace with Him with whom its God is: pestilence nor destruction touches Him; and the fall of thousands round Him only demonstrates the more the complete protection which the divine government throws round the Man whose sole reliance is in God. Only shall He see with His own eyes the end of the wicked.

3. A new division of the psalm begins here: which seems, at first sight, very much a repetition of what has been said before, but goes beyond it, and opens

3 (9-16): The Sanctuary-refuge.
(i.) Jehovah the Supreme.
(ii.) security.
(iii.) heavenly escort.
(iv.) casualty hindered.
(v.) divine government.
(vi.) His triumph.

Because *thou* hast [a]made Jehovah, [b]my refuge,
[even] the Most High, thy habitation,
There shall no evil befall thee,
nor plague come near thy [c]tent.
For he shall give his [d]angels charge respecting thee,
to [e]preserve thee in all thy ways.
Upon their hands they shall bear thee up,
lest thou [f]dash thy foot against a stone.
Thou shalt [g]tread upon the [h]lion and the [i]adder:
the young lion and the serpent shalt thou trample under foot.
Because he hath set his [j]love on me, I will deliver him:
I will [k]set him on high, because he hath [l]known my Name.

a *cf.* Mat. 26. 53, 54.
b *cf.* Ps. 22. 26 with Ps. 40. 3.
c *cf.* Jno. 1. 14.
d Mat. 4. 5-7, 11.
e *cf.* Lk. 22. 43.
f *cf.* Mt. 1. 20. *cf.* Mt. 2. 13-15, 19-23.
g *cf.* Gen. 3. 15.
h *cf.* 1 Pet. 5. 8.
i *cf.* Is. 11. 1-8.
j *cf.* Jno. 14. 31.
k *cf.* Eph. 1. 20-22.
l *cf.* Jno. 10. 15; *cf.* Jno. 17. 25.

the heavenly side of blessing. He has made Jehovah, the refuge of His saints, the Supreme, His habitation; and heaven opens towards Him in consequence. Notice the words here for the first time, "*my* refuge." It is but a hint indeed, for as yet there can be no more, but a real hint nevertheless, of such refuge opening now to others, through Him who has in fact never known nor sought any but in God. And He has *made* Him His habitation; not professed to do so, nor labored to do so, but done so—abode in God as a new and perfect Man, for whom no excuse is to be made, and no reduction from the full demand for absolute perfection. Hence evil has no hold on Him, nor opportunity against Him: "there shall no evil befall Thee, nor plague come near Thy tent." "*Tent*," mark: so that, with all the perfection of Manhood which is His, He is yet a Sojourner and Pilgrim upon the earth. He is not another man of the earth merely, a mere Adam that has never fallen; and who by virtue of that very unfallen state, *could never* have been a pilgrim. But here is One whose glory shines out in His very humiliation. He is a Wayfarer, not because a steward turned out of his stewardship; outside paradise, indeed, but not banished from it; One with His home in God, yet in an alien world, and whither should His steps be directed, but towards God His home, and in the place where His home is?

Thus even here heaven opens to Him. He is in a hostile world, and must have an escort; and angels are charged concerning Him, to keep Him in all His ways. Those blessed feet, so traveling through a place which is all in disorder, and might seem even hap-hazard, must be preserved from casualty.

But there is the power of the enemy also, "the lion and the adder"—force and craft. Both must give way to Him. He turns not aside, but tramples them under His feet. Good is ordained to victory, necessarily, or it would not be God that ruled: and that is, I suppose, why the number here is that of divine government. We do not see things work in this simple manner doubtless, and there is plenty of room left for exercise, and for faith. But the rule itself is absolute, and must be.

And now the voice of God Himself is heard; and He too owns and testifies to the Man in whom He delights. Heart has met heart: "because He has set His love upon Me, I will deliver Him." And here we find where His path necessarily ends: "I will set Him on high, because He has known My Name."

But this does not begin a new section, apparently, and therefore must come under the number which speaks of victory; at first sight difficult to understand or recognize as appropriate. Yet in fact this is the time of which it is said: "He has *gone up on high; He has led captivity captive;* He has received gifts for men." And this connects readily with the previous verse,—the power of the enemy trampled in the dust. Thus the structure reveals its significance; and

(vii.) perfect blessing.

(viii.) to eternity.

He shall [m]call on me, and I will answer him:
I will be with him in [n]strait,
I will [o]deliver him and [p]honor him.
With [q]length of days will I satisfy him,
and [r]show him my salvation.

[m] Ps. 61.1,2.
[n] Ps. 63. 7–11.
[o] Ps. 40. 2.
[p] *cf.* Phil. 2. 9–11.
[q] Ps. 21. 1-7.
[r] Ps. 20. 1-5.

Ps. xcii.

1 (1-5): Jehovah, the Supreme.

(i.) right to praise.

(ii.) for loving-kindness in opposite circumstances.

[s]PSALM XCII.

Sanctuary-praise.

A psalm-song for the [s]Sabbath-day.

[s] *cf.* Lev.23. 1-3. *cf.* Ps. 95.11 with Ps.85. 1.

IT is [t]good to give thanks to Jehovah:
and to psalm unto thy Name, O [u]Most High!
To [v]declare thy loving-kindness in the [w]morning
and thy faithfulness in the nights:

[t] Ps. 135. 3. Ps. 147. 1. Ps. 33. 1.
[u] Ps. 91. 1.
[v] Ps. 26. 7.
[w] *cf.* Nu. 9. 15, 16.

again we have a hint, and yet more than a hint of a work accomplished for others: not the cross (for that is not in the line of this psalm, and involves the giving up in grace of what is seen to be proper to Him here) but that which in fact triumphed in the cross itself. For the priest's white linen robe was that in which he went in to God; and when He cried "with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him *out* of death, He was heard for His piety" (Heb. v. 7). By the power of His absolute perfection He rose necessarily from all that He endured, into His own sphere: and this was truly the greatest of victories, and is perfectly in the line of the psalm before us.

Accordingly the next verse reminds us of the cross itself, although the peculiar features of the cross are not in it. There is the call that was heard, but no forsaking: "He shall call on Me, and I will answer Him: I will be with Him in strait; I will deliver Him and honor Him:"—a perfect response to personal perfection; while the last verse, with its significant number, overlaps time and stretches through eternity. "With length of days will I satisfy Him, and show Him My salvation." Compare Ps. xxi. 4 for the interpretation: "He asked life of Thee,—Thou hast given it Him: length of days for ever and aye." It is the same Person before us in both psalms.

Psalm XCII.

We have now an out-burst of praise consequent upon this. It is not yet the full praise which we shall have before the book closes, and this for a very evident reason. Redemption and the work needed to accomplish this have not yet been seen with any sufficiency. The personal perfection of the Second Man could not of itself lift up the fallen creature. His own words in reference to this are plain, that "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (Jno. xii. 24). Union with Him is not in incarnation, but as risen from the dead; and only thus can God become the Sanctuary-refuge of fallen men.

Yet we have already had "Jehovah my refuge" from the lips of faith in the preceding psalm, and the present one is clearly sanctuary-praise. The means of accomplishment have not yet been brought out; but the One who accomplishes it has been before us: and as the poor man in Israel might bring his meat-offering for atonement, though "the blood that maketh atonement" was not found in it (Lev. v. 11–13), so we are permitted already to rejoice in the fruit of what has not itself become our possession. By and bye we shall be taken out of the ranks of the poor, and enriched with the wealth which has been already secured to us, and able to bring to God the full sin-offering and burnt-offering too. Meanwhile God's delight is in His Son; and as the Sabbath followed the manna in the wilderness (Ex. xvi.), so now already have we here a song. He is worthy; although the fullness of His glory has not yet been seen.

1. "Jehovah, the Most High," are titles which connect the present psalm with

(iii.) the instruments of praise.
(iv.) the experience.
(v.) the exercise.

Upon a [x]ten-stringed instrument and on the lyre,
with a solemn sound upon the harp.
For thou hast [y]made me glad with thy work, Jehovah:
I will sing for joy at the work of thy hands.
Jehovah, how [z]great are thy works!
thy [a]thoughts are very deep.

2 (6-10): The enemies.
(i.) without knowledge.
(ii.) spring up but to be destroyed.
(iii.) the Sanctuary-refuge.
(iv.) prostration of vain workers.

A [b]brutish man knoweth not:
and a [c]fool doth not understand this.
When the wicked [d]spring as the grass,
and all the workers of vanity flourish,
[it is but] to be [e]destroyed for ever:
But thou art a [f]high place for ever, Jehovah.
For lo, thine enemies, Jehovah,—
for lo, thine [g]enemies shall perish:
all the workers of vanity shall be [h]scattered.

(v.) man with God.

3 (11-15): The portion of the saint.
(i.) his knowledge as to the right that shall be.
(ii.) the increase of the righteous.

But my [i]horn shalt thou exalt like [the horn of] an aurochs:
I shall be [j]anointed with fresh oil.

And mine eye shall [k]see as to mine enemies:
mine ears shall hear as to the [l]evil-doers that rise against me.
The righteous shall [m]flourish like the palm-tree:
he shall grow like a [n]cedar on Lebanon.

x Ps. 144. 9.
y cf. Gen. 21 6. Ps. 126.1-3.
z Ps. 111.2,3.
a Is. 55. 8, 9. cf. Jer. 29. 11.
b Ps. 49. 20.
c Ps. 53. 1. Lk. 12. 20, 21.
d Job 21. 7-21. Lk. 16. 19-23. Ps.37.35,36.
e 2 Thess. 1. 9. Phil. 3. 19.
f cf. Is.57.15.
g Lk. 19. 27. Ps. 37. 20.
h Prov. 20. 26. Ps. 59. 11.
i Nu. 23. 22. Deu. 33. 17. Ps.89.17,24.
j Ps. 23. 5. Is.32.15-18. cf.Zech.4.6.
k Ps. 59. 10. cf. Is.66.23, 24.
l Ps. 27. 2.
m Ps. 1. 3. Is. 65. 22.
n Nu. 24. 6.

the last; and the latter we know as God's millennial name, when He shall be manifestly supreme over all the earth. The time is now in view, and in the next psalm comes: Jehovah reigns, and the earth is subject. Here already the soul celebrates Him in this way, and sees how "good" (or "right") it is to celebrate Him: His loving-kindness in the morning, His faithfulness in the nights. In opposite circumstances He is the same still; in darkness as in light His love works and declares itself.

The various instruments of praise are set in motion therefore: all that is responsive to man's hand is made to praise Him. We can discriminate little between them; for nothing but an antiquarian interest seems to attach to them in men's account. The experience of Jehovah's work has loosed also the tongue in praise; while His works as the expression of the deep thoughts of God, give abundant exercise to all man's faculties.

2. But there is conflict and opposition, as we well know: there are enemies to God among the creatures He has made. There are brutish men leveled with the animals below, who have shut themselves off from what none but themselves could deprive them of. They understand not even the lot of the wicked which is before their eyes, who spring up as the grass, but to be destroyed; while Jehovah remains the "high place" of His people for ever. To faith it is simple that Jehovah's enemies must perish; and the workers of vanity incur the doom of vanity. "But my horn," says the psalmist, "shalt Thou exalt like the horn of an aurochs:" the power conferred being not merely what men count that, but the power of the Spirit: "I shall be anointed with fresh oil."

3. Finally, the portion of the saint is given in the last five verses. First, as to his enemies, he will see surely that which comes for them. It is not needful to say what, it is so evident. The common principles of right secure it: if God is, that which is right shall be.

On the other hand, the righteous shall flourish like the palm and grow as the cedar of Lebanon. The soil of their planting is the best surely for this: planted

(iii.) in Jehovah's house.

They that are planted in the [o]house of Jehovah
shall flourish in the courts of our God.

(iv.) no failure.

They shall still be vigorous in [p]old age:
they shall have sap and be green:

(v.) in divine government.

To declare that Jehovah is [q]upright:
he is my [r]rock, and there is no perversity in him.

o Ps. 52. 8. Hos. 14. 5-8.
p *cf.* Ps. 71. 18 with Is. 65. 20-23.
q Is. 11. 4, 5.
r Ps. 18. 2.

Ps. xciii.

[s]PSALM XCIII.

The creature in the creature place.

1 (1, 2): Jehovah reigns.

(i.) in power in which the world too abides.

JEHOVAH [t]reigneth:
he is clothed with [u]majesty:
Jehovah is clothed, he hath [v]girded himself with strength;
the world also is [w]established, that it shall not be moved.

(ii.) the throne established.

Thy [w]throne is established of old:
thou art from [x]eternity.

s Ps. 97. 1. Ps. 99. 1. Is. 24. 23. Mi. 4. 7.
t Ps. 104. 1. Hab. 3. 3-7.
u Ps. 65. 6. *cf.* Is. 62. 8.
v Ps. 96. 10. *cf.* Jer. 33. 20-22. *cf.* Hos. 2. 21, 22.
w Ps. 45. 6. Rev. 4. 2, 3.
x Ps. 90. 2. *cf.* Mi. 5. 2.

2 (3-5): Confirmed by opposition.

(i.) rebellion.

The [y]floods have lifted up, Jehovah,—
the floods have lifted up their voice:
the floods lift up their [z]breakers.

(ii.) the contrast.

Than the sound of many waters, the mighty breakers of the sea,
[a]mightier is Jehovah on high.

(iii.) the holiness of Jehovah's house.

Thy [b]testimonies are very sure:
[c]holiness becometh thy house, Jehovah,
to length of days.

y *cf.* Ps. 2. 1-3 with Dan. 7. 2, etc.
z *cf.* Rev. 19. 19, 20.
a Ps. 89. 9. *cf.* Ps. 76. 10 with Acts 4. 25-28.
b Ps. 19. 7.
c *cf.* Ezek. 44. 4, etc. *cf.* Rev. 21. 27.

in the house of Jehovah, they flourish in the courts of God Himself. And here we are made to remember that "in Him we live and move and have our being"; for their vigor abides in old age; they have sap and are green. All this is to declare, blessed be God, that Jah, to whom they have been brought back, is *upright*:—we see how He has pledged Himself to His people; "He is my Rock, and there is no perversity with Him."

Psalm XCIII.

And now in a short psalm of five verses we are made to see the kingdom of the Lord on earth: which is only to say, the creature in its place as such. Then God will be in His: of course, reigning.

Then there will be seen the majesty with which He clothes Himself,—the might which would be but destruction for those away from Him. Now it is only stability for everything, and the world is established, so that it cannot be moved. Yet it is the Throne established of old: nothing new, in that sense. Men have been blind to it, and now it is revealed.

2. There has been opposition: strange strife has been permitted: the floods have lifted up not merely their voice, but their dashing waves, against the Rock of Ages. No details of the strife are needful: one has only to compare the parties in it: "Jehovah is mightier than the sound of many waters! than the mighty breakers of the sea!

What is the lesson of this strife? Only the lesson of God's holiness and truth. Holiness becomes then His dwelling-place,—the place of His rest,—for ever. So the first series of the psalms of this book ends.

Subd. 2.

The second subdivision of these psalms gives us the salvation of the earth, its redemption from the condition into which sin had brought it, or what the Lord

SUBDIVISION 2. (Ps. xciv–c.)

The Judgment-salvation of the Earth.

Ps. xciv.

[1]PSALM XCIV.

The appeal of righteousness to power.

1 (1, 2): The plea. (I.) for righteousness. (II.) against evil.

GOD * of [d]vengeances, Jehovah,—
God * of vengeances, [e]shine forth!
Lift up thyself, thou [f]Judge of the earth!
render [g]recompense to the proud.

[d] Deu. 32. 35. 2 Sam. 22. 48. Jer. 5. 9.
[e] Ps. 80. 1. *cf.* 2 Thess. 1. 7-10.
[f] Ps. 50. 1-6. Is 33. 22.
[g] Is. 59. 16-19.

* El.

calls its "regeneration" (Matt. xix. 28). This in the human soul is when the kingdom of God is set up within it, and the dominion of sin is therefore taken away. And in these psalms we find correspondingly Jehovah's coming and reign over the earth. It is not, indeed, the final and perfect condition—the "new earth"; just as the regeneration of man is not his perfected condition: sin *exists*, though it does not *reign;* and not yet has the word been spoken, "Behold, I make all things new." Yet the groaning condition of the earth ceases at the "manifestation" in glory "of the sons of God" (Rom. viii. 19); and the kingdom itself is final: no other will supersede it ever.

This salvation is by judgment, therefore, the reign of the King and putting down of evil; and thus it is introduced here by the cry of the righteous, for whom judgment comes in. But this could not come, with any hope for man, until a new Man had been found with the secret of the Most High in His possession, and therefore able to claim and secure the blessing of God for Himself and for the earth as connected with Him. Atonement must indeed come in for this, but that is a secret at present as far as this book is concerned: the previous psalms have already declared it.

Here it is more the earth, though man, of course, is involved: and He is come who can say, if "the earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved, I bear up the pillars of it" (Ps. lxxv. 3). Thus He is in fact the new Adam, the Head of blessing for the world; and judgment, if it comes, shall not be for destruction, but for blessing and purification.

PSALM XCIV.

The introduction gives us, as already said, the cry of the righteous,—the appeal of righteousness to power. As the Lord says: "And shall not God avenge His own elect, who cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily" (Luke xviii. 7, 8). And in Revelation (viii. 3–5) the angel takes the censer from which the smoke of the incense has gone up to God with the prayers of the saints, and fills it with the fire of the altar, and casts it to the earth, and there follow thunders and voices and lightnings and an earthquake—the answering judgments of God upon their persecutors.

1. Such is the cry then here: "God of vengeances, Jehovah"—covenant God of Thy people, pledged to take up their cause—"God of vengeances, shine forth." The lightning-stroke is yet the revelation of the light: "Lift up Thyself, Thou Judge of the earth! render recompense to the proud."

Aye, it is pride which calls for abasement. "The day of Jehovah of hosts shall be upon all that is proud and lofty, and upon all that is lifted up; and it shall be brought low: and upon all the cedars of Lebanon that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan; and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up; and upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall. . . . And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day" (Isa. ii. 12–17).

2 (3-7): The opposition of evil.
(i.) the continuance of rebellion.
(ii.) their lips testify.
(iii.) Thy heritage!
(iv.) the weak!
(v.) Thy government!

Jehovah, [h]how long shall the wicked—
how long shall the wicked triumph?
They pour out—they speak [i]arrogance:
all the workers of vanity boast themselves.
They [j]crush thy people, Jehovah,
and afflict thy [k]heritage.
They slay the [l]widow and the stranger,
and murder the fatherless:
And they say, Jah [m]doth not see;
nor doth the God of Jacob discern.

3 (8-13): God as He manifests Himself.
(i.) men without knowledge.
(ii.) testimony to His discernment.
(iii.) compassing round.
(iv.) vain imaginations.
(v.) government of one with God.
(vi.) till the end of evil.

Discern, ye [n]brutish among the people:
and ye fools, when will ye understand?
He that planted the [o]ear—shall he not hear?
he that formed the [p]eye, shall he not behold?
He that restraineth the nations, shall not he [q]correct?
he that teacheth man [r]knowledge?
Jehovah knoweth the [s]thoughts of man,
that they are vanity.
[t]Happy is the man whom thou restrainest, Jah,
and teachest him out of thy law:
To give him [u]quiet from days of evil,
till the [v]pit be digged for the wicked.

h Ps.74.9,10. Ps.35.19-21.
i Ps. 10. 3, 4. cf. 2 Pet. 2. 18.
j Is. 3. 15.
k Ps. 79. 1. Is. 63.17,18.
l Deu. 27.19. Is. 10. 1-4. etr. Ps.72.4.
m Ps. 10. 8-11. Ps. 64. 5.
n Ps. 92. 6.
o Ex. 4. 11. Prov.20.12. etr. Ps.115. 4-8.
p Ps. 10. 14. Ps. 11. 4.
q cf. Is. 11. 3, 4.
r cf. Is.26.9-11.
s 1 Cor.3.20. Jer.17.9,10.
t Ps. 118. 18. cf. Ps. 16.7.
u cf. Ps.37.7. cf. Is.30.15.
v Ps.9.15-17. cf.Ezek.28. 6-8.

Thus the cry here is in perfect accordance with the demands of holiness, and with the manner of the coming judgment. Pride is the very essence of sin, the creature lifted up out of its place and God dethroned from His; and for this the stroke must come. Here then is the prevailing plea.

2. The detailed catalogue of crime follows: continuous, and, as it would seem, triumphant rebellion; arrogant words pouring from their lips—boastings of utter vanity; Jehovah's people and inheritance the object of attack; the widow, stranger, fatherless, all that have no strength to resist. And the patience of Jehovah scoffingly insulted,—the God of this poor despised Jacob. Enmity to Him is at the bottom of it all, and the heart that seeks its own things without regard to others.

3. The psalmist turns to expostulate with them, though they be like brutes that possess no faculty for knowing God. Does not the formation of the ear testify to One who hears? of the eye, to One who beholds? And is there not a moral government of the world which manifests itself, such as the Teacher of all human knowledge must possess—the rod of the Master? Ah, Jehovah knoweth well the thoughts of men that they are vanity; and happy is the man who knows the restraint of His government, and the teaching of His law. Kept in quiet from the fear of evil, he waits for the sure end of the wicked.

4. This leads him to affirm the judgment of experience, in which the faithfulness of God, realized as to His own, assures the soul that the reign of evil shall not continue. "Judgment" that has slipped away from righteousness, as Moses' rod (the sign of authority) out of his hand became a serpent. But as, after all, he retained authority over it, so that when he put forth his hand to take it, it became again a rod in his hand, so judgment shall return again to righteousness; and all the upright in heart shall follow it: it shall be pursued in peace by these without the hindrance that now exists from the presence of evil.

Meanwhile the destitution of other help only shuts one up to God all the more. And the soul knows what help He has already given. Had it not been for this he would have already been dwelling in silence. But even when he

4 (14-19): The test of experience.
(i.) the faithfulness of God.
(ii.) shall be confirmed by judgment.
(iii.) shut up to God.
(iv.) the experience.
(v.) the weak with the strong.
(vi.) a limit.

For Jehovah will not [w] cast off his people,
nor forsake his heritage.
For [x] judgment shall return to righteousness,
and all the upright in heart shall follow it.
[y] Who will rise up for me against the evil doers?
who will take a stand for me against the workers of vanity?
Unless [z] Jehovah had been my help,
my soul had soon dwelt in silence.
When I said, my [a] foot hath slipped,
thy loving-kindness, Jehovah, sustained me.
In the [b] multitude of my anxieties within me
thy comforts soothe my soul.

5 (20-24): Exercise.
(i.) the Throne?
(ii.) hostile alliance.
(iii.) the refuge.
(iv.) the test.

Shall the [c] throne of wickedness * be co-partner with thee,
which frameth mischief according to [d] statute?
They [e] band together against the soul of the righteous,
and condemn the [f] innocent blood.
But Jehovah will be a high [g] tower for me,
and my God my [h] Rock of refuge.
And he will [i] return on them their iniquity,
he will [j] cut them off in their own evil:
Jehovah our God will cut them off.

* "Depths."

w *cf.* Rom. 11. 1, 2. *cf.* Jer. 31. 37.
x *cf.* Ps. 58. 1, 2 with Is. 1. 21-27. *cf.* Ezek. 21. 25-27.
y *cf.* Is. 59. 16-19. *cf.* Ezek. 22. 30.
z Ps. 124. *cf.* Ps. 118. 6-13.
a Ps. 38. 16. Mi. 7. 8.
b *cf.* Jer. 31. 18-26. *cf.* Is. 54. 11-17.
c *cf.* vers. 3-6. *cf.* Dan. 11. 36-39.
d *cf.* Rev. 13. 11-18. *cf.* Is. 10. 1.
e Ps. 10. 10. Ps. 2. 2.
f *cf.* Matt. 27. 1-5. *cf.* Ps. 82. 3-7.
g Ps. 9. 9, 10. Ps. 62. 2, 6.
h Ps. 18. 2.
i Ps. 7. 16. *cf.* Es. 7. 10.
j Prov. 11. 5.

had realized that his foothold was already gone, a Stronger than he, and with heart, not merely hand, supported him. Thus amid a multitude of anxieties within him, the comforts of God soothed—or, in the vivid imagery that he uses, "caressed"—his soul.

5. But this only gives him confidence the more to turn to Him as to the state of things which are still unanswered. He puts a question which seems bold to rashness, but it is only an appeal to righteousness which, amid all exercise, he knows full well to be in Him who is Supreme. Can He go on as if in partnership with a throne of iniquity which makes wickedness into law? The dread figure of the "Lawless one" is evidently before us here, and makes one realize what energy could be thrown into such questions. "They band together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood."

But he comforts himself in God: "Jehovah will be a high tower for me, and my God my Rock of refuge." And the end is that which will test where God is. "He will return upon them their iniquity; He will cut them off: Jehovah our God will cut them off."

Psalm XCV.

The ninety-fifth psalm gives us now the testimony, not yet actually of the Lord coming, but of the need of the obedience to Him, if Israel is to have the security of His care. While at the same time He is celebrated as the God of the whole earth, to whom everything is subject. It is thus, practically, (though neither so wide in its address, nor so definite in its announcement,) the message of the "everlasting gospel" in Rev. xiv.: "Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made the heaven and the earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." That the hour of His judgment is *come* is not in fact declared: but the next psalm declares it, and for this the present one prepares the way. Israel, however, is alone in view here: the invitation and the warning are distinctly addressed to them.

1. The psalm opens with the exhortation to sing to Jehovah as the Rock of

Ps. xcv.

1 (1-5): Jehovah our Creator-God.
(i.) the Rock.
(ii.) answer with confession.
(iii.) His glory.
(iv.) the whole earth His.
(v.) government (?)

2 (6-11): The alternative.
(i.) obedience.
(ii.) conditioning relationship.
(iii.) remember!
(iv.) the testing.
(v.) man with God.
(vi.) the limit of patience.

[2]PSALM XCV.

The two-fold testimony of judgment and salvation.

COME, let us [k]sing unto Jehovah;
let us make a joyous sound to the [l]rock of our salvation.
Let us come before his presence with [m]thanksgiving:
let us make a joyous sound to him with psalms.
For Jehovah is a [n]great God,*
and a great King [o]above all gods.
In [p]his hand are the deep places of the earth,
and the heights of the hills are his.
The [q]sea is his, and he made it,
and his hands [r]formed the dry land.

Come, let us [s]worship and bow down:
let us kneel before Jehovah our [t]Maker.
For he is [u]our God:
and we are the people of his [v]pasture,
and the sheep of his hand:
[w]to-day, if ye will hear his voice!
[x]Harden not your heart, as at [y]Meribah,
in the day of [z]Massah, in the wilderness.
When your [a]fathers tempted me,
proved me, and saw my [b]work.
[c]Forty years was I grieved with [that] generation, and said:
it is a people that do [d]err in their heart,
and they have not known my [e]ways;
Wherefore I sware in mine anger,
that they should not [f]enter into my rest.

* *El.*

[k] Ps. 96. 1. Ps. 98. 1.
[l] Ps. 94. 22. Ps. 144. 1.
[m] Ps. 50. 14. *cf.* Is. 12.
[n] Ps. 96. 4. 2 Sam. 7. 22.
[o] Ps. 97. 9. Ps. 86. 8. Ps. 89. 6.
[p] Gen. 14. 19. Ps. 104. 5, 16-18.
[q] Ps. 104. 25, 26. *cf.* Ps. 93. 3, 4.
[r] Gen. 1. 9, 10.
[s] Ps. 66. 4. *cf.* Zeph. 2. 11. *cf.* Phil. 2. 10.
[t] Ps. 100. 3. Ps. 149. 2. *cf.* Rev. 14. 6, 7.
[u] Ps. 48. 14. Is. 25. 9.
[v] Ps. 79. 13. *cf.* Is. 40. 11. *cf.* Ezek. 34. 11-16.
[w] Heb. 3. 7-19. Heb. 4. 7-11. *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 2.
[x] Deu. 10. 12-17. *cf.* Jer. 7. 22-28.
[y] Ex. 17. 7. Nu. 20. 13. Nu. 27. 14. Ps. 81. 7.
[z] Deu. 6. 16. Deu. 33. 8.
[a] Ps. 78. 8, 18. *cf.* Acts 7. 51-53.

cf. Mal. 4. 5, 6. [b] De. 11. 2-8. [c] Nu. 14. 22-34; *cf.* Amos. 5. 25, 26. [d] Ex. 33. 3; Ex. 34. 9. [e] *cf.* Ps. 103. 7. [f] Nu. 14. 23; Nu. 32. 10-13; Ezek. 20. 15, 16; *cfr.* Ezek. 20. 40-44.

their salvation, to answer with "confession," of what He is to them,—the word for "thanksgiving" being literally "confession." For Jehovah their God is a great God, and a great King over all that man would exalt to deity. The earth in its depths and heights is then claimed as His; and the sea and the dry land which He has formed. In these last two cases the idea of control seems prominent, and that as necessarily inferred in the fact of His making them.

2. Then they are exhorted again to do Him homage, and His loving relationship to them as their Shepherd is put before them as what may well incite them to this. But there is added as the necessary condition to the continuance of this, "to-day, if ye will hear His voice!"* Apart from such obedient hearing there could be no walking together, of those not agreed. Grace only fulfills—not sets aside—such conditions.

A sad page of their history is now brought before them, the time of their "strife" with God at Meribah, and "tempting" Him at Massah. And this was

*The Masoretic division of the verses is an apparent difficulty; but Delitzsch points out that the "if ye will hear His voice" cannot be really the condition of what follows in the next verse, but is the expression of desire for them. It may then be really the condition of what precedes,—that is, of the continuance of it. And this seems to suit well with the character of the psalm as a whole. The use of the passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews is not against this, the quotation being from the Septuagint, and the division of the subject no way affecting the purpose of the apostle.

Ps. xcvi.

1 (1-3): Jehovah!
(i.) a new song.
(ii.) publish His salvation.
(iii.) glorious in wonders.

2 (4-6): The controversy with idolatry.
(i.) supreme.
(ii.) the contrast.
(iii.) glorious in the sanctuary.

3 (7-10): The glory due.
(i.) ascribe might.
(ii.) serve Him.
(iii.) worship in holiness.

[3]PSALM XCVI.

Jehovah manifested.

SING unto Jehovah a [g]new song:
sing unto Jehovah, [h]all the earth.
Sing unto Jehovah, bless his Name:
[i]publish his salvation from day to day.
Declare his [j]glory among the nations,
his wondrous works among all the peoples.

For Jehovah is [k]great, and greatly to be praised:
he is to be feared above all gods.
For all the gods of the peoples are [l]idols,
but Jehovah made the heavens.
Honor and [m]majesty are before him:
[n]strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

[o]Give unto Jehovah, ye families of the peoples,
give unto Jehovah glory and strength.
Give unto Jehovah the glory of his Name:
bring an offering, and come into his [p]courts.
Worship Jehovah in the majesty of [q]holiness:
[r]tremble before him, all the earth.

g Ps. 98. 1. *cf.* Deu. 31. 30. Deu. 32. 1, etc.
h *cf.* Ps. 22. 27. Ps. 67. 7.
i 1 Chron. 16. 23-33. Is. 60. 6.
j *cf.* Is. 66. 19. *cf.* Mal. 1. 11.
k Ps. 95. 3. Ex. 15. 11.
l Ps. 115. 4-8. Ps. 97. 7. Jer. 10. 3-12.
m Hab. 3. 3-11.
n 1 Chron. 29. 11, 12.
o Ps. 29. 1, 2.
p Ps. 100. 4. Is. 26. 1-4.
q *cf.* 2 Chr. 20. 21. *cf.* Zech. 9. 16, 17.
r Ps. 99. 1. Hab. 3. 6.

but a sample of forty years in which He was grieved by a generation finally cut off in the wilderness for unbelief. They are exhorted not to harden their hearts as did their fathers, when they tempted and proved God, and saw His work,—found Him alike faithful in His promises and in His threatenings. And now the rest of God is so near at hand, and in proportion to the blessedness of all implied in it, is the awful irremediable ruin of being cut off from it.

Psalm XCVI.

1. In the next psalm Jehovah is come, and the announcement of it is made, that all the earth may greet and give Him welcome. There is indeed a new song now to sing: for the long estrangement is over, the time when God has to be sought after, even by those nearest Him, and the world may go on in ignorance and unbelief of His existence even. Now He comes to fill the earth with the knowledge of His glory. He comes to bless and save it: to judge it indeed, and that is its salvation,—to purge it from the evil that defiles it, and deliver it from the bondage of corruption, and bring it into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God (Rom. viii. 21). Jehovah, the living, the eternal God comes to impart to it the blessing that must flow out where He is. "Bless," then, "His Name; publish His salvation from day to day! Declare His glory among the nations, His woudrous works among all the peoples."

2. God has not arbitrarily hid Himself. It is men who have turned away from Him. "When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful." Thus "they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened: professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts, and creeping things" (Rom. i. 21–23). This controversy with idolatry is now coming to an end. The sun arises, and the unclean things of the night are banished: "Jehovah is to be feared above all gods." Truly: for what are they? "all the gods of the peoples are idols"—or as the word means, "nothings" (compare 1 Cor. viii. 4)—"but Jehovah made the heavens." Such is He who has now come down to an earthly sanctuary, to reveal His heavenly glory upon earth: "honor and glory are before Him; strength and beauty are in His sanctuary."

(iv.) the world subject.

Say among the nations that Jehovah [s]reigneth:
the world also is established that it should not be moved:
he shall [t]judge the peoples with equity.

4 (11–13): Nature.
(i.) in harmony;
(ii.) with its increase.
(iii.) before Jehovah come.

Let the heavens [u]rejoice, and let the earth be glad:
let the [v]sea roar, and the fulness thereof.
Let the [w]field exult and all that is therein:
then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice
Before Jehovah:
for he is [x]come, for he is come to judge the earth:
he shall judge the world in righteousness,
and the peoples in his faithfulness.

Ps. xcvii.

[y]PSALM XCVII.

The earth subject.

1 (1–5): Jehovah supreme.
(i.) He reigns.
(ii.) in the midst of opposition.
(iii.) manifested in judgment.
(iv.) the earth prostrate.
(v.) the creature with God.

JEHOVAH [z]reigneth, let the earth exult:
let the multitude of [a]isles rejoice.
Clouds and [a]darkness are round about him;
[b]righteousness and judgment the foundation of his throne.
A [c]fire goeth before him,
and burneth up his adversaries round about.
His lightnings [d]lightened the world:
the earth saw, and [e]trembled.
The hills [f]melted like wax at the presence of Jehovah,—
at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.

[s] Ps. 99. 1. Is. 24. 23. Mi. 4. 7.
[t] *cf.* Ps. 110. 6. ver. 13.
[u] Is. 44. 23. Is. 49. 13. *cf.* Rev. 18. 20.
[v] Ps. 98. 7–9.
[w] Is. 35. 1, 2. Is. 55. 12, 13.
[x] Ps. 98. 9. Ps. 50. 3. *cf.* Zech. 14. 4, 5.
[y] Ps. 99. 1. *cf.* Is. 32. 1. *cf.* Jer. 23. 5.
[z] Is. 42. 4, 10–12. Is. 60. 9. Zeph. 2. 11.
[a] 1 Ki. 8. 12. Ps. 18. 11. *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 16.
[b] Ps. 89. 14. *cf.* Is. 6. 1. *cfr.* Ps. 94. 20.
[c] *cf.* Lev. 10. 2. *cf.* Num. 16. 35. Is. 66. 15, 16.
[d] Ps. 77. 18. *cf.* Lu. 17. 24.
[e] Ps. 114. 7.
[f] Is. 64. 1, 2. Mi. 1. 3, 4.

3. To this therefore all are now invited: all the families of the peoples are exhorted to give Him the glory due, the glory of His Name, to come before Him with an offering in token of homage, and worship Him in the majesty of holiness.

For Jehovah reigns: He judges the peoples with equity; and that stable and righteous throne is the stability of the world.

4. Nature therefore is called to rejoice in harmony: a song which begun in heaven is taken up on earth, and the sea too lifts up its waves in gladness, not rebellion. The field too is to exult, and the trees of the wood, for the curse of barrenness is lifted off. Jehovah is come, and come to judge the earth: the seal of its perpetuity of blessing emphasized once again to be in evil banished.

Psalm XCVII.

1. This is taken up, too, and expanded in the psalm that follows. Jehovah's supremacy is celebrated; the earth is subject to Him. The joy of His presence does not prevent the recognition of the fact that "clouds and darkness are round about Him"; and *just because* "righteousness and judgment are the foundation of His throne." He finds therefore upon earth opposition to be subdued, and He subdues it: "a fire goeth before Him, and subdueth His enemies round about." The earth trembles at His lightnings, which yet truly lighten the world: for the sharp flash of judgment is (though in anger) the revelation of Himself. The hills melt, and all that is high and lifted up is humbled and brought low in His presence.

2. Idolatry gives way before Him whom the heavens reveal in righteousness; a known God causes all the worshipers of idols to be ashamed. The powers that they have exalted to deities are found all paying homage to the true God: while Zion hears and the daughters of Judah exult, because of His judgments. Jehovah is Most High over all the earth, and exalted far above all gods.

2 (6–9): The idols set aside.
(i.) a known God.
(ii.) the confusion of idols.
(iii.) the satisfaction of His people.
(iv.) subjection of all.

3 (10–12): His holiness.
(i.) faithful to the godly.
(ii.) blessing increasing spite of opposition.
(iii.) the praise it wakes.

The heavens [g] declare his righteousness,
and all the peoples see his glory.
Ashamed are all they that [h] serve graven images,
that boast themselves of idols:
all the [i] gods worship him.
Zion heard and was [j] glad,
and the daughters of Judah exulted,
because of thy [k] judgments, Jehovah.
For thou, Jehovah, art Most High above all the earth:
thou art [l] exalted far above all gods.

Ye that love Jehovah, [m] hate evil:
he [n] preserveth the souls of his godly ones;
he [o] delivereth them from the hands of the wicked.
Light is [p] sown for the righteous,
and [q] gladness for the upright in heart.
[r] Rejoice, ye righteous, in Jehovah,
and give thanks at the [s] remembrance of his holiness.

[g] Ps. 50. 6.
[h] Deu. 27. 15. Is. 44. 9–20.
[i] Heb. 1. 6. *cf.* Eph. 1. 21.
[j] Ps. 14. 7. *cf.* Jer. 31. 11–14.
[k] Is. 26. 8, 9. Ps. 149. 5–9.
[l] Ps. 95. 3.
[m] Ps. 101. 3. Ps. 139. 21, 22.
[n] Ps. 116. 6.
[o] Ps. 37. 39, 40.
[p] Ps. 126. 5, 6. Ps. 118. 27.
[q] Is. 54. 1–5. Zeph. 3. 14, 15.
[r] Ps. 33. 1. Is. 12.
[s] Ps. 30. 4. Is. 52. 9, 10.

[t] PSALM XCVIII.

God with man.

A psalm.

Ps. xcviii.

1 (1–3): The new song.
(i.) acts of power.

SING unto Jehovah a [u] new song:
for he hath done [v] wonderful things;
his right hand and his holy arm have wrought [w] salvation for him.

[t] Ps. 33. 3. Ps. 96. 1. Ps. 149. 1. *cf.* Rev. 5. 9.
[u] Ps. 136. 4. *cf.* Is. 49. 18–23.
[v] *cf.* Ex. 15. 1, 6. Is. 59. 16–19. Is. 63. 5.

3. The third section exhorts in view of His holiness. The love of Jehovah means, if it be real, opposition to evil; and to such, as manifest this, His godly ones, He is faithful, preserving and delivering them from the hands of the wicked. For the righteous light is *sown*, and though it may for a time be obscured, it will finally increase and produce a harvest. A strange figure it may seem, and yet an intelligible one: for "the path of the just is as the shining light,"—or "the light of dawn,"—"which shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. iv. 18). How impossible to stop the steady advance of the morning light! And the real "day," when it comes, what shall it not bring with it in abundant recompense! the Light itself, what glories will it not disclose! "The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting Light, and thy God thy glory! Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting Light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended" (Isa. lx. 19, 20).

How blessed is the grace, which can enable redeemed sinners to "rejoice in Jehovah, and give thanks," not merely "at the remembrance of His" grace, but of His "holiness"!

PSALM XCVIII.

The ninety-eighth psalm, like the ninety-sixth, calls for the new song; and the close of it is also very similar. But the salvation He has wrought, and His remembrance of His people Israel are here before us, and the praise exhorted to is correspondingly more distinctly from (though not confined to) Israel themselves. The same thing is true of the next psalm, as compared with the ninety-seventh, though not so fully; and the verses of the present two psalms are nine each, as those of the former two are thirteen. This is not accident, although its meaning may not be clear to us.

1. The new song itself—the material of it—is, in the first section. Jehovah has done wonderful things,—deeds of power by which He has wrought salvation. This has spoken for Him among the nations, and manifested His righteousness:

(ii.) their testimony.

(iii.) He hath remembered Israel.

2 (4-6): In response from the redeemed people.

(i.) the people as a whole.

(ii.) the Levite ministry.

(iii.) the priests before Jehovah.

3 (7-9): The full praise.

(i.) the full concord.

(ii.) ministries.

(iii.) before Jehovah.

Jehovah hath made known his salvation:
his righteousness hath he [w]openly showed in the sight of the nations.
He hath [x]remembered his loving-kindness and his faithfulness toward the house of Israel:
all the [y]ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

Shout aloud unto Jehovah, all the land:
break forth, and [z]sing for joy, and psalm!
[a]Psalm unto Jehovah with the harp:
with the harp and the voice of a psalm.
With trumpets and sound of cornet
make a joyful noise before the [b]King, Jehovah.

Let the [c]sea roar, and the fulness thereof:
the world and the dwellers therein.
Let the rivers clap [their] hands:
let the [d]hills sing for joy together
Before Jehovah:
[e]for he is come to judge the earth:
he shall judge the world in righteousness,
and the peoples in equity.

w Ps. 126. 1-3. Is. 40. 5. Is. 56. 1.
x Is. 54. 7, 8. cf. Jer. 14. 19-21.
y Is. 49. 1-6. Mi. 4. 1-4.
z Is. 54. 1. Ps. 100. 1.
a Ps. 150. 3-6.
b Ps. 95. 3. Is. 43. 15.
c Ps. 96. 11-13.
d Ps. 72. 3. Is. 55. 12.
e Is. 64. 1. cf. Matt. 25. 31.

He has remembered His loving-kindness and truth toward the house of Israel, and the ends of the earth have seen His salvation.

2. The praise for this is heard in widening circles. In this section Israel is in view; in the next, the world and all the dwellers in it. Yet in the three verses here, the order is reversed, and begins with the people of the whole land; then the Levite chorus; and then, as indicated by the trumpets and the presence of the divine King, the priestly innermost circle. Jehovah is their King, and the accompaniment is heard with Israel's praise.

3. The full praise joins together the sea and the stable land; then the ministries of blessing, for which the rivers and the hills, their sources, seem both to stand. The rivers are manifestly this, the types of refreshment, which the hills distribute. One cannot help thinking of the waters flowing from the temple-throne in the Jerusalem to be on earth: the type of those in the New Jerusalem above; the "hills" speaking elsewhere also of authorities, and as ministering blessing thus (in psalm lxxii. 3). The last verse reminds us once more of that supreme rule in righteousness which is the great ministry, and from which the other ministries derive their being. All these, like the cherubim of the throne, celebrate Him from whom they have their origin, and proclaim His goodness who has come once more into a world which is His own. Man is with God, and in fullness of blessing.

Psalm XCIX.

The victory over evil requires more development. It is this that the sixth psalm of the series, in accordance with the numerical significance, now takes up. Salvation by judgment necessarily involves it; but we see this worked out here both in regard to the world at large, and to the saints also. Thus the apostle applies it to the latter: "for the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God;" and in this way "the righteous are with difficulty saved" (1 Pet. iv. 17, 18)—not "scarcely:" but God having to be at such pains with them to bring them through, so as both to His creatures at large, and for their own sakes also, to justify His holy government.

1. The first section, therefore, speaks of this government as now manifested,

Ps. xcix.

1 (1-3): Jehovah's reign.
(i.) His throne.
(ii.) extension.
(iii.) the praise of His holy Name.

2 (4-6): Loving judgment.
(i.) might and right.
(ii.) serve Him.
(iii.) His worshipers.

[e] PSALM XCIX.

Victory over evil.

JEHOVAH [f] reigneth: let the peoples tremble;
he sitteth [above] the [g] cherubim: let the earth be moved.
Jehovah is [h] great in Zion:
and he is [i] exalted above all the peoples.
Let them [j] praise thy great and terrible Name:
it is holy.

And the king's strength [k] loveth judgment:
thou hast established equity;
thou hast [l] executed judgment and righteousness in Jacob.
Exalt Jehovah our God, and worship at his footstool:
[m] holy is he.
Moses and Aaron were among his [n] priests,
and Samuel among those that [o] call upon his name:
they [p] called upon Jehovah, and he answered them.

f Ps. 97. 1. Jer. 10. 6,7.
g Ex. 25. 22. *cf.* Ezek. 1. 4-28.
h Joel 3. 16, 17.
i Ps. 97. 9. Ps. 47. 9.
j cf. Deu. 28. 58. *cf.* Rev. 15. 4. Ps. 113. 3. Mal. 1. 11.
k Ps. 45. 6,7.
l Ps. 72. 4. Ps. 103. 6.
m Is. 6. 3. Is. 40. 25, 26.
n Ex. 6. 26, 27. Lev. 8. 2, etc. Lev. 9. 22-24.
o 1 Sam. 3. 7-10, 19-21.
p Ps. 81. 7.

Jehovah reigning, enthroned above the cherubim, as Ezekiel and the book of Revelation show Him. In the latter the "living creatures" in their various characters thus represent the features of His rule. The lion shows the fundamental necessity for all government—power. The ox shows it however to be used in patient ministry, as true rule is. The "face of a man" speaks of intelligence that seeks to be known by men His creatures. And lastly, the "flying eagle" speaks of ways yet "too wonderful" for comprehension by them (Prov. xxx. 18, 19). These cherubic beings, with their sleepless vigilance and activity, proclaim the Thrice-holy who is still above them (Rev. iv. 8); and this is the Throne now established over the earth. Well may "the peoples tremble" before Him, and "the earth be moved."

But He reigns in Zion, which His grace has chosen as the place of His rest, the accessible metropolis of the whole earth. Let the peoples praise His great and terrible Name: for it is holy.

2. Might and right are wedded at last, in a despotic rule, from which yet none need shrink except the wicked. For "the king's strength loveth judgment"—a beautiful poetic phrase which strangely seems to perplex the commentators: "Thou hast established equity; Thou hast executed judgment and righteousness in Jacob."

Thus the world is saved and blest, and all are bidden to worship at the footstool of the Throne: Jehovah our God is holy.

The third verse here one might naturally take to belong to the closing section. Yet the structure is against it: for it is evidently a third and not a first, and its presence in the last section would derange all the numbers there. Moreover the connection is not so close as at first it seems. "In the pillar of cloud He spake to them," could not refer to Samuel; and the three together—Moses and Aaron and Samuel are cited here as practical examples of the worship to which the people now are called. Such were the men that drew nigh to Him, His priests: Samuel not officially that, but practically standing in that place, when the priests themselves had departed from Him, and known characteristically as one that called upon His Name. These all, He in His faithfulness had answered, drawing near to those that drew near to Him.

3. But with all His people sanctification was the object that He steadily pursued. "In the pillar of cloud He spake to them"—that pillar which as the sign of His Presence, moved with them all the way from Egypt to the land:

3 (7-9): The sanctification of His people.
(i.) the obedience rendered.
(ii.) His answer in love and judgment.
(iii.) worship.

In the [q]pillar of cloud he spake unto them:
they [r]kept his testimonies, and the statute he gave unto them.
Jehovah our God, thou [s]answeredst them:
a [t]forgiving God * thou wast unto them,
even while taking [u]vengeance on their doings.
[v]Exalt Jehovah our God;
and worship at his holy hill:
for Jehovah our God is holy.

Ps. c.

[1]PSALM C.

The Final Praise.

A psalm of [w]thanksgiving.

(i.) Jehovah! with one accord.
(ii.) serve Him with joy.
(iii.) God manifest: to Him we belong.
(iv.) the ways resultant.

SHOUT aloud unto Jehovah:
[x]all the earth!
Serve Jehovah with [y]gladness:
come before him with a song.
Know that Jehovah, he is God:
it is he that [z]made us and not we ourselves,—
[we] his people and the [a]sheep of his pasture.
Come into his gates with [b]thanksgiving,
into his courts with praise:
give thanks unto him; [c]bless his name.

q Ex. 13.21, 22. Ex. 33. 9.
r Heb. 3. 2, 5.
s *cf.* Ex. 17. 11, 12.
t *cf.* Nu. 14. 17-23. Ps. 85. 1, 2.
u *cf.* Ex. 32. 32-35. *cf.* Amos 3. 1, 2. *cf.* Heb. 12. 7.
v ver. 5. Is. 25. 1.

w *cf.* Jer. 30. 18, 19. *cf.* Jer. 33. 7-16.
x Ps. 98. 4. *cf.* Ps. 22. 27.
y *cf.* Is. 35. 10. *cf.* Num. 10. 10.
z Ps. 95. 6. *cf.* Is. 43. 1.
a Ps. 95. 7. *cf.* Is. 40. 11.
b Ps. 66. 13-15. Is. 60. 18.
c Ps. 103. 1.

* *El.*

thus grace had sought them, and obedience followed: "they kept His testimonies, and the statute He gave unto them."

His holiness was as fully displayed as His love; and His love was not less, that it was *holy*: "Jehovah our God, Thou answeredst them: a forgiving God Thou wast to them, even while taking vengeance on their doings."

Upon *them* it was not wrath, but chastening love—grace that showed itself in this that declared His wrath upon the *evil*, to make *them* "partakers of His holiness" (Heb. xii. 10). *Thus* does "grace reign" in holiness as well as righteousness; the very "vengeance" only showing the forgiveness to be really that, and not indifference; and that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord" (ver. 14). Blessed, salutary lessons, worthy of God to give!

Praise, therefore, is what ends the psalm: "Exalt Jehovah our God; and worship at His holy hill: for Jehovah our God is holy."

Psalm C.

The hundredth psalm closes this series with the full anthem of praise. Naught else remains. Perfection is found and rest; and both are in God. There is little need of interpretation. Jehovah is now to be in every mouth, not the superstitious dread of men afraid of uttering His Name, but shouting it aloud for very gladness: joyous service, with a song. Jehovah is indeed the manifest God, to whom belong His people: the creatures and the cared for of His hand. Strangely it may seem, but most beautifully, surely, the thankful approach of the worshiper falls into the fourth place, which speaks of the practical life. The *life* will now be praise (comp. Heb xiii. 15, 16). And the psalm ends with the record of *Jehovah's* ways, which are the theme of the praise itself: "for Jehovah is good: His loving-kindness is for ever; and His truth endureth from generation to generation."

Amen.

(v.) *His* ways.

For Jehovah is [d]good:
his [e]loving-kindness is for ever,
and his faithfulness [endureth] from [f]generation to generation.

[d] Ps. 86. 5. Ps. 119. 68.
[e] Ps. 103. 17. Mi. 7. 18-20.
[f] Ps. 89. 24, 33. Lam. 3. 22, 23. Mal. 3. 6.

SUBD. 3.

The third subdivision shows us now the salvation of the earth in its innermost reality; and here necessarily we return, therefore, to Christ, to see how truly its blessing is dependent upon this Second Man, and to find how deep and full it is as based upon His atoning work, and upon the glory of His Person in which Godhead and manhood are inseparably and eternally united together. The revelation of this mystery is given us in the hundred and second psalm, and in the most deeply instructive manner, as the answer of God to One humbled and cut off under the wrath of God upon sin, and which addresses Him—this humbled Man—as Creator and Lord of all. Dying, He is yet the Unchangeable, Jehovah Himself; and all things are in His hand. The claim that He has to the earth is thus every way perfect; and He is the One whom we have seen as Jehovah, taking possession of it. Thus the praise that flows out now is to Jehovah as Creator and Redeemer alike, the God of Israel, whose Presence with them has been the one glory of their history hitherto, and who has now shown Himself supreme in grace and power above all their sin.

These things we must not indeed expect to have told out to us in the clear language of the New Testament. We are dealing with prophetic scriptures which need for their very first rule of interpretation what Peter assures us applies to all prophecy, that they are none of them interpretable by themselves, but must be taken in communion with the whole mind of the Spirit, as given in the Word. Thus we must put these psalms together, just as we would put together the sentences of a book to find the full meaning, perhaps of any. And we must, above all, bring in the New Testament as the proper key to all deeper understanding of the Old. So read, however, there is to be gained a full and clear appreciation of the precious and pervasive meaning running through the whole, which gained is its own evidence. The spiritual picture, flooded with the warm light of heaven, no fortuitous running together of incoherent lines could possibly have achieved. And it is the picture of One well-known, who must have been present and well-known to the mind of Him who drew it with such perfect fidelity.

PSALM CI.

We have, first of all, the utterances of a King; and who if He be what His words convey to us, is such an One as the world yet waits for and must have for blessing: a strong hand of power which will not fail to accomplish its salvation, —power that will act in unswerving righteousness, and yet in tenderest consideration of frailty and of need: power with heart behind it; a "rod of iron," but in the hands of a Shepherd, the true Shepherd of the sheep: a rod that smites down evil, and yet only smites to save.

Prophet and priest and king make up One—the "Anointed": Messiah of Israel, and Gentile Christ alike. None of these can avail without the other. Prophet and priest have come, but not yet the full deliverance. Each has done his necessary work, and made ready the way for the King; but the King must come, that the full meaning of all may be apparent, and the end be reached. The Prophet must reveal, and bring in God as Light where all has been darkness, that God known may bring men's hearts back to Himself. The Priest must open the way to God, that they may in fact be able to draw near to Him. After all this, nothing remains but that power in the hand of the King should intervene, and put away in fact sin and its consequences from among men, and perfect blessing.

But for all this prophet, priest and king must be united in One who is Himself the bond which shall bind the universe together, God and man in one

SUBD. 3. (Ps. ci.–cvi.)

Salvation in its innermost realization.

Ps. ci.

[1]PSALM CI.

The King of righteousness.

A psalm of David.

1 (1–3): Personal righteousness.
(i.) in harmonious perfection.
(ii.) fellowship with God.
(iii.) holiness.

I WILL sing of [g]loving-kindness and of judgment:
unto thee, Jehovah, I will sing.
I will behave [h]wisely in a perfect way:
when wilt thou come unto me?
I will walk within my house in the [i]integrity of my heart.
I will [j]set no thing of Belial before mine eyes:
I [k]hate the work of them that turn aside:
it shall not cleave to me.

2 (4–8): Dealings with others.
(i.) integrity of purpose.
(ii.) as to the evil.
(iii.) the dwellers in his house.

A perverse heart shall be far from me:
I will not [l]know an evil thing.
Whoso [m]backbiteth his neighbor, him will I destroy:
him that hath a [n]lofty look and a proud heart will I not suffer.
Mine eyes shall be on the [o]faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me:
he that walketh in a [p]perfect way, he shall serve me.

[g] Ps. 89. 1. *cf.* Is. 26. 9. *cf.* Is. 11. 1–5.
[h] Jer. 23. 5. Is. 52. 13.
[i] *cf.* 1 Ki. 9. 4. *cf.* Is. 11. 5.
[j] *cf.* Ps. 16. 8. *cf.* Jno. 14. 30.
[k] Ps. 97. 10. *cf.* Rev. 2. 15.
[l] *cf.* Jno. 8. 46.
[m] *cf.* Ps. 15. 3.
[n] Ps. 18. 27. *ctr.* Matt. 11. 29. *ctr.* Zech. 9. 9.
[o] *cf.* Ps. 16. 3.
[p] Ps. 84. 11. *ctr.* Amos 5. 10.

Person, who for man shall be God to reveal Him; who for God shall be Man to bring man nigh; who in the union of both shall combine absolute power with tender, sympathetic knowledge of man's need, and so be the true King after God's heart—for God and man, the David, the "Beloved."

1. The present psalm only begins to tell this tale, and in a way abrupt enough, if it did not suppose the ear of a disciple, already instructed by what has been said elsewhere. It is the utterance of David, and expresses the mind of a King of Israel, filled with zeal for that divine Throne which the throne in Israel represented. He is thus a worshiper, and "loving-kindness and judgment" are the theme of a "song." He sings to Jehovah, as one intimate with Him, inviting His coming to him, and with a confidence too great for one merely of the children of men, not only of the integrity of his heart, but of his practical wisdom for "a perfect way": in holiness which can permit no approach of evil. It is the voice surely of Him who with perfect lowliness and the keenest apprehension of evil in every form, could say in the presence of His enemies seeking how they might condemn Him, "Which of you convicteth Me of sin?"

"Loving-kindness and judgment" are with Him parts of but one song. Love and light,—grace and truth—are with Him as the two equal eyes which hold but one image. His heart "sings" of them—singing to Him in whom it finds them as their Source and Original. Here is One in whose hands power may be safely put: the prophetic picture of Him in whose hands it will in fact be put: to whom He has "given authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man."

2. We see Him now accordingly in the execution of this judgment. First of all, His principle and purpose to tolerate no evil; then the application of this to the back-biter, and to the proud who walks in his self-estimation apart from other men. But His eyes are upon the faithful in the land for good, and He draws them to Him, opening His house and heart, and gladly giving them places of confidence in which to serve a perfect Master in the way of the perfectness He loves.

(iv.) the practiser of deceit.

He that practiseth [q]deceit shall not dwell within my house:
he that speaketh falsehoods shall not be established before mine eyes.

[q] Ps. 52.1-5. Mi. 6. 12. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 9.

(v.) theocratic rule.

Morning by morning will I [r]destroy all the wicked of the land:
that I may [s]cut off all vain-doers from the city of Jehovah.

[r] Ps. 75. 10.

[s] *cf.* Is.66.19, 20.

Ps. cii.

[z] PSALM CII.

Christ in His humiliation, uniting God and man.

A prayer of the [t]afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and [u]poureth out his complaint before Jehovah.

[t] *cf.* Ps.22.24. *cf.* Ps. 41. 1.

[u] *cf.* Heb.5. 7, with Lk. 22. 41–46.

I (i-7): The cause of the prayer.

(i.) pleading with Jehovah.

JEHOVAH, [v]hear my prayer;
and let my cry come unto thee.

[v] Ps. 61.1, 2.

(ii.) for answer in strait.

Hide not thy face from me in the [w]day of my strait:
incline thine ear to me;
in the day when I call, [x]hasten to answer me.

[w] *cf.* Lk.22. 53.

[x] Ps. 40. 13.

The vice of the weak, which is deceit, is not tolerated any more than that of the bolder or the stronger. Wickedness of all kinds must be rooted out of the land, and all vain-doers cut off from the city of Jehovah. Here is emphasized the spirit of the theocratic Ruler: the name of Jehovah must be hallowed in the place which He has chosen for Himself in grace among men.

PSALM CII.

Here then is a King after Jehovah's heart: such an one as the need of man craves but has not found. Yet has He long since come, and in the way marked out for Him from the beginning, all prophetic voices testifying to Him. They had testified also to His rejection at the hands of those long and carefully prepared for His reception, but who knew Him not. The crown they gave Him was a crown of thorns; they wrote His title in derision over a cross; little supposing that He would show His royalty by making that cross itself henceforth the very symbol of a power mightier than that of all the kings of the earth, and to outlast them all.

But in fact to be King after the fashion that alone He sought, He had to wear another title, and take another office, as we have seen; and this involved the very place to which in ignorance and unbelief they destined Him, but to which He freely—constrained only by His own love—stooped. As Priest He must have somewhat to offer; and, there being nothing that could avail beside, He offered up HIMSELF. And thus too He became the Prophet of a new dispensation, and, lifting all this into a new sphere of glory, in Him Messiah's three-fold qualification was at last completed—Prophet, Priest, and King.

But who could be sufficient for these things? *Man* He must be to take man's penalty; man, to go in for man to God. We have seen One able to go in there—to whom the sanctuary was accessible; who knew "the secret place of the Most High," and could "abide under the shadow of the Almighty;" a Second Man, not involved in the ruin of the first, and for whom all the resources of divine power are available. But who then *is* this Second Man? This is the question which is answered by God Himself in the psalm before us, and answered to Him the rejected King of Israel, but under a heavier burden than this by far, and stricken by the hand of Him who owns Him now. But let us take up the psalm.

1. The first seven verses state in general terms the cause of the Sufferer's prayer. His plea is His distress. There is no confession of sin, as in the psalms of atonement generally, while on the other hand there is no profession of integ-

(iii.) the meaning.
(iv.) fading away.
(v.) exercise.
(vi.) under the mastering hand of God?
(vii.) complete desolation.

For my days are [y]consumed like smoke,
and my [z]bones are burned like a fire-brand.
My heart is smitten and [a]withered like grass,
so that I forget to [b]eat my bread.
Because of the voice of my [c]groaning
my bones [d]cleave to my flesh.
I am like a pelican of the [e]wilderness:
I am as an owl in ruined places.
I watch, and am like a [f]sparrow
alone upon the house-top.

2 (8-11): Against me!
(i.) man as in agreement with God.
(ii.) food that is not food.
(iii.) the inmost meaning.
(iv.) fading.

Mine enemies [g]reproach me all the day:
they that rave against me [h]curse by me.
For I have eaten [i]ashes like bread:
and mingled my drink with weeping;
Because of [j]thine indignation and thy wrath:
for thou hast lifted me up, and [k]cast me away.
My days are like a [l]shadow that is lengthened:
and I am [m]withered like grass.

3 (12-16): The resurrection of Zion.
(i.) steadfast, eternal.
(ii.) deliverance.
(iii.) the return of heart towards her.

But thou, Jehovah, [n]endurest for ever,
and thy remembrance is to all generations.
Thou shalt arise; thou shalt have [o]mercy upon Zion:
for the time to favor her—the [p]set time is come.
For thy [q]servants take pleasure in her stones,
and show favor to her dust.

y ver. 23. *cf.* Dan. 9. 26.
z Job 30.30. Lam. 1. 12, 13.
a ver. 11.
b *cf.* Jno.12. 27. *cf.* Matt.26. 38.
c *cf.* Ps. 6. 6.
d Ps. 22. 14, 15, 17. *cf.* Lam. 4. 7-9.
e Job 30, 29.
f *cf.* Ps. 69 20. *cf.* Matt.26. 56.
g *cf.*Ps.69.9-12. *cf.*Is.52.2.3.
h *cf.* Nu. 26. 10. *cf.*Ezek.14. 8 with Jer. 29. 22, 23.
i *cf.*Lam. 3. 16. *cf.* Ps. 80.5.
j *cf.* Ps.22.1. *cf.*Zech. 13. 7.
k *cf.* Ps. 51. 11. *cf.* Heb.13. 11, 12.
l *cf.* Ps. 109. 23.
m ver. 4.

cf. Is. 40. 6 with Phil. 2. 8. *n* *cf.* Ps.22.3; Ps. 90. 2. *o* Is. 14. 1, 2; Jer. 30. 10-22; *cf.* Zech. 10. 6. *p* Is. 40. 2; *cf.* Dan. 9. 24; *cf.* Lk. 21. 25-33. *q* *cf.* Ps. 122. 6-9; *cf.* Lam. 2. 1, etc. with Lam. 4. 22.

rity: it is as the prayer of one with whom there is no need. Yet He pleads that God's face should not be hidden from Him, and in the third verse seems already to intimate that which afterwards finds plainer expression—the wrath of God like a fire in His bones and His days consumed like smoke. In the sixth similarly the figures, as well as the number, would seem to speak of God's hand upon His circumstances, making Him like a bird of the deserts or of ruined places; while the desolation is yet heightened by the picture of the sparrow with its social instincts, in the place where these would naturally find gratification, yet watching alone.

2. The evil comes into clearer detail, however, in the second section, where we find pictured a woe so extreme that His enemies use it as a typical imprecation; as if God and they were in agreement—they could wish no one worse than God had done to Him! He had eaten ashes for food, and mixed His drink with tears. And now He speaks openly of God's indignation and wrath: if He had lifted Him up, it was but to cast Him away. Yet still there is no account given of this, no question of sin raised in any way. Reason there must be of course, but none is presented. Atonement is not intimated, and yet it is only in atonement that wrath could be upon the sinless One as here. But the fact alone is brought before us—Christ (as it surely is) in the depth of His humiliation, in the sorrow that had no equal, brought down now till the lengthening shadow of evening is the symbol of His days, and the withered grass His emblem.

3. But now the vision of the future passes before the eyes of the dying Man. He sees Jehovah, the unchanged, unchanging God, incapable of forgetfulness, and thinks of the promises which must surely be fulfilled, according to which not only Zion must be raised out of her ruin, but Jehovah Himself be manifested in His glory and the nations brought to fear His Name. He anticipates that mercy pledged to her, the set time come, as shown by the hearts of those in

(iv.) the earth-blessing waiting.
(v.) God with us.

4 (17-22): God's way with the weak and failing.
(i.) grace.
(ii.) the after-witness.
(iii.) God from His sanctuary.
(iv.) regarding the creature.
(v.) man with God.
(vi.) the limit of disobedience.

5 (23-28): Immanuel.
(i.) My strength!
(ii.) the contrast.

And the [r]nations shall fear Jehovah's Name,
and all the [s]kings of the earth thy glory.
When Jehovah shall [t]build up Zion,
he shall [u]appear in his glory.

He will [v]regard the prayer of the destitute,
and not despise their prayer.
This shall be written for the [w]generation to come,
and a people that shall be created shall praise Jah.
For he hath [x]looked down from the height of his sanctuary:
from the heavens Jehovah hath beheld the earth;
To hear the [y]groaning of the prisoner,
to set loose the children of death:
To [z]declare in Zion Jehovah's Name,
and his praise in Jerusalem;
When the [a]peoples are gathered together,
and the kingdoms to serve Jehovah.

He [b]weakened my strength in the way:
he [c]shortened my days.
I said, O my God,* [d]take me not away in the midst of my days:
[e]thy years are throughout all generations.

r Is. 60. 3-5. Is. 65. 1.
s Ps. 138. 4. Is. 49. 7.
t Is. 44. 23-26. *cf.* Ezek. 36. 10, 33.
u Ps. 50. 1, 3. *cf.* Mal. 3. 1-3. *cf.* Ezek. 43. 1-5. *cf.* Matt. 25. 31.
v *cf.* Ps. 22. 24.
w *cf.* Ps. 22. 30, 31. Ps. 78. 6, 7
x Is. 63. 15. Ps. 80. 14.
y Ps. 79. 11. Is. 49. 9. *cf.* Zech. 9. 12.
z *cf.* Jer. 51. 10.
a *cf.* Is. 2. 2-4.
b *cf.* 2 Cor. 13. 4.
c vers. 3, 11. *cf.* Is. 53. 8.
d *cf.* Matt. 26, 38, 39.
e ver. 12. Ps. 90. 2. *cf.* Mi. 5. 3.

* El.

sympathy with His heart turned towards her stones and to the very dust of her degradation. Already thus the streaks of dawn are visible for the earth; and soon "the nations shall fear Jehovah's Name, and all the kings of the earth Thy glory." For when He builds up Zion, then His glory shall appear.

4. This leads on to the consideration of those ways of His with the weak and failing, the self-ruined sons of men, exemplified so signally in His mercy to Israel. Man has fallen through pride and independence of heart. Therefore the need of his being humbled and brought into that state of destitution in which alone he will seek God. But then "He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer." And this is not merely true in an isolated and exceptional instance: it is His way of grace, broad-written now in Israel's restoration, for a memorial to after-generations, that a people "created" for Himself may praise the Eternal. The strong word "created" is no doubt used here with a moral force which anticipates the doctrine of the New Testament. Nor are there any that really fill their place as the creation of God except as they are recipients, and so heralds of His grace.

God then has looked down from the height of His sanctuary; from the heavens Jehovah has beheld the earth: never with indifference, never with hostility, while abiding in the holiness of His nature, which separates Him, not from His creatures, but only from their sin: "to hear the groaning of the prisoner; to set loose the children of death"—those under its sentence. And in this misery was Zion, in which therefore His Name is now declared, and His praise in Jerusalem. And so the rebellion of the earth is ended: "the peoples are gathered together, and the kingdoms to serve Jehovah."

5. Is HE, then, an example of these ways of Jehovah—of His showing mercy to the poor? Nay, "He weakened my strength in the way: He shortened my days." Himself the King of Zion, "Messiah the Prince," He is "cut off, and has nothing" (Dan. ix. 26 *margin*). The sinless One. He is left to die; He upon whom depend all the promises is left to cry out to the Eternal Might, as one in the midst of his days taken away—smitten, and not supported!

(iii.) the manifestation.

Of old hast thou [f]founded the earth,
and the [g]heavens are the work of thy hands.

(iv.) the frailty of the creature: where?

They shall [h]perish, but *thou* shalt continue;
and they all shall grow old as a [i]garment:
as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed;

(v.) Immanuel.

But thou art the [j]same,
and thy years shall have no end.

(vi.) the triumph.

The children of thy servants shall [k]abide,
and their seed shall be established before thee.

[f] Heb.1.10–12. *cf.* Jno.1.3. *cf.*Col.1.16.
[g] *cf.* Ps. 8.3. *cf.* Prov. 8. 27, 28.
[h] Is. 34. 4. *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 10–13.
[i] Is. 51. 6.
[j] Lam.5.19. *cf.* Heb.13. 8.
[k] Ps. 69. 36. Is. 65. 22.

From Him who delighteth in mercy, for Him no mercy? And are these the equal ways of the Unchangeable? Why then no mercy? And if this is no exception to Jehovah's ways, can it be that HE is the exception? does He in fact not belong to the class of those to whom mercy could be shown? does He not violate the rule, because He does not come under it? That is what the answer of God declares: "Of old hast Thou founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. *They* shall perish, but *Thou* shalt continue; and they all shall grow old as doth a garment: as a vesture shalt Thou change them and they shall be changed; but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end."

The statement of the apostle (Heb. i. 10–12) is the direct authority for applying these words to Christ. Apart from this we might indeed imagine that they were but the pursuing of that affecting contrast between the transience of man and the immutability of God which we find in the earlier part of the psalm, and which seems to begin again in the preceding verse. But we have not for the first time here to realize the mystery-form in which some of the most glorious intimations in the Psalms are clothed. This is characteristic, moreover, of the whole of the Old Testament. And then the cry of the Speaker finds no response, and the perplexity in the psalm finds no unravelment. Yet one can see, if we merely take this for what it is not, a detached and isolated composition, that the Sufferer is One who, meeting the wrath of God with the profoundest faith in God, contrasts the fulfillment of the promises to Zion with His own brief days. Yet God "regards the prayer of the destitute, and does not despise their prayer." He could not mean to give the case of the Sufferer as an exception to this, or a problem without solution. His own condition has to do evidently with these promises to Zion with which it is interwoven, and the psalm ends in no hopeless spirit but with confidence and happiness.

The inspired application of these verses is at once an illumination of the whole psalm. They become at once the key to the whole, and throw their light beyond the psalm itself upon all that surrounds it in the book. We see the connection with the voice of the King which we have heard in the psalm preceding: we understand the connection with the fulfillment of the promises to Zion: for here too is the King! We look back, and without difficulty connect this again with the subject of the ninety-first, with Him whom in contrast with the failed and death-stricken sons of men in the psalm of Moses (xc) we may well call the Second Man. We find here One who has never lost His title to the earth as Adam did. Nature greets and smiles on Him; angels wait on Him; and in the next two psalms we have a "sabbath" and the world immovably established. Then Jehovah comes to take possession of the earth, and it is blessed indeed; but we miss the Head of blessing: where is the Second Man? The third section of the book opens with His voice. He is now the King of Israel, but His kingdom scarcely seems thus as world-wide as before. We pass on, and we find—what? The glorious King Himself and the Man whom earth and heaven join to honor,—the Deathless death-stricken, "numbering *His* days"! but where is the "wisdom" here? Then the answer bursts on us. It is a problem of which God Himself may well give us the solution. The death-stricken is yet the

Ps. ciii.

[3]PSALM CIII.

The praise of the restored people.

[A psalm] of David.

1 (1-2): Bless Jehovah!
(i.) with united heart.
(ii.) love answering love.

[1]BLESS Jehovah, my soul:
and [m]all that is within me, [bless] his holy Name.
Bless Jehovah, my soul:
and [n]forget not all his benefits.

2 (3-7): Saviour
(i.) altogether,
(ii.) redeeming from death.
(iii.) renewal of youth.
(iv.) for the oppressed.
(v.) governmental ways.

Who [o]forgiveth all thine iniquities:
who [p]healeth all thy diseases.
Who [q]redeemeth thy life from the pit:
who crowneth thee with [r]loving-kindness and tender mercies.
Who [s]satisfieth thy mouth with good:
thy youth is [t]renewed like the eagle.
Jehovah [u]executeth righteousness and judgment
for all that are oppressed.
He made known his [v]ways unto Moses,
his [w]doings to the children of Israel.

[3] Ps.104.1,35.
[m] *cf.* Ps. 35. 10.
cf. Ps. 45.1, *cf.* Eph. 5. 19.
[n] Gen.40.23, *cf.*2 Pet.1.9.
[o] Is.44.22,23. *cf.*Col.2.13.
[p] Ex. 15.26. *cf.* Matt. 8. 17. *cf.*Ezek.47. 12.
[q] Ps. 56. 13. *cf.* Lam. 3. 57, 58.
[r] Ps. 68. 19, 20. *cf.* Is. 61. 3.
[s] *cf.*Deut.33. 23. Jer. 31. 14.
[t] Is. 40. 31.
[u] Ps. 146. 7. *cf.*Mal. 3.5.
[v] Ex. 33. 13, 18. *cf.* Nu. 12. 6-8.
cf. Hos. 14. 9.
[w] *cf.*Ex. 14. 30, 31 with Ps. 106. 12, 13.

Deathless One; the King of Israel is a divine King; the Second Man, the Sabbath-maker for the world, is Jehovah who comes back to it: and creature and Creator are in Him for ever united; everlasting, *Human* arms hold us fast to God!

Of atonement itself we do indeed hear, directly, nothing; but we may well be trusted to discern (after all that has been before us) in this Death what has effected it. It is the necessary and only explanation of "indignation and wrath" met by this self-humbled, glorious One. And suited it is, after all, to what we know Him now to be. God, who is love, would be Himself our Redeemer. He has redeemed us to *Himself*. Blessed be His Name, it is Immanuel, for He has saved His people from their sins.

Thus we can understand the note of triumph with which the psalm ends: "the children of Thy servants shall abide, and their seed shall be established before Thee."

Psalm CIII.

1. There follows now the praise of the restored people. The psalmist calls upon his soul with all its powers to praise Jehovah, the eternal, unchangeable and covenant-God. Love manifesting itself in "all His benefits" awakes the soul to praise Him, while it realizes amid all its joy the weakness and inconstancy of the creature, of which in contrast with His faithfulness it has had such abundant proof: "forget not all His benefits."

2. Jehovah is celebrated, first of all, in the salvation which He has effected for them. He is Saviour altogether: of the whole man, body and soul alike. Israel's experience in the day contemplated will include in the fullest way that of bodily healing, such as accompanied the Lord's ministry in her midst, miracles which are called therefore in the epistle to the Hebrews "powers of the world to come" (chap. vi. 5),—more strictly, "of the coming age." The bodily condition will then be the fitting sign of the spiritual, in a world from which the curse upon the ground even will be removed.

Nationally and individually, their life is now redeemed from destruction, and more, they find, more completely than Abraham their father, a renewal of youth. "As the days of a tree shall be the days of My people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands" (Isa. lxv. 22).

3 (8-10): Himself.
(i.) His grace.
(ii.) not always contending.
(iii.) the manifestation.

4 (11-18): In view of creature weakness.
(i.) supreme in mercy.
(ii.) putting away sin.
(iii.) a father's heart.
(iv.) our weakness.
(v.) divine government.
(vi.) the limit of life.
(vii.) perfect loving-kindness.
(viii.) the new covenant.

Jehovah is [x]merciful and gracious:
[y]slow to anger and plenteous in loving-kindness.
He will not [z]perpetually contend,
nor will he keep in mind for ever.
He hath not dealt with us [a]after our sins,
nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

For as the heavens are [b]high above the earth,
so great is his loving-kindness unto them that [c]fear him.
As far as the east is from the west,
so far hath he [d]removed our revoltings from us.
As a [e]father hath tender mercy on [his] children,
so Jehovah hath tender mercy on them that fear him.
For he [f]knoweth our frame:
he remembereth that we are dust.
As for man his days are as [g]grass:
as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.
For the wind passeth over it, and it [h]is not:
and its place recognizeth it no more.
But Jehovah's loving-kindness is [i]from everlasting to everlasting on them that fear him:
and his righteousness unto [j]children's children:
To those that [k]keep his covenant,
and to those that remember his precepts to do them.

x Ex. 34. 6. Neb. 9. 17. Joel 2. 13.
y *cf.* Nah. 1. 3 with Ps. 76. 7.
z Is. 57. 16. Mi. 7. 18.
a *cf.* Ezr. 9. 13. Ps. 130. 3, 4. *cf.* Is. 40. 1, 2.
b Ps. 57. 10. Ps. 108. 4. Is. 55. 9.
c vers. 13, 17. Ps. 34. 9.
d Jer. 50. 20. Is. 38. 17.
e *cf.* Hos. 11. 8, 9. *cf.* Lk. 15. 20.
f *cf.* Gen. 6. 3. Ps. 78. 39. Is. 2. 22.
g Is. 40. 6-8. Ps. 102. 11. Jas. 1. 10, 11.
h Job. 14. 1, 2, 10.
i *cf.* Ps. 90. 2. Jer. 31. 3.
j *cf* Ex. 20. 5, 6. *cf.* Ezek. 37. 25. *cf.* Acts 2. 39.
k Deut. 7. 9. *cf.* Heb. 8. 7-13.

Then the oppressed find a Judge of unfailing righteousness: the character in which Israel's King is so often represented;—the tender assurance of how the pitiful eyes of the Almighty have been fastened upon human misery and wrong all the time that He endured it; as the prophet says with regard to Israel (Isa. lxiii. 9), "afflicted in all their affliction." Now has come the time of interference and of setting right—the revelation of the God in whom men have not believed.

Yet these are ways long since in fact declared: "He made known His ways unto Moses, His doings unto the children of Israel." The people saw what was outward; to him with whom God spake face to face, the inner principle was declared. Nor must we imagine that this was law merely. All Deuteronomy is witness of how far beyond this Israel's law-giver was made to see; and the final prophecy and song with which this closes, clearly declare the ruin of man under law, the sovereign goodness which comes in at last for him. Thus the song of Moses will be the fitting accompaniment of the song of the Lamb in the mouth of the victorious multitude who stand, in the day to come, by the crystal sea (Rev. xv. 3).

3. Now we have Jehovah Himself put before us: "merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in loving-kindness"; and this is how in fact He declared Himself to Moses (the cross-shadow of the law only being removed from it,) that "He can by no means clear the guilty" (Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7). Nay, "He will not perpetually contend, nor will He keep in mind for ever." They have proved this now in their history, and can say, "He has not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us after our iniquities." Thus He has manifested Himself, and glorified Himself before their eyes.

4. They expand this, therefore, in the fourth section, in which His mercy in view of the frailty of the creature is dwelt upon, and in eight verses traced as far as the new covenant, in the blessings of which they are now rejoicing. Supreme is He in mercy: high as the heavens are above the earth. East is no

5 (19-22): God in His government.
(i.) universal rule.
(ii.) servants in fellowship.
(iii.) fulfilling His pleasure.
(iv.) His works.

Jehovah hath established his [t]throne in the heavens,
and his kingdom ruleth over all.
Bless Jehovah, ye his [m]angels:
ye that excel in [n]strength, doing his word:
[o]hearkening to the voice of his word.
Bless Jehovah, [p]all his hosts:
ye ministers of his that do his pleasure.
Bless Jehovah, all his [q]works in all places of his dominion:
bless Jehovah, O my [r]soul.

t Ps. 11. 4. Is. 66. 1.
m Ps. 148. 2. cf. Is. 6. 1-3. cf. Rev. 5. 11, 12.
n cf. Rev. 5. 2. cf. Rev. 18. 21.
o Heb. 1. 14.
p Josh. 5. 14. Ps. 68. 17.
q Ps. 145. 10.
r ver. 1.

farther from the west than He has removed their transgressions from them. Nay, as a father's tender mercy toward his children, such is His tender mercy toward those that fear Him. Then we are assured of the fount of infinite pity in Him who remembers that we are but dust; though under His government it is that man's days can find their image in the flower of the field, which, if the wind roughly passes over it, is gone for ever out of its place.

"But Jehovah's loving-kindness is from everlasting to everlasting upon those that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children: to those that keep His covenant, and to those that remember His precepts to do them." This should not sound legal: it is a principle that grace does not set aside,—which it would not *be* grace, in fact, to set aside. Grace affirms and fulfills it; for "sin shall not have dominion over you, *because* ye are not under law but under grace." And thus the "covenant" here cannot be either the covenant of law which only "worketh wrath," but must be that which as Abraham's covenant makes them true children of Abraham, and which was given four hundred and thirty years before the law came in. *Faith* links men with this covenant, whether Jew or Gentile, and those who keep it are the circumcised *in heart*.

So only can we understand the utterance here, and realize the joyous assurance that rings through it. The "*new* covenant" is but the re-statement more fully, and in more precise application to the nation of Israel, of the old "covenant of promise" which God gave to Abraham; and in this direction apparently the numerical finger points. The grace and blessing here are both eternal.

5. Nothing remains, therefore, but the eternal praise to Him whom all His ways become, and to join with all intelligences, all His hosts—the forces that with sun and moon and storm and earthquake, do still His pleasure—while all His works, all created things in all places of His dominion, bless Him. Yea, "bless Jehovah, O my soul."

Psalm CIV.

We are now in a position to realize as never before what creation is. Redemption is the key, and the only key, that will fully unlock its treasures; for redemption alone can remove the shadow which, after all, invests its brightest scenes, and lift the sadness which will intrude itself upon every contemplation of it. Nor only so: unbelieving suspicions find their lurking-places amid these shadows, and give bitterness to this sadness. Nature, pervaded by law, as the science of the day more and more assures us, seems cast in a rigid mould from which we shrink inevitably. The more perfect as a machine, the less we find heart in it; and the smiles with which it decks itself seem often but very cruelty and hypocrisy, as we realize it to be the monster that without remorse consumes day by day its own offspring. The more we grow in knowledge, the more impossible it seems to escape the conviction that this is no effect of moral ruin introduced by Adam into what was before a deathless paradise. Death seems wrought into the constitution of things from the beginning. We have in the geological strata a history of the earth stretching long ages back of Adam; and far down as we may pierce, nothing but convulsion and ruin can be discerned. We dwell upon the accumulated dust of multitudinous generations, which some-

Ps. civ.

1 (1-4): Jehovah the Creator.
(i.) His greatness.
(ii.) hiding yetdeclaring.
(iii.) display in the heavens.
(iv.) creature-subjection.

[s] PSALM CIV.

Nature's tribute to Jehovah.

[1] BLESS Jehovah, my soul:
Jehovah my God, thou art very [t]great:
thou art clothed with [u]honor and majesty:
Covering [thyself] with [v]light as with a garment;
[w]stretching out the heavens like a curtain;
Framing his upper [x]chambers in the waters;
making the [y]clouds his chariot;
going on the wings of the wind;
[z]Making his angels spirits,
his ministers a flaming fire.

s Ps. 103. 22.
t Ps. 48. 1. Jer. 10. 6. *cf.* Job 38. 4, etc.
u Ps. 93. 1. *cf.* Rev. 1. 13-15.
v *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 16 with Col. 1. 12.
w *cf.* Ps. 19. 4, 5. Is. 40. 22.
x ver. 13. Amos 9. 6.
y Is. 19 1. Ps. 18. 10. *cf.* Acts 1. 9 with Rev. 1. 7.
z Heb. 1. 7, 14; *cf.* Dan. 9. 27.

times constitute in fact the very substance of the strata themselves. Not merely individuals but countless types of form have passed away; and the "fittest" that "survive"—if they do survive—have been (according to the theory) produced at the cost of a prodigal waste of life on the part of the less perfect which have yielded them only temporarily the place which in a brief time they too must yield to others.

Is it possible then to have any more a "psalm of creation"? is it possible any more to sing with the understanding these songs of another age? Yes, surely, if we have learned, and not unless we have learned, redemption as the key to the mysteries of creation. If we realize God to be a Saviour, and can write Jehovah-Saviour in brief as "Jesus," we have a light bright enough to dispel all shadow from the soul and bathe it in eternal glory. A record of conflict and of ruin as connected with the creature will no more be strange or stumbling, but familiar truth; while the up-rise of a higher form of life out of what has perished and passed away will be but as a prophecy of a better resurrection and the final victory of God over the evil, the Son of God being glorified thereby.

1. Jehovah the Redeemer is what the last psalm has proclaimed to us. Divine Love could not give to another the glory of this salvation, nor find one capable of the stupendous sacrifice that it involved. In the psalm before us Jehovah is the Creator also, and Nature brings its tribute of praise to swell the anthem of redemption. Only thus can we realize its glorious harmony.

The psalm begins with celebrating the greatness of Jehovah: He is clothed with honor and majesty. Inaccessible in His own essential glory, He covers Himself with light as with a garment, and stretches out the heavens like the curtain (of a tent). The visible is thus the robe of the Invisible. He indwells it, and through it we may discern, if dimly, His glorious Form.

Yet this dimness itself is Light; and there is no hiding, save the better to make known; just as when, because of the feebleness of our sight, through a darkened glass we behold the sun. The tremulous curtain of the heavens stretched out is, as it were, interwoven with its iris-rays. In the waters of the expanse He frames His upper chambers; the dark clouds moving on the wings of the wind being the chariot in which He rides.

It is plain that the psalmist refuses mere matter and motion as a sufficient account of heavenly phenomena, and that to him all these are instinct with the Presence and Will of a Divine Being, whom they in some sense disclose. Nor has the discovery of some of the mechanics involved in them done one whit to disprove the psalmist's belief. Certainly the description given may be allowed to be poetical, but its meaning is not difficult to understand, nor can it be proved superstitious. Superstition thrives in the dark, is incongruous, fantastic, irrational. To claim as manifestations of Mind what has been proved to be so perfectly rational, or of a Divine Governor what is so plainly authoritative as to be owned as "law,"—this has no character of superstition at all. Divine action,

2 (5-9): The establishment of the earth and separation of the waters. (i.) permanent foundations. (ii.) the contrast. (iii.) the resurrection of the earth. (iv.) the subject waters. (v.) government.

He laid the earth on its [a]foundations,
that it might not be moved for ever and aye.
Thou hadst covered it with the [b]deep as with a garment:
waters stood above the mountains.
At thy rebuke they [c]fled:
at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.
Mountains ascended; they went down the valleys
unto the place that thou hadst [d]appointed for them.
Thou hast set a bound that they shall not pass,
nor [e]return to cover the earth.

a Ps. 24. 2. *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 5, 10, 13.
b Gen. 1. 2.
c Gen. 1. 9. Job. 26. 10. Prov. 8. 27-29.
d Job. 38. 8-11. Jer. 5. 22.
e Gen. 9. 11. *cf.* Rev. 21. 1.

identified with such phenomena, is God thus far in the light, and appealing to the rational nature of His creatures for recognition.

The acceptance and use of the Septuagint translation of the next verse by the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews (i. 7) would quite preclude the adoption of any other. "He maketh His angels spirits" is, according to the apostle, a fact affirmed of the nature of angels; and of course a much higher fact than "making the winds His messengers." As it might be translated either way, the meaning must be decided otherwise than by the language. Nor is it a disproportion in thought, that while the material instrument is contemplated as directly in the hands of God, the spiritual beings should be His messengers. This shows, on the one hand, that no part of His creation is to be conceived as separate from Him, no physical agency that is not the embodiment of His will, while, on the other hand, the "spirits" with a responsibility of their own represent Him and are subject to Him, receiving their character and endowment from Him, according to His will. There would be indeed a lack in the representation of Jehovah the Creator, were only physical forces—clouds, winds, etc—spoken of, and not His creative power in the domain of spirit.

2. The psalmist now recites the story of the preparation of the earth for man. Divine delight in man, and so His "rejoicing in the habitable parts of his earth" are evidently the theme, while the rebuke and bounding of the overflowing waters may be read as a parable of the strife of which the world has ever been the scene, and which receives its final rebuke when the Prince of peace shall come. The first verse declares the absolute security of the dry land for ever, in the strongest expression for eternity that the Old Testament knows (*le-olam va-ed*). The deluge (of which we are beginning to have some knowledge geologically*) altered nothing essentially as to the structure of the earth in this way; and the purification by fire which awaits it before the eternal condition of the "new earth" can be reached, need not do so either; although there will then be "no more sea" (Rev. xxi. 1). Whatever may be the changes, God adheres to His first plan all through, and builds for eternity.

But at first, as we read in Genesis, the reign of water had been universal: "Thou hadst covered it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains." Geology knows well this condition; which Moses somehow knew before geology. The earth man lives upon, like man from the womb, was born out of water; and the structure of the earth was there—"mountains," and by implication valleys—before it was thus born.

The third verse implies (what the number seems to indicate) the resurrection of the earth; but the psalmist speaks of the rebuke of the waters; which I suppose is continued in the following verse. It is objected that we cannot say, "They ascended the mountains," which (while in itself unnatural) is forbidden by the fact that they already stood above them. Most, therefore, read "The mountains rose; the valleys sank," and suppose it parenthetical; for the rest of

* See an exceedingly interesting volume by Sir J. W. Dawson, which gives in brief the evidence: "The Meeting-place of Geology and History." (Religious Tract Society, England.)

3 (10–15): Springs of refreshment. (i.) their sources. (ii.) sustenance. (iii.) birds of heaven. (iv.) the ground.

He sendeth the *f*springs into the valleys:
they run among the mountains.
They give *g*drink to every beast of the field:
the wild asses quench their thirst.
By them the *h*birds of the heavens dwell:
from among the branches they give voice.
He *i*watereth the hills from his upper chambers:
the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.

f cf. De. 8. 7. *cf.* Is. 41. 18.
g ctr. 1 Ki. 18. 5. ver. 21.
h cf. Gen. 9. 10 with Ps. 145. 9.
i Ps. 65. 10.

the verse, as well as the following one, speaks again of the waters. The "place appointed" is evidently the "one place" into which the waters are gathered on the third day, and does not refer to either mountains or valleys; on the other hand, it is awkward to take the first half of the verse as a parenthesis. But there seems no reason why we should not translate, "Mountains ascended: they went down the valleys"; which preserves the connection, and makes the language vividly pictorial.

The next verse speaks then of the bound assigned by God to the retreating waters, so as to prevent their return again. Thus man's earth has been recovered and is preserved for him: the typical aspect of it has been pointed out elsewhere (Genesis i; *notes*). The more we study this, the more we shall be satisfied that the typical meaning is no arbitrary accommodation of the facts to spiritual illustration, but one deeply grounded in the nature of things: in short, we shall realize what the psalm before us emphasizes, that the Redeemer and the Creator are One.

3. But it is not enough that man's abode should be separated from the waters. Merely separated, the dry land would be for him but indeed a barren possession, upon which he could not sustain himself a few brief days. Earth (and therefore man) is dependent on heaven, a deeply spiritual truth, of which all nature is full; and to this now we come, the springs of refreshing which, though they are ministered from the earth, are not of earth. "*He* sendeth the springs into the valleys: they run among the mountains." The well-known type of the Spirit is the "living water"—water that has in it the power which is first of all derived from its descent from heaven, though it come by whatever underground channels to the place in which we find it. "They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst." How free are all God's gifts; and the most absolutely necessary are just the freest. Fresh air, sunshine, the streams that water the earth: these are as generally distributed, as they are everywhere needful. The "wild asses" are the very type of rebellious intractability; but "He maketh His sun to shine upon the evil and upon the good; and sendeth rain upon the just and on the unjust." And He who has ascended up on high and received gifts for men, has done so "for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them."

And beside these springs the birds of the heavens dwell; and give voice among the branches. Natural worshipers as we may say, no *song*-bird was by the law of Leviticus ever unclean; and their notes, however various, are ever harmonious. Attracted by the water, they dwell above our heads, and sustain themselves upon their wings in unobstructed flight through paths in which no beast of earth can follow them.

Next, we have God's irrigation-system for the earth, in which the hills have their part in turning hither or thither the rain of God's "upper chambers," so that the rivers spread abroad to water the land. That which is nearest to heaven attracts most the rain of heaven; while by the law of its nature it cannot keep it, but must pass it on to others. Thus "the earth is satisfied,"—that which receives and is made fruitful by it being just that which, not as rock or sand, resists the force that would disintegrate, but the contrary: that which yields and crumbles as the humble and contrite heart yields to the divine Husbandman.

So the grass grows for cattle and herb for the service of man; God bent upon

(v.) man with God.

(vi.) discipline and encouragement.

4 (16-18): A lesson of experience.
(i.) sufficiency of His care.
(ii.) ministering to others also.
(iii.) refuges.

He causeth the [j]grass to grow for cattle,
and herb for the service of man,—
bringing forth food out of the earth;
And [k]wine which gladdeneth frail man's heart;
he maketh his face shine with [l]oil;
and [with] [m]bread he strengtheneth frail man's heart.
The [n]trees of Jehovah are full,—
the cedars of Lebanon which he hath planted:
Where the birds make their [o]nests,
as for the [p]stork, the fir-trees are her house.
The high hills are for the [q]wild goats:
the rock-clefts a refuge for the [r]hyrax.

j Ps. 147. 8. Gen. 1. 11, 29, 30. Job. 38. 26, 27.
k Judg.9.13. cf. Ps. 4. 7. Prov. 31. 6, 7.
l Ps. 23. 5. cf. Acts 6. 5, 15. Is. 61. 3.
m cf. Is. 55. 10, 11.
n cf. Is 55.13. cf. Hos. 14. 5-7.
o cf. De. 22.6.
p Lev.11.13, 19. Jer. 8. 7.
q Job 39. 1. r Lev. 11. 5; Prov.30.26.

maintaining the creature, whom He has set in dignity upon the earth as His image and likeness, to know Him and to be for Him, and made him thus of all most thoroughly dependent, even because master of all. Where is there a creature ordained to frailty and long helplessness like a human babe? Where is there one so defenceless naturally, with neither tooth nor claw nor strength nor speed and with his very skin denuded to the blast, as is man in his prime? It is spirit in him that is to manifest itself and does, but by the recognition of his dependence and his careful use of all God's gifts.

Truly he is "*frail* man" (*enosh*); but now, alas! called to know a frailty to which not creation but his sin destines him. Now there is discipline for him in it, which he needs, and in which still divine love acts. While that additional need has brought out as never before God's tenderness in it: the wine that gladdeneth frail man's heart, the bread that strengtheneth frail man's heart,—how the words, and the repetition of the words, breathe of God's thoughtful care in upholding one who may so easily give way in discouragement! "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto the bitter in soul: let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more." (Prov. xxxi. 6, 7.)

Bread and wine: may we not find symbol here? And with these, "oil to make his face to shine!" Christ and the Spirit! we do no violence to the work of the Redeemer-Creator when we find these here.

4. The fourth section—of but three verses—seems to add, to what we have just had, a brief lesson of experience as to this care of God for the creatures He has made. It is briefer, I suppose because it is so much in the general line of thought in this creation-psalm. Beyond it there are problems that must be faced, and which will occupy much more time; and for which we will do well to be well furnished.

The lessons—for there are more than one—are all the more such and suited for refreshment by their simplicity. It is good to see how all around us are the assurances of divine loving-kindness. In the buoyant happiness of childhood, in the fragrance and delicate tints of a common flower, in the hues of sunset, in every direction, in short, that we may look, apart from effects of sin, we find abundant evidence of One who has thought, not merely of the preservation but of the enjoyment of His creatures: pleasures of sense, pleasures for the mind, pleasures for the heart, quite beyond any need of theirs, if we think merely of what is implied in the necessity of things going on (if that in fact should be a necessity). The eye, the ear, the man in his whole being, finds without seeking, without soliloquizing about it, constant sources of enjoyment. Something of this sort, though objectively considered, we have here. "The trees of Jehovah are full:" strength, beauty, delicacy of workmanship, are in those "cedars of Lebanon which He has planted." And then they do not grow for themselves

5 (19-23): Government and exercise occasioned.
(i.) appointed times.
(ii.) darkness.
(iii.) compassing round.
(iv.) passive in His hands.
(v.) the responsible being.

He hath made the [s]moon for seasons:
the [t]sun knoweth his going down.
Thou appointest [u]darkness, and it is night:
wherein all the [v]beasts of the wood creep forth.
The [w]young lions roar after their prey,
even seeking their food from God.*
The sun [x]ariseth, they gather together,
and lay them down in their dens.
Man goeth forth unto his [y]work
and unto his labor, until the evening.

6 (24-30): Divine control.
(i.) wisdom in all His works.
(ii.) the sea also.

How [z]manifold are thy works, Jehovah!
in [a]wisdom hast thou made them all:
the earth is [b]full of thy riches.
This great and wide [c]sea also,
wherein are [d]moving things innumerable,—
living creatures, small and great.

s Gen. 1. 16. Jer. 31. 35.
t Ps. 74. 16.
u Is. 45. 7. Ps. 139. 12.
v Ps. 50. 10, 11. Ps. 148. 10.
w Job 38. 39–41. Ps. 145. 15. *cf.* Joel 1. 20.
x *cf.* Mk. 1. 13.
y *cf.* Jno. 11. 9, 10.
z Ps. 111. 2, 4.
a Prov. 3. 19.
b Ps. 145. 5, 9, 10, 17.
c Ps. 95. 5.
d Gen. 1. 20, 21.

* El.

simply, but minister to the birds that rejoicingly flock to and nest in their covert; while the gloomy fir gives hospitable shelter to the home-loving stork. The high hills, too, furnish a refuge for feet like those of the wild goat, specially prepared for them; and the very clefts of the rock provide one for the timid and feeble hyrax. Thus the earth is a house of many chambers, in which her various inhabitants find various provision; God is the great host of multitudinous tenantry.

5. But we come now to consider His government; in which there are difficulties that give room and exercise for faith. His appointed times contemplate darkness as well as light. This is plainly the point in question; and thus the moon is mentioned before the sun, and as to the latter simply his *going down*. Yet the moon shows darkness not unrelieved; and not relieved by hap-hazard. Darkness, however, is of His appointment; which is comfort and yet mystery: and at His appointment, too, the night brings the wild beasts from their lairs. The young lions are cared for, as the innocent sheep, and roaring after prey, seek it and find it from God. Thus the devourer is provided for, as all else: there is no shirking that; and nature witnesses plainly as to it: tooth, claws, and tongue bear witness for the lion. Who gave them to him? The Same who gave to the lion's prey the agility for escape. An equal hand has been at work for both, as it if were designed to have the world a battlefield of not very unequal forces, each cared for and sustained. If the fittest do survive, as some say, it is hard enough to tell who are the fittest. The giants perish, and the pigmies live. "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." If there be design, then strife seems designed: as if the good and the evil, with the inevitable conflict arising from their co-existence, must have its counterpart and reflection in the whole frame of things amid which man is found; as it must, if nature at large be in any sense a parable of spiritual things—if the analogies between them be otherwise than mere deceptions.

The rein is kept upon this strife, even in the ordinances of day and night, with all that these imply: "the sun ariseth, they gather together and lay them down in their dens." And under this same subjection man is, with the addition of the toil which marks him as the responsible creature under the discipline of God: he "goeth forth unto his work and unto his labor, until the evening." His work is to be in the light, and not in darkness; and yet the darkness limits and controls him also in its measure. But it has its measure.

6. The next section, in its seven verses, emphasizes the full mastery of all things possessed by God. It opens with a declaration of the Creator's wisdom in all His works: manifold works, and every one showing His wisdom. Can any-

(iii.) realized control.
There go the [e]ships;
[there is] that [f]leviathan, which thou hast formed to play therein.

(iv.) waiting on Thee.
These all look unto thee:
that thou mayest give them their [g]food in its season.

(v.) creature with Creator.
That thou givest unto them they gather:
thou [h]openest thy hand, they are filled with good.

(vi.) the limit of life.
Thou [i]hidest thy face, they are troubled:
thou takest away their breath, they die,
and [j]return to their dust.

(vii.) perfect sufficiency.
Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created:
and thou [k]renewest the face of the ground.

7 (31-35): Rest in God.
(i.) eternal glory.
The [l]glory of Jehovah shall be for ever:
Jehovah [m]rejoiceth in his works.

(ii.) dependence of all on Him.
He looketh on the earth, and it [n]trembleth:
he toucheth the mountains, and they [o]smoke.

(iii.) the praise.
I will sing unto Jehovah [p]while I live:
I will psalm unto my God while yet I am.

e Ps. 107.23-31.
f Job. 41.
g Ps. 136.25. Ps. 147. 9.
h Ps. 145.15, 16.
i Job 34. 14, 15. cf. Ps. 49.20.
j Gen. 2. 19. Eccl. 12. 7.
k cf. Is. 32.15. cf. Is. 55.8-13.
l cf. Ps. 72. 7, 17.
m cf. Gen. 1. 31 with Rev. 21. 5.
n Hab. 3.10.
o Ps. 144. 5. Is. 64. 1, 2.
p Ps. 63. 4. Ps. 146. 2.

one produce one that does not? But this wisdom itself implies control of material: the mind must be sustained by the hand that it may be shown. Truly "the earth is full of Thy riches."

And so, too, is the at first sight barren sea, full of life in innumerable forms; where, above, the ships tossed upon its surface yet make it the highway of man, God's noblest workmanship; while beneath, the sea-monster sports in its depths. All these must be fed at His table, gather from His hand, be filled with what He gives; or, if He hide His face, suffer; if He take away their breath, go back to the dust from which they came. Yet is He the fountain of life, from which, if He send forth His Spirit, a new creation replaces these vanished forms, and the earth is renewed.

7. From all this the soul justifies its confidence in God, who is Jehovah the Eternal. His glory then shall last forever; and His works are not the playthings of His might, but He rejoices in them. Eternity will be thus the seal upon that final condition with which He at last shall be well pleased.

For thus even now does creation depend on Him, and sympathize with His every thought. If He look upon the earth it trembles; if He touch the mountains they are asmoke. How dreadful this almightiness of His, if He be unknown! If He be realized as what He is, how good that He should be sovereign absolutely! So the psalmist breaks out in a praise which can end but with his being. Nor is it a mere unreasoning emotion: his meditation upon Him shall be sweet, the knowledge of Jehovah shall make glad his heart. The one blot upon God's works shall disappear: "sinners shall be consumed out of the earth, *and* the wicked shall be no more." Then shall His works glorify Him indeed; and in the anticipation of it the heart praises Him.

Thus the song of creation ends. We may perhaps be disappointed after all, that there is no further attempt to lift the curtain of mystery that must be confessed to hang so thickly over much of God's governmental ways. But here Scripture always declares that "clouds and darkness are round about Him." Nor, though Christianity reveals Him as in the light, is this essentially altered. Still we are called to walk by faith, and to glorify Him by submission where we cannot penetrate His meaning. The difference that Christianity makes is that *God* is in the light—not all His acts or ways: which faith knows to be worthy of Him, even where it knows not *how* they are. Here the cross is indeed the bow in the cloud; and redemption shows the relation of God to sin itself, in perfect holiness

(iv.) which can be tested.
(v.) the end.

My [q]meditation upon him shall be sweet:
I will be [r]glad in Jehovah.
Sinners shall be [s]consumed out of the earth,
and the wicked be no more:
bless Jehovah, my soul. [t]Hallelujah.

Ps. cv.

[5]PSALM CV.

The story of His ways as with His people.

1 (1-7): Jehovah our God.
(i.) celebrate Him.
(ii.) meditate on Him.
(iii.) His holy Name.
(iv.) creature need.

GIVE thanks unto Jehovah, [u]call upon his Name:
[v]make known his deeds among the peoples.
Sing unto him, [w]psalm unto him,
[x]meditate on all his wondrous works.
[y]Glory ye in his holy Name:
let the [z]heart of them be glad that seek Jehovah.
Seek Jehovah and his strength:
[a]seek his face continually.

q Ps. 19. 14.
r Ps. 92. 4.
s Ps. 101. 8.
t Ps. 105. 45.
u Ps. 116. 13.
v Ps. 96. 2. *cf.* Is. 60. 6. Ps. 145. 4, 5, 11.
w Jer. 20. 13. Ps. 149. 1.
x Ps. 77. 12. Ps. 78. 4. *cf.* Mal. 3. 16.
y Ps. 44. 8.
z Ps. 40. 16.
a Ps. 27. 8. *cf.* Is. 45. 19.

and yet in love; and this is found here in the hundred and second psalm, Jehovah seen in the Man cut off in the midst of His days, yet the Creator of all, whose years shall have no end. This then throws its light over the darkest mysteries; and even the conflict of opposites which we discern in nature begins to be intelligible, as bringing it into accordance with earth's fallen head, and making it the symbolic utterance of spiritual things. True it is we know but little of nature in this character of it: we have mere glimpses of what the glorious vision should be. But what wonder when we have allowed Scripture itself to be practically so much hidden as it still must be confessed to be? Alas, we have not yet the key that shall completely open the door, and set us face to face with the unveiled mysteries. Thank God for what we know; but shall we not press on to what yet we know not?

Psalm CV.

The last two psalms of the book show us God's ways with His people, and (in confession on their part) their ways with Him, which had necessitated the discipline of His hand. But this has done its work, and they are thus ready for the final blessing, the principles and character of which we find fully in the fifth book.

These two psalms are naturally therefore of very simple character, a review of Israel's history as already known to us in the books of Moses, with a mere glance at the after events when in the land. In fact the story of the wilderness is typical of all the rest; just as Israel as a nation is but a sample of man generally, — the "heart of man" anywhere being but the full, fair reflection of "man" at large.

The hundred and fifth psalm is not the story of God's governmental ways with Israel as a whole, but simply of that which has to do with His action on their behalf, mainly in the deliverance in Egypt, and ending with their possession of the land. One verse alone declares this last.

1. The first section, in seven verses, calls for the celebration of Jehovah their God, as known in His glorious deeds. His Name is holy. His power is needed by human frailty. The "judgments of His mouth" interpret His acts, and make them illustration of His perfect ways. To this glorious God His people stand in relation as the "seed of Abraham His servant" the one marked by his history for his obedience as such. They are "the children" too, "of Jacob His chosen": whose history is of another character, and shows the struggle of a soul in the hand of God, whom it knows, but too little knows. And this necessitates those dealings of God with it, by which at last an Israel emerges out of a Jacob. These struggles and this divine discipline are, as easily seen, the type of the

(v.) His ways.
(vi.) Jacob His chosen.
(vii.) everywhere the same perfect God.

Remember his [b] wondrous works that he hath done;
his miracles, and the judgments of his mouth,
Ye seed of [c] Abraham his servant;
ye children of [d] Jacob, his chosen [ones].
He is Jehovah [e] our God:
his [f] judgments are in all the earth.

2 (8-12): His covenant-relation.
(i.) a perpetual covenant.
(ii.) with Abraham and Isaac.
(iii.) Jacob-Israel.
(iv.) the land.
(v.) weak with Strong.

He is ever [g] mindful of his covenant:
the word that he commanded to a thousand generations.
The [covenant] which he [h] made with Abraham,
and his [i] oath unto Isaac.
And he [j] confirmed it unto Jacob for a decree,—
to Israel for an [k] everlasting covenant:
Saying, Unto thee will I [l] give the land of Canaan—
the lot of your inheritance:
When they were but [m] few in number,
of no account, and sojourners in it.

3 (13-15): Fenced round.
(i.) the occasion.
(ii.) His deliverance.
(iii.) His anointed.

When they went from [n] one nation to another,—
from [one] kingdom to another people,—
He suffered no man to oppress them:
and [o] reproved kings for their sakes:
[Saying,] [p] Touch not mine anointed ones,
and do my prophets no harm.

4 (16-22): Under trial.
(i.) the occasion.

And he called for a [q] famine upon the land:
he brake the whole staff of bread.

[b] Ps. 77. 11. Ps. 78. 4.
[c] Ex. 3.6,15. Is. 41. 8. Is. 51. 2, 3.
[d] cf. Is.43.1, 2.
[e] Ps. 48. 14.
[f] Is.26.9-11.
[g] cf. Ps.89.3.
[h] Gen.22.16, 17. Heb. 6. 13-17.
[i] Gen. 26. 3.
[j] Gen. 28.13 -15.
[k] cf. Gal. 3. 15-18. cf.Rom.11. 25-29. cf. Is. 54. 7-10.
[l] Gen.13.14-17. cf.Ezek.47. 13-23.
[m] cf. De.7.7. Is. 51. 2.
[n] Gen. 12.6-9.
[o] Gen. 12. 17-19.
[p] Gen. 20.3-18. Gen. 31. 24.
[q] Gen. 41.53 -57.

nation's history afterward. They are but a too faithful reproduction of their father; while the victorious grace of God will not cease toward them, until in them also He has produced an Israel indeed. And this is "Jehovah our God," whose "judgments," essentially of the same character, "are in all the earth."

2. The psalmist goes on to speak of the covenant-relation in which He stands to them. It is an abiding one: He is ever mindful of it; He has commanded it to a thousand generations—a round number, as it would seem, for as many as may be (comp. Deut. vii. 9). Made with Abraham, and with an oath to Isaac, He confirmed it to Jacob for a decree unalterable, and to Israel as an everlasting covenant. Here the double name, and used evidently with regard to the people as well as to the father of their twelve tribes, has (as always) its significance. To Jacob, with all the frailty and sinfulness that the word implies, it takes nevertheless the form of a decree, the fixed expression of His absolute will; with Israel, in whom as such His transforming power is realized, it is an everlasting covenant. He works thus in perfect sovereignty, and according to the holiness of His own nature. According to this covenant the land is secured to them, and was so when they were in it as sojourners only, a few people and in men's account of no consideration.

3. The next section, briefly but effectively, shows how in their after-history Jehovah was a sanctuary to them: according, indeed, to the care He had shown for Abraham, when Abraham himself also had been sadly untrue to the promise which had been given him, in yielding up the designated mother of the seed to be, into the hands of the Philistine king (Gen. xx.), and here He owns His "prophet" in the one who had so failed. This was but a sample of how He had come in for the nation in whom He had set the mouth-pieces of His revelation to man. And here is the declaration of those larger purposes of His which connect themselves with this people, set apart not for their own blessing merely, as

(ii.) the servant of God and man.
(iii.) the realization.
(iv.) testing.
(v.) the divine issue.
(vi.) Joseph the master.
(vii.) in fulness of power.

He had [r]sent a man before them—
Joseph, who was [s]sold for a servant.
His feet they hurt with [t]fetters:
the iron entered his soul.
Until the [u]time that his word came to pass,
the word of Jehovah tried him.
The king sent and loosed him,
—the ruler of peoples—and let him go free.
He made him [v]lord of his house,
and ruler of all his substance:
To bind his princes at his pleasure,
and teach his old men [w]wisdom.

r Gen. 45. 5. Gen. 50. 20.
s Gen. 37. 26-28, 36.
t Gen. 39. 19, 20. Gen. 40. 15.
u Gen. 41. 1, 14.
v Gen. 41. 38-44.
w Gen. 41. 8, 16.

5 (23-35): Exercised, but God with them.
a (23, 24): the occasion.
(i.) the entrance into Egypt.
(ii.) increase over enemies.
b (25-27): the opposition and intervention.
(i.) the occasion.
(ii.) the deliverers.
(iii.) signs.

And [x]Israel came into Egypt:
and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.
And he [y]increased his people greatly,
and made them [z]stronger than their adversaries.
He turned their heart to [a]hate his people,
to deal [b]subtly with his servants.
He sent [c]Moses his servant,—
[d]Aaron whom he chose:
They showed his [e]signs among them,
and his miracles in the land of Ham.

x Gen. 45. 28. Gen. 46. 1-30.
y Ex. 1. 7.
z Ex. 1. 9.
a Ex. 1. 11-14.
b Ex. 1. 10. Acts 7. 19.
c Ex. 2. 1-10. Ex. 3. 1-18.
d Ex. 4. 14-17.
e Ex. 7. 1-13.

not at all on account of righteousness in them, but in grace towards all the sons of men.

4. The fourth section naturally speaks of trial; but while the famine which came upon the land in Jacob's time is the occasion of it, the psalmist goes on to show how God had provided for it by one sent before them into Egypt to be His servant in the service of man: one himself fully tried, and made to realize what in a world like this such service means; tried too by that word of Jehovah which in him as the Spirit of prophecy had announced His exaltation, and which at last came to pass. In Joseph we have, as every one knows, the type of the Lord Jesus, in whom God has provided indeed for blessing, both to Israel and the earth, and deliverance out of the great trial that is coming for both. The divine issue came at last for him: loosed from his chains, he is made the lord of Egypt, with fullness of power based upon fullness of wisdom. Such an One, but far transcending Joseph, shall the world find at last.

5. But Israel's coming into Egypt was only their introduction into manifold experiences, in which they found exercise indeed, but God manifesting Himself with them in that which fell upon the mightiest power of that day,—signs which Israel themselves could ever look back to with thanksgiving and for the renewal of confidence, and which are to be repeated in their deliverance in the last days (Mic. vii. 15, and comp. Rev. xvi.), and are the necessary humiliation of all the pride of the world and its idols before God, when the day of the Lord succeeds man's day.

(*a*) Two verses show the occasion of these trials. First, "Israel came into Egypt": the people of God, graced by the purpose of God, were in the land of "double straitness," the place of the conflict between the desert and the river,—of life struggling with death; alas, the land of Ham, the "sun-darkened," a darkness upon which the light shone and it comprehended it not. The people of God are in a world opposed to God; hence necessarily in opposition to them as that; but then this people of God are themselves looked at from another side,—"Jacob": and *Jacob*, though but a sojourner in the land of Ham, is in danger from more than *opposition*. He needs all the exercise through which he is made to pass.

They increase greatly, through the favor of God, and become stronger than

He sent [f]darkness, and made it dark:
and they rebelled not against his word.
He turned their waters into [g]blood,
and slew their fish.
Their land swarmed with [h]frogs,
in the chambers of their kings.
He spake and there came [i]swarms*:
[and] lice in all their borders.
He gave them [j]hail for rain,
flaming fire in their land.
He smote their vines and their fig-trees,
and brake the trees of their borders.
He spake, and the [k]locusts came,
and gnawers, and that without number.
And he devoured every herb in their land,—
devoured the fruit of their ground.

He smote also all the [l]first-born in their land—
the first-fruits of all their strength.
He [m]brought them forth also with silver and gold:
and there was no [n]feeble one among their tribes.

* *arob*, "mixture."

c (28–31): the signs proper. (i.) light withdrawn. (ii.) the means of refreshment death. (iii.) the unclean things from the river. (iv.) the swarms and lice—brand of vanity.
d (32–35): the desolation of the land. (i.) a concord of opposites. (ii.) destruction. (iii.) the full realization. (iv.) complete prostration.
6 (36–45): Victory.
a (36): the first-born.
b (37, 38): the going forth. (i.) in strength.

f Ex. 10.21–23.
g Ex. 7. 19–25. Ps. 78. 44.
h Ex. 8.1–14. Ps. 78. 45.
i Ex. 8. 16–24.
j Ex. 9. 18–26. Ps. 78. 47, 48.
k Ex. 10. 4–15. Ps. 78. 46.
l Ex. 11. 4–6. Ps. 78. 51.
m Ex. 12. 35, 36.
n *cf.* Ex. 15. 26.

their enemies, as Pharaoh's own words declare (Ex. i. 9). And here is the way, doubtless, in which we are to interpret the verse following: "He turned their heart to hate His people." It needs no more than that the favor of God should be thus manifested, to set the tide of opposition in full force.

(*b*) The opposition and God's intervention for them are next spoken of. Moses is sent, and Aaron, and signs and wonders show unmistakably the broad seal of their commission.

(*c*) The order in which the miracles are given is different from the historical one. For this, of course, there must be a reason. It would seem that we have a classification of them in two divisions: first, the signs proper, those whose force lay for the most part in their testimony to the conscience; the second consists rather of those that really prostrated the land—miracles of destruction that made Egypt desolate. Among the signs proper, the darkness is put at the head, the light of heaven withdrawn: one of those things which would appeal most strongly to the conscience of man as supernatural; and which to the Egyptians, who made the night especially a sign of the prevalence of evil, and for whom the sun was the great deity, would be a cause of the greatest consternation. In fact, they moved not from their seats during the three days it lasted: a thing to which the psalmist refers here when he says, "they rebelled not against His word." To refer this (with most interpreters) to the Israelite leaders, in contrast with their conduct at the waters of Meribah, seems quite opposed to the connection. Nor can it refer to the final submission of the Egyptians; here they were appalled into perfect stillness—no doubt, only for the time: but it made their after-attitude all the more solemn.

Next we have, what was really the first miracle of judgment, the waters turned to blood, the means of refreshment becoming death, and then that of the frogs swarming out of the river-bed, and into the chambers of the king, as to which I can add nothing to the notes on the book of Exodus. The lice follow, in the historical order; but with these are put the "swarms" or "mixture" (probably, of flies), which may there go with the lice (see the "notes" Ex. viii. 16–19) in stamping man with the brand of vanity.

(*d*) The moral or spiritual lessons are indeed thus far upon the surface, and

Egypt was °glad at their departing:
for the fear of them had fallen on them.
He spread a ᵖcloud for a covering,
and fire to give light in the night.
They asked, and he brought ᵍquails,
and filled them with ʳbread of heaven.
He opened the ˢrock, and the waters gushed out,
they ran in the dry places like a river.
For he ᵗremembered his holy word:
[and] Abraham his servant.
And he brought forth his people with ᵘjoy,
and his chosen ones with singing.
And he gave them the ᵛlands of the nations,
and they possessed the labor of the races.
That they might ʷobserve his statutes,
and keep his laws. Hallelujah.

(ii.) their adversaries.
c (39): His presence.
d (40, 41): the wilderness.
(i.) sufficient provision.
(ii.) refreshment out of the rock.
e (42–45): the end.
(i.) the ground.
(ii.) joyful deliverance.
(iii.) possession of the inheritance.
(iv.) the practical effect.

o Ex. 12. 33.
p Ex. 13. 21, 22. Neh. 9. 12. Ps. 78. 14.
q Ex. 16. 12, 13.
r Ex. 16. 14, 15. Ps. 78. 24, 25.
s Ex. 17. 6. Nu. 20. 10, 11. Ps. 78. 15, 16.
t Ex. 2. 24, 25.
u Ex. 15. 1–21.
v Ps. 44. 1–3. Ps. 78. 55.
w De. 4. 1. De. 27. 11–26. Josh. 24. 13–25.

ᵇPSALM CVI.

God's discipline of the people for their evil.

Pa. cvi.

1 (1–5): Jehovah the fountain of good.
(i.) eternal goodness.
(ii.) deeds unutterable.
(iii.) the character of those who realize this goodness.
(iv.) prayer for such experience.

HALLELUJAH!
Give ˣthanks to Jehovah; for he is good:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
Who can utter Jehovah's ʸmighty acts?
[or] tell forth all his praise?
ᶻHappy are they that keep judgment,
and he that ᵃdoeth righteousness at all times.
ᵇRemember me, Jehovah, with [thy] favor towards thy people;
visit me with thy salvation.

x Ps. 107. 1.
y Zech. 9. 16, 17.
z Ps. 119. 1–3.
a Ps. 15. 2. *cf.* Jno. 8. 29.
b *cf.* Neh. 13. 14, 22, 31. Ps. 119. 132.

well-fitted to bring the conscience into the presence of God. Those that follow compel man to feel, whether he has conscience or not. Hail and lightning together break up the fruit-trees in the land, while the locusts strip it of every green leaf to be found. Its desolation is complete, although not yet is their rebellious pride humbled; and it requires one last decisive blow to bring submission.

6. The rest of the psalm details the victory of God; the incidents of the wilderness and the putting them in possession of the land itself being associated with the deliverance from Egypt naturally, as completing what began there. The story speaks for itself, and needs no comment. The death of the first-born, their own departure from the land in prosperous strength, the fear in the hearts of their enemies; His presence with them, sheltering and guiding; the satisfaction of their hunger, refreshment brought for them out of the flinty rock: this sums up the deliverance accomplished, in which the word of promise is fulfilled and Abraham is remembered. They are brought into the land, to possess labors not their own; and this is to be the practical effect of all upon them, "that they might observe His statutes, and keep His laws."

PSALM CVI.

The last psalm of the book, as already said, gives us the history of the people from another side,—their ways with God, which entailed upon them the long discipline which is even yet upon them. This discipline, with all its sorrow, is of course still His love; and shows Him Master over the evil, and in grace towards them. This psalm is their confession of their sin, and their final appeal

(v.) the end desired.

2 (6-12): Confession of sin and His salvation.
(i.) we all.
(ii.) the provocation at the Sea.
(iii.) yet for His Name's sake.
(iv.) the way through the Sea.
(v.)——
(vi.) the victory.
(vii.) the complete end.

3 (13-33): God sanctifying Himself.
a (13-15): their independence of heart.
(i.) will.
(ii.) lusting.
(iii.) the satisfaction of their desire.
b (16-18): the double opposition.
(i.) the rebellion.
(ii.) the destruction of the transgressors.

That I may see the [c]prosperity of thy chosen;
that I may rejoice in the [d]joy of thy nation;
that I may glory with thine [e]inheritance.

We have [f]sinned with our fathers:
we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly.
Our [g]fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt:
they [h]remembered not the multitude of thy mercies;
and were rebellious at the [i]sea—at the Red Sea.
But he saved them for his [j]Name's sake,
that he might make his mighty [k]power known.
He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it was [l]dried up;
and he [m]led them through the depths as through the wilderness.
And he [n]saved them from the hand of him that hated [them],
and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.
And the waters [o]covered their adversaries:
not one of them was left.
So they believed his word:
they [p]sang his praise.

They soon [q]forgat his works:
they [r]waited not for his counsel.
But [s]lusted [their] lust in the wilderness;
and [t]tempted the Mighty One in the waste.
And he [u]gave them their request;
and sent leanness into their soul.
They [v]envied Moses also in the camp,
[and] Aaron, the holy one of Jehovah.
The earth [w]opened and swallowed up Dathan,
and covered the assembly of Abiram.

c Ps. 37. 11, 34.
d Is. 9. 3. Is. 65. 18.
e De. 32. 9. Ps. 33. 12.
f Lev. 26. 40. Dan. 9. 4-8. Neh. 9. 33-36.
g. Ezek. 20. 8, 9.
h ver. 13.
i Ex. 14. 10-12.
j cf. Ex. 32. 11-14. *cf.* Josh. 7. 9.
k cf. Josh. 2. 10, 11. *cf.* Ex. 9. 16.
l Ex. 14. 21, 22.
m Is. 63. 11-14. Ps. 78. 13.
n Ex. 14. 30, 31.
o Ex. 14. 27, 28. Ex. 15. 5.
p Ex. 15. 1 21.
q Ps. 78. 11.
r cf. Ex. 15 22-24.
s cf. Nu. 11. 4-10.
t Ps. 78. 18. Ex. 16. 2, 3.
u Nu. 11. 31 35. Ps. 78. 29-31.
v Nu. 16. 1-5.
w Nu. 16. 29 34. De. 11. 6.

to this grace of His, for the salvation now at hand. It begins and closes with the heart-utterance of His praise.

1. The first section praises Him as the source of all good, in a loving-kindness which endures forever. His deeds are past expression; and all of them are His praise. Happy, then, are they who keep judgment and do righteousness at all times: these are His people, the heirs of His favor, with whom the psalmist desires to be remembered; and visited by His salvation to that end. This is Israel, His chosen nation and inheritance, whose prosperity as promised by His word is before the eye of faith.

2. But as the psalmist looks he realizes what has so long kept this favored people out of their destined blessing; and he owns with them their sins, present and past, their fathers' and their own; going back to the history of the wilderness, as a complete sample of all their history since. Fresh from the manifold mercies of their wondrous deliverance, they were rebellious in their unbelief of His power and grace, from the Red Sea itself, where they would have gone back into that hard Egyptian servitude in sheer distrust of Him who yet saved them for His Name's sake, to make His power known. He led them through the depths of the sea, as if it were the dry ground of the wilderness. He redeemed them with His right hand from the enemy; and their enemies were swept away before the returning waters: not one of them was left. Then they believed His word, and sang His praise.

3. But they soon forgot all this; and the third section shows how in the

(iii.) fire from the Lord.
c (19-23): image-worship.
(i.) a self-chosen god.
(ii.) abased to an ox-form.
(iii.) the manifest God forgotten.
(iv.) and their experience.
(v.) governmental ways.
d (24-27): the failure which left them in the wilderness.
(i.) independence.
(ii.) opposition.
(iii.) under the ban.
(iv.) dispersed over the world.
e (28-31): governmental atonement.
(i.) the occasion.
(ii.) wrath.
(iii.) sanctification by judgment.
(iv.) righteousness.

And a [x]fire was kindled in their assembly:
the flame burned up the wicked.
They made a [y]calf in Horeb,
and worshiped a molten image:
And [z]changed their glory
into the likeness of an ox that eateth grass.
They [a]forgot the Mighty One their Saviour,
who had done [b]great things in Egypt,—
Wondrous things in the land of Ham,—
terrible things at the Red Sea.
And he [c]spake of destroying them,
had not [d]Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach,
to turn away his hot anger from destroying [them].
They [e]despised also the pleasant land:
they [f]believed not his word;
But [g]murmured in their tents;
they hearkened not to the voice of Jehovah.
So he lifted up his hand against them,
causing them to [h]fall in the wilderness;
Causing their seed also to fall among the nations,
and [i]scattering them in the lands.
They joined themselves also unto [j]Baal-peor,
and ate the sacrifices of the dead.
So they [k]provoked him with their doings,
and the [l]plague brake forth upon them.
Then stood up [m]Phinehas, and executed judgment;
and [so] the plague was stayed.
And that was [n]counted unto him for righteousness
from generation unto generation evermore.

x Nu. 16. 35. cf. Jude 11.
y Ex. 32. 1-4.
z Jer. 2. 11. Rom. 1. 23.
a ver. 13.
b Ps. 78. 11, 12.
c Ex. 32. 9, 10. De. 9. 14.
d Ex. 32. 11-14.
e Nu. 14. 1-10.
f Heb. 3. 17-19.
g Nu. 14. 2, 27.
h Nu. 14. 29-35.
i Ezek. 20. 23, 24.
j Nu. 25. 1-5. De. 4. 3. Hos. 9. 10.
k De. 32. 16, 17.
l Nu. 25. 9.
m Nu. 25. 7, 8.
n Nu. 25. 10-13.

wilderness itself, their manners forced the blessed God their Saviour to sanctify Himself in judgment upon them. Slipping away from Him once more, their hearts lusted for their own will; and tempted the Mighty One in doubt of His ability to save. His very answer, which displayed His might for them, brought but leanness into their souls. So it is with the soul away from God: the satisfaction of the thirst, as with salt water, but increases it.

(*b*) The open rebellion follows the veiled one. They envy their God-given leaders, and throw off the authority of Moses and the priestly office of Aaron, Jehovah's sanctified one. The more open rebellion calls forth the severer judgment: the earth swallows up Dathan and Abiram, and the fire of God consumes those who insolently venture in their own right to draw near to Him.

(*c*) Next, not in historical, but in moral order, their image-worship in Horeb assaults God Himself, whose glory they profane to the mere likeness of a beast —an ox that eateth grass! forgetting all His wondrous deeds in that very Egypt, where He had prostrated the false gods to which now they equaled Him. Here Moses' intercession alone had saved them from the penalty of that covenant which in their self-righteousness they had made with Him.

(*d*) Now comes the failure for which all that generation perished in the wilderness, mere wanderers in a desert-land. And with this punishment the psalmist connects the after-wanderings of the nation, after Canaan had been possessed; but when they had no more faith to retain the possession than now to acquire it.

(*e*) Next we have their joining themselves to Baal-peor, and Phinehas' atone-

f (32,33): discipline at the height.
(i.) Moses the leader.
(ii.) by their provocation.

They moved him to wrath also at the waters of [o]Meribah,
and it went ill with [p]Moses upon their account.
For they provoked his spirit,
and he spake unadvisedly with his lips.

4 (34-39): The failure in the land.
(i.) as to Jehovah's command.
(ii.) the mingling.
(iii.) idol worship.
(iv.) inhuman deeds.
(v.) the land polluted.
(vi.) the height of evil.

They did [q]not destroy the peoples,
as to whom Jehovah spake to them,
But [r]mingled themselves among the nations,
and learned their works.
And they [s]served their idols,
and these became a snare unto them;
They [t]sacrificed also their sons
and their daughters unto demons,
And shed innocent blood—the blood of their sons and daughters—
which they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan;
and the land was [u]polluted with blood.
So they were defiled with their own works,
and [v]prostituted themselves with their doings.

5 (40-46): His ways in recompense.
(i.) the cause, His anger.
(ii.) giving them up to their enemies.
(iii.) the realization.

And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against his people,
and he [w]abhorred his own inheritance;
And he [x]gave them into the hand of the nations,
so that those that hated them ruled over them,
And their enemies [y]oppressed them,
and they were bowed down under their hand.

o Nu. 20, 3. 13. Ps. 95. 8.
p Nu. 20. 7-12. Nu. 27. 12-14.
q Judges 1. 21, 27-35.
r Judges 2. 2. Judges 3.5, 6.
s Judges 2. 13.
t 2 Ki. 16. 3.
u Ezek. 20. 26. Nu. 35. 33.
v Ezek. 16. 15-34. Ezek. 20. 30, 31.
w cf. Is. 1.10-15.
x Judges 2. 14, 15.
y cf. Judges 4. 1-3. *cf.* Judges 6. 1-6.

ment by judgment (see Num. xxv. *notes*) to the government of God; an act which God marks for all succeeding time, with His emphatic approval. Let us note it as very needful to keep in mind, in days so lax as these as to divine holiness. Phinehas is no less a priest in the intercessory place, when he uses the sword of judgment.

(*f*) Lastly, the sin of the people affects even the leader himself; and Moses fails to enter the land of promise. The intercessor for others finds himself no availing intercession. The discipline of God takes account of all alike. Moses, swan-like, sings his song and dies. But the song abides and is still a song, to be sung yet upon the sea of glass, with the song of the Lamb (Rev. xv. 2, 3).

4. The wilderness-history is over, and we have now the story of the failure in the land. It is in principle ever the same, taking its shape only according to the command which tests them,—here the cleansing of the inheritance of the Lord from all that which had defiled it. The nations of Canaan were under the ban for their iniquity and Jehovah had intrusted the execution of this to their hands. Instead of this they left them in it and mingled themselves with them, with the sure result which had been predicted, that they learned their works. Their gods became a snare to them, and the unnatural deeds connected with their demon-worship became the shame and pollution of Israel. The innocent blood of their sons and daughters stained their altars and defiled their lands. Their deeds corrupted them ever more deeply.

5. Jehovah's ways with them were in necessary recompense. His anger was kindled against them, and He abhorred the inheritance they had polluted. Thus they were given over to their enemies and bowed down under their hand. Frequently as they were delivered, so frequently did they afresh provoke Him with their evil, and were again brought low.

(iv.) their departure from Him bringing about their prostration.
(v.) the weak with the strong.
(vi.) the covenant as a limit.
(vii.) the end.

[a] Many times did he deliver them:
but as for them they [a] provoked him with their counsel,
and were brought low by their iniquity.
Yet he [b] regarded their distress,
when he heard their cry.
And he [c] remembered for them his covenant,
and [d] repented according to the multitude of his loving-kindnesses.
And he caused them to [e] find mercy
of all those that carried them captive.

[a] Judges 2. 16, Neh. 9. 27.
[a] cf. Judges 3. 8.
[b] cf. Judges 3. 15.
[c] Lev. 26. 41, 42.
[d] Judges 2. 18.
[e] cf. Ezra 9. 9.
[e] cf. Jer. 42. 12.

6 (47): prayer for divine victory and triumph.

[f] Save us, Jehovah our God:
and [g] gather us from among the nations;
to give thanks unto thy holy Name,
[and] [h] triumph in thy praise.

[f] 1 Chr. 16. 35, 36.
[g] cf. 1 Ki. 8. 46–53. cf. Ps. 107. 2, 3.
[h] Ps. 126. 1–3.

7 (48): praise.

[i] Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel,
from everlasting to everlasting:
and let all the people say, Amen.
[j] Hallelujah.

[i] Ps. 41. 13. Ps. 72. 18, 19. Ps. 89. 52.
[j] Ps. 105. 45.

But in their distress He could not but show His pity still; and His covenant of promise was a necessary limit to their chastisement. Amid all their wanderings and in their captivity He still caused mercy to be shown them by those who were His instruments to chasten them.

6. Looking back, then, over this history of constant failure, they could yet trace the love throughout, that had acted towards them. He could not openly display it as He would; but the one cause of this was unrepented evil. Now then in their confession of their sin He could return; and if He could, He would. They cry to Him for this: that He would save and gather them from the nations, that they might give thanks unto His holy Name, and triumph in His praise!

7. And the praise bursts forth. Jehovah is claimed confidently as Israel's God, and from everlasting to everlasting He is to be praised. Let all the people say, Amen!

Hallelujah!

BOOK V.

The Deuteronomic character of the fifth book is very easily to be discerned. The first psalm of it shows us the divine ways with Israel and with men at large, of whom they have been but the too faithful representatives. Quite like Moses' recital to the people in the plains of Moab, just in view of the land into which now they are to make speedy entrance (Deut. i.–iv.),—the people are here as gathered back out of the countries in which they had been scattered, and (as seen in the next psalm) now ready to take possession of the land. Here they are bidden to look back upon Jehovah's dealings with them, humbling and proving them indeed, but to "do them good at the latter end," that they might recognize wherein their true life consisted, and learn the perpetual goodness of their covenant-God.

These ways of God in their various character are told out in the first subdivision of seven psalms: in the first two with Israel, in the next two with Christ, ending with three Hallelujah psalms celebrating His Name. The second subdivision of six psalms (cxiv.–cxix.) shows us how these ways, when pondered in the heart aright, turn it and attach it to God. The third subdivision (cxx.–cxxxvi.) tells us now how fully He is for us, in all that His ways display

BOOK V. (Psalms cvii.–cl.)

The conclusion as to the divine ways.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Ps. cvii.–cxiii.)

Principles.

SECTION 1. (Ps. cvii., cviii.)

Efficient Grace.

[1]PSALM CVII.

Constant and harmonious.

Ps. cvii.

1 (1-9): To Israel once more in unity.

a (1-7): the goodness of Jehovah.

(i.) perpetual.

(ii.) the testimony of redeemed Israel.

(iii.) re-gathered to the land.

GIVE [k]thanks unto Jehovah, for he is [l]good:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for [m]ever.
Let the [n]redeemed of Jehovah say [so],
whom he hath redeemed from the [o]hand of the oppressor,
And [p]gathered them out of the lands,
from the rising and from the setting [sun],
from the north and from the sea.

k Chr.16.34. Ps. 106. 1. Ps. 118. 1. Ps. 136. 1.
l Ps. 25. 8. Ps. 34. 8. Ps. 145. 9. Nah. 1. 7.
m Ps.103.17.
n Ex. 15. 13. Is. 44. 23.
o Ps. 106.10. Jer. 31. 11.
p Deut.30.3. Is. 43. 5, 6. Jer.31.8-10. Ezek.11.17. Mi. 2. 12.

Him thus to be. While the fourth (cxxxvii.–cxlv.) gives us then the searching out of man in His presence, so as to leave us thus to rejoice in nothing but Himself. Lastly, we have—all that remains—the closing and universal praises.

SUBD. 1.

In the first subdivision the seven psalms divide (as these sevens generally do) into four and three, the last three being sufficiently distinct as Hallelujahs. The first four divide again into two equal parts of two psalms each. Israel is before us in the former two; Christ in the latter: these in perfect contrast with one another. With both indeed, the end is blessing; but fallen man, exalting himself, has first to be abased. The perfect Man, humbling Himself as none ever did beside, had *only* to be exalted.

There are thus three sections, characterized by the numerals: the first speaking of God's efficient grace to man; the second, of Christ in humiliation and rejection, answered with that Melchizedek priesthood under which all blessing comes; and thirdly, the tardy but at last full praise.

Sec. 1.

Israel is before us in the first section, as already said; their long wanderings at last ended, the multiplied exercises having brought forth the fruit designed, God's patient labor with them finding what love counts its recompense. The two psalms unite together evidently in this way; the first giving the principles, which apply not to Israel only, though standing in the forefront of their application; the second more concrete, the repossession of the land by the restored people.

PSALM CVII.

The first psalm proclaims the unchanging, harmonious goodness of Jehovah, which finds the way of blessing for His people, spite of, and yet as recognizing, their sinful and rebellious behavior. The discipline of the way is the method of a grace which will not give up the objects of it; the furnace of affliction being provided for in the original covenant with Abraham, and of this the Egyptian bondage was but one example, even as their wilderness journey as redeemed from Egypt was but the prototype of their many wanderings since. The wilderness is now once for all exchanged for the "city of habitation," implying the abiding rest into which they are brought.

1. Jehovah is the name they celebrate, who has acted in a loving kindness

(iv.) wilderness-experience.
(v.) exercise.
(vi.) ended by their cry.
(vii.) rest now before them.
b (8, 9): let them answer to it!
(i.) a call to confession.
(ii.) for soul-hunger met.
2 (10-16): Deliverance of prisoners.
a (10-14): the goodness of Jehovah.
(i.) their condition permanent.
(ii.) for opposition to God.
(iii.) realized.
(iv.) experience in their need.
(v.) the governmental issue.

They [q]wandered in the wilderness, in a solitary way:
they found no [r]city of habitation.
Hungry and thirsty,
their soul [s]fainted in them.
Then they [t]cried unto Jehovah in their strait,
[and] he delivered them from their distresses.
And he [u]led them forth by a right way,
that they might go to a [v]city of habitation.
Let them give thanks to Jehovah for his [w]loving-kindness,—
and for his [x]wonderful works to the children of men!
For he [y]satisfieth the longing soul;
and filleth the hungry soul with good.

Those sitting in [z]darkness and the shadow of death,
bound in [a]affliction and iron,—
Because they [b]rebelled against the sayings of the Mighty One,
and [c]despised the counsel of the Most High,
And [d]he bowed down their heart with travail:
they stumbled, and there was [e]none to help.
Then they [f]cried unto Jehovah in their strait,
[and] he saved them out of their distresses.
He caused them to [g]go forth out of darkness and the shadow of death,
and [h]brake their bonds asunder.

q Deut. 32. 10. ver. 40. *cf.* Nu. 14. 33-35.
r vers. 7, 36. *cf.* Is. 26. 1.
s Ps. 143. 4. Lev. 26.36.
t vers.13,19, 28. Lam. 3.55-57. Jonah 2. 2. Ps. 34. 6.
u cf. Ex. 13. 21, 22. *cf.* Is.11.16.
v Is. 62. 10-12. Zech. 1. 12, 17. Zech.8.1-8.
w vers. 15, 21, 31, 43. Jer. 9. 24.
x Ps. 78. 4. Is. 25. 1.
y cf. 1 Sam. 2. 5. Ps. 132. 15. Luke. 1.53.
*z cf.*Is. 9.1,2.
a cf. Job 36. 8.
b cf. Is. 63.9, 10. *cf.* Lam. 1. 20.
c Is. 5. 24.
d cf. Job 40. 11, 12. *cf.* Dan. 4. 37.
e cf. 2 Chr. 36.16 with Deut. 32. 26; *cf.* Is. 63. 5. *f* vers. 6, 19, 28. *g* Ps. 68. 6; Is. 49. 9. *h cf.* Jer. 30. 8; *cf.* Nah. 1. 12-15.

which is always His characteristic, and redeemed them from the hand of the oppressor. They are gathered now from the east and west and north, and from the sea, the highway to so many countries then unknown that lie beyond it.

They have long been wanderers in a solitary way, with the brand of Cain upon them, always seeking possession of the earth, and finding in it but Aceldama, their own fatal purchase. Ahungered and athirst, with more than physical need, their soul fainted in them. Until, brought to seek from God alone, they cried unto Jehovah in their strait, and found deliverance from Him. A very simple and a very common story, but which needs, for all that, constant repetition. Now rest is before them, and their way is right (or straight) toward the city they are to inhabit. A crooked way is, on that account, a long one; and Deuteronomy marks how long they had made the way for themselves the first time in the wilderness by their crooked ways with God. Since then how long the road had been, indeed! Only the loving kindness of Jehovah could have brought them where they now were.

Let them answer to it then, and let His wondrous works be fittingly acknowledged by souls whose longing had found satisfaction, whose hunger had been appeased with good.

2. Israel come before us, however, not merely as in the wilderness, but as in the prison-house also,—in captivity to their enemies because of their sins. Thus they sat in darkness and the shadow of death, the light of life withdrawn, the iron bondage entering into their souls. There they abode without help or hope, save in the very One against whom they had rebelled, compelled now to own the supremacy of Him whose counsel they had despised. They had to realize their sin, bowed down with travail, stumbling and with none to help.

With the cry of need came, however, another experience, and He became their

Let them give [i]thanks to Jehovah for His loving-kindness,
and for his wonderful works to the children of men.
For he hath [j]shattered the doors of brass,
and cut asunder the bars of iron.

Fools, because of their * [k]revolt,
and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.
All [l]food their soul abhorreth,
and they draw [m]near unto the gates of death.
Then they [n]cry unto Jehovah in their strait,
[and] out of their distresses he saveth them.
He [o]sendeth his word, and healeth them,
and [p]rescueth them from their pit-falls.
Let them give [q]thanks unto Jehovah for his loving-kindness,
and for his wonderful works unto the children of men.
And let them [r]sacrifice sacrifices of thanksgiving,
and [s]declare his works with song.

They that go down to the [t]sea in ships,
that do business in great waters,—
These see the works of Jehovah,
and his [u]wonders in the deep.
For he speaketh, and [v]raiseth the stormy wind,
and lifteth up its waves.
They go up to the heavens, they go down to the depths:
their soul is [w]melted because of trouble.
They reel to and fro and stagger [x]like a drunken man,
and are at their [y]wits' end.†

* *Literally*, "the way of their."
† *Literally*, "all their wisdom is swallowed up."

b (15,16): let them answer.
(i.) a call to confession.
(ii.) for deliverance.
3 (17-22): Healing of the soul.
a (17-20): the goodness of Jehovah.
(i.) revolting.
(ii.) going on to death.
(iii.) restoration.
(iv.) the experience.
b (21, 22): let them answer.
(i.) a call to confession.
(ii.) and testimony.
4 (23-32): Seafarers.
a (23-30): the goodness of Jehovah.
(i.) their calling.
(ii.) the profit of it.
(iii.) manifestation.
(iv.) prostrate.
(v.) exercise.

i vers. 8, 21, 31.
j cf. Is. 45. 2.
k Is. 50. 1. Is. 58. 1.
l Job. 33.20-22. cf. Ps.102.4.
m Ps. 88. 3.
n vers. 6,13, 28.
o cf. Mat.8.8. cf. Jer. 33.6-16. cf. Hos. 14. 4. cf. Is. 53. 5.
p cf. Job 33. 18-25. cf. Is.38.17.
q vers. 8,15, 31.
r cf. Lev. 7. 11-15. Hos. 14. 2. Jer. 17. 26.
s Ps. 26. 7. Ps. 66. 16.
t cf. Jonah 1. 3-15. cf. Is. 57.20. cf. Dan. 7.2, 3, etc. with Deut.28.64.
u Ps. 77. 19.
v Ps. 148. 8. cf. Acts 27. 14, etc.
w cf. Josh. 2. 9, 24. Is. 13. 7.
x cf. Is. 29. 9. cf. Is.51.17, 21.
y cf. 2 Chr. 20. 12. cf. Jer. 30. 5-7.

Saviour. His government, which had held them fast, now released them from their prison-house, and the darkness around them was dispersed. And again the call rings out for confession and praise for this great deliverance.

3. "The sufferings of the 'foolish nation' (Deut. xxxii. 6), when, filled with Jehovah's indignation, they find a snare in that which should have fed them (Rom. xi. 9, 10), and pine beneath the pressure of a more grievous famine than that of bread (Amos viii. 11–13), until, in answer to the cry of sorrow, the word of saving health is sent them from above (Deut. xxx., comp. Rom. x.), seem to be indicated in the next division. The language of ver. 22 is in agreement with this. Those who had vainly gone about to establish their own righteousness are called now to offer the sacrifices of thanksgiving (Heb. xiii.), and to declare *His* works with singing."—*Pridham on the Psalms.*

It is the deepest and most fundamental need, then, that is met here. Christ, the bread of life, had been rejected by them, and they are necessarily on the way to death. This strait His word alone can heal, and thus they are rescued from their pitfalls. Well may they now give Him, then, their thanks.

4. Pridham again says:—

"Besides the obvious force and beauty of the following verses (23–30) in their

(vi.) the end of distress.

(vii.) rest.

(viii.) the haven.

b (31, 32): let them answer.

(i.) a call to confession.

(ii.) and testimony.

5 (33–43): General governmental ways.

a (33–35): power.

(i.) the curse of barrenness.

(ii.) for evil.

(iii.) restoration.

b (36–41): love.

(i.) a fixed abode.

(ii.) increase.

(iii.) fenced by His care.

Then they [z] cry unto Jehovah in their strait,
and out of their distresses he delivereth them.
He [a] stilleth the storm to silence,
and the waves thereof are hushed.
Then they are glad because they are [b] quiet,
and he leadeth them to the haven of their [c] desire.
Let them give [d] thanks to Jehovah for his loving-kindness,
and for his wonderful works unto the children of men.
And let them [e] exalt him in the congregation of the people,
and praise him in the session of the elders.

He [f] turneth rivers into a wilderness,
and water-springs into dry ground;
A [g] fruitful land to saltness,
for the [h] wickedness of those that dwell therein.
He turneth the [i] wilderness into a pool of water,
and a dry land into water-springs.
And he [j] maketh the hungry to dwell there,
that they may prepare a [k] city of habitation,
And sow [l] fields and plant vineyards,
and produce fruits of increase.
And he [m] blesseth them, and they [n] multiply greatly,
and their cattle he suffereth not to decrease.

z vers. 6, 13, 19.
a Ps. 65. 7. *cf.* Luke 8. 22–25. *cf.* Rev. 21. 1.
b cf. 1 Kl. 5. 4. *cf.* Ps. 46. 9.
c cf. Is. 54. 11–13. *cf.* Is. 60. 8–11. *cf.* Jer. 31. 23–26.
d vers. 8, 15, 21.
e Ps. 57. 5, 11. Ps. 111. 1. *cf.* Is. 25. 1–5.
f cf. Deut. 28. 37–40. *cf.* 1 Kl. 17. 1.
g cf. Gen. 19. 25 with Gen. 13. 10.
h cf. Deut. 29. 22–28. *cf.* Jer. 22. 8, 9.
i Ps. 114. 8, 18. 35. 1–10.
j cf. Jer. 32. 36–44. *cf.* Is. 25. 6.
k cf. vers. 4, 7. Is. 26. 1.
l cf. Jer. 33. 10–14. *cf.* Hos. 2. 21–23.
m cf. Is. 19. 24, 25; *cf.* Jer. 31. 23.
n Ps. 67. 6, 7; *cf.* Mal. 3. 10, 11.

simple meaning and their general application, we have. I believe, a figure of Jacob's restless trouble when, like a vexed and frightened mariner, he wandered up and down the wide sea of nations without ease (Deut. xxviii. 65), a friendless pilgrim of the Lord's displeasure, until the long-desired rest was gained at last, under the faithful guidance of Him who seeks His people in the dark and cloudy day (Ezek. xxxiv. 12). Accordingly we find in the hortatory remembrancer of praise that follows (ver. 32) a mention of the gathered people and their elders, who are now called on to celebrate, in the quiet resting-places of Immanuel's land, His faithful goodness and His might who had turned the long-endured tempest of affliction to the calm sunshine of perpetual peace. (Isa. liv. 11–13)."

True as the special application is, yet here is the general lot of the people of God, who are, as it were, by their very occupation, mariners, called to see the works of the Lord upon the deep. The numerical structure is here as plain and significant as indeed His meaning in such trial and the fitness of it should be. The "haven" is, as we see by the number, in the new scene, which has in it the promise of eternity.

5. In the last part Jehovah's ways in general are celebrated: ways which are characterized by power, love, and holiness.

He fashions and refashions the earth at His will, commanding fruitfulness into barrenness, but this because of the wickedness of those that dwell in it. Again He restores and makes fruitful the barren land; and here it is not said that there must be a moral reason: the Creator rejoices in the works of His hands, and requires a moral reason only for *not* acting according to this delight.

His love is naturally much more dwelt upon. He shows it in His provision for the hungry of that fixed abode which is the first thing needed by man for his development; with the city for association, and the fields with their need of sow-

(iv.) when brought low.
(v.) judgment in their behalf.
(vi.) and end of evil.

c (42, 43): holiness manifest.
(i.) in power.
(ii.) and in love.

And [when] they are diminished and [o]brought low,
through oppression, calamity, and sorrow,
He poureth [p]contempt upon nobles,
and maketh them [q]wander in a pathless waste,
But setteth the needy on [r]high, out of humiliation,
and [s]maketh [t]families like a flock.
The [u]upright see it and are glad,
and all iniquity hath [v]stopped its mouth.
Whoso is [w]wise and observeth this,
even such shall discern the loving-kindness of Jehovah.

[x]PSALM CVIII.

The incoming Salvation.

A song. a psalm of David.

Ps. cviii.

1 (1-4): Israel as first-fruits.
(i.) purpose of heart.
(ii.) the accompaniment.
(iii.) the praise of Israel.
(iv.) universal experience.

MY heart is [y]fixed, O God:
I will [z]sing and psalm,—[with] my [a]glory also.
[z]Awake, psaltery and harp!
I will [b]awake the dawn.
I will praise, Jehovah, [c]among the peoples
and will psalm to thee among the races [of men].
For thy mercy is great [d]above the heavens,
and thy [e]truth unto the clouds.

o Lev.26.22. Is. 24. 5, 6.
p Job 12. 21. Dan. 4. 37.
q Job 12. 24, 25. ver. 4.
r 1 Sam. 2.8. Ps. 113. 7,8. *cf.* Dan. 4. 17. *cf.* Job 36. 7-11.
s Ps. 68. 6. *cf.* Is. 49. 18-23.
t Ps. 37. 34. Ps. 52. 6.
u 1 Sa. 2. 9. Ps. 63. 11.
v Jer. 9. 12, 13. Hos. 14. 9. Dan. 12.10.
w Ps. 57. 7-11 (ref'ces). 2 Chron.30. 19. Ezra 7. 10. *ctr.* Ps. 78. 37.
x Ps 95. 1.
y Ps. 30. 12. *cf.* Ps. 16.9.
z *cf.* Jndg.5. 12. *cf.* Is.52.1,2.
a *cf.* Ps. 22. title; *cf.* Ps. 110. 3; Ps. 5. 3. b Ps. 105. 1; Ps. 9. 11. c Ps. 71. 19; *cf.* Jer. 31. 35-37; *cf.* Is. 51. 6. d Ps. 89. 2.

ing and planting for increase. So by His blessing they multiply as fenced by His hand, with the cattle He has prepared for them as servants and allies.

But evil is here, attending on man's sin, and oppression is found and various trial. He takes up the cause of the needy and down-trodden, pouring contempt upon nobles, and making them wander in a pathless waste who cared not for the fellows God had provided for them; while He lifts the needy up out of his humiliation, and makes families like a flock.

Holiness is manifest in all His ways: the upright are made glad as they see it; iniquity itself has its mouth stopped. Whoever would be wise will observe this: such shall discern the loving kindness of Jehovah.

Psalm CVIII.

The second psalm of the fifth book is very lightly treated by many commentators: as an example, Moll declares:—

"Two fragments of Davidic psalms, namely Psalm lvii. 7–11, and lx. 6–12, are here brought together *without any connection whatever;* and the changes occurring, in only a few words, are so unimportant that *neither occasion nor purpose can be discovered* in this combination and conformation. Least of all is a poet like David to be held guilty of combining in such a manner two pieces taken out of their connection."— *Lange's Commentary.*

Delitzsch agrees with Moll, and so does Perowne. Alexander and Hengstenberg unite, however, in believing the origin of these psalms to be Davidic; but "the former view," says the American editor of Moll, "seems to be the most favored at present."

A truer reverence for Scripture would surely restrain the rashness of such criticisms. Granted that a psalm made by bringing together two ends of previous ones—or with scissors and paste, as it might be urged—may seem strange enough for inspiration; yet to say that "neither occasion nor purpose can be discovered in this combination" is a challenge of the perfection of Scripture

2 (5, 6): Appeal for deliverance.
(i.) God to show Himself supreme.
(ii.) and save His beloved.

3 (7-9): Possession of the land anticipated.
(i.) from the divine promise.
(ii.) the allied tribes.
(iii.) the full inheritance.

4 (10-13): Weakness waiting upon God.
(i.) the strength to be met.
(ii.) the breach that has existed.
(iii.) shut up to God.
(iv.) the experience looked for.

Be thou [e]exalted above the heavens, O God!
and thy glory over all the [f]earth.
That thy [g]beloved ones may be delivered,
save with thy [h]right hand and answer me.

God hath spoken in his [i]holiness:
I will [j]exult; I will [k]divide [l]Shechem,
and mete out the [m]valley of Succoth.
[n]Gilead is mine, [o]Manasseh is mine;
[p]Ephraim also is the strength of my head;
[q]Judah is my ruler.
[r]Moab is my wash-pot;
upon [s]Edom I cast my shoe;
over [t]Philistia I shout aloud.

Who will bring me into the [u]strong city?
who will lead me into Edom?
[Wilt] not [thou], O God, who [v]didst cast us off?
and didst not go forth, O God, with our hosts?
Give us [w]help out of strait;
for [x]vain is help of man.
Through God we shall do [y]valiantly,
and *he* shall [z]tread down our oppressors.

e Ps. 8. 1, Ps. 113. 4.
f Nu. 14. 21. Is. 6. 3. Ps. 72. 19.
g Ps. 60. 5-12 (ref'es). Deut. 33. 12. Ps. 127. 2.
h Ps. 44. 3. Ps. 118. 15, 16.
i *cf.* Am. 4. 2.
j Zeph. 3. 17, Is. 62. 5. Is. 65. 19.
k Josh. 14. 5.
l *cf.* Josh. 20. 7. *cf.* Josh. 24. 25.
m *cf.* 1 Ki. 7. 46.
n *cf.* 2 Ki. 15. 29.
o *cf.* 2 Chr. 15. 9.
p *cf.* Hos. 14. 5.
q Ps. 76. 1.
r Ezek. 25. 8-11.
s Ezek. 25. 12-14.
t Ezek. 25. 15-17.

u Obad. 3; *cf.* Num. 13. 28. v Ps. 44. 9; Ps. 74. 1; *cf.* Jer. 30. 11. w Ps. 121. 1, 2; Ps. 124. 8; Ps. 12. 1. x *cf.* Is. 30. 1-7 with Is. 45. 24; *cf.* Jer. 17. 5-8. y *cf.* Rom. 8. 37. z *cf.* Is. 63. 6.

which can only speak the audacious incompetence of the one who utters it. It is easy, on the other hand, to show that there *is* purpose: for it is just the character of a Deuteronomic book, such as this is, to give us, as Deuteronomy itself does, the way and the end,—the governmental way of God by which His end is reached; the end, therefore, which reveals the way. Now the previous psalm has given us, without any possible question, the ways of God with men, and that as shown especially in the case of Israel: what more simple than that, in the present one, we should have the *end* of His way with them? And for this—and to make it definitely plain to us what is intended—*the ends of two previous psalms, cut off from the exercise and trials with which these are connected, should be joined together?* The purpose which the commentator denies is, in fact, here transparent; and the unbelieving attack upon the perfection of the Word is an arrow turned back into the face of him that has discharged it.

Now for the "connection" between these two ends. Certainly the psalm makes, as we find it here, a very complete whole; and the two portions join together in the second division of it without a seam. The first division gives us Israel's praise as leading the incoming praise of the whole earth. The second appeals, therefore, that God may manifest His supremacy over the earth, for Israel's deliverance. The after-divisions show the nation, as in answer to this prayer, upon the threshold of full blessing. There is no lack of unity or completeness here.

The minor changes in the psalm here, as compared with the two psalms from which it is divided, we may not have skill to interpret or appreciate: for the *true* "higher criticism" is as feeble with us as that which is falsely called so is vigorous and strong; and these things naturally go together. For the interpretation of the psalm in detail it is sufficient to refer to the notes elsewhere (pp. 223, 224; 230–234.)

Sec. 2.

The second section gives us, in two psalms which are in evident and striking contrast with one another, first, Christ in His humiliation hated and rejected of

SECTION 2. (Ps. cix., cx.)

Christ in humiliation and rejection owned of God.

Ps. cix.

1 (1-5): The appeal of righteousness.
(i.) to God.
(ii.) against the false tongue of man.
(iii.) compassing round.
(iv.) their way and mine.
(v.) requital.

[1]PSALM CIX.

Enmity self-caused.

To the chief musician, a psalm of David.

O God of my praise, be not [a]silent!
For a wicked mouth, and a [b]deceitful mouth have they opened against me;
they have spoken against me with a false tongue.
And with words of [c]hatred have they compassed me;
and they fight against me [d]without cause.
In return for my [e]love, they are mine adversaries;
and *I* [am all] [f]prayer.
And they have requited me [g]evil for good,
and hatred for my love.

a Ps. 28. 1. Ps. 35. 22.
b cf. Ps.10.7. *cf.* Ps. 36.3. *cf.* Matt.26. 48, 49.
c Ps. 25. 19. *cf.* Jno. 7.7.
d Ps. 35. 7. Ps. 69. 4. Jno. 15. 25. *cf.* Jno. 10. 32.
e cf. 1Jno. 4. 10 with Jno. 19. 6.
f cf. Matt. 26. 39. *cf.* Lk. 23. 33, 34.
g Ps. 35. 12. Ps. 38. 20. Jer. 18. 20.

man, and then His acceptance of God,—owned in the double character of King and Priest. Both parts are needed to give God's way as to the perfect Man, who (according to the divine principle in blessing, but which in Him who is what He is, fulfills itself so marvelously) humbles Himself and is exalted.

PSALM CIX.

On the other hand, men His adversaries display the awful reality of evil which is remediless because it rejects the only remedy. Of the imprecatory psalms, this is the strongest, being indeed a glimpse into the mouth of hell. And this I say in full view of the fact that it is *not* hell that is before us, but (according to the manner of the Old Testament) rather the government of God on earth: to which the law, imbedded in a covenant with a nation in the flesh, naturally appealed.

Yet it is in Gehenna, according to the import of that word (see Josh. xv. 8, *notes*), the self-caused doom to which, without other cause, men doom themselves. So is the enmity here self-caused, the hatred of good as good, brought to its highest thus by that which is good in its fullest display. For such it is not an arbitrary appointment that all things should in result declare themselves against them. It is only the declaration of the righteousness inherent in the framework of things; that is, that it is framed by the God of righteousness. So that, again, we must not shrink when we hear it affirmed by God that it is His judgment, or when it is looked for and besought by men suffering on earth, the cry of the widow, as the Lord Himself puts it, which must vex even the unjust judge to answer at last, and which God recognizes as the cry of His elect, and which, though He bear long, He will at length fully respond to.

Here the application of the eighth verse by the apostle to Judas (Acts i. 20), and no less the connection with the following psalm, show us that it is the voice of the Prince of martyrs that is to be heard, though it may well be not alone, but identified with the cry which from Abel runs throughout all history. Nor is this contrary to the grace which failed not from His lips while hope was left, but which He always declared had its limit, and if refused would only avail to increase men's condemnation. Of Judas He Himself declared: "good were it for that man if he had not been born." And while this application may in no wise be the whole, it shows at least sufficiently the character of that limit which there surely is. But we shall gain clearer understanding by the examination of the psalm.

1. The appeal is to God to open *His* mouth. Men's mouths are opened wide; but only deceit and hatred are poured out! For himself, he only pours out his heart to God. It is for good they are requiting evil,—enmity for love.

2 (6-15): Be an adversary to him.
a (6-8): in person.
(i.) his ruler.
(ii.) sentence against him.
(iii.) his office.
b (9-15): relations.
(i.) through connections strictly personal.
(ii.) dependent on others.
(iii.) his possessions.
(iv.) to man generally.
(v.) requital.
(vi.) disciplinary ways.
(vii.) complete end.

Appoint over him a [h]wicked one,
and let an adversary* stand at his right hand.
When he is judged, let him go forth [i]guilty,
and let his [j]prayer be sin.
Let his [k]days be few;
his [l]office let another take.
Let his [m]children be fatherless,
and his wife a widow.
Let his children wander about and [n]beg,
and seek, away from their desolate places.
Let the usurer [o]cast a net over all that he hath,
and let strangers despoil his labor.
Let him have [p]none to extend mercy to him,
and let there be none to show favor to his orphans.
Let his [q]posterity be cut off:
in the generation following let their name be [r]blotted out.
Let the [s]iniquity of his fathers be remembered before Jehovah:
and let not his mother's sin be blotted out.
Let them be continually before Jehovah,
that he may [t]cut off the memory of them from the earth.

h cf. 2 Thes. 2. 8-10.
cf. Is.8.5-8.
cf. Rom. 1. 28.
i cf. Matt.26. 24, 25.
cf. Matt.27. 3, 4.
j Prov.28.9.
k Ps. 55. 23. Prov.10.27.
l Acts 1. 20.
m cf. Ex.20. 5.
cf. Ex. 22. 24.
n cf. 1 Sam. 2. 36.
ctr. Ps. 37. 25.
Ps. 59. 15.
o cf. Job 18. 8, 9.
p cf. Matt. 27. 4.
q Ps. 21. 10.
cf. 1 Ki. 13. 34.
r Prov.10.7.
ctr. Prov. 17. 6.
s Ex. 34. 7. Neh. 4. 5.
cf. Is. 14.20, 21.
cf. Matt.23. 35.

*Satan.

t Job 18. 17; Ps. 34. 16; Prov. 2. 22.

Causeless enmity is, of course, enmity that has its cause only in the condition of heart from which it arises, and whose state it shows. But this is not merely such; it is love that awakens it; it is moral antagonism to that which is good and lovely; it is corruption such as the sun that invigorates the living breeds in the dead. And this is death, and naturally hopeless, as death is: for only from that which is good can good be looked for, and yet here the good itself produces but evil. All means, therefore, fail; hope fails; if it be fully proved, judgment alone can be invoked; and the next ten verses are accordingly a cry for judgment.

2. The judgment is first personal. He is to be put into the hands of a wicked one; and at his right hand, when he would put it forth for aid, he is to find an adversary. This is only congruous dealing, finding others toward him just what he had been to them. Then, when he is judged, there can be no plea made for one who is beyond the reach of hope. His prayer for himself is only a struggle against the righteous government of God, and not repentance or submission: thus it may well be treated as sin. His sentence is to death, not long delayed; and his office passes over to another.

It is not here that conscience can make any plausible objection. When we turn to the relation of his sin to others there come in many; and to remove them the light must be brought in from elsewhere. But God has provided for it, and we may be sure that there can be no contradiction between His nature and His acts.

He has Himself assured us that He "visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation," but then it is added as most necessary guarding of what would be otherwise misconstrued. "*of them that hate Me*"; and elsewhere the proverb which Israel had taken up from just such misconstruction is reprobated most emphatically by the Lord: "the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." (Ezek. xviii.) He not only says, but swears, that they shall have no occasion to use such a proverb; that the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, nor the father bear the in-

3 (16-20): The moral reason.
(i.) congruous penalty.
(ii.) his love of cursing.
(iii.) full inward realization.
(iv.) outwardly.
(v.) requital.

Because he remembered not to show kindness,
but [u]persecuted the poor and needy man,
and the smitten in heart, to put him to death.
Yea, he loved [v]cursing: so let it come to him;
and he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him.
And he clothed himself with cursing as his garment:
so let it [w]come into his inward parts like water,
and like oil into his bones.
Let it be unto him as the [x]robe he weareth,
and for the belt wherewith continually he girdeth himself.
Let this be the [y]wages of mine adversaries from Jehovah,
and of those that speak evil against my soul.

[u] Ps. 69. 26. Ps. 119. 86.
[v] *cf.* 2 Sam. 16. 9-12. Ps. 7. 16.
[w] *cf.* Nu. 5. 21, 22. *cf.* Hab. 3. 16.
[x] *ctr.* Is. 61. 3, 10. *ctr.* Zech. 3. 3-5.
[y] *cf.* Gal. 6. 7. Is. 3. 11.

4 (21-25): Poor and needy.
(i.) before Jehovah the Lord.
(ii.) in humiliation.
(iii.) inward consciousness (?)
(iv.) flesh wasting away.
(v.) a byword.

But do *thou* with me, Jehovah, Lord, for thy [z]name's sake;
because thy loving-kindness is good, deliver me!
For *I* am [a]poor and needy:
and my heart is [b]pierced within me.
Like the [c]shadow as it lengtheneth, I am passing away:
I am shaken off like the locust.
My knees fail through [d]fasting,
and my flesh [e]wasteth away from [its] fatness.
And I am become a [f]reproach to them:
they that see me [g]shake their head.

[z] Ps. 143. 11, 12.
[a] Ps. 40. 17. *cf.* Ps. 72. 4.
[b] *cf.* Ps. 69. 20.
[c] *cf.* Ps. 102. 11. Ps. 144. 4.
[d] *cf.* Ps. 35. 13. *cf.* Ps. 69. 10.
[e] *cf.* Ps. 22. 17.
[f] *cf.* Ps. 22. 6, 7. *cf.* Is. 53. 3.
[g] *cf.* Matt. 27. 39.

5 (26-31): But be Thou with me!
(i.) Jehovah, my God.
(ii.) bear witness.
(iii.) manifest Thyself.

Help me, Jehovah, my God:
save me, according to thy [h]loving-kindness!
And let them know that this is [i]thy hand:
thou, Jehovah, hast done it.
Let them curse, but [j]bless thou!
when they rise up, let them be [k]ashamed, but let thy servant be glad.

[h] *cf.* Ps. 21. 7. *cf.* Is. 55. 3.
[i] *cf.* Ps. 69. 26. *cf.* Ps. 22. 31.
[j] *cf.* Ps. 20. 1-4. *cf.* Ps. 45. 2.
[k] Ps. 70. 2. Ps. 71. 13.

iquity of the son; that the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him; while the repentance of any shall avert his doom.

On the other hand, it is familiar to us all that the character of the father may have much to do with the temporal condition of the children; and that thus the warp and woof of human history proclaim the far-reaching consequences of sin. And all this is a witness from God as to it that could not be silenced without the worst results upon men at large. If we take, then, these guides and guards on either hand, we shall avoid serious mistake as to the moral character of what we have in this psalm, with all its solemn imprecations of judgment on the transgressor. So far as this affects his children it is overruled for blessing to them, as surely as they heed the lesson; nor can sin be bound upon any, apart from the consent of their own character. And this the 14th verse here definitely shows: for the very prayer that the iniquity of his fathers may be remembered before Jehovah is grounded upon his own character in this way (ver. 16).

3. Accordingly, the moral reason is given in the third division, where the equal government of God is clearly seen; and then—

4. The need and poverty which appeal to God, and for which He is besought

(iv.) outward proof.
(v.) the return of praise.

Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame,
and cover themselves with shame as with a [l]robe.
I will give [m]thanks to Jehovah with my mouth, at large:
yea, among the [n]multitude will I praise him.
For he standeth at the [o]right hand of the needy,
to save [him] from those that judge his soul.

(vi.) the control of evil.

Ps. cx.

[z]PSALM CX.

The confirmation of the King-Priest.

A psalm of David.

1 (1-3): Jehovah's King.
(i.) upon the Father's throne.
(ii.) sustained in spite of enemies.
(iii.) a people of saints from the womb of the dawn.

[p]JEHOVAH said unto [q]my Lord:
[r]Sit thou at my right hand,
until I set thy [s]foes a footstool for thy feet.
Jehovah shall send the [t]rod of thy power out of Zion:
rule thou in the [u]midst of thine enemies.
Thy people shall be of [v]ready heart in the day of thy might:
in the [w]beauties of holiness, from the womb of the [x]dawning,
for thee the [y]dew of thy youth.

l vers. 18,19.
m Ps. 71.22-24.
n *cf.* Ps. 22. 25. Ps. 111. 1.
o Ps. 16. 8. *ctr.* ver. 6.
p Matt. 22. 42-45. Mk. 12. 35-37. Lk. 20. 41-44. Acts 2. 34, 35.
q *cf.* Rev. 5. 5. *cf.* Rev. 22. 16. *cf.* Is. 11. 1, 10.
r Heb. 1. 3, 13. Heb. 8. 1. Eph. 1. 20. *cf.* Ps. 2. 6.
s *cf.* Heb. 2. 7-9 with 1 Cor. 15. 25.
t *cf.* Ps. 50. 2. *cf.* Ps. 2. 8, 9.
u Ps. 18. 43-45.
v *cf.* Ex. 35. 21, 29; *cf.* 1 Chr. 29. 6, 9, 14, 17; *cf.* Jer. 31. 31-34.
w Ps. 27. 4; Ps. 29. 2; Ps. 96. 6; *ctr.* Is. 53. 2.
x *cf.* Ps. 22, title; *cf.* 2 Sa. 23. 4.
y *cf.* Ps. 22. 31; *cf.* Ps. 45. 16; *cf.* Is. 26. 19.

to come in, according to His Name and title over all, and deliver. There is, all through, no thought of suffering from God, nor therefore of atonement: nothing that cannot be applied, in measure, to His people as to Christ Himself; and there is little need of comment as to it.

5. A final appeal to God to be with him, and give convincing proof that He is so, closes the psalm. If they curse, may God bless; and may the adversaries be clothed with shame. Then will he give thanks to Him with his mouth, and praise Him amid the multitude: for He standeth at the right hand of the needy, — where the outstretched hand can also find Him, — to save him from those that judge his soul.

Psalm CX.

The second psalm here is the answer of Jehovah to this humbled One, establishing Him as King and Priest together, after the order of Melchizedek, and with a prophecy of the revival of Israel under Him, and the subjection of enemies. There are but seven verses, and which follow the general septenary pattern of 4 (3+1)+3; except that these portions seem to be more emphasized than usual, so as to divide the whole into three equal parts of equal value.

1. The first three verses speak of Jehovah's King. But He is not yet actually enthroned. Like David himself, but whose Lord He really is, He has His time of rejection and even banishment. But unlike David, and completely in opposition to the thought of a reference in it to the Israelitish throne as the "throne of Jehovah" (1 Chr. xxix. 23), it is precisely in this time of His rejection that He sits at the right hand of Jehovah. It is an Old Testament hint which the New Testament clearly unfolds for us. The place is heavenly, not earthly: "He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." (Mk. xvi. 19). It is further developed by the Lord Himself in His address to Laodicea (Rev. iii. 21), where, distinguishing it from the human throne which He will by and by take, and which He will share with others, He speaks of having overcome, and sitting down with His Father upon *His* throne.

This defines for us the Christian interval in which we are, and which we must not expect to find more than hinted at in the Old Testament scriptures.

2 (4): The confirmation.

3 (5-7): The day of manifestation.
(i.) the Lord revealed.
(ii.) the judgment.
(iii.) the secret of success.

Jehovah hath [z]sworn and will not repent:
thou art a [a]priest for ever,
after the order of [b]Melchizedek.
The Lord [is] at thy [c]right hand:
he smiteth through [d]kings in the [e]day of his anger.
He shall [f]judge among the nations:
he shall fill [the places] with [g]dead bodies;
he shall [h]smite the head over a wide country.
He shall [i]drink of the brook in the way:
therefore shall he [j]lift up the head.

z Heb. 7.21.
a *cf.* Zech.6.13. *cf.* Heb. 10.11, 12, 21.
b *cf.* Heb. 5 6. *cf.* Heb. 6.20, *cf.* Heb. 7.1-28, *cf.* Heb. 8.1-6.
c *cf.* Ps. 109.31. *cf.* Ps. 16.8.
d Ps. 2. 2;

Ps. 48. 4; Ps. 68. 12; Is. 24. 21. *e cf.* ver. 3; *cf.* Ps. 2. 8-12; *cf.* Is. 13. 6-9. *cf.* Ps. 9. 15-20. *f cf.* Ps. 45. 3-5; *cf.* Is. 63. 1-6; *cf.* Is. 66. 15, 16, 23, 24. Hab. 3. 13. *i cf.* Judg. 7. 5, 6; *cf.* Jno. 4. 7, 31-34. *j cf.* Phil. 2. 8-11.

f Ps. 96. 13; h Ps. 68. 21;

Jehovah acts in due time for His King, who waits in entire dependence upon Him for the day in which His enemies are to be made His footstool. Then Jehovah will send the rod of Messiah's power out of Zion, the seat of His kingdom; setting Him there in the midst of a hostile world, then to be quickly reduced to subjection. And as when He comes from heaven His heavenly people exchange their bridal festivities for militant array, and come with Him,—so now that He is in Zion He gathers Israel first around Himself. It is the day of His might, and they are now, as they were not hitherto, all of ready heart. They are newborn children of the dawning day, in the beauties of holiness every one; and for Christ, in the tender sympathy (as I take it) which unites Him to His people, like the dew of His own youth. As Paul could say, "Now I live, if ye stand fast in the Lord," so the immortal Life, as it were, renews itself in the vigor of His people.

2. And this leads naturally to another view of the Person addressed, besides that of King. He is the King-*Priest*, the One who goes in to God in man's behalf, and presents for him the acceptable sacrifice. Here again God bears witness to Him, and here indeed all the fullness of the divine heart comes out. He knows the importance of this for us; He knows, too, how slow and unbelieving we are in the reception of His grace. Hence He not only speaks,—He *swears:* "Jehovah has *sworn*, and will not repent: Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."

The apostle has given us the full significance of this, and from the Christian side, in the epistle to the Hebrews. Here is not the place for any proper investigation of it. It is one of many proofs that for Israel also the predicted blessing could not come through the Levitical rites or priesthood, instituted by the law, but through a glorious Person ordained to an eternal priesthood. The sacrifice—which a priest implies—is not, however, brought before us here. But we see that the King needed for them cannot be only King,—that He cannot commit the work of atonement to other hands than His own. Only by atonement can He be true "King of righteousness" (Melchizedek) and bless the children of Abraham as he to whom Abraham had given tithes had blessed the father.

3. Priestly *work* is not otherwise before us in this psalm, while the day of wrath it is that is earnestly pressed. The fifth and sixth verses do not seem to be the action of the King Himself, but of God as the Sovereign Lord (*Adonai*) in His behalf, according to the character of the psalm as a whole. It is God who sets His foes as a footstool for His feet; which does not lose sight any more than this does of His own activity. But the heavenly and earthly thrones are now and henceforth in complete concord; and here, throughout, the ways are the ways of God, with which in the last verse once more the Conqueror is shown to be in full accord.

Thus "the Lord is at Thy right hand" would not be the repetition of the thought in the first verse, but the converse; and the divine anger is at the rejection of the Object of divine delight. The head over a wide country would seem

SECTION 3. (Ps. cxi.-cxiii.)

Hallelujah!

Ps. cxi.

[1]PSALM CXI.

Jehovah!

[k] HALLELUJAH!

(*Aleph*) I will give thanks to Jehovah with the [l]whole heart,

(*Beth*) in secret converse of the upright and in the [m]assembly.

(*Gimel*) Great are Jehovah's [n]works,

(*Daleth*) sought out of all that [o]delight in them.

1 (1, 2): The whole heart. *a* (1.) to Jehovah. *b* (2): the testimony sustaining this.

k Ps. 112. 1. Ps. 113. 1.
l Ps. 9. 1. *cf.* Ps.119.2, 34, 58.
m Ps. 35. 18. Ps. 149. 1.
n Ps. 104.24. Ps. 8. 3, 4. Rev. 15. 3.
o cf. 1 Ki. 4. 33. *cf.* Job chs. 38–41. *cf.* Rom. 1. 20. *cf.* Acts 14. 15–17.

to be Gog (Ezek. xxxviii.), as has been often noticed, inasmuch as it is not the descent from heaven that is in view, as in Rev. xix, but the rod going forth from Zion.

The last verse shows us, in figurative language, the secret of the King's success. He drinks of the brook in the way, taking Himself the divine refreshment, the stream of living water, of which, though provided for all, the kings of the earth have so little availed themselves. Thus is He, as having the mind of the Spirit, in full unhindered fellowship with the ways of God,—Himself, indeed, being as we know the centre of them.

Sec. 3.

The next and closing section is composed of three psalms, each marked at the beginning, and the final one at the end also, with a Hallelujah. Accordingly they are, throughout, filled with Jehovah's praise: the first, celebrating Him as known in His works and ways; the second, the blessing of those that fear Him; the third, the glory of His Name as filling heaven and earth. From their largeness these psalms are difficult to summarize, as may be imagined: who can tell out His praise? The first two have a difficulty also of another nature in their alphabetic structure, which is most regular, and in both perfectly alike, the whole twenty-two letters being contained within the compass of ten verses. Of the numerous divisions resulting from this, I have only been able to characterize as far as the verses. Indeed I have doubted if the letters are to be taken as real divisions here, or had another meaning. This I must leave for any who may follow me in this direction to decide; but as I have said elsewhere (p. 42) "it is surely natural to see in the alphabetic arrangement a symbol of *order impressed by a governing mind.* A numerical structure by itself expresses this; and an alphabetic one, making use of all the elements of human speech, seems as if it were indeed intended to make that order vocal." Here the perfect regularity and exact correspondence in the two psalms emphasize this thought, which is in thorough harmony with their being devoted entirely to Jehovah's praise. This is indeed the only harmony that is really that: all else is discord; and the coming day will bring forth from human history as well as nature this secret harmony, which it is a joy to think that man's lips shall make vocal. This may be a sufficient meaning for the alphabetic structure here.

PSALM CXI.

1. The one hundred and eleventh psalm, then, celebrates Jehovah, as seen in His works and ways; the whole heart united in thanksgiving, and this poured out in the secret converse of the upright where hearts are freest, and in the public assembly. The theme is a large—aye, an unending one: for "great are Jehovah's works, and sought out by all that delight in them;" or perhaps, as Delitzsch takes it,—"worthy of being sought out in all their aims," or "purposes."

2 (3, 4): His twofold character.
a (3): abiding righteousness.
b (4): borne witness to in love.

3 (5, 6): The fulfillment of the inheritance.
a (5): according to the covenant of promise.
b (6): declaring His doings.

4 (7, 8): Tested.
a (7): by truth and stability.
b (8): His appointments are sustained.

5 (9, 10): Man with God.
a (9): in grace on God's part;
b (10): humility on man's.

(*He*) His work is [p]honor and majesty,
(*Vau*) yea, his righteousness [q]standeth for aye.
(*Zayin*) He hath made his [r]wonderful works to be remembered:
(*Cheth*) [s]gracious and merciful is Jehovah.
(*Teth*) The prey hath he given to them that [t]fear him:
(*Jod*) he remembereth his [u]covenant for ever.
(*Caph*) The [v]living power of his doings he declareth to his people,
(*Lamed*) in giving them the [w]inheritance of the nations.
(*Mem*) The works of his hands are [x]truth and judgment:
(*Nun*) all his appointments are [y]sure;
(*Samech*) Maintained for [z]aye—for ever,
(*Ayin*) [as] done in truth and [a]uprightness.
(*Pe*) He hath sent [b]redemption for his people:
(*Tzaddi*) he hath [c]commanded his covenant for ever:
(*Koph*) [d]holy and reverend is his Name.
(*Resh*) The [e]fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom:
(*Schin*) a good [f]understanding have all that do [accordingly]:
(*Tau*) his [g]praise endureth for ever.

f Jer. 9. 23, 24; *cf.* Dan. 12. 3, 10.

p Ps. 19. 1. Ps. 145. 4, 5.
q Ps. 119. 142. Is. 51. 6–8.
r Ps. 143. 5.
s Ps. 116. 5. Is. 30. 18. *cf.* Titus. 2. 11–14.
t Ps. 34. 8–10. *cf.* Is. 33. 23.
u cf. Gen. 9. 15. *cf.* Lev. 26. 42, 45. *cf.* Ezek. 16. 60–63.
v Ps. 147. 5.
w cf. Ex. 15. 14–17. Ps. 44. 2. Ps. 80. 8–11. *cf.* Is. 60. 1–10.
x Ps. 145. 17. Hos. 14. 9. Rev. 16. 7.
y Ps. 19. 7. Ps. 93. 5.
z Ps. 119. 89. 1 Pet. 1. 25. Deut. 7. 9.
a Ps. 19. 9. Ps. 92. 15.
b cf. Ex. 8. 23. Is. 50. 2. *cf.* Lk. 1. 68.
c Deut. 28. 8. Ps. 133. 3.
d Lk. 1. 49. Ps. 99. 5.
e Job. 28. 28. Prov. 1. 7.
g Ps. 113. 2.

2. Now we find His character as told out in these: essentially righteousness and tender mercy; or light and love, as the New Testament unites with the Old to declare Him. "His work is honorable and with majesty;" and this is the reason of it, that in it all there is enduring, everlasting righteousness: "His righteousness standeth for aye." This is the one side; but there is another: for He has provided for the remembrance of His wonderful works; and in this His tender care for His creatures has shone out, that they might have the joy and fruitful consequences of such knowledge: "gracious and merciful is Jehovah."

3. But Israel is in the front, the Old Testament example in which these characters of His have been displayed, a people His by a covenant which He never forgets. "The *prey* has He given to them that fear Him: He remembereth His covenant for ever. The living power of His doings He declareth to His people, in giving them the inheritance of the nations." Here it is plain why it is, not "meat" but "the prey" in the first line; for Israel's inheritance has to be gained by conquest, as the last psalm has again reminded us; and spite of the long time in which the nations have had possession of the covenanted land, the word of God which has secured it to them, shows the "living power" or "vitality" of His doings through those years in which so long it has lain dormant. Now they are put in possession; and thus, as tested by the event, they can say:—

4. "The works of His hands are truth and judgment: all His appointments are sure. Maintained for aye—for ever, as done in truth and uprightness."

5. Now all has come out fully,—His faithfulness to His covenant; the manifestation of His Name. His covenant will be seen at last as only grace, in which alone can any stable relationship between God and man be found. While on man's part God is recognized in a holy fear which is the "beginning of wisdom," the secret of that "good understanding" which the "knowledge of the holy" is. The praise of it will indeed be eternal.

Ps. cxii.

1 (1, 2): The upright.
a (1): *obedient* fear.
b (2): the way of increase.

2 (3, 4): His twofold character.
a (3): righteousness.
b (4): love.

3 (5, 6): Fenced round.
a (5): by righteousness.
b (6): his security.

4 (7, 8): In view of frailty.
a (7): his heart firm.
b (8): and kept firm.

[z] PSALM CXII.

Praise for the security of those that fear Him.

[h] HALLELUJAH!

(*Aleph*) [i] Happy is the man that feareth Jehovah;
(*Beth*) that [j] delighteth greatly in his commandments.
(*Gimel*) His [k] seed shall be mighty in the earth:
(*Daleth*) the [l] generation of the upright is blessed.

(*He*) [m] Wealth and riches [shall be] in his house:
(*Vau*) and his righteousness [n] endureth for ever.
(*Zayin*) For the upright there ariseth [o] light in the darkness:
(*Cheth*) [he is] [p] gracious and merciful and righteous.

(*Teth*) Well is it with the man that is gracious and [q] lendeth:
(*Jod*) he shall sustain his affairs by [r] judgment.
(*Caph*) For he shall not be [s] moved for ever:
(*Lamed*) the righteous shall be in everlasting [t] remembrance.

(*Mem*) He shall not be afraid of an [u] evil report:
(*Nun*) his heart is [v] fixed, trusting in Jehovah.
(*Samech*) His heart is sustained, he shall not [w] fear,
(*Ayin*) until he [x] see [what he looketh for] on his adversaries.

cf. 2 Thess. 2. 1, 2; *ctr.* Prov. 28. 1. *v* Ps. 108. 1; *ctr.* Ps. 78. 37. *w* Prov. 1. 33; Is. 12. 2. *x* Ps. 59. 10; Ps. 92. 11.

h Ps. 111, 1. Ps. 113. 1.
i Ps. 115. 13. Ps. 128. 1.
j Ps. 1. 2. Ps. 119. 16, 35, 47, 92.
k Ps. 25. 13. Ps. 127. 5.
l ctr. Ps. 109. 13. *cf.* Ezek. 37. 25–28.
m Prov. 3. 16. Prov. 8. 18. Is. 60. 17.
n vers. 6, 9. Ps. 37, 28, 29.
o Is. 50. 10, 11. Job. 11. 16, 17. Ps. 97. 11. *cf.* Mal. 4. 2.
p cf. Ps. 109. 4, 5. 1 Pet. 3. 8.
q Luke 6. 34, 35. *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 17. Deut. 15. 7, 8.
r cf. Prov. 3. 27–29. *cf.* Is. 11. 4, 5.
s cf. Ps. 15. 5 with Ps. 16. 8. *cf.* Luke. 6. 47–49.
t Prov. 10. 7. *ctr.* Ps. 9. 5, 6.
u cf. Ps. 91. 3–8.

PSALM CXII.

In the last verse the key-note of the present psalm is struck, in which we have in fact the praise of such wisdom. It is a psalm of praise for the security and blessing of those who fear Jehovah; and the alphabetic structure may remind us of the similar one in the twenty-fifth, but here (as not there) perfect. As soon as the soul is turned to God, things begin to get the impress of divine order; and while from the side of human experience (as in the twenty-fifth) this is yet imperfect, from the divine side (as here) it is not so: the structure is the exact reflection of the truth contained.

In the character of the blessing the psalm is Jewish, of course; and we have to make large allowance for this in any Christian application.

1. We have first the description of the man that fears Jehovah. His fear is a fruitful fear and not a slavish one: he has great delight in the commandments in which he walks. "His seed shall be mighty *in the earth*,"—the sphere of blessing in the Old Testament,—"the generation of the upright is blessed."

2. Next, as in the last psalm the two-fold character of light and love is seen in Jehovah, so here this is seen in the one who walks in His way. "Wealth and riches shall be in his house; and his righteousness endureth for ever." Amid a dark world light arises for the upright; and the only upright one is he that is "gracious and merciful" as well as "righteous." Indeed our Lord has fully shown us in the parable of the thankless servant (Matt. xix.) that for those who are debtors to mercy not to show it is not even *righteous*.

3. We now see how he is fenced about and cared for: "Well is it with the man that is gracious and lendeth: he shall sustain his affairs by judgment"—not in the judgment which is coming at the hands of God, (as some interpret,)

5 (9, 10): Divine government.
a (9): as to the righteous.
b (10): the destruction of the wicked.

(*Pe*) He hath [y] scattered abroad, he hath given to the needy,
(*Tzaddi*) his righteousness [z] endureth for aye;
(*Koph*) his horn shall be [a] exalted with honor.
(*Resh*) The wicked shall [b] see [it] and be vexed:
(*Schin*) he shall gnash with his teeth and [c] melt away;
(*Tau*) the desire of the wicked shall [d] perish.

[y] 2 Cor. 9. 9. Prov. 11. 24.
[z] vers. 3, 6. *cf.* Is. 58. 6-12.
[a] Ps. 75. 10. Ps. 89. 17. Ps. 148. 14.
[b] *cf.* Lk. 13. 28. Ps. 107. 42.
[c] Ps. 58. 7, 8. Ps. 18. 45. Ps. 37. 36.
[d] Job. 8. 13. Job. 11. 20. Prov. 11. 7.

Ps. cxiii.

1 (1-3): "One Jehovah, and His name one."
(i.) the call for worship.
(ii.) the answer of praise.
(iii.) the full praise to be.

2 (4-6): His relation to His creatures.
(i.) Supreme!
(ii.) who can compare?
(iii.) to whom all is manifest.

[e] PSALM CXIII.

The glory of Jehovah's Name.

[f] HALLELUJAH!
Praise, ye [f] servants of Jehovah,—
Praise ye Jehovah's name!
Blessed be Jehovah's name,
[g] from this time even for ever.
From the [h] rising of the sun to the going down of it,
Jehovah's Name shall be praised.

Jehovah is high [i] above all nations:
His glory is over the [j] heavens.
Who is [k] like Jehovah our God,
who hath placed his [l] dwelling on high?
Who [m] stoopeth down to see
[what is] in the heavens and on the earth?

[e] Ps. 111. 1. Ps. 112. 1. ver. 9.
[f] Ps. 134. 1. Ps. 135. 1-3. *cf.* 1 Chr. 25. 1-7.
[g] *cf.* Rev. 4. 8. Ps. 115. 18.
[h] Is. 59. 19. Mal. 1. 11. *cf.* Is. 6. 3 with Ps. 72. 8, 19.
[i] Ps. 83. 18. Ps. 99. 2. Ps. 47. 9.
[j] Ps. 8. 1. Ps. 57. 5.
[k] Ex. 15. 11. Jer. 6. 7. Is. 40. 25, 26.
[l] Ps. 115. 16. Is. 57. 15. [m] Ps. 138. 6; *cf.* 2 Chr. 6. 18; Job 4. 18; Job 15. 15.

but by the judgment which he himself practises. "For he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance"—remembered by God Himself, and so kept unmoved.

4. Yet he is in a world where things do not show stability; but "he shall not be afraid of an evil report"—of bad news; because he has found stability in God: "his heart is firm, trusting in Jehovah," the Unchangeable. This very trust too is sustained of God, until he see what he looks for as to his adversaries.

5. The principles of divine government, both as to the righteous and the wicked, are seen in the closing verses.

PSALM CXIII.

1. And now the third Hallelujah celebrates Jehovah's Name, now to be one, according to the testimony of the prophet, over all the earth. All servants of Jehovah are exhorted to praise it: to show thus that their obedience springs out of joyful adoration; the only service which can have value for Him. And the answer rings out joyfully: "Blessed be Jehovah's Name! from this time even for ever." The full worship, too, is seen coming in: "from the rising of the sun to the going down of it, Jehovah's Name shall be praised."

2. Well may it be! for the whole scene of this praise is His creation. "He is high above all nations:" yea, "Jehovah's glory is above the heavens." The Incomparable One! He has placed His dwelling on high; but He sees, and with tender interest, all that is in heaven and on earth. This leads to the next verse in which we see how deep this interest goes, and how wonderful are the results of it.

3. For He is Abraham's God, the God of resurrection: this still told in Old Testament style, and to which the Christian revelation only has given its full glory. Yet the features of it can be still discerned and have been from the beginning. For He "raiseth the exhausted from the dust; He lifteth up the needy from the dunghill:" "an emblem of the deepest poverty and desertion;

3 (7-9): The God of resurrection.
(i.) power in grace.
(ii.) changed relations.
(iii.) birth from the barren.

Who [n]raiseth the exhausted from the dust;
he lifteth up the needy from the dunghill;
To set him with [o]nobles—
with the nobles of his people.
He maketh the [p] barren to keep house,
a joyful mother of sons.
[q] Hallelujah!

n 1 Sa. 2. 8. *cf.* Ps. 78. 70, 71.
o Job. 36. 7. *cf.* Esth. 6. 6-11.
p *cf.* Gen. 21. 6, 7. *cf.* Gen. 25. 21. 1 Sa. 2. 5.
cf. Is. 54. 1-10. q ver. 1; Ps. 150. 1, 6.

for in Syria and Palestine, the man who is shut out from society lies upon the *mezbele* (the dunghill or heap of ashes,) by day calling the passers-by for alms, and by night hiding himself in the ashes that have been warmed by the sun" (*Delitzsch*).

Out of this misery and degradation God yet raises up, to put a wretch like this among the nobles (*nedibhim*, the men of princely liberality),—yea, the nobles of his people. This is a repetition of Hannah's words; and Hannah's own case is before the psalmist's mind, that case so memorable indeed for Israel: "He maketh the barren to keep house, a joyful mother of sons." Mary's song, at the beginning of the New Testament, reminds us, could we ever forget it, that *one* birth, impossible but for the stooping of God to man, has filled here for us the place of all others. And herewith has come for every recipient of divine grace now, the promise and the power of a resurrection, by which those worse degraded than the dwellers on the dunghill are raised to higher place than that of princes!

Hallelujah!

SUBD. 2.

The second subdivision shows us now these ways of God, which have been already before us, resulting in the attaching of Israel's heart to Himself in days that are still to come. And here there are two plain sections; the first of which gives the Old Testament argument; the second, the New. In the first the controversy between God and them is regarding idolatry (Ps. cxv). In the second, it is the "Stone" that they have rejected, but who becomes the "head of the corner" (Ps. cxviii). Thus the argument is complete.

Sec. 1.

The first section contains four psalms, none of them very long, and one the shortest in the Bible. In them we are first carried back, as in the beginning of the sixty-eighth psalm, to the exodus from Egypt, to see the power and grace of God as shown among them at that time. There had come in, alas, a breach between them and their glorious Leader in consequence of the straying of their hearts from Him, and the setting up of the abominations of the heathen before His eyes in the land from which they should have been rooted out. This is now looked back upon and judged in the light of their present experience of His delivering hand; and in the third psalm here (cxvi.) He has displayed Himself to them in the resurrection of the nation, so as to bring back their hearts effectually to Him. The final psalm (cxvii.) exhorts the nations of the earth to praise Him therefore for His loving-kindness and faithfulness towards the delivered nation.

The rejection or reception of Christ is nowhere in question.

PSALM CXIV.

The first psalm of the series is of the simplest character. It dwells upon the power of God as seen in the deliverance out of Egypt, and upon His gracious identification of Himself with them as His people at that time. It merely describes with emphatic brevity these things: suggesting the questions which formally it does not raise. Its fragmentary character is itself strikingly suggestive. Why should the history of which it speaks be thus exceptional and

SUBDIVISION 2. (Psalms cxiv.-cxix.)

The attaching of the soul to the God of salvation.

SECTION 1. (Psalms cxiv.-cxvii.)

One Jehovah: The Old Testament Lesson.

Ps. cxiv.

[1] PSALM CXIV.

The power of Jacob's God.

1 (1-4): God the Lord.
(i.) at the beginning of the nation.
(ii.) their relation to Him.
(iii.) realization.
(iv.) the prostrate earth.

WHEN Israel [r] went out of Egypt,—
the house of Jacob from a people of [s] strange language,—
Judah was his [t] sanctuary,
Israel his [u] dominion.
The sea saw and [v] fled:
[w] Jordan was turned back.
The [x] mountains skipped like rams,—
the hills like lambs.

2 (5-8): The Deliverer.
(i.) the cause?
(ii.) the added testimony.
(iii.) the presence of God.
(iv.) the experience.

[y] What ailed thee, thou sea, that thou fleddest?
thou Jordan that thou wast turned back?
Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams?
ye hills, like lambs?
[z] Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord,—
at the presence of the God * of [a] Jacob:
Who turned the [b] rock into a pool of water,—
the flint into a fountain of waters.

r Ex. 13. 17, 18. Ps. 77. 20.
s Ps. 81. 5. *cf.* Jer. 5. 15 *cf.* Zeph. 3. 9 with Is. 19. 18.
t *cf.* Ex. 25. 8. *cf.* Ps. 22. 9. *cf.* Eph. 2. 22.
u *cf.* Mi. 4. 8 with Deut. 15. 6.
v Ex. 14. 21, 22. Ps. 77. 16.
w Josh. 3. 14-17.
x Ex. 19. 18. Ps. 29. 6. Ps. 68. 16. Hab. 3. 6.
y Hab. 3. 8.
z Ps. 18. 7. *cf.* Hag. 2. 6.
a *cf.* Ps. 24. 6. Is. 41. 14.
b Ex. 17. 6. Nu. 20. 8-11. Ps. 78. 15.

* *Eloah.*

fragmentary? The covenant-Name, Jehovah, is significant in a very different way.

1. The psalm is in two parts of four verses each. The first speaks of God as Lord, and yet without mentioning Him: there was no need to do so. There is but One who can dry up the sea and make the mountains skip.

It was the beginning of their history as a nation: the passover, as we know, rearranged their year for them. Egypt, though so long the place of their abode, is but a place of strange language to those who are now to be the holy people of God. Only with redeemed ones can God dwell; and where He dwells He reigns: "Judah was His sanctuary; Israel His dominion." The names have their significance otherwise than historically: the "prince with God" is thus ennobled by the yoke he bears; the *holy* place is one with the place of "praise."

Nature realizes and owns her God: the sea and Jordan alike, at the two ends of the desert journey; Sinai between them no less manifests its awe: "the mountains skipped like rams, and the hills like lambs."

2. The second part begins with an inquiry as to the cause of this, the answer revealing another character of Him whose sovereignty is thus recognized, and who yet softens the majesty of His presence, to walk in company with the "worm Jacob." Nay, His glorious power is made but to serve the necessities of His creatures: "turning the rock into a pool,—the flint into a fountain of waters."

Far apart as they may be in time and diverse in manner, we see that it is the same God who afterwards put on a lowlier, yet more glorious dress in which to serve His people, coming into the wilderness Himself in fashion as a man, to do here the works which no other man did. What altered so for this people, the grace of such a beginning? What has banished from the world the tender presence of the Son of man? The two questions have but one answer. The generations of men, however far apart in time or place, have one fatal resemblance throughout. In the words of the apostle, "they did not like to retain God in their knowledge."

Ps. cxv.

1 (1-3): Plea to Jehovah.
(i.) to act for Himself alone.
(ii.) to prevent heathen taunt.
(iii.) God in heaven.

2 (4-8): The idols contrasted.
(i.) origin.
(ii.) witnesses that witness not.
(iii.) unrealizing.
(iv.) passive.

[z] PSALM CXV.

In contrast with the idols of men.

NOT unto [c]us, Jehovah, not unto us,
but unto thy name give glory,
for thy [d]loving-kindness, and for thy truth's sake:
Why should the nations say,
[e]Where is now their God?
But our God is in [f]heaven:
he hath done whatsoever he [g]would.

Their idols are [h]silver and gold,
the work of [i]men's hands.
They have a [j]mouth, and speak not;
eyes [k]have they, and they see not;
[l]Ears have they, and they hear not;
a [m]nose have they, and they smell not;
[n]Hands have they, and they handle not;
[o]feet have they, and they walk not;
neither make they murmur in their throat.

c *cf.* Deut. 9. 5. *cf.* Is. 48. 11. *cf.* Ezek. 36. 32.
d Ps. 107. 1. Ps. 63. 3.
e Ps. 42. 3, 10. Ps. 79. 10. Joel 2. 17. *cf.* Nu. 14. 13-16.
f Ps. 11. 4. Is. 66. 1.
g Ps. 135. 6. Dan. 4. 35. Job 33. 13.
h Deut. 7. 25. Ps. 135. 15-21.
i Is. 40. 19, 20. Is. 44. 12-17. Acts 17. 29.
j Jer. 10. 5. *ctr.* Ex. 20. 1.
k Ps. 94. 9. *ctr.* Deut. 11. 12. *ctr.* Prov. 15. 3.
l *cf.* 1 Ki. 18. 26-29.

ctr. Mal. 3. 16. m *ctr.* Gen. 8. 21; *ctr.* Is. 65. 5. n *cf.* 1 Sam. 5. 4; *ctr.* Dan. 5. 5; *ctr.* Ps. 18. 16. o *ctr.* Ps. 104. 3; *ctr.* Nah. 1. 3.

PSALM CXV.

The next psalm takes up the old controversy between God and man, which (not merely in Israel's history) proves the truth of the sentence passed upon man. He turns from God, when knowing Him,—turns then to the darkness; and out of this comes the substituting for the true God all the idols of his own heart. He manufactures the god he worships,—a thing so inherent in man that the light of Christianity has not sufficed to banish it from the world. Up to the time of the Babylonish captivity this was Israel's besetting sin. After this, indeed, this unclean spirit went out of them, according to the Lord's words (Matt. xii. 43-45): alas, it was not *cast* out; nor the house possessed by One stronger than he. It is ready, therefore, to be occupied afresh by him; and this will take place in the last days, when idolatry will be again set up in the very temple of God, in the midst of those returned to their own land; and the open defiance given to Him there will bring in the desolating judgment which has been so often spoken of.

In this psalm we have, however, no allusion to the circumstances of that time. But the predictions which assure us of it, both in the Old Testament and the New, enable us better to understand the coming up of this subject of idolatry in the psalms of the latter days. Nor, indeed, is an evil done with till it has been judged: it is never allowed merely to drop out of sight unnoticed; but "God requireth," as the preacher says, "that which is past." (Eccl. iii. 15.) A solemn consideration! Nothing but a real judgment of a thing before God can give it effectual burial.

1. The psalm begins with a pleading that Jehovah will act for Himself and for the glory of His Name, and not allow the heathen to taunt His people, as if Jehovah were one of their own gods, not to be found in the time of need. It is, in fact, Israel's sin which has given even the appearance of this; and therefore they urge that He give glory to His own Name, if He cannot to theirs: and this, not as if the account men made of Him were of such importance, save to them, and to the love therefore in Him which cared for them. And then again, He had pledged Himself to faith; and thus they could plead with Him for His truth's sake also.

Israel's God, after all, if for the nation's sin He were not found now in His

(v.) governmental penalty.
3 (9-11): The sanctuary refuge.
(i.) for the objects of grace.
(ii.) through Another's work for them.
(iii.) and the Spirit's work in them.
4 (12,13): The argument of experience.
(i.) as to Israel.
(ii.) the nations.
5 (14-18): Man with God.
(i.) continuance of blessing.

They that make them are [p]like unto them,
[and] every one that trusteth in them.

O Israel, [q]trust in Jehovah!
he is their help and their [r]shield.
O house of [s]Aaron, trust in Jehovah:
he is their help and their shield.
Ye that [t]fear Jehovah, trust in Jehovah:
he is their help and their shield.

Jehovah hath been [u]mindful of us, he will bless [us]:
he will bless the house of Israel,
he will bless the house of Aaron:
He will bless them that fear Jehovah,
[v]small and great.

Jehovah will [w]increase you still,
you and your children.

p Is.44.9-11. Hab. 2. 18.
q Ps. 118. 8. Jer. 17. 7,8. Ps. 131. 3.
r Gen. 15. 1. Ps. 3. 3.
s Ps. 118. 3. 1 Chr. 6.49, 50, etc.
t Ps. 34. 9. Ps. 118. 4. *cf.* Hos. 3.5.
u Ps. 111. 6. *cf.* Jer. 31. 20, 34. *cf.* Is.49.14-16.
v *cf.* Deut.1. 17. *cf.* Rev. 11. 18.
w *cf.* Is. 49. 19-23. *cf.* Is.54.2,3. *cf.* Hos. 1. 10.

place on earth, was still in heaven. He was a reality, accomplishing whatever He would, spite of all opposition. And this leads naturally to the comparison with idols.

2. What were they, these idol-images? Matter simply — silver and gold — shaped by men's hands! Mouth and eyes there all right: both things that are said to "speak," and are in different ways "witness" for the man himself, an index of what is in the heart. But the idol gives no response to his worshiper by word or look. Nay, he realizes nothing: the voice that cries to him he hears not, the odor of incense or of sacrifice he perceives not. No hand can he stretch out to help, no foot of his will stir to bring relief, no murmur of sound even is in the idle throat. What can these senseless deities do but degrade the men who bow before them into beings as senseless? And this is the just penalty upon those who can forsake God, to follow palpably their own inventions.

3. From this the psalmist turns to exhort the people of God to cleave fast to Him who is not impotent nor impassive, but the help and shield of all that trust in Him. Israel, the house of Aaron, and those that fear Jehovah, are separately exhorted; nor is this mere amplification or embellishment. "Israel" is at once the nation as a whole, the people of Jehovah, the objects of His grace, who, crippled like their father in their human strength, cleave to Him in their helplessness, and find it not in vain. The house of Aaron, on the other hand, are the recognized ministers of this grace, who speak of sacrifice — of the work of Another for them. While "those that *fear* Jehovah" declare by this character the work of the Spirit in them. Thus the living God has indeed shown Himself out for the people of His choice, not only in the grace which invites confidence, but in the *activity* of grace in Son and Spirit, — the work done *for* them, and the work done *in* them. I need hardly point out how completely the numerical structure justifies these thoughts.

4. After this exhortation, in which so much encouragement is wrapped up, we have the argument of experience as to this living God. To say "Jehovah *has been* mindful of us," is, for those who know his unchangeableness, to be entitled to say "He *will* bless us." But in accordance with this line of thought, the circles of blessing are differently divided. "Those that fear Jehovah" stand by themselves, I think, to show that under this as a principle blessing can come to others than to Israel, — with whom yet the house of Aaron remains, as in fact having the priesthood by which the whole earth draws near to God. (Isa. lxi. 6.)

5. After this the blessedness of man with God can be told out. Blessing is continuous, just because it is Jehovah's blessing, unchangeable as Himself, and they are in covenant-relation with the Creator of all.

(ii.) covenant-relation.

(iii.) the portion of men.

(iv.) the dead have lost it.

(v.) but we are with Him.

Ye are the blessed of Jehovah,
who [x]made heaven and earth.
The [y]heavens are Jehovah's heavens;
but the earth he hath given to the children of men.
The [z]dead praise not Jah,
nor any that go down into silence,
But *we* will praise Jah
[a]from this time and for ever.
Hallelujah!

Ps. cxvi.

[1]PSALM CXVI.

The God of resurrection, and the recall of Israel's heart to Him.

1 (i, 2): The cause.

(i.) His grace (?)

(ii.) the confession of dependence.

I [b]LOVE; because Jehovah hath [c]heard
my voice [and] my supplications.
Because he hath inclined his ear unto me,
and I [d]will call [upon him all] my days.

2 (3-6): Deliverance.

(i.) the occasion.

The [e]toils of death faced me about;
and the straits of Sheol took hold on me:*
I found [f]distress and sorrow.

(ii.) the cry for deliverance.

Then I [g]called on the Name of Jehovah:
I beseech thee, Jehovah, [h]deliver my soul.

(iii.) Jehovah manifested.

[i]Gracious is Jehovah, and righteous:
yea, our God is merciful.
Jehovah [j]keepeth the simple:
I was brought [k]low, and he saved me.

(iv.) the experience.

3 (7-9): The return.

Return, my soul, unto thy [l]rest:
for Jehovah hath dealt [m]bountifully with thee.

(i.) the cause.

* *Literally*, "found me."

[x] Ps. 96. 5. Ps. 121. 2. Is. 42. 5.
[y] *cf.* Gen. 1. 28. *cf.* Acts 17. 26. *ctr.* Eph. 1. 3.
[z] Ps. 6. 5. Ps. 30. 9. Is. 38. 18, 19. *ctr.* Phil. 1. 23.
[a] Ps. 113. 2.
[b] Ps. 18. 1. Ps. 31. 23.
[c] *cf.* Ps. 40. 1. Ps. 10. 17.
[d] Ps. 104. 33. Ps. 63. 7.
[e] *cf.* Ps. 18. 4-6. *cf.* Jonah 2. 1-6.
[f] Ps. 31. 9. *cf.* Jer. 30. 7.
[g] Ps. 107. 6. Ps. 50. 15. *cf.* ver. 13.
[h] Ps. 70. 1 with Ps. 39. 48. Is. 46. 3, 4.
[i] Ex. 34. 6, 7. Ps. 103. 8. Joel 2. 13.
[j] Ps. 121. 3, 4, 5. Ps. 145. 20. Ps. 119. 130.
[k] Ps. 142. 6. Is. 38. 14. *cf.* Is. 17. 4.
[l] *cf.* Ps. 126. 1. *cf.* Is. 28. 12.
[m] Ps. 13. 6; Ps. 142. 7. *cf.* Is. 30. 15.

But the sphere of this blessing, as the Old Testament reveals it, is definitely pointed out: *not* the heavens, which are Jehovah's, but the earth: this He has given to the children of men. But the dead then are out of it: the wicked have been turned into sheol, and the resurrection of the just has taken place, though the psalm says nothing of this. The New Testament here comes fully in to explain and supplement the Old. Death is now the doom only of those away from God; but "we," says the psalmist, "we [the living] will praise Jehovah: from this time and forever."

Psalm CXVI.

This does not, however, complete the story; and the 116th psalm comes in here to show how nearly Israel had been in those terrible jaws of death,—ingulfed, but for the mercy of God, to utter perdition. It is the sense of this deliverance that brings their hearts to God, and makes them His servants for ever.

1. The opening of the psalm is simple enough: a story which every one brought to God will recognize as his own. Israel, in the realization of the grace that has answered her, takes her place of confession of Jehovah her God, henceforth to own Him alone.

2. The deliverance is then recounted from the toils of death and the straits of sheol. They calling on Jehovah in distress, He manifested Himself in loving mercy and salvation.

3. The soul can now return to its rest. Delivered from death, Israel walks before God in the land of the living.

(ii.) delivered from death. (iii.) before Jehovah as brought up from death.

For thou hast delivered my [n]soul from death,
mine eyes from [o]tears,
my feet from [p]falling.
I will [q]walk before Jehovah,
in the land of the living.

4 (10, 11): The experience. (i.) a certain truth. (ii.) man a false confidence.

I [r]believe now, for I speak:
as for me, I was brought very low;
I said in my [s]alarm:
All men are liars.

5 (12-15): Man with God. (i.) the question of congruity. (ii.) the testimony of His salvation.

What shall I [t]render unto Jehovah,
for all his benefits toward me?
I will take the [u]cup of salvation,
and call on Jehovah's name.

n Ps. 56. 13. Ps. 68. 20.
o *cf.* Is. 25. 8. *cf.* Rev. 7. 17.
p *cf.* Mi. 4. 6, 7. *cf.* Jude 24.
q Ps. 119. 3, 45. Ps. 27. 13. Is. 2. 5.
r 2 Cor. 4. 13, 14. *cf.* Jno. 3. 11.
s Ps. 31. 22. *cf.* Jer. 9. 1-8.
t *cf.* Is. 38. 15. *cf.* 2 Sa. 7. 20.
u *ctr.* Matt. 26. 39, 42. *cf.* Is. 51. 17, 22. *cf.* Song 5. 1.

4. The fourth section, though only of two verses, is as important as it is emphatic. Experience has shown absolutely what the psalmist believes as a most certain truth, that all confidence in man is vain. "I said in my haste to escape" —not that it was, as we say, a mere hasty speech, for it is this in which he is so confident that he speaks it out—"all men are liars."

This realized in the soul, with honest self-application, sweeps it clean of the last remnant of self-righteousness and self-dependence. Out of a wreck so absolute nothing is saved, except what was never in it. *God* remains, and there is nothing else. The ground is clear for faith to build its temple for Him alone.

5. He turns, therefore, to ask, "What shall I render to Jehovah for all His benefits toward me?" What is right and suitable when all that is of value is what I find in Him? Well, I can receive and own His grace: "take the cup of salvation, and call upon Jehovah's Name."

But there is more than this. There are vows now to be performed to Jehovah: and this is repeated in the same words before the close of the psalm. Israel's legal vow she has, as we know, utterly failed in, and is still suffering the consequences of her failure; but there are thanksgiving vows that in the day of coming blessing shall be fulfilled. (Ps. lvi. 12; Isa. xix. 21.) They imply no legality, but the consciousness of what grace has done, and the praise with which the heart is filled and empowered. Praise is now easy,—necessary: it is, indeed, but what *His* vow implies who will be in that day the Leader of His people's praises (Ps. xxii. 22, 33); and who will be silent then? Thus these vows are evangelic only. They are connected with the "cup of salvation," and Another's work,—the joyful assurance of what that work means for them.

The 15th verse is a kind of enigma, in the connection in which it stands. It is, in fact, however, the solution of an enigma, and one most important for the soul at all times. For the law, death, as we have elsewhere seen abundantly, and as we see in the earlier part of this very psalm, was necessarily a shadow. The blessings declared by law are so thoroughly blessings to be enjoyed on earth, the dead thus losing part in them; those of the prophets themselves being so much of this character—Israel's blessings in the land in coming times—that of necessity this would be so until, with the New Testament, the full revelation of the heavenly things should come. Going through the sufferings and trials of the latter days, in which the question of their title to national blessing was pressing upon them, death would again have for the remnant of Israel all its significance. Were *they* to die or live would seem to involve fully the question of the wrath or favor of God; and under the bitter persecution of that time many, in fact, will die. Resurrection might explain this: for the orthodox in Israel have, as we know, always believed in resurrection; but here again there might be a question: *Was not the resurrection already passed?* For Christians, and along with these the whole of the saints of former times, it will in fact have taken place when Israel's

(iii.) accomplished vows.

(iv.) the lesson of experience.

6 (16-19): The victory of God.

(i.) the obedience of grace.

(ii.) the confession of Jehovah.

(iii.) accomplished vows.

(iv.) the place of this.

I will [v] perform to Jehovah my vows,
yea, in the presence of all his people.
Precious in the sight of Jehovah
is the [w] death of his pious ones.

Yea, Jehovah, for I am thy [x] servant:
I am thy servant, the son of thy handmaid:
thou hast [y] loosed my bonds.
I will [z] sacrifice to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving,
and will [a] call on the name of Jehovah.
I will [b] perform my vows to Jehovah,
yea, in the presence of all his people;
In the [c] courts of Jehovah's house,
in the midst of thee, Jerusalem.
[d] Hallelujah!

v cf. Ps. 22. 25. Ps. 66. 13.
w Ps. 72. 14. Ps. 9. 12.
x cf. Is.42.1. cf. Is.65.13, 14.
y Ps. 102.20. Is. 52. 2. cf. Zech. 9. 11, 12.
z Ps. 107.22. cf. Is. 51. 3. cf. Jer. 33. 10, 11.
a ver. 13.
b ver. 14.
c Ps. 96. 8. Ps. 84. 2.10. cf. Is. 62. 8, 9.
d Ps. 117. 2.

travail-pangs come upon her; and can they be ignorant of this who are under the teaching of Christ, specially addressed to those in view of that time of unequaled tribulation (Matt. xxiv.)? His word there, moreover, is that "he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." What, then, as to the saints of that period does death mean?

Most confirming it is to find in the book of Revelation, which so clearly brings before us the trials and sufferings of these very Israelitish saints, the same question anticipated and provided for. In the 14th chapter, which has to do with those who are seen anticipatively in the commencement of it as standing upon *Mount Zion* with the victorious "Lamb," after Babylon is fallen (ver. 8), and when the time of the antichristian "beast" and his followers is in contemplation, it is suddenly announced, as if in contrast with the woe upon the beast-worshipers, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord *from henceforth*. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." (ver. 13.)

The words "from henceforth" show the special application of what must seem otherwise a general truth; and the connection shows that the application must be, pre-eminently at least, to the latter-day remnant of Israel. And here is again the assurance so needful, just to those of this class, of death being no loss to these, but rather gain. How perfectly has the tenderness of the Lord provided for the peculiar need of these peculiarly tried and needy sufferers! The New Testament clasps hands, as it were, with the Old about them, to give them an assurance specially needed, as is plain, in their case: while the comfort abides, of course, for all of every time. Such are the "oracles" of God's living word; and so sweet a testimony have we of the heart behind them!

In the psalm, where it reaches prophetically in the history of the nation, Israel's salvation has come, and the blessedness of the dead saints has come into open light, and is a matter of experience. And so the numerical structure declares it. But, as already said, by this anticipative expression of it, it has been made the property of believers of every time; and lightens the shadows of the Old Testament with its emphatic assurance, "Precious in the sight of Jehovah is the death of His pious ones." It is not "*holy* ones" here, but those whose heart toward Himself the Lord realizes and acknowledges.

6. The closing section beautifully expresses in the number of it the triumph of His ways in bringing thus the heart of Israel back to Himself. We have, first of all, and as the foundation of all else, the spirit of obedience which is the fruit of His grace. They serve in liberty, in the constraining sense of His love who has loosed them from their bonds. They confess His Name with sacrifices of thanksgiving, and thus perform their vows. The circumstances are now added which assure us in what a scene the vision ends for us: "in the courts of Jehovah's house, in the midst of thee, Jerusalem." Jehovah has taken His place once

Ps. cxvii.

(i.) to praise Jehovah.
(ii.) because of His love to Israel.

[a]PSALM CXVII.

The whole earth summoned.

ALL [b]nations, praise Jehovah!
all races, laud ye him!
For his [c]loving-kindnesses have been mighty toward us,
and the [d]faithfulness of Jehovah [endureth] for ever.
[h]Hallelujah!

[e] Ps. 22. 27. Ps. 96. 7. Deut. 32. 43. Rom. 15. 11.
[f] Is. 63. 7. Jer. 31. 3.
[g] Ps. 146. 6. Mi. 7. 20. Ps. 100. 5.
[h] Ps. 115. 18. Ps. 116. 19, etc.

SECTION 2. (Psalms cxviii., cxix.)

Christ and the New Covenant.

Ps. cxviii.

1 (1-7): Perpetual goodness of Jehovah.
(i.) all exhorted.
(ii.) Israel, God's witness.

[i]PSALM CXVIII.

The Head of the Corner.

GIVE [k]thanks to Jehovah, for he is good:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
Let [l]Israel now say,
that his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.

[i] Ps. 106. 1. Ps. 107. 1. Ps. 136. 1. ver. 29. 1 Chron. 16. 34.
[j] Ps. 115. 9. *cf.* Ps. 22. 3.

more in the midst of His gathered people; and that is the sign which shows the day has now come for the earth; and for the "gathering of the peoples" so long foretold, at last to Shiloh. (Gen. xlix. 10.)

PSALM CVII.

Accordingly the whole earth is now summoned to Jehovah's feet; Israel's salvation being that which makes known His faithfulness to promises long since made, and which might seem to have passed out of His remembrance. In their story also His love is now shown out: a love which, if shown out to them, is love in Him, and to be enjoyed by all who have hearts to entertain it.

Sec. 2.

We have had in the first section, then, how Israel's heart is attached to Jehovah, but only on the one side of this, as is plain: for the name of Christ has not yet been uttered. This is supplied in the second section, which gives us now the New Testament side, as it were: Christ being seen as the One who as the chief corner-stone unites together the whole temple of Jehovah's praise. Accordingly, the 119th psalm shows the heart of Israel fully turned to God according to the terms of the new covenant,— His law written on the heart. The relation of these two passages to one another is striking, if compared with that of psalms i. and ii.; which give us, first, the spirit of obedience, the Israelite whose "delight is in the law of Jehovah"; while the second shows us Christ, again as rejected of man, but set as King in Zion, and the happiness of all that put their trust in Him. The one is the dispensational order, and is the same as that of the two *sections* here; the other is the moral order; for it is Christ who is the "Mediator of the new covenant," and who, as we look upon Him, changes us into His moral image. The two psalms are in perfect relation therefore to one another, though so different in themselves.

PSALM CXVIII.

The speaker in the first psalm is again one of the remnant of Israel of the latter days, the representative of the nation as wrought in by the Spirit of God; and the psalm itself is throughout prophetic. It has five sections, which are not in general difficult of connection. Any difficulty which we may find will be rather in detail.

1. The perpetual goodness of Jehovah, so constantly and naturally before us in this Deuteronomic book of the Psalms, is again the thesis here. All are exhorted

(iii.) the priestly family.
(iv.) the nations.
(v.) way and end.
(vi.) a challenge of adversaries.
(vii.) perfect rest.

Let the [k]house of Aaron now say
that his loving-kindness [endureth] forever.
Let those that [l]fear Jehovah now say,
that his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
Out of [m]strait I called upon Jah:
in a [n]large place Jah answered me.
Jehovah is [o]for me; I fear not:
[p]what can man do to me?
Jehovah is for me among [q]those that help me:
and *I* shall [r]see [my desire] on those that hate me.

2 (8–12): The opposition.
(i.) Jehovah supremely sufficient.
(ii.) better than the liberal hearted.
(iii.) Jehovah's name.
(iv.) the vanity of the attempt.
(v.) the reward.

It is [s]better to take refuge in Jehovah
than to put trust in man;
It is better to take refuge in Jehovah
than to put trust in [t]nobles.
All nations [u]compassed me about;
but in Jehovah's name I cut them off.
They compassed me about, yea, they compassed me about;
but in Jehovah's name I [v]cut them off.
They compassed me like [w]bees;
they are [x]quenched as a fire of thorns:
for in Jehovah's name I cut them off.

3 (13–19): Jehovah the sanctuary.
(i.) my sufficiency.
(ii.) my salvation.

Thou hast [y]thrust at me hard to make me fall:
but Jehovah helped me.
Jah is my [z]strength and psalm:
and he is become my salvation.

cf. Ps. 68. 7-9. *y cf.* Mi. 7.8; *cf.* Ps. 18.17; Ps. 27. 2. *z* Ps. 18. 1; Ex. 15. 2; Is. 12. 2.

[k] Ps. 115.10. *cf.* Ezek. 44. 15, 16.
[l] Ps. 115. 11. Ps. 135. 19, 20. *cf.* Ps. 40. 3.
[m] Ps. 50. 15. Ps. 120. 1.
[n] Ps. 18. 19. Ps. 31. 8. *cf.* Is. 54. 2, 3.
[o] Rom. 8. 31. *cf.* Is. 54. 11-17.
[p] Ps. 27. 1. Is. 51. 12, Heb. 13. 6.
[q] Ps. 54. 4. *cf.* 1 Chr. 12. 18.
[r] Ps. 54. 7. Ps. 92. 11. Ps. 112. 8.
[s] *cf.* Is. 30. 1, 2. *cf.* Is. 2. 22. Jer. 17. 5, 7.
[t] Ps. 146. 3. Ps. 107. 40. *cf.* Is. 32. 1, 5, 6.
[u] *cf.* Ps. 59. 6, 14. *cf.* Ps. 83. 5–8.
[v] Ps. 149. 6-9.
[w] *cf.* Deut. 1. 44. *cf.* Is. 7. 18, 19 with Is. 59. 19.
[x] *cf.* 2 Sa. 23. 6, 7.

to give Him thanks for this, with the division that we have had elsewhere into Israel, the national witness for Him,—the house of Aaron, the priestly family, and those that fear Jehovah, which would include, at least, those turned to Him from the Gentiles. The separation of the house of Aaron from the rest of the nation would seem still to indicate the sacrificial basis upon which all ever depends for them.

There follows the practical expression of His loving-kindness whose name is shown by the constant reiteration of it to be so endeared to them. They called upon Him in strait: in a large place He answered. Way and end are simply enough connected thus; and the simplicity is the sweetness of it. What power is there in the cry of a needy suppliant for Him! As a result the soul becomes bold in its confidence: with Jehovah for him, what is it possible for man—all men—to do? He is among those that help him, their strength and inspiration, and the overthrow of enemies is sure to come.

2. The opposition is now seen in its full extent, according to the prophetic picture of Israel in the last days. It is prefaced with the reiterated assurance of how much better it is to trust in Jehovah than in men of any kind, even the nobles (*nedibhim*), the men of liberality and frank chivalrous action. All nations had gathered against Israel, only to be cut off by a feeble people sheltered and energized by Jehovah's Name. Like bees they gather, like a fire of thorns, which burns up fiercely and dies out, they are quenched and gone.

3. Jehovah is then again celebrated as their sanctuary and refuge,—not merely a safe and sure retreat, but where the holiness of His presence is felt and finds response. The psalmist apostrophizes here the vanquished enemy. "Thou hast thrust at me hard, to make me fall; but Jehovah helped me. Jehovah is my strength and psalm: and He is become my salvation." Thus singing and

(iii.) the realization.

(iv.) the experience.

(v.) the outcome of exercise.

(vi.) limited discipline.

(vii.) the perfect end.

4 (20-28): Tested all round.

(i.) the righteous?

(ii.) the answer in salvation.

The voice of [a]singing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous:
Jehovah's right hand doeth [b]valiantly.
Jehovah's right hand is [c]lifted up;
Jehovah's right hand doeth valiantly.
I shall [d]not die but live,
and [e]declare the works of Jah.
Jah hath [f]chastened me sore,
but to [g]death he hath not given me up.
Open me the [h]gates of righteousness:
I will go into them, I will give thanks to Jah.

This [i]gate belongeth to Jehovah,
the [j]righteous shall enter it.
I will give thanks to thee, for thou hast [k]answered me,
and hast become my [l]salvation.

a Ps.126.1,2. *cf.* Jer. 30. 18, 19.
b *cf.* Ex.15.1.
c Ex. 15. 6. *cf.* Deut. 32. 41. Is. 30. 30.
d *cf.* Ps.30.9. *cf.*Is.38.18-20.
e Ps. 107. 22. Ps. 73. 28. Ps. 66. 16. Is. 12. 4.
f *cf.* Jer. 30. 11. *cf.* Is. 40. 2.
g *cf.* Jer. 4. 27. *cf.* Am.9.8-15.
h Is. 26. 2. Is. 62. 10.
i *cf.* Ps.24.8-10.

cf. Ezek. 44. 1-3. j *cf.* Is. 60. 21; *cf.* Is. 35. 8-10. k Ps. 116. 1; *cf.* Ps. 20. 1. l ver. 14; Is. 12. 2, 3; Ex. 15. 2; Is. 60. 18; *cf.* Gen. 49. 18.

salvation are now uttering themselves in the tents of the righteous, and it is as at the Red Sea and more marvelously, Jehovah's right hand that has accomplished all: Jehovah is the "man of war"; "Jehovah's right hand doeth valiantly."

But there is more for them than external deliverance in all this, even as the sorrow that they had been passing through was the sign and consequence of a spiritual condition which had forced Jehovah into opposition to them. They had had to face death with the terror of God's wrath in it, as we have seen. Yet He had not given them over to it. The exercise had been profitable for them; the chastening had done its work; and now they would not die, but live. The gates of *righteousness* could now be opened to them, and they would enter in and give thanks to Jehovah.

4. But even so, this is not all: we are, in fact, only approaching the real and fundamental truth of their condition. The gate of righteousness which they have challenged — the way into Jehovah's presence — belongs to Himself. He alone it is who can affix the terms of admission, terms which must be set by the demands of His own nature. True: "the *righteous* shall enter it": that, in some sort, is easily apprehended; but it only raises the old question, "*How* shall man be just with God?" And have they — these delivered Israelites — now found the answer?

Beautiful it is to see then that in the very next sentence they are speaking of "salvation": "I will give thanks to Thee, for Thou hast answered me, and become my salvation." Righteousness with God is indeed the portion of the saved, and only of the saved: it is a gift, and not a work wrought out by us, nor (in the sense in which we are speaking of it) even wrought out *in* us. While there is, assuredly, a practical righteousness which is wrought out in us, and which is necessarily connected with our capacity to enjoy, and our moral fitness for, the presence of God, it is not any the more the "gate" into His presence. Here the righteousness we need is in Another. *Christ* is Himself the "gate." The purging of sin and the positive value in which we stand are found in One alone who is the Head of blessing for His people. And thus we can realize to the full the personal element in the language here: "I will give thanks to Thee, for Thou hast answered me, and hast become my salvation."

We naturally ask, however, is not this, perhaps, too evangelic an interpretation of what may be more simply taken? Israel has been in peril from external enemies, the nations that had been gathered against her, and the so absolutely similar words of the 14th verse unmistakably refer to this temporal deliverance. Is there anything more in the present one than the thought of entering into the

(iii.) Risen!

(iv.) experience.

(v.) the ways of God.

A [m]stone which the builders refused
is become the head of the corner.
This [n]cometh of Jehovah:
it is marvelous in our eyes.
This is the [o]day that Jehovah hath made:
we will exult and rejoice in it.

m Matt. 21. 42-44. Mk. 12. 10, 11. Lk. 20. 17, 18. Acts 4. 11. 1 Pet. 2. 4-8. Is. 28. 16.
n cf. Dan. 2. 34, 35; cf. Nu. 23. 23.
o cf. Ps. 92, title; cf. Is. 26. 1; cf. Is. 60. 19, 20.

presence of God now, to thank Him for this decisive overthrow of all their adversaries?

This is a question which cannot, I believe, be decided by the words themselves, but only by the connection. And here it is certain that they have been speaking of a "gate" which "belongeth to Jehovah," and which necessarily implies conditions as to entering into His presence. "This gate"—what can it be? If it be simply their own righteousness,—the righteousness of a people just now threatened with judgment for their sins,—it would seem as if much stress could be hardly laid upon it; and here we naturally look for some reference to how the long tale of sin had been put away. But more than this, the very next verse does undoubtedly refer to Christ, and in such a character as completely to justify the thought that the foundation of the soul in the presence of God is in fact before them:—

"A stone which the builders refused is become the Head of the corner."

The Lord Himself and the apostles quote and apply this scripture. Isaiah (xxviii. 16) gives us the direct prophecy: "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a Stone, a tried Stone, a precious corner-[stone], a sure foundation." It is thus a *foundation*-stone that is in question, and we can read "the head of the corner" in no other way than it is read in Ephesians (ii. 20), "Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone." The "chief corner-stone" and the "head of the corner" are the same thing.

We are, of course, in Ephesians in the midst of Christian realities, and must take care, in any transference of texts to Jewish themes, to make account of resulting differences: but in the case before us we may find the differences themselves to give instruction. The apostle Paul is speaking of the church of God, which in the Old Testament was a mystery yet hidden. It is this of which he adds: "in whom the whole building fitly framed together groweth into a holy temple in the Lord." Thus he is speaking of a temple—a Christian one—and of Christ as its foundation. The connection in the psalm enables us to see that here also it is the foundation of a temple that is spoken of. In the gospel of Matthew, where the Lord refers to this text, it is in the temple that He actually is. When He finally leaves it, He calls it no longer God's but "your house," and pronounces sentence upon it as such: not one stone would be left upon another (xxiii. 38; xxiv. 2). Upon *their* foundations, who in self-righteousness and unbelief rejected Him, no dwelling-place of God could stand.

Israel had thus remained for many generations without that which was their distinctive glory. But they are again to possess it; and the psalm contemplates this blessed time. Christ, hitherto rejected, will then be the foundation upon which the dwelling of God among them will securely rest. When we look at the typical house, even in the wilderness, we are at no loss to understand that the sockets of the boards which were its framework spoke of Him, being made of the silver money of atonement (Ex. xxxviii. 27). As its curtained gates also spake of Him, and the beautiful curtains which were the very tabernacle itself. "In Him" the whole structure stood; and ark and mercy-seat, the very place of the Throne, still spake of Him. In this psalm we have no longer the tabernacle, but the solid foundations of the permanent building; but as to its essential meaning there could be no change; and when He declared to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," He spake of the temple of His

(vi.) the hindrance overcome. (vii.) the full blessing reached.

5 (27-29): Man with God.

(i.) light from the Mighty.

(ii.) relationship.

(iii.) praise to the manifested One.

[p] Save now, Jehovah, I beseech thee:
I beseech thee, Jehovah, give now [q] prosperity.
[r] Blessed is he that cometh in the name of Jehovah:
we have blessed you out of Jehovah's [s] house.

Jehovah is the Mighty One, and hath given us [t] light:
bind the [u] sacrifice with cords;
up to the horns of the altar.
Thou art [v] my Mighty One, and I will give thee thanks:
my God, and I will exalt thee.
Give [w] thanks to Jehovah, for he is good:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.

[p] Ps. 20. 9.
[q] *cf.* Ps. 45.4 with Is.35.
[r] *cf.* Matt. 21. 9. *cf.* Matt. 23. 39 with Is. 25. 9.
[s] *ctr.* Matt. 23. 38. Ps. 116. 19. Jer. 17. 26.
[t] Ps. 36. 9. Ps. 97. 11. *cf.* Is.30.26. *cf.* Is.60.19, 20.
[u] *cf.* Jer. 33. 9-11, 18. *cf.* Is. 60. 7.
[v] Ex. 15. 2; Ps. 48. 14; Is. 25. 1. [w] ver. 1.

body (John ii. 21). Essentially—in its true spiritual reality—He was the whole thing; and in the psalm here it is as the Risen One, refused of the builders, and His life taken from the earth, but alive again from the dead, with His glorious work accomplished, He is the foundation of Israel's praise for evermore.

We are carried thus far beyond the fact of their merely temporal deliverance, great and marvelous as that must be, and realize the foundation upon which the worshipers stand, and the "gate" which "belongeth to Jehovah," through which they come into His presence. Not any righteousness of their own is here in question. The once refused and slain, now risen and glorified One is all their joy.

"This cometh of Jehovah" is now their cry, "and it is marvelous in our eyes." So indeed it will be; and the whole "day" will be seen to be of Jehovah's making. He has brought it all about, the trial and the sorrow which were His only way of blessing for them, and the end now reached its glorious consummation. And now, all hindrance to their blessing being removed, their "Hosanna" ("save now") can be heard: "Save now, Jehovah, I beseech Thee; I beseech Thee, Jehovah, send now prosperity."

For the time of real and full return of heart to God is now reached, in which that will be accomplished of which the Lord spoke in the hour of His rejection as that which would bring Him to them once again. "Ye shall not see Me henceforth," He says, "until ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord." Here we have the decisive word: "Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord" (Jehovah); and this is the indication of their spiritual condition: He had had to say of them: "I have come in my Father's name, and ye receive Me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." (John v. 43.) For alas, it was against God Himself that they were in hostility: with the desperate implacability of a heart set upon its own lusts, they "both saw and hated" Him and His Father." (John xv. 24.)

Now that which He had declared they would do, they have done. At the standpoint of the psalm, Antichrist has come in his own name, and been received; but a remnant wrought upon by divine grace has been turned to God; and in these is found the revival of the national life. Theirs is the cry, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of Jehovah," and "out of the house of Jehovah" — the sign, as we have seen, of restored favor — they are saluted with blessing. The last part of the verse is evidently a responsive greeting from within, as the worshipers approach Jehovah's dwelling.

5. The last section is accordingly the joy and homage of those in restored and eternal relationship to God. "Jehovah is the Mighty One": they have proved Him such; but more,—"He hath given us light." Hence they fill the courts of His house with sacrifices, even up to the horns of the altar itself. He is *their* Mighty One,—*their* God; and they exalt Him. The psalm closes with the refrain of the anthem, heard ever and anon throughout this book: "Give thanks to Jehovah, for He is good: for His loving-kindness endureth for ever."

Psalm CXIX.

"That which the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." So the apostle describes for the Christian the efficacy of the grace that has in Christ been shown us. The law could not work in men the obedience it required. The cross, beheld by faith, condemned sin for us, so as to deliver us from it, and implant in our hearts the very principle of obedience, in a faith that worketh by love. And this is the connection between the present psalm and the one preceding it, though Israel and not Christians are before us in them. The law is written on their hearts, according to the promise of the new covenant (Jer. xxxi. 31-34); and here all *is* promise, that is, grace. The longest psalm in the whole book is the utterance of Israel's heart in praise of the law.

We need not wonder to find it to be an alphabetic acrostic, and that of the most regular and perfect kind. There is an *eight-fold* alphabet, this number eight showing what is new, in contrast with the old,*— thus the new covenant number — being stamped upon the whole psalm. Every letter of man's language now is taken up with the praise of that, which was but an intolerable yoke before.

"The Masora observes that the psalm contains only the one verse, 122,† in which some reference or other to the word of revelation is not found as in all the 175 others,—a many-linked name of synonyms which runs through the whole. In connection with this," says Delitzsch, "it may also not be merely accidental that the address, Jehovah, occurs 22 times, as Bengel has observed": though not in regular correspondence with the 22 sections.

There are also just *ten* synonyms of the law used by the psalmist, and which naturally remind us of the ten commandments of the decalogue, "word, saying; way, path; testimonies, judgments; precepts, statutes; commandment, law."‡ And these seem (though this may be disputed) to fall naturally into five pairs, as I have given them.

All this arrangement may seem artificial enough, if we take (as so often done) our knowledge for the measure of what is possible: which in Scripture is hardy enough. On the other hand, commentators have mostly renounced the idea of finding in the psalm any internal connection of thought. Only Delitzsch, so far as I am aware, has attempted a sketch of it, and this has met with little acceptance. Indeed the difficulty must needs be great of discerning links which are throughout moral and experimental, and which unite sentences which have the look of independence and ability to stand alone which these have. The numerical structure may here be expected, if anywhere, to show its worth as a guide to understanding; as the alphabetic arrangement would seem, in fact, to be intended to point out. It was one of the first clues which guided me, a good while since, in this direction, and I may be pardoned in preferring this to the despairing refuge of a help to remembrance, generally urged.

The psalmist has thus plainly marked out for us 22 sections. If the last were omitted, the rest would naturally fall into a triple septenary order, suiting well the regularity of structure otherwise; and capable, as I believe, of satisfactory comparison in this way, numerically and otherwise. The first seven would, then, seem to refer to *individual* condition; the second to relation to *external circumstances;* the third to divine holiness — the *sanctuary* view. Taking now the

* Notice that 8 is the cube of 2; which is itself the expression of *difference, otherness,* here therefore fully realized.

† To which, however, verse 90 must surely be added.

‡ Here again the Masora seems to have made a faulty enumeration, strangely enough substituting for "path" "truth," or, according to another reading, "righteousness." But both these are attributes, not synonyms, of the law; and are so used.

Ps. cxix.

[2]PSALM CXIX.

Faith's testimony to the Word, in love and service.

DIVISION 1.

The individual believer.

1 (1-3): The principle, (i.) wholehearted obedience. (ii.) observing His testimonies. (iii.) realized fulfillment.

2 (4-8): The soul's desire. (i.) as under authority.

[1]ALEPH.

Harmonious righteousness.

[x]HAPPY are the perfect in the way,
who [y]walk in Jehovah's law.
Happy are they that [z]observe his testimonies:
they [a]seek him with the whole heart.
They also [b]practice no perversity:
they walk in his [c]ways.

Thou hast commanded thy precepts,
that they may be kept [d]diligently.

x Ps. 1. 1. Ps. 32. 1. Ps. 41. 1.
y *cf.* Lk. 1. 6. *cf.* Neh. 10. 29.
z *cf.* Deut. 33. 9.
a *cf.* Deut. 4. 29. *cf.* Jer. 29. 10-14.
b *cf.* Is. 60. 21. *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 7-10.
c Ps. 128. 1. Ps. 25. 4, 5.
d Deut. 11. 13, 22. *cf.* Zech. 6. 15.

headings of the sections, as well as I have been able to give them, they would stand thus:—

1. *individually.*	2. *in external relations.*	3. *in view of divine holiness.*
1. harmonious righteousness.	1. persistent purpose. [good.	1. the rebellious. [them.
2. cleansing by the word.	2. things working together for	2. deliverance sought from
3. realizations.	3. recognitions.	3. sanctuary revelations.
4. in creature feebleness.	4. in trial from man.	4. in trial from defection.
5. but with the God of might.	5. but with God governing.	5. exercises.
6. thus overcoming.	6. overcoming in wisdom.	6. overcoming in judgment.
7. full rest of heart.	7. complete obedience.	7. perfection of the Word.

In any full way we cannot compare these yet, and it will be enough, at present, to invite comparison. The last section of all is left out of this table. It plainly cannot be compared, since there is no other 8th section, if it is to stand as such; and there are difficulties as to this, which also must be reserved for after-consideration.

DIV. 1.

The first division of the psalm speaks of what the Word is to the individual believer. There is absolutely no mention of others, except twice (verses 21, 23), and by implication once (22), in the first five sections. In the 6th the thought of overcoming brings them in (42, 46), and we find them in the 7th (51, 53); but there is as yet no hint of persecution, save by reproach. In the very next section—the first of the second division—(v. 61) "the cords of the wicked have wrapped him round," and in ten other verses they are spoken of; his life is continually in his hand; while those that fear God are mentioned five times. In the third division the wicked are mentioned fifteen times; but here he sees them trodden down, and put away like dross.

Sec. 1. (*Aleph.*)

1. The theme of the psalm begins, as so often, in its opening verses. The "way" for man is simply the way of Jehovah's law; and "happiness" is to be perfect in it. How blessed, indeed, just to have abidingly in the soul the consciousness that this only is happiness. To be delivered from the misery of one's own will, one's own way,—the very definition of sin (Isa. liii. 6)—how complete a deliverance is this! It is to have the law written upon one's heart, which is not a natural state but a *super*natural,—a work of divine grace. And this law is not merely arbitrary, the expression of authority: it is a "testimony" also, and one to which the awakened conscience responds. In this He is Himself declared: so that to "observe His testimonies" is to "seek Him with the whole heart." With such all is in accordance with the real nature of things: they do not twist them: "they practise no perversity; they walk in His ways." Safe, holy, and happy must be "*His* ways."

(ii.) for guidance.
(iii.) so as not to be ashamed.
(iv.) the test of experience.
(v.) appeal to government.

Oh that my [e]ways may be directed
to keep thy statutes!
Then shall I not be [f]ashamed:
when I have respect unto all thy commandments.
I will give thee [g]thanks in uprightness of heart
when I shall have learned the judgments of thy righteousness.
I will keep thy statutes:
[h]go not from me very far.

[e] Prov. 4. 26.
[f] Ps. 25. 2. *cf.* Joel 2. 26, 27.
[g] ver. 171. Ps. 47. 7.
[h] Ps. 34. 18.

[2] BETH.

Cleansing from evil by the Word.

1 (9-11): Its power.
(i.) for righteousness.
(ii.) dependent fellowship.
(iii.) holiness.

Wherewith shall a young man [i]cleanse his path?
in taking heed according to thy word.
With my [j]whole heart I have sought thee:
let me not [k]wander from my commandments.
I have [l]hid thy saying in my heart,
that I might not sin against thee.

[i] *cf.* Jno. 13. 4-10. Jno. 15. 3.
[j] ver. 2. *ctr*, Jer. 3. 10. *cf.* 2 Chr. 15. 15.
[k] *cf.* Prov. 27. 8. *cf.* Rev. 2. 4, 5.
[l] Ps. 37. 31. *cf.* Ps. 40. 8. *cf.* Jer. 31. 33.

2. Now the soul pours itself out to Him. "*Thou* hast commanded Thy precepts"—the separate applications of the divine principles—"that they may be kept diligently." God does not speak positively, and then put up with trifling with what He says. Nor is this in the least what is meant by grace. There is no non-essential in what God has spoken: obedience is always what is essential; obedience to which we can affix limits means for us a wisdom which is above God's.

Nay, it is we who need to be taught wisdom: and for this, therefore, the heart cries out: "Oh that my ways"—my goings in the path—"may be directed to keep Thy statutes: then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect unto *all* Thy commandments." And it foresees that His judgments—His decisions in the court of conscience—will so approve His righteousness, that to learn these will produce a spirit of praise in an upright heart.

The last verse is an appeal to divine government not to go far away from one who had in heart to keep the divine statutes.

Sec. 2. (*Beth.*)

The next section is more difficult to put together and find meaning for as a whole; but we are in general (at least) right in seeking this at the beginning of any distinct part of Scripture, where we should put the title, and where God in His goodness hastens, as it were, to meet us with what is a real introduction to all that follows. This is why so often the psalms begin with what is the conclusion, then going back to lead us again toward it. In this case, the power of the Word to cleanse—that is, to separate—the soul from evil will be the theme of the section; and its two portions seem to harmonize well with this: the first part speaking of its inherent power for this; while the second shows how, in fact, the soul is drawn away and detached from all else by the love that absorbs and takes it up with God.

1. The *young* man is spoken of, no doubt, because life is strong in him, and the yet untried world full of natural attraction. Here, therefore, is the test-case for the word of God to prove its power; and it is perfectly able to do this, by the light shed by it upon the whole scene, which gives things their true character, by bringing God (who alone is Light) into connection with all. The soul, finding here its attraction, is set truly free, made master of itself and of its circumstances; while it realizes at the same time its dependence and its only safe shelter in the divine strength. Seeking Him with the whole heart, it has yet to pray, "Let me not wander." But it clasps all the more to its heart the divine sayings, that it may not sin against Him: hiding them there as a possession of which

2 (12-16): Drawn by love. (i.) divine knowledge sought. (ii.) testimony of God's judgments. (iii.) joy in possession. (iv.) meditation. (v.) way and end.

Blessed art thou, Jehovah:
[m] teach me thy statutes.
With my [n] lips I have declared
all the judgments of thy mouth.
I have [o] rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies,
as much as in all riches.
I will [p] meditate upon thy precepts,
and have regard unto thy paths.
I [q] delight myself in thy statutes:
I do not forget thy word.

[3] GIMEL.

Realizations.

1 (17-19): The entrance into these. (i.) quickening needed. (ii.) for discernment.

Deal [r] bountifully with thy servant [and] I shall live;
and I will keep thy word.
[s] Open mine eyes,
and I shall behold wondrous things out of thy law.

m vers. 26, 33, etc. Job 34. 32.
n Ps. 34. 11. *cf.* Ps. 40. 10.
o ver. 162.
p ver. 23, etc. Ps. 1. 2. Ps. 19. 14.
q vers. 35, etc.
r Ps. 116. 7.
s cf. Lk. 24. 45, 46. *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 9-16.

it must not be robbed. And the world is full of robbers, who find its value to them only in its value to those from whom they would snatch it.

2. But now we see the heart in the presence and under the control of God: "Blessed art Thou, Jehovah"; to whom it turns with its consciousness of ignorance and its yearning desire,—"teach me Thy statutes."

Already, however, he has been speaking of what he knew, declaring God's judgments, the decisions He had given as to good and evil, right and wrong, and that faithfully,—holding back nothing. And how great a matter is this, for keeping a clean path,—the confession of God in all things, the committing one's self fully to all that He has made known as of Himself! The attitude of indecision tempts the assault of evil, while, God not being honored in it, He cannot honor one who is ashamed of Him. Joy in what is confessed thus goes with a true confession; and thus it follows here: "I have rejoiced in the way of Thy testimonies, as much as in all riches." The mind, too, naturally employs itself upon that which the heart enjoys. God's precepts are meditated on, and His paths regarded.

The section closes with the renewed experience of a joy in His statutes which is a sure preservative against a bad memory: "I delight myself in Thy statutes: I do not forget thy word."

Sec. 3. (*Gimel.*)

The third section speaks of realization by the soul of what God's word is, and of what things are as seen in the light of that word. Essentially, this is sanctification, because holiness is "holiness of truth." (Eph. iv. 24, *marg.*) Eternity reveals time: the presence of God all things as good or evil; and the world is then seen as a place of continual conflict from which no man can withdraw himself. This gives the second part of the section here.

1. We are wholly dependent upon God for ability to realize things in this way. Naturally, man "walks in a vain show, and disquiets himself in vain." True life begins for us in the bountiful grace of God, and is manifested in the keeping of His word; and the same energy which acts to bring us into this must still operate to retain us there. But in this way what marvelous things become known to us, and with eyes fully awake what glories may be revealed! It is simple that here we have the language of prayer. Nothing is more needed than the constant sense of dependence.

And how touching is the plea of the 19th verse, which reminds us not so much (as it is usually taken) of man's transience on earth, as the divine care for the stranger-guest in Israel, as the provisions of the law manifest it. We are apt to

(iii.) the portion of a guest.

I am a [t]sojourner in the land:
hide not thy commandments from me.

2 (20–24): Opposites.
(i.) a constant spirit.
My soul [u]breaketh for longing
after thy judgments at all times.
(ii.) those who stray.
Thou hast rebuked the [v]proud, [that are] cursed,
who wander from thy commandments.
(iii.) made manifest (?)
Remove from me [w]reproach and contempt;
for I have kept thy testimonies.

[t] Ps. 39. 12. *cf.* Heb. 11. 13.
cf. Gen. 23. 4. *cf.* Ruth 2. 10–12.
[u] ver. 40. Job 23. 12.
[v] Ps. 94. 2. Is. 2. 12.
[w] Ps. 39. 8. *cf.* Is. 54. 4.

judge things rather by the narrow and sectarian spirit actually manifested by the nation in its later history than by the precepts of the inspired lawgiver. Yet, separated as they were by the law itself from the abominations to which the nations in their departure from God had given themselves up, He had placed them upon the very lines of intercourse between these nations, and at the throbbing centre of the world's traffic. Here was their mountain fastness in which the Word that was intrusted to them was to be maintained for the blessing of the whole human race; and here, in the presence of all the powers of the world, so frank an asylum was offered to the one who sought it, that a mere fugitive slave escaping there was sheltered and free to find his home under the protection of the Lord God of Israel, and no man might deliver him up. (Deut. xxiii. 15, 16.)

Israel themselves had known the "the heart of a stranger" by bitter experience, and God declared Himself to them as One that "loveth the stranger in giving Him food and raiment." They are exhorted, "Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." (Deut. x. 18, 19.) Nay, they were taught still to account themselves as strangers, even in their land, and to prove to themselves that love of His to strangers of which He speaks: "The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is Mine: for ye are strangers and sojourners with Me." (Lev. xxv. 23.)

This seems to be the key to the language in the psalm here: "I am a sojourner [or stranger] in the land." The Israelite, even if home-born, might still say that. He was thus, in frailty and dependence, entertained by God. Still more would these Israelites, brought home at last from all their wanderings, realize this. If the land had been their own, they would have lost it; but God could not forfeit His right to it, nor to put into it whomsoever He might see fit. And for these, coming back from their long alienation, as prodigals to learn afresh the ways of Him whose grace now welcomed them, effectual indeed would be the plea: "hide not Thy commandments from me." As guests of His they will find a portion worthy of Him,—their lodging, food, and raiment, as His grace will give it; and His commands as their sweet enfranchisement from the ways of sin.

2. Thus the eyes open to the reality of things. Evil and good are seen in the sharp antagonism which exists between them. And, the eye affecting the heart, the soul breaks with the longing it has after those judgments of God which penetrate to the heart of things and make clear the essential, necessary opposition. It is no mere cold, colorless discrimination that is reached by this passionate longing after His mind, nor does the fervor of this spirit exhaust itself by its intensity, but abides "at all times." God abides the same, and communion with Him, if real, forms His character within us. God is not coldly right: He is "a consuming fire." His patience is not slowness of heart, but the pleading (if we may say so) of His love with men until all hope is over. Then the "wrath of the Lamb" will manifest itself, not pitiless, but not restrained by pity. The Lamb will be still the Lamb, and thus will such wrath be terrible indeed.

He sees it already taking effect: "Thou hast rebuked the proud": the creature exalting itself above its place,—against Him who has ordained it its place; "they are cursed who go astray from Thy commandments."

And then, suffering from the opposition of a world which has turned its back

(iv.) tested.
(v.) man with God.

Even [x]princes have sat [and] spoken against me:
thy servant doth meditate on thy statutes.
Thy testimonies also are my delight,—
my [y]counsellors.

[1]DALETH.

1 (25-29): All power in God.
(i.) quicken me!
(ii.) confession and God's answer.
(iii.) realization.
(iv.) the experience of weakness.
(v.) exercise.

In creature feebleness.

My soul cleaveth to the [z]dust:
quicken me according to thy word.
I [a]declared my ways and thou answeredst me:
teach me thy statutes.
Make me to [b]understand the way of thy precepts:
and I will meditate upon thy wondrous works.
My soul [c]melteth for heaviness:
make me arise, according to thy word.
Remove from me the way of [d]falsehood;
and graciously grant me thy law.

x *cf.* Lk. 23. 10, 11. ver. 161.
y *cf.* vers. 98-100.
z *cf.* Gen. 3. 19. Ps. 44. 25. *cf.* Is. 52. 2.
a *cf.* Ps. 32. 5.
b *cf.* Dan. 12. 10. *cf.* Hos. 14. 9.
c Ps. 107. 26. *cf.* Prov. 12. 25.
d *cf.* Prov. 30. 8. *cf.* Jno. 17. 17.

on God, the speaker pleads: "Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept Thy testimonies."

"Testimonies" are to fact and truth: and God's facts will assert themselves as that, and His truth will manifest itself at last, beyond all controversy. Then, at least, will reproach and contempt pass from those who have identified themselves with that which will be seen in its true character. And this may take place sooner than the inevitable time in which it surely shall. Meanwhile present reproach helps of itself to test and free from suspicion the soul that through it all makes the divine statutes its occupation and delight. And with this the section ends,—the expression of unfeigned joy and confidence in that which is realized to be true and the living word of unfailing wisdom: "Thy testimonies are my delight,—my counsellors."

Sec. 4. (*Daleth.*)

We have now another kind of realization—experience of a sorrowful kind, but most needful, that of the weakness of the creature, not in another but in one's self. This is the necessary complement of the truth that *all* power is of God. Only that this is realized now, not merely as what is necessary to the creature, what would be as true of an angel as a man, but in the moral collapse of a fallen being. This is more before us in the first part here, which begins with the confession of a soul cleaving to the dust; while in the second confidence is expressed though in dependence, and a steadfast course is contemplated, spite of—rather *because* all rests so absolutely upon God.

1. The soul, though the dweller in a dust-formed tenement, cleaves to the dust only because fallen. Out of the consciousness of this, the psalmist cries for the power of God to energize it according to the gracious promises of the Word. He has bared before God his whole practical condition, and has the consciousness of being answered by Him. But He longs to know more His statutes, and the whole way in which His precepts lead. There He is satisfied that he will find the wondrous works of God for fruitful meditation: in truth what glories may be realized in the path ordained of God! If an Israelite could say so, how much more we! We dull the prospect by unbelief, and shut ourselves out of it by a path self-chosen, and shut ourselves in to the dull, common lives we live, alas, so much. This is because we will, not because God will have it. And yet this path with God is ordained for the abasement of all human pride, and the valley of humiliation lies in it. "My soul melteth for heaviness," he cries; but then there is pledged strength to meet him: "make me to arise, according to Thy word." Exercised by the sense of frailty, he seeks also to have removed from him the way of falsehood, and that God would graciously grant him (according to the character of the psalm throughout) His authoritative law.

2 (30-32): Confidence in dependence.
(i.) choice of the way of truth.
(ii.) cleaving to God's testimonies.
(iii.) the fulfillment.

The way of truth have I [e]chosen:
thy judgments I have set [before me].
I [f]cleave unto thy testimonies:
Jehovah, put me not to [g]shame.
I will run the way of thy commandments,
when thou shalt [h]enlarge my heart.

[5] HE.

But with the God of might.

1 (33-37): The Enlightener.
(i.) perpetual obedience promised.
(ii.) discernment being given.
(iii.) the path delighted in.
(iv.) but the world felt.

Teach me, Jehovah, the way of thy statutes:
and I will keep it unto the [i]end.*
Give me [j]discernment, and I shall keep thy law:
yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.
Make me to walk in the path of thy commandments:
for therein I [k]delight.
Incline my heart unto thy testimonies,
and not to [l]covetousness.

e ver. 111.
f *cf.* Rev. 3. 8.
g Ps. 25. 2, 3.
h *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 11. *cf.* Rom. 7. 24 with Rom. 8. 2-4.
i ver. 112. *cf.* Dan. 12. 12, 13. *cf.* Mk. 13. 13.
j *cf.* 1 Ki. 3. 9-12. *cf.* Prov. 8. 9.
k Ps. 1. 2, ver. 16.
l *cf.* Col. 3. 5. *cf.* Heb. 13. 5.

* "heel."

2. For He can speak of having chosen the way of truth, of setting God's judgments before him, and that not in momentary resolve, but *cleaving* to His testimonies: and thus can confidently plead not to be put to shame. In truth it is impossible to one who does this, that he ever should be. So the soul assures itself, gathers up its strength, and contemplates the way opening up before it; yet in perfect conviction at the same time of the feebleness of all human faculties in the realization of the divine: — of entire dependence therefore upon God in all things: "I will run the way of Thy commandments when Thou shalt enlarge my heart."

Sec. 5. (*He.*)

Accordingly the next section is in every verse a prayer. The soul is with God, where the language of faith, in a place of constant need, becomes naturally that of prayer. This is not strange to us in Christianity, nor unsuitable to its joyous spirit of praise. "Rejoice evermore; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks" (1 Thess. v. 16–18) are precepts which the apostle puts in the closest possible conjunction.

1. For enlightenment and supporting power the psalmist cries therefore here to the One with whom he goes. He must be taught the way of His statutes. He looks for this as meaning to walk in it, and to walk in it without any mental reservation; which is, indeed, the utter contrary of obedience, and the leaven of unbelief which (wherever found) will leaven all the life. "I will keep it unto the end," says the psalmist; or "to the heel," — the lowest and least noticed part.

"Give me discernment," he says again in his earnestness, "and I shall keep Thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart": these two things, the "whole heart" and "unto the end," go naturally together. And again he affirms in the next verse: "therein is my delight." Thus slavery there is none: he who is constrained by his affections is the freest man possible; and so it is here.

But the power of the world is felt, and the feebleness to resist temptation. He who has judged the world in general knows but too well how specific forms of it nevertheless may appeal to us, in which the characters of the world have not been recognized, — and how much cleaves to us, to which we would not cleave. Here God's "testimonies" have their place, as such: which bring in the revealing sunshine, never capable of gilding a thing that is evil. Yet he says, "*Incline* my heart," on the one side, and on the other "turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity." He *has* his heart inclined, when he says, incline it. He *is* turn-

(v.) from vanity to God.

2 (38-40): External confirmation of the word. (i.) Thy promise. (ii.) Thy judgments. (iii.) fulfill my longings.

Turn away mine eyes from [m] beholding vanity;
quicken me in thy way.

Establish thy saying to thy servant,
who is [devoted] to thy [n] fear.

Turn away my [o] reproach which I fear,
for thy judgments are good.

Behold, I have [p] longed after thy precepts:
quicken me in thy righteousness.

m *cf.* Prov. 4. 25. *cf.* Matt. 5. 27, 28.

n Prov. 1. 7.

o ver. 22.

p ver. 20.

ing away his eyes when he prays to have it done. But so conscious is he of the infirmity that cleaves to him, and so desirous to be wholly right with God, that he can only find rest for his heart in this perfect Will and Wisdom to which he commits himself: "quicken me," he supplicates, "in Thy way."

The last three verses seem to depend upon the first two here; and the whole to express the need and craving of that light from the holy presence of God Himself which shall dispel all darkness and prevent the shadows of a dead world wrecked by sin from intruding on and deceiving the possessors of what is really life.

2. The second part is still an appeal, but in a different way: namely, that God would as a living God confirm His Word by His deed, and thus gloriously answer to the faith of His people. It is one of the glories of Scripture to touch in so many ways the whole state of things by which we are surrounded. Prophecy fulfilling shows it to be the voice of Him who is Lord of all circumstances and generations. Then history in it we find to be also prophecy, taking its place with other types and shadows of the future thus. Its moral judgments, too, appeal not merely to the conscience but also to the experience of all men and times. While again there are special promises which bring Him still nearer to the individual and into the most secluded lives. Naturally this comes into the experience of these psalms throughout; and here is the very place to find it spoken of,—in the fifth section of this great experimental psalm: here then we find it.

"Establish Thy saying to Thy servant" would thus be a prayer for the fulfillment of specific promise; where the state of the pleader may be brought forward as not (at least) barring the claim of faith. "Devoted" is perhaps too strong a word to insert, where the text has only the preposition;* but it needs only to be noted as inserted, to escape this difficulty.

The next verse, by the reason given, "for Thy judgments are good," would show that the reproach mentioned would have to do with some apparent non-fulfillment of these judgments in God's governmental ways among men. And such reproaches are being often cast upon the Lord's people: "Where is now their God?" (Ps. cxv. 2.) But the heart of the psalmist realizes the goodness of these "judgments,"—the decisions as to good and evil, which in the day of God's long-suffering His dealings with men do not always seem to affirm. Under the Old Testament dispensation, this was necessarily a much greater enigma than since the cross; and it is the occasion of much of the misapprehension of the friends of Job. With the enemies of the believer it is always a favorite reproach against him.

But the third verse takes a ground which seems clearer and surer. How can God but answer the longing of a heart after His precepts, where the clog of earth is felt and pleaded against? And the appeal is more confident, proportionally, however lowly it may be in its very nature: "quicken me in Thy righteousness."

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* Which *belongeth* unto Thy fear" (R. V.); "*leadeth* to thy fear," (Cheyne) give somewhat different renderings of another construction, where it is the promise (in its being fulfilled, of course) which leads to this. But Cheyne's translation seems too free; that of the Revised Version too vague.

1 (41–43): Jehovah's sufficiency. (i.) His promise. (ii.) the answer of faith to reproach. (iii.) let the word be openly confessed.

2 (44–48): Consequences. (i.) consistent obedience. (ii.) in liberty.

ᶠ VAU.

Thus overcoming.

Let thy ᵍ loving-kindness also come unto me, Jehovah :
thy ʳ salvation according to thy saying.
And I shall have wherewith to ˢ answer him who reproacheth me :
for I trust in thy word.
And take not ᵗ utterly out of my mouth the word of truth :
for I have waited upon thy judgments.
Then I shall keep thy law ᵘ continually :
for ever and aye.
And I will walk at ᵛ liberty,
for I have sought thy precepts.

ᵍ Ps. 25. 6.
ʳ Ps. 118. 15.
ˢ *cf.* 1 Sam. 2. 3.
ᵗ *cf.* Amos 8. 11, 12. *cf.* Ezek. 7. 26. *cf.* Ezek. 20. 1-3.
ᵘ ver. 33.
ᵛ *cf.* ver. 32. *cf.* Jno. 11. 44. *cf.* Jas. 1. 25.

Sec. 6. (*Vau.*)

There are but two prayers in the sixth section; upon the answer to which all the rest of it hangs. The number (6) is that of overcoming; and this is clearly and prominently the thought in verses 42, 45, and 46.

We need not wonder that in a world whose course is contrary to God, overcoming should have a marked place in divine testimony. Christ Himself was the great Overcomer; and for all who have faith in Him, the "victory that overcometh the world" is in their "faith." (1 John v. 4.) One of Israel's tribes, that of Naphtali, as we have seen at length elsewhere (Josh. xix. 32–39, *notes*), speaks typically of this aspect of the Christian as an overcomer. The epistles to the seven churches in Asia speak loudly as in trumpet-calls to him as that, all through the present period.

1. The first part here grounds all its assurance upon Jehovah's sufficiency; and this abides the same throughout all ages. Our claim upon it, through the work of Christ, has been indeed established, enlarged, and handed over to us in its completeness, since the Mediator of the New Covenant, by the blood of the Covenant, entered heaven itself and sat down there for us; but in all ages the assurance of the saint has been in the unchanging faithfulness of the Eternal God. For the psalmist it was the "saying of God," the "word of God," the "word of truth," upon which he rested; and for us to-day it is the same. For him also, that word revealed Jehovah's "loving-kindness," and a pledged "salvation," for which he waited; and so do we wait to-day. But we have a salvation wrought out by Another for us, as to which we can say, in a sense no Israelite could, "He *hath* saved us": and with this the Person of the Redeemer has come into view, and God Himself been revealed to us in Him, as otherwise He never could be. The poverty of the Psalms in these respects, when they express not what prophetically refers to Christ Himself, but the experiences and knowledge of an Israelite of that day, strikes one painfully indeed. We, in the midst of the full glory of divine revelation now, what instruments of praise should our hearts be! May our gracious God awaken their full music!

The soul of the psalmist leans upon the promise of God while it waits for a salvation which is yet future; and it gathers confidence from the Word in which it trusts, to answer the reproaches of the enemy. God's word he realizes to be the "word of truth," and prays that it may not be taken utterly out of his mouth, weak as he may be in standing for it: for he waits in hope for His judgments to manifest themselves.

2. The consequences are developed in the second part, which result from the realized sufficiency of Jehovah and His word. And the first, for one upon whose heart the law is written, is the joy of continuous, uninterrupted obedience to it. "For ever and aye," he says with enthusiasm. Oh for our "easy yoke" to be

(iii.) open confession.
(iv.) the voice of experience.
(v.) exercise.

I will speak also of thy testimonies before [w] kings,
and will not be ashamed.
And I will delight myself in thy commandments,
which I have [x] loved.
My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments
which I have loved;
and I will [y] meditate in thy statutes.

[w] Ps. 138. 1. cf. Mat. 10. 18-20.
[x] ver. 97.
[y] ver. 15.

[7] ZAYIN.

Full rest of heart.

1 (49, 50): The word of life.
(i.) the promise of God.
(ii.) the support of it.

Remember the word unto thy servant,
whereon thou hast caused me to [z] wait in hope.
This is my comfort in mine [a] affliction,
for thy word hath quickened me.

[z] vers. 74, etc. Ps. 130. 5, 6.
[a] Rom. 15. 4. cf. 1 Thes. 1. 6.

accepted in like manner! For him it is easy: "I will walk at liberty," he says: it is freedom to walk in ways that approve themselves to the heart,—are the choice of it; and this is our blessedness, whose "rule" is not the law, but the "new creation in Christ Jesus," the perfect and heavenly walk of the "Second Man."

The opposition of the world is realized, but without alarm. He will speak of God's testimonies before kings, and not be ashamed; and will delight himself in His commandments which he has loved. These things, I think, go together. The former is an exemplification of the latter: while the boldness of the confession of the truth maintains the joy of it also in the heart. So it ever is.

The last verse shows this delight more and more increasing, the hands (or palms) lifted up showing, as in prayer, the longing and fervor of the soul, as it implies also the realization of the depths and mysteries of that blessed Word, upon which it meditates therefore continually.

Sec. 7. (Zayin.)

The division of the eight verses in each section hitherto has been into five and three, the order of which, however, may be reversed. This first five is in the present one again divided, so that the whole psalm presents a 2, 3, 3 structure.

It is not easy always to characterize a seventh division. "Completion," for which it stands, necessarily implies "rest," because the thing is ended: the only way in which such a thought can be applied to God. The last verse here unites clearly the thoughts of accomplishment and satisfaction: "This has been mine, that I have kept Thy precepts," reminds us of the apostle's similar utterance, "I have finished my course; I have kept the faith." There is but one prayer in the section, and that about a promise now to be fulfilled, for which he is looking, and has looked. All the rest is review of the past, and that in peace of heart. Thus the heading of the section is justified in itself, and justifies its numerical place.

1. The word has been to him a word of promise,—a comforting, energizing, vivifying word. How good is it to realize it in this character! What a fullness of promise to us is there, in fact, in the word of God; and how this testifies to us of the wondrous grace of God that so displays itself! "*No good thing* will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." "They that fear the Lord shall want no manner of thing that is good." How more than sufficient—how *divine* are such assurances!

True, there is affliction in fact, and much of it. "*Many* are the afflictions of the righteous." But these are either the necessary chastenings of love; because even the "righteous" are that so inconstantly; or else they are the results of what the world is in its opposition to God, and will be found to be gain in the day of account. All this will be seen then, and should be realized now, to require no abatement from the exact truth of the Word.

2 (51-53): The opposition.
(i.) persistent obedience.
(ii.) support of God's judgments.
(iii.) realized in holiness.

3 (54-56): The sanctification by it.
(i.) God's statutes psalms.
(ii.) confirmation.
(iii.) the portion realized.

The proud have had me greatly in [b]derision:
I have not declined from thy law.
I have remembered thy judgments from of [c]old, Jehovah,
and have comforted myself.
[d]Indignation hath taken hold of me,
because of the wicked who forsake thy law.

Thy [e]statutes have been my psalms
in the house of my [f]sojournings.
I have remembered thy name in the [g]night, Jehovah,
and have kept thy law.
This hath been mine,
that I have [h]kept thy precepts.

b Ps. 1. 1. Lam. 3. 14. Ps. 44. 16-18.
c cf. Ps. 78. 11, 42. *cf.* Is 40.28. *cf.* 1Jno 2.7.
d cf. Ezra 9. 3. *cf.* Neh.13. 25. *cf.* Jer.9.1,2.
e ctr. Rom. 7. 24. *cf.* Heb. 8. 8-13.
f ver. 19.
g Ps. 42. 8. Ps. 63. 6.
h ver. 4.

Nay, it is *in* the affliction that faith grows and is established, and its energizing character is found. The Word is living and life-giving; while it tests and searches us out, as with a divine search-warrant, clothed with an authority beyond any of earth, to which all earthly authority must give way. What a Word is this!

2. Yet the opposition to it is everywhere and none the less manifest. Wherever it goes it stirs up, just by its demand for righteousness and goodness, the innate resistance of the heart to good and God. So here the psalmist testifies to the derision of men that he had encountered. These were the proud, who would not suffer its rebuke. Their character revealed what was that of their opposition, and he had not declined from the law on account of it. He had read history to purpose, and remembered God's judgments of old. It was the same God now; and so he comforted himself: while, as he reflected on this falling away of man from God, indignation ("burning heat") possessed him. Well it might, indeed: for what has man's history been! Read it in the masses of heathenism to-day; and in the condition of the foremost of the so-called Christian populations.

3. He reverts to what the Word has done for him and is to him; and now he can give as to this a precious testimony. God's statutes, against which men have been thus rebelling, why, they have made *his* life music. In the house of his sojournings,—in the place of frailty, mortality, and strangership,—they have brought out of it, not merely "songs," as in our common version, but "*psalms*";—melody, and melody to God, and to which the whole creation is in profound subtle, harmonious accompaniment. How entrancing is a "Psalm of Life" so realized!

Then it will bear the soberest thought. "In the night," when earth lies in shadow, "visions of God" have been at all times most realized; then "I remembered Thy Name," he says, "and have kept Thy law."

So he finds what more and more those who have it prove to be a substantial possession: "this has been mine, that I have kept Thy precepts." By and by "the righteousnesses of the saints" will deck them even at the marriage of the Lamb; although those pure white robes will acquire their lustre only as "washed and *made* white in the blood of the Lamb." (Rev. vii. 14; xix. 8, *Gk.*)

Here, then, the first division of the psalm ends.

Div. 2.

The second division, as has been already noticed, deals more with external surroundings, the circumstances and persons favorable or adverse. This, of course, will be seen, not in all the verses, but in special, leading, dominant ones, with which the others are connected, and around which they group themselves. The apparent independency of the verses has been remarked before also, and indeed by every one who has commented on them. Nor can one by any means always prove the connection to be such as is here represented. That which is most natural and most fruitful will necessarily most commend itself to us; but it is

DIVISION 2.

The Believer, in external relationships.

[1] CHETH.

Persistent purpose.

1 (57-59): Purpose.
(i.) obedience all to me.
(ii.) and the pledged favor of God.
(iii.) the fruit of realization.

My [t]portion, I have said, Jehovah,
is to keep thy words.
I have sought thy favor with the [j]whole heart:
be gracious to me according to thy saying.
I thought upon my [k]ways,
and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.

2 (60-64): Enemies and associates.
(i.) prompt obedience.
(ii.) breaking through the cords of the wicked.
(iii.) fullness of praise.
(iv.) practical walk.
(v.) governmental ways inciting.

I have made [l]haste and not delayed
to keep thy commandments.
The cords of the wicked have been round me:
I have not [m]forgotten thy law.
At [n]midnight I rise up to give thee thanks
because of the judgments of thy righteousness.
I am a [o]companion of all that fear thee,
and of those that keep thy precepts.
The [p]earth, Jehovah, is full of thy loving-kindness;
teach me thy statutes.

t ver. 30. *cf.* Ps. 16. 5.

j ver. 10. *cfr.* Jer. 3. 10.

k Hag. 1. 5, 7. Lam. 3. 40.

l *cf.* Gen. 22. 1-3. *cf.* Prov. 25. 13.

m Ps. 44. 17, 18.

n Ps. 4. 4. Ps. 63. 5, 6. *cf.* Acts 16. 25.

o *cf.* Prov. 13. 20. *cf.* Ps. 16. 3.

p Ps. 33. 5. *cf.* Gen. 1. 31.

upon the numerical structure that we must principally depend for the discovery of this, as it will then also be large confirmation of it. The spiritual result will speak to the spiritual mind.

Sec. 1. (*Cheth.*)

1. In the first section we have, naturally, the introduction to the whole. In the first part you see the man himself; in the second, his enemies and his associates. The thing emphasized as to man is what is needed to make him master of his circumstances, that persistent purpose of heart which delivers from the temptations which ensnare and carry away the unstable. Here he begins with reaffirming what he has said just before, that his portion, what he has for himself, in contrast with the name, power, or substance of which others might boast, is to be a keeper of Jehovah's words. And this truly brings a great revenue. Here one finds that for which His word is pledged, a favor better than life, and every way worthy as an object of pursuit with the whole heart.

This had been to the psalmist also the fruit of his coming to himself. He had thought upon his own ways, a sad enough but profitable contemplation. Thus with clear understanding of what he was turning from, he turned, not his eyes merely, but his feet unto those divine "testimonies," which ever appear more self-evidencing as there is self-judgment as to the paths that lead away from them. So he came then to realize what is indeed reality.

2. He can now speak of having followed with prompt, unhesitating decision, the new path thus found. But here, too, is the opposition of the wicked, manifested in snares set to entangle his feet; spite of which he has gone on his way unhindered. And in the night his heart would run over with a praise which he had to rise up to express, on account of the righteousness of divine judgments,—the perfect moral way in which every question received its settlement through these.

With those that feared Jehovah he took his place. Oneness of mind drew these together, as it necessarily will do; and a man becomes known by the company he keeps. Associations are also a part of the ways by which we approve ourselves or not to God, and are insisted on, as we know, at the very threshold of the whole book. (Ps. i. 1.) In close walking with those that fear the Lord, the experiences and joys of each become a common blessing of all. They are multiplied in being shared together.

1 (65-67): Good and evil thus in harmony.
(i.) Jehovah's faithfulness.
(ii.) the response of faith.
(iii) recovery.

2 (68-72): The service of evil.
(i.) God consistent ever.
(ii.) false accusation.
(iii). Inner reality.
(iv.) the experience of affliction.
(v.) the recompense.

[2] TETH.

Things working together for good.

Thou hast dealt [q] well, Jehovah, with thy servant,
according to thy word.
Teach me good judgment and knowledge:
for I have [r] believed thy commandments.
Before I was [s] afflicted I went astray,
but now I have kept thy saying.

Thou art [t] good and doest good:
teach me thy statutes.
The proud have forged a [u] lie against me:
I keep thy precepts with the whole heart.
Their heart is as fat as grease:
for me, I [v] delight in thy law.
It is [w] good for me that I have been afflicted;
that I might learn thy statutes.
The law of thy mouth is better unto me
than thousands of [x] gold and silver.

q *cf.* ver. 17. *cf.* Josh. 23. 14.
r ver. 89. *cfr.* Deut. 9. 23.
s ver. 71. *cf.* Deut. 32. 15. Jer. 31. 18, 19.
t Ps. 34. 8. Ps. 145. 9.
u Ps. 27. 12. Ps. 35. 11.
v vers. 16, 35.
w ver. 67. Heb. 12. 5-11. Jas. 1. 12.
x Ps. 19. 10. ver. 127. Prov. 8. 10, 11, 19.

And "the earth is full of Jehovah's loving-kindness," who makes all things work together for good to His own. This looks on to what we find in the next section,—one of those connecting links which are so frequent in the Psalms. The joy of this loving-kindness realized in the soul becomes in it a fervent desire to be taught His statutes.

Sec. 2. (*Teth.*)

The working together of all things for good is the theme of the next section. Good and evil in this checkered scene are thus seen to be in harmony; and the work of the enemy is even made, spite of itself, to be a minister of the good. These are in fact the two divisions of this section.

1. The psalmist approves thoroughly, in looking back, Jehovah's faithfulness in his case. He has been truly the covenant-God, and has dealt well, and only well, with His servant: according to His word so freely pledged to him. Faith responds fully to this on his part, owning the need of divine teaching, and which implies much more than the lesson-book, for scholars whose unaptness is so much a moral condition. The rod has been surely among the "all things" working good to all the people of God; and so he who speaks here has found it. "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now I have kept Thy saying."

2. But this may have only to do with physical evil; the deeper question is the moral evil, and the second part of the section takes up this. In Eden man's perfection was to abide in good where evil was not, and to be a stranger to this altogether. Now, on the contrary, it is in having the "senses exercised to discern between good and evil"; both being before him. (Heb. v. 14.) The presence of evil around is therefore permitted with this end in view; and in ourselves we come into nearer contact with it, and learn to hate it with corresponding energy. In all this we find One over all who *is* good and *does* good; whose acts are truly accordant with His nature. Joy indeed is it, then, to be taught His statutes, which enlighten the conscience and preserve moral vision. In the darkness of the cave the organ of sight is well known to atrophy from mere disuse.

The psalmist is suffering from the slander of men, whose character is clearly to be seen as the proud: men that have a spirit of rebellion against restraint, literally, that boil up, like water. The mere subjection of the heart to God rouses the opposition of such, who traduce what they have no mind to imitate. In answer to which he affirms his whole-hearted observance of the precepts of Jehovah. But *their* heart is as fat as grease; the grossness of their nature hindering all right affections: "for me," he says, "I delight in Thy law."

1 (73-75): Foundations. (i.) a Creator-God. (ii.) the communion of faith. (iii.) the holiness of divine judgments.

י JOD.

Recognitions.

Thy hands have [y]made me and fashioned me:
give me understanding that I may learn thy commandments.
They that fear thee are [z]glad when they see me,
because I have waited in hope on thy word.
I know, Jehovah, that thy judgments are right,
and that thou in [a]faithfulness hast afflicted me.

[y] *cf.* Job 10. 8. Ps. 138. 8. *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 19.
[z] ver. 63. Ps. 34. 2. *cf.* Ps. 69. 6.
[a] Heb. 12. 10. *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 31, 32.

And the very affliction through which he has passed has been serviceable to him in making him learn more deeply the character of those statutes, from the violation of which he has himself suffered. How certainly we learn in this way all must be aware. In result, the law of Jehovah's mouth has acquired for him a value beyond that of earthly riches: it is his real possession.

Sec. 3. (*Jod.*)

The theme of the third section of the second division much resembles that of the first, which we have considered. Yet there is a difference; and that according to the respective characters of the divisions themselves. It is for this reason that "recognitions" seems a more suited title here than "realizations." The soul is more upon the outlook. Circumstances and men are more before it: and these both for and against,—the brotherhood of faith upon the one hand, and the adversaries on the other. The first part, I take it, gives us certain foundations or broad facts which are clearly recognizable; the second, reckonings of faith which deal with the future rather than the present, and in which confidence takes the form of prayer.

1. The basis-fact here is that of a Creator-God, who cannot therefore but be for the work of His hands. His hands have made us, and not rudely; but fashioned us so as to be witnesses of His handiwork. He must design, then, to have His creature filling the place for which He made him, and will surely not deny the understanding necessary to this. This is an argument which the 139th psalm dwells upon at large, and which the New Testament for the Christian puts in the strongest possible way. Here we can speak of *new* creation, and of the word of God as that by which He has begotten us to Himself. No fear that He may deny it to us. To us it is as milk to a new-born babe—the one necessity of its nature.

Of new birth the Old Testament did not yet speak; but men had need of it none the less, and came thus into a communion which, though not yet marked off externally from the mass, was necessarily distinguished by the characteristics of the new spiritual life which had been received. And this is the second basis-fact here. As the first touched the centre of the circle,—ascertained the *whence* of relationship, though not with the clearness of present knowledge, so the second defines the circumference, the *with whom*, the family. And they recognize one another also, as belonging to a company known even then as a family of faith. So the psalmist says here: "they that fear Thee are glad when they see me,"—there is a joyful glance of recognition. And here is the mark by which they recognize: "because I have waited in hope on Thy word."

But there is a third thing now; and this assures us of a Living Presence, not simply at the beginning or in the past, but abiding throughout human history, faithful to His own nature, which is holy, and to His people in His dealings with them. "I know, Jehovah, that Thy judgments are right, and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me." Thus, in these three things, God, His people, and the relationship between them, are all recognized; and His word is authoritative over them, their joyful confidence, and that to which His acts at all times are found correspondent.

2. The psalmist now pours out his heart to God, whom he knows, and who is

2 (76-80): Dependences.
(i.) for faithfulness to promise.
(ii.) preserving mercies.
(iii.) holiness manifested.
(iv.) experimental proof.
(v.) the way as the end.

Let, I pray thee, thy loving-kindness be for my [b]comfort,
according to thy saying unto thy servant.
Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may [c]live:
for thy law is my delight.
Let the proud be [d]ashamed:
for they have acted perversely in falsehood toward me:
for me, I [e]meditate on thy precepts.
Let those that fear thee [f]turn unto me,
and those that know thy testimonies.
Let my heart be [g]perfect in thy statutes,
that I be not ashamed.

[b] ver. 50. *cf.* Is. 40. 1.
[c] *cf.* Ps. 118. 17 with Ps. 6. 5.
[d] Ps. 25. 3. Ps. 70. 2, 3.
[e] ver. 23.
[f] ver. 63. *cf.* Ps. 54. 4.
[g] Ps. 15. 2. Ps. 18. 23. ver. 1.

[i] CAPH.

In trial from man.

1 (81-83): Integrity.
(i.) the only foundation.

My soul [h]fainteth for thy salvation:
I wait in hope on thy word.

[h] ver. 123. Ps. 84. 2. Ps. 42. 1.

so necessary to him. He prays that His loving-kindness may be his comfort, according to His promise to him. For God has pledged Himself to His people: it has not sufficed Him to say "Ye know me, and that I cannot err or do wrong; and let this be enough for you." We are too frail, too dim-sighted, too little able to anticipate His ways, for this to satisfy us, or to satisfy Him as to us. Divine love has therefore pledged itself to us, made its covenant with man, and swears, if His word is not enough: "that by two immutable things"—His word and His oath"—"we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." (Heb. vi. 17, 18.)

We may have "boldness," therefore, in coming to what is characterized for us as a "throne of grace" (ch. iv. 16), to find help for all the way which is *His* way for us. For any other way we could neither expect nor rightly desire it. Thus the force of "according to Thy word unto Thy *servant*" here. For prayer is crippled, confidence as to it gone, if our wills are struggling in it against God's will.

And this is the argument of the next verse also: "For Thy law is my delight." His tender mercies, therefore, can be freely shown; so necessary as they are for life itself in a world of conflict,—so necessary for the invigoration of spiritual life. This brings him to the conflict: and he prays that the proud, the independent asserters of their own will, may be ashamed: their own will proving itself in his case to be mere perversity and falsehood; while for him the divine precepts were his meditation.

Thus would God's holiness be manifested in the presence of those who feared Him, and who would have in him—in God's ways with him—experimental proof of this, to which they might turn, with His testimonies in their hand thus fully corroborated. Nor can it be in haughtiness on his own side that he claims this. Nay, he has need of the mercy of God to be shown to himself also, that his heart may be made perfect in His statutes, that he himself may not be ashamed.

Sec. 4. (*Caph.*)

The fourth section speaks of the trial from man, which had reached almost the extreme point. The first part, of his integrity under it; the second, of the persecution itself, on account of which the psalmist appeals to God. Throughout, His faithful word is that to which he cleaves and which is his support, while yet the hand of God has not interposed to put an end to the trial.

1. In the extreme of necessity, his soul fainting for the deliverance which can be from God alone, His word is that upon which in hope he waits. Plenty of

(ii.) the delay.
(iii.) yet remembering.

2 (84–88): Persecution.
(i.) Thy time?
(ii.) against God and man.
(iii.) the sanctuary refuge.
(iv.) almost consumed.
(v.) capacity for responsibility.

1 (89–93): Whose word is law:
(i.) stable in the heavens, (his throne.)
(ii.) and by which the dependent earth is established.

Mine eyes [f]fail for thy saying:
  saying, When wilt thou comfort me?
For I am become like a bottle in the smoke:
  I have not [j]forgotten thy statutes.

How many are the days of thy servant?
  [k]when wilt thou execute judgment on those that persecute me?
The proud have dug [l]pits for me,
  which are not after thy law.
All thy commandments are faithful:
  they [m]persecute me wrongfully; help thou me!
They had [n]almost consumed me upon earth,
  but *I* forsook not thy precepts.
[o]Quicken me after thy loving-kindness,
  and I shall keep the testimony of thy mouth.

[5]LAMED.

But with God who governs.

For ever, Jehovah,
  thy word [p]stands fast in the heavens.
Thy faithfulness is unto [q]all generations:
  thou hast established the earth, that it may abide.

f Ps. 69 3. Is. 38. 14.
j ver. 16.
k Ps. 6. 3. Ps. 13. 1, 2. *cf.* Rev. 6. 10.
l Ps. 35. 7. *cf.* Ps. 9.15.
m ver. 78. Ps. 38. 19. *cf.* Jno. 15. 25.
n Ps. 94. 17. Ps. 124.1–5. *cf.* Matt.24. 9, 10, 22.
o vers. 25, 37, 40, 107, 149, 156, 159. Hab. 3. 2. *cf.* Job 36.6. Ps. 71. 20. *cf.* Hos. 6.2. *cf.* Hos.14.7.
p Ps. 89. 2. Matt.24.35.
q Ps. 89. 2. Is. 25. 1.

comfort there, which yet necessitates a living God to make it good. For this it fearlessly pledges Him, but the pledge sometimes seems long in being redeemed. Hence the room for exercise, which after all is not against faith,—which supposes it, and in it finds its only means of existence: for faith has to do with that which is not seen.

The pressure has been great, however: he has been dried up, like a skin bottle in the smoke, while yet he has not by all this been made to forget Jehovah's statutes.

2. But he feels the briefness of his days, and pleads for the judgment which is needed for the fulfillment to Israel of their earthly promises. When shall that time be? Here the prophecies of those times and seasons, which from us are hidden as to definite fulfillment (Acts i. 7), in the present Christian gap of time, will open up to them abundant comfort (Dan. xii. 4, 9). Meanwhile the pits of the proud yawn before them, unchecked by Jewish law. The psalmist thinks of those commandments which in their maintenance of righteousness necessarily imply a God who will be faithful to the righteous, so that he can plead them as if they were promises—"*faithful* commandments." And to these he, too, has striven to be faithful: he seeks therefore his sanctuary shelter from those that persecute him wrongfully. Almost consumed upon earth, he has not forsaken the divine precepts; for which yet he realizes his need of quickening, that he may keep the testimonies of His mouth.

Sec. 5. (Lamed.)

As generally in a fifth section, now, after the pressure of trial has been felt in its bitterness, the joyful sense of the supremacy of God rises in fresh power upon the soul. God rules, when winds and waves are at their worst; and His word, upon which alone we can rest amid the confusion, is that which is law everywhere, while by the sense of its glorious perfection it attaches the soul to Him with an indissoluble bond. These are the two parts that are found here.

1. In the heavens above His word stands firm for ever, as illustrated, no doubt, by the stars that roll in their circuits, the sun and the moon that keep their ordered path. The earth, too, is established,—in relation, I suppose, to the sea, in which the foundations of the dry land are, spite of the restless warfare of the

(iii.) the realized fulfillment.
(iv.) creature experience of it.
(v.) living by it to God.

They do [r]abide this day according to thine ordinances:
for all are thy [s]servants.
Unless thy law had been my delight,
I should then have [t]perished in mine affliction.
I will [u]never forget thy precepts:
for by them thou hast quickened me.

2 (94–96): And attaches the soul to Him.
(i.) be for me, who am for Thee,
(ii.) spite of enemies;
(iii.) the fullness of the Word.

I am [v]thine; save me,
for I have [w]sought thy precepts.
The wicked have waited for me to [x]destroy me:
[but] I attend unto thy testimonies.
I have seen an [y]end of all perfection:
thy commandment is exceeding [z]broad.

[6] MEM.

Overcoming in wisdom.

1 (97–101): The power of the Word.
(i.) its constant sufficiency.
(ii.) progress beyond enemies.

Oh how I [a]love thy law!
it is my [b]meditation all the day.
Thou through thy commandments hast made me [c]wiser than mine enemies:
for they are ever with me.

r *cf.* Jer. 31. 35–37. *cf.* Jer. 33. 20–26.
s Ps. 33. 9. *cf.* Ps. 148. 8. *cf.* Is. 38. 8.
t ver. 87.
u *cf.* Ps. 85. 8. *cf.* Is. 26. 13.
v Ps. 79. 13. *cf.* Is. 43. 1.
w *cf.* Prov. 2. 3–5. *cf.* Jer. 15. 16.
x Ps. 10. 8–10. *cf.* Ps. 71. 10, 11.
y *cf.* Gen. 6. 13. *cf.* Job 42. 5, 6 with Is. 2. 22.
z *cf.* Deut. 6. 5 with Jas. 2. 10. *cf.* Phil. 3. 12.
a *cfr.* Ps. 52. 3, 4. ver. 24.
b Ps. 1. 2. c Deut. 4. 6–8; *cf.* Matt. 4. 4, 7, 10; *cf.* Matt. 22. 15–46; *cf.* Lk. 21. 15.

sea upon them, fixed abidingly. There they all remain, servants of God in their several spheres, a permanent condition of things, amid all the apparent susceptibility to change, showing everywhere the impress of a governing hand.

In the soul God's law likewise proves its sustaining power, acting in a very different way, yet so as to manifest the divine virtue that is in it. As law it brings in the assertion of sovereignty to which the conscience responds with its homage, and the heart with its delight. Thus then, spite of the felt disorder, God is; and the soul is cheered and energized, and that which has done this remains in its unique effect, impossible to be forgotten. *One lives by it to God.*

2. This introduces the second part, the psalmist turning to Him who is thus made known with the declaration of his devotion and of his need. It is not merely a cry forced from him by outward distress: "I have sought," he says, "Thy precepts." And this, though the wicked had desired and plotted for his destruction, clearly for his adherence to them: "I attend unto Thy testimonies."

Then his whole heart opens out. He has looked out upon all human perfection and seen in every particular how limited it is. Easy enough to find everywhere an end in this way; but to the word of God, controlling him as his commandment, he has found none: "it is exceeding broad": like space itself it has no boundary-wall; but it has an infinite fullness, not an emptiness,—an infinite speech, and not a silence. It is the speech of God.

Sec. 6. (*Mem.*)

He proceeds to show how this word of God, itself so supreme, has lifted him up by its inherent power into a supreme place among men. It is divine knowledge that he gets by it, beyond the capacity of any man at his best. Nay, man's wisdom is so opposed to God's that the gaining of this knowledge is a true "overcoming," the sifting and analyzing and separation of true from false, always with a moral interest also, or, to say better, a spiritual. "Wisdom" has necessarily always this character in her, as the "fool" is he who "hath said in his heart, There is no God."

1. The psalmist begins by once more expressing his delight in the law: it gives him constant occupation. "all the day." Let us remember that it is one who can speak so, who can tell us of the wisdom it has communicated to him. We shall not, perhaps, get the same results without some similar devotion to it; and

(iii.) beyond special gift.
(iv.) beyond natural experience.
(v.) exercised to walk with God.

I have more understanding than all my [d]teachers:
for thy testimonies are my meditation.
I discern more than the [e]elders:
because I keep thy precepts.
I have [f]refrained my feet from every evil path,
that I may keep thy word.

[d] *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 27. *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 19-21.
[e] *cf.* Job 32. 7-9. *cf.* Lk. 10. 24.
[f] ver. 9. Prov. 1. 15. Prov. 4. 27.

yet the estimate has no touch of exaggeration in it. If it be God's word, what can all the wisdom outside it be, compared with that? In the perfect knowledge of our need,—with perfect love and perfect ability to meet it,—what must we say, even in anticipation of inquiry, such a book must be?

Yet, must we not fear that there are few who give it even now the day and night study which the psalmist gave to his so much smaller and poorer Bible?

Let us listen, then, to his account of the result, with the remembrance of the almost unspeakable difference in our minds. It is of the law in the main he speaks; and though we must not limit that, wherever we hear of it, just to the ten commandments, or even to the Mosaic institutions as a whole, yet it is plain that it is in fact largely of this that he is thinking here. "Law," "commandments," "keeping" God's "precepts," "refraining the feet," show this quite clearly; and it is spiritual ethics with which he is, at least, very largely concerned. To make this evangelical, we have only to remember that the Mosaic law had very definite teaching as to what sin was before God, and of the impossibility of a sinner approaching Him without the blood of atonement. This, too, was ethics, if it was much more. It was this in the highest sense; and there would be none, except it were an ethics of despair, without it. But an ethics of despair is really none.

Enemies the psalmist has, and that on account of the law of his God; but this makes him wiser than all of them. Necessarily; if "iniquity" is, as Scripture calls it, "vanity," and ignorance of God is "folly," and the government of the world is one that makes for righteousness. Thus the enemies of the righteous can neither understand God, nor the world, nor the men they have to deal with; and even the hearts of their fellows, and their own hearts, are most unreliable quantities: "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know" them?

But more than this: the testimonies of God being his meditation, he is wiser than all his teachers. And notable it is how rapidly the mind awakens and is strengthened and enlarged under the influence of Scripture. The countries in possession of an "open Bible" may be traced by the comparative intellectual gain in other directions, as is well known; and yet even this does not give a just idea of the Bible in its power as the true educator of the human race. For, alas, where the heart is not possessed by it for God, men refuse submission to the light itself, and thus in the places of greatest enlightenment there is yet an undercurrent at least of opposition to it. Nay, more, among those who are genuinely converted by it, how few receive the word of God in the whole-hearted manner of the psalmist here! It is not too much to say that for most Christians even, the blank pages of their Bibles are more numerous than the full ones; the sun is half darkened by the spots upon it.

Received fully, whole-heartedly, unreservedly,—allowed to do all the work of which it is capable,—mind, heart, conscience alike submitted to its restorative, invigorating, divinely quickening influence, what equal development would there not be of every human faculty! what light shed upon Nature, history, every question of right interest possible to man! Take all the men of special gift, the aptest to receive, the most fitted to communicate knowledge, yet uncontrolled by Scripture in what they affirm,—after all, the poor man uneducated otherwise, cleaving only to the Word, may truly and unaffectedly say with the psalmist, "I have more understanding than all my teachers: for Thy testimonies are my meditation."

2 (102-104): Attraction and separation. (i) God Himself the teacher. (ii.) the sweetness of the teaching. (iii.) holiness of truth.

I have not [g]departed from thy judgments.
for *thou* hast taught me.
How [h]sweet are thy sayings to my taste!
[sweeter] than honey to my mouth!
Through thy precepts I get discernment:
therefore I [i]hate every false way.

[g] *cf.* Ps. 18. 21. *ctr.* Jer. 18. 14, 15.
[h] Ps. 19. 10. *cf.* Ezek. 3. 1-3. *cf.* Rev. 10. 9, 10.
[i] ver. 128. *cf.* Ps. 45. 7.

[7] NUN.

Complete obedience in view of all circumstances.

1 (105, 106): Steadfast purpose. (i.) truth known. (ii.) cleaving to God's judgments.

Thy word is a [j]lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path.
I have sworn, and will [k]perform it,
to keep the judgments of thy righteousness.

[j] *cf.* Ps. 19. 8. *cf.* Prov. 6. 23 with Matt. 6. 22.
[k] ver. 93. *cf.* Ps. 56. 12. *cf.* Neh. 5. 12, 13.

2 (107-109): Maintained through adversity. (i.) which claims promised energy. (ii.) and to be taught His judgments. (iii.) the law remembered.

I am [l]afflicted very sore.
Jehovah, quicken me according to thy word.
Accept, Jehovah, I pray thee, the [m]free-will offerings of my mouth:
and teach me thy judgments.
My life is [n]continually in my hand:
but I do not forget thy law.

[l] ver. 75. Ps. 25. 16. *cf.* Zeph. 3. 12 with Matt. 5. 3.
[m] *cf.* Ps. 51. 18, 19. *cf.* Mal. 3. 3, 4.
[n] *cf.* 1 Sam. 20. 3. *cf.* Job 13. 14; *cf.* 2 Cor. 1. 8-10.

So with the "elders," the men of long experience: clearly this is all too limited, in duration, in sphere of application, in inherent capacity, to be put for a moment in comparison with the knowledge derivable from the word of God. But notice all through, how there is insisted on the practical nature of its requirements as to the condition of all such knowledge being imparted: "I discern more than the elders, *because I keep Thy precepts.*"

And he closes all this with "I have refrained my feet from every evil way: that I may keep Thy word."

2. And now we see the character of this "overcoming" from another side: the attractive and separative power of the Word, moving the affections as well as regulating the walk. One of the first necessities for which is the assurance of that direct contact in the Word between God and the soul which the next verse expresses: "I have not departed from Thy judgments: for *Thou* hast taught me." Here is the simple "book," become the divine "oracle": God has indeed spoken in it; what an inexpressible joy to have heard the voice of God! God speaking! and to me! How the heart is moved by it! "How sweet are Thy sayings to my taste! sweeter than honey to my mouth!" And this attraction is necessary repulsion from the opposite pole: "through Thy precepts I get discernment; therefore I *hate* every false way." All this is so simple as to require no comment.

Sec. 7. (*Nun.*)

The seventh section carries this out to full obedience in spirit, though with the consciousness of much infirmity and constant need of God. It seems to divide, exactly as the seventh of the first division, into 2,3,3; the ordinary five verses of the larger part being again divided, precisely as there.

1. We have first the steadfast purpose of heart which underlies all true obedience. And this is based upon the consciousness of what the Word is,—a light shining amid the darkness of the world, and which reveals the footpath, sure if narrow, through it. The path is not dark, if the world is; and the wayfarer resolvedly undertakes it: he will keep the judgments of righteousness, the decisions of God as to good and evil which largely (but not wholly) define his way.

2. The opposition of man brings him into continual peril: affliction which has but too much power over him. He realizes and pleads his need of divine energy, which has been pledged to him, indeed, so that he can reckon upon it. Thus he

3 (110-112): Realization.
(i.) unswerving obedience.
(ii.) attachment to God's testimonies.
(iii.) heart-fulfillment.

The wicked have laid a [o]snare for me:
but I have not erred from thy precepts.
Thy testimonies have I taken as a [p]heritage for ever:
for they are the rejoicing of my heart.
I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes,
for ever—[q]unto the end.*

o Ps. 35. 7. Ps. 141. 9. *cf.* Jer. 18. 20, 22.
p *cf.* ver. 57. *cf.* Deut. 33. 4.
q ver. 33. *cf.* Jno. 17. 4. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8.

Division 3.

In contemplation of divine holiness.

[1]Samech.

The rebellious.

1 (113-115): The choice of the righteous.
(i.) integrity.
(ii.) confidence in dependence.
(iii.) separation to God.

I hate the [r]double-minded:
and I love thy law.
Thou art my [s]hiding-place and my shield:
I wait in hope on thy word.
Depart from me, ye [t]evil-doers:
for I will keep the commandments of my God.

r *cf.* Ju. 5. 15. *cf.* Jas. 1. 6–8.
s *cf.* 1 Ki. 18. 21 with Lk. 11. 23. Ps. 27. 5. Ps. 32. 7.
t Ps. 6. 8. Ps. 26. 4. *cf.* Jer. 15. 17.

2 (116-120): Division between the diverse.
(i.) a plea to the faithful One.
(ii.) assured security.

Uphold me, according to thy saying, that I may live:
and let me not be [u]ashamed of my hope.
[v]Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe;
and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually.

u Ps. 25. 2. *cf.* Is. 45. 17. *cf.* Rom. 5. 5.
v Ps. 73. 23. Is. 41. 13, 14.

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[1] "heel," as verse 33.

can bring the free-will offerings of his mouth, the recognition of help given, and still pray to be taught Jehovah's judgments. And through the peril he passes, not distracted into forgetfulness of that which abides in its supremacy over him, the law of his God.

3. He advances further, to speak of more positive attainment. The snare of the wicked had not made him swerve from the path of divine precept. Yea, his whole portion, his chosen inheritance was the testimonies of God. They were the rejoicing of his heart, which he had inclined to perform them for ever,—"to the end," or thoroughly, without reserve.

Div. 3.

The third division seems to emphasize the holiness of God. The enemies are looked at more as the enemies of God than personally such, and the exercises have correspondingly their character less with regard to external trouble: in this respect the third division returns toward the first.

Sec. 1. (*Samech.*)

In the first section, accordingly, the rebellious are looked at in their character and conduct, as abhorrent to God and man. The righteous turn from them, and God puts them away in judgment from the earth; and this is, roughly, the two parts of the psalm.

1. "I hate the double-minded," begins the psalmist; "and I love Thy law." His own integrity of heart cannot abide the wavering of those who at one moment are for Jehovah, at another for Baal; who have therefore no true conviction, but in the conflict of opinion follow only their own wills. For himself his heart is in the path of obedience; and more, he has the experience of what it is to have Jehovah his hiding-place and shield,—a living God making Himself known in the day of trial, so that His word becomes his confidence. From evil-doers his path necessarily separates; for he is set to keep the commandments of his God.

2. He turns to Him in the consciousness of dependence, with the word pledged to him, which makes him hope in it, and beseeching Him that it may not leave

(iii.) the holiness of the ban.
(iv.) the vanity and passing away of evil.
(v.) the exercise resulting.

Thou hast trodden down all that err from thy statutes:
for their laxity is [w]falsehood.
Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like [x]dross:
therefore I love thy testimonies.
My flesh [y]trembleth for fear of thee,
and I am afraid of thy judgments.

[w] Jer.14.14. *cf.*2Thes.2. 9, 10.
[x] Is. 1. 22. Jer. 6. 28–30. Ezek.22.18.
[y] Jer. 23. 9. Hab. 3. 16. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 11.

1 (121-123): On the ground of righteousness.
(i.) put me not in their power.
(ii.) be my surety against oppression.
(iii.) fulfill Thy word.

[2] AYIN.

Deliverance sought from them.

I have done judgment and righteousness:
[z]leave me not to mine oppressors!
Be [a]surety for thy servant for good:
let not the proud oppress me!
Mine eyes [b]fail for thy salvation;
and for the saying of thy righteousness.

[z] Ps. 71. 9, 18. *cf.* Ps. 41.2.
[a] *cf.*Is.38.14. *cf.*Is.43.1-5.
[b] vers.81,82. *cf.* Is. 38.14.

2 (124-128): For Thy servant.
(i.) be like Thyself.
(ii.) the discernment needed by a servant sought.
(iii.) Jehovah's time accomplished.
(iv.) the test of experience.
(v.) the end of exercise.

Do with thy servant [c]according to thy loving-kindness;
and teach me thy statutes.
I am thy servant: give me [d]discernment,
that I may know thy testimonies.
It is [e]time for Jehovah to act:
they have made void thy law.
Therefore I love thy commandments
[f]above gold, yea, above fine gold.
Therefore I regard [g]all [thy] precepts concerning all things to be right:
I hate every false path.

[c] Ps. 25. 7. Ps. 51. 1.
[d] *cf.*1Ki.3.9. *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 14-16.
[e] *cf.*Is.26.10, 11. Ps. 21. 9. *cf.*Jer.6.15.
[f] Ps. 19. 10. ver. 72.
[g] *cf.* Mat. 5. 18. 2 Tim.3.16, 17.

him to be ashamed. Confident he is that he is secure who is upheld by God; and this safety he would use to run unhindered continually in the path of His will.

From his shelter he looks out to see the judgment fall upon all that go astray from the path: for their laxity—"letting fall," like the string of a deceitful bow—is falsehood: not failure where the heart may yet be right. Thus God treats them, not as silver which may yet have to be purified from dross, but as dross itself and nothing else. The psalmist sees and approves this judgment, and so clings the more to those testimonies which deliver from the way of destruction; while his flesh trembles with awe at the holiness of God, and he is afraid as he realizes His righteous judgments.

Sec. 2. (*Ayin.*)

1. Yet he is in fact still among the enemies of God's way, and who are therefore necessarily also the enemies of His people; and he seeks deliverance from these on the ground of that very righteousness. He has himself followed it; and he prays therefore not to be left in the hand of his oppressors. May He, the righteous One, be as that, surety for good to one who is His servant, and not permit the oppression of the proud, who because of pride refuse the servant's place. God's pledged word he has, but His salvation lingers, and in distress his eyes fail for longing for it.

2. He pleads the servant's place that he has taken, that he may be dealt with in divine love, and taught His statutes. For he is His servant, and as such needs and may urge that he needs, discernment to know the testimonies that he has to maintain amid a state of daring rebellion which speaks for the time being come for Jehovah's own intervention. But this disorder only makes him realize the more the value of those commandments which are more to him than the wealth of much and purest gold. For here all is pure,—every precept, whatever it concerns; and every false way is exposed to reprobation.

1 (129-131): The power of the knowledge. (i.) the ground of obedience. (ii.) discernment by the Word. (iii.) the heart told out.

2 (132-136): Desires stirred. (i.) constant grace. (ii.) establishment in freedom from sin's bondage. (iii.) sanctuary shelter. (iv.) and experience. (v.) exercise.

1 (137-141): The rule and the rebellion. (i.) Jehovah righteous and His judgments. (ii.) and His testimonies.

[3] PE.

Sanctuary-revelations.

Thy testimonies are [h] wonderful:
therefore my soul observeth them.
The opening of thy words giveth [i] light:
it giveth discernment to the simple.
I opened my mouth wide and panted:
for I [j] longed for thy commandments.

Turn to me, and be gracious to me,
as [thy] [k] wont is to those that love thy name.
Establish my steps in thy saying,
and let not any iniquity have [l] dominion over me.
Deliver me from the [m] oppression of man,
and I will keep thy precepts.
Make thy face to [n] shine upon thy servant,
and teach me thy statutes.
Mine eyes run down with [o] streams of water,
because they keep not thy law.

[4] TZADDI.

The trial from defection.

Righteous art thou, Jehovah,
and [p] upright are thy judgments.
Thou hast commanded thy testimonies in righteousness,
and in very [q] faithfulness.

h ver. 14. *cf.* Is.28.29. *cf.* Ps.139.6.
i vers. 98-100. *cf.* Lk.24.45. *cf.* Acts 8. 27-35.
j vers.20,40.
k *cf.* Ps. 37. 25. *cf.* Job 36.7.
l Ps. 19. 13. *cf.* Rom. 6. 12, 14.
m Jer. 6.6,7. *cf.* Is.54.11-17.
n Ps. 4. 6. Ps. 80. 3, 7, 19.
o Jer. 9. 1. *cf.* Luke 19. 41-44. *cf.* Rom. 9. 1-3.
p *cf.* Ezek. 18. 25-30. Ps. 97. 2.
q ver. 86. Is. 25. 1.

Sec. 3. (*Pe.*)

In the third section the psalmist turns to speak more of the joy in Jehovah's testimonies that he has found, of the revelation that they have been to him. All his heart is awake with longing after God Himself, to whom His word brings, as its power is known; and thus this is a true sanctuary portion, although it be more longed for than enjoyed. Yet the door is opening, has partially opened, and the inner light is already breaking out.

1. Wonderful are the testimonies of God, which by their glorious character win the soul to their obedience. Light breaks out as the Word is opened up; and even the simple acquire by it the faculty of discernment. The heart is drawn out in longings which are not lawless, but the very contrary: "I longed for Thy commandments."

Thus the Word as an educator makes no monsters. It does not develop the intellect, while leaving the heart and conscience unaffected; but the whole man grows in beautiful correspondence of all parts to one another.

2. The soul thus wrought upon becomes a seeker after God, in the apprehension of constant grace which is shown to all who love His name,—that is, the manifestation of Himself; for that is what His name is. Such an one realizes what the liberty is of walking in God's ways, and the miserable bondage which results from any iniquity having dominion over one. From man, too, he seeks to be free, in order to keep the divine precepts. Above all, to walk in the sunshine of God's face, as one brought near, and there to be taught His statutes. There it is that the awful horror of sin is felt, with the longing after men who know not its deformity: "Mine eyes run down with streams of water, because they keep not Thy law."

Sec. 4. (*Tsaddi.*)

The last verse contains in it, as not uncommonly, the theme very much of the following section. In it we have the trial of spirit from the defection around,

(iii.) devoted self-sacrifice in view of defection. (iv.) the voice of experience. (v.) the weak with the Strong.

My [r]zeal consumeth me,
because mine adversaries have forgotten thy words.
Thy word is exceeding [s]pure,
and thy servant loveth it.
I am [t]small and despised:
[but] I have not forgotten thy precepts.

2 (142–144): Faith's assurance. (i.) unchanging righteousness. (ii.) sorrow and delight. (iii.) realization needed.

Thy righteousness is [u]eternal righteousness,
and thy law is truth.
Trouble and [v]anguish have taken hold upon me:
thy commandments are my delight.
The righteousness of thy testimonies is eternal:
give me discernment and I shall [w]live.

[5] KOPH.

Exercises.

1 (145–149): As to the truth. (i.) wholehearted. (ii.) salvation needed.

I have called with my [x]whole heart:
answer me, Jehovah, I will keep thy statutes.
I have called upon thee:
[y]save me, and I will keep thy testimonies.

r *cf.* Ps. 69. 9. *cf.* Jno. 2. 17. *cf.* Jer. 20. 8, 9.
s Ps. 12. 6. Ps. 19. 8. Prov. 30. 5.
t *cf.* Ps. 70. 5. *cf.* Jn. 6. 15. *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 26–29.
u ver. 144. Is. 51. 8. *cf.* Dan. 9. 24.
v *cf.* Ps. 94. 19. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 16.
w *cf.* Ps. 118. 17. *cf.* Ps. 72. 14.
x vers. 10, 34.
y Ps. 71. 2, 3. *cf.* Ezek. 36. 29. *cf.* 2 Tim. 1. 9.

along with that abiding sense of preciousness of the Word itself, which is what makes the defection so full of anguish.

1. Jehovah's word is what Jehovah is: if He is righteous, so are His judgments. And so too are His testimonies, of whatever nature: He cannot be aught but a faithful witness, in whatever it has pleased Him to give any testimony.

Here, as he thinks of it, the psalmist's zeal breaks out: it consumes him as the altar-flame the sacrifice; as with Christ in the temple, where He flames out in a testimony against the evil, which puts Him in opposition to the heads of the people, identified with the wickedness that was then in power. It is not with the psalmist that men are his adversaries merely, but "because mine adversaries have forgotten Thy words."

That leads him back to think of the Word, how pure it is, and how he loves it. Little he is, it is true — he who has this spirit is ever little — and despised, for so has the mass got away from God that they can afford to despise such feeble opposition: yet he clings with all this to that which links his feebleness with the Lord of all: "I have not forgotten Thy precepts."

2. And faith affirms, amid the confusion in which all might seem buried, Jehovah's righteousness to be eternal righteousness, and His law truth which must always then abide truth. Trouble and anguish possess him, as he thinks of the madness of the adversaries; but this does not bring even the shadow of a summer cloud over those commandments which are his delight. Again he affirms: "the righteousness of Thy testimonies is eternal"; and he only needs himself to be sustained of God in ability to discern their blessedness, the bringing into that life which is alone true life: "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God shall men *live*."

Sec. 5. (*Koph.*)

The next section is more difficult to characterize; but as a fifth it seems to speak of exercise: not, in the first part at least, so much from the difficulties and trials of the way, as over the word of God itself, that healthful exercise which would that we all knew more of. In the second part the enmity of the wicked is spoken of, though briefly; and the soul comforts itself in Jehovah being near.

1. The psalmist calls with his whole heart upon Jehovah, earnestly professing his purpose of obedience. Where this is found, it naturally and necessarily leads to exercise over the Word: it is the foundation of it. The path is not so simple

(iii.) the word a refuge.
(iv.) testing.
(v.) the weak with the Strong.

I [z]anticipate the morning-dawn, and cry:
I wait in hope on thy word.
Mine eyes anticipate the [a]night-watches
in meditation on thy saying.
Hear my voice according to thy loving-kindness:
[b]quicken me, Jehovah, according to thy judgment.

[z] Ps. 130. 6. *cf.* Mk. 1. 35.
[a] *ctr.* Deut. 28. 67. *ctr.* Job 7. 4. Ps. 63. 1, 6.
[b] vers. 25, 37, 40, 88, etc.

2 (150-152): As to the wicked.
(i.) the rebellious.
(ii.) the Helper.
(iii.) realization.

They have drawn nigh that follow after [c]mischief:
they are far from thy law.
Thou art [d]nigh, Jehovah,
and all thy commandments are truth.
Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old,
that thou hast founded them for [e]ever.

[c] Ps. 26. 9, 10. *cf.* Ps. 10. 8–10.
[d] *cf.* Is. 50. 8.
[e] ver. 89.

[ר]RESH.

Overcoming in judgment.

1 (153-155): The plea of integrity.
(i.) faithful to the law.
(ii.) plead and redeem.
(iii.) holiness.

Consider mine affliction, and [f]deliver me:
for I have not forgotten thy law.
[g]Plead my cause and redeem me:
quicken me according to thy saying.
Salvation is [h]far from the wicked:
for they seek not thy statutes.

[f] Ps. 34. 4, 17, 19. *cf.* Jer. 1. 8, 9.
[g] Ps. 35. 1. Lam. 3. 58. *cf.* Is. 51. 22, 23.
[h] Job 5. 4. *ctr.* Is. 54. 14.

that we can find it without God; nor is it meant to be; but then we find Him our companion in it. The suppliant needs salvation also: he does not say from what; indeed, from how many things, the hindrances which so constantly present themselves to obedience, but which are helps to faith as everything is that casts us upon God. The Word with all this gets a large place with him, just as surely as God gets His. He is up before the dawn, crying out to God, yet with hopeful expectancy which the Word had wrought in him. Nay, before the night-watches he is awake, meditating on God's sayings, testing his knowledge; finding continually indeed the drag of nature on him, for which he has to betake himself to Jehovah's loving-kindness for quickening energy, to discern what is of Him, according to His unfailing judgment.

2. He is not allowed to do this undisturbed. The wicked are near, and threatening mischief; enemies in heart and will to that which occupies him. But Jehovah too is near, the Rock upon which all these waves break in vain. The truth abides: nothing can alter that; and this His commandments are. Yea, His testimonies have of old been known as for ever fixed upon His own immutable foundations.

Sec. 6. (Resh.)

The sixth section has as its keynote the prayer of the second verse, "Plead my cause,"—in order to which the psalmist spreads it before God. The wicked cannot hope for deliverance; but he doubts not to stand in the judgment he invites, which, of course, is not at all as to any absolute righteousness, but only as to integrity of heart amid much weakness and many adversaries.

1. The affliction that he is in makes him seek for deliverance, and thus—because the wicked cannot hope for it—appeal for the taking up of his cause; yea, that Jehovah, who fully knows, would Himself plead it. He has not forgotten Jehovah's law, though he owns at the outset the need that he has of the impartation of living energy from Him, who has pledged Himself to him for such need. Utter weakness then on his part is recognized: he needs not to hide it: but he is not among the wicked who seek not the divine statutes.

2. He casts himself, therefore, afresh upon Jehovah's tender mercies for this living power, for a life according to the judgments of His truth and holiness. His adversaries are many, but they have not perverted him from the path of His testimonies, from the recognition of things according to His declaration

2 (156-160): Mid all that is against me.
(i.) quicken me.
(ii.) adversaries have not made me turn aside.
(iii.) the realization of their ways as before God.
(iv.) able to be tested but frail.
(v.) the ways of God.

1 (161-165): Its consistent supremacy.
(i.) its authority.
(ii.) moving the soul.
(iii.) the moral estimate of it.
(iv.) its estimate in experience.
(v.) governmental recompense.

2 (166-168): The seal of subjection.
(i.) obedience.

'Many, Jehovah, are thy tender mercies:
quicken me according to thy judgments.
Many are my [j]persecutors and mine adversaries:
I have not declined from thy testimonies.
I beheld the treacherous dealers and was [k]grieved:
because they keep not thy saying.
See how I [l]love thy precepts!
quicken me, Jehovah, according to thy loving-kindness.
The [m]sum of thy word is truth:
and every one of the judgments of thy righteousness [endureth] for ever.

[i] *cf.* Ps. 40.5. Ps. 71. 15.
[j] Ps. 25. 19. *cf.* Ezek. 38. 4, 16, 23.
[k] ver. 136. *cf.* Ezek. 9. 4.
[l] ver. 97. *cf.* Ps. 40.8.
[m] *cf.* Rev. 22. 19. *cf.* Deut. 12. 32.

[7]SCHIN.

Perfection of the Word.

Princes have persecuted me without cause:
but my heart standeth in [n]awe of thy word.
I rejoice in thy saying
as he that findeth great [o]spoil.
I [p]hate and abhor falsehood:
thy law do I love.
Seven times a day do I [q]praise thee,
because of the judgments of thy righteousness.
Great [r]peace have they who love thy law:
and nothing stumbleth them.

Jehovah, I have [s]hoped for thy salvation,
and performed thy commandments.

[n] ver. 23. *cf.* Lk. 12. 4, 5. *cf.* Is. 66. 2.
[o] *cf.* Lk. 24. 32. *cf.* Eph. 3. 8. *cf.* Matt. 13. 52.
[p] Ps. 31. 6. ver. 104. Prov. 13. 5.
[q] Ps. 55. 17. *cf.* 1 Thes. 5. 17, 18.
[r] Ps. 34. 14. Is. 26. 3. *cf.* Phil. 4. 6, 7.
[s] ver. 174. *cf.* Gen. 49. 18. *cf.* Lam. 3. 25, 26.

of them. Nay, he had beheld with grief the faithlessness of those who kept not these sayings. And he invites Jehovah Himself to behold how he loves His precepts, whatever the backwardness of nature for which, the third time, he beseeches that he may know His quickening power. But as to the ways of God, these his whole heart embraces. The whole of His word is truth, and every one of His righteous judgments—judgments which have their foundation in His own nature—abide as He Himself.

Sec. 7. (*Schin.*)

The seventh section naturally gives us now the perfection of that which has been the psalmist's theme all through, the word of God. The first and larger part views it in its peerless supremacy in whatever way it is contemplated. The second sets the seal to it of heartfelt subjection. The affirmation is of little value which lacks this element of true witness.

1. He has realized the opposition to God's word in the high places of the earth. Princes had persecuted him without cause beside, but his heart stands in awe of that in which God Himself has spoken to his conscience. His heart also has responded to it, so that it has become to him like the rich and varied booty of the soldier. But more, his moral estimate of it is similar: it is the holiness of truth that attracts him in it, as he hates the falsehood which it also hates. Constantly through the day does it lift up his heart in praise, because of the judgments which he realizes to be those of divine righteousness, and which he finds in the government of God illustrated and enforced. For "great peace have they who love thy law," and their path is free from the stumbling-blocks over which others fall.

2. This word has been wrought into his practical life. The salvation which it assures of he has waited for in hope; its commandments he has obeyed; loving exceedingly the testimonies that it gives; keeping its precepts as being man-

(ii.) In love.

(iii.) the ways before God.

My soul has kept thy testimonies:
and I [t]love them exceedingly.
I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies:
for all my [u]ways are before thee.

DIVISION. 4

TAU.

Jacob in his trouble.

1 (169–172): Israel's vow.

(i.) the gift of knowledge.

Let my cry come near before thee, Jehovah:
give me [v]discernment according to thy word.
Let my supplication come before thee:
according to thy saying [w]deliver me.

(ii.) deliverance.

(iii.) praise.

My lips shall pour forth [x]praise,
when thou hast taught me thy statutes.
My tongue shall speak [y]aloud of thy saying:
for all thy commandments are righteousness.

(iv.) the voice to the nations (?)

t vers. 97, 159. *cf.* Job 23. 12. *cf.* Col. 3. 16.
u Job 34. 21. *cf.* Jer. 32. 19. *cf.* Ps. 1. 6.
v vers. 34, 73, 144. *cf.* Eph. 1. 18. *cf.* Eph. 5. 17.
w ver. 153.
x vers. 7, 164. Ps. 63. 5, 6.
y *cf.* Ps. 102. 21, 22.

ifested in all things to Him before whom he walked. Unspeakable blessedness to walk thus in the Eternal Light of that glorious Presence before we enter the joy of the presence-chamber itself.

DIV. 4. (*Tau.*)

The twenty-one sections of the psalm fall then, plainly, into three equal and parallel series of seven sections each, which together would seem to complete the subject naturally, and leave room for nothing more. But in fact we find another section, which, of course, is necessary also for the completion of the alphabetic arrangement. What, then, is its place, in connection with what has gone before? Is it an eighth section of the third division? or is it by itself a fourth division of the psalms? There can be no doubt, when we have examined it, that it is a fourth division.

Its structure is clearly different from that of any of the former sections. Each of these we have found to divide into 3+5 or 5+3; or else, as in the seventh of both the first and second divisions, the first five verses are again divided into 2+3. Here, on the other hand, the eight verses can only divide as 4+4; the last part being evidently a fourfold prayer, or plea for salvation. The last verse of the whole in no wise suggests an eighth section. It is, as a whole, a descent from and not a continuation of the last one. The number 4 seems suited to and stamped on it throughout; even the acrostic letter here, the Tau, standing for 400 in the Hebrew notation. The drop in the character of what we find here is thus accounted for.

Looking more closely into it, it is evident that, as a fourfold plea for salvation it occupies the latter half: the former one is, in fact, a promise or vow to the Lord in the event of deliverance. And as this cannot be the King (as in the sixty-first psalm) whose vows are before us, we naturally think of Israel. Looked at in this way, the meaning of the whole comes clearly into view.

This final section is in reality an appendix to the psalm: in which we have indicated the reference of it to Israel in the tribulation of the latter days predicted as to them. This is, as we know, their spiritual birthtime as a nation, when they come into the new covenant. There is no difficulty, therefore, in the application; and this section is practically, whatever else, an inspired note as to the "times and seasons" to which the psalm relates.

1. The first part is, as already intimated, Israel's vow in their distress,—a vow, not like that of the old covenant, made in self-righteousness at Sinai, the covenant so quickly broken, though the patience of God might long endure with them. Here all is based upon what God is looked to to work for them and in them, so that they may step into their predestined place, and be the witnesses of His grace and salvation to the ends of the earth. They promise no legal obedience, but only to

2 (173-176): The plea for salvation.
(i.) the choice of obedience.
(ii.) the desire for salvation.
(iii.) the praise resultant.
(iv.) a sheep astray.

Let thy hand [z]help me:
for I have chosen thy precepts.
I have [a]longed for thy salvation, Jehovah,
and thy law is my delight.
Let my soul [b]live, and it shall praise thee:
and let thy judgments help me.
I have gone [c]astray like a lost sheep:
seek thy servant;
for I have not [d]forgotten thy commandments.

z Is. 41. 10.
a ver. 166.
b *cf.* Is.38.18-20.
c Is. 53. 6. 1 Pet. 2. 25. *cf.* Ezek.34. 11-16.
d vers.16,61, 83, 93, 109, 141, 153.

declare this; which prophecy has of old assured us that they will do. All this, therefore, is quite accordant with a new covenant blessing.

Their cry goes up to Jehovah for light to break out from His word for them: no true knowledge could there be but through the Word, by which they are quickened also that they may have it. They plead the promise also of deliverance; and when delivered and taught His statutes, their lips shall pour forth praise. So, indeed, they shall. The last verse here implies, I think, their testimony to the nations, and that is what its numerical place points out. Their tongue shall speak *aloud* of God's saying, and the world shall hear it.

2. The second part gives their plea for God's salvation. This is, first, that they have chosen Jehovah's precepts: a plea already allowed in Deut. xxx. 1-3. The second is their longing for His salvation. They are not ignorant of their need, and they seek no more to other saviours. The third is the praise that shall result: and God acts for the glory of His own great Name: being in this most gracious. That Jehovah would dwell among the praises of His people was a joy in the heart of the dying Saviour, and what that precious death was designed to accomplish (Ps. xxii. 3, *notes*). Lastly, they put before God the misery which wrought in the heart of the Good Shepherd, according to His own appealing picture (Luke xv.): gone astray like a lost sheep, they ask Him the Shepherd to seek them out, already touched by the grace which has wrought in them to put into their hearts that desire for His commandments in which they come back to their first plea in which the promise in Deuteronomy applies plainly to them.

Here their plea ends; and in the "songs of degrees" which directly follow, we shall find the divine answer to it.

Subd. 3.

We have now reached the so-called "songs and degrees," a clearly defined series of fifteen psalms, which, with two thanksgiving psalms appended, forms the third subdivision of the Fifth Book. These songs of degrees are rather "songs of the ascents," which we are surely right in interpreting in the first place by reference to those ascents of the tribes thrice a year to the feasts at Jerusalem, which are spoken of in the third psalm of this very series (cxxii. 4). But this only furnishes a clue to the inner meaning, this repeated call to the city of God being in view of those "set times" of Lev. xxiii. which speak of those gracious acts of God toward His people which for all eternity will call them round Himself in praise. The "ascents" are, therefore, above all else, ascents of the heart to Him because of His grace, and this is in fact what these songs are—a recounting in a fivefold series the Divine ways toward Israel, by which their blessing has been accomplished, and for which their hearts will endlessly praise Him. With this the "climbing" movement of the psalms themselves, which Delitzsch adduces, after Gesenius, is in intimate sympathy,—a feature which only shows how perfectly the form of these inspired songs is moulded by their spirit, while it by no means allows us to degrade them as their materialistic interpretation would, by making the form the whole thing.

SUBDIVISION 3. (Ps. cxx.–cxxxvi.)

The full blessing realized.

SECTION 1. (Ps. cxx.-cxxxiv.)

In God's sovereign grace.

SUBSECTION 1. (Ps. cxx.-cxxii.)

Faithful to promise.

Ps. cxx.

[1]PSALM CXX.

Solitary!

A song of the [e] ascents.

(i.) Jehovah's faithfulness. (ii.) the cry for deliverance from the deceiver.

IN my [f] strait to Jehovah I call,
and he answereth me.
Jehovah, deliver my soul from a [g] lying lip,—
from a deceitful tongue.

[e] Ps.121-134 titles. Ps. 122. 4. *cf.* Ezek.40. 6, 22, etc. *cf.* Jer. 50. 4, 5.
[f] Ps. 107. 6. Ps. 118. 5. *cf.* Joel 2. 12-17.
[g] Ps. 101. 7. Prov.12.19, 22.

Sec. 1.

These fifteen psalms are thus in fact five threes, a little pentateuch of song, answering to the larger pentateuch of the Psalms as a whole. Each three has its own distinct theme of praise, and each three is a distinct "ascent" also in its subject-matter,—in some sense, as the numerical signature might imply, a resurrection.

All through they are divine acts that are celebrated, and acts of sovereign grace, though man may be used, more or less, in their accomplishment. In the first three, as in the beginning of the 107th psalm, the trial of the wilderness is exchanged for the "city of habitation." In the second, the deliverance is from enemies that had well-nigh accomplished their destruction. The third is more general, but above all celebrates Jehovah as the One worker of all their blessing. The fourth shows the good work that all their trial has wrought in their souls. While the fifth shows finally God with them, and their Melchizedek, the King-Priest through whom it is accomplished for them, and man's heart turned to God finds a full answer in blessing out of Zion, the place of God's eternal rest among them.

Subsec. 1.

We come now to fuller detail. And here the first subsection introduces us, according to the usual manner of Scripture, to what is to be developed further in those to come. The heading here is therefore necessarily a general one. Israel's promises are seen to be made good to her, after the long sojourn in Meshech and among the enemies of peace. Even there Jehovah has been their Keeper; and soon the restored city opens its gates to receive them, crowned with the glorious dwelling-place of God Himself; while the tribes, resettled in the land, renew their ascents to gather round Him. This is the full picture of their blessing, one may say; with one feature, however, of central importance, only suggested and not entered upon, that which the closing series of the five develops. The fifth, returning to the first, makes the circle of blessing complete.

PSALM CXX.

No mere historical view of the origin of these psalms can unite them together in an intelligible manner. Nothing will do it except the realization that they give us various lines of connection between the history of Israel in their distress as nationally away from God, and that prophetic future which we find so clearly announced for them in the pages of the Old Testament. The partial return from Babylon cannot fill out the picture here,—can give nothing but a faint and transient anticipation of it. Here is where commentators go astray so largely as to the Psalms; trying to satisfy themselves with theories of their origin in the past, with which Scripture itself, it is plain, so little concerns itself, and which are mere, if not wild, conjectures; while, as given by men led of the Holy Ghost,

(iii.) the reality, what?

What will it [h]give to thee? and what will it add to thee?
the deceitful tongue?*

(iv.) the voice of experience.

Sharp [i]arrows of the mighty,
with [j]coals of broom.

(v.) exercise

Woe is me, that I [k]sojourn in Meshech:
that I dwell among the [l]tents of Kedar!

(vi.) the height of the evil.

My soul hath long dwelt
with him that [m]hateth peace.

(vii.) full opposition.

I [am for] [n]peace;
but when I speak, they are for war.

*Or, "will he give," "will he add . . . O deceitful tongue?"

h *cf.* Is. 28. 15, 17. *ctr.* 1 Tim. 6. 6.
i Ps. 57. 4. Ps. 64. 3. *cf.* Prov. 26. 18, 19.
j *cf.* Prov. 26. 21.
k *cf.* Ezek. 27. 13. *cf.* Ezek. 38. 2. *cf.* Ezek. 39. 1.
l *cf.* Ps. 42. 6, 10. *cf.* Ps. 84. 10. *cf.* Is. 21. 16, 17; *cf.* Is. 60. 7. m Ps. 35. 20; *cf.* Is. 59. 7, 8. n *cf.* Luke 2. 14 with Is. 9. 6; *cf.* Ps. 72. 7.

their meaning is to be sought in connection with those counsels of God as to Israel and the world, with regard to which all their voices come into harmony, and adjust and explain each other. In these "songs of the ascents" especially, the history is so generalized that it would be difficult, indeed, to fix its connections. Who can tell us about the "sojourning in Meshech," or the "dwelling in the tents of Kedar"? Accordingly Delitzsch, with many others, decides that "both these names of peoples are to be understood emblematically." And elsewhere we have really nothing to furnish a clue at all. Yet, read in connection, there is no real difficulty as to the purport of these psalms. Had not the often unanswerable "how?" come so largely to displace the all-important "why?" in the minds of the professed interpreters of Scripture, they would not have been in the confusion that they are to-day. The "how" may be largely human: the "why" is divine. And where God is, we shall find Him more accessible than man is, as He is how much more worthy of being sought to, and the knowledge thus obtained infinitely more gainful.

The 120th psalm is almost all distress. The main point of cheer in it is what comes first of all, that "in my strait to Jehovah I call, and He answereth me." This the psalmist realizes, although the great deliverance that he seeks for has not come. God does not always cash His notes at sight; but if not, He pays large interest on them. "The lying lip" and the "deceitful tongue" are the subject of his first complaint, whether this be some special deceiver, or more general. The third verse may be understood in two very different ways; and most would read it with the common version, as an address to the "tongue,"—the deceiver. In this case the question will be as to the judgment of God, and the fourth verse will announce the judgment. The numerical structure seems to decide for another interpretation, in which the question "what does this deceitful tongue give to thee?" is answered by experience. In this case, the transition is better seen also, to the war spirit of the close of the psalm: "Sharp arrows of the mighty" remind us of the similar "sharp razor" of the "mighty one" in the fifty-second psalm, who is addressed also as a "deceitful tongue." And "coals of broom" do not seem so suitable an image for divine judgment as for human fury breaking out. This naturally leads on to the psalmist's lament over his sojourn in Meshech and in the tents of Kedar, nomads, very likely to suggest the "sharp arrows" he has spoken of; and whose trade as Ishmaelites was depredation and war.

The names are, as already said, "emblematic": "My soul has long dwelt with him that hateth peace"; that is the moral of it. "I am peace,"—a man characterized by that; but to speak it only rouses the opposition: "when I speak, they are for war." This is what the world is: and this is what it showed itself to be when the Prince of peace came into it. Thus it was that He, over whom, as born into it, the angels proclaimed peace, in His own clear knowledge of the immediate result, proclaimed "not peace, but a sword." He could indeed say "I am peace,"—the very incarnation of it. What did His humanity mean but

Ps. cxxi.

[z]PSALM CXXI.

The Preserver.

A song of the ascents.

(i.) the source of help?

I [o]LIFT up mine eyes to the hills:
whence shall my help come?

(ii.) the Helper.

My help cometh from Jehovah,
who [p]made the heavens and the earth.

(iii.) the realization.

He will not suffer thy [q]foot to be moved;
thy Keeper will not slumber.

(iv.) frailty none.

Behold, neither [r]slumbereth nor sleepeth
the Keeper of Israel.

(v.) the weak with the Strong.

Jehovah is thy Keeper:
Jehovah is thy [s]shade upon thy right hand.

(vi.) limiting.

The [t]sun shall not smite thee by day,
nor the moon by night.

(vii.) perfect keeping.

Jehovah shall keep thee from [u]all evil:
he shall keep thy soul.

(viii.) for ever!

Jehovah shall keep thy [v]going out and thy coming in,
from [w]henceforth and for ever.

o *cf.* 1 Kl. 8, 47–49. *cf.* Dan. 6. 10.
p *cf.* Ps. 5. 7.
q Ps. 124. 8.
Ps. 37. 23, 24. Prov. 3. 23, 26.
r Ps. 139. 11, 12.
s Ps. 91. 1.
t Is. 49. 10.
u Ps. 91. 9, 10.
v Deut. 28. 6. *cf.* Jno. 10. 9.
w Ps. 131. 3. *cf.* Ps. 72. 7.

"peace: good pleasure in man"? Yet His rejection was written upon the cross in every typical human language.

Israel were not then, and have not since been, the "sons of peace," such as the Lord sent His disciples out to seek. And we must look on to the latter days to find them as depicted here. The remnant, then, will indeed be "like sheep in the midst of wolves"; the essential opposition between Christ's people and the world will have sharpened into its acutest form, and it is simple enough that this first psalm here should give it expression.

Psalm CXXI.

But the next psalm shows itself to be indeed "a song of ascents." Although not the full blessing, which the psalm following is to bring, yet the soul has found its help and its Preserver,—found it where alone help is, in the living God.

The first part of the first verse is not, as some would make it, a question. For an Israelite the presence of God naturally connects itself with Zion, the place of His rest, but where as yet He is not found. The psalmist looks there, but as yet only questioningly. But not questionable, nevertheless, is the source of his help: it is found in Him whose is not merely Zion, but heaven and earth. His refuge is in His unslumbering care, keeping the feet of him who is still a pilgrim. He is *Israel's* Keeper: so faith, even from afar off, claims Him;—Jehovah, the faithful covenant-keeping God. The Pillar of Cloud by day again appears in the shade upon the right hand which forbids the scorching sun of the desert to smite the people of God, or the moon by night: (for the moon can affect both eyes and brain). But this is only an illustration of wider and perfect protection: "Jehovah shall keep thee from *all* evil: He shall keep thy soul."

The last verse answers, in its number attached, to what is expressed definitely in it: "Jehovah shall keep thy going out and coming in, from henceforth even for ever." Eternity shall have its blessed activities, realized in as blessed dependence on the unfailing God.

Psalm CXXII.

The next psalm brings in the full blessing. In view of the 132nd psalm, it is quite natural that it should be a psalm of David: against which it is vain to appeal to the fifth verse, unless it is quite plain that not only was David no prophet, but that he did not even *believe* the prophecy as to his house.

Ps. cxxii.
I (1-4): The centre of unity.
(i.) the basis of unity.
(ii.) the testimony of sight.
(iii.) a solid reality—the reunited city.
(iv.) the nation united with it—the tribal pilgrimages.
2 (5-9): Subjection in love claimed and yielded.
(i.) her supremacy.
(ii.) the prayer of attachment sought.
(iii.) and found.
(iv.) the human ground.
(v.) the divine-human ground.

[3]PSALM CXXII.

The restored House and the City!

A song of the ascents: of David.

I WAS [x]glad when they said unto me,
Let us go into the house of Jehovah.
Standing are our feet
within thy [y]gates, Jerusalem.
Jerusalem, that art built up
as a city that is [z]compacted together;
Whither the [a]tribes go up, the tribes of Jah,
a testimony for Israel,
to give thanks to Jehovah's Name.

For there are set [b]thrones for judgment,
thrones for the house of David.
Pray for the [c]peace of Jerusalem!
they shall prosper that love thee.
Peace be within thy walls,
and [d]prosperity within thy palaces.
For my [e]brethren and companions' sake,
I will say, May peace be within thee.
For the sake of the [f]house of Jehovah our God
I will seek thy good.

x *ctr.* Lam. 1. 4.
y Ps. 87. 2. Is. 60. 18.
z Ps. 48. 2, 12, 13.
a Deut. 16. 16. Ps. 84. 7.
b *cf.* 2 Chr. 19. 8. *cf.* Is. 28. 5, 6. *cf.* Matt. 19. 28.
c Ps. 51. 18. Ps. 137. 5, 6. *cf.* Jer. 31. 23.
d *cf.* Is. 2. 2. *cf.* Is. 60. 5, 11, 16.
e Ps. 133. 1.
f Ps. 132. 5. *ctr.* Jer. 29. 7.

The psalm shows us the end of the pilgrimage in the restored city and temple of the glorious days to come. The worse than lone man of the first psalm finds himself here surrounded with companions, who are in complete sympathy also with his own delight in what is the glorious city's crown of blessing, the dwelling-place of Jehovah in her midst.

1. Jerusalem is now the uniting centre for Israel: in fact, (though this does not appear in the psalm,) of the whole earth. The basis of unity the first verse expresses, the power over the soul of Jehovah's house. *Our* Jerusalem has indeed no temple, but only because God is there in a more perfect way. But how glad will they be when it is said to them, "Let us go into the house of Jehovah"! It is now for them no more a matter of faith: it is one of sight: "standing are our feet within thy gates, Jerusalem."

It is a resurrection, indeed, this city compacted together: all firmly united because held by that divine attraction which the first verse expresses. No other bond can unite like this, and none else be like this—eternal.

Now we see the nation united with it, the tribes going up on their pilgrimages when in the land,—happy substitution for the toil of the wilderness itself, now ended. Thus the blessing is now complete for them: I do not, of course, mean told out completely, but we realize that they are in it.

2. The city thus reviewed is now lifted into the supremacy which belongs to it: "for there are set thrones of judgment,—thrones for the house of David." Christ has His place here, as we know, though we must go to other scriptures to learn that it is so. "Thrones," in the plural, and "for the *house* of David," imply, apparently, the vice-royalty of the simply human "prince" of that line, with whom Ezekiel makes us acquainted (ch. xlvi. throughout). Of the reign of the heavenly saints with Christ, with which some would connect it, it cannot possibly speak.

The thrones are "for judgment,"—no mere regal state: for righteousness is to be maintained upon the earth; and men are bidden now to welcome and be subject to this new sovereignty. As was said to Abraham, "blessed shall he be who blesseth thee," so now is it here: "they shall prosper that love thee." To

SUBSECTION 2. (Ps. CXXIII.–CXXV.)
Deliverance from enemies.

Ps. CXXIII.

[1]PSALM CXXIII.

God only sufficient.

A song of the ascents.

(i.) the eyes up to the throne.

UNTO thee do I [g]lift up mine eyes,
thou that dwellest in the heavens!

(ii.) as the eyes of servants.

Behold, as the eyes of servants unto the hand of their [h]masters,—
as the eyes of a maiden to the hand of her mistress,
so our eyes are toward Jehovah our God,
until he show us grace.

(iii.) the sanctuary refuge.

Be gracious to us, Jehovah, be gracious to us:
for our soul is filled full of [i]contempt;—

(iv.) the trial.

Our soul is filled full with the scorn of the [j]careless,—
the contempt of the haughty.

g Ps. 121. 1.

h *cf.* 2 Chr. 20. 12.

i *cf.* Neh. 4. 4.

j *cf.* Amos 6. 1. *cf.* Zech. 1. 15.

Ps. CXXIV.

[2]PSALM CXXIV.

The deliverance.

A song of the ascents: of David.

1 (1–5): Jehovah alone the cause.

(i.) He alone for,
(ii.) men against.

(iii.) the fullness of their wrath.

[k]HAD not Jehovah been for us,
now may Israel say:
Had not Jehovah been for us,
when men rose up against us:
They had [l]swallowed us alive,
when their anger was kindled against us;

k Ps. 54. 4.

l Ps. 56. 1, 2.

love righteousness is to be righteous; and here is a kingdom of righteousness in which every sufferer for and every hater of wrong may rejoice together. The peace of Jerusalem means the welfare of men and the blessing of God. There is a human ground for such a prayer as is here offered: brethren and companions in divine things whose prosperity it means; and there is a *divine-human* ground, that dwelling of God with man which the house of God implies. Oh for the days to come in which all this shall be revealed! And yet this is only the type and shadow of better things above.

Thus the first series is clearly ended, and to begin another we go back in time.

Subsec. 2.

The next series shows us Israel's deliverance from her enemies; and it is so transparently plain as to need little comment.

PSALM CXXIII.

The first psalm here, as in the former one, is only the distress, which yet has not gone as far as it will go. Jehovah is the one resource; and as dwelling in the heavens, not in Zion. But these eyes that turn to heaven are servants' eyes: the spirit of obedience is in their hearts; and along with this the conscious need of grace. The pride of man is here the trial, as before his deceitfulness and spirit of strife. But the latter blazes out again in the next psalm.

PSALM CXXIV.

The deliverance is here already come, and it is an escape out of the extremest peril. They are conscious that only Jehovah could have accomplished it: else they would have been overwhelmed, as they nearly had been. Deceit had been at work too, as wherever our enemy is concerned it will be: there was a snare, which is now broken. Jehovah's Name — all that He is — is, however, engaged

(iv.) overwhelmed us.
(v.) exercise.

Then the [m] waters had overwhelmed us,—
the torrent gone over our soul:
Then had gone over our soul
the [n] proud waters!

2 (6-8): The deliverance.
(i.) Jehovah's will.
(ii.) the snare broken.
(iii.) the Name our Sanctuary.

Blessed be Jehovah,
who [o] gave us not over, a prey to their teeth!
Our soul is [p] escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowlers:
the snare is broken, and we are escaped.
Our help is in the name of Jehovah,
the [q] maker of heaven and earth.

[3] PSALM CXXV.

Compassed round.

A song of the ascents.

Ps. cxxv.

1 (1-3): A faithful God.
(i.) immovable.
(ii.) the Defender.
(iii.) the holiness of it.

THEY that trust in Jehovah are as mount Zion:
it cannot be [r] moved;
it abideth for ever.
Jerusalem,—the mountains surround her;
and Jehovah is [s] round about his people,
from henceforth even for ever.
For the [t] rod of wickedness shall not rest on the lot of the righteous:
lest the righteous put forth their hands to iniquity.

2 (4, 5): Diverse dealings with diverse conditions.
(i.) to the upright.
(ii.) with those who turn aside.

Do good unto the good, Jehovah:
even to those [u] upright in heart.
But as for those who [v] turn aside into their crooked ways,
Jehovah will lead them forth with the workers of vanity,—
[for] [w] peace upon Israel.

[m] Ps. 42. 7.
[n] Ps. 123. 4.
[o] *cf.* Ps. 107. 6.
[p] *cf.* Ps. 91. 3.
[q] Ps. 134. 3. *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 19.
[r] *cf.* Ps. 46. 1-3. Ps. 87. 1. *cf.* Mic. 4. 1.
[s] Ps. 5. 12. Ps. 32. 7. Ps. 34. 7. *cf.* Zech. 2. 5.
[t] *cf.* Is. 14. 5. *ctr.* Ps. 45. 6.
[u] Ps. 73. 1. Ps. 140. 13. Prov. 2. 21.
[v] *cf.* Ex. 32. 8. *cf.* Is. 30. 9-16.
[w] *cf.* ver. 3. *cf.* Ps. 46. 8, 9. *cf.* Is. 32. 16-18.

for them, as it is for all His people. He has pledged it to us. How peaceful, then, at all times, should our confidence be!

Psalm CXXV.

The third psalm goes beyond this to the fully realized result. Mount Zion is again in view, but only as a symbol of the immovable security of all that trust in Jehovah. The mountains stand around her; and so Jehovah Himself is for ever round about His people. And this in holiness: He would not allow the rod of wickedness to rest on the lot of the righteous, lest their feebleness give way before this prosperous iniquity, to follow the path of its success.

Nay, let Jehovah do good unto the good,—not faultless, but through grace upright in the heart. For the rest, the perverters of their ways, He will surely give them their place among the workers of vanity,—all their subtlety shown only to be that,—and this for Israel's peace as delivered from them.

Subsec. 3.

The third series, while it speaks uniformly of blessing, and exalts Jehovah as the gracious Source of all, shows no less how far below the New Testament standpoint we are here, necessarily. The blessing is earthly, not heavenly; nay, in things purely "natural," as we say; that is, pertaining to the sphere of the first creation. It does not reach to the eternal state, even of the earth; and the Old Testament as a whole has but the promise of the "new earth," no open manifestation of its blessedness. The psalms are, here again, all of remarkably simple character.

SUBSECTION 3. (Ps. cxxvi.-cxxviii.)

Jehovah displaying Himself for His people.

Ps. cxxvi.

[1]PSALM CXXVI.

The grace and faithfulness of His ways.

A song of the ascents.

(i.) singular grace.

WHEN Jehovah [x]turned the captivity of Zion,
we were like those that dream.

(ii.) the testimony of the nations.

Then was our mouth filled with [y]laughter,
and our tongue with shouting:
then said they among the [z]nations,
Jehovah hath done great things for them.

(iii.) realized.

Jehovah hath done [a]great things for us:
[so that] we are glad.

(iv.) let our experience be as this experience.

Turn again our captivity, Jehovah,
as [b]streams in the South.*

(v.) governmental ways.

They that [c]sow in tears
shall reap with singing.

(vi.) the triumph.

Though one goeth to and fro even weeping,
bearing the measure of seed,
he shall surely come back with [d]singing for joy,
[e]bearing his sheaves.

Ps. cxxvii.

[2]PSALM CXXVII.

The necessary dependence of all upon Jehovah.

A song of the ascents: of Solomon.

(i.) Jehovah only sufficient.

[f]EXCEPT Jehovah build the house,
its builders toil on it in vain:
except Jehovah [g]keep the city,
in vain the keeper is awake.

x Is. 35. 10. *cf.* Jer. 50. 4-7.
cf. Ps. 85. 1.
y *cf.* Job 8 21. *cf.* Is. 65. 19.
z Ps. 98. 2, 3. Is. 52. 10.
a *cf.* 1 Sam. 12. 24. *cf.* Num. 23. 23.
b *cf.* Is. 35. 7, 8. *cf.* Is. 44. 3, 4. *cf.* Josh. 15. 19.
c Jer. 31. 8, 9. Is. 54. 11, 12
d Is. 54. 1. Zeph. 3. 14.
e *cf.* Is. 49. 20, 21.
f *cf.* Is. 30. 15.
g Ps. 121. 3-5. Is. 27. 3.

* *Negeb.*

PSALM CXXVI.

Zion's captivity is turned, and God's wonderful grace to Israel seems yet almost too great to be believed. Yet it is real; and all the world is speaking of it. The nations have learned to speak of Jehovah, and of the great things He has done; and their hearts echo this with gladness: Jehovah has done great things indeed.

The fourth verse prays for the full accomplishment—probably the entire return now of their scattered tribes, so that the land may receive again the streams of her population, as the dry channels of the south receive in due time the fresh and abundant water. Those dry beds speak of Israel in her time of drought, when her only rain was the tears with which she bedewed the earth; and God has to appoint to His people, because of what they are, such seasons of disciplinary sorrow. Yet not of themselves will these be fruitful. Fruit can only come from the seed which, thrown into the furrows, has in it the new life which is to reward the sower's toil. And Israel will have had these patient sowers, the "wise," of Daniel's prophecy, who shall "turn many to righteousness," and whose sheaves shall be brought in with harvest-songs.

So will the grace of God's ways be manifest, as well as His faithful dealing with His own. In this sense also does it reign through righteousness.

PSALM CXXVII.

Thus all comes from Jehovah, and He is seen to be the sole dependence of all His creatures. It is from this that man departed in Eden, to set up in independ-

(ii.) the contrast between man's effort and Jehovah's gift.

(iii.) a portion from Jehovah.

(iv.) for the time of trial.

(v.) and juridical assault(?)

Vain is it for you to [h]rise up early,
to be down late,
to eat the bread of [i]drudgery:
so giveth he to his beloved—in [j]sleep.
Lo, [k]children are an inheritance from Jehovah;
the fruit of the womb a reward.
As [l]arrows in the hand of a mighty man,
so are children of youth.
Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them:
they shall not be [m]ashamed when they speak with enemies in the gate.

[h] *cf.* Is. 7. 4. *cf.* Is. 30. 7.
[i] *cf.* Lk. 10. 40–42.
[j] Ps. 131. 2. *cf.* Mark 4. 26, 27.
[k] *cf.* Gen. 15. 2–5. *cf.* Is. 56. 3–5.
[l] *cf.* Gen. 14. 14, 15.
[m] *cf.* Gen. 30. 23.

Ps. cxxviii.

[1]PSALM CXXVIII.

The portion of the man that fears Jehovah.

A song of the ascents.

(i.) the obedient man.

(ii.) his increase yielding him support.

(iii.) his house.

HAPPY is every one that [n]feareth Jehovah:
that walketh in his ways.
For thou shalt eat the [o]labor of thy hands:
happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.
Thy wife shall be as a [p]fruitful vine
in the inner part of thy house:
thy children like [q]olive-plants
round about thy table.

[n] Ps. 112. 1, 2.
[o] Is. 3. 10. Is. 65. 22.
[p] *cf.* Ezek. 19. 10.
[q] Ps. 144. 12.

(iv.) an appeal to experience.

Behold, for [r]thus shall the man be blessed
that feareth Jehovah.

[r] *cfr.* Ps. 52. 7.

(v.) Israel with God.

(vi.) the threshold of full blessing (?)

Jehovah shall bless thee [s]out of Zion:
and thou shalt see the [t]good of Jerusalem, all the days of thy life.
Yea, thou shalt see thy [u]children's children,
[and] peace upon Israel.

[s] Ps. 134. 3. Ps. 135. 21.
[t] Ps. 122. 6.
[u] Gen. 50. 23. Prov. 17. 6.

ence for himself. If he is brought back, then, it must be to this; and this is what we find in the hundred and twenty-seventh psalm. Jehovah alone is sufficient: except He build the house, the builders toil on it in vain; except He keep the city, the keeper vainly is awake. And then follows the emphatic rebuke of that anxious toil on man's part, early and late, eating the bread of drudgery, while God gives to those beloved of Him in a way so different: they lie down and sleep, and are supplied!

So with the blessing of children: they are an inheritance from Jehovah, and a reward; a portion like Abraham's, a defence in the day of trial, and of false accusation.* This last part of the psalm leads on to the one following.

PSALM CXXVIII.

We have here the portion of him who fears Jehovah, but with only a hint of higher blessings than the natural. One might think it patriarchal life restored, but for Jerusalem and Zion. The six verses here give us, I think, an intimation that after all, this is not the full blessing. It scarcely needs comment.

It is the happiness of the obedient man. He subsists on his own labor—does not yield it to another. Wife and children are the adornments of his house; and now there is no thought of enemies in the gate. The fourth verse appeals to experience for the proof of the blessing; there being no more the mysteries that perplex us now.

In the fifth, the blessing is from Jehovah out of Zion, and Jerusalem is in

* The gate of the city was the place of judgment.

SUBSECTION 4. (Ps. cxxix.-cxxxi.)
The lessons of experience.

Ps. cxxix.

[1]PSALM CXXIX.

An over-ruling Hand.

A song of the ascents.

1 (1-3): By the will of the lawless.
(i.) from the beginning;
(ii.) but who has not prevailed;
(iii.) what they did accomplish.

MANY a time have they [u]afflicted me from my youth,—
let Israel now say:
Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth,
yet they have [w]not prevailed against me.
The plowers [x]plowed upon my back:
they made long their furrows.

2 (4-8): His deliverance by their destruction.
(i.) in righteousness.
(ii.) enemies turned back.
(iii.) the ban;
(iv.) failing.
(v.) cut off from Jehovah.

Jehovah is righteous:
he [y]cutteth asunder the cords of the wicked.
Let them be [z]ashamed and turned back,
all the haters of Zion.
Let them be as grass upon the house-tops,
that [a]withereth before it be plucked up;
Wherewith the mower [b]filleth not his hand,
nor the binder his bosom.
Nor do they that pass by say,
the [c]blessing of Jehovah be upon you:
we have blessed you in Jehovah's name.

u *cf.* Is. 54.6, 11.
w Mi. 7. 8.
x Ps. 66. 12. Is. 51. 23.
y *cf.* Ps. 116. 16. *ctr.* Ps. 2.3.
z Ps. 70. 2. *cf.* Ps.48.4-6.
a Ps. 37. 2. Is. 37. 27.
b *ctr.* Ps.126. 6. *cf.* Ps. 1. 4.
c *cf.* Ruth 2. 4.

continual prosperity. Such are the days to which we have here reached: a state of things which the sixth verse only emphasizes in children's children seen following one another in progressive generations, and still with "peace upon Israel."

Subsec. 4.

The fourth subsection drops apparently below this; only, in fact, to secure a deeper blessing. We go back once more from the summer days which the last series pictured, to learn from sorrow and adversity the lessons of those various changes by which men learn the fear of God (Ps. lv. 19).

And for this self must be known, pride humbled, the world seen in divine light, and the soul weaned from all that makes it up. That is what is found in the present series. Psalm cxxix. first shows us the overruling hand of God in sorrow and evil. Then the hundred and thirtieth shows us sin discovered, and its remedy by one that cries out of the depths; then the hundred and thirty-first gives the moral result in a weaned soul.

PSALM CXXIX.

The first psalm here carries us behind the outward disorder of things, to show us God accomplishing His will through all. He may be acting with the enemies of His people, but He is not Himself an enemy. Israel may look back through the time of her long afflictions, and see how men have inflicted these on her; yet they have never really prevailed. They have not done what they intended; and they have done what they never intended. They have been as plowers plowing on the back,—painful and humiliating work enough; but it means none the less sowing and harvest; and the plow is set aside even before this. He who uses it for good, sets it aside too, to have the good.

So the psalmist prophesies and prays for the destruction of the wicked at the hands of the righteous God. He sees their cords cut asunder, and prays that they may be turned back in shame who hate Zion, and hate thus the purposes of grace with which it is identified. As grass upon the house-tops, withering be-

Ps. cxxx.

[z]PSALM CXXX.

Redemption from sin.

A song of the ascents.

(i.) the sole hope.

OUT of the [d]depths have I called
unto thee, Jehovah.

(ii.) the prayer for help.

Lord, [e]hear my voice!
let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.

(iii.) the Holy One.

If thou, Jah, shouldest [f]mark perversities,
Lord, who shall stand?

(iv.) but merciful.

But with thee there is [g]forgiveness,
that thou mayest be [h]feared.

(v.) waiting on Him.

I [i]wait on Jehovah,—my soul doth wait:
and in his word do I hope.

(vi.) till the limited time.

My soul [waiteth] for the Lord,
more than the [j]watchers for the morning,—
[more than] watchers for the morning.

(vii.) perfect provision.

Let Israel [k]wait in hope for Jehovah,
for with Jehovah is [l]loving-kindness,
and with him is [m]plenteous redemption;

(viii.) the new covenant.

And he will redeem Israel
[n]from all his perversities.

d *cf.* Ps. 69. 1, 2. *cf.* Is. 38.9-20. Lam. 3. 55. Ps. 107. 28.
e Ps. 39. 11, 12.
f Ps. 143. 2. Mal. 3. 2. *cf.* Ex. 34. 6, 7. *cf.* Nu. 23. 21.
g Rom. 4. 6-8. Ps. 103. 3.
h *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 17, 18. *cf.* Phil. 2. 12, 13 with 1 Jno. 4.18.
i Ps. 25. 5. Lam. 3. 25, 26.
j *ctr.* Is. 21. 11, 12. *cf.* Mal. 4.2. *cf.* Rev. 22. 16, 17.
k Ps. 131. 3.
l Ps. 145. 9.
m Ps. 86. 5, 15. Ps. 103. 8. *cf.* Is. 40. 2.
n Ps. 25. 22; *cf.* Is. 33. 24; *cf.* Titus 2. 14.

fore men think enough of it to pluck it up; which never has a handful for the mower, nor a bosomful for the binder,—so let them be under the ban of God apart from Jehovah's blessing. So indeed *must* the evil, as evil, find its doom from God.

Psalm CXXX.

We go on to see what the plowing has effected. We had it in fact in the series of remnant-psalms in the first book of psalms (iii.–vii). The troubles of the remnant in the latter days, though at the hand of godless enemies, are used to bring them to realize the sins, which cast them entirely on the mercy of God alone. This is expressed here very similarly, and in words that show more than there that it is the effect of the disciplinary process. The humbled soul has learned to *wait* on Jehovah, the impatience of self-will set aside, patience having its perfect work; and this leads on to the closing psalm, where the full result in this way is seen.

"Out of the depths"—the extreme of distress, hopeless save to God—the soul cries to Him, the sole possible Helper. It seeks answer to its lowly complaint. It realizes in Him a holiness which, if He should act simply in view of it, no one could stand. But with Him there is forgiveness also; and the mercy that He shows is the very thing that produces in the recipients of it that reverent fear in which lies the beginning of all true wisdom. This makes Him to the soul its one expectancy: it waits in hope on Him. His word sustains and directs this hope, waiting for the Lord more than the anxious watchers for the morning light.

So may Israel wait in hope then. The bounty of His love will justify it. For with Him is plenteous redemption; and He will redeem Israel from all his perversities. The new covenant number fitly closes here the lowly and chastened strain of the psalm.

Psalm CXXXI.

The full moral result is shown in the final one: blessed result it is. All the pride of the heart has been broken down before God. The eyes no more range

Ps. cxxxi.

[3]PSALM CXXXI.

The moral result.

A song of the ascents: of David.

(i.) as to pride.

JEHOVAH, my heart is [o]not haughty;
nor are mine [p]eyes lofty:
nor do I engage in [q]great matters,
nor in things too [r]wonderful for me.

(ii.) weaned.

Surely I have [s]composed and quieted my soul,
like a weaned child with its mother:
my soul is beside me like a [t]weaned child.

(iii.) the refuge.

Let Israel hope in Jehovah:
from henceforth, [u]even for ever.

o *cf.* Zeph.3. 11. *cf.* Hos.7.10.
p Ps. 101. 5. Prov.30.13.
q *cf.* Jer.45.5
r *cf.* Ps.139.6.
s *cf.* Is.30.15. Lam. 3. 26.
t *cf.* Matt. 18. 3. *cf.* Rom.16 19. Ps. 116. 7.
u *cf.* Ps.125. 2.

SUBSECTION 5. (Ps. 132-134.)

Immanu-el.

Ps. cxxxii.

[1]PSALM CXXXII.

Zion and the King.

A song of the ascents.

1 (1-5): The foundation of the covenant.

(i.) a plea for faithfulness.

(ii.) the vow of service.

(iii.) full setting apart.

JEHOVAH, remember for David
all his [v]trouble:
Who [w]sware unto Jehovah,
and vowed unto the Mighty One of Jacob:—
I will not go into the pavilion of [x]my house,
I will not go up to the canopy of my bed;

v *cf.* 1 Sam. 26. 18-20.
w *cf.* 1 Chr. 13. 1-3.
x *cf.* 2 Sam. 7. 2.

through the heavens. There are no more ambitions attempts to reason about things too wonderful. He is master of himself, while conscious of the impulses within, which he stills and quiets. Spite of this nature of his which still needs government, he is like a weaned child in the presence of its mother, seeking no more his satisfaction in that in which he formerly sought it. Yea, his soul, the seat of these desires, is beside him its master—mastered himself by the glory of another Presence—like this weaned child.

When this condition is indeed attained, what hope in God then comes to animate the heart of the saint! Israel, thus in true peace with God may hope now in Jehovah, the faithful covenant-God, from henceforth, even for ever.

Subsec. 5.

The last triad of these songs of ascent is indeed a fitting close to them. As a fifth series, God and man are found together in it now in full reality; and through the historical veil there shines yet plainly the figure of Immanuel Himself. David and Aaron, the king and the priest, are fully recognized types of Christ in these official characters; while together they spell for us the Name of our Melchizedek, whose *work* appears in the final psalm. Here the "ascents" end in a glorious and eternal resting-place, beyond which there can be none,—no higher point reached. Of course, as to the blessing implied, Israel's is upon an earthly platform, as ours upon a heavenly. This we scarcely need continually to be reminded of: and the application to ourselves is scarcely the more difficult on account of this.

PSALM CXXXII.

Zion and the king, and the relation between these two are the subject of the first psalm of this closing series. Zion is here the seat of two Kingdoms, a heavenly and an earthly one, which now come into an absolute agreement never again to be disturbed. The books of the Kings give us the long history of past discord. The present psalm inaugurates the new peace brought in by the Prince of peace; and founded upon the work by which He has made peace.

(iv.) without allowing nature's weakness.
(v.) that God may be with man.
2 (6, 7): The past estrangement.
(i.) the ark solitary.
(ii.) love's desire.

I will not give [y] sleep to mine eyes
[nor] slumber to mine eye-lids,—
Until I find a [z] place for Jehovah,
tabernacles for the Mighty One of [a] Jacob.

Lo, we heard of it at [b] Ephratah,
we have found it in the fields of the wood.*
Let us [c] go into his tabernacles;
let us worship at his footstool.

y *cf.* Prov. 6. 4.
z *cf.* 1 Chr. 15. 1-28.
a *cf.* Is. 44. 1, 2.
b 2 Sam. 6. 2.
c Ps. 100. 4.

* Or "Jaar."

The work itself is not here, but the King is, and His zeal for Jehovah's house—His dwelling-place among men,—which has found the means of accomplishment, at His own cost, of eternal purposes. It will be best to let the psalm speak for itself with regard to such things, as it does in its own perfect way.

It is not directly said to be a psalm of David; but this seems to be most naturally indicated; and the tenth verse, which is generally considered to be against this, is in fact the most decisive argument in its favor, and that just because, interpreted, as is commonly done, "it creates," as Moll says, "the impression, not of a Messianic, but of an historical reference, and of having been spoken by a theocratic king. . . . The suppliant styles himself the anointed of Jehovah, yet prays for an answer 'for the sake of David thy servant.'" Typically, we shall indeed be troubled to know how to account for this king who prays for the sake of David, except David and the king are one! And then David is the petitioner also. That he speaks of himself in the third person is no difficulty, but quite according to his utterances elsewhere (2 Sam. vii. 20, 26).

1. The first section gives us the foundation of God's covenant with Him, his own intense longing for Jehovah's dwelling-place among men, which was, however, only the mere faint reflection of what it points to in the true "Beloved." All *His* trouble sprang but out of this; the zeal of God's house was that which consumed the Blessed Sufferer Himself. This, therefore, is a plea which the Eternal cannot possibly forget.

The vow of service follows to the "Mighty One of Jacob," easily realized by us as the God of omnipotent grace. To the purposes of divine grace, in which He is glorified, and in fulfillment of which it is that His dwelling-place is found among men, the "Man Christ Jesus" absolutely devoted Himself. Here was the One who would take no rest, whom no natural weakness would divert from His one object—"a place for Jehovah: tabernacles"—the twofold sanctuary, for us by the rending of the veil made one—"for the Mighty One of Jacob."

This is indeed what Immanuel—that Name of His which is grounded in the mystery of His wondrous Person—keeps ever before us. "God with man" is what is the innermost thought of the Mediator, what mediation means. The form in which it is here expressed is, of course, Jewish; but it embodies an infinite blessing, which it takes the full Christian gospel and the Book of Revelation together to bring out as we know it now. Eternity alone will give to us its priceless value.

2. Israel's estrangement from God is now brought before us: a fact of history with a prophetic significance. The ark was the essential feature of the tabernacle. It was the ark of the *covenant*,—the throne of Jehovah in Israel, upon the mercy-seat of which, once every year, the blood of atonement was sprinkled, in order that the sanctuary might be able to abide in the midst of Israel. When the ark, therefore, went into captivity in the Philistines' land, "Ichabod" was written upon the people. The link between God and the people had ceased to be by the priesthood. God indeed maintained one by the prophet He had raised up for the emergency; but this did not restore the priesthood, nor therefore the ark: it was a sign, rather, of its being in abeyance. And thus, though it speedily returned from among the Philistines, it did not return to its former place in Israel;

3 (8-10): Let Him return to His house. (i.) the place of His throne. (ii.) with its priestly ministry. (iii.) Thine Anointed! remember David.
4 (11, 12): Conditions. (i.) unchangeable promise as to the throne.

[d] Arise, Jehovah, into thy resting-place,
thou, and the ark of thy strength.
Let thy priests be [e] clothed with righteousness,
and let thy pious ones [f] shout for joy.
For thy servant [g] David's sake!
turn not away the face of thine [h] anointed.

Jehovah hath [i] sworn unto David in truth;
he will not turn from it:
Of the [j] fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne;

d Nu. 10. 35. Ps. 68. 1.
e ver. 16. 2 Chr. 6.41.
f cf. Is.61.10. cf. Ezr.3.11, 12.
g ver. 1. cf. 1 Ki.11. 12.
h cf. Ps.84.9.
i Ps. 89. 3.
j 2 Sam. 7. 11, 12. cf. Matt.22. 41-45.

and David himself speaks of it as not sought unto, all the days of Saul (1 Chr. xiii. 3). The words of the psalm here show how far it had dropped out of Israel's thoughts. "We *heard of it* at Ephratah;* we found it"—where? "in the fields of the wood." The last word is "Jaar," and there is no need for doubt that it refers to Kirjath Jearim, the "city of the woods." But this style of speech clearly emphasizes it as a place of obscurity and retirement. The city has disappeared, as it were, from view, and only the "woods" are left.

But now the call to return is heard: "let us go unto His tabernacles; let us worship at His footstool." The abrupt, impulsive character of the address is quite in keeping. The heart is now awake, and realizing its ungrateful neglect of Him who is thus in grace come down to man.

3. Now the house is got ready for its divine Inhabitant. He is besought to come in, and after all changes to find here his rest: "Arise, Jehovah, into Thy resting-place, Thou and the ark of Thy strength." Here is His throne, and the priestly service must be connected with it, if it is to be a throne of grace. The priesthood of the past failed through the iniquity which characterized it: now may Jehovah provide Himself priests that shall be clothed with righteousness; and let pious ones, instead of wailing "Ichabod," shout for joy. The plea with which the psalm began is again urged: "For thy servant David's sake, turn not away the face of Thine Anointed."

The plea is, I think, here a double one, and complete in its two members. Christ in His Person and work are represented in "David" and Jehovah's "Anointed." But instead of the actual work being named, it is rather His own appointment to it and the testimony given of His delight in that appointment, that Jehovah is besought to remember. *He* had made no mistake. It was the Christ, *His* Christ, who invited Him to enter into the house made ready for Him, in the fulfillment of His own purposes of unfailing grace.

4. Jehovah's answer commences in the fourth section; but here we are called to distinguish, as connected with the typical character of the announcement, that which was but the type and therefore imperfect and transient, from that which belonged to this eternal purpose. We see in the end of Samuel (2 Sam. xxiii. 5, *notes*) how David there would have us distinguish. Here there is the same separation: the fourth section gives us the conditional promise, in connection, however, with that which is not so; while the fifth section speaks only of the unconditional.

The unconditional purpose is first of all shown as the basis of the conditional. But here David is, however, simply the historical person: "Jehovah hath sworn unto David in truth; He will not turn from it: Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." Here, plainly, is something more than Solomon. David is to have a throne upon which a Son of his shall sit unchangingly. Christ is not named, but can alone be this "Son of David,"—not David, but his Son.

* Ephratah seems to be certainly not Bethlehem,—which would answer neither to the conditions nor the history,—but the district in which Kirjath Jearim was situated, *Caleb*-ephratah (1 Chr. ii. 24), named from Caleb's wife Ephratah, whose son Shobal was the "father of Kirjath-jearim" (ver. 50). This was the view of Delitzsch and Hitzig.

(ii.) the succession.

If thy children [k]keep my covenant,
and my testimony that I teach them,
[l]their children shall also sit upon thy throne for aye.

5 (13-18): Immanu-el.
(i.) sovereign purpose.
(ii.) the attachment of love.
(iii.) satisfaction.
(iv.) provision for frailty.
(v.) the recompense.
(vi.) the triumph.

For Jehovah hath [m]chosen Zion:
he hath desired it for a habitation for himself:
This is my [n]resting-place for aye:
here will I dwell, for I have desired it.
I will [o]abundantly bless her provision;
I will [p]satisfy her needy ones with bread.
I will also [q]clothe her priests with salvation;
and her pious ones shall [r]shout aloud with joy.
There will I cause the horn of David to [s]bud forth:
I have set in order a [t]lamp for mine anointed.
His enemies will I clothe with [u]shame:
and upon himself shall his crown [v]flourish.

k cf. 2 Sam. 7. 14.
l Ps. 89. 29, 36.
m Ps. 48.1,2.
n Ps. 78. 68. Ps. 68. 16. *cf.* Is.11.10.
o cf. Ps. 107. 5, 9.
p Ps. 103. 5.
q ver. 9.
r Ps. 32. 11.
s Ezek. 29. 21. Ps. 89. 17.
t cf. 1 Ki.11. 36. *cf.*2 Sam.21. 17.
u Ps.35.4,26.
v cf. Is. 4. 2. *cf.* Ps. 21.3.

In contrast with this we have then the conditional promise: "If thy children keep My covenant, and My testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for aye." Here is what explains the long history of failure. The promise, like that as to Abraham's seed, has its two different — and in some sense contrasted — applications. The fulfillment seems fitful and uncertain until the eye rests on Christ; and then, through Him at last, even that on the lower plane is finally secured.

5. But then we pass from that which is conditional to sovereign purpose; and here, though the fulfillment may be delayed, there is nothing but absolute assurance. We can see, too, that it is the real and full answer to the prayer of the first part of the psalm. In this again Christ is the antitypical David, and the blessing is eternal.

Again we see that God's everlasting purpose alone explains all the rest:—

"*For* Jehovah hath chosen Zion: He hath desired it for a habitation for Himself. This is My resting-place for aye: here will I dwell, for I have desired it." Here we see, indeed, how God rests in His love,— because His heart is satisfied.

Here He pours out His heart, therefore: "I will abundantly bless her provision; I will satisfy her needy ones with bread." While grace more than answers the desire for its tender ministrations: "I will also clothe her priests with salvation,"—a security greater than that of any personal righteousness of man; "and her pious ones"— not *holy* ones, as separate from evil, but *godly* rather, as with heart for God —"shall shout"— aye, "shall shout *aloud* for joy."

And here, in the everlasting city, the horn of David's power shall bud forth at last, without any check or intermittence. "I will set in order a lamp for Mine Anointed." Now there is final triumph: "His enemies will I clothe with shame; but upon Himself shall His crown flourish."

Psalm CXXXIII.

Zion, then, has her glorious King, and the divine dwelling-place is in her midst. The priestly service is established, but we have not yet caught sight of the High Priest Himself. Now we are to do so: how fatal a defect would it be, if He did not appear. For all the lesser priests without Him are of no value. They hold but a derived office. And on the great day of atonement all other priests must needs retire to make way for Him.

Moreover, the King alone, as such, will not suffice to bring in blessing for man. Melchizedek may bless Abraham; but only as priest of the Most High God can do so.

The King may indeed build the house of God, as we have seen; but only the Priest can furnish it. Nay, only his work can lay the foundation either. Where

Ps. cxxxiii.

[2]PSALM CXXXIII.

The Priestly Mediator's service.

A song of the ascents: of David.

(i.) unity.

BEHOLD how good and how pleasant it is,
for brethren to dwell together in [w]unity.

(ii.) dependent on the Mediator.

[It is] like the [x]precious oil upon the head,
that ran down upon the beard,—
upon Aaron's beard,—
that ran down to the [y]hem of his garments.

(iii.) and realized through the Spirit of holiness.

As the [z]dew of Hermon,
that descendeth on the [a]mountains of Zion:
for there hath Jehovah commanded the [b]blessing,
life for [c]evermore.

Ps. cxxxiv.

[3]PSALM CXXXIV.

In the Sanctuary.

A song of the ascents.

(i.) constant, universal praise.

BEHOLD, bless Jehovah, all ye [d]servants of Jehovah,
who stand by [e]night in the house of Jehovah.

w *cf.* Is. 11. 13. *cf.* Ezek. 37. 16, 17.
x Ex. 30. 25, 30. *cf.* Jer. 23. 5, 6.
y Ex. 28. 33-35.
z *cf.* Deut. 3. 8. *cf.* Hos. 14. 5.
a Ps. 125. 1, 2.
b Ps. 69. 28. *cf.* Lev. 25. 21. Deut. 28. 8.
c Ps. 121. 8.
d Ps. 135. 1, 2.
e 1 Chr. 9. 33.

in answer to the sweet savor of accepted sacrifice the angel of destruction puts his sword into its sheath again, there David says is to be the house of God (1 Chr. xxii. 1). The same thing is suggested in the beginning of the last psalm, where David's trouble is what is to be remembered to him. In the present one we have, on the other hand, the Priest, but no sacrificial work. It is plain that we have to follow out the suggestions contained in each with the aid of knowledge derived from elsewhere.

Israel are now presenting the lovely spectacle of a brotherhood in unity among themselves. It is a spiritual unity, too, that characterizes them, as is evident by the similitude employed, which is not merely such, but a true type. This anointing of Aaron, which was without blood, was the testimony of God's delight in Christ in the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Him for His official work,—the justification of the divine delight in man as seen in Him. Thus from Him it flows to others, although not in their case without blood. The connection of the Priestly Mediator with the pouring out of the Spirit from on high (Isa. xxxii. 15) on Israel is plainly what is emphasized in this.

The dew of Hermon is a different figure. Like a "great white throne," seen through a large part of the land, and from which the river of death runs down to the salt sea of judgment, Hermon speaks, as we have seen elsewhere, of the ban upon evil (Ps. xlii. 6, *notes*). Upon the execution of this depends all the blessing of Israel; and the "dew of Hermon," apart from the consideration of natural causes, though not without their operation, might easily be believed to be as abundant and refreshing as in fact it is. The spiritual dew of Hermon is now descending on the mountains of Zion, purged as they are from all the evil of the past, and consecrated to God for ever: "for there hath Jehovah commanded the blessing, even life for evermore."

Hence we see what brotherhood in Israel is, from henceforth. It is in the new life to which men must be born again, that they may enter the kingdom. Israel has become a nation such as never was before,—a people all holy (Isa. iv. 3). The new covenant is now their abiding security.

PSALM CXXXIV.

The last song of ascents shows us Israel in the sanctuary, the night bringing no cessation of constant praise, the praise of a dependent people, rich with the blessing of Jehovah their God. This is, in brief, its three portions.

Here the work of the true Melchizedek is seen, the One who as Man leads out

(ii.) with the prayer of dependent ones.

(iii.) the full blessing.

Lift up your hands to the [f]sanctuary,*
and bless Jehovah.
Jehovah bless thee [g]out of Zion,—
he who [h]made heaven and earth.

[f] Ps. 84. 4.
[g] Ps. 128. 9.
[h] Ps. 121. 2.

SECTION 2. (Ps. CXXXV, CXXXVI.)
The testimony of history confirmed.

Ps. CXXXV.

[1]PSALM CXXXV.

The summons to render it.

1 (1-7): Sovereign Lord and Disposer of all.

(i.) Jehovah.

(ii.) from His servants.

(iii.) for His Name.

(iv.) His mercy to Jacob.

(v.) the weak with the Strong.

(vi.) Master!

[i] HALLELUJAH!
praise ye the [j]Name of Jehovah:
praise, ye [k]servants of Jehovah.
Ye who [l]stand in the house of Jehovah:
in the courts of the house of our God.
Praise ye Jah, for Jehovah is [m]good:
psalm unto his Name, for it is pleasant.
For [n]Jacob hath Jah chosen for himself:
Israel for his own possession.
For *I* know that Jehovah is [o]great:
and our Lord is above all gods.
Whatever Jehovah [p]pleased, that he hath done,
in heaven and in earth,
in the [q]seas and in all the deeps.

[i] Ps. 111. 1.
[j] Ps. 113. 1.
[k] *cf.* Is. 53. 17.
[l] Ps. 134. 1.
[m] Ps. 107. 1.
[n] Is. 43. 1. Deut. 7. 6, 7.
[o] Ps. 95. 3. Ps. 115. 3.
[p] 1 Chr. 16. 25.
[q] *cf.* Ps. 148. 7.

*Or holily.

His people's heart in a praise in which He is foremost. While as God, the Representative of God, He can pronounce and bring in the blessing. This is Immanuel and Melchizedek in one; and that is the end here. Everything is in His hand who is the Father of eternity, the Maker and Upholder of the new creation. And here the last "ascent" is fully reached.

Sec. 2.

The two psalms that follow are evidently a supplementary section, in which Israel's witness to God is given, the acknowledgment which shall at last be made to Him as to His ways of perfect faithfulness and wisdom all through His dealings with them. There is a peculiarity in these psalms which this accounts for, that they both take up mainly the deliverance from Egypt and their being brought into the land; His latter-day mercies to them only being brought in at the end, as if the completion of this, which no doubt is the truth. All their history between has been but an interruption of the blessing then ready to come, which their unbelief put away from them for the many generations that have intervened. Then, at last, that old Egyptian deliverance will be, as it were, repeated in a still more wondrous way: the broken-off history will be taken up again and completed, and thus its meaning will be at last fully shown.

PSALM CXXXV.

The first of these psalms is the summons to celebrate this, to which the second is the response. In this recalling of their old history there are doubtless abundant lessons which we carelessly overlook, just because we are so familiar with it; and here the numerals ought to afford signal help, only that here also we are but too dull, though for an opposite reason.

1. We have first the exhortation to praise Jehovah as the Sovereign Lord and Disposer of all, and who has been pleased in this way to take up Jacob for Himself,—not surely for good in Jacob. He who has done so is Lord above all gods, with which His people have, alas, so constantly compared Him,—inconceivably

(vii.) complete power.

Who causeth [r] vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth:
he maketh [s] lightnings for the rain:
he bringeth the [t] wind out of his treasuries.

2 (8-12.): Deliverer.
(i.) the first-born.
(ii.) the testimony in delivering.

Who [u] smote the first-born of Egypt:
both man and beast.
He sent [v] signs and wonders, O Egypt, into the midst of thee,
upon Pharaoh and upon all his servants.
Who smote [w] many nations,
and slew mighty kings:

(iii.) in the inheritance (?)

[x] Sihon, king of the Amorites,
and [y] Og, king of Bashan,
and [z] all the kingdoms of Canaan.

(iv.) the nations yielding.

And he gave their land for an [a] inheritance,
for an inheritance to Israel his people.

(v.) government.

Jehovah, thy [b] Name [endureth] for ever;
the remembrance of thee, Jehovah, for all generations.*

3 (13, 14): Now returning to His people.
(i.) enduring praise.
(ii.) as judging in their behalf.

For Jehovah [c] judgeth his people,
and [d] repenteth himself for his servants.

4 (15-18): The vanity of idols.
(i.) their origin.
(ii.) witnesses that witness not.
(iii.) unreality.
(iv.) vanity all together.

The [e] idols of the nations are silver and gold,
the work of men's hands.
They have a [f] mouth and speak not;
[g] eyes have they, and see not:
[h] Ears have they, and hear not:
nor is their [i] breath in their mouths.
They that make them are [j] like unto them:
[and] every one that [k] trusteth in them.

* "generation and generation."

r Jer. 10. 13. *cf.* Gen. 2. 6.
s Job. 38. 25, 26. Ps. 97. 4. Zech. 10. 1.
t *cf.* Job 38. 22. Prov. 30. 4.
u Ex. 12. 29, 30. Ps. 78. 51. Ps 105. 36. Ps. 136. 10.
v Ps. 105. 27.
w Deut. 4. 38. Josh. 23. 9.
x Num. 21. 21-30.
y Num. 21. 31-35.
z Josh. 12.
a Josh. 14. 1 etc.
b Ex. 3. 15. *cf.* Mal. 3. 6. *cf.* Heb. 13. 8.
c Deut. 32. 32. *cf.* Heb. 10. 30.
d *cf.* Ps. 90. 13. *cf.* Hos. 11. 8. *cf.* Jer. 42. 10.
e Ps. 115. 4-18, *ref's*
f *ctr.* Ex. 20. 1, etc.
g *ctr.* Prov. 15. 3.
h *ctr.* Mal. 3. 16.
i *cf.* Rev. 13. 15. *ctr.* Gen. 2. 7.
j *ctr.* Ps. 50. 21. *ctr.* Is. 40. 18.
k Is. 42. 17, 18; *ctr.* Ps. 125. 1.

great unto those so infinitely little. But Jehovah has done, spite of all opposition, just what He pleased in heaven and in earth. Vapor, and rain, and lightning, and wind — all the apparatus of storm — are in His hand, and made to serve His beneficent purposes.

2. The psalmist then recalls His ways as the Deliverer of His people in Egypt, and right on into the land. The smiting of the first-born was the blow that struck off their shackles from them, though part only of a succession of signs and wonders in which He had displayed Himself for their deliverance. In the land given them for an inheritance also He smote many nations and mighty kings, and gave their land unto His people.

3. Briefly as all this is spoken of, a briefer section still speaks of His return now to the fulfillment of His purposes of love then intimated, now for so long seeming to be set altogether aside. Yet the words of Moses' song quoted (ver. 14) show that all this had been anticipated before ever the land was entered. And this would be His remembrance for all generations that Jehovah had taken up again the cause of His people, to judge it in all its reality, not passing over the evil, and yet repenting for those now returned to be His servants.

4. Here again, therefore, and in language which is almost identical with that of the 115th psalm, the rebuke of the senseless idolatry which degraded its followers to its own level. Compare the notes upon the former psalm.

5. Israel are exhorted to go on with their own covenant-God, alone worthy of

5 (19-21): Israel with God.
(i.)
(ii.)
(iii.) praise from the sanctuary.

O [l]house of Israel, bless ye Jehovah;
O [m]house of Aaron, bless ye Jehovah:
O [n]house of Levi, bless ye Jehovah;
ye that [o]fear Jehovah, bless ye Jehovah.
Blessed be Jehovah [p]out of Zion:
who [q]dwelleth at Jerusalem:
Hallelujah.

[l] Ps.118.2-4.
[m] Ps. 132. 9.
[n] Mal. 3. 3.
[o] Ps. 34. 9.
[p] Ps. 134. 3.
[q] Ps. 132. 13, 14.

Ps. cxxxvi.

[1]PSALM CXXXVI.

The confirmation.

1 (1-3): Jehovah in Himself. (i.) Jehovah (ii.) in contrast with other gods. (iii.) now manifest.

GIVE thanks to Jehovah, for he is [r]good:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
Give thanks unto the [s]God of gods:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
Give thanks unto the [t]Lord of lords:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.

[r] Ps. 106. 1. Ps. 107. 1.
[s] Deut. 10. 17. Josh. 22.22.
[t] Rev. 19.16.

2 (4-9): in His works of wisdom. (i.) sole in power. (ii.) the work of the second day. (iii.) of the third day.

To him who alone doeth [u]great wonders:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
To him who by understanding [v]made the heavens:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
To him who stretched out the [w]earth above the waters:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.

[u] Ps. 72. 18. Ps. 86. 10.
[v] Prov.3.19. Jer. 10. 12.
[w] Is. 42. 5. Gen.1. 9,10. *cf.* Ex.20.4.

all blessing and praise, and now with them in His fixed abode in Zion. The first two verses of this last section correspond essentially also with the exhortation of the 115th psalm; but here the house of Levi is added to the house of Aaron, though structurally joined with those "that fear Jehovah." I am unable to assign a reason for this, and so for the numerical significance of these two verses.

Psalm CXXXVI.

The answer is now given to this call to bear witness, and the ground traveled over in the former psalm is gone over here again, but in short sentences to every one of which the celebration of Jehovah's loving-kindness in what is spoken of is attached. Be it creation, be it redemption, judgment on their enemies, or mercy to themselves, this seal is set upon all His work, that Jehovah's loving-kindness has been working in it. And indeed in all His acts all that He is must act: if He be good, as God is, He must be good in everything He does.

1. First of all He is Jehovah, the Unchangeable, the covenant-God; God of gods, the alone Supreme, and Lord of lords,—exhibiting now this supremacy.

2. Then He is spoken of in His works of wisdom, the One who alone doeth great wonders. His creative work—as given in the second, third, and fourth verses—evidently corresponds to that of the second, third, and fourth of the six days. The second speaks of the firmament of the heavens, therefore, the separation of the waters from the waters. The third, of the bringing up of the dry land from under the waters, by which man's abode was formed for him. The fourth, of the luminaries, which condition, by the changing seasons which they occasion, all the activities of his practical life.* But this the psalmist cannot pass so briefly, but must expand it in the two following verses. In the fifth place, the sun, as ruler in the day, is really the physical governor of man's earth, and so of man: among material things the fullest representative of that goodness of God which wakes up all Nature in response, to minister to him. The moon, on the other hand, is but, as it were, a delegate of the sun, and can only imperfectly reflect his rays so as to limit the darkness. All this has abundance of teaching for us, and

* See Appendix III., on the Numerals, at the end of the volume.

(iv.) of the fourth.
(v.) the ruler by day.
(vi.) limiting the darkness.

To him that made great [x]lights:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
The [y]sun to rule over the day:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
The [z]moon and the stars to rule over the night:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.

[x] Gen. 1.14-18.
[y] Ps. 19.4-6.
[z] Ps. 8. 3.

3 (10-16): Manifest for His people.
(i.) the first-born.
(ii.) the bringing out.
(iii.) signs manifest.
(iv.) the sea yielding.
(v.) Himself with them.
(vi.) victory over Pharaoh.
(vii.) the completion in the wilderness.

To him who [a]smote Egypt in their first-born:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
And [b]brought out Israel from among them:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
With a [c]strong hand and with a stretched-out arm:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
To him who [d]divided the Red Sea into parts:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
And made Israel [e]pass through the midst of it:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
And [f]overturned Pharaoh and his force in the Red Sea:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
To him who [g]led his people in the wilderness:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.

[a] Ps. 135. 8.
[b] Ex. 12. 51.
[c] Ex. 6. 6. Jer. 32. 21.
[d] Ex. 14. 21. Neh. 9. 11.
[e] Ex. 15. 13.
[f] Ps. 135. 9.
[g] Deut. 8. 15.

4 (17-22): The nations yielding.
a (17, 18): Kings—
(i.) great and
(ii.) famous.
b (19, 20): the double opposition.
(i.) Sihon.
(ii.) Og.
c (20, 21): the inheritance.
(i.) given of God.
(ii.) to His servant.

To him who [h]smote great kings:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
And slew [i]famous kings:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
[j]Sihon, king of the Amorites:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
And [k]Og the king of Bashan:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
And gave their land for an [l]inheritance:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
An inheritance to Israel his [m]servant:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.

[h] Ps. 135.10.
[i] cf. Gen. 10. 8, 9.
[j] Ps. 135.11.
[k] Josh. 2.10.
[l] Ps. 135. 12.
[m] Is. 44. 1.

should help to make Nature, what God would have it for us, a great open lesson-book. But we have not space to dwell upon it here.*

3. The psalmist turns now to speak of God's manifestations of Himself for His peculiar people; and as in the previous psalm, but in more detail, speaks first of His wonders in Egypt. First, the smiting of the first-born, smiting off their fetters. Then what was the direct consequence, their being brought out; the outstretched arm which manifested Him to all in this; the Sea yielding to His hand, and Himself bringing the people through; the victory over Pharaoh and all his host. The brief notice of the wilderness rounds off this section, completing, as it were, the deliverance in Egypt.

4. We now come to the land, in which the nations dispossessed because of their sin, have now to yield to Israel their inheritance. The six verses here seem to be plainly three couplets: the first dwelling upon the power of those who are made to yield; the second specifies the twin Amorite kingdoms that opposed themselves at the threshold of their inheritance; the third speaks of the inheritance itself as made over to them. The language is of the very briefest. What seems possible in the way of spiritual application has been elsewhere dwelt upon; but here it is

*See, for more remarks on this, Appendix III., on the Creative Days.

5 (23-26): The weak with the Strong. (i.) faithfulness in grace. (ii.) the new redemption. (iii.) full satisfaction. (iv.) the praise of the whole earth.

Who remembered us in our [n]low estate:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
And hath [o]redeemed us from our oppressors:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
Who giveth [p]food to all flesh:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
Oh give [q]thanks unto the God * of heaven:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.

[n] Ps. 113. 7. Ps. 138. 6.
[o] Ps. 107. 1, 2.
[p] Ps. 104. 27, 28.
[q] *cf.* Neh. 1. 4. Neh. 2. 4.

SUBDIVISION 4. (Ps. cxxxvii.-cxlv.)

The testing of man and things, which makes Jehovah all.

SECTION 1. (Ps. cxxxvii.-cxxxix.)

"Truth in the inward parts."

Ps. cxxxvii.

[1]PSALM CXXXVII.

1 (1-3): The occasion. (i.) solitary. (ii.) apart from joy.

Zion the one controlling object for the heart of the solitary (as cut off from Jehovah's presence.)

BY the [r]rivers of Babel, there we sat down:
yea, we [s]wept when we remembered Zion.
Upon the willows in the midst of it,
we [t]hung our harps.

[r] *cf.* 2 Chr. 36. 20. *cf.* Ezek. 1. 3. *cf.* Dan. 8. 2.
[s] *cf.* Jer. 22. 10. *cf.* Ps. 42. 3.
[t] *cf.* Prov. 25. 20.

* El.

Israel's song of praise, and doubtless for them these old histories may have new light shed upon them by their latter-day experiences.

5. The psalm closes with God's remembrance of their low estate, and their new deliverance in the time to which the Psalms as a whole so constantly point forward. The third verse abruptly widens out to the acknowledgment of the full satisfaction for all flesh which the Lord of all has provided, and which may be surely applied in the fullest way to every kind of need. With Israel's blessing, we are reminded that the blessing of the whole earth comes in; and the last verse may naturally be taken as the praise of all.

SUBD. 4.

After the realization of the blessing in this manner, we come in the fourth subdivision finally to the consideration once again of the vanity of the creature apart from God, as, alas, man has been,—the cause of all his sorrows. Now that he may be blessed, and abide in blessing, he must accept fully the creature-place, which is not a bad but a good and happy one, seeing that his Creator is good. And the voice that affirms this in the last psalm of this series, if it be, as it seems to be, Messiah's (the true "*David*'s) praise" is indeed a conclusive—a glorious—voucher for it. But man must keep this place, then, and thus it is that so earnestly, so perseveringly, the truth, so unwelcome to his pride, must be pressed upon him.

Sec. 1.

Thus we face in the opening psalm that which branded those, hitherto the people of God, as Lo-ammi, "not my people:" the only psalm which speaks openly of Babel. There, in the place of judgment, however, the heart is turned to God, and the deliverance of the lowly—of those truly humbled before God—is found in the very next one. The third shows us now one searched out and manifested to himself in the presence of God, and his heart taught to welcome the searching. Here the holiness of God becomes to him truly a delight, and he would put the ban, not merely upon Edom or Babylon, but upon all in himself that could be found in opposition to him. The first section shows very clearly the character of the whole. It gives the fundamental thought, though there is naturally an advance in those that follow, but only as building upon this foundation. "Truth

(iii.) the realization.

For there our captors [u] demanded of us words of song,
and they that made us wail, gladness, [saying],
Sing us one of the [v] songs of Zion.

2 (4-6): Cleaving. (i.) *Jehovah's* song!

How shall we sing Jehovah's song,
in a [w] foreign land?

(ii.) no separation.

If I [x] forget thee, Jerusalem,
let my right hand forget!

(iii.) the heart possessed by its remembrances.

Let my [y] tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I remember thee not!
if I [z] exalt not Jerusalem above my chief joy!

3 (7-9): The return of the ban. (i.) the ground as to Edom.

Remember, Jehovah, against the children of [a] Edom
the day of Jerusalem:
who said, Rase it, rase it, even to its foundation.

(ii.) the destruction of the destroyer.

O daughter of Babel, who art to be [b] laid waste,
[c] happy is he who recompenseth thee,
the reward with which thou hast rewarded us!

(iii.) the ban fulfilled.

Happy is he who taketh and [d] dasheth thy little ones
against the rock.

u *cf.* Judges 16. 25.
v *cf.* Ps. 122.
w *cf.* Deut. 28. 47, 48.
x *cf.* Ps. 102. 13, 14.
y *cf.* Dan. 9. 2, 3.
z *cf.* Ps. 43.4 with Ps. 48. 2.
a *cf.* Obad. 1, etc. *cf.* Amos 1. 11, 12. *cf.* Lam. 4. 22.
b *cf.* Is. 13, etc. *cf.* Jer. 50, etc.
c *cf.* Rev. 18. 6.
d *cf.* Is. 13. 16. *cf.* Nah. 3. 10.

in the inward parts" is what is very clearly the subject of the section: a blessed thing to know in absolute reality. The lips of unerring truth have said, "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God."

Psalm CXXXVII.

1. In the first psalm, then, here, as already said, we are with the captives in Babylon. The plenteous streams that once enriched with unfailing fertility "the glory of the Chaldee's excellency" are before their eyes only to remind them that they are far from Zion, and to minister to the awful home-sickness of men who realized, as Jews alone could do, what it was to be cut off from the one place of the presence of God. How unutterable the loneliness, amid crowds that might press around them, of such a condition. There then they sat down — all labor a vain labor there! — to weep as their unflagging memories called up before them the image of Zion. Estranged from joy, they hung their harps upon the willows, in resolute denial of the request of those who had carried them captive for "words of song,"—mere "words" they would be, without music now,—"saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion."

2. What could they know — these heathen — of "*Jehovah's* songs," or the reproach which they would ring with, to the people of God (alas, such no longer) gone as captives into a strange land? In Jerusalem alone could the blood of atonement — and "without shedding of blood is no remission" — be sprinkled upon the golden mercy-seat, that a holy God might dwell among the praises of His people. It was but a waste spot now; yet there with inseparable attachment their hearts lingered. Their right hand might well forget, if Jerusalem were forgotten. The tongue might cleave to the roof of the mouth that exalted not Jerusalem above every other object of joy.

3. There is no mention of their *sins*, however, in all this,— no confession. It is the desolation of those who are away from the place of Jehovah's manifestation, with the prayer only for judgment upon their enemies, who have destroyed or sympathized with the destruction of the home of their affections, in language from which the Christian naturally shrinks. But Edom and Babylon are both doomed by the prophets to extinction as a people; and to this doom of the latter there is distinct reference made here. Judgment is God's strange work: we may be sure, a necessary one; and the solemn part which God has made His people sometimes take in it, as in the case of the nations of Canaan, has doubtless its deep necessity also. Calamities involve commonly enough babes as well as par-

Ps. cxxxviii.

[2]PSALM CXXXVIII.

The deliverance of the lowly, magnifying the word of God.

[A psalm] of David.

1 (i.) United praise. (i.) whole-hearted praise.

I WILL give thee thanks with [e]all my heart:
before the [f]gods will I psalm unto thee.

(ii.) thou hast magnified thy word.

I will worship [g]toward thy holy temple, and confess thy Name,
for thy [h]loving-kindness and for thy truth:
for thou hast [i]magnified thy saying in accordance with all thy Name.

(iii.) realized answer.

In the day when I [j]called thou answeredst me;
thou didst embolden me with strength in my soul.

[e] Ps. 9. 1. Ps. 111. 1.
[f] Ps. 82. 1, 6, 7.
[g] Ps. 5. 7.
[h] Jer. 9. 24.
[i] Is. 42. 21. *cf.* 2 Sam. 7. 21, 22.
[j] Ps. 50. 15. Nah. 1. 7.

ents; while, of course, they are but the short and passing evils, which leave the eternity following to make up the balance-sheet.

PSALM CXXXVIII.

The second psalm of the series is in such decided contrast with the first that it is somewhat hard to realize the connection; although this contrast is in fact part of the connection. The present psalm is praise all through: the harp is not on the willows, but in the hand; and the praise is not that of Israel only, but (in anticipation, at least) from all the earth. God has fulfilled His word in such a manner as to bring out in full reality the meaning of His Name; and in doing this He has acted as the God of judgment, abasing the proud and exalting the lowly, giving to His people that truth in the inward parts without which the deliverance itself could not be truly that.

This shows, I believe, the connection with the previous psalm, where in Babylon is seen the ruin wrought, and in which they have learned to cry after Jehovah: "Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses." Such is the lesson of the opening psalm of this fifth book: so simple as hardly to be called such, and yet in effect the moral of all man's history — self-caused ruin, the cry after the Father's house only forced out by the famine, and yet the open arms to receive a wanderer home. Thank God, for the soul really awakened to its need, those embracing arms can do a work which nothing else can, and the lost and found becomes by this one brought to life from the dead.

1. The psalmist evidently voices the praise of Israel, now praising with the whole heart. "Before the gods" speaks of those who are called gods as representing God in places of authority, the judges of the earth. They are now called to contemplate and admire the judgments of Jehovah with regard especially to Israel as the great object lesson placed by Him before their eyes. There is once more among His people a temple to His praise, and toward which the eyes of the worshiper are turned, because of the Living Presence connected with it. And His Name has been declared in loving-kindness and in truth; His saying magnified according to all the value of that Name, which the fulfillment of it has now declared.* Nay, in the very day in which His people cried unto Him, He answered, and infused new courage into their drooping souls.

* This seems to me the meaning of what is here ordinarily rendered "Thou hast magnified Thy word *above* all Thy Name"; but if God's Name is just the revelation of Himself, it is hard to know in what way we are to take this. The only thing that seems possible to imagine in this case, is, as usually done, that His Name stands here for the revelation of Himself up to this time, which His present action has now transcended. And some would bring in the thought of the *Personal* Word—Christ—as One who, as Christianity has now declared Him, has indeed transcended all previous manifestations. The truth of this no one would think of disputing: the question can only be of the application of this to what is here. Certainly Christianity does not seem at all to be implied: and "Thy saying," as it literally is, would scarcely seem to convey the thought of the Personal Word. It naturally speaks of the fulfillment of some promise or promises that had been made, and to which now perhaps a deeper meaning had

(iv.) the earth yielding.

(v.) Jehovah's ways.

All the [k]kings of the earth shall confess thee, Jehovah:
when they hear the sayings of thy mouth.
And they shall sing of the ways of Jehovah,
that [l]great is the glory of Jehovah.

2 (6–8): The God of judgment. (i.) the Supreme and the proud. (ii.) His deliverance.

For Jehovah is high, and regardeth the [m]humble,
but the [n]proud he knoweth from afar.
Though I walk in the [o]midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me:
thou wilt [p]stretch forth thy hand against the wrath of mine enemies;
and thy right hand shall [q]save me.

(iii.) full accomplishment.

Jehovah will [r]perfect that which concerneth me:
Jehovah, thy [s]loving-kindness [endureth] for ever;
[t]forsake not the works of thine own hands.

k cf. Ps. 72. 10, 11. Ps. 102. 15, 22.
l cf. Is.66.19. cf.Mal.1.11.
m Ps.113.5,6. Is. 57. 15.
n Prov.6.16, 17. Jas. 4. 6.
o Ps. 23. 4. Ps. 71. 20.
p Ps.139.10.
q Ps. 17. 7.
r cf.Phil.1.6.
s Ps. 136. 1, etc.
t Ps. 119.73. cf. Rom. 8. 29–32.

[3]PSALM CXXXIX.

Ps. cxxxix.

Manifest in the presence of God, with the moral result of this.

To the chief musician, a psalm of David.

1 (1–6): Jehovah's omniscience. a (1, 2): knowledge. (i.) myself fully known. (ii.) diverse acts and distant thought.

JEHOVAH, thou hast [u]searched me out,
and knowest [me.]
Thou knowest my [v]downsitting and mine uprising:
thou understandest my [w]thought afar off.

u Ps. 44. 21. Jer. 17. 10. cf.vers. 23, 24. cfr. Job 11. 7.
v cf.Is.37.28. cf. Deut. 6. 6, 7.
w cf. Gen. 6. 5. cf.Matt.9.4. cf. Jno. 21. 15–17.

Now all the kings of the earth, when *they* hear the sayings of Jehovah, shall also confess Him; and, weary at last of their own ways, in which they have so long been walking, they shall sing of the ways of Jehovah, that great is His glory. Thus the misrule of the earth shall cease.

2. And now what gives them this apprehension of Jehovah's ways is intimated. The Supreme — seen to be that — yet regardeth the humble; while He knoweth the proud too, but afar off. Israel brought out of her low estate, and delivered from the wrath of her enemies, will declare this; perfectly accomplishing that which concerns her. And for this, in the conviction of His eternal loving-kindness, she prays, that He may not forsake the work of His own hands.

Psalm CXXXIX.

The last verse of the previous psalm, as so often is the case, leads on to the psalm that follows it. We see in this how truly we are the work of God's hands, and the marvelousness of this work; and this naturally leads further to the recognition that we are still in His hands, who made us, and who will not forsake His work. Thus under His eye, searched out in the light of His presence, we yet realize the blessedness of this, and find with Him our sanctuary-refuge from the evil in ourselves as elsewhere.

The psalm has a peculiar and elaborate structure, quite suited to the character of its contents: the regularity of it showing the perfect divine control of material, which belongs to the Creator of all. Its twenty-four verses are divided into four parts, — the number of testing, — each of six verses, the number of discipline and of mastery of evil; while each of these is again divided into three parts of two verses each, the numbers of manifestation and of witness together.

The first section speaks of Jehovah's omniscience simply, as realized by one

been imparted in their fulfillment. But this hardly seems to suit the connection. For the psalmist has just been saying "I will *confess Thy Name*, for Thy loving kindness and for Thy truth's sake"; and this is how he illustrates Jehovah's truth: "for Thou hast magnified Thy saying in accordance with all Thy Name":—Thou hast fulfilled it in such a manner as to bring out all that Thy Name implies. The deliverance of Israel is what the psalm speaks of, and Christ does not seem to be mentioned in it.

Thou [x]searchest* my path and my lying down,
and art acquainted with [y]all my ways.
For there is not yet a [z]word on my tongue,
[but] lo, Jehovah, thou knowest it altogether.
Thou hast beset me [a]behind and before,
and laid thy hand on me.
Knowledge too [b]wonderful for me!
it is high, I am not competent for it.

[c]Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?
and whither shall I flee from thy presence?
If I ascend to [d]heaven, thou art there:
and if I make my bed in [e]Sheol, behold, thou [art there.]
[If] I take the [f]wings of the dawn,
[or] dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
Even there shall thy hand [g]lead me,
and thy right hand hold me.
If I say, Surely the [h]darkness shall cover me,
even the night shall be light about me.
Yea, the darkness darkeneth not from thee,
and the [i]night shineth as the day:
the darkness and the light are both alike.

* winnowest.

b (3, 4): discernment. (i.) of me as a whole. (ii.) my words.
c (5, 6): compassed round. (i.) with power. (ii.) which humbles man.
2 (7–12): Whither, away from Thee?
a (7, 8): Omnipresent! (i.) Spirit and presence. (ii.) in heaven or sheol.
b (9, 10): I the dependent! (i.) solitariness (?) (ii.) yet in dependent relation.
c (11,12): ever manifest. (i.) darkness as light. (ii.) in relation to Thee.

x Job 34. 21.
y Prov. 5. 21.
z cf. Lk. 12. 3.
a ver. 7.
b cf. Job 42. 3. cf. Ps. 73. 16.
c Jer. 23. 24.
d cf. Job 20. 5-7. cf. Jer. 51. 53. cf. Obad. 4.
e cf. Amos 9. 2-4. cf. Job 26. 6. cf. Prov. 15. 11.
f cf. Jonah 1. 3.
g cf. 1 Kl. 19. 4-8.
h Job 34. 22.
i cf. Gen. 3. 8-10. cf. Heb. 4. 12, 13. Dan. 2. 22.

who is under the awe of it,—a fear which in the second section breaks out into the cry of one who would fain escape to the ends of the earth or into Sheol itself to be free from it, but knows well the impossibility of this. In the third section there is a change, however, and a tender thankfulness comes in with the thought of how in the very womb of his mother this omniscience had been exercised in building up in mysterious secrecy the marvelous structure of the future man. The preciousness of God's thoughts toward him now take possession of him, and that, sleeping or waking, the unslumbering Eye is on him becomes only happiness. In the fourth section he is now with God against the evil manifested in the world, and from that which he fears and hates within himself, the presence of God becomes now his sanctuary-refuge. He invites the searching Eye which once he dreaded. But we must take up the psalm in detail.

1. The first section, as already said, speaks of Jehovah's omniscience; the first two verses, as knowledge simply, though the Light never withdrawn searches all out. But in the next verses, He *winnows* the path,—an intimation of discriminating judgment which would imply, as result, thorough "acquaintance" or "familiarity" with all the ways. And the words are known altogether,—all that can be known of them. The third subsection speaks not simply of knowledge, but of action: "Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid Thy hand on me." He realizes, as well he may, this knowledge as too wonderful for him,—an unattainable height.

2. In the next section the three smaller divisions are similarly distinguishable. In the first, Spirit and presence are, I suppose, the same essentially, while heaven and hell—Sheol or hades, not Gehenna,—are wide asunder: it is omnipresence simply that is in question. In the next, it is relation to the Omnipresent, and that in dependence: the wings of the dawn and the uttermost parts of the sea convey the thought apparently of the utmost solitude; but "even there shall Thy hand lead me and Thy right hand hold me." In the third, exposure is what he cannot escape: darkness and light are relative only to man; for God there is no difference.

3. In the third section we come to that which is the full expression for the

3 (13-18): Manifest to God, and His.
a (13, 14): omniscient power.
(i.) my beginning.
(ii.) my making.
b (15, 16): discerning wisdom.
(i.) unity of plan.
(ii.) progressing diversity.
c (17, 18): The contained revelation.
(i.) the sum.
(ii.) the number.

For thou hast acquired my [j]reins:
thou coveredst me in my [k]mother's womb.
I will praise thee, for I am fearfully, [l]wonderfully made:
marvelous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well.
My frame was not hid from thee,
when I was made in [m]secret,—
embroidered in under-parts of earth.
Thine eyes did see mine inwrapping,
and in thy [n]scroll all [parts] were written,
[which] daily were fashioned,
when as yet there was none of them.
Even for me how [o]precious were thy thoughts, O Mighty One:
how [p]great is the sum of them!
[If] I would count them, they are more than the sand:
I have [q]awaked and am still with thee.

j *cf.* Ps.16.7. *etr.* Jer. 12. 2.
k *cf.* Ps. 22. 10.
l vers. 15,16. Eccl. 11. 5.
m *cf.* Job 10. 8, 9. *cf.* Job 3.10. *cf.* Jer. 20. 17.
n *cf.* Matt. 10. 30.
o *cf.* Jer.1.5. *cf.* Eph.1.4.
p *cf.* Ps.40.5. *cf.* Is. 55. 8. *cf.* Job 9.10. Ps. 71. 15.
q *cf.* Jno. 21. 25. *cf.* Jer. 31. 26.

psalmist of that compassing about of man on God's part, which at the same time shows fully the divine interest in him, and thus is the revelation to him of God, so as to bring him to fullness of delight in all His thoughts. As Christians we should not take up the mystery of our formation in the womb to assure ourselves of this; and that he does so shows us sufficiently the difference of the Old Testament standpoint. Christians are naturally, therefore, disposed to find in all this the typical presentation of Christian truths. But however this may do as application, the literal meaning must come first, and be the foundation of all other. It is true that this speaks to us only of the Creator, and leaves the question of sin unbottomed. Yet a soul that has realized redemption can and will come back to God's creative thoughts, with fresh apprehension of the truth that He cannot "forsake the work of His own hands." And the question of sin being here left out, at least makes the whole matter proportionately simple.

"For Thou hast *acquired* my reins" is the keynote of what follows. "The reins" stand for the very innermost parts; and, according to the Old Testament, the deepest recesses of the mind: there where the fundamental moral questions are entertained and find solution,—the good is received and the evil rejected.* God is the Master here; Lord of the conscience, which continually reminds us of Him and summons before His judgment-seat; and He has *acquired* this right over us by the fact to which the psalmist now goes on, that He is our Maker: "Thou hast acquired my reins: Thou coveredst"—or, perhaps, "didst interweave me in my mother's womb." Marvelous power it was that was at work there, and not idly, but with purpose and plan. "I will praise Thee, for I am fearfully, wonderfully made: marvelous are Thy works, and that my soul knoweth well."

He proceeds to speak of these marvels: of the bony framework upon which the flesh was supported; of the delicate embroidery of vessels and nerves ramifying through it; all this wrought in secret, in "underparts of earth,"—not the ground, surely, which would scarcely have been true of Adam,—but of that human substance which is but animated dust. He thinks of that wrapped up embryo, and of the sketched out plan, in which each part of that continually progressing organism had, before coming into being, its predestined place.

Surely for us, who know much more of these things than the psalmist, the wonder of them should not be less. To him they were a revelation of God's

* The reins or kidneys, as excretory organs, naturally speak of this; and of such symbolism—as far as possible from materialism—the Old Testament is full.

4 (19-24): The failed creature. *a* (19, 20) in his rebellion. (i.) of one accord with God. (ii.) enemies to Thee. *b* (21, 22): fellowship against evil. (i.) divine concord. (ii.) Thine enemies mine. c (23, 24): Sanctuary refuge. (i) the light welcomed. (ii.) for discernment of evil.

Wilt thou not [r]slay the wicked, O God? *
ye men of blood, [s]depart from me!
[Men] who speak of thee [t]mischievously,
they lift themselves up in vain as enemies to thee.
Do not I [u]hate those that hate thee, Jehovah?
and do not I loathe those that rise up against thee?
I hate them with [v]perfect hatred:
they are as if enemies to [w]myself.
[x]Search me, O Mighty One, and know my heart,
[y]prove me, and know my diverse thoughts:
And see if there be any [z]grievous way in me,
and [a]lead me in the way everlasting.

r *cf.* Is. 11.4. *cf.* 2 Thess. 1. 9, 10.
s Ps. 6. 8. Ps. 119.115.
t Jude 15. *cf.* Mal. 3. 13.
u Ps. 119.158.
v Am. 5. 15.
w *ctr.* 2 Chr. 19. 2.
x *cf.* ver. 1. Ps. 26. 2.
y *cf.* Ps. 17.3. *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 28.
z *cf.* Ps. 16.4. *cf.* Prov. 13. 15.
a Ps. 27. 11. *cf.* Jer. 6. 16.

*Eloah.

thoughts toward him,—precious thoughts of divine wisdom and love, which when looked at in the sum, the final outcome of it all, it was great indeed; but if you took them up to look at them in detail, they were numberless as the grains of sand. And still, to the man wakened up out of the unconsciousness of his beginning, as he has been rehearsing it, this same God abides. Could he desire to have Him banished?

4. How awful, then, the condition of the wicked: strangers and enemies to Him who made them; necessarily devoted to death by the very Author of their life. The psalmist is in perfect accord with the divine sentence, and counts the enemies of God as enemies to himself. But he is not unconscious of his own malady; and the sanctity of God's presence is not a refuge merely for him from the wickedness around. He seeks it as a refuge from himself also, and welcomes the light of it, as where sin cannot be hid. "Search me," he cries, "O Mighty One, and know my heart; try me, and know my diverse"—literally, "branching"—"thoughts": all those to him perplexing entanglements of thought which God alone could unravel; "and see if there be any grievous way in me,"—anything which is grievous to Thee: "and lead me in the way everlasting."

This is "truth in the inward parts" attained then; and God is become the one help and refuge of the soul: first of all, where we must surely begin, for itself. The setting aside of man must begin here in order to be truthful. But it does not *end* here, as manifestly the need of redemption is not yet recognized, and the world is not seen either in its true character. The experience of this section has room yet to deepen and widen in those that are to come.

Sec. 2.

The second section shows us therefore all other props for the soul displaced, that God may be its one resource. As we have seen in the "songs of ascents," and may see probably in every ternary series, the last psalm shows us (and indeed according to the symbolism of the number) the purport of the section. Here, in the 142nd psalm, all refuge fails but God alone. Turning back from this to the first psalm then (the 140th) we can realize that the point of it is the sufficiency of such a refuge. In the connecting psalm between these, the psalmist proclaims that his refuge is in God, and separates himself from the wicked, who will receive God's judgment. Thus the general purport seems clear enough.

PSALM CXL.

The 140th psalm is evidently in another line of thought altogether from that which precedes it. We are again in the midst of men—of the strife going on in the world; and indeed in the trial of the latter days. Compassed with evil, the righteous are driven the more to God as their resource, and encourage themselves in that holiness of His, which must of necessity display itself against the

SECTION 2. (Ps. cxl.-cxlii.)
The setting aside of human help.

Ps. cxl.

[1]PSALM CXL.

Jehovah the sole sufficiency.

To the chief musician, a psalm of David.

1 (1-3): The plea of righteousness. (i.) Jehovah my sufficiency. (ii.) from men of strife. (iii.) manifested.

DELIVER me, Jehovah, from the [b]evil man:
preserve me from the violent man.
Who devise [c]mischiefs in [their] heart:
every day they gather together for war.
They sharpen their [d]tongues like a serpent:
the poison of adders is under their lips. Selah.

2 (4-7): Deliver me. (i.) in righteousness. (ii.) snares.

Keep me, Jehovah, from the hands of the wicked:
preserve me from the violent man;
who devise to [e]overthrow my steps.
The proud have hidden a [f]trap for me, and cords:
they have spread a net by the way-side;
they have set snares for me. Selah.

(iii.) the Refuge. (iv.) the experience.

I have [g]said unto Jehovah, *Thou* art my Mighty One:
hear the voice of my supplications, Jehovah.
Jehovah, Lord, the [h]strength of my salvation,
thou hast covered my head in the day of equipment.

3 (8-10): Holiness in view of evil. (i.) grant not, because of pride.

Grant not, Jehovah, the desires of the wicked:
further not his device [lest] they [i]exalt themselves. Selah.

[b] ver. 4. Ps. 64. 2.
[c] Ps. 56. 6. Ps. 35. 20.
[d] Ps. 64. 3,4. Ps. 58. 4. *cfr.* Song 4. 11.
[e] *cf.* Ps. 17. 4, 5.
[f] Ps. 35. 7. Ps. 141. 9.
[g] *cf.* Ps. 16. 2.
[h] *cf.* Ps. 18. 2. *cf.* Eph. 6. 10-18.
[i] *cf.* Deut. 32. 27.

wickedness of their adversaries. It is a very simple psalm in its character, with very little to distinguish it from many others in the book; yet it is needed in its place here,—place having so much to do with the significance of the individual psalms, as we see all through: a principle which applies all through the Word, to every portion of it, and every truth in it. If we would but study the Word with this in view, how God's jewels would shine out in the settings which He has given them; and in how much less danger we should be of getting truth misplaced.

The thirteen verses of the psalm are arranged, as seems usual with this number, in the 4x3 manner of the number 12; but with the additional verse producing an irregularity which here increases the second section to four. This fourth verse is the only one which speaks of positive *present* experience in the psalm.

1. We have first the plea of righteousness urged by the psalmist in his own behalf, as shown by the insistence all through upon the evil character of the men he fears. He appeals to God to preserve him from the evil and violent man, the men of strife and plotters of mischief; the poison of their tongues manifesting them as the brood of the serpent, the instruments of the malignant power of Satan upon the earth. This evil of the tongue comes up again more than once in the psalm, as well as prominently in many others, and is specially characteristic of the last days, with their development of Antichrist and his "strong delusion." The attack upon the people of God goes naturally along with this.

2. Again the psalmist prays, in almost the same words, for God's deliverance; specifying, however, more particularly now, the devices for his overthrow, the snares hidden in his path. And from this he turns to affirm more emphatically the Mighty One to be his refuge, comforted by the actual experience of how "Jehovah, the Lord, the strength of his salvation," had covered his head in the day of his *equipment:* that is, with what a helmet God provided him.

3. He brings in now the holiness of God as against the evil. He prays that God will not grant the desire of the wicked, lest it stimulate their pride; but may He give them rather the work of their own lips, the mischief they had been

(ii.) but grant the work of their own lips.
(iii.) divine wrath manifest.

[As for] the head of those that compass me,
let the travail of their *own lips cover them.
Let burning *coals fall on them:
let them be cast into the fire;
into deep places, that they rise not *again.

4 (11-13): The test of experience.
(i.) the evil shall find evil.
(ii.) the lowly be sustained.

The man of [evil] tongue shall not be *established in the earth:
evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow [him].
I know that Jehovah will *maintain the cause of the poor—
the right of the needy.

(iii.) the righteous praise and dwell with Thee.

Surely the °righteous shall give thanks to thy name:
the upright shall dwell in thy presence.

[2]PSALM CXLI.

Separation from the workers of iniquity.

A psalm of David.

Ps. cxli.

1 (1-6): On the part of the faithful.
(i.) the plea of the solitary.
(ii.) accept my prayer.

JEHOVAH, I call unto thee, *hasten unto me:
give ear unto my voice, when I call unto thee.
Let my prayer be set forth [as] *incense before thee,
the lifting of my palms be [as] an evening-offering.

j Prov. 12. 13.
k Ps. 11. 6. Ps. 120. 4.
l cf. Ps. 18. 37, 38.
m cf. Ps. 37. 9-11.
n Ps. 9. 3, 4.
o Ps. 32. 11. Ps. 33. 1.
p Ps. 70. 1, 5.
q cf. Ex. 30. 8. *cf.* Dan. 9. 21.
cf. Rev. 5. 8.
cf. Rev. 8. 3.

laboriously working at. Let the divine anger manifest itself against them, more and more; which is necessarily the case with those that turn not from the ways that bring it down: burning coals falling are not yet the being *cast into* the fire; and the deep places from which they rise no more add to it the element of complete hopelessness.

4. The last section appeals to experience, although, I suppose, the experience of the future, to confirm confidence as to Jehovah's ways with saint and sinner. The day of open manifestation is at hand, and the place of the wicked upon the earth shall not be found. The rod of iron will repress at last all open wickedness; and the evil tongue—"the man given to tongue"—along with the evil deed. Words are in fact often deeds, if sometimes we have to put them in opposition to one another.

On the other hand, care for the poor and needy will emphatically characterize the day of the Lord's rule, as we have fully seen (compare especially Ps. lxxii.) There will be also the manifest glory, as of old, but with transcendent lustre, bathing the restored city in its radiance. That "the upright shall dwell in Thy Presence," the whole earth shall witness.

PSALM CXLI.

The second psalm of the series shows us, as already said, the separation of the righteous from the wicked; which is first the act of the righteous himself, and then carried out by the judgment of God. These are, in fact, the two divisions of the psalm. As to the interpretation there are some peculiar difficulties which all expositors have recognized, even the text of the old versions having been apparently affected by them. But the clearness of the general purport is scarcely touched by this.

1. The heart of the solitary, amid the pressure of evil round him, cries out for God. His plea is the very prayer which he is making, which cannot but find response from the prayer-hearing One. May it go up to Him, he asks, as incense, and the lifting up his palms be as an evening-offering.

Then the consciousness of the holiness of the Presence he is seeking makes him think of the mouth with which he is addressing God, and of his own infirmity; and he prays Jehovah to set a guard before it, and to keep the door of his

(iii.) the guard of holiness.
(iv.) no yielding to evil practice.
(v.) an exercised heart.
2 (6-10): Separation by judgment.
(i.) the divine act.
(ii.) the national death (?)
(iii.) the refuge of the soul.

Set a [r]guard, Jehovah, before my mouth:
keep the door of my lips.
Incline not my [s]heart to any evil thing,
to practise wicked works with men that are workers of vanity;
and let me not eat of their [t]dainties.
Let the righteous [u]smite me, it shall be kindness,
and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil,
that my head shall not refuse:
for still also my prayer shall be [v]against their evil-doings.*

Their [w]judges shall be hurled against the sides of the cliff;
and they shall [x]hear my words, that they are sweet.
As when one ploweth and cleaveth the earth,
our [y]bones are scattered at the mouth of Sheol.
But unto thee, Jehovah, Lord, are [z]mine eyes:
in thee I have taken refuge; leave not my soul destitute.

r *cf.* Eph. 4. 29.
s *cf.* Prov. 4. 23.
t *cf.* Ps. 16. 4. Prov. 23. 6. *cf.* Heb. 11. 24-26.
u *cf.* Prov. 27. 6. *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 12, 13. *cf.* Rev. 3. 19.
v *cf.* Rom. 11. 2. *cf.* Rev. 6. 10.
w *cf.* Nu. 16. 23-35. *cf.* Rev. 19. 20.
x *cf.* Is. 26. 9-11. *cf.* Ps. 58. 11.
y *cf.* Ps. 44. 11. *cfr.* Ps. 53. 5.
z Ps. 123. 1, 2.

*Or "in their calamities."

lips, that nothing unseemly may come forth. From outside also may no evil thing be permitted to allure him to evil practices with workers of vanity, nor to partake of their dainties—the "pleasant things" which can still appeal, alas, to the old nature, even of the child of God.

He prefers the very smitings of the righteous, and accepts it as kindness; and their reproof shall be as oil to gladden him (Ps. xlv. 7), which his head will not refuse. The rest of the verse is not so easy to connect with this, while it may be rendered in two different ways. If we render "for still also my prayer shall be in their calamities," this can hardly refer to the (hypothetical) righteous ones just spoken of. It would seem but a small thing to say that he would not cease to pray for those whom he counts as doing him but a kindness, and who *as* righteous would be supposed to have meant it to be such. If we refer it to the calamities of the evil-doers, this seems difficult to connect, and scarcely in the spirit of a psalm like this, which calls rather for judgment. It seems, therefore, as if we should rather render, as I have done, "against their evil-doings." In this case, also, we must go back to the preceding verse to find the reference. He must be speaking of the wicked, to whose wickedness he opposes his prayer; and that is the very thing which, as far as he is concerned, instead of practising them, he has been doing. He simply says now that this will be also his course in future; and this is in full harmony with the acceptance of the reproof of the righteous, which he has just professed. All this shows an exercised heart before God, and completes the picture of the faithful man in his separation of himself from the workers of iniquity, which the first section of the psalm presents.

2. We have now the divine separation between the two, and that by judgment. "Their judges shall be hurled against the sides of the cliff; and they shall hear my words that they are sweet." There is again an abruptness which produces difficulty; but one would naturally say that here God's act was separating between two classes of the evil-doers themselves, their judges being the leaders who were perverting the people, and whose destruction would lead the rest, or many of them, to listen to the testimony of those from whom they had previously turned away. This would be in keeping with the character of the psalm. But an abrupt change is found again in the next verse, where, as it stands in the Hebrew, the condition of the nation or of the persecuted remnant must be referred to. It is no wonder that some of the ancient versions should have "*their* bones are

(iv.) from the workers of vanity.
(v.) the governmental end.

Keep me from the [a]snare that they have laid for me,
and from the traps of the workers of vanity.
Let the wicked fall into their [b]own nets;
while *I* pass by.

[a] Ps. 140. 5.
[b] Ps. 7. 15, 16. Ps. 35. 8.

Ps. cxlii.

[3]PSALM CXLII.

Jehovah the refuge and portion.

Maskil of David: a prayer when he was in the [c]cave.

[c] Ps. 57, title. 1 Sa. 22. 1. 1 Sa. 24. 3.

(i.) an appeal to Jehovah.

I CRY unto Jehovah with my [d]voice:
with my voice I supplicate Jehovah.

[d] Ps. 3. 4.

(ii.) the declaration.

I [e]pour out my complaint before him:
before him I declare my strait.

[e] *cf.* Ps. 102, title. *cf.* Lam. 2. 19.

(iii.) manifest to Him.

When my spirit was [f]overwhelmed within me,
then *thou* knewest my path:
in the way wherein I walked have they hidden a snare for me.

[f] Ps. 143. 4. Ps. 42. 4, 5. *cf.* Job 23. 10.

(iv.) the failure of man.

Look on the right hand, and see,
there is none that knoweth me:
[g]refuge hath failed me;
there is none that careth for my soul.

[g] *cf.* Ps. 69. 20.

scattered at the mouth of Sheol," but it would not be safe to follow a correction so easily inferred and so slenderly supported. We must take it then as a figure, such as in Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones, a picture of life apparently gone, and hope with life, save as faith could count upon the God of resurrection. And so the soul of the righteous turns to Jehovah as its refuge in this extremity, and prays for deliverance from the snare of the wicked. While righteous retribution takes its course with these, may he pass by uninjured.

Psalm CXLII.

In the third psalm here, we have the last Maskil, or psalm of instruction,—a worthy close to the series; for it leaves us with God as the only refuge and rest of the soul, man having failed, not only in power but in heart to help. The psalm is a very short and simple one; wholly a prayer, but closing with confident assurance.

At once the psalmist emphatically states that it is *to Jehovah* that he cries: before Him he declares his strait, as if there were no other. He can appeal with confidence to One who has known all about him, and in circumstances of deepest distress: his spirit overwhelmed, the enemy's snare hidden for him in the path in which (as is implied) he had walked before Him (compare Ps. i. 6).

Among men he found no helper, none who would own acquaintance with him. Refuge was cut off unless he found it in Jehovah: none beside cared at all. A terrible place to be in, if Jehovah were not His hiding-place! but if He were not, though all arms were stretched out to succor him, how vain would it all be! God—how easily in our insane folly we think to do without Him, who is the one necessity for all His creatures. But such discoveries constitute the grand moments for the soul, when it turns to God as now to be its all: "I cried unto Thee, Jehovah; I said,—Thou art my refuge, my portion, in the land of the living."

Two things which go together, and refuse absolutely to be separated from one another: for He cannot suffice us in the one way, except He suffices us in the other: these are but two aspects of one need into which we are fallen, as fallen away from Him,—shelterless, famine-stricken, because away from the Father's house. To get back there is to find the one need met as surely as the other.

And "in the land of the living"! For death itself invades not the Father's house: "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." And even the way

(v.) the soul with God.

I cried unto thee, Jehovah; I said,—
[h]Thou art my refuge,—
my portion, in the land of the living.

(vi.) the overcoming His.

Attend unto my cry, for I am brought very [i]low:
deliver me from my persecutors, for they are
[j]stronger than I.

(vii.) rest in assurance.

Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks
unto thy name:
the righteous shall surround me, for thou wilt deal
[k]bountifully with me.

[h] Ps. 62. 7,8.
[i] Ps. 116. 6.
[j] *cf.* Ps. 35. 10.
[k] Ps. 13. 6. Ps. 116. 7.

SECTION 3. (Ps. cxliii.-cxlv.)
Raised up out of the depth.

Ps. cxliii.

[l]PSALM CXLIII.

The plea of righteousness where Jehovah alone is righteous.

A psalm of David.

1 (i, 2): The plea.

(i.) in righteousness and faithfulness.

JEHOVAH, hear my prayer:
[l]give ear to my supplications.
in thy faithfulness answer me;
in thy righteousness.

(ii.) enter not into judgment.

And [m]enter not into judgment with thy servant:
for before thee shall no living man be justified.

[l] Ps. 17. 6.
[m] Ps. 130. 3. Job 9. 2, 3. *cf.* Rom. 3. 19, 20.

with Him is a "way everlasting"; as the life we already live is "everlasting life." The psalmist could not know these things as we; but thus the truth he spoke was only fuller than he knew.

Thus then he cries to God the one Helper, out of the depth, brought low by enemies too strong for him, to whom he is left unless God come in. *He* must be the Overcomer for him; and thus shut up, though a prisoner of hope, he looks to Him with an expectation brightening into perfect assurance. He sees himself amid a company also of righteous gathered with him by the same grace as himself, to give thanks to the glorious Name of his bountiful Redeemer.

Sec. 3.

We are now hastening to the end. In the final psalm of this section, we have only praise; the second anticipates the judgment of their enemies at hand; the first puts them upon sure ground in which they can appeal to the righteousness of God on their own behalf. This is, of course, not just as the epistle to the Romans has developed it for us in the gospel; nor is atonement brought in at all in this place. We do approach the apostle, however, negatively, in the confession that none among men can be justified before God in judgment. And the righteousness to which they can appeal therefore, is Jehovah's faithfulness to His covenant and to His Name.

The Name Jehovah was that which He attached to the covenant according to which He delivered His people out of Egypt; and though they chose at Sinai another and a legal one, yet we have seen many times in these psalms how the Spirit of God leads them continually back to that first deliverance. If the people have given up the grace in which He first appeared for them, the Name, the Unchangeable, is the guarantee that His thoughts shall abide; and though for a time they may seem to be set aside by man's self-righteousness, He has made the law itself but the handmaid of the gospel: so far is He from having given it up. Let faith take it up at any time, it shall find it abides; and when Israel take it up, they will find it abiding for them, and the faithfulness and righteousness of God pledged to them in it.

And from hence to the full deliverance and the praise will not be long. From the realization of the impossibility of self-justification before God to justification

2 (3-6): The opposition from the enemy.
(i.) his tyranny.
(ii.) desolate!

For the enemy hath persecuted my soul:
he hath [n] crushed my life to the ground:
he hath made me dwell in darkness,
as those that have long been dead.
And my spirit is [o] overwhelmed within me:
my heart within me is desolate.

n Ps. 56. 1,2.
o Ps. 142. 3. cf. Ps. 77. 3.

(iii.) the remembrance of God.

I [p] remember the days of old:
I meditate on all thy doing;
I muse on the work of thy hands.

p cf. Ps. 77. 5-11.

(iv.) languishing for Him.

I [q] stretch out my hands unto thee:
my soul is as a thirsty* land for thee. Selah.

q cf. Job 11. 13. Ps. 88. 9.

3 (7-10): Taking refuge.
(i.) Jehovah alone his hope.

Answer me [r] speedily, Jehovah:
my spirit faileth;
hide not thy face from me,
or I shall be [s] like them that go down to the pit.

r Ps. 141. 1.
s Ps. 28. 1. Ps. 88. 4.

(ii.) the plea of faith.

Make me to hear thy loving-kindness in the [t] morning,
for in thee do I trust:
make me to [u] know the way in which I should walk,
for I lift up my soul unto thee.

t cf. 2 Sam. 23. 4. cf. Ps. 110. 3.
u Ps. 25. 4,5.

(iii.) my refuge.

Deliver me from mine enemies, Jehovah:
I [v] hide myself in thee.†

v Ps. 57. 1.

(iv.) for practical life.

Teach me to [w] do thy will, for thou art my God:
thy spirit is good;
lead me into the [x] land of uprightness.

w cf. Jno. 7. 17.
x cf. Is. 26. 10 with Ps. 125. 3.

* faint, or languishing. † literally, "unto thee."

on God's part, is not even a step; for this is His own act, and He is for us, just as we are, the Justifier of him who worketh not but believeth.

Psalm CXLIII.

This then is the principle of the first psalm here. It is the plea of righteousness in the mouth of faith, which owns that none is righteous except God alone, and which dares to say, in the consciousness of such ill desert, "in Thy faithfulness answer me; in Thy righteousness." This the Cross makes simple for us now. The Old Testament saint could not of course see this, save dimly through the sacrificial shadows: Israel will see it when they look upon the face of Him whom they have pierced.

1. It is still prayer that we have here, until the closing verses. "Jehovah, hear my prayer; give ear unto my supplications: in Thy faithfulness answer me—in Thy righteousness!" And then follows the confession: "And enter not into judgment with Thy servant: for before Thee shall no living man be justified."

2. We have then the plow that God has used with them to bring them into the exercises which in the end will be so fruitful. As in the hundred and forty-first psalm we heard them crying as from the mouth of Sheol, so here the psalmist speaks as one among the dwellers in darkness—even those long dead. But he is not indifferent, but his spirit overwhelmed, and his heart desolate; though he carries with him the remembrance of days of old, when God had manifestly wrought, and for Him his soul cried out as a thirsty land for rain.

3. Here then he takes refuge. There is for him no other hope. Did Jehovah hide His face, he would be like one of those going down to the pit. But as one who trusted in Him, he prayed to see early His loving-kindness, and to learn the way also in which to walk. In Jehovah he hid himself, and sought to be taught the will of Him who was his God. The spirit of faith and of obedience always go together.

4 (11, 12): The experience looked for. (i.) of righteousness. (ii.) of deliverance from enemies.

For thy name's sake, Jehovah, [y] thou wilt quicken me:
in thy righteousness thou wilt bring my soul out of strait.
In thy loving-kindness also thou wilt [z] cut off mine enemies,
and destroy all the adversaries of my soul:
for I am thy [a] servant.

[y] Ps. 119. 107. *cf.* Ps. 71. 20.
[z] Ps. 54. 16.
[a] Ps. 116. 16. Ps. 119. 125.

Ps. cxliv.

[2] PSALM CXLIV.

The Helper of Israel.

[A psalm] of David.

1 (1–4): The only Mighty One. (i.) Jehovah my rock, (ii.) my Deliverer.

BLESSED be Jehovah my [b] rock,
who teacheth my hands to [c] war,
my fingers to fight.
My [d] loving-kindness and my fortress,
my high tower and my deliverer,
my shield, and in whom I take refuge:
who subdueth the peoples * under me.

[b] Ps. 18. 2, 31. Deut. 32. 4. Is. 26. 4.
[c] 2 Sam. 22. 35.
[d] Ps. 107. 1. *cf.* Mi. 7. 18. *cf.* Ps. 18. 2, 37, 43.

(iii.) what is man?

Jehovah, [e] what is man that thou takest knowledge of him?
the son of frail man, that thou makest account of him?

[e] Ps. 8. 4. *cf.* Job 7. 7, 17.

(iv.) a passing shadow.

Man is like a [f] breath:
his days are like a passing shadow.

[f] Job 14. 2. Ps. 39. 5. Jas. 4. 14.

2 (5–10): Deliverance sought. (i.) act in power. (ii.) destroy them.

Bow thy heavens, Jehovah, and [g] come down!
touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.
Cast forth lightning, and [h] scatter them:
send out thine arrows, and discomfit them.

[g] Ps. 18. 9. Is. 64. 1, 2.
[h] Ps. 18. 13, 14. *cf.* Is. 30. 30.

* "*Ammim* is the reading of ninety-one Hebrew MSS., the Chaldee, Syriac, Arabic and Roman Vulgate and of the parallel passages, Ps. xviii. 47; 2 Sam. xxii. 48." (*Coleman.*)

4. In the last two verses we have the experience anticipated of Jehovah's intervention. He will act in righteousness—in consistency with His nature and His Name: thus revival and deliverance are confidently looked for. All Israel's enemies will be destroyed, the nation being owned as Jehovah's servant in a sense which never could have been before.

PSALM CXLIV.

"God only" is still the moral of the psalm that follows. He is owned here as the sole Helper of Israel, in language much of which recalls to mind the eighteenth, but with five verses added which give the blessing of Israel now with God, and prepare the way for the praises of that which follows, and which ends the series. Man as before is put in the balance before God, and what is he? The answer is a very different one from that given in the eighth psalm, the stand-point being altogether different.

1. Israel is yet in conflict, but strong in God, and confident of the issue. Jehovah is their Rock; and teaches their hands to war and their fingers to fight. He is the real Deliverer in whom they take refuge, and who subdues the peoples under them. Before Jehovah what is man, that He should make account of him? This is, of course, looking at him as the would-be thwarter of God's purposes. Yet he is merely like a breath; his days are like a passing shadow.

2. God is besought, therefore, to come down and destroy their enemies, sending from heaven to deliver them from the hand of strangers, men speaking vanity and acting falsehood. Then would they sing a new song to Him, the

(iii.) from heaven rescue me.
Put forth thy hand from above:
[e]rescue me, and deliver me out of great waters,—
from the hand of aliens.

(iv.) from vain men.
Whose mouth speaketh vanity,
and their hand is a right hand of [f]falsehood.

(v.) result.
O God, I will sing a [g]new song unto thee:
with a ten-stringed psaltery I will psalm unto thee.

(vi.) God the Giver of victory.
It is he who giveth salvation unto kings:
who [h]rescueth David his servant from the hurtful sword.

3 (11-15): Full portion possessed.
(i.) beginning with righteous intervention in power.
Rescue me and deliver me from the hand of aliens,
whose [m]mouth speaketh vanity,
and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood.

(ii.) the growth of children.
That our [n]sons may be as plants raised up in their youth,
our daughters as corner-columns, sculptured after the fashion of a palace.

(iii.) plenty.
Our [o]granaries full, yielding all kinds of store;
our sheep bringing forth thousands and myriads in our pastures.

(iv.) no failure or distress.
Our kine laden [with young];
no [p]breach nor issuing forth,
and no outcry in our streets.

(v.) a people with God.
Happy is the people that is in such case!
[q]happy is the people whose God is Jehovah!

e Ps. 18. 16.
f ver. 11. Ps. 12. 2. *cf.* Is. 44. 20.
g Ps. 33. 2, 3. Ps. 96. 1.
h Ps. 18. 17, 50.
m ver. 8.
n Ps. 128. 3.
o *cf.* Deut. 28. 4, 5.
p Mi. 2. 4. Is. 32. 18.
q Deut. 33. 29.

giver of victory to kings (and not their own might), and rescuing David His servant from the hurtful sword. If this speak typically of any in the latter day, it is suggested by another that "it would be 'the prince' [of Ezekiel xliv.–xlvi.]; for there will be a house of David on the earth" at that time (Zech. xiii). Messiah is of course the true Head; but the language seems more naturally to refer to a merely human ruler.

3. The psalm ends with describing the portion of Israel as the people of Jehovah, beginning with Jehovah's intervention in power for them: righteously, because of the character of their enemies. This would bring them into the fullness of earthly blessing according to announcements of the law, but of which the law was incompetent to give them possession. "Happy the people in such a case—a people whose God is Jehovah."

Psalm CXLV.

The concluding psalm of this series is emphatically "David's praise." From its position, and knowing of whom David is the familiar type, we should naturally be led to think of Messiah in it as leading the praises of men,—praising, as He declares He will, in the great congregation (Ps. xxii. 25). Whose voice but His could fittingly take this place? And accordingly in the psalm itself we find the Speaker distinguishing Himself from the general voice of praise, which, beginning with the "godly" in Israel, extends to the "sons of men" at large (vers. 10, 12). For all eternity this distinction lasts (ver. 21). But what praise will be waked up by this Voice when, free at last from all hindrances on man's part, it shall be heard as it will!

The psalm is the last of the alphabetic psalms, the meaning of which has been again and again pointed out. Everything has come into place and order now, and all man's language is restored from its Babel strife of tongues to unity of mind and purpose. Strange it seems, however, that one letter (*Nun*) is wanting, and the structure of the psalm acknowledges the deficiency: for, while we might

Ps. cxlv.

[3]PSALM CXLV.

Messiah's praises.

David's praise.

1 (1-7): Divine power. (i.) constant praise to the King. (ii.) confirmed. (iii.) the reality. (iv.) from the generations of men. (v.) acts toward His own. (vi.) the repression of evil. (vii.)

(*Aleph*) I WILL [r]extol thee, my God, O King:
and will bless thy name for ever and aye. r Ps. 47. 6,7.

(*Beth*) Every day will I bless thee:
and will praise thy name for [s]ever and aye. s Ps. 146. 10.

(*Gimel*) Great is Jehovah and [t]greatly to be praised; t Ps. 48. 1. Ps. 96. 4.
and his greatness is unsearchable.

(*Daleth*) Generation to generation shall [u]celebrate thy works, u Is. 38. 19.
and shall declare thy mighty deeds.

(*He*) I will speak of the glorious [v]splendor of thy majesty; v Is. 24. 14.
and of thy wondrous works.

(*Vau*) And they shall tell of the might of thy [w]terrible acts, w Ps. 46. 8. Ex. 15. 15.
and I will declare thy greatness.

(*Zayin*) The memory of thy great [x]goodness shall they pour forth, x Ps. 33. 5.
and sing aloud of thy righteousness.

2 (8-13): Divine loving-kindness. (i.) harmonious.

(*Cheth*) Gracious and [y]compassionate is Jehovah; y Ps. 103. 8, 9.
slow to anger and of great loving-kindness.

naturally suppose that the twenty-one verses resulting would divide now into three sevens, and thus the stamp of perfection after all be left upon the psalm; in fact it is not so: the structure is 7, 6. 8; the middle section does not reach to 7, though the overpassing of the last one into 8, shows, as the final verse itself does, that the praise here is eternal.

I cannot but conclude that the gap is meant to remind us that in fact the fullness of praise is not complete without other voices which are not found here; and that these missing voices are those of the Church and the heavenly saints in general. Meaning there surely is in it, where everything has meaning. The deficient *Nun* represents the jubilee number 50, which in one of its factors shows us man with God; this lifted to a higher plane by the multiplication with 10; but I leave this to those with whom nothing in Scripture is fortuitous to consider for themselves.

The three sections celebrate; 1. the power of God; 2. His loving-kindness; 3. His character as the Restorer—as we may say, the God of resurrection.

1. The Voice declares its steadfast purpose to extol God the King, and that for eternity. And this it repeats, emphasizing and confirming it: for has not, alas, experience shown how untrustworthy in general have been men's promises and resolutions? But here is One now who will not fail, who did not fail, when that will of God which He came to do expressed itself in the law of sacrifice. Here He has been thoroughly tested; and now, as He speaks, the government is upon His shoulder,— the full charge of that in which the divine character is to be shown forth: it is His in such a manner to glorify God.

He is worthy to be praised: His greatness is an infinite reality. The generations of men, too, shall declare it. But one tongue can speak aright of the glorious splendor of His majesty, and of His mighty works. *They* shall tell of the terrible acts by which evil has been dealt with and repressed. *He* will declare God's greatness. Yet they, too, shall pour forth their memory of His goodness, and sing aloud of His righteousness.

2. The last verse is, as often, a link with the next division, which takes up

(ii.) the Helper.
(*Teth*) Good is Jehovah to [z]all:
and his tender mercies are over all his works. z Ps. 147.8,9.

(iii.) the return of praise.
(*Jod*) All thy [a]works praise thee, Jehovah;
and thy godly ones bless thee. a Ps. 86. 8. Ps. 148.

(iv.) the voice of experience.
(*Caph*) The glory of thy [b]kingdom shall they tell,
and speak of thy might: b ver. 13. Is. 37. 16.

(v.) governmental ways.
(*Lamed*) To [c]make known to the sons of men his mighty acts,
and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. c ver. 6.

(vi.) the Overcomer.
(*Mem*) Thy kingdom is a [d]kingdom of all ages,
and thy dominion through all generations. d Ex. 15. 18. cf. Rev. 11. 15.

3 (14-21): The Restorer.
(i.) is Jehovah.
(*Samech*) Jehovah is the upholder of all that [e]fall,
and raiseth up all those that are bowed down. e Ps. 37. 24. Mi. 7. 8.

(ii.) maintaining.
(*Ayin*) The eyes of all [f]wait upon thee,
and thou givest them their food in due season. f Ps. 104.27.

(iii.) satisfying.
(*Pe*) Thou [g]openest thy hand,
and satisfiest the desire of every living thing. g Ps. 104. 21, 28. Ps. 147. 9.

(iv.) merciful (?)
(*Tsaddi*) Righteous is Jehovah in [h]all his ways,
and loving-kind in all his works. h Ps. 116. 5.

(v.) the weak with the Strong.
Koph) Nigh is Jehovah to all that [i]call upon him, —
to all that call upon him in truth. i Lam. 3.53. cf. Jas. 4. 8.

(vi.) limiting the evil.
(*Resh*) The desire of those who fear him he [j]fulfilleth;
he heareth their cry also, and saveth them. j Ps. 37. 4. Ps. 34. 9.

(vii.) perfect.
(*Schin*) Jehovah preserveth all that love him:
but all the [k]wicked he will destroy. k Ps. 31. 23. Ps. 11. 6.

(viii.) the eternal praise.
(*Tau*) My mouth shall speak Jehovah's praise;
and let all flesh [l]bless his holy name for ever and aye. l Ps. 103. 22.

the loving-kindness of Jehovah. Gracious and compassionate is He, — slow to be moved to anything that seems other than this; the Helper of all, His tender mercies are over all His works. Thus all His works praise Him, and the hearts of His people respond to Him in praise: they tell of the glory of His kingdom and His might, making known to the sons of men at large His acts and the majesty of His kingdom. Israel, in fact, will do this: for they, in their marvelous history, will be the suited witnesses of His ways to all the earth.

His kingdom is thus proved to be a kingdom of all ages. Not the millennial age alone, but those in which the power of evil might seem to have prevailed, and in which Satan has been, in fact, the "prince of this world." God has been, all through, the great Overcomer: and what discoveries of His glory in this way yet await us! We shall see how *He* has prevailed, beyond all our thoughts, in overcoming man's evil with His good.

3. This again introduces the third section, in which we see Him indeed the Overcomer: allowing sin to declare itself and the results to follow, but holding in His hand the power to bring out of them. Thus Jehovah it is, according to the power of that covenant-Name, who is the Upholder of all that fall, and He who raiseth up all that are bowed down. Upon Him wait the eyes of all His creatures, dependent for the food which is to maintain their existence. Thus He provides for the satisfaction and desire of every living thing.

But He is the Moral Governor also of moral beings: righteous and loving-kind. Righteous in all His ways, He can yield also to the necessities and weakness of His creatures. For this He is near to all that call upon Him, — that in truth call on Him. We cannot escape the reminder of the hollowness and insincerity which have so much attached to this. But where there is His fear, there desire is ful-

SUBDIVISION 5. (Ps. cxlvi.–cl.)

A Summary of Praise.

Ps. cxlvi.

1 (1, 2): Jehovah! (i.) a call to praise. (ii.) the assurance of faith.

2 (3-10): His help in contrast with men. (i.) the barrenness of hope in man. (ii.) stamp of death upon him.

[1]PSALM CXLVI.

The Mighty One of Jacob.

[m]HALLELUJAH:
praise Jehovah, O my soul!
I will praise Jehovah [n]while I live:
I will psalm to my God while I have being.

Trust not in [o]princes;
the son of man in whom is no salvation.
His [p]breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth:
in that very day his purposes perish.

m Ps. 145. 1.

n Ps. 63. 4. Ps. 104. 33.

o Ps. 118. 8, 9. Jer. 17. 5.

p Is. 2. 22.

filled; though here, too, the cry is so often out of the evil into which sin has plunged them. But it is under the restraint of His hand, and out of it He saveth. And indeed He preserveth all that love Him, while the wicked meet their necessary doom.

The God of resurrection in all this is but faintly sketched. Not Israel but the Church is the proper witness of this; although, as a principle, it runs through man's history.

The last verse carries the praise on into eternity: Christ still the Leader, and awakening all flesh to bless Jehovah's Name.

SUBD. 5.

Five Hallelujah-psalms complete the book. They show us now Jehovah enthroned amid the praise of His creatures, the heavens being brought in as well as the earth, and upon the earth Israel—ever the people in special relation to Him. It is striking that in all this we do not find any recognition of the past, save in the fact that the Lord gathers the outcasts and heals the broken in heart. These and such-like expressions are found, and we see the judgment of the nations at the hand of Israel (Ps. cxlix); but even redemption is not here celebrated, as far as I can see. It will, of course, always be the basis of all blessing, and that in which the full revelation of the glory of God is found; but for this we must look elsewhere, and in the psalms of atonement find what fully bears witness to it.

Of the five psalms here, the first, with that introductory character which we might expect to find in it, speaks broadly of Jehovah's power as manifested in the help and blessing of those that trust in Him. The second, while extolling Him as the God of creation emphasizes His relationship to delivered Israel. The third calls for the full praise of all in heaven and in earth. The fourth shows the nations yielding, but under the judgment of God, of which Israel are the executors. The last praises Him with all instruments of music, each according to its capacity, the full accompaniment of all Nature in that praise, which man, as its head, leads.

PSALM CXLVI.

The Mighty One of Jacob is here celebrated. Power is the first requisite for all government, and of course for all praise. But alone it could not suffice; and thus it is seen here as power used in ministry to all the need of man,—sustaining power for His feeble creatures, and in behalf of truth and right. The praise here, therefore, is very general.

1. Jehovah, a living God, the "I am": this is He whom all Nature and His saints celebrate. What a joy to recognize over all the multiplicity of Nature, and as the Author of all its laws, a living God upon the throne! And what it implies of us,—how the secret of our condition manifests itself in our holiest things,—that we need to *exhort ourselves* to praise this glorious One! Yet now the soul

(iii.) the real refuge and hope.

Happy is he who hath the Mighty One of Jacob for his [q]help:
whose hope is in Jehovah his God;

(iv.) the God of creation.

Who [r]made heaven and earth,
the sea, and all that in them is:
who keepeth truth for ever.

(v.) His ways.

Who executeth judgment for the [s]oppressed,
who giveth bread unto the [t]hungry:
Jehovah looseth the [u]prisoners:

(vi.) His restraint of evil.

Jehovah openeth [the eyes of] the [v]blind:
Jehovah raiseth those that are [w]bowed down:
Jehovah loveth the [x]righteous:

(vii.) perfect on all sides.

Jehovah preserveth the [y]strangers:
he upholdeth the [z]fatherless and the widow:
and the way of the [a]wicked he turneth upside down.

(viii.) reigning eternally.

Jehovah shall [b]reign for ever:
thy God, O Zion, to all generations.
Hallelujah.

[2]PSALM CXLVII.

In relation to His people.

Ps. cxlvii.

1 (1–6): Jehovah! (i.) a call to praise.

PRAISE Jah, for it is [c]good:
psalm of our God, for it is pleasant;
praise is [d]comely.

(ii.) in new relationship.

Jehovah is the [e]builder of Jerusalem:
he [f]gathereth the outcasts of Israel.

(iii.) restoring.

He healeth the broken in heart,
and [g]bindeth up their wounds.

19; *ctr.* Jer. 8. 11;

q Ps. 121. 1, 2.
r Rev. 14. 7.
s Ps. 103. 6. Ps. 9. 9.
t Ps. 107. 9. *cf.* Mark 8. 1–9.
u Ps. 107. 10, 14. *cf.* Lk. 4. 18.
v Is. 35. 5. *cf.* Matt. 9. 27–30.
w Ps. 145. 14. *cf.* Lk. 13. 11.
x Ps. 34. 15.
y Deut. 10. 18. *cf.* Lk. 17. 15–19.
z Ps. 68. 5. Jer. 49. 11
a Ps. 147. 6. Ps. 9. 16–18.
b Ps. 10. 16. Ps. 29. 10. *cf.* Rev. 19. 6.
c Ps. 92. 1. Ps. 135. 3.
d Ps. 33. 1. *cf.* Lk. 19. 39, 40.
e Ps. 51. 18. Ps. 69. 35. Is. 44. 26.
f Jer. 23. 3. Jer. 31. 10–17. Jer. 32. 37–44. Ezek. 37. 20–28.
g Is. 30. 26. *cf.* Is. 57. 15–19; *cf.* Lk. 4. 18.

responds with the energy of its joy in Him: "I will praise Jehovah while I live." Yes, and that only is "life" in which Jehovah is praised.

2. Now He is contrasted with men: how barren and vain is every hope in man, even man at his best. He may mean well, and seem to have power; but he is but breathing earth, and his breath goes and he returns to it: all his purposes, in which your confidence was placed, are buried with him. And in this one recognizes a "Jacob" with whom God must contend: how blessed, then, to know Jacob's Mighty One, who is at the same time Jehovah, and in covenant with man,—his Helper, and not his Lord merely, though his Maker and that of all creation. But He is faithful to the works of His hands, and delights to show his power in goodness, amid all the evil that man has brought in, and in ministering to the need of those dependent upon Him. With His strong hand also upon the evil itself, and in behalf of righteousness. Supporting those bereft of other help, He turns the way of the wicked upside down.

The evil is transitory, and will soon pass: Jehovah—thy God, O Zion—shall reign for ever, to all generations. Hallelujah.

Psalm CXLVII.

The second psalm here, while always recognizing God as the Creator, and pervading Nature with His glorious power, yet comes back again and again to tell rejoicingly what He is to His people Israel, with whom He has dealt as with no other, though His pleasure is always in all who fear Him, and whose trust is in His loving-kindness.

1. Every psalm begins with a call to praise, and Jehovah is still the inspiring Name. "Praise," says the psalmist here, "is pleasant and comely." How can

(iv.) creation as His test.
(v.) the weak with the Strong.
(vi.) His mastery of evil.
2 (7-11): The Lover of men.
(i.) the call to praise.
(ii.) the ministry of rain for growth,
(iii.) and satisfaction with food.
(iv.) the vanity of the creature for Him.
(v.) the conditions of being with Him.
3 (12-14): Fencing round Jerusalem.
(i.) Zion called to praise:
(ii.) secure, with her children,
(iii.) prosperous and satisfied.
4 (15-18). The earth subject to Him.
(i.) ruling with prompt obedience.

He telleth the [h]number of the stars:
he giveth to them all their names.
Great is our Lord, and of great [i]power:
his understanding is infinite.
Jehovah [j]lifteth up the meek:
he [k]bringeth down the wicked to the ground.

Respond unto Jehovah with [l]thanksgiving:
psalm unto our God upon the harp:
Who covereth the heavens with clouds;
who [m]prepareth rain for the earth;
who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains;
Giving to the beast his food;
to the young [n]ravens which cry.
He delighteth not in the [o]horse's strength:
he taketh no pleasure in the legs of a man.
Jehovah taketh pleasure in those that [p]fear him:
in those that hope in his loving-kindness.

Celebrate Jehovah, O Jerusalem:
praise thy God, O [q]Zion.
For he hath [r]strengthened the bars of thy gates:
he hath blessed thy children within thee.
He maketh prosperity [in] thy borders:
he satisfieth thee with the [s]fat of wheat.

He sendeth forth his commandment * upon earth:
his word [t]runneth very swiftly.

*"saying."

h Is. 40. 26.
i Job 9. 4. Job. 36. 5. Nah. 1. 3.
j Ps. 146. 8, 9. 1 Sam. 2. 8.
k *cf.* Ps. 55. 23. *cf.* Am. 9. 2.
l Ps. 95. 2. Is. 51. 3.
m *cf.* Job 38. 25-28. *cf.* Jer. 5. 24.
n Job 38. 41. *cf.* 1 Ki. 17. 4-6.
o Ps. 20. 7. Ps. 33. 16-18. Prov. 21. 31.
p Mal. 3. 16, 17. *cf.* Is. 66. 2.
q Ps. 97. 8. Is. 52. 1, 2.
r *cf.* Is. 54. 11-17.
s Deut. 32. 14. Ps. 81. 16. *cf.* Hos. 2. 21-23.
t *cf.* Matt. 8. 8-13.

this glorious God be coldly recognized? If you receive but the sun's rays, you must be warmed. And now Israel is rejoicing in the favor of Him from whom she has so long been astray. Jerusalem is built up afresh; its outcasts have been gathered. They have found Him the healer of the broken-hearted, the Physician for their deep and gaping wounds. In all their sad and devious ways, the stars which in that long night have shone above them, have been His witnesses of wisdom and mercy constant, if far off, and of steadfast order all untouched with confusion. For us, too far off for individual recognition, He, as familiar with them, calls them all by name. Now the infinite wisdom of all this shines out: the order of heaven has banished the confusion of earth; the meek, fashioned to this by their down-treading, can now be lifted up; while the wicked He bringeth to the ground.

2. Again the psalmist goes to Nature to illustrate the tender care that is displayed throughout it. The clouds gather, only to prepare rain; heaven is thus in constant ministry to earth, and as the result grass clothes even the mountains. The beast thus receives its food, and the young ravens, which cry in the ears of God. But is this His final aim? Can the horse's strength delight Him? Or even in man, his legs? No: the moral and spiritual rule throughout; and man, who fears Him,—man, hoping in His loving-kindness,—he is the creature in whom His delight is. Here is the song which for us has found expression in a far more wondrous way.

3. Jerusalem now basks in this sunshine, wrapped in the everlasting Arms. Zion has got her impregnable walls and bulwarks, her happy children, within her prosperity and satisfaction. These are but outward manifestations of divine favor: Jehovah has done this; it is the seal of God upon her forehead.

4. And to Him the whole earth is in subjection. His commandment throughout

(ii.) weaving and scattering.
(iii.) solidifying.
(iv.) and melting.

He giveth [u]snow like wool:
he scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes.
He casteth forth his ice like [v]morsels:
who can stand before his cold?
He sendeth out his word and [w]melteth them:
he maketh his wind to blow—the waters flow.

[u] Job 37. 6. Job. 38. 22.
[v] Job 37. 10. Job 38. 29, 30. Ps. 148. 8.
[w] *cf.* Ex. 10. 13, 19.

5 (19, 20): Israel with Him.
(i.) His statutes given her.
(ii.) as to none else.

He declareth his [x]word unto Jacob,
his statutes and his judgments unto Israel.
He hath not done so with [y]any nation:
and as for his judgments, they have not known them.
Hallelujah.

[x] Ps. 78. 5.
[y] Deut. 4. 7, 8, 32–34.

Ps. cxlviii.

[3]PSALM CXLVIII.

The full praise of heaven and earth.

1 (1-6): The higher sphere.
(i.) the heavens called to praise.
(ii.) angelic ministers.
(iii.) revealers.
(iv.) the earth-heavens.

[z]HALLELUJAH!
praise Jehovah from the [a]heavens:
praise him in the heights.
Praise him all his angels:
praise him, all his [b]hosts.
Praise him, [c]sun and moon:
praise him, all ye stars of light.
Praise him, ye heavens of heavens,
and ye [d]waters which are above the heavens.

[z] Ps. 146. 1.
[a] Ps. 103. 20, 21.
[b] *cf.* Heb. 1. 6.
[c] Ps. 19. 1. *cf.* Is. 24. 23.
[d] Gen. 1. 7.

it is hastened by the swiftest messengers. He gives the snow and scatters the frost; solidifies the water with His cold, and melts it back again with a warmer wind. Nature is plastic in His hand everywhere and owns its God.

5. But Israel has higher laws than those which Nature owns; and these she has learned to realize as her peculiar joy. Transmitter of these to the world around, the nations know them but by her.

Psalm CXLVIII.

1. The full praise of heaven and earth is now invoked, beginning with heaven. There is no hint of the *human* praises which will resound in heaven, except we find it in the blank place left at the commencement, where indeed our place is, and of which the expression "in the heights" may well remind us. God is going to show even to principalities and powers in heavenly places the exceeding riches of His grace and His kindness toward *us* in Christ Jesus, who are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ (Eph. ii. 7; i. 3). How it should affect our souls to realize that in us the value of the work of Christ is to find fullest expression, as those who are, as angels cannot be, members of Christ Himself, and His joint-heirs. What "joy unspeakable and full of glory" must it awaken in every heart taught by the Holy Ghost to enter beforehand into the place prepared for us, and what worship should not our hearts and lives already pour forth, as we think of it.

Then come the glorious ranks of angels, the constant ministers of God's blessed will, the "hosts" that range themselves constantly in their appointed places, in intelligent sympathy with the commands they execute.

Then we descend to sun and moon and stars, the material things which, however, by that very fact enter into the sphere of what is visible to us, and become symbols and witnesses of higher things.

In the fourth place we find, according to most, not a further descent, but the contrary; and in this way the "waters that are above the heavens" are considered to be some immense unknown reservoir of waters which lies beyond the firmament. "The Scriptures, from the first page to the last," says Delitzsch,

(v.) creature with Creator.
(vi.) in their defined place.

2 (7-12): The lower sphere.
(i.) the unique and mysterious.
(ii.) contraries and conflicting things.
(iii.) solidity and organization.
(iv.) flesh (?)
(v.) responsible man.
(vi.) limits in different directions.

3 (13,14): The secret of praise.
(i.) Supreme.
(ii.) exalting those in relation to Him.

Let them praise Jehovah's name,
for he commanded and they were [e]created.
And he stablished them for aye—for ever:
he hath given [them] a [f]statute which shall not pass.

Praise Jehovah from the [g]earth:
ye mousters and all deeps.
Fire and [h]hail, snow and vapor:
stormy wind [i]fulfilling his word.
Mountains and all [j]hills:
fruitful trees and all cedars.
Beasts and all [k]cattle;
creeping thing, and bird of wing:
Kings of the earth, and all [l]races [of men]:
princes and all judges of the earth:
Both young men and [m]maidens;
old men with youths.

Let them praise Jehovah's [n]name:
for his name alone is exalted:
his [o]majesty is above the earth and heaven.
And he exalteth the horn of his [p]people:—
the praise of all his godly ones:
even of the children of Israel, a people [q]near unto him.
Hallelujah.

e Ps. 33. 6-9. *cf.* Jno. 1. 3.
f *cf.* Jer. 33. 25.
g *cf.* Is. 43. 19, 20.
h Ps. 18. 12, 13. Ps. 147. 16, 17.
i Ps. 107. 25.
j Ps. 98. 8. Is. 55. 12.
k Is. 43. 20. *ctr.* Joel 1. 18-20. *cf.* Is. 60. 6, 7.
l Ps. 72. 9-11.
m *cf.* Ex. 15. 20, 21. Ps. 68. 11.
n Ps. 135. 1.
o Ps. 8. 1, 2.
p Ps. 89 17.
q Deut. 4. 7.

"acknowledge the existence of celestial waters, to which the rain-waters stand in the relation, as it were, of a finger-post pointing upwards (Gen. i. 7)." But the "waters above the firmament" of the fourth day are simply those stored up in the clouds, and can be nothing else; and the connection here, with the general descent in the address otherwise, would make one suppose, what the numerical structure would seem to confirm, that only the *earth*-heavens are intended in the verse. The use of the expression "heaven of heavens," however, is a difficulty of which I have no explanation, and the truth may lie in another direction.

The reason for praise is given in the next verses. By Jehovah's word they were created, and they abide before Him in the place His decree has allotted to them, impossible to be traversed or to fail.

2. We have now the lower sphere of earth, in which the call for praise is as universal. Here we begin with what is strangest and least known, the monsters and the deeps (to which, I suppose, they belong). We have next the contrary and conflicting products of the atmosphere: fire, which, as electricity, is associated with hail; snow, which soon becomes vapor; the stormy wind, which, though it may seem in revolt from established order, none the less does perfectly the will of God. The mountains and hills, on the other hand, are types of solidity; while the trees for the first time introduce us to organized things. We have next fleshly life,—higher, and, in proportion, frailer; and then responsible man, and in his various characters of responsibility. Finally, here, too, the defined places in which they are set in relation to one another, and their time-limits on either hand.

3. All these are called to praise; for Jehovah's Name is exalted, and He exalts the people that are brought near to Him. Israel are, upon earth, this special people.

Psalm CXLIX.

"When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." (Isa. xxvi. 9.) But what a tale that tells for man, that the king-

Ps. cxlix.

1 (1, 2): Jehovah, Maker and King.
(i.) the call for praise.
(ii.) in loving subjection.

2 (3, 4): Saviour.
(i.) the call to praise.
(ii.) for salvation of the meek.

3 (5-9): The ban upon evil.
(i.) supremacy of the godly.
(ii.) the conflict impending.
(iii.) for the fulfillment of holiness.
(iv.) the binding.
(v.) the judgment of God.

[s]PSALM CXLIX.

The yielding of the nations.

[r]HALLELUJAH!
sing unto Jehovah a [s]new song:
his praise in the congregation of the godly.
Let Israel rejoice in him that [t]made him:
let the children of Zion be glad in their king.

Let them praise his name in the [u]dance,
with timbrel and harp psalm unto him.
For Jehovah taketh [v]pleasure in his people:
he [w]beautifieth the meek with salvation.

Let the godly [x]exult in glory:
let them sing aloud upon their beds.
Let the high praises of the Mighty be in their mouth,*
and a two-edged [y]sword in their hand,
To execute [z]vengeance on the nations,—
punishment on the races [of men],
To bind their [a]kings with chains,
and their nobles with fetters of iron,—
To execute on them the judgment written.
such [b]honor have all his saints. †
Hallelujah.

r Ps. 148.1. Ps. 150. 1.
s Ps. 96. 1. Ps. 98. 1. Is. 42. 10. *cf.* Rev.5.9. *cf.* Rev.14.3.
t Ps. 100. 3.
u *cf.* 2 Sa. 6. 14. Ps. 30. 11.
v Ps. 147. 11.
w Ps. 90. 17. Is. 61. 3.

x Ps. 63.4-6.
y *cf.* Ps. 37. 34. *cf.* Josh. 6. 21. *cf.* Rev. 19. 11-15.
z *cf.* Is. 63.1-4.
a *cf.* Josh.12. 9-24.

b *cf.*1 Cor. 6. 2. *cf.* Rev. 2. 26, 27.

* "throats." † pious, or godly.

dom of God and of Christ, the one perfect rule for which the earth groans must be introduced after such a manner! Yet it is a "judgment written," as the psalm before us declares. Divine love must needs execute it: the "iron rod" is in the Shepherd's hand, and will smite for the salvation of His people, and to "destroy those that destroy the earth." (Rev. xi. 18.)

This is now what is briefly glanced at, the yielding of the nations to their Creator and King only when their pride is smitten in the dust, and the power they have abused is taken from them. Israel will have their part as instruments in God's hand in that day, as of old when they took possession of their land, the iniquity of the Amorites being at last full. The dew of Hermon (Israel's "great white throne") will revive the mountains of Zion (Ps. cxxxiii. 3); and they will no more, as in the former time, be disobedient to their God.

This must then be the prelude to rest upon earth; the "trumpets of jubilee" sound for the destruction of Jericho; although then, as before, there will be a remnant saved out of it.

1. The call for praise sounds once more: a "new song" is to be upon the lips of Israel. He is to rejoice in Him that made him, and the children of Zion are to be glad in their King. Zion is, as we know, to be the place of His throne, and that throne He is now taking.

2. But they are to praise Him also as their Saviour. He is taking pleasure in His people; and having brought them into the humbled condition necessary for their exaltation, He will beautify the meek with salvation. This is assuredly more than a deliverance from their national foes, though it will include this. And thus they will learn to exult in the Name they have forgotten, and the joy of the Lord will be to them a strength they have never yet possessed. "He that is feeble among them in that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of Jehovah before them." (Zech. xii. 8.)

3. Now they exult in glory; they sing aloud upon their beds. The quiet of their thoughts at the time God has ordained for us to help us to reality shall

Ps. cl.

[5]PSALM CL.

Praise according to full capacity.

(i.) the God of might enthroned.

[c]HALLELUJAH!
praise the Mighty One in his [d]sanctuary:
praise him in the [e]firmament of his power.

(ii.) for His acts.

Praise him for his mighty [f]acts:
praise him according to the abundance of his [g]greatness.

(iii.)

Praise him with the sound of the [h]trumpet:
praise him with [i]psaltery and harp.

(iv.)

Praise him with timbrel and [j]dance:
praise him with [k]stringed instruments and pipe.

(v.)

Praise him with loud [l]cymbals:
praise him with high-sounding cymbals.

(vi.)

Let all that have [m]breath praise Jah:
[n]Hallelujah.

c Ps. 149. 1.
d Ps. 134. 1.
e Ps. 19. 1.
f Ps. 145. 4-6.
g Ps. 48. 1. Deut. 3. 24. 1 Tim. 1. 17.
h 1 Chr. 15. 28. Ps. 98. 6. *cfr.* Rev. 18. 22.
i Ps. 81. 1-3. Ps. 144. 9.
j Ps. 149. 3. *cf.* Jer. 31. 3-14.
k Ps. 4, title. Ps. 92. 3.
l *cf.* 2 Chr. 5. 13, 14.
m Ps. 148. 5-13. Rev. 5. 13. Phil. 2. 10, 11.
n ver. 1. Rev. 19. 1-6; Rev. 22. 3-5.

only make them more ecstatic in their praises. They will have the high praises of the Mighty in their mouth, and in their hand a two-edged sword: for the nations are now to meet the retribution, for long ages of wrong-doing. Their kings, without power to stand, will fall into the hands of these avengers, to be bound and fettered: for it is the judgment written that is now executed, and this is the honor committed to all His saints.

PSALM CL.

Of the last psalm of this series and of the whole book we have unhappily little indeed to say. God is praised, or there is the call to praise Him, as now manifestly enthroned in the earthly as in the heavenly sanctuary; for His acts, all without exception, mighty and of abundant greatness.

Then He is to be praised with all sorts of instruments, according to the full capacity of each. This waking up of inanimate Nature, responsive to the touch or breath of man, is a blessed thing to anticipate. Nature is waiting upon man, and as yet he has evoked little but discord out of it. But this shall all be changed; and then what glorious music shall fill man's abode. But at present we cannot even distinguish the parts of this wondrous concert. Who shall tell us what trumpet and psaltery and harp represent to us here?—what spiritual significance we are to find in them? Most would, perhaps, think even the thought of it to be mere fantasy; and we must, at least, yet wait for the answer. But it will come, and might come soon enough, if—

"more of reverence in us grow"—

and more simplicity of faith in every word of God. Meanwhile let us be sure that everywhere there are notes now of that grand chorus that is to be, which are but out of the reach of ill-attuned ears. Much may be heard that we have not heard; and while the discord, though most real, is that which is first heard, most heeded by the mass, the more we listen the more we shall catch of the deep, sweet notes that lie under. "Seek and ye shall find" is still the Master's word.

"Let every thing that hath breath praise Jehovah!
Halleluiah!"

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

THE WITNESS OF ARITHMETIC TO CHRIST:

A

LEAF FROM THE GOSPEL OF THE EXACT SCIENCES

"Doth not nature itself teach you?" (1 Cor. xi. 14.)
"There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification" (chap. xiv. 10).

THE natural sciences need to be converted to Christ. Nature indeed does *not:* for (apart from man, the crown of it,) it has never fallen from Him. It knew at the beginning the touch of His creating hand, when, as the "Word," the Revealer of the mind of God, He called it into existence; and the work must, of course, bear witness to the Worker. If it be the work of the Revealer, we may well take it as a revelation. And this it is, and as this it must be read, to understand it.

But the sciences, so called, are drifting away from Christ. Man wants no more of God than he ever did; and science being the order of the day, his aim must be to make it such as he would have it. He must use it as Adam his father did the trees of the garden, to put a hedge between himself and Him who is pursuing him. The old story, if it be no more than a tradition, has its features of most uncomfortable resemblance to men's conduct now; all the more uncomfortable because every one now believes in "heredity."

So much the more earnestly does science "offer itself," as a well-known professor has told us, "to purify theology,"—necessarily after its own fashion: to make it as purely natural—as little supernatural—as it is itself. And from hence has come an attack on Christianity, (which is nothing if not supernatural,) an attack which in the multiplicity of forces enlisted under it, and in the pretentiousness of the learning out of which it springs, is the most formidable of its kind which perhaps the centuries have ever witnessed.

There has been, too, already, on the part of those who maintain the defence, so large a yielding of the ground in dispute, as brings into peril of loss all that remains of it. They have allowed the principle—at least

the mass have—that "Scripture was not intended to teach science," to be pushed so far as practically to separate from one another God's two witnesses. The natural has been cut off from the supernatural, and become thus merely secular. We may, perhaps, indeed find God in it, but scarcely the God of revelation: rather a heathen than the Christian God; or God reduced to the features common to the two. The effect of which, for those to whom Christ is the revelation, and the only revelation, of God, is to make natural theology but the dullest, coldest candlelight to those accustomed to the warmth and glory of the noonday sun. Thus it is no wonder if Nature be left as neutral territory, or debateable ground, for the materialistic or agnostic squatter to build upon, with only scant and ineffective protest.

But for Christianity such a division of the empire must be ruin in the end. Christ, if not a universal King, is none. If the physical universe say "I know Him not," where, then, is this kingdom of His? Thus science has gone on, taking fullest advantage of the concession made to it, pushing further and further its limits continually, insisting on full freedom for speculation,—on having room to add to the history of the world its dreams of the beginning, its prophecies of the end, and to fill up all the gaps between after its own fashion. If we object, we are told that "the world moves still," in spite of the efforts of theologians to arrest it. "Scripture was not intended to teach science." If science, then, can only conjecture a cosmogony, how life was produced, how species originated, how man descended (or ascended), nay, as to the birth of religion itself, the spectre of Galileo warns off interference, and Scripture, by the concession, must retire before it. Science is knowledge reasoned out and verified,—knowledge verified by facts of observation. But then the first of Genesis has not the value of the poorest text-book of geology: it is not reasoned out, but revealed authoritatively. And here, after all, is the stumbling-block for the mere "naturalist": can the supernatural be upon any terms with the natural?—can it, above all, be admitted as really "*super*" to the "*natural*"?—which means, of course, can it have leave to exist?

But we are not going into the argument whether Scripture teaches science, still less to plunge into the conflict as to the first of Genesis. I believe, indeed, that there still exists a method of proof as to this, accessible, not merely to scientists or to the learned of any kind, but also to any common man who deems the matter worthy of sufficient attention. And after all, if Scripture is, in fact, a revelation from God, one *would* expect in it a kind of authentication which would appeal to common men, and not leave them wholly dependent upon the lagging evolution of nineteenth century science, and the not very tender ministry of its priesthood of to-day.

Still we are not going to attempt such proof at this time. Our purpose is rather to interrogate Nature itself, by no means as a whole, but in a

mere fragment of it,— a few letters of its alphabet indeed,— to listen to its voice, to see if we are able to interpret at all its language, and for this compare it (after the approved method of philology) with the alphabet of another language, well known to us all as theological, and see if possibly they may not be near akin. If we should find them, in fact, so much so, as that the one, with the help of the other, should spell out a central truth of theology itself,— and if, moreover, the text used for this could be proved to be as old as, nay, involved in the very constitution of the alphabet itself,— then, without any possible question, as it would appear, the theological truth, whatever it be, must be at least as old as that old natural alphabet, and will be enforced with all the power of demonstration that Nature itself possesses. Then it will be seen that, as Scripture on its side has no quarrel with Nature, but can put sanction on its teaching, as the text at the head of this paper does,— so Nature, on its own side, far from being at issue with Scripture, owns it loyally as the word of the living God.

It is evident that the more simple and elementary the truth taken up for this, the more simple and perspicuous the argument will be. The more fundamental also in Nature, and the more it belongs to that part of it which bears, most of all, the stamp of mind upon it, the more will it seem in order for the light illuminating it to flash out here. Now I know of nothing in which the stamp of mind is more readily discovered than in that numerical system which is more and more being seen to manifest itself in Nature, and most of all in that foundation science where the Builder's hieroglyph would most certainly be found. Chemistry deals with the very substance of all material things, with the primitive atoms and molecules themselves; and "Chemistry," says Herschel, "is, in a most pre-eminent degree, the science of *quantity;* and to enumerate the discoveries which have arisen for it from the mere determination of weights and measures would be merely to give a synopsis of this branch of knowledge." And he goes further than this, and affirms that "Indeed it is a character of all the higher laws of Nature to assume the form of a precise quantitative statement."

Similarly, Alexander von Humboldt declares that "the only remaining and widely diffused hieroglyphic characters still in our writing—*numbers* —appear to us again as *powers of the cosmos*, although in a wider sense than that applied to them by the Italian school."

Once more, Prof. Flint says: "The physical universe has, perhaps, no more general characteristic than this — its laws are mathematical relations. . . . If we are to give any credit to science, there can be no doubt about the weights and measures and numbers. This question, then, is alone left: could anything else than intelligence weigh, measure, and number? Could mere matter know the abstrusest properties of space and time and number, so as to obey them in the wondrous way it does? Could what has taken so much mathematical knowledge and research

to apprehend, have originated with what was ignorant of all quantitative relations? . . . The belief in a Divine Creator is alone capable of rendering rational the fact that mathematical truths are realized in the material world." ("Theism," pp. 136, 137.)

May we not be able to go further than this, however? May it be possible not merely to assure ourselves that there are such, but even to interpret the hieroglyphics? That would indeed be a revelation, if it could be achieved! But is there any hope of it? Would it not be utopian to indulge such a hope? Is there, in fact, any meaning behind them, beyond that which Prof. Flint has given? Now we propose to inquire into the significance of only the first three numbers,—literally, the arithmetical A B C,—and to compare them with the fundamental truths of Christianity (which certainly give us, if this be true, the Name of the Builder of all this glorious fabric), the doctrine of the Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, and the respective offices of these three Persons. If there be any real correspondence apparent, then it will be surely fair to ask what can be the cause of this, except that the God thus presented to us is the Author alike of Nature and of Scripture? And this is a verification which it does not need a scientific expert to make, though it be really scientific; nor indeed any enlarged capacity or attainment of any kind. It is a manifestation of Himself such as God in His care and love to all might exhibit for the help of His creatures, and expect them to give heed to. How many such proofs *must* there be facing us everywhere in Nature, overlooked from sheer incredulity as to His having come so near us, even by those who believe in a Saviour's birth in Bethlehem,—incredulity as to His desire to be known and understood by every soul caring thus to know Him! With what a blazon of proof would the natural sciences, if converted to Christ, surround us!

I have elsewhere shown in detail—a detail which claims investigation at the hands of every candid seeker after truth—that there is a numerical structure of Scripture, as there is of Nature; and that these two have a common key in the spiritual significance of these numbers, as given in Scripture itself. I am only giving here one remarkable example on the side of Nature, and of Nature *self*-interpreted, although in perfect harmony with the scriptural use, and one which may well claim to be decisive. Certainly Christians have not had in their hands to lay the foundations of arithmetic, nor agreed to hide there in so secure a manner the evidences of their own belief. Nor, again, can it be supposed that they have constructed their belief out of the powers of these primary numbers. But "it is the glory of God to conceal a thing," as "it is the glory of kings to search out a matter." (Prov. xxv. 2.) And "if thou criest after wisdom, and liftest up thy voice for understanding,—if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." (Prov. ii. 3–5.)

There are then hidden things which are of priceless value to us. The earth but partially discloses her lodes and treasures of ore. But how little thought is there of these being such, even in the word of God itself; necessarily, therefore, how little search for them! If they are found also, how little belief is there in their value! The gems are counted but as common stones. How soon shall those who think so much of reason be waked up to find that there is *reason everywhere*,—divinest reason, put there by the Creator of the human mind, and who condescends to "reason" with the beings He has made?

Let us proceed to consider the numbers. Of each there are two forms, the cardinal and the ordinal. Taking both into account, primacy, unity, soleness, are evidently the thoughts that inhere in the first number. We shall seek out what other thoughts may be involved in, or connect themselves in a natural way with these. Then we shall inquire as to the possible theological bearings of all this. The argument must necessarily be weak at first, but it will be cumulative, and rapidly gather strength as we proceed. At least, so it is contended; and the thing to be proved has interest enough in it surely to provoke inquiry.

The ordinal of "one" is "first." If we apply this in the sphere of Nature, it is plain that what is *first*—the true beginning of all (and science does not now doubt a beginning) must be, without doubt, the cause of all: the *first*, if we really get back to that, *is cause;* and the first of all is thus the cause of all.

Suppose we *could* go back to the beginning, and that we found there, to the collapse of all our hopes, no God at all; nothing but such a cloud of elementary particles as our modern materialists can well believe in,—they must and will allow that this world-mist has been the cause of everything that exists to-day. Whatever the method—however the thing has evolved,—yet there cannot be really a single thought in the mind, or a particle of the air we breathe, that that mist shall not account for. And so Prof. Tyndall, in those "musings on the Matterhorn," which have been the occasion of so much musing on the part of others since, tells us, that his—

"Thought naturally ran back to its remoter origin and sculpture. Nor did thought halt there, but wandered on through molten worlds to that nebulous haze which philosophers have regarded, and with good reason, as the proximate source of all material things. I tried to look at this universal cloud, *containing within itself the prediction of all that has since occurred.* I tried to imagine it as the seat of those forces whose action was to issue in solar and stellar systems, and all that they involve. Did that formless fog contain potentially the *sadness* with which I regarded the Matterhorn?"

And this is all so clear to him that to make good he thinks we might well even "recast our definitions of matter and force"!

For it is plain that no one of us can believe in a self-creation of things, or their coming out of absolute nothing; no matter how long a time you allow them to do it in. Even the growth of a smaller into a larger sub-

stance (as of a seed into a plant) would of course be quite impossible, except by the ministration to it of surrounding elements, as moisture, air, and soil, in the case instanced. We may refuse the gross materialism of Prof. Tyndall; but the passage quoted well illustrates the impossibility we have noted, of separating in this way between "first" and "cause."

Of course, it is not meant, however, that a "first" always implies this. You may have the first of a series, which in no wise depend on it, but (along with itself) upon what is back of all together. We are not now concerned with these smaller beginnings, but with what is so in its highest and fullest sense. We are on the search after God, and must expect that what is less full and high will give the less perfect view or image of Him. Our contention is simply this, that, in the most absolute way of looking at it, the "first" implies cause. "The First" is the Name God claims as His, and this implies His being the Cause of all else. That nothing comes out of nothing, which is, in its rightful meaning, the faith of all, assures us that the great First of all must be the Fountain of all.

But we may take another step now, and a very easy step it shall be. A cause implies *power*, and mark, *for its effect*, sufficient, and so *almighty* power. So Prof. Tyndall speaks of the primeval world-fog as containing "potentially" his sadness on a certain occasion. Clear it is, surely, that a cause is not that till it has *produced the effect;* and thereby it has demonstrated its perfect power (*quoad hoc*, almighty) to produce it. The First Cause of the Universe must at least thus far be Almighty. There can be no need to dwell on this.

A third step now: we are seeking what is highest of its kind: the highest kind of cause we know, what is it? Perhaps one might urge even that we should not know cause or potency at all, if we had not found it in our *will* as potent. I take this to be true, although it was so early a lesson, shrouding itself in the first instinctive impulse of the babe seeking its mother's breast, that it may be better to take safer ground, and say that the *highest* cause we know is in will, choice, determination. "I will" would have no meaning, apart from the sense of power. True, that for executive ability an apparatus of nerves and bones and muscles has been somehow, and as it were in knowledge of my need, provided for me. True, my will may, from the failure of this, be practically impotent in a given case: yet even here this will of mine makes me, spite of all opposition to it, in this sense master of myself, sovereign in my inner citadel,—able, in fact, to distinguish myself by this very means from the outer machinery of flesh, which I *ought* to control and cannot.

Just as the highest "first" we know, then, is cause and potency; so, and as clearly, the highest *cause* we know is will. And it is highest, not because of the amount of power that is wielded by it, but because it is measured, controlled, *purposive*. No one doubts that this *is* the highest

quality of cause, and for this reason; and no one would give up the possession of an insect's strength, governed by an intelligent will, for the resistless might of a hurricane, which is not so,— if, after all, there *be* a hurricane, even, of this kind!

Put together all this, then, by most easy suggestion, there emerges for us a Figure far more definite than the "nebulous haze" that shrouds the beginning of Prof. Tyndall's world; and which is a true figure of PRIMACY,— of a first. It has been legitimately evolved under the careful curb of reason, demanding what is implied in the idea, as yet only of the ordinal form of a single number, and already we have got what may well stand as a fundamental conception of Deity. The King's image appears already, if faintly, upon the current medium of exchange: a Supreme Will acting in power as the sufficient Cause of the Universe, intelligent, purposive. If this be the image on the coin, we know Whose image and superscription it alone can be.

But we have still to look at the cardinal form of the number—"one," unity. And here, as before, we have to give this its highest and most varied expression; then, putting all this together, to ask to what it points. It need not even now be doubted that this will be by a whole heaven removed from Tyndall's world-fog.

And first, *physically*, what is the highest and fullest expression of unity which we find in the material world? Manifestly, it is *organic* unity; and that is as much as to say, the unity of *life*. Life is the great organizer; and, from plant to man, weaves together its matchless tissues into wholes of marvelous symmetry and adaptation. Every part is fitted to every other part and to the whole, in a working practical unity far beyond the mere naked oneness of a single element. A mountain-mass of *this* would be but a bigger *lump*. The self-contained living thing is an *individual*.

The thought here is indeed hardly needed to complete the ideal image which has been rising before us: for the intelligent, purposive Will-Cause of the universe must needs be a "living God." And of course this organic unity is not true of Him, but only the shadow of what is ineffably higher than itself. We are but using earth-boundary-lines to mark off— not to *measure*— the heavens. But above this unity of life, however connected with it, rises another unity far higher, and therefore pointing more toward God,— the *personality*, which is other than the corporeity, and other than its life. But this, if disputed, we need not here contend about. Life and personality are at least the expression of unities which plainly enter into the idea of God, if we are to possess one; and no one will contend that He of whom Scripture speaks is not Living and Personal.

But this does not end the correspondence: personality itself leads us further, in that character which seems very clearly to distinguish it from the constantly changing material body. The unity of *consciousness* is such

as our bodies, ever in flux, have not—a unity in *time*. With all the changes wrought in the course, say, of fifty years, we are witnesses to ourselves that we are, after all, the same persons as fifty years ago. We have not, in that sense, changed in all that time, though the body has been renewed, physiologists tell us, some seven times over. Here there is a unity in time, an unchangeable identity, which, if carried to its highest conceivable terms, develops yet further that thought of God which has been growing steadily, and keeping step with us, as we have pursued our way. Now it overshadows us with the suggestion of the Unchangeable, and so the Eternal. "Jehovah" meant this for the Hebrew; and here the figure of the Hebrew's God is on the coin. But the Hebrew did not stamp it there: who did?

But again: there is another personal unity, which man necessarily conceives, and some aim after, but which is seen but fragmentarily among those that dwell on earth; all the more fittingly the attribute of Him we are seeking. This is *moral* unity, a character of consistent harmony in which nothing is disproportionate, nothing defective, nothing discordant. Righteousness (which is practical harmony with one's relationships) and truth, which is identity between the representation and the fact, come naturally under this. Self-consistency in all positions is only possible to perfect goodness: and this fills out the full blessedness that we conceive as God's.

Add to this one last thing, which still the number covers, that God is One: there is no other;—none to dispute His absolute sway. Here again the old Hebrew creed is that of Nature.

All these ideas, then, find unforced expression under this first arithmetical number. Together they present us with a very sufficient summary of our faith as to God: not, of course, yet the Trinity; but God as One, living, personal, immutable, eternal, righteous, and true, the Almighty, Maker of the universe, and whom, in this sense at least, we must call Father, perfect in this relationship as in all other. Atheism, polytheism, pantheism, agnosticism, are all set aside by such a faith as this. There is not a main thought, as it would appear, that can be developed out of the number that is incongruous with this, or does not help, indeed, to set it forth. Primacy, unity, soleness, in their highest developments, speak of Him. This would seem a most extraordinary fact, and worthy of attentive consideration. This correspondence between Nature and Scripture can hardly be accidental, and *cannot be of man*. Is it possible that Nature is *meant* in this way to bear witness of the Hand that has moulded her? Is anything, in fact, more reasonable than this?

Two.

But the full Christian image of God we do not yet see; and we must now take up the second number to find if it will continue the story of the first. If it do so, the wonder must increase, and the difficulty of

any solution of it, save one, be felt correspondingly. For the testimony now required is of a very different, almost of an opposite character to that which we have been considering, and, though Father and Son are indeed one God, the distinction between them we must expect to find now dwelt upon, even while we are reminded of this oneness also! Diverse, almost self-contradictory characters, one might think, to be found here together! And yet this will not be too hard a test, if we are right in believing that the handwriting we are reading is meant to convey such a message to us.

Now, at first sight, the second number *is*, in some sense, the very opposite of the first; *One*, in whatever way it applies, excludes difference; but *two affirms it*. And this is the key-note of its significance both in nature and in Scripture. Two individuals, even though exactly alike, are yet different by the whole breadth of that individuality. But difference easily runs into the thought of opposition, conflict, and so begins to suggest the possibility of *evil*. This thought of evil enters largely into the natural use. "They are not one," we say; "there is a difference between them."

"Two" is also the first number that *divides*. "One" cannot do so, as we all know. So evil too divides: it has separated man from God; it separates man from man; it has brought in *death*, which is the separation of soul from body.

Two *tends* thus to evil, but it is not necessarily evil, or we should have no possible use for it in the quest we are now upon. Only with two comes in the thought of relationship; and language presents the other side in its use of *seconding*. To "second" is to "confirm, succour, help," and to *take even an inferior place* in order to do this. And here there begins to dawn on us the light we are seeking.

But notice first that the idea of difference, and to a large extent the assumption of evil as present, enters into the better significance itself. "The testimony of two men is true," says Scripture. But how is it "true"? May not the testimony of *one* be true too? Undoubtedly, the meaning is, it can be *taken* as true; it is valid as evidence. But why cannot the testimony of *one* be taken as true? Well; the witness may be mistaken, of course: even that will be probably due to defect in some way,—to evil, in this sense of evil; but how often, even so, may real mistake be due to something worse than this! how frequently is it due to prejudice, passion, enmity, and such like! And the moral reason is, in fact, the principal one, why a single witness is to be distrusted so much, if not refused: *evil has come in;* and there is the main need of a second witness to confirm the first.

But in any case the truth or validity of the double witness is founded upon *difference*. If upon examination we find the second witness only repeating the testimony,—still more, the words of the first, this correspondence, instead of producing greater confidence, *destroys it*. We say,

this is a contrived affair: the one has learned his lesson from the other. We need the evidence of two persons, not of one; and this is only one person talking with two mouths. We need to have diversity of interests, feelings, general standard, with yet a confirmation of the point in question,—a sort of stereoscopic view of the facts, which shall give them due solidity. Thus the very help given in *seconding* implies a difference, often a moral one: in other words, the presence of evil.

What then, are the ideas presented to us under this number, two? On the one hand, those of difference, opposition, conflict; of evil, producing division between God and man, between man and man, and going on to division between soul and body, the natural extreme of evil —death.

In connection with this, though in an opposite interest, *judgment* is the putting of difference, the dividing according to difference: "who made me a judge or a divider over you?"

On the other hand, we have the thought of "seconding," confirmation, valid witness, help, taking an inferior place to give help; even here with the implication of evil having come in and created the necessity for this.

How different is the sphere of ideas in which we are moving here from that into which we were brought in the case of the former number! And again, we have not travelled outside of nature for these suggestions: they have come to us from the natural use of language, with no sort of help from theology at all, save perhaps as far as the view that sin has brought in death may be held to be theological. But how is it that there rises up before us here a Figure, in most respects so different from the former one, yet so familiar, and so allied to it in our thoughts? We have got back of Christianity, outside of all possible influence from it, yet to find, some way, the Christ of Christianity meeting us, as if the very stones of earth's foundations were in fact rising up to prophesy of Him! And is not this indeed prophecy, where no "human element" can come in to discredit the inspiration? Is not the king's image upon the coin again? And if so, what primeval workman stamped it there?

Christ is as manifestly before us here, with all the sacred sorrow of His humiliation, as in the first place we had the Father. God and man in one person, He exhibits in this way a marvellous *difference* within Himself,—two natures far apart brought into mysterious relationship. In Himself, therefore, at the very first thought, He claims—and it is His glory to claim—this number as His own. Who in the whole range of personal existence can claim it as He?

And what is He in Godhead? As we know, the Son; the *Second Person*. And what in manhood? The Son of man: the *Second Man!* And why the *Second* Man? Why, because evil has come in, and spoiled the glory of the first. And here too is an unspeakable *difference*: for, if manhood is to be raised up again, it cannot be in the old condition

merely; no good in simply bringing back into that so soon lost, and which might be, therefore, so soon lost again! God never simply restores: He replaces the first with what is different from it and far better. Yet it is not the mere setting aside in judgment of man, but *help*, salvation for him, and "the Second Man is the Lord from heaven" (1 Cor. xv).

With Him comes in a *second*—a "new creation;" a second paradise,—not the lost Eden, but the garden of God. "Behold," says the Voice from the Throne, "I make all things new." (Rev. xxi. 5).

Thus He is the Seconder,—the Helper, Saviour. He has met in conflict the adversary of our souls, that He might deliver us; and for this He has come down into the lower place, far below His natural equality with the Father,—below angels; nay, below the proper estate and dignity of man himself. He has come down to the place where the division which sin has caused is found at its worst—into the place of separation from God Himself, as witness the cry from the cross, out of the darkness it interpreted: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

He has come down, too, to the place of death, the division of soul from body: "He humbled Himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the Cross."

The number cleaves to Him in this way all through His path. No wonder; for throughout it He is the "True Witness," testifying, amid all the contradiction that sin has brought in, to the perfection of Him to do whose will alone He came: Nay, in creation He has already been that,—the Logos, the Word of God,—the utterance and revelation of His mind. No wonder then, that creation should bear witness of Him, as it truly does.

No wonder, either, that, being this, after His work accomplished, He should be the appointed judge of all, the Divider to every man according to the difference found in each, the "quick and dead" alike.

Examine this throughout, and see if the "exact sciences" have no Gospel in them. Who has had power over nature, to place it there? Who has graven upon the current money of the realm of thought the sacred figure of the thorn-crowned King?

Three.

What then of the number 3? Does it too change the manner of speech, and yet continue the story to which thus far we have been listening? In one respect, the help to interpretation that we have been finding hitherto fails with the third numeral. We have no record in language of any significance attaching to the third numeral. Even this lack may, however, itself have significance; and we may note it and store it up for such use as every natural fact should have, if one supreme Mind produced and rules in nature. Meanwhile there must be

surely some other way of arriving at the end desired. If a worker may be known by his work, is there no *work* accomplished by this numeral, which will give it character? This question must, we think, be answered affirmatively; such work there is; and the more we examine it, the more, perhaps, we shall be impressed with the value of its testimony.

Some have speculated upon the possibility of a *fourth dimension*. But, according to the witness of all around us there are but *three*,—length, breadth and thickness; three modes of extension which alone are actually existent in the world, and which, it would seem, are alone possible to thought either. Moreover, to have any solid, tangible reality whatever, we must have this *third dimension*. What are length and breadth without thickness? A pencil line drawn upon paper is really more than that. Thus the number ^{3} attached to any other number denotes the cube of it. It is the sign of cubic—that is, *solid*—measure; and the third measurement is the measure of content.

Three, then, so taken, is ideally the great producer, the materializer, that which converts the idea into reality; thus manifests it, reveals it, brings out what it is. The architect's plan is practically in two dimensions: it cannot be carried out except the third comes in to help.

Let us keep this in mind, and still pursue the inquiry. Two dimensions cannot give solidity: correspondingly, two straight lines cannot enclose a space. That is one of the things which reason, transcending experience, affirms as an absolute, universal truth. I have not compared all possible two lines when I declare this, nor do I need to do so. It is one of those judgments which reveal the native power of the mind.

Two straight lines cannot enclose a space. They cannot therefore in this sense effect a proper *separation*. Two, as we have seen, is the number of division; but we are not thinking of mere division now, but of separation as *enclosure*,— setting apart. As if, for instance, I had a field to cultivate, and for which my hedge must go all round.

Connect this thought with that of the third dimension. The moment you get this, a thought—as the architect's plan—becomes a realization, and, embodying itself in space, separates itself from what is round about it. It is not a destructive separation, but a constructive one, and in the interests of what is positive gain and fruit.

Yet there may be implied, as in a hedge around a field, a previous or an outside evil from which the hedge is to separate; but if the field is to grow nothing, the hedge has no significance: it separates *to*, not simply *from*,—sets apart. Here, for the present, then, we may pause; we have got a distinct, *workable* idea of the number; let us consider the application.

For the Christian and in Scripture, the Holy Spirit is, as we know, the third Person of the Trinity. Apart from Him, we could not, of course, speak of a Trinity at all. With Him the Godhead is manifest: too obvious and easy a thought, perhaps, to impress us much with its significance.

But the Holy Spirit is also the Revealer. In another sense from that in which Christ is the Witness of God, the Holy Spirit is the witness. He is the Inditer of Scripture, through men inspired of Him—the Relator, as Christ is in Person and Work the substance of the relation. The Spirit is the *productive* witness, as in creation, brooding upon the face of the deep, or garnishing the heavens.

But He is the Producer in another way. Apart from Him, salvation itself is not actualized in the soul. New birth is of the Spirit; and "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." With new birth sanctification begins in the soul; and as in the number of which we have been speaking, production and, setting apart are found together: the separation is from evil to bring forth fruit to God. As saith the Bridegroom of the Song of Songs: "A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse." And the heart of the spouse answers: "Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits."

So, once more, the figure is on the coin: the full, glorious image now. But the office of the Spirit may explain to us, what a little while since was left aside for consideration. As the worker in men it will be found that His Personality, though revealed distinctly enough in the word of God, is yet characteristically much hidden in His work. He is no mere "influence," far from it. He can be grieved and vexed, searches and knows, sends and is sent, divides unto men severally as He will, guides into truth, makes intercession. Yet, while this is true, wherever pictures, types, parables of the Spirit, He is presented rather in His work, or as identified with those in whom His work is.

Take an illustration from the book of Exodus: God speaks of Himself to Moses as identifying Himself with three men, who are thus in some way the display of what He is. "God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob:" this He declares to be His memorial Name (Ex. iii. 15). Now, looking back to Moriah, the mount of sacrifice, we can see in Abraham's offering of Isaac no obscure picture of the Father and the Son (Gen. xxii.) But where is the Spirit seen in Jacob? Why, in that divine work which makes out of the "supplanter" an Israel, a "prince with God."

Take an example from the New Testament. In the 15th of Luke, where the Lord shows us the heart of God told out in the recovery of the lost, the Father comes into plain sight in the last parable; in the first, the Shepherd's search after the sheep shows quite plainly too the Saviour-Son. But in the *woman* seeking the lost piece of silver, the Spirit can be only seen, not personally, but in the Church, commonly figured in that way.

Once indeed, when the Spirit is seen in a bodily shape as a dove, at the baptism of Jesus, we have a partial exception; partial, as it seems, because the bird of love and sorrow is, as one of the sacrificial birds, rather the figure of the Man of sorrows, upon whom it descends.

Again, where the Lord seems to be making the strictest comparison, and where the word He uses is actually that used for the Spirit also,—"the *wind* (*pneuma*) bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth,"—not only is the figure that of invisibility, and it is known by its *effect*, but the Lord adds, not as you would expect, "so is the *Spirit*," but "so is every one that is *born* of the Spirit (Jno. iii. 8).

No more need be said in this respect; but, looking back now at this third numeral, to note again, that we had to find its character not in itself but in its *effects*, how complete once more is the parallel. The very anomaly, as it might seem, is really what makes more striking the analogy. The type is perfect.

The Three One.

Not that we have yet done with it, however. We have found, distinctly enough, in this nature-witness, the three Persons of the Godhead; have we no intimation that these three Persons are One God? Is it too much to expect, when we have found so much, still to find more? Well, let us put the question: how many answers may we not miss—answers of precious import too,—just because we do not put the question!

We must now then look at these three numbers as a whole, and test them by their *common* significance: if we find this, we must further ask, do these common elements point in the direction of our search? is their message really this, that these three Persons are One God?

Now there is one very evident feature in which these three numbers are united: they are all prime numbers. That means, as we know, that they are incapable of true division. But we could not go a single step beyond and find this. The number 4 splits at once into two halves, when tested by that divisive number two, which in that way so strongly suggests evil. Four is thus in Scripture the number of weakness and tendency to failure,—thus of the creature; and, divided by this number, it yields again the fatal number of division and of death.

But the three numbers preceding maintain their integrity, and thus equally and together bear the stamp of the divine. But this is only a first step in the direction we are taking.

Let us now, as we are surely by this time warranted in doing, take up Scripture as a means of inquiry, and compare it with what we have already ascertained. Scripture uses with full confidence these natural analogies, and thus frankly and fully commits itself to nature,—has no suspicion or jealousy of it at all. The apostle's saying, which he gives as the "message" of One much greater, is an illustration of this, "God is light" is a direct comparison of Him to that which still in its inmost being is a mystery, though men may have their theories about it. As a phenomenon it is a very complex one. Still, it is plain that

the beam of light, as refracted in its spectral image, shows not merely a seven-fold glory of harmonious colour, but is a *trinity* of radiant energy, disclosing itself as heat, light, and chemical power, which is now called "actinism." In the spectrum, the central light-rays blend at one end with the heat, at the other with the actinic rays, only the central band of colors, standing between the others, being, of course, the visible light. The analogy is so far obvious, though it is one which the science of the apostle might well be incapable of making. Christ, Himself the witnessing "Light," brings the message to us that God is this: Father and Spirit being alike unseen of man. The warming, vivifying rays, which the manifest light carries with it, are no unapt symbol of the Father. The unseen, actinic rays, with their transforming power, are the no less apt symbol of the Spirit's energy. The sun, with his luminous "photosphere,—the light on a material candlestick,—is again He in whom "dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 9), "and who is the effulgence of [the Father's] glory" (Heb. i. 3). Christ as God and man alike, "the Sun of Righteousness" yet to "arise with healing in His wings" (Mal. iv. 2), and bring the day. The harmony of Nature and Scripture is here maintained throughout; and even the numerical progression is in harmony also.

But let us follow this leading also further. "Light" is "that which makes manifest" (Eph. v. 13). The fantasies begotten of obscurity are dispelled by it, and the truth becomes apparent. Truth is the accordance of the idea with the fact; and this unity or identity comes under the range of the first number, even as in the Genesis-record of creation the light appears on the first day. God as One in His moral nature is the True,—consistent with Himself, and with the reality of things everywhere.

But Christ also is the Light, and the Radiator of the light, the True Witness, bringing into the soul the valid evidence of the truth. As God and Man, He is the two-fold Witness, entirely competent as such, true and trustworthy. Who could believe in the light, and yet not accept the Sun?

But again, the Spirit as the Sanctifier, the Worker of reality, the Actualizer of the divine idea in man, is no less the True; and the scriptural phrase for holiness agrees with this: it is the taking things as they are, accepting things at their real value. It is "the holiness of *truth*" (Eph. iv. 24, R. V.) and the Spirit is truth" (1 John. v. 6).

Once more, the numbers agree: the three are one in the self-same respect as the Scripture testifies as to the Persons of the Godhead. The three are a tri-unity, a trinity, even as the God of the Scriptures is a Triune God.

But there is another thing beside Light, that the same apostle bears witness that God is: "God is *Love*" (1 Jno. iv. 8); and this too will be most manifest in Him who is God manifest, and who is God's love-gift

to mankind. But this is found in all three Persons, and must be capable of deduction under all three numbers, if there is to be no defect in this natural presentation of things. This is what we seek, the testimony of nature as parallel with Scripture, and which all that we have found hitherto encourages us to expect.

Now, under the first number, we got the idea of consistency, harmony, accord. The number one, we have seen never to *divide*. This "at-oneness" is assuredly the atmosphere of love: "love worketh no ill to his neighbor" (Rom. xiii. 10). This may be a negative, rather than a positive character; still it is a character of that which we are seeking. As we do not come under this number to the breach caused by evil, so we have not yet the activity of love to heal the breach. The preservative spirit of concord, therefore, is as yet all that one can expect.

Under the second number, evil is seen as having come in, and divine love in its fullness is revealed. "Hereby know we love, because He laid down His life for us" (1 Jno. iii. 16, Gk). God and man are brought together in the very Person of the Mediator; and in His work for men, love stays at nothing whereby the end may be attained. The spirit of concord is here become the spirit of reconciliation: the Witness to God is the Saviour of men.

Under the third number, the work of the Spirit of God is the carrying out and making effectual the work of Christ in man's behalf. The soul of man becomes the garden of God, and receives the nurture necessary for the production of the fruit in which He takes pleasure. In him that keepeth His word is the love of God *perfected* (1 Jno. iv. 6).

Here then, with whatever imperfection told, is the first leaf only of that gospel of which we may be sure, if this be the beginning, the natural sciences must have much to say. The effort of the day is largely to force them into indifference, if not hostility to divine truth. Nature is neither hostile nor indifferent. And that numerical structure which we find in chemistry undeniably impressed upon the foundations of the world, but which as truly exists in nature and in Scripture everywhere, is, I believe, a God-given key to the correspondence of one with the other—a most signal help to the consistent interpretation of both. Mere utilitarianism, though quite unworthy of the name, may despise what it would consider the mysticism of all this. Harness nature to the machinery by which man's work is to be done, that it can understand. Nay, "speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee,"—that will be approved, so long as the lessons gathered are to be merely earthy, and plenty of room is allowed for man's imagination to roam free from the control of God. You may speculate, as you please, upon elemental fogs as the cause of the sadness of a man of science, and even so your sanity shall not be questioned: for the imagination, even though it be but the whirl of the livelier brain-particles, still must be admitted to belong to man. But

gravely to make nature talk in parables,—seriously to believe that they are *there*,—to credit God with sending messages to us by such a channel,—this will be for many too preposterous even for examination. Here induction, deduction, argument of every kind will perhaps be vain: the prophets of such things must be held for an anachronism. They should have lived when the world was in its credulous youth.

This is not the age of gold but the age of iron, and we are rightly doubtful about that age of gold.

And yet, if even a time of universal scepticism were upon us, it should be lawful, one would think, to *doubt the doubt*. The perplexity and unrest, the sorrow and strife, with which the world is filled, are certain: there was One who dared to say once, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." It *would* be good if one could believe in God speaking to us in a voice like *that!* It would be good to believe even that Nature were His other hand put round us, clasping the hand of revelation, in His earnest desire to draw us to Himself. The belief that such is the fact is perhaps apology enough for speaking.

APPENDIX II

A STUDY OF THE NUMERICAL SYMBOLISM OF SCRIPTURE

THERE is, I suppose, no student of Scripture who has not caught sight, to a greater or less extent, of a symbolism of numbers to be found in it. He who has implicit faith in "*all* Scripture" being given by inspiration of God will not doubt that the numbers in it, being part of it and sharing its inspiration, must therefore be "profitable," as all else in it; and spiritually, which is the profitableness which God has given it for us. But a spiritual meaning attaching to the use of numbers can hardly be other than a symbolic one; falling in thus with the general typical and parabolic language of the Bible, which evidently pervades so much of it. Take the sevens of the book of Revelation generally, or the twelves of the heavenly city, no one could, probably doubt it; but upon all this I need not now dwell, the whole present volume with others of the series being such an extended proof of consistent meaning running through the numbers of Scripture, and imbedded in the very structure of it as, if it does not satisfy any one who will patiently examine it, as to its truth in the main, nothing else that I can say will be likely to do so.

I say "its truth in the main," because it would be a very strange presumption to suppose that there were no blots or disfigurements such as are apt every where to affect all human work, and especially where it is employed upon that which is best and highest. Any one who would take such signs of human infirmity to invalidate the whole of that with which they are connected will have in consistency to reject almost all that man has ever put his hand to. And yet such arguments prevail with many, if not to disprove, at least to cast such doubt upon what is presented to them, as to prevent all real examination of the matter. The thing is shelved: if, with Gamaliel, they will not fight against it, lest haply they should be found to strive against God, like him too, they will leave it to prove this by its success elsewhere, and not trouble themselves in the meanwhile overmuch about it.

To those who are disposed to settle the matter by minute criticism

of the kind referred to, I would suggest a consideration of the very opposite kind, an argument drawn not from particulars, but from a general view of the subject, and which ought to stand the more securely because of the breadth of its foundation. In the present volume the material of such foundation is gathered out of the whole book of Psalms, every psalm, *every verse* of every psalm, is cited in evidence; and that not in any disorderly manner, or with any fancifully devised arrangement of the proof, but taken from first to last in the very order of Scripture, and with jealous respect to every hint that can be gathered from any source, as title or alphabetic arrangement, or aught else. All this, remember, is taken together in the whole and in every part of it, not merely to prove a numerical structure of the book, which would be comparatively a small thing, but *through this to show the meaning of the whole and of every part of it.* Every division, subdivision, section, verse, must more or less contribute to this end. The numerical harmony must be the key to a spiritual harmony which emphasizes everywhere the distinctive features of each part in such a way as to combine them into an intelligible and intelligent whole. If this can be done,—if it has been with any success accomplished,—who can even imagine it to be a mere flight of fancy, working in obedience to a strong will to have it so, that has accomplished this?

If, on the other hand, there be no way of accounting for this, except by there being somewhere a Mind behind it, which has arranged these marvellous harmonies, then assuredly the book in which they are found is a book which has upon it the *seal of its inspiration*, not only as a whole but in its details, in such a manner as to bid defiance to all the higher criticism of the day to remove it from it. And this alone would make it of inestimable value to every truth-seeking mind: But not merely this: the seal is set at the same time upon the *interpretation* of the book. Granting, of course, that there may be mistakes shown here and there, as is fully admitted, yet, the main features cannot be a mistake; and even the details cannot be to any large extent: they are the artist's strokes which combine to make the picture; and the truthfulness of the picture as a whole insures the general truthfulness of color and shade.

However, my purpose now is to take up the numbers, and to inquire more fully than I have yet done into their symbolic meanings. These are the keys to the locks, for they are not one but various: and it will be understood that they need to be carefully modeled to the wards that are to receive them, if they are to turn without being forced. Much difficulty has arisen from lack of precision as to these meanings, while the positively contradictory ones advocated by different writers have been a stumbling-block with many as to any faith in them at all. I do not propose, however, to examine these differences, but to give the grounds only for those which satisfy myself, and which have abundantly

proved themselves in experimental application. It will be found also that these meanings have their roots in nature as well as in Scripture, and are thus counter-checked on either side; while the numbers themselves are not indefinite, but few in number; the larger ones being but resultants of their factors, as 10, is 5 × 2, or of the addition of certain others together, according to warrant in Scripture itself; as 7 is 4 + 3 and 5, as will be shown hereafter, is 4+1. Plainly, without some Scriptural or natural warrant, the latter method would be quite unjustifiable, as any numbers might be arbitrarily taken in this way, and entire uncertainty of all meaning be the result.

The series of numbers which we may consider fundamental is, I believe, but seven: answering to the seven notes in music, which by their combinations produce all the various melody and harmony with which we are acquainted. Seven is the well-known number of perfection, which, taken from the completion of God's six days' work with the Sabbath of His approving rest, has been used for the division of time ever since, and in Israel was the basis of most of the larger divisions, except the year itself. Thus the months were lunar, (except the partial one intercalated to keep the year straight,) and the 7th month specially marked out by the day of atonement and the feast of tabernacles (Israel's celebration of rest); while there was a sabbatic *year* as well as day, and a jubilee at the end of a *week* of sabbatic years—a still more joyous rest.

Consistently with this, the number 8 speaks always in Scripture of a new beginning—what is new in contrast with the old. But this I shall give proof of later, and it is largely accepted in this way. It needs only to be mentioned here to give definiteness to the assurance that in Scripture the numerical series is in fact of seven numbers only. All others seem to be but compounds of these.

Let us now take up the numbers separately.

ONE.

The number speaks for itself of the ideas connected with it. They are rooted in all language, so that it cannot be hard to test the applicability of any that we attribute to it. Yet it is naturally one of the fullest in meaning in the whole series, and it will be seen how various are the applications that can be made of a few primary thoughts here: a thing of essential importance to any numerical structure, as every series of numbers must of course, begin with this, which must have, therefore, a largeness suited to such various connection. After the first two numbers we shall find this rapidly diminishing in proportion to their less constant use.

We may for lucidity divide the meanings of the number into subheads under which to group its different applications.

1. Soleness.

Soleness is the exclusion of another: as where Zechariah says of the day of the Kingdom soon to come: "In that day there shall be one Lord, and His Name one."

Under this head we may group also—

Singularity, uniqueness;

Solitariness; which leads on to—

Barrenness: the solitude of impotence.

In the opposite direction to this, however, soleness may imply—

Sufficiency, power; that which stands alone must have power to stand alone; thus—

Independency; admitting no other; which in a bad sense may be a mere synonym for—

Pride; and in a creature in his relation to the Creator—

Rebellion.

But soleness may have also another set of meanings, as where I have to pronounce what are apparently two things to be but one, I affirm their—

Unchangeableness, consistency, perpetuity, are but identity in progressive time; and again—

Truth is the identity of an idea with fact or object; as—

Knowledge is but the identification of these.

2. Unity.

Unity we may distinguish as the oneness which proceeds from the *uniting* of different elements, whether these be physical, mental, moral or spiritual. *One cannot divide.* Thus we have—

At-oneness, harmony, consistency, congruity, integrity, righteousness, which is consistency with relationship, and of which *obedience* to authority is only one form; *concord, peace.*

We may pass on now to thoughts which are connected with the ordinal form of the number, which here have special importance, as—

3. Primacy.

The first natural suggestion is that of—

Supremacy, headship, rule;—

Beginning; and putting these things together, the supreme, the absolute beginning is the controlling cause of all that exists beside (see Appendix I). We may put down therefore—

Cause, source, occasion (which is a lesser cause); and then—*foundation, ground,* (and so) *plea.*

Of course, it will be understood that not all these thoughts are synonymous with *soleness, unity, primacy,* as contained in this first number. But these three ideas naturally lead to them all, *suggest* them. A symbol is just that which in this way *suggests* what it does not explicitly

convey. A cock crowing is not the symbol of a cock at all; but it may be a symbol of the dawn. The numbers come far closer than this to what they stand for. Their meanings have, as stated, their roots in nature, and have all been worked out in this very way. Thus when we find such things as these characterizing the first psalm of a series, or the first section of a psalm, or the first verse of a section, there can be no doubt that this fulfills the requirement of a numerical structure; nor, when we find such conformity continually maintained, that a numerical structure is in fact what we have before us.

But yet this does not complete entirely the range of thought which may be found under this number; as it is evident that there may be combinations of these thoughts which may equally find place under it. Thus—

Life is the great organizer, or *cause* of the *unity* which is every where found in the animal and vegetable kingdoms; while—

Personality is the proper unity of man as a spiritual being. Then—

Will is allowed to be that which gives us our original conception of *cause*, and is plainly the assertion of *personal independence*. Thus we reach—

Choice, Election. Then again,—

Grace is a state of favor (*at-oneness*) with God freely (*i. e. sovereignly*) conferred.

It is remarkable how the greater part by far of all these thoughts unite together to image God as the sole personal First Cause and Ruler of all, omniscient, almighty, unchangeable, eternal, righteous and yet gracious; God of the Old Testament and of the New,—Jehovah, Father. And this tends greatly to confirm the naturalness of this grouping as designed of God. Gathered together entirely without thought of this, we find that we have gathered a group of special witnesses, all giving testimony in one direction, and uniting to put God in the first place, which is always His! If we think yet that this is chance, what can we think when we find the second number as much bearing witness to the Second Person of the Godhead as the first to the First? Aye, and again the third to the Third? If this looks like arrangement, who has arranged it? If it be chance, does it not seem as if chance itself had become a worshiper of God? Let us worship Him in it then, too.

But this has been already taken up at more length (Appendix I). We must now go on to consider the number

TWO.

If One points to the exclusion of difference, difference is the very thing which Two proclaims. This note of difference runs through all its meanings. We will group them, as in the former case, under subheads for better distinction.

1. Relation.

With the thought of "another" there comes in necessarily that of *relation*. A second, if only as that, must have some relation to the first, If it be a true *second*, as we say, then it is a relation of—

Help, support, confirmation, assurance; and thus it is in Scripture the number of

Competent testimony. We have this idea expressed in our word "seconding," and in Scripture in Ecclesiastes iv. 9–12. Already this supposes need and something adverse, and thus we are naturally led to the thought of—

Preservation, deliverance, salvation.

Another thought naturally contained in it is that of—

Service, ministry.

Then we have, as still connected, but in a more external way,—

Addition, increase, growth; and these lead on to—

Progress, movement, activity.

Spiritually, *attachment* is almost synonymous with *love*, near akin to which we have *desire*, the expression of which, to one thought able to grant it, is in *prayer*.

Attachment, too, may be otherwise read as *association, partnership, fellowship.*

In its ordinal form as—

2. Second.

The number is clearly expressive of—

Dependence, which leads naturally on to *faith*, which is dependent attachment. But otherwise it may be read in the sense of *inferiority;* and so *lowliness, humiliation, subjection* may be associated with it as ideas.

As the number which expresses—

3. Difference.

It is very apt to connect itself with the thought of evil, whether moral or physical. Running through the grades of—

Diversity and contrast, it goes on to—

Contradiction, opposition, conflict, to *enmity*, and the *enemy's work.*

And evil comes out again, unmistakably, in the thought of—

Doublemindedness, duplicity, deceit.

It is also the *first number which divides*, and so stands for—

4. Division.

Which we may have as—

Separation. Here it may be related to knowledge as *analysis, differentiation, discernment;* and so *judgment, wisdom;* in an external manner, *sight.*

But *death* also is separation, dissolution.

Combining such thoughts as these, we shall easily find, as already said, how they cluster round the Person and work of Christ, the Second

Person of the Trinity, God and yet Man, the Second Man, the Word of God, the true Witness, the Saviour, come down into the inferior place, to be the Minister and Servant of our need, serving even to death for this, and that death the death of the Cross. All through, the number *two* links itself with this, which covers, it is plain, both His Person and His glorious work. How unlike are all these things to what we had under the first number! what contrasts are contained in them! But it is the number of contrast, and all speak of Him. Let the reader pause again and consider here how the Lord the True Witness, puts His seal on the numerical system in all this. There is nothing in it that is recondite or hard to follow, surely; nothing that is forced or unnatural. If it speak, and speak truly, after such a fashion as this, how much may we expect from the use which the Spirit of God has made of it.

Two is also, as I take it, the number of the *soul*, the emotional part of man's nature, as the spirit is the mental and moral. This I have elsewhere spoken of,* and it does not seem so much to concern us here.

It is also the number of the *woman*, full of contrasts, as she is: dependent on man, but his help-meet, the type of increase, yet through whom came sin and death, and yet again, through her victorious "Seed," salvation.

THREE.

When we come to the number three, the help of language fails, for man has penetrated indeed but a little way into the divine mysteries of the book of Nature. We have no words that express the inner meaning of this number, as "unity" and "seconding" speak for the former ones. Nevertheless we are not left without efficient help for ascertaining this.

Three, the number of the Spirit, is revealed to us, like the Spirit Himself, by the work it does. The Lord shows himself to us in it, not merely as Master of arithmetic, but as the One to whom geometry bears equal witness. There seem to be just three things which mark respectively three groups of meanings. The first is that there are three dimensions to every solid body; the second, that it takes three straight lines to enclose a space; the third, that the third line of a triangle returns to the first. Let us look at them in this order.

1.

According to the first of these, three is the symbol of cubic—that is, of solid measure; of *solidity*. Two dimensions give you a measure of surface only, length and breadth without thickness: but there is no such thing in fact: the thinnest line that you can draw upon paper is more than that.

Three is thus the symbol of *reality, realization; of fulfillment, fullness, of manifestation*, as the statue or the house manifests what is in the maker's

* "Spiritual Law in the Natural World," pp. 103, 109–113.

mind,—the telling out of the heart. Cubic measure is a measure not of surface, but of *content*.

As the place of divine manifestation, the *sanctuary*, God's dwelling-place, was a cube—of ten cubits in the tabernacle, twenty in the temple. So is the final city, which the glory of God lightens: "the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal."

The *glory* of God is but the manifestation of Himself; and "whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me," says the Lord Himself (Ps. l. 23): displays Him in His rightful character, as the "blessed God." To know Him really is to bless Him. *Praise* is thus the occupation of the sanctuary; not otherwise than freely, while and because necessarily.

God's *name*, too, is the manifestation of Himself.

The Trinity is alone His full manifestation. The Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity, is He who manifests in the creature the counsels of God, whether in creation or in new creation.

2.

It is remarkable how the meanings under the second head run into the first, though reached in such a different manner. Here, if three straight lines enclose a space, the number will speak of separation from what surrounds, but not (as the last number,) of simple division. Like the enclosure of a field, it speaks of *setting apart for purpose*, *specialization*, which, if we apply it Godward, we know as *sanctification*, and in the spiritual result to be attained, as *holiness*. For, uniting the present with the former line of thought, let us remember that cubic measure is a measure of content and speaks of what is internal, as the Spirit's work is. Specialization means here therefore *transformation*, as in some sort it generally does: sanctification of heart is holiness. Thus we are reaching the sanctuary from another side, and have the symbolism of the number doubly witnessed to. Both sides are needed: for the manifestation of things, which only the presence of God rightly gives, realizes the "truth," the maintenance of which in its full character is holiness—the "holiness of truth" (Eph. iv. 24).

The sanctuary is *God's* dwelling-place; but as speaking of setting apart, the number is competent to symbolize the *dwelling place* in general, *possession*, *portion*, what is set apart to you. And so also of *marriage*, which is essentially the same idea.

The *ban*, too, we must remember, was in Israel the setting apart of holiness, though in destruction,—the sanctification of God in judgment; and we find this, therefore, sometimes under the same number that speaks of the glory and praise of God.

3

The third head is that which most evidently furnishes us with the symbol of resurrection,—the return of the third line of a triangle to the first. Here it is most striking that "life" comes under the first

number, "death" under the second, just as the first two sides separate from one another. In the third line then, symbolically, *death returns to life:* we have *resurrection.* We see why in Scripture it is on the third day.

Return, remembrance, recovery, revival of every kind would be symbolized by it, of course, as fitly. One would suppose, *reproduction.*

And the triangle becomes as a whole a sort of mathematical trinity: the witness of how divine truth underlies every where the *Kosmos*—the ordered world.

That the Spirit of God, the Third Person of the Trinity, is borne witness to also in this number, there is no need to cite more than this in proof. But I may add that it is by the indwelling of the Spirit that our bodies are made the temples of the Holy Ghost, and the Church as a whole the "habitation of God."

FOUR.

That the first three numbers have this definite reference to the Persons of the Godhead, they being also all prime numbers, may prepare us to find in the following one the number of the creature, as in some sense it is generally, perhaps, taken to be. Its character is seen in this, that it is the first number that is *not* a prime: that is, it is the first number that is capable of division without remainder by some other than itself. Thus it speaks emphatically of *weakness*, which does not belong to God but to the *creature* in contrast with Him: of that which yields itself to be fashioned by the divine hand, and may yield itself, alas, to another. This *yieldingness* gives, I believe, the real significance of its symbolism whether good or evil.

In Scripture 4 divides thus in two ways; either as $3+1$, the number of manifestation and that of divine sovereignty (and this is the good sense, when the creature reveals the divine hand that is over it); or else by true division, 2×2, which seems to be invariably significant of evil.

Yieldingness may be on the part of man *meekness* or *mercy;* and the latter even on God's part.

It may be *failure* under *testing*, of which last also the number is clearly competent to remind us. But failure is the sign also of *transitoriness* and *change;* and testing, the putting to proof, leads to *experience*, experimental knowledge.

These various thoughts with which 4 connects show it to be the *world*-number; and in Scripture it is that of the "four corners of the earth," of *earthly* completeness and universality, which thus has on it the stamp of weakness, whatever men may boast. It is the number of the "four winds of heaven"— the various and opposing influences of which the earth is the scene, and which so depict the moral contrasts and opposition which mark the fallen creature's ways. These ways of the creature are but the *practical walk on earth;* which typically the fourth book of Scripture (Numbers) presents as to the people of God.

The connection with the number 2, of which it is the square, is seen all through, while yet it is sufficiently distinct from it.

FIVE.

In the cleansing of the leper and the consecration of the priest alike, the blood is put upon three parts of man: the tip of the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, the great toe of the right foot; and these three parts manifest man in his responsibility to God. The ear is to receive His word; the hand to do the enjoined work; the foot to walk in His ways. Each of these parts is connected with the number 5.

The ear is one of five senses, the avenues of perception, by which as a rational being he can be appealed to.

The hand is that by means of which he moulds and fashions the natural world around him. It is the expression of active power, the four fingers with the opposing thumb, the consecrated, because the governing part. These on the two hands give ten, the number of the commandments in the two tables of the law, the measure of natural responsibility.

The foot, the expression of personal conduct (the walk) gives a similar division, much less marked, however, and the *two* feet a similar ten. Five stands thus as the number of man, exercised and responsible under the government of God.

Notice how carefully man's power is characterized as creature, dependent power. His hand is the sign of it as the vicegerant of God in the world: no beast has, in any proper sense, a hand. Yet the power is in no way like divine power,—simple and without effort, but a co-operation of forces, in which (as he recognizes) "union is strength;" the *four* fingers, every way significant of weakness, helped by the strong, opposing thumb; the two hands also assisting one another.

In perfect agreement with this, the Scripture commonly gives us 5 as 4+1, that is, man the creature in connection with God, his Ruler yet his Helper. Here the divine ways give him constant and needed exercise; and 5 will be found often associated with this thought of *exercise under responsibility;* and also with the kindred one, that man's *way* (4) under the control of God (1), according to its character leads to a corresponding *end.*

Capacity, as identified with responsibility, and leading thus to *recompense* are thus symbolized by the number 5: this as God's *governmental way*, implying necessarily *conditions.*

But man may be in relation to God other than governmental; and we shall find it not unfrequently spelling for us the blessed word "Immanuel," and pointing us directly once again to Christ.

It is plainly seen in all this how the significance of the lower numbers enters into the higher; and when we rise to

TEN.

We have only, so far as I can see, a 5×2, while—

FORTY.

The number of probation, is only 4×10, or $4\times(5\times2)$.

SIX.

Six is the second number capable of true division. Divided, its factors are 2 and 3, which easily yield the thought of the *manifestation* (or *fullness*) *of evil*, or of the enemy's work. But evil is weakness, as again this divisibility teaches; and as such it must yield to God. Read in a good sense, the number of conflict (2) brings forth from it sanctification and the glory of God (3).

It is the number of man's *work-day week*, the appointed time of *labor* for him, type of his life labor, his "few and evil" days, limited because of sin. It thus speaks plainly of *limit*, and of a limit which is God's *discipline*, because of sin,—His curb and victory over it. It speaks thus of mastery, *overcoming*.

In the "number of the beast" (666) we find it in three successively higher powers,—evil in fullest activity, yet its feebleness ever apparent, and God's hand controlling it: it increases only responsibility and judgment. It is but "the number of a man," vainly and impiously aspiring to be as God.

In the tenth Psalm is the description of this "wicked one" (vers. 2–11). It is, conjointly with the preceding one, an alphabetic psalm, from which in this place exactly *six* letters (*Mem* to *Tzaddi*) are dropped out.

Goliath's height is 6 cubits; a giant of his race has six fingers and six toes.

Nebuchadnezzar's idolatrous image is 60 cubits high and 6 broad.

One sixth of Gog's host is spared (Ezek. xxxix. 2.) That is, 6 parts are the spiritual measure of the host, of which God spares *one* in divine sovereignty.

Lastly, the darkness at the cross began at the sixth hour, and ended at the ninth (3×3)—God now fully displayed.

SEVEN AND TWELVE.

I put these numbers together because they are in some respects so much alike, and because in comparing them the character of each comes out the better.

Seven is well-known as the number of perfection and so of rest. But it may be applied to evil, and simply show "completeness" of any kind.

Twelve is in Scripture as commonly divided into 4×3 as seven is into $4+3$. The factors are the same; but, whereas in the one case they are added, in the other they are multiplied. Seven and twelve should

be, in some way therefore, allied in meaning. It is only in the *relation* of its factors that twelve differs from seven: * the number of the world and of divine manifestation characterize it; but these are not (as in 7) merely side by side. It is God manifesting Himself in relation to the world of His creation, as seven is, but now in active energy laying hold of and transforming it. Thus twelve is the number of manifest sovereignty as it was exercised in Israel, for instance, by the Lord in the midst of them, or as it will be exercised in the world to come.

"Turn now to the complete rest of the people of God—to the New Jerusalem, which has the glory of God, whose light God is, and the Lamb the lamp of it, to which the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple. Here perfection and rest are found, if anywhere, the thought connected, as abundantly plain, with seven: yet what do we find? Look at the foundations of the city: they are *twelve* in number. Look at the gates: there are *twelve* gates. Measure the city: its length, breadth and height are equal—*twelve* thousand furlongs each. Measure the height of the wall, 144 cubits,—12×12. Behold the tree of life planted by the river that issues from the throne of God: it bears *twelve* manner of fruits, and yields its fruit every month,—twelve times a year. Everywhere this number twelve meets us where we would expect to find the seven. It has the factors of seven; it is, as it were, the expansion of seven; and the spiritual idea that shines through it, that God is everywhere the manifest Ruler, what does it speak of to our hearts but that complete subjection to Him, which is indeed the perfection of the creature and its rest?"

The regular numerical series is here complete; the next number to seven,

EIGHT

simply showing that it *is* complete by indicating a new beginning, as the eighth day is the first of a new week. It thus speaks of what is *new* in contrast with the old, as the new covenant or the new creation. It will be noticed that this is closely akin to the meaning of two, and that eight is but the cube of two.

There is no difficulty with the number wherever we find it, except only that we must remember that here also the significance may be evil as well as good; and also that the overpassing of the week of time brings us to the commencement of eternity. Eight has not infrequently such a thought in it.

* "Spiritual Law in the Natural World," pp. 74, 75. The application of numbers to the interpretation of nature I have sought to give in the book quoted here.

APPENDIX III

THE NUMERALS IN RELATION TO THE SIX DAYS' WORK

IN its relation to nature the symbolism of numbers is a matter of the deepest interest. If it has, as we have seen, its roots in nature, and at the very basis of all arithmetic there is such a testimony to Christ as, I may venture to say, has been proved to exist, then it is hardly possible to believe that it ends with this, or that this is other than just a beginning of what must extend indefinitely throughout nature. Moreover to pursue such an investigation need not be alarming to those who most fear imagination. A bubble is not capable of being stretched very far, as every body knows; and the attempt to stretch it most surely ends in revealing its nature. The safe-guard as to imagination is to test it in every direction, and there is no test more severe than a mathematical one.

I propose, then, briefly to take up the six days' work as given in the first chapter of Genesis, to test the numerical structure more closely than has been done hitherto, with regard to the *natural facts themselves*. This has, as may be easily realized, its peculiar difficulties,—most of all, perhaps, in this, that the symbolism of the numbers gives us rather a *moral* than a physical vocabulary by which to interpret. I have been content therefore generally hitherto to apply it to the typical meaning which in all the six days' work is double, and affords a secure enough basis for application, especially as a concurrent natural one more or less appears.

But there is another thing to be taken into account also, as yet has not been done. The days being expressly announced in order from the first to the seventh, these numbers must of course, remain for interpretation, as I have elsewhere used them. But besides this, it has been very generally noticed that the six days run into two parallel divisions, according both to subject and mode of arrangement: thus—

1st day—Light.	(1) 4th day—Lights.
2nd day—Waters dividing	(2) 5th day—Waters producing.
3rd day—Dry Land and vegetation.	(3) 6th day—Dry land producing, and man.

Here is an evident parallelism which must divide the 6 days into two parts, and give to the second part a second series of numbers also, as I have indicated. Both must find their place in the interpretation.

Dana in his well-known "Geology" remarks—

"In this succession we observe not merely an order of events, like that deduced from science; there is system in the arrangement, and a far-reaching prophecy, to which philosophy could not have attained, however instructed.

"The account recognizes in creation two great eras, each of three days,—an *Inorganic* and an *Organic*. * * *

"The last day of each era, included one work typical of the era, and another related to it in essential points, but also prophetic of the future. Vegetation, while for physical reasons a part of the creation of the third day, was also prophetic of the future organic era in which the progress of life was the grand characteristic. The record thus agrees with the fundamental principle in history, that the character of an age has its beginnings within the age preceding. So again, Man, while like other Mammals in structure, . . . was endowed with a spiritual nature, which looked forward to another era, that of spiritual existence."

Thus we have three great divisions,—including the Sabbath as a third: let us characterize them each numerically:—

1. (Chap. i. 1–13): *The reign of the inorganic.*

I do not say more than the *reign*, because of that with which it closes, the introduction of vegetable life. But how does the inorganic bear its numerical stamp? Plainly, because it is of simple, uniform constitution, not differentiated into organs. Thus Dana as a physicist has characterized it by what agrees fully with the numerical division.

But the second division will not be classed numerically as the "reign of the organic;" and this certainly would not characterize it in any proper way. "The progress of life" says Dana," was its grand characteristic." We can express it more fully and precisely every way, and numerically, as—

2. (Chap. i. 14–31): *The two-fold, active life, in progress towards the discernment characterizing man.*

"Two-fold"—not like the plant, but with life and soul; and thus "active"—the moving creature; this crowned finally, (not by evolution, but according to the plan and by the creative power of God,) with the "discernment" which is not the mere intuitive instinct of the beast, but the discriminating knowledge of the human spirit.

The third division, which consists of the seventh day alone, is simple:

3. (Chap. ii. 1–3): *The Sanctification of the Sabbath of rest.*

The numerical structure in each case seems to seize upon the central character, and define it sufficiently for its purpose. But let us go on now to the smaller divisions.

The account of the original creation of the heavens and earth shows

itself by the structure to be but an introduction, however necessary as that, to the six days' work. It does not belong to that work, yet cannot form a section apart, without throwing the rest of the chapter into disorder. It must come in with the first day, and there is most suited to the spiritual meaning as making the work of the first day a beginning of *restoration;* thus:—

1. (vers. 1–5): *Introduction and first day: light.*
   (i) *Original creation.*
   (ii) *The earth as it were in dissolution: darkness upon a deep.*
   (iii) *Restoration beginning with Light.*

The stamp of the God of resurrection is clearly upon this history at the beginning, and it is repeated every day in the common daily cycle as it is recorded, the "evening and the morning" being the day. Notice that the beginning of the first day is not *before* the light, but with it, or it could not begin with *evening:* for evening implies already light. But the light strangely comes only to fade and darken into night, through this to reach its morning by a new birth as it were, when (for that day, of course) the darkness is wholly past. How earnest is God to impress us with these spiritual lessons! Faith in all times has had to learn the ruin of the creature and the sole sufficiency of God; and that is what resurrection teaches. It is the end seen from the beginning: the final lesson written on the first page of the book.

We are here too much at the beginning of things to reason as to them in their physical aspect, which is what we are just now concerned with. Why light should be the first thing in *physical* restoration we may have no means of knowing, while the spiritual meaning is clear enough. If there is indeed that deep sympathy in the natural with the spiritual, upon which all our belief in analogy is based, then we have in this what may commend the history as true in such respect, and suggest a means of insight even into nature itself, which has had at present (as I think) no advocates. It may not the less merit consideration.

"Light," it will be seen, comes under two numbers, 1 and 3, and does not seem as if it could be spared from either. The meanings of the numbers can in fact each be given in terms of the other with reference to it: for "that which doth make *manifest* is light," and it is thus a *source of knowledge.* This may justify its double place according to the spiritual meaning, and so justify it really; for the spiritual is that which governs everywhere in Scripture. Yet it must also be a canon of all true interpretation that no spiritual interpretation can set aside the text which it interprets, and the text here is physical. Plainly then light as making manifest would seem as yet not to be called for, when there were no eyes yet to be blessed by it, as there are not till the fifth day.

When we remember, however, that light is not merely what we call by that name, but in fact a *trinity* of light, heat, and actinism, or power for chemical change, for this, if we cannot trace it, we can easily infer a

meaning in connection with the next step in the preparation of the earth to be the home of life, the making of the expanse or firmament.

Thus a physical meaning may well underlie the spiritual one, and light in its triune character answer to the third place in which we find it here as an active agent in the restoration just beginning.

But we must go on to the second day, in which we find the formation of the expanse by which the waters are divided. Two is the number both of progress and increase (and so of expansion), and also of division; and thus the numerical stamp is fully upon the second day.

All this seems at first sight to be purely phenomenal; but, if we consider it more deeply, does it not point to some adjustment, if no more, of those laws of the *expansion* and diffusion of gases, which are among the most remarkable and important for the needs of every living and breathing thing? While the division of the waters is of course that which provides for the water-supply of the dry land next to come into existence. This is all obvious enough to be perhaps even common place as a suggestion; but if so, does it not show that the numerical structure, which emphasizes just such central points as these, has a real physical as well as spiritual significance?

Upon the third day, the earth is separated from the waters, and we have the beginning of organic life in the plant, the link with the next division. Both these things bear upon them very plainly the numerical stamp.

As to the earth, it is the *habitable* earth, man's future dwelling-place, *set apart* from the waters which had ingulfed it, and thus in true *resurrection*. The number of its section—of the day itself—is fully set upon it.

Then as to the vegetable life, three is the number of specialization, of setting apart for specific purpose, which organization so fully exemplifies. Besides which, as I have elsewhere shown,* there are *three* organic kingdoms in nature, of which the vegetable stands *third;* man, by virtue of the spirit with which he is endowed, standing first; and the animal, the mere "living soul," the second. The vegetable occupies the third place among these as the great *transformer* of the inorganic into the organic; while the animal reduces again the organic to the inorganic. The vegetable is the producer, as the animal is the consumer.

Another thing which is specially noticed in the account, and which would seem to come under this number is the phenomenon of *reproduction*. All living things must of course reproduce themselves, if life is to continue on the earth; for as a fact death comes in with life. Thus "its seed in itself" is characteristic.

Thus the numerical structure is justified all round: for these matters to which it directs our thoughts are not points of slight importance, but which have direct and essential relation to the account before us, which

* "Spiritual Law in the Natural World," p. 99.

is in fact that of the preparation of the earth for man. Let this be duly weighed, and the argument for the symbolism of the numbers will be convincing.

But we have not closed the account of the third day: we have yet to consider numerically these two divisions of it as such.

The *first* seems to refer to the gathering together of the waters into *one place*, by which in fact the dry land was laid bare. It naturally raises the question whether the land was elevated, or by the opening of interior receptacles in the earth the waters were drained off: a point which it certainly is not for us to take up here. The word of the Creator seems to imply action upon the waters, rather than upon the land; but of the import of the whole question we have too little knowledge to venture anything.

As to the *second*, we have not the same clue in the language; but *growth*, which is characteristic of the living thing, comes under the number; and if the transforming power of the cell is the fundamental thing in it, there must be *growth* as the immediate consequence of this, and for anything beyond the mere cell-unit. The cell must be reproduced; and the *addition* of material is followed by *division* in order to effect this. If tissue is to be formed, this is done by transformation once more of the newly formed living matter into it; in which that which has begun to live gives up its life, the protoplasm or bioplasm as it has been variously called "*dies into*"—so Dr. Beale expresses it—the formed material of the tissue, membrane or bone or muscle.

So hard does death follow upon life! and yet so really also does it minister to it. Weighty lessons to reach so early in our Nature primer!

But notice how in "growth," "addition," "division," "death," we are taking up the ideas expressed under the number two of the subdivision; and notice that as "transformation" and "reproduction" are the inherent powers of organic life, "growth," "division," "death" are *modes of their accomplishment*. Thus the numbers appear throughout; and while that of the division gives the governing principle, the modes are given in the subdivision! Is this system or what is it? Aye, what? For the first subdivision of this third day follows the same rule: gathering of the waters into one place is just the *mode* by which the dry land is produced! I leave to the reader to decide what all this may mean or not mean.

But we have only reached half-way through the six days' work, and in the second division the numerals are doubled, as we have seen. In this way they are more exacting in their requirements, but if intended as helps and verification of interpretation there must be more than compensation in the result attained. Let us go on then carefully and hopefully to consider what is still before us.

Here though life in its progress is, as we have seen, the great theme of the division, we have yet an introduction which does not take up this, though it is a preparation for it. The fourth day with its "lights" is

here the analogue of the "light" of the first. These two numbers, then, 4 and 1, are what we have to consider in reference to this day.

The number 1 speaks naturally, as in the former case, of light upon the earth as the great subject: and this is plainly stated to be so: "God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth."

The number 4 is that of the earth, eminently of matter, as passive, recipient, thus would remind us of the bodies to which the light is attached, making them "luminaries." Thus both numbers are significant and point together to what no one can fail to see to be the central feature of the fourth day.

But the number 1 is the number of *rule* also; and here sun and moon are especially appointed to be respectively the rulers of the day and of the night. As the result, upon these now depend the alternations of light and of darkness, and the seasons—here first named. Four, let us remember, is the number that speaks of *transitoriness* and *change*, which naturally point here to the "seasons." But the seasons are dependent upon the *rule* of sun and moon: so that the 4 and the 1 come for the second time together. Surely there is some meaning in all this.

These changing seasons, while they affect all living things, have yet plainly their chief significance for God's responsible creature, man, so soon now to appear upon the scene, and thus the word "signs" precedes "seasons" in the command given. The earth being dependent upon heaven in the way it is, it could not but be that man would seek the significance of all appearances in sun and moon; with which the stars would soon come to be conjoined. By all these he would learn his littleness and his dependence, as we find in an exaggerated form and turned to evil, as he turned away from God, in his wide-spread worship of the heavenly bodies. Their power for evil shows their power for good; upon which it is not here for me to dwell. It is enough here to point out how plainly all this heralds the near approach of man, and the tender interest shown by God in His creature. Purpose of love is read in the Scripture physics from the beginning; and the book of Scripture opens for us the book of Nature with lessons for the heart.

But to come now to the fifth day, which is also the second of the second series: the numbers 5 and 2 are those therefore which have now to be considered in relation to the work of this day, the introduction of animal life. But two, as has elsewhere been shown,* is the number of the animal kingdom or simple "living soul," above which man is raised by his possession of spirit. The "soul" in Scripture is the seat of that emotional, appetitive, instinctive life, which needs for its full development the guidance and control of that intelligent, moral nature, which in man is joined to it. This dependent nature of the beast suits the place for which it was ordained, of subjection to man, which in the domestic animals we find them filling, and which, spite of the fall, the wild beast it-

* "Spiritual Law in the Natural World," pp. 109–113.

self recognizes still to a large extent. The full meaning of it now we can hardly realize.

The soul as the motive, emotional faculty full of the unreasoning contrasts which we find in passion, comes fully under this number two. But in its relation to *instinct* proper, it seems to transcend this. Instinct, within a certain range, does, as we know, the work of *mind*, more promptly and satisfactorily than mind itself will do it. Reason will pause, waver, get perplexed and blunder, where instinct will at a dash and almost unfailingly accomplish its end. If it were mind, it were a higher mind than man's; and yet man's mind rectifies its mistakes and rises above instinct, and into spheres into which it is impossible for this to enter. The wisdom of the beast in its lower sphere seems more divine than that of man, which has marked upon it in its readiness to err, the creatureliness which is for him so wholesome an admonition. The beast, in fact, as having no personality to distract it, acts from its own God-given nature, unperverted by the fall; and laws of nature have, as we all realize, the same character of promptness, certainty and effectiveness which we recognize in the instinct of the beast. Its Maker has (as we may reverently say) the responsibility of its actions in a way that cannot be said of man with his free personality: hence it is *necessarily*, what man should be freely, weakness which withal testifies of an energy beyond itself. And this is just what would be covered by the number 5, which, as 4 and 1, speaks of creature weakness allied with divine strength. This as applied to man suggests of necessity *responsibility* as we have elsewhere seen, while in the beast it would speak only of an energy which wrought in it beyond its own.

Thus the 5 and the 2 unite here, as previously the numbers of the fourth day, just to point out the central feature of the work accomplished. A perfect system seems to develop itself in these numbers, which should induce us to inquire more earnestly into it; and which in Moses manifests a mind beyond Moses,—is a mark of inspiration which will turn the keenest-eyed of critics most of all, as that, into the adoring worshipper.

There is more than this, one may feel sure, as to the meaning of the fifth day's work, but I do not possess the competence to utter it. Let us go on to the sixth day, which is the third of the second series: where again the numbers are manifest. Notice, throughout, that there is no possibility of *manipulating* any of these, no choice at all which can be exercised with regard to them. We are rigorously shut up to these and none but these. If imagination is permitted, it is restricted within the narrowest limits: and this, for the purpose we have before us, is what is most of all to be desired.

On the sixth day, as on the third, we have a double work: the *earth* bringing forth the living soul, as on the fifth day the water did; now the land-animal; and after this man is made in the image of God.

As to the first part of the work, the land-animal, I can, I fear, say very little to the purpose. The living soul is introduced on the fifth day, and there characterized: as such it is not distinctive here. Of the three classes "cattle" might seem to suit the number of discipline; but of the "creeping things" we do not seem to have a clearly defined idea; while "the beast of the earth," said to be the more freely moving wild beast, is not by this either much more fully defined. They are all beasts of the earth, in the sense of moving upon it, and the "cattle," put first, shows that the definitions here are not in the way of zoological classification, while the thought of relation to man is prominent if not ruling.

As to the creation of man we can happily see more clearly. What is said of him is that he is "created in the image of God, as His likeness:" in some sort the reflection of Himself. The word "created" is very important; for it shows that the "image of God" does not refer, as many have thought, to the sovereignty man was to exercise over the earth, but that it was inherent in his very constitution. And it shows more than this: it enables us to say definitely in what it consists. For the word "created" is used as a different thing from simple "making," and implies the bringing forth of some new element of being, not involved in former production. Thus it is used in this chapter in regard to the original creation of heaven and earth, not of anything merely material afterward. It is used next of the introduction of the "living soul," *soul* being such a new element. And next it is used here, where in man *spirit* is added to soul. If this be really so, then *spirit* is that which is really the image of God in man.

Scripture confirms this from every side. For "God is a Spirit," and the "Father of spirits." (Jno. iv. 24; Heb. xii. 9). Had it said "souls," the beast is also a soul; but "the *spirit* of man which is in him" is that by which alone human things are known (1 Cor. ii. 11). It is the intelligent and moral part. Here then is manifestly what is necessary to the image of God; and if "we are His offspring" (Acts xvii. 28) then we can understand how as "Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image" (Gen. v. 3), man too can be said to be brought forth—only here it is creation, and the child is but a creature,—in the image of God.

Out of this comes indeed his capacity for the place into which he is immediately put, as the vicegerent of God upon earth: "Let us make man in our image, as our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

The word for "have dominion" is *radah*, "let them tread down" or "subdue:" implying a dominion to be maintained with power, and the moulding of those subject to him to his will. Thus we find in the next chapter that Adam is put into the garden, "to dress it and to keep it;"

and the mention of "cattle" in the present one implies the same thing. There was yet no existing evil; but here were plastic natures for him to mould and convert to fullest use. While the need of this would be for himself such needed discipline—if we may yet use such a word—such training by exercise, if that be fitter, as would call out in himself the vigilance and carefulness suited to one under needful trial, and liable to temptation.

These then are the main features of the sixth day's work as to man; and here it is not hard again to trace the fitness of the numbers. *Three* is the number of reproduction, perhaps of reflexion, and shows us man in the image and likeness of God. *Six* is the number of mastery and of discipline; that which springs out of his being alone in God's image, and in relation to the earth on which he is placed. Thus again the numbers have the most fitting and beautiful relation to the subject in hand.

As to the two divisions of the sixth day as such,—their relation to these first two numbers,—I can only give what suggests itself to me, and something of the mode by which I reach it, that it may be the better tested by those who put things to the test. The lack of clearness as to the first division of necessity occasions difficulty.

In the first place, it would seem likely that the two divisions, the beast of the earth and the man, are here exhibited in contrast with one another. Contrast there is necessarily, and the number 2 speaks often of this, especially where we have, as here, two as the whole measure of what is before us.

What is before us is something characteristic of the beast and of the man respectively. As we know the man best, it is natural to turn first to him; and here, if we consider how he is presented to us as one in the image of God, His offspring, we must think of this link with God as being the great contrast between man and beast. Two, the number of this section that speaks of man, may naturally, therefore, suggest *fellowship*,—that fellowship for which the beast is totally inapt. He can look up into the face of God, listen and respond to Him. A wondrous privilege and dignity, which has not as yet been pointed out to us, but which is based upon that which *has* been pointed out: that which comes first has been put first, and now we have the inference which is to be noted from it.

On the other hand, the beast's life is in this respect *alone*, nay, we may say, *barren*. He has on this account no link with eternity; he is but the beast that perishes. Neither desire nor thought in him craves anything better; and death is to him no shadow, no perplexity. Thus he fills evidently the numerical place assigned him; and I see no other way in which he could fill it. The number one as applied to him seems to point absolutely in this direction alone. The method of exclusion may be here permitted to the argument; though it only furnish as to it the smallest part.

This examination may not be unfitting as an appendix to the book of Psalms, which has in it such constant references to nature, and indeed to the first of Genesis. It should confirm us in the conviction of how important a place the numerals have in Scripture, and encourage us as to their application in the field of nature also. They are open books put into our hand by the same divine Teacher: would only that there were more to pursue their deeper study in that faith in the perfectness of all His work, which alone will give us the profit of such labor.

APPENDIX IV

A PLEA FOR THE POSSESSING OURSELVES OF ALL GOD'S REVELATION

"I HAVE more understanding than all my teachers," says the psalmist enthusiastically, "for Thy testimonies are my meditation." The Christian can surely not think him too emphatic. That is the voice of the disciple; but it is the voice of the Master that has said: "Search the Scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they that testify of Me."

In their own line, therefore, every believer recognizes that they are absolutely unique. Not all the books that have ever been produced in all the ages of human history outside of them are equal even to the small dust of the balance when weighed against these.

It is well to remember in such days as ours, that it was of the Old Testament, and almost certainly of only *part* of the Old Testament that the writer spoke. As it was of the Old Testament also that the apostle spoke when he reminded Timothy that from a child he had "known the holy Scriptures; which are able," he adds, "to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith that is in Christ Jesus." How small a part of what we have to-day was the wisdom for which the psalmist disclaimed in comparison all that the world beside could show!

But this is not now what I intend to take up or speak about. I am not writing for those that would contest it. In their own line, it is admitted, let us say, that the Scriptures are unique. I would yet propose the question,—and it will be by no means so readily or unanimously answered, even by the Christian,—what is then "their own line?" How far does this unique value of theirs extend? Supposing we desire to use the Bible fairly, and (as given of God,) for all for which He gave it, how could we define this? is it not desirable to do so? at least to have some practical idea of how to use it, if not an absolute definition?

If God had meant by Scripture only to teach us the way to heaven, or, along with this, how to live a good life here (and this, I suppose, is

pretty much the definition that would be adopted by the many) the first thing that would naturally occur to any one thinking seriously about it, would be that the Bible is a very large book and a very strange book, on this view of the matter.

It is a very large book: for it surely does not take so many words to tell us the way to heaven: and any one that knows the gospel knows well (and thank God that it is so) that a very few texts will suffice to show this with the most absolute clearness. As to the living a good life here, the simplest way to show us this would be in something like the ten commandments, with applications to suit the varied circumstances of life; or, if that were too legal, a *catalogue raisonné* of Christian principles.

Scripture on the face of it is not at all like this. Though there are blessed statements of the gospel, as we very well know, and many a page of Christian exhortation, yet these are not put together as we might imagine they would be, and they are mixed with much else and various matter very different from all this. Things are not so definitely stated that there should be no possible mistake about them, as witness the conflict of Christian men over their meaning. What a help to a common understanding would be at least a divine summary of faith and practice, such as the various churches have adopted and which for this purpose they find so useful. But then these articles of faith *separate:* they are but the expression after all of the judgment of a section of Christendom; suppose there had been given us by divine inspiration as plain a creed as any of these, would it not have united instead of scattering us? if the Westminster Confession had been written by apostles instead of theologians of the seventeenth century, would we not have all subscribed it? and would not Arminianism have been effectively excluded from the minds of all honest-minded and believing men?

But such help as this it has not pleased God to give us; and we have to hunt up even texts upon any given subject—not always sure even that we have got the right ones—from every part of Scripture! Does not God care for the poor? Does He not know the dullness of our minds at best, the multifarious occupations that we have to be engaged in, the trouble and anxiety caused by our many differences, the darkness in which true-hearted saints grope often after His will, the tendency we have on account of all this, to follow the men who will do our thinking for us, and in whom in some way or other we have concluded to put confidence?

Yes, surely: all this and more God knows; and, knowing it, has written Scripture as He has, a book so large, so various, so needing to be searched, *studied;* so certain to exercise *most* the most careful, earnest, conscientious, God-fearing. His thought then for us, whatever it may be, is not to save us from thought,—not to let us off from the necessity of labor for what we get from it. It was not to a class of theological stu-

dents, but to men so poor that they could follow Him for the loaves with which He fed them, that He said: "Labor *not* for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you." (John vi. 27.) Notice, therefore, that this applies not merely to the more hidden things of the Old Testament, but to the plain speech of the New as well, that it calls for labor—for more earnest and untiring labor than our daily food does; and that not from a special class of selected, capable workmen, but from *all* who need and desire such spiritual food.

Evidently the Lord distinguishes the thing that is to be labored after in the way He does in order to challenge our interest by the exceeding importance of it. "Meat that endureth to everlasting life" is a very significant title indeed, and one that we shall do well if we seek to realize what we can of the depth of its meaning. I have seen it interpreted as signifying "food that will give you entrance into everlasting life,"—by which you will become possessors of it: and that is true enough as a thought, and afterwards affirmed also: "he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever." It is a true thought in itself, and a thing justly worthy of all the emphasis that can be put upon it. And yet, if that were all, for the Christian, who has already the possession of eternal life, the urgency of the exhortation would necessarily pass out of it. *He* is not to be persuaded that he needs labor to get what he has already got, or to keep what it is as certain he can never lose.

Here too, it may be pleaded that the Lord is actually speaking to men who were not believers; but it is plain all the way through the chapter that there were disciples also among them, while in the open synagogue He is not hindered from speaking of such things and in such a way as to test disciples themselves. Here in seeking to attract men to Himself He might, as with the woman of Samaria, speak of things the depth of which they would not yet be able to penetrate, and yet of what they would understand to be a blessing set before them; and those who sought it would not be stumbled to find at last greater than at first they had realized.

After all, the truth itself is not so difficult to conceive, and the Lord's words to the Samaritan are strictly parallel. To her He speaks of "living *water* springing up unto eternal life," and under this figure of the Spirit's presence, permanent and operative ever, not to bring one into life, but throughout it. So here with the bread of life, the living bread, it too abides unto eternal life, in opposition to the "meat that perisheth." Not only the life is eternal, but all that ministers to it partakes of the same eternity. Christ abides, and abides as the unfailing support of a life which though eternal is dependent too, and which never ceases to realize its dependence.

An image of this, and to which the Lord also, in His epistles to the churches, refers us, was that "hidden manna," which was preserved in

the golden pot and carried into the land, the type of our glorious heritage, that the children of Israel might *see* the food with which Jehovah had fed them in the wilderness. (Ex. xvi. 32.) Thus the food of the wilderness *abode*, but abode simply as a memorial, to be seen. To the overcomer at Pergamos on the other hand, the promise is: "I will give him of the hidden manna" (Rev. ii. 17): he shall partake of it, not simply *see* it. Christ as enjoyed in the wilderness shall be enjoyed afresh in the glorious land to which we are going: more perfectly, surely, for all shall be perfect there, and yet, let us mark it well, the very wilderness-food itself. For the manna is Christ in His humiliation, and in heaven He is no longer in humiliation, yet it is the hidden manna of which the saint in heaven still partakes.

A serious consideration presses upon one here, that, if this be the food partaken of,—and since one cannot call up again the wilderness-condition, save in memory,—he who has not had the wilderness experience cannot have the repetition of it in heaven: *he cannot recall what he has never known.* Thus, too, there must be some correspondence between the measure of apprehension of Christ here and the measure of *such* apprehension of Christ there. Take an angel's knowledge: it could not in this respect be the knowledge of the redeemed from among men. There is no sin in the angel, and it is not sin that limits his view; nay, his very freedom from it—his never having had the experience of it—would be a necessary limitation. And so would it be with the babe, only coming into the world to be taken out of it. The perfecting of its faculties in another scene would not give it experiences of a state in which it had never been.

Perfecting of experiences that we have had is, of course, another thing. This there will surely be: for we shall look back with eyes purged from the films of earth, and with memories that will themselves be perfected. But the knowledge will still be measured—finite, not infinite; and with limitations, whatever may be the enlargement of its scope.

If Christ then be the "meat that endureth unto everlasting life," and the manna so laid up must be manna gathered here, how important must this gathering of the manna be! Surely there can be no "meat that perisheth" to be compared with it; and one can no longer wonder at being called to seek it with proportionate earnestness.

Now it is Scripture that is to give us this knowledge of Christ, though of course there is in Christ more than can be justly spoken of as manna. This will not make Scripture of less importance to us surely. Christ it is that is the knowledge of the "new man," and Christ is "*all*" that knowledge. (Col. iii. 11.) God has "predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He may be the First-born among many brethren." (Rom. viii. 29.) The "edifying of the body of Christ" also is "till we all come unto the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of

the fullness of Christ." (Eph. iv. 13.) We are *now* growing up to this; and for this it is that the word of God is given to us, not simply that we may be saved, or even live here a life of piety and good works, but to form in us the mind of Christ, that "we may grow up unto Him in all things." (ver. 15.) No wonder Scripture is as large, therefore, as it is: communion with God, though we talk quietly enough about it, yet if it be realized in the depth and fullness of its meaning, how immense a thing it is! Communion with God, realized in this way would be nothing less than sharing all His thoughts as He has revealed them to us; thoughts which have Christ as centre and circumference; for "all things were created by Him and for Him." (Col. i. 16.)

Here then is what we are called to enter into: here is a field to be worked which will call for all our faculties in all their energy to be engaged with. God does not tell us that it is easy work: how could it be? *delightful* work it is, and that increases all the energy that it demands. But it requires that we yield ourselves unreservedly to it, subordinating everything else to God's great purpose with regard to us. Christ must come to fill the whole range of our vision; but, so filling, to enlarge and rectify and illumine it with divine glory.

Here the nature of man finds what it craves, and expands in all parts and in equal proportions. Mind, heart and conscience develop together. Scripture, while it makes men of might, produces no monsters: no men of intellect without heart; no conscience urging one to self-devised torment; and yet no self-complacent egotism either: "I live, not I," says one who is without question a competent witness to us; "but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. ii. 20.)

This is not simply doctrine, nor even faith in a doctrine. A glorious truth underlies it, but this is more; it is the apprehension of the truth, and the experience which flows from it. He who spoke this had accepted what Christ had done for him, the death in which he himself for faith had died, and which enabled him to turn away from himself, the man down here, to the One with whom he was now identified before God, and with whom he had in the joy of his heart accepted identification.

His old life had ended therefore: he was now a man *in Christ;* though realizing that there was still upon earth a "self" in which he could not glory, save in the infirmity which made him conscious of the need, —a need continually met as realized,—"that the power of Christ should rest upon" him. (2 Cor. xii. 5, 9.) This for the pursuit of Christ's interests on earth to whom he belonged, while, beholding Him above, he was "changed into His image" (chap. iii. 18.)

I believe that a most false and limited idea of the design of Scripture is shutting masses of Christian people out of the very desire to possess themselves of what our gracious God has given them in it. It is a book larger by far than they have any use for. To find salvation and to live a good life on earth, these are the ends they have before them, and

which they suppose to be all that God has in His mind for them. But for these ends, I say again, Scripture is too large; I may say boldly, it is *very much* too large. Did they think that they had any particular responsibility about it, they would perhaps even be distressed to know what to do with it all. As it is they read it more or less, perhaps conscientiously all through, but with a languid interest in much of it at best, and with a wonder which they scarcely like to admit, why it should have been written.

Of *searching* it for themselves, save certain parts, they know very little. They get light here and there upon it through others, and read books, if they are not too deep. They have really no thought that what God means by it all is to form in them the mind of Christ—to give them fellowship with Himself—to train them for co-heirship with His Son; and that all this means not a little need of teaching, not a little exercise, as well as the disciplinary dealings of His hand by the way;—"*exercised* to discern both good and evil,—"suffering that they may reign with Him."

To accomplish this the word of God is not too large; though that of course, does not imply but that it will always be beyond us. It is plain that He means us to be busy with it,—would not let us off thinking,—would not leave any vacuity with us for the thorn and thistle-seed always floating in the air, to plant themselves in and spring up. To His people of old He spoke earnestly about this: "And these commandments that I command thee to-day shall be in thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them as a sign upon thy hands, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes; and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house and upon thy gates" (Deut. vi. 6–9). All this implies a constant keeping the words of God before themselves and others, constant confession of them and meditation upon them. And how thoroughly a saint of old could respond to this, the delight he could have in it, and the fruit he could find, the 119th Psalm alone is sufficient to assure. Is it to be supposed that God would have us less fully occupied or give us less joy or profit from the occupation?

The whole heart also, if it be this we bring to it, needs the whole Word. How could it do less than this, if only because God has given it? Has *He* misjudged our need, or put upon us useless labor? Certainly He does not mean to have it drudgery for us, nor does He give us mere chaff to thresh out for the granary. If there be what may seem strange to be from Him, would He not have us inquire the more because of its strangeness? If we seem sometimes to be laying up useless store, we should find, if we keep it long enough, occasion for it. We have (if we are Christians) the Spirit of God as our Teacher; and He,

let us remember, "searcheth the deep things of God." (1 Cor. ii. 10). If the heart is only enough engaged, and the throne of grace is yet accessible, we need not despair of learning because things are "deep."

I have found too that one of the most fruitful causes of not understanding or *mis*understanding a portion of Scripture is just the lack, as the man of science would say, of a *perfect induction*. That is to say, something—perhaps obvious enough—has escaped me. It was there, but I was too careless, too much in a hurry,—perhaps too doubtful of being able to find any meaning—actually to find it. The key too may be some distance off, and in a part I have not read or remembered. Hence the necessity of storing the mind with Scripture. It is all valuable—*too* valuable yet perhaps, for me to appreciate, just as a savage might have no use for a sewing-machine. Let us be assured that in Scripture there is nothing barren or unprofitable anywhere.

The *whole* Word, then; and all to be honestly thought upon and sought into. But even so, we have not got all the riches God designs for us. There is the great book of Nature, wide open, and inviting us by its appeal to all our senses. Here again, if we have minds that *work*, we shall find what will give them full activity. "Too much," perhaps, you may say; "there is no end to it." No, truly: no end to all God's wonders, nor to the riches He has spread around us.

But here, also, is a field which has been much worked of late in man's interests, and he is very proud of what he has done in it. It has for the most part to do with a world which has been put under the dominion of man, as meant for his use, and he has only lately begun to find how rich is his inheritance.

But God has taken care, also, that this world with which man has so much to do should be full of witness to His power who is above him, as well as the love that has strewn this munificence around him: a witness he can never lose, never escape. It shines upon him from the lights of the spangled sky above him; it breathes in the whisper of the gentle breeze around, which before night may have increased to a hurricane; the various voices of the day and night preach it in melody and in dissonance: and everywhere man has acknowledged this witness to be divine, and worshiped.

Scripture has brought nigh God and perfected this witness. In the mirror of Nature every spiritual truth has its reflection; and these images appear throughout Scripture and become the familiar language in which its doctrines are conveyed. In the New Testament the Creator Himself is declared to be the Word—thus the Revealer—of God, and creation therefore by implication to be a revelation. God's witness is twofold; and on the face of heaven and earth Scripture again is written out in incorruptible signs that may be appealed to. Not in vain, surely, has God done this: He can still "call to the heavens and to the earth

that He may judge His people" (Ps. l. 4.); and rebuke the unbelief which uplifts itself against Him in the very face of such tokens.

Now, if Christ be indeed the One by whom and for whom all things were created, it is only the one to whom Christ has become what we see He was with the apostle, who can be at the centre of any branch of knowledge. All roads must lead to Him. The spiritual must everywhere underlie the natural, give meaning to it, make it really what it is meant to be, clothe it with the power that should belong to it. No science but must run into theology. All the analogies of nature become but witnesses of this inner reality, without the knowledge of which the *savant* and scientist becomes indeed but a pitiful agnostic; all his utterances but broken fragments of sentences,—the stammerings of infirmity and impotence itself.

And if this be true, what must be the value of Scripture, what must be its comprehensiveness? what field of knowledge will you shut off from it? what shall we think, for instance, of the so readily accepted dictum, that Scripture was not intended to teach science? and which is meant—not to assert of it that it is infinitely *beyond* a mere primer or text-book of science, but—to rule it out as incompetent in this sphere, as without help or authority as regards the visible, and to relegate it to the sphere of the invisible alone.

The effect is that as to the immensity of nature round us we may think what thoughts we please, unhindered by anything in Scripture. Guesses we may have, and theories, and "working hypotheses" *ad libitum*, which even palpable self-contradictions shall not destroy,* and they must not be even limited by any intrusion of the divine. Thus practically we get a world—yea, a universe as far as man has explored it—Christless, if not godless; to which Scripture, with its old-time child-notions of miracles and a God nigh at hand, is in plain opposition.

Take the common theory of evolution in proof of this. It has been lately said of it that "Whatever differences of opinion as to this theory may still exist, few naturalists can feel reluctant to acquiesce in Wallace's statement that 'Darwin did his work so well that descent with modification is now universally accepted as the order of nature in the organic world.'"†

Now, if this be so, open your Bibles at the second chapter of Genesis, and ask yourself how on the principle of "descent with modification" Eve could have have been by any possibility *evolved out of Adam!* That is evidently not in the order of nature: it is the exact opposite of it; it is miracle and nothing else. Apply to it the slow successive changes demanded by Darwinism, and the absurdity is heightened at every step; but the absurdity is there at the beginning in the male producing

* See as to Ether and the Wave-Theory of Light, Prof. J. P. Cooke's "Credentials of Science the Warrant of Faith," pp. 223, *seq.*

† Prof. Calderwood: "Evolution and Man's Place in Nature," p. 1.

the female for the continuance of the race. It is not even the poetry some have claimed for it. It is simply absurdity, or miracle and divine truth.

Let us take our stand then with Scripture, or give it up: compromise is impossible. If the account of creation is not true, Scripture opens with falsehood in its face. It asserts knowledge of what only revelation could make known; or else gives conjecture, and then how much else of the same sort follows it, who shall say?

In fact the history has been amply safe-guarded. I venture to say that the proofs of divine inspiration in it can challenge the world to refute them; and thank God, the evidence is of a sort as accessible to the non-scientific as to the scientific mind. If it can be shown that according to the Genesis account the story of the restoration of the earth out of its "waste and desolate" condition is but the symbolic picture of the restoration of the same earth *morally* to God, as history and prophecy combine to picture it;—a picture also of the restoration of an individual *soul* to God, but in terms which we have to go to the New Testament to make clear to us;—if we can show a numerical symbolism running through the whole, uniting the physical, dispensational and individual aspects of the history together, and uniting itself to a symbolic numerical structure running through other parts of Scripture;—then assuredly we have a threefold cord which shall not be broken, binding it into a wondrous whole which can only be from God. This has been already done in measure,* but deserves to be done in a much more thorough and painstaking way. The whole is a many-linked proof of the underlying of the natural by the spiritual of which I have already spoken, and of which every parable in Scripture speaks, to which every one of those analogies of which we all so confidently and as it were instinctively avail ourselves, bears witness.

This analogy, if it be real,can be used also in another and a reverse way from that in which we usually employ it: a fact which deserves the most attentive consideration. If the spiritual and the natural run thus in parallel lines, why should we not trace the *natural by means of the spiritual*, as well as the spiritual by means of the natural? Take, for instance, once more, the first chapter of Genesis. If it be indeed a picture of either the soul or the world being restored to God, then we cannot possibly miss what is here so plain, that this restoration implies a fall having taken place, which the waste and desolate condition of the earth, darkness upon the face of the deep, so strikingly symbolizes. May we not see in it, then, *physically*, a lapsed condition of the earth, the effect of some cataclysmic overthrow, instead of the condition in which it was originally created, as many believe? This can be proved, I am

* See "Genesis in the Light of the New Testament;" "Numerical Bible," vol. i. notes; and the last "Appendix."

sure, otherwise; but that therefore proves that such a conclusion would, in this case, lead us aright. Would it not in every case in which the grounds of the conclusion were as plain as this?

But if so, again how valuable must Scripture be for the knowledge of Nature! It should be in every way the firm ground of the naturalist, and induction be here as reliable as that directly from nature; the microscope also being as great a revealer in one case as in the other. Ah, how little patient, believing work has been done in this direction with regard to Scripture: a neglect which has shut us out so much from the light it could have given, just in the very matters hidden from the mere man of science. The beginnings of things and their points of connection with the unseen, are things largely thus hidden: how good would it be to have all the light that Scripture can give thrown into those dark inmost recesses of the constitution of things. What a thing it would be to have a faithful company of devout explorers giving themselves to explore nature with the light of Scripture, and Scripture also, one may reverently say, in the light of nature. For both are God's books and both alike truthful, and Christ the theme of and the key to both.

"The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." In every corner of it He is to be found; upon every part of it His Name stands written. Oh for the students that shall make His glorious sanctuary their college, and see in nature that which only the anointed eye can see, and hear the worship of the things we call inanimate, but through which the Life of life is pulsating everywhere.

If we desire this, we must bring the word and the work of God together in a way that yet, it seems to me, we nowhere see. It seems almost as if we had here believed that we had the incompatible service of two masters, to one of which whosoever clings will despise the other. And so it will be until we discern that the Master is in fact only One, not two at all. And when Christ reigns over the whole of science—over all that is worthy to be called knowledge,—then we shall have an education in which heart, mind, and moral nature, shall find equal and true development; and in the heart and mind of those so taught there shall be no distraction between secular and sacred, no divided life from one half of which God is banished; but for these "there shall be," as the prophet says, "One Lord over all the earth; in that day there shall be One Lord, and His Name One."

APPENDIX V

CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF PSALMS

THE Lord's own words to His disciples assure us of "things written in the Psalms concerning" Him. (Luke xxiv. 44.) In the New Testament sixteen psalms are quoted as referring to Him;* and there is nothing to show us that this is the whole number, although all the fundamental ones are doubtless in this list. Outside of it, the Rabbinic writers, though blind to Christ, rightly emphasize the twenty-first and seventy-second psalms also as Messianic;† and the twentieth psalm can hardly be separated from the twenty-first. The tendency with some Christian writers has been to see Christ almost everywhere in them, while naturally the drift of the so-called "higher criticism" is all the other way: the effort to imagine the circumstances under which they were written, as well as the intention of the writers, necessarily leading them away from the *divine* intention, which is all-important. And when it can be boldly questioned, as by Cheyne, whether David was the writer of any of them, the apostle's comment, "he being a prophet . . . spake of . . . Christ (Acts ii. 30, 31) may be dismissed, as "contemporary *Jewish* exegesis," from all consideration.

It is only the knowledge of the structure of the book of Psalms as a whole that can show us how fully in place the Messianic psalms are, and define clearly their limits. They will then be seen in clear relation to those surrounding them, and in fact as the life-centre of the whole. As long as the individual psalms are looked at as in no particular order

* Ps. ii. viii. xvi. xviii. xxii. xl. xli. xlv. lxviii. lxix. xci. xcvii. cii. cix. cx. cxviii.

† The list given by Edersheim in his ninth Appendix to "The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," contains five psalms accepted throughout as Messianic: Ps. ii. xxi. xlv. lxxii. and cx., and seven others partially so, xviii. xxii. xl. lxi. lxviii. lxxxix. xcii. Other psalms are contained in the list, but not as having personal reference to Messiah.

or relation to one another, or the order a merely artificial one, so long, of course, it will be possible to find a Messianic psalm in any position whatever in the book. The divisions and their meaning once ascertained, each psalm will be found to have its place, from which it could not be removed without a gap resulting. The numerical structure is everywhere also a test and confirmation of the reality of this. My purpose now is very briefly to trace the connection of these Messianic psalms, both among themselves and with those in the midst of which they are,—certainly not scattered at random, nor without divine meaning in these connections.

The first book, as we have seen, is the largest in scope, and necessarily the introduction to all the rest. Its theme is in fact mainly Christ Himself, and that as the Source of blessing to His people. This people is Israel; and we must not forget this, which, so far from depriving us of our portion, only reminds us continually of the larger character of this, as "blessed with *all* spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." (Eph. i. 3.) There cannot therefore be a spiritual blessing from which we are shut out; while their being ours *in heavenly* places lifts us into the sphere to which Christ Himself belongs, and where we possess a relationship to Him of which the Psalms know nothing.

But our intelligence as to Scripture depends upon our taking it as it is written, and our spiritual profit also largely upon our distinguishing things that differ, that both *we* may have what is our own unmixed, and that Christ also may be seen in all His glories, and in connection with all the interests which are His. And these we must learn, not from any preconceptions of our own about them, but patiently and humbly as led of Scripture. God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, but deeper and higher every way.

In the first book there are three subdivisions, of which the first and third alike speak of Christ; while the second shows us rather the circumstances of the latter days, to which we find ourselves in the Psalms so constantly carried forward. The first subdivision (Ps. i–viii) speaks of Christ's dominion, King in Zion (Ps. ii), and Son of Man, the creation put under Him (Ps. viii). The first is His open claim, though resisted by man. The second is a secret told into the ear of faith alone.

The King! that is the first and last thought in the Psalms, whatever else may grow up around and unite itself to this: a King with power, although long patience may be exercised before it is put forth. Power: for not only is God for Him, but He is Son of God. Thus it is in the right hands; out of which it will never slip and never can be forced; and being divine power, it is a revelation. How long the world has been waiting wearily for this, without knowing for what it waited; nay, rejecting Him when He came in fulfillment of this very prophecy, to claim His right.

The King! because obedience is the very thing from which man has

broken away, and to which he must return in order to blessing. Thus the very first psalm is the psalm of obedience, while in the second is the One to whom it must be rendered; who as the Son of God is the Revealer of God; faith in whom turns back the heart to Him, and finds the blessing. We see why, then, it should be the first thought of Christ in the Psalms that He is King:—the proclamation of the King.

That this is not all, when the heart turns back to its allegiance, the psalms, that follow (iii.–vii) are proof enough. The remnant of true followers, amid the mass of those that reject Him, learn in the very trials that ensue from their true-heartedness the need of mercy because of sin; from whence but a little, and a new figure rises before them, not now of the Son of God, though with links of unmistakable connection with Him. It is now of a Son of man in whom both God is glorified and the dominion of man is restored; while along with this, there are thoughts of humiliation and the mysterious joy of a trodden wine-press,—intimations of fruitful suffering, by and by to be more at large declared.

The meaning here Israel as yet has not recognized, and will not until the day that they look upon Him whom they have pierced. But, united with the first picture—the Son of God joined to the Son of man—we have emphasized the two parts of a wondrous whole, in which a glory of God is manifested above the heavens, as His name is declared by it in all the earth: to us at least a clear outlining of what is to be filled up in the psalms that follow,—an inscription on the door of the temple of praise to Messiah's Name.

To this the second subdivision has nothing that I am aware to add. But with the third we come at once to the heart of our subject. Here we have Christ before us, not simply in His glory, but also in the path of suffering leading up to it, and in which we learn His perfection and the fullness of His grace toward us also. We find Him identifying Himself with His people, making their cause His own, and the consequences of this in the unequalled sorrow of the Cross; but as that in which the Son of man was glorified, and God was glorified in Him. His inmost heart is seen: we learn to know Him as we know no other, and are made His doubly, redeemed by His blood, and won by the perfection we have found in Him.

First of all in the sixteenth psalm, we see Him as a pilgrim on the way; as a servant also for the need of His people. His heart is with the saints; and the obedience, so new a thing for Him to render, is not to avail for Himself to spare Him one drop of the cup of sorrow He is to drink for others: it is an obedience by which *they* are to be made righteous. On the other hand, and none the less on this account, God is His all, "the measure of His portion, and of His cup;" and we find Him guided by His counsel, and maintained by Him in human weakness, perfect Leader in a path of faith in which we are to follow Him. We

see Him in it, down to death itself through which the "path of life" passes on up to the presence of God, whence the light also shines for us by the way which He has gone.

In the next psalm (xvii) we find Him, spite—nay, because of all that He is, the object of the hatred of the men of the world, and His pleading against this which, though made as in His own behalf, we find to be intercession for others, with whom He identifies Himself.

In the eighteenth, we have the answer of God to Him, which lifts Him into the place of power. Delivered from the strivings of the people, He is made the head of the nations. Here, of course, we are brought evidently to the latter days. Judgment has its course upon earth, the rod of power being in the hands of the rejected One, and long-suffering patience no longer holding back what is needed for the deliverance of His people and the blessing of the earth at large. For in result He praises among the nations, as the anointed King of all the earth. This is the close of the first series; and these psalms are all subjective—the utterances of the Messiah Himself.

In the next three, on the contrary, we have the utterances of faith as to Him, and thus the nineteenth psalm is accounted for as coming where it does in this series: creation and the law being now seen by it as the introduction to Christ. Thus the glory of the sun is dwelt upon—the typical picture of the Lord from the beginning of Genesis; and then the law is seen in its effects, by its own perfection convicting the soul of sin, beyond even the knowledge of the one who as the servant of the Lord seeks to be admonished by it. This prepares, as is evident, the way for sacrifice; but it is not to the sacrifices of the law that we now turn. No: the next psalm does indeed speak of sacrifice; but it is Another that offers it, and that other the King Himself. In His salvation His people shall rejoice, for it is the Name of the God of Jacob that is declared in it: as we should say, the God of Grace. The whole psalm is a prophecy of Christ and of His work, though in relation (as all through) with Israel, and the following psalm speaks of Him in His glory.

These are but hints of what atonement is. In the third series, however, it is fully declared with its blessed effects; and the twenty-second psalm returns once more from the objective to the subjective: no voice but His own can declare to us worthily the inmost heart of it.

The link with the day of atonement is shown in the third verse. The sufferer is undergoing what no righteous man ever did beside. A martyr for God, He is forsaken of God. And why? He answers His own question: it is because He who is the Holy One would dwell amid the praises of His people; and this was what (typically and governmentally only,) the blood of the sin-offering accomplished on the day of atonement. Here we see, then, the reality of what that sin-offering meant, and all other sufferings are as nothing compared with this. But

the latter part of the psalm shows the glorious results in blessings welling out in wider and wider circles to the ends of the earth. The name of God is newly declared to those in new relationship to Him who has accomplished the wondrous work, and His righteousness is declared in it to generations following.

The sin-offering psalm gives character in a certain way to all the remaining psalms of this first book. The twenty-third psalm shows us now the great Shepherd of the sheep brought again from the dead, and the pleasant pastures in which He leads His flock. The twenty-fourth, Jehovah's house established on the earth, and the people who enter it. Jehovah Himself enters it as King of glory to take His place among His ransomed ones.

This ends the nine psalms which are characteristically Messianic, and the fifteen psalms following are "remnant" psalms, or such as show us the exercises and experiences of the faithful in Israel, the background being circumstances of the latter days. But the apprehension of divine grace enters into them in a different manner from anything before. Sin is confessed, and God for His name's sake forgives as promptly as the confession is made. The twenty-fifth and thirty-second psalms are especially characteristic, and have much of the New Testament style, if they do not reach its standard. After these the first book closes with two psalms (xl. and xli), both of which speak once more of atonement, though in a different manner from before.

The fortieth psalm is the burnt-offering aspect of the cross, the Lord seen as come to do the will of God, His law (which man has continually broken) in His heart, and its provision of sacrifice realized as written of Him. The awful burden of sin is experienced; but not the forsaking of God endured.

It is striking that this comes at the end, as if it were almost an appendix to the book, and does not seem to be the basis of other experience psalms, as does the sin-offering psalm (xxii.). In fact, is not the value of the burnt-offering that which rather belongs to Christianity, though not altogether lacking in Israel's blessing? At any rate, there must be a reason for the supplementary place here occupied by the burnt-offering psalm.

The forty-first, as the closing psalm of the book, depicts the cross as the stumbling-block to unbelief, while faith, penetrating the disguise assumed by love in this "poor man's" humiliation, finds blessing from Jehovah: a natural and solemn admonition at the close of the book. Thus we see throughout how the Messianic psalms govern it, and that it has a fullness and completeness of its own in this respect, no main feature being altogether omitted, though some may be more fully developed elsewhere.

The second book is more limited in scope and more external in character. Though redemption be a leading feature of it, it is more a re-

demption by power than by purchase, and seen rather in its effects for man therefore, than from the divine side of what sin is before God. The sixty-ninth is its psalm of atonement, and presents the trespass-offering side of it. But here again Christianity had to bring out the full character of this, and the "fifth part more" of the trespass-offering cannot be as yet developed. The Kingship of Christ is, of course, the prominent feature in the psalm which speaks of Him.

The structure resembles that of the first book, the Messianic psalms being found in the first and third subdivisions, the second being devoted to psalms of experience, which are not however, excluded from the other parts.

The first subdivision opens with the cry of the remnant in their distress, in answer to which in the forty-fifth psalm we have the glorious picture of Christ as King. Still more plainly than in the second psalm, God and man meet in Him; and for the first time, and the only one in the Psalms, He is seen as Israel's Bridegroom. His rule is righteous and eternal: all enemies are put down, and the nations worship. This is the only view of Christ in the first part.

The second gives the circumstances of the last days, the rule of Antichrist and not Christ, and then the exercises of the people, looking on toward deliverance. The third closes the book with a series of psalms which put before us Christ as the Restorer of the nation: first, as the King of Israel, taking up their cause as their Representative before God to bring them to blessing; and then in His work on the cross as involved in this.

In the first series, the sixty-first psalm shows us the King's vows as heard by God, and the possession of those that fear God's name given to Him in consequence. He sojourns in the Tent which God had pitched among men, and dwells there as King in the presence of God forever, the eternal link between God and man.

The sixty-second psalm has in it no clear evidence of Messianic character, except its place in this series between two psalms of the King. As the experience of the Leader and Finisher of faith it is, however, perfectly suited; being the utter rejection of all other dependences than God Himself. And after this the sixty-third psalm breathes after God as seen in the sanctuary, whose loving-kindness is better than life. Thus the soul follows hard after Him, while its enemies drop off and are destroyed. The next psalm is but a lament over the folly and wickedness of man; but the sixty-fifth with its single and plural voices points to the settlement of the deeper question of how the iniquities of those for whom their Head has undertaken are purged away, and through the Chosen One of God now dwelling in the Sanctuary, they too are satisfied with the goodness of God's house established in their midst. The blessing following runs through two more psalms; then in the sixty-eighth there bursts out a strain of glory and triumph, in which God is

celebrated under all His Names, which have all been illustrated and endeared to them through Him who has gone up on high, leading captivity captive, and receiving gifts for men: yea, (they acknowledge in humble gratitude) even for the rebellious, that Jah Elohim, might dwell among them. Now the dove's wings are over them, the beauty of Christ is seen upon them; and under the leadership of their glorious and divine King, Israel's tribes throng up to the sanctuary. Thus the first series of psalms ends.

The second bases the blessing on the sacrifice of Christ—on atonement, which here, in connection with Israel's restoration has its restitutive aspect, as in the trespass-offering. As the result of this, in the seventy-first psalm Israel is seen reviving, taking hold of Jehovah's strength alone, and making mention only of Jehovah's righteousness. While in the seventy-second psalm the whole earth comes under the rule of the Saviour-King, who is seen in character as a true Melchizedek. Thus the salvation-book of the Psalms is completed. That it is Jewish and in sphere earthly is plain, and may be a disappointment to us; but we may be sure that inspiration has made no mistake: the limits of the law are too narrow to contain the fullness of the Christian gospel, and the divine side of the work of Christ has been more fully expressed already in the opening book. The essential outlines are, of course, preserved.

The theme of the third book, as we know, is holiness. Much briefer than either of the preceding, the Messianic psalms are in the same proportion, while they are also much fainter sketches of the commanding figure for which we are looking.

Very much as in the first subdivision of the second book, the first appearance of Christ here is in answer to the cry of distress on the part of the people. The earth and all its inhabitants are dissolved, but at the appointed time for which He has been waiting, He sets up the pillars of the earth once more. It has been dissolved by its corruption: He establishes it by just judgment carried out. He is the divine Interpreter, and with God alone it is to abase or to exalt. For this, however, that any may be exalted, grace must come in, and not merely judgment. Grace is His delight, judgment His strange work: and so we find here. "I will psalm," He says "unto the God of Jacob: the God of Jacob is the God of grace. All this is in character with the third book.

In the eightieth psalm, which is again the third psalm of a second section of the same division, there is just an appeal to God to act in their behalf through Messiah, "the Man of Thy right hand, the Son of man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself." Here they have found the secret of blessing, and the next psalm shows the light of divine favor beginning to shine upon them.

The cry of the eighty-fourth psalm is quite similar to this: "Behold,

O God our shield, and look upon the face of Thine Anointed;" and in the next psalm we find all the attributes of God united in the salvation of His people. While in the next two psalms, but more mysteriously, we have Christ in the form of a Servant, owned, in the last, by God and by His people: all their fresh springs found in Him.

But one other psalm in this book speaks of Christ,—the eighty-ninth, —in which He is seen as the One contemplated in the covenant with David. Here we have typical prophecy, and again the King, though to be made of God His first-born, supreme as to the kings of the earth.

The fourth book has two psalms of special importance, and is remarkable for the development of its blessed theme. It begins with a psalm of Moses, a lament over the generation dying in the wilderness, which is but a typical example of man's doom as man. The reason of it is, he has lost the knowledge of God, who has always been a habitation for men, but men have turned their backs upon Him. Of this departure from Him death is the universal witness. With God is the fountain of life; turning from Him, man has accepted death as His portion, but which as an admonition God would have him lay to heart.

But he cannot find the way back: first, man is helpless to recover himself. The second psalm of the book (the ninety-first) introduces us, therefore, to the Second Man.

Here is One who has never wandered. He has "made Jehovah, even the Most High, His habitation," and He can claim, therefore, all the consequences of this. Dwelling in His secret place—secret, alas, now to man at large—He abides therefore under the shadow of the Almighty. Plague and pestilence pass by Him harmless; the young lion and serpent He can trample under foot. The angels have Him in charge, lest He should dash His foot against a stone. Here is a Man, in short, with whom (as in the next psalm) earth can enjoy once more a Sabbath-rest; and the world be established on immovable foundations. (Ps. xciii. 2.)

But this shows no title as yet for the failed children of the first man; and though there are assurances given as to the *righteous*, that leaves, as we know, Job's question unanswered. Meanwhile Jehovah's kingdom is seen as coming, then as come, and the second subdivision ends amid the praises of the whole earth (Ps. c.); and still this vital question remains unanswered.

With the third subdivision again a Messianic psalm appears, the old refrain, sounding through the whole book, of a King of righteousness. The King after Jehovah's heart is come; and we readily connect Him with the Second Man of the ninety-first psalm: He is King of Israel now; and when we go on to the 102d, Israel's time has come for blessing, and Zion's to be built up once more: the throne is ready for the King, but in this psalm where is the King?

The voice here is of One not in power but in weakness—in extreme

distress. Nay, Jehovah's hand is upon Him and in wrath: He is dying, His days shortened, and He contrasts these shortened years with God's eternity in His cry to Him. Is this the King of Israel? Nay, is this the glorious Man who has the secret of life and of enduring blessing?

The answer is an amazing one, and it is God Himself who gives it. He is not only King of Israel: He is not only the Second Man, over whom death has no title: He is *God Himself;* He is Creator of heaven and earth; He is the deathless One, the fountain of Life Himself. "The Second Man is the Lord from heaven;" and in the sacrifice which is here accomplished, divine-human arms hold us fast to God.

Although the fifth book is the longest of the whole five, there are but six psalms that are Messianic; and this is to be accounted for, no doubt, by its deuteronomic, governmental character.

The 109th and 110th go together as the divine ways with the Perfect Man. They are complete contrasts: the first being One who for His love finds only hatred; until love itself can only pronounce the doom of its rejectors. The 110th is that which speaks directly of His Melchizedek Priesthood. He is exalted to God's right hand, and waiting for His enemies to be made His footstool, and for an obedient people to be made willing in the day of His power. Here the principle in divine government is contained in the last verse, though not apart from the psalm before it. The path of humiliation and suffering has ever been the way ordained of God to lead to glory, a principle which our Lord distinctly enunciated for His disciples, as He accepted it for Himself, drank only of the brook in the way—took but the refreshment provided of God in the common way of faith and patience in which He led His followers. His trials have enabled Him to be the true Priest, the sympathetic Intercessor that His people crave, as well as the truly human King, the succorer of the needy.

The 118th psalm shows us the Stone which the builders rejected becoming the Head of the Corner: and here His humiliation is nevertheless the stumbling-stone to men: the Stone was low enough for them to stumble over, and yet thus for the foundation-stone upon which faith builds, and the temple to God's praise alone can stand.

Among the "songs of degrees," three short psalms alone remain. The first (Ps. 132d) turns upon the history of David and the house of God, and David is here plainly a type of a higher King. The promise as to his house is connected with that as regards Zion and the dwelling-place of God in it.

In the next psalm we have not David but Aaron, and the unity of brotherhood in Israel at last established among her jarring tribes: a spiritual unity now produced by the Spirit out-poured upon the head of her true High-priest, of whom it is here implied that Aaron was but a figure. In these two psalms, therefore, the Melchizedek Priest-King

is again before us; and the following brief psalm gives us the blessing of God by man and of man by God which is the glorious work of the true Melchizedek.

Brief as this outline of the Messianic psalms is, it is surely enough to show the divine order in which they are arranged, and the fullness of the presentation of Christ which is found in them. His peculiar relation to us, of course, will not be found. Throughout the Old Testament times it was a "mystery hid in God." (Eph. iii. 4–9.)

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The Text of the whole book and the Notes on Chaps. 1 to 37
by the late F. W. Grant.

Notes on Chaps. 38 to 48, with a Historical Chart of the Prophets,
Plans illustrating the Temple, and the Future Division of the Land,
by J. Bloore.

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   2. Exodus.
   3. Leviticus.
   4. Numbers.
   5. Deuteronomy.

2. The Covenant-History:—
   1. Joshua.
   2. Judges.
      Ruth.
   3. Kings:—
      First Book (Samuel).
      Second Book (Kings).
   4. Captivity-Books:—
      Ezra.
      Nehemiah.
      Esther.
   5. Chronicles.

3. The Prophets:—
   1. Isaiah.
   2. Jeremiah.
      Lamentations.
   3. Ezekiel.
   4. Daniel.
   5. The Book of Minor Prophets:—
      1. *Hosea.* *Amos.* *Micah.*
      2. *Joel.* *Obadiah.* *Jonah.*
      3. *Nahum.* *Habakkuk.* *Zephaniah.*
      4. *Haggai.* *Zechariah.* *Malachi.*

4. The Psalm-Books:—
   1. The Psalms.
   2. Job.
   3. Solomon's Song.
   4. Ecclesiastes.
   5. Proverbs.

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1. The Gospels:—
   1. Matthew. Mark. Luke.
   2. John.

2. The Acts.

3. The Pauline Epistles:—
   1. Romans. Galatians. Ephesians. Colossians. *Philemon.* Philippians.
   2. Thessalonians. *First Epistle.* *Second Epistle.* Corinthians. *First Epistle.* *Second Epistle.* Hebrews. Timothy. *First Epistle.* *Second Epistle.* Titus.

4. The Catholic Epistles:—
   1. Peter.
      First Epistle
      Second Epistle.
   2. James.
   3. John.
      First Epistle.
      Second Epistle.
      Third Epistle.
   4. Jude.

5. Revelation.

PREFACE

After many years Ezekiel has at last been printed. The yellowed pages of the MS. have passed through many hands; much labor and prayer have been spent on them; many eyes have pored over them — besides the author, those of Mr. Ridout, P. J. L., T. O. L., and others engaged in the typing, composition and proof-reading. Most have now entered into that presence of which Ezekiel's closing sentence speaks: "The name of the city from that day shall be, The Lord is there." Their work is left to His hands to bless.

This book was F. W. G.'s last labor, showing as Mr. Ridout has said, no less brilliant work than his previous volumes. He completed the text, but in compiling his Notes laid down his pen at the 38th chapter, at the threshold of the city which he longed to enter. From that point Mr. Bloore has ably taken up the Notes,which point out the great lesson which the temple and the holy city with their precise measurements are intended to impress upon the people of God: "Show the house, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; and let them measure the pattern." It brings to a focus the continued repetition through the prophecy to each nation of the purpose of God's dealings with them: "They shall know that I am the Lord."

We confess to a first feeling of disappointment when we came to the Notes on the last sentence of the book, expecting an elaboration of all that could be said of that wonderful closing. But it was best to leave it in its grandeur and beauty—"Jehovah is there." The statement stands alone. The only thing that could be added is its New Testament correlative which widens out the blessing of that glorious presence beyond Israel, "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death,

neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21: 3, 4).

That years have passed since the Notes were written has not lessened their value, but rather added to it, for Ezekiel speaks of eternal and unchanging principles, and time has only brought us nearer to their full display. Since Mr. Grant laid down his pen momentous changes have taken place in the countries that once formed part of the old Roman Empire, and the stage is set for the fulfilment of Ezekiel's later prophecies, as Mr. Bloore has shown in his Notes on the land. We are living in days when History is rapidly being made, days when events are occurring whose result is foretold in Ezekiel's prophecy, and which make such books as the present one so interesting to every student of Scripture. People desire to know the future; in the prophets it is unfolded for them, written by the Holy Spirit.

We place the pages of Ezekiel beside the History of the World and trace what has been fulfilled of the prophecies. Kingdoms and nations have passed away, leaving such memorials of the glory that has been that remind us most of their ruin, for they belong to man's day and his glory. Ezekiel directs our attention to this, for God's judgments fall upon the nations, and the glory of man is humbled to the dust. But another glory has filled the prophet's vision. His book opens with the description of "the brightness of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah;" he speaks of that glory departing from Israel, yet lingering as though loth to go; but the closing sentence of the book shows, "The glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." This is the glory that abides, nevermore to be removed. —E. F.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NUMERALS

The reason for the significance must be sought in previous volumes, especially in Appendix II. to the Volume on the Psalms.

ONE.

Soleness, singularity, uniqueness; solitariness, barrenness.
Sufficiency, power, independency, pride, rebellion.
Identity, unchangeableness, consistency, perpetuity, truth, knowledge.

(UNITY.)

Unity, at-oneness, harmony, congruity, integrity, righteousness, obedience, concord, peace.

(PRIMACY.)

Supremacy, headship, rule; beginning, cause, occasion, source, foundation, ground, plea.

(COMBINATIONS OF MEANINGS.)

Life, personality, will. Choice, election. Grace.
God, Almighty, Eternal, Jehovah, Father.

TWO.

(RELATION.)

Help, support, confirmation, assurance, competent testimony.
Seconding, preservation, deliverance, salvation. Service, ministry.
Addition, increase, growth; progress, movement, activity.
Attachment, love, desire, prayer. Association, partnership, fellowship.

(SECOND.)

Dependence, faith. Inferiority, lowliness, humiliation, subjection.

(DIFFERENCE.)

Diversity, contrast; contradiction, opposition, conflict, enmity.
Double-mindedness, duplicity, deceit.

(DIVISION.)

Separation, analysis, differentiation, discernment; judgment, wisdom; sight.
Decay, death, dissolution.
Christ, Second Person, God and Man, Second Man, Word of God, Witness, Saviour, Servant, Minister. Cross. Soul. Woman.

THREE.

(THREE DIMENSIONS.)

Solidity; reality, realization, fulfilment, fulness; manifestation. Sanctuary; glory, praise. Name.

(THREE STRAIGHT LINES INCLOSE A SPACE.)

Setting apart for purpose; specialization, sanctification, holiness; transformation. Dwelling-place, possession, portion. Marriage. Ban.

(THIRD LINE OF A TRIANGLE RETURNS TO THE FIRST.)

Resurrection; return, revival, recovery; reproduction. Spirit.

FOUR.

Yieldingness, weakness; meekness, mercy. Failure, testing; experience; transitoriness, change.
Creature, earth, walk on earth, world.

FIVE.

God in government; capacity, responsibility, exercise, way and end; conditions.
Weak with the Strong; Man with God; Immanuel.

SIX.

Manifestation or fulness of evil. Work-day week; limit, discipline; mastery, overcoming.

SEVEN.

Completeness, perfection; rest.

EIGHT.

New in contrast with the Old

TEN.

Simply a 5 by 2.

TWELVE.

The manifest rule of God.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF EZEKIEL.

EZEKIEL, as the third of the greater prophets, most evidently fills this place. His prophecy is as much related to Jeremiah on the one side as it is to Daniel on the other. Jeremiah sees the historical breaking of the link between God and His people—"Lo-ammi" written upon them; while Ezekiel is already among the captives, and enters in detail into the causes of the terrible breach.

The prophet's name, "the Mighty One makes strong" or "firm," is characteristic of the book, there being a manifest application of it at the outset, where God giving him his charge against a people "hard of brow and stiff of heart," declares that He has made his face hard against their faces, and his forehead hard against their foreheads. This implies not merely the strengthening necessary for his difficult position, but much more the attitude of Jehovah Himself towards them. The prophet with his message of wrath is indeed Ben-Buzi, "the child of my contempt," as God would declare with regard to him. They have treated Jehovah with the scorn which He must now needs recompense in judgment.

Thus also we have constantly throughout the book that characteristic expression, scarcely used elsewhere, "The hand of the Lord was upon me;" and again, "The hand of the Lord God fell upon me" (chap. viii. 1), and even, "The hand of the Lord was strong upon me," where the same Hebrew word *chazaq* is used (chap. iii. 14). Thus Jehovah abides, and His word abides, though it be now in judgment. "That ye may know that I am Jehovah," rings through almost every part, and this is a striking link with the book of Leviticus—the place of which Ezekiel occupies in the Pentateuch of the Prophets. In Leviticus we find appended again and again to the commandments there which enforce the holiness of their Deliverer, "I am Jehovah." Here His dealings with them affirm what He is as such, the Unchangeable, true to His own nature at all times, without the possibility of swerv-

ing from it. Thus with a people such as Israel have manifested themselves to be, judgment must have its course.

Judgment is therefore largely the theme here, though the end is grace. Sin has first to be manifested in order to be put away. Here again is an echo of Leviticus: it is the priest dealing with the leper. Ezekiel is emphasized for us as the priest-prophet, and the whole book is the expansion of the enjoined dealing with leprosy which Leviticus insists upon. Everything is in place here. It is in the presence of the glory of God that the condition is judged; and being plainly discovered, the glory leaves. The leper is thus put outside the camp. Yet this is not the end, for God "hateth putting away," and if He does this, it is but for a time, until His dealing is effectual in the souls of His people. This being found at the time of the end, the glory returns. It is noteworthy that it is the sanctuary in Israel which is seen to be defiled with the abominations of the people, and the book ends with the restored sanctuary and the divine wings brooding once more over the city, whose very name is now *Jehovah-Shammah*, "Jehovah is there."

Thus if there is judgment, it is the judgment of the priest: not only in necessary holiness, but the judgment of one who desires to justify, and not to judge. Ezekiel is thus all through the book the "son of man," a term by which only once elsewhere another prophet—Daniel—is addressed (Dan. viii. 17). Daniel is also the one who sees upon the throne of final empire, "One like unto a Son of man" (chap. vii. 13). Here also, how beautiful it is to see that on the heavenly throne is the "appearance of a man" (chap. i. 26). It is the Lord Himself who declares to us that the Father "hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man" (Jno. v. 27). It is by a Man that man is to be judged. It is by One who knows thoroughly all that pertains to man, who has been no stranger to a path of obedience amid all the conditions that have been brought in by the fall, in human weakness facing the full power of the enemy, bearing too the burden of sin, felt as none else could feel it, and drained the cup of wrath to its very dregs. Ezekiel is but the mere shadow of such an One in whose hands judgment is safe, and the divine pity shines all through it. Yet is the title divinely given to him, the assurance of a Heart that thus appeals to man's heart all the way through the long detail of that which has provoked a judgment inflicted only when even

divine patience has reached its limit, and further delay could only be dishonor. These details are but the necessary vindication, before the eyes of His creatures, of Him who judges. Thus Ezekiel is the book of manifestation; but in which not man alone, but God also is manifested, and in the love at last to which He is then able to give way.

Judgment has however in Ezekiel a peculiar character. It is not upon the great final judgment (upon which the eyes of the other prophets are so fixed) that Ezekiel dwells; although at the close we do in measure find this; but a nearer one, executed by the hands of men—of Nebuchadnezzar as the main instrument of it—whether upon Israel or upon the surrounding nations. Nebuchadnezzar introduces us, as we know, to a new period, which it is the part of Daniel fully to bring before us, "the times of the Gentiles"—of Gentile supremacy over Israel—and which lasts during the whole time of God's indignation against her. In Ezekiel we have not this as yet, but the preliminary clearing of the field upon which the new world-empires are ready to display themselves. Thus the judgment is not simply upon Israel, although in the first place there: the nations round come under it, and Nebuchadnezzar for thus executing it is awarded compensation (chap. xxix. 18–20).

The nations so visited in judgment are those who have had largest opportunity to learn of God, as having been in nearest connection with Israel: that is, with the revelation of God, however the nation has failed in its own testimony. If, then, she is herself judged, the nations around must not exalt themselves against her. There must be clean work made of the surrounding people before the new beginning. This forms the second part of the book, the judgment being seen to come upon Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, Sidon, Egypt—seven nations; a complete survey of the field, beginning with the peoples kindred to Israel themselves, as Ammon, Moab and Edom; then the strangers in the land, Philistia, Tyre and Sidon; and then their old land of bondage, Egypt, out of which God delivered them in so signal a manner but which has been so long a snare to them in various ways. All these are related, though in different manner, to the chosen people. The view is complete, and its purpose obvious.

In the third part of the book, Israel is at last restored, and finally, to the favor of God. Theirs is a real resurrection, a revival out of a state

of death, such that their very bones are dry and scattered abroad, impossible, as one would think, to come together again. Theirs is then a true resurrection, with the new life from God accordant with this, and the blessing for the earth which they are destined to be—have indeed already been, through God's overruling grace, in spite of themselves—but are yet to be with their whole hearts His, thankfully filling the place which grace has given them. With this we have, as the type of the general work, the healing of the curse, as seen in the streams which, issuing from the sanctuary, renew the sea of death itself.

The divisions of the book are therefore manifest:

In the 1st Div. (Chaps. i.–xxiv.) Israel's rebellion is brought into the presence of Jehovah's unchangeable righteousness. God Himself appears, as it were, to plead His cause against a rebellious people; and Israel is brought into the light of the awful Presence, every detail of her wanderings perfectly exposed.

Div. 2 (Chap. xxv.–xxxii.) gives the judgment at the same time upon the surrounding nations, the enemies of the people of God as such, while—

Div. 3 (Chaps. xxxiii.–xlviii.) gives the prophetic history of Israel's resurrection and restoration.

NOTES

How little can those who are away from God measure the distance they have gone from Him! Away from Him who is Light, and the only light, the soul is in necessary darkness. And even with one who has a memory of the light, there is a lack of responsive energy to overcome the oppression of the existing darkness. For this God Himself must come in, and this is one meaning of the opening vision. Even then we are reminded of the Lord's words that "to them that are without, all these things are done in parables." It is what they complained of in the prophet's speech (chap. xx. 49), and there was so much truth in this as to enable them to put away the conviction it should have forced upon them. The Lord's answer to a somewhat similar thought on the part of His disciples did not ignore the fact of the parabolic form, but asserted the competence they should have had to understand it: "Know ye not this parable?" He asks, "and how then will ye know *all* parables?" (Mk iv. 13). Yet He adds, "To you *is it given* to know;" which does not deny their responsibility, for God's gifts are not arbitrarily withheld, but casts us upon Himself for competence. It is good for us to realize all sides of truth like this when we take up Ezekiel. Though it be all of grace, yet we must remember that to see what Ezekiel saw we must be in some sense where Ezekiel was. Grace does not release from the conditions which holiness demands, but enables for them. Oh then that we might realize this vision as He who searcheth the deep things of God can give ability!

Subdivision 1.

The charge is given to the prophet, as we have seen, by Jehovah Himself, and in a marvelous revelation of Himself as the holy Governor of the world which He has made The awful solemnity of wills in opposition to such an One is here emphasized. The glory of Jehovah is revealed, though in terms necessarily symbolical, as in fact all visions of divine glory apart from "Christ come in flesh" must be. How blessed to have *here* the deepest revelation, in the sweet and tender speech of Him who has become Man in order to bring it to us! Yet, even in Ezekiel, as we have already seen, there is, as it were, "the appearance of a Man upon the throne." God is drawing near in a way which in many respects cannot fail to remind us of the vision of Patmos. Ezekiel himself is truly in Patmos—in a place of isolation in the midst of a world hostile to God; and here with the awful sorrow added of the just judgment of God upon a people in revolt from Him. All the more do we see here how all creation works in harmonious obedience to Him This is what the living creatures speak of; and not only they, but the cycles of earthly history, as represented by the wheels, show fully the same thing. All creation, all events, display His glory, and it is in the presence of such an One that Israel's sin must be brought in order to give it its full character Yet for the soul of the saint what comfort in such a revelation! No wonder that Ezekiel is strengthened by it to stand under the weight of his commission. How thus, in times of greatest failure and apostasy, God comes near to those who have a heart for Him! Thus it is with Ezekiel; thus it is with Daniel; and even the beloved John in his blessed vision stands amid a people who have already begun to depart from God

Ephesus, to whom is committed the highest view of the Church which is given us has left its first love, and the voice now is to overcomers — not merely with regard to the world, which opposes its darkness to the divine light, but in the Church over which the same darkness is ominously stealing. Yet, in the face of all, it is the God of all encouragement who always speaks to us. To hear His voice indeed is to receive "not the spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

1. The opening verses, as an introduction to the whole book, should be of the deepest significance. As we look at them, at first they may seem but a mere record of dates and places; but we may be sure that underneath we shall find a true introduction, every word of which bears upon that which is to follow. It is thus only that we can read these scriptures aright when we willingly pass over nothing, assured that everywhere the word of God will vindicate itself as that, and that to make one word from the divine mouth idle, is the insult of unbelief to Him who speaks in it. There is a studied emphasis here, manifestly put upon that which we might overlook. This 30th year, this 4th month, this 5th day of the month, are manifestly specifications full of purpose. The 30th year is, no doubt, as it is generally considered, the year of the prophet. It was the period at which the priest entered upon his office; it was the year in which it pleased Christ, Himself the true Priest, to begin His public ministry. This 30th year has in it as one of its factors that number 5 which we shall find accompanying us remarkably through the book: We have thus the 5th day, the 5th year of Jehoiachin's captivity. Five is the number of man in relation to God. It is the number, therefore, which speaks of responsibility under His government, and that is most suited in the book of Ezekiel. Yet we must not forget that there is another side to it, and that the weak with the strong, the $4 + 1$, we have found many times to speak of Immanuel. The New Testament is thus a 5th Pentateuch, and of what does it speak? Certainly the burden of its message is not responsibility, but the blessed way in which the weakness of humanity and the strength of Deity have come together in the Person revealed.

Then let us notice that 10 is but a twice 5, and that this number 2, which is the additional factor, is the number which speaks directly of, and therefore emphasizes, relationship. Here is a 3×10, the number of manifestation and of the Spirit alike, and in connection with man, thus in company with God. And when the Lord came up from Jordan, in His 30th year, from His pledge to that ministry in which the river of death was indeed the point to which it guided, and the end for which it marked Him out, it was to be manifested and approved of God as the perfect Mediator, His beloved Son, upon whom then the Dove from heaven descends. Thus He becomes in full reality the Christ, anointed for His work of bringing God and man together. And here also, in what is now before us (though we must modify a good deal the proper force of the words), we may say that the prophet is anointed for the work upon which he enters, where man's relationship to God is that which is in question, which he is to realize in his soul in its tremendous consequences, yet where in the end God will indeed be seen to unite Himself to man in His own manner, and according to what has been ever in His heart.

This 30th year is now in its 4th month, speaking manifestly of that season of trial to which everything under God must come, which for mere fallen man

EZEKIEL

DIVISION 1. (Chaps. i–xxiv.)

Israel's rebellion brought into the presence of Jehovah's unchangeable righteousness.

SUBDIVISION 1 (Chaps. i.–vii.)

The charge given to the prophet.

SECTION 1 (Chap. i.)

Jehovah the Almighty whom all creation, all events, harmoniously obey.

1 (1-3): The person of the prophet and the occasion of the prophecy.

1. NOW it came to pass in the [a] thirtieth year, in the fourth [month], on the fifth of the month, as I was amidst the [b] captivity by the river Chebar, the [c] heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. In the fifth of the month, which was

[a] Num. 4. 3. 1 Chron. 23. 3.
[c] cf. Lk. 3. 23.
[b] 2 Ki. 17. 6. 2 Ki. 24. 8-16.
[c] cf. Dan. 10. 5.
[c] cf. Rev. 4. 1.

proves necessarily disastrous, but which for those who accept the searching out is but "for a season, if need be," and the end, blessing. Meanwhile the prophet is one among a band of captives by the river Chebar—the "great" or "abundant" river—evidently reminding us of Isaiah's language when God declared by him that He would bring upon Israel "the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria and all his glory" (Isa. viii. 7). Here it is indeed another spoiler, for the land of Israel is already a land that the rivers have spoiled (Isa. xviii. 2). Babylon has succeeded Assyria, but with no relief in the oppressing hand; yet, though the judgment be not removed, here it is, that over the head of one who, bowed under it, accepts the divine judgment, the heavens are opened and there are "visions of God." How blessed to know, by the voice of nature itself, that it is night and not day that opens the heavens; and here, whatever the message that may be given, the first thing for the prophet's soul is that there are "visions of God"

With God coming in, how everything changes, even though nothing may be changed! For there is no desolation like the absence of God; and there is nothing to lack with His presence realized. Thus the end is, as it were, seen from the beginning. These visions of God will be, at the end, visions of exceeding comfort The word that is to come is yet unspoken. First of all God is *seen*, and by and by there will be His word. But the sentence closes for a moment here, that the sweetness of the vision may be taken in without distraction, for here we have something that had never before occurred. Never before could it be said that the heavens were opened. Over this poor, lone man they opened, into whose soul the pang of the captivity of the people of God had entered in a way unrealized by his fellows around him. Isaiah had seen the glory of the Lord in the temple, and everywhere of course it is the same glory. That vision had closed, and the sanctuary on earth was desolate; but God remained and is seen in the higher sphere where His throne abides untouched by all the sin and sorrow of earth It is the preparation for that which we find in Daniel, where in contrast with that which was said when the ark,

[in] the fifth year of King [d]Jehoiachin's captivity, the [e]word of Jehovah came expressly unto Ezekiel the [f]priest, the son of Buzi, in the [g]land of the Chaldeans, by the river Chebar; and the [h]hand of Jehovah was there upon him.

2 (4-21): The chariot of Deity.

2. And I [i]saw, and behold a [j]stormy wind came out of the north, a great [k]cloud and a [l]fire infolding itself,

d 2 Chr. 36. 9, 10.
e cf. Jer. 1. 2, etc.
cf. Lk. 3. 2.
f cf. Jer. 1. 1. with Lk. 1. 5, 13.
cfr. 1 Sam. 3. 1.
g cf. Is. 39. 6, 7.

h ch. 8. 1; ch. 37. 1; *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 21. *i cf.* Rev. 1. 2, etc. *cf.* Rev. 21. 1. *j cf.* Job 38. 1; *cf.* Is. 21. 1; *cf.* Ps. 148. 8. *k* Ps. 97. 2; *cf.* Rev. 1. 7. *l cf.* Heb. 12. 29; Hab. 3. 5; Ps. 97. 3.

the throne of "the God of all the earth," passed through the dry bed of Jordan to its place in the land, it is now "the God of heaven" who is constantly before us. A higher point of view, and therefore a wider view also, is reached; and these opened heavens have now disclosed for us things that were in the time of the prophet a secret in the heart of God. Yet he who has reached the vision of God Himself has reached that beyond which there can be no height higher. He Himself is the realized pledge of all blessedness to come, and there can be nothing else but this. Thus Ezekiel may well be strengthened for all further disclosures. They can only disclose Him more whom the soul knows and recognizes as its security and rest.

And now we are carried on to look at another side of things; for on this "5th day of the month, which was in the 5th year of king Jehoiachin's captivity, the word of Jehovah came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans, by the river Chebar: and the hand of Jehovah was there upon him." Notice the change of person. We have here, so to speak, the official account, as before we had the personal; and the message is necessarily one of sorrow and judgment. This 5th year of king Jehoiachin's captivity shows us how Israel's present relationship to God has been marked by the taking away of him whose name falsely prophesied of "establishment by Jehovah." "Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with Thee, which frameth mischief by a law?" (Ps. xciv. 20). The false confidence must be taken away before God can come in for blessing, and when His "judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. xxvi. 9). These are principles of God's very nature which no grace that He shows can ever alter. Grace itself can only reign through righteousness, and the word that now comes is the word of Jehovah, this unchangeable God, to Ezekiel the priest, whom "the Mighty One makes strong" to proclaim it. The son of Buzi, "my contempt," marks the fruit of that contempt of God which all that had passed and was passing now in Israel, so completely manifested on the part of the people. Thus he was in the land of the Chaldeans (perhaps "the robber-like" or "the encroachers"), by the river Chebar; and now, molding him to His will, while sustaining him for all that that will may involve, the hand of Jehovah is there upon him.

2. He looks, and now, out of the north, there comes "a stormy wind," "a great cloud and a fire infolding itself" with a brightness round about it, "and out of the midst, as the look of brass and gold out of the midst of the fire." The north is not simply the quarter from which the invaders come—though the judgment of God it truly is which is executed by them—but it is rather, as always in its deeper meaning, the place of darkness, of mystery therefore, but a mystery which the coming in of God must needs dispel. The judgment itself declares Him—vindicates His nature, answers the questioning suspense of the

and it had a [m] brightness round about, and out of the midst thereof as the look of [n] brass [and] gold, out of the midst of the fire. And out of the midst thereof [came] the likeness of four [o] living creatures. And this

[m] Ps. 97. 4 *cf.* Ps. 18. 12. *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 16.
[n] *cf.* Rev. 1. 15 with Dan. 10. 6.
[o] Gen. 3. 24; Ps. 18. 10; Ps. 99. 1. *cf.* Is. 6. 2; *cf.* Rev. 4. 6 8.

righteous perplexed by His long patience in the presence of evil. Thus it is a storm-wind, a whirlwind, in fact, as we see by the fire infolding itself, "taking hold of itself," as it is literally, something which answers to what we shall see in the whirling wheels afterwards; and, as fire is ever sustained by that on which it takes hold, here it takes hold upon itself—it is sustained by its own nature. This fire is not pure wrath; it is rather, as a symbol, the holiness of God of which it speaks, a consuming fire indeed, therefore, to iniquity, but judgment is not its essence, not what it seeks or delights in, but what is necessitated by the perfection of God Himself. Judgment is rather seen in the whirl of the wind, such a whirl as the preacher saw in nature (Eccl. 1: 6), and it is but part of the ordained circuit of events as seen in those succeeding generations in which each repeats what has been before it, and yet does not repeat it wholly; for there is progress, a purpose working through it which is but the purpose of God; though in strange forms to which the sin of man has compelled it. But if there be a great cloud, there is yet a brightness round about, a brightness which necessarily must be when we know Him whose that purpose is; and lo, "out of the midst of it as the look of brass and gold, out of the midst of the fire." Thus the nature of God Himself is seen, what is at the heart of the judgment, and which, therefore, while it has in it the fixedness which is always symbolized by the brass, is the display of the glory of God, such as the gold ever signifies.* All this is but a first and distant view of that which is seen approaching, but there are already in it the elements of that which presently is seen in detail. The first thing indeed is that in the form of judgment, God it is who is enwrapping Himself; but in such a way that He Himself can be discerned—nay, is made known and glorified. With Him, that which makes Him known is necessarily that which glorifies Him.

The first and distant view already gives the character of that which is approaching. It is storm—the divine wrath—but God revealed in it, and therefore, brightness round about, which presently we shall find, moreover, putting on the iris-hues in which the light breaks out into a band of various glory which once more reveals Him in the storm when it is passed, and now in covenant with the earth, enfranchised and renewed. It is the anticipation of what we find in Revelation, the rainbow round the throne. As now it rapidly draws near, and the details develop, this agreement with Revelation is marked in such a manner as to be recognized at once; for out of the fire there comes the likeness of four living creatures.

They are, strictly, "living ones," creatures not being expressed, though surely implied in the four forms of man, lion, ox, and eagle, in which they appear. The human form however predominates and gives character to them; while

* The word *hashmal* in the original is translated *electron* in the Septuagint, or amber, as in the Authorized Version. It is, according to Wilson, a compound word, formed apparently of the Hebrew word *nahash*, brass, and another root meaning "to be smooth." In this way it suggests the similar word χαλκολίβανον of Rev. 1: 15. These are the two characteristics of judgment, as seen in the brass, and of glory, as seen in the other smooth bright metal, probably gold. Thus it is glory in judgment that is displayed.—S. R.

was their appearance; they had the likeness of a [p]man;
and every one had [q]four faces, and every one of them
had four [r]wings. And their [s]feet were upright* feet;

* Or "straight," not like those of a man. See notes.

r *cf.* Lk. 17. 37; *ctr.* Ps. 68. 13 with Jno. 12. 47. s *cf.* Hab. 3. 19; *cf.* Rom

p *cf.* ch with c 8. *cf.* Jn 27 wi Matt. q *cf.* G 10.

yet each one has four faces and four wings corresponding to these. Thus is not a likeness of God that they present; and all likeness of Him is ex pressly forbidden. They are creatures of His—no more; in His hand, obedien to His will, and used for His purposes; in fact, as we shall see, instrumen of His government; in Revelation seen in the midst of and around the Throne here underneath, it for here the view is from earth, and there in heaven. The have in general the likeness of a man, but their feet are like the feet of an ox "upright," and not extended, as is man's foot. They sparkle, giving the loo of glowing brass, reminding us once more of Revelation, but there of Him wh appears to John, and who is the Lord Himself, "His feet like unto fine (o glowing) brass, as if they burned in a furnace." The treading down in wrat is clearly indicated. The sole of the foot is like that of a young bullock, fo patient labor is manifest in the exercise of righteous judgment.

They had human hands under their wings: implying doubtless their posse sion of that delicacy of touch and power of manipulation which the lower ex tremities lacked: thus they were not quadrupedal, but human; their hand being moreover under those wings which showed them to be fitted for a high sphere than that of earth.

Their wings joined together, so that there was perfect unity of action amon the whole four living ones, the face guiding in a straightforward course i which was no deviation; a higher Spirit than that of the living creature itse in fact guided and governed all.

In the vision of Revelation the four forms are separate, which here we fin united in each living creature. They are given also in another order from tha given here, and plainly suited to what is contemplated in the second pa of Revelation where the Lion of Judah takes the seven-sealed book. There, th lion comes first therefore: the emblem of the resistless power which is fun damental to perfect government. A government without power to execute i will is plainly none. We might expect from this that swift decisiveness o action which we so naturally look for in view of the almightiness of God an His holiness as against evil; and indeed such action is drawing near at tha time of the end which John is looking on to. Yet the cry of the martyre saints, when the fifth seal is opened, tells how long has been the delay of judg ment for which they wait, and for which they are still told to wait. But ther is a patience which results from the very consciousness of strength; and wit everything completely under His control, there is no haste in the execution of th divine purposes of God. Thus the patient-working ox follows the lion, t supply what is needed to the first thought; the ox too being the worker for con ing harvest, as this patience of God is to have fruit in blessing to His creature The long-suffering of the Lord is for salvation. Then, the human-face cherub at once reminds us of how He has come in to manifest Himself i manhood for the accomplishment of this, and how He is seeking to be known intimately, to lead us into fellowship with Himself. And with this ther will be necessarily exercise of heart and conscience, as the man's face sti

and the sole of their feet was like the sole of the [t]foot of a young bullock: and they sparkled like the look of burnished [u]brass. And they had the [v]hands of a man [w]under their wings on their four sides; and they

[t] *cf.* Deut. 25. 4.
[u] *cf.* Lev. 26. 19.
[v] *cf.* Is. 6. 6. ch. 10. 8.
[w] *cf.* Rev. 4. 8.

reminds us: for of these different forms the man alone speaks of a moral agent. And this exercise under divine government is none the less, but the more thorough and solemn, because His ways in this, as the final figure of the eagle comes to assure us, are ways that often soar beyond our knowledge: God were no God if there were not depths in His nature and a wisdom in His ways inaccessible to man. He dwelleth in the light unapproachable; One whom no man hath seen, nor can see; though, blessed be His name, in what we know of Him, better known after all than we are to ourselves.

Thus these four forms, while certainly not meant to attract engagingly the eye, still less in their fourfold complexity as represented in Ezekiel, nor to convey to us the idea of any actually existing spiritual beings, are manifestly suited to intimate to us the characters of a government which God exercises continually, with a plenitude of power in subjection to which all creation works. Thus in the apocalyptic vision the living creatures are seen from a heavenly standpoint, "in the midst of the throne and round about the throne." Here they are *under* it; for we are looking at them from the world-side, whence they naturally appear more complex in their forms, and with the world-number, four, emphasized in the four faces and four wings of each. The faces are in a different order also from that in which the forms are represented in Revelation.

But here, in Ezekiel, the human form in general is dwelt upon; it is the human face that comes to the front; and this suits well the tenderness of God's approach to His people when in trial, which Scripture everywhere exhibits. How good to see that, just here, when judgment is impending, yet to the prophet's view, the lion is not first, but the man first. The human form invites, as by and by we see even upon the throne itself. The lion is seen next, upon the right hand (*yamin*), which is the Hebrew also for the south: opposed thus to all the soft, relaxing influences which are naturally implied under this, for the judgment of God must no more be treated easily and with indifference, as hitherto. The ox is on the left, or as it might otherwise be rendered, the north, to meet with patient resistance the dark and evil forces proceeding from the kingdom of darkness, which must not be allowed to oppose or ally themselves with the holy judgment of God. While finally, behind all is the eagle, to remove from the earth the corruption which defiles it (Luke xvii. 37), that as of old He may bear His people upon eagles' wings, and bring them to Himself (Ex. xix. 4).

The creature-forms are not separate from one another here, as seen in the heavenly vision of Revelation, but each living being unites in itself these diverse characters, as on earth we see the acts of divine government displaying, though not in equal prominence, the whole.

As to the wings of the living creatures, they are four, not six as in Revelation. With only two of these they fly; and these are joined one to another in perfect unity of action; while two cover their bodies, as in a higher Presence. In the seraphim of Isaiah's vision, who have six wings like those of Revelation, two cover the face and two the feet, while with two alone they

four had their faces and their two wings [thus]: Their wings were [x]joined one to another; they [y]turned not when they went; they went every one [z]in the direction of its face.* As for the likeness of their faces, they had the face of a [a]man, and they four had the face of a [b]lion on the right side: and they four had the face of an [c]ox on the left side; they four had also the face of an [d]eagle: and [thus] were their faces, and their wings were spread out upward, two of each joined to one another and two [e]covering their bodies. And they went every one in the direction of its face: whither the [f]spirit was to go, they went; they turned not when they went. As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning [g]coals of fire, as the appearance of torches: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was [h]bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. And the living creatures [i]ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning. †

x cf. Rev. 4. 13.
cf. Rev. 12.
y ver. 12.
cf. Lk. 9. 5 with Isa. 50. 7.
z cf. Prov. 25.
a cf. Rev. 4. 6-8.
cf. 1 Cor. 2. 11.
b cf. Prov. 30.
c cf. Ps. 14. 14.
d cf. 2 Sam. 1. 23.
cf. Is. 40. 3
e cf. Is. 6. 2 with 1 Ki. 19. 13.
f ver. 20.
cf. Heb. 1.
g Ps. 18. 12.
h Ps. 97. 3, 4
i cf. Dan. 9. 21.
cf. Mt. 24.

* Or "straight forward"—literally, "unto beyond his face," *i. e.*, in the way he was looking.

† "Flash of lightning" is one word, *bazak*, different from the word in the previous verse, *barak*.

fly. Can there be any true work for God, or wisdom for it, where in the presence of His glory the creature takes not its place of nothingness before Him? Thus there was no unsteadiness or fickleness in their movement, they went each one in the direction of its face: and, obedient to the spirit that dwelt in them, they lacked no ability for the attainment of their end, whither the spirit was to go they went with simple directness of purpose—they turned not when they went.

The likeness of the living creatures as a whole bears witness of the coming of unwilling judgment which the people have provoked, but which still is not of the essence of what is here. Their appearance is indeed like burning coals of fire, which nevertheless is not identified with the living creatures, but as the appearance of torches (not simply destroying, but enlightening also) goes up and down among them. But the judgment is manifest: the fire is bright, and out of the fire goes forth lightning; and to this the motions of the living creatures agree: they go and return as the appearance of a flash of lightning.

Now we have another thing, which is altogether outside the vision of Revelation. For there, as already said, it is as seen by one in heaven. Here the prophet is on earth, and the wheels are seen upon earth also, and have a more intimate connection with it than the living creatures themselves. Yet they move in unison with these, nay, are moved by them, for the spirit of the living creatures is in the wheels, and their character is thus reflected in them. But the wheels are moreover gem-like. their appearance and their work is as the look of a topaz; for there is in them the display of the attributes of God, as in the jewels of the high priest's breastplate, which are the Urim and Thummim, the divine "lights and perfections," the glory of the refracted light, which God is.

The four wheels are alike, and have one fundamental meaning; their appear-

Now as I beheld* the living creatures, behold one [j] wheel upon the earth beside the living creatures for the four faces thereof. The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the look of a [k] topaz: and they four had one likeness, and their appearance and their structure was as it were a [l] wheel in the midst of a wheel. When they went they went upon their four sides; they [m] turned not when they went. As for their rims, they were so [n] high† that they

j ch. 10. 9–13. *cf.* Ps. 68. 17.

k Dan. 10. 6. *cf.* Mt. 28. 3.

l ch. 10. 10.

m vers. 12, 17. *cf.* Gen. 3. 24. *cf.* Jas. 1. 17.

n *cf.* Is. 40. 22, 26.

* Literally, "And I saw."

† Perhaps the literal rendering is even more striking: "And their rims and their height, and to fear for them."

ance and their structure is as it were a wheel in the midst of a wheel; so that they go upon four sides, the one wheel being set into the other, which it crosses at right angles; thus, like the living creatures, having no need to turn, to whatever quarter they may go.

The wheel speaks naturally, primarily, of the revolution of time, marked as it is for us by those luminaries which God appointed for "signs" as well as "seasons;" and most significant signs they are: heaven putting thus the stamp of vanity upon the fallen creature, whose dependence upon God it reveals for that renewal of life ever needed by it. "To everything there is a season," and no more; nothing continues at one stay: the day comes out of the womb of night, only to go back into it again. The winter swallows up the autumn fruits. So the generations of men follow one another; and even "history," as is often said, "repeats itself." "The thing that has been is that which shall be, and there is nothing new under the sun." Yet with all this repetition there is a certain progress also: the wheel is moving; not only so, but it is moving *on*. Whither? There is often a certain betterment as it moves, which is apt to fill us with only too exuberant a hope. The wheel has eyes, in which there seems the light of purpose. And indeed, purpose of a sort is easily seen: the spirit of the living creature at least is in the wheels; the living creature taking on also, as Ezekiel sees, the human form preeminently, as the course of events plainly shows, the large control of things man has, though not alone: for with him, constantly carrying, often controlling, often thwarting him, there works a force, itself under the constraint of law, without which he can do nothing.

And here the wheel rises so high that it is dreadful: he can see but a brief portion—follow but a short way; and if he sees no more, the light dies out again; for what of this spirit of man which counts for so much, and is yet so little? which passes so readily as a breath that cometh not again? Whither does it pass? as the preacher asks: "Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" Even the spirit of the living creature seems thus but part of the machinery itself. The wheel it is that controls, and the spirit of man is under this law which so utterly abases him, and carries him down at last into a darkness out of which no one sees him emerge. *He* then is no master of the wheel, but the wheel is master: he dies as the beast dies; and how is he then greater than the beast? Thus death baffles him. The earth abides, and things that seem passed away return again; but the generations do not return. Progress there may be, and

were dreadful; and the four had their rims [o]full of eyes round about. And when the [p]living creatures went, the wheels went beside them: and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went; thither [their] spirit was to go: and the wheels were lifted up along with them, for the [q]spirit of the living creature was in the wheels. When those went, these went, and when those stood, these stood, and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up along with them, for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.

o *cf.* Zech. 3. 9.
p ch. 10.16,17 *cf.* Ps. 103. 20, 21.
q *cf.* Rev. 16. 4, 5.

fruitful thoughts take root and spring up, but it is upon the graves of those who have wrought to produce the harvest. Yet here is precisely that which has in it purpose of its own, and the highest, that is moral, purpose. In the mystery of this sentence, as it surely seems, upon him—which the voice within him interprets so persistently and bodingly as sentence—the wheel begins to put on the topaz look, and the "lights and perfections" of God reveal themselves in it. The supreme control which is not in man's hands can still less be in the wheel itself. The eyes in it after all speak of a wisdom which is alien to mere mechanism; and if the wheel be but the ordinance of God, we may learn hope of Him whose heavens proclaim to us their control over the earth, and how He can bring light out of darkness, summer out of winter, life out of death.

Resurrection is indeed the full display of God's thought. Without it there is no proper revolution of the wheel; and God Himself is not seen, who cannot be seen in judgment merely. *That* is His "strange work," and His heart cannot be seen in it. But this "sore travail which God has given to the sons of men to be exercised with it," is but God's travail with man so exercised for a new birth, which is to make him, beyond all that the first creation made him, a child of God, the heir of a glorious purpose, of which revelation has been preaching to him from the beginning, even in the story of those primal days to which the Scripture-record carries us back. For these, even then, were in a manner new-creative days—days of resurrection for that earth not *created* in that state of desolation into which it had now lapsed under those whelming waters, the records of whose work the earth has been little by little disclosing to us. The "days" of Genesis 1, with deeper lessons than ever geology could in the nature of things give us, reveal indeed the work of Him who has alone the power, not only to "renew the face of the earth," but to renew also man's moral nature. Spite of all resistance, He carries on step by step to their complete development those purposes of His grace which the dispensations are disclosing, which are all here wrapped up, in a way which went far beyond the knowledge of him who wrote, not by traditional inspiration, but by the teaching of the Spirit of God.

Thus, in the record of the first day, if God calls the darkness which He is displacing "night," yet "the evening and the morning" are the day, as He would interpret to us; a day which does not therefore begin with the night and end with the night, as we have sadly chosen, if for our common purposes conveniently, to reckon it. Nor does it begin with the day and end with the night either. No; the evening begins, and the morning follows. The light which a

3 (22-28): The heavenly throne and glory of Jehovah

3. And over the heads of the living creature was the likeness of an [r]expanse as the look of the terrible crystal stretched forth over their heads above. And under the expanse were their wings spread the one toward the other; every one had two which covered, even every one had two which covered their bodies. And when they went, I heard the sound of their wings as the sound of many [s]waters, as the voice of the Almighty, as the noise of a multitude, as the sound of a [t]host: when they stood, they let down their wings. And there was a [u]voice from above the expanse which was over their heads; and they stood, and let down their wings.*

* Or "when they stood, they let down."

[r] ch. 10. 1. *cf.* Gen. 1. 6 & with Ex. 24. 10.

[s] *cf.* Dan. 10. 6. *cf.* Rev. 1. 15. *cf.* ch. 43. 2. *cf.* Ps. 18. 13.

[t] *cf.* 1 Chr. 14. 15. *cf.* 2 Ki. 7. 6

[u] *cf.* Ps. 29. 3-10 with 1 Ki. 19. 12

the call of God has just appeared, thus seems at once to be disappearing again, and the darkness to triumph over it. But it has not really done so. The day is only being conformed to the type of resurrection which will be recognized by faith on the part of His people in coming generations as the inimitable, unmistakable pattern of His workmanship. In the victory over sin and evil which are coming in, God is to be known as the God of resurrection. Death is the brand of vanity upon the evil, the leveling of the pride which is the rebellion of the creature against the Hand that formed it. But it is in that Hand also the weapon by which the arch-enemy is defeated and spoiled; and through death, for those who accept the humiliation of it, there is found the way of life. The revolution of the wheel, though it be high and outside the ken of sense merely, is that in which it puts on its topaz look and reveals its mystery.

3. Thus Ezekiel does not see merely the wheels, or the living creatures; he sees over their heads the likeness of an expanse as the look of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above. And again, above the likeness of the expanse itself there is the likeness of a throne; and upon the likeness of the throne there is, what indeed is strange and wonderful to see, the appearance of a Man above upon it. As soon as we look up thither we become conscious, in the attitude of the living creatures, that they are themselves in profound subjection to the higher power that is there. The harmony in which they act with one another is manifested as only the result of a common subjection to One who controls all. Their wings are spread out in full activity, their bodies remaining however always covered by their wings, as we have already seen them, and as is emphasized here by the repetition. And now the sound of their wings is heard as the sound of many waters—a cataract of sound, which presently is realized as the voice of the Almighty—the noise indeed as of a multitude, but not tumultuous—the sound of a marshalled host. This is the plain interpretation of the living creatures themselves; which the heathen, as the monuments of Babylon have shown us, worshiped in such forms (there indeed grotesque), seeing what was under the firmament only, and not able to pierce to the Throne that was above it, and turning thus "the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts, and creeping things" (Rom. i. 23). Here they are in their place, and serving; at His voice moving, wing-enwrapped, before Him; at His voice stilled to absolute rest, with their wings let down.

And above the expanse that was over their heads was the likeness of a [v]throne, as the appearance of a [w]sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was a likeness as the appearance of a [z]man above upon it. And I saw as the look of [y]brass [and] gold, as the appearance of [z]fire within it round about from the appearance of his [a]loins and upward, and

[v] ch. 10. 1. Ps. 103. [*] 9.
[w] *cf.* Ex. 24. 10. *cf.* Rev. 4. 3.
[x] *cf.* Is. 6. 1 with Phil. 2. 9 11.
[y] *cf.* ver. 4. ch. 8. 2.
[z] *cf.* Heb. 12. *cf.* Is. 11. 5.

29. [a] *cf.* Rev. 19. 12, 16. *cf.* Ps. 45. 3, 4.

But we are permitted not alone to behold the throne, and hear the voice of the Eternal, but to see Him who sits upon it. First, however, as to the throne: it is as the appearance of a sapphire stone. This does not seem to be what we now call the sapphire. That of the ancients was, as Pliny testifies, "refulgent with spots of gold—azure, never transparent:" that is, the lapis lazuli. And when we hear God's own voice claiming the heavens as His throne, how suited is the likeness of a sapphire stone! The word is derived from one (*sephar*) which means "to number," and hence "to tell, declare," and this is the word used when it is said that "the heavens *declare* the glory of God" (Ps. xix. 1). This sapphire throne, then, is symbolically just the starry vault, which is seen similarly in the vision of God upon Mt. Sinai (Ex. xxiv. 10) when "they saw the God of Israel; and there was beneath His feet as transparent sapphire-work, even as the heavens themselves for clearness" This seems to have been taken by some to prove that the ancient sapphire was itself transparent; but in fact there is no occasion from this to suppose so. There is, in what is seen, the general appearance of a sapphire stone, but with this the added character of a transparency such as there is in the heavens themselves: words which show plainly that it is the starry heavens that are here symbolized.

Upon this throne then, there is "the likeness as the appearance of a Man above upon it." We are warned by the language here to be careful how far we go in the way of exact application. There can be no doubt indeed for the Christian that Christ exactly fills the picture; even as Daniel (Ezekiel's contemporary) sees in his vision "One like unto a Son of Man come in the clouds of heaven," and dominion given to Him (Dan. vii. 13). Yet, no doubt, the time is not come even yet in which this will be fulfilled. This does not however prevent the ultimate reference to Christ which is such an imperative necessity. Christ on the throne is God's ideal of government for a world departed from Him, and He it is who is thus to subdue all things to God. Thus it is not strange if the divine throne ever puts on the human character. And it surely does so. Is God a man that He should repent? It is human essentially to do so; yet governmentally God "repenteth Him of the evil;" nay, announces this as a principle in His dealings with men (Joel ii. 13; Jer. xviii. 8). His threatenings, therefore, no less than the blessings He holds out to them, are for the proving of what is in their hearts, as again He declares (Deut. viii. 2; xiii. 3; Ps. vii. 9; Jer xvii. 10). But why should He thus try the creatures He has made, who knows them perfectly, and the whole issue of every trial? Ah, it is the need of man himself and not of God, and a need on the part of all His creatures, who throughout the universe are spectators of His dealings with men, and who are learning in the Church His manifold wisdom;

from the appearance of his loins and downward I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness round about it. As the appearance of the [b] bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the brightness of the likeness of the [c] glory of Jehovah. And when I saw it, I [d] fell on my face, and heard a voice of one that spake.

b cf. 2 Sam. 23. 4 with Gen. 9. 13-16 Rev. 4. 3.
c cf. Ex. 33. 18-23. *ctr.* 2 Cor. 3. 18.
d ch. 43. 3. Dan. 8. 17. Rev. 1. 17.

and to learn "in the ages to come, the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii. 7; iii. 10).

In connection with this, the dispensational changes show us the "likeness of the appearance of a Man upon the throne." Not only has the trial of man been constantly going on, but new methods of trial have been instituted as the old ones seemed to show themselves inefficacious. Thus after the fall, there was at first the appeal to conscience, and men were suffered to do what was right in their own eyes. What men now desire, as anarchy, has had its full trial at the very beginning of things. Even Cain, the first murderer, was not to be slain; and there were no kings or potentates of any kind; but the result was the deluge; the earth had to be washed thoroughly clean, and everything to start afresh. Then human government was ordained; and that was a step in advance from which there has been on God's part no return; nor has there been since such utter disaster as with those early generations. Yet human government soon manifested its incapacity to meet the deeper need of those whose hearts were departing from the living God. Men manufactured gods to suit themselves; and thus, out of a world given over to idolatry, God had to call a people among whom the truth could be maintained—the written Word taking the place of traditions which human imaginations darkened and perverted, and fresh revelations by the mouths of prophets whom He raised up giving constantly increasing light as the world's darkness deepened. We need not enter into more detail of those interventions which culminated in the rising of that Light of the world, whose beams to-day illumine all who have eyes to see. But this succession of various appeals to man, how *human*, if indeed much more than human, they are in that appeal! How plainly is to be seen in them the "appearance of the likeness of a Man" upon a throne which is in the heavens!

But here it is we find what had been seen by the prophet at the outset, giving character to the whole, "the *look of brass and gold*," the manifestation of unchangeable holiness in that which comes as judgment, but with the display in it of the glory of God. From the loins upward this appears in the fire—the glory of the Person who is thus revealed; while from the loins downward it is more His acts that are in view; where it is more the pure fire, but with a brightness round about, in which are seen the hues of the bow of promise, the work of righteousness executed being peace, "and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever" (Isa. xxxii. 17).

"This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah."

The prophet falls prostrate before his God, and then there comes to him a voice which raises and energizes him, and sends him forth Jehovah's messenger to a rebellious people.

SECTION 2 (Chaps. ii.-iii. 11.)

God's words to be spoken to those who would not hear.

And he saith unto me, Son of man, [e] stand upon thy feet, and I will speak with thee. And the Spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and [f] set me upon my feet, and I heard him that spake unto me. And he said unto me, Son of man, I [g] send thee to the children of Israel, to Gentiles, the [h] rebellious who have

[e] Dan. 10. 11. Mt. 17. 6, 7.
[f] ch. 3. 24.
[g] Is. 6. 8 10. Jer. 1. 7. *cf.* Jno. 20. 21.
[h] Dan. 9. 5,6. *cf.* Rom. 10. 21.

Sec. 2.

We have now the charge given to the prophet, which, as we see at once, is to speak to a people who will not hear, of whom it can only be hoped that here and there ears may be open to receive it. There is no encouraging hope with regard to the success of the message; yet, whether they would hear or whether they would forbear, they should know that there had been a prophet among them. All the more if there is not to be the encouragement of conscious success, is he to find it in the consciousness of the Lord with him, whom Israel would reject in rejecting His messenger.

He is addressed at once by the title which we have already seen to be characteristic of his prophecy: "Son of man," says the Voice, "stand upon thy feet, and I will speak with thee." The title given him is itself a proof that the people to whom he goes have lost their special distinctive place with God, but at the same time that if Israel will not hear, grace will not be thwarted in its object. The message will only go out the more widely, and indeed, with a deeper, sweeter, fuller message, as we abundantly prove to-day. This title is in itself the foreshadow of One who when standing in the midst of Israel in a day which was then future, would adopt it for His own. The Son of Man would be the Seeker of men, and Himself a man in all the conditions of humanity—Himself the perfect, because unfallen, Man. The Lord's adoption of this title is, however, distinct in its significance from the use of it by God in His address to the prophet. God never addresses Christ as the Son of Man, but as His own Son; man indeed, but as it is said in Zechariah: "The Man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zech. xiii. 7). But the Lord's adoption of it for Himself is peculiar, and characteristic of the uniqueness of His personality. Who but Himself could say, "I the Son of man?" No *mere* man could claim distinctively to be what all men are. Man indeed He is thoroughly, nor only man, but Son of man, entering into manhood by the door ordained, by its lowliness, to hide pride from man. To the weakness of infancy He is no stranger. He grows and learns as other men, His kinship with whom this name discloses; yet while it discloses this, it distinguishes Him none the less from all else among men—distinctive even because of its universality; for who could distinguish himself by a title that was not distinctive? He was thus Son of man in some sense peculiar to Himself—Son of man, while much more than this. With Ezekiel the term speaks, on the other hand, simply of his identification with men. He is not *the* son of man, but reminded of the lowliness of his condition, while at the same time this only magnifies the grace which has taken him up; and thus also there is in him a peculiar suitability to convey the message with which he is charged—not an angel, but with human sympathies, and a human intelligence

rebelled against me: they and their [t]fathers have transgressed against me unto this very day. And the children are [j]impudent of face and hard of [k]heart. I am sending thee unto them, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord * Jehovah. And they, [l]whether they will hear or whether they will forbear (for they are a rebellious house), yet shall [m]know that there hath been a prophet among them. And thou, son of man, be [n]not afraid of them and be not afraid of their words, though [o]briers and thorns are with thee and thou dwellest among scorpions; be not afraid of their words and be not dismayed at their faces, for they are a rebellious house. And thou shalt [p]speak my words unto them whether they will hear or whether they will forbear; for they are [most] rebellious. And

t cf. Ezr. 9. 7. Jer. 3. 25.
j ch. 3. 7. cf. ch. 16. 3. cf. Is. 48. 4.
k cf. Is. 46. 12. cf. Zech. 7. 12. cf. ch. 11. 19.
l ch. 3. 11. cf. 2 Cor. 2. 15, 16.
m ch. 33. 33. cf. Lk. 10. 11.
n cf. Jer. 1. 17, 18. Mt. 10. 28.
o cf. 2 Sam. 23. 6, 7.
p Jer. 1. 7, 8, 17, 18. cf. Acts 23. 11. cf. 1 Cor. 9. 16.

* Hebrew, *Adonai*.

acquired and exercised amid human conditions; himself thus the proof of the heart of God behind the hand of Him who is love and cannot change His nature, even when He is executing judgment.

The feebleness of the instrument is recognized, and thus calls forth Jehovah's might to sustain it. We see this at the outset here: "Son of man, stand upon thy feet and I will speak with thee." And not only so, but the Spirit enters into him to make him stand. He cannot even listen to the message in that prostrate condition which, while it may rightly express the nothingness of the creature in the presence of God, at the same time cannot suitably express the divine grace towards him. We see this everywhere in the history of the prophets, as notably in the prophet Daniel, and as again also in the case of John the beloved. God cannot utter His thoughts to one prostrate in the dust before Him. This does not suit the blessed Speaker; and this is already the foretaste of that which enables us to say we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, "Abba, Father." That cry is not yet come in Ezekiel's case, belonging as he does to a previous dispensation, but none the less the spirit of fear is bidden to depart, in order that the divine communications may have their suited character; for if God is enwrapping Himself in the cloud of judgment, nevertheless there is, as we have seen, the manifestation of One to whom judgment is a strange work, and those iris hues of promise are about the cloud. The messenger must in his spirit reflect this, that he may be fit as a messenger; and whether they hear or whether they forbear, the prophet must be witness in his own person that if "justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne," "mercy and truth" yet "go before His face."

But Israel have, in fact, already thoroughly proved themselves, and are no other (except in the privileges which they have perverted) than the nations around. Thus the divine Speaker marks them here: "I send thee to the children of Israel," He says—to Gentiles—for they are none other than these. They are but "the rebellious who have rebelled against Me. They and their fathers have transgressed against Me unto this very day." Thus they are children as "impudent of face" as "hard of heart." Their heart spoke in their faces in such a way that there could be no more concealment, and God sends

thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee. Be not [q] thou rebellious like that rebellious house: [r] open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee.

And I looked, and behold, a [s] hand was put forth toward me, and lo, a roll of a [t] book therein, and he spread it before me, and it was [u] written within and without. And there were written in it [v] lamentations and mournings and woe. And he said unto me, Son of man, [w] eat that thou findest. Eat this roll, and go, speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat this roll. And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. And I ate it, and it was in my mouth as [x] honey for sweetness.

q cf. Acts 26. 19, 20. cf. Jonah 1. 3, etc.
r Rev. 10. 9. cf. Jer. 15. 16
s Jer. 1. 9. cf. ch. 10. 7, 8.
t Rev. 10. 10.
u cf. Rev. 5. 1, 7, 8.
v cf. Jer. 36. 4, 23, 32. cf. Isa. 3. 11.
w ch. 2. 8. cf. Mt. 4. 4. cf. Job 23. 12.
x cf. Ps. 19. 10. with Rev. 10. 9, 10.

to them in the full recognition of this, putting against their blasphemous words the speech of the Unchangeable whom they have refused. Thus they shall know, if it be learned by the judgment executed, that there has been a prophet among them. Among such a people does the prophet dwell; as briars and thorns wound and entangle those who come in contact with them, as scorpions poisonous in their sting; yet he who has been admitted to see the glory of Jehovah need not be afraid among them. How unseemly indeed would be any fear of man on the part of such an one, and how ill would he represent the majesty of Him with whom they had to do! How ill, alas, do we represent Him if in any wise we manifest this, into whose mouths God has put a sweeter message, and to whom the glory of the Lord has been more wondrously revealed than even as Ezekiel saw it here!

And now the prophet is instructed to make thoroughly his own that which he is commissioned to proclaim amongst them. The vision character of what is here, one would think, ought to be plain to us, and an indication of the character of much that is to follow in the prophecy. "I looked," he says, "and behold a hand was put forth toward me, and lo a roll of a book therein: and he spread it before me, and it was written within and without, and there were written in it lamentations and mournings and woe. And he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest. Eat this roll, and go, speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat this roll." The meaning is perfectly clear, which any literal construction would rather obscure than add any force to. Again we are reminded of the visions of the Apocalypse. The roll of the book is written within and without, which does not simply speak of the fulness of its contents, as it is taken, but rather, one would say, speaks of things outward and manifest as well as of things of a deeper and more hidden nature. That which is manifest is needed by a condition of soul that can see nothing except that which is external; while, on the other hand, there are things within, which for those who have hearts to realize, are beyond all this. Even so for the prophet himself there is something that answers to this; for while what was manifest was simply matter for "lamentations and mournings and woe," yet in the mouth of the prophet there was as the taste of honey for sweetness, and this corresponds with what we have already seen throughout the vision, where the judgment does not stand alone, but the glory of the Lord is revealed in it, and in result, the accomplish-

And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel and speak with my words unto them. For thou art not sent to a people of [y] obscure language and difficult speech,* but to the house of Israel; not to many peoples of obscure language and of difficult speech, whose words thou canst not understand. Had I sent thee unto them, they [z] would hearken unto thee: but the [a] house of Israel will not hearken unto thee, for none of them will hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel are [b] hard of forehead and stiff of heart. Behold, I have made thy [c] face hard against their faces, and thy forehead hard against their foreheads. As an adamant, harder than flint have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their faces, for they are a rebellious house. And he said unto me, Son of man, [d] all my words which I shall speak unto thee, receive in thy heart and hear with thine ears, and go, get thee to the [e] captivity to the children of thy people, and speak unto them and tell them, Thus saith the Lord † Jehovah—whether they will hear or whether they will forbear.

y *cf.* Is. 1. 3. *cf.* Jno. 1. 11.

z *cf.* Acts 28. 28.

a *cf.* Lk. 4. 23-27. *cf.* Jer. 2. 13.

b Is. 48. 4. Ex. 32. 9. Deut. 31. 27.

c Jer. 1. 18. *cf.* Acts 4. 13.

d Jer. 26. 2. *cf.* Acts 20. 27. *cf.* Rev. 22. 18, 19.

e ch. 1. 1.

* Literally, "deep of lip, and heavy of tongue." † *Adonai.*

ment of counsels which are in His heart and which display His heart. Alas, the message might seem such as if it must be addressed to peoples of obscure language and difficult speech, to men of foreign tongues, strangers such as those among whom they were already being scattered. No, these were strangers in heart alone, all the more terrible in their enmity and misconception of the words of God, which above all should have been familiar. The difficulty of foreign speech might have been overcome, but here was a difficulty which no words that the prophet could utter would overcome. "But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee, for none of them will hearken unto Me." There was the stubbornness of a condition upon which mercy itself could wait no longer, and the prophet's brow must be made hard against their brazen front, and his face against their faces. Already, the wrath to be poured out was foreshown in their condition, captives as they were to the heathen around them, who were themselves more capable of hearing the words of God, had they been addressed to them, than those who had been nursed up with them. It is the solemn lesson which we are constantly receiving, that not the lack of opportunity condemns men to judgment, but the fearful mystery of hearts that depart from the living God, who themselves invite the unwilling judgment, and can be constrained by nothing but the doom which in their case is the last touch of mercy which they are capable of receiving.

Sec. 3.

The prophet has been now qualified and energized for his work. He is accordingly inducted into it: "The Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me the sound of a great rushing, Blessed be the glory of Jehovah from its place; and the sound of the wings of the living creatures that kissed one another, and the sound of the wheels beside them was even the sound of a great rushing."

SECTION 3 (Chap. iii. 12-27.)

Set apart to be Israel's watchman, the voice of God to the people.

And the *Spirit [f]lifted me up, and I heard behind me the sound of a great [g]rushing [saying], [h]Blessed be the glory of Jehovah from its place; and the sound of the wings of the living creatures that kissed one another,† and the sound of the wheels beside them, [was] even the sound of a great rushing. And the *Spirit lifted me up and took me away; and I went in [i]bitterness, in the heat of my spirit, and the [j]hand of Jeho-

[f] ch. 8. 3. Acts 8. 39.
[g] *cf.* ch. 1. 24. *cf.* Acts 2. 2.
[h] *cf.* Is. 6. 3. *cf.* Heb. 1. 6.
[i] *cf.* Jer. 1. 6. *cf.* Jer. 9. 1. *cf.* Phil 3. 18.
[j] 2 Ki. 3. 15. ch. 37. 1.

* The article is omitted. † Literally, "a woman her sister."

This sound is heard *behind* him, at his back, because in the path in which God leads, the movement of the living creatures, the whole machinery of government, as it were, follows him who is in it, and thus becomes articulate in praise of the outshining glory, whatever the place from which it shines. It was seen, in fact, now, not in what had been its dwelling place upon earth, not in Israel's temple consecrated to it for so many generations, neither yet in its own proper home in heaven, but in an activity to which not simply its own nature calls it, but the needs of man, of the creature, and thus of creation everywhere, which if touched in one point is touched in all. It is everywhere the creation of God, and He is manifested in it. Thus it can take no place, but its glory shines from it so as to awaken (not, alas, the praise of man now fallen, but) the praise of all that is symbolized here by the living creatures and the moving wheels upon the earth, which will at last utter His praise so that it shall be re-echoed throughout the universe.

Here is again another connecting link with the book of Revelation, where it is said of these same living creatures that "they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come" (Rev. iv. 8). Beautiful it is to see the perfect harmony here as their wings, in the emphatic language of the prophet, "kiss" one another. On earth the pall of night may be hanging, and the lightnings quiver from the threatening storm; nevertheless here there is no storm, no conflict, but emphatically peace; the wings taking on, according to the Hebrew here, even a tender feminine character, as that of "a woman with her sister"—harmony and subjection united in one, or, in fact, but one and the same thing.

So, impelled by the same energy, the prophet says: "The Spirit lifted me up and took me away; and I went in the bitterness of my spirit, and the hand of Jehovah was strong upon me." The bitterness of God's judgment upon His people is still felt; and this is no discord, when we know the heart that is behind the judgment—not slackened by it, but rather impelled; the anger against the rebellion of the people of God burning all the more within him who realizes that these are the people of God, and that God is robbed of His glory in them. The hand of Jehovah, of the unchangeable One, known as the Unchangeable in His very covenant name, this hand is strong upon him to enable him for the execution of the commission which has been given him.

Thus he goes to those of the captivity at Tel-abib, who dwelt by the river Chebar. Tel-abib means "the mound of green corn." How vividly is pictured in this name the hopes springing up afresh, as it were, in this land of captivity —a mere green mound though it be by the waters of the desolating river. Here

vah was strong upon me. And I came to [them of] the captivity at Tel-abib that dwelt by the river Chebar, and to where they dwelt, and I [k]sat there astonished among them seven days. And it came to pass at the end of seven days that the [l]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, I have given thee as a [m]watchman to the house of Israel, and thou shalt [n]hear the word from my mouth and [o]warn them from me. If I say unto the wicked, [p]Thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him [q]not warning, and speakest not to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live, he, the wicked, [r]shall die in his iniquity, but his [s]blood will I require at thy hand. But [t]if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast [u]delivered thy soul. And when a [v]righteous man turneth from his righteousness and commit-

k *cf.* Dan. 4. 19.
l ch. 1. 3, etc.
m ch. 33. 7. 9. *cf.* Is. 21. 11. *cf.* Is. 52. 8. *cf.* Heb. 13. 17. *cf.* Acts 20. 28.
n *cf.* Acts 4. 20.
o *cf.* Jer. 6. 17. *cf.* Col 1. 28.
p *cf.* Gen. 2. 17. *cf.* Deut. 28. 45.
q *cf.* Jer. 8. 11.
r *cf.* ch. 18. 4, etc.
s *ctr.* Acts 20. 26. *cf.* Acts 18. 6.
t *ctr.* Gen. 4. 9.
u *cf.* Lk. 17. 1-3. v ch. 18. 24; ch. 33. 12, 13; *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 1; *cf.* Jno. 10. 38.

they have come into a land of vagabondage like Cain of old, to build their city and rest, if they may rest. The sight smites upon the prophet's heart and overwhelms him with astonishment seven days. How complete is the ignorance, how puerile the self-confidence of this hope against hope, but which has no faith for its support! Tel-abib by the river Chebar is the very sign of their condition, around which the circling storm of the divine wrath is moving for its overthrow.

The prophet is allowed full time for the realization of these true human feelings; the weight of his charge not pressing him unduly, but permitting the perfect realization of it all in his soul before, at last, he takes it up. Only at the end of the seven days does the word of Jehovah come to him, saying: "Son of man, I have given thee as a watchman to the house of Israel, and thou shalt hear the word from my mouth, and warn them from Me." But we see in what follows that as a nation there is no hope at all. The case as to them is closed. His mission, for the mass, is only to declare the certainty of the judgment coming; but which is, because God is in it, a discriminative judgment, which separates a remnant of those who do hear from the unheeding mass.

The divine words are now, however, first of all to himself, set in charge as God's watchman for the people to put every individual soul upon his responsibility before God, his own responsibility remaining unaffected, whatever the result or apparent want of result. Warned or unwarned, the wicked, obstinate in his wickedness, will die; he also who turns from his righteousness to commit iniquity, whether or not the warnings were uttered which should have preserved him in the path of righteousness. This is an important point for us at all times: so apt as we are to argue from mere results which can never rightly be our guide, as results cannot precede but follow, and cannot affect the question of duty for those who are to walk by faith and not by sight, who are to be in the divine Hand for the execution of His purposes with whom the result is.

Let us notice here that, in all that which is now before us, we are upon the plane of God's outward, manifest government, so conspicuous and fitting in the prophecy of Ezekiel. Thus the death threatened to the wicked is not simply

teth iniquity,* and I lay a [w]stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin,* and his righteousness† which he hath done shall [x]not be remembered, but his [y]blood will I require at thy hand. And if thou [z]warn the righteous man that the righteous sin not, and he sinneth not, he shall certainly live; for he hath [a]taken warning, and thou hast [b]delivered thy soul.

And the [c]hand of Jehovah was there upon me, and he said unto me, Arise, go [d]forth into the plain, and there I will talk with thee. And I arose and went forth into the plain: and, behold, the [e]glory of Jehovah stood there, [f]like the glory which I saw by the river Chebar, and I [g]fell on my face. And the Spirit entered into me and [h]set me upon my feet, and he spake with me and said unto me, Go, [i]shut thyself within thy house.

* Two different words. † Or, righteous acts; literally "righteousnesses."

[w] *cf.* Jas. 1. 13. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 8.
[x] *ctr.* Heb. 6. 10 with Heb. 8. 12.
[y] ver. 18.
[z] *cf.* 2 Cor. 1. 13.
[a] *cf.* 2 Cor. 7. 9 11.
[b] ver. 19.
[c] ch. 1. 3.
[d] ch. 8. 4.
[e] ch. 1. 28.
[f] ch. 1. 1. ch. 10. 15, etc.
[g] *cf.* Rev. 1. 17. *cf.* Mt. 17. 6.
[h] ch. 2. 2. *cf.* Zech. 4. 1.
[i] *cf.* Jno. 12. 36.

that under which we all are: nor, is it, as commonly supposed, eternal death as the doom of every unrepentant soul; but it is a removal from earth, under the government of God, which even for the present makes for blessing to the upright with Him, as the apostle also tells us, that "godliness hath the promise of the life that now is," as well as "of that which is to come." The deeper question is not raised here—it is not what is put before us; not even as the law raised it, appealing to the outward government of God which levels all pretension to righteousness on the part of any, and shuts up to grace alone, of which the law is everywhere the handmaid.

This charge being given him, the prophet is now summoned into the valley that Jehovah may speak with him. The word used here is "cleft," though it is sometimes used for a plain, as in Genesis xi. 2, "plain of Shinar;" yet even there seems to have reference to what is its strict meaning, as a cleft between the mountains. It is used for the valley of Jericho, the deep Jordan-cleft through which it enters the Dead Sea. Its significance here should be plain. In all that we have seen, God is cleaving indeed the mountains of man's pride, bringing in a breach upon all that seems most stable, wherein those who are really His own are made to recognize a judgment which abases them before Him, but where the glory of God can appear to them, as now it does to the prophet. One must ever be abased in order to be exalted; and because of what we are, we must abide in that abasement in order to abide in the exaltation itself. God thus abides for us in all that He is, as the apostle realized after his being taken into the blessedness of the paradise of God, the third heaven; yet, because of the flesh in him, needing the thorn for the flesh, which love itself could not remove, while it could enable him to glory in it.

Prostrate the prophet falls again; for who can stand before this holy, holy, holy God? But again the Spirit raises and sets him upon his feet, and with an injunction now, which at first seems almost in contradiction to the call he has received, but which is in fact to guide him in obedience to it. He is to shut himself in his house. There is no readiness on the people's part to receive the divine communication. Thus their condition will, as he is told, put bands upon him, and he can only speak amongst these obdurate people as the

And thou, son of man, behold they shall put [j] bands upon thee, and shall bind thee therewith, and thou shalt not go out among them: and I will make thy [k] tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt [l] not be to them a reprover, for they are a rebellious house. But when I speak with thee, I will [m] open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord * Jehovah: He that [n] heareth, let him hear; and he that forbeareth, let him forbear; for they are a [o] rebellious house.

[j] *cf.* Jer. 38.6
[k] *cf.* ch. 24.27, *cf.* ch. 33.22.
[l] *cf.* Mk. 8.11, 12.
[m] *cf.* ch. 24. 27. *cf.* ch. 29. 21, ch. 33. 22.
[n] Mt. 13. 9. *cf.* Rev. 2. 7, etc.
[o] ver. 9. *cf.* Acts 7. 51-53.

SECTION 4 (Chaps. iv., v.)

Delivered to the nations as worse than they: the four signs.

1 (1-3): First sign: God Himself in the siege against Jerusalem.

1. And thou, son of man, take thee a [p] brick, and lay it before thee, and portray upon it a city—Jerusalem; and lay [q] siege against it, and build forts † against it, and cast up a mound against it, and set camps against it, and place battering rams against it round about, and take thou unto thee an [r] iron plate, ‡ and set it for a

[p] *cf.* Gen. 11. 3 with Isa. 9. 10.
[q] *cf.* Lk. 19. 43.
[r] *cf.* Jer. 1. 18, 19.

* *Adonai.* † Or, "a fort." ‡ Or, "pan."

way is opened for him irresistibly, the Spirit of God refusing to be hindered. We cannot but realize that what was true of Israel in that day is true now of the world at large; and that is why the apostle says that we must "redeem the time," (Eph. v. 16)—"the opportunity," as it really is—take the opening or opportunities which God makes in speaking His message amongst men, "because the days are evil." For it is He who "openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth." And while the commission of His grace is world-wide, yet he who would be fruitful in it must realize entire dependence, and watch for the doors that open under the Hand that guides.

Sec. 4.

1. The language of parable is now taken up again, the significance of which is so fully declared to us by the Lord in relation to His own use of it (Matt. xiii. 13). It is only the remnant from whom anything can now be expected. The call of the parable is to "him who hath ears to hear." And thus we have now four signs, in which the prophet is to address himself to those about him.

The first sign is a simple, but what a significant one! He is instructed to take a brick,* and lay it before him, and portray upon it a city—Jerusalem, in fact, and lay siege against it, and place battering rams against it round about. All simple enough, surely, in view of what was actually threatening the people at that time. But there is a deeper significance: "Take thou unto thee an iron plate, and set it for a wall of iron between thee and the city, and set thy face against it, and it shall be in siege; even thou shalt lay siege against it." A sign indeed this, for the prophet is the representative of God Himself, and it is God who is at work through these strange hostile hands of His people's enemies. There is, as it were, indeed a wall of iron between the prophet and the

* The brick may suggest Babylon, as the tower of Babel (Gen. xi. 3) was made of bricks. It would thus suggest that Jerusalem had morally become assimilated to Babylon, and therefore would be subjugated by it.—S. R.

wall of iron between thee and the city, and set thy
[s] face against it, and it shall be in siege, and thou shalt
lay siege against it. This [is] a [t] sign to the house of Israel.
2 (4-8): The second sign: The bearing of their iniquity.
2. And [u] lie thou on thy side,* the left one, and lay the
iniquity of the house of Israel upon it. [According to]
the [v] number of the days that thou liest upon it thou
shalt bear their iniquity. Even I have appointed thee
the years of their iniquity according to the number of
the days, [w] three hundred and ninety days, and thou
shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And

* Or, "thy left side."

[s] *cf.* ch. 6. 2
[t] *cf.* ch. 12. 3-7, 11. ch. 24. 24. *cf.* Is. 8. 18. *cf.*, Lk 2.12
[u] *cf.* Is. 20. 2 3. *cf.* Jer. 27.2 *cf.* Jer. 28. 10-14.
[v] *cf.* Num.14 33, 34. *cf.* Dan. 9. 24-27.
[w] *cf.* 2 Chron 10. 16 with 2 Chron. 36 17-21.

city. The separation which their sins had caused is not too vividly pictured here. But more: for separation from God cannot be with any indifference on the part of Him who is the living God, ever moving in the activity of His own nature; and if He separates Himself from the people it is not simply to cast them off, but to "lay siege" Himself against them. In Jerusalem centre the hopes of the people and the promises of God. For Jerusalem to be in siege, and God, as seen in the attitude of the prophet, Himself to lay siege against it, is indeed a sign to the house of Israel which should stir them to the very depth.

2. But another sign quickly follows. He is to lie upon his side, the left one, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it. He is to bear this 390 days, each day of penalty corresponding to a year of their iniquity. But this is not all. When he has accomplished this, he is to lie again upon his side, the right one, and now bear the iniquity of the house of Judah 40 days, each day once more given for a year. The siege of Jerusalem is through all, we may say, the object-lesson, and as he lies under the burden of their sin, his arm is to be uncovered, and his prophecy to be against it. He is not to turn from one side to the other until the days of the siege are accomplished.

What we have here has been a cause of great perplexity to all commentators. The separation between the house of Israel and the house of Judah has been supposed to refer, and quite naturally, to the two kingdoms, of Judah and of the ten tribes; and thus the 390 years have been attempted to be applied to the separate kingdom of Israel, already in the prophet's time long and completely overthrown. The separate kingdom of the ten tribes lasted about 254 years, and that of Judah about 134 years, at least, afterwards. The lying upon the left side, which, according to the common use of the right hand for the south, might refer to the position of the northern kingdom (and which probably does refer to this), yet if it be taken as applying exclusively to Israel, as separate from Judah, breaks down entirely. There were no 390 years of the separate kingdom, and these cannot be read into it in any intelligible way. If you carry them back from the taking of Samaria by the Assyrians and the deportation of the people, they would reach into the times of the Judges; and thus it has been contended that the number of years can be only allegorically significant. This, however, surely seems impossible as an interpretation of what is here. The 390 days, a day for a year, is the time of the remembering of the sins of the people, which the prophet, as representative of the remnant according to God (and in this way inferring the attitude of God Himself), has been so long suffering under. The allegorical reckoning of the number 390 itself is hard to make out, and in order to justify it at all,

when thou hast accomplished these, thou shalt also lie upon thy side,* [x] the right one, the second time, and bear the iniquity of the house of Judah [y] forty days; each [z] day for a year have I given thee. And thou shalt

x *cf.* Ps. 60. 7.
y *cf.* Jer. 30. 11.
z ver. 5

* Or, "thy right side."

the 40 years of Judah have sometimes been added to these, in order to reproduce, as it were, the 430 years which was the limit of Egyptian bondage; but such a reference confounds two periods which are certainly meant here to be distinguished, as well as the connection of the house of Israel with the one, and that of Judah with the other. But the years also must surely be years of sin, of actual sin which is provoking the punishment, and no 430 years have ever been marked out in this way at all.

What then are we to say with regard to it? It is plain that only the separate notice of the house of Judah here seems to require the application of the 390 years to the separate Ephraimitic kingdom. If this can be otherwise explained, then there is no reason why the 390 years should not be those of divine forbearance as to the nation as a whole; and if we date them from the separation of the kingdoms under Jeroboam to the fall of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar, we have, as closely as possible, exactly this time. This separation was the break-up, under God, of a time of unexampled prosperity, and it was the break-out of man's will at the same time; judgment thus already beginning while yet the long-suffering of God tempered it during all this period. The separation of the northern kingdom may thus have fully its place here, and be that which, as it were, weighed heavily on that side the nation as a whole, which never recovered itself from that great disaster. It is striking also that the actual siege of Jerusalem lasted for about the 390 days of the prophet's burden. It lasted from the 10th day of the 10th month of the 9th year of Zedekiah to the 9th day of the 4th month of his 11th year; and this, says Schroeder, "can very simply be made to correspond by making a deduction for the temporary raising of the siege on account of the Egyptians" (Jer. xxxvii 5). The reference to the actual siege of Jerusalem is thus strictly in conformity with the actual fact.

With regard to the forty years of the house of Judah, the difficulties have been considered great. The symbolism of numbers has been very naturally invoked in this case, and there is no need at all to deny that there is a significance of this sort in them. Nevertheless it is impossible to make this the whole matter. But where are these 40 years then? The 390 having already run on from the beginning of Rehoboam's reign to the fall of the city (thus including all Israel, not the ten tribes only), makes it impossible to put the period for Judah anywhere among these. It has been thought, therefore, that we must go back for them to the time of Solomon. Solomon's reign was just forty years; it was a time, it is said, in which Judah had necessarily a special prominence. It was also a time in which the remarkable prosperity which God gave them tested them as to their real condition. The departure of the people into idolatry, Solomon himself drawn into it through his wives, was the sad answer to a test like this. Thus, it is considered, that this is what is pointed to, as significant of their whole history, and through which their captivity was already assured.

But, as already said, this application is entirely against the order here, in which the prophet is distinctly told that when he had accomplished the 390

set thy face toward the siege of Jerusalem, and thine arm shall be uncovered, and thou shalt [a] prophesy against it. And, behold, I lay [b] bands upon thee, and thou shalt not turn from the one side to the other, [c] until thou hast accomplished the days of thy siege.

[a] *cf.* ch. 34
[b] ch. 3. 25
[c] *cf.* Lk. 1.

days, each standing for a year, he was to lie again upon his side, the right one, to bear the iniquity of the house of Judah. This is emphasized, then, as coming after the injunction concerning the house of Israel. If, therefore, this period is to be reckoned chronologically at all (as everybody would say it should, but for the difficulty of finding it) we must go forward and not backward for its discovery.

Now it is undeniable that from the time of the destruction of the temple to its rebuilding, according to Ezra iii. 8, there elapse just 40 years; and they have reference distinctly to Judah, whose captivity was then at an end.* The ten tribes never did return. Judah, it is true, only partially; nevertheless the temple was built once more, and the city; and here they were permitted to abide that according to the divine promise the Messiah might come to them. Accordingly the post-captivity prophets, especially Haggai and Zechariah, are full of the coming of Christ. Their very names point to this. Haggai means "festive;" Zechariah, "Jehovah has remembered." Those also who come forward to rebuild the temple, as Zerubbabel, the prince of Judah, and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, are, according to the latter prophet, the double type of Christ as Priest and King. Thus the air is full of the rays of the coming dawn, and the very names breathe the music of it. All seems prepared; and in their prophecies the present is the prelude of a glorious future into which it seemed ready to develop. All seems prepared—except, alas, once more the people; and here the significance of the number puts its impress upon the result. Those 40 years of their captivity should indeed have convinced them where their only hope lay; and under the solemn teaching of men like Ezekiel, they should surely have received the sentence of death in themselves that they should not trust in themselves, but in God who raiseth the dead. To such grace as is in God, had they had hearts to receive it, no power upon earth could be an impediment. But the issue proved how little, in fact, they had learnt by the long story of their past; and Malachi, with whom the voice of prophecy closes, points once more to the needed separation of a remnant, to whom alone the Sun of Righteousness should arise with healing upon His wings. After this, therefore, their history is a mere blank. The prophetic

* The text of the notes presents a difficulty which cannot be solved. The reference to Ezra iii. 8 does not seem to help matters. Our beloved brother is no longer here to explain his meaning. It has therefore been thought best to let the text stand as he wrote it, and to add this note.

The following is suggested as a possible explanation in line with the author's thought. The *first* deportation to Babylon was in B. C. 606 (2 Kings xxiv. 14). The *second* and main deportation was in B. C. 598 (2 Kings xxv. 11). This was probably when Ezekiel was carried away—Ezek. i. 1, 2. The Temple was destroyed (Jer. lii. 28–29) in the *third* deportation, B. C. 588. There seem to be two ways of counting the 70 years' captivity: from the *first* deportation 606 B. C., to the Edict of Cyrus (Ezra i. 1), B. C. 536; and from the destruction of the Temple, B. C. 588, to its rebuilding, B. C. 518. Thus there is a *general* as well as a specific meaning to these 70 years. If we consider them as general, not from one date to the other we have, then, from 598 to 588, ten years in which Judah is not *completely* in captivity; and twenty years from 538 to 518, during which they are in their land. If these 30 years are deducted from the 70 we have the 40 of *complete* captivity which the prophet expressed.—S. R.

3 (9-17): The third sign: Defilement instead of holiness.

3. And [d]take thou unto thee wheat, and barley, and beans, and lentils, and millet, and spelt, and put them in one vessel, and make thee bread thereof [according to] the [e]number of the days that thou liest upon thy side; three hundred and ninety days shalt thou eat thereof. And thy food that thou shalt eat shall be by [f]weight, twenty shekels a day. From time to time shalt thou eat it. And thou shalt drink [g]water by measure, the sixth part of a hin. From time to time

[d] *cf.* Dan. 1. 12. *cf.* Dan. 10. 3.
[e] vers. 4, 5.
[f] ch. 12. 18, 19.
[g] *cf.* Jer. 2. 13. *cf.r.* Jno. 4. 13, 14.

voices cease; then a long silence, and the 40 years have proved, as far as the people are concerned, the determination of the whole matter.

Christ comes indeed, as we know; comes to His own according to the promise, but only to be decisively rejected by them, so that they are finally scattered for the whole time in which, already for so long, the Jebusite, "the treader down," has held Jerusalem. Thus the significance of these 40 years is unmistakable; they are seen to be at once symbolical and chronological, and filling their proper place with regard to the 390 years at the close of which they come. There is no contradiction between a symbolical and a chronological import. God is constantly showing His control over human history in giving the facts of history such deeper significance.

3. The third sign follows—some features of which corroborate the view which has just been taken. The prophet is to take wheat and barley and beans and lentils and millet and spelt, and put this miscellaneous material into one vessel, and make bread of it according to the number of the days that he has been lying upon his side. But, notice, the limit is plainly given here as that of 390 days only, not 430 as we should have imagined. Thus there is a distinction of some sort plainly between this period and the 40 days following it. It says, "390 days shalt thou eat thereof." This was, as has already been said, probably at least, the exact time of the siege of the city, which according to the first sign given has fundamental relation to all that is here. The siege of the city is, on the part of the people, their bearing the iniquity of the previous time. Yet, as we know, this is not the whole of the matter. Scattered then among the nations by which they were led captive, they are, in fact, still bearing their iniquity before God; and this extension of the character of the siege to the time following is intimated in what we have here; for the unclean bread which they eat under the pressure of the siege is to be eaten also among the nations whither Jehovah drives them. Thus, while the days of the siege are distinguished in one sense from the period following, yet, in another, they are connected with it. Thus, the 40 years are distinguished from the time of siege, while yet some of the character of that time still attached to them. All seems thus plain enough; and that which at first sight is a difficulty, brings in its solution the solution of other difficulties.

This third sign, indeed, shows the state of the people more than the distresses of the siege themselves do, for here is signified the destruction of their sanctification as a separate people. This polluted bread that is eaten among the Gentiles is no longer the consequence of being shut up within the walls of the besieged city. As we have already seen, they can have, after all, their Telabib by the desolating "river," and rally, alas, all too soon, from the hopelessness of such a condition as the siege of the city implies. But their new hopes

shalt thou drink [it]. And thou shalt eat it [as] barley cake, and thou shalt [h] bake it in their sight with dung that cometh out of man. Jehovah hath even said, [i] So shall the children of Israel eat their bread unclean among the [j] nations whither I will drive them.

And I said, Ah, Lord Jehovah, behold, my soul hath not been polluted: for [k] from my youth up, even until now, have I not eaten of that which [l] dieth of itself or of that which is torn, neither hath there come [m] abominable flesh into my mouth. And he said unto me, Behold, I [n] give thee dung of cattle for dung of man, and thou shalt prepare thy bread therewith. And he said unto me, Son of man, behold, I am [o] breaking the staff of bread in Jerusalem; and they shall eat bread by weight and in anxiety, and they shall drink water by measure and with astonishment, because bread and water shall [p] fail them, and they shall be dismayed one with another and [q] pine away in their iniquity.

h *cf.* Isa. 3 12.
ctr. Ex.19
ctr. Lev. 25, 26.
i *cf.* Deut. 64 68.
j *cf.* Hos. 9 3.
k *cf.* Acts 14.
l Ex. 22. 3 Lev. 11. 3 40.
m Lev. 11. Is. 65. 4. *ctr.* Phil. 4
n *cf.* Lev. 19, 20.
o Lev. 26. Ps. 105. 1 Is. 3. 1. *cf.* Amos 11-13.
p *ctr.* Jer. 13-16.
q Lev. 26. Deut. 28. 48.

only reveal more deeply their condition, despising as they do the chastening of the Lord, and building themselves up on hopes which, instead of encouraging them to a true separation of heart to God, practically reduce them in God's sight to the level of the nations around them. In fact, the contamination of contact with the heathen, in more ways than their captivity would necessarily involve (for an Ezekiel and a Daniel were among the captives too), is shown, as we have already seen, most signally on their return from captivity. If after their return they learned to build themselves up in a proud isolation, such as we find in the Rabbinism which soon began, and which found its perfect expression in the pretentious hypocrisy of Pharisaism, this was at the farthest extreme from any return to God. Their bread, in fact, become most thoroughly defiled, when, instead of the precious Word which God had given them, they taught "for commandments, the doctrines of men," and once more substituted for that Word by which men live, "statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby man could not live." For a remnant among those that had returned from Babylon it was a period in which there was a famine of the word of God itself; and their association with those that had returned from the captivity must have become a thing less endurable than the captivity itself.

4. A fourth sign closes the series here. As in the last we have already got beyond the siege of the city, so in the present we are manifestly beyond it, but with no revocation of the sentence upon them. Ezekiel was now to take a sharp sword, using it as a barber's razor to put upon himself the brand of shame upon his head and beard—thus manifestly in the sight of all. This was forbidden to the priest (which Ezekiel was), and thus the loss of the priestly character is made apparent. But this enforced shaving of the hair is used with a further significance, to show the fate of Israel's scattered multitudes, thus smitten. A third part was to be burnt in the midst of the city when the days of the siege were fulfilled, most evidently referring to the slaughter of the multitude when the city was taken. A third part was to be smitten about with the sword, the sword drawn out after them in the land of their captivity itself. The final third part was to be scattered to the wind, and of these, only a few in number were to be bound in the prophet's skirts for preservation;

4 (1-4): The fourth sign: reduced to a few.

4. And thou, son of man, take thee a sharp [r]sword, [as] a barber's [s]razor shalt thou take it unto thee, and cause it to pass over [t]thy head and over thy beard, and thou shalt take [u]balances, and weigh, and divide [the hair]. A [v]third part shalt thou [w]burn in the fire in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are fulfilled; and thou shalt take a third part [and] [x]smite about it with a sword; and a third part shalt thou [y]scatter to the wind, and I will draw out a sword after them: and thou shalt take thereof a [z]few in number and bind them in thy skirts; and thou shalt take of [a]these again, and cast them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire. Therefrom shall fire go forth to [b]all the house of Israel.

5 (5-17): The summing up of judgment.

5. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, This is Jerusalem. I [c]set her in the midst of the nations, and [the] lands were round about her, and she hath [d]rebelled against my judgments for wickedness [e]beyond the nations, and against my statutes more than the lands which are round about her. For my judgments they have [f]despised, and have not [g]walked in my statutes. Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Because ye have been [h]turbulent more than the nations which are round about you, [and] have not walked in my statutes nor kept my judgments, nor have [even] done [i]according to the judgments of the nations that are round about you, therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold, I, even I, am [j]against thee, and will execute judgments in the midst of thee in the [k]sight of the nations, and I will do in thee that which I have [l]not done, and the like of which I will not do any more, because of all thine abominations. Therefore [m]fathers shall eat [their] sons in the midst of thee, and sons shall eat their fathers, and I will execute judgments in thee, and [n]scatter the whole remnant of thee to all the winds.

r Isa. 51. 19.
s *cf.* Is. 7. 20.
t *ctr.* Lev. 21. 5 with ch. 44. 20.
u *cf.* Is. 40. 12, 15. *cf.* 1 Sam. 2. 3.
v *cf.* Dan. 5. 27.
w *cf.* Zech. 13. 8, 9. ver. 12. ch. 4. 1, 8.
x ch. 4. 8, 9. Jer. 7. 20.
y Lev. 26. 25. ver. 17.
z Lev. 26. 33. Deut. 4. 27. Jer. 9. 16.
a Lev. 26. 22. Deut. 28. 62. *cf.* Is. 1. 9.
c *cf.* Jer. 41. 2. *cf.* Jer. 41 28.
b *cf.* Jer. 9. 26. *cf.* ch. 22. 18-22.
c *cf.* Deut. 32. 8. *cf.* Ps. 48. 2.
d *cf.* Is. 1. 2.
e *cf.* Mt. 11. 21-24. *cf.* ch. 36. 20. *cf.* ch. 16. 47.
f *cf.* Prov. 1. 25.
g Is. 2. 5.
h *cf.* Jer. 2. 10, 11. ch. 16. 47. *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 1.
i *ctr.* Mi. 4. 5.
j *cf.* Am. 3. 1. *ctr.* Rom. 8. 31.
k *ctr.* Ps. 98. 2.
l *cf.* Dan. 9. 12. *cf.* Mt. 24. 21.
m Lev. 26. 29. Jer. 19. 9.
n Lev. 26. 33. Deut. 4. 27. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 1.

while again even of these also some are taken and cast into the midst of the fire to be burned. It is the awful fire of the wrath of God which is thus going forth to all the house of Israel. The significance here is so plain that it hardly needs comment. There is, as we see, the sparing of a feeble remnant—alas, how feeble now! But this is all that even the voice of mercy has any longer to say to them.

5. We have now the summing up of the judgment in general, along with the solemn declaration of that for which the judgment comes. Jerusalem is still taken as the sign of the state of the people as a whole, the city in which the house of God was: to lose which was to lose the only place in which the atoning blood could be presented to God; so that for Jerusalem to be set aside was for the nation to be left to the full burden of its sins. But for what a purpose had God set them in this place of privilege—this people alone in all the earth the recipient of divine revelations? In the midst of the nations, as we have seen abundantly, it should have been theirs to maintain a testimony for

Therefore, as I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, verily because thou hast [o]defiled my sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abominations, therefore will I also [p]withdraw* mine eye that it may not spare, neither will I have [q]pity. A third part of thee shall die of the [r]pestilence, and shall be consumed by the famine in the midst of thee, and a third part shall fall by the [s]sword round about thee, and I will [t]scatter a third part to all the winds, and draw out a sword after them, and mine anger shall be accomplished, and I will cause my wrath† to [u]rest upon them and will comfort myself, and they shall [v]know that I, Jehovah, have spoken in my jealousy when I have accomplished my wrath† upon them, and I will make thee a [w]desolation and a reproach among the nations that are round about thee, before the eyes of every [x]passer by; and it shall be a [y]reproach and a [z]taunt, and a [a]warning and an [b]astonishment unto the nations that are round about thee, when I shall execute judgments in thee in anger and in fury and in furious rebukes.‡ I, Jehovah, have spoken. When I send upon them the evil [c]arrows of famine which are for destruction, which I send to destroy you, I will even increase famine upon you and break for you the staff of bread, and I will send upon you famine and evil [d]beasts, and they shall bereave thee, and pestilence and blood shall pass through thee, and I will bring the sword upon thee. I, [e]Jehovah, have spoken.

o 2 Chr. 36 cf. Lev. 16.
p cf. Hos. 8. cf. Jer. 4
q ch. 9. 10
r ver. 2. Jer. 15. 2 Deut. 28.
s ch. 6. 12 Lev. 26.
t Lev. 26. Deut. 28 Zech. 2.
Ps. 44. 1
u ch. 21. cf. Is. 1. cfr. Zeph. 17.
v ch. 6. 1
w Lev. 26 Jer. 4. 7. Lam. 1.
x Lam. 1. cf. 2 Chr. 20. 21.
y Ps. 79.
z cf. Zeph. 8.
a cf. 1 Ki. 8. 9.
b cf. Jer. 9.
c Deut. 32. 24.
d Lev. 26 cf. ch. 34.
e ver. 15.

* Or, "Diminish [thee], and mine eye shall not spare."
† Literally, "Heat." ‡ Literally, "Rebukes of wrath."

God amongst those that had turned their backs upon Him—a testimony which might appeal to every heart that sought God in the lands around. But what was the result? Israel had gone beyond the very nations themselves in wickedness, refusing His judgments and rebelling against His statutes; copying the manners of those from whom, because of their condition, God had separated them, they became all the more (as would necessarily be the case, for the abuse of their privileges) aliens from God and devoted to their abominations. God therefore had to make their judgment as unique as their iniquity had been. Even here the tenderness of His love is shown in the very announcement of His judgment; and we see indeed again the "appearance as of a Man upon the throne." "*I will withdraw mine eye*," He says, "that it may not spare thee." The eye affects the heart, and it is as if He said that, if He allowed Himself but to let His eye rest upon them, He could not bear to execute the judgment. This is the Heart behind the Hand; but the Hand does not on that account really falter in the carrying out of that which righteousness now so imperatively demands. If, on the one hand, He has a pitiful eye that would spare, yet on the other there is that in His character which makes Him speak of the wrath which He causes to rest upon them as that in which He will "comfort Himself."

Yet even here there is a lesson, as we know, for every susceptible heart

SECTION 5 (Chap. vi.)

The sinful people in Jehovah's hands.

And the [f]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face toward the [g]mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them and say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord Jehovah: Thus saith the Lord Jehovah to the mountains and to the hills, to the water channels and to the [h]valleys, Behold, I, even I, am bringing upon you a sword, and I will [i]destroy your high places, and your altars shall be desolate, and your [j]sun-pillars shall be broken, and I will cast down your [k]slain before your idols. I will even lay the [l]carcasses of the children of Israel before their idols,* and [m]scatter your bones round about your altars. In all your dwel'ing places shall the cities be [n]laid waste, and the [o]high places become desolate; that your [p]altars may be laid waste and made desolate,† and your idols may be [q]broken and cease, and your sun-pillars be [r]hewn down, and your [s]works be abolished. And

f ch. 7. 1.
g ch. 20. 40. ch. 36. 1. cf. Is. 40. 4.
h Lev. 26. 30. cf. 18. 2. 18. ver. 6. Lev. 26. 30. 2 Chr. 14. 5. Is. 17. 8.
i 2 Ki. 23. 20. 1 Ki. 13. 2. 2 Chr. 34. 5.
j cf. 2 Ki. 23. 15, 16. cf. Ps. 53. 5.
k cf. Is. 1. 7.
l cf. 2 Chr. 14. 3. cf. Lev. 26. 30.
m cf. Hos. 8. 11. cf. Hos. 10. 8.
n cf. 1 Sa. 5. 4. cf. Is. 46. 1, 2. cf. Is. 2. 18.
o cf. Is. 10. 33. cf. Judg. 6. 25–28.
p cf. Jer. 25. 6.

* Or, "abominations." † More literally, "become guilty."

amongst them, as there is a terrible lesson of holiness for the nations around. "They shall know that I, Jehovah, have spoken in my jealousy when I have accomplished my wrath upon them. And I will make thee a desolation and reproach among the nations that are round about thee, before the eyes of every passer by; and it shall be a reproach and a taunt and a warning and an astonishment to the nations that are round about thee." This is sealed again and again by the solemn asseveration: "I, Jehovah, have spoken."

Sec. 5.

The word of Jehovah now comes afresh to the prophet with the distinct count in the indictment against Israel. The mountains are here specifically addressed because of their connection with the people's idolatrous foreign worship which had its location there. The channels of water and the valleys, as dependent upon them, have a necessary place here also. In contrast with Egypt, the land of independence—watered by its river, whose sources were so far off that practically they could forget all about them—Israel's land was a land of mountains and valleys, drinking the water of the rain of heaven, a land essentially dependent, and its dependence manifest, but a land which, as thus cast upon God, was such as He specially chose for a people that were in like manner to be dependent upon Himself, and thus to realize His gracious and continual care. Thus it was "a land that the Lord thy God careth for," where the eyes and the heart of Jehovah were continually. It is noticeable that Shinar was, like Egypt, nourished by its rivers, and in distinct contrast with the mountains from which those who colonized it had come down. "They found," Scripture says (what exactly suited them), "a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there." Here, therefore, as so constantly in Scripture, the material thing is significant of the spiritual condition. Israel's mountains were in this way like a constant prayer to God, upon which the dews of heaven settled, and brought down the rain so continually needed. At the same time,

the [t]slain shall fall in the midst of you, and ye shall [u]know that I am Jehovah. Yet will I [v]leave a remnant,* in that ye shall have some [w]escaped from the sword among the nations, when ye shall be scattered in the countries. And they that escape of you shall [z]remember me among the nations whither they have been carried captives, how that I have been broken† with their [y]lewd heart which hath departed from me, and their eyes which play the harlot after their idols,‡ and they shall [z]loathe themselves in their own sight for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations, and they shall know that I am Jehovah. Not in [a]vain have I said that I would do this evil to them.

Thus saith the Lord ⁊ Jehovah: [b]Smite with thy hand, and stamp with thy foot, and say, Alas, because of all

[t] ver. 13. cf. Jer. 2 33.
[u] ch. 7. 4, e cf. Ps. 9.
[v] ch. 5. 2, 6 Rom. 9.
[w] ch. 14. 2 cf. Is. 4.
[x] cf. Lev. 40-42. cf. ch. 16.
[y] ch. 44. 7. cf. ch. 16.
[z] ch. 20. 4 ch. 36. 31.
[a] cf. Gal. 6
[b] ch. 21.14 cf. Nu.24 cf. Amos 1.

* This clause is expressed by one Hebrew word.
† Others, including Hengstenberg, translate, "when I have broken."
‡ Or, "abominations." ⁊ *Adonai.*

and beautifully, these mountains were also the fortifications of the land which would derive its strength in the same way in which it preserved constantly its dependence upon and appeal to heaven. This distinguished and separated them from the nations around which had got far enough away from God to identify Him with the mere creatures of His hand.

Thus Israel's land was to be a protest against the heathenism which everywhere else prevailed, and in this way suited to be the depository of a continually growing revelation, the blessing of which is ours to-day. But, alas, what had Israel done? They had made these very mountains to be but heathen altars with which to insult their gracious Protector, the Source of all their blessing. Upon the tops of those mountains, the idolatrous altars that were so conspicuous there were now the sad witnesses of their own departure from Jehovah, their covenant God, who had signified Himself such in the very name which they thus insulted. They must, therefore, by judgment be made to recognize Him as the Jehovah that He was. And thus, as if the people themselves were unworthy to be addressed, the word by the prophet comes to the mountains, to the hills, to the water channels and to the valleys: "Behold, I, even I, am bringing upon you a sword. And I will destroy your high places, and your altars shall be desolate, and your sun-pillars shall be broken, and I will cast down your slain before your altars. I will even lay the carcases of the children of Israel before their idols, and scatter your bones round about your altars." Thus were they to prove now by experience, as bitter as God would have made it sweet to them, that He was Jehovah indeed.

Yet a remnant is to be left, to be His witness on the one hand of the grace in which He would for His own sake at last fulfil His promises; "a remnant," as the apostle says, "according to the election of grace;" on the other hand a remnant that must witness in sorrow and brokenness of spirit the judgment which had come in because of the abominations practised, and from which grace alone could exempt any. "Yet will I leave a remnant," He says, "in that ye

the evil abominations of the house of Israel, for they shall [c]fall by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence. He that is [d]far off shall die of the pestilence; and he that is near shall fall by the sword; and he that is [e]left and is preserved * shall die by the famine; and I will accomplish my wrath upon them. And ye shall [f]know that I am Jehovah, when their slain shall be among their idols round about their altars, upon [g]every high hill, upon all the tops of the mountains, and under every green tree, and under every thick terebinth, the places where they offered sweet savor to all their idols.† And I will [h]stretch out my hand upon them and make the land desolate, yea, more desolate than the [i]wilderness of Diblath, in all their dwelling places. And they shall [j]know that I am Jehovah.

[c] ch. 5. 12. *cf.* Jer. 15. 2. *cf.* Jer. 21. 9.
[d] *cf.* 1 Ki. 21. 24. *cf.* Am. 3. 10.
[e] *cf.* ch. 5. 2–4.
[f] ch. 5. 13. ver. 7.
[g] *cf.* Jer. 2. 20. *cf.* Is. 57. 5, 7. *cf.* Hos. 4. 13.
[h] Is. 5. 25. Is. 9. 12.
[i] *cf.* Jer. 48. 21, 22.
[j] ver. 7. ch. 20. 38.

* Or, "besieged." † Or, "abominations."

shall have some escaped from the sword among the nations, when ye shall be scattered through the countries. And they of you that escape shall remember Me among the nations whither they have been carried captives; how that I have been broken with their lewd hearts which have departed from Me, and their eyes which play the harlot after their idols." But here the judgment should have its desired effect: "And they shall loathe themselves in their own sight for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations, and they shall know that I am Jehovah." Alas for the people, to whom God had revealed Himself after so abundant a manner, who now needed to be called back to the recognition of the blessed Person Himself who had delivered and blessed them!

But, for the mass, no judgment could avail: "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Smite with thy hand, and stamp with thy foot, and say, Alas, because of all the evil abominations of the house of Israel! for they shall fall by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence." Nothing but a complete emptying of the land as to the living could now suffice—leaving it a mere sepulchre of their multitudinous dead, reeking with the unburied corpses which would make it desolate, "more desolate than the wilderness towards Diblath." This last word, though there is question about it, probably means "fertility." Such indeed should have been the condition in every way of Jehovah's land, which was now to be so utter a desolation. In all their dwelling-places, as scattered amongst the nations, they were at last to know, without any peradventure, that their God was Jehovah.

Sec. 6.

The final word is now addressed through the prophet to the land of Israel, the very soil itself, to which the end is come, in all the four corners of it. Thus, clearly, there is no hope of anything more. There is no soil to produce fruit. The limit of forbearance is reached, and there is no limit to the wrath, save only that there are those in whom grace manifests its power still, as there always will be. Otherwise the end was upon the whole land, an end in God's anger, the condition of things in it being the manifest proof of all the abominations of its inhabitants. The earth at large, as we well know, suffers every-

SECTION 6 (Chap. vii).

The limit of forbearance reached.

And the [k]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying. And thou, son of man, thus saith the Lord* Jehovah unto the land† of Israel: An [l]end, the end is come upon the four corners of the land.† Now is the end upon thee; and I will send mine [m]anger upon thee, and will judge thee [n]according to thy ways, and will bring upon thee all thine abominations. And mine eye shall [o]not spare thee, neither will I have pity: but I will bring thy ways upon thee, and thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee: and ye shall [p]know that I am Jehovah.

k *cf.* ch. 1. ch. 6. 1.
l vers. 5, 6. *cf.* Am. 8. *cf.* Mt. 24.1
m *cf.* Ps. 21.
n *cf.* Ps. 28. *cf.* 2 Cor 10.
o ch. 5. 11. ch. 8. 18. ch. 9. 5, 10
p ch. 12. 2 etc.

* *Adonai.* † Two different words.

where because of the sin of man, both by the desolations which sin itself naturally produces, and by the judgments which are upon it from God. Thus the places of highest privilege may become necessarily the places of most marked desolation. God's own pitiful eye can spare no more "I will bring thy ways upon thee, and thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee:" that is, there is no deliverance, no ability to roll off the burden. The unchangeableness of Jehovah Himself certifies and assures the continuation of the punishment.

Thus He declares that that which has come is evil, and only evil. It is unmixed calamity. The "turn"—that is, the revolution of the wheel—is come to the dweller in the land. Much difficulty has been made of an expression which is very simple in view of what forms so large a part of Ezekiel's vision—those wheels that are so high as to be terrible, that do a terrible though needful work in the abasement of man, and even in view of final restoration. The privileged people of God thus become subject to the mutability which is the law of all things merely human. They could claim no exemption; and even the higher they had been lifted, the more terrible would be the fall. The time had come for this—not the day which in false hope they had been prophesying for themselves, but of consternation and confusion; the battle lost, not won; no joyful tidings of victory to announce from the mountain-tops, as there will be even yet in the future for them (Isa. xl. 9); for the wrath of God was now to be poured out wholly, and His anger consummated, although it would be no more than just the fruit of their ways, the equal demonstration of divine righteousness in their case; taken, as they were, with the evidences of their guilt in their midst, in all the idolatry which polluted them and which we shall soon have exhibited in full detail.

It is a solemn thing to realize that God permits full consummation of human iniquity before the judgment falls. As it was in Israel, so it will be in Christendom. God does not come in to judge in a day of reformation, even partial as this may be. If He sees even an Ahab putting on sackcloth and walking softly before Him, He refrains from judgment (1 Kings xxi. 27–29). With Ahab it was mere fear, of course—nothing that God could really accept; and yet it was enough to avert, for the moment, the imminent wrath; and thus the abominations that are everywhere under the surface in Christendom must be allowed to come out openly before the full judgment comes.

Thus saith the Lord* Jehovah; An [q]evil, an only evil! behold, it is come. The end is come, the end is come; it awaketh against thee; behold, it cometh, it cometh. The turn† of the [r]wheel is come to thee, O dweller in the land; the time is come, the day is near—a tumult, and [s]not a joyful shout upon the mountains. Now will I soon pour out my fury upon thee, and accomplish mine anger against thee; and I will judge thee according to thy ways, and I will bring upon thee all thine abominations. And mine [t]eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: I will render to thee according to thy ways, and thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee; and ye shall know that it is I, Jehovah, that smite.

Behold, the [u]day; behold, it is come! The turn of the wheel is come forth; the [v]rod hath blossomed; [w]pride is full blown. [x]Violence is risen up into a rod of wickedness; there [shall remain] [y]none of them, nor of their multitude, nor of their wealth, nor shall there be [z]wailing for them. The time is come, the day [a]draweth near: let not the [b]buyer rejoice nor the seller mourn; for wrath is upon all the multitude thereof. For the seller shall [c]not return to that which is sold, though he‡ were yet among the living: for the

q *cf.* Jer. 1. 14. *cf.* Amos 3. 6. with Is. 45. 7.
r ver. 10. *cf.* Ps. 83. 13. *cf.* ch. 10. 13. *cf.* Dan. 7. 10.
s *cf.* Is. 2. 12-17. *ctr.* Is. 44. 23. *ctr.* Is. 52. 7. *ctr.* Nah. 1. 15.
t ver. 4. *ctr.* Mal. 3. 17.
u Is. 13. 6. Zeph. 1. 7. Mal. 4. 5. *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 2, 3.
v *cf.* Jer. 1. 11, 12. *cf.* Mt. 24. 32, 33.
w *cf.* Ps. 59. 12. *cf.* Prov. 16. 18. *cf.* Dan. 4. 30, 31, 37.
x Jer. 6. 7. Jer. 20. 8. *cf.* Ps. 55. 9-11.
y *cf.* Is. 39. 6. Jer. 50. 26.
z *cf.* Jer. 16. 5, 6. *ctr.* Lk. 19. 41.
a *cf.* Jas. 5. 8. *cf.* 1 Cor. 7. 29-31.
c *cf.* Lk. 21. 21.

* *Adonai.*

† The word is of doubtful meaning. In Isaiah 28: 5, it is rendered "crown." The primary meaning is given as "ring." Hengstenberg renders it "lot." The text is perhaps the best rendering.

‡ More literally, "though their life were yet," etc.

The Church must be removed, and the indwelling Spirit of God that hinders the full development of things according to their nature. The restraint removed, there will be manifested, in the man of sin, the iniquity which has been working in mystery through the ages past. This has to be brought out of its concealment, and the delusion which man seeks must be permitted to him. Then, as the issue, there will be that open defiance of God in every way in which He has revealed Himself, which will necessitate the full display of long-lingering judgment. He who is to come will come, and "will smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips destroy the wicked one" (Isa. xi. 4).

But the time of wrath upon Christendom can only come after there has been the full revelation of God, and time given for the effect of it to be fully manifest. Almost 2,000 years have passed since the revelation has been completed, and now he that will may see that the end is at hand.

The judgment upon Israel here is only a partial anticipation of the wrath in that day. Nevertheless, the rooting of Israel out of their land, and the desolation of the house which God had among men, marked a distinct crisis, the day of which had come. The turn of the wheel, as Ezekiel repeats, had come to them. The rod for the punishment of their iniquity was blossoming, even as the pride which provoked the judgment was indeed full blown. Violence among them had thus risen up into a rod to smite them: in itself a rod of wickedness, no doubt; for not

vision is touching the whole multitude thereof; it shall not be revoked; and none* shall through his [d]iniquity assure his life. They have blown the [e]trumpet and made all ready, but none goeth to the battle; for my [f]wrath is upon all the multitude thereof. The [g]sword is without, and the pestilence and the famine [h]within: he that is in the field shall [i]die by the sword; and he that is in the city, famine and pestilence shall devour him. And they that [j]escape of them shall escape, and shall be on the mountains like doves of the valleys, all of them [k]mourning, every one for his iniquity. All [l]hands shall be feeble,† and all knees shall dissolve‡ into water. And they shall gird on [m]sackcloth, and [n]horror‖ shall cover them; and shame shall be upon all faces, and [o]baldness upon all their heads. They shall cast their [p]silver in the streets, and their gold shall be as an unclean thing; their silver and their gold shall [q]not be able to deliver them in the day of Jehovah's wrath; they shall not [r]satisfy their souls, nor fill their belly: for it hath been the [s]stumbling-block of their iniquity.

* Literally, "A man shall not," etc.
† Or, "hang down." ‡ Literally, "go." ‖ Or, "trembling."
4; Zeph. 1. 18; *cf.* Ps. 115. 4-8. *r cf.* Is. 9. 20; *ctr.* Ps. 103. 5. *s cf.* ch. 14. 3, 4;

d cf. Jer. 17 11.
cf. Ps. 55, 2
cf. Prov. 1
2 with Prov. 11. 4
e cf. 2 Ki. 9. 13.
cf. 1 Ki. 1. 41-49.
f ver. 8.
g Deut. 32. 2 Lam. 1. 20
h cf. 2 Ki. 7. 4.
Lam. 1. 20
i cf. 1 Ki. 21 24.
j ch. 6. 8.
cf. Ps 11.
k Is. 59. 11. Lam. 3. 10
l cf. Heb. 1 12.
ch. 21. 7.
Is. 13. 7.
m cf. 2 Ki. 1 1.
Is. 22. 12.
Joel 1. 13.
n cf. Is. 51. 1
cf. Jer. 3, 2 25.
o Is. 3. 24.
Amos 8. 1
p cf. Is. 2. 2 21.
q cf. Prov. 1
cf. Rev. 2. 1

on account of righteousness in the enemy did God permit their triumph over His people; yet comparatively even these were clean. They had not trampled God's gifts under their feet as Israel had done. And thus they had themselves invited the scourge which was now to sweep through the land, leaving nothing remaining, neither of their multitude, nor of their wealth, nor even any to wail for the absence of these. The time was already come, the day was at hand; the buyer need no more rejoice in that which he had acquired, nor the seller either mourn for that which he had lost: for the wrath upon all was without distinction. No day of jubilee would return with its gracious provision to him who had had to give up his patrimony through poverty; and if even his life were yet permitted to him there would be no land for him to return to. "The vision," says the Lord, "is touching the whole multitude thereof. It shall not be revoked, and none shall through his iniquity assure his life." Strange indeed that man under the very judgment of God could think to secure himself by means of the very iniquity which was bringing down the judgment; yet man is capable of just such thoughts.

The prophet sees only utter desolation. Were the trumpet blown, there was none to go to battle. Sword, pestilence and famine had already done their work, and if there were but a few that escaped, they would be like scared and scattered doves of the valleys driven to the mountains—all of them with their mournful plaint, and every one for his own iniquity. Horror would cover them, shame be upon their faces, and baldness upon their heads. The very silver and gold, so precious to man, would be cast away in bitterness as worthless, utterly unable to accomplish anything for them; neither to satisfy their souls, nor fill their belly; for indeed it was the very stumbling-block of their iniquity. God had enriched them with that which was much more than the

And he set in majesty his beautiful ᵗornament,* but they made therein the ᵘimages of their abominations and of their detestable things: therefore have I made it unto them an ᵛunclean thing. And I will ʷgive it into the hands of ˣstrangers for a prey, and to the wicked of the earth for a spoil; and they shall profane it. And I will ʸturn my face from them, and they shall ᶻprofane my secret [place];† even the violent shall enter into it and profane it.

Make the chain; for the land is full of ᵃbloody crimes, and the city is full of violence. Therefore‡ I will bring the worst of the nations, and they shall possess their houses; and I will make the ᵇpride of the strong to cease; and their sanctuaries shall be profaned.§ Destruction cometh: and they shall ᶜseek peace, but there shall be none. ᵈMischief‖ shall come upon mischief, and rumor¶ shall come upon rumor; and they shall ᵉseek a vision from the prophet; but the law shall ᶠperish from the priest, and counsel from the elders. The ᵍking shall mourn, and the prince shall put on blank amazement, and the ʰhands of the people of the land shall tremble: I will do unto them ⁱaccording to their way, and according to their deserts will I judge them; and they shall ᵏknow that I am Jehovah.

t *cf.* Jer. 4. 30. *cf.* ch. 16. 17.
u *cf.* Judg. 8. 24-27.
v *cf.* ch. 36. 17.
w Is. 1. 7.
x *cf.* Jer. 18. 17. *cf.* Ps. 34. 16. *ctr.* Ps. 80. 3, 7, 19.
y Ps. 79. 1.
z *cf.* Is. 1. 15. *cf.* Num. 35. 33.
a *cf.* Is. 23. 9. *cf.* Is. 40. 6-8 with 1 Pet. 1. 24, 25.
b *cf.* Prov. 1. 28. *cf.* Zech. 7. 13. *ctr.* 2 Cor. 6. 2
c *cf.* Job 1. 14-19. Jer. 4. 20. *ctr.* Jno. 1. 16
d *cf.* Amos 8. 11. Lam. 2. 9 *cf.* ch. 20. 3.
e *ctr.* Jer. 18. 18.
f *cf.* 2 Ki. 6. 30.
g ver. 17.
h Gal. 6. 7. Hos. 12. 2.
i ver. 4, etc.

* Hengstenberg renders this, "And his glorious ornament he has set for pride." † Or, "treasure." ‡ "And."
§ More literally, as Hengstenberg, "They who consecrate them shall be defiled." ‖ Or, "injury." ¶ Or, "message."

riches so much valued by man: He had set the beautiful ornament of His own house in their midst, and they had put therein the images of their abominations; so that God had Himself to treat His holy house as an unclean thing, and give it up to the hands of strangers to be a spoil for the wicked of the earth.

Thus the prophet is bidden now to "make the chain" which indeed they had forged for themselves, as the crimes that filled their land attested. No sanctuary could be maintained in the midst of a people such as they were, and the glory of God required the removal of that which now only dishonored Him by its existence. Thus all, in fact, was gone. The prophet who was alone their hope, in days when every other link was broken, would have a vision from God no more, as the law would perish from the priest, and counsel from the elders. From prince to people they would alike now receive their judgment; and thus they would know (how terrible to know it thus, and how constant the repetition of this!) that their God was Jehovah.

Subdivision 2.

There yet remains to be given proof of the general charge which has been made as to the condition of the people, and this in view of all the privileges, all the mercies shown, and all the warnings given. Here it is Jerusalem, and those connected with it, that are especially before us, as those most conspicuous

1 (viii. 1): The just cause of judgment.

SUBDIVISION 2 (Chap. viii.–xix.).

Conviction of the sin for which the glory leaves the city.

SECTION 1 (Chaps. viii.-xi.).

The shepherd's rod becomes a rod of iron.

1 (1-6): The first cause, the image of jealousy. Rebellion against God as the one living and almighty Maker.

1. [1] AND it came to pass in the [j]sixth year, in the sixth [month], on the fifth of the month, that I sat in my house, and the [k]elders of Judah sat before me, [and] the [l]hand of the Lord* Jehovah fell there upon me.

j *cf.* ch. 1. 2. *cf.* ch. 20. 1
k ch. 14. 1, ch. 20. 1, ch. 33. 31. *cf.* Lk. 5. 17
l ch. 1. 3, ch. 3. 22.

* *Adonai.*

for the pride of heart which hardened itself against all warning. Proportionately to the mercy that had so far spared, so must their punishment be.

Sec. 1.

Jehovah had been their Shepherd, as witnessed by the pillar of cloud and glory, of which Ezekiel speaks so much, which had guided and protected them. But it is this that has now become their adversary. Their Shepherd's rod becomes thus to themselves—not to their enemies merely—a rod of iron; and God calls in the witness of man himself to the necessity of this. God calls to witness earth as well as heaven, in the judgment of His people; after which the glory finally leaves the city.

1. There are four examples given, all witnesses to their complete adoption of the idolatry around them. Question has been raised as to how far that which Ezekiel sees in vision answered to the facts. For instance, as to the actual defilement of the temple in the way that Ezekiel sees it, it being supposed by some that it is God Himself who connects their abominations with that holy house of His, which stamped its character upon the land. Yet, while it is true that all here is expressly stated to be in vision, it is clear that there must be in it, none the less, a true picture of the people's state. It is the evidence upon which they are convicted; it must not be merely ideal, therefore, but the positive facts of the case—facts that could be appealed to as without possibility of question.

[1] The new division is marked, as we might expect, by a new date, although reckoned from the same significant period as before—that of Jehoiachin's captivity. We have come now to the sixth year of this; and the sixth month of the sixth year emphasizes the thought of evil come to its head, but at the same time with God's hand over it; while the fifth day, the day of the vision, links responsibility with judgment. On this day the prophet is in his own house, the place of family relationships, which could not be exempt from the invasion of that which, as judgment, brooded over the whole people; the shadow falling even where grace had wrought exemption from the actual judgment.

The presence of the elders of Judah prevents that which follows from being simply a private, personal communication. Nothing is said of the purpose for which they were there; it is therefore a matter of entire indifference. We need no speculations to explain what is manifestly unexplained. The elders are rulers of Judah, as is manifest—those who should have maintained judgment according to God, but who now were made the witness of judgment which was coming from God in place of that which they had failed to exercise. In

Then I beheld and, lo, a [m]likeness as the appearance of fire, from the appearance of his [n]loins and downward, [o]fire; and from his loins and upward, as the appearance of [p]brightness, as the look of [q]gold- [and] brass. And he put forth the [r]form of a hand, and took me by a [s]lock of my head; and the [t]Spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heavens, and brought me in the [u]visions of God to Jerusalem, to the entrance

[m] ch. 1. 26.
[n] ch. 1. 27. *cf.* Heb. 12. 29.
[o] *cf.* Lk. 9. 29.
[q] ch. 1. 4. *cf.* Rev. 1. 15.
[r] *cf.* Dan. 5. 5.
[s] *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 2.
[t] ch. 3. 12, 14.
[u] ch. 11. 1, 24. ch. 40. 2. *cf.* Rev. 20. 10.

their presence, then, the hand of the Lord Jehovah fell once more upon the prophet.

He beholds, and, first of all, there appears to him, as he has seen before, the likeness of a Man upon the throne of God. Again there is seen, "as the appearance of fire"—the holiness of God, which against unrepentant wickedness is wrath, and which takes this character especially "from the loins and downward:" that is, in that which speaks of the *activities* of the person seen, rather than of the personality itself. "From the loins upward" there is the appearance of brightness, as the look of gold and brass. Thus we are ever reminded that, whatever the work may be, the character of Him who is engaged in it cannot fail to be displayed; and there is for us the joy of this, the appearance of a brightness, which is in fact that of the divine glory itself, the glory of One who is in His own nature immutable, of which the brass speaks.

There is at first no vision of anything beside, not even of the throne upon which He sits, no living creatures, no wheels. We shall come to these directly, but we have to notice that here, first of all, we have the Lord Himself. It is He who puts forth the form of a hand, and taking the prophet by a lock of his head, the Spirit lifts him up between earth and heaven, and brings him in the visions of God to Jerusalem. Thus it is plain that all that follows here is a vision simply. It is a vision according to the truth, necessarily, because it is a vision of God; nevertheless, we have to remember that God looks forward as well as back, and that the judgments which are seen now to take place may be, in fact, as in the slaughter of those in the temple courts and in the city, that which takes place afterwards, and not necessarily at the moment in which they are seen.

In Jerusalem, as the prophet is carried there, nothing is seen but its great dominant feature, the house of God which is in it. Here is the heart of the whole subject before us—the heart of God Himself; of Him who assumes for the prophet the "form of a Man," and of whom it could be said from of old that His "delights were with the sons of men." The temple is the symbol of this, for which David's heart longed after as the abode of God among men; of which He, of whom David was but the mere shadow, "sware unto Jehovah and vowed unto the mighty One of Jacob, Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up to my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for Jehovah, a tabernacle for the Mighty One of Jacob" (Ps. 132: 2–5). And where did David himself find this? "Lo," he says, "we heard of it in Ephratah; we found it in the fields of the wood." Thus had man treated in those days the token of the Lord's presence with them; what had characterized the preceding time was that the ark "had not been inquired of in the days of Saul" (1 Chr. xiii. 3).

of the [t]inner gate that looketh toward the [u]north, where was the seat of the [x]image of jealousy, which [y]provoketh to jealousy. And, behold, the [z]glory of the God of Israel was there, [a]according to the appearance that I saw in the plain. And he said unto me, Son of man, [b]lift up now thine eyes the way towards the north. And I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north and, behold, northward of the gate of the altar this image of jealousy in the entry. And he said

v cf. ver. 14; *cf.* Neh. 12. 5.
w cfr. Ps. 48. 2.
x Jer. 7. 30; *cf.* Ex. 20. 4; *cfr.* Col. 3. 5 with Mt. 3. 17.
y Deut. 32. 16-21.
z cf. Ex. 33. 18; *cf.* Jno. 1. 14.
a ch. 1. 28; ch. 3. 23. *b* vers. 6, 13, 15.

Thus has man met again and again the wondrous grace that would draw man to God Himself; and here now, the place of such a testimony, is the very place of fullest abomination! Brought to the entrance of the inner gate that looked toward the north, there the prophet is confronted at the outset with the proof of this. It is the seat of the image of jealousy, "which provoketh to jealousy." And now, in full view of this, the glory of the God of Israel appears according to the appearance that the prophet had seen in the valley: "And he said unto me, Son of man, lift up now thine eyes towards the north." From the north, the place of darkness, from where the sun is absent, comes ever the opposition to God: "And I lifted up mine eyes toward the north, and behold, northward of the gate of the altar, this image of jealousy in the entry."

The image of jealousy presents, first, the general thought which underlies all that follows here. God will not give His glory to another. Hence any self-devised image of Him, which must of necessity be man's imagination, must be a challenge of the One only to be known by revelation, otherwise unsearchable. It is impossible indeed for man's thoughts to get beyond himself. Thus the image of God which he devises must be only in some way a reflection of himself; but this is the debasement of God to man's own likeness. The question is asked in Job as an unanswerable one: "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?" Whatever the witness of creation therefore (true witness as it is), God never really left man to that. He declared Himself, as Scripture assures us, at the beginning; and it was man who voluntarily got away from this, banished himself into the darkness and distortion of his own thoughts.

And still this image of jealousy is that which threatens us all. It stands, as it were, at the very entrance when we would approach God Himself. And it need not be a visible or open image to do this. What admonition there is for us in this endeavor, as it really is, to have a god after our own thoughts, which is always in opposition to the true God? Thus "covetousness," the apostle tells us, "is idolatry;" and this, as we know, may be amongst those who are in all other respects most orthodox. But the heart after its own object, seeking that which gratifies itself (although it never *satisfies*), will have a god according to its own thought; while in *name* He may abide just what He was, and all the points of orthodoxy be preserved.

Here, in Israel, their hearts had got away so manifestly from God that the image of jealousy stood in open sight at the very gate by which men approached God; appealing thus to all, and blocking the way of sacrifice (the way of the altar) which, while it is God's only way, is just on that account what man's heart naturally would put aside. The image was in the outer court, presenting itself thus to the multitude. It was indeed the common sin and snare.

unto me, Son of man, seest thou what they do, even the great [c]abominations that the house of Israel commit here to [d]cause me to go far off from my sanctuary? But thou shalt see [e]yet other great abominations

2 (7–12): The second cause: The chambers of imagery, and the degradation of beast-worship.

7 And he brought me to the entrance of the [f]court; and I looked, and behold, a [g]hole in the wall. Then said he unto me, Son of man, [h]dig now in the wall: and when I had digged in the wall, behold, a [i]door. And he said unto me, Go in and see the wicked [j]abominations that they do here. And I went in and looked, and, behold, every form of [k]creeping thing and abominable beast, even all the [l]idols of the house of Israel, [m]portrayed * upon the wall round about. And there

* Or, "engraved."

[c] *cf.* Deut. 7. 25, 26. [d] *cf.* 1 Sam. 1. 21, 22. [e] vers. 13, 15. [f] *cf.* vers. 3, 14, 16. [g] *cfr.* Ps. 83 5. [h] *cf.* Ps. 139. 12. [i] *cf.* Heb. 4. 13. [j] *cf.* Prov. 15 3. [k] *cf.* Deut. 13. 14. [l] *cf.* 1 Cor. 1 11. [m] *cf.* 2 Cor. 13. 1. [n] ch. 7. 3, etc. [o] *cf.* Deut. 4. 16–18. [p] *cfr.* Ps. 29. 9.

And we need not speculate, as has been done, as to the form of the image, what false deity was represented by it. The less we define in this respect, if we could define, as we really cannot, the more significant will be what is before us. Any *special* false god the multitude might disclaim; for man's thoughts are various, and their gods therefore multitudinous as their thoughts; but the trouble is with the thinking at all. God has revealed Himself. Blessed to know we have only to receive His revelation.

How careful we should be, therefore, that we add nothing to it, that there be no mere speculation even within the limits, as we may say, of revelation itself. God's own Word is best; is all-sufficient. If we add to its perfection, we in reality subtract from it. We are right in inquiring into it, in seeking to know the depths that are there; and if we do so we shall find that indeed God has spoken to us in it, "not in the *words* which man's wisdom teacheth" even, "but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." Were we to say that the image here was the image of Baal or the image of Ashtaroth or any other specific form, the meaning for us at least would have largely died out of it. We would refer it to the past, to Israel, the rebellious nation, and we should escape entirely the warning which speaks to us to-day, as much as ever, of an image that provoketh to jealousy—the imagination of man, whatever form it may assume. But how blessed to know that we have indeed "the image of the invisible God," One in whom God has spoken to us, and met all true cravings of the heart after Him, the One in whom we find "the Word made flesh, the Only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, and who hath declared Him."

2 What follows, therefore, is but a further development of this fundamental thought; it shows whither it would carry those who commit themselves to it. The second proof of Israel's condition is their open adoption, if we may call it open—for after all, the secrecy and darkness accompanying it betray the consciousness of the moral deformity attaching to it—their open adoption of beast-worship.

We shall find much suggestiveness here in the symbolism of the numerals. We are at the second step downwards, and the number indicates descent; but in its ideal form it is for service, as with the Lord Jesus. It is His number, as we have abundantly seen. But the heathen gods themselves came down to men. They had an interest in reference to the things of earth, but how essentially different! The descent of the heathen gods was almost always their real

stood before them seventy men of the [n]elders of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood [o]Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, with every man his [p]censer in his hand; and the prayer of the cloud of incense went up. And he said unto me, Hast thou seen, son of man, what the elders of the house of Israel do in the [q]dark, every one in his [r]chambers of imagery? * For they say, Jehovah [s]seeth us not, Jehovah hath [t]forsaken the land.

* Or, "imagination."

n ch. 14. 1. *etc.* Tit. 2. 2.
o *cf.* ch. 11. 1. *cf.* 2 Ki. 25. 23.
p *cf.* Lev. 10. 1. *cf.* Num. 16. 17, 35.
q *cf.* Eph. 5. 11, 13.
r *cf.* Jer. 35. 2-4. *cf.* chap. 14. 3.
s ch. 9. 9. *etc.* Gen. 16. 13.
t *cf.* 2 Ki. 5. 26. *t etc.* Is. 54. 5-8

degradation, in which even bestial forms were assumed by them for base and lustful ends. There is no need to enter into this for those who have the slightest knowledge of the ancient idolatry which the Egyptian animal-worship made permanent, the worship of the animal forms themselves, which (whatever may be pleaded for its esoteric meaning) would necessarily be accompanied with the most debasing results, such as the epistle to the Romans witnesses. For a beast, no immorality is possible, and therefore where beasts are gods it may well drop out of common speech. Apart from the spirit which God has given him (which often, alas, is almost as if it were not) man is, in fact, *but* a beast; and thus he can find in the beast that which reflects and appeals to his lower nature; but *become* a beast, he cannot He must carry with him into these bestial instincts the evidence of a higher nature, which in subjection to the lower must of necessity degrade itself. But let us not relegate what is here merely to the past, as something of old time which has been civilized out of existence, and which we may well forget, therefore, except as the evidence of the progress we have made since times like these. For Scripture at least the "natural" man is still the "psychical" man, the *soul*-led man; and his wisdom, which cometh not from above, is "earthly, sensual" (psychical, that is). And more, it is "devilish;" for, through all human departures, easily traceable is the subtlety and power of one who, with no beast nature in himself, yet has led man in this departure.

These things then characterized Israel in the awful days that we are contemplating. The people who had in their hands God's revelation, the people separated from the nations around by multiplied interventions on God's part and wondrous works of power by which He made Himself known, are a people now so completely gone from Him that it is precisely in this worship of the beast, in secrecy and darkness, that we find the seventy elders, and Jaazaniah, a son of Shaphan, in their midst. What was the condition of the nation whose elders were the leaders and instigators in such things as these! And the names here mark the rapid and complete departure that had been going on. Jaazaniah means "Jehovah hears," and this name came to him from a father whose own name signifies "one who is hidden"—the name of the hyrax or coney of our common version. The book of Proverbs speaks of it as one of the things "little upon the earth, but exceeding wise" "They are a feeble folk," says the wise man, "yet make they their houses in the rocks" (Prov. xxx. 26). This is their wisdom: they know their weakness and hide themselves in their stronghold. And the record that we have of Shaphan in the history (2 Kings xxii. 8-10) answers at least to this, connecting him as it does with the publication

[3] (13, 14): The third cause: Tammuz: resurrection without sanctification.

[3] And he said unto me, Thou shalt again see yet [u]other great abominations which they do. And he brought me to the entry of the [v]gate of Jehovah's house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat [w]women weeping for Tammuz.

[u] ver. 15. cf. Amos 2. 4.
[v] ver. 5. [w] cf. Is. 3. 16, 26. cf. Jer. 44. 15, 19.

etr. Ex. 38. 8; etr. Lk. 8. 2, 3.

of the newly discovered book of the law which Hilkiah, the priest, gives first to Shaphan. How rapid then had been the movement towards apostasy! The father in the light, cleaving to God and His Word; the son in the midnight darkness, degrading himself into a worshiper of the beasts that perish! Such then was the condition of things in Israel.

[3] But we have still further proofs. The next account involves another class from that of the elders, and shows how all parts of the nation were infected now: "He brought me to the entry of the gate of Jehovah's house toward the north, and behold, there sat *women* weeping for Tammuz." Tammuz* is a word of difficult derivation, but the history of which is in measure plain. We have to identify him, no doubt, with one better known to us and to history in general as Adonis, who according to the legend, which is told in different ways, was beloved of Venus for his beauty. Slain in hunting by a boar, says the legend, he was, at her solicitation, permitted to return six months in the year from the under-world to her companionship. We need not go into it, as the general lesson is all that interests us. It is a nature picture in some way, no doubt; and faithfully represents the brief and lawless joys of earth under a heaven pictured as no less lawless, joys which soon end in lamentation; along with this long ng for their recovery, which in one way or another makes men prophesy this for themselves, but with little comfort even in that which they prophesy: as to which there need be no wonder, no knowledge of sin being in it, and no repentance.

We find God setting before us here the one side only, the sorrow and not the joy; the weak and passionate wail over the shadow departing, which identifies itself, as the details of this Tammuz-worship show, with only the increase of the power of evil in the despair of good. Thus this weeping of the women was accompanied with utter self-abandonment to the grossest wickedness. It was the practical fulfilment of the motto of despair: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Yet after all this is not absolute. Man will cling to the poorest and vainest hopes; and in the case before us here we have the distorted, faint image of what is indeed God's remedy for the sorrow of earth—not escape from death, but resurrection out of it. But this is indeed out of the power of man to accomplish; and has come to us—alone *could* come to us—in Him who has put His seal upon man's sentence, Himself bearing it.

Thus the evil which has wrecked the world is judged, and we reach God's side of it; finding not the mere restoration of the life wrecked, but, thank God, a new life in sanctification, and indeed with higher hopes than ever before.

* The derivation of "Tammuz" which is most accepted would make it a corruption of *tammezuz*, "melting away," and which they refer to the discoloration of the streams of Lebanon, among which is the river Adonis, by the mountain floods. This they connect with Adonis' legendary death by the boar, but it seems nevertheless hardly possibly to justify the derivation. On the other hand, may it not be derived more simply as *tam'uz* from *tamam*, "to complete" (and thus "finish," "end"), and *uz*, "strength," thus giving the meaning of the exhaustion of strength? This seems, more directly than the other, to apply itself to the story of Adonis.

4 (15 18): The sun-worship. Priestly apostasy.

4 And he said unto me, Seest thou, son of man? Thou shalt see yet again [x]greater abominations than these. And he brought me into the [y]inner court of Jehovah's house, and, behold, at the entry of the temple of Jehovah, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men with their [z]backs toward the temple of Jehovah, and their faces toward the east; and they worshiped the [a]sun toward the east. And he said unto me, Seest thou, son of man? Is it a light

x ver 13. cf. ch. 16. 5. y ctr. Joel 17. z Jer. 2. 27. Jer. 32 33. ctr. Jer. 50 4, 5. a cf. Deut. 19, etc. cf. Job 31. 26 28. cf. Ps. 48. cf. Isa. 40 26.

God is the God of resurrection, and this we have seen to be stamped upon the whole physical frame of things here, and to be especially that which is before Ezekiel, the revolution of the wheel: which indeed is so high as to be dreadful, out of man's merely natural ken, yet which, as revealed, becomes with all its blessedness a possession of faith, open to all who will accept the lesson of abasement. This is the only hope, the acknowledgment of a ruin which is at once the condemnation of evil and the glorification of God. The numerical symbolism here sheds full light upon what is before us, the divine substitute for the poor hopes to which man vainly clings, and which are pictured in this Tammuz worship among God's people of old.

4 The last picture here is that of priestly apostasy; in this way it is the natural conclusion of the whole. Approach to God is what His house speaks of. The apostasy of the priesthood leaves this approach no longer possible; and this is complete in what is before us. "And he said unto me, Seest thou, son of man? Thou shalt see yet again greater abominations than these. And he brought me into the inner court of Jehovah's house, and behold, at the entry of the temple of Jehovah, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men with their backs toward the temple of Jehovah, and their faces toward the east; and they worshiped the sun towards the east."

These twenty-five men are necessarily a priestly company. They are representatives of the twenty-four courses into which we know the priesthood were divided, with the high-priest at the head of them. They are not indeed spoken of as priests, and at this we need not at all wonder, for the plain reason that they are apostate; but their position is between the porch and the altar, therefore in the priestly court, where no others were allowed. "And He said unto me, Seest thou, son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah to commit the abominations which they commit here, that they yet fill the land with violence, and keep again provoking Me to anger; and behold, they put the vine-branch to their nose. Therefore will I also deal in wrath. Mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity; and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet I will not hear them." Thus the very ones, chosen out of the chosen nation itself, to draw near to God, are seen with their backs turned upon His house, and worshiping the sun, the foremost feature in those heavens which "declare God's glory and show His handiwork," as the Psalmist reminds us (Ps. xix).

The sun, with all his brilliancy and blessing for us, is manifestly but the servant of a power beyond his own, and indeed, as Moses declares in his appeal against this very worship, servant to the peoples to whom God has assigned the ordinance of heaven (Deut. iv. 19). Thus in the very constancy with which it observes its appointed seasons, its character is seen as abiding under physical law, that of a servant simply. It is part of the great wheel of nature which

thing to the house of Judah to commit the abominations which they commit here, that they yet fill the land with [b]violence, and keep again [c]provoking me to anger? And, behold, they put the [d]branch to their nose. Therefore will I also deal in wrath: mine eye shall not [e]spare, neither will I have pity; and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet I will [f]not hear them.

9 (ix): The judgment a discriminative one.

2. And he cried in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, [g]Draw near, ye that have charge over the city,* and every man with his destroying [h]weapon in his hand.

* Lit., "Governments of the city."

[b] ch. 9. 9. *cf.* Gen. 6. 11.
[c] *cf.* Deut. 31. 20.
[d] *cf.* ch. 15. 2. *cf.* Rom. 1. 25.
[e] ch. 5. 11. ch. 7. 4, 9. ch. 9. 5, 10.
[f] *cf.* Prov. 1. 28. *cf.* Is. 1. 15. *cf.* Zech. 7. 13. *cf.* Lk. 13. 24, 27.
[g] *cf.* Rev. 6. 1.
[h] *cf.* Ex. 32. 27.

Ezekiel has shown us, whose revolutions, indeed, its own revolution marks. But law is the rule of the governed, and not of the Governor. We must penetrate to the Heart that is beyond all this, to One who is not limited by the laws which He has appointed, to get above the necessary perplexity of those who see only, as the preacher saw, what is "under the sun." Law is indeed most necessary to produce a stable world. Where would we be if we could not trust the stability of the things amongst which we move? But those who worship it, as alas so many seem inclined to do now, instead of worshiping are merely putting the vine-branch to their nose. There is a sweetness in nature, apart from that which sin has brought into it, which we cannot and need not deny; and for one whose heart enshrines the true Beloved, "the vines with their tender grapes give a good smell" still (Song ii. 13). But if we rise no higher, this sweetness of nature only hinders the sweet savor of sacrifice—of that which is true worship and of Him who has offered it, the basis upon which everything rests now for faith. The fall being ignored, no sacrifice is needed, as is plain. Nature itself bears witness of this, though it needs interpretation. But without God, what is nature, with all the steadfastness of the laws which govern it, but a poor, weak thing fittingly imaged by this vine in which God pictures it—the very image of dependence, as it surely is, with ourselves, who are part of it, upon the One "in whom we live and move and have our being." Those who are but mere Danites of Ir-shemesh (Jo-h. xix. 41) find, spite of their joy in nature, nothing finally but perplexity, as the Preacher did (Eccl. viii. 17). The *Comtist*, with his worship of humanity, may illustrate in a very forcible way man's need and the vanity of all attempts to meet it. He is most surely one who is putting the vine-branch to his nose, and imagining himself the worshiper that he is not; for who, after all, can worship himself, much as he may desire it?

But here, then, is the end of that which we saw in the beginning, in the image of jealousy. This is what all men's imaginations come to. They cannot get beyond the nature of which they are part, and they cannot get beyond the perplexity that is in nature, the vanity written upon all that is merely "under the sun." Yet thank God, there is a better Sun soon to appear as Sun of righteousness upon the world, and with healing in His wings. Then shall men find how the types of nature are prophecies of what is in God's thoughts for us; and then shall the vines with their tender grapes give a good smell; not alienating the heart from God, but drawing it to Him.

Here, then, the evidences of Israel's condition are complete. Surely, noth-

And, behold, six men came from the way of the upper gate, which is turned toward the north, and every man with his destroying weapon* in his hand; and in the midst of them one man clothed in [f]linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side. And they went in, and stood beside the [g]brazen altar. And the glory of the God of Israel went up from off the cherubim, whereupon it was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed in linen who had the writer's inkhorn by his side; and Jehovah said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a [k]mark upon the foreheads of the men that [l]sigh and that cry for all the abominations that are done in the midst thereof. Unto the others

[f] *cf.* ch. 44 17, 18.
[g] *cf.* Rev. 15. 6.
[h] *cf.* Rev. 1. 13
[i] *cf.* Rev. 8. 3
[k] *cf.* Rev. 7. 3.
[l] *cf.* Rev. 9. 4
[m] *cf.* Rev. 13 17.
[n] *cf.* Eph. 1. 13.
[o] Jer 13. 17
[p] *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 2.

* Or, "battle axe," as in Jer. 51 : 20. Not the same word as in ver 1.

ing more is needed. Sentence is passed, therefore, and we have but to see the execution of it in what follows.

2. "And he cried in mine ears with a loud voice saying, Draw near, ye that have charge over the city, and every man with his destroying weapon in his hand." As already said, we are not to look at this as a judgment actually taking place at the time of the prophet's vision. It is no doubt that which is really executed by the Chaldeans afterwards. For the purpose of the vision there is no need to distinguish in this way, or rather, the thought that is impressed upon us is precisely that which the bringing in of Nebuchadnezzar's host might conceal for many. The judgment is as direct from God as if the Chaldeans were not at all in question.

The six men that answer to this summons come from the north; and this was, as we know, the route of invasion by the Chaldean hosts. The number six speaks, as always, of divine sovereignty over evil.* This, alas, is now to be shown in judgment. Yet on this very account the judgment must be discriminative also, as the man in linen tells us: "In the midst of them one man clothed in linen with a writer's inkhorn by his side." Here, plainly, is that which speaks of peace in the midst of all that is adverse. "And they went in and stood beside the brazen altar." The altar had in a special way been outraged by the abominations practised, and the vengeance upon this is now to be executed. When men refuse the only way of propitiation, there can be none, of course; and as the fitting corollary to this, "the glory of the God of Israel," distinctly emphasized as that, "went up from off the cherub whereupon it was, to the threshold of the house"—a significant action indeed, for we have nothing as yet here of the living creatures, which Ezekiel soon afterwards identifies with the cherubim of the mercy-seat. But as yet they are not identified; and we are to think of the abode of the glory as realized of old, which made "the Lord God that dwelleth between the cherubim" a familiar thought. He is seen for a moment there again, but only now to show distinctly the terrible change which is taking place. There is to be no more for Israel the truth

* It is also the number of man, the utmost limit of his power, and thus of evil in its assault upon what is of God. It enters into Goliath's stature (1 Sam. 17: 4), the dimensions of Nebuchadnezzar's image (Dan. 3: 1), and the number of the Beast (Rev. 13: 18), where, thrice repeated, it would assail the people of God. It is thus fittingly associated with this preliminary assault of the Chaldeans.—S. R.

he said in my hearing, Go through the city after him and [m]smite: let not your eye spare, neither have pity. Slay [n]utterly the old man, the young man, and the maiden, and little children, and women; but [o]come not near any one upon whom is the mark; and [p]begin at my sanctuary. And they began at the [q]old men who were before the house. And he said unto them, [r]Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain; go forth. And they went forth and smote in the city.

And it came to pass, while they were smiting, and I was left, that I [s]fell upon my face, and cried, and said, Ah, Lord Jehovah! wilt thou destroy all the remnant of Israel in thy pouring out of thy wrath upon Jerusalem? Then said he unto me, The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness; for they say, Jehovah hath [t]forsaken the land, and Jehovah seeth not. And as for me also, mine eye shall [u]not spare, neither will I have pity: I will recompense their [v]way upon their head. And, behold, the man clothed in linen who had the inkhorn by his side [w]reported the matter, saying, I have done as thou hast commanded me.

m *cf.* 1 Chron. 21. 16.
cf. Jer. 48. 10.
n 2 Chron. 36. 17.
o *cf.* Zech. 2. 8.
p 1 Pet. 4. 17.
cf. Jer. 25. 29.
q *cf.* ch. 8. 11.
r *cf.* Ps. 79. 1, 2.
s *cf.* Num. 14. 5.
cf. Josh. 7. 6.
t *cf.* 2 Ki. 21. 14.
u ch. 8. 12.
v ch. 5. 11, etc.
w ch. 11. 21.
cf. Gal. 6. 7.
x *cf.* 2 Sam. 24. 13.

of a mercy-seat over which the cherubim bend down to see the blood of propitiation placed there. If the altar be rejected, there is no blood to be sprinkled upon it any more. But then He who dwells between the cherubim must go forth.

This, then, is what we have here; the full significance of it will be developed for us in what is soon to follow. But, first of all, He calls to the man clothed in linen who had the writer's inkhorn by his side, and bids him go through the midst of the city to "set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that are done in the midst" of it. The word for "mark" here is that which designates the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the *tav*, which in the manner of writing of that time was a *cross*. Who can forbear, in connection with all that we have here, to realize the meaning of this? The judgment is judgment in behalf of the altar; or, to put it in another way, it is that which necessarily comes because the propitiation of the altar is no more. How significant, then, that those whom the judgment spares are just those marked for mercy *by the altar itself*, that is, by the sign of the cross, as the Christian heart at once interprets it. As far back as the days of Tertullian it has been interpreted in this way, and all the circumstances here confirm the interpretation. Here, then, is the sinner's shield at all times, the only hope of escape where all are sinners.

"Unto the others He said in my hearing Go through the city after him, and smite . . . and begin at my sanctuary." Judgment must begin at the house of God. It always begins there. In proportion to the privilege is the responsibility; and the outward nearness to God, with the heart away, only the more invites judgment. The house is completely gone as that. The blood defiles it; and in the midst of the awful judgment which is then poured out, the prophet

3 (x): The ban from the glory.

3. And I looked, and behold, in the expanse* that was over the head of the cherubim, there appeared above them as it were a [y]sapphire stone, as the appearance of the likeness of a [z]throne. And he spake unto the man clothed in linen, and said, Go in between the revolving [wheels], even under the cherub, and fill thy hands with [a]coals of fire from between the cherubim, and scatter them over the city. And he went in in my sight. And the cherubim stood on the right side of the house when the man went in; and the [b]cloud filled the inner court. And the glory of Jehovah had risen from off the cherub, over the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of Jehovah's glory.

y ch. 1. 22. cf. Ex. 24. 10.
z cf. Rev. 4. 2.
a ch. 1. 13. cf. Ps. 18. 12, 13.
b cf. Ex. 40. 34, 35. cf. Is. 6. 1–4.

* The same as "firmament" in Gen. 1: 6.

pleads against the complete removal of Israel from before God's sight. But this has been already anticipated and answered. The only reply now is the urging of Israel's iniquity, which is now complete, and God can no longer spare.

3. Even yet the tale of judgment is not ended. What is of the utmost importance is now seen: the appearance of the heavenly throne, as the prophet had already seen it in the vision at Chebar, is to replace the earthly one which God can no more take. The removing is to be complete. He who was once, when the ark of old passed through Jordan, spoken of as "the God of all the earth," is now to be known simply as "the God of heaven." The earth is, as we see in Daniel, to be committed in fact to the Gentiles. Outwardly and visibly God's throne is no longer on earth. The throne of Gentile empire is, alas, how different! And yet it is the representative, responsibly, of the throne above. Though we cannot hope that this responsibility will now be discharged in a way more according to God than hitherto, yet, even so, God will rather have the Gentile with all his manifest alienation from God, than the Jew with his false profession and worse dishonor of Him by them who professed to draw nigh.

The judgment still proceeds; and it is the man clothed in linen, who has been hitherto the messenger of God's mercy, who is told to go in between the revolving wheels and fill his hand with coals of fire from between the cherubim and scatter them over the city. Here, of course, we have the pregnant figure of divine wrath; and it is at least an approach to that which we find afterwards, when the yet future day of wrath shall have arrived, and when this will be distinctively "the wrath of the Lamb." How terrible and how hopeless when it is His wrath! And yet how blessed to see and know that it is He who is eternal Love itself who will execute the judgment, and that, therefore, the one cannot be in contradiction to the other.

And now we are called to see more fully all the significance of that which is taking place. The cloud as yet fills the house; the glory of Jehovah, as we are reminded here, having risen up from off the cherub over the threshold of the house. The brightness of the glory is rather in the court itself now than in the house which it is leaving. The wings of the cherubim too are in motion, heard as the speech of the Almighty God Himself; and the cherubim are of course no longer those of the golden mercy-seat, which, as the memorials of a mere dead worship, are now left behind. The wheels of the former vision are

And the [c]sound of the wings of the cherubim was heard even to the outer court, as the voice of the Almighty God* when he speaketh. And it came to pass, when he had commanded the man clothed in linen, saying, Take fire from between the revolving [wheels], from between the cherubim, that he went in and stood beside the wheel. And the [d]cherub stretched forth his hand from between the cherubim unto the fire that was between the cherubim, and took up [thereof], and gave it into the hands of him [that was] clothed in linen; and he took it and went out.

And there appeared in the cherubim the form of a [e]man's hand under their wings. And I saw, and behold, four [f]wheels beside the cherubim, one wheel beside one cherub, and another wheel beside another cherub; and the appearance of the wheels was as the look of a [g]topaz stone. And as for their appearance, they four had one likeness, as if a [h]wheel were within a wheel. When they went, they went upon their four sides; they turned not as they went; but to the place whither the head looked they followed it: they [i]turned not as they went. And their whole body, and their

c ch. 1. 24. ch. 43. 2.

d *cf.* Heb. 1. 7.

e ver. 21. ch. 1. 8. *cf.* Gen. 18. 2

f ch. 1. 15, etc.

g *cf.* ch. 28. 13.

h *cf.* ver. 11.

i *cf.* Jas. 1. 17.

* "El-shaddai."

here also, and ready for revolution; stayed for the moment, as the linen-clothed man goes in to take of the fire (which we have already seen at Chebar as going up and down between the cherubim), and which they now put into his hands. We are reminded here of what has been seen before, that there was the form of a man's hand under the wings of the cherubim. Human hands, we need not doubt, are to execute that judgment which, nevertheless, is itself the wrath of God.

Attention is once more called particularly to the wheels. We have them just as they appeared at Chebar, one wheel beside each cherub, with the look of the topaz in them, the display still of divine characteristics, though in human history, and the likeness as of a wheel within a wheel. There is added here that the whole body, and backs, and hands, and wings, and wheels, are full of eyes round about, the tokens of a knowledge which is indeed omniscient, although there is of course no omniscience in the creature: but they move by a wisdom higher than their own. They are, in fact, beginning as it were afresh their revolution in obedience to the call of the Voice to them, at the bidding of which they revolve This is no doubt the real meaning of the 13th verse. The pause of contemplation is over. The trial is over. The wheels that have halted as it were in suspense for the moment, are to revolve again: and we are bidden to take notice once more of the faces of the cherubim as we have seen them, only that now the cherub itself is identified with the face of the ox; which is foremost, therefore: for through all this, while judgment is before us, God has nevertheless His harvest-field in view.

But now the cherubim mount up, and at last we have the full identification of the living creature with the figures upon the mercy-seat. "The cherubim mounted up . . . this was the living creature that I saw by the river Chebar."

backs, and their hands, and their wings, and the wheels, were full of [j]eyes round about; and they four had their wheels. As for the wheels, it was called to them in mine ears, Revolve.* And every one had four [k]faces: the first face was the face of a [l]cherub, and the second face the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle. And the cherubim mounted up. This was the [m]living creature that I saw by the river Chebar. And when the cherubim went, the wheels went beside them: and when the cherubim lifted up their wings to mount up from the earth, the wheels also turned not from beside them. When they stood, these stood; and when they mounted up, these mounted up with them: for the [n]spirit of the living creature was in them.

And the glory of Jehovah [o]departed from over the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubim.

[j] ch. 1. 18, etc.
[k] ch. 1. 6, 10, etc.
[l] *cf.* Ps. 18. 10.
[m] ch. 1. 5, etc.
[n] *cf.* Ps. 139. 7.
[o] ver. 4. *cf.* Hos. 9. 12 with Mt. 23. 38, 39.

* Lit., "revolution," or, "turning."

"I knew," says the prophet just after this, "I knew that they were cherubim." There is the complete identification. It is, as it were, those figures upon the mercy-seat that are now manifesting life and activity.

It is very striking as to this word "cherub" that only two derivations seem to be at all satisfactory for it. The one is from the word *charab*, "to engrave," of which "cherub" would be but the past participle; thus, "the forms engraved." This suits (but alone suits) the cherubim of the mercy-seat. On the other hand, Hengstenberg contends for another derivation, which certainly exactly suits the meaning of the living creatures, according to which it is a compound word, *che-rav*, "as it were a multitude."* But here, *not* the mercy-seat is before us, but the Chebar vision. Significant it surely is that the one meaning now goes over as it were to the other. The one is, no doubt, the interpretation of the other. But, more than this, the reality is now taking the place of the mere symbol. The cherubim are indeed the living ones, in every way full of life, and standing for that multitudinous host of God which in all His creation ever obey His will.

But, alas, for Israel, the mercy-seat is left, and the cherubim now go forth from it. "And the cherubim lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight when they went forth, and the wheels beside them. And they stood at the entrance of the east gate of Jehovah's house;" and now also "the glory of the God of Israel is over them above." It is God who is leaving His earthly abode; and yet even as He leaves, everything assumes a greater clearness and a fuller glory. Notice once more, as we are called to it, the close dependence of the wheels upon the living creatures. As the cherubim mount up, the wheels mount up with them: they leave the earth. Thus as far as Israel is concerned, whatever suspension of the sentence there may be (and which we read in this lingering yet a while over the east gate), it is signified to us that they are soon, as it were, to revolve no more.

* Another derivation has been given—*che-reb* "As if pleading." These assessors to the throne are pleading for righteous judgment upon an apostate nation. At other times their pleading has been for mercy on the basis of the blood upon the mercy-seat. But *that* having been rejected by the people, nothing but judgment is left.—S. R.

And the cherubim lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight, when they went forth, and the wheels beside them: and they stood at the [p]entrance of the east gate of Jehovah's house; and the [q]glory of the God of Israel was over them above. This is the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel by the river Chebar; and I [r]knew that they were cherubim. [s]Each one had four faces, and each four wings; and the likeness of a [t]man's hands was under their wings. And as for the likeness of their faces they were the faces which I had [u]seen by the river Chebar—their appearance and themselves: they went each in the [v]direction of his face.

p ch. 11. 22, 23 with ch. 43. 2.
q ver. 18.
r *cf.* Is. 6. 2. *cf.* Gen. 3. 24.
s ch. 1. 6, etc.
t *cf.* ver. 7. *cf.* 1 Ki. 18. 44.
u ch. 1. 1.
v ch. 1. 12. *cf.* Dan. 9. 21.

As far as prophetic history is concerned, we see the truth of this fully at the present time. Prophecy as to them has ceased. We are in a gap of time which has for them, as it were, no more significance! And yet in this very way how sad a significance! In truth there was a longer suspense than this lingering over the east gate might seem to signify. God's mercy lingered, as we know, over the returned remnant until, in fulfilment of what the countless voices of the prophets had declared, He who was to come did come, and Messiah, Himself the King of glory, stood in their midst. But it was only to find rejection proportionately decisive and complete. The wings that would have sheltered Jerusalem had to be withdrawn. She had once more to be given up to enemies that would lay her in the dust and her children with her. The glorious vision in the midst is gone, but it has gone in fact to heaven, a heaven which is opened for us that we may see it there. The living creatures are connected with this throne above, which has just been intimated to us in Ezekiel. Israel abides outside of the glory without a mercy-seat and without a priest to represent them before it; but for us there is only a nearer, sweeter vision, a fuller reality, a gospel of the glory which is indeed no longer in the face of Moses but in the face of Him who, Man as He is, is "the image of the invisible God," the effulgence of it.*

4. We have what is now in some sense an appendix to what has gone before. The judgment having been definitely pronounced, the glory, as we have seen, yet lingers, and the mercy which is in God's heart expresses itself more freely, as one may say, because of the judgment pronounced. God's character being

* There seems to be a striking correspondence between this vision of the removal of the throne of God from the temple to the chariot of the cherubim, from earth to heaven, and the removal of God's testimony from the Jews and Jerusalem to the Church, as recorded in the book of Acts. During His life our Lord had declared to the Jews, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate" (Matt. 23: 38, 39), and the removal or transfer of the glory is seen taking place at Pentecost. The Jewish "house" being left desolate, the shekinah glory descends upon *believers*, instead of filling the temple of Jehovah (2 Chron. 13: 11). The persecution of the saints develops until in the stoning of Stephen the glory is seen in heaven rather than upon earth. Gradually the blessing extends from Jerusalem to Samaria, Cæsarea and Antioch—a Gentile city. The meeting at Jerusalem to consider the relation of the Gentiles to the law (Acts 15) may be considered as the final lingering upon the threshhold of the temple: but the widening circle of blessing reaching to Ephesus, Philippi and Corinth shows how a great change was impending. Paul's last visit to Jerusalem is, we may say, the final appeal of lingering love, and his closing words to the Jews at Rome (Acts 28: 28) indicate the complete removal of the shekinah from Judaism: "The salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it."—S. R.

4 (xi.): Scattering among the nations, but with mercy.

4. And the Spirit [w]lifted me up and brought me to the [x]east gate of Jehovah's house, which looketh eastward; and behold, at the entrance of the gate five and twenty men; and I saw in the midst of them [y]Jaazaniah the son of Azzur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, [z]princes of the people. And he said unto me, Son of man, these are the men that [a]devise iniquity, and give wicked counsel in this city: who say, It is not the [b]time to build houses: this is the [c]caldron, and we are the flesh. Therefore [d]prophesy against them, prophesy, son of man. And the Spirit of Jehovah fell upon me, and said unto me, Speak, Thus saith Jehovah: Thus have ye said, O house of Israel; even the things that come into your mind, I know them. Ye have [e]multiplied your slain in this city, and ye have filled the streets* thereof with the slain. Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Your slain whom ye have laid in the midst of it, they are the flesh, and it is the [f]caldron; but you shall one bring forth out of the midst of it. Ye have [g]feared the sword; and I will bring the sword upon you, saith the Lord Jehovah. And I will

w ch. 3. 12, 14. ch. 8. 3. cf. Acts 8. 39.
x ch. 10. 19.
y cf. ch. 8. 11.
z cf. Num. 14. cf. Num. 13. 3, etc. cf. 18. 1. 23.
a cf. ch. 14. 3.
b cf. ch. 12. 22.
c cf. Lk. 12. 19.
d ch. 13. 2, etc.
e ch. 7. 23. cf. 2 Ki. 21. 16.
f cf. ch. 24. 3–5.
g cf. Job 3. 25. cf. Prov. 1. 26, 27.

* Or, "courts."

cleared by this, He is free to show what is in His heart. At the same time, that there may be no false hope, the judgment is re affirmed.

We are introduced once more to the leaders of the people who have, as we see, the people behind them. They are twenty-five men (the number of the priests as given before), but these are not the priests, though they represent, as one may say, all represented by the priesthood—that is, the people at large, and therefore are the same in number. Among them, two prominent men recall in their very names the false hopes which are misleading the people: Jaazaniah, "the Lord heareth," who is the son of Azzur, "the helper," with Pelatiah, "Jehovah delivers," the son of Benaiah, "Jehovah builds up." Their words correspond to their names. These are the men, as it is declared to Ezekiel, who supplant Jeremiah's exhortation to the captives to build houses in the place of their captivity, which was to be long (Jer. xxix. 5), by building in Jerusalem. Judgment is not near, they say. They infer, the time to act after this manner never will be. If Jerusalem, in the midst of all its enemies, may seem indeed to be but a caldron, and "we are the flesh in it," be it so, say they, we can accept that place with all that we find in it. The words, vague though they may seem, can scarcely be anything but mockery. They base themselves upon such prophecies as both Ezekiel and his contemporary Jeremiah were uttering against the place, which nevertheless still stood, defying its adversaries; so they argue that it will stand. These prophecies are idle talk, say they, suited enough for exiles whom the land has already cast out, and who have forfeited the privileges of the chosen people. For us, they say, we need not fear them.

Swiftly as the destruction was coming, God yet meets this with another prophetic warning. He who was acquainted with all their thoughts, would give them presently their full answer. Already the prophet sees the slain in

bring you forth out of the midst of it, and deliver you into the [h] hands of strangers, and will execute judgments among you. Ye shall [i] fall by the sword; I will judge you in the [j] border of Israel; and ye shall [k] know that I am Jehovah. This shall not be your [l] caldron, neither shall ye be the flesh in the midst of it: I will judge you in the border of Israel; and ye shall [m] know that I am Jehovah, in whose [n] statutes ye have not walked, neither have practised my ordinances, but have done [o] after the ordinances of the nations that are round about you.

And it came to pass, when I prophesied, that Pelatiah the son of Benaiah [p] died. And I [q] fell down on my face, and cried with a loud voice, and said, Ah, Lord Jehovah! wilt thou make a [r] full end of the remnant of Israel?

[h] *cf.* Is. 1, 7. *cf.* Hos. 7, 9. *cf.* Hos. 8, 7.
[i] *cf.* Jer. 39, 6.
[j] vers. 7, 9.
[k] Ps. 9, 16. ch. 6, 7, 14.
[l] *cf.* ver. 3.
[m] ver. 10, etc.
[n] *cf.* Ps. 19, 8. ch. 20, 16.
[o] *cf.* Lev. 18, 3. *cf.* Deut. 12, 30, 31.
[p] *cf.* Nu. 16, 29. *cf.* Acts 5, 5.
[q] *cf.* Josh. 7, 6. chap. 9, 8.
[r] *cf.* Ex. 32, 10, 11. *cf.* Jer. 30, 11.

the city, slain at the hands of those who have misled them. These would fulfil the figure, and be, manifestly enough, the flesh in the caldron; but for themselves, the deceivers of the people, there waited still a severer judgment. God would not suffer the city to be even the tomb of such. The sword which they defied, even while they trembled at it, Jehovah would bring upon them, taking them out of the midst of the city which they had profaned, to fall by the sword in the border of Israel; they would witness before their death the calamities which they had brought upon the people. Cast out of the city, they would be judged in the border of Israel, and should learn there, to their utter confusion, that it was Jehovah who had been speaking to them—Jehovah, whose ordinances they had transgressed, while they claimed the privileges which belonged to His elect, and had gone after the ordinances of the nations around them *

While Ezekiel thus prophesies, one of these leaders, the man whose name falsely spoke of deliverance and building up, Pelatiah, died. Vision it is still; yet one would naturally argue that this was, in fact, an actual occurrence at the time. Such a proof has constantly accompanied true prophecy, that God was speaking in it. There was to be no deliverance nor building up in the way that they imagined to themselves; but, as before, the heart of the prophet, standing truly before God for the people, trembles at the judgment manifested, and again there is a question in his heart, as has been uttered before, whether any can survive it. "Ah, Lord Jehovah," he cries "wilt Thou make a full end of the remnant of Israel?" But this had been already answered again and again.

It is but a moment of dismay; a confusion which the Lord answers in grace, explaining to him that these people, the objects of His divine judgment, are not such a remnant. His brethren, such as the prophet could truly own as kindred, those who truly represent the house of Israel, are not such men as these, but have characteristically their position among those very exiles to whom the then inhabitants of Jerusalem were saying, "Get you far from Jehovah," as having no claim upon Him. In their own possession the land still was, and

* For an Israelite especially it was a great dishonor not to be buried, or not in his own sepulchre. There seems to have been, in the care taken of the body and its burial, a hint of the resurrection to blessing. So Abraham purchased the cave of Machpelah (Gen. 23). To have no burial, as in the case of Jehoiakim (Jer. 22: 19) was like "the burial of an ass"—S. R.

And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, thy [s]brethren, even thy brethren, are the men of thy kindred* and all the house of Israel, the whole of it, unto whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem say, 'Get you far from Jehovah: unto [t]us is this land given for a possession. Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Though I have [u]removed them far off among the nations, and though I have [v]scattered them among the countries, yet I will be to them for a little [x]sanctuary† in the countries whither they have come. Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I will even [y]gather you from the peoples, and assemble you out of the countries where ye are scattered, and I will [z]give you the land of Israel. And they

[s] *cf.* Mt. 23. 13.
[t] *cf.* Deut. 13. 7.
[u] *cf.* ver. 3.
[v] *cf.* Lev. 26. 39 42. *cf.* Deut. 32. 26. *cf.* Jer 31 10.
[x] *cf.* Is. 8. 14. *etc.* Ps. 43. 3.
[y] *cf.* Jer. 24. 6. ch. 28. 25. ch. 36. 24.
[z] *cf.* ch 47. 13, etc. ch. 39. 25, 26.

* Or, "redemption." † Or, "a sanctuary for a little while."

so, they argued, it would continue. Was not the condition of those in exile a plain proof of the displeasure of God against them? Nay, says the Lord: it is amongst these that I am, and though it is true that in this national breach of the covenant they are removed far off among the nations and scattered among the countries, and though they have lost the recognized sanctuary in Jerusalem, yet I Myself will be to them for a little sanctuary in the countries whither they come. It was not indeed all that they were looking for, and might look for yet, it was an unseen Presence that was with them. The glory was unseen, save by such opened eyes as were those of Ezekiel. Nevertheless, in the "remnant according to the election of grace," as the apostle speaks afterwards, there was the assurance of what grace would be in its fulness when the time should come for the completion of those promises which God had unconditionally made, and which, therefore, He would fulfil. The sap of life was in the tree, although it was a tree cut down; and it would in due time manifest itself in the renewal of all they had departed from, and much more: "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah"—it is the exiles plainly to whom He is turning, He has no promise for the doomed inhabitants of the city itself—"I will even gather you from the peoples, and assemble you out of the countries where ye are scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel." But along with this there must be and would be, therefore, the return of heart to God which would alone be the fulfilment of such promises. The terms of the new covenant must be fulfilled, and they would contemplate not the mere setting up again of the glory that had departed, but much more, the inward renewal, in which alone they would be manifested as the true seed of Abraham and the heirs of all that God had promised to him

Here, it is plain, we go far beyond the mere return of a remnant out of Babylon, such as took place under the Persian kings. This was, according to the Lord's figure, but a fig-tree planted in the vineyard, under conditions of fruit-bearing, which were not fulfilled; and when He who was to come, and did come, seeking fruit upon the fig-tree and finding none, according to His word it withered away. But this could not be the end of the promise—the free and unchangeable promise of God, which never can be taken away from the people to whom He made it. And the words of Jehovah here look on to an end not come even yet, but which through all the length of time elapsed He

shall come thither, and they shall [a]take away from thence all its detestable things and all its abominations. And I will give them [b]one heart, and I will put a [c]new spirit within you; and I will [d]take away the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a [e]heart of flesh; that they may may [f]walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them; and they shall be [g]my people, and I will be their God. But as for them whose [h]heart walketh heartily after their detestable things and their abominations, I will [i]recompense their way upon their heads, saith the Lord Jehovah.

And the cherubim [j]lifted up their wings, and the wheels were beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above. And the glory of Jehovah [k]went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the [l]mountain which is on the east side of the city. And the Spirit [m]lifted me up, and brought me in the vision by the Spirit of God into [n]Chaldea, to them of the captivity; and the vision that I had seen went up from me. And I [o]spake unto them of the captivity all the things that Jehovah had shown me.

[a] ch. 37. 23. [b] cf. Ps. 86. 11. Jer. 32. 39. cf. Zeph. 3. 9. [c] ch. 36. 26, 27. cf. Jer. 31. 33. cf. Jno. 3. 3. [d] cf. Zech. 7. 12 with Eph. 4. 22. [e] cf. 2 Ki. 5. 14 with Mt. 18. 3. [f] cf. Deut. 4. 40. cf. Ps. 105. 45. [g] Jer. 24. 7. ch. 37. 27. cf. 1 Pet. 2. 10. [h] cf. Acts 7. 51. [i] ch. 9. 10. ch. 22. 31. [j] ch. 10. 19. [k] ch. 9. 3. cf. Lk. 13. 34, 35. [l] cf. Lk. 24. 50. cf. Zech. 14. 4. [m] cf. ch. 8. 3. [n] ch. 1. 1-3. [o] cf. ch. 3. 4.

has never forgotten: "They shall come thither," says the Lord; "and they shall take away from thence all its detestable things, and all its abominations; and I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of their flesh and will give them a heart of flesh that they may walk in my statutes, and keep my ordinances, and do them; and they shall be my people and I will be their God." This, then, is afresh certified with all the assurance of God's word, and in plain view of all that has just before been denounced in the way of judgment. Nay, it is repeated here: "But as for them whose heart walketh heartily after their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their heads, saith the Lord Jehovah."

And now the breach between the city and the Lord is consummated: "And the glory of Jehovah went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city"—the Mount of Olives. How it reminds us of how the Lord Himself took leave of the same city from the same place! Refused by the world, and risen from the dead, He went up finally to heaven in the eyes of His disciples from the Mount of Olives once more. The angels prophesy His return, as Zechariah had prophesied it long before. For us, the Mount of Olives with its Bethany home, is the witness of what is ours in the meantime. Olivet is the memorial of the spiritual unction which has been poured out upon us, anointed with which we wait for His return. Meanwhile, in widowed loneliness, God's earthly city waits also; but in how different a manner! Her captivity has been unbroken ever since, and it is to the men of the captivity that the prophet now returns. "The Spirit lifted me up and brought me in the vision by the Spirit of God unto Chaldea to them of the captivity, and the vision that I had seen went up from me." In principle, the story is told out, although there may be many and important details that are to follow. What a word for the elders who had been waiting all this time the

SECTION 2 (Chaps. xii.—xv).

The judgments in detail.

1 (xii.): The king in exile, and the land desolate.

1. And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, thou [p]dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have [q]eyes to see, and see not; which have ears to hear, and hear not; for they are a rebellious house. Therefore, thou son of man, prepare thee the baggage of an [r]exile, and remove by day in their sight; and thou shalt [s]remove from thy place to another place before their eyes; perhaps they will see, though they are a rebellious house. And bring forth thy baggage by day in their sight as an exile's baggage, and thou thyself go forth at even in their sight, as they that go forth into exile. [t]Dig thou through the wall in their sight, and carry out thereby. In their sight shalt thou bear upon thy shoulder, and [u]carry it forth in the dark; thou shalt [v]cover thy face that thou see not the ground: * for I have set thee for a [w]sign unto the house of Israel. And I did so as I

[p] ch. 2. 3, 6-8. *cf.* Rom. 10. 21.
[q] Is. 6. 9. Jer. 5. 21. Mt. 13.13,14.
[r] *cf.* 2 Chr.36. 17-21.
[s] *cf.* Jer.15 4. *cf.* Jer. 24.9.
[t] *cf.* Jer. 52. 7. *cf.* 1 Sam.19. 12.
[u] *cf.* Jer. 15. 9.
[v] *cf.* Jer. 52. 11.
[w] Is. 8. 18. ch. 4. 3. ch. 24 24. *cf.* Is. 20. 3.

* Or, "land."

result of this prophetic rapture: "I spake unto them of the captivity all the things that Jehovah had shown me."

Sec. 2.

The story having been told, we have in what follows the detail of exactly measured judgment in relation to the various classes.

1. First of all, therefore, we begin with the king, of so great significance in Judah as the one who "sat upon the throne of the Lord" in Jerusalem (1 Chr. xxix. 23). The removal of the king means, therefore, that the representative throne exists no more. Yet how many hopes had been centred in it! Throughout the history of the Judges we find that the great necessity was that a king should come. Even if men did that which was right, it was "that which was right in their own eyes;" that only made the need more apparent. There was no king yet in Israel. When he came, he was ushered in by the prophet, as we know, so in Ezekiel the prophet announces his removal; for the prophet remains through all this time the witness for God and of His ideal in government; but from the very first, we see how the ideal of the people diverged from God's thought. Saul, who was really the man of the people, as such had to be removed; and David, though the man after God's heart, fails in his turn, and is himself the witness that, although in his house the promise of sovereignty remains, yet it must be fulfilled in some higher way than man can accomplish it—the true King must come. Whatever faint shadows of Him there might be, as shadows they could not be permanent, and as they more and more departed from their character as witnesses to Him that was to come, always the more clear it becomes that they must pass. The meaningless king must be removed; he cannot be left for a reproach as God's king—an imbecile, and worse. Ezekiel is now summoned, therefore, to announce his definite removal from the land, no more to return there. During the time in which the desolate land keeps its sabbaths, which it keeps yet, it cannot prosper in their hands; thus we have here the connection of the two parts of the prophecy.

was commanded: I brought forth my baggage by day as an exile's baggage, and in the evening I digged through the wall with my hand; I brought it forth in the dark, and bare it upon my shoulder in their sight.

And in the morning the word of Jehovah came unto me saying, Son of man, hath not the house of Israel, the rebellious house, said unto thee, [x] What doest thou? Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, This [y]burden [concerneth] the prince in Jerusalem, and all the house of Israel that are among them. Say, [z]I am your sign: as I have done, so shall it be done unto them: they shall go into exile, into captivity. And the [a]prince that is among them shall bear upon his shoulder in the dark, and shall go forth; they shall dig through the wall to carry out thereby; he shall cover his face that he may [b]not see the ground with his eyes. My net also will I spread upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare; and I will bring him to [c]Babylon, to the land of the Chaldeans; yet shall he not see it, though he shall [d]die there.* And I will [e]scatter toward every wind all that are about him to help him, and all his hosts; and I will draw out the [f]sword after them. And they shall know that I am Jehovah, when I shall scatter them among the nations, and disperse them through the countries. But I will leave a [g]few men of them from the sword, from the famine, and from the pestilence; that they may [h]declare all their abominations among the nations whither they shall go; and they shall [i]know that I am Jehovah.

[x] ch. 17. 12, ch. 24. 19, ch. 37. 18.
[y] *cf.* 18. 22. 1, *cf.* Mal. 1. 1.
[z] ver. 6, *cf.* Is. 8. 18, *cf.* 1 Ki. 22. 11.
[a] *cf.* Jer. 39. 4.
[b] *cf.* Jer. 39. 7.
[c] *cf.* Jer. 32. 4, 5.
[d] *cf.* ch. 17. 16.
[e] *cf.* Deut. 4. 27, *cf.* Deut. 28. 64, ch. 5. 2, 12.
[f] *cf.* Deut. 28. 65, 66.
[g] ch. 6. 8–10, *cf.* Jer. 42. 2.
[h] *cf.* Lev. 26. 39–42.
[i] vers. 15, 20, etc.

* Or, "and there shall he die."

All is simplicity itself with regard to the prophecy, however little they, who were a rebellious house, as Ezekiel was told from the beginning, might see what was meant. Eyes they had to see, and saw not; ears they had to hear, and heard not; yet God acts for Himself, and unhindered by this incapacity on their part. Ezekiel is instructed to prepare the baggage of an exile and to remove by day in their sight. "Perhaps they will see," says Jehovah; for we know there were still those who were capable of doing so; and, as for the rest, God would still make things so plain that on His part there should be no possible misunderstanding—nothing wanting to complete conviction.

He is to gather together his baggage by day, but himself was to go forth at evening, under the cover of darkness, digging through the wall to carry off just what he can bear upon his shoulder, and no more; covering his face also, so as not to see the ground—a pregnant sign to the house of Israel of what was to take place. All this, of course, was not in vision, but in reality; expressly intended to awaken question by those who saw these enigmatical doings, and would naturally inquire into what they meant. He is to tell them that the burden concerns the prince still in Jerusalem, with all the signs of his royalty about him, but who is to go forth into exile, into captivity, with no sign of his forfeited rank, but as a mere ordinary fugitive; and even so, not to be allowed

And the [j]word of Jehovah came unto me saying, Son of man, eat thy bread with [k]quaking, and drink thy water with trembling and with care;* and say unto the people of the land, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah concerning the inhabitants of Jerusalem, concerning the land of Israel: [l]They shall eat their bread with anxiety, and drink their water with astonishment, because her [m]land shall be left desolate of all that is in it for the [n]violence of all them that dwell therein; and the cities that are inhabited shall be laid [o]waste, and the land shall be a desolation; and ye shall [p]know that I am Jehovah.

And the [q]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, what is that proverb that ye have in the land of Israel, saying, The days are [r]prolonged, and every vision faileth? Tell them, therefore, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I will make this proverb to [s]cease, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel; but say unto them, The days are at [t]hand, and the matter* of every vision. For there shall be no more

* Or, "anxiety." † Lit., "word."

j vers. 21, 26; ch. 13. 1, etc.
k cf. ch. 4. 9-17.
l cf. Deut. 28. 38-40, 49-51.
m cf. Lev. 26. 33. cf. Jer. 4. 27.
n cf. Ps. 107. 34. cf. Is. 59. 6.
o cf. Lev. 26. 31, 33. cf. Neh. 2. 17. cf. Jer. 4. 7.
p ver. 16, etc.
q ver. 17, etc.
r ver. 27. cf. ch. 11. 3. cf. Mt. 24. 48.
s cf. ch. 18. 2, 3.
t cf. Joel 2. 1. cf. Zeph. 1. 14. cf. Rev. 1. 3.

to go safely away, but to be taken in the net by Him whose hand was acting through the Chaldeans. And yet the very land to which he would be removed he should not see, although he should die there. His eyes, in fact, were put out, according to a common custom of the Babylonians in such cases. His following would be all dispersed, the mass of them slain by the sword, by famine and by pestilence, and the few left would be but as witnesses of the state of things amongst them which had provoked Jehovah's wrath; for in all this, as it is repeated again and again, they were to know that He was Jehovah.

To this burden concerning the king, there is appended, as naturally connected with it, the burden of the land left waste and desolate; for as long as the king continued, even though he might be but the shadow of royalty at the last, this was a testimony that the covenant between God and Israel was yet not wholly gone. The land itself also, as Jehovah's land, which they enjoyed as sojourners with Him, as His guests, was another sign of this: it could not pass wholly into other hands; and in this way even still remains, until the people of God are brought back to enjoy it. Thus, in one way or another, the curse of barrenness must be upon it. The hands that should have wrought in its harvests are scattered far away, and the few that remain, remain but to eat their bread with anxiety and drink their water with astonishment, while their cities should be laid waste and the land a desolation—and this, though Jehovah were His covenant name, that all might know Him to be the Unchangeable, as His name implied.

To this is appended another solemn testimony against the vain hopes of those who, expecting the message of peace which the false prophets had given them, and grounding it upon all the promises to their fathers, were already realizing the failure of their vision, which was no true vision. How often people imagine a failure of God's word, when the failure is only that of hopes falsely built upon His word! But the true word was not of smooth things, but of

any vain vision nor [u]flattering divination within the house of Israel. For I am Jehovah; I will speak, and the [v]word that I shall speak shall be performed; it shall be no more deferred; for in [w]your days, O rebellious house, will I speak the word and will perform it, saith the Lord Jehovah.

And the [x]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, behold, they of the house of Israel say, The vision that he seeth is for many days, and he prophesieth of times that are [y]far off. Therefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: There shall none of my words be [z]deferred any more, but the word which I speak shall be performed, saith the Lord Jehovah.

2 (xiii.): A prophecy against false prophets.

1 (1–16): The prophets.

2. [1] And the [a]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy [b]against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say unto them that prophesy out of their [c]own heart, Hear ye the word of Jehovah:

[u] ch. 13. 23 *cf.* Is. 30. 10.
[v] ver. 28. Is. 55. 11.
[w] *cf.* Dan. 5. 30.
[x] ch. 13. 1, etc.
[y] ver. 22. *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 4. *cf.* Lk. 17. 26, 27.
[z] *cf.* Hab. 2. 3. *cf.* Rev. 10. 6, 7. *cf.* Is. 55. 10, 11.
[a] ch. 12. 1, etc.
[b] ver. 17. *cf.* Mt. 7. 15. *cf.* 1 Jno 4. 1.
[c] Jer. 14. 14. Jer. 23. 16. Jer. 27. 10.

judgment, which would not linger now. It was at hand. In the very days of those that spoke, the Lord Jehovah would fulfil at once that which He was declaring He would bring upon them. Again the word comes re-affirming this: "Son of man, behold they of the house of Israel say, The vision that he seeth is for many days, and he prophesieth of times that are afar off. Therefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: There shall none of my words be deferred any more, but the word which I speak shall be performed, saith the Lord Jehovah."

2. [1] When the priesthood (the first link between God and Israel) failed, the prophet was raised up extraordinarily of God, in sovereign goodness, to stand between the people and Himself. When the kings failed afterwards, the prophet again came forward, the sign, on the one hand, of the broken condition of things, and yet on the other, of God's patience, waiting for possible recovery. Priest and king belonged to the *established* order of things, and therefore their office passed in the ordinary way from father to son. With the prophet it was otherwise. There was no provision for the continuance of the prophet. He was specially raised up by the goodness of God, as His messenger, to bring His word to the people in such a condition of things as was, or should have been, exceptional altogether. Alas, the adversary of God and man might find his opportunity in this very way to imitate that which is of God, bringing forth prophets of his own invention to speak falsehood as from God, so as to lead more entirely astray their followers.

Naturally, therefore, Ezekiel now turns to these, to prophesy to and against these prophets—prophesying out of their own hearts and seeing nothing. The word which the prophet spoke was not simply something evolved out of a man's "inner consciousness," as men represent it to-day, a divination as it were of a spiritual mind prognosticating the future from what he saw before him. On the contrary, it was no human judgment that they professed to bring, but the judgment of God Himself. Thus it was not their own saying, but Jehovah's saying. And so thoroughly was this known in Israel, that the false prophets themselves had to go as far as this in their pretension. If they saw nothing, they must

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Woe unto the foolish prophets that follow their own spirit, and have [d]seen nothing! O Israel, thy prophets have been like [e]jackals in waste places. Ye have not gone up into the breaches, nor made up a [f]wall around the house of Israel, to stand in the battle in the day of Jehovah. They have seen vanity and [g]lying divination that say, Jehovah saith! and Jehovah hath [h]not sent them; and they make [men] [i]hope that the word will be fulfilled. Have ye not seen a vain vision and spoken a lying divination when ye say, Jehovah saith—and I have not spoken? Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Because ye speak vanity, and have seen a lie, therefore, behold, I am [j]against you, saith the Lord Jehovah. And my hand shall be against the prophets that see vanity, and that divine a lie: they shall [k]not be in the council of my people, neither shall they be [l]written in the registry of the house of Israel, and they shall not [m]enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall [n]know that I am the Lord Jehovah. Because, even because they

d cf. Zech. 1 2.
e cf. Ps. 59. 14.
f cf. ch 22 3
cf. ch 14 with Ps. 10 23, 30
g cf. Jer. 1 14.
ch 22. 28.
h Jer. 23. 2 32.
cf. Jer. 27. 14, 15.
cf. 2 Pet. 2.
i cf. ver. 22
cf. Jer 23 1
etc. Hag. 1.
j Jer. 23. 31
cf. Zeph 2.
etc. Rom. 31.
k cf. Ps. 1.
cf. Mt. 7. 2 23.
l cf. Ezra 2. 59, 62.
cf. Neh. 7.
cf. Ps. 69. 2
etc. Lk. 10 20.
etc. Mal. 3

16, 17. m ch. 20. 13. n ch. 11. 10, et

feign that they saw. But the true heart of the prophet was not seen in them, nor, therefore, the true voice of Jehovah heard. The priest's breastplate was typical of what made the priest the true expression of the Lord's mind towards His people. It contained the Urim and Thummim, by which the priest gave answer from God; the precious jewels which shone in it representing the various attributes of the Unchangeable. They were "the lights and perfections" of Him who is the true and perfect Light, abiding unalterably in Him as the lustre in the gem. But upon these jewels also the names of the people of God were indelibly engraved. Thus the priest bore upon his heart before God the interests of God's people, and God's interests, therefore, in His people. If the priest had now passed, and the king also, any one raised up of God as His prophet must be marked by these very characteristics. Thus, in Ezekiel's day, the prophets should have been men "gone up into the breaches," not ignoring them nor what had been the occasion of them, but proclaiming the faithful word of Jehovah, while at the same time seeking, if it might be, to build up the wall which had been broken down, that it might stand in the battle, even in the day of Jehovah.

But these false prophets had failed in all this. Great as was their pretension, it was as far as possible from the reality. "O Israel, thy prophets have been like jackals in waste places"—a significant figure indeed of those who preyed upon the corruption around, hiding from the light in the barren wilderness which could only furnish them the covert that they sought. In pretension they were angels of light indeed—as Satan's emissaries among God's people constantly are—but the evil which prospered around them bore them true witness. They had seen but vanity, says the Lord, and divined lies. They should not, therefore, be in the counsel of His people, nor written in the register of the house of Israel, nor possess themselves of that land which could be held only according to the tenure of the covenant. Thus they too must know that He was the Lord Jehovah. Yet these were the men that swarmed around in proportion

have seduced my people, saying, °Peace; and there is no peace; and one ᵖbuildeth up a wall, and lo, they daub it with ᵍuntempered [mortar]: say unto them that daub it with untempered [mortar], that it shall ʳfall: there shall be an ˢoverflowing rain, and ye, O great ᵗhailstones, shall fall, and a ᵘstormy wind shall rend it. And lo, when the wall is fallen, shall it not be said to you, ᵛWhere is the daubing wherewith ye have daubed it? Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I will even rend it with a stormy wind in my wrath; and there shall be an overflowing shower in mine anger, and great hailstones in wrath to consume it. So will I ʷbreak down the wall that ye have daubed with untempered [mortar], and bring it down to the ground, so that the foundation thereof shall be discovered; and it shall fall, and ye shall be ˣdestroyed in the midst thereof; and ye shall ʸknow that I am Jehovah. Thus will I ᶻaccomplish my wrath upon the wall, and upon ᵃthem that daub it with untempered [mortar], and will say unto you, The wall is not, nor they that daubed it—the ᵇprophets of Israel who prophesy concerning Jerusalem and who see a vision of peace for her, and there is no peace, saith the Lord Jehovah.

2 (17-23): The prophetesses.

2 And thou, son of man, set thy face against the ᶜdaughters of thy people who prophesy out of their ᵈown heart, and prophesy thou against them, and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Woe to the women that

o Jer. 6. 14. Jer. 8. 11. *cf.* Mic. 2. 11. *cf.* Is. 57. 21. *ctr.* Col. 1. 20 with Rom. 5. 1.
p *cf.* Gen. 11. 4. *cf.* Gal. 2. 18.
q ch. 22. 28. *cf.* Gal. 1. 8-10.
r *cf.* Ps. 62. 3. *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 17.
s ch. 38. 22. *cf.* Is. 28. 14-18. *cf.* Mt. 7. 24-27.
t *cf.* Job 38. 22, 23. *cf.* Is. 28. 2.
u *cf.* Dan. 7. 2. *cf.* Ps. 18. 42. *cf.* Ps. 103. 16.
v *cf.* Is. 33. 18. *cf.* Deut. 28. 52.
w *cf.* Rev. 11. 13.
x *cf.* Num. 31. 8.
y ver. 9, etc.
z *cf.* Jer. 51. 25. *cf.* Jer. 42. 18.
a *ctr.* 1 Cor. 3. 15.
b *cf.* 1 Ki. 22. 24, 25.
c *cf.* Is. 3. 16; *cf.* Rev. 2. 20. d ver. 2; *cf.* Lk. 18. 11.

as the true prophet of the Lord was scarce, banding together, confirming one another's words, one building up a wall and another daubing it with untempered mortar, which could never stand the storm that was at hand. God would bring it down completely to the dust, so that the foundation upon which it was built would be discovered—a lie, all through, which could work but the destruction of those who trusted in it. For their prophesying of peace could but provoke war, and the pretension of security provoke God to sweep away the refuge of lies; for, however men misrepresent Him, Jehovah must still and evermore be the Lord; and as against the men who misrepresent Him the Lord will be found Jehovah—the unchanging One. This is the constant reiteration all the way through. Jehovah is arising in His own behalf when there remains as it were no longer any witness for Him.

2 But there were not only prophets, but prophetesses. Beautiful it is to see that, when it is God's grace that is raising up help, the expression of it will be found in those who in their very weakness will thus be most competent witnesses. There were no priestesses in Israel; nor, saving usurpation, any queens that reigned in their own right, but there were prophetesses. The grace of God did not in the same way regard distinctions such as these. Nay, if the men of Israel failed, the rise of a prophetess might be a more signal rebuke to them—thus Deborah, in the days of the Judges, and others at other times. And if after all there were but few women of this class, we know how slow God's people are to accept the grace which thus visits them in its fulness of blessing.

sew [e]cushions upon all armholes,* and that make [f]veils for the head of [persons of] every stature, to [g]catch souls. Will ye catch the souls of my people, and will ye [h]save your own souls alive? Will ye even [i]profane me among my people for handfuls of barley and for morsels of bread, to slay souls that [j]should not die and to save souls alive that should not live, by your [k]lying to my people that listen to lies? Wherefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold I am [l]against your cushions wherewith ye hunt souls, that they may fly away,* I will even [m]tear them from your arms, and I will let the souls go, the souls that ye catch, that they may fly away.† And I will [n]tear your veils, and [o]deliver my people out of your hand, and they shall be no more in your hand to be hunted; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah. Because with lies‡

[1] Literally, "upon all my wrists." † Or, "as birds." ‡ Or, "falsely."

e *cf.* Mic.3.5.
cf. Rev 18 7.
f *cf.* Is. 30. 10.
cf. Mt. 23. 16, etc.
cf. Mt 15.14.
cfr. Is 25. 7.
g *cf.* 2 Pet. 2. 14.
cf. 2 Tim. 3. 6.
cf. Hab. 1. 14, 15.
h *cf.* ch. 34. 16.
cf. Jude 11.
i *cf.* Prov. 28. 21.
cf. Mic.3.11; 7. 3
cf. Tit. 1. 11.
j ver. 22.
k *cf.* Jer. 14. 14.
l ver. 8.
cf. Is. 2. 12–17.
m *cf.* 2 Ki.18. 4.
n *cf.* Mt. 21. 12, etc.
o *cf.* Ps. 124. 7.

And God's delight is shown in various instances, as in the case of the daughters of Zelophehad, who claimed their portion in Jehovah's land when a weaker faith might have thought it humility to make no claim. The heart that counts upon God's grace, how much may it enjoy of the grace it counts upon! Grace is the same grace towards all, and God answers faith. Alas, we ourselves put limit where God puts none. If we make our portion in the land the whole question, we may hesitate to ask for the needed springs—which Achsah did—to make the very land that is our own, fruitful! Beautiful is the recognition, which even a false propheey is forced to make, as to the sovereign grace of God in the instruments that it employs. But, alas, even such precious grace as this could find those who would pervert it, and Ezekiel has now to utter Jehovah's voice against the daughters of his people, who prophesied out of their own heart merely.*

The words that describe the conduct of these have been differently interpreted. What was this sewing of cushions upon all arm-holes, and making veils for the head of every stature to catch souls? Many have interpreted these things literally, as magic fillets worn by these women after the manner of sorceresses, to impose upon their dupes, and which perhaps imposed upon themselves also. But this seems nothing but conjecture; there is no proof, if it be not in the words before us; and while it is easy to recognize the feminine character of these doings, it is surely not necessary to make them seamstresses for such occasions, nor would it mark them out with any plausibility as prophetesses of Jehovah. On the other hand, we may easily read Ezekiel's language here as

* It has been suggested, by Hengstenberg, that these may not have been literal women, but effeminate men, whom in derision the prophet calls prophetesses, and who address themselves to the love of luxury and pleasure which appeals to effeminate natures. "*She* that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth" (1 Tim. 5: 6). It is very significant that it was "that woman Jezebel who calleth herself a prophetess" (Rev. 2: 20) who is the type of the luxurious seductions of the "great harlot" described in Rev. 17, 18. These seductions were for ease and a smooth path by which the people were ensnared, and these snares might well be spread by men who had lost all true manliness of spirit. "As for My people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them."—S. R.

ye have *grieved the heart of the righteous [man] whom I have not made sad, and *strengthened the hands of the wicked [man] that he should not return from his wicked way, to save his life; therefore ye shall no more see vanity nor divine divinations. I will even *deliver my people out of your hand; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah.

3(xiv. 1-11): Against the seekers of oracles.

3. And there came certain of the *elders of Israel unto me, and sat before me. And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their *heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be *inquired of at all by them? Therefore speak to them and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet, I, Jehovah, will answer him *according to this—according to the multitude of his idols: that I may *take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all *estranged from me through their idols. Therefore say

p cf. Mt. 23 4. cf. 1 Sam. 1. 13-16.
q cf. Jer. 23. 14.
r cf. Is. 46. 4.
s ch. 8. 1. ch. 20. 1. ch. 33. 31.
t cf. Eph. 5. 5.
u cf. 2 Ki. 3. 13. cf. Mk. 8. 12.
v cf. ver. 9 with 1 Ki. 22. 15-23.
w cf. Is. 8. 14, 15. cf. Is. 28. 13
x cf. Is. 2. 6. cf. Ps. 58. 3.

figurative. They did in fact, by their prophecies of soft and pleasant things, sew cushions upon the arm-holes, upon which those who listened to them might repose themselves and be at rest; while the veils for the head might, on the one hand, suit what was a mere false humility, and be, on the other, a blinding of the eyes, so as not to see things as they were. These prophetesses sold cheap their sophistries, as Jehovah says, working destruction by them, perverting judgment, so as "to slay souls that should not die, and to save souls alive that should not live." Here again Jehovah must come in to manifest Himself and tear from them the cushions which were upon their own arms also for repose—their false confidence, which infected others. As the constant repetition shows, Jehovah must be and must prove Himself, Jehovah. No lie can avail before Him who is the living Truth, and before whose presence every delusion must at last be broken and pass away; and then what would be the condition of those who had prophesied deceits? Would they catch souls of His people and yet save their own souls alive?

3. The idolatry in the heart of those who professed to be inquiring of the Lord is now exposed in the very elders of Israel who should have led the people in Jehovah's ways, and from whom the revival of the nation should have been looked for. Certain of them come and sit before the prophet, and before they speak God anticipates their inquiry. Only the fact that they are elders is given, those who should have the wisdom of age, therefore, and from whom came the judges of the people. Moreover, they had before their eyes the judgment of God already taking effect upon the nation; a judgment of which they themselves, in their scattered and captive condition, were witnesses. Yet, among those who thus have a decorous outside of orthodoxy, the heart is found, for the most part at least, gone after the common idolatry. It was in this way that false prophets rose up among the true, finding their inspiration, as we presently see, from the desire of the people who, under whatever name, really coveted gods of their own—*manageable* gods, as the idols certainly were, although the

unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: [y] Return ye, and turn yourselves from your idols, and [z] turn away your faces from all your abominations. For every one of the house of Israel, or of the [a] strangers that sojourn in Israel, that [b] separateth himself from me, and setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet to inquire of me by him, I Jehovah will answer him by myself; and I will [c] set my face against that man and will make him an astonishment, for a sign and [d] proverbs, and I will [e] cut him off from the midst of my people; and ye shall [f] know that I am Jehovah. And if the prophet be enticed,* and shall speak a word, I Jehovah have [g] enticed that prophet; and I will stretch out my hand against him, and will [h] destroy him from the midst of my people Israel. And they shall [i] bear their iniquity: the iniquity of the [j] prophet shall be even as the iniquity of the enquirer; that the house of Israel may go [k] no more astray from me, nor defile themselves any more with all their transgressions, but that they may be [l] my people, and I may be their God, saith the Lord Jehovah.

y ch. 33 11
z *cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 9.
a *cf.* Nu. 11. 4.
b *cf.* Lk. 15. 13.
c Lev. 20. 3, 5, 6. Jer. 21. 10. Jer. 44. 11. Amos 9 4. 1 Pet. 3. 12.
d *cf.* Nu. 26. 10. *cf.* 1 Cor. 10. 6. *cf.* 2 Pet. 2. 6.
e Ps. 34. 16, etc.
f ch. 13. 23, etc.
g *cf.* 1 Ki. 22. 23 *cf.* Jer. 4 10 *cf.* Mt. 24. 11 with 2 Thess. 2. 11.
h *cf.* Jer. 28 17. *cf.* ch. 11. 13
i *cf.* Jer. 31. 30.
j Jer. 14. 15, 16. *cf.* 2 Pet. 2 15.
k *cf.* ch. 34 29; *cf.* ch. 16. 63; *cf.* Deut. 13. 11. l ch. 36. 28; *cf.* Zech. 13. 9.

* Or, "deceived."

power of Satan was not deficient in them. They were now treating Ezekiel as a false prophet himself, and thus putting Jehovah also among the false gods, as one who could be flattered, wheedled and bribed into conformity with their own desires. How strange is the mystery of the human heart that must, after all, have a god, and yet will not bow to him! — must have a god, yet in reality be its own god; "*serving*," but even with professing Christians, "serving their own belly," as Scripture says! What a strange and terrible conflict this between their interests and their convictions; and what folly it writes upon this creature of God, intended for communion with Himself, but who has made itself so incapable of it! Their false gods are but the expression of how their hearts and their convictions are opposed to one another.

God therefore meets them, as we see, first of all with the assurance of how truly He discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart, arresting the very inquiry which is upon their lips by giving them the answer which indeed they do not seek, but with all the evidence that it is *God* who gives them answer. It was but their doom, however; it could be nothing else, as they were but too truly representatives of the house of Israel as a whole, and are addressed therefore as such. They are to learn that the prophet, who truly represents Jehovah, is no advocate to make terms between the people and their offended God. Thus God declares that if they approach Him through one upon whom they can work more easily than upon Himself, in hope that such an one can draw God to be of their mind, they shall find that He will answer for Himself, to manifest the more His own unchangeable nature. He therefore declares the doom of those who set up their idols in their hearts, yet came to the prophet with an

4 (12 23): The failure of mercy.

4. And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, when the [m]land sinneth against me by working unfaithfulness, and I stretch out my hand upon it and break the [n]staff of the bread thereof and send famine upon it, and cut off man and beast from it, though these three men, [o]Noah, Daniel, and Job, should be in it, they should deliver but their [p]own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord Jehovah. If I cause evil [q]beasts to pass through the land, and they bereave it, and it becometh a desolation, so that no one [r]passeth through because of the beasts, though these three men should be in it, [as] I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, they should deliver [s]neither sons nor daughters; they only should be delivered, and the land should be a desolation. Or if I bring the [t]sword

m cf. Is. 24. 20. *cf.* Lam. 1. 8. *n* Lev. 26. 26. Is. 3. 1. *o* ch. 5. 16, 17. *p* vers. 16, 18, 20 *cf.* Jer. 15. 1. *cf.* Gen. 6. 8, 9. *cf.* Dan. 9. 21. *cf.* ch. 28. 3. *cf.* Job 1. 5. *q ctr.* Gen. 18. 23 33 with Jer. 5. 1. *q* Lev. 26. 22. *cf.* 1 Ki. 20. 36. *cf.* 2 Ki. 17. 25. *cf.* Jer. 15. 3. *r cf.* Jer. 9. 12. *cf.* Is. 34. 10. *s ctr.* Gen. 7. 13. *t* Lev. 26. 25; *cf.* ch. 32. 11, 12.

outward semblance of obedience to inquire from Jehovah. He would answer for Himself—not merely by the prophet—setting His face against such, making them a sign and a proverb by His dealing with them. Moreover, if they could entice, as, alas, they did entice prophets professedly of God, to utter a word such as they coveted to hear, Jehovah might permit them to have the message which they craved from such a prophet, but they would both alike find the penalty of their iniquity, and be destroyed from among the people whom God would have in result as His people, and to whom He would be God, according to the name by which He was in covenant with them, the unchangeable Jehovah.

4. A solemn appendix to this follows. These elders would fain have had an answer of peace without righteous foundation to it, and would have made the prophet the mediator of such a peace. God answers them now, although not with a direct message to them, but as it were with His face turned away; addressing the prophet merely, He announces the principles of His own holy government under which they and all must come. Thus "the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, when a land sinneth against Me by working unfaithfulness, and I stretch out my hand upon it and break the staff of bread thereof, and send famine upon it, and cut off man and beast from it: though these three men, Noah, Daniel and Job, should be in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord Jehovah."

Thus, in the condition of which the Lord speaks, and in which the people of Israel were at this time, no human mediation could be at all available, even of the righteous. Of these, God chooses three who might of all men be most suited as intercessors; if even *they* were before Him at the present time, their pleading would alter nothing in such a case. Noah had stood at the wreck of one world, and alone was spared with his house to begin another; when the after-world was once again departing far from Him, Job was declared by God Himself to have no equal upon the earth. Noah and Job had long since passed away. It is remarkable to find Daniel associated with such men as these—a young man as Daniel surely was at this time, and in the court of the king of Babylon; but this has no doubt to do with his fitness to represent hopes that might be very much centered in him; his great place with Nebuchadnezzar being gained in so remarkable a way, and so conspicuous. It had been, too, by

upon that land, and say, Sword, go through the land; so that I cut off man and beast from it, and these three men should be in it, [as] I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, they should deliver neither sons nor daughters, but they only themselves should be delivered. Or if I send a [u]pestilence into that land and pour out my wrath upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast, and Noah, Daniel, and Job should be in it, [as] I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, they should deliver neither son nor daughter, they should but deliver their own souls by their righteousness. For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: How much [w]more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the evil beast, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast. But behold, there shall be left in it those that [x]escape, who shall be brought out of it, sons and daughters. Behold, they shall come forth unto you, and ye shall see their way and their doings; and ye shall be [z]comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, as to all that I have brought upon it. And they shall comfort you, when ye see their way and their doings; and ye shall know that I have [y]not done without cause all that I have done in it, saith the Lord Jehovah.

u ch. 38. 22. *cf.* 2 Sam. 24. 15. *cfr.* 1 Ki. 8. 37-39.

v ch. 5. 17. *cf.* Amos 4. 6-12.

w *cf.* ch. 6. 8-10. *cf.* Is. 6. 13. *cf.* Is. 17. 4-6.

x *cf.* Rom. 2. 24. *cf.* 2 Sam. 12. 14.

z *cf.* Is. 52. 5. *cf.* ch. 36. 20, 23. *cf.* ch. 20. 43. *cf.* Lev. 26. 39. *cf.* Hos 5. 15.

y *cf.* Jer. 22. 8, 9. *cf.* Deut. 29. 24, 25. *cf.* 1 Ki. 9. 8, 9.

actual prevailing with God in prayer—prayer which had availed for others as much as for himself, a sample of the "effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous," of which James speaks. It was as one of these practically righteous ones his prayer had prevailed with the Lord. It was not the favor of man that had raised up Daniel, but the favor of God. How much might be hoped for from such a conspicuous representative of God in a day like that! Yet, while recognizing Daniel's eminent place, and associating him with the prominently righteous of by-gone generations, all human hopes that might be based upon this are refused. Not Noah, Daniel and Job together could avert a judgment which was already in fact begun!* Indeed, if only one of God's four sore plagues had been in question, they could not have turned it away; but these four plagues were all of them together now upon the land.

The sentence had been pronounced; judgment was already begun; how vain to think of altering the word which had thus gone forth from God! All that remained was to acquiesce in it; and in a strange and terrible way would God work, as He assures Ezekiel, to produce this acquiescence. There should

*There seems a contrast here too with the Lord's mercy when there is the least indication of a possibility of any returning to Him. "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now . . . if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment . . . and I will pardon it" (Jer. 5: 1). So in Abraham's intercession for Sodom, God declared He would spare the city if but ten righteous were found there. It is to be noted that Abraham ceased asking for any further lowering of the number; as long as he asked, God granted his request. "Ye are the salt of the earth;" but the time comes, as in the days of Noah, when the salt was taken away and the corrupt earth left to its doom. So will it be at the coming of the Lord for His church. A similar moral state is here described by Ezekiel. The testimony of the few faithful ones, like Jeremiah, was helpless in the face of universal apostasy. Therefore nothing but judgment was left.—S. R.

5 (xv.): Israel a fruitless vine. Their responsibility and judgment.

5. And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, what is the wood of the [z] vine more than any wood—the vine-branch, which is among the trees of the forest? Shall [a] wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will [men] take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon? Behold, it is given to the [b] fire for fuel: its two ends that the fire consumed and the midst of it is burned; * is it fit for [any] work? Behold, when it was whole, it was used for no work; how much less when the fire has consumed it and it is burned. Shall it yet

[z] *cf.* Ps. 80. 8-15. *cf.* Is. 5. 1, etc. *cf.* Jno. 15. 1, etc.
[a] *cf.* ch. 17. 6. *cf.* Judg. 9. 12, 13. *cfr.* Deut. 32. 32, 33.
[b] Jno. 15. 6. *cf.* Zech. 11. 2. *cf.* Is. 27. 11.

* Or, "dried out."

be left in Jerusalem a remnant who would escape, and be brought out of it, sons and daughters: "Behold, they shall come forth unto you, and ye shall see their way and their doings; and ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, as to all that I have brought upon it; yea, they shall comfort you when ye see their way and their doings, and ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it." Such language is as unmistakable as solemn. This spared remnant, alas, a remnant not of the righteous, but of the wicked, after all God's mercy to them would demonstrate by their very doings the necessity of God's judgment. God would be vindicated in such a way that every upright heart must acquiesce in it.

5. And still there is a supplement, as we may say, even to this. "And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, what is the wood of the vine more than any wood?—the vine-branch which is among the trees of the forest? Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon?" The vine, as we know, is of use simply for one thing, for its fruit. If it bear no fruit, there is no reason for its existence. What is its wood? Compare it, says the Lord, with those trees of the forest among which it twines its branches. Has it wood like their wood? Can you manufacture anything from it? or can it serve any purpose? Only for one thing is it of the least use, it is for the fire.* And, as already shown, God was acting thus with regard to Israel. Its two ends, the kingdom of Ephraim and the kingdom of Judah alike, were manifestly being consumed in the fire which was burning the whole of it. How useless now to expect anything from what was so manifestly a mere brand for the burning! Thus it was with the inhabitants of Jerusalem; at the time the prophet spoke they were as between two fires from both sides—Egypt and Babylon—ready to lay hold of them; and to the fire they would be given up. That which they dreaded would come upon them; they should know that He was Jehovah when He set His face in unchangeable holiness against them.

One cannot but remember, in connection with what is here, the Lord's word

* Israel had been brought as a vine out of Egypt (Ps. 80: 8). Everything had been done to secure fruit. The heathen had been displaced, it had been cared for, and had flourished, but all had been in vain. With a slight change of figure, the prophet Isaiah pleads with Israel, which had been planted as a vine in a very fruitful hill, fenced, guarded and tended, but which had borne only wild grapes. "For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel . . . and He looked for judgment, but behold, oppression; for righteousness, but behold, a cry" (Isa. 5: 1-7). Their vine had become as the vine of Sodom (Deut. 32: 32), although planted a noble vine (Jer. 2: 21). Israel had become an empty vine (Hos. 10: 1). Therefore, failing utterly to bear *fruit*, nothing but judgment was left for it.—S. R.

be used for any work? Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: As the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest which I have given to the fire for fuel, so will I [c]give the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And I will [d]set my face against them: from the fire they have [e]gone out, but fire shall devour them; and ye shall [f]know that I am Jehovah when I set my face against them. And I will make the land a [g]desolation because they have wrought [h]unfaithfulness, saith the Lord Jehovah.

[c] *cf.* Jer 52. 13 with Jer. 2. 21. *cf.* Mic 3.12.
[d] Lev. 17. 10. Ps 34. 16. Jer 21. 10.
[e] *cf.* 1 Ki. 19. 17. *cf.* Is. 24. 18. *cf.* Amos 5. 19. *cf.* Jer. 48. 44. *cf.* Amos 9. 1-4.
[f] ch. 6. 7, etc.
[g] ch. 6. 14; ch. 33. 29; Is. 24. 3-12. [h] *cf.* 2 Chr. 36. 14-17.

to us as Christians, in which He declares Himself the true Vine, the stock of the vine for His people, from which all the sap and nourishment must come; in whom alone, therefore, all ability for fruit is found: "I am the Vine," says the Lord to His disciples: "ye are the branches." There is nothing strange, therefore, in the choice of this image for Jerusalem. In God's people is found at all times that weakness and impotence which belong to man, apart from Him who alone can be to them the source of supply—the all-sufficient Source. It is ours to recognize this feebleness and nothingness on our part; not merely such as is necessarily in the creature, but more, in the *ruined* creature; as hopelessly ruined as Israel in the picture here. To be connected with Israel, now cast out of the land, could be no cause of hope, apart from the grace of God which could alone fulfil to them those promises which in grace He had given, which He would fulfil, therefore—must fulfil—for His own sake, for He can neither change nor repent. Nevertheless, no individual in Israel could *claim* their fulfilment. God's grace itself was manifestly out of their reach, save only as in the confession of this helplessness faith turned to Him who, because of His own nature, could not turn away from the prayer of the destitute confiding in Him. Here is where we find our place and portion still, who have indeed no part in these promises which are to be fulfilled to Israel, but who enjoy, nevertheless, the sweet new covenant assurances in their fullest reality.

How blessed to know Christ as the unfailing resource of His people; from whom they have but to draw, as the branch from the vine, for unlimited capacity for fruitfulness! We are "blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus." What we want, therefore, is but the faith which claims and looks for the fulfilment of these blessings—the actual ministry of them for actual need. And of what use are we if we do not bear fruit? "In this," says the Lord, "is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."

Sec. 3.

We have now the long and terrible history of Jerusalem as the Lord alone could give it: a people who, in so signal and manifest a way, had been delivered by the power of God from the misery of her original condition, as born among the nations, and made to know Himself. None, surely, had been brought face to face with Him as Israel had. And Jerusalem was only Israel in fullest manifestation; and not only delivered, but they had been united to God in a way no other nation had, to have their part with Him, and know the full blessedness of that in the midst of a world gone far from Him. They were thus (wonderful to speak of it) as it were Jehovah's married wife, to whom He was

SECTION 3 (Chap. xvi.).

Jerusalem's profanation of her marriage covenant, yet final restoration.

1 (1-5): Her original condition.

1. And the [f]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, [g]cause Jerusalem to know her abominations, and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah unto Jerusalem:

[f] ch. 15. 1, etc.
[g] ch. 20. 4. ch. 22. 2. cf. Ps. 78. 9, etc. cf. Ps. 106. 6, 7, etc.

in a relationship peculiar and exclusive amongst the nations, and enjoying all the blessings that this great and wonderful position would of necessity yield for them. Yet they were now to prove the terrible capacity on man's part of losing all that he is entrusted with, in breaking, as far as he can do it, every tie by which God would bind him to Himself.

The long story of this is given in all its loathsomeness, for it was no time to hide the reality of it all, so that it should be fully judged. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not find judgment from God; thus, for those who had hearts to realize it (and the spiritual eye is in the heart) Israel is taught here to judge herself, that grace may even now be her refuge; and, as at the beginning, so at the end, triumphant therefore all through, God's grace is manifest. If Israel has profaned her marriage covenant, yet God in the end shows Himself true to it: and from Him shall come the final restoration which shall at last openly, in the eyes of all the world, manifest His grace, so that the world itself should know it. This, then, is what we have here.

1. Israel's original condition is first reviewed. As already said, Jerusalem is only Israel in full development. The city stands for the people, as cities are everywhere the development of man, in which what he is is most fully shown and brought to maturity. The city in this way is notable from many sides. The tendency of men is plainly towards cities; they show what man is, what he can do for himself; as, on the other side, they show his feebleness, his dependence, and how little he can do. There was no city *of God* in the beginning. The first city that we read of was man's city, not God's. It was the offspring of man's thoughts and of his need. The city is the bringing together of men in the consciousness of their need of one another, according to the common motto that "Union is strength." Helplessness is written upon man in his very beginning. The human babe is helpless as the young of no other creature is. The child from its beginning and for long, is debtor to others if it is to exist at all; and for suitable development men must come together. God has so ordained that full independence should be impossible for us. Individuality with all of us is grounded in some way upon individual defect. We are not competent all round. We have each his special capacities and his special deficiencies; as, in the world at large also, each country has its own peculiar productions and its need of what is to be got from elsewhere. Thus the world is bound together, and it is quite superfluous to-day to dwell upon the need which we thus have of one another.

The city then is the natural product of this need; but while it is almost necessarily thus the product of man's thought, there is in it a divine meaning which eternity itself will recognize in the fullest way. Yet man anticipated God as to it, and such an anticipation is ever found to be without God, and to have, therefore, all the terrible characteristics of this. Those who would not scatter, when that was God's mind, remained but to build up Babel. Yet man finds the help he seeks. "As iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the

countenance of his friend." The bringing of men together favors this; and even the more diverse such men are, the more may this help be manifested—struck out, as one may say, even from the collision of contrasted attributes. Thus in the city we find, as a rule, the ripest fruits of man's efforts, and always, perhaps, his ripest wisdom, but in evil as well as good. And, alas, with man such as he is, selfish ends dominate too largely to make the coming together wholly good. Rather is there oftentimes, as we know, the most manifest and fullest debasement in this way. What spectacles are men's cities of vice and poverty, as, on the other hand, of man's achievements! Cain builds his city; and his posterity show the aptitudes which are developed in such combinations as the city manifests. But it is plain that morally the development is but a degeneration. On the other hand, in the final future, the city will manifest God's hand in it—God's hand in our individual necessities themselves; in our various adaptation to one another; in our various ability to help one another. Love is the spirit of help, and, where true, manifests the divine nature. How blessed to know that His own ministry of love to us all is to be reflected in our ways with one another. The city of God stands over against the city of man, contrasted, yet resembling. Jerusalem here gives us, in a sense, both sides of this—city of God, as in His thought and desire; city of man, as he but too surely makes it. Jerusalem, then, is but Israel herself in full development.

She is first told of her extraction and of her birth. Heredity puts its mark upon the pages of Scripture, as it does everywhere upon nature; only, man being fallen, the mark of heredity is largely the mark of the fall. Grace makes us to rise above this, but if the power of grace declines, the natural heredity manifests itself once more. Thus Jerusalem was, as it were, again Canaanite, as it was in its origin: "Thy father," says God, "was an Amorite, and thy mother a Hittite." Notice these names here, where everything has a symbolic force, and fully significant, therefore. At the very opening of the world after the flood, as a mark of departure from God already beginning, and so soon to spread everywhere in it, we find the shameful story of Ham ("darkened by the light," as his name imports), and Canaan is his immediate descendant; it shows us man, not in mere original ignorance of God, as many now would make him, but as one who, in the presence of the light received it only as capacity for degradation. Resisted light is ten-fold darkness. From such an one Canaan is the natural fruit, Canaan "the merchantman," as the word is plainly used in Scripture. Canaan is from *cana*, "to bend the knee, to bow down." "Servant of servants" he was to be to his brethren; and we may be sure that he was that in spirit, if God puts him into this place. But we may serve in two ways. We may serve in love, in which there is nothing higher. But, with fallen man, this service may be but as in Canaan the spirit of the slave (the "servant of servants"), the spirit of fear and not of love. Or it may be for selfish ends; when, of necessity, subtlety and deceit will characterize it. "He is a merchant" (*Canaan*), says the prophet, "the balances of deceit are in his hand; he loveth to oppress" (Hos. xii 7). Thus it is plain what the spirit of his service is. The Amorite comes naturally from this.

The Amorite, as we have seen elsewhere, does not mean "the mountaineer," for which there is no proper justification. He is "the talker," the man of words; in the East, in the market-place, he is the person who perhaps most impresses you. The merchant, there, is emphatically one who "cries up" his wares; demanding a higher price than he ever expects to get, in order to

Thine *extraction and thy birth is of the land of the Canaanite; thy [l]father was an Amorite and thy [m]mother a Hittite. And as for thy [n]nativity, in the day that thou wast born, thy [o]navel was not cut, neither wast thou [p]washed with water for cleansing;* thou wast

k ch. 21. 30. *cf.* Neh. 9. 7. with Is. 51. 1, 2. *cf.* Eph. 2. 3. *cf.* Deut. 26. 5.
l *cf.* Deut. 20. 17. *cf.* Rom. 5.

* Or, "for looking upon;" so Gesenius.

12. *m cf.* Ezra 9. 1; *cf.* Ps. 51. 5. *n cf.* Ex. 1. 7, 14; *cf.* Ex. 2. 3, 6; *cf.* Acts 7. 18, 19; *cf.* Hos. 2. 3. *o cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 17, 18; *cf.* 2 Cor. 7. 1. *p cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 9; *cf.* Ex. 19. 10.

leave room for the inevitable coming down. He knows the uttermost value of his goods; or if he is buying, how to depreciate that which he really values. The wise man exactly describes him: "It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer; but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth" (Prov. xx. 14). With greed against greed, the balances are sure to be deceitful ones; and for him who is possessed with a spirit of this sort, everything is valued according to its estimate in the market. Alas for "the Canaanite in the house of the Lord!" (Zech. xiv. 21). Here the Judas-spirit develops, who will sell his Master cheap enough; and we see directly the proofs of Israel's parentage in this way, how the Amorite father manifests itself in her.*

Her mother also as the Hittite is not difficult to understand. The sons of Heth are literally "the children of fear" (See Gen. xxiii. 19, *Notes*). Such fear necessarily develops where the heart is set upon its own things, and in a world where every one is at strife with his neighbor. In the things of God also it comes in, as we know, in such sort that men tell us to-day that all religion is bred of it. This, moreover, can alternate with utter recklessness; for such a spirit will naturally seek the antidotes for its torment, which the world and Satan will as readily supply. All this, alas, but too well depicts the history of the professing people of God, whether in Israel or in the Christendom that has succeeded it. If we would get the profit of all this, we must not lose sight of the unmistakable repetition before our eyes to-day of Israel's history. We have it all, even to the Babylonish captivity, and the broken fragments which have come out of it. Go back to the so-called "dark ages," or find the spots in in which these dark ages have survived to the present day, and see how a selfish spirit of fear is everywhere, and how it connects with the haughtiness of a spiritual profession which knows how to cry up its wares, while it will sell them cheap, too, to attract sufficiently the bidder. The Amorite and the Hittite have left unmistakably their impress upon things everywhere; and we have little cause to boast ourselves with the Philistine boast (see ver. 27) against scattered and exiled Israel. Yet we cannot but notice in Jacob, the supplanter, how these features showed themselves in the very beginning of the nation—before there was a nation at all. But this is all that heredity can do for us. For the rest, it must be the grace of God or nothing.

We come now (ver. 4) to the actual birth of the nation which, as we know, was in Egypt. The forlornness of their condition was manifest when, according to the figurative language here, their navel was not cut; that is to say, they

*The Amorites, or "Talkers," suggest that pride which is so distinctive of high profession—"speaking great swelling words;"—"Our lips are our own, who is lord over us." Pride and boasting seem thus to be connected with the thought of the Amorite, the *emir* (as the word is) who exalts himself, and gives his commands. The Hittite is the other extreme—cringing, fawning cowardice. They are linked together as the parentage of the natural man. "Ye shall be as God" is the Amorite pride; "they hid themselves" is the Hittite cowardice.—S. R.

not rubbed with [q]salt at all, nor [r]wrapped in swaddling bands at all. No eye had [s]pity on thee to do any of these things for thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast [t]cast out in the open field, so [u]abhorred was thy person in the day that thou wast born.

2 (6-8): Her deliverence and Jehovah's love.

2. And I [v]passed by thee, and saw thee [w]weltering in thy blood, and I said unto thee in thy blood, [x]Live! Yea, I said unto thee in thy blood, Live! I caused thee to [y]multiply* as the sprout of the field; and thou didst increase and grow [z]great, and camest to [a]excellent

* Or, "made thee myriads."

cf. Lk. 10. 33; *cf.* Lk. 18. 37. *w cf.* Eph. 2. 1. *x cf.* Eph. 2. 5; *cf.* Col. 2. 13. *y cf.* Ex. 12. 37; *cf.* Gen. 22. 17. *z cf.* Deut. 4. 32-34; *cf.* Gen. 18. 18; *cf.* Deut. 26. 5. *a cf.* Ex. 3. 22; *cf.* Deut. 4. 8; *cf.* Deut. 32. 10-14; *cf.* Ps. 135. 4.

q cf. Lev. 2. 13.
r cf. Lk. 2. 7, 12.
s cf. Is. 49. 15. *cf.* Lam. 2. 11, 19. *cf.* Lam. 4. 3, 10.
t cf. Gen. 21. 10. *cf.* Jer. 9. 21, 22. *cf.* Deut. 32. 10.
u cf. Is. 14. 19. *cf.* Mic. 7. 10.
v cf. Ex. 2. 24, 25.

were not qualified, as it might seem, for independent life at all, and thus exposed to death at the very outset.* Nor were they washed with water for cleansing. How they had forgotten the very name of their God in Egypt is manifest by Moses' inquiry (Ex. iii. 13); and the golden calf is manifest proof of how the Egyptian idolatry had laid hold of them. Thus they were not rubbed with salt at all; they were strangers to divine holiness and to that power which alone can resist corruption. Nor, as yet, were there even swaddling-bands for the infant nation. The restraints suited to their condition which love itself may impose, and which they were to find afterwards, were, as yet, unfelt. Egypt had lawlessness enough for them, if it had no true freedom. And Israel was, as we know, no object of compassion even to the nation among whom they had come to be. They were but as a foundling cast out into the open field to perish; as we may see them in Moses their deliverer himself thus cast out, but with the divine hand over him, and a divine purpose in all, through which these very circumstances became the means of lifting him into his higher and God-ordained position.

2. It is evident, then, in what we find here, it is not the city Jerusalem merely or literally that we are to think of, but the nation as we find them in Egypt when under the decree of the persecutor, in their blood, as it is expressed here, and groaning in their bondage, "God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged them" (Ex. ii. 25). The first sign of their national life and of the blessing of God was even then manifesting itself with regard to them in their multiplication under the very decree of death; and when afterwards the judgments were upon Egypt, Israel, as we read, grew great and came to excellent adornment. It was indeed the voice of the Almighty that had said unto them in their blood, "Live." And, according to the figure, the breasts that were to nourish her children grew; while even then, nevertheless, they were, as far as the blessing which God designed for them, still "naked and bare." But then and thus it was that He looked upon them; and for this despised people, mere Egyptian bond-slaves as they were, there came the time of love in which, as He declares, He spread His skirt over them to cover their nakedness. We cannot but think of the covering cloud, and how, when they seemed to be exposed to the wrath of their enemies and almost in their grasp,

* The necessary separation from defilements of birth is here suggested. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." The link with its symbolic Hittite mother had not been cut. The picture is dreadful and solemn, but divinely applicable to Israel's infancy as a nation.—S. R.

adornment;* thy breasts were fashioned and thy hair grew: yet thou wast [b]naked and bare. And I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, and behold, thy time was the [c]time of love; and I spread my [d]skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness; and I [e]sware unto thee, and entered into [f]covenant with thee, saith the Lord Jehovah, and thou becamest [g]mine.

* Lit., "Adornment of adornments."

b *cf.* Hos. 2. 3.
c *cf.* Jer. 2. 2. *cf.* Rev. 2. 4.
d *cf.* Ruth 3. 9.
e *cf.* ch. 20. 5, 6. *cfr.* Heb. 7. 20-22.
f *cf.* Ex. 19. 4-8. *cfr.* Ex. 24. 1-8. *cfr.* Hos. 2. 18-20.
g *cf.* Ex. 33. 16; *cf.* Is. 43. 1.

the sea made way for them, while the cloud covered them from above. Here, already, they were proclaimed the people of the Lord, although the covenant at Sinai had not yet taken place; and, indeed, it is important to realize that *this* covenant was not, after all, the foundation of blessing for the nation. God had His own purpose in it, and His purposes are always blessing.*

The law was needed as the handmaid of a grace for which the people as yet, alas, were not prepared; and when God looked upon them in Egypt, it is expressly declared that He remembered His "covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob," and thus "took knowledge of them." In the same way, at the bush, God declares Himself to Moses as "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob;" and His word is: "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt" (Ex. iii. 7). His message to Pharaoh accordingly is: "Thus saith Jehovah, Israel is my son, my first-born; and I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve Me." Thus God's recognition of His people does not wait for any legal promise on their part of what *they* will do: and when at Sinai the legal covenant begins, He could already say to them (Ex. xix. 4): "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself." True, He has now to say: "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. xix. 5, 6). Thus there was a covenant which they had to keep or observe, but that which followed was not what is yet in the divine mind for them, of which the new covenant is to be the perfect expression. Nor are we to confound, as alas so many Christians even still do, the old with the new covenant. It was of their own choice and with the declaration of their own ability—the value of which had so soon to be tested, but with such terrible result—that God proclaimed in their hearing from the mount which flamed with fire and quaked under His presence there, the terms of blessing which they might find in an obedience which was rendered as easy as possible for them, but which, nevertheless, was the "ministration of death."

Hittite they are in their own character surely, as they tremble and stand afar

* This period is touchingly referred to in Jeremiah, "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after Me in the wilderness . . . Israel was holiness unto the Lord" (Jer. 2: 2, 3). The whole chapter is a solemn and tender pleading with a poor unfaithful people, like an untrue wife; and this is followed up in the next chapter: "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you" (chap. 3: 14). Similarly Isaiah (chap. 50) shows that it was not the Lord, but Israel's sins which had brought about her divorce. This is the frequent imagery of Scripture in history (as Gen. 29: 18), psalm (45) and prophecy. In a higher and sweeter sense it is also the type of the union of Christ with the Church (Eph. 5: 32, etc.). The two are not however to be confounded.—S. R.

3 (9-14): Her conferred glory.

3. And I [h]washed thee with water, yea, I thoroughly washed thy blood from off thee, and I [i]anointed thee with oil. And I [j]clothed thee with broidered work, and shod thee with [k]seal-skin, and bound thee about with fine [l]linen and covered thee with [m]silk. And I

[h] Ex. 19. 10. [i] Ps. 51. 7. [j] cf. Ex. 13. 21, 22. cf. 2 Cor. 5. 21. [k] cf. Ex. 19. 4-6.

cf. Ps. 45. 13, 14. [k] cf. Ex. 25. 5; Ex. 26. 14; cf. Deut. 33. 25. [l] cf. Ex. 39. 27-29 with Ex. 19. 6; cf. Gen. 41. 42; cf. Prov. 31. 22. [m] cf. Rev. 18. 12.

off while Moses draws near to the thick darkness in which God is (Ex. xx. 18–21); and Amorite none the less for that, as we see in their ready profession. But thus it was that they had to be tested, as Moses declares: "God is come to prove you," he says. But alas for the fallen creature under the proving of God! What can it prove but a fallen condition? And Moses' song long after this (Deut. xxxii.), a song which was to be put into their mouths that it might be a witness for God against the children of Israel (Deut. xxxi. 19), declares at once the utter hopelessness of blessing under it, and the grace of God which must be their only resource at last. Nevertheless, Israel was here now by their own profession in covenant with the Lord; they had fully, of course, the responsibility of this.

3. The object here is manifestly to recite all that God did for them, and in spite of legal conditions, how God's grace as well as His holiness was made to shine out. "I washed thee with water," He says, "yea, I thoroughly washed thy blood from off thee, and I anointed thee with oil." Hengstenberg asserts here that "We are not to think of spiritual benefits;" and that "the prophet abides by what is palpable, which the ungodly even, whose consciences he wishes to touch, would necessarily recognize." How narrow is this as an idea, and how little it does justice to what God was doing for His people, in which the spiritual benefits were, as one may say, the whole thing aimed at—without which all others would be necessarily empty and vain; true also, as has just been acknowledged, that the people under the test of the law, would necessarily show themselves what man under such tests has ever shown himself to be, and that, notwithstanding the large outward show of blessing in keeping the Lord's words, which should have enticed nature itself, if possible, into obedience. They were to have all possible assistances to this, and self-interest itself was to be enlisted upon the same side. Every material good was to be with the righteous; the whole nation, under one government, committed to the same path, was to be in favor of him who kept the covenant. Nevertheless, He who knew man perfectly—who knew the needs of the true-hearted who would experience that by the law is the knowledge of sin—could not but speak all through of God's continual mercy and the ground of His showing this. The very publication of commandments in the keeping of which, if it were possible, man should live, was a light which must needs have effect upon the nation at large. Moreover, they had all the responsibility of the knowledge which God had given them of Himself in the constant interventions in their behalf, providing for them through the barren sands of the wilderness every day of their journey—a constant miracle. Thus He could say of them, in contrast with the terrible immoralities of the nations around: "I washed thee with water;" and in the provisions of His law itself, when seen in connection with their typical meaning: "I thoroughly washed thy blood from off thee, and I anointed thee with oil."

As to what these last words signify in their deepest meaning, we cannot but see ground for it in the gifts and work of the Spirit manifesting Himself among

them, the responsibility of which was upon all. From those who have heart for the blessing, nothing can shut out blessing. Nothing on God's part surely would ever do it. And the oracles of God, which, as we must remember, began to take written form with Moses himself, were as the voice of the Spirit; the apostle Paul puts them as Israel's chiefest blessing: "Chiefly that unto them were committed the oracles of God." How much are we not receiving at this present time through God's word to them! Here, then, God puts before the nation, in its extreme departure from Him, all that in which He had wrought to bring them nigh.*

The clothing with "broidered work" (literally, "variegated work") naturally refers to the elaborate ceremonial of their religion; in which, although under a veil, all the grace of God was found for them, as far as it could then have expression. What an interweaving of forms and colors do we find there when we consider its typical significance—continually inviting the meditation of the thoughtful; and for those who, stricken in conscience by the law's just claim upon them, how it pointed them to God's way of forgiveness! We may see in the 32nd psalm how far this knowledge could go, while here the very failure of the law to produce perfection made it all the more a finger pointing to that which was yet to come. The inefficiency of those sacrifices, such as those of bulls and goats, would necessarily press itself upon any who realized what sin was; while faith, in connection with prophecies given from the very beginning, would find in it the foretoken of a better Sacrifice to come. On the other hand, when positive, wilful sin was in question, the ceremonies failed altogether, and one in sin like David's was left entirely to God's mercy, as he also expresses it in the 51st psalm. In all this Israel was plainly under the school-master, and the law was already the handmaid of the grace upon which everything depends for man.

The shoeing with sealskin, which is next spoken of, makes us think of Kohath's charge in the wilderness, to whom the most precious things, as the object-lessons for approach to God, were committed—all went under the protection of sealskin. Israel was thus, in a higher sense than the literal, shod for the way. She must pursue her journey in peace: and so are we, as the apostle tells us, "shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;" shoes which, like those of Israel in the wilderness, never wear out.

The "fine linen" speaks of practical righteousness, inscribed as it was upon the tables of the covenant. The clothing of the priests, and the enclosure of the tabernacle itself, was of fine linen; to a thoughtful mind it could hardly fail to suggest something of what it typified. It comes also in its natural place in the enumeration here, after cleansing by the blood and the maintenance of approach to God had been duly cared for—things upon which all righteousness depends.

The word used here for "silk" only occurs twice in Scripture. It speaks of something drawn out (*meshi*, from *mashah*); it is an animal product, as the fine

* The anointing with oil was an official act in setting apart priests, kings, and in one case at least, the prophet to his work. As a type of the Spirit, it would suggest the empowering of the anointed one for his work. Thus Israel as a nation had that ministry of the Spirit which should have been an abundant sufficiency for all her testimony and service. That she so utterly failed was but proof of her alienation, not of any lack in God's provision. The simile of the marriage relation is still preserved here. The presentation of queen Esther to Ahasuerus will illustrate this. For the Church however the unction is of the *indwelling* Spirit, and therefore abides eternally.—S. R.

decked thee with [n]ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands and a chain about thy neck: and I put a ring upon thy nose and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful [o]crown upon thy head. Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver, and thy clothing was fine linen, and silk and broidered work; thou didst

n *cf.* Gen. 24. 22, 47, 53 with Ex. 33. 4. *cf.* Prov. 1. 9. *cf.* Prov. 4. 9.
o *cf.* Is. 28. 5. *cf.* Lam. 5. 16.

linen is a vegetable one. All nature contributes to the symbolism of spiritual things, and none can question that Israel's was a symbolic system throughout. Silk is produced by the caterpillar, according to the figurative idea, through death to resurrection; left behind, as it were, by the creature for the use of man. We thus see in it the most costly ornament of God's people still—in fact, the "best robe" for the Father's house.

This introduces to what is more simply *ornament*, for God is not satisfied with meeting the necessities of His people, but must enrich those whom He has delivered. Hands, neck, nose, ears, head, are all covered with them. The bracelet (*tsamid*) speaks of what is "joined together," and *tsemed* means a "yoke;" thus are the hands still ornamented that are used to labor in the service of Christ. The chain for the neck (*rabhid*, "collar for the throat") reminds us of that through which the high praises of God should sound, as expressed in psalm 149. In both of these last things the activities of the divine life are pointed out as the true ornament of God's people. The nose-ring seems to give us the effect for the whole life here: *nezem al appaim* means literally "the device for the nostrils," which in Scripture are connected with the human life which is as a vapor in the poor, weak creature which man is; but by God's "device," the wonderful plan which these things bring before us, the life is redeemed from vanity. It seems that we are here reminded of all this.

Then we have the ear-rings in the ear. The word *agil* is in close relation with the name *Eglon* (see Josh. x. 3, *Notes*), which means not simply a "ring," but with the thought of movement also, reminding us of what Ezekiel has ever in remembrance, the whirring wheels, the wheel of life ordained at once for man's humiliation and his blessing. These two things come constantly together, and the ear is truly circumcised when it accepts the divine lesson. "The ear that heareth the reproof of life shall abide among the wise" (Prov. xv. 31). Thus the ear is indeed beautified and capable of hearing aright all other things when it has heard, first of all, the condemnation upon man himself, which, accepted, brings him ever to the never-failing blessing which God has for him.*

After all this comes the beautiful crown. A people of whom the former things were true could not lack it. Israel, when true to her God, could not but be thus a queen among the nations. If she failed, the cause of the failure is manifest. For when God was even in measure owned in the midst of Israel, she stood unconquerable by all enemies. Thus the next words picture her according to her God-given exaltation. As we see her in Solomon's time, she has indeed "come to royal estate." The Lord sums up what He has done for them: "Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver, and thy clothing was fine linen and silk and broidered work." And to this is added that by which God sustains the creature so dependent upon Him: "Thou didst eat fine flour and honey and

* How beautifully all these adornments speak of the Lord our righteousness. Each detail yields a fuller richer meaning for us than even it could do for Israel, for all is *real*, spiritual, and therefore eternal.—S. ft.

eat fine [p]flour, and [q]honey, and [r]oil; and thou becamest [s]exceeding beautiful and didst prosper unto [t]royal estate. And thy [u]fame went forth among the nations for thy beauty; for it was perfect through [v]my comeliness which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord Jehovah.

15. *t cf.* Gen. 17. 6; *cf.* 2 Sam. 8. 15. *u cf.* Deut. 4. 6-8, 32-38; *cf.* Josh. 2. 9. *cf.* Song 1. 5 with Song 4. 7.

p cf. Deut. 32. 13, 14. *cf.* Ps. 81. 16. *q cf.* Ex. 3. 17. *r cf.* Deut. 33. 24. *cf.* Deut. 8. 8 *s cf.* Ps. 48. 2. *cf.* Ps. 50. 2. *cf.* Lam. 2. *v cf.* Ps. 90. 17;

oil." Even in the wilderness, the bread from heaven was given them; not only angels' food, as the common version puts it, but "the food of the mighty" (Ps. lxxviii. 25)—the food which makes mighty. How apt we are to think that if we are once Christians, the character of our food is of no vital import. How little is realized our dependence upon the word of God—that "man shall live not by bread alone," but by that which is its true antitype, "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God!" If only we knew better our dependence upon this, if only God's word was searched into, not to obtain mere knowledge, but that which ministers to the need of the soul (and there is nothing in all God's word that does not minister to it if read aright), what mighty men would be produced! Is it not for want of this that revivals, such as are truly that, so soon decline? Through the grace of God, some ministry has laid hold upon men, some fresh truth, it may be, or some fresh power in truth known before; but then, so often comes the lack in *going on* acquiring and growing. God has invited, has drawn to Himself, and is ready to give in unexhausted grace what would maintain the spiritual life in blessing and power. But we are satisfied, as it were, with the first taste, and go no further. Thus, as the manna, kept and unused, quickly grew old and became corrupt, so the truth once enjoyed, even if not lost, becomes, as it were, without sap or lifeless, inadequate to produce what once it did produce. And why? It has been neglected, if not slighted. It has not led, as it should, to God Himself and to the growing acquaintance with Him for which it was intended. The glow and fervor that once was, passes away therefore; and we are brought under that law which we have seen again and again so to characterize that which is earthly—of revival and decay. The unsearched pages of God's word are witness against us of how we have really dishonored that which we have professed to believe in as, all of it, the word of God. If we are content with this, decay is assured.

Again, we read of the manna that it was like wafers made with honey (Ex. xvi. 31). Honey speaks of natural sweetness, which may refresh one for the moment, as in Jonathan's case, but which we can in no wise live upon. But the manna, the heavenly food, has in it a power which does not pall; not mere natural sweetness, but that which is abiding. In Christ, the true antitype of the manna, our true food, we find indeed all the sweetness of humanity, but raised to the divine. Such honey of spiritual sweetness awakens an appetite which should never languish.

But again, we find in the manna (Num. xi. 8) that the taste of it was like "fresh oil." So the power of the Spirit is in the word of God; it is *Christ* whom it ministers to us; and in this there is perpetual freshness, which will resist decay. Thus even in the wilderness we already have that which will be our food in the land itself—the meat which, as the Lord says, "endureth to everlasting life."

This is the application for ourselves, of course. The things that happened

4 (15-34) Her failure to abide.

4. But thou didst *w*trust in thy beauty, and *x*playedst the harlot because of thy renown, and pouredst out thy harlotry upon every passer-by: his it was. And thou didst take of thy [garments] and madest for thyself *y*high places, decked with divers colors, and didst play the harlot thereon: [the like] had *z*not been, and shall be no more. And thou didst take thy beautiful

w cf. Deut. 32. 15. *cf.* Mic. 3. 11. *cf.* Zeph. 3. 11.
x cf. Ex. 32. 6. *cf.* Num. 25. 1, 2. *cf.* Judg. 3. 6. *cf.* Ps. 106. 35. *cf.* Is. 1. 21. *cf.* Is. 57. 8.

cf. Jer. 2. 20; *cf.* Hos. 1, 2; *cf.* Hos. 4. 10. *y cf.* 1 Ki. 3. 2; *cf.* 1 Ki. 22. 43, etc. *z cf.* 1 Ki. 21. 25, 26; *cf.* 2 Chr. 33. 9.

unto Israel "happened unto them for types;" yet in all this we surely can see how God was drawing His people to Himself; how He would make, and did make, day by day bear witness to His inexhaustible resources, and lead His people on from strength to strength, making their difficulties only the more to manifest the almighty power which was there to meet them. Thus Israel became "exceeding beautiful," even in the eyes of the nations around, as we see in the gifts of Tyre and Sheba in the days of Solomon—an anticipation of the time yet to come in which again, drawn by the glory of her glorious King, "the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift." "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him" (Ps. xlv. 12; lxxii. 10, 11). But Israel forgot that it was the comeliness which Jehovah's presence imparted to them which constituted her beauty. Hence the misery which soon followed, and which not yet has passed away.

4. The story of Israel's failure is next brought out; and, alas, all her privilege, her wealth of blessing, became for her only the means of more fatal and deeper downfall. It is traced to its root here, to their self-confidence. Alas, how possible it is for those who owe all they have to grace alone, that self-confidence should yet show itself! And *we* may build ourselves up just as Israel did, upon privileges which only God's grace could have given to us, thus taking the glory which is His due to dress ourselves with it! And how quickly pride may thus darken the sunshine of God's grace—for God dwelleth with the humble and the contrite spirit, and the proud He beholdeth afar off: it is the necessity of His nature. Sin entered at the very outset of man's history, by departure from the God-appointed place, as it began in heaven itself. The account of this is given us later on, where we shall have to consider it: "Thy heart was lifted up because of thy beauty; thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness" (chap. xxviii. 17). So with Israel: "Thou didst trust in thy beauty," and then, alas, the Canaanite character came fully out. Israel could make merchandise of that beauty itself, and, in the strong language of Scripture (to make it offensive to us, as it was to God), she played the harlot because of her renown, prostituting herself with the nations around in utter debasement. What cause had she indeed to whom all God's wealth was being ministered, to make merchandise of it with others? Alas, where pride turns the thoughts upon oneself, God's gifts fail to satisfy. So with Israel; and so with us, wherever in any measure we repeat this history. All that we see here in Israel is in principle only too sadly possible for the Christian also. Ezekiel has thus a message for us to-day. The heart that loses its first love becomes unsatisfied with its God-given blessings; the good that is in them is not found, and a mad craving comes into the soul to seek from the world a satisfaction

jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given thee, and madest for thee [a]images of men *and didst play the harlot with them. And thou didst take thy broidered garments, and didst cover them; and thou didst set [b]mine oil and mine incense before them. And my bread which I had given thee, fine flour, the oil and the honey with which I had fed thee, thou didst even set it before them for a sweet savor: so it was, saith the Lord Jehovah. And thou didst take

a *cf.* Jer. 2. 27, 28. *cf.* Rom. 1. 23.

b *cf.* 1 Sam. 2. 12–17. *cf.* Num. 28. 2.

* Lit., "male."

which the world has not, and therefore cannot give. Thus it finds but degradation, and this is what God calls idolatry and harlotry—singularly strong words, we may think, but only because the true estimate of things is lost. "Ye adulterers and adulteresses;" says James, "know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" And again another apostle says, "Covetousness, which is idolatry." The Church taking up with the world has repeated, only in a more terrible way, Israel's history; and we must not forget this, so as to make the prophetic words but mere records of the past, and lose their admonition for us.

Departure from God took its outward form in Israel by making for themselves "high places." It was but a heathen habit, playing upon the imagination with a worship in which there is no heart, just as men still seek to satisfy themselves with music, architecture, drapery, and that most characteristic "dim religious light," in which to worship a God who is Light itself, and in whom no darkness is. Such things work upon nature, and produce a sentiment which is so largely taken for the reality which is wanting to it. Thus upon the mountain-tops man could imagine himself nearer to God than in the valleys, and the depths of groves and forests helped, with the beauty of nature, to make him think he was nearer to the God of nature than he really was. There is indeed a witness to God in all these things: who would wish to deny it? Nay, with joy to realize how God in all these things is seeking to draw near to man. Nevertheless, it is just here that man so often makes the fatal mistake of substituting what is merely natural for what is spiritual, and so deceives himself. In heathenism these high places and these groves turned thus, as was inevitable, to evil instead of good, and the worst abominations of heathenism attached themselves to them. What is figurative in the language used here is nevertheless drawn from the awful grossness of the heathen abominations, in which the lusts and passions of men were let loose as homage to the God of nature, with the consequent degradation following upon this. Israel soon realized all these abominations, and spent the riches which God had heaped upon her to the gratification of those various forms of lust which make the world the corrupt thing it always has been.

Under such figures as we find here, the Spirit of God in the final book, in Revelation, draws the awful picture of Babylon the Great, the corrupt Church, in her commerce with the kings of the earth. She has gone Israel's way, but further in reality than Israel could go, for holy things were committed to her such as Israel never had, and with these she has made merchandise in true Canaanite fashion. She has given that which is holy to the dogs; she has cast her pearls before swine; and she, too, out of her silver and gold, has made for herself

thy [c]sons and thy daughters, whom thou hadst borne unto me, and thou didst sacrifice them unto them to be devoured. Were thy whoredoms a small matter that thou didst slay my children and give them up in passing * them over to them? And in all thine abominations and thy whoredoms thou didst not [d]remember the days of thy youth when thou wast naked and bare, when thou wast weltering † in thy blood.

And it came to pass after all thy wickedness ([e]woe, woe unto thee! saith the Lord Jehovah), that thou didst build thee an eminent place, and madest thee a high place in every street: thou didst build thy high place at [f]every head of the way and madest thy beauty to be abhorred, and didst open thy feet to every one who passed by and multipliedst thy harlotry. And thou didst commit fornication with the [g]Egyptians, thy neighbors, great of flesh: and didst multiply thy harlotry to [h]provoke me to anger. And behold, I

c *cf.* 2 Ki. 16. 3. Ps. 106. 37, 38. *cf.* Is. 57. 5.

d *cf.* Jer. 2. 2. *cf.* Hos. 11. 1. *cf.* Gen. 35. 1. *cf.* Rev. 2. 4, 5.

e ch. 2. 10. Jer. 13. 27. *cf.* Mt. 23. 13–29.

f ver. 31. *cf.* Prov. 9. 14. 18. *cf.* Is. 57. 5, 7. ch. 23. 9, 10.

g *cf.* Is. 30. 2. *cf.* Is. 31. 3. *cf.* Lam. 5. 6.

h Deut. 31. 20. Jer. 11. 17.

* Or, "passing them through [the fire]." † Or, "trampled."

what is spoken of immediately here, the "image of men"—men not as they are, but as she would have them: in effect, sacramental, sham Christians, decorated with the lowest debasement of spiritual blessings. But wherever the heart departs from God, it will adorn what it seeks with imaginations of its own, and conjure up delirious visions, which only show the loss of all sobriety. The false becomes the true, and the true therefore becomes the false.

The last step here is one in which the apostate Church has still followed the ancient order. The children really born to God in the midst of Israel, the remnant owned as His, were sacrificed by a people mad upon their idols; and who knows not that, for refusing divine homage to a piece of magically transformed bread, the blood of God's saints has been poured out like water? If we had eyes to read such things on a minuter scale, how often might we find that the impulses and purposes born of the Spirit within us have been sacrificed in like manner to the self-will that even in a Christian may go thus after its idols. In all this, as with Israel, God's grace and the deliverance wrought by His grace must be practically forgotten. The way is naturally downward, and Israel leaving her true God transgressed as the heathen with their false ones would be ashamed to do. "Hath a nation changed its gods which are yet no gods?" asked the Lord by Jeremiah; "but my people have changed their glory into that which doth not profit" (Jer. ii. 11). The Philistines who at Ashdod would not tread upon the threshold of their mutilated Dagon (1 Sam. v. 5), might be ashamed of Israel's lewd way. They recognized the hand of the Lord upon them, when they sent back the ark to Israelitish territory; yet how little did Israel recognize or repent under the divine hand which was upon her! "Why," asks the Lord by Isaiah, "should ye be smitten any more? Ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick and the whole heart faint" (Isa. i. 5). But as in a Christian assembly, even in the apostles' days, there had been what even the Gentiles stigmatized as infamous, so Israel away from God became more heathenish than the heathen. Her high places were, as the Lord reproaches her here, at every cross-road, to allure passers-by from all

stretched out my hand over thee, and I [i]diminished thine allotted portion; and I [j]gave thee over to the soul of them that hate thee, the daughters of the [k]Philistines who were ashamed of thy lewd way. And thou didst commit fornication with the [l]Assyrians because thou wast insatiable; yea, thou playedst the harlot with them and yet couldst [m]not be satisfied. And thou didst multiply thy harlotry with the land of merchants,* [n]Chaldea, and yet thou wast not satisfied therewith. How [o]weak is thy heart, saith the Lord Jehovah, seeing thou doest all these things, the work of a lewd, [p]imperious woman, in that thou buildedst thine eminent place at the head of every way, and madest thy high place in every street, and wast not like the harlot in that thou scornedst [q]reward! O [r]adulterous wife, that taketh strangers instead of her husband! They give rewards to all harlots, but [s]thou gavest thy rewards to all thy lovers, and rewardedst them that they might come unto thee on every side for thy whoredoms. And in thee is the [t]contrary from [other] women in thy whoredoms, in that none followeth thee to commit fornication, and whereas thou gavest reward, and no reward is given unto thee; so art thou contrary.

i *cf.* Deut. 28. 48-57.
cf. Is. 3. 1.
cf. Jer. 37. 21.
j *cf.* Ps. 106. 41.
cf. Jer. 34. 21.
k ver. 57.
cf. 2 Chr. 28. 18, 19.
cf. Is. 9. 12.
l ch. 23. 5-9.
cf. 2 Chr. 28. 20-23.
cf. Jer. 2. 18, 36.
m *cf.* Amos 4. 8 with Eph. 4. 19.
cf. Prov. 30. 15.
n ch. 23. 14-17.
cf. 2 Ki. 21. 9.
o *cf.* Prov. 9. 13.
cf. 1 Sam. 2. 5.
cf. Hos. 6. 4.
p *cf.* Prov. 7. 11-13, etc.
cf. Judg. 16. 15, 16.
cf. Lam. 4. 1.
q vers. 33, 34.
cf. Is. 52. 3.
r *cf.* Jer. 2. 25-28.
ch. 23. 27.
s *cf.* Is. 30. 3, 6, 7.
cf. Is. 57. 9; *cf.* Jno. 6. 68.

* Or, "Canaan."

cf. Hos. 8. 9, 10. t *cf.* Jer. 2. 11 with Mic. 4. 5;

quarters. As Rome in her days of degeneracy, so had Israel her Pantheon of all the gods there were round about her—of Egypt, with the fleshly grossness indicated in the worship of bestial gods; of Assyria, of Babylon, etc., all sought after, with continually increasing loss of prestige and power. The infatuated harlot squandered in vain all that divine goodness had bestowed upon her, hiring lovers for reward, getting herself none, and her portion from her true Husband necessarily finding no replenishment. If godliness hath profit of this life also, as well as that which is to come, how sure and utter is the loss that is entailed by the will that wanders from the Source of every good!

The record of Israel here is what we find in the history of Christendom as well, as already said, which has repeated the sins of her ancestry, even though there may be with this the disguise of a new dialect which puts no restraint upon the things thus covered up by it, the darkness only favoring the deeds that suit it.*

* It may be well to remember that this apostasy may have had, ostensibly, its origin in a *political* effort to court the friendship of the nations by whom Israel was surrounded. Isolated from all other peoples, Israel's only safety lay in abiding obedience to Jehovah. Lapsing from that she turned for help to one and another of the nations. Only faith would keep them true to God; this is abundantly seen in the book of Deuteronomy. Therefore when that faith failed, the people soon courted the favor of the world, and this of course led them into the idolatry described with such unsparing faithfulness in this portion.

So in the history of the Church, when first love failed—as in Ephesus—in the very effort to escape persecution—of Smyrna—the world was courted, and the illicit union of Pergamos and Thyatira was the inevitable result. Of course true faith resisted all this: but, alas, all men have not faith, and so the mass turn to the world for its help.

Similarly in the soul's individual history, faith alone fights the good fight; where faith

5 (35 52): The recompense of God.

5. Therefore, O [a] harlot, hear the word of Jehovah, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Because thy money hath been poured out, and thy nakedness discovered through thy fornications with thy lovers, and with all the idols of thine abominations, and because of the blood of thy children which thou didst give unto them, therefore, behold, I will [u] gather all thy lovers with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all that thou hast loved, with all that thou hast hated—I will even gather them round about against thee, and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness. And I will [w] judge thee with the judgments of women that commit adultery and shed blood; and I will give thee up to the blood of [x] wrath and jealousy. I will also give thee into their hand, and they shall [y] throw down thine eminent place, and break down thy high places; and they shall strip thee of thy garments, and take thy fair jewels, and [z] leave thee naked and bare. They shall also bring up an assemblage against thee, and shall [a] stone thee with stones, and thrust thee through with their swords. And they shall [b] burn thy houses with fire and execute judgments upon thee in the sight of many women; and I will cause thee to [c] cease from being a harlot, and thou shalt also give no more any reward. And I will [d] appease my wrath against thee, and my jealousy shall [e] depart from thee; and I will be quiet, and will be no more angry. Because thou hast not [f] remembered the days of thy youth, but hast raged against me in all these things, therefore, behold, I also will [g] bring thy way upon thy head, saith the Lord Jehovah, and thou shalt not commit this lewdness besides all thine abominations.

Behold, every one that useth proverbs shall use this proverb against thee, saying, As is the [h] mother, so is her daughter! Thou art the daughter of thy mother that loathed her husband and her children; and thou art the sister of thy sisters who loathed their husbands and their children. Your mother was a Hittite, and your father an [i] Amorite. And thine elder sister is [j] Samaria that dwelleth at thy left hand, she and her daughters; and thy younger sister that dwelleth at thy right hand is [k] Sodom and her daughters. And

[a] cf. Is. 1. 21. cf. Jer. 3. 1.
[u] cf. Jer. 13. 22, 26. ch. 23. 9, 10, 22. 30. cf. Nah. 3. 5, 6. cf. Rev. 2. 22.
[w] cf. Lev. 20. 10. ch. 23. 45. cf. Jno. 8. 3-11.
[x] cf. Ps. 79. 3, 5. cf. Jer. 18. 21. cf. Zeph. 1. 17.
[y] vers. 24, 31. ch. 7. 23-24. Is. 27. 9.
[z] cf. 1 Ki. 13. 2.
[a] ch. 23. 26, 29. cf. Is. 3. 16-24.
[b] cf. Jno. 8. 5, 7. cf. Hab. 1. 6-10. ch. 23. 10, 47.
[c] Deut. 13. 16. 2 Ki. 25. 9. Jer. 39. 8. Mic. 3. 12
[d] ch. 23. 27. cf. ch. 37. 23. cf. Zech. 13. 2.
[e] ch. 5. 13. cf. Is. 1. 24.
[f] cf. Is. 40. 1, 2. cf. Is. 54. 9, 10.
[g] ver. 22. Is. 106. 13.
[h] ch. 7. 3, 4, 8, 9. ch. 22. 31.
[i] vers. 3, 45. cf. ch. 18. 2.
[j] cf. 1 Ki. 21. 26.
[k] ver. 51. ch. 23. 4.
[k] vers. 48, etc. cf. Is. 1. 9, 10. cf. Jer. 23. 14.

5. Israel's guilt is now summed up and her punishment announced. Her sins are made the means of her recompense, and those to whom she has turned, while turning away from God, become the instruments of His judgments. Stripped of the riches she had received from God, but had lavished upon her

weakens, the power of spiritual enemies increases, and in very timidity the soul turns to the world and its principles for the strength which comes from God alone. Compromises, worldly ways and entanglements, and shameful dishonor to the Lord are the result.

But it cannot be too constantly repeated, that the beginning of all declension is a loss of heart for the things of Christ, and of faith which counts upon Him alone.—S. R.

thou hast not walked in their ways, nor done after their abominations, but, as though that were a very [t]little, thou wast [m]more corrupt than they in all thy ways. [As] I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters! Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom: [n]pride, [o]fulness of bread, and [p]careless ease was in her and in her daughters; neither did she [q]strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me. Therefore I [r]took them away when I saw [it]. And [s]Samaria hath not sinned according to the half of thy sins; but thou hast multiplied thine abominations more than they, and hast [t]justified thy sisters with all thine abominations which thou hast done. Thou also, take upon thee thy shame, thou who hast [u]judged thy sisters; because of thy sins in which thou hast acted more abominably than they: they are [v]more righteous than thou. So be thou [w]ashamed, and bear thy confusion, because thou hast justified thy sisters.

6 (53–63): The victory of grace at last.

6. And I will [x]turn again their captivity, the captivity of [y]Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of

t ch. 8. 17. *cf.* 1 Ki. 16. 31.
m cf. 2 Ki. 21. 9, 16. *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 1. *cf.* Mt. 10. 15. *cf.* Mt. 11. 24. *cf.* Acts 7. 52.
n cf. ch. 28. 2, 9, 17. *cf.* Ps. 138. 6. *cf.* Prov. 16. 5, 18.
o cf. Gen. 13. 10. *cf.* Deut. 32. 15. *cf.* Is. 22. 13, 14. *cf.* Lk. 12. 16–20.
p cf. Ps. 123. 4. *cf.* Is. 32. 9. *cf.* Amos 6. 1.
q ch. 18. 12. *cf.* Prov. 21. 13. *cf.* Is. 3. 15. *cf.* Jas. 5. 1–6.
r Gen. 19. 24. Deut. 29. 23.
s cf. Lk. 12. 47, 48.
t cf. Is. 10. 11. *cf.* Jer. 3. 11.
cf. ch. 23. 11. *u cf.* Mt. 7. 1-5; *cf.* Rom. 2. 1, 19, 20, 27; *cf.* Lk. 18. 11. *v cf.* 1 Sa. 24. 17.
w ch. 36. 31, 32. *x cf.* Ps. 126. 1. *y cf.* Jer. 20. 16.

lusts, she should no more be able to gratify herself in this way. She had fully proved, as she is again reminded, her Canaanite descent, which was now apparent: "Behold, every one that useth proverbs shall use this proverb against thee, saying, As is the mother, so is her daughter. Your mother was a Hittite, and your father an Amorite." There remained for her but the judgment long since pronounced upon Canaan for their sins; and Judah was but the sister of already judged Samaria—and more, of judged Sodom too. She had exceeded in her enormities even these, and, as the Lord declares, had even justified them, comparatively—she had exceeded them in iniquity. She who had judged her sisters must now take her place along with them and bear her shame. Jerusalem that had looked on in pride of heart while Samaria had gone into captivity, and had ceased to think of Sodom, a mere vacant spot as it were upon the earth which had cast it out, was now to exhibit her guilt in her condemnation as fully as they did.

6. And is this then the end? It might seem indeed to be so. What could be done more than God had done, but in vain? If the story were merely a human one, a dealing of man with man, there would surely be no help, no remedy; and God Himself numbering Judah now with Sodom and with Samaria might seem to argue that *He* had fully and finally given her up. Indeed, interpreters not a few *have* argued from such premises in this very way. If Sodom could return and find blessing, then there might be hope for Jerusalem; but was it not already wiped out from the earth? Yet God takes up this argument to answer it in a way of His own: meeting the challenge from His own words, to say, Well, I will do this thing which is impossible: "Thy sister Sodom and her daughters *shall* return to their first estate, and Samaria and her daughters

[z] Samaria and her daughters, and the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them, that thou mayest bear thy confusion and mayest be confounded for all that thou hast done in that thou comfortedst them. And thy sister [a] Sodom and her daughters shall return to their former estate, and [b] Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former estate; thou also and [c] thy daughters shall return to your former estate. For

[z] *cf.* Jer. 31. 23.
[a] *cf.* ch. 29. 14. *cf.* ch. 47. 8.
[b] ver. 53. *cf.* Jer. 31. 5.
[c] *cf.* Amos 9. 14. *cf.* ch. 36. 11. *cf.* Mal. 3. 4.

shall return to their first estate. Thou also and thy daughters *shall* return to your first estate."

What is intended here seems a difficulty, for it is certain that Sodom has gone out of knowledge. If we look for her upon the earth, we shall not find her; yet it is just of this earthly restitution that Ezekiel, as has often been said already, everywhere speaks. The judgment that he pronounces is not the judgment of eternity, the judgment following after death, but the historical earth-judgment. Thus we are not permitted here to do as some do, and look beyond the grave to find the remedy. The fact that we have just now had before us, that the judgment of Israel was to be at the hands of those with whom she had sinned, shows that it is in the record of the world's history that we are to look for its accomplishment. It is not a question therefore of the standing of souls before God, nor of individuals, whatever inference we may make, as we have to make in many cases, but what is before us here is Sodom as a whole, Samaria as a whole, and so again Jerusalem as a whole. God is acting things out before the eyes of men, in order to give the broad, general lesson so much needed. We do right to carry it further than the mere details of history. If sin is the destruction of any people, it is because it is the destruction of individual souls; and if it is their destruction in this world, assuredly, except God's grace in some way come in, it must be their destruction in the eternity that follows time. But this is not Ezekiel's theme. It is the broad lesson of history to which he would call our attention, and we may be sure that these lessons are of immense importance to us. It was for this that the trial of man, through the forty centuries before Christ, went on. And we know how God in the New Testament takes up the result of this trial. It was "when the world by wisdom knew not God," that "it pleased God by the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe;" and it was "when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." Thus we may not think lightly of the lessons of history, while there is that, truly, which no earthly history can reveal, of which indeed we must think, and for which all else works.*

If we take what is here clearly revealed, then, Sodom is to reappear in a future generation, with her burden of sin and shame removed, and owned as sister to the tribes of Israel; as in their punishment, so in the grace they can say at last, they have received double for all their sins (Isa. xl. 2). We need not at all be at the trouble to search for her at the present time. God will know how to bring her out of her obscurity in His own due time; but it is certain

* Our Lord had declared it would be more tolerable for Sodom than for the city which rejected Him; and in Revelation (ch. 11: 8) Jerusalem is spiritually called Sodom. The Phariseeism which made self its object, resulted in spiritual abominations and corruptions which can only be characterized in this awful way.—S. R.

Sodom thy sister was not [d] mentioned by thy mouth in the day of thy pride, before thy wickedness was discovered, as at the time of the reproach of the daughters of Syria and of all that are round about her, the daughters of the Philistines who despised thee on every side. Thy lewdness and thine abominations, thou barest them, saith Jehovah. For thus saith the Lord Jehovah, I will even [e] deal with thee as thou hast done who hast despised the oath and broken the covenant.

[d] cf. Is. 65. 5, cf. Zeph. 3. 11.

[e] ch. 14. 4, etc.

that for other perished nations besides Sodom, the future, according to the word of God, has a resurrection-time at hand. Nor can we fail to see, if we have eyes for it, some anticipations of such things furnished by present history. Thus has Italy been finding her lost national unity again; and Greece is upon the way to realize this also.* In some cases it seems indeed as if there were to be, not a resurrection of life, but rather a resurrection of judgment. Into all this it is not the place to inquire here; but, for various purposes of righteousness or of grace, God will certainly show, as the Preacher assures us, that He "requireth that which is past" (Eccl. iii. 15). This, once more, is only part of that implied in the revolution of the wheel which again and again Ezekiel brings before us, in which we may see the lesson it surely has for us. The divine Word thus positively assures us that "Sodom and her daughters shall return to their first estate;" "Samaria and her daughters shall return" also—guaranteed by Scripture again and again, though disputed still (perhaps less and less however). The verity of the judgment which has come is only the seal upon the verity of the restoration that shall come. The wheel is, in fact, revolving; and that which brings down will bring up again.†

So the double assurance is given here: "Thy lewdness and thine abominations, thou barest them, saith Jehovah; for thus saith the Lord Jehovah, I will even deal with thee as thou hast done, who hast despised the oath and broken the covenant. Nevertheless, I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and establish to thee an everlasting covenant. And thou shalt remember thy ways and be confounded, when thou receivest thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger one; for I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not because of thy covenant; and I will establish my covenant with thee, and thou shalt know that I am Jehovah." Thus, if on man's side the covenant with God has been broken, from God's side, breach there really can never be.‡

* Since the 10 years when this was written, Greece has taken further strides, and even now seems on the verge of assuming the national prominence foretold in Scripture.—S. R.

† Sodom, we must remember, was a typical Canaanite city. If the "mother" was overthrown, the "daughters" were spared, and in Zoar (the "little one" spared for Lot's sake) we see the perpetuation of the Canaanite, which in the latter day will blossom out in what will answer to a literal restoration of Sodom.—S. R.

‡ It is instructive to note the causes which developed such abominable iniquity in Sodom—"Pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness." Pride, the exaltation of self, comes first. It is the sin of Satan, as it is declared in chap. 28. Pride's self-sufficiency has no need of mercy nor of grace; it says to God, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." Next comes "fulness of bread"—no need which would force a cry to God. It is notorious in the world's history that wealth and luxury are the cause of moral and manly decay.

"Abundance of idleness" leaves the soul open for the lusts of the flesh to assert themselves. Vices flourish in luxuries, until unspeakable corruption brings God's judgment

Nevertheless, I will [f]remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and establish to thee an [g]everlasting covenant. And thou shalt [h]remember thy ways, and be confounded, when thou receivest thy [i]sisters, thine elder and thy younger ones: for I will give them unto thee for [j]daughters, but [k]not because of thy covenant. And I will [l]establish my covenant with thee, and thou shalt know that I am Jehovah; that thou mayest remember, and be ashamed, and [m]no more open thy mouth because of thy confusion, when I am [n]propitiated as to thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord Jehovah.

[f] Lev. 26. 42, 45. Ps. 105. 8. Jer. 2. 2. Jer. 33. 20-26. Hos. 2. 15. *cf.* Lk. 1. 72.
[g] Jer. 32. 40. ch. 37. 26, 27. Is. 55. 3. *cf.* Heb. 8. 10.
[h] ver. 63. *cf.* 20. 43.
[i] *cf.* Is. 2. 2-5. *cf.* Is. 60. 8-10.
[j] *cf.* Is. 54. 1. *cf.* Is. 49. 18-23. [k] *cf.* Jer. 31. 31-34 with Heb. 8. 8-13. [l] *cf.* Gen. 9. 9; *cf.* Ps. 89. 3; *cf.* Is. 55. 3; *cf.* Heb. 13. 20. [m] *cf.* Ps. 85. 1, 2; *cf.* Rom. 3. 27; *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 9. [n] *cf.* Is. 40. 1, 2.

This covenant in the days of Israel's youth we must not confound, as has been already said, with the mere legal covenant which Israel so readily entered into, but which has had such bitter fruit. The covenant which God remembered when He took up Israel at the first was, as we have seen, His covenant with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob; and those three names give what is to be His memorial to all generations (Ex. iii. 15). So also the everlasting covenant which He will establish with them is expressly said to be a *new* covenant (Jer. xxxi. 31-34): "*Not* according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which my covenant they brake, though I was a husband to them, saith the Lord." To confound these contrasted covenants would seem to be impossible for us; yet it has been done, and is being done continually. The covenant with their fathers they could not break; it had no conditions which might entail the loss of its blessings. The Sinaitic covenant is distinctly marked out in the very passage before us as *not* that covenant: "I will give them unto thee for daughters," says the Lord here, "but *not* because of *thy* covenant." "*Thy* covenant" He calls it, because man with his legal heart necessitated, as it continually does in individual experience, the allowing of a law which could yet perfect nothing, and with which God thus finds fault—not indeed for lack of holiness in it or anything unsuited in that way to His requirements, but just because it is that requirement which, to those who are under it, yields nothing but the knowledge of sin and self-hopelessness. Indeed *that* is its true and worthy fruit. But then, as the apostle says, if God speaks of a new covenant, He has made the first old; and it is according to the new covenant that He says here: "I will establish my covenant with thee, and thou shalt know that I am Jehovah; that thou mayest remember and be ashamed, and no more open thy mouth because of thy confusion, when I am propitiated as to thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord Jehovah." Here the fruit of

upon the putrid mass. When, in the language of the Roman satirist, "the Orontes flowed into the Tiber"—oriental luxury and vice displaced the manly energy of former days—the great empire tottered to its fall. Nations can no more afford to be idle than individuals. Peoples of a rough northern climate or bleak mountain lands, often put to shame those under a balmy sky where sloth flourishes.

So in spiritual things, the saint must meet the foe, must toil and wrestle with an apparently barren condition, if he is to avoid succumbing to the deceits of this world. There is special warning in this for the young believer. "It is good that a man bear the yoke in his youth"—learn to endure hardness, and thus become a good soldier of Jesus Christ.—S. R.

SECTION 4 (Chap. xvii.).

The mercy to an abased kingdom; yet its failure.

1 (1-10): The parable

1. And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, put forth a [o]riddle, and speak a parable unto the house of Israel, and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: A great [p]eagle with great wings, long pinioned, full of feathers which had [q]divers colors, came unto [r]Lebanon and took the topmost [s]branch of the cedar. He cropped off the topmost of the young shoots thereof.

o *cf.* Judg. 9. 8-15, etc. *cf.* Judg. 14. 12-19. *cf.* 2 Sa. 12. 1-4.
p vers. 7, 12. *cf.* Jer. 4. 13. *cf.* Ex. 19. 4 with Deut. 32. 11 and Is. 63. 9.
q *cf.* Dan. 2. 37, 38. *cf.* Dan. 3. 29.
r *cf.* Deut. 3. 25; *cf.* 2 Ki. 14. 9; *cf.* Song 4. 8. s 2 Ki. 24. 17, 18.

Christ's work is, as we see, recognized. The glory, over which the law necessitated a veil, is now in open sight.

Sec. 4.

Having thus seen Israel in her relation to God, and in what comes from this on *her* side, and on *God's* side—the judgment, and the grace which follows the judgment—we return now to what is more simply history, but which has of necessity, as ever, its spiritual lesson, as all history will have if it be read aright. We have, here, the mercy which had been shown to the abased kingdom, in the long days of its latter declension, when God yet waited upon it in patient long-suffering. But this mercy failed to effect recovery, as we see here; and it must be reserved to a future day, in which it will manifest itself at last in triumph. This brings in, of course, a prophecy of Messiah, the future King; for in all this part, in which judgment is assured and imminent, the promise of future dawn is held out for faith, to deliver from a hopelessness which is not of Him who is "the God of all encouragement."

1. We have first a parable put forth, of which the interpretation is given afterwards. It is significant, as to the use of a parable, that it should be given with its interpretation alongside of it; which one might think to be the whole matter. It is evident that in pictures such as these we have what strikes the mind and fastens upon the imagination in a peculiar way; and God does not disdain to use these helps for men's attention. Certainly everything is full of parables, if we had only skill to read them; parables which are not mere chance applications, but everywhere rooted in the very nature of things. God's wisdom is everywhere seen in that with which He has surrounded man in all his history. It needed no apology therefore that Ezekiel should be, what they in fact accused him of being, "a speaker of parables." It showed that he was in the line of that universal teaching which divine wisdom has appointed for us, which connects itself with what is before our eyes, that we might never lose sight of it. How good it would be if our minds were spiritually trained in the interpretation of parables! When the Lord asked His disciples the question: "How then will ye know *all* parables?" did it not imply that He intended them to know what was thus set before them for their exercise? Yet we are not ashamed to own our want of skill in such things, and so far despise what Scripture calls "the deep things of God."

The parable here, as all true parables are, is from God Himself: "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: A great eagle with great wings, long-pinioned, full of feathers, which had divers colors, came unto Lebanon, and took the topmost branch of the cedar. He cropped off the topmost of the young shoots thereof, and carried

and [t]carried it into a land of merchants; in a [u]city of traders he set it. And he took of the seed of the land and planted it in a [v]fruitful soil; he placed it beside many waters, he set it as a willow, and it sprouted and became a spreading [w]vine of low stature, so that its branches might turn towards [x]him, and its roots might be under him; and it became a vine, and [y]produced branches and shot forth sprigs. There was

[t] *cf.* Jer. 51. 13 with Is. 47. 15.
[u] *cf.* Rev. 18. 3.
[v] *cf.* Nah. 3. 4 with Zech. 14. 21.
[w] *cf.* Deut. 8. 7–9.
[x] 2 Ki. 24. 17.
[y] ver. 14.
[z] 2 Ki. 24. 17–20.
[y] Jer. 37. 1, 2; 2 Chr. 36. 11–13.

it into a land of merchants. In a city of traders he set it. And he took of the seed of the land and planted it in a fruitful soil. He placed it beside many waters; he set it as a willow, and it sprouted, and became a spreading vine of low stature; so that its branches might turn towards him and its roots might be under him. And it became a vine, and produced branches and shot forth sprigs." Here is plainly a story of humiliation, and yet of mercy mingling with the humiliation. He had once reminded them of a deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and how He had borne them on eagles' wings and brought them to Himself (Ex. 19: 4). This, however, is not what we have here. It is not in Egypt or the wilderness that the scene is laid; nor is it the beginning of a nation that is spoken of; but of the Cedar of Lebanon, which in fact Israel was, with the sign of its former glory. The interpretation leaves no doubt of this: "Behold, the king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and took its king and its princes, and brought them to him to Babylon; and he took one of the seed royal and made a covenant with him, and brought him under an oath. He took away the mighty of the land, that the kingdom might be abased, that it might not lift itself up, that it might keep his covenant in order to stand." It is, plainly, the history of Zedekiah that is thus before us. Jehoiachin had been plucked off and carried away in the captivity from which, as we have seen, Ezekiel dates his own prophecies. Jehoiachin never returned, and the captivity of Judah was already begun. Daniel himself belonged to the beginning of this transportation to Babylon.

Thus the great eagle is Nebuchadnezzar, a royal bird, his royalty being derived from God Himself; yet a bird of prey, whose great wings show the extent of his dominion, as well, perhaps, as the rapidity with which he acquired power. The feathers of divers colors are the heterogeneous multitudes which followed him; yet he is plainly under divine control, and his acts towards Israel are at first gentleness itself, as far as a king of Babylon could show this. If he crops off the topmost shoots of the cedar, it is to carry them to a land of merchants, a city of traders. We see in Daniel himself an illustration of this conduct; in the captives of Tel-abib we see how they could find their hope in it. But Israel as a whole was not yet rooted out of the land. He took of the seed of it and planted it in a fruitful soil. Nebuchadnezzar placed it beside many waters, set it as a willow that its branches might turn towards himself. This was everywhere, and necessarily, the policy of the empire, whose interest was to encourage in a subjective way the growth of various powers under it, independent of one another while dependent upon himself. Thus one might be used against another, and the empire sustained by these divided interests. Here we find the beginning of Zedekiah's history. His significant name, "Jehovah's righteousness," was soon to be the illustration of it against himself. The kingdom, under Nebuchadnezzar's policy, was reviving hopefully. It was

also [z]another great eagle with great wings and many feathers; and, behold, this vine did bend its roots [a]toward him, and shot forth its branches toward him, that he might [b]water it from the beds of its plantation. In a [c]good field, by many waters, it had been planted to produce leaves and to bear fruit, that it might be a [d]noble vine. Say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, [e]Shall it prosper? Shall he not [f]pull up its roots and cut off its fruit that it may wither? All its fresh sprouting leaves shall wither, and [g]not by a great army or many people, to pluck it up by its roots. And, behold, when it is planted, shall it thrive? Shall it not utterly wither when the east wind toucheth it? It shall [h]wither in the beds where it grew.

2 (11-21): The interpretation.

2. And the [i]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Say now to the [j]rebellious house, Know ye not what these things are? Say, Behold, the [k]king of Babylon came to Jerusalem, and took its king and its princes and brought them to him to Babylon. And he took one of the [l]seed royal and made a covenant with him, and brought him under an oath. He took away the

z Jer. 37. 5–7.
a *cf.* Is. 30. 2.
b *cf.* Jer. 2. 18.
c ver. 5. *cf.* Ps. 80. 8–11.
d *cf.* Jer. 2. 21.
e *cf.* Num. 14. 41. *ctr.* 2 Chr. 20. 20.
f *cf.* 2 Ki. 25. 1–7.
g *cf.* ver. 17. *cf.* Lev. 26. 36.
h *cf.* Hos. 13. 15. *cf.* Mt. 21. 19.
i ver. 1. ch. 18. 1, etc.
j ch. 2. 5, 8, etc.
k ver. 3, etc. Jer. 22. 24–28.
l Jer. 37. 1. 2 Ki. 24. 17. 2 Chr. 36. 13.

indeed but as a vine of low stature; it could be nothing else, but it produced branches and shot forth sprigs. But soon the spirit of independence arose which was to work the total downfall of the nation.

Another great eagle is seen with great wings and many feathers; it is the king of Egypt, but in no wise with the power of the king of Babylon; yet for this very reason more capable of being made use of, while having sufficient power, as they hoped, to enable them to stand by his help against Babylon's rising power, which was much more to be feared. Thus did this vine bend its roots towards *him*, and shot forth its branches toward him, that he might water it from the beds of its plantation. There was nothing to be pleaded for this on the ground of any oppression by Nebuchadnezzar. On the contrary, Israel might still have prospered in bowing to Jehovah's will. It was still, according to the language of the prophet, in a good field, by many waters, and had been planted to be a noble vine. God had declared His purpose as to Babylon, so that rebellion against it was rebellion against Him. It was resistance to the chastening which the Lord had appointed for blessing, if they had received it as such.* But all was forfeited by this resistance. The question then is capable of but one answer: "Shall it prosper? Shall he not pull up its roots and cut off its fruit, that it may wither?" This, surely, would be the result, if God's word and His power counted for anything. What was the power of Egypt that it should be opposed to Him? "Shall it not utterly wither," the Lord asks, "when the east wind toucheth it?"—but "toucheth" it! and of course it did.

2. The people are not left to interpret this parable for themselves. That they may be without excuse, God Himself will give them the interpretation. They are to be plainly told the issue of this breach of a covenant which had

* This is clearly seen in the closing part of Jeremiah, where the whole situation is the same, both in the exhortations of the prophet, and the disastrous consequences of their going down into Egypt (chaps. 34–52).—S. R.

[m] mighty of the land that the kingdom might be abased,* that it might not lift itself up, that it might [n] keep his covenant, in order to stand. But he [o] rebelled against him in sending his ambassadors to [p] Egypt, that they might give him horses and much people. Shall he prosper? shall he escape that doeth such things? Shall he break the covenant, and yet escape? [As] I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, verily, in the place of the king that made him king, whose oath he despised and whose covenant he broke, even with him in the [q] midst of Babylon shall he die. Neither shall Pharaoh with a great army and a large assembly do [r] anything for him in the war when they cast up mounds and build forts to cut off many persons. He hath [s] despised the oath and broken the covenant; yea, behold, he had given his hand, yet hath he done all these things; he shall not escape. Therefore, thus saith the Lord Jehovah: [As] I live, verily, mine oath which he hath despised and my covenant which he hath broken, even this will I [t] recompense upon his head. And I will spread my [u] net over him and he shall be taken in my snare, and I will bring him to [v] Babylon, and will enter into judgment with him there for his unfaithfulness in which he hath been unfaithful against me. And all his fugitives with all his bands shall [w] fall by the sword, and they that remain shall be scattered towards every wind, and ye shall [x] know that I Jehovah have spoken.

3 (22-24): The revival of David's house in Messiah.

3. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I also will take of the topmost [y] branch of the high cedar, and will set it: I

* Lit., "it might be a base kingdom."

[m] Dan. 1.1,2. cf. Jer. 24.1 with Jer. 52. 16.
[n] Jer. 27. 12-17. Jer. 38. 17.
[o] cf. Is. 30.1-4.
[p] cf. Is. 36. 6-9.
[q] cf. Deut. 17. 16.
[q] Jer. 32. 4, 5. Jer. 39. 5-7.
[r] cf. Lam. 4. 17 with Is. 31. 1.
[s] cf. ch. 16. 59. cf. Josh. 9. 20. cf. Lam. 5. 6.
[t] ch. 21. 23-26. cf. Gal. 6. 7.
[u] ch. 12. 13. ch. 32. 3.
[v] cf. 2 Chr. 33. 11. ver. 16.
[w] ch. 12. 13, 14. Jer. 52. 8.
[x] ch. 6. 7, 10, etc.
[y] cf. ch. 34. 29. cf. Is. 11. 1. cf. Ps. 80. 15. cf. Jer. 23. 5-8. cf. Jer. 33. 15, 16. cf. Zech. 3. 8. cf. Zech. 4. 12-14. cf. Zech. 6. 12, 13.

solemnly been made in the name of the Lord with Nebuchadnezzar; the breach of which could only make heavier the chastisement which had already come, and thoroughly arm God as well as man against them. Thus the royal power in Israel, which was to have been for the deliverance of the people, was now to involve them completely in its doom: "As I live," says the Lord, of Zedekiah, "Verily in the place of the king that made him king, whose oath he despised and whose covenant he brake, even with him in the midst of Babylon shall he die. I will spread my net over him, and he shall be taken in my snare; and I will bring him to Babylon, and will enter into judgment with him there for his unfaithfulness in which he hath been unfaithful to Me." Plainly, the whole character of Israel as the people of the Lord was gone, and nothing remained for them but complete scattering, which would assure them at last what their unbelief had refused to own, that Jehovah had spoken!

3. Such then, for many centuries, was the end of the throne of David; yet God had guaranteed that throne with a promise which no failure of man could possibly set aside. Nay, in giving it, God had contemplated the failure, and declared what He would do: "I will establish his seed forever, and his throne as the days of heaven. If his children forsake my law, and walk not in mine

will crop off from the top of its young shoots a [z] tender one and will plant it upon a mountain, high and exalted. Upon the [a] mountain height of Israel will I plant it; and it shall [b] bring forth branches, and bear fruit, and become a [c] noble cedar; and under it shall [d] dwell all birds of every wing; in the shadow of its branches shall they dwell. And [e] all the trees of the field shall

z *cf.* Is. 53. 2 with Lk. 4 22, etc.
a Is. 52. 13. Ps. 72. 11.
b *cf.* Ps. 92. 12, 13.
cf. Jno. 15. 1, 2, etc.
cf. Ps. 72. 16.
c *cf.* Acts 5. 30, 31.

d cf. ch. 31. 6 with Dan. 4. 12; *cf.* Gen. 49. 10, 22, etc; *cf.* Ps. 22. 27-30; *cf.* Is. 49. 18-23. *e cf.* Is. 55. 12, 13; *cf.* Is. 60. 3; *cf.* Ps. 2. 10-12.

ordinances; if they profane my statutes and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter that which has gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness, I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure forever, and his throne shall be as the sun before Me" (Ps. lxxxix. 29–36).

Therefore, while avenging their breaking of the covenant, God will surely not forget His own; and while the rod is upon David's house for its unfaithfulness, the assurance is at once given that God is not as man to repent, and that He will be to Israel at last, what the Babylonian eagle could only be by contrast, representing as it did, God's tender hand in their present discipline: "Thus, saith the Lord Jehovah, *I* will also take of the topmost branch of the high cedar, and will set it. I will crop off from the top of its young shoots a tender one, and will plant it upon a mountain high and exalted."

For God, the cedar remains therefore, though He seem now to be calling that which is not as though it were. But this cedar of David's house rises up only to fuller stature, as it were, out of its degradation, when Christ of whom the Spirit speaks here becomes the Head of it; humbled, and accepting the deepest possible humiliation, when every promise of blessing to the people who refused Him will seem to have come to an end forever. What blessing can there be, we might ask, for those who have refused the Deliverer when He came and, in a way beyond all that Zedekiah could possibly do, hurled defiance against Him who sent His Son for man's salvation? Yet, in the resurrection of Him who went down thus to death for man, is the assurance of the fulfilment of every promise: "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I also will take of the highest branch of the lofty cedar, and will set it; I will crop off from the top of its young shoots a tender one, and I will plant it upon a mountain high and exalted. Upon the mountain height of Israel will I plant it." There is here no question of legal conditions at all, nor breach of covenant, which we see all through Israel's history, to affect Jehovah's promise in grace when He takes up her cause. It is a new beginning, as we see. It is the branch cropped off by Jehovah which now becomes a noble cedar, and all birds of every wing shall dwell in the shadow of its branches. Here comes at last the universal refuge from the oppressor, the beneficent power in which the weakest shall rejoice. All the music of heaven shall be heard amid its branches. Here at last is One in whom God shall fully display Himself, and in whom will be revealed the secret of all God's former dealings with the nation, and with men at large. Man's pride is brought down that thus abased he may be rightly exalted. The tree, once so green to man's eye, is dried up that it may flourish again after God's mind. Ezekiel's wheel, and the Preacher's, has made now its final revolution! Thank

know that I Jehovah have *f* brought down the high tree, have *g* exalted the low tree, have *h* dried up the green tree, and made the *i* dry tree flourish: I Jehovah have *j* spoken and will do it.

f 1 Sa. 2. 7, 8. *cf.* Is. 2. 13–17.
g cf. Is. 9. 6, 7. *cf.* Is. 53. 11, 12.
h Ps. 75. 6, 7. Lk. 23. 31. *cf.* Mt. 2. 19, 20.
i cf. Num. 17. 5, 10.
j ch. 12. 25, *et al.*

SECTION 5 (Chap. xviii.).

The righteous ways of God.

1 (1-9): With the righteous man.

1. And the *k* word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, What mean ye, that ye use this *l* proverb in the land of Israel, saying, The *m* fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? [As] I live,

k ch. 17. 1, etc.
l cf. ch. 12. 22.
m Jer. 31. 29, 30. *cf.* Lam. 5. 7.

God, it will need to revolve no more; for here is One come who, having been abased, is now exalted, and shall never again be abased. By *His* abasement all has been secured. It was "overturn, overturn, overturn," till He should come whose right it was, and now it is given Him. God has put His seal upon this: "I, Jehovah, have spoken, and will do it." *

Sec. 5.

We have now another chapter after the manner of, and according to the line of things committed to Ezekiel—the affirmation of God's righteous ways in government. These governmental ways form the matter of his whole prophecy hitherto. And they are ways that need to be affirmed; for in God's government of the world, clouds and darkness are round about Him, and we have here that in which the whole law given to Israel finds its explanation. Even now, with His face fully seen, as Moses yet could not see it, we are in some sense upon the mount with Moses still hearing Him say: "Thou canst not see my face." And though we may be consciously hidden and safe under His hand while His glory passes by, yet still what we see is just the glory of the back parts—glory after it is passed. The apostle says of the chastening Hand (which so often is like a cloud encompassing the throne), "Afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby." Faith, therefore, is the requisite all through; but it is faith, now, in One who has fully manifested Himself in Christ, so that as to what He Himself is there should be henceforth no rightful question. But His ways may still perplex us; and the exercise which we have under them is intended as part of the wholesome discipline under which we are.

* Let it be borne in mind that the prophet refers, not to the *first* coming of our Lord, but to His final revelation as the King of His people, which introduces the millennial reign. He is seen indeed at His first coming as "a root out of a dry ground"—ready to be the Deliverer. But "His own received Him not:" Messiah was cut off and had nothing. The true Vine was refused, save by the remnant of His people, who became the nucleus of a new order, the Church. "We have no king but Cæsar," shows how the people still leaned upon the arm of flesh, and their house remained desolate. It will be so until (after the close of the present day of grace) the remnant will turn in faith to the One whom they have previously disregarded. "Return, we beseech Thee, O God of hosts; look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine; and the vineyard which Thy right hand hath planted, and the BRANCH that Thou madest strong for Thyself . . . Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand, upon the Son of Man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself" (Ps. 80: 14-17). Then will this tender Shoot spread abroad its branches, and redeemed Israel will dwell under the shadow of the Vine of the Lord. "Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the earth with fruit" (Is. 27: 6). But it will be through Him whose voice they shall at last hear saying—"From ME is thy fruit found." "His branches shall spread, and His beauty shall be as the olive tree, and His smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under His shadow shall return: they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine" (Hos. 14: 6-8).—S. R.

saith the Lord Jehovah, ye shall not have any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, [a]all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that [c]sinneth, it shall die.

[a] Num. 16. 22. cf. Zech. 12. 1.
[c] cf. G. n. 2. 17. cf. Rom. 6. 23. cf. Rom. 5. 12.

With Israel under the law, the glory was under a covering; and here we have to look at things necessarily from the standpoint of men in those days. The chapter before us deals with the unbelief which prevailed so much in Israel, which argued from what was but the consequence of their own sin, against the righteousness, as well as the goodness, of God's chastening hand.

1. The statement of the chapter is very full, and we see easily God's earnestness about it. It is not of little account to Him what man, the creature He has made, may make of Him. He is saying here, as in the opening words of another prophet: "Come, let us reason together;" although upon His side there is here little of what we might call reasoning. He reasons in fact upon that in man which should be obvious upon the mere statement of it, which if denied would mean there was no God at all, none worthy to be called that. On the other hand, man's arguments are but those of unbelief, of self-ignorance; for he who knows not God, we may be sure, knows not himself to begin with. We must come to ourselves in order to come to Him. As surely as we have taken our true place before Him, so surely will His glory shine upon us.

"And the word of Jehovah came unto me saying, What mean ye that ye use this proverb in the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge?" It is to be noted that it was *in the land of Israel* that this proverb was being used; the land of God's gift to them, the land that was emphatically "a good land," a land into which God had brought them by the display of most wonderful miracles, beating down the haughtiest power on earth existing then, to give them deliverance, and executing judgment upon Egypt's false gods in a way which rang in the ears of the nations around for long. It was in this good land they could speak of "sour grapes" which their fathers had eaten, and their children's teeth were set on edge through no failure of their own! How little need of argument, one would say, against a proverb of this sort in the land and among the people of Israel! All the more, and because these people are the objects of His love, for whom He has shown Himself mighty, must He silence this talk forever: "As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, ye shall not have any more to use this proverb in Israel." In fact, throughout all the judgments which the prophet had had to announce, we have heard echoing again and again the assurance that He is Jehovah, the One who took them up under this Name. How plainly His heart is in the answer: "Behold, all souls are mine. As the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine." Will they take from Him the souls of those He has created? Will they doubt His care and goodness toward those whom He had created? Will they think, in the face of the goodness which He has lavished upon them, that those for whom He has thus provided are of no concern to Him? And as the apostle asks long after, "Is God the God of the Jews only? Is He not also of the Gentiles?" As surely as man is man, wherever he is, so surely must God be God to them all. Clouds and darkness may be round about Him, but is the sun less bright because it is hidden? And are the clouds that encompass it of heaven or of earth?

We must remember that Israel was brought into special relationship with God

as Creator. As such the very opening of their inspired oracles declare Him; and if Israel had special nearness to Him, yet, even where this is declared, there is careful remembrance of His relation to all others on the same ground. Thus, if God says to Pharaoh: "Israel is my son, even my first-born," the first-born son implies there are other sons. And if there be a special promise to Abraham and to his seed, that promise (indirectly, but as truly) takes in others: "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Thus the relationship of the Creator to His creatures is especially insisted on in the Old Testament. So the Psalmist (Ps. cxxxix. 13–16), if troubled at the omniscient eye of God ever upon him, has but to go back and consider how that same eye watched over him before ever he was born, while gradually that delicately interwoven body of his was forming. How could he do other than welcome the eye of such an One to search him through and through? So, pitiful even in His anger, God says in Isa. lvii. 16: "For I will not contend forever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before Me, and *the souls that I have made*."

True, death has come into the old creation, and God does not forget it here. It is His own penalty, and He cannot overlook it. It is meant to have meaning for man. The very law is the ministration of it; and if all souls are His, the soul of the son as of the father is an object of emphatic interest to Him: none the less is it true that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." It is solemnly affirmed that it is for his *own* sins that man dies—not for the sins of another.

We must pause a moment here to consider (what has been considered elsewhere and in various places) what the "soul" is that is intended here, and what death. The "soul that sinneth" is so constantly assumed to be the immortal part of man, and therefore the death, with which it is connected, an immortal death, as it were, that we must stop to consider the Old Testament's constant speech as to this, and the law which is in a special way the spirit of the Old Testament. It has often been said that if it is the judgment of eternity that is affirmed in the law, and its death-judgment eternal death, then God has pledged Himself that every sinner shall receive eternal condemnation. But we know this is contrary to every principle that Scripture declares. God has not thus bound Himself as to be unable to show grace; nor could He play fast and loose with what He has declared. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" is the patent fact before all men, and pressed upon them by what is itself the ministration of death. It is the undeniable reality of this fact, that all men are under the sentence of death, which makes the law a true and full test of man's condition—shows his inability to stand before God in judgment. It says, "The man that doeth these things shall live in them." Is it not plain that the man who really doeth these things, in a way *absolutely according to God*, could not be under the sentence of death at all? How could God put such a sentence upon one who is altogether according to His mind? Ah, but *that* is the contention. Does God really mean that *all* must be according to His mind? Does He not know, do we not all know and confess, that men are sinners? And if we be so, why any test of man in this way at all?

The answer is, that man will ever mix up God's mercy and man's righteousness, so as to get credit for himself for whatever partial righteousness he thinks he can furnish; and God did, in fact, in the *second* giving of the law, contemplate this very thought which was in man's heart. With the *first* giving of the law no promise of forgiveness was attached; the trial was soon over, as we

> But if a man be [p]righteous and do judgment and justice: he hath not [q]eaten upon the mountains, nor lifted up his [r]eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, nor hath [s]defiled his neighbor's wife, nor come [t]near to a woman in her separation, nor hath [u]wronged any;

p Ps. 15. 2. 5. Rom. 2. 7. 10. Rom. 10. 5.
q Ch. 20. 28.
r ch. 33. 25.
s ch. 33. 26.
t Lev. 18. 19.
u Ex. 22. 21. cf. Mk. 10. 19.

know. The golden calf was the end of that; and the tables of the covenant as first made were simply broken under the mount, and never reached the people. In the *second* giving of the law God declares that He is not only righteous but "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth . . . forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." Here, then, is a provision made for those who are allowed—what, in fact, the first trial proved them so clearly to be—sinners. God was ready to forgive sins—though the ground of it is not yet stated—with regard to every one who truly turns to Him. Yet, according to this, man is under a legal system still; and it is of the essence of a legal system that God should say that He can "by no means clear the guilty." How reconcile this with the forgiveness which He has just declared? Where shall the line be drawn? *How much* sin will God forgive? And where will He put the limit? Here man would interpret in the easiest way according to the measure of his own light thoughts, making God such an one as himself. It is of all importance, therefore, to show precisely what God means, and to declare also from His side what must be the issue of such a trial. And this is not held back at all. The ten commandments are the measure of the righteousness God requires. But who can yield to Him this requirement? And if that be the measure (however often God may come in to cancel the past, and bid him begin again) will man, in result, be anything else but guilty, at any time God comes in? and then how can God clear him? Thus, clearly, it is of this second giving of the law that the apostle asserts it is "the ministration of death and condemnation." No need to say so as to the first. It was of the time when God had declared His mercy, and thus His glory, which made the face of Moses to shine, that the apostle is speaking; and how important it is to realize that God here actually cuts off all hope as to the issue. No man can stand before Me and live, He says. How far does *that* go? Moses himself, the mediator of this covenant, can in no wise behold His face, as He declares. After He has *gone by*, God will take away His hand and let him see His back parts; but this is God turned—His back, not the face. And this is the constant tenor of the law. Man misreads it because he is anxious to maintain his own righteousness in whatever fragment of it he thinks himself able.

But *grace* was always in God's heart; and grace is the only possible hope for any. "But if it be of grace," says the apostle, "it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace." You cannot mix these principles at all. The legal system could not but be a ministration of death to man. And this yet has its use, as is also plain. The law becomes in this very way the handmaid of the gospel, cutting off all hope derived from human effort, and thus making us debtors to God's grace alone. How suited to this character of it, then, that the law should affirm, not the penalty of eternity (unseen as yet), but the penalty which man can plainly see exacted from man day by day, the penalty which in its universality is designed to cut off hope absolutely from all on that ground. Thus the death must be the present death; and God can maintain the penalty

he hath [w]restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by [w]robbery, hath given his [x]bread to the hungry, and covered the naked with a garment: he hath not given forth upon [y]usury, nor taken increase: he hath [z]withdrawn his hand from unrighteousness, hath executed true [a]judgment between man and man, hath [b]walked in my statutes, and kept mine ordinances to deal faithfully: he is righteous; he shall surely [c]live, saith the Lord Jehovah.

[w] Deut 24.12, 13
[x] Is. 58. 6, 7. Job 31. 16, 20.
[y] Neh. 5. 7. Is. 58. 7.
[z] Is. 33. 15.
[a] Lev. 19. 15, 35.
[b] Ps. 19. 7-11.
[c] ch. 20. 11. *cf.* Rom. 3. 20 with Gal. 3. 21.

here and now, while holding to His own grace as to the eternity that follows. All is absolutely clear and perfectly consistent.

The death here in Ezekiel, then, is not what we think of as the death of the soul. It is "the soul that sinneth" that dies, true; but what *is* the soul in this Old Testament language? Just the person himself, the man who was made "a living soul." The soul of the father and the soul of the son is just the person of the father and of the son, and this use is retained in our common language.* And it is well to see how perfectly all this unites with the whole character of Ezekiel's prophecy, which contemplates the world and God's judgment of the nations as nations, of Israel as a nation, judgment executed by special instruments, as here by Nebuchadnezzar. Eternal judgment is entirely out of the question. It is not Nebuchadnezzar who inflicts eternal penalty.

Another difficulty must also be considered here. It will be said, and rightly, that the penalty of death, of which God speaks by Ezekiel in, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" can scarcely be a penalty resting upon all, when God Himself positively exempts the righteous from it. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" is but in contrast with the righteous man who shall not die, but live; and that God is not speaking of absolute righteousness, but of those who in heart are His own, who are constantly spoken of, in the Old Testament especially, as "the righteous." Nor that it means the righteous by faith, as it was not the principle yet clearly announced.

We acknowledge this to be true. It is the man *righteous in character* of whom God is speaking, distinguished in this way from the wicked, even while he "the righteous" lays no claim to any *absolute* righteousness. Yet he escapes death as it is spoken of here. We can easily see how some at once would say: Here, at least, it must be eternal death that is intended. But, whatever the implication, that is not what is meant. It is death, no question, but as a special judgment of God—not as what comes upon man so universally that he thinks of it as the law of nature with him; but it is a cutting off before the time, in such a way as declares God's wrath upon the person so cut off.

It is the same here as ever in the Old Testament therefore; just what we call natural death, but as a special infliction. For instance, we have no difficulty in understanding what the apostle means when he says to the Corinthians (because of their profanation of the Lord's supper). "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." And he adds as to it: "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged," while at the same time carefully preserving the grace in which the Christian stands by the declaration, "But

* It is interesting to find in the Syriac New Testament the word *nephesh*, "soul," constantly used for "self."—S. R.

2 (10 20): With the son of the righteous or wicked according as he is himself righteous or wicked.

2. Now if he have begotten a [d]son that is violent, a shedder of blood, and doeth to his brother any of those things; and that doeth not any of those [duties], but hath even eaten upon the mountains, and defiled his neighbor's wife, hath oppressed the poor and needy, hath spoiled by robbery, hath not restored the pledge and hath lifted up his eyes to the idols, hath committed abomination, hath given forth upon usury and taken increase; shall he then live? He shall not live: he hath done all these abominations; he shall surely die; his [e]blood shall be upon him.

[d] *cf.* 1 Sa. 2. 12, etc.

[e] Lev. 20. 9 11. 13, etc.

when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." Thus there is a death in judgment here which is, nevertheless, *not* eternal judgment, but which is God's open manifestation of what departure from Him naturally leads to. So the apostle John speaks again: "If any one see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life, for them that sin not unto death. There *is* a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it." This is perhaps more than what is necessary to be said upon the matter, but Christians and commentators have so largely gone astray with regard to just such things.

As already said, Ezekiel keeps constantly in view what the law has in view, the tribunal of God in His providential dealings with men *upon earth*. He is, through all this, contemplating the issue and the end of this very legal covenant; and thus the penalty which He announces is the penalty in human history.

In the first place, then, the Lord speaks of His way with a righteous man—not absolutely such, as already said, but distinctively so: "If a man be righteous, and do judgment and justice, he hath not eaten upon the mountains, nor lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, . . . he hath walked in my statutes and kept mine ordinances to deal faithfully; he is righteous; he shall surely live, saith the Lord Jehovah." This was entirely subversive, therefore, of the proverb which Israel was using. There is no question about their ancestry; each one was responsible for himself; and this is the basic principle of all that follows.

2. In the second place we have the son of the righteous, or the son of the wicked, as he is *himself* righteous or wicked. First, as to the son of the righteous: If this righteous man "have begotten a son that is violent, a shedder of blood . . . shall he live because of his father's righteousness?" This was an important question for the Jew, and especially for the Jew of the captivity, who with the nation under God's dealings, cut off from their land and temple, more and more learned to fall back upon the merits of Abraham, which Rabbis pressed to the extent of involving in some sense the acceptance of all his natural seed. The question is turned back upon them. Here was a father who had *not* eaten sour grapes; did it prevent his children having their teeth on edge? God was dealing with them for *their own* sins; and all the privileges they had through Abraham were necessarily forfeited, if in their own character they were not the true seed of Abraham.*

* This is dwelt upon by our Lord in John 8, where it is well to note the distinction *He* makes between Abraham's *seed*—according to the flesh—and Abraham's *children* according to faith and new birth. See John 8: 37, 39.—S. R.

Now, lo, if *f* he have begotten a son that *g* seeth all his father's sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth *h* not such like: he hath not eaten upon the mountains, nor lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, hath not defiled his neighbor's wife, and hath not oppressed any, nor withholden the pledge, nor spoiled by robbery; hath given his bread to the hungry, and covered the naked with a garment; hath withdrawn his hand from the poor; hath not received usury nor increase; he hath executed my judgments, hath walked in my statutes; he shall not die *i* for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live.

f cf. 2 Ki. 16. 19, 20.
g cf. 2 Chr. 29. 6, 11.
h ch. 20. 18.
i vers. 19, 20; cf. Jer. 16. 11-13.

Next comes the question of the son of the wicked man, who "sees all his father's sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like." This should ever be the result with one who has had such an object lesson before him. If he read it aright, so as to turn from his father's iniquity and to walk in the divine statutes, should he die for the iniquity of his father? Nay, he should surely live. Father and son are thus judged according to their own personal character.

But they raise the objection: "Why? Doth not the son bear the iniquity of his father?" Spite of many commentators, the second commandment of the law is evidently in question here. It was that which gave a seeming excuse for the proverb itself. For God had declared that He *was* "a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me and keep my commandments." It seems evident that the resentful thought that is in the mind of those overtaken by the present calamities of the nation, is that the third and fourth generations were suffering for faults that were in no wise their own. Allowing the wickedness of former generations—which is not so hard to confess as one's own—they admit that their fathers indeed ate the sour grapes, but not themselves. But the commandment speaks quite otherwise than this; for those who love God and keep His commandments have in it the definite assurance of mercy to be shown them, and could not come, therefore, under the contradictory law of inheriting their father's sins.

This is quite plain as to the law. But it may be argued, Is there not a testimony of fact, however, which we cannot help taking as an interpretation of the commandment? Is there not a law of heredity entailing the most serious consequences? What do we all inherit from Adam? There is but one answer to this. We certainly inherit both a sinful nature and its consequences; but the nature is not in question here. It is the penalty, of which the popular proverb here is speaking. A fallen nature we all have, truly—though we must remember that man is not as a beast to be bound by his nature, nor to be excused by it. Let a man argue as he will about what he has inherited from Adam, he knows in his own soul, as to every sin that he has committed, that he is responsible, and why he is responsible for it. He cannot put his sins to Adam's account. They are *his own*. Theology may complicate matters for him, indeed, but we are not concerned with that now—it is looked at elsewhere. (See Rom. v. 12–21, *Notes*.)

As for his [j]father, because he practised oppression, spoiled his brother by robbery, and [k]did that which is not good among his people, behold, he shall die in his iniquity.

Yet ye say, [l]Why doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done judgment and justice, hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. The soul that [m]sinneth, it shall die; the [n]son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son;

j ver. 4, etc.
k *cfr.* Prov. 14. 22.
l *cf.* Ex 20.5. *cf.* 2 Ki. 23. 26.
m ver. 4. *cf.* Rom. 2. 6, 11.
n Deut 24.16. *cf.* 2 Ki. 14. 6.

As to penalty, the apostle plainly declares that "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men" (not, for that *Adam* sinned, but) "for that *all* have sinned." Any one who can say he has not sinned, may justly argue that he should be free from a penalty which comes to him simply from his fathers. But let us look at this in the light of some examples that may help us. The Christian at least is free from wrath. He is accepted in Christ before God in all the fulness of Christ's own acceptance. With regard to him the Lord distinctly states: "Verily, verily, I say unto you. He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into *judgment* (as the word is), but is passed from death unto life" (Jno. v. 24). In *this* thought of judgment (not as the holy discipline of God with His people, as in 1 Cor. xi. 30-32, but) as true penalty, the Christian is wholly free; yet he dies as others do (unless the Lord comes before), for death came into the world through Adam. Plainly, we must carefully distinguish here. Death for the Christian has changed its character. The Lord has pronounced with regard to this that he who believeth on Him, though he were dead, yet shall live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Him shall never die (Jno. xi. 25, 26). Yet we must admit a death which is the result of chastisement. Discipline, so far from being penalty merely, is that which secures our being partakers of God's holiness (Heb. xii. 10). It is a proof thus of sonship, as the apostle says.

An Old Testament example is of great value to us here. The book of Job gives an account of the trial of a man who had not his like upon the earth; a man that feared God and eschewed evil. Yet Job is permitted to be in Satan's hands in such a way that his suffering through it is proverbial. His friends argue, as men so commonly do, that this must be the visitation of God for sins in his life, thus detected and exposed, in spite of all his righteous seeming. Of the suffering there was no doubt. Of its being distinctly from God there can be no proper doubt either. Yet Job could proclaim his blameless conduct without possibility of any one controverting it. But there was another cause, which the speech of Elihu (who alone has God's mind with regard to it) brings into open view. There is often an inner condition of heart which has to be reached, and which Job's very claim of righteousness, truthful as in a sense it was, clearly manifests. He has to come where, instead of any such claim to righteousness, he can only say: "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee; wherefore *I abhor myself*, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job xlii. 5, 6).

By such examples as these we can see clearly how the fruits and consequences of sin—which is indeed penalty for the unrepentant sinner—may be found in

3 (21-32): With the wicked returning to righteousness, or the righteous to iniquity.

the °righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the ᵖwickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. 3. But if the wicked ᵍturn from all his sins that he hath committed, and ʳkeep all my statutes, and do judgment and justice, he shall surely live, he shall ˢnot die. None of his transgressions which he hath committed shall be ᵗremembered against him; in his ᵘrighteousness that he hath done, he shall live. Have I any ᵛpleasure at all in the death of the wicked? saith the Lord Jehovah; and not rather in his ʷreturning from his way that he may live? But when the ˣrighteous turneth from his righteousness and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked doeth, shall he live? ʸNone of his righteous deeds that he hath done shall be remembered: in his unfaithfulness which he hath wrought, and in his sin which he hath sinned, in them shall he ᶻdie. And ye ᵃsay, The way of the Lord is not equal!

o 1 Ki. 8. 32; *cf.* Is. 3. 10, 11.
p Rom. 2. 9 with Rev. 20. 12, 13.
q ver. 27, etc. ch. 33. 11, 16; *cf.* Is. 1. 16-20.
r *cf.* Is. 55. 7.
s ver. 9.
t *cf.* Jas. 2. 10.
u vers. 17, 28; *cf.* Rom. 8. 2.
v ch. 33. 16; *cf.* Ps. 25. 7; *cf.* Heb. 8. 12.
w 2 Chr. 6. 23.
x ver. 32; ch. 33. 11; *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 9.
y *cf.* Ps. 147. 11; *cf.* Hos. 6. 1, 3; *cf.* Lk. 15.

4, etc. *x* ch. 3. 20, etc.; *cfr.* 1 Jno. 2. 1, 2. *y cfr.* Jno. 10. 28-30; *cf.* Rom. 8. 31-35. *z cfr.* Col 3. 3, 4. *a* ver. 29; ch. 33. 17, 20.

the case of the righteous. If a man like Job needed the discipline through which he passed to open his eyes to his condition—to sin in his very nature—it is plain that no one could think of being exempt from these ways of a holy and merciful God with regard to him. And proportionately as we have little knowledge of ourselves, these ways may be mysterious to us. They were surely that to Job until they found their interpretation; and it is plain that the great point through it all is, as Elihu says, to turn man from his purpose, from all his own ends and ways, and to hide pride from man. Pride is that which, above all, obscures the ways of God with us, while it necessitates a severity of trial which, arguing from the mere outward conduct, when there is even a general desire to be right with God, is hard to penetrate. Thus we can see why, in a world like this, the righteous and the wicked seem often to fare so similarly; indeed, as the psalmist thought, the wicked may get on best. He found that he must be in the sanctuary to understand this.

3. We have now another case considered; which closes the account. It is that of the sinner turning to righteousness; or, on the other hand, the turning of the righteous outwardly to sin. In either case, the judgment must be according to the end of the trial. Former sin, or former righteousness, cannot be remembered; that is, the sin of the past will not make the present righteousness to which one has turned, unavailing; nor, on the other hand, the past righteousness make the present sin to be cancelled by it. We must remember in all this that it is not the final account in eternity that is spoken of, but the present entering into the favor or under the judgment of God in government. Nor have we the grace of God's mercy, as the gospel has shown it to us, spoken of at all. It is God's ways in government that are before us, which is the constant theme of the prophet. We must remember also how, in the case of sin like David's, there might have to be, as far as outward experiences go, the remembrance of the sin, even when it had been forgiven and the soul was once more in the unclouded favor of God. The need in David's case is explicitly given to us. Because he had made the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, God

Hear, then, O house of Israel: Is not [b]my way equal? are not [c]your ways unequal? When the [d]righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth therein, in his iniquity that he hath done he shall die. And when the [e]wicked turneth from his wickedness which he hath committed, and doeth judgment and justice, he shall keep his soul alive. Because he [f]considereth and turneth away from all his transgressions which he hath committed, he shall certainly live, he shall not die. Yet the house of Israel say, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? Are not your ways unequal? Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one [g]according to his ways, saith the Lord Jehovah. [h]Return ye, and turn from all your transgressions; and iniquity shall not be your stumbling-block. [i]Cast away from you all your transgressions wherewith ye have transgressed, and [j]make you a new heart and a new spirit: for [k]why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have [l]no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord Jehovah. Therefore [m]turn ye and live.

[b] Gen. 18. 25. Deut. 32. 4. Zeph. 3. 5.
[c] Ps. 50. 21. *cf.* Jer. 2. 19.
[d] ver. 24. *cf.* Rom. 2. 7.
[e] ver. 21.
[f] ver. 14. Deut. 32. 29.
[g] ch. 7. 3. ch. 33. 20. Eccl. 12. 14.
[h] Mal. 3. 18. Is. 31. 6, 7. *etc.* Heb. 9. 26.
[i] *etc.* ch. 36. 25, 26 *etc.* Jer. 32. 39.
[k] ch. 33. 11. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 20.
[l] *cf.* Lk. 19. 41.
[m] *cf.* Mt. 11. 28.

must glorify Himself as to the sin, not merely on account of any disciplinary need on David's part, but because God cares for His glory among men in general. He must maintain His character, and show that He cannot pass over evil in the lives of His own people because they are that. Thus the sword was never to depart from David's house, and the sin that he had committed sprang up again and again in his own family history. How great the need that there should be no right question with regard to the holiness of Him who yet delights in mercy, abundant in goodness and in truth at the same time! But with Him, "mercy rejoiceth against judgment," and He emphatically declares, therefore, that He can have no pleasure in the death of the sinner. In fact, the nation of Israel as a whole were in such a state as necessitated judgment. The darkness over the ways of God was with them the fruit of that darkened understanding which a heart turned away from Him will surely produce; and he closes here with an earnest appeal to their conscience and heart together. *Their* ways, not His, were unequal; of necessity therefore, judgment was at hand; but still He would have them turn from all their transgressions, that they might not be to their destruction. "Cast away from you all your transgressions wherewith ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" How fully is man's responsibility for his whole condition recognized in this appeal! It is not, of course, what the Lord urged upon Nicodemus, when the new light was dawning upon him, that man must be born again; but it is responsibility pressed to the full, and man is fully recognized as one who ought to be master of himself, capable of such appeal as is made to him here: "For why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord Jehovah; therefore, turn ye and live."

Sec. 6.

In this chapter we return to the lessons furnished by the history of the peo-

SECTION 6 (Chap. xix.).

The victories of the Gentiles over the line of David, so that under them Israel never obtains her hope.

AND thou, take thou up a [n]lamentation for the princes of Israel, and say, What was thy [o]mother? A lioness: she lay down among [p]lions, she nourished her whelps in the midst of the young lions. And she brought up [q]one of her whelps; it became a young lion, and he learned to catch the prey; he devoured men. And the [r]nations heard of him; he was taken in their pit, and they brought him with hooks into the land of [s]Egypt. And when she saw that she had waited and her hope was lost, she took [t]another of her whelps, and made him a young lion. And he went up and down among the lions, he became a young lion, and learned to catch the prey; he devoured men. And he

n ch. 26. 17; ch. 27. 2.
o cf. ch. 16. 3; *cfr.* Gal. 4. 26, 31.
p cf. Nah. 2. 11, 12. *cf.* Gen. 49. 9, 10.
q cf. 2 Ki. 23. 31, 32. *cf.* 2 Chr. 36. 1, 2.
r cf. 2 Ki. 23. 33, 34.
s cf. Jer. 22. 11, 12, 18.
t cf. 2 Ki. 23. 34–37.

ple. The prevailing of Gentile power over the line of David, spite of the promises of God given to it, is here pointed out. The hope which these promises awakened, Israel seemed not to obtain. We have not this fact merely, however, but the plain reason for it, which its very brevity makes all the more vivid. Two pictures of Israel are set side by side before us, Jerusalem and her king being the representatives of Israel; and these pictures are intended to cast light upon one another. There is a certain incongruity between them which at first sight makes the connection difficult, but which is the very point intended to be pressed. Jerusalem as the lioness among lions is the very secret of Jerusalem's present broken-down condition as God's vine.

The lamentation is over the princes of Israel; it is the kingdom that is before us, and the question is asked, "What was thy mother?" The answer is, "A lioness; she lay down among lions; she nourished her whelps in the midst of the young lions." She is a kingdom among the kingdoms of the earth, in a relation to them which makes her offspring as their offspring, and reproduces in them the Gentile characters. There is, truly, a Lion of the tribe of Judah; it is a title of Christ Himself, and He will arise in this character to put down all enemies at last by one decisive stroke. The book of Revelation shows us Christ after this manner, as the Lion of the tribe of Judah. When the seer looks to see this *Lion*, however, he sees the *Lamb*. These things are not incongruous or contradictory in Him. The Lamb is His true and inner character; and all the way through it is the Lamb that is upon the throne, and it is the Lamb whose wrath is dreaded. The rod of iron, to use another figure, is in His hand; but it is the Shepherd's rod none the less. Judgment is not only in behalf of righteousness, but it is the fruit of love itself. He must manifest Himself against the enemies of His people; He must destroy those that destroy the earth.

But the lion which is spoken of here is a very different one. Indeed, Israel was nothing now but a Gentile power, with the lawlessness and selfish spirit that belongs to man in nature. Her offspring manifest this: "She brought up one of her whelps. It became a young lion, and he learned to catch prey; he devoured men." The statement is as decisive as it is short. This is not God's picture of the "Ruler amongst men," surely. It is not

knew their palaces, and laid [u]waste their cities; and the land was desolate and its fulness because of the noise of his roaring. Then the [v]nations set against him on every side from the provinces, and spread their net over him; he was taken in their pit and they put him in a cage with hooks, and brought him to the king of [w]Babylon; they brought him into strongholds, that his voice should [x]no more be heard upon the mountains of Israel.

[u] vch. 22. 25. cf. 18. 1. 21. 23.
[v] cf. 2 Ki. 24. 1-6. Jer. 22. 13-19.
[w] 2 Chr. 36. 6. cf. Hab. 1. 6.
[x] ch. 6. 2, 3.

David's picture in his final song; and we see how truly he realized it when he owned that his house was "not so with God." Indeed, it was not, as the disorders already manifested plainly showed; but this being so, the rule of the line of David could not justify its existence; for even God's promise would not do this apart from its possessing the characters of true rule, which it had not. Thus it directly follows that when "the nations heard of him, he was taken in their pit, and they brought him with hooks into the land of Egypt." It is the fate of Jehoahaz that is referred to; it is his history generalized for our consideration. What would people do with a man-eating lion? The pit and the hooks were the only right treatment for such.

But Jehoahaz is only one example out of many: "And when she saw that she had waited and her hope was lost, she took another of her whelps and made him a young lion; and he went up and down among the lions; he became a young lion, and learned to catch prey: he devoured men." We scarcely know whether it is Jehoachin who is spoken of here, or Zedekiah who replaced him. It is really of no consequence. In any case, it is but another lion's whelp, like the former; and as the character is like, so also must be the result.

There is some further description to bring out fully the moral of the whole. The first expression is difficult, and there is some question with regard to the text. "He knew their palaces:" more strictly perhaps, "He knew their widows;" but it may mean, rather, their solitary or widowed places or palaces. Some would read it: "He broke down their palaces," which would seem to connect better with what follows. But we have to be careful in Scripture how we take what seems simplest to be the best. The general thought, however, is plain: "He laid waste their cities, and the land was desolate and its fulness" (*i. e.*, all that was in it), "because of the noise of his roaring." His voice was evidently more pretentious than his power, but his power was enough, such as it was, to make a desolation, whereas there should have been prosperity. This repeats, therefore, only more emphatically, what was the character of these lion whelps. The consequence is that the same destruction comes upon him, only now from another side. "Then the nations set themselves against him on every side from the provinces, and spread their net over him. He was taken in their pit, and they put him into a cage with hooks, and brought him" (this time) "to the king of Babylon. They brought him into strongholds, that his voice should no more be heard upon the mountains of Israel." This would make it look more like Zedekiah, the last king; but in any case it is the justification of the Gentile overthrow of David's house, and it is a complete one. It may be said, of course, that these Gentiles were none of them any better. The answer is plain, that Israel, with all her privileges and her knowledge of God, should have been better; and that the profession of this knowledge could

Thy mother [g]like thee is as a vine planted by the waters: it was fruitful and full of branches by [z]reason of many waters. And it had strong [a]rods for sceptres of them that bare rule, and its stature was [b]exalted among the thick boughs; and it was conspicuous by its height with the multitude of its branches. But it was [c]plucked up in fury, it was cast down to the ground, and the east wind [d]dried up its fruit; its strong rods were broken and withered; the fire consumed them. And now it is planted in the wilderness, in a [e]dry and thirsty land: and the [f]fire is gone out of a rod of its branches, it hath devoured its fruit; so that there is in it no strong rod to be a sceptre for ruling. This is a [g]lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation.

g ch. 17. 6, etc. Is. 5. 1-4. cf. Mt. 21. 33-41.
z Deut. 8. 7-9. Ps. 80. 8-11.
a cf. ch. 21. 10, 13. cf. Ezra 4. 20.
b cf. ch. 31. 3.
c cf. Ps. 80. 12, 13, 16. cf. Jer. 31. 28.
d cf. Jer. 4. 11, 12. cf. Hos. 13. 15.
e cf. Ps. 63. 1. cf. Hos. 2. 3.
f cf. Judg. 9. 15. cf. Jer. 52. 3.
g ver. 1; cf. Lam. 4. 20.

not possibly be permitted to dishonor God, accompanied, as it was, with the full heathen character.

This ends the first picture. Now, in opposition to this, we have what Israel should have been, what it was in the mind of God according to the place in which He had set it for Himself upon the earth. Here the address is, one would say, to Zedekiah: "Thy mother like thee is as a vine planted by the waters." That seems the most probable rendering of another difficult expression. Naturally, the mother was like her offspring in character; but that is not the point here: it is *place*, not character; and the place of the king in Israel was to exhibit rightly the character corresponding to the place which God had given to the nation, the mass of which had departed from Him. Ezekiel, as Isaiah also, had already used the same figure, reminding us of fruitfulness as the only purpose of a vine, of its weakness and dependence. It was in this weakness that Israel would find her strength; it was in drawing from the one Source of all blessing that all her fruitfulness was to be found; and God had in Israel's case done all that could be done in this respect. For a short time, intermittently, it was fruitful; but, by reason of many waters with which God had encompassed it, it grew strong rods for sceptres of them that bare rule, and its stature was exalted among the thick boughs, and it became conspicuous by its height with the multitude of its branches. That is all that is said as to its condition; but we have had abundance heretofore to show that, whilst in weakness she was to find strength, she turned her very blessings, alas, into instruments for her weakness.

These strong rods for sceptres were indeed conspicuous in such times as those of David and Solomon, when the kingdom stretched from the Edomite Gulf to the Euphrates; but it was at this very time that the seed was being sown of the disasters which were soon to follow. The idolatry under Solomon blasted it at once; and though God indeed bore with them in long patience, so that the history of the divided kingdom was prolonged for centuries, yet it forebode the end as a sure thing, and it came at last: "It was plucked up in fury, it was cast down to the ground, and the east wind dried up its fruit; its strong rods were broken and withered; the fire consumed them." So much wood, useful for nothing else when the fruit was gone, as already shown—was proper fuel for the fire. Israel still remained, but in how different a condition! "And now it is planted in the wilderness in a dry and thirsty land, and the fire is

SUBDIVISION 3 (Chaps. xx.–xxiv.).

The full exposure of the people's sin, the heart laid bare.

SECTION 1 (Chap. xx. 1-44).

Rebellion from the beginning hitherto, though still God's purpose as to them abides.

1 (1-9): In Egypt, their birth land.

1. And it came to pass in the [h]seventh year, in the fifth [month], the tenth of the month, that certain of the [i]elders of Israel came to inquire of Jehovah, and they sat before me. And the [j]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, speak unto the elders of Israel and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Is it to inquire of me that ye are come? [As] I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I will [k]not be inquired of by you. Wilt thou judge them, son of man, wilt thou

[h] *cf.* ch. 1. 2. ch. 8. 1, etc.
[i] ch. 14. 1. ch. 33. 30. 33.
[j] ch. 18. 1, etc.
[k] ch. 14. 3. *cf.* 2 Ki. 3. 13. ver. 31.

gone out of a rod of its branches" (Zedekiah seems clearly intimated here), "it hath devoured its fruit, so that there is in it no strong rod to be a sceptre for ruling." The kingdom had passed—passed with every hope that could be grounded upon man as man. It had passed in the righteous judgment of God upon it; and yet who can forbear to mourn for the blighting? "This is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation."

We have thus reached already the close of this sad history. The last section here, extended beyond what is usual, gives us the summary of it all before the final judgment, which we reach in the last chapter of this division, where the siege of the city by Nebuchadnezzar is announced as having begun, and closes therefore the first division of the prophecy.

SUBDIVISION 3.

Sec. 1.

We have now, therefore, their history given from the beginning. We have had it already in various aspects, but here it is shown how consistent, alas, had been the conduct of the people from their very birth as a nation in Egypt to the present time. Constant grace had been shown them; on their part constantly resisted, and thus made ineffectual. Still the purpose of that grace abides, as we see in the end here. God would not leave His gracious purpose to end in failure, whatever may be man's sin against it. Once more, therefore, we are reminded that the promise abides, and that God will perform it in His own wonderful way.

1. We have a new date now, which is significant. "It came to pass in the seventh year, in the fifth month, the tenth of the month, that certain of the elders of Israel came to inquire of Jehovah, and they sat before me." This seventh year with the numbers of responsibility attaching to the month and day, with which we are already familiar, naturally connects itself with the subject before us. We have once more a deputation of elders to inquire of Jehovah, and once again their inquiry is unanswered—it is not even uttered, one would say. They represent, as we see by their inquiry, the professed orthodoxy of the people of whom they are the leaders. But God has nothing to say to them; that is, He has nothing that will answer to their expectations.

judge them? Cause them to know the [l]abominations of their fathers and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: In the day [m]when I chose Israel, and lifted up my hand unto the seed of the house of Jacob, and made myself known unto them in the [n]land of Egypt, when I lifted up my hand unto them, saying, I am Jehovah your God, in that day I lifted up my hand unto them to bring them out of the land of Egypt into a land that I had [o]espied for them, flowing with [p]milk and honey, which is the [q]glory of all lands; and I said unto them, [r]Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt: I am Jehovah your God. But they [s]rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me: none of them cast away the abominations of his eyes, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. Then I said,

l Ch. 16. 2. *cf.* Mt. 12. 38, 39.
m Ex. 6. 7. Ex. 19. 4-6. Deut. 4. 37. Is. 41. 8, 9.
n Ex. 4. 31. Ex. 20. 2, 3. Deut. 4. 34.
o Deut. 8. 7-9. Deut. 11. 11, 12.
p Ex. 13. 5, etc.
q Ps. 48. 2. Dan. 8. 9.
r cf. Ex. 13. 5-7. *cf.* Josh. 24. 23. ch. 18. 31.
s cf. Deut. 9. 7. *cf.* Neh. 9. 16-18.

They are looking for good, and there is nothing but evil that can be announced to them. They fully represent those fathers who, according to the current proverb, had set their teeth on edge; and the prophet is commissioned only to set before them the way in which they were repeating their fathers' abominations. We cannot but remember how in the Lord's time, the scribes and Pharisees were pleading, in the same way as was done here, their right of exemption from the judgment coming for their fathers' deeds, and how the Lord meets them at that time: "Ye are witnesses," He says, "that ye are the children of them who killed the prophets. Fill ye up, then, the measure of your fathers" (Matt. 23: 31, 32).

What is most manifest here is the moral unity of the generations which succeeded one another. There is a perfect monotony of evil all the way through, from the nation's birth in Egypt to Ezekiel's time, and nothing else can be expected until God acts in the sovereignty of His own grace, at last to fulfil His promises in spite of this continuous rebellion.

The elders here are not spoken of as the same company that had previously come to inquire of the prophet, but they are met in the same way, for there is no moral difference. God will not suffer any more inquiry from them. What right have they to inquire, when the terms upon which He alone can be with them have been fully before them, so continually pressed upon them also by the voices of the prophets whom God raised up, and violated all the time? Their own consciences would witness that their hearts were untrue in the inquiry itself. There was no need, therefore, but to remind them of their fathers' abominations: they would find in them a mirror of their own. For this cause the long history is brought before them, beginning from the time God had chosen them, making Himself known in the land of Egypt, to bring them out of it into the land He had selected for them, a land flowing with milk and honey, the glory of all lands. But they were all defiled with the abominations of Egypt, and God had warned them from the outset that these must be put away. Yet with His judgments upon the gods of Egypt before their very eyes, they had not put them away; so that in Egypt itself He had threatened to pour out His wrath upon them. What an inside picture of the condition of things already in the people whom His grace was taking up! Yet He had taken them up, and for His name's sake still wrought, that it should not be

I will [t]pour out my wrath so as to accomplish mine anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt. But I wrought for my [u]name's sake that it should not be profaned in the [v]sight of the nations among whom they were, in whose sight I had made myself known unto them in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt.

2 (10-27): On the way.

2. So I caused them to go [w]forth out of the land of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness. And I gave them my [x]statutes, and made known unto them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall [y]live by them. And I also gave them my [z]sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am Jehovah who sanctify them. But the house of Israel [a]rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they rejected my judgments, which if a man do, he shall live by them; and my sabbaths they greatly profaned: then I said, I will pour out my wrath upon them in the [b]wilderness to consume them. But I wrought for my [c]name's sake, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations in whose sight I had brought them out. Moreover also

t vers. 13, 21.

u vers 14,22.
cf. Ex.32.12.
cf. Num. 14. 13-16.
cf. Josh.7.9.
v cf. Josh. 2. 10.
cf. Josh.9.9, 10.
w Ex. 15. 17, 18.

x Ex. 20. 1, etc.
cf. Deut.4.8.
y Lev. 18. 5.
cf. Lk.10.28.
cf. Gal. 3.12, 21.
z cf. Gen.2.3.
cf. Ex.16.29.
Ex. 20. 8-11, etc.
a cf. Ex. 16. 28.
cf. Deut. 9. 12-24.
b cf. Ex. 32. 10.
cf. Num. 16. 20, 21
c vers. 9, 22.

profaned in the sight of the nations among whom they were, with whom God was dealing through them, and with purposes of mercy towards those also who might listen to His powerful voice. Israel was thus a witness of the living God, proclaiming Himself in the sight of all in bringing them out of the land of Egypt.*

2. The wilderness begins another portion of their history; yet how thoroughly it resembled that which had come to an end! What deliverances God had wrought for them; how thoroughly He had declared Himself to them. Question there could not be, one would say, as to the power or grace of One who was among them, making Himself known in constant miracles. Yet it is not of these that He speaks here, but rather of the statutes and judgments which He had given them, which pointed to the way of life. His sabbaths were the seal upon all these, a sign between God and them of the rest which He designed for them. Not a hard taskmaster was He, but their gracious Deliverer: He ever would point them to the rest, for themselves and the very cattle with them, the memorial of that creation-rest when, satisfied with the perfect goodness of all that He had created, Himself rested. But man's sin had soon broken in upon it, and they continually repeated this: "They walked not in my statutes, and they rejected my judgments, which if a man do, he shall live by them; and my sabbaths they greatly profaned." Thus again, as in His words to Moses, He had to threaten them with the wrath which could so easily

* It is to be remembered that in all this historical review of Israel's sin, God's controversy with them is not primarily for their sinful *acts*, but for that which lay at the root of all those acts—their apostasy from Him, and their idolatry. All else is the fruit of this. So it ever is: sin, in principle, is departure from God, a departure which produces actual transgressions. So God wrought for the glory of His name, and will eventually magnify that name, in the recovery of the apostate, but finally penitent people. The chapter is strikingly correspondent to chapter 16.—S. R.

I lifted up my hand unto them in the wilderness, that
I would [d]not bring them into the land that I had given
[them], flowing with milk and honey, which is the
glory of all lands; because they [e]rejected my judg-
ments and walked not in my statutes and profaned my
sabbaths: for their heart went after their idols. Never-
theless mine eye [f]spared them so as not to destroy
them, neither did I make a full end of them in the
wilderness. And I said unto their [g]children in the
wilderness, Walk not in the statutes of your fathers,
neither observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves
with their idols. I am Jehovah your God: walk in my
statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them and
sanctify my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between
me and you, that ye may know that I am Jehovah
your God. But the [h]children rebelled against me: they
walked not in my statutes, neither kept my judgments
to do them, which if a man do, he shall live by them;
they profaned my sabbaths: and I said I would pour
out my [i]wrath upon them to accomplish mine anger
against them in the wilderness. Nevertheless I with-
drew my hand, and wrought for my [j]name's sake, that
it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations in
whose sight I had brought them forth. I lifted up my

d Num. 14. 23-30. Num. 26. 64, 65. Ps. 95. 11. *cf.* Heb. 3. 11, 18.
e *cf.* Ex. 32. 1-8. *cf.* Num. 15. 39. *cf.* Acts 7. 39 43.
f Ps. 78. 37, 38. *cf.* Neh. 9. 19.
g Num. 32. 13-15. Deut. 4. 3-6. Ps. 78. 6 8.
h Num. 21.5. Deut. 9. 23, 24. Ps. 106. 29-33, etc.
i vers. 8, 13. *cf.* 2 Chr. 34. 21, 25.
j vers. 9, 14. *cf.* Ps. 25. 11.

have consumed them; but still His mercy held back the merited reward of their sins, and again it was for His name's sake that He wrought, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations before whose eyes He had brought them out. How much depended upon the preservation of the witness of what He was amid the idols with which everywhere men had surrounded themselves!

But God could not bring, as He had been ready to bring, that generation into the land which He had promised them; for their hearts yet were after the idols they had seen smitten by Him blow after blow. How useless that man's mind should be convinced when his heart is deliberately astray! God's eye had spared them so as not to destroy them, not to make a full end of them in the wilderness; and once again He took their children by the hand, saying: "Walk not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols: I am Jehovah your God;" but was answered after their former manner. They again refused the statutes which commended themselves to their consciences. They profaned the sabbaths, the sign of the rest which He desired for them; and even before the land was reached, He had again to threaten them with the wrath which love and pity held back from a people who were to be the bearers of His name before the nations; for how could He destroy that which alone remained as a witness at all? Yet, through all that time, as the prophet Amos bears distinct witness, they deserted Him for the false gods around them. His own words by the prophet appeal to them: "Have ye offered unto Me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? Nay, ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god which ye made to yourselves. Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the Lord, whose name is the God of hosts" (Amos v. 25–27).

hand also unto them in the wilderness, that I would [k]scatter them among the nations, and disperse them through the countries; because they had not executed my judgments, but had rejected my statutes, and profaned my sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers' idols. And I also gave them [l]statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live; and I polluted them with their own gifts, in that they caused to [m]pass through [the fire] all that opened the womb, that I might make them desolate, to the end they might know that I am Jehovah. Therefore, son of man, speak unto the house of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, in this moreover have your fathers blasphemed me, in that they have wrought [n]unfaithfully against me.

3 (28, 29): In the land.

3. When I had [o]brought them into the land which I had lifted up my hand to give them, then they saw every high hill and all the thick trees, and they offered there their sacrifices, and there they presented the [p]provocation of their offering: there also they presented their sweet savor* and they poured out there their drink offerings. And I said unto them, What is the [q]high place whither ye go? And the name thereof is called Bamah† unto this day.

k Lev. 26. 33. Deut. 28. 64-68. Ps. 106. 27. Jer. 15. 4.

l *cf.* ver. 39. *cf.* Deut. 4. 27, 28 *cf.* Deut. 28. 36. *cf.* Ps 81.12. *cf.* Is. 66. 4. *cf.* Rom. 1. 21, etc.

m *cf.* 2 Ki.17. 17, etc. *cf.* ch. 16. 20, 21.

n *cf.* Jer. 32. 35 with Ex. 32. 7, 8. *cf.* Ps 78. 57.

o *cf.* Josh. 23. 3, 4, 14. *cf.* Neh. 9. 22 26. *cf.* Ps. 78. 55 58.

p *cf.* ch. 8. 3.

q *cf.* ch. 16. 24, 25, 31.

* Lit., "savor of rest," as in Gen. 8 : 21.
† Lit., "high place," as in the previous clause.

Thus the wilderness had decided as to the issue which only now in Ezekiel's time was becoming history; and since they had rejected His statutes, and their eyes were after their fathers' idols, He had to "give them," as in strong language He puts it here—give them over to "statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live:" that is, give them over to statutes of the heathen around them, as we see immediately when He adds: "And I polluted them with their own gifts in that they caused to pass through the fire all that opened the womb" (every first-born whom the Lord had sanctified to Himself), "that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I am Jehovah." People ask still for evidences of Christianity, as if God had not been heaping evidence upon evidence; and here was a people before whose eyes were constant miracles, which forbade men to doubt the reality and power of their Deliverer, yet the answer given to Him was only in unfaithfulness and blasphemy.

3. There is but a glance at their history in the land. What would come upon them, as we have seen, was already pronounced; and this in itself declared what would be their conduct, which God foresaw. Fresh privileges would be only fresh opportunity for evil; and the high hills of the land to which they were now brought, and the trees which showed its fertility, became for them the places of idolatrous resort where they lifted up, professedly to Him, offerings that provoked Him, or would fain have hid amongst the trees the sin from which they could not be divorced. Their sweet savor was for others than Himself. Their drink-offerings of joy became but drunken revels in honor of their multitudinous deities. This worship in the high places had left its marks

4 (30-38): The wilderness of the peoples.

4. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Do ye pollute yourselves after the [r]manner of your fathers, and do ye [s]commit fornication after their abominations? And when ye offer your gifts, when ye make your sons to [t]pass through the fire, do ye pollute yourselves with all your idols, even unto this day, and [u]shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? [As] I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I will [v]not be inquired of by you. And that which

r Judg. 2. 19. Jer. 7. 26.
s *cf.* Rev. 2. 14. *cf.* ch. 16. 15.
t *cf.* Deut. 18. 10. 12. Jer. 19. 5.
u ver. 3. ch. 14. 3. 4. *cf.* 2 Ki. 3. 13, 14. *cf.* Mt. 12. 38, 39.
v *cf.* Zech. 7. 13; *cf.* Is. 1. 15.

upon the land in the very names by which they were known. Thus everywhere, upon the face of the country and the city alike, they had written out their sentence.

4. As to all their history, therefore, there was nothing more to say. Reformations attempted here and there by some of their kings, and all that was accomplished by the prophets whom God had raised up amongst them, altered in no wise the character of things below the surface. What a witness against man it is! And the history of the Church on earth has still been a viler history, when we think of the higher privileges perverted, and the sweeter communications of God's grace—a grace now fully declared. We are to-day, as a mass, just where Ezekiel was in his day, although we may hide it from ourselves, as they would fain have hidden it also. A spiritual captivity may be more easily denied, of course, than their external one; but "as in water face answereth face, so the heart of man to man." We may worship silver and gold still, while we do not make it into the hideous shapes which once were made. We may civilize and refine, while altering nothing as to the terrible reality of hearts that are away from God; and we are surely now, at the very end, face to face with an impending judgment to which Scripture bears fullest witness. An outbreak of evil is at hand which will fill the world once more with a darkness of which the prophets of Israel bore witness: "Darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples"—and this at the time when it is said as to Israel, "The Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee" (Isa. lx. 2).

We have cause, therefore, to enter into the feelings of the prophet as God's voice denounces those who, with the light that He had given them, deliberately preferred darkness, who said: "We will be as the nations, as the families of the countries in serving wood and stone." They had plenty of evidence of this before their eyes; but whatever presents itself as a hiding from God has always been, alas, acceptable to those whose hearts wander from Him. If He reigns at all, it must be in power, therefore: "As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, surely with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out will I reign over you. And I will bring you out from the peoples, and will gather you out from the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand and with an out-stretched arm, and with wrath poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness, and there will I enter into judgment with you face to face." Here we are plainly carried on to what is still future. They are now indeed scattered in the countries and among many peoples, yet they are with reviving hope turning once more to the land which God is indeed keeping vacant for them, expecting to find quiet possession, to obtain it as a mere matter of merchandise and by successful politics. But that is not what

cometh into your mind shall not be at all, that ye say, We will be [w]as the nations, as the families of the countries, in serving wood and stone. [As] I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, surely with a [x]mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out, will I reign over you. And I will [y]bring you out from the peoples, and will [z]gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out; and I will [a]bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there will I enter into judgment with you face to face. Like as I entered into judgment with your fathers in the [b]wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I enter into judgment with you, saith the Lord Jehovah. And I will cause you to [c]pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the [d]covenant. And I will

[w] *cf.* 1 Sam. 8. 5.
cf. Deut. 7. 3-5.
[x] ch. 8. 18.
cf. Jer. 21. 5.
[y] ch. 34. 13.
cf. Is 27. 13
[z] *cf.* Lev. 26. 45.
cf. Jer 32. 37.
cf. Jer. 31. 10.
[a] *cf.* ch. 38. 8.
cf. Hos 2. 14.
cf. Jer. 2. 9, 35.
[b] *cf.* Ex. 32. 30, etc.
cf. Num. 11. 1, etc.
[c] Lev. 27. 32.
cf. Jer. 33. 13.
cf. Matt. 25. 32, 33.

[d] *cf.* ch. 16. 59, 60; *cf.* Ps. 89. 31-34; *cf.* Jer. 31. 31-34.

God has in mind for them; for the record of their history has yet to be faced, and that record, unrepented of, can only be faced in judgment.

Thus, God will gather out, but only into a condition of things such as when He brought Jacob their father out of Padan-aram to meet the consequences of the sin which had driven him there, and for which, if God is to interfere for him, He must wrestle with him Himself. Thus Peniel must be known by the nation also before they can know Bethel. And "like as I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I enter into judgment with you, saith the Lord Jehovah; and I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant"

It is for mercy, and yet through judgment; for mercy will once more rejoice against judgment. But the judgment must itself do a necessary work: "I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against Me, and I will bring them forth out of the land where they sojourn, but they shall not enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah." This is not, of course, the whole history of the people in that day soon to come. There will be those who doubtless will return to their land and get a certain possession of it for a while, but only to end in a worse condition than ever, as they yield themselves to an idolatry more terrible than all that has been seen among them yet. People may scout even the possibility of this, while false christs and false prophets are everywhere rising up, leading men captives with unblushing delusions.

We do not enter into the details here, which the book of Daniel is to bring fully before us; but the issue is given by the prophet Isaiah in words that cannot be mistaken, except wilfully. Thus he speaks: "In that day shall the Branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass that he that is left in Zion and he that remaineth in Jerusalem shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem, when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning." There is no room to say that this has been fulfilled in any time of their previous history, for the prophet

[c] purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me; I will bring them forth out of the land where they sojourn, but they shall [f] not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall [g] know that I am Jehovah.

5 (39-44): The end in the strong hand of Jehovah.

5. As for you, O house of Israel, thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Go ye, [h] serve every one his idols henceforth also, for* none of you will hearken unto me; but profane my [i] holy name no more with your gifts and your idols. For in my holy [j] mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel, saith the Lord Jehovah, there shall [k] all the house of Israel serve me, the whole of it in the land; there will I [l] accept them, and there will I require your heave offerings and the first fruits of your offerings, with all your holy things. As a [m] sweet savor will I accept you when I bring you out from the peoples, and [n] gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered; and I will be [o] sanctified in you in the sight of the nations. And ye shall [p] know that I am Je-

* Or, "if."

c *cf.* ch. 34. 17, 20. *cf.* Amos 9. 9, 10. *cf.* Zech. 13. 8, 9. *cf.* Mal. 4. 1-3.
f *cf.* Num. 14. 28-30. *cf.* Ps. 95. 11. *cf.* Jer. 44. 14. *cf.* Is. 65. 12-15.
g ch. 6. 7, etc.
h *cf.* Jer. 10. 11. *cf.* Ps. 81. 12. *cf.* Hos. 4. 17. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 11.
i *cf.* Is. 1. 13. *cf.* Jer. 7. 9-11. *cf.* Zeph. 1. 4-6. *cf.* Hos. 2. 16, 17.
j *cf.* Ps. 2. 6. *cf.* Is. 2. 2, 3. *cf.* Jer. 31. 12. *cf.* Joel 3. 17, 18.
k *cf.* ch. 37. 22-28; *cf.* Is. 11. 13; *cf.* Jer. 3. 18; *cf.* Rom. 11. 26.
l *cf.* Is. 56. 7; *cf.* Is. 60. 7; *cf.* Mal. 3. 3, 4.
m *cf.* Lev. 1. 9, 13, 17; *cfr.* ch. 6. 13; *cfr.* ch. 16. 19; *cfr.* ver. 28.
n ch. 11. 17; ch. 34. 13; ch. 36. 24; Is. 27. 12, 13.
o ch. 28. 22, 25; *cf.* Is. 5. 16; *cf.* Lev. 10. 3.
p vers. 38, 44, etc.

goes immediately on to what is certainly still future: "And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion and upon her assemblies a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defence. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain" (Isa. iv. 2-6). To the time pictured here, Ezekiel will bring us before his prophecy is run out. Here what we have is the intervening judgment, the judgment which has scattered and will scatter, the judgment which has overturned and will overturn, "until He come whose right it is," and the kingdom shall be His to whose hands it belongs.

5. Even here a brief glance is permitted forward at the blessing that shall be. Israel is dismissed, as it were, for the time present, to go and serve every one his idols as he lists. Only, let them do it openly, and not with the profanation of His holy name as attached to it. For once again God will, and finally, sanctify His name, and that in the grace which is His, and which we cannot wonder at when we know how it has dealt with ourselves: "For in my holy mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel" (that is, when the mountain of the house shall finally be lifted up, and exalted above the top of the mountains, as God has declared, Isa. ii. 2), "there shall all the house of Israel serve Me—the whole of it, in the land. There will I accept them, and there will I require your heave offerings and the firstfruits of your offerings, with all your holy things. As a sweet savor will I accept you, when I bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered, and am sanctified in you in the sight of the nations." Yes, if He is sanctified in judgment first, as He must be, yet will He only be sanctified fully in blessing, as becomes Him. What a time when the people who

hovah, when I shall bring you into the land of Israel, into the country which I [q]lifted up my hand to give your fathers. And there ye shall [r]remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have polluted yourselves; and ye shall [s]loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils which ye have committed. And ye shall [t]know that I am Jehovah, when I have wrought with you for my [u]name's sake, [v]not according to your evil ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O house of Israel, saith the Lord Jehovah.

[q] ver. 5, etc.
[r] ch. 16. 61. ch. 36. 31. *cf.* Ps. 126.
[s] *cf.* Jer. 31. 18. *cf.* 2 Cor. 7. 11.
[t] ver. 38, etc.
[u] Ps. 79. 9. *cf.* Ps. 115. 1, 2.
[v] Ps. 103. 10. Ezra 9. 13. *cf.* Deut. 7. 7, 8.

SECTION 2 (Chaps. xx. 45-xxi. 32).

The sword upon the righteous and the wicked.

1 (45-49). Against those who have had the light.

1. And the [w]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, [x]set thy face toward the south,* and drop [thy word] toward the south,† and prophesy against the forest of the south‡ field; and say to the forest of the south, [y]Hear the word of Jehovah: Thus saith the

[w] ch. 21. 1, etc.
[x] ch. 4. 3, 7. ch. 25. 2. Jer. 26. 11, 12. Amos 2. 4, 6.
[y] Amos 7. 16. ch. 36. 1.

* Lit., "right." † Lit., "bright." ‡ Lit., "dry." These are three different words—all meaning "south."

have been His witnesses in spite of themselves, in all the scattering by which they have fulfilled the words of their ancient prophets, and still by their preservation in which is contemplated the mercy that awaits them! "And ye shall know that I am Jehovah, when I shall bring you into the land of Israel, into the country which I lifted up my hand to give to your fathers; and there ye shall remember your ways and all your doings wherein ye have polluted yourselves, and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils which ye have committed. And ye shall know that I am Jehovah when I have wrought with you for my name's sake, not according to your evil ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O house of Israel, saith the Lord Jehovah."

This, then, is how the story ends. There is no triumph of man in it, but there is the triumph of God's own sovereign grace. The view of their history given here is morally complete. We have not details, but for its purpose what is more suited, the character of that history as a whole. Whatever the individual exceptions, and the superficial and momentary revivals which we know have been, God has not yet interpreted by the event what He means by working for His name's sake. Then His name, so long profaned, shall be indeed honored, according to the psalmist's words of praise, anticipating those of the nation: "Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him" Ps. lxvii. 6, 7).

Sec. 2.

We are nearing the end of all this part of Ezekiel—the first Division. There is little more now than the reiterated announcement of judgment, which in the last chapter, the 24th, we see begun. Nebuchadnezzar has there begun the siege of the city, which we see him here contemplating. And with this commencement of what the prophet has announced, the word for the present ceases. There is no need and no use in any further announcement. The chapter before

Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will kindle the [a]fire in thee, and it shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree: the flaming flame shall not be [b]quenched, and all faces from the south to the north shall be burned thereby. And all [c]flesh shall see that I Jehovah have kindled it: it shall not be quenched. Then said I, Ah, Lord Jehovah, they say of me, Is he not a speaker of [d]parables?

[a] ch. 15. 6, 7. ch. 19. 14. Jer. 21. 14.
[b] cf. Is. 66. 24. cf. Mk. 9. 43–49.
[c] Deut. 29. 24–28. cf. Is. 26. 11. cf. Jer. 40. 2, 3.
[d] cf. ch. 33. 32. cf. Mt. 13. 13, 14; cf. Ps. 78. 2, 3.

us shows the sword in Nebuchadnezzar's hand as God's judgment upon the land, a judgment so complete that it sweeps away the righteous and the wicked together; that is, the whole land was desolate. It is not meant that there is no discrimination between the righteous and the wicked, for this would contradict what we have had explicitly in a previous chapter as to the seal put upon those who sighed and cried before God for the abominations of the people, and who are, therefore, by this seal itself, put explicitly under the care of God whom they have honored. Nevertheless, the land is swept bare; the righteous and wicked suffer together in this respect. The sword is upon both; only, as we have already seen, and as is simple enough, that which is pure judgment for the one class is only a refining fire for the other, and God is in it carefully superintending the process which is to bring forth a perfect vessel for Himself.

1. First of all, it is insisted that one common doom is to envelop the whole of the land. God will be true to His own, but they cannot save from destruction that which is already devoted to it. God's wrath is as a devouring fire, which lays hold of all that is before it, and that is the first point. "The word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face towards the south" in which Judah and Jerusalem were), "and drop thy word towards the south, and prophesy against the forest of the south field." According to the idea here given, the cultivated "field" has, as it were, grown wild, grown into a forest, as we know was the case with Judah. (For a similar thought, the meaning of Kirjath-Jearim, "the city of the woods," may be compared in Josh. xv: 9. See *Notes.*) In such a case, the very fertility of the ground, and the care that may once have been bestowed upon it, only helps the luxuriance of the wild growth. It is the common story of perverted privileges and blessing of every kind. Thus the prophet is to address himself to "the forest of the south." God is bringing a fire upon it, which is of course the symbol of His wrath, although the wrath must in a sense be discriminative, which the fire is not. This is not a contradiction, however. The external calamity reaches all alike, and the green tree suffers with the dry, but God knows how to turn the suffering itself into blessing for His people, which eternity shall reveal: and in spite of all, as He has Himself said, the man that doeth righteousness shall live thereby.

But a flame is devouring the land from south to north. Why the direction here, when the inroad of the enemy was from north to south? It would seem that what is intimated is, what was according to the fact, that the destruction of Jerusalem would scatter the people mainly northward, as it did, and would follow them there.* It was to be the unmistakable evidence of God's own

* The south was the place of light—under the sun—of privilege, and if the privileges of the light were not used, they became means of dryness. So the various words for "south" indicate the failure to enjoy privilege, and thus "I will curse your blessings" is fulfilled.

2 (xxi. 1-7). Against Jerusalem and the Lord's house.

2. And the [d]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy [e]face toward Jerusalem, and drop [thy word] toward the [f]sanctuaries, and prophesy against the land of Israel; and say to the land of Israel, Thus saith Jehovah: Behold, I am [g]against thee, and will draw forth my [h]sword out of its sheath, and will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked. Seeing that I will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked, therefore shall my sword go forth out of its sheath against [i]all flesh from the south to the north; and all flesh shall know that I Jehovah have drawn forth my sword out of its sheath: it shall not return any more. [j]Sigh then, thou son of man, with breaking of the loins and with bitterness, sigh before their eyes. And it shall be, when they say unto thee, [k]Wherefore dost thou sigh? that thou shalt say, Because of the tidings, for it cometh; and every heart shall melt, and all [l]hands shall be feeble, and every spirit shall faint, and all knees shall dissolve into water: behold, it [m]cometh; it is even here, saith the Lord Jehovah.

[d] ver. 8, etc.
[e] ch. 20. 46.
[f] cf. ch. 9. 6. cf. Mt. 23. 38.
[g] cf. ch. 6. 11-14. cf. ch. 26. 3. ctr. Rom. 8. 31.
[h] ch. 5. 2, 12. Is. 34. 5, 6. cf. Rev. 1. 16.
[i] ch. 20. 47.
[j] ver. 12. Is. 22. 4. Jer. 9. 1, 17-21. cf. Lk. 19. 41.
[k] ch. 12. 9-11.
[l] ctr. Is. 35. 3. cf. Jer. 50. 43.
[m] ch. 7. 2, 3, etc.

judgment. God was to be glorified in it when His people were not glorifying, but dishonoring Him. The speech of the prophet, however, is as the people urge, in parables. God was dealing with them after their own fashion, for His plainest warnings had been but words to them; and, shut up in their own unbelief, there seemed no use in speaking more plainly. The ear that was opened would hear; and if it were realized that Jehovah was speaking, the very language of parable would only invite the more to search into the meaning of it.

2. Nevertheless, the word of Jehovah answers the voice of the people, and Ezekiel is instructed to speak plainly, to set his face towards Jerusalem, and drop his word toward the holy places, which, of course, were that no more, but only the witness against those who had destroyed them by their desecration. The prophecy is now to the whole land, and God says plainly that the sword, which they might then see drawn out of its sheath, was the sword of no mortal enemy merely, but His own; and as the fire devoured the green wood and the dry, so He would cut off out of the land the righteous and the wicked. The judgment was, as already declared, to be plainly *His* judgment. And if we follow Daniel to the court of the king of Babylon, we shall see how God took care to make known, in such a way that the heathen himself had to acknowledge it, His power and majesty, whose sanctuaries Nebuchadnezzar might seem to have overthrown. The king of Babylon was, as the chapter itself declares plainly, but an instrument in the hands of the Almighty who wielded all the power which Nebuchadnezzar would naturally ascribe to himself. In fact it was this which brought judgment upon him—a judgment which humbled his heart and brought him fully to own the Most High God, while the hearts of His own people remained intractable and rebellious. But it is not without sorrow,

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The fire begins in the south, the place of privilege. "Begin at my house," and it reaches northward, to the mass of the people until all are consumed.—S. R.

3 (8 17). Wrath fully displayed.

3. And the *word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord:* Say, A sword, a *sword is sharpened, and also furbished: it is *sharpened for sore slaughter; it is furbished that it may glitter. Shall we then make *mirth, [saying], The sceptre of my son *despiseth all wood? And he hath given it to be furbished that it may be *taken into the hand: the sword—it is sharpened, yea, it is furbished to give it into the hand of the *slayer. *Cry and wail, son of man: for it shall be against *my people, it is against all the *princes of Israel: they are given up to the sword along with my people; *smite, therefore, upon the thigh. For the trial [is made]; and what if even the *sceptre that despiseth shall be no more? saith the Lord Jehovah. And thou, son of

* "*Adonai.*"

t cf. ver. 19; *cf.* Ps. 17. 13, 14. *u* ver. 6, etc. *v cf.* ch. 9. 6; *cf.* Amos 3. 2. *w cf.* vers. 25–27. *x* Jer. 31. 19. *y cf.* Gen. 49. 10 with ver. 27.

n vers. 1, etc.
o vers. 3, 15, 28. Deut. 32. 41, 42. *cf.* Is. 66. 16.
p cf. Ps. 7. 11–13. *cf.* Is. 27. 1. *cf.* Is. 34. 5, 6.
q cf. Is. 5. 12–14. *cf.* Is. 22. 12–14. *cf.* Amos 6. 3–7. *cf.* Lk. 21. 34, 35.
r cf. vers. 25–27. *cf.* Rev. 18. 7. *cf.* Is. 47. 8. *cf.* Zeph. 2. 15.
s cf. Deut. 32. 41. *cf.* Is. 10. 5.

such as He never hesitates to attribute to Himself, that God inflicts this inevitable chastisement; and the sighing of the prophet, even with breaking of the loins and bitterness, is but the echo of what is in the heart of Him who bids him give vent thus to his human sorrow. As of old it was said, "In all their affliction He was afflicted," so it ever is, even when He whose delights are with the sons of men has to manifest Himself against them. The tears of the Lord over Jerusalem, when He took leave of it, witness with the anguish of the prophet. Yet He who wept could not spare; and that which threatened now would melt the heart and enfeeble the hands and make every spirit faint; and it was already upon them: "It cometh, it is even here, saith the Lord Jehovah."

3. Still, we have to be reminded once more of what is involved in this. It is not simply the judgment of a people, but of a people with whom were the promises of God; and it is this which for the time sets aside those promises, that they cannot be fulfilled. The sons of David, however much in rebellion against God, had nevertheless built themselves up in pride upon these very promises; and the heart of the righteous might plead with Him: Was He going to permit that the sweet assurances He had given be made void? Might they make mirth and say, as if from God's side of things, "The sceptre of my Son despiseth every tree?"* Could it not make light of all human power, however firmly rooted, which would set itself in opposition against it? "The sceptre of my Son" shows the thought implied. Was it not, according to the second psalm, the One who could declare the decree that Jehovah had said to Him, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee," who was appointed to rule upon God's holy hill of Zion, and the very ends of the earth were to be given into His hands? And had it not been said in older prophecy, that the sceptre

* "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh"; God's sceptre, held by His Son, would lay low every thing that exalted itself against Him, would bring down the high tree and dry up the green tree. Hengstenberg makes this rod, despising every tree, to be the affliction which is now about to fall upon the people—so great that it eclipses ("despises") all former rods of affliction. But the explanation in the text is so lucid, appropriate and complete, that there can be little room for questioning it.—S. R.

man, prophesy and smite thy hands together; and let the sword be [a]doubled the third time: it is the sword of the slain [ones], the sword of the [a]great one slain, which penetrateth to them. That their [b]heart may melt, and their stumbling be multiplied, [c]I have set the threatening sword against all their gates. Ah! it is made to glitter, whetted for slaughter! Gather together, [d]go to the right, turn thee, go to the left, whithersoever thy face is turned; and I will smite my hands together, and I will cause my [e]wrath to rest: I Jehovah have [f]spoken.

[a] *cf.* Gen. 41. 32.
cf. Lev. 26. 21.
[a] Is. 3. 14, 25.
[b] ver. 7.
ch. 22. 14.
[c] *cf.* ver. 9 with Lev. 26. 16, etc.
ch. 14. 17.
[d] *cf.* Ps. 139. 7.
cf. Amos 9. 2.
[e] ch. 5. 13.
cf. Deut. 28. 63.
cf. Is. 1. 24.
[f] vers. 1, 8, etc.

should not depart from Judah and a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh came? (Gen. xlix.) How simple, it seemed, to put such things together, and think of it as faith itself, to resist the conviction of coming judgment. Yet, in spite of this, the prophet affirms that it is coming. The sword of the Lord, He has made it ready, furbished and sharpened it, that it should be as fully as possible effective, and this sword was to be against this people of Jehovah, and against all the princes of Israel; princes and people alike were to be given up to the sword. Yea, the test (in the event) was even now being made; and what if this sceptre that despiseth were actually to be no more? asks the Lord Jehovah.

How readily may His people misinterpret His plain words! How ready are we to-day to misinterpret them! How often do we hear that "the knowledge of the glory of the Lord is to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea" interpreted as being of course through the spread of Christianity—and this after nearly 2,000 years, which have manifested its incapacity to do this; and not merely this, but exhibited everywhere, as is so plain to-day, its capacity for decay—yet how many still look for this! And the very word which announces what is plainly opposite to such thoughts is made to confirm them: "*Israel* shall bud and blossom, and fill the face of the earth with fruit"—and are not we Christians the true Israel?

Thus we see the heart searched out in Ezekiel's day; and here we have a glimpse, as it would seem, that we have not elsewhere, as to the perplexity which must have been in the hearts of many of such a day, faced with all those promises of triumph and blessing of which Scripture is full for them; and then, on the other hand, faced by the prophet now with this assurance of the coming desolation. But God's word abides, and time will reconcile all these things. What concerned them now was to realize the Lord's judgment upon His people, and its sure and swift coming. "Son of man, prophesy and smite thy hands together, and let the sword be doubled the third time:" the strokes of it growing only the more terrible to the end—perhaps, if we are to read the number symbolically, until the time of full manifestation. This is the sword which is soon to be busy in its dreadful work, and among the slain, the "great one," the sword which has penetrated to the king himself who is the "deadly wounded." Not that Zedekiah was himself slain in the siege or after it: we know he was not. His sons were slain before his eyes, and then those eyes that had been witness of the awful sorrow were put out, that they might see the light no more. *As king*, he lived no more; and his life after that, was it life? And still the sword swept on, melting every heart and multiplying the

4 (18-23): The divination true and false.

4. And the [g] word of Jehovah came unto me, saying: And thou, son of man, set thee [h] two ways for the coming of the sword of the king of Babylon. Out of one [i] land shall they both come; and make* thee a [j] finger-post, make it at the head of the way to the city. Thou shalt set a way for the coming of the sword to [k] Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and to [l] Judah in Jerusalem the fortified. For the king of Babylon standeth at the [m] parting† of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination: he [n] shaketh his arrows, he inquireth of the [o] teraphim, he looketh in the [p] liver. In his right hand is the divination for [q] Jerusalem to set battering rams, to open the mouth for slaughter, to lift up the voice with shouting, to set battering rams against the gates, to cast up mounds, to build forts. And this shall be a [r] false divination in their sight for them that have sworn oaths; but he bringeth the iniquity to [s] remembrance that they may be taken.

5 (24-27): Divine government waiting for Immanuel.

5. Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Because ye have made your iniquity to be remembered, in that your [t] transgressions are uncovered so that in all your doings your [u] sins appear; because that ye are come to remembrance ye shall be taken with the hand. And

* Lit., "create." † Lit., "mother."

[g] ch. 20. 45, etc.
[h] cf. Jer. 1. 10, ver. 20.
[i] cf. Jer. 25. 9.
[j] ctr. Jer. 31. 21.
[k] ch. 25. 5. Jer. 49. 2. Amos 1. 14
[l] cf. 2 Chr. 26. 9. ctr. Ps. 48. 12, 13.
[m] ctr. Josh. 24. 15.
[n] ctr. 1 Sam. 20. 35, 39. ctr. 2 Ki. 13. 17.
[o] cf. Gen. 31. 19, 34. cf. Judg. 17. 5 with Judg. 18. 5, 6. cf. Hos. 4. 12.
[p] cf. Is. 47. 13.
[q] cf. ch. 4. 2. ctr. Is. 54. 17.
[r] cf. Is. 28. 14, 15. cf. ch. 17. 13, 15, etc.
[s] cf. Nu. 5. 15. ch. 29. 16.
[t] cf. Is. 3. 9. cf. Jer. 2. 34.
[u] cf. Jer. 5. 27, 28. cf. Hos. 4. 2. cf. Rom. 3. 10-18.

carcases so that men stumbled over them. And there was no escape from it: the threatening sword was against all their gates. Its very glitter was meant by God as prophesying the sure quenching in blood which was to follow. Jehovah turns to it and bids it do its work: gather up its strength, go to the right, turn to the left, finding its work unfailingly wherever it turned, for it could not miss worthy objects. And thus was Jehovah's wrath: "I will smite my hands together, and I will cause my wrath to rest. I Jehovah have spoken."

4. The next word of Jehovah contemplates more the human instrument which is implied in all this. The sword is the sword of the king of Babylon, which, even if blindly, is none the less the instrument of the Hand which is over him continually. The prophet marks his course, the path that he is to pursue. He sees him pause, and hesitate, where the one road out of his land separates into two. The one road leads to Rabbah of the Ammonite; the other to Jerusalem, strong in its fortifications. There he stands at the parting of the way, practising his vain divination, shaking his arrows, inquiring of the teraphim, looking into the liver. In his right hand is the divination for Jerusalem, to lay siege to it. A poor thing in itself, against which men might build themselves up, as mere false divination of the heathen—they who had in Jehovah's name sworn faithfulness to the king of Babylon and broken their oath! All right to scorn the heathen divination, but what about Jehovah who has been scorned and defied? "He bringeth the iniquity to remembrance that they may be taken." And thus the divination does not fail.

5. Divine government has not loosed its hand upon men in all this. Nay, it is the very thing that is coming out in its full reality. The "iniquity of the

thou, the pierced-through wicked one, the [v]prince of Israel, whose day is come at the time of the iniquity of the end, thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Remove the mitre, and take [w]off the crown: what is, shall be no [more]. [x]Exalt that which is low, and abase that which is high. I will [y]overturn, overturn, overturn it! This also shall be no [more] until he come whose [z]right it is; and I will give it [him].

6 (28 32): The sword upon Ammon.

6. And thou, son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah concerning the [a]children of Ammon and concerning their reproach: and thou shalt say, A [b]sword, a sword is drawn; for the slaughter it is furbished that it may consume,* that it may glitter: whilst they see vanity for thee, whilst they [c]divine a lie unto thee, to lay thee upon the necks of the wicked that are pierced through, whose [d]day is come at the time of the iniquity of the end. Let it [e]return to its

* Or, "Sufficiently furbished that it may glitter."

v 2 Chr. 36. 11-13. eh. 17. 19, 20.
w ch. 12. 12, 13.
cf. Jer. 13. 18.
x ch. 17. 24. Ps. 75. 7.
y cf. Hag. 2. 21, 22. cf. Heb. 12. 26, 27.
z cf. 1 Ps 2. 6-8. cf. Heb 1. 2. cf. ch. 37. 24, 25. cf. Is 9. 6, 7. cf. Jer. 33. 15, 16. cf. Dan 9. 25. cf. Mi. 5. 2. cf. Zech. 9. 9.
a Jer. 49. 1-5. Amos 1. 13-15. Zeph. 2. 8-10.
b vers. 9, 10.
c ch. 12. 24. ch. 22. 28. cf. Is 44. 25.
d ver. 25.
e cf. Jer. 47. 6, 7; etr. 1 Chron 21. 27.

Ps. 37. 13; cf. Rev. 6. 17.

end" (which is bringing about the end) has taken place. The crown is gone from the head of the king of Israel, and the mitre of the high priest, which was supported by the crown, has to go also. That which still existed was to be no more. The wheel was going round! That which is low is to be exalted; that which is high is to be abased. "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it," says Jehovah; "and it shall be no more until He come whose right it is, and I will give it Him." Thus there is even here a gleam through the thunder-clouds. All other hands are proved incompetent to wield this sceptre which God is taking for the time being from the line of David. There is One, however, who has right, and who will put forth His claim to it, and Judah's rod of magistracy would *not* cease until Shiloh comes. How sweet such a promise to a sorely-stricken heart! How sweet for us in our own day, revealing, as it does, the mystery of the breakdown of all things upon which we rest our human hopes, "until He comes whose right it is!" How we forget this, that the overturning is not something against *His* right, but contemplates it. Just as Israel's desolate land with all its desolation speaks of a people for whom it is waiting, in God's design, so the broken sceptre and the empty throne are only waiting for the One to come who surely will fulfil every promise, and outdo all that the heart can imagine or crave, in the blessing that He brings.

6. There is yet one final word: Ammon had escaped; the enemy of God's people had gone scot-free. The king of Babylon had turned off to Jerusalem; and the enemy now can insult them as they will. Ammon, as we know, was an ancient enemy of Israel; and, as a type, shows still more the opposition of the heart to that which is of God. We may remind ourselves how in the days of Jephthah, and afterwards in the days of Saul, Ammon stood forth under its king Nahash, "the serpent," as bent upon taking from Israel the land that was their own. (Judges xi. and 1 Sam. xi., *Notes.*) This is ever the work of the enemy of our souls—not merely to gain a victory over the people of God, but to take from them the very portion which God has given them. Israel's sins, now

sheath. In the place where thou wast created I will [f] judge thee, in the land of thy birth. And I will pour out mine [g] indignation upon thee, I will [h] blow upon thee with the fire of my wrath, and deliver thee into the hand of [i] brutish men, skilful to destroy. Thou shalt be for [j] fuel to the fire; thy blood shall be in the midst of the land; thou shalt [k] not be remembered: for I Jehovah have spoken.

[f] *cf.* Gen. 15. 14. *cf.* ch. 16. 38. *cf.* Mt. 25. 31, etc.
[g] ch. 7. 8. ch. 22. 22. *cf.* Nah. 1. 6.
[h] ch. 22. 20, 21. Is. 18. 15. *cf.* Is. 30. 33.
[i] *cf.* ver. 19 with Is. 14. 4-6. *cf.* Jer. 4. 7. *cf.* Jer. 6. 22, 23.
[j] ch. 20. 47, 48. *cf.* Mal. 4. 1.
[k] ch. 25. 10. Zeph. 2. 9.

SECTION 3 (Chap. xxii.).

The corruption in Jerusalem manifest.

1 (1-16): The causes of the judgment.

1. Moreover, the [l] word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, And thou, son of man, wilt thou judge, wilt thou judge the [m] bloody city? Yea, cause her to [n] know all her abominations, and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: a city that [o] sheddeth blood in her midst, that her time may come, and that maketh [p] idols against herself to defile her. Thou art become [q] guilty in thy blood which thou hast shed, and hast defiled thyself with thine [r] idols which thou hast made; and thou hast caused thy [s] days to draw near and art come unto thy years: therefore have I made thee a [t] reproach unto the nations and a mocking unto all countries. Those that are [u] near, and those that are far from thee, shall mock thee, thou infamous* one, full of tumult. Behold, the

[l] ch. 1. 3. ch. 3. 16. ch. 6. 1, etc.
[m] ch. 24. 6. 2 Ki. 21. 16. Jer. 2. 34. *cf.* Nah. 3. 1.
[n] ch. 8. 6, etc. ch. 16. 2, etc. ch. 23.
[o] ver. 27. ch. 24. 6, 9. Zeph. 3. 3.
[p] *cf.* 2 Ki. 21. 2, 9. *cf.* Hos. 8. 5, 11.
[q] *cf.* Is. 1. 21-24. *cf.* Jer. 22. 17.
[r] *cf.* Ps. 106, 36-39. *cf.* Jer. 3. 9.
[s] *cf.* Joel 2. 1.
[t] *cf.* Lam. 1. 12 with Obad. 10-14; *cf.* Deut. 29. 22.

* LIT., "unclean of name."

cf. Ps. 85. 9. [l] ch. 16. 57; Deut. 28. 37; *cf.* 2 Chr. 7. 20; Ps. 44. 13, 14; Ps. 79. 4. [u] *cf.* Lam. 1. 12 with Obad. 10-14; *cf.* Deut. 29. 22.

at their height, bringing judgment upon them, the desolate land lay open to the attacks of the enemy. But God's eye is upon it, and Ammon is not to escape. The sword is to prove itself as Jehovah's sword in this way also. Misjudging altogether the work of God, as the enemy continually misjudges it, Ammon brings upon himself the wrath in which, as against others, he is rejoicing. "And I will blow upon thee," says the Lord, "with the fire of my wrath, and deliver thee into the hand of brutish men, skilful to destroy. Thou shalt be for fuel to the fire; thy blood shall be in the midst of the land; thou shalt not be remembered. For I Jehovah have spoken." Thus, where all seems wreck, and what God has done for His glory seems to have fully shared in this, yet Jehovah's word stands forth unchanged in its utterance!

Sec. 3.

We return now to see once more in Jerusalem the manifest corruption which is bringing in the judgment. As has been said elsewhere, God does not judge until the corruption is fully manifest. Evil is allowed to come to its head before God smites upon it, for He will be justified in its judgment, and be clear when He is judged. What we have here, therefore, is no more history: it is not the sins of the fathers, even, as showing themselves in the children. It is the present condition of things—the causes which necessitated that which was at hand.

1. We need not spend many words upon interpretation of what is manifest.

[t]princes of Israel have been in thee to shed blood, each according to his power.* In thee have they set light by [u]father and mother; in the midst of thee have they dealt by [v]oppression with the stranger; in thee have they wronged the [w]fatherless and the widow. Thou hast despised my [x]holy things, and hast profaned my [y]sabbaths. In thee have been [z]slanderous men to shed blood, and in thee have they [a]eaten upon the mountains; in the midst of thee they have committed [b]lewdness. In thee have they discovered their [c]father's nakedness; in thee have they humbled her that was [d]unclean in her separation. And one hath committed abomination with his [e]neighbor's wife; and another hath lewdly defiled his [f]daughter-in-law; and another in thee hath humbled his [g]sister, his father's daughter. In thee have they taken [h]bribes to shed blood; thou hast taken [i]usury and increase, and thou hast [j]overreached thy neighbors by oppression, and hast [k]forgotten me, saith the Lord Jehovah. And behold, I have [l]smitten my hand at thine overreaching which thou hast done, and at thy bloodshed which hath been in the midst of thee. Shall thy heart [m]endure, shall thy hands be strong in the days that I shall [n]deal with thee? I Jehovah have [o]spoken, and will do it. And I will [p]scatter thee among the nations, and disperse thee through the countries, and will [q]consume thy filthiness out of thee. And thou shalt be [r]polluted through thee in the sight of the nations; and thou shalt [s]know that I am Jehovah.

2 (17–22): Jerusalem the furnace of wrath.

2. And the [t]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, the house of Israel is become [u]dross to me: they are all [v]copper, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace: they are become the dross of silver. Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Be-

* Lit., "arm."

t Prov. 1. 19; Is. 56. 11; *cf.* Lk. 18. 11. *u* Deut. 32. 18; Jer. 2. 32. *v* ch. 21. 14, 17. *w* ch. 21. 7; ch. 16. 30; *cf.* Job 40. 9. *x* Jer. 13. 21; *cf.* Jer. 12. 5. *y* ch. 17. 24. *z* ch. 5. 12; Deut. 28. 25, 64; Zech. 7. 14. *a* *cf.* vers. 18 22; Zech. 13. 9; *cf.* Mt. 3. 12. *b* *cf.* Is. 43. 28; *cf.* Is. 47. 6. *c* ch. 6. 7, etc. *d* ver. 1, etc. *e* Is. 1. 22; Ps. 119. 119. *f* Jer. 6. 28-30; *cf.* Lam. 4. 1; *cf.* Is. 1. 25; *cf.* Prov. 17. 3.

g *cf.* Mic. 3. 1-3. *cf.* Neh. 9. 34. *h* Ex. 21. 17. Deut. 27. 16. Prov. 20. 20. *cf.* Mt. 15. 4-6. *i* *cf.* Mal. 3. 5. *cf.* Ex. 22. 21. *cf.* Ps. 72. 4. *j* Ex. 22. 22. Prov. 22. 22, 23. *k* Lev. 19. 30. *cf.* 1 Sam. 2. 17. *l* *cf.* Amos 8. 4-6. ch. 20. 20. *cf.* Jer. 17. 21-23. *m* Ex. 20. 16. *cf.* 1 Ki. 21. 10-13. *cf.* Prov. 18. 8. *n* ch. 18. 6, 11, 15. *cf.* Ps. 106. 28. *o* ch. 16. 15, 45. ch. 24. 13. *p* *cf.* Gen. 35. 22. *cf.* 1 Cor 5 1. *q* *cf.* Lev. 20. 18. *r* Lev. 18. 20. *cf.* 2 Sam. 11. 2, 3. *cf.* Jer. 9. 2. *s* Lev. 20. 12. *cf.* Gen. 38. 26. *t* Deut 27. 22. *cf.* 2 Sam. 13. 1, etc. *u* Deut. 27. 25. Mic. 7. 2, 3. *cf.* Mt. 26. 14-16. *v* Lev. 25. 35, 36. *cf.* Ps. 15. 5. *cf.* Neh. 5. 1, 7.

The evil speaks for itself, and what we have is an enumeration of crimes in high and in low; crimes of which the apostle says, with reference to them, that the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles through them. We need not wonder at this. It is according to the constant rule of perverted privileges, and that which is done in the darkness elsewhere, is now done in the full light. Along with this, and instead of the anticipation of a sure judgment coming, that there was hardening of the heart against it is in entire harmony with all the rest. Nothing but the actual infliction of wrath would now avail. Words merely were useless. They must be replaced by deeds.

2. Accordingly, Jerusalem has become a furnace which melts down the various things exposed to it into one mass of manifest dross. God surely has

cause ye are all become dross, therefore, behold, I will gather you into the [g]midst of Jerusalem. As they gather silver, and copper, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger and in my wrath, and I will lay you there and [z]melt you. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you with the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall [a]know that I Jehovah have poured out my wrath upon you.

3 (23 31): Corruption through and through, with none to stand in the gap.

3. And the [b]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, say unto her: Thou art a land that is [c]not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation. There is a conspiracy of her [d]prophets in the midst of her like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they devour [e]souls; they take [f]treasure and precious things; they have increased her [g]widows in the midst of her; her [h]priests do violence to my law, and profane my holy things: they put [i]no difference between the holy and the profane, neither do they make known [the difference] between the unclean and the clean, and they hide their eyes from my [j]sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. Her [k]princes in the midst of her are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, to destroy souls, that they may get dishonest [l]gain. And

g *cf.* ch. 11. 2, 7. *cf.* ch. 24. 3-6. *cf.* ch. 21. 31, 32.
z *cf.* Is. 48. 10. *cf.* Mal. 3. 2, 3. *cf.* Mal. 4. 1.
a vers. 16, 31.
b vers. 1, 17, etc.
c *cf.* 2 Chr. 36. 14-16. Is. 1. 5. Jer. 2. 30. Zeph. 3. 2.
d ch. 13. 10-16. *cf.* 1 Ki. 22. 11-13. *cf.* Jer. 5. 30, 31.
e *cf.* Jer. 2. 34. *cf.* Rev. 17. 6. *etc.* Rev. 18. 13.
f *cf.* Mt. 23. 14. *etc.* 2 Ki. 5. 26. *cf.* Tit. 1. 11.
g *etc.* Is. 1. 17. *cf.* Job 22. 9. *cf.* Is. 10. 1, 2. *cf.* Lam. 5. 3.
h *cf.* 1 Sam. 2. 12-17, 22. Mic. 3. 11, 12. Mal. 1. 6-8.
i *cf.* Lev. 10. 1-3, 10. *etc.* Jer. 15. 19. *cf.* Hag. 2. 11-13.
j ch. 20. 12, 13.

k ver. 6; Is. 1. 23; *cf.* Mic. 3. 1-3, 9-11. l ver. 13; *cf.* Mt. 21. 13.

purification in mind, but what is here is the wrath itself—a wrath by which what cannot be changed may yet be limited and kept under. And such will be the fire of hell; corruption, at last, will be permitted no longer; none of the rioting will be there which has been in men's shameful imaginations of what is to come; Satan, then, is the arch-tormentor no more, but himself the most tormented. Suited and necessitated penalty, carefully discriminated, will be God's decisive repression of that which can be no more permitted to break out at all. Man's ways come to an end then, and God comes to His own finally and fully.

3. The final word returns once again to the corruption itself. It is complete, among all classes, and especially are the prophets and priests brought into the dark catalogue here; for in *their* corruption hope is gone entirely. Among all these not a man was left ("and I sought for such," says the Lord), that can make up a fence to keep out the incoming desolation, or stand in the breach before Him, that He might not destroy the land. Thus, then, the indignation, so long warned of, is at last to be poured out: "I will consume them in the fire of my wrath. Their own way will I recompense upon their head, saith the Lord Jehovah."

See. 4.

We have now once more one of those apparent repetitions which, as such, emphasize the importance of what they speak. Yet there is perhaps no mere

her [m]prophets have daubed for them with untempered [mortar], seeing vanity and divining [n]lies for them, saying, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah! and Jehovah hath [o]not spoken. The [p]people of the land use oppression and practise robbery; yea, they have vexed the [q]poor and needy, and oppressed the stranger wrongfully. And I [r]sought for a man among them that should make up the fence, and stand in the breach before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none. Therefore have I [s]poured out mine indignation upon them; I will consume them in the fire of my wrath: their [t]own way will I recompense upon their head, saith the Lord Jehovah.

SECTION 4 (Chap. xxiii.).

Yielding themselves to the world.

1 (1–4): One mother and one course.

1. And the [u]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying: Son of man, there were [v]two women, daughters of one mother. And they committed whoredom in [w]Egypt;

m ver. 25. ch. 13. 10–16. *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 11–15.
n ch. 13. 22, 23. Jer. 23. 25–32. *cf.* Zeph. 3. 4.
o Jer. 23. 21. *cf.* Jer. 28. 2, 16, 17.
p cf. vers. 25, 26, 27. *cf.* Is. 10. 2. *cf.* Jer. 5. 26–31.
q Job 24. 4, 14. Ps. 12. 5. Ps. 109. 16.
r Is. 41. 28. Is. 59. 16. Is. 63. 5. Jer. 5. 1.
s vers. 21, 22.
t ch. 7. 3, 8, 9. ch. 9. 10. *cf.* Gal. 6. 7.
u ch. 22. 1 etc.
v cf. ch. 16. 44, 46.

etc. Song 8. 8; *cf.* Jer. 3. 7–10. *w* ch. 20. 8; Lev. 17. 7. *cf.* Deut. 29. 16, 17 with Josh. 24. 14.

repetition in all Scripture, and it is important for us to realize what constitutes the difference between things which at first sight seem absolutely similar. The present chapter gives us, as is evident, substantially the theme of the 16th; Israel's departure from God being symbolized by the sin of adultery; Jehovah's exclusive relationship to Israel among all the nations of the earth being compared in this way to marriage. God has taken up the most intimate relations of human life to show us the fulness of His love towards men, and the nearness in which His heart delights to bring us to Himself. All the greater therefore is the sin which breaks through a love so manifested, and we cannot wonder if the foulest of human sins becomes a shadow of that which is symbolized by it here. We shrink from these descriptions. How thoroughly God would teach us by it to loathe that which in His sight is so much worse: the human symbol is but a shadow of the greater sin!

It has been truly said that the present chapter, as compared with the former one, speaks of political, rather than of spiritual, departure from God; yet this only shows the more how intimately the two are related to one another. Religion is necessarily the most powerful bond that unites men together, and thus it is no wonder that when men no longer recognized the one true God, supreme over all, each nation came naturally to have its own gods whose glory or decay became identified with that of the nation to which they belonged. We see in Nebuchadnezzar's policy, in the setting up of his golden image in the plain of Dura, the recognition of the power of such a motive. The different gods of the subjected nations were acknowledged in what was owned as supreme over them still. As Nebuchadnezzar was a king of kings, so naturally in his thought was his god a god of gods. Such then being the condition of things, and idolatry set up everywhere among the nations dispersed at Babel, God had necessarily to separate to Himself politically a people who were to be in true spiritual relationship to Himself. Where the nations ruled, their gods must rule; and thus to lose national independence threatened the loss of all else. This could not have

they committed whoredom in their [x]youth: there were their breasts pressed, and there were handled the teats of their [w]virginity. And their names were Oholah, the elder, and Oholibah her sister; and they were mine,

x vers. 8, 19, 21. ch. 16. 22. w Hos. 2. 15. cf. Jer. 2. 2, 3. y cf. Jer. 18. 13.

been as to Israel, had they not been untrue to themselves as the people of Jehovah. The captives in Babylon show what the change meant for the true-hearted under its imperial power.

Christianity, indeed, openly disclaimed any separate political existence for its converts; this was necessary; for, in the first place, it was a gospel for the world, going out freely to men apart from all question of nationality. Judaism had not such a gospel; and as long as Judaism lasted, the time for it had not come. The people whom God took up to reveal Himself to them showed this by their ready acceptance of the legal system after their own demonstrated inability, and on this account it was necessary that they should have it, that they should be allowed to prove in the fullest way that inability. The "due season" for the gospel did not come until man was shown not only to be "ungodly," but "without strength." Then and thus it was Christ died for us. But if God would prove in the completest way what man was, He must give them, and did give them, all the assistance in His power to walk aright according to a law. Thus they were fenced off from the intrusion of the nations, and assured of God's protection in preserving the fence. Among themselves they were bound together by family relationships, by the promises to their forefathers, which embraced them all, by the earthly blessings attached to obedience, by a central worship which drew them together from all parts of the land, while through all their tribes the cities of the priests and Levites were, as it were, a garrison to keep them for God—men separate from all other interests and devoted to God alone.

This all broke down, as we know; the hands of the people themselves broke it down. Christianity fully accepts the fact of this, being itself a complete salvation for men who can no longer trust in themselves at all; and it accepts the fact of a hostile world through which, kept by the power of God alone, His people have to make their way, finding in Christ at once their Leader and the Captain of their salvation. To the Jewish policy we cannot go back; and while on the one hand it is no wonder that men should have sought the advantage of this, it should be just as plain that for Christians themselves it is absolutely impossible. We stand by faith, and faith is not helped by circumstances, or by any natural conditions, but rather by the very difficulties which exercise and develop it. A higher blessing is thus secured for us as we have higher privileges and a perfect Example. We are strangers and pilgrims, and not citizens of earth at all. Yet there will be a time when God's present purpose completed, and His heavenly people taken to Himself, the world will be delivered from the power of evil which now rules it; and what we find in Israel of old will be reproduced again, with all the imperfection of it removed, in restored Israel, no longer in the midst of hostile nations, but under the dominion of Him who will be owned over all the earth, one Lord, and His name one.

1. In what is before us, the kingdoms of Judah and Israel are seen as distinct, but in closest relation to one another; alas, clearly related also in the common course that they pursue. "And the word of Jehovah came unto me saying, Son of man, there were two women, daughters of one mother." There

and they bore sons and daughters. And as for their names, [z]Samaria is Oholah, and [a]Jerusalem Oholibah.
2 (5-10): Oholah, the separate tent.
2. And Oholah played the [b]harlot when she was mine; and she doted upon her lovers, upon the [c]Assyrians

z *cf.* 1 Ki. 12. 20.
a *cf.* 1 Ki. 8. 29. *cf.* Ps. 76. 1, 2.
b *cf.* 1 Ki. 14. 8. 16.
cf. 1 Ki. 15. 26, 30. c *cf.* 2 Ki. 15. 19.

is no need to question as to that mother now, nor to speak of Amorite or Hittite. The heredity which they exemplify goes further back, and lust, in whatever way displayed, is the beggar's badge which marks out everywhere fallen man. As the apostle has shown us, the full condition of man is reached and judged in that one commandment: "Thou shalt not lust." Of these lusts, the idols of the nations are the exhibition, and meant for their gratification. They represent an imaginary freedom of souls who have got away from God, seeking to satisfy themselves, apart from His way and will, with things incompetent to do so.

Such as these women here, all the children of Adam are in all their generations. And if we ask, as we look at their history, How could God take up such as these? the answer is found in another question: Where could He find any better? As we see their common origin, so we are taken back to Egypt to see them from the very beginning of their course nationally. And this licentious free-will marks them from the start. God had appointed them in Egypt a school which should have been profitable for them. No land could more fairly and fully exhibit the folly and degradation of heathen idolatry, while God made them also to realize the rod of the school-master in what they suffered at their hands. There was as plainly, on one side, God's meaning in all this, as on the other was exhibited the natural perverseness of the human heart. Little cause had Israel to take up with Egypt, themselves having the revelation of the true God and such promises of blessing as might well have won their hearts to obedience. Yet, it is plain, they accepted Egypt as their school in another way entirely from that in which God meant it. Egypt was the land of independence, the type of the world in that way, nurtured by the constant overflow of its river, with no need of the rain of heaven, which was, however, the source of the abundance that was round about them. But these sources were afar off, unnoticed and unknown, and if they were not content to make the river itself their god, as we know they did, there was another course, yet more satisfactory to human pride: "My river is mine, and I have made it"—the complete folly of which was no hindrance to its adoption. Manifestly, Oholah ("her own tent") made this the text upon which her conduct was the comment. Oholah is Ephraim, characterized by her chief city, Samaria, a name which speaks of the desire to preserve that which they stood for. Samaria (*Shomeron*) means "keeper" or "guard." It was Omri's city, set up against Jerusalem, and as Micah says (chap. vi. 16), "the statutes of Omri were kept" but too faithfully in it. But before this, at the very commencement of their independence as a kingdom, the calves which Jeroboam set up remind us of Egyptian worship. In fact, he had been in Egypt and manifestly brought them from thence.* Jerusalem, on the other hand, the capital city and representative of Judah, characterized by its glorious temple, was Oholibah ("my tent is in her") in contrast with Oholah, "her own tent." How far this affected her after-course we have already had intimated.

* Israel worshiped the golden calf at Sinai. Thus the Egyptian idolatry was manifest both in the earlier and the later apostasy.—S. R.

[her] neighbors, clothed in blue, governors and rulers, all of them desirable young men, horsemen riding upon horses. And she bestowed her whoredoms upon them, all of them the choice of the sons of Asshur; and on whomsoever she doted, with all their idols she [d]defiled herself. Neither did she [e]leave her whoredoms [brought] from Egypt: for in her youth they had lain with her, and handled the breasts of her virginity, and

d ch. 22. 3, 4. Ps. 106. 39.
e Ex. 32. 4. *cf.* Hos. 2. 5 *cf.* Jer. 3. 1.

2. We have first the history of Oholah; and, under the strong figure of adultery, we find how the world outside at once attracted her. Assyria was her main attraction: "She doted upon her lovers, upon the Assyrians her neighbors, clothed in blue, governors and rulers, all of them desirable young men, horsemen riding upon horses." In a worldly course, the world in fact surpasses the people of God, whose own things, the moment they seek the world, fail with them at the start. In the outside world there is full room for all the energy, ambition, luxury, self-enjoyment, which the terms speak of here: youth, vigor, the keen pursuit of that which man counts to be riches, and which makes him all that he can hope to be, these things attract, alas, how much, the people of God themselves!

And what does Asshur stand for? If we go back to the neglected book of national genealogy, the 10th chap. of Genesis, we find that Asshur has his place as the second son of Shem. He is, therefore, in the line of revelation, of which Shem speaks. Shem means "name;" the name of God revealed in connection with him, which makes him all that he is; and, as is well known, revelation as a whole has come to us through the line of Shem; and as has been said elsewhere (see Judges, chap. iii., *Notes*) the genealogy of Shem, as God has given it to us, shows in its necessary order the unfolding of this revelation.

We begin with Elam, which is only, in another form, Olam, "eternity;" and the first necessary revelation of God is that He is the Eternal. His name, therefore, which stands for what He is, must be eternal as Himself. Nevertheless, there is a gradual unfolding of this, of which Asshur in the next place speaks. Asshur means "step," and the steps of God, His activities, are also His manifestation. In every act of God, He more or less reveals Himself; and there has been, as we surely know, an adaptation of this revelation to the conditions and needs of men which has made it a revelation, gradual indeed, far more so than we should have thought could be; but our thoughts are not as God's thoughts. It has been shown, in what has just been referred to, that the names following show the continued development of the revelation.

Arphaxad, in the third place, brings us to what God's manifestation for the need of man is, the mystery in which He is truly manifest, the mystery of the cross being spoken of in it; while the next name, in the fourth place, Lud, "born," shows that He has revealed God in *manhood;* this humiliation of His being followed by what the last name speaks of, Aram, "exalted." The depths and the heights that we find in Christ are surely before us here. "Beautiful, however, as are these names thus joined together, we easily understand how in a world like this, and as connected with the human generations for which they stand, they soon scatter and fall away from one another, and thus lose their meaning and their beauty as united. The sentences become but broken words, capable of very different, even of opposite suggestion. The Shem families, as

poured their whoredoms on her. Therefore I [e]gave her into the hand of her lovers, into the hand of the sons of Asshur, upon whom she doted. These [g]uncovered her nakedness: they [h]took her sons and daughters, and [i]slew her with the sword: and she became a [j]name among women; and they executed [k]judgment upon her.

3 (11-35): Oholibah, "My tent in her."

3. And her [l]sister Oholibah saw [this], yet was she [m]more corrupt in her doting than she, and in her whoredoms more than the whoredoms of her sister. She doted upon the sons of [n]Asshur, her neighbors, governors and rulers, clothed to perfection, horsemen riding upon horses, all of them desirable young men.

e *cf.* 2 Ki. 15. 19. 2 Ki. 17. 3-6, 36. 2 Ki. 18. 9-12. *cf.* Hos. 11. 5.
g ver. 29. ch. 16. 37, 41. Hos. 2. 3, 10. *cf.* Rev. 2. 22.
h *cf.* ver. 47. *cf.* Dan. 1. 3.
i *cf.* Rev. 17. 16.
j *cf.* Jer. 22. 8, 9. Deut. 28. 37. Ps. 44. 14.
k *cf.* 1s. 10. 5, 6. ver. 24.

l Jer. 3. 7, 8. m *cf.* Jer. 3. 10, 11; *cf.* Mt. 11. 20-24; *cf.* ch. 16. 48. n ch. 16. 28; *cf.* 2 Chr. 28. 16-23.

they scattered and multiplied into nations, lost almost entirely the promise of their origin. Their primitive worship became corrupted into a dark and debasing idolatry" in which, however, we find still as we look into them, the fragments of primitive revelation. Still, as a whole, the meaning is lost. Cut off from the Name of which they speak, there is no purpose of God really left. What should have been God's "steps" become in fact but a reflection of man himself and of his lusts. Strikingly in this way does Asshur's god speak for what he is. Asshur's god was Asshur. Man serves but himself—*himself*, alas, the miserable object of his worship! Even as the apostle puts it, with regard to some professing Christians, "whose god is their belly, whose glory is in their shame" (Phil. iii. 19). Yet he is successful, as men say; his energies are spent undividedly upon that which is within his reach, and "the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." He is successful; and what is his success like? Look at the 73rd psalm for the answer, and see how perplexed even the godly can be at what he finds it. Only in the sanctuary can you learn the truth about it—the end of it.

After Asshur, therefore, Oholah goes with her whole heart. She still carries her Egyptian idolatries with her, for evil, as we know, is tolerant of evil, while the good is not. Yet at last, as we find in her history here, out of men's vices are hatched the hordes that prey on them, and out of this has arisen the fable that Satan is the torturer of men in God's final place of judgment; but this is only the reflection of present things. He is indeed *here* the torturer, not there; and God would wake man up by this constant connection of sin with its judgment. Man's pleasant vices are the whips that scourge him.

The history here in the case of Ephraim is plainly read: "I gave her into the hand of her lovers, into the hand of the sons of Asshur upon whom she doted. These uncovered her nakedness, they took her sons and daughters, and slew her with the sword, and she became a name among women, and they executed judgment upon her."

3. Oholibah's history now follows. In it we see once more the power of example, as we see also how one evil develops out of another, and the consequent progress made in a downward path. Once more Oholibah chooses the human school instead of the school of God, and learns nothing by His rod upon her sister. She too goes after the attractive Assyrians, but she adds to these the Chaldeans, the images of whom promptly carried her off. And these Chal-

And I saw that she was defiled: they both took [o]one way. And she [p]increased her whoredoms: for she saw men [q]portrayed upon the wall, the images of the [r]Chaldeans portrayed with vermilion, girded with girdles upon their loins, with flowing turbans upon their heads, all of them leaders* in appearance, after the likeness of the sons of Babylon, of Chaldea, the land of their birth. And as soon as she [s]saw them she doted on them, and sent messengers to them into Chaldea. And the sons of Babylon came unto her in the bed of love, and [t]defiled her with their fornication; she too defiled herself with them, and her soul was [u]estranged from them. So she uncovered her whoredoms, and uncovered her nakedness: and my soul was [v]estranged from her, like as my soul was estranged from her sister. Yet she multiplied her whoredoms, [w]calling to mind the days of her youth, wherein she played the harlot in the land of Egypt. And she doted upon their paramours, [x]whose flesh is as the flesh of asses, and whose issue as the issue of horses. Thus thou calledst to mind the lewdness of thy [y]youth, in the handling of thy teats by the Egyptians, for the breasts of thy youth.

o *cf.* 2 Ki 17. 18, 19 *cf.* Hos. 12. 1, 2. *cf.* Rom. 3. 22, 23
p *cf.* ch. 8. 6, etc.
q ch. 8. 10.
r Is. 47. 1. Jer. 50. 2. *cf.* Is 39.3-7.
s ch. 16. 29. *cf.* Job 31. 1 with Mt. 5. 28. *cf.* 1 Sam. 6. 6, 8
t ch. 20. 43. ver. 13. *cf.* Hos. 5. 3.
u *cf.* 2 Sam. 13. 15. vers. 22, 28. *cf.* 2 Ki. 24. 20.
v *cf.* Jer. 6. 8. *cf.* Lev. 26. 30. *cf.* ch. 16. 18.
w vers. 3, 8, 21. *cf.* ch. 20. 7. *cf.* Acts 7.39.
x ch. 16. 26. *cf.* Jude 7.
y ver. 8.

* Lit., "Third men," *i. e.*, "leader of three."

deans, as we learn by more than the derivation of their name, which seems to be "demon-like," bring with them a power of evil more intense, less human, more supernatural. As James teaches us, it is how the wisdom that cometh not from above develops; it is "earthly, sensual, devilish." These Chaldeans had their own tongue and learning, practised occult arts, "wore a peculiar dress like that seen upon the gods, and deified men in Assyrian sculptures." Added to this, they were not Shemites, but Cushites, and belonged fully to the darkness of this their origin. Yet Oholibah, as we see, is immediately attracted; their mere images attract her: "As soon as she saw them, she doted on them and sent messengers to them, unto Chaldea." This passion, as we know by their history, did not last long, except in its consequences. It was, as is so often the case, as short-lived as it was sudden. Oholibah returned to her old passion for Egypt, and this brought on her doom.

When her day of lawless self-will is past, the day of the Lord finds all her former lovers gathered against her. The mustering is come now, the sons of Babylon heading the list with all the Chaldeans; and Asshur too, with Babylon, Assyria following under the power of Nebuchadnezzar.

Numbered among the Chaldeans, we have three names which present a special difficulty. Pekod is, in Jer. l. 21, an allegorical name for Babylon itself as the land of "visitation"—there, visited of God; here a visitation of God upon others; or it may mean her "charge," "office," for officer. Shoa means "wealth," "liberal;" Koa, probably "prince." Geographically no such names are found within the limits of Chaldea, and the words remain a problem yet unsolved, while from the connection they might seem to form part of the enumeration of all that was brilliant and attractive in the land, now gathered

Therefore, Oholibah, thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will [a]raise up thy lovers against thee, from whom thy soul is estranged, and I will bring them against thee on [d]every side: the sons of Babylon, and all the Chaldeans, Pekod and Shoa and Koa, all the sons of Asshur with them; all of them desirable young men, governors and rulers, all of them leaders and men of renown, all of them riding upon horses. And they shall come against thee with [b]weapons, chariots, and wheels, and with an assemblage of peoples; with buckler and shield and helmet they shall beset thee round about: and I will [c]commit the judgment * unto them, and they shall judge thee with their judgments. And I will visit my [d]jealousy upon thee, and they shall deal with thee in fury: they shall [e]cut off thy nose and thine ears, and thy remnant shall fall by the sword: and they shall [f]take thy sons and thy daughters; and thy residue shall be [g]devoured by the fire. They shall also [h]strip thee of thy garments, and take away thy fair [i]jewels. † And I will make thy lewdness to [j]cease from thee, and thy whoredom [brought] from the land of Egypt: so that thou shalt not lift up thine eyes unto them, nor [k]remember Egypt any more.

For [l]thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will [m]give thee over into the hand of them whom thou hatest, into the hand of them from whom thy soul is estranged; and they shall deal with thee in [n]hatred, and take away all thy labor, and [o]leave thee naked and bare; so that the nakedness of thy whoredoms shall be [p]uncovered, both thy lewdness and thy fornications. These things shall be done unto thee, because thou hast gone [q]whoring after the nations, because thou hast [r]defiled thyself with their idols. Thou hast [s]walked in thy sister's way, and I have given [t]her cup into thy hand.

a ver. 28. ch. 16. 37. *cf.* Is. 10. 5, 6. *cf.* Hab. 1. 6-10. *cf.* Rev. 17. 16.
d *cf.* Jer. 6. 22, 23. *cf.* Jer. 12. 9-12. *ctr.* Ps. 118. 10-12
b ch. 26. 10. *cf.* Jer. 47. 3. Nah. 2. 3, 4.
c *cf.* ver. 45. *cf.* ch. 16. 38. *cf.* Jer. 39. 5, 6.
d *cf.* Deut. 29. 20. Song 8. 6. Zeph. 1. 18. Ex. 20. 5
e *cf.* Rev. 17. 16. *cf.* 1 Sam. 11. 2.
f ver. 47. Hos. 2. 4, 5. *cf.* Dan. 1. 3.
g ch. 15. 6, 7. ch. 20. 47, 48. *cf.* Rev. 18. 8.
h ver. 29. Jer. 13. 22.
i 1 Is. 3. 17-24.
j ch. 16. 41. *cf.* Mic. 5. 10-15. *cf.* Zech. 13. 2.
k *ctr.* Hos. 14. 3, 8.
l ver. 1, etc.
m ch. 16. 37. Jer. 21. 7-10. Jer. 34. 20.
n ch. 16. 39. *cf.* Deut. 28. 47-52
o ver. 26.
p *cf.* Is. 3. 17.
q ch. 6. 9. *cf.* Ps. 106. 35-38. *cf.* Jer. 2. 18-20.
r vers. 7, 17. *cf.* Acts 15. 20.
s ver. 13; ch. 16. 47-51.
t *cf.* 2 Ki. 21. 13; *cf.* Jer. 7. 14.

* Lit., "Set judgment before them." † Lit., "adornment."

with the desirable sons of Asshur against Jerusalem. The qualities which before spoke of the energy and ability which carried away the hearts of the Israelites are now enumerated in the same terms, but realized now in an opposite interest. How men's old allurements face them in the day of visitation which comes for each one! They work their will without mercy, though the mere instruments of God's judgment, as He declares. The punishment of cutting off the nose and ears was the punishment of an adulteress; and we may remember how these, on God's part, were ornamented in a former chapter (xvi.) which gives us, as the present does not, the blessing which God had poured out upon those brought into this peculiar relationship to Himself. Now, not only the ornaments are removed, but there is no place for them any longer, mere deformity instead, and with the jewels the garments are also taken away.

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Thou shalt [u]drink of thy sister's cup, deep and wide; thou shalt be for a [v]laughing-stock and derision: for it containeth much. Thou shalt be filled with [w]drunkenness and sorrow, [with] the cup of [x]astonishment and desolation, with the cup of thy [y]sister Samaria: thou shalt even drink it and drain it out, and thou shalt gnaw the sherds thereof, and tear off thy breasts: for I have spoken [it], saith the Lord Jehovah. Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Because thou hast [z]forgotten me, and cast me behind thy back, therefore bear thou also thy lewdness and thy fornications.

4 (36-49) The human appeal.

4. And [a]Jehovah said unto me, Son of man, wilt thou judge Oholah and Oholibah? Yea, [b]declare unto them their abominations. For they have [c]committed adultery, and [d]blood is in their hands; and with their idols have they committed adultery; and also their sons, whom they bare unto me, have they caused to [e]pass through [the fire] unto them to be devoured. Moreover, this have they done unto me: in the same day have they defiled my [f]sanctuary and profaned my [g]sabbaths. For when they had slain their children to their idols, they [h]came the same day into my sanctuary to profane it: and behold, this have they done in the midst of my house. And furthermore, they [i]sent to men to come* from far, to whom a messenger was sent; and behold, they came: for whom thou didst wash thyself, [j]paintedst thine eyes, and deckedst thyself with ornaments, and satest upon a stately bed, with a table prepared before it, whereupon thou hadst set [k]mine incense and mine oil. And the voice of a

* Or, "coming."

u *cf.* Is. 51. 17, *cf.* Jer. 25. 15-28. *cf.* Rev. 16. 19.
v ch. 22. 4, 5. ch. 36. 3. *cf.* Deut. 28. 37. *cf.* Ps. 79. 4. *ctr.* Mic. 7. 8.
w Jer. 25. 27. Hab. 2. 16. *cf.* Is. 51. 21.
x *cf.* Is. 51. 17, 22. Ps. 60. 3.
y ver. 32.
z ch. 22. 12. Jer. 2. 32. Hos. 8. 14.
a vers. 1, 28.
b Is. 58. 1. Hos. 2. 2. Mic. 3. 8-11.
c *cf.* Hos. 4. 2. ver. 5.
d vers. 39, 45. ch. 16. 36, 38. Ps. 106. 37, 38. Is. 1. 15. Hos. 4. 2. *cf.* 2 Ki. 24. 4.
e ch. 20. 26, 31, etc. *cf.* Deut. 12. 31. *ctr.* Lev. 19. 30. *cf.* ch. 8. 16, etc.
f ch. 22. 8. Neh. 13. 17, 18. Jer. 17. 27.
g Is. 3. 9. Jer. 7. 8-11. Mic. 3. 11. *cf.* Jno. 18. 28.
h ver. 16. Is. 57. 9.
i *cf.* 2 Ki. 9. 30; Jer. 4. 30; ch. 16. 15-16; *cf.* Prov. 7. 10.
k ch. 16. 18, 19; Hos. 2. 8, 9

Yet all this severity is on God's part not mere judgment. The effect is, as He puts it here, to make the lewdness of Oholibah cease from her, and the objects formerly attractive to be turned from with loathing. One must come to one's self in order to come to God, and this is the process through which God was now bringing Israel. What a terrible thing to face, when one is left naked and destitute, all that gone which, while it was being squandered, made one for a time feel and look rich to others! But the cup now must be drained to its bitter dregs, wrung out in desperation by the soul that has lost its all, but cannot yet fully awake to it; the very sherds of the broken cup, as represented here, gnawed in madness to obtain that which is impossible, while the tearing off of the breasts is but the self-despair under which, if anywhere, the true blessing lies. But this is not gone on to in the chapter before us, which ends with judgment: "Because thou hast forgotten Me and cast Me behind thy back, therefore bear also thy lewdness and thy fornications."

4. God now appeals to man himself in the person of the prophet against both these debauched and uncensured women: "And Jehovah said unto me, Son of man, wilt thou judge Oholah and Oholibah? Yea, declare unto them their

[l] loose crowd* was in her: and with people of the common sort were brought Sabeans† of the wilderness: and they put bracelets upon their hands, and a beautiful crown upon their heads. And I said of her who was old in adulteries, Will she now, even she, commit her fornications? And [m] they went in unto her as they go in unto a harlot: so went they in unto Oholah and unto Oholibah, the lewd women. And righteous men, they shall judge them with the [n] judgment of adulteresses, and with the judgment of women that shed blood: for adulteresses they are, and blood is in their hands.

For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: [o] I will bring up an assemblage against them, and will give them to be driven hither and thither, and spoiled. And the assemblage shall [p] stone them with stones and shall despatch them with their swords; they shall kill their sons and their daughters, and their houses they shall [q] burn with fire. And I will cause lewdness to [r] cease out of the land: and all women shall be [s] warned, and shall not do after your lewdness. And they shall [t] recompense your lewdness upon you, and ye shall bear the sins of your idols; and ye shall [u] know that I am the Lord Jehovah.

*"Or, a multitude living at ease." †Or, "drunkards."

[l] *cf.* Ex. 32. 6, 18, 19. *cf.* Hos. 13. 6. Amos 6. 1–6.

[m] *cf.* Ezra 9. 7. vers. 3, 9–13.

[n] ver. 24. ch. 16. 38, etc.

[o] ch. 16. 40. Jer. 25. 9. *cf.* Lk. 19. 43.

[p] ch. 16. 40. ch. 9. 6. Jer. 33. 4, 5. *cf.* Josh. 7. 25, etc. *cf.* Jno. 8. 5.

[q] Deut. 13. 16. Jer. 39. 8.

[r] ver. 27. ch. 22. 15. *cf.* ch. 36. 25. Mic. 5. 11–14.

[s] Deut. 13. 11. *cf.* Esth. 1. 20.

[t] ch. 7. 4, 9, etc.

[u] ch. 24. 24, 27, etc.

abominations." And the story is repeated briefly with all the circumstances of its aggravation and the persistency of wickedness, which seems as if it would go on to the end—the scum of a pot, as in the next chapter, which will never be cleansed. Adultery and blood are both in the count against them here. Their idolatries contained both features: unfaithfulness to God, and causing their sons to pass through the fire to their idols to be devoured; and all the while shamelessly entering Jehovah's sanctuary, which could but be defiled by their presence; and His sabbaths, the sign of His covenant with them, profaned by all their actions. They had not been the victims of others, simply; they had not merely been solicited by others; they *themselves* had been the solicitresses, laboring to bring from afar those who could only pollute them with their abominations; they had decked themselves with the ornaments that God had given, for the reception of their corrupters!

The picture is painted for us in a few brief touches: the insensate profligate sitting upon a stately bed, with a table prepared before it whereon were placed the incense and the oil that belonged to her forsaken God. Around her the voices of a loose crowd in utter abandonment, even the Sabeans of the wilderness, the men who lived by pillage, as their name here may indicate, brought in to join with them, and all this when plainly old age was come upon her, hastened by her excesses.* The two sisters, every way such, are joined together in this count, and men of mere human righteousness are called to pronounce

* There is a resemblance to Jezebel, the apostate queen of Israel, 2 Kings 9: 30, who in her old age "painted her face and tired her head." She is also the symbolic adulteress in the professed church, the Thyatira of Rev. 2, whose adulteries bring down the Lord's judgments.—S. R.

SECTION 5 (Chap. xxiv).

The judgment reached.

1 (1-14): The stroke falls on the rebellious city.

1. And in the [v]ninth year, in the tenth month, on the tenth of the month, the [w]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, [x]write thee the name of the day, of this selfsame day: the king of Babylon has [y]drawn near to Jerusalem this selfsame day. And utter a [z]parable unto the [a]rebellious house, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: [b]Set on the caldron, set it on, and also pour water into it; [c]gather the pieces thereof into it, every [d]good piece, the thigh and the shoulder; fill it with choice bones. Take the choice of the flock, and [make] also a pile of the bones under it;* make it [e]boil well, yea, let the bones thereof be boiled in the midst of it.

*Or, "A pile [of wood] for the bones under [it]."

v *cf.* ch. 1. 2, etc. *cf.* 2 Ki. 25. 1. *cf.* Jer. 52. 4. *cf.* Jer. 39. 1. *cf.* Zech. 8. 19.
w ch. 13. 1, etc.
x *cf.* Is. 30. 8, 9. *cf.* Hab. 2. 2, 3. *cf.* Jno 4. 52.
y 2 Ki. 25. 1. Jer. 39. 1. Jer. 52. 4.
z ch. 17. 2 ch. 19. 2, etc. *cf.* ch. 20. 49.
a ch. 2. 3, 6, etc. *cf.* Is. 1. 2. *cf.* Is. 30. 1, 9. *cf.* Acts 7. 51.
b *cf.* ver. 6 with ch. 11. 3.
c *cf.* ch. 22. 18, 22; *cf.* Mic. 3. 2, 3. d *cf.* ch. 20. 47; *cf.* ch. 34. 16, 20; *cf.* Lk. 1. 52; *cf.* Jer. 39. 6.
e *cf.* Is. 30. 33; *cf.* Mt. 3. 12.

the judgment upon them which they so well deserve. Thus a divine judgment is executed, but with the approbation of the human conscience everywhere. God and man are united together against them, but with the end in God's thoughts still of getting rid, by whatever severe measures, of the wickedness which else would never end, but which shall at last make them recognize their covenant-God in the holiness which compels Him thus to afflict them. The end for Israel and for the nations alike is ever that they shall know that He is the Lord Jehovah.

See. 5.

In the last chapter of this series, which comes evidently as an appendix to what has gone before, we find the judgment now reached. The king of Babylon has drawn near to Jerusalem, and with this, when fully ascertained, prophetic communications cease for the present. The events speak for themselves, and to God's voice in them they have now to listen.

There are two parts in the chapter. The first announces, before the people could have any message of it to reach them, that the siege has begun; while the second shows us what is implied in this—the divine sundering of the tie between Jehovah and the people, as figured in the death of the prophet's wife. These two parts are in a certain sense, and in a most touching manner, in contrast with one another, as we shall see when we examine them.

1. We are now in the second year from the last communication, and in the ninth year of Jehoiachin's captivity. The number speaks of divine manifestation, God manifesting Himself now, alas, in the very cloud which hides Him from the people; but the cloud is that which their sins have raised, and God is manifest in necessary judgment. Thus also the tenth month the tenth day of the month, speaks. The word of Jehovah comes to Ezekiel on that day, bidding him to write down the name of the day, with the assurance that the king of Babylon has drawn near to Jerusalem on that self-same day.

And now the taunt about the caldron is to be answered in the event. Jerusalem is indeed to be their caldron in which they are to be subjected to the

Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Woe to the *f* bloody city, to the *g* caldron whose rust* is *s* therein, and whose rust is not gone out of it. Bring it out piece by piece; no lot has fallen upon it. For her blood is in the *h* midst of her; she set it upon the bare rock; she *i* poured it not upon the ground to cover it with dust. That it might cause *j* wrath to come up to take vengeance, I have *k* set her blood upon the bare rock that it should not be covered. Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: *l* Woe to the bloody city! I *m* will also make the pile great. *n* Heap on the wood, kindle the fire, boil well the flesh, and make *o* thick the broth,† and let the bones be burned. Then *p* set it empty upon the coals thereof, that it may be hot, and the brass thereof may burn, and that the *q* filthiness thereof may be molten in it, and that its rust may cease. She has *r* exhausted labor, yet her great rust *t* goeth not forth out of her: let her rust be in the *t* fire. In thy filthiness is *u* lewdness, for I have cleansed thee, and thou wast *v* not cleansed. Thou shalt *w* no more be cleansed from thy filthiness till I have caused my *x* wrath upon thee to rest. I Jehovah have *y* spoken it: it shall come to pass, and I will do it; I will not go back, neither will I *z* spare, neither will I *a* repent. *b* According to thy ways, and according to thy doings, shall they judge thee, saith the Lord Jehovah.

* Or, "filth." † Or, "Spice it well."

f cf. 2 Ki. 21. 16. Mic. 7. 2. *cf.* Nah. 3. 1.
g vers. 11-13. *cf.* Jer. 6. 29, 30.
h cf. Jer. 2. 34. *cf.* Jer. 6. 15.
i cf. 2 Cor. 12. 20, 21.
j Lev. 17. 13. Deut. 12. 16, 24. Job 16. 18. Is. 26. 21. *cf.* Gen. 4. 10.
k Deut. 32. 21, 22. *cf.* 2 Ki. 22. 17, etc.
l ch. 16. 37, 38. *cf.* Jer. 22. 8, 9.
m ver. 6. *cf.* Lk. 13. 34, 35.
n cf. Is. 31. 9. *cf.* Deut. 32. 22.
o ver. 5.
p cf. Jer. 20. 5. *cf.* Mk. 9. 49.
q cf. Jer. 32. 29. *cf.* Jer. 38. 18. *cf.* Jer. 52. 13.
r ch. 20. 38. ch. 23. 26, 27. *cf.* Is. 1. 25. *cf.* Mic. 5. 11-14.
s cf. Is. 47. 13. *cf.* Is. 57. 9, 10. *cf.* Hos. 12. 1.
t cf. Jer. 5. 13. *u cf.* ch. 23. 44, etc. *v* ch. 22. 24; *cf.* Is. 5. 7; *cf.* Jer. 25. 3-7. *w cf.* Hos. 7. 1, 9, 16; *cf.* Mt. 23. 34-39. *x* ch. 5. 13; *cf.* ch. 16. 42; *ctr.* Zeph. 3. 17; *ctr.* Is. 40. 1. *y cf.* Is. 55. 10, 11; *cf.* Num. 23. 19; *cf.* 2 Cor. 1. 20. *z* ch. 7. 4, 9, etc.; *ctr.* Mal. 3. 17. *a cf.* Jer. 23. 20; *ctr.* Rom. 11. 29. *b* ch. 16. 43, etc.; Gal. 6. 7.

fire of divine wrath: "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Set on the caldron, set it on, and also pour water into it. Gather the pieces thereof into it, every good piece, the thigh and the shoulder; fill it with the choice bones. Take the choice of the flock, and make also a pile of bones underneath it. Make it boil well; yea, let the bones thereof be boiled in the midst of it." This then was to be the issue of every controversy with God, of which there was ample necessity. The city itself was a caldron whose rust was in it, and could not be scoured out. The whole, therefore, is visited. No lot has fallen upon it for the sparing of any. She had taken life—that life which God had ordained to be sacred, even where rightly taken, when the blood was to be poured out to Him. It had not been poured out; it remained to defile her; nay, she had set it upon the bare rock in open view: "She poured it not upon the ground to cover it with dust." Thus it cried openly for vengeance, and God had set her blood upon the bare rock, in His turn, that it should not be covered. The very city emptied of its inhabitants must go down in the fire of His anger: "Set it empty upon the coals thereof, that it may be hot, and the brass thereof may burn, that the filthiness thereof may be molten in it and its rust may cease. It has exhausted labor, yet its great rust goeth not forth out of it. Let its rust be in the fire." Thus after all possible pains taken with her, such pains as God Himself might take, she was not cleansed. Here then was the only possible end; inexorable, unsparing

2 (15-27): Mourning forbidden.

2. And the [c]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the [d]desire of thine eyes with a stroke; yet thou shalt [e]not mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down. Sigh in [f]silence, make no mourning for the dead; bind thy [g]turban upon thee, and put thy [h]sandals upon thy feet, and [i]cover not the beard, and [j]eat not the bread of men. And I spake unto the people in the morning; and at even my wife [k]died. And I did in the morning as I was commanded. And the people said unto me, Wilt thou not tell us [l]what these things are to us which thou doest? Then I said unto them, The word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will [m]profane

c ver. 1, etc. d vers. 18, 21, 25. e cf. Prov. 5. 19. cf. Song 7. 10. cf. Lam 1. 7. e cf. Lev. 10. 2, 3, 6. cf. Jer. 22. 10, 18. cf. 1 Cor. 7. 29, 30. f Ps. 39. 9. Ps. 46. 10. cf. Amos 8. 3. g cf. Lev. 21. 10. h cf. 2 Sam. 15. 30. i cf. Lev. 13. 45; cf. Mic. 3. 7. j cf. Hos. 9. 4; cf. Jer. 16. 7; k ver. 16; cf. 1 Cor. 11. 30. l ch. 12. 9, etc. m ch. 7. 20-22; cf. Ps. 74. 7; cf. Mt. 23. 38.

judgment was alone sufficient for such a case: "According to thy ways and according to thy doings shall they judge thee, saith the Lord Jehovah."

2. We have now a parable of another nature, which seems to bear a double significance; one open, and one hidden. Jerusalem is gone in judgment. The city is gone, and the sanctuary with it—the sanctuary so necessary for the nation as a whole, where alone the blood of sacrifice could be offered to God. Thus the destruction of the sanctuary was the end of all relationship. What could remain between a holy God and a people for whose sins no atonement could be made? This is the overwhelming calamity which, as to the people, might well make every other of comparatively small account. The voice of lamentation itself was hushed in this silence of despair. "And the word of Jehovah came unto me saying, Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke, yet thou shalt not mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down." It is not that grief is forbidden, but the expression of it. He is to be in this expressionless grief a sign to the people: "Sigh in silence, make no mourning for the dead, bind thy turban upon thee, and put thy sandals upon thy feet, and cover not the beard, and eat not the bread of men. And I spake unto the people in the morning, and in the evening my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded."

In contrast with the loud lamentation customary in such cases, for which they even hired mourners, this conduct calls for explanation: "The people said unto me, Wilt thou not tell us what these things are to us which thou doest? Then I said unto them, The word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Say unto the house of Israel: Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold, I profane my sanctuary, the pride of your power, the desire of your eyes and the pity of your soul, and your sons and your daughters whom ye have left behind shall fall by the sword." It is the mourning for these last that is to cease in view of the mourning which can have no sufficient expression.

Yet, after all, it is not they who can feel these things according to the divine account of them. They might be overwhelmed by the calamity, but were to pine away in iniquities yet unrepented of. This is why, as it seems, the full meaning as to what Ezekiel is called to do does not come out. The loss of their sons and daughters, with all its severity, cannot answer to this breaking of a marriage-tie under which Ezekiel suffers. For that, we have to think of the

my sanctuary, the [n]pride of your power, the [o]desire of your eyes, and the pity of your soul; and your sons and your daughters whom ye have left behind shall [p]fall by the sword. And ye shall do as I have done: ye shall [q]not cover the beard, nor eat the bread of men; and your turbans shall be upon your heads, and your sandals upon your feet: ye shall not mourn nor weep; but ye shall [r]pine away in your iniquities, and moan one toward another. Thus Ezekiel shall be unto you a [s]sign; according to all that he hath done shall ye do: when it cometh, then ye shall [t]know that I am the Lord Jehovah.

n *cf.* Mt. 24. 1. *cf.* Jno. 19. 20.
o *cf.* Ps. 27. 4. *cf.* 1 Ts. 84. 1. *cf.* Is. 64. 11.
p ch. 23. 25, 47. Jer. 6. 11.
q vers. 16, 17. *cf.* Ps. 78. 64. *cf.* Jer. 16. 4-7.
r ch. 4. 17. ch. 33. 10. Lev. 26. 39.
s ch. 4. 3. Is. 8. 18. Hos. 1. 2.
t ch. 7. 9, 27, etc.

sanctuary itself gone, which was the pledge and seal of the tie, which spoke of the Lord's presence with them, and gave the people access to Himself; that tie being broken, it might well swallow up all others.

But this does not put the prophet's parabolic action in its full meaning before us. Ezekiel himself is plainly here, as elsewhere, the representative of God to the people, as the prophet in fact always was. It is to be noted that the stroke falls not upon the people, but upon the prophet himself. Nor is it inflicted as a judgment, as far as he is concerned. With the prophet there is no divorce from God by it; on the contrary, just at this time he stands before the people fully as the representative of God Himself, speaking and acting in His name. We have to take the prophet here as really representing the One for whom he stands. Thus it is not obscurely intimated that the prophet's sorrow is the sorrow of God Himself. The affliction is on *His* part, not on man's side. Yet it is an affliction which can find no expression in the midst of a people obdurate as these are. It is their sin which has wrought their calamity. It is their sin in which they still pine away; feeling, no doubt, certain effects of it, but not the iniquity itself. He who has inflicted it is He who feels what He has inflicted. It is the sundering of His own relationship with a people whom He had taken up to manifest His love to them and to bring them near to Himself in such a way as all their history indicates. Yet He has been compelled to give them up. The tie, in fact, is broken, for we are not thinking here of purposes to be fulfilled in the end, but of present relationship, and these ended for the nation as such. Yet He who in all their affliction has ever been afflicted, can give no expression to it. It is the shadow of judgment which is necessarily over them all and which hinders this expression.

Yet how wonderful in its pathos is this unexpressed, inexpressible sorrow with which all this part of the prophecy closes! God will not, as it were, permit it all to end in judgment merely, without bringing us to His side in this matter, if we have heart for it, and showing us how truly *His* heart remains unchanged, and how thoroughly the divorce which He has given, as He says in Hosea, is not on His side but on theirs. Nothing can divorce His heart from the objects of His love, and if He has to act in a way apparently most contradictory to this, faith may yet penetrate the disguise and realize the love unchangeable throughout it all. This is what seems to be the meaning here—the meaning upon His side; the worthy end to which we have been looking.

The prophetic communication to the people closes here for the time. The last act of the judgment which is now about to take place is to be waited for until the message shall come which speaks of its full accomplishment. For

And thou, son of man, shall it not be in the day when I take from them their strength, the joy of their glory, the desire of their eyes, and the burden* of their souls, their sons and their daughters, that in that day he that [u] escapeth shall come unto thee to cause thine ears to hear it? In that day shall thy [v] mouth be opened to him that is escaped, and thou shalt speak, and be no more dumb. So shalt thou be a sign unto them; and they shall know that I am Jehovah.

[u] *cf.* 1 Sam. 4. 12–18. *cf.* Job 1. 15–19.
[v] ch. 3. 26, 27. ch. 29. 21. ch. 33. 22. *cf.* Lk. 1. 20, 64.

* Or, "choice."

nearly a year and a half the siege lasted, and then came the message that the city was taken. In that day, when at last all was over, and no false hope could any longer be maintained, the prophet's mouth would be opened. He would speak, and no more be dumb. This we shall find accordingly in the third division of these prophecies. When judgment has had its way, and God's holiness is fully vindicated, the prophet's mouth is to be opened, not in judgment once more, but in the announcement of blessing to come; of blessing which, in God's unrepenting goodness, is still reserved for them, however much their persistent iniquity has delayed the fulfilment of it.

DIVISION 2 (Chaps. 25–32.)

Judgment is now executed upon Israel, God's special people, who owed their prominence to the privileges granted to them, as the apostle reminds us —"chiefly that unto them were committed the oracles of God." But this of necessity includes others also, in so far as these oracles have reached to others besides Israel. In God's mind His house was to be a house of prayer for all nations; and Israel, with her miraculous history, whose land was on the highway of national intercourse, was to be wisdom's voice heard in the crossways in which God had appointed her stand. Could the nations around be guiltless, then? They were not in the simple ignorance which God could overlook, as the apostle states in his address to the Athenians (Acts xvii. 30). In fact, as we shall see, the message had in measure told upon them, but only to arouse, as to the mass of them, the natural enmity of the human heart to God. Accordingly, if Israel be judged, the nations around her must also be dealt with, and dealt with by the instrument which God uses in the judgment of Israel herself. Thus it is the nations in various degrees of relation to Israel that we find now summoned before the judgment-seat.

Seven of the nations around are thus made special representatives of such responsibility, and their attitude towards the chosen people of God stands at the forefront of the account. In principle we have here what will be repeated in the last days, in the judgment before the Son of Man (Matt. xxv. 31–46, see *Notes*). Ammon we find to be against the sanctuary and the land. Moab, in pride of heart, will see nothing in Israel but a nation like all the rest. Edom and Philistia have nursed a spirit of vengeance against her. Tyre finds her own gain in Israel's fall. Sidon has been a sting and a thorn to her; and Egypt, always a staff of reed. Whatever difference there may be one from another, it is plain that God's word in Israel, which is necessarily for all His creatures, has been disregarded or refused. It may be said, and truly so, that there was not a missionary spirit in Israel, and that as yet there was no proper gospel to

DIVISION 2. (Chaps. xxv.–xxxii.)

The judgment upon the Gentile enemies.

SECTION 1 (Chap. xxv. 1-11).

Ammon-Moab, one in descent, in sin, and retribution. Their land given to the sons of the East.

1 (1-7). Rabbah made a solitude for their joy at the desolation of the temple and the land.

1. AND the [w]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face toward the children of [x]Ammon, and prophesy against them; and say unto the children of Ammon, Hear the word of the Lord Jehovah: Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Because

[w] ch. 24. 1, etc.
[x] ch. 21. 28-32. Jer. 9. 25, 26. Jer. 25. 21. Jer. 49. 1-6. Amos 1. 13-15. Zeph. 2. 8-11. cf. Judg. 11. 4, etc. cf. 1 Sam. 11. 1, etc. cf. 2 Sam. 10. 1, etc.

go out to others. Nevertheless, for the heart that seeks Him, there will be the consciousness that wherever He is to be found, He is the rewarder of those that seek Him out. His gifts, wherever appreciable to the carnal mind, will be easily recognized and sought after. At the time of Israel's deliverance, when judgment passed upon Egypt and upon all her gods, there was such a testimony as could not be mistaken, but it only brought out more fully the fact that there was no heart to respond to it—that their ignorance of God was a willing ignorance. Thus the opposition of surrounding nations to Israel in her after-course was, manifestly, largely due to a claim which these things pressed upon them, and to which they did not yield.

It has been remarked by some that the number of these nations—seven in all—is meant to be significant. Together they present an epitome of the world as a whole, in the different forms which this resistance takes. This surely should cause us to inquire into the particular significance of each of these, and what we are to learn by it; but it has been little inquired into. If we examine it, however, we shall find that what is given us here is not simply the world in Israel's time, but the world in our time also. It is essentially the same—one in spirit all through; and the lessons therefore abide for us to-day; typically they are for spiritual lessons to us, having at the same time a prophetic meaning, manifesting itself everywhere to those who care to see. Let us take them up therefore in this manner, remembering the importance to apprehend God's mind in everything that He may communicate to us, and that true blessing to ourselves is not merely found in what is distinctly addressed to ourselves, but in the apprehension of what God would give us in the consideration of all His ways either in judgment or in grace. His steps everywhere, as we have said before, are always steps of revelation. His *acts* are of significance, as His words are; and here, as elsewhere, all these things happened and were recorded for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Sec. 1.

First of all, the kindred peoples of Ammon and Moab are set before us: one in their origin, according to their well-known shameful history, and one in their sin, as we shall see directly; one also, therefore, in the retribution which comes upon their sin. Yet there is a difference between them, a difference fully recognized in what we find here.

1. Ammon faces us first. In him is marked opposition to the sanctuary and to the land of Israel. But the sanctuary is God's dwelling among men, the expression thus of grace—a grace which has been only more fully made

thou saidst, Aha, [y]against my sanctuary, when it was profaned; and against the [z]land of Israel, when it was made desolate; and against the [a]house of Judah, when they went into captivity: therefore, behold, I will give thee to the [b]children of the East for a possession, and they shall set their [c]encampments in thee, and make their dwellings in thee; they shall [d]eat thy fruits, and they shall drink thy milk. And I will make [e]Rabbah a habitation for camels, and the children of Ammon a couching place for flocks: and ye shall [f]know that I am Jehovah. For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Because thou hast clapped thy hands, and

y vers. 6, 8. ch. 24. 2, etc. *cf.* Prov. 17. 5. *cf.* Lam. 4. 21. *cf.* Ps. 137. 7. *cf.* Obad. 10–14.
z *cf.* ch. 21. 3. *cf.* ch. 6. 2, 3.
a *cf.* ch. 20. 45, 46. *cf.* Dan. 1. 2, etc.
b *cf.* Judg. 6. 3. *cf.* Num. 23. 7. *cf.* Is. 41. 2.
c *cf.* Lk. 19. 43. d *cf.* Lev. 26. 16; *cf.* Deut. 28. 33, 50, 51; *cf.* Is. 1. 7. e ch. 21. 20; *cf.* 2 Sam. 12. 26; *cf.* Is. 17. 2; *cf.* Zeph. 2. 14, 15. f ch. 25. 17, etc.

known in after-times. In Christ we have had the fullest expression of it, dwelling amongst men in such a way as told out His delight in them; and this is a step which He will never take back. In Him, God and man are indissolubly joined, and with Him there is no repentance. The land of Israel is the portion which God in grace has given them, and in which He would make manifest the blessedness of those who draw near to Him. These are lessons which at all times are meant to speak to all; but as Israel on the one hand could take such privileges to glorify themselves with them, and despise others, so on the other hand, men could take them as the mere exhibition of a narrow partiality on God's part, and make Him but as one of the gods of the nations round about.

If in this way we look back at the history of Ammon it will have continual significance for us. Their first father's name, Ben-ammi, "son of my people," is significant, if we think of it as in opposition to the people of God. The land also, as we find in the history of the Judges, he covets for himself, though he can take possession really of nothing, being only the nomad ravager which everything shows him to be. Thus, as others have remarked, we have no cities of the land of Ammon; nothing that indicates the proper occupation of the soil or the care of the agriculturist. Rabbah is his one city, "numerous," as we may read the word, the hold of a motley host, as it were, but the stronghold of a Bedouin race; and the judgment which falls upon it is completely in character with this. In the congruous ways of God, the land of Ammon is given up to similar raiders, "the sons of the East;" the word for east signifying what is opposite to you, but which may easily acquire the character of what we find in the east wind—what is in opposition, or adverse. "The sons of the East," such as the Ishmaelites, were men whose hand was against every one, and every one's hand against them. Rabbah, under them, becomes itself broken up, and is but a habitation for camels, "the burden bearers" of the desert.

If we look further at Ammon, and in the light of his previous history, which has been elsewhere considered, we need have little difficulty in discerning the foe who makes his attack upon the things of primary importance for us; above all, upon the grace of God and the portion which grace has for His people. It is characteristic of the errorist of all time, in whom the power of Satan specially is at work, one who is ever against Christ, and necessarily, therefore, against His people. Nahash, "the serpent," the king of Ammon, is thus the figure of the great adversary of God and man. His attack upon the people in Saul's

stamped with the feet, and [g]rejoiced with all the spite of thy soul against the land of Israel; therefore, behold, I will stretch out my hand upon thee, and will give thee for a [h]spoil* to the nations; and I will [i]cut thee off from the peoples, and I will cause thee to [j]perish out of the countries: I will destroy thee, and thou shalt know that I am Jehovah.

2(8-11): Moab associated with Seir and Ammon; judged according to their associations.

2. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Because that [k]Moab and Seir say, Behold, the house of Judah is [l]like unto all the nations, therefore, behold, I will [m]open the side

* Or, "for food," as good authority gives it.

g ver. 3, etc. ver. 15. h Amos 1. 13-15. i Jer. 49. 2. j *cf.* Num. 24. 18-20. k *cf.* Num. 22. 2-6, etc. Num. 24. 17, 18. *cf.* Ps. 83. 4-8. l Is chs 15,16. Jer. 48. Amos 2. 1-3. Zeph. 2. 8-11. *cf.* ch. 35. m *cf.* Is. 45. 1; *cf.* Jer. 50. 26; *cf.* Zech. 11. 1, 2.

time has been already considered in its place. Heresy, as we know, takes away the portion of God's people, but it is able to do nothing with it. It cannot make the land fruitful in which it is simply a raider, and indeed cannot retain that upon which it may lay hold, as we see in Ammon's previous possession of the land of Sihon which they had lost to the Amorite.

All this is in the deepest way instructive for those who have learned in Scripture history to find not merely that, but prophecy also, bringing out, as prophecy ever does, the mind of God, His judgment of all the things that come into man's mind. It is not the place to dwell upon it here at length, but the history will be found in this way significant throughout, and not merely in a few points which a lively imagination may read things into. The history as such, with all its admonition, is the more confirmed, of course, as we realize it to be an inspired history; with the breath of the Spirit of God in them, the prophets wrote much better than they knew.

2. From Ammon now we turn to Moab, who is associated in the closest way with Ammon, and with Seir also, in whom one of the great lessons that we read is the gravity of the association. In all that is here Moab is scarcely seen alone. Moab is the company-lover, and not careful as to the company he keeps; he is the true child of Lot, as we see at once, if we remember him as with Abraham on the one hand, and on the other off into Sodom, drawn there by what gain he can find in it. Moab is thus the very type of the comfortable worldling who will keep company with the people of God until he can almost persuade himself, as he would others, that he is one with them, while on the other hand he can consort with what is in deadliest opposition to the people of God; he is not able to discern for himself what constitutes the difference.

Thus, "Moab and Seir say, Behold the house of Judah is like unto all the nations." Moab's character is thus as plainly marked as that of Ammon. In contrast with Ammon, he can win his land and have his cities, which are the glory of it. As mentioned specially here, he has a Beth-jeshimoth ("a house of the wastes") to redeem the wastes. He has a Baal-meon, or more fully, Beth-baal-meon ("the house of the possessor of a dwelling"), and he appreciates it, of course. Then he has a Kiriathaim, "a walled double city," in which security and the association which he loves, so favorable for polish and practical activities, are combined. These things stand for principles which men still glory in; and they come so near to what is true and right, that we find them taken up and adopted by Reuben, the typical child of God, as there is, no doubt, such

of Moab from the cities, from his cities which are on his frontiers, the glory of the country, Beth-jeshimoth, Baal-meon, and Kirjathaim, unto the [n]children of the East, with the sons of Ammon; and I will give it them for a [o]possession, that the children of Ammon may not be remembered among the nations: and I will execute judgments upon Moab; and they shall [p]know that I am Jehovah.

SECTION 2 (Chap. xxv. 12–14).

Edom the unbrotherly enemy; the Lord's vengeance for his vengeance.

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Because that [q]Edom hath dealt against the house of Judah by taking [r]vengeance, and hath made himself very guilty, and re-

[n] ver. 4.
[o] *ctr.* Ps. 83. 3-6. *cf.* Is. 23. 15, 16.
[p] ver. 5, etc.
[q] vers. 3, 8, etc. 2 Chr. 28. 17. Ps. 137. 7. Jer. 49. 7, etc.
[r] Amos 1. 11, 12. Obad. 10-16. *cf.* Gen. 27. 41, 42. *ctr.* Rom. 12. 19-21.

transformation in them as that into which faith introduces him (Josh. xiii. 17–20. Compare Numbers xxxii. 38, *Notes*).

In all this, Moab exemplifies typically the professor of religion, but always tending to go easily with the heretic; he makes Christianity itself, as Moab made Judaism, but one of the forms which illustrate the religious element in man. Every one knows what a favorite idea this is coming to be in these last days. Thus Moab, in full company with Ammon in his later history and in his spirit, becomes partaker of his doom. In other places of Scripture they are treated as if one. The company he keeps testifies of the man he is; this is a lesson as to association which is continually needful.*

Sec. 2.

The judgment passes on to Edom, the typical enemy of Israel, who, according to what we have seen of it elsewhere, presents to us the world of the old man, as we may say—the natural fallen man—the most real enemy we have as Christians; none the less so for being akin to us all naturally, even as Edom was the unbrotherly brother of Israel. His enmity is characterized here as revenge. He had, as we know, a quarrel from the beginning—the primal loss of his birthright-blessing, *his* sale of which, for a mess of pottage, has passed out of his memory. Nothing is stated here as to the cause of his enmity, which is indeed inherent in his nature. The old man has had a quarrel with God from the beginning; having turned his back upon Him, and so lost paradise, he counts against God the evils of the place in which he finds himself now, which is indeed very much a wilderness, a "rugged" place, such as Seir was for Edom, according to its name. Yet he has acquired wisdom in it, the wisdom gathered from experience: "Necessity is the mother of invention," as the proverb says; and fallen man has sought out many inventions.

Teman, spoken of here, was noted for the wisdom of its inhabitants. It means "the right hand," which, according to Scripture usage, was the south, and as

* Moab and Ammon, the children of Lot, as pointed out in the text, are by their close relationship to Israel types of profession. From the history in the book of Judges, we would gather that Moab represents profession closely coupled with the lusts of *the flesh*; Ammon with the lusts of *the mind*. The one brought God's people into slavery through their appetite; the other through the darkening of their minds. See Judges 3: 12-30; 11: 4-28. We see the bondage of *Moab* in the worldliness, love of ease and pleasure of the day; of *Ammon* in the infidelity, higher criticism and general unbelief so common.—S. R.

venged himself upon them, therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah; I will also [s]stretch out my hand upon Edom; and will [t]cut off from it man and beast; I will even make it [u]desolate from Teman, even unto Dedan shall they fall by the sword. And I will execute [v]my vengeance upon Edom by the [w]hand of my people Israel; and they shall do in Edom according to mine anger and according to my wrath; and they shall [x]know my vengeance, saith the Lord Jehovah.

[s] vers. 7, 16. Is. 34. 6. Is. 63. 1-6. Lam. 4. 21, 22.
[t] *cf.* Is. 34. 11-15.
[u] *cf.* Jer. 7. 20.
[v] *cf.* Is. 34. 9, 10. Obad. 8, 9.
[w] Jer. 49. 8-13. *cf.* Heb. 10. 30, 31.
[x] *cf.* Gen. 27. 29.

cf. Ps. 83. 9, etc; *cf.* Is. 11. 14; *cf.* Ps. 149. 6-9. *x cf.* Deut. 32. 35, 36. *cf.* Ps. 9. 16.

this, has many significant implications. The right hand is the place of dependence, yet of honor: it was the place of Reuben in the wilderness, and we may remember that he also was a first-born who had lost his birthright place, and yet found blessing in the loss itself. Typically he is the man of faith, essentially dependent, yet finding abundant resources in God who is for him—the refuge always of the destitute. This Reuben thus learns a wisdom of his own, the wisdom of faith; and in this way, as the book of Numbers shows us, falls heir to Sihon, the king of Heshbon, which he possesses and builds up afresh. The story has been told elsewhere. (See *Notes*, Numbers xxxii.) Heshbon means "device," and it is faith that restores the reason in man to its natural, dependent place, to find how much blessing in it! Teman's wisdom is dependent also, necessarily; it is Edomite, not Israelite—a fleshly dependence, therefore. He has no faith in God to keep him steady, to give him fixed points to reason from; he is born into a world where he must receive largely from others, inheriting the thoughts of men, fallible, in fact, often deceived, sinful, and capable of deception. Yet men pride themselves upon this godless wisdom, which so often assumes the name of science, though in its wilful ignorance of God it is necessarily ignorant of the sources and origin of all things.

And here we find another name in the prophecy which seems to have a relation and adds significance to all this. Dedan is given as meaning "progress"—the watchword of the day, we might say; but which, after all, has doubt thrown upon it, in its derivation from a word which means not exactly to go forward, but rather to go softly or slowly. Slow enough indeed has been man's progress through all these centuries of his possession of the earth, although the pace may be quicker now through the multiplication of experiences and experiments which he has been able to make. He has been variously assisted along the road, and by nothing so much as by the divine revelation which has lighted up every place in which it has shone, which he, nevertheless, is seeking to discredit as "unscientific." Discarding this, however, his science must necessarily lose knowledge of the beginning, and is unable to look onward to the end. Put human wisdom right, let it not be esteemed as opposed to faith, let faith not be thought unreasonable, but rather the highest character of reason, and then indeed we might see splendid work, with nature yielding its resources—spite of the fall yielding true blessings, in the bounty of God, which still it witnesses.

Stranger than this unbrotherly strife between Edom and Israel is that which is seen between the men of nature and the men of God. Yet it will continue, if we read Scripture aright, and Ezekiel's prophecy should throw light upon it and make us aware of what is coming. For power will assuredly put down

SECTION 3 (Chap. xxv. 15–17).

The Philistines under ban.

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Because the [y]Philistines have dealt by [z]revenge, and have taken vengeance in spite* of soul, to [a]destroy with perpetual enmity; therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will [b]stretch out my hands upon the Philistines, and I will [c]cut off the Cherethites,† and [d]destroy the remnant of the sea-coast. And I will [e]execute great vengeance upon them with wrathful rebukes; and they shall [f]know that I am Jehovah when I shall lay my vengeance upon them.

y vers. 6, 12. *cf.* 18. 14. 29. 32. *cf.* Jer. ch 47. *cf.* Amos 1. 6–8.
z ver. 12.
a *cf.* Judg. 13 1, etc. *cf.* 1 Sam. 4. 1, etc.
b vers. 7, 13.
c 1 Sam. 30. 14. *cf.* Zeph. 2. 4, 5.
d Jer. 47. 4.
e ver. 11. *cf.* ch. 5. 15.
f vers. 5, 11, etc.

* Or, "contempt." † Lit., "those cut off;" the same root as "I will cut off." They thus answer to their name.

those whom grace has not subdued; and if neither the witness of Scripture nor of nature have a right effect upon this pride of human wisdom, God Himself must interfere. There is nothing left but for Him to come in in necessary judgment. In the case of Edom, as given here, Israel will be God's instrument in this; for we know by the voice of prophecy everywhere that to Israel is given the inheritance of the earth, and through the seed of Abraham alone shall all the families of the earth be blessed. The gospel will not effect what men are looking for from it—though it does take out from the earth a people for heaven; but He to whom will be given the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession, will surely rule over the nations with a rod of iron, and as the vessels of a potter shatter them to pieces. This, and Israel's part in it, we find abundantly in the prophets elsewhere, but it is not the place here to take it up. (See Jer. li. 20, 23; Isa. xi. 14, etc.)

Sec. 3.

The Philistines next come before us, as partakers of this inherent and perpetual enmity of Edom. They were intruders into a land promised to Israel, though with a conviction of their own prior right. They have given their name to the whole land (Palestine, from *Philistia*), which they claim, though they have never been able to take possession of more than its mere lowest border. We have seen them abundantly elsewhere, as typically natural men intruding into spiritual things. As Philistines they are "immigrants," but never Hebrews—that is, "passengers" or "pilgrims." They figure largely in the earlier historical books as far as Samuel, and must have a corresponding importance in their signification for us. As Christians, we should know these Philistines very well. They are seen to-day in what claims to be the Catholic, the Universal Church, but which spiritual judgment recognizes as but Judaism with a thin veil of Christianity drawn over its face, and with the full inheritance of Jewish enmity to the children of the free woman apparent through it. Into this also we cannot enter now, and need not, as any that will can find it fully where the interpretation naturally belongs. (See *Notes* on Gen. xx.; xxvi. 12; Josh. xiii. 2, 3; 1 Sam. xvii., etc.)

We have but one class of these Philistines specially noticed here, the Cherethites, the "cutters off," which have been also elsewhere considered. (See Acts xxvii., *Notes.*) "Cutting off" naturally characterizes asceticism in its

SECTION 4 (Chaps. xxvi.-xxviii).

Tyre and Sidon, the world of mammon under the abasing hand of God.

1 (xxvi.): Tyre to be bare rock.
1 (1-6): The occasion of her fall.

1. [1]And it came to pass in the [g]eleventh year, on the first of the month, that the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, because [h]Tyre hath said [i]against Jerusalem, Aha, she is broken, the gate of the peoples! She is turned unto me: I shall be [j]replenished now that she is laid waste. Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I am [k]against thee, O Tyre,

g ch. 1. 2. ch. 8. 1. ch. 20. 1.
h cf. Ps. 83. 7. Is. 23. Jer. 25. 22. Joel 3. 4. Amos 1. 9, 10. Zech. 9. 2-4.
i ch. 25. 3, etc.
j cf. ch 35. 10.
k cf. ch. 28. 22.

every shape, a remnant merely of the old heathenism, whatever its Christian dress. Externalism is manifest here, even in the most zealous forms of devotion. The Cherethites are taken by many, in certain passages at least, to mean "executioners," and in this form of cutting off, Philistinism has ever distinguished itself; and, doubtless, many who sacrificed in this way the deepest feelings of their nature have thought they were doing God service. But all through, the enmity against Israel (the literal as well as the typical enmity) is apparent in what is here, and God threatens the Cherethites in a special manner: "Behold, I will stretch out my hands upon the Philistines, and I will cut off the Cherethites, and destroy the remnant of the seacoast." Thus Philistia will perish in the day of God, and all that are with God will only rejoice over the judgment.

Sec. 4.

We come now to Tyre, though in Tyre we find no direct enmity to Israel. Tyre, as we know, was in the days of David and Solomon ministering in friendly fashion to the Israelites; and in the day of their prominent blessing, under Christ their King, the daughter of Tyre will be there again with a gift. Tyre thus stands apart from Edom and Philistia. She is a Canaanite, however —of no good significance in this respect. The Canaanite was ever under the doom of being a servant of servants to his brethren, and in his proudest day he is still this. Tyre is essentially the merchantman; his professed object even is to serve. No doubt his aim is first of all to serve himself. He has not the true spirit of service for God, but finds in the necessity of man the opportunity for his own gain, and this is what we find as to the cause of his judgment here. Jerusalem has been judged—Jerusalem, in many ways a centre of attraction for the people around, "the gate of the peoples," as Tyre calls her. The rejoicing at her fall is Canaanite enough. She says against Jerusalem: "Aha, she is broken, the gate of the peoples; she is turned unto me. I shall be replenished now that she is laid waste." How naturally we understand it, alas! How natural it is! How common is such rejoicing on the part of merchantmen at all times! The habitual acquirement of riches from the need of others hardens the heart, there is little need to say; and thus with Tyre here: and for this she is judged. As we plainly see, Tyre is the world of mammon, and we need not wonder at the large place it has in Ezekiel's prophecy.

1. Tyre means "a rock." This island city was built upon a rock, and what it needed for its peculiar purposes was not productive power in the place it occupied, but a suitable gathering point where the products of other parts might come and be exchanged. In the immensity of its resources, Tyre might indeed look upon itself as a rock that could not be shaken. The greater the necessities of others, the more the streams of supplies from all quarters ministered to it.

and will cause [i] many nations to come up against thee, as the [m] sea causeth its waves to come up. And they shall [n] destroy the walls of Tyre, and break down her towers; I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her a [o] bare rock. She shall be a place for the [p] spreading of nets in the midst of the sea; for I have spoken it, saith the Lord Jehovah; and she shall become a [q] spoil for the nations. And her [r] daughters that are in the field shall be slain by the sword; and they shall [s] know that I am Jehovah.

i cf. Mic. 4. 11. cf. Zech. 14. 2.
m cf. Jer. 6. 23. cf. Rev. 13. 1 with Rev. 17. 15.
n ver. 9. Is. 23. 11.
o cf. ch. 24. 7, 8. cf. Lk. 19. 44.
p ver. 14.
q ch. 25. 7.
cf. ch. 29. 18, 19. *r* ver. 8; cf. Jer. 49. 2. *s* ch. 25. 17, etc.

But God takes up its character in result, and pronounces that it *shall* be a rock—a rock and nothing more—"a bare rock," or "cliff," as the word which He uses means. The word for "bare," means rather, "dry," dried by the sun, in fact; barren enough, surely, in the idea of it, for few things can dry as the sun.

The point for us is that which we find in the first ancestor of all these Canaanites, who were Hamites; and Ham is "the sun-dried one." He is what man fallen from God and in conflict with Him necessarily is, darkened by the light itself. And this is the nature of all heathenism; not, as people imagine, a condition in which men are groping after God, but on the contrary, one in which they are doing their best to *forget* God, and turn away from Him. God did not leave man His creature without the primitive knowledge of Himself; and there is in him still a witness to God, however perverted. But if he turns from the *true* God, he must have a God of his own—make it out of a beast, or fashion it out of stone with a chisel, or hew down a tree, and fashion into some grotesque shape what he reserved from the fire. As the sun can darken, so it can dry. God's blessings, which all surrounding nature furnishes to man, are the very things which he takes to dry himself up into a being divested of every human sympathy. Not only Godward, but manward also, he thus becomes parched and barren. This was the process that was going on in Tyre: the process that makes men misers or usurers, and sometimes prodigals also for the *luxury* of prodigality—drawing remorselessly from others the means which they scatter again with lavish hands. This is what characterized Tyre, which God decrees shall in the end be just what it has made itself, a sun-dry cliff; or, as He puts it otherwise, a mere place of the spreading of nets; the device of poverty to lay hold upon the living being of which it makes merchandise.

[1] The date of the prophecy is in the eleventh year of Jehoiachin's captivity, on the first of the month; the month itself, if we have the true text here, not being given. What can we make of this eleventh year? Is it characterized by not being yet the full twelve, which speaks of the manifest government of God that shall be? In fact, all this judgment of which Ezekiel speaks, falls short of the full end which prophecy for the most part contemplates, though here assuredly there is the shadow of this. The blow has fallen upon Jerusalem, and Tyre is quite ready to take advantage of it. Proud of her position and counting upon her many sources of strength, she can sit apart, hoping to profit by that which she does not dread. But, as God declares to her, it is but a vain dream. The many nations whom she has seen constantly coming to *replenish* her, are now come up *against* her with the resistless force of the waves of the sea, to overtop her defences, destroy her walls, and break down her towers. She that hath so often profited by the spoil of the nations, shall be in turn a spoil for the

[2] (7 14): The instrument of destruction.

[2] For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will [f]bring from the north, against Tyre, Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, the king of kings, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and an assemblage and much people. He shall [u]slay with the sword thy daughters in the field; and he shall make [v]forts against thee, and cast up a mound against thee, and raise up the buckler against thee; and he shall set his [w]battering engines against thy walls, and with his weapons shall he break down thy towers. By reason of the [x]abundance of his horses their dust shall cover thee; thy walls shall [y]shake at the noise of the horsemen, and of the wheels and of the chariots, when he shall enter through thy gates as one entereth into a city wherein a breach is made. With the [z]hoofs of his horses shall he tread down all thy streets; he shall [a]slay thy people with the sword, and the [b]pillars of thy strength shall go down to the ground. And they shall make a [c]spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy wares; and they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy [d]pleasant houses; and they shall [e]lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the waters. And I will

f ch. 28. 7. ch. 29. 18. 20. cf. ch. 30. 10, 11. cf. ch. 32. 11, 12. cf. Jer. 27. 6–8.
u ver. 6.
v cf. ch. 21. 22.
w cf. Jer. 32. 24.
x cf. Jer. 47. 3.
y cf. ver. 15. cf. Nah. 2. 3.
z Is. 5. 28. cf. Hab. 1. 8.
a ver. 6.
b cf. Is. 26. 5.
c ver. 5. ch. 27. 3, etc.
d cf. Is. 32. 13, etc. cf. Amos 5. 11.
e cf. Is. 13. 11. cf. Is. 23. 12.

nations; and the judgment of God, carrying further the judgment of man, as her history has fully shown, declares itself in that which has been fully accomplished: "I will scrape her dust from her, and make her a bare rock. She shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea; for I have spoken it, saith the Lord Jehovah." And her doom is to be the declaration of Jehovah's name—the Name which she has despised.

[2] In the first place the instrument of Tyre's destruction is declared to be Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon; but we must not confound with this the full end which Jehovah Himself makes of her, as in the 14th verse. The siege by Nebuchadrezzar was the beginning of the end. There was a revival after this, however, and another siege by the Grecian king Alexander. This brought down her strength effectually, although the remnant of a city remained for a long time, more and more wasting and drying up until the end was reached, when, as we see to-day, nothing but a bare rock was left, used for the spreading of nets only. Nebuchadrezzar is here, however, as all through this part of Ezekiel, the special instrument of the divine judgment.

The name is striking enough in connection with his own history, meaning "the god Nebo's prince;" Nebo being worshiped in Babylon as the interpreter of the gods—answering to the Greek Mercury. The word Nebo is but a form of the Hebrew *nabi*, "the prophet," and this strikingly connects with the heathen wise men's utter failure to interpret to Nebuchadrezzar the divinely-sent dream which Daniel alone was able to make known. Thus the discredit of Nebo was complete, and this witness of God to Nebuchadrezzar was natural and necessary for one whom God was taking up, in His dealings with the nations around, to make him himself the interpreter of the divine mind as to them; thus out of the dark north was the light to break out, but only as the flash from the storm-cloud. The proper meaning of divine revelation could not be given through him, as is plain; it belonged rather to those who were now under the rod for

cause the [e]noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard. And I will make thee a [g]bare rock; thou shalt be a place for the spreading of nets; thou shalt be [h]built no more: for I Jehovah have spoken it, saith the Lord Jehovah.

3 (15, 21): Realizations at the fall of Tyre.

[3] Thus saith the Lord Jehovah to Tyre: Shall not the isles [i]shake at the sound of thy fall when the wounded groan, when the slaughter is made in the midst of thee? And all the [j]princes of the sea shall come down from their thrones, and lay aside their robes, and put off their broidered garments: they shall [k]clothe themselves with trembling, they shall sit upon the ground, and shall tremble [every] moment, and be astonished at thee. And they shall take up a [l]lamentation for thee, and say to thee, How art thou destroyed that wast [m]inhabited from the seas, the [n]renowned city, which wast strong in the sea, she and her inhabitants, who caused their [o]terror to be on all that haunt it! Now shall the isles tremble in the day of thy fall; yea, the isles that are in the sea shall be troubled at thy departure. For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: When I shall make thee a [p]desolate city like the cities that are not inhabited; when I shall bring up the deep upon thee, and the great [q]waters shall cover thee, then will I bring thee down with them that go down to the [r]pit, to the people of old time, and will make thee to dwell in the lower parts of the earth, in places desolate of old,* with them that go down to the pit, that thou be not inhabited; and I will set [s]glory in the land of the living. And I will make thee a terror, and thou

* Or, "like places long desolate."

e *cf.* Is.14.11. *cf.* Jer 7.34. *cf.* Jer.16.9 *cf.* Hos 2.11.
g ver. 4. *cf.* Mt. 11. 20-23.
h *cf.* Mal.1.4.
i ver. 18. ch 27.28,35. ch. 31. 16. ch. 32. 10.
j ch.27.29-36 Is. 14. 9, etc.
k *cf.* Ps. 132. 18. *cf.* Ex. 15. 14 16.
l *cf.* Rev. 18. 11, 19.
m *cf.* Rev.18. 19. ch. 27. 25. *etc.* Is. 60. 5.
n ch. 27. 3. *cf.* Is. 23. 4, 5, 8.
o *cf.* ch.32.27.
p ver. 12, etc. *etc.* Is. 62. 11, 12.
q ver. 3.
r ch.32.18-32. *cf.* Lk.10.15.
s *cf.* ch. 28. 25, 26 with Is. 4. 5. *cf.* ch. 39. 25-29.

their sins, yet the recipients of promises which should be, and shall be, fulfilled when Babylon and all that has succeeded it should have passed away.

In the meantime no effectual resistance was possible; it only rendered the destruction of those that opposed themselves more complete. As the prophet speaks here, the breach in Tyre had already been made for him by their sins. Her stones, her timber and her dust were now to be laid in the midst of the waters; the noise of her songs was to cease, and all her pomp and glory were to perish together. As already said, however, the complete end would wait for many generations.

[3] The lessons of such a fall need hardly be dwelt upon. They are felt instinctively by all that are in the presence of them, while, as unwelcome, they are dismissed as quickly as possible. The lessons of God's school are too humiliating to man to be welcomed by him. He may perforce accept the sentence of condemnation upon himself, and the passing away of all the false glory which he would fain make true, but cannot. The sentence of God is upon it; but, as He says here, that He may set true glory in the land of the living. The earth is at present little like this; it is rather the sepulchre of the dead; what man conceives as glory is largely that of those who have been in an eminent way the

2 (xxvii.): Its means of revenue and dissolution.
1 (1–11): Its sources of greatness.

shalt be no more; and thou shalt be [t]sought for, and shalt never be found again forever, saith the Lord Jehovah.

2. [1]And the [u]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying: And thou, son of man, take up a [v]lamentation for Tyre, and say unto Tyre: O thou that dwellest at

[t] ch. 27. 36. ch. 28. 19.
[u] ch. 26. 1, etc.
[v] ver. 32. ch. 26. 17. cf. Amos 5. 1.

destroyers of mankind. Blessed be God, all this has indeed to pass away; that which can be shaken is to be removed, in order that that which cannot be shaken may remain, and our kingdom is in that which cannot be shaken.

2. We have now an analysis of all the sources of greatness such as we see in Tyre, together with the announcement of its bereavement and desolation; in fact, its own rowers bringing it into the deep waters in which it is to find shipwreck. It is a picture which God has put before us in much detail, and had we eyes to see more into it, we should assuredly realize its meaning for ourselves; for while Tyre itself has passed away, no one can doubt that it has had many successors in the generations following, and that to-day the world is largely characterized by what we find in it. There are certain characteristics about it also which naturally enlist men's sympathies. Tyre was not a great conqueror as Assyria or Babylon. It does not express to us the despotic tyranny of man over man which we see so much of in the history of the world. The activities that we find in it have very much the character of ministry to the need of others; they are employed in making the best of all man's resources and spreading abroad everywhere the products of his hands and of his intellect. The merchants are in our day more and more realized as the princes of the earth, and the rule of commerce is looked at very much as meaning the rule of civilization and the elevation of the nations generally to more equality, causing the brotherhood of man to be more realized in that which gives each his place in service to the common good. It does not take deep looking into it to realize that it is self-interest which stirs everywhere in it, a motive which is at once intensely powerful and readily communicating itself also to others. Persuade a man that it is his own interest that you are seeking—how readily in general will he be accessible to such a motive! And in this sense only it is a civilizer as prompting men to follow that which is to be personal gain, and thus spreading abroad a civilization which, however, has been reached in another way. And the gain must be of a sort which the lowest can realize. However man may value intellect, with the mass, appeals to the intellect in any other way than personal gain have very little power. They are comparatively few who are much moved by intellectual appeals, save as it can be shown that it may be made to minister to the gratification of the lower senses. Religion again is that which it is evident should be most powerful in its appeal to man; and it is true that almost everywhere man's conscience responds to it. You do not find in the masses the casting off of God, but, on the other hand, you do not find in the masses anything like a spirit of real obedience to Him. He will make his bow, and go his own way; or he will give his money, and pay a good price to be allowed to do so; but a real religious nation has yet to be found.

Yet, after all, in the revelation of God to man's conscience is found the true springs of power for the proper development of man as man, such as is alone worth speaking of as civilization. Here, mind and heart go together, and under its influence is developed a man, not a monster. Here the mind of man

fully wakes up, as we may see if we will, in the track of light which the Bible leaves behind it wherever it has been. What would not we attain were we only true with the truth and to Him who gave it to us! But we are not, alas! The children of light are everywhere but a small minority; and more than this, alas, as we have divine authority for saying, "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." These can concentrate themselves without distraction upon objects which appeal to them in the deepest way, and the power of worldly interests over the people of God themselves may well assure us, if we need any assurance, of what they must be to those with whom they are their all. The light once introduced will be true to its own nature; and as all the fruits of the earth develop only under the light of heaven, so the mind of man awakened by the truth manifests its God-given power in a way which wakes up others, who nevertheless are not themselves truly under its influence. These can discern just so much as serves their worldly interests, and even pursue further in this direction what those truly wiser let slip in mere carelessness out of their hands. And thus it is that unbelief can assert to-day that natural science belongs to it, while it gives at the same time that peculiar twist which turns it into the enemy of the truth itself.

So Christianity has manifested itself in such a way that to-day the great powers of the earth have become "Christian nations." Yet this must be read in another way that it may be seen in its rightful aspect. Alas, we must say, that the "Christian" powers have become powers of *the earth*. Everywhere, what we see is, that instead of the grace which is really the Christian spirit—the grace which grace has taught and which makes gracious, the spirit of self-sacrifice for others, such as the cross is the great example of—there is in fact in every kingdom of the earth to-day the spirit of gain, the opposite of self-sacrifice, everywhere dominant. Men may talk of altruism in the same way as heathen philosophers themselves could read excellent moral lessons to their pupils, but if you expect the practice you must be sanguine indeed. We must expect nothing of this sort in the mass until Christ comes, or that any other principle will rule the world save the Canaanitish principle which is exemplified here in Tyre—of selfish gain. No doubt, with it all, a certain progress results; certain fruits even of Christianity itself, though plucked half-ripened from that which they grew upon, are made available to a continually increasing number, while the fruits of intellect merely are still more made to serve, as they are amply able to serve, the lust of acquirement. The way in which the Spirit of God in Ezekiel dwells upon all this in the prophecy before us, may assure us of what interest it should have for us in following it out; yet how little has been the interest! Commentators are mostly content to point out what has been plain enough upon the surface, how all the treasures of the earth are heaped up in Tyre, and how all the nations around are made to minister to her; little more indeed do they give us except scraps of geography and history, which may be good enough for the historian, but which for the prophet, we may be sure, could have little that was attractive. What we do find here is certainly a moral and spiritual analysis of what so much constitutes the world of to-day, the world of mammon; and if we profit rightly by it, we must look into our own hearts and search out what is there, for the lusts of the flesh are native to us, alas, and "all that is in the world," as the apostle tells us, is "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; "fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind."

the [w]entry of the sea, trafficker with the peoples in [x]many isles, thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Thou hast said, O Tyre, I am [y]perfect in beauty. Thy borders are in the [z]heart of the seas, thy builders have perfected thy beauty. Of cypresses* of [a]Senir they have made all thy planks; [b]cedars from Lebanon have they taken to make masts for thee. Of the

* The ordinary word for firs, but which would include the cypress; for which Senir was noted (Sirach 24:13).

w ch. 26. 17. Is. 23. 2.
x vers. 12, etc. Is. 23. 8, 11. *cf.* Rev. 18. 3, etc.
y vers. 4, 10, 11. *cf.* ch. 28. 12. *ctr.* Ps. 50. 2. *cf.* Is. 23. 9.
z ch. 26. 5.
a *cf.* Deut. 3. 9.
b *cf.* 1 Ki. 5. 1, 6; *cf.* Ps. 104. 16.

[1] The ship is used allegorically here as picturing Tyre for us, a most natural figure, which we use still when we speak of the "ship of state," thinking in this of the needed power and skill that must be put forth in human effort to make it prosper, to catch favoring winds and avoid shoals and rocks. We should surely expect to find this vividly pictured here, and the moral character of things brought out; this state in Tyre, being a commercial one, having its true image, therefore, in every vessel sailing from its port. We may say that man has been working at this ship ever since, doing his best to perfect its beauty; and how attractive it may be we realize in the exhibitions which it is continually affording us of all the productions of nature and of man which it brings together, and, as it were, embodies in itself the restless, ever-craving spirit of man, the untiring energy which works in him.

We have the materials of the vessel first, from which we go on to see the character of the crew that mans it; then its merchandise, the prizes which it holds up to others and for which it works itself.

We have first the material of the vessel's frame-work: "Of cypresses of Senir they have made all thy planks. Cedars from Lebanon have they taken to make masts for thee." The word for "cypresses" is not confined to what we now call cypress; it would apply to the whole fir tribe to which the cypresses belong, but Senir or Hermon was in fact renowned for these (Sirach xxiv. 13), and their wood was of the best for the kind of work contemplated here. Hermon designated here by its Amorite name, means, as we have seen elsewhere, "the ban," the exterminating curse upon evil. It was the mountain which, with its white dome, dominated the land of Israel, and from which, in most expressive connection, the river Jordan, the river of death, ran down to the sea of judgment, the salt sea. It was that which marked out the tenure upon which Israel held the land, as seen in the extermination of the Canaanite out of it, which was the preservation of that awful purity of which its dome, rising like a great white throne above all else, naturally spoke. Notable it seems that Senir, the Amorite name, should be used here instead of Hermon. Senir is said to mean "cuirass," "coat of mail," from *senar*, "to clang, clatter," a notable comment, as it seems, of the Amorite talker upon that Israelitish ban. Senir, then, furnishes the funereal cypress as material for the ship of Tyre. No wonder if the issue is a funeral!

Lebanon, which means "white," is the *range* of which Hermon is the southern point; the same image would suggest the same solemn thought. This furnishes the cedar-masts upon which is hoisted the sail to carry the ship of commerce forward in its career. From Bashan come the oars, as the propelling force which alone could be duly trusted in those days: a strength not derived from God, but from native energy—"well fed," as was proverbial of that which came

[c] oaks of Bashan have they made thine oars; they made thy rudder of [d] ivory inlaid in pine* from the isles of Chittim. Of fine linen with broidered work from [e] Egypt was thy sail†, to serve thee for an [f] ensign;

* A peculiar and difficult sentence: hatches, deck, benches, have all been suggested instead of rudder; and cedar or boxwood instead of pine. † Or, "was spread forth."

[c] *cf.* Is. 2. 13. *cf.* Zech. 11. 2.
[d] *cf.* Gen. 10. 4. *cf.* 1 Ki. 10. 18. ver. 15.
[e] 1 Ki. 10. 28. *cf.* Is. 19. 9.
[f] *cf.* Ps 74. 4. *etc.* Is 59.19.

from Bashan. We need not wonder to find human energy emphasized in this way, almost at the outset.

After the oars comes the rudder, as the word probably means, though there is a doubt about it; but we would not expect it to be left out, as otherwise must be the case. The steering of a vessel is surely of the first importance; it must have lessons for us if lessons there be everywhere here. The word used, however, is *keresh*, "planking." A specific word for "rudder" there does not seem to be in the Hebrew. It is taken here collectively by most, perhaps, either for the benches for the rowers, or for the deck; but, in connection with what has immediately preceded it, this view would have little apparent significance. The suggestion that it is the thick plankwork which forms the scaffold of the mast, argues no better for our purpose. Meyer suggests "table-work, wainscoting for the laying out of the ship." It is Rashi who suggests "the helm," which, says Schroeder, "recommends itself more than the others, on account of its importance for the vessel and its suitableness in respect to the adorning that follows." There is some difficulty also in connection with this, but it is generally taken as meaning that it was of ivory inlaid in pine, box-wood, or cedar. That some kind of wood is intended, is obvious, and the word for it seems to intimate what is straight, as pine or cedar would be. It being from the isles of Chittim also, that is, from Cyprus, reminds us that the Cyprian pines were especially noted as ship-building material.

All this is serviceable for us, mainly in ascertaining, if we may, the spiritual significance; and if Chittim be Cyprus, as is generally allowed, then it stands for all that is fair and lovely in nature, the sweet influences which are apt to rule the heart, rigorously enough it may be, and be to it what Chittim means, "the breakers down," destroying the true response of the heart to Him from whom all natural blessings come. But how such influences do guide, in one way or another, the course of the ship of commerce, while there are master-needs indeed which must be met, and which must in a certain sense control. Yet how much there is of ministry to *pleasure* merely, and to luxury! How much of all the material of trade goes to this end! And the guidance of the ship must be accordingly.*

Next, we have either the sail or ensign, or most probably the sail which is at the same time the ensign; and this gives the fullest moral significance. Egypt provides for this the fine linen, which everywhere speaks of practical righteousness—necessarily here as the *world* recognizes it; while it is ostentatiously put forth as "embroidered," to attract the eye. Your personal interests, it would say, are to be cared for with all uprightness, and here is something quite need-

* This influence of the pleasant, gentle and soft as a guide, is seen in the loosing of the ship in which Paul was carried as a prisoner to Rome, from Fair Havens, when "the *south wind blew softly*" (Acts 27: 8, etc.). Such a "rudder" or guide resulted in the disastrous voyage and shipwreck of the ecclesiastical vessel of which the ship was a type.—S. R.

blue and purple from the isles of [g]Elishah was thine awning. The inhabitants of [h]Zidon and [i]Arvad were thy rowers; thy [j]wise men, O Tyre, were in thee, they were thy pilots. The elders of [k]Gebal and the wise men thereof were repairing thy leaks; all the [l]ships of the sea with their mariners were in thee to barter with thee. [m]Persia and Lud and Phut were in thine

g *cf.* 1 Chr. 1. 7.
h *cf.* Gen. 10. 15. *cf.* ch. 28 21.
i *cf.* Gen. 10. 18. ver. 11.
j *cf.* 1 Ki 5. 6. *cf.* 1 Ki 9. 27.
k Ps. 83. 7.
l *cf.* Rev. 18. 19. m ch. 38. 5; ch. 30. 5; *cf.* Gen. 10. 6; *cf.* Is. 66. 19.

ful to enable the vessel at the same time to catch the wind and minister to its own. Is it not, in fact, for its own interests to serve yourself? How can you sever these? Thus you have the best possible security that your interests will be served. This interweaving of argument is often very elaborate, as we know.

Last of all here the good ship needs a covering, and the idea is, to protect it from the sun. The isles of Elishah furnish this in the purple colors, which speak of earthly dominion, whether this may refer to the powers of the world, whose protection she may fairly claim as servant to all their interests, or whether it refer to the claim of dominion on her own part, her power rooting itself so firmly as it does in the interests of the many. In the language of the day, she is abundantly insured in this way; but, whether it be the men or the measures by which she insures herself, how much its motto finds adoption in the principle held secretly, if not openly, that "God has forgotten." This seems to be the meaning of Elishah here; and is not this the secret of the abundant care which everywhere the world must take of itself?—that which the serpent taught man in Eden; and the question as to God once raised, man's hand is immediately lifted to pluck for himself the fruit, though forbidden. That "God helps those who help themselves" means, in the ear of faith, that God can be trusted no more.

Next comes the manning of the vessel, in which, significantly, Zidon, "the taker of prey," and Arvad, "the runner loose," are the rowers. She will often have to trust this human energy and skill when the winds of heaven will do nothing for her. The motives and the character indicated do not commend themselves to heaven; so we need not wonder. The master-mind, the controlling power is that of Tyre herself. We have the repairers next; very necessary indeed when human machinery is so constantly wearing out. These are the elders of Gebal, from a word which means "to plait," "combine," "twist together." Plenty of this work has to be done for the stopping of leaks and much else in this way. Finally, we see in this ship of trade how common interests, as it is boasted, bring the world together. "All the ships of the sea" are in her, as if all were one vessel to serve her purposes and to carry on the civilization of the world upon the ground of the common brotherhood of man and the conservation of the universal good.

Yet the vessel of commerce must be prepared for the conflict also, and it has many a battle to fight. And we see her armament for this: First of all, Pharas (Persia), "division," reminding us of the old motto, "Divide and conquer"—a very reliable one, surely. Next we have Lud (not the Shemite of Gen. x. 22, but the Mizraimite or Egyptian of Gen. x. 13), which may mean, as it is taken to mean, "strife." Thus if Pharas speaks of manœuvering and diplomacy, Lud speaks of preparation for more open war; while Put (or Phut) is given either as "trampling down," or else "despising," or "rejection." One may be tempted to think here of the crowding out of all separate interests of those who

army, thy men of war: they [n]hanged the shield and helmet in thee; they gave thee splendor. The children of [o]Arvad with thine army were upon thy walls round about, and the Gammadim were on thy towers: they hanged their shields upon thy walls round about, they perfected thy beauty.

n ver. 11. *cf.* 1 Ki. 10. 16, 17. *cf.* 2 Chron. 12. 9-11.
o ver. 8.

do not belong to the combination which trade favors and which favors trade, a thing for which, in its extreme form, "boycotting" is the name to-day. Then the sons of Arvad are seen upon the walls round about, a careless and unscrupulous crowd, while the Gammadim, who are in her towers, may be "guards," as the Septuagint calls them, and thus speak of the constant spirit of watchfulness which in all this and at all times has to be maintained. This would give a consistent sense, but there are other conjectures which seem only that.

[2] Now, as to the merchandise. What can be said of it for edification, which all Scripture is to serve? Is it a mere catalogue, an inventory of where, as a matter of history, she found the goods with which she traded, and of the goods themselves? Little else seems ever to have been made of it, but are we not warranted to seek for something more? Certainly the difficulties are greater here than elsewhere, and any interpretation that may be proffered will doubtless be stamped as visionary by the many who shrink from allegory with the aversion that Israel themselves had to Ezekiel's parables. Yet if the choice is to be between an absolute giving up of such scriptures as these, or seeking in them what we are positively assured all Scripture has (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17), what is the position for faith to take? Plenty of difficulties there are, of course. What we have here is, upon the surface, just a catalogue of lands or peoples with their produce with which they traded, and there seems no *moral* element in them, nor in the fact of the trading either. We are indeed to buy the truth and not to sell it; but this is not in question here. The wares embraced otherwise all kinds of material; for what is there a man will not sell who will sell his soul to satisfy the craving of a moment? To how much of all this should we be able to assign a spiritual meaning that shall stand the test of sober, judicial reflection? And if mistakes are too many or too serious, will it not cast doubt upon the whole inquiry? Yet, with all this, it would seem to some less serious than to own that in the word of God there are large portions here and there to which no spiritual meaning can be assigned—portions which might vanish entirely from the pages they occupy, and Scripture be rather bettered for their absence. If they are *not* "for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," then why should they be found in the word of God at all?—which is not a mere history, but *God's word*, to which we must neither add, nor diminish from it.

Coming now to consider the commerce of Tyre and what it represents for us, we find Tarshish coming first and last in the list, apparently giving character to the whole. It is important therefore to know just what Tarshish means. The derivation is mostly understood to be from *rashash*, "to break down," or if in the *hiphil*, "to cause to break down;" but the word is usually taken as a noun, and as meaning "fortress," which involves another and apparently altogether conjectural meaning of *rashash*. The "breaker down" seems also to give nothing that plainly connects with what we have here. On the other hand, Tarshish may be a compound word, the first syllable from the verb *tur*, "to go

2 (12-25): Its commercial activity.

2 [p] Tarshish traded with thee by reason of the abundance of all kinds of riches: with [q] silver, iron, tin, and lead, they traded for thy wares. [r] Javan, [s] Tubal and

p ch. 38. 13. *cf.* 1 Ki. 10. 22, etc.
q *cf.* Is. 60. 9. *cf.* Jer 10. 9.
r Gen. 10. 2, 4; *cf.* Dan. 8. 21. s *cf.* ch. 32. 26; *cf.* ch. 38. 2, 3.

about," and thus "to explore," "search out," or even sometimes "to traffic." The second syllable may then be *shesh*, which means "white marble" or "white linen," the common element of which plainly is "white," or as it is suggested, "shining;" and here we find what at first sight seems singularly in keeping with all that is before us.

Tarshish was the second son of Javan, as Javan was the fourth son of Japheth, the typical Gentile by whose seed the isles of the Gentiles were divided. Javan is thus in character the wanderer from God, as the Gentile plainly was. There is not in him the positive opposition that we find in the sons of Ham, and in Noah's prophecy the two are widely distinguished in God's ways of dealing with them. "God will make room for Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem"—a partaker of the revelation of which Shem is the depositary. But in the meanwhile he is away from God, busy and making room for himself. He spreads abroad unfettered; but Javan, whose name in its root-meaning gives the thought of "boiling," "bubbling," or "fermentation," seems akin to *yayin*, "wine." Greece,* which Javan confessedly represents, was the land of wine, given over to the worship of Bacchus; and in its light-heartedness, its poetry, and even its philosophy, bears witness of a kind of intoxication of spirit which would answer to the name.

Javan's first-born is Elishah, "God has forgotten," which is always the thought in a soul which has forgotten Him. His second son is Tarshish; and, according to what has been already said as to the derivation, naturally speaks of one who goes out from the presence of God, a seeker on his own account, attracted by everything that is shining or conspicuous. He is seeking to satisfy himself with that which never satisfied any; but thus we can understand the energy that he puts into it, so that he is the ideal explorer, and the riches of the earth become his own. He has, as we see here, silver, the current money of the merchant; iron, the great material for manufacturing implements, and we have had enough talk about "the iron age," to recognize what it stands for. Then he has tin, which is literally "alloy," and which, however serviceable for men's ends, is in Scripture described as impurity, as much that seems very serviceable surely is. Lastly we have lead, which in Scripture scarcely stands for anything but dross or weight. There is no gold in this catalogue; but, on the other hand, while not noticed in this connection, there is in Tarshish a precious stone which we have had before us as the topaz, and which gives a similitude for the wheels of the cherubic vision. That it should not be noticed in this connection seems striking here. It is not part of his merchandise. Is it not rather a witness from God to himself? For with all his eager hunt after something that will satisfy, the stamp of vanity is upon it all, as the topaz wheel bears witness. How plain indeed the moral, and how significant, even, that it should be omitted here! Just the one thing, one might say, omitted from the inventory of the wealth of Tarshish. But Tarshish is the foremost contributor to Tyre's commerce, and gives, as what is introductory mostly does in Scripture, the character of all that follows. Here is the restless spirit of one

* Literally, "*Ionia*."—S. R.

Meshech, they were thy traffickers: they bartered with thee the [f]persons of men* and vessels of bronze. They of the house of [u]Togarmah traded for thy wares with [v]horses and steeds† and mules. The sons of [w]Dedan were thy traffickers: many [x]isles were the mart of thy hand: they brought thee in exchange‡ horns of [y]ivory and ebony. [z]Syria was thy merchant for the multitude of thy handiworks:§ they traded for thy wares with [a]carbuncles, purple, and broidered work, and fine linen, and coral,‖ and rubies. [b]Judah

* Lit., "Soul of man." † Or, "riders." ‡ Or, "As a present."
§ Lit., "works." ‖ Lit., "Precious things."

f cf. Rev. 18. 13. cf. Joel 3. 3.
u Gen. 10. 3. ch. 38. 6.
v cf. Is. 31. 1, etc.
w ver. 20. Gen. 10. 7. Gen. 25. 3. Jer. 49. 8.
x cf. Is. 60. 9.
y 1 Ki. 10. 22. cf. Rev. 18. 12.
z Gen. 10. 22. cf. Gen. 28. 5.
a cf. ch. 28. 13.
b cf. Acts 12. 20.

adrift from God—a prodigal. How often are "the substantial gains of commerce," as they are called, but prodigal wasting of the Father's goods!

We have Javan next, with Tubal and Meshech, who belong to the same order, and are indeed brethren. Tubal means "issue." Tubal-Cain is but another Cain, a continuation of the one who first sought to take possession of the earth and build his city there. We may remember Tubal-Cain as the instructor of every artificer in brass and iron, who thus contributes to the civilization of the city which Cain has built. A similar thought we have in Ahab, whose name means "brother of his father," again one in whom heredity clearly holds its place and shows its full value. Thus Tubal here. Meshech, elsewhere associated with him in Scripture, means "a drawing out," as of seed from the basket of the sower; hence, "a sowing." In connection, the two together look backward and forward; they tell—how surely!—as the beginning so shall be the end. Not that there is not progress; there truly is; but progress in this way, and in fallen man, is scarcely to be boasted in. So we find these three sellers here with their vessels of brass and human chattels also. We shall see how prominent these are in the great confederacy against Jehovah and Israel of which Ezekiel speaks later.

We have next Togarmah, which no doubt is Armenia, the third son of Gomer, Ashkenaz and Riphath being the other two. None of the three is known as to its derivation, and only Togarmah as the people for whom it stands. This vagueness makes all else about it doubtful for our purpose.

Next we have the sons of Dedan, which, if it has the meaning we have before ascribed to it, is of that "progress," such as it is, which the world can show. It is remarkable that what they trade in is in general what is used for purposes of veneer—an outside which does not truly indicate what is beneath. How much of what is called education goes for this, and how much of what is counted civilization consists in it!

Next we have Aram, child of Shem though he is, but fallen from the blessedness of this, and who, instead of speaking of Him whom God constantly exalts, and finding his own exaltation in Him, has learned the fatal habit of self-exaltation (see Judges iii. 8, *Notes*); and who, enriched with many a precious thing from the divine goodness, would fain exchange them for Tyre's manufactured articles. *Nophek*, here, from a word which means "to blow up a fire," is thought to mean a precious stone of a glowing, ruddy hue, probably a carbuncle; thus it may speak of what One who suffered in the fire has produced in glory to God.

and the land of Israel, they were thy traffickers: they bartered with thee [c]wheat of Minnith, and sweet cakes, and [d]honey, and oil, and balm. [e]Damascus dealt with thee because of the multitude of thy handiworks,* by reason of the abundance of all kinds of riches, with [f]wine of Helbon, and white wool. Vedan and Javan of Uzal traded for thy wares with wrought iron; [g]cassia and calamus were among thy merchandise. Dedan was thy trafficker in [h]coverings spread

c *cf.* Deut. 8. 8.
d *cf.* Ex. 3. 8.
e Gen. 15. 2, etc.
f *cf.* Hos. 14. 7.
g *cf.* Ex. 30. 23, 24.
h *cf.* Lev. 15. 9.

* Or, "works."

Purple speaks of the royal crown which followed the cross. Then the broidered work, which may well image the Spirit's embroidery of the new creature, far surpassing that of which the psalmist speaks (Ps. cxxxix. 15) when he applies the same word to the work of the old creation. Next we have the fine linen, which is ever in Scripture practical righteousness, or what stands for this. Then what is considered to be coral, literally, "heights" (surely not from the great price paid for it, as some suppose, but rather from its manner of growth), and which, as found in the sea, gives us heights out of the depths, as we may say; and how much more than can be expressed is implied here! Finally, we have *kadkod*, "the sparkler," another gem. Whatever it was, whether jasper, garnet, ruby, or agate, the Lord's promise to His people of making their windows "agates," shows that it was to some good extent transparent, and naturally suggests, as typical of a future blessing, the visions of glory that shall surely come. All this may be significant enough as the portion of a fallen Shemite, which, alas, he is ready to barter—for what? It is not said; and silence is surely more significant than speech—goods of Tyre's own manufacture, that is enough to say.

But Judah too is here in line with the rest; Judah too will barter her wheat of Minnith (her own "portion") and her dainties of honey and oil and balm. There needs little skill to interpret this; we need not emphasize the sorrowful way in which the people of God will barter away what is their own portion—and again, for what?

Damascus follows, as Aram preceded. It is but another form of Aram (see 2 Sam. viii. 6, *Notes*), and speaks of elevation by activity, being itself a noted place of traffic. Its contributions are the wine of Helbon, "fatness"—the stimulus of successful self-enrichment, and the whiteness of its wool which has been shorn from the sheep.

The next sentence is again more or less doubtful. The merchandise, however, speaks strongly for Arabia, and Vedan may be Aden, which, although there is no full certainty about it, has come generally to be accepted: and Aden was celebrated as a commercial emporium from very ancient times. The wrought iron may remind us, as one has suggested, of the sword-blades of Yemen, as Uzal was the ancient name of Sanaa, its capital. Cassia and calamus are also Arabian products. If Javan and Uzal both speak in different ways of man's departure from God, it may remind us of what in Scripture is devoted to Him now turned aside to self-indulgence, while the wrought iron may speak of the many inventions which man attributes to necessity as their mother, but which God attributes to his departure from original uprightness, by which he has got into necessity (Eccl. vii. 29).

out for riding. [i]Arabia and all the princes of Kedar were the merchants of thy hand: in [j]lambs, and rams, and goats, in these did they trade with thee. The merchants of [k]Sheba and Raamah were thy traffickers: they traded for thy wares with all the choice [l]spices, and with all precious stones and gold. [m]Haran, and

[i] 1 Ki. 10. 15; Jer. 25. 24.
[j] Is. 60. 7.
[k] cf. 1 Ki. 10. 1-13.
[l] Is. 60. 6, etc.
[m] Gen. 10. 10; Gen. 11. 31, 32.

Now comes again Dedan, though probably another, the Edomite, not the Arabian; as some have thought there may be also a connection between them. That the men of what is counted "progress" should furnish riding-cloths for others than themselves is not to be wondered at, and even as Edomites they may serve Israelites in this way. God is above all the world's ways to serve their own ends, and makes them serve Himself, and thus serve His people in some ways, after all.

Arabia and Kedar, "darkness," in their meaning are connected by *ereb*, "evening," the time of darkness, and thus of mixture when the forms of darkness are abroad. Naturally enough the two peoples sell sheep and lambs, though they may often quite rightly sell goats also.

Sheba and Raamah then come together. They are remarkable as being the first Cushite or indeed Hamitic people named, with the exception probably of one of the Dedans, in whom the opposition to God and to the light may be expected fully to show itself. Accordingly we find, first, Sheba, "captor," in whom we may read the great enemy of God and man. It would be strange if he who leads men captive made no more contribution than we have seen to Tyre's merchandise. Here he makes notable contribution by his merchandise, and with him is associated Raamah, "rumbling," "trembling," "agitation," "thunder," and Raamah is the father of Sheba, while named second here. In these two names together there is as much truth as one can find in what is often said, that fear is the parent of all religion. It will be readily allowed, of course, that there is a fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom, and that reverential fear is a very different thing from what these names would speak. In all heathenism and superstition fear is that which has complete control, and how much of the sway that Satan has over a soul is found in this! "We have not received the spirit of bondage unto fear," says the apostle to his fellow-Christians, but Satan, as the dread power which works by death, makes men "all their lifetime subject to bondage." Thus we can understand that Raamah is the father of Sheba here; the spirit of fear gives his place to him who holds man captive. God known, as He is in the gospel, and the soul brought into full liberty as in relationship to Him, how thoroughly and forever is the rule of Satan broken, and every form of superstition brought to an end!

It may seem strange to find here what Sheba can make merchandise of. The chief of spicery and all precious stones and gold are in the catalogue. But if this surprises us, we may look on to the book of Revelation and notice Babylon's array: "In purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand," and yet "full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication." But in truth, Satan is known by his selling these. He does not buy them, nor has he acquired them aright, nor will he enrich any with them. All through, he is the captor merely, and in his method, the deceiver. God does not sell; He gives. Or if He invites to buy, that is, to come to His terms about that which is to be your own, He is careful to assure us that it is "without money and without price."

Canneh, and Eden, the merchants of [n]Sheba, 'Asshur and Chilmad were thy traffickers. These traded with thee in choice wares, in wrappings of [o]blue and broidered work, and in chests of rich apparel, bound with cords and made of cedar, among thy merchandise.* The [p]ships of Tarshish were thy caravans† for thy merchandise; and thou wast replenished, and made very [q]glorious in the heart of the seas.

3 (26-36): The transformation of its glory.

[3] Thy [r]rowers have brought thee into great waters: the [s]east wind hath broken thee in the heart of the seas. Thy 'substance and thy wares, thy merchandise, thy mariners and thy pilots, they that repair thy leaks, and they that barter with thee, and all thy men of war that are in thee, with all thine assemblage which is in the midst of thee, shall fall into the heart of the seas in the day of thy [u]ruin. At the sound of the cry of thy [v]pilots the open places shall shake. And all that handle the oar, the mariners, all the pilots of the sea, shall come down from their ships; they shall stand upon the land, and shall cause their voice to be heard over thee, and shall [w]cry bitterly; and they shall cast up dust upon their heads; they shall wallow themselves in ashes. And they shall make themselves bald for thee, and gird themselves with sackcloth; and they

n *cf.* Ps. 72. 10, 15.
o *cf.* ch. 23. 6.
p *cf.* Ps. 48. 7. *cf.* Is. 2. 16.
q *cf.* Is. 23. 1-11.
r *cf.* Is. 33. 23. *cf.* Acts 27. 11, 12.
s *cf.* Jer. 18. 17.
t ch. 26. 12.
u ch. 26. 14, 21. *cf.* Is. 23. 9. *cf.* Jer. 47. 4. *cf.* Amos 1. 9, 10. *cf.* Zech. 9. 3, 4.
v ch. 26. 16, 15. *cf.* Ex. 14. 23-25.
w *cf.* Rev. 18. 17, etc. ch. 26. 16.

* This might be rendered, "Treasures of costly raiment, bound with cords and packed, among thy merchandise."

† Or, "visited thee."

Next and really last in this catalogue, we have Haran, "the parched," "the dry," but he is associated with Kanneh, "the firm," "the upright," and also with Eden, the place of "delight" lost from earth; for, alas, these are still but the merchants of Sheba, doing his work with Asshur, the Shemite, who has lost his place in connection with the revelation of God, and is wandering among the perverted traditions of men, and with Chilmad who, as the word seems to mean, points out the "*quasi* learner." Their traffic is in rich apparel, by which the nakedness of the fall is done away, nay, covered over with adornment, and of which, as we see by the carefully packed bales that are noticed here, they evidently made much.

The analysis ends here, save only that we find how that the ships of Tarshish are the one great means to unite all these together. It is all indeed the fruit of a spirit away from God, which therefore explores the earth for whatever it can make gain of, but which, nevertheless, can yield no satisfaction. All is thus united together like their bales of merchandise, by which Tyre is made for the present very glorious, but in the midst of what is the very image of instability, "in the heart of the seas."

3 Now comes the end of all this glory. The very hands by whose power the good ship has been carried on, bring her into great waters, and there the east wind of adversity breaks her helplessly "in the heart of the seas." No skilful management avails any more; no stoppage of leaks can be attempted any more. Useless are the men of war, and all that assemblage which has been gathered in and about her falls into the heart of the seas in the day of her ruin. The

shall weep for thee in bitterness of soul with bitter mourning. And in their wailing they shall take up a [z] lamentation for thee, and lament over thee [saying], Who is like Tyre, like her that is brought to [y] silence in the midst of the sea? When thy wares went forth over the seas, thou filledst many peoples; thou didst [z] enrich the kings of the earth with the abundance of thy riches and of thy merchandise. In the time that thou art [a] broken by the seas in the depths of the waters, thy merchandise and all thine assemblage in the midst of thee have fallen. All the [b] inhabitants of the isles are astonished at thee, and their kings are horribly afraid; their countenance is troubled. The merchants among the peoples [c] hiss at thee; thou art become a [d] terror, and thou shalt never be any more.

3 (xxviii. 1-10) The prince who glorifies himself as God.

3. And the [e] word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, say unto the [f] prince of Tyre, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Because thy heart is [g] lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a [h] god, I sit in the seat of God, in the heart of the seas—and thou art a [i] man, and not God—and thou settest thy heart as the heart of God: behold, thou art [j] wiser than Daniel; nothing secret

z ch. 26. 17. ch. 32. 16. *cf.* Rev. 18. 9, etc.
y *cf.* Is. 16. 9. *cf.* Lam. 1. 12. *cf.* Lam. 2. 13.
z ch. 26. 4, 5. *cf.* Jer. 16. 9 *cf.* Is. 15. 1.
a *cf.* Rev. 18. 3, etc.
b ver. 26. ch 26.19-21.
c Is. 23. 5, 6. *cf.* Jer. 18. 16. *cf.* Zeph. 2. 15.
d ch. 26. 21.
e ch.27.1,etc.
f *cf.* ver. 12. *cf.* Jno. 14. 30.
g vers. 5, 17. ch. 31. 10. Deut. 8. 14. *cf.* Dan. 4. 30, 37.
h *cf.* Gen.3.5. *cf.* Acts 12. 22, 23. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 3, 4.
i *cf.* Ps. 9. 20; *cf.* Is. 31. 3; *cf.* Is. 40. 18-23.
j Dan. 1. 20; Dan. 2. 22, 23; Dan. 5. 11, 12.

cry of the pilots is only one of despair; the open places of the land that might give her refuge, are themselves shaking, and shut out hope, and those who stand afar off in fear for her judgment only recall the glory of the past as those who fain would be incredulous that it is past. So full of help to many, so abundant in the riches continually being distributed, all the inhabitants of the isles are astonished and their kings are horribly afraid, their countenance is troubled. Where shall any find a security that Tyre has not found? All this lamentation is sealed by one single and emphatic word from God: "Thou art become a terror, and thou shalt never be any more."

3. We have now an address to the prince of Tyre, in which we see the effect upon him of the abundance of wealth gathered together and the power implied by this, exalting his heart to a place more than human. "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Because thy heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a god, I sit in the seat of God, in the heart of the seas; and thou art a man and not God, and thou settest thy heart as the heart of God." Monstrous as all this may be, it is yet, after all, the natural development of what took place in the Garden of Eden itself, when the temptation presented by the evil one was distinctly, "Ye shall be as God." No doubt this was to be a moral likeness—"knowing good and evil;" nevertheless, it was a place usurped, not given by God, and naturally leading to still more open and extreme usurpation. We see in it apparently also reminiscences of the dealings which we know Tyre had had with Israel in Solomon's time, when she had been permitted to contribute to the temple of God in Jerusalem. Solomon sat, as the inspired Word says, "on the throne of Jehovah in Israel" (1 Chron. xxix. 23), His representative in that place. This representative place was given him from God Himself. The prince of Tyre takes it in a carnal fashion, and in independence. With him it is no mere representative authority which might, in the fear of God, be realized by

have they hidden from thee; by thy wisdom and by thine understanding thou hast gotten thee *riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures; for thy great wisdom thou hast by thy traffic increased thy riches, and thy heart is lifted up because of thy riches. Therefore, thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Because thou hast set thy heart as the heart of God, therefore, behold, I will *bring strangers upon thee, the terrible ones of the nations: and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall "tarnish thy brightness. They shall bring thee "down to the pit, and thou shalt die the death of those that are slain in the heart of the seas. Wilt thou °yet say before him that slayeth thee, I am God? But thou art man, and not God, in the hand of him that pierceth* thee. Thou shalt die the death of the uncircumcised by the hands of strangers: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord Jehovah.

k *cf.* Hab. 1. 15, 16. *cf.* Zech. 9. 2-4.

l ch. 26. 7-14. *cf.* Is 23.8,9. *cf.* ch.30.11.

m *cf.* vers. 15-17. *cf.* Is. 2. 11, 12. *cf.* Is 23. 9.

n *cf.* ch. 32. 18-30. *cf.* Is.38.17.

o ver. 2. *cf.* Dan. 4. 31, 32.

* Or, "defileth."

any of those "powers that be," of whom the apostle speaks as "ordained of God," so that obedience to the power becomes for the believer obedience to God Himself. In Tyre there was no such sense of responsibility, but the language is according to what we find concerning one who in the last days shall himself sit in the temple of God, "showing himself that he is God." It is the language of Antichrist, of whom the prince of Tyre here is, no doubt, to some extent, a shadow. But what is Antichrist himself except the full manifestation of fallen manhood, with the restraint upon it which God is exercising now, removed, so that the depths of the heart come out? Who that lifts himself up against God but becomes God to himself, in fact, robbing God of the glory which He will not give to another? Incredible it might indeed seem that any could go to the full length of what is here, when manifestly, as he is reminded, he is but a man—and what a *nothing* is man before God, even the wisest! As to his wisdom amongst men, no doubt he might claim much as searcher out of the secrets of all the earth, and knowing how to use for his purposes all that he acquired. He was "wiser than Daniel," as the prophet says to him; and, as we see, the wisdom of Daniel had reached far already in those days. Daniel had shown himself wise as to the secrets of a monarch's chamber, and could interpret to him the thoughts of his heart, nevertheless it left Daniel in the place of entire subordination to the king to whom he ministered. Here was one who had learned to use his wisdom in his own behalf, to give *himself* a place amongst men, a greatness which was merely acquired, however, neither innate nor moral, and therefore no real greatness in the sight of God. He had gathered riches into his treasury and continually was increasing them, but to debase himself morally in a way that he was not competent even to estimate. He is incapable of receiving God's judgment of things as they really are, and thus God would have to teach him by men like himself, with a lesson of the sword, marring all his beauty and bringing his brightness to an end. God needed to put forth no manifest divine power against him, the power of men was enough. Would he maintain an argument for his own divinity in the face of the weapons of those who would put him to death? Uncircumcised as he was, having never

4 (11-19): The apostate king.

4. And the [p]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, take up a lamentation over the [q]king of Tyre, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Thou who sealest up the [r]sum, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty, thou wast in [s]Eden, the garden of God; every [t]precious stone was thy covering: the sardius, the topaz and the diamond, the chrysolite, the onyx and the jasper, the sapphire, the carbuncle, and the emerald and gold. The workmanship of thy

[p] ver. 1, etc.
[q] *cf.* ver. 2, etc.
[r] ch. 27. 3.
cf. Is. 10. 13.
cf. Jer. 9. 23.
[s] *cf.* Gen. 3. 1, etc.
cf. ch. 31 8, 9.
[t] *cf.* ch. 27. 16, etc.
ctr. Ex. 28. 17-20.
ctr. Rev. 21. 19, 20.
cf. Lk. 4. 5, 6.

learned the lesson of self-judgment, he would die the death of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers, and the Lord seals this as the doom which He has pronounced upon him.

4. Nevertheless, for such an one there is a lamentation. If God must execute judgment, He does not smite without recognizing the sorrow of this, which is always His "strange," if necessary, "work." Here was the man enriched with everything that his hand could acquire, nay, with all that *God* had filled the earth with in the way of beauty: and beauty there is in it, how much beyond any that we apprehend! Who could expect to come after the king in this way? He had "sealed up the sum" of perfection which it seemed impossible for mere man to transcend; full of wisdom he had shown himself; perfect in beauty he had come to be. True, it was for his own interests, and the beauty which he had acquired was but artificial, the result of all that he had heaped together of the world's goods. He had been, as it were, in another Eden, a garden like that of old, stored with everything pleasant to the eye. Nature had for him opened its resources to enrich him with its innermost secrets; nay, it had revealed beauties which are indeed the manifold reflections of perfect light, the source of which is in God Himself. Thus every precious stone was his covering—the exquisite beauty with which God has strewed the earth, and which the fall itself has not removed, although it has dimmed the lustre in which it was meant to shine—this covered him. You could not, as it were, think of the man himself for all the glory that was spread out over him. Moreover, in man himself what beauty is there, and what a capacity for awakening out of the things around him, over which he is sovereign, the hidden capacities everywhere existent, and which he alone has power to evoke to his Creator's praise! Thus the workmanship of his tabrets and of his pipes was in him. In the day that God had created him they were prepared. He was himself the chief of creation, more glorious in himself than all this glory; all the more humbly should he have learned it, as what was *from* God and therefore *for* God.

Thus he was "the anointed," that is, as it seems, the "king cherub." Ezekiel has already taught us how to understand this, for the cherubic forms of his vision are predominantly human; and these cherubim show us the working of all this living ministry ordained of God to work out His will and to fulfil His purposes upon the earth. The cherubim upon the mercy-seat, which we have seen interpreted for us by these living creatures, cover the throne of God, and this language is again and again used with regard to them. They emphasized the judgment and the justice which were the habitation of His throne; and, as transformed into the living creatures, the fire of God ran up and down amongst them. From this, in the tenth chapter, the linen-clothed

tabrets and of thy pipes was in thee; in the day that thou wast [u]created they were prepared. Thou wast the anointed covering [v]cherub, and I had set thee [so]: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou didst walk up and down in the [w]midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast [x]perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till [y]unrighteousness was found in thee. By the abundance of thy traffic they filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned; therefore have I [z]cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God, and have destroyed thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thy heart

u ver. 15. *cf.* Col. 1. 16. *cf.* Phil. 2. 10, 11.
v *cf.* Ex. 25. 17–20. *cf.* Gen. 3. 24.
w *cf.* Ex. 19. 18. *cf.* Ps. 18. 7–10. *cf.* Is. 6. 1–4.
x vers. 3–5, 12. *cf.* ch. 27. 3.
y *cf.* Jude 6, 9. *cf.* 2 Pet. 2. 4. *cf.* 1 Tim. 3. 6.
z *cf.* Is. 14. 12–15. *cf.* Lk. 10. 18 with Rev. 12. 8, 9; *cf.* Heb. 2. 14.

man took the coals of fire to scatter over the city in judgment for the desecration of the sanctuary. Thus the stones that covered the cherub himself were, in fact, "stones of fire." In them, as we have many times seen, were the reflections of the divine attributes, which must be revealed in wrath therefore against all profanation of them. So had this king of Tyre been walking as "amidst the stones of fire." However ignorant and however careless, nevertheless his was the responsibility of such a position. His would be the judgment if he abused such a position. It should be plain that much more than the temporary ministry to the temple in Solomon's time is here intended. No doubt the connection of Tyre with the temple in this case was the connection with that revelation of God of which Israel was the depositary; it should have enlightened him fully as to the One with whom he had to do, and brought him consciously into that light in which henceforth he would have seen light.

But it is not merely knowledge that makes us responsible, but the *lack* of knowledge when we should have had it; how much more, therefore, the lack of availing one's self of the opportunity for knowledge which God is everywhere giving, is in fact pressing upon men! All the beauty of creation was in the temple upon the mountain of God, dedicated to the God of creation, seen in its proper place, and thus with all the beauty which such a place would give it; for the jewel is seen in the light, and God's jewels in the light of God. Yet in these relationships of Tyre with Israel, we have the anticipation of a time to come, when, under a greater than Solomon, "the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift." And as we think of Hiram, the Tyrian, the fashioner of things in the temple (the very name of the king of Tyre of that time being his own), how suggestive it is of privileges conferred, and at the same time of responsibilities incurred!

The Lord owns also the blamelessness of her ways in this respect, which in some sense, at least, might well be taken for the time of her creation, putting her as a nation in the place in which she might have availed herself of blessed opportunities, and united herself to the people of God in a way that certainly He on His part would have owned and perpetuated. But the attraction of the world was too great, and the history of man from the beginning repeated itself here. Deceit and violence quickly followed. How we misconceive often as uprightness in man that which is only lack of opportunity; or, let us say, lack of trial sufficient to reveal a man even to himself, and certainly to others! How men can be taken thus with their own beauty, when it is but factitious, a glory with which circumstances only have surrounded one, like the halo of a

was lifted up [a]because of thy beauty; thou hast [b]corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I have cast thee to the ground, I have laid thee before kings, that they may behold thee. By the multitude of thine iniquities, by the unrighteousness of thy [c]traffic, thou hast profaned thy sanctuaries: and I have brought forth a fire out of the midst of thee, it hath devoured thee; and I have turned thee to ashes upon the earth in the [d]sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the peoples shall be astonished at thee: thou art become a terror, and thou shalt [e]never be any more.

a *cf.* ch. 16. 14, 15.
cf. ch. 31. 10.
cf. Prov. 16. 18.
cf. Rom. 1. 21–23.
b *cf.* Jer. 8. 9.
c ch. 27. 33.
d *cf.* Rev. 18. 9.
cf. ch. 26. 17, 18.
e ch. 26. 21.
cf. ch. 27. 35, 36.
cf. Rev. 18. 21.

traditional saint; and the God of truth cannot spare it, while the heart lifted up because of this external beauty is corrupted by it. All the sanctuaries of the soul, or what should be such, become profaned. It is the image of man that appears in them instead of God. Covetousness shows itself as idolatry and thus out of it comes forth the fire which shall surely and finally sweep it all away.

Many have seen in all this account a greater prince depicted than the king of Tyre, and we cannot refuse such application of prophecies which have their most obvious fulfilment near at hand; but this is only the pledge and anticipation of that final one which is always the great thing with God, while man is prone to lose sight of it in what is nearer and therefore larger to his eyes. In all this part of Ezekiel, the judgment at hand by Nebuchadnezzar has indeed a special place; but there are, nevertheless, many intimations in various places, both of final judgment and of final blessing. Here, where the glory of the world has been spread out so before our eyes, it seems fully in place that there should be seen a real prince of it, and in this way some of the things here speak with more fulness than in their first application: thus the fall, by self-occupation and the pride begotten by it—for it was in this way that he who was created an upright and glorious being became an apostate and a devil. The cherub character given him would be more difficult, spite of the common thoughts about angelic cherubs, if we were to take Ezekiel alone. But Daniel reveals the principalities of the earth as angelic, and as having a place in this way from which even their fall has not yet removed them. Thus it is, as the apostle tells us, "with spiritual wickedness in heavenly places" that we are in conflict still, and the book of Revelation shows this just at the time when Satan is cast down from heaven (Rev. xii.). In Job also we are made to realize the cherub place he has. In his accusation of Job, which is all upon the ground of righteousness, as detecting what is false and unreal, he is, as it were, professedly covering the throne of God. And while in Ezekiel the human and other forms of the cherub seem to leave no place for the angelic, yet they in no wise conflict with this, the thought itself of the cherub requiring naturally, as one would say, the angel also as the highest natural creature of God to supplement it. Thus also we may realize the application of what is said of Eden here, though it be gone from the earth, and the stones of fire. What to an angel must be the riches of the earth, which man, prodigal as he is, so little cares to estimate, while he is so busy squandering them! After all, we may well conceive here the great king of Tyre, whose judgment abides a future time, when he too shall be cast out of the mount of God and come to that end which, in the patience of God, so long has tarried.

5 (20-26): Sidon: retributive judgment which acts to deliver Israel from her enemies.

5. And the [f]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face towards [g]Sidon, and prophesy against it and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I am [h]against thee, O Sidon, and I will be [i]glorified in the midst of thee; and they shall [j]know that I am Jehovah when I shall have executed judgments in her, and shall be sanctified in her. And I will send pestilence into her, and blood in her streets; and the wounded shall fall in the midst of her by the [k]sword upon her on every side; and they shall know that I am Jehovah. And there shall be no more a pricking [l]brier to the house of Israel, nor a grieving thorn of any that are round about them, that despised them: and they shall know that I am the Lord Jehovah.

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, When I shall have [m]gathered the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they are scattered, and shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the nations, then shall they [n]dwell in their own land which I gave to my servant Jacob. They shall dwell in it in safety, and shall build houses and plant vineyards; yea, they shall dwell in safety when I have executed [o]judgments upon all those that despised them round about them; and they shall [p]know that I am Jehovah their God.

f ver. 1, etc.
g ch. 32. 30. cf. Is 23.2 4.
h ch. 5.8, etc.
i cf. ch 39.13.
j ver.26,etc.
k cf. ch. 25. 7, 11, 17.
l cf. ch. 26 6. cf. Num.33. 55. cf. Josh. 23. 13. cf. Judg 2.3. cf. Is 35. 9 with Is. 55. 13.
m cf. Is 11.12. cf. Lev. 26. 44, 45. cf. Deut. 30. 3, 4. cf. Ps. 106. 47. cf. Jer 30.18. cf. Hos.1.11. cf. Joel 3. 7.
n ch. 36. 28. cf. Jer.23.8. cf. Lev. 25. 18, 19. cf. Deut. 12. 10. cf. Is. 65. 21, 22. cf. Amos 9. 13, 14.
o cf. Ps. 9. 16.
p ch. 34. 30; cf. Ex. 29. 46.

5. We have now the judgment upon Sidon, as supplementary to the judgment upon kindred Tyre. It is of the briefest, but as the first-born of Canaan, he cannot be overlooked here. Sidon means not distinctively "the fisher," as some say, for which there is no word, but "the taker of prey." Sidon was a great mercantile power before Tyre was known, and thus Homer speaks exclusively of her. In general, Tyre represents the Canaanite character, and therefore Sidon requires briefer notice. But she has been a pricking brier and a grievous thorn in Israel's side; not very formidable, perhaps, through lack of power, but that was not her fault. It is the enmity that God judges here, as elsewhere. Israel has sinned and given occasion to what the malice of others might do and justify themselves in doing. Nevertheless, it was malice, and that against God in His people. Hence, Jehovah should be known by them in judgment simply. In Israel, spite of her terrible failure and sin, He will be known in final grace; it must be in *grace*, for she can claim nothing, as we know. Can any of us claim anything from God on any other ground? But this only makes it sure that God will cleave to this in which all the interests of man and His own glory are alike concerned. In us He is going to show "the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Who shall forbid Him this? And how suited that this unrepenting grace should take up Israel also according to the angel's words to Zechariah (Zech. iii.), in which her sin and just condemnation are alike owned: "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" True, it is this; but Satan is ever and only the adversary against God as he is against man. But if it is God's will to pluck a brand out of the fire, who shall say Him nay?

Sec. 5.

We have seen, then, the judgment of the world, as represented in Tyre, the

merchantman, rich with all that man's energy can pillage from the earth and use with the lavishness of a prodigal who knows not its value—use it also as the prodigal away from his Father's house, and with no reference any more to that Father whom he has forgotten. We come now finally to look at the world in another way, in which however it closely connects with what we have had before. It is a fallen world in the one case and in the other, and the marks of the fall upon it are essentially similar. The soul away from God, having lost faith in Him, must needs have faith in itself, or there would be despair at once. Thus man's competency comes in to meet the defect of God's incompetency, and while taking freely what God has graciously bestowed upon him, he uses it to build himself up in pride and self-sufficiency. We see this unmistakably in Egypt, the lesson of which is as clear as it is fundamental.

Egypt is, as we have seen long since, the land of Mizraim—the double strip: that is, the strip on each side of the river, the overflow of which has formed and enriches it. Wherever we look at it, it is essentially the land of independence, as far as heaven is concerned. The rain seldom falls there; it is not expected. The sources of the river are necessarily in the heavens themselves, but so far off that they are no more thought of, or if speculated about, the speculations themselves are of no great consequence. The practical thing is that the river is there, always there, overflowing at a certain regular time most convenient for man's purposes, giving him little to think about, only how best to guide hither and thither the supply which is thus made his own. Indeed he values himself upon this, that he can direct this abundant water with great wisdom so as to meet with it his own needs. Thus Pharaoh can say, as we see him here doing: "My river is mine, and I have made it." Practically it is the reverse of this, it is the river that has made him. Even the name of the first father of the Egyptians, Mizraim, is given to him, as one would say, by the land to which he owes his all: which is after all but the narrow strip through a desert in constant conflict with it, blowing its sand upon it in such a way as would soon annihilate the whole strip if it were not for the constant overflow of the river. Life is thus in perpetual conflict with death, and the Egyptians, one would say, were in a position to value life and enjoy it. No doubt in a way they did—yet from the earliest times Egypt was, what the earth at large very much is, a place of death rather than of life. Egypt is emphatically the land of tombs. Its literary memorial is a book of the dead. Their great men built their sepulchres with more extravagance than their palaces, for they realized that they were to use them longer; and, almost as if in mockery of themselves, they had their bodies embalmed that they might enjoy their sepulchres!

Thus if death is the stamp upon man's fallen condition, it was not only over all the land of Egypt—it is everywhere—but was emphasized there in a most remarkable way. The very lesson that God would impress upon man, and would have him take to heart, he has taken to show *how little* his heart is impressed by it, for he remains the same vain, self-confident creature that he ever was. This, alas, is the fundamental moral condition of the fall. All blessing comes from keeping the creature-place, but there is this constant tendency to depart from it, God's mercy being abused to that very end, as we have seen. Thus, in very mercy, must judgment come to abase the pride of man and give him wisdom in the only way possible. This, then, is what we find in the section before us. Egypt is everywhere in Scripture the type of that fallen condition out of which we have been redeemed; in this condition, he who has been

SECTION 5 (Chaps. xxix.-xxxii).

Egypt: the abasement of creature-pride for ever before God.

1 (xxix. 1-16): Causes of the judgment.
1 (1-5): Pride and self-sufficiency.

1. [1] In the [q]tenth year, in the tenth [month], on the twelfth of the month, the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Pharaoh, king of [r]Egypt, and prophesy against him and against all Egypt; speak and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I am [s]against thee, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, the great monster that lieth in the midst of his rivers,*

q ch. 1 2, etc.
r *cf.* Is. 19. 1. *cf.* Jer. 25. 19. *cf.* Jer. 46. 2. 25. *cf.* chs. 30-32. *cf.* Joel 3. 19 *cf.* Zech. 14 18, 19.
s ver. 10, etc *cf.r.* Rom. 8. 31.

* A word said to be of Egyptian origin, and used almost exclusively of the river Nile.

awakened by the life-giving Spirit of God finds himself in captivity, and out of it he must be redeemed as Israel was redeemed out of Egypt.*

1. We have, first, the causes of the judgment; they are, mainly, two: First, that pride and self-sufficiency itself, of which we have already spoken. Second, that Egypt has been a breaking staff to Israel; a staff of reed, which offered much, but never fulfilled its promises, bringing only ruin to all that trusted it. The going down to Egypt for help was the constant snare of the people of God, though they had been delivered from that land, and seen God's judgment upon it in their own deliverance. Yet they could again and again turn back to it. Alas, it is an inconsistency which not one of us who knows himself can be a stranger to! Happy for those who are taught by any means at last to say, as the apostle says for Christians as such: "We are the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit, and glory in Christ Jesus, and *have no confidence in the flesh.*" What blessing is implied in such a condition, but how slow we are in reaching it! God must, therefore, for Israel, Himself break this staff that they leaned upon; and although He show mercy in the end, and Egypt is not finally left to judgment, as with Edom or Babylon, yet it must be henceforth a "base," that is, a low kingdom, something that will invite no more the confidence which it has hitherto invited, and be trusted no more by those about it. The lesson is as plain as it is fundamental. It is the lesson, "Cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?"

[1] The date of the prophecy is the tenth year, and the tenth month, the number of responsibility and of judgment being thus emphasized for us. It is given on the twelfth day of the month, the number which speaks of the manifestation of divine government, as it is manifested here. On this day, says the prophet, "The word of Jehovah came unto me saying, Son of man, set thy face against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him and against all Egypt. Speak and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, the great monster that lieth in the midst of his rivers, who hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself." Pharaoh is likened here to the crocodile of his rivers, the "long stretched," as the word "monster" here literally means; a creature whom one might think took shape by his river, as the king of Egypt does—an unclean creature at the best; an ungainly one, however huge he may be, and however much the scales which shut him in may give him defence against all that may be adverse. He lies there, in no really

* Tyre seems to represent the world in its intercourse and traffic; Egypt in its isolation and authority.—S. R.

who hath said, My [t]river is mine own, and I have made it for myself. And I will put [u]hooks in thy jaws, and I will cause the fish of thy rivers to stick unto thy scales, and I will bring thee up out of the midst of thy rivers, and all the fish of thy rivers shall stick unto thy scales; and I will [v]cast thee forth into the wilderness, thee and all the fish of thy rivers: thou shalt fall upon the open field; thou shalt not be brought together nor gathered: I will give thee for [w]food to the beasts of the earth and to the fowls of the heavens.

2 (6-12): A breaking staff to Israel.

[2] And all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am Jehovah, because they have been a [x]staff of reed to the house of Israel. When they took hold of thee

t cf. ch. 28. 2. cf. Is. 10. 13, 14. cf. Deut. 8. 17.
u cf. Is. 37. 29. cf. ch. 38. 4. cf. Job 41. 1, 2. cf. Amos 4. 2.
v ch. 32. 4, 6. cf. Jer. 8. 2.
w cf. ch. 39. 4, 6, 17, 20. cf. Ps. 74. 14. cf. Rev. 19. 17, 18.
x cf. 2 Ki. 18. 21. cf. Is. 20. 5, 6. cf. Is. 30. 2, 7. cf. Is. 31. 1–3.

exalted position, as is plain, and with little ability to survey things beyond the banks which on either side enclose him. Yet he can derive matter of boasting out of all this: "My river is mine own," he says, "and I have made it for myself." The ditches, the canals, the embankments and sluices are of his own manufacture truly, and this he calls making the river; just as we think so much of the little we do, and so little of all that God has done for us. What a sight for the angels that excel in strength, to see a creature pinned to the earth that bears him, as the crocodile to his river-bank, and yet boasting himself to be in the place of God, and be his own god! And it was not Pharaoh's boast alone, as we have sufficiently seen. A god to himself, he was a god also to his people, as is well known, whose fate is represented as identified with that of their king as the fish of the rivers sticking to his scales; for all that he is to be brought out of his river, and in a way that will abase him utterly: "I will put hooks in thy jaws, and I will bring thee up out of the midst of thy rivers, and all the fish of thy rivers shall stick unto thy scales; and I will cast thee forth into the wilderness, thee and all the fish of thy rivers; thou shalt fall upon the open field; thou shalt not be brought together nor gathered. I will give thee for food to the beasts of the earth and to the fowls of the heavens." No overthrow can be more complete. Thus, in another sense than that of Samson's riddle, "Out of the eater comes forth meat;" he becomes the prey of those upon whom hitherto he had preyed.

[2] We come now to the second cause of the judgment, and we see how God takes up the cause of His people, foolish and perverse as they may have been. Had they not been sufficiently warned that they must not trust in Egypt? Were they not fully accountable in doing this after all the care that God had taken to deliver them from it? This Pharaoh, then, who has invited their confidence in himself which he cannot justify, who, as thus leaned upon by Israel, has given way under them and rent all their shoulder and lamed all their loins, he must be put into the place where he belongs, and God Himself must break the staff that has broken to His people's hurt. The fertility of Egypt, proverbial as it was, must therefore be turned into deserts and desolation from one end of it to the other. Migdol was on the east border of lower Egypt, as Syene was on the border of upper Egypt, on the boundary between it and Cush, or Ethiopia. Not only would the desolation for a time be extreme, but the people would be scattered from the land, and the cities laid waste forty years.

by thy hand, thou didst give way and did rend all their shoulder; and when they leaned upon thee, thou didst break, and didst make all their loins to tremble. Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will bring a [y]sword upon thee, and cut off from thee man and beast. And the land of Egypt shall be a [z]desolation and a waste, and they shall [a]know that I am Jehovah: because he saith, The [b]river is mine, and I have made it. Therefore, behold, I am [c]against thee and against thy rivers, and I will make the land of Egypt deserts of waste and desolation, [d]from Migdol to Syene, even to the border of Ethiopia. Foot of man shall not pass through it, nor shall foot of beast pass through it, nor shall it be inhabited [e]forty years. And I will make the land of Egypt a desolation in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities among the cities that are laid waste shall be a desolation forty years; and I will [f]scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries.

y cf. ch. 21. 3, 4, etc.
z ch. 30. 7, etc.
a vers. 16, etc.
b ver. 3.
c ch. 28. 22, etc.
d ch. 30. 6.
e cf. Num. 14. 33.
cf. Jer. 46. 19.
cf. Is. 23. 15, 17.
cf. 2 Chron. 36. 21.
f ch. 30. 23.

The judgment here has raised an historical question of which the critics have naturally not been slow to avail themselves. We must remember, in thinking of it, that the reckoning of Scripture is not that in respect to time with which we are familiar. That the words here do not necessitate that the desolation must be complete, after the manner spoken here, for the whole forty years, is easily to be proved by what is undeniable elsewhere. In Genesis xv. 13, God speaks to Abraham of his seed being strangers in a land that is not theirs, serving them, and to be afflicted by them 400 years. And again we have in Exodus xii. 40, 41, the time more precisely stated: "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt was 430 years; and it came to pass at the end of the 430 years, even the self-same day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt." Thus complete accuracy is asserted. Yet, when we turn to the epistle to the Galatians, we find from the pen of one who certainly could not be ignorant or mistaken in what he asserted, that the law came just 430 years after the *promise* which God had given (Gal. iii. 17).

It is plain, therefore, that the 430 years are to be taken as *from the promise*, and that they define the time *to which* the captivity in Egypt lasted. Thus in the 15th of Genesis we must read this as meaning that the people should be captives to the Egyptians until 400 years *from that time;* the captivity is defined as to the *end* of it, instead of as we at first would naturally think, as to both ends. The forty years from the time of the prophecy here would reach to about the time of the overthrow of the Babylonian empire, the power of Nebuchadnezzar and his successors, until the Persian overthrew his city and his dynasty. That it is Nebuchadnezzar's hand which God uses to inflict this upon Egypt is plain from what follows almost immediately; and while the critics have doubted whether Nebuchadnezzar himself ever was in Egypt, we have now the proof from Egyptian and from Babylonian records together, that he was there *twice;* and it is even stated that the land was scourged by him as far as to Syene. It was completely in his hand.

3 (13-16): Yet restoration.

3 Yet thus saith the Lord Jehovah: At the [g]end of forty years will I gather the Egyptians from the peoples whither they were scattered; and I will bring again the captivity of Egypt, and will cause them to return to the land of Pathros, unto the land of their birth; and they shall be there a [h]base kingdom. It shall be the basest of kingdoms; neither shall it [i]lift itself up any more above the nations; and I will diminish them, so that they shall no more rule over the nations. And it shall be no more the [j]confidence of the house of Israel, bringing iniquity to remembrance when they turn after them: and they shall [k]know that I am the Lord Jehovah.

2 (17-21): Nebuchadrezzar's wages for service elsewhere.

2. And it came to pass in the [l]seven and twentieth year, in the first [month], on the first of the month, the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, caused his army to do hard service against [m]Tyre; every head was made bald and every shoulder was peeled: yet had he no [n]wages from Tyre, nor his army, for the service he had served against it. Therefore, thus saith the Lord Jehovah:

[g] *cf.* Is. 19. 22-25. *cf.* Jer. 46. 26.
[h] *cf.* ch. 17. 6, 14. ch. 30. 13. *cf.* Zech. 10. 11.
[i] *cf.* Dan. 4. 37. *cf.* Dan. 11. 42, 43. *cf.* Nah. 3. 8-10.
[j] vers. 6, 7. Is. 30. 2, 3. Is. 36. 4, 6. *cf.* Jer. 2. 18, 19.
[k] ver. 21, etc. [l] *cf.* ch. 30. 20, etc.
[m] ch. 26. 7-12. *cf.* Jer. 27. 6. *cf.* Is. 7. 20.
[n] *cf.* Is. 43. 3.

3 At the end of the forty years, God announces a certain measure of restoration: "At the end of forty years will I gather the Egyptians from the place whither they were scattered; and I will bring again the captivity of Egypt, and will cause them to return to the land of Pathros, unto the land of their birth, and they shall be there a base kingdom. It shall be the basest of kingdoms, neither shall it lift itself up any more above the nations; and I will diminish them so that they shall no more rule over the nations, and shall be no more the confidence of the house of Israel." This has been, as is well known, Egypt's condition since. Under the Ptolemies, whether there might seem to be something more than this, it was the foreigner who had possession of the country, and Egypt has ever since been in the hand of foreigners; the more the power that reigned over them lifted itself up, the more was the burden upon the subject people.

2. We have now Nebuchadnezzar distinctly named as the instrument of this judgment, and this at a notable time. The prophecy, unlike the other prophecies with which this is connected, is stated to have been given in the twenty-seventh year, in the first month, the first day of the month. At that time, after thirteen years' siege at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, Tyre had just fallen; and the prophecy with regard to it which Ezekiel had thus made long before, was fully proved; God was manifested as He whose judgment it was, and in whose hand, therefore, the conqueror himself was. The "twenty-seventh year" may as a number refer to this. It is the number of divine manifestation cubed. The reality of God's government was made fully plain, and here we have one of the various ways in which God would speak to Nebuchadnezzar himself, as is so manifest in the book of Daniel. As the head of the new Gentile power that God had raised up, Nebuchadnezzar as king of kings owed all to the Hand that raised him, and God would have him learn the lesson of this.

Thus, with the seal upon God's word in what he had already accomplished,

Behold, I will [o]give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon; and he shall carry away her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey; and it shall be the wages for his army. I have given him the land of Egypt for his labor wherewith he served against it, because they wrought [p]for me, saith the Lord Jehovah. In that day will I cause the horn of the house of Israel to [q]bud forth, and I will give thee the [r]opening of the mouth in the midst of them; and they shall [s]know that I am Jehovah.

3 (xxx. 1-19): The full judgment upon the land.

3. And the [t]word of Jehovah came unto me saying, Son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Howl ye, alas for the day! For the day is at hand, yea, the [u]day of Jehovah is at hand, a day of clouds; it shall be the time of the nations. And the [v]sword shall come upon Egypt, and there shall be anguish in

[o] ch. 30. 10-12. cf. Jer. 43. 10-13.
[p] cf. Is. 10. 6, 7. cf. Is. 45. 1-3. cf. Jer. 25. 9. cf. 2 Ki. 10. 30.
[q] ch. 28. 25, 26. cf. Ps. 132. 17. cf. Is. 27. 6.
[r] ch. 3. 26. ch. 24. 27.
[s] vers. 6, 9, 16.
[t] ch. 29. 1, etc.
[u] Joel 2. 1, 2, etc. Zeph. 1. 7, 14.
[v] ch. 29. 8.

Nebuchadnezzar was to carry with him into Egypt an assurance which every step towards his full exaltation would thus confirm. Egypt was to be the spoil given him for his lack of wages in his service against Tyre. It was God's work that he had been doing, whether he regarded it as such or no, and yet in the thirteen years of the siege in which "every head was made bald, and every shoulder peeled," he found in the end, very naturally indeed, nothing but a ruin left. Thus the land of Egypt would be given him as his recompense: "He shall carry away her multitude, and take her spoil and take her prey, and it shall be wages for his army."

The prophecy ends here, as far as Nebuchadnezzar is concerned, and the voice to him in it is unmistakable. In that day God would cause the horn of the house of Israel to bud forth, and He would give Ezekiel the opening of his mouth in the midst of them. The budding of the horn speaks but of partial and more or less slow revival for the people of God, which shows itself, in its beginning, in what the end of the book of Kings supplies as to the altered treatment of Jehoiachin, from whose captivity, let us remember, these prophecies are all dated, and who was brought out of his prison by Nebuchadnezzar's successor and given a place above all the subject kings that surrounded him. Later, we have also Daniel's exaltation, after a period seemingly of forgetfulness under Belshazzar and Darius, which was soon followed by the return of the people to the land under Cyrus. Thus the horn of Israel was indeed budding. In the prophets of that period, as Haggai and Zechariah, we have intimations of a further and more wondrous budding of the horn in the announcement of Messiah's coming. Israel's sins still hindered, as we know, and Messiah Himself came only to be rejected; but that belongs not to God's side, if we may so speak, but to the people's. The final visions of Ezekiel (chs. 40-48) had been uttered just before the prophecy which we are now looking at, the fulfilment of which, however, would now cause them to speak in such a way as to be heard, though, as we know, only by a remnant.

3. We have now still another prophecy, which is, however, but the detailed announcement of that judgment upon the land already declared. The day of Jehovah is at hand, a day of sorrow and distress: "A day of clouds shall it be, the time of the nations;" that is, the full time is at hand in which the judg-

Ethiopia when the slain shall fall in Egypt, and they shall take away her multitude, and her foundations shall be overthrown. [w] Ethiopia and Phut and Lud and all the mingled people, and Chub and the children of the land that is in league shall fall with them by the sword. Thus saith Jehovah, They also that [x] uphold Egypt shall fall, and the pride of her strength shall come down: from Migdol to Syene shall they fall in it by the sword, saith the Lord Jehovah. And they shall be desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolated, and her cities shall be in the midst of the cities that are wasted. And they shall [y] know that I am Jehovah, when I have set a fire in Egypt, and all her helpers shall be broken. In that day shall [z] messengers go forth from me in ships to make careless Ethiopia afraid; and there shall be anguish upon them, as in the day of Egypt: for, lo, it cometh!

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; I will also make the multitude of Egypt to cease by the [a] hand of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon. He and his people with him, the terrible of the nations, shall be brought to destroy the land; and they shall draw their swords against Egypt, and fill the land with the slain. And I will [b] make the rivers dry, and will sell the land into the hand of the wicked; and I will make the land desolate and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers: I, Jehovah, have spoken it.

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I will also [c] destroy the idols, and I will cause the images to cease out of Noph. There shall be no more a prince out of the land of Egypt; and I will put fear in the land of Egypt. And I will [d] make Pathros desolate, and will set a fire in Zoan, and will execute judgment upon No. And I will pour my [e] wrath upon Sin, the stronghold of Egypt; and I will cut off the multitude of No. And I will set a [f] fire in Egypt: Sin shall be in great anguish, and No

[w] Is. 20. 4. Jer. 46. 9. Nah. 3. 9. *cf.* ch. 27. 10.
[x] *cf.* Is. 20. 3-6. *cf.* Is. 31. 3.
[y] ch. 30. 26, etc.
[z] *cf.* Is. 18. 1, 2. *cf.* Zeph. 2. 12. *cf.* ch. 39. 6.
[a] *cf.* ch. 29. 18, etc.
[b] *cf.* Is. 19. 5-10. *cf.* Jer. 50. 38. *cf.* Nah. 1. 4.
[c] *cf.* Ex. 12. 12. *cf.* Is. 2. 18. *cf.* Zech. 13. 2.
[d] *cf.* ch. 29. 14. *cf.* Ps. 78. 12, 43. *cf.* Is. 19. 11.
[e] *cf.* Ps. 11. 6. *cf.* Nah. 1. 6.
[f] *cf.* ch. 28. 18.

ment will be accomplished by Nebuchadnezzar's hand which, as we have already seen, prepares the way for the full establishment of the universal Gentile empire. Egypt seems to have been the last of these nations to experience this; but with and in Egypt it comes upon Ethiopia, Phut and Lud, and all the mingled people, "the children of the land of the covenant"—apparently those Israelitish colonists of whom Jeremiah speaks, and whose judgment he also emphatically announces. Thus Egypt is desolate in the midst of the countries that have been made desolate, and her cities in the midst of the cities that have been wasted. Egypt's end is the full tale told, and Nebuchadnezzar is again clearly announced as the one by whose hand it is to be executed. The points that are marked out here are naturally those which either set before us the idolatry, in Egypt so monstrous, and which God could never forget, or on the other hand, the symbols of her power and might, and her capitals upper and lower (No or Thebes, and Noph or Memphis); Zoan also, which God had

shall be rent asunder, and Noph [shall have] enemies daily. The [g]young men of Aven and of Pi-beseth shall fall by the sword; and these shall go into captivity. And at [h]Tehaphnehes the day shall be darkened, when I shall break there the yokes of Egypt, and the [i]pride of her power shall cease in her. As for her, a cloud shall cover her, and her daughters shall go into [j]captivity. Thus will I execute judgments in Egypt, and they shall [k]know that I am Jehovah.

4 (xxx. 20–26): Breach and scattering.

4. And it came to pass in the [l]eleventh year, in the first [month], on the seventh of the month, the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, I have [m]broken the arm of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and behold, it shall not be [n]bound up to apply remedies, to put a bandage to bind it, to make it strong to hold the sword. Therefore, thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I am [o]against Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and will break his arms, the strong one and that which was broken; and I will cause the sword to fall out of his hand. And I will [p]scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries. And I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, and will put my sword in his hand; and I will break the arms of Pharaoh, so that he shall groan before him with the groaning of a deadly wounded man. And I will [q]strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, and the arms of Pharaoh shall fall down; and they shall know that I am Jehovah, when I have put [r]my sword into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall have stretched it out upon the land of Egypt. And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and disperse them through the countries: and they shall [s]know that I am Jehovah.

g cf. Is.40.30.
h Jer. 2. 16.
i Dan. 4. 37.
j ver. 17, ch. 29. 12.
k vers. 25,26.
l ch. 29. 17, ch. 32. 1,etc.
m ver. 24, cf. Ps.10 15, cf.Jer 48.25.
n cf. Jer. 30 13, cf. Ps.51.8.
o ch.29.3,etc.
p ver. 26 ch 29.12,13, cf. Ps.68.30.
q cf.Is 45 1,5, cf. Jer. 27. 6 8, cf. Is.10.5,6, 15, cf. Deut. 32. 41, 42.
r cf. Is. 10. 5 cf.Jer.51.20.
s ver. 8, etc.

plagued of old in Moses' time, having its place among these: the strongholds are gone and the land is open to all assailants. The picture speaks for itself, hardly needing a word of explanation. The purpose is here, as everywhere—whether men will listen or whether they will forbear—that they may know that He is Jehovah.

4. We have now another distinct, short prophecy, with regard to the incurableness of the breach which God has already made upon Egypt, evidently when they were defeated at the battle of Carchemish—a blow from which they never recovered. The prophecy is to forbid all revival of hope on account of the activity and energy which Egypt for the time was again showing. The effort to relieve the siege of Jerusalem is of course specially in view, and God announces that no bandage should be applied to bind up the arm that has been broken, so that it should be able to hold the sword again. On the contrary, He would break that and the other arm also, and cause the sword to fall out of Pharaoh's hand. The Egyptians should be scattered among the nations and dispersed through the countries; the king of Babylon is once more named as the instrument of this. It is striking how these prophecies follow one another,

5 (XXXI.): The divine ways with the Assyrian a lesson for Egypt. 1 (1. 9): His might.

5. [1]And it came to pass in the [t]eleventh year, in the third [month], on the first of the month, that the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, say unto Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and to his multitude: Whom art thou [u]like in thy greatness? Behold, [v]Assyria was a cedar in Lebanon, with fair branches and with a shadowing thicket and of a high stature; and his top was amid the thick boughs. The [w]waters made him great, the deep exalted him; its streams ran round about his plantation, and it sent out its rivulets to [x]all the trees of the field. Therefore his stature was [y]exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long, because of many waters when he sent them forth. All the [z]fowl of the heavens made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all the great nations. Thus was he fair in his greatness, in the length of his branches; for his root was by many waters. The [a]cedars in the garden of God could not hide him;

t ch. 30. 20, etc. ch. 32. 1, 17.
u ver. 18. Is. 14. 13, 14.
v cf. Is. 10. 33, 34. cf. Nah. 3. 8-10. cf. Zeph. 2. 13-15.
w cf. ch. 17. 5, 8. cf. Jer. 51. 36. cf. Prov. 14. 28.
x cf. Dan. 4. 12. cf. ch. 17. 24.
y Is. 10. 8-14. Is. 36. 18, 19.
z ch. 17. 23. cf. Mt. 13. 32. etc. Is. 60. 8, 9.
a ch. 28. 13. cf. Ps. 80. 10. cf. Gen. 3. 8.

which shows the urgency, on God's part, that His people should encourage themselves in no false hope. We can see how every blow upon such hopes was intended to fasten their hope upon God Himself; but how little will man listen to anything short of experience itself, hard teacher though it is owned to be! How we have again and again to hear the word "Cease ye from man," affirmed and emphasized by the event itself. How slow are we to come to that to which we *must* come finally, and which will have such abundant recompense for us!

5. We have now God's governmental ways with the Assyrian as another lesson for Egypt. There was a strong link of connection between the lands themselves. Assyria, like Egypt, was as an oasis in the desert track which stretches across nearly the whole breadth of Africa and Asia, from the Atlantic to the China Sea; an oasis which for Assyria was made by its two rivers, to which it owed its all, as Egypt did to the Nile. Thus essentially dependent, as it might be seen to be, yet it was self-exaltation and not the sense of dependence that grew out of it. Thus in the end abasement had to follow, for God's law is: He that exalteth himself shall be abased.

[1] The prophecy in this case is in the eleventh year, as was the last, and scarcely two months after it. On the first day of the third month, the word of Jehovah comes to Ezekiel, saying, "Son of man, say unto Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and to his multitude: Whom art thou like in thy greatness?" How gladly would we make ourselves the one exception, so that that which applies to others should not apply to us! God therefore points them to Assyria, a power as strong as Egypt itself. The rivers that had made him great were the rivers of that old Eden which had passed away, but which might seem to have revived again in him and such as he—though just such as he among the neighboring powers there was not. In Tyre, one might have seen again, as it were, the precious stones of Eden. In Assyria and the neighboring powers, the trees of the Garden of God might seem to have reproduced themselves in another manner, but all alike dwelt under the shadow of the one preeminent

the cypresses were not like his boughs, and the plane-trees were not as his branches; no tree in the garden of God was like him in his beauty. I had made him fair by the multitude of his branches; so that all the trees of Eden, that were in the garden of God, [b]envied him.

2 (10-18): His humiliation.

2 Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: [c]Because thou hast lifted thyself up in stature . . . He hath even set his top amid the thick boughs, and his heart is lifted up in his height. I have [d]given him into the hand of the mighty one of the nations; he shall surely deal with him; I have driven him out for his [e]wickedness. And [f]strangers, the terrible of the nations, have cut him off, and have left him: upon the mountains and in all the valleys his branches are fallen, and his boughs are broken in all the water-courses of the land; and all the peoples of the earth are gone down from his shadow, and have [g]left him. On his [h]ruins all the fowl of heaven dwell, and all the beasts of the field are upon his branches: to the end that [i]none of all the trees by the waters exalt themselves in their stature, neither set their top among the thick boughs, and that none of them that drink water stand up in his height by himself: for they are all delivered unto death in the lower parts of the earth, in the midst of the children of men, with them that go [j]down to the pit.

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: In the day when he went down to Sheol I caused a [k]mourning; I covered the deep for him, and I restrained the floods thereof, and the great waters were stayed; and I caused Lebanon to be black for him, and all the trees of the field fainted for him. I made the nations to [l]shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him down to Sheol with

b cf. Judg. 9. 8-20. cf. Zech. 11. 2.
c cf. Gen. 26. 14. cf. Mt. 23. 12. cf. ch. 28. 6, 7. cf. Dan. 5. 20. cf. 2 Chron. 34. 27.
d cf. ch. 31. 9. cf. Judg. 13. 1.
e cf. Nah. 3. 15-19. cf. Deut. 18. 12.
f ch. 30. 11. cf. Hab. 1. 5-11. ch. 32. 4, 5.
g cf. Dan. 4. 13, 14. cf. Rev. 17. 16.
h ch. 29. 5. Jer. 7. 33. Is. 18. 6. cf. Rev. 19. 17, 18.
i cf. Deut. 13. 11. cf. Dan. 4. 32, 37. cf. Ps. 83. 17, 18.
j ch. 32. 18-32. Ps. 63. 9, 10.
k cf. Nah. 2. 10. cf. Rev. 18. 9-11, 18, 19. cf. ch. 27. 29-32.
l cf. ch. 26. 15. cf. Is. 14. 8.

power which was the envy of them all. Like a cedar in Lebanon was he, with fair branches and a shadowing thicket, and of high stature. All the fowls of the heavens made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches all the beasts of the field brought forth their young; so under his shadow dwelt all the great nations. No tree in this Garden of God was like him in his beauty. But, thus made great by the fostering care of God, it was only to repeat the old story; for what gift of God is there that man will not abuse? And what hope is there, one would say, for the being with whom God's mercies are turned to evil instead of good? It is a terrible lesson, but so constantly to be learned, that the wonder of it is sadly lessened by familiarity.

2 The contrast of his humiliation was now correspondingly great. He too had been given into the hand of Babylon, one who would make thorough work with him; for when God has work to be done, He will see that it *is* done. As a consequence, instead of seeking his protection, the birds and the beasts would dwell among his ruins. All the peoples of the earth had gone down from his shadow and had left him; and this was no inexplicable calamity, but a warning which the sure government of God preaches everywhere against pride, and which,

them that go down into the pit; and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, were comforted in the lower parts of the earth. They also went down unto Sheol with him unto them that are slain by the sword; yea, they that were his [m]arm, that dwelt under his shadow in the midst of the nations. To whom art thou thus [n]like in glory and in greatness among the trees of Eden? Yet shalt thou be brought down with the trees of Eden into the lower parts of the earth; thou shalt lie in the midst of the uncircumcised, with them that are slain by the sword. This is [o]Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord Jehovah.

[m] ch. 32. 20-30. ch. 30. 6, 8. *cf.* Lam. 4. 20. *cf.* Dan. 4. 11, 12.
[n] ver. 2. ch. 32. 19. *cf.* Mt. 11. 20-24.
[o] *cf.* Ps. 52. 7.

6 (xxxii. 1-16): God's victory over the victor.

6. And it came to pass in the [p]twelfth year, in the twelfth month, on the first of the month, that the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, take up a [q]lamentation for Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and say unto him, Thou wast like a young [r]lion of the nations, and thou wast as a monster in the seas; and thou brakest forth in thy rivers, and [s]troubledst the waters with thy feet, and fouledst their streams.

[p] ch. 31. 1, etc. ver. 17.
[q] vers. 16, 18. ch. 27. 2, etc.
[r] *cf.* ch. 19. 2-6. *cf.* ch. 38. 13.
[s] *cf.* ch. 34. 18.

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I will also spread my [t]net over thee with an assemblage of many peoples; and they shall bring thee up in my net. And I will

[t] ch. 12. 13. ch. 17. 20. *cf.* Hos. 7. 12.

if it were but for the moment, was felt by all around. In fact, were they not all following in the same path which could only emphasize the claim of Sheol upon them?—the claim of the unseen world which gathers men on every side. For the wheel surely turns, as Ezekiel has over and over again assured us, and he that is lifted up is exalted but for the moment, then must come down to the lower parts of the earth. True it is that, if we follow this out, we shall find that in God's thought there is a resurrection also, and that whatever is permanent in blessing lies in this for us. But man's view in general does not reach thus far, and where the lesson is not accepted, the blessing itself is not reached. God therefore challenges Pharaoh here. Sheol had its rights over him also, rights which in God's judgment were already conceded, but he must "lie in the midst of the uncircumcised with those slain by the sword. This is Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord Jehovah."

6. We now come to the twelfth year and the twelfth month, a period which speaks of the full manifestation of God's governmental ways. But with this, in which there should be only blessing, there comes instead a voice of lamentation, a reminder for us of those tears actually wept on earth by One who was the manifestation of God Himself in flesh, over those that had despised His gracious invitations, and would not be gathered under the wings that would so safely have covered them. The creatures that God has made must ever be objects of interest to Him—such interest as we little realize who confound so much the clouds and darkness that are about Him with the One who is distinct from the cloud and from the darkness, in whom is no darkness at all, and who has now made Himself known to us for that which indeed He ever was. Nevertheless, man may make void all this as far as he is concerned, and with his

leave thee upon the land, I will cast thee forth upon the open field, and will cause all the [u]fowl of the heavens to settle upon thee, and I will fill the beasts of the whole earth with thee. And I will lay thy flesh upon the mountains, and fill the valleys with thy height. And I will water with thy [v]blood the land wherein thou swimmest, even to the mountains; and the watercourses* shall be full of thee. And when I shall extinguish thee, I will cover the [w]heavens, and make the stars thereof black; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. All the bright lights of the heavens will I make black over thee, and set darkness upon thy [x]land, saith the Lord Jehovah. And I will vex the heart of [y]many peoples when I shall bring [the news of] thy destruction among the nations, to the countries that thou hast not known. And I will make many peoples amazed at thee, and their [z]kings shall be horribly afraid at thee, when I brandish my sword before them; and they shall [a]tremble at every moment, each one for his own life in the day of thy fall.

For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: The sword of the [b]king of Babylon shall come upon thee. By the swords of the mighty will I cause thy multitude to fall: the terrible of the nations are they all; and they shall spoil the [c]pride of Egypt, and all the multitude thereof shall be destroyed. I will destroy also all the [d]beasts thereof from beside many waters; and the foot of man shall trouble them no more, nor shall the hoofs of beasts trouble them. Then will I make their waters to settle, and cause their [e]rivers to run like oil, saith the Lord Jehovah. When I shall make the land of Egypt a desolation, and the country shall be left destitute of all its fulness, when I have smitten all them that dwell therein, then shall they [f]know that I am Jehovah. This is

u ch. 31. 13. 18. 18. 6. Jer. 25. 33. Joel 3. 19.

v Is. 34. 3, 7. *cf.* Rev. 16. 6.

w *cf.* Is. 13. 10. *cf.* Jer. 13. 16. *cf.* Amos 8. 9.

x *cf.* Ex. 10. 21-23. *cf.* Is. 50. 3. *cf.* Rev. 6. 12.

y ver. 16, etc. *cf.* Rev. 11. 18. *cf.* Jer. 25. 15-25.

z ch. 27. 35. *cf.* Deut. 29. 24. *cf.* 1 Ki. 9. 8.

a ch. 30. 9. *cf.* Ex. 15. 14-16. *cf.* Zech. 11. 2.

b ch. 26. 7. ch. 30. 4, 22-25. Jer. 46. 13, 24-26.

c Is. 25. 2, 3. ch. 29. 19. *cf.* Is. 16. 6.

d ch. 30. 12. *cf.* 1 Sam. 15. 3.

e *cf.* Is. 8. 7, 8.

f *cf.* Ex. 7. 5. ch. 6. 7, etc.

*Or, "Plains."

back upon God he sees Him but as reflected in the depths of his own heart, in imaginations darkened by a guilty conscience.

Pharaoh is seen in this prophecy in a double character. He is not simply now the crocodile lying in the waters; he has broken forth as a young lion of the nations, as for some time past Egypt had been showing unwonted activity in this way, and Pharaoh sought to imitate the action of his predecessors of old, and to make himself an imperial power after the fashion of Assyria, and now of Babylon. But in this, as we know, he was doomed not to succeed. Like the restless monster which represents him, he could only trouble his own waters with his feet, and foul his streams. God, in fact, was spreading His net over him, and the human instruments were but means in His hands by which He would bring him up out of his streams and cast him upon the open field, and fill the birds of heaven and the beasts of the earth with his great bulk; his flesh would lay upon the mountains and fill the valleys; his blood would water the land, and his dead bodies would fill the rivers wherein he had been swimming.

the lamentation wherewith they shall lament: the [g]daughters of the nations shall lament therewith; for Egypt and for all her multitudes shall they lament therewith, saith the Lord Jehovah.

7 (xxxii. 17-32): At rest in the grave with all the uncircumcised.

7. And it came to pass in the [h]twelfth year, on the fifteenth of the month, the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, [i]wail for the multitude of Egypt, and cast them down, even her and the daughters of the famous nations, into the lower parts of the earth, with them that go down into the [j]pit. Whom dost thou surpass in [k]beauty? Go down, and be thou laid with the uncircumcised. They shall fall in the [l]midst of them that are slain by the sword. The sword hath been given: Draw her away, and all her multitudes. The [m]strong among the mighty shall speak to him out of the midst of Sheol with them that help him: they are gone down, they lie still, the uncircumcised slain by the sword.

There is [n]Asshur and all his assemblage, his graves round about him: all of them slain, fallen by the sword; whose graves are set in the sides of the pit, and his assemblage is round about his grave: all of them slain, fallen by the sword, who caused [o]terror in the land of the living.

There is [p]Elam and all her multitude round about her grave, all of them slain, fallen by the sword, that are gone down uncircumcised into the lower parts of the earth, who caused their terror in the land of the living; yet have they borne their [q]shame with them that go down to the pit. They have set her a bed in the midst of the slain with all her multitude; her

g ver. 2. cf. 2 Chron. 35. 25.

h ver. 1, etc.

i cf. ch. 21. 6, 7. cf. Is. 16. 7, 8, 9. cf. Mic. 1. 8.

j ver. 30, etc.

k cf. ch 27. 3, 4. cf. ch. 28. 12-17.

l vers. 22-26. cf. 2 Sam. 1. 17-27.

m ver. 27. cf. Is. 1. 31. cf. Is. 14. 9, 10.

n vers. 24, 26, 29, 30. cf. Is. 30. 33. cf. Is. 37. 36-38.

o ch 26. 20, 21. cf. Is 14. 15, 16.

p Gen. 10. 22. 1 Chron. 1. 17. Jer. 25. 25. Jer. 49. 34-39.

q cf. ch. 16. 52, 54. cf. Jer. 3. 24, 25. cf. Dan. 12. 2.

All the bright lights of heaven would be made black over him, and darkness be upon the land through the darkening of sun and moon. This is the constant figure for the destruction of the powers which God has ordained for the preservation of order upon the earth. The darkness in which one could hardly find one's way was the fitting representation of ensuing anarchy, and consternation would come upon all beholders; his fall would make all the nations around to tremble for their own lives.

Again it is announced that the sword of the king of Babylon is to do this, by reason of which the land of Egypt should be but a desolation, stripped of its plenteous fulness, its inhabitants smitten that they might know—if even yet they would know—that it was Jehovah's hand. The prophecy closes as it began, with a lamentation.

7. One final prophecy now, a dirge over Egypt as gone down to the pit. We have still the twelfth year; and, as we may suppose, the twelfth month, and the fifteenth of the month, numbers in which the full government of God is seen displayed in judgment, for, alas, there is a monotony of judgment here. Nothing else can there be, for man's wickedness permits nothing else! Sheol and the grave are now seen as receiving their claim, and the nations that have already passed into the shadow are those with whom Pharaoh and Egypt are

graves are round about her, all of them uncircumcised, slain with the sword; though terror was caused by them in the land of the living, and they have borne their shame with them that go down to the pit: he is put in the midst of them that are slain.

There is [r] Meshech, Tubal and all her multitude; her graves are round about her: all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword, though they caused terror by them in the land of the living. And they lie* not with the mighty that are fallen of the uncircumcised, who are gone down to Sheol with their weapons of war, and whose swords are laid under their heads, and their iniquities are upon their bones, though they were the terror of the mighty in the land of the living. Thou also shalt be broken in the midst of the [s] uncircumcised, and shalt lie with them that are slain with the sword.

There is [t] Edom, her kings, and all her princes, who in their might are laid with them that are slain with the sword: they lie with the uncircumcised and with them that go down to the pit.

There are the princes of the [u] north, all of them, and all the [v] Sidonians, that are gone down with the slain; they are put to shame in the terror which they caused by their might; and they lie uncircumcised with them that are slain by the sword, and bear their shame with them that go down to the pit.

[r] ch. 27. 13. ch. 38. 2, 3. ch. 39. 1. Gen. 10. 2.

[s] *cf.* 1 Sam. 31. 4.

[t] ch. 25. 12. Amos 1. 11, 12. Obad. 1, 2. *cf.* Is. 63. 1–6.

[u] *cf.* ch. 38. 6, 15. *cf.* Jer. 1. 14. *cf.* Jer. 4. 6. *cf.* Ps. 48. 2, 4.

[v] ch. 28. 21–23. Jer. 25. 22. *cf.* Mt. 11. 21.

* Or, "Should they not lie?"

now to be joined. Among these nations Tyre is not seen as yet; but Assyria, Elam, Meshech and Tubal, Edom, the Sidonians, are all seen as involved in one hopeless ruin. It is a judgment, as we see, not of individuals, but of nations—the judgment of the whole world, so far as it had yet come, as we may say, into the light of revelation—the circumcised with the uncircumcised; for Egypt was externally a circumcised people, but for whom it meant nothing; and now all together made equal in that which merges all distinctions, the common nervelessness and shadow of death. This monotonous dirge, the same for all of them, is part of the lesson meant by it—meant to impress us with the common blank and desolation in which so many energies, so many varieties of human character and activity, all come into one undistinguishable ruin. This is the lesson of death from which none is exempt, which God pressed upon man in that law which was the ministration of it, the common death and condemnation which man must accept in order to find blessing. It is therefore the natural end of all this part of the prophecy.

Thank God, we are going to emerge now into brighter things! But God's lessons must be learned, and in their own order. There is no escape from this, and we have to have the sentence of death in ourselves, that we may not trust in ourselves but in Him who raiseth the dead. Resurrection is all of God. Here it is plain that man has no ability whatever; he is out of account, and thus God has freedom to manifest Himself as He desires to do; then the grave itself is no hindrance to Him, but rather the means of brighter display of His divine glory. Thus among the names here, Egypt herself is to have her resur-

"Pharaoh shall see them, and shall be comforted over all his multitude, Pharaoh and all his army slain by the sword, saith the Lord Jehovah. For I have caused his terror in the land of the living; and he shall be laid in the midst of the uncircumcised, with them that are slain by the sword, Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord Jehovah.

w ch. 31. 16
cf. ch. 14. 22.

rection and blessing in the coming day, and Assyria also, as Isaiah witnesses (chap. xix. 23–25): "In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria; and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria; and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the Lord of Hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance."

DIVISION 3 (chaps. 33–48).

There is a question made of where the division of the chapters actually comes here. The references to chapters iii. and xviii. in the 33rd are manifest, and this is urged to show that it is a close and not a beginning, that it connects with what is past rather than with what is yet to come. Again, the whole chapter still speaks of judgment, as the former ones have done, not of deliverance. On the other hand, the significance of the re-opening of the prophet's mouth is in this way lost, for in the 34th the judgment is but an introduction to the grace. It could not be rightly thought that this re-opening of the mouth was only more emphatically to repeat what had been already uttered, and that then again there was to be a close. Besides which, righteousness being the eternal character of God's throne must be maintained in grace as in judgment, as we all know it has been; and this must be first made clear, that grace may have free way.

Thus it is the announcement of the fall of the city, of the full execution of judgment foretold, that opens the mouth to predict the blessing. In the next chapter the false shepherds are removed that the true Shepherd may take their place, and it is Jehovah Himself who is manifested as this, the representative of whom is found in the true David raised up unto them. This is, of course, in Messiah, the Successor to David's throne, and of whom David was but the type. The Shepherd being found, and the flock in His hand, the enemy is then answered; then the land is comforted by the rooting out of those who would possess themselves of it, and the restoration of a people reunited in heart to God; after which in the 37th chapter the nation as such is brought up from the dead, and Ephraim and Judah, long parted and at strife with one another, are made one in the land. There is yet one last enemy to be destroyed (chaps. xxxviii., xxxix.), and then the land is finally cleansed and the full blessing comes in the restoration of the dwelling-place of God among them. This is set before us in full detail, and the city is then and henceforward known by the blessed reality as His abode with them. It is *Jehovah Shammah*, "The Lord is there."

SUBDIVISION 1

The previous chapters have shown us, then, that as far as man is concerned, all is gone. There is no hope for man that can come from himself. *God* must act if there is to be blessing, sovereignly and alone, and this is what the terms

DIVISION 3. (Chaps. xxxiii.-xlviii.)

Resurrection and Restoration.

SUBDIVISION 1 (Chaps. xxxiii.-xxxvii.)

Jehovah acting from and for Himself.

SECTION 1 (Chaps. xxxiii., xxxiv.)

The opening of the prophet's mouth.

1 (xxxviii.): The basis of righteousness.
1 (1-20): The way of Jehovah equal.

1. [1] AND the [z] word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, speak to the children of [y] thy people, and say unto them, When I [z] bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take one man from among them, and set him for their [a] watchman: if he [b] see the sword coming upon the land, and blow the [c] trumpet, and warn the people; then whosoever [d] heareth the sound of the trumpet, and [e] taketh not warning, if the sword come and take him away, his [f] blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him; whereas, if he had [g] taken warning, he would have delivered his soul. But if the watchman see the sword coming, and blow [h] not the trumpet, and the people be not warned, if the sword come and take any person from among them, he is [i] taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I [j] require of the watchman's hand.

r ch 30.1,etc. *y* ch. 3. 5, 11, 27. *cf.* Mt 10.5,6. *z cf.* ch 6 3. *cf.* ch. 11. 8. *cf.* Lev. 26 25. *cf.* Jer.12.12. *a* ver. 7. *cf.* 2 Sam. 18. 24 27. *cf.* Is.21.6-9. *cf.* Is 56.9,10. *cf.* Jer 51.12. *cf.* Hos.9.8. *cf.* Heb. 13. 17. *b cf.* Acts 20. 29, 30 *cf.* Lk 19.41-44 *cf.* Mic.1.9, etc. *c cf.* vers.8,9 *cf.* Neh. 4 18, 20 *cf.* Is. 58. 1. *cf.* Jer. 4 5. *cf.* Jer. 6. 1. *cf.* Hos 8.1. *cf.* Amos 3. 6, 7. *d cf.* Mt.13.14. *cf.* ch. 12. 2. *e cf.* 2 Chron. 25. 16. *cf.* Prov. 29. 1. *cf.* Zech 1 4. *f* ch. 18. 13. Lev. 20.9,1. *cf.* Acts 18 6. *cf.* Mt 27 25. *g cf.* Ps.95 7 1

cf. Ex. 9. 19-21; *cf.* 2 Ki. 6; 10. *cf.* Acts 2. 37-41; *cf.* Heb.11.7. *h cf.* Is. 56. 10, 11; *cf.* 1 Cor.14 8; *cf.* Acts 20. 27. *i cf.* ch. 18. 20, 24; *cf.* Jno. 8. 24; ch. 3. 18-20. *j* ch. 34. 10; *cf.* Heb. 13. 17; *cf.* Gen. 9. 5; *cf.* Gen. 42. 22; *cf.* 2 Sam. 4. 11.

of the new covenant show. There is no further expectation from man, and no condition made with him. The restoration of the people must be a resurrection from the dead; for this, God alone is competent. But all His glory thus shines out, and there is fulness of blessing found—the dirge passes into a song.

Sec. 1.

The prophet's mouth then is re-opened, because there is grace to be announced. Yet the affirmation of God's righteous ways unchanged is the fitting introduction to this. The fall of the city shows the people now fully under judgment. Their false confidences are exposed. The law has spoken, and the people, by its verdict are *Lo-ammi*, without the blood of atonement for their sins, without the place in which alone it could be sprinkled before God, God Himself entirely withdrawn. Moreover, there are no true shepherds among the people only such as are not only inadequate, but false. God must raise up the only Shepherd who can truly represent Him in His care for the feeble and scattered remnant who shall still remain an election, wholly of grace, and who are cast entirely upon Him—themselves also undone, apart from absolute grace. The true Shepherd is found in David ("the beloved"), the real fulfiller of that name and of the unrepenting promises of God to which "the sure mercies of David" are attached.

1. [1] The prophecy here does not begin with the date, as we might expect,

So [k]thou, son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; and thou shalt [l]hear the word from my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O [m]wicked man, thou shalt surely die, and thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his [n]blood will I require of thy hand. But if thou [o]warn the wicked of his way to turn from it, and he turn not from his way, he shall [p]die in his iniquity; but thou hast [q]delivered thy soul.

And thou, son of man, say unto the house of Israel, Thus ye speak, saying, [r]Our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we waste away in them, [s]how then should we live? Say unto them, [t]As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I have [u]no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: [v]turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? And thou, son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The [w]righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression; and as for the [x]wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall he that is righteous be able to live thereby in the day that he sinneth. When I say to the [y]righteous that he shall surely live, if he [z]trust to his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, none of his righteous deeds shall be remembered; but in his iniquity that he hath committed, therein shall he die.

cf. Mic. 7. 18. *p* ch. 14. 6; ch. 18. 30; Is. 55. 7; Jer. 3. 22; Hos. 14. 1. *q* ch. 3. 20, 21; ch. 18. 24-26; *cf.* Jas. 2. 10. *r* ch. 18. 21, 27, 32; *cf.* Is. 1. 18. *y cf.* Lk. 10. 28; *cf.* Deut. 8. 1, etc. *z* ch. 3. 20; *cf.* Phil. 3. 4-7; *cf.* Lk. 18. 9; *cf.* ch. 16. 15.

k ch. 3. 17. Is. 62. 6. *cf.* Hab. 2. 1. *l* ch. 2. 7, 8. *cf.* Phil. 3. 18. *m* ver. 14. ch. 18. 4, 10-13, 18, 20. *cf.* Gen. 2. 17. 18. 3. 13. *n cf.* Acts 20. 26. *cf.* Mt. 27. 24, 25. *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 16. *o* ch. 3. 19, 21. *cf.* Acts 13. 40, 41. *cf.* Acts 18. 5, 6. *cf.* Acts 28. 23-28. *p* Prov. 15. 10. Jno. 8. 24. Acts 13. 41. *q cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 3-6. *cf.* 2 Cor. 1. 12. *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 15-17. *cf.* Acts 7. 54-60. *r* ch. 24. 23. *cf.* Ps. 44. 22, 25. Lev. 26. 39. *s cf.* ch. 37. 11. *cf.* Jno. 11. 39, 40. *t cf.* ch. 5. 11. *cf.* Num. 14. 21, 28, etc. *cf.* Is. 49. 18. *u* ch. 18. 23, 32. Lam. 3. 33. *cf.* Lk. 15. 7, 10, 23, etc.

that being found, however, in verse 17. God first prepares the message which the re-opened lips of the prophet are to utter. The message given is a repetition almost wholly of chaps. iii. and xiii., a repetition which, for the purpose, is more effective than a wholly new statement. It is emphasized, however, in the first place that while men might naturally, and ordinarily would appoint themselves a watchman, the prophet is not appointed of the people, but of God in their behalf. Were there no word from Him, the accountability of the people would still remain, but God had provided a watchman for those too heedless and indifferent to care for their own interests, even the most weighty. How this, nevertheless, would increase the culpability of those who still refused the Voice that spoke to them! How often had He spoken of the sword which He was bringing upon the land! Yet they had taken no heed. Instead of looking for every sign of approaching judgment, they hardened their hearts against all that was given them in this way—nay, pressed upon them by one event after another, and by one messenger after another. What then could there be at last but that which had now come?—the awful signs no more to be refused by their desolate city, and the triumph of the heathen enemy over those who, as the people of God, would have been sheltered from every possibility of successful assault.

And when I say unto the [a]wicked, Thou shalt surely die, if he turn from his sin, and do judgment and justice; if the wicked [b]restore the pledge, give again that which he had taken by robbery, walk in the statutes of life, committing no iniquity; he shall surely [c]live, he shall not die. None of his [d]sins that he hath committed shall be remembered against him: he hath done judgment and justice; he shall surely live. Yet the children of thy people [e]say, The way of the Lord is not equal: but as for them, [f]their way is not equal.

[g]When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall die therein. And [h]when the wicked turneth from his wickedness, and doeth judgment and justice, he shall live thereby. Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, I will judge you every one [i]after his ways.

2 (21-33): Confirmation of the judgment foretold.

[2]And it came to pass in the [j]twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth [month], on the fifth of the month, that one who had [k]escaped out of Jerusalem came unto me, saying, The city is smitten! Now the [l]hand of Jehovah had been upon me in the evening, [m]before he that had escaped came, and he had opened my mouth before he came to me in the morning; and my [n]mouth was opened, and I was no more dumb.

a ver. 8. ch. 3. 18, 19. *cf.* Jonah 3. 4, 5.
b Is. 55. 7. Mic. 6. 8. Hos. 14. 1. *cf.* 2 Chr. 33. 12, 13. Deut. 24. 6, 10-13, 17.
c *cf.* Lk. 19. 8.
d ch. 18. 27, 28.
e Is. 40. 27. *cf.* Mic. 7. 18.
f ver. 20. ch. 18. 25, 29. *cf.* Rom. 7. 12.
g *cf.* Rom. 3. 21, 31.
h *cf.* Lk. 19. 21, 22. *cf.* Rom. 3. 4, 19.
i vers. 12, 13, etc.
j ch. 32. 17, etc.
k ch. 24. 26, 27.
l ch. 1. 3. ch. 3. 22.
m *cf.* 2 Ki. 5. 25, 26; *cf.* 2 Ki. 6. 32.
n ch. 24. 27; ch. 3. 26, 27; *cf.* Lk. 1. 64.

ch. 37. 1; ch. 40. 1.

The second part of the address here begins at the 10th verse, in which the lesson of the 18th chapter is once more enforced. They would now be ready to plead, and indeed were pleading, that before the unbending righteousness of God it was impossible that men should live. But the Lord replies as He had declared abundantly already, that He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that they turn from their wickedness and live. For one who truly turned to Him, none of his past wickedness should be remembered against him. Could God go on with them in evil ways? Surely it would be impossible even for themselves to think so. There was then but one alternative, and God still pleaded as He had been pleading, that they turn from their evil ways that they might live. Why *would* they die? Their death was of their own will and not His. If, then, even one who had been righteous, trusting in this past righteousness of his, gave himself up to wickedness, none of his righteous deeds could be remembered: in his iniquity that he had committed, he would surely die. But what is rather emphasized is the mercy that awaits even the worst and vilest who should turn to God. Yet the people would rest the blame of all upon the Lord's ways as if they were not equal, whereas it was their own ways that are unequal, as their conscience must surely witness against them. Much as men may seek to stifle the voice that speaks for God within them, yet it will one day have full utterance when they will be compelled to hear it.

[2] We have now the confirmation of the judgment foretold in the destruction of the city: "And it came to pass in the twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth month, on the fifth of the month, that one who had escaped out of Jerusalem came unto me, saying, The city is smitten. Now the hand of the

And the [o]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, they that inhabit those [p]waste places in the land of Israel speak, saying, [q]Abraham was one, and he inherited the land: but we are [r]many; the land is given us for a possession. Therefore, say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Ye [s]eat with the blood, and lift up your eyes unto your [t]idols, and [u]shed blood: and shall [v]ye possess the land? Ye stand upon your sword, ye work abomination, and ye [w]defile every one his neighbor's wife: and shall ye possess the land? Say thou thus unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: As I live, surely they that are in the waste places shall [x]fall by the sword, and him that is in the open field will I give to the [y]beasts to be devoured, and they that are in the strongholds and in the caves shall die of the [z]pestilence. And I will make the land a [a]desolation and an astonishment, and the [b]pride of her strength shall cease; and the mountains of Israel shall be desolate that none shall pass through. And they shall [c]know that I am Jehovah, when I have made the land a desolation and an astonishment, because of all their abominations which they have committed.

o ch. 26. 1, etc.
p *cf.* Jer. 52. 16.
cf. ch. 5. 3, 4.
q Is. 51. 2. Acts 7. 5.
r *cf.* Mic 3.11. *cf.* Jno.8.33, 34.
s Lev. 3. 17. Deut. 12. 16.
t ch. 18 6,etc. Deut. 4. 19. *cf.* Jer. 44. 15-19.
u ch. 9. 9. ch. 22. 6, 9, 27.
v *cf.* Jer. 7. 9, 10.
w ch. 18. 6, 11, 15. ch. 22 9-11. Jer 5. 8, 9. *cf.* 1 Cor.5 1.
x ch. 5 12 17. ch. 6. 11, 12.
y Jer.15 2,3. *cf.* Rev. 19. 17, 18.
z Lev. 26. 25. Num 14.12. Deut.28 21. Jer. 24. 10.
a ch. 6. 14.

Is. 6. 11; Mic. 7. 13. *b* ch. 7. 24, etc. *c* ch. 6. 7, etc.

Lord had been upon me in the evening before he that escaped came, and He had opened my mouth before he came to me in the morning, and my mouth was opened, and I was no more dumb." The date here is a significant one, "the twelfth year of our captivity" is, according to the numerical stamp upon it, the time of complete manifestation of the government of God with which the tenth month and the fifth day of the month combine to speak of the responsibility of man before God, of man who can never escape from the presence of Him whose eye is in every place, beholding the evil and the good. It is strange, however, to realize that the date here of the arrival of the man escaped from the city is more than sixteen months after it was taken. It has been naturally thought, therefore, that there must be a mistake in the text which, in common manuscripts of the Septuagint, seems to have been altered to suit. The well-known Alexandrian manuscript, however, agrees with the Hebrew which, as has been already seen, has its own internal evidence of being the correct one. No doubt the report of the capture had long preceded the actual coming of the refugee, delayed as he doubtless was by the conditions through which he had to make his way, and which there is no need to suppose to have been a direct one. It was probably after much wandering that the refugee had found a place at last where he could rest in safety. Until this time, then, the message waited: God dealing with the people in a way suited to the persistency with which they clung to their false hopes, and hardened themselves in obstinate pride of heart that would not listen to the plainest announcements. Now, with the living witness in their midst, they could at least doubt no more that the blow had actually fallen.

The first utterance of the prophet after this, which is addressed to those yet remaining in the desolate land, shows how readily still these hopes would rally: "Son of man," says the Lord to him, "they that inhabit those waste places in

And as for thee, son of man, the children of thy people [d]talk of thee by the walls and in the borders* of the houses, and speak one to another, everyone to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from Jehovah. And they [e]come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they [f]do them not: for with their [g]mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their plunder.† And behold, thou art unto them as a lovely [h]song, a pleasant voice, and one that playeth well upon an instrument; and they hear thy words, but they do them not. And when this cometh to pass (behold, it cometh), then shall they [i]know that a prophet hath been among them.

*Or, "doors." †Or, "coveteousness."

[d] Jer. 11. 19. Jer. 18. 18. *cf.* Jno. 7. 32.
[e] *cf.* Is 29. 13. Jer. 23. 35. *cf.* Jer. 42. 1. 6. 20. *cf.* Mt. 22. 16, 17.
[f] *cf.* Jer. 43. 1. 7. *cf.* Mt. 7. 24–27. *cf.* Jas. 1. 22–24.
[g] *cf.* Deut. 5. 28, 29. *cf.* Ps. 78. 36, 37. *cf.* Is 29. 13. *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 18.
[h] *cf.* Mk. 6. 20. *cf.* Jno. 5. 35.
[i] *cf.* Jer. 28. 9. ch. 2. 5. 2 Ki. 5. 8.

the land of Israel speak, saying, Abraham was one, and he inherited the land, and we are many; the land is given us for a possession." Had this been the boldness of faith, it might indeed still have been admirable; for the inheritance, as we know, however much the people might even for long years lose possession of it, could never be finally alienated from the children of him to whom God had promised it. But this was another thing, as the character of those who made these utterances showed, mere desperadoes as they were, whose works declared them to be anything but Abraham's children. Their very conduct is held up before them, therefore. It was not for such to possess the land, surely, and they are warned by the Voice that speaks to them through the prophet: "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: As I live, surely they that are in the waste places shall fall by the sword, and him that is in the open field will I give to the beasts to be devoured, and they that are in the strongholds and in the caves shall die of the pestilence; and I will make the land a desolation and an astonishment, and the pride of her strength shall cease. And the mountains of Israel shall be desolate that none shall pass through them. And they shall know that I am Jehovah (how differently should they have learned this!) when I have made the land a desolation and an astonishment because of all their abominations which they have committed."

Among the exiles, however, a transient effect might seem to have been produced by the fulfilment of the prophet's words. They were now coming to hear the message that he had for them, sitting before God as if His people, and hearing words which, however, they never followed. "Behold," says the Lord to him, "thou art unto them as a lovely song, a pleasant voice, and one that playeth well upon an instrument; and they hear thy words, but they do them not"—there was no true faith with them. They would know that the prophet had spoken to them only by the voice of the judgment which would overtake them, as it had in fact already overtaken them. They would believe when it was too late, when the prediction was fulfilled, but that would be only to make it vain as to the whole meaning of it. It was no true faith that did not anticipate the fulfilment. Thus everywhere, as one sees, the ruin of man is complete. There could be no proper hope, no expectation any longer, and here the first utterance closes.

2 (xxxiv 1): The shepherds and the Shepherd.
1 (1 6); The shepherds that feed but themselves.

2. [1] And the [j] word of Jehovah came unto me, saying,
Son of man, prophesy against the [k] shepherds of Israel,
prophesy; and say unto them, even unto the shep-
herds, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: [l] Woe to the shep-
herds of Israel that [m] feed themselves! Should not the
shepherds feed the [n] flock? Ye [o] eat the fat, and ye
clothe you with the wool; ye kill those that are fat-
tened, but ye feed not the sheep. The [p] weak have ye
not strengthened, nor have ye healed the [q] sick, nor
have ye [r] bound up that which was broken, nor have
ye [s] brought again that which was driven away, nor
have ye [t] sought for that which was lost; but with
[u] force and rigor ye have ruled over them. And they
were [v] scattered because there was no shepherd; and
they became food to all the [w] beasts of the field, and
were scattered. My sheep [x] wandered through all the
mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my sheep
have been scattered upon all the face of the earth, and
there was [y] none that searched, or sought after them.

j ch. 33.1, etc.
k cf. Jer.2.8. cf. Jno.10.12. cf. 1 Pet. 5. 1-4
l cf. Jer.23.1. cf. Zech. 11. 17. cf. Mt.23.13, 14, etc.
m cf. Mic. 3. 1-3, 11, 12. cf. Zeph. 3. 3, 4. cf. Is. 56.11, 12. cf. 1 Sam. 8. 11-18.
n cf. Jno. 21. 15-17. cf. Acts 20. 28, 29.
o cf. Zech.11. 5, 16. cf. ch.22.25-27. cf. Jas. 5. 5. Ps. 53. 4.
p cf. 1 Thess. 5. 14.
q cf. Heb. 12. 13.

etr. Lk. 4. 18. *r etr.* Lk. 10. 34. *s etr.* Mt. 9. 36 with Lk. 15. 3-7. *t etr.* Lk. 19. 10. *u cf.* Ex. 1. 13, 14; *cf.* Mt. 24. 49. *v* Jer. 23. 2; *cf.* 1 Ki. 22. 17; *cf.* ch. 5. 10. *w* Is. 56. 9; *cf.* Jno. 10. 12. *x cf.* Jer. 13. 16; *cf.* Ps. 107. 4. *y cf.* Ps. 142. 4; *etr.* Mk. 6. 34.

2. [1] In the chapter following, we have again no date given as to the time of the message, nor is there another until we come to the closing vision of the temple in the restored land, which is the only other in the book. That which follows here seems now to pour forth without any pause; and while we have once more judgment, in the opening, it is now manifestly connected with blessing, as the way to it. If the people are to be according to God, it must be as Isaiah has said (chap. iv. 4), "By the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning," or as Ezekiel himself has said elsewhere (chap. xx. 38) by purging out from them the rebels and those that transgress against God.

Thus we find that the judgment now before us is upon the false shepherds, those who only feed themselves, and make a prey of the sheep. "And the word of Jehovah came unto me saying, Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say unto them, even unto the shepherds, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Woe to the shepherds of Israel that feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill those that are fattened; but ye feed not the sheep. The weak have ye not strengthened, nor have ye healed the sick, nor have ye bound up that which was broken, nor have ye brought again that which was driven away, nor have ye sought that which was lost; but with oppression and rigor ye have ruled over them." How thoroughly this gives the character of those whom the Lord charged in His day with similar conduct. The rule of the rabbins was an oppressive one, and while they assumed to stand for God and for His word, self-seeking characterized them throughout, and thus of necessity the sheep were scattered: "They were scattered because there was no shepherd: and they became food to all the beasts of the field and were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains and upon every high hill; yea, my sheep have been scattered upon all the face of the earth, and there was none that searched or sought after them." Nothing stirs the heart of

2 (7-10): The judgment of the shepherds and the deliverance of the flock.

2 Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of Jehovah: As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, surely [z]because my sheep have been a prey, and my sheep have been food to all the beasts of the field, because there was no shepherd, and my shepherds searched not for my sheep, but the shepherds fed themselves and fed not my sheep: therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of Jehovah. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I am [a]against the shepherds; and I will [b]require my sheep at their hand, and cause them to [c]cease from feeding the sheep; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; and I will [d]deliver my sheep from their mouth, that they may not be food for them.

3 (11-16): The flock regathered with their portion from Jehovah.

3 For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold I, even I, will [e]search for my sheep, and examine* [as to] them. As a [f]shepherd examineth his flock in the day that he is among his scattered flock, so will I examine* [as to] my flock, and deliver them out of all the [g]places whither they were scattered in the [h]cloudy and dark day. And

*Or, "seek out."

z *cf.* Lk.16.2. *cf.* Mt.21.43. *cf.* 1 Sam.13. 14.

a ch.5 8,etc. b ch. 33. 6-8. *cf.* Jer.13.20. *cf.* Heb.13. 17.

c *cf.* 1 Sam.2. 27-33. *cf.* 1 Ki. 13. 34.

d ver. 22. *cf.* 1 Sam.17. 34, 35.

e *cf.* Ps. 80. 1. *cf.* Ps. 119. 176.

f *cf.* Lk. 15. 4-6. *cf.* Is. 40. 10, 11.

g *cf.* Lev. 26. 40, 41.

h *cf.* ch.30 3. *cf.* Jer. 13. 16, 17.

the true shepherd like the wanton abuse or neglect of the sheep, and here is One whose heart never needed to be stirred, but abides continually with His people, however long He may have patience, and however much circumstances may seem to argue that He has forgotten them. Therefore, as we shall see, it is Jehovah Himself who is manifested as the Shepherd of Israel, and that in the One raised up to them in tender grace; One who is Himself Man, and a stranger to nothing in man, except man's inherent evil.

2 The doom of the shepherds is therefore now announced. It is the judgment of love which smites for deliverance. There must be an end of this false assumption of the shepherd's place without the shepherd's heart—an assumption so peculiarly offensive to Him whose heart is with the sheep, who is afflicted in all the afflictions of His people, and who, when He arises for their help, will make a thorough work of it.

3 Thus the Lord declares that *He* will come in and search for His sheep and examine their condition. The language is human language, and we see here, according to what Ezekiel has shown us elsewhere, the likeness of a Man upon the throne. God speaks as if He were ignorant; therefore to examine into everything were a first necessity; and in truth there is what answers to this. God is careful to expose fully the evil with which He is dealing, that in His government He may be justified by all His creatures. This is the meaning of all those solemn assurances of a day of judgment to come, when the books are opened, and all the history of those brought before the judgment-seat is thoroughly entered into. There are crises of judgment which anticipate this, in which God allows the character of things fully to come out, allowing to come to a head the evil upon which He is going to smite, and bringing out the secret thoughts of men's hearts into open day. Thus as to His flock, Jehovah will examine their whole condition and all that has led to it. Their scatterings shall cease when the Voice is heard which His people know—which does not scatter, but brings together; and this, therefore, by removing every cause of

I will [i]bring them out from the peoples, and [j]gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their [k]own land; and I will [l]feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the water-courses, and in all the [m]habitable places of the country. I will feed them in a [n]good pasture, and upon the high [o]mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they [p]lie down in a good fold, and in fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I myself will feed my sheep, and I will [q]cause them to lie down, saith the Lord Jehovah. I will [r]seek that which was lost, and will bring again that which was driven away, and will [s]bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick; but the [t]fat and the strong I will destroy: I will feed them with [u]judgment.

[i] *cf.* Jer. 31. 8, 9, ch. 11. 17, etc.
[j] Jer. 32. 37, etc.
[k] Amos 9. 14, 15, etc.
[l] *cf.* Mic. 7. 14, 15, ch. 36. 28, 29.
cf. Is 25. 6.
[m] Jer. 23. 3, 4, 8.
cf. Mic. 4. 3, 4.
cf. Zech. 3. 10.
[n] Ps. 23. 2.
cf. Ps. 65. 11, 12.
cf. Jer. 31. 12–14.
[o] Is. 25. 6, Is. 65. 25.
[p] Jer. 33. 12, 13.
[q] *cf.* Song 1. 7, 8.
cf. Is 11. 6, 7.
cf. Hos 2. 18

4 (17-22): The sifting in mercy.

[4] And as for you, my flock, thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I judge [v]between sheep and sheep, between the rams and the he-goats. Seemeth it a small

[r] vers. 4, 11; *cf.* Is. 40. 11; *cf.* Mic. 4. 6, 7; *cf.* Mt. 9. 36–38. [s] *cf.* Is 61. 1–3 with Lk. 10. 33–35; *cf.* Lk. 15. 4–7. [t] ch. 39. 17–19; *cf.* Deut. 32. 15. [u] *cf.* Amos 4. 1–3; *cf.* Jer. 23. 15. [v] vers. 20–22; ch. 20. 37, 38; *cf.* Jas. 5. 1–8; *cf.* Zech. 10. 3.

scattering. Yet scattering may be at times the very thing that is of God, which He permits to avoid worse evil: nevertheless it is only permission for a brief time. What is in His heart is gathering, not scattering. And so He declares that He will deliver His flock out of all the places whither they were scattered in the cloudy and dark day. He has realized the darkness of it, and He will bring them out from the peoples, and gather them from the countries, and bring them into their own land. It has been their own land in His mind all the way through; and if for a time it has refused to own them as its inhabitants, there is no setting aside of the purposes which, with God, can never be repented of. The mountains of Israel shall welcome them again, and all the springs shall be set running for their benefit, and all the habitable places of the country shall be filled with them. The mountains, which so peculiarly characterize the land of Israel, shall provide good pasture for them, lifted up and kissed as it were by the light of heaven. That is where God would ever have His people feed, and there are the fat pastures to be provided now. He will feed them and make them to lie down. How thoroughly these things go together in His mind—provision and rest, in which all the evils that have afflicted them in the long past shall be put away, the lost restored, the wounded bound up, the weak strengthened; but, on the other hand, the fat and the strong destroyed! We know what this means: God is thinking of those who have been feeding themselves at the cost of the sheep, and have become fat through the spoiling of others. They of necessity will be the objects of swift, sure judgment: "I will feed the flock with judgment," says the Lord.

[4] The searching which the Lord institutes is to go down deeper than merely with certain heads of the people: "Behold," says the Lord, "I judge between sheep and sheep," not merely between sheep and shepherds. "The rams and the he-goats" seem to speak not alike of objects of His judgment. The rams belong to the flock themselves, but the he-goats are alien to it. They are, as we know, in the Lord's own picture of judgment, representatives of those whom the Son of Man puts upon His left hand, as He puts the sheep upon His

thing unto you to have eaten up the *w*good pasture, but ye must *x*tread down with your feet the residue of your pasture, and to have *y*drunk of the clear waters, but ye must *z*foul the residue with your feet? And as for my sheep, they eat that which ye have *a*trodden with your feet, and drink that which ye have fouled with your feet.

Therefore, thus saith the Lord Jehovah unto them: Behold, I, even I, will judge between the *b*fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because ye *c*thrust with side and with shoulder, and push all the weak ones with your horns, till ye have *d*scattered them abroad:—I will *e*save my flock, that they may no more be a prey; and I will judge between sheep and sheep.

5 (23-31): Immanuel.

*f*And I will set up *f*one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant *g*David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I Je-

w cf. Num. 16. 9, 13. *cf.* 1 Sam. 2. 12-17. *ctr.* Acts 20. 33-35. *cf.* Mic. 2. 2. *x cf.* Mt. 15. 6-9. *cf.* Mt. 23. 13. *cf.* Lk. 11. 52. *ctr.* 2 Cor. 2. 17. *y cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 1. *ctr.* Acts 4. 20. *z cf.* ch. 32. 2. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 2. *cf.* Phil. 1. 15. *ctr.* 1 Cor. 2. 13. *a* ver. 18. *b* vers. 10, 17. *cf.* Ps. 72. 2, 4. *cf.* Ps. 22. 24, 26, 29. *cf.* Gal. 6. 12, 13.

c vers. 3-5; *ctr.* Rom. 15. 1; *ctr.* 1 Thess. 2. 7, 8; *cf.* Gal. 5. 15; *cf.* Zech. 11. 5; *cf.* Lk. 13. 14-16. *d* Jer. 23. 1; Jer. 50. 17; *cf.* Lk. 11. 23; *cf.* Jno. 10. 12. *e* Jer. 23. 4; vers. 11-16; *cf.* Is. 40. 11. *f cf.* Mic. 5. 2-5; *cf.* Zech. 13. 7; *cf.* Jno. 10. 11 with Heb. 13. 20. *g* ch. 37. 24, 25; *cf.* Is. 11. 1; *cf.* Is. 55. 3, 4 with Acts 13. 34-37; Jer. 30. 9; Hos. 3. 5.

right. Among the sheep there are those who have from God a certain natural place as leaders, and when God is working among His people, as in the days to come, these must of necessity come to the front. Leaders among the people of God are always recognized. It is the *character* of the leading which determines as to what it is before God. The true leader is he who leads by the Word itself, and to faith in it, and not in the leader, therefore. And he who says, "Follow me as I follow Christ", puts Christ before the eyes of His people as the measure by which he himself and all his leading is to be measured. How good to have those who, if they have found a bit of good pasture, must run to tell others of it! And this is a kind of leading open to all that have hearts for it. How different the conduct of those of whom the Lord speaks here, who not only have eaten up all the good pasture for themselves, but must tread down and spoil what is left of it: not satisfied with drinking of the clear waters, they must foul the residue with their feet. How this applies to such as rose up in Israel after this, when the rule of the priest was changed for the rule of the rabbi, is obvious to all; who, as our Lord said, were "teaching for doctrine the commandments of men," and putting their own word before the word of God. They made the flock eat what they had trodden with their feet, and drink what they had fouled with them. And it is not in Israel only that these things have taken place. Alas, how Christendom has copied them in fullest detail! But God is going to judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. The lean sheep are His objects now—the people who have suffered from these things, and whom He sees suffering. Thus He will save His flock that they may no more be a prey, and will judge between sheep and sheep.

5 Now we come to what is God's complete thought for them. He has one true Shepherd that is to be set over them; in that sense, only one; there is not another, and "He shall feed them, even my servant David." "The introduction of David without anything further or particular," says Schroeder, "confirms what is stated by Hengstenberg, that the Messiah, the glorious offspring of David, had in the time of the prophet been for long a lesson of the catechism."

hovah will be [h]their God, and my servant David [i]prince among them: I Jehovah have spoken it. And I will make with them a [j]covenant of peace, and will cause evil [k]beasts to cease out of the land; and they shall dwell in [l]safety in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. And I will [m]make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the [n]shower to come down in its season; there shall be [o]showers of blessing. And the tree of the field shall [p]yield its fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase; and they shall be in [q]safety in their land, and they shall [r]know that I am Jehovah, when I have [s]broken the bands of their yoke and have delivered them out of the [t]hand of those that serve themselves of them.

h ch. 36. 28, etc. Is. 43. 2, 3.
i cf. Josh. 5. 13-15. cf. Is. 9 6, 7. cf. Acts 5. 31.
j ch. 37. 26. cf. Jer. 31. 31-33 with Heb. 8 8-13.
k cf. Lev. 26. 6. cf. Is. 35. 9. cf. Hos. 2. 18-23.
l Jer. 23. 6, etc.
m cf. Gen. 12. 2. cf. Is. 19 24. cf. Zech. 8. 13, 23.

n cf. Is. 2 2-5. o Lev. 26. 4; Ps. 68. 9. p Deut. 28. 12; cf. Ps. 72. 6; cf. Is. 32. 15; cf. Is. 44. 3; cf. Mal. 3. 10-12. q ch. 47. 12; Ps. 67. 6; Is. 35. 1, 2. r Is. 32. 18. s ch. 33. 29, etc. t Ps. 107. 16; Jer. 2. 20; cf. Ps. 116. 16; cf. Lev. 26. 13. t cf. Is. 52. 2, 3; cf. Ps. 18. 17.

That is true, and it is sweet to think how God necessarily supposes that they will know who is spoken of here, the true David, of whom the one in history was only a type. He is to take up David's place and office in a more glorious fashion: David's Son is also David's Lord, "the Beloved," as His name means; and our hearts recognize Him in this way: "He shall feed them, and He shall be their Shepherd." And thus alone it can be that Jehovah will be their God. Thus alone will "the covenant of peace" be theirs—the peace by a covenant never to be broken, and as a consequence, all nature at peace with them, evil beasts gone: "They shall dwell in safety in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods." Eden, but a better Eden, has come for them; and from the hill of God, His dwelling-place among them, the object for every eye and every heart, blessing shall flow out to all the places round about. Heaven yields its seasonable showers: "There shall be showers of blessing." Thus the curse is removed, and the land yields its increase. The tree of the field comes to its fruit, not casts it, and in all this they shall know that it is Jehovah who has brought them into this blessing; it is Jehovah who has burst the bands of their yoke and delivered them; it is Jehovah who has come in with the deliverance which is now eternal. They shall be no more a prey, nor shall they fear it. There shall be no danger nor thought of danger. How blessed to think of such a time at hand, and for a world trodden by the feet of oppressors, as the world has been.

But the attention is turned once more to God's central figure for them: "I will raise up for them," says He, "a plant of renown." Neither shame nor hunger can be their portion when God has done this. "A plant for a name" is the literal rendering, which reminds us at once of the Name in which is all the revelation of God for man, which has been in His thought from the beginning—revelation come to its completion, and all things taking shape according to this. For this Immanuel (Jehovah, revealed in Christ) is among them; the bond of His humanity is never to be broken, and Israel as His people are compassed with those blessed arms which are yet to be seen about the whole creation of God, linking it forever with God. They need not fear, then, to recognize the weakness which as creatures necessarily belongs to them. It is the wholesome lesson which they have taken so long to learn, and which we are all so slow to learn, though a very simple one: "Ye my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord Jehovah."

And they shall [u]no more be a prey to the nations, nor shall the beast of the earth devour them; but they shall dwell in safety, and none shall make them afraid. And I will [v]raise up for them a plant of renown, and they shall be no more consumed with [w]hunger in the land, nor bear the [x]shame* of the nations any more. And they shall know that I Jehovah their God am [y]with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are [z]my people, saith the Lord Jehovah. And ye, [a]my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, are men: I am [b]your God, saith the Lord Jehovah.

*Or, "reproach."

u ch. 36. 15. Jer. 30. 10. cf. 2 Sam. 7. 10. cf. Heb. 10. 17. v cf. Is. 4. 2. cf. Is. 11. 1. cf. Is. 61. 3. w cf. Is. 49, 9, 10. x ch. 36. 3. 7. cf. Is. 51. 22, 23. y Ps. 46. 7, 11. cf. Is. 8. 9, 10. z cf. Hos. 2. 23. a ch. 36. 38. cf. Is. 40. 11. Ps. 78. 52. cf. Jno. 10. 11, 16, 26-30. b ver. 24: cf. 2 Cor. 6. 16-18.

What does this mean?—that we are men. The word is "adam": God "called their name Adam, in the day that He created them"—a name which comes from *adamah*, "the ground." Yes, just to learn that we are men! Have we learnt it? Do we act and speak as if we had truly learnt it? That they were formed out of the clay is not the whole matter, of course, and it is not what made them the offspring of God, or in His likeness, but it is the suited word to keep us humble; yet, even so, it is a word of triumph too, of *God's* triumph, for in them the dust of the ground is made to shine with a new glory. He has taken up this very dust, not putting it away as if the material thing were unsuited for Him, but developing all the capacities which are latent in it, which are not capacities of the spirit but *for* the spirit, in which matter itself becomes a fitted servant of the spirit, and God as the Creator is revealed all through in the goodness of His work. The dust of the ground is become man, and God Himself has met us in Christ, claiming man, even man's flesh as His, of which He is not, and never will be, ashamed. Is it not the display of His glory, is it not His triumph, this wonder of divine condescension, this stooping of divine love?! Yes, men are thus the sheep of His pasture, and they have no cause to forget, but ever to remember and thank and bless Him ever that they are *men*.

Sec. 2.

We have now a prophecy of a wholly different character; it is a natural corollary of what we have had before us. Israel are now the people of God. But "was not Esau Jacob's brother?" It is God's own challenge to Israel in Malachi: "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord. Yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the Lord hath indignation forever. And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The Lord will be magnified from the border of Israel" (Mal. i. 2-5). This is the question which comes up here, Esau was Jacob's brother. Were they so unlike each other after all? Was he not Jacob "the supplanter?"—the man with the hand upon the heel of his brother; the man always intent upon his own gain and little careful as to his means of acquirement; the man who believed in himself and who, if he cannot fully trust God, must act for himself? whose motto, "God helps those who help

SECTION 2 (Chap. XXXV.)

The enemy answered.

And the [c]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying. Son of man, set thy face against [d]Mount Seir, and prophesy against it, and say unto it, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I am [e]against thee, Mount Seir, and I will stretch out my hand upon thee, and I will make thee a [f]desolation and an astonishment. I will lay thy [g]cities waste, and thou shalt be a desolation: and thou shalt [h]know that I am Jehovah. Be-

[c] ch. 21. 1, etc.
[d] *cf.* ch. 20. 46. ch. 25. 8.
[e] ch. 5. 8. Nah. 2. 13.
[f] *cf.* ch. 5. 14, 15. ch. 25. 13.
[g] *cf.* Joel 3. 19. *cf.* Mal. 1. 3, 4.
[h] vers. 9, 12, etc.

themselves" has had wide circulation. It is but the picture of a fallen being, and Jacob was such, we know. Are any of us different? We may take comfort then that God can yet say: "I loved Jacob!" Nay, that He can call Himself "The God of Jacob," which is but another way of saying, *The God of grace.* Jacob has another name, as we know, but that is what he is by the work of God, by that only. This "worm" Jacob can only by divine fashioning become a threshing instrument which shall "thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and make the hills as chaff" (Isa. xli. 15). Upon these two names, Jacob and Israel, God dwells in contrast all through their history. It is the history essentially of every soul that has learnt what divine grace is; as Esau's, on the other hand, is the history of a soul that has never learnt grace, and whose misery is this, not only that he has never learnt it, but resists it.

This lesson, which God is holding up before us all, Esau might have learnt, but did not. God has sworn that He has no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, and Ezekiel has borne witness to this. But He has but one way of acceptance and blessing, and not another; and he that will not learn this must be without the blessing, akin as he may be naturally, as indeed he is, to his brother that has obtained it. But thus there arises the perpetual grudge and enmity that the Edomite has against the Israelite, and it is an enmity which is really to God, to God's thoughts and ways. Thus we need not wonder if it come into special consideration here, just when Israel comes into his blessing, which is also the time when Edom is finally cast out.

The prophet is instructed to set his face against Mount Seir and prophesy against it, and say: "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah. Behold, I am against thee, Mount Seir, and I will stretch out my hand upon thee, and will make thee a desolation and an astonishment." Mount Seir is Edom's possession, a "rough," or "rugged place," as the word means. Esau has chosen for himself; therefore he has not chosen well. Does ever any one choose well who chooses for himself? When Abram stood with Lot in the land which God had told him was to be his by divine gift, the man of faith could say in the liberality which comes from faith, "Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right: or if thou depart to the left hand, then I will go to the right," but Lot was of another mind: "Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan that it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah—even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other" (Gen. xiii. 9–11). Alas, they were separated by more than locality, and we know the

cause thou hast had perpetual [i]enmity, and hast given over the children of Israel to the power of the sword in the time of their [j]calamity, in the time of the iniquity of the end; therefore, as I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I will appoint thee to [k]blood, and blood shall pursue thee; since thou hast not hated blood, therefore blood shall pursue thee. And I will make Mount Seir a desolation and an astonishment, and [l]cut off from it him that passeth through, and him that returneth; and I will [m]fill his mountains with his slain: in thy hills, and in thy valleys, and in all thy watercourses shall they fall that are slain with the sword. I will make thee [n]perpetual desolations, and thy cities shall not be inhabited: and ye shall know that I am Jehovah.

Because thou hast said, These two nations and these two countries shall be [o]mine, and we will possess it,

[i] *cf.* ch.25.12. *cf.* Gen. 27. 41, 42. *cf.* Ps.137.7.
[j] *cf.* Jer.18.21. *cf.* Obad. 13.
[k] *cf.* Ps. 109. 16-18. *cf.* Is.63.1-6. *cf.* Rev. 16. 5-7.
[l] *cf.* ch.29.11. *cf.* 2 Chron. 15. 5, 6.
[m] ch. 31. 12, etc. *cf.* Amos 1. 12. *cf.* Is. 34. 2-6, etc.
[n] ch. 25. 13. Jer. 14. 17, 18. Zeph. 2. 9.
[o] ch. 36. 5. *cf.* Ps. 83. 4-12. *cf.* Obad. 12, 13.

after-history of Lot's fatal choice. In a sense, God was before him also. This plain of Jordan was it not like the Garden of God? All this that spoke so alluringly to his heart, was it not of God, and good? Why should he not enjoy what God had made so manifestly for enjoyment? Alas, how is it that we can forget how sin has disordered everything, even to the very eyes that look upon things now? And Lot chose, as we know, what did not become to him a Mount Seir only because God had mercy towards him—only that God forbade it to be that to him! Lot was to be driven out, as he was driven out, and that was God's mercy to him; but Edom, the profane person, had chosen in deliberate profaneness, and Mount Seir accordingly was his.

Alas, when God has to give according to one's own desire merely, and not according to what would be for His heart a gift! Mount Seir was Esau's choice; yet it could not, after all, remain his. The things that we choose naturally are things which cannot abide because we would have them do so; for there is a judgment of God which may follow, though we see it not, of which we may be warned and yet have no eyes to see. And Edom was to know that God is Jehovah, the true and unchanging God in what He threatens, as in what He promises. Yet the portion of Jacob invited Edom too. But the kind of craving he had for it only stirred in his heart as enmity against its possessor; and thus Edom is the typical enemy of Israel through all his history. That is the point here: "Because thou hast had perpetual enmity, and hast given over the children of Israel to the power of the sword in the time of their calamity, in the time of the iniquity of the end; therefore, as I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I will appoint thee to blood, and blood shall pursue thee. Since thou hast not hated blood, therefore blood shall pursue thee." We have already had this in brief in a former prophecy, but God returns to dwell upon it for the lesson that is in it, a lesson that we may all well ponder. He that will nurse enmity in his soul shall be himself pursued by the enmity that he nurses, and when this is enmity to God and to His grace, however he may disguise it, it will necessarily be judged as such, and the end is sure. Edom is the ancient infidel as to God. He sees Israel's land, but he does not see Jehovah's presence in it. Thus he thinks to possess himself of that in which he finds Jehovah as his adversary, and the bitter fruit of his unbelief is made good

whereas [p]Jehovah was there: therefore, as I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I will do [q]according to thine anger, and according to thine envy, that which thou hast done out of thy hatred against them; and I will [r]make myself known among them when I shall judge thee. And thou shalt know that I Jehovah have [s]heard all thine insults which thou hast uttered against the mountains of Israel, saying, They are laid desolate, they are given us to devour. And ye have [t]magnified yourselves against me with your mouth, and have multiplied your words against me: I have heard it. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: When the [u]whole earth rejoiceth I will make thee a desolation. As [v]thou didst rejoice over the inheritance of the house of Israel because it was desolate, so will I do unto thee: thou shalt be a desolation, O Mount Seir, and all Edom, the whole of it: and they shall [w]know that I am Jehovah.

p *cf.* Ps. 48. 1-3.
cf. Is. 12. 6.
q Ps. 137. 7.
cf. Ps. 9. 16.
cf. Mt. 7. 2.
r *cf.* Ps. 76. 1-3.
cf. Is. 49. 26.
cf. Is. 60. 16.
s *cf.* Ps. 94. 9, 10.
cf. Is. 37. 4, 23.
t *cf.* Is. 10 13-15.
cf. Mal 3.13.
cf. 2 Pet 2.18.
u *cf.* Is 14.7,8.
cf. Is.65.13-15.
cf. Lk.16 25.
v ch. 36. 2-5.
cf. Prov.17.5.
cf. Lam.4.21.
cf. Obad. 12, 15.
w vers. 4, 9. ch. 39. 6, etc.

to him as what he has indeed chosen, little as he knew the character of his choice. Was there not plenty in Israel to provoke righteous wrath against them? Yes, and God had to show this as against their misdeeds.

But the enemy's wrath is not righteous; it is of another character. It is against Jehovah at bottom, as all unbelief is; and this is what comes out in result here. The question is not between Edom and Israel, but between Edom and God. If they said of the mountains of Israel that they were desolate, was it not true? But they did not discern the difference between chastening and rejection: therefore they said, "They are given us to devour." But if Israel can for the time cast themselves out of the very land that is their own, Edom can never enjoy it: "Ye have magnified yourselves against *Me* with your mouth, and have multiplied your words against *Me*. I have heard it. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; When the whole earth rejoiceth, I will make thee a desolation. As thou didst rejoice over the inheritance of the house of Israel because it was desolate, so will I do unto thee. Thou shalt be a desolation, O Mount Seir, and all Edom, the whole of it; and they shall know"—what a wail there is once more in this, "they shall know—that I am Jehovah."

Sec. 3.

We have now the work of restoration, of re-organization, accomplished first of all in the land once more becoming Israel's. Jehovah claims it from its would-be possessors, and gives it back to Israel. But, that they may enjoy it, a deeper work must be done in the nation itself, and thus we have the Lord sprinkling clean water upon them to make them clean, and putting within them a new heart and a new spirit. In the third place we have the resurrection of the nation as such, their political resurrection, the embodiment in a fitting manner of the new life; and for this Judah and Ephraim, so long sundered, must come together. God can lose nothing of that which, through grace, is now to be owned as His. There must be no final triumph of the power of evil anywhere. The work of restoration is thus to be completed; but the seal of their new condition and the perfect blessing which is to be theirs forever—the return of the glory of God, which Ezekiel had seen depart, but which henceforth is to be in brighter display in the restored city—remains yet to be given

SECTION 3 (Chaps. xxxvi., xxxvii).

Restoration and reorganization.

1 (xxxvi. 1-15): The land claimed by Jehovah and given back to Israel.

1. And thou, son of man, prophesy unto the [x] mountains of Israel, and say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of Jehovah. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Because the [y] enemy hath said against you, Aha! and the ancient high places are [z] ours in possession: therefore prophesy, and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Because, yea, because they have [a] made you desolate, and swallowed you up on every side, that ye might be a possession unto the residue of the nations, and ye are taken up on the lips of talkers, and the [b] defamation of the people: therefore, ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord Jehovah. Thus saith the Lord

x *cf.* ch. 6. 2, 3. *cf.* ch. 33. 28. *cf.* ch. 34. 14. *cf.* ch. 37. 22. *cf.* Mic. 4. 1.
y ch. 35. 15. ch. 25. 3. ch. 26. 2.
z ver. 5. *cf.* Deut. 32. 13. ch. 35. 10. *cf.* Jer. 49. 1.
a *cf.* Is. 10. 13–15. *cf.* Mic. 3. 12.
b Deut. 28. 37. 1 Ki. 9. 7, 8. Ps. 44. 13, 14. *cf.* Ps. 79. 10.

us. It has a place by itself, therefore, as the crown of their blessed condition when the city itself shall be known upon earth as the dwelling-place of God with man, *Jehovah Shammah*, "The Lord is there."

1. We have, first of all, Jehovah's word to the land itself. This is in plain connection with the claim which the Edomite enemy had made to possess it. It must be vindicated from this reproach, therefore. The land is really Jehovah's land, and He certainly has never forfeited it, and will never give it up to those who are His enemies. Israel are to possess it upon the surest ground possible—that of God's *grace*. They are to be sojourners with Him, to be His guests, and thus to know all the resources of His hand, as well as the full protection necessitated by this relationship.

Thus Ezekiel is instructed now to prophesy to the mountains of Israel, and say: "Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of Jehovah: thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Because the enemy hath said against you, Aha, and the ancient high places have become ours in possession: therefore prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Because, yea, because they have made you desolate, and have swallowed you up on every side, that ye might be a possession to the remnant of the nations, and ye are taken up on the lips of talkers, and the defamation of the people; therefore, ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord Jehovah." These mountains have been addressed before, in the sixth chapter, but in far other terms. They were then the seats of an idolatry which dared to lift its head in a special manner in the high places of the land. Desolation had come upon them, therefore; and the enemy had taken it up as a reproach both to them and to Jehovah Himself. But these mountains of Israel, very far from being what we have seen Mount Seir to be (the indication of the folly of Esau's choice and the barrenness of the portion which had thus become his own), were characteristically verdant and fruitful mountains, the places of pasture for the flock; they also were in testimony to the condition of a people whom Jehovah owned as His: round about whom He stood as the mountains round about Jerusalem. Their foundations must be upon the earth, but their tops were lifted high into the light and glory of heaven. How different from their condition since!—a reproach, in their present barrenness, in the sight of those that look upon them—the types, as so many suppose, of the hopeless forfeiture of all things by the people to whom they belonged! How often Jehovah de-

Jehovah to the [c]mountains and to the hills, to the water-courses and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes and to the [d]cities that are forsaken, which are become a prey and derision to the residue of the nations that are round about; therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Surely in the fire of my [e]jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the nations, and against all [f]Edom, that have appointed my land unto themselves for a possession with the joy of all their heart, with [g]spite of soul, to take possession of it for a prey. Therefore prophesy concerning the land of Israel, and say to the mountains and to the hills, to the water-courses and to the valleys, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I have spoken in my jealousy and in my wrath, because ye have borne the [h]reproach of the nations; therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I have [i]lifted up my hand [saying], Surely the [j]nations that are about you, they shall bear their shame. And ye, mountains of Israel, shall [k]shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people Israel; for they are at [l]hand to come. For, behold, I am [m]for you, and will [n]turn unto you, and ye shall be [o]tilled and sown. And

c ver. 1. *cf.* Lk. 19. 41–44.
d ch. 6. 14. *cf.* Jer. 33. 10 13.
e Deut. 4. 24. *cf.* Is. 66. 15, 16.
f ch. 25 12–14.
g Amos 1. 11.
h vers. 3, 15. *cf.* Ps. 123. 3, 4.
i ch. 20. 5, 15. Deut. 32. 40. *cf.* Rev. 10. 5.
j *cf.* Jer. 25. 9, 15 29. *cf.* Amos 1. 3, 6, 9, 11, 13. *cf.* Amos 2. 1. *cf.* Zeph. 2. 4, etc.
k *cf.* Ps. 65. 9–13. *cf.* Is. 27. 6. *cf.* Hos. 2. 21, 23.
l *cf.* ch. 12. 25 *cf.* Jas 5. 8, 9.
m *cf.* Rom. 8. 31.
n *cf.* ch. 6, 2, 3.
o *cf.* Ps. 60. 1. *cf.* Joel 3. 18; *cf.* Zech. 8. 12.

clared here that He has pledged Himself by His never-to-be-broken word, to their revival!

That word therefore takes in all the land: "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah to the mountains and to the hills, to the water-courses and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes and the cities that are forsaken, which have become a prey and a derision to the remnant of the nations that are round about; therefore, thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the remnant of the nations, and against the whole of Edom who have appointed my land unto themselves for a possession with the joy of all their heart, with spite of soul, to take possession of it for a prey." This is all that the enemy could do. Make it yield its fruit to him, he could not; and already we see this in the long Sabbaths in which the land has rested while Israel has been banished from it. To none of the nations would it yield its strength, and the people who are in present possession are just those who can be readily characterized as mere plunderers, and nothing else. But this suits, in the meanwhile, Jehovah's purpose. With all this, they are as it were, His watchmen against the intrusion of those who might take it up with more serious intent to make their own out of it. The hordes that sweep over it still, the government under which it remains and under which everything like prosperity is impossible, all this is but the sign that the land is still waiting for her true inhabitants.

The prophet is instructed, therefore, to speak to the mountains and to the hills, to the water-courses and to the valleys, and to declare to them that they shall yet shoot forth their branches and yield their fruit to His people Israel, as a people who are at His hand, ready to come. The people, as we know, are kept as distinct as ever they were, under the same repression meanwhile as their land has been. Jerusalem is to "be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." If we see, as surely we do see now, the

I will [p]multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, the whole of it; and the cities shall be [q]inhabited, and the waste places shall be built. And I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and be fruitful; and I will cause you to be inhabited as in your [r]former estate, yea, I will do [s]better [unto you] than at your beginnings: and ye shall [t]know that I am Jehovah. And I will cause men to walk upon you, even my people Israel; and they shall [u]possess thee, and thou shalt be their inheritance, and thou shalt no more henceforth [v]bereave them of children. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Because they say unto you, Thou [w]devourest men and hast bereaved thy nation, therefore thou shalt devour men [x]no more, neither [y]bereave thy nation any more, saith the Lord Jehovah; neither will I cause thee to hear any more the [z]reproach of the nations, and thou shalt no more bear the [a]scorn of the peoples, nor shalt thou cause thy nation to stumble any more, saith the Lord Jehovah.

2 (xxxvi. 16-38): A new heart and a new spirit given with increase.

2. And the [b]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land they [c]defiled it by their way and by their doings: their way was before me as the [d]uncleanness of a woman in her separation. And I [e]poured out my

p ver. 37. *cf.* Is. 60. 2.
q *cf.* Jer. 30. 18-21. *cf.* Is. 51. 3. *cf.* Is. 61. 4.
r Jer. 30. 18. Jer. 31. 38-40. *cf.* Obad. 19-21.
s *cf.* Is. 30. 26. *cf.* Joel 3. 18-21. *cf.* Hag. 2. 6-9. *cf.* Zech. 8. 11-15. *cf.* Heb. 8. 8-13.
t ch. 35. 9, etc.
u *cf.* Jer. 32. 15, 42-44.
v *etc.* Jer. 15. 7.
w *cf.* Num. 13. 32.
x *cf.* ch. 37. 25-28. *cf.* Amos 9. 14, 15. *cf.* Is. 60. 20-22.
y *cf.* Zech. 9. 8. *etc.* Is. 60. 21. *cf.* ch. 7. 19. *cf.* ch. 34. 29. ver. 6. Is. 54. 4. *cf.* Mic. 7.

8 10. *a cf.* Zeph. 2. 8. *cf.* Ps. 89. 50. *b* ch. 35. 1, etc. *c cf.* Lev. 18. 24-28; *cf.* Num. 35. 33, 34; *cf.* Ps. 106. 37, 38; *cf.* Jer. 2. 7, etc. *d cf.* Lev. 15. 19, etc. with Lk. 8. 43, etc. *e* ch. 21. 31, etc. *cf.* Ps. 74. 1.

people gathering back, and the land sought to by them for a new occupation, we have in all this the proof that God is ready to turn His face towards them and to their land alike. It would then be seen far other than as the eye of the stranger has seen and the scoff of the infidel has declared it, a land that has but devoured its inhabitants. It is to be, as the faithfulness of God is pledged to make it, a land that shall be "the glory of all lands," a land upon which His eye rests continually: "I will multiply men upon you—all the house of Israel, the whole of it; and the cities shall be inhabited, and the waste places shall be built, and I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and be fruitful." Thus has God pledged Himself; and, as in other cases, if He restore it is not merely to the old fruitfulness, to the condition at the beginning, but to one far better than at the beginning. The reproach of the nations shall be entirely removed from it, and His glory shall be more fully seen than ever where men have assumed to see His dishonor.

2. The prophet now turns from the land to the people themselves. The condition of the land was but the reflection of their own condition. If Joshua sees the people flee before their enemies, and in astonishment and dismay falls before God to ask, "And what wilt Thou do for thy great name?" the sufficient and only answer is, "Israel hath sinned." But Israel has resisted the lesson of their scattered condition, and have turned it even into a matter of self-glorying as if it were the sins of others that they were bearing and making atonement for! Thus they have interpreted Isaiah liii. God here asserts against them that it is judgment on account of their condition. They have defiled the land with their idolatry, and He scattered them among the nations, and they

wrath upon them for the [f]blood which they had shed upon the land, and because they had defiled it with their [g]idols. And I [h]scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed through the countries: [i]according to their way and according to their doings I judged them. And when they came to the nations whither they went, they [j]profaned my holy name when it was said of them, These are the [k]people of Jehovah, and are gone forth out of his land. But I have pity for my [l]holy name which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations whither they went. Therefore, say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I do [m]not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for my holy name which ye have profaned among the nations whither ye went. And I will [n]sanctify my great name which hath been profaned among the nations, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the [o]nations shall know that I am Jehovah, saith the Lord Jehovah, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. And I will [p]take you from among the nations, and [q]gather you out of all the countries, and will [r]bring you into your own land. And I will sprinkle clean [s]water upon you, and ye shall be clean:

f *cf.* ch. 23 37. *cf.* Gen. 4. 10, 11.
g *cf.* Is. 66 17, 18.
h Lev. 26. 33. Amos 9. 9.
i ch. 39. 24. *cf.* Gal 6 7, 8.
j *cf.* Is. 52. 5 with Rom. 2. 24
k *cf.* Ex. 32. 11–13. *cf.* Josh. 7. 9. *cf.* Jer. 33. 24.
l ch. 20. 9, 14, 22. *cf.* Ps. 79. 9.
m *cf.* Deut. 7. 7, 8. *cf.* Dan. 9. 18.
n *cf.* ch. 28. 22. *cf.* Lev. 10. 3.
o ch. 39. 27, 28. *cf.* Ps. 126. 2.
p ch. 34. 13. *cf.* Ps. 107. 2, 3.
q *cf.* Is. 11. 11–16. *cf.* Is. 43. 5, 6. *cf.* Jer. 30. 3.
r *cf.* Jer. 23. 3–8.

cf. Is. 27. 12, 13; *cf.* Jer. 31. 8, 9; *cf.* Jer. 32. 43, 44. s *cf.* Lev. 14. 5–7; *cf.* Is. 52. 15; *cf.* Tit. 3. 5, 6; *cf.* Jno. 3. 5; *cf.* Heb. 10. 22; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 23; Eph. 5. 26.

have been dispersed through the countries. According to their ways and according to their doings He has judged them: nor can they say that it was for their sin before they were carried captive into Babylon, but that since then they have been clear. They were, in fact, permitted to go back into their land, in order that they might, with the lesson of their past before them, receive the One who alone could atone for the iniquities they had committed. But to these sins they have added the crowning sin of rejecting Him who came to them, aforeannounced by the prophets, with the signs and wonders with which God sealed the testimony that He gave. Thus they have bought for themselves an Aceldama with the price of His betrayal. Thank God, for this also there can be and will be forgiveness; for grace shall yet manifest itself for them above all their sins! But how vain to plead that that to which the prophet looks on here, was the termination of their scattered condition—a condition which was expressly the judgment for their sins—when we go on to that which follows here! Have they ever been taken from among the nations and gathered out from all the countries and brought to their own land? Have they ever, with a new heart and a new spirit, entered upon the possession of that from which they are no more to be alienated? It is impossible honestly to read a prophecy such as we have here and not to see that the scattering which began at Babylon has never really come to its end for God; but that they are still abiding, as Hosea declared they should abide, "many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim" (Hos. iii. 4). Their idolatrous ensigns have indeed passed from them; but recover themselves from that in which their sins have involved them, they never can until, as another prophet has declared, "they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for an only son . . . In

from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. And I will give you a [t]new heart, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will [u]take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a [v]heart of flesh. And I will put my [w]Spirit within you, and cause you to [x]walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the [y]land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be [z]my people, and I will be your God. And I will [a]save you from all your uncleannesses; and I will call for the [b]grain, and will multiply it, and lay [c]no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the trees and the [d]increase of the field, so that ye may receive no more the reproach of famine among the nations. And ye shall [e]remember your evil ways, and your doings that were not good; and ye shall [f]loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations. [g]Not for your sake do I this, saith the Lord Jehovah, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel.

t *cf.* Deut. 30. 6. *cf.* Ps. 51. 10. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 17.
u ch 11.19,20. *cf.* Zech. 7. 12. *cf.* Mt. 13. 5, 20, 21.
v *cf.* Heb. 8. 10.
w ch 37. 14. *cf.* Joel 2.28, 29. *cf.* Is. 44. 3. *ctr.* Eph. 1. 13.
x ch. 37. 24. *cf.* Ps. 15. 2. *cf.* Gal. 6. 15, 16.
y ch. 28. 25, 26.
z Jer. 30. 22. Hos. 1. 10. Zech. 13. 9. *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 16-18. *cf.* Rev. 21. 3, 7.
a *cf.* Hos. 14. 2, 4, 8. *cf.* Zech. 13. 1. *cf.* Mt. 1.21. *b* vers. 8, 9; *cf.* Hos. 2. 21, 23; Ps. 65. 13. *c ctr.* Joel 2. 21-27; *cf.* Jer. 14. 1-6 *d cf.* Ps. 67. 6, 7; *ctr.* Deut. 29. 22. *e* ch. 16.61-63. *cf.* Dan. 9. 4-20. *f cf.* Job 42. 6; *cf.* Isa. 6. 5. *g* Deut. 9. 5; Ps. 115. 1; *cf.* Tit. 3. 3-6.

that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. xii. 10; xiii. 1). God will fulfil His word, but only in His appointed way, and the cleansing of His people can only come when He sprinkles upon them that "clean water" which, as a type of old, declared the virtue of a sacrifice before completed—not a work of atonement as then newly wrought, but the verity of that which, blessed be God, still abides for them when faith in them shall be able to claim it.

There is a remarkable connection here between the 51st psalm and the prophet's declaration. This is the answer from God to their prayer, as it is prophetically given us in the psalm referred to. The prayer is: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow . . . Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me" (Ps. li. 7, 10). Put this in connection with the promise here: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean . . . and I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit will I put within you." How plainly the one corresponds to the other, while there is indeed, as one might expect, a greater fulness in the answer than in the prayer! That this 51st psalm is, in fact, the voice of the people when they shall turn to God in the latter days, has been seen by many, and the proof of it has been fully given elsewhere. (See Ps. li., *Notes.*) It was David's voice that utters it, no doubt, but the personal application to himself is plainly not all, and this "Purge me with hyssop" clearly refers to the language in Ezekiel—to that sprinkling which is for cleansing from defilement with the dead, and speaks of a more terrible defilement of the people, and of God's provision for it in a sacrifice whose virtue, as already said, still abides for them. It is like that other remarkable ordinance for the day of atonement, when the sins of the people are carried away by the scape-goat, which does not

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: In the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause also the [h]cities to be inhabited, and the waste places shall be builded. And the land that was desolate shall be [i]tilled, whereas it was a desolation in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become [j]like the garden of Eden; and the [k]waste and desolate and ruined cities are fortified and inhabited. And the [l]nations that shall be left round about you shall know that I Jehovah build the ruined places and plant that which was desolate: I Jehovah have [m]spoken it, and will do it.

h Zech 8.7,8. cf. Is. 40. 9.
i cf. Deut. 29. 24 with Jer.32.42-44. cf. Is. 35.1,2.
j Is 51. 3. etc. Joel 2.3.
k etc. Is 29. 1-6 with Ps. 48.2,12-14.
l cf ch. 17. 24. cf. ch. 34.28-30. ch. 37. 28. ch.39.23,etc.
m cf. Nu. 23. 19. cf. 2 Chr.6.4.

make atonement for them, but which is identified with an atonement already made. (See Leviticus xvi., *Notes.*) The priest has carried in the blood of the offering for them—the blood of the first goat; but no answer as to it comes forth for them while the priest is himself hidden in the sanctuary into which he is entered. When he comes out again, the scapegoat (identified with the first goat in the work which has been accomplished before, and which is not repeated) carries away the iniquities of the nation to a land cut off. Thus, in fact, Israel will be met by the power and virtue of an atonement made before our Great High Priest passed into heaven. There He remains, and so long as He remains there hidden from them, Israel have practically no atonement for them nationally. Their sins are not put away.

How perfectly this is in keeping with the sprinkling of water in which are the ashes of a sacrifice before offered—the memorial of a before-accomplished work. It is then only that this word is carried out: "From all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you." They abide as yet under the condemnation of their sins, as it is plain that nationally a new heart and a new spirit, which are the accompaniment of this, have never yet become theirs. Had it been so, that which follows immediately here would have taken place, and a fulness of blessing would be theirs, in which their whole condition would bear witness to the reality of what God is yet to do for them. It is not mere reformation; it is no work such as man can perform. If David witnesses that God must create in him a clean heart, so the promise here declares: "I will give you a new heart." It is the new heart that He will give which can alone alter their condition, a new heart which is itself the effect of a new spirit put within them.

The words at once remind us of the Lord's declaration to Nicodemus, that the Israelite also needed to be born again in order to inherit the kingdom of God. Water and Spirit the Lord puts together in these words: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;" "born of the Spirit" implies, therefore, a new spirit in the person so born—a new and divine nature from the Almighty Worker of every true work that has ever been done in man. (See John iii., *Notes.*)

For this, the heart of stone must be taken out of the flesh, that a heart of flesh—a true feeling and tender heart—may be theirs. To this is added the blessed assurance: "I will put my Spirit within you," and thus, as the glory rests upon Jerusalem itself in the days that we are so shortly to contemplate, there is to be for all His saved among the people a personal assurance of this glorious reality. "I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments and do them." Then follows that for which only now they are fit, and are seenre in it: "Ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God."

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I will yet for this be [n]inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will [o]increase them with men like a flock. As the [p]holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem at her appointed [q]feasts, so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men: and they shall [r]know that I am Jehovah.

n cf. Jer. 29. 11-14. cf. Jer. 50. 4, 5. cf. Zech. 13 9. o ver. 10, etc. p ch. 34. 11, etc. q cf. Deut 16. 16, etc.; cf. Ps. 80. 1 with Is. 40. 11. r ch. 37. 28, etc.

The increase of the land follows as a necessary consequence. Israel's portion is in the earth, and therefore nature itself is a witness to the relation in which they stand to God. It has been largely a witness against them, as we know. It is yet to bear testimony of another kind. Christians are taken out of the world, and are strangers and pilgrims in it: their portion is elsewhere. But, alas, with Christians also there can be a reproach of famine, which is the index of how they stand with God. How many have gone down to Egypt, as Abraham did of old, because of a famine in *their own* things! Our land is indeed "the glory of all lands;" but it is, above all things, a dependent land, and if we are not in communion with God we have less than any others; for the world is a wilderness for us, however much we may dream of plenty in it, while our own portion, though not denied us, surely, can yet be found only by those who *dwell* in it. The word is still for us, "Dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." It is not so much the knowledge of the evil we have brought upon ourselves that brings repentance, but, in its full character, it is the wonder of the Lord's grace that does so; as the apostle says, "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance," so it will be when Israel shall have been brought back into their land by the mercy of God, and find His abundant welcome in the light of His glorious presence. They shall indeed remember their evil ways and their doings that were not good, and loathe themselves for their iniquities and abominations.

Meanwhile God is acting for Himself, as He declares here. He is in a measure doing in Israel what we shall know in a still brighter scene and in all its fulness, when God shall show "the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." It is not only for their sakes or for our sakes that God takes up any, but He delights to make Himself known in all that He is —the depths of the riches of His wisdom as well as of His love. Thus He has a sure ground upon which to act, and we have an unchallengeable blessing, which never can be forfeited. If God is going to show "the exceeding riches of His grace," where can we limit that? What wondrous revelations are implied here! It is good, while we are thinking of all the prophet here sets before us, to realize that they are but the figures of the things which belong to us—not indeed in the sense in which so many would make them figures, as depriving Israel of their just title to them, for the apostle of the Gentiles has assured us that these Old Testament promises belong to his "kinsmen according to the flesh:" it seems idle, therefore, to discuss whether these promises do belong to Israel. The earth at that time will be, as it were, a reflection of the heavens that are opened over it. But we shall have to trace this more fully in our prophet when we reach the final chapters. There is no confusion between the earthly and the heavenly spheres of blessing, and there is no excuse for any making confusion. Correspondence there is indeed, and we shall find many a lesson in seeking to trace this.

God has not forgotten man and the earth, and He is not going to drop it out of sight and have done with it. It is the scene of His own Son's sufferings, and the earth itself has been purchased by Him. It shall therefore be redeemed, not done away. The millennial blessing itself is but a step to the full glory of it. It is its regeneration time, according to the Word elsewhere (Matt. xix. 28), the time when evil shall be put down and righteousness shall rule, but not yet

3 (xxxvii): The resurrection of the body.
1 (1-14): Life in the Spirit.

3. [1] The [x]hand of Jehovah was upon me, and Jehovah [t]carried me out in the Spirit, and set me down in the midst of a [u]valley; and it was full of [v]bones. And he caused me to [w]pass by them round about; and, behold, there were many in the open valley; and, behold, they were very [z]dry. And he said unto me, Son of man, [y]can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord Jehovah, [z]thou knowest. And he said unto me, [a]Prophesy over these bones, and say unto them, Ye [b]dry bones, [c]hear the word of Jehovah. Thus saith the Lord unto these bones: Behold, I will cause [d]breath to enter into you, and ye shall live. And I will put [e]sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall [f]know that I am Jehovah.

x ch. 1. 3, etc
t ch. 8. 3. ch. 11. 24. cf. 2 Cor. 12. 1-4.
cf. Rev. 1. 10, etc.
u ctr. ch. 17. 22-24
cf. Zech. 12. 11.
cf. Zech. 14. 4, 5.
v cf. Ps 141.7 Ver. 11
w cf. Neh. 2. 12-16.
cf. Lk. 19.41 etc.
ctr. Ps. 48. 12-14.
z cf. Ps. 32. 4
cf. Eph. 2. 1
y cf. Rom. 11. 15; cf. Jer. 30. 10-17. z cf. Jer. 32. 17, 27; cf. Rom. 4. 17. a ctr. 1 Ki. 13. 2; cf. 1 Ki. 17. 20-22 cf. Lk. 3. 2, etc. b cf. Acts 17. 30. c cf. Is. 26. 19; cf. Is. 42. 18; cf. Jno. 5. 25. d cf. Gen. 2. 7 cf. 1 Pet. 1. 23; cf. Jno. 1. 3-8. e vers. 8-10; cf. 2 Ki. 5. 14; cf. Jer. 30. 17. f ch. 36. 38, etc.

the time when it will be utterly banished. That there comes between this and the time of full blessing, the passing away of the heavens and earth to be replaced by new heavens and a new earth, has been misapprehended so as to make a great mistake in the way. The earth passes—is to be changed—just as the body passes from the corruptible to the incorruptible, from the state of dishonor which sin has caused, to the state of glory; but the identification of the risen man with the man who toiled and suffered and sinned upon earth is no less complete on this account. We speak of a "new man" when we do not mean *another* man in the strict sense of the word; so we speak of "a new earth" which will indeed be that, as every one shall realize, yet *not another* earth, but the earth made new—a realized fulfilment of God's thoughts with regard to the earth when He created it. We do not go on to that here. Save in a single expression, Old Testament prophecy is limited to the millennium as its outlook, and then that kingdom shall have begun in which, under the rule of Him who is the perfect Revealer of the mind of God, that which is eternal will be perfected. What we have here is, on the one side, the trial of man still, but, on the other, God is finally inviting (by the display of all this beauty and the manifestation of His truth and grace) men to enjoy it. Revelation assures us that even then, as there will be hearts obdurate to it all the way through, so there will be a final outbreak even under those glorious skies. It is the necessary manifestation of what has been kept down by power throughout the millennial reign, in order that judgment may make the clean work which it must finally do that perfect blessing may come in.

And what a witness to man will be that which we find here; and they shall say: "This land that was desolate is become like the Garden of Eden, and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are fortified and inhabited!" There is no room for doubt or question any longer but that Jehovah has done this. There will be no skeptics or atheists in those days; yet, alas, the enmity of man's heart will not be removed even by that wondrous vision. "The nations that shall be left round about you shall know that I Jehovah build the ruined places, and plant that which was desolate. I Jehovah have spoken it, and will do it."

That which follows immediately is not necessarily a condition that God will "yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them;" but, rather, the assurance that they *will*. It does not involve, as some seem to imagine, that the actual unbelief of the nation at the present time has set aside such promises as these which have been given them. The Lord goes on imme-

And I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and, behold, a rustling, and the bones [g]came together, bone to its bone. And I beheld, and, lo, sinews and flesh came up upon them, and [h]skin covered them above; but there was [i]no breath in them. Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the [j]wind, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. And I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath [k]came into them, and they lived, and [l]stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great [m]army.

g cf. Jer 50.4 *cf.* Ezra 2.1
h cf. Neh. 10. 29.
i cf. Mt. 23. 13-28.
j vers. 5, 14. *cf.* Jno. 3. 8. *cf.* Acts 2. 2. *k cf.* Ps. 104. 30. *cf.* Rev. 11. 11. *cf.* Prov. 1. 23. *l cf.* Lk. 7. 14, 15. *cf.* Jno. 11. 43, 44. *cf.* Is. 51. 17. *cf.* Is. 52.1,2.
m cf. Is. 60. 8, 9; *cf.* Ps. 149. 6–9.

diately with His assurances, which certainly do not rest upon any foundation less broad than that upon which He has set them. God is acting for the glory of His name, and who shall disappoint Him? "I will increase them with men," He says, "like a flock, as the holy flock; as the flock of Jerusalem at her appointed times; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men, and they shall know that I am Jehovah."

3. We have still to see this restoration of Israel stamped as a resurrection; God bringing them out of a condition in which even to themselves all hope is lost. They are but as the dry bones of the slain, of which, if the question be raised, "Can these bones live?" the answer can only be in God's hands. The new life of the nation is truly a resurrection. The stamp which God is putting upon all things here is to be put distinctly upon this people yet. It will not be by their own efforts or achievements—as they are thinking and planning now—that they will become all that the prophets have declared that they shall become. Nothing but the quickening breath of God can accomplish it for them, and for this they have yet to be brought down into the dust, even after all that they have suffered for these centuries, in order that they may learn their needed lesson of abasement and may learn the grace to which, as they shall finally own, they owe everything.

[1] We have two parts in this chapter: First, new life in the Spirit is given to the nation which thus becomes miraculously reorganized; while, in the second part we have what must be in order for this, the healing of the long breach between Judah and Ephraim, so that the nation as a whole shall re-attain its unity and under the true David, from whom, alas, they have alike gone astray. "The hand of Jehovah was upon me, and Jehovah carried me out in the Spirit, and set me down in the midst of a valley, and it was full of bones; and He caused me to pass by them round about, and behold, there were very many on the face of the valley, and behold, they were very dry." There is no mingling here of the dead and the living as the prophet sees them. They are altogether those from whom not merely life is departed, but who are the mere dry and scattered relics of the dead. The prophet is challenged by the question: "Son of man, can these bones live?" To man of course this is impossible. The passage from death to life has never been achieved, save by the power of God alone; and this, spite of all their present thoughts, is the condition out of which God at last revives them. It is not the actual condition of the nation at present in which, as we know, there are yet those who live—live spiritually. "Blindness *in part* is happened unto Israel." It is true that these are, in the mind of God, no more part of the people according to the flesh; they have lost their Jewish hopes, to find in the loving mercy of God far better ones. When the Lord shall have removed His present people to Himself, the Church, this

And he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole [n]house of Israel. Behold, they say, Our [o]bones are dried up, and our hope is lost: we are [p]cut off. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will open your [q]graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, O my people, and bring you into the [r]land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am Jehovah, when I have opened your graves, and caused you to come up out of your graves, O my people. And I will put my [s]Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I will place you in your own land: and ye shall [t]know that I Jehovah have spoken it, and have done it, saith Jehovah.

n vers. 16,19
cf. Is. 11. 12, 13.
cf. 1 Ki. 18. 31, 32.
o *cf.* Nu. 17. 6, 12, 13.
cf. Ps. 77. 7, 9
cf. Is. 49. 14.
cf. Lam. 2. 21, 22
cf. Lam. 3. 4
p *cf.* Hos. 1. 6, 9.
cf. 2 Chr. 36. 14–21.
q Hos. 13. 14. Dan. 12. 2.
r ch. 25. 3.
s ch. 36. 27.
cf. ch. 11. 19. ch. 18. 31.
ch. 36. 26; ch. 39. 29. t ch. 36. 36, 38; ch. 37. 6; ch. 5. 13, 17, etc.

state of things will be ended. The nation will be then, in their rejection of Christ, utterly dead. The prophet answers: "O Lord Jehovah, Thou knowest," and then he is bidden to give Jehovah's word to the dry bones themselves. The nation is to be thus new born by the word of God, and from the dead. Every step here is a true creative work of God: "Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live; and I will put sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live." And then comes once more the refrain,—for this alone is what can make it truly life: "Ye shall know that I am Jehovah."

So the prophet prophesies and sees the miracle wrought—the wondrous miracle of resurrection. He sees the bones come together, and the flesh cover them, and the form given, while yet there is no breath from on high. But then he is told to prophesy to the winds, the type, as we know, in the Lord's words, of the Spirit; and from the four winds, the breath comes into these slain, and now they live. These that, but a moment since, were mere inanimate and scattered wrecks of departed life, are now at once an exceeding great army, the hosts of the Lord.

The prophet is not left in doubt about the vision. The bones are the whole of the house of Israel, and in a condition in which they are made to realize at last that, as to themselves, there is no hope any longer. They are not only dead, as the prophet has seen them, but in their graves, buried and gone. But this is the stamp which God puts upon everything in nature. The evening dies into the night before the morning springs out of it. The earth itself will have to find its dissolution before it comes to that new earth in which dwelleth righteousness. Ezekiel's wheel is going round; it is ordained to abase all the glory of man in order that man may come at last to true glory. In resurrection alone can everything be stable, as that which manifests the power of evil already met and conquered, and no foe to meet again. God has done it all Himself; He has taken upon Himself the whole burden of it! How strange a work He has wrought in order that He might lift creation into the glory that yet shall be, every Christian knows. And Israel shall know who it is that has done this, that He is indeed Jehovah, when He has opened their graves and caused them to come up out of their graves and put His Spirit in them that they may live. The blessing still keeps to the old sphere of promise for them; as an earthly people the earth is their destiny. "I will bless you," says the Lord, "*in your own land.*" Then shall prophecy find its full witness and have the eternal seal upon it: "Ye shall know that I Jehovah have spoken it, and have done it, saith Jehovah."

z (15 28): The restoration of the brotherhood of Judah and Ephraim.

z And the u word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, And thou, son of man, take thee one v stick, and write upon it, For w Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions. And take another stick, and write upon it, For x Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and all the house of Israel his companions. And y join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thy hand. And when the children of thy people speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not z declare to us what thou meanest by these? say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his companions, and will put them with this, [even] with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be a one in my hand. And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thy hand before their eyes. And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will b take the children of Israel from among the nations whither they are gone, and will c gather them from every side, and bring them into

u ch. 35. 1, etc.
v ch. Num. 17. 6. 13.
w 1 Chron. 5. 2. Gen 49. 8. 12
x 1 Chron. 5. 1. Gen 49. 22-26.
y vers. 22-24.
z ch. 24. 19.
a Mic. 4. 6, 7; 5. 3. Zeph. 3. 14-20.
b ch. 36. 24. ch 28. 25. Is. 11. 11, 12.
c ch. 36. 24. ch. 34. 13. ch. 20. 34.

z One thing remains which must not be omitted. The ancient and unnatural strife between Judah and Ephraim must and will surely pass away if all this is to be; and the complete assurance of it is given: "The word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, And thou, son of man, take thee one stick and write upon it: For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions. Then take another stick, and write upon it: For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions; and join them one to another into one stick, and they shall become one in thy hand."

The people are Jews, for us now; that is, they are all of Judah; and the question has even been asked whether such coming together did not find its accomplishment long ago, when the people returned out of captivity in Babylon. Thus we are told with regard to the prophetess Anna, in our Lord's day, that she was of the tribe of Asher; and it is thought that other intimations are given that the ten tribes, so often spoken of as "the lost tribes," have become merged long since into this one Jewish race. But this will not do for the prophecy here, and assuredly it will not do for God. It is distinctly in their own land, and under the King whom God will raise up to them, when God shall be once more manifestly their God, His sanctuary set in the midst of them forever, that this prophecy shall find its accomplishment. There is a universal gathering: "Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the nations whither they are gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, upon the mountains of Israel; and one King shall be king to them all, and they shall be no more two nations; neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all." That the time of all this is future should need no argument, nor should it need one that the promise to which God has appended no condition here (but which He affirms He will Himself fulfil) can never be set aside by any unfaithfulness of the people of whom He speaks, a people whose unfaithfulness has been all contemplated (and realized) from the beginning. Faithless as they may be, the time will come, as God has announced it, when they shall no more defile themselves with their idols nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions, but He will save them out of their dwelling places wherein they have sinned, and they shall be His people and He will be their God.

their own land; and I will make them [d]one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel, and [e]one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be [f]no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all. Neither shall they [g]defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will [h]save them out of all their dwelling places wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: and they shall be [i]my people, and I will be their God. And my servant [j]David shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: and they shall [k]walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the [l]land that I have given to [m]Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, they and their children, and their children's children forever: and [n]David my servant shall be their prince forever. And I will make a [o]covenant of peace with them: it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will place* them, and [p]multiply them, and will set my [q]sanctuary in the midst of them forevermore. My [r]tabernacle also shall be over them; and I will be their [s]God, and they shall be my people. And the [t]nations shall know that I am Jehovah that sanctify Israel when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them forever.

d Jer. 3. 18; 30. 3. Isa. 11. 13. Hos. 1. 11.
e ch. 34. 23. Jer. 30. 21; 23. 1-8.
f ch. 48.
g ch. 36.26,29. ch. 39. 7. ch. 43. 7. ch. 14. 11. Hos. 14. 4-9. Jer. 3. 17.
h ch. 36. 28. ch. 28. 25. ch. 20 41. Mic.7.18-20. Jer. 50. 20.
i ch. 36. 28.
j ch. 34. 24.
k ch. 36. 27.
l ch. 36. 28. ch. 28. 25.
m ch. 28. 25. Gen. 35. 12.
n *cf.* Amos 9. 11.
o ch. 34. 25.
p ch. 36. 10.
q ch. 43. 7. ch. 48. 8, 10, 21.
r *cf.* Is. 33. 20-22. Is. 4. 5, 6
s Hos. 1. 10. ch. 11. 20; ch. 14. 11.
t ch. 36. 23.

* Lit., "give."

The former shepherd-king comes again before us here, David, "the Beloved." This keeper of sheep has celebrated in his psalms, as we well know, Jehovah Himself in this character, and realized wondrous things from it: "Jehovah is my Shepherd; I shall not want." This is God's thought of rule, as Christ, the true Shepherd, fully manifests it; so that even if He take the rod of iron, as He will do in the time near to come, it will be to "tend" or *shepherd* the nations with it. Here is one with whom rule is *ministry*, and subjection to Him is subjection to eternal love itself. Thus when God at last shall be able to show all that is in His heart, in the times contemplated here, how shall it in fact be shown? When they shall dwell in the land as their unalienable inheritance, they and their children and their children's children forever; and David, "the Beloved," himself the servant of Jehovah, shall be their prince forever. The One who *claims* obedience shall be the One who has *walked* in obedience, and that at all cost to Himself, and in devotedness to all the interests of His people.

Thus the "covenant of peace" shall be made with them—"He has made peace by the blood of His cross." Thus it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and "I will bless them," says the Lord, "and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore." This last remains for full expansion by the mouth of Ezekiel himself, but divine love lingers upon it: "My tabernacle also shall be over them"—those covering wings which once they refused, but of which they shall yet know the blessedness—"and I will be their God, and they shall be my people; and the nations shall know that I am Jehovah that sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore."

SUBDIVISION 2. (chaps. xxxviii., xxxix.)

Salvation fully realized through Jehovah's judgment of Israel's last enemy

Section 1. (chap. xxxviii. 1-7.)

The leaders in this final conflict.

And the [u]word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against [v]Gog, the land of [w]Magog, the prince of Rosh, [x]Meshech, and [y]Tubal, and prophesy against him, and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. And I will turn thee back, and put [z]hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses, and horsemen, all of them thoroughly equipped, a great assemblage with targets and shields, all of them handling

u ch. 37. 15.
v Rev. 20. 8.
w Gen. 10. 2. 1 Chr. 1. 5.
x Gen. 10. 2. 1 Chron. 1. 5, 17. Ps. 120. 5. ch. 27. 13; ch. 32. 26.
y Gen. 10. 2. 1 Chr. 1. 5. Is. 66. 19. ch. 27. 13. ch. 32. 26.
z *cf.* 2 Ki. 19. 28. *cf.* ch. 29. 4.

SUBDIVISION 2.

Israel is now brought finally back from her long captivity and planted in the land, no more to be removed, the face of the Lord never again to be turned from her. This being accomplished, there remains only the condition of the world outside to be dealt with, and to show the effect of these judgments in the deliverance of the earth.

There are three spheres of judgment in Ezekiel, apart altogether from the sphere of professing Christianity, which, of course, is not seen in Ezekiel.

First of all comes the judgment of the Gentiles who have been brought in contact with the light, and who are judged, therefore, with regard to their responsibility as to this. We shall constantly find that they are judged by their attitude towards Israel, and that the judgment does not go, therefore, beyond the circle of those who have been brought in contact with Israel. This we have seen already.

The judgments in Ezekiel are earthly judgments, and by the hands of the Gentiles themselves—in short, of Nebuchadnezzar, in whose hands God had put the imperial power. The Gentiles, who never had any revelation, are entrusted with this power. Therefore, they are directed at least to the true God and to His message, as we find in Daniel, God Himself dealing expressly with the man to whom He had entrusted this power. This ends speedily in the discovery that he is but like all those who have been entrusted with such responsibility, as we see in the image of gold set up in the Plain of Dura, and where those who confess the true God have to suffer for their faithfulness. What follows is the history of increasing departure; the history of Nebuchadnezzar himself and of his successors being taken as the exemplification of it. With the Lord's personal coming the story of the empires ends. But this is not the end altogether of Gentile history. Morally, man is completely judged, but the full assurance of this condition is seen in what follows—"the times of the Gentiles."

swords: [a]Persia, [b]Cush,* and [c]Phut† with them, all of them with shield and helmet; [d]Gomer,‡ and all his bands; the house of [e]Togarmah from the farthest north, and all his bands; — many peoples with thee. Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thine assemblage that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard§ unto them.

a ch. 27. 10. *cf.* Dan. 2. 32 39; 5. 28-31; 8. 20.

b *cf.* Gen. 2. 13; 10. 6. 8. Jer. 46. 9. Zeph. 2. 12 Dan. 11. 43 ch. 30. 4, 5, 9

c *cf.* Gen. 10. 6. 1 Chr. 1. 8. ch. 27. 10; 30. 5. Jer. 46. 9. Dan. 11. 43. Nah. 3. 9.

d *cf.* Gen. 10. 2, 3. 1 Chr. 1. 5, 6.

e *cf.* Gen. 10. 3 1 Chr. 1. 6. ch. 27. 14.

* Cush was the son of Ham, and the father of Nimrod. Cush, or Ethiopia, has reference in general to a powerful kingdom to the south of Egypt, while the connection with Nimrod associates the family with the first kingdom in Babylonia.—(J. B.).

† The A. V. gives Libya, the Greek name for the region along the Mediterranean, west of Egypt. The Hebrew name is Phut.—(J.B.)

‡ Gomer was the eldest son of Japheth, and father of Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. He is the supposed progenitor of certain branches of the Celtic family. His descendants settled to the north of the Black Sea, spreading to the South and West of Europe.—(J.B.)

§ "Or, "chief," "commander."

This is what we have in the chapters now before us, in which the last manifestation of the Gentiles is given. If we look carefully at the names of the peoples here mentioned, we see at once that we are in a different sphere from that of Daniel. We return to what we find at the very beginning: Magog, Meshech, Tubal, Gomer and such like, which carries us right back to Gen. 10; it sets before us the final history of those who, we may say, had as yet no history at all. It is evident that the sons of Japheth are here before us, and that Japheth is seen as the prodigal that has wandered away from God; and having lost God, he has lost himself no less.

If we look at the genealogies in Gen. 10, we shall see how brief and fragmentary they are. As with the sons of Gomer, those of the next generations are only put before us in a broken manner, and they soon end altogether; nor have we any revival of them until we come to Ezekiel. With the exception of Persia in a partial way, we have nothing of the Gentiles numbered among the imperial powers of Daniel; for, as already said, the imperial history ignores these.

The first name here, a strange one in Scripture, we may recognize in another form. It is said that Gog means "extension;" Magog is but the same with the additional thought, perhaps, of "means," or "place of," "extension." Japheth is "enlargement." Thus Japheth and Gog give us thoughts to some extent similar.

[*End of "Notes" by Mr. Grant.*]

Now Ezekiel clearly shows how in the coming days of peace and prosperity, following the gracious work of restoration recorded in the preceding chapters, Jehovah will bring up against His people and their land these great and powerful nations which are situated outside the limits of the empires of which Daniel speaks. *They* have been already met in the full assemblage of their power at Har-Magedon (Rev. xvi. 12-16; xix. 11-21), followed by the judgment, at the Lord's appearing on Mount Olivet (Zech. xiv. 1-4), of the great host gathered

Section 2. (chap. xxxviii. 8-13.)

The evil designs of the enemy

After many days shalt thou be visited; at the end of years|| thou shalt come into the land brought back from the [f]sword, [g]gathered out of many peoples, upon the [h]mountains of Israel which

|| This expression would seem to have the same meaning as another of very distinct prophetic connection, i. e., "the last," or "latter (end of, New Trans.) days," which occurs just 14 times (Gen. 49:1; Num. 24:14; Deut. 4:30; 31:29; Isa. 2:2; Jer. 23:20; 30:24; 48:47; 49:39; Ezek 38:16; Dan. 2:28; 10:14; Hos. 3:5; Mic. 4:1), in all of which the reference is clearly to the closing scenes of Jacob's time of trouble and the establishment of the Millennial kingdom, as a study of the context of these passages will show.—(J. B.)

f *cf.* Is. 1. 20, Hos. 11. 6.

g ver. 12. *cf.* 20.34,etc. 28. 25, etc. 36. 24, etc. 37. 21. Is. 11. 12; 54. 7; 56. 8. Jer. 23. 3; 29. 14. Zeph. 3. 19, 20.

h *cf.* ch. 36. 1 15. ch. 37. 22.

for the capture of Jerusalem. But Gog and his hosts are brought up *after* these scenes of judgment, and when Israel is dwelling safely (vers. 8-11), for the purpose of manifesting before all nations the absolute supremacy of Jehovah in all the earth. The object in view is emphatically stated (xxxviii. 16, 23; xxxix. 6, 7, 21, 22, 28).

This prophecy not only warns, and so prepares, the people for this last great invasion, but it is intended to give them confidence, since it makes known that Jehovah will act on their behalf—He who has so blessedly established them in the land under the True Shepherd. Further they will not need to fight; Jehovah shall rise in His fury; He shall fight and triumph gloriously, and Gog shall find not a *spoil,* but a *grave* in Israel's fair land, which shall be a perpetual memorial, a witness to Jehovah's great power in judgment upon this insolent enemy.

After this great show of the enemy's arrogance, his destruction, and the purging of the land from the defilement of their corpses, we have in beautiful sequence the dwelling place of God with the detail of its establishment, the Sanctuary of the land and people, the divine centre of the earth, for "The Lord is there."

Thus, in the order of these events, we see the linking together of important features which often appear in the ways of God. First, the people are gathered back and established in favor; secondly, the enmity and power of the enemy is permitted under God's hand to manifest itself, resulting in God being glorified, while full deliverance becomes the portion of His people. Thenceforth "none shall make them afraid" any more, God in glory dwelling in their midst.

These things are illustrated on two other prominent occasions. In Egypt during the plagues, and at the Passover, the people are manifested as having special favor in the eyes of Jehovah; they are marked off from those under judgment, though in exile and poor slaves under Egypt's power; these conditions find a certain correspondence in the days of which Ezekiel speaks, in that a people scattered and peeled, trodden down under Gentile oppression, is delivered and brought into blessing in their God-given land. And as Pharaoh and all his hosts came against the delivered people, only to meet his utter destruction, so shall it be with Gog and his company; and as the Tabernacle, God's dwelling, was set up among the people, so here,

have been a perpetual [i]waste: but it is brought forth out of the peoples, and they shall all of them be dwelling in [j]safety. And thou shalt ascend, thou shalt come like a [k]storm, thou shalt be like a [l]cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many peoples with thee.

i cf. ch. 5. 14. ch. 6. 14. Jer. 2. 15. cfr. Is. 60. 18; 61. 4. Amos 9. 14, 15.
j cf. ch. 28. 24-26. Jer. 32. 37. ch. 34. 27, 28. Hos. 2. 18.
k cfr. Is. 4. 6; 25. 4. l cfr. Is. 4. 5; 25. 4, 5; ch. 30. 3; 31. 12; Jer. 4. 13.

as already remarked, the Sanctuary of the Millennial glory is established. The other occasion is in David's time. The nation, delivered out of the abject condition which existed in the closing period of the Judges, is established in blessing under David's rule with the subjugation of enemies, followed by the peaceful reign of Solomon and the building of the Temple.

We may translate these things into our individual experience. Redemption not only places us before God in favor, but also where we become special objects of the enemy's attack in full power (Eph. 6). For this the panoply of God is provided, invested in which, victory is assured. This leads into the possession of our spiritual blessings in heavenly places, into what spiritually answers to the sanctuary for us.

The truth in the Epistle to the Romans may be considered in a similar setting. First, our salvation out of ruin through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Then we get the questions as to sin, the flesh, and the law, by means of which the enemy assails the saved soul, yet permitted by God for its exercise and blessing. God delivers by the Word of Truth, and this introduces to the glorious things of Romans 8—a sanctuary chapter. Other analogies of this divine order may be traced in Scripture. To thus see the ways of God is not only instructive, but comforting and assuring to the heart. How certain it is that He makes all things work together for good to His people. The enemy can do nothing but what shall abound to His praise and our blessing.

Let us now consider this important prophecy in more detail.

Sec. 1.

1. The leaders in the conflict soon to ensue are first set before us. It is the Lord Jehovah as against Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. For faith this must at once settle the issue. "Who may stand in Thy sight when once Thou art angry?" Who?—for it is the hour when the earth must fear and be still, God having arisen in judgment "to save all the meek of the earth" (Ps. lxxvi.).

Gog is evidently a ruler of great power and influence, for he is able to gather under his leadership a complex group of nations, on behalf of whom Jehovah commands him to prepare in view of the coming conflict, and to whom he is to be a "guard" or "commander." This marks him as a military organizer and leader. Here we have simply the statement of his great assemblage. The time at which it takes place and the object, are given later in the chapter.

These nations do not fill a large place in prophecy. Persia alone has any measure of prominence. They are not immediately adjacent to the land, nor do they belong to the western confederacy. They

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: It shall even come to pass in that day that things shall come into thy mind, and thou shalt conceive an evil purpose; and thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will come to them that are at rest, that dwell in [m]safety, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, to seize a [n]spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thy hand against the [o]waste places that are [now]

m ver. 8.
n cfr. Is. 17. 12-14.
o ver. 8.

are the Gentile nations external to the groups mentioned in Daniel and Revelation, and largely descendants of Japheth, from whom come the inhabitants of "the isles of the sea" (Gen. x. 5). In a general way these peoples have been located near to and north of the Black Sea, Rosh pointing to Russia. It seems clear that we have in this assemblage a great northern confederacy which becomes the last instrument in Satan's hand by which he will seek the destruction of the chosen people then restored to the land under Messiah.

We must also distinguish this company and this invasion (which takes place early in the Millennium) from that which comes after the 1000 years of Messiah's reign, though Gog and Magog are again introduced (see notes on Rev. xx. 7-9).

Sec. 2.

Let us now endeavor to place this invasion in relation to the closing events of Daniel's 70th week. In this connection first note the words, "I will turn thee back" (xxxviii. 4; xxxix. 2). The force of this expression is to cause to return as to a place previously occupied. This being said of the invasion of the land at the time of which this vision treats seems to suggest that Jehovah is bringing these nations back again to a place formerly visited. In view of this the inquiry may be raised as to whether they had previously invaded Israel's land.

Bearing in mind that it is a northern confederacy of which Ezekiel speaks, certain nations of which are also associated in the assault upon the land recorded in Daniel xi., let us turn briefly to that prophecy. In vers. 36-39 we have the future Wilful King reigning in the land, with whom the Roman Prince makes a covenant for seven years (Dan. ix. 27), but which is broken in half that time; these rulers (the Beasts of Rev. 13) then manifest their full blasphemous character, setting up the abomination of desolation because of which God brings in a desolator — the overflowing scourge of Isa. xxviii. 15-19, the details of which are given in Dan. xi. 40-45. In the closing days of the seventieth week when the fearful apostasy of the Jewish nation under Antichrist supported by the Roman Prince is at its height, and the hour of judgment having drawn near, God in His providential ways acts to bring about the gathering of all the forces of the nations to meet their overthrow when the Lord appears in glory. So at this time the King of the South finds some reason to attack the Wilful King. Jealous perhaps of his great increase in power and influence as the chief associate of the Roman Prince, he determines upon an effort to lower his prestige. Seeing this the

inhabited, and against a people [p]gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the middle* of the land. [q]Sheba, and [r]Dedan, and the merchants of [s]Tarshish, with all the [t]young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered thine assemblage to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take cattle and goods, to seize a great spoil?

* Or, "high part," lit., "navel," of the earth. The thought may be similar to that of Is. 2: 2.

[p] ver. 8.
[q] cf. ch. 27, 22, 23.
[r] ch. 25: 13, 27: 15, 20; Is. 21: 13.
[s] cf. ch. 27, 12, 25, etc. 2 Chr. 9: 21; 20: 36, 37. Ps. 72: 10. Is. 66: 19.
[t] cf. chs. 19: 2, 6; 32: 2. Nah. 2: 11-13.
cf. Mic. 5: 8. Nu. 23: 24. Is. 11: 6.

King of the North is roused to action, for he too aspires to world-supremacy, and doubtless has watched with jealous eye the ascendancy of the king in Palestine who stands as the representative of the great western confederacy; now fearing that the King of the South may gain an advantage he rushes into action with the vast forces at his command. It is his movements which Daniel details at length. It is evident that he passes through Palestine and reaches as far as Egypt, the country of the King of the South, in the course of his victorious campaign. It is stated that the Libyans, or people of Phut, and the Ethiopians, or those of Cush, are in his forces, and these are also allies of Gog. Then tidings out of the east and north trouble him. Since he would be in the vicinity of Egypt at this time, it would appear that these tidings would come from Palestine, which would be to his east and north. They stir him to furious energy in a mighty effort to destroy an enemy of whom these tidings inform him. He returns and establishes himself with his armies "between the seas, at the glorious holy mountain," that is, between the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea in the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem. Joel and Zechariah describe this gathering, adding details not given by Daniel. (Compare Joel iii. and Zech. xiv.).

This gathering of armies to besige Jerusalem cannot be those of the western or revived Roman empire to which Rev. xix refers, for that power is allied to and would support the Wilful King against whom the King of the North comes in his whirlwind campaign. The nations then of which Zechariah and Joel speak are those to the north and east of the "pleasant land." They are the enemies of the Wilful King and the Western confederacy which supports him—the false Messiah in the Land. Keeping this in mind, and remembering that God is working at this time to bring all these forces together for judgment at the Lord's appearing, a thought suggests itself as to what tidings reached the King of the North when in the vicinity of Egypt. May they not be the news of the gathering hosts of the Western powers coming into Palestine to effect the cutting off of his return to the north, thus severing his communications from the rear, purposing then to strike one final blow which will decide the question of world-supremacy once for all in favor of the Beasts of Rev. xiii. which are the instruments of Satanic power and policy? Putting together with this the prophecy of Rev. xvi. we learn that this mighty host will gather at Har-Magedon, identified as the plain of Esdraelon, which lies across the path of travel through Palestine between the

Section 3 (chap. xxxviii. 14-23.)

The revelation of Jehovah to the nations in the judgment of Gog.

Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: In [u]that day when my people Israel dwelleth in [v]safety, shalt thou not know [it]? And thou shalt come from thy place out of the farthest [w]north, thou and many peoples with thee, all of them riding upon [x]horses, a great assemblage, and a mighty army. And thou shalt come up against my people Israel as a [y]cloud to cover the land—it shall be at the [†]end

u *cf.* Is. 10. 20, 27; 12. 1; 26. 1; 27. 1; 52. 6. Jer. 30. 7-9. Ezek. 29. 21. Ho. 2. 18, 21. Jo. 3. 18. Amos 9. 11. Mic. 4. 6. Zech. 2. 10-13; 3. 10; 9. 16; 12. 6-14; 14. 4, 6, 8, 9, 13, 20, 21.

v ver. 8.

w ver. 6, ch. 39. 2. Jer. 1. 14; 6. 22; 46. 20, 24. Is. 14. 31.

† See note, ver. 8.

x ver. 4; *cfr.* Hos. 1. 7; *cf.* Is. 31. 1, 3; Joel 1. 6; Hab. 1. 8; ch. 23. 6; 26. 7, 10. y ver. 9.

north and the south.* Tidings of such movements may well explain Dan. xi. 44, and the northern leader commences his return, likewise determined to strike the blow which will place in his hand the coveted world-supremacy.

These opposing leaders know nothing of Him whom they will suddenly meet and whose appearing will with swift blows of judgment destroy them utterly (Isa. xxx. 27-33; xxxi. 8, 9; Zech. xiv. 3-5; 2 Thess. ii. 8; Rev. xix. 11-21).

Having digressed thus far it may not be amiss to go a little farther afield and consider more fully the order and relation of these events.

There are two general lines of prophecy as regards the nations which perhaps are not always distinguished. The Old Testament Prophets, except Daniel, very largely, if not entirely, treat of the course and judgment of the "peoples," or nations, north and east of the land, and which have come into direct relation to Israel, but which are always her pronounced enemies and oppressors. It is the Assyrian, the King of the North, and his allied peoples which are brought before us. The great western coalition, or revived Roman

* At the seaward end of this notable plain is situated the Bay of Acre, the line of which stretches from Haifa to Acre, or Acco. Perhaps it is of more than passing interest to note that the American Zion Commonwealth has purchased 15,000 acres of land right along the shore and back, covering a very fertile section; and that the Commonwealth is undertaking a great development of this vast sea frontage, making a new channel to the sea for the River Kishon, and preparing to establish important industries with garden cities lying back from the sea, around what will be soon the greatest port of the Mediterranean, as a high British official has declared. The Palestinian Government is to spend millions to make a genuine harbor at Haifa. It is just such extensive developments which would be needful for the assembling of the vast forces of the Roman empire upon this great plain, for it is natural to suppose that they will be gathered from many parts of the ten-kingdom confederacy, and transported under naval convoy to the shores of Palestine. Already 500 miles of railroad connect this bay and its harbor facilities with different parts of the Land, including Jerusalem and reaching as far south as Beer-sheba. At Haifa, where at the close of the world-war there were only 3,000 inhabitants, ten years after there were 13,000. For centuries this town has been at a standstill, but now it pulsates with life, and under the urge of industrial enterprise the mountains are being cut through and the sea front developed to meet the demands of the projects in view.

of days—and I will bring thee against [z]my land, that the nations may [a]know me, when I shall be [b]hallowed in thee, O Gog, before their eyes.

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Art thou not he of whom I have [c]spoken in old time through my servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied in those days, for [many] years, that I would bring thee against them? And it shall come to pass in that day, when Gog shall come against the land

z Deut. 32. 43. Ps. 10. 16; 85. 1. 3. Is. 14. 2, 25. Jer. 2. 7. Hos. 9. 3. Joel 1. 6. Zech. 9. 16.
a ver. 23. chs. 37. 28; 39. 6, 7. Ps 83. 12-18; 9. 16.
b ver. 23. c/. Is. 5. 16.
chs. 28. 22, 25; 36. 23; 39. 27; Deut. 32. 51 with Nu. 27. 14. c See notes for reference passages.

empire, is not directly spoken of except in Daniel who, indeed, reveals the relation of both these confederacies.

Now in the New Testament what comes into view is the western empire, and not those nations which so largely fill the Old Testament vision. The moral reason for this seems evident. In the Old Testament God's controversy is with "the heathen" or "peoples" north and east of the land, also to the south, which had come into direct touch with Israel, and from whom she had learned her evil ways, all of whom however hated her bitterly, despising Jehovah, and helping forward her affliction on every possible occasion, for they desired to crush her out of existence. It is their still future attack upon the Land, and their siege of Jerusalem, with their overwhelming judgment at the hands of the Lord when He comes, which so largely occupies the Old Testament. In the New Testament it is the western coalition which fills the prophetic vision, because it is in direct relation to the Church and Christendom (which is the subject of the New Testament as Israel and her place is of the Old Testament), which it first persecuted, then favored. Finally becoming apostate we find these western powers associated with the Antichrist or false Jewish Messiah. The King of the North and his allies are the open enemies of this Wilful King who will then exercise authority in Palestine.

Thus we see there are two great divisions of the nations, and similarly there are two great gatherings, at the time of the end. One distinctively occupies the Old Testament vision, and the other the New. The former is the gathering of the peoples under Israel's oppressor, the Assyrian of the future, or last King of the North. The latter is the gathering of the western nations under the Beast and False Prophet at Har-Magedon.

As there are two gatherings, there are two distinct geographical locations at which they take place. In considering these two gatherings we must remember one marked feature of contrast: the one under the Beast is friendly to the apostate Jews and their city Jerusalem, their apostate leader being the ally of the Beast; the other is fiercely opposed to the Jews and their false prince, against whom they direct their attack. We can hardly think of the Beast and his hosts besieging Jerusalem; they would rather be its defenders, and so cannot be included among the "peoples" which come up against Jerusalem. The locations then are these: the King of the North and his hosts are gathered in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, which is just outside of Jerusalem at the base of Mt. Olivet. This is referred to in Joel iii. and Zech. xiv., and Dan. xi. 45. The other gathering, as already mentioned, is at Har-Magedon, quite to the north of Jeru-

of Israel, saith the Lord Jehovah, [that] [d]my fury shall come up in my [e]face;* for in my [f]jealousy, in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Verily, in that day shall be a great [g]shaking in the land of Israel; so that the fish of the sea, and the fowl of the heavens, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things which creep upon the earth, and all mankind that are upon the face of the earth shall shake at my [h]presence; and the [i]mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.

* Lit., "nose." The idea seems to be that of a fiery breath from the nostrils, rather than the inflammation of the face from anger.—(J. B.).

d cf. ch. 5. 12-17; 14. 19-21. Is. 34. 1-4; 59. 17-19. 63. 1-6.
e cf. Is 10.20, 28, 33; 11. 4. 2 Thess 2. 8. Rev. 2. 16; 19. 15, 21.
f cf. Zech. 8. 2. Joel 2.18-20.
g cf. Is. 2, 19, 21; 24. 18. Hag. 2. 6, 7.
h cf. Ps. 68. 2, 8; 97. 3-5; 114. 7. Is. 2. 10-20; 64. 1-3. Jer. 4. 26.
i Is. 64. 3. Nah. 1. 5, 6. Hab.3. 6,10.

salem, and identified with the plain of Esdraelon, connected with the sea coast where it would be natural for great armies to disembark.

As we may thus discern two distinct groups of nations, two distinct gatherings at two distinctly different centres, so we may, I think, speak of two distinct, though of course closely related, manifestations of the Lord in judgment. The appearing of the Lord in glory for judgment is described in a twofold way. Daniel saw Him come like a son of man with the clouds of heaven (vii. 13); John says, "Behold, He comes with the clouds, and every eye shall see Him." And again, "I saw, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud one sitting like the Son of Man;" and, "I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and one sitting on it...and the armies which were in heaven followed Him." Then the Lord's own words are, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days...shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the land lament, and they shall see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." He will come in the glory of His Father with His angels. Paul speaks of "the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven, with the angels of His power," at which time He will consume the Lawless One, the Antichrist, with the breath of His mouth and shall annul him by the appearing of His coming. It is then also that the first Beast is taken, and both these monsters of iniquity are cast into the lake of fire and their armies destroyed. These details give one aspect of the Lord's appearing apparently directly connected with the judgment of the apostate western powers under the Roman Prince, the first Beast of Rev. xiii, and his ally the second Beast, or the Antichrist of the Jews, the Lawless One of 2 Thess. ii. and the Wilful King of Dan. xi. 36-39. The other aspect of the Lord's appearing is described as an actual descent to the Mount of Olives (Zech. xiv.; Acts i. 10, 11). With this we have the deliverance of besieged Jerusalem, against which the King of the North and his hosts are assembled in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, as with the other—the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, His coming in the clouds—we have the immediate judgment of the Beast and the False Prophet, or Antichrist, which stroke of judgment seems to take place *first* in the progress of the Lord's manifestation, after which He stands upon Olivet as Zechariah describes. It is to be noted that

And I will call for a [j]sword against him throughout all [k]my mountains, saith the Lord Jehovah: [l]every man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will enter into judgment with him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many peoples that are with him, [m]overflowing rain and great [n]hailstones, fire and [o]brimstone. And I will magnify myself, and sanctify myself, and I will be [p]known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I [am] Jehovah.

j *cf.* Is 66 16
k *cf.* Is 14. 25; 49. 11; 65. 9.
l Jud 7 22. 1 Sam. 14. 20. 2 Chron. 20. 23. Hag. 2. 22. Zech. 14. 12, 13.
m ch. 13. 11.
n ch. 13 11. 13. Is 30. 30.
o Gen. 19 24. Deu 29 23. Ps. 11. 6. Is 30. 33; 34. 9. Luke 17. 29. Rev. 19. 20.
p *cf.* Ex. 7; 5, 17; 8. 10, 22; 9. 13-18; Rom. 9. 17, 22

the city is actually taken and plundered by the besieging armies, which naturally are not those of the Beast and his ally, the Jewish Antichrist, for they would be gathered rather for its defence, and it seems more than likely that they had been at Har-Magedon for that purpose in response to appeal from the Jewish ruler to meet and destroy their mutual enemy, the King of the North, when he returned from his drive into Egypt. It is evident that for some reason they could not reach Jerusalem in time to prevent its capture and plunder, though assembled only a few miles to the north. Why this failure and victory of the enemy? Is it to be explained by the fact that the Lord had suddenly appeared in heavenly glory and smitten them with the breath of His mouth, which is compared to a sharp two-edged sword, and so the city left to its own resources falls a prey to the superior power of the attacking forces? Is not just such a failure of the trusted power of the West foretold by Isaiah (xxviii. 14-22)? It would so appear. But is there a lapse of time allowed between this initial stroke and the actual appearing on Mount Olivet—during which opportunity is given for the King of the North to accomplish the capture of the city with its apostate mass? And may this not take up the additional thirty days of Dan. xii. 11 at the end of which the Lord appears for the deliverance of the city? In any case after this the Millennial kingdom is set up. There is still a further period of forty-five days after the close of the seventieth week mentioned in Daniel. May it not be that during this second additional period the momentous events of Ezekiel xxxviii. and xxxix. take place? I merely offer these thoughts by way of suggestion as presenting the possible order and relation of these vastly important events. As to the events themselves there need be no question. The prophetic Scriptures are clear enough.

We may conclude, then, that there was a first invasion of the land by the King of the North, and that this answers to what is foretold in such scriptures as Isa. xxviii. 14-22; Dan. ix. 27; xi. 40-45; Joel iii.; Zech. xiv. Furthermore, this leader is the personage of Dan. viii. 23-25, of whom the Little Horn of that chapter is the anticipatory fulfilment (Antiochus Epiphanes, King of Syria, the north, in contrast to Egypt, the south), showing that it is the King of the North that is in view. Now the course of this leader is carried to the point of standing up against the Prince of princes—Messiah, who must there-

Section 4. (chap. xxxix. 1-7.)

Creature impotence: the overthrow of the proud foe.

And thou, son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: [q]Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal; and I will turn thee back, and lead† thee, and will cause thee to come up

q ch. 38. 3.

† The meaning of this word is uncertain. Perhaps the A. V. is correct in rendering, "leave but the sixth part of thee." It is at least suggestive as intimating that six, the number which speaks of the manifestation of evil, and the divine limit to its activity, is the measure of Gog's host, i.e., six parts compose it, of which God spares one in divine sovereignty.—(J.B.).

fore have been manifested for this to take place. Considering that the powers in Dan. viii. and xi. are to be identified, as well as with the Gog confederacy which comes out of the north and bears both a national and territorial identity with the former, then in the invasion of which our chapters speak we get the *second* invasion of the Northern confederacy. This seems like a supreme effort to overcome the third great Combatant who so suddenly appeared on the scene at the time of their first attack, smiting the assembled armies in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and those of the West at Har-magedon. He does not know that Jehovah is turning him back to the mountains of Israel, and that in reality he is standing up against the Prince of princes, who is already present, as chap. xxxvii. shows. But as Daniel says, "He shall be broken without hand"—a terse description of what Ezekiel depicts in more detail.

One final suggestion: in Dan. viii. it is stated of this northern leader that he destroyed the mighty and the holy people, that is, the Jewish people; and that he shall stand up against Messiah. The first would certainly characterize his actions at the time of his first invasion, while the latter would be accomplished in what these chapters of Ezekiel tell us. This may have taken place very shortly after the Lord's descent to the Mount of Olives.

The time at which this invasion took place is clearly indicated (vers. 8, 11, 12). It is when the waste condition of the land is past, and the regathered people are dwelling securely in peace (Zech. xiv. 10, 11; Amos ix. 11-15; Isa. xxxv.; Jer. xxx. 3). His coming is like that of a dark thunder-cloud, spreading over the land, ascending from the north parts upon the mountains of Israel. In all this Jehovah is revealed as not only foreknowing and foretelling, but also as the Searcher of hearts. The mind of the enemy is as an open book to Him. This we learn in addition to the fact that *He* is putting hooks into the jaws of this mighty host, bringing them forth to meet Himself that all nations may know Him, the Holy One of Israel.

When the time of these events has come, how comforting and reassuring for the people to have this word of prophecy. On this they may rest their souls when the first signs of the gathering storm shall suddenly darken the blessed scenes of peace and plenty which will then be their portion in the land "brought back from the sword." Gog shall not be permitted to put it to the sword again. Has not

from the farthest north, and will bring thee upon
[r] the mountains of Israel. And I will smite thy [s] bow
out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to
fall out of thy right hand. Thou shalt fall [t] upon the
mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and
the peoples that are with thee: I have given thee
to be [u] food for the birds of prey of every wing,
and to the beasts of the field. Thou shalt fall
upon the open field; for I have spoken [it],

r chs. 6. 2; 38. 8.
s cf. Ps. 11. 2; 37. 14; 46. 9; 58. 7; 76. 3. 5. Hos. 2. 18.
t cf. Ps. 9. 3. 10. Is. 14. 25-27; 34. 4.
u ch. 29. 5.

Jehovah made His everlasting covenant of peace with them? It is the day of Isa. xii. 2-6 when Israel shall prove the blessing of abiding under the shadow of the Almighty.

The enemy thinks he is carrying out the purpose of his own heart, and in boastful pride assembles his hosts to take a spoil. The secret for faith is that Jehovah both leads and commands. It is a solemn lesson. How often must the proud "I will" of man bring him under the crushing stroke of Omnipotent power called into action to shield and deliver the objects of infinite love. Haughty Pharaoh must sink down before it. Midian's hosts must fall under its sword. Boastful Rabshakeh and the armies of Assyria must melt away before its blast. How many more of earth's mighty have fallen, must yet fall, before its withering breath! So too, but with higher thoughts, the Christian heart can say in the light of the inspired record, and rejoicing in Christ now enthroned, "Who shall separate us?" even though we be but as sheep accounted for the slaughter.

Sec. 3.

The interrogation of the merchant princes represents them as expressing surprise at Gog's multitude. Can it be simply for the taking of spoil? The greatness of the attack appears out of proportion to the smallness of the object. Thus might it appear to human eyes, but the deep underlying reason is given in Jehovah's answer. He draws forth *all* this army, that, as He says, "The nations may know Me when I shall be hallowed in thee, O Gog, before their eyes." The magnitude of Gog's undertaking would seem to the observant eyes of all the "young lions" of Sheba, Dedan, and Tarshish without any prospect of adequate compensation, but all is clear when God's purpose is known. In this we get an example of how the wheels of divine government go round, carrying forward the throne and its glorious Occupant.

We have now a reference to former prophecies relating to these events. This at first may present a difficulty, for we do not find any previous prophetic announcement under the nation's names here given. The interrogative form rather excludes the thought of Gog being mentioned before. It is rather that the prophets for many years announced a great consummation in judgment, executed upon the nations having special relations with Israel, while also her pronounced enemies. The question is then, "Art thou he" in connection with whom this will find its full accomplishment? The answer is given affirmatively in the next verse, coupled with the declaration of Jehovah's wrath, and the terrible shaking which will be caused by His stroke of judgment.

saith the Lord Jehovah. And I will send a [t]fire on Magog, and among them that dwell at ease in the [u]isles: and they shall [v]know that I [am] Jehovah. And my [w]holy name will I make known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not suffer my holy name to be profaned any more; and the nations [x]shall know that I [am] Jehovah, the Holy One in Israel.

t ch. 38. 19, 22.
u cf. ch. 39. 6, 16.
v ch. 28. 18. Is. 66. 14-16.
w cf. Is. 48. 9-11; 66. 9; 66. 19; 42. 4, 10
x cf. ch. 26. 15, 18.
y cf. ch. 36. 20-22; Is. 52. 6.
z ch. 38. 16, 23; Ps. 83.

It may be well to mention here several of the prophecies which point to this consummation. The name "Assyrian" is given to the last great enemy of Israel. He is associated with the north in Zeph. ii. 13; and Assyria is the land of the north from which Israel will be gathered (Isa. xxvii. 12, 13; Hosea xi. 11; Zech. x. 10; Jer. xvi. 15; xxiii. 8). Though "Assyria" and "Gog" seem names so very different, there is a similarity in their meaning which suggests moral identification, as well as that of locality, while the prophecies we shall refer to establish identity as to time, scene, and the character of judgment. Gog means either "extension" or "the topmost," both suggesting the ambition, pride and avarice which mark his conduct as given in our chapters. Assyria, from Asshur, means "a footstep," as going forward successfully, and this in boasted self-sufficiency, as Isaiah says (x. 8-11, 13, 14). In this very chapter Isaiah makes plain that the invasion and the consummation in judgment of which it speaks is not only future, but after the restoration and when Messiah is present (vers. 12, 17, 20, 21, 27). Thus he stands up against the Prince of princes as Dan. viii. states, and this is more emphatically affirmed by Micah (chap. v. 1-9). We know how direct the reference here is to Christ (vers. 1, 2), and then "He shall stand and shall feed His flock in the strength of the Lord," this being in beautiful accord with what Ezekiel has told us (xxxvi. 24-26). Following this we have the remarkable statement, "And this Man shall be the Peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land...and He shall deliver us from the Assyrian when he cometh into our land" (vers. 5, 6). And Jehovah says in reference to this time, "I will execute vengeance in anger and in fury upon the nations, such as they have not heard." This agrees with what we have considered to be the time of Gog's invasion, giving us good reason to link the prophecies regarding the Assyrian of the last days with those of Gog in Ezekiel. This we will find further strengthened by such passages as Isa. xvii. 12-14; chaps. xxv.; xxvi. 21; xxx. 18-33; Joel ii. 15-27; Nahum i.-iii., especially i. 11-15 and iii. 9; and Zech. 12. A careful consideration of these scriptures will lead us to see that, no matter what application they may have to the days which close the seventieth week of Daniel, they look on for full accomplishment in Gog's great gathering, though his name does not appear. Similarity of moral character and purpose, coincidence in time and characteristics of judgment, prevail throughout. They are in that way of the same generation as the Assyrian of Sennacherib's day, whose coming and defeat gave the text for many prophecies, while undoubtedly it was the foreshadow of the final consummation.

From these considerations we may conclude that Jehovah's words (ver. 17) indicate the wide scope to be attributed to the prophecies.

Section 5. (chap. xxxix. 8-16.)

Almighty strength: the glory brought to Israel through its exercise.

Behold, it cometh, and shall be done, saith the Lord Jehovah. This is the day whereof I have [a]spoken. And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall kindle fire, and burn weapons, and shields, and targets, bows and arrows, and hand-staves, and spears: and they shall

a ch. 38. 17.

They not only have an application to the action of Assyria at the time when that ancient empire flourished, but also to the King of the North, or Assyrian of the future, who shall be the desolator, or overflowing scourge, in the closing scenes of the seventieth week, God's battle-axe then as before upon a rebellious and idolatrous people; and finally the day when he shall come again as Gog from the north, to be utterly broken upon the mountains of Israel (Isa. x. 26, 27; xiv. 24-27 with our present chapters. Compare also Isa. x. 26; Judg. vii. 22 with ver. 11).

There follows a most graphic description of Jehovah revealed in judgment. It is a manifestation which while centering in the land of Israel reaches throughout the earth and affects all mankind. The overthrow is accomplished by internal strife, every man's sword against his brother; by pestilence and blood, that is, violent death, and by the downpour of destruction from heaven. Thus man in proud self-will and vaunted sufficiency has his own weapons turned against him, corruption and violence assail, while heaven's displeasure is revealed. Those who are against God must find that the forces of earth and heaven, combined with their own devices, carry them down to destruction. Self-will and pride must ever reap according to the sowing. It is an unvarying principle of the divine government. God has written this largely on the pages of history, but men in their folly will not learn, seemingly blinded by thinking that each successive effort will be the exception to the rule which prevails in all affairs physical, moral and spiritual.

Grace known by us in Christ does not deliver from this holy government of God. Rather, since it gives to us a higher place of favor than ever known to faith before, we have greater responsibility, and we become more directly subject to the action of such divine principles. The whole history of Israel enforces this lesson. It is the moral underlying the ministry of the prophets. It is pressed home upon the people by repeated strokes of judgment. David used the sword to accomplish his own sinful will, and the sword never departed from his house. Solomon consorted with strangers, his heart was led astray, and enemies arise in the very quarters from which he drew the means of pleasing himself (1 Kings xi.). Man's self-devised plans and wilful choice ever come back upon him with a harvest of results, which if he would only hear the Voice speaking in them, would bring him down before God in confessed impotency and sinfulness to receive the uplifting that is always given to those who humble themselves under God's mighty hand.

The divine purpose is clearly stated (vers. 16, 23). It is that Jehovah may be known, that "the earth shall be filled with the glory

make fires with them seven years. And no wood shall be taken out of the field, neither cut down out of the forests; for they shall make fire with the weapons; and they shall [b]spoil those that spoiled them, and plunder those that plundered them, saith the Lord Jehovah.

[b] cf. Hab. 2. 1-8. Mic. 5. 8. Jud. 6. 1, 6 with 7. 19-25, and 18. 9, 4; 10. 21-34; 2 Chr. 14. 9-15; 2 Chr. 20.

And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] I will give unto Gog a place there for burial in

of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. xi. 9; Habak. iii. 14). "Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy; for all the nations shall come and worship Thee; for Thy righteous acts have been made manifest" (Rev. xv. 4). This alone can establish things in proper order, as the lack of it, or its refusal, only produces confusion and evil. It is to this end that judgment is brought in. Indeed, since sin came in it is alone through God's strange work that men can be brought to know Him. From the very beginning this has been so. Through the woman's sorrow and subjection, and the man's toil striving against the curse and blight of sin, God becomes known in mercy, grace and deliverance. He might have been known to His creatures through the Garden of Delights, earthly abundance, and ever-extending dominion, but this avenue was closed forever as far as the old creation is concerned, because of man's sin. It will be realized by the new creation on a higher plane and in intimate heavenly associations through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Thus does God triumph over evil, but by way of judgment, in which He is magnified, sanctified, and made known. And where more fully so than in the greatest of all judgments?—that of the Cross, at once the answer to every question raised by sin, the fullest manifestation of God in holiness, righteousness, and love, when indeed a greater than Gog is met and judged, even Satan, the prince and god of this world. In our individual experience it is still often through the Lord's judgments that we come to know Him in growing measure. Judgments which are either chastening for our waywardness, the discipline of love, or the disposing contrary to our proposing, or even allowing our will to have its demands granted that the bitter fruit of *our* way may be tasted, and so the sweetness of subjection to *His* way be realized. But ever it is the same love that gave Christ, working with and for us, love nevertheless which must prove itself holy to the objects of its richest blessing—to us. Our failure may not bring open discipline, He by the Holy Spirit may produce exercise and distress of heart which leads to self-judgment before Him, yet the salutary lesson will be kept before the soul by results reaped from our sowing which cannot be avoided. God graciously makes all contribute to a better knowledge of Himself. He is magnified and sanctified in these ways of judgment.

It is not that the believer has sin imputed to him, for to such pertains the blessedness of Romans 4, that of non-imputation, so that he does not come into judgment (John v. 24). This has to do with eternal issues, it is put in relation to our possession of eternal life, so that from this view-point we have passed out of the region of judgment. It remains true, however, that as in this blessed position we call on God "as Father, who without respect of persons judgeth

Israel, the valley of the passers-by* to the east of the sea; and it shall stop [the way] of the passers-by; and there shall they bury Gog and all the multitude; and they shall call it, The Valley of Hamon-Gog.† And seven months shall the

* This probably refers to some usual route of communication between the country east and that west of the Dead Sea. In view of the use of this same word in vers. 14, 15, it can hardly be applied to the hosts of Gog, as some suggest. The "passers-by" are evidently distinct from the "men of continual employment." May not the reference be, as Kiel suggests, to "travellers who pass through the land?" If so, and they are called upon with those men of special appointment to engage in burying the dead as they pass through the land, instead of going by the usual route of the valley, it being closed (ver. 11), we may see how in this way the knowledge of what God had done to Gog would be carried to distant peoples, for travellers thus made to serve either in burying or setting up signs would naturally inquire concerning the details of this signal event, and spread the news as they travelled. Thus would Israel's renown and Jehovah's glory be made known, as v.13 intimates.—(J.B.).

† Meaning, "multitude of Gog."

according to each man's work," and are to pass the time of our sojourn in fear, conscious of the redemption we have through the precious blood of Christ, and responsible as obedient children to be holy in all our behavior, "Because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy" (1 Pet. i. 14-18). Thus we are under the Father's government. Its principles find illustration all through Scripture, and that quite fully in the Old Testament, where we get the record of the various dealings of God with those who are given places of privilege and responsibility. Hence the value and importance of all Scripture, and its use for teaching, conviction, correction, and instruction (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17). Its essential unity is known by the exhibition of the same divine principles in the greatest possible variety of circumstance and instrumentality. This Word "endureth forever"—"Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in the heavens." It is the heavens that shall rule for blessing to all creation. This will surely be exercised according to that Word which is *now* to rule us as born from above, born by that Word and the Spirit. The position of this verse in the psalm (cxix. 89) offers an interesting numerical study. That psalm is an alphabetic acrostic "of the most regular and perfect kind," and this verse opens its *twelfth* section — *Lamed* being the twelfth letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It is the number of divine government, heavenly in character and manifestly exercised over all creation (3x4), as the psalm expresses. But to this we may add that the letters of the Hebrew alphabet (as also the Greek) have a definite numerical value. In this case it is thirty (3x10), divine and heavenly manifestation in that completeness of divine order, both Godward and manward, which ten suggests. All of this is found in and through the Word, and the exercise of that holy government which is according to it and revealed in it.

See. 4.

We return to the announcement with which we began, so that by reiteration emphasis is given to what Jehovah declares. His unalter-

house of Israel be burying them, that they 'may
[c] 'cleanse the land; and all the people of the land
shall bury [them]; and it shall be to them for
renown in the day that I shall be glorified, saith
the Lord Jehovah. And they shall sever out men
of continual employment to go through the land,
who, with the passers-by, shall bury those that
remain upon the face of the land, to cleanse it:
at the end of seven months shall they make a
search. And the passers-by shall pass through the
land, and when [any] seeth a man's bone, he shall
set up a sign by it, till the buriers have buried
it in the Valley of Hamon-Gog. And also the
name of the city shall be Hamonah. Thus shall
[d] they [d]cleanse the land.

[c] cf Num. 19. 11-16.

[d] ver. 12.

able "I will" assures complete accomplishment. Added to the repetition of Jehovah's purpose we now have location specified—"from the uttermost (or farthest) north." This helps to identify Gog with whatever power may occupy Russian territory at this time, while the similarity of detail in many prophecies leads us also to link him with the Assyrian, or King of the North.

As Jehovah has told of Gog's coming and purpose, also revealing His own relation and purpose, now He shows Gog's impotence to accomplish his plan—he is only a creature, vanity. The bow and arrows are smitten from his hands—at the very moment they are drawn ready for the attack, bow in left hand, arrows in right, the blow falls. How often the attainment of some self-cherished object or wilful plans seems within the grasp, and sudden blight comes. Instead of vanquishing, we are vanquished. The self-chosen way or plan is suddenly turned to our destruction. Why? God has been left out of the carefully devised arrangements. Sensual wisdom has ruled instead of that wisdom which is from above which is first pure; and God must sanctify Himself in relation to us by showing Himself in opposition. "With the froward, Thou wilt show Thyself froward." And here we must mark a distinction, for the Hebrew words for "froward" are different. The first means perverse, crafty, false, and "is said only of the mind falling from rectitude" (Gog's sin, xxxviii. 10); while the second speaks of the wrestling of one opposed, who strives until he overcomes. These chapters illustrate this text. But are there not chapters in our individual lives which convey the same lesson? How slow we are to learn! Yet God has given many warning lessons in His holy Word.

Gog then is permitted to reach the mountains he has lusted after, only to be given a prey to the ravenous bird and beast. "Lust when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is completed, bringeth forth death" (James i. 15). How often the grave is the answer to the heart's folly! Instead of taking a spoil, proud Gog falls a prey. "Extension" he did not find, nor "the topmost" place, for which he strove in pride and self-sufficiency; instead, he ignominiously falls without striking a blow to advance his selfish interests, and finds a grave in the valley.

Section 6. (chap. xxxix. 17-21.)
The mighty a prey

And thou, son of man, thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Speak unto the birds of every wing, and to every beast of the field, Gather yourselves and come, assemble yourselves on every side to my [c]sacrifice which I sacrifice for you, a great sacrifice upon the [f]mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood. Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, [and] of bullocks, all of them fatted beasts of [g]Bashan. And ye shall eat fat till ye are full, and drink blood till ye are drunken, of my sacri-

c ver. 4. cf. Zeph. 1. 7, 8. Is. 34. 6. Jer. 46. 9, 10. Rev. 19. 17, 18. 18. 11. 4. 2 Thess. 1. 7-9.
f vers. 2, 4.
g cf. Ps. 22. 12. Amos 4. 1. Deut. 33. 22 with Gen. 49. 16, 17.

The results of this overthrow shall be as a fire on Magog, reaching to the distant isles where they had thought to dwell securely, secure, perhaps, from the disastrous judgments that had fallen in rapid succession in the land at the time of the Lord's appearing in glory. In this Jehovah lets the nations know that His judgment can reach to the uttermost bounds, and so "they shall know that I am the Lord." Their security must be found in knowing Him, and this at once destroys every other fancied safety, opening the only true sanctuary to them.

In all this a threefold purpose finds accomplishment. Jehovah is manifest as dwelling in the midst of Israel. He is there in holy, preserving, delivering power. This will make true in the fullest way the desire expressed by Moses: "Wherein shall it be known that I have found grace in Thine eyes, I and Thy people, except in that Thou goest with us? and we shall be distinguished, I and Thy people, from all the people which are on the face of the earth." Then, "Neither will I suffer My holy name to be profaned anymore." This had taken place in the past. Though Jehovah had humbled and stricken Israel in judgment, using the nations as the rod of His anger, they whom He used had not considered; mocking and boasting, they had blasphemed Jehovah's name. Surely He was of less account than their own idol-gods. He could not defend nor save His professed people! They gloried in wasting the land and the people that bore that name. Israel had made Jehovah to serve with their sins, so that His name was dishonored among the Gentiles. The very judgments His holiness must visit upon His sinful people resulted to His dishonor in the eyes of the nations. The overwhelming judgment of Gog will cause this reproach to pass away, for it will demonstrate His power over the mightiest of earth. Furthermore, all that profaned that holy name in Israel will also have been purged out, and the nation will be holiness unto the Lord. Finally, through this consummation of judgment "the nations shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel."

There is a voice in this for us. We, too, individually or collectively, stand identified with the holy name of Christ. Is that name sullied because of our failure? Do we commend Him before the eyes of the world? Or does our carelessness, our indifference, make

fice which I sacrifice for you. And ye shall be filled at my table with horses and charioteers, with mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord Jehovah. And I will set [h]my glory among the nations, and all the nations shall see [i]my judgment which I have executed, and [j]my hand which I have laid upon them.

[h] ver. 13. ch. 38. 16, 23. cf. Ex. 9. 16. Is. 37. 20. Ps. 97. Ps. 102. 15. Is. 11. 10; 60. 1-3.
[i] cf. Is. 26. 9. Mic. 5. 15. Ps. 126. ch. 28. 25, 26. Ps. 9. 16. Is. 42. 1-4.
[j] cf. Ex. 7. 4.

Him serve with our sins in the world's eyes because His name is named upon us? He is not visible; we are to be His living representatives, His ambassadors. May the impress of His image be upon us! For this we must be much in the secret place of communion, learning from Him, sitting at His blessed feet.

Sec. 5. (Chap. xxxix. 8-16.)

Judgment executed upon proud flesh always leaves its aftermath to which the torch must be applied, or for which the grave must be dug. The collapse of every self-willed fleshly plan leaves that which must be removed or buried out of sight as loathsome and corrupt. Who that has experienced deliverance out of a snare by God's blight falling upon some cherished plan conceived in the will of the flesh, has not found plenty to burn and bury? Yet it is thus we spoil the spoiler and plunder the plunderer, while the graves of our lust are a memorial, warning by the lessons they teach, but leading the exercised soul to confidence in an ever faithful God, so that after all He is glorified.

The prophet is first assured of the absolute certainty of these events. It is the day of which Jehovah has spoken (xxxviii. 18, 19), the day referred to in the many prophecies already mentioned. The arms of a stricken foe are usually gathered and preserved as trophies, or if fit for use stored in the arsenals of the victor. Not so here; they are consumed by fire. Might not Israel have future use for all this vast store? Would it not be prudence to preserve it? Why? They who dwelt in peace without walls or gates or bars had not used a weapon to strike the foe! They had not been called to fight, Jehovah had accomplished the overthrow. It was like that of the ancient Assyrian host, the foreshadow of Gog, when the angel of the Lord went forth and smote 185,000, and "behold, they were all dead corpses" (Isa. xxxvii. 36). The day for sword and spear had passed. The fires that burned for seven years would witness to this, as also to Israel's confidence being in Jehovah. For how different a purpose to that of Gog shall then the gathering of the nations to Jerusalem be (Isa. ii. 1-4).

The land is now cleansed of its defilement through death by the burial of Gog's multitude. This place of a grave will abide a memorial to posterity; they who pass by will stop there to consider Jehovah's judgment. Geographically this valley is difficult to locate, though the language suggests the vicinity of the Dead Sea, and also a route of general communication between the land and the east of the sea. That the lesson may not be forgotten the valley shall be called Hamon-Gog, "multitude of Gog," and a city shall bear a name memorializing this judgment.

Section 7. (chap. xxxix. 22-29.)
The perfect completion of God's ways with His people

And the [k]house of Israel shall know that I [am] Jehovah their God from that day and forward. And the nations shall know that the house of Israel went into [l]captivity for their iniquity, because they trespassed against me; and I [m]hid my face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies, so that they fell all of them by the sword. According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions [n]I did unto them, and I hid my face from them.

k vers. 7, 28. *cf.* Is. 12. Ps. 46. Hos. 13. 4. Ps. 59. 13. Ps. 100. Joel 2. 27; 3. 17. ch. 34.27-31.
l *cf.* ch. 36. 16-23. Deut. 28. 15-68.
m Is. 54. 8; 57. 17; 59. 2. *cf.* Deut. 31. 17, 18; 32. 15-20. Is. 64. 6, 7. *cfr.* ch. 22.26. Is. 28. 15; 53. 3.
n *cf.* Lev. 26. 14-45; Deut. 32. 23-26; Ezra 9. 7; Ps. 78. 55-64.

This burial of the slain shall be for Israel a renown. It will give them a name of fame, of honor, before all nations. They bury the foe, instead of being buried under the weight of Gog's avalanche. This is so, because it is the day upon which Jehovah is glorified in overcoming their enemies.

Sec. 6. (Chap. xxxix. 17-21.)

The sacrifice of judgment provides a feast for bird and beast. It is spread upon the mountains of Israel which had been laid waste when the nations surfeited themselves with the spoil of Jehovah's people; but there now the rich and mighty of the nations fall to utter destruction. Where once they had spoiled, they are now taken for a spoil. Such is the sowing and the reaping.

Sec. 7. (Chap. xxxix. 22-29.)

The perfect completion of God's holy ways in government with His people, and their establishment in full blessing, is now expressed as a fitting conclusion. First, the work of judgment confirms Israel beyond all question in the knowledge of Jehovah as their God. Secondly, it answers conclusively every question raised to profane Jehovah's name because of Israel's abject condition for the centuries of her dispersion. It was not because He was weak, unable to save, though it might appear so to the mocking eyes of unbelief. It was because He was holy, and must hide His face from them because of their iniquity. So He gave them into the hands of the adversaries, otherwise they could have had no power. This history read in the light of Gog's judgment will witness to the righteousness and holiness of Jehovah to whom now all the earth must bow. It also becomes the lesson book for the restored nation (ver. 28), while none shall be left out of blessing, nor shall God's face be anymore hid from them. The Sun of Righteousness has arisen, and in its perpetual shining they shall ever rejoice. Likewise shall we, when in the glory of Christ's day we read the lesson book of life's history, which the judgment-seat of Christ will enable us to interpret according to divine righteousness and holiness. What a blessed knowledge this will give us of the Holy and the True, while being then forever like Him no cloud shall ever come between us and the glorious shining of His face!

Therefore, thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Now will I [o]bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy on the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name; and they shall bear* their confusion, and all their unfaithfulness in which they have acted unfaithfully against me, when they shall dwell [p]safely in their land, and none shall make them afraid; when I have brought them again from the peoples, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am hallowed in them in the sight of many nations. And they shall know that I [am] Jehovah their God, in that I caused them to be led into captivity among the nations, and have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there. And I will not hide my face any more from them, for I shall have poured out [q]my Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord Jehovah.

o cf. Deut. 30, 3. Ps. 14, 7. Ps. 126. Jer. 30, 3, 18; 32, 44. Joel 3, 1. Amos 9, 13-15.

p Jer. 23, 6; 32, 37, 38. chs. 28, 24-26; 38, 8, 11, 14.

q Joel 2, 28. ch. 36, 25-29; ch. 37, 14. Is. 44, 3; 59, 21; 32, 15.

* It is not bearing shame in the sense of outward disgrace, but as bearing the inward realization of unworthiness, into which they are brought by the manifestation of the goodness of Jehovah on their behalf.—(J.B.)

God is jealous of His holy name, He acts to vindicate it, and in this His people get their full blessing. How gloriously redemption accomplishes both—His glory and our blessing. And so with Israel in that day. But their dwelling securely as regathered will only give them a deeper realization of their shame and trespasses. The grace that restores and blesses writes more deeply upon the heart the failure of which we may be guilty than does the rod of judgment, which may leave of necessity a bleeding furrow. Thus shall the matchless glory of His presence, the perfect grace and kindness displayed in our being there, only make us read more deeply the awful meaning of sin, while we raise our anthem before the throne, "Unto Him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by His blood."

The blessing of those Millennial days will be found through the outpoured Spirit (ver. 29). Whatever may be the difference in dispensation, He has always been the active Divine Agent of blessing. From the time of His brooding upon the face of the waters, He has wrought in loving ministry for the creature. For us the blessing is the highest because of His personal indwelling of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and His baptism of all such into one Body united to Christ in glory. Though this will not be true of Millennial days, and the presence and activity of the Spirit will then be after the order which the Old Testament makes known, yet it will be in greater fulness and with effects far more widespread than known in the days of old. It will be the glorious time of creation's deliverance from its groan, and its enjoyment of the liberty of the glory of the children of God (Rom. viii. 21).

SUBDIVISION 3. (chaps. 40-48).

This final vision of Ezekiel has for its background the whole of his preceding prophecies. It is in the form of a great plan with accompanying specifications, drawn with the utmost care, delineated with mathematical exactness, and intended to give expression by its sharp outlines to those principles of God's holiness and government which are set forth in the earlier messages of the book.

It is important for us to get a general view before studying any of the details.

It is not hard to see that the prophet embodies in the plan of the Sanctuary and the related subjects the great central truth of God's holiness, and the divine order which must govern for blessing to be realized. Expression to this is given symbolically in the wonderful structure presented in the vision, and upon which in its glorious Millennial execution all the nations of the world will look as they come to worship.

The truth of God's holiness has been the theme pervading all of Ezekiel's utterances, whether directed to Israel or the nations. Throughout the object in view is declared to be the knowledge of Jehovah in the holiness of His nature and government. This had been most seriously called in question by the rebellion and sin of His professed people. They had obscured His character and profaned His holiness in the eyes of the nations.

The presentation of this fundamental truth in relation to Jehovah not only leads to the fullest exposure, arraignment, and judgment of Israel in the light of the glorious manifestation of God given to the prophet (chs. i.-xxiv.), but the prophet is led on to pronounce judgment upon the surrounding nations who had shown themselves enemies of God and His people, so that complete manifestation of Jehovah may be made in all the earth (chaps. xxv.-xxxii.).

Not only is Jehovah to be manifested in withering everything contrary to Himself by the breath of His holy judgment, proceeding from that august Presence which is revealed at the beginning of the book and broods over all its action, but He also is manifested in grace in resurrection power, restoring the prodigal to Himself in the power of the Spirit and as a new creation, followed by the defeat of the last unholy assault of the enemy (chs. xxxiii.-xxxix.). Now that a people have been created suited to God and His holiness, we fittingly close with the picture of the divine order for Sanctuary, priesthood, people and land.

The book opens with visions of God which set forth His almighty majesty; His unerring, ever harmonious movement toward the predestined end; His will in holy government, to which all creation must bow, to the accomplishment of which all events must contribute. The book closes with the vision of the Sanctuary in which this glorious Presence takes up His dwelling, in the plan of which He intends all creation to learn the truth of His character and relation to creation, since it forms a visible expression of the very truth His prophet has so emphatically spoken.

We view things here according to the visions of God. We do not pass through the land to the Sanctuary, but begin with the sacred enclosure and proceed outward to the people and land. This is like the description of the tabernacle. It begins with the ark, the throne

and mercy seat (Exod. xxv.). Or, again, like the sacrifices in Lev. i-vi., the burnt offering is first, that in which all went up as a sweet savor to God. Then, too, this vision commences at the East Gate, that at which a little later the glory is to enter (chap. xliii. 1-4). This is ever the foundation of all blessing. We must begin with God, we must take His view-point. From this all unfolds in divine order, and with absolute precision.

It is rather remarkable that there is only a single measurement which we can certainly define as being a measurement of height (xli. 8) in the whole of this minute specification. As to the sanctuary, it is exclusively a ground-plan which is before us. This marks utter indifference to what seems to man a very great, if not the greatest, element of architecture. Nothing is considered to affect the imagination so much as height or loftiness of space, especially in a religious sense. "The height, the span, the gloom, the glory" of a venerable Gothic cathedral do not enter into the conception before us. It is characteristic of man in his pride and rebellion to aim at building a tower which will reach to heaven. In this an important principle may find illustration. Man's blessing is not found through his efforts to reach up to God, but through God coming down to him. Many are the illustrations of this, commencing with the scene in the garden (Gen. iii.), which enforce the general truth that "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven" (John iii.). As a result of this coming down there is a great spreading out in relation to which height becomes an insignificant factor—the mountain is brought low, and the valley filled, for the revelation of Jehovah's glory (Isa. xl. 3-5).

In a general survey of the whole arrangement laid out in this vision, several general principles may be discerned as ruling this presentation of the fundamental truth of holiness. We may define them as separation, gradation, symmetry, sacrifice.

That *separation* is of great importance in manifesting the character and name of God comes out in chapter xliii. 7-12, where comparison is made with the first temple arrangements. Great defilement had arisen through the close proximity of the royal buildings to the Sanctuary, for the wickedness and idolatry of those who often occupied the former had been introduced into the latter. Further, the sharp distinction between the priests and Levites (chap. xliv. 5-16) emphasizes the thought of separation, the guarding against all undue familiarity with the presence of Jehovah, and the exercise of His government in holiness. It is to be noted how past disorders are brought forward both to show the need of, and to enforce, the ordinances of the new Sanctuary. The same may be observed as to the priestly garments and the people, and other related details (xlii. 14; xliv. 19). All is manifestly designed to impress the observer with the distinct sanctity of Jehovah and His dwelling-place. This is a needful lesson for all times, and in the days to which these visions of God refer it will be not only enforced by precept, but will have its continual display before the whole world in the plan and service of the Sanctuary, to which all nations shall come to worship.

A second principle of importance may be called *gradation*—a relative subordination or arrangement of parts so as to produce the desired effect, or express some one great truth. This is expressed in a way that could not fail to set forth the fundamental idea of holiness, and so give before the eyes of all a constant witness to this

essential characteristic of Jehovah, who will then rule from Mount Zion over all the earth. First, as moving toward the divine centre, we have Israel's separation from the nations; then the oblation in the midst of the land; then the Sanctuary with its walls and courts; finally the Temple and its three graded apartments—porch, holy place, and most holy place. The whole plan is a most impressive portrayal of the Divine majesty and holiness in the power and truth of which the Millennial blessing will be maintained. It will give an ever present object lesson to the world such as it has never seen before. Note, too, that the outer court is entered by *seven* steps, the inner by *eight*, and the House by *ten*. It is an entrance into what is perfect as to its form and order (7); established in the blessing of the New Covenant, a new beginning for Israel (8); and all this through God manifest in holy government according to the fulness of the divine measure (10). God ever leads the creature, as to its learning and experience, by successive steps, into the secret of His presence. We may learn this as a general principle of God's ways in the tabernacle and its arrangement, in the days of creation, and in the recorded experiences of men of God. Whatever may be the absolute and perfect fulness of our standing, made ours the moment faith lays hold of God according to His Word, the apprehension or learning of it is by gradation, by successive steps. This, in one way, narrows the sphere, for constriction marks the gradation as we draw near the Divine presence, and yet in another way it is an introduction into the fulness of God. After speaking of the all-various wisdom of God, the eternal purpose in Christ, and the breadth, length, depth, and height which are connected with the riches of God's glory, the apostle brings us to the love of Christ, the heart of all, which had its positive and full manifestation at the Cross in every way. This may appear to be constriction, a narrowing down to that upon which our hearts may rest in what, as we may say, is concrete. This is needful for us, and ever will be so. But having reached the concentrated centre of all, notice there is immediate expansion, "which surpasses knowledge; that ye may be filled even to all the fulness of God" (Eph. iii.). Having found the divine centre we look out upon the vast expanse of grace and glory. Again, he speaks of "every family in the heavens and on earth," but the making known of the all-various wisdom of God is narrowed down to the assembly, though it will surely radiate to the utmost bounds. This mode of revelation is expressed in the most wonderful way of all, in a way seemingly constricted, if you please, yet ever abiding inscrutable, when we consider Christ in whom "dwells all the fulness of the Godhead *bodily*." From the contemplation of the incomprehensible vastness of all things which that fulness ever pervades in a variety of constant manifestations we come to *Him*, and hear those marvelous words, the like of which cannot be found elsewhere, "Ye are complete in Him." It is interesting in this very connection to find that, not the holiest of all, but the *great altar* is the exact centre of the whole sanctuary enclosure (see plan). What a striking testimony to the truth of the Person and Work of Christ upon which is founded the glory of God and the blessing of man for time and eternity! May not the significance of this have influenced the mind of the godly remnant who later returned from Babylon? for they first set up the altar, and in it they found their protection in face of the surrounding peoples (Ezra iii. 1-3). Again,

in Noah's day, the altar is prominent at the new beginning which is made after the purging judgment, typical, as we may well take this to be, of the Millennial scene after the introductory judgments of the day of the Lord. Then at the commencement of Solomon's reign—another Millennial picture—the altar is the great gathering centre, and also the place of God's revelation and blessing (2 Chron. i.).

Symmetry is another general principle illustrated in the plan and arrangements presented in this vision. Throughout there is a perfect balancing of the different parts in relative proportion and harmony. The constantly recurring square of 100 cubits, the whole sanctuary space being comprised of 25 such squares, and the preponderance of the numbers five and ten in the measurements, are suggestive in the light of what these numbers mean in Scripture. Such exactness of measurement and attention to detail as we find here must have as an underlying principle the harmonious arrangement of every part and relation as affecting both the buildings and the personnel of the Sanctuary. What do these things teach us? In the perfect balancing of every part we see how with God there is nothing of unevenness or undue proportion. Every element and feature of His character is in perfect adjustment and harmonious manifestation. It is found in its moral and spiritual display in Jesus, and it will be in constant manifestation before all created intelligences throughout eternity when God is "all in all." Further, it exhibits to us that there is perfect harmony, absolute precision, and perfect balance in His relation to the whole universe, or to the individual, in His every act, and in all His ways of wisdom, power, grace and love, in perfect holiness. The knowledge of this shall engage us for all eternity, when we shall no longer see through a glass darkly, but face to face, and known even as we are known. Then we shall say in a way impossible to us now, "O depth of riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgments, and untraceable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been His counsellor? Or who has first given to Him, and it shall be rendered to him? For of Him, and through Him, and for Him are all things: to Him be glory forever, Amen" (Rom. xi. 33-36).

As previously mentioned, five and ten are here the prominent basic numbers of measurement. We have become familiar with the first as signifying how the weak creature and the Almighty God are brought together, an accomplishment possible only through grace, so that it is a number we find identified with the blessing of redemption. In its common division of four and one (4+1) it suggests the thought of the world and man, in his own natural weakness, under the gracious yet absolute government of God. It leads us, therefore, to the idea of responsibility on the part of the creature in his relation to God as sovereign over all. These things in display become a wonderful testimony (2) to the Divine fulness (3) — 5 as 2+3. Such thoughts fit in admirably with the "visions of God," which close Ezekiel. For they treat of the time when the new covenant in its gracious work, founded upon redemption, shall be made good in all its blessing to Israel, and the sovereignty of God and His perfect administration of government shall be exercised over all creation, in which indeed there shall be a visible display of the Divine characters in the righteous reign of Christ—the *fifth* universal kingdom (Dan. ii.).

In the 25 (5x5) squares of 100 cubits which comprise the sanctuary enclosure we have these things intensified. This intimates that their concentrated expression is found in the plan and ordinances of the Sanctuary, the holy of holies of the earth. This number (25) is also prominent in other parts of the vision (chaps. xl., xlv., xlviii.).

In the 100 cubits so constantly repeated we have 5x20 (5x4, or 10x2 or 10+10). The latter number (20) appears in the holy and most holy places, also other adjacent parts, and must therefore be of some importance. The first division of this number (5x4) would suggest the truth of five intensified by universal application, four being the number of creation. This, indeed, will be the great lesson of the Millennial reign, that dispensation of the fulness of times, and the redemption of the purchased possession, accompanied as that will be with the manifestation of the sons of God. For the measuring of the other two possible divisions of the number twenty, we must first think of the meaning of ten, for it, too, appears as fundamental to the divine plan and order here revealed. In brief, it presents the perfection of divine government in the ordering of relations both Godward and manward (5+5), as, for example, we see in the ten commandments, and this as manifesting in fulness (3) the Divine perfections (7) (10=3+7), which, on the other hand, constitutes the witness (2) of the bringing together in grace of the weak creature and the Almighty God (5) in active display (10=5x2). That from this, ten should be expressive of full responsibility (as also of judgment, since it relates to the accomplishment or non-accomplishment of responsibility), is easily understood, and finds illustration in Scripture. All of these things will be given fullest manifestation in the Millennium. To this the abundant testimony of the prophets concerning its characteristics bears witness. It is not, therefore, surprising that this number should play such an important part in the plan of the Sanctuary, which is the heart of the administration and manifestation of this glorious kingdom as established on the earth. Twenty, then, as the product resulting from the use of *two*, may suggest to us the competent testimony which will be given at that wonderful epoch to the things of which we have just spoken. Further, 100 is a dominant factor throughout, and so stamps the essential meaning of *ten* upon the whole arrangement here spread out for our contemplation. Well may we say that a perfect symmetry governs everywhere.

There is minute care and great exactness shown in making this plan and in defining the relations of the several parts. This is also true as to the ordinances of service for the Prince, priests, Levites and people. All this is surely designed to press upon heart and conscience God's intense interest in the important truth presented in this great picture.

A fourth general principle, which stands out prominently, is the permanent memorial of *sacrifice*, maintained in the presence of the revealed glory. It is not sacrifice rendered with a view of obtaining salvation, but sacrifice in view of accomplished salvation, which has been blessedly developed for us in chaps. xxxvi.-xxxix.

Before closing this general survey, it may be well to speak of some remarkable omissions. In the order of feasts Pentecost is not mentioned. This, as we know, presents distinctively Christian truth which, being fully accomplished in the Church—no longer on the earth at the time this vision contemplates—is fittingly omitted from

the feasts celebrated in the Millennium. There is no allusion to the ark. Is not this because of the more wondrous throne of glory which the prophet sees first in the visions of God which open the book, and which later he sees entering the House in the same form? This abides forever, filling the House (chap. xliii. 3-7). Every truth that the ark and mercy seat symbolize is found expressed in an intensified form in this remarkable chariot of the Divine glory, and over all is "the appearance of a Man." All mention of any High Priest is omitted. This would seem to find its explanation in that when Christ bears the glory, sitting and ruling upon His throne, He is spoken of as "a Priest upon His throne" (Zech. vi. 12, 13). From this passage we may also gather a suggestion as to why so much of seeming importance, needful for the construction of this great Sanctuary, such as measurements of height and details of style and treatment of both the exterior and interior of buildings and courts, is not given. Messiah, says Zechariah, "shall build the temple of Jehovah: even He shall build the temple of Jehovah." When He unrolls the completed design, and all that is needed is added to what was given to Ezekiel, then shall it be said, as once before when only the type of the glory was filling the eyes of the Queen of Sheba, "Behold, the half of the greatness of Thy wisdom was not told me." There is no king mentioned. Again Zechariah gives us the answer: "And Jehovah shall be king over all the earth...the nations...shall go up from year to year to worship the King, Jehovah of Hosts, and to celebrate the feast of tabernacles" (Zech. xiv. 9, 16, 17).

In contrast to these omissions, we have "the Prince," who has a unique and highly favored position. It is his privilege to occupy the eastern gate at which the glory of Jehovah entered. To him the offerings of the people are given, and by him administered in providing for the ritual of sacrifice. It does not appear that the people bring sacrifices of themselves, but that it is the Prince who gives all for the prescribed ritual, including the daily burnt offering (xlv. 17). The people are spoken of as simply worshipping at the times of offering by the Prince, but the act of offering is his, the priests and Levites acting in their respective capacities. He thus fills a representative position on behalf of the people in the matter of specific offerings, while in all of these the people may be considered as having their part, since, in the first instance, they present their offerings to the Prince (xlv.13-17), and join in worship when he offers. It would seem also that he occupies a representative position for God toward the people, since he is privileged to commune with Jehovah at the East Gate.

Finally, we may note that the omission of very much concerning the interior decoration, and the details of furniture, all so fully presented in relation to both the tabernacle and the first temple, only the more gives prominence and throws emphasis upon the great fundamental idea which it must be evident fills the whole vision. We have sought to show that this is the holiness of Jehovah. "Thou, son of man, show the house to the house of Israel, *that they may be confounded at their iniquities;* and let them measure the pattern." The mind and purpose of God are revealed to His people that they (and we too) may rightly judge both themselves and their history in the light of the revelation, and also acquire the needed wisdom to correct and direct all their ways. The things written aforetime were written for our learning.

It may be helpful to give in tabulated form the contents of these chapters. This will aid us in getting a comprehensive view of the whole subject.

SUBDIVISION 3. (chaps. 40-48).

The Glory dwelling in the Restored Land.

The principal subjects are:

The new Temple buildings, the entry of Jehovah into the House, the great altar, and the service of consecration (chaps. 40-43).

The ordinances regarding the personnel of the Sanctuary—priests and Levites (chap. 44).

The ordinances regarding the provision for the priests, Levites, and Prince, with his special responsibility to provide for the ritual in the Temple (chaps. 45: 1-17).

The ordinances regarding special and daily services in the Temple —the feasts, sabbaths, new moons, and offerings of the Prince (chaps. 45: 18—46: 24).

The river issuing from the Temple (chap. 47: 1-12).

The boundaries of the holy land, and the privileges granted to strangers who sojourn among the tribes (chap. 47: 13-23).

The divisions of the land (chap. 48).

SECTION 1. (chaps. 40, 41).

The Sanctuary, the holy of holies, where the glory will dwell.

1. (40: 1-4) The occasion of the vision.
   (1-3) The time, place, and communicator.
   (4) The eyes, ears, and heart to be engaged.
   The testimony to be given.
2. (40: 5-47) THE GATES AND COURTS: the precincts of the House.
   1. (5-27) *The first court*: the place of general assemblage.
      (5) The wall.
      (6-16) The *Eastern* Gate.
      (17-19) Chambers, Pavement, and measurement of Court.
      (20-23) The *Northern* Gate.
      (24-27) The *Southern* Gate.
   2. (28-46). The *inner court*: and its gateways: the place of separation for priestly service.
      (28-31) The *Southern* Gate.
      (32-34) The *Eastern* Gate.
      (35-37) The *Northern* Gate.
      (38-43) Chambers for washing the burnt-offering.
      Four tables for slaying the burnt, sin, and trespass offerings.
      Eight tables for the sacrifices.
      Four tables for the instruments.
      Double hooks for sacrificial purposes.
      (44-46) Chambers for the priests, keepers of the charge of the House, and keepers of the charge of the altar.
   3. (47) *The Altar*: the divine centre.
3. (40: 48—41: 4). *The House itself* into which the visible glory shall enter.
   1. (40: 48, 49) The porch.
   2. (41: 1, 2) The holy place.
   3. (41: 3, 4) The most holy.

4. (41: 5-11). *The chambers around the House*: the encompassment of divine fulness realized through accomplished creative sovereignty (3x10x3, 90 chambers in all).
   (5-7) Their construction and relation to the house.
   (8) The elevation of 6 cubits.
   (9-11) Adjacent spaces and way of entrance to chambers.
5. (41: 12-14) *The separate place*: God in government maintaining holiness, according to the fulness of the divine measure (10x10).
   (12) The building to the west.
   (13, 14) The two squares of 100 cubits each occupied by the two previously described buildings.
6. (41: 15-26) *Interior details*: symbolic of Messianic triumph.
   1. (15-21) General character: all established by measure in glory and righteousness.
   2. (22) The altar of wood: fellowship.
   3. (23-26) The doors: the manner of entrance.

SECTION 2. (chap. 42).

The arrangements provided to preserve the service of the Sanctuary in separation from defilement.

1. (1-12) The chambers before the separate place.
2. (13-14) The purposes served by these chambers.
3. (15-20) The established separation of the whole sacred enclosure.

SECTION 3. (chap. 43).

The glory of Jehovah filling the House.

1. (1-12) The place of the throne, glorious in majesty and holiness.
   1. (1-6) The *glory* itself.
   2. (7-11) The place of the throne—the seat of *government*.
   3. (12) The mount of holiness.
2. (13-17) The altar—the place of *sacrifice*.
3. (18-27) The offerings at the sanctification of the altar and the priests—the place of *worship*.

(*Note, The people and their rulers are reproved and corrected*, 7-11).

SECTION 4. (chap. 44).

Regulations concerning those who minister in the Sanctuary.

1. (1-3) The supremacy of Jehovah: regulations regarding the Eastern gate, and the Prince's privilege to use it.
2. (4-14) The judgment and holiness which become His House: regulations regarding service in keeping the gates, and slaying the sacrifices; those who shall not be permitted to serve, and the Levites who are to minister in these ways, with the reason for their exclusion from the priesthood.
3. (15-31) The priests: the features of their place and portion as sanctified unto Jehovah. They minister at the altar, are to be only sons of Zadok; their garments, their marriage, their service as teachers and judges, their preservation from defilement, their maintenance, are subjects of regulation.

(*Note, The people, Levites and priests are reproved and corrected*, 6-13).

SECTION 5 (chaps. 45, 46).

Divine government exercised in the apportionment of the land, and the establishment of ordinances for worship and service.

1. (45:1-8) The division of the land in which the Lord's claim is given *first* place.
   The portion for the priests...25,000x10,000
   The portion for the Levites..25,000x10,000 } 25,000x25,000.
   The portion for the City.....25,000x 5,000
   The portion for the Prince...
2. (45: 9-12) Justness in practical dealings required by Him whose ways are full of mercy and truth. Regulations as to weight, measure, and coinage.
3. (45:13—46:15). The materials for, and the order of, worship.
   1. (13-17) The gifts of the people: these are rendered to the Prince whose charge is to provide for the sacrifices.
   2. (18-25) The yearly feasts.
      (*a*) The offerings to cleanse and atone for the House.
      (*b*) The passover and feast of unleavened bread.
      (*c*) The feast of tabernacles.
   3. (46:1-7) The sabbaths and new moons.
   4. (8-10) The manner of entrance and exit.
   5. (11) The regulation as to the meal-offering.
   6. (12) The Prince's free-will offering.
   7. (13-15) The daily burnt-offering.
4. (46: 16-18) Warning against oppression.
5. (19-24) Guarding the holy things.

(*Note, Princes are reproved and corrected,* 45: 8-12 and 46: 16-18).

(*Note the prominence of the Prince throughout this section*).

SECTION 6. (chap. 47: 1-12).

The victory over curse.

The waters of continual refreshment and blessing flowing forth from the Temple.

SECTION 7. (chaps. 47: 13—48: 35).

The perfect land, for "the Lord is there."

1. (47: 13-21) The boundaries of the land.
2. (22, 23) Care for the stranger.
3. (48: 1-7) The tribes *north* of the sacred oblation.
4. (8-22) The sacred oblation: the universal centre of glory, government, and worship.
5. (23-29) The tribes *south* of the sacred oblation.
6. (30-35) The gates of the city.
7. (35) The name of the city.

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chaps. xl.-xlviii.)

The Glory dwelling in the Restored Land

Section 1 (Chaps. xl., xli.).

The "Sanctuary, the holy of holies,"* where the glory will dwell.

1 (xl. 1-4): The occasion of the vision.

1. In the twenty-fifth year of our captivity, in the beginning of the year, on the tenth of the month, in the fourteenth year after the city was [r]smitten,

[r] Jer. 33. 21. 2 Kings 25. 4. Jer. 39. 1-7; 52. 4-11.

* Cf. chap. 45: 2-4.

Sec. 1.

Our attention is first called to the Sanctuary and its various precincts, the dwelling-place of the divine glory during the Millennial kingdom. These two chapters contain a description of the gates, courts, and buildings which make up what will be the most sacred and glorious place in all the world. From it the power and blessing of God will flow forth to the ends of the earth. Here we have, as it were, the very heart of that golden age, from which will go forth those streams of life which will remove the blight of the curse, make the desert blossom as the rose, and bear to every rank of creation the revivifying touch. A great pæan of praise will rise from the delivered creation thus brought into the liberty of the children of God, when the Firstbegotten shall have been brought again into the world, to whom universal homage shall be paid, His enemies having been made the footstool of His feet.

1. In order of time this is not the last prophecy of Ezekiel, that given in chap. xxix. 17 being two years later (see *Notes*, p. 176). But this great vision is the only one that could fittingly close the book. The glory revealed to the prophet at the beginning, and which he saw a little later leave the defiled temple soon to be laid in ruins, he now sees returning to that greater and more wonderful earthly dwelling-place, spread out before him so that he may describe it to the house of Israel.

In this there is a note of victory. It assures us of God's ultimate victory over evil, apart from which the glory could not return. It teaches us that there is a divine limit to the progress of evil. The tide of wickedness may rise so high as to seem to overwhelm the power of God and administer defeat to Him; but in the end, in the fulness of the time, when all has been accomplished which He had in mind, and which He indeed has been working out through all the turbulent scenes of human sin and strife, He moves to the closing act, the day breaks, the dark shadows of night flee away, and the mastery of His hand over all, even in the darkest hour of the past, is seen as in retrospect, the course of history is reviewed in the light of the glory. What a comfort for faith! How good to know the *living* God! He does not slumber or sleep. He abides faithful, no word of His can fail. "Have faith in God."

This vision was given, Ezekiel says, "In the twenty-fifth year of our captivity." The fact that morally and spiritually it alone fittingly closes his book, though not the last communication given to him, seems to imply that the very year itself in which this vision

on that same day was the *hand of Jehovah upon me, and he brought me thither. In the ᵗvisions of God brought he me into the land of Israel, and set me upon a very ᵘhigh mountain; and upon it there

*Jer. 28. 5-17; 29. 31. u *cf.* ch. 20. 40-44; ch. 37. 22; Is. 2. 2, 3; Mic. 4. 1; Ps. 48. 1-3; ch. 43. 12.

s ch. 1. 3; 3. 14, 22; 8. 1; 33. 22; 37. 1.
t ch. 1. 1; 8. 3; 43. 3. 2 Chr. 26. 5. *cf.* ch. 13. 16, 22.

is given bears a lesson to us. Why the twenty-fifth year? Is it not because as 5x5 it suggests how fully God (1) and the creature (4) are brought together, and this in fivefold power and blessing? Thus the thought is emphasized, intensified, for us; and need we wonder at this when it is the time that the creature shall be delivered from the bond of corruption and be brought into the liberty of the glory? Then with the glory in the land there shall spread to earth's remotest bounds the blessing of Messiah's reign in righteousness, the time when the Son of Man shall sit upon His throne and administer the government which will then rest upon His shoulder.

The time is still more definitely stated as "in the beginning of the year, the tenth of the month." Considering Ezekiel's priestly place, and that the civil year, which was reckoned to begin with the first of the seventh month of the sacred year, was a late innovation among the Jews, having no relation to the divine economy with which the whole order of things here revealed has to do most intimately, it would appear certain that we are to think of that beginning of the year as referring to that spoken of in Exodus in connection with the Passover. This was the beginning of the year according to God's order, and this would be first in the heart and thought of the prophet. Is it not just the light of redemption and deliverance from bondage that we might expect to illumine our entrance upon the glorious vista of earth's golden age, of which this Sanctuary is the spiritual centre? What a word for downtrodden Israel to consider when pondering this book of their captivity prophet! All that that memorable event meant for them is to find its superlative accomplishment in the period to which this vision belongs. Then it is the tenth of the month when the lamb was taken to be kept up to the fourteenth day. This brings into view the blessed Person by whom alone all that is in prospect can be accomplished—Christ, who as a lamb without spot or blemish, has made peace by the blood of His cross; Christ who as the Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world; the Lamb who is so prominent in the book of Revelation, in which so much is given as to the circumstances and events relating to the period to which this vision shows the consummation.

Finally, we are told that this vision was given in the 14th year after the city was smitten (see Chronological Chart, *Appendix*), when the temple was burned, and the walls of the city broken down by order of Nebuchadnezzar, but in fulfilment of the divine decree (2 Chron. xxxvi. 11-21). Here again are we not to expect to find some note of comfort? Fourteen (7x2), testimony (2) given to the complete reversal of the ruin, and the bringing in of perfection (7), upon which the dark cloud of failure and ensuing judgment shall never fall again. Well may Haggai, as he looks beyond the insignificant temple of the restoration in his day, seeing as with the eye of God the glory of the Millennial temple, which Ezekiel describes, break out in prophetic ecstasy and say, "For thus saith Jehovah of Hosts: Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens,

was as the building of a city, on the south. And he brought me thither, and behold, there was a [r]man whose appearance was like the appearance of brass, with a cord of flax in his hand, and a

r cf. ch. 1. 5, 8; 10. 2; 9. 2; 10. 2. 1 Tim. 10. 5, 6. Rev. 1. 15; 2. 18.

and the earth, and the sea, and the desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory, saith Jehovah of Hosts. The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine, saith Jehovah of Hosts. The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, saith Jehovah of Hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith Jehovah of Hosts."

Here we may digress, and think of another temple which lies in ruin, the walls of whose separation and protection have been broken down—the house of God which is the Church of the present time. As set up on the earth its history presents a sad spectacle, much of which may be found similar in character to that of Israel, for whatever is committed to the hands of men, though established in perfection at the beginning, suffers the same sorrowful blight. But, blessed be God, His Word teaches us in constantly recurring measure, by precept and example, in type and history, that the cycle must return to perfection, not so much like a circle returning to its beginning on the same level, but as lifted up on the line of perfection to a higher level than the point of beginning, revealing greater glory, from which flashes forth to the universe a knowledge of God not to be apprehended in any other way. So the latter glory of God's "spiritual house" shall be greater than the former, when the Church shall be presented faultless in the presence of God's glory, the temple of eternal praise throughout the generation of the age of ages (Eph. iii. 21). So too with creation—once there was a garden of Eden on the earth, then the earth shall be as the garden; once only one nation knew the blessing of a theocracy, then the whole world shall know it when "Jehovah shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Jehovah and His name one;" once only part of Israel knew God, then all shall know Him in themselves (Heb. viii. 11, *New Trans.*), for all Israel shall be saved when the Deliverer comes out of Zion. There is a glorious prospect wherever the eye of faith turns to contemplate the mystery of God's will, the consummation of which is the universal gathering into one under the hand of Christ our Saviour and Lord. In Him we have obtained an inheritance. We are His joint-heirs. Truly in the blessing of life and the glory of eternity we receive of *His* fulness, grace upon grace. Wonder of wonders that *we* should be called into the fellowship of God's Son!

The prophet was under the hand of Jehovah, and He brought him to the place of this vision. No other hand, no other guide, could bring him and open his eyes to see what are "the visions of God." It is good to have this assurance of *how* he is brought to see. The divine seal is thus put upon all. They are visions of God, signifying that God is the Giver. It is the genitive of origin, or efficient cause.

The location is definitely given. God brought Ezekiel into the land of Israel. These visions have to do with the whole nation, with the land when in possession of all the tribes, restored, united, blessed, all enemies smitten down, all internal conflict over. The prophet's vantage ground is a very high mountain. This can be no other than Jehovah's "holy mountain, the mountain of the height of Israel,"

measuring reed; and he stood in the gate. And the man said unto me, Son of man, [w]behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine [x]ears, and apply thy [y]heart to all that I show thee; for in order

[w] ch. 44. 5; etc., ch. 8. 5; etc.
[x] ch. 3. 10.
[y] or, Dan. 1. 8; 7. 28; 10. 12.
Ps. 119. 36; Prov. 4. 20-22.

where Israel shall serve Him (chap. xx. 40-44). It is that mountain of Jehovah to which all the nations shall flow (Isa. ii. 2, 3), beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, the city of the great King (Ps. xlviii. 1-3).

Question has been raised as to whether what Ezekiel sees is to be taken in a literal or ideal sense. There would be little profit in following the arguments on either side. All is expressly stated to be in vision, yet assuredly it must be a true picture, setting before us that which will be given actuality in all its parts in the time to which these visions belong. Great physical changes are intimately connected with the establishment of the Kingdom.

The prophet's approach is evidently from the north, since what he sees is on the south. It seems that he is brought by the way of the north from which came the great enemies of Israel, the way too by which they were carried into captivity. Now it is the return from all of that, with no ememy any more to swoop down from the north quarters, but judgment having brought in righteousness, a peaceable habitation is found. (Compare Isa. xliii. 6; xlix. 12; Jer. xxxvii. 1-9; xxiii. 7, 8).

Upon the high mountain Ezekiel sees what resembles the building of a city—that is the group of buildings which is described in the following chapters.

The prophet now sees a man standing in the gate, presumably the north gate of the sacred enclosure, for it would seem that he goes from this station with the prophet to the east gate (ver. 6), which is measured first. The man had the appearance of brass. It is the same metal as that used in the tabernacle and Solomon's temple, which is, more correctly, copper. It is familiar to us as the symbol of *strength* (1 Kings iv. 13; Job xl. 18; Judges xvi. 21), *protection* (1 Sam. xvii. 5,6), *unyieldingness* in good or evil (Jer. i: 18; xv. 20; Isa. xlviii. 4), and *judgment* (Lev. xxvi. 19; Deut. xxviii. 23; Micah iv. 13). As it could be highly polished and reflect images it was used for mirrors (Exod. xxxviii. 8). Such mirrors were used to make the laver of the tabernacle which held the water of cleansing for the priests. This last connection links it with the Word of God, of which the water is the well-known type. The characteristics of the copper are found in that Word which endureth forever, which is settled forever in heaven, and cannot be broken but must be all fulfilled, and makes all manifest even as the light, another figure of the Word (1 Pet. i. 25; cxix. 8, 9; John x. 35; Matt. v. 18; Heb. iv. 12, 13; Ps. cxix. 105). The character of God as a God of holy judgment, unchanging, enduring, and searching, all as revealed in His immutable Word, is the lesson of the copper. And this cannot fail to carry our thoughts to Him who is called the Word of God, who abides the same yesterday, to-day and forever, whose goings forth have been from eternity, and who is both the wisdom and power of God. With Him all the glory of God stands associated, and it is not strange then to find this metal prominent in the visions of God which open this book

> that it might be shown thee art thou brought hither: declare to the house of Israel all that thou seest.

in which also the human form predominates. We find it also in the description of the glorious Person Daniel sees (chap. x. 5, 6), and John later (Rev. i. 15), both presenting the Lord Himself. Added to all this Ezekiel tells us that the glory of Jehovah which he saw returning to the new temple (chap. xliii.) had the appearance of the vision he had previously seen. Thus what the brass, or copper, symbolizes has a prominent place in the manifestation of God's glory.

The man has in his hand a cord of flax and a measuring reed. He is prepared to measure. In fact it is with this labor that he occupies the prophet as he guides him through the courts and around the buildings of the Sanctuary. This work of measurement is prophetically significant. See Zech. ii. and Rev. xi.; Hab. iii. 6. It suggests God's care and interest; every thing relating to His purposes and promises is important. Then it may well signify that God has risen up to take possession; it is the assertion of His title. Every false claim set aside, all that usurped possession removed, all shall be established according to the measure of truth and righteousness.

From ver. 5 we learn that the measuring reed in the man's hand was a reed of *six* cubits, each being a cubit and an handbreadth, which means, if our conclusion is correct (see *Appendix*), a cubit of *four* palms or handbreadths. We have learned that six expresses the thought of the limit imposed by God upon man. It is associated with evil, as in the case of Goliath, the Beast of Rev. xiii., and Nebuchadnezzar's idolatrous image. Yet if it is linked with evil in full manifestation, it is just in this connection we find God overcomes and makes the wrath of man to praise Him. *He* gains the victory. David fells Goliath, and the Son of Man coming in His glory destroys the Beasts and sets up His everlasting kingdom. On the sixth day of Gen. 1 Adam is brought in to subdue and rule over creation, suggesting thoughts of mastery and government. Just such thoughts cluster around this measuring reed of six cubits. When God asserts His title to the earth, destroying those who have destroyed it, it will be in the way this number suggests. But it is by the arm and hand of a Man that this will be accomplished, and *four* (the four handbreadths of the cubit here specified) is the number of man and creation, the Man Christ Jesus, the appointed Heir of all things, the One who will subjugate all things to Himself according to the purpose of God.

The man now addresses the prophet. The visions of God require the concentration of every faculty—the eyes, ears, and inner man are all to be called into exercise. The things of God claim our undivided attention. We yield ourselves imperfectly to the divine requirement, and so fail in spiritual perception and intelligence. God's hand brought His servant into the midst of these wonderful scenes that all that pertained to them might be shown to him by divine guidance, and then he was commissioned to make it known to the house of Israel. This is the way of divine grace. These visions of God have to do with the time when Israel will be brought under the new covenant which is grace, not law. But it is upon this principle that we are now blessed. Out of the land of our captivity to sin and

2 (xl. 5-47): The gates and courts: the precincts and the house.

1 (5-27): The first court: the place of general assemblage.

2. [1]And behold, a wall on the outside of the house round about, and in the man's hand a measuring reed of six cubits, of a cubit and a handbreadth each. And he measured the thickness of the building, one reed, and the height, one reed.

And he came unto the gate which looked toward the [z]east, and went up its [a]steps; and he measured the threshold of the gate, one reed broad, even one threshold, one reed broad. And each [b]lodge was one reed long, and one reed broad; and it was five cubits between the lodges; and the threshold of the gate beside the porch of the gate toward the house was one reed. [And he measured the porch of the gate toward the house, one reed.] And he measured the porch of the gate, eight cubits; and its posts, two cubits; and the porch of the gate was toward the house. And the lodges of the gate which was toward the east were three on this side and three on that side: these three were of one measure; and the posts were of one measure on this side and on that.

z *ctr.* ch. 8. 16; 11. 1-3. *cf.* ch. 10. 19; 11. 23; 43. 1-4.

a vers. 22, 26, 31, 34, 37, 49.

b vers. 10-16; 21. 29, 33, 36. *cf.* 1 Kings 14. 28.

Satan the hand of God brings us to the mountain-top of spiritual blessing. He has brought us there to be wholly taken up with our glorious heritage, and then to be ministers of its bounty to others. May our eyes, ears, and hearts be applied to all that the Holy Spirit, who searches the deep things of God, is ever ready to make plain to us. It is His delight to take the things of Christ and show them unto us.

2. [1] First of all the prophet beholds a wall on the outside of the house. The lesson of the measuring reed we have already suggested; it seems introduced here rather than in ver. 3 so as to link it with the fact that this encircling wall is one reed high, one reed broad—a reed of *six* cubits, equivalent to 7.2 feet, our measure. We see at once that this wall is not for protection against enemies, it is too low. Its significance is other than that of a bulwark to resist assault. The fundamental idea here expressed is that of separation, the wall teaches that the enclosed space is sanctified, set apart, to Jehovah, and this according to the symbolism of the number six. It preaches the exclusion of all that defiles. This wall is as broad as it is high, being in fact foursquare, for perfect equality in every direction marks the holy requirements of God as to both the separation from and judgment of evil. Seven steps lead up to the outer court level. This may suggest to us that the way of approach to these holy precincts of God's presence must be according to the perfection of Him who declares His character in this wall of separation. He must be sanctified in all those who draw near to Him.

This first court is the place of general assemblage. For worship the people must go within. The wall is too high for any outside

And he measured the breadth of the gate-entry, ten cubits; the length of the gate, thirteen cubits. And there was a border before the lodges of one cubit; and a border of one cubit on the other side; and the lodges were six cubits on this side, and six cubits on that side. And he measured the gate from the roof of the lodge to its [opposite] roof, a breadth of five and twenty cubits, entry opposite entry. And he made posts of sixty cubits; and up to the posts was the court of the gate round about. And from the front of the entrance-gate to the front of the porch of the inner gate, fifty cubits. And there were closed* windows to the lodges, and to their posts within the gate round about [them], and likewise to the wall-projections, even windows round about inwards; and on the posts [c]palm-trees.

And he brought me into the outer court, and behold, chambers, and a stone pavement made for the court round about: thirty chambers upon the pavement. And the pavement was by the side of the gates, answering to the length of the gates,

[c] 1 Kings 6. 29, 32, 35. 2 Chr. 3. 5 vers. 22, 26, 31, 34, 37. ch. 41. 18-20, 25, 26.

* Heb., closed, i.e., not opened like ordinary windows. Usually windows were openings filled with lattice-work. Might be rendered "latticed windows."—(J. B.)

to observe what is going on within, and entrance must be in the prescribed way, and as ascending the seven steps of the gate-building. Both the way of our approach to God, and the character which pertains to it, are ordered by Him and must be according to what He is in Himself. This underlies the truth of redemption and all that flows out of it. This outer court, as determined by the various measurements given later, is evidently a square of 500 cubits. In our general observations on this vision attention has been called to the very large place given to *five* as a factor of measurement, and its significance, with that of those numbers in which it occurs, has been considered.

We now come to the east gate, which is really a large building 25 cubits broad by 50 cubits long (*i.e.*, 30 feet by 60 feet). It is described in detail; the other gates conform to it. This gate-building is in several respects the most important of all. It is on the axis of the temple; by it the glory of God enters (chap. xliii.); it is shut and no one permitted to enter it because "Jehovah, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it;" the Prince is privileged to eat bread in it before Jehovah, but he must enter by the porch and go out by the same way, there is no passing through it (chap. xliv. 1-3). The plan in the Appendix will help us to understand the relation of the several parts of this structure. The arrangement of these gate-buildings with their six guard-chambers appears designed to emphasize the

[even] the lower pavement. And he measured the breadth from the front of the gate of the lower [pavement] to the front of the inner court without, a hundred cubits [as to] the east, and [as to] the north.

And the gate of the outer court which looked northward he measured, its length and its breadth and its lodges, three on this side and three on that, and its posts and its wall-projections; it was after the measure of the former gate: fifty cubits its length, and the breadth five and twenty cubits. And its windows, and its wall-projections, and its palm-trees, were after the measure of the gate which is toward the east; and they went up to it by seven steps, and its wall-projections were before them. And there was a gate to the inner court over against the [other] gate, as to the north [gate], even [so] to the east; and he measured from gate to gate, a hundred cubits.

And he brought me toward the south, and behold, a gate toward the south; and he measured its posts and its wall-projections according to these measures; and there were windows to it, and to its

divine provision to preserve the sanctity of the house. It evidences special care to exclude all that would profane these holy precincts. The careful attention given to detail must impress upon all concerned God's care for the holiness of His dwelling-place, thus reminding the people of their own gross negligence and departure in the past, as a result of which they so wickedly defiled God's house. This is pressed upon them in the ordinances given in chap. xliv. 4-14.

If then the wall speaks of exclusion, limiting entrance to the court by the gate-buildings, they certainly instruct us as to that watchfulness ever necessary to guard against the intrusion of what would defile, or not be according to the requirements of Jehovah. All must answer to the claims of His holiness. By these structural forms He was preaching against those abuses and idolatrous evils which prince and priest had allowed to traverse the court of His house, and even be set up within its walls. It was like saying to them in a parable of stone, "Holiness becometh My house forever."

Only one feature of decoration is mentioned — the palm. It is the symbol of beauty (Song vii. 7); of righteousness, prosperity and fruitfulness (Ps. xcii. 12-14); of salvation and victory (Rev. vii. 9); of kingly glory (John xii. 13); and its extensive use in the first temple identifies it with the kingdom and glory of which Solomon's reign is typical (1 Kings vi. 29, 32, 35; vii. 36; 2 Chron. iii. 5). These are the characteristic features of the Millennial age. Then palm branches were used at the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. xxiii. 40; Neh. viii. 15)—this feast typifies the time of peace and rejoicing which

wall-projections round about, like the other windows; fifty cubits was the length, and five and twenty cubits the breadth. And there were seven steps to go up to it; and its wall-projections were before them; and it had palm trees, one on this side and one on that side, upon its posts. And there was a gate to the inner court toward the south; and he measured from gate to gate toward the south, one hundred cubits.

2 (28-46); The inner Court and its Gateways; the place of separation for priestly service.

2 And he brought me into the inner court by the south gate; and he measured the south gate according to these measures: and its lodges, and its posts, and its wall-projections, according to these measures; and there were windows to it and to its wall-projections round about: the length was fifty cubits, and the breadth twenty-five cubits. And

shall come when our Lord shall have established His kingdom upon earth, and Israel shall come into her possessions, and flourish amid Jehovah's blessings in the land. Its inclusion of the *eighth* day suggests the new beginning under grace, the day of the new covenant in which the nation will then stand and abide forever. The constant, steady growth of the palm tree through all seasons symbolizes constancy, perseverance. Certainly the palm sets forth perfectly the character of the time to which these visions belong, and most suitably adorns these buildings.

This outer court, with its east, north, and south gate-buildings, extends around the temple itself and the altar-court on three sides, and to the west there are additional buildings, with flanking chambers to north and south of the temple, and a gateless wall. In every direction the sanctity of the house is guarded, an arrangement manifestly different from that of the first temple, as Ezekiel xliii. 7, 8 clearly intimates.

Around this court, and abutting the gate-buildings, there is a pavement with chambers, which probably extended from the gate-buildings to the kitchens, or boiling places, situated in each of the corners of the court. No chambers, it would seem, are located on the west side; they are rather ranged along the court wall on the other three sides. These chambers would be for the people when feasting upon their offerings. The word here used for chambers is different from that for the guard-rooms, or lodges, in the gate-buildings. It suggests a rather spacious room. In 1 Sam. ix. 22 it is rendered parlor, a room in which thirty persons could be accommodated at a feast. It is probable that these chambers were arranged in six groups of five each.

We may be little able to interpret many of the details given as to these buildings, but it is noticeable that certain numbers stand out prominently, and these may at least suggest lessons which fit in with the time to which these visions of God unmistakably point.

2 The prophet now enters the inner court by the south gate, and is successively taken to the east and north gates. In connection with

there were wall-projections round about, twenty-five cubits long, and five cubits broad. And its wall-projections were toward the outer court; and there were palm trees upon its posts: and its ascent was [by] eight steps.

And he brought me into the inner court toward the east; and he measured the gate according to these measures; and its lodges, and its posts, and its wall-projections, according to these measures; and there were windows to it and its wall-projections round about: the length was fifty cubits, and the breadth twenty-five cubits. And its wall-projections were toward the outer court; and palm trees were upon its posts, on this side and on that side, and its ascent was [by] eight steps.

And he brought me to the north gate, and he measured it according to these measures: its lodges, its posts, and its wall-projections; and there were windows to it round about: the length was fifty cubits, and the breadth twenty-five cubits. And its posts were toward the outer court; and palm trees were upon its posts, on this side and on that side: and its ascent was [by] eight steps. And there was a chamber and its entry by the posts of the gates; there they washed the burnt offering, and in the porch of the gate were two tables on this side, and two tables on that side, to slay thereon the burnt offering and the sin offering and the trespass offering. And at the side without, at the ascent to the entry of the north gate, were two tables; and on the other side, which was at the

the last there is the provision for the work of sacrifice. In addition there are two cells for those having charge of the house and the altar, situated in the court itself, one near the north gate, and one near the south gate.

The gate-buildings are not materially different from those already described. They have eight steps, one more than the others, so that the level of the inner court is the height of these eight steps above that of the outer court. This may be the reason why the pavement of the outer court is referred to as the lower (ver. 18).

Within this inner court the priests performed their service with respect to the altar and the house. The garments in which they ministered within these precincts must be laid aside before they go out to approach the things of the people (xlii. 14).

It seems significant that the work of sacrifice is connected with the northern gate. In Scripture the north is associated with judg-

porch of the gate, were two tables: four tables were on this side, and four tables on that side, by the side of the gate—eight tables whereon they slew [the sacrifices] — and at the ascent four tables of hewn stone, of a cubit and a half long, and a cubit and a half broad, and one cubit high; whereon also they laid the instruments with which they slew the burnt offering and the sacrifice. And the double hooks of a hand-breadth were fastened round about within; and upon the tables [they put] the flesh of the offering.

And without the inner gate were two chambers in the inner court, one at the side of the north gate, and its front toward the south; the other was at the side of the south gate, the front toward the north. And he said unto me, This chamber whose front is toward the south is for the priests, the [d]keepers of the charge of the house. And the chamber whose front is toward the north is for the priests, the [e]keepers of the charge of the altar. These are the sons of [f]Zadok, those who from among the sons of Levi approach unto Jehovah to minister unto him.

3 (47): The altar: the divine centre.

[3]And he measured the court, one hundred cubits long, and one hundred cubits broad, foursquare; and the altar was before the house.

[d] Lev. 8. 35; Num. 3. 27–32, 38; 18. 1-15. 1 Chr. 6. 23. 2 Chr. 13. 11.
[e] ch. 44. 15, 16. Num. 18. 7.
[f] 1 Chr. 6. 8, 53; 24. 6. 2 Sam. 8. 17 2 Sam. 15. 24, 29. 1 Kings 1. 8, 26, 32, 34; 38, 39.
ch. 43. 19; 44. 15; 45. 11.

ment. From that quarter the stroke falls upon both Israel and Judah. The word itself, *tsaphon*, properly means "the hidden," "the dark," and is only used of the north as a quarter gloomy and unknown. The idea of darkness thus associated with it fits well with that of judgment. And in this connection we cannot fail to think of the darkness of Calvary, the outer darkness of eternal doom, and the gloomy darkness in which wicked angels are kept. Darkness, too, is the term used to describe man's state away from God, alienated by wicked works, and darkened in his understanding. Certainly in the moral and spiritual application, it is in relation to the north, speaking symbolically, that we need to learn the truth of sacrifice. Here then at the north gate of the inner court, the court of the altar, we have all provided for the accomplishment of this work, whether it be the burnt-offering, sin-offering, or trespass-offering.

[3] We come now to the altar, the actual centre of the whole sacred enclosure,* standing at the centre of the inner court which is measured 100 cubits each way. Details and dimensions of the altar are given later (xliii. 13-17). Here it is mentioned to show its relation to the whole. It is the divine centre upon which every line of approach converges, east, north, and south. It surely stands

* See Appendix.

3 (ch. xl. 48; xli. 4): The house itself into which the visible glory shall enter.

3. [1]And he brought me to the [g]porch of the house, and he measured the post of the porch, five cubits on this side, and five cubits on that side; and the breadth of the gate, three cubits on this side, and three cubits on that side. The length of the porch was twenty cubits, and the breadth eleven cubits,* even by the steps whereby they went up to it;† and there were [h]pillars by the posts, one on this side and another on that side.

[g] 1 Kings 6. 3. 2 Chr. 3. 4.

[h] 1 Kings 7. 21.

1 (xl. 48, 49): The porch.

2 (xli. 1, 2): The holy place.

[2]And he brought me to the temple; and he measured the posts, six cubits broad on the one side, and six cubits broad on the other side, the breadth of the tent. And the breadth of the entry was ten cubits, and the sides of the entry were five cubits on this side, and five cubits on that side; and he measured its length, [i]forty cubits, and the breadth twenty cubits.

[i] 1 Kings 6. 2, 17.

3 (5, 4): The most holy.

[3]And he went inwards and measured the post of the entry, two cubits; and the entry, six cubits, and the breadth of the entry, seven cubits.‡

* The LXX reads "twelve." This seems the most likely measure considering the general symmetry of number and plan, which see.—(J. B.).

† Or, according to the reading of the LXX, "by ten steps they went up to it." If this is correct, as is probably the case, then note the three sets of steps—7 to the outer court, 8 to the inner court, and 10 to the house.—(J. B.).

‡ It seems probable that the LXX is right in considering this measurement to refer to the wall on either side of the entry (see plan).—(J. B.).

as an abiding memorial of Christ and His sacrifice. This is central to all the blessing and glory in which Israel and the nations will participate, as indeed it is in regard to the whole universe (Col. i. 19, 20). It will ever remind those who throng the courts of the Lord's house of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Upon the Mount of Transfiguration His death was the subject of converse. That scene set forth the glory of the kingdom of God come in power, and when it has actually come that death will not be forgotten. The peerless glory which will then invest Him will not hide the truth of that redemption by blood upon which all action in power is based.

In the next sections we have the description of the two courts, each 100 cubits square, in the first of which the house itself is located, and in the second, another building the purpose of which is not stated. Thus there is a series of three squares, each of 100 cubits, following each other toward the west, the first being the court of the altar already considered.

3. Now we are brought to consider what is called the house. This building over all is 60 cubits from north to south, and 100 cubits from east to west, with an open space of 20 cubits on three sides—north,

i (ch. xli. 5-11): The chambers: the encompassment of divine fulness realized through accomplished creative sovereignty (5x10x3, 90 chambers in all).

And he measured its length, [j]twenty cubits, and the breadth twenty cubits, before the temple; and he said unto me, This is the holy of holies.

4. And he measured the wall of the house, six cubits; and the breadth of [k]the side chambers, four cubits round about the house on every side. And the side chambers were three, chamber over chamber, and thirty in order; and they entered into the wall which belonged to the house for the side chambers round about, that they might have hold; but they had not hold in the wall of the house. And as to the side chambers there was an enlarging and a [l]winding about still upward to the side chambers, for the winding about of the house went still upward round about the house; wherefore the breadth of the house was upward; and so one went up from the lower [story] to the upper, by the middle one.

j 1 Kings 6. 20. 2 Chr. 3. 8.

k 1 Kings 6. 5, 6.

l 1 Kings 6. 8.

west, and south. Successively, the porch, the holy place, and the most holy are measured. The plan shows the arrangement along with the surrounding chambers.* We may notice the terms used. The whole building is called "the house," of which the porch is the first part described. The next part is called "the temple," which is 40x20 cubits; this is the holy place. The third compartment is "the holy of holies," 20x20 cubits. Connected with this building are chambers surrounding it in three stories—30 of these to each story, 90 in all.

To the west another building is located, having walls of 5 cubits' thickness, and measuring on the outside 80x100 cubits. The principal measurements are then enumerated (vers. 12-15*a*).

(a)—The house, 100 cubits long.
(b)—The separate place (20 cubits), and the building (80 cubits), total, 100 cubits.
(c)—The breadth of the house, 60 cubits, with the separate place, 20 cubits on each side, making the total breadth at the east end of these two squares 100 cubits.

There follows (vers. 15*b*-26) an account of certain interior features and details of ornamentation.

4. In the temple of Solomon the dimensions are similar. The holy and most holy places are the same size, but the porch was 20x10 cubits, here 20x11, but the LXX gives 12. There too the height was given, but Ezekiel does not mention it. The side chambers are mentioned as five cubits, but Ezekiel specifies four. The account in 1 Kings vi. may help us to better understand the structure of the side chambers. These were in three stories also, and increased in breadth one cubit, the dimensions being 5, 6, and 7 cubits. This means that the wall of the house receded with each story, so forming a resting-

* See Appendix.

And I saw that the house had elevation round about: the foundations of the side chambers were a [m]full reed of six cubits to the junction. The thickness of the wall, which was for the side chambers without, was five cubits, as also what was left free along the building of the side chambers that belonged to the house. And between the chambers was a width of twenty cubits round about the house on every side. And the entrance of the side chambers was toward what was left free, one entrance toward the north, and another entrance toward the south; and the width of the space that was left was five cubits round about.

m ch. 40. 5.

place for the floor beams, these beams not being let into the wall but bearing upon the ledge of one cubit formed by the receding wall. It is noticeable that no wall thicknesses are given in Kings or Chronicles. On the other hand the rich embellishment of Solomon's temple is dwelt upon, its gold and precious stones; but of such details Ezekiel makes no mention, in fact the only material referred to is wood. This seems to indicate that at least one purpose is to impress upon us the massiveness and stability of these structures, rather than beauty of detail and adornment, while the arrangement of courts—increasing in height from the level beyond the outer court to the level of the house, and these courts with their gates so surrounding the Sanctuary as to guard it from all contamination with what was common, or would defile—seems designed to enforce the rebuke and admonition given in chap. xliii. 1-12.

Perhaps the dimensions themselves may yield us some helpful lesson. Five and ten appear as basic numbers in so many of the measurements, often intensified by the use of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10, that the general lesson seems to be that of divine sufficiency (1) identified for blessing with creature weakness (4), in the full accomplishment of every divine requirement (10). This will be manifest in the kingdom and glory. Practically all the digits by which all numbers are expressed are used in varying relations throughout this complex of buildings, suggesting how that day will be characterized by divine measure ruling in the most far-reaching manner. But in no instance is eleven used as a factor. Twelve appears in the measure of the altar, and is a factor in certain measures noticed a little later. Here we may find it in the breadth of the house, which is, including the free space on each side, 60 (5x12) cubits, but this may be also 6x10. All the multiples and the sums found by adding the measurement of different parts together are divisible by five or ten. There are no uneven multiples, or such as would leave a fraction when divided. All produces the sense of evenness, unity, harmony, stability, and so in the moral sense equity, righteousness, peace, sanctification, amid which the service and worship of Jehovah is carried out and the divine government exercised. As we consider these things and their spiritual import we understand why, "Many peoples shall go and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways,

5 [ch. xli. 12-14]: The separate place: God in government, maintaining holiness, according to the fulness of the divine measure (10x10).

5. And the [n]building that was before the [o]separate place at the end toward the west was seventy cubits broad; and the wall of the building was five cubits thick round about, and its length ninety cubits. And he measured the house, the length one hundred cubits; and the separate place, and the building, and its walls, the length one hundred cubits, and the breadth of the front of the house, and of the separate places toward the east, one hundred cubits. And he measured the length of the building before the separate place, which was at the back of it, and the galleries on the one side and on the other side, one hundred cubits.

n ver. 13.
o vers. 13, 15. ch. 42. 1, 10, 13.

and we will walk in His paths." The city of that day is, as Ezekiel shows us, a part of the great oblation, and Isaiah lx. is a wonderful description of it. The house, too, is spoken of, "I will beautify the house of My magnificence" (ver. 7).

From the level of the inner court the house with its encompassing chambers is elevated a full reed of six cubits. To reach this higher level there seems to have been 10 steps, if the reading of the LXX is accepted. Thus seven steps led up to the outer court, eight to the inner court, and ten to the house. This suggests perfection in new covenant relation according to the fulness of divine requirements—in all 25 steps (5x5) in *three* sets, the latter speaking of full manifestation according to the power of the Spirit and the truth of resurrection.

5. The house is surrounded on three sides—north, west, south—by what is called the separate place, a space of 20 cubits, making three sections of court each measuring 100x20, and so having an area of 2,000 square cubits, or a total of 6,000. The extreme measurement of the house is 60x100, or the same total area of 6,000. This makes a total for this part of the sacred enclosure of 12,000 square cubits, which equals 12x10x10x10. Here we observe how 12 appears as an important factor; and the frequent use of three, which enters into six and twelve, and of ten, whether in multiplication or addition, is worthy of notice. They appear in these areal measurements, in the number of chambers in the outer court (30), in those surrounding the house (30 in each of the three stories), and in the three successive squares of 100 cubits each, equalling 300x100. Then in the area of each of these we have a *fourfold* use of ten, the area being 10,000 square cubits or 10x10x10x10, and this repeated *three* times. Thus we find three multiplied by two or four, giving us six or twelve, intensified by ten used once, twice, thrice, or in fourfold power. These basic numbers in their multiplied form cannot fail to impress any one who has given a little attention to their significance in Scripture. They teach us how divine fulness in complete manifestation (3) is exercised in government (12) according to every requirement Godward and manward (10), and this in realized victory over evil (6), as a result of which the Creator and His creature are brought together under the administration of Christ into harmonious relation to the praise of His glory (5). This general lesson

6 (15-26): Interior details and ornamentation: symbolic of Messianic triumph.
1 (15-21): General character: all established by measure in glory and righteousness.

6. [1]And the inner temple and the porches of the court, [p]the thresholds, and the closed [q]windows, and the galleries round about the three of them (opposite the thresholds it was wainscoted with wood round about, and from the ground up to the windows, and the windows were covered), [and] above, over the entry, even unto the inner house, and without, by all the wall round about, within and without, [all was] by measure. And it was made with [r]cherubim and [s]palm trees; and a palm

p cf. 1s. 6. 4
q ver. 25, ch. 40. 16.
r vers. 20, 2 1 Kings 6. 29, 2 Chr. 3. 7-14. cf. Ex. 25. 18-22, 1 Kings 6. 23-35, 2 Kings 19 15, Ps. 80. 1; 99. 1, Isa. 37. 16, ch. 10 Heb. 9. 5.

s cf. Lev. 23. 40; Neh. 8. 15; Ps. 92. 12; Jer. 10. 5; John 12. 13. etc. Joel 1. 1

appears stamped upon this whole arrangement. All is measured and ordered to set forth divine perfection, the basis of which is the reed of six cubits of four handbreadths each, making in all 24, or 12x2, for it will be the full testimony (2) to the perfection and order of divine government (12) set up on the earth, and this under the hand of man—the Man Christ Jesus. "All was by measure."

6. [1]As to the interior we are told of it being wainscoted with wood, ornamented with cherubim and palm trees, alternating, and each cherub having the face of a man and the face of a young lion. The significance of the palm tree we have already considered. This is now combined with the symbolism of the cherubim. Both are evenly distributed; there is perfect balance, symmetry rules throughout. From the scriptures in which the cherubim are mentioned they appear as "supports or guardians of the throne of God in His absolute righteousness and judgment," and "seem clearly to represent the divine attributes of righteousness and its execution in judgment, which is the basis of all true government, human or divine, the only guarantee of the stability of that which is beneath its sway. The throne of iniquity can have no fellowship with the God of righteous judgment (Ps. xciv. 20). Therefore God will overturn until the righteous Ruler comes who loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity (Ezek. xxi. 27; Ps. xlv. 6, 7). Such a throne can alone be 'forever and ever;' and this Ruler is the Melchizedek, 'King of righteousness and King of peace,' David's Son and yet his Lord, who sits at God's right hand till His enemies are made His footstool (Ps. cx. 1, 2). In view of such a Ruler the people may well tremble and bow in heart to Him in the day of His grace ere His judgment fall; and yet when He takes His power to reign, the earth shall rejoice and be glad. For Him His whole creation waits in hope, for then will the children of God be manifested in their liberty of glory and creation be delivered from its present bondage" (Rom. viii. 21, 22). The living creatures of the earlier vision of God's majesty and glory are called cherubim in chapter x., and there too we see them associated with the work of Judgment. But while there they have four faces, here in the sanctuary only two are mentioned, those of the ox and eagle being omitted. This emphasizes the lesson of the other two, that of the man suggesting intelligence combined with all the tender and gracious affections of human nature to which the face is the index by means of both look, word, and feature; and that of the lion denoting majesty of bearing, fearless and irresistible in authority and power. These features will characterize the government of God in

tree was between cherub and cherub; and the cherub had two faces: the [t]face of a man was toward the palm tree on the one side, and the face of a young lion toward the palm tree on the other side; [so] was it made upon all the house round about. From the ground unto above the entry were cherubim and palm trees made, and [on] the wall of the temple. As for the temple, the door-posts were square; and the front of the sanctuary had the same appearance.

[t] ch. 1. 10.

[2] (22); Fellowship

[2] The altar was of wood, three cubits high, and its length, two cubits; and its corners, and its length, and its walls were of wood: and he said unto me, This is the [u]table which is before Jehovah.

[u] ch. 44. 16. Mal. 1. 7, 12.

the day of the kingdom and glory, and surely they find there superlative manifestation in Him who then will rule—in Him who is both the Man Christ Jesus and the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

[2] The altar of wood, called "the table which is before Jehovah," seems from this to have been placed on the central axis of the temple, and so in line with the doors of the holy of holies, the dwelling-place of the glory soon to enter. Of this only two dimensions are given, the height three cubits, the length two cubits, although the LXX adds that it was two broad, making it foursquare. This makes it appear quite different from the table of showbread in the tabernacle. It seems to be more like the golden altar of incense, both as to its form and location, yet the difference is very evident in that wood is the only material mentioned, and it is called a table as well as an altar. Little can we say about this, except that the thoughts of worship and communion combine in this the only article of furniture mentioned. The fact that it is only wood prohibits the actual offering of sacrifice such as the burning of incense, and nothing is said of bread being placed upon it. Perhaps its dimensions may afford a lesson. By comparison it is *four* times the area of the altar of incense made for the tabernacle, and twice that of the table, being also twice its height; the altar was two cubits high, this altar-table is three. Three is the number of full manifestation, of the Trinity, and particularly of the Spirit, and of resurrection; two is the number of testimony and communion, in both of which what three speaks of is revealed and enjoyed. These precious thoughts are combined as it were in this altar-table, and if we are permitted to link with it the altar and table of the tabernacle, then all that it speaks of centres in the perfection and fragrance of Christ—His Person, work, and the results, as found in life, fellowship, and acceptance—all as set forth in the incense and the bread of presence; and furthermore all of this found in manifest union, only in intensified form, as the enlarged dimensions may indicate, in the day of the kingdom and glory. It will be the dispensation of the fulness of time when all shall be gathered together in one under Christ to enjoy the accomplished reconciliation of all things, even the things on earth and in heaven. They will then be reconciled in manifest glory to the fulness of the Godhead, resting as this does and ever will be seen to

3 (23-26): The manner of entrance.

[3]And the temple and the sanctuary had two [r]doors. And the doors had two leaves, two turning leaves; two for the one door, and two leaves for the other. And there were made upon them, on the doors of the temple, cherubim and palm trees, as there were made upon the walls; and

r 1 Kings 6 31 35.

do, upon the work of the sacrifice whose abiding memorial will be seen in the great altar which stands at the very centre of this Millennial Sanctuary. It will be the day pictured for us in Ps. xcvi.-c., and also in the Hallelujah psalms cxlvi.—cl. Compare Isa. xxxii. 15-18; xxxiii. 5, 6, 20-22; xxxv. 1, 2; xli. 17-20; lv. 12, 13.

It is hardly possible to pass without notice that with all the detailed description of arrangement and measure here given, there is no mention made of many features prominent in the first temple and the tabernacle. At once we think of the candlestick, incense altar, veil, ark, censer, and all the many related vessels of service, with the wealth of spiritual instruction they afford. No mention is made of brazen sea nor laver, nor do we read of the lavish use of gold, as in the house built by Solomon. When we consider that Moses received the pattern of the tabernacle from God (Exod. xxv. 8, 9), and that the pattern of all the house and its furnishings David "had by the Spirit," by Jehovah's hand upon him "instructing as to all the work of the pattern" (1 Chron. xxviii., 11, 12, 19, *New Trans.*), the omission of so much in Ezekiel's vision cannot fail to impress us. Though we may be little able to explain it, this difference serves to bring out into greater prominence what we have considered the chief lesson of this vision, in view of Ezekiel's earlier prophecies and the several rebukes given in the final chapters.

[3] The prophet turns to look at the doors of the temple and sanctuary. The brief description is sufficient to show that they are similar to those of Solomon's temple (1 Kings vi. 31-35), but here seemingly it is not so much the doors themselves which are of importance as the relation in which we find them. The altar-table just described being on the central axis of the temple, the prophet now notices the doors of both parts of the house, in direct line with it. Across this line of approach to the presence of the Glory, soon to be seen entering the inner chamber, lies this altar-table with its combined lesson, if we have read it aright, of worship and communion. The only station for such holy service is in direct line with the opened Sanctuary. Through its unfolded doors the outshining light of the indwelling Glory would illuminate the altar-table, and shed forth its rays along the central line of its abode, passing through the doors at the porch to fall upon the great altar—"the hearth of God." As we think of what is associated with this manifestation of the Divine Presence in the kingdom and glory, how fitting to be reminded of the cherubim and palm trees, whose meaning we have already considered!

But why are there doors? May they not witness to God's absolute right to shut out from His presence, if occasion require? There are two doors to each opening, and evidently two turning, or folding, leaves to each door. Thus the numbers *two* and *four* appear, and they may speak of witness-bearing toward the creation, and such a witness as the carved cherubim and palm trees indicate. The truth

there was a wooden portal in front of the porch without. And there were closed windows and palm trees on the one side, and on the other side, on the sides of the porch: thus were the side chambers of the house and the portals.

to which they witness orders, controls, as it were, the way of approach to the Divine Presence. And though the service and privilege of entering the house pertain only to the priestly family, the lessons of its parts and arrangements are not only for their instruction, but that the people themselves may know Jehovah as thus revealed (chap. xliv. 23).

But may we not also think of Christ in this connection? The figure of the door He applies to Himself, as we know. By Him there is entrance into full salvation. He, as having become Man, is the abiding witness of all that the cherubim and palm tree symbolize, and to all creation, to which He stands as Firstborn and the Image of the invisible God. Only by Him is there access to the altar-table and the indwelling Glory. He may give access, or be as a closed door shutting out forever. He may be the Saviour or the Judge, for to Him has been committed all in relation to salvation and judgment.

A brief reference to the porch calls attention to its portal (or threshold), its windows, and the decoration, which in this case, as in that of other surrounding chambers (chap. xl. 16), was simply the palm tree. The cherubim is rather associated with the house itself, and the interior in particular. There is an alternative rendering, not without good authority, for the latter part of ver. 25—"And there were wooden planks upon the front of the porch without." If this is accepted the close of ver. 26 should read, "and the planks," instead of, "and the portals." These planks would then also have palm trees carved upon them as upon the surrounding walls—work which would all be in low relief. Thus the approach to the outer doors of the house would be over these carved planks. The word here rendered "wooden planks" is the one used where death by hanging on a *tree* is mentioned (Gen. xl. 19; Deut. xxi. 22; Josh. x. 26; Esther ii. 23; v. 14). Moreover, it is by the tree cut down and fashioned to the proper form that this path of approach to the doors is made. Is it too much to draw from this a suggestion of the Cross? By it indeed, in any case, the way has been made, whether for us or Israel, by which access is possible. It introduces, as it were, to that path upon which falls the light from the opened Sanctuary. And where more than in the Cross is manifested the symbolic meaning of the palm tree, both to the glory of God and the blessing of the whole creation!

Before leaving this section let us revert for a moment to some of the dimensions of the house, in particular those of the three entrances which the plan shows to be as follows:

Porch entrance, ...	14 cubits	=7x2.
Temple entrance, ...	10 "	=5x2.
Entrance to the Holy of Holies,....	6 "	=3x2.

Two the number of testimony and fellowship, and distinctly of Christ Himself as the second Person of the holy Trinity, rules throughout in this threefold entrance to the place of the divine glory.

Section 2 (Chap. xlii.).

The arrangements provided to preserve the service of the Sanctuary in separation from defilement

1 (1-12): The chambers before the separate place.

1. And he brought me forth unto the [w]outer court, the way toward the north; and he brought me to the chambers that were over against the [x]separate place, and which were over against the building, toward the north, before the length of the one hundred cubits; the entry was on the north, and the breadth was fifty cubits over against the [y]twenty cubits that belonged to the inner court, and over against the [z]pavement that belonged to

[w] ch. 40. 17.
[x] vers. 10, 13; ch. 41. 12.
[y] ch. 41. 10.
[z] ch. 40. 17, 18.

As *three*fold it implies fulness, and this as found manifested in what 7, 5, and 3 teach us, and that is perfection, but this found in the grace which has effected the union of the Creator and the creature (4+1), and this in relation to the fulness of the Godhead itself (3). And let us remember that what leads up to this from the court in which the great altar of sacrifice stands is a flight of *ten* steps, signifying—shall we not say?—that every requirement of the divine righteousness both Godward and manward has been perfectly met, and this, as we know, in the Person and work of Him of whom that very altar perpetually speaks—CHRIST. I may remark too that if the plan of the house is examined* it will be found that the wall-posts of these entrances are in this same fundamental ratio, only in reverse order, that is 3, 5, 7. Again in the dimensions of the Porch, Holy Place, and Most Holy we see how *two* rules with *ten* as the number multiplied, as also in the open space of 20 cubits which surrounds this structure. One more feature which gives prominence to the house with its side chambers is the foundation upon which it rests, which is "a full reed of six cubits" above the level of the surrounding court including that of the altar, and projects five cubits from the outside walls of the building (*see Appendix*). Six, as the number which speaks of the divine limit to evil, and of mastery over it, and of the subjugation of all things to God, is the fitting measure for the foundation of His house of glory. Notice too that it says a *full* reed; there will be no coming short in what this measure of six cubits means. And it extends out *five* cubits all around the house, for all is realized in the blessedness of that grace which reigning through righteousness brings God and man together to share in and enjoy the triumph and the fruits of the old Serpent being smitten, his head crushed by the blessed and glorious Man whose heel he in malice and enmity had bruised at the Cross. How heaven and earth will sing His triumph! The redeemed creation will join as one to adore the Lamb.

Sec. 2.

1. Two cell buildings are now described. They are located on the north and south sides of the separate place, and are three stories high. Again the familiar factors, 3, 5, and 10, are prominent in the measurements.

* See Appendix.

the outer court; there was gallery against gallery in the third [story]. And before the chambers was a walk of ten cubits in breadth, and a way of one hundred cubits inward; and their entries were toward the north. And the upper chambers were shorter than the lower (for the galleries encroached upon them), and than the middlemost of the building. For they were in three [stories] and had not pillars as the pillars of the courts; therefore [the third story] was straitened more than the lowest and the middlemost from the ground. And the wall that was without, answering to the cells toward the outer court in front of the chambers, its length was fifty cubits: for the length of the chambers that were against the outer court was fifty cubits; and lo, before the [a]temple, it was one hundred cubits. And under these chambers was the entry from the east as one goeth unto them from the outer court.

[a] ch. 41. 1, etc.

In the breadth of the wall of the court toward the south, before the separate place, and before the building, were chambers; and a passage before them, like the appearance of the chambers that were toward the north, according to their length, according to their breadth, and all their goings out, and according to their fashions, and according to their doors. And according to the doors of the chambers that were toward the south there was a door at the head of the way, [even] the way directly before the wall toward the east as one entereth into them.

2 (13, 14) The purposes served by these chambers

2. And he said unto me, The north chambers and the south chambers, which are before the separate

2. The special purposes of these buildings are then stated. They are called holy; in them the priests eat the most holy things; to them is brought the priests' portion of the offerings; then after entering into the holy place the priests must only pass out by going through these buildings. In them they change their garments, laying aside the holy linen in which they minister in the inner court or the house before going into the outer court to the people (ver. 14; xliv. 17-19). This is to avoid hallowing the people with their garments. The details of the sacrifice and the ordinances as to priestly service will occupy us later. Here the point is that all must be kept in its proper separation from all contact with the common, thus insisting upon the essential holiness of all pertaining to the inner courts, temple buildings, and priestly place.

place, they are holy chambers, where the [b]priests that come near to Jehovah shall [c]eat the most holy things; there shall they lay the most holy things, and the [d]meal offering, and the [e]sin offering and the [f]trespass offering; for the place is holy. When the priests enter in, then shall they not go out from the holy place unto the outer court, but there they shall [g]lay their garments wherein they minister, for they are holy: and they shall put on other garments, and shall approach to that which is for the people.

3 (15-20) The established separation of the whole sacred enclosure

3. And when he had made an end of measuring the inner house, he brought me forth by way of the gate whose front was toward the east, and measured it* round about. He measured the east side with a measuring reed, five hundred reeds with a measuring reed round about. He measured the north side, five hundred reeds with a measuring reed round about. He measured the south side, five hundred reeds with a measuring reed. He turned about to the west, and measured five hundred reeds with a measuring reed. He measured it on the four sides: it had a wall round about, five hundred long, and five hundred broad, to make a [h]separation between that which was holy and that which was common.

b ch. 40. 46.
c Lev. 6. 16, 26; 10. 13; 24. 9. ch. 44. 29.
d Lev. 2. 3, 10; 6. 14-18; 7. 9; 10. 12, 13. Num. 18. 9, 10.
e Lev. 6. 17, 18. 25. 30; 7. 1, 7; 10. 17, 18.
f Lev. 6. 17, 18; 7. 1, 6.
g ch. 44. 19.

h ch. 22. 26; 44. 23; 48. 15.
i Lev. 10. 10; 20. 22-26. Ezra 9. 1-3. Ex. 33. 7-11. Num. 6. 2 Cor. 6. 14-18. 1 Cor. 3. 16, 17; 6. 19, 20.

* Not the gate itself, as the following dimensions show, but the enclosure, or with the LXX, "the plan of the house." This measurement appears to be along the wall referred to in chap. 40: 5.—(J. B.).

3. Finally, after all of the inner house has been measured, the prophet is brought out by way of the east gate and into a large space, four-square, of 500 reeds on each side, enclosed with a wall of which the dimensions are not given. This appears as the extreme outer line of separation "between that which is holy and that which was common." This would form a great square of 3,000 cubits, in the centre of which would be the Sanctuary square of 500 cubits.

This whole concept presents a rebuke to and correction of the laxity and loss of the just consciousness of the great difference between Jehovah and Israel. The prophet shows this was entirely absent from the life of the nation, so that rulers and people had violated the sanctity of the temple, even introducing idolatrous worship. They had grievously failed to maintain His holiness in separation from evil. By these courts and gates, and wide open spaces which surround them, Jehovah is signifying by concrete example the truth of His surpassing glory, absolute pre-eminence, and essential holiness.

Section 3 (Chap. xliii.).

The glory of Jehovah filling the house

1 (1-12): The place of the throne, glorious in majesty and holiness

1. [1]And he brought me to the gate, [i]the gate which looketh toward the east: and behold, the [j]glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east; and his [k]voice was like the voice of many waters; and [l]the earth was lighted with his glory. And the appearance of the vision that I saw was according to the vision that I had seen when I came [m]to destroy the city; and the visions were like the vision that I saw [n]by the river Chebar, and I fell upon my face. And the glory of Jehovah came into the house by the way of the gate whose front is toward the east. And [o]the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of Jehovah [p]filled the house. And I heard one speaking unto me out of the house, and [q]a man stood by me.

1 (4-6): The glory itself

2 (7-11): The seat of government

[2]And he said unto me, Son of man, [this is] the place of my throne, and [r]the place of the

[i] ch. 10. 19; 40. 32, 44; 43. 1; 44. 1; 45. 19; 46. 1, 12.

[j] vers. 4, 5, ch. 1. 28; 3. 23; 8. 4; 9. 3; 10. 4, 18, 19; 11. 22, 23; 44. 4. Ex. 16. 7, 10; 24. 16, 17; 40. 34. Deut. 5. 24. 1 Kings 8. 11. 2 Chr. 5. 14; 7. 1-3. Ps. 138. 5. Isa. 6. 1-4. Zech. 2. 5. *cf.* Ps. 8. 1; 148. 13; 138. 5.

[k] Isa. 28. 5, 6; 33. 1-10; 40. 3-5, with Matt. 3. 3; 4. 1; 16. 28; 17. 8; 2 Pet. 1. 16-18. Hag. 2. 3-9. *cf.* 1 Sam. 4. 21. Ps. 106. 19, 20. Isa. 3. 8. Jer. 2. 11-13; 14. 20-22.

[l] ch. 1. 24; 25. 28; 10. 5; Ps. 29. 3-5, 7-11. Rev. 1 15; 10. 1-3; *cf.* Ex. 19. 19; Deut. 4. 12, 33, 36; 5. 22-26; Job 37. 2-5; 40. 9; Dan. 4. 31; 10. 6. [m] Rev. 18. 1; Ps. 80. 1; 72. 19; Num. 14. 21; *cf.* Isa. 2. 5; 60. 1, 3, 19, 20; Dan. 2, 35; Hab. 2. 14; Isa. 11. 9; Matt. 24. 27, 30 with Lk. 9 26. [n] ch. 1. 3; 3. 23; 10. 15, 20, 22. [o] ch. 3. 12, 14; 8. 3; 11. 1, 24. [p] ch. 44. 4; Ex. 40. 35; 1 Kings 8. 10, 11; Hag. 2. 6-9; Mal 3. 1-3. [q] ch. 40. 3; *cf.* ch. 1. 26; Dan. 7. 13; 2. 25; Gen. 18. 2, 13, 17. [r] *cf.* 1 Chr. 28. 2; Ps. 99. 5; 132 7; Isa. 60. 13; Lam. 2 1.

Sec. 3.

1. [1]The house and its holy precincts having been viewed in their entirety, the prophet is now called to see that which alone can give character to the whole—the entrance of the divine glory. He is brought to the east gate. In his earlier visions he had beheld the glory of God leave the defiled temple by way of the east gate, and take its stand upon the mountain which is on the east of the city—the Mount of Olives (chap. xi. 22-25). He who is the perfect and eternal embodiment of all that this vision of glory sets forth symbolically also left the house of His day desolate, and as He sat on the Mount of Olives, looking over the rejected city, He unfolded the course of future events until the day when He shall stand upon that same mount on the east, bringing the glorious dawn of that day which shall be ever bright with the light and healing of the Sun of Righteousness (Matt. xxiv.; Zech. xiv.).

Along the path of exit the glory now returns to fill the house. It is "the glory of the God of Israel...and the glory of Jehovah." Then all that those Names mean shall be found fully accomplished—Israel one nation, new born in fellowship with the Eternal, according to the new covenant, and in the power and blessing of the outpoured Spirit.

[2] Of old the cherubim were set and the flame of the flashing sword, east of Eden, to guard the way of the tree of life. Curse had come,

soles of my feet, [z]where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever; and the house of Israel shall [a]no more defile my holy name, they, nor their kings, with their fornication, and with the carcases of their kings in their high places, in their setting their threshold by my threshold, and their post by my post, and there was [but] the wall between me and them; and they [b]defiled my holy name with their abominations which they committed; and I consumed them in mine anger. Now let them put away their fornication, and the carcases of their kings, far from me, and I will dwell in the midst

[z] ver. 9. ch. 37. 26-28; *cf.* Ex. 15. 17. 1-8; 25. 8. 29. 45, 46; Lev 26.3-12 Deut. 12. 10, 11; 33. 12, 28, 29. 1 Kings 6. 13; 8. 12, 13, 27. Ps. 68. 16; 85. 9; 132. 13-18. Isa. 57. 15. Joel 3. 17. Zech. 2. 10, 11; 8. 3-8. *cf.* Ps. 90. 1. 1 Kings 8. 30, 39, 43, 49. 2 Chr. 6. 30. Ps. 113. 5.
[a] ch. 20. 39-44.

ch. 39. 7. [b] ch. 5. 11; 8. 3, 16; 23. 37-39; 44. 6-8; 2 Kings 23. 4-14; *cf.* Lev. 26. 30; 2 Kings 16. 10-18; 21. 3-7; Jer. 16. 18; 2 Chr. 36. 14.

none could claim right to life; from God alone could it come. Only in the place of His presence could it be found, but inexorable righteousness, inflexible holiness, and incontrovertible judgment stood guard. He who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life"—the Tree of Life—bowed His blessed head to bear all and answer to all required by the divine glory, that the way might be opened to the poor sinner who draws near in the value of His precious blood. Now in the glory supported by the cherubim our attention is called to the figure of a Man. There indeed He ever was as foreknown before all ages, and so He is seen in the visions of God before the time of manifestation had come. This is one of the many foreshadows of the Incarnation, but now we know that He has actually appeared. Henceforth He, not apart from, but as identified with, all that the cherubim symbolize, stands at the very entrance of life, and He is ever found all along the way as He is its glorious and eternal end—"Christ our life."

Of old the cherubim stood at the closed Garden of delight, and looked out on a cursed earth and a fallen race, but in the day of Ezekiel's vision they shall bear the divine glory into its earthly resting-place (ver. 7), to look out upon an earth from every part of which the joyful song of deliverance shall be rising, every note blending and uniting in one universal Hallelujah.

No wonder the light of Jehovah's glory shone forth to announce the birth at Bethlehem, and that out of the midst of its brightness the angelic choir chanted its anthem of glory and pleasure over the Child born and the Son given upon whose shoulder the government shall be, and whose name is called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace, the increase of whose government and peace shall never end, upholding all with judgment and with righteousness from henceforth even forever. Again that glory invests Him on the holy mount; as a cloud it receives Him ascending from Olivet; in it He shall come with all the holy angels to take His kingdom; and of the heavenly city, enlightened with the glory of God, He, the Lamb, is the Lamp.

God comes in this glory, with majesty and awe-inspiring utterance, and with light reaching to earth's remotest bounds. The prophet

of them forever. Thou, son of man, show the house to the house of Israel, that they may be confounded at their iniquities; and let them measure the pattern. And if they be confounded at all that they have done, make known to them the form of the house, and its fashion, and its goings out, and its comings in, and all its forms, and all its statutes, yea, all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof; and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the statutes thereof, and do them.

assures us that he is seeing again the vision which appeared by the river Chebar (chap. 1; see notes), in the presence of which then and now he falls prostrate. Brought into the inner court, he sees that the Glory fills the house. Then he is personally addressed by some one speaking before the house, and he finds a man standing beside him. The Glory, majestic in appearance, mighty in speech, far reaching in its effect, has been seen to enter the Sanctuary, and now in the familiar accents of human speech Jehovah communicates His word. He speaks first of rest, and that forever in the midst of His redeemed earthly people. What He had said to Solomon after the dedication of the first house had been fulfilled in Israel's long history of shameful departure, scattering, and judgment, yet it was also true as then declared that His eyes and heart were perpetually upon that house, the place of the soles of His feet, and the returning Glory proves that He abides faithful.

Rest can only be realized where *He* sets up His throne. The curse comes to Satan, to angel, to man by defiance of its holy claim, by resisting the righteous rule of an ever-loving, wise, holy and glorious Creator. The blessing of every creature is found only in submission, and if this is not accomplished through grace it must be through power, the Shepherd's rod must become the rod of iron.

If the throne suggests the divine government as connected with the indwelling glory, the expression, "the place of the soles of My feet," introduces the thought of worship (Ps. xcix. 5; cxxxii. 7). In that day there will be no other throne-house in Israel. The Prince of whom we read later evidently does not occupy the same position as former kings. They had assumed absolute right to the throne, and had acted in shameful disregard of Jehovah's revealed will. Instead of acting as Jehovah's vicegerents, they had practically ignored His supremacy, neglected or rejected His Word, and made their own will paramount. In this evil course they were followed by the people and the priesthood. Idolatry came to prevail throughout the land, and even invaded the temple precincts, defiling the house itself. When the time of Ezekiel's vision has come, all such conditions will have passed forever. This change is declared to the prophet. Neither the people nor their kings will defile Jehovah's holy name any more. Because of their abominations (compare 2 Kings xvi. 14, 15; xxi. 4-7; xxiii. 11, 12; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 4-7) His anger had consumed them; but then Israel's time of suffering will be accomplished, her iniquity will be pardoned, having received double for all her sins (Isa. xl. 1, 2).

8 (12) The mount of holiness

2 (13-17) The place of sacrifice

[3] This is the law of the house: upon the top of the mountain, all its border round about is most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house.

2. And these are the measures of the altar in cubits: the cubit is a cubit and a handbreadth. The bottom was a cubit, and the breadth a cubit, and its border on the edge thereof round about, one span: and this was the base of the altar. And from the bottom upon the ground to the lower ledge was two cubits, and the breadth one cubit; and from the small ledge to the great ledge, four cubits, and the breadth one cubit. And the upper altar was four cubits; and from the hearth of God and upward were four horns, and the hearth of God was twelve [cubits] long, by twelve broad, square in the four sides thereof. And the ledge was fourteen [cubits] long by fourteen broad in the four sides thereof, and the border about it half a cubit; and the bottom thereof a cubit round about: and its steps looked toward the east.

Israel as a nation new born, upon whom the Spirit has been poured out, will dwell safely under the shadow of the Almighty. With the majesty of the glory will be the beauty of holiness. So the purgation of ver. 9 is essential to Jehovah's dwelling in the midst of them.

[3] This lesson may be learned from the vision of the house (vers. 10, 11). It is sealed by the law of the house which decrees the whole limit of the top of the mountain to be most holy (ver. 12).

2. We pass from the vision of the entering glory of Jehovah to consider the detailed measure of the altar, which stood at the centre of the whole enclosure, and directly before the house. God looks out, as it were, from the place of His rest upon that which presents the basis of all blessing and glory—the place of sacrifice. It stands as a memorial bearing witness to Christ. He is the true Burnt Offering, whose sacrifice of perpetual efficacy is being recalled by every offering presented upon this altar.

Not all is perfectly clear as to its construction. It appears to be two cubits higher than that of the first temple, and eight cubits less in length and breadth. Ezekiel's altar is 12x12 cubits.* Its principal dimensions are 18, 16, 14, and 12 cubits. The one common divisor of these numbers is *two*, which, as often remarked, speaks of competent witness, fellowship, and particularly of Christ. Dividing the measurements we obtain the numbers 9, 8, 7, and 6. Thus we have the complex idea of fullest manifestation (9=3x3) in the power of the Spirit and the glory of resurrection (3); and this in new covenant, new creation relations (8) into which all creation (4) will then be brought, according to perfection and rest (7), crowned of necessity with mastery over evil (6). This last is the

* See Outline Elevation of Altar. Appendix.

3 (18-27) The place of worship

3. And he said unto me, Son of man, thus saith the Lord Jehovah: These are the ordinances of the altar in the day when they shall make it, to offer burnt offerings thereon, and to [r]sprinkle blood thereon. Thou shalt give to the priests, the Levites, that are of the seed of Zadok, who come near unto me, to minister unto me, saith the Lord Jehovah, a [s]young bullock for a sin offering. And thou shalt take of its blood, and put upon the four horns thereof, and on the four corners of the ledge, and upon the border round about: so shalt thou cleanse it and make atonement for it. And

[r] Lev. 1. 5.

[s] Ex. 29. 10, 14. Lev. 8. 14, 15. ch. 45. 18-20.

topmost part of the structure, and it is foursquare, 12 cubits each side (4x3)—the number of divine government exercised throughout creation according to the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in Christ, to which fulness all things in heaven and on earth are reconciled in the power of the blood of the cross by which peace has been made. Such seems to be the lesson of the altar, if we are permitted to interpret it in the number-symbolism of Scripture.

Since God has abounded toward us in all wisdom and intelligence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, we may now rejoice in the knowledge of these precious and holy themes. They give comfort and confidence as we pass on in touch with a groaning creation which we know will be brought into the reality and blessing of Christ's glory. God has given to us knowledge of His counsel, so that while it is still night for the world we may walk in the light of day. This is to have its practical effect upon us, for we are not of the night but of the day. It should lead us to walk through the world as not of it, not influenced by the spirit of this age, but as sober and watchful, wearing the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation—that salvation for which we wait and which will be realized at the coming of the Lord. Not only so, but when the redeemed creation will be enjoying the accomplishment of all that we now know to be God's purpose and which gives cause for present rejoicing in the Lord, we shall be with Him, sharing as the Body with the Head in all the various features of that glorious kingdom, not in an earthly but heavenly relation. And though we shall then be in the glory and around the throne forever, we will never fail to look at and consider the place of sacrifice, viewing it then from the inner Sanctuary. The Lamb shall be seen in the midst of the throne.

3. The ordinances of the altar are now given. They relate to its establishment as a place of worship where the priests shall offer the burnt-offerings and peace-offerings of the people. In this there is an abiding witness to their acceptance by Jehovah (ver. 27).

As already pointed out, this altar stands at the very centre of the sacred enclosure. The worshippers in the outer court, and "the Prince" who came in among them or sat in the east gate, would have attention and interest focused upon this great altar, and, as we may say, the glory of God in the house would look toward it. It would ever stand before the eyes of all as of fundamental importance

thou shalt take the bullock of the sin offering, and it shall be burnt in the appointed place of the house, [x]outside the sanctuary. And on the second day thou shalt offer a he-goat without blemish for a sin offering; and thou shalt cleanse the altar, as they cleansed it with the bullock. When thou hast made an end of cleansing it, thou shalt offer a young bullock without blemish, and a ram out of the flock without blemish; and thou shalt bring them near before Jehovah; and the priests shall cast [y]salt upon them, and they shall offer them up for a burnt offering unto Jehovah.

x Ex. 29. 14. Lev. 4. 11, 12, 21; 9. 11; 16. 27. Heb. 13. 11, 12.

y Lev. 2. 13. *cf.* Nu. 18. 19. Mark 9. 49, 50.

to the blessing and welfare of the people, affording visible expression of their acceptance and the ground upon which the glory could abide among them.

These ordinances are given in view of the day when they shall *make* the altar, a word of comfort and assurance to the remnant in the land of their captivity that the time would come when the nation would again be restored and the divine centre for worship be set up. With this prophecy before them it is not surprising to see that those who return from Babylon to the land of their fathers first built the altar.

The altar has a twofold purpose — to offer burnt-offering and sprinkle blood. The burnt-offering signifies full acceptance, the sprinkled blood, accomplished expiation. That offering all goes up to God as an odor of sweet smell, and the shed blood tells of judgment borne, vindicating the righteousness of God and answering to the holiness of His nature. The perfect service and obedience symbolized in the offering satisfies His heart, and the blood suffices to meet all the requirements of His throne. The altar too sanctifies the gift, and thus all combines to set before us the preciousness and perfection of the Person and work of Christ.

Then the priests of Zadok's seed are to minister at the altar. Zadok fills a prominent place in the history of Israel, being high priest in David's and Solomon's reigns. He remained faithful to David during Absalom's rebellion, and with Nathan the prophet espoused the cause of Solomon when Adonijah sought to secure the throne. David being of one mind with them instructed Zadok to anoint Bathsheba's son (1 Kings i. 8, 26, 32-45). Zadok thus stands as representative of the priesthood in association with the king of God's choice, and with the kingdom as established by Him in David's seed—type of Christ. Zadok descended from Eleazar (1 Chron. vi. 50-53), Aaron's third son, who succeeded to the high priesthood upon his father's death. We have already seen that this is a lesson of resurrection (see notes, Num. xxi.). Eleazar being a type of the resurrection priesthood of Christ, his association was with the new generation who were to enter the land, suggesting Israel as new born, to whom under new covenant relation will be given possession of the land and the fulfilment of the promise. Fittingly, then, the seed of Zadok fill the priestly place in the glorious Millennial day.

[z] Seven days shalt thou offer daily a goat for a sin offering; they shall also offer a young bullock, and a ram out of the flock, without blemish. Seven days shall they make atonement for the altar and purify it, and consecrate it. And when these days are ended, it shall be that upon the [a] eighth day and onwards, the priests shall make your burnt offerings upon the altar and your peace offerings; and I will accept you, saith the Lord Jehovah.

[z] Ex. 29. 35-37.

[a] Lev. 9. 1.

There are seven days of consecration, on the eighth and thereafter the regular services may be performed. In the seven we have the perfect basis laid for abiding worship which is of new creation character and in the grace of the new covenant.

If the divine glory has found its resting-place in this shrine of holiness, the plan and order of which is expressive of the divine character, then for the people to be able to draw near in their place and enjoy the blessings of acceptance and fellowship with that glory, the altar and its service are essential. Only on the ground of sacrifice which presents the truth of atonement and purification can man make his approach to the dwelling-place of God. Thus the altar stands related to the people themselves and their place with God. It stands as identified with what they are, and they being sinful, makes atonement for it necessary to purify and consecrate it. In what is accomplished for *it*, the people see, as in an object lesson, what is accomplished for *them*.

It is not hard to see in this a picture of precious truth regarding Christ and His people. He in His grace identified Himself with them, and so what they were in themselves made it necessary for Him to be the sacrifice, bearing as in their place the very judgment they deserved. Thus He accomplished atonement that they might know identification with Him in the acceptance of the sacrifice He made. Of that one offering by which all who are sanctified are perfected—we now, Israel in the future, and all who believe—these sacrifices are the significant type, as in the future day they will be an ever-witnessing memorial. If our blessed Lord took our sins upon Himself, He also endured the smiting by which atonement was made, so that coming from under the curse which He took for our sakes He can stand before God's glory, and appear in His presence on our behalf, even—may we say?—as the great altar stands before the house in which the glory dwells. Now in the place He fills we read our own acceptance and privilege in fellowship with the glory itself, together with the glory of redemption and the blessing of salvation.

Sin and burnt offerings are made for seven days. These present two aspects of atonement by which reconciliation is effectual and access procured. Sin is fully dealt with in judgment, and that as carried out in the burning in the outside place—the place where Jesus suffered that He might sanctify the people with His own blood. This was accomplished according to the will of God to which He rendered perfect obedience, offering Himself without spot in the power of the eternal Spirit. So we find what is toward man in his dire need as a sinner, but for the eternal satisfaction of God in respect to all that he deserved as being such a creature; and then

Section 4 (Chap. xliv.).

Regulations concerning those who minister in the Sanctuary

1 (1-3) The supremacy of Jehovah

1. And he brought me back toward the [b]outer gate of the sanctuary which looketh toward the east; and it was shut. And Jehovah said unto me, This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and none shall enter in by it: for Jehovah, the

[b] ch. 43. 1.

what is toward God to His eternal glory, the one accomplished righteousness of the Man Christ Jesus, obedient even unto death, but for our eternal blessing as accepted in the abiding perfection of such fragrance as God alone can fully appreciate. Thus are we redeemed from destruction and crowned with loving-kindness.

There is the young bullock in all the energy and power of fresh, new life, neither aged nor blemished—type of the Perfect Servant who came only to do God's will. The he-goat speaks of the sinner's Substitute; the ram is the symbol of devotedness even unto death. The salt, the preservative power of holiness and the sign of the covenant, is that which secures beyond possibility of failure. And then the sprinkled blood of the salted sacrifice, the precious blood, effects expiation and the forgiveness of sins according to the holiness of God and the perfection of the offering.

Let us not leave this section without linking its three parts together—the glory, the sacrifice, and the worship of the redeemed people. As being a third section it suggests manifestation, the fulness revealed, and that is given in a threefold way, as just remarked. Is not the order here that which characterizes Christian blessing also? First, Christ in whom the glory all centres, in whom the fulness dwells, must be in His rightful place, that of being at the right hand of the Majesty on high in the heavenly Sanctuary, the true holy of holies. There He entered, saluted of God as priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. Then the measure of the altar could be given, the truth of the wonderful work in all its varied parts be told out, be given manifestation in the testimony rendered in its due time. This brings out the meaning of the new place, its worship, the acceptance known and enjoyed in the light of the fulness now revealed. The place of Christ in glory, the testimony to His blessed Person and work in redemption, and the place of His people as identified with Him, constitute the threefold cord of revealed truth which none can break.

Sec. 4.

1. Now that all as to the Sanctuary and altar has been set in order we are given the regulations concerning the ministers of the Sanctuary. It is not surprising that in this connection we are again reminded of the divine glory, and also to find that there is an abiding witness to its entrance into the House and to the essential pre-eminence of Jehovah, in that none, not even the Prince, is to enter by the east gate through which Ezekiel saw the Glory enter.

In the past kings, priests, and people had fallen into the evil of treating Jehovah as though He was altogether like one of them-

God of Israel, [c]hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut. As for the prince, he shall sit therein as prince to eat bread before Jehovah; [d]he shall enter by the way of the porch of the gate, and shall go out by the way of the same.

[c] ch. 43. 4.

[d] ch. 46. 2, 8.

selves. In their rebellion and idolatry He had become but one God among many, even though they might give Him first place in their Pantheon. In the theocracy of the future there shall be one Jehovah and His name one. His absolute supremacy will be acknowledged by all, and the evil of idolatry will be banished from the earth. So the majesty and distinctive glory of Jehovah is emphasized by the shutting of the East Gate by which He entered His House; no one may enter or go out by that gate.

Here a dignitary is introduced who has not been mentioned before —the Prince. He is privileged, as no other person, to occupy the porch of the east gate, sitting there to eat bread before Jehovah. But he does not pass through the gate, he enters by the porch and goes out by the same way. Thus the special sanctity of this gate would be impressed upon all, and particularly upon the Prince himself, reminding him of his subordinate place; the closed gate and the limited privilege of this person who appears to be the highest secular dignitary in the nation, teaching all of the supreme place of Jehovah. We may notice that the porch is at the end of the gate-building toward the west, facing the altar and the House.

This important personage, the Prince, is apparently one of the nation, not Christ Himself: his sons are spoken of (xlvi.16) and he offers a sin-offering for himself (xlv. 22). It seems clear that he occupies a representative position, yet neither the same as that of the high priest, of whom Ezekiel does not speak, nor that of the king as formerly known in Israel. He is not accorded the privileges nor the power of either. He seems to occupy an intermediary place between the people and the priesthood, since he is found among the former in their seasons of worship (xlvi. 10), not among the priests, nor privileged to enter the inner court, yet drawing nearer than the people themselves, since he may worship in the inner east gate which opens upon the inner court, while the people worship in the outer court as gathered at the door of this gate (xlvi. 2). But he is responsible to supply the various offerings at the feasts, the new moons, the sabbaths, in all the solemnities of the house of Israel, and he is therefore the recipient and holder of what the people offer for these occasions; and thus too the priesthood would look to him for the provision needed to carry on the national worship (xlv. 13-22). Then he is given his own special portion in the land, and he is enjoined not to take any of the people's inheritance (xlv. 7, 8; xlvi. 18; xlviii. 21, 22). The Oblation and the Sanctuary are spoken of as in the midst of the Prince's portion.

These considerations show that the Prince occupies quite a unique place in the history of Israel. It serves to emphasize the absolute character of the theocracy as to both kingly and high priestly rule. They are vested in the Messiah Himself, not in any mere man. Priests and kings of the past may have been types, but now the Antitype has come—the substance has replaced the shadow. This

2 (44) The judgment and holiness which become His house.

2. And he brought me the way of the north gate before the house, and I beheld, and lo, the glory of Jehovah filled the house of Jehovah; and I fell upon my face. And Jehovah said unto me,

world to come of which this vision treats will not be in subjection to angels, but to Him to whom all things have been made subject according to God's purpose, even Jesus (Heb. ii. 5-10). Angelic hosts will then attend the Son of Man (Matt. xiii. 41; xxiv. 31; xxv. 31; John i. 51; 2 Thess. i. 7).

Returning to our chapter, we see then in the closure of the east gate a standing object-lesson teaching the sanctity and preeminence of Jehovah, showing that none, not even Prince or priests, are to be thought of as approaching in any measure an equality with God such as free access at the same gate might be construed to imply. Still in the privilege of the Prince to partake of a sacrificial feast in the porch of this gate we get an intimation of the connection of the saved nation and the glory of God which has hallowed this gate in a special manner, for in his place he is doubtless representative of the nation. His communion, and so that of the nation as seen in him, is with God whose glory entered by that gate and now dwells in His House in their midst—a holy, happy, salutary lesson.

We see too that all the worship would be conducted with faces *westward*. This furnishes an instructive contrast to what the prophet had seen in the entry of the temple as recorded in chapter viii.—twenty-five men with their backs to the temple and their faces toward the *east*, worshipping the sun. In their evil course they had reversed God's order. In how many things it is found that man's thought is the very opposite of God's, the sad consequence of departure and alienation through sin. How evident it is also that Satan's constant aim is to induce the creature to turn its back upon God and have an idol of his own which is always another creature, for fallen man will have his god to be like himself, and groping in the moral darkness into which he has fallen he deifies his own lusts and passions and makes their gratification the chief feature of his worship. Every step of God's advancing revelation through the ages has been to undo this lie which has wrapped itself around the heart and mind of man, blinding him to the light which he learns to hate because his deeds are evil, while for the same reason he loves the darkness. That revelation reached its meridian splendor in the coming of the Son, and now it is known beyond all possible question that in God is no darkness at all, that indeed He is light and love, not darkness and hate. He is One whose thoughts are as high above man's as the heavens are above the earth. This lesson to learn which brings the creature into its right place and therefore its real blessing, seems clearly suggested to us in what Ezekiel sets forth.

2. The prophet is now brought before the House by way of the north gate. This was the gate of sacrifice, as we have seen. Is not this significant? For only by the way of *sacrifice* can we be brought before the glory of God. This he beholds filling the House, and bows low in *worship*. Then Jehovah *reveals* to him the ordinances which follow, after which he is taken to view other parts of the

Son of man, set thy heart [to this], and behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, all that I say unto thee, concerning all the statutes of the house of Jehovah, and all the laws thereof; and mark well the entering in of the house with every going forth of the sanctuary. And thou shalt say to the rebellious, even to the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: let it suffice you of all your abominations, O house of Israel, in that ye

[a] Ch. 2. 5; 12. 2; Deut. 31. 27; Isa. 30. 1, 9.

sacred enclosure. How suggestive the order — sacrifice, worship, revelation.

It is instructive to note that the communication of these ordinances of service and worship, including the allotment of the heave-offering, the feasts and special solemnities, with instruction as to the ways of righteousness which become those who draw near to God, should be given in the light of the glory and in close relation to where the work of sacrifice is performed. Three important truths are thus brought together—the glory of God who is the Holy One, the work of redemption as set forth in the sacrifices, and the holy ways which are to characterize God's people. Peter, setting before us God's holy character and government, enjoins us to walk in holiness and fear, forasmuch as we are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ (1 Pet. i. 14-19). Redeeming love in Christ has given perfect answer to the light which God is, in which all that we are and have done is searched out and manifested, and which according to holiness God must judge. Thus we who believe are made fit for the portion of the saints in light, and as thus accepted by God we are privileged to enter the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus. This being so, we are under the responsibility to behave ourselves according to the holy requirement of God our Father. Here His government over us comes in, and only the more so since He has abounded toward us in such riches of grace.

God claims the attention of the whole man (ver. 5)—heart, eyes, ears; and note, it is the inner man first. The heart stands for the inner springs of man's being and life. As from this organ of our physical frame the blood goes forth to energize the whole of the body's wonderful structure, returning to it to be again prepared for continued work in the circulatory system, so in the spiritual realm we have, as we may say, man's spirit and soul, the seat of his intellectual and emotional faculties which are manifested in his course of life. These are claimed by God, and as being under His control (other control can only result in spiritual death) there goes forth into the spiritual sphere, into all its paths of movement, of circulation, of feeling and emotion, that vital energy which makes us fit vessels for divine service. Then our vision (the eyes) will be full of that light which shines from the innermost Sanctuary enlightening the inner man; and one Voice will be heard, whose accents falling upon the multitudinous strings of our spiritual ears, send those vibrations of divine speech and harmony through our being which bring the desired response to the Master.

have brought in [f]aliens, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary, to profane it, even my house, when ye offered [g]my bread, [h]the fat and the blood; and they have broken my covenant, besides all your abominations. And ye have not kept the charge of my holy things, but have set keepers at my charge in my sanctuary for yourselves.

f Num. 3. 38; 18. 4, 7 cf. Num. 40.
2 Chr. 26. Lev. 10. 1- Eph. 5. 18 with Phil. 3. 3.
g Lev. 21. 17, 21; 22. 3. 11, 16.
h Lev. 7. 27; 3. 16,

The prophet is told to mark well, literally, "set thine heart to," what Jehovah is making known. This is called for in view of the service he is to perform, that of communicating God's mind to the people. It is well for us to remember that such occupation with what God may give is ever essential for the carrying out of any commission He may call upon us to fulfil. Purpose of heart is the necessary qualification for any servant of the Lord. One may possess much learning and great natural ability, be attractive in person and eloquent in speech, and yet useless, because the heart is not right, its purpose not formed in the secret place with God. If the inner man is under the power of divine things it is certain that the members of the outward man will be yielded in happy service to the holy and perfect will of God. God looks upon the heart, not upon the outward appearance, which may easily deceive.

The prophet is called to give whole-hearted attention to Jehovah's Word. Apart from this he could not rightly perform his mission. Nor can we know how to rightly number our days and apply our hearts to wisdom apart from such attention to the Word of God. It alone provides a thorough furnishing of the man of God for every good work. Let us feed upon it, walk by it, preach it, serving others out of its treasuries, into which we daily enter with believing and worshiping hearts. Our hearts should stand in awe of that Word, while having joy in it as those who find great spoil (Ps. cxix. 161, 162).

Jehovah first reproves the house of Israel for their evil ways. They had forgotten His holy claims and defiled His house with their abominations. In view of this He established the ordinances which follow. By them they will be kept ever mindful of the past and of His own holiness, to safeguard which from all unlawful intrusion insures to them the fullest blessing and His own proper glory.

In earlier chapters of this book the prophet has told of Israel's abominations (*e.g.*, chaps. viii., xi.), and many times have they been referred to as rebellious. Here they are so spoken of for the last time. This then is a word for the people of Ezekiel's day, for when this new temple is built they will be no longer of such a character. This shows that God intended the new order of things to be established in the future, which the prophet was making known, to have a present effect upon the ways of the people. As they learned what God purposed for the day of glory, they were to already separate themselves from past evils, which had come in through gross carelessness as to His honor and holiness. This, it may be said, is consistently God's purpose in revealing the future. Those to whom it is revealed are responsible to walk in its light. God's purpose as to

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: No alien, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any alien that is among the children of Israel. But the Levites who went far away from me, when Israel went astray, that 'went astray from me after their idols, they shall bear their iniquity. Yet they shall be ministers in my sanctuary, having oversight of the gates of the house, and doing service in the

1 chs. 22. 26; 48. 11. 2 Kl. 23. 8,9. 2 Chron. 24. 3 ff. Jer. 2. 8, 26-28.

future judgment or glory is His call to us to conduct ourselves now in a manner accordant with the revelation granted, and so to be witness to those around us of what we know is sure to come. This is the path of faith, for faith believing God's testimony enters into fellowship with Him as to His purposes, and then judges of the present in the light of that secret which faith possesses, and which becomes its strength and comfort while waiting in the present. Thus we know that the day of the Lord is coming upon the ungodly world. It is not only a day of judgment but also the time of established righteousness and peace which Christ will bring in, and in which we shall have our part and place with Him. We are of the day, and not of this world's present night. Hence we are to walk *now* as those who are of the day, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation—salvation out of the world which goes on to wrath (1 Thess. v.). Whatever God has revealed in His prophetic Word is by no means for the gratification of curious minds, but so that he who believes it may walk with God in the present. By doing this we find practical deliverance from this present evil age, not being conformed to it, but transformed by the renewing of our minds in daily fellowship with God through His word of truth. So now Jehovah makes known by Ezekiel the order of things to obtain in the new Sanctuary and its service, that the people may learn therefrom and let the past suffice to have wrought abomination and rebellion.

Although these visions belong to a time still future, we see by the ministry of reproof and correction given in this chapter and the previous one (xliii. 7-11; xliv. 6-13), relating to the people and their rulers, both civil and religious, that God always has a present object in view in the revelations He gives. He brings the past into contrast with the future, that in the present practical sanctification may be realized in ceasing to do evil and learning to do well. Isaiah first describes the glory of the Millennial state, and then admonishes the people, saying, "House of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of Jehovah" (Isa. ii. 1-5).

In the first place provision is made to guard the Sanctuary from such profanation as had entered its precincts in the time of the kingdom. The evils that Jehovah rebukes had come in through unholy alliances with idolatrous neighbors, and by having hired foreigners to keep the charge of the gates. Such a state of things was aided by the close proximity to the temple of the king's palace, so that the corruption of the royal house first seeped into the sacred enclosure of the first temple and then flooded it with wickedness, as

house: they shall slay the burnt offerings and the sacrifices for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister unto them. Because they ministered unto them [j]before their idols, and were a [k]stumbling block of iniquity unto the house of Israel, therefore have I lifted up my hand against them, saith the Lord Jehovah, and they shall bear their iniquity. And they shall not come near unto me, to execute the office of priest unto me,

[j] 2 Ki. 16. 10-16.
[k] ch. 14. 1-5.

in the days of Ahab and Manasseh. Balaam was made to give God's thought concerning His people: "Lo, it is a people that shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations;" and he it was who later did his best to accomplish their mixture with the wicked nation of Moab. He could not curse, but becoming acquainted with God's purpose, and being an enemy, he sought their overthrow by subtlety (Num. xxxi. 16). He snares them into evil associations, and God must deal in judgment. From this we learn what is meant by the doctrine of Balaam, and it shows one of the great wiles of the devil against which we must be on our guard. His constant effort is to effect mixture where God's express mind is separation and purity. The admixture of Israel with the nations in her later history wrought her ruin, and brought the judgment of the Captivities and desolation. The admixture of the world and the Church, a greater evil, has wrought a correspondingly worse ruin. Scripture has especially warned us of this evil (2 Cor. vi. 11-18), so disastrous, whether in the individual or corporate sphere.

In this connection we may well consider Rev. ii. 14. It is one of those many instances in Scripture in which the things written aforetime for our admonition are taken up and made of present application. The doctrine of Balaam consisted, as we have seen, in the counsel he gave, directing the women of Moab and Midian to seduce the people of Israel into association with them in their idolatrous festivities, with which there was a practice of gross moral evil. Israel was caught in the snare of those friendly advances, which had behind them the enemy's purpose to destroy the character of God's people as called to "dwell alone," in separation to God, whose holy ways and worship had been revealed to them. Doubtless, the seduction was intended to deprive Israel of her distinctive position and favor with God, which Balaam had been forced to proclaim. God's thought was that His people should be separate from all the abounding evil of the nations. Balaam's doctrine was that a mixture should be effected between them. Fleshly lusts and false religious activities were the instruments used.

This history has been repeated in the relations established between the Church and the world. In the apostolic period idolatry touched every sphere of life. As a result, the early Christians of necessity withdrew largely from all the social and festive activities in which moral evil abounded, and in which they had formerly taken part (1 Pet. iv. 1-4). This brought against them much persecution and evil-speaking. In those days, to partake of the idol sacrifices came to signify the recantation of Christianity.

nor to come near to any of my holy things, [even] to the things that are most holy; but they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed. Yet will I make them keepers of the charge of the house, for all the service thereof, and for all that shall be done therein.

3 (15-31) The priests: the features of their place and portion as sanctified unto Jehovah

3. But the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near to me to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord Jehovah. They

Cf. 1 Sam. 2. 35 with 2 Sam. 15. 24, and 1 Ki. 2. 27, 35.

But things changed; the world became friendly and sought association with the Church, who, like Israel, was snared into evil practices. *The doctrine of mixture prevailed.* This destroyed the true character and testimony of the Church in the world. Expansion by compromise with the idolatrous world became the policy of its leaders. Features and practices of heathendom were incorporated into its life, both publicly and privately. But to-day we do not think of this, because idolatry has passed away. Nevertheless it has its lesson for us. This same principle of *mixture* assailed the returned remnant in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, and wrought and caused them much sorrow. It is one of our great dangers, if not the greatest. The idol-feasts, with their open immorality, are not around us to-day; but there are still idols to keep from, and fleshly lusts from which to turn away. With the light and knowledge we have, whatever displaces God, or represents Him as different from what He is known to be as revealed in Christ, or that changes His truth, cannot be followed without some form of moral failure resulting. Truth refused, perverted, or neglected, is accompanied in some degree with moral laxity and spiritual decrepitude.

3. Returning to our chapter we find that the Levites, except the family of Zadok (ver. 15), are appointed to keep guard and do the service of the house, but are excluded from the priestly office. In the government of God they are shut out from this higher place because of their previous history. They had followed the people into idolatry, and were a stumbling-block of iniquity instead of resisting the incoming evil and instructing the people in the laws of the covenant under which they stood in relation to Jehovah. God requires that which is past; and in His ways of holy government such departure from His revealed and known will must be remembered in judgment, though those subject to it are personally safe. The day of loss and reward is certain, and this God's grace does not set aside. The future will bring out results which flow from the past, for as we sow we reap. If our work is good we shall receive reward, if bad we shall suffer loss, though we ourselves are saved. This solemn lesson is seen in the case of the Levites. The past and its lessons would thus be kept before them as they fulfilled their service, and be a constant reminder to all the people of the nation's

shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall approach unto my table to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge. And it shall be that when they enter in at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with [m]linen garments; and no [n]wool shall come upon them, while they minister in the gates of the inner court, and towards the house.

m Ex. 28. 39, 40. 42. 43.
n *cf.* Deut. 22. 11.

past sin, in which the Levites had joined, ministering to them before their idols.

The same principle of righteous government finds illustration in the priests of Zadok's line. They had remained faithful when Israel departed from Jehovah, and now in the day of Messiah's kingdom they fill the nearest place. Past faithfulness meets its reward. Having previously spoken of Zadok's place in the nation's history, we may without further remark consider the details now given regarding the priestly office.

The difference between the Levites and the priests is that the former stand before the people and minister to them, while the priests minister to Jehovah, stand before Him, and enter the Sanctuary. The holy privilege of going into God's presence and of fellowship with Him at His table is characteristic of the priestly place.

There are twelve features in the regulations of this section, falling into *four* groups of three each. All have to do with the service and walk, in which there is to be a manifestation of truth and holiness in keeping with their Sanctuary privileges.

1. Regulations regarding their place and service in the Sanctuary.
   - i. Their sacred charge (ver. 15a).
   - ii. Their holy service in this charge (vers. 15b, 16).
   - iii. Their holy garments (vers. 17-19).
2. Regulations regarding their habits and relationships.
   - i. Their hair—moderation, no extremes (ver. 20).
   - ii. Their abstinence—sobriety (ver. 21).
   - iii. Their marriage—purity (ver. 22).
3. Regulations regarding their service toward the people.
   - i. Their work of teaching (ver. 23).
   - ii. Their work of judgment (ver. 24a).
   - iii. Their responsibility to observe and care for the order of divine worship (ver. 24b).
4. Regulations regarding their separation from defilement.
   - i. As to the dead (vers. 25-27).
   - ii. As to inheritance (ver. 28).
   - iii. As to their food (vers. 29-31).

The Sanctuary, then, is in their charge. This brings to them an access that others do not share, and with it a ministry peculiarly their own. The fat and the blood are specially mentioned, and then the table, for communion can only follow that of which the former elements speak.

The fat and the blood were especially reserved from all the offerings as being God's own portion. Compare Lev. vii. 22-27. The fat is spoken of as the food of the offering, and as burnt for a sweet

They shall have linen tires upon their heads, and linen breeches upon their loins; they shall not gird themselves with [anything that causeth] sweat. And when they go forth unto the outer court, even unto the outer court to the people, they shall put off their garments wherein they ministered, and lay them in the holy chambers; and they shall put on other garments, that they may [o]not sanctify the people with their garments.

[o] Ex. 29. 37; 30. 29.

savor (Lev. iii. 16). It stands for that which is entirely consecrated to God in all that pertains to both the will and the energy of life, which is all given up to Him, even as the fat is all consumed on the altar. In this connection it is of interest to note, as another has done, that the word for ashes used in reference to the sacrifices "literally means 'fat.' This has been thought to be because of the burning of the fat upon the altar, which would thus saturate the ashes. Be that as it may, the word is significant and suggestive. Ashes are the witness that the fire has done its work, the witness of an accomplished and accepted sacrifice. So we read in the margin of Ps. 20: 3, 'The Lord *turn to ashes* thy burnt sacrifice,' translated 'accept,' in explanation of the text. This witness of an accepted sacrifice is not a sign of sorrow, for which the word [generally translated 'ashes'] is used, [as also for] showing the emptiness and vanity of things (Esther 4: 1, 3; Job 2: 8; 42: 6; Isa. 61: 3, etc.; 44: 20). There is *nothing* worthless in connection with the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"The ashes of the sacrifice were first put on the east side of the altar, toward the sun-rising; they were then removed to a *clean* place outside the camp (Lev. 4:12; 6:10,11). Our blessed Lord's body, after He had yielded up His life to God on the cross, was kept absolutely inviolate. The piercing of the spear was in fulfilment of Scripture, and furnished the evidence that He had actually died. But 'a bone of Him shall not be broken' (John 19: 33-37). So that precious body ('A body hast Thou prepared Me,' Heb. 10: 5) was not suffered to be treated as that of a criminal, but was judicially handed over to those who loved Him, wrapped in fragrant and costly perfume, and laid in a new grave hewn out of the rock (John 19: 38-42; Luke 23: 52, 53). Does this not show in reality what was suggested in the 'fat ashes?'...The same unyielding judgment that had dealt with Him on the cross now demanded the fullest honor to Him, in judicial testimony to the acceptance of His sacrifice. The east side of the altar, the side of the sunrise, where the ashes were placed, is not only the witness of accepted sacrifice, but the pledge of resurrection. All this was ever before the Lord. He always linked His resurrection with His death (Matt. 16: 21). The ashes thus would speak of God's acceptance of Christ's sacrifice, giving full assurance to the believer of *his* acceptance."—*Lectures on the Tabernacle*, pp. 439-441, by S. Ridout.

This is an acceptance connected, therefore, with all the preciousness to God of which the fat speaks. So we may say the fat speaks of our blessed Lord Himself in His unreserved and perfectly acceptable devotion to God's holy will, for the accomplishment of which He

[p] Neither shall they shave their heads, nor suffer their locks to grow long; they shall duly poll their heads. [q] Neither shall any priest drink wine when they enter into the inner court. [r] Neither shall they take for their wives a widow, nor her that is put away: but they shall take maidens of the

[p] Lev. 21. 5.
[q] Lev. 10. 9.
[r] Lev. 21. 7, 13, 14.

yielded up all the strength of His holy and perfect life in the work of the cross. Are not those words of Ps. xxii. significant of this? "Like water I am poured out, and My bones are all disjointed: My heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of My bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue cleaveth to My jaws; and Thou hast laid Me in the dust of death...I may tell all My bones: they gaze, they stare upon Me."

What other language could more vividly depict the utter yielding up of all strength, of all fatness, in the work of sacrifice under the stroke of judgment? Truly this is the food of the offering, and a sweet savor to God. In it He finds His special portion and eternal delight.

Then there is the blood, it speaks of life, but laid down under judgment, given upon the altar to make atonement. No one was permitted to eat blood (Lev. iii. 17; xvii. 10-14; xix. 26). Life essentially belongs to God, man has forfeited all claim to it through sin; but in connection with the sacrifices it speaks of Christ who became a Substitute for sinful men, and that the judgment sin required has been executed upon Him. As put upon the altar it declares the truth of acceptance, and provides the basis of worship for God's people; as put upon the gate it marks the way of access into that blessing, and as put upon the House itself it shows what permits God to be with and dwell among His people, for it fully cleanses and atones in relation to all that would defile (xliii. 20; xlv. 19, 20). The precious blood of Jesus cleanses from every sin. That precious blood gives us our access, for we are made nigh by it; it gives us our acceptance, for we are taken into favor in the Beloved in whom we have redemption, even the forgiveness of offences; it enables God who is just to justify the ungodly who believe in Jesus; and in virtue of His work He will present His redeemed people faultless in the presence of God's glory so that He will be found dwelling among them for eternity.

The next regulation refers to the clothing of the priests for entrance into God's presence. They must be clothed in linen garments. No wool was permitted, nothing that would promote the exudation of nature, for this can have no place in *His* presence. That stands identified with man's toil as a sinner (Gen. iii. 19). Linen we are familiar with as a symbol of righteousness, and of the righteousnesses of the saints, as in Rev. xix. 8. Whether we think of it in reference to our standing before God, what we are made in Christ, or the practical life of the believer, it is that which alone suits the holy presence of God. Such in fact are the garments of praise which should ever invest us as a holy priesthood. This alone rightly manifests His character, and on our part alone marks us as truly representing Him. Righteousness is the first feature of the kingdom of God (Rom. xiv. 17). He who loves us and has washed us

seed of the house of Israel, or a widow that is the widow of a priest. And they shall [s]teach my people [the difference] betwen the holy and the common, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. And in a controversy they shall stand to [t]judge: they shall judge it according to my judgments: and they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all my appointed times; and they shall hallow my sabbaths. And they

[s] Lev. 10. 10, 11. *ctr.* ch.22.26.

[t] Deut. 17. 8-11. 2 Chr. 19.10.

from our sins in His blood, has made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father (Rev. i. 5, 6); and hence we are to follow righteousness (2 Tim. ii. 22). We are to avoid evil, do good, seek and pursue peace, "because the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears toward their supplications; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. And who shall injure you if ye have become imitators of that which is good? But if also ye should suffer for righteousness' sake, blessed are ye; but be not afraid of their fear, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord the Christ in your hearts" (1 Pet. iii. 11-15). The righteous Lord loveth righteousness.

In no one like to the Lord Himself was the truth of the linen fully and perfectly displayed. So He is our example that we should follow in His steps.

Righteousness, we may say, is acting according to the place in which God has set us. As His righteousness in Christ, we are to be followers of Him as dear children. Thus in these verses we have been considering, we get first the place and its privileges (15, 16), then the responsibility to be clothed as befits that place, and to guard all as sanctified to the Lord.

In the second group of regulations, three important principles appear. That as to the hair shows how moderation is to mark those who present Jehovah's offerings. They are to avoid extremes on the one side or the other. Neither undue severity nor fleshly looseness is to characterize their ways.

Hair occupies an important place in Scripture. In the case of the Nazarite it signifies lowly dependence upon God, the only proper creature-attitude, with withdrawal from the things of the flesh and its stimulus, so that action is not under such influences. In 1 Cor. xi. it is used to show the relative place of man and woman in the divine order of creation—the short hair of the man indicating his headship and responsibilty to rule, the long hair of the woman that of her place of dependence, yet helpfulness, without which the man is not complete. Thus we may see in it a sign of separation in devotedness to God, all that we are brought into subjection to His will, and so of obedience to His order for us in whatever sphere of relation we may be placed. It is evident that there may be that extreme asceticism which does dishonor to God's creature, or on the other hand the turning of the grace of God into dissoluteness. It is needless to remark that neither is of God. It is the avoidance of such extremes that seems suggested in this ordinance as to the hair. It counsels true-hearted devotion to God in accordance with the obedience His Word enjoins, so that fleshly extremes are avoided on both sides.

shall come at [u]no dead person to defile themselves, but for father, or for mother, or for son, or for daughter, for brother, or for sister that hath had no husband, they may defile themselves. And after he is [v]cleansed, they shall reckon to him seven days. And in the day that he goeth into the sanctuary, into the inner court, to minister in the sanctuary, he shall offer [w]his sin offering, saith the Lord Jehovah. And they shall have an inheritance: [x]I am their inheritance; and ye shall give them no possession in Israel; I am their pos-

[u] Lev. 21. 1-3.
[v] Num. 19. 11, etc.
[w] Lev. 4. 3.
[x] Num. 18. 20; Deut. 10. 9; 18. 1, 2; Josh. 13. 33.

Abstinence from wine in connection with their service in the inner court well accords with what we have just considered. It "plainly covers all fleshly stimulus, which prevents clear discernment of what is or is not according to the mind and nature of God. For us also who are called to walk in the light of God's presence continually, this is not a casual, but a constant rule. The impulse of nature needs the restraint of Christ's yoke; even where, as the apostle says, things are lawful to us, we must still not be brought under the power of any (1 Cor. vi.12). And how easily do they acquire power!" It means the avoidance of all worldly, carnal methods, the love of the things of the world, in all that constitutes our place in worship and service as a holy and royal priesthood called to show forth the excellencies of Him who has brought us out of darkness into His marvelous light. We are to be controlled by that sober judgment which is formed in the Sanctuary. The psalmist might envy the ease, prosperity and power of the wicked when not in the current of God's thoughts, but when he went into the Sanctuary then understood he their end (Ps. lxxiii.). It is to such sobriety that the apostle exhorts —a sobriety of a spiritually sound mind, fleshly desires and passions held in restraint, the habits of life well regulated with discretion and moderation. Compare 1 Tim. iii. 2; Tit. i. 8; ii. 4, 6, 12; Rom. xii. 3; 1 Pet. iv. 7; 2 Cor. v. 13, sober, soberly, or sober-minded; Tit. ii. 2, temperate; ver. 5, discreet.

In the ordering of the marriage relation the purpose is to preserve purity of association. It comes as an added guard against yielding to the mere dictates of passion, or to acting in a careless, loose manner in forming the most sacred and important relation of human life. Compare Lev. xxi. 7-14.

Thus in every way the habits and relationships of the priests are to constitute a good witness for God. The priest is to "show out of a good conversation his works with meekness and wisdom" (James iii. 13). "But as He who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation" (1 Pet. i. 15). Of course, we know that "conversation" means manner of life, and not merely our speech, though that is of itself an important factor.

The third group of regulations treats of priestly service toward the people. Let us not forget this order. To rightly fill priestly responsibility, to serve others in the work of teaching and judgment, we must first regulate our individual lives in accordance with the revealed mind of God. Here, as we know, Samson broke down, and

session. [y]They shall eat the meal offering and the sin offering and the trespass offering; and every devoted thing in Israel shall be theirs. And the first of all the first fruits of every kind, and every heave offering of every kind, of all your heave offerings, shall be for the priests; ye shall also give unto the priests the first of your dough, that he may cause a blessing to rest on thy house. The priests [z]shall not eat of anything that dieth of itself, or of that which is torn, whether it be fowl or beast.

y Lev. 10. 12-15; 27. 21. Num. 18. 1-32.

z Lev. 22. 8.

how many another since his day! The apostle well understood this principle, and declares, "I buffet my body, and lead it captive, lest after having preached to others I should be myself rejected." This gives us a sober guiding principle. To love this present age results in forsaking the path of true service, as Demas did (2 Tim. iv. 10); that is only a form of self-love which refuses to give place to that love which would make Christ everything and all; in other words, to henceforth live unto Him who loved us and died for us, so that the life we now live in the flesh has Him for its supreme object. Plainly to know how to discern for ourselves, and so teach others the difference between the holy and profane, the clean and unclean, we must live in the light of the Sanctuary and know how to use its balances. And again what else can fit for the judgment of that which is in controversy? Those who thus serve and would lead others to obey the divine order must themselves observe God's holy laws and statutes, thus setting the example of obedience thereto. This is their responsibility, the foundation upon which the superstructure of priestly service must be built. When this is not so we may see the consequences depicted in the case of Eli's sons (1 Sam. ii. 12-30).

In the last part of this section we return to what relates to the walk of the priests. First, as regards defilement from the dead. Compare Lev. xxi. 1-6. To be connected with it in even the permitted cases defiles, requiring proper cleansing and the presentation of a sin-offering. Thus death becomes the remedy for the defilement which death brings in as the penalty of sin. To this the cross bears witness. But it is clear that general or promiscuous defilement was to be sedulously watched against. There is defilement in death because it is the penalty of sin, and what we have here is given as an evidence of what is suited to God's presence. The priestly place is viewed in that relation. Into *His* presence death and its defilement cannot come. Sin is inextricably linked with it, and so even Christ is forsaken when dying under its judgment. Only His death avails to bring poor helpless man into the life beyond its touch. And He so perfectly and completely met all the issues raised by sin and death that He could sit down in the presence of God—a witness, indeed, how all is removed from before God through that one sacrifice. Upon this depends all the exercise of power to take away sin by judgment. So we may learn from this regulation that the one who enters God's presence must be free from the touch of death, from the defilement it causes. As redeemed by the precious blood of Christ

Section 5 (Chaps. xlv., xlvi.).
Divine government exercised in the apportionment of the land, and the establishment of ordinances for worship and service

1-8) The division of the land in which the Lord's claim is given first place

1. And when ye [a]shall divide by lot the land for an inheritance, ye shall offer a [b]heave offering unto Jehovah, a holy portion of the land: the

[a] ch. 47. 22.
[b] ch. 48. 8-14.

we are made free, and stand identified with the glorious resurrection-life of our Saviour and Great High Priest. Our priestly place as linked with Him is in the power of indissoluble life. The present practical effect of this is to be a godly care to avoid unnecessary contact with what death stands for—sin and its fruits; while when this comes in we must remember what becomes *His* presence, the cleansing which restores the disturbed communion and service. The governing principle is, "I will be sanctified in them that draw near to Me."

The subject of inheritance is next treated. "I am their inheritance ....I am their possession." The priests have no inheritance, no possession in Israel. Compare Num. xviii. 20; Deut. x. 9; xviii. 1. Is this a deprivation? Can it be that to be an heir of God, to have *Him* as one's inheritance and possession? Rather it expresses the highest possible place of nearness and blessing in which what God is becomes the portion of those so blessed. What more than this gives God His rightful place? The whole man is lifted up to Him in whom all his resources are found, from whom all his expectation must come. It reminds us of the Christian place—heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ, who is the appointed Heir of all things, and He in whom we have obtained an inheritance into which we are brought according to the riches of His grace and to the praise of *His* glory. Now we joy in God, and rejoice in hope of *His* glory. Our city is of *His* building, our kingdom is of *His* preparation and giving.

Finally, the food of the priests is virtually all that is offered to Jehovah by the people—His portion becomes their's.

"Because of the anointing, the most holy things were given them to eat, which was a special privilege of the priests. The same thing is true with regard to us. Whatever is precious in the offering of Christ, in every point of view—in His life and in His death; in that bread come down from heaven, contemplated in His life of devotedness and grace here below; and in His death for us—all is the food and nourishment of our souls, in that communion with God in which we ourselves are kept in our priesthood. The priests alone ate the holy things, and they ate them in a holy place. It is only in the sense of the presence of God, and under the efficacy of that oil which is not poured on flesh, that we can truly realize what is precious in the work of Christ" (*Synopsis*, Vol. 1, pp. 261, 262).

Sec. 5.

1. The apportionment of the land and the arrangement of the heave offering, which includes the Sanctuary, we have already considered. Little more need be added here, except to notice that it is the Lord's portion that is specially in view. The tribal portions are stated in chap. xlviii. It is given *first* place, and the order in which the parts of this heave offering are mentioned emphasizes the Lord's

length shall be the length of five and twenty thousand, and the breadth ten thousand:* this shall be holy in all the borders thereof round about. Of this there shall be for the sanctuary five hundred by five hundred, square round about; and fifty cubits for the suburbs thereof round about. And of this measure shalt thou measure the length of five and twenty thousand, and the breadth of ten thousand; and in it shall be the sanctuary, the holy of holies.

* It may be better to read here 20,000 with the LXX. This is preferred by Keil, Davidson, and others. It seems to make ver. 3 more intelligible. "Of this measure [or, out of this measure, i.e., the 25,000x20,000]" they were to measure 25,000x10,000 for the priests, and in this the sanctuary was located. Thus the previously mentioned allotment of 500x500 plus 50 cubits all around was in this portion given to the priests. Ver. 5 tells us to whom the remainder of the 25,000x20,000 was assigned, namely, the Levites who received a portion equal in size to that of the priests. Both these portions are called holy in chap. 48: 10, 14, thus agreeing with chap. 45: 1 if read with the LXX—"This shall be holy [the 25,000x20,000] in all the borders thereof round about." The adjoining possession of the city is not called holy.—(J. B.)

preeminence. That of the priests and Levites comes first, for what has to do with the Sanctuary is of chief importance. This is the more evident since the priests' portion is first mentioned, although the central division of this offering from the land.

Ver. 8 shows how moral considerations govern throughout. The possession given to the Prince has in view the correction of past abuses when those who ruled in Israel appropriated for themselves the possession of others, as in the case of Naboth's vineyard (1 Kings xxi.). Naboth's refusal was based on the Lord's word. His mind as to the change of possession had been given in Num. xxxvi. 7-9. The inheritance was not to remove from tribe to tribe, but each one was to cleave to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers; and provision was made to redeem any possession that had been sold because of poverty (Lev. xxv. 25-28). The book of Ruth affords us precious lessons in this connection. God's care that each of His people should have preserved to him the allotted inheritance, teaches us the unchangeable character of His giving (for all was determined by lot which He disposed), and that there is an individuality which He designs should be preserved in the inheritance. Thus the person and his portion in the land as allotted of God (Num. xxxiii. 54; Josh. xiv. 2; Num. xxxvi. 2, 3; Prov. xvi. 33) are so identified in His mind that no separation is to take place—individuality, distinctness and abiding character are involved in this. Israel lost her inheritance, and the land reverted to Him who had given it and who claims it as His. But Israel is to be brought back, and the land will be again divided by lot according to this vision of Ezekiel. Then shall its apportionment to the redeemed people abide according to the purpose of God.

Abuses such as that of Ahab's were decried by the prophets (Isa. v. 8). Micah pronounces, "Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! When the morning is light they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand. And they covet fields, and

This is a holy portion of the land; it shall be for the priests, the ministers of the sanctuary, who come near to minister to Jehovah, and it shall be a place for their houses, and a holy place for the sanctuary. And five and twenty thousand in length, and ten thousand in breadth, shall be for the Levites, the ministers of the house, for a possession for themselves, for their habitations.

And ye shall appoint [c]the possession of the city five thousand in breadth and five and twenty thousand in length side by side with the holy heave offering: it shall be for the whole house of Israel. [c] ch. 48. 15-20

And the prince shall have [d]his portion on the one side and on the other side of the holy heave offering, and of the possession of the city in front of the holy heave offering, and in front of the possession of the city, from the west side westward, and from the east side eastward; and in length answering to one of the portions from the west border unto the east border. As land it shall be his for a possession in Israel; and [d] ch. 48. 21.

take them by violence; and houses, and take them away; and they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage" (chap. ii. 1, 2). Hosea says, "The princes of Judah are become like those that remove the land-mark" (chap. v. 10; see Deut. vi. 21; xix. 14). The oppression of the ruling classes had grown in evil from the days of Solomon. Ezekiel found the princes of the land "like wolves ravening the prey to shed blood, to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain" (xxii. 27). The prevalence of such oppression finds confirmation from many passages in the prophets, and these show how deep and vile was the corruption—religious, moral, and civic—which destroyed the life of both kingdoms (Israel and Judah) until there was no remedy, the unsparing stroke of judgment must fall. How good to know that the day of restoration shall not be darkened by this evil—"My princes shall no more oppress My people."

The lesson of this history is patent. With departure from God's order and the ways of truth and righteousness which His Word directs, oppression, tyranny, and violence come in as the means to establish man's unrighteousness and its evil brood. This marks the line of Cain at the very beginning, and human history bears its sad and solemn witness to the inevitable consequences of rejecting the revealed knowledge of God, whether in the individual, the family, the Church, or the nation. Under this incubus creation groans, and will continue to do so until He comes whose rod of iron shall smite, breaking in pieces the oppressor, bringing liberty to creation and freeing the nations from the shackles in which sin and Satan's power have bound them.

my princes shall no more oppress my people; but they shall give the land to the house of Israel according to their tribes.

2 (9-12) Justness in practical dealings required by Him whose ways are full of mercy and truth

2. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Let it suffice you, princes of Israel, [e]remove violence and spoil, and execute judgment and justice; take away your exactions from my people, saith the Lord Jehovah. Ye shall have just balances, and a just ephah, and a just bath. The ephah and the bath shall be of one measure, so that the bath shall contain the tenth part of an homer, and the ephah the tenth part of an homer: the measure thereof shall be according to the homer. And the shekel shall be twenty gerahs; twenty shekels, five and twenty shekels, fifteen shekels, shall be your maneh.

e ch. 22. 27. Isa. 1. 23. Jer. 21. 12. 22. 3. Mic. 3. 1-12.

2. In the light of that coming day when the last blow of the oppressor's cruel will shall have fallen, and his terror cease from the earth, the prophet calls for that response in his day which would be in accord with the evident mind of God.

The admonition of these verses reaffirms the ordinances of the Law (Lev. xix. 15, 35, 36; Deut. xxv. 13-15). In the Proverbs we are assured that a false balance, divers weights and measures, are an abomination to the Lord (xi. 1; xx. 10); and by Micah He denounces the prevailing injustice, scant measure, deceitful weights. Amos also exposes the same wickedness (viii. 4-7).

Isaiah v. 10 makes clear that both liquid and dry measure are mentioned by Ezekiel, the bath being the former and the ephah the latter. The homer is made the standard for both, a measure approximately estimated at 11 bushels, or 90 gallons.

As to weights, the shekel is to be that of the Sanctuary, twenty gerahs (Exod. xxx. 13; Lev. xxvii. 25). The latter part of this verse is difficult to understand. The maneh is usually taken to equal fifty shekels; here it seems to be sixty, that is, 20+25+15; but if this is so, the reason for giving it in three parts is not apparent. Kiel inclines to consider the text corrupt; but Hengstenberg and Hitzig suppose a maneh of threefold value, but evidence for this is lacking. If the talent is correctly estimated as 60 maneh, the statement here seems at variance with Exod. xxxviii. 25, 26, an analysis of which gives the following result: 603,550 persons gave each half a shekel. This would give 301,775 shekels, deducting the 1,775 leaves the 300,000, which would be equal to the 100 talents, these being taken as sixty manehs each, requires each maneh to equal fifty shekels (100x60x50=300,000). This is true of the later Jewish weight system. The passage remains obscure. Some critics suggest the adoption of the LXX as read in the Alex. MS., "Five (shekels) shall be five, and ten shekels ten, and fifty shekels shall be your maneh," meaning that all shall be genuine, of equal and full weight. This at least is in accord with the moral significance of the context.

This insistance upon judgment, justice, honest measure and weight, may serve to remind us of the character of the Millennial age. It

3 (13 ch. 46: 15) The materials for, and the order of, worship.
3 (13-17) The gifts of the people

3. [1]This is the heave offering which ye shall offer: the sixth part of an ephah out of a homer of wheat, and ye shall give the sixth part of an ephah out of a homer of barley; and the set portion of oil, by the bath of oil, shall be the tenth part of the bath out of the cor, [which is] a homer of ten baths; for ten baths are an homer; and one lamb out of the flock, out of two hundred,

is the time when righteousness shall reign and all conform to the divine standards (Ps. xlv.; Isa. xi. 1-5; xxxii. 1-5, 16-19; xxxiii. 5, 6; lx. 17, 18; lxi. 10, 11; Jer. xxxiii. 15; Dan. ix. 24).

3. Here what relates to the worship of the people—their gifts, the feasts, and other regulations—is given in seven sub-sections. First, we considered the place of the Sanctuary (vers. 1-8); then ways of holiness and truth enjoined (vers. 9-12); and now the order of worship, the manner of approach to God. This teaches us that right ways in practical life are the garments which must first invest those who are to be worshipers. The removal of evil and the following of righteousness must characterize those who offer their gifts to God. Of this the fine white linen in which the priests are clothed for service is the symbol. Apart from the accompaniment of obedience and practical righteousness, God can take no pleasure in mere outward observances and lip worship (Isa. i. 10-17; Matt. xv. 7-9). He desires mercy and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings (Hos. vi. 6). Obedience is better than sacrifice. God looks upon the heart, His searching eye penetrates the mask of outward appearance, and what He desires of His people is that they should do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with Him (Mic. vi. 7). This order, namely that of practical righteousness preceding activity in worship, fits well with this as a fifth section—the number that speaks of responsibility to maintain and be exercised in godliness as under the government of God with whom relationship has been established through grace. This principle holds good for us as well as Israel. This the Epistles abundantly teach. The marvelous grace which they reveal as ours only obligates us to answer the more fully to the righteous and holy requirements of Him whose love and grace we now know. The hands that are lifted up to Him are to be holy hands, the sacrifices of our lips confessing His name are to be yielded up from hearts true in their purpose for His glory, the out-breathing of lives yielded up to obedience in sincerity and truth—our bodies presented as living sacrifices.

[1] Let us now consider the various features of the order of worship. First we have the gifts of the people. These consist of wheat, barley, oil, and lambs, in the measure and proportion stated. All is given to the Prince from all the people of the land, and he is to supply the various offerings at the yearly and monthly feasts, on the sabbaths, and in all the solemnities. These gifts have their significance. As to the lamb little remark is needed, we are so familiar with it as the type of Christ, the Lamb of God. Oil is the well-known symbol of the Holy Spirit; this is associated with the oblation of an ephah presented with the various sacrifices. The cereals too we

from the well watered pastures of Israel; for a meal offering and for a burnt offering and for peace offerings, to make atonement for them, saith the Lord Jehovah. All the people of the land shall be [held] to this heave offering for the prince in Israel. And it shall be the prince's part [to give] the burnt offering and the meal offering and the drink offerings, in the feasts, and on the new moons, and on the sabbaths, in all the appointed times of the house of Israel: he shall prepare the sin offering and the meal offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings, to make atonement for the house of Israel.

think of in relation to Christ, the Bread of Life (wheat), while also the food of the poor and humble, to be which He Himself entered into humiliation (barley). Barley was, and still is, to some extent, the food of the poor (Ruth ii. 17; 2 Kings iv. 42; John vi. 9, 13). Its connection with Gideon makes it a type of those who are despised and of lowly condition. Then wheat is the figure used by the Lord in reference to His people, those really His whom He will gather into His barn. It thus becomes a symbol of what is true and genuine as the result of the divine work. Such alone are acceptable to God. On the other hand the barley may suggest the humble station of those who become God's people, and the lowly place they must take to enter into blessing with Him. To be converted man must become as a little child. It is to the babes that the Father makes His revelation of the Son. To the poor the gospel is preached, and "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Not many mighty, not many noble are called; but the despised and those of no account in the eyes of the world become God's peculiar treasure.

But aside from these suggestions, this heave-offering from all the people teaches the recognition of God's goodness and bounteous giving from the lowest to the highest, from the least to the greatest form of blessing (barley, wheat); realized in the power of the Spirit (oil), and redemption (the lamb). This should be true of all God's people, whether the form of blessing be earthly or heavenly.

Terumah, the word for heave-offering, means a sacrifice or gift offered up, that is, as raised or lifted up in presentation for acceptance, and as such devoted to Jehovah's service. In the Law the right shoulder is the usual heave-offering, the type of service, and that the most efficient, for the right shoulder is the one best able to bear the burden. It is the term applied to the gifts of Israel for the tabernacle, and in that connection we learn what God's mind is as to the inward state of those who offer: it is heart-willingness, the spirit of being wholly yielded up to God in devoted service, the inner attitude answering to the outward act as the gift is heaved or lifted up. Here in Ezekiel it is specially connected with the oblation which accompanies the sacrifices mentioned in these regulations (xlv. 24, 25; xlvi. 5, 7, 11, 14, 15); and then with two forms of offering, the burnt and peace-offerings, the latter being always mentioned in the plural, which thus emphasizes the ideas of thanksgiving and fellowship so

2 (18-25): The yearly feasts

2 Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: In the first [month], on the first of the month, thou shalt take a young bullock without blemish, and thou shalt cleanse the sanctuary. And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin offering, and put it upon the door-posts of the house, and upon the four corners of the ledge of the altar, and upon the posts of the gate of the inner court. So they shall do also on the seventh of the month for every one that erreth, and for the simple; and ye shall make atonement for the house.

prominent in those offerings (Lev., *Notes*.). Since the gift of lambs is only mentioned in the heave-offering of the people, and later in the sacrifices of the sabbaths and new moons and the daily burnt offering (xlvi. 3-5, 13-15), it would seem that the people are particularly associated with these occasions. We may conclude that the other animals of sacrifice, the bullocks, rams, and he-goats, are of the Prince's own providing, though in doing so he doubtless fills a representative place. In one case this is specifically stated (ver. 22). Yet that the people are identified with all these sacrifices may be seen in that an oblation accompanies each supplied out of the cereal-offering of all the people. The sacrifices for the purgation of the House (vers. 18-20) appear rather to be the responsibility of the priests, though the indefiniteness of the address—"Thou shalt"—may leave it open to question.

2 Now the yearly feasts are stated; and first the offerings to cleanse and atone for the House. Two occasions are mentioned, on the first and seventh of the first month. This is a remarkable deviation from the Levitical order. The great day of atonement is not mentioned, and these two occasions in the first month seem to take its place. The bullock only is offered, whereas in Lev. 16 there are the bullock and two goats, as well as the two rams for burnt-offerings. Yet the object in view is similar, cleansing and atonement respecting the House and those who err. We hear of no ark or mercy-seat, as of old, upon which the blood is sprinkled; but the blood is put upon the posts of the House, upon the altar, and the posts of the gate of the inner court. Which gate is not specified, though most likely the north gate was meant, for here the work of preparing the sacrifices took place.

The omission of not only the day of atonement, but also the offering of firstfruits, Pentecost, and the blowing of trumpets, is significant. In fact, at the time to which the vision of Ezekiel applies, all these will have been accomplished. The resurrection of Christ, the formation of the Church, and the regathering of Israel answer to them, while all that the day of atonement typified, including its application to Israel (Lev., *Notes*, p. 344), will have also found its fulfilment.

Evidently these sacrifices which open the year cannot be considered in the same light as those of old. These point back to the basic work of redemption at the Cross, as those of the past pointed forward to it—those anticipated it, these memorialize it. At the same

In the first [month], and the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have [f]the passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten. And upon that day shall the prince offer for himself, and for all the people of the land, a bullock for a sin offering. And the seven days of the feast he shall offer a burnt offering to Jehovah, seven bullocks and seven rams without blemish daily for the seven days; and a he-goat daily for a sin offering. And he shall prepare a meal offering, an ephah for a bullock, and an ephah for a ram, and a hin of oil for an ephah.

[f] Ex. 12. 14-20; Lev. 23. 5-8; Num. 28. 16, 25.

In the [g]seventh [month], on the fifteenth day of the month, at the feast, shall he do the like seven days, according to the sin offering, according to the burnt offering, and according to the meal offering, and according to the oil.

[g] Lev. 23. 34; Nu. 29. 12-40.

3 (xlvi. 1-7): The sabbaths and new moons

3 Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: The gate of the inner court that looketh toward the east shall be shut the six working days; but on the [h]sabbath

[h] Nu. 28. 9, 10.

time they constitute a continual reminder of God's holiness, which must take notice of the least departure.

Next in order comes the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread. Here there are also marked differences from the Mosaic order, which required for each of the seven days two bullocks, one ram, and seven lambs, and an oblation of fine flour mingled with oil, graded for each (Num. xxviii. 19-21). Ezekiel requires seven bullocks and seven rams for each of the seven days, and no lambs. In both cases there is also the daily sin-offering of one he-goat. The oblation is one ephah for a bullock, and one for each ram, and an hin of oil for an ephah. In addition there is on the first day a bullock for a sin offering for the Prince and all the people, a feature not included in Numbers. The significance of this feast has been fully given in its place (Exodus, *Notes*), and in considering the offerings in Leviticus the spiritual meaning of the animals of sacrifice has been adequately stated. Here, then, let it suffice to notice that the offerings required are much richer than under the Law. This emphasizes the fulness of obedience in service (bullock) and consecration (ram). The omission of the lambs would concentrate attention upon the one lamb of this feast—the Passover lamb, and so upon Christ, the Lamb of God.

The third, and last, yearly feast is that of tabernacles. Referring again to Numbers (xxix. 12-34) we find here an entire change, and on the whole a simplified ritual, since it is to be the same as at the previous feast of unleavened bread. The eighth day appears omitted also, for its significance finds fulfilment in the establishment of the kingdom with its glorious new beginning of righteousness, peace, and rest for Israel, the nations, and creation itself.

3 The ordinances which relate to the weekly and monthly feasts—sabbaths and new moons—are now given. In connection with them

day it shall be opened, and on the day of the [1]the new moon it shall be opened. And the prince shall enter by the way of the porch of the gate from without, and shall stand by the post of the gate, and the priests shall offer his burnt offering and his peace offerings, and he shall worship at the threshold of the gate; then he shall go forth: but the gate shall not be shut until the evening. And the people of the land shall worship at the door of the gate before Jehovah on the sabbaths and on the new moons. And the burnt offering that the prince shall present unto Jehovah on the sabbath day shall be six lambs without blemish, and a ram without blemish. And the meal offering shall be an ephah for the ram, and the meal offering for the lambs as he is able to give, and a hin of oil for an ephah. And on the day of the new moon, a young bullock without blemish, and six lambs and a ram: they shall be without blem-

[1] Nu. 28. 11-15.

a distinctive feature appears in regard to the east inner gate. This is closed for the six working days, but opened on the sabbath and the day of the new moon. At this open gate Prince and people worship (vers. 2, 3). The Prince is distinguished by alone having permission to enter its porch, and standing there to worship during the offering of his sacrifices. This brings these acts of worship into line with the great altar, and the entrance of the House, immediately before the indwelling glory.

Again comparing Num. xxviii. 9-15 we see there are marked differences.

NUMBERS	EZEKIEL
Sabbath: Two lambs, with their oblation of two-tenths parts of fine flour mingled with oil, and the required drink offering.	*Sabbath*: Six lambs, one ram, with an oblation of an ephah for the ram, and that for the lambs is left to the Prince's generosity: and oil, a hin for an ephah.
New Moon: Two bullocks, one ram, seven lambs, with their graded oblations. One goat for a sin-offering.	*New Moon*: One bullock, one ram, six lambs, with an oblation of an ephah for a bullock, and for the ram, and for the lambs according to the Prince's generosity: and oil, a hin for an ephah.

This new order of sacrifices gives greater prominence to the sabbath, while the greatly increased oblation in all cases may signify the increased fruitfulness and prosperity of those Millennial days; and the emphasis on the sabbath suggests that what it means for

ish. And he shall offer a meal offering, an ephah for the bullock, and an ephah for the ram, and for the lambs according to what his hand shall attain unto; and a hin of oil for an ephah.

4 (8-10): The manner of entrance and exit

[8]And when the prince cometh in, he shall come in by the way of the porch of the gate, and he shall go out by the way thereof. And when the people of the land come in before Jehovah at the appointed times, he that entereth in by the way of the north gate to worship shall go out by the way of the south gate; and he that entereth by the way of the south gate shall go out by the way of the north gate: he shall not return by the way of the gate by which he came in, but shall go out straight before him. And the prince shall come in in the midst of them, when they come in; and when they go out, they shall go out [together].

the earth and creation is then blessedly realized in the righteousness, peace, rest and abundant blessing of the kingdom. The enlarged oblations which answer to the meal-offerings of old, and are typical of Christ's Person in its human perfection, may well speak of the enhanced appreciation of Him in that day when He will no longer be One having no beauty that He should be desired. Of Him then will it be sung, "Thou art fairer far than the sons of men: grace is poured into Thy lips...Thy throne, O God, is forever and aye; the sceptre of Thy kingdom is an even sceptre." The larger proportion of the oil intimates the greater fulness of the Spirit, and so of apprehension. The offerings are increased threefold, for there is full realization through redemption of the victory of good over evil (6) in the sabbath-keeping of that coming day.

As to the differences on the feast of the new moon we can say little. The monthly return of the moon speaks of constant renewal under the good hand of God, and that of course of the creature, weak and nothing in itself, ever dependent upon the sufficiency and ministry of the Creator; like the moon, in itself nothing, and getting all its light from the great source of light and power, the sun. It has its special reference to Israel, but yields its lessons also for the Church and the individual (Numbers, *Notes*, p. 498). The bullock and ram must still speak of service and consecration, but in the victory of known redemption.

[8] Certain directions as to the times of public worship follow. First, the Prince cannot enter the inner court. He comes into the porch of the east gate, which is at the outer end toward the court of general assemblage, and goes out the same way. This shows that he is not privileged to pass through the gate.

The people are to enter by one gate and leave by the opposite one. Only two gates are available for them, the north and south, for the outer east gate was perpetually closed. This rule of the Sanctuary is, in effect, "Let all things be done fittingly and in order" (1 Cor. xiv. 40). We have referred to the meaning of the north when con-

5 (11): The regulations as to the meal-offering

5 And on the feast days, and at the appointed times, the meal offering shall be an ephah for a bullock, and an ephah for a ram; and for the lambs as he is able to give, and a hin of oil for an ephah.

6 (12): The Prince's free-will offering

6 And when the prince shall offer a free-will burnt offering or free-will peace offerings unto Jehovah, the gate that looketh toward the east shall be open for him, and he shall offer his burnt offering and his peace offerings as he did on the sabbath day; and he shall go out again, and the gate shall be shut after he has gone out.

sidering that gate. The south affords another lesson. To go southward is to go toward Egypt—the land of the serpent, with its lure for the flesh, and its bondage too, though with this may be found a measure of ease and pleasure which gratifies the natural man. Abram travelled there to escape the famine and the exercise of dependence upon God alone. We are kept by His power through faith, not sight, but that means a path of both exercise and discipline. Relaxing influences are found in the south; they may be pleasant for a season, but there too we experience the burning heat which parches the earth and destroys fruitfulness. "How many have found the hot breath of worldly prosperity the destruction of spiritual fruit." In the tabernacle it is suggestive to find the table of the showbread on the north side, for the truth of communion is what we need and get there, where also we learn how through sacrifice judgment is forever removed so that our darkness is turned to light. But on the south side of the tabernacle, opposite the table, the candlestick was placed, for as we walk in the light of the Spirit we do not fulfil the lusts of the flesh—the south does not attract. Instead we bear the fruit of the Spirit, of which the *motif* used in designing the candlestick plainly speaks. Spiritually speaking, we need to pass through both the north and the south gates, for thus the altar and the House come into view and their lessons are impressed upon us.

5 The oblation, or meal-offering, is now specially emphasized by repeating its measure in relation to the sacrifices. Typical of Christ in His perfect humanity it brings Him before us as the Son of Man, the One in whom full, perfect and holy Manhood is united with full Deity, for in Him the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily. It is fitting that that which speaks of Him in this character should receive prominence in these visions of Ezekiel, for they refer to the time of the kingdom of the Son of Man, when He as that will take up His great power and reign, possessing Himself of the inheritance of which He is the appointed Heir.

6 This next ordinance shows the distinctive place of the Prince. The east gate is opened to him whenever he presents his freewill offering. It seems clear that he fills a representative place, and this being so may not his special privilege suggests the preeminent place of Israel as compared with other nations who come up to the mountain of Jehovah's House?

7 (13-15): The daily burnt-offering

7 And thou shalt [j]daily offer a burnt offering unto Jehovah, a yearling lamb without blemish: morning by morning shalt thou prepare it. And thou shalt prepare a meal offering with it morning by morning, a sixth part of an ephah, and a third part of a hin of oil, to moisten the fine flour: a meal offering unto Jehovah continually by a perpetual ordinance. And they shall offer the lamb, and the meal offering, and the oil, morning by morning for a continual burnt offering.

[j] Ex. 29.38. Nu. 28.3.

4 (xlvi.16-18): Warning against oppression

4. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: If the prince give a gift unto any of his sons, it shall be his inheritance, it shall belong to his sons: it shall be their possession by inheritance. But if he give a gift of his inheritance to one of his servants, it shall be his until [k]the year of liberty; then it shall return to the prince; to his sons alone shall his inheritance remain. And the prince shall not take of the people's inheritance to thrust them by oppression out of their possession: he shall give his sons an inheritance out of his own possession: that my people be not scattered every man from his possession.

[k] Lev. 25.10.

5 (xlvi.19-24): Guarding the holy things

5. Then he brought me through the passage which was at the side of the gate, into the holy chambers which were for the priests, which looked toward the north; and, behold, there was a place there at the end westward. And he said unto me, This is the place where the priests shall boil the trespass offering and the sin offering; where they shall bake the meal offering: that they bring them not forth unto the outer court to sanctify the people.

7 Finally, the daily burnt-offering is prescribed. In contrast to the Levitical order it is offered in the morning only. The oblation is increased from one-tenth to one-sixth, and the oil from one-quarter of a hin to one-third.

4. Further warning against oppression is given, and the purpose expressed that each preserve his own inheritance. This latter feature is guarded in the regulation concerning the division of the Prince's inheritance. It must remain in his family, so that a portion given to a servant reverts to him in the year of jubilee, or liberty.

5. In this concluding part we are told about the kitchens for the priests and for the people. The care to keep what is priestly from the people is meant surely to maintain a sense on both sides—with the priests and people—of the sanctity of the service of Jehovah, so guarding against all undue familiarity, as a result of which in the past so much had crept in to defile the courts of Jehovah's house.

And he brought me forth unto the outer court, and caused me to pass by the four corners of the court; and behold, in every corner of the court there was a court. In the four corners of the court there were courts enclosed, forty [cubits] long and thirty broad: these four corner courts were of one measure. And there was a range round about in them, round about those four, and it was made with boiling places under the ranges round about. And he said unto me, These are the boiling houses where the ministers of the house shall boil the sacrifice of the people.

Section 6 (Chap. xlvii. 1-12.)
The victory over curse

And he brought me back to the door of the house; and behold, [1]waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the front of the house was eastward. And the waters came down from under, from the right side of the house, south of the altar. And he brought me out by

[1] Ps 46. 4. Joel 3. 18, Zech. 14. 8. cf. Jer. 2. 13; 17. 13. Isa. 35. 6, 7; 41. 18; 43. 19; 44. 3. Rev. 22. 1.

Sec. 6.

Brought back to the door of the House the prophet sees waters issue from under its threshold. They flow from the House on the right side, that is, the south, because the prophet stands facing east, or looking toward the altar, so that the south is on his right hand. On the south of the altar he sees the stream flowing eastward. The two east gates being closed he is brought out of the north gate, and led around outside the wall of the outer court to the east gate, and there the water was flowing out on the right side.

The stream is then four times measured at successive points of 1,000 cubits, so that at 4,000 cubits the depth was too great for a man to pass through.

The prophet now traverses the banks of this river, and finds both banks clothed with a luxuriant growth of trees of fadeless leaf and never-failing fruit, supplying medicine and food.

The easterly direction is again noticed (ver. 8), and in addition Ezekiel is told that the river flows into the Dead Sea, healing its waters so that they teem with life, for "everything shall live whither the river cometh." Its waters are waters of life issuing from the Sanctuary of the living God. Only the marshes and pools are not healed; they are reserved as a means of supplying salt.

This whole picture is one that inspires the mind and heart with the bright anticipation of that blessedness of life which will characterize the Millennial earth. Then creation will bear witness to the power and glory of God in a way man has never known since the fall. But let us range a little through the fields of Scripture, for the lesson of these life-giving waters. This symbol of the river meets us at the beginning in the Garden, and we find it again in

> the way of the gate northward, and led me around outside, unto the outer gate towards [the gate] that looketh eastward; and, behold, waters ran out on the right side. When the man went forth eastward, a line was in his hand; and he measured

the glory-scene which closes the inspired volume. Between these far distant points the references are numerous, teaching us lessons of blessing from God and fellowship with Him.

We go to Eden. There are its four rivers. It will repay us, however, to consider a little the whole setting of the wonderful second chapter of Genesis. It furnishes us with features of the Millennial age, which, as the porch to the House, introduces the eternal state, but which being this bears the character of that to which it thus belongs. These visions of Ezekiel, if not giving us the seventh day in the dispensational order, certainly refer to the sixth, and that leads into the sabbath-keeping which remains to the people of God. In the order of creation the sixth day has witnessed the completion of God's work. Suitably it closes with the Head of all set in the place of Lordship over the new scene of blessing. In this we have a type of our blessed Lord, God's Man, to whom all has been subjected, and who will bring all into subjection to Himself. In beautiful sequence to this the seventh day comes in—the day of God's rest. The eternal rest will result from the work of subjugation accomplished by the Second Man, and so He is called "the Father of Eternity" (Isa. ix. 6, *New Trans.*). Of that final rest this first sabbath of the re-fashioned, re-furnished earth is a type. Notice that from this day is omitted the formula constantly repeated on the previous days, "Evening was, and morning was." Is it not as though God would have us understand that in His thought this day should have no end? Blessed be God, that final day will endure eternally. Precious, too, it is to note that on this day God is not occupied with work, or the work done, but with *the day*. He blesses *it*, and sanctifies *it*. Blessed intimation that the eternal day shall have the blessing of God resting upon it with no element of disturbance to intrude.

Three things are mentioned. First, God ended His work — the dawning of the seventh day brought with it the end of His labor. Second, God rested; this is what the day brought in for Him—rest. Third, God blessed and sanctified it. The blessing of the day can alone consist in the delight and satisfaction of God concerning the accomplished work which thus makes rest possible. It is sanctified, in that it is set apart to the enjoyment of this delight and satisfaction. Who shall say what the measure of these things is to be in that sabbath-keeping of God into which His people shall enter with Him?

Apart from redemption we know man could never enter into and enjoy God's rest. This finds illustration in Israel, who as the one nation brought into relation to God on the ground of redemption, is commanded to observe the seventh day—the sabbath, the observance of which is associated with the thought of redemption as typified in the sacrificial system, and by means of priesthood-relation between God and the redeemed. All this finds its fulfilment, both as to redemption and priesthood, in the Lord Jesus. Thus the true and

> a thousand cubits and he caused me to pass through the waters: the waters were to the ankles. Again he measured a thousand, and caused me to pass through the waters: the waters were to the knees. And he measured a thousand and caused me to pass through: the waters were to the loins.

final rest of God, of which Israel's sabbath was a type, is now sure of fulfilment, and secured for God's redeemed people.

A new subject begins in ver. 4 of Genesis ii., that of the relationships in which the new head of creation is placed, in all of which we see him to be a figure of Christ. We see Him here as Heir of all and Ruler over all, with His consort, the Church, of whom the woman is a type; yet may we not also see here a picture of the Son of Man and His kingdom? Following what is plainly introductory, showing how God has acted in view of man, we get the account of the garden—its location and planting, then the river and its parts (of special interest to us now); and finally man's place, service and privileges in the garden. Many details might profitably engage our attention, but we must confine ourselves to noting that the garden is located "eastward *in* Eden." Eden means *delight;* and the east suggests the glory of God. Here too is "every tree pleasant to the sight and good for food"—fullest ministry to satisfy and refresh. In the midst of this the river and its four branches fill an important place. Does it not suggest the ministry of the Spirit from whom alone rivers of living water can flow, and that in a universal character, for all the creation (the four parts), such as shall mark that day to which this whole scene points, including that of Ezekiel's vision, as we have seen? Indeed, Israel can look forward to blessings of the Spirit such as never yet enjoyed. God will put His Spirit within them (Ezek. xxxvi. 27), and pour it out upon them collectively (Isa. xliv. 3), when their time of trial and desolation is over (Isa. xxxii. 15), never to return (Ezek. xxxix. 29). Nor will this blessing be confined to Israel, as Joel plainly predicts, telling us also the time when the outpouring of the Spirit will take place. It will be after God has interposed on behalf of His people, overthrowing the aggressive power of the north, and restoring its fruitfulness to the land. If Eden's rivers then speak of the Spirit and His ministry, let us see what we may learn from a study of them. Should they not teach us the character of His ministry? That we know has for its subject Christ and His things, so this is what comes before us.

Pison, "increase," is first; it compasses the land of Havilah, "anguish," or "travail," where the gold is which is good. Gold is the symbol of God's glory. Increase for eternity has been accomplished by Christ through the encompassment of the land of anguish —the birth-pains of the new creation of which He is the Beginning. There, nevertheless, has been found in all its wealth the glory of God. And if faith now can say, "And the gold of that land is good," how much more in the eternal day! It is added, "There is bdellium and the onyx-stone." The Hebrew word for bdellium means "in trouble," and that for onyx-stone, "their recompense." Here perchance we get a hint of faith's connection with the sufferings of Christ and the glories which follow. It is given to those who find their increase through the anguish of Christ, not only to believe

> And he measured a thousand: it was a river that I could not pass through; for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed through. And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen [this]? And he led me and brought me back to the bank of the river. And

but to suffer for Him; but to suffer leads to being glorified with Him, and so there is both the trouble and the recompense. Both of them bring us in their way into a knowledge of the glory of God.

The second Edenic river is Gihon, "the bringer-forth." It surrounds the whole land of Cush, "terror," or "black." Christ is our Deliverer from the land of our terror and blackness. God in His mercy thus brings out of darkness into marvelous light. If in the first river we read the lesson of the cross from the Godward side—God glorified in Christ—here in the second the enemy is in view. But he is a smitten enemy, all his power has been encompassed, he is annulled, captivity led captive, and now nothing can separate God's redeemed people from His love in Christ Jesus, their Bringer-forth. Thus we can speak of being delivered from the authority of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love. To this end Christ first entered the land of terror and blackness, and came forth as the firstborn from among the dead. Those who believe share in His triumph.

Hiddekel, the third, means "thorn of God." It "goeth in front of Assyria," "a footstep," or "to go forward," and in front lies the thorn of God—the thorn is the significant sign of the curse, which God Himself must bring in because of sin. How man in his every forward move as independent of God, following the inclination of his own will, guided by his own wisdom, meets with the thorn in such a path. Blight falls in some form upon even his greatest and highest achievements, for close by the gourd under which he seeks rest and in which he greatly rejoices, there is the worm which causes it to wither. Then the sultry east wind blows, and man faints. The thorn of God is there. To this creation is subject, and groans. But, thank God, there is deliverance. There is One who has worn the crown of thorn, but who is now crowned with glory and honor. Into His hand all power and judgment has been committed. He has made peace by the blood of the cross. He will remove the blight of sin from creation, and as the Sun of Righteousness chase away all the shadows of its long night, and under His wings of healing grace and power gather all things together in one. Viewing the lesson here from another angle, we may say that because sin and man's ruin brought in the curse, it must be borne, the judgment involved be fully endured, if God's purposes are to go forward to ultimate success. Christ has accomplished the needed work and all is assured. Then it is no wonder that in the fourth place we have Euphrates, "fruitfulness." This is the grand result which shall be made good throughout the length and breadth of the universe.

Are not the features of this picture again before us in Ezekiel? From the house filled with God's glory the river flows out, past the altar of sacrifice where the work of judgment has been accomplished, down to the sea of death, removing its curse, bringing fruitfulness and life where barrenness and death had reigned, for the

when I returned, behold, on the bank of the river were very many [m]trees on the one side and on the other. And he said unto me, These waters issue forth toward the east district, and go down into the [n]Arabah, and go into the sea; when they are brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass that every living thing which moveth, whithersoever the double stream shall come, shall live; and there shall

m ver. 12. cf. Rev. 22. 2.

n Or, plain. cf. Deut. 3. 17; 4. 49. Josh. 3. 16.

Deliverer has come out of Zion, and creation sings its Hallelujah. At 4,000 cubits the waters are to swim in—4x10x10x10, the creature brought into the power and blessing of the full manifestation of the divine order as it relates to God and man (the threefold ten).*

These suggestions may help us to see how important a place the rivers fill in instruction as to the blessings of God. But let us go on. We read of the Israelites after the Red Sea crossing, "They came to Elim; and twelve springs of water were there, and seventy palm trees; and they encamped there by the waters." By the way we must pass the bitter waters of Marah—sorrow and trial which the cut down tree cast in makes sweet, but rest is found at Elim where the waters flow, bringing forth abundant fruit and shade realized under the government of God (12=4x3), fully manifest in creative goodness meeting creature weakness, which as realized and bringing us into dependence upon God assures the creature's fullest blessing. Again in this we have the testimony (2) given to God's mastery over evil, the victory of good (6), through His manifest power to bless (12=6x2). Such waters are sweet and unfailing in the joy and provision they supply.

Twice the waters flow from the smitten rock, bringing life and refreshment to Israel's host. On the first occasion the lesson is plainly that of the Cross, by which alone all spiritual blessing is realized. The second time when Moses was told to take the rod of Aaron that budded and speak to the rock, we get a beautiful type of the resources of Christ in resurrection priesthood, through the exercise of which the living waters flow—flow, as we may say, from the throne upon which He sits. No second smiting was needed. In this Moses erred. The one Sacrifice suffices, and in the power of its abiding efficacy, and of life out of death, the waters now flow down from the Sanctuary where He is enthroned. These are still waters beside which He leads, and where the green pastures of blessed ministry and fellowship are found for those who know the Lord to

* In the concluding section of Genesis 2, do we not get a type of all the redeemed creation ranged under the headship of Christ? First we have the counsel of God (ver. 18), then all the animal creation is brought to Adam and he gives them their names. All creation comes into relation to its head, Adam, the figure of Him who was to come, God's Man, the appointed Heir of all things, and the One who as Last Adam is set far above all principality and power and every name named. Notice there are three families mentioned: the cattle, the fowl of the heaven, and the beast of the field. May not this speak to us first of Israel, of whom in the prophets, the domesticated animal is the type; then of heavenly powers; and finally the Gentile nations, of whom the beasts of the field are used in a typical way in Scripture. Lastly we have the man's special helpmeet, suggesting the Church, the Bride of Christ.

be a very great multitude of fish; for these waters shall come thither, and the [waters of the sea] shall be healed; and everything shall live whithersoever the river cometh. And it shall come to pass that fishers shall stand upon it; from En-gedi even unto En-eglaim shall be a place for the spreading of nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of °the great sea, exceeding many. But its marshes and its pools shall not be healed: they shall be given up to salt.

° ch. 48. 28. Num. 34. 6. Josh. 23. 4.

be their Shepherd. He will be so known to Israel, and among the nations in that day to which Ezekiel refers.

Then as the Shepherd of Israel He will feed His flock (Isa. xl. 11: Ezek. xxxvii. 24), for they will no longer refuse "the waters of Shiloah which flow softly" (Isa. viii. 6). Of that day no more beautiful description than that of Isa. xxxv. could be given. "The wilderness and the dry land shall be gladdened; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose...for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and torrents in the desert" ("plain," or Arabah, the same word as in Ezek. xlvii. 8). It is then that "judgment shall roll down as waters, and righteousness as an overflowing stream" (Amos v. 24). Jerusalem shall be a quiet habitation, for there "the mighty Jehovah will be for us a place of rivers" (Isa. xxxiii. 21, *New Trans.*).

These and other passages in the prophets show how the symbol of water is used to express the fulness of blessing and fellowship with God. It is also used of God Himself. Jehovah charges His people with having forsaken Him, "the fountain of living waters" (Jer. ii. 13; xvii. 13). And the figure in this connection finds beautiful application in the words of the prophet, "Blessed is the man that confideth in Jehovah, and whose confidence Jehovah is. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out its roots by the stream, and he shall not see when heat cometh, but his leaf shall be green; and in the year of drought he shall not be careful, neither shall he cease to yield fruit" (Jer. xvii. 7, 8).

In relation to the blessing and glory of the days toward which Ezekiel looks we read, "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall shepherd them, and shall lead them to fountains of waters of life, and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes" (Rev. vii. 17; xxi. 6; see *Notes*). Indeed the last passage mentioned gives almost the last gospel invitation in the Book of God, and this may well remind us of how this figure of living water is used to express the precious fulness and permanence of God's grace in His Son (John iv.), while he who receives from His hand this gift of God becomes a vessel from which shall flow "rivers of living water." "This He said concerning the Spirit, which they that believe on Him were about to receive" (John vii. 37-39). Thus we have life from God in the blessed fulness of His grace and in the power of the Holy Spirit presented to us under this figure of water. Truly, it issues out of the Sanctuary, yea, it is the outflow of God, of Christ, of the Spirit. These divine Persons are the Fountains from whence such waters flow, and of whose very being they partake, bringing the recipient into the fulness of God. However true it is that only the

> By the river, upon its bank, on the one side and on the other, shall grow all trees for food, whose leaf shall not wither nor their fruit fail: it shall bring forth new fruit every month, for its waters issue out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for food, and the leaf thereof for medicine.

blessing and glory of Christianity, and so of what is heavenly, fully express the preciousness of this figure, it is also true that the coming age of earth's jubilee will enjoy, in the divinely granted measure, like blessing and fellowship in the power of the Spirit and His ministry as then poured out (Joel ii. 28, 29; Isa. xliv. 3; Ezek. xviii. 31; xxxvii. 1, 14; xxxix. 29).

We must not forget that water is also a figure of the Word of God. So the Lord uses it in John iii. (see *Notes*, pp. 492-494), in John xiii., where it is indispensable for communion. In the laver of the Tabernacle we read the lesson of its important relation to all priestly activity (Exodus, *Notes*, p. 240).

This general testimony of Scripture helps us to see the significance and importance of the river which flows from the Sanctuary in Ezekiel's vision. These thoughts find confirmation as we consider the results of it reaching the Dead Sea—figure as that is of utter barrenness, death, and judgment. The inflow of these living waters so changes all, that life and fruitfulness fill the place of curse and death. Only the stream flowing out from the glory of God, by way of the altar of sacrifice, can transform the wilderness into a garden, overcoming the havoc wrought by sin. Within the limits of the purpose of God "there is nothing—nothing too sunken, too useless, too doomed—but by the grace of God it may be redeemed, lifted and made rich with life." The chief of sinners has been saved, and he is now in glory. Certainly Israel, new-born and blessed with the outflowing stream of life in the Spirit's power, will be as different in her moral and spiritual condition from that of her past history as will be the future physical change of the Dead Sea and its surroundings compared with that of its present existing state.*

Yet the past must be remembered, the work of judgment must not be forgotten: and this will serve its own purpose. "But its marshes and its pools shall not be healed; they shall be given up to salt"—the witness of the inflexible righteousness and changeless holiness of the divine nature, acting in both preservative and sanctifying power. Doubtless from this source of supply will come, as of old, the salt used in the temple service.† God's grace is seasoned with salt—the preservative energy of the divine will.

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* See Appendix.

† "The salt of the Dead Sea was anciently much in request for use in the temple service. It was preferred before all other kinds for its reputed effect in hastening the combustion of the sacrifice, while it diminished the unpleasant smell of the burning flesh. Its deliquescent character (due to the chlorides of alkaline earths it contains) is also noticed in the Talmud" — (Smith's Bible Dictionary).

Section 7 (Chaps. xlvii. 13.—xlviii.).
The perfect Land, for "the Lord is there."

1(xlvii. 13-21: The boundaries of the land.

1. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: This shall be the border whereby ye shall allot the land as an inheritance according to the twelve tribes of Israel: [p]Joseph shall have two portions. And ye shall inherit it, one as well as another; [the land] concerning which I lifted up my hand [q]to give it to your fathers; and this land shall fall to you for an [r]inheritance.

And this shall be the border of the land: toward the north side, from the great sea by the way of [s]Hethlon unto the entering in of [t]Zedad; [u]Hamath, [v]Berothah, Sibraim which is between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath; Hazar-hatticon, which is by the border of Hauran. And the border from the sea shall be [w]Hazar-enan, the border of Damascus, and the north northward to the border of Hamath: this is the north side. And on the east side between Hauran and Damascus, and Gilead and the land of Israel, the Jordan, from the border unto the east sea, shall ye measure it: this is the east side. And the south side southward, from [x]Tamar to [y]the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, by the torrent, unto the great sea: this is the south side southward. And the west side shall be the great sea from the border as far as over against the entering into Hamath: this is the west side. And ye shall divide this land unto you according to the tribes of Israel.

p ch. 48. 4, 5. cf. Gen. 49. 22-26. 1 Chron. 5. 1, 2.
q ch. 20. 5, 6, 28, 42; 36. 7. Gen. 12. 7; 13. 14, 15; 15; 18 21; 17. 8; 26. 3; 28.13; 50. 24. Ex. 3. 17. Deut. 34. 4. Acts 7. 5.
r ch. 48. 29.
s ch. 48. 1.
t Num. 34. 8
u Num. 34. 8
v 2 Sam. 8. 8.
w ch. 48. 1. Num. 34. 9.
x ch. 48. 28.
y Num. 20. 12, 13, 24. Deut. 32. 51; 33. 8. Ps. 81. 7.

Sec. 7.

1. This final section begins with giving the boundaries of the land. These are essentially the same as those given in Num. xxxiv. 1-15. There is the difference that in Numbers the southern boundary is given first, whereas here we begin with the north. In both cases the Jordan forms the eastern line, the settlement of the two and a half tribes east of the river being a departure from the original plan. This is not given any place in the final arrangement, all the tribes being given their inheritance west of the Jordan.

We may note that Joseph is given two portions—Manasseh and Ephraim. This fulfils Gen. xlviii. 5, 6; and according to 1 Chron. v. 1, the birthright forfeited by Reuben was given to the sons of Joseph. Since he has two portions the number of the tribes remains twelve, although Levi is not counted, his inheritance being part of the heave-offering.

2 (21, 23): Care for the stranger

2. And it shall come to pass that ye shall divide it by lot for an inheritance unto you, and for *the strangers who sojourn among you, who shall beget children among you; and they shall be unto you as the home-born among the children of Israel: with you they shall draw by lot inheritance among the tribes of Israel. And it shall come to pass that in what tribe the stranger sojourneth, there shall ye give him his inheritance, saith the Lord Jehovah.

*cf. Ex. 22.21; 23. 9. Lev. 17. 8, 10. 13; 20. 2; 22. 18; 25. 45. Deut. 10. 18, 19; 24. 14, 17. 21. Ps. 146. 9. Isa. 14. 1; 60. 4, 5, 10. Jer. 7. 6; 22. 3. Ob. ch. 22, 7, 29.

3 (xlviii. 1-7): The tribes north of the sacred Oblation

3. And these are the names of the tribes: from the north end along the way of Hethlon as one entereth into Hamath, Hazar-enan, the border of Damascus northward unto near Hamath; and they shall have their sides east and west, Dan one [portion]. And by the border of Dan, from the east side to the west side, Asher one. And from the border of Asher, from the east side even unto the west side, Naphtali one. And by the border of Naphtali, from the east side unto the west side, Manasseh one. And from the border of Manasseh, from the east side unto the west side, Ephraim one. And by the border of Ephraim, from the east side unto the west side, Reuben one. And by the border of Reuben, from the east side unto the west side, Judah one.

4 (8-22): The sacred Oblation, the universal centre of glory, government and worship.

4. And by the border of Judah, from the east side unto the west side, shall be the heave offering that ye shall offer, five and twenty thousand in breadth, and in length as one of the portions from

2. In addition to prescribing the division of the land to the tribes, the strangers who have settled themselves among them and begotten children among them are to receive inheritance with the tribes. The word for "stranger" here is different from that used in chap. xliv. 7, where the word signifies "sons of the alien," or "foreigner," really those brought in through Israel's unholy mixture with the evil nations around. Here it is one who, though not naturally one of the tribes, has cast in his lot among them. Such are to be as the home-born, and have their inheritance by lot in the tribe in which they live.

3-5. We next have the order of the tribes, first those north of the heave-offering (1-7), then that offering itself is described (8-22), followed by the tribes to the south (23-28). It will be of interest to compare the relations of the tribes as first settled in the land, and this final disposition. Chaps. xiii.-xxi of Joshua give in detail the first allotment of the inheritance, and this has been fully considered in its place. Here it seems only needful to emphasize the relation of the tribes to one another.

the east side unto the west side: and the sanctuary shall be in the midst of it. The heave offering that ye shall offer unto Jehovah shall be five and twenty thousand in length, and ten thousand in breadth. And for these, even for the priests, shall be the holy heave offering, toward the north five and twenty thousand, and toward the west the breadth ten thousand, and toward the east, the breadth ten thousand, and toward the south, the length five and twenty thousand: and the sanctuary of Jehovah shall be in the midst of it. [It shall be] for the priests that are sanctified of the sons of Zadok, who have kept my charge; who went not astray when the children of Israel went astray as the Levites went astray. And it shall be unto them a heave offering from the heave offering of the land, a thing most holy by the border of the Levites.

First, in bringing Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh from the east side of Jordan* an element of division is removed which formerly existed in the nation, and a feature not originally a part of God's order. Thus national unity and solidarity are established—divided interests and natural barriers overcome.

Reuben formerly separated from Judah by the expanse of the Dead Sea is now situated next to him. Benjamin who stood between Judah and Ephraim is removed to the south, bounding on that side the holy heave-offering. Manasseh, once divided, is now united and placed immediately north of his brother tribe, Ephraim. Asher, Naphtali, and Dan remain in the north, but Zebulun and Issachar are located in the south, and with them, Gad, who was formerly east of the Jordan. The division of Dan disappears. Simeon remains in the south.

It is noticeable that Judah and Benjamin, the tribes that remained faithful to David's house, are honored by nearest relation to the glorious centre of the Messianic kingdom. "Them that honor Me will I honor, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed."

Now let us see what spiritual instruction may be gathered from this new arrangement of the tribes. They are in two groups, one of *seven* and one of *five*. It seems evident that we must seek the lesson in this very division, and consider them in the order of a first and second to which the numbers seven and five apply respectively. Group one should yield us truth suited to that number, and also seven; group two, what suits that and five.

First, the whole number of the tribes, twelve, speaks of manifest divine government over all creation in realized mastery over evil. Since this is divided into two parts, we may think of a full witness being given to this in the perfection and completeness (7) of the position in which God sets His redeemed people—a position of right-

* Compare the map of Canaan with that of the new arrangement. See Appendix.

> And answering to the border of the priests, the Levites shall have five and twenty thousand in length, and ten thousand in breadth: the whole length shall be five and twenty thousand, and the breadth, ten thousand. And they shall not sell of it, nor exchange it, nor shall the first fruits of the land be alienated: for it is holy unto Jehovah.

eousness and blessing in harmony with the divine attributes and sovereignty (1); and then in the fellowship, service, and relationship (2) in which they are placed in happy union with God, God and His creature reconciled (5 = 4 + 1). With these general thoughts before us, let us see what lessons the first group of seven tribes may teach us. They are in order as given us from the north:

1. Dan.
2. Asher.
3. Naphtali.
4. Manasseh.
5. Ephraim.
6. Reuben.
7. Judah.

In Jacob's prophecy (Gen. xlix.) we read in connection with Dan of Satanic character, the power of evil in manifestation. This can only be met and overcome by Jehovah's salvation, and for this Jacob expresses earnest desire. But despite Dan's evil character the prophetic assurance that he shall judge his people points to restoration and the realization of self-government, as far as the nation is concerned, when the day of the lawless one, the false Messiah, is over —a personage linked with Dan it would seem from this very prophecy. So in Dan's blessing as pronounced by Moses we have suggested the power that overcomes the enemy. His name means "judge," or "judging," and he stands for the spirit of rule which must necessarily be realized through the lesson of *self*-rule, self-judgment, self-government, and this means the truth applied to the whole man. Little does Dan's history express this, rather is it entirely in contrast to what his character should be. It is this which makes what Jacob yearns for in speaking of him such a necessity—Jehovah's salvation. This alone can meet the condition in which man is found, unable to rule himself (or the creation over which he was set as head at the first), dominated by the evil of his own heart, carried about by every wind of Satanic influence, he shows a character and power like that of the serpent. Self-judgment, self-government alone become possible through submission to another will and power, that of God revealed in Christ. Thus man comes into his true place and dignity —the enemy overcome, mastery through grace secured, the dominion of sin broken as made free by the Son. This is the first step in the cycle of divine blessing and perfection.

It quite naturally leads to the second as expressed in Asher, "the happy," for *this* man becomes when once reconciled to God by the death of His Son. As thus turned from Satan unto God, he enters the kingdom of the Son of God's love. There he enjoys fellowship with Him, finding in His shadow rapture and rest, His fruit sweet to our taste and His banner over us love (Song ii. 3, 4, *New Trans.*). Truly of such it can be said, as of Asher, "His bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties" (Gen. xlix. 20). Jehovah's salvation brings us the bread of life, the food of the mighty. His blessing is that of living fruit, brotherly fellowship, spiritual power in walk,

> And the five thousand that are left in the breadth in front of the five and twenty thousand, shall be a common [place] for the city, for dwellings and for suburbs; and the city shall be in the midst thereof. And these shall be the measures thereof: the north side, four thousand and five hundred, and the south side, four thousand and five hundred, and the east side, four thousand and five hundred, and the west side, four thousand and five hundred. And the suburbs of the city

and divine strength, as we may learn from the blessing of Moses (Deut. xxxiii. 24, 25). "It is of immense importance that the people of God should be known as a 'happy' people. If 'the joy of the Lord is your strength,' then happiness must have for the soul a large spiritual value. As a testimony to God it can be no less. One of the characteristics of the true 'circumcision,' as given by the apostle, is that they 'rejoice in Christ Jesus:' and his exhortation to the same people is, 'Rejoice in the Lord; and again, I say, Rejoice' (Phil. iii. 3; iv. 4). Such joy is one of the best signs that the knowledge of the gospel has reached the heart, and that the life will be governed by it. It is quite true that feelings may be put in a wrong place, as in the first quest of peace they are almost sure to be. There is plenty of need for insisting on the truth that we are not justified by feeling but by faith. Nay, it is certain that the reception of the gospel with *immediate* joy is made by the Lord Himself a sign rather of stony-ground hearing than of a fruitful reception of the Word (Matt. xiii. 20). Plowing up must be before the seed can spring up aright; repentance before God will accompany 'faith in our Lord Jesus Christ' where the latter is real and effective. This is all true; yet, on the other hand, it is no less true that the effect of the gospel—the 'glad tidings'—is to produce gladness, and that the apostle prays for believers that 'the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing' (Rom. xv. 13). The third character of the 'kingdom of God' he gives, after 'righteousness and peace,' is 'joy in the Holy Ghost' (ch. xiv. 17). 'The fruit of the Spirit is' said to be 'love, *joy*, peace' (Gal. v. 22). 'And not only so, but we joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, *by whom* we have now received the reconciliation' (Rom. v. 11). These passages, of course, define the happiness which they speak of, so that it is impossible to confound it with the mere play of animal spirits, or even the happiness derivable from the hope of salvation. One might have this last, and yet in fact be unsaved. '*Joy in God through Christ*' is something perfectly distinct and infinitely higher" (Joshua, *Notes*, pp. 145, 146). In this connection another lesson may be noticed in Asher following Dan. If Dan speaks of self-rule, self-judgment, we know this means exercise of heart and conscience, and these are essential to the maintenance of a happiness worthy of the name.

This brings us to Naphtali which means "my wrestling," not so much with the idea of this going on but as having reached a conclusion in victory, bringing freedom. It expresses the blessedness of that new place in which man finds himself, as Moses declares of Naphtali, "satisfied with favor, and full with the blessing of the

> shall be toward the north, two hundred and fifty, and toward the south, two hundred and fifty, and toward the east, two hundred and fifty, and toward the west, two hundred and fifty. And the residue in length, alongside the holy heave offering, shall be ten thousand eastward and ten thousand westward: it shall be alongside the holy

Lord," so that he becomes as "a hind let loose," all fear removed, and the tongue loosed to give goodly words which are the sacrifices of the lips confessing His name (Heb. xiii. 15). Is not this the first-fruits of the Spirit, the blessing and triumph of Romans 8? This fittingly fills the third place in the cycle of perfection and completeness.

Following on we come to Manasseh, "forgetting"—not in a mere negative sense, but after the manner of the apostle who was "forgetting the things behind," as absorbed with the glory opened through faith to the vision of his mind and the affections of his heart. Thus for him the rule became, "For me to live is Christ." Naphtali leads us to Manasseh, to that soleness of object and whole-heartedness of life which finds its portion in the things above, the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. This is the manner of walk that results from being in the sanctuary where, like Naphtali, we are made "full with the blessing of the Lord."

Is it any wonder that Ephraim, "fruitfulness," comes next? It must, it ever does, in such a cycle of blessing as we are considering, and since Manasseh and Ephraim are the sons of Joseph we may turn to what is said of him to learn more fully what belongs to them (Gen. xlix. 22-26; Deut. xxxiii. 13-17). Plainly Christ is very much before us in Joseph, and what is the fruitbearing of the divine life in man but the being conformed to *His* image, changed from glory to glory by the power and energy of the Spirit's transforming work? The wealth of figure and expression used to tell the portion of Joseph, and so of Manasseh and Ephraim, witnesses to the greatness of the abiding power, grace, and blessing reached as we advance in the knowledge of God's thoughts concerning the perfection and completeness of His redeemed people.

Our course brings us to Reuben with whom the excellency and dignity of sonship in its virgin freshness find expression. Such was man unfallen, fresh from the hand of God; but he showed himself unstable as water; like Reuben he fell. But Moses can say, "Let Reuben live and not die, and let not his men be few." Though worthy of death, the way of life has been opened to sinful man, and now by faith in Christ Jesus he receives that sonship which is of higher order and richer blessing than the dignity lost through sin. It is "according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He has taken us into favor in the Beloved: in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of offences, according to the riches of His grace." This is victory indeed, so Reuben fitly fills the sixth place.

We end with Judah, "praise." "We find the spirit of *praise* is that of *power*—necessarily, because God is exalted in it. It is what the fiftieth psalm challenges on His part from His people: 'Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High....

> heave offering; and the increase thereof shall be for food for them that labor in the city. And they that labor in the city out of all the tribes of Israel shall till it. The whole heave offering shall be five and twenty thousand by five and twenty thousand; ye shall offer the holy heave offering foursquare with the possession of the city.

whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me.' It is this which marks the life that comes from God, that it turns back to God again; and the joy of the Lord is ever its principle of strength. A simple lesson, but, oh, that it were learnt! The 'wine' in the portion of Judah is the sign of a joy in which there can be no excess; and the milk may show that here there is not merely stimulus, but nourishment as well, and that in the form in which the merest babe may find it" (Genesis, *Notes*, p. 129). Throughout Scripture praise is presented as a marked characteristic of God's redeemed people; it brings us to the completeness of that salvation with which we began in Dan. Let us also remember that the spirit of praise is the spirit of obedience, for it is to be rendered with the understanding, with the soul, and with the whole heart in uprightness, the whole man is to be in the power of it, and this means to find God with us, for He delights to dwell amid the praises of His people. When the heart is thus fixed, and God fills it, it will be His throne; His judgments will be known and His Word kept. Then the place of our inheritance will be found in immediate connection with the Sanctuary as with Judah here, his border joins that of the holy heave-offering where the throne-house of Jehovah stands.

In this cycle of blessing we have traced precious truths of God's great love and grace which apply to all who are His redeemed, to all to whom the new covenant is made good, as it is to us now and will be to Israel in that coming day to which Ezekiel's vision refers.

But we must now see what instruction we may gather from the second and southerly group of tribes. There the order is:

1. Benjamin. 2. Simeon. 3. Issachar.
4. Zebulun. 5. Gad.

In the first group of seven we learn the glorious perfection of the position grace gives. It is God's purposes and work whereby new creation is accomplished. This is a real bringing out of darkness into His own marvelous light, and thus we reach the Sanctuary as we move onward from Judah. Passing through its holy precincts we come to this second group which, as a second, we might expect to teach us, as already remarked, lessons of relationship and fellowship regarding the divine life. Being a series of five it should show how God (1) is found with His saved creature (4) for the control of its way, the strength of its life, and the enlargement of its capacity to know Himself through the union thus established in His grace. This of necessity brings into the meaning of this number creature-responsibility and the exercise occasioned by being under the government of God. So from the precincts of the Sanctuary we enter Benjamin, "son of the right hand." This suggests the place of power and privilege in known relationship. Moses declares his blessing, "The

> And the rest shall be for the prince, on the one side and on the other of the holy heave offering and of the possession of the city, in front of the five and twenty thousand of the heave offering toward the east border, and westward in front of the five and twenty thousand toward the west border, answering to the portions: it shall be for the prince; and the holy heave offering and the sanctuary of the house shall be in the midst thereof. And from the possession of the Levites and from the possession of the city, being in the midst of that which shall be the prince's, between the border of Judah and the border of Benjamin, shall be for the prince.

beloved of Jehovah shall dwell in safety by Him: He shall cover him all day long, and he shall dwell between His shoulders." Here is dearness, nearness, security, the overshadowing of Almighty power, and rest as borne up on the shoulders of infinite love. True as this is in a special way of the Church, it will be Israel's special glory too in the coming age. But all of this for us is connected with the truth of Christ in us, for because we are sons God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, and in this is all our power on earth for the activities of the divine life in fellowship with God whom we now know as Father. It is thus we come to know Christ lives in us, and we not only glory in Him, but we accept Him for ourselves, God having accepted Him for us.

Easily enough we pass to Simeon, "hearing." This suggests communion, Mary's place at the feet of Jesus hearing His word. "Blessed is the man that heareth Me, watching daily at My gates, waiting at the posts of My doors" (Prov. viii. 34). In this Wisdom speaks, but we know that Christ is the wisdom of God, and that He has been made wisdom unto us; and He is the Word. To thus hear is to delight ourselves in Him. It is truly the way of life, and this leads us into what is connected with Issachar.

From Jacob's prophecy we see that Issachar stands for yoke-bearing, though evidently in a slavery that speaks of fleshly indulgence and the vain reward of sin's pleasure for a season. Here, however, we are rather to think of deliverance through grace from such servitude, as coming to the One whose loving voice calls us to hear and find the true rest. Thus coming under His yoke and learning from Him (Matt. xi. 29, *New Trans.*)—the meek and lowly One who stooped to bear *our* burden and carry our sorrows, even unto death, the death of the cross—we enter a new service, sanctified by the word of truth we have heard and received, finding in this way the true reward, for "If any man will serve Me, him will My Father honor." Isaachar means, "There is reward." Thus the blessing of Issachar is realized, for, as Moses declares, he sounds God's call to the peoples to come to "the mountain," surely the mountain of the Lord's house, there to offer the sacrifices of *righteousness*, a service, a yoke-bearing so different from that of the past, both for Issachar and those to whom he carries the invitation. And this is ever the

5 (23-29): The tribes south of the sacred Oblation

5. And as for the rest of the tribes: from the east side unto the west side, Benjamin one [portion]. And by the border of Benjamin from the east side unto the west side, Simeon one. And by the border of Simeon, from the east side unto the west side, Issachar one. And by the border of Issachar, from the east side unto the west side, Zebulun one. And by the border of Zebulun, from the east side unto the west side, Gad one. And by the border of Gad, at the south side southward, the border shall be from Tamar to the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, by the torrent, unto the great sea. This is the land which ye shall divide by lot unto the tribes of Israel for inheritance, and these are their portions, saith the Lord Jehovah.

order according to God, that communion (Simeon) should issue in such service. The heart that is full of the Word must overflow in ministry to others, calling them to the place where the fulness of God is found. Issachar, then, in this third place may well speak of walking in the *Spirit*, sanctified by Him by means of the Word of truth so that we manifest in our walk His fruit. In this our true recompense, "reward," will be found both now and for eternity.

The Lord assures those who take His yoke and learn from Him that they will find rest unto their souls, and so we pass into Zebulun, "dwelling with," a doing so in intimacy, as Leah's words intimate when giving this name. "For where I am there will My servant be also." Is not this John xiv.? "If any one love Me, he will keep My word (this indeed is what the communion of Simeon and the service of Issachar involve), and My Father will love him, and We will come and make our abode with him." Because the apostle so well knew this "dwelling with," he could say out of the richness of his experience, "*My* God shall abundantly supply all your need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." What a rich gathering of precious and priceless store this means, and so we end this series with Gad, "*a gatherer*:" a glorious fifth in which the need of the creature is supplied out of the exhaustless treasuries of the divine glory! Alongside the ever-abiding sufficiency of God we have the two governing principles for His people by which sufficency is appropriated — *dependence* and *obedience*. "Be careful about nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God that surpasses every understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts by Christ Jesus...What ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you" (Phil. iv. 6-9).

Thus we reach Gad, the place of *increase*, for that thought is associated with the meaning of his name. Our truest and fullest enlargement must be found in being with God, who did not spare His own Son that with Him we might receive all things. It is of His fulness that we receive, and grace upon grace.

6 (30-35) The gates of the city

6. And these are the goings out of the city. On the north side, four thousand and five hundred by measure. And the gates of the city shall be after the names of the tribes of Israel: three gates northward: the gate of Reuben, one; the gate of

6. We are now told about the gates of the city.* They are named after the twelve tribes. It is a city in which all have their part and special interest. All ancient jealousies, all strife for place, are over; unity and concord prevail with each one in his ordered place. What we have just considered will help us to the understanding of the spiritual meaning.

We may note that Manasseh and Ephraim have their gate in Joseph. This permits Levi to have a gate bearing his name. Here, too, the association of the tribal names is different from the order of succession in the land. The prominent lesson here would appear to be in connection with the side on which they occur—north, east, south, or west. In placing the names it seems clear that we are to begin at the west corner of the north side and proceed eastward, so passing around the entire city.

We have had occasion to consider the quarters of the heaven in the book of Numbers in connection with the encampment of the tribes around the Tabernacle (Vol. 1, pp. 388-393). The significance there given we may use here: "The north (*tsaphon*) means 'what is hidden,' and the reason why the north is called so is because to those living in the northern hemisphere the sun travels through the southern heavens, and the north side of anything is the dark side. Naturally the north itself would be contemplated as the seat of darkness, the abode of gloom and mystery....And this mystery, how it assaults us! From the north come the most frequent attacks upon the land, and from it will come the final attack (Ezek. xxxviii., xxxix.). In the sides of the north the Babylonian apostate makes his seat and utters his defiance of the Almighty (Isa. xiv.). We must not imagine this to be without significance. Nothing in Scripture is; and it is by putting things together that we perceive a meaning which taken by themselves such things might seem to lack. Certainly in the place of mystery it is that apostasy and infidelity intrench themselves most securely; while upon the forehead of Babylon the Great there is also written 'Mystery.'" Thus the north tells of mystery, the power of evil, the judgment of God, His ways in providence too, which so often awaken exercise and leave man in his wisdom utterly baffled, and, as we have also seen, it is the place of slaying the sacrifice which speaks of the cross with all its horror of great darkness, but through which after all we come into the knowledge of the wisdom and power of God, so the dark shadow is lifted from His face and there is light from Him which "removes all guilty fear and love begets." In this quarter we get Reuben, the excellency of sonship, with which there is the blessed unfolding of the purposes of God, and Judah, for all of this is to the praise of His glory, yea, the glory of His grace, making His people an ever thankful and praising people. They have a triumph-song to sing in the face of the north, for God is for us, and who can separate us from His

* See Diagram of the city gates in the Appendix.

> Judah, one; the gate of Levi, one. And at the east side, four thousand and five hundred, and three gates: even the gate of Joseph, one; the gate of Benjamin, one; the gate of Dan, one. And at the south side, four thousand and five

love which is in Christ Jesus our Lord? So we now have Levi, "joined." Forevermore it is Christ and those who are His, His companions, co-heirs, ever together with Him who is the Firstborn among many brethren, the Captain of salvation with His host of sons, all things *with* Him. Glorious truth! How it thrills the soul and fills the lips with praise "to Him who loves us, and has washed us from our sins in His blood, and made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father: to Him be the glory and the might to the ages of ages. Amen!"

We turn to the east, which we have already seen is connected with the glory of God. There the sun rises, and this always suggests the idea of joy and blessing with the returning day. But the word for east is *qedem*, "what faces," or "confronts" you, and thus, as nearly as may be, resembles our word "adversity" from the Latin, "what is *toward*" you, only in a hostile manner. The *qadim*, the "east wind," is the dry and parching wind from the desert, as the west wind is literally the sea-wind, bringing moisture and rain. These two contrary thoughts to us as Christians so suggest one another that there is no difficulty in their connection. He who faces in earnest the evil of the world will have proportionately before him that appearing of Christ which will bring its long disorder to an end forever. The night is far spent, and the day is at hand; blessed be God, we who believe in Him are children of the day; "therefore," says the apostle, "let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light" (Rom. xiii. 12). In this quarter we have Joseph, beautiful type of Christ in all the lowly grace of His humiliation, and then the surpassing glory of His place at the right hand of the Majesty on high—the sufferings of Him who was separated from His brethren, and the glories that followed. These two things are in their measure true of the redeemed, for they learn to suffer with Him and are glorified together, then shall they be conformed perfectly to His image: here the lessons of Manasseh and Ephraim combine, for in the light of the glory and as absorbed with it, pressing forward to it, we "forget" the adverse and evil world, with the result that the mind of Christ possesses us and we become "fruitful" in the power of the Spirit. Benjamin follows—"Christ in us the hope of glory," so there is present power to overcome: and lastly on this side, Dan who stands for the spirit of rule and judgment. Only do we form a right judgment of the world and of ourselves as we enter into what Joseph and Benjamin speak of, and so too learn how to rule, thereby gaining capacity to rule with Him in the day of glory when the Sun of Righteousness has arisen, bringing an end to all opposition. How good to be familiar with the gateways that enter eastward, as well as those of the north.

We have had occasion to speak of the south as indicative of relaxing influences, of the way of the world and the pleasures of sin by which men seek to escape from dependence upon and exercise under the hand of God. But this only brings spiritual drought, the soul is

> hundred by measure and three gates: the gate of Simeon, one; the gate of Issachar, one; the gate of Zebulun, one. At the west side, four thousand and five hundred, and their three gates: the gate

parched and barrenness results. In accord with this the word for south is *negeb* which means "to be parched," and is applied to the south because of its drought. In this connection we may well think of the discipline of God as exercised over His people, by which they come to know Him better and are made partakers of His holiness and serve Him in righteousness. The patriarchs in their wanderings southward learned these ways of God, and so do we. Here, then, we first have Simeon, "hearing," and we cannot help but think of that word, "Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it" (Mic. vi. 9). Submission leads into communion, of which Simeon speaks, and this to that obedient, willing service that brings reward (Issachar): then we find the green pastures and still waters whither our Shepherd leads by rod and staff where we rest with Him (Zebulun).

Turning westward we face the sea. "Westward in Hebrew means 'toward the sea.' And the sea is preeminently in Scripture, as in nature, the type of trouble and unrest, which the word itself signifies in the original. We have seen it in the six days' work the type of the evil within us, and which remains in us though regenerate, limited, however, by divine grace. It is the evil, moreover, in the negative rather than its positive aspect, and the west wind, as the sea-wind, differs from the east wind, the wind of the desert, in this way. It comes not to wither, but rather loaded with the moisture that revives and refreshes the earth. This is the answer of heaven to the appeal of man's misery, even though that misery be in a certain sense identified with his sin. As the heaven draws from the bosom of the sea itself the vapors which it pours out again upon the land, so grace is that with which God in sovereign goodness has answered our sin, and the *occasion* of which has been the very sin itself; for only in a world of sinners could He show grace. How full and exact are these natural types when we come to analyze them." It is just out of this that we are able to gather our increase (Gad, "a gatherer"), and find our genuine happiness (Asher, "happy"), and in our wrestling overcome, finding victory over all the subtle influences of this world's things, learn in fact not to love them, as John speaks, and that our faith is the victory that gets the victory over the world.

Perhaps we should not pass without notice the oft-repeated measurement of each side—4,500 (45 [5x9] x 10x10). Here *nine* appears as an important factor. As being 3x3 it signifies the full manifestation of what is divine, its complete display. It has been suggested that as the last of the digits it signifies the end or conclusion of a matter. This brings in the idea of perfection and completeness (7), to which competent testimony (2) is given in the display. This fits well with Ezekiel's vision in which we have traced the summation of God's thoughts as to man's blessing in relation with Himself. So in another way it is all that five speaks of added to the four—the number of the creature and creation. This again is intensified by five, making the forty-five, and this whole is multiplied twice by ten

of Gad, one; the gate of Asher, one; the gate of Naphtali, one. It shall be eighteen thousand round about.

7 (35): The Name of the City

7. And the [a]name of the city from that day shall be, [b]Jehovah is there.

[a] *cf.* Jer. 23. 6; 33. 16. Isa. 78 7; 62. 2, 12 Deut. 12. 5; 16. 2, 6, 11; 26. 2.
[b] *cf.* Jer 3.17; ch. 37 26-28. Isa. 60. 9 11. Joel 3. 17, 21; Zech. 8. 3; Rev. 21. 3.

—a full and competent witness to the accomplishment of divine order in all relations Godward and manward. This shows us the character of the Millennial metropolis, and the government of the kingdom; this agrees with the general testimony of Scripture. The same thoughts appear in the final measurement, "It shall be 18,000 round about" (18 [9x2] x 10 x 10 x 10).

7. The name of the city — JEHOVAH SHAMMAH — Jehovah is there.

APPENDIX

THE LOCATION OF THE SANCTUARY AND THE ALLOTMENT OF THE LAND.*

The location of the Sanctuary and the arrangement of the tribes in relation to it, are given in chap. 48. We begin at the north with Dan, and six tribes follow him in succession toward the south (vers. 1-7). Then we have what is called "the heave offering." This has three main parts, and these claim special consideration since they are in immediate relation to the Sanctuary. Five tribes follow this "heave offering," thus completing the division to the southern limits of the land.

The "heave offering" is of first importance since the Sanctuary enclosure is within its bounds. It is foursquare, 25,000 by 25,000, divided into three main parts; 25,000 by 10,000 for the priests, 25,000 by 10,000 for the Levites, and 25,000 by 5,000 for the city and environs. Then the Prince's portion is mentioned as being on the east and west of this great square, reaching to the eastern and western boundaries of the land. The Sanctuary enclosure is in the priests' portion. While these numbers are given, a question at once confronts us: are they reeds or cubits? In the text of chapter 48 this is not stated. Can it be determined from other parts of the vision?

In chap. 45:1-8 we find another detailed specification of the several parts which form this heave offering, but here again the reed and the cubit are not mentioned in giving the dimensions, with one exception; 50 cubits are allowed as open space around the 500 by 500 (something) for the Sanctuary (ver. 2). That cubits are mentioned in the one item seems to imply that the measures in the other cases are of a different denomination. Turning now to chap. 42:15-20 we are told that after completing the measurement of the inner house, the prophet was brought toward the gate fronting east. Here a space with a wall was measured as being 500 by 500 reeds. This made a separation between what was holy and what was common. This appears to

* See Map in the following pages.

determine the allotted space of chap. 45:2 to be 500 *reeds*, surrounded by a free or open space of 50 cubits.* If this conclusion is correct then we may determine that the other measurements are to be taken as reeds. This conclusion seems the only reasonable one when we consider that 5,000 by 5,000 (something) is given for the city (48:15, 17). If these were cubits the city would be no more than about 1.136 miles square—a very insignificant place of little more than one and a quarter square miles. Taking the measurement as reeds—the reed is six cubits, 40:5; 43:13—we have a city more fitting in size to the glory of the millennial kingdom: it would be about 6.81 miles square, or cover nearly 47 square miles.†

Before going further let us consider the size of the cubit used in determining these dimensions. We know the cubit was used in Babylonia and Egypt. In the latter there is evidence of its use from very early times in two forms—the common or commercial cubit of six handbreadths, and the royal one of seven handbreadths. Ezekiel specifies the cubit used in measuring the Sanctuary as a cubit and a handbreadth, which some think points to a measure similar to the Egyptian royal cubit of seven handbreadths. From the monuments and other remains a length of 17.68 inches has been fixed for the Egyptian short cubit, and 20.63 for the long. It is not possible to determine that the Hebrew cubit was identical with that of Egypt, and it does not seem probable, for if either of these cubits is used to determine the measurements of the oblation, it is not possible to place this allotment within the boundaries of the land itself as given in chap. 47.

This "holy heave offering foursquare with the possession of the city" [i.e., the 25,000 by 20,000, plus 25,000 by 5,000] (ver. 20) is bounded on the north by Judah, and on the south by Benjamin (48:8, 22, 23; see map); but from ver. 8 it would appear that this *holy* offering is part of another and somewhat larger offering, not specifically called holy, which while 25,000 reeds in breadth from north to south, and thus exactly the same as the holy heave offering in this direction, is "in length as one of the parts [i.e., of the tribes] from

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* These 50 cubits that surround the Sanctuary plot would appear to be for the purpose of preventing the priests' houses being built against the enclosing wall. This impresses the lesson of the sanctity of the Sanctuary precincts, the separation from anything relatively common, a fundamental lesson of these visions.

† The fact, too, that Levi, one of the tribes, has his entire inheritance as part of the heave offering (10,000 x 25,000) argues for the reed against the cubit. Were it the latter he would not have more than 15 square miles, while all the other tribes would have from about 800 to over 1,000 square miles, as shown on the map.

the east side unto the west side." This larger offering, then, extended from the Mediterranean Sea on the west to the eastern boundary of the land, or in other words, to the Jordan and the Dead Sea; and this larger offering included the holy heave offering of 25,000 by 25,000 reeds with the Prince's portions, one on each side, extending from the line of the holy offering to the east and west borders of the land, and stretching from the border of Judah to that of Benjamin. This appears clear from vers. 20-23. In fact no other arrangement seems possible if we follow the requirements of the text. These verses also confirm another point—the location of the priests' portion. The Sanctuary, it is said, is in the midst of the offering (vers. 8, 21). From chap. 45:3, 4 we know that the Sanctuary was in the priests' portion, which was 25,000 by 10,000, and therefore this must be the central division of the holy heave offering since the Sanctuary is in the midst of the whole offering. Then on one side of this is the Levites' portion, also 25,000 by 10,000; and on the other the city and its possessions—25,000 by 5,000. As to whether the Levites were on the north side, and the city on the south, or the reverse, we will consider a little later.

Now, as already mentioned, the west side is the Great Sea, the Mediterranean (47:20); and the east side is formed by the Jordan and the East, or Dead, Sea: that is, at that part of the land where this offering would be located. This then limits the 25,000 to the territory between these established boundaries. We have taken the 25,000 to be reeds, and this would be equivalent to 150,000 cubits. If these cubits are calculated of the longer Egyptian form, the 25,000 reeds would equal slightly less than 49 miles. This would extend west to east, beyond the limits of the land by several miles. On the other hand if we limit the cubit to the common or smaller form, which is about 18 inches, the plot of 25,000 reeds would just fall within the prescribed boundaries, but leaves no land for the Prince which, as we have already determined, is on the east and west sides of the offering between the border of Judah and the border of Benjamin.

To solve this problem I have adopted the sizes of the cubit given by Dr. W. Shaw Caldecott. He has given this subject of measurement an exhaustive examination. He says,

> "It is a commonly held opinion that the cubit of the Bible is one of eighteen inches in length. This is based on the fact of its being the common denominator of all the spaces in the best known of Babylonian ruins . . . In the absence of later and fuller light upon the matter, it has, therefore, been understood that the cubit of the Bible was half a yard in length. But further light is

derivable from the other three columns of the Senkereh Tablet.* This does not contradict, but confirms the evidence already before us, and adds to it the additional information that an 18-inch cubit was not the only one used; but that there were two others of lesser length, all three of which were commensurate with one another.

"The second column of the tablet (the first having been devoted to the palm†) is limited to the various extensions of the palm into an ell, or cubit, of three palms. This is that which is represented on the statue of Gudea,‡ the cardinal fact in relation to these two antiques being, that the fractions, formed by the cuts in the stone, are those which are represented by the figures and hieroglyphs of the clay tablet. This coincidence—often repeated—is the proof that both these spoils of the pick-axe and the spade belong to one system of measures, and that they are complementary to one another. By their collation and agreement, it has been established, *nemine contradicente*, that in Babylonia there were three ells [or, cubits], respectively of 3, 4 and 5 palms' length; the evidence on this behalf being completed by the fact that the third column of the tablet is one of 4 palms', and the fourth column one of 5 palms'.

"We thus obtain, from a fundamental palm-breadth of 3.6 inches, the three measures of 10.8, 14.4 and 18 inches."

Dr. Caldecott is of the opinion that these measures were those of Palestine, and that they were used in the construction of the Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple.

"Care, however, must be taken to observe the rule that each of the three cubits is confined to its own department—the larger to land spaces, the middle to buildings, and the smallest to gold work."

These considerations show that we have three cubits of which the shortest one, that of three handbreadths, or palms, equalling 10.8 inches, is the fundamental or basic measure. With this system of measures Ezekiel would doubtless be quite familiar either from the knowledge of its use in Palestine, or acquaintance with it through

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* This tablet is a small square of unbaked clay, 7½ inches by 5¾ inches in size, written on both sides of its upper and under surfaces, in closely packed rows and columns of figures. These divide themselves, on the one side, into four separate columns, each of six perpendicular rows of numerals and mathematical characters. It is in these four columns of cuneiform that we find the fuller light by which we detect three cubits of different lengths, each used in its own department of work.

† A basic measure of 3.6 inches.

‡ "In the year 1881, a French explorer in Babylonia discovered, in the courtyard of an ancient palace, a number of headless statues. These are now in the Louvre Museum. One of the sitting figures has on his knees a slab bearing the ground plan of an early royal residence, which stood on the same site as that in which it was found. On this slab, of hard diorite, is engraved a representation of the measure by which the palace was built. This measure was found, on examination, to have been ten and four-fifths English inches in length, and to have been divided into two main portions, one of which is twice the length of the other. The smaller portion is thus 3.6 inches [or, one palm], and the larger, 7.2 inches in length [or, two palms, so that this measure of three palms is equivalent to the smallest of the three ells, or cubits, found on the Senkereh mathematical tablet]."

his long residence in Babylonia. Now he is quite explicit in stating what is the unit of measurement in his visions of the Sanctuary, and in fact no other unit is given, whether it be the record of the building measurements, or those of the holy heave offering, so that we appear warranted in adopting the same basis throughout these visions of the Temple and the land. The unit he gives us is "a measuring reed of six cubits, of a cubit and a handbreadth each," and again he says, "the cubit is a cubit and a handbreadth" (40:5; 43:13). Taking the smallest cubit as the basic measure, we may conclude that Ezekiel's unit of a cubit and a handbreadth is equivalent to this smallest cubit of three palms or handbreadths plus one handbreadth, *or in other words that it is the same as the middle cubit of* 14.4 *inches.** Let us now apply this conclusion to the measurements of the holy heave offering, and see if it enables us to solve the difficulty referred to in a previous paragraph.

Upon this basis of measurement the holy heave offering with the city portion forms a great square of 34 miles, having an area of about 1160 square miles. Within its bounds centre all the interests of the Divine worship and government as established on the earth. There the Sanctuary, the holy of holies, and the city are situated with all the attendant ministers and servants of both. Here we have the mountain of Jehovah's House to which all nations shall come (Isa. 2; Micah 4). Now by reference to the map we see at once that on this basis of measure the holy heave offering is of such a size that it falls within the prescribed boundaries of the land, and allows a suitable portion on both the east and west side for the possession of the Prince. This result, as already stated, is impossible by the use of either the royal Egyptian cubit, or the smaller and common cubit of 18 inches, for in the former case the holy heave offering extends beyond the actual limits of the land, and in the latter, though it falls just within those limits, it leaves no portion for the Prince. To adopt the middle cubit solves this difficulty, and enables us to keep within the requirements of the text.†

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* This cubit, Dr. Caldecott has determined, is the one used for building work, and so would seem the suitable unit for the prophet to mention, while since no other is given when land measures are recorded, it seems only reasonable to use the same unit throughout. This also appears justified by the results of its application, as I go on to show.

† Another argument in favor of the middle cubit, I find in calculating the height of the steps of the House. The elevation of the house above the altar court is specified as a full reed of six cubits, and the ascent is by 10 steps (41:8 and 40:49, according to the reading of the LXX). Thus the six cubits of height were divided into 10 steps, each being therefore six-tenths (.6) of a cubit. The middle cubit equals 14.4 inches, so that each step would be 8.64 inches high. This is a reasonable height for steps of such a structure. But to use a cubit of larger standard would make them objectionably high. Even the 18 inch cubit would make each step 10.8 inches, not to mention the still larger or royal Egyptian cubit of about 21 inches.

Here a word of explanation must be given for a departure from the location of the Offering as usually given by Commentators. It has been customary to place it just north of the Dead Sea, and (because of calculating it by larger cubits) permitting it to extend across the Jordan, so going beyond the east boundary. This doubtless seemed necessary to allow for the Prince's portion on the west, but of course this placed both part of the holy offering and the Prince's portion beyond the limits of the land on the east. As already explained these difficulties are overcome by using the smaller cubit. In addition to this change the present writer also thinks it is better to place the Offering between the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea, as shown on the map. His reason for this change from the usual location is found in the prophecy of Zechariah, which states that the land is to be a great plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem (14:10). He found that the Offering measured by the smaller cubit so closely fitted the territory between these points as almost to be exact. Geba is about six miles north of Jerusalem, and Rimmon is identified with *Umm er Ramamin*, about 30 miles south of Jerusalem. The map shows that the Offering as calculated on the basis of the smaller cubit may be so placed that its northern and southern boundaries touch Geba and Rimmon respectively. It may also be noted that to pass through these points the Offering must be placed at the angle shown on the map, making the northern and eastern lines of the great square run east with an inclination of 4° to the south.*

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* In this connection it has been a matter of interest to consider the identification of **Ramet-el-Khulil**, a spot close to Hebron (see map), with the Ramah of Samuel's altar where Saul feasted with the prophet and was informed of his selection to be king. It is a location of sacred memories, for within an hour's walk of this Ramah is the ancient city of Kirjath-Arba, afterwards called Hebron, where three of the Patriarchs are buried.

The interest in this identification of Ramah chiefly lies in the finding at this location a large walled enclosure which evidently served as a place of sacrifice and worship. It is taken to be the high place of 1 Sam. 9:11-13, etc. Here, that is to Ramah, Samuel returned after his yearly circuit, "for there was his house, and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar to Jehovah" (1 Sam. 7: 17).

The structure referred to has been carefully examined and measured, with the result that it is found to be an enclosed space of 100 x 145 cubits, consisting of a court 100 cubits square with the additional space of 100 x 45 cubits divided into three parts of different levels, and these give evidence of being used for the work of the sacrifices and the ablutions of the priests, a well being in one corner, while niches in the wall seem to indicate the location of stone tables for preparing the sacrifices, similar to those specified by Ezekiel in connection with the North Gate of the inner court. The entrance to this enclosure was by an eastern gateway.

Dr. Caldecott, to whom reference has been made, thoroughly investigated this site. He has presented convincing evidence for its identification with this notable centre of religion and government in Samuel's day.

I call particular attention to the fact that a survey of this walled enclosure shows that it was built with "the north and south walls running east with an inclination of 4 degrees to the south, as recorded in the third volume of the

A further indication that this is the location of the heave offering may be found in the direction of the stream which issues from the House (47:1, 2, 8). This goes out toward the east country, down into the plain or Arabah (the name of the depression of the Jordan Valley, the Dead Sea, and southward to the Gulf of Akaba: see map), and into the sea, that is, the Dead Sea. In the location usually given to the Offering this stream, flowing east, would enter the River Jordan, *not the Sea;* but in the location here given the requirements are all met.

Another question remains. The holy heave offering is divided into three main parts, and we have before determined that the priests' portion is the central division; on which side then, are we to place the Levitical portion and that of the city? First, we may notice that in the location I have given to the Offering, the ancient city of Jerusalem lies in its northern part; then the distance between Geba and Jerusalem is about six miles, and the 5,000 reeds allotted for the city of Ezekel's vision is equal to 6.81 miles. This along with the fact that the prophecies do not intimate any change of site for the Millennial city, but rather maintain identity all through, seem to suggest that we are to place the city and its environs on the north side of the priests' portion. If we thus locate it on the north side of this great uplifted plain, the mountain of the Lord's house, may we not think of this answering to the Psalmist's description of the city of the future: "Great is Jehovah, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, His holy hill. Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north,

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Survey of Western Palestine." This appears as the angle of inclination which fits the placement of the heave offering of Ezekiel between Geba and Rimmon (see map). Perhaps this has some significance, or is it mere coincidence?

It may not be amiss to quote briefly from Dr. Caldecott as to this very interesting site. He says:

"The special ruin to which I refer is a large rectangular ground-figure enclosed within monolithic stone walls, standing near to, though not visible from, the ancient highway leading from Jerusalem to Hebron. Countless travellers have looked on this mysterious handiwork of man with reverence and wonder. Each must have speculated as to who reared its massive masonry, and for what purpose. Archaeologists have agreed that we have not here the remains of a church. Nor could these low walls of solid stone have been those of any military fortification, as the work is of too refined and time-engrossing a character to have been done for purposes of war . . . the four walls which formed the enclosure [are not perfect]. That on the south side is in almost unbroken condition, many of its stones being 12 and 15 feet in length, laid without mortar, and truly squared. The west wall is in fair condition, as is a portion on the north side. The east wall has almost completely disappeared, though its line can still be traced. There is thus no difficulty in determining the size of the enclosure as originally constructed."

One surprising correspondence, I notice, between this structure and that of Ezekiel is found in the wall being 6 cubits high in both. Furthermore, Dr. Caldecott found that the cubit of 14.4 inches proved to be the common denominator of all the dimensions of original work still standing. (Quotations and references are from "The Tabernacle, its History and Structure," 2nd edition, by Dr. Caldecott.)

the city of the great King" (Ps. 48: 1, 2; *Num. Bible*). I have ventured to so show the city, placing the Levitical portion as the southern division of the Offering. In so placing the three parts of this Offering I am not forgetting that in the text where they are described the priests' portion is mentioned first, then the Levitical, and lastly the city, making it appear that such is the order from north to south. But as I have already pointed out, the Sanctuary is in the midst, and that being in the priests' part, necessitates making this the central division of the whole Offering. This seems to show that after specifying the whole Offering, the description follows along the line of the relative importance of the several parts, rather than giving their geographical order. From this point of view the order is quite natural, for certainly the priests' portion in which the Sanctuary is located is of first importance, while that of the Levites falls into the second place, both of these parts being considered distinctly holy; then lastly the part which is called "a common place for the city, for dwellings and for suburbs" (48:15). Thus the order of thought which governs throughout these visions governs in this also, namely, that what has to do with God, His holiness and glory, is always given first place. This is a lesson we may well take to heart, and consider our ways in its searching light, for who more than we should be ever careful to give Him His rightful place, caring for His honor, rendering happy obedience to His blessed will?

Without a doubt there are spiritual lessons to learn from the order and relation of the tribes, but these we will look at in their place.

As to the Sanctuary enclosure itself, this is shown by the outline plan. Full references to the text accompany this plan. The Gate buildings and the Temple itself are illustrated on separate plans drawn to a larger scale. Elevations of the buildings have not been attempted since measurements of height are not given. It is distinctly a plan which the prophet spreads out before us, for the only certain features of height are found in the number of steps specified for each court and the Temple square, except in the case of the altar.

SOME CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

As a help to understand the structure of the Gate-buildings, it may be useful to define some of the terms. First, the "threshold" is in Hebrew *saph*, a word suggesting the idea of a vestibule. "Lodge" is *tah;* it occurs only in Ezek. 40, 1 Kings 14: 28 and 2 Chron. 12:11, being rendered in the last two passages as "guard-chamber." The word therefore denotes a room of some kind. *Tah* is connected with a primitive root, meaning to mark off or out, used only in Num. 34:7, 8, for marking out the border of the land, and so we get the idea of a room that is marked out in some special way within a larger space. This suggests and appears to warrant arranging the lodges of the Gate-buildings as shown on the plan. This seems confirmed by the fact that the posts of these lodges are said to be "within the gate" (ver. 16). The word for posts is considered a little later.

A different word from *tah* is used for the chambers in the court, namely *lishkah*, which indicates a rather spacious room. Compare 1 Sam. 9:22. This word is from a root meaning to be joined, to adhere to, and so suitably describes the chambers around the court as being built in conjunction with its wall while also being connected or joined to each other in succession. The same word is used for the Chamber-buildings situated at the north and south sides of the separate place, doubtless because of similar construction and size.

Again a different word is used for the side-chambers of the House. It is *tsalah*, meaning a rib, literally of the body, or figuratively the sides or leaves of a double door; hence a side, and so architecturally, in the plural, *ribs* of a building, planks for wainscotting (1 Kings 6: 15; 7: 3): so this word fitly describes these side-chambers which like ribs or side planks go round the House.

"Porch" is *ulam*, from *alam*, which means "to tie fast," and so applies to a vestibule or porch as *bound* to the building.

"Post," or posts, is *ayil*, anything strong, and used for an oak or other strong tree, also for a ram, and architecturally a lintel as well as a post, or pilaster, as being a strong support. Thus it applies to a wall that projects forward, forming what serves as a partition or division, and also the jamb of an entry or doorway. This suggests that what is called the posts of the lodges "within the gate" are sections of wall projecting from the outer walls into the gate-building,

so marking off these lodges from the surrounding space, an idea applicable to these lodges from the Hebrew word used for them, as we have seen. It is specified that these lodges and their posts had windows, and this would indicate that we are not to think of the posts as pillars or columns but sections of wall. (See plan in the following pages.)

"Border" is *gebul*. It is the usual word for border, that is, the boundary of any given territory. It is so used repeatedly in Ezek. 48, and elsewhere. That which is so called in the Gate-buildings is before the lodges and measured one cubit. This indicates something in the nature of a barrier, or fence, which marks off the lodges from the central corridor, so protecting them from encroachment on the part of the passing crowd. This would be necessary if, as supposed, these lodges were used by the guards or keepers of the gate. The entrances to them would seem to be in the outer walls, and so lead into the outer court. This conclusion is drawn from ver. 13 in which the total measurement across the gate is given, and the fact noted that entry is opposite entry.

Finally, we have the word rendered "projections." This is *elam*, and is probably from *ayil* for posts, a word we have already considered. In the text it occurs in the plural only, and is variously taken to mean a colonnade, or vestibules, porches, recesses. It is conceded to be a word difficult to understand and apply. From its use in this chapter (vers. 16, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 36, uniformly rendered "projections" in the accompanying text) it is clearly distinguished from "posts." Whatever the word signifies has *windows* as mentioned in vers. 16, 25, 29, 33; an exception is the North inner gate, in connection with which they are not specified (ver. 36). Again, what this word signifies is said to be *before the steps* in the North and South gates of the outer court, but this is not said in connection with the East gate. As to the South and East gates of the inner court, what this word signifies is said to be *toward the outer court;* but as to the North gate no mention is made, and the text reads, "its *posts* toward the outer court"—the word for posts appearing instead of that rendered "projections" as in the other cases, although this word occurs in its usual connection in ver. 34 as compared with the description of the other gates. It may be further noted that in each instance there follows the mention of the steps, and this seems to bring them and whatever this word signifies into close relation. Ver. 30 gives the only dimensions of these so-called "projections." But another difficulty confronts us here. Of this verse, Davidson says, it "is wanting in the LXX and some MSS., and in others deleted. No object belonging to the gateways has

hitherto been mentioned to which the measurements can apply. The verse may have arisen from an inaccurate repetition of the measurements given in the previous verse." In the text the word appears as plural, but he considers this form of doubtful authenticity, and says that there is no evidence that the word has any other sense than "porch." While to adopt this meets some of the difficulties, it does not solve all. If we take it to be singular, and to mean porch, then this determines that the porch of the inner gates is at the end toward the outer court; this apparently agrees with what is said of the porch of the North inner gate, for in vers. 38-42 the porch appears to be in close relation to the ascent or the steps of this gate; but when we come to the outer gates we find that what this word speaks of, and which Davidson considers should mean "porch," is also stated to be "before the steps," whereas the porch of these gates is specifically stated to be "toward the House" (ver. 9), which means at the inner end of the gate and not the front end where the steps are located; and further this inner location of the porch of these gates seems confirmed by what is said of the Prince who eats in it before the Lord (ch. 44: 3)—this would not be possible in the *shut* East gate if the porch was at the end where the steps ascend to it. In view of this, if we accept the suggestion and read "porch" for "projections," we must conclude that the outer gates had two porches, one at each end, while the inner gates had only one at the end toward the outer court. There seems nothing to warrant the former conclusion.

After all there seems no better solution than to consider the term to refer to the sections of wall which project from the posts within the gate which are between the lodges, and which therefore form the lodges and are joined by the posts (wall) which close these lodges toward the outer court, as indicated on the plan. This arrangement meets the several features already mentioned in regard to these parts, or, as we shall call them, "wall-projections." They are thus distinguished from the posts, and all have windows. They appear before the steps in the sense of facing one as the ascent is made, the steps being the full width of the gate-building. Then these wall-projections of the inner gates could be rightly specified as toward the outer court since these gates are situated wholly in that court (see outline plan). This item of information has its importance, for it establishes the location of these inner gates in reference to the courts. Apparently the one point of difference between the outer and inner gates is that in the latter the porch is situated at the outer end toward the outer court, and in the former at the inner end toward the House.

Two or three other points remain. Ver. 11 presents a difficulty. The statement, "the length of the gate 13 cubits," seems impossible to reconcile with the other measurements and preserve the 50 cubits given in ver. 15, for as a measurement of length it would naturally run from east to west. The LXX has "breadth" in place of length. A possible solution is that this dimension refers to what is primarily considered the gate, namely the gate-*entry* already specified as 10 cubits in breadth, plus the walls of 1½ cubits on each side, making up the 13 cubits of this verse. Thus it would be proper to speak of the breadth of the gate as being this size, and all the other parts as "wall-projections" which, as may be seen by the plan, make up the 25 cubits of breadth given in ver. 13.

Ver. 14 is obscure. "He made posts of 60 cubits, and up to the posts was the court of the gate round about." The reading of the LXX affords no real help. Some take this as applying to the posts of the porch in ver. 9, making it mean their height, comparing them to the pylons of Egyptian structures or the obelisks set up before the doors of their temples. But the posts in ver. 9 are only 2 cubits (2.88 feet), and a height of 60 cubits (72 feet) is out of all proportion and an improbable construction. An added difficulty is the word *made* when elsewhere in this part it is a matter of measurement. The latter part of the verse, though not easy to understand, may mean that the court surrounded the gate on all three sides, but as to the former statement a really satisfactory solution does not seem possible at present.

Considering these textual difficulties, the plan here proposed seems to give, as near as now attainable, an intelligible lay-out of these gate-buildings.

THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE DEAD SEA

"The Dead Sea receives, beside the Jordan, four or five smaller streams, but has no relief for its waters, except through evaporation. This is raised to enormous proportions by the fervent heat which prevails in the sunken valley during the greater part of the year. The extracted moisture usually forms a haze impenetrable to the eye for more than a few miles, but sometimes vast columns of mist rear themselves from the sea, heavy clouds are formed above, and thunderstorms, the more violent for their narrow confines, rage, as the torn coasts testify, with lightning and floods of rain... While the water of the ocean contains 4 to 6 per cent of solids in solution, the Dead Sea holds from 24 to 26 per cent, or five times as much. The water is very nauseous to the taste and oily to the touch, leaving on the skin, when it dries, a thick crust of salt. But it is very brilliant, seen from far away no lake on earth looks more blue and beautiful. Swim out upon it, and at the depth of twenty feet you can count the pebbles through the transparent waters....The surface is generally smooth, the heavy water rises not easily; but when in storm it does rise, the waves are immensely powerful...like the blows of a sledge hammer. No fish can exist in the waters, nor is it proved that any low forms of life have been discovered.

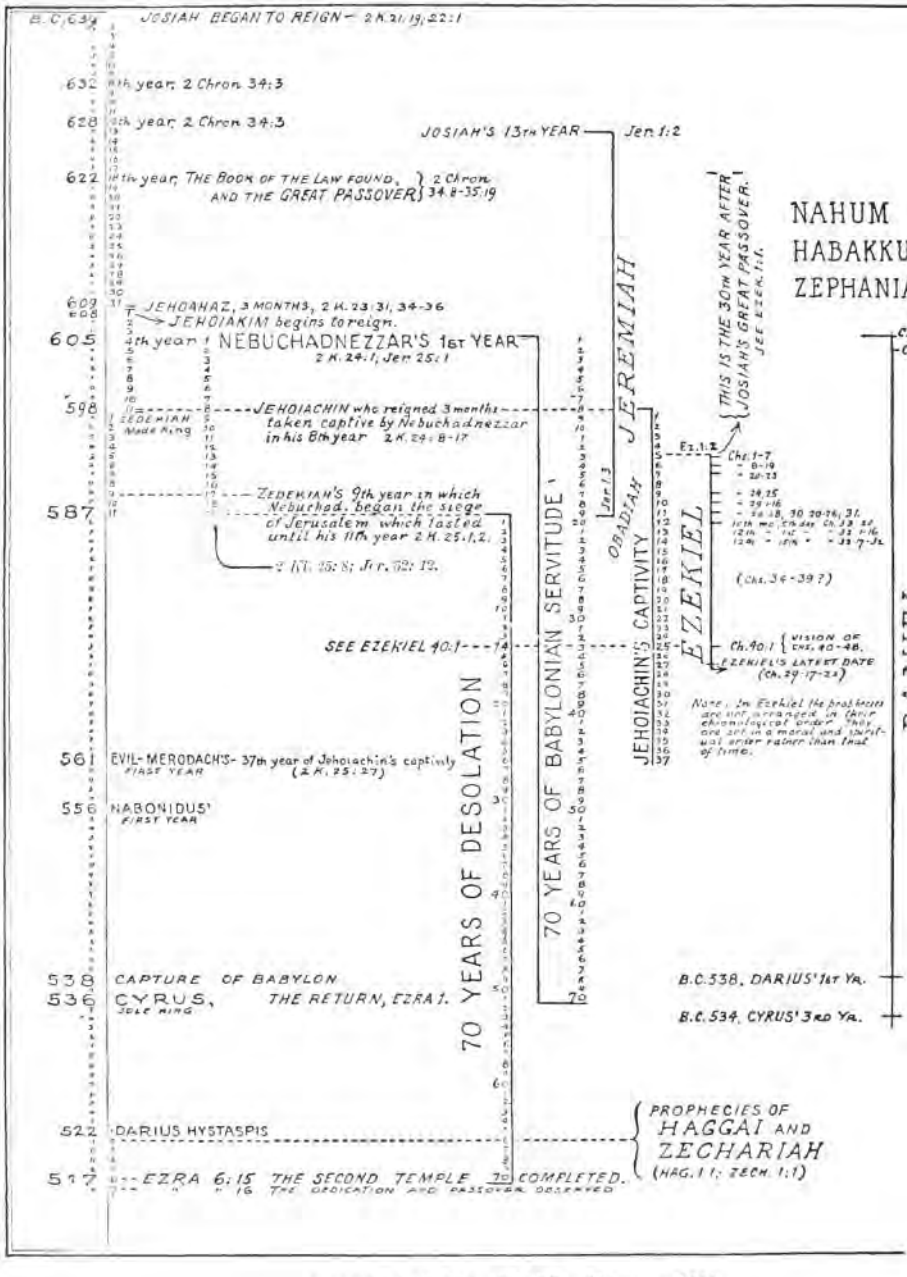
"These bitter and imprisoned waters, that are yet so blue and brilliant, chafe a low beach of gravel, varied by marl or salted marsh ...but the gravel is crowned with an almost constant hedge of driftwood, every particle of which is stripped of bark and bleached, while much of it glitters with salt. You could not imagine a more proper crown for Death. With this the brilliant illusion of the Dead Sea fades, and everywhere beyond, violence and desolation reign supreme. If the coast is flat you have salt-pans or a briny swamp; if terraced there is a yellow, scurfy stretch of soil, with a few thorn bushes and succulent weeds. Ancient beaches of the sea are visible all around it, steep banks from five to fifty feet of stained and greasy marl, very friable, with heaps of rubbish at their feet, and crowned by nothing but their own bare, crumbling brows. Some hold that these gave the region its ancient name, the Vale of Siddim; and in truth it is they which chiefly haunt one's memory of the Dead Sea. Last

crumbling shelves of the upper world, there are not in nature more weird symbols of forsakenness and desolation...

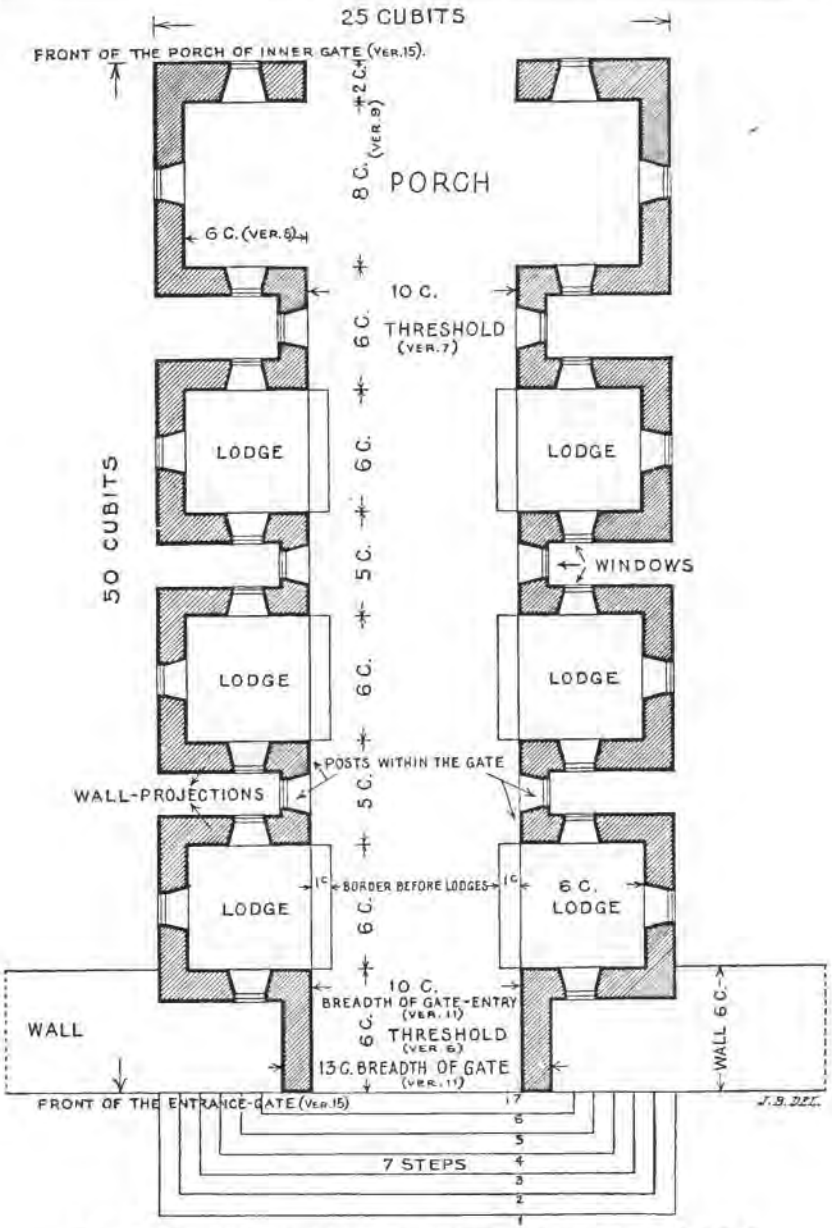
"In this awful hollow [which seems like a] bit of the infernal regions come up to the surface, this hell [as the inhabitants sometimes call it] with the sun shining into it," was the scene of one of God's most awful judgments on human sin. "The glare of Sodom and Gomorrah is flung down the whole length of Scripture history. It is the popular and standard judgment on human sin. The story is told in Genesis; it is applied in Deuteronomy, by Amos, by Isaiah, by Jeremiah, by Zephaniah, in Lamentations, and by Ezekiel. Our Lord Himself employs it more than once as the figure of the judgment. He threatens it upon cities where the Word is preached in vain, and there we feel the flame scorch our own cheeks. Paul, Peter, Jude, all make mention of it. In the Apocalypse the great city of sin is spiritually called Sodom.....

"It is in accordance with the grace of God, making that first which was last and that last which was first, that this awful vale of judgment should be the scene of one of the most lively and stupendous hopes of prophecy."

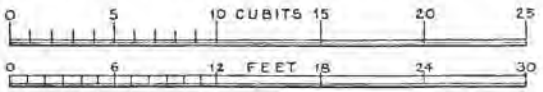
("Historical Geography of the Holy Land," Geo. Adam Smith.)



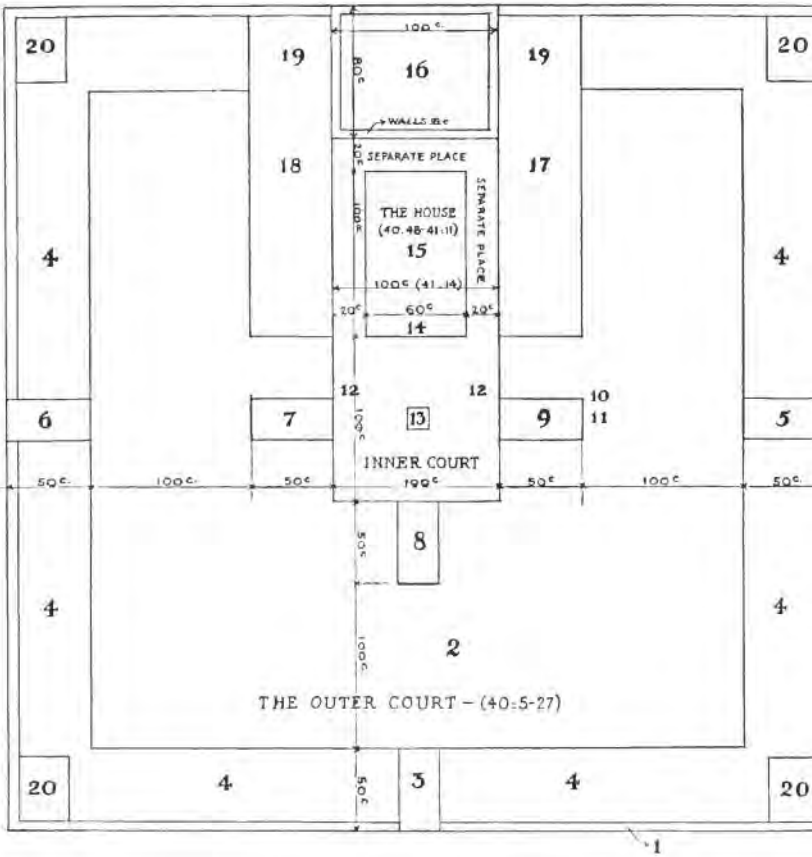
CHRONOLOGICAL CHART (Notes, p. 244)



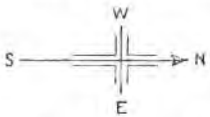
PLAN OF THE GATE BUILDINGS

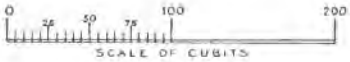


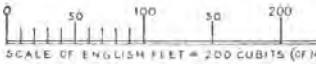
OUTLINE PLAN OF THE COURTS AND TEMPLE

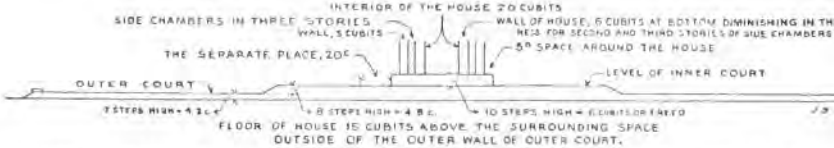


EACH SIDE OF SQUARE 500 CUBITS







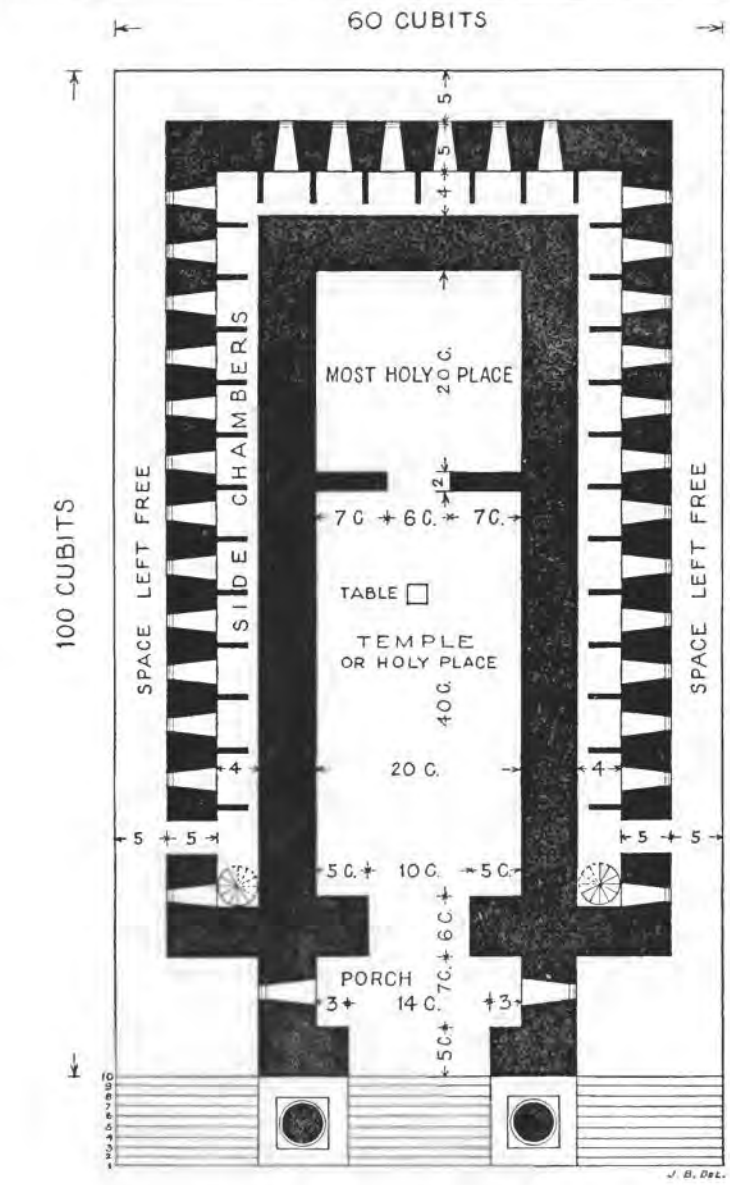


CROSS SECTION SHOWING THE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF THE COURTS AND THE HOUS

REFERENCES TO OUTLINE PLAN

1.—Outer wall around court (ch. 40: 5).
2.—Outer court, its details (ch. 40: 6-27).
3.—East Gate of outer court (ch. 40: 6-16).
4.—Cells and pavement around the outer court, arranged on three sides in groups of five on each side of the Gate buildings (ch. 40: 17-19).
5.—North Gate of Outer court (ch. 40: 20-23).
6.—South Gate of Outer court (ch. 40: 24-27).
7.—South Gate of Inner court (ch. 40: 28-31).
8.—East Gate of Inner court (ch. 40: 32-34).
9.—North Gate of Inner court (ch. 40: 35-37).
10.—Cell for washing the Burnt offering near North Gate—text does not definitely fix the location (ch. 40: 38).
11.—Sacrificial tables connected with the North Gate. These are placed in the porch of the Gate and adjacent to its ascent (ch. 40: 39-43).
12.—Cells for the priests who are keepers of the charge of the House and the Altar—text does not definitely fix the location except that they are said to be outside the inner gate, in the inner court (ch. 40: 44-46).
13.—The Altar (ch. 40: 47). For its dimensions see ch. 43:13-17.
14.—Porch of the House (ch. 40: 48, 49).
15.—The Temple itself, holy and most holy places, the side chambers and the separate place (ch. 41: 1-11).
16.—The building to the west of the House, and a summary of the principal measurements (ch. 41: 12-15).
17.—The cell building on the north side of the separate place (ch. 42: 1-9).
18.—The cell building on the south side of the separate place* (ch. 42: 10-14).
19.—Cooking places for the priests located at the west of the cell buildings devoted to their use—see 17 and 18 (ch. 46: 19, 20).
20.—Cooking places for the sacrifices of the people (ch. 46: 21-24).

* Note. The text describing these two buildings is difficult to interpret, and in certain features obscure. The general location is clear, and this is indicated on the plan; but the actual arrangement of the several parts presents a problem to which a really satisfactory solution is hard to find.



PLAN OF THE HOUSE

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FEET 0 6 12 24

DIAGRAM OF THE CITY-GATES

CHAP. 48 : 30-35

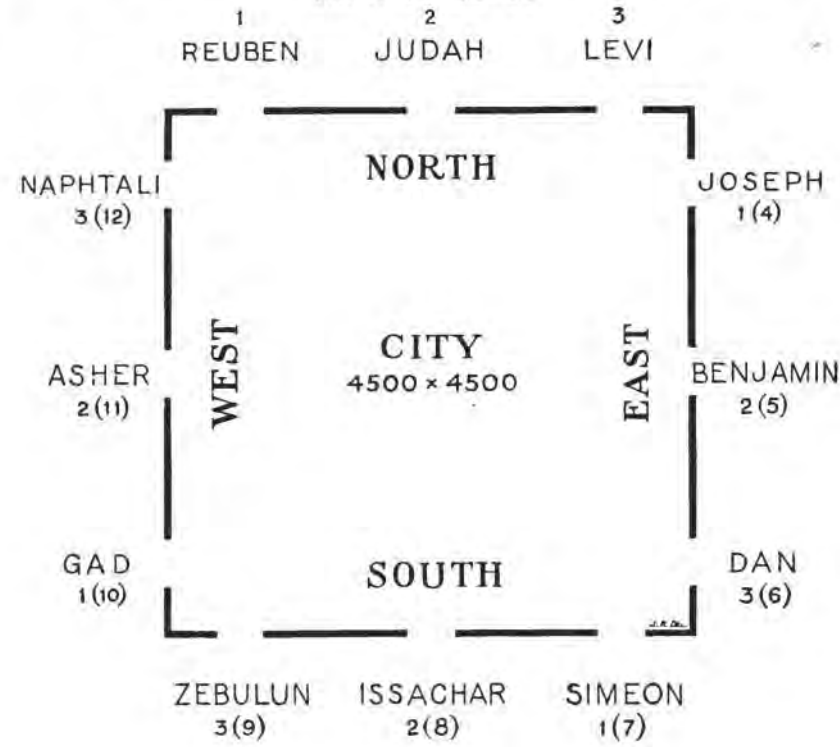
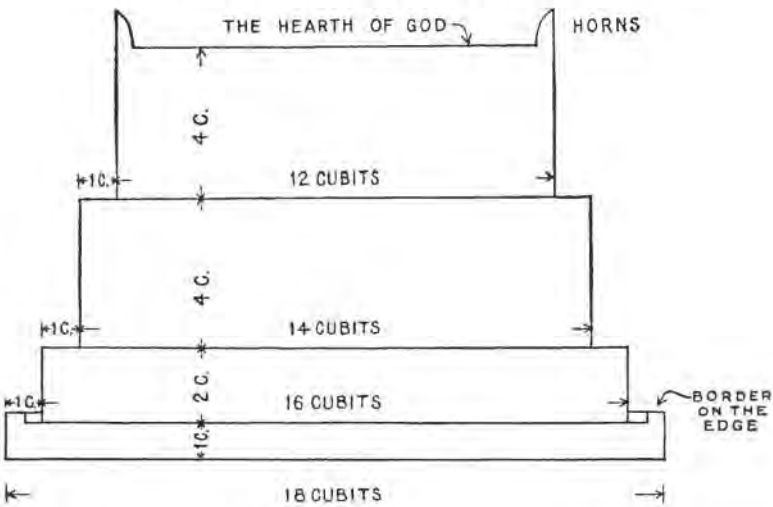
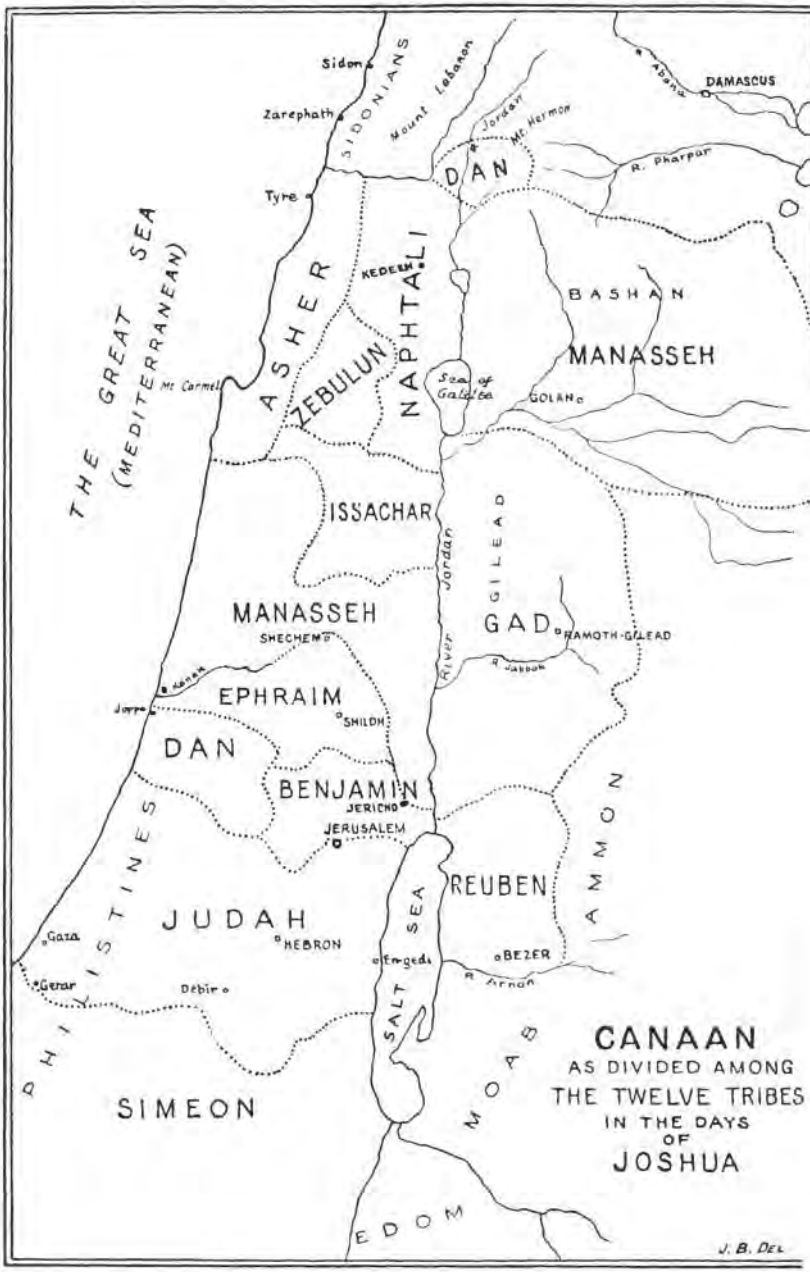
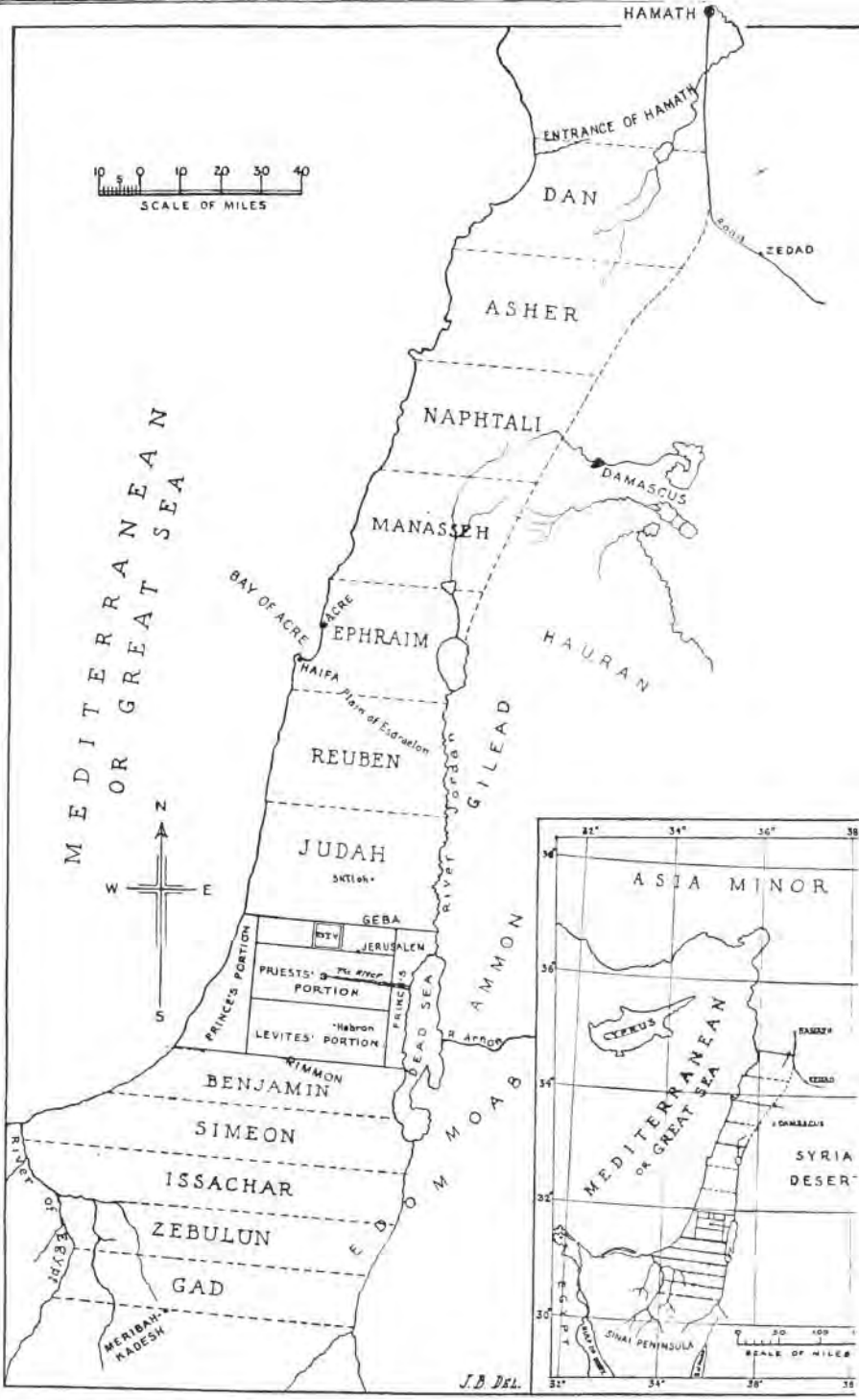


DIAGRAM OF THE ALTAR




Sidon
Zarephath
SIDONIANS
Mount Lebanon
Abana
DAMASCUS
Jordan
Mt. Hermon
DAN
R. Pharpar
Tyre
THE GREAT SEA (MEDITERRANEAN)
ASHER
KEDESH
NAPHTALI
BASHAN
MANASSEH
Mt. Carmel
ZEBULUN
Sea of Galilee
GOLAN
ISSACHAR
Jordan River
GILEAD
MANASSEH
SHECHEM
GAD
RAMOTH-GILEAD
R. Jabbok
Joppa
EPHRAIM
SHILOH
DAN
BENJAMIN
JERICHO
JERUSALEM
PHILISTINES
REUBEN
AMMON
JUDAH
Gaza
HEBRON
Engedi
BEZER
R. Arnon
Gerar
Debir
SALT SEA
MOAB
CANAAN
AS DIVIDED AMONG
THE TWELVE TRIBES
IN THE DAYS
OF
JOSHUA
SIMEON
EDOM
J. B. Del



Future Division of the Land

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THE

NUMERICAL BIBLE

BEING

A REVISED TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

Arranged, Divided, and Briefly Characterized

ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THEIR

NUMERICAL STRUCTURE

THE GOSPELS

THIRD EDITION

NEW YORK
LOIZEAUX BROTHERS, BIBLE TRUTH DEPOT
1 East 13th Street

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PRINTED AT

THE BIBLE TRUTH PRESS, 183 EAST 13TH STREET,

NEW YORK

PREFACE.

IN sending out the present volume of the Numerical Bible, it is a joy to realize that it is another witness to that which in our day is assailed on every hand, the absolute perfection of the Inspired Word. This very perfection renders, indeed, every testimony of this kind so feeble in comparison that it must make every attempt to show it forth in some sense a matter of humiliation. It will ever remain its own only-competent witness; and a large part of our work has to be simply the removal of that which through the incompetence of its friends, much more than the wanton malice of its foes, has obscured for many the light which shines forth from it. Nor can one pretend that even while seeking to do this, there may not be the adding of fresh mistakes to the number of those that have gone before. One's comfort only can be that after all, it is the nature of light to shine; and that that which has this self-evidence for oneself may be trusted to manifest it also to the eyes of others. The perfection of the Word cannot of course be demonstrated by that which is confessedly itself imperfect; yet so much may be seen as to produce conviction in the soul as to what is not seen. We have the highest witness that can be, that "Scripture cannot be broken;" and it is joy to know that every attempt to show the contrary has always resulted in ampler confirmation of its truth. But there is more than this: for God has ordained that we should in the reception of even the Word of truth, be helpers to one another; and thus it is that the Spirit of God testifies to our need of one another, and to His own abiding Presence in the Church. I have for my own part sought to keep this in mind, and have not willingly neglected any available means of knowledge. My indebtedness to those who have gone before me is far too great to be even realized, much as I have desired, without despising any help, to read Scripture for myself in dependence on that "Unction from the Holy One," by which even the "babes" may be delivered from helpless dependence upon any mere human teacher. That those who take up the present volume may do it in this spirit also is my heartfelt desire.

The references are here, as in all these volumes, the work of Mr. SAMUEL RIDOUT, to whom its readers, with myself, are also indebted for many helpful suggestions as to the translation, as in other ways.

F. W. GRANT.

Plainfield, N. J.
June, 1899.

ORDER AND DIVISIONS OF THE BOOKS.

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

1. THE BOOKS OF THE LAW :—
   1. Genesis.
   2. Exodus.
   3. Leviticus.
   4. Numbers.
   5. Deuteronomy.

2. THE COVENANT-HISTORY :—
   1. Joshua.
   2. Judges.
      Ruth.
   3. Kings :—
      First Book (*Samuel*).
      Second Book (*Kings*).
   4. Captivity-Books :—
      Ezra.
      Nehemiah.
      Esther.
   5. Chronicles.

3. THE PROPHETS :—
   1. Isaiah.
   2. Jeremiah.
      Lamentations.
   3. Ezekiel.
   4. Daniel.
   5. The Book of Minor Prophets:—
      1. *Hosea.* *Amos.* *Micah.*
      2. *Joel.* *Obadiah.* *Jonah.*
      3. *Nahum.* *Habakkuk.* *Zephaniah.*
      4. *Haggai.* *Zechariah.* *Malachi.*

4. THE PSALM-BOOKS:—
   1. The Psalms.
   2. Job.
   3. Solomon's Song.
   4. Ecclesiastes.
   5. Proverbs.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

1. THE GOSPELS :—
   1. Matthew. Mark. Luke.
   2. John.

2. THE ACTS.

3. THE PAULINE EPISTLES :—
   1. Romans. Galatians. Ephesians. Colossians. *Philemon.* Philippians.
   2. Thessalonians. *First Epistle.* *Second Epistle.* Corinthians. *First Epistle.* *Second Epistle.* Hebrews. Timothy. *First Epistle.* *Second Epistle.* Titus.

4. THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES :—
   1. Peter.
      First Epistle.
      Second Epistle.
   2. James.
   3. John.
      First Epistle.
      Second Epistle.
      Third Epistle.
   4. Jude.

5. REVELATION.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NUMERALS.

The reason for the significance must be sought in previous volumes, especially in Appendix II. to the Volume on the Psalms.

ONE.

Soleness, singularity, uniqueness; solitariness, barrenness.
Sufficiency, power, independency, pride, rebellion.
Identity, unchangeableness, consistency, perpetuity, truth, knowledge.

(UNITY.)

Unity, at-oneness, harmony, congruity, integrity, righteousness, obedience, concord, peace.

(PRIMACY.)

Supremacy, headship, rule; beginning, cause, occasion, source, foundation, ground, plea.

(COMBINATIONS OF MEANINGS.)

Life, personality, will. Choice, election. Grace.
God, Almighty, Eternal, Jehovah, Father.

TWO.

(RELATION.)

Help, support, confirmation, assurance, competent testimony.
Seconding, preservation, deliverance, salvation. Service, ministry.
Addition, increase, growth; progress, movement, activity.
Attachment, love, desire, prayer. Association, partnership, fellowship.

(SECOND.)

Dependence, faith. Inferiority, lowliness, humiliation, subjection.

(DIFFERENCE.)

Diversity, contrast; contradiction, opposition, conflict, enmity.
Double-mindedness, duplicity, deceit.

(DIVISION.)

Separation, analysis, differentiation, discernment; judgment, wisdom; sight.
Decay, death, dissolution.
Christ, Second Person, God and Man, Second Man, Word of God, Witness, Saviour, Servant, Minister. Cross. Soul. Woman.

THREE.

(THREE DIMENSIONS.)

Solidity; reality, realization, fulfilment, fulness; manifestation. Sanctuary; glory, praise. Name.

(THREE STRAIGHT LINES INCLOSE A SPACE.)

Setting apart for purpose; specialization, sanctification, holiness; transformation. Dwelling-place, possession, portion. Marriage. Ban.

(THIRD LINE OF A TRIANGLE RETURNS TO THE FIRST.)

Resurrection; return, revival, recovery; reproduction. Spirit.

FOUR.

Yieldingness, weakness; meekness, mercy. Failure, testing; experience; transitoriness, change.
Creature, earth, walk on earth, world.

FIVE.

God in government; capacity, responsibility, exercise, way and end; conditions.
Weak with the Strong; Man with God; Immanuel.

SIX.

Manifestation or fulness of evil. Work-day week; limit, discipline; mastery, overcoming.

SEVEN.

Completeness, perfection; rest.

EIGHT.

New in contrast with the Old.

TEN.

Simply a 5 by 2.

TWELVE.

The manifest rule of God.

INTRODUCTION.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE meaning of the title given to the latter and distinctively Christian portion of the inspired Word is not in dispute. The Greek word (διαθηκη) means both "covenant" and "testament," and apparently in this very relation (compare Heb. ix. 15, 16); though, as in contrast with the "Old Covenant," the law, we naturally find most emphasis laid upon the former significance. "Covenant," says Fausset, "expresses its obligatory character, God having bound Himself by promise. 'Testament' expresses that, unlike other covenants, it is not a matter of bargaining, but all of God's grace, just as a testator has absolute power to do what he will with his own. Jesus' *death* brings the will of God in our favor into force."

Old Covenant and New Covenant are, as law and grace, completely opposed to one another. As the apostle argues, so absolutely is this true here that when the latter comes in the former must give way, to disappear before it (Heb. viii. 13); and yet they are two parts of one testimony, both necessary to the Scripture rule with regard to testimony, and answering, in their very contrast to each other to the inherent reason for its being twofold. "Who that has considered it in the least but must appreciate the power of this for conviction? For such power in twofold witness proceeds largely from the diversity of character and interest that they present. They are otherwise different,—contrasted; yet here they agree: different in such sort that you realize there is no collusion between them,—no treachery. Nothing but the necessary unity of truth could make them one. And how will this be strengthened in proportion as the contrast is manifold, and yet the unity pervasive: and this in the two Testaments is what so demonstrates them to be of God.

"The Old Testament is in Hebrew, the language of a special people, with whose history it has grown up, and to whom it addresses itself. It is the religion of a nation, one of the families of the earth, its horizon earthly, its sanctuary a worldly one, its services ritualistic, ornate,

elaborate, intrusted to a special priesthood. God is here behind a veil which none can penetrate; man—all men—are shut out; none can see Him and live; for, merciful as He is, He cannot clear the guilty, and who (let him do his best) is *not* guilty?

"This legal, sacerdotal, exclusive system, the incarnation of conscience, but a bad conscience, in what utter contrast is it to the free, spiritual, all-embracing spirit of Christianity! 'The Lord has said that He would dwell in the thick darkness,' says Solomon on the day of the dedication of the temple. (1 Kings viii. 12.) 'We walk in the light as God is in the light,' answers the apostle. (1 Jno. i. 7.) 'Who can by no means clear the guilty,' says the Old Testament voice. (Ex. xxxiv. 7.) 'That justifieth the ungodly,' says again the New Testament. (Rom. iv. 5.) 'No man can see Me and live,' is the elder utterance. (Ex. xxxiii. 20.) 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father,' are His words who is Himself the spirit incarnate of the New. (Jno. xiv. 9.)

"Here are two witnesses how diverse: can it be that, after all, under these statements, so seemingly conflicting, there is yet a perfect unity? can there be a fullness of truth which embraces and harmonizes all? Yes, surely; admit what the Old Testament so abundantly confirms and illustrates, the essential opposition between law and grace, yet that the first is handmaid to the other;—then, on the basis of law, all the Old Testament utterances are but the sentence of God upon the self-righteousness of man; while the New Testament reveals the heart of God in grace, upon the basis of a righteousness, by which the law also is magnified and made honorable, and able to forego its penal claim."*

Thus this diverse testimony is all the more conclusive for being diverse. And the number two in itself speaks of diversity, as is plain. The foundation also of the new covenant or New Testament is the Cross; and the Cross receives and unites these diverse elements. It is curse and blessing,—the curse of the law taken and removed. It is humiliation and glory. It is the sin of man at its worst, and the love of God in its fullest display. The shed blood of Christ is the "blood of the new covenant," and the cup at His supper is "the new covenant (or testament) in His blood." (Matt. xxvi. 28; Lu. xxii. 20.) Thus the New Testament holds up the Cross as its emblem; and from Matthew to Revelation it is ever before us.

Clearly, the New Testament stands as a second part of the Bible, in contrast with yet confirmation and interpretation of the first. It is the substance of former shadows, but thus also in contrast with them. It is for men at large instead of a single nation; for the family of faith, who are now as such brought into a place of recognized relationship with God, and as called out of the world become a heavenly and not an earthly people.

* "Spiritual Law in the Natural World," pp. 32–34.

But it is also a *fifth Pentateuch*, the Old Testament being made up of four Pentateuchs, as we have elsewhere seen. Nor is this number 5 in contradiction to the other number which it bears: for every 5 is also a two: it is made up of two numbers 4+1, and these two are in perfect contrast with one another, though coming thus together. Four is the number of frailty—of the creature. One is the number of strength and of God. Five brings these together in itself, and is the number of Immanuel therefore—"God with us"* This is surely the very meaning of the new covenant: "I will be their God;" and our Immanuel, Jesus, is the personal fulfillment of it. He is the "Mediator of the new covenant," the Reconciler of God and man. Thus, as a fifth Pentateuch, the New Testament is perfectly in agreement with its character as the second part of Scripture. The numbers two and five both speak of Jesus, and as no other numbers do. It is no wonder that here they should come together. For Scripture has its own arithmetic as Nature has: and nothing that is, save man, can be ever wanting in its Maker's praise.

The Pentateuchal Structure.

Taking up the New Testament now, to look deeper into it, we find it has twenty-seven books in all, as the Old Testament has really thirty-six; the three double historical books of the latter being not originally so divided.† The one is therefore 3×12; the other is 3^3. The number of revelation (or divine manifestation), 3, enters into both; but in the Old Testament it is in connection with the number of manifest government: it is God upon the throne throughout, as "Law" means; whereas in the New Testament we have only the 3 itself, but *cubed*, which speaks of solidity—*of contents*. God is manifest all through; there are no clouds and darkness round about Him, to hide the glory of what He is: He is "Light," and He is "*in* the light."

Thus as the manifestation of God to man, Father, Son and Spirit are now fully revealed. Beautifully we find this first, where, at His baptism by John, Christ comes forward to take up His work among men,—the whole Godhead in wondrous fellowship in that salvation.

Answering to this also, and as the necessary response on man's part, the full sanctification of the Spirit is announced and realized. The things which Moses had to suffer for the hardness of men's hearts are now refused: "perfection" has in this sense come, that which "made nothing perfect" has (dispensationally) passed away.

Thus the numerals still bring out the character of what is here before us. But there is more than this: for these twenty-seven books fall into five divisions,—in fact a Pentateuch, of Gospels, Acts, Pauline epistles, Catholic epistles, Revelation. The divisions are not based upon their

* See the appendix for all numerical symbolism; or the former volumes.

† The division is due to the Septuagint.

form: for, in that case, the Gospels and Acts would go together as history, just as the Pauline and Catholic would all be epistles. There are epistles also in the book of Revelation. It is plain that we could not, therefore, divide them in this way; we must look more deeply into what is so presented to us, and then we shall find that they are a Pentateuch in contents as well as form, and that the structure is here as elsewhere in Scripture, throughout numerical.

1. The Gospels.

The Gospels are, in that case, of course, the Genesis. They are the new "beginning," which the apostle John in his first epistle refers to constantly as that. In Christ, "that Eternal Life which was with the Father" shines here, without fleck or stain,—"the Light of men." Head of new creation, He is the "Father of eternity"—of that which, as approved of God, abides. The Gospels are the foundation upon which the whole superstructure of Christian truth is reared, and they have always opened the canon of the New Testament. No other place would be possible to them at all.

2. The Acts.

As indisputably as the Gospels are the Genesis, the book of the Acts is the Exodus of the New Testament. It is that redemption from legal bondage of the people of God, (not now a nation but the family of faith,) of which the epistle to the Galatians speaks doctrinally. In the Acts we have the history of the deliverance, the large part of it being taken up with the labors of Paul, the instrument mainly used of God in bringing it about. Beginning with Jerusalem and its rejection of the risen and ascended Christ, it shows us thereupon the reception of the Samaritans, and then of the Gentiles in the persons of Cornelius and his household; the apostle of the circumcision being made to open the door to them. We have then the conversion of Saul, the scattering of the Jerusalem saints by persecution, the new Gentile assembly formed at Antioch, and the going forth from thence of Saul and Barnabas on their mission to the nations.

The question is then raised, Is the law to put its yoke upon these new converts? and that is decided in the negative at Jerusalem itself. The second missionary journey of the apostle follows, the Gentile work enlarging continually. But the Jewish disciples are still zealous for the law, and from the hostility of the unbelievers in Jerusalem the apostle of the Gentiles finds refuge only in a Roman prison. The last chapter narrates the final interview of the apostle with the Jews at Rome, closing with his definitive word, that "the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it."

3. The Epistles of Paul.

The order of the epistles varies somewhat in different MSS.; and in the east, as it would seem, the epistles styled "catholic," because not

addressed to any distinct churches or individuals, preceded those of Paul. In the west, on the other hand, the order was in this respect as found in our common Bibles.

But if the numerical (and Pentateuchal) system has any claim to be considered divine, the Pauline epistles, and not the Catholic, must stand as the third division of the New Testament books. Paul it is who by his doctrine establishes the soul before God, opening for us the heavenly sanctuary itself, to bring us in there in the Person of our Representative, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is thus, as he claims to be (Col. i. 23) in an especial sense the minister of the gospel; which answers to the place in which we have seen him in the Acts. He is in fact the first to proclaim "justification," as recorded in the Acts itself (xiii. 39), going beyond the forgiveness of sins, as preached by the other apostles; and both this and the Christian place in Christ he alone of all the Scripture writers formally declares.

As it is Leviticus that gives typically the different features of the Lord's great offering, the measure of our acceptance and sanctification to God, so it is Paul who interprets this into the plain speech of the New Testament. His epistles are evidently, then, the third division.

But he claims to be not simply "minister"* of the gospel, but of the Church also as the body of Christ (verse 25), of which again no one but himself speaks; and even its character as the house of God, indwelt of the Spirit, it is his fully to bring out: in both respects the effect of the coming of the Spirit, as found in Christianity. Every way, therefore, he fills the third place.

4. The Catholic Epistles.

On the other hand, the "catholic" or general epistles, are the work of *four* writers (Peter, James, John and Jude), and in this have the numerical stamp of their division. They have also all as their theme that practical path through the world which is brought out typically in the book of Numbers, and which comes under the number four. This is not hard to be realized as to them, while in many respects they are quite diverse from each other. For this reason I shall defer any further characterization of them until we may, in the goodness of God, be called to consider them in detail.

5. The Revelation.

And so we come now to Revelation, the one book of New Testament prophecy, but which goes entirely beyond the Old. In the Old Testament, however, prophecy is a third division, not a fifth,—a place which it fills here for a very beautiful and obvious reason.

In the Old Testament prophecy alone could lead the people of God

* We must not read merely "a" minister in either of the verses in question (Col. i. 23, 25); for he is speaking of the special dispensation committed to him.

into things which could not yet be proclaimed as present. Even then they could be only feebly entered into: as Isaiah says: "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." But the apostle quoting this, can add for his Christian hearers: "but God hath revealed them unto *us* by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.)

Most fittingly, therefore, do the epistles of Paul, in which the fullness of such truth is given,—truth which opens heaven itself for us, as even Old Testament prophecy could not do—take the place in the New Testament held by prophecy in the Old. But the place of Revelation itself is none the less a significant and blessed one. On the one hand, it is indeed a Deuteronomy, a magnificent summing up, solemn, yet glorious, of the divine ways with man and in view of man's ways; of the history of the Church and of the world alike; while beyond—as Israel from the plains of Moab could view their inheritance—our glorious city, the heavenly Jerusalem, is shown us. And there, and by and by upon the new earth also, "God with us," the full power of the name Immanuel, is seen in accomplished blessing. From this side also the closing book of prophecy fills completely its numerical place.

THE TIME BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS.

The New Testament, as every one knows, was not given in quiet continuity with the Old. Inspiration had long lapsed, and after Malachi no prophet had arisen in Israel for over 400 years, when suddenly the "Messenger" before Jehovah, of whom he had spoken, broke the long silence, preaching in the wilderness of Judea. There had been much and stirring history, and Israel herself had seemed for awhile to have a resurrection in the kingdom of the Maccabees. But it had proved, as to the nation, to be but as the galvanizing of a corpse, which does not preserve it from increasing corruption. The sceptre, which from the prophetic point of view had never been a legitimate one, tumbled helplessly at last into the hands of the open usurper and Edomite, Herod; and it was in a land under his cruel sway that the true King was born.

Prophecy had already fixed the time of His coming, in the "seventy weeks" foretold to Daniel, which must be given up as a genuine prediction, if Christ were not the "Messiah the Prince," therein declared. The general expectation also fastened itself upon this or similar predictions. "That 'the testimony of Jesus was the Spirit of prophecy,'" says Geikie,* "was only the Christian utterance of a universal Jewish belief respecting the Christ. 'All the prophets,' says Rabbi Chaja, 'have prophesied only of the blessedness of the days of the Messiah.' But it was to Daniel especially, with his seeming exactness of dates, that the

* "Life and Words of Christ" (chap. vi.)

chief regard was paid. It was generally believed that the 'times' of that prophet pointed to the 20th year of Herod the great, and when that was past, not to mention other dates, the year 67 of our reckoning was thought the period, and then the year 135; the war which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem arising from one calculation, and the tremendous insurrection under Hadrian from the other."

Alas, they had not known Messiah when He came; and the forfeiting in this way, for so many generations, of all their hopes, the prophet had fully declared. He would "be cut off, and have nothing" (verse 26, *marg.*); and the destruction of the city and the sanctuary would follow, as it did follow, as the result.

The rejection of Christ was the inevitable consequence of the self-righteousness in which the people were steeped. They had rejected the testimony of the old covenant against them, and the judgment of God because of the breach of it; on account of which they were already scattered in all lands, and in their own were under the feet of the heathen. The very temple to which they outwardly devoted themselves, and which had been rebuilt by the bloody hands of the unscrupulous tyrant Herod (contrast the prohibition of David from building it because he was a man of war) bore witness against them in its empty sanctuary. There was no ark of the covenant within the veil—no true mercy-seat, therefore, on which the blood of the covenant could be sprinkled on the day of atonement,—no "Urim and Thummim," by which the high-priest obtained answers from God—finally, no manifestation of God at all in connection with it. It was round this hollow shell that all the ritualistic system now revolved,—a type of the heartless formalism of the mass of the people.

The sentence of Lo-ammi was upon the nation (Hos. i. 9), and it was in strange but real accordance with this that never did they value themselves so highly. In the measure of one's distance from God is this self-estimation practicable, and we see by the Baptist's warning words to them how far in this way they had attained. The higher their religious claim, the more emphatically would they refuse also alike the stern preacher of repentance and the evangelist of divine grace. Thus the Pharisee could ask with assurance as to the answer, "Which of the Pharisees have believed on Him?" and with perfect conviction that that settled the matter as to the claim of Him whom they refused.

Thus to the condemnation of the broken law they added the condemnation of a rejected Gospel; to the "ungodly and without strength" which the former proved as to them, they added the last and worst count of the indictment against men, "the carnal mind is enmity against God." (Rom. v. 6; viii. 7.)

The Cross was thus in this sense the end of the trial of man, the "end of the" (probationary) "ages" (Heb. ix. 26, *Gk.*) but only leaving God to show Himself now, as man had done himself. The world lies

indeed under its shadow; but God is in the light, and the eternal counsels—the mind and heart of God—are told out in the new revelation of Christ, His manifestation.

The Cross itself lay in this gap of time between two revelations; the new revelation waited, as far as its Scriptures were concerned, for the advent of the witnessing Spirit, the Witness of the glory of Christ in His accomplished work. His coming into the world to take the place of the absent Christ, marked at its commencement with the abundant bestowal of spiritual gifts, but perfectly distinct from this, is what characterizes for us the new epoch. And the promise of the Lord in connection with His coming, "He shall guide you into all truth," is emphasized by the apostle as in present accomplishment: "the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (1 Cor. ii. 10.)

This slight indication may suffice to introduce us to what we shall have almost immediately to look at more in detail under the guidance of the inspired Word. I shall not here anticipate what will be much better treated in this connection. The object we have before us is not a history, but (if I may call it so) an inductive study of the word of God. We shall, for this, commence with as few presuppositions as possible, and, even in the statement of facts, while not neglecting any sources of help that may be open to us, shall let these come into use, as Scripture itself may suggest. Wisdom is in them as well as knowledge, and we desire that it may make its impression upon us, and that all our thoughts may be absolutely moulded by it. We come now at once therefore to the study of the Gospels.

THE GOSPELS.

It is simple enough to understand why the books which give us the fourfold history of the Lord's life on earth should be called by way of eminence the "Gospels." The opening words of Mark may have given rise to it, and be its formal justification; but apart from this, all the *facts* which the gospel proclaims and in which it is inwrapped are here. The development and application we find afterwards rather; and yet the man who was above all intrusted with this, at the beginning of that which is the most elaborate statement of the "glad tidings" to be found in Scripture, carries us back to what is recorded in the Gospels, for that which he preached (Rom. i. 3, 4): "the gospel of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness by resurrection of the dead." These things remain ever the gospel, however great the development may be afterwards.

That there would be such development, the Lord Himself plainly assures His disciples: "I have many things to say to you, but ye

cannot bear them now; howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all truth . . He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you" (Jno. xvi. 12–14).

We see then that it is mere unbelief of the Gospels which would make men turn from the words of the Apostles to find their all even in the words of the Lord Himself. It is the Lord who assures us that things which could not be uttered by Himself would be uttered afterwards; and that these would be still, moreover, His own things. In the Gospels we find the germinant truths and facts, which imply all else; but it would be impossible for any less qualified than the apostles to have developed them. The history of this in measure we have in the Acts: enough to show us that it did in fact take place, and that it was even a slower process than we would have imagined. As to doctrines, Paul was given to complete* the word of God" (Col. i. 25); and only in Colossians and Ephesians, from his prison at Rome, does he seem to do this.

On the one hand, if we must not expect in the Gospels the fullness of Christian doctrine, on the other we must not limit them to the expression of what is distinctively Christian. It is again Paul himself who reminds us that the gospel is about One who was "made of the seed of David according to the flesh," and that, as this implies, that He "was minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers" (Rom. xv. 8). We shall find in the Gospels, therefore, Christ in necessary relation to Israel and the fulfilment of the Old Testament predictions as to them,—predictions and promises not set aside by the unbelief of the nation when He came, however much they might be delayed by it. The true understanding of the "Sermon on the Mount" (Matt. v–vii), of the prophecy upon Olivet (Matt. xxiv, xxv), and much else, depends upon the apprehension of this.

We must rid ourselves of the short-sighted and narrow application of everything to our special interests, which has perplexed so long the interpretation of Scripture; or rather, we must lay hold believingly of the astonishing grace which has made all that concerns Christ our interest and communicates as unto "friends" the divine thoughts and counsels which have for their centre Him by whom and for whom all things were made. In this way alone can we get to the heart of revelation anywhere, and find the true Life-centre of the universe of God.

It has been little enough realized till of late, and even now is it too little discerned, that each book in Scripture has its own specific purpose,—its dominant truth or truths, therefore, which give individuality to it, and with which all other truths connect themselves. We apprehend in the works of man the specific purpose of every book and every chapter of a book which is written by him, and yet are slow to credit the Lord with equal distinctiveness of plan and method. The variety

* Or "fill up," not as in the common version, "fulfil."

of the instruments He has been pleased to use has hidden the One author who has used them; and despite the general unity of design which runs through them, we have failed to realize the perfect way in which each fills the place appointed for him. We have scarcely even allowed to the word of God the symmetry of a woman's patchwork,—which is, in fact, the only appropriate figure for the views long current as to the four Gospels, in which each writer was supposed to be making up as best he could the deficiencies of the one preceding him, and, as this implies, with but partial success. No wonder if this suggested to the later critics to apply the patchwork theory to the composition of the individual books,—a task which has been found to be proportionally easier, according to the multiplication of the patches.

For the intelligent Christian, however, such theories of origin are, we may trust, passed away, and we have been returning (at least with regard to the Gospels) to what the faith of Christians anciently accepted as the truth, that each Gospel presents a distinct aspect of the Lord's person and work. It is true, that they strangely differed among themselves about these, and we may even smile at the quaintness and extravagance of some of their arguments; all the more do their conflicting voices seem to represent the uncertain transmissions of some primitive teaching which tradition had been, as usual, unable accurately to preserve. Thus Irenæus "argues that the Gospel is the pillar of the Church; the Church is spread over the whole world; the world has four quarters; therefore it is fitting there should also be four Gospels. Again, the Gospel is the divine breath, or wind of life for men; there are four chief winds: therefore four Gospels. He builds another argument on the fourfold appearance of the cherubim. The cherubim, he says, are fourfold, and their faces are images of the activity of the Son of God. The first beast was like a lion, signifying His commanding and kingly dignity; the second, like a calf, signifying His priestly office; the third like a man, denoting His incarnation; the fourth like an eagle, denoting the Holy Spirit flying over the Church. Like these are the Gospels. John, who begins with the Godhead and descent from the Father, is the lion; Luke, who begins with the priesthood and sacrifice of Zacharias is the calf; Matthew, who begins with His human genealogy is the man; Mark the eagle, who commences with the announcement of the prophetic spirit—"the beginning of the Gospel as it is written by Isaiah the prophet."

Crude enough are these applications, and not one of them really right: John is not the Gospel of the Kingship, but of incarnate Deity. The genealogy in Matthew is not to show the Lord's humanity, but His royal title; the application of the calf to Luke is trivial and wholly wrong; and that of the eagle to Mark no less so. No wonder that Dr. Salmon,* from whom I have quoted, tells us that "this is not the appor-

* "Introduction to the New Testament:" p. 33.

tionment of the four beasts to the Gospels which ultimately prevailed in the West: John being usually represented as the eagle; Matthew as the man; Luke as the ox; and Mark as the lion."

This is better in the first case only; and Lange has amended this, though again with only partial advantage, by regarding "Matthew under the symbol of the ox and Luke under that of the man."

All this would be taken by most as instancing merely the folly of such fanciful comparisons, and Dr. Salmon seems to cite them for this purpose. Yet in fact, the application of the cherubic figures to the Gospels only fails for want of a full induction and strict rigor of argument. The truth in it is fuller than any of the ancients seem to have understood, and lies not in casual or partial resemblances, but touches the essential difference in each of the evangelic histories.

Even the number of the Gospels connects itself with the analogies first pointed out by Irenæus; though that does not guarantee the application made of them. Here we are upon the ground of the numerical structure with which we are already familiar. Four is the number of the world as the place of trial, of the four corners of the earth and the four winds of heaven; and the Lord is seen in the four Gospels in the scene of what He Himself calls His "temptation;" facing the sins and sorrows and needs of men. Himself Man, and hiding Himself from nothing human, all the perfection of His Person is thus revealed to us. He is not only heard but seen, gazed upon, and handled by the hands of men. All forms of proof that can be given are given, that they may know the meaning and certainty of the vision accorded them—of the gift of God that is put into the possession of faith in Him. This is the first necessity for us, not a system of doctrine to be learned, but a living Person to be occupied with. And for this, with scarcely a word of comment, He is made to walk and live before us in an atmosphere of crystalline purity, which never detains or diverts the sight from the one sacred Figure who is to engage our attention and lay hold upon our hearts. All other forms that pass before us are but in contrast with Himself, not excepting the disciples that follow Him, or the greatest of woman-born, who goes before Him.

The division of the four Gospels is also in accord with the scriptural manner, where all is according to God. It is not the 2+2 which is true division, and seems always suggestive of evil in some way; it is 3+1, the number of manifestation and of supreme Godhead: together, therefore, showing us Him who is "God manifest in the flesh." The first three are, as thus going together, called "synoptic" Gospels, as uniting, with all their differences, in a common view of the Lord, very different from that of John, in which all His divine glory is at last displayed. The three agree together, and contrast with John in this, that in them, as in the parable of the vineyard which they all give, Christ is seen as God's last testimony to Israel—His Son, sent after the rejection

of all previous messengers, as His last resource. "Having therefore yet one Son, His well-beloved, He sent Him also last unto them, saying, they will reverence My Son." The whole character of the "synoptics" is affected by this. Testimony, as in the previous dispensations, is still going on. The demonstration of the "mind of the flesh" as "enmity against God" is not complete in them till the Cross. Israel is not yet set aside but is addressed by this last Divine Messenger, who, finding God's treasure hid in the field of the world, goes and sells all that He has to possess Himself of it. Man is not yet seen in them as "*dead* in sins;" and the decidedly Christian truths of new birth and eternal life are not yet brought out. With all this John's Gospel, coming after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, and the setting aside publicly of Judaism by the government of God, is in direct contrast. All three of the synoptic gospels, moreover *emphasize* the Lord's humanity; John's, as already said, most clearly and emphatically proclaims His Deity.

This distinction is at once seen in the cherubic figures of the Apocalypse before referred to, and which it will be well for us now to take up for full determination of whether and how they apply to the Gospels. That the "beasts" of the fourth chapter of Revelation—which the Revised Version more properly calls the "living creatures"—are in fact cherubic forms, no question has, I suppose, been ever raised, and could hardly be by any one who has compared them with the cherubim of Ezekiel (chap. i. 5–10). There are differences, into which it is not needful to inquire here, but the essential forms are the same. In Revelation the four forms are given in order and numbered; and the order is exactly that of the Gospels to which they respectively apply: the first like a lion; the second like a calf—or young ox;* the third with the face of a man; and the fourth, like a flying eagle.

Here at once we realize a distinction between the first three and the fourth, which is the bird of heaven: this clearly answers, as the Western interpreters saw, to the Gospel of John; as the kingly lion to Matthew; the laborer ox to Mark; and the face of a man to Luke—the gospel of the Manhood. These applications will bear the most thorough scrutiny; and the cherubim themselves will be found embroidered upon the veil of the holiest, which we have divine authority for understanding to be the "flesh" of Christ. (Heb. x. 20). We can see, therefore, that the cherubim may have this relation to the Christ of the Gospels. In fact they speak of the government of God, and are thus "in the midst of the throne and round about the throne," and in the tabernacle were out of, and of one piece with, the mercy-seat. (Exod. xxv. 19.) In their different forms they convey to us the different features of divine government, features naturally derived from Him with whom the government is found; and thus again we need not wonder in them to have Christ before us.

* Μόσχος is so applied in the Septuagint, and in fact in Heb. ix. 12, 19.

We see, then, that the ancient view is true; even while those from whom we get it did not know how true it was, and were at a loss when they came to the application of it. It thus seems as I have said, a specimen of apostolic tradition, which tradition (as so constantly) proved itself unable to keep, but which God has restored to us. Let us now look at these living creatures in the order in which Revelation presents them to us, and compare them with the Gospels in the order in which we find them in our Bibles.

1. The Lion.—There is a passage in Proverbs (xxx. 29–31) which singularly connects together four things which seem to have the closest relationship with the Gospel of Matthew: "There be three things that are good in stepping; yea, four that are good in going: a lion which is strongest among beasts, and turneth not away from any; a war-horse; or a he-goat; and a King against whom there is no rising up." I give what is only a slight correction of the common version. The first three things spoken of here are distinguished from the fourth, as so often in Scripture, and for a reason with which we are acquainted. The writer does not say "*step* well" of the King, nor would it be so suitable; but the more hidden meaning of the first three comes to the surface in the last—the King: and the King above all characterizes Matthew. It is as this that Christ is worshiped by the magi; and it is as this that the genealogy introduces Him. Moreover, He is in the first place Son of David,—King of Israel; and here the lion symbol comes to the front, as in the very scene in Revelation in which we find the cherubic creatures, and in which He is announced as the "Lion of the tribe of Judah"—the One now going to take up the cause of the Jew on earth.

This naturally introduces, again, the second symbol in Proverbs,—the war-horse.* When the Lamb opens the first seal of the book which He alone can open, we see a war-horse and its rider going forth; and in the closing visions of the 19th chapter He Himself is seen on the war-horse too. "In righteousness He doth judge and make war."

The third symbol in the passage in Proverbs seems in contrast, however, with these thoughts. "A he-goat" may be of stately carriage, but if that be all, the thought would be merely trivial. In fact, it is a word that is used which somewhat more approaches the previous thoughts: *tayish* means the "butter," or "striker;" but still there is nothing additional in this to what has gone before, and the thought is manifestly weaker than in preceding cases. What is there that can supplement it? I believe, that which the goat typically so perfectly suggests—the thought of *substitutionary sacrifice*. Israel must have the scape-goat in order to have her King. And the book of Psalms brings

* In the common and revised versions, "a grey-hound;" literally, "girt in the loins," in Gesenius (*Thesaur*) "war-horse," girt about with trappings, as seen in the sculptures of Persepolis.

again and again (see Ps. xx., xxi., cii., etc. *notes*) these things together. Matthew shows us in a parable of the Kingdom, and in the history of the King, that He who finds the treasure in the field must sell all that He hath to buy the field. Thus then all four thoughts perfectly unite and fill out the picture of the first Gospel.

The Lion as a symbol unites but the thoughts of power and royalty, and thus emphasizes what is the chief character of the book. Christ the Son of David, the Lion of Judah,—this, though far from being all that is in the book, is its central feature.

2. How any thoughtful mind could have regarded Mark as symbolized by the lion is hard to realize; and yet this, though it was not the view of Irenæus, had the most general consent among those that followed him. But the power displayed in Mark is of another order, and the ox has strength, but which is spent in service. In this way the apostle interprets it as the type of the laborer (1 Cor. ix. 10), as it is also the fullest sacrifice known under the law. And in Mark we have this Servant character of the Lord, whether in active labor or in patient offering of Himself. Hence the introductory portions which are found in Matthew and Luke are here omitted, and we come at once to His active service. Hence too His titles are in general absent from Mark, save that He is Son of God, which makes His service so full and wonderful. This character of the Gospel is plain all through, but we are going to look at it more fully presently.

3. The "face of a man" greets us very certainly in Luke. It is emphatically the Gospel of the Manhood; and the face of a man is that unto which you look naturally to learn what he is, and what is in his heart towards you. You are never nearer to Christ than in the Gospel of Luke; and while His divine glory does not shine out as in the fourth Gospel, yet you are made assuredly to know that in Him you draw near to God. It is here that we learn of the Shepherd's quest of the lost sheep, and of the Father's reception of a returning prodigal. Our hearts will at once recall sufficiently the tenderness and intimacy which are everywhere manifest in this Gospel; while every trait of complete manhood in Him is carefully delineated for us.

4. The resemblance fails most—from the necessity of the case, probably, *must* fail most in the case of John: where yet the bird of heaven can hardly be mistaken in its reference to Him who speaks of Himself in it as "the Son of man who is in heaven." We should hardly have anticipated here, no doubt, of all the birds of heaven, the "flying eagle." We must notice particularly, however, that it is just "the way of the eagle in the air" of which the writer of Proverbs once more speaks, as of one of the "things too wonderful for him" (ch. xxx. 19). It is the soaring character of truth in John that is here pointed out to us: truth that penetrates to regions quite outside of human ken. It reminds us of His own words in direct reference to this, that "no man hath ascended up

to heaven but He that came down from heaven," so that here we must be debtors to Himself alone, if He reveal to us that of which there can be no other witness except His.

But the "flying eagle" can yet suggest other thoughts,—thoughts not only of divine strength or of divine wisdom, but also of divine tenderness no less and ministering care. "Ye have seen," says the Lord to His people of old, "how I have borne you upon *eagle's wings*, and brought you to myself." (Exod. xix. 4.) And again, "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the Lord alone did lead him." (Deut. xxxii. 11, 12.) Here then under this figure we may think not merely of heights that surpass our powers, and of ways too wonderful for us, but of divine love that would enable us to soar, and support our feebleness in it with divine omnipotence. And of this character truly is the fourth Gospel.

This may serve as a first introduction to these blessed books, and assure us of the reality of the provision made for our understanding them. But this is only an encouragement to enter more deeply into the work of comparison, and realize the harmonies that are in these differences, and the fullness of blessing that the Gospels have for us in leading us into the adoring contemplation and apprehension of Christ. Let us go on then into a fuller examination of them in this relation that they have to one another and to ourselves, and may the Spirit of Christ who is with us to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us, lead, control, and enlarge every faculty, and make room for Him less unworthy of Him in our hearts.

The Gospels in Their Internal Relationship to One Another.

The Gospels then are four, not one; and there is no accident or mistake in this. There is, of course, a deep inward unity which belongs to them: because truth is one; but the apprehension of this does not depend upon our ability to put them together into one perfect narrative, nor even to expunge from them as four all appearance of contradiction to one another. The Evangelists are not to be treated as if under arraignment as false witnesses, lest we find them do as He did before a human bar—open not their mouths. They have written, without any possibility of denial of it, four books the like of which the world cannot produce beside; and they have pictured for us such a Person as has never been found but once: we must credit them, then, with knowing better than any wisdom of any age could teach them, how to do the work which they have so admirably done; and we must seek to be learners only of their method, and disciples at their feet.

There are four Gospels, then, not one; and these four are three and one. This division is surely significant, for the simple reason that it

exists. In the word of God nothing exists in vain; and the more we inquire in this faith into every detail of it, apparently the most trifling, the more we shall be rewarded. We have then in these four Gospels, first, a trinity of Gospels,—a three that in some sense—some sense of value to us—are one: the Synoptics. The last Gospel stands by itself as a second division.

1. *The Synoptic Gospels.*

We have already glanced at the unity of the "synoptic" Gospels,—the name generally given to them since Griesbach employed it: but long before seen in some measure, though in a different way from that in which we have considered them. Ordinarily it is apprehended more as arising from there being in them essentially a common narrative, which has been sought to be accounted for, either by their all being fashioned out of some still more primitive, and perhaps unwritten Gospel, or by their growing out of one another by abridgement or addition.

Now this, to which so much importance is attached, is in fact of the very smallest importance to us. It belongs, with all these theories of the "how" of origin, to the region of speculation merely, which as such gives no firm ground to build upon; and then, if it were as certain all of it, as it is all uncertain, it would still remain that we have the three Gospels and not one, and with all needful assurance of divine intention as to their being three.

The similarity of the three Gospels is, however, not to be mistaken. They give us largely the same incidents, often in quite similar language, sometimes in the same words. With all this, characteristic differences of style are plainly to be detected, and differences otherwise, which only force themselves the more on our attention, as being divergences from what might seem a common narrative. Since God has given them to us as three, not one, it is plain that the differences are the very things which will guide us to the meaning of this; and oftentimes the worst difficulties for unbelief will be fullest of meaning to believing inquiry.

After all, *this* unity of the three Gospels seems to yield little or nothing as to the division of the Gospels by their subject-matter, and we shall be compelled to look elsewhere to find a meaning.

Even what has been previously said as to their common character does not characterize the presentation of the Lord Himself in them, and correspondingly seems to have nothing to say as to numerical structure. That which must characterize a division of the Gospels can only be something inherent in the life of the Lord Himself, and a broad feature of it too, and in looking for this, light will soon break in upon us.

The Gospels are essentially a glorious Life lived in the world—a "Life" which was the "Light of men." If it is John's Gospel that gives us the doctrine, the reality of it cannot be confined to this: *every* Gospel is a witness of it. Nor in speaking of them as a life displayed,

is it meant at all to separate it in this character from that marvellous Death, which however in so many ways contrasted with this, was (in the way in which we are speaking of it now) nothing but the fruitage of that Life itself, and without which it could have profited us nothing.

But this Life—which was in character always "that Eternal Life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us" (1 Jno. i. 2) —necessarily displayed itself in two essential characters, which together answers to the twofold revelation of God which has been given us as Light and Love. (1 Jno. i. 5; iv. 8, 16). Now Love is the full divine energy; Light is the necessary character of its display. The apostle can say as to believers (Eph. v. 8), "now are ye light in the Lord;" but he does not and could not say, "now are ye *love* in the Lord." "Love," therefore, finds a pre-eminent place in the Gospel of John, which is, as we know, the home of it, and thus the Gospel of the Deity of Christ.

Are then the Synoptic Gospels, which we may certainly call in this emphatic way the Gospels of His humanity, those which more occupy themselves with "light," as the complemental revelation of God? This, at first sight, seems hard to realize: for "light," too, is undoubtedly a word that is characteristic of John, and love cannot be revealed without it. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ;" and these are love and light in application to the need of man, and cannot be separated from one another.

Light is here also as always, the revealing power: "that which doth make manifest is light." (Eph. v. 13). But the "fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth" (ver. 9); and the apostle, when showing how eternal life, or the divine nature, is exhibited in those that are born of God, makes its display to be in *righteousness* and love: "whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother" (1 Jno. iii. 10).

Righteousness, as consistency with relationship, may be even used, and *is* used in Scripture, in a broader sense than this: so that the "righteous" may be the full expression for the people of God; and the "righteousness of the law" cover the thought of love itself. (Rom. xiii. 8, 10). But we could not speak of God's righteousness in this way. Thus righteousness cleaves more to the human, as love to the divine order: though God who is love is righteous; and the man who is righteous loves.

Thus we can understand how the first division of the Gospels, emphasizing the humanity of the Lord Jesus, is characterized by righteousness, which as consistency with relationship finds threefold expression in the three synoptics: in Matthew in the King; in Mark the ministering Servant of man's need; in Luke, the Man, who as Priest with God opens the sanctuary for us. Here the first division finds numerical significance in Him whose righteousness was one harmonious whole, full-rounded and complete; the unique Man, Christ Jesus.

We must now look more closely at the separate Gospels.

(1) *Matthew.*

It was an old idea that our present Matthew was either a translation, or at least derived from a "Gospel according to the Hebrews." This is now discredited, and it would at any rate, if proved, be of no possible use to us. But it derives all the semblance of truth it ever had from the very obvious connection with the Old Testament in this first of the Gospels; which approves also its place among them as the first. Not only are the quotations from the Old Testament comparatively more numerous than in the other; but these, where made by the evangelist himself, are fresh translations from the Hebrew original, while, where in the mouths of others, they are from that ordinarily in use, the Greek Septuagint. His own style is full of Hebraisms, and he anticipates with those for whom he writes a knowledge of Jewish customs and of the law, such as only Jews might be expected to possess.

But apart from all this, his primary theme is the connection of the Lord with Israel's Messianic hopes and promises; and though on that very account he has to show also how "He came to His own and His own received Him not," and how consequently the "kingdom of heaven would be taken from them," and assume the mystery-form in which it was unknown to the prophets of Israel, yet still we are not left in uncertainty as to the final issue, when at the coming of the Son of man from heaven, the "elect" nation will be gathered from the four winds to their ancient land again. (xxiv. 30, 31.) This connection with Daniel and the prophets is indeed little more than indicated. The destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of her people are an immediate prospect, and with this the Gentile Christianity, for us now nearing its predicted end. Matthew is the first book of the New Testament, and the field of view widens accordingly.

Matthew is in this way the dispensational Gospel, and even the Church is contemplated in it (xvi. 18). Thus there is a new expansion of the ancient promise, and that Christ is the Seed of Abraham gains a new significance: we shall see how in the genealogy with which the book opens this is already indicated.

But King and kingdom are the governing thoughts in Matthew throughout, and the characteristic phrase, "the kingdom of heaven" is found in it two and thirty times. This is divine rule, though it may be intrusted to human hands, and is; for Christ is the King of it. In His absence as rejected by His own, and administered by men on earth, it assumes forms foreign to His mind, and must itself be purged when He comes again. This implies present discipline for His own, and final judgment for the earth; and these, which are the fruits of His own rejection, pervade the book with a certain shadow, and an unmistakable feeling of distance. There is indeed a Father in heaven, and without whom not a sparrow falls to the ground; but there is not nearness of intimacy. The work of salvation is intimated as to be accomplished,

but there is not as yet the joy of it. Forgiveness of sins is found, as in the Lord's parable of the kingdom (xviii. 23–35), not absolute but conditional and revocable. Discipleship and its responsibility in walk and life are emphasized; but man's heart is not yet awakened in response to the outflow of the heart of God as yet it will be. Over all these is a certain restraint and reserve, which in the other Gospels we find more and more lifted, until we reach in John what can be called in the full sense communion with the Father and with the Son.

All this suits and illustrates a character of things which we call governmental, and which Moses on the mount at the second giving of the law very precisely pictures to us, but which may go and does go on, apart from any legal covenant whatever. When we have known God as now fully revealed in grace in the Person of His Son, and are with Him also upon that footing, that does not prevent His governmental ways being, as always, largely encompassed with the mystery that attaches itself necessarily to the throne of the Majesty on high. Providentially, as we term it, "clouds and darkness are round about Him" still; nor in His dealings with us do we meet Him face to face; but rather (safely covered with His hand as Moses was, and hid in the cleft of the Rock) we realize His glory passing by; then we look after Him and behold the glory that has passed by—as the apostle distinguishes between the present affliction, which is "not joyous but grievous," but which "*afterwards* yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness to those that are *exercised* thereby" (Heb. xii. 11). It is this exercise which the very mystery of His ways secures to us, while it draws out faith in us and reminds us of our feebleness and ignorance and of the holiness of Him with whom we have to do.

That we know Him in Christ, and know Him to be for us, is another thing, in no wise in contradiction with this, and which it is the part of faith never to account of as if it were contradiction. For us it is a Father's hand which is over us: "we call on Him as Father who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work," (1 Pet. i. 17); so that the revelation of the Father which we find in Matthew, the necessary effect of God's speaking to us "in the Son" (Heb. i. 2), does not interfere with this, but only gives it Christian instead of legal character. The New Testament stamp is upon Matthew throughout; but we are in it only upon the threshold of the New Testament. Naturally therefore, it is just in Matthew that we find "branches that run over the wall" for Israel also, and a link maintained with the remnant of a future day, when His ancient people in the day of famine shall turn to seek their rejected Joseph, so long unknown.

We see, then, that the thought of the Kingdom and the King is the controlling one in Matthew. At first sight we may not so readily see how the truth of atonement connects itself with these. Yet the Cross in Matthew is not simply the sign of the rejection of the King, but as in

the other Gospels it is distinctly atoning. The cry of desertion, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani," expresses this in the fullest way. This was not man's forsaking at all, nor his persecution: it was the judgment of God upon sin, and the endurance of this was that which was the very essence of atonement.

But, as I have said, we do not readily connect this with the thought of the King. Sacrifice was exclusively priestly work; and the Priest is found rather in Luke than Matthew. Yet in the Old Testament, apart from ritual law, the King is no less distinctly the Redeemer. In that verse in Proverbs which we have already seen to associate together in so striking a way the different characters of Matthew, the "goat" is the very symbol of substitutionary sacrifice. The King is the natural representative of his people: the divine King still more so: and the 20th and 102nd psalms, though with different degrees of clearness, alike connect His Kingship with His sacrificial sufferings (see *notes* on the Psalms). Even by the hands of His enemies, it is as the King of the Jews that the Lord is put upon the cross, and it is in parables of the kingdom which are peculiar to Matthew that, twice over, the unique figure is presented of One who to acquire the object upon which his heart is set, goes and sells all that he has, to purchase it (chap. xiii. 44–46).

The symbolism here is quite in accordance with Matthew elsewhere. In the prayer taught to the disciples, we find in Matthew "debts," where in Luke we have "sins;" and this again agrees entirely with that view of the work of sacrifice which the Cross presents in Matthew—the governmental aspect of the trespass-offering. But this we must consider with more attention.

As the Gospels give us a fourfold view of the Person of the Lord, so they do also of His sacrificial work; and this is precisely the fourfold view of the opening chapters of Leviticus. Omitting the meat (or meal-) offering, which is not sacrificial, we have there four offerings in which life is taken and the blood of atonement offered to God,—offerings which are really sacrifices—the "burnt," "peace," "sin" and "trespass-offerings."

These are divided into two classes: the burnt and peace offerings are of "sweet savor." The peace-offering speaks of peace with God accomplished and communion attained; the burnt-offering, which all goes up as sweet savor, of the perfection of the work which accomplishes this,—of obedience found in absolute devotedness to the will of God. These we shall have in Luke and John respectively; and of their application to these we shall have to speak by and by. In the two other offerings, the sin and trespass, the judgment of sin is the side dwelt upon, the necessary result of divine holiness, but which cannot be (as judgment) a sweet savor to God. Between these, again, there is this difference: that in the sin-offering sin is dealt with fully as that; in the trespass-offering, whether as regards God or man, it is treated rather as *injury*, the

exact amount of which is estimated by the priest as having the mind of God, and made up with overpayment. In the sin-offering the thought is of *expiation* in the full sense; in the trespass-offering of *reparation*.

The Gospels of Matthew and Mark undoubtedly give the aspect of the offering which is not sweet savor. This is evident by that cry of forsaken sorrow which the Lord utters on the cross in both these Gospels, but in these only. But there is a difficulty connected with this very fact: for the sin-offering alone (as given in Leviticus) shows the full judgment of sin in that outside place in which—away from all that is owned as in relationship to God—the victim is burnt upon the ground without an altar: but *both* Gospels show our blessed Lord in this outside place: the cry of abandonment is in one as much as the other. What then is the difference between them? or is there in this respect a difference?

Now, in fact, in the cry itself there *is* a difference, and for which there must be a reason: it is "Eli" in Matthew, "Eloi" in Mark; and though both are names of God, there is a difference of meaning. "Eloi" is the ordinary expression for "my God;" while "Eli" speaks rather of *power* —"my Mighty One." And this last is found, just where such a difference is most intelligible, in the "lion" Gospel of Matthew, the Gospel of the Kingdom and the Throne. "Eloi," as in the Gospel of Mark, would evidently suit better the thought of the sin-offering, as what is in view of the *holiness* of God, or His *nature*. And if so, Mark will give the sin-offering aspect, and Matthew that of the trespass-offering.

But to this, which is in fact the true view, an objection may be made, which at first sight would seem a fatal one. In the 22nd psalm, from which the words are taken, and which without doubt gives the sin-offering aspect (*see notes on the Psalms*), "Eli" and *not* "Eloi" is the word we find. How then can this be the true view?

I think, nevertheless, that this is not decisive. Scripture is not written in one stereotyped language, however accurate; and in its flexibility of speech it knows how to preserve the most perfect accuracy, while gaining by it a fuller meaning than such rigidity would allow. Any one who will turn to the 22nd psalm will find that the agonizing question, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" is not only asked but answered there. It is because "*God is holy*, and dwelling amid the praises of Israel." If a holy God is to be able to dwell amid the praises of a sinful people, it can only be through such atonement as the cry expresses. Thus the question, why is the Mighty One forsaking the blessed Sufferer, is answered by the declaration of His holiness and grace. Here, plainly, "Eli," "my Mighty One," is more suited to the psalm, because the *answer* it is that contains the thought, which in Mark, *where there is no answer*, is suggested in the question itself. Thus there need be no contradiction between the language of the psalm and what has been suggested as to that of the Gospels.

That Matthew's is the trespass-offering aspect of the Cross may be seen in a still clearer way if it is considered that the trespass-offering is, as has already been said, the *governmental* offering. Reparation, restitution, and in legal phrase the giving damages, are plainly governmental requirements; but the sin-offering, as shown in the forsaking of God, is a question of His *nature*. God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and cannot look on sin: hence the horror of that cry from Him whose delight God ever was: though, as we have seen, the full expression of this is scarcely given in Matthew. While yet the trespass-offering can put on, as here, something of the sin-offering character, because the claim of divine government requires yet a witness to the holiness of the divine nature.

In Matthew we find also the *double* answer of God to the work of Christ. Having gone for us into the darkness which that which fell upon the Cross only symbolized, the darkness is for us dispelled: God dwells no more in it. The veil of the temple is rent in twain from the top to the bottom: the glory of God can shine out; the way in to God is opened for man.

But the Lord gives up His spirit also: the double portion of man is death and judgment. Judgment He takes first, and having exhausted this, dies. The answer to His death is seen in the resurrection of many of those who slept, who after His resurrection go into the holy city and appear to many. Now death is the stamp of divine *government* upon a fallen creature, a thing not in itself necessary, for in order to the proper judgment resurrection must come in. And while Matthew and Mark alike give the rending of the veil, Matthew alone gives the resurrection of the saints. All is perfectly—*divinely* fitting.

Again, in Mark there is no prophetic Aceldama, the field of blood bought for themselves by the people with the money of Christ's betrayal; the cry, "His blood be on us and our children" is omitted; there is no judgment even of the traitor. In Matthew as the governmental Gospel, these things have their right and necessary place, and their omission would be as much a defect in Matthew, as it is a perfection in Mark.

Before we close the brief review of this Gospel, let us notice that, as it begins with the genealogy which is the King's human and legal title, so it shows that He has another and higher one, inasmuch as the kingdom He rules is greater far than David's whose Son is no less his Lord. Matthew thus connects with John by the emphasis that it puts on the Divine Sonship, and on Jesus being truly Immanuel—"God with us." At the close we find accordingly all authority given to Him, in heaven as on earth. All through, the theme is one, although the "Lion of the tribe of Judah" is seen also, as in the prophet's vision, as the "Lamb slain."

(2) *Mark.*

We have already partly anticipated the subject of Mark's Gospel. Mark is the cherubic "ox"—the Laborer: Christ as the Servant of man's need and of the divine goodness; in this way in entire contrast with Matthew, of which in some respects it might seem, as it has been declared by some to be, an abridgment. He is at the very outset declared to be the "Son of God," but this to give blessed character to that ministry of His which it is the purpose of the writer to describe. The "kingdom of God" we have naturally often still, but no more, as in Matthew, that of "Christ" or "of the Son of man." Save as accusation on the Cross, He is never explicitly the "King of the Jews." Even when He rides into Jerusalem it is only the "kingdom of our father David" that is announced. His title of "Lord" is very seldom taken. But He is the Son of God in service, with divine power and riches in His hand, servant in love which requires nothing but power to entitle it to serve. On this account no genealogy is given or needed.

The earnestness of His service is marked by the frequency of the word "immediately" occurring in connection with it. Half of all the occurrences in the New Testament (40 out of 80) are found in Mark,* but these, of course, in various connections, the enemies of His Person and work being busy also. The singleness of His service is seen in that characteristic word of His (xiii. 32) which must be read in the light of John xv. 15, to be understood aright. Even the Son as Servant knows nothing of His Father's business, save that which is given Him to communicate. Again what tenderness is seen in all the details of His service as Mark dwells upon them: how His heart, His lips, His hands, moved sympathetically in the relief of all manner of human need. Here, too, as in Luke, the ascension is given as the fitting close to His path of humiliation, and this is marked as to the place of power, "the right hand of God": which does not change the unwearied Worker, but puts as it were afresh into His hand the power to serve: for immediately we read: "And they went forth and preached everywhere, *the Lord working with them*, and confirming the word with signs following."

We need not wonder if, in connection with this we find hints of another, if not a larger audience being addressed than in Matthew's Hebraistic gospel. Mark's on the contrary, as it abounds in Latinisms, has been even affirmed (though without ground) to have been written in Latin; yet scholars pronounce it "still much more akin to the Hebraistic diction of St. Matthew than to the purer style of St. Luke." (*Thomson, in Smith's Dictionary*). Yet the contrast with Matthew is decided: he never himself appeals to the Old Testament; he never names the Law; he describes Jewish customs as if writing to strangers; terms

* In the common version variously translated as "forthwith, straightway, anon," twice "as soon as," and once "shortly."

that would be offensive to the Gentiles are omitted, and the grace to them more dwelt upon. Even the temple they are reminded was to be called "a house of prayer for all nations;" and in the closing commission, the disciples are bidden, "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," even "the Jew first" being entirely omitted.

Yet in Mark, as in Matthew, at least until the close is reached, there is not found the nearness to God which is so manifest in Luke. The Father is mentioned as such but five times, and "your Father" only in one place (xi. 25, 26). It is the servants', not the children's place that is here contemplated, even though it is recognized that the servants are yet children. Governmental responsibilities and rewards are emphasized, as in Matthew; but there as of disciples, here of laborers for the accomplishment of divine purposes, and after the pattern of Him who as "Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."

But in this last, as has been seen also in Matthew, we find the shadow which hangs over the book. The sin-offering aspect of the Lord's work, as shown here, is only indeed brought out in the closing chapters. The substitutionary character attaches, not to His life-work but to the Cross alone. As to this we cannot be too clear. Yet the shadow hangs over the whole in this sense that until atonement has been seen as made, the fruits of it cannot be properly enjoyed. The shadow lengthens into a terrible night, which with a sudden break is scattered and the day comes; for those brought into it, never to give place again.

(3) *Luke.*

In Luke's picture of the Lord we have indeed "the face of a man." Luke's is the Gospel of the Manhood. Thus we have His birth as in Matthew, but with more circumstantial detail than in Matthew; and instead of the King, hailed by the worship of the magi, we have the gospel preached to the poor, and from the opened heavens by the joyful lips of angels, who proclaim God's good pleasure to be in men. The presence of Christ on earth is at once the assurance and the justification of this: and the manger at Bethlehem shows how fully He has assumed manhood in its lowliest and neediest conditions. We see Him in childhood, growing in wisdom as in stature; and after thirty years of the fulfilment of His own personal responsibility, taking at last His place of priestly service openly before God and man at His baptism by John. There the Father's voice attests His satisfaction, and the descent of the Spirit endows Him for His work.

It is here, and not at His birth as in Matthew, that His genealogy is given; but the stream as it were runs backward now. The line is traced to Adam and not merely to Abraham, and we do not need to know that as a Man He is descended from Adam. But we are reminded too that *he* was by creation a son of God, and now have the full significance

of this made good in a Second Man who undoes the fall and brings in unimagined blessing. "The Second Man is of heaven." (1 Cor. xv. 47, *R.V.*)

This shows already the character of the Gospel as that in which God and man are at last at one. A new word, "salvation," is now upon men's lips and in their heart: *present* salvation, known and rejoiced in; peace and forgiveness fully assured. Even from the beginning of it the voice of praise breaks out; and it ends with the triumphant worship of those who have seen the risen Saviour ascend to heaven with His hands out-spread in blessing. Between these the grace of God unfolds itself without check or hindrance, in word and deed; not simply in goodness ministering to the daily needs and sorrows which appeal to all, but in awakening the consciousness of sin, in bowing the soul in repentance, in bringing to God and assuring men of welcome to Him, while the kiss, the ring, the robe, the music of the Father's house await the prodigal, and begin for him the new life which is eternal.

In all this Luke's is the peace-offering Gospel, in which the fruits of atonement are emphasized, rather than the work itself; and this, when we look at the Cross, is quite apparent. The anguish is in the garden rather than at the Cross. There, though the darkness is spoken of, the interpreting words of the Lord Jesus are not found; while twice He cries to God as Father,—in the first case, praying for His murderers. He is not Himself in the darkness, but in the light with God; and it is here we find Him giving sweetest assurance to the soul of the poor sinner by His side, and the door of paradise opened without question to a dying thief.

This is, all through, the manner of the Gospel; and it is in perfect accord with the grace of that humanity, which is here dwelt upon in all that characterizes it. He is the "brother born for adversity," "the Mediator, the Man Christ Jesus," the compassionate High Priest, who goes up to heaven with the uplifted hands. Luke therefore is the writer of the Acts also, which shows the fruit of His intercession in the place to which He is gone up. That Luke was also a Gentile (comp. Col. iv. 11, 14), the only one among the writers of the New Testament, and writes in both cases to a Gentile, is surely significant.

2. *John.*

We now come to the second division of the Gospels, in which, as we have seen, John stands alone. The number of the division is that which pre-eminently speaks of Christ. It suggests at once the *Second* Person of the Godhead, the divine Son in full reality, the *Only*-Begotten and not the First-born. Not less does it suggest His two natures, the Godhead and the Manhood, which John brings fully out. The activity or descent of divine love among us might well be implied under this number.

It is peculiarly also the New Testament Gospel, the grace and truth which have come by Jesus Christ being not merely exhibited as beyond law, but in contrast with it (i. 17). We are so outside Judaism, that its most familiar institutions (as the passover, ch. vi. 4) have to be explained to us; while the Hebrew names and titles (even Messias, ch. i. 41) are given only to be translated into the language of the Gentiles. This connects with its position as the final Gospel, starting morally where the others close, with the Lord's rejection by Israel (the theme of Matthew, ch. i. 11) and non-recognition by the world (10), and thus showing the necessity of divine work—of new life needed by the soul, which when received brings into the relationship of children with God and capacity to receive the divine revelation.

For there is now no veil over the face of God: man tested not only by law but in the Person of Christ in perfect lowly grace, come only to be rejected, God must now act for Himself, and in a way fully worthy of Himself. The veil therefore which law had kept over the face of God, and which in the other Gospels, even in Luke, is rent only at the Cross (Matt. xxvii. 51, Mark xv. 38, Luke xxiii. 45), is absent here all through: "We *beheld* His glory," says the apostle, with direct contrastive reference to the tabernacle of old,* "glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

A contrast on the opposite side with the Synoptic Gospels makes this more impressive. All three give in detail—Luke in the fullest manner—the account of the transfiguration, the exceptional display of the glory of the "Son of *Man*, coming in His Kingdom." (Matt. xvi. 28; Mark ix. 1; Luke ix. 27: comp. 2 Pet. i. 16–18.) John omits this altogether, and necessarily, for the divine glory of Christ is ever before his eyes. This omission is similar to that of the ascension, which is indeed referred to, but in an exceptional chapter (vi. 62) in which He is seen as Son of man: "What and if ye see the Son of man ascend up where He was before?" The account of it is given in the two Gospels which speak of Him respectively as Servant and as Man; there crowning His path of humiliation with divine acknowledgment. But here it is on this account omitted. The Word has become flesh; and the blessedness of this is to remain with us, without anything to render it less near. "Grace and truth" have come to abide.

There is one special character of John's Gospel, already in part referred to, by which it is connected with the preceding ones, and which will not allow us to forget that after all it is a *fourth:* that is the word "world": it is the universal aspect of the grace that is come. It is that which manifests the true Light, that "it lights"—or "shines for"—"every man." When the sun rises, it makes no distinction of persons:

* "The Word became flesh, and *tabernacled* among us: and we beheld His glory" (ch. i. 14, *Greek*).

when God is revealed, we can ask with the apostle: "Is He the God of the Jews only? is He not also of the Gentiles?" (Rom. iii. 29). So we read here: "I am the Light of the world;" "God so loved the world;" "sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved;" "my flesh which I will give for the life of the world," and so on. What makes all this more marked is that, as often observed, John's Gospel is that which gives us *characteristically* the Lord's Jerusalem ministry, while those before it show us rather that in Galilee. But if He is here at the centre of Jewish worship and ritual, it is only to display the hollowness of it all, and Himself as the one resource and refuge of the soul. This needs no special exemplification: we shall find it all through the book.

It is that also to which the preceding Gospels have been leading on. Even in Matthew Israel is seen rejecting Him, and the Kingdom of heaven thus acquires its mystery-form. The Sower goes forth to sow His seed in the broad field of the world; but this is more anticipative of what is to be. In Mark we find what has been called the Latin Gospel and signs of a Gentile audience being contemplated. Luke is a Gentile distinctly addressing a Gentile. But in John, though salvation may come of the Jews, yet man as man, the world as the world, is fully set forth,—in its guilt and misery alike everywhere, but thus all distinctions lost in this common ruin; amid which divine grace finds everywhere its objects and ministers to the same need.

Man must be born again: this is now for the first time explicitly declared. "I give unto them eternal life": here is the grace suited. But it rises beyond the mere supply of need in bringing those that are thus "made partakers of the divine nature" into the blessed place of relationship with God as Father, in the full enjoyment of communion with the Father and the Son.

All this can now be merely indicated: it can only be developed when we come, if the Lord will, to the study of the book itself. There is, however, one character beside which has to be considered, and that is the aspect which is here presented of the Lord's sacrificial work. Even here, where least we expect to find it, His glory is shining forth. His own words about it are: "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him" (chap. xiii. 31). We find at the Cross no horror of great darkness hanging about it here. There is no cry of desertion. There is no agony portrayed. If He says, "I thirst," it is not that His thirst may be met, but "that Scripture may be fulfilled." The character of the burnt-offering, which the fortieth psalm expresses, is here made manifest: "Sacrifice and offering Thou hadst no delight in: ears hast Thou digged for *Me;* burnt-offering and sin-offering Thou hast not demanded. Then said I, Lo, I am come: in the roll of the book it is written of ME: I delight to do Thy pleasure, my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart." (See notes on the Psalms.)

The many sacrifices of Judaism are here displaced by the one perfect Sacrifice, which in its entire devotedness to God shows the true burnt-offering character, its savor brought out by the fire of divine holiness. So in John Jesus offers Himself in the calm and perfect consciousness of acceptance: "when He had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished; and He bowed His head and rendered up His spirit."

This is the witness, not merely of the strength of our salvation, but to the perfectness of our acceptance in the Beloved. How suited also to that particular aspect of truth which we have here: viz. communion in the light with God, maintained by the preciousness of that obedience in which we are accepted. The perfection of the work which He has declared is presently borne witness to by the blood and water which follow the thrust of the soldier's spear. It is the answer of divine love to man's senseless enmity,—the divine provision for his need. The blood of atonement is here found with the cleansing water,—guilt and impurity are both met in the Cross: that which puts away sin for men before God, reconciles them also *to* God: "the life which I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20).

This must suffice as to the Gospels before we take them up in detail, as now at once we shall begin to do. The orderly display of these and other features can only be seen in this way. May the Lord give us happy and fruitful meditation.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF MATTHEW.

CHRIST, the King, and His Kingdom: which, offered to Israel, and rejected by them, is seen prophetically to take on its present "mystery" form, and pass over to the Gentiles. This, too, is seen in its whole course as committed to the hands of men in the absence of the King, and lapsing more and more into disorder, until His coming as the Son of man ends it in judgment. The principles characterizing it throughout are given; and the events connected with His coming again. Finally we have His life given up as the Trespass-offering, in which He sells all that He has to possess Himself, whether of the Church or Israel, and, rising from the dead, all power in heaven and in earth is given into His hand.

Matthew has seven divisions:—

1. (Chap. i., ii.) The King, as promised.
2. (Chap. iii.–vii.) The Announcement of the Kingdom and the King.
3. (Chap. viii–xii.) The manifestation of the King, which manifests also the people's heart towards Him.
4. (Chap. xiii.–xx. 28.) The Kingdom in the hands of men.
5. (Chap. xx., 29–xxiii.) The Governmental Presentation, and the End as to Israel.
6. (Chap. xxiv, xxv.) The putting down of evil at the consummation of the age.
7. (Chap. xxvi–xxviii): The completed purchase.

NOTES.

MATTHEW, the tax-gatherer of his own people under Roman despotism, is the one called of God to write the story of the true King, the "gift of Jehovah" to His people, and thus to fulfil the significance of his name. Rejecting the gift, Israel may indeed remain under the tax-gatherer for their sins, but the gift itself will not on that account lose its blessedness or be recalled by the "Eternal" from whom it comes, and with whom there is no repentance,—"no shadow of turning." The King shall yet reign in righteousness, and Israel too be His people, and Matthew himself shows us this; while in the meantime His grace shall not lack expression, nor His kingdom be taken from the earth.

The special designation of it, which is peculiar to Matthew is—

"THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN"

or "of the heavens," as following the Hebrew, the expression always is. In this form it is founded upon the book of Daniel, and was in common use among the Jews of our Lord's day. "According to the Rabbinic views of the time," says Edersheim, "the terms 'Kingdom,' 'Kingdom of heaven,' and 'Kingdom of God' (in the Targum on Mic. iv. 7, 'Kingdom of Jehovah')were equivalent. In fact, the word 'heaven' was very often used instead of 'God,' so as to avoid unduly familiarizing the ear with the Sacred Name. This probably accounts for the exclusive use of the expression, 'Kingdom of Heaven,' in the Gospel by St. Matthew. And the term did imply a contrast to earth, as the expression 'the Kingdom of God' did to this world. The consciousness of its contrast to earth or the world was distinctly expressed in Rabbinic writings."*

This will hardly suffice, however, as to the Gospel of Matthew, in which the constant use of this term must be sought beyond mere Rabbinism or Jewish usage. The Old Testament furnishes us also with its roots, rather than with the exact expression; but the place in which we find them is significant from its connection with a significant period in Israel's history.

In the book of Daniel we are in the "times of the Gentiles," and his prophecies have all reference to these, which he traces to their end in the coming of the Son of man (vii. 13.) But these "times of the Gentiles" imply the subjection of Jerusalem to them,—the throne of God in Israel given up, therefore. Ezekiel has in fact already shown us this, the glory of the Lord removing from Jerusalem, as necessitated by the idolatrous abominations practised there (ch. x. 18, 19, xi. 22, 23). The destruction of the city by Nebuchadnezzar is the sequel of this, and the carrying away of the mass of the people captive to Babylon. A significant phrase comes into constant use at this time; when the ark took its place in Jordan to lead them into the land, it was said to them: "Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the *earth* passeth over before you" (Josh. iii. 11); now in the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel, and the last chapter of Chronicles, God, having left the throne of His kingdom in Israel, is become in the lips of His people as afar off—"the God of heaven."

It is as this that He gives Nebuchadnezzar the throne of earth (Dan. ii. 37, 38), alas, only to find him rebellious to the Hand that has set him on it. In consequence of which we find him sentenced shortly to be driven to the beasts

* "Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," (i. 266).

"till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will." This is paraphrased in the next verse by an expression which seems to imply the very thing of which Matthew so often speaks:—"after that thou shalt have known that the *heavens do rule*" (iv. 25, 26).

That surely seems to give us the root-idea of the "Kingdom of heaven," while yet it is as plain that nearly six centuries after this, John the Baptist was only announcing in the wilderness of Judea the Kingdom to be "at hand." The "rule" spoken of to Nebuchadnezzar is only the providential one which has always existed over all the earth and through all dispensations, but without other avouchment of it upon earth than in its acts, and these often unrecognized as such by men, and indeed an enigma to men of faith; for here "clouds and darkness are round about" God still, if "justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne." In the New Testament, on the other hand, the kingdom is in the open sight of men at least, though unbelief may still mock at it and deny it. This is only the form it assumes before it is set up in power as the prophets from of old prophesied of it, though not under the name in Matthew. These two forms are distinguished in the New Testament as "the Kingdom and *patience* of our Lord Jesus Christ" and "the Kingdom and *glory*" (Rev. i. 9; 1 Thess. ii. 12). The former is the kingdom of a *rejected* King, as such gone in the meantime from the earth, and committing authority to men who act for Him in His absence; but this leaves room for failure to come in consequence of their unfaithfulness, and a perverted form of the kingdom itself, which is carefully forewarned of, but awaits rectification at the coming of the King (Matt. xiii.) The *parables* of the Kingdom are its "mysteries" (ver. 35), hidden from the prophets of old, and which now being told out make the scribe who is now instructed in the kingdom of heaven, like one who "brings out of his treasures things *new* as well as old" (ver. 52).

The Old Testament form is a manifest Kingdom, set up in power, in the hands of Messiah, Son of David, but Immanuel. (Isa. ix. 6; xi., xii.) Judgment introduced this kingdom, which is characterized by power exercised in righteousness and mercy. Peace prevails on earth, which shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Israel regathered and restored, after disciplinary judgment has done its necessary work, becomes the centre of blessing and refreshment for the earth, the glory of the Lord being once more, but beyond all past manifestation, revealed in Zion, and His throne established there. (Isa, ii. 1–4; iv. 2–6; Zech. xiv., etc.)

In both these forms it is spoken of in Matthew as the Kingdom of heaven; in the first having no display of power on earth, the sentence of Lo-ammi pronounced on Israel at the Babylonish captivity being confirmed by their rejection of Messiah when He came. Christ, gone up on high, sits upon the Father's throne instead of on His own (Rev. iii. 21). Faith in the unseen is thus the very principle of the kingdom now, as by and by everything will be manifest to sight, heaven and earth being openly united (Jno. i. 51), the heavenly city in sight (Rev. xxi. 10, 26), and the very judgment of the rebellious shown in that which is used in the New Testament to describe hell itself (comp. Isa. lxvi. 24; Mark ix. 43–48). But thus it will still be the Kingdom of heaven (Matt. viii. 11, 12),—even manifestly so.

"Heaven" is here in antithesis to earth, as in the "Kingdom of God" God is to man. There is no other difference: some of the parables of the Kingdom of heaven in Matthew being found in the other synoptic Gospels as parables of the Kingdom of God. (Comp. Matt. xiii. 1–9, with Luke viii. 5–10; Matt. xiii. 31, 32 with Mark iv. 30–32, and Luke xiii. 18, 19; Matt. xiii. 33 with Luke xiii. 20, 21.) The term in Matthew is broader and dispensationally applied, while the Kingdom of God implies more its spiritual features (Rom. xiv. 17; Matt. vi. 33). The term "Kingdom of heaven" occurs 32 times in the Gospel, the "Kingdom of God" only 5 times: the dispensational aspect of the Kingdom characterizes the book.

Division 1.

Naturally, therefore, we begin with the coming of the King Himself, carefully shown in connection with His genealogical title, and the prophecies that announced His higher glory. But these had also foretold His rejection by His people, which begins accordingly at once to be accomplished. The magi from the east bring Him the homage of the Gentiles, but only "trouble" Jerusalem with their loyalty to its King, and the new-born Christ is sought by Herod to be put to death. But this only carries Him to Egypt, where as the Representative of His people He begins anew their history under the eye of God.

He is thus called out of it by God to fulfil His predestined course as the Branch of David, *netzer*, the slip or scion of the fallen house, which, growing up in an obscurity which is once more the presage of rejection, finds its suited place in Netzareth (Nazareth),—small enough to be despised of men, and yet in it all the hope, not merely of David or of Israel, but of the human race. Thus on both sides had the prophets prophesied of Him.

Subd. 1.

In the first subdivision we have the King identified: in the first place by His legal descent; in the second by His supernatural birth. As the King of Israel He needed the one; as the King of the Kingdom of heaven He needed the other. But the King is also in Scripture the representative-head of his people before God, and here is One whose representation of them will be surely of divine significance: it means much for Himself—it means everything for them; thus His name is called Jesus, because He shall save His people from their sins.

Sec. 1.

The Lord is introduced in a double character,—as Son of David, and as Son of Abraham. As Son of David He is King of Israel; as Son of Abraham He is not necessarily King at all; but He has a promise of widest blessing, which is on the principle of faith to all the families of the earth. It is not hindered, therefore, by Israel's rejection of Him and the consequent delay of the Davidic Kingdom; this only affects the expression of it, not the fact; which may even find a higher expression, as it has actually found one in Christianity.

Abraham is the depositary of blessing, and therefore with Abraham the genealogy begins. Since title is conveyed by the descent, the stream runs down through the centuries. We find in Luke a very different meaning conveyed by a reverse order: *the stream runs back*. The style and manner of Scripture have importance as well as its statements, and we may miss the *matter* by not attending to the *manner*.

The genealogy is divided for us into three parts, which are specially emphasized as consisting of fourteen generations each. The fact that some links in the genealogic chain have to be omitted, in order that there may be just this number, still further shows that there must be importance in it. The number must be itself significant, and probably that of the parts as well as of the generations contained in each.

In fact, the first part of the genealogy embraces both the heads of promise—both Abraham and David. The second begins at once with one in whom departure from God manifested itself, one whose heart went after other gods than the One Only God, whose special favor had been shown him. After which there is a general history of decline, three descendants of the apostate murderess, Athaliah, being blotted out of the list altogether; while the Babylonish captivity, which was the giving up of the nation as the openly acknowledged people of God, ends the story in this part.

The third part has in it but one significant name, that of Zorobabel; after which the line lapses into utter obscurity. All is ruined and hopeless, save for God, till suddenly by a manifest divine intervention Jesus is born—a true resurrection, which justifies this third part as real numerical symbolism.

MATTHEW.

DIVISION 1. (Chap. i,–ii.)

The King, as promised.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. i.)

Identified as such.

1 (1-17): By birth.

1 (1-6): The line beginning in grace with the heads of promise.

1.[1] THE [a]genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of [b]David, the son of [c]Abraham.
Abraham begat [d]Isaac; and Isaac begat [e]Jacob; and Jacob begat [f]Judas and his brethren; and Judas

a cf. Gen. 5. 1. *cf.* Lk. 3. 23-38.
b cf. 2 Sam. 7. 12-14. *cf.* Jer. 23. 5. Rom. 1. 3. *cf.* Rev. 22. 16.
c cf. Gen. 15. 4, 5. Gal. 3. 16.
d Gen. 21. 1-5.
e Gen. 25. 26.
f Gen. 29. 35. *cf.* Rev. 5. 5.

The genealogy shows the ruin hopeless but to God, in that Joseph, the last of the line here before Christ, is shown by it to be Jeconiah's son; and against Jeconiah prophecy had denounced (Jer. xxii. 30) that he should be (as to the throne) "childless, . . for no man of his seed should prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah." The consequence was pressed, as far back as Irenæus, that here the direct line of descent is smitten with a curse, while yet it was not deprived of the legal title: it could hand on to another, therefore, that which could be of no advantage to itself. The marriage of Joseph and Mary was, in the wisdom of God, the means of accomplishing this. The Lord's birth from Mary made Him the real Son of David (Luke i. 32) while the marriage of His mother made Him David's legal heir.*

The genealogy thus shows the ruin of man in the fullest way, while the grace and power of God are declared abundantly. The number 14, thus stamped upon it three times over, is certainly the number of witness (2) combined with that of completeness (7), if we interpret it by its natural factors; if on the other hand we take the *dekatessares* (ten-four) of the Greek, then the testing of responsible man is what is indicated; and assuredly that would be the substance of the testimony given by the genealogy all through. It is in fact the testimony of the ages up to Christ, which were the ages of human probation as characterized by that "Old Covenant," as books of which the records have come down to us. If the common chronology be admitted, its 4,000 years of human history to its centre in the birth of Jesus is only the "ten-four" in a more emphatic way ($10^3 \times 4$), while if we apply it to the birth of him of whom our Isaac was the undoubted Antitype, it is the 100 years of Abraham's age at which, after the utter failure of nature, the promised seed was born, multiplied by 40, the symbol of perfect probation. Thus by different pathways the same result is reached: God has stamped His meaning on all this too deep for erasure. Paul sums it up substantially for us in his declaration that, "when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. v. 6). This is the moral on man's side of preparation for Christ: we have to be brought *down*, not up, to receive Him; and all God's previous dealings with man enforce this conclusion.

* There are different ways of understanding this, and it is a difficulty that Zorobabel and Salathiel (or Shealtiel) appear also in Mary's genealogy in Luke, which we may indeed assume, with Lange, to be simply a coincidence of similar names, as with Jacob and Joseph in the list in Matthew, though these are of common occurrence. Zorobabel, "born in Babel," may be conjectured to have been also a name common at that period, though we have no proof of this. The names before and after have no similarity; and it is not easily seen how, if the lines come together here, they should have been separate before this meeting.

There is another difficulty in these names coming together in a line of *natural* descent, such as that in Luke is allowed to be, that the Zerubbabel of the returned captives was not the *natural* son of Shealtiel, but of Pedaiah (1 Chron. iii. 18, 19); and of Shealtiel, it is supposed, only according to the levirate law (Deut. xxv. 5, 6).

begat [g] Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat [h] Esrom; and Esrom begat [i] Aram; and Aram begat [j] Aminadab; and Aminadab begat [k] Naasson; and Naasson begat [l] Salmon; and Salmon begat [m] Booz of [n] Rahab; and Booz begat Obed of [o] Ruth; and Obed begat [p] Jesse; and Jesse begat [q] David the king.

[g] Gen. 38. 11-30. [h] Ruth 4. 18-22. [i] 1 Chr. 2. 5, 9. [j] 1 Chr. 2. 10. [k] Num. 2. 3. [l] 1 Chr. 2. 11, 12. [m] Ruth 2.

1, etc. [n] *cf.* Josh. 6. 17, 25 with Heb. 11. 31. [o] *cf.* Ruth 4. 13-17; *cf.* Deut. 23. 3 with Rom. 8. 3. [p] 1 Sa. 16. 1; *cf.* Is. 11. 1. [q] 1 Sa. 17. 12, 58.

So much then as to the Son of David; but we have still to see Him in this genealogy also as Son of Abraham—the Isaac, therefore, whose name means "laughter;" His advent "glad tidings of great joy which shall be to all people." In this way we shall find a feature of the register here appeal to us of which as yet we have taken no notice, but which would strike a Jew at once.

The presence of women's names in a genealogy was thoroughly exceptional. As links in the chain of descent they might be needed, as where there were different wives and it was needful to indicate from which of these a title was derived. Now in the first part here there are three women mentioned, of whom two at least cannot be on this account—Rahab and Ruth; which naturally would imply that in the case of the other—Tamar—this was not the reason either. In her case also the twin-birth of Zerah is referred to, as if to remind us of the history connected with her; as, again, in the case of Bathsheba afterwards, who is not called by her name, but as "her of Urias:" which flashes upon us a history worse than Tamar's, both for the actors and the relationships involved.

Indeed these names are not what we should expect in such a list—in a register of descent of the King of Israel—the great King foretold. They are all probably, three certainly, Gentiles; two are Canaanites—of a race under the curse.

Here, then, the Abrahamic blessing begins to unfold to us: just in the most indisputable part of the genealogy, where no Jew could contest their right to a place in the ancestry of his Messiah, these women's names are found. What a light they shed, with all their misery and wretchedness, upon His title as the Son of Abraham! But there is more than this: apart from their birth-heritage, three out of the four are marked out by the sins of their own lives. Tamar, the first of all, actually finds her place here through her sin—her place in connection with the Saviour of sinners! Is it not what we all do? is it not our first claim upon Him that we are sinners and He the Saviour of sinners? Thus we find our title, through His grace, in that which would otherwise drive us to despair, —in that which involves no labor on our part to reach, a title as to which it is not possible to deceive ourselves, which it cannot be presumption on our part to plead. Would we take our place even with Tamar? Then Tamar's name given here may be our encouragement — Tamar's name as one of whom He is not ashamed!

The second name is that of Rahab, drawn out of the obscurity in which in the Old Testament her later history is involved, and brought forward in strange connection with a princely family of the house of Judah. As wife of Salmon and mother of Boaz she takes her place here in the genealogy of the Lord; and we may surely say, in view of the epistle to the Hebrews, and the epistle of James, that salvation by faith is the lesson of her history. Thus we have the second great principle of the gospel proclaimed in her.

Ruth is morally a very different person from Tamar and Rahab. She is a beautiful example of faith that lives and roots itself against every wind of adversity. We know her history well, for the Spirit of God has dwelt upon it at large for our edification and encouragement: against her, whatever personally she might be, stood the sentence of the law that "an Ammonite or a Moabite shall not come into the congregation of the Lord: even to their tenth generation they shall not come into the congregation of the Lord forever" (Deut. xxiii. 3).

2 (6-11): Decay.

6 And David begat [r]Solomon of her of Urias; and Solomon begat [s]Roboam; and Roboam begat [t]Abia; and Abia begat [u]Asa; and Asa begat [v]Josaphat; and Josaphat begat [w]Joram; and Joram begat [x]Ozias; and Ozias begat [y]Joatham; and Joatham begat [z]Ahaz; and Ahaz begat [a]Ezekias; and Ezekias begat [b]Manasses; and Manasses begat [c]Amon; and Amon begat [d]Josias; and Josias begat [e]Jechonias and his brethren at the time of the [f]transportation to Babylon.

3 (12-17): Manifestation and resurrection.

12 And after the transportation to Babylon Jechonias begat [g]Salathiel; and Salathiel begat [h]Zorobabel; and Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor; and Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud; and Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Joseph the [i]husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

17 All the generations, therefore, from Abraham to David are [j]fourteen generations; and from David to the transportation to Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the transportation to Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.

2 (18-25): Son of God and Saviour.

18 Now the [k]birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: his mother Mary having been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the

r 2 Sa. 12. 24. cf. 2 Sa. 11. 1-27.
s 1 Chr. 3. 10, 1 Ki. 12. 1, etc. 2 Chr. chs. 10, 11, 12.
t 2 Chr. 12. 16. 2 Chr. 13. 1, etc.
u 2 Chr. 14. 1, etc.
v 2 Chr. 17. 1, etc.
w 2 Chr. 21. 1, etc.
x 2 Chr. 26. 1, etc.
y 2 Chr. 26. 23, etc.
z 2 Chr. 27. 9.
a 2 Chr. 28. 27.
b 2 Chr. 32. 33, etc.
c 2 Chr. 33. 20.
d 2 Chr. 33. 25.
e 2 Chr. 36. 1-13.
f 2 Chr. 36. 14-23.
g 1 Chr. 3. 17.
h Ezra 3. 2. Hag. 1. 1, etc.
i vers. 18-20, 24. Lk. 2. 6.
j cf. Ex. 12. 6; cf. Gal. 4. 4.
k Lk. 1. 26-38.

Thus she is legally excluded from the very people with whom her faith unites her. But grace is sovereign in her case as in every other. She and her children come into the congregation of the Lord. It is interesting to see that in the rigid observance of this law, David himself, only third in succession, would have been excluded, the reign of law would have excluded the saviour-king himself; so also would it have been as to his great Antitype.

The only woman that remains at this end of the line is not mentioned by her name but as "her of Uriah," her history being thus fully, if concisely indicated. In this case grace reigns, even with regard to a saint's transgression; and this completes the gospel as we find it in the genealogy. The salvation which it brings is for sinners, by faith, apart from law, and eternal. Thus Christ as the Seed of Abraham is fully declared.

Mary's name at the end of the genealogy has another meaning: it shows us Christ as the Seed of the Woman, out of weakness manifesting strength, out of passiveness, the energy of the Overcomer, the Conqueror who with His bruised heel stamps down the serpent.

The genealogy of Jesus Christ tells us, therefore, much of Him. It is more than possible that, had we only eyes to see it, every name in this list would prove itself significant, and have its own story to tell in connection with Him. But it is not mine to attempt this: yet of these so carefully numbered generations, I cannot believe there is one that is not worthy of being so cared for. If we had worked believingly in this direction, how would the work have been repaid!

2. But we are now to look at the Lord in another character, in which no genealogy can tell Him out. Here He is Son of God, the suited King of a Kingdom greater far than that of David, though that of David is included in it. Necessarily then the fact of His divine Sonship has a large place in Matthew, by which this Gospel connects more with John than the other Synoptic Gospels do. The

[l] Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a [m] just man, and unwilling to [n] expose her, was minded to put her away privately. But while he thought on these things, behold, an [o] angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, [p] son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is begotten in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name [q] Jesus, for *he* shall save his people [r] from their sins. Now all this came to pass that that might be [s] fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: [t] Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which is, being interpreted, [u] "God with us." And Joseph, being awaked from his sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and [v] took unto him his wife; and knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn * son; and he called his name Jesus.

[l] Lk. 1. 35. cf. Gen. 3. 15. cf. Jno. 1. 14. cf. Heb. 10. 5.
[m] ch. 5. 32.
[n] ctr. Jno. 8. 4, 5.
[o] ch. 2. 13, 19.
[p] ver. 16. cf. ch. 22. 42.
[q] Lk. 1. 31. cf. Josh. 1. 1, 2. cf. Phil. 2. 9, 10.
[r] cf. Acts 3. 26. cf. Tit. 2. 14.
[s] cf. ch. 2. 6, 17, 18, 23.
[t] Is. 7. 14. Is. 9. 6.
[u] cf. Jno. 1. 1-3, 14. cf. Jno. 8. 58. cf. Jno. 15. 9. cf. 2 Cor. 5. 19.
[v] cf. Lk. 2. 5.

* Most editors now read "a son;" but it is doubtful.

claim of it becomes the great and critical point in His presentation to Israel, and is that which, more than anything else, brings about His rejection.

As in the case of the genealogy, however, it is still Joseph who is prominent here. We have his conflict with himself, the visit of the angel to him which dispels his doubts, his marriage and naming of the child by which he accepts it as his own. Joseph is here in all this manifestly what the genealogy makes him, the legal heir of David's line, and the representative of its hopes and responsibilities. In Luke, the Gospel of the Manhood, it is on the other hand, and as naturally, Mary who is in the fore-front, and Joseph is only outlined among the figures in the background.

Mary is seen at the beginning in question, if not under reproach. The singular honor which God's grace has conferred on her, is too great to be received unhesitatingly, even by the people of God themselves. We cannot believe for joy: the thing is too good to be true; the will to believe is not sufficient to accomplish faith. For so far is this from being credulity, that it requires all the more decisive proof, the more that for which we seek it awakens all the desire of our hearts. This is all the truth, (whatever the amount may be) contained in the strong assertion of the poet,—

> "There lives more faith in honest doubt,
> Believe me, than in half the creeds:"

although the last line can scarcely express his thought accurately. Joseph here, as a righteous man, but in perplexity, thinks of a half measure: he will give her a writing of divorce without statement of the cause, and put her away. But the appearance of an angel to him in a dream resolves his doubt and changes his purpose.

It is quite in character with the distance maintained in Matthew's Gospel, that the angel appears only in a dream. It is so again with the Magi afterwards, and with Joseph himself once more, in Egypt. In Luke, on the contrary, the angel appears openly, to Zacharias as well as to Mary. The difference does not seem founded upon a personal one, as Zacharias exhibits more unbelief than Joseph. It may be connected with the failure of David's house, and especially of Jeconiah's line which Joseph represents; and the blessing comes to him in a veiled form answering to this. Mary is not and could not be of Jeconiah's line, and his connection with Jesus is only by his marriage with her. Yet grace gives him in this way a place of unspeakable blessing.

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. ii.)

Borne witness to and rejected: the Nazarene.

1 (1-12): God the Creator and the men of natural knowledge.

1. NOW, Jesus having been [w] born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, [x] magi from the east arrived at Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that

[w] Lk. 2. 1-20. [x] *cf.* 1 Ki. 10. 1, 2. *cf.* Is. 60. 3.

The angel addresses him as son of David with the confirmatory announcement of the divine origin of the Child that is to be born, and whose work requires no less than a divine Person to perform. His name, Jesus, or Joshua ("Jehovah the Saviour") is declared to be no mere name, or indicative of some abstract truth, or of some principle to be developed in relation to His history. Nay, Jehovah's people are *His* people, and *He* therefore is Jehovah and Saviour. He is the full reality of His name: "*He* shall save His people from their sins."

Prophecy had already declared the wondrous truth as to His Person; the primal one as to the woman's Seed had been supplemented by one more distinct which plainly referred to it and filled it out. "The virgin" of Isaiah, who was to be with child, and whose Son was to be called Emmanuel, points back to and defines what had long been a hope in the hearts of men. The woman's Seed would indeed be that, without the co-partnership with man ordained by the Creator for the continuance of the race; and this by no mere miracle which would still leave the child to be a man merely, though of superhuman birth. No: his name Emmanuel would be the explanation of the unique fact; "God" would in Him be "with us;" which the angel's words declare to mean "Jehovah," come to deliver us from that which was the necessary barrier to intimacy, and *in Himself* to bring God and man together!

And Emmanuel is distinctly in the prophecy the King of David's line, upon whose shoulder the government should be (Isa. ix. 5, 6). We see that the prophecy belongs rather to Matthew's picture of the Lord than John's, as we might have thought it; although evidently these come near together here. As King He is at once the Representative of His people, and "Mighty God" who as "Father of eternity"* shall settle all things upon everlasting foundations —Power alone cannot accomplish this: God must become man, the King must be crowned with thorns and be the Saviour. The whole circle of truth is needed here: the Highest must become the lowest; it is His glory: only the Highest could come down so low.

Joseph, awaked out of His sleep, does as the angel of the Lord has bidden him, and takes his wife. The divine intervention does not set aside the Creator's ordinance, nor God put His seal upon human asceticism. Judaism, in fact, knew nothing of this dishonor done to the God of nature. The Child is born and named: and "David in spirit" once more calls his Son his Lord.

SUBD. 2.

So the King has come—the true King, for whom all is waiting, for whom all still waits: for He came but to be rejected, and immediately He has come, we find Him rejected, by the very people who for centuries had been taught to expect Him, and carefully prepared to receive Him. He is worshipped by those from afar; but when He comes to His own, they have no heart for Him; and this is discovered before He has even been personally before their eyes. There is but the announcement that He has come, and we see at once what afterwards they formally declare, that they have "no king but Cæsar." There is no help but to leave them, then, to Cæsar.

Gentiles indeed receive and worship Him: yes, Gentiles, but not *the* Gentiles. The special link between God and Israel is broken by their unbelief, and now the question is to be asked, "Is He not the God of the Gentiles also?" From

* Not, as in our common version, "Everlasting Father."

hath been born [y]King of the Jews? for we have seen his [z]star in the east and are come to [a]worship him. And when Herod the king heard it, he was [b]troubled, and all [c]Jerusalem with him; and, having gathered together

[y] *cf.* ch. 27. 11, 29, 37, 42. [z] *cf.* Num. 24. 17. *etc.* Amos 5. 26. [a] *cf.* Ps. 72. 9-11. [b] *cf.* ch. 21. 38; *cf.* Jno. 1. 11. [c] *cf.* ch. 23. 37-39.

God's side this can only be answered as the apostle answers it (Rom. iii. 29), that He surely is. But in fact only a remnant really receive the Lord, and these are the subjects of a divine work in their souls. This, however, is John's testimony and not Matthew's; while in Matthew the worship of the magi, while Jerusalem is but "troubled" at their coming, shows the impending dispensational change.

Already the end of Judah's "sceptre"—her tribal rod of authority—as predicted by Jacob, is fairly within sight, and the Edomite Herod reigns over the land. The true King is forced out of it, but only to renew from the beginning in Egypt the history of the people in the sight of God, that He may (as He will yet) show them His grace. But this involves much more for Him through whom the blessing is to come to them, and is no release to Him from the path which ends but at Calvary. He returns, after Herod is dead, to the land of Israel, only to find Archelaus in the place and reigning in the spirit of his father Herod, and to take His own place at Nazareth as the "Branch of Jesse," returning to the lowliness out of which David sprang, but with the hopes of much more than David's house resting upon Him. But we must look at all this more in detail.

1. The King, the Lord of glory, is come into the world, and has to be announced among His own people by men from afar—by Gentiles. Yet not only had prophets from long since prophesied of Him, and the scribes could put their finger upon the place of His birth, but Daniel had predicted the exact time of His coming. Heaven had been recently giving its witness also, immediately before and at His coming. Zacharias and Elizabeth had announced in their own child His fore-runner. An angelic vision had brought the shepherds to the manger where He lay. Simeon had blessed God for His salvation seen, and with Anna had spoken of Him to many in Jerusalem itself. And yet the city is only startled for a moment from its slumber when "magi from the East" come with the inquiry, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" and with the declaration that a star had been seen by them as the sign of His birth,—a sign so fully believed on their part that here they were, from their own far off land, to seek and to worship Him.

The magi were the great natural observers of their day, though this connected itself largely with practices which from them have got the name of "magic." They were men of occult science, the astrologers and soothsayers, the interpreters of dreams and auguries. True knowledge in them was variously mingled with imposture and with superstition; so that they figure as variously. No doubt, we may find in those who were real among them the affecting expression of minds that, having lost hold of primitive revelation, turned to search the dim border land of the unseen, to dreams and omens, and the face of the far off heavens, to find that God who was not far off but nigh at hand; and here in these travelers we may see one supreme example of God meeting such in their own way, to lift them out of such groping into the light indeed.

They had heard of a "King of the Jews" and assuredly something more than merely that. Though He were King of the Jews, yet His coming had to do with them, awakening expectant joy and reverence in their hearts. The prophecy of Balaam is the only one of which we know, which could in their minds connect such an one with a "star;" but this, though of a Gentile and to Gentiles, if it were traditionally known to them, must have come through 1600 years of most uncertain conveyance to reach them thus. Besides the Jews scattered through the East, furnished a more direct means of knowledge. Balaam had said noth-

all the chief [d]priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is [e]written through the prophet: "And thou, Bethlehem, [in the] land of Juda, art in no wise least among the princes of Juda; for out of thee shall come forth a [f]Ruler who shall be a [g]shepherd to my people Israel."

[d] *cf.* Mal. 2. 7. *cf.* Jer. 18. 18. *cf.* Lk. 11. 52. [e] Mi. 5. 2. *cf.* Jno. 7. 42. [f] Is. 9. 6. 7. [g] *cf.* Zech. 13. 7. *cf.* Jno. 10. 11; *cf.* Rev. 2. 27.

ing about a star to herald the King: it was the King himself who was to be the star. Yet the prophecy was couched in terms natural to one of the *magi;* a class to which the seer himself seems clearly to have belonged; and the appearance of a supernatural star to men of this kind, accustomed to see portents in the heavens, might naturally connect itself with such a representation. The star was surely supernatural. No conjunction of planets, such as Kepler pointed out, could be spoken of as a star, nor have begotten so perfect a conviction in the minds of men well acquainted with the heavens. It was, in fact, a beautiful witness of the God of nature to the men of nature,—of One not under bondage to the uniformity in general so necessary to us, that we may have a stable world to reckon on. But this is only a suited back-ground on which the more plainly to display Himself as the Living and Almighty God transcending far the universe He has made, and willing in love so to display Himself.

What messengers these from among the Gentiles, to awaken, if it might be, Israel to jealousy. They come to Jerusalem, expecting, doubtless, at the capital city, to find all men ready to greet the inquirer with a gospel message. They come to find an Edomite on the throne of Israel, and with all the old Edomite hatred in his heart, craftily though he may hide it, and even gather the chief priests and elders together, to hasten them on the way. These, too, can tell all about the place of Christ's birth textually. They give a response which must have stricken the blood-stained tyrant to the heart; but of faith in God they show nothing. They answer that Christ is to be born "in Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet: And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art in no wise least among the princes of Juda; for out of thee shall come a Ruler, who shall be a shepherd to my people Israel."

Such, literally, are the words they use: and one might suppose that in using them they meant to inflict a wound that Herod should not be able to impute to them, but which should come home to him as the voice of God Himself. And so it was, though the words are not found in Micah just as they quote them here. For Hebrew was not any more the language of Israel as a whole; and it was quite the custom to paraphrase, rather than quote literally a scripture appealed to. The Hebrew, besides smaller differences, does not give "shepherd" in this passage, but simply "Ruler." The Greek of the Septuagint follows the Hebrew: so that the variation is their own. And yet who can deny that the one word is God's thought as to the other? He who had sent Moses to the sheepfolds to learn how to guide His people in the wilderness—He who in the land had chosen David and "taken him from following the ewes great with young" (demanding therefore, the tenderest care) to feed and guide with no less tenderness, the flock of His pasture—He had indeed consecrated the "shepherd" as the picture of the Ruler whom He had appointed and would raise up. There is but One who has out-done this picture.

The scribes show, then, in their variation from the letter their acquaintance with the character of Messiah as prophecy reveals Him. But we hear no more of them. They cite the text for Herod; and they do it well; but they have no heart for the One they testify to. They are like sign-posts upon a road on which they do not move an inch. They pass on the word to those who value it; Herod himself also becoming the instrument in guiding worshipers to the feet of Jesus. They only, obedient to the Word, turn their faces toward Bethlehem; and as

Then Herod, having privately called the magi, inquired of them exactly the time that the star appeared; and sending them to Bethlehem he said, [h]Go and search out exactly about the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me back word, that [i]I may come and worship him also. When they had heard the king they departed; and lo, the star which they had seen in the east went before them, until it came and [j]stood over where the young child was. And when they saw the star, they [k]rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and [l]worshipped him. And opening their treasures, they presented unto him [m]gifts; [n]gold, and [o]frankincense, and [p]myrrh. And, being divinely [q]instructed in a dream not to return to Herod, they withdrew into their own country by another way.

2 (13-18): Under death-sentence from man, God's Substitute for men.

2. And when they had withdrawn, behold, an [r]angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and [s]flee into Egypt, and be there until I tell thee: for Herod is

h cf. Is. 2. 2, 3.
i cf. Ps. 18, 44.
j cf. Num. 9. 15–23. *cf.* Is. 60. 3.
k Ps. 105. 3. *cf.* Is. 66. 10–12.
l ver. 2. *cf.* Is. 49. 22, 23.
m cf. Ps. 45. 12. *cf.* Ps. 72. 10.
n cf. Is. 60. 6, 9. *cf.* Is. 61. 6. *cf.* Hag. 2. 7, 8.
o cf. Lev. 2. 1. *cf.* Song 3. 6, 7.
p cf. Song 1. 13 with Jno. 19. 39, 40. *cf.* Gal. 6. 14.
q ver. 22, etc.
r ch. 1. 20. *cf.* ch. 4. 11. *cf.* Luke 22. 43.
s cf. ch. 4. 12. *cf.* ch. 10. 23, 24.

they do so, the star which they had lost by the way, appears again and goes before them, until it comes and stands over where the young child is. It does not leave them now till they are face to face with Him they seek.

Then they worship. It is but a humble house, we may be sure, and there are in it but a young mother and her babe. But they worship,—worship, not the mother but the Babe. Divinely taught, they pour out their gifts at His feet, "gold and frankincense and myrrh." The Church of old seems almost unitedly to have interpreted them as, in the gold, the recognition of His royalty; in the frankincense, the acknowledgement of His Deity; while the myrrh, used afterwards at His burial, was taken thus to be the anticipation of His death. We might be disposed, from the use of these things in Scripture, to take the gold as the recognition of His divine glory; the frankincense as the fragrance of a life lived, as none other ever was, for God. But to some of these things as we know, His disciples were long after strangers, nor could we argue that the magi knew the real significance of what they did. But the worship was real, and the great joy with which they had greeted the star on its reappearance, was we may be sure, more than justified in the result.

They are divinely instructed in a dream not to return to Herod; God again thus meeting them in their own peculiar way, and they return by another road to the place from which they came.

2. And now Joseph also is warned by an angel of the Lord of impending danger at the hands of Herod, and flees by divine direction with the young child and His mother into Egypt. There is no manifest display of power made. The angels that appeared, to announce a Saviour, do not encircle with chariots and hosts the infant King. Everything marks that He has come to take no exceptional place in this way from the common lot of men. Nay, it is a necessity of the work which He has come to do that He should stoop to this; and in subjection to these human conditions, manifest His exaltation above fallen man.

Prophecy, however, has marked out His course all through; and it is that this may be fulfilled that He goes down to Egypt. But just here we find what calls for special examination. The prophecy to be fulfilled is that of Hosea (xi. 1): "Out of Egypt have I called My Son;" but this does not, at first

about to seek the young child, to [t]destroy him. And he arose and took the young child and his mother by night, and withdrew into Egypt; and he was there until the [u]death of Herod: that that might be [v]fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: "Out of Egypt have I called my son."

[t] *cf.* Luke 13. 31-33. *cf.* Acts 4. 25-28. [u] *cf.* 1 Sam. 26. 10. [v] Hos. 11. 1. *cf.* Heb. 11. 26, 27.

sight, appear to be a prophecy at all; and certainly not a prophecy of Christ. Any one looking at it would say that it was simply a rebuke of Israel as a nation, for repaying with apostasy and Baal-worship the love which God had shown in their redemption of old. He had them taken out of the misery of their bondage, and called them to adoption as His own family among the families of the earth. "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called My son out of Egypt." But how had they repaid it? "As they [the prophets] called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed to the Baalim, and burned incense to graven images." This, of course, could only speak of Israel as a nation.

And yet the application of the first verse to the Lord is no *mere* application. It is not that such a thing took place now in relation to Him who was Son of God by a fuller title, as corresponded to that which had taken place of old in regard to God's "first-born," Israel. The manner of quotation is much too precise for that: the Lord going down into Egypt definitely to fulfil what is spoken by Hosea. Evidently there is here something deeper in the way of fulfilment than we are accustomed to. It is common to say that we have here an example of typical prophecy; but we must understand what we mean, if we say this. For certainly it could only be in fragments of the national history that there could be any typical reference to the Lord; and what follows in the prophet indicates only entire and emphatic contrast, as we have seen. We must, therefore, have some guiding principle to enable us to discern, with any certainty, what is typical from what is not.

Now in Isaiah xlix. we have such a principle: for of whom is it written: "Jehovah hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath He made mention of my name, . . . and said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified?" This, one would say, must be the nation; but immediately we hear a voice that is *not* the nation's: "Then I said, I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nought and in vain; yet surely my judgment is with Jehovah, and my work with my God."

Now notice the claim: "And now saith Jehovah, that formed ME from the womb to be His Servant, to bring Jacob again to Him: Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in Jehovah's eyes, and my God shall be my strength. And He said, It is a light thing that Thou shouldest be my Servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation to the ends of the earth."

Here, to a Christian, there can be no doubt of the application: it is Christ *alone* who fulfils this. But then He is also the true Servant, formed from the womb to be this, and the *Israel* in whom God will be glorified. Here Christ and Israel are both identified and distinguished at the same time. Israel, that had failed utterly,—failed even in hearing this glorious Person when He came,—Israel comes to fulfil its destiny only in and through Christ, who comes of Israel; who is (according to the prophetic language) the lowly "Shoot" from the cut down "stem of Jesse," and the "Branch" that should "grow out of his roots;" and upon whom, in full complacency and in seven-fold power, "the Spirit of Jehovah was to "rest" (Isa. xi). In Him, the "Son born" to them, Israel nationally, is yet to revive. His glory involves their blessing. He begins anew for God their history, purged of its failure and its shame; and hence comes the necessary application of such passages as that in Hosea, "Out of Egypt have I called My son."

Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked by the magi, was exceedingly [w]enraged, and sent forth and slew all the male children that were in Bethlehem, and in all its borders, from two years old and under, according to the time that he had learned exactly of the magi. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken through [x]Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "A voice was heard in Rama, weeping and great lamentation: [y]Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not."

3 (19-25): The return as Sprout of Jesse (Nazarene)

3. But when Herod was dead, behold, an [z]angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the [a]land of Israel: for they are [b]dead that sought the young child's life. And he arose and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel; but having heard that Archelaus reigned over

w Ps. 71. 4.
x Jer. 31. 15.
y Gen. 35. 16-20. cf. Lam. 1. 4.
z ver. 13.
a cf. Ezek. 36. 1-20.
b ver. 15.

Yet how differently is it fulfilled in these two cases! For Him there could be no captivity, no house of bondage. For them this had been the discipline needed, the "furnace," because of the dross that the Refiner must purge out. Typically, for us all, it speaks of the bondage to sin in our natural state, out of which a divine voice alone can "call" us. For Him, of all this there was nothing, and could be nothing. Egypt shelters, not ensnares, nor takes captive. He has no natural state to be delivered from. The world of nature, had He desired it, would have yielded Him all it had. The Voice that called Him out of it called Him but to the work for which He had come; and so the "favor," even "with man" was exchanged for rejection, as also for one dread hour, the "favor with God" seemed to be eclipsed in the darkness of abandonment, only to shine out, however, immediately in the glory of His resurrection and return to heaven.

All, then, should be clear as to the application of Hosea. The next quotation that we find here, which is from Jeremiah, and which speaks of Rachel weeping over her dead, is introduced after a very different manner, "*then* was fulfilled," not "that it might be." This is really but an application. When Bethlehem mourned her babes slaughtered by Herod, then it was as if Rachel from her grave close by were repeating her lamentation. But Rachel must be comforted here also, in a deeper way than in the prophet. *He* had escaped, who by and by would freely offer Himself to redeem from the power of the grave, and bring back to a better life the heirs of death.

3. But the days of the Edomite were drawing to an end; and soon the angel of the Lord appeared once more to Joseph in a dream, with words that bring back those that set the face of Moses the deliverer toward the people to whom he was commissioned: "they are dead that sought the young child's life." But only had one tyrant succeeded another, so that they do not return to Judea, where Archelaus had begun his short but cruel reign, but into Galilee, and they came and dwelt in Galilee in a city called Nazareth. In this, too, prophecy was to be fulfilled,—not a specific one, but the tenor of the prophets generally: "He shall be called a Nazarene."

Galilee means "circle" or "circuit;" and here was the place in which, though but for a short time through the unbelief that rejected Him, Israel's lost blessings were to return more gloriously. Part of Israel's inheritance as it was, it was now called, as elsewhere stated, "Galilee of the Gentiles," because so full of Gentiles. There the ruin of the people was most plainly to be seen; and thus it was the fitting place for grace to be shown; it would be grace *there* most manifestly. So, when the Child returns, the land is claimed, as it were, once

[c] Judea in place of Herod his father, he was afraid to go there; but having been divinely [d] instructed in a dream he withdrew into the parts of [e] Galilee. And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth; so that that should be [f] fulfilled which was spoken through the prophets, "He shall be called a [g] Nazarene."

c *cf.* Jno. 7. 1.
d ch. 1. 20.
e ch. 4. 14, 15. *cf.* ch. 28. 16.
f ch. 1. 22. vers. 15, 17.
g *cf.* John 1. 46 with Is. 53. 2, 3. *cf.* Jno. 15. 1 with Is. 11. 1, 10; *cf.* Judg. 13. 7 with Heb. 7. 26.

more: it is the only place in the New Testament where the expression is used, "the land of *Israel*." Such it shall be yet, when owned in the future as Emmanuel's land (Isa. viii. 8)

And this connects with what we have had before, and with that to which our attention is once again and more distinctly directed in this summing up of various prophecies. "He shall be called a Nazarene." This was, of course, a name actually given to the Lord, and generally in scorn, from the place to which in general His birth was accredited, and in which so large a proportion of His life on earth was spent. Nazareth was, it seems, nowhere in very good repute, but especially among the Pharisees and traditionalists. It had no history, no memories, was consecrated by no great names; and its own name, which seems to have been but a feminine form of *netzer*, a "sprout" or "shoot," may even refer to this. It was thus expressive of lowliness, if yet of life, and identical with the word in Isaiah xi. 1, where Messiah is spoken of as the "rod" or "shoot out of the stem of Jesse;" and here His greatness and His lowliness are seen together.

The stem has been cut down; it is better characterized as that of Jesse than of David, for royalty no more attaches to it: and thus the Son of David comes into no outward state or glory, but the opposite. And yet Jesse bears witness in his name also that "Jehovah exists;" and He is the God of resurrection. The Sprout, if lowly, has yet the energy of life in it. In Him the cut down tree is to revive, and to eclipse all its former glories. He is the "righteous branch" of Jeremiah (xxiii. 5, xxxiii. 15), and Zechariah's Branch, Jehovah's Servant, who is to build the temple of Jehovah, and bear the glory (vi. 12). His lowliness is but the stooping of strength in love and to service,—even to death, because His work is resurrection. How great and wonderful is this lowliness, when once we penetrate its real character! how necessary, when once we have understood the need which He came to relieve.

Here then is the key to His position; and it is manifestly the one in which we find Him throughout Matthew's Gospel. For this Branch is to reign, and be a Priest upon His throne. Not only Israel's burden is He lifting, but our own. For Israel in their long probation, in which they failed so utterly, were only the representatives of men—all men—our own: and therefore ours also is the royal Saviour. And this expression implies all this. Nazarene He may be called from opposite sides, for opposite reasons. Those who would dishonor, those who honor Him, here unite together. The Cross is a death of shame, but it is His glory. Up in the glory of heaven, amid the universal homage there, when the apostle turns to see the "Lion of the tribe of Judah," he beholds what might seem but the entire contrast to it—"a Lamb as it had been slain."

Div. 2.

The King having thus been set before us, the second division of the Gospel presents to us now the Kingdom as announced by the herald of it, and then by the King, heaven opening now more wondrously than at His birth, to proclaim Him as the object of its delight, the Son of the Father, and to anoint Him publicly as the "Christ" of God.

There are three subdivisions here: the first of which shows us the King once more identified, as now coming forward, after thirty years' interval of silence, to take up His public work, and put forth His claim to the Kingdom, already declared to be "at hand."

The second gives us the King's own testimony to the Kingdom, with the signs accompanying this—the broad seal of heaven set to that testimony in the sight of all men.

The third is the unveiling of the Kingdom in its inner spirit and holiness, as declared by the King Himself, in what is commonly known as "the Sermon on the Mount." This manifestly completes the announcement. In all this part we find distinctly the Lord as "the Minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made unto the fathers" (Rom. xv. 8). The Kingdom as yet declared is in its Jewish and Old Testament form, Israel not having yet rejected Him with whom the fulfilment of all the promises is bound up. It is only after it is clearly seen that they will do this that, in the thirteenth chapter we have the parenthetic form of the Kingdom announced, in the meantime of His rejection by His people; now taking therefore its Gentile or rather its universal, New Testament form. But it must not be imagined, on this account, that our own interest in these chapters will be diminished. Not only is the whole range of Christ's interests our own as Christians, but also we shall find that there are principles all through most fully applying to us, and not infrequently that their relation to Israel really intensifies their force in relation to ourselves. But our first consideration must be what is in truth their strict meaning and application; and we need not fear that the truth when we have found it can possibly be less fruitful and profitable than what is not this. It would be disloyalty to God to believe it.

SUBD. 1.

1. At the beginning—as we are now—of the New Testament, it is natural to turn to consider the relation of the Old Testament to it; and this is pressed upon us in an especial manner by the Old Testament apparition which meets us at the threshold of the New in the person of John the Baptist. That he should go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elias, is declared of him by his father Zacharias; and Christ Himself says of him, "If ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come." It is not necessary to discuss here his exact relation to Malachi's closing prophecy. It is at least plain that he reproduced in his character and preaching the typical prophet whom even in his garb he very much resembled; and his call to repentance is only giving voice to what the law and the prophets united to proclaim.

It is divinely significant that the long interval of about four centuries should intervene between the two portions of God's inspired Word—His twofold testimony to man; and it is equally significant that the general character of the last prophecy should be that of lament over the utter failure of the people, their history closing at the same time, as if there were no use in any longer giving record of their doings. This is in fact the final account of man as man, the genealogies of Chronicles also ending, and the New Testament having only *one* genealogy, as it has practically only the history of One, the Second Man in contrast with the first, and (thank God) He the last Adam of a new creation.

The ages up to Christ were ages of probation, the law itself being the typical form of this, and giving character to the whole canon of the Old Testament; but even the Gentiles, left in general, as it might seem, outside of positive direct dealings of God with them, only furnish in this way more perfectly their own contribution to the history of utter ruin. And the verdict of the ages as to these both is given us in Scripture itself in such a way as yet to cover both classes of mankind with this double condemnation.

The law tested man—the Jew—as to righteousness: and the verdict of the law as to those under it is (as the apostle declares) that there is none righteous, no, not one (Rom. iii. 10, 19). But the book of Job takes up also the best man of the Gentile world, and outside of law, to make him acknowledge as to himself the self-same condition (Job xlii. 6).

Again, the Gentile was left to his own wisdom—so dearly bought—to find out

DIVISION 2. (Chap. iii–vii.)

The Announcement of the Kingdom.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. iii–iv. 11.)

The King once more identified.

1 (iii. 1-6): The Fore-runner.

1. NOW in those days cometh [h] John the Baptist, preaching in the [i] wilderness of Judea, and saying, [j] Repent ye: for the [k] kingdom of heaven * is at hand. For this

* Literally, "the heavens," and so elsewhere.

[h] Luke 1. 13, 63. Luke 3. 1-3. Mk. 1. 4, etc.
[i] Mark 1. 4. Lk. 7. 24-28.
[j] ch. 4. 17. Mark 6. 12. Acts 2. 38. Acts 20. 21.
[k] *cf.* Dan. 2. 44. *cf.* Dan. 4. 17, 25, 32. ch. 5. 3, etc.

by searching as to God. But, says the apostle, "when the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. i. 21). And yet again, the book of Ecclesiastes shows us a Jew—the wisest man on earth—setting himself upon the same quest, to find *by wisdom* as to God's ways with man, only in his turn to be utterly baffled (Eccles. viii. 16, 17).

In either case, God's coming in is man's only hope; in either case, men are lost utterly: every mode of trial, every assistance that can be given them, short of a salvation all of God, only the more confirms this.

The chosen people of God are the signal example of this. After having been in their deliverance from Egypt, and in the early part of their wilderness-journey, signal examples of the grace of God, they choose a legal covenant in self-confidence to their ruin. Their after-history is only that of the successive stages of their descent into it; until in their removal to Babylon the brand of their apostasy is put upon them. And though a remnant returns at the end of the seventy years predicted, the nation is owned no more as the people of God. Our Lord's own picture of them is but that of a "fig-tree planted in the vineyard," not of the vine restored. (See Isa. v.) And to this, too, with its plentiful leaves of profession, He comes seeking the fruit which should have accompanied them, and finds none.

The causes leading to this are as patent as they are instructive. The remnant returning from the Babylonian captivity find God with them as a remnant, and as far as they have faith to count upon Him; but there is no general return of heart to God even in these, and still less in the nation at large, nor could there be hope or profit in putting them back where they had been before, to follow once more the course that had led them to ruin. No, the only hope is in that ruin itself laid to heart, that it may produce in them that distrust of self in which they shall lay hold of God and find blessing.

Accordingly as a *people* they are not restored. The decree of Lo-ammi is not revoked (Hos. i. 9): the covenant is not renewed. They return under Gentile dominion, to build up again their temple and city; but they cannot bring back again what they have lost—that glorious Presence with them which was the distinctive feature of their national pre-eminence. The glory of God, which Ezekiel had seen definitely leave its place among them (xi. 22, 23), never returned; there was no ark of the covenant, and as a consequence no propitiatory mercy-seat to receive on the day of atonement the peace-making blood; there was no Urim and Thummim, the habitual means of consulting with God (Ezra ii. 63). While He could speak with them by a prophet, and did, this was an exceptional thing, and itself a sign of changed relationship.

Soon even the prophet's voice closed, and closed in words of sadness and rebuke. They were left with the long story of their past against them, all their hopes now concentrated in the Christ that was to come.

The only hope that ever was! the failure of all else would work indeed for blessing, if it only shut them up to that. The law with its condemnation, the types with their spiritual enigmas inviting solution, the prophecies with their

is he that was spoken of through [l]Esaias the prophet, saying, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make his paths straight." Now John himself had his [m]clothing of camels' hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his [n]food was locusts and wild honey. Then [o]went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the country round about the Jordan, and were [p]baptized by him in the river Jordan, [q]confessing their sins.

[l] Is. 40. 3. Mark 1. 3. Luke 3. 4. John 1. 23.
[m] Mark 1.6. *cf.* 2 Ki. 1.8. *cf.* Zech. 13. 4.
[n] Lev. 11. 22. *cf.* Is. 7. 15, 16.
[o] Mark 1. 5. Luke 3. 7.
[p] Acts 18. 25. *cf.* Acts 19. 3-6; *ctr.* Acts 10. 47.
[q] Prov. 28. 13; *cf.* Dan. 9. 20; *cf.* 1 Ki. 8. 33.

clearer light, all alike pointed them forward to but One. Could they now fail to hear the Voice that spake to them? Would they not humbly, gladly accept the grace that was now held out to them?

Alas, it was in this interval that Pharisaism arose under the guise of patriotism and a zeal, all too late, for the Word which they had slighted. It took up fanatically the covenant under the condemnation of which they lay—not heeding, not accepting the condemnation. It took up the law to fence it in by fresh prohibitions from the possibility of a breach, but thus turned it into a mere and grievous yoke of ordinances, without life, which they could not deal with, and so ignored. Above all, it built them up in a self-righteousness which made them inaccessible to the grace of Christ, while ignorant and because of their ignorance of the righteousness of God which would have led them to repentance. They became thus the "ninety and nine just persons who needed no repentance," and who could therefore ask indignantly and decidedly, "Which of the Pharisees have believed on Him?"

To a nation of legalists thus it was that John the Baptist came. He came as the true voice of the law and the prophets, the spirit of the Old Testament incarnate in him. He came with the sound of his Master's feet behind him, and the announcement that at last the Kingdom of heaven was at hand. But the years that had passed had brought no recovery, and the promise had to come with a voice of warning in it. Crying in the wilderness, and not in the cities of the land,—there where Jehovah still remembered there had been shown the kindness of her youth, the love of her espousals, when Israel was holiness to the Lord, and the first-fruits of her increase (Jer. ii. 2, 3), and whither again He will have to allure her, in order that He may speak comfortably to her (Hos. ii. 14). There the cry of "Repent" was in its place.

It was the cry Isaiah had predicted, the voice of the herald before Jehovah Himself, urging them to prepare His way by taking their true place before Him, making His paths straight, as righteousness required. For he was "come in the way of righteousness," as the Lord afterwards testified of him, and could only "mourn" for a condition of things without God, and from which he must needs stand apart. Apart he is therefore, in the most uncompromising manner. While the son of a priest, he exercises no priestly functions. We never even find him at Jerusalem. His clothing even speaks of the desert, being of camel's hair, and with a leathern girdle about his loins. His food is locusts and wild honey. He acts in thorough consistency with the word to Jeremiah, "Let them return unto thee, but return not thou to them" (Jer. xv. 19).

His baptism confirms his preaching. He baptizes unto repentance, and in Jordan, the river of death: baptizes thus unto death; as it is also, according to the apostle (Rom. vi. 3, 4), with Christian baptism. But here we have to distinguish: Christian baptism is to Christ's death, for Christ has come and has died; but this is not true of John's baptism. His disciples simply take the place for themselves, "confessing their sins," of which death was the just due: as it is indeed, the stamp upon a fallen creature, as well as the penalty denounced by the law. In the history of the past, the waters of Jordan had been dried up, to give Israel entrance into the land which God had given them. Now

2 (iii. 7-12): His message of separating judgment.

2. But when he saw many of the [r]Pharisees and of the Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said unto them, O brood of [s]vipers, who hath shown you that ye should flee from the coming wrath? Bring forth, then, fruit [t]worthy of repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have [u]Abraham for [our] father:

r ch. 5. 20. cf. Luke 18. 10-14.
s ch. 12. 34. ch. 23. 33. Luke 3. 7-9. cf. Ps. 58. 4.
t cf. Lk 19. 8. with 2 Cor. 7. 9-11.
u cf. Is. 51. 1, 2 with Ezek. 33. 24-29; John 8. 33-44; cf. Rom. 2. 25-29 with Rom. 4. 9-12.

that history is traced back to Jordan itself, but this is dried up no longer: they do not pass through it, they are buried *in* it; their victory, then obtained, has after all ended in shameful defeat.

Here, then, we see the repentance that John preaches: not a vain promise of reform, not the reform itself, but what is primary and antecedent to all this, the taking true ground before God as hopeless and undone, with such a man as Job even, who, if the best man of his day, and so pronounced by God, found his place here in self-abhorrence.

Were repentance the same as reformation, or "doing better," as is more vaguely said, we might well despair, if the best man on earth had yet to repent in this sense. On the other hand, it is not hard to realize how the very perfection, comparatively, of his life and ways might hinder the apprehension of the evil in him, till he had measured himself fairly in the presence of God. This is his own account of it, as is evident. He had found in such light, deeper than his outward life, a self from which he turned in shame and loathing. Repentance was, in him, not *doing* in any shape, but turning from all that he had done and been, to cast himself upon mere mercy. And this mercy in God met him there and then with full deliverance and lifting up out of all his sorrows.

Thus, then, was the way of the Lord to be prepared into His Kingdom. As Isaiah states it—though the quotation is to be found in Luke, not here, the mountain was to be leveled, the valley filled, pride abased and lowliness exalted, grace in God realized as needed alike by all, sufficient for any. So would He have His way.

John preached, and his word was with power to break through the hollow crust of things and bring men to reality. This man with his strange garment and rough fare, was at all events real. Multitudes from all the country round about poured out to listen to him, and submitted to his baptism. The conditions of it were within easy reach: every convicted sinner had in this his title.

2. But we soon find the opposition of the heart to God revealing itself, even under apparent conformity to such humbling requirements, and John emphasizes therefore the division that would be made among men when the King should come. For now, among the multitude, whether merely to be in the fashion, or else moved by a power to which they would not wholly yield themselves, many Pharisees and Sadducees came to his baptism. They were the religious leaders of the people, though far enough apart from one another, types of the two directions in which men turn away from God. As the Pharisee was the legalist and formalist, so the Sadducee was the rationalist and semi-infidel of his day. Apart as they were from one another, they could yet show their essential oneness by the way in which they could combine against the followers of the Lord; and John treats them as one, essentially. "O brood of vipers," he exclaims, "who has shown you that ye should flee from the coming wrath?" He could not credit them with having felt the sting of such an incentive. They must prove, then, the reality of it—must bring forth fruit worthy of repentance. And here self-judgment would show itself first of all, in giving up the false and futile pretensions which they based upon their descent from Abraham, for all the promises to him God could fulfil to a seed raised up to him from what might be to them as it were from the very stones.

These pretensions were indeed enormous. "The common notion of the time," says Edersheim, was that "the vials of wrath were to be poured out

for I say unto you that God is able of these [v]stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And already is the [w]axe directed at the root of the trees: every tree, therefore, that bringeth not forth good fruit is cut

[v] *cf.* Is. 63. 16. *cf.* Gal. 3. 7-9. *cf.* Rom. 11. 17, 18.
[w] *cf.* ch. 5. 25. *cf.* Jas. 5. 9. *cf.* Lk. 19. 41-44; *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 9, 10.

only on the Gentiles, while they, as Abraham's children, were sure of escape—in the words of the Talmud, that the 'night' (Isa. xxi. 12) was 'only to the nations of the world, but the morning to Israel.' For no principle was more fully established in the popular conviction, than that all Israel had part in the world to come, and this specifically because of their connection with Abraham. This appears not only from the New Testament, from Philo and Josephus, but from many Rabbinic passages. 'The merits of the fathers' is one of the commonest phrases in the mouths of the Rabbis. Abraham was represented as sitting at the gate of Gehenna, to deliver any Israelites who might have been otherwise consigned to its terrors. In fact, by their descent from Abraham, all the children of Israel were nobles, infinitely higher than any proselytes. 'What,' exclaims the Talmud, 'shall the born Israelite stand upon the earth, and the proselyte be in heaven?' In fact, the ships on the sea were preserved through the merit of Abraham; the rain descended on account of it. For his sake alone had Moses been allowed to ascend into heaven, and to receive the law; for his sake the sin of the golden calf had been forgiven; his righteousness had on many occasions been the support of Israel's cause; Daniel had been heard for the sake of Abraham; nay, his merit availed even for the wicked. In its extravagance the Midrash thus apostrophizes Abraham: 'If thy children were even (morally) dead bodies, without bloodvessels or bones, thy merits would avail for them.'"

So thoroughly had Israel missed the lesson which in Abraham himself God had kept constantly before their eyes, that he was a man justified by faith, and that the circumcision of which they boasted was, in fact but the sign of righteousness by faith (Rom. iv. 2-5, 11). Alas, natural birth, mere outward participation with the people of God, or ceremonial ingrafting among them,—it is possible for men even yet, and under a very different dispensation, to attribute to such things an extraordinary importance. For the Jew, it is plain that John's language assailed his most cherished hopes. It was possible, then, that all upon which he had built should fail him, and God could bring in, in his stead, those who had no natural claim, or birth-relationship at all! To us who enjoy, in fact, a place so given, this is simple; but for the Jew it would be an overwhelming thought. It did indeed show that the axe was being laid at the root of the trees. All depended upon the fruit that manifested the tree. If the fruit was bad, what matter though it should be of the finest stock?

The sinner, as such, wherever he was, was under the wrath of God. If once the limit of forbearance were reached, the tree cut down was destined for the fire. Very simple truth indeed; but no man loves it. Because he does not love it, he will invent every possible way of escape; or rather, hide from his own eyes that from which there is none. How terrible is the power of self-deceit in all of us; and how great need for the plainest possible speaking, where this is the case! For, thank God, there is a way of escape—not indeed from the need of repentance, but by its means. For repentance is only the backside of faith: he who turns his back on himself finds grace from the One to whom he turns,—who has thus become visible to him.

All John's aim therefore is to bring men to repentance. For this he baptizes "with water:" laying stress upon the "water," expressly to free them from the idea that there was anything in this, apart from the significance which it had as a baptism to repentance. Water is only water—can only produce a material effect, and not a spiritual. Nor does God ordain it to a magical use, perverting the nature of what He has created. On the contrary, He takes up what is in itself, and manifestly, nothing, in order that men should not lose sight

down and cast into the fire. *I* indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, [z]whose sandals I am not fit to bear: he shall baptize you with the [y]Holy Spirit and [z]fire.

[x] ver. 14. Mk. 1. 7, 8. Lk. 3. 16, 17. John 1. 15, 26, 27. John. 3. 28, 30.

[y] Acts 1. 4, 5 with Acts 2. 1-4, 16-20; *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 13. [z] Mal. 4. 1; ch. 13. 8, 9; Lk. 16. 22-26.

of the spiritual meaning by what might seem to have some inherent virtues. Baptism, with John as with Paul, is simple burial of the dead, *not* life, not resurrection, but the contrary of this: the confession of need, of sin and death, that Another may be seen and known and trusted in.

He turns therefore now to speak of that Other and His baptism, and to put himself in the lowliest attitude at the feet of the One of whom he is but the herald, and unworthy even to bear His sandals—to perform the office of the meanest slave: a strong testimony from one to whom all the nation seemed looking at this time; but what John announces Him as to do speaks more strongly yet: for what must He be who baptizes with the Holy Spirit? No doubt, the Jews were far from having any proper intelligence with regard to the Holy Spirit; yet they knew it was a divine influence that was here spoken of. *We* ought to have clear knowledge; and yet of few things, perhaps, in Christianity has there been more misunderstanding than of the baptism of the Spirit. Indeed, the very thing with which John contrasts it here, the baptism of water, has been and is by many, nay, by the large number of professing Christians, confounded with it; and as a necessary consequence it has been degraded to mere unreality, subjected to man's will, made to inflate the pride of a pretentious ecclesiasticism, and to deceive the credulous victims of superstition to their ruin. While, on the other hand, many who have truer knowledge of spiritual things yet reduce the baptism of the Spirit to a temporary, oft-repeated influence, whose significance is in reverse proportion to its ready repetition.

It is evident that our Lord is but applying the words here, when He says to the disciples after His resurrection: "John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence" (Acts i. 5). Here is the same contrast of water with Spirit, yet the same term, "baptism," applied to each; while the Spirit on the day of Pentecost when these words were fulfilled, did not connect itself with water, nor were those to whom they were spoken baptized with water at that time at all. It is certain, also, that these disciples were born again before Pentecost, and that this baptism, therefore, was not their new birth. Scripture, if we pay the least real heed to it, easily delivers us thus from such strange delusions.

On the other hand, clearly at Pentecost the Christian Church began, and this is the "Church which is Christ's body" (Eph. i. 22, 23); while, in exact agreement with this we are told (1 Cor. xii. 13), that "by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." Thus the baptism of the Spirit is not that by which men are new-born, but that by which those already new-born become members of the body of Christ. It is not the beginning of the Spirit's work in souls, but a further, and yet in an important sense an initial work.

It does not follow, however, from the way in which Christianity has fulfilled this prophecy of John, that he knew anything of the Church as the body of Christ. It is certain that this was a revelation of later date, and necessarily hidden from him (Eph. iii. 3-6). It is certain, because Scripture declares it (1 Pet. i. 10-12), that prophets might be led of the Spirit to utter what was quite beyond their own intelligence. But more than this, it does not follow, because Christianity has fulfilled this in a certain way, that there may not be another fulfilment of it, Israelitish and not Christian, in those days to which the Baptist seems to point on, when Israel will be God's threshing-floor and finally purged, according to the Lord's own prophecy at an after-time. There does not seem, at least, any reason why the outpouring of the Spirit upon Israel and the nations in millennial times, of which Joel and others plainly speak, should not be called a "baptism," as initiating for them that state of bless-

3 (iii. 13-17): The King anointed, and proclaimed from heaven.

Whose [a]fan is in his hand, and he shall thoroughly purge his threshing-floor, and shall gather his wheat into the [b]garner; but the chaff he will burn up with [c]unquenchable fire.

13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John would have him-

a *cf.* Mal. 3. 1-3. *cf.* chap. 25. 31-46.
b ch. 13. 29, 30, 39-43. ch. 8. 11. *cf.* Luke 16. 22. *cf.* Heb. 4. 9.
c Ps. 1. 4-6; *cf.* Mark 9. 43-48; *cf.* 2 Thess. 1. 8, 9; *cf.* Rev. 20. 9-15.

ing which will then be theirs. Such double accomplishments of prophecy are by no means rare.

It agrees with this thought that John puts alongside of this baptism of the Spirit the baptism of fire; which finds its explanation in what directly follows: "He shall burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Many would point us rather to the "cloven tongues like as of fire," on the day of Pentecost,—a thought natural enough if Christianity were the complete fulfilment of what is here, and such an idea has become fully attached to the expression, a "baptism of fire." But the *tongues* of fire convey a different idea—that of a word that shall act upon others, while that of baptism is of something into which the subjects of it are themselves introduced. These things may have easy connection, but they are not the same. Moreover the going forth of the gospel among men of divers tongues does not seem at all in the line of the Baptist's message here, which is an exhortation to Israel in view of the coming Kingdom and their unpreparedness for it. There would be alternate consequences, according as they repented and received, or else rejected, the coming King: they would either be separated to God by the action of the Spirit of God, or separated to judgment, if they rejected Him.

He had just been speaking of the burning of the fruitless tree; he goes on now to speak of the coming of the King under the figure of one who winnows wheat in his threshing-floor. He fans away the chaff to get the wheat, which alone he values; and this is exactly what is necessary for the blessing of Israel, who are to be blessed upon earth. For this the wicked must be severed from among the just, as we find in one of the parables of the Kingdom afterwards (xiii. 49): the earth must be freed from the destroyers of it. The saints of the present time are, on the other hand, taken to heaven; and for their blessing no such judgment of the earth is needed.

We see that the Baptist goes on to a judgment which is even yet future, and says nothing about the present delay of it in the Lord's long-suffering. This is quite in the manner of Old Testament prophecy, as in that of Isaiah which the Saviour quoted and appealed to in the synagogue at Nazareth. There He quotes "the Spirit of the Lord is upon Me," and as far as "to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." There He stops, though the sentence goes on without a break to "the day of judgment of our God" (Luke iv. 19; Isa. lxi. 1, 2); just as in John's words also, in connection with the blessing and restoration of Israel, which in Isaiah are then described in glowing terms.

We find this as a principle all the way through the Old Testament. Christianity, with all belonging to it, is a "mystery hid in God,"—abundantly spoken of in types and figures throughout, but of course needing the light of the New Testament for its discovery. Even John is not given to see behind the veil, although being brought face to face with Christ, he is "much more than a prophet" of the Old Testament.

But John is not at his highest in any of the so-called "synoptic" gospels. It is John the Evangelist who records for us his fullest utterances. In Matthew the herald of the Kingdom has nearly completed his testimony, and is about to pass away. But before doing so he is privileged to baptize the One whose coming he anticipates and welcomes with such fullness of delight; and we are now to stand with him in the presence of the KING.

3. The third section gives us now therefore, in brief but all important words,

dered him, saying, I have [d]need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, [e]Suffer it now: for so it becometh us to fulfil all

[d] ver. 11. *cf.* ch. 11. 11. [e] *cf.* ch. 17. 27. *cf.* Lk. 12. 50 with Lk. 24. 46.

the manifestation and anointing of the King, who is also, as we have seen, even in that character the Saviour. He now comes forth from His private into His public life, to take up the wondrous work for which He alone is competent. Although not historically so, yet in its significance here, the mission of the Baptist ends where Christ begins His public ministry.

"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him." There is definite purpose and meaning then, in this baptism; and yet, from what we have seen of its character as John proclaims it, it is the last thing that we should have imagined possible for the Lord, to be baptized of John. John himself thinks so: he is startled, even to refusing it: "but John forbad Him, saying, *I* have need to be baptized of *Thee*, and comest Thou to me?" In fact there has been the widest misunderstanding among Christians of this act ever since; and we need to look at it earnestly and reverently, in order (if it may be) to find the track where so many have gone astray. We shall not need, however, to discuss the conflicting views that have been taken. It will be more profitable to enquire directly for ourselves what Scripture may give us with regard to it. There is, it is true, no direct explanation; the Lord's words in reply to John, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," require themselves to be set in the light of related facts, before, as it seems, we shall be able to apprehend them. Let us start with some of the plainest of these, and see what light they may throw upon the matter.

It is clear that this baptism of Christ by John lies at the entrance of His public ministry. Before this, with the exception of the notices of His birth, and the one incident of His youth which Luke recalls, the silence of the Gospels with regard to His life up to this time, when He is about thirty years of age, is absolute and profound. So strange has it seemed that this should be, that, as is well-known, the gap has been sought to be filled by apocryphal statements, in which miraculous deeds, as unlike the soberness of Scripture as possible, and as far removed from the character of the "signs" which bore testimony to His divine nature, fill the pages with transparent falsehood. They only have their use in showing us what our Gospels would have been, had they been left merely to human wisdom to provide for us. We have not really a scrap of this apocryphal work which is otherwise worth preserving. The denial of all this invention of the miraculous is found where the turning of water into wine at Cana of Galilee is stated to be the "*beginning* of miracles" which He did, and which showed forth His glory (Jno. ii. 11). And the silence of Scripture otherwise as to all these years of His life regarding which there were, of course, so many witnesses ready to utter all they knew, and so many eager, as we should be, to take it in—this silence can only be accounted for by a Hand controlling, and a divine design.

When He comes forth, it is to be proclaimed by John as "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world" (Jno. i. 29); and in such a view of Him we shall find the speech of this mysterious silence. The passover lamb was to be "taken" on the *tenth* day of the first month, and "kept up" until the fourteenth day before being sacrificed. Yet the whole year was changed evidently in view of this, which was in fact the primal deliverance upon which the after-deliverance from Egypt was really based. Why then these unnoticed ten days?

Notice, that we are in the midst of the typical shadows of the Old Testament; and, according to the symbolic language which these types speak throughout, the number *ten* is the number of responsibility, as derived from those ten commandments which are its perfect measure according to the law. The lamb was, as we know, to be without blemish —and this means as to the true Lamb a spir-

righteousness: then he suffered him. And Jesus, having been baptized, came up straightway out of the water; and behold, the [f]heavens were opened, and he

[f] Mk. i. 10. Lk. 3. 21, 22. Jno. i. 32-34. *cf.* Acts 7. 56.

itual state. Putting these things together, it is plain that they have connected meaning, and that the ten days of silence, yet of responsibility, answer in fact to the thirty years of silence—a *three times* ten—in which He was living for Himself His individual life before the eye of God, after this to come forward and be approved of Him as "without blemish and without spot." In fact, He *is* then so approved, the Father's voice giving testimony publicly to Him as His beloved Son, in whom He is well pleased.

The typical "four days" of *public testing*—the meaning again given by the numeral—were still to come before the actual sacrifice should take place. He is immediately led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, for the express purpose of being "tempted by the devil." And His life afterwards, how different is it from that quiet life at Nazareth in which He had been so long in communion with His own thoughts and with God! This was the fulfilment of His own individual responsibility, having its divine necessity in order that He should be able to give Himself for others, yet on that very account private, and not public. Miracles, as we see at once, would have been quite out of place here. For Himself He never used them, as He had come down to the common lot of men, and was for Himself far beyond need of them. Only God could be the competent witness of such a life, and He it is who must give witness, as He does.

It is plain that if it is as the unblemished Lamb He is presenting Himself here, the Lord's baptism by John at once becomes unmistakable in its significance. In the Gospel of Mark He speaks of His baptism,* with evident reference to His sufferings (Mark x. 38). Christian baptism is also spoken of as "baptism unto death," and in it we are "baptized unto *His* death" (Rom. vi. 3, 4). With this John's baptism in *Jordan*—the river of death—is in full agreement. The words, "so it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," receive also in this way their simplest interpretation. For those who were "confessing their sins" in such a manner, the first step in righteousness of which they were capable was to take openly their place in death, as that which was their due. This is alone the principle according to which He can unite the other recipients of John's baptism, so different as they were, with Himself: for, for Him also, who having no sins of His own, was yet there for the sins of others, the place of death which it prefigured was no less the requirement of righteousness; the blessed Substitute for sinners had of necessity to take the sinners' place.

Thus all is clear throughout, while as the King we have already seen that the Lord acts as the Representative of His people, who is to save His people from their sins. No Kingdom, such as prophecy had pointed out, apart from this. No possibility could there be of men being "His people," apart from it. Men are sinners, and a holy God cannot for a moment ignore this. When Israel came of old into relationship with Him, it could be only by the blood of the lamb: redemption could not be by power only, but (and first of all) by blood. He, therefore, who is to be King of God's Kingdom cannot without preliminary take the throne. He must suffer that He may be glorified: He must come to the throne by the way of the Cross.

And so, when the throne *is* taken, the effect of this and the character it manifests abide. "He shall be a priest upon his throne" (Zech. vi. 13). He still stands before God for the people over whom He reigns; and while He is the true Melchizedek, "king of righteousness," He is also the true King of Salem, "King of peace." In Him "righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Ps. lxxxv. 10). For His throne, like the mercy-seat of old, is blood-sprinkled;

* In the common version, also in the present one (Matt. xx. 22), but all editors agree that it is an interpolation.

saw the Spirit of God descending as a [g]dove, and coming upon him; and behold, a [h]Voice out of the heavens, saying, [i]This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

g *cf.* Gen. 8. 8-12. *cf.* Lev. 1. 14-17. *cf.* Is.38.14. *cf.*ch.10.16. *cf.* Song 5. 12; *cf.* Ps. 68. 13. h Jno. 12. 28; *ctr.* Ex. 19. 19; *ctr.* Ex. 20. 1, etc. i Mark 1. 11; Luke 9. 35; 2 Pet. 1. 17; *cf.* Is. 42. 1; *cf.* Heb. 2. 9.

and the cherubim of judgment gaze upon it from between their covering wings, and are at rest.

Here, therefore, the Lord enters not yet upon His Kingship. He is anointed, but not crowned. It is priesthood that must first act and prepare the way. Thus, rising up out of the water, the Spirit of God descends upon Him as a dove: He becomes not simply in title but in fact, the Christ, the "Anointed." As Aaron of old had by himself received the typical anointing without blood, in order to his exercising the priesthood, so is He now declared fit for and consecrated to His sacrificial work, Priest and Sacrifice as He is in one. His perfection is as needful to the one as to the other. The white linen garments of the day of atonement, and not the robes of glory and beauty, are those in which alone the sacrifice is offered that enters the sanctuary, and in which he enters it to sprinkle the blood before God. It is what He Himself was that prevailed, in the day of unequaled agony, when Aaron's Antitype offered up to God the only acceptable offering, and was accepted in that glorious "obedience unto death," by which "the many" for whom He stood "are constituted righteous" (Rom. v. 19).

What the Father's voice proclaimed the Spirit seals (Jno. vi. 27). He comes to rest where there is a heart—at last, a human heart—in perfect sympathy with His own, to give Him lodgment. Thus, appearing as a dove, He manifests exactly the character of Him upon whom He comes. The dove was one of the sacrificial birds—the symbol of Christ, therefore, in the very attitude in which we find Him here; and all is still in perfection and divine harmony. Father, Son, and Spirit are indeed for the first time openly manifested together in the work of redemption, while it is Christ, in the perfection of manhood reconstituted, and in Him brought nigh to God, to which Father and Spirit witness.

The dove, or pigeon,—and the two were almost one,—was in fact the only bird explicitly *named* for sacrifice. As the "bird of heaven" it has, undoubtedly, its first significance. Heaven itself provides the offering by which heaven is to be appeased and opened over man. "The Second Man is from heaven" (1 Cor. xv. 47). He who has sinned, as all mere men have, cannot by that fact provide the unblemished offering that will alone avail. It is God, therefore, who Himself provides it; and in this way manifests Himself in unspeakable goodness to win man's heart to Himself. This is the divine power of the gospel in reconciliation. He who requires has fulfilled the requirement. He who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity has yet devised the wondrous means whereby His banished should be restored to Him. Not only so, but for this restoration the bird of heaven shows us God become man—no temporary condescension, but eternal love made known for eternity, eternally to be enjoyed.

Christ is divine love come down, and the dove is the bird of love and sorrow united. The love explains the sorrow: the sorrow the depth of the love. What a world to welcome the Son of God! and what a welcome the world gave Him! "A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief! and we hid, as it were, our faces from Him: He was despised, and we esteemed Him not."

But Scripture is more definite than this as to the dove, for it points us to "its wings covered with silver, and its feathers with yellow gold." (Ps. lxviii. 13.) And here the reference will be plain to those that are acquainted with the symbolism. "Silver" gets its significance from the money of atonement, and its meaning is well illustrated in passages familiar to us. The *wings* are silver, for it is in redemption that the activity of divine love has been displayed; while in the feathers is the gleam of gold, the display of divine glory. This is how nature witnesses to Christ.

4 (iv. 1-11): His proving in the wilderness.

4. [j] Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be [k] tempted of the devil; and when he had

[j] Mk. 1. 12, etc. Lk 4.1, etc. Luke 4. 14.

cf. Acts 8. 39; *cfr.* Gen. 2. 8. [k] *cf.* Ex. 12. 3-6; *cf.* Heb. 2. 18; *cf.* Heb. 4. 15.

The Father proclaims the Son. The apostle tells us that "no man taketh this honor unto himself"—that of the high priesthood—"but He that was called of God, even as Aaron. So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made a High-priest, but He that said unto Him, "Thou art my Son" (Heb. v. 4, 5). This, then, was the Lord's induction into His office, as having the relationship which is acknowledged here. Yet it is not as the Only-begotten Son, or in His Deity that He is addressed; for, in that case, it could not be added, as in Hebrews, "*to-day* have I begotten Thee." Nor could His divine glory be the foundation of a priesthood which, of necessity, is human. It must be, therefore, as born into the world by the power of the Holy Ghost, as the angel says to Mary, "therefore that Holy Thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Here he is Son of God in His human nature,—Man, but a *unique* Man. And the connection of this with His priesthood is not hard to trace. True Man He is, without taint of the fall—the Son of God, as coming (like Adam, but another Adam) fresh from the inspiration of God. Thus He begins another creation, though out of the ruins of the old. In this way He is the Representative Head of a new race of men, standing for them before God, with God, the true Mediator-Priest of the new humanity.

No wonder that heaven opens to own and induct into His place this glorious Person! "Therefore doth my Father love Me," He says elsewhere, "because I lay down my life that I might take it again." And here, where He is, as it were, pledging Himself to that death for men, the Father's voice breaks out in all its fullness of joy in Him: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

Let us notice before we pass on, how in the meat-offering view of His Person the distinction between His birth of the Spirit and His anointing is kept before us. (*See notes on Lev. ii.*) In the first general view of Christ as given in it, the anointing of the Spirit is what is emphasized, because it is the seal set upon Him,—the Father's approbation. In the meat-offering baken in the oven (the sufferings from the mere fact of what the world was, without open persecution) both things are represented but apart; and here the "*wafers anointed* with oil" show fuller, readier exposure to it after His public coming forward. In that upon the pan (the open persecution) it is the Man born *and* anointed that brings forth the world's enmity. His public testimony fanning the necessary opposition to Him into flame.

In the meat-offering of the priest on the day of his anointing (Lev. vi. 19-23, *see notes*) we have, distinctly and necessarily, what He was as presented to God at the very time to which we have reached in the Gospel. Here, therefore, it is *prepared* with oil, but *not* anointed. And it *all* goes up to God as a sweet savor, man having no part in it. It is Christ in the period of His life which closes with His baptism, the years lived to God in retirement, of the sweet savor of which to God He Himself gives testimony.

4. The fourth section follows the third here, as the story of the wilderness in the book of Numbers follows the priestly anointing in the book of Leviticus. The Israelites had forty years of trial in the wilderness, and all through showed how little they had learned the lessons they were placed there to learn. The Lord is there forty days, and tested to the full, approving Himself ever perfect, and beyond the need of learning,—Master and not disciple.

He has fulfilled, as we have seen, in the thirty years of His private life at Nazareth, His own responsibility as Man before God. He has now come forth from that retirement to take His public place as Mediator for others. He has been accepted as perfectly pleasing to the Father, the unblemished Lamb of sacrifice, as well as the Priest, able to offer for the sins of men. To this office He is consecrated by the descent of the Spirit upon Him, and is now fully the Christ, the Anointed, openly declared to be this.

1 (1-4): the Obedient One—God's will alone His motive,

[l] fasted forty days and forty nights, he afterward hungered. And the tempter came to him and said: [m] If

[l] *cf.* Ex. 34. 28. *cf.* 1 Ki. 19. 8. [m] *cf.* Gen. 3. 1; *cf.* Ex. 17. 6; *cf.* ch. 26. 53, 54.

He is now to be tested as to His ability for the path upon which He has entered. The book of Job shows us Satan allowed of God for this purpose to be the sifter of God's wheat—the "accuser of the brethren." He who is to be the First-born among these pleads for Himself no exemption from this trial. He is expressly led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, *to* be tempted of the *devil:* designated thus according to the meaning of the term as "the false accuser."

But God has pronounced: is not that enough? Alas, with sin has come in distrust of God Himself: He also is upon trial; and Satan's reasoning in Job's case almost openly takes that ground. God pronounces as to Job, and he takes exception to it. "Hast Thou not made a hedge about him, and about his house?" he says; and that means to say, "This sentence is not given upon proper trial." And God in His very mercy to man, who to his undoing has accepted Satan's malignity as truth, does not retreat behind His privilege. If He is, and must be, sovereign in His doing, so that "none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" yet will He suffer question, and let all be brought into the fullest light. Job's hedge is taken away, and Satan is allowed large limits within which to deal with him,—the end being, of course, blessing to the sufferer and full vindication of God's perfect ways.

And here now is His own Beloved, and there is no remnant of a hedge about the person of the Christ of God; nor will He use the power that is in His hand against the adversary. In conflict between good and evil, power cannot decide: the good must manifest itself as that, and stand by its own virtue against all odds. The glorious Wrestler is stripped, therefore, for the wrestling. Son of God though He be, He comes into the poverty of the creature, the conditions of humanity, and these in their utmost straitness. Man in Adam in his original perfection had been tempted in a garden specially prepared and furnished for him. But one thing was denied him, and in the denial was contained a blessing, among the chief of all the blessings there. Real want there was none, and need was in such sort ministered to as to be itself, in every way, the occasion of new delight. The weakness of the creature was owned, but tenderly provided for, so as to witness to the tender arms of love that were about him: he had but to shrink into them to be in perfect safety, beyond all possible reach of harm.

But not so sheltered, not so provided for, is the new Adam, the Son of man. The garden is gone; in its stead is the wilderness; nor is there nurture for Him now from nature's barren breast. For forty days He fasts, and then with the hunger of that forty days upon Him, the tempter comes. It marks the contrast between Him and other men that, whereas a Moses or Elias fasted to meet God, *He* fasts to meet the devil.

There are three forms of the temptation: though, with the first broken we see that victory is gained over them all. Yet for our instruction it is that we are permitted to have all before us, that we may realise the points in which the subtlety perfected by ages of experience finds man to be above all accessible, and learn how Satan is to be resisted still. We shall do well to consider them closely, therefore, and with the closest application to ourselves. The battle-field here may seem to be a narrow one; the points of attack few; the weapons employed against the enemy a scanty armory: but here lies one of the excellences of Scripture, that its principles, while simple, have in them all the depths of divine wisdom, and far-reaching application to the most diverse needs.

1 "And when the tempter came unto Him, he said, If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."

Satan would thus act upon Him by the conviction of what He was, and make Him assert Himself, in circumstances which were so unsuited to what He was. The Son of God, the Beloved of the Father, at the extreme point of starvation in a desert! But then this was surely in His own power to set right: He needed

thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread. But he answered and said: It is [a]written not circumstances to be adjusted to Him, who was able so easily to adjust them to Himself. The power surely was His, the need real, the hunger sinless: why, then, should He not put forth His power, and make the stones of the ground minister to His necessities? So simple and plausible is the suggestion, so well it seems to recognize the truth of what He was, so natural is it with us to minister with what power we have to our own requirements, that to any of us naturally, it might seem to be no evil suggestion at all,—no *temptation*. But it *was* such; and the Lord's answer will show us, better than any reasoning of our own, why it was such.

[a] vers. 7, 10, Deut. 8. 3, ch. 6. 25-34, *cf.* John 4. 31-34.

It has been noticed by all,—it could hardly escape notice,—that the Lord answers ever by the word of God. This is the sword of the Spirit, the only weapon we have with which to encounter the adversary; but it is striking, and speaks powerfully to us, to find the Lord who could surely have answered from His own mind, using always, and with distinct reference to it as such, the written Word. We see that He takes absolutely the same ground as ourselves, answers as man, is subject, as we are, to the authority of God. And this the passage which He quotes fully proves,—going, indeed, beyond it: "*It is written*, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

This is from Deuteronomy (viii. 3), the book that sums up the lessons of the wilderness, for those who had been through the wilderness. And the passage shows that the dealings of God with His people had been directly designed to teach them this: "And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know, that *He might make thee to know* that man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." How important,—how supremely important, therefore, is this principle!

Man lives by the word of God,—in obedience to it. The true life of man is nourished and sustained alone by this. Bread will not sustain it: the life of obedience is that which alone is life. In this way we see that though, because of inherent sin everywhere, the legal covenant had no life in it, yet there is another sense wherein "which, if a man do he shall even live in them" is to be understood. There is really a path of life, though grace alone can put us in it or maintain us there. Eternal life and disobedience are in fact opposites. The gospel does not alter this: grace fully affirms it: "Sin shall not have dominion over you, because ye are not under law, but under grace."

All this is in the passage quoted by the Lord; but in His application of it we are made to go further than naturally we should carry it. What principle of disobedience, we might ask, could be contained in the simple suggestion to use power that He really had, to minister to need that was as really His also, and in which, therefore, there could be no evil?

Notice, then, that it is as *man* He speaks: it is of man these things are written. Son of God He was—adoringly we own it; it is this that makes the path we are thinking of so wonderful an one; but it is not in the open glory of the Godhead that He is come to walk upon earth, but to learn obedience in humiliation,—nay, by the things that He *suffers*. He is come as man to work out redemption for men; and for this to learn all that is proper to man, apart from sin. Thus He cannot put forth divine power to save Himself out of this condition. What He can use freely for others, for Himself He cannot use. It is He of whom it is written in the volume of the book, "Lo, I come to do Thy will O God . . . I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart." Thus He is here simply subject, and subject in satisfaction and delight, to the will of Another. He has, for His whole course on earth, no other motive. Need may press, appetite may crave: He feels this as other men; did He not feel it, the

ten, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every °word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

° Job 33. 12. Jer. 15. 16. cf. Heb. 10. 7, 8.

glory of His humiliation would be dimmed. But while He feels it, it is no *motive* to Him: there is but one motive—the will of God. To make Himself a motive would destroy that perfection; come to do *that* will, and nothing else.

This is the spirit in which He goes forth to service: the close of it on earth, closing with the deepest humiliation and dreadest shadow of all, affords so beautiful an example of this principle, (even while at first sight it might seem at conflict with it), that one cannot forbear to speak of it here. One of the physical distresses of the agony of the cross is the great thirst produced by it. Almost the last words of the Lord there had reference to this, and gave it expression. His words, "I thirst" are answered by the sponge filled with vinegar, of which He tasted: and they were such as naturally to call forth such an answer. Was this, then, really any seeking of relief in His extremity, even from the hands that had nailed Him there? No: we are carefully guarded from such a thought. There was one Scripture, we are told, that remained to be fulfilled; and of this it was, in all the agony of that hour, that He was thinking: "Jesus, that the *Scripture might be fulfilled*, saith, I thirst." This leads to what had been predicted: "in my thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink." Thus the glorious obedience shines here without a cloud upon it, nay, in surpassing lustre. "Lo, I come to do Thy will" is the principle of His life.

But here we are made to realize the wondrous privilege that is ours,—the solemn responsibility that lies upon us. For *we* are "sanctified unto the obedience of Christ," and "He has left us an example that we should follow in His steps" (1 Pet. i. 2; ii. 21). This principle of His life must be, then, the principle of our lives. If with Him the governing motive was to do the will of God,—if He rejected every motive that could be urged from His own necessities —how simple is it that, for us also, the will of God must be our motive for action; apart from this there is no right motive possible.

What a world then, is this, in which the mass of men around us have no thought of God, no knowledge of His will, no desire to know it,—men with whom life is little else than the instinctive animal life; *disturbed*, more or less, by conscience, that is, by the apprehension of God! And as to Christians themselves, how easily are they persuaded, that, with certain exceptions at important crises of their lives, the simple rule of right and wrong—often determined by custom of some kind, rather than the word of God—is sufficient to indicate for them the will of God; their *own* wills being thus left free within a variously limited area!

The law in fact drew such a circle round man, and in mercy, as a sheepfold is the limit for the sheep. A class of actions is defined as evil, and forbidden; within these limits one may please oneself. Nor could law do other than this: for it the rigidity of a fixed code is necessary. But Christ came into the sheepfold to make His sheep hear His voice, and to lead them out: free, but where freedom would be safe as well as blessed, following the living guidance of the Shepherd Himself (John x). The rule is at the same time stricter and freer. And the reality transcends the figure, even as the Good Shepherd Himself transcends every other shepherd. To a love like His, united to a wisdom absolutely perfect, no detail of our lives can be unimportant, as (in the connection of these throughout, and of one life with another, none can be insignificant. Could it be imagined that any were so, yet which of us is competent to discern this, in any instance? "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth" is but the utterance of the common experience. Who, then, that has learned to distrust himself at all, but must welcome deliverance from such an uncertainty, and find it joy to be guided at all times by a higher wisdom?

Nothing makes this appear severe, nothing difficult, except the love of our own way, and the unbelief which, having given up confidence in God, first sent man out from the bountiful garden, to toil and strive for himself in the world

[z] (5-7): and whose faith in God's word will

[5] Then the devil taketh him into the [p] holy city, and setteth him on the pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him: If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself

[p] Is. 48. 2. cf. Is. 52. 1. cf. ch. 27. 53.

outside. But the divine love which has purchased us here, and given us Bethlehem for our "house of bread," should suffice to heal that insane suspicion, and close up the fountain of self-will within us. "He who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not, with Him also, freely gives us all things?" The path ordained for us has, no doubt, its roughness, and the cloud hangs over it; but He makes the cloud His tabernacle, and just in the very night it brightens into manifest glory. All differences are in the interests of the journey itself, as was said of Israel, that they might "go by day and by night." The record of experience adds to this the assurance, "they go from strength to strength."

No wonder! if "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God doth man live." What a sustenance of the true life within us to be thus, day by day, receiving the messages of His will, guided by that wondrous Voice, learning continually more the tenderness of His love for us: "He wakeneth morning by morning; He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learner" (Isa. l. 4). This is the utterance prophetically of the Lord Himself: how blessed to be able to make it our own, and thus to have the fulfilment of those words: "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way in which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye."

So then the first temptation is met and conquered; and with this, in fact, is conquered every after-one; for he who, walking with God, waits upon God, what shall ensnare him? what enemy shall prevail against him? It is plain that Satan has been hinting again here the lie with which of old he seduced the woman. And that, as in her case "the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye and the pride of life" came in through the door so opened, they were now effectually shut out. Satan might repeat and vary his efforts; but to one cleaving fast to God, God will be a shield against which every shaft shall be broken to pieces. How great, then, the importance for us of such a lesson!

[z] But if we are to listen for the word of God, and our lives are to be shaped by it, we are called next to guard against the misuse of the Word itself. This is Satan's next attempt: "Then the devil taketh Him into the holy city, and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto Him, If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down: for *it is written*, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee; and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest haply Thou dash Thy foot against a stone."

How careful should we be as to quotations from Scripture! how little in fact we often are! Scripture twisted but a little awry, the authority of God is put upon a lie, and our very faith in it may betray us to the enemy.

How important, too, in this view of it, becomes the complete verbal inspiration of Scripture. If only the thought meant to be conveyed is guaranteed to us, but the wording left to the choice of imperfect wisdom, then (unless words mean nothing) we can never settle what the thought precisely is. If the words are possibly faulty, who can assure me of the exact truth hid under this faulty expression?

Satan does but leave out two or three words of the original: "to keep Thee *in all Thy ways*" (Ps. xci. 11, 12); but those words guard them against the abuse that he would make of them. The "ways" of Him who in the same psalm says of Jehovah, "In Him will I trust" will be God's ways, and He will wait upon God for the fulfilment of His word, and not impatiently grasp at it before the time. This is evidently Satan's effort now; and since the Lord will not move without the word of God, here is now the word to lead Him in that path of the miraculous which He has just refused. The psalm surely refers to Messiah: would it not be simply becoming confidence in God, boldly to claim and act on it?

not move out of the way of humiliation.

down: for it is [q]written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him: It is written again, [r]Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

3 (8-11): God His whole portion and praise.

[3] Again the devil taketh him unto an exceeding high mountain, and [s]showeth him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. And he said unto him,

q Ps. 91. 11, 12. cf. 2 Cor. 11. 14. cf. 2 Cor. 2. 17. cf. 2 Cor. 4. 2.
r Deut. 6. 16. cf. 1 Sam. 4. 3-11. Ps. 95. 8-10.
s cf. Lk. 4. 6. cf. ch. 12. 29. cf. Jno. 14. 30; cf. 2 Cor. 4. 4.

The place was favorable for such a venture. The miracle would be right before the eyes of the many worshipers—of a people always seeking after signs, and who, having shown themselves ready to go after impostors, would be brought now to the feet of the true Messiah. The word could not fail: was it not for Him to answer the desire of the people, stop with the right hand of power the confusion and misrule, and fulfil the glowing pictures which the prophets had drawn, and take the Kingdom already proclaimed to be at hand by one whose call of God he had Himself acknowledged?

This seems to be the line and power of the temptation here. It appeals to Jesus as the Messiah, as the former one had done to Him as Man. It takes advantage of the Lord's answer given to that, and would with devilish cunning turn that victory into a defeat. How would He refuse to take His predestined place, when the word of God itself beckoned Him into it?

But the "ways" of the blessed "Author and Finisher of faith" lie elsewhere than in this direction. Of these Satan has not dared to remind Him. He has come into the wilderness from Jordan, from the place of death, to which He had freely stooped as what "righteousness" required from the Representative of His people, and has been consecrated as the Priest to offer the needed sacrifice. Power could be found for men only in the path of humiliation, and out of this He could not raise Himself, nor put forth a hand to lay hold of that which must come to Him from God alone, vindicated and glorified. He would not be slow to put forth power, when this was accomplished, and in this alone all blessing lay. He that believed could not anticipate this: we see that it is the Lord's first answer which has essentially answered all, and which reveals the secret of victory over all temptation. He has come to do the will of God and not His own. In Him patience will have its perfect work, and thus He will be perfect and entire, living by His word, suffering only, putting forth no hand in His own behalf. Anything else would really be to "tempt God,"—to question as they questioned at Massah (Deut. vi. 16), where in their need He seemed not to come forward. They "tempted," tried Him by His providences, found Him to come short. This question still connects in this way with the first temptation; but Israel had no power in themselves to fall back upon as He had: would He use it? Nay, when God had pledged Himself to Him in His word, would He not put it to the proof, let it be seen openly that God was with Him? Nay, He will not; nor take the short road, as if God's way were too long.

This is to tempt Him then: to try Him by our thoughts,—alas, by our impatience, that cannot wait for His due time, nor take the path of humiliation He prescribes; that will in self-will reach out its hand and take, as Christ would not. He to whom all power belonged moved on as if in weakness, leaving it for God to vindicate and appear for Him, as and where and when He would.

[3] In the third temptation Satan shifts his ground completely. He is seeking the same thing of course; and shows himself more openly than he has done before; but he could not say, "If Thou be the Son of God, fall down and worship me!" He suddenly seems to realize so the truth of His humanity, that he will adventure fully upon it. If this be indeed One who is Son of man, shut off as it were from the claims and conditions of Deity;—if He has come in, in the very weakness of manhood itself to work the work committed to Him, then

All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and [t]worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, [u]Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, [v]Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him; and behold, [w]angels came and ministered unto him.

t cf. 1 Cor. 10. 20. *cf.* Rev. 9. 20. *cf.* 1 Jno. 5. 18–20.
u cfr. Gen. 3. 6, 7. *cf.* Jas. 4. 7.
v Deut. 6. 13. Deut. 10. 20.
Ex. 20. 3–5; *cf.* Is. 44. 6–8. *w* Lk. 22. 43; *cf.* John 20. 12, 13.

he will boldly test Him as mere man. All the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, can they have no attraction for this poor Nazarene? It is a desperate game indeed, and to us cannot but seem like the mere raving of insanity to propose to Christ to do homage to *him* for their possession! But, however it may seem to be no longer temptation, but a mere awful insult to the divine glory veiled in humanity before him, it does not seem to be given us as this. The Lord answers it, as He does the rest, from Scripture, though with an indignation which He has not shown before. Satan has disclosed himself, and can be called by his name and bidden to be off. Yet the whole reads as if he had as much confidence in this attack as in the other. The change of address, no longer "If Thou be the Son of God," with the boldness of his proposition, seems to say that he has now discovered and accepts the fact that his conflict is with One who, whatever He may be more than this, had indeed come to meet him as man only. And man—what had he not proved as to *him?* From Adam in the beauty of his Maker's handiwork, through the many generations since—he had not encountered yet a *second* man.

And he, the prince of this world, had he not wrested from man the sovereignty of earth, the inheritance for which God had destined him, God not interfering? might it not seem to him as if evil were stronger than good, as he realized the 4,000 years of his triumph, the generations of men that had conspired to lift him to his throne,—surely, an easy thing to do him homage!

In result, he has disclosed himself and is defeated. He has met, at last, the second Man. It is truly so: there is no display of deity, no outburst of divine judgment or of power; he is answered, still and always by the Word; its sufficiency as a divine weapon is seen all through: how great an encouragement for us in the irrepressible conflict which we all have to maintain. Through all He is the perfect example of faith, the Man Christ Jesus. We hear throughout the One who in the 16th psalm declares as the principle of His life: "the Lord is the measure of my portion and of my cup: . . . I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved."

The devil leaves Him now; and angels come and minister to Him.

Subd. 2.

The manifestation of the Lord's fitness for His work is now complete. From opposite sides He is declared, what even the demons henceforth own Him to be, the Holy One of God. He can now go forth to His appointed work; and we have here a brief notice of His preaching, after the close of John's public testimony. What we have in this place is not yet any detail, but the fact of the announcement of the Kingdom by the King Himself, the place of its announcement, the association with Himself of others to carry on the work; and the signs which accompany it. Each of these things has its importance, and Matthew groups his facts for the purpose of giving a history of the testimony now given to Israel, in its fullness and sufficiency, though rejected by them, the testimony of John being already rejected when that of Christ begins.

1. We have first the place of its proclamation, Galilee being in general in this Gospel the sphere of the Lord's labors, from Capernaum as a centre, which was now indeed, according to its name, the "village of consolation," as the place of His residence and the scene of many of His mighty works. That it was chosen in divine wisdom to be this, one cannot doubt, and the prophet Isaiah had

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. iv. 12–25.)

The King's own Testimony.

1 (12-16): Light.

1. NOW when Jesus heard that John was [z]delivered up, he withdrew into Galilee. And leaving Nazareth he came and dwelt at [y]Capernaum which is by the sea-shore, in the borders of Zebulon and Naphtali: that it might be [z]fulfilled which was spoken through Esaias the prophet, saying: "The land of Zebulon and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the [a]nations: the people who sat in [b]darkness saw a great light, and to those who sat in the region and shadow of death, to them hath [c]light sprung up."

2 (17-22): His testimony and disciples.

2. From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, [d]Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two [e]brethren, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, [f]Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they immediately [g]left the nets and followed him. And going on from thence, he saw [h]other two brethren, James the [son] of Zebedee and John his brother in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the boat and their [i]father, and followed him.

[z] Mk. 1. 14. Lk. 4. 14.
[y] Mk. 1. 21. Luke 4. 31. *cf.* ch. 9. 1. *cf.* ch. 11. 20, 23.
[z] *cf.* ch. 1. 22, etc. Is. 9. 1, 2. Josh. 19. 32, 34.
[a] *cf.* John 7. 52.
[b] Is. 42. 6, 7. *cf.* John 1. 5.
[c] *cf.* Mal. 4. 2. *cf.* Jno. 8. 12.
[d] ch. 3. 2.
[e] Mk. 1. 16-18. *cf.* Lk. 5. 1-11. *cf.* John 1. 40-42.
[f] *cf.* Acts 4. 11-13 with John 14. 12.
[g] ch. 19. 27-30. *cf.* Lk. 9. 57-62. *cf.* Phil. 3. 7, 8.
[h] Mk. 1. 19, 20.
[i] *cf.* Lk. 18. 29, 30.

marked it out in this way long before, as Matthew reminds us. Galilee, as "the land of Zebulon and Naphtali" on the one hand, and now "Galilee of the Gentiles" on the other, spoke plainly of the ruin into which the people of God had sunk. Zebulon, the dweller in relationship, as he should have been, had long fulfilled Jacob's prophecy, and "dwelling at the haven of the sea" had become the type of Israel as a whole, giving up its "dwelling alone" to mingle in adulterous commerce with the nations. Now it was but "the way of the sea," as if swallowed up in its waters; while Naphtali, the struggler, sat, struggling no more, in darkness which was indeed the "shadow of death." But the Saviour of sinners is not hindered thus, and there in the darkness was the very place for light to spring up. And now there had come to Zebulon a Dweller, in whom God Himself could dwell with man, and to Naphtali more than a struggler, a glorious *Conqueror*, the woman's Seed.

Here in outcast Galilee, the light could shine more freely than in Jerusalem, with its legal pretension and its hollowness at heart. Light, its own immediate evidence for all that have eyes to see! The Personal Word, the "Brightness of the Father's glory" before men's eyes! Earth had never before a revelation such as this.

2. The Lord takes up John's word as to the coming Kingdom. The full truth, when it comes, unites in itself all preceding partial utterances. Along with this comes the call of disciples: and Peter and Andrew, James and John, answer His call to be fishers of men, with prompt obedience. It is an obvious and common remark that the Lord chooses neither men of position, wealth, or learning. The qualifications He requires are first of all spiritual, and He who sends them out means to be with them in their work. Nay, the first of all qualifications is to be dependent upon Himself. But He calls,—calls now, as ever He did; and has given over to none His claim to do this. He is Lord and Master and Guide in all His people's service.

3 (23-25): The signs accompanying.

3. And Jesus [j] went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and [k] healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people. And the [l] report of him went

[j] ch. 9. 35. Mk. 1. 39. Lk. 4.15,44.
[k] Acts 10.38.
[l] ch. 9. 31. Mk.7.36,37. Lk. 4. 37.

That His call requires prompt, unhesitating obedience, He emphasizes Himself elsewhere. How great a thing is promptness, when once we are assured of the Lord's will. There is then nothing else to be considered, while moral hesitancy may so cloud this assurance as to make obedience then impracticable. Not alone in this, with how many would the present darkness of their way be clearly intelligible, if they would face honestly their past history. And that history must, after all, be faced one day.

3. The gospel preached by our Lord had "signs" accompanying it. This is one of the common Scripture words (though not used in this place,) for what we call "miracles." Such a word is used in Scripture also, but it emphasizes the "wonder" element only, and is of infrequent occurrence in the gospels. Important was even the power to produce wonder, as a bell to gather an audience, but the words chosen rather for these divine works speak of that in them which was to make its impress on the conscience and the heart. As "signs" they evidenced themselves as "powers"—acts of power—which in their character revealed God. The Kingdom of heaven which the Old Testament prepared men to expect was, in fact, an interference of divine power on behalf of men which would free the earth from the burdens sin had imposed and the curse brought in by it. Miracles, therefore, formed an essential part in the "Kingdom and glory," and are thus called by the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews "the powers of the world to come" (vi. 5). Most suitably, therefore, did they accompany the message that the Kingdom of heaven was at hand.

Yet John, its proclaimer, had done no miracle. His simple call to repentance required none. He saw and announced the Kingdom, but was not to introduce it. He embodied the spirit and emphasized the testimony of the old dispensation, which itself pointed beyond itself for the completion which would of necessity set it aside. He was the judicial summing up of the past, but in near view of the predicted future; and men needed only to have conscience called into activity to confirm to them the truth of what he said. They needed not and were not called to have faith in John, but to judge their own condition, and thus be ready for the coming King.

But now here *was* the King,—the One to whom the world was to be subject, the whole realm of nature submissive to His hand. Here miracles were the *natural* sign, then, of His Presence; to Him what man would call *supernatural* was *natural:* not to have manifested it would have discredited His claim. True and needful testimony it was to Him, when "all manner of disease and all manner of infirmity" yielded to His power, showing Him thus to be Master of the whole condition of things into which He had come. All the consequences of sin had found their remedy: to earth the long-lost paradise might be restored. Sin itself, therefore, as presently was to be proclaimed and certified, had found in Him its conqueror also. And, not passively content with receiving all who came, this grace in Him went forth with ceaseless activity to find its objects. God's heart was pouring itself out in such a way as if to preclude all possibility of resistance. Who could refuse such ministry to need so manifest, in which man's very flesh cried out for the living God: and how could then, his heart be silent?

In fact great multitudes flocked after Him from all the country round: from Galilee itself; from Decapolis, Rome's ten colonial cities; from Jerusalem also, valuing itself for privileges which, *mis*used, were bringing ruin upon all connected with it. Could, then, these various grades of a common humanity, one in the sad inheritance of the fall, which yet had so strangely divided them, find now in one Saviour-King their restorer to one another and to

out into all Syria; and they [m] brought unto him all that were sick, holden with various diseases and torments, demoniacs and lunatics and paralytics, and he healed them. And there followed him great [n] multitudes from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and [from] beyond the Jordan.

[m] Mk. 1.32. 33. Lk. 4. 40.

[n] ch. 5. 1. Mk. 3. 7, 8. ch. 8. 1, 18.

themselves? So it surely seemed as if it would be. "He made and baptized more disciples than John" was said of Him in the early days of His ministry. "The world is gone after Him," said His enemies at a later time. But history has been slow in fulfiling such a promise. Prophecy, on the other hand, has declared that so it shall be, though under different conditions from the present. And this is the one hope for the world which, in the beggary of all other hopes, shall at last find fulfilment.

SUBD. 3.

We shall be called back to these thronging multitudes again, to learn in detail their various needs and the way in which God had provided for them. But first the inspired history bids us listen to the Lord's own statement of what His Kingdom is; not in the form it should take, but in its inner spirit. The Old Testament prophets had already announced the form it would, and will yet, assume, when the "promises" still belonging to Paul's "kindred according to the flesh" (Rom. ix. 3, 4) shall be fulfilled. Introduced by a coming in glory which every eye shall see, the Kingdom of that day will be established in power that shall smite down all opposition as with a rod of iron (Ps. ii. 9). The law will then go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord once more from Jerusalem, then to be the place of His special manifestation upon the earth, men coming up from all parts of it to worship Him (Isa. ii.; Mic. iv.; Zech. xiv. 5–21).

The whole picture is, in many of its features, so unlike that into which Christianity has introduced us,—is, in fact, such apparent retrogression when seen as coming after this, that many find it impossible to understand it except as a figure; but as such no one will find it possible to understand it really. It is not Christianity certainly; it is not the heaven in which our portion is; it is a future —and still not final—state of the earth. It is a last dispensation before the eternal state begins,—a dispensation of sight, rather than of faith; and yet in many ways lower in character than that which faith now enjoys. "Blessed" in a higher sense, truly, "are they that have *not* seen, and yet have believed." Yet, in perfect accordance with this, the glory is then manifest and visible, as now it is not. And once more, and beyond all in the past, Jerusalem will be the candlestick for the light, where all may see it. Granting the apostle's interpretation to be the true one, and that to "Israel in the *flesh*" the promises belong,—and the prophets themselves unmistakably show this,—no other reading of Scripture is possible at all than the simple and literal one.

When John the Baptist proclaimed the Kingdom as at hand, he had before him no vision of Christianity, but just what the prophets of old had announced. And when the Lord takes up, with more emphasis and fuller demonstration, the Baptist's message, He is still speaking of the same thing. But Israel rejected Him through whom alone those promises could be fulfilled to them: "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." Thus, as Daniel had predicted, "Messiah" was "cut off, and had nothing" (ix. 26, *margin*). As far as Israel's blessing was concerned, the fair vision vanished. The world too, and not Israel merely, understood not the day of its visitation: "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." Thus the predicted blessing of the earth also is delayed, and only after nineteen centuries are the streaks of dawn beginning to be seen on the horizon.

Yet the Kingdom has come: the Baptist was not mistaken; the signs given could not deceive. Yes, it has come, and more than that which it promised has been brought in for faith. Yet it has come in a different way. Grace repelled will

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chap. v.–vii.)

The Kingdom in its Inner Spirit and Holiness.

1 (v. 1-16): The principles of the kingdom as shown in those who enter it.

1. [1] AND seeing the multitudes, he [o]went up into the mountain; and when he had sat down, his disciples came unto him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying,

[o] *cf.* ch. 17. 1. *cf.* ch. 8. 1.

still triumph over hindrances; its flood will rise but higher to overtop the barriers which would hem it in. And out of the world which has taken Satan for its prince, and rejected and crucified the Son of God, God has been all this time taking out for Himself a heavenly people—a people to share with Christ rejection upon the earth, yet to share with Him also His reign over it, and to have with Himself a place of nearer, dearer intimacy than even this might imply—"members of His body," partners soon of His throne, where He is, for eternity to be with Him.

These things we shall find the Lord beginning to unfold to His disciples, as soon as it is clearly seen that Israel will have none of Him; and here, where He speaks of "things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world" (xiii. 35), we shall have no difficulty in finding that which is our own—a fullness of blessing that Israel's portion does indeed figure, but only figure. This—the nation's as such—is earthly: ours is heavenly. There is to be a "new earth" also "wherein dwelleth righteousness," and with which Israel's seed and name are permanently connected (Isa. lxvi. 22), as on the other hand, a "heavenly city" for God's pilgrims of to-day.

In the "sermon on the mount" we have, then, the principles of the Kingdom of heaven, with very plain reference to the millennial earth. It is the *earth* that the meek are to inherit, though there is a "reward in heaven" also, at which we shall have to look in its place (vers. 5, 12). The first statement is from the 37th psalm, the application of which will be perfectly evident to all who consider it. Jerusalem also is spoken of, not in its desolate, disowned condition, but as "the city of the great King" (ver. 35), and we shall see further indications of this nature, as we take up the study of what is before us here.

Yet let it not be thought that this takes from us the application to ourselves, which Christians seek in it. The fuller revelation only completes the partial one; the higher blessing but transcends the lower. Through all dispensations God is the same God; and we are "blessed with *all* spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Of many things we can only argue, indeed, a more perfect—or at least a *fuller* application to ourselves than to them. To take from Israel what is hers is only to diminish her and not enrich ourselves; nay, what has been called in this way the spiritualizing of the promises has led most surely and emphatically to the *carnalizing* of the Church.

1. The "sermon on the mount" is the manifestation, then, of the Kingdom in its inner spirit and holiness,—still, of course, as a Kingdom to come, and not actually come. There are seven parts (the number of perfection); and the first (vers. 1–16) fittingly consists of "beatitudes," blessings pronounced by the King Himself upon the heirs thereof: first, in view of their personal character (1–9); then as sufferers in the midst of a world hostile to them (10–12); lastly, in face of that hostility, they are set in it as ministers of a blessing to be fully realized, when the long expected Kingdom at last is come (13–16).

The old covenant also had its blessings, but which, conditioned upon legal obedience, proved only the hopelessness of blessing under it; so that the very "song" of the lawgiver is a witness against the people, and his blessing of the tribes has to look for its fulfilment in times beyond the law; in fact, in the very times of the Kingdom which the Lord here announces. How suited that the Minister of the *new* covenant should begin with blessing—blessing still upon obedience (for in the nature of things there can be no other) but now with a

l (1-9): their righteousness.

p Blessed are the q poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

p Ps. 1. 1. Ps. 32. 1. Ps. 119. 1.

Luke 6. 20, etc. q Prov. 29. 23; Is. 57. 15; cf. ch. 15. 26-28.

positiveness and assurance which imply the grace which that covenant, with its glorious "I wills," so royally expresses. (Heb. viii. 8–12.) For those under it there is no Mount Ebal, no curse or woe at all. The sweet authority of divine love constrains and restrains together. Christ is King of a Kingdom like which there is no other, where the "ingrafted word" is law, but a "law of liberty," and every individual conscience is His throne.

[l]There are seven blessings pronounced on character, and (as in most sevens elsewhere throughout the Word) the first four are distinguished from the last three by being connected with what is more negative and external—related here to position in the world; while the last three give us more specific divine lineaments which are found in all the children of God, as partakers of the divine nature. The first four show us the heart set upon a blessing which is not yet come,—upon the Kingdom of heaven itself: governed, therefore, by the unseen, and finding itself in the midst of all that is its moral opposite in the world around. It is an empty, barren scene, and the soul is conscious of poverty and distress and moral failure only in the midst of it. The last three give us the positive energy and activity of good amid the unceasing conflict of evil with it.* But we must look at them more particularly in their order and connection with one another, all which has its importance spiritually and for us.

First, and therefore of first importance here we have "Blessed are the poor *in spirit*." This is in contrast with mere external poverty, and yet like it in its own sphere. When the heart is set upon things to come, present things of necessity lose proportionately their value. There is "absence of mind," as we call it,—the heart on the unseen. And this is characteristic of faith ever, which is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen." Yet this poverty of spirit is only the negative side of faith, the emptying and not the filling. Still there is power in it, as deliverance from a world in which men are walking in a vain show, and disquiet themselves in vain. The soul's bonds are cut: it can move, it can make progress. To such an one God's word becomes a necessity, as the one link with the invisible. And such a seeking has its welcome and assurance from the Lord Himself:—"theirs is the Kingdom of heaven."

How much *more*, not *less* forceful for us should this be, than for those to whom the Lord is directly speaking, or even for the people who will stand upon the threshold of the Kingdom in days soon to come. True, the earth's crisis will be upon it, and Israel's travail-time of intense anguish, out of which, as in a day, a nation will be born to God. But *we* have the revelation of a brighter inheritance, higher as heaven is above the earth, the meeting-place of the redeemed of the present and the past, the dwelling-place of God and the Lamb. Had we divine affections proportionate to the revelation made to us how little would mere circumstances here have power over the formation of a character like this! Granting that Satan's tactics for us have changed, and that, instead of funeral pyres for martyrs, there are now only premiums in abundance for unfaithfulness to Christ—a condition of things formed by compromise between the Church and the world,—should this have power to dim the eyes of faith?

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*I give the meaning of these numerically here, it being difficult to do this with sufficient conciseness and intelligibility in the margin as usual.

(*a*) the Kingdom itself controlling, though unseen:—
  (i) the barrenness of things here:
  (ii) mourning is here love's judgment of the ruin.
  (iii) meekness, the fruit of realizing one's possessions assured by God.
  (iv) the complete failure of the world's system felt.
(*b*) the more positive Christ-like features:—
  (i) mercy, only righteousness with such as we are; (*see notes*).
  (ii) purity (separation from evil);
  (iii) peace-making,—recovering energy.

Blessed are they that [r]mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the [s]meek: for they shall inherit the earth.*

[r] Ps. 147. 3. Lk. 4. 18. *cf.* Lk. 7. 37, 38, 44–47.
[s] Ps. 37. 11. *cf.* ch. 11. 29 with Is. 53. 7, 12.

*Or "land."

What would it be to say this, but to own it right and reasonable that Satan should gain his object?

Christ in the world at least must be poor in it. It was the place, without any question, of His poverty. If then, He be the example for us, how much does this imply? If He, too, gone out of the world, be the object for our hearts, where will our hearts be?

The second blessing is that of those who mourn; and here I do not think that it is a question of personal sin. Christ was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," and necessarily, as the Son of God in a world astray from Him. "For the zeal of Thy house hath eaten Me up," He says, "and the reproaches of them that reproached Thee are fallen upon Me" (Ps. lxix. 9). His tears fell over Jerusalem. The Cross He bore for men was fullest witness to the intensity of His anguish upon their account, while justifying the holiness of God in all He suffered for them. The mourning that He blesses here is, we may be sure, like His own, love's judgment of the ruin that is everywhere around: little need to dwell upon the causes for mourning in the world, such as we know it. Its open sores are revealed enough day by day, in a time when the most hidden things are revealed as a matter of course before the public gaze, as having unquestioned right to know everything. And yet, after all, the mass of evil is too great even to be so gauged and realized. What must have been the opposition of it to Him whose eye saw through it all, and whose heart had none of the callousness with which we can throw off, or the weakness which makes us faint under, so great a burden.

But "they shall be comforted." There is a rest of God to come, a rest into which we shall enter; a sabbath-rest, where rest shall not only be allowed but sanctified. How sweet the thought of a rest of God, where *He* shall rest—rest, as alone He can do, "in His love." And this shall be.

Approached from this direction, the next point is soon reached, the character of the meek. Amid the lusts and strife of earth, if like others you have your portion to seek, you must strive as they do. If you have nothing here to live for but God's will, you can afford to be quiet. Be sure for yourself of a Father's love and care always over you,—infinite love and wisdom concerning itself with all your path, and such realization will of necessity subdue all rashness of self-assertion, and make you careful only to give God His way, to cease from the folly of your own. Here too the Lord leads His people, "Learn of Me," He says, "for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." There is the present blessing of it, and how great it is!—"rest to your souls:" rest from all restlessness; quiet in the knowledge that God is God; what an inestimable joy is this!

When the "meek shall inherit the earth" will be, of course, still the time of the Kingdom to which we are here continually looking forward. It will be a wonderful thing in this world, whose history has been one long strife of ambition, and whose heroes have been so often made such by the hecatombs of the slain, to have the inheritance at last belong to the meek! The promise for an earthly people as it is, we shall still enjoy it, and in a better way. "Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ," we shall reign with Him over the earth. We have no need, therefore, to covet Israel's promises, and should not be enriched by them in the least. Here the Lord is quoting, as has been said, from the 37th psalm, and the reference is obvious. It shows of whom these blessings primarily speak; and "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

There is yet one special form of sorrow to be noted, and it is one that men

> Blessed are they that [t]hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

[t] Lk. 1. 53. Is. 55. 1. cf. Lk. 15. 17, 23.

are feeling intensely to-day; not that there is more of it than in the past ages, or at least not that there is necessarily more. Rather, perhaps, because all these questions press more for solution as the day of settlement nears and the harvest of the earth approaches ripeness. "Judgment shall" yet "return to righteousness," long divorced as they have been; but it is not yet so. Still the cry because of oppression goes up into the ear of God, and He is quiet, and men think He regards not. And because they think so, they are rising up to-day to take things into their own hands, and settle them after their own fashion. Yet they can never be so settled: where are the righteous that are fit to rule? Are the few that have shown their unfitness other than fair samples of the many who have not had a chance to try? And if they could get one perfectly righteous, would they submit rejoicingly to him? What says the Cross as to that? The One they need has come and been rejected. "We have no King but Cæsar" was the cry then; and it has been answered by the long reign of Cæsar. Would they choose otherwise to-day? Cæsar may not be in the fashion: they enjoy too well the scramble for the spoils of office. Try experiments in politics they may, and dethrone Cæsar; but Christ will never get His own until God makes His enemies as a foot-stool for His feet.

But "blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness"—*righteousness;* not merely to get their own necks out of the collar: there is no particular moral character about that. But craving for righteousness shall at last be satisfied. The coming of the Lord alone can accomplish this. There is One who can be safely trusted—only One: He, one who had power in His hand once, on earth, and used it, but never for Himself. Personal interests He had indeed, and wrought for them—a joy on account of which He endured the cross, despising the shame: the cross, even *He* could *not* despise. He too, blessed be God, shall be satisfied: "He shall see fruit of the travail of His soul, *and shall be satisfied.*" Amen.

The last three blessings upon character, to which we now come, relate to that in which the children of God manifest most distinctly their divine origin. In mercy, in purity, in peace-making, the character of God Himself is manifested as Light and Love. It is directly said of the peace-makers that they "shall be *called* the sons of God"—recognized in their relation to Him; and here assuredly is the great office Christ Himself assumed. In the first epistle of John, where the possession of eternal life by the possessors of Christianity is in question, similar things are given as the signs of it. There it is, indeed, that we have the statements, "God is light" and God is love:" and consequently, "he that doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." The two things must be found in the same person, as in God they belong together. Love is not truly love that is not holy; holiness is not that, if separated from love.

These seven beatitudes are in like manner one sevenfold blessing. Blessing cannot dwell with cursing; nor the child of light be the child of darkness also. Such cross-checks as to reality are of the greatest possible importance for practical use. In a world of shams there is nothing but needs testing: and with the flesh still in us there is abundant room for self-deception. Saddest of all it is, that even Christians may not be unwilling to be a little blinded; with this additional necessity, of course, that they cannot dictate the limit of this: the enemy to whom they capitulate will be bound by no terms.

It will be thought strange, no doubt, to put down "mercy" under the head of "righteousness" rather than of love; yet this is what I believe its numerical place enforces. Of course, it is not to be doubted that love is shown in it; but that results from what we have just been saying, that one moral attribute, just so far as it is that, will be penetrated, as it were, by other elements. You cannot absolutely separate one part of moral character from another: each is de-

Blessed are the "merciful: for they shall receive mercy.

Blessed are the "pure in heart: for they shall see God.

u Mk. 11.25, 26. cf. ch. 18.12-35. cf. 2 Tim. 1. 16; cf. ch. 25.34-40. v cf. Jer. 17.9 with Acts 15.9; Heb. 12.14.

pendent and will not stand alone. Granting that, however, it will still be thought that mercy is more the fruit of love than of righteousness, and that it is artificial to characterize it in this way. Let us turn, then, to Scripture itself to see if it has any help for us.

Now we shall find such in this very "sermon on the mount," and only in the third section of it (ch. vi. 1, 2). In our common version you find there, "Take heed that ye do not your *alms* before men to be seen of them;" but the R.V. rightly substitutes there "*righteousness*" for alms. It will be seen when we come to speak of it, that the character formed by the realization of the presence of God is described for us in three different ways,—manward, Godward, self-ward. In each case His examples are different, possibly, from what we might have expected. Manward, He specifies "alms" as righteousness; prayer, as characteristic Godward; fasting, selfward. The truth and wisdom of this we surely cannot doubt, when we realize who is the Speaker here; but here, then, as I have claimed to be the case in the beatitudes, *mercy* is given as a form of righteousness: for undoubtedly *alms*-giving has the character of mercy.

The parable of the unmerciful servant in this same gospel will throw light upon all this (xviii. 23–34). He demands but his due from his fellow-servant, and so might not seem unrighteous; but there is more than this that must come into account. "O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldest not thou also have had mercy on thy fellow-servant, even as I had mercy on thee?"

Mercy was with him clearly but righteousness; and so it is with us ever, being what we are, and God being to us what He ever is. Notice distinctly how this is brought out in the recompense. The mercy that the merciful shall find will be, as elsewhere with the enjoyment of these blessings, in the coming Kingdom, and we might expect perhaps something more than this; but all the reward there is mercy, and it is well and needful to be reminded of it. So the apostle, after speaking of the self-forgetting love of Onesiphorus, who had refreshed and ministered to him in his bonds at Rome, prays, "The Lord grant unto him that he may find *mercy* of the Lord in that day" (2 Tim. i. 18). At our best, as at our worst, it is to grace that we are debtors. Grace crowns, even as grace saves.

And now we have clearly the character of God as Light. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," If we remember that the *eyes* are in the heart (Eph. i. 18, R. V.), the connection is most obvious. Indeed this must be the qualification for seeing anything that is worth seeing. When Christ, the image of God, was in the world, the world knew not its Maker. And why? Not because there was not abundant evidence. He Himself declared the reason in that pregnant question which admitted but of one answer: "How can ye believe who receive honor one of another, but seek not the honor that cometh from God only?" The reason for lack of faith is always a moral one: the pure in heart alone can see God.

The Pharisee may cleanse the outside with most religious care and see nothing,—or see indeed the very opposite of the truth; but the soul brought by its very misery to self-judgment, with its back on the world and self, shall see the glorious Vision which lies over against these, unseen by their votaries. And oh, for the bliss that lies beyond this! for the possibilities of vision beyond all that any one yet has made his own! for such is the unrealized wealth of our possession even here. To us the sanctuary is completely open; the veil is rent from top to bottom; and Christ is entered in, to give us entrance. Yet we imitate so much the unbelief of those who in days past besought God to put

2 (10-12): the world in opposition.
(a) for righteousness' sake.

Blessed are the [w] peace-makers: for they shall be called sons of God.

[2] Blessed are they that are [z] persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

w cf. Rom. 12. 19, 20. cf. Phil. 4. 2. cf. Eph. 2. 14.
x John 16. 1-3. 2 Tim. 2. 12; 2 Pet. 2. 20; 2 Pet. 3. 14-17.

distance when He was drawing nigh, and to put a creature of His, though it were a Moses, abidingly between themselves and Him.

The last beatitude, "Blessed are the peace-makers," recognizes the strife and unrest that have come in, while it shows the energy of divine grace which has come to restore and bring back out of it. As the final blessing we see in it the result of what has gone before. There is in it the consciousness of a Voice which has spoken peace with power to still the disorder and reach down to the very root of it. How wonderful to know that that which is the basis of true peace is that in which we see also evil in its worst, but overpowered, made subject, transformed into glorious good. The world's worst crime, the bitter growth of its many centuries of hostility to God, its awful act of allegiance to the prince that it had chosen, has been the Cross. But just its worst is that which, in the triumph of good over it, gives absolute peace. The worst that man could do has but disclosed the infinite good in God; nay, He has met the full power of the enemy in all the weakness of a Son of man. Goodness, with no power but what is inherent in it, has defeated evil with all its accumulated strength. "Out of the eater has come forth meat, and out of the strong, sweetness."

Henceforth, to despair of good is to despair of God. He has made peace by the blood of His cross. How blessed now are the feet of those who are but the messengers of the gospel of peace! who go forth with the trumpet of jubilee to proclaim the fruits of the day of atonement for the Israel of God! the feeblest may recount the praises of that weakness which has defeated the strong, and out of weakness brings forth strength everlasting.

Blessed, then, are the peacemakers! God is Himself that. They, then, shall be called the sons of God. Henceforth, whatever the roughness of the road, their feet are "shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace:" shoes that, like those of Israel of old, never wear out. Well may they be the publishers of this grace to others.

[2] The blessings connected with character are now followed by two which are divine encouragement to those suffering from the consequent opposition of the world. For the world is in opposition to God, as the Cross has once for all proved, and so to those who resemble Him or remind it of Him. This opposition may be indeed disguised in many ways, and so that those who exhibit it may be unconscious of what they are doing—unconscious even (such is the deceitfulness of the heart) that they are of such a spirit. For few indeed will own to themselves a condition so terrible as this. Hence have come in the false gods which have been invented to satisfy the religious principle in man, and yet allow him to follow his lusts and passions without check, or even with the approbation of a misguided conscience. And hence, even under the form of Christianity, people can picture a God after their own heart, and serve him with quite unconscious heathenism.

The persecution of which the Lord speaks here is of two kinds—for righteousness and for His sake. In the first case it is for character, but it is to be noticed that it is represented as less violent and radical than the latter is. Correspondingly, the blessing pronounced is in the latter case greater.

With righteous conduct there may not be linked the open testimony which brings out opposition; and, if it be without personal claim on the beholder, it may even be admired, or at least approved, by him. It is another thing when it does make this claim; when the honesty of a servant, for example, interferes with his employer's profit. Then he may have to suffer; and this is so common a case that it calls for little remark.

(b) for Christ's sake.

Blessed are ye, when they shall [y]revile you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your [z]reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the [a]prophets who were before you.

y Acts 28. 22. 1 Pet. 2. 12. 1 Pet. 4. 14.
z Rom. 8. 17, 18. 2 Tim. 2. 12.
a 2 Chr. 36. 16. Acts 7. 52; ch. 23. 34-37.

When suffering is for Christ's sake, it is because suffering for Christ presses His claim upon the conscience, and it is *felt*, however little *admitted*, that one has to do with Him. As often said, a man who smiles at a Mohammedan may curse a Christian; and he who will quietly enough discuss the Koran, grows hot and angry in disputing against Scripture. Truth carries with it its own evidence sufficiently to make this difference; which is, therefore, but unwitting homage paid by those who mean nothing of this. Christ turns from the mere abstract "they" in the former case, to speak, as it were, directly into the hearts of these sufferers: "Blessed are *ye* when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for My sake." With this comes the fuller recompense: "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

This "reward in heaven," addressed (as few realize it to have been) to Jewish saints, whose portion as such would be earthly, (and so the Lord has before applied the language of the 37th psalm,) and in immediate anticipation of the Kingdom being set up on earth,—is really stranger than it looks to those who contemplate it merely from a Christian standpoint. *Our* portion is rightly recognized as being in heaven, and it is so much the accustomed thing to think of all saints as dying and going there, that we have largely lost sight of the meek inheriting the earth, or else injuriously misapply it. For it is certainly not the rule with the meek now, and in seeking to make it such they would lose their character.

But the Lord, with all Israel's blessings in His hand, and offering Himself to them as Messiah to bring them in for them, naturally speaks according to the Scripture which has in view the time when He will be received and they will be blessed under Him upon earth. According to this view, it is the reward in *heaven* which becomes more exceptional and difficult to understand.

But these blessings—millennial as we call them—being then lost to them through unbelief, belong, in their primary sense, to the future yet;—to a remnant brought to God in a time of trial such as has never yet been known, and who will have to pass through it to enjoy their promises. Of these many will be persecuted even to death, and thus lose what we may call their proper portion. But they will thus receive, in the goodness of God, a higher blessing. Deprived of an earthly, they will enter into a heavenly inheritance, and so are seen in the book of Revelation (xx. 4–6) as a special company of *martyrs*, *added* to the saints of the first resurrection (the saints of Christian and previous times) who will be already on their thrones.

But besides this, and apart from martyrdom (of which the Lord does not here directly speak), there will be also a preserved remnant, who, passing through the trial of this time, will have a special link with heaven, such as all will not possess (Rev. xiv. 3, 4).*

For *us* there is, of course, no difficulty in an application, which is as true for us as if there were no others who had concern in it. The prophets, of whom our Lord speaks in this connection, dealt with men by the word of God which was given them to communicate, and themselves suffered, not merely as righteous, but as men of God. Yet as to the professing people of God even it could be said, "Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute?"

* For this, upon which it is not the place here to dwell, I may refer to my "Revelation of Christ" pp. 159-162; 208-212.

3 (13-16): saints manifesting Him.

3 Ye are the [b]salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost its [c]savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men.

Ye are the [d]light of the world: a city that is set upon a hill cannot be hid. Neither do they light a

b *cf.* Gen. 18. 23-32. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 7.
c Mk. 9. 50. Lk. 14. 34, 35. *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 5. *cf.* Rev. 3. 15, 16.
d *cf.* Eph. 5. 8; *cf.* Rev. 1. 12, 13; *cf.* Jno. 5. 35.

The apostle Peter speaks similarly of these two causes of persecution (1 Pet. iii. 14; iv. 14), and with corresponding emphasis of blessing for those "reproached for the name of Christ." With him it is present, however: "the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you;" but who can measure what is implied in this?

3 Such treatment at the world's hand involves also in itself a place of privilege and responsibility from God, which is two-fold, answering to this two-fold rejection. First, "ye are the salt of the earth." Salt is that which resists corruption; there being in it also a special diffusibility, which makes it a suited image of active and aggressive power. Mere passivity is, in fact, inconsistent with righteousness itself; even what we call "passive resistance" is more than this. There is the government of moral principle, in obedience to which the whole man braces himself up, if but to endure. Example also becomes precept, and that of the most convincing kind: words may be merely words, and light as the breath that forms them. The willing sufferer is so truly the witness, that the old word for witness has come to belong to him. The "martyr" is preeminently the "witness."

But this leads on to the second thing, which is just a place of testimony: "Ye are the light of the world: a city which is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a lamp and put it under the bushel, but on a stand; and it giveth light to all that are in the house. "So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

From it being said, 'let men see your *good works*," people often imagine that these are the light itself, and thus make the two things we are considering practically one. Indeed they are made for one another: separate them, and there is at once a fatal deficiency in each. What testimony to Christ can there be, if there be not the life giving evidence? But again, what evidence in the life if the lips are silent as to Christ? Nay, this may be construed so as to make the life of no consequence:—

"For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight:
He can't be wrong, whose life is in the right."

But it is truth which sanctifies; and the life *cannot* be right that is not governed by it. And this is still the most serious effort of the enemy where Scripture is sought to be maintained: "For Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light," says the apostle; "therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed into the ministers of righteousness: whose end shall be according to their works" (2 Cor. xi. 14, 15). Here these ministers of righteousness *press* the life, to deny the truth; and as no more successful argument can be found than the evil lives of professors of it, so (next to this and in the same line with it) the good deeds of those who are without or who deny the truth, is Satan's wisest one.

Thus it needs the light to shine upon the good works, that they may be seen as such, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. Apart from this, they may glorify humanity, or glorify any lie under the sun. Christ is He with whom, in the full reality of it, "light is come into the world," and if "men love darkness rather than light," it is, as He Himself says, "because their deeds are evil" (John iii. 19). We must not be afraid to say this after Him. There are some, thank God, who are profoundly conscious that in His light alone they have seen light, and that there is no light for the world but only in Him. Thus if any are

2 (v. 17-48): The law confirmed, expanded, and supplemented. Christ's words contrasted with those of old.
1 (17-20): Its authority affirmed.

lamp and [e]put it under the bushel, but on the lampstand; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. So let your light [f]shine before men, that they may see your good works, and [g]glorify your Father who is in heaven.

2. [1]Think not that I am come to overthrow the law or the prophets: I did not come to overthrow but to [h]complete; for verily I say unto you, Till [i]heaven and

[e] Mk. 4. 21. Lk. 8. 16-18, Lk. 11. 33-36.
[f] cf. 1 Thess. 1. 8-10.
[g] cf. Phil. 2. 15, 16.
[h] cf. 2 Cor. 3. 2.
[i] 1 Pet. 2. 12.
[j] cf. 1 Cor. 14. 25.
[k] cf. Is. 42. 21.
Rom. 3. 31; cf. Gal. 5. 14. [l] Ps. 119. 89; Lk. 16. 17.

to be in any sense a light of the world, there is but one way of it—by reflecting Him. Let us remember, then, the responsibility we have, of bold confession of Him. It is not even righteous to hide from men in need what He has done for them. No: the lamp is not for the bushel,—but for the lampstand: it is not for ourselves that we are made light: the world has right to it, and can produce that right under the broad seal of Christ's commission.

One may perhaps object: "But *my* good works! Alas, that is just my difficulty. With all my inconsistency, I fear that it would more dishonor Christ than honor Him, for *me* to confess Him." One can understand such language; one can even respect the motive, and yet it involves an essential mistake. We are never called to *show* our good works, or even to be *conscious* of them. The Lord's lesson as to almsgiving perfectly illustrates the rule as to all such things, which is "let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." He is not here, we may be sure, teaching a contradictory principle. He takes for granted that there *will* be good works indeed: true faith in Him will surely have its fruit; but *faith* is the very opposite of self-occupation, and certainly of self-satisfaction.

If it be Christ that occupies us, the apprehension of His perfection will give us true self-judgment: it will be as impossible to be careless of evil, as it will to be self-pretentious. We shall "boast in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. iii. 3). This will make the confession of Him both sweet and safe. We shall let our light shine before men; and, poor as we shall ever be in our own account, there *will* be fruit seen in us which shall glorify our Father. This joy in Christ itself will be the best evidence to commend Him to others.

2. We have now a new and very distinct section of the "sermon on the mount," in which the Lord takes the place of One greater than Moses, confirming, expounding, and bringing out the spirituality of the law, while He at the same time supplements and perfects it; not hesitating to put His own words in a place of higher authority than that of those spoken "to them of old time." For "the law made nothing perfect" (Heb. vii. 19), and what Moses had to concede on account of the hardness of their hearts (ch. xix. 8) could now, in the light which had come with Christ into the world, no longer be permitted.

There are fittingly seven subsections here, ending with the enjoining of this very perfection as required of the children of the perfect Father in heaven, who were to manifest as that their Father's character. The higher the place accorded, the higher the standard necessarily. But there are many questions which the whole subject raises, and which we must take up seriously and consider patiently in the order of their suggestion.

[1] First of all, the authority of the law is affirmed, and in the fullest way; but we have to consider in what sense it is affirmed, for it is here that many and grave mistakes are made.

"The law and the prophets" was the recognized phrase for the Old Testament as a whole, the Scriptures of a dispensation already past, but which had not passed themselves with the dispensation. Thus in the Gospel of Luke He says again (xvi. 16): "*The law and the prophets were until John*; since that time the Kingdom of God is preached." Thus it could be said that they were passed,

earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all come to pass. Whosoever, then, shall do away with one of these [j]least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called least

[j] Lk. 16. 10. Jas. 2. 10, 11. *cf.* Gal. 3. 10.

and that they were not passed. They were passed as the sole and governing truth: that was now come, or at least was at hand, for which they had been preparing the way; and necessarily this must be now the higher truth, but which must by the very fact bear witness to and establish what has gone before it. No truth can pass away. The more complete that is, to which we have arrived, the more surely must it embrace and set in their place all lower and partial truths which have anticipated and led on to it.

Thus then Christ came not to destroy the law and the prophets. He came to fulfil, or rather complete,—fill them out. What would the Old Testament be without the New? Very much like a finger, pointing into vacuity!

It is plain that the Lord is not here speaking simply of the ten commandments, though these have their place, and a foremost place, in His thoughts, as is manifest by what follows. But the law, in its use in Scripture, is by no means confined to this, and the addition of the "prophets" shows that it must be taken in its widest significance.

The "fulfilment" could not be therefore simply by His obedience to the law, though He *was* fully obedient, but implies the bringing in something additional, as plainly even the mere fulfilment of the prophets must be by the addition of something to the prophecy.

But He goes on now to affirm with His emphatic "verily," that "not one jot or one tittle,—not the smallest letter, nor the projection of a letter*—"shall pass from the law till all come to pass." This, though translated in our own version "be fulfilled," is a different word from that just used; and such coming to pass could not refer to the keeping of commandments. The ten commandments could not be spoken of as something which had to come to pass. But this experience would naturally have to do with the law in its larger significance, which must even, one would say, include the prophets also; and thus the phrase "until heaven and earth pass" would be the real equivalent of all things being fulfilled. For beyond this the Old Testament gives us only the promise of "new heavens and a new earth," about which it says little or nothing (Isa. lxv. 17; lxvi. 22).

Every jot and tittle of the Old Testament remains then never to pass away through the ages of time. It is all confirmed as divine, and therefore stable; but which, of course, does not mean that types and shadows were not to give way to the substance when it should come, or that the "new covenant" would not replace the old: for this would be a contradiction of the Old Testament itself which affirms it. No; the law abides in all its details; and *therefore* in all the limits it imposes on itself, and for all the purposes for which it was given, and *for no other*. This is simple enough, surely, to understand; and yet it is not understood by those, for instance, who would from words like these impose the yoke of the law upon the necks of Christians. For this it is not enough to tell us that the law abides. It is none the less necessary, as the apostle says, that "a man use it lawfully." And he adds to this, in illustration, that "the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient" (1 Tim. i. 8-10).

But the Lord's next words, for many, show without any doubt the perpetual and universal obligation of the law. For here He speaks plainly about doing or not doing, teaching or not teaching, even one of the least of its commandments, and of the recompense or retribution following for this. But while this is certain, it is no less clear that it is to Jews—to men under law—that He is

*Which in several Hebrew letters is the only distinction between them: as between the "r" and the "d," the "h" and the "ch," etc.

in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall practise and teach them, *he* shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall [k]excel [the righteousness] of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

[2] (21-26): the second commandment of second table: the accusation of the law.

[2]Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, [l]Thou shalt not kill; but whosoever shall kill shall be

[k] *cf.* Lk. 18. 11, 12. *cf.* Rom. 3. 20. *cf.* Phil. 3. 5-7.

[l] Ex. 20. 13. Deut. 5. 17. *cf.* Rom. 13. 9. *cf.* Deut. 19. 4-13.

addressing Himself. Christianity is not come, nor the Kingdom of heaven, nor is the former even announced as yet. The Lord is simply making a special application of the principle He has declared, to the case of those before Him; whether this is to be in fact wider is not to be inferred from this particular case.

When we do come to Christianity we find, especially in the epistles to the Romans and Galatians, the relation of the law to the saints of the present dispensation carefully argued out. And here two things are emphasized for us. First, that the "*righteousness* of the law" is "fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. viii. 4). There is not, there cannot be, any giving up of what is *righteous*—of what is according to the character of God Himself. The Christian standard cannot be lower, but is in fact higher than the legal one, in the same proportion as the Christian position is higher than the Jewish, and as the power communicated in Christianity transcends any that was known in Judaism. The Christian position is in Christ before God. The Christian standard is therefore to walk as Christ walked. The Christian power is that of the indwelling Spirit of Christ. As the greater includes the less, so the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in Christian righteousness.

But, secondly, this does not mean that we are *under* the law. We are *dead to it*, that we might be married to Christ, says the apostle, that we might bring forth fruit unto God (Rom. vii. 4). It is not that the law is dead,* but *we* are; and thus it is carefully guarded from the least possible conflict with what the Lord has here said.

It is not the place here to discuss this doctrine, but the simple statement of it should be enough. It is not the possible meaning of a few texts but the whole doctrine of the apostle, fully argued out, that denies that the Christian is under the law; and to say that it is merely the ceremonial part that is in question, is simply impossible for any one who will read his argument with any care. Is it the ceremonial law that says, "Thou shalt not covet" (Rom. vii. 7)? Is "the good that I would I do not" (ver. 19) ceremonial? It is impossible to say this.

The Lord, here in Matthew, is speaking to Jews, to those confessedly under the law, and in view of the coming Kingdom, which (because of their rejection of the King) has yet not come for them, and which, when it does come, will bring in a different condition of things from Christianity, as indeed the sermon on the mount itself assures us. This we shall have to look at in a little while.

[2] But now the Lord proceeds to develop the righteousness that He requires, in contrast with that of scribes and Pharisees, those zealots for the external. The second table of the law is here pressed, rather than the first: evidently because on this side man is most accessible,—his conscience is most easily roused. Men can invent all sorts of coverings to hide from themselves their state Godward; but if this be tested by their conduct toward men, made in His image, it is not so possible to conceal from oneself the truth. Corruption and violence were of old the characteristics of a world which had reached the limit of divine long-suffering (Gen. vi. 11-13). The Lord takes therefore the sixth and seventh commandments of the law—the second and third of the second table—to illustrate the righteousness which He proclaims, expanding and spiritualizing what was

*See margin, and R. V.

subject to the judgment. But *I* say unto you that every one that is [m]angry with his brother without a cause shall be subject to the judgment; but whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be subject to the [n]council; and whosoever shall say, Fool, shall be liable to the [o]hell of fire. If, then, thou bring thy [p]gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way: first, be reconciled to thy brother, and

[m] 1 John 3. 15. 1 John 4.20. *cf.* Eph. 4. 26.
[n] *cf.* 26. 59. *cf.* Ex. 22.28.
[o] vers. 29, 30. ch. 10. 28.
[p] *cf.* Lev. 1. 3, etc. *cf.* ch. 15.5,6. *cf.* Lk. 21.1-4. *cf.* 1 Cor. 5.8.

said to them of old time, so as to make it a new moral revelation to those that hear Him. Moses' commandments become thus, as it were, His own, who is shown as One greater than Moses,—the Prophet of the new dispensation.

The "judgment," the "council" (or Sanhedrin), and the "hell (Gehenna) of fire" are three grades of penalty, as is evident; but in the Kingdom of heaven all under one authority. "Thou shalt not kill" stood as the sixth commandment of the law. God had long before declared that "whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." The *executive* law in Israel could go no further than this. It could not deal with the state of the heart but with the outward act only. But the law as expressed on the tables of stone applied not merely to the outward act, and their appending in the way they did the executive to the moral law, inferred that the two were equal in what they covered; as they were not. The state of the heart was thus left out of view in the estimate of accountability toward God, and the practical bearing of the law was nullified for the many.

But now, the kingdom of heaven was drawing nigh, in which another estimate of things would be made and acted on. Anger in the heart, where causeless, and the railing charges which men so lightly bring against one another, would be all crimes against an authority which had at its command not mere physical penalties, limited by the temporal life, but the awful Gehenna of fire—hell itself. It is not meant that under this divine government no mercy would be shown: that is not the point, nor what the words express. But such things would be within the range of jurisdiction, and man would be made to realize that there is a God who judgeth the hearts, and by whom actions are weighed.

But this cuts deep: it is meant to do so, and to rouse the conscience of the hearers to the impossibility of any mere human righteousness in the presence of God. That of scribes and Pharisees would never do for Him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and who cannot look upon sin. Their whole method was a false one. They valued apparently God's altar, loading it, Cain-like, with gifts defiled by the hands that offered them. The Lord warns them that they must be reconciled to their justly offended brethren, before presuming to bring such offerings: and while the application here is evidently to Israel, the principle as manifestly applies to every one of us to-day. A sinner coming as such to God is not at all in question: for he can only come as what he is, and has the explicit assurance that he will be received. The Pharisees said truly of the Lord, though they meant it as a reproach, "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them;" and the Lord answered, justifying His ways as the Physician of sin-sick souls. Abel, too, bringing his sacrifice to God, "obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying"—not of his works nor of his character, but—"of his gifts" (Heb. xi. 4). How impossible otherwise to have any assurance at all! for as to how much could we never set ourselves right with brethren! Blessed be God, it was for our sins that Jesus died; and our sins are the best of titles to a Saviour of sinners.

But while God would never turn away a sinner thus seeking Him, or delay even for a moment the reception of such an one, this is not to hinder any possible restitution to those we may have injured, but the very contrary. For now we come under the rule before us, and as saints are to lift up holy hands; but

then come and offer thy gift. Make friends with thine [q]adversary quickly whilst thou art with him on the [r]way; lest the adversary deliver thee to the [s]judge, and the judge deliver thee to the [t]officer; and thou be cast into [u]prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt in no wise come out thence till thou hast [v]paid the last farthing.

[3] (27-32): the third commandment.

[3] Ye have heard that it was said, [w]Thou shalt not commit adultery; but *I* say unto you, that every one that [x]looketh upon a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart. But [y]if thy right eye cause thee to stumble, pluck it out and cast it from thee: for it is profitable to thee that one of thy members should perish and not thy whole body be cast into hell. And if thy right hand cause thee to stumble, cut it off and cast it from thee: for it is profitable to thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body be cast into hell.

q Lk. 12. 58, 59.
r *cf.* Prov. 25. 8.
cf. Lam. 3. 4, 5.
s *cf.* Is. 33. 6, *cf.* Lk. 19. 42.
t *cf.* Deut. 32. 36.
u *cf.* Is. 10. 5, 6, 15.
v *cf.* Is. 42. 22 with Zech. 9. 11, 12.
w *cf.* Is. 40. 2 with Ruth 1. 21, 22.
x Ex. 20. 14. Deut. 5. 18.
y Job. 31. 1. *cf.* 2 Sam. 11. 2-5 with Jas. 1. 14, 15. ch. 15. 19.
y ch. 18. 8, 9. Mk. 9. 43-47. *cf.* De. 13. 6. *cf.* Col. 3. 5.

for a saint this is absolutely necessary for communion. And how many suffer sadly in their souls because of an unjudged condition in this respect! For such the Lord's words here have the gravest importance.

Those to whom they were addressed, however, were Jews, in no wise taking the place of sinners, nor yet truly saints, but legalists: going on with the law, in which they boasted, and not realizing that Moses, in whom they trusted, was necessarily their greatest adversary (John v. 45). Judgment must be the end, if they did not in the meanwhile reconcile themselves to him by the offering of which already the law had spoken, and which the glorious speaker Himself was to provide. This He does not, however, go on to in this place. He is convicting them of a need without the consciousness of which all revelation of God's way of grace would be impossible to be understood. The judgment reached, they would in no wise come out from it until they had paid the uttermost farthing.

Hopeless then was their confidence in the law. But the Lord had not done with it for the purpose of conviction, and of clearing it from the mistakes and perversions of the scribes. He goes over, therefore, from the sixth to the seventh commandment, to show once more that out of the heart the positive transgression comes, and that what was in the heart to do was in fact done as to the guilt of it. Opportunity might be lacking, which altered nothing: the sin was in the heart.

And He urges that if the right eye or hand cause men to stumble, it were better to cut them off and go on maimed through life, than to preserve these and go with a whole body into hell. Better sacrifice what might seem most necessary than give oneself up to the sure penalty of sin. Clearly no asceticism or self mutilation is intended by such an injunction; but men excuse on the plea of necessity what they find to be a constant provocative of sin. God's law admits no pretext of the kind.

[3] In connection with this commandment, the Lord takes up also the law of marriage, to refuse the laxity which even Moses had had to bear with, and still more the license of the rabbins. Moses on account of the hardness of their hearts had only been able to modify somewhat the existing custom of divorce. The "writing" which he had "commanded" was in the interests of social order, not of license, which the prevailing school of Hillel favored in the most shameless manner. The Lord, peremptorily and on His own authority, restricts the allowance of it to that one ground which plainly destroys the very idea of marriage; and declares the putting away of one's wife for any other cause, to be

It hath been said, moreover, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a [z]writing of divorcement. But *I* say unto you, that whosoever putteth away his wife, except on account of fornication, [a]maketh her to commit adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away committeth adultery.

4 (33-37): warning of creature-weakness.

[4]Again ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, [b]Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths. But *I* say unto you, [c]Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is the [d]throne of God; nor by the earth, for it is the [e]footstool of his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the [f]great King; neither shalt thou swear by thy [g]head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your word be [h]Yea, yea; nay, nay: but what exceedeth these cometh of evil.

z Deut. 24.1. Jer. 3. 1. *cf.* Gen. 2. 23, 24.
a ch. 19.3–9. Mk. 10. 2–12. Lk. 16. 18. *cf.* 1 Cor. 7. 10, 11. *cf.* 1 Cor. 8. 12.
b Ex. 20. 7. Lev. 19.12. Num. 30.2. Deut.23.23. c *cf.* ch. 26. 63. *cf.* 2 Cor. 1. 17. *cf.* 1 Thess. 2 5.
d Is. 66. 1. ch. 23. 22.
e Acts 7. 49.
f Ps. 48. 2.

cf. ch. 4. 5. *g cf.* Acts 18. 18; *cf.* Nu.6.18. *h* ch. 19. 6–22; Jas. 5. 12.

making her commit adultery by another marriage. Also he who marries one so divorced is committing adultery.

The Lord's words cannot surely be less binding upon Christians of the present day; Christianity cannot be content with a lower morality than He enforces here, not as a national or ecclesiastical regulation, but just *as* morality. What was adultery then to Him must ever be adultery; and no human law can alter this in the slightest degree. Let the Lord's people look to it, in a day when men are doing their own wills with continually more audacity.

4 He proceeds now to another matter, in which again what was tolerated under the law is now forbidden in the new morality which He is enforcing. "Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths," plainly speaks of vowing. There had been great abuse of it, as Israel's history makes manifest: men not hesitating to vow recklessly to God at the dictate of their pride and passion and self-will, to find themselves then entangled by what seemed now their *duty*. Careless profanity had come in at the heels of this, and God's name been profaned by light appeals to it on every occasion, modified by conscience or the lack of it, by every kind of circumlocution and indirect expression of what they dared not openly give utterance to.

The Lord sweeps into His prohibition all these evasions of the third commandment, putting them into the same category, with that which was once permitted. Man's utter weakness, so fully and simply demonstrated by his inability even to change the color of a hair, is made (at least in part) the basis of the prohibition. God might swear, for He could accomplish, and knew, too, all the consequences of that to which He pledged Himself. Beautifully we find Him doing it when seeking to assure the soul of His creature, so ready to doubt the perfect faithfulness even of his God. "Wherefore God, willing to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things"—His word being really as certain as His oath, but not so to man—"wherein it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us" (Heb. vi. 13–18).

We then on our part should be far from what is so suited to His strength, so ill-suited to His feeble creatures. The legal covenant had, however, in its essential features the character of an oath; and the last chapter of Leviticus contemplates typically their failure under it, in contrast with the One who did not fail (*see notes*). The law, therefore, until man was fully proved by it, could not forbid the vow, while it is anachronism, and worse, that it should be imported into Christianity, and that we should hear of covenant-vows, the baptis-

5 (38-42): recompense as from one with God.

6 (43-45): the moral victory over evil.

38 Ye have heard that it hath been said, [i]Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth: but *I* say unto you, that ye [j]resist not evil; but whosoever [k]smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also, and he that would get judgment against thee, and [l]take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him two. [m]Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, [n]Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy; but *I* say unto you, [o]Love your enemies, [[p]bless those that curse you, do good to those that hate you,]* and [q]pray for those that [insult you and]* persecute you; that ye

*The bracketed words are omitted by many.

cf. Ex. 23. 4, 5; Prov. 25. 21, 22; *cf.* Rom. 5. 8-10. *p* Lk. 6. 28; *cf.* 1 Cor. 4. 12; *cf.* 1 Pet. 3. 9. *q cf.* Lk. 23. 34; *cf.* Acts 7. 60.

i Ex. 21. 24. Lev. 20. 24. Deut. 19. 21.
j Prov. 20. 22. Rom. 12. 17, 19, 20.
k cf. Is. 50. 6 with ch. 26. 67. Lk. 22. 63-65.
l Lk. 6. 27-31. *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 7. *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 15.
m cf. Deut. 15. 7-11. Lk. 6. 30, 34. *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 18.
n Lev. 19. 18. *cf.* Deut. 23. 3-6.
o Lk. 6. 27, 35.

mal vow, etc., so contrary to the simplicity of Christ's institutions for us, and to the grace which we know to be alone our strength. The vow is wholly passed away, but to make room for Christ's strength to rest upon us, our very infirmities to be gloried in on this account (2 Cor. xii. 9, 10). God's oath is sworn to us, that His abundant grace shall be our sufficiency.

38 The Lord now takes up the necessary principle of law, to contrast it with that non-resistance of evil which He enjoins upon His disciples. The righteousness of the law of course remains righteousness, but it does not require of any that *they* should exact for personal wrongs. There is no supposition of the abrogation of law or of its penalties. The government of the world is not in question, but the path of disciples in it. Where they are bound by the law, they are bound, and have no privileges. They are bound, too, to sustain it in its general working, as ordained of God for good. Within these limits there is still abundant room for such practice as is here enjoined. We may still turn the left cheek to him that smites the right, or let the man that sues us have the cloak as well as the coat which he has fraudulently gained: for that is clearly within our rights. If the cause were that of another, we should have no right of this kind, nor to aid men generally in escape from justice or in slighting it. The Lord could never lay down a general rule that His people should allow lawlessness, or identify themselves with indifference to the rights of others. He speaks only of what is personal to oneself,—"smite *thee*," "sue *thee*," "compel *thee*:" and here the law itself would recognize one's liberty.

His disciples are not only to yield, but to show readiness, at least, to do more. They are not to be overcome of evil, but to overcome it with good. They are under a higher than any earthly government, which will take abundant care of them, and are freed from the need of advocating their own cause, or taking arms in their own defense. And they are partakers of such royal bounty that they are to be themselves bountiful. "Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away."

All this needs wisdom in following out, that it may answer its end:—that God may be honored in it, and men be blessed. It must not be allowed to degenerate into a moral laxity which may counterfeit it, but will then be its opposite. True love alone will find its way here, but will certainly find it,—clear-sighted, as all true love is. To this, therefore, the Lord now goes on.

43 Men understand, at least, that they ought to love their neighbor: but their qualifications narrow even their idea of such a duty, while they have *invented* a duty of *hate*, which no law-giver perhaps would dare inscribe upon his tables, but to which there is given nevertheless a too ready and practical obedience.

may be the sons of your Father who is in heaven: for he [r]maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and unjust.

7 (46-48): the perfection enjoined.

7 For if ye [s]love those who love you, what reward have ye? do not the tax-gatherers also the same? And if ye greet your brethren only, [t]what do ye beyond others? do not even the Gentiles the same? Be ye then [u]perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect.

[r] Acts 14.17. Ps. 65.9–13. *cf.* Lk. 12.16, 17.
[s] Lk. 6.32–34. *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 10.
[t] *cf.* ver. 20. *cf.* Lk. 10.25–37.
[u] *cf.* Gen. 17. 1. *cf.* Lk. 6.36. Eph. 5.1, 2; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1.15, 16.

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy" is what he would justify to his conscience, as he approves it in his heart. But the law has no other word than "neighbor" here, as it has no other duty than to love him; and the Lord specifically puts even our enemies into this class. "But I say unto you, Love your enemies;" not even do them good merely, though that might seem much, but "*love* them." Hard work, indeed, and impossible, save in the light of a greater love: for every day that the sun shines or the rain falls upon this evil world which has turned away from God, such love is demonstrated, leading men to repentance. *God* blesses those who curse Him, does good to those that hate Him,—sets us the sweetest and most wonderful example of infinite compassion, which He who was Speaker here has filled out to the full, by taking His place among those despitefully used and persecuted, and pouring out not only His heart, but His heart's blood for His persecutors. Thus that which might seem impossible even with God, is in God become Man made actual.

When the Lord spoke, this last word had not yet been uttered; but He was there who was to utter it, the Son of the Father, and opening to men the way into divine relationship, which He encourages His disciples to apprehend and realize in a way unknown till now. "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven" implies acceptance of this wondrous place in such a way as to let it be manifest in the character displayed. And how responsible are they to whom such grace is given! To live in it is to acquire power to fill it out.

7 They must not, then, with this high place accept the moral code that would suit even those typical sinners, the publicans or tax-gatherers—those instruments of Roman greed and oppression. For these even were capable of returning love for love. For those whose Father is in heaven, nothing can be permitted as the standard but perfection—His own moral perfection. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" is supreme, flawless perfection. And nothing else would do as a standard. The moment we admit evil into this, the evil has become part of the standard, and God is made to go with what He hates.

We must, however, distinguish between having perfection *before* us,—condemning ourselves for whatever is not that, and honestly pressing after it—and the self-flattery that can assert "we have attained it." It is in fact because perfection is before us that we cannot say so. Will any one indeed venture to assert that he is morally perfect *as God is?* The highest pretension must surely shrink a little from making such a claim. Yet here is the pattern: we are to be "imitators of God as dear children" (Eph. v. 1, *Gk*), aspiring after that which will always be beyond us, and which as being so, will always work in us self-abasement and humiliation, instead of self-complacency.

This, then, is to be the aim: and while it is owned that we fall short, let us remember that the very falling short implies an aim: if we do not *aim*, we cannot fall short. If we aim at something lower, the standard is given up: we are then doing our own will, and not God's.

Let us remember also that there are two kinds of perfection, which it is important to distinguish from one another: perfection in *degree*, something that cannot be exceeded, and perfection as wholeness, entireness. We say of a wheel,

3 (vl. 1-18): Before the Father.
1 (1-4): Righteousness manward.

3. [1] Take heed that ye do not your [v] righteousness before men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. When therefore thou doest [w] alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have [x] glory of men: verily I say unto you, they *have* their [y] reward. But when *thou* doest alms,

v cf. Deut. 24. 13. cf. Ps. 112. 9. cf. Rev. 19. 8.
w cf. Rom. 12. 8. ctr. Lk. 18. 12.
x vers. 5, 16. cf. Jno. 12. 43 with Jno. 5. 44.
y ctr. Phil. 3. 7, 8; cf. Mk. 12. 41-44.

it is perfect, because it has all its parts; while, as to its workmanship, it may be very imperfect. Now, the child of God may be feeble, and is; but as a "partaker of the divine nature" he should not be *maimed*. In God, love and light belong together: no one of these, apart from the other, could represent His nature. Love without righteousness could not be divine love. Righteousness without love, would not be divine righteousness. So love, too, just to those who love us, may be, as the Lord tells us, only a publican's love, but not God's: it is not a feeble likeness, but a distortion. Where the new nature is, there the moral character of God is found,—infantile, perhaps, as to development, and yet in it the Father's image shines. "Love," then, "your enemies," says the Lord, "that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven."

This closes the second part of the sermon on the mount with the seal of divine perfection. In it the greater Prophet than Moses speaks, with a brighter glory in His face than Moses' face could show.

3. The third section occupies the first eighteen verses of the sixth chapter. It has upon it plainly the seal of a third section, as bringing us into the sanctuary, and teaching us to realize the Father's presence and to act as before Him.

The first verse furnishes the principle, which is then illustrated, amplified and enforced, in three different applications. The text is: "Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father who is in heaven." The word is allowed to be "righteousness" here, as in the Revised Version, and not "alms," as in the common one. In the following verses "alms" is right.

This is then illustrated in three different applications, manward, Godward and selfward,—almsgiving, prayer and fasting. Each of these is, of course, but an illustration of the principle; but the illustration is in each case chosen in divine wisdom, and must therefore have special suitability.

[1] Almsgiving is chosen to express what is "righteousness" toward men. So it is distinctly called, and indeed was by the Rabbins also. Thus we can see how the Lord, in reproving a righteousness done before men, naturally takes this up as a most showy form of it, and which indeed was lauded in the most extravagant terms by the senseless formalists of the day.* He speaks of men sounding a trumpet before them, in the synagogues and in the streets, when they gave them: language which is perhaps only symbolical of the way in which they blazoned abroad their acts of charity, but for which also they might assign the most plausible reasons. In fact, among all people, at all times, almsgiving is a charity which readily enough has been accepted at its fullest value. While it can be practised with so little personal sacrifice, it yet ministers to need so various and so palpable,—it has so much the form of benevolence, that it seems like cynicism to question if the spirit be there; it is in itself so right, and puts one so plainly in the *company*, at least, of those who do right: all this makes it of priceless value, therefore, to those who seek the praise of men. They can in no way, perhaps, so readily attain their object: but then, alas, "they have their reward:" it is all they will possess for ever.

But, on the other side, almsgiving, as here classed by the Lord Himself as a

* Edersheim quotes a specimen as all-sufficient: "He that says, 'I give this *sela* as alms, that my sons may live, and that I may merit the world to come,' behold, this is the perfectly righteous."

let not thy [z]left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret; and thy [a]Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee.

2 (5-15): prayer.

[2]And when ye [b]pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, so that they may appear to men: verily I say unto you, they *have* their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy [c]chamber, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray unto thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee.

z *cf.* ch. 8. 4.
a *cf.* Lk. 14. 12-14. *cf.* Phil. 4. 17-19. *cf.* 2 Tim. 1. 16-18. *cf.* Heb. 6. 10.
b *cf.* Lk. 18. 10-12. ch. 23. 5-7, 14. Mk. 12. 38-40. Lk. 20. 46, 47.
c *cf.* ch. 14. 23. *cf.* Mk. 6. 46; *cf.* Lk. 5. 16.

form of righteousness, is a significant witness to us that mercy is not something supererogatory, but the ministry of love is itself a debt—a due. A man who withholds from another what he can give him for his need is not even righteous; and this removes also the thought of merit from the mercy shown. Only in a world of habitual *un*righteousness could the thought of the fulfilment of duty associate with it any thought of merit. "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin," says the apostle (Jas. iv. 17). And the Lord bids us on the other hand, "When ye shall have done all things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have *done*"—not we have *not* done—"that which was our duty to do" (Luke xvii. 10). And with the comparative righteousness which is all that is ours at best,—a righteousness that still leaves us sinners,—how impossible should be the claim of merit! But to love, with all that this implies, is mere commanded duty; yea, to love one's neighbor as oneself is the injunction of the law. While the Christian standard rises higher still in its law of self-sacrifice, and all the marvelous enforcement of this in the example of Him who has given us life through His death. For those who have known this, there is no possible margin of devotedness outside of that duty which His love has endeared.

Almsgiving shrinks in this way into a small thing indeed; while this diminution of it cannot make it less imperative. All this, then, that our Lord addresses to a Jewish audience, our Christianity only emphasizes for us in every particular. We are of all men—to all men—the witnesses of grace. Debtors to it, absolutely, ourselves, we are debtors to show it to others.

And as to the secrecy of almsgiving, alas, how have Christians forgotten such words in their displayed charities, justifying the display as letting their light shine! The contrast is too manifest here to need enlargement.

[2] The second illustration of the need of being before God is furnished by what is itself a duty Godward. Prayer is the expression of creature-need and dependence. It is utterly inconsistent with any thought of pride and self-satisfaction. Yet, alas, we can unite these incompatible things together: think of the utter and awful contradiction in terms, of praying to *God*, in order to be seen of *men!* "As the hypocrites do," says the Lord; and yet, is it not a hypocrisy which creeps often into public prayers, where those who pray cannot, after all, be so characterised? Are not those who lead the prayers of others especially liable to act, in some measure, in this way? the consciousness of being before others influencing them often in the matter and style of their petitions! How much shorter, how much simpler, how different in various ways, might many of our prayers be, if we were alone before God, instead of in the prayer-meeting!

What records would not our chambers—our secret hours—afford, of our true state in respect of conscious dependence on and seeking after God, if we were perfectly faithful to ourselves in these respects! In secret prayer it is that our souls above all lay hold of God, and faith roots itself in His omnipotence. That prayer with us is to be *characteristically* in secret is here quite unmistakable.

But when ye pray, use not [d] vain repetitions, as the nations do; for they think that they will be heard because of their much speaking. Be not ye, therefore, like unto them: for your Father [e] knoweth of what things ye have need before ye ask him.

[d] *cf.* 1 Ki. 18. 26-39. *cf.* ch. 26. 39-44. *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 8, 9. [e] *cf.* Rom. 8. 26, 27. *cf.* Is. 65. 24; *cf.* ver. 32.

And this will of itself very much exclude the vain repetitions against which our Lord warns His hearers, and which Christianity has by no means banished from our midst. If there be little need to explain or apply, the warning still needs serious attention on the part of Christians.

Our Lord follows this with that divine model for prayer, which for fullness combined with perfect directness and simplicity, so manifestly fulfils the conditions indicated. More than this, the order and proportion of the petitions are (with all else) perfect, and claim our earnest attention. They betoken a condition of heart which, where it is found, must ensure answer,—the state of one over whom God's will is supreme; for whom He is first and last, beginning and end. To realize such a condition would make us realize the meaning of those words of the Lord, "Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done to you." Clearness of apprehension would go with it, and confidence of success: "the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much" (Jas. v. 16).

A perfect *model* of prayer this is and must be: whether designed for a form, and especially whether intended for Christians, is another matter. The differences in Luke (xi. 2–4), now recognized in the Revised Version, would of course be the simplest argument against the first. Apart from this, the gift of the Spirit to Christians, for those who realize what is the characteristic feature of the present dispensation (John xvi. 7; Rom. viii. 26, 27), and who is distinctly named as the Intercessor within us according to God, would still more hinder such from interpreting it as a form to be used by Christians now. That it is not in the Lord's Name is evident upon the face of it, and confirmed (if it need confirmation) by His words to His disciples afterward: "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My Name" (John xvi. 24); and this is a difference which cannot be remedied by supplying an omission where there is none, and making that really imperfect which is perfect. This very perfection, if we consider the state of the disciples at the time it was given them, would suggest once more its *not* being intended for Christians in the Christian state.

One is more concerned, however, to point out the actual perfection of the prayer, than to dwell upon such distinctions,—even though they have to do with differences vital to Christianity; but here is not the place for their examination. Let us consider now briefly the petitions in it, and what they imply.

The whole prayer is an address to God as Father: "Our Father who art in heaven." What underlies this title given to God is in fact a relationship never before made known in its true character, between Him and the true disciples of this blessed Teacher. "I have declared unto them Thy Name," He says elsewhere, "and will declare it, that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (John xvii. 26). This name of "Father" is something wholly different from those Old Testament titles, which have declared as the "Almighty" His power, or as "the Most High" His supremacy, or as "Jehovah" His enduring immutability. "Father" declares what His heart is toward us, while it gives us title to enjoy the love implied. The character of the tie is such as gives claim and confidence,—a claim He cannot deny. How great an encouragement to the prayer of faith!

No doubt, there had been long before anticipations of what is here conveyed. At the very birth of the nation God had announced, "Israel is my son, even my first-born" (Ex. iv. 22). And this, which had been repeated in the law, and made the foundation of preceptive argument—"Ye are the children of Jehovah your God" (Deut. xiv. 1),—might seem in itself to justify Israelites such as were these disciples who had gathered round the Lord, in taking the place He

After this [f]manner, therefore, pray ye, [g]Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy [h]Name. Thy [i]kingdom come; thy [j]will be done, as in heaven [so] also upon [k]earth. Give us this day our daily * [l]bread; and

[f] Lk.11.1-4. *ctr.* Jno.16. 24. *cf.* Jude 20. *cf.* Eph. 6. 18.
[g] *cf.* ch. 5.9. 16. *ctr.* Rom.8. 15.
[h] *cf.* Mal. 1. 11; *ctr.* Rom. 2. 24.
[i] *cf.* Ps. 22. 28; *cf.* Obad. 21; *cf.* Dan. 2. 44; *cf.* Dan. 7. 17; *cf.* Zech. 14. 9.
[j] Ps. 115. 3; Dan. 4. 35.
[k] *cf.* Jer. 31. 34; *cf.* Is. 2. 2-5.
[l] *cf.* Is. 33; 14-16; *cf.* Ps. 37. 3, 25; *cf.* 1 Ki. 17. 1-16.

* Or "needed."

gives them here. But in fact this, in the national ruin that had intervened, had passed away. Israel was now Lo-ammi, "not my people," though with a promise for the future, of a restoration not yet fulfilled, whereby they should be called "the sons of the living God" (Hos. i. 9, 10). They could not comfort themselves with assurances thus forbidden to them, nor with a legal covenant to which God's faithfulness on His part could but make them partakers of a curse, rather than a blessing.

God is, however, the God of grace and of resurrection. He does not, indeed, patch an old garment with new cloth. He does not even merely restore what has failed and gone. But He can replace it with that which is better; and so much better, that the old and removed blessing shall be but the shadow of that which replaces it. Both together thus witness, if on the one hand to the failure of man, on the other to the changeless goodness and grace in God.

The old relationship to the Unchangeable had after all changed. The "children of Jehovah" were now as a nation outcast from Him. That tie, stable as it might look, had not the elements of endurance in it. As we look back upon it from the standpoint of the new revelation, it is simple to understand that Israel's sonship was not the result of new birth, as now it is for those in Christian relation. An Israelite was not necessarily, because that, a true believer in that God who had drawn nigh to him. A Jew was, as the apostle says (Gal. ii. 15), a "Jew by *nature*," but that nature was not a *new* nature. The child of law, as he afterwards shows by the type of Hagar and Ishmael (iv. 22–31), was but "born after the flesh," and showed the nature of the "wild man," as Ishmael did (Gen. xvi. 12). Thus there was no real nearness to God or fellowship with Him necessarily implied in sonship of this kind. Adoption there was in it, but not regeneration. Consequently it never secured from eternal judgment, nor even from day to day, except as obedience lasted or God's pity spared.

But the Father of whom Christ now spoke to His own, was not the Father of the nation in such a manner. Only the pure in heart should see Him; only the peacemakers be called His children. Even before this, though we do not find it in this Gospel, He had taught Nicodemus the absolute necessity of new birth, and that, while that which was born of the flesh was only "flesh," that which was born of the Spirit—a divine Person—was "spirit,"—divine in nature (John iii. 6). Here, it is plain, is the foundation of relationship to God, a real new yet divine life communicated, which is therefore "eternal life." For eternal life is not that simply which, when it begins, abides and has no ending. It is that which, though *in us* it begins, *in itself* never did. Receiving this, we are not merely *adopted* sons; we are that, truly; but none the less are we *born* into the family of God, and partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. i. 4), children of God indeed.

How far all this had been entered into by the disciples as yet, is another question. That it was what was in the Lord's mind we know, and what He was leading them into,—what therefore underlies the teaching of the prayer. This Father in heaven, known for what He is, becomes thus rooted in the affections, supreme in the heart that has learned the cry of children. Of this, at least, the prayer is the expression. The first petition is one that shows how jealous for this Name revealed to it is the soul that has truly entered into the revelation: "Father, hallowed be Thy Name." May no thought come in to profane this wondrous intimacy now existing; may grace not be abused to license; may all

[m] forgive us our debts, [n] as we also have forgiven our debtors; and [o] lead us not into temptation, but [p] deliver us from evil.* For [q] if ye forgive men their offences,

* Or from the evil one.

[m] *cf.* Jer. 33. 8. *cf.* Dan. 9. 19. *cfr.* Col. 2. 13, 14. [n] Mark 11. 25, 26.

cf. Col. 3. 13. [o] ch. 26. 41; *cf.* Luke 21. 34-36; *cf.* Rev. 3. 10. [p] *cf.* Jer. 30. 7; *cf.* Dan. 12. 1; *cf.* ch. 24. 15-22. [q] Lk. 17. 3, 4; ver. 12; *cf.* Eph. 4. 32.

thy people worship with unshod feet in this place of nearness. Such surely will be the first cry of the heart that has felt—and in proportion as it has felt—the ecstatic joy of God so made known to us.

But the world knows not this joy, and the abounding evil in it is but the shadow upon hearts and lives that have turned away from the light of God. Hence the next cry necessarily is, "Thy Kingdom come! Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven!"

This, if true prayer, must be the outcome of a heart that is itself obedient. And what an absorbing desire this should be to us! The misery and moral ruin and dishonor to God on every side may well force from us such a prayer as this. Where is there another like it for the magnitude of that which is embodied in it? God, as it were, everywhere set in His place, every thing finding its relation to Him as the planets to their central sun; here is universal blessedness beyond which we can conceive no greater: all peace, happiness, goodness, are implied in it. And this is the practical power and glory of faith that it sets us where, from a full heart, such a prayer can well; that it enthrones God of its own free choice upon that absolute throne which alone His throne can be; that it realizes His will to be only the expression of His glorious nature,—in which every divine attribute blends and harmonizes.

For this Kingdom of the Father we must look beyond all dispensations to the sabbath of God's own rest. To confound it with the millennium would be an entire mistake, and necessarily lower its character terribly. The millennium, with all its blessedness, is but a step toward this glorious consummation. It is earth's "regeneration" (Matt. xix. 28); but *after* which, as in our own case, (not in it,) must come the eradication of evil and the change to eternal conditions. The millennium ends in an outbreak of evil, the most defiant that the world has ever seen (Rev. xx. 7-10). The judgment that follows reaches to the very frame-work of material things, and the earth and *its* heavens—the "firmament" of the second day (Gen. i.)—pass away in fire, to make way for that new heaven and earth in which righteousness shall dwell. Then, with all evil subdued and all things made anew, the Son of God, having brought about the very condition for which He teaches His disciples here to pray, will give up His separate human Kingdom to the Father (1 Cor. xv. 24-28) and the Kingdom of the Father here contemplated will at last have come.

Important it is not to confound the temporary with the eternal, the divine outcome with any intermediate step. Such confusion is no less mischievous for the heart than for the mind; for only where God rests should our hearts find rest. But for us it is true that the Kingdom of the Father will have come even before the millennium, when, caught up at the coming of the Lord to be ever with Him, the Father's house receives us into its "many mansions." And thus it is that in the parables of the Kingdom, (in the Gospel we are now considering,) when the present form of it is closed by the appearing of the King, it is said, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, *in the Kingdom of their Father*" (ch. xiii. 43). To this even then we shall have come.

With this petition for the coming of the Father's Kingdom, the first half of the prayer ends: the petitions following are of a different character. But what happiness would it not be for us, if the glory of God were thus, and as taught of the Spirit, the first desire of the heart, the first thing to utter itself, therefore, in our prayers!

But the remainder of the petitions are, as just said, personal; and here all is

your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye do not forgive men their offences, [r] neither will your Father forgive your offences.

[r] *cf.* ch. 18. 21-35. *cf.* Jas. 2. 13.

characterized by the most perfect moderation. A sense of dependence, of failure, and of frailty, manifests itself conspicuously in them; while the needs felt are realized as those of others of the same family of faith, who are associated, therefore, in all the petitions. The prayer is, indeed, a family prayer throughout; the expression of a common interest from which no one withdraws himself to walk alone. How well we should be cared for, indeed, if all were thus remembered by all, and the family tie united all the family.

It is not straining the request for daily bread, to make it comprehend also a spiritual application. With the Lord it would be simply impossible, while remembering the need of the body, to forget the immensely greater need of the soul. In both ways also the supply must be continual. The manna must be fresh every morning, and freshly gathered as the morning comes: hoarded, it breeds worms and stinks. There is no release from a dependence, which makes us sensible only of the love which constantly ministers, and keeps us near to the gracious Hand of Omnipotence. It is only treating us as children who are at home with the Father, not to provide for independence or absence from Him. We are not to renew the prodigal's experience, after being brought back from the far-off country; and it is not stint but love that deals thus with us.

The petition following needs more care to apprehend it, and Christians have lost much here by not realizing the fuller grace that has now come in for us, so far beyond what these disciples, though so near the Lord, could know. The great sacrifice was not yet offered, and the precious fruits of it could not yet be understood. The place of acceptance in the Beloved—identification with Him who has represented us before God in His atoning death, and now represents us in unending life—was yet among the things which could not be communicated. But with this, as quickened together with Him, is necessarily joined the forgiveness of *all* trespasses (Col. ii. 13). "By one offering He hath perfected for ever those that are sanctified" (Heb. x. 14).

Now it is certainly true that with this the prayer before us is in no wise in contradiction. The Lord could not mean to teach His disciples here that sins were only remitted from time to time, in answer to prayer about them. Yet those ignorant of the settled acceptance which the gospel teaches have used it, and continually use it, in this very way. On the other hand some would press, on account of such implication, the impossibility of the intelligent use, by the Christian, of such a petition. Both views are wrong, the prayer itself being perfectly in keeping—how could it be otherwise?—with the fullest revelation of divine grace. The simple fact that it is to the *Father* removes every difficulty. It is thus a *Father's* forgiveness that is besought by those who distinctly take the place of relationship. As between God and His creatures, the precious blood of Christ perfects forever those who, in faith, have taken shelter under it; but that only *brings* such under a *Father's* government who, "without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work" (1 Pet. i. 17), and who cannot but take notice of the conduct of His children, just because they are that, and of His love to them as that. Loss of communion, with chastening for restoration, are consequences of these trespasses; and the conditions implied in the petition itself, and emphasized by the Lord just afterward, show the holy character of this government. We must forgive, if we are to be forgiven. With an unforgiving spirit toward others we cannot enjoy communion with Him whose nature is love, and who must have His image reproduced in us.

This seen, there is no contradiction to the grace of Christianity. And yet it is true that in it we have nowhere any exhortation to prayer to the Father for what is here besought. It is Christ Himself rather who is declared to be our "Advocate with the Father" (1 John. ii. 1); and the same blessed Person offers Himself for the cleansing of our feet from the defilements of the way, that we

s (16–18): fasting.

[3] And when ye [s]fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces so that they may [t]appear unto men to fast; verily I say unto you, they *have* their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, [u]anoint thy head and wash thy face, so that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father who is in secret; and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee.

s *cf.* Is. 58. 3-7. Lk. 18. 12.
t vers. 1,2,5. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 12.
u *cf.* I Sam. 16. 7. *cf.* Dan. 1. 12–16. *cf.* Prov. 14. 10. *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 10.

may have part with Him (John xiii. 8). But all this awaited expression necessarily till the crowning work was done; and as to the last the Lord's own words are: "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know afterwards" (ver. 7). That *we* are not exhorted to prayer of this kind may well be due to the danger of such confusion of different things as we know to have been made here; while it could not be urged that such prayer intelligently used is in any wise inconsistent with Christian position.

Again, the sense of frailty comes out in the closing petition not to be led into temptation, but delivered from the evil. It is not in opposition to this that James bids us "count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations" (Jas. i. 2). The first is the expression of that self-distrust which is the fruit of self-knowledge. Who that knows himself but must realize this? and fear, therefore, what the hour of trial may manifest as to his weakness? But then this is just the spirit in which, if it be the will of God to bring him into circumstances of this kind, he will cleave to the only Source of strength and find it. *In* the trial he needs the consoling assurance of God's hand over it and working through it; and if he has come into it, not in self-confidence but in the path with Him, every element of it will work for good to him: it may well be a time of truest joy. Patience will be that which will work experience, and experience hope; and, patience having its perfect work, he will be "perfect and entire, needing nothing."

It would seem to be rightly here "deliver us from the evil," rather than "from the evil *one*," though either rendering is possible; but the larger view includes the narrower, and is therefore more suitable. The evil one is a most real and powerful enemy; but the evil in ourselves is still more to be dreaded, as only through this can he gain advantage over us. In this most concise prayer, the fullest meaning is the best.

It is characteristic of the law that, with all its forms, no form of prayer was ever prescribed to the people. When the disciples ask for one, as we are told they did (Luke xi. 1), they refer to John the Baptist as having taught his disciples, and not to Moses. The people of God, as conscious of their need, had always expressed it, and of course the Old Testament is full of examples of this: but all the more striking is it that the law did not prescribe anything of the kind. It was God's schoolmaster to teach man his weakness, but then it did this by claiming from him strength.

[3] In fasting the Lord touches that inward mortification which expresses the realization of what man is in the sight of God: in one's own sight, therefore, in proportion as we have attained to oneness of mind with Him. In the mount with God neither Moses nor Elijah ate or drank. "If then ye be risen with Christ," says the apostle,—"mortify your members which are upon the earth" (Col. iii. 1, 5). Fasting is treating them as if they did not exist,—not ministering to self: an unnatural condition which implies fallen nature; you can do nothing with it, but leave it out. The apostle speaks of this as the true characteristic of the children of God (Rom. viii. 13, 14): "if ye through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live; for as many as are led of the Spirit of God *they* are sons of God." It is as self-realization before God, that fasting comes here in its numerical place.

In fact, in Israel, with the Pharisaic externalism which characterized the

SECTION 4. (vi. 19–34.)

The way amid the temptation of the world.

1 (19–23): single-eyed integrity.

[1] Lay not up for yourselves [v] treasures upon the earth, where [w] moth and rust doth consume, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in [x] heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where thy treasure is there will thy [y] heart

Lk. 16. 9; 1 Tim. 6. 18, 19. *y cf.* Col. 3. 1, 2; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 4; *cf.* Heb. 10. 34.

v 1 Tim. 6. 6-11. Prov. 23. 4. *w* Prov. 23. 5. 1 Tim. 6. 17. *cf.* Job 1. 8-19. *cf.* Luke 12. 15-21. Jas. 5. 1-5. *x* ch. 19. 21. Lk. 12. 33.

nation, fasting was abused to its very opposite. It was made to accredit self, instead of discrediting it. It brought it into prominence, instead of setting it aside. And it has always been a feature, not merely in asceticism (which the Lord is plainly not rebuking here), but in formalism also. He extinguishes this by making it a thing to be before the Father and not before men: before the eyes of Him who sees in secret. As to the practice of it, He does not really decide anything; and as to its place in Christianity, we must inquire about that elsewhere. That the true life is one that is to be lived before God is the main point upon which He is here insisting.

4. We pass now out of the sanctuary into the world, but carrying with us the sanctuary still, as Israel did in their journey through the wilderness. The way is thus not merely marked out morally for us, but we are empowered also for it; and we need this, for, wilderness as it is, the trials of the way are real ones, and if they are not in the way of allurement, the allurements of Egypt are felt *through them*, as we see with Israel. "The leeks, and the onions and the garlic" —earthy enough and never much above the earth,—displace (for they only compete with by displacing) the "bread from heaven;" and it is to Egypt that the heart turns back.

[1] Here we have the remedy for it all: a word which, if it could be spoken to a Jewish remnant in view of millennial blessing, is so fully and transparently our own as Christians that the natural thing is to take it as if it had no other application. Yet, for those who are to inherit the earth, in the day to which all this looks forward, there will be abundant need to lay up their treasures in heaven, in the care of Him who is coming to give reward to His saints, and while the earth is yet vibrating with shocks of upheaval, such as the Old and New Testaments combine to assure us will be, and which God will use also to make the frightened hind to calve (Ps. xxix. 9, *see notes*)—the nation of Israel thus to be born spiritually, as in one day (Isa. lxvi. 8).

From this, however, without losing sight of it, we may turn to consider our Lord's words in the way most profitable to ourselves; and here, as I have said, all is transparent. Heaven is where we belong; the earth is simply what we are traveling through. Our need and our privilege are one—to have our treasures there where nothing decays or corrupts, and where nothing can deprive us of them. Not only shall we then not lose the treasures, but the heart too will rest in undisturbed security, outside all alarms, and our feet will not be endangered by a loss of balance.

Let us note well that the Lord says, "where your treasure is, there your heart *will* be." He does not say, "*ought* to be," but "*will*." We are not allowed to escape with the easy assurance that what we are diligently accumulating our hearts are not engaged with. Why, then, accumulate it? We should say of a man who was heaping up sticks and straws and rubbish, that he was a maniac. But to him, nevertheless, the worthless pile is valuable; and that you can argue most surely from the fact of the accumulation. Who would not change worthless paper into good security? and this we are privileged to do; while treasure in heaven will keep the heart there, and draw the feet on to where the heart is.

And this alone gives a single eye: there is no confusion, no distraction of vis-

be also. The [z]lamp of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be [a]single, thy whole body shall be full of light; but if thine eye be [b]evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If, then, the light that is in thee be darkness, how [c]great the darkness!

2 (24): the contradiction of divided service.

[2] No one can serve [d]two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other: ye cannot serve God and [e]mammon.

3 (25, 26): the heart's sanctuary-refuge.

[3] Therefore I say unto you, Be not [f]careful for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink; neither for your body, what ye shall put on: is not the life [g]more than food, and the body than clothing? Consider the [h]birds of heaven that they sow not, nor reap, nor gather into barns, and your heavenly Father feedeth them: are *ye* not much [i]better than they?

4 (27–30): human impotence.

[4] And which of you by being careful can [j]add one cubit to his growth? and why are ye careful about clothing? Learn well as to the [k]lilies of the field, how they grow:

z Lk. 11.34-36.
a *cf.* Prov. 4. 25. *cf.* Heb. 2. 9. *cf.* 2 Cor. 3. 18. *cf.* Jno. 7. 17. *ctr.* 2 Pet. 1. 9.
b *cf.* ch. 5. 28. *cf.* ch. 20. 15. *cf.* Mark 7. 21, 22. *cf.* Prov. 23. 6, 7.
c *cf.* Mark 4. 11, 12. *cf.* Jno. 1. 5. *cf.* Jno. 8. 12. *cf.* Jno. 12. 35, 36, 40.
d Lk. 16. 13. *cf.* 1 Kl. 18. 21. *cf.* 2 Kl. 17. 41. *cf.* Rev. 3. 15, 16.
e Gal. 1. 10. Jas. 4. 4.

f Luke 12. 22-31; ver. 31; Heb. 13. 5, 6; *cf.* Phil. 4. 6, 7; *ctr.* Phil. 3. 18, 19; *ctr.* Lk. 10. 40-42. *g* *cf.* ch. 4. 4; *cf.* Mk. 8. 36; *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 32. *h* Job 38. 41; Ps. 104. 12, 17, 27; Ps. 147. 9. *i* ch. 10. 29-31; *cf.* ch. 12. 12. *j* *cf.* ch. 5. 36. *k* *cf.* Song 2. 1, 2, 12.

ion, no unsteadiness therefore, or uncertainty. The eye is the lamp of the body; not the light, but what holds and fixes the light. The light comes from elsewhere: the organ of perception does not create the light, but receives it. The *light* for us is in the Word alone: it is this that judges and makes plain; but there must be spiritual reception and, for this, *capacity* of reception, which the Lord indicates here, as it is stated by the apostle (Eph. i 18, R. V.) to be in the heart and its condition. With the heart set on things above, the eye is single and clear: God is before it, and in His light we see light. Then the whole body becomes full of light:* the hands and feet have plenty of it for work and walk. On the contrary, if the eye be evil, the very light may blind one; and when the word of God becomes this, how great may the resulting darkness become.

[2] Separate interests distract thus and divide the heart. God and mammon—that is, the treasures of earth personified and viewed as an idol,—each claim the man in ways entirely incompatible with one another. Such service, if attempted, can only be a form on one side. One master will be despised, if not hated. "He who will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God;" he who cleaves to God will despise all the world can offer. Yet how many are seeking to unite things that cannot be united! the result being only a halting inconsistency of life in which the Christian side is necessarily that which suffers eclipse.

[3] But are there not, in going through the world, necessities which demand one's attention, from which one cannot escape, and which tend to such distraction as this, even when the heart would gladly be free? Yes, surely; but there is a remedy also, which is an effectual one,—a sanctuary-refuge which faith finds ever open: it is the apprehension of a Father's care, of which His creatures preach incessantly. The birds of heaven are fed, and we are of more value: the life, indeed, of too great value to make it a question of the food by which it is sustained; or the body, of what it may be clothed with.

[4] The human impotence that we feel has its own instruction. All one's anxiety cannot add a cubit to the stature; and how much there is in this way for which we are absolutely dependent on the will of another! why not, then, leave all things to Him to whom we have to leave so much, and who clothes the

* Not "luminous," as it has been strangely taken: for this is never the effect of the eye receiving light.

they toil not, nor do they spin; yet I say unto you, that even [l]Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. And if God so clothe the [m]grass of the field which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, will he not much more [clothe] you, O ye of [n]little faith?

5 (31-33): the good of being with God.

[5]Be not [o]careful, therefore, saying, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or what shall we put on? for all these things the [p]nations seek; for your heavenly Father [q]knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye [r]first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

6 (34): the limit.

[6]Be not careful then as to the [s]morrow; for the morrow will be careful for itself: sufficient for the day is its own evil.

l *cf.* 2 Chr. 9. 1-28.
m *cf.* Ps. 103. 15, 16. *cf.* Is. 40. 6-8.
n ch. 8. 26.
o ver. 25.
p *cf.* ch. 5. 46, 47.
cf. 1 Cor. 3. 3. *cf.* Eph. 4. 17, 18. *cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 5. *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 3.
q ver. 8.
r *cf.* 1 Ki. 3. 10-13. Mk. 10. 28-30. Lk. 12. 30, 31.
s Jas. 4. 13, 14.
cf. Acts 20. 22-24; *cf.* Acts 12. 6.

perishing lilies of the field with a glory greater than Solomon's? The weakness of a man's faith is the only really sorrowful weakness, after all.

5 And here, the Lord appeals to us, whether those who know God are to find His presence with them count for anything or not. The Gentiles, away from God, seek after these things as His people do; but we have a Father in heaven who knows our need. We have but to set the heart on His things, and let Him take the burden of ours. Seeking first His Kingdom and righteousness, all these things shall be added to us.

6 Finally, He gives us a limit for care, which by itself would very much exclude it. How much of the burden that we carry belongs really to the morrow,—a burden not yet legitimately ours: for who can really tell what shall be on the morrow? Each day will have its own sufficient evil—not too much, for a careful hand has apportioned it: but by borrowing trouble not yet come, we not only necessarily make the burden of the day too heavy, but we cannot reckon upon divine grace for that which is not come, and bear it thus so far without assistance. Nay, we have lost Him from our thoughts in all this calculation of the unknown future which is in His hands. How often has love in the most undreamed of way, disappointed all our fears!

In all this it is not taking *thought* for the morrow that is forbidden us, but taking care, (in the full sense of *care*). The word used has been claimed in these different senses by different interpreters; but it certainly is derived from one * which suggests "division," and so "distraction" of heart; and this is completely in accordance with the warning about singleness of eye and divided service. Moreover, James, where he is speaking explicitly of the boasting of those who say, "To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain," corrects such a speech in this manner, that "ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that" (ch. iv. 13, 15). He blames only the confident assurance of the speech, and not all "taking thought for the morrow." This, in fact, should be evident: the whole current of our lives would be changed by the contrary supposition, which those who make it have immediately and seriously to modify.

5. [1]The fifth section gives us lessons of divine government, the first of which is to remember that we are subjects under it, and not rulers,—so that we must keep off the judgment-seat. To put ourselves there is already a sign that personal feelings or interests are moving us; for if it were otherwise—if God were aright before us—should we forget that He Himself was Lord in His own Kingdom? If personal interests are moving us, then we are in the worst possible

* *Μεριμνάω* from *μερίζω*.

SECTION 5. (vii. 1-14.)
Lessons of divine government.

1 (1-5): accordant dealing.

1 Judge not, that ye [t]be not judged: for with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you. But why lookest thou at the [u]mote in thy brother's eye, and observest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me cast out the mote out of thine eye; and behold, the beam is in thine [own] eye! Thou hypocrite, cast out [v]first the beam out of thine eye, and then thou shalt see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

t Lk. 6. 37. Rom. 14. 4, 10, 13. 1 Cor. 4. 3-5. cf. 1 Cor. 5. 12. cf. 1 Cor. 14. 29.
u Lk. 6. 41, 42. cf. Rom. 2. 1, 21. cf. Gal. 6. 1. cf. 1 Cor. 10. 12.
v cf. ch. 5. 23, 24. cf. Jno. 8. 7. cf. 2 Chr. 28. 10.

condition to be judges, as is evident; for we are then judges in our own case: a thing that no law would permit, no sane mind tolerate.

But then we must understand what it is, this judgment which the Lord forbids. And here two things should be clear to us: first, that we are to judge of things,—of the evil and the good in either principles or acts presented to us. Here we have what touches ourselves: it is necessary that we should have our "senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. v. 14). It is true that we are to be "wise concerning that which is good and simple concerning evil" (Rom. xvi. 19); and this word "simple" (literally, pure, unmixed"*) is a warning as to the defiling nature of evil, which if realized will forbid unnecessary occupation with it, as the contrast with "wise" would lead us to understand. Yet we must know it so far as to know it to *be* evil, or we have no safeguard against it. Judgment, therefore, as to whatever lies in our path, is absolutely necessary for us; and the character of the world and the state of Christians both warn us to be watchful.

We are obliged then to judge of things as we meet them,—are responsible to the Lord, and in our own behalf, to do so; but more, we are obliged, and by the same authority, to judge persons also: "by their fruits ye shall know them,"—twice repeated here (vers. 16, 20)—is our direct warrant to do so: "do not ye judge them that are within?" asks the apostle (1 Cor. v. 12); we do and we must do it: it is, of course, not this, therefore, that the Lord is forbidding here.

The example that is given shows what is intended: to judge of things and of persons in the way of duty is to be obedient and to serve; to judge of what is not before us for judgment—to volunteer in it, or to pronounce as to motives and springs of action, to assume knowledge of that which is not open to us,—this is to take authority, not be subject to it, and indeed to assume what only belongs to the Judge of all, and is an intrusion, therefore, on His office.

This may be mere censoriousness; or passion, prejudice, self-interest may be at work with us: in any case, there is a beam in the eye, which effectually prevents a true and righteous judgment. The assumption is shown in the utterance, whether the mote in a brother's eye exists or not; and such a spirit awakes an adverse spirit: the harshness is paid back in harshness; the measure we mete to others is measured to ourselves. The language used shows that, while this is permitted in divine government, it is not the sentence of the divine Judge. In the parallel passage in Luke (vi. 38) this is plainly stated, "good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over shall men† give into your bosom."

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*Ἀκέραιοι, which in Matt. x. 16 and Phil. ii. 15 is translated "harmless," and which Bengel gives as "sine cornu" (Gk. from ἀ (*priv.*) and κεραία,) "hornless." The general derivation, however, and which commends itself here, is from ἀ and κεράννυμι, to "mix," "unmixed."

† The word "men" is not actually expressed: it is "shall *they* give."

2 (6): division between holy and unclean.
3 (7–11): realized fulfilments.

[2] Give not that which is [w] holy unto dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn round and [x] rend you.

[3] Ask, and it shall be [y] given you; [z] seek, and ye shall find; [a] knock, and it shall be opened to you. For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or [b] what man is there of you who, if his son ask bread, will give him a [c] stone? or if he ask for a fish, will give him a [d] serpent? If ye then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how [e] much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to those that ask him?

w cf. Prov. 23. 9. *cf.* Acts 13. 45, 46. *cf.* Phil. 3. 2. *cf.* Acts 8. 20–23.
x cf. Heb. 6. 7, 8. *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 15, 16. *cf.* Acts 14. 1–5.
y Lk. 11. 9–13. ch. 21. 22. Lk. 18. 1, etc. Jno. 15. 7. *cf.* Jas. 4. 3 with Jas. 1. 5–8.

z Prov. 2. 4, 5; Prov. 8. 17; *cfr.* Is. 55. 6 with Prov. 1. 28. *a cf.* John 1. 38, 39; *cfr.* Lk. 13. 25. *b cf.* Is. 49. 15; *cf.* Heb. 12. 9, 10. *c cf.* ch. 4. 3, 4. *d cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 17. *e* Ps. 84. 11; Jas. 1. 17; *cf.* Luke 13. 15, 16.

You reap what you sow, and taste the quality of what you have been sowing; and this may be even mercy in result; for nothing is more likely to awaken in us the sense of what it is we have been doing, and of the omniscient Eye, that has been, unregarded, watching all. Thus God's mercy and His holiness are found together.

[2] The revolt from harsh judgment is apt to carry us into the opposite extreme of laxity, against which the Lord now proceeds to guard us. Dogs and swine are the very images which Peter uses in his epistle to represent those who manifest their still unrenewed nature after apparent conversion: the "dog" by "turning to his own vomit again, the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (2 Pet. ii. 22). Was he not thinking of the words of his Master here?

Christendom has in fact done shamelessly what the Lord here forbids, and has proved the truth of His words in consequence. Baptism and the Lord's Supper, perverted from their original meaning and application, have been used above all to give the grossest evils tolerance in the house of God, and to make Babylon the great "a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." They have thus been trampled under foot by the profane, and Christianity been rent and mangled fearfully, as all the centuries bear witness. The "judgment of charity" is continually invoked to take darkness to be light, and credit the most barren profession with what it dares not even claim for itself. But the false judgment of laxity has here its woe upon it, as much as the false judgment of censoriousness: upon that which puts good for evil, and that which puts evil for good alike. If grace is the spring of holiness, holiness is, by this very fact, the test of grace.

[3] And now the heart of God is declared as the ready and bounteous Giver, whose fullness cannot be exhausted, whose word to His people ever is, "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it." There is no limit except the limit that little faith may put, or the guard on God's side (which is not limit) that the gift be good. And the Lord double clasps His exhortations with assurances that "*every one* that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." What a door is, in fact, opened for us here, and what possibility of blessing is here unfolded! How rich may we all be, if we only will be! and what free leave we have to covet the best things! And yet the apostle's words could find application in the fresh early days in which they were written: "Ye have not, because ye ask not; ye ask and have not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts!" (Jas. iv. 2, 3). Think of such an answer to the royal invitation here! what must man's heart be, that can answer so?

The appeal is backed with persuasive argument derived from affection subsisting even in earthly relationships. If we call God Father, do we expect to find

[4] (12): the practical path.

[5] (13, 14): the way and end.

[4] All things, therefore, [f] whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, so do ye also unto them: for this is the [g] law and the prophets.

[5] Enter ye in through the [h] narrow gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth unto destruc-

[f] Luke 6.31. ch. 5. 7. *etc.* ch. 18. 23-25. *cf.* Col. 3.12-14.

[g] ch. 5. 17. Lev. 19.18.

ch. 22. 39, 40. [h] Lk. 13. 24; *cf.* Jno. 10. 9 with Mk. 10. 23-27.

Him less than such a title implies, even among men? Is not this, in fact, however real, only a feeble suggestion of what God is as Father? It necessarily would be, even if men were unfallen; but "if ye, *being evil*, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more"—there, indeed, is a calculation for faith to make—"*how much more* shall your Father which is in heaven give good gifts to them that ask Him?"

[4] The connection of the practical admonition following with this is surely of the same sort as that of what follows the prayer He has given to His disciples to one of the petitions in that prayer. If you realize this bounty of God, of which He has been speaking, you will practise bountifulness; the measure of your conduct to them will not be their actual conduct to you, but what you yourself would have desired it to be. Largeness of mind will be the result of living in the enjoyment of the King's bounty; and then, conversely, the practical conduct so inspired will react upon yourself, and help you to realize the conditions of successful prayer. A character thus formed will enable one to feel more the character of Him to whom we thus draw nigh. We understand Him as we are assimilated to Him; and faith strengthens itself thus by that which it has itself developed.

But, moreover, "this is the law and the prophets." The new dispensation falls into the same line, as has been already said, with all that has been before it. The same God has been all through aiming at the same results; and while with each step of progress the means used may vary, the end is continually kept in sight and steadily approaches. The righteousness which the law had in view grace has brought in, and yet law and grace are contrasts.

[5] This section closes with a solemn exhortation to "enter in through the *strait* gate," as the only way leading to life, and alas, found by few. The many would then (and still will) enter by another and wide gate, and throng a broad way, but a way leading to destruction and not to life. The words are figurative, of course, and the Lord does not further explain them here in any direct way. He leaves them as He does many other things, to awaken thought. There have, in fact, been very different thoughts about them: not, as to what they refer, in the mention of a gate and of a way, for the Lord speaks plainly of the way to life and the way to destruction; and these things are plain enough; but the gate, the way, are not themselves explained. We have but the description,—a "strait" gate and a "narrow" way, with few travelers, set in opposition to a "wide" gate, and a "broad" way, and many crowding them. We are left to ask what is this straitness, and what does it imply? Hard terms and difficult to comply with, with an uncertainty, on this account, of perseverance to the end? Surely not; although many have so taken it. The Lord once uses the first of these expressions in the Gospel of Luke, where He is answering one of those questions with which we so often perplex ourselves: "then said one unto Him, Lord, are there few that be saved?" which the Lord answers with a home-thrust at the questioner himself, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate," to which He adds also that "many would seek to enter in and would not be able" (Luke xiii. 24). But He bases this upon something else than the straitness of the gate: the difficulty, or rather, the impossibility of entrance is only found "when once the Master of the house is risen up and has shut to the door;" it was a *shut* gate that was to be dreaded, not a *strait* one. Thus the exhortation: be urgent to enter in while there is time.

Here in Matthew, there is no exhortation to strive, but simply to enter in

tion, and [g]many there are that enter through it; because narrow is the gate and straitened is the way that leadeth unto life, and [i]few there are that find it.

[g] cf. Lk. 13. 23, 24. cf. 1 Jno. 5. 19.
[i] cf. 1 Cor. 1. 26. cf. Lk. 12. 32. ctr. Rev. 7. 9.

SECTION 6. (vii. 15–20.)
False prophets.

Beware of [k]false prophets, such as come to you in sheep's clothing, but within are ravening wolves. By

[k] Deut. 13. 1–5. cf. Rev. 13. 11-17 with Rev. 19. 20; Jer. 5. 30, 31; Mi. 3. 5-7; Mk. 13. 22; cf. 1 Tim. 4. 1, etc.

there, and by no other gate. "Few there be that find it:" the mass go by a different road. It is not here the door being shut, but men mistaking which it is: the broad way of destruction being taken for God's narrow way of life.

This makes the picture of that broad way exceedingly solemn. Many have, no doubt, the thought of its representing the way of vice and open irreligion as opposed to the way of holiness; but closer consideration will convince us that it is not so. For no one expects, however careless he may be about it, the way of sin to lead heavenward. Whereas the Lord plainly intimates this to be what the writer of Proverbs speaks of—"a way that *seemeth right* unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (xiv. 12). The question is of *finding* the way of life. Hence the solemn warning to beware of false prophets which follows thereupon, men who would lead those listening to them upon the broad way of death.

"Few there be that find it." The great company of heavenward wayfarers, as they would consider themselves, are thronging another road, congratulating themselves upon the number and respectability of their companions. As they said in the days in which these words were uttered: "Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed on Him? but this people who know not the law, are cursed."

It is plain that the Lord affirmed Himself to be the door and the way. "I am the door of the sheep: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (John x. 9). Again, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (John xiv. 6). Again, if they asked about the works that they should do, He answered: "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent" (vi. 29). Thus, if there are not *two* ways to life, (and He says there are not,) then the narrow way is Christ Himself. If the "gate" and the "door" are not different, it is still Christ who is represented by the gate. And then men miss the way of life, not because the terms are hard or He so unapproachable, but because men, glorifying themselves as good moralists, refuse the gracious Saviour of sinners, and seek out other ways. "They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God; for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. x. 3. 4).

The gate is "strait," because here is indeed an absolute condition: "no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." Self-righteousness must come down; Christ must be the absolute and complete Saviour, which He alone can be: too strict conditions for multitudes to submit to. The crowds do not yet "come to Him that they may have life" (John v. 40). Yet grace itself can make no other terms, and we shall find, as we pass on here but a little way, that these are in fact the terms which exclude many of those who even call Him Lord, but who have never known Him.

6. There follows now a warning about false prophets, which is in very plain connection with that about the different roads which men were taking to reach a common end. This is intensified by the fact that, wherever the true Voice speaks, there will come the false voice after it, its mocking echo; like Jannes and Jambres opposing by imitation, putting on the dress of the sheep, but as a lure, over the evil heart within. The fruit would manifest them, but we must remember that this is not necessarily immoral conduct, in which the sheep's

their [l] fruits shall ye know them: do men gather clusters of grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? So every [m] good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but the [n] worthless tree bringeth forth bad fruit. A good tree [o] cannot bear bad fruit, nor a worthless tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is [p] cut down and cast into the fire. By their fruits, then, surely ye shall know them.

SECTION 7. (vii. 21–29).

The complete disciple.

1 (21-23): barrenness and true knowledge.

[1] Not every one who [q] saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. [r] Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not [s] prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out [t] demons, and in thy name done many [u] works of power? and then will I avow unto them, I [v] never knew you: [w] depart from me, ye who work lawlessness.

2 (24-27): dependence, true and false.

[2] Every one, therefore, who heareth these words of mine and [x] doeth them, shall be likened unto a [y] prudent man, who built his house upon the [z] rock; and the [a] rain descended, and the streams came, and the winds blew, and fell upon that house; and it fell not, for it was founded upon the rock. And every one that heareth

l ch. 12. 33. ver. 20. Lk. 6. 43, 44. *cf.* 1 Tim. 5. 24, 25. *cf.* Jas. 3. 11, 12. *m cf.* 1 John 3. 7. *cf.* Gal. 5. 22, 23. *n cf.* Gal. 5. 19-21. *o cf.* Jno. 3. 6. *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 9. *cf.* Phil. 1. 11. *p* ch. 3. 10. Jno. 15. 2, 6. *cf.* ch. 25. 41-46. *q* Lk. 6. 46. Is. 29. 13. Ezek. 33. 31. *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 5. *cf.* Jude 4. *r cf.* ch. 25. 11, 12. *cf.* ch. 22. 14. *s cf.* Jno. 11. 50-52. *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 27. *cf.* 1 Cor. 13. 2. *t cf.* Lk. 10. 17-20. *u cf.* Heb. 6. 5. *v* ch. 25. 12; Lk. 13. 25-30; *ctr.* Jno. 10. 14. *w* ch. 25. 41; *cf.* Rev. 20. 11, 14. *x* Lk. 6. 47-49; Jas. 1. 22-25; Jas. 2. 14-26; *cf.* ch. 23. 3, 4. *y* Prov. 22. 3; *cf.* Heb. 11. 7. *z cf.* Is. 28. 16, 17; *cf.* ch. 16. 18; *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 11. *a cf.* Ps. 32. 6; *cf.* Gen. 7. 11-23; *cf.* Rom. 8. 1; *cf.* Jno. 5. 24; *cf.* 2 Thess. 1. 7, 8.

clothing would no longer remain, but rather their doctrines tested by experience, as when men looking for grapes find nothing but at most the mockery of these.* Satan, when coming in as an angel of light, does not send out open evil-doers to commend his doctrines, while on the other hand an evil life may dishonor the preacher of substantial truth. But a true and needy soul, testing for itself the fruit of what is spoken, will assuredly find that the truth has its own witness to the heart and conscience, such as nothing but the truth can have. Here, above all, the Lord's words apply, that a good tree cannot bring forth bad fruit.

7. [1] We have now pressed what the complete disciple is in contrast with the mere barren professor, and the man who does not in fact build upon the rock. The time surely comes when the reality under all appearances will be made evident, and nothing will stand but what is real. Empty profession will not do: the saying, "Lord, Lord," is not necessarily subjection to Him. Prophesying, casting out demons, doing miracles, are no decisive proofs of true discipleship. For this there must be living acquaintance with Himself, that true knowledge without which, after all, the life will be lawless.

[2] The second illustration exhibits the true dependence of the soul on Him where He is known, in contrast with the false dependences which betray men to their ruin. In both cases we have pictured the builder of a house—the place of his affections and his rest, but above all, as it is viewed here, his shelter and refuge from the storm. Now for the stability of a house the foundation is the matter of first moment. If the foundation is not firm, no matter how solidly

* "Ἄκανθαι, or ἄκανθα, is the general name for all kinds of thorns, of which the most common bears small black berries not unlike grapes, while the flower of the τρίβολοι may be compared with the fig." (*Quoted in Lange's Commentary.*)

these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a [b]foolish man, who built his house upon the [c]sand. And the rain descended, and the streams came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell, and [d]great was the fall of it.

3 (28, 29): manifestation to the heart.

[3] And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these words, the multitudes were [e]astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as one having [f]authority, and not as their scribes.

b cf. Prov. 1. 22-32. *cf.* Lk. 12. 16-21.
c cf. Is. 64. 6. *cf.* Rom. 10. 3. *cf.* Rom. 3. 20.
d cf. Prov. 29. 1. *cf.* 2 Thess. 1. 9. *cf.* ch. 8. 12.
e ch. 13. 54. Mk. 1. 22; Lk. 4. 32. *f cf.* ch. 5. 22, 28, 32, 39, 44; Jno. 7. 46; *cf.* ch. 23. 1-33.

the house is built: it will go with the foundation. Christ and His words are here the rock that abides; all else, whatever be its nature, is but sand. He who puts His sayings livingly into practice shall build a house that will endure the storm. None else and nothing else will: while the fair weather lasts it is quite possible that this last may look better than the rock-set one, and the man who trusts it enjoy a passing triumph. Too soon! and when the storm shall come, too late to remedy it.

[3] No wonder that the multitudes were astonished; no wonder that they found this teaching different from the strange conceits, the externalism and traditionalism of the scribes. It was a Voice from another sphere than that of earth, and the strange authority that was in it suited it yet how well! Nothing else could have suited it: any other tone would have been the renunciation of His whole mission. This claim of authority demanded the miracles that accompanied it; and yet, on the other hand, rested itself not even upon these, but above all on the manifest holiness and love and truth which commanded mind, heart, conscience into His presence, compelling the whole man to reverence; where, at least, the *man* remained to recognize and answer such a claim.

Div. 3.

The Kingdom thus announced, and its principles declared, we have now in detail the signs that manifest the King. These are not, and could not be, mere works of power, but such as bear the stamp of divinity upon them, the evidence of whence this power is derived. Power alone might accredit what was evil—a thing most necessary to be remembered in the present day: "whose coming is according to the working of Satan, in *all power* and signs and lying wonders" (2 Thess. ii. 9), is said of Antichrist. But the power manifest now in Israel was displayed in goodness and holiness and truth, and in connection with that which appealed (as just now said) to the whole moral nature. The Lord refused the faith which was built but upon miracles (John ii. 23–25), and reproved the craving for them among the people with the words, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe" (John iv. 48). Miracles were not with the Lord the foundation of anything, but what flowed naturally out of what He was, and from the intervention of God in behalf of a sin-ruined world. They testified to Christ in this way as the One whom nature owned and served, but who, therefore, was above it, and could not be debtor to it for His authentication. They were in place as they put Him in His place, and with all else served and worshiped Him.

The characters manifested in them were apart from this. They were *His* characters. They were impressed upon them as *His* acts,—were part of His living energy in its operation. And thus they had their inner significance,—as "signs:" they went with all else that He did to declare Him, and did so, acting in a sphere beyond what was merely human, where dull eyes saw better what was in all spheres the same. Faith was at all times in Christ Himself, the Son of the Father, wherever seen—"beheld His glory, the glory of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

We are now to see Him in this manifestation of Himself, but to see, alas, that this manifestation did not of necessity bring men to His feet. On the contrary,

DIVISION 3. (Chap. viii.–xii.)

The Manifestation of the King; which manifests also the people's heart towards Him.

SUBDIVISION 1. (chap. viii.–ix. 26.)

Divine power in constant grace.

SECTION 1. (chap. viii. 1-17.)

His fore-known place.

1 (1-4): touching the leper, as present in Israel: the Son of God.

1 AND when he [g] had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. And behold, a [h] leper came to [him] and worshiped him, saying, Lord, [i] if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And he stretched forth his hand and [j] touched him, saying, I will: be thou cleansed. And [k] immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

g ch. 5. 1. *ctr.* Ex. 32. 15-29 with Rom. 8. 3. *cf.* Jno. 6. 38, 39.
h Mk. 1. 40-45. Lk. 5. 12-15. Lev. 13. 1-46. 2 Kl. 5. 1, etc. *cf.* Is. 1. 6. *cf.* Rom. 3. 10-19.
i *cf.* Mk. 9. 22, 23. *ctr.* Jno. 5. 6, 7. *cf.* 1 Tim. 2. 4.
j ch. 20. 34. *cf.* Lk. 15. 20.
ctr. Nu. 5. 2; *ctr.* Nu. 19. 11; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 21. *k cf.* Lk. 18. 14;

we are to find Him rejected by His people long taught to anticipate His coming as Messiah as the crown of all their blessings. The more He shows and proves His claim to be this, only the more decisively is He rejected; until grace can no more utter itself, and He turns in spirit from them to own relationship with those only who are doers of His Father's will. If the national refusal of Him is not yet complete, it is in sight; and the next division shows us anticipatively the Kingdom in its present Gentile form, and the New Testament "mysteries" begin to be unrolled to us.

SUBD. 1.

The signs themselves occupy the first subdivision; after which, as fully manifested, He sends His messengers through the cities of Israel to proclaim the Kingdom and do the works that confirm their mission; after which we find a remnant separated from the rest, who harden themselves in unbelief and impenitence.

Sec. 1.

In the first section, one of those dispensational pictures is presented to us such as we have already had in the second chapter. There it was impossible not to see in the Gentile magi coming up to worship a King of the Jews unknown in Jerusalem, the forecast of what was to come. In the present section after the leper has been healed, and sent in testimony to the priests, that they may themselves certify the divine power which is being displayed among them, the faith of a Gentile is declared by the Lord to be greater than any He has found in Israel. And thereupon He announces the coming in of the Gentiles into the Kingdom of God, while the sons of the Kingdom are cast out. Here we are left in no uncertainty, then, as to the larger meaning of what is before us. But the significance is not ended here: for in the healing of Peter's mother-in-law we find Him healing by touch again as in the leper, Himself present therefore, while in the case of the centurion's servant He heals at a distance, as in the present time. The touch assures us that here we have Him once more present as when He returns to Israel at a future time; while the healing of the sick of all kinds, with the reference to His human sympathy in the quotation from Isaiah, leads us out into a wider scene beyond. We seem to have Him thus in four different characters: as Son of God in the case of the leper; as Son of Abraham, in that of the centurion; as Israel's Messiah; and as Son of man. He fills in all this His predicted place.

[1] The cure of leprosy seems to have been unknown in Israel. It was a condition that only God could reach. On this account it was the fitting type of the incurable nature of sin, and a fitting case with which to begin the Lord's manifestation of Himself to Israel. We have seen that He could not take the Kingdom, except as the Son of God; and this was the character in which He was

2 (5-13): healing by His word as absent, where there is faith: the Son of Abraham.

And Jesus saith unto him, See thou [t]tell no one; but go, show thyself to the [m]priest, and offer the [n]gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

2 And [o]when he had entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion beseeching him and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home [p]paralytic, grievously tormented. He saith unto him, *I* will [q]come and heal him. But the centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not [r]fit that thou shouldest enter under my roof; but [s]speak a word only, and my servant shall be healed. For *I* also am a man under [t]authority, having soldiers under me, and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. And when Jesus heard it, he

cf. Lk. 24. 28. *r etr.* Lk. 7. 4, 5; *cf.* Lk. 5. 8. *s cf.* 2 Ki. 5. 9; *cf.* 2 Ki. 20. 4, 5; Ps. 147. 15; Ps. 107. 20. *t cf.* Mk. 1. 27; *cf.* Lk. 9. 1.

t cf. ch. 9. 30 with Jno. 4. 48. *ctr.* Mk. 5. 19, 20.
m Lev. 14. 1-3. *cf.* Lk. 17. 14. *cf.* Rom. 8. 33, 34.
n Lev. 14. 4-32. Deut. 24. 8. *cf.* Rom. 3. 21 with ch. 5. 17.
o Lk. 7. 1-10.
p Lk. 5. 18. *cf.* Rom. 5. 6. *cf.* Rom. 8. 3. *cf.* Is. 40. 29.
q ctr. Jno. 4. 47-54.

first of all rejected by the leaders of the people. Here He cures by a touch, which would have defiled another, and sends the healed man to the priest that he may certify the cure. But there is no response from this quarter, to which He appeals, as it were, alone, bidding the man tell it to no other. The clamor of a crowd would not have helped such an appeal, which would better be heard in the conscience as a case quietly submitted for their decision. But there is no response: Israel is dumb until her demon is cast out, and then only will she be a true witness to her glorious King.

2 But here it is that the Gentile comes in, with a faith not found in Israel; and if the contrast with the case of the leper is plain, it is the more striking that in fact they occurred at different times* and are brought together for an evident purpose. Moreover Luke, whose Gospel is the only one that has this story besides Matthew, while giving details omitted by the latter, omits on his part the assurance to the believing Gentile of sitting down in the Kingdom of heaven, and the warning to the Jew of sons of the Kingdom being cast out, which the Jewish Gospel records. Humbling all this was to the pride of those to whom it was addressed; and because humbling, most needful, — the proud must be abased. On the other hand with the centurion there is the most thorough humility. He is not fit for Christ to come under his roof, but in this already we see the faith that animates him. As self is behind the back, the vision becomes unclouded, and thus he realizes in Him One whom all things serve. Yet Himself is come to serve, and to serve such as have no worthiness— no fitness but in their need. Let Him speak the word then: every thing will do His bidding. He, the soldier, a man *under* authority, has yet his subordinates, the agents of his will, and knows how promptly his commands are executed. So, with a word, his servant shall be healed.

The experience of the Lord's delight has in it yet what gives rise to much grave question. *Why* should there be faith outside of Israel greater than any that could be found in Israel? Israel had every advantage in this respect that could have been given her. Do privileges neglected and misused tend to blight even the true faith that exists in the midst of an easy profession? When we speak approvingly of a "child-like" faith, do we not seem to mean that the faith of a man does not fulfil the promise of the child? that hardly it can be expected it should do so? If so, this surely cannot argue that a longer acquaintance with Christ will be unfavorable to development, or that there is inherent a

*This can be seen by a comparison of the connections in the other gospels, where notes of time are given. The healing of the centurion's servant occurred after the sermon on the mount (see Luke vii. 1,) but that of the leper earlier, so that its introduction here is parenthetical. Mark evidently gives in general the historical order, while Matthew and Luke arrange and adapt for their purposes.

"marveled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great [v]faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, that [w]many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down * with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but the [x]sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into the outer [y]darkness: *there* shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said unto the centurion, [z]Go thy way: as thou hast believed, be it to thee. And his servant was healed in [a]that hour.

3 (14, 15): touching again as returned to Israel: Messiah.

[3] And [b]when Jesus had come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother lying sick of a [c]fever. And he [d]touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she rose up, and [e]ministered to him.

* Literally "recline," as at table in the East.

u *ctr.* Mark 6. 6. *cf.* Rom. 4. 20.
v *cf.* Jno. 20. 29. *cf.* Heb. 11. 1. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 8, 9. *cf.* ch. 15. 28.
w Lk. 13. 28-30. *cf.* Lk. 14. 21, 24. *cf.* Is. 60. 3.
x ch. 21. 43. *cf.* Acts 13. 40, 41, 46–48. *cf.* Rom. 9. 6.
y ch. 13. 42, 50. ch. 22. 13. ch. 25. 30, 41, 46.

Jude 13. z Mk. 10. 52. a Jno. 4. 52, 53; *cf.* Jno. 5. 24. b Mk. 1. 29–31; Lk. 4. 38, 39. c Jno. 4. 52; Acts 28. 8; *cf.* Deut. 28. 22; *cf.* Rom. 6. 23. d ver. 3. e Lk. 8. 2, 3; *cf.* Rom. 6. 22; *cf.* Acts 16. 14, 15.

principle of decay in faith that affects this: and if not, what else can it be that does so but the breath of the outside air, the world-atmosphere that is unfavorable to such an exotic as faith is? Yet "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith!"

Without meaning to excuse it in this way, it cannot surely be doubted that the atmosphere of what may be truly called a "*Christian world*" is more detrimental to development than that of a *heathen* world would be; and that because a Christian world stands as the very ideal of compromise, and compromise has in it as a first element disloyalty to Christ and to His word. Here you are faced, not with what is openly nor even intentionally hostile to Christ,—what would put you on your guard, and rouse up in you all your power of resistance; no, you find in it truth owned, but not taken very seriously; you are to follow it, but not be too extreme about it. And how naturally we grow up just to the stature, morally or spiritually as even mentally, of the company we keep! how we read Scripture itself with such a traditional interpretation put upon it as is in this way acquired, until we lose capacity for taking it simply and straightforwardly, as it would necessarily appear to the faith of a child, or of one outside the current rendering.

Who can doubt that the large and miscellaneous Christendom about us also, like the Pharisaic, Sadducean, Herodian Judaism of our Lord's time, is the greatest hindrance to true faith; and that the gospel is rendered so powerless as it is to-day, by the dead weight upon it of barren profession and the truth unfollowed and unfelt? The witnesses *for* Christ are just those who may be most terribly *against* Him, and who, however little they may mean it, can never be merely negative or neutral in their testimony.

I think we can scarcely help such an application of our Lord's words as to the simple faith of the Gentile centurion in the midst of formal, ritualistic hollow-hearted Judaism. But how great a thing to give refreshment to the heart of Christ as this man did! And by it His soul looks out anticipatively to those gathering multitudes who from opposite quarters should come to sit down at the glad feast of welcome with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of heaven:—then, when "sons of the Kingdom," the claimants now of title to that for which they had no heart, would be cast into the outer darkness, whence God the Light would be withdrawn, into the awful unavailing weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Here the Seed of Abraham is very clearly revealed.

[3] The third miracle here, as may be seen by the account of it in both Mark

4 (16, 17): healing all the sick: the Son of man.

16 And when the *e*evening was come, they brought unto him many possessed by *g*demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all that were sick: so that it might be *h*fulfilled which was spoken through Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself *i*took our infirmities and bare our diseases.

e Mk. 1. 32-34. Lk. 4. 40, 41.
g Mk. 5. 1, 2, etc. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 4.
h cf. ch. 1. 22, etc. Is. 53. 4.
i 1 Pet. 2. 24. 2 Cor. 5. 21.

SECTION 2. (Chap. viii. 18-ix. 8.)
The various deliverances.

1 (viii. 18-27): Absolute Master; 1 (18-22): claiming absolute obedience,

1. 18 Now, *j*when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he commanded to depart unto the other side. And one, a scribe, came and said unto him, Teacher, I will

j cf. Lk. 14. 25, 26.

and Luke, is again out of the order of time, and in fact took place before the cleansing of the leper. It must, therefore, be inserted in this place for a purpose, and we have already glanced at its significance in this respect. The Lord in this case once more heals by touch,—is Himself, therefore, personally present where He heals. Natural relationship also is owned, as we see in "Peter's wife's mother," and even in its being in the house, the place of relationship. No doubt, such references will be thought by some too minute and trivial to find meaning in them; but the mistake is in supposing anything in Scripture to have that character. We shall find elsewhere just such things with similar meaning and in important connections (xiii. 1, 36). By and by the Lord will thus come back (the fullness of the Gentiles having been brought in) into the sphere of His old relationships, to bring in healing for Israel of a deeper kind. The fever of the old life will then be subdued by His presence: He will say to the tumult of human passion, "Peace," and it shall be still; and Israel will arise in the strength of a new devotedness, to minister unto Him. That the scene here is a picture of this must be judged by its fitness to represent it and by the connection with all that goes before and follows. So judged, it seems to answer well to such a thought.

4 For Israel's restoration will, it is certain, bring souls from every part, tormented with Satan's tyranny to Him who has been her Deliverer; and the casting out of Satan will bring in the blessing of those millennial times, while the sympathizing pity of which Isaiah speaks, and which marks Him as true Son of man, will remove the results of sin of whatever character. The principle here will not allow of blessing limited to Israel, as in fact the Lord never did so limit it; and thus the widest, fullest out-flow may be indicated here.

This sketch, then, as a sort of title of all that follows, may well show us the Lord filling all His predicted place: Son of God, Seed of Abraham, Israel's Messiah, Son of man. Mere picture it is not, but a display of personal characters that are found in Him, and this comes naturally in the first place, as the foundation of all else. The characters of the deliverance He brings come next, and in place as suited, and then, briefly, what is exceptional in Matthew, but needed for the full display of what He is, the presence of God is shown to be open to man, and His grace welcomes freely, the restrictions of the law set aside: the new wine is to be put into new bottles.

Sec. 2.

The various features of the deliverance are now, then, briefly but sufficiently shown to us. We begin with what is more external, and end with what is deepest and most personal, the heart of the whole matter. Circumstances are in His hands; the power of the enemy is prostrate before Him; sins are remitted, and the helpless and impotent one rises up in strength: such is the power and such the grace of our Redeemer. And yet, beyond this there is blessing for which all this is but the necessary preparation. To be with God: that is the complete and innermost joy of all; without which all else would be but vanity, and the soul's hunger wholly unappeased.

1. We begin with the first lesson first. Creation is in His hand: He has

[k] follow thee whithersoever thou mayest go. And Jesus saith unto him, Foxes have holes, and the birds of heaven roosting-places; but the Son of man hath not where to [l] lay his head. And another of the disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and [m] bury my father. But Jesus saith unto him, Follow me, and leave the [n] dead to bury their own dead.

k Lk. 9. 57, 58. *cf.* Jno. 13. 37, 38. l *cf.* Lk. 2. 7. *cf.* Lk. 9. 58. m Lk. 9. 59, 60. *cf.* Gen. 11. 31, 32 with Acts 7. 4. *cf.* ch. 10. 37. n *cf.* Eph. 2. 1,

made it and He is Lord of it; full of disorder as it may appear and is, the rod of power has not slipped out of His hand: faith's triumph is in owning Him amid what is real disorder, compelling even this to work out His purposes. So in the beginning of such a record of faith as we have in the catalogue of witnesses in the epistle to the Hebrews, the first thing of all is this, that "by faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God." Thus the scene of all our trials is in its whole framework and constitution His before whom faith walks. Whatever may be for the moment in the front, behind it rise the everlasting hills founded by divine strength, and bearing testimony to immutable faithfulness. The frost has riven them; the torrents have swept their shattered fragments into the valleys below; they seem to be the prey of every destructive agency which has license to work its will upon their passive forms. Yet the Hand that made them at first is still unseen raising them and sustaining them, while their very dust, spread out over the lower lands, is maintaining these also, and renewing their surface by its ministry. Death and destruction are in the hands of the God of resurrection; amid all the waste is nothing wasted; death ministers to life, and life springs out of it.

And here is the Master of all, in meekest surrender to circumstances in a path where all seems against Him, yet maintaining His absolute title untouched, as He must, or all were given up. Where would we be, if He resigned His authority?

As to circumstances, the foxes in their holes and the birds of heaven are better provided; and this He urges to test the zeal of a too ready disciple. On the other hand, if one would put even a father's claim before His own, He in the plainest manner refuses this. From Luke we learn that the Lord had called this man to follow Him, but there seemed no duty which could take precedence of burying a dead father. The man who is called is not fully ready; the one not called is more than ready. We may be sure that the state of enthusiasm in the one case was genuine enough; and he was one of a class not given to it in regard to Christ. The enthusiasm was all well, but there was in it a dangerous self-confidence, like that which we find in Simon Peter afterwards, and which we know betrayed him into a terrible fall. It was not that sincerity or love was wanting in him, but the consciousness of his own weakness: and this is why so much of early promise is apt to fail, and backwardness succeed, it may be, to confident energy. When Christ's call is heard distinctly in the soul, then it is as dangerous to be reckoning up difficulties, as in mere enthusiasm to lose sight of them. It is for Him who calls us to the path to reckon with the difficulties, and faith for the path also is found as we travel it. Assuredly, if we have not faith for the Lord's path, we shall not find it *for any other*.

In the second case, therefore, the Lord insists upon promptitude of devotedness. "Let the dead bury their dead" is distinct exhortation to lay aside every thing that would, under the idea of duty itself, delay compliance with what He has called to. Even Abraham suffered his father to lead in obedience to a word addressed to himself; and so we read that "Terah *took* Abraham his son, . . . and went forth with them . . . to go into the land of Canaan." What came of it? "And they came unto Haran, and *dwelt there*." While Terah was alive, they never got to the place for which they had set out: "Terah died in Haran."

In the case before us it was only a dead father needing to be buried; and here

2 (23-27): and able to ensure as absolute security of those embarked with Him

[2] And when he had entered into a ship, his disciples followed him. And behold, there arose a great [o]tempest in the sea, so that the ship was covered with the waves; but *he* was [p]asleep. And they came to him and awoke him, saying, Lord, [q]save: we perish. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of [r]little faith? Then he arose, and [s]rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great [t]calm. But the men marveled, saying, [u]What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?

2 (viii. 28–ix. 1): Deliverance from the enemy.

2. And [v]when he had come to the other side, into the country of the Gadarenes, there met him two [w]possessed by demons, coming out of the tombs, exceeding dangerous, so that no one could pass that way. And, behold, they cried out, saying, [x]What have we to do with thee, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to [y]torment us before the time? Now there was, a good way off from them, a herd of many swine feeding. And the

o Mk. 4. 37-41. Lk. 8. 22-25.
p *cf.* Is. 26. 3.
q *cf.* ch. 14. 30, 31. Ps. 107. 28.
r *cf.* ch. 17. 20. *cf.* Mk. 16. 17, 18.
s Lk. 4. 39, 41. *cf.* Ps. 65. 7.
t *cf.* Ps. 89. 9. Ps. 107. 29.
u *cf.* Mk. 1. 27. *cf.* Lk. 5. 26.
v Mk. 5. 1-20. Lk. 8. 26-40.
w ch. 17. 14-18. *cf.* Eph. 2. 2.
x *cf.* Acts 1. 25. *cfr.* Lk. 5. 8. *cf.* Acts 24. 25.
y *cf.* ch. 25. 41 with Rev. 19. 20.

the living disciple, the messenger of life, was not to be detained in the region of death, from the delivery of his gracious message. Let the dead attend to death, is the Lord's word; and, although the two deaths spoken of here are not the same, yet there is simple and evident connection between them.

If the Lord maintain His authority as Master, it is soon made manifest that Master He is, and able to ensure the safety of those that are with Him. On the stormy sea, He is asleep until, roused by their unbelieving appeal to Him,—and how much unbelief is expressed in our prayers!—He hushes with a word the winds and the sea. The application of this is familiar to us all, and made by every one: a pregnant example of how naturally these histories speak to us all of spiritual realities in the way of exhortation and comfort,—how truly they are meant to do so.

And the unbelief of disciples, how constantly has it been repeated since, and how often does the Lord shame us by coming in for us as here. How much is it all in contrast with that faith of the centurion, which we have so lately seen winning the Lord's wonderment, as here their unbelief does. This restless sea of Galilee, so often lashed with storms, is indeed a vivid picture of the world of our pilgrimage, much vexed, soon traversed; and we find it more than once again in this way, and human feet taught to walk in peace upon it, not without His help who Himself walked there and still walks, for faith, in the like fashion.

2. They come to the other side of the sea, only to find there the enemy's power rampant. Two possessed by demons, coming out of the tombs, stop the way against all comers. Matthew does not go into detail here, as Mark and Luke do. His object is just to show the power of the Lord as manifested in these various deliverances, and details have not for him the same importance. The ghastly horror of the dwelling of these living men in the abodes of death, and their insane fury before which men quailed, are given to put in contrast the absolute surrender of their prey by those who held them captive, when the Lord appears. *Men*, blinded of Satan, may dispute His right, not they. Striking it is that they give Him at once the title, which men deny Him, of Son of God, and recognize Him as their future Judge. But they plead that the day of judgment has not come, and can He be come to torment them before the time?

The story of the swine that follows seems as if it were designed to make manifest the reality of these demoniac possessions, than which nothing can be plainer, indeed, in the whole account of them. The demons, speaking with the

demons besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, send us away into the [z]herd of swine. And he said unto them, Go. And when they had come out, they went into the swine; and, behold, the whole herd [a]rushed down the steep into the sea, and died in the waters. And they that fed them [b]fled, and went away into the city, and told every thing, and what had befallen those possessed by demons. And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus; and, when they saw him, they besought [him] to [c]depart out of their coasts. And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came unto his [d]own city.

3 (Ix. 2-8): "Arise and walk."

3. And, behold, they [e]brought to him a paralytic, laid upon a bed. And, when Jesus saw their [f]faith, he said unto the paralytic, Son,* be of good courage, thy sins are forgiven. And, behold, certain of the [g]scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, Why do *ye* think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to [h]say, Thy sins are forgiven, or to say, Rise up and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath [i]authority upon earth to forgive sins (then saith he unto the paralytic),

*Literally, "Child," τέκνον.

z *cf.* Lk. 15. 15, 16 with ch. 7. 6.

a *cf.* 1 Jno. 5. 19 with Phil. 3. 19.

b *etr.* Lk. 8. 35. *cf.* Jno. 6. 67-69.

c ver. 29. *etr.* Acts 16. 9. *cf.* Lk. 4. 29.

d ch. 4. 13. ch. 11. 23.

e Mk. 2. 1-12. Lk. 5. 17-26.

f ver. 28. ch. 8. 10.

g vers. 11, 34. ch. 12. 2.

h ch. 8. 8. Mk. 1. 27. *cf.* Rom. 10. 8-13.

i *cf.* ch. 21. 23-27. *cf.* Acts 4. 7-12.

voice of the possessed, recognize the Lord (always, as already said, with intelligence as to His Person), address and are addressed by Him, their testimony to Him being necessarily refused. They ask permission to go into the herd of swine, ("*all* the demons," according to Mark, taking part in this) and are granted it; and thereupon the whole herd of swine (about 2,000 in number) rush down the steep bank into the sea, and perish in the waters.

Matthew, again, gives us no after-picture of these delivered men. He is occupied with the deliverance itself, the manifestation of the glorious King, and along with this but with the shadow that creeps after it, His rejection, as already showing itself, at the hands of an unbelieving and impenitent people. They are more afraid of the Deliverer than of the awful power from which He would have delivered them, and imitate, in effect, the prayer of the demons themselves, in begging Him to depart out of their coasts. The Lord accepts His rejection and returns across the lake to His own city.

3. The jarring elements have owned Him; the power of the enemy has been broken before Him; the strong man's captives are delivered: we are next to see what is the stronghold of the enemy yield, and man's condition met in its innermost reality; the burden of guilt is lifted from the soul, and the paralysis which sin induces removed in consequence. We are surely to take in widest, fullest application what is given us here, just as we do instinctively, and not the less surely, the hushing of the storm upon the lake. All through these divine narratives, that which is manifested to the senses is but a parable of spiritual realities. The external facts are, none the less as that, a veil of the unseen, a manifestation in flesh of the divine. The miracles are not wonders merely but signs,—through and through significant.

The miracle that follows here is again taken out of the order of time, but all the more should it be manifest, with such purpose as we have already seen. Morally and spiritually it is here perfectly in its place; and again we find features that are dwelt upon in the other gospels omitted in order to bring into prominence the central fact. They bring to the Lord a paralytic, lying upon a bed; and He, seeing their faith, goes beyond the apparent need, and down to

[j] Arise and take up thy bed, and go unto thy house. And he arose and departed to his house. And, when the multitudes saw [it,] they [k] feared, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

j Jno. 5. 8, 9. cf. 1 Thess. 1. 9. cf. Acts 14. 8–10.
k cf. Acts 2. 43. cf. Acts 5. 11.

SECTION 3. (Chap. ix. 9-26.)

Opening the presence of God to men.

1 (9-13): The call of grace.

1. And, as Jesus [l] passed on from thence, he saw a man named Matthew, sitting at the tax-office; and he saith unto him, [m] Follow me. And he rose up and followed

l Mk. 2. 13–17. Lk. 5. 27–32.
m ch. 4. 18–22.

that in which all the distress that is in the world has its root: "He said unto the paralytic, Son, be of good courage, thy sins are forgiven thee."

He who spoke knew perfectly the state of soul to which He was addressing Himself, and the weight of his sins, which might hinder even bodily healing, was certainly pressing upon him. But the miracle of healing which was to follow was thus also to be a witness to that which in itself the senses could not realize or confirm. The sufferer was to have the assurance of this; but also the most unsympathetic and unbelieving there were to find openly the seal of divine power put upon His claim to forgive sins. As Son of man He claims it: but that was itself a Messianic title, and (as we have seen) implied in itself One higher than man; even while it assured them of the tender truth of that humanity. But why the need of assuring any one that He who was in their midst as man really *was* that? It was in fact the sweetest assurance, as it could only have arisen out of the most absolute conviction of His highest glory.

Even the accusation of Him in their thoughts, by the proof given of His knowledge of them, is made to turn to their conviction; and if none could forgive sins but God alone—and they were surely right in that—*what*, then, was He who could thus so completely prove His authority to do this?

How sweet and wonderful the assurance of sins forgiven, His word certifying it after this manner! Not that it was new that God met men in His grace upon the simple confession of their sins to Him. The psalmist had found it so, and published his experience for the help of others (Ps. xxxii.), and in this way David had described, as the apostle says, "the blessedness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works" (Rom. iv. 6). This had been thickly overlaid with ritualistic practices and rabbinical prescriptions, and could scarcely have been understood by any with the simplicity which it appears to us to have. But who could have undertaken to apply this grace on God's part definitely to the individual, to pronounce him forgiven in this authoritative manner? Thus we see that all this is part of the manifestation of the Deliverer. It is not the *doctrine* of forgiveness that is declared, nor would this have aroused opposition in the form we find it here, but that the *Son of man* had authority to forgive sins.

The order of blessing is, however, pregnant with meaning. First, "thy sins be forgiven thee," and then "arise and walk." The load of unforgiven sin is too great for any one to lift and yet find power to walk in a way acceptable to God. Pardon assured from Him, the soul arises with the strength found in this new joy in Him. All is changed for it. The path is a path with Him, not to find Him. It is a path given of Him who is now known. Thus the limbs just now paralyzed with guilt and fear receive, as in a moment, life and energy. The impracticable legal principle, "do and live," has given way to the evangelical one, "live and do." Here is a change of order how significant: "arise and walk" speaks first of the wondrous gift bestowed; then, as the flush and vigor of health are felt, the "walk" becomes but prolonged ecstasy. Salvation in its fullness is not found till this is attained.

Sec. 3.

That which follows here is in extension of such thoughts as these, and fully assures us that we are to find this spiritual meaning in what has been

him. And it came to pass, as he "sat* [at meat] in the house, that, behold, many tax-gatherers and sinners came and sat down with Jesus and his disciples. And, when the °Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, ᵖWhy eateth your teacher with tax-gatherers and sinners? But, when he heard it, he said, They that are ᵠwhole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have ʳmercy, and not sacrifice: for I came not to ˢcall righteous persons but sinners.

* *Gk.*, "reclined."

n Lk. 14.12-14. Lk. 15. 1,2.
o ver. 3. Lk. 7. 39.
p ch. 11. 19. *cf.* ver. 14.
q *cf.* Jno. 9. 39–41. *cf.* Lk. 18.9-14.
r Hos. 6. 6. Mi. 6. 6–8. ch. 12. 7. *cf.* 1 Sa. 15. 22.
s Lk. 19. 10. Rom. 5. 8; 1 Tim. 1. 15.

before us. For now the Lord openly declares His grace and justifies it, telling men too that it cannot be used to patch up the legal system, nor will the spirit of it be confined within the Mosaic ordinances. Come for the need of men He the Representative (as He has proved Himself) of God on earth, freely receives sinners, and makes faith welcome to draw upon Him at all times. Thus the presence of God is opened to men. They may refuse, but they are not refused. While, though at present only to be told in parables for the wise, the truth of Israel's—and indeed *man's*—condition is that he is dead, and needing life, and Christ's mission needs must be, therefore, to raise the dead. This completes His manifestation, therefore; while the mystery in which it ends shows how little faith there is anywhere to receive it, and prepares us for the full rejection of Him by the mass, which is soon to appear.

1. The call of the taxgatherer* follows immediately the cure of the paralytic; and this in the order of time, as the words show. The challenge of His authority and the grace He is showing, only makes the assertion of it more imperative, as it would have made it weakness to give way. All was in question now; and now, therefore, He will make as plain as possible what is in His heart. "Tax-gatherers and sinners" are with them in natural association, and that association He never disclaims. But who are *not* sinners? If He refuse men on that ground He must refuse all; Matthew the tax-gatherer, called into the circle of His immediate followers, is to be the witness to all men of His grace for all.

The feast at which we find Him directly afterwards, took place in fact after His return from Gadara, as we see in Mark and Luke. The account of the healing of the paralytic and of Matthew's call are historically parenthetical. The special purpose is maintained all through.

We learn from Luke that Matthew made Him this feast. He knew well what would be that to Him, and showed it by the company he gathered. These persons had, at least, the consciousness of what they were, and grace could not offend them. At the very entrance upon fellowship with God we find it in learning to be with Him as to what we are, and the light of the first day of new creation breaks upon a barren, restless and shoreless sea. The weariness and distress and remorse of sin are witnesses for God which cannot be bribed, though they may not be listened to; while self-righteousness is lulled to sleep by its own monotone, and dreams of peace where there is no peace.

Yet the light troubles these sleepers and angers them; and so we find in the questioning of the Pharisees now. They could not be indifferent to what might seem so little to concern them as where One in whom, at any rate, they did not

* "Publican," borrowed from the the Latin, is not the proper rendering. This was the name of those who paid into the "public" treasury the fixed sum for which they farmed the taxes of special provinces. Under these, who generally lived at Rome, were overseers of districts, and under these again the actual collectors, who being in close relationship to the people, themselves in general grossly extortionate, and a sign of subjection to the hated Roman government, were of all men, it would seem, most bitterly hated by the people; and especially, as Edersheim observes, the custom-house official, such as Matthew was. His being a Jew, as many were, would naturally be the climax of his wickedness in the eyes of the people.

2 (14-17): the annulling of law.

2. Then come to him the disciples of John, saying, [t]Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said unto them, Can the sons of the bride-chamber mourn, as long as the [u]bridegroom is with them? But there will come days when the bridegroom shall be [v]taken from them, and then shall they fast. No one putteth a [w]patch of unfulled cloth upon an [x]old garment: for that which filleth it up taketh from the garment, and a [y]worse rent is made.

t Mk. 2. 18-22. Lk. 5. 33-39. cf. Joel 1. 14. u Jno. 3. 29. cf. Jno. 17. 12. v cf. Jno. 16. 6, 20, 22. w cf. Lk. 15. 22. cf. Gal. 2. 16-21. x cf. Is. 64. 6. cf. Phil. 3. 4-8; cf. Heb. 8. 13. y cf. Gal. 3. 3, 15-17, 25-29; cf. Gal. 4. 9-11, 21-31; cf. Gal. 5. 2-4; cf. Gal. 6. 12-15.

believe, could find His company. They might have remembered, but chose rather to forget, that the Baptist also, than whom there could be no sterner preacher of righteousness, had found response to his message in just such a class (ch. xxi. 32). But the Lord answers. (what indeed they had not ventured to address to Him), that He was a physician; did not, of course, come after them, who were well enough, but to the sick ones; and that they had never learnt, what they needed much to know, that God had said in the Scriptures which they acknowledged, that He would have mercy, rather than sacrifice. It was little mercy indeed that rabbinism showed to these tax-gatherers, as, indeed, "sick" enough, as a class, they were, and needing the physician. But here was One who was the perfect expression of divine mercy, not merely receiving, but actively going out after the objects of it; One who came not to call the righteous but sinners. If so, the chief of sinners would have chief title. But divine love, and the wondrous power of it, are strange to the heart of the legalist at any time; and then Christ must be strange.

2. It is not only the Pharisee who has question as to the Lord's ways. The disciples of John find Him at variance with their master. But there is a notable difference between them: the disciples of John come straight to the Lord with their question, instead of assailing His followers with it: they do not find fault, but inquire. Moreover they may ask, why His disciples fast not: they could not put such a question as to the Lord Himself. Still what they needed was to know better the glory of Him whom they were addressing, as they needed also to realize the essentially secondary character of what had all its value from its being an expression simply of the spirit of the man who used it. To make it an iron or universal rule would be to degrade it really,—to make it a form from which the life has departed.

Christ had come to His own: and what would be the spirit of those who realized this? The Bridegroom had come to the bride, and should the children of the bride-chamber—the invited guests—clothe themselves with the array of mourners? That would be impossible to one who knew Him aright; but there would be time enough for fasting, when the Bridegroom would be taken from them; this, of course, implying His rejection: in those days fasting would be perfectly in place.

But the Lord goes beyond this to speak of the change of dispensation that was now at hand, and for which they must be prepared: a change which would be still more complete and radical; not a mere patch upon an old garment. The garment of legal righteousness was in fact wearing out, and man being exhibited as the prophet had declared him, "*all* his righteousnesses but as filthy rags" (Isa. lxiv. 6). What good in patching up what was so utterly gone? Between the new evangelical righteousness and the old legal one there can be only the strife of contradictory principles. There can be no fusion here: with all such attempts the rent is only made worse.

Nor only this: the spirit of the gospel, the free, expansive power of Christianity, cannot be put into the old skins of ceremonial Judaism. Here both the wine will be lost, and the skins will perish. And this has been proved experi-

Nor do they put [z]new wine into old [wine-] skins, else the skins [a]burst, and the wine is poured out, and the skins perish; but they put new wine into [b]fresh skins, and both are preserved together.

3 (18–26): faith realized and the dead raised.

3. While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a [c]certain ruler and worshiped him, saying, My daughter hath by this time [d]died; but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. And Jesus arose and followed him, and [so did] his disciples. And, behold, a woman who had had an [e]issue of blood twelve years, came behind and [f]touched the border of his garment: for she said within herself, If I can touch but

z *cf.* Jno. 2. 3, 9, 10. *cf.* Acts 2. 13-18. *cf.* Acts 13. 52. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 8.
a *cf.* ch. 13. 5, 6, 20, 21. *cf.* Heb. 6. 4-6, 9.
b *cf.* Jno. 3. 5-8. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 17.
c Mk. 5. 22-43. Lk. 8. 41-56.
d Lk. 7. 11-15; Jno. 11. 4-15; *cf.* Eph. 2. 1.
e Lev. 15. 19-27; *cf.* ch. 15. 19, 20.
f *cf.* ch. 8. 3; *cf.* Rom. 4. 5.

mentally: the thing has happened; ritualism of every kind is just such an experiment, with the result that we have neither Judaism nor Christianity left. The living organism can only clothe itself with the tissues woven by the life itself.

3. This is already parable, and a parabolic story follows it. We have a picture of things which could not as yet be spoken out: two incidents connected together, which, different as they are, throw light upon one another, and are found, in dispensational and moral application, to continue and complete the lessons which the Lord has been enforcing. The perfect fitness of the whole here, internally, and to the place in which it stands, vouches for the reality of the meaning which we attribute to it.

The truth has been coming more and more into recognition, that Israel, whom the Lord came to heal, is in fact but a corpse, like the ruler's daughter. We have not the name of this ruler in Matthew; but in the two other Gospels which narrate the miracle, we find that his name was Jairus or Jair (Judg. x. 3, *see notes*), the "enlightener,"* a name quite suited to those "fathers" of that generation of Israel which had, alas, become a nation of the dead, fathers through whom the enlightening Word has come down to us.

If such then be Israel's condition, we see why the principle of law must be given up, as just now declared. Law is not for the dead, but for the living; for the dead it is useless. But "if there had been a law given which could have given *life*, verily, *righteousness* should have been by the law" (Gal. iii. 21). These are the two things—life and righteousness—which we find in the Lord's words just now, and in the narrative here, connected together.

If the principle of law, then, be given up, and grace be shown by the mere goodness of God, the apostle's question becomes an unanswerable one: "Is He the God of the Jews only? is He not also of the Gentiles?" (Rom. iii. 29, 30,)—will such goodness confine itself within the limits of a feeble and scattered people, or much rather go out to meet the universal need?

So it is, then, that while the Lord is on His way to fulfil a special declared purpose, faith in the woman with the issue claims Him, and finds answer to its claim. Again we have not in Matthew the same detail as in either Mark or Luke, and for the same reason as was noticed before, that it is with the signs which manifest Him that Matthew is occupied. Her disease, an issue of blood, is given, which was not merely a slow sapping of the life away, but, according to the law, defiling also by contact (Lev. xv. 25–27): so that here again (as with the leper) there is uncleanness, the typical reminder of the effect of sin.

But in this case it is not the Lord who touches, it is faith that touches, not Him, but rather His garment. It is the activity of faith that is here seen, of

* This is one of the reasons assigned for a mythical interpretation of the history by Strauss and others, the symbolic meaning of the name; but they might for the same reason make all Scripture mythical; while all that shows inspiration shuts out myth.

his garment, I shall be healed. But Jesus turned and saw her, and said, Daughter, be of good [g]courage: thy faith hath healed thee. And the woman was healed from that hour. And when Jesus came to the ruler's house, and saw the flute-players and the crowd making a [h]noise, he said, Give place; for the maid is not dead, but [i]sleepeth. And they derided him. But when the crowd had been put forth, he went in and [j]took her hand, and the maid arose. And the [k]fame of it went out into all that land.

[g] ver. 2. Mk. 10. 49. Lk. 7. 50. Lk. 17. 19.

[h] *cf.* 2 Chro. 35. 25. *cf.* Jno. 11. 33.

[i] Jno. 11. 11-14. *cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 13, 14.

[j] ch. 8. 3, 15. *cf.* Rom. 6. 10 with Eph. 2. 5, 6.

[k] ch. 4. 24.

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. ix. 27–x.)

The King's Messengers.

SECTION 1. (chap. ix. 27-34.)

The King indeed.

[l] (ix. 27-31); light given.

[1] AND as Jesus passed on from thence, two [l]blind men followed him, crying out and saying, [m]Son of David, have mercy on us. And when he had come into the

[l] ch. 20. 30-34. *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 9.

[m] *cf.* ch. 15. 22. Lk. 18. 38, 39.

course, and that lays hold, not of Himself personally, but of His robe—His character as displayed in His life down here. None the less certainly is virtue found in Him; and He pauses on His way to ratify her title to the healing and impute it to her faith. In principle it is the grace to the Gentiles during the present delay of Israel's blessing.

But He reaches the house at last, and finds the mourners busy, who mock at the quiet words which speak of the power of resurrection in His hands. But the unbelieving crowd being put forth, the maid arises: and so, in spite of her desperate condition and the unbelief that mocks at Him, will Israel, when He appears and at His word to her, arise. It is a figure we have often in the prophets, of the revival of the nation in the last days. (Isa. xxvi. 19; Ezek. xxxvii; Dan. xii. 2; Hos. vi. 2.)

Under this dispensational application we may without difficulty discover an individual one, in which the intertwining of the two miracles, if not presenting so clear a meaning, is yet significant. In Jairus' daughter we have man's state in its full reality discovered. The Lord is here the Life-giver: the dead hears the voice of the Son of God and lives. This is the divine side of salvation, and here man is passive and recipient merely. But there is another side, and the woman with the issue seems clearly to represent this. Her faith applies to the Saviour for its need, and the issue of blood is staunched. These are the two sides of a common history, to adjust which fully may transcend our power: and yet each has its place. It is Mark, however, especially, who brings out this individual view, as Matthew the dispensational; but the double application, with the place in which we find these in the different Gospels, confirms the whole.

The signs which manifest the King are here complete. We see how truly He is no merely human King, but One "marked out Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection of the dead" (Rom. i. 4, *Gk.*) And such the fore-ordained King of Israel was to be. He is now, therefore, ready to be proclaimed as this over the land; and accordingly we find provision made for this proclamation now by the commission given to the twelve apostles.

SUBD. 2. *Sec. 1.*

[1] In all that we have hitherto had before us, the Lord has not once yet been owned as Son of David; nor, since the day of the magi, as the King. The question is first as to His higher title. The Father's voice is the first to own Him as the Son of God; and this is surely in due order. Afterwards, and as taught of Him, the Baptist does so (John i. 33, 34); but it is not Matthew who records

house, the blind men came unto him. And Jesus saith unto them, [n]Believe ye that I am able to do this? They say unto him, Yea, Lord. Then [o]touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly [p]charged them, saying, Take heed, let no one know it. But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that land.

2 (32-34): and speech, with deliverance from the enemy: yet rejected.

[2] And as they were going out, behold, they brought a [q]dumb man to him, [r]possessed by a demon. And, when the [s]demon was cast out, the dumb spake. And

n Mk. 9. 23, 24. *cf.* Heb. 11. 6.
o ch. 8. 3. Mk. 8. 22-26. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 21.
p ch. 8. 4. Mk. 7. 24. Mk. 1. 45.
q ch. 12. 22, 23. Lk. 11. 14. Is. 32. 4. Is. 35. 6. *cf.* Rom. 10. 9, 10. r *cf.* Lk. 13. 16. s *cf.* Mk. 9. 25-27; *cf.* Acts 26. 18.

this, nor have we heard it yet in Matthew upon the lips of men. The devils own it and tremble. Men call Him Master (i.e. Teacher) and Lord: and this He accepts, taking naturally and as of full right the highest place. Of Himself He ordinarily speaks as Son of man, a title which prophecy had given Him indeed, but with some indistinctness, and which claimed more than might at first sight appear: for why should one who was simply and only that, assume what is universal among men, as if it were *unique in Him?* The grace and tenderness of the title are what strike us most.

With all this, we have not heard Him here as yet openly claim to be the Christ or King. He seems to wait for human lips to pronounce this, and indeed pointedly asks the disciples the question at a later time, who do they say that He, the Son of man is? And when Peter answers, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," He refers this acknowledgment of Him to the Father's revelation of Him (ch. xvi. 16). In none of the synoptics does such a confession come before this; but in John, Andrew owns Him at the beginning to be Messias (John i. 41), and to the woman of Samaria (iv. 25, 26) He openly declares Himself. Still, upon the whole, we may say, He waits for faith to acknowledge Him, and always, in connection with the Kingdom, His divine Sonship is the first question. The manifestation of Himself in this way is now complete, and now we have the testimony, humble enough though it be, to the King of Israel.

Two* blind men appeal to Him on His way from the ruler's house, as Son of David: a testimony confirmed by Him with the miracle by which they receive their sight, when once it is seen that it is faith that speaks in it. Blindness indeed was upon Israel, for which there could be no remedy until in the sense of it they should cry to Him. Here, as with the leper, He heals by touch, and forbids them to make it known; an injunction which could not have been, as at a later time, because of His rejection by the people, for as yet the decisive rejection had not come—He was Himself going to send out a testimony far and wide among them. One would say that it must have been because the testimony to the Son of David was peculiarly liable to abuse among a carnal people who could be attracted by miracles and the display of power, while their hearts were far away from God. For this reason the acknowledgment of the Son of God must come before that of the Son of David. The latter title indeed He Himself never uses, though He could not but own it, where as here true faith expressed itself in it.

[2] Linked directly with this miracle we have another. A dumb demoniac is brought to Him, and when the demon is cast out, the dumb speaks. Here again surely, we have Israel's miserable enslavement to the prince of this world, which they showed in their rejection of the true King. The dumb will speak,

*This "two" of testimony to Him is comparatively common in Matthew: as in the case of the two demoniacs previously, where Mark and Luke have only one; and the two other blind men at Jericho, still in the other Gospels only one.

the multitudes marveled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel. But the Pharisees said, He [f]casteth out demons by the prince of the demons.

SECTION 2. (chap. ix. 35–x.)

His Messengers.

1 (ix. 35–x. 15): the authority given.

[1] And Jesus [g]went about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the [h]gospel of the kingdom, and healing all sickness and all infirmity. And, seeing the multitudes, he was moved with [i]compassion about them, because they were harassed and [k]cast away, as [l]sheep that have no shepherd. Then saith he to his disciples: The [m]harvest indeed is great, but the [n]laborers are few: beseech, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that [o]he would thrust forth laborers into his harvest.

And when he had called to him his [p]twelve disciples, he gave them [q]authority over unclean spirits to cast them out, and to [r]heal all disease and all infirmity.

f ch. 12. 24, etc. Mk. 3. 22, etc. Lk. 11. 15, etc.

g ch. 4. 23. Mk. 6. 6. Lk. 13. 22. Acts 10.38.

h ch. 4. 17. ch. 13. 19. ch. 24. 14.

i ch. 14. 14. Mk. 6. 34.

k ch. 10. 6. Ezek. 34. 1–6. Zech. 10. 2.

l Nu. 27.17. 1 Ki. 22.17. ch. 2. 6. Ps. 80. 1. Ezek.34.12–19. Jno. 10.12–14.

m Lk. 10. 2. Jno. 4. 35–38. *a cf.* Jno. 6. 9; *cf.* Acts 1. 15; *cf.* 2 Tim .4. 9–11, 16. *b* 2 Thess. 3. 1; *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 12; *cf.* 2 Cor. 3. 5, 6. *c* Mk. 3. 13–19; Lk.6.12–16. *d* Mk. 6. 7–12; Lk. 9. 1–6. *e* ver. 8; *cf.* ch. 17. 16, 19–21.

only when the demon is cast out, and then it will be indeed to the praise of their Deliverer. But now the miracle is only provocative of blasphemy from the Pharisees, which they repeat more boldly at an after-time, and which then brings out the Lord's warning words as to blasphemy against the Spirit. It was a sign of hearts that were hardening themselves against all that divine love could do.

But it was yet to be seen whether Israel as a whole were going with such leaders. The pity of the Lord is only roused by it now to more importunate appeal to the people to whom He had come,—*His* people and the sheep of His pasture,—to listen to His voice.

Sec. 2.

The Lord refuses, then, the leaders of the people as representing the people themselves. They are mere misleaders, shepherds not feeding the flock, but injuring and rending them. As He goes up and down Galilee, constantly bearing testimony of the Kingdom at hand, and doing every where the mighty deeds which were the demonstration of the power of God already among them to bring it in, His heart is moved with the misery of their condition. Yet the sheltering wings of divine mercy were manifestly ready to be folded over them. It depended but upon themselves whether they would welcome the love that was seeking them. The abundant miracles, appealing as they did to the very senses of men, by the relief of need in every form and however desperate, could not but appeal to every legitimate self-interest on man's part. And, however it might be with the nation at large, He is assured of the harvest that will reward labor in these beckoning fields. But the laborers, where are they? He bids His disciples, therefore, supplicate the Lord of the harvest that He would thrust forth laborers into His harvest—not merely "send" but impel them to go out; and then He turns these praying ones into laborers themselves. He gives them authority to do the works that He is doing—power over the whole power of the enemy and every outward consequence of sin, and sends them out to testify thus by word and work of the Kingdom drawing nigh.

The messengers thus sent out are themselves significant. We are familiar with their manifest deficiencies from a mere human point of view, deficiencies which made them only the more dependent upon that divine power which worked in them and through them. The apostle of the Gentiles afterwards, himself a man of very different up-bringing from these Galilean fishermen, and

Now the [f] names of the twelve apostles are these: first, [g] Simon, who is called Peter, and [h] Andrew his brother; [i] James, the [son] of Zebedee, and [j] John his brother; [k] Philip and [l] Bartholomew; [m] Thomas and [n] Matthew the taxgatherer; [o] James, the [son] of Alphæus and [p] Thaddæus;* [q] Simon the Cananæan and [r] Judas Iscariot, who also delivered him up.

These twelve Jesus [s] sent away when he had charged them, saying, Go not away to any way of the [t] nations,

* Or, "Lebbæus, who was surnamed Thaddæus."

[f] Acts 1. 13. Mk. 3. 13-19. Lk. 6. 12-16. [g] Jno. 1. 41, 42. ch. 16. 16-19. ch. 26. 69-75. Jno. 21. 15-19. 1 Pet. 1. 1. [h] Jno. 1. 40. ch. 4. 18. Mk. 13. 3. [i] ch. 4. 21. Mk. 10. 35-42; Acts 12. 2. [j] Lk. 9. 49-56; Jno. 13. 23; Jno. 21. 24; 2 Jno. 1. [k] Jno. 1. 43, 44, 46; Jno. 6. 5-7; Jno. 12. 21; Jno. 14. 8, 9. [l] *cf.* Jno. 1. 45-51; *cf.* Jno. 21. 2. [m] Jno. 11. 16; Jno. 14. 5-7; Jno. 20. 24-29; Jno. 21. 2. [n] ch. 9. 9; Lk. 5. 27-32. [o] Mk. 15. 40; ch. 13. 55; Acts 12. 17. [p] *cf.* Jno. 14. 22; *cf.* Jude 1; Lk. 6. 16. [q] Lk. 6. 15. [r] Jno. 6. 70, 71; Jno. 12. 4-6; Jno. 13. 2, 26-29; Lk. 22. 47, 48; Acts 1. 16-20, 25. [s] *cf.* ch. 28; 16-20; *etc.* 1 Cor. 15. 8-10. [t] *cf.* Acts 1. 8.

just when addressing himself to the vain and luxurious inhabitants of a wealthy pagan city, expressly stripped himself of any natural advantages that he might have, and "came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto them the testimony of God." And this was expressly that his "speech and his preaching might not be with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor. ii. 1, 4). It is certain that these rude instruments, as we should call them, yet moulded and energized by the Spirit of God, did a work such as has never since been done. Doubtless there was a fitness so given to them, transcending all the power of the schools to accomplish since. It is remarkable, with but an exception or two, how little we know of this or of them. In the Gospels themselves we much more often have them held up as warnings to us, than for our imitation. In the Acts, where most we should expect to find them, only one or two—fewer than in the Gospels—are at all prominent. And even these soon pass from our sight, and scarcely even a fragment of tradition of them remains. The "Acts" are, as has been well said, rather the acts of the Spirit of God, sovereignly using any that He will, than the "Acts of the Apostles," as they have come without warrant to be called; though Paul the apostle—not any of the twelve—is the principal figure in the latter half of the book. It is to the Spirit of God, evidently, that we are commended, and to practise the same utter dependence upon Him as they did.

No doubt, what we have of these earliest workmen should reveal to us much more than we have ever found in it. Even their names and their number should be significant. The Lord Himself connects them with the twelve tribes of Israel, over whom they are to rule in the day of the earth's "regeneration" (ch. xix. 28). And on the foundations of the heavenly city their names are also found (Rev. xxi. 14). Twelve is indeed the number of manifest divine rule, as we have often seen, and these twelve names should have lessons for us in such connection. Their ministry is specially connected with the Kingdom, as Paul's is eminently with the Church (Col. i. 25*), and thus, probably, it is that their names are on the foundations of the city of God, which is the centre of divine government in that scene to which the book of Revelation carries us forward.

But we have here only a preparatory testimony addressed to Israel, and the names are in pairs, six pairs, as they were sent out by the Lord, two and two, not disregarding apparently in this the natural or spiritual ties which link men together. Simon and Andrew are brothers, and Simon had been led by his brother to Jesus: here there were both links. The sons of Zebedee come next. Then Philip and Bartholomew, the latter supposed to be that Nathanael, whom Philip had brought to the Lord. Beyond this we are not able to go in realizing such connection, and as to the names and persons had better leave what can be said of them to develop naturally from the history.

* Where read "minister"—not "*a* minister"—"to *complete* the word of God."

and into any city of the [u]Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the [v]lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The [w]kingdom of heaven is at hand. [x]Heal the infirm, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons: [y]freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither [z]gold nor silver nor brass for your girdles, nor wallet for the way, nor two coats, nor shoes, nor staff: for the [a]laborer is worthy of his sustenance. But into whatever city or village ye enter, inquire who in it is [b]worthy, and there abide until ye go forth. And when ye enter into a house, salute it; and if the house be worthy, let your [c]peace come upon it; but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hearken to your words, as ye depart out of that house or city, [d]shake off the dust of your feet. Verily, I say unto you, It shall be more [e]tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.

2(x. 16-23): a witness in the face of enemies.

[2] Behold, *I* send you forth, as [f]sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore prudent as [g]serpents, and guileless as [h]doves. But [i]beware of men: for they will de-

u *cf.* Jno. 4. 9, *etc.* Acts 8. 5.
v ch. 9. 36. *cf.* Gal. 2. 7-9. *etc.* 1 Cor. 1. 24-29.
w ch. 3. 2. ch. 4. 17.
x ver. 1. *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 12.
y *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 10.
z Lk. 10. 4. *cf.* Lk. 22. 35-38. *cf.* Acts 3. 6. *cf.* 3 Jno. 7, 8.
a Lk. 10. 7. *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 4-15. *cf.* 1 Tim. 5. 18.
b *cf.* Acts 16. 15.
c Lk. 10. 5-8.
d Lk. 10. 10-12. *cf.* Acts 13. 51.
e ch. 11. 22.
f Lk. 10. 3.
g *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 16; *cf.* Col. 4. 5. h *cf.* Phil. 2. 14-16; *cf.* 1 Pet. 3. 13, 14. i *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 14, 15. *etc.* ch. 7. 15.

Here they are upon a special mission to the "lost sheep"—already that—"of the house of Israel," and are strictly forbidden to go whether to Gentiles or Samaritans. It is not at all an evangelization after the Christian pattern, and the directions given to them are only in part applicable to the present time. They were to proclaim the Kingdom as at hand, accompanying the proclamation with what the apostle calls, because of their connection with this, the "powers of the age" (not "world") "to come" (Heb. vi. 5). Sickness and death would yield to them; leprosy, (which had to do also with defilement before God,) and the power of the enemy: blessings to be scattered far and wide, as manifesting the grace which they themselves also had received. They were to take no supply, whether of money or clothing, as not going out into a heathen world but among those professedly owning God, with whose message they came, and as under the guardianship of the King their Master,—having a right, therefore, to expect the sustenance due to His laborers. Referring to this afterwards, and appealing to their own experience of how this expectation had been fulfilled to them, He distinctly recalls this commandment, in view of their going out into the world after His rejection (Luke xxii. 35, 36); and the laborers of an after-time are distinctly commended by the apostle, "because that for His Name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles" (3 John 7). But now the King's messengers were not to go as strangers: in every city or village those worthy were to be sought out, and with these they were to abide till they went forth from the city. The "peace" with which they greeted a house, made good, if it were worthy, with substantial blessing, would more than recompense all that they might receive. If it were not worthy, then the blessing would be as if it were not uttered. Finally, against house or city that would not receive them, they were to shake off the dust of their feet, as not willing to carry with them the least particle of that which belonged to those in hostility to their Lord. It would be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment than for that city.

[2] Invitation and warning thus went hand in hand; but the Lord does not hide from the disciples the fact that the nation, nay, the world, would reject Him, and therefore them. He puts this indeed fully before them, to prepare them for it and encourage them in view of it: He was sending them forth as

liver you up to [j]councils,* and scourge you in their synagogues; and ye shall be brought before [k]princes and kings on my account, for a witness to them and to the nations. But when they deliver you up, be not [l]careful how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak: for it is not ye that are the speakers, but the [m]Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you. But [n]brother shall deliver up brother to death, and father, child; and children shall rise up against parents and put them to death; and ye shall be [o]hated of all on account of my name; but he that [p]endureth to the end, *he* shall be saved. But [q]when they persecute you in one† city, flee to another: for, verily I say unto you, ye shall not have [r]completed the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come.

j Mk. 13. 9. *cf.* Jno. 16. 2.
cf. Acts 4. 5-7.
cf. Acts 5. 17-40.
k *cf.* Acts 12. 1.
cf. 2 Tim. 4. 16.
l Mk. 13. 11-13. Lk. 12. 11, 12. Lk. 21. 14-19. *cf.* Ex. 4. 10-12.
m *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 1-5.
n *cf.* Jno. 7. 5. *cf.* vers. 35, 36.
o *cf.* Jno. 16. 1-4.
p ch. 24. 13.
q *cf.* Acts 14. 6.
r *cf.* ch. 24. 4-30.

* "Sanhedrim." † this.

sheep in the midst of wolves,—a hopeless thing to natural expectation; they were therefore to be as prudent—or wary—as serpents, but pure as doves,—without the serpent's deceit. Men would deliver them up to councils, or sanhedrim, spiritual courts connected with the synagogues themselves. But beyond this they would bring them before governors and kings, the secular Gentile powers, as we see in the Lord's case, necessarily under a different charge, and with a malice which He would turn to a testimony in the highest places and to the Gentiles at large, whom grace was content to seek even in such a manner. Paul's case illustrates all this fully at a later day.

But they need not be careful as to their defence at such times. They would not be left to mere unaided wisdom. As the cause of Christ the Spirit of their Father would take it up and give them words fitted. Yet the hatred of them would be so intense as to break through all natural ties, and change the strongest affections into bitterest enmity. Brother would rise against brother, father against child, children against parents: they must endure, and at the end would come deliverance. Fleeing from one city to another, they would not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man was come.

These last words make it plain that the mission of the twelve, while a mission to Israel only, and necessarily broken off by the judgment upon Jerusalem and the dispersion of the people, if not before, yet is not in the Lord's mind at an end even now. It will be taken up again under similar circumstances, but in the face of bitterer persecution, and continued until the actual coming of the Son of man from heaven and the consequent deliverance of His own at a time yet future. No doubt the Lord's words could not as yet be understood by those to whom He spoke; and they have been a cause of great perplexity to commentators, and variously interpreted by them in consequence. Had they not mostly confounded this testimony to Israel alone with the general publication of the gospel since, they would have had their perplexity increased. The occurrence of the same exhortation and encouragement with the distinct and detailed prophecy of the coming of the Son of man, in the twenty-fourth chapter, assures us as to the meaning here. Again there we are told that "he that endureth to the end shall be saved," the special troubles of the last days are put before us, and the Lord's coming at the end "with all His holy angels with Him." But even as to the meaning of this, many have gone quite astray; while the lack of understanding of the parenthetical nature of the present Christian time has necessarily confounded things which should have been kept far apart. In the Old Testament prophecy the present time of grace to the Gentiles never appears; and to this character the words of the Lord here conform. The new dispensa-

s(x. 24-33): but before God.

[3] The [s]disciple is not above the teacher, nor the servant above his lord. It is sufficient for the disciple that he should become as his teacher, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the [t]Master of the house Beelzebul, how much more those of his household? Fear them [u]not, therefore; for there is [v]nothing covered which shall not be revealed, nor hid which shall not be known. What I say to you in the darkness, [w]speak in the light; and what ye hear in the ear, preach upon the house-tops. And be not afraid of those that [x]kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but fear ye rather [y]him who is able to destroy both soul and body

s Lk. 6. 40. Jno. 13. 16.
t cf. Jno. 8. 48 with Acts 2. 13.
u cf. Acts 4. 13, 19, 20.
v Mk. 4. 22. Lk. 12. 2,3. cf. 1 Cor. 4. 5.
w cf. Acts 5. 20. cf. Col. 1. 23.
x cf. Is. 8. 12, 13. cf. Dan. 3. 16-18.
y cf. 2 Cor. 5. 11.

tion was not yet in view, and could not be while yet the testimony to Israel was going on. But this is, on this very account, not yet the place to consider what will necessarily be before us a little further on. (See chap. xiii. 35.)

[3] The Lord urges now upon His disciples their necessary identification with Himself, so that they can expect no better treatment than He Himself received. If they had called the Master of the house Beelzebul,* how much more those of his household. Beelzebul means the "lord of the dwelling,"—the *Satanic* "master of the house," who made the demon-possessed his habitation. They called *Him* this who was the lawful Master, the One stronger than the strong, who set the poor captives free (xii. 29). What, then, would they call the men of His household? But then from such raving there was nothing to fear. All would one day be unveiled and brought to light; and in that confidence they might proclaim upon the house-tops whatever they had heard of Him in greatest privacy.

It was true that in their enmity to it men might kill the body: this was their limit; by doing so they would only deprive themselves of further power. The soul would survive beyond their reach. God could destroy both body and soul in hell,† and He who has this power is the One only to be feared. We cannot but remember, in view of the Lord's words here, that there was a Judas already among this little band of witnesses for Christ,—a man whose surname was "Iscariot,"‡ and who "from the beginning" was known by Him to be the

* So all the editors. Most commentators take it as a contemptuous alteration of Baalzebub, "lord of flies," the Philistine god of Ekron. Edersheim says that *zebul* means, in Rabbinic language, only the Temple, and suggests that *zibbul* may be referred to, which means "sacrificing to idols." Others take *zebul* as "dung;" but this is *zebel*. I give what seems most satisfactory, following Lange (*Commentary on Matthew*).

† Man has spirit as well as soul, but the Lord speaks of soul here, doubtless, because it is in closest connection with the body,—which is therefore called the "psychical" (not "natural) body" (1 Cor. xv. 44),—of which it is the "life." *Psyche*, like *nephesh* in the Old Testament, is thus used for "life" and "soul." Of "spirit" there is not in Scripture a possible question: of soul there might be; but the Lord affirms here its survival also. The common thought of body and soul being the whole man has clouded the truth of immortality, as if it had to be proved from a solitary text or so, as here: and also from its making man only what the beast is, in which there is also a "living soul" (Gen. i. 30). Spirit is what is distinctive of man (1 Cor. ii. 11).

Again, when the Lord speaks of body and soul in hell, He does not speak of "killing" any more, but of "destroying,"—a word used as to "ruin" of any kind. (See, for a full discussion, my "*Facts and Theories as to a Future State.*")

‡ The surname "Iscariot" has had many interpretations: commentators in general having pretty well settled down now into the belief that it means "*Ish Kerioth*," or the "man of Kerioth." If so, he was the one Judean among the disciples, who otherwise were of Galilee; and some see much significance in this. But is it not much more probable that it is from the same root with, and akin to Issachar, "there is reward," or "hire," too near identity being naturally avoided with one of the fathers of Israel? There seems to have been a form of the word, *shacar*, from which is derived the word *eshcar* (Ezek. xxvii. 15) of similar meaning. Iscariot might mean even thus the "trafficker," more closely connected with his crime than "hireling" would be. Notice how we are reminded of this surname (which may have been given him afterwards) at the very time when he puts himself into Satan's hands for the betrayal of the Lord (Luke xxii. 3).

in hell. Are not two [z]sparrows sold for a penny? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father; but of you even the [a]hairs of the head are all numbered. [b]Fear not, therefore: ye are of more account than many sparrows. Every one, therefore, who shall [c]confess me before men, him will *I* also confess before my Father who is in heaven; but whosoever shall deny me before men, him will *I* also [d]deny before my Father who is in heaven.

[e] (x. 34-38): the test of discipleship.

[e] Think not that I came to send* [e]peace upon the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man at [f]variance with his father, and the daughter with her mother, and the daughter-in-law with her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his household. He who loveth father or mother more

[z] Lk. 12. 4-7.

[a] Lk. 21. 18. *cf.* Acts 27. 34.

[b] ver. 26. *cf.* Heb. 13. 5, 6.

[c] Lk. 12. 8. Ps. 119. 46. *cf.* Rev. 3. 8.

[d] Lk. 12. 9. 2 Tim. 2. 12. *cf.* ch. 7. 23.

[e] Lk. 12. 49–53.

[f] Mi. 7. 6. *cf.* Jno. 9. 18–23.

* *Βάλλειν* is to put on over a thing, as clothes, armor, or to put [into the mind]; but rather the former here with *ἐπί*,—"put peace upon the earth," "clothe the earth with peace;" "send" is too much as if the sword were His intention, whereas it is the result of the world being away from God.

traitor (John vi. 64). Solemn words of our Lord in the presence of such an one; and surely for his ears.

But He goes on to encourage them with the blessed thought of being in relation to such an one as Father, without whom not one of those sparrows which men sold two for a penny,* could fall to the ground, and whose tender care had numbered every hair of His children's heads. They were of more account, then, than many sparrows.

But they must confess Christ before men: whoso confessed Him before men He also would confess before His Father in heaven; and whoso denied Him, He also would deny before His Father—He could not now say *their* Father—in heaven. Grace never sets aside the holiness of God, but conforms us to its conditions; while divine holiness does not set aside the grace, which always receives the penitent: and the chief of the apostles furnishes us with the illustration of this.

[e] The test of true discipleship is found then in the preference of Christ to all things whatsoever else. The Prince of peace had come into the world, and yet the effect of His presence would not be to produce peace as between man and man, but on the contrary to bring out all the opposition of the heart to Him. For this they must be prepared. Variance would be introduced into families,—an effect with which the truth has been invariably reproached. Professing disciples would have to take their choice, therefore, between Himself and all else, were it father, mother, son or daughter; the inmates of a man's house would be his foes. No one would be fit to be a disciple of His who did not accept this, and take up his cross to follow Him. Here for the first time He intimates the death before Him,—the shame which He has turned to glory: a dread word now for those whom He is sending out as heralds of His Kingdom, but with all the intimation of sorrow and rejection. Humbling Himself to all that the enmity of man can do, His language is that of serenest, fullest consciousness of a title far more than royal—a *divine* title. With the world thus against Him, He putting forth no power to subdue it, nor even to shelter His people from the vindictive hatred which He predicts, He claims from all that will be His disciples the most perfect devotedness that could be shown by man. He is to be dearer than the dearest, nearer than those bound by the closest of ties. And under

* An assarion, really equal to a cent, or a halfpenny sterling.

than me is not [g] worthy of me; and he who loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he who doth not take up his [h] cross and follow after me is not worthy of me.

5 (x. 39-42) a recompense.

5 He that [i] findeth his life shall lose it, and he who hath lost his life for my sake shall find it. He that [j] receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a [k] cup of cold [water] only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

1 (1-15): Sufficiency and unity of the manifestation.

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chap. xi.)

The Separation of a Remnant.

1 (1-6): the divine accord in signs of His presence.

1. [l] AND it came to pass, when Jesus had finished commanding his twelve disciples, that he [l] passed on thence to teach and to preach in their cities. Now,

[g] Lk. 14. 26. *cf.* Deut. 33. 9. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 16.
[h] Lk. 14. 27. Lk. 9. 23. ch. 16. 24. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 10.
[i] ch. 16. 25. Jno. 12. 25. Mk. 8. 34, 35. *cf.* Acts 20. 24.
[j] ch. 18. 5. ch. 25. 40, 45. *cf.* Gal. 4. 14. *cf.* Heb. 6. 10.
[k] *cf.* Lk. 21. 1-4. *cf.* 1 Ki. 18. 4.
[l] *cf.* ch. 9. 38 with John 6. 38.

such constraint they are to follow Him as the perfect, supreme example of all that is highest to be attained: to be "worthy of Him" their whole ambition! How His glory shines out here from the depth of self-abasement.

5 He goes on to declare the recompense, connecting it with the conditions already laid down. "He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he who has lost his life"—not simply as having done this, but—"*for My sake*, shall find it." This is no principle of asceticism, or anything like that: it is His love governing in the face of a hostile world. Then He identifies Himself in the fullest way with those sent forth by Him: "he that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me." This principle He now extends beyond those He is addressing: "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward." That is, where mind and heart identify one with the prophet or the righteous man, God will identify him: the receiver of a prophet shall be blessed *with* the prophet. And divine love will forget nothing that is done for love's sake: "whosoever shall give to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, he shall in no wise lose his reward."

SUBD. 3.

We have now the separation of a remnant to Himself, while the mass are going on to complete rejection. This we see through all this manifestation of Himself; the more fully He is manifested, the more this rejection of Him appears: for it is just His divine glory which they refuse most utterly. But it is this also which brings out the faith of those divinely taught, the babes, conscious of their own nothingness, to whom the things of God can be declared. These are wisdom's children who justify wisdom, even in ways that seem most opposite; while the rest reject alike whatever God may please to use in the way of witness to them. In the Lord's words to those who listen to Him the coming grace begins to be more distinctly seen.

1. [1] First of all, we have brought before us the sufficiency and unity of the manifestation made. And this is emphasized in a message to the Baptist, who from Herod's prison in which he is shut up, sends by his disciples to the Lord,

when [m]John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent by his disciples, and said unto him; Art thou he that cometh, or are we to expect another? And Jesus answered and said, Go your way, and tell John the things ye hear and see. The [n]blind recover sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the

m ch. 4. 12. ch. 14. 3. *cf.* Jer. 32. 2, etc. *ctr.* Phil. 1. 12-21.
n ch. 9. 27, etc.

to ask if He is indeed the Coming One, the One they had been expecting; or were they still to look for another.

It is evident that, in some measure at least, doubt was assailing the mind of the Baptist. Indeed, with regard to such a matter as this, the smallest question unanswered is an agony. No doubt, he had expected in the One to whom he had borne witness, conduct in some way different from that which he had since heard of Him. It is generally and naturally said that he expected, as the mass of the nation certainly did, the Kingdom to be established in power which would put down all opposition, and yet here was he, the messenger to prepare His way, languishing in the power of an immoral usurper of the Kingdom that was Christ's alone. But John had proclaimed Him as the Lamb of God, and evidently the Lamb of sacrifice,—nay, as taking away the sin of the world (John i. 29). How, but by suffering and death? Must he not have understood, then, that this might involve suffering for His disciples also, even as the Lord had spoken of days to come in which the Bridegroom would be taken away from them, and that then they would fast?

Perhaps the reserve the Lord had hitherto maintained as to His Messiahship, and for which we may find reason in the carnal views held by the people as to it, may have, at least, prompted the desire that He would explicitly declare Himself. This seems the simplest account of the question put through his disciples. It was from the Lord Himself he sought the answer: and if he could not put this and that together, the Lord would know how to help him, and to have compassion on him.

The Lord answers by referring the messengers to what they heard and saw. The signs spoken of by Isaiah (xxxv. 5, 6) were being given before them: the blind were receiving sight, and the lame were walking; more than that, the lepers (whose uncleanness cast them out from man and from the house of God, and which only God could heal) were being cleansed, and the deaf heard—a blessed thing, when now there was so much to hear,—these were such things as the prophet had spoken of, to be fulfilled in Messiah's days.

But more, the dead were being raised:—the sign which marked out Christ as "Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness." * For, although prophets had done this before, yet never as the seal of such a testimony as His, that "as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son *quickeneth whom He will*" (John v. 21). Thus now there was indeed "good news" for the poor: we may say "gospel," for it is the same word; only we must understand that the gospel, as we think of it now, is a very different thing. *Then* it was that "the Son of man had power on earth to forgive sins;" *now* it is the precious "blood of Jesus Christ His Son" that "cleanseth from all sin" (1 John i. 7). The blood shed was the emphatic sign of His rejection by the world, as it is for us that by which we are brought to God. That death of His was not, therefore, yet preached; *He* was not preaching it: and though He had indeed spoken to His disciples of taking up their cross, it was only after this that He began to speak to them of His own, to the consternation of all, and to be "rebuked" by Peter for it (ch. xvi. 22). When His death came, though they had been then fully warned of it, it seemed the collapse of all their hopes; and when the women declared His resurrection, "their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not" (Luke xxiv. 11).

* Rom. i. 4: where it should read, "by resurrection of dead persons," and cannot be limited therefore to His own resurrection, as the common version is taken to mean.

deaf hear; the dead are raised, and the poor have good news preached to them:* and [o]blessed is he who shall not be stumbled by me.

2 (7-15): His witness to John, and John's witness.

[2] And as these went their way, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: [p]What went ye out into the wilderness to look upon? a [q]reed shaken with the wind? [Nay] but what went ye out to see? a man clothed in [r]soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in king's houses. But why went ye out? to see a prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and [s]more than a prophet: this is he of whom it is written, [t]Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, that among those that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist; but the [u]lesser one in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. But

o *cf.* Jno.12. 37. *cf.* Jno. 15. 24. *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 23, 24.
p Lk. 7. 24-30.
q *cf.* Eph. 4. 14. *cf.* Jas. 1.6-8.
r *cf.* ch. 3. 4. *cf.* 2 Ki.1.8.
s *cf.*ch.13.17. *cf.*Jno.5.35.
t Is. 40. 3. Mal. 3. 1.
u *cf.*Heb.11. 40. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 10-12. *cf.* Eph. 3.4 -10.

* *Literally,* "are evangelized."

Yet how sweet this gospel preached to them by the Son of God among them, and confirmed by the abundant signs of divine power working far and wide. "To the poor" also—poor in every sense—He proclaimed it; to "publicans and sinners," as we know: One come to seek and save the "lost"—though that is not quite what we have reached yet, and as yet He is acting as "Minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers" (Rom. xv. 8). Israel's rejection of Him, without being able to destroy this as the final purpose of His love, was soon to bring about the revelation of purposes still more glorious, the display of which would be, characteristically, among sinners of the Gentiles.

The Lord adds therefore, as admonition for John, but in the gentlest terms, "And blessed is he who shall not be stumbled by Me." His reserve as to taking His title as Messiah was already the foreshadow of the blessing passing, in the meantime, from the people with whom all the Scriptures had connected it—to whom belonged "the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service, and the promises" (Rom. ix. 4)—heart-break enough for a Jew, that! And He had already spoken of "days in which the Bridegroom should be taken away from them!" Here was danger, indeed, of stumbling over the stumbling-stone. The exercise as to this John could not escape: it was forced upon him by his own circumstances. But then this new beatitude was to be his also. And every honest exercise, if it be for the time an agony, will be found in the end the travail-pain of a new beatitude.

[2] But thus now it is the Lord whom we find bearing witness to John, instead of John bearing witness to Him. His own words are fulfilled, "I receive not testimony from man" (John v. 34). Right and meet it is that He should be His own sufficient witness; and blessed it is to see now how, where John had brought his own testimony into question, the Lord comes forward on his behalf. What was it that the multitudes had gone out into the wilderness to look upon? in fact it was what John was that had largely drawn them out to him. Had they been thus moved by a mere reed, to be shaken by the wind? No, spite of all seeming now, they knew better. Was it a soft luxurious man that they saw in the wilderness? It was the wrong place in which to find such. Had they not rather believed him to be a prophet? And they were not mistaken: he was that and more. For, indeed, among those merely born of women, there had not arisen a greater than this man with his strange baptism; and yet, the Lord adds emphatically, "the one comparatively little in the Kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

He does not say, "the least," nor does the expression seem the equivalent of

from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven is [v]taken by violence and the violent seize upon it. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And, if ye will receive it, this is [w]Elias, who was to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

2 (16-24): Israel rejecting the way of righteousness and grace alike.

2. But to what, then, shall I liken this generation? It is like [x]children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their companions, saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye

[v] Lk. 16. 16. cf. Lk. 3. 19, 20.

[w] ch. 17. 12. Mal. 4. 5.

[x] Lk. 7. 31–35.

this; and we must first of all consider in what this greatness which the Lord ascribes to John consists, before we can properly estimate the force of His words.

Plainly, it cannot be that even the little one in the Kingdom of heaven can be greater morally than John the Baptist; but then it can hardly be thought that John himself was greater in this respect than all the men that had preceded him. That is not the point of comparison: it is in the place given to him as the predicted messenger who was to prepare the way before Messiah. Certainly spiritual greatness could not be wanting in one put in such a position; but that is another thing. "All the prophets and the law prophesied until John?" they all pointed onward to the time of which John was able to say, "It is just at hand." It was for him to change the whole character of testimony hitherto, and to sound the note of Jubilee which announced a Kingdom not of earth but of heaven, and the King Himself even at the door. And, this being his greatness, it is easy to understand that he would be in the greater position, who was in the Kingdom itself, and could say in the language of the psalmist anticipating this, "As we have heard, so have we seen, in the city of Jehovah of hosts, in the city of our God" (Ps. xlviii. 8).

The Lord's words are commonly taken indeed to refer to the Kingdom in its present Christian and parenthetic character; and no one would deny that such an application could be made. But the testimony as to this was not that given by the Baptist, nor was it yet given when these words were spoken. The Kingdom in this form only began to be spoken of, and in parabolic utterance, when once it was clear that Israel had indeed rejected Him. And that time was now close at hand, and of course foreseen by the Speaker here, but not yet made definitely plain, even to disciples. Every thing would indicate to us that the Lord is declaring the blessedness of that of which all the prophets prophesied, and which John himself had announced, and when Israel will be lifted up to a greatness, which has never yet been paralleled in all the history of that favored nation. That they then put it away from them does not in the least affect this application, which relieves all difficulties at once, and yet leaves room for another application. This must, however, as I believe, be a secondary one.

The next words of the Lord have more real difficulty than those preceding them. They have been taken in opposite ways: the "violent," who seize upon the Kingdom having been thought to refer to the opposition of the scribes and Pharisees, as if they were forcibly taking possession of it; but this is hardly possible as the meaning of the words. "Seize upon it" they could not, though they could obstruct the way of those who were seeking to enter. But their opposition compelled men to violence who would possess themselves of it. As yet, indeed, it was only preached, or presented in the person of the King, and not set up; but the adversaries and those who laid hold of it as thus proclaimed were being distinguished. Until John there had only been the prophesying of what was yet at a distance; John was in fact, if men would receive him, the Elias who was to come. Elias then had come and gone: his "days" could be spoken of as past already. So urgent was the call, then: he that had ears at all must now give ear.

2. The Lord goes on to speak of the way in which, in fact, the senseless gener-

have not beaten the breast. For John came [y] neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a demon; the Son of man came [z] eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a glutton and a wine-bibber, a friend of taxgatherers and sinners. And wisdom is [a] justified by her children.

Then began he to [b] reproach the cities in which most of his mighty works had taken place, because they repented not. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for had the mighty works which have taken place in you, taken place in Tyre and Sidon, they would have long ago repented in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which hast been [c] raised up to heaven,* shalt be brought down to hades: for if the mighty works which have taken place in thee had taken place in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the [d] day of judgment than for thee.

3 (25-30): the revelation of the Father and the Son.

3. At [e] that time Jesus answered and said, I give thee thanks, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast [f] hid these things from wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto [g] babes. Yea, Father, for so it hath

y *cf.* ch. 3.4. Lk. 1. 15. Lk.5.33–35. *cf.* ch. 3. 2.
z Lk. 5. 29–32. Jno.2.1–11. Lk. 7. 36. *cf.* Jno.3.16.
a *cf.* Prov.8. 8, 9. *cf.* Jno.8.43.
b Lk. 10.13–16. ch. 10. 15. *cf.* Heb. 2. 1–4.
c *cf.* Lk. 18. 14. *cf.* Rev. 18. 7. Is. 25. 12. Is. 26. 5.
d *cf.* Jonah 3. 7, 8. ch. 10. 15. *cf.* Lk. 12. 47, 48. *cf.* ch.25.31. etc.
e Lk. 10. 21, 22.
f I Cor. 1.19–21, 27–31. Is. 6. 9, 10.
g Ps. 8. 2. *cf.* ch.16.17. I Cor. 3.18.

* Others read, "shalt thou be raised up to heaven?"

ation to which God had thus been speaking had treated the divine appeal that had been made to them. They were merely like children in the midst of the serious business going on around them, idling away their time in mocking the realities of life. They trifled in their pleasure, they trifled with sorrow, even with that which was upon man for his sins, and carried him away from both his pleasures and his sorrows. They would have had John dance to their piping, and Jesus and his disciples beat their breasts to their idle dirge. The ways of God never suited them; if John came in the way of righteousness and so with his call to repentance, they said he had a demon—would drive us among the tombs. If the grace of God in Christ came among them as not shunning contact, but eating and drinking even with the sinners whom it had come after to win them to the Giver of all good they knew not, then they reviled it as licentiousness, and the Saviour as fit company for those whose need had brought Him to their help. No way would suit them that divine love could take; while wisdom's children justified her in all her ways.

So then they but turned the mercies shown them into occasions of judgment and self-degradation. Tyre and Sidon would have repented, had they seen the glorious things which Chorazin and Bethsaida had beheld unmoved. Sodom would have remained to that day, if it had had the privileges of favored Capernaum. But therefore the judgment of Tyre and Sidon and of Sodom would be lighter in the day of judgment, than that of Israel's cities. Capernaum, the city of His choice, had come near to heaven by the Presence which indeed makes heaven for those that have received His grace. It would sink down under the weight of its rejection of Him to a mere abode of death and desolation.* And such it has long been, whether the identification of its site be correct or not.

3. The Lord turns from it all, to approve, spite of the sorrow that filled His heart, the Father's perfect ways. It was right to hide from the world's wise

* To *Hades*, "the unseen," the region of departed spirits; not "hell" or Gehenna.

been pleasing in thy sight. All things have been [h] delivered unto me by my Father; and no one [i] knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any one the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son may will to [j] reveal [him]. [k] Come unto me, all ye that labor and are burdened, and I will give you [l] rest. Take my [m] yoke upon you, and learn of me: for I am [n] meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls: for my yoke is [o] easy, and my burden light.

h cf. Jno. 5. 27. Jno. 13. 3. Jno. 17. 2. *cf.* Heb. 2. 8. *i cf.* Ex. 16. 15. *cf.* Lev. 1. 17. *cf.* Eph. 3. 19. *j* Jno. 1. 14, 18. Jno. 6. 46. Jno. 17. 6, 26.

k Jno. 6. 35, 37; Jno. 1. 38, 39. *l etr.* Is. 57. 20, 21; *cf.* Is. 30. 15; *cf.* Is. 32. 17, 18; *cf.* Rom. 5. 1. *m cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 21; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 2. *n* Jno. 13. 15; Phil. 2. 5; 1 Pet. 2. 21-23; *cf.* ch. 26. 67, 68. *o* 1 Jno. 5. 3; *etr.* Acts 15. 10.

and prudent what to babes He could reveal. This is not hiding anything from men as men, but from men that cleave to their own wisdom,—are wise enough to judge God, but not to judge themselves. In that condition it is impossible that He and they should come together. It is a first necessity that God should have His place—should *be* God; and therefore man be the puny creature that he is, a babe indeed before Him. If there be true wisdom, he will find it no hardship to take his place as this before the Lord of heaven and earth: and here is the condition of all true blessing.

Here, then, was the Son of the Father; Himself the Repository of all blessing: all things in His hand, whose very Person was to man an inscrutable mystery, before which all the pride of man must humble itself; but a mystery of grace in which as nowhere else God is revealed. The Son makes known the Father,—He, and He alone. We find here, beyond all that had been predicted as to Messiah, the glory which is not, so to speak, officially, but personally His. It passes knowledge, and yet it is for us to know: it is not God shrouded in the darkness, but the glory of the Light; inaccessible, though most accessible; an infinite fullness, in which we are filled up. Here we need but capacity to receive; emptiness in ourselves, not fullness; the "babe's" capacity to draw from and live upon Another, and to such need it is that He wills to reveal Himself, and in revealing Himself to reveal God—Lord of heaven and earth, and yet the Father, for the "babe" to call upon as such.

Practically rejected already by the people to whom He came, He appeals, then, to these needy ones wherever they may be—to those who have found the world but a weary place, in which those "laboring" after satisfaction only find, in proportion to the eagerness of search, the heavier weight of disappointment—He appeals to these to come away from this fruitless labor to Himself for rest. He will *give* rest. The responsibility of fully satisfying them shall be His own.

In this way, He is practically outside of Israel: for wants of this kind are not the birth-right privileges of the chosen nation. He, too, is more and higher than a mere King of the Jews; as His call and offer show, by the character of those invited and by the freeness of the gift, that it is not law but grace that He is declaring. But He is a King; and in submission to Him all hope for man is found. He gives rest, but not to those going on in rebellion. Seeking and following one's own will, no rest is practicable; it would be rest in sin. "Take My yoke upon you," He says, "and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

What an example for our imitation! When God raised up a leader for His people of old, to bring them out of Egypt and into the land, He gave them one after this pattern: "the man Moses was very meek above all men that were on the face of the earth" (Num. xii. 3). That was God's choice for a ruler of His people. But now here is the One to whom all things are delivered, and how perfectly does He exemplify this character! Maker and Lord of all, He has come down among men as one that serveth: doing, throughout, His Father's will, and learning what obedience is, in a strange path of human suffering.

SUBDIVISION 4. (Chap. xii.)

The Passing of Divine Long-suffering.

1 (1-13): Christ the source of all authority.

1 AT that time Jesus went on the sabbath through the [p] corn-fields; and his disciples were hungry, and began to pluck the ears and to eat. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the [q] sabbath. But

[p] Mk. 2. 23-28. Lk. 6. 1-5. cf. Deut. 23. 25.
[q] Lk. 13. 10-17. Jno. 5. 9-17.

Well may we learn such a lesson from such a Teacher! and, submitting ourselves to such a yoke as He will impose, find rest from the unrest of our own self-will!

Some think of His yoke here, as if it were a yoke He had borne that He gave us, or as if we shared it with Him. But the "red heifer" is His picture, "upon which never came yoke" (Num. xix. 2): the doing of His Father's will was never that to Him. For a yoke implies restraint; and then there must be something to be restrained: and this for us is true, as for Him it could not be. He speaks both of a yoke and of a burden; but the yoke is not that of the law, but a gentle as well as salutary one; and His burden is light.

SUBD. 4.

The fourth subdivision now closes this part with the full manifestation of the breach between the Lord and Israel. The incidents are grouped together, however, not altogether historically, but according to the usual manner in Matthew, for the purpose of illustrating clearly the great dispensational change that is beginning. The story of the corn-fields and the healing of the withered hand is brought in here from the earlier place to which it belongs chronologically, because the Sabbath was a sign of God's covenant with the nation, and Christ being Lord of it shows how absolutely dependent upon Him their blessing was. The repetition of their awful charge of casting out demons through the prince of the demons, gives occasion to the Lord's warning as to blasphemy against the Spirit as the unpardonable sin. While at the end of the twelfth chapter He formally refuses the claim of fleshly relationships, such as Israel's was ("of whom, as concerning the flesh Christ came,") and declares the spiritual tie between His disciples and Himself as that which replaces it,—the new principle of Christianity. In the next chapter we have the parables of the Kingdom in its present form, and the very style (the parable) shows the mass of the people as given up to hardness of heart (xiii. 11-15). It is true that after all this the Lord presents Himself definitively to the nation, riding into Jerusalem as her King in fulfilment of Zechariah's prophecy, and this brings on the closing scenes; but it is the full public confirmation which they here give, and which it was designed of God that they should be permitted to give, of a rejection which had virtually taken place before. At this, and the principle involved in it, we shall have to look, when we reach that portion of the Gospel.

1. [1] The question of the Sabbath is that which we find first raised; and Christ declares Himself the Lord of the sabbath on a double ground, that of His Person and that of His work. At this we must look more closely. The two incidents given here are found in both the other synoptic Gospels, and the question (somewhat differently answered) is found in all.

If the ten commandments were, as Scripture positively declares (Ex. xxxiv. 27), God's covenant with His people, the Sabbath as the fourth of these had evidently a peculiar place among them. It was the only commandment that was positive, not moral,—something, therefore, which, with the failure of the covenant itself, might fail and be set aside, as those which were moral could not. Covenant or no covenant, every other part of the "ten words" has its ground in the nature of God Himself, and must be as unchanging as He is. Thus, although the "rule" of Christianity is not that of the law but a higher one (Gal. vi. 16), yet it is none the less true that "the *righteousness* of the law"—the "righteous requirement" (*δικαίωμα*), that which was essentially right-

he said unto them, Have ye not read what [r] David did, when he was hungry, and those with him: how he entered into the house of God, and ate the show-bread, which it was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those with him, but only for the priests? Or have ye not

[r] 1 Sam. 21. 1-6. Ex. 25. 30. Ex. 29. 32, 33. Lev. 24. 5-9.

eous in it—"is fulfilled in us who walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. viii. 4). In the sabbath, then, we find something which in its being set aside could be a "sign" of their relationship with God broken by their sin, as no other commandment could.

And the Sabbath *was* a "sign." "I gave them My sabbaths," says God by Ezekiel, "to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them" (Ezek. xx. 12). For this purpose it was, in fact, every way fitted. As first given in the book of Exodus, it is a memorial of God's rest as the Creator, when satisfied with the goodness of all His hands had made. Thus alone could He rest ever; and as a sign of God resting as satisfied, we can see at once how much the maintenance of the sabbath meant for an Israelite,—how fiercely the Pharisee would resent the thought of its being set aside. In Deuteronomy (v. 15) they are commanded to keep it as a people redeemed from Egyptian bondage; and here also the loss of it would be most serious. As the sign of a people set apart to God they had often submitted to all kinds of injury rather than themselves violate it.

With their multiplied guards against infringement—the hedge round the law—the disciples rubbing the ears of corn between the hands could be thought of as a work: the *gathering* for personal use, if hungry, was permitted. The Pharisees boldly appeal to Him about the conduct of His disciples in doing what was not lawful to do *upon the sabbath;* not unlawful *in itself*, or at other times, but as a violation of the day of rest. The Lord replies, justifying them against the charge, but not at all in the way we should expect Him to have done. He does not attack their human additions to the divine Word, nor their fine spun interpretations of it: He takes higher and stronger ground, exposing the whole condition of the people as before God, and through their unbelief in Him, who was Lord of the sabbath, and with whose rejection the sabbath could no longer be with them at all.

David was ahungered, and those that were with him: did they remember how he entered into the house of God, and ate the show-bread, which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those with him, but only for the priests? This was not a doubtful point, not a question of human additions to the law or interpretations of it, but a direct opposition to the Levitical statute. But how, then, could the Lord justify this? Was it on the ground of hunger, merely? and were they so far from possibility of help as to justify the setting aside of the law in their case? and was every hungry man entitled with David here to set it aside?

The answer must be surely sought elsewhere: David, who took the show-bread, was in fact the anointed King of Israel, Saul having been rejected of God for his disobedience to the divine commands. Yet David was now fleeing, a well-nigh solitary man, from the causeless wrath of Saul. Moreover upon the King all Israel's relation to God now depended. The priesthood had utterly failed; the ark was in practical banishment all the days of Saul (1 Chron. xiii. 3). And, according to the prophetic word of the man of God to Eli, even the "*faithful* priest," raised up of God, was to "walk before" His "anointed" king "continually." (1 Sam. ii. 35, 36, and contrast Num. xxvii. 21.) Thus David brings the ark to Zion, and assumes afterwards the ordering of the service in connection with it.

David, then, being in rejection, the whole relationship of God with Israel had suffered eclipse, and the sanctity of the consecrated things was departed from them: and this is, no doubt, the meaning of his words to the high-priest upon the occasion referred to: "and the bread is, as it were, common, though it were

read in the law that on the sabbaths the [s]priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are guiltless? But I say unto you, that here is one [t]greater than the temple. But if ye had known what that is, "I will have [u]mercy and not sacrifice," ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is [v]Lord of the sabbath.

And, when he was departed thence, he came into their synagogue. And behold, a man having a hand [w]withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath? that they might accuse him. But

[s] Num. 28.9, 10. *cf.* Jno. 7. 22, 23.
[t] *cf.* 2 Chro. 6. 18. *cf.* Is. 66. 1, 2.
[u] Hos. 6. 6. Mi. 6. 6-8. *cf.* 1 Sam. 15. 22. *cf.* ch. 15. 4-6.
[v] *cf.* Jno. 5. 17. *cf.* Col. 2. 16.

12. [w] Mk. 3. 1-6; Lk. 6. 6-11; *cf.* Lk. 14. 3, 4; *cf.* Is. 56. 3-8.

sanctified this day in the vessel." All was, for the moment, in abeyance in Israel, and that because of the rejection of the anointed of Jehovah. How much more surely, then, when the antitypical David was in their midst, only to be rejected, was it the uttermost folly to contend for a sabbath! How could the sabbath remain for those who were refusing the Lord of the sabbath?*

The Lord cites from the law itself another witness. The priestly service of sacrifice did not cease upon the sabbath: the morning and evening sacrifices were even increased (Num. xxviii. 9, 10). Here man's sin was the cause, but the grace of God also that provided for the sin. This whole typical sacrificial system, much older than the law, and dating really from the gate of Eden, though incorporated with the legal system when this was established, was the constant, though veiled, witness of the grace running through all previous dispensations. Before it, wherever there was conflict, the "sign" of the legal covenant gave way, as here. Thus, even now, Israel's sin, and yet also the incoming grace of God along with it, were setting aside the legal covenant. "The temple" thus insisted on this violation of the Sabbath, for the glory of Him whose abode it was, and in the interests of those who could only in such a manner be maintained in relation to Him. But here was what was greater than the temple as much as the antitype was greater than the type: temple and sacrifice, the glory of God and the blessing of man, were all represented there in Him, as never before had been. No doubt, they were ignorant of it: alas, they were ignorant of plainer things, in which the character of God whom they professed to serve declared itself. *He* had said: "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice," but with them sacrifice (in the mere external way) overshadowed mercy. God was a God of requirement rather than of bounteous giving. Had they known Him as such, they would not have condemned the guiltless.

For the truth was here, the seal of all that He was saying, that "the Son of man was Lord of the Sabbath,"—the One, therefore, who had in His hand the whole adjudgment of their case; which in law, too, had gone so entirely against them. The Giver of divine rest was, indeed, among them: as that, we have just heard him proclaim Himself; for no rest could there be for man, except at the same time God could rest also. In Christ He has declared His delight; on Him the Spirit of God, dove-like, rests; He is the "Father of eternity," the One who brings about the eternal rest of God, and who, by His work, brings sinners to partake of it. But thus also, if He be rejected, Sabbath there can be none, and for ever none.

[2] The claim of His work is more distinctly affirmed in His healing the withered hand in the synagogue afterwards. Here He does work Himself, and in answer to their challenge. With distinct purpose to accuse Him, they ask, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath?" to which He answers by another question: would they not lift a sheep of theirs out of a pit upon the sabbath? and was not a man more than a sheep? Then, having silenced them with His word, He silences them with His deed: divine power heals the man before their eyes. Who shall

* See for further remarks, and especially the relation of the shew-bread to a rejected Christ and to Christianity, 1 Sam. xxi. *notes*.

he said unto them, What man shall there be of you, who if he have one [x]sheep, and it fall into a pit upon the sabbath, will not lay hold of it, and lift it out? How much, then, is a man better than a sheep! so that it is lawful to do [y]well upon the sabbath. Then saith he to the man, [z]Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it forth, and it was restored, as sound as the other.

[x] Lk. 13. 15, 16. Lk. 14. 5.

[y] *cf.* Jno. 7. 23, 24.

[z] *cf.* Ex. 4. 6, 7. *cf.* chap. 9. 6, 7.

2 (14-21): acceptance of rejection.

[2] But the Pharisees went out and took [a]counsel together against him, how they might destroy him. But Jesus, knowing it, [b]withdrew himself from thence; and many followed him, and he healed them all; and he [c]charged them strictly that they should not make him known: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Esaias the prophet, saying, [d]Behold, my servant whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall show forth judgment to the nations. He

[a] Mk. 3. 6, 7. Lk. 6. 11.

[b] *cf.* Lk. 4. 30. *cf.* Jno. 10. 39, 40.

[c] chap. 8. 4. chap. 9. 30. Mk. 8. 26.

[d] Is. 42. 1-4. chap. 3. 17. *cf.* ch. 11. 29.

stay God's love from going forth? and yet they but respond to this with more determined hatred.

[2] We now, for the first time, hear of a council held to put Jesus to death. Aware of it, He withdraws Himself, but cannot withdraw from the need which continually appeals to Him. Still the stream of mercy flows; but He charges them strictly not to make Him known: He accepts rejection, will not gather the multitudes after Him by the fame of His abundant miracles, nor raise up any against His enemies. There was plenty of material to work upon, plenty of readiness, as we know, to follow a leader of such a kind as had arisen and still would rise; but He was upon a different path and with a different purpose from any of theirs. The Spirit of God quotes from Esaias to show this. The Son-Servant (ὁ παῖς) of God, His Chosen, His Beloved, in whom His soul delights,—terms by which He is characterized in answer to the enmity and reproach which manifest themselves upon man's part,—characterized, too, by the Spirit that abides upon Him, in the fulness of that Spirit He is going to show judgment to the nations. Judgment is here the absolute right of things. Quietness, patience and gentleness characterize Him: "He shall not strive, nor cry, nor cause His voice to be heard in the streets. A bruised reed"—the perfect symbol of weakness surely—"will He not break, and smoking flax will He not quench, until He send forth judgment unto victory. And in His name shall the nations trust."

The application here is perfectly evident. Rejected of Israel, He is turning to the Gentiles, and we think, and are intended to think, of the present grace going out to the Gentiles during the Christian dispensation. But such a Gentile dispensation is never contemplated in the Old Testament prophets: it is a gap of time in the working out of God's purposes as to Israel, which in this way foreshortens their perspective, and brings the first and second comings of the Lord between which it lies, into a closeness of connection which is confusing enough to those who are not aware of this.* Isaiah in the passage quoted does not, in fact, speak of such a dispensation. He begins with the character of the Lord's ministry in Israel as Matthew here exhibits it, and then contrasts with this His showing judgment to the nations, and the final blessing which will flow out to them, in words which are quite capable of taking in the present time; and Matthew uses it in this way. There is no statement of any change of dispensation, as is clear; none the less it suits well with what is now taking place,

* The principle itself is clearly stated, chap. xiii. 11, 35; Rom. xvi. 25, 26; Eph. iii. 6, 9, 10; Col. i. 25-27, and will be considered under these texts.

shall not strive nor cry out, nor shall any hear his voice in the streets; a bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, until he bring forth judgment unto victory. And in his name shall the nations trust.

3 (22-32): the blasphemy of the Spirit.

[3] Then was brought to him one [e]possessed by a demon, blind and dumb; and he healed him, so that the dumb man [f]spake and saw. And all the multitudes were astonished and said, Is this the [g]son of David? But the Pharisees, when they heard it, said, This man doth not cast out demons, but by [h]Beelzebul, the prince of demons. But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom [i]divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand; and if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself, how then shall his kingdom stand? If *I* also by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your [j]sons cast them out? therefore *they* shall be your judges. But if *I* by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then surely the [k]kingdom of God hath come upon you. Or how can any one enter into the [l]strong

e *cf.* chap. 9. 32, 33.
f *cf.* Is. 35. 5, 6. *cf.* Ps. 126. 1, 2.
g ch. 9. 27. ch. 21. 9.
h chap. 9. 34. Mk. 3. 22-30. Lk. 11. 14-20.
i *cf.* Jn. 7. 20. *cf.* 2 Chron. 20. 23.
j *cf.* Lk. 9. 49, 50. *cf.* Lk. 10. 17. *cf.* Acts 19. 13-16.
k *cf.* Ex. 8. 19. *cf.* ch. 4. 17.
l *cf.* Is. 49. 24, 25. *cf.* 1 Pet. 5. 8.

—the shadow of the cross now beginning to fall across the path of One who meek and lowly of heart, and knowing what is before Him, accepts rejection and this uttermost sorrow with it, finding His joy meanwhile in such service of love as grace had brought Him down to, His precious compensation for the cross itself.

[3] And the road still leads downwards. One possessed by a demon is brought to Him, blind and dumb; and, the demon cast out, the blind and the dumb is at once restored. The multitudes, astonished, cry out, "Is this the Son of David?" and yet, as the question implies, only half convinced. The Pharisees hasten to extinguish the spark of this conviction by repeating their former blasphemy. They could not deny the power that was so manifest. They were driven then, if they did not submit and own God in it, to the awful alternative of imputing this to Satan. To Himself, it would seem, they dared not do this. The Lord read it in their hearts, however, and answered it. If Satan could cast out Satan, as they supposed, his kingdom would be divided against itself, and such a divided kingdom could not stand. Division there might be, no doubt, and discord in many respects, and in fact evil is in this way ever discordant, as truth and goodness are the only perfect unity. But with these healed demoniacs, it was not insinuated even that merely one form of evil had contended with another,—one had given place to another. Nay, the power of Satan, they confessed, was broken and gone: Satan was really cast out. Satan, then, had not done this. To say so would be but to confound good with evil, and lose the power of discernment altogether.

Moreover their sons professedly cast out demons. How was it, then, if they admitted, as they did admit, this? Was it an opposite power that worked in the same way? or how did they distinguish? These, then, would be their judges.

If, on the other hand, it had to be admitted that this was the work of the Spirit of God, the kingdom of God had come upon them unawares. The expression here suggests the idea of surprise: here it was, not indeed as established outwardly, but in the power which belonged to it, and that as manifested in the King Himself. Yet they were not prepared for it and did not recognize it, when before their eyes! Who, then, could enter into a strong man's house,

man's house, and seize his goods, except he first [m] bind the strong man? and then he will plunder his house. He that is not [n] with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth. Wherefore I say unto you, [o] All sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against the [p] Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in [q] this age nor in that to come.

4 (33–37): The test of the tree.

[4] Either make the [r] tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree corrupt and its fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by its fruit. Ye [s] offspring of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things; and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you that every [t] idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account of it in the day of judgment: for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

5 (38–42): the end in divine government.

[5] Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, Teacher, we wish to see a [u] sign from thee. But he answered and said to them, An evil and [v] adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet.

[m] *cf.* chap. 4. 10, 11. *cf.* Heb. 2. 14, 15.
[n] *cf.* Lk. 9. 50. *cf.* Rev. 3. 16.
[o] Lk. 24. 47. Acts 13. 38, 39. *cf.* 1 Jno. 1. 7.
[p] *cf.* ch. 21. 37, 38. *cf.* ch. 27. 18. *ctr.* Acts 3. 17. *cf.* Acts 7. 51.
[q] *cf.* ch. 19. 28. *ctr.* Is. 35. 24. *ctr.* Jer. 50. 20.
[r] ch. 7. 17, 18.
[s] ch. 3. 7. ch. 23. 33. *cf.* Ps. 140. 3.
[t] *cf.* Rom. 2. 16. *cf.* Jude 15.
[u] ch. 16. 1–4. Mk. 8. 11. *cf.* Jno. 2. 18–22.
[v] Is. 57. 3. Mk. 8. 38. *cf.* Jas. 4. 4.

and seize upon his goods, if he did not first bind the strong man? Strong enough Satan had shown himself in the case of these poor demoniacs; yet his power had been vanquished, the enemy bound. And by whom?

It had come, then, to this: there must now be an open decision; neutrality could not be permitted. "He that is not with Me is against Me; he that gathereth not with Me scattereth." Mercy could no longer be shown where the power of the Spirit of God had, as power, to be owned, and yet attributed to Satan himself. This blasphemy was no longer ignorant unbelief: it was open-eyed opposition to God and to all that was of God. A word spoken against the Son of man might be forgiven; the lowly place that He had taken—though it were but fullest grace and to meet the need of man—might yet hide His glory from the eyes of carnal men; but here was what had to be owned, could not be hidden: open-eyed hatred could not be forgiven, could never be. They expected fuller mercy in the age to come—in Messiah's day—than in the present age of law: but this could never be forgiven, in this age nor in that to come.

[4] That generation had proved its condition; the tree was known by its fruit. It was a viper's brood, from which no good thing could be expected any longer. Their mouth was speaking now out of the fulness of the heart. The treasures of the good man were good things, but the treasures of the evil, evil. Thus an idle word might prove a man's condition, and in the day of judgment all such would be taken into account,—by his words a man be justified or condemned. How impossible, then, for any to escape, who has not found his shelter in Him whom Israel here refuses!

[5] The end, then, had been reached morally. It was no use asking now for signs. An evil and adulterous generation could not be helped by signs. One they should have, the sign of the prophet Jonah. Jonah, three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, had been a sign to the Ninevites, and thus

For, as [w]Jonas was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of [x]Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold, more than Jonas is here. The [y]queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation and shall condemn it: for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon: and behold, [z]more than Solomon is here.

[w] Jonah 1. 17.
[x] Jonah 3. 5-9. Lk. 11. 32. ch. 11. 20-24.
[y] 1 Ki. 10. 1-13. Lk. 11. 31.
[z] ver. 6. *cf.* Ps. 72.1, etc.

6 (43-45): the evil mastering.

[a] But when the unclean spirit is gone out of the man, he goeth through dry places seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it [b]empty, swept and adorned. Then goeth he and taketh with him [c]seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the [d]last state of that man becometh worse than the first. So shall it be also to this evil generation.

[a] Lk. 11.24-26. *cf.* Ezra 1. 1-3.
[b] *cf.* ch. 2. 3 with Lk. 2. 7. *cf.* ch. 23.27-31. *cf.* ch. 24.1, 2.
[c] *cf.* Lk. 16.9.
[d] *cf.* Jno. 5. 43 with 2 Thess. 2. 8-12. *cf.* Rev. 18. 11-18.

7 (46-50): the rejection of natural ties complete.

[e] While he was yet speaking to the multitudes, behold, his [f]mother and his brethren stood without, seeking to speak with him. And one said to him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, seeking to speak to thee. But he answered and said to him that

[e] Mk. 3. 31-35. Lk. 8.19-21.

the preaching of a man, as it were risen from the dead, had brought that great city to repentance. Well, the Son of man would be really in the grave three days and nights, rejected and cast out, but at His preaching by His resurrection they, more hardened than Nineveh, would not repent. The Ninevites would rise up in the judgment to condemn them; so much the more as the Son of man was greater than Jonah. The queen of the south also, would rise up in the judgment against them, who came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon: and here was One how much greater!

[a] The Lord goes on to predict the end of this reformed and law-boasting generation, which rejected Him. They were cleansed from idolatry indeed, but it was but as when the unclean spirit had gone out of a man, not cast out, but of its own will. Swept and adorned its house might be, but, empty, it only invited the return of its former occupant. The occupant would return: idolatry will again take possession of Israel in the latter days, and with seven other spirits worse than this: and they will enter in and dwell there. The last state of that generation* will be worse than the first. We shall see later on in the Gospel (ch. xxiv) to what the Lord refers.

[f] All this is closed, on the Lord's part, with a significant word. While still speaking to the people, He is told by one of the bystanders that His mother and His brethren stand without, desiring to speak with Him. The cry had been raised, as we learn from Mark (iii. 21), even among His "friends," that He was beside Himself; and this attempt to speak with Him on the part of His relatives no doubt was a consequence of this. The opposition had grown so great, that alarm for His personal safety may have actuated them, and the desire to induce Him to take in some respects a different course. But if such were their thought Matthew gives no hint of it; and the omission is significant. The Lord's words are not to be taken as if they referred merely to any conduct of

* "Generation" in Scripture is often used with a moral application rather than in a time sense,—for a succession of people with the same moral characteristics, see Ps. xii. 7. This is, no doubt, the sense here.

spake to him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren" And, stretching out his hand over his disciples, he said, Behold, my mother and my brethren: for whosoever shall [f] do the will of my Father who is in heaven, *he* is my brother, and sister, and mother.

[f] Lk. 11. 27, 28.

this kind, as far as this Gospel is concerned. They are to be taken rather in connection with what has gone before and what follows here; that is, as referring to the dispensational change beginning. Judaism was essentially a national religion: men were "Jews by nature," as the apostle says, although of course, proselytes were admitted. Christians are such by *new* nature only: the spiritual tie is the whole thing. And that is what the Lord here affirms: "He answered and said to him that spake to Him, Who is My mother? and who are My brethren? And, stretching out His hand over His disciples, He said, Behold My mother and My brethren: for whosoever shall do the will of My Father who is in heaven, *he* is My brother, and sister, and mother."

DIV. 4.

We have now come, therefore, to that which directly appeals to us, the Kingdom as we know it at the present time, Israel while refusing the King having necessarily lost it, as the Lord declares to them (chap. xxi. 43). But this involves a momentous change: for the promises concerning it, all contemplated Israel as in the central place of glory and power in that day, the law of Jehovah going forth from Zion and His word from Jerusalem, the glory of God being manifested there, and the Lord reigning openly in power to the ends of the earth (Mic. iv.) These promises still belong to Israel, because His counsel shall surely stand,—His gifts and calling are without repentance (Rom. ix. 4; xi. 29). But this being so, either the Kingdom itself must be delayed till Israel is brought to receive the Lord; or else, it must in the meantime come in in a different manner from that contemplated in the prophets. This last it is which has actually taken place; not, surely, as an after-thought on God's part, for there is no such thing with Him as this, but on the contrary, revealing the riches of His grace according to counsels hidden, indeed, from ages and generations past, but now to make known to principalities and powers by means of the Church the manifold wisdom of God (Eph. iii. 10).

The whole time of the working out of these counsels is necessarily, therefore, a gap in Old Testament prophecy, and a time of delay as to the accomplishment of blessing for the earth, —a blessing which is inseparably bound up with that of Israel nationally. Christianity is indeed universal in its character, the call of the gospel being world-wide—"to every creature which is under heaven;" but it is not a call to earthly but to heavenly blessings, and to strangership and pilgrim character upon earth. And this is, so far, only what the family of faith has all along confessed (Heb. xi. 13–16.) Israel's inheritance nationally is another matter: and here the voices of the prophets unanimously direct us on to such a scene as we have seen Micah picture. Heaven in the prophets is the place of God's dwelling, but little is known of what is inside, even though Enoch went there, and Elijah went there, in days long since. For us it is opened and furnished; Christ has come out and gone in, and now we know it; and He is coming again to receive us to Himself. Our blessings are in heavenly places in Him; our home is with Himself.

In two different ways people get confused and confuse others, as to things as plain as this. Some, in the enjoyment of what is simple Christian truth to-day, read their Christianity back into the Old Testament, and can think of nothing else but a heavenly inheritance for all the saints of all times. Some, on the other hand, read the Old Testament forward into the New Testament, and make the earth the final habitation for all. Scripture is larger and more diverse than either of these understand. The Old Testament outlook is earthly unmistak-

ably, the New Testament revelation is what our Joseph, rejected of his brethren, is telling as the "Revealer of secrets" in the ears of His Gentile bride.

These are the "mysteries," which characterize Christianity, so that the apostle bids us account of his fellow-laborers and himself "as ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. iv. 1). The first great mystery is that of Christ Himself—"the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. iii. 16). Along with this, however, and as part of it, we have His whole life here, "justified in the Spirit"—by the descent of the Spirit of God upon Him,—and again by His resurrection from the dead,—"seen of angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory." It is Christ actually *come*, and known in His whole life down here, that is the mystery: not the prophetic picture merely, which certainly and clearly made known His Deity (*e. g.* Mic. v. 2), but the fulfilment of this in the person of Jesus Christ. Next we may put "the mystery of God's will . . . to *head* up," as the word really is, "all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth" (Eph. i. 9, 10)—the Headship of Christ over the (new) creation. Then we have "the mystery of *the* Christ"—not simply of Christ personally, but that in Him "the Gentiles should be joint-heirs, and a *joint-body*" (σύσσωμα), a body formed of Jews and Gentiles brought together,—"and *joint*-partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel (Eph. iii. 4, 6). Then the mystery of Christ and the Church, His Bride (Eph. v. 32). Then the mystery of "Christ *in you*" (Col. i. 27). The change of the living concurrently with the resurrection of the saints at the coming of Christ (1 Cor. xv. 51), the present blinding of Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles is come in (Rom. xi. 25), even the "mystery of iniquity" working out in Christian times, (2 Thes. ii. 7), and which the woman "Babylon the Great" bears as a brand upon her forehead (Rev. xvii. 5),—all these are "mysteries" connected with the Christian dispensation, hidden, therefore, in Old Testament times (Rom. xvi. 25; Eph. iii. 5; Col. i. 26); secrets made known to those initiated into Christianity.

It is not the place here to inquire further into these: none of them are mentioned as such in the Gospels; but we can see that in them the essential and distinctive features of Christianity are to be found. In that part of Matthew to which we have now reached, such secrets begin to be told out; and according to what we have seen to be the theme of this Gospel, they begin with the "mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven,"—the Kingdom in the new form which it acquires by the rejection of the King, and His consequent absence from the place of His Kingdom. He reigns indeed, but on the Father's throne (Rev. iii. 21),—a higher place, and which manifests His glory as the divine Son: none could sit upon such a throne but He; still it is not His human throne as Son of man. The Kingdom is administered for Him in His absence by His servants, and the fashion of it, therefore, greatly changed. In a parable in Mark, the Lord compares it to a man casting seed into the earth, and seeing it no more till the time of harvest: it springs up and grows, he knows not how (Mark iv. 26–29). This is already significant as to the possibility of failure. Left in the hands of men, we know, only too well, what man is. Divine wisdom and love cannot really be baffled; and yet we must be prepared for this seeming to be so.

These mysteries of the Kingdom speak of "things that had been hidden from the foundation of the world" (verse 35), and he that is now discipled unto the Kingdom of heaven has, therefore, in his treasures things "new" as well as "old" (verse 52). Of the bringing together of these the parables that follow here will give us decisive proof.

Subd. 1.

The history of the Kingdom is given us before the principles. It was necessary to have clearly before the eye the character of that to which the principles apply. And more especially is this so because of the opposition between the Kingdom in its initiation and in its after-development, which the history

DIVISION 4. (Chap. xiii.-xx. 28.)

The Kingdom in the hands of Men.

SUBDIVISION 1. (xiii. 1-52.)

Viewed as a Whole.

SECTION 1. (1-35.)

As left to itself,—the King absent.

1 (1-30): Individual aspects. 1 (1-23): a kingdom of the truth.

1. [1] ON that day went Jesus out of the [g] house, and sat by the [h] sea-side. And there were gathered unto him great multitudes, so that he entered into a ship himself, and sat down; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. And he spake to them many things in parables,

[g] *cf.* ch. 23. 38.

[h] *cf.* Rev. 13. 1, etc. *cf.* Rev. 17. 15. Mk. 4. 1.

so clearly shows, and which would naturally raise question of their application altogether, if this contradiction were not accounted for.

On the other hand, the veil of parable is thrown over the whole; and the Lord's explanation of the reason of this (verses 11-13), while applying primarily to unbelieving Jews, has in it most important principles of far wider application.

History given before-hand, as One alone is competent to give it, is given, not to gratify curiosity about the future, but as practical wisdom for the wise in heart, that the servants of the Lord may find the path wherein to walk and to serve Him (Rev. i. 1). Exercise of conscience will be needed to understand it, far more than grasp of intellect, and we need not wonder at diverse interpretations. Yet the Lord expects us to be able to see clearly through the veil (Mark iv. 13); and without certainty no application can be safely made: Scripture must first of all be for "doctrine," in order that it may be for "reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. iii. 16).

Matthew gives us here seven parables—the usual number indicating completeness. In some sense, surely, they are designed to give us a perfect picture of the Kingdom, but in what sense we are not entitled to decide without examination of the whole series; which is divided by difference of place and audience into four and three, the usual division of a septenary series. Four are spoken to the multitude upon the sea-shore; the last three to the disciples in the house. The numbers concur with the circumstances to lead us to expect in the first four a more external, in the last three a more internal and spiritual view. The explanation of the second parable has its place also with the three.

Sec. 1.

The first four parables also are plainly susceptible of another division. Four is often divided in Scripture into 3+1; and in this way is significant of what is good: the number of the creature (4) resolves itself into the numbers which speak of divine manifestation. On the other hand it may divide into 2x2, which as true division seems generally to have in it an evil significance. The four parables here divide in the latter way: the first two giving individual aspects,—the wheat and the tares; while the last two give us the collective aspect, the seeds gathered, as it were, into one seed; the leaven permeating the meal. We shall see as we go on, the importance of these divisions.

But the character attaching to the whole four parables may first of all be emphasized. The series as a whole has been already spoken of as applying to the Kingdom in its present "mystery" form; but we shall find that in fact only the first four parables develop this,—the fact that it is a Kingdom *left to itself*,—the King absent. This certainly does not characterize in the same way the last three, inasmuch as in two of them we find the figure of the King Himself. The man who in the one sells all that he has to buy the "field"—if the interpretation of the second parable hold good here ("the field is the world")—can be

saying, Behold, the [i]sower went forth to sow; and as he sowed, some [seed] fell by the [j]wayside, and the birds came and devoured them. And some fell on [k]rocky places, where they had not much earth; and forthwith they sprang up, because they had no depth of earth; but when the sun arose, they were scorched, and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among [l]thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked them. And some fell upon [m]good ground, and yielded fruit, this a hundredfold, this sixty, this thirty. He that hath ears, let him hear.

[i] Mk. 4. 3–9. Lk. 8. 5–8. [j] ver. 19. [k] vers. 20, 21. [l] ver. 22. [m] ver. 23.

no other than the Lord. And then also the similar action of the merchantman who buys the pearl must surely point out the same blessed Person. Here, then, we are in another line of thought to that of the first four parables. Of course, this waits for confirmation or disproof upon a closer examination.

1. The first two parables are in evident contrast with one another in this respect: in the first we have the various success—as to three parts out of four we must say the *ill* success of the good seed. In the second we have the enemy and the bad seed. Even thus far, it seems to be a picture of decline that is before us; or at least, the scene in the meanwhile grows darker and not brighter; and the tares remain, we are authoritatively told, until the harvest. But let us now take up the parables in detail.

[1] The Lord goes out of the house and sits by the seaside. He has just declared the principle which carries Him outside of Judaism. The doers of His Father's will are now alone to be His kindred. He leaves therefore the house, the sphere of natural relationship, and takes His place by the sea, the figure of man in the restlessness and barrenness of nature, of man apart from God, and so of the Gentiles. The concourse of the multitude, instead of detaining Him, hastens His departure: He enters into a ship and sits down there—takes His place definitively in separation from them.

He speaks to them indeed from this new place that He has taken, but He speaks in parables. The nation as such is given up to hardness of heart: there is no use in increasing their condemnation by more light. And yet the very addressing them shows that all are not given up. "Blindness in part is happened to Israel:" if there are those who have earnestness of heart to penetrate within the external form they shall find still a gracious heart that beats towards them. The national rejection leaves individual responsibility where it ever is. He that hath an ear, as the Lord tells them, still may hear.

Yet behold, a Sower is going forth to sow; and here is a decisive change. Israel had been God's vineyard planted once and enclosed and nurtured by God's unforgetting love. That had now long been given up: the fence had been taken away; the boar out of the woods had wasted it; the people had long been scattered. Still, though this were so, the end had not then been reached: after seventy years a remnant had been permitted to return to the desolate land, and a "fig-tree" had been "planted in the vineyard" (Luke xiii. 6). But this, too, had now failed to bring forth fruit; if such was to be found, there must be a fresh labor of the husbandman and in fresh fields: the sower must go forth to sow.

There is not now the planting of vines or fig-trees, but what better suits the character of work among the Gentiles,—the broad-cast sowing of seed. Are we not to think also of our Lord's words, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone" (John xii. 24) and to realize the new form of the gospel which would follow that death of His, now coming so plainly into sight? Its being, as the Lord in His interpretation calls it, "the word of the *Kingdom*" does not hinder this; for the apostle shows us in the epistle to the

And the disciples came and said to him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? And he answered and said unto them, Because unto you it is given to know the [n]mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever [o]hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but whosoever hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away from him. Therefore speak I unto them in parables, [p]because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the [q]prophecy of Esaias, which saith, In hearing ye shall hear, and not understand, and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: for this people's heart is grown fat, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest at any time they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But [r]blessed are *your* eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear. For verily I say unto

n Mk. 4. 10, 11. Lk. 8. 9,10.
o ch. 25. 29. Mk. 4. 25. Lk. 8. 18.
p *cf.* Jno. 7. 16, 17. *cf.* Jno. 8. 43.
q Is. 6. 9, 10. Mk. 4. 12. Lk. 8. 10. Jno. 12.39-41. Acts 28.25-27.
r Lk. 10. 23, 24. Lk.8.11-15.

Romans (x. 9–13) the gospel of the Kingdom in its present form, as based fully upon the death and resurrection of Christ. Death and resurrection both we have, wherever the seed springs up; and that is what we are called to watch now, where and with what final result the seed springs up. What success in its world-wide sowing is the word of the Kingdom now to have?

We are at once made aware that it is not world-wide success we are to expect from it. First of all, we see in the seed received by the wayside, the hard, unreceptive heart, hardened like the road by the constant traffic of the world, so that the seed never really finds lodgment in it. True, it is said to have been "sown in his heart," and that is a solemn thing. It is what the apostle's words imply, where he speaks of "by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to *every* man's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Cor. iv. 2). And yet he goes on immediately to speak of those to whom his gospel is hidden, "in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of those that believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." These two things are easily reconcilable, and we can see that the case here is quite similar to the first one in the parable, where the "birds of the air" are interpreted by the Lord as "Satan." In the parable the word has first been sown in the heart: Satan could not prevent that. It has made its appeal to the conscience, commended itself as truth to it, been sown in the heart for acceptance or rejection.* Conscience commends it, but that is not faith; in which always the personal will is concerned. Conviction is not acceptance. The soul may tremble, Felix-like, before the truth, and yet refuse it: the seed after all lies outside; and now comes Satan's work,—the god of this world blinding the minds of those that believe not, Satan catching away that which was sown in the heart, but which the heart has not accepted. Those may well tremble who have not been true to what they could not but recognize as truth: for here Satan has his opportunity with them, and he never fails to use his opportunity. Well he knows what blessedness lies for them, contained in what they so lightly refuse. His business is to prevent their knowing that,—to hide the glory of Christ from those who might be attracted by it.

For Christians also the same principle holds good. For every truth in the word of God has to be accepted thus in the soul or rejected, and we are tested

* Compare Rom. x. 8, 9: "the word is . . . in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach: that if thou . . . shalt believe in thy heart," etc., The "heart" in Scripture is not necessarily the affections, as we generally take it, but the man himself, the real man.

you, that many prophets and righteous men have longed to see what ye behold, and have not seen them, and to hear the things that ye hear and have not heard them.

Hear ye, therefore, the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom and [s]understandeth it not, the wicked one cometh and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart: this is he that received seed * by the wayside. But he that received seed * upon the rocky places is he who heareth the word and immediately with [t]joy receiveth it; but he has no root in himself, but endureth for a while; and when [u]affliction or persecution cometh on account of the word, immediately he is stumbled. But he that

[s] *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 14. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4.

[t] *cf.* Is. 58. 2. *cf.* John 5. 35. *cf.* Gal. 3. 1. *cf.* Gal. 5. 7.

[u] *cf.* Heb. 6. 4–9 with Heb. 10. 34. Acts 14. 22.

* Literally, "is sown."

by it as to how far we also are "of the truth:" "every one that is *of* the truth heareth" Christ's "voice" (John xviii. 37). Not of mere ignorance, but by the refusal of truth, have all systems of error flourished and been built up. And how few, alas, comparatively are there who have not admitted some darkness into their souls by the lack of perfect absolute uprightness before God in every particular! And in some respect it is always the glory of Christ that is thus hidden. What need have we to be cleansed according to His mind that we may have (as He desires for us) "part with Him."

Here, then, in this first failure of the good seed, the opposition of Satan is manifest. We are at once made aware that it is in a world which lieth in the wicked one that the Kingdom of heaven (in this new phase of it) is to be found. Man's responsibility is carefully maintained; but, alas, he is a fallen being, and manifests himself as such: the world, the flesh, and the devil are but too fully united in opposition to Christ. This may be detected even in the first case: for the heart has rejected the truth, and the world's traffic has hardened the heart, and Satan has only taken away that which was unwelcome. But each element of opposition must be fully shown, and we go on to see other forms of it in the seed upon the rocky ground, and that sown among the thorns.

Rocky ground it is, not stony: bed-rock, with a slight layer of earth over it, in which the seed grows rapidly but superficially, the very cause of its destruction in a little while, operating at first to produce hot-house growth: "forthwith it sprang up because it had no depth of earth;" by and by the sun growing hotter scorched it; and, because it had no root, it withered away.

Here it is the nature of the ground that is at fault. In the case of the wayside hearer it might be urged that circumstances had made him what he was: the traffic over it had made the ground hard. Here it was the nature of the ground itself. The prophet—or rather, God by him—speaks of a "heart of stone" (Ezek. xxxvi. 26); and this, without any question, is exactly pictured here. Yet there is earth also, a superficial susceptibility, which promises largely at the beginning: "he heareth the word, and immediately with joy receiveth it;" this is, as the parable states it, a sign of a lack of depth. There has been no deep conviction, no true repentance: the sentiments are engaged, but not the conscience; and such an one may be warm and enthusiastic, and make rapid progress in the learning of truth; but he has not counted the cost: "when affliction or persecution ariseth because of the word, immediately he is stumbled."

This is the flesh at its fairest; capable of coming so near to the kingdom of God, and all the more manifesting its hopeless nature. There is the unbroken rock behind that never yields itself to the word, and gives it no lodgment; and the class of hearers pictured here are born of the flesh only, and so only flesh. Let things be outwardly favorable to profession, it is plain that the

received seed * among thorns is he that heareth the word, and the [v] care of this life † and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. But he that receiveth seed * on the good ground is he who heareth the word and understandeth it, who also heareth [w] fruit and bringeth forth, [x] this one a hundredfold, and another sixty, and another thirty.

[v] *cf.* ch. 19. 16–26. *cf.* Lk. 12. 13–21. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 10. *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 9, 10.
[w] *cf.* Phil. 1. 11. *cf.* Col. 1. 6.
[x] *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 41. *cf.* 2 Cor. 9. 6. *cf.* ch. 25. 14–29.

* Literally, "is sown."
† αἰῶν, usually "age," but its oldest meaning (in Homer) was "life."

number of these may multiply largely, and may stick like dead leaves to a tree that has no rough blast to shake them off. But life is none the more in them.

There is still a third class of the unfruitful, and in these the influence of the world is paramount. The seed sown among thorns represents those in whom the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches choke the Word. Poverty and riches, as Agur long before noted (Prov. xxx. 8, 9), are seen here as alike unfavorable to spiritual life. Yet riches may entice the poor, and care weigh heavily upon the prosperous rich man. The deceitfulness of riches is so great a snare that the Lord has elsewhere said that the rich man could hardly enter into the Kingdom of heaven (Matt. xix. 23). But He expressly guarded this from any implication of its applying to salvation, as if salvation (when men sought *that*) were different for different classes. Of those who realize their need of salvation there is but *one* class: "Christ died for sinners" covers every case. But if it be a question of men seeking after it, the more they have to satisfy themselves with here, the less real is eternity likely to appear. How many have had the interest awakening within their souls stopped by such things as these the day will declare.

And so one part alone out of four of the good seed becomes fruitful really. Not, of course, that this is to be taken as numerical proportion. One fears, indeed, that any reckoning in this way would give less satisfactory results rather than more; but we must leave this with Him who "knoweth them that are His." At any rate we know well that the success of the good seed is partial; and with those in whom it *does* bring forth fruit, there are still various measures of fruitfulness: "one a hundredfold, another sixty, another thirty," says our Lord. The devil, the flesh, and the world, are the unchanging, untiring foes of all that is of God, and the true people of God have no discharge in this life from this war.

In this first parable, then, we see the beginning of the Kingdom to be in the sowing of the word of the Kingdom. The Kingdom is, ideally at least, a kingdom of the truth (John xviii. 37). The subjects are "disciples" (ver. 52). How far the Kingdom being in the hands of men may affect this we have yet to see; but even as we find it already, we find in it unreal disciples as well as true; and this the after-parables confirm. The sphere of the Kingdom is profession, a profession which will be in due time tested by the fruit it bears. There is no undue haste to realize this: the picture is that of a field of growing wheat, as to which the harvest alone can properly decide what the fruit may be; and the harvest itself is not yet spoken of. Manifestly it is a kingdom introduced in a very different way, not merely from any Jewish conception, but from anything that the prophets had announced. Thus it is of the *mysteries* of the Kingdom that the Lord is speaking. Of the sower himself we do not hear: it is upon the seed that our attention is fixed, and whoever sows *that* is the sower. Thus it might be the Lord Himself in His work on earth, although the Kingdom does not begin till the end of the Gospel * (xxviii. 18); it might be any one

* Which is probably the reason why this parable does not begin, as the others do, with "The Kingdom of heaven is like"——. The eleventh verse guards against any mistake resulting.

2 (24-30): the enemy and the spurious wheat.

24 Another parable set he before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man who sowed *y* good seed in his field; but while men *z* slept, his *a* enemy came and sowed* *b* darnel among the wheat, and went away. Now when the blade shot up and produced fruit, then appeared the darnel also. And the servants

y cf. 1 Pet. i. 23 with 1 Jno. 3. 9.
z cf. Eph. 5. 13-15.
a vers. 36-43.
b cf. Acts 20. 29, 30.

*Literally, "oversowed."

afterwards. In the sense in which the second parable speaks (ver. 37), wherever the good seed is sown, the Sower is the Son of man: personally or by His agents, it is all one sowing.

24 The second parable now shows us the work of the enemy to defeat, as far as he may, the work of Christ. Satan as the prince of the world, which has rejected and cast out the true King, will not receive now His Kingdom; and he is permitted to work without the curb of manifest power to restrain him. It is the "kingdom and *patience* of Jesus Christ," as the apostle at the beginning of Revelation fittingly reminds us (chap. i. 9); and Satan remains throughout, not only the "prince of this world," but the "god" of it (2 Cor. iv. 4). The expression used in the last passage is, in fact, much stronger than even this: it is "the god of this *aion*" or "*age*"; which shows conclusively, therefore, what the "*spirit* of this age" must be. It shuts out hope of any effectual change of this until the Lord comes and Satan is shut up in that prison (Rev. xx. 1-3), in which so many, who ought to be wiser, suppose him to be already, but which will be then a more effectual restraint than even these can persuade themselves is upon him now.

Yet it is not by persecution of the saints that we see Satan acting in this parable. He has practised this often enough, and always will, as far as he can realize that the time is favorable; but he knows, too, and that by plentiful experience, that the "blood of the martyrs is" apt, at least, to be "the seed of the church," and he has found for his purposes what is a better way. This is the way of *imitation*, "as Jannes and Jambres," in Egypt long since, "withstood Moses" (2 Tim. iii. 8), counterfeiting God's miracles with lying wonders; and such is his method in the parable before us now.

The good seed has been sown and is growing up: the "word of the Kingdom" preached has developed into "sons of the Kingdom;" so far, we have just what the previous parable has put before us, the effect of the sowing of the good seed only. The work of the enemy cannot be accomplished by sowing seed of the same kind: he sows darnel in the midst of it, and goes his way. Such "oversowing" is to-day in the East a common piece of malice; and darnel is a poisonous kind of rye, which among the Jews was credited with being a degenerate wheat: its grain is black and bitter. Thus it is evident that we have not here false profession merely, but error and its fruit: at first, deceptive and appearing at any rate not very different from the truth, but by and by developing radical opposition. The dissemination of this is accomplished "while men slept," a thing that shows an evil state among the "children of the day," however natural it may be with others (1 Thess. v. 5–7).

Notice that, throughout the New Testament, if the flesh is opposed to the Spirit, and the world to the Father, the devil is the constant enemy of Christ, and the perversion of the Word and the denial of the Person of Christ are his special work. As Christ is the truth and the true Witness, Satan is "a liar, and the father of it" (John viii. 44). The tempter of Christ in the wilderness, he enters into Judas for the betrayal at a later time. He it is who "deceiveth the whole world" (Rev. xii. 9), and who is cast into the bottomless pit to deceive the nations no more until a thousand years are fulfilled. At the end of this time, being let loose, he again goes out as of old to deceive, and is then cast into the lake of fire (Rev. xx. 3, 8, 10).

The "children of the wicked one" in the parable are thus those who are the

of the householder came and said to him, Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? whence, then, hath it darnel? And he said unto them, An enemy hath done this. And the servants say unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather it up? But he saith, Nay; lest when ye gather up the darnel, ye root up also the wheat with it. Let [c] both grow together till the harvest, and in the time of harvest I will say unto the

[c] *cf.* Phil. 3. 18, 19. *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 5–13. *cf.* 2 Thess. 3. 6.

offspring of his deception, by whom he seeks to antagonize the truth. And the New-Testament epistles give us plenty of proof of such a state of things already begun a good while before the canon of inspiration was completed. It is not needed to do more than refer to this. They show us how insidiously the "mystery of iniquity" began its work (2 Thess. ii. 7), which, however it might be hindered, would never cease until the "wicked one," energized by Satan, should be destroyed at the appearing of Christ (ver. 8). Thus the darnel would remain until the day of harvest, no human hands being competent to accomplish the separation of Christian profession from it. After many centuries now, we are all clear, whatever may be our standpoint, that this separation in fact never has been attained.

But we must remember, however, that it is of the Kingdom that the parable speaks, and not of the Church or Assembly, of which we have not heard, in fact, as yet. A large mass of Christians make no distinction between these, although here it should be plain that "the field is the world,"—the Kingdom in its present phase, the profession of Christianity in the world, or what men call Christendom; and we have no capacity, authority or responsibility to purify Christendom after this fashion. But, if we are truly Christians, we have responsibility to purge out *from our assemblies* "all things that offend, and those committing lawlessness," the thing which the angel-reapers alone can do as to the profession at large.

Rome has taken in hand, and insists upon her authority to anticipate the time of harvest; and the state-churches, following her, have feebly and spasmodically attempted the same thing. Necessarily that has followed which the Lord declared: with some darnel, they have rooted up the wheat also, and indeed this most of all. Yet the prohibition, to these Jewish disciples of the Lord, (taught as they were by the Old Testament to expect the kingdom of Messiah to be an open display of judgment upon transgressors,) would naturally be a mystery indeed; and so to those who confound the New with the Old Testament. But the Lord recognizes fully the coming of the judgment. It is only delayed, not set aside. Evil is allowed in the meanwhile to manifest itself: in the time of harvest, He will say unto the reapers, "Gather together first the darnel, and bind it in bundles for the burning; but gather the wheat into my barn."

We shall find that the Lord in His interpretation carries this further: the darnel is actually burnt, and the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. This we must look at in its own place. At present we have only the preparatory work with the darnel, which is bound in bundles with a view to its being burnt; and then the wheat is gathered into the barn. The last is clear enough: it speaks of the removal of the true saints to heaven; but the binding of the darnel in bundles is not so clear. It cannot refer to the associations now so characterizing the days in which we are, *except* we take the ground that harvest-time has already begun; and indeed it does begin, as is plain, *before* the saints are taken home. If this were true, it would show the end very nigh. The multiplication of associations, the prevalence of the principle more and more, every one must admit. We should look for it to take a form which would more and more gather the false and shut out the true, while at present true and false are sadly mixed together. With the growth of infidelity, so manifest as it is to-day, this might very quickly result. Even the

reapers, [d] Gather together first the darnel, and bind it in bundles for burning; but gather the wheat into my barn.

2. [1] Another parable set he before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of [e] mustard seed,

[d] *cf.* Is. 8. 12. *cf.* Rev. 3. 17. *cf.* Rev. 18. 7.

[e] Mk. 4. 30-32. Lk. 13. 18, 19; *cf.* Acts 1. 15, etc.

2 (31-33): Collective aspects.

[1] (31, 32): In independence.

religious associations are swallowing up the churches, and taking their work into their own hands; and all things move to-day with marvelous rapidity, as the stream grows quicker near the brink of the precipice.

2. The two parables that follow differ strikingly from those that have preceded them, and agree together in this, that we have no longer individuals before us but the mass. In the grain of mustard seed the many grains of the wheat-field are massed together: the "sons of the Kingdom" are no longer seen, nor indeed the "sons of the wicked one," but a general condition,—I believe we may add, resulting from their mixture. The "woman" of the second parable here, the common figure of the professing church, gives us in this the collective aspect, and *not* the leaven, nor the three measures of meal. This we must examine fully in its place; and as to both parables there has been sufficient disagreement among interpreters to make us look carefully at every step we take. Nor have we as to either of them the help in this way that the Lord gives as to the first two.

All the more thankful we may be, therefore, that the second parable has already carried us on to the time of harvest, mournful as it is to realize that it is thus settled without possibility of successful question, that the evil result of the oversowing of the field of profession with false doctrine never will be repaired,—that the crop, as a crop, is very much spoiled, however much the good wheat still reproduces its own likeness. But this, at least, assures us that the parables to follow cannot alter this: they cannot take away the certainty of the failure of things in man's hands which the whole history of the past declares. We have indeed but shown ourselves all along the road the too faithful imitators of our first parents in the violation of every trust that God has committed to us. One might perhaps have hoped that, with the new power of Christianity, a new history might have begun for man; but, on the contrary, every feature of Israel's history has been reproduced in that of Christendom. It is even a proverb that "history repeats itself." Prophecy and history unite to assure us that as to this Christianity is not an exception to the rest.

[1] The parable of the mustard-seed is similar to those that have gone before it in its being the growth of a living thing that is brought before us, but that which is to be remarked in it now is its *disproportionate* growth, in which it seems to overstep the limits of its nature. The round seed of the mustard was used proverbially among the Jews for the smallest of things, which it was relatively to the other seeds they sowed. Its development in the East in favorable places is indeed in conspicuous contrast with its growth elsewhere. But the question is raised at once, Is the world, then, a favorable place for the growth of a kingdom "not of this world," and where the devil and the flesh unite with the world in unceasing opposition to it? Either the world must (measurably, at least,) cease to be what it is, or the seed must change in some respects its character, for the Kingdom of heaven to take its place among the kingdoms of the earth: and this is, in fact what the parable shows.

"And the general meaning," says Edersheim, "would be the more easily apprehended, that a tree, whose wide-spreading branches afforded lodgment to the birds of heaven, was a familiar Old Testament figure for a mighty kingdom that gave shelter to the nations. Indeed it is specifically used as an illustration of the Messianic kingdom."

He refers in the first place to Ezek. xxxi. 3–6, where we have the picture drawn by God Himself of the Assyrian power: "Therefore his height was ex-

which a man took and sowed in his field; which indeed is less than all seeds, but, when it is grown, it is greater

alted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, . . . all the fowls of the heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations." In Daniel we have a similar picture of the Babylonian in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, which is interpreted by the prophet (chap. iv. 20–22): "The tree that thou sawest, which grew and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth; whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the air had their habitation: it is thou, O king, who art grown and become strong; for thy greatness is grown and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth."

The likeness here to the "tree" of the parable cannot surely be doubted: it is a figure of earthly greatness that is pictured. And yet it cannot but be remarked that there is not in the parable after all anything like the greatness of the Assyrian or Babylonian empire. The passage in Ezek. xvii. also, to which Edersheim refers as picturing the Messianic kingdom,—in fact, the resurrection of the house of David in Messiah's day,—still represents a cedar, the stateliest of trees, under which "dwell all fowl of every wing, and in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell." But this speaks of a future time, and a very different dispensation.

The tree of the parable is a *garden shrub out-doing itself*. It grows into a tree, and the birds of heaven lodge in its branches; but if you look at this as divine increase, it will naturally be asked, why then is there nothing more glorious than this? As growth it is dubious, and the mention of the birds of heaven cannot but remind us that the birds of heaven carried away the good seed in the first parable, and that the Lord's interpretation is, "Then cometh *the wicked one*." Great Babylon, the figure of a professing Christian body in guilty connection with the kings of the earth, becomes "a cage of every unclean and hateful bird" (Rev. xviii. 2). If we remember that this seed and its development give the Kingdom as a whole, and that the previous parable has shown us a mixed condition in fact, the result of the enemy's work, then the anomalous tree becomes perfectly intelligible. The state of the whole has been affected by this mixture of diverse elements. There has resulted from it what we know as Christendom to-day. Christianity has been more or less assimilated to the principles of the world; the world, in consequence becomes more favorable to the adulterated Christianity. The shrub grows,—overgrows its nature, if you consider what its character is as defined at its first beginning. A people unknown by the world (1 John iii. 1), and strangers in it (1 Pet. ii. 11), followers of One it crucified, and crucified to it by His cross (Gal. vi. 14), not of it, even as He is not of it (John xvii. 14), become a people well-known, honored and at home in it. Nay, they acquire the right to rule, and like their predecessors at Corinth, "reign as kings" (1 Cor. iv. 8), quite without fear of apostolic rebuke for it. Yet after all, the spiritual and political interests can never become so accordant that the tree shall assume the dimensions of full imperial power. The woman may ride the beast, but even so these are diverse. Alas, this political Christianity is more powerful to corrupt the Church than to elevate the world, and she that rides the beast is but a painted harlot. It passes the subtlest imagination to conceive how what is "not of the world" can become *of* the world and yet retain its character. The birds of the heaven are wiser: they understand their claim upon the abnormal tree for lodgment, and find it there.

The Kingdom is now, in the form it has taken, in independence of its King. To the Corinthians the apostle could say, "Ye have reigned as kings *without us*:" they were not in communion any longer with men "appointed to death," for their sufferings "a spectacle to the world and to angels and to men." "I

than herbs, and becometh a *f*tree, so that the *g*birds of heaven come and lodge in its branches.

[2] (33): the leaven of falsehood.

[2] Another parable spake he unto them, The kingdom

f cf. Ezek. 17. 22-24. *cf.* Ezek. 31. 3-9. *cf.* Dan. 4. 20-22. *g cf.* vers. 4, 19; *cf.* Rev. 18. 2; *cf.* Rev. 2. 20.

would to God," he says, "that ye did reign, that we also might reign with you." If the saints reign now, they are still reigning without the apostles. Time can make no difference in this respect, so long as it is still true that all the saints are not reigning together. And that time will not come until the Lord takes His own throne as Son of man,—a *human* throne that He can share with others. True, He reigns now, but on His Father's throne, which no mere man can ever sit upon (Rev. iii. 21); and He reigns, distinctly, as rejected by the world: "Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstool" (Ps. cx. 1). Thus the saints cannot reign now, except in unfaithfulness, in independence of their Lord Himself. The tree is thus anomalous, and the condition evil.

[2] A worse thing follows, which clearly connects with what precedes it here: "The Kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."

Here the explanations ordinarily given are so generally in contradiction to the truth, that it will be well to look at them more particularly before attempting to develop this. Edersheim gives thus briefly the generally accepted view:—

"To this *extensive* power of the Kingdom [as shown in the Mustard-seed] corresponded its *intensive* character, whether in the world at large or in the individual. This formed the subject of the last of the parables addressed at that time to the people—that of the Leaven. We need not here resort to ingenious methods of explaining the 'three measures,' or *seahs*, of meal in which the leaven was hid . . . To mix three measures of meal was common in Biblical, as well as in later times (Gen. xviii. 6; Judg. vi. 19; 1 Sam. i. 24). Nothing further was therefore conveyed than the common process of ordinary, every-day life. And in this, indeed, lies the very point of the parable, that the Kingdom of God, when received within, would seem like leaven hid, but would gradually pervade, assimilate, and transform the whole of our common life."

Alford's view is similar, but he adds:—

"Leaven has its good as well as its bad side, and for that good is used: viz., to make wholesome and fit for use that which would otherwise be heavy and insalubrious. Another striking point of comparison is that leaven, as used ordinarily, is a piece of the leavened loaf put among the new dough, just as the Kingdom of heaven is the renewal of humanity by the righteous Man, Christ Jesus."

Lange still adds:—

"The woman is an apt figure of the Church. Leaven, a substance kindred, yet quite opposed to meal,—having the power of transforming and preserving it, and converting it into bread, thus representing the divine in its relation to, and influence upon, our natural life. One of the main points of the parable is the 'hiding,' or the mixing of the leaven in the three measures of meal. This refers to the great visible Church, in which the living gospel seems, as it were, hidden and lost. It appears as if the gospel were engulfed in the world; but under the regenerating power of Christianity it will at last be seen that the whole world shall be included in the Church."

Trench remarks:—

"In and through the Church the Spirit's work proceeds; only as that dwells in the Church is it able to mingle a nobler element in the mass of humanity, in the world. The woman *took* the leaven from elsewhere to mingle it with the lump; and even such is the gospel, a kingdom not of this world, not the unfolding of any powers which already existed therein, a kingdom not rising, as the

of heaven is like unto [h]leaven, which a [i]woman took and [j]hid in [k]three measures of meal, till the [l]whole was leavened.

[h] *cf.* Lev. 2. 11. *cf.* Ex. 12. 15. *cf.* ch. 16. 6.
[i] *cf.* Eph. 5. 24; *cf.* 2 Cor. 11. 2; *cf.* Rev. 17. 1-6.
[j] *cf.* ver. 25; *cf.* Gal. 2. 4; *cf.* Gal. 3. 1; *cf.* Eph. 4. 14.
[k] *cf.* Num. 15. 8, 9 with John 6. 32-35.
[l] *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 6; *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 33; *cf.* Gal. 5. 6-9.

secular kingdom, 'out of the earth' (Dan. vii. 17), but a new power brought into the world from above: not a philosophy, but a revelation."

This is a sufficiently full account of the most widely accepted interpretation; and, if not absolutely harmonious in detail, as presented by these different writers, it is still as much so as it would be reasonable to expect, and has in itself a very reasonable appearance. From the Scriptural point of view, however, it must be judged; and it has been often pointed out that in this way there are insurmountable difficulties to our receiving it.

In the first place, it is contrary to the general tenor of the previous parables. After all that has been before us, we do not expect a change so sudden and complete as this seems to involve. If the three measures of meal speak of humanity in general, or the world, the progress of the leaven is distinctly declared to be, "till the whole is leavened." But the other parables, from the very first one, are entirely against this; and the whole witness of prophecy as to the Christian dispensation. To apply it, as some would, simply to the work of regeneration in individuals, destroys in another way its harmony with the series of pictures of which it forms a part, all of which give us the public and general history. "Three measures of meal" seems a strange figure for the world, and the "measure" seems not realizable. Not that this would be a weighty objection with the many who deprecate any particular attention to such minutiæ as they would consider this. For such, a *general* resemblance is all that one need expect: which would leave in result a large uncertainty of interpretation, and Scripture to the reproach of many unmeaning words.

The signification of "leaven" in every other passage in which it is used is a great difficulty also. The Lord applies it to the "doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (chap. xvi. 12), and to their hypocrisy (Luke xii. 1). He speaks also of the "leaven of Herod" (Mark viii. 15); the apostle again of the "leaven of malice and wickedness" and of "the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. v. 8). Twice we are warned how "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (1 Cor. v. 6; Gal. v. 9). That very piece of old dough which Dean Alford interprets so strangely of the Lord's humanity, the apostle applies in quite another manner, when he bids the Corinthians "purge out, therefore, the *old* leaven, that ye may be a new lump," and this where he is interpreting the Old Testament feast of unleavened bread in its connection with the passover, and which must remind us how absolutely leaven was to be excluded from every "offering of the Lord made by fire" (Lev. ii. 11).

It will be urged in answer to this that it is the Kingdom of heaven itself which is here compared to leaven, and the Kingdom of heaven cannot be evil. But we have to go no further than these parables themselves to perceive that this objection cannot be sustained. In the very next one, if we interpret in a similar way, the Kingdom is compared to the treasure which a man found, but in that which follows, not to the pearl which corresponds to this, but to the merchantman who seeks it. Evidently, the whole parable it is which is the similitude of the Kingdom, and not separately either treasure or finder: and this is completely confirmed upon examination.*

In this way, too, it will be seen that, while the Kingdom of heaven cannot indeed in itself be evil, it may still be in an evil condition. This series of parables have surely exhibited in it a steady growth of evil, which in that of the mustard seed affects the form which as a whole it takes. We may naturally expect, therefore, to find here this development going on; and if, as Edersheim

* See also chap. xviii. 23; xx. 1.

3 (34, 35): things hidden manifest.

3. All these things spake Jesus unto the multitudes in parables, and without a parable spake he nothing unto

and others truly say, the leaven in contrast with the mustard-tree gives us intensive character rather than extensive growth, then we may expect to find this inward character affected now in a way corresponding to the outward form before. And this is in fact the meaning of the leaven: it is an energy, but alas, of evil from without, which transforms the character more and more of what it works upon, and completes the sorrowful picture of decline at which we have been looking. From this point of view also, all the details of the picture assume significance, and give a definiteness of meaning to the whole which vindicates the parable from the reproach of ambiguity or of useless verbiage.

The safest of rules that we can have is to let scripture be the interpreter of scripture. Now, if in carrying this out we ask ourselves, what leaven put into the meal may mean, we are at once reminded of the meat or *meat-offering*, as to which it is distinctly said (Lev. ii. 11): "No meat-offering which ye shall bring unto the Lord shall be made with leaven: for ye shall burn no leaven . . . in any offering of the Lord made by fire." If then this be the application here, at once we see that the parable falls into line with the previous parables in this that it continues that thought of evil and opposition to the Word which they all more or less exhibit. *The woman is doing what the word of God prohibits:* she is putting leaven into the meal-offering.

But what, then, is the significance of this? A terrible one indeed: for the meal-offering speaks, as these offerings in general do, of Christ as the food of His people, of which they partake in communion with God (see Lev. ii., *notes*); and thus we see that to bring in the merely natural thought (whether it be true or not) of the wholesomeness of leavened bread, as Alford does, is most misleading. God insists upon the feast being kept to Him with *un*leavened bread: all mixture with leaven is adulteration; and if the Church, as Trench with Lange and others rightly says, is intended by the woman, then the professing church is here seen as adulterating the pure doctrine of Christ, the bread of life, with impure admixture.

"*Three measures* of meal:" does that add nothing to the significance? Is it merely, as Edersheim says, the usual quantity, and is that what his texts suggest? Not, surely, to one who is accustomed to see the New Testament in the Old, and to read the histories contained in it, as the apostle does that of Abraham (Gal. iv.) as types and prophecies of spiritual things. In this way it is most instructive to observe that Gideon's ephah of flour, which is the equivalent of "three measures" was offered to the Lord; and that Hannah likewise brought her ephah to the house of the Lord in Shiloh. The third case he adduces (and the only other) is still more in point: for Abraham's food with which he entertains his heavenly visitants was undoubtedly overruled, at least, to show us again Christ in His Person and work (three measures of fine meal and the calf—life sacrificed) as the means of communion between heaven and earth.* "*Three* measures" are the full divine measure, God in manifestation, and that is the right measure surely of the true Meat-offering, the Man Christ Jesus.

How all this brings out what is before us! Christ, the bread of life, is what the professing church has had entrusted to her for her own sustenance and for the blessing of others. The doctrine of Christ is her most precious deposit, and the maintaining this in purity her great responsibility. Alas, she has adulterated it with leaven: the Lord's own explanation of this as "the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees" and the "leaven of Herod," remains still for us in Christian times as wherewith to interpret His parable of the Kingdom. Formalism, ritualism, rationalism, the corrupting tendencies of world-pandering

*These are not random or fragmentary applications, but have their place in a history completely significant throughout, in which by the significance of the whole each part is certified (see Gen. xviii. *notes*).

them: so that that was [m]fulfilled which was spoken through the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables: I will utter things that have been hidden from the foundation of the world.

[m] Ps. 78. 2.

Herodianism, have all had their share in perverting the precious doctrine of Christ. And here distinctly the "woman's" form appears in that which Scripture itself stamps as "the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth" (Rev. xvii.), she who, claiming to be emphatically the "CHURCH," at the same time assumes the power of adding to it her own authoritative interpretations. Doubtless she is not alone in this: others have followed her more or less distinctly, in claiming to give the "voice of the church," whether in the "catholic" or some lesser form. In whatever way this may be done it is an intrusion upon Christ's office as the only "Master* and Lord;" and wherever it is done, some kindred evil will spring out of it. Christ's voice, and that alone, must be authoritative for the soul.

The leaven is leavening the whole lump. No doubt, there is a present hindrance to this in the power of the Spirit working, and as long as the present purpose of God is not complete, the lump as a whole cannot be leavened. God will preserve His truth, which never has been as a whole allowed to be in the woman's hands to be leavened. Once let the true Church be removed, the truth of God will be removed with it, and the leaven of falsehood do its fatal work upon all that is left.

3. With this the parables spoken to the multitude are ended; and except in parables He did not speak to them. The prophet's word was being fulfilled in Him (Ps. lxxviii. 2): He was taking the place of another Asaph, to speak of things more deeply hidden than those of which Asaph spoke. The psalmist's words therefore are not exactly but freely quoted: *his* deep things were contained in a past history, the meaning of which it is given to him to utter; Christ's in a history of things to come, but which mournfully reflect in their general lesson that older story of another people. Alas, man's history *does* repeat itself: now, however, it was of a state of "things hidden from the foundation of the world"—of which the prophets of the Old Testament themselves knew nothing.

Sec. 2.

The Lord now leaves the multitude and goes into the house: the audience is changed, and He is now with His disciples only, and able to speak out. He does now give them the explanation of the parable of the darnel, carrying it further also than the parable itself had done. But to this he adds three other parables, the third of which He partially explains, but not the others. We are left to spiritual apprehension to discern these.

Between these last three and the first four we shall find the difference which the numbers indicate. Four is the number of the world, and they are spoken *in* the world—before the multitude. We find in them, in fact, what we can see to be the external aspect of things,—the Kingdom in the form which it has taken manifestly, even though those who see it may discern little of its import. In what is said to the disciples in the house we shall find what is for those of the present time only spiritually discerned,—what is not public fact, but either lies beyond Christian times, or else is of such a nature as only to be understood by those who have learned it from God, from His word. It is faith's view, then, that we now are to be occupied with, and it need not be a strange thing to us to find that we have very different interpretations to consider, and which it will be necessary to consider seriously, before we shall be entitled to speak with conviction upon the subject.

[1] But first of all we have what is itself an explanation. The interpretation of the parable of the darnel finds its place with the last three parables, and for this

* "Teacher" (John xiii. 13).

SECTION 2. (36–52.)
Faith's view.

1 (36–43): the beginning of the reign of righteousness.

[1] Then, having sent the [n] multitudes away, he went into the house; and his disciples came and said unto him, [o] Explain unto us the parable of the darnel of the field. And he answered and said, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; and the field is the world, and the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the darnel are the sons of the evil one; and the enemy that sowed it is the devil; and the harvest is the [p] completion of the age, and the reapers are angels. As then the darnel is gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be at the completion of the age. The Son of man shall send his angels, and they shall [q] gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and those committing lawlessness, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; *there* shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the [r] righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He that hath ears let him hear.

n ver. 2. *cf.* Lk. 10. 23, 24.
o Mk. 4. 13, 33, 34.
p cf. ch. 24. 3, etc.
q cf. Lk. 17. 26–37.
r cf. Col. 3. 4. *cf.* 2 Thess. 1. 5–10.

there must be some special reason. It would not be enough to say, it is an interpretation; for the Lord had before this explained that of the sower apart to His disciples, without reserving it for the after-teaching in the house. The true reason seems to be in that which is manifest in it, that it goes beyond the parable itself, and therefore beyond the end of the *Christian* form of the Kingdom of heaven. It presents, therefore, what must be to us as long as we are down here a matter of faith simply: and thus it comes into the second section here, and finds its place with the last three parables.

The parable ends with the gathering of the wheat into the barn. The saints of the present are removed, while the darnel, the fruit of Satan's sowing, is left in the field—in the world; bound in bundles for the burning, but not burnt. It is noticeable that there is nothing else but this mentioned now. There are no mere lifeless professors, but only the followers of false doctrine,—the reason for which is an unspeakably solemn one, as explained by the apostle in the second epistle to the Thessalonians: the mere professors will be swept off by that "strong delusion" which will come with the apostasy of the last days upon all that "have not received the love of the truth that they might be saved" (ii. 7–12). The public judgment here is upon those in manifest rebellion, not upon what is hidden but what is manifest. The words in the epistle are decisive as to this.

It is with what takes place after the saints are taken home that the interpretation of the parable has mainly to do: "As then the darnel is gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be at the completion of the age. The Son of man shall send His angels, and they shall gather out of *His Kingdom*"—it is now *His* Kingdom, He is not simply sitting on the Father's throne—"all things that offend, and those committing lawlessness, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: *there* shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father."

Notice the contrast: the Kingdom of the Son of man below, the Kingdom of the Father above: the righteous *reign* in the Kingdom of the Son of man; they *shine* in the Kingdom of their Father. The Sun of righteousness is risen upon the earth; and this is why the righteous shine as the Sun: they are with Him, sharers of His glory; not suns—central, independent orbs,—but lustrous with the glory put upon them. But this carries us, as is plain, beyond the present form of the Kingdom, as also we shall find the parable of the net does. For us,

[2] (44): preserved and reserved.

[2] Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto [s]treasure hid in the [t]field, which a man having found, hath hid,

[s] *cf.* Ex. 19. 5. *cf.* Deut. 4. 20. [t] *cf.* Deut. 32. 8, 9, 10; *cf.* ver. 38.

to whom all these parables of the Kingdom belong, it is a matter of faith alone. The numerical symbolism stamps this, I doubt not, as what it so plainly is, the beginning of the reign of righteousness.

[2] We come now to two parables which ought, by their evident likeness to one another, to render mutual help in their interpretation — the parables of the treasure and the pearl. They are commonly understood by Christians as portraying in somewhat different ways the value of Christianity or of Christian blessings, and the need of sacrificing all else in order to secure them. But we must take them separately.

"Again, the Kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in the field, which a man having found hath hid, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field."

An old note of Luther gives what is still the common view: "The hidden treasure is the gospel, which bestows upon us all the riches of free grace, without any merit of our own. Hence also the joy when it is found, and which consists in a good and happy conscience, that cannot be obtained by works. The gospel is likewise the pearl of great price."

"True Christianity," says Lange, "is ever again like an unexpected discovery, even in the ancient Church: the best possession we can find, a gift of free grace. Every one must find and discover Christianity for himself. In order to secure possession, even of what we have found without any merit of our own, we must be willing to sacrifice all; for salvation, though entirely of free grace, requires the fullest self-surrender."

He is naturally perplexed, however, about the purchase of the field, to get the treasure. His solution of the difficulty is so strange that it can only be of value as showing to what strange methods people have to resort to interpret consistently: "If 'the field' refers to external worldly ecclesiasticism, the expression might mean that we were not to carry the treasure out of the visible Church, as if we were stealing it away, but that we should purchase the field in order to have full title to the possession hid in it. Accordingly it would apply against sectarianism." It is hardly worth while to go further.

In fact the interpretation is scarcely scriptural in any part. A man like Luther may speak of "buying" the riches of free grace, and so, no doubt, does Scripture; but it never speaks of selling all that one has to do it. God says rather, "Come ye, buy wine and milk *without* money and *without* price." And the Lord does indeed say, "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple" (Luke xiv. 33); but He has taught us elsewhere how to understand all such expressions, and that the would-be disciple does not by this "buy" the grace of God, but must receive that grace first to enable for such whole-hearted discipleship. Not "whosoever will lose his life," in *order* to find it, but he who does so "*for My sake*, shall find it" (chap. xvi. 25). For "though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not *love*, it profiteth me nothing" (1 Cor. xiii. 3). Love must be the motive power, or there is nothing that can count; but then we cannot *love* in order to gain for ourselves by it: there is but one way of acquiring it, and that is, as flame lights flame. So love alone kindles love: "we love Him, because He first loved us" (1 Jno. iv. 19).

To sell all that one has to buy the free grace of God is not according to the gospel: that alone wrecks this interpretation; but, if we inquire further, What is the "*field*" that is bought to get the treasure? the Lord has Himself answered, not with Dr. Lange that it is "external worldly ecclesiasticism"—a strange thing indeed to buy at such a cost!—but the "world," simply the *world*. That is the field in which the Word is sown, clearly; ecclesiasticism may spring up in it, but only after the sowing, and must always be a very different thing.

and for joy thereof goeth and [u]selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

[u] *cf.* Is.53.4-10. *cf.* Ps. 22. 1. *cf.* 2Cor.8.9.

But, if "the field is the world," are we to sell all we have to buy the world, to find the gospel in it? That is mere absurdity, of course.

This interpretation breaking down, then, it only remains to reverse the order of thought, and find in it the Saviour seeking the sinner, instead of the sinner seeking the Saviour. Divine love is first and worthiest: and then how the central figure here shines out! HE went and sold all that He had—"emptied Himself," as the word in Philippians literally is (ii. 7, *R. V.*): "though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich" (2 Cor. viii. 9). Texts are easy enough to find in this direction, and simple enough, too, in application. Here is a view of the Kingdom which lies outside of the range of the first four parables, as the continuation of the second parable does, but antecedent, not consequent to them. But it is the foundation upon which all rests, and which could not be omitted from faith's view of things. It is the fundamental view of the Kingdom itself, and now its being the field of the world that *He* buys, instead of being out of place, or difficult to understand, is most exactly accordant and most perfectly intelligible. "Even denying the Lord that bought them" is said of those who bring in "damnable heresies," and bring upon themselves swift destruction (2 Pet. ii. 1). They are not, therefore, of His *redeemed* (for redemption involves the forgiveness of sins, (Eph. i. 7,) and is much more than purchase); nor of the treasure, therefore, for which He buys the field; but they are purchased, as all the world is purchased, and He is Lord over them: the word used here being not the usual title of authority, but "*despot*" (δεσπότης), "owner."

The world, then, belongs to Him, and the treasure He has found in it, and for which He buys it, must be His people, who are therefore His purchased ones, the people of His possession (Acts xx. 28; 1 Pet. ii. 9, *Gk.*). Yet there are still points of difficulty about this parable, if we apply it to Christians now, as is usual and natural with those who accept the interpretation which we must believe to be the true one. For, according to this view, neither the (implied) first hiding, nor the finding, nor the re-hiding of the treasure is accounted for, and even the buying of the field does not seem fully explained, though the meaning of it in itself is clear enough. But beyond all this the parable that follows it, so similar, and which yet cannot be so close a repetition of it as it appears, needs explanation. We must go on, therefore, to this and compare the two together, before we can get a satisfactory view of the whole matter.

[3] Here "the Kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls; and when he had found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it."

Such interpretations as those of Lange need not long detain us, since they are but slight variations of what we have, in the case of the former parable, already rejected. "The following points," says Lange, "are plain: he who obtains the Kingdom of heaven is no longer represented, merely as a fortunate finder, but at the same time as an untiring searcher. He is consciously seeking and striving after goodly pearls, or precious spiritual goods. At the same time what was formerly described as a treasure is now characterized as a pearl of great price: it is presented in a concentrated form as the *one* thing needful, bright and glorious in its appearance,—*i. e.*, the person of Christ and life in Him, are now all in all. Accordingly, all former possessions are readily surrendered." Surely, one would not expect two parables to present things no wider apart than these; and the buying of Christ after this manner is an unscriptural thought. If we have had to refuse, moreover, the similar interpretation of the treasure, the parallel features in the two forbid our acceptance of dissimilar explanations for them. If Christ be the Finder of the one parable, He must be also the Seeker in the other.

But why, then, the two parables? If Christ be the central Figure in each

[3] (45, 46): His own and for His glory.

[3] Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman, [n] seeking goodly pearls; and when he had

[n] *cf.* Lk. 19. 10. *cf.* Jno. 15. 16.

case, there must be surely difference as to the object before Him; but the general thought of those who accept this view is that it is only one and the same object, though differently presented: "'The parable of the hidden treasure,' it is said, 'did not sufficiently convey what the saints are to Christ. For the treasure might consist of a hundred thousand pieces of gold and silver. And how would this mark the blessedness and beauty of the Church? The merchantman finds "one pearl of great price." The Lord does not see merely the preciousness of the saints, but the unity and heavenly beauty of the assembly. Every saint is precious to Christ; but He "loved the Church and gave Himself for it."'"

This, however, does not adequately distinguish between the two parables, and indeed passes over entirely some of the most conspicuous differences between them. One cannot understand, if this be all, why the "pearl" should not by itself suffice for both.

That the pearl is the Church is indeed capable of fullest demonstration. If, then, the Church, the *heavenly* object, be pictured in the second parable, does not this naturally raise the question whether the "treasure hid in the field" of the *world* is not intended to mark a contrast in this respect? If so, and in connection with the Kingdom of heaven, our thoughts are at once directed to *Israel* as brought before us in the treasure. Let us examine the possibility of such an application, and see whether it may not help us with regard to some of the otherwise unexplained differences between the two parables.

We have seen that the Kingdom was first announced to Israel. But they rejected the King, and on this account it passed from them. This is, no doubt, why the thought of Israel being before us here has not been more frankly entertained. The parables are "mysteries" of the Kingdom; but is not Israel's rejection from that which according to Old Testament prophecy belongs to her (and which shall be yet hers in a day to come) *part of these very mysteries?* The words of the apostle of the Gentiles seem to be clearly in the affirmative with regard to this. He says: "For I would not have you to be ignorant of *this mystery*, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that *blindness in part is happened unto Israel*, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in" (Rom. xi. 25). Thus he names the very thing which has caused the rejection of Israel for the present time as among the mysteries of this time. Is it not, then, antecedently probable enough that among these parables Israel's relation to the Kingdom should be found to have a place?

When we look at the parable again, we cannot but be confirmed in this. To Israel it was promised that if they obeyed Jehovah's voice, and kept His covenant, then they should be a peculiar treasure unto Him above all people (Ex. xix. 5); and the psalmist would wake up their praise by the recollection that "Jehovah hath chosen Jacob for Himself, and Israel for His peculiar treasure" (Ps. cxxxv. 4). Yet when the Lord came to His own this treasure as such was hid in the field of the world,—as it were, lost among the nations. He discovered it, but could not possess Himself of it. He must first purchase it as at the cross, where Caiaphas' unconscious prophecy declared He would "die for the nation" (John xi. 51). We see also why the field must be bought: it is in the *world* that Israel is yet to be displayed as Jehovah's treasure. But the purchase being made, there is nothing further done as to possession: here the parable stops; the end of this belongs not to the "mysteries;" and in the meanwhile another purpose comes into sight, and is the very thing of which the next parable certainly bears witness.

Thus the interpretation in this way fairly and fully unlocks the whole parable; and a scriptural interpretation which does this must needs be the true one; for if not,—if two interpretations, equally consistent, could be given of the same words, then the words would not distinguish, would be defective in

found "one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it. *w cf.* Eph. 5. 25-27. *cf.* Rev. 21. 21.

significance, as the Lord's words could not be. We would have no means of discerning between the true and the false: a conclusion which would be the destruction of the power and authority of Scripture: for that whose meaning cannot be known ceases by that fact to have authority.

In the pearl of great price it is no wonder that Christians should imagine the Lord to be intended. But it is the Church which is thus spoken of, and its preciousness is not only insisted on, but in measure explained also. Its value is estimated by One who knows fully what it is He values. It is now not merely a man who finds, but a merchant who is seeking goodly pearls. The thing he finds he is in pursuit of, and with the practised eye of the skilled observer. Notice, too, that it is intimated that there are other pearls. This is one, however, whose value is such that, having found it, he will sell all he has to buy it.

But what is a pearl? It is, first of all, the product of a living being: it is the only jewel, as far as I am aware, that is so; and this is the first thing, surely, that we are intended to realize in it.

A pearl is the result of injury done to the animal that produces it. Its material is the *nacre*, as it is called, or "*mother* of pearl," which lines the interior of the shell, and which is renewed by it as often as injured or worn away. A particle of sand getting between the animal and the shell, the irritation causes a deposit of nacre upon it, which goes on being deposited, layer after layer, till a pearl is formed. But "completely spherical pearls"—and these are the valuable ones—"can only be formed loose in the muscle or soft parts of the animal. The Chinese obtain them artificially by introducing into the living mussel foreign substances, such as pieces of mother of pearl fixed to wires, which thus become coated with a more brilliant material."

The pearl is thus, as we may say, an answer to an injury; and it is the *offending object* that becomes, through the work of the injured one, a precious and beauteous gem. It is clothed with a comeliness put upon it, as the objects of divine grace are, with the beauty and glory of Him we crucified! It is in truth nothing else that He sought in coming among us but objects of divine grace.

Between a common pearl and one of great price, the difference is only of degree. The size and brilliancy depend, not upon the grain of sand which may be inwrapped, but upon the number of layers of nacre which inwrap it. The greatness of the grace bestowed is the distinguishing feature in what is here. Different bestowals of grace there are, and Scripture asserts this in the fullest way. The calling of Israel is not that of the Church, which is Christ's body; and though the departed saints of former dispensations will plainly be in heaven as we shall be, Scripture again makes a difference between "the Church of the first-born ones whose names are written in heaven," (Israel being the first-born upon *earth*) and the "spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. xii. 23). God is going "in the ages to come to show the *exceeding* riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii. 7).

Israel may be the treasure in the field, but the pearl speaks of *personal adornment*. Christ will have the Church in heaven with Himself, putting in the highest place what is to show most conspicuously the glory of His grace. It is *one* pearl; as the body of Christ is one. There cannot be, it is evident, another body of *Christ*. The "fullness" or complement "of Him that filleth all in all" admits of no other.

The treasure and the pearl both speak of what is faith's view as to the Kingdom, not the external view presented in the first four parables. In the treasure we find Israel preserved for blessing, but reserved, they having in the meanwhile rejected the only possible way in which it could be theirs. In the pearl we have that in which, during this reservation, the purpose of God as to the Church comes out. It is the first expression of it, and as yet we do not realize

[4] (47-52): the mercy to the world.

[4] Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a draw-net, cast into the [x] sea, and gathering of every kind: which when it was filled, they drew to shore and sat down and [y] gathered the good into vessels and cast the worthless away. So shall it be at the completion of the age: the angels shall go forth, and separate the wicked from among the righteous, and shall cast them into the [z] furnace of fire: *there* shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

[Jesus saith unto them],* Have ye [a] understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord. And he said unto them, Therefore every scribe who is made a [b] disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like unto a householder that bringeth out of his treasure things [c] new and old.

[x] *cf.* Rev. 17. 15 with Gen. 1. 20-23.
[y] *cf.* ch. 25. 31-46.
[z] *cf.* Rev. 19. 20. ver. 42.
[a] *cf.* Jno. 16. 25-30.
[b] *cf.* ch. 11. 11.
[c] *cf.* Eph. 3. 3-5. *cf.* Song 7. 13.

* Omitted by some.

just what it is: as the "assembly which is His body," or even as "the house of God," it is not yet mentioned, but as people for Himself, destined to display His glory—the glory of His grace: heavenly, therefore, not earthly, the earthly promises being Israel's still. The revelation will, of course, become fuller as we go on. The light increases to the perfect day.

[4] Israel comes no more into this picture: all has been said about it that needs. The rest is told fully in the Old Testament prophets. What we have in the last parable here concerns neither Israel nor the Church, as is plain by the interpretation which our Lord Himself gives: it is the mercy to the Gentiles, after the purpose of God as to the Church is complete. A new gathering now begins with the net cast into the sea, the figure of the Gentile nations. It gathers of every kind, and is then drawn to shore, and the sorting of the good from the bad is by angel-hands alone. This is at the completion of the age, and while coincident with the final harvesting of the wheat-field, is a different thing from it. To the present time it cannot apply: the putting the fish into denominational vessels, as some have applied it, is not a possible thought here: for *we* are not in the "completion of the age,"* which is, as our Lord explains, the time of harvest; and the sorting in this case is not by human but angelic hands.

The net applies to the going out of the "everlasting gospel," as in Rev. xiv. 6, 7, after the Church is removed to heaven, and where the terms of it show at once the difference between it and the gospel at the present time. We cannot say, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the *hour of His judgment is come*," and on the other hand the grace which it is ours to proclaim is infinitely fuller. The issue of what is here is, no doubt, seen in the separative judgment of the *living*, when the Lord appears, as shown forth in the "sheep" and "goats" of the twenty-fifth chapter. In the wheat-field of Christendom there will be at the end no separation of the wicked from among the righteous, but the righteous will be gathered first of all, and removed to heaven; after which nothing but the darnel will remain to be gathered and burnt. With the fish here and the sheep and goats in the later chapter, there is a true judicial separation of the "sheep from the goats," the wicked departing into everlasting fire, and the righteous left for blessing upon earth under the "Shepherd" rule of the Son of man now come.

This is the end of the parables of the Kingdom; and the Lord's words that follow to His disciples are self-evident in their application to them. New things have been declared and put in connection with the old; all the latter part being

* The full explanation of this term will be given in the notes on the twenty-fourth chapter, where the whole prophecy relates to it. The "end of the world" is a wrong translation.

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. xiii. 53–xiv.)
Features of a day of rejection.

1 (xiii. 53–xiv. 12): Men alike in rejecting.
1 (xiii. 53–58): the pride that refuses conviction.

1. [1] And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence. And coming into his [d]own country, he taught them in their synagogue, so that they were [e]astonished and said, Whence hath this [man] this wisdom and these works of power? Is not this the [f]carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary, and his brethren James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? and his sisters, are they not all with us? whence hath this [man], then, all these things? And they were [g]offended at him. But Jesus said unto

[d] cf. ch. 2. 23. Mk. 6. 1-6. Lk. 4. 16-30.
[e] cf. Jno. 7. 15.
[f] Jno. 6. 42. cf. Jno. 7. 41, 48, 52. cf. Is. 49. 7.
[g] cf. 1 Cor. 1. 22, 23. cf. 1 Pet. 2. 7, 8.

such an adjustment. The scribe of the old dispensation, becoming now the disciple of the new, is brought into the fullness of the whole revelation of God.

SUBD. 2.

We return now to the personal history of the Lord, but to find in it also the foreshadow of such things as the parables have put before us. The fact of His rejection by man is now a governing thought; and this involves rejection for His people, and a path in separation from a world in estrangement from Him. This is especially what characterises the next portion of the Gospel which developes for us the features of a day of rejection, but in which grace still works, and finds among men not its objects only but its instruments. But the world is at the same time on the one hand a desert, on the other a stormy sea. Soon He Himself also is absent, and His disciples are left in the darkness, toiling over the waters in the face of the adverse wind. But again there is a change: He is coming back to them over the waters; and faith, discerning Him and seeking to be with Him, is fain to leave the boat and at His invitation walk upon the waters too to go to Him. Here the Church's path is clearly presented to us, the boat imaging the position of that remnant of Israel which as to their hopes the disciples were, when He went away, and to which (accompanied by His heavenly people) He will again return. Then the wind ceases, and the boat having reached the shore, mercy flows out to men far and wide as it will in millennial days. Let us now seek to apprehend this in detail.

1. First of all, we have a two-fold witness to His rejection. All classes of men are concerned in this: for the reception of Christ alike wounds their pride and opposes their lust; and thus Christ Himself and he who would prepare His way must share together.

[1] First, Nazareth rejects Him,—the place where He had been so long, and where the glory of a life to which all else was darkness had shone before their eyes. They have perforce to own His wisdom and His mighty work; but what right has He to them? They know His mother and His kindred; and these suggest no such greatness. They ought surely to have argued therefore that all this in Him was not natural but supernatural—that there was more in Him than nature could account for: but no! they will rather discredit what they see and know, than accept such things from a carpenter's son. Divine power must not work without human credentials. The root is out of a dry ground: the plant may be anything you please, but it is a sufficient condemnation of it that the ground is dry.

That was His glory for which they despised Him. He was no creature of His circumstances; He derived not from man, He received no honor from him. Nor could He thus, on His part, put honor on man, nor accredit him who had fallen away from God. He could *serve*, and for this come into the lowest place, when from man He could not accept the highest. Those who had not judged aright the world or themselves, could not judge *Him* aright. And still the proverb holds that a prophet may be in honor anywhere rather than among those who

them, A [h]prophet is not without honor, save in his country and in his house. And he did not many mighty works there [i]because of their unbelief.

[2] (xiv. 1-12): the opposition to men's lusts awakening enmity.

[2] At that time, Herod the tetrach [j]heard the report concerning Jesus; and he said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist: he is risen from the dead, and therefore do these powers put forth energy in him. For Herod had [k]laid hold on John and bound him, and put him out of the way in prison, because of Herodias his brother Philip's wife: for John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. And when he would have killed him, he [l]feared the multitude, because they held him for a prophet. But when Herod's birthday came,* the daughter of Herodias [m]danced in the midst, and pleased Herod; whereupon he promised with an [n]oath to give her whatsoever she might ask. But she, being incited by her mother, said, Give me here upon a dish the head of John the Baptist. And though the king was [o]grieved, [yet] on account of his oaths and those at table with him, he commanded it to be given. And he sent and [p]beheaded John in prison; and his head was brought upon a dish and given to the damsel, and she bare it to her mother. And his disciples came and took away the corpse, and buried it, and went and [q]brought word to Jesus.

* Or, "was kept:" a difference of reading.

[h] Jno. 4. 44. *cf.* 2 Ki. 5. 8.

[i] *cf.* ch. 17. 19, 20.

[j] Mk. 6. 14-29. Lk. 9. 7-9.

[k] Lk. 3. 19, 20. *cf.* Acts 7. 51-54.

[l] *cf.* ch. 21. 26.

[m] *cf.* Gen. 27. 1-5. *cf.* Dan. 3. 5. *cf.* 1 S. 5. 11, 12.

[n] *cf.* ch. 5. 33-37.

[o] *cf.* Prov. 29. 25. *cf.* Lk. 18. 23.

[p] *cf.* Acts 7. 52.

[q] *cf.* Jno. 1. 35-37. *cf.* Jno. 11. 21.

know him in his earthly relations best. Did not this for long dim the eyes even of His brethren (John vii. 5)? and does not its influence appear even in the tender solicitude of His mother?

So Nazareth shuts itself out from the blessing which was ready to be poured out upon them: "He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief."

[2] Prince and people were alike in this; and now we hear of the murder of the Baptist at the hands of the licentious Herod. Conscience he has, enough to trouble him; religion enough to bind him to the abominable wickedness in which he is ensnared by the evil influences to which he has already surrendered himself. The spirit of uncleanness is quite ready to take to himself other spirits more wicked than himself, and with the key of the house in his hand, it is too late to shut the door upon them. Scrupulous the adulterer may be as to his oath, and for his honor before those who are at table with him,—the poor remains of honor which are so apt to increase in value in proportion to the little left. So the death of the prophet is cheaply purchased by the dance of a light girl, and the king's oath is kept inviolate. What a world it is in every view that can be taken of it, whether in its pleasures, its morals, or its underlying passions and malignities! In such a world what an honor to be persecuted! what a reproach to be in esteem! The Spirit of God sums it up morally thus: "*All* that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," and adds that "it is not of the Father" (1 John ii. 16). The *Father* has been seen and hated in the Son (John xv. 23, 24).

2. The Lord accepts the news of the Baptist's murder as His own rejection. He withdraws into a desert place apart; but those who are drawn to Him by their necessities flock after Him still, and He cannot withdraw Himself from the need which appeals to Him. The wilderness thus becomes a place of plenteous provision, and the Lord's grace and power are manifest for all that come.

2 (xiv. 13-21): Ministry in the place of rejection.

2. But when Jesus heard it, he [r]withdrew from thence by ship into a desert place apart; and when the multitudes heard it, they followed him on foot out of the cities. And he went out and saw a great multitude, and had [s]compassion on them, and healed their infirm. And when even was come, the disciples came to him, saying, The place is desert, and the time already gone by; dismiss the multitudes, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food. But Jesus said unto them, They have no need to go away: [t]give ye them to eat. But they say unto him, We have here but [u]five loaves and two fishes. And he said, Bring them hither to [v]me. And he commanded the multitudes to recline upon the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and [w]blessed and brake, and gave the loaves to his [x]disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes. And all ate,

r ch. 12. 15. Mk. 6. 32-46. Lk. 9. 10-17.
s ch. 9. 36.
t *cf.* ch. 10. 8. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 5, 6.
u Jno. 6. 1-14. *cf.* 1 Cor. 14. 19. *cf.* Ex. 4. 2.
v *cf.* ch. 17. 17. *cf.* 1 Ki. 17. 8-16.
w Jno. 6. 23. *cf.* Jno. 11. 41, 42. *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 24.
x ver. 16.

He heals all the infirm among them; and as night comes on, and the disciples remind Him of the need of the multitude there in a desert place, He casts them for all this upon the disciples themselves: "They have no need to go away," He says, "give ye them to eat." But they do not realize what this implies, and that they can avail themselves of His power for ministry such as this. They have but five loaves and two fishes: how plainly we may read ourselves in them! What use to put such a pitiful morsel even into *His* hand to satisfy so many with! But He does not disdain it, or set it aside, to work independently. If a miracle were in His mind, this might seem more worthy of Him; but on the contrary He will rather lower the miracle than set aside those whom He would identify with Himself and use in service. They are to find the little that they have, enough, if but His blessing be with it; and so are we.

But they are to bring it to Him first, and to receive it from Him; and then He bids the multitude recline upon the grass: His way is to give rest and then refreshment. Then He blesses and breaks, and puts it back into His disciples' hands to distribute; and they distribute it all; and there is more than enough for all the multitude. How good to know that out of that insignificant quantity there is positively enough for *every one there;* yea, and more than enough: "twelve handbaskets full of fragments that remained" over and above all that had been eaten! Thus there is actually more left than they had had at the beginning; and this is constantly the way of spiritual increase, scattering and yet increasing. Would that we all and always remembered it:—the responsibility of the possession of whatever ministers to the need of man, but above all, of that which ministers to what is truly life,—and then the gain resulting. Every particle of truth we have, brings with it corresponding responsibility, proportionate privilege, and opportunity of greater gain. "To him that *hath* shall more be given, and he shall have abundantly; and from him that *hath not*, even that which he *hath*"—hath and hath not, hath as if he had it not, without practical use or advantage—"shall be taken away."

Such grace was still going forth in Israel: the power of Jehovah was manifesting itself among them, to "satisfy her poor with bread" (Ps. cxxxii. 15). The *twelve* baskets full may point to the resources of power for them in the presence among them of their King; the five thousand men, the responsibility of such realized capabilities (5×10^3), which yet unbelief might make of no effect. And this is in fact the result. The stream of grace that was flowing then could not, indeed, be dammed back by all that unbelief could do, but it might be forced to flow in other channels; and this was in fact the result. The Gospel of John

and were filled; and they took up of the fragments that [y]remained twelve hand-baskets full. And those that ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

[y] *cf.* 2 Ki. 4. 1-7, 42-44. *cf.* ch. 15. 37.

3 (xiv. 22-33): separation by the apprehension of the Lord.

3. And immediately he compelled his disciples to go on board ship, and go before him to the other side, until he should send the multitudes away. And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into the [z]mountain apart to pray; and when even was come, he was there alone. But the ship was already in the midst of the sea, [a]distressed by the waves, for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night he went toward them, walking upon the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking upon the sea, they were [b]troubled, saying, It is an apparition; and they cried out for fear. But immediately Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good [c]courage: it is I; be not afraid.

[z] Mk. 6. 46. *cf.* Lk. 5. 16.
[a] Mk. 6. 47-52. Jno. 6. 16-21.
[b] *cf.* Lk. 24. 36-40.
[c] *cf.* Jno. 14. 27. *cf.* Jno. 16. 33.

it is which gives us insight (chap. vi.) into the spiritual condition of those to whom the Lord ministered here, and to whom He had to say, "Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles,"—not because ye realized divine power in them,—"but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled." These were they who would after this carnal manner, "have taken Him by force, to make Him a king" (ver. 15). Such was the nation; and, as such, He had to turn away from them.

3. We find Him therefore urging His disciples to re-enter the ship, and go before Him to the other side, while He Himself, having dismissed the multitudes, goes up into the mountain apart to pray. This is simple, as significant of His present place and work, Israel being in the meantime left to the consequences of their unbelief. Gone up to God, He intercedes for His own, tossed on the sea of this world, and with the wind contrary: for Satan is "the prince of the power of the air," by whom "the course of this world" is directed (Eph. ii. 2). The "ship" does not represent, however, what is proper to the present dispensation, but the means by which, when faith has not Christ before it, we are sustained upon the waters. Such means are essentially Jewish, no doubt, and it was practically a Jewish remnant which the Lord left upon earth when He went up, as it will be a Jewish remnant to which He will by and by return. The question put by the disciples to the Lord immediately before His going up, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?" (Acts i. 6) shows how little beyond the national hope they were at this time. Long after, they "walked orderly," thronged the temple, and were "zealous of the law" (Acts xxi. 20, 24), and Paul it is who speaks the decisive word by which the Christian company separate themselves from the Jewish ship to take the true path of faith upon the waters.

The ship speaks not properly of help given to faith, but of help to do without it. "The law is not of faith," and in the notable chapter in which Paul insists to the Hebrews upon the path in which the elders walked, and in which they obtained a good report, it is striking how little the times of walking orderly and keeping the law furnish him with examples (Heb. xi.) Faith lives in the unseen and is built up by that which is spiritual, not natural. Nay, the mighty miracles of the wilderness did not beget a generation of believers, as we well know. The law, being the trial of man, gave every assistance to man naturally: the eye, the ear, the senses generally, through these the whole sensitive being, were appealed to,—only to end in more emphatic witness to his utter impracticability. The schoolmaster's reign, therefore, is at an end, though the lessons learnt abide: "after that faith is come, we are no longer under the schoolmaster" (Gal. iii. 25).

And Peter answered and said, Lord, if it be thou, [d]bid me come to thee upon the waters. And he said, Come. And Peter, having descended from the ship, walked on the waters to go to Jesus. But seeing the [e]wind strong, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he [f]cried out, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and took hold of him, and saith unto him, O thou of [g]little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they had gone up into the ship, the wind [h]ceased; and they that were in the ship worshiped him, saying, Thou art indeed the [i]Son of God.

4 (xiv. 34–36): the mercy to the world.

4. And when they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret. And when the men of that place recognized him, they sent into all that region round about, and they [j]brought unto him all that were sick. And they besought him that they might only [k]touch the border of his garment; and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.

d cf. Heb. 13. 13.

e cf. Heb. 10. 32–34.

f Lk. 8. 24, 25.

g ch. 8. 26.

h cf. Ps. 107. 29, 30.

i cf. Ps. 46. 10. ch. 16. 16. Jno. 1. 49.

j Mk. 6. 53–56.

k cf. Lk. 5. 29–34.

Faith could not be more strikingly pictured than in this solitary man stepping out of the ship upon the waters to go to Jesus. And this has been in fact the Church's path ever since. True, the "ship" has come back again, with the return of Jewish principles with church establishments and the patronage of the world; but this has made the picture only a more striking one, by separating even disciples from disciples, and making the Church's path in result more absolutely the individual, isolated path, which for the saint, in character as such, it has ever been. Faith is, of necessity, personal and individual. A "Christian world" means only a corrupt and degenerate Church-profession. The Church itself, as well as the open world, becomes a scene in which the word of the Lord calls for "overcoming" and more and more appeals to the individual only,—to him "that hath an ear to hear" (Rev. ii., iii.).

Indeed, this Figure on the water is not seen except by faith; even those who are disciples may count it an "apparition" only, and fear, instead of being drawn by it. Notice, that it is to the soul that *invites the invitation* that the Voice says, "Come." It speaks to no other. Nor does it speak other than approvingly, though the one inviting it proves thoroughly his weakness in his response to it. But he gets no rebuke for a rash venture. The other disciples might have given him that: there are many who are in no danger of this kind of failure, who would justify themselves by it from all such attempts; but the Lord says only, "Wherefore didst thou *doubt?*" And surely this doubting is as foolish as disastrous. For the moment, at least, he had proved the power of Christ: he had actually walked upon the water, and why should boisterous winds put him now in fear? The power was not his own, and he might reckon on it as much for rough water as for smooth. But with the eye off Christ, one cannot reckon right. He doubts and he begins to sink; but at his cry there is a Hand outstretched to him, and he is held up. It is not the ship that rescues him, nor is he taken from the path, but *supported in it.* Good is it to remember and realize this as grace which acts towards us in our failure now.

Peter and his Lord come back to the ship together; then the wind ceases, and those in the ship come and worship Him with the acknowledgment, "Indeed Thou art the Son of God." This is again not difficult to understand; for when He returns to Israel, we shall be with Him still, and for them and us the wind will be at rest. Satan's power will be over, himself shut up in the bottomless pit, the power of Christ supreme over all.

4. We see now therefore in Gennesaret the mercy flowing out which will characterize this blessed time. "Gennesaret" may even mean "the protection of

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chap. xv.-xvi. 12.)

The heart of man manifested, and God's heart told out: the way of sanctification.

1 (xv. 1-20): Commandments of God and traditions of men.

1. THEN come to Jesus Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the [t]tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the [m]commandment of God for your tradition? For God commanded, saying, [n]Honor thy father and thy mother, and he that speaketh ill of father or mother, let him [o]die the death. But *ye* say, Whosoever shall say unto his father or his mother, It is a [p]gift, that by which thou mightest have been profited by me, he shall in no wise honor his

t Mk.7.1-23. *cf.* ch.23.16-18.
m cf. ch. 23. 23. *cf.* Jno. 18. 28. *ctr.* Rom.3. 31.
n Ex. 20, 12. *cf.* Jer. 35. 18, 19.
o Lev. 20. 9. Deut.27.16. Prov.30.17. *cf.*1 Tim.5. 4, 8.
p ctr. ch. 5. 23, 24.

the prince." Sickness and distress are banished by the presence of the "Prince of life." It is but the shadow; what will the reality be?

SUBD. 3.

We are now shown in the teachings of Israel's leaders the blindness of man's heart, both as to man himself, and as to the way of blessing for him. The one error of course involves the other, and it is an error, not of the mind only, but of the heart as well. The heart is in fact what is in question everywhere as to man—teacher or taught: out of the heart all evil comes, and dealing with the outside will not help it. Sanctification is not an external thing; and it can only be learnt, moreover, in the sanctuary,—in the presence of God from whom man has deeply revolted. The prodigal must return to his Father; and God is ready to welcome him. Let him take but the place to which his need should bring him, he shall find that Heart that never has been alienated or indifferent poured out over him. This is seen in the person not of a privileged Jew, but of a Canaanitess; and then in Israel we find the table of the Lord spread, and the bounty with which He would attract wanderers to Himself. The closing section returns to that with which it began, and warns against the leaven of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

1. The question with which we begin is raised by themselves, by Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem, the headquarters of all the religious opposition to the Lord. They come to Him directly with the inquiry, which of course is an accusation, and as a charge against His disciples, impliedly against Him their teacher: "Why do Thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread." They had here what in their minds convicted the disciples indeed as very manifest sinners; for the breach of such a tradition was with these men a greater sin than the breach of the law itself; nay, by a manifest perversion of Ex. xxxiv. 27, it was argued that this *oral* law it was that contained the terms of God's covenant with Israel,* and not the other.

Thus here was a challenge which the Lord could not allow to go unanswered. He answers them with another question, which even to themselves would destroy the authority to which they appealed, if they could not answer it: "Why do ye also transgress the *commandments of God* for your tradition?" And then He takes up the commandment to which in a special way God had been pleased to attach a promise for the observance of it, a signal punishment for disobedience to it, and shows how thoroughly their tradition left the door open to any who pleased, to violate it with impunity. A man had only to say it was "corban"—a gift to God—that by which he might have ministered to the need of his

*See Edersheim's "Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," for much else and worse upon this subject.

father or his mother; and ye have made void the word of God for your tradition. Hypocrites! well did [q]Esaias prophesy of you, saying, "This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far away from me: but in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines commands of men."

And having called unto him the multitude, he said unto them, Hear and understand: [r]not that which entereth into the mouth defileth the man; but that which [s]cometh out of the mouth, that defileth the man. Then

q Is. 29. 13. Ezek.33.31.

r Rom. 14. 14-23. *cf.* Col.2.20-23.

s *cf.* Jer. 17. 9, 10. *cf.* Rom.3. 10-18. *cf.* Tit.1.15.

father or mother, to be completely excused from such a duty. "Of course, the 'Ten Words,'" says Edersheim, "were the Holy of Holies of the Law; nor was there any obligation more rigidly observed—indeed, carried in practice almost to the verge of absurdity,—than that of honor to parents. In both respects, then, this was a specially vulnerable point, and it might well be argued that if in this law Rabbinic ordinances came into conflict with the demands of God's word, the essential contrariety between them must indeed be great.

"It must not be thought that the pronunciation of the votive word 'Corban,' although meaning 'a gift' or 'given to God,' necessarily dedicated a thing to the Temple. The meaning might simply be, and generally was, that it was to be regarded *like* Corban,—that is, that in regard to the person or persons named, the thing termed so was to be considered as if it were Corban,—laid on the altar, and put entirely out of their reach. For, although included under the same name, there were really two kinds of vows: those of consecration to God, and those of personal obligation—and the latter were the most frequent.

"There can be no doubt that the words of Christ referred to such vows of personal obligation. By these a person might bind himself with regard to men or things, or else put that which was another's out of his own reach, or that which was his own out of the reach of another, and this as completely as if the thing or things had been *Corban*, a gift given to God. . . . And so stringent was the ordinance that (almost in the words of Christ) it is expressly stated that such a vow was binding, even if what was vowed involved a breach of the Law. It cannot be denied that such vows in regard to parents would be binding, and were actually made. Indeed the question is discussed in the Mishnah, in so many words, whether 'honor of father or mother' constituted a ground for invalidating a vow, and decided on the negative against a solitary dissenting voice. And if doubt should still exist, a case is related in the Mishnah, in which a father *was* thus shut out by the vow of his son from anything by which he might be profited by him" (*Edersheim*, vol. ii. pp. 17-21).

Thus was Rabbinism convicted out of its own mouth of the most glaring substitution of its traditions for the word of God, and the moral character of these involved in hopeless condemnation. Nor has traditionalism ever escaped from such a violation of conscience and the word of God. Man being what he is, it could not be otherwise: the maintenance of the word of God in absolute supremacy is his only salvation from the grossest immorality, as the "teaching for the doctrines the commandments of men" is itself rebellion against the Source of all morality.

The Lord calls the multitude together to Him therefore, to give the most public utterance to that which may seem to us so simple, and yet to which a large mass of Christians by profession have not even yet attained; that "not that which entereth into the mouth defileth a man." The source of defilement for a man is, alas, within him; and Christianity by taking away the suppositious sources has lifted the true moral element out of all confusion, and placed it upon an immutable foundation. Brought into the clear light, such a principle commends itself to every man's conscience; but all the more would the Pharisees resent it. The disciples, in some alarm, represent this to Him; but

came the disciples and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended when they heard that word? But he answered and said, Every plant that my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be [t]rooted up. Let them alone: they are [u]blind leaders of the blind; but if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

t *cf.* ch. 5. 20. *cf.* Acts 15. 10.
u Is. 9. 16. Mal. 2. 8. ch. 23. 16. Lk. 6. 39.

And Peter answered and said unto him, Explain to us this parable. And he said, Are ye also even yet without understanding? Do ye not perceive that whatever entereth into the mouth passeth into the belly and is cast out into the draught? but the things that come out of the mouth proceed from the [v]heart, and *they* defile the man: for out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnessings, blasphemies. These are the things that defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not the man.

v *cf.* Jas. 3. 10–12. Gen. 6. 5.

2 (xv. 21–28): Faith confirmed.

2. And Jesus going forth from thence, withdrew into the parts of [w]Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanitish woman coming out of those coasts cried out, saying,

w Mk. 7. 24–30.

He at once in most decisive language condemns their principles as what were no plants of His Father's planting, but as it were weeds that must be rooted up; while they themselves were but blind leaders of blind followers: they would fall into the ditch together. For man cannot escape from the responsibility which the moral faculty entails on him, and which would for the simplest, if they would listen to it, break such snares as these.

Yet, so great is the blinding force of association and habits of thought, that even the disciples, as represented by the ever foremost Peter, desire to have "this parable" explained to them; and He has to reprove them for their spiritual slowness. How constantly was there found in this the cause of this lack of understanding which we would rather even impute to mere mental feebleness. Cannot they perceive the difference between the moral and the material? Here is indeed a fountain of evil which it may pass human ability to cleanse, but it has to be reckoned with. It is an easy thing to legislate about meats and the washing of hands, and by such poor righteousness as this satisfy oneself perhaps but too well; but even this satisfaction convicts the soul of its unrighteousness and lack of truthful dealing with itself. The evil must be faced in order to deliverance; but where shall deliverance be found?

2. The answer we have in the next incident, the story of the Canaanitish woman. From the pitiable self-righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, which is but hypocrisy, the Lord withdraws into the parts of Tyre and Sidon. Here are open sinners, long since under the divine curse for their sins; but here too, as everywhere, are the needs which under God force men to reality. Thus they are mercies in disguise,—a divine Voice, which must have mercy in it, even though this may not be recognized as such.

A woman out of these coasts comes crying after Him. With her it is need that brings her, that blessed need that in one shape or another has brought us all. But she appeals to Him by a strange title for a Canaanite—"the Son of David," and as such she could have no claim upon Him. He answers her, therefore, not a word. With a heart full of blessing for her, He yet could not bless her on false ground: for her it would not be good; for Him it would be impossible. But to come to Christ without a claim seems also at first impossible, not knowing aright either ourselves or Him. We try to claim Him by some betterness beyond our neighbors, or by our repentance and good resolu-

Have pity on me, O Lord, thou [x]Son of David! my daughter is grievously vexed with a demon. But he answered her not a word. And his [y]disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away: for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent save to the [z]lost sheep of the house of Israel. But she came and worshiped him, saying, Lord, [a]help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's loaf, and to cast it to the [b]dogs. But she said, Yea, Lord: for the dogs also eat of the [c]crumbs that fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee [d]as thou wilt. And her daughter was healed from that hour.

x ch. 1. 1. ch. 22. 41, 42. *cf.* Ps. 132. 11.
y *cf.* Lk. 18. 15. *cf.* Lk. 9. 54, 55.
z ch. 10. 5, 6. *cf.* Jno. 1. 11.
a Ps. 145. 18.
b *cf.* ch. 7. 6. *cf.* Jno. 4. 22.
c *cf.* Ex. 22. 31. *cf.* Lev. 23. 22. *cf.* Ruth 2. 12. *cf.* Is. 56. 6, 7. *cf.* Acts 10. 9-18, 28.
d *cf.* ch. 9. 27-29; *cf.* ch. 21. 21, 22.

tions, or in some other way by which we may avoid the full facing of our need —of that which has given the devil power against us. But the Canaanite under the curse is still our picture if we put it that way, and Christ is the Son of David, silent and afar off. He had, in fact, to take a far different position, in order that either Jews or Gentiles might have part in Him.

Yet she cries on, till the disciples also beg Him to dismiss her; impliedly (for they knew His grace) by granting her request. But he answers, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." He speaks, let us notice, not of what is in His heart, but in His mission; and He speaks as Son of David, not as Son of man or Saviour. But even the house of Israel were *lost* sheep, little as they realized it; and if *they* were "lost," what hope for any, save in pure and utter grace?

She takes heart, as it seems, by this, to draw near to Him: for if Israel be lost, and He has come after them, may not a lost one from outside have hope also? and will not grace be consistent with itself? can it be local merely, and limited—not universal? how could such light shine, and not shine all round? Has he not here, in fact, supplied her with the argument which presently she uses? Did He not mean to do so, when He dropped that word, so penetrating, so assuring, into her heart?

So she comes, now worshiping, and dropping the formal title; while she owns in her simple "Lord," in a more personal way, His title over her. Will He not give *help* to one who needs it? So she drops all other claim than this: "Lord," she says, "help me." "But He answered and said, It is not right to take the children's loaf and cast it to the dogs."

That might seem as if she had gained nothing, but she has. Again He has dropped a word for her, if she be lowly enough to take it. For the last word "dogs" is not the word for the wild houseless, offal-hunting creatures of the eastern streets, but though still "dogs," yet the "little dogs," the house or pet-dogs even, such as would look, as she was doing, for *something in the house*. So that the way for her into blessing has really been laid open: *if* only she has humility enough to take it. And indeed faith and humility—which in a sinner is repentance—are twin companions, never to be disjoined. He that is lowly enough to take the place of dog will soon discern God's way of grace. She sees at once the steps by which He has been leading her—"the lost," the "dog," yet the house-dog, dependent and to be cared for in some way. And then *His* bounteous table! perhaps she may have heard of those baskets of fragments taken up after five thousand men had been fed at it: at any rate, she did not ask,—had no need to ask the children's loaf: the fragments—in her humility and faith, she says, "the crumbs"—would be enough for her: "Truth, Lord; for the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their masters' table."

No fear of that argument failing: He himself has given it her; and He would

3 (xv. 29-38): Divine fullness.

3. And Jesus departed thence and came nigh to the sea of Galilee. And he went up into the mountain and sat down there. And there came unto him great multitudes, having with them, the [c]lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and they cast them at his feet, and he healed them: so that the multitude wondered, seeing the dumb speaking, the maimed whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they [f]glorified the God of Israel. And Jesus, having called his disciples unto him, said, I have [g]compassion on the multitude, because they have been with me now three days, and have nothing to eat; and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint by the way. And his disciples say unto him, Whence should we have so many loaves in the wilderness as to fill so great a multitude? And Jesus saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, [h]Seven, and a few little fishes. And he commanded the multitudes to recline on the ground; and he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks and brake and gave them unto the disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes. And they all ate and were filled; and they took up what was over of the fragments seven baskets full. And they that had eaten were [i]four thousand men, beside women and children.

c ch. 11. 5. Ps. 146. 8. *cf.* Is. 35. 5, 6.

f Lk. 5. 25, 26. *cf.* Lk. 19. 37, 38. *ctr.* ch. 11. 20-24.

g Mk. 8. 1-9. *cf.* ch. 9. 36-38.

h *cf.* ch. 14. 17. ver. 37.

i *cf.* ch. 14. 21.

deny His very nature did He say, He was not good enough for *that*. But He has no thought of this, no need of the argument, which yet, for her sake, He rejoices in: His heart leaps to His lips, as He exclaims, "O woman, great is thy faith! be it unto thee even as thou wilt." And her daughter is healed from that very hour.

Here is how a human heart is led into the sanctuary; and the holy, pure, revealing light is that of *grace*. What work has been done in it is plain enough, and what no cleansing of the hands could ever have effected. Here is the divine remedy for the heart's vileness, *the revelation of the heart of God to it*. But Pharisaism could not even understand it, and the double miracle, wrought for a Canaanite, would only have been a double offence. It is not even presented to them, therefore, but has to be done afar off, though under the eyes of His disciples, a sweet appealing picture for those that have hearts to understand it. To how many hearts has it not appealed since then!

3. So now the table of the Lord is spread, and divine fullness is poured out for man's need. The dispensational character so largely found in Matthew still characterizes what is here, and after the blessing of the Gentile in the Canaanitish woman, the Lord is here again among the Jews, and the multitudes who are witnesses and recipients of abundant goodness, glorify the *God of Israel*. This is all in perfect order; and the feeding of the people has in the numbers connected with it a witness that must not be despised. There are *seven* loaves now, and *seven* baskets* full of fragments, the number of perfection being thus doubly stamped on the divine bounty, and carrying us on in thought to the final blessing.

4. A new demand is now made upon Christ for a sign from heaven, the Pharisees uniting with their constant enemies, the Sadducees, to make it. The com-

* Larger baskets than in the former miracle; here σπυρίδες, "round, plaited-baskets; fish- or provision-baskets;" in the former case, κόφινοι, "hand- or traveling-baskets. The distinction is always preserved, as in the next chapter.

4 (xv. 39-xvi. 4): Israel's failure to discern the time.

4. And when he had dismissed the multitudes, he went up into the ship, and came unto the coasts of Magdala.* And the Pharisees and Sadducees came and, tempting [him], desired him to show them a [j]sign from heaven. But he answered and said unto them, When [k]even is come, ye say, Fine weather, for the sky is red; and in the morning, A storm to-day, for the sky is red and lowering: ye know how to discern the face of the sky, but the signs of the times ye cannot. A [l]wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and no sign shall be given to it, but the sign of Jonas. And he left them and departed.

[j] ch. 12.38-41. Mk. 8. 10-13.
[k] Lk. 12.54-57.
[l] *cf.* ch.21.23-27.

5 (xvi.5-12): warning as to the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

5. And when his disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. And Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the [m]leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, [It is] because we have no bread. And Jesus knowing [this], said, Why reason ye among yourselves, O ye of little faith, because ye have taken no

[m] Mk. 8.14-21. Lk. 12. 1. *cf.* Gal. 5.9.

* Or "Magadan."

ing together of those otherwise so opposed was but a sign of the strength of that opposition to Jesus which united them. There was not even truth in the desire they expressed; and the character of it showed the reason why they could not see in Him the reality of His claim. A sign that could work upon a carnal people was what they sought, and which would have left them a carnal people still. The faith so awakened would have had none of the moral qualities of faith in it: conscience and heart would have been alike wanting, and God so displayed would have been half dethroned. What a slight, too, would be put upon the Sign of signs, Himself, the Son of God, come in power, yet in all the grace of humanity, among men His creatures! From Him, indeed, the supernatural was natural; but on that account it could not accredit Him: He was above it, though it bore witness to Him. To those who believed on His Name when they saw His miracles, He could not commit Himself (John ii. 23–25).

In fact, they were prophets of the external and could read well enough the face of the sky: the spiritual condition, which always rules in the signs of the times just because God is a moral Governor, this they could not see. Had they done so, they would have judged first their own condition and have been brought by their need to the supply provided.

But "a wicked and adulterous generation" it was that sought after a sign, and they would get none but the sign of Jonas. His death and resurrection would be a sign against them, that they had rejected the message of God and His grace, such as Nineveh had known nothing about. Already He had declared this as now inevitable, and briefly refers to it here, as to a sentence pronounced. Then He leaves them and departs.

5. But these Pharisees and Sadducees do not present an evil wholly outside of the circle of His disciples. We have all of us, alas, within us that which makes us from the side of nature but too much akin to them, and in our hearts that which offers itself as a ready and kindly soil for their most seemingly opposite errors. The Lord therefore, in that enigmatic way which He so much used, and which is so well adapted to awaken thought and searching of heart, bids His disciples "beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." They can think only that it is because they have taken no bread; although it would be enigmatic enough how the ritualism or rationalism of these could affect their breadmaking. But this manifested again the terrible unbelief of those who

bread? Do ye not [n]yet understand nor remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many hand-baskets ye took up, nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many baskets ye took up? How is it that ye do not understand that I spake not to you of loaves, to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees? Then they understood that he spake not to them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the [o]doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

[n] *cf.* Jno. 12. 37. *cf.* Lk. 24. 25. *cf.* Heb. 5. 11, 12.

[o] *cf.* Gal. 1. 6-9. *cf.* Col. 2. 4, 18.

[1] (xvi. 13-19:) Christ's purpose as to His assembly, and the administration of the Kingdom.

SUBDIVISION 4. (Chaps. xvi. 13–xvii. 21.)

"The Kingdom and patience" in man's world and day.

[1] AND when Jesus came into the parts of [p]Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Who do men say that I, the Son of man, am? And they said,

[p] Mk. 8. 27-33. Lk. 9. 18-22.

had twice so lately seen Him multiply the loaves so as to satisfy thousands. Yet they could think that *He* was troubled about the supply of bread! Nay, it was of the doctrine of the Jewish leaders He was speaking, and of its subtle pervasive working; by which indeed Christendom has been so largely corrupted since. We have already seen His own use of the figure in this way, and it might have prepared them to understand of what He was now speaking. They were slow to understand; but how slowly indeed does that which is of God dawn upon us in general!

SUBD. 4.

We come now to what furnishes the ground of Peter's two epistles,—what John speaks of as "the Kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ" (Rev. i. 9); set up in a world of which Satan is still the prince, through the lusts by which he holds men captive. Thus the world is that which knew not Christ when He came into it, and of which the cross is the characteristic sign. The cross for the Master means, therefore, the cross for the disciple, as He declares here, if indeed we will be true to Him. The light for the path is a glory outside the world, and which is in His face whom the world has rejected and cast out. Thus we are "called," as Peter says, (2 Peter i. 3) "by glory and virtue"—the last being the *soldier's* virtue, "courage," the virtue of the Church militant; and as in Colossians (i. 11), "strengthened with all might, according to the power of His glory, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness."

We have in connection with this the first plain announcement of Christ's assembly, not as Paul long afterwards was given to declare it, as Christ's "body" or "bride," but rather as the house of God, "a spiritual house" of "living stones," as Peter preaches from this very text (1 Pet. ii. 5). Moreover the administration of the Kingdom is committed to Peter, as representative of the assembly, no doubt (comp. chap. xviii. 17, 18). We have already seen its history (chap. xiii), and that the opposition of the world which is the necessary consequence of moral oppositeness, comes to be introduced within the Christian profession itself, so as to entail the need of overcoming in this way also: of which the epistles give us everywhere abundant proof, if indeed the experience of any true disciple permitted him to doubt it.

[1] It is in the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi—stamped thus doubly with the assertion of the power of the world rulers, the Cæsars and the Herods, there where Israel should have been sole possessor of the land, upholding and upheld by the name of her God,—that this revelation of the Divine purpose in the assembly is made. Israel is but as a wanderer among the nations now. Her doom is upon her, although not as yet fully carried into effect; and the world which is uniting with her in the rejection of the one hope of deliverance must still be left for Cæsar and Herod to divide between them. Out of it God is going to

Some, John the Baptist; but others, Elias; and others again, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But [q]ye, who do ye say that I am? And Simon

[q] Jno. 6. 67.

separate a people for Himself, and in the over abounding of divine grace to give them an inheritance in heaven. But this they are to reach by His own pathway of suffering in the world, the fellowship of His sufferings being the fit training for fellowship upon the throne and in the glory.

The first point here is in the apprehension of Himself; and so He asks His disciples now. "Who do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" He uses the term by which we find Him, in the synoptic Gospels, most commonly speaking of Himself, the term so perfect in its lowliness, so tender in its intimacy, so unique in its very generality: for, just because *all* were "sons of men," the claim to be the Son of man would by itself be suited to awaken attention. If Daniel, and, still more, Ezekiel were addressed by the Lord as "son of man," this of course was a thing quite different. Whatever else it signified, the reminder of essential difference between the glorious Speaker and the frail instrument by whom He pleased to speak to men, was obviously in place. But, just on that very account, no prophet of them all, in speaking to other men, could have called himself the "Son of man." On the other hand, Daniel had spoken of "One like unto a son of man" coming in the clouds of heaven to receive universal dominion (chap. vii. 13, 14), a passage to us abundantly clear, but which does not in fact give Messiah this title, as is plain, and by the Jews in general it does not seem to have been even applied to him.* The question put by them afterwards would apparently indicate this: "We have heard out of the Law, that Christ abideth for ever; and *Thou* sayest, the Son of man shall be lifted up: *who is* this Son of man? (John xii. 34). As a title indeed, to those whose expectations of the Messiah were so different, its lowliness would not commend it to such use as the Lord constantly made of it. The form of it in Daniel (*Bar Enahsh*) is the very lowliest, "a son of frail, or mortal, man," so that we are naturally reminded of the "*likeness* of sinful flesh" (it *could* only be "likeness" here of which the apostle speaks, Rom. viii. 3). Little fit would they be to understand the tenderness of the adoption of such an epithet as "Son of man."†

What did they make of One who came after this manner: not emblazoning His name upon the skies, but writing it upon the hearts of those relieved by divine mercy through Him? of One who, instead of skimming over the surface of the sore of humanity, probed it to the bottom, though but to heal it effectually? "Who do men say that I, the Son of man, am?"

The answer only takes the judgment of friends into account, and this is various: "some say, John the Baptist; some Elias; some, Jeremias, or one of the prophets." But this various judgment is, in fact, but one: *no one really knows;* among the crowds around, and recognizing too, the best that could be said for them, the desire to do Him honor, there is yet, so to speak, *no true faith.* No matter as to the difference between these thoughts, compared with their amazing unanimity. Well might He say, "I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nought and in vain." Israel is surely not now to be gathered, though there is still an election of grace. He turns to the disciples with the same question: "But ye, who do *ye* say that I am?" And Peter breaks out with his answer for the rest: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

* Edersheim in his "Life and Times of Jesus," so often referred to, in a list of Old Testament passages so applied, says of this one only: "Dan. vii. 13 is curiously explained in the Talmud (Sanh. 98 *a*) where it is said that, if Israel behaved worthily, the Messiah would come in the clouds of heaven; if otherwise, humble, and riding upon an ass." In the "Book of Enoch" also, the Messiah appears in the clouds of heaven "as a son of man," amid the angels of the divine judgment-seat; and in the Sibylline Oracles there are allusions.

† *Now*, however, the equivalent of *Bar Enahsh*, but of *Ben Adam*, ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, "of *man*" generically.

Peter answering said, Thou art the [r]Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answering said unto him, [s]Blessed art thou, Simon bar-Jona: for flesh and blood

[r] ch. 14. 33. John 6. 69. John 11. 27. Acts 9. 20. [s] 1 Jno. 4. 15. 1 Jno. 5. 1, 5; *cf.* Jno. 1. 12, 13 with ch. 11. 27.

Here, then, while Israel remains in unbelief, is the faith of the Church. It is founded on Scripture, but along with this on the knowledge of Christ Himself,—on the revelation of Christ by the Father to him, as the Lord immediately declares. The Spirit and the Word act together, and so constantly: the Shepherd comes in by the door, and the porter opens to Him; He speaks, and the sheep hear His voice.

That the Christ would be the Son of God, Scripture had again and again declared. The second psalm expressly represents Him as rejected by men, yet owned of God as His Son by nature, yet in manhood, and to be (in spite of all opposition) King at last on Zion. And this is the Scripture which with one accord the disciples quote, after the first appearance of the apostles before the rulers of the Jews, when dismissed, they go to their own company (Acts iv. 25-28).

Similarly, according to Isaiah, the virgin's Son would be Immanuel, and this no mere or hyperbolical name: the Child born, the Son given, upon whose shoulder was to be the government in Israel, would be "the mighty God, the Father of eternity, the Prince of peace" (Isaiah vii. 14; ix. 6).

His deity, though born in Bethlehem, but whose goings forth had been of old, from everlasting, Micah had borne witness to, in those words which the scribes and chief priests, so unavailingly for either, could quote to Herod.

Other scriptures there were to shame Israel's unbelief in God's marvelous grace to her, and her great glory. But Peter, taught of God, expresses his faith in a way that shows it to be personal, not traditional nor mere orthodoxy, but a divine energy within his soul. It is the Eternal Life that He has seen in Christ—that indeed was in Him "the Light of men" (John i. 4). Thus he calls Him not simply the Son of God, but "the Son of the *living* God." Living power it is that he has realized in Him, the manifested Life, the incarnate, creative Word, and in the sense of this he bears witness to Him.

Striking it is, too, that John, His most intimate disciple, speaks of Life so much. And with Peter, if we look at his first epistle, we shall find that "living" is a characteristic word. A "living hope," "the living word," "living stones" built up upon the "Living Stone," living unto righteousness, living according to God: all these harmonize with his confession of Christ here; while some of them carry us right back to the confession itself or to the Lord's words in response to it. They combine to assure us of the Presence in which he had lived and walked, and of its power over him.

The Lord answers immediately: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father, who is heaven. And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter (Petros), and upon this rock (petra) I will build my assembly; and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it."

Peter's faith is thus a divinely given faith, the fruit of a divine revelation to his soul, and thus he is a true "bar-jona," (son of a dove,) born of the Spirit of God; and, Israel having rejected Christ, he must have a new place provided for him, and for those of like faith. Thus he becomes Peter, a stone in a new spiritual building which will be Christ's assembly. It is not yet said that this is the house of God, which in Israel, as we know, had been always a material building. Relationship to God is not yet opened up, but rather to Himself as the Builder of it. It is to be His assembly, a people "called out," as the word indicates,* to Himself; and Peter himself explains it to us as consisting of "living stones," who "coming to" Him, the "Living Stone," "are built up a

* Ecclesia (ἐκκλησία) from ἐκκαλέω, to "call out."

hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father, who is in heaven. And *I* also say unto thee, that thou art

spiritual house" (in opposition to Israel's material one). He thus very simply settles the old controversy which Rome has raised upon the Lord's words to him,—none more competent to settle it surely than the one to whom the words were spoken, and, moreover, Rome's own chosen interpreter, whom for very shame they cannot refuse, and by refusing whom they still destroy their own interpretation: so has God doubly guarded the truth against their perversion. Peter assures us that the "Rock" upon which the assembly is founded is not Peter but Christ Himself. The Petra is not the Petros, near as these may be together: for indeed the "stone" derives all its rock-like qualities from the "rock,"—is, so to speak, quarried out of the rock upon which it is founded.

There is no question here, then, to raise or to settle: the "prophetic scriptures" have settled it for us in anticipation, before it was raised. The assembly called out to Christ, is built upon Christ, and every way His assembly: relationship to Himself is now the whole question. And He being the Son of the *living* God, the gates of hades—of death—cannot prevail against it. Death has prevailed over the whole human race, but in the Son of God become Son of man, a new and eternal life has come into humanity, annulling, for those who believe in Him, him who had the power of death, that is, the devil. For these death is abolished, and life and incorruption are brought to light through the gospel.

Here, then, the assembly stands, upon the rock of resurrection, though resurrection has not yet been mentioned in connection with it. But Christ, says the apostle, is marked out Son of God by resurrection of the dead (Rom. i. 4). Life is thus not in Him simply, but in Him meets the power of death and vanquishes it: the assembly (though in the meanwhile on earth) belongs to the other side of death, yea, to heaven: the gates of hades open in vain for it.

This is not, therefore, as Rome again alleges, an affirmation of the infallibility of the Church, but rather of its continuance; and it does continue until at the coming of Christ it is removed to heaven. Of the saints of the Old Testament the apostle could speak as "the spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. xii. 23); and if by the latter expression he intimates, as he surely does, their resurrection, that still shows that, as a body, they had been removed by death. But the Church of Christ could never be spoken of in such a manner: spite of all that it has come through—all the opposition of men and Satan through which it has come,—the yawning jaws of the grave have never ingulfed it. Though in its character an exotic, and not of earth, the power of the Spirit has maintained it here without interruption, a witness even in her failure and suffering to her absent Lord.

But under all this, and shining through it, there is a higher truth, as has been already said: the Church is that in which, first of all, the power of life over death, death itself made to minister to it and sustain it, comes out in its full character. The eternal life has come in Christ in its perfection, but in Him as a corn of wheat which, falling into the ground and dying, brings forth fruit in which it is perpetuated and multiplied. This is, of course, John's doctrine, or that of his Gospel rather, and Paul also must come in to give it full utterance; but it is wrapped up here in the Lord's first announcement of the Church to Peter.

He is going to build it. His words are as yet but prophecy, not a declaration of what He has done, or is doing, but of what He is going to do. Between that and the present lies for Him, as He begins now to declare explicitly, that awful valley of the shadow of death through which a deeper death darkens,—an uttermost woe which He alone can bear, a depth in which no foot but His could find standing. Then the "light of life" will have come, the weight be removed from off man's heart, the cloud from his path, but more,—the veil rent which covers the sanctuary, he will draw near to God, distance done away for ever, to where the full glory of God in a *Human Face* shall greet and bless and glorify

Peter, and on 'this rock I will build my "assembly; and the gates of "hades shall not prevail against it.

l cf. ch. 7. 24, 25. *cf.* Is. 28. 16 with 1 Cor. 3. 11; Ps. 18. 2. *u cf.* Eph. 2. 20; *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 4, 5. *v cf.* Rev. 1. 18; *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 50-58.

him with its radiance. This is what Christianity means for us even here; and oh that one could tell it out, but it is impossible. Christ must be for Himself the Speaker, and every one must hear from His own lips, find in His own face, drink in from His own love, that else ineffable reality.

From the announcement of the assembly (or, as it is commonly called the Church *) and of Peter's place in it, the Lord goes on to speak of the Kingdom and his place in it: two things which are surely connected together, while they are different, and of which it is important to see both the connection and the difference. Here also there has been on both sides as much confusion of thought as in the former case, and far more widely spread. We shall do well therefore to examine with the more care the meaning of what is here before us.

A common confusion is that of the Church and the Kingdom, and which has both proceeded from and led on to very serious confusion in other respects. We have already seen sufficiently what the Kingdom is, to be delivered from the possibility of any absolute identification of them. It certainly was not the Church which John the Baptist proclaimed to be "at hand." Israel was alone before him as the people of God, though needing to be purged by the Lord for entrance into His Kingdom. Even so, people and Kingdom were plainly different thoughts, however closely they might be connected together.

The Kingdom in its Old Testament character being for the time set aside, on account of Israel's rejection of the King, the "assembly" which Christ owns as His, in the day of that rejection, becomes the recognized people of God; and in the same relation to the "Kingdom and patience" that Israel will yet have in relation to His "Kingdom and glory." Still the Kingdom and the people are very different thoughts; although in any picture of the Kingdom we necessarily see the people. So it has been in that history of the Kingdom which we have had put before us in the parables of the thirteenth chapter. But there even, if we have been able to interpret them aright, the people before us in the first parables are not the same people as in the closing one at all; and the Kingdom, while changing in character at the close, goes on beyond the time of the "assembly," of which we have been speaking, altogether.

Church and Kingdom are not, then, even for the present time, the same; though it may be urged that (in the same way as with Israel) in some sense we may identify them. Yet even here, for any right interpretation of the passage before us, we must learn to discriminate. We shall surely find, if we look closely enough, that we cannot even say that (even for the present time) the limits of Church and Kingdom are practically the same: there is a difference here also which must be taken into account, although we may not be able, at the point which we have reached in the Gospel here, fully to define it.

The Kingdom, it is plain, in its mystery-form, is established in the world, not by any open act of divine power, but by the sowing of the "word of the Kingdom" in the hearts of men. It is thus not territorial, as the kingdoms of the world are, but a Kingdom of the truth, a sphere of discipleship; which may be, however, merely outward and nominal, a profession true or false, which the end will declare. This is plain by the parables that have been before us. Its blessings are thus conditional, dependent upon character and conduct, as the parable of the unforgiving servant especially declares (chap. xviii).

That it is administered by men, as representatives of the absent King, the

* While in common parlance we may still use this term, it is important in all interpretation of Scripture to keep to the true word, "assembly," which, if it had been always adhered to, would have done much of itself to prevent some of the perversion of thought which has connected itself with the other. Church, as is perfectly well known, comes from the Greek *Kuriake*, "of the Lord," which (as is evident) leaves out the very thing which *ecclesia* defines, and so permits the free substitution of other thoughts in its place.

And I will give unto thee the [w]keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou mayest [x]bind on earth shall

[w] *cf.* Acts 2. 14, 42. *cf.* Acts 10. 46-48.
[x] ch. 18. 18; Jno. 20. 22, 23; *cf.* Acts 5. 1-11.

Lord's words to Peter here are clearly in proof, for the keys of the Kingdom are committed to him: not, I believe, distinctively, but as connected with that place which the Lord had just assigned him. As his confession of Him was just that of the others—of all true disciples, so the place of a stone in Christ's spiritual building was not Peter's alone, but that of all disciples; and the keys of the Kingdom go with this: the Church (that is) administers the Kingdom. In the eighteenth chapter, the power of binding and loosing, given here to Peter, is given to the assembly as a whole (ver. 18): and when we consider what the power of the keys implies, we shall find that in fact it is not peculiar to Peter at all. The two statements here go perfectly together, and as Peter is but a living stone founded upon the Rock, Christ Jesus, so every living stone is thus a Peter, and addressed as such through him.

After all that Rome and ritualism and even more evangelical systems have found in these keys, it may be hard to credit such a view as this; and with many it has been customary to point to Peter's eminent place on the day of Pentecost in opening the Kingdom to the Jews, as afterwards in the person of Cornelius to the Gentiles. But an eminent place may be fully allowed him in this way, while yet we deny him any exclusive place; and in fact we cannot exclude others on the day of Pentecost; nor even at Cæsarea allow that this was the sole use of the key in relation to the Gentiles, any more than the use of *another* key than that which before had opened the Kingdom to the Jews. One act did not surely exhaust the service of the key, nor to open the door *twice* require *two* keys. Can it be thought that the door once opened simply *remained* open, and needed no more opening? On the contrary, I believe it can be conclusively shown that the administration of the Kingdom, which these keys stand for, is not yet over, is not all come to an end in one initial authoritative act. Men still receive and are received in; and if the power of the keys speaks of admission into the Kingdom, and the Kingdom be the sphere of discipleship, then the key is in fact but authority to disciple.

Now there are keys, not simply a key; and so, if we are right, a double way of doing this is implied. The first is what the Lord Himself speaks of as "the key of *knowledge*," and which He reproaches the lawyers for taking from the people (Luke xi. 52). Similarly in this Gospel He denounces the Pharisees for shutting up the Kingdom of heaven against men. "Ye neither go in yourselves," He tells them, "neither suffer ye those that are entering to go in" (Matt. xxiii. 13).

But while the key of knowledge is thus the first and fundamental form of what is here, it is not the whole. There is also an authoritative reception, which the Lord has enjoined, and which, just *as* submission to authority, is most suited in entering the Kingdom. Baptism is thus "unto Christ" (Rom. vi. 3), and "unto the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts viii. 16), an open "putting on of Christ" (Gal. iii. 27). It is thus a bowing to the authority of the King, as entering the Kingdom: "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, *calling upon the name of the Lord*," says Ananias to Saul (Acts xxii. 16). But the Lord Himself most distinctly puts the two keys together when, after His resurrection, with all authority given to Him in heaven and earth, He sends out the eleven with the commission of the King, saying: "Go and disciple all nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the completion of the age (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20).

All this is in perfect harmony with the words to Peter here, and sufficiently explains them. Thus read, they are in the highest degree appropriate to the occasion upon which they were spoken, as introducing to the new state of things

be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou mayest [y] loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

[y] cf. 2 Cor. 2. 6-8.

which was at hand. Their very character as outlining, rather than filling in, leaving much to be explained at an aftertime, is perfectly suited to their introductory position. This is not, however, all that the Lord announces here; He adds, "And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven:" words which have been perhaps as much in contention as to their meaning as any of those connected with them here.

There need be no doubt that the terms "binding" and "loosing" have reference to, and are indeed but the application, in a Christian manner, of those in use among the Rabbins, and the Lord's extension of them to the assembly in the eighteenth chapter shows absolutely that such power as is implied in them was not simply to belong to Simon Peter. Two or three gathered to Christ's name have exactly the same authority, the same sanction of their acts; in either case the Lord uses the very same words: "Whatsoever *thou* shalt bind on earth," or "loose," "whatsoever *ye* shall bind," or "loose, on earth shall be bound (or loosed) in heaven." If this were the communication of even apostolic power to Peter, then every two or three gathered to Christ's name have similar apostolic power. No one doubts, of course, that Peter had this; no one, I suppose, would claim it for the two or three. That is not in contention: the question is solely now of what these words convey. The same words must have the same meaning, if there is to be any certain meaning in words at all: the application, or limitation, must be found in the connection. Not even the Romanist would say that there was to be absolutely *no* limitation, even in Peter's case; and if any did, he would have (if he would be consistent) to say exactly the same of every little gathering to the name of Jesus. No one certainly could press a conclusion in the one case that would not have exactly the same title to be pressed in the other.

Now, if we seek the limitation in the context, that in the case of the two or three is easily seen to be to cases of discipline needed to maintain the Lord's honor in their midst. The assembly does not define doctrine, and has no right to "teach for doctrine the commandments of men." Christ alone is the authoritative Teacher, by His Spirit, and all we are brethren (chap. xxiii. 8). But the assembly has to maintain by a holy discipline what is due to Him who is Head and Lord, and whatsoever is truly bound in this way is bound in heaven. Here moral conditions also, in the very nature of things, impose a limitation: for to "bind" a saint to do evil cannot be authorized in heaven, and it would be wickedness to maintain this.

When we take this back with us to Simon Peter's case, we shall find similar limitations. The context does not speak of the discipline of an assembly, but of administration in the Kingdom of heaven. This is not the Church, but the sphere of individual responsibility to the Lord, and hence the individuality of the assurance, "thou" not "ye." The connection here is with the keys of the Kingdom,—with discipling into it: here individual teachers teach, and disciples baptize. There is no limit to any class that Scripture gives us, except the limit of *capacity*, and no control over others recognized except as all are subject to the common discipline of which we have been speaking.

Peter, therefore, in what the Lord says to him here, is not the apostle, but the confessor of his Lord. In his faith he does not stand alone, but is the representative of others. As Peter, the living "stone," he does not stand alone either. In his use of the "keys" he is not alone; and in teaching and baptizing, the sanction of heaven is put upon what is done on earth; but nowhere apart from such necessarily implied conditions as we all own must come in in the case of two or three gathered to the Lord's name.

There is really no special difficulty in all this. The difficulties have been created for us by ecclesiastical views and claims which have grown up, as the

[2] (xvi. 20-28): The cross the badge of the followers of the Crucified.

[2] Then [z]charged he his disciples, that they should say to no man that *he* was the Christ. From that time Jesus began to show to his disciples that he must go away to Jerusalem, and [a]suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised again. And Peter taking him began to [b]rebuke him, saying, [God] be propitious to thee, Lord: this shall never be to thee. But he, turning round, said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan; for thou art an [c]offence to me: for thou hast not a mind toward the things of God, but toward the things of men. Then Jesus said unto his disciples, If any one

[z] ch. 17. 9. *cfr.* 2 Cor. 3. 12.

[a] ch. 17. 12.

[b] *cfr.* ver. 16. *cf.* Jno. 13. 36-38.

[c] *cf.* Gal. 1. 8. *cf.* Jno. 18. 10, 11.

Church, in the decline of spiritual power, came to lean upon external supports and to adopt a legal system as a refuge from license—the boat, as easier than walking on the water. Alas, it must be confessed it is; but oh, that Peter might here be suffered to speak to us of what *he* found in his walk upon that boisterous sea to meet His Lord, and of that Hand stretched out to meet him when the storm was beyond his strength, with the words which rebuked, not his rashness in walking *there*, but the little faith that had made it to appear but rashness.

[2] All this already tells of rejection of the King. Now He declares it to them in plain words such as He had not uttered yet. Those who have just expressed their faith in Him as the Christ are now told that they are not to utter this to any man. There is no hope as to the nation, and He shows them that He must "go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up." It is not atonement of which He speaks, but of rejection by men, the human side of His death, and not the divine. But this brings out in him who had been the spokesman of the apostles the working of that which was not faith but the opposite of it, and in which the Lord discerned the attack of the enemy. "Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him, saying, God be propitious to Thee, Lord: this shall *never* be to Thee!" But He, turning round, said unto Peter, "Get thee behind Me, Satan; for thou art an offence unto Me; for thou hast not a mind toward the things of God, but toward the things of men."

Thus quickly are the thoughts rebuked of those who would put Peter upon a throne of infallibility above all others. He is now sunk down into a mere ordinary man, with nothing but the thoughts of men, nay, an instrument of Satan to tempt the Lord Himself. Satan too would willingly have spared Him that Cross that He foresaw: for all the counsels of God hung upon it. From one side it was, indeed, but the awful wickedness of man; but from another the display of the glory of God, at once in righteousness and in love towards men. Peter knew not yet his own need, nor yet the unique place and dignity of his Master. He is praying God to be propitious to Him who is to be Himself the one propitiation for others; and to spare Him that by which propitiation could alone be wrought. Thus human wisdom may mistake its way, and human affection set itself against the path of divine love. And thus may the same man who has just now been drinking in, in faith, the revelation of God, without any consciousness of the transition, presently with equal zeal and earnestness be listening to the adversary! How we need constantly to pray, "Search me, O God, and try me!"

But the Lord not only declares His own path; He announces it as the path also of all His followers. What was peculiar to Himself in it, the cup that none but Himself could drink, He does not speak of, and here there is indeed an infinite difference; but as far as man's part in it is concerned, He warns us all. "If any one will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall

will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his [d]cross and follow me. For whosoever will save his life* shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life* for my sake, shall find it. For [e]what shall a man be profited, if he gain the whole world, but suffer the loss of his soul*? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul*? For the Son of man is about to come in the [f]glory of his Father with his angels, and then shall he render to every one according to his doings. Verily I

[d] Mk. 8. 34-38. Lk. 9. 23-26. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 10, 11.
[e] Mk. 8. 36, 37. *cf.* Lk. 12. 20, 21. *cf.* Jas. 5. 1-6.
[f] ch. 25. 31. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 10, 11. *cf.* Jude 14, 15. *cf.* Rev. 19. 11-21.

* ψυχη, soul or life.

lose his life for My sake shall find it." Thus the conditions of discipleship are laid down with the most decisive plainness, for all without exception. It is a world which has crucified Christ through which our path lies, and we have to make up our mind to face it. It is evident that He does not hold out any hope of the world changing, nor therefore of the path changing. The style of its opposition perhaps may change—even in His case it varied; but the opposition itself, proceeding from its unbelief in Him, could not possibly change, except by that unbelief being given up; and that would mean, of course, the world ceasing to exist, in all that which, according to Scripture, constitutes it the "world."

Its moral characteristics the apostle John describes for us, where he says that "all that is of the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John ii. 16). When men are no more characterised by these things, then the world (as such) will have ceased to exist. We know that this has not taken place, however, and Scripture never contemplates such a state before the Lord comes, at least. The path still exists for us, therefore; and the conditions of the path exist.

The Lord calls upon His people, therefore, to take their life in their hand, if necessary in order to follow Him. We must not "will" to keep it, if we "will" to follow Him. That is to be the spirit of our discipleship, and with the implication, of course, that we shall be tested as to it. We know how fully the generations immediately following the days of the Lord on earth were tested—how often the cross and the sword and the flame made His people fully understand the conditions which He here proclaims. Can we fairly refuse the application to ourselves to-day? or to ask whether there is not still, and for all of us, such a test remaining? or if the *spirit* of such discipleship must not be found with us at least in order to abide the test?

Our lot may be cast in so-called Christian times and lands, and the arm of open persecution may seem to be, if not shattered, at least so weakened, as to permit us to look upon a test of this kind, for most of us, as hardly to be made. Christian profession is mostly in repute; Christians themselves are in high places of authority, the government as a whole would not wish to be considered other than Christian. The world still exists, but, as the parables we have considered show, and as we all must recognize, has changed its tactics. As Pharisees and Sadducees followed John when all the rest were doing so, so the world largely follows Christ now, after its own worldly fashion. The Church too, bids for popularity, and does not disclaim but is glad of the alliance. Amid all this, is it not possible for the *spirit* of discipleship any longer to find a cross, when the Church and the world unite to say, "Lord, Lord," and you are only asked not to take too seriously the *things that He says?*

Some way it must surely be that the Lord's words here must have to us also, if we are disciples, some present application; and that straightforward obedience, in the laxest and easiest times, would (even on that very account) find penalty of some real kind in seeking to follow Christ according to His word rather than popular interpretations of it. If this be not just the losing life, this

say unto you that there are some of those [g]standing here who shall not taste of death until they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

[3](xvii. 1-8): The glory as goal and portion beyond.

[3] And [h]after six days Jesus taketh with [him] Peter and James and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart; and he was [i]transfigured

[g] *cf.* Mk. 9. 1 with 2 Pet. 1. 16–18. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 51.
[h] Mk. 9. 2–10. Lk. 9. 27–36.
[i] *cf.* Rev. 1. 13–16. *cf.* Heb. 2. 9; *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 6.

cannot make it less imperative for one to suffer it; and good it is to go back in thought to times in which men in reality "suffered the loss of all things," and even "counted them but dung that they might win Christ." There can be no question that the Christ they went after in that way seemed to them unspeakably glorious; and for us it will be well indeed if, being the same Christ, He shine as bright.

The Lord closes here with that appeal to consider the soul's value which has rung through so many hearts since then: "For what shall a man be profited if he gain the whole world but lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" The question needs no answer: the impossibility to answer it *is* the answer. He adds, that it is the Son of man, soon to come in glory, who will render to every one according to his doings. Some of those standing there, moreover, should not taste of death until they saw the Son of man coming in His Kingdom.

[3] The reference made by one present at the Transfiguration (which now follows) to this as making visible "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. i. 16) should settle all question as to meaning of the last quoted words; opinions as to which have been, however, most various. The great variety has all arisen from taking "the Son of man coming in His Kingdom" in a non-natural way as applying to the destruction of Jerusalem and the going out of the gospel and its successes,—both entirely different things. The "Son of man coming in His Kingdom" is a plain reference to the vision of Daniel (vii. 13, 14), which indeed in like manner has been interpreted as applying to the "gospel dispensation," or the Kingdom in that "mystery" form in which we have seen it in the parables of the thirteenth chapter. But this is not the Kingdom of the Son of man as Daniel and the New Testament agree in representing it. We find the expression, no doubt, in the interpretation of the parable of the "tares of the field" (ver. 41) but only when in time of harvest the end of the present time is reached, and the Son of man (having come) sends forth His angels to gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend and those that work iniquity, and cast them into the furnace of fire. Then, clearly, the gospel dispensation will be over, and the Kingdom will have taken its open and millennial form.

That the Kingdom of the Son of man is not the present one, the Lord's words to the overcomer in Laodicea (Rev. iii. 21) make absolutely plain, in which He distinguishes between the throne on which He had sat down *with His Father*—where no mere man could ever sit—and *His own* throne, which He will share with His people. The opening vision (chap. i. 13) assures us that it is *as* "Son of man" that He is speaking here. Thus, then, the "Son of man coming in His Kingdom" cannot refer to the present period.

The second epistle of Peter again helps us as to the meaning of the transfiguration, when it speaks of our being called "by glory and virtue" (i. 3). Glory at the end awaits us, to be reached by a pathway of trial, which necessitates "virtue" (or "courage") to endure it. The apostle evidently refers to what is recorded in the Gospel here, the transfiguration being directly spoken of in the latter part of the chapter, as we have already seen. In it he could not but realize the call of the glory. That which is at the end of the course is in it brought before the disciples at the beginning, to animate and strengthen them in view of what has just been declared as to the conditions of discipleship, and he can appeal to

before them, and his face shone as the sun, and his garments became white as the light. And behold, there appeared unto them [j] Moses and Elias talking with him. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Lord, it is [k] good for us to be here; if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one

[j] *cf.* Deut. 18. 15, 18 with Acts 3. 22. *cf.* Mal. 4. 4, 5.
[k] Ps. 73. 28.

it in proof that "we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of His majesty: for He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came to Him such a voice from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; and this voice which came from heaven *we* heard, when we were with Him on the holy mount." Thus it is the goal before them that is here exhibited to them, but the glory of the Kingdom, not the still more wondrous glory of which John speaks, "the glory of the *Only* begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father." It is the human side that is here dwelt upon, though of course one cannot be separated from the other. John does not give us the transfiguration, because the *Only*-begotten (as such) cannot be transfigured.

The "after six days" with which the account begins, both here and in Mark, (in Luke differently expressed as "about an *eight* days after,") has reference, I believe, to the final character of what the scene here pictures, after the time of labor and of overcoming is fulfilled. The three disciples whom alone the Lord takes up with Him to witness it, point out to us the need of intimacy with Him such as only the comparatively few possess, if we would enjoy such disclosures. The "high mountain" most probably was Hermon, which was near Cæsarea Philippi, but it is not named, and were this certain, we could base nothing on it. Earth has in fact no knowledge of the elevations where such visions of the future may be enjoyed, though even yet it is not so poor as to be without them; and at these times and places it is still the Lord Himself who puts on special glory before the eyes of those so blest as to behold it, and who is the glorious Centre around which all else revolves. So it surely will be in the day of His coming which is here before us. His face will shine as the sun,* for with Him the day will come—the blessed day in which the watch-night ends; and His apparel will be as the light, for it is with the light the sun apparels itself. It is God who is manifested in Him, and God is light. Earth is no more an outcast, but brought nigh.

Another thing takes place which strikes them with special wonder. "And behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him." In the two other Gospels there are slight differences which yet must have significance: Mark says, "Elias with Moses;" Luke, in evident accordance with the character of the truth as he presents it, presses the fact of *men* being in such a place: "two *men*, which were Moses and Elias." In Matthew the lawgiver and the prophet of judgment because of the broken law, are mentioned in the natural order to remind us of this relation to each other. And they are talking with Jesus: so they had been, we may say, all through the centuries. Law in its fulfilment and law in its non-fulfilment, both alike required and foretold Him whose coming as the Priest-King is the full end of them reached. With Elias judgment itself is in view of restoration, and the last note of the Old Testament prophecy ends with the announcement of his preparation work. Thus Moses and Elias have each a special suitability in connection with this anticipation of the coming of the King. The ages are thus seen all through in harmony; and with power in the hand of Christ eternal harmony is perfectly secured.

Peter's voice breaks in, even here, and with words which show how he has

* Notice, that it is only Matthew who says this. Mark draws attention altogether to His garments. Luke says, His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistering. The dispensational character of Matthew is here again strongly marked.

for Elias. While he was yet speaking, behold, a bright [k]cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved [m]Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell upon their faces, and were exceedingly afraid. But Jesus came to [them] and [n]touched them, saying, Arise and be not afraid. And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, but Jesus only.

[4] And as they descended from the mountain, Jesus [o]charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no one un-

[k] *cf.* Ex. 13. 21, 22. *cf.* Ex. 40. 34–38.
[m] ch. 3. 17. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 21.
[n] *cf.* Dan. 10. 10. *cf.* Rev. 1. 17.
[o] ch. 16. 20. *cfr.* Acts 9. 20.

[4] (xvii. 9–13): "Cut off and having nothing."

failed to realize the meaning of the glorious vision. Terribly like his would-be followers to-day, he would enshrine the saints alongside of Christ, and make the Kingdom which is to come a present thing; giving, moreover, his help as if it were needed to accomplish this! But here he is stopped at once, and by an overwhelming spectacle: "There came a bright cloud and overshadowed them"—the well-known token of the Divine Presence as it had led Israel of old through the desert, and dwelt in the sanctuary,—"and behold a Voice out of the cloud which said: This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear *Him*." No wonder that, "when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces, and were sore afraid." It was, in fact, the holiest of all unveiled. They stood where, only once a year, and with covering incense and atoning blood, the feet of the high priest alone might stand. And they were but men of the people, no sacrifice in their hand, no covering incense, and the glorious Presence, which had long been absent from the temple,—nay, had never appeared since the captivity in Babylon,—was indeed here. He whom none could see and live, had drawn nigh to them, and they heard His voice, as the people had heard it of old, when they prayed, in their fear, that they might no more hear it.

Yet all else was changed from the time of the shaking mount. Nor was it the Law which was now proclaimed to them, a law which brought but the knowledge of sin, and was, indeed, its "strength" (1 Cor. xv. 56). This Voice pointed them but to the Son of God, whom Peter had but just now confessed as this, their own gracious Master; to put Him in His rightful place, and separate Him from all their misconceptions—from the misconceptions which, alas, have nevertheless followed Him since, and still follow Him. Moses and Elias had but been drawn thither by Him who had drawn them also, and opened heaven to them. Moses cannot open heaven, Elias brings but fire out of it, though he himself is caught away there: in Christ, the Son, the Father's Name is revealed, the object of the Father's heart is found, communion with God is attained, the throne of God becomes a throne of grace, His "Kingdom righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. xiv. 17). In all this He is alone, and thus alone is to be heard.

He comes now, therefore, and touches them, and says what He alone is able to say to such as we are, "Arise, and be not afraid." And now all else has disappeared: they see no man but Jesus only.

Here we have, then, the central features of the Kingdom, as Christ Himself will introduce it. In Moses and Elias, the dead and the living saints are represented; the glory in which He is seen is that of the Son of man; and the glory of His Father is also here. Thus the hearts of the disciples are strengthened in view of the cross by the knowledge of the end before them. "The knowledge of His glory" is given to sustain them by the way: "glory and virtue" are linked together as principles of the divine calling; for "if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him."

[4] After all, as yet even these favored disciples know little of what is implied by this glorious vision; and the rest seem not to have been prepared for it in any way, so that it is forbidden to be told them. It would not have given light, but dazzled. They themselves, as Mark tells us, did not know what the

til the Son of man be risen from among the dead. And the disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes, that Elias must first come? But he answered and said unto them, [p] Elias indeed cometh and shall restore all things; but I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they did not recognize him, but did unto him whatsoever they would. So also the Son of man is about to suffer from them. Then the disciples understood that he spake to them of John the Baptist.

[p] ch. 11. 14, Lk. 1. 17. Mal. 4. 5. Mk. 9. 11-13.

[b] (xvii. 14-21): The conditions of availability of entrusted power.

[5] And [q] when they came to the multitude, there came to him a man falling on his knees to him and saying, Lord, have pity upon my son, for he is lunatic and suffereth sorely: for ofttimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water; and I brought him to thy [r] disciples, and they could not heal him. And Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I bear with you? bring

[q] Mk. 9. 14-29. Lk. 9. 37-42. *cf.* Ps. 72. 4-6. *cf.* Is. 51. 21-23.

[r] *cf.* ch. 10. 1, 8. *cf.* John 14. 12. *cf.* Is. 63. 5.

rising *from* the dead of which He spoke could mean; yet it was to be so soon the heart of their message. That Elias was to come and restore all things, as the scribes declared, they could not reconcile with the fact that Messiah was here, and as to the general condition nothing seemed accomplished. Elias they had just seen, but in what different connection! and the very glory of the heavenly vision only seemed, doubtless, to show the more the darkness of things on earth. They turn to Him with this question, which He answers with the assurance that Elias was indeed to come and to restore; but he had already come unrecognized, and men had treated him according to what was in their hearts. So too the Son of man was presently to suffer from them. And then they know that He has been speaking of John the Baptist.

But in fact it was difficult for them to reconcile what was so opposite: Messiah upon whom all depended for them, yet cut off and having nothing. And the divine purpose could not fail; but how could they imagine a victory by defeat, a cross as the way to glory? Israel rejecting also and rejected, and yet the promises to be fulfilled to her in spite of all. In fact, as Christians, we from another side have found it hard to keep the even balance of truth as to just these things. John was the Elias for his day, but "if they would receive it," as the Lord had already declared. It was in the wisdom of God that he should be so offered them for their acceptance, that there might be the complete trial of man thus: John being "sent to bear witness of that Light" whom he preceded, and who yet (as Light) needed no such witness, if they had had eyes to see. Alas, they had not eyes or hearts; and Elias, for the fulfilment of the message of Malachi, has yet to come, as Christ has also, to bring in the blessing of Israel to a repentant people. Meanwhile more wondrous purposes are being disclosed.

[5] The weakness and folly of man (which are but his perversity) are now exhibited among those who have received Christ, and have received from Him also a power which they are not competent to use. It is this which the case of the lunatic child is evidently intended to impress upon us. The disciples had been applied to, to cast out the demon, for which they had had authority given them by the Lord, and they had failed to do so. The father brings his child to Christ with this statement; and it is this which forces from Him the groan over a "faithless and perverse generation" by whom the love which bound Him to them was made to suffer through their unbelief. Seldom does the Lord exhibit to us so clearly the trial of uncongeniality which was His amid His chosen associates. Here it is openly exhibited, and the occasion was such as to require that the cause of a failure which had been manifest should be manifest also.

him hither to ˢme. And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon went out from him; and the child was healed from that hour. Then the disciples came to Jesus apart and said to him, Why could not we cast it out? And he saith unto them, Because of your ᵗlittle faith: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard-[seed], ye shall say to this mountain, Depart hence to yonder place, and it shall depart; and nothing shall be impossible to you. But this kind goeth not out, except by ᵘprayer and fasting.

s *cf.* ch. 14. 18. *cf.* Jno. 15. 5. *cf.* Phil. 4. 13.

t *cf.* ch. 16. 8. *cf.* ch. 21. 21. *cf.* Lk. 17. 6.

u *cf.* Acts 13. 2, 3. *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 9.

SUBDIVISION 5. (Chap. xvii. 22–xx. 28.)

Responsibility and Reward.

1 (xvii. 22–27): The place of sons of God, but to be held in grace.

1. AND while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man is about to be ᵛdelivered up into the hands of men; and they will kill him; and on the third day he shall be raised up: and they were grieved exceedingly.

v ch. 16. 21. Mk. 9. 30–32. Lk. 9. 43–45.

But *He* remained still, only the more seen as the unique dependence of His people. "Bring him to Me," is the assurance of resources that cannot be overtaxed, at the command of a love that cannot be too absolutely relied on. Accordingly the demon departs, and the child is healed. Matthew does not give us the details which we find in Mark, but leaves thus the main point clearer, the glorious power so freely used, where disciples have failed, with all else. But the failure must be searched out, and the disciples themselves inquire about it. They are not conscious of the cause of it, which the Lord had already implicitly declared, and now does explicitly: "Because of your little faith: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Depart hence, and it shall depart; and nothing shall be impossible to you." This implies, of course, that we are on the path of His appointment for us: for, indeed, faith is impossible for any other; and the suggestive figure of the mountain speaks clearly of the disappearance of the most firmly rooted obstacles in a path like this. In the path of self-will and self-indulgence, how vain would it be to expect anything of this kind! And this the closing words here show: for "prayer" is vain—"we ask and have not," when we "ask amiss, to consume it upon our lusts"—or "pleasures" (Jas. iv. 3);—and "fasting," if it is to have any spiritual value, implies self-mortification. People often speak of having (or *not* having) faith for the path; the truth is, we must have the *path* for *faith*: faith for any other path than God's is plainly an impossibility.

SUBD. 5.

The responsibilities of the Kingdom follow, by an easy transition, upon the principles of it as thus declared; closing with a view of the rewards of grace in which love will satisfy itself at the end of the way. We have here, not merely the fact that there are such, but the doctrine as to them—a most important one—and giving us a precious and wonderful insight into heaven itself, which is a sweet and how fitting conclusion to all this part. After this the Lord presents Himself openly to Israel, and the final scenes draw on.

1. The governing principle is what comes first before us; and this, as we have seen, is the cross. Accordingly the Lord again speaks of it to His disciples now. He does not apply it; and nothing further is connected with it here, except the exceeding grief of His disciples. But it is not difficult to trace it as in moral connection with what follows. The Son of God as Son of man passing through the world, is not discerned by the men of it. Had they possessed this wisdom, "they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." True, it was guilty ignor-

And when they came into Capernaum they that received the half-shekel * came to Peter and said, Doth not your teacher pay the half-shekel? He saith, Yea. And when he came into the house, Jesus anticipated him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? from their sons, or from strangers? And when he said, From

w cf. Ex. 38. 26.

* Literally, "the didrachma," equivalent to the Jewish half-shekel, which was the annual tribute for the temple-service. The value of the shekel is variously estimated at from 2*s.* 3*d.* to over 3*s.* or from 50 to 70 cents.

ance, the result of being so absolutely in contrast with Him spiritually; and the followers of their Master are, just in proportion as they resemble Him, in the same way unknown. "Therefore the world knoweth us not," says the apostle, "because it knew Him not" (1 John iii. 1). Being thus rejected, He accepts it without contention, and in this too calls upon His disciples to follow Him. At Capernaum those that collected the half-shekel which was the temple-tribute, come to Peter and ask him: "Doth not your Teacher pay the half-shekel?" He at once answers, in entire forgetfulness of the glory of Him whom He had confessed as the Son of God, that He did pay it. If it were the atonement-money, the dishonor done to Him would be most manifest, yet the Lord raises no question upon this ground; and, according to the institution of Ex. xxx. 11–16 that was only required upon the occasion of a numbering of the children of Israel. Joash, however, refers to it (2 Chron. xxiv. 6), when urging contributions for the temple-service; but evidently as a precedent only, as the restrictions of the law were not carried out in the answer to his exhortation. "After the return from the captivity," says Farrar, "this *bekah*, or half-shekel, became a voluntary annual tax of a third of a shekel"—showing it was hardly looked at as carrying out the original enactment of the law of Moses—"but at some subsequent period had again returned to its original amount." The Lord treats it as a simple temple-tribute, but even on this ground cannot let pass the question of its claim upon Him. He does more than as such resist it for Himself: He puts His rash and forgetful disciple along with Himself, as free.

He does not wait for Peter's question, but shows His divine knowledge by anticipating it. "What thinkest thou, Simon?" He asks; "from whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? from their sons, or from strangers?" There could be but one answer: "From strangers." "Surely then," the Lord replies, "the sons are free."

But, though He vindicate this liberty, in practice He does not insist upon it. Personal right one is always entitled to surrender, and the "giving offence"—the causing spiritual injury—to any one, by any claim of it, though misunderstood wholly, *that* were indeed for Him, the Lord and yet the Servant of His people's need, impossible to be thought of. "But that we may not give them offence, go to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that cometh up first; and when thou hast opened its mouth, thou shalt find a shekel: that take, and give unto them for me and thee."

Thus He veils His glory, yet declaring it in the very way in which He veils it. To summon a fish of the sea to pay the tribute for Him, guards indeed well His glory, as the Lord of that higher temple *which Israel's temple figured*, and which is the universe that His hands have made (Heb. ix. 23, 24). There is not even the appearance of compromise as to what He is, and only His grace is shown in thus stooping. Not an adversary even can cavil at it; and the weakest instead of stumbling, can find in it only measureless comfort in the realization of this union of power and grace in Him.

But not only so: as "Son over" this "house of God" (Heb. iii. 1–6), He can make others free of it (John viii. 36). Yea, He can set free the very slaves—

[x] strangers, Jesus said unto him, Surely then the sons are free. But that we may not give them offence, go to the [y] sea and cast a hook, and take the fish that cometh up first; and when thou hast opened its mouth, thou shalt find a shekel *: that take and give to them for me and thee.

x *cf.* Is. 60. 10, 16, 17. *cf.* Is. 49. 23.
y *cf.* Rev. 17. 15 with Is. 60. 3-9. *cf.* Hag. 2. 7-9.

2 (xviii. 1-14): The lowliness which exalts.
1 (1-5): needed for entrance into the Kingdom.

2. [1] At that time the disciples of Jesus came unto him, saying, [z] Who, then, is the greater in the kingdom of heaven? And he called to him a little child, and set it in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

z Mk. 9. 33-37. Lk. 9. 46-48.

* *Greek:* "stater;" equal to a shekel.

and there is no slavery in God's universe but that of sin—and make them sons of the house of which He is Master. And this is what He shows us now in Peter, the representative disciple, as we have so lately seen him. The fish brings the tribute-money for him also, a piece which is the equivalent of *two* half-shekels: "For Me and thee," the Lord says; not "for *us*": for if He had not His unique glory, *we* could not have our blessing. "For Me," and so, through My grace, "for thee:" and in this (or what is implied in it) we all have part.

We, through His grace, are sons of God, and free. Yet must we be content to wait for the time when we shall be recognized as this, and in the meanwhile to pay tribute, as if we were not what we are. Not expecting recognition, and not claiming rights, and earnest to avoid giving offence by any self-assertion, our privilege, as well as our responsibility, is to walk in the steps of Him with whom the path of humiliation and of service was His choice and glory.

2. [1] This lowliness of spirit is now insisted on in the strongest way, the Lord using a little child as His text throughout, and in answer to a question proposed by His disciples which evidenced their need of such instruction. There had been a dispute among them, the other synoptists tell us, as to who among them should be the greater. The Lord's words about the keys to Peter, and His joining him with Himself in payment of the temple-tax, may have led to this; but the cause is not stated, nor is it important. The important thing was the condition of soul which the question itself revealed. *Greatness* was what they sought; and in that which they owned to be the Kingdom of heaven, yet which (as they are shown later) they are making but a kingdom of the Gentiles in their thoughts, a place for the gratification of ambition and self-seeking. In this a little child was capable of being their instructor. Jesus called to Him a little child, and placed him in the midst of them and said, with one of His emphatic affirmations, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise ENTER into the Kingdom of heaven."

The question was here a more fundamental one than that which they had started. One must *enter* it, in order to be great in it; and ambition could not even *enter*. It is plain that, while merely the ordinary term is used here, which applies both to the mystery- and the final form of the Kingdom, yet it is of the latter both the disciples and the Lord are speaking. They have in mind the time when "greatness" will be estimated by the King, and receive its reward, and the Lord states the necessary condition for even entrance into it at that time.

The word for "be converted" is simply "turn yourselves," though surely here having reference to that spiritual change, for which a compound form of it is generally used, of somewhat stronger meaning. The little child as a symbol reminds us of the way in which God has ordained that men should enter the present life, most surely in lowliness and feebleness enough. The long drill and discipline of childhood might well seem intended to "hide pride from man,"

Whosoever then shall humble himself as this little [a]child, *he* is the greater in the kingdom of heaven. And whosoever shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me.

[a] Lk. 18. 14, 17. *cf.* Ps. 131. 2.

2 (6-9): offences against little ones.

2 But whosoever shall [b]offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a great millstone had been hanged about his neck, and he sunk in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world because of offences! for offences must needs come; but woe to the man by whom the offence cometh! And if thy [c]hand or thy foot cause thee to offend, cut it off and cast it from thee: it is good for thee to enter lame or maimed into life, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into the eternal fire. And if thine eye cause thee to offend, pluck it out and cast it from thee: it is good for thee with one eye to enter into life, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire.

[b] Mk. 9. 42. Lk. 17. 1, 2. *cf.* Rom. 14. 13, 15. 21.

[c] ch. 5. 29, 30. Mk. 9. 43–48.

3 (10-14): the Father's face and heart.

3 See that ye despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you that their [d]angels in heaven continually behold the face of my Father who is heaven. For the

[d] *cf.* Acts 12. 15 with 2 Cor. 5. 8.

and the mercy of God it is that provides for beings so helpless, the love and care which after all, in such a world as this, so generally wait upon the birth of children. So also is it with the beginning of spiritual life, which we enter not as doers of something great, but in feebleness and poverty to receive grace, not due. And the end is as the beginning: it is in grace we grow; at the end as at the beginning, it is salvation that we receive; reward at last is not claim but *mercy*. In this way it is as little children that the Kingdom of heaven must be entered; and in proportion to the simplicity with which this is done will the true character of the Kingdom be attained. "A little child" may, indeed, have in its heart the seed of ambition as of all other evil, but not the man who estimates himself but as that. To him no ambitious thought is possible. While the Lord in His grace identifies Himself with the least of His own; so as to assure every one that his littleness will not make him of little account to *Him*. This is an assurance which prevents the consciousness of nothingness becoming a distress; nay, rather, enables us only the more to realize the sweetness of a love so great.

2 Thus it wraps itself about the objects of it, like a mother with a babe, and grows, as one might think, passionate in denouncing those who would injure them. "But whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in Me, it were better for him that a great mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he sunk in the depth of the sea;"—so does God care for the feeblest of His own!

But offences would come: "woe to the world because of" them; yea, "woe to the man by whom the offence cometh!" And here the Lord repeats, with more general application, what He had said in the sermon on the mount with more special reference to the seventh commandment of the law. Better to cut off hand or foot,—better to pluck out an eye, if it caused offence, than to retain these and be cast into the hell of fire. It is the Saviour of men, He who died in His love to redeem them, who ever gives the most earnest and emphatic warning of that to which sin of necessity brings those who cleave to it.

3 But His heart turns to what is more congenial; "See that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you that their angels in heaven continually behold the face of My Father who is in heaven." Well, then, may they be held in loving regard by men. But the doctrine of the passage has its difficulty. De Wette, as quoted by Lange, says with regard to it: "In the Old

Son of man came to save that which was [e]lost. What think ye? If a man have a [f]hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine upon the mountains, and go and seek that which is gone astray? And if it be that he find it,

e Lk. 19. 10. cf. Rom. 3. 23 with Rom. 5.12.
f Lk.15.4-7.

Testament we only read of guardian angels of empires (Dan. x. 13, 20). But at a later period the Jews believed also in the existence of guardian angels for individuals (Targum of Jonathan on Gen. xxxiii. 10, xxxv. 10, xlviii. 16). Similarly also the New Testament (Acts xii. 7?)" Yet he takes it as figurative, in which way it would be hard to understand it. Meyer, approved by Lange, in opposition to this says, "The belief in guardian angels is clearly admitted by Christ." Probably most agree with this; Dr. Brown remarks: "Among men, those who nurse and rear the royal children, however humble in themselves, are allowed free entrance with their charge, and a degree of familiarity which even the highest state ministers dare not assume. Probably our Lord means that, in virtue of their charge over His disciples (Heb. i. 14; John i. 51), the angels have *errands* to the Throne, a welcome there, and a dear familiarity in dealing with His Father which is in heaven, which on their own matters they could not assume." This, however, seems too much like the state of an earthly court, from which it is rash to draw analogies for heaven. The difficulty as to interpreting our Lord's words as referring to guardian angels is that it seems a very indecisive passage to stand alone for the doctrine, which assuredly the verses in Hebrews and in John's Gospel do not teach. Daniel more nearly approaches it, though the angels representing the empires there seem all to be evil, and only Michael as "prince" of the Jewish people is really in any sense a "guardian" (see Dan. x. 21).

But the Lord's words seem to apply strictly to "little children," and not simply to believers as designated in that way. He is not telling His disciples not to despise believers, but certainly what might seem to them comparatively of little account, which believers as such would not. (Comp. chap. xix. 13.) On the other hand, we have no reason that I am aware of, for introducing into what is here the additional thought that there is restriction even among the unfallen angels as to seeing the Father's face. The fallen condition in which we are is that, rather, one would suppose, which makes such a restriction seem necessary or natural.

The passage in the Acts referred to, though commonly taken to imply also the Jewish doctrine of guardian angels, hardly seems capable of being reconciled with it: for why should a guardian angel assume Peter's voice, so as to be mistaken for him? and in this place Brown interprets "his angel" to be "his disembodied spirit, his ghost." The two passages in this case would strengthen one another; and the children's angels, or spirits, being permitted to behold the Father's face in heaven would be indeed an admonition not to despise them, as well as an unspeakable comfort as to the condition of an infant after death.

The next clause is omitted in some ancient MSS. and versions, and it has been thought to be an insertion from Luke xix. 10; but, as others have remarked, the omission of "to seek"—simply, "the Son of man came to *save* that which is lost"—is significant. They are lost ones needing a Saviour; but *seeking* implies a condition of active wandering from God such as in their case is hardly begun yet.

His own joy in salvation—the joy of the Shepherd over a lost sheep found—the Lord then emphatically declares. It is but a glimpse of what we have in Luke poured fully out, and here without the contrast of Pharisees with "tax-gatherers and sinners," there brought out so vividly. The ninety and nine in this case seem but brought in to emphasize how the *one* lost has concentrated upon him in the meantime *all* the solicitude, and, when found, the tenderness of the Shepherd, as if there were not another. Yet this over-abounding joy

3 (15-20): Holiness and satisfaction in the place of Christ's Name.
1 (15-18): Authority to maintain holiness given to the assembly.

verily I say unto you that he rejoiceth more over it than over the ninety and nine that went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

3. [1] But if thy [g]brother sin [against thee],* go and show him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear

g Lk. 17.3,4. cf. Gal.6.1,2. cf. Eph. 4. 30-32.

*Some old MSS. omit "against thee."

does not, in fact, disparage the interest in them which is only for the moment not in the same way realized. Let any of *these* become the lost, they too would arouse the same anxiety and tenderness. In Luke the parable is uttered to a different audience, and in other circumstances which combine to present these ninety and nine in a manner in some respects very different from this.

Here it is the Father's will which He has come to carry out, and it is not the Father's will that one of these little ones should perish. How sweet and perfect an assurance! It is only the contrary will of man that hinders his salvation: on God's part there *can* be no contrary one: "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth." Thus the little ones removed from us by death we may trust confidently to the divine love which waits on them. Our assurance as to them is rooted in the unchangeableness of the divine nature.

3. The Lord goes on to speak of holiness, which is also absolutely characteristic of God, and which must be maintained by all who are associated with His name on earth: "Let him that nameth the name of the Lord," says the apostle, "depart from iniquity." The assembly comes here, therefore, into a special place of responsibility; and for the first time we find it assuming a position and exercising powers for which He has endowed it with authority as representing Him. On the other hand, in most suited connection with this, we find His people reminded of their weakness and dependence upon Him: a dependence which, when realized, brings in that assured and ready help which makes it but a means of realizing in turn the resources and nearness of the living God. The whole is crowned with the assurance of His presence in the midst, where two or three are gathered to His Name; and this at once seals their commission to maintain what is due to Him under whose authority they act, and pledges Him to meet all their necessities.

But this is another text which, having been variously interpreted, calls for careful examination at our hands.

[1] The disciples having been charged to avoid what would be offence against another, and as to themselves rather to get rid of what might seem like hand or foot than go on with what was matter of offence, are now taught how to deal with sin in another.

But at once question begins: What *is* the sin which we have to do with here? and are we to take it as generally taken, as simply personal trespass? For some of the most ancient MSS. and some editors omit the "against thee" of the common version, and have only "if thy brother sin," which would seem to make it wider. This can however, I think, be better settled as we go on, and we may leave it for the present undecided.

But undoubtedly we are to remember that, in any case, the thing to be considered by us is what the Lord calls "sin," and we must not allow ourselves to admit practically a lighter word than that. "*Sin*," whether it be against oneself or not, is something which should bring up at once before us the psalmist's deep realization, "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned" (Ps. li. 4); words which only appear the more striking as we think of the dreadful character of that which he had committed against his neighbor. Sin can only be viewed rightly as against *God;* and to treat it so we must be before God about it. We must know how, in Old Testament language, to eat the sin-offering in the holy place.

thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he do not hear [thee], take with thee one or two more, that by the mouth of [h]two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he will not listen to them, tell it

h 2 Cor. 13. 1. Deut. 19. 15.

This is the only fully effectual corrective of the danger from any personal element, wherever (as in the present case is generally taken for granted) that may be found. In the presence of God sin is truly judged, but therefore judged in ourselves first; and so it is we obtain that "spirit of meekness," in which alone we are able to "restore" those "overtaken in a fault" as considering our own proneness to temptation (Gal. vi. 1). That is the first thought here, and always as regarding one who has sinned—restoration: "if he shall hear thee, thou hast *gained thy brother*." There is not to be the thought, as presently and plainly insisted on, of "pay me that thou owest," but of gaining a brother: of winning him back to all that belongs to Christian brotherhood. For sin means collapse, estrangement from this,—a shadow over the glory of "what is really life," and dishonor to Christ and to God. How in the apprehension of this, could one even think of one's own things, save as one may truly find them in the thought of a "brother"!

And this governs all in this first step taken: "go and show him his fault"—literally, "convict him," bring him to conviction—"between thee and him *alone*." Let there be no needless exposure, no pain that can be spared, nothing that would arouse resentment, and so most surely hinder recovery. He is to feel that, as Elihu with Job, you *desire* to justify him,—if that may not be, yet to put his case into his own hands for trial, and lift him up into the Christian place of judgeship, master of himself once more.

Grace is in anywise the only power over sin. It is not laxity, as people misconceive it, but always sin's unsparing enemy and scourge. "Sin shall not have dominion over you, because ye are not under law, but under grace." Yet how often do those who are themselves wholly debtors to grace, use the law without hesitation in their dealings with one another. Of course, they betray in this their own slight knowledge, while the fruit is reaped in failure to maintain the holiness they seek. We cannot, by our will to do it, make that which is the "strength of sin" become its antidote.

But if this, then, be the divine principle in dealing with it, it is plain that whether it is sin against myself or against another can make no difference. This does not come into consideration, and the reading which would leave it out seems practically right. If it is grace that is moving me for a brother's deliverance, it can make no difference against whom the sin is. Nay, if it is in my brother, it is against me necessarily, if not directly: it injures me, aggrieves me, as one of the family. It will in any case work the same misery: it is equally against God my Father, against Christ my Lord, and against the soul of him who has committed it; while again grace requires not to find a legal title to proceed, as in my own matters, but in the needs to which it ministers finds its sufficient justification. In any case, the principle applies, wherever and so far as the circumstances permit the application; there is supposed, as we see, a condition of things in which love finds its call and opportunity, and which cannot, perhaps, and need not, be further defined.

The next step to be taken, if the first be ineffectual, is to "take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established." These witnesses are not to establish the truth of the charge: for of this the one who has sinned is already "convicted," but to bring the influence of the truth to bear upon him the more by their confirmation. They are a jury of appeal to make him realize the gravity rather than the truth of his sin, —a midway step between the private reasoning and the full publicity of the assembly. Love would yet spare the person, while it cannot spare the sin; and therefore the present procedure.

to the [h]assembly; but if he will not listen even to the assembly, let him be unto thee as a [j]Gentile and a tax-gatherer. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall

[h] ch. 16. 18. *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 4. *cf.* 1 Tim. 3. 15.
[j] *cf.* 2 Thess. 3. 14, 15; *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 9-13.

The third appeal is to the assembly as a whole, which is defined in what follows as a gathering to the name of Christ. It is astonishing that any could have had the thought here of the Jewish synagogue, although it is true that the Christian assembly did not yet exist, and that the Lord is speaking anticipatively; but the same could be said in general of what is before us in all this part of Matthew. The Christian assembly has as yet only once been spoken of, and in the present case it is a local one—a "gathering," for which we must wait historically for the Acts. Here we have it strikingly for the first time as entrusted with the maintenance of holiness in connection with Christ's Name on earth. It is, as we see, the last court of appeal, and to whose acts He gives, in the most solemn way, authoritative sanction. The case is left in its hands for final decision, which is supposed to be in accordance with what has been done before; and now, "if he refuse to hear the assembly, let him be unto thee as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer."

This is the fourth step therefore: the man is now to be treated as in an outside place, as a Gentile, a "man of the nations," by itself expresses. A "tax-gatherer" adds to this the thought of having lost the place inside by his unworthiness. The outside place is manifest: of course, in the Lord's lips it could not mean any dismissal of care and thought and labor after the one so treated. It is one of that hated class—the tax-gatherers—who records, and alone records, this injunction: himself the most signal example of the grace that sought all such. On the other hand, while business intercourse and communications might go on, even in all this would it be but the more apparent that what was Christian had come to an end, till divine grace should restore it. The Christian in the world was to be but the reflex of his Master's mind; and as surely as *He* could not go on with sin, no more could those who were to act on earth for Him who had left it.

It is true that it is said here, "let him be to *thee*," and this is the binding of this conduct on the individual; but any proper consideration given to the matter will assure us that this could not possibly mean that this refusal of Christian fellowship was to be merely on the part of the one against whom the sin had been. Were the witnesses who had shown their sympathy up to this point with the brother who had been sinned against, now to withdraw it, and go on in fellowship with him they had condemned, because the case was *not their own?* Was the brother offended, and to whom at least this *must* apply, to act in such a way, not because of the *sin*, but because he himself was the person wronged? How this would destroy the whole character of discipline, as well as the spiritual character of Christian fellowship!

The assembly would be little Christian which could become partner to any thing of this sort, or look at sin as having merely a particular reference, and not being the general concern of all. The next verse also, which applies, of course, to the assembly as a whole, negatives absolutely any such conclusion. For here, in the fifth place, the numerical order certifying it as a principle of divine government in the kingdom of God at hand,—the power of God allying itself here to human weakness—the Lord adds, with one of His "verilies," the oath for confirmation, which is an end of all dispute: "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

The Church on earth acts for its absent Lord; and, as so acting, He gives it His authority with the broad seal of royalty attached to the commission. Without this it could not move in the regulation of such matters at all: all the authority that it has is delegated to it by the King: it is not a democracy, but a monarchy most absolute,—a Kingdom not of man but of God.

[k] bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. k ch. 16. 19.

2 (19): The assurance to united prayer.

[2] Again I say unto you, that if two of you [l] agree on earth concerning any matter about which they may ask, it shall come to pass for them from my Father who is in heaven. l cf. Heb. 13. 18. cfr. Acts 5. 9.

It is plainly also in the moral sphere that the commission applies; and this at once makes known its limitations. In nothing so plainly as in the moral sphere is every thing based upon the character of God Himself. Every thing here is fixed, therefore, and unchangeable. The Church cannot so much as define what good or evil is. Every conscience here is subject to God alone, and the only appeal to it is as the appeal of light to the eye—the appeal of self-evidence. The eye may be diseased, the conscience hardened, the appeal useless; but this is always a result of rejecting the light: the light itself is divine, not human; and brings the soul before God, not man, not the Church. The rule of conscience means in result the rule of God, just as that of the eye would mean that of the light. Though light and the eye are very different things, yet the "light of the body is the eye."

The Church is a body not legislative but executive: it does not decree what shall be, but decides upon what *is*. It has authority to act, but upon lines laid down for it; and authority to act does not guarantee the action. But unless the action be according to His mind, it should be plain that the Lord could not sanction it. He could not "bind" sin upon one who had not sinned, nor "loose" it where there had been no repentance. This would be to put evil for good and good for evil, and to put the Church above her Lord. Either, then, the Church's action is secured infallibly, or there are conditions implied which we shall be able to gather from the context.

In the specified case to which this assurance is appended, it is abundantly plain that it is a case of real "sin:" "if thy brother sin." Of this he is to be convicted, and witnesses brought in, and then it is to be told to the assembly. This is the case in which the assembly is authorized to act, and only in such plain cases. As far as we read here, if the case were not plain,—if there were not, therefore, agreement about it,—it would not be such as would give title, or (to speak better) impose responsibility, to act at all. It must be in the light, not in the dark, we walk. The fact is, that it is not here that the Church has ever realized its real difficulties, although, of course, here also there may be unfaithfulness to the Lord, and what is to be done then is not yet taken up. We are here at the beginning of things, and must expect, in this, as in other matters, to have the truth gradually unfolded to us. The point is here, that the Church is guardian of the holiness to be always associated with the profession of the name of the Lord; there is no question at present of doctrine at all, and it would be premature to speak of it yet in any explicit way; though something may be inferred in what almost immediately follows: but that is another thing.

[2] The sense of responsibility should lead ever to the sense of weakness, and this is the order of thought here. Remembering the need of His people, the Lord now assures them of the way in which they may count upon Him for the supply of all their need. And, like Him, He does not limit it to this or any particular need: "Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree together on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father who is in heaven." Above all is this assurance needed where, as the connection would imply, and in some measure the agreement also, the acting together as representatives of Christ on earth is that as to which need is realized. Here one cannot but feel the grace of this lowest possible number for consent or united action. Supposing there were no more together in a place, or that others failed to realize the need, yet here would the Lord meet those who did so. Thus, while not necessarily implying the failure of His people, He provides for it. How tender are these all-seeing Eyes that contemplate us!

[3] (20): the place of His presence.

[3] For [m] where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of them.

[m] *cf.* Acts 20. 7. *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 20.

cf. Deut. 12. 5; *etc.* 1 Cor. 1. 10-13.

[3] And He adds this assurance, the unspeakable comfort of His people ever since: "For where two or three are gathered together unto My Name, there am I in the midst of them."

It is not "*in* My Name," as in the common version, but "unto:" His name being thus the central point of gathering. "*In* His name" would be by His authority, or as representing Himself: both things, of course, true, but neither of them defining, as this does, the Christian assembly. His Name speaks of doctrine—the truth of what He is, Himself being absent; and where He, apprehended by faith, thus draws His people together, there He promises Himself to be among them, their sufficient resource and the sanction of what they do in the manner already enjoined to maintain in love the holiness of His name.

It should be evident that more is intended here than to declare His readiness to meet the need of two or three who unite to supplicate Him in some common interest. This is simply appended to what has been before enjoined in the matter of assembly discipline, and both are sealed with this final promise of His presence where two or three are gathered to His name: words which must apply to the assembly so gathered. His presence in their midst is more directly called for by their action in the first case as representing Him than by their supplication in the second. Compare the apostle's words to the Corinthians (1 Cor. v. 3–5), though the Lord's here are so much more, as He is Himself beyond all other.

No body of people gathered to aught but the truth as to what Christ is could have any claim to the promise here, as none who fulfil this condition could be excluded. If those are admitted among the orthodox who are themselves unorthodox, and this be deliberate, then it is plain His Name ceases to be that to which such a company is gathered. The orthodoxy even of the mass cannot make up for the failure as to the gathering-point. However many the Christians there, the *gathering* is not Christian.

A false Christ is not Christ; deliberately held to, it is the *denial* of Christ; and here it is important to remember that *ignorance* is by no means the same thing as *denial*, which assumes knowledge. As to the blessed Person of the Lord His own words declare our common ignorance as to much: "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." But that which Scripture declares of Him is by that fact no longer to be beyond our knowledge, but what is committed to our trust as the vital centre of all truth and blessing. Christ is the manifestation of God, the Redeemer of men; as the Word of God, by whom and *for* whom all things were created, He is the Sum of all knowledge that is really such. Aberration here is quick distortion of all other things. Thus "gathered to My name" is vital to the Assembly. They are in the world as His representatives; the Spirit by which they are baptized into one body is in them to glorify Him. How would every thing be lost if His Church could accept a substitute for Him; or allow the darkening of one glory of the "Light of men"!

Here, then, is the Church as it is presented to us for the second time and in living activity in the Gospel of Matthew. In no other Gospel is it presented to us at all. And here it is seen, as we may say, according to the constant character of Matthew, as in the Kingdom, and in the exercise of authority suited to the Kingdom of heaven. We have nothing as yet of the Body of Christ, or of espousal to Him; nothing of it even as indwelt of the Holy Spirit, nor explicitly as the house of God—though it is what He builds, and Peter and such as he are "stones" in the building: a building instinct with glorious life, against which the gates of hades cannot prevail: a living Church, manifesting its life in love and holiness, finding its centre of attraction and controlling authority in Him who is its Creator and Lord, refusing all other. Such is the picture given to us in the Gospels.

SECTION 4. (Chap. xviii. 21-35.)

The failure in mercy of one who has received mercy.

1 (21, 22): Grace to be constant.

[1] Then Peter came and said to him, Lord, [n] how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until [o] seventy times seven.

2 (23-27): The debtor forgiven.

[2] Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a human king* who would have a reckoning with his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, there was brought to him one who owed him [p] ten thousand

n *cf.* Ps. 78. 40. ver. 15.

o Lk. 17.3,4. *cfr.* Gen. 4. 24.

p *cf.* Ps. 40. 12.

* Literally, "a man, a king."

Sec. 4.

We have now a solemn word upon the responsibility of showing grace in a day of grace. In His teaching as to prayer the Lord has already warned us to the same effect, in words which are almost identical with those which close the parable before us. But here the principle is shown us in the full extent of its application, and enforced in the most absolute way.

[1] The first object in dealing with a brother who has sinned is, as we have seen, restoration. If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. Forgiveness is necessarily grounded upon the "hearing," for that alone would show restoration. But Peter has a question here: how often is there to be forgiveness? The Rabbins had already decided as to this, and their limit was three times. Peter has so far appreciated the spirit of the Lord's words as to more than double this number. Seven was the perfect number: shall his forgiveness of an offending brother be "till seven times"? But the Lord answers, He has put no such limit; and then He puts one which is practically none at all: "I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until *seventy times* seven." I suppose it would test Christian grace in us, to go even half way to such a boundary line; but the Lord does not mean us seriously to contemplate this. Could it be a question how often I should *gain my brother?* Peter is after all still viewing things from the stand-point of personal rights. He must still be seeking in some measure his own; but "love seeketh not her own." Hence the personal element still rules here—"sin against me, and I." The Lord takes up, therefore, this very side of things, but to turn it in another direction: "how oft shall I sin against God, and God forgive *me?*" If there be no limit here, and I am in the sense of this, how can this question of Peter be asked at all?

[2] The similitude which the Lord draws for us here is necessarily a similitude of the Kingdom of heaven. It is not after all a picture of *perfect* grace, such as we know it in God, although this is as nearly approached as possible for the purpose of the illustration; and, of course, it is a true presentation of God, in no wise inconsistent with the fullest grace. But the Lord will not image one of His own people in the picture that He gives of this unmerciful servant. He is one with the responsibility of such a profession, but without the *real* apprehension of divine grace, as his conduct shows. Hence the grace shown to him is not the unconditional grace of the gospel, but that which, in fact, is manifested in the Kingdom, as in "*baptism* for the remission of sins" (Acts ii. 38) where the grace witnessed to is manifestly conditioned, as here, upon the truth of discipleship. The Kingdom, as we see in the parables, embraces the true and the false, and in it all is governmental, conditional blessing.

The Kingdom of heaven is likened here unto a *human* king; which prepares us for certain points in it which we must not attribute to the divine. The king here will have a reckoning with his servants; and no sooner has he begun to reckon than there is brought to him one with an overwhelming debt, which argues in itself surely something more than any misfortune can account for. He is ordered, therefore, to be sold, with his wife and children and all belonging

talents.* But, forasmuch as he had [g] not wherewith to pay, his lord commanded him to be [h] sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore [i] fell down and worshiped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I [k] will pay thee all. But the lord of that servant, being moved with [l] compassion, loosed him and [m] forgave him the debt.

3 (28–30): The heart exposed.

[3] But that servant went out and found one of his [n] fellow-servants, who owed him a [o] hundred pence †; and he laid hold of him and took him by the throat, saying, Pay what thou owest. Then his fellow-servant fell down and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee. But he [p] would not, but went off and cast him into prison till he should pay that which was due.

4 (31–35): The failure of mercy, for him with whom mercy fails.

[4] Then his fellow-servants, when they saw what had

g *cf.* Ps.38.4.
h *cf.* Ps.130.3.
cf. Rom. 3. 19, 20.
i *cf.* ch.5.26.
cf. 2 Kl.4.1.
k *cf.* ver. 29.
cf. ch.15.25.
l *cf.* Lk. 15. 19.
cf. Ezek.18. 21.
m *cf.* Lk. 10. 33.
n *cf.* Acts 2. 38.
o *cf.* ch. 24. 49.
Prov. 28. 3.
p *cf.* ch. 7. 3.
q *ctr.* Col. 3. 13.
ctr. Eph.4. 32.

* Probably, about £2,400,000 sterling, or $12,000,000.
† Literally, "denarii," for which we have no equivalent coin. The denarius was worth about 8½ pence, or 17 cents.

to him, for the debt. We see in this the "human" king, of course; yet there is this truth in it, that the sinner against God, as far as he can do it, wrecks not himself alone, but all connected with him. No man can be his own enemy only, as men sometimes assert; and we need no argument to prove how the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children in this world, although in the final account every one answers simply for his own.

So helplessly are we all indebted to the supreme King. Good it is that there is mercy with Him for which all figures fail. The debtor falls at his lord's feet with an impossible plea for mercy in his own case,—how impossible in our own! "I will pay thee all." The king can accept no such agreement, takes no notice of it; but his heart is moved with compassion, and taking counsel of that, "he loosed him, and forgave him the debt."

[3] All this, thank God, the blessed Speaker has now made very plain to us; but the point of the parable has yet to come. "But that servant went out"—out from an experience like this!—"and found one of his fellow-servants, who owed him a hundred pence"—denarii (about a 700,000th part of his own debt just forgiven); "and he laid hold of him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me what thou owest."

It was his own that he was demanding. Apart from the violence used, he was, as men say, quite within his rights. That was not the question; and every one at once understands that that was not the question. We too, in the exaction of our own from others, may be within our rights; and why is it that in our own case we are not as simple in judging of the real state of things as we are in the case of the man before us? We have been forgiven (if we are Christians) as well as he; and with regard to a debt in proportion to which his was as nothing. How is it that we can look upon grace or mercy shown to others as if it were anything more than the merest *righteousness* on our part, from the standpoint of forgiven men?

There follows an appeal, so like his own recent one, save only in its greater reasonableness and simplicity, that it should have pierced the heart of the hardened man: "Then his fellow-servant fell down and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee. But he would not, but went off and cast him into prison till he should pay the debt." It is the grace shown him that fully exposes the obduracy of his unmerciful heart.

[4] Plain as the matter seems, it is developed and enforced upon us. The grief

come to pass, were grieved exceedingly, and went and related to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord called him to him, and saith to him, Thou wicked servant, [z]I forgave thee all that debt because thou besoughtest me: shouldest not thou also have had mercy on thy fellow-servant, even as I had mercy on thee?

And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the [a]tormentors till he should pay all that was due. So also shall my heavenly father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother, from your [b]hearts.

z *cf.* Lk. 7. 41–43. *cf.* ch. 5. 7.

a *cf.* ch. 5. 25, 26. *cf.* ch. 25. 41, 46.

b *cf.* ch. 6. 12–15. Mk. 11. 25, 26.

SECTION 5. (Chap. xix. 1–15.)

Nature and the Kingdom of God.

1 (1-12): The Creator's ordinance governing still.

1 (1-6): "one flesh" as at the beginning.

1. [1] And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these words, he [c]withdrew from Galilee and came into the borders of Judæa beyond Jordan. And great multitudes followed him, and he [d]healed them there.

And the Pharisees came to him, [e]tempting him, and saying, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

c Mk. 10. 1. Jno. 10. 40.

d ch. 12. 15. *cf.* Mk. 7. 24, 25.

e ch. 22. 15. Mk. 10. 2–12.

of his fellow-servants who bring the account of it to their lord; who on his part summons the guilty man and puts before him the wickedness of his conduct with abhorrence. The close of the parable has the moral of it, that mercy fails for him with whom it fails: "his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors till he should pay all that was due"—an impossible thing, and typical therefore of an eternal recompense.

A tremendous failure, when divine mercy fails to impress its image on the soul that has been subjected to its influence! Love that subdues not saves not, and this is, of course, the history of an unsaved soul. But the lesson that is to be learned is not to be limited by this, as the Lord's application of it shows. His government is over sinner and saint alike; and He is the same with sinner and saint in His unchanging reprobation of sin. Communion can only be in the holiness and love of the divine nature; and through all degrees of resemblance to that which has been before us, the principle applies. "So also shall My heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother, from your hearts."

Sec. 5.

In the fifth section the Lord shows to His disciples the relation of the Kingdom to what God as the Creator had established for the blessing of man: an important matter, as to which, it is evident, there would be need of instruction, as also the history of the professing Church has made manifest how easily the mind can get astray. Here was One who had declared Himself Lord of the sabbath, and revoked with His emphatic, "But *I* say unto you" the sayings of ancient days. It might naturally be questioned, how the new relationships which He had proclaimed would affect those of nature. He had bidden one whom He had called to "leave the dead to bury their dead," as called into a new sphere and power of life. It was necessary to show whether and how far nature was to have a place in the Kingdom of God; and the two questions of marriage and of children are such as would throw light upon this.

In the epistles, and with the advance of knowledge as to Christian place and privilege, such things had to be expanded and given practical application also; and it is significant that it is in those two of Paul's epistles in which the position of the believer is shown at its highest (Ephesians and Colossians) in which the duties arising from natural relationships are insisted on in the fullest way.

1. [1] Here it is the Pharisees who bring up the question of marriage, or of its

But he answered and said, Have ye not read that he who made them *f* from the beginning made [them] male and female, and said, On account of this, a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh? So then they are no longer two, but one flesh. *g* What, therefore, God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.

2 (7-9): Moses and divorce: does the law contradict?

f Gen. 1.27. Gen. 2. 24.

g cf. Eph. 5. 25-33. Heb. 13. 4.

[2] They say unto him, Why, then, did *h* Moses command to give a writ of divorce, and to put [her] away? He saith unto them, Moses for the *i* hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you that

h Deut. 24. 1. ch. 5. 31.

i cf. Rom. 8. 3. *cf.* Heb. 7. 18, 19.

obligation, in order, as it has been reasonably conjectured, to seek to involve Him in the disputes between the rabbinical schools of Hillel and Shammai, who were at issue as to divorce. The question, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for *every cause?*" seems indeed to refer to the opinions of the former, who went as far as to decide that a wife spoiling her husband's dinner was cause enough. But in answer the Lord goes further than Shammai himself, and removing all that man had in the meantime obscured it with, finds His argument in the institution of marriage at the beginning,—an argument which strikes at polygamy, as well as the loose holding of the marriage tie, and brings us beyond all that has come in with sin, to the first design of the Creator for His creatures.

He had made them male and female, each adapted for the other, each completed by the other; and had said as to what the union implied, "they two shall be one flesh." Two, and only two, are spoken of, as with Adam and his wife at first, where neither polygamy nor divorce could be thought of; and "one flesh" would make either polygamy or divorce abomination. Man's own voice, before sin had beclouded the mind, thus had given utterance to what the Lord speaks of as a divine utterance: for God and man were then at one. He who with true insight had before named the beasts and found among them all no helpmeet, spoke now in the joyful discernment of that helpmeet found.

[2] They have their objection from the law ready: "Why then did Moses command to give her a writing of divorcement and to put her away?" But they did not apprehend aright either Moses or themselves; and their argument is turned against them in the simplest manner: "Moses, for the *hardness of your hearts*, SUFFERED you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so." It was Moses himself who was furnishing the evidence, and what an evidence, of their own condition! The law, which was "weak through the flesh," could not perfect anything because of the resistance to it of a carnal people. That which they objected proved but at the same time their own evil and the hopelessness of it under law. And He turns upon them with one of those imperial sayings which put aside all power of resistance as with the lightning-flash of truth: "And I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife except for fornication, and shall marry another committeth adultery; and whoso marrieth her that is put away committeth adultery."

One cause alone is permitted for divorce; and that where the bond of marriage has already been broken through. Where not so justified, another marriage on the side of husband or of wife is but adultery. Courts of law may legalize adultery of this sort, if they will, but they cannot sanctify it, or take away the brand which the Lord here puts upon it. How evident that the grace of Christianity is as far as possible from laxity!—that law is more tolerant here than grace can be. But the palliatives of law were only the proof that it could not heal; grace will not palliate, because it heals.

This, let us remember however, is the abstract right of the matter—binding of course, as such, with all the authority that the Lord's words can give it upon

[j] whosoever shall put away his wife, (except for fornication) and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whoso marrieth her that is put away committeth adultery.

3 (10-12): the special exception as to marriage.

3 The disciples say unto him, If the case of the man with his wife be so, it is not good to marry.

But he said unto them, Not [k] all have capacity for this, but those to whom it hath been given: for there are eunuchs who were born so from the mother's womb; and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men; and there are eunuchs who have made [l] themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is capable of it, let him go forward.

[j] ch. 5. 32. Lk. 16. 18. 1 Cor. 7. 10, 11.

[k] 1 Cor. 7. 7, 17. *cf.* 1 Tim. 5. 14.

[l] 1 Cor. 7. 32-34. 37, 38. 1 Cor. 9. 5, 15.

every one of His own. He does not pursue it further, nor consider the complications that may arise in a world such as this which knows Him not, and where His people may be entangled with alliances with the unbelieving, or followed by the consequences of their conduct before conversion. This manifestly belongs rather to what concerns the discipline of the Church, and we shall find the principles applying to it in their place in the epistles. It will be the proper place, therefore, to consider them there, though for the help of souls a few words here may be in place.

We are all born in sin, and go astray naturally from the womb, except as the grace of God may prevent this. When converted to God we may have spent a large part of our lives in disobedience; the effects of which are not necessarily removed by our conversion. With the truest desire to do so, it may be absolutely impossible to return to the position in which we were before the sin was committed. Thus the Lord has Himself decided in the case of a divorced wife, after marriage to another, even though death has dissolved the newer relationship. For the former husband then to take her back again is declared to be an "abomination" to Him (Deut. xxiv. 4); and no change of dispensation can affect what is clearly grounded in nature itself, as an ordinance of the God of nature. Hence restoration to a past state may be, and will commonly be, where divorce has taken place, a thing impracticable. We have but to accept things as they are, and rejoice in the mercy that has blotted out the past, and enables us to start afresh, with Him.

Again, there are cases in which *separation* may be a necessity or allowable, where divorce could not be according to God; separation leaving yet room for the mercy of God to come in and restore; and this door the apostle opens in Corinthians (1 Cor. vii. 15), not too widely. Divorce he does not touch: for the Lord has decided there.

3 To return now to our text: the disciples show out now the state of their own hearts. "If the case of the man with his wife be so," they say, "it is not good to marry." And the Lord replies: "Not all have capacity for this,* but those to whom it has been given." The word of God having pronounced from the beginning, to which our Lord has been referring us, that "it is not good for man to be alone," we cannot expect that the gift to abide alone will be other than exceptional. Christianity leaves the general truth unaffected, while it may and does give power over nature where special circumstances call for this.

*"This of which ye speak,"—λόγος being here used for the "*matter* of speech." The common translation here and in ver. 12 does not seem to me to give the sense: for what *saying* is it that all men are "not able to receive"? Certainly the Lord does not mean to agree with what they have said, that "it is not good to marry," and as certainly does not mean to apologize for the non-reception of what He has just so emphatically stated. The single state is, of course, what all have not the gift for. Χωρέω means both to "*have* room," and to "*make* room for;" and to "make room for *oneself*," so "to advance, go forward."

2 (13-15): The relation of children to the Kingdom.

2. Then were brought unto him [m]little children, that he might put his hands on them and pray; and the disciples [n]rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of [o]such is the kingdom of heaven. And he put his hands on them, and departed thence.

m Mk. 10.13-16. Lk. 18. 15-17.
n cf. ch. 15. 23.
o ch. 18. 3. cf. 1 Pet. 2. 2.

Nature itself has imposed this necessity upon some: the cruelty of men has imposed it upon others. But the Kingdom of heaven, as a motive in the heart, may lift men above all necessity, and enable them to take this place freely. How different a thought, however, from the selfishness which had just spoken out in the disciples, and of which their Master takes no further notice. The shining of the light sufficiently reveals the darkness which it displaces.

2. We pass on to a different scene, and a far happier one, though still to find the painful contrast between the Master and the disciples. It is in this case so much the more so, as He has already declared the spirit of His Kingdom by the example of one of these little children who are now brought to Him, that He may "put His hands on them and pray." But they seem full of nothing but of His dignity as a Rabbi, in which they found also, without doubt, their own. Of what use to bring such mere babes to Him? But the Lord answers their rebuke Himself by bidding them place Him higher in their thoughts, and recognize what the parents here more truly apprehended in Him,—the power which had all within its absolute control, the love which wielded this power. To put His hands on them and pray: would this be barren? In the Kingdom of God in Israel had there been no place for babes? And now that heaven was manifesting itself, and the Father's name being declared, in the Kingdom of *heaven* was there to be no place for babes? Yes; emphatically yes: for "of such" it was, and of no others. If men had to become like babes to enter it, the spirit of the babe was the very spirit of the Kingdom; and who should shut them out? "Suffer the little children," He says, "to come unto Me, and forbid them not; for of such is the Kingdom of heaven. And He laid His hands on them, and departed thence."

It is to be observed, however, that Matthew excludes, what Mark and Luke both record, the Lord's words as to moral resemblance. The latter is not here the point, but the place with Him of little children *themselves*, the answer to the heart's affections, given of God Himself, to those who are manifestly put in their weakness and need, to be nurtured, trained, reared amid the contrary influences of the world, to be for the glory of Him whose they are, while in it. How gracious and comforting is the assurance then, that we may come in the confession of our weakness to Him who is Lord of all, though yet the world does not own Him, and in faith still put our little ones into His hand, assured of His reception of them, and that He recognizes them, not as part of the outside world, but as subjects of His Kingdom and disciples in His school. Here is our warrant and encouragement to "bring them up in the discipline and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. vi. 4), expecting from Him the grace of the Spirit, which alone can make it effectual. For the word abides for us, if we do not through our unbelief make it barren, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts xvi. 31).

The Kingdom of heaven was not yet come: it is only at the end of this Gospel and after His resurrection that we find the Lord announcing all authority as given to Him in heaven and on earth (xviii. 18). The words are, therefore, anticipative of that time, and perpetuate the value for us of His action here.

Sec. 6.

The sixth section shows us man in his creature place, limited necessarily because of this, but still more as fallen and in his sins; but it shows us also how God, who alone can, overcomes for him the straitness of his condition, and brings him out (as the psalmist says) into a large place.

SECTION 6. (Chap. xix. 16—xx. 16.)
Human limitation, and how overcome.

1 (xix. 16–22): Eternal life, and God alone good.

1. And behold, one [p] came to him and said, Teacher, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? But he said unto him, Why askest thou me about that which is good? There is One good; but if thou desirest to enter into life, [q] keep the commandments.

[p] Mk. 10. 17–22. Lk. 18. 18–23.
[q] Lk. 10. 25–28. Lev. 18. 5.

This is developed in two ways, which are in beautiful connection, while yet very different: as regards the salvation of the sinner, and as regards the reward of a saint. For rewards there are, in which divine love sovereignly displays itself, for they are "mercy" (2 Tim. i. 18) and not a claim of right; as the Lord has emphatically taught us to say, when we have done all, we are unprofitable servants: we have done but that which it was our duty to do.

Creature merit is thus impossible,—a doctrine which destroys at once not only the supererogatory works and merits of the saints as Rome teaches them, but very much else held quite outside of Rome; while it makes eternal life for the sinner (such as we all are) only possible to grace.

But, alas! we are as naturally self-righteous, as we are absolutely without the least true claim to righteousness. If we will look around, we may quite easily find the Pharisee in the felon's coat; and nearer still, in our own hearts, the spirit of Pharisaism ready to spring out from under the shadow of the Cross itself, its God-ordained condemnation.

Here we have the beginning and the end of it, as we may say, the self-assertion of the sinner and of the saint; and in the last case creeping, if it might be, into heaven itself in the abuse of the truth as to rewards. In the glimpse of heaven which immediately follows we shall have at last a scene from which it will be perfectly and forever banished. The victory of divine grace over us will then be fully accomplished.

1. We begin here with a question addressed to the Lord, not, as so often, by one tempting or caviling, but, on the contrary, earnestly seeking the way of life: "Teacher, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?"

It is "*what* good thing:" he does not doubt at all that *some* good thing is what is needed. Too many are on that road to allow him to doubt its being the right one. At the same time he is conscious of a lack,—not self-satisfied, and yet, as we see directly, with no conviction of sin, no thought of inability to attain his goal, if only the means were pointed out to him. Yet there were many instructors on such points whom he must, with the anxiety that he has, have sought out, but had not gained satisfaction from them. He confesses himself ignorant of the way of life, and has confidence, as it seems, that Christ can teach him. All this is encouraging, and yet he is on the broad way still with the multitude (no sign for good, that) and expecting God to give eternal life to the doer of "some good thing."

The Lord meets him, therefore, where he is: not, as we might have expected, perhaps, with the gospel and the declaration of His grace, for he has as yet no need of grace. Law must do its work with him, for "by the law is the knowledge of sin." Yet He does, at the same time, intimate the result, and so had the law itself done with its unrent veil, God in the darkness,—whether men realized it or not: witness and warning on God's part can never be wanting, and so here: "Why askest thou Me about that which is good? there is One good," and only One.

That blocks the way for the legalist entirely; which yet in a sense the Lord opens directly, that one who must learn by experience may do so: "but if thou desirest to enter into life, keep the commandments."

There was nothing fresh to be pointed out as to such a path. The law had long since precisely defined every thing, and not left men to search for some good thing additional or other than this. It is true they had not found life in

He saith unto him, Which? And Jesus said, [r] Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honor thy father and thy mother, and Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

The young man saith unto him, All these have I [s] kept; what [t] lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wouldst be perfect, go, [u] sell what thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have [v] treasure in heaven; and come, [w] follow me.

But when the young man heard that word, he went away [x] grieved, for he was one who had great possessions.

2. And Jesus said unto his disciples, Verily, I say unto you that a [y] rich man shall with difficulty enter into the

[r] Ex. 20. 13 etc. *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 20, 21.
[s] *cf.* Phil. 3. 6, 7.
[t] *cf.* Jas. 2. 10, 11.
[u] Lk. 12. 33. *cf.* 1 Cor. 13. 3.
[v] ch. 6. 20. *cf.* Lk. 16. 9. *cf.* Acts 2. 45.
[w] *cf.* ch. 8. 19–22.
[x] *ctr.* Heb. 10. 34. *cf.* Rom. 8. 3, 4.
[y] Mk. 10. 23–27. Lk. 18. 24–27; Prov. 11. 28; *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 26–29.

[z] xix. 23–26; Impossible to man, but possible to God—salvation.

this way, and hence resulted the uneasiness that prompted such inquiries as that of the young man now. But the law had nevertheless precisely defined all the good required: "the man that doeth these things shall live in them." True, "that which was" thus the way "to life, I found to be to death," says the apostle; and so will all true experience find it, a "ministration of death" (2 Cor. iii. 7),—the very thing man needs to shut him up to the grace of God in Christ.

But the young man has not received this ministration of death: he had no "sentence of death in himself, that he should not trust in himself, but God that raiseth the dead." He was unsatisfied; the light of God was not on his path,—that he knew. There was no burden of sin to be lifted. He lacked, but confessedly knew not what he lacked. How many are in just such a condition! rich, and comfortably able to thank God for that; ignorant of such trials as even a Job had to learn before the depths of his heart could be made known to him, but, like him, not at rest. As to "commandments," which did the Master mean? The Lord tests him by the second table of the law, the human side, summing it all up in "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." But he is with Saul of Tarsus, "touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless." There is no shadow upon the honest face with which he turns to Him he is questioning, with the assertion, "All these have I kept; what lack I yet?" And then the bolt falls for him out of a summer sky: "If thou wouldst be perfect, sell what thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

People ask, how could the Lord make that the condition of eternal life for him? But it was the law that had made that necessary which would have made this easy—that he should love his neighbor as himself: and this he had declared he actually did. *Why not*, then, sell what he had, and give to the poor? Would it be more to him than giving it back to himself, to give to the neighbor whom he loved as himself?

Evidently the Lord is but searching out a heart that sorely needed it. He does not make it a condition of eternal life; for that is a gift which He Himself had come to acquire for us; but He speaks to the young man according to the character which he professed; adding to it that tender assurance of a heart open to him, which was ready to give him a place among His followers and intimates. "Jesus, beholding him, loved him," says Mark in connection with these very words. And this love, may we not hope, might, even spite of present failure, wake up to consciousness of its condition the heart that could now, alas! turn from it, though grieved, to enjoy in its now exposed selfishness its "great possessions."

2. But of this we have no knowledge. The Lord makes use of this case now

kingdom of heaven; and again I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

And when the disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? And Jesus looking upon them said, With men this is [z]impossible, but with God all things are possible.

3 (xix. 27–29): The portion in glory.

3. Then Peter answered and said unto him, Behold, *we* have [a]left all and followed thee: what shall we have then? And Jesus said unto them, Verily, I say unto you, that ye who have followed me, in the [b]regeneration, when the Son of man shall [c]sit on the throne of

z Gen. 18. 14. *cf.* Lk. 19. 2–10.
a Mk. 10. 28–31. Lk. 18. 28–30. *cf.* Lk. 5. 10, 11.
b *cf.* Is. 65. 18–21.
c cf. ch. 25. 31.

to impress upon His disciples the difficulty, nay, the impossibility, of a rich man entering into the Kingdom of God. The camel may more easily pass through a needle's eye, He says; and we must leave these words in all their simplicity,—the thing completely passes nature. The camel is, no doubt, the suited figure of one burdened with his possessions, after the manner of the young man here. The things of the world thus claim and control the natural man; and how often is their influence seen upon one who is through grace a Christian! Only the almighty grace of God can change this, that is, can change the nature of man; and so, when in dismay the disciples ask, "Who then can be saved?" the Lord assures them, salvation is not of self, but of God.

3. The question of Peter cannot but suggest how readily in a saint also the spirit of self-seeking can intrude into the most sacred themes and places. The Lord's answer perfectly recognizes and provides for this, which comes out presently in a more offensive form in the other two of His most privileged disciples. But we may be thankful for that which exposes what is our own need as well as theirs, and has been the occasion of such an answer to it as we find here.

"Peter answered and said unto Him, Behold, we have left all and followed Thee: what shall we have then? And Jesus said unto them, Verily, I say unto you, that ye who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." This is found only in Luke and in this Gospel, and in perfect suitability with the character of it. It shows us how literally the reign of the saints with Christ is to be taken, and in the term "regeneration" applied to the millennial Kingdom presents an instructive parallel between the work of God in the individual and in the world at large. That these are, in fact, in correspondence with one another, the first chapter of Genesis has already made us fully aware (*see notes*). The only other place in which we find this word "regeneration" (παλιγγενεσία) is in the epistle to Titus (iii. 5) and it is there applied to the individual state: "according to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." In the present state of the world sin not only dwells, but *reigns;* in the coming Kingdom sin exists but reigns no longer, as in the soul that has truly bowed to Christ; then comes the change of the heavens and earth, as for the saint the bodily change into His likeness; and so finally for each, sin neither reigns nor exists. Thus there is a complete parallel between the ways of God in grace with the individual and with the world at large, a unity which is the stamp of the perfect workmanship of the One God in every sphere of His working, whatever may be the variety also which testifies to His infinite resources.

The Lord goes on to assure us that His love can forget nothing of whatever any disciple of His may have renounced for His name. He shall receive a hundredfold and inherit everlasting life. These distinctive rewards, whatever may be the blessing in them, we must remember always to keep apart from what is the common portion of believers, which it is good to realize, as being simply the fruit of Christ's work for us, must be by far more blessed than anything which

his glory, ye also shall [d] sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And [e] every one who hath left houses or brethren or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for my name's sake shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.

4 (xix. 30–xx. 16): But mercy only.
1 (xix. 30–xx. 2): the agreement.
2 (xx. 3-7): dependents upon mercy.

4. [1] But [f] many first shall be last, and last first. For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man, a householder, who went out with the [g] early morn to hire laborers for his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the laborers for a penny* a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

[2] And he went out about the third hour, and saw [h] others standing idle in the market-place, and said unto

[d] *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 12. *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 13. *cf.* ch. 20. 21. *cf.* Lk. 22. 29.
[e] ch. 10. 37–39. *cf.* 2 Cor. 8. 9.
[f] ch. 20. 16. ch. 21. 31, 32. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 8. *g cf.* Jer. 7. 13, 25.
[h] *cf.* Lk. 14. 21. *cf.* ch. 21. 43.

* a "denarius."

even in divine mercy can be accorded to our own. The place of children with God, of membership in the body of Christ,—these and such things as these are to us the fruit of divine grace alone, and have nothing whatever to do with reward of our work. This is so simple that there should be no need even of mentioning it; and yet many Christians confound, more or less, things so different as these; as even the "many mansions" of our Father's house have been taken to imply different degrees of reward, and to put the children of God at various degrees of distance from their Father,—the very thing which assuredly is most opposite to the Lord's intention of comfort in it. But, in fact, the legality of the human heart is such as to make the whole matter of reward require the most jealous guarding from abuse; and this the Lord proceeds now to supply in the parable which follows here.

4. The meaning of the parable is given both at the beginning and the close; so earnestly is it pressed upon us. We must not allow ourselves to be carried away from this by any supposed demand of special features, as to which we are cautioned here in the same way as in the case of the previous parable of the unmerciful servant (ch. xviii. 23). There it is "a *man*, a king"; here, "a man, a householder." In the application we are bidden to remember that we must distinguish between the ways of men and the ways of God, even where the one may be taken to illustrate the other. *God* certainly does not "hire" laborers after the manner of men, where work in His vineyard is in question; but this is human misunderstanding of His way. The prodigal still afar off may talk of the "hired servants" of his father's house; but we are not to take this as a representation of the actual truth. And the very design of the parable here is to warn us by the issue against such perversions. It would seem, therefore, plain that to seek to interpret everything in it as if it stood for absolute truth would be to fall in measure into the very misconceptions from which it is intended to deliver us.

[1] The agreement with the laborers illustrates but the legality of souls who so misconstrue the Lord's *gracious* recompense of what is done for Him. Just so far as this is made the end for which we labor, it is clear that the character of what is done is deteriorated, and its value to Him lost. We are living to ourselves, the misery from which divine grace has delivered those that are Christ's.

We are not, therefore, to conceive of this either, as if any child of God could be a mere hireling. The principle, given broadly in the parable, is by this means put before us in its proper repulsiveness, and the picture is an ideal one solely. Were we to take it as literally exact, we should have to imagine God giving in the day of recompense some stipulated measure of reward to those who have worked for it; which, whether it were saint or sinner, would be positive error. Recognizing it as ideal only, the lesson remains, and with no perplexity.

[2] In those who are called to labor at various hours in the day, we find the

them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is just I will give you. And they went [their] way. And again having gone out about the sixth and ninth hour, he did likewise. And he went out about the [i]eleventh hour, and saw others standing, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard.*

[i] *cf.* Lk. 23. 39–43.

3 (xx. 8-10): the realization.

[3] Now, when [j]evening was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the laborers, and pay them their hire, beginning from the last even unto the first. And when they came who [began] at the eleventh hour, they [k]received every one a penny. And when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they also received every one a penny.

[j] *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 10.

[k] *cf.* Rom. 4. 4, 5. *cf.* 1 Cor. 4. 7.

4 (xx. 11,12): murmuring.

[4] And when they had received it, they [l]murmured against the master of the house, saying, These last have worked but one hour, and thou hast made them [m]equal unto us who have borne the burden of the day and the heat.

[l] *cf.* Rom. 14. 10, 11.

[m] *ctr.* Lk. 17. 7–10. *ctr.* 1 Cor. 4. 16, 17.

5 (xx. 13-16): conditions of the result.

[5] But he answered one of them and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst thou not agree with me for a penny? Take what is thine, and go thy way: I will

* Some old MSS. add, "and whatsoever is just ye shall receive."

thought of a stipulated agreement more and more given up, and those who go into the vineyard becoming correspondingly more dependent upon the goodness of the householder to give to them as he sees fit. To those called at the third hour it is simply said, "Whatsoever is just I will give you." At the sixth and ninth hours, "what is just" becomes a more and more slender hope. In the case of those at the eleventh hour, nothing seems to be said of this at all:* they are left entirely to the owner of the vineyard to give as he please, or not.

[3] At the end of the day, the laborers are called and paid; and then those called at the eleventh hour receive a whole day's wages. Of those called at the intermediate hours we are told nothing, but it is implied that they all receive the same: for when the first come, expecting to receive more, they also are paid every one a penny. From this some have deduced the doctrine of an equality of reward for all; but that is not the doctrine of Scripture; and the rewards here are plainly according to the moral of the parable given to us, that the "first shall be last and the last first;" which again is not equality.

[4] It is the first alone who murmur: it would be impossible for any of the rest, one would say, to do so; for they are all, in fact, overpaid. Ah, were we not, how little would we any of us receive! In the day of reward will there be a legalist found to murmur against the amount of his recompense? Surely, not one; all is again only ideal here. And yet even the first can only complain that they have not received *more* than they bargained for.

[5] The answer of the householder to one of those that murmur brings before us the conditions which have determined that result of which they now so foolishly complain. They cannot say they have not received what they contracted for. They had got what was just; grace they had not trusted nor sought: how can they complain that to those who were dependent upon it it has been shown? —and indeed in the measure in which they were dependent.

* Though some ancient MSS. add a similar clause; but the oldest and the drift of the parable are against it.

give to this last even as to thee. Is it not lawful for me to do [n] what I will in mine own matters? is thine eye evil because I am good? So the [o] last shall be first, and the first last; [for many are the called, but few chosen.] *

n *cf.* Rom. 9. 20, 21.
o ch. 19. 30.

SECTION 7. (Chap. xx. 17–28.)

The perfection of the Kingdom.

1 (17–19): The will of the Master.

1. And Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples apart, and said to them on the way, [p] Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man will be delivered up to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and deliver him up to the Gentiles, to mock and scourge and crucify [him]; and the third day he shall rise again.

p Mk. 10. 32–34. Lk. 18. 31–34. ch. 16. 21.

* Some omit.

For them it was a matter of bounty, not of right; for the giver of it, had he not the right to be bountiful? What I am entitled to must be measured by what I am; what grace shall give can only be measured by what God is. Human measure and divine! put it at the best you can for man, what a difference here!

The more we think of our service, the less must we think of Him to whom the service is done; the more we imagine claim, the less must His grace appear: that the first should thus be last is absolutely simple. Think of it as the Lord once put it, a supper at which the guests take their places as they estimate themselves. No one here, however, says to another, "Give this man place." They are permitted to assign to themselves just the rank they claim. Only, when the King comes in to take His own place among the guests, He takes it at the *opposite* end of the table from that which they imagined! Then, of course, "the first is last and the last is first;" and yet their places are decided by their own self-measurement.

"For many are the called," says the Lord in closing, "but few the chosen ones:" words which here tell us that among the guests few are they that are according to His mind indeed. Alas! how slow we are indeed in the true judgment of self! how difficult is it for divine grace to obtain full possession of us!

See. 7.

The seventh section, in close connection with the last, gives us a gleam of the glory of the Kingdom which displays its moral perfection, in contrast with all the kingdoms of men. The spirit of the disciples also is shown out in contrast with the spirit of their Lord, and their painful misconception of all that constitutes true glory. But it is upon the Lord Himself that the eye rests here, who is the Light and Glory, as of the heavenly City so of the earth in the blessing that it soon shall know. And with this, suitably, this fourth division of the Gospel closes.

1. We have first the Lord going up to Jerusalem, with the perfect consciousness of all that is before Him there. He takes the twelve apart in order to make known to them again what He would have them realize as to Him—no unforeseen thing, but that for which He had come, and to which He had devoted Himself. He knew every bitter ingredient in that cup which He was going to drink: the betrayal, the condemnation by the heads of the people—His own, their delivering Him to the Gentiles, the mockery, the scourging, the crucifixion. Of all this He speaks to them, adding the blessed comfort of His resurrection also, on the third day. Mark tells us of the fear that had already fallen upon them in the way; Luke, that nevertheless they understood none of these things, but that this saying was hidden from them. No doubt, all this went together. They

2 (20-23): The lust of the disciple.

2. Then came to him the [q]mother of Zebedee's sons with her sons, worshiping him, and asking something of him. And he said unto her, What wouldst thou? She saith unto him, Say that these my [r]two sons may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left, in thy kingdom. But Jesus answering said, Ye [s]know not what ye ask. Can ye drink the [t]cup which I am about to drink? They say to him, We can. He saith unto them, My cup ye shall drink indeed; but to sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, except to those for whom it has been [u]prepared of my Father.

3 (24-28): The actuality of glory.

3. And when the ten heard it, they were [v]indignant about the two brethren. But Jesus called them to him and said, Ye know that the rulers of the nations lord it over them, and the great exercise authority over them.

q Mk.10.35-45.

r ch. 19. 28. *ctr.* Rev.4. 10.

s *cf.* Lk.9.46-56.

t *cf.* ch.26.37-39, 42. *cf.* Jno. 18. 11.

u *cf.* Rev.3. 21.

v *cf.* Lk. 22. 24-30.

were dazed and stupefied with the apprehension of a great sorrow which they had no courage to face nor take in. Matthew simply speaks of the Lord's making it known to them, putting this in sharpest contrast with the appeal of the sons of Zebedee with their mother which follows next, and which shows so perfectly in which direction they were looking at that time,—how quickly they had rallied from the unwelcome announcement of the Cross, to comfort themselves with that which, true as it was, they were soon to show they little apprehended. The glory itself they would find morally conditioned by that Cross of which it was the outcome, and from which they turned away.

2. After the will of the Master, therefore,—a will in which self-seeking had no place,—we come to the lust of the disciple, to see how the most precious truths can be distorted by the mirror that reflects them, were it a James and a John, the nearest intimates of the Lord on earth, who furnish the mirror. How jealous should we be of ourselves, lest we should pervert what we imagine we but receive, and turn our blessing into loss and shame!

Nature is leading here, as is evident; the mother of Zebedee's sons is a witness to us of how our natural relationships need to be watched and not suffered to intrude into the things of God. We see in the Lord's case how He refuses all control of this kind, as we see in the Popish doctrine how readily, if allowed, it will come in. "Say that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand, the other on Thy left hand, in Thy kingdom."

But the way of the Cross from which they have turned is the way of glory: "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of?" The moment it presents itself to them as a personal gain, they are ready. The Lord answers, "Ye shall indeed drink of My cup; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, except to those for whom it is prepared of My Father."

He is the perfect Servant all the way through; just because—

"Serving in the joy of love."

In exaltation and in lowest humiliation, the Father's will rules for Him—is all to Him. We have the wonderful example, in One perfect in wisdom and in goodness, of how service is the characteristic sign of love. In Him in whom all is absolute freedom, there is never a thought of anything but the Father's will. To us, what a commendation of it! What a bond of perfection for the universe will it be in all eternity, the Son of God in manhood, Himself "subject to Him who put all things under Him"!

3. But the indignation of the ten at the two brethren shows their kinship with them morally. And now the Lord lets them see their common error, and the true glory of that Kingdom which they had been thinking of as if it were but like a kingdom of the nations. What! did they imagine that in *His* Kingdom

So it shall [w]not be among you; but whosoever will be great among you shall be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you shall be your bond-servant: even as the [x]Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a [y]ransom for many.

[w] 1 Pet. 5.3. cf. Ezek. 34. 21. cf. Eph. 3.8. [x] Phil. 2. 7. [y] Is. 53.10,11. cf. 1 Tim. 2. 6. cf. Tit. 2.14.

there would be the gratification of ambition, of the desire for lordship? or that the places of rule with Him could be such as this would imply? No: for service was the road to rule, and this could only be because rule itself would be but more ample service. Whosoever would be great among them would be their minister, and the chief among them by that very fact be but bound to serve them. Must it not be plain that the Son of man, the King, "came not to be ministered unto but to minister"? Glory might change the character of this service—not the spirit nor the fact of it. The Cross might be lowest humiliation for Him, but it was His glory too. Could they cease to remember it? Could the love shown there be measured by aught else? Could it change or be exhausted? Would He be upon the Throne to be ministered unto or to minister? What must the places of rule be in the Kingdom of which He would be the King!

Div. 5.

Clear as it already was that Christ would not be received by His own, there yet had to be His formal presentation to Jerusalem as its King, so that they might openly and manifestly accept or reject Him. Moreover, this could not be too early, before not only His works of power had been done among them, but also He Himself had been fully before their eyes, and His teaching was sufficiently known to those who cared even to listen to it. For these were in fact the credentials of His power, as from God. The people as a whole would have responded to what had been the devil's suggestion, and have welcomed one who had cast himself down unhurt from the pinnacle of the temple before their eyes. But that could have been no settlement of anything in any way acceptable to God. The people who did, in fact, believe when they saw the miracles that He did, He could not trust. God is not Power only, nor Power and Wisdom, but Righteousness and Holiness and Love as well. All was fully now displayed, and they were called to make their momentous decision.

Now therefore He openly accepts the title of the Son of David given Him by the acclamation of the multitudes who accompany Him to the city, and who had perhaps been first wrought upon by the miracle at Jericho, which was expressly an acceptance of that title. The blind men to whom He had given sight were with Him as His witnesses, as once before two blind men (chap. ix. 27) had been; but then forbidden to let any know it. Here all is in public, and they follow Him without prohibition. His claim of the asses afterwards, expressly as fulfilling Zechariah's prophecy, is still more outspoken; and the children crying in the temple are commended by Him in the fullest way.

But the acclamations die out in the air of the rebellious city, whose pollution of the temple proclaimed its rottenness at heart; and His judgment of the fig-tree is that of the people themselves, of whom the "fig-tree planted in a vineyard" is elsewhere distinctly used by Him as the figure (Luke xiii. 6, 7). This is the prelude only to that open opposition which follows on the part of all the various sects and classes among them, who set aside their strife with one another to unite in vainly seeking to ensnare Whom they cannot confute. And this ends with the "woe" upon the leaders, and His lament over the city.

Subd. 1.

The presentation of the King occupies the first subdivision here, which ends with the judgment of the fig-tree. All is quickly over, for the decision of the people has been really made before, and here they but re-affirm it. Babes and

DIVISION 5. (Chaps. xx. 29–xxiii.)

The Governmental Presentation and the End as to Israel.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chaps. xx. 29–xxi. 22.)

The King.

1 (xx. 29-34): The gift of light.

1. AND as they [z] went out from Jericho, a great multitude followed him. And behold, [a] two blind men sitting by the way-side, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, Lord, have mercy on us, [thou] Son of David.

And the multitude [b] rebuked them, that they should hold their peace; but they cried out the more, Lord, have mercy on us, [thou] Son of David.

And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What [c] would ye that I should do for you? They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. And Jesus had [d] compassion on them and touched their eyes, and immediately they received sight and followed him.

2 (xxi. 1-11): The announcement.

2. And when they drew [e] nigh to Jerusalem, and had come to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, Go into the village over against you, and immediately ye will find an ass tied and a colt with her: loose them and bring them to me. And if any one say aught unto you, ye shall say, the Lord hath [f] need of them; and he will send them immediately.

z Mk.10.46-52. Lk. 18. 35-43.

a *cf.* ch. 8. 28. *cf.* ch. 9. 27 with 2 Cor. 13. 1.

b *cf.* ch. 19. 13.

c *cf.* ch. 15. 28.

d Mk. 1. 41. *cf.* Heb. 4. 15.

e Mk. 11. 1-11. Lk. 19. 29-40. John 12. 12-19.

f *cf.* Ps. 50. 10.

sucklings may welcome Him, but the people are far from being of the spirit of such, and therefore far from the Kingdom. The cry "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" will have, as the Lord declares, to be taken up again and in earnest at a future time.

1. The royal proclamation begins at Jericho, the city of the curse; which does not and cannot, however, prevail over the blessing. Jericho, which even in Joshua's day had witnessed the salvation of Rahab from its own doom, now witnesses the grace of the Son of David. Two blind men, sitting by the wayside, cry out to Him as this, only to find the rebuke of the multitude, as by and by a remnant of Israel will awake up to their darkness and their need of Him, only to meet the opposition of a growingly apostate mass. But they cry the more, until He who can never turn away from the voice of need answers and heals them. The light dawns upon those sightless eyes, and the Person of their Saviour becomes revealed to them; then they follow Him.

The two men in this case, where in the other synoptics is but one, are, as we have seen, characteristic of Matthew, as the two blind men before (chap. ix.) and the two demoniacs (chap. viii), in both which cases Mark and Luke speak but of one. There is surely, therefore, design in this difference, which in Matthew, no doubt, speaks of witness-bearing to the Lord, now in the character which at this time He is taking. And this witness He does not, as in the former case, forbid; as the healing also is now in public. Publicity He designs, as His time is at last come for "showing Himself to the world;" and these, delivered from the "land of darkness and of the shadow of death" are suited witnesses.

2. Accordingly now upon His approach to Jerusalem, at Bethphage, the "house of unripe figs,"—and the typical significance of the fig comes shortly into prominence,—He sends two of His disciples to claim for His service the ass and colt, upon the latter of which He rides into the city. The animal was characteristic of the Prince of peace, in contrast with the war-horse upon which we

Now this was done that it might be [g] fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Say unto the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and mounted upon an ass, yea, upon a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.

[g] Zech. 9. 9. Is. 62. 11.

And the disciples went and did as Jesus had commanded them, and brought the ass and the colt, and put their garments upon them; and he sat upon them. And a very great multitude spread their own garments in the way, and others cut branches from the trees and strewed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before him and that followed cried, saying, [h] Hosanna to the Son of David: [i] blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest.

[h] Ps. 118. 25.
[i] Ps. 118. 26. *cf* ch. 23. 39.

And when he entered into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? And the multitudes said, This is Jesus the [j] prophet, from Nazareth of Galilee.

[j] Lk. 7. 16. *cf.* ch. 16. 14.

3 (xxi. 12-17): The cleansing of the temple.

3. And Jesus went into the temple of God, and [k] cast out all the sellers and buyers in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of those that sold doves. And he saith unto them, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer; but *ye* have made it a robbers' den.

[k] Lk. 19. 45, 46. Mk. 11. 15-17. *cf.* John 2. 13-17. *cf* Mal. 3. 2, 3.

see Him in Revelation (xix. 11). The young animal also, before unridden, shows the new and free spirit of obedience which alone could bring Him into His place among His people—thus to be "willing in the day of His power" (Ps. cx. 3).

As to the other ass accompanying, it is impossible not to think of the past in connection with it, as the patristic commentators did. Is it more suitable to regard it merely as necessary to quiet the foal for its service to its Creator? Those who can think so we must leave to such sober interpretation. It was a time when the very stones were ready to cry out, and all, we may be sure, has its significance for us. The "foal of a beast of burden" seems even as if it were intended to remind us, not surely of the unbelieving synagogue, nor yet of the law itself, which imposed, but did not *bear*, burdens, but rather of those who as belonging to the legal dispensation could be so pictured, even though the true people of God by faith. Thus only, as inheritors of that faith, could the after-generation, destined to freer service, be counted as their offspring. But with these the elder generations could be seen, as linked with them in the triumph of the Christ now come.

Thus all is surely consistent, though even for that time it was but a gleam of light which, as far as Israel nationally was concerned, went out in darkness. And the prophecy of Zechariah is carefully abridged on this account. "He is just and having salvation" is omitted, because in fact salvation could not then come. The crowds might exhibit a temporary enthusiasm, and genuine disciples add their truer homage to the King,—the city meets it with a question merely, however "moved;" and the "Hosannas to the Son of David" weaken sadly into the how different reply, "This is Jesus the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee." The King of glory is for them already discrowned.

3. But He, not dependent on the voices of the multitude, goes on into the temple which was in fact the place of His throne, but now desecrated by the abominations of priestly avarice, for which the people, three years before the destruction of the city, themselves suppressed the traffic that defiled

And [l]blind and lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them.

But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonders which he wrought, and the children crying in the temple and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David, they were [m]indignant, and said to him, Hearest thou what these say? But Jesus saith unto them, Yea; did ye never read, [n]Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise? And he [o]left them, and went out of the city to Bethany, and he passed the night there.

4 (xxi. 18–22): Failure under test.

4. Now early in the morning, as he returned to the city, he [p]hungered. And seeing one [q]fig-tree by the wayside, he came to it; and he found nothing thereon but [r]leaves only. And he saith to it, Let no fruit be henceforth on thee for ever. And forthwith the fig-tree [s]withered away.

l cf. Acts 3. 1, 2 etc. *cf.* Lk. 14. 21.

m cf. ch. 20. 31. *cf.* John 11. 47, 48. *cf.* John 12. 19.

n Ps. 8. 2.

o cf. Jno. 11. 54.

p cf. Jno. 4. 6. Mk. 11. 12–14, 20–23.

q cf. Lk. 13. 6–9.

r cf. Gen. 3. 7 with Is. 64. 6.

s cf. 1 Sam. 2. 5. *cf.* Is. 5. 5–7.

it.* There it was before His eyes, with its loud-voiced iniquity, just as He had met it at the beginning of His ministry, and then purged out the defilement as He afresh purges it now. Quick work for Him to establish His authority there in the very presence of His fiercest enemies, in the heart of Jerusalem, in His Father's house itself, which, as He tells them, they had changed from the "house of prayer" for which it should have been known, into a robber's den. And there, in the now empty place, "the blind and the lame" (characteristic and concurrent types of those that needed the touch of the true King) "came to Him in the temple and He healed them." Thus He is owned of God and of man alike,—though of man, alas, unchanged and hostile still. There are no "willing people;" and for them it cannot be the "day of His power." He may prove His title, but cannot take His throne.

This is for Him, then, no triumph: only the children's voices make music for Him now, with whom the hosannas that have died out in the streets are taken up again. What is hidden from wise and prudent is revealed to babes; and the rebuke which they look for from Him as to it, they find themselves. No: they had never read that "out of the mouth of babes and sucklings He perfected praise." How much of our Bibles, it may be, *we* have never read, though our eyes may have often enough been upon what they have never seen there! Had they been spiritually little ones, would they not have seen this? Even our involuntary ignorance may tell—*must* tell—thus against us!

They were not little ones, and therefore for that generation of Israel the Kingdom could not come. The Lord withdraws from the city to spend the night at Bethany among those whose hearts had answered to the grace that was seeking men.

4. In the morning He returns early to the city, and is ahungered. A fig-tree is before Him by the wayside, and He comes to it to satisfy His hunger, but finds no fruit. Mark tells us that it was not the season yet for figs; but the leaves upon this tree promised for it fruit, as Israel stood alone among the nations in the profession of allegiance to the One True God. Fruit therefore could be expected from her, if nowhere else; and He with hunger of soul unsatisfied had been seeking it. His own parable of the fig-tree had been long before spoken (Luke xiii. 6–9) with evident application to the people also; and now the judgment is to be pronounced. "Let no fruit be henceforth on thee for ever," is answered by the rapid withering away of the fruitless tree.

The disciples are in amazement when they see the fig-tree withered; but the

* Edersheim, vol. i., p. 372.

And when the disciples saw it, they wondered, saying, How suddenly is the fig-tree withered away! But Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have [t]faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do what is done unto the fig-tree, but if ye shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed and cast into the sea, it shall come to pass. And [u]all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

[t] ch. 17. 20. Lk. 17. 6. *cf.* 1 Cor. 13. 2.

[u] ch. 7. 7-11. John 15. 7. Jas. 5. 16-18.

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. xxi. 23–46.)

Rejection and its Consequences.

1 (23-27) The question of authority.

1. AND when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and elders of the people came to him while he was teaching, saying, By what [v]authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?

[v] Mk. 11. 27-33. Lk. 20. 1-8.

Lord uses the miracle to assure them of the power which was ready to manifest itself for them in response to faith. Not only should they do what was done to the fig-tree, but if they had faith and doubted not, even a mountain standing in their way should be removed and cast into the sea, and whatsoever they asked in prayer, believing, would be done. We may well see in this a veiled assurance of how Israel, now nothing but an obstacle in the path of faith would disappear politically in the sea of the nations. But the promise here is of course, of very various application, and it would be entirely wrong in any way to limit it, save as the Lord Himself does; who distinctly makes His last assurance as full as possible. To faith nothing shall be denied; but it is not limitation to insist that faith must be faith.

SUBD. 2.

The opposition gathers strength, although still kept in check by the power displayed in Him, and by the revealing words in which He lays bare the condition of things and their hypocrisy and unfrankness in their rejection of Him. They are made to feel how well He knows them, and their intent, and how its success would leave Him Master still, themselves alone undone by it. Quiet, simple, strong, irrefutable words, they penetrate through all the defenses of a seared conscience and a hardened heart, and confound, if they do not convert. We do not read of conversion; but then we are here occupied with another and very different subject, and tracing Israel's rejection of her King, as it goes on step by step to the end now so near, when He leaves desolate the House (no longer His Father's, but their own) to the Gentile invader.

1. For the moment He is in the House which He has cleansed, teaching publicly, as was His wont, and there the chief priests and elders of the people come upon Him with the question, "By what authority doest Thou these things? and who gave Thee this authority?"

It was the Sanhedrim, the highest religious authority itself among the people, that asked this; and their question implied their disclaimer of any authorization on their part. But it was a vain and foolish question: for as they knew on the one hand that He was no Rabbi of the schools, so on the other, as we know, the testimony of Scripture united with that of His miracles to proclaim Him what He was even now declaring Himself to be. But for those who were questioning Him there was a yet more simple ground of appeal. They had sent a special mission to the Baptist to investigate his claim; and the Baptist's own recognition of the Lord was known to all. They "sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth." What then was "the baptism of John? was it of heaven or of men?" Either they had decided about John's authority, or else they were incompetent to pronounce as to the Lord; and their verdict as to the one would necessarily include both: in any case they had the means of answering their own question.

And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I also will tell you by what authority I do these things: the [w]baptism of John, whence was it? From heaven or of men? But they reasoned among themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven, he will say, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men, we [x]fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered and said to Jesus, We know not. And he said unto them, [y]Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

2 (28-32): The two sons.

2. But what think ye? A man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in the [z]vineyard. And he answered and said, I will not; [but] afterward he [a]repented and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise; but he answered and said, I [go], sir; and went [b]not. Which of the two did the will of his father? They say, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that the [c]tax-gatherers and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the tax-gatherers and the harlots [d]believed him; and ye, when ye saw it, did not repent afterwards, to believe him.

3 (33-46): The vineyard and the Heir.

3. Hear another parable: there was a man, a householder, who planted a [e]vineyard, and put a [f]hedge round it, and dug a wine-press in it, and built a [g]tower, and let it out to [h]husbandmen, and went abroad.

[w] *cf.* Jno. 1. 19-28.
[x] Prov. 29. 25. ver. 46.
[y] *cf.* ch. 3. 3. ver. 32.
[z] *cf.* ch. 20. 1 etc.
[a] *cf.* Lk. 15. 7.
[b] *cf.* ch. 7. 21-23. *cf.* ch. 15. 8.
[c] *cf.* Lk. 7. 29-50.
[d] *cf.* Lk. 3. 12, 13.
[e] ver. 28. *cf.* Is. 5. 1-7. *cf.* Jer. 2. 21.
[f] Ps. 80. 8-13. *cf.* Num. 23. 9.
[g] *cf.* Ps. 18. 10.
[h] *cf.* ch. 23. 2. *cf.* Ezek. 34. 2, etc. *cf.* Song 8. 11, 12.

Answer it, however, they cannot: if they said the mission of John was from heaven, they had to believe the testimony that he gave; if they said, of men, they would be in direct opposition to the people, and theirs was no martyr-spirit to suffer for their convictions. It was easier, with all the humiliation it involved, to profess their ignorance; but then they were no court to adjudicate in claims of this kind: "Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things."

2. Plainly it was conscience they needed, and the Lord has in turn a question for them. A man had two sons: one who to his bidding, "Go, work to-day in my vineyard," answers openly and defiantly "I will not;" while the other expresses at once his ready obedience. After all, the first repented and went; the second never did go. Which, then, did the will of his father? The answer is put into their mouths: they could only say, The first. Then He makes application for them: the tax-gatherers and harlots would go into the Kingdom of God before them. For John came in the way of righteousness, only demanding on their part an upright conscience to receive manifest truth, but, built up in legal self-righteousness, they had turned from him; while the people of evil life had been convicted and believed; and even this witness of repentant sinners *they* had refused.

3. He searches them out with another parable, in which Israel's history as a whole is shown to be of a piece with this, while He follows it on to the end soon coming, and shows them how their success against Him would only be ruinous defeat for themselves at last.

The figure of a vineyard had been used of old in the prophets with reference to Israel. The "man," the householder, could only partially represent God. Was it not a representation of things according to their own thoughts merely,

But when the [h]time of fruit drew nigh, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, to receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and [i]beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did to them likewise. And afterwards he sent to them his [k]son, saying, They will respect my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the [l]heir: come, let us kill him, and lay hold of his inheritance. And they took and cast him out of the vineyard and slew him. When, therefore, the lord of the vineyard cometh, what will he do to those husbandmen? [m]They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen, who will render to him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The [n]stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner:

h *cf.* Mk. 11. 13.
i ch. 23. 35.
k *cf.* ch. 22. 42–45. *cf.* John 3. 16.
l *cf.* Gen. 37. 18. *cf.* Ex. 2. 14. *cf.* Acts 3. 13, 14, 17.
m *cf.* 2 Sam. 12. 5–9.
n Ps. 118. 22, 23. 1 Pet. 2. 7, 8.

that God was like a man in a far country, and things were in their hands as they proudly assumed? Yet their responsibility was fully granted, and let them take heed to it. All through the ages down, God had been sending to those in trust for Him, to get the fruit of His vineyard; and the prophets had been His messengers to them to present and urge His claim. How had they treated them? Certainly *they* well knew, whose claim had been, that if they had lived in their fathers' days, they would not have been "partakers with them in the blood of the prophets." They had beaten one, killed another, stoned another, and so whenever God had sent fresh witnesses.

But now He had sent His Son: there the full glory of the Speaker is flashed upon them; had He not title to say, without taking into account His divine knowledge, "They will respect *My Son*"?

But indeed He is not ignorant to what He sends Him: and now all that is in their hearts to do and what they will accomplish is pictured for them, as if it were a history of the past. What a testimony to the actors in it that are to be, —He face to face with them, with those clear, deep, always compassionate eyes looking into theirs! think after this of their going on to fulfil it. "But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves"—*not*, who art Thou? or who gave Thee this authority? but on the contrary, "*This is the heir;*" and their after action is all grounded upon this.

Yes, they could have been very tolerant of a false claim: the true one was quite another matter. The claim of God is uncompromising, and His yoke intolerable to the natural heart. The second psalm represents the refusal of Messiah as the Lord does, as the manifestation of the spirit which said, "Let us burst their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." Here it breathes of murder,—"Come, let us kill Him, and lay hold of His inheritance."

And the thing is done. The Lord quietly assures them, as He had done before with His disciples, that He is in fact to die. But if He be in reality the Son, will that secure them what they seek? "when the lord of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?" and they are forced to pronounce what is their own doom.

He confirms it from their own scriptures: for was not the chief corner stone of which the psalmist spoke to be a stone rejected by the builders in Israel? Was not "the Lord's doing" to be the reversal of their deed? But the result of it for that generation would be the taking from them of that Kingdom which in the person of its King they were thus refusing. It would be given to a *nation* bringing forth the fruits thereof: that is, not the Christian Church, but the

this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Wherefore I say unto you, that the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given unto a [o] nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall [p] fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will [q] grind him to powder.

And when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they knew that he spake of them. But when they sought to lay hands on him, they [r] feared the multitudes, because they held him for a prophet.

o *cf.* Ezek. 37. 21-24. *cf.* Hos. 1. 10, 11. *cf.* Is. 26. 1, 2.
p Is. 8. 14, 15. *cf.* Acts 13. 41.
q *cf.* Dan. 2. 34, 35, 44, 45. *cf.* 2 Thess. 1. 7-10.
r *cf.* John 7. 44-46.

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chap. xxii. 1–14.)

The marriage of the King's Son.

1 (1-4): Called.

22 [1] AND Jesus answered and spake again to them in parables, saying: The [s] kingdom of heaven is like a man, a king, who made a marriage for his son, and sent his servants to call those that had been [t] invited to the marriage, and they would not come. Again he sent other servants saying, Tell those that have been invited,

s *cf.* Lk. 14. 15-24.
t *cf.* ch. 21. 33.

Israel of the future; in fact the first nation which will be *all* holy. The terms of the new covenant expressly assure us of this.

Meanwhile "whosoever shall fall on this stone"—as the nation then were doing—"shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall"—in the day when it strikes the feet of the image, as Nebuchadnezzar, the head of the image, saw it—"it shall grind him to powder." At the coming of the Lord judgment will do its complete and effectual work.

The chief priests and Pharisees knew that it was of them that He was speaking; but His words held the people, and they could as yet do nothing. Those who have lost the fear of God are just those who will be most completely dominated by the fear of man.

SUBD. 3.

The parable of the marriage of the king's son is a parable of the Kingdom of heaven. Its subject, therefore, is not the response of Israel to God as under the law, or even to Christ come unto His own, as in that of the husbandmen. Responsibility as to the vineyard is no more in question, but as to the offer of grace made to them in the gospel after the Cross, and when the Spirit of God was in marvellous grace testifying through the apostles that upon their repentance there would still be for them the blotting out of their sins and the coming of times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, whom, though rejected, God would again send to them.* Not till after the definite rejection of this offer by Israel, does the message of the gospel go out to the Gentiles, as in the parable, which goes on to the end of this also, when the man that has not on a wedding garment is cast out. In this, too, the rejection of grace is figured, though here in one who might seem to have accepted it.

[1] We find the same parable in the gospel of Luke (chap. xiv. 16–24), but in briefer form, and without the dispensational character which is so manifest and appropriate in Matthew. In Luke it is simply a man who makes a feast: here it is the marriage-feast of a king's son. Marriage was in the Old Testament a familiar figure of covenant relationship between the people and their God; here with the Son of God—Messiah. The bride does not, however, come into the scene, but only those invited to the marriage, the joys and blessings of union being symbolized as a feast. The Jews are the already invited guests,

* Acts iii. 19-21. The Revised Version has here set right the strange error of the common one, which has "*when* the times of refreshing shall come," instead of "*so that* the times of refreshing may come."

Behold, I have [u]prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted beasts are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.

[u] *cf.* ch. 4. 17. *cf.* Prov. 9. 2.

2 (5-7): Rejection on either side.

[2] But they made [v]light of it and went off, one to his field, another to his merchandise; and the rest laid hold upon his servants and ill-treated them and slew them. But the king was wroth, and sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and [w]burned up their city.

[v] *cf.* Gen. 19. 14.

[w] Lk. 19. 27.

3 (8-10): The wedding furnished.

[3] Then he saith unto his servants, The wedding indeed is ready, but those that were invited were not worthy: go out, therefore, into the [x]thoroughfares, and as many as ye shall find call to the marriage. And those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together as many as they found, both [y]bad and good; and the wedding was furnished with guests.

[x] *cf.* Acts 28. 28.

[y] *cf.* ch. 13. 47.

4 (11, 12): The failure still.

[4] And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man that had not on a [z]wedding-garment. And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, having no wedding-garment? And he was [a]speechless.

[z] *cf.* Lk. 15. 22 with Phil. 3. 7, 9.

[a] *cf.* Rom. 3. 19.

but not till after atonement had been made in the sacrifice of the Cross could the message go forth, "I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are now ready: come unto the marriage." Nothing is said of what the Cross is on the human side of it; we have only the result in divine grace; and that is "tidings of joy which shall be unto all people."

[2] The messengers go out with this, but only to find how little it is this to those to whom it is sent. Only the general result as to Israel is given, and this is rejection whether it be manifest simply in making light of it and going off to other things, or in harsher treatment of the messengers, even to putting them to death. This brings sure retribution: "the king sent forth his armies and destroyed those murderers and burned up their city." Israel is thus for the time being set aside,—left without priest or altar or sacrifice, as it is this day.

[3] But divine goodness will not be frustrated in this way; and through Israel's fall salvation comes to the Gentiles. The invited guests were not worthy: the servants of the king are sent out therefore into the public thoroughfares to invite all without restriction of any kind—the universal call of the gospel now. "Bad and good" are welcome alike: salvation is needed by the best, sufficient for the worst. The response is still not universal as the call is; but the vacant seats are nevertheless filled: the wedding is furnished with guests.

[4] But this, alas, is not yet the whole account. The Kingdom, as we have seen, in all these parabolic representations of it, in which the "mysteries" of it are told out,—the Kingdom while the King is absent and the administration in the hands of men—is in a mixed condition, the false found with the true; and needs in consequence that purging which when the King comes to take it into His own hands, it will surely receive. The gathering of the guests is on earth ideally, where of course, alone the confusion is, but even this is not stated, nor have we here any prophetic outline of final events. It is the awful fact alone that is put before us of what the end will reveal as to a class of which the man without a marriage garment is simply the representation. The coming of the King reveals them: a class which, with whatever profession, have not Christ, the precious gift of God's grace, and who alone is title and fitness for the eternal joy.

Whether the garment was a gift or not, and what it stands for, have been variously disputed. The circumstances of the case are sufficient proof that the multitude of invited could not be expected to have or to provide for themselves what would suit a royal feast. While the spiritual meaning can only be made

5 (13, 14): The recompense.

5 Then the king said unto his servants, Bind him foot and hand, and cast him out into the [b] outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth. For [c] many are called, but few chosen.

b ch. 8. 12. Rev. 22.15.

c ch. 20. 16. *cf.* Lk.12.32.

SUBDIVISION 4. (Chap. xxii. 15–46.)

Testing and tested.

1 (15-22): The claims of Cæsar and of God.

1. THEN the Pharisees went and took [d] counsel together how they might ensnare him in speech. And they sent to him their disciples with the [e] Herodians, saying, Teacher, we know that thou art [f] true, and teachest the way of God in truth, and carest not for any one, for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us, therefore, what thinkest thou? is it lawful to give [g] tribute to Cæsar, or not?

d Lk. 20. 20.

e Mk. 12.13-17. Lk. 20. 21-26.

f *cf.* Jno.3.2.

g *cf.* Jno.11. 48. *cf.* Lk. 3. 1.

clear by the language of the gospel as we find it elsewhere. The "robe of righteousness" (Isa. lxi. 10) with which God covers His people, and which, though it be put upon a prodigal, is the "best robe" in the Father's house, is only susceptible of the most evangelic meaning. Christ is alone "made unto us righteousness" (1 Cor. i. 30), and as with the first God-given covering for the nakedness of sinful man, death it is that in His wonderful way has furnished it. That He is God's free gift to all who will receive Him, will strike dumb every one who appears at last before God without this.

5 Judgment follows. The refuser of Christ is really outside all the light of God by that very fact. He is but sent to his own place in the darkness outside the rejoicing in the house of God. There the awful sting of remorse must follow him: "*there* is the weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The last dread words here multiply this one man into a multitude indeed: "for many are called, but few chosen."

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Thus the Lord has made, and made good for Himself, the highest claim. He has searched out the hearts of His accusers, and summoned their consciences before Him, not in vain, though they have not yielded to their convictions. On the contrary we are now to find their whole strength massed against Him to try and remedy their desperate condition, and give Him, if possible, even yet an overthrow. For this Pharisees and Herodians combine together, and Sadducees seek to retrieve the lost battle of the Pharisees. But all is vain, and the leaders and factions among the people appear before Him only to receive severally specific judgment from Him, until He turns upon them at last with one decisive question which completely silences them all, and that with regard to the very claim which He is making. From that time they have but the one answer, in deeds, not words.

1. The Pharisees, who are all through the leaders, lead now in the attack. But they confess their fear in the subtlety with which they make it, sending their disciples instead of openly appearing themselves, and with them their adversaries the Herodians, with whom it would not be expected they could have collusion. Between them they would catch Him as between the opposite blades of shears; not with an argument either, but only a matter for His decision, as to which they can depend upon His entire and unfearing truthfulness, teaching the way of God in truth, and regarding not the person of men. "Tell us, therefore, what thinkest thou? is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not?"

A dangerous question, however it were decided: whether to refuse it, under the iron heel of Rome as they were, or to yield it in the face of a people constantly fretting against the sign of their humiliation. Was He too, if indeed

But Jesus, [h] knowing their wickedness, said, Why tempt ye me, hypocrites? Show me the tribute-money. And they brought unto him a penny.* And he saith unto them, Whose is this [i] image and superscription? They say unto him, Cæsar's. Then saith he unto them, [j] Render then to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the [k] things that are God's. And when they heard it they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.

2 (23-33): Relationships hereafter and the Scripture testimony as to death.

2. On that day, there came unto him Sadducees, who say there is [l] no resurrection; and they asked him, saying, Teacher, [m] Moses said, if a man die, not having

h Jno. 2. 25. Jno. 6. 64.
i cf. Dan. 2. 31-43 with Dan. 3. 1.
j cf. ch.17.24-27. cf.Rom.13. 7.
k cf. Is. 5. 7. cf.Mi.6.6-9.
l Mk. 12. 18-27. Lk. 20. 27-38. Acts 23. 8.
m Deut. 25. 5, 6. cf.Gen.38.8. cf .Ru. 4.5.

* "denarius."

their King, to bring them no deliverance? Would it not be the collapse of all His claims to leave a question of this sort even for a moment doubtful?

In reply, He assures them that their object was fully known to Him. They were hypocrites, only tempting Him; and yet for all that, they should have their answer; indeed should help to find it for themselves: let them show Him the tribute money. So they brought Him the Roman coin, and there was the image of Cæsar upon its face. "Whose is this?" He asks; and they say, "Cæsar's." "Render, then," He replies, "what is Cæsar's to Cæsar; and to God the things that are God's."

It is a mistake to consider this as simply settling the rights and distinguishing the jurisdictions of the civil and spiritual powers. It was the dominion of the Gentile over the people of God that was felt by the Pharisees,—a yoke under which they never would have come, had they rendered, as the Lord bids them, to God His own. It was the refusal of this which had put them into Cæsar's hands, and now to seek escape was only to refuse the chastisement of their sins, and thus was rebellion against God Himself.

The Gentile yoke had come as their father Jacob had long since prophesied. Issachar had become "like a strong ass, couching between the hurdles; and he saw rest that it was good, and the land that it was pleasant, and bowed his shoulder to bear and become servant to tribute" (Gen. xlix. 14, 15 *Notes*). Israel had accepted fellowship with the Gentile, and Cæsar's coin was only the sign of this. Gentile in heart and way, God had reckoned her where she belonged; but then she could not maintain an independence, which for her could only be another name for dependence on God. Let them give Cæsar his own; but let them give God His own also. When they really do this, there will be no question at all to settle as to Cæsar. Not by self-assertion, but by repentance only can deliverance come for them.

While the principle, of course, remains the same for the Christian, the *case* of the Christian is far different. He is not a citizen of earth, but a pilgrim and a stranger. He is to "render to all their due; tribute to whom tribute is due" (Rom. xiii. 1–7). For him, "the powers that be are ordained of God," and to "resist the power" would be to "resist the ordinance of God"; while this, of course, defines the limit also. If there be collision between the higher and the lower power, the apostles' rule, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts v. 29) is the only real fulfilment of duty both to God and man. To render to man what belongs to God is evil every way.

Thus the first attack upon the Lord turns only to the confusion of His adversaries: "when they heard it, they marvelled and left Him, and went their way."

2. There follows now an attack on the part of the Sadducees, the unbelievers in resurrection, who had their question (more honest, as it would seem, than that of the Pharisees), though displaying, as the Lord tells them, ignorance both of the Scriptures and the power of God. But the Pharisees on their part had

children, that his brother should marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

Now there were with us [n]seven brethren; and the first having married died, and, having no seed, left his wife unto his brother. In like manner, the second and the third, unto the seven. Last of all, the woman died also. In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her.

But Jesus answered and said unto them: Ye err; [o]not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the [p]angels of God in heaven. But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read what was spoken to you by God, [q]saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. And when the multitudes heard it, they were [r]astonished at his doctrine.

n cf. 1 Tim. 1. 4.

o cf. Jno.20. 9. *cf.* Acts 13. 27.

p cf. Phil. 3. 21. *cf.* 1 Jno.3. 2.

q Ex. 3.6,16. Acts 7. 32.

r ch.7.28,29.

done much to give occasion to such difficulties with regard to the future life as their opponents here suggest; perhaps, in spite even of the Lord's words here, we are not at the present time altogether beyond them.

Their question is as to the relationship in the resurrection of a woman who, according to the law in Deuteronomy (xxv. 5, 6), had married seven brethren. "In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife shall she be of the seven: for they all had her?"

The Lord answers their question first, and then rebukes the unbelief which had inspired it. The question He answers with a simple affirmation, in which He contradicts another article of their unbelieving creed,—that there were no angels (Acts xxiii. 8). It was sufficient to meet a mere argument from their ignorance with His own perfect knowledge. Angels there were, and in the resurrection the saints would be like these, neither marrying nor giving in marriage. They knew not the power of God, and could conceive of nothing else than a mere reproduction of earthly conditions. Their perplexity was but the fruit of their own carnal imaginations.

But as for the truth of resurrection, it underlay the very simplest assurance of God's covenant-relationship with men. The "dead" were for the Sadducees extinct, and the denial of any enduring personality was the natural root of the denial of resurrection. It is here, therefore, that the Lord meets them; for, if death be not extinction, but the spirit survives it, not only is all argument for extinction taken away, but this survival by itself implies that death is but a temporary interference with what creation shows to be God's thought of man, and may be perfected but cannot be abandoned. If man still continue to exist in death, then it is natural and reasonable that, whether for judgment or reward, the body should rise again.

Sadduceeism was thorough in its denial; and for the Sadducee "I am the God of Abraham," said to Moses at the bush, could be but mockery. Abraham was a shadow that had passed without even hope of recall. The God of a nonentity—what of comfort or blessing was in that? Could there be even such?

It was by that title, the "God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob," and as that "I am," who had looked upon and had respect unto His people, that God had sent forth Moses from "the bush" to be their deliverer. Sadduceeism never could have been the gospel of that deliverance, nor the inspiration of it. A living God in covenant with men meant life, not death; and if death were, then a life supreme above it. Thus resurrection was the necessary filling out of such a declaration: the hand that God held out to man was not to clasp the listless fingers of a corpse.

3 (34-40): The heart of the law.

3. But when the Pharisees heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him, tempting him, Teacher, which is the [s]great commandment in the law? And he said unto him, Thou shalt [t]love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment.

And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy [u]neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hangeth the [v]whole law, and the prophets.

4 (41-46): The testers tested.

4. And when the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus [w]asked them, saying, [x]What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? They say unto him, [y]David's. He saith unto them, How then doth David in Spirit call him Lord, [z]saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I put thine enemies beneath thy feet? If David, then, call him Lord, [a]how is he his son?

And no one was [b]able to answer him a word, neither did any one from that day dare to ask him further.

s *cf.* ch. 5. 17-20. Mk. 12. 28-34.
t Lk. 10. 25-27. Deut. 6. 5. Deut. 10. 12.
u Lev. 19. 18. ch. 19. 19. Rom. 13. 9. Jas. 2. 8. 1 Jno. 4. 20.
v Gal. 5. 14. *cf.* 1 Cor. 13. 1-3, 13.
w *cf.* ch. 21. 24.
x Mk. 12. 35-37. Lk. 20. 41-44. *cf.* Acts 2. 22-28.
y *cf.* 2 Sam. 7. 12-14.
z Ps. 110. 1. Acts 2. 34. Heb. 1. 13. Heb. 10. 12, 13.
a *cf.* Jno. 1. 14.

cf. Rom. 1. 3, 4. b *cf.* Lk. 14. 6; *cf.* Jno. 18. 6.

3. So the Pharisees hear that He has put the Sadducees to silence, and they are gathered together; not, alas, to own His divine wisdom, but to "tempt" Him yet again. Still there has been an effect produced, as Mark tells us, upon the questioner, and some better thing is hidden under the test question he proposes. Matthew takes no note of this because he is occupied with the position of the nation as a whole with regard to the Lord, and the state of the individual does not indicate this.

The question is, "which is the *great* commandment of the law?" The answer shows what is the heart of it, the life-pulse beating through it all. Alas, that this should be a question. The apostle answers it afterward in a similar manner to the Lord here.—"*love* is the fulfilling"—or, the fullness—"of the law" (Rom. xiii. 10). God claims heart and soul and mind; but then, on that very account, man as the image of God must come in under it. Thus the second commandment is like unto the first: that commandment which they were so manifestly breaking. Nay, here was the Image of God indeed; and in Him they had seen and hated both Himself and His Father (John xv. 24).

But He adds no word of reproach; only enlarges upon the central place which these two commandments had, not in the law only, but also in the prophets: wherever, therefore, the mind of God was expressed. All, in fact, depended upon them there: they were the moral unity manifested in all.

4. And now the Lord appeals to them as they are gathered there before Him as to that which was now for them the question of questions: what do they think of Christ? "whose son is He?" To that they readily reply, "The son of David." This was the truth, and they knew He would not deny it: it was in fact a question which any child among them could have answered.

He did not deny it: it was truth, but was it the whole truth? "How then," He asks, "does David in Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying, 'The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand until I put thine enemies beneath thy feet'? If David, then, call Him Lord, how is He his Son?"

The argument was complete and crushing, and so they felt it.* "No one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day did any one dare to ask Him further."

* It "proceeded, of course," says Edersheim, "on the two-fold supposition that the psalm (cx.) was Davidic, and that it was Messianic. Neither of these statements would have been

SUBDIVISION 5. (Chap. xxiii.)

Judgment pronounced.

1 (1-12): Barren profession in Moses' seat.

1 (1-7): the rule of the rabbi.

1. [1] THEN spake Jesus unto the multitudes and to his disciples, saying, The scribes and the Pharisees have [c]set themselves down in Moses' seat: all things, therefore, that they bid you, do and keep; but do not after their works, for they say and do not. And they bind [d]heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with their finger. But all their works they

c Lev.10.11. Mal. 2.7,8. Rom. 2.19-22.

d Lk. 11. 46. Acts 15.10.

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They are silenced, but not won. The human heart is a citadel that can entrench itself against the clearest evidence; and the conscience can harden itself by repeated rejection of the truth, until light be as darkness. Thus it is now that He who would (how often!) have gathered the children of Jerusalem, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, is forced to give them up to the avenger soon to come. Israel is doomed, and the lips of divine love have to pronounce her doom, until she shall say in truth and penitence, "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

But the terrible denunciation that follows is rather against the leaders that have misled her to her ruin, though the blind leaders and the led fall together into it. From the necessity of the case, the judgment pronounced is given in the most open manner in the presence of the multitude, preceded by that picture of the rule of the rabbi, which could not but appeal to the experience of all who heard it. Yet it left them under it, of their own choice.

1. [1] The scribes and Pharisees had set themselves down in Moses' seat. It was their own act, and yet could not be looked upon wholly as a usurpation. An earnest zeal for the law of God in opposition to prevailing laxity had put them originally in the place that they now occupied. Degeneration had come in, and they had fallen from the ancient spirit while retaining the place,—a place in which the Lord evidently recognizes them here, while recognizing fully also the degeneracy. They were now mere barren professors, contradicting their profession with their lives; while the rule of the rabbi was a tyranny of the severest kind, binding upon men's shoulders burdens grievous to be borne—a growing oppression, more and more intolerable, and never lightened.

"Rabbinism placed the ordinances of tradition above those of the Law, and this by a necessity of the system, since they were professedly the authoritative exposition and the supplement of the written law. And although it was a general rule that no ordinance should be enjoined heavier than the congregation could bear, yet it was admitted that, whereas the words of the Law contained what 'lightened,' and what 'made heavy,' the words of the scribes contained only what 'made heavy.' Again it was another principle that where an 'aggravation' or increase of the burden had once been introduced, it must continue to be observed."* Well might the Lord say, that they would not put forth even a finger to move the intolerable load.

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questioned by the Synagogue. But we could not rest satisfied with the explanation that this sufficed for the purpose of Christ's argument, if the foundation on which it rested could be seriously called in question. Such, however, is not the case. To apply Ps. cx., verse by verse and consistently, to any one of the Maccabees, were to undertake a critical task which only a series of unnatural explanations of the language could render possible. Strange, also, that such an interpretation of what at the time of Christ would have been a comparatively young composition, should have been wholly unknown alike to Sadducee and Pharisee. For our own part, we are content to rest the Messianic interpretation on the obvious and natural meaning of the words taken in connection with the general teaching of the Old Testament about the Messiah, on the undoubted interpretation of the ancient Jewish synagogue, on the authority of Christ, and on the testimony of history." (Life and Times of Jesus, vol. ii. 405.)

* Edersheim, vol. ii. p. 407.

do to [e]be seen of men: for they make broad their phylacteries and enlarge the borders [of their garments],* and love the [f]chief place at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men Rabbi.

2 (8-12): the disciples in contrast.

[2] But be not [g]ye called Rabbi: for one is your teacher, and all ye are brethren. And call not [any] your father upon earth: for [h]one is your Father, who is heavenly. Nor be ye called leaders: for [i]one is your

[e] ch. 6.1,2,5, 16. Rom. 2. 28.
[f] Mk. 12. 38, 39. Lk. 11. 43. Lk. 20. 46.
[g] Jas. 3. 1. cf. 1Cor.3,5.
[h] ch. 6. 9. Mal. 1. 6.
[i] ver. 9. Jno. 13. 13.

* Some omit.

With the people all this, of course, increased their power; and power and place was what they were constantly seeking. Thus they made broad the 'phylacteries' or parchment strips in which they strove after their peculiar manner to have the law in the most literal way as "frontlets between the eyes" (Deut. vi. 8)*; while the actually enjoined tasselled "borders" (Num. xv. 38) they enlarged, to make them conspicuous, as the Lord reproaches them. Naturally with this there was the love of conspicuous places also, at feasts and in the synagogues, and of greetings in the markets in which they were to be accosted as Rabbi, with all due respect.

[2] Such were the Jewish leaders: among the disciples Jesus enjoins them that such things were not to be. They were not to be called Rabbi, but to be all brethren, with Christ alone their real Teacher. There was to be no *authority* among them but His own; no claim of spiritual fatherhood but for the Heavenly Father; nor of leadership, again, for any but Christ. The "leader" here (καθηγητης) is more than teacher: he is the teacher who may have many teachers under him. All this, as it plainly calls for most serious attention on the part of all who call Christ Lord in truth, so also it needs wisdom in the application: for all these terms, "teacher," "father," "leader,†" are applied in Scripture itself to disciples, and cannot be meant, therefore, to be in an absolute way forbidden. But it was in Israel then, as it has come to be so largely in the Christian Church to-day, that those who should have been the *servants* of their brethren claimed to be masters, and stood between the consciences of men and Him who is alone the Lord of the conscience. Neither the Church as a whole nor any class of men in it can claim aright authoritative place for their teaching, which Scripture alone (as the word of the Lord) has; and yet this is what, with many modifications, is continually being done, and the people of God also are on their side not merely allowing but prompting the claim. In this way the word of God loses irreparably; it is made plastic in the hands of men; and, dethroned from its place of authority, it becomes subject to the reproach which attaches to all human handiwork: infidelity finds its own in this degradation. The louder and more authoritative the Church's voice, the more that of God through His word becomes silenced and unheard.

But how different is the "ministry" which is really that, which seeks no lordship for itself, and no authority, but, like the Baptist of old, points only to that Other, in whose presence it stands self-emptied, because filled, satisfied, glorified with the light, unseen of the world, into which it has entered! True, it will not lead men universally to faith, which Christ's own presence in it was not able to do; yet the faith to which it brings men will be how different! But it is not of this the Lord speaks here. He carries us back instead to that glimpse

* They were "square capsules, covered with leather, containing on small scrolls of parchment these four sections of the law: Ex. xiii. 1-10; 11-16; Deut. vi. 4-9; xi. 13-21. The phylacteries were fastened by long leather straps to the forehead, and round the left arm, near the heart."

† The exact word here is only found in the New Testament in this place, but it is only an intensive form of that used in Acts xv. 22, "leading men" and in Heb. xiii. 7, 17, 20, "leaders," which the common version translates "those that have the rule."

2 (13-33): Characterization for judgment. *a* (13-22): as to light. 1 (13): rebellion against the Kingdom. 2 (15): eager proselytism to worse evil.

leader, Christ. But the *j*greater of you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall *k*exalt himself shall be humbled; and whosoever shall humble himself shall be exalted.

2. *a*[1] But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye *l*shut up the kingdom of heaven before men: for ye neither enter yourselves, nor suffer those that are entering to enter.*

[2] Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!

j ch. 20. 26, 27.
k Lk. 14. 11. Lk. 18. 14.
l Lk. 11. 52. *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 16. *cf.* Ezek. 34. 18.

* Verse 14 is omitted by the editors.

of an open heaven, which He so lately Himself has opened to them, and again He repeats: "The greater of you shall be your servant." In service—in the ability to serve—true greatness is. And if the spirit of service be love, and love be the spirit of heaven, then it must be—there can be no avoidance of so plain a fact—that "whosoever shall exalt himself among you shall be humbled; and whosoever shall humble himself shall be exalted."

2. The Lord turns now and addresses personally the leaders of the people, smiting them with a sevenfold perfect "woe," because of their condition which He reveals in successive flashes of awful wrath. Yet no mere outburst of passionate emotion is it that manifests itself in these burning words. They are measured utterances in which the truth of divine judgment is as plain as its reality. And even in form, as they are sealed with the number of perfection, which is at the same time the stamp of an oath,* so this seven is in its structure, like that of the creative days, a 3. 3. 1, beginning indeed with the "light," which is in these "blind guides" but darkness, in the first three woes; in the second three, stigmatizing their duplicity—their double life; while the final one, which has the characters of both preceding sections, brands them as the true children of those who slew the prophets, however much (now that these were dead) they might build their sepulcres.

a[1] The first "woe" deals with their opposition to the Kingdom of heaven; which they shut up in the face of men, themselves neither entering in, nor (as far as lay in them) suffering others to enter. As it is put in Luke, they had "taken away the key of knowledge." With their legal and traditional teachings they had barred man's approach to the only place of blessing in subjection to the glorious King in whom the Kingdom was presented to them, so that the outcasts of Israel, the "tax-gatherers and harlots," went into it more easily than they.

Thus they had not the light, and had refused the light: for if "light had come into the world," it is necessarily self-manifesting, as well as that which manifests other things; and men who refuse it do so, not because of insufficient evidence, but because they "*love* darkness rather than light." And such were the leaders of Israel: here is their condition written upon their forehead.

[2] But while they had taken away the key of real knowledge, it was in perfect accord with this that they should be zealots of their own false knowledge, and eager to gain proselytes to it. Perfectly accordant, too, it was that they should, in the condition in which they were, have proselytes that would go beyond themselves. Calling the light darkness they naturally called the darkness light, and as light would propagate it. The second woe, therefore, follows the first in easily intelligible order.†

* "To swear" is in Hebrew to "use or name seven (victims or witnesses) as to oneself, *i. e.* to bind oneself by an attested oath." (*Davies' Heb. Lexicon.*) Compare Gen. xxi. 28. Beersheba is thus the "well of seven" or "of the oath."

† The omission of the fourteenth verse here is justified as well by its character as by the textual evidence; for in this place it would not suit, however characteristic of the leaders it might be, and was. It is found in Mark and Luke.

because ye [m]compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is become [such] ye make him two-fold more a son of hell than yourselves.

3 (16-22): perversion as to holy things.

[3] Woe unto you, ye [n]blind guides, who say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing, but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is debtor! Ye fools and blind, for which is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing, but whosoever shall swear by the gift that is upon it, he is debtor. Ye blind, for whether is greater the gift or the [o]altar that sanctifieth the gift? He therefore that sweareth by the altar sweareth by it and by all things that are upon it. And he that sweareth by the temple sweareth by it and by him who dwelleth therein. And he that sweareth by heaven sweareth by the throne of God and by him who sitteth upon it.

b (23-28): their duplicity.

b[1] Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay [p]tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have left out the [q]weightier matters of the law, judgment and mercy and faith: these ought ye to have done and not have left out the other. Ye blind guides, that [r]strain out the gnat and drink down the camel.

1 (23, 24): with profession of whole hearted obedience.

2 (25, 26): lusts within.

[2] Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye cleanse the [s]outside of the cup and of the dish, but within they are full of rapine and indulgence. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside may become clean also.

3 (27, 28): corruption of death Godward.

[3] Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like [t]whitened sepulcres, which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but within are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so do ye outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

m Acts 2.10. *cf.* Lk.3.49. *cfr.*1 Cor.3. 4, 5.

n ch. 15. 14. Is. 9. 16. Mal. 2. 8.

o ch.5.33-37. *cf.*Ex.29.37.

p *cf.* Lk. 18. 12. Lk. 11. 42.

q 1 Sa.15.22. Prov. 21. 3. Hos. 6. 6. Mi. 6. 6-8.

r *cf.* Jno.18. 28. Lev. 11. 20, 23, 41. Lev. 11. 4.

s Mk.7.4,8,9. Lk. 11. 39, 40. Ps. 51. 6.

t Lk. 11. 44. *cf.* Ps. 5. 9. *cf.* Acts 23. 3. *cf.* Phil. 3. 4-6 with 1 Tim.1.15.

[3] The third woe again shows how the light in them was darkened by their inversion of true proportion as to the holy things. With them the gold of the temple was more highly estimated than the temple itself, and the gift than the altar that sanctified it. And then this casuistry was used to teach men how they could swear vain oaths and be excused responsibility—a responsibility which the Lord affirms in every case.

b[1] The three following woes are plainly different from the preceding ones. They show us the double life of these Jewish leaders. In the first case, the profession of absolute integrity could hardly be more complete than in paying tithes of the very mint and anise and cummin, the least product of their fields; yet on another side there was an absolute deficiency in that which should have been rendered. The moral elements, the weightier matters of the law, were just with them the things that had *no* weight. They strained carefully out the gnat in such things, but they swallowed easily the camel!

[2] Then the cup and dish they cleansed on the outside; within they could keep them full of rapine and indulgence. With a correct outside the lusts within were retained and sanctioned.

[3] The third woe speaks of spiritual death within, with a good looking exterior

c (29-36): memorializing the prophets; whose return would manifest the reality of things.

c Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye [u] build the sepulcres of the prophets, and adorn the tombs of the just, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. So that ye bear witness to yourselves that ye are the [v] sons of those that killed the prophets. Fill ye up also your fathers' measure. Ye serpents, [w] brood of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell? Wherefore behold, *I* send unto you prophets and wise men and scribes; and some of them ye shall [x] kill and crucify, and some of them ye shall scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city; that upon you may come [y] all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous [z] Abel to the blood of [a] Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation.

3 (37-39): The wings that would have compassed, and the house left till their return to God.

3. [b] O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often

u Lk. 11.47, 48. cp. Dan. 9. 5-8.
v Acts 7. 51, 52.
w ch. 3. 7. ch. 12. 34.
x cf. Jno. 16. 2. cf. Acts 5. 40. cf. Acts 7. 54-60.
y cf. Rev. 18. 24.
z Gen. 4. 8-10.
a cf. Zech. 1. 1. cf. 2 Chron. 24. 20-22.
b Lk. 13. 34, 35. cf. Lk. 19. 41, 42.

only, like a whitened sepulcre. This is the most inward aspect of the evil, but it presents the same duplicity as those preceding it.

c In the next and last case, there is a return to the beginning. The opposition to God with which this characterization began is here as real as there; yet it is covered with a veil which might hide it, not only from others but from themselves. The dead prophets they memorialized and honored—built sepulcres to the men their fathers killed. And this honor to the dead might well save them from all identification with the men that killed them, though these might unfortunately be their fathers. Alas, their present opposition to the Kingdom of God showed how much value was to be attached to such a profession of regard for men who lay quietly in their graves and never troubled them. They were witnesses themselves that they were children of those who slew the prophets. Let them fill up then the measure of their fathers: fill it up and more they would, as already He had shown them, for these with whom He was now face to face would be His betrayers and murderers.

And He would send them prophets and wise men and scribes, and the old history would be repeated. With the long record of ages before them, and that history of their forefathers preaching to them of God's controversy with them for their sins, they would renew and consummate it in their own persons, making themselves heirs of all that long reign of unbelief and evil, of the blood-shedding crying out to God from Abel to Zechariah slain between the temple and the altar, in the very face of God Himself. If this were the Zechariah the prophet, of the returned remnant,* how the guilt of Israel is emphasized in this! and "which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?" are Stephen's words to them at a later time. Upon this generation was to come the recompense of that long wearing out of the saints of God.

3. But here the pent-up love in the heart of Christ breaks out in a lament over the city which had rejected Him. City as it was of murderous hatred

* There seems no good reason for supposing any other than Zechariah the prophet to be meant, though Zechariah the son of Jehoiada is generally taken to be. But this leaves the "son of Barachias" to be accounted for, when the "son of Jehoiada" also would have better reminded them of the history. It seems also too far back (in Joash's time) for the Lord's purpose, when summing up the guilt of the people.

As to Zechariah the prophet, he was son of Berachiah, and grandson of Iddo, and "the Jewish Targum states that Zechariah the son of Iddo, a prophet and priest, was slain in the sanctuary" (See "The Irrationalism of Infidelity," by J. N. Darby, pp. 150-159).

would I have [c]gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye [d]would not. Behold, [e]your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall in no wise see me henceforth, [f]until ye shall say, Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

[c] *cf.* ch. 11. 28-30. *cf.* Deut. 32. 28, 29.
[d] *cf.* Jno. 5. 40.
[e] *ctr.* ch. 21. 13.
[f] Ps. 118. 26.

against those sent to it of God, how often would *He* have gathered her children together, as the hen gathers her brood under her wings! but they would not. Now their house—which He could no longer call His Father's—was left to them as they would have it; but to real desolation. Nor would they see Him henceforth, according to the blessing which those rejected prophets had prophesied should yet be theirs, until, with hearts disciplined with sorrow, and in judgment made to learn the righteousness which alone could be the preparation for it, they should be enabled from their heart to say, "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Div. 6.

We now enter upon the consideration of a most interesting and important group of prophecies, the importance of which is seen by the place it occupies in all three of the synoptic Gospels. Matthew, as we might expect from its character, gives it most fully; the others in an abridged form, and with certain differences which will claim special consideration when (if the Lord will) we take up those gospels. They treat as a whole of the "end of the age," of the coming of the Lord, therefore, which closes it, and this in its relation to the three classes of which Scripture speaks, "the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God." Mark and Luke omit what relates to the last two. Matthew does not give them in this order, but what relates to the Church comes parenthetically, and in parabolic form, between the others.

This mode of presentation, and still more some of the detail, show us, all through, Israel as the central figure upon earth, and giving character to the presentation. The Israelitish part comes first (xxiv. 1–42); that referring to the Church is in veiled speech, and as an appendix to it, and here, if Christians are seen as virgins going forth to meet the Bridegroom, the Bridegroom Himself is Israel's,—the virgins and the bride are not the same, (though the Church stands in this relationship in a higher, a heavenly sphere)—and in the final judgment-scene again, the "brethren" of the King are Jewish. These things must be more fully considered when we come to them, but it is of primary importance to interpretation to make such distinctions. Through lack of it confusion has been introduced where every thing is simple, and along with this, the so called "spiritualizing" process has combined to deprive the Lord's people of much that would, by its extensive connection with other prophecies both in the Old Testament and New, have opened up the mind of God as to the future in a way that otherwise, perhaps, could hardly be attained. Much else, also, besides prophecy, is certain to be obscure where this is. Scripture is so united with scripture, and truth with truth, that no part can be disarranged without disordering the rest. On the other hand, thank God, no truth can be made clear without helping to clear other truth, if followed to its results; and the clue thus put into our hands by God is of priceless value for those that desire to walk amid divinely given certainties rather than by any light of merely human kindling.

For this reason it cannot be strange if we seek to look closely into the meaning of that which is before us here, and examine also some at least of the various interpretations put upon it, with such care as may be needful to form a positive judgment of what the truth is that is taught us in it. We need not merely probable but positive truth. *Probable* truth may be positive error. We need in Scripture to be able to say, "we know," although to many this may be what

DIVISION 6. (Chaps. xxiv., xxv.)

The Putting down of Evil at the Consummation of the Age.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. xxiv. 1-44.)

Christ's coming in relation to the elect people (Israel).

1 (1-14): The beginning of birth-pains. 1 (1-3): the knowledge sought.

1. [1] AND Jesus [g] went out and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him to point out to him the [h] buildings of the temple. But he answered and

g cf. ch. 21. 17.

h Mk. 13. 1, 2. Lk. 21. 5, 6.

they stamp as dogmatism merely. Scripture can mean nothing less than this when it proclaims to us a "full assurance of understanding" also, as well as "of faith," and "hope."

SUBD. 1.

It is of first importance then to realize that, in all this first part of the prophecy, it is Israel, or a company of Israelitish disciples, with which we have to do. The twelve were as yet fully that, although the Church or assembly had been spoken of to them. But the foremost among them, and to whom the Lord had especially addressed Himself, needed, as we know, long afterward, to have a special vision to make him go to a Gentile, and the question in which they all unite when with the Saviour after His resurrection, and in the fulness of hope induced by it, is yet, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?" Certainly then, of the Church, as Paul spoke of it, they could have as yet no conception; of what we call commonly the Christian dispensation they could have had no expectation; if we are reminded of the parables of the thirteenth chapter, what they had gathered from them we know not; but we know that they had not realized as yet the truth of the Lord's death and resurrection which He had in the plainest way and at various times declared, and yet these were fundamental to all the rest.

It is not meant by this to limit what He might now declare, for to suppose this would be in contradiction to what has been already said. He spoke of much that would only open up as they went on, and which even the gift of the Spirit did not at once make plain. This the book of Acts fully shows, with much else. It does not therefore limit the Lord's communications, although we know that there *were* things of which He could not as yet even speak; but we shall shortly find that it does affect important points in what is now before us, as for instance in regard to that coming of the Lord and that "consummation of the age," of which they question Him.

It is plain, then, that they were Jews not only in fact but in spirit, these disciples of the Lord. The questions they ask must be apprehended from this point of view, and no other; and this will help us to understand the parabolic way in which (even to them) the Christian portion of His answer is introduced. I do not forget that its being Christian even has on the other side been denied by some for whom the Jewish character of much has overshadowed the rest. All this shows how little we can afford to take anything for granted here, and the care with which we must examine things which for the mass of readers even may be undoubted.

1. [1] Let us now take up the question of the disciples which the Lord answers in the chapter before us. He has left finally the temple, as no longer the Father's house. Israel had made it but a robbers' den; and that not merely the traffickers whom He had so easily driven out, but much more the people as a whole, who had refused not only the messengers from time to time sent to them by God, but now the Son of His love, the Witness not of His righteousness alone but of His grace. The vineyard should be their own; and for that they were ready to kill the Heir of it. He could only therefore leave them to their choice, though with His heart wrung at the thought of all that this meant of necessity for them.

said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, 'There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. And

[f] Lk. 19. 44. cf. 1 Ki. 9. 8. cf. Ps. 79. 1. cf. Is. 64. 11.

But His disciples are held by other and very different thoughts. Herod's magnificent temple, not even yet complete, though now nearly fifty years building, and growing thus continually under their eyes, the glory of Israel, spite of the murderous hands that built it—the temple drew them yet. "What manner of stones and what buildings are here!" they urge, as if in intercession for that house which He was leaving desolate. But He answers at once, "See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down." For Herod's temple as such there can be no regret, with one who looks on more than the outside.

But it seems to linger yet in their hearts; and on the Mount of Olives, as He sits with the city over against Him, they come to Him to ask when these things shall be; and they add two other questions which in their minds were no doubt practically one,—"what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the consummation of the age?*"

The "age," in their thoughts, as already said, could not be any Christian age, of which they had no idea; it was the age in which they lived, and which was for the Jew the age of law. There would follow it the "days of Messiah," and the coming of Messiah would bring them in. There was no interval thought of as taking place between the two, and certainly for the disciples here, no considerable time to elapse before He would return to Jerusalem, and take the Kingdom now denied Him. That time the Lord shows them to be longer than they imagined, though still leaving it largely indefinite, and certainly not interposing a Christian or Gentile age between that present one and His coming to set up the Kingdom, rather making it a protraction of the Jewish "age" itself. The gospel of the Kingdom is indeed to be preached in all the earth for a witness, and "then shall the end come"—the end of that age about which they had inquired. There is no hint as yet of any Christian one.

It was this, doubtless, which helped to confuse the old interpreters. They could see that there was no sign of Christian times before it, and that the end of which the Lord speaks, with the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place had to do with Israel—"them that were in Judea." They naturally connected this with the question, "when shall these things"—the destruction of the temple and what was connected with it—"be?" There seemed indeed no other answer to it than this. Consequently the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus was intended to be pictured—Daniel certainly had spoken of this (chap. ix. 26); but as a consequence also the coming of the Son of man immediately following must be providential merely. Thus the interpretation was complete.

A reference to the same prophecy as given by Luke (chap. xxi.) would seem to confirm this: for here certainly Jerusalem is spoken of as compassed with armies, the Jews led captive and dispersed among the nations, and Jerusalem trodden down of the Gentiles till the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled. No one questions, or could question, that here is its sack by Titus; and here is the same warning to flee to the mountains, as given in Matthew. The interpretation seems thus fully confirmed.

For the disciples indeed such a coming of the Son of man could in no wise be what they expected or desired. It was no restoration of the Kingdom to Israel; nothing, indeed, but vengeance upon her; no fulfilment of hopes, such as the Old Testament prophets had inspired, of that blessing for the earth even, which was in them always connected with the restoration and exaltation of Israel. Rather would it be the complete setting aside of this. The coming of the Son of man also in Daniel is always to receive a Kingdom, displacing all the kingdoms of the world; and that, not by a slow, leavening process, which would be

* It is not *kosmos* here, the physical world, but *aion*, "age," a marked off period of time.

[j] as he sat upon the mount of Olives, his disciples came to him privately, saying, Tell us, [k] when shall these

[j] Mk. 13. 3-37. Lk. 21. 7-37.
[k] *cf.* Lk. 17. 20-37.

transformation instead of displacement, but by a sudden blow as of a stone falling from heaven upon the feet of the world-colossus, overthrowing and shattering it as in a moment. How great the contrast between the Son of man shattering the Gentile powers and bringing Israel into blessing and supremacy, and the appearing of the Son of man here to put Jerusalem under the iron heel of the Gentiles!

Yet the Son of man appearing in the clouds of heaven seems in manifest connection with Daniel (vii. 13, 14), as the abomination of desolation is in our Lord's reference. Moreover, this coming itself, in the clouds of heaven, and with the angels, reads little like a mere providential judgment. Instead of its being to destroy Jerusalem, it is spoken of as coming after it, and separate, therefore, from it. Nay, in Luke, where alone the treading down is spoken of, this goes on until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, and then come the signs in the heavens, and soon the Son of man.

In Matthew, when He comes, He sends His angels to "gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other," and this might be thought to refer to the day of judgment, by one holding the common views, but could not in any sense apply to the long past judgment upon Jerusalem. Rather is it, if in connection with Daniel, the exact opposite of Israel's dispersion completed under Titus; it is the *regathering* of the elect nation under the "wings" that would so willingly have long since been spread over them. And this connects with the judgment of the Gentile nations, "when the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, and then shall sit upon the throne of His glory." Then shall "all the nations be gathered before Him, and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats" (chap. xxv. 31, 32). By no fair inference can this be disconnected from the coming of the Son of man in the earlier part of the same prophecy, to which it self-evidently indeed refers. Nothing but the necessity of an unscriptural theory could have disjoined them from one another.

Thus the coming of the Son of man is most clearly future, a personal coming to set up that kingdom over the earth, for which the disciples rightly looked. But this being established, another result follows,—that the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, as given in Luke, must be distinguished widely from what we find in Matthew. The abomination of desolation standing in the holy place is not even connected with the worship of the Roman standards at the taking of the city over eighteen centuries ago: it is a yet future thing, and in close connection with that coming of the Son of man, of which it is the great and conclusive sign.

To see this clearly we have but to keep together in our minds what the Lord so plainly links together here. The abomination of desolation marks the beginning of a tribulation so severe, that, "except those days should be shortened, no flesh should be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." It is plain, therefore, that a time so characterized could not stretch over centuries. Scripture has indeed, over and over again, marked the exact length of it; but this we need not now take up: it is evident that it can be but a short time; but then "immediately after the tribulation of those days" come the signs of the Son of man at hand. Thus it must as plainly be yet future, as the destruction of the city in Luke is long past. In Matthew there is no destruction of the city; in Luke no abomination in the holy place: the prophecies are different, although given by the Lord at the same time.

But this gives rise to another question: if that of which Matthew speaks is still in the future, how can it be the end of the *Jewish* age? Christianity has in fact replaced Judaism for God upon the earth; and, even though Israel has still promises to be fulfilled to her naturally, when the Lord appears, how can there be any recurrence between now and then of any remnant of the Jewish age?

things be? and what shall be the sign of thy [l]coming, and of the [m]consummation of the age?

[l] ver. 30. cf. 2 Pet. 3. 4. [m] ch. 13. 39, 49.

This question can only be answered by turning once more to the Old Testament to which we are referred here—to Daniel: in his prophecy of the seventy weeks, the whole connection of what we have before us is made plain to us.

In the ninth chapter we find Daniel pleading with God for his people Israel, and for the city called by God's name. God in answer sends the angel Gabriel to acquaint him with His purposes. "Seventy weeks" (of years,) he is told, "are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city to finish transgression and to make an end of sins, and to make atonement for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the holy of holies." This last expression points definitely to national restoration and blessing, and all that is spoken of here has reference to the same thing. At the end of this 490 years their sins are to be brought to an end, everlasting righteousness brought in *for them*. As with the prophecy in Matthew, the end of this is plainly not reached yet, however long ago the time began; and the end cannot be before the coming of the Son of man, as the Lord in agreement with Daniel, declares here. Up to that time their deliverance is not reached; and Zechariah shows how it will be effected (xiv. 1-5).

There is again, however, a great difficulty. Four hundred and ninety years from the decree to restore and to build Jerusalem have long run out,—had nearly done so when Christ appeared publicly in Israel, and yet the blessing for them did not come. Nay, that time was some years past, when the Romans, in sharpest contrast with the promise here, *destroyed* the sanctuary. But all this, let us notice is in the prophecy itself: sixty-nine weeks (483 years) carry us already as far as "Messiah the Prince" (ver. 25), and then He is "cut off and has nothing," as the margin better renders (ver. 26); and after that, "the people of the prince that shall come destroy the city and the sanctuary." So that the prophecy shows us that there would be this seeming contradiction,—Messiah come, but not accomplishing the blessing; cut off, and so having nothing (to us with regard to Israel a thing perfectly plain); and still the prophecy goes on to the "end of the war," as far as which "desolations are determined." Until this therefore the prophecy cannot end.

Accordingly now, just at the close, we hear of the final, seventieth week: "And he shall confirm a [not "the"] covenant with many [properly "*the* many"] for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease, and because of the wing of abominations there shall be a desolator"—that is the literal rendering—"even until the consummation, and that determined is poured upon the desolate."

Here plainly is the consummation, and the determined time ends. To the very end the trouble lasts; and that we understand. The "wing of abominations" brings a desolator; so that here is an "abomination of desolation." Sacrifice and oblation being made to cease imply that it has to do with the holy place. Nay, there is a touching link just here with what we have had in Matthew; for the *wing* of abominations brings the desolation: how impossible to forget here the "wing" of which the Lord has spoken, under which Israel had been so often called to find shelter, and which would have so effectually sheltered them!

Put Daniel's prophecy in this way side by side with what we have in Matthew, and their exact agreement will demonstrate that they are made for one another. We see that the "end of the age" is nothing but this broken-off end of Daniel's seventy weeks. We can trace also its connection with the destruction of the city in Luke, though this latter does not itself come into the period. There is unity, in fact, throughout.

The answer to the first question of the disciples is more fully given in Luke than in Matthew, as is plain. We have only here in the first and introductory

2 (4,5): false Christs.

[2] And Jesus answered and said unto them, See that no one lead you astray. For [n]many shall come in my name, saying, *I* am the Christ, and shall lead astray many.

3 (6-8): travail-signs.

[3] And ye shall hear of [o]wars and rumors of wars; see that ye be not troubled: for this must needs come to pass, but the end is not yet. For [p]nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be [q]famines [and pestilences *] and [r]earthquakes in divers places; but all these things are the beginning of travail-pains.

4 (9-13): trial and failure.

[4] Then shall they [s]deliver you up to affliction and kill you, and ye shall be [t]hated of all the nations for my name's sake. And then shall many [u]stumble and deliver one another up, and shall hate one another.

n ver. 24. *cf.* John 5. 43.

o *cf.* Rev. 6. 2-4.

p *cf.* Hag. 2. 22.

q *cf.* Rev. 6. 5, 6.

r *cf.* Rev. 6. 12.

s *cf.* ch. 10. 17, 18.

t *cf.* Rev. 11. 9, 10.

u ch. 10. 21, 22.

* Some omit.

portion of the prophecy the general character of the times, which in some sense would suit the whole period of the Lord's absence. We find nothing however, in this part, necessarily Christian. This comes in afterwards in the appended parables.

[2] The first words of Christ's reply are a warning against the coming of false Christs. It has been said that it cannot be shown that there were any false Christs before the destruction of Jerusalem. But if that cannot be shown, neither can the opposite. There were many antichrists, the apostle John assures us. Among the Jews also leaders of various kinds with various pretensions were continually rising up. Nor are the disciples addressed here individually, but as representatives of others also who should succeed them, and that right down to the time of the end, when the greatest false Christ will appear that the world has ever seen, and when death will be the penalty threatened for resisting his pretensions; but of this it does not need to speak here.

[3] Next the Lord warns of wars and rumors of war, things which have been common enough certainly; as have "famines and pestilences and earthquakes in divers places." He gives them, however, a very significant character, as the beginning of travail-pains: as if nature were pressing on to the birth of a new and better time, and could not rest content or quiet with the present evil. Nor is there anything strained in this, however unintelligent may be the thing which manifests thus its sympathy with the purpose of God: "for we know," says the apostle, "that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Rom. viii. 22). The mind of God cannot but manifest itself through nature, as well as in the movements and convulsions among the nations of the world; and though the specific lessons may have their difficulty, the general one is not hard to read. It is an unrest everywhere which cries for Him who alone has said—who alone could venture to say—"Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." And the cry sounds in His ears, and will find answer.

[4] With all this His people are warned of special trials. The world that crucified their Master will be the same world still. They must look for suffering even to death, the signs of the world's hatred for His name sake, and which will test the reality and measure of loyalty to Him on their part. Many will be stumbled and betray one another. False prophets will find their own in it and be listened to. And the abounding of lawlessness will have its effects even upon the mass in the decline of love. Let them have courage, however, as forewarned. They have but to have patience, and he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

It is manifest that, looking back over the Christian centuries, such things have characterized them throughout. They will end in an apostasy, out of

And many [v]false prophets shall arise and shall lead astray many. And because lawlessness shall be multiplied, the love of the many shall grow [w]cold; but he that hath [x]endured to the end, the same shall be saved. [5] And this [y]gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the habitable earth, for a witness unto all the nations; and then shall the end have come.

[5 (14)]: the end and recompense at hand.

[v] *cf.* Rev. 13. 11 with Rev. 19. 20. [w] *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 3, 4. [x] *cf.* Heb. 10. 37–39. [y] *cf.* ch. 10. 7, 23. *cf.* ch. 28. 19, 20.

which there will arise the giant forms of evil which will dominate the earth when the Lord shall have gathered His own out of it to Himself in heaven, and a new work of the Spirit shall begin in Israel, in order that the promises to her may be fulfilled. Those who have discerned the structure of the Apocalypse can be at no loss to discern, after the close of the Church's history as depicted in the epistles to the Asiatic churches (ch. ii., iii.), the united company of the redeemed in heaven (chap. iv.), the Lamb now taking the book of the future into His hands, as the Lion of the tribe of Judah; so that Israel nationally comes now upon the scene, as in the sealed ones of the seventh chapter out of all her tribes. And now as soon as the book begins to be opened, the figures that come forth in answer to the cherubic call are again strikingly similar to what we have in the beginning of the great prophecy before us. Under the first seal the symbol is of foreign conquest; then we have civil war; then famine; then pestilence; then there are under the altar the souls of slaughtered saints; then a great earthquake, whether literal or political or both. And then with the seventh seal, the book is fully opened; and those who have skill to read will find the very prophecies of Daniel to which the Lord presently refers us beginning to be fulfilled, and the half-week of unequaled tribulation again and again brought forward in the following chapters (Rev. vii. 14; xi. 2, 3; xii. 6, 14; xiii. 5).

The closing word of encouragement here also, without denying its applicability to the Lord's people at any time, cannot but be felt to have special reference to this time of trouble, so severe and yet so brief, and with every day of it numbered. They have but to endure for this brief measured time, and deliverance will come for them. How tender a provision for them this numbering of the very days!

[5] And all through it also the testimony of God will go out to the nations. "This gospel of the Kingdom" will be preached, spite of the distress and opposition, "in all the habitable earth for a witness unto all nations." It would not be like God to allow the end to come without warning, and this is especially the character of the gospel then. It is not just what we have as that now, although the gospel of the Kingdom does go out surely now; but if we look at Rev. xiv. 6, 7, which speaks of the same time and thing, we shall find that a special element enters into it then, which with us would be impossible to preach. The angel flying in the midst of heaven, there, has the "everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell upon the earth, and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people." It is expressly called the "*everlasting* gospel," that which has always been the gospel. The gospel of the Kingdom, the announcement of the putting down of evil by the power of God, has been sounding out ever since the promise was given of the victory of the woman's Seed; so that it is truly the everlasting gospel, and yet at the time we are speaking of one thing is said which never could have been said at any other: it marks the exact time of going forth with the most perfect precision: "Fear God and give glory to Him; for the hour of His *judgment* is come." Then this will have come. The eagles will be gathering to the carcase. Judgment will have returned to righteousness. Instead of the shepherd's rod being transformed into a serpent, the shepherd's rod will *smite down* the serpent.

Thus, though with all our hearts we may thank God for the revival of the missionary spirit and work for the last century, we cannot properly apply to this the preaching of the everlasting gospel as we find it in Revelation. And

2 (15-28): The enemy and anti-christ.
1 (15-18): his supremacy.

2. [1] When ye therefore shall see the [z] abomination of desolation spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (he that readeth, let him understand), then let those that are in Judæa [a] flee to the mountains;

z Dan. 9.27. Dan. 12.11. *cf.* Rev. 13. 14-17.
a *cf.* Gen. 19. 15-17. *cf.* Jer. 6.1. *cf.* Jer. 37. 11, 12.

the passage here also, while it may be better applicable to the present time, has yet, we may be sure, its full and final reference to the same period as that in Revelation. The "end" that then comes is that which will complete entirely the period of the seventy weeks, and so bring in the coming of the Son of man.

2. [1] It results from all that has been said, that that which now follows brings us completely to the end of the age, the determined time of God's disciplinary dealings with Israel, in order to bring them into their promised blessing under Christ, when He appears. This, if really the subject, at once sets aside the ordinary interpretations, which apply it to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. The reference to Daniel (ix. 27; xi. 31; xii. 11) renders this impossible. The ninth chapter does indeed foretell the destruction by the Romans, but as distinctly separates it from the abomination of desolation, which comes in the middle of the last week of the seventy. It is in the midst of the week that sacrifice and oblation are made to cease, and this is commonly referred to the Cross as putting an end before God to the legal sacrifices. It is true that it did so, but how does this agree with the coming in of blessing at the *end* of the week, which must be and is allowed to be the end of the seventy? For, take away (as is commonly done) the application to Israel which is so plain in the angel's words, then the making an end of sins and the bringing in of everlasting righteousness must be itself by the Cross, and the Cross must be at the end of the week, and not in the middle. Count one half week of years, three-and-a-half years, after the Cross, and what can be shown as bringing in everlasting righteousness at such a time? But the passage itself most distinctly states the making sacrifice and oblation to cease to be in the midst of the week and not at the end of it. This is an argument which would seem to pass the ingenuity of man to meet.

The setting aside of sacrifice, then, is not by atonement; and the other passages clearly show this. Take chap. xi. 31: "They shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate"; or take the last passage of the three: "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up." In both cases it is clear that the taking away of sacrifice is for or with the setting up of the abomination. In the ninth chapter it should be clear, therefore, why as soon as the former is spoken of, we hear of the latter: "on account of the wing of abominations [there shall be] a desolator," as it reads literally: idolatrous abominations bring the desolation.

Certain it is that the application of the taking away of sacrifice to the Cross cannot be maintained, and that if it could, that of the abomination to the Roman invader of the first century still would be impossible. The abomination of desolation in Daniel is in the last week of Daniel's seventy; and this can only end with Israel's blessing fully come; and that means with the coming of the Son of man. In Matthew it is exactly the same: only a brief period of unequaled tribulation, which Daniel also unmistakably declares (xii. 11), intervenes between the abomination and the coming of the Son of man; and this interval we can now exactly measure as three-and-a-half years. It is the "time, times and a half" of Dan. vii. 25, and xii. 7, and again of Rev. xii. 14. It is the "forty and two months" of Rev. xi. 2, and xiii. 5. It is the "thousand, two hundred and threescore days" of Rev. xi. 3 and xii. 6. So many are the witnesses to what the prophecy in Matthew now before us speaks of.

There is no need of saying much as to other applications. The profanation of the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes, and which ended in the revolt of the Jews

let him that is on the [b]house-top not come down to take away what is in the house; and let not him that is in the field return to take his garment.

[b] *cf.* Is.22.1, *cf.* Lk.9.59–62.

under the Maccabees, while it was doubtless a partial fulfilment of Dan. xi. 31, could not possibly fulfil either of the other passages, and was already a good while past when the Lord uttered this. The "abominations of the papacy," to which others would apply one of the passages in Daniel, are wholly out of question here in Matthew. Thus the application we are making of the Lord's words seems the only one really possible.

In Old Testament times, when truth of heart to the one God of Israel was the foundation of all, the false gods of the heathen were in a special sense the "abominations." Thus Milcom is called the "abomination of the Ammonites" and Chemosh of Moab (1 Kings xi. 5, 7), Ashtoreth of the Zidonians (2 Kings xxiii. 13); and there is no doubt that here (as is generally accepted) the desolating abomination is an idol or a false god. Israel has long been, and was then when the Lord spoke, and according to his own comparison, like a man out of whom this unclean spirit had gone (chap. xii. 43–45); but it is to return in the last days in a still more evil fashion; and a false god or idol in the sanctuary of God itself would be the very trumpet-note of defiance to Israel's Jehovah. In Dan. vii. 25, we find of the last horn of the last beast or kingdom pictured there, and whose "great," that is, haughty "words" shall bring destruction upon the beast (ver. 11), that he shall "speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and *the law* (*R. V.*); and they shall be given into his hand, until a time and times and the dividing of a time." Thus again we find in Rev. xiii., of what is undoubtedly the same evil one, that "there was given to him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and power was given him to continue"—or "do," "practise,"—"forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle and them that dwell in heaven; and it was given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them." It is plain by just putting these texts together, that they speak of the same time and power; and we see how it is that the great tribulation of Daniel and of Matthew is brought about.

But in the same chapter of Revelation we are told of a second beast that shall arise along with the former with two horns like a lamb, but speaking like a dragon. He is like Christ, but a devilish imitation—an Antichrist; and as Christ leads men to worship the Father, so "*he* causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast;" and "he doeth great wonders so that he maketh fire to come down from heaven in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast, saying to them that dwell on the earth that they should make an image to the beast . . . and he has power to give *breath*"—not "life" "to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed."

As already said, it needs but to put these scriptures side by side to see how well they fit together. Taken apart, we may apply them to the pope or the Mohammedan power, as many do. Putting them together, the connection with the last half-week of the seventy, and the *shortened* tribulation of the last days, forbids this as an interpretation, which in Matthew is quite impossible. On the other hand, we see how this breathing and speaking image (if we are to take it literally) or whatever it may signify, connects with this closing tribulation, which is indeed the "time of Jacob's trouble," the travail-time of the nation, when they are "born" as "in a day" to God. And here we find the "elect," for whose sake the days are shortened, and who, when the Lord appears are to be gathered together from their long dispersion (Ezek. xxxvii).

2 (19-22): the tribulation.

[2] But woe to those that are with child, and to those that give suck in those days! And pray ye that your flight be not in winter, nor upon the sabbath. For then shall be [c] great tribulation such as hath not been since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall be; and except those days had been [d] shortened, no flesh should be saved, but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

3 (23-25): signs and wonders.

[3] Then if any one say to you, Behold, here is the Christ, or here, believe it not: for there shall arise [e] false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if it were possible, even the elect. Behold, I have foretold you.

4 (26): testing.

[4] Therefore if they say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert, go not forth; behold, [he is] in the inner chambers, believe it not.

5 (27, 28): the coming for judgment.

[5] For, as the [f] lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth unto the west, so shall the coming of the Son of man be. For wherever the [g] carcase is, there shall the eagles be gathered together.

c *cf.* Jer. 30. 5-7. *cf.* Dan. 12. 1. *cf.* Joel 2. 2. *cf.* Zech. 14. 2, 3. *ctr.* Rev. 3. 10.

d *cf.* Is. 65. 8, 9. *cf.* Zech. 13. 8, 9. *cf.* Is. 40. 1, 2. *cf.* Dan. 9. 27 with Rev. 12. 6-17.

e vers. 5, 11. 2 Thess. 2. 8-10. *cf.* 2 Pet. 2. 1-3. *cf.* Rev. 13. 11-18.

f *cf.* Is. 30. 30 with 1 Thess. 5. 1-3.

g *cf.* Ezek. 39. 17, 18. *cf.* Rev. 19. 17, 18; Lk. 17. 37.

[2] The notice of the tribulation follows that of the abomination; but we have already sufficiently considered it.

[3] That of the signs and wonders in connection with false Christs and false prophets is also plain. In 2 Thess. ii. we have the same power as the "man of sin," sitting in the temple of God and showing himself that he is God. The connection with Christianity (or rather with apostasy from it) and the thought of the Church as the "temple of God," have combined to lead the mass of interpreters towards Romanism and the pope as the explanation of this also. But how could this be a sign of the day of the Lord being just at hand, when Romanism counts its centuries of despotic sway over men, and that day is not yet come? And again Rome is Babylon the great, the harlot, the *woman* of sin and not the *man* of sin. The dark and evil power to rise up at the end will not even *profess* obedience to Christ, as Rome does. The man of sin is "he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God." . . . "Even he whose coming is according to the work of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that are perishing; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved" (*R. V.*)

All this answers clearly to what we have in Matthew, and goes far beyond Romanism, evil as Romanism surely is. It links with all that we have had before, to certify the meaning of what we have here, a meaning which rather Scripture itself has given us than any interpretation of our own.

[4] They are warned now of any attempt to mislead by drawing away disciples after a Christ come secretly—in the desert, or in the secret chambers. Not so would He come. The power of evil at work would have its snares laid on the right hand and on the left; but there would be no need for any nice discrimination to discern the truth.

[5] He would come openly, not secretly. The need appealing would be such as to call not for secret help but open interposition. His coming would be like the lightning lighting up all the heavens, the announcement of swift and unsparing judgment. Wherever the carcase, the corruption, existed the eagles would find it out: judgment would thoroughly do its work. In long-suffering patience there was no longer hope. Judgment itself was now the only mercy. The shepherd's rod must smite, and destroy the destroyers of the flock and the earth.

3 (29–44): The manifestation.
1 (29–31): to the elect, and their gathering.

3. [1] But immediately after the tribulation of those days, the [h] sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light; and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the [i] sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the land lament; and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall [j] send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from [one] end of the heavens to [the other] end of them.

2 (32–35): the speediness.

[2] Now from the fig-tree learn her parable: when her branch is now tender, and putteth forth its leaves, ye know that summer is near; so also ye, when ye [k] see all these things, know that it is near, at the doors. Verily I say unto you, [l] This generation shall in no wise pass away, till all these things shall come to pass. [m] Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall in no wise pass away.

3 (36–41): a secret told out.

[3] But of that day and hour [n] knoweth no one, no, not the angels of heaven, but the Father only. But as the [o] days of Noah were, so shall the coming of the Son of

h cf. Is. 13. 9, 10. cf. Ezek. 32. 7, 8. cf. Joel 2. 10, 31. cf. Am. 8. 9, 10. cf. Rev. 6. 12-14.
i cf. Dan. 7. 13. cf. Rev. 1. 7. cf. 2 Thess. 1. 7, 8.
j ch. 13. 41. cf. Ps. 50. 4, 5. cfr. 1 Thess. 4. 16-18.
k ver. 15. cfr. 1 Thess. 5. 1-5.
l cf. ch. 12. 45. cf. ch. 23. 35, 36.
m cf. ch. 5. 18. cf. Is. 51. 6.
n Acts 1. 7. vers. 42, 44. cf. Mk. 13. 32.
o Gen. 7. 1, etc. cf. 1 Pet. 3. 20. cf. Amos 6. 3-6.

3. [1] We come therefore now to the appearing of the Lord, ushered in by signs throughout all nature. The sun and moon would fail; the stars fall from heaven. Nature itself would call for a stronger than creature hand to save it from ruin. Then would appear the sign for which men had asked. As Jonah to the Ninevites, so would He be again to them, the Son of man once crucified at their hands, now seen in the clouds of heaven. The sign would be Himself, and what a sign! They "look on Him whom they have pierced,"—not in their minds, not in vision, but really: "every eye shall see Him, and they also who pierced Him," "and then shall all the tribes of the land lament"—the reference to Zechariah (xii. 10–14), both here and in Revelation (i. 7) is, or ought to be, unmistakable—"and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Joseph and His brethren are face to face.

Israel must be now re-gathered: this is the mission of the angels, to gather together His elect from the four winds. It might seem indeed as if the winds had scattered them: how little they think that angel hands shall bring them back! Brief are the words used, but how divine love breathes in them! what will be the joy in these from the far off country gathered home!

[2] "The man will not be at rest," says Naomi to her daughter-in-law, "until he has finished the thing this day." And the Lord now impresses upon His disciples the suddenness with which all this will be accomplished. The fig-tree is once more chosen as a figure of Israel: and "when her branch is new and tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near." The fruit is there as soon as the leaves: thus the development is sudden indeed; summer in this way seems at once to set in: Israel's hopes come thus to sudden fruitage. The very generation that sees the beginning of these things will see the end.*

*So the connection inclines me now to understand ver. 34. That "generation" (γενεὰ) may be taken as "race," or a people marked by certain moral characteristics, there can be no question at all for any one who has examined the matter: and in this sense I used to take it here, that that unbelieving generation of our Lord's day would continue on to the coming of the Lord itself. And this is, no doubt, true. I think, however, it is not so suited to the connection here as that given above, which is accepted by many. The suddenness of the end is the point insisted on.

man be. For, just as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not till the flood came and took them all away; [p]so shall the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; one shall be [q]taken, and one shall be left; two [women] shall be grinding at the mill; one shall be taken, and one shall be left.

4 (42-44): the world-test.

[42] [r]Watch, therefore, for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Therefore, be ye also [s]ready, for in an hour that ye think not, the Son of man cometh.

p *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 3-10.
q *cf.* Prov. 14. 32. *cf.* Ps. 101. 5, 6. *cf.* Ps. 37. 10, 11.
r ch. 25. 13. *cf.* Rev. 3. 3.
s ch. 25. 10. *cf.* Rev. 22. 14. Lk. 12. 31-40.

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chaps. xxiv. 45–xxv. 30.)

Separative judgment between true and false in the fellowship of faith—the Church.

1 (45-51): Faithfulness and usurpation of authority. 1 (45-47): the faithful servant.

1. [t]WHO, then, is the [u]faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath set over his household, to give them [their] food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

t Lk. 12. 41-46. 1 Cor. 4. 2.

[3] The Lord adds to this, what makes its suddenness more impressive, that the time in which it would take place was known to none, save only to His Father.* Upon the world all this would come as a surprise, just as the flood did in the days of Noah, judgment suddenly sweeping them to destruction. But at the end it would be separative, selective of its objects: two in the field, one taken and one left, two women at the hand-mill together, one taken and the other left. Here, as in the illustration from the time before the flood, it is *judgment* that "takes away": the one left is left for blessing; for the earth is now being purified, as we have seen, and where the carcase is the eagles are gathered together.

[4] The Lord enjoins upon all to watch, just because they know not the day upon which He may come. For the world, it will be but the unexpected visit of the thief, breaking in upon the house they count their own. But let all be ready.

SUBD. 2.

Here He introduces the parables which show us, by way of appendix to the Jewish aspect, the relation of His coming to the Church, but in a veiled manner. It was, in fact, what as yet they would not be able to enter into. The three parables which follow all remind us that in the Kingdom as committed in His absence to the hands of men, the true and the false would be mingled together, and at His coming only would the evil be purged out. Here we have therefore that separative judgment seen in relationship to what is professedly a fellowship of faith. The three parables have to do with—1st. the use and abuse of authority; 2nd. the Christian expectation of the Lord, the going forth to meet Him; and 3rd. the special deposit committed to each, and the heart towards Him as shown by the way the trust is discharged. We may notice that in all this part we have no reference to Daniel or to Old Testament prophecy any more. All in it belongs to the mysteries of the Kingdom unknown to the prophets of old, and

* A very few ancient MSS. insert "neither the Son"; but Jerome asserts that, while in his day some Latin copies had it, yet in the Greek and especially "in Adamantii et Pierii exemplaribus" it was not found. According to Athanasius also it was alleged at the Council of Nicæa, A. D. 325, that these words were in Mark only. I take this from a note of Dr. Schaff, the American editor in Lange's Commentary on Matthew.

Verily I say unto you, that he will [u] set him over all that he hath.

2 (48-51): the evil servant.

[2] But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My [v] lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and shall eat and drink with the drunken, the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he

[u] ch. 25. 21. *cf.* Lk. 22. 29, 30.

[v] *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 4. *ctr.* Rev. 22. 7, 12, 20. Heb. 10. 37.

which the very form of the parable expresses (chap. xiii. 34, 35). In what is commonly called the "parable" of the sheep and goats which follows, we have what is no longer that, but plain speech enough, the sheep and goats being only used by way of figurative illustration.

1. The coming of the Lord is, throughout these parables, the governing object. He is leaving the world as rejected by it; and it is characterized for the Christian as the place of that rejection. But He leaves it to prepare for His people a place in heaven, and He comes again to introduce them there, where He is. Israel has still the earthly promises; but the Church is a stranger here; for her portion and her heart are with Christ in another scene. In the meanwhile she is the representative of her Lord however upon earth, put in charge of His interests on it, and responsible to serve and glorify Him.

[1] In the first parable here it is of ministry that the Lord speaks, pressing the responsibility of him whom his Lord has set over His household, to give them food in due season. The value He puts upon such service is emphatically declared. Blessed shall he be whom his Lord, when He cometh, shall find doing this in faithfulness and wisdom. He will even set him over all that He has.

It is service, as the same blessed Speaker has taught us not long since, that not only leads on to rule, but qualifies for it: just because all rule with God *is* service. "Love seeketh not her own." To seek one's own is the misery of a fallen creature, and in heaven no such beggar's badge can anywhere be found. Its places of trust are places of service therefore, new ability to serve,—to satisfy love's desire, and pour out of fulness which shall find even there some room for happy overflow, if yet we know little what. Thus, then, the Lord looks at service here as qualifying for service, higher and fuller there—reaping in the same sort as that which has been sown: and that is the law of harvest.

[2] But there is another side which we are to consider: for "if that *evil* servant shall say in his heart, my lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and shall eat and drink with the drunken, the lord of that servant shall come in an hour when he looketh not for him, and shall cut him asunder and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites." Plainly the man *is* a hypocrite: it is no case of ignorance merely as to prophetic teaching; it is what his *heart* says, whether his prophetic views are right or wrong. He, too, like Israel when the Lord came, wants the vineyard for himself, and this he shows by his conduct: he usurps authority over his fellow-servants, and associates himself with loose livers; it does not say that he becomes drunken, but a man is known by the company he keeps; and he is perhaps worse than his company because of the profession he makes. He is a hypocrite, and his doctrine (whether publicly professed or not) comes from his heart, as so much false doctrine does. We are apt to be easily persuaded of that which we want to be true; and so in this case.

Primarily, it is the individual of whom the Lord speaks, but we cannot be aware of the history of the Church without realizing that there is a wider significance; and that along with the decline of the expectation of the Lord's speedy return, and with the coincident assertion of the Church's heirship to Israel's promises, there did in fact ensue that hierarchical transformation of ministry into lordship which culminated at last in papal domination and the necessarily lax manners of the growing world-church. The grain of mustard-seed, enlarged into a tree, sent down its roots proportionately into the earth; and the parable of the transformation soon became its justification also. But this brings the

looketh not for him, and in an hour which he knoweth not, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint his portion with the [w] hypocrites: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.

2 (xxv. 1-13): The wise and foolish virgins: faith's expectancy.

2. [1] Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten [x] virgins, who took their [y] lamps and went forth to meet the [z] bridegroom.

1 (1): at the beginning.

cf. ch. 13. 20, 21. *y cf.* ch.5.14-16; *cf.* Phil. 2. 15, 6. *z cf.* Ps. 45. 8, 11; *cf.* Is. 62. 4, 5; *cf.* Eph. 5. 25-27 with Rev. 19. 7.

w cf. ch.25.3, 11, 12. *cf.* ch.7.21-27. *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 23. *cf.* 2 Pet. 2. 20-22. *ctr.* Jno.10. 28, 29. *x cf.* 2 Cor. 11. 12.

judgment of the world upon the professing church itself: "upon thee goodness, if thou continue in His goodness, otherwise thou also shalt be cut off" (Rom. xi. 22). The true saints being removed to be with their Lord in heaven, there is left upon earth nothing but a decaying carcase, to which the eagles will presently gather. Upon every one so left, the awful doom will come which the Lord announces: "the Lord of that servant shall cut him asunder and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

2. The second parable deals still more directly with the Church's expectancy of Christ, which is indeed the very point of it; the figure of a marriage has been already used by the Lord in a parable of the Kingdom (chap. xxii.) but there neither bridegroom nor bride is actually brought in, although the bridegroom is named as the King's son. The gathering of the guests is there the central feature of the parable; here it is the going forth to meet the bridegroom; and the Bridegroom Himself takes the most important place in it.

The bride is still not seen;* but not surely because the virgins *are* the bride in another aspect, as so many think. This is not more against the unity of thought than it is against the connection, or the orderly development of the revelation. For the heavenly bride has not yet been revealed; and the prophecy as a whole is evidently from the Jewish standpoint, from which the Baptist speaks when he says, "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom" (John iii. 23) Israel is the bride, as with the Old Testament prophets, and it is when Christ comes to take Israel into relationship to Himself, that on the way Christians are called out to meet Him and come with Him to the marriage. The very fact of being called out to meet Him shows who they are. Jewish disciples could not be called out to meet Him; and it is a New Testament truth altogether that "when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory."† Thus the bride is Jewish and the virgins are Christian; and if we will remember this, every feature of the parable becomes harmonious.

[1] "Then shall the Kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, who took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom."

The connective "then" has certainly a meaning, and as certainly connects this parable with that which has gone before; nay, even with the judgment upon the evil servant. But that will not suffice to make it mean all that interpreters have taken from it. But it is when the end is reached that the "likeness" of the Kingdom to what is here before us will be fully complete. Nevertheless the parable takes us back to the beginning of the Church's history —to the time of first freshness, when the heathen world around was witness not only that they had "turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God," but also "to wait for His Son from heaven, even Jesus, who delivered

* There is, however, a reading "and the bride" at the end of the first verse, which Westcott and Hort insert in their margin, and which Trench (*Notes on the Parables*) approves as to the sense, as conformed to the Jewish customs. Probably it is this conformity that has led to the interpolation, which is certainly opposed to the plain meaning of the parable. The marriage could not have taken place before the virgins are called out to meet the bridegroom.

† In Zechariah (xiv. 5) "the Lord my God shall come, and all the *holy ones* with Thee" does not necessarily imply more than "angels"; and so with Enoch's prophecy which Jude quotes: "The Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints," or "holy ones."

2 (2–4): the difference between them.

3 (5–7): the rousing of the sleepers.

2 And five of them were [a]foolish, and five were [b]wise. For the foolish took their lamps and took no [c]oil with them; but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

3 Now as the bridegroom [d]tarried, they all grew drowsy and [e]slept. But in the middle of the [f]night,

[a] *cf.* ch. 22. 10. Lk. 12. 20, 21. [b] Deut. 32. 29, chap. 7. 24–27. [c] *cf.* Eph. 1. 13.

cf. Acts. 5. 32; *cf.* 1 John 2. 20, 27. [d] *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 8-10; *cf.* ch. 24. 48. [e] *cfr.* 1 Thess. 1. 9, 10; 1 Thess. 5. 6. [f] *cf.* Ex. 12. 29; *cf.* 2 Thess. 5. 3.

them from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. i. 9, 10). What is referred to here is certainly not the fact of what at last took place when the midnight cry had aroused the sleepers, and when in fact the *unpreparedness* to go forth together immediately manifested itself. As yet the virgins are one, as it would seem, in heart and hope. Afterwards we find the tarrying of the bridegroom, the falling asleep, the startling cry; but not as yet.

The being "virgins" must not be pressed too far, nor yet lost sight of. Hebrew customs are illustrated in it all, even in the number, for "ten lamps or torches were the usual number in marriage processions"; still that does not in the least prevent there being a deeper meaning, for Scripture selects what it can turn to spiritual profit. Thus, though the virgins are not (from the point of view taken here) the bride, or the espoused, yet we are not to refuse the conception naturally attaching to such, of purity, of separation from the world; while the number ten, as well as five, show that this is their responsibility rather than necessarily the reality of their condition. And this comes out clearly in the sequel, though it has been lost sight of by many, in a way that has not only led to misconstruction of the parable but has perverted important truth. The going out to meet the bridegroom is, in the first place and essentially, in desire and expectation of heart, though it results in a positive "going forth" from the world and its associations. A heart in heaven can be fairly measured by the reality of pilgrim- and strangership on earth.

2 A great and fundamental contrast is found to exist between two classes of these virgins: "five of them were foolish and five were wise." And their folly or wisdom is shown in regard to that for which they had come out: "the foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them; but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps."

Here naturally the difference between those of whom I have just spoken and other interpreters comes out. We are told that in this parable all are spoken of as "virgins;" while in those that precede and follow it, all are spoken of as "servants." They are therefore all alike true Christians—"Christians with no stain upon the genuineness of their profession, but whose Christianity lacks that maturity of growth, depth of consecration, and perfection of development which can alone entitle to the highest honors and joys of the kingdom." And this is supposed to be shown in the fact that their lack in the case spoken of here "is not of oil in their *lamps*, but of oil in their *vessels with* their lamps" —an extra supply of grace, which the wise virgins carried with them.

A lamp without any oil is, no doubt, a foolish thing enough; too foolish, it might be supposed, for any to think of. Spiritually, however, alas! there is no difficulty at all in the conception of what is seen continually, men satisfied with the form without the power; and this is even the special characteristic of the last days (2 Tim. iii. 1, 5). "The lamps consisted of a round receptacle for pitch or oil for the wick. This was placed in a hollow cup or deep saucer which was fastened by a pointed end into a long wooden pole, on which it was borne aloft." It is distinctly said that the "foolish took their lamps and took *no* oil with them"; but we cannot definitely say whether the "vessels" in which the wise took their oil were just the receptacles on the top of the poles or something separate altogether from the lamps. The foolish have *no* oil, no power of the Spirit to make "a burning and a shining light" for Christ; and this their end demonstrates absolutely.

there came a cry, [g]Behold, the bridegroom: come ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

4 (8, 9): the failure proved.

[4] And the foolish said unto the wise, [h]Give us of your oil: for our lamps are [i]going out. But the wise answered and said, [Nay,] lest there be not enough for us and you: go ye rather to those that [j]sell, and buy for your selves.

5 (10-13): the result.

[5] And while they were gone away to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were [k]ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut.

g *cf.* Rev. 3. 11. *cf.* Jas. 5.8.

h Ps. 49. 7.

i *cf.* Prov. 20. 20.

j *ctr.* Acts 8. 18–23. *cf.* Is. 55. 1.

k ch. 24. 44. *cf.* Col. 1. 12–14.

[3] The bridegroom tarries, and this has its effect upon them all. Wise and foolish alike, they become drowsy and sleep. So in the history of the professing church the expectation of the Lord grew languid and ceased. The expectation of the conversion of the world came in to replace the true Christian hope of being taken out of it, the millennial reign being finally interpreted by the event, of the overthrow of paganism in the Roman empire. After Constantine, but one prominent teacher is known to have favored what was then called "chiliasm"; and he an unsound man.* There was no longer a watcher to disturb the slumberers.

In the middle of the night, however, a cry is heard, "Behold the Bridegroom; come ye out to meet Him;" and this rouses all the virgins. It is more, surely, than a revival of the doctrine of the Lord's coming which is indicated by this: it is a definite announcement, rather, of His being at hand, which is followed so promptly by His actual arrival that there is no time for those who are awakened unprepared to remedy their condition.

[4] *All* are aroused; and then comes the conviction on the part of the foolish, "Our lamps are going out." It is urged therefore that they had been lighted up to this time, and that they must have had oil in them, for this to be; but the parables appeal so constantly to the thoughts and feelings of men, that the argument is an unsafe one. The words are *their cry* only, not necessarily fact at all. And the "ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance" in the well-known fifteenth of Luke, are they in fact such, or in their own thoughts? Surely in their own thoughts only; they are in fact the Pharisees whom the Lord has before Him. So here, it is not necessarily the *fact* that the lamps were ever lit; and the warning is a solemn one, that one may have a good enough light to welcome the Bridegroom, *when He is not there*, and find, when faced with the reality, that the light reckoned on expires at once!

The foolish show their folly by their appeal to the wise. In the spiritual application of these things, none but fools could make it; for while a true soul, with the eyes on the wrong object, might fall almost into despair, yet none surely could expect to borrow from another of the grace that was in him to make a light wherewith to meet the Bridegroom. The wise virgins direct them to those that sell, to buy for themselves; and in fact Scripture exhorts men elsewhere to "buy," though "without money and without price" (Isa. lv. 1). Such "selling" speaks of fixed terms upon which alone the one who seeks may obtain what he desires; and in this way, paradoxical as it may seem, we may buy without money. Nay, the very terms of the gospel are that "the gift of God" cannot be "purchased with money," or with anything that religiously might be its equivalent. The pride that will not take a free gift as such must be sent empty away.

[5] They are too late, these foolish ones; for "while they were gone away to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. Afterwards came also the other virgins, say-

* Apollinaris the Younger, bishop of Laodicea (died A. D. 390).

Afterwards come also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, [t]open to us. But he answered and said, Verily, I say unto you, I know you not. Watch, therefore, for ye [m]know not the day nor the hour.

3 (xxv. 14-30): Special trusts, and the heart manifested by them, 1 (14, 15): to each according to capacity.

3. [1] For it is as if a man, going away out of the country, called his own servants, and delivered to them his [n]goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one; to each [o]according to his own ability, and immediately went out of the country.

2 16-18): the contrast.

[2] And he that had received the five talents went and [p]traded with them, and gained other five. In like manner he that [had received] the two gained other two. But he that had received the one, went away and dug in the earth, and [q]hid the money of his lord.

t Lk. 13. 25-30.
m ch. 24. 42.
n Lk. 19. 12-27. cf. Lk. 15. 12, 13. cf. 1 Tim. 6. 20.
o Rom. 12. 6-8. 1 Cor. 12. 28-30. cf. Lk. 12. 48.
p cf. 1 Tim. 4. 13-15. cf. 2 Tim. 1. 6. cf. Eph. 5. 16. cf. 2 Pet. 1. 5-8.
q cf. Prov. 26. 15; etc. 1 Pet. 4. 10; cf. 2 Pet. 1. 9-12.

ing, Lord, Lord, open unto us." But they are shut out; shut out, if (as all seems to indicate) it is the earthly marriage, from the earthly joy and blessing, as well as the heavenly; and in any case this is the truth of it. The Lord disowns any knowledge of them; and this He could not do of His own. All that is said of them too sadly agrees with this.*

3. [1] The parable which now follows speaks of the special trusts committed to the servants of the Lord in the time of His absence from them. They are left to care for His interests, and the "talents" are not what is ordinarily taken to be that,—some natural endowment or capacity,—but something added to this, while taking it fully into account: to each one is given "*according to* his own ability." It cannot be further defined than as being like money in different amounts, possibilities of gain for Christ, what in His love to God and man He counts such. The deposit itself increases by wise use of it; the sphere of service grows larger, as we serve; and this is a point insisted on. The five talents grow to ten; the two to four: capacity necessarily growing also by experience, as we know so well. How little in spiritual things are we any of us shut up to mediocrity, as we are prone to imagine, and suffer seriously by the imagination too.

[2] This is presently seen in the conduct of the three depicted here, though it is not, of course, at all a sufficient account of it. Yet it is worthy of note that the man who hides his lord's money in the ground, is not the one who has received five talents, or even the man who has received but two. And we understand well how natural this is, that it should be the receiver of the smallest gift who makes no use of it. It need not be so: the man of splendid natural ability, and who has corresponding opportunities and superadded endowments may be the very one to forfeit all by his neglect or perversion of them. Still the appropriateness and power of exhortation for us in this circumstance of the parable must not be on this account overlooked. It is the little gift which tends to be despised as little; to the great injury of the people and the cause of Christ. For thus the mass of Christians almost drop out of responsibility, drop into inactivity, more or less complete,—practically give up their talent into the hands of those they esteem better qualified than themselves; who, however, cannot do the work thus imposed upon them, and it remains undone; but this is the largest part of all the Church's work! How necessary to remember that "much more they that are feeble are necessary," and to give a right answer to the prophet's question, "Who has despised the day of small things?"

Suppose we have but one talent, every day's believing use of it will carry us on some way towards two. We are not shut up within the limits of God's first

* Alford, Olshausen, and others deny the finality of the judgment here; but Schaff is wrong in asserting that millennarian commentators in general take this view. He should at least own that there are many exceptions.

3 (19-23): the return and reali-zation.

[3] Now after a long time, the lord of those servants cometh and [r]reckoneth with them. And he that had received the five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst to me five talents; lo, I have gained other five talents. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been [s]faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things: enter thou into the [t]joy of thy Lord. And he also that received the two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: lo, I have gained other two talents. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will set thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

r *cf.* Rom. 14. 10-12. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 10.

s *cf.* Lk. 16. 10-12. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8.

t Ps. 16. 11. *cf.* Heb. 12. 1, 2.

4 (24, 25): the failure.

[4] But he also that had received the one talent came, and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a [u]hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not scattered: and, being afraid, I went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, thou hast what is thine.

u *cf.* ch. 20. 11, 12. *cf.* Jer. 44. 16-18. *cf.* Mal. 1. 13. *cfr.* 1 Jno. 5. 3.

5 (26-30): the recom-pense.

[5] But his lord answered and said to him, Thou [v]wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I

v *cf.* ch. 22. 12, 13. *cf.* ch. 24. 48-50.

gift. We may shut *ourselves* up; and by hiding our talent in the earth, both lose what we have and the capacity for gaining more. For the rule is, "to him that hath"—in the way of increase—"shall more be given; but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away."

[3] Another thing becomes manifest in result: that it is not the amount with which we are entrusted that ensures the reward, but the faithfulness shown as to it. The servant who had the five talents has gained five talents; but he who has gained but two has as much doubled his capital as the other has, and is received with the same approval into the joy of his lord. It would be possible for the one with the smaller trust, to win even the higher approbation; and it is something for the Lord to find one of His own willing to serve as cheerfully in a humbler as in a higher position. To a love that "seeketh not her own," all would be equal here, though love itself may "covet earnestly the *best* gifts," these meaning fuller capacity for love's sweet service.

[4] As principles all these things apply to every Christian, yet we are not allowed to suppose that the man who hides his lord's money in the absolute way here described is possibly, after all, a Christian. His plea for it here is total unbelief, and expressed in such a way as would be impossible to the stoutest-hearted in the day which is referred to. But the Lord puts into language of the most out-spoken character what the conduct supposed would really mean. Faith would argue as to every gift of God that He who gave it had made no mistake, and that the possession of anything wherewith to serve was sufficient warrant for service; and love would prize the opportunity for this as blessing from the divine Source of blessing. The man before us is a mere accuser of his Lord; but so would He teach us to judge the legal spirit which, even in a believer, would render one incapable of using frankly and fully whatever he is possessed of, in the service of Him who has bestowed it. If we abhor the awful blasphemy which this man utters, let us abhor the unfaithful and cowardly refusal of our responsibilities which means the entertainment (however disguised) of traitorous thoughts like these. "Faith worketh by love"; and love is the free spirit of service. Lack of the one is, therefore, lack of the other; while we may be sure, and for that reason, that no true believer could be found as this man, with his Lord's talent lying entirely unused.

[5] Accordingly the judgment here is absolute condemnation. He is condemned

have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered? thou oughtest therefore to have put my money with the [w]bankers, and at my coming I should have received mine own with interest. Take away, therefore, the talent from him, and give it unto him that hath the ten talents. For unto [x]every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And [y]cast out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.

[w] *cf.* Eph. 5. 15, 16. *cf.* Gal. 6. 9, 10.

[x] ch. 13. 12. John 15. 2.

[y] ch. 8. 12. ch. 22. 13. ch. 24. 51. ver. 46.

out of his own mouth, for if his master were what he thought him, he should have given his money to the bankers, that he might have received his own with interest. He is cast out into the outer darkness, which speaks of the awful darkness, away from God who is light, and of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.

SUBD. 3.

Thus Israel and the professing church have been before us in their relation to the coming of the Lord; and now we have the Gentiles similarly,—the judgment of the living nations, when, having come, and His throne established upon the earth, He casts out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and those that work iniquity—a judgment not to be confounded with the final judgment of the "great white throne," which is a judgment of the wicked dead alone.

To those who see in Scripture but one general resurrection of saint and sinner at the last day, with one general judgment in which the righteous will be manifested and separated from the wicked, the scene that the Lord puts before us here seems naturally to picture what is in their own minds. If their view be right, it is, of course, quite clear that it must picture it; and this it is to which we must confine our attention here: does it indeed represent a judgment of all the generations of men, Jew, Christian, heathen, dead and living, at the end of the world? Is this what it states or what it implies? If so, we must heartily and unreservedly accept this, assured that it will be found, of necessity, in conformity with all other scriptures; and that if it plainly declares this, we may accept it even without going further. But it must plainly declare it.

Now the coming of the Son of man in His glory with all His holy angels with Him, we have already seen in its relation to Israel, and to the prophecy of Daniel, to which our Lord Himself directly points us. In Daniel He comes to receive a kingdom which He shares with the "saints of the most high" and which stands for ever; *first of all*, breaking in pieces and consuming the kingdoms of the earth (ii. 34, 35). There surely can be no doubt, except to those entirely prepossessed with other thoughts, that this is a kingdom yet to be set up. To speak of the saints reigning *now* is a thought utterly foreign to Scripture. It is to the overcomer that the Lord promises that he *shall* sit with Him on His throne, even as He also overcame and is set down with His Father upon *His* throne (Rev. iii. 21). Who could sit with Christ upon the Father's throne? And notice He is speaking in this promise as Son of man, walking in that character among the candlesticks (chap. i. 13). If Christians "reign as kings without" the apostles, (who certainly never did) it is a rebuke simply to mention it (1 Cor. iv. 8).

Thus the Kingdom in Daniel is the Kingdom for which still we wait, introduced by that personal and manifest coming in the clouds of heaven of which Matthew (as well as Daniel) speaks, and it is when the Son of man so comes and sits on the throne of His Kingdom that the nations are gathered before Him in the manner spoken of here. There is no hint of resurrection here, and for a good reason. The first resurrection has already taken place *before* His appearing, for *when* He appears, we shall appear with Him in glory (Col. iii. 4). This is

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chap. xxv. 31–46.)
The day of manifestation.

1 (31–40): The righteous.

1 BUT when the Son of man shall [z]come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be [a]gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats. And he shall set the [b]sheep on his right hand, but the [c]goats on his left. Then shall the

z ch. 24. 30, 31. *cf.* Zech. 14. 4, 5. *cf.* 2 Thess. 1. 7–10. *cf.* Rev. 1. 7. *cf.* Rev. 19. 11–21.
a *ctr.* 2 Cor. 5. 10. *ctr.* Rev. 20. 11–15. *cf.* Jno. 5. 24. *cf.* Ps. 96. 13.
b *cf.* Ezek. 20. 38; *cf.* Ezek. 34. 17, 20; *cf.* Ps. 79. 13; *cf.* John 10. 11, etc.
c *cf.* Lev. 16. 5, 7–10; *cf.* Zech. 10. 3.

indeed a truth which Matthew does not reveal to us, though we have seen the living saints called forth to meet the Bridegroom. But it is a thing made known afterwards to Paul "by the word of the Lord," that the dead saints are to join this blessed company and rise to "meet the Lord in the air," together with them (1 Thess. iv. 14–17). Thus it is plain why there is no mention of resurrection *after* He is come, and that there could not be any. The wicked dead are yet in their graves, and will only come forth after the millennium is at an end, to stand before the "great white throne" for judgment (Rev. xx. 5, 11–13). The company gathered before the Son of man when He appears and sets up His throne on earth, is simply of living men who have never died, and of Gentiles only.

The judgment is a *selective* judgment,—the righteous separated from the wicked, the "sheep from the goats." But the saints alive or dead of the present or the past dispensations, will not (as we have seen) stand in such a promiscuous assemblage, to be picked out from the rest by the judgment of their works. The first resurrection will have separated them wholly and for ever. Raised or changed, the saints caught up to meet the Lord in the air will be already in His likeness (1 Cor. xv. 42–44, 52). Give account of themselves they will, and their *works* will be appraised for suited recompense, but *personally* into judgment they cannot come (John v. 24, *R. V.*). Thus it should be absolutely clear that they are not among the mingled company which the King judges here.

But a difficulty arises in the mind immediately—one of those difficulties by which, if fairly met, we are led on to fuller apprehension of the truth itself. It may be naturally asked, if the Lord thus takes away to Himself all the living saints before His appearing, how can there be any "sheep" to put upon His right hand when the Son of man appears? What are they who now are welcomed by the King, as blessed of His Father, to inherit the Kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world?

A similar question, it will be remembered, is asked of John in Revelation (vii. 13) by one of those elders whom he has seen in heaven, sitting upon thrones around the throne of God, and heard singing the song of redemption in the presence of the Lamb (chap. v. 7–10). Here is another company, distinct from these, as also from the 144,000 sealed out of the tribes of Israel, just before seen. They are Gentiles, "out of every nation and tribe and people and tongue," with blood-washed robes and palms in their hands, and the elder asks, "Who are these? and whence do they come?" He asks, and has himself to answer: "These are they who come *out of the great tribulation*"—not simply "out of great tribulation," which might apply very generally to Christians, but out of the tribulation of which Daniel and the Lord in Matthew speak. Thus they are a company precisely defined and limited, and to the very time of the prophecy before us,—a time in which, if we compare the scriptures, Christianity in the true sense of that term is taken from the earth. Once more, Jew and Gentile, even in blessing, form distinct companies; temple-worship is again going on, till the abomination of desolation stands in the holy place; it is in

King say unto those on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the [d]kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was [g]ahungered and ye gave me to eat, I was thirsty and ye gave me drink; I was a [f]stranger and ye took me in; [g]naked and ye clothed me; I was [h]sick, and ye visited me; I was in [i]prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the

d cf. Lk. 12. 32.
cf. Rom. 8. 17.
cf. Zech. 14. 9, 16.
e cf. Heb. 11. 37, 38.
cf. ch. 10. 9-15.
f cf. Acts 16. 15.

cf. Heb. 10. 32, 33. *g cf.* 1 Cor. 4. 11 with Acts 16. 33, 34. *h ctr.* Ezek. 34. 4. *i cf.* Jer. 38. 7-13. *cf.* 2 Tim. 1. 16, 17.

short that "end of the (Jewish) age," which is nothing else than the cut-off end of Daniel's seventy weeks,—the last week.

In it we see the "everlasting gospel" going out (Rev. xiv. 6, 7), declaring (gospel as it is) "the hour of God's judgment" to have come; and here the instrumentality used is, no doubt, Jewish. Thus we can understand the special character of the judgment itself which turns entirely upon how men have treated the King in His "brethren," the time being that in which "His brethren," instead of being separate, as while the natural promises and privileges were in abeyance, have returned, as Micah prophesies they will, *unto the children of Israel* (chap. v. 3). Even the apparent ignorance, on the part of the righteous, of the glorious King can in this way be accounted for; because it is only when they look upon Him whom they have pierced that the veil drops completely off Israel's own face (Zech. xii. 10; xiii. 6). No wonder if the Gentiles, turned by their means to God, should not be in advance of the ministry they have received.

Thus there is fullest harmony; and we see that this last week is indeed a seed-time for Israel and the earth. Before it begins, the Lord has called His saints of the past and present up to Himself, and removed the candlestick of Christianity from the earth, spuing out, as in the threat to Laodicea, the mere lukewarm profession. Darkness then covers the earth, and gross darkness the peoples, but the light begins to rise upon Israel, the morning (stormy as it is) of an unending day (Isa. lx. 1 *sq.*).

There needs not much more to be said of this closing part of the Lord's prophecy. For the righteous there is eternal life, death being for them completely abolished. They "*go into* eternal life,"—which is not yet said even of the Christian; and the immensely lengthened life of that time Isaiah witnesses (Isa. lxv. 20–22). On the other hand the wicked go away into eternal punishment—the fire prepared, not for man but "for the devil and his angels." They share the portion of those to whom they have chosen to unite themselves. All Scripture declares, with this passage, that it is strictly eternal.*

I do not know of another scripture which treats definitely of such a sessional judgment of the Gentiles as that which the Lord puts before us in this prophecy. The fiftieth psalm seems about as unique with regard to a similar judgment in Israel, when Jehovah having come and shining in glory out of Zion gathers before Him the covenanted people, and when there are, apparently, as here among the Gentiles, the wicked whom He addresses. Psalm fifty-one follows with a general confession on the part of the nation, who own their guilt in the rejection of Christ (see "Notes"). But the Lord's words in Matthew, in accordance with the character of the New Testament generally, bring in more clearly the eternal consequences.

In general the judgment of the nations when the Lord appears is set before us, as even in Revelation (xix), as a smiting with the sword. In the symbolic language of the Apocalypse, Christ is pictured as a Warrior upon a white horse, whom the "armies in heaven" follow. The beast and the kings of the earth and their army are gathered together to make war with Him that sits upon the horse, and with His army. The beast and false prophet are taken and cast

* See for a full discussion, "Facts and Theories as to a Future State" (Loizeaux Brothers, New York).

righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee ahungered and fed thee; or thirsty and gave thee drink. And when saw we thee a stranger and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? And when saw we thee sick or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the [j] least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

[j] *cf.* ch. 10. 40–42. *cf.* Acts 9. 2, 4, 5.

alive into the lake of fire; while those that follow them are slain with the sword that proceeds out of the mouth of Him who thus manifests Himself as the "King of kings and Lord of lords." Taken with arms in their hands, in open rebellion, there is no need of judicial inquiry in such a case. But, undoubtedly, with the "rest of the dead" (xx. 5) they await the judgment of the "great white throne" for their measured out award. And this marks a wide difference between the *selective* judgment of Matthew and the distributive judgment which closes up the record. That in Matthew, being simply selective, requires but the one point to be raised—for Christ or against? While that of the great white throne, being judgment according to their works, requires the whole life-history to be brought into account. As forming no part of the "first resurrection," the "resurrection of life," all is settled for these as to the company with which they stand: it is of the "few stripes," or the "many" that alone there is question.

An Old Testament prophet confirms with his testimony that of Revelation. "And it shall come to pass in that day," says Isaiah (xxiv. 21–23), "that Jehovah shall punish the host of the high ones on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison; and after many days they shall be visited. Then the moon shall be confounded and the sun ashamed: for Jehovah of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously."

Revelation shows us both the punishment of the "host of the high ones on high," as implied in the binding of Satan (xx. 1–3) and casting him into the abyss, and that of the "kings of the earth upon the earth." But the great assize is not then. The millennium intervenes before their "visitation" comes, and final judgment. The Old Testament doctrine is in necessary harmony with the New and with the so-called "premillennial" interpretation of it.

The Old Testament also shows us Gentile nations outside of the empire of the "beast" and his associates,—the "Latin" nations. "Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal" is neither in the empire, nor in alliance with it; and the names given and the powers connected, show not obscurely Russia and the *east* (Ezek. xxxviii., xxxix.). Daniel's "King of the north" is as certainly Greek, all through his closing chapters; and his position and might, which is not his own (chap. viii. 24) suggest that his connection is with the colossus at his back. All these are to find Jerusalem "a burdensome stone" to them, and meet their judgment at the day of the appearing of the Lord.

But these are the banded armies, behind which are the nations themselves; and we hear of spared ones sent to them (Isa. lxvi. 19), to declare the glory of the now reigning King to those who as yet have neither heard His fame nor seen His glory. And so His Kingdom still extends, not by a sudden revelation, as we might expect, and divine power alone, but by the aid of human instruments, with an economy of that which at such a time we might think would cease to be held for miracle, instructive to realize.

Christianity, it must be remembered, has entirely passed away. The true saints in Christendom having been taken up to meet the Lord in the air, those that have refused His grace while the day of grace continued, have been given up to strong delusion, to believe the lie of Antichrist (2 Thess. ii. 8–12). These swell the ranks of the followers of the beast and false prophet; and their doom

2 (41-46): The wicked.

[2] Then shall he say also to those on the left hand, [k]Depart from me, ye cursed, into the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I [l]was ahungered, and ye gave me not to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee ahungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily, I say unto you, [m]Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of these least, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into [n]eternal punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.

k ch. 7. 23.
l vers. 35-40. cf. Am. 6. 6.
m cf. Prov. 14. 31. cf. Zech. 2. 8.
n Mk. 9. 43-48. 2 Thess. 1. 9. cf. Rev. 14. 11. cf. Rev. 19. 20. cf. Ps. 9. 17.

is fixed (Rev. xiv. 9–11). But the mercy of God still finds its objects, those whom divine wisdom and love may count never to have really had the truth before them, so as to have rejected it, and to these, as well as those outside all profession, the everlasting gospel may bring salvation yet. To the Old Testament prophets Christianity is a thing unknown, and in their writings we must not expect to find it. The book of Revelation it is that adds all this to the Old Testament.

Among the nations outside of the Latin powers, it would seem that the same power of delusion will work in gathering after "false prophets," if not after "false Christs." The Lord warns of these in that day, as if there were more than the one special form of Antichrist which we find in the land of Israel. Satan has usually more than one device, and although never really "divided against himself," can work upon men by deceits of diverse kinds. Thus the Grecian king of the last days,—quite distinct as he is from the more conspicuous form of evil,—is spoken of as a king "of bold countenance, and understanding dark sentences" and who "stands up against the Prince of princes." This is usually taken to be Antiochus, or else Mohammed; but both are negatived as the complete fulfilment by the time specified for the fulfilment by the interpreting angel, "for the vision belongeth to the time of the end," "the end of the indignation"—of God against Israel,—"the appointed time of the end" (Dan. viii. 17, 19, *R. V.*). Such expressions a comparison with what we have had in Matthew should make absolutely clear.

How little we realize what "he that restraineth" (2 Thess. ii. 7, *R. V.*) is keeping back, and the flood-tide of evil ready to roll in, when in righteous compensation for the refusal of God's fullest grace, "he is taken out of the way." It is surely the Spirit of God as now working out His purposes as to the Church, that is the restraining power. He alone is competent for it. But the wearing out of divine patience is already manifesting itself for those that have eyes to see. The fearful "end" is not far off.

It is the "cutting off" of the Gentile church, which the apostle at the beginning distinctly threatened (Rom. xi. 21, 22), and thus the absence of Christianity from the world when Old Testament prophecy resumes its now suspended course of fulfilment, which necessarily baffles every interpreter who does not recognize this. For he must in that case necessarily bring in what he looks for, and apply what relates to Israel wholesale to the Christian church. It must be so: for while the Church is the object of God's favor upon earth, the Jews (nationally) are "enemies for your sake" (Rom. xi. 28). Christianity and Judaism cannot go on together; and the "end of the age," the Lord's prophecy here shows fully to be Jewish. For this to come, the Church, as well as the Holy Spirit indwelling her, must be taken out of the way; and "then" only "shall that wicked one be revealed," who for this reason cannot be the papacy, for it will have

DIVISION 7. (Chaps. xxvi.–xxviii.)

The Completed Purchase.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. xxvi. 1–56).

The Presentation of the Offering.

1 (1-16): Prescient and obedient.
1 (1-5): the counsel of God and the counsel of man.

1. [1] AND it came to pass when Jesus had finished all these words, he said to his disciples, Ye [o]know that after two days cometh the passover, and the Son of man is delivered up to be crucified. Then were gathered together the chief priests and the elders of the people to the court of the high priest who was called Caiaphas, and took [p]counsel together that they might seize Jesus by subtilty, and kill him. But they said, Not during the feast, that there be not a [q]tumult among the people.

o Mk. 14. 1. Lk. 22. 1. John 13. 1.

p Jno.11.47. *cf.* Acts 4. 25-28.

q Mk. 14. 2. *cf.*ch.21.26.

then no *Christian* "temple of God" to "sit in" (2 Thess. ii. 4). Any neglect of landmarks so definite as these must work confusion as to the interpretation of prophecy.

Thus the "everlasting gospel" sent out to the nations (Rev. xiv. 6, 7) is applied without question to the missionary labors of the present day, although we may be thankful to know that the devoted men who give themselves to this blessed work, could scarcely find their Christian evangel in the words of the angel there, and most certainly do *not* say, what is so characteristic of the time to which it really refers, "the hour of His *judgment* is come." They say on the contrary, and rightly, with the apostle, "Now is the *accepted* time; behold now is the day of salvation."

But upon all this here is not the place to enlarge further. We pass on to very different themes from this.

DIV. 7.

The last division of the Gospel brings us to what is common to them all, and without which there would have been no gospel for us, the suffering and death of the Lord; His resurrection afterwards showing its divine efficacy. According to His own language in the parables of the thirteenth chapter, we may well speak of it as the story of the "completed purchase." The thought is characteristic of Matthew, where, as already said, the Cross is seen as the trespass-offering, which is the *restitution*-offering in view of the government of God, the wrong done being estimated and a fifth part added to it, that it may be the full amends which He reckons restitution. Thus the reckoning is the cost of atonement, the purchase-price.

In the parables referred to, the finder of the treasure "buys" the field and the merchant "buys" the pearl. The field is the world, and thus even the teachers of "destructive heresies" are "denying the Master that bought them" (2 Peter ii. 1). These are not redeemed, but they *are* purchased. The Church, Christ's "pearl of price," is both purchased and redeemed. We see again how the character of the trespass-offering suits that of the Royal "Master" whom we find in Matthew.

All through this part, spite of the depth of His humiliation, He shines out as truly Master,—One from whom no one takes His life, but He lays it down of Himself, having "authority," as no other has, to lay down His life, and to take it up again (John x. 18), while doing all in perfect subjection (as in Gethsemane we see Him) to His Father's will. It would be doing Him wrong to say of Him, in any other sense, that He was master of Himself. There was no "self," as with the best and holiest beside, to be master to. There was no division in Him, but perfect harmony throughout. Thus all things moved in

2 (6-16): the discernment of love, and the treachery of the disciple.

[2] Now when Jesus was in [r] Bethany, in the house of Simon the [s] leper, there came to him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious [t] ointment, and poured it upon his head, as he sat at table.* But when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, To what purpose is this [u] waste? For this might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. But Jesus, knowing it, said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath done me a good deed: for ye have the poor always with you; but [v] me ye have not always. For in pour-

r Mk. 14. 3. Jno.12.1-8.
s *cf.*Lk.15.2. *cf.*Mk.16.9.
t *cf.* Song 1. 3. *cf.* Ps. 45.8. *cf.*Lk. 7.37, 38.
u Jno. 12. 4. *cf.* Am.8.5.
v Lk. 5. 34, 35. Jno. 16. 28.

*Literally, "as he reclined."

correspondence with Him,—even His enemies working out only that which was His will because the Father's,—stooping to death only to master it and make it serve Him, who could not be holden of it.

SUBD. 1.

We have, first, the Lord delivering Himself up,—not in reality to man, for to man the offering was not, and his part in it was only the consummation of human guilt,—but to God, for the drinking of that cup which only the Father's hand could give Him. Gethsemane is thus the central feature in what is before us here, although all the rest has the cross directly in view, with its consequences whether of trial or of blessing. Now, as we may say, the pledge given at the baptism of John is redeemed; the four days of the lamb being kept up are over; and He keeps the passover with His disciples, celebrating beforehand, in His own assured triumphant way, the fruits of a redemption of which the cost was all His own.

1. [1] He turns from the contemplation of His coming Kingdom to what is immediatedly before Him now, and for which He has been all through preparing and fortifying the hearts of His disciples: "Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is delivered up to be crucified." He sees clearly before Him, and announces the exact time of His suffering, which is not in His enemies' hands, but in His own. And immediately we are told of their coming together, as if His word had given them liberty to act. Yet they act blindly, as blind they are, determining *not* to take Him at the feast, the very time He has marked out as that of His betrayal. He is to suffer at the passover, as the true Passover,—the Substance replacing the shadow; as the resurrection was on the day of the first-fruit sheaf, and the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost.

[2] Next we have, in the strongest and sharpest contrast the love that pours out its precious ointment upon the Lord, and the murmuring of the disciples, prompted, as we are elsewhere told, by one who could sell the Lord Himself for the price of a slave. The last finds its occasion, also, in the first, love rousing and developing its awful opposite in the soul of this unhappy man, whom the defeat of his earthly ambitions and carnal hopes has already set in antagonism. He had begun to compensate himself, as best he could, with the contents of the common bag which carried all the means of subsistence of the little company. That pitiful compensation was coming to an end. Clearer sighted in his unbelief than his companions in their faith, he could understand the intimations, constantly now coming, of his Master's death. The enmity of the leaders of the people was too plain, to need much other prophecy of what was to be. It might not come to that: at the end we find him possessed with the hope that in fact it would not. Still he needed to make his escape from this ruined cause, and carry with him also what he could secure. The price of this ointment might well be coveted by one in such a position, and he breaks out openly with his complaint: "To what purpose is this waste?"

She, too, who has come there with her ointment, has realized as those

ing out this ointment on my body, she did it for my [w]burial. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this [z]gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her. Then one of the twelve who was called [y]Judas Iscariot went unto the chief priests, and said, What will ye give me, and *I* will deliver him up to you? And they settled with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to deliver him up.

w *cf.* Mk. 16. 1. *circ.* ch. 16. 21-23.
x *cf.* 1 Thess. 1, 7, 8. *cf.* Phil. 4. 18.
y Mk. 14. 10, 11. Lk. 22. 3-6. Jno. 13. 3, 27-30.

around Him have not yet, the death that is now drawn so near Him. But the effect is only, if possible, to make Him more absorbingly the object for her heart, and whatever is precious for her goes into death with Him. Her use of the ointment testifies of this, as well as of the fragrance of the death itself, which will abide with us for eternity, and in which we too abide, and shall abide—in the sweet savor of this wonderful obedience.

Even true disciples are caught by the cry of utilitarianism that that which is spent upon Christ alone is "waste," and taken from the poor; and such pleas become for many effectual arguments against what true devotedness to Him demands. Those who would understand and appreciate the laying down of life for His sake, can often not understand the sacrifice of *usefulness* on His account, even though the demand come in the way of duty. They will say, indeed, that duty cannot really demand such sacrifice; but it does very often demand that we leave entirely out of question all consideration of results, and follow simply and without reserve the dictates of the Word. And it is certainly true that the thought of usefulness governs often disastrously even the interpretation of the word of God itself. Results are never really safe as guidance, and this for at least two plain reasons. First, because they must follow the action, and therefore come too late to determine it. And secondly, if it be thought that we can profit by the experience of others, so many things combine to produce them that we are constantly in danger of mistaking the real cause. Of course, if God's word has spoken decisively, even in the least particular, then all pondering of results is mere unfaithfulness.

The Lord openly vindicates the act of the woman. This devotedness shows itself at the right time to refresh His true human heart, afflicted with the treachery of Judas, and now in near prospect of the cross. She had manifested an appreciative love which those around Him were unable even to enter into, and He declares that wherever His gospel shall be preached among men, this deed of her's shall be told for a memorial of her. It may well be, indeed, a corrective of that tendency of utilitarianism to invade the gospel itself, to the great harm and loss of souls; and this is not unapt to be where salvation is made freest, but more a boon to man than a cost to God. Thus Christ is little known, little followed: to have salvation is to have all that the heart craves; yet it is not really satisfied thus, but the world comes in to fill the vacuum.

The dearer Christ is, the dearer souls will be; and His people represent Him for hearts true to Him. But the bland liberality which so often simulates love to the people of God, while it allows His word to be slighted and His rights to be discredited, works to His dishonor and their inevitable loss. To give Christ His due is the only way by which His people can be enriched. Ah, that the savor of the woman's ointment might indeed still fill the house!

But this love and worship bring out the traitor's heart, and the Iscariot, the "trafficker," fearfully earns the surname by which we know him (see p. 119, *notes*). For the price of a slave he agrees with the chief priests His enemies, to deliver up his Lord into their hands, they putting contempt thus upon Him and His betrayer. They know not that they are but moving in the way predicted, and manifesting His sovereignty in their very rejection of it.

2 (17-35): At the passover.
2 (17-19): ordering of the passover.

2. [1] Now on the [z]first [day] of unleavened bread, the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Where wilt thou that we make ready for thee to eat the passover? And he said, Go into the city to such an one, and say unto him, The Teacher saith, My [a]time is near: I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had bidden them; and they made ready the passover.

2 (20-25): the traitor pointed out.

[2] And when the [b]evening was come he sat at table with the twelve disciples. And as they were eating he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall [c]deliver me up. And they were grieved exceedingly, and began to say unto him, each one, [d]Is it I, Lord? And he answered and said, He that [e]dippeth his hand with me into the dish, the same shall deliver me up. The Son of man goeth as it is [f]written of him; but woe to that man by whose means the Son of man is delivered up! [g]Good were it for that man if he had not been born. And Judas, who delivered him up, answered and said, Is it I, [h]Rabbi? He saith unto him, Thou hast said.

[z] Mk. 14.12-16. Lk. 22.7-13.
[a] *cf.* Lk. 9. 51. *cf.* Jno. 8. 20.
[b] Mk. 14. 17-21. Lk. 22. 14-18, 21-23. Jno. 13. 1.
[c] Jno. 6. 70, 71. Jno. 13. 21.
[d] *cf.* Ps. 139. 23, 24 with 1 Cor. 4. 4.
[e] Ps. 41. 9. *cf.* Ps. 55. 12-14. Jno. 13. 18, 26.
[f] Mk. 9. 12. Lk. 24. 44-46.
[g] Jno. 17. 12. Acts 1. 25.
[h] *ctr.* ver. 22; *cf.* ver. 49; *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 3.

2. [1] We now come to the last passover, the story of which is by all the synoptists very briefly told. It is John alone who, while he scarcely mentions the passover itself, gives the full out-pouring of Christ's heart in connection with it. The ordering of the paschal supper is more briefly given in Matthew than in Mark or Luke, the directions as to finding the man at whose house it is to be prepared being omitted. But it is seen, all through, how fully He is Master of all circumstances, and the disciples, it is evident, are intended to feel this. If He be going down the steep decline to Calvary, it is of His own free choice, and He is still the King who does so. "My time is at hand," seems certainly spoken for the ear of a disciple; and it is natural that to such the Lord should give the privilege of entertaining Him at a time like this. That it is already the first day of unleavened bread is decisive that He did not anticipate the appointed time for the passover, as many have thought. The three synoptists unite in this specification of time, Mark and Luke adding that it was the day when they killed the passover. The statements of John alone are thought to be in contradiction to this, but have been often shown to be not really so; nor is this the place in which to consider them.

[2] The traitor is next pointed out, but by gradual approach, as if to alarm and arouse the conscience to repentance before the guilt was fixed. "One of you shall deliver Me up." Then "he that dippeth his hand with Me in the dish." Slowest of all to respond is Judas with his question, asked with fatal certainty of what would be the answer, yet with the appearance of the same innocence as the rest. But notice, he does not, as they, address Christ as his "Lord." That is ended for him: it is "*Rabbi*, is it I?" "After the sop," says John, "Satan entered into him;" and Satan could not say, "Lord." If there were any struggle in his soul, it is ended now; and in the face of the awful "woe" that he has heard from lips that lie not, he goes away to do determinately what would stamp him as the "son of perdition" through all eternity. Such is the hardening power of sin.

[3] This separation of Judas from the rest takes place before the institution of the memorial feast which follows here; for John tells us that "Judas, having received the sop," went immediately out. Luke inverts the order of this and the last section; but Luke's order is often different from that of time. The

[3] (26-29): the memorial.

[3] And as they were eating, Jesus [e]took bread, and blessed, and brake [it], and, as he gave it to the disciples, said, Take, eat; this is my [f]body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it: for this is my *blood of the [new] * covenant, which is shed for many, for the remission of

*Some omit "new."

[e] Mk. 14.22-25. Lk.22.19,20.
[f] 1 Cor.11.23-29. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 24.
[g] 1 Cor. 10. 16. *cf.* Heb.13. 20. *cf.*1Jno.1.7.

point, however, is not of doctrinal importance: for few would advocate a known traitor being admitted to the table of the Lord; and if it were to be permitted, no discipline could be maintained at all. If Judas were present, he was yet unknown as such to the disciples; and while the Lord knows all the secrets of the heart, His knowledge cannot, it is plain, be guidance for us, who do not possess it. The question is, therefore, as already said, of no practical importance: the principles involved are settled conclusively elsewhere.

There are others, as we know, much more widely and keenly debated, though one cannot say really more entitled to be heard. The Romanist contention that the bread and wine, after the Lord's blessing, were pronounced by Him to be literally His body and blood, involves a grossness of conception which He has Himself rebuked elsewhere (John vi. 60-63). It makes Him while alive in the body, take and break His body in His hands. It multiplies the body of Christ, at the will of man, upon myriads of altars, day by day. It makes God work as constant miracles to *conceal* those which are in this way taking place; so that to the senses that should still be bread and wine, which has wholly changed its character. It makes the flesh to profit spiritually, while the Lord has Himself denied it. And all this is done to escape a difficulty which never existed, and to make us treat one of the commonest forms of figurative speech, which we are every day using, as if it were a manifest perversion to take it as they themselves are doing without thought of wrong. "The rock was Christ," needed no transubstantiation to make good. Nay, even, "the cup is the new covenant in My blood," cannot be understood by them but as a figure. But "this is My body," must be maintained, in the face of whatever objection from nature, from spirit, from the connection here, from Scripture elsewhere, in the grossest literality!

The doctrine of consubstantiation escapes some of these incongruities, no doubt, but it is as open to some of these charges as is the Romish one itself. It admits that the bread is bread, and the wine wine; but it maintains that the "flesh profiteth" in the way Christ denies; and the actual production, multiplication and eating of the body of Christ.

In opposition to both these is the Calvinistic or "Reformed" view, in which the reception is not by the mouth, but by faith, through the power of the Spirit; and not of the substance of His body and blood, but of the sacrificial virtue or efficacy of His work alone.

Zwingle, on the other hand, maintained that the bread and wine were simply significant memorials; but this is considered by the greater number of the Reformed "too low" a view. Yet in refusing the thought of any actual physical reception of Christ in the Supper, and limiting this reception to that of the virtue of His sacrificial work, and in declaring that it is by faith we feed upon Him, and *we can do the same thing apart from the Supper altogether*, they come much nearer to Zwingle's view than they seem to be aware: for if, wherever there is faith, Christ is received and fed upon, and in the Supper not apart from faith, what does this add, except a significant memorial of what faith receives?

It is, however, in Luke and in Corinthians, and not in either of the first two Gospels, that its memorial character is explicitly affirmed; and this is of the most decisive importance for the interpretation. "Do this," the Lord says:

sins. But I tell you, I will not drink any more of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it 'new with you in my Father's Kingdom.

l cf. ch. 13. 43. *cf.* Num. 6. 13-21. *cf.* Ps. 4. 7.

for what?—"for calling me to mind" (Luke xxii. 19). Here the precise object of the bread and cup is stated; and it is the only object: no other ever is; any other than this is purely an addition to the word of Christ.

Now a remembrance is of what is *not* present, never of what is. Moreover it is of something in the past, not in *time* present. The apostle's comment upon it is as plain as can be: "for as often as ye eat this bread and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's *death*, till He come" (1 Cor. xi. 26, *R. V*). Clearly the Lord's *death* is not a present thing, but past: "death has no more dominion over Him." A dead Lord it is we *remember*, but a living Lord with whom we have now to do.

"Body" and "blood": why, of course, this is death. Would they be mentioned apart, if it were not so? "My body which is given for you" makes us naturally think of a dead not a living body; but "body and blood" separate: of what else *can* we think? We have no reason at all for attributing "blood" to the Lord in resurrection. Blood is the sign of change and the means of renewal. It implies a life sustained by food and drink,—*capable* of dying, though not necessarily subject to death. After His resurrection we hear Him speak of His "flesh and bones," not "flesh and *blood*" (Luke xxiv. 39). But, apart from this, the blood spoken of here is the "blood shed for many," the blood of sacrifice: every thing assures us that we have before us here, not Christ as He is at all, but as He *was:* the bread and the cup are just significant memorials,—nothing else. The language used prohibits all possible thought of the Lord's glorified humanity, and cuts away all basis for any view of an actual reception of Christ's body and blood; for in that case it must be a dead Christ that we receive, and there *is* no dead Christ.

Moreover, this "Remember Me" of our Lord and Master seems quite to overtop all thoughts of what we *receive* in the bread and wine. No doubt we can never have Christ really before us without finding blessing in it; and no doubt the picture given is one of how Christ as the Bread of Life sustains the spiritual strength of His believing people. But what He desires in it is our heart's remembrance, and the highest and sweetest view that we can have of it is surely that which brings before us, and qualifies us best to satisfy, this desire of His.

"Take, eat: this is My body."

"Drink ye all of it: for this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins."

Faith it is, of course, that enables us to do what is spoken of here. Eating and drinking are terms which imply the fullest appropriation of that which becomes thus part of our very selves. We enter into the sweetness and blessedness of a love so free, so costly, stooping so low, so triumphant in this humiliation. Out of death has come forth life; we enter into communion with death. Evil has been explored to its depths, and there is yet no dimming of the glory of God; nay, never was He so glorious.

Therefore this blood is that of a new covenant, in which God alone speaks, and as He will. He is free from all hindrance, and thus His whole heart comes out, and the result is that it is grace to the full that appears, and nothing but grace (Jer. xxxi. 31–34). Unlike the covenant that He had made with the people when He brought them out of the land of Egypt, this covenant thus abides. Human instability does not affect it, and sin is cancelled: "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin."

But now He is to be separate from His people's joy on earth, looking for participation with them in His Father's Kingdom. Then He will drink the wine with them in a new manner, no more a Nazarite stranger from that as-

4 (30-35): tested and failing.

4 And, when they had sung a [m]hymn, they went out unto the mount of Olives. Then saith Jesus unto them, [n]All ye shall be offended because of me, this night: for it is written, I will [o]smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad; but after I am risen, I will go before you into [p]Galilee. But Peter answered and said unto him, If [q]all shall be offended in thee, yet will I never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the [r]cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter saith unto him, Even if I must die with thee, yet will I in no wise deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

3 (36-46): Gethsemane (the "oil-press"): the realization of the cup.

3. Then [s]cometh Jesus with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he saith unto his disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be [t]oppressed with grief and desolate. Then saith he unto them, My soul is plunged in* sorrow,—unto death:

m Mk.14.26. cf. Jno. 14. 31.
n Mk. 14.27.
o Zech. 13.7.
p ch.28.7,10, 16. Mk. 14. 28. Mk. 16. 7.
q Mk.14.29-31. Lk. 22. 31-34. Jno. 13. 36-38.
r cf. Mk. 13. 35-37.
s Mk. 14.32-42. Lk. 22. 39-46. Jno. 18. 1.
t cf. Jno. 12. 27. cf. Is. 53. 3.

*περίλυπος, "circled with grief."

sociation with His own, for which in heaven itself He waits, as the full cup of blessing.

4 They sing a hymn—in Israel it was usually the four psalms called the great Hallel (Ps. cxv.-cxviii.),—and go out together to the Mount of Olives. And He warns them once more of what is before Him and them. They will all be offended because of Him and scattered; for the prophet had foretold the smiting of the Shepherd, and the consequent dispersion of the sheep (Zech. xiii. 7). But after His resurrection He would go before them into Galilee. In fact the Gospel closes with His meeting them there, passing over most of what took place at Jerusalem, for in Galilee it is that He announces to them the Kingdom as in His hand, and this is the theme of Matthew, as we well know. Every Gospel, as every book of Scripture, keeps to its own portion of the one harmonious revelation of God to which it belongs.

Peter is the one who is to illustrate most fully the "offence of the cross" among those pre-eminently named as Christ's disciples. How perfectly it is shown that divine grace alone can be the hope of any. It is characteristic of him who fails in this signal manner that he should be the one most loudly to maintain that for himself, at any rate, such failure was impossible. And this he repeats, still more emphatically, in spite of the Lord's more precise and positive assurance. He that thinketh he standeth must take heed lest he fall, not merely because of the general liability, but as being then most of all liable. Our own strength is just our weakness, as our weakness realized will be our way to strength—a strength not our own. Every one of the Gospels enforces this most solemn lesson. Matthew and Mark assure us of the participation of the other disciples in Peter's perilous self-confidence. He who would plead exemption must condemn himself by this very pleading.

3. In approaching the mysterious suffering in Gethsemane we are warned by every circumstance—even the scantness of the pregnant words—of the need of reverent caution. Eight of the eleven disciples are left behind, and with Peter, James, and John He goes on further. Presently He bids these also, "Tarry ye here, and watch with Me," but Himself still goes on to what they cannot share with Him. Only a little further, and then He falls upon His face in that deep distress of which He has spoken to the three, plunged in sorrow, as unto death,—"sore amazed," says Mark—and desolate. So He prays,—one prayer which with Him, we may say confidently, never had its like,—"My

tarry ye here and watch with me. And going forward a little, he fell upon his face, praying and saying, My Father, if it be possible, let this [u]cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as [v]thou wilt. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them [w]sleeping, and saith unto Peter, So ye were not able to watch with me one hour! [x]watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the [y]spirit indeed is willing, but the

cf. Rom. 13. 11, 12; *cf.* Eph. 6. 18. *y cf.* Rom. 7. 15, etc; *cf.* Gal. 5. 17.

u cf. Gen. 22. 7, 8. *cf.* Heb. 5. 7. *v cf.* ch. 6. 10. *cf.* Jno. 5. 30. *cf.* Jno. 6. 38–40. *cf.* Heb. 10. 7–10. *w cf.* Lk. 9. 32. *x* Mk. 13. 33.

Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

He rises, comes back to His disciples whom He finds not watching but asleep; wakes them with a reproof and yet a tender apology for their weakness; goes back to say what He has said before, but with less pleading, "My Father, if this cannot pass except I drink it, Thy will be done."

He comes again to His disciples, to find them again asleep, leaves them once more, to pray the same words.

Then it is over. He comes back to them now to bid them sleep on and take their rest. There is a conflict passed, which Luke emphasizes in two particulars which he alone relates: the bloody sweat and the visit of an angel to strengthen Him,—two things which show the exceeding pressure of the agony upon Him physically, but add nothing to the explanation of its nature. What was the "cup" from which He shrank? which, plainly, He was not yet drinking, but which was before Him; as to which there was this prayer that could not be answered; something from which it was perfection in Him that shrank, because in Him all ever was perfect?

It seems certain that it was the cross, in some aspect of it, that cross to which He was going on, and which He had again and again announced to His disciples, and the necessity of it. "The Son of man *must* be lifted up," He had declared long before to Nicodemus, and again to the multitude (John xii. 32, 33): by this "signifying what death He should die." This, so announced by Himself, it does not seem possible that He should now pray might be averted.

There is, however, a passage in Hebrews which at first sight might seem to put it in this way, as it most certainly seems to refer to this very time, when the Lord "in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications unto Him that was able to save Him from death," "was heard for His godly fear" (v. 7). This surely refers to Gethsemane, in part at least: yet it does not speak of an unheard prayer, but of a heard one. Moreover, as He was not saved *from* death, what, both in the Revised, and in the older Version, has been put into the margin, should be in the text—"to Him that was able to save Him *out of* death," not from it. *Out of it* He was saved, was perfected as Captain (or "Leader" or "Originator") of salvation by the obedience wrought in suffering, and so is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.

Resurrection was the divine answer, then, to a prayer that *was* heard; but in the twenty-second psalm, which also emphasizes a prayer that was heard, we have a prayer of the same blessed Person, as to which He says, "I cry in the day-time and Thou hearest *not;* and in the night-season, and am not silent." Have we not here the true Gethsemane prayer for which we are seeking? could there be more than one such prayer of the Lord Jesus?

The subject of the psalm also is the cross, and that in its sin-offering aspect. The cry that characterizes it is the cry that in Matthew the Lord takes up and uses as His own—the awful cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" a cry which is answered in the psalm by Him who utters it (*See Notes on the psalm*). And here, surely, is that from which the Lord must needs

flesh is weak. Going away again the second time, he prayed saying, My Father, if this cannot pass, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them asleep again; for their eyes were heavy. And leaving them, he went away again and prayed the third time, saying the same thing. Then cometh he to the disciples, and saith unto them, [z]Sleep on now, and take your rest; behold, the hour is nigh, and the Son of man is delivered into the hands of sinners. Arise, let us be going: behold, he is nigh, who delivereth me up.

4 (47-56): The delivering up.
1 (47-50): Identification.

4. [1] And, while he was yet speaking, behold, [a]Judas, one

[z] *cf.* Ps. 69. 20.
[a] Mk.14.43-45. Lk. 22. 47, 48. Jno.18.2-9.

shrink because of His very perfection. Such a cup He might take as the Father's will for Him, that God who is holy might dwell among the praises of His redeemed people, but not otherwise. Here then is the awful "cup" to which He is looking forward in Gethsemane, the subject of the one only prayer as to which it could be said of Him who "heard Him *always*," "Thou hearest not."

To realize the subject of the prayer is not to solve the mystery of it. It certainly gives us to see how true, while perfect, the humanity of the Lord Jesus was. In the seventh century, the words "Not My will, but Thine be done" were used against the Monothelites to prove the distinctness of the human from the divine will in Christ. But while we recognize their competency for such purpose, it is for us to acquiesce in the Lord's own assurance that "No one knoweth the Son but the Father," and to refrain from seeking to penetrate beyond what is ours to know. The truth of His humanity, and its personality (without which it would not have been true) we may thank God for showing us in so clear a manner; and we must hold it fast as essential to the proper Christian faith. Analysis of His inscrutable nature we should not venture upon.

Gethsemane, the "oil-press," answers to its name. We find in it, not the *wine*-press, the suffering that wrought atonement, not the bearing of sin itself, but the pressure upon Him of that supreme sorrow, as now He touched the very border of it. We are allowed to see the agony of it to Him, who nevertheless takes the cup in its full bitterness, humbling Himself and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. From the "oil-press" nothing flows but that which is of the Spirit: to God, uncompromising obedience; to man, self-sacrificing devotion to meet every need. We can understand how in the oil here as in the dove before, the types of Christ and of the Spirit should be one; and even so it is that the Spirit rests upon Him in absolute congenial delight. The meat-offering is first mingled with oil and then anointed with oil.

Mere human incompetence for that hour is seen in the disciples. Oppressed with it, they are found asleep—stupefied. As on the mount of glory, so in the valley of the shadow of death. They neither respond to His tender request that they should watch with Him, nor realize their own need, that they enter not into temptation. Even this incompetence might have been warning to them but was not, and they have to prove by sadder experience what they have not learned in a happier way.

And yet, indeed, they may now sleep on and take their rest. The work of deliverance is in hands that cannot fail in what they undertake, although there is now to be laid a deeper foundation than for the earth of old, and the "new creation" to be built upon it is to transcend in every measure the dimensions of the old.

4. [1] The traitor comes now, with the armed men he has procured,—a great multitude with swords and clubs from the chief priests and elders. "The swords indicate that the Roman cohort (John xviii. 3) was the centre of this

of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and clubs from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now he that delivered him up had given them a sign, saying, Whom I shall kiss, the same is he; hold him fast. And straightway, coming to Jesus he said, Hail, Rabbi, and [b]kissed him affectionately. But Jesus said unto him, Friend, for what art thou here? Then they came and laid hands on Jesus, and held him fast.

[b] *cf.* 2 Sam. 20. 9. *cf.* ch. 7.21.

2 (51–54): resistance and submission.

[2] And behold, one of those with Jesus stretched out his hand, and [c]drew his sword, and smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. Then saith Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into its place, for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Or thinkest thou that I cannot call upon my Father, and he shall now place on my side more than [d]twelve legions of angels? How then would the [e]scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?

[c] Mk. 14.46, 47. Lk. 22. 49–51. Jno. 18. 10, 11.
[d] *cf.* 2 Ki. 6. 17. *cf.* Lk. 2.13, 14.
[e] ver. 24. *cf.* Jno. 19. 28. *cf.* Acts 13. 29.

multitude; while the clubs and so forth indicate that the Jewish temple watch, and other miscellaneous fanatics, were there also" (*Lange*). Jew and Gentile, men of different nationality and diverse classes, were ready to take part, and did, in the world's crowning sin.

The treachery of Judas would fain still conceal itsely in the kiss of identification, which is given emphatically, as if to assure the One he is betraying that he is not part of the multitude that follow him. The Lord penetrates this disguise, not with a rebuke but with a question: "Friend, wherefore art thou here?" to which He adds, as Luke tells us, the more direct one, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" Divine love has not, even yet, ceased its expostulation,—has not closed the door against his return even yet.

[2] They take Him unresisting. But Peter is again to illustrate how far even a loyal heart may be from the mind of Christ. In speaking of the hostile attitude of the world in which He is leaving them, the Lord had enjoined one that had no sword to sell even his garment and buy one (Luke xxii. 36). Peter, taking this literally, as we may suppose, no sooner finds his beloved Master thus assailed than his weapon is out, and he smites a servant of the high priest and cuts off his ear. But he has belittled and misrepresented Him whom he would serve, who must be fallen low indeed to need His disciple's sword to extricate Him from such hands as these. If He yield, it is to God, not man, He yields, —to take the cup from the Father's hand: and what should the sword do here? Were not heaven's legions dependent on His will? and would not the Father, if He had willed it, give Him, not twelve frail disciples, but more than twelve legions of angels?

But He had proclaimed also as the law of His Kingdom that they "resist not evil." The men in authority upon earth—to whom God for the need of men had given authority—to these it belonged to do this. If they failed, God was still upon the throne and could not fail. But for His people, His own path of quiet submission was ordained,—submission not to man, but to God. Here to resist would be to resist Him.

This was the path which for Christ Himself alone could give Him the throne for which He came, and His enemies were but unwittingly preparing to fulfil the prophetic voices which from the beginning had proclaimed this as the way of the divine counsels for Him. For the "Captain of salvation" must be "perfected through sufferings." The ram of sacrifice is taken by its horns (Gen. xxii. 13); the need of man thus laying hold, through the love that was His nature, of the power that dwelt in Him.

[3] (55, 56): fulfilment.

[3] At that hour Jesus said unto the multitudes, Did ye [f] come out as against a robber with swords and clubs to take me? I sat daily teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold upon me. But all this is come to pass that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.

[f] Mk. 14.48, 49. Lk. 22. 52, 53.

[4] (56): the flight.

[4] Then the disciples all [g] forsook him and fled.

[g] Mk. 14.50. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 16.

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. xxvi. 57–xxvii. 54.)

The Cross.

1 (xxvi. 57–75): The true ground: His divine claim.

[1] (57–68): the claim asserted.

1. [1] NOW they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to [h] Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were gathered together. And [i] Peter followed him afar off unto the court of the high priest, and entering in, sat with the officers to see the end.

[h] Mk. 14.53. Lk. 22. 54. *cf.* Jno. 18. 12–14.

[i] Mk. 14. 54. Jno. 18. 15, 16.

Now the chief priests and all the council sought [j] false witness against Jesus, to put him to death. And they found none, though many false witnesses came. But at

[j] Mk. 14.55–60. *cf.* Ps. 35. 11.

[3] Of this fulfilment of the prophets He reminds the multitudes that had come to seize Him, as He had just reminded the disciple that would have fought for Him. Why had they not taken Him, while daily in the temple He had been teaching publicly amongst them? They had feared the people, as we know; and Judas's treachery alone had given them what they deemed their opportunity. But neither power nor guile could have succeeded against Him, had it not been for that will of God which Scripture witnessed to; which indeed bound them so little, but Him so absolutely; yet they too were fulfilling it.

[4] Now the sheep of the flock are scattered, as the prophet had borne witness: protected in their flight, as John shows us, by their smitten Shepherd. In fact, they could not follow Him now, as He had said to Peter. There could not be permitted even any obscuring of the truth of the solitary, unique place in which He was now to stand, not *with* but *for* His people. Even though for Peter it might be entirely different in reality from the cross of his Lord, yet who could think of Peter on the cross beside his Lord? No, He might be "numbered with the transgressors" but not with His disciples. He was alone, therefore, now, and to be alone; until, His work perfectly achieved, He should come forth in the morning of resurrection, with the night for ever past.

SUBD. 2.

The Lord of glory is now in the hands of men, and we are to see what is in their hearts to do with Him. The perfect and ordained trial of man it is, this opportunity of theirs, and in result the world is manifest in all its dreadful alienation from God. The Cross gives character to all that is before us now; men are acting, and God too is acting in view of it, although the special, anticipated cup is not taken till the Cross is actually reached, and even then is confined to the three hours of intensest suffering marked off by the preternatural darkness from all the rest. Those will lose much of what God would teach us as to the mystery of atoning suffering who do not see the distinct meaning here. All the ground is holy, all the suffering necessary; but the more on this account, not less, must be the meaning of such differences as we find here.

1. Christ is now before men's judgment-seats, the ecclesiastical, as we call it, and the civil; before the high priest and the governor; the Jew and the Gentile. The charge before each is different: in the one case, blasphemy; in the other, rebellion. The last was to the Jew every way a false charge, made to serve a purpose, and by the Roman so fully seen through that it was but like

last came two false witnesses and said, This man said, I am able to [k]destroy the temple of God, and in three days to build it. And the high priest arose and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what do these witness against thee? But Jesus was silent. And the high priest said unto him, I [l]adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us if thou be the Christ, the son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said. Moreover I say unto thee that from henceforth ye shall see the Son of man [m]sitting upon the right hand of power and [n]coming on the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy: what need have we more of witnesses? See now, ye

k ch. 27. 40. *cf.* Jno. 2. 19–22.

l Mk. 14. 61–64. Lk. 22. 69–71.

m Ps. 110. 1. Mk. 16. 19. *cf.* Acts 7. 55, 56.

n *cf.* ch. 24. 30. Rev. 1. 7. Dan. 7. 13, 14.

mocking him to his face to prefer it. The whole land was soon to go up in flames in opposition to the hated tyranny of the Gentile; and Pilate had already tasted the temper of these men now so careful to maintain the authority of Cæsar. Nay, they were using him in all this for their own purposes, as he well knew, and making him the instrument of their malice. For an upright man the escape for him was easy; but being the man he was, it was impossible.

The first charge was the real one, though here too they might seek false witness to establish it. But the essential provocation for them was in this, what He had already told them to their faces. They were saying, "This is the Heir: come, let us kill Him and seize on His inheritance." "They have seen," He declares, "and hated both Me and My Father."

Certainly, not even to themselves, would they have admitted this. Not only was there a multitude that blindly followed them, but the leaders too were in the deepest sense "blind" also, as again He had told them. There is, in the awful mystery of our fallen nature, a blindness which is all the more intense because intentional,—an ignorance which is the fruit of knowledge. And such was the misery of these unhappy men, with whom the very light in them was darkness, knowing not because they would not know, and condemned therefore even because they did not.

But this was the ground, then, of His accusation, as they declared themselves, "by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God" (John xix. 7). This was the issue, though they never faced it, "*Was* He the Son of God?" Confessedly even, *that* they never meant to face. Scripture had silenced them. David in Spirit had certainly called his Son his Lord. Why this? They had no answer, and they would not seek one.

[1] He on His part stood by this issue—would not accept another—would not take the Kingdom upon any other ground. "Thou art the Son of God" must in the lips of a disciple be the basis of the other affirmation, "Thou art the King of Israel." False witness, such as they sought, they did not need to condemn Him, nor would He plead one way or the other against it. Let them put the real question, He will answer under oath, and does. "Tell us if Thou be the Christ the Son of God." And He answers, "Thou hast said. Moreover I say unto thee that from henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

There is His counter-challenge. He, yet in their hands, patiently subject to all the indignities they can heap upon Him,—He is just at the end—at the end for ever, of all this humiliation. "From henceforth" all will be changed for Him and for them. And He summons forth Daniel again to link that manhood of His, which they deemed a sufficient disproof of His highest claim, with those prophetic scriptures to which, through all that was in contradiction to it, the heart of the nation clung. Let them give heed to the voices, then, which out of the past spoke with new energy in the living present. Affirmed

have heard the [o]blasphemy; what think ye? They answered and said, He is worthy * of [p]death. Then did they [q]spit in his face, and buffeted him, and some [r]struck him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophesy unto us, O Christ: who is he that smote thee?

2 (69–75): the denial.

2 Now Peter [s]sat without in the court, and a maiden came unto him and said, Thou also wast with Jesus the Galilean. But he [t]denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And when he had gone out into the entrance, another saw him, and said unto those that were there, This man also was with Jesus the Nazarean. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. But after a little while, they that stood by came and said unto Peter, Of a truth thou also art of them, for even thy [u]speech discovereth thee. Then began he to [v]curse and to swear, I know not the man. And immediately [the] [w]cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus that he had spoken, Before [the] cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And going out, he [x]wept bitterly.

2 (xxvii. 1–26): The deceptive charge, and the opposing witnesses.

1 (1, 2): before the governor.

2. [1] Now, when morning had come, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus,

o *cf.* Jno. 10. 31–36.
p *cf.* Lev. 24. 16. *cf.* Jno. 19. 7. *cf.* Jno. 5. 18.
q Mk. 14. 65. Lk. 22. 63–65. Jno. 18. 22, 23. Is. 50. 6. Is. 52. 14.
r *cf.* Jno. 19. 3. *cf.* Mi. 5. 1.
s Mk. 14. 66–72. Lk. 22. 55–62. Jno. 18. 15–18, 25–27.
t *cf.* ver. 35. *cf.* Phil. 3. 3. *cf.* Acts 3. 14.
u *cf.* Acts 2. 7.
v *etc.*, ch. 16. 16, 17.
w ver. 34.
x *etc.*, ch. 27. 3–5. *cf.* 2 Sam. 12. 13. *cf.* 2 Cor. 7. 9–11.

* ἔνοχος, legally guilty.

as such, with all the glory of His words and works to give authority to His witness, Christ the Son of God was there.

But it avails only for His condemnation, and to set loose the fury of wild passion stirred by the breath of satanic enmity: for this was their hour and the power of darkness (Luke xxii. 53). Frenzied with the majesty of that calm Presence in which they stand, they break out in insult and defiance of all His claim. Rending his clothes as in horror, the high-priest declares the trial over; He has blasphemed, He has condemned Himself. To which they all agree, that He is worthy of death. Then the pitiful form of justice being ended, the spirit beneath is free to manifest itself, and all the depths of men's hearts are poured out.

[2] The true witness of the Master is followed by the denial of the disciple,—the foremost of them all, and under his Master's eye. Three times over and even with noisy profanity, he denies companionship with or knowledge of Him; until it would seem, this reckless overflow of a heart too like their own, assures them, more than his denial, that indeed he cannot be a follower of "Jesus the Nazarene." Only the Eye that Peter discerns presently upon him can find still under all this the partaker of the old intimacy, the man to whom the Eternal Father had revealed His Son. Alas for this other self we carry with us, and which would disown the Christ that we think we could die for! Matthew does not indeed record the look of Jesus upon His fallen disciple, but how, when immediately the cock crew, he remembered the words of prophetic warning that had been addressed to him, but which had been surely part of the provision made for him to sustain the faith which Christ had prayed in that critical moment might not fail, even though it might seem to have already failed. With an awful spasm of conviction, out he went into the night, a crushed and broken man.

Night! but already the darkness was not unrelieved. That which had brought it into his soul was that which heralded the coming day.

2. The charge made before the high-priest was, as already said, the real one,

to put him to death. And having bound him, they led him away, and [y]delivered him to Pilate the governor.

2 (3-5): the witness of the traitor.

[2] Then Judas, who had delivered him up, when he saw that he was condemned, was taken with [z]remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. But they said, What is

y Mk. 15. 1. Lk. 23. 1. Jno. 18. 28. *cf.* Gen. 37. 28, 36.

z *ctr.* ch. 26. 75.

and was the truth. He did affirm Himself to be what they charged Him with affirming, and was condemned for His own true witness. The charge before the governor was on the contrary a fictitious charge, with just so much truth in it only as would make it serve their purpose. Pilate hears it, hears His own declaration that He is a King, nay, that He is King of the Jews, and having heard and examined, declares Him innocent, and does so to the end. The Kingdom that He claimed was not to be established by human power, nor might they draw sword on His behalf. He had exhorted them to give to Cæsar what was Cæsar's, and declared that they that took the sword should perish by the sword. Cæsar had nothing to fear, therefore, except it were possibly from a quarter where to resist would be hopeless.

But the Jews had not the power of inflicting a penalty of death, and had need, therefore, of the Roman governor for this purpose, and were, no doubt, full of grim satisfaction at the thought of having him in their hands, towards whom they had plenty of ground for ill-feeling, and little enough for good will. Crucifixion was not a Jewish penalty: they might hang the dead upon a tree, but not the living. The Lord, the Yielder up of His own life, had declared that He was to be delivered to the Gentiles to be crucified.

There was a spiritual reason governing all here. For the curse of the law was to be upon Him, and the public, open sign of the curse was hanging on a tree (Deut. xxi. 23); but the infliction of this as a Jewish penalty would have carried this beyond death, and altered its significance. In the hands of the Gentiles alone would crucifixion answer to its end. But this we must look at further in a little while.

In connection with this charge before the governor it is that we see God bringing forward His witnesses to the spotlessness of His beloved Son. Matthew especially dwells upon this, because Matthew gives us all through the governmental side of things, and even the aspect of the Lord's sacrificial work (the trespass-offering) is governmental.* The witness of Pilate is given more fully here than elsewhere; that of Judas, and that of the dream of Pilate's wife, are only in this Gospel. Correspondingly we have the purchase of Aceldama with the money cast back to them by Judas, which is surely significant. The witness of the acceptance of His work we shall look at in its place. The four testimonies previously mentioned are all found in the present section. They are the evidence in rebuttal of the charge brought against Him.

[1] Israel deliver up their King, then, to the Gentiles. It is done formally, by the heads of the nation, whom we hear little later refusing positively any king but Cæsar, as the result of counsel taken to put Jesus to death. The evangelist breaks off at once to follow the course of Judas to the end.

[2] A hope seems to have remained or freshly risen in the heart of Christ's betrayer that, after all, He might not be condemned. Perhaps the words here do not convey as much as that, but rather the horror produced by the actual thing when now accomplished, never to be undone. What tales have we of deeds deliberately done, which when done have assumed at once a new shape of terror and dismay, as if never contemplated before. With what different eyes might the traitor have seen the actual condemnation of his Lord and Master from those with which he had looked on to it, however certain. Clearly it is the awful agony of remorse that awakes now in Judas, and not repent-

* See Introduction pp. 27, 28, and the notes on the offerings, vol. I, pp. 296-300.

that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the silver pieces into the temple * and departed, and went away and [a] hanged himself.

3 (6-10); what they acquired.

3 And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful to put them into the [b] Corban, since it is the price of blood. But they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury [c] strangers in. Therefore that field is called the field of blood, unto this day. Then was [d] fulfilled that which was spoken through [e] Jeremias † the prophet, saying, And I took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price was set, on whom they of the sons of Israel had set a price, and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

a 2 Sam. 17. 23. *cf.* 1 Sam. 31 4. *ctr.* Acts 16. 27-34.
b *cf.* Jno. 18. 28. *cf.* ch. 23. 24.
c *cf.* Gen. 4. 12.
d Zech. 11. 12, 13.
e *cf.* Jer. 18. 2, etc. *cf.* Jer. 19. 1, etc.

* Ναός, the temple proper, not the courts.

† So, practically, all the MSS. The quotation, however, is from Zechariah. The simplest conjecture is that the name should be omitted; but other explanations have been given.

ance. He cannot keep the money he has gained, to which even for the chief priests the blood-stain indelibly attaches. Nay, he shrieks out even in their ears the confession of his sin in having betrayed the innocent blood. But there it ends: "innocent blood;" not holy or righteous, still less "the Holy and the Righteous One": the glory of the Son of God has no part in it—neither heals nor even smites him. There is no turning to Him with whom he had companied so long,—no sense of any one to whom he *can* turn. There is, in short, no faith, and therefore no repentance. "He cast the silver pieces into the temple"—practically, the sanctuary, the part proper to the priests alone,—"and departed and went away and hanged himself." In this we see again the opposite of faith. How many times must he have seen the miraculous deeds which testified that "the Son of man had power on earth to forgive sins"! but he seems to remember nothing of all this, or else cannot believe in the divine mercy toward himself; and thus he plunges headlong into irrecoverable ruin.

3 So the money is on the hands of those who scruple to defile the treasury with it, though as to their souls they have no such care. But the price of blood they cannot put into the "Corban," among the offerings to Jehovah, and so they take counsel, and buy with it the potter's field—a special place known as that—"to bury strangers in." "The expression," says Lange, "does not refer to Jews from other countries (as Meyer supposes), who in a religious point of view were not strangers; nor to professing heathens, who were left to themselves; but to Gentile proselytes (of the gate), to whom a certain regard was due, while priestly exclusiveness would not allow them to rest in properly consecrated graves. Thus even in this act of cheap charity and pious provision on the part of a Sanhedrin which slew the Lord of glory, Phariseeism remained true to itself. The price of blood and the field of blood are declared quite suited for 'strangers.'"

But this is on man's side only; on God's there was surely a witness of what Israel had really acquired for themselves with this fatal blood-money. Had they not in fact purchased for themselves in every land into which they were to be cast "a burial-place for strangers"? Strangers *they* have indeed been ever since, and their graves how often in a "field of blood:"—a "potter's field" too, as the quotation here declares; not simply that which lay on the slope of the valley of Hinnom, but the field of the Great Potter of Jer. xviii., in which "the word of Jehovah came to me," says the prophet, "saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you, as this potter? saith Jehovah. Behold, as the clay in the potter's hand, so are ye in My hand, O house of Israel."

e (11-23): test for the people,—Barabbas or Jesus?

e But Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor f questioned him, saying, Art thou the king of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, g Thou sayest it. And when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he h answered nothing. Then saith Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? But he answered him not so much as one word; so that the governor marvelled greatly.

f Mk. 15. 2-5. Lk. 23. 3.

g *cf.* Jno. 18. 33-37. 1 Tim. 6. 13.

h ch. 26. 63. *cf.* Jno. 19. 9. *cf.* Is. 53. 7.

Now at the feast the governor was i accustomed to release unto the multitude one prisoner, whom they would. And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas. When therefore they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you, Barabbas, or Jesus, who is called Christ? for he knew that for j envy they had delivered him up. And, as he was sitting on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have nothing to do with that just man; for I have suffered many things to-day in a k dream because of him. But the chief priests and the

i Mk. 15. 6-15. Lk. 23. 17-25. Jno. 18. 39, 40.

j *cf.* ch. 21. 38. *cf.* Jno. 15. 22-25. *cf.* Gen. 37. 11.

k *cf.* Gen. 31. 29.

They had indeed cast this money to the potter, and they have been ever since as a vessel marred upon the wheel, and to be re-moulded. This is the meaning of their discipline in all the long years since.

e Jesus before the governor at once declares Himself the King of the Jews; but to all the accusations of the Jews replies nothing whatever; so that Pilate marvels.

But now the question of His acceptance or rejection is to be pressed on all the people; and again we see how the government of God has arranged every thing to this end. First, there has been established a custom of releasing a prisoner at the time of the paschal feast, and the people had the decision as to what prisoner it should be. Then they had at this time a prisoner of a notable kind, most suitable every way for comparison and by way of contrast with the spotless Victim now before them. This is at once suggested by his name, Barabbas, which is "son of the father." The Syriac and some other versions, with some cursive MSS., even read "Jesus Barabbas," an insertion very hard to explain if not genuine. All Christian feeling would naturally be against it, and certainly favor omission rather than insertion. Together, the names would be an awful diabolic assumption of titles most significant in the Lord.

Mark and Luke add that he had been cast into prison for sedition, thus had actually committed the crime with which they were falsely charging Jesus. Added to which, he was a robber and a murderer. Thus for the people to choose Barabbas would seem impossible, when now Pilate desired to know whether he should release this notorious criminal or "Jesus who is called Christ."

The mercy of God has given Pilate warning also from a wholly unexpected quarter. "As he was sitting on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have nothing to do with that just man, for I have suffered many things to-day in a dream because of him." It was the very thing most calculated, perhaps, to act upon the sceptical Roman, a voice out of that dark border-land which by its very darkness seems to attract the imaginative faculty, to fill it with possibilities the less challengeable the less they are defined. Outside of all priestly influence also, his wife is made the witness to his conscience, and against these priests whose measure he has long since taken and whose motives he penetrates. "He knew that for envy they had delivered Him."

In his uneasiness Pilate would fain put the responsibility which he cared

elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. And the governor answering said unto them, Which of the two will ye that I release unto you? And they said, [l]Barabbas. Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ? They all say, Let him be [m]crucified. And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.

[l] Acts 3. 14. cf. Jno. 5. 43.

[m] Lk. 23. 21.

not to face upon the people. Not the chief priests but the popular voice shall determine what is to be done, and the people also shall decide but one way, if he can accomplish it,—it shall be Barabbas or Jesus who is called Christ!

But the unhappy people are under the control of their leaders, and urgently insist upon their choice of Barabbas. It is the heart of man exposed to its depths,—the mind of the flesh, which is enmity against God; and when Pilate, still anxious to escape the fatal responsibility, puts it to them, (as he had no right to do,) what they would have done with Jesus then, immediately the awful cry breaks out from the crowd as with one voice, "Let Him be crucified!" Pilate asks in vain, "Why? what evil hath He done?" The only answer is the more vehement cry, "Let Him be crucified!"

It is the popular vote, after He has been among them three or more years, borne witness to by a constant display of power in grace that ministered to every need of man, by wondrous words that went even beyond this, and revealed, as light from heaven, the whole face of the world, while bringing in for it the glory of what is beyond and above it; Himself in Himself the incarnate glory of God, the seal and perfection of all that He uttered. The end is full, absolute rejection, hatred for His love, passionate hatred as if for some unspeakable wrong, that dooms Him to death, a death of shame, of unutterable anguish, the death of a criminal, a frightful and accursed death. They deliver up the Prince of life and desire a murderer to be granted to them. One cannot but realize in this Jesus Barabbas of Matthew the shadow of one to come, in whom man's natural choice will find its final expression, and of whom the Lord said to the Jews, "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not: if another come in his own name, him ye will receive" (John v. 43). Another *will* come in his own name. God allowing all the thoughts of man's heart to come out in full public expression,—another "saviour," the son of another father, true "child of the devil," in whom the unbelief as to Christ shall come to faith, and the crop of sin at last be harvested. "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work, only he who now letteth" (hindereth) "will hinder until he be taken out of the way: and then shall that wicked one be revealed, the son of perdition, whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of His mouth, and destroy with the manifestation of His presence: even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. ii. 7–11).

Awful are words like these, but they are words of truth, and to be fulfilled in days that are yet before us. The common application to Popery destroys for us in large measure its power for warning, and teaches us to look for its fulfilment in what has been manifested for centuries, and the day of Christ has not yet come. Not in the Christian Church, but in the Jewish "temple of God" will this defiance of God be uttered, and where Christ was rejected, there shall antichrist be installed. Israel have, alas! saved their Barabbas, to enthrone him in a day which every sign of the times assure us to be very near at hand.

5 (24-26): judgment against themselves.

3 (27-54): The offering up.
1 (27-31): crowned with the curse.

[5] Now, when Pilate saw that it availed nothing, but that rather a tumult was arising, he took [n]water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just man: see ye to it. And all the people answered and said, [o]His blood be on us and on our children. Then he released Barabbas unto them, but having [p]scourged Jesus, he delivered him up that he might be crucified.

3. [1] Then the soldiers of the governor, having taken Je-

n cf. Deut. 21. 6. Jer. 2. 22.

o cf. Gen. 4. 10. ch. 23. 35. *cf.* Acts 5. 28.

p Jno. 19. 1.

And as the Gentiles then joined hands with the Jews to put Jesus to death, so shall they join hands also to enthrone antichrist.

[5] The government of God in all this shows itself, and the power of the enemy itself works in compelled subjection to it. We find now Israel invoking it, and not in vain. Pilate, determined to escape the responsibility of that which under pressure he is about to do, adapts to his purpose part of the Jewish ritual in the case of an unknown murder, and washes his hands in the presence of the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just man: see ye to it." "And all the people answered and said, His blood be upon us and on our children." Thus, if they cannot lift the load from Pilate, they accept their own responsibility in the fullest way; and ever since, flee as they might into all the countries of the earth, the avenger of blood has been behind them. No effectual city of refuge has been found for them; nor will be until they look upon Him whom they have pierced, and in repentance and faith find it in Him the source of all their blessing.

Barabbas is released, and Pilate has the One whom he has owned to be righteous scourged, preparatory to crucifixion.

3. With one more step we come to the Cross itself, the lowest point of Christ's humiliation, and the place of deepest suffering, but not only this: the Cross has a character peculiarly its own, and here alone do we reach what is in the proper sense, atonement. This is, however, contested by so many, and is of such importance in itself that we must look at it in this place sufficiently to understand the character of what is before us.

If sin-bearing be, as it plainly is, an absolute necessity for atonement, Scripture declares without any obscurity whatever, that it was on the Cross He bore sin, and only there. "Who His own self," says the apostle, "bare our sins in His own body *on the tree*" (1 Pet. ii. 24). Scripture says this, and only this. It never speaks of our Lord as a sin-bearer in life, but in death; including, however, in death not simply the *act* of death, the expiring, but the suffering connected with it, "the death of the *cross*": suffering which gave its character to the death itself.

To distinguish it from mere dying, the circumstances are associated with it in a way that at first seems strange enough, to be put (as they are) as if essential to atonement itself. Thus it is said, "Jesus, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, *suffered without the gate*" (Heb. xiii. 12). Why without the gate? does not that seem a mere circumstance, quite separable from the suffering itself even, and certainly from the power of the precious blood of Christ to sanctify?

Yet, when we examine the connection with the preceding verse, we find that this suffering without the gate, or what is implied in it, is undoubtedly contemplated in the type to which the apostle is referring: "For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high-priest for sin, are *burned without the camp*." "Burned without the camp" certainly answers to "suffered without the gate." And here, notice that the distinction between those offerings whose blood went into the sanctuary and those that did not, was not in the burning, (for all were burnt, though indeed not

sus into the prætorium, gathered against him all the band. And having [q]stripped him, they put on him a

[q] Mk. 15. 16-20. Jno. 19. 2, 3, 5; *cf.* Gen. 37. 23.

all wholly burnt,) but in the *place* of burning: the emphasis is laid upon this very thing.

But what, then, is the meaning? the ordinary place of burning was upon the altar in the tabernacle-court, and *there* was the place of which it was said, in connection with the blood, "I have given it to you *upon the altar* to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul" (Lev. xvii. 11).

Yet the blood of what was burnt upon the altar could not go in where the blood of that which was burnt on the ground outside the camp could and did go.

Notice again, that this is the *sin*-offering, called this distinctively as that in which the judgment of sin is what is prominent — is differential. The judgment of sin, then, is that which is expressed in the banishment of what is nevertheless the "most holy" sin-offering into the holy place outside not merely the courts of Jehovah's house, but outside the camp also, the place of a people in relationship with God.

Banishment from God is what is marked by it: for God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and that cannot look at sin; while sin and sin-offering are the same word in Scripture, a man's sin-offering being that in which his sin was put before God. Thus outside the gate, as outside the camp, expresses either the place of one himself a sinner, or the place of One "made sin" for sinners.

"The Tree" intensifies still more this thought; for "cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree;" and the cross is thus a death of curse. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. iii. 13). Here again, what might seem merely circumstantial is made to express that which marks the death of Christ as truly propitiatory, the bearing of sin's awful penalty. Here is the "cup" from which the Lord necessarily shrank, but which nevertheless He drank in obedience to the Father's will, as requisite for our redemption. Death and judgment are man's natural portion, because of sin; not death only and there an end, but "*after* death the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27). Thus death alone could not be what Christ had to bear, and death simply was but its least part. Death is provisional, temporal, a governmental infliction, not an absolute necessity. For judgment in its full character resurrection must come in: death yields up to judgment, and judgment is eternal.

We must not look at the "curse of the law," then, as if it were mere circumstance—the hanging on a tree. That was but the outer garb of a reality more fearful far. Man could give man the cross: atonement was not an effect of suffering at the hands of man, but of suffering Godward. And this is what the cry of abandonment on the cross expresses. It was not that He had been given up into the hands of men; and to make it that would be to make Him less than the many of His people who have suffered such physical agonies at the hands of others without any such thought of being forsaken of God as is heard in this desolate cry. Nay, the psalmist, in that prophetic psalm to which the very words of the cry refer us, has distinguished carefully between this and all that saints ever suffered: for "our fathers trusted in Thee," he says: "they trusted in Thee, and Thou didst deliver them; they cried unto Thee, and were not confounded; but I am a worm and no man . . . be not far from me" (Ps. xxii. 4-6, 11; and see the notes on the Psalm). The sorrow here is an unequalled sorrow, and wholly different from any other.

How different from anything that could be true of Him in that wondrous

[q]scarlet cloak; and, having plaited a crown of [r]thorns, they put it on his head, and a [s]reed in his right hand,

[q] cf. Gen. 3. 18; cf. Gal. 3. 13; [r] cf. Is. 36. 6; cf. 2 Cor. 13. 4. [s] cf. Lk. 23. 11. cf. Ps. 69. 19.

life He had lived, in which His testimony was, "And He that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath *not left Me alone;* for I do always the things that please Him" (John viii. 29). How would such a cloud in any other place than this have marred the glory of that life of manifest communion with God, which in its unbroken perfection shone out in Him. Nay, how it would have shadowed the divine glory revealed in Him, that He, being what He was, should have been yet ever in the distance of the sinner's place with God! Or do we think that what is involved in this is only the bearing some results of God's government of a fallen world,—as one of an exiled family, though innocent, not being able to sleep at Jerusalem (!) and such things? If that were all, what need of the cross at all? Is it possible that any one can fail to see the difference—the total, absolute contrast, between the forsaking of God and His being ever with Him? between His life-work and His sacrificial death?

Another thing that results from all this, and the want of perception of which has clouded for many the full intelligence of the atoning work, is the need of realizing that the penalty upon sin that had to be lifted from us could not be satisfied or modified, by the infinite glory of the blessed Sufferer. Such thoughts appeal to us very strongly and from two different directions. We think of the Father's Son, of the Word made flesh, and shrink confounded from the thought of what seems to be suggested by it, as if a schism (though but for a moment) in the divine nature, or between the divine and human in the Lord. Or, again, contrasting the eternity of the penalty upon man with the actual brief endurance of the Lord's suffering, we incline at once to say, here certainly there was modification of the penalty, and a very great one.

Now in the first case, we are simply baffled by the inscrutability of that which the Lord assures us *is* inscrutable, the mystery of His divine-human Person, which for those who have not been content to accept the necessary limitations of creature-understanding, darkened now by sin, have constantly ended in the acceptance of some impairment either of humanity or divinity in Him. But neither in this way have they escaped from perplexity, nor, had they done so, could they have found the inscrutable Christ of Scripture. We can but accept Scripture, in its declarations and its silences; and in doing so, we shall find a Christ never impaired in His humanity by His divinity, capable as Man of being understood by men, One capable of all that is proper to man; capable of *faith*, nay, the supreme example of it; capable of a *will* which, though holy, He gave up to the Father; capable of being "tempted in all things like as we are, sin apart" (Heb. iv. 15). Can we reconcile it all with that higher glory of deity in Him, which gives new glory to His humanity itself? We should gain nothing by the attempt, but lose wholly. We need a Christ whom we can know, but yet not wholly know; with whom there are inner recesses of light which no man may explore; and that is what we find in Him.

As to the second case, the eternity of the penalty is no necessary element in it, except where the sins or the sinful condition eternally abide: and that is the case wherever the atonement provided has no effect. It is a common mistake to argue against the eternity of the penalty from the time during which the Lord endured it, or upon the same ground for a modification of the penalty as He endured it. Indeed, some will have no penalty at all in His case, but a substitute for it; while others say an equivalent or one modified in some way. The Scriptures cannot be made to agree with any of these thoughts. Christ honored the God of judgment by taking the very judgment lying upon man: He was made a curse for us; He was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. But let us go now with the solemn history before us.

[1] And here the indications of the divine meaning in the Cross are found in

> And kneeling before him they mocked him, saying, Hail, king of the Jews. And they [u]spat upon him, and took the reed, and [v]smote him on the head. And, when they had mocked him, they took the cloak off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.

u *cf.* Is.50.6.
v ch. 26. 67.

that which is nevertheless but the awful display of diabolic cruelty at the hands of man. A new class of men are the soldiers to whom Pilate has given Him up, and in them man comes to a new trial. They have heard the justification by the judge of the One whom he sends as innocent to an agonizing death. They are not Jews, these soldiers, care nothing about the Sanhedrin, are not pressed to what they do by the chief priests or the outcries of a people whom they despise as senseless and bigoted fanatics. There was not only in general no love between them and the Jews, but the fiercest scorn and enmity. Nor are they forced by their office as executioners to that for which now as their own special mocking and insult, not to be lost willingly by any of them, they gather the whole band.

How the various classes of men are made to bear witness against themselves through all this scene: most freely acting out the very depths of their hearts, while overruled by the divine purpose to show out the glory of the Man so seemingly helpless in their hands. These are the men of blood and iron, the men with whom might is right, the men who delight to pull down others from their excellency; men with no wrongs even imagined to repay, but simply at their business, which they enter into with the zest of the amphitheatre, the cruel Roman frenzy, which possessed all sections of the people. Now they have a king in their hands—a King!—and with an inscrutable dignity about Him which nothing that man has done can touch. Now it is their turn: what can they do that has not yet been done, and which shall accomplish what all else has failed in?

Herod had mocked Him with a royal robe; it should be theirs to *crown* Him; but with what? with bay, laurel, myrtle? He takes satire easily, as it were, unconsciously: can they not make Him feel it, this impenetrable Man? You see the brutal jest of the soldier: crown Him? yes, crown Him! make the satire pungent: crown Him with THORNS.

So they stripped Him, and put on Him a scarlet cloak, and having plaited a crown of thorns, put it upon His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they mocked Him, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!"

But they could not know how, ever after, we should be gazing with eager adoration at this wondrous Figure just as with their cruel hands they had arrayed it; and how the centuries should see in all they had done, no more their malignant mockery, but indeed the divinely significant emblems of God's glorious King.

The scarlet cloak or pallium was such as was worn by kings and emperors, but its color was produced from the coccus; it was a death-stain.

Thorns are the sign of the curse which He was now taking to remove it from us.

And the reed, the type of weakness, becomes the symbol of His power,—or at least of the way through which He has taken it: "He was crucified through weakness." Yet the cross is that which has annulled every foe that was against us, while it has made Him the Sovereign of an Empire soon to be universal: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."

How plain that every detail here is under the government of divine wisdom, and proclaiming in fact His glory. They have failed, and cast aside their mockery, to turn it into mere brutality as useless. They have failed; every foe *must* fail. The King goes on to His throne.

2 (32–44): "the contradiction of sinners."

[32] And as they were coming out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name, him they impressed to [w]bear his cross. And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, the [x]place of a skull, they gave him to drink [y]wine mingled with gall; and when he had tasted of it, he would not drink. And they crucified him, and [z]divided his garments among them, casting lots. And sitting down, they kept guard over him there. And they set up over his head his [a]accusation written, THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Then are there two [b]robbers crucified with him, one on the right hand, and one on the left. And they that passed by [c]reviled him, wagging their heads and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days: save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also, the chief priests, mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He [d]saved others; himself he cannot save. He is the

w Mk. 15. 21. Lk. 23. 26. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 10.
x Mk. 15. 22. Lk. 23. 33. Jno. 19. 17. *cf.* Ps. 141. 7.
y Mk. 15. 23. Lk. 23. 36. Ps. 69. 21.
z Mk. 15. 24. Lk. 23. 34. Jno. 19. 23, 24. Ps. 22. 18.
a Mk. 15. 26. Lk. 23. 38. Jno. 19. 19–22.
b Mk. 15. 27, 28. Lk. 23. 32, 33. Jno. 19. 18. Is. 53. 12.
c Mk. 15. 29. Lk. 23. 35. Ps. 22. 7.

Ps. 109. 25. *d cf.* Lk. 15. 2; *cf.* Jno. 3. 14, 15; *cf.* Heb. 9. 22.

[32] Of the Cross we have first the human side,—a cross which man may be permitted to carry after Him: and so Simon, the "hearkener," the "obedient," is seen at the outset here. For by dull hearing we may escape the world's impressment after this fashion, though *as* Simons we shall find it companionship with the Lord. Still we must remember that there was another Simon who had professed readiness to take this place and more, and did not; though he afterwards did. We have to learn the secret of power, even though we have the will; and that the strength we need is made perfect in weakness.

So the place of a skull is reached, the objective point which had been before the Lord all through. A scene of death was the attraction for the Lord of life: for none other could it have had any. But He comes into it, therefore, not to be merely a visitor, but to "taste death" in its reality. He refuses therefore the stupefying draught* offered to those led to execution, and gives Himself up to the full endurance of all that is before Him. Then they crucify Him and divide His garments among them, casting lots; all the while the light of prophecy steadily shining upon all this, as the great Eye of God, though unheeded, heeding silently, until the time comes for interference. And meanwhile still for faith there runs through all the deeper meaning which, if we could not read it, we should be satisfied must be there. But is He not in fact providing at His own cost the clothing which is to cover men's nakedness, and that by divine appointment also, (of which the lot in Israel spoke,) even for His enemies? Certainly thus alone it is that any one of us can say, "He has covered me with the robe of righteousness" (Isa. lxi. 10).

Nay, was it not we, the sinners enriched by Him, who guarded Him there, keeping Him upon that cross of shame which He could not leave, because of our necessities? This was indeed more than all the legions of the Roman army, that which made rescue for Him impossible, and kept all the hosts of heaven from breaking through for His relief.

His title is His accusation: He is Jesus, the King of the Jews; and for that they class Him with robbers, who is presently to sit down upon the Father's throne; and the passers-by revile Him, wagging their heads as they see Him

* The "gall" mingled with the wine was probably "wormwood," a strongly stupefying ingredient, though the Septuagint use it for various bitter substances. The "vinegar," an alternative reading here, and with evident reference to Ps. lxix. 21, was no doubt simply the sour wine in common use.

king of Israel: let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe on him. He [e]trusted in God: let him deliver him now, if he will have him; for he said, I am the Son of God. In like manner, the [f]robbers who were crucified with him reproached him.

[3] *a* Now from the sixth hour there was [g]darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, [h]Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani: that is My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Some of those standing by, when they heard it, said, This man calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge and filled it with [i]vinegar, and put it upon a reed, and gave him to drink. But the rest said, Let be; let us see if Elias will come to save him.

e Ps. 22. 8.
f Mk. 15.32. Lk. 23. 39-43.
g Mk. 15.33. Lk. 23. 44. *cf.* Amos.8. 9. *cf.* 1Jno.1.5.
h Mk. 15.34. Ps. 22. 1. *cf.* Is.53.4,5.
i *cf.* ver. 34.

3 (45-54): the divine reality.
a (45-49): forsaken of God.

there who according to their false accusation was to destroy the temple and in three days was to build it up again. In fact it was they who were now destroying it, and in a little while they will begin to realize the true application, "In three days I will rise again."

But against all His claims, the cross is in their minds a conclusive argument. The Son of God upon a cross! He must, if He is to be believed at all, come down from the cross. And the priests follow, mocking Him with the same arguments: "He is the King of Israel? well, let him come down from the cross, and we will believe." And then they use, all unconsciously, almost the words of the mockers of the twenty-second psalm: "He trusted in God: let Him deliver Him, if He will have Him." Nay, even "the robbers who were crucified with Him, reproached Him" with His powerlessness and lack of help. He is the King with the reed-sceptre and the crown of thorns!

[3] *a* Deeper the chasm under Him yawns. A preternatural darkness settles down upon the whole land for three hours together, from the sixth to the ninth hour. When it disappears the crisis is over, He Himself declares that "It is finished" (John xix. 30), and then, in the language here, dismisses His spirit and departs. His work is accomplished: the rent veil and the graves broken through remain as the tokens of what is accomplished.

It is surely a superficial thought that the sympathy of nature with her suffering Lord is what the darkness falling over all expresses. The Lord, as it passes away, Himself interprets it in a different manner. If God be Light, darkness is the natural sign of His turning away. The three days' darkness in Egypt we have seen to have such a meaning. The final "outer darkness" of the lost is the most distinct and awful expression of it—darkness outside,—away from the presence and glory of God. It is the rejection by God of those who have rejected Him. It is the necessity of a holy nature which cannot have fellowship with evil. And Christ in the darkness is the sign of His being the Sinbearer of His people,—the sign of that which to Him was the deepest agony that He could suffer, the forsaking of God.

We have already in some measure considered the meaning of this. It is not here that we shall find the doctrine of atonement, but the fact, the making it, with presently the consequences Godward and manward, which show how perfectly it has been made. Christ in the sinner's place, the reality of substitution, God's judgment upon sin owned and borne by Him who knew no sin,—that is what is before us here. These three hours are apart from all other in human history; three hours in which have been manifested, as nowhere else, both man and God; evil and good have come together; the good, not by power interposing for it, but by its own intrinsic blessedness, o'ermastering the evil; God glorified, so as to bring Him in in answer to it, in righteousness the justifier of every one that believeth in Jesus.

b (50): dying.

c (51-53): the sanctuary opened.

b But Jesus, having cried again with a loud voice, [j] dismissed his spirit.

c And behold, the *veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top even to the bottom; and the earth [l] quaked, and the rocks were rent; and the graves were

j Mk. 15. 37. Lk. 23. 46. Jno. 19. 30. cf. 1 Cor. 15. 3.

k Mk. 15. 38. Lk. 23. 45. cf. Lev. 16. 2, 11-14; cf. Heb. 9. 7, 8, 11, 12; cf. Heb. 10. 19, 20.

l cf. Ex. 19. 18; cf. Rev. 5. 12.

To those standing by the cross the Lord's words are a call for Elias; a misinterpretation, probably, of the soldiery, rather than the Jews, but who had caught up some of the common Jewish beliefs which they would have heard expressed around them. Would Elias come and take Him down? Conscience getting roused, they still it with faint mockery addressed to the man who ministers the vinegar to the agonizing thirst of crucifixion, "Let be: let us see whether Elias will come to save Him."

b But the end now is reached. Still, master of Himself, not conquered of death but yielding Himself to it, He cries with the loud voice of unexhausted strength, and dismisses His spirit. The expression is peculiar to Matthew, the royal Gospel, and very unhappily obscured in the common translation.* It is the explicit assertion, as to the moment of death, of what He had Himself before declared: "No man taketh My life from Me, but I lay it down of Myself; I have authority to lay it down, and authority to take it again" (John x. 18). Notice that here it is the simple expression of authority and thus absolutely in place in the Gospel of Matthew, one of those more hidden harmonies of inspiration, which we are apt to let through mere inadvertency escape us. But what a testimony to Him whose royal title was proclaimed upon a cross, whose sceptre was a reed, whose crown was of thorns, and lately in the deepest agony of One suffering for sin! But such are the mysteries of our salvation, now made so fully intelligible to us, yet still the mysteries of a "love that passeth knowledge."

c The peculiar agony passed of the forsaking of God, there remains but death to complete atonement. All that lay upon man is then taken; God's righteousness approved and manifested, sin in its reality as before Him exposed. The result begins at once to be apparent in a double way. The veil of the temple is rent in the midst; and on the other hand the quaking earth opens the graves, "and many bodies of the saints that slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city and appeared unto many."

This latter sign is, again, a thing peculiar to Matthew. As the effect of the Lord's work, it would naturally have reference to that special aspect of the work which is presented here; and this we have seen already to be in Matthew the trespass- (which is the governmental) offering.

This is easily understood, if we consider the difference between that which is the necessary part of the penalty upon sin, as resulting from the very nature of God, and therefore unchangeable as that nature, and that which it may please Him to affix to it as the special brand of His displeasure.

As has often been said, while "God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and cannot look at sin," and therefore His separation from it is an unchangeable necessity,—death (I am speaking of what we ordinarily call that) is, in man's case, such a governmental brand, and can be removed from him without change on his part, or atonement for him. This is important to realize as bearing upon the resurrection of the wicked. It has been often argued and with apparent justification from a certain statement in Scripture, that the resurrection even of the wicked is due only to Christ's atoning work, and so in their case also has a redemptive character. Here is not the place to discuss the fundamental passage; but the Lord's own words assure us that as, on the one hand, there is a "resurrection of life," so, on the other, there is a "resurrection of

* "Yielded up the ghost," (R. V.) "yielded up His spirit."

opened and many bodies of the saints that slept [m] arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

[d] (54): the Gentile.

d Now when the centurion and they that were with him on guard over Jesus saw the earthquake, and the things that took place, they feared greatly, saying, Truly [n] this was the Son of God.

[m] *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 22, 23.

[n] Mk. 15. 39-41. Lk. 23. 47-49.

judgment" (John v. 29, *R. V.*). As, on the one hand, life claims even the bodies of the heirs of life, so on the other, does judgment claim the bodies of the unsaved. And thus it is said, "*after* death the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27), which takes place, as we see in the book of Revelation, only when "death and hades" have given up the dead.

Thus death has place in God's dealings with man this side of eternity only; and indeed, though it be the brand upon sin, yet still as part of a discipline of mercy. As the removal of man from the place for which he was originally created, and the sundering of all sweet, familiar ties, sending him out alone, naked as he came into the world, but with neither the ignorance nor innocence with which he came into it, to meet he knows not perhaps what, yet fears with a true instinct, if he knows not,—death is the constant appeal to him as to the ruin in which he is,—the "Adam, where art thou?" of God who seeks him. Whatever, then, the final issue, death has no part in it. For even the second death is no repetition of the first, but that in which it is swallowed up and lost; while the saint inherits life eternal.

Notice, now, the peculiar way in which the resurrection of the saints of which Matthew speaks here is connected with the work of atonement. They do not come out of their graves till "after His resurrection." They do not actually rise till then. Plainly, because Christ is the "first-fruits" of them that sleep, the "First-born from the dead;" and none, therefore, could precede Him.* On the other hand, it is when the Lord dies that the graves open: it is this that opens them; we are intended to find connection between this death and the apparition of living men brought up out of death. No phantom merely, we are assured; "*bodies* of the saints that slept" arising; not to take again their place among men, but as those that belong to another sphere, glowing with the light of it.

The rending of the veil of the sanctuary precedes in the account here, as it preceded in order of occurrence, the resurrection of the saints. It is plainly connected with the three hours of darkness, in the same way in which the latter is connected with the Lord's death. The veil was the sign of that "thick darkness" in which under the law God dwelt. "The way into the holiest was not made manifest." None could see God and live. If Moses himself is permitted to see His glory, it is after He is gone by: thus with His face turned away.

Here, then, is the darkness of the Cross, the darkness in which man abides, spite of all that he can do in his own behalf. He *sits* in darkness and the shadow of death. Pass the veil he cannot. His Deliverer must come out after him, even to where he is; but having come there in the perfection of that marvelous obedience, cannot abide there. The veil is rent in the divine way, from top to bottom. The light of the glory of God streams forth, God fully manifested in righteousness and in love, and by that way, the way of the Cross which has revealed Him, men be they what they may can draw near, if they will, to Him,—nay, find in His presence thus their one possible sanctuary of refuge.

The resurrection of the saints that follows here is but that which completely

*For this is not a restoration to mortal life once more, as in the case of Lazarus, of the daughter of Jairus, and the son of the widow of Nain; or it would not exemplify, as is plainly intended here, the power of atonement.

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chap. xxvii. 55-xxviii.)
The Resurrection.

1 (xxvii. 55-61): The beginning of the intervention of God.

1. AND there were many women beholding from afar off, who followed Jesus from Galilee to minister unto him, among whom were Mary of Magdala, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

Now when evening was come, there came a °rich man of Arimathea, Joseph by name, who was also himself a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded it to be given up. And Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a ᵖclean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock. And he rolled a great ᵠstone to the door of the tomb, and departed. And Mary of Magdala was there, and the other Mary, sitting over against the tomb.

o Mk.15.42-47. Lk. 23. 50-56. Jno. 19.38-42. *cf.* Is. 53. 9.

p *cf.* 2 Cor.5. 21.

q *cf.* Jno.11. 38, 39.

fits them for that place, and puts them fully into it. Restitution Godward, with its overplus of glory being fully made, man too can receive his overplus of compensating blessing. If the first paradise be not restored, he shall enter in Christ the paradise of God. Thus the trespass-offering view of the Cross is here complete.

d The fruit of it is seen also in another way. The Gentile centurion and those that are with him, convinced by all that they have seen and heard, confess Him to be, not the King of the Jews merely, but the Son of God. Thus the Roman soldier takes his place with Peter the apostle in proclaiming that which Israel has denied. The dispensational intimation here, according to the character of Matthew's Gospel, seems to be shown in this, that what in Mark and Luke is given as the individual faith of the centurion is here testified as shared by "those that were with him." It is the general faith of a Gentile company.

SUBD. 3.

The atoning work, then, is done: we are now to have before us the answer on God's part to it, an answer which certainly cannot be long delayed. Indeed, as we have seen, there has been already answer; but not yet *the* answer. That will be no less than in raising Christ from the dead, and setting Him at His own right hand in heavenly places, with all authority given to Him in heaven and earth. We do not see Him in Matthew at the right hand of God: that is reserved for Mark. Nor do we even, as in Luke, see His ascent into heaven. But in accordance with the character of Matthew, we do find all authority put into His hand,—the Kingdom of heaven begun, with its administration committed to men, but with the assurance that He is with them to the end of the age.

1. The Lord having gone down to the depths of His humiliation, from this point all is changed. God permits no more indignity, and, marked out still, as every thing here is, by the voice of prophecy, the rich man comes forward to bear testimony to Him, and give His body its temporary resting place. "They assigned Him a grave with wicked men," says the prophet, "but with the rich man when He had died" (Isa. liii. 9, *Heb.*). He is numbered with transgressors no more, but in the hands of disciples, tender, if feeble hands, which though it be the shadow of death upon hopes lately so bright, will anoint Him for His burial. These women that have followed Him from Galilee, ministering to Him, wait on Him still with their eyes through all the terror of the Cross, too intent for fear or sorrow to divert their riveted gaze

2 (xxvii. 62–66): The seal upon the sepulcre.

2. Now on the morrow that followed the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, [r]After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulcre be secured until the third day, lest his disciples come and steal him away, and say to the people, He is risen from the dead, and the last deceit will be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go and secure it as well as ye know how. And they went and secured the sepulcre, [s]sealing the stone, besides [setting] the watch.

[r] ch. 17. 23. ch. 12. 40. Jno. 2. 19.

[s] *cf.* Dan. 6. 17.

3 (xxviii. 1–10): The manifestation of Christ to His own.

3. Now after the sabbath, as it began to dawn on the [t]first day of the week, there came Mary of Magdala and the other Mary, to see the sepulcre. And behold, there was a great [u]earthquake; for an angel of [the] Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. His [v]appearance was

[t] Mk. 16. 1. Lk. 24. 1. Jno. 20. 1.

[u] ch. 27. 51.

[v] *cf.* Dan. 10. 6. *cf.* Rev. 10. 1.

until the stone closes the sepulcre. This Joseph, too, just at the hour when all seems lost, comes forward openly to join himself to the disciples of a crucified Master. He goes to Pilate to beg the body of Jesus, and having obtained it, lays it in his own new tomb. For this death cannot mingle with the common deaths of men, but is that which dispels death. Nor can the Holy One enter into the abode of corruption—He who is to know none. The instinct of the heart goes, as it would seem, beyond knowledge; and God is over all, guarding and guiding.

2. The enemy, too, is at work to make more secure His coming triumph. His disciples shall not come and steal the body away, and make men think that He is risen. Upon the supposition that they were dealing with imposture merely, that would be well enough: but did they think so? Could they, fresh from the spectacle of such a death as He had died, imagine it?

They remember the words which His own disciples had forgotten; words which had contemplated what they had done to him, and asserted His own final triumph. On the third day He would rise again. If that were indeed true, how vain any effort of theirs to avert the consequences! Yet fear has its fascination, which compels its subjects to follow to the end they dread,—to know and face the worst that can come. Perhaps there were mingled motives, the result of contradictory thoughts which urged them on. At any rate they do all they can with their company of soldiers and their seal upon the sepulcre to make fraud and illusion both impossible, and to certify the only hope available for man.

3. Matthew gives us very briefly the resurrection of the Lord; and of all His manifestations of Himself to His disciples at Jerusalem only that to the women visiting the sepulcre. In His message given through these also He speaks of meeting them, not at Jerusalem, but in Galilee, the scene of His former labors. There the commission with regard to the Kingdom is given them, and it is the Kingdom with which Matthew, as we know, is occupied.

The connection of our Lord with Galilee was from the first the token of His rejection by Israel. In His infancy Jerusalem under the sway of Herod had refused Him, and the rule of Archelaus there had turned Him aside from Judea to Nazareth. Galilee of the Gentiles was the witness of the ruin of Israel, as largely given up to these, the land of the former kingdom of the ten tribes, who had not returned from their captivity in Assyria. Out of Galilee, said the scribes, no prophet could arise. Yet it was there, among a people sitting in darkness and the shadow of death, that the Light was to arise.

like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. And from fear of him the guards shook and became as [w] dead men. But the angel answered and said unto the women, [x] Fear not ye; I know that ye seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he is [y] risen, as he said. Come, see the [z] place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and say to his disciples that he is risen from the dead, and behold, he goeth before you into [a] Galilee: there ye shall see him. Behold, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring his disciples word. And, [as they went to bring his disciples word,] * behold also Jesus [b] met them, saying, Hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus saith unto them, Fear not; go and bring word to my [c] brethren that they go into Galilee; and there shall they see me.

w *cf.* Acts 17. 31. *cf.* Rev. 1. 17.
x Mk. 15. 6. *cf.* 2 Tim. 1. 7. *cf.* Rom. 8. 15.
y Lk. 24. 5, 6.
z *cf.* Jno. 20. 5-8.
a ch. 26. 32. Mk. 16. 7.
b *cf.* Mk. 16. 9. *cf.* Jno. 20. 1, 11-18.
c Jno. 20. 17. *cf.* Heb. 2. 11, 12.

* Probably to be omitted, as in many MSS. and versions.

The passing by of Jerusalem in the close of Matthew is easily seen, therefore, to be significant of the world-wide aspect of the Kingdom now to be proclaimed, a remnant of Israel sharing in it, in the time of their national rejection, the blessings of Christ's rule. But not even into these does Matthew enter deeply: the air of reserve which we have noticed in Matthew clings in measure to him, to the end. There is one expression only which seems to break through it, and carry us on towards the complete revelation,—"Go and tell *My brethren.*" But it is not developed further, and by itself might only apply the language of the Lord's prophecy (chap. xxv. 40) to His present followers.

The separation which some would make between an *evening* visit of the women to the sepulcre, and a *morning* one, when the angel addresses them, seems neither necessitated by the words themselves,* nor consistent when the account is taken as a whole.† The stone had been rolled away when they got near enough to see; and thus the resurrection had already taken place. They may have felt the trembling of the ground and seen something of the lightning-like flash that had scattered the watch. But He was risen; and the opening of the tomb was to publish to all that it was empty. The victory is gained; and, as of old, the women celebrate it. Mary of Magdala here comes into prominence, out of whom seven demons had been cast by the word of Christ. And now that He has spoiled principalities and powers and led captivity captive, she in whom the complete power of Satan has been met and conquered is fittingly the leader of this company. Her heart is not empty since the unclean spirits left, but Another has filled it. The dead Christ still lives in her and controls her; and now she is a true "Mary of the watch-tower," even while yet she has no knowledge nor expectation of what has taken place.

It is John who details to us the way in which the risen Lord reveals Himself to her, during an interval of time passed over by Matthew, in which she has left the company with which she had come to the sepulcre to bring Peter and John to see that it was empty. The other women, less bold than she, must have waited for her to rejoin them before they went on to the tomb. If so

* ὀψὲ τῶν σαββάτων may mean "*after* the sabbath" as well as "in the end of": it: see Lange on the text.

† Yet it is evident that Matthew's account is of the briefest, and that the Lord's appearing to Mary Magdalene alone is omitted by him. Mark states that He appeared "first" to her, which does not seem to allow the presence of the other women at that time, as thought by some, while yet Matthew and Luke (xxiv. 10) plainly seem to include her with them in what is narrated here.

4 (xxviii.11–15): The broken seal.

4. Now, as they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and brought word to the chief priests of all that had come to pass. And when they were assembled with the elders and had taken counsel, they gave much [d]money to the soldiers, saying, Say ye, his disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this should come to the hearing of the governor, we will [e]persuade him and secure you. And they took the money, and did as they were taught; and this report is current among the Jews until this day.

5 (xxviii.16–20): The Kingdom committed to the charge of men; Himself with them.

5. But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had [f]appointed them; and when they saw him, they worshiped, but [g]some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, [h]All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth: go ye therefore and [i]disciple all the nations,

d *cf.* ch.27.4.
e *cfr.* Acts 12. 19.
f ver. 7.
g *cf.* Jno.20. 24–29. *cf.*1 Cor.15. 5, 6.
h *cf.* Jno. 5. 22. *cf.*Jno.17.2. *cf.* Eph. 1. 22.
i Mk. 16. 15, 16. Lk. 24. 47, 48. *cf.*Acts 1.8.

Mary Magdalene must have already been gladdened with the knowledge that He was risen before she went back with them there. Matthew certainly intimates that Mary was with them at this time, as he only mentions "the other Mary" as her companion, and to these the angel addresses himself.* Now they are told that not only is He risen, but that He is going before them into Galilee, and there they should see Him.

Galilee is in fact the gathering place of the disciples, characterizing the circumstances under which the new faith begins to be published, as we have seen. Presently an unexpected joy is theirs; for Jesus Himself meets them on the way, and while they worship at His feet, repeats to them the message given to them by the angel.

4. Meanwhile some of the guard bring word to the chief priests of all that has taken place. The impotence of all their efforts is revealed; and they have even to publish it, along with the manifestly false account of what had happened while the witnesses were asleep. Spite of all they will continue the vain struggle with omnipotence itself; and such are Israel's chosen leaders.

5. The Gospel closes with the appearing of the Lord in Galilee, where by appointment the eleven meet Him; with others also, as is plain, for it could hardly be of the eleven, after all that we know to have taken place in Jerusalem, that it is written, that "some doubted." From His words to the women also Galilee seems to have been appointed, as already said, for a general gathering of the disciples, and it was probably here that He was seen, as the apostle tells us, "of more than five hundred brethren at once" (1 Cor. xv. 6). The institution of His Kingdom would naturally call for such a gathering; and here it is that He declares all authority to have been given to Him in heaven and upon earth, and sends them out to disciple all nations to it.

It is not a Kingdom set up as yet in power, but established as a Kingdom of the truth by the sowing of the "word of the Kingdom" in the hearts of men. This the parables of it (chap. xiii.) have already shown us. "Discipling" is therefore the mode of introduction into it; but this has two parts, which the Lord joins together here. The great essential for a disciple is, of course, reception of the Word; but since it is a Kingdom into which men are discipled, there is added to this an outward recognition to be made of the authority under which they come: and these are assuredly the "keys of the Kingdom," of which the Lord spoke to Simon Peter (xvi. 19). The "key of knowledge" He had spoken of elsewhere (Luke xi. 52); here we have the external authoritative admission on the part of those to whom the Kingdom is

* In fact there were others, as Luke assures us (xxiv. 10).

j baptizing them unto the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; *k* teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have enjoined you. And behold, *I* am *l* with you always, until the *m* consummation of the age.

j cf. 1 Cor. 1. 17. Acts 2. 38, 41. Acts 8. 36.
k Acts 2. 42.
l cf. Acts 4. 31.
cf. Acts 23. 11. *m cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 13; *cf.* Rev. 22. 20.

committed: "disciple all the nations, baptizing them," the name to which they are baptized being that of the Triune God, now fully revealed.

"All nations" shows the whole world to be the sphere in which the Kingdom is to be proclaimed, and cannot be the Gentiles only: Israel cannot be left out of such a commission. Certainly, they have not received the Kingdom, nor the King: they cannot be looked upon as an inner circle from which His messengers are to be sent out; and in Luke "repentance and remission of sins" are to be "preached among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (xxiv. 47). This is in fact the course that was pursued. By and by Paul is raised up of God to lead in the special Gentile work, and the other apostles, owning what God has done, give it up as apostles to Paul and Barnabas; but this is no failure on their part, nor change in the original plan. Paul still preaches "to the Jew first"; and if of the other apostles we have little scriptural notice, tradition scatters them variously among the Gentiles. Moreover, the commission given here in Matthew to baptize and teach is not one that we can limit in any way to the apostles, but must have wide enough application to embrace all who, in fact and according to Scripture, baptize and teach.

Thus the Kingdom takes its place outside all nations, while having its door wide open towards all, its blessed gospel call for all that have an ear to hear.

The King is, as we know, to be away; and just on this account He gives to those who represent Him here the assurance of His being ever present with them. Faith may reckon upon Him as securely all the way as if He were still bodily and visibly in company with His disciples; "all the days"—every single day—cloudy or bright—until the consummation of the age is reached, and the opened heavens yield Him once more to earth.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF MARK.

CHRIST, the Son of God, as Ministering Servant of man's need whether in life or death, in which He is seen as the Sin-offering, meeting the requirements of the divine nature as regards sin. The dispensational character, so attaching to Matthew, is scarcely found in Mark, and while the Kingdom of God of necessity is found, we have neither the Kingdom of heaven, nor of Christ, nor of the Son of man. He is the unwearied Worker for the glory of God, and until resurrection the title of Lord is seldom given Him. Naturally, therefore, because the condition and need of man are the same for Jew and Gentile, the service is for all, and Mark addresses himself more to men at large, the references to Old Testament fulfilments being also less conspicuous. On the other hand, He is for His people more fully the pattern of the life of faith, as He comes more down to such a place as we find here; and then also He stoops below them into the awful realization of sin and its penalty, as borne upon the Cross.

Mark has but three divisions:—

1. (Chap. i.–v.): The personal ministry of Christ.
2. (Chap. vi.–x. 45): The service of a rejected Master.
3. (Chap. x. 46–xvi.): The heart of service revealed in sacrifice, answered from the heart of God in resurrection and the ascension to heaven of the Offerer.

NOTES.

AN old view of Mark, that it was an abridgment of Matthew, while it is not the truth, has yet in it a certain measure of truth, which would apply to more than Matthew. From the nature of its theme, "the Son of God in service," it must take up what runs through every Gospel. Christ serves upon the throne as well as on the Cross, and at every point between. His words when coming into the world characterize Him at all times: "Lo, I come to do Thy will" show Him to be all through essentially the Servant; and as such God by the mouth of Isaiah, in what is the fullest prophecy of the Old Testament concerning Him, dwells upon Him with delight (chap. lii. 13).

Mark's Gospel can thus have no exclusive line of truth. It has in fact scarcely any important words, certainly no phrase (such as Matthew's "Kingdom of heaven," for instance) peculiar to itself; and might, perhaps, be rather characterized by its omissions (as, for instance, of *nomos*, "law") than by what it inserts. For law neither measured nor required service such as His, which was the free offering of His heart, and knew no necessity but that of His own nature.

MARK.

DIVISION 1. (Chaps. i.–v.)

The Lord's personal ministry.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. i. 1–13.)

The Person who comes to serve.

1 (1-3): His title.

1 THE [a] beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God: as it is written in the prophet,* [b] Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way; the [c] voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.

a *cf.* Matt. 1. 1. *cf.* Lk. 1. 1, 5. *cf.* Jno. 1. 1.

b Mal. 3. 1. Matt. 11. 10. Lk. 1. 76. Lk. 7. 27.

c Is. 40. 3. Matt. 3. 3. Lk. 3. 4. Jno. 1. 23.

* "We regard the testimony of Irenæus and other fathers, with Codd. A., P., as sufficient to establish this reading, against that of 'Isaiah the prophet' preferred by most recent editors" (Lange).

Beautiful it is, and gracious, that Mark, the failed servant, who had shrunk back from the work to which he put his hand (Acts xv. 38), but afterwards recovered and through grace made serviceable (2 Tim. iv. 11), should be chosen as the one to put before us the unfailing, perfect Servant. What comfort for us in this!

DIV. 1.

The three divisions are in very simple connection with one another. The first gives us the Lord's ministry in itself, its character, the needs met and the way of meeting them, with the results that became apparent. The second shows the opposition of the enemy in whose hand the world is, the conflict between the evil and the good, and the meaning of discipleship to a rejected Master. The third shows us the Lord's service perfected in the sacrifice of the Cross, the need met before God, and God glorified in it, resurrection its outcome, with what is implied in this, which only the epistles, however, develop in its fulness for us.

SUBD. 1.

We begin now, with the second of the synoptists, the fruitful work of comparison between them. To this the remarkable similarity in much, the very words being as if copied from one to the other, with the equally apparent differences, which to many often seem to amount to contradictions, on either side invite us. These differences are, for the most part, such as none can claim the merit of having discovered,—they do not need a great deal of searching out: they lie on the surface, and appeal to every reader to inquire as to their meaning. If we have the happiness of being among the number of those who still accredit Scripture as inspired of God, we shall not be surprised to find that not only will this inquiry assure us that there is no contradiction, but that God has awakened it in order to reward our search in His own abundant way. We shall do well to give attention to the differences. Our sense of the reality and value of verbal inspiration will assuredly deepen as the result of this, and the truth of God will acquire fresh distinctness, certainty, and power over us.

[1] In both Matthew and Mark, nay, in all the Gospels, the Person of the Lord is necessarily the first thing put before us; but in very different ways. Matthew, presenting to us the Son of David, gives as the foundation of all His legal title in His genealogy. Mark, as we see, has nothing of the sort. And yet His

2 (4-8): the witness of John.

3 (9-11): proclaimed from heaven and anointed.

2 There came [d]John, baptizing in the wilderness, and preaching the baptism of repentance for [the] remission of sins. And there [e]went out unto him all the country of Judea, and all they of Jerusalem, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. And John was [f]clothed with camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and did eat locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, There [g]cometh after me he that is mightier than I; the latchet of whose shoes I am not fit to stoop down and unloose. I have baptized you with water, but he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

3 And it [h]came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in Jordan. And immediately rising up out of the water, he saw the [i]heavens parting asunder, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him. And there came a voice out of the heavens, Thou art my beloved Son: in thee I am well pleased.

d Matt. 3. 1, 2. Lk. 3. 1-3. Jno. 1. 6, 7. Jno. 3. 23.
e Matt. 3. 5, 6. Lk. 3. 7.
f Matt. 3. 4. *cf.* 2 Ki. 1. 8. *cf.* Zech. 13. 4. *cf.* Matt. 11. 8, 9.
g Matt. 3. 11. Lk. 3. 16. Jno. 1. 15, 26, 33. *cf.* Acts 1. 5. *cf.* Acts 13. 25.
h Matt. 3. 13.
i Matt. 3. 16, 17. Lk. 3. 21, 22. *cf.* Lev. 8. 12. *cf.* Ps. 89. 20. *cf.* Acts 10. 38.

title to the place He takes is as much affirmed in Mark as in Matthew. But title to *serve*, what will give that? If there be power for it, and heart, nothing else is needed. Serving is love's prerogative, wherever power and need are found together. Thus that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is for Mark the explanation of his Gospel. Power cannot fail the Son of God; and love is demonstrated in the fact that the Son of God is become the Man Christ Jesus.

To this is added that He comes in the foretold way: the Shepherd comes through the door into the sheepfold, which the Lord speaks of to the Jews as the sign that He is the Shepherd. Here, therefore, the testimony of two prophets is brought forward: Malachi of a messenger divinely sent to prepare the way of Christ; Isaiah giving the voice of that messenger addressed to *Israel* to prepare His way: the way of the Lord (or Jehovah), Messiah being Himself Jehovah. To make *His* paths straight, how much was involved in that!

2 Mark passes on to the testimony of the forerunner: not even pausing for a moment to record the birth of Jesus, as both Matthew and Luke do, he begins his history with the account of the Baptist. Even here he is briefer than either of the others. He shows you the man himself in his rough and independent garb, as Matthew does. He tells you with both the others of his baptism of repentance, and with Luke that it is for the remission of sins. He shows you the people flocking to his baptism from all the country round; but he does not give, as Matthew and Luke do, any details of his address to them, but simply his testimony to Christ Himself, to the glory of His Person and His better baptism, with the Holy Spirit.

Thus it is plain, if Mark abridges, it is an abridgment with a purpose. He is taking our eyes as much as possible off other things, to fix them upon the Person who is coming forth to minister, so glorious in Himself, so wondrous in the gift He brings: the Son of God, and baptizing with the Holy Spirit!

3 But He has higher witness than that of John; and now we see Him coming forth from Nazareth of Galilee, and Himself baptized of John in Jordan. This is indeed the pledge in which He devotes Himself, as we have seen in Matthew, to the path of service which lies before Him. It is His "Lo, I am come," and Jordan prefigures the death which is "written of Him in the volume of the book," in its law of sacrifice.

His vows are now upon Him; and immediately as He comes up out of the water, the heavens are opened, and the Spirit like a dove descends upon Him—the bird of heaven, the bird of love, the bird of sorrow, the bird of sacrifice,—

[g] (12, 13): tested.

[g] And immediately the Spirit [j] impelleth him forth into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness [k] forty days, [g] tempted by Satan, and was with the [m] wild beasts; and the [n] angels ministered unto him.

j Matt. 4. 1. Lk. 4. 1.
k Matt. 4. 2. Lk. 4. 2. cf. Ex. 24. 18. cf. 1 Kl. 19. 8.
g cf. Matt. 4. 3-10. cf. Lk. 4. 3-13. cf. Heb. 2. 18. cf. Heb. 4. 15.
m cf. Gen. 2. 19, 20.
n Matt. 4. 11.

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. i. 14-iii.)

His ministry.

1 (i. 14-20): The time, the Kingdom of God, and its claim.

1. [o] NOW after John was [p] delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is come nigh: repent ye, and believe in the gospel.

cf. Lk. 22. 43. o Matt. 4. 12, 17.

and the Father's voice owns the object of His delight, His well-beloved Son. There is little variation as to all this in the three Gospels: it is plainly fundamental to them all. (*See Notes on Matthew, chap. iii. 13–17*).

[g] Now once again, Mark hastens over what Matthew and Luke detail with equal care, the temptation in the wilderness. We are merely told of the fact of it, and Mark adds that "He was with the wild beasts." This is in no wise as if they threatened Him. He was the Lord of nature,—the Creator; and as the Second Man, all was in His hand. The angels' ministry was not at all, as Meyer thinks, "a sustaining support against Satan and the beasts," which in the first case would have been only a dishonor to Him, and in the second would have involved a breach between nature and Himself. They came, as Matthew shows, when the temptation was ended, and to minister to His bodily need.

Thus the Lord is put before us, however briefly, in all His relations, not only to the world, in which now we are to see Him serving. The world is already marked out as a world in departure from God, wherein the people specially the object of God's love and care have to be called to make straight His paths before Him by taking themselves their place in the baptism of repentance as those rightly under death because of sin. Into this death He who would serve them effectually must come, and to this His baptism pledges Him. Thus He can minister to all lesser needs which result from this condition.

SUBD. 2.

That ministry itself is now to be put before us, and the various characters of evil, hopeless to any other, present themselves in rapid succession, the spiritual root of it being first of all emphasized; while even the bodily diseases become the pictures of more distressing and fatal maladies,—the visible being made to manifest the invisible, after the manner of Scripture indeed everywhere, and after the manner of nature also: for one is based upon the other. Thus too the divine dealings with these acquire an interest for us they could not otherwise possess. The Gospel narratives are seen to be not simply histories of the past, but depict for us the present also, and appeal to us with fuller, more pervasive and personal claim. That we may know that the Son of man has power on earth to *forgive sins*, He saith to the sick of the palsy, Rise and take up thy bed, and go unto thy house. The word of God is characterized in this way by its tender concern for the soul of man; and everywhere, "Scripture inspired of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

1. The Lord's public ministry in Galilee begins from the imprisonment of John His forerunner. He takes up the testimony which the world has done its best to silence, and, more definitely than even John, declares the time to be fulfilled and the Kingdom of God to be come near. Herod might have been thought to have proved his own kingdom to be the more substantial reality, with the herald of the divine one languishing in prison; but now it is that the

And, [p] passing along by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon, and Andrew, Simon's brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you become [q] fishers of men. And immediately they left the nets and followed him.

And going on a little further, he saw [r] James the [son] of Zebedee and John his brother, who also were in the boat, mending the nets. And immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after him.

2 (21-39): The enemy met, and competent testimony to a new teaching.

2. And they enter into Capernaum; and immediately on the sabbath day he went into the [s] synagogue and taught. And they were [t] astonished at his teaching:

[p] Matt. 4.18-20.

[q] Lk. 5. 10, 11. cf. Matt. 13. 47-50.

[r] Matt. 4.21, 22.

[s] Matt. 4.13, 23. Lk. 4. 31.

[t] Matt. 7.28, 29.

announcement is made afresh with new power and evidence. A gospel indeed in a world so bruised in Satan's fetters; but yet with its claim of repentance which John had so earnestly enforced. These are the first words of the great Healer, and His words precede His deeds. Before all other deliverances, and that these may be truly such, the Word must be spoken by which man lives. For death is but the shadow of sin, and the true life alone can banish it.

The Kingdom of God is at hand. As a Kingdom of truth, it is to be established by the truth in the hearts of men, it must have its heralds. The Lord begins, therefore, now to call the men who are to proclaim it,—who are to be as He terms it, in words derived from that which they give up to follow Him, the "fishers of men." The account given is almost exactly the same as what we find in Matthew, and as brief as can be. There is none of the personal work done in their souls: that is supplied by John and Luke (John i. 35–42; Luke v. 4–11).

2. There is omitted also the first preaching in Nazareth (Luke iv.), which in the decisive rejection which follows it, causes Him to leave the place in which He had grown up. Capernaum, "the village of consolation," became now "His own city" (Matt. ix. 1), and in this for a time fulfilled its name. The first act of His power here, as given by Mark, is one that is fundamental for the blessing of the earth, the casting of Satan out of it. When He shall come in power, to take all things into His hand, the dragon will be shut up in the bottomless pit. Similarly, the first sign given to Moses, whereby he is to prove his divine call as the deliverer of Israel, is the return of the rod of power, which, cast out of his hand, is become a serpent, once more to be the shepherd's rod of protection for the flock.

Here in Capernaum the demon is in the synagogue, in the midst of the professing people of God, and as gathered before God; introduced in the person of a man whom he has possessed. The Word, in the mouth of Christ, manifests him, and he cries out in words which show his conviction, and are demoniac in their suggestion still. Gripping his poor victim to him, "he cries out, saying, Let *us* alone: what have *we* to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? art Thou come to destroy us? *I* know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God."

The change of pronoun is very suggestive here. The knowledge of the Holy One is that of the demon alone; he would join with him in the dread which it inspires, and the desire to escape from Him as a destroyer, the one to whom He is to be a Saviour! The devil is always that—the "false accuser"; and the dread of coming doom (which he has—for "the demons believe and tremble") cannot alter his nature. Hell will make no change in this way, though doubtless it will be, and is meant to be, a restraint upon the manifestation of it.

But the word of Christ casts out the demon: in one last convulsion, permitted to show the reality of his malign power, ere he leaves unwillingly his prey.

for he taught them as having authority, and not as the scribes. And * there was in their synagogue a man with an [u]unclean spirit; and he cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I [v]know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And the unclean spirit [w]convulsing him, and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. And they were all [x]amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What is this? a new teaching! with authority he commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey him. And his [y]fame went out immediately into the whole region of Galilee round about.

And immediately when they had gone out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. And Simon's [z]mother-in-law lay sick of a fever; and immediately they tell him of her. And he came and took her by the hand and raised her up; and † the fever left her, and she [a]ministered unto them.

u Lk. 4. 33-37. *cf.* Rev. 16. 13.
v ver. 34. *cf.* Jas. 2. 19.
w ch. 9. 20, 26. *cf.* Jno. 8. 44.
x ch. 2. 12.
y Matt. 4. 24.
z Matt. 8. 14, 15. Lk. 4. 38, 39.
a *cf.* Matt. 27. 55. *cf.* Philem. 11.

* Many ancient MSS. add "immediately."
† Some add "immediately."

The people, amazed, accredit it as the testimony of a "new teaching," a fresh interposition of God in the affairs of men, as in truth it was. "Signs" were for the confirmation of the Word, wherever this was new, or where, perhaps, as in Elijah's time, it had been practically lost, and needed recovery. Where it had been received, among disciples of Christ even, where the workers of miracles had a distinct place, and signs originally followed those that believed, (Mark xvi. 17), they yet were given in conformity with the divine purpose as to them. The people, therefore, rightly inferred a new teaching from the power accompanying the Lord's word. And the manifestations of that power were completely in accordance with the grace that characterized the message that was being given. They were works of power in deliverance and blessing. The New Testament Elijah "*wrought no* miracle" (John x. 41); grace in the One that followed John lavished its wonders to attract the needy ones it sought.

Here then the field of service opens out: God in His overflow of goodness amid the sin and sorrow of the world finds in Christ the means of manifestation. In the gospel, for the first time, He is adequately manifested; and the miracles are a visible gospel, "powers of the age to come" (Heb. vi. 5, *Gk.*), in which the earth's salvation is anticipated and the Kingdom of God seen as redemption from all the effects of sin.

Thus, the power of Satan broken, Simon's mother-in-law is raised up from her sick bed with ability at once to minister. And then a multitude of these two classes, the diseased and those possessed with demons, carefully and twice over distinguished from one another, gather around Him, to find unfailingly deliverance at His hands.

But with this we are given a glimpse also of that abiding intercourse with God in which He lived. "Rising early a great while before day, He went out and went away into a desert place, and there prayed." The picture of service would not be complete without this—the root of it. But how instructive to find such seasons of retirement and prayer observed by the Son of God! Our natural thoughts as to such a Person would be against it. We should be inclined to think it too formal, too artificial, and ignoring too much of His divine nature;

And when the [b]evening was come, and the sun had gone down, they brought to him [c]all that were diseased, and those that were possesesd with demons, and the whole city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many that were sick of various diseases, and cast out many demons, and [d]suffered not the demons to speak, because they knew him.

And in the morning [e]rising early a great while before day, he went out and went away into a desert place, and there prayed. And Simon followed him, and they that were with him. And they found him, and say unto him, All men are seeking thee. And he saith unto them, Let us go elsewhere into the neighboring country-towns, that I may preach there also; for [f]therefore came I forth. And he went into their synagogues, preaching throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.

[b] Matt.8.16, 17. Lk.4.40,41. *cf.* Jno.8.12.
[c] Matt. 11.4, 5. Lk. 9. 11.
[d] vers. 24, 25. ch. 3. 12. *cf.* Acts 16. 17, 18.
[e] Lk. 4. 42-44. Lk. 5. 16.
[f] Is.61. 1, 2. *cf.* Matt.10. 5, 6.

we should imagine it as implying too much an effort to get near or to keep near His Father. The evangelist does not in the least stop to apologize for it or explain it, however; but leaves it to have its due effect upon us, a needed feature in the picture of the glorious Worker here. How necessary then for us must be such hours of retirement, such seasons of devotion! which, alas, some would consider it "legal" to insist upon, whether for ourselves or others, and which the intrusion of things without, the demands of daily life, the very occupation with service itself, are apt to trench upon so much. Noticeable it is, then, that the apostles, upon making the proposition for the choice of the Seven, gave as their own occupation,—"we will give ourselves unto prayer and to the ministry of the Word:—"to prayer," as the first requisite, not an appendage to their work, but an essential part of the work itself. For here the vessel is put afresh under the fountain,—the instrument into the Hand that is really to handle it.

Nor is it forgotten in saying this that the spring is really in the vessel,—that our Lord has said, "The water that I shall give him shall be *in* him, a fountain of water, springing up unto eternal life." None the less must there be for overflow the practical acknowledgment of dependence which, giving God His place, gives man also his. No spiritual working is independent of moral order; and divine power works so as to give place to human responsibility for this.

That the Son of God should be found in such conformity to human conditions shows us how truly He is Man; and we are meant, as is plain, to realize this. Scripture does not hide but brings fully before us the truth of His manhood, and that in ways which writers not speaking as "moved by the Holy Ghost" would surely not have ventured.

The disciples follow the Lord with the announcement that all men are seeking Him. They are evidently under the impress of the popular feeling, and have no discernment of its character. The Lord meets it quietly with the purpose of God which He is fulfilling. The crowd might rather hinder His access to souls, or misrepresent the grace which was seeking men to bring them with their personal needs before God. Not in the crowd but in isolation could this best be done, and the seed of the Word must be scattered widely to find the good ground that would receive it. "Let us go elsewhere," He says, "into the neighboring country-towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth." He passes over the wonders which have attracted the masses, to emphasize the preaching of the Word as His true object. "And He went into the synagogues and preached throughout all Galilee, and cast out demons." Mark, as the Gospel of service, shows us everywhere the power of the enemy on the alert to frustrate it. In the presence of Christ the enemy has no power; but

3 (40–45): The leper cleansed.

3. And there cometh unto him a [g]leper beseeching him, and falling on his knees to him, and saying to him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And he was moved with compassion and stretched out his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I [h]will: be thou cleansed. And immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. And having strictly charged him, immediately he sent him away, and saith unto him, [i]See that thou say nothing to any one; but go thy way, show thyself unto the priest, and offer for thy cleansing the things that [j]Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. But he went away, and began to proclaim it much, and to spread abroad the matter, so that he could no longer enter openly into the city, but was without in [k]desert places; and they came to him from every side.

[g] Matt. 8. 2-4. Lk. 5. 12-14. *cf.* Lev. 13. 44-46 with Is. 1. 5, 6.
[h] *cf.* Jno. 6. 37.
[i] ch. 5. 43.
[j] Lev. 14. 2-20.
[k] ch. 6. 31, 32. *cf.* Is. 35. 1.

there is in man himself what is of deeper significance, and this it is to which the evangelist now points our attention.

3. Mark and Luke join together the story of the leper and that of the palsied man. Leprosy was in Israel so connected with banishment from the presence of God, and in itself so virulent and incurable an evil, as readily to suggest the corruption and malignity of sin as that of which it was a type (*see Lev. xiii. notes*). With sin also the Lord links the case of the palsied man: first of all pronouncing him forgiven before healing him. The two together thus naturally remind us of the corruption and impotence of fallen men, the "ungodly" and "without strength" of the apostle (Rom. v. 6). Here is the double witness to the ruin of man; in their healing, therefore, the witness of the full provision for his need in Christ.

The story of the leper is given in very similar terms in the three synoptists. Mark is slightly the fullest; Matthew the least full. Mark alone speaks of the Lord's compassion moving the hand that touched the unclean and cleansed him. Thus an authority higher than that of law was confirmed by the law: and for this the leper is sent to the priest. He had to certify that One not under its restrictions had done what it was not possible for law to do. No more could it deal with the corruption of heart which the touch of Christ alone can remedy. "He that sinneth hath not seen Him neither known Him," says the disciple nearest to Him. Surely *he* knows Him, who has felt the thrill of that life-giving touch which brings out of the otherwise unending banishment into the sweet relationships of a new life with God for ever.

"Immediately the leprosy departed from him." So that a robber, from his well-earned cross of shame, is ready for Paradise and the company of Christ. So that the apostle can say of us all, that the Father "*hath* made us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. i. 12). The blotches and disfigurements of our practical life may seem to gainsay this; and we must not deny or belittle them: alas, there is in us still that which is not Christian; but there is, too, a new man, "created in Christ Jesus unto good works," and who can say of all this, "It is not I that do it;" and it still remains true, whether or not we have learned to reconcile it with our experience, that "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin: for His seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

Into all this it is not here the place to enter. Mark emphasizes the prohibition to the healed man not to publish the miracle, and notes the effect of this being violated, the reason for the Lord's withdrawing from the crowds being, no doubt, what it was before. Follow Him, however, they will, for their needs are imperative, and the omnipotent mercy of God is with Him, flowing freely for them.

4 (ii. 1–12): Impotence.

4. And again he [l] entered into Capernaum after [some] days, and it was reported that he was in the house. And [immediately] * many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room, even at the door; and he spake the word unto them. And they come unto him bringing a [m] paralytic, borne by four. And, not being able to bring [him] to him on account of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where he was; and having [n] broken [it] up, they let down the couch on which the paralytic lay. And Jesus, seeing their faith, saith unto the paralytic, Child, thy sins are [o] forgiven [thee]. And there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man speak thus? he blasphemeth: who can forgive sins but one—[p] God? And immediately Jesus, [q] knowing in his spirit that they were reasoning thus within themselves, saith unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to [r] say to the paralytic, Thy

* Many omit.

[l] Matt. 9. 1. Lk. 5. 17.

[m] Matt.9.2-8. Lk.5.18-26. *cf.* Is.40.29.

[n] *cf.* Matt. 15. 23-28. *cf.*Lk.18.39.

[o] *cf.*Col.2.13.

[p] *cf.* Jno. i. 1, 14 with Jno. 8. 11. *cf.* Is. 43.25

[q] *cf.* Jno. 2. 25. *cf.*Matt.17. 25.

[r] *cf.* ch.1.27. *cf.* Lk.4.32. *cf.* Ps. 33.6, 9.

4. The healing of the paralytic follows that of the leper; and here the crowd is a manifest hindrance to drawing near the Lord. His own condition also forbids it on his own part, but the faith of others bears him up, and through all obstacles, into the presence of Christ. How good to see the ready answer that faith in this way here receives. The Lord goes to the root of the matter: He deals with what underlies the whole condition; "Son," He says, "thy sins be forgiven thee."

"It was a wondrous utterance, and must have sounded still more strangely, when thus first heard, than to us who have been familiar with it from childhood. No one had ever heard Him admit, even by a passing word, His own sinfulness; He showed no humility before God as a sinner; never sought pardon at His hands. Yet no Rabbi approached Him in opposition to all that was wrong, for He went even beyond the act to the sinful desire. The standard He demanded was no less than the awful perfection of God. But those round Him heard Him now rise above any mere tacit assumption of this sinless purity by His setting Himself in open contrast with sinners, in His claim, not only to announce the forgiveness of sins by God, but Himself to dispense it. He pardons the sins of the repentant creature before Him on His own authority as a King, which it would be contradictory to have done, had He Himself been conscious of having any sin and guilt of His own. It is clear that He could have ventured on no such assumption of the prerogative of God, had He not felt in Himself an absolute harmony of spiritual nature with Him, so that He only uttered what He knew was the divine will. It was at once a proclamation of His own sinlessness, and of His kingly dignity as the Messiah, in whose hands had been placed the rule over the new theocracy." *

Such an answer to faith was a challenge, no less, to unbelief; and the scribes sitting watchful there among the rest, could not but be roused. It shows how they felt yet the power of His presence, or that for the time, "the world had gone after Him," that they keep it in their hearts without utterance; but there in their hearts it ferments: "Why doth this man speak thus? he blasphemeth: who can forgive sins but God alone?"

But He pursues even the unspoken thought with His divine knowledge: "Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Which is *easier*"—a beautiful word that "easier": for with Him words must have their full worth, nothing

* Geikie: "Life and Words of Christ."

sins are forgiven, or to say, Rise and take up thy couch, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins, (he saith unto the paralytic,) I say unto thee, Arise; take up thy couch and go unto thy house. And he arose, and immediately taking up his couch, went forth before them all; so that they were all amazed and *glorified God, saying, We have never seen it thus.

5. [1] And he went forth again by the sea; and all the multitude came to him, and he taught them. And [t] passing on, he saw Levi the [son] of Alphæus sitting at the tax-office, and saith unto him, Follow me: and he

5 (ii. 13-iii. 6): The dispensational conditions.
1 (ii.13-17): grace seeking.

s. *cf.* Matt. 15. 31. *cf.* Phil. 2. 11.

t Matt. 9. 9-13. Lk. 5. 27-32.

less; so that the word carries all the weight of the deed:—"Which is *easier*, to say to the paralytic, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Rise and take up thy couch, and walk?" Yet now His deeds shall vouch for His words, if only it may conquer them to faith:—"But, that ye may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins,—He saith unto the paralytic—Arise, take up thy couch, and go unto thy house."

And so it is: the glorious announcement is convincingly sealed. Forgiveness of sins, not possible under stringent conditions, or to be known when called to meet God, but *now*, "on earth," positively assured and made his own, and the new life flowing through him the seal of it: this is what becomes the possession of the rejoicing man. This is also the good news that is published in him to the multitude around. "The *Son of man* has" this "authority:" One in the reality of man's nature, yet exceptional in that very title; having to emphasize in His own case, as strange to it, what need not be affirmed of another;—well might they be amazed, and glorify God for it! Not to them only: to earth, hell, heaven, it was the marvel of marvels. Angels were saying adoringly, with this company of earth's fallen creatures, objects in their misery of the love that brought Him down: "We never saw it on this fashion."

5. All this intimates the change that was coming in. Already there was among them One who was greater than the law and stood in a very different relation to it than men as sinners. Doubtless there was, incorporated witht he law itself, a ritualistic system which in contrast with the rigor of the moral requirement, addressed itself to sinners as a provision of mercy which pointed the eye of faith also to the better thing to come. But, just as doing this, it revealed its own incapacity for deliverance from the condemnation which the law to which it was wedded preached, and was designed to preach. Only in preaching this could it act as the "handmaid" of the grace for which it was preparing the way; and to find hope in law was just to defeat the very end for which it was given; and thus the Lord had to tell the people led away by their blind Pharisaic teachers: "There is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust."

The ministry of Christ showed clearly that all was on the point of change. Divine love, now manifesting itself in Him, could be satisfied with nothing short of the fullest expression; and this is what He now affirms. The call of Matthew or Levi, and that which is connected with it here, is found in almost identical words in the three synoptists. The teaching as to the Sabbath with which it is followed in Mark and Luke, is found in Matthew in a different connection.

[1] While the *matter* of the Lord's teaching is more fully given in any other of the Gospels than in Mark, the *fact* and constancy of it are as much insisted on as in any, and the miracles, as we have seen, follow and confirm it. His going forth again *by the sea* and teaching may have significance akin to what we find in Matthew xiii.: for the grace now to display itself so fully, apart from law, suggests ever that going forth to the nations in which it was so soon to issue.

arose and followed him. And it came to pass, as he sat at table in his house, that many tax-gatherers and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples; for there were many, and they followed him. And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with tax-gatherers and sinners, they said unto his disciples, He eateth and drinketh* with [u]tax-gatherers and sinners! And when Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are in [v]health have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous but sinners.

[2] (ii.18-22): the old and the new.

[2] And the disciples of John and the Pharisees were [w]fasting; and they come and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and the disciples of the Pharisees

[u] Lk.15.1,2. Matt.11.19.

[v] Matt. 18. 11. Lk. 19.7.10. *cf.* 1 Tim.1. 15.

[w] Matt.9.14 –17. Lk.5.33-39. *cf.* Matt. 6. 16–18.

*Some omit "and drinketh."

Mark alone gives this as the preface to the calling of Levi, as Matthew is called in Luke also; Mark only speaks of him as the son of Alphæus: what is signified for us by the difference of name?

The meaning of Levi we already know. Leah says at his birth: "Now will my husband be joined to me. . . . Therefore was his name called Levi" (joined).

Alphæus is more difficult. Some give it, with Young, as "leader, chief." Others would identify it with Clopas (the Cleophas of our common version, John xix. 25), and then it may *mean "passing on" or "beyond," in a bad sense, "transgressing." In this way the two names have a relation to each other and to the context here, so striking that it is hard not to accept it as giving that divine thought which assuredly there is somewhere to be found. They would thus speak of "joining together" as the result of "passing beyond" law, and so does grace bring God and man, Gentile and Jew together.

In this way Levi, the tax-gatherer, called from his tax-office to be an apostle of Christ, from a legal exactor to be a minister of the divine bounty, comes to fulfil his name. We have abundance of similar cases in the word of God; and if absence of meaning could be proved in Levi's case, this would be indeed the strange thing to be accounted for.

Grace has its way, and Levi follows Jesus; and this becomes an initiative of work of a like pattern. For to Levi's house many come of those whom the Jews put together as of one kind—"tax-gatherers and sinners"—and take their places at table with Jesus and His disciples; and it is added as an explanatory note upon this, "for there were many, and they followed Him." This is only what the Lord Himself told the Pharisees as to John; and they that had ear for John's stern insistence on repentance had ear also on this very account for the "piping" of grace.

But the Pharisees and scribes find fault with this laxity, as they conceive it. "Why is it," they ask, "that He eateth and drinketh with tax-gatherers and sinners?" His answer is conclusive: He is the Physician of souls: will He surround Himself, then, with the healthy or diseased? He does not come on the vain quest for righteousness, which the law had already proved vain: then indeed He would have been, as they thought Him, in a wrong place; but He had made no such mistake. Were they making none? "I came not to call the righteous but sinners." And sinners are they who have always heard that call.

[2] But this involved a far-reaching change of method. The old must give place to the new, the rigid forms be exchanged for the expansive freedom of the Spirit. How could the prescribed fasts go on, with the Bridegroom in their

*As Chalpai.

fast, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said unto them, Can the sons of the bridechamber fast, while the [x]bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. But days will come when the bridegroom shall be [y]taken away from them; and then shall they fast, in that day. [z]No one seweth a patch of new* cloth upon an old garment, else the new which filleth it up taketh from the old, † and there cometh a [a]worse rent. And no one putteth new wine into old [wine-] skins; else the wine bursteth the skins, and the wine is poured out and the [b]skins perish; but new wine must be put into new skins.

[x] *cf.* Jno. 3. 29.

[y] *cf.* Jno. 16. 6, 20, 22.

[z] *cf.* Gal. 3. 1-3.

[a] *cf.* Heb. 6. 4-8, *cf.* 2 Pet. 2. 20-22.

[b] *cf.* Heb. 10. 26, 27. *ctr.* 2 Cor. 5. 16, 17.

3 (ii. 23-28): the sign of the Sabbath.

[3] And it came to pass that he [c]went on the Sabbath-day 'through the corn-fields; and his disciples began to make their way, plucking ‡ the ears. And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the Sabbath that which is not lawful? And he said unto them, Have ye never read what [d]David did, when he had need and was ahungered, he and those with him, how he went into the house of God in [the days of] Abiathar the high priest, and ate the show-bread, which it is not lawful to eat, except for the 'priests, and gave also to those that were with him? And he said unto them, The [f]Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: so that the [g]Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath.

[c] Matt. 12. 1-8. Lk. 6. 1-5.

[d] 1 Sa. 21. 1-6.

[e] Lev. 24. 5-9.

[f] *cf.* Lk. 14. 5.

[g] Matt. 12. 8. *cf.* Jno. 5. 16-18.

4 (iii. 1-6): the need of man.

[4] And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was there a man having his hand [h]withered. And they

[h] Matt. 12. 9-13. Lk. 6. 6-10.

* Or "unfulled."

† Perhaps more literally—"the filling up takes away from it, the new from the old."

‡ Or, "as they went, to pluck."

midst? By and by, indeed, He would be taken away; and then they would fast. But how could their rags of legal righteousness be patched with the so different righteousness of faith? or the new wine of spiritual power be shut up in the forms of ceremonial Judaism?

[3] Mark and Luke append to this the Lord's settlement of the Sabbath question, which for the Jew had such great importance as involving their whole covenant-relation to God. This we have very similarly in Matthew (chap. xii. 1-13, *see notes*), though in a different connection. The example of David is given here as there; but instead of the appeal to the priests in the temple, and the quotation from Hosea, Mark substitutes Christ's own affirmation that "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: so that the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath." The tender solicitude for man, which appeared in such an institution, and which the Pharisees had gone far to obliterate by the harshness of their additions, was itself the convincing proof of the authority of the Son of man over it. It was for man that He had *become* the Son of man; and as such, all the blessing of man was in His hand to accomplish. Reject Him, and all this vanished. The rest of God, the real rest for all His creatures, He alone could bring in; and the sign was necessarily gone when that which it signified had no longer reality for any.

[4] The need of man is enforced more strongly in the synagogue lesson which follows, the healing of the withered hand. Here they would have restrained with their interpretation of the Sabbath law the very going out of divine power

watched him, if he would heal him on the Sabbath, that they might accuse him. And he saith unto the man that had the withered hand, Rise in the midst. And he saith unto them, Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do [i]good or to do evil, to save life or to kill? But they were silent. And looking round upon them with [j]anger, being distressed at the hardening of their heart, he saith unto the man, [k]Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored. And the Pharisees went out immediately with the Herodians, and took [l]counsel against him, how they might destroy him.

i *cf.* Lk. 14. 3.
j *cf.* Matt. 23. 13, etc.
k *cf.* Jno. 4. 50. *cf.* Rom. 4. 19–25.
l Matt. 12. 14. Lk. 6. 11. *cf.* Ps. 109. 4, 5.

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chaps. iii. 7–v.)

Things made apparent.

SECTION 1. (chap. iii. 7–iv. 34.)

God only sufficient.

1 (iii. 7–19): Divine power in grace.
1 (iii. 7–12): in the Lord Himself.

1. [1] AND Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea; and a great [m]multitude followed from Galilee, and from Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea,

m Matt. 12. 15. Lk. 6. 17–19.

itself in behalf of such misery as the world was full of. Was it, then, a law not to do good but to do evil? to let death have its way, rather than preserve life? But they remain obstinately silent. Then, the love within Him burning to anger at the hardness of their hearts, He summons divine power to witness against them in the healing of the man. They are confounded but unhumbled; and their wrath against Him unites Pharisees with Herodians henceforth to destroy Him.

SUBD. 3.

We have had then, thus far, the general features of the ministry of Christ among men; we are now called to consider the results of it, or what is made apparent by it as it goes on. And here we must remember, and as of wider application, the words prophetically spoken by Isaiah as to Israel: "Then I said, I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nought and in vain; yet surely my judgment is with Jehovah, and my work with my God." Not only was it true of Israel, but, all through the present time, apparent failure attaches to His work. Until He comes again in the clouds of heaven, the world remains the scene of His rejection, and none the less because whole countries are covered with nominal Christianity. Nay, this nominal reception only makes more manifest, where it is but that, how obdurately, when no plea for it is any longer possible, the citadel of the heart can stand out against Him. Thus, to follow one's own will, and justify it, truth is perverted and Christianity debased. "The corruption of what is best becomes the worst corruption."

And yet the end shall speak for Him, that neither His love nor His power has failed. Heaven is filling with the fruits of His travail. By and by the earth also shall have its harvest. Meanwhile faith and patience are exercised and needed constantly.

Sec. 1.

The whole subdivision is divided into seven parts; but the 4+3 into which the seven so often resolves itself, is so strongly marked that these become two sections. The first, as characterized by its 4, shows that external view of results which seems so much stamped with failure, but in which (man being fully proved) the sufficiency of God is seen as alone to be relied on. The second, stamped with its 3 of spiritual energy and resurrection, shows us the work of God itself in its salvation character, unhindered by the power of evil.

and beyond Jordan; and those around Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, having heard what he was doing, came to him. And he spake to his disciples that a little boat should wait on him, on account of the crowd, that they might not press upon him. For he healed many, so that they pressed on him, that they might [n]touch him, as many as had plagues. And the unclean spirits, when they beheld him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God. And he [o]rebuked them much, that they should not make him manifest.

2 (iii.13-19): His ministers.

[2] And he goeth up into the mountain, and [p]calleth to him whom he himself would; and they came away to him. And he appointed twelve that they should be with him, and that he might send them out to preach, and to have authority to [heal diseases and to]* cast out demons: and Simon he surnamed Peter; and James the [son] of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, that is, sons of thunder; and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the [son] of Alphæus, and Thaddæus, and Simon the Cananæan,† and Judas Iscariot, who also delivered him up.

2 (iii.20-30): Rejection and blasphemy.

2. And he cometh into [the] house. And again the multitude cometh together, so that they could not so much as eat bread. And when his [q]relatives heard of

n Matt. 14. 36. Lk. 6. 19.

o Matt. 12. 16. ch. 1. 25,34. Lk. 4. 41.

p Matt. 10. 1-4. Lk.6.13-16. Lk. 9. 1. *cf.* Jno. 15. 16. *cf.* Rev. 21. 14 with Eph. 2. 20.

q ver. 31. Jno. 7. 5. *cf.* Jno.8.48. *cf.* Acts 26. 24.

*Many MSS. omit.
†Or "zealot."

1. At the commencement we see once more divine power flowing forth in grace to meet all the effects of sin, in a world disorganized and ruined by it. A witness this which has a certain, present effect in attracting multitudes from all the country round.

[1] First, we have this as seen in the Lord Himself; where, notice, as to its significance in connection with what has been already said, that Jesus "withdraws with His disciples to the *sea:*" a hint, as we have seen reason to believe, of that going out to the nations which, however implied in the very character of the grace which is coming in, actually takes its form from Israel's rejection of Him. At present it is Israel that is crowding after Him, but (notice again) in such a manner that He must take to the little ship because of the crowd.

The power of Satan, too, is everywhere manifest, though as manifestly subject of necessity to Him. After the manner we have seen, still they declare Him,—only to be rebuked and silenced by Him, as unfit to be His witnesses. Indeed we may see in it already an indication of how by and by the unclean birds would get lodgment in the branches of the overgrown "tree" of a parable which we find shortly given us in this very section.

[2] Next we are shown this ministry of the Lord extended by means of those called and empowered of Him to represent Him. For this they are ordained, first of all to be "with Him;" then that He might send them out to preach; the power to heal sicknesses and cast out demons being the accompaniment of this. The list of the twelve which follows is not in the same order as that in Matthew, except that Simon Peter's is the first name, while that of the unhappy Judas is the last.

2. What follows here is still for the most part in Matthew, who however gives a much fuller account. Mark omits much that came after the choice of the

it, they came forth to lay hold of him: for they said, He is beside himself. And the scribes that came down from Jerusalem said, He hath [r]Beelzebub, and by the prince of demons he casteth out demons. And he called them unto him and said unto them in parables, How can [s]Satan cast out Satan? And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house be divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end. But no man can enter into the [t]strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first [u]bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house. Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme; but whosoever shall [v]blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but lieth under an eternal sin: [w]because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

3 (iii.31-35): The real link with Christ spiritual.

3. And his [x]mother and his brethren come; and, standing without, they sent unto him, calling him. And the multitude sat around him; and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without are seeking thee. And he answering saith unto them: Who is my mother, and my brethren? And looking round on those sitting round about him, he saith, Behold my mother and my brethren. For whosoever shall do the [y]will of God, the same is my brother and sister and mother.

r Matt.9.34. Matt.10.25. Matt.12.24. Lk. 11. 14, 15. Jno. 10. 20.
s Matt.12.25–28. Lk. 11. 16–20.
t Matt.12.29. Lk. 11. 21, 22. cf. Ps.35.10. cf.Lk.13.16.
u cf. Heb.2. 14, 15. cf. 1 Jno. 3. 8.
v Matt. 12. 31, 32. Lk. 12. 10. cf. 1 Jno.1. 7. cfr. Eph.4. 30 with Eph. 1. 13, 14.
w cf. 1 Cor. 12. 3. cf.Is. 5. 20. cf. 1 Pet.4. 4, 5.
x Matt. 12. 46–50. Lk.8.19–21. ch. 6. 3.
y cf. Jno.20. 17. cf. Heb. 2. 11, 12. cf. Rom. 8. 17. cf. Ps. 16.2, 3.

twelve. Of the so-called "sermon on the mount" he has nothing, and little detail of the breach which is now becoming apparent between the nation led by its Pharisaic teachers and the Lord. All this has more its place in Matthew as the dispensational Gospel, while Mark comes almost at once to the conclusion when the scribes impute His miracles to demon power. This exhibits so clearly the heart hardened against all conviction that Christ warns them that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, by whose power His mighty works were done, is the unpardonable sin. The expression in Mark, if the best accredited text is in fact the true one, is that it is "an *eternal* sin"—a sin which in its mark of a soul stiffened in determinate resistance to God speaks of an ultimate, eternal condition. Alas, it was demonic power in Israel that was asserting itself, and only One stronger than Satan could bind and deprive him of his prey. Satan would not cast out Satan; and the fact of his being cast out, that very slander admitted. They had thus, in fact, condemned themselves.

3. But all this was but the demonstration of man's condition, which only the power of God is competent to meet. Even his kindred according to the flesh thought of the glorious Worker as "beside Himself;" and now they press upon Him in the midst of His labor with their supposed (at least) prior claim. With Him they could not plead it: the Son of God, this relationship to God governed all. It was on account of the state of man Godward He had come, and His very presence among them argued, not their being right in this, but the reverse. For Him the spiritual condition was that upon which all else depended, and the spiritual link was all that He could acknowledge. In the most decisive way, therefore, He rejects the mere fleshly claim: "Who," He asks, "is My mother, and My brethren? And looking round on those sitting round about Him, He

4 (iv. 1-34): The Word testing men.
1 (1-20): causes of barrenness.

4. [1] And again he began to teach by the [z]sea-side; and there was gathered unto him a very great multitude, so that he entered into the ship, and sat in the sea: and all the multitude were by the sea, upon the land. And he taught them many things in parables, and said unto them in his teaching,—

z Matt.13.1, 2. Lk. 8. 4. cf. Is. 60. 5.

Hearken: behold, there went out the [a]sower to sow. And, as he sowed, some fell by the wayside, and the [b]birds came and devoured it up. And other fell upon the rocky ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth; and when the sun arose it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. And other fell among the thorns; and the thorns sprang up and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. And others fell upon good ground, and yielded fruit, growing up and increasing, and brought forth thirtyfold, and sixtyfold, and a hundredfold. And he said, He that hath [c]ears to hear, let him hear.

a Matt. 13. 3-9. Lk. 8. 5-8.
b vers. 15, etc.
c Matt. 11, 15. cf. Rev. 2. 7, etc.

And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked him about the parables. And saith, Behold My mother and My brethren: for whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother and sister and mother."*

4. There follows, as in Matthew, the parable of the Sower and the seed, but only one other of what there is a series picturing the Kingdom of heaven as it would take shape in the absence of the King. The Lord's last announcement of necessity brings in the Gentiles; if at least the work of the Spirit of God should be found among them: it contains, as is evident, a fundamental principle of Christianity; and Matthew traces the history of this till the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven. Mark has one parable, indeed, which Matthew has not, and showing explicitly the absence of the King until the time of the harvest; but Matthew does not need this, as what he does give sufficiently declares it. Mark gives only so much of the history as to develop the principles; pressing all into a moral dealing with the individual conscience.

Here we are still upon the same track as before: the lesson is of the vanity of man, of the sufficiency of God alone. The parables here show this under the test of the word of God. The ground of the human heart yields nothing for God save as the Word is sown in it. Even then there are many causes of unfruitfulness, and foes of the new life that has sprung up. Nay, the general result as to the earth at large is mingled and dubious. What, in fact, has the history of the Church shown, if it be not this? How great the comfort of knowing, however, that this is no unforeseen, unaccountable happening. Before the Church began, the history of professing Christianity had already been outlined, and the causes of failure pointed out; and in the New Testament, parable, literal prophecy and vision have all been used to give us warning—a warning which is encouragement as well.

[1] The causes of barrenness are depicted for us in the parable of the Sower and the seed; and we have already gone through it in Matthew. From the word of God all fruit in man is to be found, yet from man himself opposition comes. The devil, the flesh, and the world are confederates against Christ; and the same hindrances, even where the word is received, prevail to hinder in different degrees the proper fruit of it.

* One need hardly point out the rebuke of Romish Mariolatry in all this. It is, in fact, constant throughout the Gospels (comp. Luke ii. 48, 49; xi. 27, 28; John ii. 3, 4).

he said unto them, Unto you it is [d]given [to know] * the mystery of the kingdom of God; but unto those that are without all things are done in parables: that [e]seeing they might see, and not perceive, and hearing they might hear, and not understand; lest haply they should turn, and it might be forgiven them. And he saith unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know [f]all parables?

The sower soweth the word. And these are they by the wayside, where the word is sown, and when they have heard, immediately [g]Satan cometh and taketh away the word that was sown in them. And these are they likewise who are sown in rocky places, who, when they hear the word, immediately with joy receive it; and they have not root in themselves, but endure for a time: then, when [h]affliction or persecution cometh on account of the word, immediately they are offended. And others are they who are sown among the thorns; these are they who have heard the word, and the [i]cares of the world † and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts after other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. And those are they that were sown upon the good ground: such as hear the word and [j]accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold, and sixtyfold, and a hundredfold.

2 (iv. 21-25): hindrances to testimony and increase.

[2] And he said to them: Doth the lamp come, that it may be put under the [k]bushel or under the [l]bed, and not to be upon the stand? For there is nothing hid, but in order to be [m]manifested; nor hath anything been made secret, but in order that it might come to light. If any one have ears to hear, let him hear. And

* Many omit.
† Or "age."

d Matt. 13. 10-17. Lk. 8. 9,10. *cf.* Matt.11. 25-27.
e Is. 6. 9, 10. *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 14. *cf.* Rom.. 8. 5-7.
f *cf.* 1Cor.10. 6, 11 with Rom. 15. 4.
g Matt. 13. 18-23. Lk.8.11-15. *cf.* ver. 4 with Jer.5. 27. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4.
h *cf.* vers.5, 6 with Prov.28.14. *cfp.* Ps. 51. 17.
i *cf.* ver. 7 with Prov. 22. 5. *cf.*1 Tim.6. 9, 10.
j *cf.* ver. 8 with Jer.4. 3, 4. Hos. 10.12. *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 13.
k Matt.5.15. Lk. 11. 33. *cf.* Lk. 14. 18, 19.
l *cf.*Prov.19. 15. *cf.* Eph. 5. 14.
m Matt. 10. 26. *cf.* Phil. 2. 15, 16.

Notice in the Lord's rebuke to His disciples, how little the parabolic form should hinder intelligence for one of His own. "How then will ye know all parables?" shows what on the Lord's part He designs for us. And everywhere, it need not be doubted, in Nature as well as in Scripture, such parables are to be found awaiting the interpretation of faith. Alas, we may, on the other hand, be ignorant of their very existence, and reason may deny what without such guidance it can never find; but agnosticism of whatever quality has no power of conviction for the man that sees; were the prayer oftener with us, "Open Thou mine eyes," we might at least realize more the immeasurableness of our inheritance.

[2] After the causes of barrenness the Lord goes on to warn of hindrances to testimony. If the word of God is that from which all fruit is to come, how great the responsibility to minister it. If a lamp is brought, what do you do with it? It is for illumination doubtless. Do you put it, then, under a bushel measure, or under a bed? Clearly not, but upon its stand. Activity and slothfulness as typified in these two ways may both hinder testimony: the heart bent upon gain, and occupied with what is emphatically called "*business*," like the thorny ground of the parable, may have little room for the Word, either to get hold of it or to scatter it. While Og's great bed of ease and pleasure may keep men as securely from occupation with or ministry of the things unseen. Christ bids

he said unto them, Take [n]heed what ye hear: with whatsoever [o]measure ye mete it shall be measured unto you; and more shall be given you. For [p]whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away from him.

3 (iv. 26-29): the manifestation at harvest.

[3] And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast [q]seed upon the earth, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring up and grow, he knoweth not how. The [r]earth bringeth forth fruit of herself: first, the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear; but when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he sendeth out the sickle, because the [s]harvest is come.

4 (iv. 30-34): the success which is failure.

[4] And he said, How shall we liken the kingdom of God, or with what parable shall we set it forth? It is like a grain of [t]mustard-seed, which, when it is sown upon the earth, is less than all seeds that are upon the earth, and when it has been sown, it mounteth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and maketh great branches, so that the [u]birds of heaven can lodge under its shadow.

n *cf.* Jas. 1. 19. *cf.* Acts 16. 14.
o Matt. 7. 2. Lk. 6. 38.
p Matt. 13. 12. Matt. 25. 29. Lk. 8. 18. Lk. 19. 26. *cf.* Jno. 15. 2. *cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 3.
q *cf.* Matt. 13. 24-30, 36-43.
r *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 6, 7.
s *cf.* Rev. 14. 14-16.
t Matt. 13. 31, 32. Lk. 13. 18, 19. *cf.* Acts 1. 15 with Acts 2. 41. *cf.* Ex. 12. 38.
u *cf.* ver. 4 with Dan. 4. 20-22.

His disciples have before them the day of manifestation, in which all secret things shall be at last revealed.

Again, in order to minister one must receive; and if the fruit take its character from the seed, must receive only the truth. How important, then, to take heed what one hears! and what one measures out to others will be more than recompensed again: a thing as true of ministry of the Word, as of practical conduct; for heaven's law is scattering for increase,—you do not alienate from yourself what you give to others, but gain the more; and still this opens the way to fresh gain: to him that hath shall more be given. Every bit of truth acquired leads on to fresh truth; every sphere of usefulness found prepares for more.

[3] In a parable peculiar to Mark the Lord now goes on to speak of the day of manifestation at the reaping of earth's harvest, and of what is implied in it for the present time. The seed put into the ground is left there by the sower as if he had no further thought about it. It springs up and grows, as it were, without his knowledge. So the Lord after sowing the seed of His word at the beginning, is gone up to heaven. How much, in fact, seems to be taking place without His knowledge. The crop goes on developing and ripening. When He sees that it is ripe, the sickle will be put in.

Of this harvest time of earth Matthew gives us the fuller detail. The parable here simply emphasizes the time of responsibility and uncertainty—the earth bringing forth of herself; then the intervention, when the crop is ready. Of the general result nothing is said at present. All that has been already before us would imply one not unmixed. Matthew shows us correspondingly tares among the wheat; not even the failure merely of much of the right seed (a lesson which Mark has repeated), but the effect of the enemy's sowing. Mark passes over this to the third parable in Matthew; and here we find what has more sorrowful interest for us.

[4] We have already taken up in some detail the meaning of this third parable. It is that of the mustard-seed, and we have seen in it the picture, indeed, of success of a certain kind, a growth beyond expectation. The smallest of seeds develops into a tree; the Kingdom of heaven becomes (according to the constant use of the figure in Scripture) a world-power,—a thing of self-evident application, so long before our eyes that we have lost the sense of what it means.

And with [v]many such parables spake he the word to them as they were able to hear it; but without a parable spake he not unto them; but in private, to his own disciples, he expounded all things.

[v] Matt. 13. 34, 35.

SECTION 2.

The work of God in its salvation power.

1 (iv.35–41): Abiding sufficiency.

1. And on that day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us go over to the [w]other side: and having sent the multitude away, they took him with them as he was, in the ship. And there were with him other ships. And there cometh a great squall of wind upon the sea, and the waves beat into the ship, so that the ship was already filling. And *he* was in the stern, [x]asleep upon the cushion. And they awake him, and say unto him, Teacher, [y]carest thou not that we perish? And he awoke and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, [z]Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there came a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye fearful? Have ye not yet [a]faith? And they feared with great fear, and said to one another, [b]Who then is this, that also the wind and the sea obey him?

[w] Matt. 8. 18, Lk. 8. 22.

[x] Matt. 8. 23–27. Lk. 8. 23–25. *cf.* Lk. 6. 12.

[y] *cf.* Lk. 10. 40. *cf.* Ps. 44. 23.

[z] Ps. 107. 29. Ps. 65. 7. Ps. 89. 9.

[a] *cf.* Matt. 14. 31, 32. *cf.* ch. 16. 14.

[b] *cf.* Matt. 14. 33.

Christianity, we say, has a right of dominion over the earth: a claim which Rome has been most successful in making. Alas, if Christianity has ever ruled a nation upon earth, *Christ* Himself has never done so; and therefore nothing else than a *debased* Christianity. The success in this way has been dreadful failure: the well-rooted tree has given lodgment to the unclean birds of the air who in the first parable devour the good seed. Here in the degradation of the Kingdom of *heaven* to a world-power with the prince of this world undethroned, we find what even comes of the word of God among those professedly accepting, not rejecting. And here the view of man as tested by the Word comes naturally to an end.

Sec. 2.

We have now the other side: how God nevertheless manifests Himself to faith, carrying out His purposes unfailingly, spite of all opposition, and as the Saviour of all who put their trust in Him. The three subsections here as the closing part of a septenary series naturally speak of divine manifestation, while the second section as naturally speaks of that salvation work in which He is most fully manifested.

1. The stilling of the storm upon the lake is found earlier in Matthew, but with little difference in detail. In it Christ's power over the elements is exhibited to the wonder of His disciples; and in it probably all His people have seen without any question the sign of His supremacy over all circumstances of the disturbed scene through which we pass. When the storm comes, how often He seems asleep! But this is for practice of faith, not for the overthrow of it. Yet unbelief in them is importunate and querulous: "*Carest Thou not* that we perish?" as if waves could sink the ship in which He was! But there was the logic of fact: the ship was filling. They wake Him, and at His rebuke the tempest stills; but have they not missed something? and do not we often gain, perhaps, a speedier deliverance through our unbelief? when faith, like the tropic-bird, would find its rest amid the tempest, and see more the "wonders of the Lord."

Mark notices most distinctly His rebuke: "Why are ye fearful? have ye not yet faith?" And why indeed do we not trust Him with absolute rest of heart? Surely it is true that "he that feareth is not perfected in love." But then, how

2 (v. 1-20): The enemy subject.
1 (1-5): the enemy's power.

2. [1] And they [c]came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes. And immediately, when he was come out of the ship, there met him out of the tombs a man with an [d]unclean spirit, who had his dwelling in the tombs, and no one could any longer bind him, even with chains; because he had been often [e]bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been torn asunder by him, and the fetters broken to pieces: and no one had power to tame him. And continually, night and day, he was in the [f]mountains and in the [g]tombs, crying out, and [h]cutting himself with stones.

2 (6-13): the deliverance.

[2] And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped him; and crying out with a loud voice, he saith, [i]What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God? I adjure thee by God, torment me not. For he had said unto him, Come out, thou unclean spirit, out of the man. And he asked him, What is [j]thy name? And he saith unto him, Legion is my name; for we are [k]many. And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country. And there was there on the mountain side a great herd of swine feeding, and they besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. And he

c Matt. 8. 28-34. Lk. 8. 26-36.
d ch. 7. 25. cf. Rev. 16. 13, 14. cf. Jas. 3. 15.
e cf. r. ch. 3. 27. cf. ver. 26. cf. Rom. 3. 20 with Rom. 8. 7.
f cf. Jer. 13. 16.
g cf. Prov. 21. 16.
h cf. Prov. 23. 29. cf. Prov. 8. 36.
i ch. 1. 24.
j cf. Gen. 32. 27. cf. Ruth. 1. 20. cf. 1 Jno. 1. 9.
k cf. ch. 16. 9.

good to know that His love is such—so true and omnipotent—that to learn this perfectly is all that we can want for absolute deliverance.

2. The familiar story of the demoniac follows, as in the two other synoptists, showing the power of the enemy in its fullest and fiercest display entirely subject to Him. We have already looked at it in Matthew, but who in this case is much briefer in his account than Mark. Mark dwells more upon the desperate condition of the man, his being infested with a horde of demons—as he says, a Legion, and depicts his after-condition as delivered, of which Matthew says nothing. These things lie more within the scope of the present Gospel, in which the quality of the deliverance, the service done to man, is more before us, as in Matthew the Deliverer.

[1] In the first place, Mark shows us in a very distinct way the enemy's power. His victim's abode is in the tombs, he who had the power of death finding a congenial abode amid the tokens of the ruin which his hand has wrought. There he lives in the lawless freedom secured by supernatural strength. Men cannot bind him and cannot tame him: fetters and chains are broken in pieces by him; and bent upon self-injury, he is always in scenes of desolation,—on the mountains or in the tombs, crying out, and cutting himself with stones. Here are features by which we may see still in many different forms how great a hold Satan has of men still and everywhere. Spite of their pride and self-love, they pursue eagerly the paths of self-degradation and self-torture; breaking asunder every restraint which the wisdom bred of bitter experience has taught men to put upon one another. The heights of self-exaltation and the charnel-houses of corruption are alike their haunts; and these, though apparently so far apart, come often-times together.

[2] But the power of Satan, while to the fallen creature so hopeless to overcome, finds in Christ a power to which it must succumb. Throughout these evangelic histories there is not a trace of open resistance on the part of these demons, if as here there were a legion of them. They deprecate the judgment they foresee, but for which the time is not yet come, and plead this in their own behalf. They beseech Him not to send them out of the country, and ask leave to enter

gave them leave. And the unclean spirits came out and entered into the [l]swine; and the herd rushed down the steep slope into the sea ([being] about two thousand), and were choked in the sea. And they that fed them fled, and reported it in the city and in the country.

3 (14, 15): the transformation.

[3] And they came out to see what it was that had taken place. And they come to Jesus, and see him that had been possessed with demons [m]sitting, clothed, and in his right mind,—even him that had the legion; and they were afraid.

4 (16, 17): a fallen world.

[4] And they that had seen it declared to them how it had befallen him that had been possessed with demons, and concerning the swine. And they began to beseech him to [n]depart out of their borders.

5 (18–20): the responsibility.

[5] And as he was entering into the ship, he that had been possessed with demons besought him that he might be [o]with him. And he suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home unto thy people, and [p]declare to them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had mercy upon thee. And he went his way, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men wondered.

3 (v. 21–43): Resurrection-power.

1 (21–24): an appeal for life.

3. [1] And when Jesus had passed over again in the ship to the other side, a great multitude were gathered unto him; and he was by the sea. And there cometh one of

l *cf.* Lk. 15. 15.

m *cf.* Matt. 11. 28–30. *cf.* Lk. 10. 39.

n Matt. 8. 34. Lk. 8. 37. *cf.* Ex. 20. 18. *cf.* Acts 16. 39.

o Lk. 8. 38. *cf.* Rom. 5. 2. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 2, 4.

p Lk. 8. 39. *cf.* Acts 26. 19, 20. *etc.* ch. 1. 44 with Jno. 1. 11.

into the herd of swine. What purpose they might have in this, and whether it was in the end thwarted or suffered, we may have little ability to understand. The demons are still demons, and seeking their own ends as such; while the wisdom of God taketh still the wise in their own craftiness.

[3] We are then given the picture of the delivered man. Three things show the transformation wrought: he is "sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind." Restlessness, vehemence, passion, are gone; the shame of his nakedness is covered; he has come to himself and his mind is cleared. Is there any coming to oneself, where there is not coming to Christ?

[4] But the world is a fallen world, and Satan is the prince of it. Here we see how it is that he is this. Those who beg Christ to depart must needs have the devil to remain. It is but a question between the two, for nature abhors a vacuum. The Lord has shown us how an empty, swept and garnished house waits and invites such a tenant: Christ is too costly a guest: one soul to cost two thousand swine is too high a reckoning. They beg Him therefore, courteously, to depart: for He can be refused with courtesy, and yet refused: and He does depart.

[5] But the rescued man is of another mind than this: divine grace has wrought in his heart, and the deliverance of which he has been the subject is too real and great. He prays that he may be with Him; but the Lord has other purposes as to him: "Go home to thy people," He says, "and declare to them how great things the Lord has done for thee, and has had mercy upon thee." Thus is the saved sinner made to be a witness of the salvation which he has received, in the world out of which Christ has gone rejected. "And he went his way, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him; and all men wondered."

3. In the intertwined stories of the daughter of Jairus and the woman with the issue of blood, Mark again is fuller than Matthew, and the dispensational application which we have seen in his account seems to give place here to an

the rulers of the synagogue, [q] Jairus by name, and when he seeth him, he falleth at his feet, and beseecheth him much, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: [I pray thee] that thou come and lay thy hands upon her, that she may be healed and live. And he went with him; and a great multitude followed him and thronged him.

2 (25-34): the confirmation of faith.

[2] And a [r] woman who had had an issue of blood [s] twelve years, and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had [t] spent all that she had, and was no wise bettered, but rather grew [u] worse, when she heard of Jesus, came in the crowd behind, and [v] touched his garment; for she said, If I touch but his garments, I shall be healed. And immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt * in her body that she was healed of the scourge. And immediately Jesus, [w] knowing in himself the power that had gone out of him, turned about in the crowd and said, Who touched my garments? And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude [x] thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And he looked round about, to see her

q Matt. 9. 1, 18, 19, 23-26. Lk. 8. 41, 42, 49-56.

r Matt. 9. 20-22. Lk. 8. 43-48. *cf.* Lev. 15. 25-31 with Matt. 15. 19.

s *cf.* ver. 42. *cf.* Josh. 4. 2-5 with Am. 3. 2.

t *cf.* Lk. 10. 31, 32. *cf.* Rom. 5. 6. *cf.* Rom. 10. 2, 3.

u *cf.* Rom. 3. 20. *cf.* Rom. 7. 8, 11, 24.

v *cf.* Matt. 14. 35, 36 with Rom. 4. 5.

w Jno. 2. 25. *cf.* Nah. 1. 7.

x *cf.* Rom. 10. 16-18. *cf.* Rom. 9. 6 with Lk. 13. 26, 27.

* *Literally* "knew."

individual and spiritual one. We have, no doubt, the divine and human sides of what is, in fact, one glorious work of the God of resurrection. From one side we are sinners dying in our sins, and we lay hold upon Christ in our need and prove the virtue that is in Him for our healing. From the other, we were not dying simply but dead, and are raised up from the dead. Both sides are true, but we are not concerned just now with any reconciliation of them. They are in the main the views respectively of Romans and Ephesians, and we reach them in the order indicated by this.

[1] Jair, "the enlightener," as ruler of the synagogue, may signify to us by name and position both the failure and the power of law. The law had said, "Do this, and thou shalt live," but life, as he owns, is only in the hands of Jesus, to whom the conviction of his extremity brings him. Faith springs out of his daughter's need: "My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee that Thou come and lay Thy hands on her that she may be healed, and she shall live." It is the right effect of law when we are shut up by it in this way to the faith of Jesus.

[2] The Lord listens to his prayer, and follows him toward the house, a multitude thronging Him upon His way there. Amidst them all comes one who has conscious personal need of Him,—an issue of blood, a steady quiet draining of the life away, for which all the help that she has hitherto sought has been but aggravation of the evil and impoverishment. Now she has heard of Jesus, and without means, without hope, she too has reached the place in which she is ready to be attracted. Faith says in her heart, "If I touch but His garments I shall be healed"; and the event confirms this; coming in the press behind she touches; and "she felt in her body that she was healed of that scourge."

This is one of the not infrequent cases in which the spiritual application is so easy to be made that in fact it *is* made generally by the common consent of Christians, and needs little enforcement. The twelve years of unhealed misery are marked by the number of divine government as that which issues, after all other means of healing has been proved worse than vain, in the exaltation of Christ. The touching of the garments is the appeal to those ways of His which manifest His character, the "*habits*," in Him so safely to be relied upon. We

who had done this thing. But the woman, affrighted and trembling, knowing what had been done in her, came and [y] fell down before him, and told him all the truth. But he said unto her, Daughter, thy [z] faith hath healed thee: go in peace, and be well of thy scourge.

[x] (35-43): "Talitha Koumi."

[35] While he yet spake, they come from the ruler of the synagogue's [house], saying, Thy daughter hath died: why troublest thou the teacher any further? But Jesus, having overheard * the word spoken, saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, [a] Fear not; only believe. And he suffered no one to follow in his company except Peter and James, and John the brother of James. And he cometh † to the ruler of the synagogue's house, and seeth the tumult, and people weeping and wailing greatly; and entering in, he saith unto them, Why make ye a tumult and weep? the child hath not died, but [b] sleepeth. And they derided him. But he, having [c] put them all forth, taketh with him the father and mother of the child, and those that were with him, and entereth in where the child was. And, taking the child by the [d] hand, he saith unto her, Talitha koumi, which is, when interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, [e] Arise. And immediately the damsel arose and [f] walked; for she was twelve years old. And they were [g] amazed with great amazement. And he [h] charged them much that no one should know this, and said [to them] that something should be given her to [i] eat.

* Or, "disregarding."
† Or, "they come."

[y] *cf.* Rom. 10. 9, 10. *cf.* Lk. 17. 14–19.
[z] ch. 10. 52. *cf.* Gal 2. 16.
[a] Matt. 14. 27. *cf.* Is. 43. 1.
[b] Jno. 11. 11–14, 25. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 55–57.
[c] *cf.* Acts 9. 40. *cf.* 1 Kl. 17. 19. *cf.* Matt. 26. 56 with Matt. 27. 46.
[d] *cf.* Acts 3. 6, 7. *cf.* Rev. 1. 17, 18.
[e] Jno. 11. 43. *cf.* Jno. 5. 25, 28, 29.
[f] *cf.* Rom. 6. 4.
[g] ch. 1. 27. *cf.* Jno. 12. 12, 13, 17, 18.
[h] ch. 3. 12.
[i] *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 2. *cf.* Col. 3. 1. *cf.* Heb. 5. 14.

see in her also how necessary faith is to feelings, producing these, not built upon them: "joy and peace" found "in believing." The details of the picture sustain the interpretation: it is not casual resemblance that we find, but the consistency of truth.

She illustrates also the confirmation found in open confession of Christ: how the Lord looks for this on the part of those whom He has healed. He owns her also as one of whom He is not ashamed and assures to her the quiet enjoyment of what His grace has given. Of what immense importance to our spiritual life is the confession of Christ, as He Himself has emphasized it for us!

[35] But now the news is brought that the child is dead: why trouble the Teacher any more? Death, for man, is the end of hope; and, as far as he is concerned, designed to be so. On this very account, it is in this that God can show Himself where man is impotent. "Be not afraid," says the Lord in answer to such a message; "only believe." Unbelief may claim its right to mourn and weep, unreal as much even of this is; but faith it is that alone can see the glory of God.

The same twelve years measure the period of the woman's issue of blood and the age of the child when raised from the dead: the same meaning must attach to them in both cases. "God, for the great love wherewith He loved us, *even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ, and has raised us up together*" (Eph. ii. 4, 5). This goes, indeed, beyond that which we find in Mark; but "with Christ" shows Christ to be, in a deeper sense even than in the Gospel, the Worker of the miracle of resurrection. "With Him" only, as the fruit of His precious death for us, and by grace "bound in the bundle of life" with Him, could we have been brought up out of a death so different. In

DIVISION 2. (Chaps. vi.–x.)

The Service of a Rejected Master.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. vi.)

The unity of opposition and supremacy of divine grace.

1 (1-13): Power in grace. 1 (1-6): pride resisting conviction.

1. [i] AND he went thence and cometh into his [j]own country; and his disciples follow him. And when the sabbath was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, [k]Whence hath this man these things? and what is the wisdom that is given unto this man, that such works of power are done by his hands? Is not this the [l]carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were [m]offended in him. And Jesus said unto them, A [n]prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and among his kindred, and in his own house. And he [o]could there do no work of

[i] Matt. 13. 53-58. *cf.* Lk. 4. 16-30.
[k] Jno. 6. 42. Jno. 7. 15. *cf.* Acts 2. 7-11. *cf.* Acts 4. 13.
[l] *cf.* Lk. 2. 51, 52 with Phil. 2. 7, 8. *cf.* Acts 18. 3 with Jno. 13. 16.
[m] Matt. 11. 6. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 7, 8.
[n] *cf.* Jno. 7. 5. *cf.* Jno. 4. 44. *cf.* Acts 2[22] 17-23.
[o] ch. 9. 23. *cf.* ch. 5. 17. *cf.* Lk. 13. 34.

the Gospel it is a miracle of power that is seen; in the epistle it is a miracle of righteousness and yet of grace toward us.

DIV. 2.

In the face of rejection and active opposition, the Lord now sends out His disciples into the world as a field of labor. They take their character of necessity from Him; and as we have in Him the perfect Servant, so here the servant-character is what is seen in them. This, evidently, is what the second part of Mark takes up and dwells upon, the Lord being seen as the Leader in this, as in the Christian path all through. It gives us first of all the unity of this opposition, from the lowest to the highest, the truth awakening by its challenge of all the corruption in the world the united energies of the world against it. In the next place we see the religious opposition, the legal traditionalism of the day (and traditionalism is always legal) ignorant of man's true need, and therefore of the grace which alone can meet it, hostile really to Moses and to Christ alike. We have then the confession of Christ called for, with the cross as the present result, but the glory the final one. The moral principles involved in the path are then insisted on; essentially the creature put in his right place, and so God having His. While, finally, we have the results when, the creature being thus with God, the victory of God is seen over all that has marred and distorted in it the reflection of Himself.

SUBD. 1.

With the unity of opposition, the supremacy of divine grace is seen: for, after all, God cannot be thwarted of His purpose of blessing, though His method of victory may be by a cross. Divine fullness pours itself out even in a wilderness, and though with contrary wind upon a stormy sea, Christ walks upon it, coming to them and the wind ceases; and on the farther shore all evil yields to Him and passes away.

1. [i] But first we see Him rejected by His own, to whom He comes with power which they needs must own, yet which though manifest in grace cannot win reception for Him. The pride of the natural heart is always the most stubborn opposer of the salvation of God, and cannot even discern the glory of that self-humiliation in Him who has drawn nigh to them. They stumble over the Stumbling-stone.

Yet in this decisive rejection of God's message, there is nothing exceptional, except in the greatness of the Messenger. The Lord speaks of it, as only the

power, save that he laid his hands upon a few infirm persons, and [p] healed them. And [q] he marvelled at their unbelief. And he [r] went round about the villages, teaching.

2 (7-13): the ministry by which His personal testimony is extended.

[2] And he called unto him the twelve, and began to [s] send them out [t] two and two; and gave them [u] authority over the unclean spirits; and he charged them that they should take [v] nothing for the way, save a staff only: no bread, no wallet, no money in their girdle; but be [w] shod with sandals, and not put on two coats. And he said unto them, Wherever ye enter into a house, there abide till ye depart thence. And whatsoever place shall not receive you nor hear you, when ye depart thence, [x] shake off the dust that is under your feet for a witness unto them. And they went out and preached that men should [y] repent. And they cast out many demons, and [z] anointed with oil many infirm, and healed them.

2 (14-29): Opposition to man's lusts and the hatred it awakens.

2. And [a] Herod the king heard [of him], for his name had become known; and he said, John the Baptist is [b] risen from among the dead, and therefore do these powers put forth energy in him. But others said, It is a prophet, as one of the prophets. But when Herod heard [of him] he said, It is John whom I beheaded: he is risen. For Herod

p *cf.* ch. 7. 24, 25.
q *ctr.* Matt. 8. 10-12. *cf.* Is. 59. 16.
r Matt. 9. 35. Acts 10. 38. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 21.
s Matt. 10. 1, etc. ch. 3. 13, 14. Lk. 9. 1-6. *cf.* Matt. 28. 19, 20.
t *cf.* Deut. 19. 15.
u *cf.* Jno. 8. 17. *cf.* Rev. 11. 3, 4. *cf.* Eccl. 4. 9-12. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 9-11.
v *cf.* Lk. 10. 17-20. *cf.* Acts 16. 16-18. *ctr.* Acts 19. 13-20.
w *cf.* Lk. 22. 35. *cf.* 3 Jno. 5-8. *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 7-19.
x *cf.* Eph. 6. 15.
y Lk. 10. 10, 11. Acts 13. 51.
z *cf.* Jas. 5. 14, 15; *cf.* Acts 1. 8.
a Matt. 14. 1-12; Lk. 9. 7-9.
b *cf.* Acts 17. 31.
c Matt. 16. 14; ch. 8. 28.

exemplification of a common rule, that a prophet is not without honor save in his own country and among his own kindred. Human nature is, alas, consistent enough in evil to warrant such general statements: for "as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man."

In the face of this, as Mark above all emphasizes, the Servant of divine love, able to do little because of an unbelief at which He marveled, patiently did this—"laid His hands on a few infirm persons and healed them"—and seeking yet the way to their hearts, "went round about their villages, teaching." How the perfect manhood of the Lord comes out, and is *meant* to come out, in this account. The divine glory that is His must not obscure the reality of that which appeals so powerfully to us in the tender human fashion in which the Son of God has come down to minister to men.

[2] He sends out now also the twelve, in extension of His personal testimony; two and two, the number of competent witness, and doubtless for mutual help. Mark emphasizes here as elsewhere the power over unclean spirits which is given them, over the dark and dreadful enemy of men, out of whose clutch they have to be rescued. They are sent forth in such a way as shall manifest in all this their absolute dependence upon Himself,—without provision either of food or money. They are to be shod with sandals, not the more luxurious "shoes;" and not to wear two coats. They are to be content also with what accommodation they find in the first house opening its doors to them; while, on the other hand, judgment is denounced on every place that will not receive nor hearken to a testimony accredited by divine power.

With their message, and with this sanction put upon it, they accordingly go forth.

2. We are taken back now to see the death of the Lord's forerunner, in which His own is not obscurely intimated. Herod, indeed, we are told, alarmed by his guilty conscience, when he hears of the miracles wrought by Jesus, sup-

himself had sent forth and [d]laid hold on John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her. For John had said unto Herod, It is not [e]lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. And [f]Herodias kept it against him, and would have killed him, but could not; for Herod [g]feared John, knowing that he was a righteous man, and holy, and he protected him; and when he heard him he did many things,* and heard him [h]gladly. And when a [i]favorable day was come and Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, and captains of thousands, and the chief men of Galilee, the daughter of the said Herodias came in and [j]danced and pleased Herod and those that were at table with him. And the king said unto the damsel, [k]Ask what thou wilt of me and I will give it thee. And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom. And she went out, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And [l]she said, The head of John the Baptist. And immediately she went in with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me forthwith upon a dish the head of John the Baptist. And the king was exceeding [m]sorry; but for his oaths' sake, and [n]those who sat with [him] at table, he would not break his word with her. And immediately the king sent forth a soldier of the guard and commanded to bring his head. And he went and beheaded him in the prison, and brought his head upon a dish, and gave it to the damsel; and the damsel gave it to her mother. And when his [o]disciples heard [of it], they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.

3 (30-45): Divine fulness manifested for the satisfaction of need.

3. And the apostles [p]gather themselves unto Jesus; and they told him all things, whatsoever they had done, and whatsoever they had taught. And he saith unto them, Come ye yourselves [q]apart into a desert place and rest awhile. For there were many coming and going, and they had not leisure even to eat. And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.

* R. V., following a well supported reading, renders this "was much perplexed." The context however is against this, and good authority gives the reading of the text.

d Lk. 3. 19, 20.
cf. Jer. 26. 1-15.
cf. Jer. 32. 2.
cf. 1 Ki. 22. 8, 27, 28.
e Lev. 18. 16.
cf. Jer. 1. 7-10.
f cf. Prov. 9. 7, 8.
cf. Prov. 15. 12.
cf. Amos 5. 10.
ctr. 2 Sa. 12. 1-14 with Ps. 141. 5.
g cf. Acts 24. 24, 25.
cf. 2 Cor. 7. 10.
h cf. Matt. 13. 5, 20.
ctr. Acts 2. 41.
i cf. Gen. 40. 20.
cf. Matt. 26. 16.
cf. Dan. 5. 1, 2.
j cf. Amos 6. 3-6.
k cf. Esth. 5. 3, 6.
cf. Esth. 7. 2.
ctr. 1 Jno. 5. 14, 15.
l cf. Eccl. 7. 26.
cf. Gen. 39. 17-20.
cf. Acts 7. 51-54.
m cf. Matt. 27. 3, 4.
cf. Dan. 4. 27.
n cf. Prov. 29. 25.
o cf. Jno. 1. 35-37.
cf. Jno. 3. 29, 30.
p Lk. 9. 10. Matt. 14. 13, 14.
q Matt. 12. 15.

poses him to be the Baptist, risen from the dead. Thereupon the awful story of lust and hate is given us with very little variation from what we have had in Matthew. It completes the rejection which Nazareth has shown us already, wedding the lusts of the flesh in unholy union with the pride of life. It binds together the world and its rulers in opposition to the throne of heaven, and its claims and grace alike. This is the world in which nevertheless God is to be glorified as nowhere else, and to reap a spiritual harvest which shall show forth the exceeding riches of His grace to the principalities and powers in heavenly places.

3. The Lord retires into the wilderness, the type of the world in the condition to which sin has reduced it, in the Old Testament as well as in the New. Here

And many saw them going and knew [them], and ran there together on foot out of all the cities, and outwent them. And he came forth and saw a great multitude, and he had [r]compassion on them because they were as sheep that had no shepherd; and he began to [s]teach them many things. And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him and said, The place is desert, and the day is now far spent: [t]send them away that they may go into the country and villages round about, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat. But he answered and said to them, [u]Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread and give them to eat? And he saith unto them, [v]How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes. And he commanded them that all should [w]recline in companies upon the green grass. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds and by fifties. And he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he [x]blessed and brake the loaves, and gave to the disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all. And they all ate and were [y]filled. And they took up of [z]broken pieces twelve hand-baskets full, and of the fishes. And they that ate of the loaves were five thousand men. And immediately he [a]constrained his disciples to enter into the ship, and to go before him unto the other side to Bethsaida, while he himself sent away the multitude.

r Matt. 9.36-38.
s Lk. 9. 11.
t Matt. 14. 15-21. Lk. 9.12-17. *cf.* Lk. 18. 15, 16. *cf.* Heb. 2. 17, 18.
u *cf.* Matt. 10. 8. John 6. 5-14.
v *cf.* 2 Kings 4. 2. *cf.* 1 Cor. 14. 19.
w ch. 8. 6, etc. *cf.* Ex. 14. 13 with Rom. 4. 5.
x *cf.* Jno. 11. 41, 42, with Ps. 16. 1.
y *cf.* 2 Chro. 31. 10 with Mal. 3. 10. *cf.* Ps. 132. 15.
z *cf.* 2 Ki. 4. 42-40. *cf.* Eph. 3. 20.
a Matt. 14. 22-27. John 6. 15-21.

4 (46-52): Experiences by the way.

4. And when he had dismissed them, he [b]went away into the mountain to pray. And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone upon the land. And seeing them [c]distressed in rowing, for the wind was contrary to them, about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, [d]walking on the sea, and would have passed by them; but they, when

b ch. 1. 35. *cf.* Rom. 8. 34.
c *cf.* Jno. 16. 5, 6, 20, 33. *cf.* Matt. 24. 7-9.
d *cf.* Matt. 24. 30. *cf.* Ps. 77. 19. *cf.* Jas. 5. 8.

disciples' hands minister to the need of the multitude out of their own provision multiplying through His blessing on it. Five loaves and two fishes feed, and more than feed, five thousand men. The application is of the easiest, and made by Christians generally; and we have been through it in Matthew already: the fullness of its blessed meaning is as little to be exhausted, as the loaves were at the time here brought before us. It is one of those scenes, exceptional in the evangelic history, to which its four writers all contribute, while in John the Lord Himself develops from it His teaching as to the bread of life.

4. The passage across the sea of Galilee is also connected with the ministry in the wilderness in three of the Gospels, Luke alone omitting it. In each of these the Lord's walking upon the water is recited, and His coming to the disciples toiling in the contrary wind. The walk of Peter on the water to meet the Lord, characteristic as we have seen it to be in Matthew, is omitted in the other accounts; the numerical change being in harmony with this. The general significance of what is here before us cannot be mistaken. The ascent of Jesus into the mount to pray, leaving His disciples alone upon the sea until His coming again, shows us unmistakably the limits of the trial-time of faith, in which is

they saw him walking on the sea, [e]supposed it was an apparition, and cried out: for they all saw him and were troubled. But immediately he spake with them, and saith unto them, [f]Be of good courage: it is I; be not afraid. And he went up unto them into the ship; and the [g]wind ceased. And they were exceedingly [h]amazed among themselves: for they [i]understood not concerning the loaves, but their heart was hardened.

5 (53–56): The end of the way.

5. And when they had passed over, they [j]came to the land of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore. And when they were come out of the ship, immediately they [k]knew him, and ran throughout that whole country, and began to carry about on their beds those that were sick, wherever they heard he was. And wherever he entered, into villages or into cities or in the country, they laid the sick in the market-places, and besought him that they might [l]touch if it were but the border of his garment; and as many as touched him were healed.

[e] *cf.* Luke 24. 37.

[f] *cf.* Is. 25. 9. *cf.* 2 Thess. 1. 7.

[g] *cf.* Matt. 8. 26. Ps. 107. 29. *cf.* Ps. 46. 9–11.

[h] *cf.* ch. 4. 41.

[i] *cf.* ch. 8. 17–21.

[j] *cf.* Lk. 24. 25

[k] *cf.* Jno. 14. 8, 9.

[l] Matt. 14. 34–36.

[k] *cf.* Jno. 4. 45. *cf.* Luke 8. 40.

[l] *cf.* ch. 5. 27, 28.

experienced the opposition of the "course of this world." No doubt, apart from the great and final interference of the Lord on behalf of His people, there are abundance of lesser fulfilments in which He comes in and ends for a time the storm; and some too in which we do not discern for a time the familiar form, and are afraid; until the Voice says, "It is I;" and we wonder we could have failed for a moment to know it; and the storm for the time is over. And yet, how often do we find, when a new trial comes, that we are scarcely more prepared than before to recognize the One who comes afresh with it; and when He makes Himself known it is scarcely less a wonder.

5. But at last the sea is passed, as when He joins us in the end it will be, and then the blessing comes, even for the earth, when it shall "know," like the men of Gennesaret, the One upon whom all blessing depends, and the blight upon the whole frame of things shall pass, with the spiritual sickness it attends and indicates.

SUBD. 2.

The next subdivision runs still, for the most part, side by side with Matthew. Luke omits it all. We have here in the first place the opposition of traditionalism to the ways of God, and therefore to the true service of man; whereas faith directly connects us with God, discerns and owns His way and is confirmed by Him, as with the Syro-phœnician woman. The healing of the deaf man following this is peculiar to Mark; and in this man's condition spiritually seems more fully imaged to us, with no ear to hear, and therefore speech failing. Here the Lord is specially oppressed by the condition, and His "Ephphatha" is uttered with a sigh. Then in another wilderness scene the divine mercy satisfies once more the poor with bread, which as a figure has been plainly interpreted for us; and with this the present subject ends.

1. The growth of traditionalism is not hard to trace. Truth itself from the source of truth, where ministered by man, necessarily accredits the one who brings it. So far this is well, or it would not be necessary; but how often it follows, and at no long interval, that the teacher comes to accredit the truth which first accredited him. We have gained confidence in the man, and begin to accept with less careful examination whatever comes to us from such a source. The interpreter begins to displace the Word that he interprets. For the next generation this is an easier process, and the rule of the rabbi is soon begun. There is soon (formally or informally) a body of doctrine growing up, which although confessedly human and theoretically fallible, is accepted for truth and attaches to itself the masses. Henceforth he who will learn from

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chaps. vii.–viii. 9.)

The Opposition of Traditionalism and the Service of Love.

1 (vii. 1-23): Human commandments and the divine.

1 (1-8): the rule of the rabbi.

1. [1] AND there were gathered together unto him the Pharisees and certain of the scribes that had come from Jerusalem, and had seen some of his disciples [m] eating bread with defiled, that is, unwashed hands: for the Pharisees and all the Jews, except they wash their hands diligently, eat not, holding the [n] traditions of the elders; and [coming] from the market-place except they wash* themselves, they eat not; and many other things they have received to hold, the washing* of cups and pots and brazen vessels and couches.† And the Pharisees and the scribes ask him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with defiled hands? And he said unto them, Well did [o] Esaias prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far away from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines commandments of men. Leaving the commandment of God, ye hold fast the tradition of men.‡

m *cf.* Matt. 15. 1-9.

n *cf.* Col. 2. 8. *cf.* Gal. 1. 14. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 18. *cf.* Col. 2. 20-23.

o Is. 29. 13. Ezek. 33. 31. *cf.* Amos 4. 4, 5. *cf.* Amos 5. 21-27. *cf.* Rom. 2. 17-29.

* Literally, "baptize," "baptism."

† Several good authorities omit "couches."

‡ Many add; "washing of vessels and cups, and many other such like things ye do."

God has to break through a steadily increasing barrier to the end he would attain.

Traditional teaching is ever tending downwards. If it has a creed this will be a conservative element, no doubt, but a dead support at best, not a living principle. Being human, it will have gaps through which error will come in, if not error of its own, which will readily unite with further error. Immediate recourse to God is shut off by it, and the profit of His word "for correction, for reproof" is, at least, limited.

In Israel the scribes arose as a reaction from that departure from the law which had been the nation's ruin. They came forward as its defenders and vindicators, and in order to this its investigators and interpreters. Their zeal for its observance urged them to "make a hedge about it" of their own rules, which, while making it ever a heavier yoke, came naturally by degrees to displace what they were intended to enforce. The human came inevitably into conflict with the divine. As additions to it, they broke the law necessarily from the beginning; and the end could not but be still worse than the beginning.

But worse even than their conflicting ordinances was their total mistake as to the nature of the law itself, and of the disease for which it was the appointed remedy. With all their laborious enquiries as to it, they interpreted it superficially, and had no knowledge of its true working. They had not learned the lesson of experience as the apostle declares it, that "that which was ordained to life" he "found to be unto death." They tried therefore to remedy the failure under it by additional ordinances, instead of turning to that Saviour of whom the prophets with one voice testified. Their remedy was law, not grace; letter and not spirit. They would heal man's deep-seated disease from the outside, and if they suppressed the external signs, only aggravated to a fatal issue the internal disorder.

[1] Mark emphasizes beyond Matthew the religious scrupulosity which dealt with the outside, the ceremonial washings (or "baptisms") of hands, cups,

2 (9-13): the opposition.

[2] And he said unto them, Well do ye [p]set aside the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For [q]Moses said, Honor thy father and thy mother, and he that speaketh evil of father or mother, let him die the death. But *ye* say, If a man say to his father or his mother, [It is] Corban, that is, a gift, that with which thou mightest have been profited by me, ye no longer [r]suffer him to do aught for his father or his mother: making void the word of God by your tradition which ye have delivered: and many such like things ye do.

[p] *cf.* Matt. 23. 14 33.

[q] Ex. 20. 12. Ex. 21. 17. Lev. 20. 9. *cf.* Deut. 21. 18-21.

[r] *cf.* 1 Tim. 5. 8. *ctr.* Eph. 4. 28.

3 (14-23): the heart that which defiles.

[3] And having called the multitude to him again, he saith unto them, Hearken unto me, all of you, and understand: there is [s]nothing from without the man that entering into him can defile him; but the things which [s]come out from him are the things that defile the man. If any one hath ears to hear, let him hear.* And when he was entered into the house from the multitude, his disciples asked him as to the parable. And he saith unto them, Are ye also so unintelligent? Perceive ye not that any thing that is without, entering into a man, cannot defile him: because it goeth not into his [t]heart, but into his belly, and goeth out into the draught,† purging all foods? And he said, That which goeth forth out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, [u]out of the heart of men, go forth evil thoughts, fornications, murders, thefts, adulteries, covetousness, wickednesses, deceit, licentiousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, haughtiness, folly: all these evil things go forth from within, and they defile the man.

[s] Matt. 15. 10-20. *cf.* Rom. 14. 14. *cf.* 1 Tim. 4. 4.

[t] *cf.* Jer. 17. 9. *cf.* Rom. 3. 10-18.

[u] *cf.* Prov. 4. 23.

[v] *cf.* Matt. 12. 34, 35. *cf.* Gen. 6. 5. *cf.* Jas. 3. 10-12. *ctr.* Ps. 45. 1.

2 (vii. 24-30): The discernment of faith.

2. And from thence he arose and went away into the [w]borders of Tyre and Sidon; and having entered into a house, he would have no man know it; and he [x]could not be hid. But immediately a woman whose little

[w] Matt. 15. 21-28.

[x] *cf.* ch. 2. 1, 2. *cf.* Jno. 4. 4-7.

* Many omit this verse.
† Or "place of refuse."

vessels, couches; tedious in proportion to its vain unprofitableness. God, by Isaiah, had characterized it long since as mere externalism without heart, human commandments claiming divine authority: so essentially hollow that the Lord denounces it as hypocrisy.

[2] In fact, what God had commanded was set aside by it; and the breach of the "first commandment with promise" was only an example of many like things which they did.

[3] With such it was even vain to argue. The Lord turns, therefore, to the multude to show them the simple underlying principle which justified to the conscience what He said. Nature had provided for the cleansing of impurities as to the body. Moral, spiritual defilement is, alas, from what comes out of the man, from the heart, and is native there. But how then shall the heart be cleansed?

2. For this they are not ready. He turns from them towards the Gentiles as hiding Himself from their unbelief, to find in one herself a Gentile, a conscious need of Him from which He could not hide Himself, and a discernment of faith which Israel's doctors lacked. This Syro-phœnician, content to take her true

daughter had an unclean spirit, having heard of him, came and fell at his feet. Now the woman was a Gentile,* a Syro-phenician by race; and she besought him that he would cast out the demon out of her daughter. And he said unto her, Let the [y]children first be filled: for it is not right to take the children's loaf and [z]cast it to the dogs.† But she answered and saith unto him, Yea, Lord; even the dogs† under the table eat of the children's [a]crumbs. And he said unto her, For [b]this saying go thy way: the demon is gone out of thy daughter. And she went away to her house, and found the child [c]laid upon the couch, and the demon gone out.

3(vii.31-37): Man's state fully realized.

3. And again, having left the borders of Tyre, he [d]came through Sidon to the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the borders of Decapolis. And they bring unto him one that was [e]deaf and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to lay his hand upon him. And he took him away [f]apart from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he [g]spat and touched his tongue; and, looking up to heaven, he [h]sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. And immediately his [i]ears were opened, and the [j]bond of his tongue was loosed, and he spake aright. And he [k]charged them that they should speak of it to none; but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it. And they were [l]astonished above measure, saying, He hath done [m]all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak.

4(viii.1-9): Wilderness mercy.

4. In those days the multitude being again great, and having [n]nothing to eat, he called to him his disciples

*Literally, "Greek."
†Greek, "little dogs."

y *cf.* Jno. 4. 22. *cf.* Matt. 10. 5, 6. *cf.* Matt. 8. 11, 12.
z *cf.* Acts 13. 46, 47. *cf.* Col. 1. 27.
a *cf.* ch. 6. 43. *cf.* Rom. 11. 15.
b *cf.* Luke 18. 14.
c *cf.* ch. 5. 15.
d Matt. 15. 29.
e *cf.* Is. 29. 18. *cf.* Is. 35. 5.
f *cf.* ch. 5. 37.
g ch. 8. 23. Jno. 9. 6.
h Jno. 11. 33, 35, 38. *cf.* Lk. 19. 41.
i *cf.* Job 33. 16. *cf.* Job 36. 10, 15, 16.
j *cf.* Is. 32. 4. *cf.* Is. 35. 5, 6. *cf.* Matt. 9. 32, 33.
k ch. 1. 43, 44. ch. 5. 43.
l Luke 5. 26.
m *cf.* Lk. 19. 37, 38. *cf.* Matt. 3. 17. *cf.* Jno. 17. 4.
n Matt. 15. 32-38. *cf.* ch. 6. 34-44.

place as a dog before Him, could find her title in His grace to divine bounty, discerning what was impenetrable to the men of law. This faith on His part He recognizes and rejoices in. The power of Satan is quelled, and the soul satisfied.

3. But Israel had no ear to hear the Voice that spake to them: and this is indeed man's condition naturally, a condition symbolized in this deaf man brought to Christ, and who has a corresponding impediment in his speech: for the speech can only be right where the ear is open. The Lord is oppressed in spirit with this condition. He puts the finger which had touched the leper into his ears: for does not spiritual leprosy underlie such deafness spiritually? and in the cleansing of the leper the ear is the first part anointed. In this type the meaning is quite clear. The soul under the power of sin is deaf to the voice of God—has lost even the power of hearing aright. That which cleanses the leper alone gives the ear to hear.

The Lord touches the tongue also; and then, lifting up His eyes to heaven, sighs and says, Ephphatha! "be opened." Immediately, his ears are opened, and the bond of his tongue loosed. He is here in Decapolis, a part of the land mainly Gentile and heathen, but the fame of this miracle goes far and wide.

4. The crowds follow Him; and the miracle of the loaves is repeated on their behalf. Here again we are in the track of Matthew's Gospel, and the difference

and saith unto them, I have compassion upon the multitude, because they have continued with me now three days, and have nothing to eat; and if I send them away home fasting, they will [o]faint by the way: and some of them are come from far. And his disciples answered him, [p]Whence can one satisfy these with bread here in a desert place? And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground; and taking the seven loaves, he gave thanks and brake, and gave them to his disciples, that they might set them before them; and they did set them before the multitude. And they had a [q]few little fishes; and having blessed them, he commanded these also to be set [before them]. And they ate and were [r]satisfied. And they took up of fragments that remained seven baskets. And there were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

o Matt. 9.36. *cf.* Ps. 107. 4, 5. *cf.* Is.40.30.

p *cf.* Ps. 78. 19, 20. *cf.* 2 Ki. 7. 1, 2.

q *cf.* Jn. 7. 3, 4. *cf.* 2 Chro. 14. 11.

r *ctr.* Lev. 26. 26. *cf.* Ps. 132. 15.

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chaps. viii. 10–ix. 8.)

The Revelation of the Glory of Christ here and hereafter.

1 (viii. 10–21): Leaven.

1. AND immediately he [s]entered into the ship with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha. And the Pharisees came out and began to dispute with him, seeking of him a [t]sign from heaven, tempting him. And groaning in his spirit, he saith, Why doth this generation seek a sign? Verily, I say unto you, There shall [u]no sign be given to this generation. And he left them, and going aboard again, departed to the other side.

s Matt. 15. 39.

t Matt. 12. 38–40. Matt. 16. 1–4. *cf.* Jno. 6. 30, 31.

u *cf.* Matt. 21. 23–27. *cf.* Lk. 16. 30, 31.

between the two accounts is very slight. The healing of the multitudes, however, which Matthew records, is omitted here, and their glorifying the God of *Israel*. Instead of *five* loaves among *five* thousand men, as on the former occasion, with *twelve* baskets of fragments taken up (see p. 157, *notes*), we have now *seven* loaves with *seven* baskets, and *four* thousand men: the numbers of perfection and of the world at large. They remind us of the perfect sufficiency of divine blessing for all human need, and of all men without restriction being in God's desire participants in it. This fittingly closes what we have had before us.

SUBD. 3.

And now we come to the point at which the Lord, having in opposition to the general unbelief elicited from His disciples their faith in Him as the Christ, forbids them any more to speak of Him as that. The Son of man was to suffer and die and be raised from the dead, and come again in glory. The glory now hidden from the world and manifest to faith alone, will at last be revealed from heaven. But till then His disciples must accept the cross after the pattern of their Master. Here the shrinking of nature is at once evident; and in view of it the transfiguration of the Lord attests that they have followed no cunningly devised fables, confirming the word of prophecy by the display of that coming glory. This is Peter's own interpretation of what took place upon the "holy mount" (2 Peter i. 16–19).

1. We start here with the demand of the Pharisees of a sign from heaven, which shows only their own total and wilful blindness to His true glory. The "sign of the Son of man in heaven" will be seen at last; but too late then for His rejectors. The seeking for new proofs amid the profusion that had been

And they had forgotten to take bread; neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf. And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the [v]leaven of the Pharisees and of the leaven of Herod. And they reasoned with one another, [It is] because we have no bread. And Jesus, knowing it, saith unto them, Why reason ye because ye have no bread? Do ye not [w]yet perceive nor understand? Have ye your heart hardened? Having [x]eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do not ye remember? When I brake the [y]five loaves to the five thousand, how many hand-baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve. And when [I brake] the [z]seven to the four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they say unto him, Seven. And he said unto them, Do ye not yet understand?

v Matt. 16. 5-12. *cf.* Lk. 12. 1. *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 6. *cf.* Gal. 5. 9.

w *cf.* Lk. 24. 25.

x *cf.* Ps. 115. 5, 6, 8.

y ch. 6. 35-44.

z vers. 1-9.

2 (viii. 22-26): Gradual discernment.

2. And they come to Bethsaida; and they bring unto him a [a]blind man, and beseech him that he would touch him. And he took hold of the blind man's hand and brought him [b]outside the village; and having spat upon his eyes, he put his hands upon him, and asked him if he saw anything. And he looked up and said, I behold men: for I see [them] as [c]trees, walking. Then again he laid his hands upon his eyes, and he saw distinctly, and was restored, and saw all things [d]clearly. And he sent him to his house, saying, [e]Neither go into the village, [nor tell it to any in the village].*

a Is. 42. 16, 18.

b *cf.* ch. 7. 33. *cf.* Jno. 9. 35-38.

c *cf.* Acts 18. 24-28. *cf.* Phil. 1. 10.

d *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 9. *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 27. *ctr.* Rev. 3. 18.

3 (viii. 27-30): Faith manifests itself in the recognition of Christ.

3. And Jesus [f]went out and his disciples into the villages of Cæsarea Philippi. And in the way he asked his dis-

e ch. 7. 36. ver. 30.

f Matt. 16. 13-20. Lk. 9. 18-21.

* Many omit this last clause.

given was but the seeking of justification for their unbelief; and to such no sign could be effectual: none, therefore, would be given. He leaves them and departs to the other side of the sea.

In fact their self-righteousness had no need of Him and was but a ferment of opposition in their hearts. This is what He presently calls it—"leaven," "ferment": the pride and will of man aroused in rebellion against God; and this characterized them. Elsewhere He stamps it as "hypocrisy": for their minds were made up, and their arguments were but insincere,—the dictates of will, not reason. Alas, in disciples also such leaven might be found: self-righteousness as in the Pharisees, worldliness as in the Herodians. Of this He warns them now, though at first they think but of the bread they have forgotten; and they have forgotten practically the bread that He had blessed!

2. Following this, the blind man at Bethsaida illustrates, as it would seem, the gradual breaking in of light with those who are in His hands for the cure of nature's blindness,—hands that do not cease their work until the cure is complete. The hindrances to it have just been put before us,—self-occupation, the world, the half-sincerity and lack of earnestness in our discipleship, and such like things. No wonder if the Lord must have us alone with Himself for cure, outside of Bethsaida, the "place of nets," which the world truly is. Then comes the touch of His hands; and if the sight produced be indistinct, we must still not deny that it is truly sight. Nor will He leave till it be perfected.

3. We have had the hindrances of faith, and its gradual development amid such hindrances; we now have that in which, where real, it ever manifests it-

ciples, saying unto them, [g]Who do men say that I am? And they told him, saying, John the Baptist; and others, Elias; but others, One of the prophets. And he asked them, But ye, who say ye that I am? Peter answering saith unto him, [h]Thou art the Christ. And he [i]charged them strictly that they should tell no man of him.

4 (viii. 31-38): The path and the failure as to it.

4. And he began to [j]teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And he spake that openly; and Peter took him and began to [k]rebuke him. But he turned, and looking on his disciples, rebuked Peter, and saith, [l]Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou hast not a mind toward the things of God, but toward the things of men. And calling the multitude to him with his disciples, he said unto them, [m]If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and

g cf. Matt. 22. 42-46.
h cf. 1 Cor. 12. 3. cf. 1 Jno. 4. 2, 3. cf. 1 Jno. 5. 1. cf. Jno. 1. 49.
i cf. Matt. 11. 27. cf. ch. 9. 9.
j Matt. 16. 21-23. Lk. 9. 22. cf. ch. 9. 31.
k cfr. ver. 29. cf. John 21. 18, 19 with 2 Pet. 2. 14, 15.
l cf. Matt. 4. 10 with Gal. 1. 8, 9.
m Matt. 16. 24-28. Lk. 9. 23-27. Lk. 14. 27. cf. Phil. 3. 7-10.

self. It may see men but as trees walking; but it sees Christ and does not confound Him with other men. Those who said He was John the Baptist or Elias did not mean Him any dishonor, but they had not eyes to distinguish the glory of the Christ of God. The Lord tells them that they are not to make Him known as such: for it was now plain that Israel had no welcome for Him; and the Cross was now to be the only expectation that His followers were to entertain. Mark here omits some pregnant words in the confession of Peter, and the announcement both as to the Church and Kingdom with which the Lord answers it. Mark's abridgment of Matthew, if it were that, still follows the distinct purpose of his Gospel, omitting what is dispensational, and simply showing us what distinguishes true faith from all the wisdom or sentiment of man, and carries us on at once to see what man's unbelief involves as to the path of the true believer.

4. He begins therefore now to teach them that the Son of man—speaking of Himself under that title which showed His connection with men at large and His own stooping to all implied in true humanity,—"that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priest and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again."

Immediately the very one in whom faith has been foremost becomes foremost in opposition to it. "Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him"! But He turning round, and with His eyes upon them all, on His part rebukes this opposition as of Satan. Satan had before proposed to Him a way to the Kingdom without the Cross; and here amongst His own is the same voice now, exhorting Him to spare Himself. But these were not the purposes of God, but the weak human thoughts which could so easily oppose themselves to God. Not as seeking His own after such a sort could He be man's Saviour; and the path of His disciples also must be after the pattern of His own. He calls the multitude to Him with His disciples, that the conditions of discipleship to Him may be perfectly understood. He that will come after Him must follow on the same road: he must deny himself and take up his cross also, and follow Him.

He contrasts here the two ways, of one of which every one must make choice. To seek one's own is to lose all,—to lose even oneself,* as it is put in Luke (ix. 25), and for ever. To lose one's life for Christ's sake and the gospel's is eternal

* The ambiguity of ψυχή, "soul" or "life," makes a difficulty in translating, not really in understanding, what is here said. Man being a living soul, his soul is often but a synonym for "himself," and so here. There is a present loss of oneself which is only gain, the laying down one's life for Christ's sake; while final loss is irretrievable ruin.

follow me. For [n]whosoever willeth to save his life* shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life* for my sake and the gospel's, shall save it. For [o]what doth it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?* or what should a man give in exchange for his soul?* For whosoever shall be [p]ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him shall the Son of man also be ashamed, when he [q]cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.

5 (ix. 1-8): The end of the way.

5. And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that there are some of those standing here who shall not taste of death until they [r]see the kingdom of God come in power.

And after [s]six days Jesus taketh with [him] Peter and James and John, and bringeth them up into a high mountain [t]apart by themselves. And he was [u]transfigured before them; and his garments became shining, exceeding white, so as no fuller on earth could whiten them. And there appeared unto them [v]Elias, with [w]Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter answering saith unto Jesus, Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make [x]three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. For he [y]knew not what he should answer, for they were filled with fear. And there came a [z]cloud, overshadowing them; and there came a voice out of the cloud, [a]This is my beloved Son: hear him. And suddenly looking round, they saw [b]no man any longer, but Jesus only with themselves.

n Lk. 17. 33. Jno. 12. 24-26. *cf.* Rom. 6. 1-7. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 5-11 with Acts 20. 24.
o Ps. 49. 6-8. *cf.* Jas. 5. 1-3.
p Matt. 10. 32, 33. *cf.* Jno. 12. 42, 43. *cf.* Jno. 5. 44. *etc.* Rom. 1. 16. *cf.* 2 Tim. 1. 7-9. *cf.* Phil. 1. 20, 21.
q Matt. 25. 31, etc. *cf.* Col. 3. 4.
r *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 16-18. vers. 2-4.
s Matt. 17. 1-8. Lk. 9. 28-36.
t *cf.* ch. 7. 33.
u *cf.* Rev. 1. 9, etc. *cf.* Phil. 2. 9, 10. *cf.* Heb. 2. 9. *cf.* Rev. 1. 13-16.
v *cf.* Rom. 3. 21, 31. *cf.* Deut. 34. 5, 6 with 1 Thess. 4. 6. *cf.* Rev. 15. 3.
w *cf.* Mal. 4. 5. *cf.* 1 Ki. 19.

* ψυχήν, "soul" or "life."

14; *cf.* 2 Ki. 2. 11 with 1 Thess. 4. 17. x *etc.* ch. 8. 28, 29; *cf.* Phil. 2. 9; *cf.* Heb. 3. 5, 6. y *cf.* Matt. 20. 20-23; *etc.* Acts 4. 11, 12. z *cf.* Ex. 40. 34; *cf.* Acts 1. 9; *cf.* Rev. 1. 7. a ch. 1. 11. *cf.* Jno. 12. 28. b *cf.* Jno. 6. 68; *cf.* Jno. 3. 30; *cf.* Col. 3. 11.

gain. This in the spirit of it applies to all; to-day, as much as at any former time: and a solemn word it is. The confession of Christ still *costs:* that which does not is scarcely to be called confession. "For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him shall the Son of man also be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of the Father, with the holy angels."

5. The last words lead on to the transfiguration scene in which that coming of the Son of man is foreshown. We have already considered it in the notes on Matthew, with whose account Mark's is almost identical, except that it is shorter. These repetitions have, doubtless, even as such, their significance; and they differ as being connected with different lines of truth. But we need much more and deeper study to understand such things as these.

SUBD. 4.

We have now the way put before us in its moral features, along with that which experience does not permit us to make marvel of, the contrast of our own ways naturally. Two things are specially insisted on here, the second of which is involved in the first: faith,—which, putting God in His place, puts me in mine; and lowliness, which is just the taking this creature-place before God. As a foundation principle of the path itself we find, what the disciples as yet could not enter into, and in the Gospels could not be much more than hinted

SUBDIVISION 4. (Chap. ix. 9–50.)

God's way for us and our way.

1 (9–13): Foundation principles.

1. AND when they came down from the mountain, he [c]charged them that they should tell no one what they had seen until the Son of man should be [d]risen from among the dead. And they kept that saying, questioning among themselves what the rising from the dead was. And they asked him, saying, Why do the scribes say that [e]Elias must first come? But he said unto them, Elias indeed, coming first, restoreth all things; and how is it written of the Son of man that he should suffer many things, and be set at nought? [f]But I say unto you that Elias is even come, and they have done to him whatsoever they would, as it is written of him.

2 (14–29): The enemy and the deliverance of faith.

2. And when they came to the disciples, they saw a [g]great multitude round them, and scribes questioning with them. And immediately all the multitude seeing him were [h]astonished, and running to him, saluted him. And he asked them, What question ye with them? And one of the multitude answered him, Teacher, I have brought to thee my son, who hath a [i]dumb spirit; and wheresoever it seizeth him it throweth him down; and he foameth, and gnasheth his teeth, and is withering away; and I spake to thy disciples that they might cast it out; and they [j]could not. But

c Matt. 17. 9-13. *cf.* ch. 8.30.
d ch. 8. 31. Matt.20.19. Matt.26.61. Matt.27.63. *cf.* Acts 2. 32.
e Mal.4.5,6.
f Matt.11.14. Luke 1.17.
g Matt. 17. 14-18. Lk. 9. 37-42. *cf.* Rev. 19. 11-21.
h *cf.* ch. 10. 32. *cf.* Ex. 34. 29, 30.
i *cf.* Matt. 12. 22.
j *cf.* ch. 6. 7. *cf.* vers. 28, 29.

at,—resurrection; which is twice declared here as to the Lord Himself, but the application of it to disciples is left for us to make. This part closes with a most solemn affirmation of a day of recompense,—the most emphatic, perhaps, that we find in Scripture.

1. As they come down with Him from the mount of transfiguration, the Lord charges the three who have been admitted to this wondrous sight to say nothing of it to any one until the Son of man is risen from among the dead. At this, though He has already plainly spoken of it, they are perplexed. A rising *from among* the dead is a thing strange to them, though resurrection itself was an accepted truth. This is now the Christian form of it, the Lord Himself being the first-fruits and pattern. No such application is as yet made of it however: only the Son of man is to arise alone on the third day. It is a foundation of our faith that He has done this.

But the disciples have a question they would fain put. How is it that the scribes say that Elias must come before Messiah's day? They know that here is Messiah. The Lord answers that indeed Elias must come first and restore all things. And how is it written, on the other hand, that the Son of man must suffer many things and be set at nought? That did not look like coming after all things were restored. And yet in fact there had been a coming of Elias,—one who had come in such a spirit and power. But that light had gone out: they had done to him according to their will; and so the Son of man would suffer also.

Thus a world contrary, and power in the meantime with it, a path leading down to death, with resurrection as the answer of God beyond: these are the features of the way traveled by the Lord, and upon which His disciples follow Him.

2. The power of Satan has also to be reckoned with; but the enemy here is one already vanquished, and faith only is needed for full deliverance. Faith,

he answered and saith unto them, O [k]unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him to me. And they brought him to him; and [l]when he saw him, immediately the spirit convulsed him; and he fell upon the ground and rolled, foaming. And he asked his father, How long time is it since this came unto him? And he said, From [m]childhood: and oft-times it hath cast him into the fire and into the water to destroy him; but [n]if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us and help us. But Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe:* [o]all things are possible to him that believeth. Immediately the father of the young child cried out† and said, I believe: [p]help thou mine unbelief. Now when Jesus saw that the multitude came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, *I* [q]command thee come out of him, and enter [r]no more into him. And he cried out and convulsed him greatly, and came out. And he became as if dead; so that the mass said, He is dead. But Jesus [s]took him by the hand and raised him, and he stood up. And when he had come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, [t]Why could not *we* cast him out? And he said unto them, [u]This kind cannot go out except by prayer [and fasting].‡

3 (30-32): The Lord's death and resurrection again pressed.

3. And going forth from thence, they went through Galilee; and he would not have any [v]know it: for he taught his disciples and said unto them, The Son of man is [w]delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him; and when he is killed, after three days, he shall rise again. But they [x]understood not the saying, and were [y]afraid to ask him.

k *cf.* Jno. 4. 48. *cf.* Jno. 14. 12.
l *cf.* Rev. 12. 12.
m *cf.* Jno. 9. 1 with Ps. 51. 5.
n *cf.* ch. 1. 40.
o *cf.* ch. 11. 22, 23. *cf.* Matt. 9. 28, 29.
p *cf.* Eph. 2. 8 with Jno. 6. 44.
q *cf.* ch. 1. 25-27.
r *ctr.* Matt. 12. 43-45. *cf.* Jer. 31. 31-34.
s ch. 5. 41, 42.
t *cf.* Josh. 7. 6-12.
u *cf.* 1 Ki. 18. 42-45. *cf.* Acts 13. 2.
v ch. 7. 24.
w ch. 8. 31.
x *cf.* Jno. 16. 12, 13 with Jno. 2. 22.
y *cf.* ch. 10. 32. *ctr.* Phil. 3. 10.

* Many omit "believe."
† Many add, "with tears."
‡ Some omit.

alas, may be lacking so that power which has been given may not be available. The child brought to the Lord has been already in the hands of those who were expressly authorized to cast out demons; yet they have only shown their incompetency in this case to do anything. It is over these He groans as an unbelieving generation, though still there is a resource in Himself, however much disciples fail. Here, as He says to the father of the child, "all things are possible to him that believeth." Mark emphasizes the malignity of the demon and the long time of possession. After he is gone out, the child seems for the moment dead; but Jesus takes him by the hand and he rises up. To His disciples He says that so virulent a case could yield only to prayer and fasting. But how great is the encouragement in such an enemy so certainly to be vanquished. The demand for faith to be in energy is no abatement of the blessing.

3. Next we have once more the pressing of death and resurrection, possibly in a wider circle than before. There is no comment upon it, except that "they understood not and were afraid to ask Him." How many things we are disposed to shirk after this manner; and in doing so lose, as far as we can, our own best blessings. By and by, this death and resurrection will be the staple of the gospel that they everywhere proclaim; and beyond this still, new glories

4 (33-41): The spirit of meekness.

4. And they [a]came to Capernaum; and having come into the house, he asked them, What were ye reasoning about in the way? But they were silent: for they had been disputing with one another by the way, who should be the [a]greater. And he sat down and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any one will be the [b]first, he shall be last of all and servant of all. And he took a little [c]child and placed it in the midst of them, and having taken it in his arms, he said unto them, Whosoever shall [d]receive one of such little children in my name receiveth me, and whosoever receiveth me receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

John said unto him, Teacher, we saw one [e]casting out demons in thy name, [who followeth not us;]* and we forbade him, because he followeth not [f]us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no one who will do a miracle in my name and be able quickly to speak evil of me: for whosoever is not [g]against us is on our side. For whosoever shall give you a [h]cup of water to drink in my name, because ye are Christ's, verily I say unto you that he shall not lose his reward.

* Many omit.

a Matt. 18. 1-5. Lk. 9. 46-48. Lk. 22. 24-27.
a *etr.* Phil. 2. 3.
b *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 9.
c *cf.* ch. 10. 13-16.
cf. 1 Cor. 3. 18, 19.
cf. Ps. 131.
d Matt. 10. 40. Jno. 13. 20.
e Lk. 9. 49, 50.
cf. Nu. 11. 26-29.
cf. Phil. 1. 12-18.
f *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 10-13.
g *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 1-6.
cf. 1 Jno. 2. 18, 19.
cf. Matt. 12. 30.
h Matt. 10. 42. Matt. 25. 40.
cf. Heb. 6. 10.
cf. 2 Tim. 1. 16-18.

will develop in it: Christians will learn and rejoice to realize that they are dead and risen with Christ.

This repetition of the announcement of Christ's death may, as I have said, point to that which could not yet be uttered. As a principle of the walk, for us it is of primary importance. To "walk in Christ" involves of necessity the being risen with Him; and this is the only Christian standard.

4. Grace has put us in such a place, and only grace could do it. There is no possible room for the thought of merit in our gaining that which man in innocence could never have pretended to, and which makes our whole life henceforth but a thank-offering for it. Faith is that by which we regain what we had lost in the fall, the place of creature nothingness before God, with the sense also of our guilt in having lost it. Thus there should be for us no claim of greatness any more, while the glorious example before our eyes of One who became for us a servant in His love, self-humbled, poor, emptied of the glory proper to Him, should rid us of all desire of self-exaltation.

Yet, alas, the next thing that we read of after His announcement of the death to which He is going, is an unseemly strife among the disciples as to who should be the greater. The Lord meets it promptly. The desire to be first would only qualify one to be last, and servant of all. Then He takes a little child, young enough to be taken up in the arms, and tells them that He could link His Name with one like that. Nay, here was the type of what He could identify Himself with. He who received one such little child in His Name received Himself, and thus the Father also. Before God indeed, what is the man beyond the babe? Only the happy thing is to recognize it.

John thereupon tells Him, as inviting His judgment on it, how they had found one casting out demons in His Name and had forbidden him as not following them. Here, too, the spirit of meekness had been lacking. They who had but so lately failed (spite of having authority) to cast out a demon, should have known that one who could do so must have some title. Christ's name was not a thing that one could conjure with. There must have been some reverence for that name which could use it as a word of power against Satan. Such an one could not turn quickly round from this to speak evil of Christ. But among

5 (42-50): God's recompense for offences.

5. And whosoever shall [h]cause one of these little ones that believe in me to stumble, it were better for him if a great mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea. And if thy [i]hand cause thee to stumble, cut it off; it is better for thee to [k]enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go away into hell,* into the fire [l]unquenchable; [where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.]† And if thy [m]foot cause thee to stumble, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter life lame, than having two feet to be cast into hell, [into the fire unquenchable; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.]† And if thine eye cause thee to stumble, cast it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire, where their [n]worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. For every one shall be salted with [o]fire, [and every [p]sacrifice shall be salted with salt.]† Salt is good; but if the salt have [q]lost its saltness, with what will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have [r]peace with one another.

h Matt. 18.6. Lk. 17. 1,2. cf. Rom. 14. 15-23. cf. 1 Cor. 8. 7-13.
i Matt. 5. 29, 30. Matt. 18. 8, 9. cf. Gal. 2. 20 with Col. 3. 5-11.
k Matt. 19. 17. cf. 1 Pet. 4. 18.
l cf. 2 Thess. 1. 8, 9. cf. Rev. 19. 20. cf. Rev. 20. 10, 14, 15.
m cf. Rom. 6. 13, 14.
n cf. Lk. 16. 22-26. cf. Jer. 8. 20.
o cf. Matt. 3. 11. cf. Lk. 12. 49.
p Lev. 2. 13. Nu. 18. 19. Ezek. 43. 24.
q Matt. 5. 13. cf. Rev. 3. 1. cf. 2 Tim. 3. 5.
r cf. Col. 4. 6.
cf. Gal. 5. 15.

* Literally, "gehenna."
† Many omit.

men there were only opposing ranks: he who was not against was for Him. And he who thought so of Christ's name as to give but a cup of water to one who belonged to Him, should not in any wise lose his reward.

5. The Lord passes from this to speak of recompence upon the other side in the same manner but with more emphasis than in Matthew. Every one must be salted with fire: for "our God is a consuming fire." This jealous holiness by its judgement of the evil would only preserve the good: for, when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. On the other hand, for the wicked the salting with fire applies to the awful judgment of Gehenna, "where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." Here the holiness of God as pure wrath upon sin, eternal as His unchanging nature, unites with the undying worm of a remorseful conscience to torment the sinner. Ah, better surely to give up what may seem necessary as eye or hand or foot, live here in whatever maimed, imperfect way, and enter into life, than, having here the fulness of all good, pass on to the eternal fire!

But "every sacrifice shall be salted with salt:" that which is to be presented to God must answer to His nature; there must be "the salt of the covenant of thy God," as the law puts it, or what must be in all relationship with Him. Salt is the energy of devotedness to God which keeps out corruption: "salt," therefore, "is good," and if it lose its power, what shall replace it? Salt, therefore, we must have in ourselves. It will diffuse its savor round, of course: if it has any, it will surely do so. But this is ministering, not requiring. We must be jealous over ourselves—careful, of course, to maintain this character in all our intercourse with others; but in peace—so easily broken by a legal and exacting spirit: "have peace one with another."

SUBD. 5.

We have now, as again in Matthew, nature in its relation to God, a matter of great moment in the path of service: the institution of marriage, the relationship to Him of children, the state of man in his best naturally, sin having

SUBDIVISION 5. (Chap. x. 1–45.)
Results: Nature in its relation to God.

1 (1-12): The Creator's ordinance governing still: man and wife one flesh.

1. AND rising up from thence he cometh into the [a]borders of Judea, and beyond Jordan; and multitudes come together again unto him, and as he was wont he taught them again. And the [b]Pharisees coming to him asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. But he answered and said unto them, What did [u]Moses command you? And they said, Moses [v]allowed to write a bill of divorce and to put [her] away. But Jesus said to them, In view of your [w]hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment, but from the [x]beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause a man shall [y]leave his father and his mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and the two shall be one flesh: so that they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath united together, let not man put asunder. And in the house again the disciples asked him concerning this. And he saith unto them, [z]Whosoever shall put away his wife and shall marry another committeth adultery against her; and if [a woman]* put away her husband, and marry another, she committeth adultery.

2 (13-16): Children in their relation to the Kingdom.

2. And they [a]brought unto him young children that he might touch them; and his disciples rebuked [those that brought]† them. But when Jesus saw it he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a [b]little child, he shall in no wise enter therein. And he took

a Matt. 19. 1, 2. *cf.* Jno. 10. 40.
b Matt. 19. 3-9.
u *cf.* Lk. 10. 26. *cf.* Matt. 5. 17-20.
v Deut. 24. 1-4. Matt 5. 31.
w *cf.* Rom. 8. 3, 4. *cf.* Heb. 7. 18, 19.
x Gen. 1. 27.
y Gen. 2. 21-25. *cf.* Mal. 2. 14, 15. 1 Cor. 6. 16. *cf.* Eph. 5. 31, 32.
z Lk. 16. 18. *cf.* 1 Cor. 7. 10.
a Matt. 19. 13-15. Lk. 18. 15-17. *cf.* Matt. 21. 15, 16.
b ch. 9. 36.

* Greek, "she."
† Some omit.

thrown its dark shadow over all; finally, we see nature thus deformed working in the servant of God himself and tending to destroy the whole character of service; but then the victory of God over it, and the perfect Servant setting the pattern for His people and moulding them after His own likeness.

As we have gone through this in Matthew, we shall add but little to it here; seeking mainly to note any points of difference, with a conviction at the same time of how slight and superficial our knowledge of these differences is, and how the word of God must suffer from our scanty knowledge of it.

1. In the question as to marriage we are taught by Christ to respect absolutely the Creator's ordinance at the beginning. According to that, man and wife are one flesh, and this is founded on the creative work itself which made them male and female, one man and one woman. God has joined them together: man must not put them asunder. Mark does not even notice the exceptional allowance of divorce, when the marriage tie has in fact been broken through.

2. As to the children, Mark notices the Lord's displeasure at the disciples' conduct, and gives here substantially what in Matthew is found elsewhere, that only those who received the Kingdom of God as a little child could enter therein (Matt. xviii. 3). Mark also shows a fuller answer on the Lord's part to a

them up in his arms, laid his hands on them and blessed them much.

3 (17-22): The heart manifested.

3. And as he went forth into the way, there [c]came one running, and kneeled down to him and asked him, Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? But Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? [d]none is good but one—God. Thou knowest the [e]commandments, Do not commit adultery; do not kill; do not steal; do not bear false witness; defraud not; honor thy father and mother. But he said unto him, Teacher, [f]all these things I have kept from my youth. Now Jesus, looking upon him, [g]loved him, and said unto him, [h]One thing thou lackest: go thy way, [i]sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have [j]treasure in heaven; and come,* follow me. But he was [k]sad at that word, and went away grieved; for he had large possessions.

4 (23-27): Natural impotence.

4. And Jesus looking around, saith to his disciples, How [l]hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answered again and saith unto them, Children, how hard it is [for those that [m]trust in riches] † to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And they were ex-

c Matt. 19. 16–26. Lk. 18. 18-27.
d cf. Ps. 16. 2 with Phil. 2. 7.
e cf. Lk. 10. 26–28 with Rom. 3. 20.
f cf. Phil. 3. 5-11.
g cf. Lk. 19. 41, 42.
cf. Hos. 11. 8.
h cf. Lk. 10. 42.
i Matt. 6. 19, 20. Lk. 12. 32-34.
cf. Acts 2. 45.
j cf. Heb. 10. 34.
cf. Phil. 3. 18-21.
k ctr. Acts 20. 24 with Phil. 3. 10-14.
l cf. Lk. 6. 24.
cf. Jas. 5. 1-6.
cf. 1 Tim. 6. 7-11.
m Job 31. 24.
cf. Ps. 52. 7.
cf. 1 Tim. 6. 17-19.

* Some add "taking up the cross."
† Some omit.

slighter request. He is asked to "touch" them; He takes them up in His arms, puts His hands on them, and blesses them.

3. In the ruler's case which follows, we find the heart manifested of one who is, as Paul says of himself when unconverted, "touching the righteousness which is of the law, blameless." There is really that on account of which it is said, (and in direct connection with his "Teacher, all these things have I kept from my youth,") that "Jesus looking upon him, loved him." There was that in him which was lovable. What he says of himself, he says with an honest conscience and conviction of its truth. Nor is he, as his question shows, merely engrossed with the present and without thought of God. He desires and seeks eternal life; and, attracted by what he hears or sees in Jesus, he comes to Him to learn the way to find this.

Mark emphasizes his running and kneeling to the Lord, his "*Good* Teacher," which from that mere human standpoint the Lord cannot accept. Goodness is in God alone: would that he had sought it only there! Nature is fully judged in the sweep of that assertion; and presently in his aching heart, as he turns, alas, from the One in whom his hope had been, he has to realize at least the bond that (one would fain hope, only for the present) holds him from the blessing that he seeks. But this bond a more than human power must sever. Nature in its fairest form is fallen away from God. Man's need is of a Saviour.

4. This is what the Lord now affirms. To the amazement of His disciples, He declares that it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God. Those who, to make this less absolute than it seems, would apply it to an eastern city gate, should remember that the Lord affirms directly that that of which He is speaking is "to man impossible." On the other hand, Mark records for us the explanation that a rich man stands here for one that *trusts* in riches, which at the same time prevents

ceedingly astonished, saying to one another, And who can be saved? But Jesus, looking on them, saith, With men it is [n]impossible, but not with God, for with God all things are possible.

5 (28-31): Recompense.

5. Peter began to say to him, [o]Behold, *we* have left all and followed thee. Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no one who hath [p]left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, [or wife,]* or children, or lands, for my sake and for the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in [q]this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with [r]persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life. But [s]many first shall be last, and the last first.

6 (32-45): The victory of God.

6. And they were in the way [t]going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus was going on before them; and they were amazed; and as they followed they were afraid. And he took again to him the twelve, and began to tell them the things that were going to happen to him: [u]Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man will be delivered up to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him up to the Gentiles, and they will mock him, and scourge him, and spit on him, and kill him; and after three days he will [v]rise again.

* Some omit.

n Lk. 1. 37. *cf.* Rom. 4. 20, 21. *cf.* Lk. 19, 2, etc.
o Matt. 19. 27-30. Lk. 18. 28-30. *cf.* Lk. 5. 27, 28.
p Matt. 10. 37, 38. *cf.* Rom. 8. 17, 18.
q *cf.* 2 Chr. 25. 9. *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 22, 23.
r *cf.* Phil. 1. 29, 30. *cf.* Jno. 16. 1, 2.
s Matt. 20. 16. Lk. 13. 30.
t Matt. 20. 17-19. Lk. 18. 31-34.
u *cf.* ch. 8. 31. *cf.* ch. 9. 31.
v ch. 9. 9, 10.

the obvious mistake of a gross literalism, and extends the principle to the poorest in actual possessions. Really he only is in the sense intended "rich," who trusts in riches: and he may do that who never acquires them. In the divinely wrought hunger of soul, the things to which the worldling turns for help become as little valuable as gold to meet desert-thirst.

The disciples in their astonishment say one to another, "Who then can be *saved?*" But salvation is of God wholly. When men have learned their need of this, there is then no difficulty.

5. Nature in itself is then hopeless; and in the child of God still there abides that which because of its tendencies Scripture calls the flesh. "In me, that is in my flesh," says the man in the experience of the seventh of Romans, "dwelleth no good thing." Of the flesh self is the centre; and into the sphere of spiritual things the flesh will intrude, how easily. Self may claim that in which (in the sense in which we are speaking) it can have no part, and take pleasure in the thought of a foremost place there. Peter's "*We* have left all and followed Thee," is just such a claim, which the Lord meets in grace with a full assurance that nothing can be left for His sake without abundant recompense, both here and hereafter. But He guards this doubly from abuse such as the carnal mind might make of it: first, by the reminder that it must be done for His sake to be rewarded: not for self, to gain the reward. Secondly, and springing out of this, "many first shall be last, and the last first," which effectually forbids self-placing anywhere.

6. But we go on beyond this, to see the victory of God over all this spirit of strife and emulation. Again He begins to warn them of His coming death and comfort them with the thought of His speedy resurrection. There is no response: fear has already fallen upon them. But presently it is seen of how contrary a spirit they are by the request of the sons of Zebedee for the two places nearest Himself in the coming Kingdom. The Lord points out to them the way

And [w]James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Teacher, we would that thou shouldest do for us what we may ask of thee. And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? And they said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory. But Jesus said unto them, Ye [x]know not what ye ask: can ye [y]drink the cup that *I* drink, or be baptized with the baptism that *I* am baptized with? And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, The [z]cup that I drink ye shall drink, and with the baptism that I am baptized with shall ye be baptized; but to sit on my right hand or on my left is not mine to give, except to those for whom it hath been [a]prepared.

And when the ten heard it, they began to be much [b]displeased concerning James and John; and Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that those who are accounted to rule over the [c]nations lord it over them, and their great ones use authority over them: but so it is not among you, but whosoever willeth to be [d]great among you, he shall be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you shall be servant of all. For even the [e]Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a [f]ransom for many.

w Matt. 20. 20-28.

x *cf.* ch. 9. 6. *cf.* Jas. 4. 3. *cf.* Ps. 106. 15.

y *cf.* Matt. 26. 37-40.

z *cf.* Jno. 13. 36-38 with Jno. 21. 18, 19. *cf.* Phil. 3. 10. *cf.* Rev. 2. 10.

a *cf.* Matt. 19. 28. *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 2, 3.

b Matt. 20. 24. *cf.* Gal. 5. 26.

c *cf.* Matt. 6. 31, 32.

d *cf.* ch. 9. 35.

e *cf.* Lk. 22. 27. *cf.* Jno. 6. 38, 39.

f 1 Tim. 2. 6. *cf.* Is. 53. 11, 12. Tit. 2. 14

by which He reaches this. Can they drink of His cup and be baptized with His baptism? And immediately they assure Him that they can. He tells them that in these they shall in fact partake; but the places that they seek are only His to give to those for whom it is prepared of His Father.

This awakes the indignation of the other disciples, and shows a similar spirit to be in them all. And now He shows them their great and fundamental mistake. Heaven is to be no place for the ambition of men. The Son of man came not to be ministered to but to minister: love's mission among them sought only what love alone could count a recompense. And if, "beyond all controversy, the less is blessed of the better," our dependence on Him insures that this ministry of His to us will go on for ever. If love made Him take it up, love will make Him keep it too, as surely as He is Son of man for ever, although the toil and sorrow of His work be past.

If then with Him service is but the sign of a love unending, and so can never cease, can it be different with those whom He is bringing into the glory of likeness to Himself? Can they take up service to win lordship by it, and state and authority? That were surely impossible: nay, the greatest in heaven's Kingdom is he that humbleth himself as a little child (Matt. xviii. 4). In heaven's rule, Love rules; and therefore rule is service still, most valued because it is so.

DIV. 3.

The closing division of the book shows us the Lord's service perfected in His sacrificial death, the acceptance of which is seen in resurrection. But Mark goes beyond this, and further than any of the Gospels, following Him into heaven itself,—to the right hand of God. The connection of this with the sin-offering aspect of the atoning work, as here presented to us, we must consider at another time.

The Cross and the resurrection give us characteristically the second and third

DIVISION 3. (Chaps. x. 46–xvi.)

The Heart of Service revealed in Sacrifice, answered from the Heart of God in Resurrection and the Ascension to Heaven of the Offerer.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chaps. x. 46–xiii.)

The King.

1 (x. 46–xi. 26): The barren tree.
i (x. 46–52): light.

1. [1] AND they come to [g]Jericho; and as he went out of Jericho, and his disciples, and a great multitude, the son of Timæus, Bartimæus, a blind man, sat by the wayside, [h]begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out and say, [i]Son of David, Jesus, have mercy on me. And many [j]re-

g Matt. 20. 29–34. Lk. 18. 35–43.
h *cf.* Jno. 9. 1. *cf.* Acts 3. 2. *cf.* Lk. 7. 42.
i *cf.* Matt. 15. 22. *cf.* Matt. 21. 9 with Jno. 1. 49.
j *cf.* ver. 13.

subdivisions here. The first, as introductory to these, takes us back (as at this point do all the Gospels) to Matthew's view of the King, come to His own and rejected by them; the connection of which with what follows it is plain, when we realize that in this not only Israel's condition but that of the world as a whole is seen, the sin of man in its full development, for which the cross of Christ is the only possible remedy. Thus the three parts of this last division are in fit relation to one another, and form a significant whole.

SUBD. 1.

The first subdivision has also its three parts. The first of these has its central significance in the barren fig-tree, which the Lord curses for its barrenness, a figure scarcely to be mistaken by any who look below the surface, and which in Mark is woven together with the story of His purification of the temple, His Father's house. Israel, alas, for this had to be driven out of that which they had profaned. The "Canaanite (or merchantman) in the house of the Lord" had found in the favored people of God its sorrowful fulfilment.

The second part shows us, along with their hostility to the Lord, His judgment in detail of their condition. This comes out in His answers to their various and evil-designing questions and efforts to entangle Him in His talk,—efforts which end for them in disastrous confusion. He closes it with His unanswerable question to them with regard to David's Son, and then denounces to the people the heartless and ostentatious religiousness of the scribes.

The third part announces (for disciples' ears alone) the coming of the rejected Son of man in glory, to deliver His believing people out of the great final tribulation into which the nation has come because, rejecting Him who came to them in His Father's name, they have received him who comes in his own.

The connection all through, as generally in Mark, is close and intimate with Matthew's Gospel; Mark, however, omitting much, especially of the dispensational details, as the marriage of the King's son, and in the prophecy of the final scenes, all that has reference to the Church and to the judgment of the nations, the separation of the sheep from the goats.

1. [1] In the three synoptic Gospels alike, the Lord's presentation of Himself to the people as their King is prefaced by the miracle at Jericho, which is expressly wrought in answer to an appeal to Him as Son of David. Matthew mentions two blind men, but Mark only one, whose name he (and not Matthew) gives. Bartimæus is simply the son of Timæus, so that he gets his personal name from his relationship. Timæus is in Greek,* "one that is prized," and "the son of

* A Greek name need scarcely be a difficulty, where Greek had been almost the common language for so many years, and where Peter, Andrew, Philip, Nicodemus, Stephen, are all Greek. Its being Greek (the common synonym of Gentile) is in fact spiritually significant, Israel's father Abraham, God's Timæus, having been called in uncircumcision, according to the apostle's argument in Rom. iv.

buked him that he should be silent; but he cried so much the [k]more, Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still and said, Call him. And they called the blind man, saying to him, Be of good courage, rise, he calleth thee. And he, [l]casting away his garment, sprang up and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What [m]wilt thou that I should do for thee? And the blind man said unto him, [n]Rabboni, that I may recover sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go [o]thy way: thy faith hath healed thee. And immediately he recovered sight, and [p]followed him in the way.

[2] (xi. 1-11): the announcement.

[2] And when they [q]come near to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go into the village that is over against you, and immediately upon entering it ye shall find a colt tied, [r]whereon no man ever yet sat: loose it and bring [it]. And if any one say unto you, Why do ye this? say, The Lord hath [s]need of him, and immediately he will send it hither. And they departed, and found a colt tied at the door without, at the way round [the house], and they loose him. And some of those standing there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt? And

k cf. Lk. 5. 19.

l cf. Is. 64. 6 with Phil. 3. 7-9.

m cf. Jno. 5. 6, 40.

n Jno. 20. 6.

o cf. Jno. 11. 44 with Rom. 8. 2.

p cf. ch. 1. 18 with Rom. 6. 12, 13.

q Matt. 21. 1-11. Lk. 19. 29-40. Jno. 12. 12-16.

r cf. Jer. 31. 18. *cf.* Job 11. 12.

s cf. Acts 9. 13-16.

one that is prized" would well represent the state of Israel in her blindness of unbelief still "beloved for the fathers' sakes" (Rom. xi. 28). It is surely a striking name for one whom we have already looked at as on other grounds (see notes on Matt. xx. 29–34) foreshadowing the remnant of Israel in days to come, when God is preparing the way of His King to come to Zion. They need and will find, spite of the opposition of the mass by whom they are surrounded, in Jesus of Nazareth, One who is sent to "preach recovering of sight to the blind" (Luke iv. 18). To Him they will come, "casting away the garment" of religious self-righteousness, which has been ever the hindrance with the people to whom they belong. They will receive sight and follow Jesus.

Such spiritual sight given in Jericho, the world under the curse, into which Christ has come, and which still converts blind beggars into joyful followers of the Lord, is even now His witness. He had to come under this curse to redeem us from it, and the deliverance at Jericho, may well be the pledge of His victory at Jerusalem and elsewhere, though He go to present rejection at the hands of men. The blessed Servant has anticipated it all, and sees with no uncertainty the path before Him. That very rejection shall only give Him occasion for deeper service.

[2] So they come near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage (the "house of unripe figs") and Bethany (the "house of affliction" or "humiliation")* significant names both for *Him;* and now He sends two of His disciples to bring to Him the colt upon which He is to ride, proclaiming His Kingdom of peace, into Jerusalem. Mark, as little as possible touching the dispensational side of things, omits from his account the mother ass (*see Matthew*). The acclamations of the multitude hail the "coming kingdom of our father David." There seems at present no opposition. He simply enters Jerusalem, goes into the temple and looks round upon all things there. Then, it being now evening, He withdraws and goes out to Bethany.

Matthew does not notice this first visit of silent contemplation on the Lord's

* More generally taken now as "house of dates," but quite conjecturally.

they said unto them even as Jesus had said; and they let them go. And they bring the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him, and he sat upon him. And many [f]spread their garments in the way; and others branches which they had cut out of the fields. And those who went before, and those who followed cried, Hosanna! [g]blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest! And he entered into Jerusalem, into the [h]temple; and having looked round upon all things, it being already evening, he [i]went out to Bethany with the twelve.

[3] (xi. 12-26): the ban upon the fig-tree and the cleansing of the house of God.

[3] And on the [k]morrow, as they came out from Bethany, he hungered. And seeing a [l]fig-tree afar off, having [m]leaves, he came, if haply he might find anything thereon; and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the [n]time of figs was not yet. And he answered and said to it, Let [o]none eat fruit of thee any more for ever. And his disciples heard it.

And they come to Jerusalem; and, entering into the temple, he began to [p]cast out the sellers and the buyers in the temple; and he overthrew the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those that sold doves; and would not suffer any one to carry a vessel through the temple. And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, [q]My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations? but ye have made it a [r]den of robbers.

f *cf.* ch. 10. 50. *cf.* Lk. 7. 38.
g Ps. 118. 26. Zech. 9. 9.
h *cf.* Lk. 2. 46. *cf.* Jno. 18. 20.
i *cf.* Lk. 2. 7 with Jno. 1. 10, 11. Matt. 21. 17.
k Matt. 21. 18-22.
l *cf.* Lk. 13. 6-10.
m *cf.* Gen. 3. 7. *cf.* Ezek. 17. 9.
n *cf.* Is. 1. 30. *cf.* Ps. 1. 2, 3.
o *cf.* Lk. 19. 44.
p Matt. 23. 37-39.
q Matt. 21. 12, 13. Lk. 19. 45, 46. *cf.* Jno 2. 13-16. *cf.* Mal. 3. 1-6.
r Is. 56. 7. *cf.* Mi. 4. 2.
s Jer. 7. 11. *cf.* Is. 5. 7.

part, but puts the cleansing of the temple, which did not really take place till the next day, in connection with the triumphal entry. This has of course been charged upon him as a discrepancy. It is in fact the substitution of an order of thought for the order of time; and this is not infrequent in the Gospels.

This simple looking round upon everything and then turning the back upon it is very solemn. It is not judgment that is inflicted, but He finds nothing to His satisfaction, and leaves it to them, and leaves them with it. His own personal position is outside it all. The temple as His Father's house should have been His own. There, if anywhere in Israel, would have been the throne of God, and here was the King of this kingdom, the Son of the Father; and He turns His back on it. Leaving it, He leaves the city also, for Bethany, the "house of humiliation." He can only abide there.

[3] On the morrow, as He returns to the city, He hungers. A spiritual hunger was, in fact, upon Him. The zeal of His Father's house was consuming Him, with all that that house implied, as established among men—a place of approach to Him, not for Israel only, but for all nations. This had been committed to Israel's care, and their privileges upon which they prided themselves, only to look down with disdain upon the Gentiles, were really responsibilities on their behalf. The blessing of the earth depended—and still depends—upon Israel's blessing. As God's vine they had failed, and the vineyard had been laid waste; but He had suffered a remnant to come back, according to His own figure as to them, to be as "a fig-tree planted in" the desolate "vineyard" (Luke xiii. 6), to see if yet there might be fruit for Him.

Here, then, the significance of the present act is seen. The returned people stood before God with its profession of faith in Him, in striking contrast with the nations round, for whom plainly as merely heathen, "the time of figs was not yet." The fig-leaf was the promise of fruit wherever found; and therefore

And the chief priests and the scribes heard it, and [f]sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the multitude were [g]astonished at his doctrine. And when evening was come he went out [h]without the city.

And passing by, early in the morning, they saw the [i]fig-tree dried up from the roots. And Peter, calling to remembrance, saith unto him, Rabbi, behold, the fig-tree which thou cursedst is dried up. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. Verily I say unto you that [j]whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou plucked up and cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he saith is coming to pass, it shall be [so] to him. Wherefore I say unto you, Whatsoever things ye [k]pray and ask for, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. And when ye stand praying, [l]forgive, if ye have aught against any, that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your offences. [But if *ye* do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your offences.*]

[f] Matt. 21. 45, 46. Lk. 19. 47, 48.
[g] ch. 1. 22, etc.
[h] ver. 11.
[i] *cf.* Lk. 23. 31. *cfr.* Ezek. 37. 11, 12.
[j] Matt. 17. 20. Lk. 17. 6. *cf.* Zech. 4. 7.
[k] Jno. 14. 13, 14. Jno. 15. 7. *cf.* Jno. 4. 50.
[l] Matt. 6. 14. *cf.* Matt. 18. 23–35.

* Omitted by some, and doubtful.

the Lord comes to it to find this. There was none: and for this He pronounces its doom.

No more is said about this here, but He goes on to Jerusalem and the temple, and what He had found at the beginning of His ministry (John ii. 13–16) He finds unchanged at the end of it. Greed was profaning the very house of God, and that which should have been a house of prayer had become a den of robbers. He purges them all out, assuming for a moment the authority which was His; but the effect is only to bring the chief priests and scribes together to plot for His destruction. As yet the fear of the people holds them back.

We return then to the actual destruction of the fig-tree, which they find next morning dried up from the roots. The Lord uses it to impress upon His disciples the power of faith in God. Not a tree merely, but a mountain would disappear in this way from the path of faith, where faith laid hold of the Invisible for it. But He joins with believing prayer the need of a tender spirit of forgiveness towards any against whom the heart might retain the sense of wrong, lest the Father's government should be made to remember one's own offences.

The Lord leaves the application both of the fig-tree and the mountain to be made by His disciples. They were evidently not yet prepared to realize the doom that Israel as a nation were bringing upon themselves, or that they might be such an obstruction as He pictured to the path of faith. The divine foresight of the end would not prevent the most assiduous tenderness in warning and entreaty till the end should come. God has taken care even to proclaim by the mouth of Jeremiah that His own prophecies of coming judgment might be set aside by a nation's repentance (Jer. xviii. 7, 8); and has even given us in Nineveh an example of this (Jonah iii. 10).

But Israel went on unrepenting until it was in fact, as a nation, sunk like the mountain of which the Lord speaks into the sea of nations round her; and the fig-tree died withered up because it had no fruit for Him who sought it. The blessing of which the Word still gives assurance for them can only be through a veritable resurrection (Ezek. xxxvii).

2. The next section is almost entirely similar to Matthew, save in the omission of two parables, and in the addition by Mark of the beautiful and signifi-

2 (xi. 27–xii.): Rejected and rejecting: the discriminative judgment.
1 (xii. 27–33): the question of authority.

2. [1] And they come again to Jerusalem; and, as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders; and they said unto him, By what [m]authority doest thou these things, and who gave thee this authority that thou shouldst do these things? And Jesus said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. The [n]baptism of John, was it from heaven or of men? answer me. And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven, he will say, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men—they feared the people: for all held John to be truly a prophet. And they answered and said to Jesus, We [o]know not. And Jesus saith unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

2 (xii. 1–12): the rejection of the messengers.

[2] And he began to speak unto them in parables. A [p]man planted a vineyard, and set a [q]hedge about it, and digged a pit for the winepress, and built a tower, and let it out to [r]husbandmen, and went out of the country. And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the [s]fruit of the vineyard. And they took him, and beat him, and sent him away empty. And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they [threw stones and]* struck him on the head, and sent him away with insult. And he sent another; and him they killed; and many others: [t]beating some and killing some. Having therefore† yet one beloved [u]son, he

m Matt. 21. 23–27. Lk. 20. 1–8. *cf.* Jno. 5. 30. *cf.* Jno. 6. 57.
n *cf.* Lk. 7. 24–35.
o *cf.* Jno. 1. 19–28. *cf.* Jno. 5. 35.
p Matt. 21. 33–46. Lk. 20. 9–18.
q *cf.* Is. 5. 1–7. *cf.* Ps. 80. 8–16. *cf.* Deut. 7. 2–6.
r *cf.* Matt. 25. 14. *cf.* Josh. 24. 12–14. *ctr.* Jno. 15. 1 with 1 Co. 3. 8, 9.
s *cf.* Deut. 26. 8–14. *ctr.* Hos. 10. 1. *cf.* ch. 11. 13.
t *cf.* 2 Chr. 16. 10. *cf.* Matt. 23. 34–36. *cf.* Acts 7. 52.
u *cf.* Heb. 1. 1, 2. *cf.* Jno. 3. 16.

* Many omit. † Many read, "He had."

cant incident of the widow's mites. It gives, as already said, the Lord's judgment in detail of Israel's condition, in her chosen leaders, who unite in opposition, though veiled, against Him. Everywhere they are met, refuted, their disguise stripped off, until He closes argument with His own triumphant question how Christ can be the Son of David. This is followed by His denunciation of the scribes, and His appraisal of all their ostentatious giving to the temple treasury as less in value than the widow's "two mites which make a farthing."

[1] The question of authority is the one first raised; upon the face of it unutterable folly; for His works bore witness of Him, and it was impossible to suppose that divine power, such as was manifest in them, could have been gained unlawfully. He refuses, therefore, to answer their question, except they answer first His own. If competent to discern as to Himself (and if not, it would be of no use to answer them), they should know as to the baptism of John, whether it was from heaven or of men. If they knew, let them answer.

But they dare not answer. On the one side they cannot excuse themselves, if it were from heaven, for not being his disciples: on the other, they could not deny his claim for fear of the people. And the only refuge left for them is in what for them is a complete and yet most insincere humiliation; they cannot tell!

[2] The parable of the two sons which Matthew gives is here omitted, and that of the vineyard comes into the second place. The thought of the vineyard was familiar to them from the prophets, who had pressed upon them the claims of

sent him unto them last, saying, They will respect my son. But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the [v]heir: come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. And they took him, and [w]killed him, and cast him out without the vineyard. What therefore will the lord of the vineyard do? He will [x]come and destroy the husbandmen, and give the vineyard unto others. Have ye not read even this scripture, The [y]stone which the builders rejected, the same was made the head of the corner: this was from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes?

And they sought to lay hold on him, and [z]feared the multitude: for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them; and they left him, and went away.

3 (xii.13-17); Cæsar's portion and and God's: an unveiling.

[3] And they send to him certain of the [a]Pharisees and of the Herodians, that they might catch him in [some] matter.* And when they were come, they say unto him, Teacher, we know that thou art true, and carest not for any one: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God with truth. Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar or not? shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me

v *cf.* Ps. 89. 27. *cf.* Jno. 19. 15. *cf.* Acts 3. 17.
w *cf.* ch. 9. 13, 31. *cf.* Acts 2. 23. *cf.* Acts 13. 27, 28.
x *cf.* Lk. 19. 27. *cf.* 2 Thess. 1. 8, 9.
y Ps. 118. 22. 23. 1 Pet. 2. 7, 8.
z ch. 11. 32.
a Matt. 22. 15. 22. Lk. 20. 20-26.

*λόγος, "matter of speech."

God as to it; and they had built the sepulcres of these prophets, whom they could not deny that their fathers killed. With the murder of the One who spoke to them in their hearts, how could they deny that they were in the succession of the parable? Then came their own Scriptures to prove that the corner stone of God's building was one rejected by the builders. Clearly they could understand that all this spoke of them, and feel it enough to be maddened by it.

[3] Now they break up into parties, (Pharisees and Herodians) which unite together, however, in dexterous combination. They do not question His authority any more: they know that He is true and teaches the way of God in truth. Nor will the fear of man shut *His* mouth.

So they have a question to ask, an important one, touching closely all ranks and conditions among them, and quite apt to kindle dangerous passions. Pharisees and Herodians were divided about it: here it was for Him to settle: Should they give tribute to Cæsar? Aye, or no?

But they cannot dig deep enough to hide from Him the hypocrisy of that question, that they were merely, as He tells them, tempting Him. Yet He will not decline it: let them only bring Him the tribute money. And they bring it: and there is the image of Cæsar stamped broadly upon it.

They cannot deny,—they are not suffered to ignore the fact,—that this is Cæsar's money. But how much lay hid under this for those that were still capable of entertaining such questions. How long they had given up any full, entire reliance upon the Almighty, the God of their father Abraham, and by profession their own! They had leaned upon another arm than His. They had coveted the riches of a world which Abraham had refused. They were trafficking with Cæsar's money, and must pay him back his money. Issachar in their father Jacob's prophecy had proved but too surely their type: Issachar, the "bony ass, couching between the burdles: and he saw the land that it was good, and rest that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became servant to tribute."

a penny,* that I may see it. And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Cæsar's. And Jesus said unto them, [b]Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's. And they wondered much at him.

[b] *cf.* Rom. 13. 1–8. *cf.* Tit. 3. 1. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 13–17.

[a] (xii. 18–27): the failure of human tests in divine things.

[a] And there come unto him [c]Sadducees, who say that there is no resurrection, and they asked him, saying, Teacher, [d]Moses wrote unto us, if a man's brother die, and leave a wife behind him, and leave no child, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. There were seven brethren, and the first took a wife, and, dying, left no seed; and the second took her, and died, and neither did *he* leave seed; and the third likewise. And the seven [took her and]† left no seed: last of all, the woman died also. In the resurrection, [when they shall rise again,]† whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her as wife. And Jesus said unto them, Is it not on this account ye err, [e]not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God? For when they rise from among the dead, they neither [f]marry nor are given in marriage; but are as angels in heaven. But as regards the dead that they rise, have ye not read in the book of Moses, at the bush, how God spake unto him, saying, I [g]am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.

[c] Matt. 22. 23–33. Lk. 20. 27–38.

[d] Deut. 25. 5, 6. *cfr.* Eph. 1. 3.

[e] *cf.* Acts 2. 24–31. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 4.

[f] *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 42–52. *cf.* Gal. 3. 28.

[g] Gen. 28. 13. Ex. 3. 6. *cf.* Rom. 4. 17.

[b] (xii. 28–34): as to the true responsibility to God.

[b] And one of the [h]scribes who had come up, and had heard them reasoning together, and knew that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The

[h] Matt. 22. 35–40.

* "*A denarius.*" † Many omit.

Give Cæsar then what is his: no use to expect divine help to ignore what their sin had brought them into. No! and yet a way there was—a way which they had never taken: give God also His own! how surely then would the burden pass from their back, and the rest they longed for be obtained! "My yoke is easy, and my burden light."

"And they marvelled at Him."

[a] But they are not yet silenced; and after the Pharisee and the Herodian appears the Sadducee: a not unusual order at any time. With them we find the intrusion of mere human thought into spiritual things, and which with its own beggarliness would beggar heaven. But they know neither the Scriptures,—when did an infidel ever know the Scriptures?—nor the power of God. The Lord proves to them how the simplest sayings of God may contain what would enrich us for ever and we do not find it there. Shall we ever awake to the need we have of putting under adequate tillage the rich land which God has given us? As to the Lord's argument here, we can add little or nothing to what has been said in Matthew.

[b] As to the next question, Mark shows us under the tempting spirit of which Matthew speaks a certain effect nevertheless produced in the man who asks it. How apt we are to fight with the truth just when it is gaining access into our hearts! and how contrary often are the thoughts which unite to move us! In

first [commandment of all]* is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. [This is the first commandment].* And the second [like it]* is this: [j]Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is not another commandment greater than these. And the scribe said unto him, Right, teacher; thou hast spoken with truth: for he is [k]one, and there is none besides him; and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, [and with all the soul,]* and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself is much [l]more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered with intelligence, he said unto him, Thou art [m]not far from the kingdom of God. And no one any longer dared to question him.

6 (xii.35-37): the scribes conquered on their own ground.

[6] And Jesus answered and said, as he taught in the temple, [n]How say the scribes that the Christ is the Son of David? for David himself [o]said in the Holy Spirit, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies a footstool for thy feet. David himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he his son? And the [p]common people heard him gladly.

7 (xii.38-40): completely judged.

[7] And he said to them in his teaching, [q]Beware of the scribes, who desire to walk about in long robes, and [r]salutations in the market-places, and [s]chief seats in the synagogues, and chief places at feasts, who devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive a far greater judgment.

* Many omit.

i Deut. 6. 4, 5. Lk. 10. 27.
j Lev. 19.18. Rom. 13. 9, 10. Gal. 5. 14. Jas. 2. 8.
k Deut. 4. 35, 39. Deut.32.39. Is. 45. 6, 22.
l 1 Sa. 15. 22. cf. Ps.51.16, 17. cf.Mi.6.6-8. cf.Hos.6.6.
m cf. ch. 10. 21. cf. Acts 26. 28, 29.
n Matt. 22. 41-46. Lk. 20. 41-44.
o Ps. 110. 1. cf. Is. 11. 1. cf. Mi. 5. 2. cf. Rev. 22. 16.
p cf.Lk.15.1. cf.Matt.11. 5. cf. 1 Cor. 1. 26-29.
q Lk. 20. 45-47.
r Matt. 23. 7-12. ctr. 1 Cor. 4. 9-16.
s Lk. 11. 43. Matt. 23. 6. ctr. Jas. 2. 1-5. cf. 3 Jno. 9.
t Matt.23.14. cf. Rom. 2. 13. cf. Lk. 12. 47, 48.

the scribe before us we find a further effect of the answer given to his question, and the Lord Himself pronounces him "not far from the Kingdom of God." We are not told that he ever entered it; but we have good reason for hope that he had reached the place in which he was as the result of a seeking which could not fail of divine guidance. It needed some boldness to proclaim so heartily his acceptance of the truth, (simple as it may seem and is,) that love to God and to one's neighbor is "more than all whole burnt-offering and sacrifices," and this in sympathetic admiration of Jesus of Nazareth, and in the midst of those who were His open adversaries.

With the exception of this, Matthew's account is almost exactly that of Mark, and we cannot add to what is said of it in the former Gospel.

[6] After the scribe's confession, "no one any longer dared to question Him." But He now turns upon His silenced enemies with a question on His own part. The charge against Him was that "He made Himself the Son of God." The creed of the scribes was that Messiah was simply Son of David. He produces David himself therefore in proof that He must be more: otherwise how, as in the 110th psalm, could the father call his son his lord? To this they have, and could have, no answer.

[7] He proceeds to warn the people against the scribes. Mark does not however reproduce here the detailed judgment which is given in Matthew. He speaks of their love of display, of human applause, of leadership, their very prayers a

t xii. 41–44: a turn of the page.

[8] And Jesus, sitting down over against the [u]treasury, beheld how the multitude cast money into the treasury; and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a poor [v]widow and cast in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called his disciples and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than all they that have cast into the treasury: for they all have cast in of their superfluity; but she of her destitution did cast in all that she had, the [w]whole of her living.

3 xiii. 1: His manifestation in glory.

1–4 13: the beginnings of birth-pains.

3. [1] And as he went forth out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Teacher, [x]behold what manner of stones, and what manner of buildings. And Jesus said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left here one stone upon another* that shall not be [y]thrown down. And as he sat on the

u Lk. 21. 1–4.

v *cf.* ver. 40. *cf.* 1 Kl. 17. 9. *cf.* Lam. 1. 1–4.

w *cf.* 2 Cor. 8. 1–5, 12. *cf.* Phil. 2. 17, 30.

x Matt. 24. 1, 2. Lk. 21. 5, 6. *cfr.* 1 Cor. 3. 11–15. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 4–9.

y *cf.* 1 Kl. 9. 7. *cf.* Jer. 7. 14.

* Literally, "a stone upon a stone."

hypocrisy, while they devoured in their greed the substance of the poor and unprotected. Such were the religious chiefs of the nation, and their character was one most easily to be discerned surely. Yet these blind leaders were as blindly followed.

[8] He turns the page, and shows us amid such a state of things what the eye of God could discern, and His heart delight in, the act of a poor widow, too poor to tempt even the rapacity of a scribe, yet not too poor to put into the temple-treasury a gift beyond all the rich gifts of the wealthiest worshipers. "Two mites which make a farthing:" really about three quarters of a farthing! but the value of it, as our Lord declares, was not according to the market—according to its buying capacity, but intangible and spiritual. The two mites were all the means she had: "all her living." She had put her heart in with it: a heart that had no reserve,—that would keep nothing back from God. The value of it was that of sacrifice, and could not miss appreciation by One who was Himself the Great Sacrifice, or by Him who spared not for us His own Son.

But this was one among all that had cast in; and the commendation takes the form of condemnation; the joy of approbation is only as of a sweet note amid dissonance. Nay, the existence of this one verity of goodness and devotedness seems only to make worse the awful falsehood and self-service and arrogancy of pretension all around. Israel remains unhealed, unhelped, with her sin upon her, and going on to the culminating sin of sins—the Cross.

And, as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man. There is naturally no difference. The lesson here is lesson for us all, and the exception is of divine grace only. Thus the Cross was not man's sin only, but the grace that meets his sin: and

"The very spear that pierced Thy side
Drew forth the blood to save."

3. But before the Cross is reached, the veil is once more for a moment drawn aside, and we are given to see the One rejected and disowned of men coming in the glory of heaven when unbelief shall be possible no more, and resistance beyond a moment's possible thought. We have been already through this great prophecy in Matthew, whom Mark in what he gives of it almost entirely resembles. No doubt there are certain differences, and for these and for the resemblances alike there must be spiritual reasons which we should be able to give some account of. But for this the Gospels in their entirety must be better known, and each part apprehended in the light of the whole. Too little believing work has been done in this direction to enable us to say much to the purpose as to it. That there is divine wisdom in it all it should not need to say;

mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, [z] Tell us when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things are about to be fulfilled? And Jesus [answering them]* began to say, Take heed that no one lead you [a] astray: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am [he]; and shall lead many astray. And when ye shall hear of [b] wars and rumors of wars, be not troubled: these things must needs come to pass; but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be [c] earthquakes in [divers] places; and there shall be famines [and troubles]:* these things are the beginning of travail.

But take ye heed to yourselves: for they shall [d] deliver you up to councils; and in synagogues shall ye be beaten; and ye shall stand before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony unto them. And the [e] gospel must first be preached unto all the nations. And when they shall lead you away to deliver you up, be not [f] anxious beforehand as to what ye shall say; but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Spirit. And [g] brother shall deliver up brother to death, and the father his child; and children shall rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be [h] hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.

* Many omit.

z Matt. 24. 3, etc. Lk. 21. 7. etc. *cf.* Lk. 17. 20-37.

a *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 1-3.

b *cf.* Rev. 6. 2-4.

c Rev. 6. 12. Rev. 8. 5.

d *cf.* Matt. 10. 17, 18. *cf.* Jno. 16. 2.

e Matt. 24. 14.

f Matt. 10. 19. Lk. 12. 11, 12. Lk. 21. 14. *cf.* Acts 5. 29-32. *cf.* Acts 26. 1, 2, etc.

g *cf.* Jer. 9. 4. *cf.* Mi. 7. 5, 6. Matt. 10. 21, 34-36. Lk. 21. 16.

h Matt. 24. 9. Lk. 21. 17. *cf.* Jno. 16. 1-3. *cf.* Acts 28. 22. *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 14.

but one may have to confess ignorance, which the many with whom we share it prevent being felt with the shame which should belong to it. To avoid mere repetition the notes on Matthew must be referred to throughout.

[1] The introductory portion no doubt takes in, in its general characteristics, the present time; though Christianity, as such, is not contemplated in it. It partakes in this way in the character of Old Testament prophecy, in which the present dispensation has no place; save, indeed, as you may call a type a prophecy, and then we can find such parabolic utterances not seldom. The prophecy of our Lord here has, in Matthew's version of it, quite similarly its Christian portion couched in this parabolic style. The time had not yet come for plainer speech. Mark and Luke alike omit all this Christian part; while the indefiniteness of this introductory portion leaves room for what is not explicitly found there.

Mark, as well as Luke, emphasizes in a special manner the persecutions that the disciples would have to endure, which in Luke are declared to take place before the signs among the nations. They are, therefore, persecutions of the early Christian days, such as the Acts show us to have taken place as soon as the new message of salvation was proclaimed. In this way the testimony to governors and kings was to be given; and they were, without any anxiety about it, to rely entirely upon the Spirit of God for all that they should say. Even the natural love of kindred would be destroyed by the spirit of hostility to Christ. He that endured to the end would be saved.

[2] The last clause, while as a general principle it applies to all, has certainly a

2 (14-23): the abomination of desolation.

[2] But when ye shall see the [i]abomination of desolation standing where it ought not (he that readeth, let him understand), then let them that are in Judea [j]flee to the mountains, and let him that is upon the house-top not go down, nor enter in, to take anything out of his house; and let him that is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! And pray ye that it * be not in the winter. For those days shall be a [k]tribulation such as there hath not been the like from the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never shall be. And except the Lord had [l]shortened the days, no flesh would be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days. And then, if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is the Christ; or, Lo, there! believe it not: for there shall arise [m]false Christs and false prophets, and shall show signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. But take ye heed: behold, I have told you all things beforehand.

3 (24-27): the appearing of Christ.

[3] But in those days, [n]after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall be falling from heaven, and the [o]powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall they see the [p]Son of man coming in clouds, with great power and glory. And then shall he send his angels, and [q]gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

4 (28-37): watchfulness on the way.

[4] Now from the [r]fig-tree learn the parable. When its branch already becometh tender and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh. So also ye, when

* Some read, "your flight."

i Matt. 24. 15-20. Dan. 9. 27. cf. Rev. 13. 14-18.
j cf. Rev. 12. 6. cf. Lk. 21. 20-24. cf. Zech. 14. 4, 5.
k Dan. 12. 1. cf. Rev. 7. 14.
l cf. Is. 26. 20. cf. Dan. 9. 27 with Rev. 12. 12-14.
m Matt. 24. 11, 23, 24 with Rev. 13. 11-18. cf. 2 Thess. 2. 3-12.
n Matt. 24. 29. cf. Joel 2. 31. Lk. 21. 25, 26. cf. Rev. 8. 12.
o cf. Heb. 12. 26-29. cf. Dan. 8. 10, 11.
p Dan. 7. 13. Matt. 24. 30. Lk. 21. 27. Rev. 1. 7. Rev. 19. 11.
q cf. Matt. 13. 30, 41-43. Matt. 24. 31. cf. Ps. 50. 5.
r Matt. 24. 32-35. Lk. 21. 29-33. cf. Song 7. 12.

special reference to the time of the end, and the Lord goes on immediately to the abomination standing in the holy place, "where" (above all) "it ought not:" the very place in which idolatrous worship would be the most open defiance of Him who had peremptorily forbidden it. This, as we have seen in Matthew, undoubtedly refers to days that are yet to come, after the present dispensation is ended by the removal of the saints to meet the Lord in the air, and when the "remnant of His brethren," as Micah declares, "shall return to the children of Israel" (Micah v. 3): that is, when those converted to God in Israel will no longer find their place as now in the body of Christ, but share the national hopes and promises of the ancient people of God.

All the warnings of the great tribulation following here are almost word for word as we find them in Matthew, with the omission only of the reference to the sabbath, and the danger of deception as to His being in the desert or the secret chambers.

[3] The signs which precede the coming of the Lord follow, and then the Son of man, coming in the clouds of heaven, sends forth His angels to gather together His elect from the four winds,—Israel, once more His people, from their long dispersion.

[4] The parable of the revival of Israel's fig-tree from her winter sleep, with

ye see these things coming to pass, know that it is nigh —at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This [s]generation shall in no wise pass away, till all these things come to pass. [t]Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall in no wise pass away. But of that [u]day or of that hour knoweth no one, no not the angels that are in heaven, neither the [v]Son, but the Father. Take heed, watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is. It is as [w]when a man, away out of the country, having left his house, and given authority to his servants, and to [x]each one his work, hath commanded also the porter to watch. Watch therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, whether at even, or at midnight, or at cock-crowing, or in the morning: lest, coming suddenly, he find you [y]sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, [z]Watch.

s *cf.* Matt. 10. 23. *cf.* Rom. 9. 28.
t *cf.* Matt. 5. 18. *cf.* Jer. 31. 35-37.
u *cf.* Acts 1. 7. *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 1-10.
v *cf.* Phil. 2. 7 with John 5. 30. *cfr.* John 6. 30.
w Matt. 24. 45-51.
x *cf.* Matt. 25. 14, etc. *cf.* Rom. 12. 6, etc.
y *cf.* Rom. 13. 11-14. *cf.* Eph. 5. 14.

cf. 1 Thess. 5. 5-7. z Matt. 24. 42; Matt. 25. 13; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 13.

what follows to the thirty-second verse, is again almost word for word with Matthew. But Mark alone, in recording the Lord's declaration that "of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven," inserts "neither the Son."* This the Lord's character as the Son of God in service sufficiently explains. "The servant knoweth not what his lord doeth." And to the Corinthians the apostle says, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." It is not a question of His divine knowledge, but of what He knew as about His Father's business, as the apostle at Corinth knew nothing but the Crucified One.

It has been urged against this that it is not in this sense that no man or angel knoweth; but this as an objection has no force. For the point of our Lord's words is the inaccessibleness *to man* of this knowledge. There was none to whom one could go for this knowledge: neither man nor angel could communicate it, nor the Son either, as the apostle of His Father's will. It is a pregnant example of how we need to apprehend the divisions of Scripture according to their proper significance, in order to get the details rightly. "Take ye heed, watch and pray," the Lord adds, "for ye know not when the time is."

Notice the interests which Christ has here. He is going up to where He was before,—to the Father's presence and joy; yet He presents Himself here as having His house on earth, leaving it for a time and coming back to it, to those who have been entrusted with the work and authority of it in the meantime: a theme upon which Matthew dwells more at large. The master of the house comes back at an unknown hour, "at even, midnight, cock-crowing, or in the morning." Later it cannot be, for He of whom this is spoken Himself *brings* the day. But with the uncertainty, watchfulness is imperative: the true disciple must not be caught asleep.

Subd. 2.

We come now to the Cross. Every view of Christ that the Gospels give connects with the Cross. Every step He took in this world led Him to the Cross. Men's voices decreed Him to be worthy of death. The multitude, in the land where He had raised miracles of mercy, shouted "Crucify Him." Man's wickedness gave Him the Cross. Man's need led Him to it. The righteousness and love—the whole glory of God—find in it their fullest and their eternal display.

* It is found, however, in some copies of Matthew: see notes Matt. xxiv. 36.

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chaps. xiv., xv.)

The Cross.

SECTION 1. (chap. xiv. 1-52.)

The cup chosen.

1 (1-11): The traitor's choice and the occasion.
1 (1, 2): the purpose.
2 (3-9): love and utilitarianism.

1. [1] NOW after two days was the [a]passover and unleavened bread; and the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how they might lay hold of him by craft and kill him: for they said, Not at the feast, lest haply there might be a tumult of the people.

[2] And [b]when he was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as he was at table, there came a woman having an alabaster cruse of [c]ointment of pure nard,* very precious: and she brake the cruse, and poured it on his head. Now there were some [d]indignant among themselves, and saying, Why was this waste of the ointment made? for this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred pence,† and given to the poor.

a Matt. 26. 1-5. Lk. 22. 1, 2. Jno. 11. 55-57.

b Matt. 26. 6-13. Jno. 12. 1-8.

c *cf.* Ex. 30. 34-38 with Song 1. 3, 12, 13. *cf.* Ps. 45. 8.

d *cf.* Lk. 18. 15.

* Or "spikenard." † "Denarii."

Sec. 1.

The Gospel of Mark shows us the Cross in its sin-offering character, as already stated, Matthew giving the trespass-offering. These two Gospels, as having alike the Lord's cry of abandonment, most evidently represent the offerings which as emphasizing the judgment of sin are not "sweet savor." The distinction has been pointed out in the Introduction (pp. 26–28), and we shall have to touch afresh upon its proofs and illustrations as we go through this closing portion. The essence of the sin-offering is that "cup" which in Matthew's narrative of the agony in the garden has been already before us, and the Lord's choice of it there surely characterizes this first section. Matthew and Mark, it will be seen, cling closely together here as elsewhere, while there is also a difference which is characteristic in the case of each.

1. [1] It is the divine will to which Christ bows in taking the cup. It is not to be wondered at that, here at the outset, that divine will should make itself apparent, overruling, controlling, working by, the various and conflicting wills of men. This is what we find in the introductory portion here, of which the last two verses show how and how far the first two were fulfilled, while what comes between shows what brought about the traitor's action.

The hearts of the chief priests were set on mischief; but they were permitted thus to bring about the will of God for an infinite blessing. Yet their plots are not permitted to entangle the Lamb of the sacrifice: these are anticipated; and although He is delivered into their hands, yet it is open-eyed and unresisting. They must dishonor themselves by purchasing treachery with the blood-money, soon to be hurled back at them by their miserable tool, with words which must have haunted them ever after. Not even *they* dare put into the treasury that "price of blood."

[2] In the midst of all this there comes the beauteous story of the woman's ointment, always to be told wherever the gospel is preached, for a memorial of her: protest as it is against the utilitarianism which in the gospel itself would make Christ of less account than the "poor" who are to be benefited by Him. Ah, let us remember the claims of the Christ of God, if the poor themselves are not to suffer. This utilitarianism may well hide under it a Judas as chief instigator, while it seduces with its fair seeming even true disciples.

The spikenard is for His burial. That which she has that is precious here goes into the grave with Christ; and though He is not there now, the doctrine of Christ goes further for the Christian: for we ourselves are dead and buried

And they murmured against her. But Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. For the poor ye have always with you, and when ye will ye can do good to them; but [e]me ye have not always. She hath done what she could: she hath come beforehand* to anoint my body for the [f]burial. And verily I say unto you, Wherever the gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a [g]memorial of her.

3 (10, 11): fulfilment of the purpose.

3 [h]And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, that he might deliver him up to them. And they, when they heard it, were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might, at a good opportunity, deliver him up.

2 (12-31): Love's witness to His disciples with the cross in sight.

1 (12-17): the preparation of the passover.

2. [1]And the [i]first day of unleavened bread, when they slew the passover, his disciples say unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare, that thou mayest eat the passover? And he [j]sendeth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow

e *cf.* Lk.5.35.

f *cfr.* Matt. 16. 22, 23. *cf.* Phil. 3. 10.

g *cf.* Jno.11. 2. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 10, 11.

h Matt. 26. 14-16. Lk. 22. 3-6.

i Matt.26.17 -19. Lk.22.7-13. *cf.* Jno.13.1.

j *cf.* ch.11.1. *cf.* Jno.2.6-10.

* Literally, "anticipated."

with Him, and in Him alone we live, where He is gone. Thus we are identified with Him, to seek His interests only, as *He* secures *ours*. Woe will it be to any who sacrifice the claims of Christ for any other. The universe hangs upon Him: "in Him all things subsist:" "all things were created by Him and for Him"; and nothing can be right that is not in its due place of relationship to Him.

[3] The traitor understands more truly than many Christians the significance of the burial of Christ. The three hundred pence are gone for him without possible recovery. The bag he has carried will soon be as unprofitable. He must get what he can, if he sell Christ for it: and all they to whom Christ is offered and who turn away from Him to grasp the world instead, are *they* not after their manner selling Christ too? and valuing Him perhaps no higher than he did?

2. We follow on now to see the Lord at His last passover with His disciples before He suffers, and instituting His own memorial feast to take its place. The Old Testament is about to give place to the New, and He who is Lord of the sabbath and of the sacrificial rites fulfilled in Him, shows Himself Master of the future which He predicts, and of His own part in it, amid enemies that surround Him, and adverse conditions that seem to hold Him in their grasp. But the ram of consecration can be held only by its horns: it is His very power that makes Him submit and serve, while divine love contemplates the blessed end of all. And those around Him now, the few sheep so soon to be scattered, are the objects of His unfailing care, which would prepare them for the trial so near at hand. This, especially in the synoptics; while John shows us at this time the full out-pouring of His heart, in which, far beyond the present trial, He enters into the blessings of the new era coming in. John's is the Christian Gospel, and, not here alone but throughout, occupies itself with glories which even Christians have feebly apprehended.

[1] Mark gives, as Matthew does not, the special signs which would assure the disciples when they would have reached the house in which He would eat the passover. Was it not on their account that they were permitted thus to see how perfectly the apprehension of the minutest details of the future was possessed by Him. Dispensationally also, was not the man with but the pitcher of water

him; and wherever he shall enter in, say unto the master of the house, The teacher saith, Where is the guestchamber for me, where I may eat the passover with my disciples? And he will himself show you a large upper room furnished [and] ready; and there prepare for us. And the disciples departed and went into the city, and found as he had said to them. And they prepared the passover. And when the even was come, he cometh with the twelve.

2 (18–21): the traitor pointed to.

[2] And as they were at table and eating, Jesus said Verily I say unto you, that [k]one of you, who is eating with me, shall deliver me up. And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him, one by one, Is it I?* And he said unto them, It is one of the twelve that dippeth with me in the dish. Because the Son of man goeth, as it is written of him, but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is delivered up: [l]good were it for that man if he had not been born.

3 (22–25): the memorial.

[3] And as they were eating, Jesus [m]took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave it to them, and said, Take it: [n]this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my [o]blood of the† covenant, which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you that I will drink [p]no more of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

4 (26–31): testing.

[4] And when they had [q]sung a hymn, they went out unto the Mount of Olives. And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended: for it is [r]written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.

k Matt. 26. 20–25. Lk. 22. 21–23. Jno. 13.21–30. *cf.* Ps.55.12–14.

l *cf.* Jno. 6. 70, 71. *cf.* Jno. 17. 12. *cf.* Acts 1. 25.

m Matt. 26. 26–29. Lk. 22. 19, 20. *cf.*1 Cor.11. 20–34. *cf.* Acts 20. 7.

n 1 Cor. 10. 16. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 24. *cf.* Heb.10. 5, 10.

o *cf.*1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. *cf.* Heb.10. 19.

p *cf.*Is.53.10, 11. *cf.* Heb.12. 2.

q Matt. 26. 30. *cfr.* ver.34.

r Matt. 26. 31, 32. Zech. 13. 7.

* Some add "and another, Is it I?" † Many add, "new."

passing on to the place whence presently the rivers of living water were to flow forth? Indeed, the Old Testament had prepared the place already, which He alone could fill with His glory. Now He is come, for whom it is prepared.

[2] Now they must learn from His own lips that one of the twelve should deliver Him up. It was needful that they should be prepared for this uttermost wickedness, which, however, like so much else, they do not seem to have understood in its real character. It was needful also to the divine love which would not give up even a Judas without warning, to let him know that "even the night" was "light about" him. Scripture too had forewarned and pointed at him. And the Lord adds His awful warning: "good were it for that man if he had not been born."

[3] The institution of the Supper follows, almost in the words of Matthew. Mark omits "for the remission of sins," and for "My Father's Kingdom" substitutes "the Kingdom of God."

[4] They sing a hymn and go out to the Mount of Olives. And there follows now the warning of the trial coming from the smiting of the Shepherd. All would be stumbled; but He carries on their thoughts to His resurrection and going before them into Galilee. Peter protests more than once in his vehement way that he never would be stumbled; and when the Lord adds that he would that night thrice deny Him, he still more stoutly protests that, though he should die with Him, he will not deny Him. He does not discern that this very

But after that I am *risen, I will go before you into Galilee. But 'Peter said unto him, Though all shall be offended, yet will not I. And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee that thou to-day, [even] this night, before the cock crow twice, shalt thrice deny me. But he spake exceeding vehemently, If I should have to die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. And "so also said they all.

s ch. 16. 7. Matt. 28. 7, 10, 16.

t Matt. 26. 33–35. Lk. 22. 31–34. Jno. 13. 36–38. *cf.* 1 Cor. 4. 4 with Phil. 3. 3.

u *cf.* Prov. 27. 19.

3 (32–42): Gethsemane.

3. And they *come unto a place, whose name is Gethsemane; and he saith unto his disciples, Sit ye here while I shall pray. And he *taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly amazed and sore troubled. And he saith unto them, My soul is plunged in grief, [even] to death: remain here and watch. And going forward a little, he *fell upon the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass away from him. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible with thee: take away this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what thou wilt. And he cometh and findeth them *sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? canst thou not watch one hour? watch and pray, that ye come not into temptation: the *spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. And he went away again and prayed, saying the same thing. And he came again and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy; and they knew not what to answer him. And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest. It is enough: the *hour is come; behold, the Son of man is delivered up into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand who delivereth me up.

v Matt. 26. 36–46. Lk. 22. 39–46. Jno. 18. 1, 2.

w *cf.* ch. 5. 37. *cf.* ch. 9. 2. *cf.* Jno. 12. 27.

x *cf.* Heb. 5. 7, 8. *cf.* Ps. 102, title. *cf.* 2 Cor. 13. 4.

y *cf.* ch. 10. 38. *cf.* Ps. 88. 18.

z *cf.* Gal. 5. 17.

a *cf.* Jno. 7. 30 with Jno. 13. 1.

4 (43–52): The yielding and the testing.

4. And *immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, cometh up, and with him a multitude with swords and staves from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. Now he that delivered him

b Matt. 26. 47–50. Lk. 22. 47, 48. Jno. 18. 3–9. Acts 1. 16.

strength of his is his weakness. And the others with as little discernment repeat his protest.

3. The agony in Gethsemane is told alike in Matthew and in the present Gospel; and we have already considered it. Not the view of death nor of any attendant suffering could move Christ after this manner. It would be dishonor to Him to suppose it. There is but one thing mighty enough to do so, and this connects it with the surpassing agony of the Cross, the forsaking of God. This, we shall find that Mark, by the abridgement or omission of other things, brings into emphatic prominence: it is the full reality of substitution, the Sinless in the sinner's place; and it is this that He is anticipating here.

4. Judas comes up with his band of men from the chief priests and scribes, and into such hands He surrenders Himself for the accomplishment of His Father's will. The disciples are struggling against it,—fighting, and then fleeing. His reproof of them is not given here, but only of the multitudes. Exceptional in Mark is the story of the young man clad in a linen or muslin garment (a *sindon*), which when they lay hold upon him, he leaves in their hands, and escapes from them naked.

up had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he; lay hold of him and lead him away safely. And when he was come, immediately he came to him, and saith unto him, Rabbi, and [c]kissed him affectionately. And they laid their hands upon him and took him. But [d]one of those who stood by drew his sword, and smote the servant of the high priest, and struck off his ear. And Jesus answered and said unto them, Are ye come out as against a [e]robber, with swords and staves, to take me? I was daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye took me not: but [this is] that the [f]scriptures might be fulfilled. And they all [g]forsook him and fled. And a certain young man followed him with a linen cloth cast about him, over his naked [body], and they lay hold upon him. But he, [h]leaving the linen cloth behind, fled from them naked.

c cf. Ps. 55. 21. cf. Ps. 62. 4. cf. Ezek. 33. 31.
d Matt. 26. 51-54. Lk. 22. 49-51. Jno. 18. 10, 11.
e Matt. 26. 55, 56. Lk. 22. 52, 53. cf. Lk. 22. 37.
f cf. Jno. 18. 9. cf. Jno. 19. 24.
g Ver. 27. cf. Ps. 31. 11. cf. Ps. 142. 4.
h cf. ver. 54.

1 (xiv. 53-72): The true charge, and the truth charged.
1 (53-65): the confession of the Master.

SECTION 2. (Chaps. xiv. 53–xv. 15.)

The false condemnation.

1. [1] And they led Jesus away to the [i]high priest; and there come together* all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes. And Peter followed him afar off, even

i Matt. 26. 57, etc. Lk. 22. 54, etc. Jno. 18. 13, etc.

* Some add "to him."

Significant it seems that the *sindon*, though generally spoken of as a night-dress, was such a wrapper as was used to enwrap the dead, and is actually, in the only other case in the New Testament, applied to that in which the Lord's body was wrapped (Matt. xxvii. 59; ch. xv. 46; Luke xxiii. 53). It came to be used for any light garment made of this material, and so might be a night-dress; but does not seem to be the word for this specifically.

Its connection with the dead has suggested an allegorical meaning for the story here, at a time when all facts seem to allegorize (if there be even any exception in this way as to Scripture facts). It has been spoken* of as suggestive of the vanity of human effort against the Christ of God. The priests and people, Herod and Pilate, got nothing of the Man against whom they combined but the grave-clothes empty of their temporary occupant. The living Person had escaped: the true life was untouched. And this might be a parable as to all His followers, to whom indeed, as in Christ before God, the vestment of the body is but as it were the light garment of the dead, in whom a hidden life resides not to be touched of death: "the gates of hades cannot prevail against it." In the midst of a hostile world, the Lord of life has well provided for His own.

Sec. 2.

The condemnation of the Lord—trial in any real sense there was not—was two-fold. Before the high priest and council it was upon the true charge, and the truth it was that was charged against Him. He was condemned on His own confession of the truth, that He was the Son of God. Before Pilate they change this accusation for another, that He claimed to be King of the Jews: this for the obvious reason that they can plead: "Whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar." These things naturally appear in all the Gospels, though with different emphasis and omissions as to particular details, according to the different line of truth in each. Matthew and Mark, as usual, come nearest together; John is the most distinct.

1. [1] The confession of the Master is set before us in evident contrast with the

* In the Sermons of Henry Melville.

within into the court of the high priest; and he was sitting with the officers, and [j]warming himself in the light [of the fire]. Now the chief priests and the whole council sought witness against Jesus to put him to death, and found none. For many bare [k]false witness against him, and their witness agreed not. And certain persons rose up and bare false witness against him, saying, We heard him say, I will [l]destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days will build another made without hands. And neither thus did their witness agree. And the high priest rose up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, [m]Answerest thou nothing? What is it that these bear witness against thee? But he was [n]silent and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him and saith unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One? And Jesus said, [o]I am: and ye shall see the Son of man [p]sitting at the right hand of power, and [q]coming with the clouds of heaven. And the high priest [r]rent his clothes, and saith, What further need have we of witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all [s]condemned him [as] worthy of death. And some began to [t]spit upon him, and to cover his face and buffet him, and say unto him, Prophesy. And the officers struck him with the palms of their hands.

[j] Lk. 22. 55. Jno. 18. 18. cf. Jno. 21. 9.
cf. Eph. 5. 11 with Is. 50. 11.
[k] Matt. 26. 59-61. cf. Ps. 35. 11.
[l] Jno. 2. 18-22. ch. 15. 29.
[m] Matt. 26. 62.
[n] Is. 53. 7.
[o] Matt. 26. 63, 64. cf. Lev. 5. 1.
[p] ch. 16. 19. Ps. 110. 1. Lk. 22. 69.
[q] Matt. 25. 31. Dan. 7. 13. Rev. 1. 7.
[r] Matt. 26. 65. cf. 2Ki. 19. 1.
[s] Matt. 26. 66. cf. Jno. 19. 7. cf. Lev. 24. 16.
[t] cf. Is. 50. 6. cf. Is. 52. 14.
[u] Matt. 26. 69-75. Lk. 22. 56-62. Jno. 18. 25-27.

2 (66-72): the denial of the disciple.

[2] And while [u]Peter was below in the court, there came

denial of the disciple. In every part of this scene man is exposed; consistent only in wickedness, unreliable and inconstant where truest in heart. His self-confidence is his weakness; his weakness, known and owned, his only strength. The Second Man stands alone amid a ruined world; most glorious in this utter desolation; all contradictions uniting to approve Him; all depths to place Him highest. The simple language of the evangelists, putting not an additional word even of emotion—not an irrepressible note of wonder or of praise, to the mere recital of His words, His deeds, His sufferings, is in fact the hush of the sanctuary of His presence, the only fit celebration of that unique glory with which nothing else must or can mingle.

Before the high priest the false witnesses are condemned by their contradiction of each other. They *sought* witnesses for the purpose that was in their hearts before. And are not those who bring such witness, commonly, if not constantly, of such a spirit? Do not they dare even to search Scripture to justify the condemnation they have determined on already? And yet how often are they obliged to put out of court their own witnesses! How little can they quote without misquoting. It was they who even now were seeking to destroy the temple of God, as His words had implied they would; and it was no other could replace this, but He would raise it up again. Still there was no agreement: and the high priest turns to Jesus, to make Him answer what had need of none, and thus make something of what was nothing. He is therefore silent.

But the direct question He will not fail to answer. "Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" must be answered with no ambiguity at all. It will give them what they seek against Him; but it will give rest also to those that are true enquirers, and minister through the ages to the blessing of man. Yes, He is the Son of the Blessed, while He is the Son of man as well; and they shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.

[2] The denial of the disciple follows the confession of the Master. It speaks

one of the maidservants of the high priest; and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked on him and saith, Thou also wast with the Nazarene, Jesus. But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the outer court; and a cock crew. And the maid seeing him began again to say to those standing by, This is one of them. But he again denied it. And after a little while those that stood by said unto Peter again, Truly thou art one of them; for thou also art a Galilean. And he began to [v]curse and to swear, I know not this man of whom ye speak. And immediately, a second time, the cock crew. And Peter remembered the saying, how Jesus said unto him, [w]Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.

2 (xv. 1-15): The feigned charge. 1 (1-5): the confession.

2. [1] And [x]immediately in the morning, the chief priests took counsel together with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate. And Pilate [y]asked him, Art *thou* the king of the Jews? And he answered and said unto him, Thou sayest [it]. And the chief priests accused him of many things. And Pilate again asked him, saying, Answerest thou nothing? Behold how many things they accuse thee of. But Jesus still [z]answered nothing; insomuch that Pilate marvelled.

2 (6-15): Jesus or Barabbas.

[2] Now at the feast he [a]used to release unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they asked. Now there was one called Barabbas, bound with them that had made insurrection, men who had committed [b]murder in the insurrection. And the multitude crying out began to ask him [to do] as he was wont to do unto them. And

v *cf.* 1 Sa. 21. 13. *cf.* Matt. 2. 8. *cf.* ver. 45.
w vers. 29-31.
x Matt. 27. 1, etc. Lk. 23. 1, etc. Jno. 18. 28, etc.
y Matt. 27. 11. Lk. 23. 3. Jno. 18. 33.
z *cf.* ch. 14. 60, 61.
a Matt. 27. 15-26. Lk. 23. 17-25. Jno. 18. 39, 40.
b Acts 3. 14. *cf.* Gen. 4. 8 with Jude 11.

for itself, and needs here little comment. Each evangelist gives it: for there is need of such a lesson being well learned, as that honesty of heart, and true love to Christ, and zeal for Him, cannot save us from the most terrible falls, without that distrust of ourselves which brings in the power of God for us. Not only the *sinner* needs to be broken down before God, but the *saint* does. Human strength avails nothing on the path he is called to tread.

Mark alone notices the twofold crowing of the cock, the latter being at the general cock-crowing of which the other Gospels speak. The first fails to arouse Peter; so easily may the conscience become torpid through the power of sin. Only Luke notices the tender reproof of the Lord's look, which followed the second: in fact those eyes had never been withdrawn from him; though the "look" was more than this: it was the divine recall of the wanderer to himself and to God.

2. [1] In the second part here, we have still a confession and a denial, though the latter of a very different kind to what we have just seen. The chief priests still charge Him with being what He truly is, although as a charge they make it falsely. He *is* the King of the Jews. To their further accusations He answers nothing, so that Pilate marvels: but He has no thought of saving Himself from what was before Him; had He purpose of this kind, He would have stood in no such fashion before His accusers. Mark almost leaves out Pilate; from his point of view he is but a mere circumstance.

[2] It is otherwise as to Barabbas, whose crimes are told out, as they are not in

Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the king of the Jews? For he knew that for [c]envy the chief priests had delivered him up. But the chief priests stirred up the multitude that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. And Pilate answering said to them again, What will ye then that I do [unto him] whom ye call the king of the Jews? And they cried out again, [d]Crucify him. And Pilate said unto them, Why, [e]what evil hath he done? But they cried out exceedingly, Crucify him. And Pilate, willing to content the multitude, [f]released Barabbas unto them, and delivered up Jesus, when he had [g]scourged him, to be crucified.

c *cf.* Matt. 21. 38. *cf.* Jno. 12. 19.

d Matt. 26.2 with Jno. 12. 32, 33. *cf.* Acts 13. 27-29. *cf.* Gal. 3.13.

e *cf.* Jno. 19. 4. *cf.* Jno. 8. 46.

f ver. 6. *cf.* Is. 61. 1.

g *cf.* Is. 50. 6.

SECTION 3. (Chap. xv. 16-47.)

The Cup drunk.

1 (xv. 16-20): Crowned with the curse.

1. Now the soldiers led him away into the court which is the prætorium, and they call together the whole band. And they clothe him with [h]purple, and put on him a [i]crown of thorns which they had plaited. And they began to salute him, Hail, king of the Jews! And they [j]struck his head with a reed, and spat upon him, and bowing their knees worshiped him. And when

h *cf.* Ex. 26. 31 with ver. 26.

i *cf.* Is. 55. 13. *cf.* Is. 53. 5. *ctr.* Heb. 2. 9.

j *cf.* Ps. 69. 3. *cf.* Ps. 109. 4, 5.

Matthew. He is seen as a chief of sinners, a rebel and a murderer, for whom the feast of redemption offers a possibility of release, but only, according to Pilate's alternative, if Jesus is given up. Jesus becomes, as it were, the Substitute for the chief of sinners. To "release Barabbas" is "to destroy Jesus." Why? because He has done evil? the judge asks in vain, Where is it? Looking deeper than at the wicked wills of men, we may discern in the purpose of God that holy Sin-offering, the true passover, by which even a Barabbas may be delivered, not for good in him, for Barabbas shows none. Thus the gospel story is more completely unfolded. Barabbas is released: Jesus is given up.

Sec. 3.

1. Now we approach the drinking of the cup. He is crowned with thorns, the sign of the curse, as in Matthew, clothed with the purple, but without the reed-sceptre: that only smites Him. And it is indeed, but a reed that smites the Rock; yet presently, through the marvelous working of God, the waters will flow out; and the waters will become a great river, going forth on all sides to gladden the earth.

Notice that the robe is *purple** here, not *scarlet*, as in Matthew. The blood-color is here, but mingled: as we have seen, even the precious blood of atonement, that it might sanctify the people, must be that of a sacrifice offered outside the camp (Heb. xiii. 11, 12). And "so Jesus, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate." Here is the true sin-offering, and here is the purple, the composite color,—the blood, the death-penalty taken; but with that, the heavenly side also, that is, the blue. For

* "A scarlet military mantle," says Lange, "was made to represent the imperial purple: hence the designation, *a purple* (πορφυραν) a purple robe, as Mark and John describe it. And because this is the symbolic import of the robe, there is no discrepancy. The scarlet military robe no more required to be a real purple than the crown of thorns required to be a real crown, or the reed a real sceptre; for the whole transaction was an ironical drama, and such an one, too, that the infamous abuse might be readily perceived through the pretended glorification. The staff must be a reed, the symbol of impotence; the crown must injure and pierce the brow; and so too must the purple present the symbol of miserable, pretended greatness; and this was done by its being an old camp-mantle."

But how, through all this, God was working, to turn all to the bringing out His glory as infinitely higher than that of earthly potentates, we may surely see clearly.

they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him; and they lead him out to crucify him.

2 (21-32): Crucified.

2. And they *k*impress a certain man passing by, Simon, a Cyrenian, coming from the field, the father of Alexander and Rufus, that he might bear his cross. And they bring him to the place *l*Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, the place of a skull. And they offered him *m*wine mingled with myrrh, but he received it not. And they crucify him, and *n*part his garments among them, casting lots on them what each should take. And it was the *o*third hour, and they crucified him. And the *p*superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

And with him they crucify *q*two robbers; one on his right hand, and one on his left. [And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, *r*And he was reckoned with transgressors].* And they that passed by *s*railed upon him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ha! thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save thyself, and come down from the cross. In like manner the *t*chief priests also, with the scribes, mocking among themselves, said, He *u*saved others; himself he cannot save. Let the Christ, the king of Israel, now come down from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified *v*with him reproached him.

k Matt. 27. 32. Lk. 23. 26. *cf.* Jno. 19. 17. *cf.* Phil. 3. 10.
l Matt. 27. 33. Lk. 23. 33. Jno. 19. 17. *cf.* Heb. 13. 11-13.
m Matt. 27. 34. *cf.* Ps. 69. 21. Lk. 23. 36. *cf.* Jno. 19. 28-30.
n Matt. 27. 35. Lk. 23. 34. Jno. 19. 23, 24. Ps. 22. 18. *cf.* Phil. 3. 9.
o *cf.* Matt. 27. 45. *cf.* Lk. 23. 44. *cf.* Jno. 19. 14.
p Matt. 27. 37. Lk 23. 38. Jno. 19. 19-22. *cf.* Gen. 22. 13 with Ps. 132. 17.
q Matt. 27. 38. Lk. 23. 32, 33. Jno. 19. 18. *cf.* Is. 53. 9.

* Perhaps to be omitted.

r Is. 53. 12; Lk. 22. 37. s Ps. 22. 7; Ps. 69. 12; Matt. 27. 39, 40. t Matt. 27. 41-44; Lk. 23. 35; *ctr.* Heb. 4. 15. u. *cf.* Jno. 3. 14, 15 with Heb. 9. 22. v *cf.* Lk. 23. 39-43 with 1 Tim. 1. 13.

that was heaven's side, the consequence of sin laid upon Him, the hiding of the face of God from Him,—for *us* heaven opened.

These are both *royal* colors also, as we plainly see; the scarlet of Matthew and the purple of Mark, just as the crown of thorns, the crown of curse, for Him was really a crown. The Sufferer reigns as that, in the Kingdom peculiarly His; and so only could He have, among the sinners of man's race, such a throne as could satisfy Him.

2. The impressment of Simon the Cyrenian upon the road, to bear His cross, is recorded here, as in Matthew; but with an addition here which shows Simon, the "hearkener" and cross bearer, as the father of Alexander and Rufus, God's grace being fruitful in him. Is not this the true way of fruitfulness ever, to hearken and bear the cross?

Golgotha, the place of a skull, is reached, and then the vinegar and gall are offered Him, only to be rejected: Mark gives "wine mingled with myrrh;" the former, the sour wine of common use, much like vinegar; the latter is probably a different thing from "gall," which would hardly seem a fitting term to describe it. The parting of His garments, according to the view that has been given of it,* is as naturally found in all the Gospels as the particularization as to it suits and is found in John. The mockery of the bystanders, and especially of the heads of the people is given almost exactly as in Matthew.

3. And now from the sixth to the ninth hour, there falls a darkness over all the land. We have already considered its meaning generally, but every partic-

* See Notes on Matthew.

3 (33-38): The opening of the sanctuary.

33. And when the sixth hour was come, there was [w] darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus [x] cried with a loud voice, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elias. And one ran and, filling a sponge with [y] vinegar, put it upon a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let be; let us see whether Elias cometh to take him down. And Jesus, having uttered a [z] loud cry, expired. And the [a] veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

4 (39-41): Impending changes.

39. And when the [b] centurion who stood by over against him, saw that he so cried out and expired, he said, Truly this man was Son of God.

[w] Matt. 27. 45. Lk. 23. 44, 45. *cf.* 1 Jno. 1. 5 with 2 Cor. 5. 21.
[x] Matt. 27. 46–49. Ps. 22. 1. *cf.* Is. 53. 5, 6.
[y] *cf.* ver. 23.
[z] Matt. 27. 50. Lk. 23. 46. *cf.* Jno. 10. 17, 18.
[a] Matt. 27. 51. Lk. 23. 45. *cf.* Heb. 10. 19, 20.
[b] Matt. 27. 54. Lk. 23. 47; *cf.* Deut. 32. 31.

ular specified has surely its importance. The *three* hours, as such, speak naturally of the manifestation of what is hidden, and may most simply speak of the opening of the sanctuary, which takes place at its close. It is the blood of the sin-offering which on the day of atonement in Israel opened it for the moment to let in the high priest, the representative of the people. But that was but for a moment: the characteristic of the legal dispensation was in the veil which hung continuously before the presence of God, so that from man's point of view He dwelt in the thick darkness. It was a darkness forbidding man's approach, and speaking of sin unmet, spite of the hecatombs of victims dying for it. And the true Sacrifice having now come, He must find His way through the darkness, laden with the sin which had forced God thus into distance from the creature of His love.

The three hours of darkness were to Him the measure of what to any other would have been an infinite hopeless distance. The cry of desertion interpreted the darkness. The veil rent from top to bottom proclaimed that it was traversed and removed. The *sixth* hour speaks of the barrier-limit reached; the *ninth*, of perfected manifestation.

The agonizing question shows the nature of the darkness, which is not outward but within upon His soul. The quotation from the twenty-second psalm gives us the clue to find the answer which the psalm gives to the question. If a holy God is to abide among the praises of a people taken from among sinful men, He under the weight of that sin must declare that holiness in God's judgment of it. God is glorified in this redemption-work beyond the possibility of all man's sin to cloud again for ever. The light bursts forth now, and as never yet. God is *in* the light. The separating veil is rent from top to bottom.

To the mockers around the cross, the darkness is as dense as ever. They exclaim that He is calling for Elias. And while one brings to Him upon a reed the vinegar for His thirst, he joins in the cry they raise, to wait and see if Elias will come to take Him down. But Jesus cries again with a loud voice, and expires.

Through all this account we have already seen how, by the omission of particulars recorded by Matthew, Mark emphasizes the sin-offering character of Christ's sacrifice.* But there are positive testimonies, also, that we have noted. And now, as we go on to the after events of the book, we shall find the same character attaching to it, until we see the glorious Risen Man seated in heaven at the right hand of God. The veil is passed, but never closed again: He is gone in, our Fore-runner, and we walk in the light as God is in the light.

4. Before we have left the Cross and its glory of sorrow, intimation is given of victories which it is to achieve, and changes resultant. The first voice, save

*See Introduction, pp. 26–28.

And there were [c]women also looking on from afar; among whom were both Mary of Magdala, and Mary the mother of James the younger, and of Joses, and Salome: who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him; and many other women who came up with him unto Jerusalem.

c Matt. 27. 55, 56. Lk. 23. 27-31, 49. Jno. 19. 25. *cf.* ch. 16. 1.

5 (42-47): Governmental working of God.

5. And when even was now come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, there came [d]Joseph of Arimathea, an honorable councilor, who himself also awaited the kingdom of God; and he went in boldly unto Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. And Pilate wondered whether he were already dead; and calling the centurion, he inquired of him if he had been any while dead. And when he had learned it of the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. And having bought a linen cloth, he took him down, and swathed him in the linen cloth, and laid him in a [e]sepulcre which had been hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a stone against the door of the sepulcre. And Mary of Magdala and Mary the [mother] of Joses beheld where he was laid.

d Matt. 27. 57-61. Lk. 23. 50-56. Jno. 19.38-42. *cf.* Matt.20. 6, 9.

e *cf.* Is. 53.9. *cf.* Josh.3.4.

that of the dying robber, which, in the midst of Jewish blasphemy and dishonor, owns the supreme glory of the Son of God, is that of the Gentile centurion. Christ already has His own among the uncircumcised, the beginning of the great host that are soon to follow Him.

Then this company of ministering women gathered by His cross, and to be the first heralds of His victory over death, is not without significance. "The Lord gave the word; great was the company of the women that published it" (Ps. lxviii. 11). The victory is so achieved, that not the men of might are needed, but the feebleness of women was abundantly enough. Indeed the men of might, the fighters on the Lord's behalf, had not found their hands. But now the battle was over: He had fought alone, and of the people there were none with Him: with the last great shout of the battle-field, the cry of victory and not of exhaustion, He had entered into His rest. The women are now free to minister. The shadow of the Cross is but the shadow of the sheltering wings of divine love.

It is this victory-shout which, according to Mark, impresses the soldier: "when the centurion saw that He so cried out and expired, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God." He had seen death upon the battlefield, perhaps in many a shape, but never a death like this. If we take John's account, it is the cry that has rung through so many hearts since then, *Tetelestai*, "It is finished." If it be not the great cry itself, it certainly went with it; and how has that become for Gentile faith the gospel-utterance! It has assured of peace made with God, stilled to rest the tumult of other things, and subdued the heart to Jesus, to the Son of God who loved and gave Himself for the sons of men.

5. "They assigned Him His grave with wicked men; but with the rich man when He had died." So had Isaiah long before predicted, and now we have the fulfilment of it. The malefactor's grave which would have naturally followed the death of the cross could not be permitted Him. That substitutionary work was accomplished which alone had made Him to be numbered with transgressors. In that character He could appear no more; and the righteousness of God, which He had declared in His death, claimed now divine intervention in His behalf. While He yet slept He must sleep in honor, and as it has been well said, the One born of a Virgin-womb could only be fittingly honored in a

SUBDIVISION 3.

Resurrection, and Heaven really opened.

1 (1-8): Promise, yet barren.

1. AND when the [f]sabbath was now past, Mary of Magdala, and Mary the [mother] of James, and Salome, bought spices that they might come and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, they come to the sepulcre when the sun was risen. And they said one to another, [g]Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulcre? And looking up, they see that the stone is rolled away: for it was exceeding great. And entering into the sepulcre, they saw a [h]young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a white robe: and they were astounded. And he saith unto them, Be not astounded; ye seek Jesus, the Nazarene, the crucified. He is [i]risen, he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. But go, tell

[f] Matt. 28.1, etc. Lk. 24.1, etc. Jno. 20. 1, etc.

[g] Matt. 28.2. *cf.* Ex. 14.13 -16.

[h] Lk. 24. 4. *cf.* Jno. 20. 12, 13. *cf.* Acts 1. 10, 11. *cf.* 1 Tim. 3. 16.

[i] Matt. 28.6. Lk. 24. 5-7. 1 Cor. 15. 3-8.

virgin-tomb. He who could not see corruption, could not lie in a tomb which corruption had defiled. Thus all was in harmony, and God silently controlling all things before visible intervention could take place. Joseph of Arimathea, inspired with a boldness he had not yet shown, goes in to Pilate and asks of him the body of Jesus. Pilate, finding from the centurion that He is indeed already dead, commands it to be given; and in the new tomb, awaiting its predicted resurrection on the third day, that sacred body rests.

SUBD. 3.

As every one knows, doubt has been cast upon the authenticity of the last twelve verses of this Gospel; and if they are, as Meyer calls them, but an "apocryphal fragment," a waif without parentage known, introduced into Mark we know not how, to mend the ragged end of his mutilated or unfinished work, doubt would naturally be cast on more than its authenticity, and most of all for those who are slow to believe in inspiration moving after this fashion. We need not, however, discuss it here, as the authority for the full text is abundant in both MSS. and Versions. The spiritual relationship of the closing verses to the Gospel as a whole is perfect; and this, if proved, is a better argument of itself in favor of authenticity than all besides that has ever been produced against it.

Moreover there is reason of an internal kind for the difference that in fact exists between the two parts of this last chapter,—the first, which gives the promise from the (unseen) Lord to meet His disciples in Galilee: a promise of which Mark gives no fulfilment: while the second briefly relates His actual appearances in and around Jerusalem, and His sending them forth with signs attesting their commission to preach the gospel in all the world. These two parts we have now to consider in their scope and connection with one another.

1. In the first part we have then promise which, *as far as Mark's account of it goes*, is not fulfilled. Jesus does not meet them in Galilee; and the end for them, the account closing abruptly, is in fear and trembling, rather than the joy and gladness we should have expected from it.

If, then, nothing is without a purpose here (and we at least are not going to question this), there must be for us some meaning in this non-fulfilment, this fear instead of joy. If we think, also, of the disciples as what they were undoubtedly till after (and a good while after) the resurrection,—a Jewish remnant, with hopes still clustering round the Old Testament promises, we can see something very like what Mark pictures here. Christ is come, Christ is risen; there is a promise for believing Israelites which to them as such is not fulfilled; and in short their history, and that of the ministry to the circumcision, with which especially is connected Peter's name (ver. 7, Gal. ii. 7, 9), is just such a

his disciples and [j] Peter, [that] he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. And they went out and fled from the sepulcre; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them. And they said nothing to any one, for they were [k] afraid.

2 (9-18): The witness of salvation.

2. Now when he was risen early on the first day of the week, he appeared [l] first to Mary of Magdala, out of whom he had cast seven demons. She went and told those that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when they heard that he was alive and had been seen of her, [m] disbelieved.

And after these things he was [n] manifested in another form to two of them, as they walked on their way into the country. And they went and told it to the rest; neither believed they them.

j cf. ch.14.71. cf. Lk.24.47.

k cf. Matt. 28. 5. cf. Lk.24.36-40.

l Jno. 20.11-18. cf. Lk.7.42, 43. cf. 1 Cor.15. 8, 9.

m. Lk.24.10, 11.

n. Lk.24.13-35.

broken fragment as is here presented to us. It will be completed, but only in another dispensation, after the parenthesis of the Church's history shall be over, and the "remnant of" the King's "brethren shall return to the children of Israel" (Mic. v. 3): that is, when Israelites converted to God shall again be partakers in the hopes and promises of the nation.

This, I doubt not, is what is intimated in the first verses of Mark's closing chapter. We shall find similar things in the close of John's Gospel, and more fully brought out there: things hard to be uttered, indeed, when the meaning, even of divine history, is so generally considered to be merely in the letter, and when belief in the inspiration of God's word—in any proper sense of inspiration—is being so largely given up. That cannot affect the truth itself, nor its importance for those that have ears to hear.

2. The second part begins once more with the resurrection, and is of another character. Here the Lord Himself appears, and first to one who had been delivered from the power of Satan, which had completely possessed her. This supremacy of power over the whole array of the enemy—seven demons—characterizes the full salvation which is now to be proclaimed. The message given her we find only in John; here only that at first it was disbelieved. The very men who are to be the heralds of it in the world are at first incredulous as to what they long to receive. As Luke says of what took place afterwards, "they believed not for joy": it was, according to the common phrase, "too good to be true."

The appearance to the two on the road to Emmaus, next referred to, is still incompetent to bring conviction; and the Lord then Himself appears to the eleven—the company now spoken of as that number, though Thomas, as we know, was not among them at the first,—and upbraids them with their unbelief and hardness of heart.

The commission that follows is entirely different from that in Matthew, though some have represented it as but another version of it. They were given at different times and places clearly; while they reflect each the character of its respective Gospel. Matthew, whose subject is the Kingdom, gives the mode of reception into it by baptism and teaching. This supposes Mark's commission as being already acted on,—the "what shall we do?" of those already wrought upon by the good news proclaimed. Mark's view of the sin-offering is the basis of the gospel: this blessed work accomplished, the going forth of the good news naturally results.

Faith, therefore, which is implied in the commission in Matthew, is insisted on here: "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." On the other hand, "he that disbelieveth"—no baptism affecting the case of such an one—"shall be condemned."

And [o]afterwards he was manifested unto the eleven themselves, as they were at table, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not those who had seen him after he was risen. And he said unto them, [p]Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation: he that [q]believeth and is [r]baptized shall be saved; and he that disbelieveth shall be condemned. And these [s]signs shall follow them that believe: in my name they shall cast out [t]demons; they shall speak with new [u]tongues; they shall take up [v]serpents; and if they [w]drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them at all; they shall lay hands on the [x]sick, and they shall recover.

o Lk. 24.36-45. Jno. 20.19, 20.
p Matt. 28.18-20. *cf.* Lk. 24.46-49. *cf.* Jno. 20.21-23.
q *cf.* Acts 13.38, 39.
r *cf.* Acts 16.30-34.
s *cf.* Acts 4.29-31. *cf.* Acts. 5.12.
t *cf.* Acts 16.18.

4, etc. *v cf.* Acts 28.3-6. *w cf.* 2 Ki. 4.39-41. *x cf.* Acts 9.32-35.

The signs that follow those who believe introduce us into a region of controversy in different quarters. It is plain, however, that even in the apostles' days they were not signs which necessarily followed in every individual. "Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues?" implies the negative. But the apostle asks moreover, "Are all workers of miracles?"—any kind of miracles?—and this must have a similar answer (1 Cor. xii. 29, 30).

Here then is what at once destroys any argument founded upon the universality of such gifts as these. It could not be said of any Christians that as such they would have them. The question was a much simpler one,—a question of fact: who have them? who have them not? If no one in a generation had them, we could not say they ought to have had, according to the Lord's words. As "signs," the apostle's words as to one of them might apply to others, or to all, "wherefore tongues are for a *sign*, not to those that believe, but to those that believe not" (1 Cor. xiv. 22); and if unbelievers ceased, we might even *expect* that these would cease.

But miracles do not produce faith; though they may produce conviction. Those who "believed in His Name when they saw the miracles that He did," He "did not commit Himself to, because He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for He knew what was in man" (John ii. 23-25). It was but an intellectual conviction, quite possible to men without divine work at all; so that if this were accomplished—if only the gospel were going out amidst a people who accepted Christianity as true—one still would not expect these signs to follow.

Thus we are brought very near to the actual condition of things that obtains in Christendom to-day. Nor do the Lord's words make that condition a hard matter to reconcile with them. The signs *did* follow, and fulfilled the object for which they were designed. As Christianity became known, and the truth came to get hearing, the miraculous accompaniments ceased, after the manner of all such whenever their purpose was fulfilled. Miracles have always been temporary, gathering around certain crises in the divine history of mankind, times of special divine intervention, and then passing away; and Christianity is no exception to the rule. As to power for conviction, where the word of God is once fairly before men, the Lord Himself has assured us that, if they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

That which comes first among these signs has special significance. Satan had possessed himself of the world largely by means of the religions of men, the perversions of that original worship which through successive generations became ever more corrupt. "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice," says the apostle; "they sacrifice to demons, and not to God" (1 Cor. x. 20). And as in Egypt, when God brought out His people, the delivering judgments fell upon their gods, so now in Christianity. "They shall cast out demons in My Name"

3 (19, 20): The return to God.

3. The Lord, therefore, after he had spoken unto them, was [y] taken up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord [z] working with them and confirming the word with signs following.

[y] Lk. 24.50-53. *cf.* Eph. 4.8-10.
[z] *cf.* Acts 3. 13 with Heb. 2. 4. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 16, 17.

is the proclamation of Christ's supremacy over the religious rulers of the heathen world.

The gift of new tongues was grace surmounting the judgment of Babel, while yet the primitive "one speech and one language" could not be restored.

The taking up of serpents and the innocuousness of any deadly draught would fence round life from the insidious attack of the destroyer; while the miraculous healings were a manifestation of power over the power of death in others. All together testified to the Lord's victory over Satan, over death, and over sin: for sin was that which gave power to both death and Satan. Nothing could affect these which had not gone to the bottom of the question of sin.

Thus, then, were the messengers of salvation equipped for their work.

3. And now, His end achieved, the shadow taken from the face of God, the sanctuary opened to all seekers of Him, the Servant-Son returns up where He was before. But He returns not *as* He was before. He returns with the humanity that He has taken: sure pledge that though He has changed the sphere of His service, the service itself He has not given up. He takes humanity itself up to the throne of God, and sits down there with it at the right hand of God.

He has been in the lowest place: He receives the highest. It is the same Gospel which fitly shows Him to us in both. The blood of the sin-offering opens the sanctuary; but more, He who has shed it has entered heaven in the power of it; has entered it a Man, and with this link of Manhood connecting Him thus with others who are men, and for whom He offered Himself.

The consequences of this are not pursued in this Gospel. They must be sought in after-communications of divine grace, which has traced for us His path step by step from lowest humiliation to glory, and how we are concerned in every step. The place at the right hand of God is, of course, peculiar to Himself; but not only does His heart still abide with His people here, but His hand also works for them and with them; and thus Mark presents Him at the close as One whose love makes Him still the Servant of man's need. For "they went forth, and preached everywhere, the *Lord working with them*, and confirming the word with signs following."

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF LUKE.

LUKE'S Gospel gives us "the face of a Man," which naturally connects, therefore, with the numerical place of the Gospel, the number of "manifestation." In no other of the Synoptics are we brought so near God, or is God so unveiled to us, as witness the fifteenth chapter. This connects necessarily with the peace-offering character of Christ's work, the fruit of atonement as seen in the previous Gospels. The shadow is gone from off the face of God.

The "face of a man" goes beyond this, however: for manhood is that which the Son of God has assumed to Himself, not simply to accomplish our redemption, but as for ever the Head of humanity in new creation. All the blessed results are indeed not yet unfolded; but the Person is here who owns and acts towards His people in all the human sympathy and affection of such relationship. His manhood is emphasized in all the reality of weakness and dependence, His birth and childhood, growing in wisdom as in stature, frequent in prayer; amid all, perfect in obedience, a unique spectacle on earth, so that God's "good pleasure in men," of which the angels unjealously speak, is justified and necessitated. Here God and man meet; with blessing for man which fills heart and life with answering praise.

Even from the Cross, as we contemplate it here, the supreme agony is departed. There is no cry of abandonment; "My God!" is exchanged for "Father." He prays for His murderers; He gives peace to the dying sinner at His side. Salvation is an accomplished thing throughout the book; grace, peace, remission of sins, are proclaimed everywhere in it.

There are three divisions only:—

1. (Chaps. i.–iv. 13): The unique obedient Man.
2. (Chaps. iv. 14–xviii. 34): A Saviour and His salvation.
3. (Chaps. xviii. 35–xxiv.): Restoration, its hindrances and accomplishment, and the peace-offering work by which man is brought nigh.

NOTES.

Div. 1.

THE Person of the Lord is that which is set before us in the first division: the truth, but also the uniqueness of His manhood, born of a virgin mother by the power of the Spirit of God; unique also in the perfection of that obedience, "tempted in all things as we are, apart from sin." It is evident that this is put before us—the reality of what He is—as neither of the previous Gospels develops it. Matthew dwells rather upon His dignity as the Ruler of the people of God. Mark declares Him to be the Son of God, but passes on then immediately to His service, speaking neither of His birth nor human parentage save incidentally at an after-time. John dwells upon His deity, the Word made flesh, the *Only*-begotten of the Father, where He has no brethren. All in it speaks of contrast rather than human kinship, though Man He truly is. But Luke presents the *First*-born, which of necessity implies brethren,—the One born of the Spirit, as we are *new*-born of the Spirit: an immense difference, surely, but which yet gives the connection declared by the apostle (Heb. ii. 11), that "both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause," he adds, "He is not ashamed to call them 'brethren.'"

The link is not between the Lord as Man and men in general. It was not true as some say, that in becoming Man He became flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone. It is we, His people, who are flesh of *His* flesh and bone of *His* bone (Eph. v. 30). For this also death had to come in: for "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone" (John xii. 24); and it was in the deep sleep fallen upon Adam, the image of such death-sleep, that Eve was taken out of his side (Gen. ii. 21–23).

Thus it is the Sanctifier and the sanctified that are all of one; and yet here also, as already said, there is a difference that is of immense importance. Truly Man as Christ was, and even the Son of man, the power of the Spirit preserved that pure humanity which He took in the virgin's womb from the slightest taint or consequence of evil. Naturally, He was only "that Holy Thing," a "Second Man," unfallen; and more, by virtue of His divine nature, never separable from His humanity, "of heaven" (1 Cor. xv. 47)—a heavenly Man.

We must remember, however, that for the doctrine of all this we must go beyond Luke, and indeed, gather from Scripture generally. As we do so, the gospel of the Manhood will more and more reveal to us the Person about whom these texts and truths gather in a constantly increasing radiance of glory. For Scripture has its central theme in Him, even as "all things were created by Him and for Him." His word is as His work, in all parts testifying to Himself.

Luke shows us the perfect Man, welcoming the searching eyes of a hostile world to prove Him; challenging those who gladly would, to find Him aught but the unblemished One; while God commits Himself to Him absolutely as the One in whom He has found His perfect satisfaction and delight. Yet He is not only in the flesh, but "in the *likeness* of *sinful* flesh" (Rom. viii. 3). He is in wilderness circumstances, "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;" never sheltering Himself, by the power of the divinity that was in Him, from the common lot of men; never pleading the exemption due to His perfection, from any trial known to man; nay, upon a path which led ever downwards to the lowest humiliation, to death and the place of the Cross. All this was made the means of the fullest possible display of an obedience to God which had no limit, —of a love which Godward was the spring of such obedience, to men an unreserved devotedness: "the good Shepherd," laying down His life for the sheep.

These sheep are wanderers, and He must seek them, if they are to be His own. They must be won out of the ways of sin, made to know His voice, the work of His love done in them. Thus He is the Sanctifier; thus they are sanctified. And this work is shown in Luke as in neither of the former Gospels, though it could not, of course, be omitted in any. But with "Luke, the be-

LUKE.

DIVISION 1. (Chaps. i.–iv. 13.)

The Unique Obedient Man.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. i.)

Divine promise fulfilling in sovereign grace.

1 (1–4): The purpose: certainty by sufficient knowledge.

1. FORASMUCH as [a]many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning the things fulfilled among us, as they [b]handed them down to us who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having traced all things accurately from the first, to write

[a] Matt. 1. 1. Mk. 1. 1. Jno. 1. 1. *cf.* Acts 1. 1.

[b] Heb. 2. 3, 4. *cf.* 1 Jno. 1. 1. *cf.* Acts 1. 21, 22.

loved physician," the remedy for the sin-sick souls must needs have a great place; and so will any acquaintance with the blessed book before us realize it to have in it abundantly the revelation of God's method with all spiritual diseases: the voice of recall and recovery to God sounds everywhere through it.

SUBD. 1.

In the first subdivision we find the events immediately preceding and in relation with the birth of Christ. In them, in the midst of the ruin in which Israel is found (and Israel is but what man is: there is no exceptional betterness that can be claimed for any), God is seen working in pursuance of long-declared purposes, and in sovereign grace. The names of two of those who come before us in the first place in this account are highly significant in this respect. The first is Zacharias, "Jah has remembered"; his wife's name is Elisabeth, the same as Elisheba, "God has sworn." And in his song of praise Zacharias puts these things together. "Blessed be the Lord"—or Jehovah (of which Jah is a contracted form)—"for He has wrought redemption . . . to *remember* His holy covenant: the *oath* that He *sware* to our father Abraham." Thus is He declared, then, to be acting here.

Thus the spring of all blessing is in God Himself, who from the beginning has pledged Himself in His grace to men, that they might know and so have confidence in it. Thus the New Testament begins for us, with its roots in the Old, new indeed in the fulness of its blessing. He comes who is to bring in the blessing, into whose hands all that concerns human interests and the glory of God can be entrusted without fear. Yet it is Man that is to undertake for man: the Seed of the woman is to bruise the serpent's head; Man is to glorify God where man has dishonored Him; and goodness is to triumph, not by other might but by its own.

1. The introduction to the Gospel is remarkable as showing the unity of thought that runs through the book, even in parts where naturally we should not expect it. Luke's is the Gospel of the Manhood; and "the face of a man" greets us in the opening lines. The human purpose is accomplished in a thoroughly human way, and without the claim of anything more than human. Others have taken in hand to put forth narratives of the events which have been fulfilled among men of late, and which have been handed down to them by eye-witnesses who were also specially accredited as ministers of the Word. The attempts themselves show the desirability of giving permanent form to what as tradition was liable so soon to change and to perversion. The writer had given special attention to this subject, and had traced out all things accurately from the first. He writes therefore to his brother-Christian Theophilus, that he might have certainty about the things in which as a Christian he had been instructed.

unto thee in order, most noble Theophilus, that thou mightest [c]know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed.

[c] *cf.* Jno. 20. 29-31. *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 16.

He claims no commission from the Lord to write his Gospel. He sees a want existing which he is competent to supply, and he supplies it. He does not even speak or think apparently of writing for the Church as a whole, or what would meet the general need. It is for Theophilus. He says nothing of inspiration. Divine love in him sets him to do what he can to establish in the faith one in whom he is interested; and in result he has written what the whole Church has owned to be of God for all.

It is a beautiful example of how naturally the Spirit of God works, or may work, in what we term inspiration. The instrument He uses is not like a mere pen in the hand of another. He is a man acting freely—for "where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty"—as if from his own heart and mind alone. He uses all the means he has got, and uses them diligently. You are quite prepared to find in his work the character of the writer: why should not He who has prepared the instrument, use it according to the quality of that which He has prepared? Why should He set aside the mind which He has furnished, any more than the affections of the heart which He has endowed? Why, too, should He who fed the multitudes from the loaves and fishes already provided, set aside what the zeal and diligence of the disciple had "accurately traced out"? It was that before-made provision which the Lord blessed and which common men after their own fashion distributed; and who shall tell us *just what* it was, wondrous as was the change, that the blessing of the Lord had added to it?

The Author of nature is not jealous of nature: He is Lord of it. Amid laws that He has imposed on it, He moves freely, working His own will, so that we are apt to ask, Where is He? when we should ask, Where is He *not*? And, even when the greatness of the work accomplished demonstrates that here is the Almighty Worker, we look at the ease and simplicity of the accomplishment, and wonder how can it be He?

This is the lesson of Luke's introduction; so suited as an introduction to the One who comes to us with the face of a Man, and speaks to us with a human tongue. As is He, so is His word: in which also the human element misread has been made to banish or diminish the divine; to put God into the distance, instead of bringing Him completely nigh.

Luke says nothing explicitly of inspiration; but he knows the power of what he has to communicate to give *certainty* as to the Christian verities: a certainty which clearly neither tradition for more than a first generation or so could give, nor an inaccurate, however well-intentioned, account of them. This is the ground of his own writing: he has traced out "accurately" all things from the first. How short a time it was that this tradition had existed! Luke was himself the companion of Paul the apostle; yet already it was needful to take measures for giving a settled form to it, and trace out things accurately. We can see that he has not claimed as much as he has really done: for he has given us one part of a fourfold history of Christ, furnishing together what we need to know of Him in all His various value for the soul. He has pictured for us among these the *Man*, Christ Jesus, distinct from all other views, yet absolutely accordant; pursuing the line of truth entrusted to him with a simplicity of purpose which moulds every part of his Gospel; while the fulness of divine grace in it speaks and will ever speak as from the full heart of God to men.

One thing we must add to this, which naturally connects with it, that we have in Luke the first and only Gentile writer, that we are aware of, in the Bible; and that he writes to Theophilus, evidently another Gentile; by the title of "most noble" applied to him, as to Festus by the apostle (Acts xxvi. 25), still or recently in some similar position of honor. Thus the gospel was going out among the heathen while Israel had turned the back upon it. Here was grace indeed in its fullest expression; and it is characteristic of what is presented to us here.

2 (5-25): The angel's message: the Saviour's herald.

1 (5-7): righteous but barren.

2 (8-11): the angel's visit.

3 (12-17): fulfillment of prayer: John filled with the Holy Spirit.

2. [1] There was in the days of [d]Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the [e]course of Abia; and he had a wife of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both [f]righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And they had no child, because Elisabeth was [g]barren, and they were both advanced in years.

[2] And it came to pass, as he fulfilled his priestly service before God in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priesthood his lot was to enter into the temple of the Lord and burn [h]incense. And all the multitude of people were praying [i]without at the hour of incense. And there appeared unto him an [j]angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense.

[3] And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and [k]fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy [l]prayer is heard, and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his

d Matt. 2. 1.
e 1 Chron. 24. 10.
f *cf.* Gen. 7. 1. *cf.* Ps. 32. 11. *cf.* Ps. 15.
g *cf.* Gen. 16. 1. *cf.* Gen. 25. 21. *cf.* Gen. 29. 31. *cf.* 1 Sam. 1. 2, 5.
h 1 Chron. 24. 19. *cf.* Ex. 30. 1-10.
i *cf.* Lev. 9. 23. *cf.* Num. 6. 22-27.
j *cf.* Matt. 1. 20. *cf.* Matt. 2. 13, 19. *cf.* vers. 26, etc. *cf.* ch. 2. 9, 10, 13.
k ver. 29; *cf.* Mk. 16. 8.
l *cf.* Acts 10. 4; *cf.* 1 Sam. 1. 11, 20, 26-28.

2. [1] The history opens with what is highly significant. Zacharias is a priest, of the course of Abiah, in the days of Herod the king, and his wife is of the daughters of Aaron, and her name is Elisabeth. All is outwardly in order, though the days are evil days in Israel, as the name of Herod stamps them sufficiently. Yet the priests serve in their courses in the temple, according to what David had established, Zacharias being of the course of Abiah, "my Father is Jah," significantly, the *eighth* course. Not only this, they are both righteous before God, blamelessly walking in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord. They are advanced in years, however, and without children: Elisabeth ("God's oath") is barren.

The whole is a picture of Israel, the priestly nation, not at its worst but at its best, as seen in a remnant, such as God's grace always maintained there, but which, under law dispensationally, could not inherit the promises. Nevertheless Jah could remember His oath, but only through the Kinsman Redeemer now to arise, and of whom the Gospel of Luke speaks.

[2] Zacharias comes, then, in the order of his course into the temple, his lot being to burn incense when he went in. The lot is the expression of the sovereign will of God, which in man's extremity has ever been his resource. Incense is the fragrance of Christ to God: not perhaps of atonement, but rather of Christ personally. And this is what is in view here. By and by it will be seen that atonement must be by His blood, and types and prophecies had long since declared this; yet in fact, historically when He did come the necessity of His death was kept much in the back-ground. Even the Baptist's pointing to the Lamb of God would seem from his after questions not to have been to himself so clear as we should naturally imagine it must have been. In general, at least, the reserve at first seems to be unquestionable: the incense came before the blood; as on the day of atonement it did also.

Zacharias, then, at the incense-altar sees the angel of the Lord. He stands at the right side of the altar—the right hand of power: for the power of that of which the altar speaks is with him: his visit is, as we see immediately, the expression of the sweet savor of Christ to God.

[3] Yet fear falls upon Zacharias: alas, this cannot surprise us; we are but too well accustomed to such misinterpretations of divine goodness on the part of His own. God means us good, and we charge Him with evil. Through lack of

name [m]John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall [n]rejoice at his birth. For he shall be [o]great in the sight of the Lord, and he shall [p]drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be [q]filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And many of the sons of Israel shall he [r]turn to [the] Lord their God. And he shall [s]go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of fathers to children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make [t]ready a people prepared for [the] Lord.

4 (18-23): the failure of unbelief.

18 And Zacharias said unto the angel, [u]Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife advanced in years. And the angel answered and said to him, I am Gabriel, who stand in the [v]presence of God; and I have been sent to speak to thee, and to bring thee these glad tidings. And behold thou shalt be [w]silent, and not able to speak until the day in which these things shall come to pass, because thou believedst not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season. And the people were waiting for Zacharias, and wondered at his delaying in the temple. But when he came out he could not speak to them. And they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple; and he kept making signs to them and remained dumb. And it came to pass, as soon as the days of his service were completed, he departed to his house.

5 (24, 25): the effect of being with God.

24 Now after these days Elisabeth his wife conceived, and hid herself five months, saying, Thus hath [the] Lord done to me in the days wherein he looked on me, to [x]take away my reproach among men.

3 (26-56): The revelation of the Holy One.

1 (26-38): the first announciation.

26 Now in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent

m vers. 60-63. *cf.* ver. 31.
n vers. 58, 67-79. *cf.* Ps. 32.5, 11.
o *cf.* Matt. 11. 7-11.
p *cf.* Matt. 11. 18. *cf.* Num. 6. 1-8. *cf.* Judg. 13. 4, 5.
q *cf.* vers. 41, 67. *cf.* Acts 2. 4. *etr.* Eph. 1. 13.
r Mal. 4. 5, 6.
s *cf.* Mk. 1. 2, 3.
t *cf.* ch. 3. 1-17. *cf.* Acts 19. 4.
u *cf.* Gen. 18. 12. *cf.* Gen. 15. 8, etc.
v Dan. 8. 16. Dan. 9. 21. *cf.* Ps. 103. 20.
w *cf.* Ezek. 3. 26. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 13.
x Gen. 30. 23. *cf.* Is. 4. 1.

being perfected in the lesson of His love, the fear which has torment takes possession of us. How often has He to say to us, "Fear not," when He is about to give us perhaps the very blessing we have long sought.

So is it at least with Zacharias: the angel has to tell him that his prayer is heard, and a son is to be born to him; a rejoicing not to himself only but to many: for he comes, filled with the Spirit, to turn many to God in Israel, going before Him in the spirit and power of Elias, to make ready for the Lord a people.

18 But Zacharias, though fearing God, is but too much after the pattern of his generation, and seeking a sign to satisfy him of what an angel has been sent from God to declare, gets the sign in his own person, being made dumb until the fulfilment of the angel's words. Thus also the priestly office has failed in Israel, her oracle is silent, her witness is that of judgment upon herself. The multitudes gaze upon her, only to behold her dumb: till by and by her season is fulfilled, and "God's oath" is no longer barren.

24 In the consciousness that God is taking away her reproach Elisabeth hides herself. It is in this way that grace works. If God is with one, and this is known aright, it will not exalt but humble. Nothing, indeed, will duly humble but His presence: in the light of this who can exalt oneself?

26 The angel Gabriel* is sent from God in the sixth month (of Elisabeth's pregnancy) with a more important message. Heaven, after the long silence of

*Gabriel means the "might of the Mighty One."

from God to a city of Galilee named [y]Nazareth, to a [z]virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the [a]house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in to her and said, Hail, thou [b]favored one! the Lord is with thee: [blessed art thou among women.*] But she was [c]troubled at that saying, and reasoned in her mind what kind of salutation this might be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God; and behold, [d]thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bear a son, and shalt [e]call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the [f]Son of the Highest; and [the] Lord God shall give unto him the [g]throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for the ages; and of his [h]kingdom there shall be no end. But Mary said unto the angel, How shall this be, since I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, [The] [i]Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: wherefore also the Holy Thing that shall be born shall be called [the] [j]Son of God. And behold, Elisabeth thy kinswoman, she also hath conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month with her that was called barren: for [k]nothing shall be impossible with God. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord: [l]be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

* Omitted by some of the oldest MSS.

y Matt.2.23.
z Matt.1.18, 23.
a *cf.*Matt.1. 20. *cf.* Rom. 1. 3.
b ver. 42. *cf.* Judg. 5. 24. *cf.*ch.11.27, 28.
c ver. 12. *cf.* Is. 66. 2.
d *cf.* Is. 7.14.
e Matt. 1.21, ch. 2. 21.
f *cf.* ch. 3.23, 38. *cf.*Rom.1.4. *cf.* Jno. 9. 35-38.
g Ps. 132.11. *cf.* 1 Ki. 8. 25. *cf.* Is. 9.6,7. *cf.* Jer. 23. 5, 6.
h *cf.* Ps. 72. 5-8, 17. *cf.*Ps.89.36. *cf.* Mi. 4. 7.
i Matt. 1.20. *cf.* Lev.2.4.
j ver. 32. *cf.*Heb.1.2.
k *cf.*Gen.18. 13. *cf.* Jer. 32. 17, 27. *cf.* Rom. 4. 21.
l *cf.* 1 Sam. 25. 41. ver. 45.

centuries, is once again communicative, and in Luke in a more familiar way than Matthew, where it is Joseph who receives the messages, but in a dream. Here we have open face to face speech, and the most important not in the temple, but in a private dwelling. God is coming near in His grace; and always the nearer He comes the more fully He reveals Himself.

Not only is the angel's mission now not to the temple nor to Jerusalem, it is to Galilee of the Gentiles, and to Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man named Joseph, of the fallen house of David: the virgin's name is Mary, or Miriam ("exalted"). All is in ruin here, when God comes in to revive and raise to higher glory.

By the favor of God she is to have a Son, who will be called the Son of the Most High, and, through her the Son of David, shall receive His father's throne, but with unending empire. Then, in answer to Mary's question, it is declared that the Holy Spirit should come upon her, and power of the Highest overshadow her, so that the Holy Thing born should be called the Son of God. This is not, then, the truth of incarnation declared, though, of course, in perfect accordance with it; it is that of a Man born by divine intervention, without human father,—Son of God, but as Man. And this is Luke's theme: it is the Gospel of the Manhood.

Son of man, He is yet a Second Man, a Man without taint of the fall: a new Adam we cannot speak of as yet; for to this two things are needed, which are not as yet brought out: His full, proper Deity, and His atonement. We have had both, of course, in the previous Gospels: we shall find them all, I think, for the first time connected in the Gospel of John.

Mary yields herself to the Lord's will; and the angel departs from her.

2 (39-45): the confirmation.

39 And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill-country with haste, to a city of Judah, and entered
40 into the house of Zacharias, and [m] saluted Elisabeth.
41 And it came to pass, as Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth
42 was [n] filled with [the] Holy Spirit; and cried out with a loud voice, and said, [o] Blessed art thou among women, and blessed the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this
43 to me, that the mother of my [p] Lord should come unto me? for behold, as the voice of thy salutation sounded
44 in mine ears, the babe [q] leaped in my womb with joy.
45 And [r] blessed is she that believed: for there shall be an accomplishment of those things that have been spoken to her from [the] Lord.

3 (46-56): the realization and praise.
(*A*) Power in grace.
(*a*) whole-hearted praise.
(*b*) the low estate regarded.

46 And [s] Mary said:
My soul doth [t] magnify the Lord;
47 and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my [u] Saviour:
48 For he hath regarded the [v] low estate of his handmaiden;
for, behold, from henceforth [w] all generations shall call me blessed:

m cf. Mal.3. 16. cf. Ps. 16. 3.
n cf. vers.15, 67.
o cf. ver. 28.
p cf. ver. 47. cf. Col.1.18.
q cf. Jno. 3. 29. cf. Ps. 8. 2.
r ver. 38. cf. Ps. 2. 12. cf. Heb. 11. 6.
s cf.1 Sam.2. 1-10 cf.vers. 67-79.
t cf. Ps. 34. 2, 3. cf.Ps.69.30.
u cf.Matt.1. 21. cf. Acts 4. 12. cf.Matt.12. 46-50.
v cf. 2 Sam. 7. 18-20. Ps. 138. 6.
w vers. 28, 42; cf. Acts 1. 14; cf. Matt. 26. 13.

[2] Before departing, however, he has referred her to Elisabeth, as a sign of the power of God at work, to which nothing is impossible; and Mary, who has asked for no sign to be given her, yet "drinks of the brook in the way," and goes "with haste," as one feeling the weight of what had been communicated to her, to seek refreshment in the company of her kinswoman, linked with her as she is in faith, and now by this new work of God which is beginning to accomplish the long looked for blessing. She enters the house of Zacharias and salutes Elisabeth.

Here the tender mercy of God meets her with a surprise. When Elisabeth hears the salutation of Mary, the very babe within her leaps for joy, and the Spirit fills her at once with divine intelligence. She cries out to her, "Blessed art thou among women," repeating the words of the angel* which had been matter of wonderment to her before. She adds, "And blessed is the fruit of thy womb;" and then expressly addresses her as the mother of her Lord, at whose voice the babe had leaped in her womb for joy. Blessed, she declares her to be also, in the faith which had received the divine message; and there would be an accomplishment of that which had been spoken to her from the Lord,—from Jehovah.†

[3] Thus, if the unbelief of Zacharias meets with rebuke, though tender rebuke, from God, the faith of Mary receives abundant encouragement. Her heart overflows as she realizes the grace that has made her answer to her name, and she pours out her soul in a song of praise which reflects much that of Hannah (1 Sam. ii. 1–10). It is in fact largely an Old Testament strain, a psalm such as might well become a daughter of David; only with the new gladness of the promises to the fathers being just fulfilled, a covenant going back of Moses to Abraham and his Seed: a ground of blessing to all the families of the earth.

There are three parts; the first of which speaks of the power of God which has intervened in grace to deliver and bless with a blessing that shall resound

* If the majority of the MSS. have here preserved the text; and one does not see why, upon such an occasion as the present, the repetition of the words should not have been intended as divine comfort and strength for Mary.

† Wherever "Lord" is without the article in the Greek, or bracketed in the text here, it stands for Jehovah in the Hebrew, which in the Greek Septuagint is always "Lord."

(c) His holiness.
(d His mercy.
(E) Reversals.
(a) might against pride.
(b) high and low.
(c) the filled and the full.
(C) God's remembrance.

For he that is mighty hath done for me [x]great things;
and [y]holy is his name.
And his [z]mercy is to generations and generations,—
to them that fear him.
He hath showed [a]strength with his arm:
he hath [b]scattered the haughty in the thought of their heart;
He hath [c]put down rulers from thrones,
and exalted the lowly.
He hath filled the [d]hungry with good things;
and the [e]rich he hath sent empty away.
He hath helped Israel his [f]servant,
in remembrance* of his mercy;
as he [g]spake unto our fathers,
to Abraham and his seed for ever.

And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her house.

4 (57–66): The mercy found.

4. Now Elisabeth's time was fulfilled for her to bear; and she [h]brought forth a son. And her neighbors and kindred heard that [the] Lord had magnified his mercy towards her, and they [i]rejoiced with her. And it came to pass on the [j]eighth day that they came to circumcise the child: and they were calling it after his father's name, Zacharias. But his mother answered and said, Nay, but he shall be called [k]John. And they said to her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. And they made signs to his father as to what he would have him called. And he asked for a writing-table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they

x *cf.* Ruth. 4. 14-17. *cf.* Ps. 126.4.
y Ps. 111. 9. *cf.* Jno. 17. 11.
z Ex. 20. 6. Ps. 103. 17.
a Ps. 98. 1. *cf.* Ezek. 20. 33, 34.
b Jas. 4. 6. *cf.* Gen. 11. 4, 8.
c *cf.* Dan. 2. 21, Ps. 75. 6, 7.
d *cf.* Matt. 5. 6, *cf.* ch. 6. 25.
e ch. 6. 24. *cf.* ch. 18. 23, 24.
f *cf.* Is. 44. 21.
g Gen. 17. 19. Gen. 26. 24. Gen. 28. 13-15.
h vers. 13, 24.
i ver. 14.
j *cf.* Gen. 17. 9-14. ch. 2. 21.
k ver. 13. *cf.* Gen. 17. 19 with Gen. 21. 3.

* Literally: that he might remember.

through following generations. Soul and spirit unite in joy and praise; and the great things done proclaim the holiness of His Name; His mercy is to many generations of those that fear Him.

The second part shows, in view of what the world is, the complete reversal of things when God comes in. The pride of man is smitten down before Him; rulers are put down from their thrones, and the lowly exalted, the hungry are filled and the rich sent empty away.

The third part gives the blessed fact in which all this is realized. God has remembered His promises to the fathers, seemingly so long forgotten,—mercies only, for Israel's utter failure could allow no possible claim. All the more did they witness to what was in Him, and so could not fail. The help come to Israel was indeed but what enclosed a purpose of wider blessing which the promise to Abraham unconditionally declared.

For in fact the Christ of Israel is the Son of man; the Seed of the woman bruises the serpent's head; life, righteousness and sanctification are in Him who (crucified through weakness) is the wisdom of God and the power of God by grace through faith alike for all.

4. And now, Elisabeth's full time having come, she brings forth the promised son. Her neighbors and kindred come round her, hearing of the Lord's mercy, and rejoice with her. Upon the circumcising of the child on the eighth day the name was given, as then he came into covenant place and privilege; and the friends propose for the son of Zacharias his father's name. But the mother says, "Nay, but he shall be called John," and the father, when appealed to, confirms

all wondered. And his [t]mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue [loosed], and he spake, blessing God. And [m]fear came upon all who dwelt round about them; and in all the hill-country of Judea all these things were spoken about. And all that heard them laid them up in their heart, saying, What then shall this child be? for the [n]hand of [the] Lord also was with him.

5 (67-80): God with Israel.

1 (67-75): His faithfulness.

(a) Jehovah, the God of Israel.

(b) the Saviour.

(c) fulfilment of the prophets.

5. And Zacharias his father was [o]filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying,

[p]Blessed be [the] Lord, the God of Israel;
for he hath [q]visited and wrought redemption for his people;
And he hath raised up a [r]horn of salvation for us,
in the house of his servant [s]David:
As he [s]spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, from of old,
salvation from our [u]enemies,
and out of the hand of all that hate us:
To work [v]mercy with our fathers,
and [w]remember his holy covenant:
the [x]oath that he sware to our father Abraham,
That he would give us, [y]without fear,
[z]delivered from the enemies' hand, to serve him,
in [a]piety and righteousness before him, all our days.
And thou, child, shalt be called the [b]prophet of the Highest:
for thou shalt [c]go before the face of [the] Lord, to prepare his ways:
To give [d]knowledge of salvation unto his people,
by the remission of their sins;

(d) the mercy at last experienced.

(e) way and end.

2 (76-80): the herald of salvation.

(a) the forerunner.

(b) the ministry of salvation.

t ver. 20. *cf.* Ezek. 24. 27. *cf.* Ezek. 33. 22.
m cf. ch. 5. 26.
n cf. Ezek. 37. 1. *cf.* Gen. 39. 2.
o cf. vers. 41, 46-55.
p 1 Chron. 29. 10, 20. *cf.* 2 Chron. 6. 4.
q cf. Gen. 50. 24. *cf.* Ex. 3. 16. *cf.* Jer. 29. 10. *cf.* Zech. 10. 3. *cf.* ch. 7. 16.
r cf. Ezek. 29. 21. *cf.* Ps. 132. 17.
s cf. Ps. 89. 20-29. *cf.* Acts 13. 34.
t cf. Is. 11. 1, etc. *cf.* Jer. 23. 5, 6. *cf.* Ezek. 37. 24. *cf.* Mi. 5. 2.
u cf. Ps. 18, title; *cf.* Ps. 72. 4.
v Ps. 67. 1, etc.
w cf. Gen. 9. 15. Ps. 98. 3. *cf.* Is. 63. 11.
x Gen. 22. 16.

cf. Heb. 6. 17, 18. *y cf.* Ex. 20. 18-21 with Rom. 8. 15. *z* ver. 71; Ps. 44. 5, 7. *a* Ps. 96. 9; *cf.* Zech. 14. 20, 21. *b* Matt. 11. 5; Matt. 14. 5. *c* ch. 3. 4. *d cf.* Jno. 4. 22; *cf.* Acts 13. 38, 39.

this. Immediately his mouth is opened and his tongue loosed; and he speaks out, blessing God. Thus too will Israel when she has learnt to call the offspring of her old age "the grace of Jehovah," find her tongue loosed, and bless God. And the hand of Jehovah will again be with the remnant that He has raised up.

5. The prophecy of Zacharias, filled with the Spirit, celebrates, as has been already said, Jehovah's remembrance of the covenant oath. The first part declares His faithfulness in this: He has become once more the God of Israel, as redemption witnesses. A horn of salvation, a Saviour, has been raised up in the house of David, a deliverance from all their enemies, that thus delivered they may serve Him without fear, in piety and righteousness.

The second part is more evangelic; and John appears in it as more than the austere messenger of repentance. He is the fore-runner of Jehovah Himself, to prepare His ways; to give the knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins. This is quite according to the character of the peace-offering Gospel; and it is striking to find it at the very beginning. God is manifested thus in the tenderness of His compassion, in which the dayspring from on high chases away the shades of night where men sit hopeless, and guides the feet into the way of peace.

Thus the unbelief which had clouded Zacharias' vision in the temple disappears, and the blessing of the people, which had been hindered by the chasten-

(*c*) the dayspring from on high.

(*d*) to guide in the way.

On account of the tender* mercy of our God,
wherein the [c]dayspring from on high hath visited us,
To shine upon those sitting in [e]darkness and the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.

And the child [g]grew and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts until the [h]time of his showing forth to Israel.

[c] cf. 2 Sam. 23. 4. cf. Mal. 4. 2.
[e] cf. Is. 9. 2. cf. Matt. 4. 15, 16.
[g] cf. ch. 2. 40.
[h] ch. 3. 1, 2.

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. ii.)

A Saviour, and a testimony to Him.

1 (1-7): His birth in Bethlehem ordered of God acting through the throne of the world.

1. NOW it came to pass in those days that a [i]decree went out from Cæsar Augustus, that a census should be made of all the habitable [earth]. The census itself first took place when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. And all went to be enrolled, [j]every one to his own city. Now Joseph also went up from Galilee out of the city Nazareth into Judea, to the [k]city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his [l]espoused, who was great with child. And it came to pass while they were there, that the days were fulfilled for her to bring forth; and she [m]brought forth her first-

[i] cf. Jno. 19. 11.
[j] cf. Josh. 24. 28.
[k] 1 Sa. 16. 1. Jno. 7. 42.
[l] ch. 1. 27.
[m] Matt. 1. 23, 25.

* Gk., "bowels of mercy."

ing hand upon him, is restored and multiplied. Indeed it seems as if now Israel's full blessing were at hand: as it was really, if only they had heart for it. Who could imagine that their own refusal was to put away from them for now nearly two millennia what was then close at hand? Yet come it shall, for God has promised it; and its coming cannot surely be much longer delayed.

SUBD. 2.

As compared with Matthew—the only other Gospel which gives at all the circumstances of His birth or infancy—the account of the Lord's coming into the world is clearly in keeping with the Gospel of the Manhood. There is no incident that the two have in common, and each maintains its own character with the most perfect consistency. In the one the Gentile magi may come to do homage to a King of the Jews; in the other, to shepherds in the field heaven opens to announce a Saviour. The testimony of Simeon and Anna is also to a Saviour and salvation. His circumcision, and the offerings at His presentation to the Lord, alike show Him to us in the "*likeness* of sinful flesh"; while His growth and development testify to the verity of His Manhood. These things are in full accord with the truth presented in Luke,—each one being necessary to it.

1. How thorough is the humiliation into which He is come is shown by the circumstances of His birth. Cæsar is lord of the world, and orders it as he will, for his own purposes. How different a world from that which *He* had made at the beginning; yet He is in it as under Cæsar's rule, Joseph and Mary being brought out of Nazareth to Bethlehem to be enrolled as of David's line. Spite of all this, the power of the world is unconsciously working to fulfil a prophecy concerning One it knows not; and this being accomplished, the design drops through as if it had never been: "the census itself first took place when Cyrenius (or Quirinus) was governor of Syria"—some years afterward.

Thus the Lord of all is born a Man, among men His creatures, and laid in a

born son, and wrapped him in swaddling-bands,* and laid him in a manger, because there was "no room for them in the inn.

2 (8-20): The angels' announcement.

2. And there were in the same country °shepherds abiding in the field, and keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, an ᵖangel of [the] Lord stood by them, and the glory of [the] Lord shone round them, and they were afraid with great fear. And the angel said unto them, ᵠFear not: for behold, I bring to you good tidings of great ʳjoy which shall be to all the people: for there hath been born to you to-day in the city of David a ˢSaviour who is Christ, [the] ᵗLord. And this shall be the sign to you: ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling-bands,* and lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a "multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth "peace, good pleasure in men.†

n *cf.* Jno. 1. 10, 11. *cf.* ch.23.18. *cf.* Phil. 3. 20.
o *cf.* Ps.78.70-72. *cf.* Ps. 23.1.
p *cf.* ch.1.11, 26.
q *cf.* ch.1.29, 30.
r *cf.* Zeph.3. 14. *cf.* Zech. 2. 10.
s Matt. 1.21. *cf.* Is. 63. 1, 8, 9.
t *cf.* Jno. 1. 41, 49. *cf.* 1 Cor.12. 3. *cf.* Acts 2. 36.
u Ps. 148.2. Rev. 5. 11.
v *cf.* Job 38. 7. *cf.* ch.19.38. *cf.* Ex. 15.1. *cf.* Rev. 5. 13, 14.
w *cf.* Ps. 72. 2, 3; *cf.* Is. 52.7; *cf.* Col.1.20; *cf.* Eph. 2. 17.

* Or, "enswathed him," one word in the Gk.
† Some of the earlier MSS. read, "among men of good pleasure."

manger, because there is no room for them in the inn. Sad sign, surely, of men's condition, when their Maker, come to be their Saviour, prophesied of in every particular as coming, heralded even now by angelic visitation, could come after all unnoticed and unknown!

2. As already said, in Luke the announcement is, not of a King of the Jews, but of a Saviour; and it is not to the great or wise, but "to the poor the gospel is preached." To shepherds keeping watch over their flocks, the news is brought of the Good Shepherd who goeth after that which is lost; and here it is not a star in the heavens that is the sign, but heaven itself opens, and the angels bring a direct face to face message, while the glory of the Lord shines round about. Good tidings of great joy there are for all the people: a Saviour who is Christ the Lord. And now there is a sign: what is it? Not a sign in heaven, but a little babe, and wrapped in swaddling clothes. Not in a king's palace, but lying in a manger!

How unlike are the thoughts of God to those of men! The Deliverer is a Son of man; nay, the Seed of the woman. Divine power has clothed itself in weakness to accomplish that for which mere power was not competent: for the battle here is not to the strong; an infant bound in swaddling-bands is no symbol of strength, nor a manger that of favoring circumstances, but the very opposite. Still, in such a conflict as is here impending, difficulties may be used to manifest the overcomer, as darkness to bring out the stars. And in a world ruled by God, there must after all be victory in goodness, which the stripping off of mere strength may make plain; nay, the accumulation of all that we conceive as power on the opposite side.

This little babe brings out the praise of angels, if the earth is silent and asleep. The hosts of heaven praise on man's behalf, and with a fuller praise than when, at creation first, "all the sons of God shouted for joy:" "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in men."

Sin has dishonored God, and thus introduced conflict where all was harmony. Man, the image of God, set over all else on earth, has fallen lower than was possible for the beast, and after centuries of trial has only demonstrated the impossibility of self-recovery. The first man has had children in his own image, himself repeated in every one of them but too faithfully. But now, at last, there is a Second Man. At last God is glorified in the scene of His dishonor,

And it came to pass, as the angels departed from them into heaven, that the shepherds said one to another, Let us go now as far as Bethlehem, and see this thing that hath come to pass, which the Lord hath made known to us. And they came with haste, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger. Now, when they had seen it, they [x]made known* about that which had been spoken to them concerning this child; and all who heard it [y]wondered at the things which had been spoken to them by the shepherds. But Mary [z]kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, as it had been spoken to them.

3 (21-39): The testimony of the Spirit, on His presentation to the Lord. 1 (21-24): the Obedient One, according to the law, and First-born.

3. [1] And when [a]eight days were fulfilled for circumcising him, his name was called Jesus; which was so called by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

x *cf.* Matt.2. 10, 11. *cf.* Mal.3.16.

y *cf.* ch.1.58. *cf.* Is. 9. 6.

z *cf.* Gen.37. 11. ver. 51. *cf.* ch. 1.66.

a Gen.17.12. ch. 1. 59. *cf.* Col.2.11 -14.

* Some MSS. add, "around."

nay, in a manner which has given heaven itself such a theme of praise as it has never known before. Here is for earth's wounds a healing power, for its conflict peace, if delayed yet assured; and for men more than justification of wisdom's old delight in them. The Second Man becomes the last Adam of a new humanity, the embrace of God for a renewed creation.

So the angels depart, and the shepherds go their way to Bethlehem, to find all as the angels had declared, and to make known to others what they have heard and seen. All who hear it wonder; Mary ponders it in her heart; the shepherds praise and glorify God.

3. After the testimony of angels we have now that of the Spirit of God when Jesus is presented to the Lord: a fitting occasion, and the witness that of One who from the beginning inspired the prophets to speak and write of Him. Besides Simeon and Anna, the types and shadows of the Old Testament find here their suited place, though the Antitype of necessity transcends them all.

[1] First, He is circumcised, and receives at that time the significant name given Him before His birth—that of Jesus. He is afterwards presented to the Lord as a first-born Son, or as the law expresses it, one opening the womb. While next we hear of a sacrifice presented on the part of His mother, as to which He declares in the burnt-offering psalm, "In the volume of the book it is *written of Me*" (Ps. xl. 7). All this we must briefly look at.

His circumcision, as the apostle says of this, makes Him "debtor to do the whole law" (Gal. v. 3). "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, come of a woman, come under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. iv. 4, 5). He thus pledges Himself to full legal obedience, which on His part is to have no relaxation. To others He is to be the Source of a grace which for Himself He is never to know. And the law itself marks out for Him a special place, apart from all others.

At His circumcision it is that He receives the name of "Jesus" (Jehovah the Saviour) of which it was said, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matt. i. 21). He comes under the law as the Redeemer from under it.

As such we find Him directly under the law of the first-born, and presented to the Lord. Every first-born son is holy to the Lord, and thus God claims the whole family as His; thus He acknowledges the claim and presents them to Him.

We have already seen what family this is of which He is the First-born. It is not Mary's; though through His mother He may have brethren merely

And when the days of their [b]purification were fulfilled according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of [the] Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord), and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of [the] Lord, a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons.

2 (25-32): salvation seen.

[2] And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and this man was [c]just and pious, waiting for the [d]consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it was divinely shown to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not [e]see death until he had seen [the] Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, that they might do for him according to the custom of the law, he took him into his arms, and blessed God, and said:—

b Lev. 12. 6-8. Ex. 13. 2. *cf.* Gal. 4. 4, 5.

c ch. 1. 6. Vers. 36, 38.
d *cf.* Is. 40. 1. *cf.* Is. 54. 11-13.
e *cf.* Mk. 9. 1. *cf.* Jno. 21. 22. *cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 17.

human. But the true family must be sons of God, though also human. It is in the very idea, a *human* family, as He is presented as One opening the womb. On the other hand, the whole human family it is not; while yet again all men are invited and urged to become members of it. Those who do so are thus "sons of God, by faith, in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26), as He is true Man, and Son of God *as Man* also.

In Hebrews, in which He is distinctly called "the First-born" (chap. i. 6), occurs the passage in which is affirmed at the same time His kinship with and His great diversity from, those whom, because they are all of one with Him, He is not ashamed to call His brethren (ii. 11). Yet He is the Sanctifier, they are the sanctified; and forasmuch as they are partakers of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise took part in the same (ver. 14); for in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people (ver. 17, *Gk.*).

We see, then, what this relationship as First-born involves for Him. He is taking up a path peculiar to Himself. He is acknowledging the claim of God upon that family with which He is in true and abiding relationship, and who are in Him presented to God. But these are sinners: they are those who are to be "sanctified" by Him,—"sanctified," as the epistle itself explains it, "by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ" (ch. x. 10). His priestly work is the offering of *Himself* (vii. 27). Immediately here, therefore, the shadow of this falls over His path: Mary, His mother, must bring her offering for purification (see Lev. xii., *Notes*). He is "in the likeness"—only in the likeness, but still that—"of sinful flesh" (Rom. viii. 3). His connection with a human mother brings for Him that shadow which acquired its fullest character, as it found its explanation, in the darkness of the Cross. He touches here the margin of that which He was to know in all its dread reality. For He was to be Himself the sacrifice to put away the shadow, and that how gloriously! shadow dispelling shadow evermore.

The sacrifice here is, as we know, the sacrifice of the poor. It is, at the same time, that which if it does not speak of fullest *sacrifice*, does surely of the Heavenly One: and the dove or pigeon is the only sacrificial bird required in the law.

[2] It is as thus presented to the Lord that the testimony of the Spirit is given as to Him. We find once again the people who fear God, and with whom the secret of the Lord is, not among the heads of the nation, but little known of men, though in communion with one another as those upon whom the Spirit of

(a) peace from the sovereign act of God. (b) salvation going forth. (c) a revelation of the nations and Israel's glory.

Now, Sovereign Lord, thou [f]art letting thy servant go,
according to thy word, in peace:
For mine eyes have [g]seen thy salvation,
which thou hast prepared before the face of [h]all
the peoples:
A light for revelation of [the] [i]nations,
and the [j]glory of thy people Israel.

2 (33–35): a revelation of the hearts.

[3] And his father and mother were in [k]wonder at the things spoken concerning him. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this [child] is appointed for the [l]fall and rising up of many in Israel, and for a sign spoken against; yea and a [m]sword shall pierce through thine own soul, that the [n]thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

4 36–39): the widow.

[4] And there was a prophetess, [o]Anna, daughter of

f *cf.* Gen. 46. 30. *cf.* Phil. 2. 17.
g ch. 3. 6. *cf.* Lam. 3. 26. *cf.* Is. 25. 9.
h *cf.* ver. 10. *cf.* Gen. 12. 3.
i Is. 49. 6. Is. 60. 1–3. *cf.* Acts 26. 17, 18.
j *cf.* Is. 40. 5. *cf.* 1 Sam. 4. 21, 22.
k *cf.* Is. 4. 4, 5.
k *cf.* vers. 18, 19, 48, 51.
l *cf.* Rom. 9. 32, 33. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 7, 8.
m *cf.* Jno. 19. 25–27; *cf.* ch. 24. 21.
n *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 23, 24; *cf.* Matt. 22. 41–46.
o *cf.* 2 Chron. 34. 22.

God is. Of Simeon we know nothing but his character as just and pious and waiting for the consolation of Israel. It was not merely for his own, even spiritual good: his heart longed for the blessing of the people of God, keenly feeling their condition and what alone could meet it.—Who alone could bring effectual comfort. To him it was given by the Spirit to know that he should not see death till he had seen the Christ, Jehovah's Anointed.

He comes, therefore, into the temple at the time Jesus is brought in, and taking Him into his arms, breaks out in praise. This praise, moreover, goes far beyond the consolation of Israel, while it includes this: for the bud of God's promise has a sweeter, richer unfolding than the promise itself implies. Simeon, no doubt, did not realize all that his words pointed to, and there were still developments to be in the day just dawning.

(*a*) He begins with what is personal to himself. God is acting in His sovereignty, and he can rejoice: for sovereignty with Him means sovereign goodness; He has fulfilled His word to him, and now he may depart in peace. What, indeed, could man have sought or imagined on God's part so blessed as He has done? Who could have thought of what the Babe in Simeon's arms meant for the heart that could take it in?

(*b*) Simeon knew, at last, that here was God's salvation. If not as yet wrought out, here was the Worker of it; and his faith did not fail as he contemplated the weakness of those infant hands to which it had been committed. Already his eyes had seen it: a salvation which as such, though it might come from Israel, could not be shut up in Israel; nay, God had prepared it before the face of all the peoples. Could it be less in God's desire than world-wide, with the same need on all sides calling for it?

(*c*) Israel and the Gentiles must be both in the purpose of God; and so much had the Old Testament already declared should be; but Simeon puts them in another order than the Old Testament. "A light," he says, "for the revelation of the nations:" to bring those that had been hidden, sitting in darkness and the shadow of death, into the light of divine blessing. And then "the glory of Thy people Israel." But this will be more fully declared as we go on.

[3] Simeon does not see the bright side only, nor imagine that even God's message of salvation will be at once welcomed because of the need men have of it. While Joseph and Mary wonder at the things that are spoken of Him, he turns to the mother with the warning of what divine light will reveal as to the hearts of men. The Child was appointed for the fall as well as the rising up of many in Israel, and as a sign—surely the most significant that could be—yet to be spoken *against*. Yea, a sword would pierce through her own soul also. For the presence of Christ as light would bring all to light.

[4] Anna completes the number of these witnesses. All else have failed with

Phanuel, of the tribe of [p]Aser, who was far advanced in years, having lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; and she was a [q]widow of as much as eighty-four years; who departed not from the temple, [r]serving with fastings and prayers night and day. And she, coming in at the same hour, gave thanks to God, and [s]spake of him to all those that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.*

4 (40-52): The ways of the youth of Jesus.

4. And when they had completed all things according to the law of [the] Lord, they [t]returned to Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. And the child [u]grew and waxed strong [in spirit,†] being filled with wisdom, and the favor of God was upon him.

And his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the [v]feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, and they had gone up after the custom of the feast, and when they had completed the days, as they returned, the child Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem.

p cf. 2 Chr. 30. 11. cf. Rom. 11. 5.
q cf. 1 Tim. 5. 5. cf. Is. 54. 1.
r cf. Ex. 38. 8. cf. Ps. 27. 4.
s cf. ch. 1. 39, etc. cf. Mal. 3. 16.
t cf. Matt. 2. 19-23. cf. Jno. 1. 46. cf. ch. 4. 16, 22.
u ver. 52. cf. Jno. 1. 14. cf. Jno. 4. 6. cf. Heb. 4. 15.
v Deut. 16. 2. cf. 1 Sam. 1. 24.

*Or "the redemption of Jerusalem." †Omitted by most editors.

her; but she has been brought into the wilderness only that God may speak comfortably to her. She is a true child of Asher, the "happy," and of Phanuel, the "face of God;" her name Anna, "grace," identifying her with the principle of a life like hers, where fastings and prayers are but love's service, and her prophesying the outflow of intercourse with God. A blessed picture! Christ will surely be with such the thanksgiving of the heart, and the theme of the tongue. Already it was so with those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

4. The visit of the magi and the consequent flight into Egypt are omitted in this Gospel; on the other hand we have here the only notice of the Lord's youth. It naturally finds its place in the Gospel of the Manhood, being evidently intended to show the truly human development of this. The words are simple and natural, with no pretentiousness of knowledge and yet no plea of ignorance; no apology indeed of any kind; no attempt at explanation or reconciliation. We find in them a true, while yet a perfect Child; growing mentally, just as we have no doubt He grew in body; filled with wisdom, no room in Him for folly at any time: His heart turned constantly to God, and so the favor of God resting ever upon Him. Little do we realize how spiritual aim affects the mental capacity. These points are at the end of the chapter taken up once more and emphasized: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."

Between these statements we have that story of His youth, which shows what His aim was,—the way in which already, at twelve years old, He was occupied with His Father's business. This was the age at which the Jewish child began to come up to Jerusalem at the festivals; and here for the first time it was, no doubt, that the schools of the greater Rabbis were open to Him. How great must have been the attraction to Him of the teaching and discussions of the spiritual leaders of Israel, with whom He was to be in relations so different at a later time! Thus He remains at Jerusalem, after the company with whom He had been had left it on the return to Galilee, and is found there by Joseph and His mother on the third day "in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers."

Yet how little did those know Him who should have known Him best upon earth! "And when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother"—she who had learnt of Him from angels' lips, and had been pondering in her heart

And his parents knew not of it; but, supposing him to be in the company, they went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kindred and acquaintances: and, not finding him, they turned back to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass after three days that they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them and asking them [w]questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. And when they saw him they were amazed, and his mother said to him, Child, [x]why hast thou dealt thus with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee in distress. And he said unto them, Why is it that ye sought me? did ye not know that I ought to be about* my [y]Father's business? And they did not understand the thing he spake to them.

And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was [z]subject to them. And his mother [a]kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus [b]increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and men.

w *cf.* ver. 52.

x *cf.* Jno. 2. 3, 4. *cfr.* ch. 1. 35, 38.

y *cf.* Heb. 10. 5–10. *cf.* Jno. 6. 38–40.

z *cf.* Eph. 6. 1 with 1 Pet. 2. 21.

a ver. 19. *cf.* Matt. 9. 30.

b ver. 40. *cf.* 1 Sam. 2. 26.

* Literally "in the things of my Father." Surely not as R. V. "in my Father's house."

so much already—"said to Him, Child, why hast Thou dealt thus with us? behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee in distress." From the mere human side of things that was no wonder; but alas that we should be so much at the mere human side of things! "And He said unto them, Why is it that ye sought Me? did ye not know that I ought to be about My Father's business?" It is strange indeed that any should think that this was His own waking up to such a thought. For in this case how could He speak of it as a strange thing that *they* should not before have had this thought? On the contrary, it is plain they ought to have understood it from all that they had ever seen of Him. This absolute devotedness had been His "wisdom" ever, only manifested more as His child-life expanded into youth and manhood. Thus this visit to Jerusalem, and to what He afterwards used to call His Father's house, comes in between His earlier and His later life in Nazareth, giving the character of it all, while He filled too His place in that human family life, which was His Father's will for Him, subject to the authority of those who at best knew Him so little. Still His mother kept in her heart and thought upon what was still beyond her, God's favor towards Him more and more manifesting itself as the development went on of that which, for the present, drew out man's favor also. For as yet He had not come forth into that place of public ministry and appeal on God's part which would lead on to His rejection by those after whom in grace He had come, and for one brief, awful moment to the transcendent sorrow of the abandonment of the cross also. But thus were His words to be fulfilled, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me" (John xii. 32).

Subd. 3.

We have next, after eighteen years more of silence from that passover at Jerusalem, the manifestation of Christ in the midst of Israel. His forerunner, John, proclaims Him as at hand; then, after His baptism by John, He is borne witness to by the Father's voice from heaven, is openly sealed by the Spirit of God descending in bodily form, like a dove, upon Him; lastly, He is vindicated under trial, tempted by the devil in the wilderness. In all this, Luke follows in the track of the other Synoptic Gospels; although Mark omits the details of the temptation. We shall seek to compare the three accounts as we may be enabled.

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chaps. iii.–iv. 13.)
Manifested and Seated with the Spirit.

1 (iii. 1-14): The way of righteousness: a solitary voice in a barren land.

1. NOW, in the fifteenth year of the [c]government of Tiberius Cæsar, [d]Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, and [e]Herod tetrarch of Galilee, but [f]Philip his brother tetrarch of Ituræa and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, in the [g]high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the [h]word of God came upon John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came into all the region round about Jordan, [i]preaching a baptism of repentance for remission of sins; as it is [j]written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet: A voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of [the] Lord; make straight his paths. Every [k]valley shall be filled, and every [l]mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the [m]crooked places shall become a straight [path], and the rough places smooth ways; and [n]all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

Then said he to the multitudes that came forth to be baptized of him, [o]Offspring of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth, therefore, [p]fruits worthy of repentance; and begin not to say within yourselves, We have [q]Abraham for [our] father: for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And even now also is the [r]axe laid at the root of the trees: every tree, therefore, that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. And the multitudes asked him, saying, [s]What should we do, then? And he answered and said unto them, He that hath [t]two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath food, let him do likewise. And there

c *cf.* Matt. 22. 7, etc.
d *cf.* Mk. 15. 1, etc.
e *cf.* Matt. 14. 1, etc. *cf.* ch. 13. 31, etc.
f *cf.* Mk. 6. 17.
g *cf.* Jno. 11. 49. *cf.* Jno. 18. 13, 14.
h *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 26-29. *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 8. *cf.* Matt. 11. 8. *cf.* Rev. 1. 9.
i Matt. 3. 1, 2. Mk. 1. 4. Jno. 1. 6-8.
j Is. 40. 3-5. Matt. 3. 3. Mk. 1. 3. Jno. 1. 23.
k *cf.* Jas. 1. 9.
l *cf.* Jas. 1. 10. *cf.* ch. 18. 14. *cf.* Is. 1. 12-17.
m *cf.* Eccle. 1. 15. *cf.* Is. 59. 8.
n Ps. 98. 2. Is. 52. 10.
o Matt. 3. 7-10. *cf.* Is. 14. 29. *cf.* Jno. 8. 44.
p *cf.* Acts 26. 20 with Acts 19. 18-20. *cf.* 2 Cor. 7. 10, 11.
q *cf.* Rom. 9. 7. *cf.* Jno. 8. 33-40.

r *cf.* ch. 13. 6-10; *cf.* Rom. 2. 4. s *cf.* Acts 2. 37; *cf.* Acts 9. 6. *cf.* Acts 16. 30, 31. t *cf.* Matt. 10. 10.; *cf.* Jas. 2. 15, 16.

1. The first part is introductory, the voice of the Old Testament in the New. John the Baptist coming in the way of righteousness, as the Lord characterizes him, and therefore with his baptism of repentance, since the legal requirement of righteousness only brands all men as under hopeless condemnation, and repentance is but the heart-acknowledgment of this, that grace may appear in its own sovereignty. Luke is fuller in detail here than either Matthew or Mark, though he has less of austerity in the Baptist's ways: neither his rough dress nor diet is mentioned. On the other hand the way of the Lord is more insisted on as to be prepared only by the bringing down of the mountains and the filling up of the valleys,—bringing all flesh to a common level before God, that the salvation of God may be seen by all. Thus baptism is to Jordan, the river of death, to which men's sins bring them, and not their goodness, but to find remission.

The very description of the time shows the condition of ruin in Israel—of the people under law. Even the show of a united kingdom in Israel is gone, Herod's being quartered—the sign of weakness being stamped upon it in the tetrarchies; and a fourth part, Judea itself, under a Roman governor. The high priesthood is divided between the two Sadducees, Annas and Caiaphas. Judah is losing its tribal rod, and Shiloh must appear, to gather the peoples.

came also unto him [u] tax-gatherers to be baptized, and they said unto him, Teacher, what should we do? And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed to you. And soldiers also asked him, saying, And we, what should we do? And he said unto them, Do [v] violence to no one; nor accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.

2 (iii.15-20:) His testimony to Christ.

2. Now, as the people were in [w] expectation, and all were reasoning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, John answered them all, saying, [x] I indeed baptize you with water, but there cometh One mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: *he* shall baptize you with [the] [y] Holy Spirit and [with] [z] fire; whose fan is in his hand, thoroughly to purge his [a] threshing-floor, and to gather the wheat into his garner; but the [b] chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.

With many other exhortations, therefore, preached he good tidings to the people. But [c] Herod the tetrarch being reproved by him for Herodias, his brother's wife, and for all the evils that Herod had done, added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

3 (iii.21-38): Christ sealed with the Spirit; the renewal of man.

3. [1] And it came to pass, when all the people were baptized, and [d] Jesus also having been baptized and praying, that heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily form as a [e] dove upon him; and a

1 (21, 22): the First-born.

u *cf.* Matt. 9. 10. *cf.* ch. 7. 29. *cf.* ch. 19. 8.
v *cf.* Jno. 18. 36. *cf.* 2 Cor. 10. 3–5.
w *cf.* Jno. 1. 19, 20. *cf.* Jno. 5. 33, 35. *cf.* Matt. 21. 26.
x Matt. 3. 11, 12. Mk. 1. 8. Jno. 1. 26, 33. Acts 1. 5. Acts 11. 16. *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 17.
y *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 13.
z *cf.* Rev. 20. 9, 15. *cf.* Matt. 25. 41.
a Matt. 13. 30. *cf.* Mi. 4. 12, 13. *cf.* Is. 21. 10.
b *cf.* Ps. 1. 4. *cf.* Hos. 13. 3. *cf.* Heb. 6. 8.
c Matt. 14. 3, etc. Mk. 6. 17, etc. *cf.* Jno. 3. 24.
d Matt. 3. 13-17; Mk. 1. 9-11; Jno. 1. 31-34. e *cf.* Acts 10. 38; *cf.* Gen. 8. 8, 9.

John's is truly a solitary voice in a barren land. It is characteristic of Luke that what is addressed in Matthew to Pharisees and Sadducees is here to the people at large. They can no longer plead the privileges of children of Abraham. The axe is at the root of the trees; while on the other hand, God is able to raise such out of the very stones. To those who ask of him what they are to do, he prescribes no asceticism, but practical righteousness and love; while yet no claim upon God is allowed on this account. As the Lord says at an after-time, no such claim is possible for a creature: "when ye have done all say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which it was our duty to do."

2. But John does not end with this. The people, full of expectation, are reasoning in their hearts whether this might be the Christ; and this brings him out to disclaim entirely any such pretension. He is not fit to loose the shoe-latchet of Him who comes after him. *He* would baptize, not with water merely, but with the Holy Spirit and fire. He would purge His threshing-floor, separating between the wheat and the chaff: the one preserved for the garner, the other to be burnt up with unquenchable fire (*See notes on Matthew pp. 55, 56.*)

Luke passes on with this to John's imprisonment at the hands of Herod, and the occasion of it; the fore-runner precedes also in his suffering and death the Prince of sufferers.

3. The Father's voice is now heard owning His beloved Son, upon whom the Spirit descends out of the opened heaven, in bodily form like a dove. He is thus now in full reality the Christ, the Anointed; the Spirit of God finding a congenial habitation in a "Second Man," the First-born of a new family, from whom, however, the stream of blessing flows back also through the ages, so that Adam shall once more, though not as of the old creation, be the "son of God."

[1] The meaning of the Lord's baptism by John has been considered in Matthew. It was the pledge on His part to that other baptism unto death in which He met

voice came out of heaven, [saying]* [f]Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased.

2 (23-38): Son of man and Second Man: the link of salvation.

2 And Jesus himself was beginning to be about [g]thirty years old; being, as was supposed, the son of [h]Joseph, of Heli, of Matthat, of Levi, of Melchi, of Jannai, of Joseph, of Mattathias, of Amos, of Naoum, of Esli, of Naggai, of Maath, of Mattathias, of Semein, of Josech, of Joda, of Joanan, of Rhesa, of Zorobabel, of Salathiel, of Neri, of Melchi, of Addi, of Cosam, of Elmadam, of Er, of Jesus, of Eliezer, of Joreim, of Matthat, of Levi, of Simeon, of Judah, of Joseph, of Jonan, of Eliakim, of Meleas, of Menna, of Mattatha, of [i]Nathan, of David, of Jesse, of Obed, of [j]Booz, of Salmon, of [k]Naasson, of Aminadab, of Aram, of Esrom, of Pharez, of Juda, of Jacob, of Isaac, of Abraham, of Terah, of Nahor, of Seruch, of Ragau, of Phalek, of Eber, of Sala, of Cainan, of Arphaxad, of [l]Sem, of Noe, of Lamech, of Methusala, of Enoch, of Jared, of Malaleel, of Cainan, of Enos, of Seth, of Adam, [m]of God.

4 (iv. 1-13): The testing in the wilderness.

1 (1-4): the true life of man.

4. [1] But Jesus, [n]full of the Holy Spirit, returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness forty days, being tempted of the devil; and in those

f *cf.* Is. 42.1. *cf.* ch. 9.35. *cf.* Jno.8.29.
g *cf.* Num.4. 3. *cf.* Jno.8.57, 58.
h *cf.* Matt.1. 1-17.
i *cf.* Zech.12. 12. *cf.* 2 Sa.5.14. *cf.* 1 Chron. 3. 5.
j Ruth 4.18-22.
k *cf.* Nu.1.7.
l *cf.* 1 Chron. 1.1-4,24-28, 34. *cf.* 1 Chron. 2. 1-12.
m *cf.* Gen.5. 1, 2. *cf.* Num.16. 22.
n Matt. 4. 1. Mk.1.12,13.

* Many omit.

the need of those who as sinners took their place in death their due. In Luke alone it is noticed that He is praying; which we may thus connect with His prayer in Gethsemane, and with Heb. v. 7. Thereon heaven opens, as in fact that death opened it, and the Spirit descends on Him in bodily form like a dove. The dove being the bird of sacrifice, Christ and the Spirit of Christ are One as seen in it, the First-born—man as presented by Christ in this new family—being wholly according to His mind. Thus the Voice from heaven owns Him: "Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased."

So had the angels declared God's "good pleasure in men," as that which the Babe of Bethlehem bore witness to and justified. "Whom He foreknew He also fore-ordained to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the First-born among many brethren."

2 Thus a genealogy follows here traced backward, and not, as in Matthew, forward; and not to Abraham merely, as in Matthew, but to Adam. It is a genealogy, not of the King, (and so giving the legal title, the descent from David) but of the Son of *man*.

But what need of a genealogy in this case? If He be man, must He not be Son of man—of Adam? True; and so, as has been said, the stream runs backward. The Son of man is also the Second Man; and each link in the chain at least *suggests* a link of salvation. Thus the genealogy is not put in connection with His birth, but with that coming forward to be baptized of John in Jordan, which was His entrance upon His ministry of salvation; and He is then thirty years of age, the time of the commencement of Levite service.

Son of man as He is generically, Christ is no less Seed of the woman; and it is doubtless Mary's line that is given us here. Joseph is, as husband of Mary, the son of Heli. In the Gospel of the Manhood it is as naturally Mary who would be before us, as in the Gospel of the Kingship it would be Joseph; and the respective histories conform themselves to this.

4. [1] The temptation in the wilderness follows the public testimony of God to His Son. It is founded on it:—"If Thou be the Son of God"; and necessarily follows it. This is the divine order: for it would have been dishonor to both,

days he °ate nothing; and when they were finished, he hungered. And the devil said to him, If thou art Son of God, ᵖspeak to this stone that it may become bread. And Jesus answered him, It is ᵍwritten that not by bread alone shall man live, [but by every word of God].*

2 (5-8): the Second Man and the Seed of the woman.

2 And the ʳdevil, leading him up [into a high mountain],† showed him all the kingdoms of the habitable earth in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, I will give thee all this authority and the glory of them: for it is ˢdelivered to me, and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship before me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said to him, It is ᵗwritten, Thou shalt worship [the] Lord thy God, and serve him alone.

*Some omit. † Some omit, but evidently to be retained.

o Ex. 34.28. 1 Ki. 19.8. *ctr.* Gen. 2.15-17.
p *cf.* ch. 9.12-17. *cf.* Matt. 27.42.
q Deut. 8.3. *cf.* 1 Jno. 2.14.
r *ctr.* Ps. 2.8. *cf.* Jno. 17.4, 5.
s *cf.* Jno. 12.31. *cf.* Jno. 14.30. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4.4.
t Deut. 6.13. Deut. 10.20. *cf.* Rev. 13.12.

if God had waited to see if His Son could stand all tests before approving Him. On the other hand that approval was a challenge to the accuser, the Spirit leading Christ in the wilderness forty days, while Satan was permitted to assail Him. Fasting and hungry with the famine of those days upon Him, the devil appeals to Him, if He be the Son of God, to put forth His power and make bread of the stones which are around Him. Thus He would take Himself out of the place of dependence by using a power which had not been given to man. But the true life of man is not that which is sustained by bread but by the word of God. Obedience, dependence, communion, are its characteristics and its strength. Against one walking in such a path all the suggestions of the enemy are unavailing.

2 The second and third temptations are in reverse order in Matthew and Luke. The historical order seems to be that which is found in Matthew, the second being marked by "then" as following the first; while the third is marked as the closing one by the Lord's "Get thee hence, Satan," which lays bare and dismisses the tempter. Indeed the proposal here in its very nature seems to close the whole matter. Yet there must, of course, be a reason for the change in order here, and that whether we are able or not to discover it; the limit of our knowledge is not that of the word of God which He has given us.

The first answer of the Lord to Satan has shown us man in the true life of dependent obedience for which he was created. Than such a life there could be nothing freer, nothing happier, nothing nobler. Living such a life, the world was his, and all was subjected to him as the image of his Maker. Aspiring to independency he lost it all, and became, by the lusts through which he governed him, Satan's poor drudge and bondsman. This is the empire of which the devil boasts now to the Lord; spreading it before Him in a moment, as if to dazzle Him with it. But all this authority and the glory of earth's kingdoms he whose it now was would give Him, if He would do homage for it.

The dragon has in this way, in the book of Revelation, the heads and horns of the last world-empire: he is the spirit of it, the "prince of this world" (Rev. xii. 3). Later, he is giving authority to the beast,—"the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority" (xiii. 2). His terms have been always similar, and the children of the fallen first man have been constantly repeating their father's forfeiture of his birthright freedom.

But the Second Man is now come, the Seed of the woman, who is to bruise the serpent's head; and the conflict is already begun in victory. The prince of this world finds nothing in Him who is here not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him. To such an one he can present no motive that has force. The strong man is bound.

3 (9-13): Messiah, and God's fulfilment.

3 And he led him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the [u] pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: for it is [v] written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee to guard thee, and, on their hands they shall bear thee up, lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone. And Jesus answered and said to him, It is said, [w] Thou shalt not tempt [the] Lord thy God. And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he [x] departed from him for a season.

[u] *cf.* Ps. 27. 4. *cf.* Mk. 11. 11. *cf.* Matt. 16. 1.
[v] Ps. 91. 11, 12. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 2.
[w] Deut. 6. 16. *cf.* Ps. 19. 13.
[x] *cf.* Matt. 16. 21-23. *cf.* Jno. 14. 30. *cf.* ch. 22. 53.

[3] The temptation by the word of God itself comes last therefore: it is all that remains. He cannot be seduced *from* it; can it be so presented as that He should be seduced *by* it? We have already looked at this in Matthew, and seen how it necessarily involved the perversion of the Word, and this by the impatience for the fulfilment of it which would take it out of God's hand instead of leaving Him to fulfil it in His own way. This impatience is only distrust, and to act upon it is to tempt the Lord our God. We are seeking an easier path than His, as if His wisdom had failed, or His power were insufficient for the difficulties of the way. Whereas to "wait on the Lord" is to "spring up with wings as eagles;" it is to "run and not be weary," and to "walk and not faint" (Isa. xl. 31).

The devil has now ended all the temptation, and departs, but only "for a season." He will return as "prince of this world" (John xiv. 30), with the men of this world behind him, to show the sad reality of that dominion over them which he has vaunted, and to gain an apparent victory which will be in the end his complete overthrow.

Div. 2.

The division of Mark and Luke is very similar. We shall find also that of John to correspond essentially. First, we have the Lord presented to us personally, in that character which the particular Gospel exhibits; then His work in active ministry among men; and finally the sacrificial work and its results. Here, as Man, and in the nearness implied by this, the former Gospels having shown us atonement in its full substitutionary character wrought out, as in the sin- and trespass-offering, we find in the second division the salvation so accomplished ministered to men in a way we could not have had before. Not that the fulness of what is in John is reached. The truths of new birth, eternal life, the gift of the Spirit, and other things, are lacking, as John (or the Lord in John's Gospel) shows them to us. There is an approach made to these; God and man meet together; the prodigal is in the Father's house; the fatted calf is on the table: things which have made some of old to suppose—with the known relationship of Luke to Paul—that it was this Gospel which Paul called his own (Rom. xvi. 25). This goes too far, but the doctrinal connection is yet evident. We shall have many opportunities of realizing this.

Subd. 1.

The sovereignty of grace in salvation is the very first thing presented here. God alone could have thought of it: from His heart alone it could have come. Even so, and with all the suitability there is in it to man's condition, it is naturally distasteful to him, for he believes in himself, and does not willingly own the truth of his condition. Hence God must act for Himself as is implied in new birth: for who was ever born of his own will? And Scripture directly negatives this as to spiritual birth (John i. 13).

But thus salvation being of God is effected from first to last in the power of God. How great a comfort for the soul convicted of its own evil, folly and feebleness? God "worketh in you the willing and the doing of His good pleasure" (Phil. ii. 13, *Gk.*). The work *in* us is secured by the same grace

DIVISION 2. (Chaps. iv. 14–xix. 27.)

Salvation.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chaps. iv. 14–vi. 49.)

In sovereign grace, and divine power.

1 (iv. 14-30): The foreshadow.
[1] (14-21): the Source of blessing.

1. [1] AND Jesus [y] returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee; and a [z] fame went out concerning him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. And he [a] came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and he entered, as his [b] custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read. And there was delivered to him the book of the prophet Esaias. And he opened the book, and found the place where it was [c] written: [d] The Spirit of [the] Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the [e] poor: he hath sent me* to proclaim [f] release to captives, and recovery of [g] sight to the blind, to set at [h] liberty those that are bruised, to proclaim the [i] acceptable year of [the] Lord. And when he had [j] rolled up the book, and delivered it again to the attendant, he sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened upon him. And he began to say unto them, To-day is this scripture [k] fulfilled in your ears.

* Many copies have "to heal the broken-hearted," as in Isaiah.

y ver. 1. Matt. 4. 12. Mk. 1. 14. *cf.* Jno. 4. 43.
z Matt. 4. 24.
a Matt. 13. 54-58. Mk. 6. 1-5.
b ver. 15. Mk. 1. 21. *cf.* Acts 13. 14, 15.
c Is. 61. 1-3.
d *cf.* ch. 3. 21, 22. *cf.* vers. 1. 14. Acts 10. 38.
e *cf.* Matt. 11. 5. *cf.* ch. 1. 53.
f *cf.* Is. 42. 6, 7. *cf.* Jno. 8. 32-36. *cf.* Rom. 8. 2.
g *cf.* Jno. 9. 1-3, 39. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 4, 6.
h *cf.* Ex. 21. 26. *cf.* ch. 13. 11-16.
i *cf.* Lev. 25. 9, 10. *cf.* Is. 63. 4. *cf.* Is. 61. 2 with Mi. 7. 18.
j *cf.* Rev. 4. 1-5. *cf.* Rev. 10. -17.
k *cf.* ch. 2. 10, 11.

that has accomplished the work *for* us, in the value of which we stand unchangeably. All is provided for equally, the covenant of promise being God's "I will" throughout.

1. [1] This part begins with a foreshadow at Nazareth of what is soon to be fulfilled in Israel's history. The Lord is seen in the place where He was brought up and according to His custom He enters the synagogue on the sabbath day. There He stands up to read, and the book of Isaiah being given Him, He opens at the sixty-first chapter, and applies the words of the Man anointed with the Spirit of Jehovah to Himself. It is clear how accordant with the character of Luke the quotation is. It is the "Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. ii. 5), whose voice is heard here; and it is as come up out of Jordan, where He has pledged Himself to a baptism to death far different, that the Spirit has come upon Him for His work. He declares here in the first words of His ministry, as Luke gives it to us, the purport of that anointing. The preaching of glad tidings to the poor comes first, and gives character to all the rest. When man is in the place of need he can receive the gospel. When he is consciously a sinner, captive to the sin which he cannot, when he will, renounce, the gospel brings him release. The blind receive their sight. Those bruised in fetters liberty.* It is in fact "the acceptable year of the Lord"; the jubilee of God; fuller and more blessed than the law ever proclaimed in Israel.

Now in His Person this had come to them. He was the source of all, the spring of grace and salvation. Where the prophet goes on to "the day of vengeance of our God," the Lord stops short in the middle of the sentence: grace

* This is not in chap. lxi., as the rest is, but inserted from chap. lviii. 6. It is there found in very different connection, and here is so similar to what we have had already, that it would arouse suspicion as to its being really part of the text; but the copies are in agreement.

2 (22-30): grace rejected will go out to others.

22 And all bare him witness, and wondered at the *l* gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this the son of *m* Joseph? 23 And he said unto them, Ye will surely say to me this parable, *n* Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard of as done at *o* Capernaum, do also here in thine own country. 24 And he said, Verily I say unto you that *p* no prophet is acceptable in his own country. 25 But of a truth I say unto you, Many widows were in Israel in the *q* days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, so that there came a great famine over all the land; 26 and unto none of them was Elias sent, save to Sarepta of *r* Sidonia, unto a woman that was a widow. 27 And many *s* lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.

l *cf.* Ps. 45. 2. *cf.* Jno. 7. 46.
m Jno. 6. 42, Jno. 7. 41, 52.
n *cf.* Rom. 2. 21, 22.
o *cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 8. *cf.* 2 Cor. 8. 1, etc.
p Jno. 4. 44. *cf.* Jno. 1. 11.
q 1 Ki. 17. 9, etc. 1 Ki. 18. 1.
r *cf.* Matt. 11. 21, 22. *cf.* Matt. 15. 21–28.
s 2 Ki. 5. 1, etc. *cf.* Matt. 8. 10.

had hastened to anticipate the judgment; although for those who refuse the one there will at last be the other. But judgment lingers with reluctant feet, while those of grace are winged with desire.

22 They heard and wondered: could not but own that these were gracious words. Would they receive them, then? That is a very different thing. *They* were not the poor, the captive, blind or fetter-bruised. They were wonderful words indeed of Joseph's son! How had He learned this wisdom? and how had He the boldness to take such a place as He was taking? After all, the question was of Him and not of them. Who was He? But they had heard of miracles wrought at Capernaum: let the physician heal himself; what they had heard of elsewhere let Him repeat in His own city, to which His wonders naturally belonged, and the fame of the prophet. For it had become a proverb that out of Galilee there arose none; and as to Nazareth it was a question, could any good be expected of it? Well, if He had such power, let Him exercise it there where there was need and the occasion called.

After all, with all the unbelief that might be in it, it seems natural to ask, why the Lord did not take this means of breaking down their unbelief; why, if He were doing miracles elsewhere, why not here?

But He, seeing more deeply, sees He is rejected. Even while they wonder at His gracious words, they have no need of them: and of what use were miracles, save to confirm that of which they had no need?

It was a case, too, coming under a rule which—so alike are men, so inveterate the evil in them—could be deemed invariable. "No prophet is acceptable in his own country." And this seems as if it were a comment upon their question, "Is not this the son of Joseph?" God acting in a son of Joseph! God speaking with so familiar a voice, and disguising Himself so in nature and common life! That seems impossible; self-contradictory even; startling too by bringing God so near; unwelcome, alas, in the same proportion.

But, however men judge of it, God will be as God, acting sovereignly as He pleases, while in goodness, because goodness is His nature, but not tied to show it according to any of the thoughts of men. What had their history shown as to this? In the awful times of Elijah, when for their sins famine swept through the land for three years and six months;—or in times succeeding, when Elisha was in Elijah's place;—who were they to whom it pleased God to show mercy? There were many widows in Israel, when Elijah was sent to the Sidonian widow! many lepers in Israel unhealed, when Naaman the Syrian was cleansed! Israel might in those days have said to Elijah, "Do these things in thine own country," while yet they had shown no desire after God, but had cast Him off; and now grace rejected might go out to others. There were the poor, the blind,

And all in the synagogue were filled with [f]wrath when they heard these things; and rising up they cast him out of the city, and led him as far as the brow of the hill on which their city was built, so that they might [u]throw him down headlong. But he, passing through the midst of them, [v]went his way.

2 (iv.31-44): Salvation from the enemy.

1 (31-37): "with authority and power."

2. [1] And he [w]went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee; and he was teaching them on the sabbaths; and they were [x]astonished at his teaching, for his word was with authority. And in the [y]synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, Let be! [z]what have we to do with thee, Jesus, Nazarene? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, [a]Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And the demon, having thrown him down in the midst, came out of him, and did him no hurt. And [b]amazement came upon all, and they spake one to another, saying, What a word is this! for with [c]authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out. And there went out a [d]rumor concerning him into all the region round about.

2 (38, 39): disease.

[2] And, rising up out of the synagogue, he entered into the [e]house of Simon. Now Simon's mother-in-law was holden with a [f]great fever; and they asked him for her. And, standing over her, he rebuked the fever, and it left her; and straightway she rose up and [g]ministered to them.

[f] cf. Acts 13. 45-50. cf. Acts 22. 21, 22.
[u] cf. Jno. 8. 37. cf. Jno. 15. 24, 25. cf. 1 Thess. 2. 15, 16.
[v] cf. Jno. 8. 59. cf. Jno. 10. 39. cf. Jno. 7. 30. cf. vers. 9-12.
[w] Matt. 4. 13. Mk. 1. 21. cf. Jno. 2. 12.
[x] Matt. 7. 28, 29. Matt. 13. 54.
[y] Mk. 1. 23-27.
[z] Matt. 8. 29. cf. Jas. 2. 19.
[a] Mk. 1. 34. Mk. 3. 11, 12. cf. Acts 16. 16-18.
[b] ch. 5. 26.
[c] Matt. 12. 29.
[d] vers. 14, 15. cf. Mk. 1. 45.
[e] Matt. 8. 14, 15. Mk. 1. 29-31.
[f] cf. Is. 1. 5.
[g] cf. ch. 8. 2, 3. cf. Gal. 1. 23.

the captives of sin elsewhere,—even among the Gentiles: men who had need of Him, if they had none; and who, finding that need met in Him, would realize in Him more than "the son of Joseph."

But the men of Nazareth are only roused into fury by such words. They seek to kill Him by hurling Him from the brow of the hill on which the city is built; but He passes through the midst of them and goes His way. How plain a foreshadow of the rejection that waited Him at the hands of the people, and of the way in which the death to which they destined Him availed nothing to hinder those purposes for which He stooped even to death also. And so grace went out to the Gentiles.

2. [1] We have had, then, Christ as the Source of blessing, and the character of the blessing which He is come to convey to men. But if blessing be thus prepared for him, the enemy in whose hand he is must be met and despoiled of his prey. This, therefore, is what we find next, the story which we have already had in Mark (i. 21–28), of the demoniac in the synagogue at Capernaum. Very significant it is that the demon is not here in the tombs or in the mountains, but parading his victim in the midst of the concourse of men, and even in the synagogue, as if he would make good his title to him in the presence of God Himself. But under the power of the Word, which is the sword of the Spirit to expose and vanquish him, he is made to realize the Holy One of God, and quails as before his destroyer. He is silenced and made to come out, with one last expression of impotent rage, which only manifests the more the power over him; and amazement seizes upon the multitude who behold it, and spread His fame throughout the region round about.

[2] He enters into Simon Peter's house and the devil's power meets Him in another form. The mother-in-law of Simon is ill with a great fever. He re-

4 (40-44): the manifestation.

40 And when the [h]sun was setting, all those that had any sick with divers diseases, brought them to him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them. And demons also went out of many, crying out and saying, Thou art the Son of God. And [i]rebuking them, he suffered them not to speak, for they knew that he was the Christ.

42 And [j]when it was day, he went out, and went into a desert place; and the multitudes sought after him, and came unto him, and would have [k]stayed him that he should not go from them. But he said unto them, I must preach the good tidings of the kingdom of God to the [l]other cities also: for therefore was I sent. And he was preaching in the [m]synagogues of Galilee.

5 (v. 1-26): Sanctification; and Christ the Sanctifier.

1 (1-11): conviction.

5 1 Now it [n]came to pass while the multitude pressed on him and were hearing the word of God, that he stood by the lake of Gennesaret: and he saw two ships standing by the lake; but the fishermen had come down from them and were washing their nets. And entering into one of the ships which was Simon's, he asked him to draw off a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the multitudes [o]out of the ship. And when he had finished speaking, he said unto Simon, Draw out now into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answered and said to him, Master, we have [p]toiled all the night and have taken nothing; but at [q]thy word I will let down the nets. And

h Matt.8.16, 17. Mk. 1. 32-34.

i ver. 35.

j Mk. 1. 35-39.

k *ctr.* ch. 8. 37.

l *cf.* Matt. 11. 1.

m *cf.* ver.16.

n Matt. 4.18-22. Mk. 1. 16-20.

o *cf.* Matt. 13. 1, 2. *cf.* Matt.5.1. *cf.* Mk. 11. 11.

p *cf.* Jno. 21. 3, etc.

q *cf.* Matt.8. 8. *cf.* Jno. 4.50-53.

bukes it, and it leaves her; and immediately she is restored and able to minister to them.

[2] And now the crowds gather, bringing those sick with all manner of diseases; and the power of God is manifest in healing all without exception. Nothing is too hard for Him. The earth is ready to put on again its paradisaic garb, and the devil to be banished out of it: so at least it well might seem.

There is love also equal to the power displayed. The people, well content to have such an one among them, would fain prevent His leaving them; but it is not enough for Him that seekers should find Him, He must be the Seeker, and seek everywhere the sheep that are astray from their Shepherd. All the cities of Israel must hear the Voice of Him that is come after them. The Kingdom of God must be everywhere proclaimed. That which men most coveted, the miracles of healing, were but the attendant signs of divine authority once more ready to be openly established over a willing-hearted people. Thus alone could there be healing indeed.

3. Naturally we are led on in this way to the inward deliverance, the spiritual healing by which sanctification to God is attained. This we shall find commonly conveyed to us, as so often in the Gospels, in terms of the outward miracle, the clearest and most concise way, no doubt, in which it could be done in these cases. Figures though they are, the Christian understanding can hardly fail to realize their significance.

[1] The first story here, though from its conclusion surely coincident with the call of the first disciples in the previous Gospels, is yet in the main part peculiar to Luke, as it is surely in fullest harmony with its character. It is the record of a soul brought into the presence of God; at once drawn and searched out by the light of it. There is nothing in the nature of the miracle itself that is in the least calculated to terrify or produce any emotion of fear whatever, but

when they had done this they enclosed a great multitude of fishes, and their nets were [r]breaking; and they beckoned to their partners in the other ship that they should come and help them. And they came and filled both the ships, so that they began to [s]sink. Now, when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, [t]Depart from me: for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was amazed, and all that were with him, at the draught of fishes which they had taken: and so were also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, [u]Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their ships to land, they [v]left all, and followed him.

2 (12-16): the leper: corruption of sin.

[2] And it came to pass, while he was in one of the cities, behold, [there was] a man full of [w]leprosy. And when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And he stretched forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou cleansed. And immedi-

r *cf.* vers.36-39. *cfr.* Jno.21. 11. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 16.

s *cf.* ver. 6.

t *cf.* Is. 6. 5. *cf.* Gen. 28. 16, 17.

u *cf.* Matt. 8. 26. *cf.* Acts 26. 16.

v *cf.* Matt. 19. 27. *cf.* Phil. 3. 8.

w Matt. 8. 2-4. Mk. 1. 40-45. Lev. chs. 13 and 14.

the contrary. They who have toiled all night and caught nothing, find now, upon casting their nets once more at the Lord's bidding, a multitude of fish which fill their own and their partners' vessels till they are ready to sink with the weight. When Simon sees it he is amazed; and falling down at Jesus' knees, he cries, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

It is the sense of the divine presence, revealed by the miracle, that has stricken through Simon Peter, and brought him to the consciousness of his condition. He cleaves to Him, even while he says, depart. Conscience and heart are at strife within him. But he does not flee: how should he flee from Him who is what he realizes Him to be—who has searched out the paths of the sea and his heart together? Nor does the Lord leave him in doubt as to the grace that can take up the sinful: "Fear not," He says to Simon; "from henceforth thou shalt catch men." The grace thus shown is not simply the reception of sinners. Christ thus known in the heart associates the redeemed with Himself in His message of mercy to men.

[2] In the two miracles following, the need that is to be ministered to is more fully exposed. The leper and the paralytic show us the corruption and impotence produced by sin; the former being the well-known type of sin in the Old Testament, in its subtle invasion, its certain spread, its contagion, its breaking up of human relations, its banishment from God (Lev. xiii.) Man was powerless in the presence of this malignant scourge. The mere touch of one who had it was defilement. Every leper was known, and had to make himself known to all around him, that none might come in contact with him. Moreover the removal of it was one of the signs by which was proclaimed the God-sent deliverer of Israel from the oppression of the Egyptians.

Nowhere then could there be found a more suitable means for the manifestation of His power than in cleansing the leper; and here was one in that awful state of isolation, "a man full of leprosy." This is Luke's description, going beyond the former Gospels: it was not in mere incipiency, but revealing itself in all its terrible reality. But "when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and besought Him, saying, Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean."

A sorrowful case when one who confesses the power of Jesus to heal him, can doubt His will; and yet, in the case of sin how common! But the Lord would have none question. He does not merely speak, He goes further, and with a touch at once breaks through the barrier of law, and removes that which the

ately the leprosy departed from him. And he [x]charged him to tell no one: but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing as Moses commanded, for a testimony to them. But so much the more went there abroad the word concerning him; and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed of their infirmities. But he [y]withdrew himself in the deserts and prayed.

3 (17-26): the paralytic: strength renewed, and divine glory manifested.

[3] And it came to pass in one of those days that he was teaching, and there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, who were come out of every village of Galilee and Judea, and from Jerusalem; and power of [the] Lord was there to heal them. And lo, men [z]bringing upon a couch a man who was paralyzed; and they sought to bring him in, and put him before him. And not finding what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went up upon the housetop, and [a]let him down through the tiles with his pallet into the midst before Jesus. And seeing their faith, he said, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee. And the scribes and Pharisees began to reason, saying, [b]Who is this that speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone? But Jesus, knowing their reasonings, answered and said unto them, Why reason ye in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk? But that ye may [c]know that the Son of man hath authority upon earth to forgive sins (he said to the paralyzed man), I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy pallet, and go to thy house. And straightway he rose up before them, took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his house, [d]glorifying God. And amazement took hold upon all, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen [e]strange things to-day.

x *cf.* ch. 8. 56.

y Matt. 14. 23. Mk. 6. 46. ch. 11. 1.

z Matt. 9. 2-8. Mk. 2. 3-12.

a *cf.* ch. 18. 39.

b *cf.* ch. 7. 49.

c *cf.* Acts 2. 22. *cf.* Mk. 16. 17.

d *cf.* Acts 3. 8. *cf.* ch. 17. 15, 16.

e Mk. 7. 37.

law could only brand, not remedy. "I will: be thou cleansed." And immediately the leprosy has departed from him. Now the very priest of the law must pronounce him clean, and Jesus sends the healed man to him for that purpose.

Leprosy speaks of the out-break of the flesh,—the nature of the unrenewed man; but which remains in the renewed man also, and may, alas, break out of him. This last is, in fact, what the type in Leviticus directly speaks of, while leprosy in itself may speak of either. Christ is, in either case, the only and all-sufficient remedy. In John xiii. He takes our feet into His blessed hands to cleanse them from all the defilements of the way, and this is the touch of Jesus for the Christian. For the sinner also there is the touch of the Samaritan-Saviour, come where he is; of which Luke will tell us much at another time: a story which unites in some sense the leper with the paralytic in him who fell among the thieves. The aspects vary of that which is fundamentally the same: the meeting of divine power and love with human need and guilt. The experience of how many can interpret and apply a history like this.

[3] We pass on to the paralytic, in whom the impotence produced by sin is clearly shown us. The Lord, therefore, first assures him of forgiveness—"Thy sins are forgiven thee," and makes the power to "rise and walk" the token to others of the reality of what he has received. And this is the spiritual order.

4 (v. 27-vi. 11): The change involved.

1 (v. 27-32): the call of Levi.

4. [1] And after these things he went forth and saw a [f]tax-gatherer, Levi by name, sitting at the tax-office, and said unto him, Follow me. And he left all, rose up, and followed him. And Levi made a great [g]entertainment* for him at his house; and there was a great multitude of tax-gatherers and others who sat down with them. And the Pharisees and their scribes murmured at his disciples, saying, Why do ye [h]eat and drink with tax-gatherers and sinners? And Jesus answered and said unto them, They that are [i]whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. I am not come to call the righteous but [j]sinners to repentance.

2 (33-39): the old and the new.

[2] And they said unto him, The† disciples of John [k]fast often and make supplications, and likewise those of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink. But Jesus said unto them, Can ye make the sons of the bride-chamber fast, while the [l]bridegroom is with them? but days will come when the bridegroom shall be [m]taken away from them: then shall they fast in those days.

f Matt. 9. 9. Mk. 2. 14. *cf.* Gal. 1. 15. *cfr.* Matt. 22. 5.

g Matt. 9. 10-13. Mk. 2. 15-17.

h *cf.* ch. 15. 1, 2. *cf.* ch. 7. 34.

i *cf.* John 9. 41. *cf.* ch. 18. 9-14.

j 1 Tim. 1. 15.

k Matt. 9. 14-17. Mk. 2. 18-22. *cf.* ch. 7. 33.

l *cf.* John 3. 29. *cf.* Song 7. 10. *cf.* Ps. 45. 9, etc.

m *cf.* Jno. 16. 6, 20 *cf.* John 20. 11-15.

* Literally "reception." † Many read, "Why do."

Both this and the previous miracle we have had in the first two Gospels, and in Mark, as here, together. In Matthew they are separated, but with as distinct a purpose as to each. The divine glory of Christ in all this part is fully manifest.

4. We have now what with little variation is common to the three Synoptists, the dispensational change which this open display of divine grace involves. Matthew indeed puts an interval between that which takes place at Levi's house and the contention as to the Sabbath; while Mark and Luke present them in connection. The *call* of Matthew (or Levi) seems also historically to have been some time before the feast made by him. Each evangelist uses his material according to his purpose, rather than in mere chronological order. The connection between the Sabbath question and the displacement of the legal ritual which was impending is evident, and so it is that they are brought together here.

[1] The call of Levi to the apostleship must have been startling to a Jew. The tax-gatherer was hated as the symbol of foreign dominion, hated for his often unscrupulous exactions, and hated more than all if (as was here the case) it was a Jew who lent himself to what was considered the oppression of his own people. But "tax-gatherers and sinners," thus associated in the language of the multitude, followed the Baptist, while Pharisees and Sadducees turned away from him; and so was it now in the Lord's case. Levi follows Him with unhesitating promptitude, leaving all he had. And the feast that he makes Him is furnished with guests which show how fully he has entered into his Master's mind.

But the scribes and Pharisees as naturally murmur: why eat and drink, they ask, with such as these? The Lord's answer is as simple as can be, and as sufficient. He is a physician looking for the sick; and not, therefore, as disregarding the need men had of repentance, but to bring them to it. It is the goodness of God known that brings men to it.

[2] Then they raise a question about fasting. John's disciples fasted; as, with the message that he brought the people, well was there need. The Pharisees too had not been wrong in this, if only they had penetrated the true meaning of the law, which John had but emphasized. The voice in the wilderness had

And he spake also a parable to them: No one putteth a piece of a [n]new garment upon an old garment: otherwise he will both rend the new, and the piece which is from the new will not [o]agree with the old. And no one putteth [p]new wine into old skins: otherwise the new wine will burst the skins, and the wine be poured out and the skins destroyed; but new wine is to be put into [q]new skins, and both are preserved. And no one having drunk [r]old wine [immediately]* desireth new: for he saith, The old is good.†

[3] *a* And it came to pass on the [second-first]‡ sabbath that he went through [s]corn-fields; and his disciples were plucking the ears and eating, rubbing them in their hands. And some of the Pharisees said: Why do ye that which is not [t]lawful upon the Sabbath-day? And Jesus answering said to them: Have ye never read this, what [u]David did when he was hungry,—himself, and those who were with him? how he went into the house of God, and took and ate the show-bread, and gave also to those that were with him, which it is not [v]lawful to eat, save for the priests alone? And he said unto them, The Son of man is [w]Lord also of the sabbath.

3 (vi.1-11): sabbath sanctification.
a (1-5): the Lord of the sabbath.

n *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 17. *cf.* Gal. 2. 20, 21. *cf.* Eph. 4. 22-24.
o *cf.* Rom. 11. 6.
p *cf.* Ruth 4. 6.
q *cf.* Rom. 14. 17. *cf.* Col. 1. 29.
r *cf.* Jno. 3. 6. *cf.* Gal. 6. 15.
s *cf.* Heb. 8. 13. *cf.* Heb. 9. 9, 10.
t Matt. 12. 1-9. Mk. 2. 23-28. Deut. 23. 25.
u *cf.* ch. 14. 1-6. *cf.* Jno. 5. 9, 10.
v 1 Sam. 21. 1-6.
w *cf.* Lev. 24. 5-9.
x *cf.* ch. 5. 24. *cf.* Jno. 5. 17, 18.

* Some omit. † Some have "better."
‡ Many omit "second-first," and the meaning is disputed. The term is not found elsewhere, either in Scripture or amongst Jewish writers.

announced however the coming of One who would be the Bridegroom of His people (John iii. 29): how unsuitable would be the voice of mourning then!

But of this the dead ritualism of the Pharisee knew nothing. Fasting was meritorious in itself according to their thought, and Christ in the truth of what He was had no place in them. Thus Israel's Bridegroom, already in their midst, would, as rejected, be taken from them; and then indeed would the sons of the bride-chamber fast.*

But there was another thing, for the old covenant points beyond itself, and that which was peculiar to it was therefore destined to pass away and be replaced by the new. So opposite were these that the two could not agree. The garment of human righteousness according to the law, however incompetent it might be, could not be patched with the "righteousness which is of God through faith" (Phil. iii. 9). The old wine-skins of the Jewish institutions could not confine the free expansive spirit of the new covenant which was already showing itself. But the opposition to it showed also that with man naturally the law was more to his taste: he who was still drinking of the old wine would not immediately desire the new.

[3] The two incidents which raise the question of the Sabbath are given in almost precisely the same way in the three Gospels. In Matthew they are in different connections from those in which they are found in Mark and Luke; but in all their purport is the same: Christ the Lord of the Sabbath being rejected, they can claim no Sabbath; just as when, David the anointed king of Israel being a fugitive from the wrath of Saul, the show-bread became common food. Alas, Israel in a little while would keep their Sabbath with the Lord of it, crucified at their hands, lying in His guarded grave!

And at all times had mere ritualism lost the spirit of the law while retaining

* There is no thought of Christianity proper, or the Church, in all this. The Church is the *heavenly* bride, but of this the Baptist had no knowledge: nor did it form part of the Lord's teaching in the Gospels, but remained for the Spirit to bring out after His coming (John xvi. 12, 13). The Lord's words and those of the Baptist are in the line of Old Testament thought.

b (6-11: to save or destroy.

b And it came to pass on [x]another sabbath that he entered into the synagogue and taught. And there was a man there, and his right hand was [y]withered And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath-day: that they might find wherewith to [z]accuse him. But he [a]knew their thoughts, and said to the man who had the withered hand, Rise and stand in the midst: and he rose and stood. And Jesus said unto them, I ask you if it is lawful on the sabbath to do good or to do evil? to save life or destroy it. And having looked round upon them all, he said unto him, [b]Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so; and his hand was restored. But they were filled with madness,* and [c]spake to one another what they might do to Jesus.

5 (vi.12-49): Responsibilities and rewards of those that are with Him.

1 (12-19): Christ the source of authority and centre of power.

5. [1] And it came to pass in those days that he went out into the mountain to [d]pray; and he continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he [e]called his disciples to him. And of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles: Simon, whom he also named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James, and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, James [the son] of Alphæus, and Simon who was called [the] Zealot, and Judas [the brother] of James, and Judas Iscariot who became the traitor. And

x Matt. 12.9-13. Mk. 3. 1-5. *cf.* ch. 13.11-17.
y *cf.* Rom. 8. 3. *cf.* Ezek. 37. 11.
z *cf.* ch. 20. 20.
a *cf.* Jno. 2. 25. *cf.* Jno. 6. 64.
b *cf.* Jno. 4. 50. *cf.* Jno. 9. 6, 7.
c *cf.* Jno. 5. 18. *cf.* Jno. 15. 22-25.
d ch. 5. 16. Matt. 14. 23.
e Matt. 10. 1-4. Mk. 3. 13-19. *cf.* Jno. 1. 40-51. *cf.* Acts 1. 12.

* Literally, "unreasoning fury."

the form of it. The love to man which the seventh day rest breathed had passed into a rigid exaction which rather slew than saved. In the story of the withered hand this is fully manifest, and in the miracle which is wrought, the Lord brings in the power of God to bear witness against it. But the Pharisees and scribes are only the more roused to madness, and commune one with another what they might do to Jesus.

5. Thus He is more distinctly than before rejected of Israel in the persons of their leaders, and takes His place as such. In answer to their attitude He gathers His disciples round Him, and chooses from them twelve as His "apostles," or "sent ones," to be the witnesses and heralds of the new Kingdom coming in. In their presence and that of a great multitude as well of His disciples as of those from all the country round about attracted by His power and grace, He declares the blessedness, responsibilities, and recompence of those that cleave to Him, the heirs of the Kingdom. They are in a scene characterized by His rejection, and sufferers for His sake, only thus the more blessed, not the less. The end would declare it.

What we have here is, no doubt, "the sermon on the mount," but with abridgment as well as additions, according to Luke's purpose. The remnant character of those that are with Him is very strongly emphasized.

[1] Christ is here the source of authority and the centre of power. As He had already told the people of Nazareth, grace will not be stopped in its outflow by the opposition of men. "The Man Christ Jesus," Himself the expression of eternal counsels, in the sweet dependence of perfect humanity, and the perfect intimacy of the Son with the Father, goes up to God upon the mountain, and continues there all night in prayer to God. It is the anticipation of the place He has now taken, and all that follows is the fruit of that intercession. But thus the wisdom of God which is in it appears in the form of human weakness. He names the twelve, and among them is a traitor. The rest are fishermen and

he descended with them, and stood on a level place, and a great multitude of his disciples, and a [f]great number of people from all Judea, and Jerusalem, and the sea-coast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases; and those that were beset with unclean spirits were healed. And all the multitude sought to [g]touch him: for power came forth from him and healed them all.

2 (20-26): the separation of His disciples, and contrast in blessing or woe.

[2] And he, lifting up his eyes upon his disciples, said, [h]Blessed are ye [i]poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that [j]hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that [k]weep now: for ye shall laugh. Blessed are ye when men shall [l]hate you, and when they shall separate you from them, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil for the Son of man's sake. [m]Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy: for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for in the same manner did their fathers to the [n]prophets. But [o]woe unto you that are rich: for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are [p]filled: for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that [q]laugh now: for ye shall mourn and weep. Woe unto you when all men shall [r]speak well of you: for in the [s]same manner did their fathers unto the false prophets.

3 (27-31): the return of good for evil.

[3] But I say unto you that hear, [t]Love your enemies; do good to those that hate you; [u]bless those that curse you; [v]pray for those that despitefully use you. To

[f] Matt. 4.25. Mk. 3. 7, 8.
[g] Matt. 14. 36. Mk. 5. 28-30.
[h] Matt. 5.1-12.
[i] Matt. 11.5.
[j] ch. 1. 53.
[k] *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 6, 7.
[l] Jno. 16.1-3.
[m] *cf.* Acts 5. 41.
[n] *cf.* Acts 7. 52.
[o] *cf.* Jas. 5.1. *cf.* 1 Tim. 5. 9.
[p] *cf.* ch. 12.15-21.
[q] *cf.* Prov. 1. 24-28.
[r] *cf.* Jno. 15. 18.
[s] *cf.* 1 Ki. 22. 6-8.
[t] ver. 35. Matt. 5. 43, 44. Rom. 12. 20.
[u] Rom. 12. 14. *cf.* 1 Cor. 4. 12.
[v] *cf.* ch. 23. 34, 35. *cf.* Acts 7. 60.

what not; not a sign among them of what naturally we should take for power; and the three most prominent, frequently made so, as it would seem, by their lack of apprehension of His mind and fellowship with Him. We see plainly that without Him they can do nothing. He is all of wisdom to them, all of power. They, like the crowd that swarm to Him from the regions round, are joined to Him by their absolute need of Him, their entire dependence on Him. A Judas even must serve Him. How we see the Christianity that is to spring out of this! *The whole of Christianity is Christ:* "Christ is all and in all" (Col. iii. 11).

[2] We see this strikingly in what follows here, in which His disciples are separated from all the world about them by this fact, that they are His. The world is in opposition to Him and to His. It hates them, separates them from it, casts out their name as evil for the Son of man's sake. Thus for them it has nothing. They are the "poor," the hungry, the weepers, the afflicted in it. Yet well may they rejoice: for their reward is great in heaven; on earth they but continue the line of the prophets rejected by the world from of old.

On the other hand, and for the same reason, those who are satisfied with it, and the world with them, have their part in the woes that are coming on the world. And He cannot leave this to inference, for He is the Saviour of sinners and His heart goes after them: in its very denunciations grace overflows. But this changes nothing as to the final end: rather does it assure us how fixed and unalterable that end must be.

[3] But the Lord goes on to speak of what the conduct of His disciples is to be in the midst of a world in opposition to them. To those whose ears are open to His words He says, "Love your enemies; do good to those that hate you; bless those that curse you; pray for those that despitefully use you." This rule of returning good for evil is that which He has so bountifully illustrated in His own person, and of which the Cross is the supreme example. The precept of

him that [w]smiteth thee upon the cheek, offer also the other; and to him that [x]taketh away thy cloak forbid not thy coat also. [y]Give to every one that asketh thee; and from him that taketh away thy goods ask them not back. And [z]as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

4 (32-35): tested by the way of the world.

[4] And [a]if ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to those that do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do the same. And if ye lend to those of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? even sinners lend to sinners to receive again as much. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing back; * and your [b]reward shall be great, and ye shall be the sons of the Most High: for he is kind to the unthankful and the evil.

5 (36-38): under the Father's government.

[5] Be [c]merciful, as your Father is merciful; and [d]judge not, and ye shall not be judged; and condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned; [e]release, and ye shall be released; [f]give, and it shall be given unto you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom. For [g]with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again.

6 (39-45): the overcoming of evil.

[6] He spake unto them also a parable: Can the [h]blind lead the blind? will they not both fall into the ditch?

w Matt. 5. 39. *cf.* Is. 50. 6. *cfr.* Acts 23. 2, 3.
x *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 7, 8. Matt. 5. 40.
y *cf.* Deut. 15. 7-10. *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 17. *cf.* Gal. 6. 9. Matt. 5. 42.
z Matt. 7. 12. *cf.* Gal. 5. 14. *cf.* Rom. 13. 8-10.
a Matt. 5. 46, 47.
b Matt. 5. 45. *cf.* Matt. 6. 4. *cf.* ch. 14. 14. *cf.* Matt. 25. 34, 35.
c *cf.* Matt. 5. 48. *cf.* Eph. 5. 1, 2. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 15, 16.
d Matt. 7. 1, 2. *cf.* Rom. 14. 10-13. *cf.* Jas. 4. 11. *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 12, 13.
e *cf.* Matt. 6. 14, 15. *cf.* Matt. 18. 23-35.
f Prov. 28. 27.

* Some render, "despairing of none." But the text is clearly right. *cf.* Gal. 6. 7-10; *cf.* Eccl. 11. 1, 2.

g Mk. 4. 24; Jas. 2. 13; *cf.* Rev. 18. 6.

h Matt. 15. 14; *cf.* Is. 9. 16; *cf.* Matt. 23. 24; *cf.* Mal. 2. 7, 8.

non-resistance which follows it we have already remarked upon in going through Matthew. The bountiful spirit which becomes those who owe their all to the free gift of God is enforced in the words, "Give to every one that asketh thee," —words which surely require the wisdom inspired by divine love to guide in their application. This part closes with the general principle that "as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."

4 The way of the world is put in contrast with this, the world being quite capable of returning love for love, of doing good to those who do good to them, of lending with the hope of getting back as much. But to love and do good and lend without hope of return: this would be conduct suited to the sons of the Most High; because He is kind to the unthankful and the evil.

5 Thus we are to be imitators of God as dear children, and under a Father's holy government also, according to which the measure meted will be measured out; and this as what both suits the nature of God, and the truest interests of His people also. It is evident, therefore, that rewards are not intended to be denied, nor yet disregarded: for that which God gives it cannot but be of God that it should have place in our thoughts and in our hearts. Seeing what we are, this needs and receives careful guarding. We find it so again and again:—*guarded*, but maintained in this very way (Matt. xix. 27–30, xx. 20–28, *notes*). He gains who for Christ's sake loses; but not for *gain's* sake.

6 The "blind" are primarily, no doubt, the Jewish leaders; but the follower will not escape the ditch by being simply a follower: for the truth speaks for itself to him who has ears to hear. He who gives himself up to another's leadership absolutely, has his conscience not before God, but before man; and even the Lord bases His title to be heard upon the truth of what He spoke: "*If I say the truth*, why do ye not believe Me?" (John viii. 46.) That to

The [t]disciple is not above the teacher, but every one that is perfected shall be as his teacher. But [j]why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, and considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? [k]How canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me cast out the mote out of thine eye, and beholdest not the beam that is in thine eye? Hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote that is in thy brother's eye. For there is [l]no good tree which bringeth forth corrupt fruit, nor again a corrupt tree bringing forth good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit: for of thorns they do not gather figs, nor gather in grapes from a bramble. The [m]good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and the evil one out of that which is evil bringeth forth evil: for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

7 (46–49): the complete disciple.

[7] But [n]why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? [o]Every one that cometh to me and heareth my words and doeth them, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who digged and went [p]deep, and laid a foundation upon the [q]rock; and when a [r]flood came, the stream brake against that house, and was [s]not able to shake it, because it had been built upon the rock.* But he that heareth and doeth not is like a man who [t]without a foundation buildeth a house upon the earth; against which the stream brake, and immediately it fell in, and the ruin of that house was [u]great.

* Many read only "well builded."

t (Matt.10.24. Jno. 15. 20. *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 14.
j Matt. 7. 3. *cf.* Gal. 6.1.
k *cf.* 2 Cor. 10. 6. *cf.* Rom. 2. 21-23.
l Matt. 7.17, 18. Matt.12.33
m Matt. 12. 34, 35. *cf.* Prov. 4. 23. *cf.* Gal.5.19 -23.
n Matt.7. 21 -23. *cf.*ch.13.25. *cfr.* 1 Cor. 12. 3.
o Matt. 7.24 -27.
p *cf.* Matt. 13. 5.
q *cf.* 1 Cor.3. 11.
r Ps. 32. 6.
s *cf.* John 5. 24. *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 17. *cf.* Rom. 8. 33, 34.
t *cf.*Is.28.14-17. *cfr.* Prov. 10. 25.
u *cf.*Prov.1. 24-27. *cf.* Heb. 10. 28, 29.

which a man yields himself necessarily moulds him. If then he surrenders himself to the teacher of error, he will not be above his teacher, but, if he is perfect, be only like him.

On the other hand, if evil be detected in another's eye—in his way of regarding things (and here the teacher of error seems still primarily pointed at)—one must take care that there be no lack of self-judgment as to one's own. Evil must first be judged within before it can be judged outside; and this will give tenderness and compassion, as well as clear sightedness. Judging without self-judgment is but hypocrisy.

And this self-judgment is always of the "beam" as compared with the "mote" in others. For what can we know of others compared with what we may and should know of ourselves? And then the evil fruit we find is but the sign of an evil tree: thorns grow no figs, nor brambles grapes. Thus true self-judgment sets aside self altogether. We do not judge to establish our own righteousness, nor as rejoicing in the evil, but as rejoicing with the good: we learn to "take forth the precious from the vile," because the good *is* "precious."

[7] Useless indeed is the profession of the lips,—the saying, "Lord, Lord,"—except the life confirm it. Not that the best life will justify before God, or save in the day when all that can be will be shaken. But it is evidence, nevertheless, that Christ is the foundation of the soul,—of a house built secure against all the storms that can assail it. Faith in Christ must, of course, be real; but the more real the faith in other things, the more complete is the delusion, the surer and more fatal the ruin that awaits one. "The ruin of that house is great."

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chaps. vii.–viii. 21.)

The Word as the Ministry of Salvation.

P (vii. 1-17): "Living and powerful."
1 (1-10): supreme over all power.

1. [1] WHEN he had [v]completed all his sayings in the hearing of the people, he entered into Capernaum. And a certain [w]centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick and at the point of death. And when he heard of Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him that he would come and heal his servant. And they, when they had come to Jesus, besought him earnestly, saying, He is [x]worthy to whom thou shouldest grant this: for he loveth our nation, and himself hath builded the synagogue for us. And Jesus went with them; but when he was already not far from the house, the centurion sent [y]friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself; for I am not fit that thou shouldest enter under my roof; wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee, but say in a word and my servant shall be healed. For I am also

[v] Matt. 8. 1.
[w] Matt. 8. 5-13.
[x] *cfr.* ver. 7. *cf.* ch. 13. 14.
[y] *cf.* ver. 3.

SUBD. 2.

We have now the Word as that by which the ministry of salvation is effected; the language being still often, as that of the synoptic Gospels so much is, symbolic, and the healing of the body illustrative of that deeper spiritual healing which it is so well qualified to picture to us, and which is so in the mind of the Spirit to keep before us. This fuller blessing, without which there is none, comes moreover continually into more open view, and its features are revealed with growing fulness.

1. The two narratives with which this part opens show us in the most striking way the power of the divine Word as Christ utters it. The first is the story of the centurion in whom the Lord finds greater faith than He had found in Israel: a faith which owns the Lord's supremacy, whether present or absent, over all the powers of nature which are obedient to His will. The second is that of the raising of the widow's son at Nain, which shows that giving way to His word which is the stamp upon the fallen creature; the removal of which is the significant pledge of power come in able to deliver from the condition itself of which it is the stamp. Here then, is indeed a "word living and powerful," as the epistle to the Hebrews calls it (chap. iv. 12), and ready as well as competent to meet man's need.

[1] Matthew gives us the healing of the centurion's servant, but in another connection, and with certain differences, which have occasioned question. For Luke represents not only the elders of the Jews as first sent with prayer that Jesus would come and heal the sick man, but that, while He is upon the road, the friends of the centurion are sent with a second message, which excuses his not coming in person by his felt unworthiness. In Matthew we are told the centurion came; but his words are to the same effect as those of his friends in Luke. It seems, therefore, that the account in the former is to be explained by the latter: the Gentile Gospel taking care to show fully the humble place that the Gentile took, both in making use of the Jewish elders, and in not actually coming to the Lord Himself. The faith at which the Lord wonders is related in both; while the Jewish writer it is who gives, and in fullest accord with the dispensational character of his book, the warning to the Jews of the rejection of children of the Kingdom, while those of the nations should come in from every quarter to partake in its blessings with the patriarchs of Israel.

The Roman soldier sees everywhere in the world the law and order which Rome so emphasized. But he sees it to draw an argument from it for the abso-

a man set under [z]authority, having under me soldiers, and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh, and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. Now when Jesus heard these things he wondered at him, and turning to the multitude following him, said, I say unto you, that not even in [a]Israel have I found faith so great. And they that had been sent, returning to the house, found the servant [b]whole that had been sick.*

2 (11-17): death subject to it.

2 And it came to pass afterwards† he went into a city called [c]Nain; and his disciples went with him, and a great multitude. Now, as he drew near to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a [d]widow; and quite a multitude of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her he had compassion on her, and said unto her, [e]Weep not. And coming up to it, he touched the bier; and the bearers stood still; and he said, Young man, I say to thee, Arise. And the [f]dead sat up and began to speak; and he gave him to his mother. And fear took hold on all, and they [g]glorified God, saying, A great prophet is risen up among us, and God hath [h]visited his people. And this word went forth concerning him in all Judea, and in all the region round about.

z *cf.* ch. 5. 24.

a *cf.* Matt. 15. 27, 28.

b *cf.* Jno. 4. 50-53. *cf.* Ps. 107. 20. *cf.* Jer. 23. 23.

c *cf.* Ruth 1. 20. *cf.* 2 Ki. 2. 19. *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 16, 17.

d *cf.* 2 Ki. 4. 1. *cf.* Lam. 1. 1.

e *cf.* ch. 8. 52. *cf.* Jno. 11. 35.

f *cf.* Matt. 11. 5. *cf.* Jno. 11. 43, 44.

g *cf.* ch. 8. 54, 55.

h ch. 1. 68. *cf.* Jer. 29. 10.

* Many omit this last clause. † Many read "on the next day."

lute authority of Him whom his faith owns as having supreme power over all the powers of nature. He himself, only a man under authority, could speak and be obeyed; it needed not, then, the presence of Jesus—He needed not to put His own hand to the work, when all things served Him. We have only to compare the wonder of His disciples when He calmed the the sea of Galilee, to realize how indeed the faith of the Gentile surpassed that of the Lord's nearest and chosen followers.

2 The story of Nain is found in Luke only. Nain means "pleasant," what the world was as God made it; what it is still naturally to the natural man. But at the gate of it, carried out, is a dead man, death being still the way out of the world, as it is the shadow over it. The widowed mother, whose only son he is, and the sympathetic crowd that follows, show in how many ways death affects the survivors. The consequences of it, which lie in another world, are not introduced into this picture, but man's conscience will not allow him to forget them: "the sting of death is sin," which threatens the soul with judgment.

Thus the pleasant world is become the "valley of death-shade," and as such Christ has come to it in His infinite compassion, as He comes here to Nain. To the sorrowing mother He says, "Weep not," and His is no fruitless sympathy. He *touches the bier*, as touch it Himself He must, by His death to give His word power over it. Then the word is spoken which abolishes it, and the dead man rises. He "sat up and began to speak; and He gave him to his mother."

Here, then, is man's need fully met, the judgment which is upon him, all that sin and death imply, has found a remedy. The people fear, and glorify God; and the word goes out throughout all Judea that a great prophet is risen up, and God hath visited His people: a testimony true indeed, but quite below the wondrous truth as to His Person who was there.

2 (vii. 18–35): The twofold testimony of God, demanding faith on man's part.
1 (18–23): the sufficiency of witness to Christ.

2. [1] And the disciples of John brought him word of all these things; and calling two of his disciples, John [t]sent them to the Lord,* saying, Art thou the one that is coming, or wait we for another? And when the men came to him, they said, John the Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou the one that is coming, or wait we for another? In that hour he healed many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits; and to many that were blind he gave sight. And he answered and said to them, Go and bring John word what ye have seen and heard. The [j]blind recover sight; the [k]lame walk; the [l]lepers are cleansed; the [m]deaf hear; the [n]dead are raised up; the [o]poor have good news preached to them;† and [p]blessed is he who shall not be stumbled by me.

2 (24–35): His testimony to John and the rejection of both John and Himself, except by a remnant.

[2] And when the messengers of John had departed, he began to say unto the multitudes concerning John: [q]What went ye out into the wilderness to behold? a [r]reed shaken by the wind? But what went ye out to

t Matt.11.2-6.
j *cf.* ch.4.18, 19. *cf.* Matt. 9. 27-31.
k *cf.* Matt. 15. 31.
l ch.5.12-14.
m Mk. 7.32-37.
n vers.14,15.
o *cf.* ch. 14. 12-24.
p *cf.* Matt. 16. 17. *cf.*1Pet.2.8.
q Matt. 11.7-11.
r *cf.* Eph. 4. 14. *cf.*Jas.1.6,7.

* One ancient MSS. reads "Jesus." † Literally, "are evangelized."

2. The twofold testimony of God which man needs and which God has provided is now shown us in John and the Lord: John the preacher of repentance, the witness to man's condition, the summing up of the Old Testament controversy with man, while pointing forward, as the Old Testament did, to Him who was to come; Christ the Bringer of salvation, the New Testament Voice, the Manifester of God to men, and who opens the way to God for men.

Repentance and faith are the double answer to this double testimony, though neither of these can exist without the other. They are the backward and forward glances of the soul, and which are at the same time its downward and upward ones. Or, conversion being the "turning round" of man, repentance is the back turned upon self, as faith is the face turned toward God in Christ. Repentance is as inseparable, therefore, from faith, as faith is from repentance.

The testimony of John and of Christ come in, then, in this place with perfect naturalness; and in the contrast between them their accord is manifest. In both, divine wisdom will be justified by her children, and the refusal of the one will be seen, as in Israel's case, to be the refusal of the other.

[1] But first we have to see the Baptist in his prison perplexed with doubt, as to which he sends two of his disciples to Christ, that He may satisfy it. "Art Thou the One that is coming?" is his question, "or wait we for another?" Honest doubt never stays away from Christ, but comes to Him for solution. The Lord points him to the works which at that very time He was doing, the power of God being manifested in various goodness, while the gospel-tidings were being given to the poor. Not wonders alone were evidence, but wonders that were "*signs*"—significant of the nature and power of Him from whom they proceeded. While all the time the sweet gospel invitation addressed itself to the needy, most Godlike in coming lowest down.

The Lord adds one gentle word for the conscience of His fore-runner: "And blessed is he who shall not be stumbled by Me." (See pp. 122, 123, *notes.*)

[2] The messengers departed with this, and now, when John may seem to have failed entirely in his witness, the Lord bears witness to him. Be it that he had failed, was it in vain that crowds had gone out into the wilderness after him? Was he then but a reed shaken with the wind? Was he a courtier of men, clothed in soft raiment? did they look for such in the wilderness, rather than in the courts of kings? Certainly, his whole life proved him far other than these.

see? a man clothed in [s]soft raiment? behold, they that are in splendid apparel, and live luxuriously are in kings' courts. But what went ye out to see? a prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and [t]more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written, [u]Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee. For I say unto you, Among those born of woman there is none greater than John; but he who is [v]less in the kingdom of God is greater than he. (And all the people who heard, and the tax-gatherers, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John; but the [w]Pharisees and lawyers rejected for themselves the counsel of God, having not been baptized of him.) To what, then, shall I [x]liken the men of this generation, and to what are they like? They are like children sitting in the market-place, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned, and ye have not wept. For John the Baptist came [y]neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and ye say, He hath a demon. The Son of man is come [z]eating and drinking, and ye say, Behold, a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, a friend of tax-gatherers and sinners! And wisdom is [a]justified by all her children.

s Matt. 3. 4. cf. 2 Ki. 1. 8. cf. ch. 16. 19.

t cf. Jno. 1. 21, ctr. Jno. 1. 27.

u Mal. 3. 1.

v cf. Matt. 13. 17. cf. Eph. 3. 5.

w cf. Matt. 21. 23-27. cf. Matt. 23. 13, etc.

x Matt. 11. 16-19.

y ch. 1. 15.

z cf. ver. 36. cf. ch. 15. 1, 2.

a cf. 1 Cor. 1. 21-24.

3 (vii. 36-50): A spiritual transformation, and the secret of it.

3. And one of the Pharisees asked him to [b]eat with him; and he entered into the Pharisee's house and sat down [to meat].* And behold, a woman that was in

b cf. ch. 14. 1.

* Literally, "reclined."

But what was it, then, that drew men after him? Was he a prophet? Yea, says the Lord, and more than a prophet: he was one of whom the prophet had spoken, as the messenger of God before Messiah's face, to prepare His way before Him.

Such then was John, the preparer for the Kingdom of God; as great in this position as any of women born; yet the one comparatively little, actually in the Kingdom thus announced, would be greater than he. (See pp. 123, 124, *notes*.)

But in fact John's message had been rejected by the leaders of the nation, the Pharisees and lawyers, while only those classed by these as "sinners" had heard and been baptized by him. These owned the righteousness of God in pressing upon them through John their need of repentance; but the others rejected for themselves the counsel of God, and were not baptized of him. Thus a remnant only of the people, and these the outcasts, were ready for the grace which now addressed itself to them. As to that generation at large, they could only be compared to children sitting in the market-place, triflers who would have had John dance to their piping, and the Lord and His disciples weep when *they* mourned. They understood not, for they were too careless to understand, either the one or the other. To them John was but a demoniac; Christ a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, to be judged according to the company He kept. The children of wisdom alone justified wisdom's ways: and who, then, were these children of wisdom? The answer to this is given us in what immediately follows now.

3. That which follows is one of those stories peculiar to Luke and characterizing it, the story of the woman in the Pharisee's house: the woman a "sinner;" the Pharisee one of those "ninety and nine just persons" of whom the

the city, a [c]sinner; and when she knew that he sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of [d]ointment, and standing behind at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her [e]tears, and wiped them with the [f]hairs of her head, and [g]kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. Now, when the Pharisee that had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, [h]This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, that she is a sinner. And Jesus answered and said to him, Simon, I have somewhat to say to thee. And he saith, Teacher, say on. A certain creditor had two debtors: the one owed [i]five hundred pence,* and the other [j]fifty. And they having [k]nothing to pay, he [l]forgave them both: which of them therefore will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose, he to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And turning to the woman, he said unto Simon, Beholdest thou this woman? I entered into thy house; [m]thou gavest me no water for my feet, but she hath wetted my feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. Thou gavest me no kiss;

c *cf.* Jno. 8. 3, etc.

d *cf.* Ex. 30. 22–33 with Song 1. 3, 12. *cf.* Jno. 12. 3, etc.

e *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 13–15. *cf.* ch. 18. 13.

f *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 15 with Phil. 3. 4–7.

g *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15.

h ch. 15. 2. ch. 19. 7.

i *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 9.

j *cf.* Jno. 19. 38.

k *cf.* Rom. 3. 20. *cf.* Rom. 5. 6.

l *cf.* Eph. 1. 7. *cf.* Rom. 5. 15, 16.

m *ctr.* ch. 19. 6.

* denarii.

Lord afterwards speaks, and whom He puts there in contrast with the "lost." Here it is the Pharisee who invites the contrast.

They had called Him the "Friend of sinners." We see here how truly He was that, and in what manner: what sinners gained from that wondrous friendship. We see a spiritual transformation wrought, and wisdom justified in a child of wisdom, a sinner transformed. We see how sanctification comes from salvation, or, indeed, is the internal part of it; and that there is nothing holier than the gospel grace.

Asked by a Pharisee to eat with him, Jesus enters the house and takes His place at table. And there it is—strange place for such a meeting—a woman in the city who is a sinner, having heard that He is in the house, draws near and stands behind Him weeping, her tears falling upon His feet. With the hairs of her head she wipes them off, and kissing His feet, anoints them with the ointment which she has brought with her.

Sinner she is, yet the knowledge of it does not keep her back; rather it gives her boldness to be there where of all places, perhaps, she would find the most unsparing judgment. But His shield shall be over her—the Friend of sinners: how differently does that sound to her, and to the Pharisee whose house she has entered!

Indeed he is already astir, his mind drawing its conclusion against One who can permit the familiarity that a woman like this is showing. But even He, he reasons, must be ignorant of her character. A prophet would have known; but a prophet could not have permitted defilement such as this. The Lord answers his unspoken thoughts and makes him judge of himself as compared with this woman whom he condemns; a sinner, truly, but a forgiven sinner. Surely, he too could not deny himself to be a sinner! and if so, did *he* not know for himself the sweet sanctifying power of forgiveness,—the outflow of heart to God who has forgiven? Perhaps, indeed, he had not sinned as she: could God then forgive the debt of fifty pence, but not the five hundred? And if to her the larger debt had been remitted, could he not recognize in these tears, this abandonment of ecstatic emotion, in contrast with his own cold treatment of the

but she, from the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but she hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins—the many—are [n] forgiven: for she loved much; but he to whom little is forgiven [o] loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And those who were at meat with him began to say among themselves, [p] Who is this that forgiveth sins also? And he saith unto the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee: [q] go in peace.

4 (viii. 1-21): The seed testing the soil.
1 (1-3): gathering.

4. [1] And it came to pass afterwards that he [r] went throughout [the country], city by city and village by village, preaching and announcing the good tidings of the kingdom of God; and the twelve [were] with him, and certain women who had been [s] healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary who was called Magdalene, out of whom had gone seven demons, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, who [t] ministered to him of their substance.

2 (4-8): the diverse growth.

[2] And a great multitude coming together, and those who were coming to him out of every city, he spake by a parable: The [u] sower went forth to sow his seed;

n *cf.* 1 Jno. 1. 9.
o *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 19. *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 14-17.
p *cf.* Matt. 9. 3-6.
q ch. 8. 48. Jno. 8. 11.
r *cf.* Mk. 1. 38.
s Matt. 27. 55, 56. *cf.* Mk. 16. 9.
t *cf.* ch. 4. 38, 39. *cf.* Mk. 5. 18.
u Matt. 13. 3-8. Mk. 4. 3-8.

Guest he had invited, the sense of that larger debt which made her in a Pharisee's eyes a sinner indeed?

But remitted! Yes, it was the consciousness of that remission which had wrought in her after this manner. Even he should understand—could understand in the case of a common debtor; though himself having been forgiven little, he loved but little.

Thus the Pharisee is set in the light of God, and his inmost heart searched out, while He who reveals Himself in doing this, openly takes the place which the woman's faith before had given Him, and confirms to her that which she in her simplicity had appropriated already. "And He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven." If they murmur at His words, only the more positively does He reiterate them: "And He said unto the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

4. [1] We have seen, then, the power of the Word in the soul of one that receives it; all the more that, as we saw her first, she had as yet had no word distinctly addressed to herself to assure her of the blessing which she grasps with such effect. We now go on to see how the fruits produced characterize the reception of it,—how the seed tests the soil. This is shown in that familiar parable of the Sower, which we have had already in the two previous Gospels, here given a slightly abbreviated form, and without the parables which accompany it in them. As an introduction to it, however, we are shown as fruit of the Word the company of disciples who now follow the Lord, and some of whom minister to Him of their substance. It is here first we find those faithful women who follow Him to the cross itself, and at the sepulchre greet Him first in resurrection. Their own deliverance has attached them to Him, and He on His part receives their services, emancipating them from the harsh restrictions of Rabbinism, which put the woman into a not merely inferior but a degraded place. The twelve are also with Him, and throughout all Galilee, with the testimony of word and work, goes also that of the new communion of faith and love which Christianity was fully and universally to establish.

[2, 3] People gather together to Him out of every city around; and in the midst of such a multitude it is that the Lord searches out the heart (as so commonly He does where the crowds follow Him) by the parable of the Sower.

and, as he sowed, some fell by the [v]wayside, and it was trodden under foot, and the [w]birds of heaven devoured it. And other fell upon the [x]rock, and when it had sprung up it withered away, because it had no [y]moisture. And other fell in the midst of [z]thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. And other fell into [a]good ground, and sprang up, and brought forth fruit a hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath [b]ears to hear, let him hear.

[2] (9-18): the interpretation; all to be manifested.

[3] And his disciples [c]asked him, What may this parable be? And he said, To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest in parables, that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. But the parable is this: The seed is the [d]word of God. Now those by the wayside are those that hear: then cometh the [e]devil and taketh away the word from their hearts, that they may not believe and be saved. But those upon the rock are those who when they hear receive the word with [f]joy; and these have no root, who for awhile believe, and in time of temptation fall away. But that which fell among thorns, these are they that hear, and as they go on their way are choked under anxieties and [g]riches and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to perfection. But that on the good ground, these are they who, in an [h]honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it and bring forth fruit with [i]patience.

Now no one that hath lighted a [j]lamp covereth it with a vessel or putteth it under a [k]bed, but putteth it upon a lamp-stand, that those who enter in may [l]see the light. For there is nothing [m]hidden that shall not be made manifest, nor secret that shall not be known and come out openly. Take [n]heed, therefore, how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

[4] (19-21): the ways that test men

[4] And there [o]came to him his mother and his brethren, and could not get to him because of the crowd. And it was told him, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee. And he answering said to them, My mother and my brethren are these who [p]hear the word of God and do it.

v cf. Acts 17. 18-21.
w cf. 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4.
x cf. Jer. 5. 3. *etc.* Acts 2. 37. *cf.* Ps. 51. 17.
y cf. Jno. 3. 5.
z cf. Gen. 3. 18. *cf.* ch. 18. 24. 25.
a cf. Acts 16. 14, 27-30.
b Matt. 11. 15. Matt. 13. 9. Mk. 4. 9.
c Matt. 13. 10-23. Mk. 4. 10-20.
d 1 Pet. 1. 23.
e cf. Acts 13. 10. *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 14.
f cf. Gal. 4. 15. *etc.* 1 Thess. 1. 6. *cf.* Jno. 9. 22. *cf.* 1 Thess. 3. 3-5.
g 1 Tim. 6. 9, 10. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 10.
h cf. Ps. 32. 2, 5.
i cf. Rom. 2. 7. *cf.* Heb. 10. 36.
j Matt. 5. 14-16. Mk. 4. 21-23. ch. 11. 33.
k etr. ch. 12. 19.
l cf. 2 Cor. 3. 2. *cf.* Phil. 2. 15, 16.
m Matt. 10. 26. ch. 12. 2. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 10.
n Matt. 13. 12. Mk. 4. 24, 25.
o Matt. 12. 46-50. Mk. 3. 31-35.
p cf. Matt. 25. 40. *cf.* Heb. 2. 11.

No fruit is to be got from man for God, except as the word of God produces it; but with the same seed and the same Sower, how different are the results! The devil, the flesh, and the world are in triple league against God and His word, and man is traitor to himself in listening to them. All this, however, has been already dwelt upon. The closing verses are substantially as in Mark (iv. 22–25).

[4] The following verses are also in both the other Synoptists, though here somewhat briefer and in different connection. They complete, in the place in which they stand in Luke, the view of the relation of the word of God to salvation and fruitfulness for God, and carry us on in principle to Christianity, which develops and manifests this.

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chaps. viii. 22–ix. 36.)
The Fulness of Salvation.

1 (viii.22-25): Peace in Him who is supreme over all.

1. NOW it came to pass on one of those days that he [q]entered into a ship, and his disciples. And he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake: and they set out. And as they sailed, he fell [r]asleep. And there came down a squall of wind upon the lake; and they were filling, and were in jeopardy. And they came to him and awoke him, saying, [s]Master, master, we perish. And he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water; and they ceased, and there was a calm. And he said to them, [t]Where is your faith? But they were afraid and wondered, saying one to another, [u]Who then is this, that he commandeth both the winds and the water, and they obey him?

2 (viii.26-39): Deliverance from the enemy.

2. And they [v]arrived at the country of the Gadarenes,* which is over against Galilee. And as he went out upon the land, a certain man met him from the city who had demons, and for a long time had put on [w]no clothes, and abode not in a house, but in the [x]tombs. But when he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and said with a loud voice, [y]What have I to do with thee, Jesus, [thou] Son of the Most High God?

q Matt. 8.23-27. Mk. 4. 35-41.
r *cf.* Jno.4.6. *cf.* Ps. 121. 3, 4.
s *cf.* Ps. 44. 23. *cf.* Matt.14. 30, 31.
t *cf.* ch. 9.41. *ctr.* Matt.8. 10.
u *cf.* ch.5.26, etc.
v Matt. 8.28-34. Mk. 5.1-20.
w *cf.* Gen.3. 7-11.
x *cf.* Prov. 21. 16.
y *cf.* Mk. 1. 23, 24. *cf.* Jas.2.19.

*Some read, "Gerasenes."

SUBD. 3.

The third subdivision also for the most part simply puts together in different connection what Matthew and Mark have already given us. Together the details show us the fulness of salvation which Christ has provided for us, and which the opposition of the world only brings into fuller prominence. There must be deliverance out of it also, only we must not expect here the full Christian deliverance of the epistle to the Galatians, but a moral one rather, from its spirit and ways, the rejection of Christ being that of every follower of His, and faith, therefore, giving victory over it.

1. We have, first, deliverance from the power of circumstances through identification with Him who is supreme over all. Thus for faith there is peace through whatever storms: although this does not mean that the hearts of disciples are always on the level of their privileges. Here on the sea of Galilee they were plainly not so. Jesus was with them, that they knew; but He was asleep, and the winds and waves seemed to have no regard for Him. In their fear they rouse Him, to find relief in His display of a power with which they had not credited Him, but to meet the sorrowful reproof on His part, "Where is your faith?" In truth our prayers in their very urgency often betray our unbelief, and would reproach the Lord on His side with a passivity which is but a sign of the confidence that He would fain repose in us as those who know His truth and steadfastness. "He that feareth is not perfected in love"—*His* love: he has not learned as yet the lesson of such entire trustworthiness as is to be found in Him.

Peace, then, at all times, is God's provision for us; the greeting with which Christ ever meets us; the legacy which His death has left us. All winds and waves yield alike to Him; all things good and evil serve Him, and therefore serve His people, through His abiding care.

2. We have next the story of the demoniac possessed with the "legion," the

I beseech thee, torment me not. For he commanded the unclean spirit to come out from the man. For many times it had seized upon him, and he was kept bound with chains and fetters, and he [z]brake the bands and was driven by the demon into the deserts. And Jesus asked him, saying, [a]What is thy name? And he said, Legion: for many demons had entered into him. And they besought him that he would not command them to go away into the [b]abyss. Now there was there a herd of many swine feeding on the mountain; and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them. And the demons went out of the man and entered into the [c]swine; and the herd rushed violently down the steep into the lake and were choked. Now when those that fed them saw what had taken place, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what had come to pass, and came to Jesus, and found the man out of whom the demons had gone [d]sitting, [e]clothed, and in his [f]right mind at the feet of Jesus; and they were afraid. And those that had seen it told them how the man possessed by demons had been healed. Then the whole multitude of the surrounding country of the Gadarenes* asked him to [g]depart from them; for they were taken with great fear; and he entered into the ship and returned. But the man out of whom the demons had gone [h]besought him that he might be with him. But he sent him away, saying, 'Return to thy house, and relate how great things God hath done for thee. And he went away through the whole city, publishing how great things Jesus had done for him.

z *cf.* Rom. 8. 7.
a *cf.* Gen. 32. 27. *cf.* 1 John 1. 9.
b *cf.* Rev. 20. 1-3. *cf.* Jude 6.
c *cf.* ch. 15. 15. *cf.* 2 Pet. 2. 22.
d *cf.* Matt. 11. 28.
e *cf.* Phil. 3. 9.
f *cf.* 2 Tim. 1. 7.
g *cf.* Acts 16. 39. *cf.* ver. 28. *cf.* Matt. 25. 41.
h *cf.* ch. 18. 43. *cf.* Phil. 1. 23, 24.
i *cf.* ch. 5. 14. *cf.* Matt. 11. 20, etc. with John 4. 48. *cf.* Acts 4. 20.

3 (viii. 40-56): Faith realized and the dead raised
1 (40-42): the ruler.

3. [1] And it came to pass, when Jesus returned, that the multitude received him gladly, for they were all expecting him. And behold, there [j]came a man whose name was Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And, falling at Jesus' feet, he besought him to come into his house; for he had an only [k]daughter about twelve years old, and she was dying.

j Matt. 9. 18, 26. Mk. 5. 22-43.
k *cf.* ch. 9. 38. *cf.* Is. 37. 22.

* Some read "Gerasenes."

picture of whose condition is as full as that in Mark, fuller than Matthew. We see the awful power of Satan over him whom he has enslaved, in contrast with the same man "sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind."

We see also the world preferring Satan to the Deliverer, begging Him to depart, while the delivered man beseeches Him that he may be with Him. Yet the Lord dismisses him to be a witness for Him at home of the divine compassion which has wrought in his behalf.

3. After this we have the twofold story of the daughter of Jairus raised from the dead, and the faith that touched the hem of His garment, and found the healing that it anticipated from the touch. In this we have seen already a parabolic meaning, the divine and human sides of salvation being given in these intertwined miracles: the dead hearing the voice of the Son of God and living,

2 (42-48): the touch of faith.

[2] And as he went, the crowds thronged him. And a woman who had had an [l]issue of blood twelve years, who had [m]spent all her living upon physicians and could not be healed of any, came behind and [n]touched the border of his garment, and immediately her issue of blood stopped. And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and those with him said, Master, the multitudes [o]throng thee and press on thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me, for I know that [p]power is gone out of me. Now, when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, [q]declared before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately. And he said to her, Be of good courage,* daughter: thy [r]faith hath healed thee; [s]go in peace.

3 (49-56): the raising of the dead.

[3] While he yet spake, there came one from the ruler of the synagogue's [house], saying, Thy daughter is [t]dead; trouble not the Teacher. But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, [u]Fear not: only believe, and she shall be made whole. And when he came to the house, he [v]suffered no one to go in but Peter and John and James, and the father and mother of the child. And all were weeping and lamenting her; but he said, Weep not: for she is not dead, but [w]sleepeth. And they derided him, knowing that she had died. And he put them all out,* and took her by the [x]hand, and called, saying, Child, arise. And her spirit came again, and she rose straightway; and he commanded something to be given her to [y]eat. And her parents were astonished, but he enjoined them to [z]tell no one what had come to pass.

4 (ix.1-17): The world's need and the mercy of God.

1 (1-6): authority given.

4. [1] And having [a]called together the twelve, he gave them power and authority over all demons and to heal diseases, and sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. And he said unto them, Take [b]nothing for your journey, neither staff nor wallet, nor bread, nor money; neither have two coats apiece. And

* Many omit this clause.

l cf. Lev.15. 19.
m cf. Rom. 10. 3. *cf.*Gal.3.21. *cf.* Rom. 3. 20.
n cf. ch.5.13. *cf.* Rom. 4. 4, 5.
o cf. ch. 13. 25. *cf.*Matt.11. 20.
p cf. Matt. 15. 28. *cf.*ch. 5. 17.
q cf. Rom. 10. 10.
r ch. 7. 50.
s cf. Jno. 8. 11.
t cf. Ezek. 37. 11, 12.
u cf. Jno.11. 39, 40.
*v cf.*ch.9.28. *cf.*Matt. 26. 37. *cf.*Mk.13.3.
w Jno.11.11 -14.
x Mk. 1. 31. *cf.* Heb. 2. 14-16.
*y cf.*1 Pet.2. 2.
*z cfr.*ver.39. Matt. 8. 4.
a Matt.10.1, etc. Mk.6.7-12.
b ch. 10. 4. ch. 22. 35. *cf.* 3 Jno.5-8. *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 7, 14.

while faith draws from the Saviour the virtue that it needs. Matthew here is the briefest of the three Gospels, Mark's account somewhat the fullest; but of the differences we do not seem able to give a proper account.

4. [1] The Lord now sends out the twelve as messengers of His mercy in a needy world. They have authority over the power of Satan and disease, and are to preach the Kingdom of God, of which the miracles are signs and anticipants. This communicated authority is very significant: for *as* communicated it could not be supposed to be due to the character of those who were but the delegates of Another, yet as such clothed with power from God. Luke merely gives a partial outline of this commission, of which Matthew furnishes the full details. Here we have simply the breadth of their authority, the claim upon men which it carries with it, and the testimony against those who reject that claim. The evangelizing is in the forefront, but what hope for those who reject the precious

whatever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart. And whosoever will not [c]receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them. And they departed, and went through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.

2 (7-9): the world's perplexity.

2 Now [d]Herod the tetrach heard of all the things that had taken place and was in perplexity, because it was said by some that John was risen from among the dead, and by some that Elias had appeared, and by others that one of the old prophets was risen again. And Herod said, John I have beheaded; but who is this of whom I hear such things? And he [e]sought to see him.

3 (10-17): the return of the twelve; "satisfying the poor with bread."

3 And the apostles, when they were [f]returned, related to him all that they had done. And he took them, and [g]withdrew apart into [a desert place belonging to]* a city called Bethsaida. But the multitudes, when they knew it, followed him: and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed those that had [h]need of healing. And when the day began to decline, the twelve came and said unto him, [i]Send away the multitude, that they may go into the villages round, and into the country, and lodge and find victuals; for we are here in a desert place. And he said to them, Do *ye* give them to eat. But they said, We have not more than [j]five loaves and two fishes, unless we go and buy food for all this people. For they were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, Make them [k]sit down by fifties in a company. And they did so, and made them all sit down. And taking the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven and [l]blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude.

c *cf.* Jno. 13. 20. Acts 13. 51.

d Matt. 14. 1, etc. Mk. 6. 14, etc.

e chap. 23. 8.

f Mk. 6. 30.

g Matt. 14. 13, 14. Matt. 12. 15.

h ch. 4. 40. *cf.* Rom. 5. 20.

i Matt. 14. 15-21. Mk. 6. 35-44. Jno. 6. 5-13.

j *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 27, 28.

k *cf.* Rom. 4. 5.

l Prov. 10. 22. *cf.* ch. 22. 19. *cf.* ch. 24. 30.

*This clause is omitted by most.

grace of God? yet the denunciation is part of that grace, its last effort to rouse the consciences of men to respond to it.

2 Herod himself is roused by all this, but partially, to a foreboding perplexity. He has beheaded John, and here is One exhibiting a power which John had not. Luke shows us the tyrant concluding in an opposite way to that which we find in the previous Gospels. Between the incredulity of a Sadducee and the terror of conscience which breaks out beyond the control of it, he vacillates evidently. But here is a problem that he cannot solve, and he is drawn by that which he fears, because he fears it: "he sought to see him." By and by we shall find how, misled by a carnal mind which cannot penetrate the mystery of the Cross, he is able to treat with awful mockery the object of his former fears; and so he disappears out of inspired history.

3 The twelve return, and the Lord takes them apart privately into a desert place for needed rest. But the multitudes, hearing of it, follow and break in upon Him, and their various necessities call forth once more His compassion actively to minister to them. "He received them, and spake unto them of the Kingdom of God, and healed those that had need of healing." There ensues that first miracle of the multiplication of the loaves which is the only one recorded by Luke and John as well as the other evangelists. With John it is the

And they all ate and were filled; and there were taken up of [m] fragments that remained over to them twelve hand-baskets.

5 (ix.18 36): The way and the end.
1 (18-22): who knows?

5. [1] And it came to pass, as he was [n] praying alone, that his disciples were with him, and he asked them, saying, [o] Who do the multitudes say that I am? And they answered and said, John the Baptist; but others, Elias; and others, that one of the old prophets is risen again. And he said unto them, But who do *ye* say that I am? And Peter answering said, The Christ of God. And he [p] strictly charged them and commanded them to say this to none, saying, The Son of man must [q] suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be [r] raised up.

m *cf.* Eph. 3. 18, 19. *cf.* 2 Ki. 4. 42-44.
n ch. 3. 21. ch. 5. 16. ch. 6. 12. vers. 28, 29. chap. 11. 1. ch. 22. 40-46. ch. 23. 34.
o Matt. 16. 13-20. Mk. 8. 27-30.
p Mk. 1. 34.
q Matt. 16. 21. Matt. 17. 22, 23. Mk. 8. 31.
r *cf.* ch. 24. 6, 7, 46.

text of the Lord's discourse upon the bread of life. Luke is somewhat briefer than any of the others, and omits entirely the scene upon the lake which follows it. As Jehovah, with a marvel of creative power, "He satisfies Israel's poor with bread." The need of the world, true wilderness as it is, is made to manifest the divine resources which are in the hand of Him who because of its misery has come into it. The Creator of it is the Redeemer for it; Christ, the Son of man, is both. The details of the miracle we have had before us in Matthew.

5. But the world is not only a place of want and misery, or of sin as lying at the root of these: it is a place into which the Redeemer has come and they know Him not, but reject and cast Him out. This, therefore, is what really characterizes the world for those who receive Him, and salvation must be a salvation *out of it*. Judgment awaits it; Christ is gone out: heaven receives whom the world has rejected; and for His followers also, if the earth be closed, heaven is opened. Thus the wonder of salvation is increased with the wonder of a rejected Saviour; grace descends lower to find its objects, (for we are all upon the world's dead level,) and places them where all the glory of it will be shown out: for "in the ages to come God will show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (Eph. v. 7).

This is now beginning to be shown out to us, although for the full reality of it we must wait until Christ being ascended, the Holy Spirit shall have come down to make known all His glory and the fruit of His work. In the meanwhile, as His rejection becomes manifest, and the way of the cross is seen as the way of discipleship, there is permitted an anticipative vision of "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," that His people may along the road "be strengthened with all might according to the power of His glory" (Col. i. 11) so displayed.

[1] Again we find Him in prayer. The unbelief of men, as we may infer from His question presently, is shadowing His soul with all its sorrow and its bitter fruits. He rises from it to ask His disciples, "Who do the multitudes say that I am?" He is not speaking of manifest rejectors, and their answer does not take its color from the enmity of the scribes and Pharisees. "John the Baptist," "Elias," a prophet of old time risen from the dead, are the conjectures of those who mean to do Him honor; but they are conjectures merely, and not faith, and none of them rise up to the reality: they all fail to apprehend the glory of His Person, and therefore the end for which He is come. The light of His glory who is among them has not shone into their souls; He is not their Saviour,—not the Christ: the Baptist had absolutely disclaimed it, and had declared of the One that was coming after him that He was too great for him to be worthy to undo the latchet of His shoes.

And the Lord questions His disciples: "But who do *ye* say that I am? Peter answers in behalf of them, "The Christ of God." But He forbids them to de-

2 (23-27): the way of the Cross.

[2] And he said to all, [s]If any one will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whosoever shall desire to [t]save his life * shall lose it, but whosoever shall lose his life * for my sake, he shall save it. For what shall a man be [u]profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose or forfeit himself? For whosoever shall be [v]ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be [w]ashamed, when he shall [x]come in his glory and that of the Father, and of the holy angels. But I tell you of a truth that there are [y]some standing here that shall in no wise taste of death until they see the kingdom of God.

3 (28-36): the glory realized.

[3] And it came to pass [z]about eight days after these words, that, taking Peter and John and James, he went up into a mountain to pray. And as he [a]prayed, the

s Matt.10.38 Matt. 16.24 -28. Mk.8.34-38. *cf.* Phil.3.10.
t Jno. 12.25, 26. *cf.* Acts 20. 24.
u *cf.* ch. 12. 15–21. *cf.*ch.16.19-31.
v Matt. 10. 32, 33. *cf.* Rom. 1. 16.
w *cf.* Heb. 11. 16.
x Matt. 25. 31.
y *cf.*2 Pet.1. 16-18. Mk. 9. 1.
z Matt. 17.1 -9. Mk.9.2-10.
a *cf.*ver. 18.

* Or "soul."

clare it now. for if Israel had not faith to receive Him, He on His part was going on to fulfil the divine purpose in stooping to suffering and death at their hands; then, on the third day, to be raised up.

He adds nothing to this, the first open, literal announcement of what, even in this way, was too hard a saying for them to understand. The *doctrine* of the Cross, though found in all the Gospels, yet develops slowly there. The Old Testament types of it, to us so familiar, were to the disciples as yet like a fountain sealed, inaccessible; and thus much that we should look upon as plain language—as for instance, the Baptist's witness to the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world"—would be to them a dark saying. Israel in general were looking for a conquering, not a suffering, Messiah. "We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever," they said in answer to one of His own declarations, "and Thou sayest, the Son of man must be lifted up: who is this Son of man?" (John xii. 34). Thus the unwelcome truth struggled through the darkness, and those who confessed His Person were still, as to His work, in darkness like the rest. As a consequence, much of what was plainly announced remained as seed in the ground for a future harvest.

[2] The Lord goes on to declare the way of His followers to be that of the Cross, and here virtually therefore, as He had not yet, the manner of His own death. But He uses the word symbolically, as the expression "daily" (only found in Luke) would convey to them. To follow Him they must sacrifice their life—themselves—in all that the world counts life; perhaps literally lay it down for Him. The life so lost for His sake would be saved, while he who would grasp the present must lose the future. It is a world hostile to Christ through which we pass, and the confession of Him will cost in such a scene. He gives no reason to expect that it will alter in its spirit essentially, but the reverse: the path He treads is, in this fact that it is His, the path for all His followers; and of those who are ashamed of Him and of His words, He will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory—this is only in Luke—and that of His Father, and of the holy angels.

All this, with the exceptions named, is found, and has been considered, in the previous Gospels. The Lord closes, as in them, with the assurance, that some standing there would in no wise taste of death until they should see the Kingdom of God.

[3] The reference to the transfiguration in this has been also considered. Luke links them more directly together than the other evangelists by his reference: "about eight days after these words." Matthew and Mark say "after *six* days." Luke's "eight" stamps it with that character of "newness" which attaches to the number. A new scene indeed for the old sin-stricken earth to witness; and the centre of all its glory a Man in prayer!

[b] fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became white [and] radiant. And behold, there talked with him [c] two men, who were Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory and spake of his [d] departure which he was about to accomplish in Jerusalem. Now Peter and those that were with him were weighed down with [e] sleep; but when they were fully awakened, they saw his glory, and the two men who stood with him. And it came to pass when they were departing from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make [f] three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias, [g] not knowing what he said. And as he said these things, there came a [h] cloud and overshadowed them; and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, [i] This is my beloved* Son: hear him. And when the voice came, Jesus was found alone; and they kept [j] silence, and told no one in those days any of the things which they had seen.

b cf. 2 Cor. 4. 6. cf. Heb. 2. 9.
c cf. Matt. 18. 16. cf. Rom. 3. 21.
d cf. ch. 24. 26, 27. cf. Acts 17. 3.
e cf. ch. 22. 45, 46.
f cfr. vers. 19, 20.
g cf. Matt. 20. 21, 22. cf. Jno. 14. 8-11.
h cf. Ex. 13. 21. cf. Acts 1. 9.
i ch. 3. 22. cf. Jno. 5. 36, 37. cf. John 12. 28-30.
j ver. 21.

*A well-supported reading gives "chosen."

Such is the new Adam upon whom rests all the blessing of the new creation, and in this sign we read its permanence. Man is no more to lapse from God into a fancied but impossible independence; and the path of obedience is no more to be thought of as one of hard and servile drudgery when the Son of God has chosen it for His own. The glory that now alters the fashion of countenance and radiates from His very garments is His own proper glory, veiled in tenderness only to those to whom He has come to minister, that they might know Him better, as through a darkened glass we better see the sun.

But He is not alone: for where He is must be the fruit of His work and the companions of His love. Two men are with Him, and appear in glory also; but they with a glory which is *not* their own. Moses and Elias, the law-giver and the prophet, shine, as in fact they did, in *His* glory; and that of which they are speaking is that departure which He is to accomplish at Jerusalem, the very thing of which He has been speaking to His disciples without finding ears to hear.

Now, in fact, they are weighed down with sleep. As upon another, how different occasion, but when the same departure was before Him, He compassionately said of them, the spirit might be willing, but the flesh was weak. The heaviness of earth clung about them, and there was not power to rise above it. Only when they were fully awakened did they see His glory and the two that stood with Him. How much too of what we might see do we fail to see, not because of positive evil, and yet because of lack of energy to reach what is so near, yet so beyond us. But what might our lives be—what might they *not* be—if things were different with us!

So even when they are awake, they are dazed and confounded. As the two men are departing, Peter makes an effort to stay them by a proposal to build tabernacles for them, as also for the Lord. But then comes the Cloud and overshadows them; Moses and Elias disappear into the Cloud; and out of it the Father's voice once more as at the Jordan-baptism proclaims His Son. Let them hear Him. And Jesus is found alone.

Here is the end, then, anticipated, which is to strengthen for all the way. We have looked at it already in the previous Gospels, each of which has, no doubt, its differences, though we may be feeble in presenting these. We shall soon reach now what is peculiar to Luke.

SUBDIVISION 4. (Chap. ix. 37–62.)

Testing in an evil World.

1 (37–45): the power to use power may fail, but in Christ is still the resource.

1. AND it came to pass on the following day, when they [k]came down from the mountain, a great multitude met him. And behold, a man from the multitude cried out, saying, Teacher, I beseech thee, look upon my son, for he is mine [l]only child; and behold, a [m]spirit taketh him, and suddenly he crieth out, and it convulseth him with foaming, and crushing him, scarcely departeth from him. And I besought thy [m]disciples that they would cast it out, and they could not. And Jesus answered and said, O [n]unbelieving and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and suffer you? Bring thy son hither. But while he was [p]yet coming, the demon threw him down and convulsed him. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the child, and gave him back to his father. And they were all [q]astonished at the majesty of God.

k Matt. 17. 14–21. Mk. 9. 14–29.

l cf. ch. 7. 12. cf. Gen. 22. 2. cf. Jno. 3. 16.

m ch. 8. 27, etc. cf. Matt. 15. 22.

n cf. ver. 1.

o cf. Jno. 14. 12.

p cf. ch. 8. 49.

q ch. 7. 16.

SUBD. 4.

We have seen then what the world is, through which the disciple of Jesus is called to pass, and how the rejection of the Master characterizes it henceforth for the disciple. It is therefore an adverse stream that he is called to breast, and to meet the combined powers of evil in a warfare that never ends on this side heaven,—which, if it seem to do so, it is but the lure of the enemy replacing his open assault; while, as that which intensifies all the struggle, there is that within us constantly in league with the foe without, an enemy behind all our fortifications, a self against oneself.

Yet are we assured that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to those that are the called according to His purpose." It must be therefore that all this is working for good, this various strife, this enemy within also, all this that is the occasion of such and so keen distress, all this that seems so against us. Nay, there must be in all this a wisdom of God exhibited which when learned shall call forth our wonder and our praise,—a wisdom which has in view not time only but eternity.

And it is not hard to understand this: for if God's thoughts are fixed on bringing us into conformity with Himself, the discernment of good and evil must be a large part of this, we must have our senses exercised to this end. How much the manifestation of God Himself has been made in connection with His mastery over the evil! not in mere judgment of it, but much more in His grace. Must we not for the knowledge of Him, as He would have it, learn also what evil is, be tested by it, learn mastery over it? Thus the good of the trial is apparent, and why it should occupy the place it does here in connection with the fulness of salvation.

1. That failure in this conflict should be so much before us is sorrowful enough; yet even so are we most emphatically warned and guarded against it. The very first lesson is that of how to use the power with which we are intrusted; and the story is one which, for our need of it, is found in all three synoptic Gospels. Luke indeed does not dwell upon the details as the two others do,—Mark especially; nor have we even (what may seem stranger) the insistence upon the need of prayer and fasting which we find in the others. Rather do we find that the power is in Christ, and still available, whatever may be the failure of disciples. The actual display of it does not measure what is available, as long as Christ remains accessible, as He ever is, to the feeblest faith of the really needy. The simplicity and ease with which He acts seems most enforced here; and

But as all wondered at all things that Jesus did, he said to his disciples, Let these words [v] sink into your ears: for the Son of man is about to be delivered into the hands of men. But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them that they comprehended it not; and they feared to ask him concerning this saying.

[v] Matt. 17. 22. cf. ver. 31.

2 (46-50): the need of humility.

2. And there arose a [x]reasoning among them, which of them should be the greatest. But when Jesus saw* the reasoning of their heart, he took a little [t]child and set it by him, and said to them, Whosoever shall receive this little child in my name receiveth me; and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me. For he who is [u]least among you all, he is great.

[x] Matt.18.1-6. Mk. 9. 33-37. cf.chap. 22. 24-27.
[t] cf. Ps. 121. ch. 18. 17.
[u] cf. Eph.3. 8. cf.1 Cor.15. 9. cf.Phil.2.3-11.

And John answering said, Master, we saw one casting out demons in thy name, and we forbad him, because he [v]followeth not with us. But Jesus said unto him, Forbid [him] not: for [w]whosoever is not against you is for you.

[v] Mk.9. 38-40. cf.1Cor.3.5. cf.Num.11. 26-30.
[w] cf. ch. 11. 23. cf.Matt.10. 42. cf. Phil. 1. 15-18.

3 (51-56): reproduction and the heart told out.

3. Now it came to pass when the days were being fulfilled for his being received up, that he [x]steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers before his face; and they went and entered into a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, [y]because his face was [as if] going to Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command [z]fire to come down from heaven and consume

[x] cf. Is.50.7. cf. Heb. 12. 2. cf.Matt.26. 53, 54.
[y] Jno. 4.4,9.
[z] 2Kl. 1. 10, 12. cf. ver. 30.

*Some read "perceived."

Christ as the resource, amid whatever failure on the part of His people is worthy of the first place in the lessons that are given here.

But the fact of His rejection by men abides, however much He may display His power; and though there may be astonishment at it, too, at times. Christ the crucified is the Master we follow, and this truth He would have sink down into our ears and abide with us. Alas, we are not beyond the need either of being warned by the disciples' want of comprehension of this, or even by their fear of being made to comprehend!

2. Two lessons as to humility follow: the first in which the Lord checks the anxiety to be greatest by identifying Himself with the littleness of a little child, and then by the assurance that the least of all among His followers would be great enough. For indeed, that which we have in common, and as the fruit of Christ's work, must be far greater, thank God, than our differences, which will be the result of our own.

The second lesson is in view of their having forbidden one who was casting out demons in Christ's name, but who was not in their company: as if the power that he displayed had been illegitimately acquired. The Lord here assures them that if he were not of their company, he must needs be on their side. For who could divorce the power of the Spirit from the Spirit of power? Self-appreciation here but slenderly covers itself with zeal for Christ; and how soon does it blind us as to plainest principles.

3. We next find the Lord on His way to Jerusalem, the days getting near for His being received up. For the Samaritans it is enough that His face is set toward Jerusalem: they do not receive the messengers sent before to prepare for Him. The spirit of the sons of Zebedee is aflame, and they would bring fire

them, [as also Elias did?]* But he turned and rebuked them; [and said, Ye know not of what spirit ye are: for the [a]Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them];† and they went to another village.

[a] Jno. 12. 47. ch. 19. 10.

4 (57-62): the testing by the way.

4. And, as they went in the way, a [b]certain man said unto him, I will follow thee wherever thou goest, [Lord].* And Jesus said unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of heaven [have] roosting-places; but the Son of man hath not [c]where to lay his head. And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and [d]bury my father. But he said unto him, Let the dead bury their own dead, but go thou and announce the kingdom of God. And another also said, I will follow thee, Lord; but first suffer me to bid [e]farewell to those at my house. But Jesus said unto him, No man having laid his hand on the [f]plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God.

[b] Matt. 8. 19, 20. *cf.* ver. 23.

[c] *cf.* ch. 2. 7. *cf.* ch. 8. 23. *cf.* 1 Cor. 4. 11.

[d] Matt. 8. 20, 21. *cf.* Gen. 46. 4. *cf.* Gen. 11. 31, 32. *cf.* ch. 18. 28-30.

[e] *cf.* 1 Ki. 19. 20, 21.

[f] *cf.* Acts 15. 37, 38. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 10, 11.

* Many omit.

†The first part here is doubtful; the last, according to the evidence of MSS., still more so. Yet the interpolation seems difficult to understand, and as to the first part must have been early, for it is found in most of the ancient versions, as well as in Marcion, Clement of Alexandria, and others. See the Am. Editor's note in Lange's Commentary.

down from heaven after the manner of Elijah, to consume the churlish Samaritans. The pleading of Elijah's example seems to imply that they were already by no means sure that the Lord would be disposed to such a visitation of an offence like this. They could hardly have been with Him so long, without having learned as much as this of His long-suffering. But Elijah they had lately seen with Him, and his example they might quote with One who so completely maintained as He did the authority of Scripture. But He makes it no question of Scripture; it was they who knew not of what spirit they were. They were not of His: for the Son of man had not come to destroy men's lives but to save them.

The disciples here illustrate the danger in which we are in, seeking to reproduce the examples left us by the men of faith of old, even where most fully sanctioned by the word of God. Dispensations differ, and we must know well how to recognize the difference. Faith too is an individual thing which can only be exercised in one's own path with God; and the imitation of another, as that, necessarily takes us out of such a path. The carrying out of principles, or obedience to precepts, is, of course, an entirely different thing; only they must be the principles of the dispensation to which we belong. From want of understanding this the Church of God has been judaized, secularized, and carnalized; an earthly priesthood, law, the rule of kings, and how much else, have been introduced into it; it has usurped Israel's place and promises; and Scripture has been quoted for all this, and perverted to make it good. Here too, disciples, acting with honest enough meaning, have not known of what spirit they were.

4. Finally in this section we have what Matthew (viii. 19–22) puts in another connection, and doubtless in the order of time. Luke gives the moral connection and adds a third example of such testing of followers by the Lord, which we can suppose to be of no infrequent occurrence. In the first case there is the enthusiasm which looks well, but needs a more sober estimate of what is involved in following Christ. The second, on the other hand, is unready, and needs the rousing call to prompt obedience. The third, which is in Luke only,

SUBDIVISION 5. (Chaps. x.-xvi.)

God with men, and the responsibility connected with it.

SECTION 1. (chaps. x., xi. 13.)

The divine provision.

1 (x. 1-24): A new commission.
[1] (1-16): representatives and forerunners.

1. [1] NOW after these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them [g] two by two before his face into every city and place where he himself was about to come. And he said unto them, The [h] harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few: supplicate therefore the Lord of the harvest that he would send* out laborers into his harvest. Go your way: behold, I send you forth as [i] lambs in the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no wallet, no shoes; and salute no one by the way. And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if a son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it; and if not, it shall return to you again. And in the same house abide, eating and drinking such things as they have: for the

[g] *cf.* Mk. 6. 7. *cf.* Acts 13. 2.
[h] Matt. 9. 37, 38. Jno. 4. 35, 36. *cf.* I Cor. 16. 9.
[i] Matt. 10. 16. *cf.* Matt. 7. 15. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 12.

* Literally, "thrust out."

though very similar to the second, requires the renunciation of the claims of the living, as much as of the dead. He who has put his hand to the plow—the one-handled eastern plow, frail and easily overturned, is in question—must keep his eyes on it also, and not look back, or he is unfit for the Kingdom of God.

SUBD. 5.

The transfiguration is a turning-point in all three of the synoptic Gospels. It follows the Lord's announcement of His rejection by the Jews, and the prohibition of His being proclaimed as Christ. Earth has rejected Him, but heaven opens to Him; and this gives character to that which follows.

In Luke especially is there the opening of heavenly things. It is only a glimpse indeed that we get into them. We must not expect the full opening that we have in Christianity, after Christ has gone in for us in the value of His accomplished work, and the Spirit is come out to enable us to enter in there. Still, in the peace-offering view that it presents, God and man are brought together, and we have the anticipation at least, of what is to be fully made known at a later time. Luke connects thus, as has been already said, with Paul's line of truth and Gentile revelation, he himself being a Gentile. It is the portion of Luke to which we have now come that has specially this character; and we shall soon hear of Satan fallen from heaven, though only anticipatively announced, and of those whose names are written there. With this we have the inscrutable glory of the Person of Christ, the tender revelation of man's blessed Neighbor, the fulness of the "good part" given to the saint, and the Spirit to be given to them that ask of God.

All this is found in—

Sec. 1.

the first section here, which speaks, therefore, of the divine provision which has been made for man; as the after ones will show us the opposition of Satan, the world, and the religion of the world, to God's blessed ways, to which afterwards we return to see how God Himself is manifested in them.

1. [1] The commission of the seventy seems at first sight to be but a partial repetition of that given to the twelve. But it is easily seen that this must necessarily be, in so far as they are sent out as the heralds of the same Master into the same world. The number of those sent shows the urgency of the mes-

[j] laborer is worthy of his hire; remove not from house to house. And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat what is set before you, and heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The [k] kingdom of God is come nigh to you. But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go out into the streets of it and say, Even the [l] dust of your city which cleaveth to us upon our feet, we shake off against you; but know this that the kingdom of God is come nigh. I say unto you, that it shall be [m] more tolerable for Sodom in that day, than for that city. [n] Woe to thee, Chorazin! woe to thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had come to pass in Tyre and Sidon which have come to pass in you, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment than for you. And thou, [o] Capernaum, which* hast been exalted to heaven, shalt be cast down to hades. He that [p] heareth you heareth me, and he that rejecteth you rejecteth me; and he that rejecteth me rejecteth him that sent me.

2 (17-20): The enemy abased.

[2] And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the [q] demons are subjected to us by thy name. And he said unto them, I [r] beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to [s] tread upon serpents and scorpions, and all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Yet in [t] this rejoice not, that the

j Matt. 10. 10. *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 7, 14.
k ver. 11. Matt. 10. 7.
l ch. 9. 5. *cf.* Acts. 13. 46, 51.
m Mk. 6. 11. *cf.* Heb. 2. 2, 3.
n Matt. 11. 20-24.
o Jno. 2. 12. Matt. 9. 1.
p Matt. 10. 40. Jno. 13. 20. *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 6.
q *ctr.* ch. 9. 49.
r *cf.* Rev. 12. 7-11. *cf.* Rom. 4. 17.
s Mk. 16. 18. *cf.* Acts 28. 3-5.
t *cf.* Matt. 7. 22. *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 26, 27.

*Perhaps "shalt thou be exalted to heaven?"

sage, as the appended woe upon the cities of Israel implies the nearing judgment of the nation. All being practically (though not openly) decided, makes the result to be manifestly but the separation of a remnant from the self-doomed people. Yet the Kingdom of God is come nigh, and its glories are opening more than ever yet, if hid from eyes that have no care to see them.

[2] The return of the seventy with the joy of their success brings out the farther-sighted joy of their Lord, which plainly reaches on to where the "holy mount" has already carried us. They say exultingly, "Lord, even the demons are subjected to us by Thy Name;" and He replies, that He had beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven, the anticipation of that which Rev. xii. gives in its connection with still future history. It is when the man-child who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron is caught up to heaven, that Satan is cast down to earth. The man-child is surely Christ, as the woman of whom He is born is Israel; yet as soon as Satan is cast down, the three and a half years of the great tribulation begin, which immediately precede the Lord's appearing (*See Matt. xxiv. notes*). The present period is thus passed over, as it is in the Old Testament prophecy, or where Israel is in the foreground, and thus the ascension of Christ and the taking up of saints of the present and the past are seen as one: they are identified with Him who shares with them His "rod of iron" (Rev. ii. 27).

To this time the Lord is looking on here, the beginning of that complete abolishing of Satan's power of which the casting out of demons by the seventy was an anticipation. He goes on to confirm and extend the authority He has given: "Behold," He says, "I have given you to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any

spirits are subjected to you, but rejoice that your names are [u]written in heaven.

3 (21-24): the revelation and glory of the Son.

3 In the same hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit* and said, I [v]thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from wise and prudent, and revealed them unto [w]babes: yea, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. 22 [x]All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knoweth who the Son is but the Father, and who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the [y]Son may will to reveal him. And he turned to his disciples privately and said, [z]Blessed are the eyes that see the things which ye see. For I say unto you that many [a]prophets and kings have desired to see the things that ye behold, and have not seen them; and to hear the things that ye hear, and have not heard them.

2 (x.25-37): The law and man's neighbor.

2. And behold, a certain [b]lawyer stood up, putting him to the proof, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And he said unto him, What is written in the [c]law? how readest thou? And he answered and said, Thou shalt [d]love [the] Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself.

u Phil. 4. 3. Rev. 21. 27.
v Matt. 11. 25–27. cf. Eph. 1. 5, 6.
w Ps. 8. 2. cf. 1 Cor. 1. 26–29. cf. Jas. 2. 5.
x Matt. 28. 18. cf. 1 Pet. 3. 22. cf. Jno. 3. 35.
y cf. Jno. 16. 25. cf. Jno. 17. 4, 26.
z Matt. 13. 16, 17. Matt. 16. 17.
a cf. Acts 3. 24, 25. cf. 1 Pet. 1. 10–12.
b cf. Matt. 22. 35. cf. ch. 18. 18.
c cf. Rom. 7. 12, 13. cf. Gal. 3. 21.
d Deut. 6. 5.

* The mass of ancient MSS. with one exception read "Holy Spirit," but it seems strange.

means hurt you." And then He adds, "Yet in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subjected to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." Thus already they are assured of a more blessed place than among the earthly people. They are enregistered in heaven (see Heb. xii. 23), as citizens of that "better country."

3 Thus we are being led out beyond Israelitish hopes and promises, and we see along with the mission of the seventy the faint dawning of a new day. And here now we find in its true order of time, what Matthew for his purpose has connected differently, the Lord's declaration of the inscrutable glory of His Person, and of the Father having put all things into His hand; though this was hidden indeed from wise and prudent ones, and revealed to babes alone. What else are men to God? and how could He crown with the knowledge of Himself the wisdom of the world which it had gained in departure from Him? But now had come that which many prophets and kings had desired to see, and not seen; and blessed indeed were the eyes of those who as disciples of this grace had seen it.

2. There follows that story of him that was neighbor to him who fell among robbers, which shows on the one hand the powerlessness of law to furnish a ministry of grace, and on the other the heart of Him who, apart from law and in such a way as to incur reproach for it and indeed the penalty of the law itself, brought help and salvation to the dying sons of men.

It is given as a parable to one who, being a lawyer, and thus a typical Jew of that day, would fain make trial of Him as to His relation to or conception of Moses, whose disciple it was his own boast to be. And yet he must have supposed it a difficult question that he was proposing for this end: "what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Was he beginning, perhaps, to realize the difficulty of it? When the Lord makes the law the measure of doing, and puts it to him to answer his own question, he answers like a man who is not resting in the mere outside of things, but takes love to God and one's neighbor as the very

And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this [e] do and thou shalt live. But he, desiring to [f] justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor?

[e] Lev. 18. 5. cf. Gal. 3. 11, 12. cf. Rom. 10. 5–12.

[f] cf. ch. 16. 15; cf. 2 Cor. 10. 18; ctr. ch. 7. 29 with ch. 18. 13.

heart of the commandments, as indeed they were. In this, Christ emphatically approves his answer; let him do that, and he shall live.

But to answer the question aright is one thing; to satisfy his soul with it is another: and here is again, perhaps, a token for good, amid all that is evil in his case: there is at least no self-complacency. He seeks to justify himself; but who has accused him? Conscience, it is plain, is at work with him, and that Moses whose disciple he is has become his accuser. He resists it: how we have most of us resisted and resented that sentence of the law which brings us all down to that common level of guilt,—Jews and Gentiles alike "under sin"! The man here is fighting with himself, if in fact he does not discern it, nor even has come yet to realize that it is the heart and not the head merely, as he would fain put it, that is astray: he passes over the "first and great commandment of the law," which he has so clearly stated, to take up the second, and here to shelter himself under a question which he has no thought will turn, as it really does, so terribly against himself, "And who is my neighbor?"

We have heard that it was said by them of old time, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy." Here, then, there might be a matter for much nice discrimination: whether the Israelite alone was the neighbor; whether every one of these was so; whether there was a third class between the two; and then whether, when the classification was uncertain, the duty attaching might be left in suspense too. Casuistry of this kind might certainly be carried far, and men might, of course, let themselves off more or less easily. After all how much uncertainty would come in thus, and correspondingly affect the issue!

But the Lord goes beyond and deeper than all this, and with a searching appeal to the conscience of the questioner sets it all aside. He not only answers the question; He answers it in such a way as completely to expose him to himself, and show him (if he had candor to receive it) that it *was but an unneighborly heart that could ask it.* This man left half-dead upon the road: there is nothing to determine if he were Jew or Gentile; while it is certain that the priest and Levite were both Jews, and that the true neighbor was a Samaritan. It may be that it was their not having settled the lawyer's question that made the men of law so absolutely without help for an unknown stranger.

But the true neighbor of man is so depicted in this parable as to make us feel how the Lord had provided in it for the need of the one before Him (as for how many others since!) when once he had got into the place of need in which so many things become plain to us. Had he not heard what seems to have been no uncommon saying in the mouth of the people, and evidently from His attitude, as they considered it, toward Moses and the law, that *He* was a Samaritan (John viii. 48)? How different the reproach would sound for one who had proved, as he, we may trust, was on his way to prove, the powerlessness of priest and Levite in his case! Commentaries are much given to warning us not to go too far in such application; but the danger of false interpretation is apt to be in the exact opposite direction. A picture out of which we may leave whatever features we please to consider of no use save for decoration, is surely that in which we are most liable to go astray. While the having to make every detail fit is just what will put bounds to the imagination when disposed to stray. The insisting upon as complete as possible agreement between the representation and what it represents is in the interests of exact interpretation every way.

How vividly man's natural course is set before us, in that down-hill, dangerous road, with the back upon the city of God and the face towards the place of curse, as which Jericho stands in the well-known history. The robbers may represent any of the many forms of evil that break in upon men and bring them

And Jesus replied and said, A certain man went down from [g]Jerusalem to [h]Jericho, and fell into the hands of [i]robbers, who also [j]stripped him [of his raiment], and [k]wounded him, and departed, leaving him [l]half dead. And by chance a certain [m]priest went down that way; and, when he saw him, he passed by on the [n]other side. And likewise also a [o]Levite, when at the place, came and looked [at him,] and passed by on the other side. But a certain [p]Samaritan, as he journeyed, came

g cf. Ps. 48. 2 with ch. 13. 33.
h cf. Josh. 6. 26 with Eph. 2. 3.
i cf. Jno. 8. 34.
j cf. Gen. 3. 10. *cf.* ch. 8. 27.
k cf. Prov. 23. 29. *cf.* Ps. 38. 4, 5.
l cf. Eph. 2. 1; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 14.
m cf. Heb. 7. 28; *cf.* Heb. 8. 4.
n cf. Gal. 3. 10.
o cf. Heb. 7. 9. *etc.* Acts. 4. 36, 37.
p cf. Jno. 8. 48 with Is. 53. 3; *cf.* Jno. 1. 46.

to desolation, yet which God uses to make them realize their true state before Him. The stripping off of raiment is the loss of all with which we cover from ourselves the nakedness which from God we cannot hide. A wounded conscience, the consciousness of impotence—"ungodly and without strength"—with the shadow of that death, which is awful banishment from the Life of life, stealing over the soul,—this is a picture true in every part of its tale of misery, the faithful representation of a convicted man.

Who shall be neighbor now to one in this condition? who is there with will and power to help? The Jew, Moses' disciple, is brought before us in two illustrative witnesses: "the testimony of two men is true;" and the priest and Levite are good representatives, if any are, of the help the ministers of law can give.

The priest is the first example; but one fatal phrase disqualifies him at the outset,—"*By chance* a certain priest went down that way." It is plain what such a word means upon the lips that are speaking here. It means that the Jewish priest was not the divinely provided minister for this condition. The message of law, "this do and thou shalt live," is no gospel for any who could be pictured by this helpless and dying man. True, it could say also, "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive:" and here salvation is proposed, but a self-wrought one, still containing the fatal principle. And even the sacrifices, though they proclaimed a God who forgave iniquity, transgression, and sin, left untouched what He Himself had joined with this, "who can by no means clear the guilty." The old page might indeed be blotted out, but only that a new one might be turned, and the vain work begin again. Thus still the veil hung before the face of God: "None can see Me and live," was His own affirmation.

So the priest went by on the other side, and had no help. "Likewise also a Levite, when at the place, came and looked at him, and passed by on the other side."

The same inability,—the same chance visit, no divine messenger; only the Levite comes nearer, peers into the anguished eyes, for a moment lighted up with transient hope, and then he too passes by on the other side.

Thus the ministers of the law declare only the helplessness of the law for salvation, and to emphasize this the more the actual savior is pictured as a Samaritan, a man not merely most distasteful to the Jew as a schismatic, but actually under the condemnation of the law itself. This the true Saviour must needs be: for the curse of the law, denounced on sin, must be really taken for men, if the law is to be maintained in honor, and the sinner saved. And here the antitypical Samaritan is therefore the One who has heart for men and the Witness of what is in the Divine Heart towards them. It is this that is the glory of the gospel. The law cannot bring God nigh, for such as we are. The gospel exhibits Him as come down in His love to seek the lost. This, because of its infinite value for us, is afterwards developed at length in the three parables of the fifteenth chapter, where the whole Triune God is seen in the "joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Here it is Christ whom we see in this Samaritan, who "as he journeyed, came where" the wounded man "was, and when he saw him, had compassion on him."

[q] where he was, and when he saw him, he had [r] compassion [on him,] and went to him, and [s] bound up his wounds, pouring in [t] oil and [u] wine; and raised him up upon his [v] own beast, and brought him to an [w] inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow [as he departed,]* he took out [x] two pence,† and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take [y] care of him; and whatsoever thou shalt spend [z] more, when I [a] come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three seems to thee to have been [b] neighbor to him who fell into [the hands of] the robbers? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. And Jesus said unto him, Go and do [c] thou likewise.

*Many omit. †"Denarii."

[q] *cf.* ver. 30 with Rom. 5. 6. *cf.* Heb. 2. 14.
[r] *cf.* Ps. 22. 1. *cf.* Mk. 1. 41. *cf.* Gal. 2. 20.
[s] *ctr.* Is. 1. 6. *cf.* ch. 4. 18. *cf.* Rom. 5. 1.
[t] *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 27 with Acts 5. 32. *cf.* Rom. 5. 5.
[u] *cf.* Matt. 26. 28 with 1 Jno. 1. 7.
[v] *cf.* Gen. 24. 61.
cf. Rom. 5. 9, 10. [w] *cf.* Heb. 13. 14; *ctr.* ch. 2. 7. [x] *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 3. [y] *cf.* Jno. 21. 15–17; *cf.* Acts 20. 28; *cf.* Heb. 13. 17. [z] *cf.* Philem. 18, 19; *cf.* Jno. 1. 16. [a] *cf.* Jno. 14. 1–3. [b] *cf.* Prov. 17. 17. *cf.* Prov. 27. 10; *cf.* Rom. 5. 7, 8. [c] *cf.* ch. 14. 21; *cf.* Acts 26. 17, 18.

The details that follow are again clear and significant, and present the grace of Christ in the fullest way. Faith's appropriation of the blessing, true as it is from the human side, is not what we find here, but rather the appropriation is on the divine side, all the value of the work of Christ made over to the helpless and stricken soul. He is taken into tender hands, and his wounds closed or bound up by the authoritative Word of God: for it is the Word which binds the conscience, and here for healing, as when the sweet compelling utterance of "peace" from a Saviour's lips made rest but duty for those that heard it.

The oil and the wine follow for effectual healing: they are plain symbols of the joyful remembrance of Christ's work—of His precious blood—applied in the power of the Holy Spirit. And here there is such unmistakable plainness, as if no manner of doubt must be permitted upon so fundamental a point. And now he is ready for the road with his deliverer.

The tender care of the latter does not slacken. He lifts him up upon his own beast,—κτῆνος, not often used in the singular, as here, "acquirement," what he had got for himself. The power which supports and carries us on is indeed what Christ has acquired for Himself: it is living power, the "Spirit of Christ," which bare Him in His wondrous Manhood to our rescue, and who, that being effected, now bears us.

So "he brought him to an inn"—according to the blessed universality of the gospel offer, a "place of reception for all." This is what the Church as the house of God is; where still He "cares for" His own,—"takes charge of" them. How much is compressed in how little in these pregnant words!

Now we hear of His departure, though His care abides. And "as he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee."

It is to the care of the Spirit that Christ has left His people in the world: here it is impossible to go astray as to the interpretation. But what, then, are we to see in the "two pence"? We may equally with Van Oosterzee, refuse as "trifling" the thought of two sacraments, and yet believe that there is meaning, here as elsewhere. The two pence are plainly recompense for care bestowed, and we may find perfect fitness if we will note that in parabolic figures, such as we have to do with here, the Spirit of God is identified with His work, or with the agents through whom He works. We shall find as to the last a very decisive example in the "woman" of the second parable of the fifteenth chapter; and here it should be easy to see that it is to those by whom the Spirit works in the care of Christ's people that the reward is given. *Present* reward: for "he that watereth shall be watered also himself;" and yet a future recompense also,

3 (x. 38–42) The fulness of the saint's "good part."

3. And it came to pass, as they went [on their way], that he entered into a certain village; and a certain woman, named [d]Martha, received him into her house. And she had a sister named Mary, who also [e]sat at Jesus'* feet, and heard his word. But Martha was [f]distracted with much serving, and she came to him and said, Lord, dost [g]thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? speak to her therefore that she help me. But the Lord † answered and said unto her, Mar-

[d] Jno. 11. 1, etc.
[e] *cf.* ch. 8. 35. *cf.* Ps. 131. *cf.* Col. 2. 6, 7.
[f] *cf.* 1 Cor. 13. 1–7. *cf.* Heb. 11. 5, 6.
[g] *cf.* Mk. 4. 38. *cf.* r. Jno. 11. 5.

* Many read "the Lord's." † Many read "Jesus."

when the departed Saviour shall return again. And thus the *two* pence (or denarii) may have the number of testimony, because the present reward is but the witness of that gracious remembrance of all that is done here for Him, which the future will exhibit in its full reality.

Thus, from first to last, the parable speaks with perfect clearness; and it is of Christ above all it speaks: *not* mainly to answer a lawyer's question, but beyond this to reveal Himself to the soul of a sinner, though, because of his condition, this cannot be done with the simplicity that would have welcomed need more fully confessed. In this way also it agrees with the place in which we find it, following the declaration of the personal glory of the Son of God with the revelation of His grace, and the full provision in it for the otherwise desperate state of man.

3. After this we are made to understand the full provision for a *saint*, and how it is to be acquired, and how earnestly the Lord longs to have His people acquire it, how thoroughly He will guard them in their possession of it. Here, for our better instruction, we have contrasted the conduct of two saints. Martha and Mary are again, and more largely spoken of in the Gospel of John, and in accordance with the different character in which they are presented here. As two sides of Christian character, they are both needful for its proper display, the worker and the listener, the servant and the one who, even because she better understands His real dignity, *lets her Lord serve her.*

It is easily to be seen that the latter is the fundamental necessity, and the higher blessedness. As sinners, as the previous parable has shown us, Christ must serve us first, or we should never find ability, nor have the heart to serve Him either. We would willingly reverse this order, but it cannot be. So too as saints we are prone to get our service out of place, and that because of the same root of self-sufficiency which troubled us as sinners. Served us, of course, He has; and now it is our part to serve Him; but how prone we are to do it after Martha's fashion. How little we realize the need we have of being served by Him all through, and the little need He has of us, save as the objects of His love, and as those in whom the exceeding riches of His grace are to be shown out through the ages.

Martha has received Christ into her house, and surely into her heart. If she is busy, she is busy serving *Him*; yet that does not prevent her being distracted by it. She is more: she is vexed and irritated. Mary her sister is sitting quietly at the feet of Jesus, listening to His word; and she blames even the Lord for permitting it, while she needs her help so much. But the Lord asserts that Mary has chosen the good part, and it is moreover the only needful thing: it shall not be taken from her.

But is learning of Jesus, then, the one needful thing? Is activity nothing? is service nothing? We may be sure the Lord is very far from meaning that. But if a man brings me, let us say, an apple, I do not despise it when I say, "The one thing is the tree that bears the apples."

One may hear Christ's words and never hearken. There may be even an occupation with them which is little better than mere idleness. But to hear as

tha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things. But [h]one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen the [i]good part, which shall [j]not be taken away from her.

4 (xi. 1-13): In view of creature need.

4. And it came to pass, that, as he was in a certain place [k]praying, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, [l]teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, [m]When ye pray, say, [Our] Father, [who art in heaven] hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; [thy will be done, as in heaven so on earth;] give us day by day our daily bread; and forgive us our sins, for we also forgive

h *cf.* Ps. 27. 4. *cf.* Phil. 3. 13.
i *cf.* Ps. 86. 11.
j *cf.* Jno. 13. 23. *cf.* 1 Jno. 1. 3. *cf.* Ps. 119. 72.
k ch. 9. 18, 29, etc.
l *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 21. *cf.* Jno. 16. 7, 13, 24 with Rom. 8. 26.
m *cf.* Matt. 6. 9-15; *cf.* Rom. 8. 26.

Mary did, that implies service also, and the right kind of service,—wisdom and power for service; and a service which shall be in the sanctuary also,—worship in the heart of it.

For what fruit will not grow upon that seed sown in the heart—the Scripture able to furnish thoroughly the man of God unto all good works? And how else shall we be able to gain and maintain communion with God than by drinking in the thoughts of God? On the other hand, it is easy to see, and there is plenty of sad experience to show, how service unenlightened by the Word may carry us out of communion with God; and how the cares engendered by it may, as with those of common life, choke much of the good seed. Yet if it is to be feared that there are more Marthas than Maries in the Church to-day, is it not to be feared that there are more than both of these united, of those to whom the cares and pleasures of the world are, far more than any service of the Martha sort, the causes of distraction?

Shall we not covet more that good part which with the Lord's approbation Mary had chosen? Have we not the power to-day to choose where she did? The portions that men naturally covet pass away beyond recall; here is that which the Lord Himself emphatically pronounces "good," and which He seals with eternity of possession to him who has chosen it.

4. There follows now, in that order which we have seen to be so constant in Scripture, after the fulness of the blessing provided, that recognition of creature need which makes the living God so absolute a necessity. We must do more than know about Him; we must have the strength of His arm, a resource in Him ever available. And this is what prayer expresses, the cry to One who hears and who answers. "The fervent, effectual prayer of the righteous man availeth much." The need of it is pressed in an epistle like Ephesians, where we are at the topmost height of heavenly position: it there, perhaps, requiring most to be emphasized that we are not above it. "Praying always with all prayer, and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Eph. vi. 18). There could be surely no more earnest exhortation, nor in a more suited place than where the height of all the blessing needs to be practically realized and maintained in daily walk.

The prayer that the Lord teaches His disciples here is that which we have in Matthew substantially, with certain omissions according to all recent editors, for which nevertheless it is hard to account. Certainly Luke it is who gives us the original form of the prayer, if the difference is to be maintained; as it is impossible to imagine the disciples asking to be taught to pray, if they already had been. Then in the sermon on the mount afterwards the Lord must have amplified the prayer by these added petitions, unless Luke can be supposed to have omitted part of what was first given; which again seems hard to believe. A reason for the omissions, if the larger form were first, is as hard to suggest. Nor, apart from all critical questions, can one well see the meaning of such a difference. It would be a bad argument to reason from one's ignorance; yet, on

every one indebted to us; and lead us not into temptation, [but deliver us from evil].*

And he said unto them, [n]Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and say to him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine on a journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him; and he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed: I cannot rise and give thee? I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his [o]importunity † he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And

n *cf.* ver. 11. *cf.* Jno. 15. 13.

o *cf.* ch. 18. 1-8, 39. *cf.* Rom. 4. 18-21.

*The shortenened form of prayer, leaving out the bracketed portions, has its argument, not from any preponderance of manuscript authority, but from the fact that while those which do contain it are among the earliest known, the use of the prayer as a form by Christians would naturally affect all but the earliest. The omissions are on the other hand not easy to understand, if there had been but one form at the beginning. Even in Matthew the closing doxology, now generally omitted, was evidently introduced from the ecclesiastical usage. The editors generally give the text without the bracketed parts, though the great majority of MSS. have these, in accordance with Matthew. Even so the two cannot be made exactly the same, Matthew having "trespasses," "trespass against us," though the difference is slight.

† Literally, "shamelessness."

the whole we may be pardoned if we incline to the fuller form, (perfect as we realize it to be,) as found in Matthew. There it has already been before us, and there would be no profit in mere repetition.

The Lord adds an encouragement to perseverance which at first sight looks strange enough, but which must have therefore a lesson in this strangeness. How many arguments does the devil use, and which our own hearts assent to for their plausibility, against the continuance of apparently unsuccessful petitions. Yet if there be no more than this against them we are taught here to urge them still. And striking it is that the parallel suggested between the success of importunity with man and with God is one which seems as little capable of full application,—seems as capable of having serious arguments against it,—as any that could be suggested in this line. Nay, the Lord Himself points to the difficulty, while He presses the argument as if there were none. "I say unto you, *though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.*" Can we apply this to God? Not the motive, surely: God does not give to get rid of the petitioner; spite of which the Lord goes on: "And I say unto you, Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you."

Thus the Lord shows us that we may seek continuously, seek importunately, seek, as one needy man from another; although it might be argued, You are forgetting the difference between God and man. Difference there is, indeed; but we are not to use it to check the pouring out of our full hearts to Him. Be it so that He knows all before we ask; be it that we may be tempted to say with Job, "He is of one mind, and who can turn Him?" let us not heed arguments that would shut us from all the comfort of knowing that we have for our necessity a living God that hears and answers prayer. Ask as if He would yield to mere importunity. Cling to Him as Jacob clung, and say, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." Ask until you hear Him say, "As a prince hast thou power with God . . . , and *hast prevailed.*"

Then the Lord goes on to speak of the difference between God and man, but which is all in His favor. If men that are evil can be depended on to give *good* gifts to their children, *how much more* shall your Father who is in heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"

I say unto you, [p]Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. But of [q]which of you that is a father shall his son ask bread, and he give him a stone? or also a fish, and he for a fish give him a serpent? or if also he shall ask an egg, shall he give him a scorpion? If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is of heaven, give the [r]Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

SECTION 2. (Chaps. xi. 14-xii.)
Confirmation in view of opposition.

1 (xi.14-26): The strong one not divided, and the Stronger than he.
1 (14-20): the Kingdom of God come.

1. [1] AND he was casting out a demon, and it was [s]dumb; and it came to pass that, when the demon was gone out, the dumb man spake; and the multitudes wondered. But some of them said, By [t]Beelzebul the prince of the demons he casteth out demons. And others, tempting him, sought of him a [u]sign from heaven. But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every [v]kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and house against house falleth: and if also

p Matt. 7.7. Matt.21.22. *cf.* Jno. 15. 7, 16. *cf.* 1 Jno. 5. 14, 15.

q Matt. 7.9-11. *cf.* Ps. 103. 13. *cf.* Is.49.15, 16.

r *cf.* Acts 1. 14 with Acts 2. 4. *cf.* Eph. 1. 13.

s Matt.9.32-34. Matt. 12.22-30.

t Mk. 3. 22-27. *cf.* Eph.6.12. *cf.* Rev. 9. 11.

u Matt. 12. 38-42. Matt. 16. 1. *cf.* ch. 20. 2.

v *cf.* Judges 7.22. *cf.*2 Chron. 20. 22, 23.

He guards against the abuse of the doctrine of importunity. He does not want us to think that we can by our importunity wring a gift out of our heavenly Father's hand that is not good. In madness sometimes, perhaps, we might desire it; only, surely, in madness. But how can He refuse to give the *Holy Spirit* to them that ask Him?

Type of all good gifts this, the Holy Spirit. And John has told us that when the Lord was yet on earth, the "Holy Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified." We must look at what this implies in another place; but we know quite well that the *work* of the Spirit in enlightening, sanctifying, working all spiritual work in man, was needed then as now, and being needed, was found and enjoyed. And now that, in the Christian sense, the Spirit is given, we can still have, and are called to prove the way in which our Father will respond with fulness of spiritual blessing to the prayers of His people. How comforting is the Lord's assurance here! yet how it reproves us also! Here if we lack, "we have not because we ask not." Shall we be content to go without the fulness of what Christ our Lord has certified to us to be ours if only we value it enough to seek it from the blessed hand of God?

Sec. 2.

The provision of God for His people having been shown, we have now the opposition on the part of the enemy, who is moreover the prince of this world. Thus the world becomes a scene of strife just so much the more because the Prince of peace has come into it. The Lord prepares His disciples for this, warning and confirming them, and setting them in view of His coming again, when winds and waves shall cease. A great deal in all this part is similar to what we have had before,—especially in Matthew; so that we shall notice it more briefly.

1. [1] The substance of what is here we find in Matt. xii. 22-30. The man out of whom the demon is cast is there said to have been blind as well as dumb; and the multitudes ask, "Is this the Son of David?" But there is only wonder, and not conviction, and others refer the power over demons (which they cannot deny) to Beelzebul the prince of the demons. The Lord, addressing

Satan is divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out demons through Beelzebul. But if I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your [w]sons cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. But if I by the finger of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you.

2 (21-23): and Satan spoiled: two opposing ranks.

[2] When the [x]strong [man] armed guardeth his own house,* his goods are in peace; but when a [y]stronger than he shall come on him and overcome him, he taketh away his whole [z]armor† wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoil. He that is not [a]with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

3 (24-26): the return of an uncleanspirit.

[3] When the [b]unclean spirit is gone out of the man, he goeth through places without water, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he is come, he findeth it [c]swept and adorned. Then goeth he and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in and dwell there: and the [d]last state of that man becometh worse than the first.

2 (27-36): The testimony competent, but discernment lacking.

2. [1] And it came to pass, as he said these things, a certain woman of the multitude lifted up her voice, and said unto him, [e]Blessed is the womb that bare thee,

1 (27, 28): the blessing of obedience.

* Literally, "court," put for the whole establishment.
† Literally, "panoply."

w cf. ch. 9. 49, 50.
x Matt. 12. 29, 30. *cf.* Eph. 2. 2.
y cf. Heb. 2. 14, 15. *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 8.
z etc. Eph. 6. 11-17.
a cf. ch. 9. 50. *cf.* 1 Ki. 18. 21. *cf.* Matt. 6. 24.
b Matt. 12. 43-45. *cf.* 2 Chron. 36. 14-16 with Neh. 10. 28-39.
c cf. ch. 18. 11, 12. *cf.* Matt. 23. 13-33.
d cf. Acts. 7. 51-53 with 2 Thess. 2. 9-12. *cf.* Jno. 5. 45.
e cf. ch. 8. 19-21. *cf.* Matt. 3. 9.

Himself to them, shows them that He has read their thoughts, and refutes them by the argument that then Satan would be against himself. But if this were the finger of God, then it was the Kingdom of God that had come upon them.

[2] The result in this case was the spoiling of Satan, whom it required power greater than his own to dispossess. And for Himself the Lord declares that He accepted no compromise, and allowed no indifference on the part of any to Him. It was simply for or against; and he that gathered not with Him was only scattering.

[3] But indeed there might be the case in which Satan had not been expelled, but merely left his house empty, to return when he pleased. As the Lord applies it in Matthew, it was indeed their own. Nationally they had reformed from their once constant idolatry, and were now swept clean and adorned, but hollow-hearted. God was not enshrined among them, as their empty temple witnessed. Satan then could come back, and bring with the old spirit of idolatry an intensity of wickedness never before known. The Lord does not say, as in Matthew, that it would be so with them; and the word is left for wider application.

2. We have now the competence of the testimony given asserted, and the reason assigned for its failure with them, in the lack of the spirit of obedience, the want of singleness of eye.

[1] A woman in the crowd that was listening to Him lifted up her voice, and said, "Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the breasts that Thou hast sucked." And He answers, "Yea, rather"—so it is, indeed, but there is a greater blessedness—"blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it."

It was in fact the central feature of Israel's condition, that with professed reverence for the word of God, they had crusted it over with their traditions, their "unwritten law," which they exalted above it, and so made it of no effect,

and the breasts which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

2 (29-32): a contrast; One greater than Jonah.

[2] And as the multitudes were gathering together, he began to say, This generation is an evil generation: it seeketh a sign, and no sign shall be given it but the [f]sign of Jonas. For as Jonas was a sign to the Ninevites, so also shall the Son of man be to this generation. The [g]queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation and shall condemn them: for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, more than Solomon is here. Men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgment with this generation and shall condemn it: for they [h]repented at the preaching of Jonas, and behold, more than Jonas is here.

3 (33-36): the illumination of the eye.

[3] No one, when he hath [i]lighted a lamp, putteth it in a secret place, nor under a bushel, but upon the lampstand, that they that enter in may see the light. The lamp of the body is thine eye: when thine [j]eye is single, thy whole body is light; but when it is evil, thy body also is dark. Look, therefore, that the [k]light that is in thee be not darkness. If therefore thy whole body be light having [l]no part dark, the whole shall be light, as when the lamp lighteth thee with its brightness.

f Matt.12.38-42. Jonah 1.17. Jonah 2.10.
g 1 Ki. 10.1-13. *ctr.* Is.53.2.
h *cf.* Jonah 3. 4-10. *ctr.*Mk. 15. 12-14. *cf.* Acts 7. 54.
i Matt. 5.15. ch. 8. 16.
j Matt. 6.22, 23. *cf.* Prov. 4. 25. *cf.*Eph.6.5.
k *cf.*Heb. 6. 4-6. *cf.* 2 Pet. 2. 21.
l *cf.* Eph.5.8-14. *cf.*1Cor.4.4, 5. *cf.* Ps. 139. 23, 24. *cf.*2Cor.4.6.

as the Lord told them. This is a condition of things which, as we know, has once more come about in the history of the professing Church, human nature manifesting itself similarly in all generations. It is striking, and shows the prophetic character of Scripture, that the Lord here takes occasion by the woman's words, to guard against an error which has assumed of late, in that body which has, more than any other, adopted and developed the traditionalism of the Jews, the most colossal proportions. Romanism has exalted the mother of our Lord above all creatures, and into a perilous nearness to Deity itself. In its cruder forms it would, by virtue of this human relationship to Him, exalt her in some sense above Him to whom she owes this exaltation. The Lord declares here the blessedness of the spiritual tie above the natural, and most distinctly characterizes this blessedness as that of those who "hear the word of God and keep it;" which Rome, as far as lies in her, will not permit. Good reason she has, surely, not to permit it.

[2] The last incident is recorded by Luke alone; what follows is in Matthew also, with some difference. In it He contrasts the spirit of the very heathen at Nineveh, and that of the Arabian queen of Solomon's days, with the people then around Him. A greater than Jonah was then among them, and as Jonah had been a sign to the Ninevites so would He be in His death and resurrection a greater sign; but they would not repent. Nor could a wiser than Solomon attract them with His wisdom.

[3] Not signs were wanting, but the heart to interpret them. God had not done what man would not do: He had not lighted a lamp to hide it from men's eyes, but that all might see and rejoice in the light. But whatever the light might be outside, the light that illumined the man within was his eye: his eye must be single, without any veil there, or the light outside would not light the lamp that could alone be light to him. But the testimony given was not insufficient. If the light *within* them was not darkness, they would walk in the full brightness of the illuminating lamp.

3 (37–54): Manifested!
1 (37–44): the self-righteousness of the Pharisees.

3. [1] And as he spake, a certain Pharisee [m] asked him to dine* with him; and he went in and sat down to meat. But when the Pharisee saw it, he wondered that he had not first baptized before dinner.* But the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees cleanse the [n] outside of the cup and of the dish, but your inward part is full of extortion and wickedness. Senseless ones, did not he that [o] made that which is without make that which is within also? But rather give [p] alms of what† ye have, and behold all things are clean unto you. But [q] woe unto you, Pharisees: for ye pay tithe of mint and rue and every herb, and pass over judgment and the [r] love of God; these things ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Woe unto you, Pharisees, for ye love the [s] chief seat in the synagogues, and salutations in the market places. Woe unto you, for ye are as [t] sepulcres that appear not, and the men that walk over them know it not.

m cf. ch. 7. 36. Mk. 7. 3.
n Mk. 7. 4-13. Matt. 23. 25.
o Ps. 94. 9, 10. cf. Isa. 16. 7.
p ch. 12. 33. ch. 16. 14, 15. cf. ch. 18. 22.
q Matt. 23. 23.
r ch. 10. 27. cf. 1 Jno. 4. 10, 19.
s Matt. 23. 6. ch. 20. 46. cf. Eph. 3. 8.
t cf. Matt. 23. 27, 28. cf. Acts 23. 3. cf. Ps. 5. 9.

* Literally, "breakfast."

† R. V. renders this clause, "of those things that are within" suggesting "giving from the heart," but the text is doubtless the correct rendering.

3. The Pharisees and lawyers are now put in the light, and searched out by it: an exposure, indeed, scathingly severe, and which rouses them to the utmost. The denunciation so closely resembles that in Matt. xxiii., which took place at a later time, that Van Oosterzee* supposes that Luke has, in fact, borrowed from this, and interpolated what was actually now said with it. But besides the natural difficulty of accepting what we should certainly object to in an ordinary historian, there is no part of what is here that we might not imagine to be borrowed; to be sure, with some changes. If we confine ourselves to the unchanged parts, these can only be found in vers. 43 and 52: too small a debt to be worth while to incur. On the other hand, that Matthew borrowed from Luke of what was uttered at this time has similar difficulty, and is rejected by Van Oosterzee himself.

Why may we not accept it as the truth that the Lord in His final judgment of Pharisaism repeated much of what He had said at the earlier time recorded by Luke? Why may He not, at the end of His ministry in Israel, have deliberately reaffirmed His former judgment of those scribes and Pharisees whose characters were so well marked? a double testimony suited to the solemnity of it.

[1] To the Pharisee the Lord's words denounce the self-righteousness which was their prominent characteristic. This failed in its externalism, as if God had made the body, not the soul;—the form, but not breathed the spirit into it. Instead of the excessive scrupulosity which this engendered, let them only be ready to impart to the necessities of others, and all else would be clean to them.

Then their scrupulosity in these minutiæ—tithes of mint and rue and every kind of herb—went with the great defects in things of great account, as judgment and the love of God.

With this, self-exaltation, which made them love the chief seat and public greeting.

While the hypocritical smooth outside, with the defilement underneath, made them like graves which rendered men unclean, without their being aware of them.

* In Lange's Commentary.

2 (45-54): the teaching of the lawyers.

[2] And one of the lawyers answered and said to him, Teacher, in saying this thou reproachest* us also. And he said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers: for ye lay upon men [t]burdens grievous to bear, and ye yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. Woe unto you, for ye [u]build the sepulcres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. So ye are witnesses and consent to the works of your fathers: for *they* killed them, and *ye* build their sepulcres. On this account the wisdom of God hath said, I will [w]send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall kill and persecute: that the blood of all the prophets that hath been shed from the foundation of the [x]world may be required of this generation; from the [x]blood of Abel unto the blood of [y]Zacharias, who perished between the altar and the house: verily I say unto you, it shall be required of this generation. Woe unto you, lawyers: for ye have [z]taken away the key of knowledge; ye neither went in yourselves, and those that were entering ye hindered.

And as he said these things unto them,† the scribes and the Pharisees began to [a]press him urgently, and to make him speak of many things; watching him, [and seeking]‡ to catch something out of his mouth that they might accuse him.

4 (xii. 1-12): Tried and in weakness.

4. In those [days], when the myriads of the [b]people were gathered together, so that they trod one upon another, he began to say to his disciples first, Beware of the [c]leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

u Matt.23.4. cf. Acts 15. 10. cf. Gal. 5.1.
v Matt. 23. 29-31. cf.Matt.3.9. cf. Jno.8.37 -40.
w Matt. 23. 34-36. cf. Acts 7. 51-53. cf. Hos. 12. 10. cf.Amos 2. 11, 12.
x Gen. 4. 8-11. cf. 1 Jno.3. 12.
y 2 Chro.24. 20, 21. cf. Acts 7. 57-60 with 1 Thess. 2. 14, 15.
z Matt. 23. 13. cf.Jno.7.48. cf. Acts 4. 16, 17.
a cf. Mk.12. 13. cf.ch 20.20.
b cf. Matt. 16. 6-12. cf. Mk.8.14 -21.
c cf. Lev. 2. 11. cf. 1 Cor. 5. 6, 8. cf. Gal. 5.9.

* Or "insultest." † Some read, "And as he went out thence." ‡ Some omit "and seeking."

[2] The doctors of the law He rebukes for their well-known laying on of intolerable burdens (see p. 215), which they would not even put forth a finger to remove. They built also the sepulcres of the prophets whom their fathers had killed, and honored those whose living voices disturbed men's consciences no longer. Tested by new prophets, they would act as their fathers did, and bring upon themselves the gathering vengeance for all righteous blood from the beginning. Again, as professors of knowledge, they had taken away the very key of it, and, not entering in by it themselves, had only hindered those who were ready to enter.

4. What has been said with regard to the connection of the address to the Pharisees and lawyers with Matt. xxiii. may be and has been said as to the connection of the present chapter with the tenth and other parts of Matthew. That Luke does not always preserve the order of time or the historical connection of events or words may be freely admitted, nor does he here give as definitely as in the last case the time or times of these sayings of the Lord. After the most searching investigation that we can give to such matters, Van Oosterzee allows that definite certainty will, probably, be impossible. If it could be, we would have to ask, would there be any particular profit in such knowledge? It is hard to imagine what. We have the Gospels in the form the Spirit of God has been pleased to give them, and shall surely find divine wisdom in this as elsewhere in Scripture. When it leads commentators to talk of "heterogeneous elements of discourse," we can realize the dangers of too much theorizing in things unknown. We shall do well to take it as we find it, assured that none can mend what needs no mending, and that "to this man will I look," saith the Lord,

But there is nothing [d]covered up, that shall not be revealed, nor hid that shall not be known: therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light, and what ye have spoken in the ear in chambers shall be proclaimed upon the housetops. But I say unto you, my friends, [e]Fear not them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do; but I will show you whom ye shall fear: Fear him who, after he hath killed hath authority to [f]cast into hell;* yea, I say unto you, Fear him. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings†? and not one of them is forgotten before God. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. [g]Fear not, therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows. But I say unto you, Whosoever shall [h]confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God; but he that shall deny me before men shall be [i]denied before the angels of God. And whosoever shall say a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but to him that [j]blasphemeth against the Holy Spirit it shall not be forgiven. But when they shall [k]bring you before the synagogues and rulers and the authorities, be not anxious how or what ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: for the Holy Spirit shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.

*Greek, "Gehenna." †"Assaria."

d ch. 8. 17. Matt. 10. 26. *cf.* Rom. 2. 16.

e Matt. 10. 28. *cf.* Is. 8. 12. *cf.* Acts 4. 23-31. *cf.* 1 Pet. 3. 14, 15.

f *cf.* Matt. 25. 41. *cf.* ch. 16. 22, 23. *cf.* Rev. 19. 20.

g Matt. 10. 29-31. *cf.* ver. 4.

h Matt. 10. 32, 33. Mk. 8. 38. *cf.* Rom. 1. 16. *cf.* Rom. 10. 9, 10.

i *cf.* Matt. 7. 23. *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 12.

j Matt. 12. 31, 32. Mk. 3. 28-30.

k Matt. 10. 19, 20. Mk. 13. 11. *cf.* Acts 4. 5-12.

"even to him that is lowly and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at My word" (Isa. lxvi. 2).

In that which is now before us disciples are addressed, in view of such a condition of things as what has gone before implies. The multitudes are crowding after Him, so that they tread one upon another, and it was at just such times that the Lord's warning voice was almost certain to be heard, to break the spell of that seductive influence which apparent popularity was so apt to exert over the minds of His real followers. The multitudes were under the sway of the Pharisees, as we know, and their pretentious religiousness helped to maintain them in this place. The Lord warns them against "the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy," and puts them in the light of that coming day when all disguise will be stripped off, and what may have been spoken in privacy in the chamber will be proclaimed openly as on the house-tops.

But fear in the presence of the multitude might be as potent a governing principle as the love of power or applause. He exhorts them, therefore, not to be afraid of those whose power was confined at most to the body and the present life, but to fear Him who could not only kill the body, but cast afterwards into hell.

Then He reminds them of His care and tenderness, with whom not a sparrow is forgotten, and who numbers the hairs of their head. *They* need not fear, who were more to God than many sparrows.

Then He calls for confession of Himself before men, and they would be confessed by Him before the angels of God; but those who denied Him before men must look to be denied also before the angels. Yet a word spoken against the Son of man should be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Holy Spirit—as in the malevolent imputing of power that they could not deny to Satan,—that would not be forgiven. It was the sign of malignant enmity to God manifested openly as God.

5 (xii. 13-32): Man with God, for evil or for good.
1 (13-21): independency of God.

5. [1] And one of the multitude said unto him, Teacher, speak to my brother to divide the inheritance with me. And he said unto him, Man, who appointed me a [t]judge or a divider over you? And he said unto them, Take heed and guard yourselves from all [m]covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things that he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The land of a certain rich man brought forth abundantly. And he reasoned within himself, saying, What shall I do? for I have not [n]room where to lay up my fruits. And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there will I lay up all my produce and my goods. And I will say to my soul, [o]Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Senseless one, [p]this night shall thy soul be required from thee; and whose shall those things be which thou hast prepared? So is he who [q]layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.

2 (22-31): dependent faith.

[2] And he said to his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Be not [r]anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, nor for the body, what ye shall put on: for the life is more than food, and the body than clothing. [s]Consider the ravens, that they sow not nor reap, which neither have store-house nor barn, and God feedeth them: how much are ye better than the birds? And which of you by anxious thought can [t]add one cubit to his stature? if then ye cannot do that which is least, why are ye anxious for the rest? Consider the [u]lilies, how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothe the grass which [v]to-day is in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how much more [shall he clothe] you, O ye of little faith? And [w]seek not what ye shall

t *cf.* Jno. 12. 47. *cf.* Jno. 18. 36.
m *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 1-7.
cf. Eph. 5. 5. *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 9, 10.
n Ps. 62. 10. *cf.* Is. 5. 8.
o *cf.* Ps. 49. 6, 11-14. *cf.* Ps. 73. 3-7, 17-20.
p *cf.* 1 Sam. 25. 38. *cf.* Dan. 5. 20-29. *cf.* Jas. 4. 13, 14.
q *cf.* Ps. 52. 7. Matt. 6. 19, 20.
r Matt. 6. 25-34. *cf.* Phil. 4. 6, 7, 19.
s Job 38. 41. Ps. 147. 9. *cf.* 1 Ki. 17. 4-6.
t *cf.* Jas. 4. 14.
u Gen. 2. 5. *cf.* Hos. 14. 5.
v *cf.* Ps. 103. 15, 16.
w *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 8, 9. *cf* Heb. 13. 5.

On the other hand, in the presence of accusers and judges they were to expect the Spirit of God to give them a mouth and wisdom: they needed no anxiety with regard to that.

Evidently, the theme in all this is a world that they must neither court nor fear, but before which Christ must be held up, with the Spirit of Christ to hold up those who did this.

5. [1] He goes on to speak of those to whom the world was all: not persecutors necessarily, but quietly enjoying it; God and the life beyond forgotten. He pictures such an one making his count of long prosperity and suddenly turned out of it into the presence of Him he had made no account of, and leaving all he valued here to whom he knew not. Folly indeed, but how common a folly! the independence of a nature fallen away from God.

[2] On the other hand, the dependence of faith is the remedy for all care, in the consciousness of the care of Him whose presence and power all creation testifies. Seeking His Kingdom—the maintenance of His authority over what was but His own, and whom they could call, "Father,"—the men of faith with their hearts in the unseen, would find the good of all else ministered to them.

eat and what ye shall drink, nor be ye of doubtful mind: for all these things do the nations of the world seek after, and your Father [x]knoweth that ye have need of these things. But seek his kingdom,* and [all]† these things shall be [y]added unto you.

6 (xii. 32-48): Watching?

6. [1] Fear not, little flock: for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. [z]Sell what ye have, and give alms; make yourselves purses that grow not old, a [a]treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, nor moth destroyeth: for [b]where your treasure is there will your heart be also.

1 (32-34): a gift that empowers for giving.

[2] Let your [c]loins be girded about, and [your] lamps burning; and ye like unto men that [d]wait for their own lord, when he shall return on occasion of‡ the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find [e]watching. Verily

2 (35-40): the expectant servant served.

x *cf.* 1 Pet. 5. 7. *cf.* Rom. 8. 32.

y Mk. 10. 28-31. *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 10.

z *cf.* ch. 18. 22. *cf.* Phil. 3. 8. *cf.* Acts. 4. 33-37.

a Matt. 6. 19, 20.

b *cf.* Col. 3. 1.

c Ex. 12. 11. 1. Pet. 1. 13.

d *cf.* Matt. 25. 1-13.

e *cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 10. *cf.* Heb. 9. 28.

*Some read "the kingdom of God." †Some omit. ‡Or "from."

All this is simple to us, thank God. We have listened to such words from childhood, and they are not difficult to apprehend, whether or not we have drunk in their blessedness.

6. The Lord carries us on to what is the limit of the life of faith; not death, but His own coming. Death might come, of course, but we must not, and cannot, confound, in such words as we have here, one thing with the other. The whole thought is different, the blessing of the whole Church, and of the earth, and the glory of Christ Himself being connected with His coming. It is not that we know either when He will come; for the injunction to watch implies the reverse of this. "Watch; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."

[1] First of all, we have the assurance which permits the heart to go out freely after this. The gift of the Kingdom is assured to us as the Father's good pleasure; and this gift qualifies for giving, which, in fact, is but laying up treasure in it. There no possibility can be, of change or loss; and one's treasure being there, fixes the heart there also. (*See p. 93 seq. notes.*)

[2] The loins are to be girt up in readiness for removing, and the lamps burning, for it is night while Christ is absent. The whole attitude is governed by the fact that at any time He may return: His servants are to be as those waiting for their lord, when he shall return on occasion of the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh they may immediately open to him. The common rendering here ("from the wedding") raises a difficulty unnecessarily: for all other passages represent the wedding as following the coming of the Lord, not preceding it, and it would only be possible to say either that the passage here applied to *Jewish* saints after the heavenly ones were already united to the Lord (Rev. xix. 7); or that the figure was only in loose application to the facts. The last is not to be thought of: why introduce a difficulty so easy to be avoided? The former seems contrary to what is here; for we have seen that since the transfiguration the heavenly things have been more opening to us. Hence it is preferable to translate "on occasion of the wedding," which, while quite justifiable, removes every difficulty.

The blessing of those found in this expectant service is great indeed. The heart of Him who was amongst us "as one that serveth" is called forth in response: He will gird Himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. Blessed be His Name, He is the same in heaven as He was on earth. How easy should service be to Him!

"Whether He come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, blessed are those servants." "The Romans divided the night," says Van Oosterzee,

I say unto you that he shall [f]gird himself and make them sit down to meat, and shall come forth and serve them. And if he come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. But this know that, if the master of the house had [g]known in what hour the thief was coming, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be dug through. And ye therefore, be ye ready: for in what hour ye [h]think not the Son of man cometh.

3 (41-44): the portion of the good steward.

[3] And Peter said to him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even unto all? And the Lord said, Who then is the [i]faithful and prudent steward, whom his lord shall set over his household, to give them their [j]portion of food in season? Blessed is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he will make him [k]ruler over all that he hath.

4 (45, 46): lapsed from service.

[4] But if that servant say in his heart, My lord [l]delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite the menservants and maid-servants, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken, the lord of that servant shall come in a day that he looketh not for, and in an hour that he knoweth not, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint his portion with the [m]unbelievers.

f *cf.* Jno. 13. 4, 13. *cf.* 1 Sam. 2. 30.

g *cf.* Rev. 3. 3. *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 4.

h *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 10. *cfr.* Rev. 22. 17, 20.

i Matt. 24. 45 -51.

j *cf.* Acts 20. 28.

k *cf.* ch. 19. 17.

l *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 3, 4. *cfr.* Rev. 22. 7.

m *cf.* Matt. 25. 30.

"into four night-watches, a division which the Jews had accepted from them. The opinion is entirely without ground that the Saviour here followed another division into only three night-watches. He says nothing of the fourth, simply for the reason that the disciples, from that, should note that His return was by no means to be expected as late as possible; even as He does not name the first, because it would weaken the whole representation of the watchful servants. The Parousia does not come so quickly as impatience, nor yet so late as carelessness supposes, but in the very middle of the night, when the temptation to fall asleep is great and therefore must be most vigorously combated. It may even tarry longer than the servants think; but, grant that it should not take place even till the third, or should come even in the second watch of the night, whosoever perseveres faithfully at his post shall in no wise lose his reward."

The Lord has a word on the other side, where the servant has somehow become "the master of the house," and the coming of the Son of man like the unwelcome visit of a thief. It would be needful for such to remember that the thief does not come at an hour expected, or perhaps the house would not have been dug through. "*If* he had known" only presses the fact that he does *not* know.

[3] Peter asks whether this parable is limited to the twelve, or applies to all. The Lord answers, not directly, but by giving, on the one side and on the other, the portion of the faithful and of the unfaithful steward. Responsibility attaches wherever there is trust; and proportionate to the reward of faithfulness is the recompense of unfaithfulness. The parables here, if we may call them such, are almost word for word those at the end of the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew; yet seem to have been given at another time, and the repetition of specially important lessons may surely have had its purpose in imprinting them the more on the minds of the disciples. (*See p. 232, notes.*)

[4] The only difference in the parable of the unfaithful servant is that instead of eating and drinking *with* the drunken, he is himself drunken, and the association with others is omitted. His portion is said also to be "with the unbelievers," as in Matthew "with the hypocrites."

5 (47, 48): the award measured.

7 (xii. 49–59): The conclusion.
1 (49, 50): the purpose of God.
2 (51–53): the division resulting.

5 And that servant who [n]knew his lord's will, and prepared not [himself], nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many [stripes], but he who knew not, but did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with [o]few. And to whomsoever [p]much is given, from him shall much be required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

7. [1] I came to cast [q]fire on the earth; and what will I, if it hath been already kindled? But I have a [r]baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished.

[2] Suppose ye that I have come to give [s]peace upon earth? I tell you, nay; but rather division. For from this time there shall be five in one house divided: [t]three shall be divided against two, and two against three: father against son, and son against father; mother against daughter, and daughter against mother; mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

n *cf.* Num. 15. 30, 31. *cf.* Jas. 4. 17. *cf.* Heb. 10. 28, 29.
o *cf.* Lev. 5. 17. *cf.* Rom. 2. 12.
p *cf.* Lev. 4. 22. *cf.* 2 Sa. 12. 7–10. *cf.* Gen. 39. 8, 9.
q *cf.* ch. 3. 16, 17. *cf.* Mal. 3. 2, 3. *cf.* vers 51, etc.
r *cf.* Mk. 10. 38. *cf.* ch. 9. 51.
s Matt. 10. 34–36. *cf.* Gal. 5. 11. *cf.* ch. 19. 38.
t Mi. 7. 5, 6. *cf.* ch. 14. 26.

5 There is added here, as not in Matthew, the statement as to the gradation of penalty according to the measure of knowledge of his lord's will on the part of the servant. On the other hand, the want of knowledge, since it was capable of being obtained, does not secure the offender. Indeed the smiting of fellow-servants and the drinking until drunken could not be excused after that manner. The common conscience of men is sufficient to condemn the grossness of what is often done by professing Christians without apparent check from their religion.

7. The Lord closes now with putting the purpose of God in connection with its present effects among men. These in fact were very different. The Prince of peace had brought a sword. Israel, so long identified with the revelation of God to men,—from which salvation was to come for men,—was nevertheless to be set aside. Yet His purposes moved on, spite of all this, to their accomplishment, and the signs were already in the world, though they might be blind to them.

1 Christ had come to cast fire upon earth. The holiness of God was to be manifested; nay, already the effects of it were showing themselves: the fire was being kindled among men. The grace in which it was displayed did not alter this, for grace in no wise means tolerance of sin. Alas, men could little bear the exposure of it: "The world hateth Me," said the divine Speaker here, "because I testify of it that its works are evil" (John vii. 7). Thus the fire that would have purified, consumed.

And of Him holiness required the baptism of suffering that was before Him, before His full heart, otherwise straitened, could be poured out as He longed to pour it out. He Himself must satisfy this necessity of the divine nature. Thus on God's part there should be no hindrance to fullest blessing. According to the significance of baptism, these sufferings would put Him into a new place with God, a place of sanctification on account of His people (John xvii. 19), through which they would find a new and blessed place in Him.

2 But what would be the result of this as to men at large? Peace among men, in the union of heart with heart in the acceptance of it? No; but everywhere division, and among the most intimate relations of life; a man's foes would be those of his own household. "The world would no more endure faith in the Saviour than it did the Saviour Himself, who was faith's object, and whom it confessed. It is well to note how the presence of the Saviour draws out the evil of the human heart. The state described here is in Micah, the description of the most dreadful state of evil conceivable (Mic. vii. 1–7)." (*Synopsis.*)

3 (54-57): signs.

3 And he said also unto the multitudes, When ye see a [u]cloud rising out of the west, immediately ye say, A shower is coming; and so it cometh to pass. And when [ye see] the south wind blowing, ye say, There will be heat: and it cometh to pass. Hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the earth and of the heaven, and [v]how is it that ye cannot discern this time? But why even of your own selves judge ye not what is right?

4 (58, 59): the failure of Israel.

4 For as thou goest with thine [w]adversary to the magistrate, give diligence on the [x]way to be reconciled with him; lest he drag thee to the [y]judge, and the judge deliver thee to the [z]officer, and the officer cast thee into [a]prison. I tell thee, thou shalt not come out thence, till thou hast [b]paid the very last mite.

u Matt.16.2, 3.
v *cf.* Rom. 13. 11. *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 18. *cf.*1 Chr.12. 32.
w Matt. 5. 25, 26.
x *cf.* ch. 14. 31, 32. *cf.*Heb.3.7, 8.
y *cf.*Jas 5.9. *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 5..
z *cf.* Judg.6. 1, etc. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 11.
a *cf.* Matt. 18. 30–34. *cf.*Is. 24.22.
b *cf.*Is.51.17. *cf.* ch.19.41 –44.

SECTION 3. (Chaps. xiii.-xvi.)

The Gospel as manifesting God to man.

1 (xiii.): Righteousness alone barren.

1. [1] THERE were present at that time some who told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had [c]mingled with their sacrifices. And he answered and said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners [d]beyond all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I

c *ctr.* ch. 23. 17. *cf.* Lam. 2. 20.
d *cf.*Jno.9.2.

[3] Yet God had not left them without witness, plainly to be read as the face of the heavens which they were so skillful in discerning. It was hypocrisy to pretend they had not what only their unwillingness to see rendered obscure. Conscience only was needed, the discernment of what was right. The signs given of God are of moral character, and the right is what appeals to every man; yet the appeal may be none the less in vain.

[4] Israel had thus failed as the witness of God on earth. Their own law had pronounced upon them; Moses, in whom they trusted, was but their accuser; while they were refusing Him through whom they might have been reconciled to him. The Lord utters still His warning, but with the consciousness in His heart that their doom was at hand.

Sec. 3.

We are approaching now the very heart of the Gospel; in which God is manifested in righteousness and love to man: His whole character is made apparent. But for this, man also must be manifested, in order that the suitability and necessity of God's grace may be seen. This is the theme of the first part here, therefore, that righteousness alone, man being what he is, can do nothing for him: judgment, and only judgment, is his portion. The second part (chap. xiv) exhibits God and man in contrast to one another; men seeking their own things and without taste for the things of God; with the consequences of this for those that follow Christ. While, thirdly, in the fifteenth chapter, all the heart of God is seen as towards man when simply lost, rejoicing in his recovery. The sixteenth goes on to the practical life of the disciple, and to the recompence beyond.

1. The first part lays the basis of repentance, and shows how far man's judgment of himself must go, if it is to answer to the judgment of God with regard to him. Here we have—

[1] First, very precisely, Paul's doctrine of "no difference," with which he opens the way for the gospel in his epistle to the Romans. They tell the Lord about the Galileans whom Pilate had slain at the very altar, as they were drawing near to God. He probes the thought of their heart by the question: was this, then, a proof that they were greater sinners than others in the sight of God?

tell you, nay; but except ye [e]repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, suppose ye that they were debtors beyond all the men that dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

2 (6-9): "but if not"—the alternative.

[2] And he spake this parable: A certain man had a [f]fig-tree planted in his [g]vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. And he said to the vinedresser, Behold, these three years I come, [h]seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: [i]cut it down; why doth it also render the ground useless? But he answered and said unto him, Lord, let it alone [j]this year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it; and if it bear fruit, [well]; and if not, [k]after that thou shalt cut it down.

3 (10-17): resource in God.

[3] And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath; and behold, a woman having a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and she was [l]bowed together, and wholly unable to lift herself up. And when Jesus saw her, he called to her and said, Woman, thou art [m]loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight and glorified God. But the ruler of the synagogue answered

e cf. vers. 23, 24. cfr. 1 Tim. 1. 13-16.

f cf. Jno. 1. 48 with Ezr. 9. 8, 9.

g cf. Is. 5. 1-4. cf. Ps. 80. 8-16.

h cf. Matt. 21. 19, 23-33.

i cf. Ex. 32. 7-14. cf. Ezek. 20. 8, 9, etc. Matt. 3. 10.

j cf. Nu. 14. 11-14. cf. ch. 24. 47 with Acts 3. 26.

k cf. Rom. 11. 21. cf. Acts 13. 46.

l cf. Lev. 21. 20. cf. Deut. 28. 59.

m ch. 4. 18. cf. Ps. 146. 8.

and answers it Himself, that they were not, but that, except they repented, all would perish alike: there was not a possible one who could merit escape.

He adds another example, where the character of what took place might make it seem more like the special judgment of God Himself,—eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell and slew them: were these, at any rate, "debtors" to the justice of God beyond all else of the dwellers in Jerusalem? and again He will not leave it to others to answer, but answers it Himself in the same way as before. The number 18, which is 3x6, speaks of evil manifested in its highest uprise; and note that the Lord says not a word with regard to them to lessen the thought of evil in them: that is not the point. On the contrary, make of it as much as possible, the lesson is only deeper. For the question is, *not*, were they sinners beyond others? but does the hand of God upon them *prove* them to be that? had they not been such, could they have pleaded exemption from divine judgment on that account? And to this He answers, No: judgment from God, and even to perdition, will come upon all, except they repent. It is the owning the ruin in which we are alike, which casts us, *as* sinners, upon unfailing mercy and brings out from under judgment: this, and this alone.

[2] He strengthens this by showing that the *delay* of judgment does not at all mean escape from it, but only that God *desires* men to escape, and would leave them the possibility of it. The alternative still remains: "if not, thou shalt cut it down;" the fruit of repentance must be brought forth, or sooner or later (if in this life even never) judgment must take its course.

Even this respite comes, not from comparative betterness, but through a Mediator. It is not that there is some little fruit, but let it alone till all means are exhausted that may produce fruit. It is the plea of mercy only that could avail for any; and the fruit of repentance must at last be found.

[3] Here comes in the assurance of the resource that there is in God for all that so turn to Him, though it be "without strength" as well as "ungodly." A woman bowed together so that she could not lift up herself, for eighteen years! Notice, once more, that sinister eighteen. Yet with Him there is no difficulty.

with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the
n sabbath day, and said to the multitude, There are six
days in which men are to work: in these therefore,
come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day. But
the Lord answered him, and said, Hypocrites, doth not
o each of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from
the manger, and lead it away and water it? And ought
not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom
p Satan hath bound, lo, [these] eighteen years, to be loosed
from this bond on the sabbath day? And when he
said this, all his adversaries were ashamed, and all the
multitude q rejoiced at all the glorious things that were
being done by him.

t (18-21): the kingdom in man's hand.
a (18, 19): in independence.
b (20-21): the leaven of falsehood.

t *a* Then he said, Unto what is the kingdom of God
like? and to what shall I liken it? It is like a grain of
r mustard-seed which a man took and cast into his gar-
den; and it grew, and became a tree; and the birds of
the heaven lodged in its branches.

b And again he said, To what shall I liken the king-
dom of God? It is like s leaven, which a woman took
and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was
leavened.

n ch. 6.7-11. Jno. 5.9,10.

o ch. 14. 5. Matt. 12.10-13.

p *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 8. *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 26.

q ch. 14. 6. *cf.* Acts 5. 12, 13. ch. 19. 37, 38.

r Matt. 13. 31, 32. *cf.* Acts 20. 29, 30 with Rev. 18. 2.

s Matt. 13. 33. *cf.* Gal. 1. 6-9. *cfr.* 2 Cor. 2. 17.

"Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity." He says; and then His hands make His words good. She was made straight immediately, and glorified God.

But this produces indignation in the synagogue: for it is the sabbath; and a man must not use the power of God upon the sabbath day! What! the Lord says: is it to preserve the rest of God unbroken, to keep a daughter of Abraham in bondage to Satan? Notice the emphasis He lays upon this, that she is a daughter of Abraham. How unseemly for one who inherits Abraham's faith to be kept bowed together; and this is, doubtless, how we are to take Christ's plea for her, as in the case of Zacchæus afterwards (xix. 9). This perfects the picture: work there is none, but God's work, and the synagogue in vain would tie *His* hands. It was, in fact, but loud-voiced hypocrisy: for they had no difficulty in leading away their beasts to the water. They only prized man at less than the beast.

t With this, for the time, His adversaries are silenced, and the people rejoice at all His glorious works. But the Lord repeats here two significant parables whose meaning we have already seen, but which gain a new significance from their new position. They are parables of the Kingdom not then begun, and carry us beyond Judaism into that which would indeed seem to show His adversaries silenced, and the people rejoicing in His power established.

Alas, what it does show is the likeness of human nature in all dispensations, the revival of the synagogue in the professing Church of Christ, and the consequent degradation of the divine in human hands. For these parables show us the Kingdom of God itself administered by man, and the changed form which is the result of this. In the first it is seen like one of the kingdoms of the world, and the ministers of Satan finding shelter in it. In the second the professing Church itself is adulterating the bread from heaven, to adapt it to the tastes of the world; in the end the word being leavened. Such is man; and in no way, perhaps, could he be shown more hopeless in his evil. Hope can be in God alone.

The weakness even of the saint is shown in these pictures: for the evil goes on without ability on his part to overcome it. For himself he may; but he has lost control of that which was committed to him, and cannot recover it. His very separation from the evil, which faithfulness to God enjoins, has to be in confession of the general ruin.

5 (22-30): judgment at the end.

5 And he went through one city and village after another, teaching and journeying towards Jerusalem. And a certain man said to him, Lord, are they [t]few that are to saved? But he said unto them, [u]Strive earnestly to enter in through the narrow door: for many, I say to you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the [v]master of the house has risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without and to knock at the door saying, Lord, open to us, and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are; then shall ye begin to say, We have [w]eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. And he will say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; [x]depart from me, all workers of unrighteousness. There shall be the [y]weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves cast out. And they shall come from the [z]east and the west, and from the north and the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And behold, there are [a]last that shall be first, and there are first that shall be last.

6 (31-35): the evil under control from God.

6 In the same hour came certain Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out and go hence, for [b]Herod would fain kill thee. And he said unto them, Go and tell that [c]fox, Behold, I [d]cast out demons and perform cures today and to-morrow, and on the [e]third [day] I am per-

t Matt. 7.14. Matt. 20.16. *cf.* Rev. 7.9.
u *cf.* Matt. 11.12. *cf.* Heb. 12.16, 17.
v *cf.* Matt. 25.10-12. *cf.* Gen. 7.16.
w Matt. 7.21-23. *cf.* Tit. 1.16. *cf.* Jude 12.
x Matt. 25.41. *cf.* 2 Thess. 1.9.
y Matt. 8.12. 2 Pet. 2.17. Ps. 112.10. *ctr.* ch. 7.38.
z *cf.* Mal. 1.11. Matt. 8.11.
a Matt. 19.30. Matt. 20.16.
b *cf.* ch. 9.7-9.
c *cf.* Ps. 37.12. *cf.* Mi. 3.1-3.
d *cf.* Acts. 10.38.
e Matt. 17.23. *cf.* Heb. 2.10.

Such then is man; and being such, all help, all hope, must be in God alone. "Cease ye from *man*, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (Isa. ii. 22).

This judgment, seen and accepted in the Cross, is peace, holiness and happiness. Self is set aside by that which has made peace for us; and Christ abides as the One in whom we have acceptance with God, and the store-house, freely ours, of every blessing.

5 But judgment yet abides for those that refuse His grace, and the door of salvation is even a narrow one, for the many who would gladly enter the Kingdom by some way more gratifying to their pride of heart, or freer to the careless foot of those who would have God as careless. Nor would that door be always open: the Master of the house would rise and shut it; and then there would be many left outside, even of those who could plead outward acquaintance with Him, but no practical inward knowledge, still the unsaved doers of unrighteousness. Then would be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when they would see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of God, but be themselves shut out: and Gentiles too from all quarters would come and sit down there; the last being first, the first last: men's thoughts ever, naturally, the opposite of God's. But God's will stand.

6 The Pharisees come now to the Lord with an apparently friendly suggestion, but which, from His answer to it, evidently proceeded from Herod himself. "That fox" was but seeking in a round-about way to get rid of One whom he feared as well as hated. It is easily to be understood from what we have read of him elsewhere, that he did not want more blood on his hands of such a character as had already stained them. Yet the reports of the marvels done in what was his own kingdom troubled and haunted a heart in which, as is so commonly the case, superstition and unbelief held sway together. If he did

fected. But I must go my way to-day and to-morrow and the following [day]: for it is not permitted a *f*prophet to perish outside Jerusalem. *g*Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth those that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a *h*hen her brood under her wings, and ye *i*would not. Behold, your *j*house is left unto you! and I say unto you, Ye shall not see me until ye shall say, *k*Blessed is he that cometh in the name of [the] Lord.

2(xiv.)Man in contrast with and estrangement from God.

1 (1–6): the prerogative of good with God.

2. [1] And it came to pass, as he entered into the house of one of the rulers [who was] of the Pharisees, on the Sabbath, to eat bread, that they were *l*watching him. And behold, there was before him a certain man who had the *m*dropsy. And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it *n*lawful to heal on the sabbath, or not? But they were silent. And

f *cf.* Ezek. 3. 5-7.
cf. ch. 4. 24.
g Matt. 23. 37-39. ch. 19. 41, 42.
cf. Hos. 11. 8.
h *cf.* Ps. 57. 1. *cf.* Ps. 91. 4.
i *cf.* John 5. 40.
cf. Acts 3. 14, 15.
j *cfr.* Jno. 2. 16, 17.
k *cf.* Ps. 118. 26 with Ps. 24. 7-10.
l *cf.* ch. 6. 7, etc.
m *cf.* ch. 9. 11.
cf. Matt. 4. 23.
n *cf.* Jno. 5. 10, 16, 17.

not want to commit himself to threatening which he might have to make good, he was more than willing that it should be done by others. The Lord shows him that He knew well his design, and that He was perfectly beyond the power of all that he could do. The power of God which was showing itself supreme over man's great enemy, and in tender assuagement of the misery which had evoked divine compassion in its behalf, could not submit to be thwarted or curbed by aught that man could do. It would go on "to-day and to-morrow,"—the two days of testimony in the face of unbelief; on the third day, He, the glorious Worker, would be perfected; and there is surely an enigmatic reference to resurrection. The mightiest miracle of all, not in power displayed only, but in its significance, would place Him for ever in manifest supremacy, with His work accomplished, all the power of the enemy but working out, spite of itself, the divine purpose.

For He knew whither He was going, not to escape Herod, but to meet the enmity of man where it had ever displayed itself most, where most God had, through the generations past, drawn near to men. Jerusalem had a fanaticism of hatred for the prophets which would be jealous of any perishing elsewhere. Then with a sob of anguish for His murderers:—"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth those that are sent unto her!"—He turns where His heart draws Him, to testify in face of the inevitable result following —"how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen her brood under her wings! and ye would not." So He and they must part, because they will: their house—no more God's house—is left to them; and "I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me, until ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

2. The fourteenth chapter shows man, such as we have seen him, in contrast with God, and the rejection of His grace by man in consequence of the resulting estrangement of his heart from Him. The conditions of discipleship are therefore the readiness to abandon even the nearest relatives for His sake, and to take up one's cross to follow Him. The cost must be reckoned seriously in a world so adverse, and God's salt must not be allowed to lack its savor.

[1] Once more the sabbath question is brought up; and this time, by the Lord Himself. In it they would set God against Himself, and make His statutes prohibitory of the profit to men they were intended to secure. He takes this up therefore in the house of one of their rulers and a Pharisee. A man is there before Him who has the dropsy; and He asks the question which was not then for the first time asked, but which they had never answered, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath?" But they are silent. Then He makes divine power give the

he took him and healed him, and let him go. And he said unto them, [o]Which of you shall have an ass or ox fall into a well, and will not immediately draw him up on the sabbath day? And they [p]could not answer him again as to these things.

2 (7-11): the wisdom of humility.

2 And he spake a parable unto those that were invited, as he marked how they chose out the [q]chief places, saying unto them, When thou art invited by any one to a marriage feast, do not put thyself down in the chief place, lest perhaps a more honorable man than thou be invited by him, and he who invited thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place, and then thou shalt begin with shame to take the last place. But when thou art invited, go and put thyself down in the [r]last place, that when he who invited thee cometh, he may say to thee, Friend, go up higher. Then shalt thou have honor before all that are at table with thee. For every one that [s]exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that abaseth himself shall be exalted.

3 (12-14): a portion in resurrection.

3 And he said also to him that had invited him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kindred, nor thy rich neighbors, lest haply they also should invite thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, invite the [t]poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; and thou shalt be blessed: for they have not [wherewith] to recompense thee; for it shall be recompensed thee in the resurrection of the just.

o ch. 13. 15. cf. Ex. 23.4, 5.
p ch. 13. 17. ch. 20. 26. cf. Matt. 22. 12.
q Prov. 25.6, 7. cf. Jno. 9.34, 40. cf. ch. 18.11. ctr. 1 Tim. 1. 15.
r cf. Phil. 3.4 -7. cf. 1 Cor. 15. 9.
s cf. 1 Sam. 2. 7, 8. cf. Prov. 29. 23. cf. 1 Pet. 5.5, ch. 18.13,14.
t cf. ch. 15.2. cf. ch. 1. 52, 53. cf. ch. 7. 41, 42. cf. Is. 55. 1.

answer, surely an unbribed one: He takes and heals him, and lets him go. God has decided.

The case He puts to them, He had put before; and He puts it to show that they themselves had virtually decided it also, and that to make even a doubt of it was mere hypocrisy on their part; they made none if it were ox or ass, or the worth of these. But good with God has constant prerogative: He never tied His own hands, that He should not bless, though man, if he could, would do so. They lacked sincerity; but how far were they from God, who dared to argue for Him so!

2 He turns to the guests to press on them the wisdom of humility. Even in the world the man that exalts himself is often abased: but with God this is the constant rule. Man's way is that of self-exaltation: he cannot trust God nor see himself aright; he must be abased for blessing or abased in judgment. How the Speaker here in His own Person illustrates the contrast between God and man. How far He had come down! emptying Himself in a love that seeketh not her own, that divine fulness might be in Him for human need: a need which our pride forbids us to own, and would make the cross of Christ but foolishness.

3 Now He has a word also for the entertainer, bidding him seek his recompense at the resurrection of the just. For this, he must not invite those who can repay him, but the poor, the maimed, the blind. To covet what is spiritual, and invisible except to faith: that is not only permitted but enjoined upon us, though the recompense is but mercy, and the Giver One who never mistakes, and whose rule in exaltation and abasement, Christ has just now given. We are safe, therefore, in waiting for His approval; while the sense of His grace encourages the weakest to send his heart on there.

t (15-24): God's offer testing man.

15 t And when one of them that were at table heard these things, he said unto him, u Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. But he said unto him, A certain man made a v great supper, and invited many; and he sent out his servant at supper-time, to say to those invited, w Come, for all things are now ready. And they all began with one consent to make excuse. The first said to him, I have x bought a field, and must needs go out and see it: I pray thee, have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee, have me excused. And another said, I have y married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. And the servant came, and related to his lord these things. Then the master of the house, being angry, said unto his servant, Go out quickly into the z streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and maimed and blind and lame. And the servant said, Lord, what thou commandedst is done, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the a highways and hedges, and compel [them] to come in, that my house may be filled: for I say unto you that none of those men that were invited shall b taste of my supper.

u cf. Rev. 19. 9.
v Matt. 22. 2-14. cf. 1 Ki. 10. 5. cf. Prov. 9. 1-5.
w cf. Matt. 10. 6-8. cf. Jno. 7. 37.
x cf. Acts 13. 38, 39.
x cf. ch. 12. 16-21. cf. 1 Tim. 6. 9, 10.
y cf. ch. 17. 26-28. cf. vers. 26, 27. cf. 1 Cor. 7. 29-33.
z ver. 13. cf. ch. 4. 18. cf. 1 Tim. 1. 15.
a cf. Matt. 28. 19. cf. Acts 1. 8. cf. Acts 11. 18.
b cf. Acts 13. 46, 47. cf. Acts 28. 26-28. cf. Rom. 11. 7-10.

15 t Now, when one of those at table hears these things, his heart is stirred to say that he is indeed blessed who shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God: to which the Lord replies by a parable, to the effect that men do not think so, but when God opens to them the provision of His house, the invited guests begin all to make excuse. Their possessions, the relations upon which they have entered, these in themselves not evil, are made excuses for turning the back upon that to which as Israelites they had been invited, and where indeed they claimed to have a place. The Kingdom long looked for had come nigh at last, the blessed Servant of Jehovah had appeared, to make known to the guests that the appointed time was arrived, and all things were now ready. Nothing needed but to come and partake of the free bounty of God,—of a grace which required nothing but man's acceptance of it.

The leaders of the nation, their self-claimed representatives, were those who had treated thus the heavenly message. Grace itself was forced to turn from them to the poor of the flock, those in the streets and lanes of the city, "the poor and the lame and the maimed, and the blind." Poor enough, and with plenty of defects, the very evils of their condition were such as took from them the excuses which had been made by the others. "The blind had no field to view, the lame could not go along behind his oxen, the maimed had no wife who could have hindered him from coming; only the feeling of poverty could have held them back; but this feeling also vanishes, since they must in a friendly way be led in by the Servant" (*Van Oosterzee*).

Thus the condition of the guests, which stumbled the Pharisees, is accounted for. The publican and the harlot went into the Kingdom of God before these: for their knowledge of themselves as sinners, and their despair of self-recovery, made the Saviour of the lost to be fully suited to them. Repentance and faith were in their case friendly associates which took them by both hands to lead them to Jesus.

But God's provision found not in this way sufficient guests in Israel: "Lord, it is done as Thou hast commanded, and yet there is room." Again, therefore, is the word issued, "Go out into the highways and hedges,"—to the mere unsheltered wanderers, such as were, spiritually, the Gentiles,—"and compel them

[5] 25-35): conditions of discipleship to be exercised about.

[5] And there went great multitudes with him; and he turned and said unto them, If any one cometh to me, and shall not [c]hate his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his own [d]cross, and come after me, he cannot be my disciple. For which of you, wishing to [e]build a tower, doth not first sit down and count the cost, whether he hath wherewith to complete it? lest haply, having laid the foundation and not being able to finish it, all who behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man [f]began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to [g]encounter another king in war, doth not first sit down and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand [men] to meet him that cometh against him with [h]twenty thousand? and if

c *cf.* Gen. 12. 1. *cf.* Deut. 33. 8-10. *cf.* Jno. 12. 25.
d Matt. 16. 24, 25. *cf.* Gal. 2. 20. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 10, 11.
e *cf.* Matt. 7. 24, etc. *cf.* Matt. 13. 20, 21.
f *cf.* Gal. 5. 7. *cf.* Heb. 6. 4-9.
g *cf.* ch. 12. 58, 59. *cf.* 1 Ki. 20. 11. *cf.* Prov. 25. 8.
h *cf.* 1 Cor. 10. 22.

cf. Jude 14, 15; *cf.* Rev. 19. 11-21.

to come in," (love's sweet compulsion,) "that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men that were invited shall taste of my supper."

The last words, though speaking of the rejection on God's side of those who were rejecting His grace in Israel, their place given to the Gentiles, yet in principle remains true as to all rejectors, they shall not taste of God's supper. The invitation is now world-wide, and bears with it wherever it goes the responsibility attached.

[5] There follow, the world being such as all this shows it to be, the conditions of discipleship. It is just when crowds are going with Him, and to these, that the Lord declares them. He had spoken in the same way before, but the repetition intensifies His utterance, and shows its exceeding importance. He who comes to Him must hate (in comparison with Him) all nearest and dearest to him, and his own life, too. He must bear his cross, and come after Him, or he cannot be His disciple.

Then He bids them count the cost of this, and draws two pictures: the first under the figure of building: the second, of a warfare.

A "tower" is something that is conspicuous and eminent as a building; and needs, on that account, a special solidity. It may be for defence; it may be for overlooking what is round it. Our Christian discipleship should have all these characters.

It will be conspicuous, in a world like this, just as far as it is Christian. The world is not something of an inferior sort, but the total opposite of Christianity. The Christian is a light in the world, a light which shines in darkness, and cannot blend with it.

It will be eminent: little need to say that, with the Lord's conditions before our eyes. Even the world recognizes the moral height of devotedness and self-sacrifice; though it will make large reserve when it is estimating this in the case of a Christian.

Then as to defence, the character of the disciple fully maintained shields him from how much temptation which the waverer invites and succumbs to; while the suffering to which he is exposed as such causes the "Spirit of glory and of God" to rest upon him (1 Peter iv. 14), power that is equal to every demand upon it.

Finally, the disciple it is who as such acquires the ability to see, the single eye being in fact that of the disciple, to whom Christ is the touchstone of every thing.

But this is a tower that costs much to build, from the point of view from which it is seen by one outside it. It will cost him all that the world holds precious; how much he will gain he is not yet in the place to see. He who

not, while he is yet far off, he sendeth an embassy, and asketh [g]conditions of peace. So then, every one of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple. [h]Salt* is good; but if even the salt has become savorless, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is fit neither for the land nor for the dunghill; they cast it away. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

3 (xv.) The heart of God displayed. [l] (1-7): the faithfulness of the Shepherd.

3. [i] Now all the [k]tax-gatherers and sinners were drawing near to him to hear him. And both the Pharisees and the scribes [l]murmured, saying, This [man] receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. But he spake unto them

*Most add "therefore."

[g] cf. 2 Ki. 10. 4. 5. cf. Job 22. 21. cf. Col. 1. 20. cf. ch. 15. 1 24.
[h] Matt. 5. 13. Mk. 9. 50. cf. Jno. 15. 6. cf. 2 Pet. 2. 20-22.
[i] ch. 5. 27-32. ch. 7. 29. ch. 19. 2.
[l] ch. 7. 34. 39. ch. 19. 7. Matt. 9. 11.

attempts it lightly will surely find it beyond his power to accomplish; and he who does not undertake it in strength far greater than his own.

The next picture of discipleship views it as a warfare. A king is going to an encounter with another king: for you must indeed be as a king to meet the forces that are against you in the world. Moreover these are not merely irregular, guerilla forces: they are organized under a king of their own, the dread "prince of this world," with more than the power of this world in his hand, and more than you are likely to be able to meet, high as you may rate your competence. Here, surely, if you come to reckoning, all is against you: the case is more strongly against you, the result of failure worse than in the former one. You may be scoffed at if you begin to build and are not able to finish; but here it will be worse: provoke the animosity of the world against you, and it is an enemy that does not easily forgive.

Thus the effect of reckoning may seem mere discouragement; and so it is meant to be, from all mere levity, and from all self-confidence: if you are setting out in either of these moods, you may as well give up at once. If, on the other hand, you are in serious earnest, the Lord's words are meant only to cast you upon resources better than your own, and all-sufficient.

But savorless salt, of what use is it? just as little is discipleship without reality. Israel had been, in God's thought for her, such a purifying salt for the nations of the earth. It had become savorless; and God's new evangel had not succeeded in imparting to it the quality which it had lost. It could only be cast out. And just such would be the case with those who should now have merely the label without the reality of discipleship.

3. We now come to the very heart of the Lord's teaching in this Gospel, and turn from man and what he is, to realize the love of God towards him, in spite of, or rather, in view of what he is,—the heart of God told out in seeking and saving that which is lost. The three parables of this chapter unite in this: in each case what has been lost is found; in each the joy is with the finder; and in heaven, before the angels, speaks conclusively of Whose joy it is that is presented. The *three* parables again, in this connection, naturally suggest the Trinity, the Shepherd and the Father being in manifest agreement also with such a thought. The Woman does not seem so, until we realize that the Spirit is often presented in Scripture in the agents and instruments through which He works. The Woman then will stand directly for the Church, but still as the vehicle of the Spirit, and all parts of the chapter will be in place. Father, Son, and Spirit are all occupied with man; and he it is through whom the angels themselves become adoring witnesses of the "exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus."

[i] All the tax-gatherers and sinners were drawing near to Him to hear Him: this was the occasion of the parables and shows us the application of them as not to wandering saints, but to sinners truly that: the "lost," a deeper word used by divine love here than the Pharisees themselves, as to men in this life,

this parable, saying, What man of you, having a [m] hundred sheep, and having lost from among them [n] one, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and [o] go after that which is lost until he find it? And, having found it, he putteth it on his [p] shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, [q] Rejoice with me: for I have found my sheep that was lost. I say unto you that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that [r] repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just men who need no repentance.

8 (8–10): the woman, the church.

[8] Or what [s] woman, having ten [t] pieces of silver,* if she lose one piece, doth not light a [u] lamp, and [v] sweep the house, and seek carefully till she find it? And, having found it, she calleth together her friends and neighbors, saying, [w] Rejoice with me: for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

* "Drachma": a drachma was worth about 17½ cents.

m Matt. 18. 12-14. *cf.* Rom. 3. 10.
n *cf.* Is. 53. 6. *cf.* Jno. 4. 7, etc.
o *cf.* ch. 5. 2, 17.
p ch. 10. 34. Jno. 10. 28-30. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 5.
q *cf.* Zeph. 3. 17. *cf.* Is. 53. 11. vers. 9, 23, 32.
r *cf.* Acts. 2. 37. *cf.* Acts. 11. 18. *cf.* 2 Cor. 7. 10.
s *ctr.* Matt. 13. 33. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 12.
t *cf.* Mk. 8. 36; *cf.* Matt. 13. 45, 46; *cf.* Is. 43. 4.
u *cf.* Zeph. 1. 12; *cf.* Ps. 119. 105.
v *cf.* Ps. 50. 21; *cf.* Ps. 90. 8.
w vers. 6, 7; *cf.* Acts 8. 8.

would have cared to utter. But these were murmuring, after their manner, at the Physician of sin-sick souls, for going after them. "This Man receiveth sinners," they say, "and eateth with them." It is then that in a parable He makes personal appeal to them. Was there any of them who if he lost but one sheep out of a hundred, would not leave all the rest and go and find it? Yet they wondered at the value of a human soul to Him! He was finding what He had lost: for they were His; He was Maker and owner of them indeed, become shepherd in His care for them; and He would not leave one such till He had got it back.

We see in this a character of these parables as an appeal to the different classes before Him: not meant therefore, to convey merely general truth but to specialize and apply it. The "lost" is not here characteristic of men in general, but meant to apply itself to those who in self-despair would take it as their description. The Pharisees would disclaim it as intended for them—would have resented it if so applied: they would discern readily enough for whom it was intended; while the poor outcast sinners, self-convicted, would find to their unutterable joy, that they were just those whom He, compassionate Saviour, could not suffer to be lost. All that followed was for them: the putting upon His shoulders, the bringing home with joy; His care too great to trust them any more to themselves for getting home. Then the reception, the gathering together of the friends, the angels, to bid them all rejoice with Him! He does not close without a word for the other class here: for, if the lost sheep was the sinner that repenteth, who then were these "ninety and nine just persons who needed no repentance?" Ah, there had been no joy like this in heaven over them! there never could be as long as they retained this character.

[8] The second parable is that of the woman, in Scripture the figure of the Church, the instrument of the Spirit. The lamp of the Word is in her hand, and she needs it in the darkness of the night, while Christ is absent. The "house" is the circle of natural ties and relationships; for it is not just a question of public preaching, but of that testimony upon which the success of the preacher after all so much depends, and for which the whole Church, and not any class or section of it, is responsible. Good it is to realize that every soul of man, covered with the dust of sin as he may be, and hidden in the darkness of the

3 (11-32): the Father's dead alive again.

3 And he said, A certain man had two sons; and the [x]younger of them said unto his father, Father, give me the [y]portion of [thy] substance that falleth [to me]: and he divided to them [his] living. And [z]not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and went off into a [a]far country, and there [b]wasted his substance in riotous living. And, when he had [c]spent all, there came a mighty [d]famine throughout that country; and he [e]began to be in want. And he went and [f]joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed [g]swine. And he [h]longed

x cf. Gen. 37. 3, *cf.* Gen. 44. 20, 22.
y cf. Gen. 1. 26, *cf.* Eccl. 7. 29, *cf.* Acts 14. 17, *ctr.* Ps. 16. 5, 6.
z cf. Ps. 58. 3, *cf.* Jas. 1. 15.
a cf. Job 21. 13–15, *cf.* Eph. 2. 12, 13.
b cf. Prov. 5. 8–14; *cf.* ch. 16. 1; *cf.* Eccl. 11. 9, 10. *c cf.* Is. 55. 2; *cf.* ch. 8. 43. *d cf.* Ex. 5. 7; *cf.* Ezek. 16. 27. *e ctr.* ver. 24; *cf.* ch. 16. 24–26. *f cf.* 2 Chro. 28. 22; *cf.* Jer. 5. 3; *cf.* Am. 5. 5. *g cf.* Mal. 2. 9; *cf.* ch. 8. 32, 33. *h cf.* Is. 44. 20; *cf.* Hos. 12. 1; *ctr.* 1 Pet. 4. 3, 4.

world, belongs of right to the King's treasury, and has the King's image stamped on him, though with sore disfigurement. Claim him we may, wherever we may find him, for God to whom he belongs. This general evangelism, we may learn from the parable here, is what is the mind of the Spirit for the Church indwelt of Him. Here too there must be friends and neighbors summoned to rejoice,—angelic onlookers who are in sympathy with Him who is always the glorious Seeker, and who sets in motion all the springs of love and pity that flow anywhere in unison with His own.

3 The third parable shows us the dead alive again, the subjective side, therefore, of this recovery of the lost, which the first two were incompetent to express. The sheep is simply brought back; the piece of money is unchanged when restored; but the lost son returns to his father, and in heart, though under the pressure of famine at the first. The parabolic veil also is thinner, and permits the affections of the heart to manifest themselves with freedom. The two classes seen in the first parable, lost sight of in the second, reappear and come fully out in contrast here, the mirror being held up before the Pharisee as never before, in the elder son.

Sons they both are. This, which has led some astray as to the application, is intelligible in view of Israel's relationship to God, as in Deut. xiv. 1: "Sons ye are of Jehovah your God." This, of course, must not be understood as if involving the Spirit of adoption, which they had not, nor what would be implied by such language in the New Testament. It involved of necessity neither new birth nor salvation. An adoption they had; and the Lord says to the Syrophenician woman, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs." Again in the parable which He spoke to the Jews after His solemn entry into Jerusalem, He speaks of Pharisees and publicans both as "sons," exactly as here. Those to whom He was now addressing Himself claimed this most unhesitatingly in their own behalf, and in a sense in which He could not allow it: "We be not born of fornication," they said indignantly: "we have one Father, even God" (John viii. 41.)

This relationship, though it might be only external, furnishes the basis of appeal in the story before us. External only it was, at first, with the younger son, and to the end of it with the elder. The prodigal naturally is the younger son: the elders of Israel were with the Pharisees.

This younger son soon shows where his heart is. The "substance" that he gets and squanders is, of course, his portion in natural things, that which God has in fact divided among men to use as accountable to Him who gave it, or perhaps to abuse in utter forgetfulness of Him. The far-off country which he seeks classes him at once among the many whose backs are habitually turned on God. Here for awhile he enjoys himself after the fashion of those to whom transgression has its own delight, in the lusts which yet consume and never satisfy. An end must come, therefore, in which not only his own resources are at an end, but a famine comes upon all the sources of supply. He is in a land,

to fill himself with the pods of which the swine were feeding, and no one gave him. And when he [i] came to himself, he said, How many [j] hired servants of my father have abundance of bread, and I am [k] perishing with famine. I will [l] arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have [m] sinned against heaven and before thee: I am no longer [n] worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy [o] hired servants. And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet a [p] long way off, his father saw him, and had [q] compassion, and [r] ran, and fell on his neck, and [s] kissed him fervently. And the son said unto him, Father, I have [t] sinned against heaven and before thee; I am no longer worthy to be called thy son. But the father said unto his servants, Bring out quickly * a robe, the [u] best, and put it on him; and put a [v] ring on his hand, and [w] sandals on his feet; and bring the fatted [x] calf, and

i *cf.* Jer. 31. 19. *cf.* Acts 2.37. *cf.* Acts 10. 4-6.
j *cf.* ver. 19. *cf.* Lam. 1.7.
k *cf.* 2 Cor. 7. 10. *cf.* Acts 16. 30.
l Ps. 32. 5. *cf.* Jer. 31.6-9. *cf.* Hos. 14. 1-3.
m *cf.* Ps. 51.4. ch. 18. 13. 1 Jno. 1. 9.
n *cf.* ch. 7.6,7. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 9.
o *cf.* Josh. 9. 24-27.
p *ctr.* Rom. 8. 15. *cf.* Jno. 8.35, 36.
q *ctr.* Gen. 37. 18.

* Some omit "quickly."

cf. Job 33. 27, 28; *cf.* Rom. 5. 8, 10. r *cf.* Eph. 2. 4; *cf.* Tit. 3. 4, 5. s *cf.* 1 Tim. 2. 4; *cf.* Ezek. 18. 23. t *cf.* Jno. 3. 16; *cf.* Rom. 5. 8. u ver. 18. v *cf.* Gen. 3. 21; *cf.* Phil. 3. 9; *cf.* Zech. 3.3-5. w *cf.* Gen. 41.42; *cf.* Rom. 8.15,38,39. x *cf.* Deut. 33. 25; *cf.* Eph. 6.15. x *cf.* Gen. 18.7; *cf.* Eph. 2.14.

too, where no man gives, but he joins himself to a citizen of that country, and is sent into the fields to feed swine. Sad picture of Satan's service, in ministering to men given up to their own lusts entirely, longing even to be as they are; thank God, (this is His mercy merely and the door of hope) thank God, in vain.

Now he comes to himself, and in his misery the thought of his father's house breaks in upon him. Alas, it is not yet his father; nor does he think aright of it either, if we realize of what it is the parable speaks. Bread there is there, to be sure, enough and to spare—abundance of bread in that Bethlehem, where our Christ was born, and whence He came to us: bread enough, but not for hired servants. No hired servant, as such, could eat the passover in Israel (Ex. xii. 45.) God has all children in His house, and service but for the free hearts who know the constraint of love in serving Him.

The prodigal is not yet in place to know this, and fain would be one of those hirelings himself. All else is gone for him; but he will go back and confess the sin which he committed, which has deprived him of the son's place (never really known), and after the fashion of man's humility, which recognizes not the worthlessness of such labor nor the grace of God, he will say, "Make me as one of thy hired servants."

With all this, he is yet on his way to his father. The father's love anticipates and effectuates the son's endeavor. "When he was yet a long way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him." Not a word of the confession intended has been uttered; not a question is put: "I *said*, I will confess my transgression to the Lord; and so Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." There is no reproof for the past, no stipulation as to the future, no condition in this free forgiveness. How it would spoil the revelation of the Father's heart which is to do the yet needed work in the soul of the returning prodigal, make the son a son, and deliver from all thought of that far country, save abhorrence of that which had carried him thither!

Now, in another spirit than that which dictated it, he can pour out his confession. "Make me a hired servant," he cannot say for shame. And the right acknowledgement of his unworthiness is cut short by the father's peremptory joy which bids, "Bring forth a robe,—the best,—and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and sandals on his feet." What he could not have pretended to as claim if he had never wandered is now his in the father's delight to have him back: Christ, the sinner's robe of wondrous righteousness, what can equal

kill it, and let us eat and make [y]merry: for this my son was [z]dead and is alive again, was lost, and is found. And they [a]began to be merry.

Now his elder son was in the [b]field; and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he [c]called to him one of the servants, and inquired what these things might be. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and well. But he was [d]angered, and would not go in; and his father came out and [e]entreated him. But he answered and said unto his father, Behold, so [f]many years I am serving thee, and have never transgressed thy commandment; and to me thou never gavest a [g]kid, that I might make merry with my [h]friends. But as soon as this thy son is come, who hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. But he said to him, Child, thou art ever with [i]me; and all that is mine is thine. It was meet that we should make merry and rejoice: for this thy brother was [j]dead, and is alive again; and was lost and is found.

y vers.6,7,9. *cf.*Mt. 7.18.
*z cf.*Eph.2.1. *cf.*Jno.5.24, 25.
a cf. ver.14. *cf.* Eph. 3. 21. *cf.*Rev.22.5.
b cf. Matt. 20, 12. *cf.* ver. 7.
*c ctr.*ver.18. *cf.*Lk.10.40.
d ver. 2. *cf.* Acts 13. 45. *cf.*Matt.23. 13. *cf.*Jonah 4. 1, 4, 9–11.
e cf. ch.14.7. *cf.* Acts 3. 25, 26.
f cf. Ex. 12. 45. *ctr.* ch. 17. 10. *ctr.* Phil.3. 4–7.
*g cf.*ch.19.21. *cf.*Mal.1.13. *cf.* ch.7.41–43.
h cf. Jas. 4. 4; *cf.* Rom. 8. 7. *i cf.* Ps. 16. 5; *cf.* Rom. 1. 21. *j* ver. 24.

it in the apparel of the angels as they shine in heaven? Then the ring unites the working hand to God for ever; and the feet are shod for all the way, whatever it may be.

"And bring the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and make merry: for this my son was dead and is alive again, and was lost, and is found."

Death is the food of this new life, for which in fact, that it might be, life had to be given. Such is the ransom price by which the prodigal has to be redeemed from the bondage of sin. And henceforth death is not merely conquered, but becomes the minister to a life in which the shadow of death is passed for ever. The fatted calf—or young ox, not immature but in the first fresh vigor,—the type of the laborer for God, is here the peace-offering, that aspect of the Lord's work which the Gospel of Luke expresses. The prodigal is welcomed into the joy of reconciliation and communion with God; but it is the *Father's* joy, let us still remember, which is all through prominent: "This my son was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found."

Every way in contrast with this picture, we have now that of the elder son; and it would be impossible, surely, for any one to mistake for whom it is intended. *He* has not wandered, is no prodigal, has no need of repentance, has never transgressed his father's commandment, is still in the field when his brother comes home; and then finding how he has been received, breaks out in indignation. Then another side of his character comes out: he himself brings it out. Music and dancing in his father's house: these are strange things to him. Joy over *him* there never had been such. He had had no privileges, not even a kid to make merry—not, mark, with his *father*, but with his *friends*. Could the cold, cheerless life of a formal religionist be more clearly expressed? He too is in heart away from his father, has no sympathy with the yearning of God's love over a sinner, cannot eat and make merry over the return of such, though his father comes out and entreats him, will not go in. What is the end of a breach like this? *That* the Lord leaves to be decided by each one in his audience for himself. But God keeps—can they expect otherwise?—to His own thoughts: "It was meet that we should make merry and rejoice: for this thy brother was dead and is alive again: he was lost and is found."

There is one thing here, however, which spite of all the rest has been supposed

4 (xvi. 1-13): The mercy as to earthly things permitted to the failed creature.

4. And he said also to his disciples, There was a certain rich man who had a *steward; and he was accused to him as *wasting his goods. And having called him, he said to him, What is this that I hear of thee? Give "account of thy stewardship; for thou canst be no longer steward. And the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: "dig I cannot; to beg I am ashamed. I

k cf. Matt. 25. 14, etc. *cf.* 1Cor.4.2. *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 10.
l ch.15.13,30. *cf.* ver. 19. *cf.* Prov.18. 9 with ch. 19. 20.
m cf. Gen.3. 9-14.
cf. Eccl. 11. 9, 10; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 10, 11. *n cf.* Rom. 4. 4, 5; *cf.* Rom. 5. 6.

to give countenance to the view that the elder son is the true picture of the child of God, or at least the consistent one. It is, that the father says, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." But to explain this we have only to go back to the beginning of the parable and to remember that the substance which the father had divided between them, and which the younger son had squandered in self-indulgence, could not be any figure of spiritual blessings, but, as already said, of earthly things. If, then, the prodigal had returned, that with all its spiritual gain did not reinstate him in the possession of what he had lost; it did not in itself restore the lost health, the forfeited possessions, the various good gifts of God which had passed away from him. On the other hand, the spiritual blessings which salvation brings do not become the possession of any by the careful or upright use of earthly things. And the witness of his own heart (in the case of the elder son) was that, spite of his own punctilious righteousness, the Father's house had made no music over *him*.

4. This leads on, however, to the next parable, in which, not the outside multitudes but *disciples* are taught how *they* may use even earthly things (even the mammon of unrighteousness) in such a way as that, when this fails, the "friends" they have made by it, may receive them into the eternal tabernacles. But here, notice, there is no parade of the righteousness of the one who acts after this manner. No, it is the very opposite: we have an unjust steward accused of wasting his master's goods, a thing which recalls to us the younger son of the parable before given, rather than the elder. And here is where we all begin naturally, although the Lord has something else to say of this before He closes.

But to begin with, all are stewards of God in the matter of those things with which we have been entrusted; and not one of us can stand before God on the ground of righteousness in our stewardship. Death—and this is brought out in fullest emphasis by the law of Moses—is the turning of man out of the place for which he was originally created, as having failed in it: and who is not turned out? Self-righteousness is thus impossible if we will listen to the teaching of nature itself, and above all of that law under which the Pharisee so securely sheltered himself. The "publican," or tax-gatherer, become a disciple, had owned his sinnership before God, while the Pharisee had refused to recognize it: and thus in the only way possible for man, the repenting sinner had become comparatively righteous.

The parable here is not however of the reception of a penitent, but of stewardship: of one under sentence of dismissal for unrighteousness, and of what he can still do in view of the future.

He does not hope for reversal of his sentence, but seeks how best he may subserve his interest when this has taken effect. If death be this dismissal, as it most evidently is, then in the application this refers to what comes after death; and so the Lord Himself applies it.

The steward is a child of this age, and his wisdom is that of his generation. It is not commended for its righteousness, but for its adaptation to the end in view; and in this respect the children of this age are *wiser* than the children of light. They pursue their end with more clearsighted consistency, while the children of light are often how strangely *in*consistent. The unrighteous steward is unrighteous to the last, and no plea to the contrary is ever made for him; but

know what I will do, that when I am [o] put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. And he called each one of his lord's debtors, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? And he said, A hundred baths* of oil. And he said to him, [p] Take thy writings, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And thou? how much owest thou? And he said, A hundred cors† of wheat. He saith unto him, Take thy writings; and write eighty. And the lord‡ commended the unjust steward, because he had done [q] prudently: for the sons of this age are for their own generation [r] more prudent than the sons of light. And I say unto you, [s] Make yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles. He that is faithful in the [t] least is

o *cf.* Gen. 3. 24. *cf.* Rom. 3. 10-19 with Rom. 6. 23.

p *cf.* Tit. 2. 10. *cf.* Gen. 39. 4-6.

q *cf.* Ex. 1. 10. *cf.* Gen. 3. 1. *cf.* Prov. 30. 24-28.

r *cf.* ch. 12. 54-57. *cf.* Deut. 32. 29.

s *cf.* ch. 11. 41. *cf.* ch. 12. 33. *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 17-19.

t ch. 19. 17. *cf.* 1 Tim. 3. 8-13.

*The *bath* is about seven gallons. †A *cor* is equal to eight bushels.
‡That is, the lord of the steward.

his wisdom as to the future is set before us for our imitation, the unrighteousness of it being distinctly reprobated and set aside in the words that follow the parable: "for, if ye have not been *faithful* in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?"

His master's goods are still in the steward's hands; and these are all the means that he has, as his words plainly show. Yet his authority over them seems only now to extend so far as concerns the rendering that final account that has been required of him. He is no doubt under jealous oversight now, as to any further "waste," such as has been charged against him; but, of course, if he is to render an account, he has authority to *call in* the accounts. Here he can do no harm.

So he calls in his lord's debtors to see how every one stands, and remits to each a portion of his debt, a thing which Edersheim remarks, was within his rights, though his motive in it was unrighteous. In mercy, and in his master's interests even, he might have done so; he did it in his own.* But the wisdom with which he made capital out of what was not in his hands is clear enough. The moral for disciples is, "Make yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles."

Certainly it is not meant that we can buy ourselves thus admission into heaven, or that God's grace is shown in permitting us to buy cheap. He gives, but does not sell; unless it be "without money and without price." And even as to rewards, love can reward only what is done from love. Yet love itself may desire, and must, the approval of Him towards whom it is felt, and so may covet the rewards of love; while grace permits us out of what is not our own to make "friends" that shall in this way welcome us in the habitations of eternity.

Thus to use what is so commonly as to be characteristically the "mammon of unrighteousness" is not unrighteous, but faithfulness in that which is Another's; and although it be in "that which is least," as such earthly things must be, yet even as that it may test and manifest the character with regard to what is the "true riches." A man's piety cannot be measured by his charities; but on the other hand it cannot exist without them, for "faith without works is dead." And he who seeks to satisfy himself with that which is not his own, but of which he is merely steward, will find the things that are his own proportion-

*Van Oosterzee concludes that it was his own overcharge that he remitted, and thus that he made his account right with his master, while he gained credit with the tenants. But this introduces much that is conjectural; and it does not seem that he had hope of setting his account right.

faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If, then, ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is [u]another's who shall give you that which is your own? No servant can serve [v]two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will cleave to the one and despise the other: ye cannot serve God and mammon.

5 (xvi. 14-31): The recompense beyond.

5. And the Pharisees, who were [w]lovers of money, heard all these things, and they derided him. And he said unto them, Ye are they who justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is exalted among men is an [x]abomination before God. The [y]law and the prophets [were] until John: from that time the evangel of the kingdom of God is preached, and every one forces [his way] into it. And it is [z]easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one tittle of the law to fail. Every one that [a]putteth away his wife and marrieth another committeth adultery; and he who marrieth one put away from a husband committeth adultery.

u *cf.* 1 Chro. 29.14-16. *cf.* Ezek.16. 16-21. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 4, 5.
v Matt.6.24. *cf.* Jas. 4.4. *cf.* 1 Jno.2. 15. *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 14-16.
w *cf.* Matt. 23. 14. *cf.* Is.56.11. *cf.* Jer.6.13.
x *cf.* ch. 10. 29. *cf.* Matt.23. 27. *cf.* Prov.16. 5.
y *cf.* vers.29, 31. Matt.11.12, 13. *cf.* Jno.1.45. *cf.* ch.5.18-20.
z Matt.5.18. *cf.* Is. 40. 8. ch. 21. 33.
a Matt.5.31, 32. Matt.19.3-9.

ately unsatisfying. Even an Abraham, with his face toward Egypt, will find a famine in the land which God has promised and brought him into.

Thus the Lord deals with the side of righteousness; and He rules with a firm and steady hand. Grace does not relax the lines of government; and the throne of grace is a true and absolute throne. A servant may not be a son, but every son is a servant; and "no servant can serve two masters." God and Mammon are incompatible as that.

5. But that cuts deep; for the Pharisees are among His audience; and they, the zealous maintainers of law, are at the same time money-lovers. They deride Him therefore: for had not the law promised all temporal good to the man that kept it? From this it was easy for one that had never felt the hopelessness of man's condition upon that footing, to make the fruit of a man's own covetousness the token of his acceptance with God. They thus, as the Lord told them, justified themselves before men; but justification is not man's work, but God's: what human law allows one to judge his own case? when, alas, also, the world is in complete opposition to God, and what is esteemed most highly by it is with Him an abomination.

There was another thing. The dispensation of law was passing away. The law and the prophets were until John, and then the Kingdom of God was preached. Now every one was forcing his way into that, through the opposition of those like themselves who neither believed John, nor the One to whom he testified.

The passing of the dispensation did not mean that the law had failed. It could not fail: heaven and earth might pass rather than one tittle of it fail. It did not fail, when that to which it pointed came; nor when that was remedied which Moses for the hardness of their hearts had permitted, and the new dispensation perfected what the law was unable to enforce.

He gives them an example, which the former Gospels have insisted on more fully. Pharisaism had taken advantage of the permission of divorce to give sanction to a license against which the whole spirit of the law bore witness. Now all this was to be remedied. He that should put away his wife and marry another would now commit adultery; and he likewise who should marry a divorced woman. The exception given in Matthew with regard to this, and

There was a certain [b]rich man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, making merry in splendor every day; and a certain [c]poor man, Lazarus by name, was laid at his gate full of sores, and longing to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table; and even the dogs came and licked his sores. Now it came to pass that the poor man died, and was carried by the angels into [d]Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died, and was buried. And in hades lifting up his eyes, being in [e]torments, he seeth Abraham from afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he called and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue: for I am tormented in this flame. But

b *cf.* ch. 12. 16-21. *cf.* ch. 18. 24, 25 with ch. 6. 24.

c *cf.* Jas. 2. 5, 6. *cf.* ch. 6. 20. *cf.* Prov. 19. 1.

d *cf.* Matt. 8. 11.

e *cf.* Ps. 49. 14. *cf.* Prov. 5. 5, 22. *cf.* Phil. 1. 23.

which is found neither in Mark nor Luke, is not really an exception: for the divorce only affirms the breach of the law of marriage which sin had already made in the case excepted.

Thus the law had not failed, but was only perfected in the Kingdom of God.

The Lord goes back now to illustrate the fundamental mistake that they were making by the contrast of two men, perfect opposites of one another in life and after death, but in either case with the reversal after death of the condition in life.

He pictures a rich man, so rich as that if the Pharisaic idea were right, he should have been in fullest favor with God. He is clothed in purple and fine linen, and passes each day in uninterrupted enjoyment.

There is a poor man at his gate, so poor as to be in beggary and starvation. He longs for the crumbs (the broken pieces) from the rich man's table; and the dogs—unclean animals for the Jew—come and lick his sores.

No evil is recorded of the rich man further than this, that he enjoyed himself to the full. Even neglect of Lazarus is not urged against him. Perhaps Lazarus may have got the broken pieces. That he remained a beggar is true: but is it supposed that a rich man is to feed and care for every beggar at his door-step? Nor do we read of anything to the credit of this Lazarus. Providence seems to have decided against him, and the law to have condemned him: for where are the good things the law has promised to those that keep it?

The beggar dies, and there is a marvelous change. Without any means by which to make friends for himself to receive him into the everlasting tabernacles, he is carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. A beggar, with everything against him as that, according to the law, gets a place that the best Jew in the world might envy him for. What has caused this? Not law, we may be sure. Not any need of making up for that pitiable life on earth by the after condition. The testimony of the law settles this fully, and would settle it as well for any child of man. Nay, his name, Lazarus, Eleazar, "the Mighty One the Helper" gives us the only key to the explanation here. Spite of all else against him, God the Mighty One, acting apart from law, and so in grace, has lifted him from that degradation in which he was to the place in which now we find him. He who has chosen Jerusalem, Jacob, Abraham, any other name in this line that you please to name, has chosen to do this—to display Himself in it: and who shall say Him nay?

The rich man also dies, and is buried. Again a marvelous, but now dreadful change! In hades—it is not hell, gehenna—he lifts up his eyes being in torment, and sees Abraham from afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. "And he called and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue: for I am tormented in this flame."

Abraham said, Child, [f]remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus likewise evil things: but now he is comforted here, and thou art in anguish. And beside all this, between us and you a great [g]chasm is fixed, so that those who desire to pass from hence to you are not able; nor can those from thence cross over to us. But he said, I pray thee then, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: for I have five brethren, so that he may testify to them, lest they also come into this place of torment. But Abraham saith, They have [h]Moses and the prophets: let them hear them. But he said, Nay, father Abraham, but if one go to them from the dead, they will repent. But he said to him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, [i]neither will they be persuaded if one rise from the dead.

f *cf.* Lam.1. 7.
cf. Mk.9.46.
cf. Ps.73.7, 17-19.
g *cf.* Mal.3. 18.
cf. Prov.14. 32.
cf. Jno.3.36.
h *cf. vh.* 18. 20.
cf. Jno.5.39, 40.
cf. Is.8.19, 20.
i *cf.* 1 Sa.28. 15-20.
cf. John 11. 43-53.
cf. Matt.28. 11-15.
cf. Rom.10. 17.

The language is, of course, as figurative here as on the other side is Abraham's bosom. All representations of what is beyond the present life seem to partake of the same figurative character, which is, however, all the more adapted to appeal strongly to the imagination. The final judgment is not yet come; the once rich man has, as we presently see, brothers upon earth who may be warned to escape that place of torment. Resurrection, therefore, has not come any more than judgment, but the wrath of God is already realized in suffering which can be most suitably conveyed to us in terms like this. The hope of relief,—of such slight relief as is requested here, is presently declared to be in vain, an impassable gulf (or chasm) unalterably fixed between the lost and saved, no crossing or mingling to be, even for a moment; no hope of condition changing after death, such as many entertain to-day, for a moment to be thought.

But the reason for the rich man's coming into that awful doom is what is evidently intended to be pressed upon us. The Lord has already declared to his disciples that whosoever loseth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal; and that, if a man come to Him, and hate not his own life, he cannot be His disciple. This, it is plain, the rich man had not done. This only it is that is affirmed against him: "Child, remember, that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things"—not "good things" simply, but "*thy* good things." He had chosen life on the wrong side of death, and lost it.

This loss is not merely that: for God cannot be simply passive with regard to sin, and the tormenting flame is the wrath of God upon it. Death is not extinction; nor, therefore, is the second death. All that we find in this picture is the very opposite of this: it is intense realization. And if the pang of remorse is the soul's judgment of itself, (such judgment as the lost may be capable of,) the judgment of God is other than this, and more.

Oh, then, for a voice to warn men! So thinks the poor sinner here. Companionship is no alleviation of this hopeless anguish. "I pray thee then, father," he says, "that thou wouldst send him to my father's house: for I have five brethren; so that he may testify to them, lest they also come into this place of torment." Even this hope fails: "They have Moses and the prophets," Abraham answers; "let them hear them." But he urges further: "Nay, father Abraham; but if one go to them from the dead, they will repent." But he said to him, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rise from the dead."

No fear that Moses should not receive due honor from the lips of Christ. These Pharisees with their strenuous seeking of a sign from heaven: these are they that dishonor Moses. "Take up, and read," disdainful Pharisee, and thou shalt see how Moses accuses thee of unbelief of all the signs that he has given,

SECTION 4. (chaps. xvii., xviii. 8.)

The Ways which result from the Experimental Knowledge of this manifestation, and from the world's rejection of it.

1 (xvii.1-4): The certainty of offences and the imperativeness of constant grace.

1. AND he said unto his disciples, It is *impossible but that causes of stumbling will come; but woe unto him through whom they come! It were profitable for him if a millstone were hung about his neck, and he were cast into the sea, rather than that he should be a stumbling to one of these little ones. Take heed to *yourselves: if thy brother sin against thee,* reprove him; and if he *repent, forgive him. And if he sin against thee seven times in the day, and seven times turn unto thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him.

* Most MSS. omit "against thee."

j Matt. 18.6, 7. Mk. 9. 42. Rom.14.13, 20, 21. *cf.* 2 Pet. 2. 1-3.

k cf. Gal.6.1. *cf.* Eph. 5. 15. *cf.* Lev. 19. 16, 17. *cf.* Prov.17. 10.

l cf. Matt.18. 21-35. *cf.* 2 Thess. 3. 15, 16. *cf.* 1 Cor.13. 6, 7.

and which are fulfilled in Him that speaks to thee. Yet our hearts ache so often for something more, even with Scripture completed in our hands, and a greater than Moses speaking to us from it. Yet "all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink;" and out of all the host that did so, two men of those that came out of Egypt entered the land to which God was bringing them! So with the men that wanted a sign now, did they dream that when He whom they had devoted to death should come back from the dead, they would be found giving large money to the keepers of His tomb, to have it believed a lie that He was risen? So still, with their eyes tight shut, men cry for light.

Sec. 4.

1. God then has manifested Himself: no lost soul from its far off place of misery shall ever be able to challenge Him in this respect. He swears it even: "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth."

But while His word remains to testify for Him, how often, alas, are even His people found false witnesses! And among the ranks of professing disciples how many causes of stumbling arise! The Lord goes on now to speak of these in a way that shows His earnestness to have all stumbling-blocks removed from before the feet of the least of all. Whom men despise for their littleness, of these His tender compassion would have special care, and this He presses now upon His disciples.

Occasions of stumbling will indeed come: these are sad certainties in so sad a world; but that does not make them less grave, or easier to be passed over: nay, "woe unto those through whom they come." Better were it for one of these to have a mill-stone hung about his neck, and so to be cast head first into the sea, than to be a stumbling to one of these little ones.

But whence do occasions of stumbling most arise? To answer that, must we not ask, to what, then, above all are we witnesses? Failure here will surely be the gravest, as it will be that also of which men will most take note, and which the arch-plotter will seek most of all to get us into. Scripture, then, teaches us that we are to "show forth," even "in the ages to come the exceeding riches of God's *grace*." Grace characterizes the dispensation, as in contrast with law, the rule of the schoolmaster which preceded this (Gal. iii. 24, 25). What, then, can be so great a failure as to fail in grace? It is to this, then, that the Lord goes on with an emphatic "take heed to yourselves:" "If thy brother sin against thee, reprove him; and if he repent, forgive him." Some of the earliest MSS. omit "against thee," with several of the earliest versions; and yet it seems plain that it should be at least understood: for it is only a personal offence that we can individually forgive; and it is just these personal offences that we most betray inability to deal with aright.

2 (xvii. 5-10): Faith's increase in lowly service without thought of supererogation.

2. And the apostles said unto the Lord, [m]Increase* our faith. And the Lord said, If ye have faith as a [n]grain of mustard-seed, ye should say to this sycamine, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea, and it would obey you. But which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him immediately upon his coming in from the field, [o]Come and sit down to table? and will not rather say to him, Make ready wherewith I shall sup, and gird thyself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk; and after that, thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he [p]thank that servant because he hath done that which was commanded? I judge not. So also ye, when ye shall have done all things that were commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which it was our [q]duty to do.

m *cf.* Mk. 9. 24. *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 5-8. *cf.* 2 Thess. 1. 3.

n *cf.* Heb. 11. 11 with Gen. 18. 12-15.

o *cf.* ch. 12. 37. *cf.* Rev. 22. 3.

p *cf.* Job 35. 6, 7. *cf.* Is. 64. 6.

q *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 16, 17. *cf.* Matt. 25. 37-40. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 9, 10.

3 (xvii. 11-19): The cleansed worshiper.

3. And it came to pass, as they journeyed to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were [r]lepers, who stood afar off. And they lifted up the voice, saying, Jesus, Master, have mercy upon us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go, [s]show yourselves to the priests. And it came to pass, as they went their way, that they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, with a loud voice glorifying God; and he [t]fell on his face at his feet, giving him thanks; and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answered and

r ch. 5. 12-15.

s Lev. 13. 1, 2, etc.

t ch. 5. 8. Mk. 5. 33. Jno. 9. 35-38.

*Literally, "add faith to us."

Love is to act in the reproof; and this is cared for by the spirit of forgiveness enjoined; while the holiness of grace is seen in the condition of repentance. But if it were seven times a day he sinned, and seven times a day he turned, saying, I repent, he must be forgiven. This, of course, could not happen in a case of discipline in the assembly, where fitness for the table and the fellowship of the whole are involved, and where the authority of the Lord in the assembly is to be maintained. Individually we have no such authority over one another, and the service of love is the best constraint that can be used.

2. In view of the difficulties of the path which the certainty of such causes of stumbling would imply, the apostles—named as such, as those to represent the Lord in a special way as leaders of His people—ask Him to increase their faith. He replies that to faith, small as a grain of mustard-seed, the sycamine tree with its strong spreading roots would yield obediently, and plant itself in the sea. But they must be servants in all this, not masters, nor thinking to take their ease and satisfy themselves before their Master was fully served. Having done all, they were still to confess themselves those who had done no work of supererogation, but their duty only. And this is the way, in fact, in which increase of faith surely will be found. When we are doers of Christ's work, and not our own,—not valuing ourselves upon the doing it, but lowly in spirit—then will the needed faith for all the way be found: faith is for God's way and will: we cannot expect it for our own.

3. The story of the cleansed worshiper follows this. Ten lepers, standing afar off, beseech Him to have mercy. He bids them show themselves to the priests, and on their way they are cleansed. † One, and one alone, turns back to glorify God and give thanks for his healing; and he is a stranger, a Samaritan. It is

said, Were there not ten cleansed? but [u] where are the nine? There hath not been any found that returned to give glory to God, except this [v] stranger. And he said unto him, Arise and [w] go thy way: thy faith hath healed* thee.

4 (xvii. 20-37): The world without Christ and its ways till His return.

4. And being asked by the Pharisees [x] when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; nor shall they say, Lo, here, or there: for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you. And he said unto his disciples, [y] Days shall come when ye shall long to see one of the days of the Son of man, and shall not see it. And they shall say unto you, [z] Lo, there; Lo, here: go not after, nor follow: for as the lightning shineth, lightening from one part under heaven to another part under heaven, so shall the Son of man be in his day. But first, he must suffer many things, and be [a] rejected by this generation. And as it was in the [b] days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of man: they ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was in the [c] days of Lot: they ate,

u cf. Rom. 1. 21. cf. ch. 15. 25, etc.
v cf. Matt. 8. 10-12. cf. Matt. 15. 24-28. cf. Heb. 13. 10-15.
w ch. 7. 50. ch. 8. 48.
x cf. ch. 10. 11. cf. ch. 19. 11. cf. ch. 21. 7. cf. Acts 1. 6, 7.
y cf. ch. 5. 35. cf. Jno. 12. 35. cfr. Jno. 16. 7.
z ch. 21. 8. cf. Matt. 24. 23-28.
a ch. 9. 22. ch. 18. 31-33. cf. Acts 7. 9, 27, 35.
b Gen. 7. 1-8. Matt. 24. 38, 39. 2 Pet. 2. 5. cf. 2 Pet. 3. 3-7.
c Gen. 19. 1, etc. 2 Pet. 2. 6-9.

* Or "saved."

evident he is not hampered by the law that carries the others away from Christ, although belonging to a like system. But Christ has by the deliverance realized become an object for his heart: he returns to Him a worshiper; the others remain in the dead ritualism centering in an empty temple, while he obtains open recognition of a faith in which God is glorified.

In fact these cleansed worshipers, worshiping neither at Samaria nor Jerusalem, and not in temples made with hands, but in the presence of God revealed in the Man Christ Jesus, are typical of the new dispensation coming in, indeed the heart of it. The mere human priests are gone: there is access through grace by faith,—a faith owned of God openly, all distance done away. Of course, it is not meant that the cleansed leper knew all this; but he foreshadowed it, Gentile as he was also, the nine Israelites having turned their back on Christ. It is to these, as one may say, that we now turn, to a people that have rejected Him, and that are now in the evils springing out of that rejection.

4. He is asked by the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God shall come. He tells them that it has in fact come, and without being perceived by them. It was there, presented to them in the Person of the King, in their midst.

But as rejected, He says no more to them of this; but turns to His disciples, to tell them of the days of His absence: not of Christian times, but carrying them on to when Israel's long night would be hastening to its close; days when there would be disciples longing to see one of the days of the Son of man, but not seeing it. Rumors there would be that He was here or there, but they were not to heed them. The Son of man would come, but manifestly to all, as when the lightning lightens the whole breadth of the heavens. But first He would have to suffer and be rejected.

Again He passes on to the time of the end, comparing it to the careless days before the flood, and the similar days before Sodom was destroyed. Judgment came sudden, sweeping, irresistible, and so it would be when the Son of man should be revealed. The warning to one upon the house-top not to come down into the house is given, as in Matthew (xxiv. 17), but not the events with which

they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but in the day that Lot went forth from Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. After the [d]same manner it shall be in the day in which the Son of man shall be revealed. In that day, he who shall be upon the [e]house-top and his goods in the house, let him not go down to take them away; and he likewise who is in the field, let him not return back. [f]Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever shall [g]seek to save his life* shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose it, [he] shall preserve it. I say unto you, In that night there shall be two [men] in one bed: the one shall be [h]taken, and the other left.†

Two women shall be grinding together, the one shall be taken, and the other left. And they answering say unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, [i]Where the body is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

5 (xviii. 1-8): Vengeance for His elect.

5. And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that they should pray [j]always, and not faint, saying, There was a judge in a city, who feared not God and regarded not man. And there was a [k]widow in that city, and she came unto him, saying, [l]Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not, for a time; but afterwards he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man, yet, because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her perpetual coming, she distract me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his [m]elect, who cry to him day and night, and he [n]beareth long as to them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find [o]faith on the earth?

*Or "soul."

†A few MSS. and the Syriac insert here: "Two men shall be in the field: the one shall be taken, and the other left."

d *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 2-10. *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 10. *cf.* 2 Thess. 1. 8-10. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 8.
e Matt. 24. 17, 18. Mk. 13. 15. *cf.* ch. 18. 23.
f Gen. 19. 17, 26. *cf.* Heb. 10. 38, 39.
g Jno. 12. 25, 26. *cf.* Acts 5. 41. *cf.* Acts 20. 24.
h *cf.* Gen. 41. 13. *cf.* Jer. 45. 5. *cf.* Ezek. 9. 4-6. *cf.* Mal. 3. 16-18. *cf.* Zech. 13. 8, 9.
i *cf.* Gen. 40. 17-19. *cf.* Rev. 19. 17-21. Matt. 24. 28.
j *cf.* ch. 11. 5-9. *cf.* Gen. 18. 23-33. *cf.* Ps. 27. 13, 14.
k *cf.* ch. 5. 34, 35. *cf.* Lam. 1. 1-7, 12. *cf.* Rev. 18. 7.
l *cf.* Deut. 32. 35-43. *cf.* Ps. 94. 1-7, 22, 23.
m *cf.* Is. 34. 1-8. *cf.* Is. 63. 1-6. *cf.* Is. 65. 9, 15, 17-25. *cf.* Rom. 11. 28, 29.
n *cf.* Ps. 13. 1, 2; *cf.* Gen. 15. 16; *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 9.
o *cf.* Ps. 57. 1; *cf.* Nah. 1. 7.

it is there connected. Only we see from the next admonition not to seek to save their lives that enemies are in question. The final judgment would be as discriminative as sudden: one man taken in bed, and his fellow left; one woman taken away by it at the mill, and another left. They ask, where? and He answers, wherever the carcase is, the eagles (or vultures) will assemble; wherever the corruption is, the judgment which is to purify the earth will find it out.

5. That judgment will be the complete settlement of the long reckoning for the persecuted saints who have been so long crying to God under it, and as yet without the full answer which will surely come. The Lord illustrates by the parable of the unjust judge the good of importunity with God, and presses on all under all circumstances that men should always pray and never faint. God's patience is not slowness nor indifference, as the event will show. Faith may count upon Him. In fact, when the Son of man comes, the darkness is such as to suggest the question, Will He find faith upon earth?

Sec. 5.

The last section here closes with the consideration of man's being with God,

SECTION 5. (Chap. xviii. 9-34.)
Man with God: the conditions and hindrances.

1 (xviii. 9-14): Self-righteousness and righteousness imputed.

1. AND he spake also this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were [p] righteous, and despised the rest: Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, the other a tax-gatherer. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with [q] himself: God, I thank thee, that I am not as the [r] rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax-gatherer. I [s] fast

p cf. ch. 15. 29. *cf.* Is. 65. 5. *cf.* ch. 19. 7.
q cf. Prov. 28. 9. *cf.* Prov. 15. 8, 29.
r cf. 2 Cor. 10. 12. *cf.* Rev. 3. 17. *cf.* ch. 13. 2, 3. *ctr.* 1 Tim. 1. 15.
s cf. Is. 58. 3-7; *cf.* Zech. 7. 5, 6; *ctr.* Ex. 34. 28; *ctr.* Acts 13. 2.

the moral conditions and the hindrances. It reviews in this way some things we have had before, but to emphasize some points of special importance in this particular interest, which for man is surely second to no other.

1. The first point here is that of righteousness; in which, however, the righteousness in which we stand before God is rather suggested than developed. Indeed, so much is this the case that the actual reference to it is passed over commonly, both in translations and commentaries. Here it surely supplies what would otherwise be a serious deficiency, when the object is to depict the true righteousness in opposition to the false.

The Pharisee and the publican, or tax-gatherer, furnish here, as so often, the contrast which He would present. He is speaking directly to "some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:" things which naturally go together. The two men in question are shown us going up into the temple to pray. The position that they take is taken before God, not man. As for the tax-gatherer, that is evident; no one would question it. But as for the Pharisee, though he compares himself with the other, yet he is not presented as seeking credit with men in any way: he is self-righteous, but not a hypocrite. That he prays, however, with himself, (or toward himself) shows how little in the presence of God he really is, even while he addresses himself to Him. His actual requests we do not hear; they are of no importance, even if we are to suppose he makes any. The whole of it that we hear is a thanksgiving for his own good condition; and here he forms a class by himself, in advance of those whom he vain-gloriously puts down as "the rest of men." They are "extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or like this publican,"—of whom the less he knows, the more he can imagine. But that is only the negative side: positively, it is enough to say, "I fast twice in the week; I tithe all that I acquire"—all my profit. In either case he went quite beyond the law.

There is not a hint that he was insincere in this self-admiration. He was indeed but too thoroughly a believer in himself; and his conduct may have been all that he here claims for it. Outwardly correct, morally; ceremonially, going beyond what was legally required: that was what he honestly thought to be enough for God; and indeed enough to give him that unique place quite beyond others, which, as we see, he claimed. The law, in which he trusted would have told him differently; but when did a law-keeper for righteousness ever take his measure from the law? Nay, *that* was meant for the destruction of legality, and the "Oh wretched man that I am!" which men learn to cry under it, is at least far different from jubilant Pharisaism.

The man's picture is complete, and no comment upon it is needed further. No one believes in him except himself, just as he himself believes fully in no one else. Moses has given sentence against them all that "there is none righteous, no, not one," and "we know that whatever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law: that *every* mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God."

Now we turn to look at the other man. The Pharisee lifts up his head, because he sees nothing. The tax-gatherer is in a Presence that he dares not approach, nor lift up his eyes to. Smiting upon his breast, as if his heart were

twice in the week; I [t]tithe all that I acquire. But the tax-gatherer, standing [u]afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but [v]smote upon his breast, saying, God be [w]propitiated toward me, the [x]sinner. I say unto you, This man [y]went down to his house [z]justified, rather than the other. For [a]every one who exalteth himself shall be abased, but he that abaseth himself shall be exalted.

2 (xviii. 15-17.) The lowliness required.

2. And they [b]brought unto him also the babes, that he might touch them; but when the disciples saw it, they [c]rebuked them. But Jesus called them to him, saying,

[t] *cf.* Lev. 27. 30. *cf.* ch. 11. 42. *cf.* 1 Cor. 13. 3.
[u] *cf.* 2 Cor. 8. 5.
[v] *cf.* ch. 15. 13. *cf.* Is. 6. 5.
[w] *cf.* Ps. 51. 1-5. *cf.* Rev. 1. 14.
[x] *cf.* Ps. 25. 11. *cf.* Rom. 3. 23; *cf.* Heb. 9. 14.
[y] ch. 7. 38; ch. 15. 21; *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 13.
[z] *cf.* 2 Sam. 12. 13; *cf.* Job 33. 27, 28; *cf.* Acts 16. 30-34.
[a] *cf.* Rom. 4. 4, 5; *cf.* Acts 13. 38, 39.
[b] Matt. 19. 13-15; Mk. 10. 13-16.
[c] Matt. 15. 23; *cf.* ver. 39; *cf.* 2 Ki. 4. 27; *cf.* ch. 9. 49, 50, 54. *cf.* ch. 14. 11; *cf.* 1 Sam. 2. 5-8.

viler than his life, he lays hold upon the horns of the altar with the cry, "God be propitiated towards me, the sinner."

That is certainly the full force of his words, and the prevalent objection to its being "pressed" is quite unaccountable. The common version gives "God be merciful" only; the revised puts "be propitiated" in the margin as an alternative, but keeps the other in the text. The "Variorum" Bible, with its clippings from every source, has not even a word with regard to it. Yet propitiation by sacrifice was, as must be acknowledged, one of the leading features of the temple ritual, that temple in which the speaker stood. Moreover it is the Lord, the One who could say of just this sacrificial system, "In the volume of the book it is written of Me" (Ps. xl. 7), who gives us this parable. And the direct purpose of it is to show what is true righteousness before God in contrast with the righteousness in oneself in which men have ever trusted. Yet, says Van Oosterzee, "It is entirely unnecessary to press the word *hilaskesthai* in such a way as to see intimated in it the dogmatic conception of atonement"!

On the contrary, here is the very way of mercy which a sinner needs appealed to by one who realizes himself to be in as unique a way "the" sinner, as the Pharisee is in his own thoughts uniquely righteous. For such an one no vague idea of God's mercy could satisfy the soul; least of all could the Lord allow it to be supposed that it could; and that where Jewish altars were proclaiming day by day, that "without shedding of blood is NO remission." How simple, how natural, to one taught of God, and in the representation of a divine Teacher, that a convicted soul should say, "Let that blood avail for *me!*"

"I tell you," says the Lord, "that this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other." Here again, a wrong use is made, surely, of the comparison between the two. It does not mean that the publican was justified *more* than the other, nor would such comparative justification be of much comfort to one in his condition. That which avails before God is the whole question; and as the Pharisee had decided as to himself, that he, rather than the tax-gatherer, would be found righteous before God, so the Lord decides that it will be the reverse of this, the tax-gatherer rather than the Pharisee. In each case this means, the one, *and not* the other. And it is to the one who in the most distinct way disclaims all righteousness, that righteousness is ascribed, or imputed; but not, surely, merely because he owns himself a sinner, but because there is provided for sinners that propitiation for sin to the value of which before God, even though feebly, his faith appeals.

Thus we see again, as we have seen elsewhere, how near to Paul's is the doctrine of Luke, although it brings us only to the threshold of it. Beyond this, still, there are things which cannot be opened to us until the Spirit of God is come from a glorified Christ in heaven, to reveal what neither eye has seen nor ear has heard.

2. The last verse in the previous part opens the way to the present one. The

[d] Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, [e] Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein.

3 (xviii. 18-27): The hindrance of men's possessions.

3. And a certain [f] ruler asked him, saying, Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? But Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? [g] None is good but one, [that is] God. Thou knowest the [h] commandments, Do not commit adultery; do not kill; do not steal; do not bear false witness; honor thy father and thy mother. And he said, [i] All these things have I kept from my youth. Now when Jesus heard it, he said unto him: Yet [j] one thing thou lackest: sell all that thou hast, and distribute to the poor, and thou shalt have [k] treasure in heaven; and come, [l] follow me. But when he heard these things, he was plunged in [m] sorrow, for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw * that he was plunged in sorrow, he said, How [n] hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! for it is [o] easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And they that heard it said, And who can be saved? But he said, The things that are [p] impossible to men are possible to God.

4 (xviii. 28-30): The mercy of God as to what is yielded up.

4. And Peter said, Lo, [q] we have left all,† and followed

d *cf.* 2 Chro. 29. 13. *cf.* Acts 16. 31. *cf.* 1 Cor. 7. 14.
e Matt. 18. 3, 4. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 2. *cf.* Ps. 131.
f Matt. 19. 16-22. Mk. 10. 17-22.
g *cf.* Ps. 16. 2 with Phil. 2. 6, 7. *cf.* Heb. 7. 26. *cf.* Jno. 1. 1.
h ch. 10. 25-28. *cf.* Gal. 3. 10-13.
i *ctr.* Rom. 3. 19, 20. *ctr.* Rom. 7. 7, 14. *cf.* vers. 11, 12.
j *cf.* 1 Jno. 5. 12. *cf.* 1 Cor. 13. 3 with 1 Jno. 4. 19.
k *cf.* ch. 12. 33, 34. *cf.* Phil. 3. 7.
l ch. 9. 23, 24, 57-62. *cf.* Jno. 21. 19, 22.
m *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 1. *cf.* Phil. 2. 5.
n *ctr.* Heb. 10. 34. *ctr.* Acts 5. 41; *cf.* ch. 17. 32.
o *cf.* Rom. 9. 32; *ctr.* ch. 17. 6.
p *cf.* Gen. 18. 14; *cf.* Eph. 2. 4-6.
q Matt. 19. 27-30; Mk. 10. 28-31; ch. 5. 11; *cf.* Acts 4. 34-37; *cf.* Phil. 3. 8.

* Or "And Jesus looking on him said." Many omit the clause "that he was very sorrowful."

† Some read "our own."

self-abased tax-gatherer has been exalted, the self-exalted Pharisee has been abased. And now they bring babes to Him that He may touch them, and the disciples (too much akin to the Pharisees in spirit) rebuke them for doing so. But Jesus declares that of such the Kingdom of God is, and that whoever would enter it must receive it in the spirit of a little child. Where God is known and rules, man must needs shrink into his native nothingness. Look at the earth from the sun, and what has become of its lofty peaks and granite ranges? The truly wise will own this from the heart: the pride of life, equally with the lusts of the flesh and of the eye, is not of the Father, but of the world.

3. The last portion has brought us fairly into the track of the previous Gospels, and to the end of this division we still pursue it. The story of the rich ruler shows us now the hindrance of worldly possessions, with one in other respects exemplary, and with an apparently earnest craving for eternal life. Yet he turns his back upon the Lord,—sorrowfully indeed, but none the less really; and the Lord's comment upon it generalizes so sad a case alarmingly. If it were as hard for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God as for a camel to go through a needle's eye, then who can be saved? ask the disciples. But salvation is of God; and all things are possible with Him. In fact, if a man has realized his need of salvation, God, it may be hoped, has begun that work in his soul which will make the far off country a place of intolerable famine to him, which lands or gold will be unable to satisfy. He can hardly be called "rich" who has that famine-fever upon him.

4. The question of Peter thereupon shows doubtless a modified form of the

thee. And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no one who hath left house, or wife, or brethren, or parents, or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who shall not receive [r]manifold more in this time, and in the age to come [s]eternal life.

5 (xviii 31-34). The way and the end.

5. And he took unto him the twelve and said unto them, Behold [t]we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that have been written through the [u]prophets shall be accomplished to the Son of man. For he shall be [v]delivered up to the nations, and shall be mocked, and treated shamefully, and spit upon: and they will scourge [him] and put him to death; and on the [w]third day he shall rise again. And they [x]understood nothing of these things, and this saying was hidden from them, and they knew not what was said.

r *cf.* ch. 12. 31. *cf.* 1 Tim. 4. 8. *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 6. *cf.* Eph. 3. 16, etc.
s Rom. 6. 23, *t* ch. 9. 44.
u *cf.* ch. 24. 25–27. *cf.* Is. 53.
v Matt. 27. 2. *cf.* Gen. 37. 28.
w 1 Cor. 15. 3, 4. *cf.* Hos. 6. 2.
x Mk. 9. 30–32. *cf.* Matt. 16. 23 with 1 Cor. 2. 14.

rich man's trouble, so far as disciples may be affected by it. They had left all, —little or much as it might be,—to follow Him: what would they have for it? It is evident that what they have given up has still some value for them, then: and what will be their compensation for it is a matter of concern. The Lord's answer seems one of encouragement, which has with it also a certain blending of reproof. They shall have what the rich man might well crave—eternal life; but in the present also—and had they not begun to taste that blessing yet?—"manifold more" than all that they had given up. Such is God's mercy towards those who, whatever they may have deemed themselves to have renounced for Christ, were in fact but bankrupt beggars when His grace laid hold of them!

5. Once more, therefore, He puts before them what was the way that was opening now before Himself. Here indeed was sacrifice—such as yet they prove unable even to comprehend. The end for Him is in resurrection, in which the life of service taken up once more, His joy is accomplished in what for them and us secures all blessing and the glory of God.

Div. 3.

We enter now upon the last division of the book, in which the glorious work is set before us, in that Peace-offering aspect which, as we have seen, gives character to the whole of Luke. For the most part, the history here comes closely together in the three synoptic Gospels, yet with peculiar passages in the present one, such as the story of Zacchæus and of the penitent thief, which any one would recognize as such. In Luke also, as in Mark only besides, the Lord's ascension into heaven closes the book; a fact so much the more significant because with the ascension and what immediately precedes this, the same writer commences the Acts. The Father's house, which we have before seen opened to receive a prodigal, here receives the One whose work has justified this reception. "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation."

Subd. 1.

The subdivisions are similar to those in Mark: the first giving the first coming of the King, with the fatal hindrances to restoration for Israel at that time, when for a moment it might seem to be at hand; going on, however, to His second coming when that restoration is accomplished. The general character of what is here resembles Mark rather than Matthew, as indeed we might expect; those parts also in which Mark cleaves to Matthew being often omitted by Luke. It is the King, however, necessarily, that is presented here in all the three.

1. [1] That which takes place at Jericho is more fully given by Luke than elsewhere. The story of the blind man, however, is almost precisely as in Mark, Luke showing its character in the closing ascription of glory to God, both on

DIVISION 3. (Chaps. xviii. 35–xxiv.)

Restoration, its hindrances and accomplishment; and the peace-offering work by which man is brought nigh.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chaps. xviii. 35–xxi. 36.)

The King.

1 (xviii. 35–xix. 27): Premonitions

1 (xviii. 35–43): the gift of light

1. [1] AND it came to pass, as he [y] drew near to Jericho, a certain [z] blind man sat by the way-side, [a] begging. And hearing a multitude passing by, he inquired what this should be. And they told him that Jesus the Nazaræan was passing by. And he cried out saying, Jesus, [b] Son of David, have mercy on me. And those going before [c] rebuked him, that he should hold his peace; but he cried so much the more, Son of David, have mercy upon me. And Jesus stood and commanded him to be brought unto him; and when he was come near, he asked him, saying, [d] What wilt thou that I do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy [e] faith hath healed thee. And immediately he received his sight, and [f] followed him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave [g] praise unto God.

2 (xix. 1–10): salvation to a son of Abraham.

[2] And he entered and passed through Jericho. And behold, a man called by name Zacchæus, and he was chief [h] tax-gatherer, and he was [i] rich. And he sought to [j] see Jesus, who he was, and could not for the crowd: for he was little in stature. And running on before, he climbed into a sycamore to see him; for he was going to pass that way. And when he came to the place, Jesus looked up and said to him, Zacchæus, make haste and come down: for to-day I must [k] abide at thy house.

y Matt. 20. 29–34. Mk. 10. 46–52.
z *cf.* Jno. 9. 1–8, 39. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4.
a *cf.* Acts 3. 2. *ctr.* Jas. 2. 5.
b *cf.* Matt. 15. 22. *cf.* Matt. 21. 9.
c ver. 15. *cf.* ch. 19. 39 with ch. 11. 52.
d *cf.* 1 Ki. 3. 5. *cf.* Rev. 22. 17. *ctr.* Jno. 5. 40.
e ch. 7. 50. *cf.* Rom. 4. 20.
f *cf.* ch. 8. 2, 3. *ctr.* ch. 9. 57–59. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15.
g ch. 5. 26. *cf.* Phil. 1. 11.
h Matt. 9. 9, 10. ch. 18. 10–13.
i *cf.* ch. 18. 23. *cf.* Matt. 27. 57.
j *cf.* Jno. 12. 21. *ctr.* ch. 23. 8. *cf.* Heb. 2. 9.
k *cf.* Gen. 18. 2–5. *ctr.* Gen. 19. *cf.* Rev. 23. 20.

the part of the blind man, and the people who witness it. The beginning of God's work in a soul, as it was in nature, is the bringing in of light. Israel was now but the blind, led of the blind; and with the light in their midst, the "God of this world darkened the minds of those that believed not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

We have seen in the blind men here (for Matthew shows us two of them) a picture of that remnant in the last days who shall have their eyes opened to see and follow Jesus as their King. Crying after Him, the multitude in that day will indeed "rebuke them that they should hold their peace," but they will only cry the louder to Him, who, finding them in the city of the curse, will presently lead them up to the city of blessing, and of His rest for ever.

[2] The story of Zacchæus follows and is still connected with Jericho and the Lord's passing through it. The name means "pure" or "clean," as his words to the Lord show him to be. We are to take them surely, not as the profession of what he meant to do, but as the answer to the murmured charge against him, and which implicated Christ also, that He was gone to lodge with a man that was a sinner. "A sinner!" he would say, "behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken anything from any one by false accusation,"—a thing which might be done without design—"I restore him fourfold." He is speaking of what he does habitually, not of what he has made a new resolve to do.

And he made haste, and came down, and received [l]him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all [m]murmured, saying, He is gone in to lodge with a man that is a sinner. And Zacchæus stood and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I [n]give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any one by false accusation, I [o]restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, To-day is [p]salvation come unto this house: forasmuch as he also is a [q]son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to [r]seek and to save that which was lost.

[*] (xix. 11–27): the Kingdom appearing at His return, and manifestation then.

[3] And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the [s]kingdom of God was to be manifested forthwith. He said therefore, A [t]certain high-born man went into a far country to [u]receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And calling his own ten servants, he [v]gave to them [w]ten pounds,* and said unto them, Trade, until I come. But his citizens [x]hated him, and sent an embassy after him, saying, We will not that this man reign over us. And it came to pass, when he was [z]returned, having received the kingdom, that he desired those servants to be called to him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know what they had [y]gained by trading. Then came the

*Greek, "*mina*." An Attic *mina* was equal to about $14. A Hebrew *mina* to about $83.

l *cf.* ch. 5.29. *cf.* ch.10.38. *cf.* Jno.1.11, 12.
m *cf.* ch.7.34, 39. *cf.* ch. 15. 2.
n *cf.* ch. 11. 41. *cfr.* ch.18.9, 12, 22, 23.
o *cf.* ch.3.14. *cf.* Ex.22.1-4. *cf.* Lev. 6. 1-6.
p *cf.* ch. 18. 14. *cf.* 2 Cor. 7. 10. *cf.* Acts 11. 14, 15.
q ch. 13. 16. *cf.* Rom. 4. 11. *cf.* Gal. 3.7, 14, 29.
r Matt.9.12, 13. Matt.18.11. *cf.* 1 Tim.1. 13-16.
s *cf.* ch.17.20. *cf.* Acts 1.6, 7.
t *cf.* Matt.25. 14-30. *cf.* Mk. 13. 34-37. *cf.* ch. 20. 9, etc. *cf.* Acts 1.9.
u *cf.* ch. 20.42, 43; *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 25; *cf.* Rev. 1. 9 with Rev. 11. 15. v *cf.* ch. 16. 1, etc.; *cf.* Rom. 12. 6-8; *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 10, 11. w *cf.* Gen. 37. 8; *cf.* Jno. 19. 14, 15; *cf.* Acts 17. 5-7; *cf.* Is. 49. 7.
x *cf.* Matt. 25. 31, etc.; *cf.* Rev. 22. 12. y *cf.* 1 Tim. 4. 13-16; *cf.* 2 Tim.1. 6; *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 5-8.

And yet Zacchæus is no mere Pharisee under his publican's garb. There may well be the Pharisee in him, for it is in our fallen nature; and the Lord's words, gentle and gracious as they are, are well adapted to meet such a condition; even while to one characterized by it He could not have used them. For "a son of Abraham" meant with Him assuredly a child of faith (comp. John viii. 39); and that day had salvation come to that house, with the Object of faith received within it. Thus, not from that "cleanness" of life that he could claim came salvation to him, nor even the assurance of it, but from Him whom he had sought, who had been seeking Him first: "for the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was *lost*." Such, then, was Zacchæus.

[3] The parable that follows is plainly stated to be supplemental to the Lord's words just spoken, and in correction of the thought that the Kingdom of God was going to be manifested immediately. Nay, He was as a man going into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom and to return to take possession of it. Time would be given in this way for His servants to prove their faithfulness to Him; and while salvation was by faith, and for the lost, such faithfulness would be recognized and rewarded when the Kingdom would be set up. His ten servants have (like the ten virgins) the number of responsibility, and are not necessarily servants in heart, as we see directly. His citizens moreover are in open rebellion against him, and send after him a positive refusal of subjection to him.

All this, of which then His disciples needed to be warned, is, of course, for us as plain as possible in application. The emphasis, however, is laid upon the different result in the case of those who are all intrusted with the same amount, to trade with on his behalf. Here the parable of the pounds differs from that

first, saying, Lord, [z]thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said, [a]Well done, good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten [b]cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said also unto him, Be thou also over five cities. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, thy pound, which I have kept [c]laid up in a napkin: for I feared thee, because thou art a [d]hard man: thou takest up what thou laidst not down, and reapest what thou didst not sow. He saith unto him, [e]Out of thy mouth will I judge thee, wicked servant: thou knewest that *I* am a hard man, taking up what I laid not down, and reaping what I have not sown; and why didst thou not give my money into the [f]bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest? And he said to those that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) For I say unto you that to [g]every one that hath shall be given; but from him that hath not, even what he hath shall be taken away. But those mine [h]enemies, who would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.

2 (xix. 28–48): The announcement.

1 (xix. 28–40): peace with the King of peace.

2. [1] And when he had said these things, he [i]went on before, ascending up to Jerusalem. And it came to pass, when he drew nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called [the mount] of Olives, he [j]sent two of the disciples, saying, Go your way into the village over against [you], in which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon no man ever yet sat:

z *cf.* Eph. 4. 8-13. *cf.* 1 Cor. 4. 7.
a *cf.* 1 Pet. 5. 1-4. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8.
b *cf.* Matt. 19. 28. *cf.* ch. 22. 28-30.
c *cf.* Prov. 18. 9. *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 16, 17, 27.
d *cf.* Ex. 20. 18, 19. *cf.* ch. 15. 29. *ctr.* 1 Jno. 5. 3. *cf.* Ex. 1. 14.
e *cf.* 2 Sam. 1. 16. *cf.* Matt. 22. 11-13. *cf.* Rom. 3. 19.
f *cf.* Rom. 2. 7. *cf.* Prov. 30. 24, 25. *ctr.* ch. 12. 16-21.
g Matt. 13. 12. *cf.* Jno. 15. 2. *cf.* 1 Sa. 15. 28. *cf.* Rev. 2. 5.
h ver. 14. *cf.* Matt. 22. 7. *cf.* 2 Thess. 1. 8, 9.
i Matt. 20. 17; Mk. 10. 32.
j Matt. 21. 1-11; Mk. 11. 1-10.

of the talents in Matthew, which comes after it and is a development of it. "Matthew presents the sovereignty and wisdom of the giver, who varies his gifts according to the aptitude of his servants; in Luke it is more particularly the responsibility of the servants, who each receive the same sum, and the one gains by it, in his master's interest, more than the other. Accordingly it is not said, as in Matthew, 'Enter into the joy of your Lord,' the same thing to all, and the more excellent thing; but to the one it is authority over ten cities that is given; to the other over five: that is to say, a share in the kingdom according to their labor. The servant does not lose that which he has gained, although it was for his master. He enjoys it. Not so with the servant who made no use of his pound; that which had been committed to him is given to the one who had gained ten. That which we gain spiritually here, in spiritual intelligence and the knowledge of God in power, is not lost in the other world. On the contrary we receive more, and the glory of the inheritance is given us in proportion to our work. But all is grace" (*Synopsis*).

It is the apprehension of grace also that enables for work, as we see by the opposite of this in the unfruitful servant, who is indeed to be judged out of his own mouth. His words, however, are but an excuse for slothfulness. "Instead of laboring in the sweat of his brow for the interests of his lord, he had hidden the entrusted money in the now entirely superfluous *soudarion*: literally 'sweat-cloth'" (*Van Oosterzee.*)

Upon the enemies of the King judgment comes to the uttermost.

2. [1] With these forewarnings of the character of His Kingdom, and of how

loose and bring it. And if any one ask you, Why do ye loose it? thus shall ye say to him, Because the [k] Lord hath need of it. And they that were sent went their way, and found as he had said to them. And as they were loosing the colt, its owners said unto them, Why loose ye the colt? And they said, Because the Lord hath need of it. And they brought it to Jesus; and they cast their own garments on the colt, and set Jesus thereon. And as he went, they [l] spread their garments in the way.

And as he drew nigh, [being] already at the descent of the Mount of Olives, all the multitude of the disciples began joyfully to [m] praise God with a loud voice for all the works of power which they had seen: saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord; [n] peace in heaven and glory in the highest. And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Teacher, [o] rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said, I say unto you that, if these hold their peace, the [p] stones will cry out.

[3] (xix. 41-44). the alternative, humiliation from the hand of the enemy.

[2] And as he drew nigh, he saw the city, and [q] wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that are for thy peace! but now they are [r] hid from thine eyes. For days shall

k cf. Ps. 50. 10-12.
cf. Ps. 8. 6-8.
cf. Ex. 34. 20 with ch. 1. 68.
l cf. 2 Ki. 9. 13.
cf. Zech. 9. 9.
cf. Jno. 12. 3.
cf. Jno. 19. 38-40.
m cf. Jno. 12. 12-19.
cf. Matt. 23. 38, 39.
n cf. ch. 2. 14.
cf. Rev. 12. 7-12.
o cf. ch. 18. 15.
cf. Matt. 23. 13.
cf. Matt. 27. 18.
p cf. Heb. 2. 11-14.
cf. 2 Chron. 7. 20-22.
q cf. ch. 10. 34, 35.
cf. Jer. 9. 1.
cf. Jno. 11. 35.
r cf. Is. 6. 9-13.
cf. Rom. 11. 7, 25.
cf. 2 Cor. 3. 13-16.

His claim to it would be treated at this time, Jesus ascends to Jerusalem, by the way of the "house of unripe figs" (Bethphage) and of the "house of humiliation" or "of sorrow" (Bethany). Then, as in the previous Gospels, He fulfils—or presents Himself for the fulfilment of Zechariah's prophecy, riding into the city on an ass's colt. But it is noticeable how much higher is the character, beyond the former Gospels, in which He is presented here. As Son of David He is not even spoken of, but as the King that cometh in the name of the Lord —Jehovah; and with "peace in heaven, and glory in the highest."

This is a strain, indeed, beyond the intelligence of the disciples; as all here is manifestly under the control of God, and pointing onward to a future time. The King that comes in Jehovah's Name brings not only peace on earth, but peace in heaven. We have heard the Lord announce already the casting down of Satan out of it (see chap. x. 18), and have seen to what period this refers. It is but, however, the effect of the Cross, as that which has overcome principalities and powers, and led captivity captive. Back of man's sin, the Cross reaches to the incoming of sin at the beginning, glorifying God about it all. We little realize the need of this, where it is no longer a question of the salvation of sinners, but of the purification of heavenly things (Heb. ix. 23), the reconciliation of things in the heavens (Col. i. 20). Scripture speaks plainly of it, however, both in type and open speech of the New Testament. Nor will God deal with sin even in definitive judgment until He has glorified Himself in view of it. "Hallowed be Thy Name; Thy Kingdom come:" such is the divine order. That "hallowed be Thy Name" is in effect "peace in heaven," as "glory in the highest."

The Pharisees dare to appeal to the Lord Himself to deny Himself, and rebuke the disciples. He tells them that, if *they* held their peace, the very stones would cry out. As a result of His rejection this has indeed taken place, and the stones of the plowed up city bear witness for Him to-day.

[3] This was the alternative, which His lament over the city brings fully out: it was the Saviour or the destroyer, Christ or the dreaded and hated Roman.

come upon thee, when thine enemies shall cast up a palisade* around thee and shall [s]compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side; and they shall [t]level thee to the ground, and thy children within thee, and shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone: because thou [u]knewest not the time of thy visitation.

3 (xix. 45–48): the temple cleansed.

45 And he entered into the temple, and began to [v]cast out those that sold,† saying unto them, It is [w]written, My house shall be a house of prayer: but ye have made it a [x]robbers' den. And he was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes [y]sought to destroy him; the chief also of the people: and they could not find what they might do; for all the [z]people hung upon him, listening.

3 (xx. 1–18): The vineyard and the Heir.

1 (1–8): the question of authority.

20 1 And it came to pass on one of the days, as he was teaching the people in the temple, and evangelizing, the chief priests and the scribes came upon him, with the elders, and spake unto him, saying, Tell us by what [a]authority thou doest these things, or who it is that gave thee this authority? And he answered and said unto them, I also will ask you a question,‡ and tell me: The [b]baptism of John, was it from heaven or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven, he will say, Why did ye not believe him? But if we say, Of men, all the [c]people will stone us: for they are persuaded that John was a prophet. And they answered that they [d]knew not whence [it was.] And Jesus said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

s ch. 21. 20–24. cf. Deut. 28. 49–57.
t cf. Is. 29. 1–4. cf. Mi. 3. 12.
u ver. 42. cf. Jno. 12. 35, 36.
v Matt. 21. 12, 13. Mk. 11. 11, 15–17. cf. Jno. 2. 14–17.
w Is. 56. 7. cf. Is. 2. 3.
x Jer. 7. 11. cf. Mal. 3. 3 with Hos. 12. 7.
y Mk. 11. 18. Matt. 21. 45, 46.
z Mk. 12. 37. cf. Jno. 7. 40, 46.
a Matt. 21. 23–27. Mk. 11. 27–33. cf. Ex. 2. 14. cf. Jno. 2. 18.
b cf. Jno. 1. 23. cf. ch. 7. 28–35.
c cf. Matt. 14. 5. ver. 19. ch. 22. 6.
d cf. Jno. 1. 19–28. cf. ch. 7. 33. cf. Is. 6. 9, 10. cf. Jno. 9. 29.

*Or "mound." †A few add, "and bought." ‡Greek, "word."

In fact, they had already made their choice, and could only be left to it. But the Judge weeps as He gives sentence. If Jerusalem had known, though but at the last moment, the things belonging to her peace! but now they were hidden from her. She and her children within her would be destroyed—not a stone left upon a stone—because she knew not the time of her visitation.

45 But this that He foresaw does not hinder the completion of His testimony among them. He purges the temple: for Him, until He leaves it desolate, His Father's house, and the place of Jehovah's throne on earth, though now long vacant. It was the symbol of His life-long thought, the zeal which was to be as the flame of sacrifice consuming Himself, as the psalmist had long since expressed it (Ps. lxix. 9). Luke mentions, however, the casting out of the traffickers very briefly, dwelling more upon His teaching in the house that He had purged, and how the people hung upon His words. What seed was sown, to spring up at an after-time, we cannot tell; but we know that He was emphatically the Sower, and that upon all seed sown the sign of the cross must pass, that it may be fruitful (John xii. 24).

20 1 The conflict with the leaders is now upon Him. They begin it with the challenge of His authority, which He answers by one on His side to settle that of John: as to which, to their confusion, but even then insincerely, they have to own incompetence. He refuses then to show them His: for of what use would it be with those who had just acknowledged themselves to be no proper judges? and when the things about which they asked Him bore the authority for doing them upon their face?

2 (9-19): the rejection of the messengers.

9 [2] And he began to speak unto the people this parable: A man [e]planted a vineyard, and let it out to [f]husbandmen, and left the country for a [g]long time. And at the [h]season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard; but the husbandmen [i]beat him and sent him away empty. And he sent again another servant; and they beat him also, and treated him shamefully and sent him away empty. And he sent yet a third; and him also they wounded, and cast him out. And the lord of the vineyard said, What shall I do? I will send my [j]beloved son; it may be they will have regard to him. But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned with one another, saying, [k]This is the heir: let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. And they cast him forth out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore will the lord of the vineyard do unto them? He will come and [l]destroy these husbandmen, and give the vineyard unto [m]others. And when they heard it, they said, May it not be. But he looking upon them said, What is this, then, that is written? The [n]stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner. Every one who falleth on that stone shall be [o]broken; but on whomsoever it shall [p]fall, it will grind him to powder.* And the chief priests and the scribes [q]sought to lay hands on him in that very hour: and they feared the people; for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them.

4 (xx. 20-xxi. 4): Testing and tested.

1 (20-26): The claims of Cæsar and of God.

20 4 [1] And they [r]watched him, and sent out men suborned, feigning themselves to be just men, that they might take hold of some word of his, so that they might deliver him up to the power and authority of the governor. And they asked him, saying, Teacher, we [s]know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, and acceptest not the person, but teachest truly the way of God. Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto [t]Cæsar, or not? But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye me?† Show me a penny:‡ whose

*Or, "Scatter as chaff." †Some omit this clause.
‡Denarius, as in Matt. xviii. 28.

cf. 2 Sam. 14. 2, etc. *s cf.* Jno. 3. 2; Matt. 22. 15-22; Mk. 12. 13-17; *cf.* Ps. 12. 2. 13, 19-22; *cf.* Ezr. 9. 7; *cf.* Neh. 9. 37 with Deut. 28. 33,51.

e Matt. 21. 33-46. Mk. 12. 1-12. *cf.* Is.5.1-7.
f cf. Deut.1. 15-17. *cf.*Matt.23. 2.
*g cf.*ch.19.12. *cf.* Acts 13. 19-22.
h cf. Jer.25. 3-7. *cf.* Jer. 35. 15.
*i cf.*Matt.23. 29-36. *cf.* Acts 7. 51, 52. *cf.* Neh. 9. 26.
j cf. Gen.37. 13, 14. *cf.* Gal.4.4. *cf.*Heb.1.2.
k cf. Ps.2.1-3. *cf.* Matt. 2. 1-18. *cf.* Jno. 11. 47-50. *cf.* Gen. 37. 18-20.
*l cf.*ch.19.27. *cf.* Ps.2.8,9. *cf* Acts 13. 40, 41. *cf.*1 Thess. 2. 15, 16.
m cf. Acts 13. 46. *cf.* Neh. 9. 36, 37. *cf.* Is. 6. 13.
n Ps. 118.22. Acts 4. 11. 1 Pet.2.4,7, 8.
*o cf.*Is. 8.14, 15. *cf.*Is. 28.16. *cf.* Rom. 9. 32, 33.
*p cf.*2Thess. 1. 6-10. *cf.* Dan. 2. 34, 35. *cf.*ch.17.37.
q ch. 19. 47, 48.
*r cf.*Is.29.20, 21. *cf.* Jer. 20. 10.
t cf. Ezr. 4.

[2] The parable of the two sons is here omitted, as in Mark; and Luke goes on to that of the Vineyard and its Heir, and the rejection of the messengers crowned by the murder of the last, the only son of the owner. He searches out their hearts, foretells their triumph and the ruin it would bring upon themselves, shows them from their own scriptures, that the Stone to be made by God the Head of the corner was first of all to be rejected by the builders themselves. Here they could not help recognizing that He spoke of them, while their blind passion urged them on to the fulfilment of His words.

4. [1] They go on testing Him, as in the previous Gospels. First, by the question of tribute to Cæsar, in which His answer goes to the root of the matter, and shows the way of deliverance also, if only they would take it. They had bor-

"image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, Cæsar's. And he said unto them, Then [v]render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's. And they were not able to lay hold of the saying before the people; and [w]wondering at his answer, they held their peace.

2 (27-40): Relationships hereafter and the Scripture testimony as to death.

[2] And certain of the Sadducees, who say that there is no [x]resurrection, came unto him and asked him, saying, Teacher, Moses [y]wrote unto us that, if a man's brother die, having a wife, and he be childless, his brother should take the wife and raise up seed unto his brother. There [z]were, then, seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and died childless. And the second [took her, and he died childless];* and the third took her; and in like manner also the seven left no children and died; and last of all, the woman died. In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife. And Jesus said unto them, The sons of [a]this age marry and are given in marriage; but they that are accounted worthy to have part in that age, and the resurrection [b]from among the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage; for neither can they [c]die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are [d]sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. But that the dead rise, even Moses showed at the bush, when he [e]calleth [the] Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Now he is not God of [f]dead men, but of living ones: for to him all live. And certain of the scribes answered and said, Teacher, [g]thou hast spoken well. For they [h]dared not any more to ask him anything.

u *cf.* Ezr. 1. 1, etc. *cf.* ch. 2. 1. *cf.* ch. 3. 1. *cf.* Jno. 19. 12.
v *cf.* Rom. 13. 1, 6, 7. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 13, 14, 17. *cf.* Acts 4. 19, 20. *cf.* Acts 5. 29.
w ch. 13. 17. *cf.* ch. 21. 15.
x Matt. 22. 23-33. Mk. 12. 18-27. *cf.* Acts 4. 1, 2. *cf.* Acts 5. 17.
y Deut. 25. 5. *cf.* Gen. 38. 8, etc. *cf.* Ruth 4. 5.
z *cf.* ch. 18. 1-8. *cf.* Tim. 1. 4.
a *cf.* ch. 17. 27. *cf.* 1 Cor. 7. 29. *cf.* Rev. 19. 7.
b *cf.* Phil. 3. 11. *cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 16. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 42-44.
c *cf.* Rom. 6. 9. *cf.* Rev. 20. 6. *cf.* Rom. 6. 5.
d *cf.* Rom. 8. 17-23. *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 2.

* Many omit the words in brackets.

e Ex. 3. 6; *cf.* Gen. 17. 7; *cf.* ch. 16. 22. f *cf.* Eph. 2. 1, 12; *cf.* Heb. 11. 13-16. g *cf.* Acts 23. 9. h ver. 26; *cf.* Prov. 26. 4, 5.

rowed Cæsar's money; let them pay it him back: a just debt could not be met by rebellion and repudiation. On the other hand, there was a way out: let them render to God His due, and He would come in for them. Thus the whole question is settled in a few simple words, and so that they cannot even say a word against it.

[2] The Sadducees take the place of the beaten Pharisees, and raise their question of relationship in the resurrection state, illustrating their difficulty by the case of a woman who had married seven brethren. The Lord answers, that marriage belongs to this world or age, while in the age to come and the resurrection from the dead those counted worthy to obtain these will be as the angels in this respect. The Lord's words announce a resurrection from among the dead comprising the sons of God alone: they are necessarily sons of God if they are sons of the resurrection; the one involves the other. The obtaining the "age to come" (the millennium) goes with this; which is exactly what is said in Rev. xx. 5, that the rest of the dead—the wicked—do not rise again till the thousand years are finished. Among the ranks of these blessed ones there is no death either: and so no need of marriage to fill up the gaps caused by death. He adds that even the dead are yet alive to God; and so destroys the materialis-

[3] (41-44): the glory of Christ manifested.

[4] (45-47): the ways of the scribes.

[5] (xxi.1-4): results with God.

[3] And [g]he said unto them, How say they that the Christ is David's son? and David himself [h]saith in the book of Psalms, [The] Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet. David therefore calleth him Lord, and [k]how is he his son?

[4] Then in the hearing of all the people, he said unto his disciples, [l]Beware of the scribes, who like to walk in long robes, and who love salutations in the market-places, and [m]chief seats in the synagogues, and chief places at feasts; who [n]devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive [o]more abounding judgment.

[5] And he looked up and saw the [p]rich casting their gifts into the treasury, and he saw also a certain poor [q]widow casting therein two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than all. For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the gifts [of God],* but she out of her want hath cast in [r]all the living that she had.

* Some omit.

cf. ch. 12. 16-21; *cf.* ch. 16. 19-31; *cf.* ch. 18. 23-27; *cf.* ch. 19. 2-10. *q cf.* ch. 18. 3; *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 10; *cf.* Is. 54. 6. *r cfr.* ch. 18. 12; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15; *cf.* 2 Cor. 8. 1-5.

[g] Matt 22.42-46. Mk. 12. 35-37. *cf.* ver. 3.
[h] Ps. 110. 1. Acts 2. 34. 1 Cor. 15. 25. Heb. 1. 13.
[k] *cf.* Acts 13. 22, 23. *cf.* Rom. 1. 3, 4. *cf.* Rom. 9. 5. *cf.* Rev. 22. 16.
[l] Matt. 23. 1, etc. ch. 12. 1.
[m] ch. 14. 7. ch. 11. 43.
[n] Matt. 23. 14. *cf.* Jer. 7. 6-10. *cf.* Am. 8. 4-6.
[o] ch. 10. 12-14. *cf.* ch 12. 47, 48.
[p] Mk. 12. 41-44. *cf.* ch. 6. 24.

tic idea of death held by the Sadducees, the basis of their denial of resurrection. And finally, He proves this last out of the Scriptures they acknowledged—the books of Moses. They acknowledged, but did not *know* them.

[3] They are silenced,—Pharisees, Herodians, Sadducees, all the leaders of the unhappy people,—and He turns upon them with a question which reaches the bottom of the whole controversy, the question of His Person, of the true glory of Christ. Was *He* merely David's Son? Why then did David, speaking by the Spirit, call Him "Lord," saying, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet"? How could He be his Son and yet his Lord? Clearly no answer could be made which did not admit His higher nature.

[4] Then He denounces the scribes as those whose ways made known too certainly what they were. Self-importance, rapacity, hypocrisy, marked them. More abundant judgment would be their lot at last. Let us observe that He first meets and refutes their doctrines before He brings their ways into question. Scripture alone could settle as to the truth; and His appeal is there to the Word and nothing else. Truth might have evil professors of it, without annulling its right as truth; but now it was in place to show how sadly their errors were mated with their characters. The common conscience of men was sufficient to condemn them.

[5] But He does not close with this, for judgment is work in which He has no delight. If He be wearied with the evil, He refreshes Himself with the good, and among the rich who are casting much into the treasure, His eye discerns a single poor widow who casts in a contribution hardly to be reckoned amid their costly gifts. But He reckons differently from men at large, and not so much by what is put in as by what is kept back. *She* has kept *nothing* back. For Him this poor widow has cast in more than all. For these have given out of their abundance, leaving much still behind; but *she* has cast in all the living that she had.

Such sights, then, were still to be seen in Israel. Alas, they were few, as the very terms of the commendation show. For all the gifts of the rich were not equal to these "two mites, which make a farthing."

5 (xxi. 5–36): Judgment.
I (5–24): the first, and impending judgment.

5. [1] And as some spake of the [s]temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and offerings, he said, As for these things that ye behold, the days shall come in which there shall not be left here a [t]stone upon a stone which shall not be thrown down. And they asked him, saying, Teacher, [u]when therefore shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when these things are about to come to pass? And he said, See that ye be not [v]deceived. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am [he], and the time is drawn nigh; go ye not* after them. And when ye shall hear of [w]wars and tumults be not terrified: for these things must needs come to pass first, but the end is not immediately. Then said he to them, [x]Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there shall be both great [y]earthquakes in divers places, and famines and pestilences; and there shall be [z]fearful sights and great signs from heaven. But before all

s Matt. 24.1, etc. Mk. 13. 1, etc. *cf.* Jno. 2. 19–21.
t ch. 19. 44. *cf.* 2 Chro. 7. 20–22. *cf.* Is. 64.10, 11. *cf.* Ezek. 7. 20–22.
u Matt. 24.3. Mk. 13. 3, 4. *cf.* Acts 1.6, 7. *ctr.* 1 Thess. 1. 10 with Phil. 3. 20, 21.
v *cf.* 2 Cor. 11. 13–15. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 3. *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 13.
w *cf.* 2 Chro. 15. 5, 6. Matt. 24. 6, 7.

* Some add "therefore."

Mk. 13. 7, 8. x *cf.* Hag. 2.21, 22; *cf.* Zech. 14. 2, 3; *cf.* Rev. 6. 4. y *cf.* Rev. 6. 5, 6, 12. z vers. 25–27; *cf.* Matt. 24. 29.

5. The Lord's prophecy from the Mount of Olives has a conspicuous place in each of the three synoptic Gospels: in John only it is not found. Luke's version of it, however, though approaching that of Mark most nearly, differs in a very striking way from both; and all the more because of its resemblances to them.

Matthew gives the fullest account, showing the coming of the Lord in its relation to the Jews, the Church, and the Gentiles. Mark is briefer, and omits altogether the last two; but like Matthew he speaks of the abomination of desolation and the tribulation unequalled in any other time. This last, through the mercy of God very limited in duration, has the abomination as the date of its commencement, and continues till immediately before the appearing of the Lord,—linking in this way the two together, and showing that we are in the time of the end throughout this part. What precedes it is general in character, and might (and doubtless does) take in from the beginning of Christianity, but as a dispensation says nothing of this. It is passed over, quite as in Old Testament prophecy; though in Matthew taken up in its relation to the coming of the Lord in the parables which follow. Luke also says nothing indeed of Christianity as such, and is briefer as to the Lord's coming and what connects with this. We have nothing of the abomination nor of the tribulation following, but in place of this Jerusalem encompassed with armies and her being trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles—of the empires pictured by Daniel—are fulfilled. Then follow the signs of the Lord at hand.

Luke retains his character in this as the Gentile Gospel; and the smaller details are in harmony with this. Thus there is no angelic mission to gather together the elect; and to the parable of the fig-tree he adds "and *all* the trees." The indefinite lapse of time fulfilled in Jerusalem's desolation, as contrasted with the immediate coming of the Lord after the tribulation which follows the setting up of the abomination, distinguishes in the clearest way the destruction by Titus spoken of in Luke from the signs of the end-time in the other Gospels. Jerusalem at the end is not destroyed but delivered, though at her extremity, by the appearing of the Lord.

[1] The commencement of the prophecy is very similar in the three Gospels. In Luke, as in Mark, the disciples' questions have to do entirely with the destruction of the temple, of which He had just been speaking, and only in Matthew have we the additional ones, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of

these things shall they [a]lay their hands upon you and persecute you; delivering [you] up to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for my name's sake: but it shall turn out to you for a [b]testimony. Settle it then, in your hearts not to [c]premeditate how to answer: for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your [d]adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist. But ye shall be delivered up even by [e]parents and brethren and kindred and friends; and they shall put some of you to [f]death, and ye shall be [g]hated of all men for my name's sake. And a [h]hair of your head shall in no wise perish. By your [i]patience gain your lives.*

But when ye see Jerusalem [j]encompassed with armies, then know that her desolation is drawn nigh. Then let those that are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those that are in the midst of it [k]depart out; and let not those that are in the country enter into it. For these are days of [l]vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. Woe unto those that are

a Matt. 10. 16-22. John 16. 2. cf. 1 Pet. 4. 12-14.
b cf. Phil. 1. 12, 13, 28. cf. 2 Thess. 1. 4, 5.
c ch. 12. 11, 12. Mk. 13. 11. cf. Ex. 4. 11, 12.
d cf. ch. 20. 40. cf. Acts 5. 29-41. cf. Acts 6. 10.
e cf. Jer. 9. 4. Mi. 7. 5, 6. Matt. 10. 21, 35. cf. Jno. 9. 19-23.
f cf. Acts 7. 54-60. cf. Acts 12. 1, 2. cf. Rev. 2. 13. cf. Rev. 11. 7.

*Or, "In your patience possess your souls."

g Matt. 10. 22; cf. Jno. 7. 7; cf. ch. 6. 22. h cf. Matt. 10. 29-33; cf. 1 Sa. 14. 45; cf. Dan. 3. 27. i cf. Heb. 10. 36; cf. 2 Thess. 3. 5; cf. Matt. 24. 13. j cf. ch. 19. 43, 44; cf. Dan. 9. 26, 27; cf. Matt. 24. 15-22; cf. Mk. 13. 14-20. k cf. Gen. 19. 17-26; cf. Ex. 9. 20, 21; cf. Jer. 6. 1; cf. Rev. 18. 4. l cf. Hos. 9. 7; cf. Lev. 26. 14, etc.; cf. Ps. 69. 22-28; cf. Is. 65. 12-15.

the end of the age?" Matthew accordingly it is who develops most fully, as we have seen, the circumstances connected with the end-time and the Lord's return, while Luke gives the full answer to the question as to the temple. In relation to this, he brings out also as the others do, the false Christs that should arise, the wars and rumors of wars, the convulsions and disasters. But before all these things the hatred of men to Him would break out in the bitter persecution of His followers. The nearest ties would be no restraint; the dearest affections of nature would be turned to enmity. They would be delivered up to the synagogues and brought before rulers and kings; Christ, however, being borne witness to in this way, and the Spirit, therefore, with them to furnish them with the needful ability to glorify Him. Through all not a hair of their heads would really perish: He who has counted them all would certainly give a good account of them. By endurance they would gain their lives, instead of losing them: by the very loss of them they would keep them, as the Lord assured them before, to life eternal.

Upon the guilty city, stained with the blood of the prophets, and now to be with that of their glorious King also, days of vengeance were coming. When they saw Jerusalem encompassed with armies, then they might know that its desolation was near: a very different thing, nevertheless, from the "abomination of desolation" of which Matthew and Mark speak, and which is connected with the middle of the last week of Daniel, while *this* comes between the sixty-ninth and seventieth in the same chapter: "and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary" (Dan. ix. 26). There is really no excuse for confounding things so different, and where the interval between them is so plainly expressed.

There are, no doubt, similar warnings to depart from the city, and lamentations over the childbearing women in each case—as easy to be understood in one connection as in the other. But the omissions in Luke are noticeable. Where the armies encompassing the city are the sign, there is naturally no exhortation as to speediness of departure, no need to pray that it might not be upon the sabbath day. In fact, for those *in* Jerusalem, such haste would be

with child, and to those that give suck in those days! for there shall be great distress upon the land and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and be led [m]captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem shall be [n]trodden down by the nations until the [o]times of the nations be fulfilled.

2 (25–36): the judgment which is redemption.

[2] And there shall be [p]signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon earth distress of nations in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and billows; men [q]ready to die for fear and expectation of things coming on the habitable earth: for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And [r]then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. But when these things begin to come to pass, [s]look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh.

And he spake a parable to them, Behold the [t]fig-tree, and all the trees: when they already shoot, ye know of yourselves when ye see it, that summer is already nigh. So ye, when ye see these things taking place, know that the [u]kingdom of God is nigh. Verily I say unto you that [v]this generation shall in no wise pass away until all things come to pass. [w]Heaven and

m cf. Deut. 28. 64–68. *cf.* Acts 7. 43.
n cf. Is. 5. 5. *cf.* Is. 63. 18.
o cf. Dan. 9. 24–27. *cf.* Rom. 11. 25, 26.
p cf. Is. 13. 9, 10, 13. *cf.* Ezek. 32. 7, 8. *cf.* Joel 2. 10, 30, 31.
q cf. Rev. 6. 12–17. ch. 23. 30.
r Matt. 24. 29–31. Mk. 13. 24–27. Rev. 1. 7. 2 Thess. 1. 7–10.
s cf. Is. 64. 1–5. *cf.* Ps. 96. 11–13. *cf.* Ps. 97.
t Matt. 24. 32–35. Mk. 13. 28–31. *cf.* Mk. 11. 13.

cf. Matt. 16. 1–3. *u cf.* Heb. 10. 37; *cf.* Jas. 5. 8, 9. *v cf.* ch. 11. 50, 51; *cf.* Matt. 10. 23. *w cf.* Is. 40. 8; *cf.* Is. 51. 6.

rather dangerous than wise, and abundance of time was given, after Cestius Gallus had retired from the city, for leisurely departure. All, therefore, is in perfect keeping.

How terrible these days of vengeance were is known to all. Josephus gives the number of the slain in the siege as 1,000,000; of those carried away captive as 97,000. The complete fulfilment of our Lord's words is matter of common history. The times of the Gentiles are not yet concluded, after more than eighteen centuries of treading down; although there are many signs that they are near their end: to what then takes place the prophecy passes on.

[2] The signs of the end are more briefly given than in the previous Gospels; signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars, answered by the roaring of the sea with its billows from below; between them the nations in distress and perplexity; men ready to die for alarm at what is coming on the earth. There seems good reason to believe that these signs are physical, while yet there are corresponding ones in the political sphere, as the book of Revelation clearly shows. At such a time God's mercy multiplies His calls to men to give heed to what He is doing; and such mysterious sympathy of nature with human woes gives all the apparent countenance that there may be to the fables of astrology. In such ways man perverts the goodness of God to his destruction.

Amid such signs the Son of man will be seen coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Nothing is said of attendant angels or of the gathering of the dispersed of Israel. But when the disciples should see the beginnings of these things, they were to rejoice and lift up their heads, because their redemption was drawing nigh. These would be, in fact, Jewish disciples, such as they were to whom the Lord was now addressing Himself. Christianity was yet unknown, and the long lapse of time designedly hidden.

The parable of the fig-tree applies, as we have seen in various places, to the Jewish remnant of returned captives in the land. Since dispersed, as Luke has told us they would be, they are now again gathering there; the fig-tree is shooting. But Luke adds "and all the trees": in which we are to see apparently, according to the character of Luke, the revival of the nations making up Daniel's

earth shall pass away, but my words shall in no wise pass away. But take [x] heed to yourselves, lest peradventure your hearts be [y] surfeited with debauch and drunkenness, and [z] cares of life, and that day come upon you unawares: for as a [a] snare shall it come upon all that dwell upon the face of the whole earth. [b] Watch therefore, at every season, praying, that ye may prevail to [c] escape all these things that are about to come to pass, and to [d] stand before the Son of man.

x cf. 1 Pet. 1. 13. cf. 1 Pet. 4. 7.
y Rom. 13. 13. cf. 1 Pet. 4. 3, 4.
z cf. ch. 14. 18–20. cf. ch. 17. 28.
a cf. 1 Thess. 5. 1–7. cf. Rev. 3. 3, 10.
b cf. Matt. 24. 42, etc. cf. Mk. 13. 32–37.
c cf. ch. 17. 33–37. cf. Rev. 7. 3.
d cf. Matt. 25. 31–40. cf. r. Ps. 1. 5.
e Jno. 8. 1, 2. cf. ch. 2. 7. cf. Heb. 13. 11–14.

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chaps. xxi. 37–xxiii.)

The Cross and its Salvation.

SECTION 1. (Chaps. xxi. 37–xxii. 62.)

Anticipations.

1 (xxi. 37–xxii. 23): Consenting wills.
1 (xxi. 37–xxii. 6): the compact.

1. [1] AND by day he was in the temple, teaching; and at night he [e] went out and lodged in [the mount] that is called the mount of Olives; and all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple to hear him.

empires. Notable it is that Greece and Italy, after a time of long depression, have again become kingdoms. If we go outside of these, but still within the range of Daniel's vision, Egypt is also reviving under British care. Certainly the trees seem putting forth their leaves. The summer surely is already nigh; and there is no summer apart from the Kingdom of God. Again we are reminded, as in Matthew, of the rapidity with which it will at last come on. The generation that sees the beginning will see the end. And here the Lord solemnly affirms the immutability of His word: though heaven and earth pass, this shall not.

In view of such a time again there come warnings, lest the world, its pleasures and its cares engross and stupefy the heart, and these things come unawares; for as a snare it will come upon those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. They must watch and pray, that they may prevail to escape, and stand before the Son of man. "This is still the great subject of our Gospel. To be with Him as those that have escaped from the earth, to be among the 144,000 on Mount Zion, will be an accomplishment of this blessing, but the *place* is not named; so that, supposing the faithfulness of those whom He was personally addressing, the hope awakened by His words would be fulfilled in a more excellent manner in His heavenly presence in the day of glory" (*Synopsis*).

SUBD. 2.

We have now, as in the other Gospels, the descent to the cross, but which takes here, as has been already stated, that peace-offering character which is so entirely in unison with all that has been before us in the book. The shadow on the cross itself is in no wise what Matthew and Mark have pictured. It is just indicated, but not felt as there. The glory of its accomplishment shines through it and irradiates it. Correspondingly the descent thither is less protracted, the detail is less minute. In Gethsemane, indeed, the effect of the conflict upon His human frame is given, as not elsewhere: for Luke's is, as we know, the Gospel of His humanity; but the conflict itself is not so fully brought before us. Upon the cross there is suffering, but not distance; and the Saviour and His salvation are completely manifested.

Sec. 1.

Anticipations of the cross naturally fill now the short space of time which yet remains before it. He is a willing sacrifice; not taken unawares, but with the full consciousness of all that is to come upon Him. The disciples on the other hand, in spite of all His forewarnings of what would so profoundly affect

Now the [f] feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the passover; and the chief priests and the scribes [g] sought how they might kill him: for they feared the people. And [h] Satan entered into Judas, who was called Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went away, and spake with the chief priests and captains as to how he might deliver him up to them. And they were glad, and agreed to give him [i] money. And he consented, and sought opportunity to deliver him up to them in the absence of the multitude.

[f] Matt. 26. 1-5. Mk. 14.1,2. *cf.* Jno. 11. 55.
[g] ch. 19. 47, 48.
[h] Matt. 26. 14-16. Mk. 14. 10, 11. Jno.6.70,71. Jno.13.2,27.
[i] Jno. 12. 6.

2 (xxii. 7-13): the witness of the Old Testament to Christ (?)

[2] And the day of unleavened bread came, in which the passover must be sacrificed. And he [j] sent Peter and John, saying, Go and make ready for us the passover, that we may eat. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we make ready? And he said unto them, Behold, as ye enter into the city, there shall meet you a man bearing a [k] pitcher of water: follow him unto the house into which he goeth. And say unto

[j] Matt.26.17-19. Mk. 14.12-16.
[k] *cf.* 1 Sa.10. 3. *cf.* Jno.2.6-10. *cf.* Rev. 5. 20.

their whole future, are still unprepared for it. He is occupied, therefore, here in setting it before them, with its consequences and lessons. We must wait, indeed, for John, to see how perfectly He does this; and how at this time His human heart overflows towards them with divine fulness. Luke, of all the synoptists, is nearest John, but here, on that very account, seems to be limited by him; while he is yet outside the sphere of the previous Gospels.

1. We see first how many consenting wills lead Him onward to the cross. The wicked wills of men, pursuing independently their wretched ends, are yet under the control of that divine will which in holiness and loving-mercy governs all. A suited preface this to that which follows. The first thing we are apt to see is man's will, and that under the government of Satan, as it was here: and these things are just as truly to be owned, with all their consequences in responsibility and judgment, as if they were the whole truth, which they are so far from being. We may consider them by themselves, or as simply *against* the will of God; which in their wickedness they were. Yet the whole mystery of sacrifice in heathendom, coming into light in the Old Testament, and crowned with the glory of prophecy, guides on the course of human history to the Great Sacrifice which was to come. The Son of man goeth as it was determined; yet most freely following out the will of God; and now faith looks back in the memorial instituted by Himself, to this as the centre of the ages: the salvation of man, the manifestation of God.

[1] In the temple day by day, teaching as never man taught, the crowds hanging upon His lips, those who looked little below the surface might say with the priests themselves, "The world goes after Him." But the more they feared, the more they were inflamed against Him, seeking His death.

An awful colleague appears: Satan, in Judas the "trafficker,"* ready to make merchandise of his Lord. And these all take their own way, follow their own will, as if God had none, or knew nothing. Yet Satan knows and trembles (Jas. ii. 19); and goes on as if he knew not: such is the infatuation of sin.

[2] The type-shadow of that in which they thus were to have their part was now brooding over them. Other eyes were watching it with what mingled feelings. It was the shadow upon the dial-piece of time which had now reached the decisive moment when it was to pass into the brightness which should illuminate all else. But how pass? Thank God, that is not any more a question.

*See p. 119.

the master of the house, The teacher saith unto thee, Where is the guest-chamber, where I may eat the passover with my disciples? And he will show you a large upper room furnished: there make ready. And they went away, and found as he had spoken to them; and they made ready the passover.

[3] And when the [l]hour was come, he sat down,* and the [twelve]† apostles with him. And he said to them, With [m]desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer. For I say unto you, that I [n]will not eat any more at all of it, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And having received a [o]cup, when he had given thanks, he said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves. For I say unto you, I will no more drink of the fruit of the vine till the [p]kingdom of God shall come. And taking a [q]loaf, when he had given thanks, he brake, and gave to them, saying, This is my [r]body which is given for you: this do for a [s]remembrance of me. And likewise the cup, after having supped, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my [t]blood, which is poured out for you. Moreover, behold,

[3] (xxii. 14-23); the memorial.

* *Literally* "reclined [at table]." † Many omit.

l Matt. 26. 20, etc. Mk. 14. 17, etc. *cf.* Jno. 13. 1, etc. *m cf.* Heb. 9. 11, 12, 26 with Heb. 10. 1-9. *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 7. *n cf.* ver. 30. *cf.* Matt. 8. 11. *o ctr.* ver. 20. *cf.* Ps. 116. 12-19. *p cf.* Matt. 26. 29. *cf.* Mk. 14. 25. *cf.* Nu. 6. 20 with Ps. 22. 22-26. *cf.* Is. 25. 6-8. *q* Matt. 26. 26-28. Mk. 14. 22-24. 1 Cor. 11. 23-26. *cf.* Acts 20. 7. *r cf.* 1 Cor. 10. 16. *cf.* Heb. 10. 5, 10. *s cf.* Ex. 12. 42. *t cf.* Eph. 1. 7; *cf.* Heb. 13. 20.

Follow where the man with the water goes in, and there you will find the place prepared which only He can fill. For the Old Testament leads thus to the New; the pitcher merely of water to where presently flow out the living streams in their fulness. This seems to be the meaning which we cannot doubt there must be in the sign given to the disciples here. Christ was going to the place already prepared for Him.

[3] When the hour is come, the Lord takes His place, and the apostles with Him. It is striking how many times more, compared with the other Gospels, the official title of the twelve is used in Luke. We might have expected this rather in Matthew; but there, as in Mark and John, it occurs but once, while Luke has it six times. And we can understand, I think, clearly why this is so, when we consider the evangelic character which Luke has throughout. The heart being filled, the going forth of the "good news" which had filled it necessarily follows. The recurrence of the word here is therefore the very opposite of officialism. It is love which calls to and qualifies for and necessitates the mission,—the overflowing of the heart of God towards men.

Here the Lord shows how His heart goes out. The strong Hebrew iteration most fittingly expresses it: "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." He is closing, as the words following intimate, His earth-sojourn with them, and the old dispensation together. He closes it with honor, magnifying it by His celebration of it, while longing for the better thing beyond, its glorious fulfilment in the Kingdom of God. His suffering was the only way to this fulfilment, and itself the assurance, the fullest that could be given, of His longing after it.

He celebrates the old feast, therefore, before He institutes the new: in which He emphasizes, as none of the other Gospels do, its character as a remembrance. As the passover in its full meaning was anticipative, though a memorial of the deliverance from Egypt, the Supper, on the contrary, has its blessedness in being commemorative only. The work of which it speaks is done—complete for ever: the joy is to realize that it is finished. The work is central, closing the old, bringing in the new economy, the new covenant; displacing the temporal with the eternal.

the [u]hand of him who delivereth me up is with me on the table. For the Son of man goeth indeed, as it was [v]determined; but [w]woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed. And they began to [z]question together among themselves who among them it should be who was about to do this thing.

2 (xxii.24-38): Lessons of the cross.
1 (24-30): greatness and rule.

2. [1] There was also a [y]strife among them, which of them appeared to be greatest. But he said to them, The [z]kings of the nations lord it over them, and they that exercise authority over them are called benefactors. But not so [is it to be] with you: but let the greater among you be as the younger, and the leader as the servant.* For which is greater? he that sitteth at table,† or he that serveth?* is not he that sitteth at table?† but I am among you as he that [a]serveth.* But

*Or "minister," "ministereth." †Literally "reclineth."

[u] *cf.* Ps. 41. 9. Jno. 13. 21.
[v] *cf.* Acts 2. 23. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 20.
[w] *cf.* Jno. 17. 12. *cf.* Acts 1. 18-20, 25.
[x] *cfr.* vers. 33, 34. Matt. 26. 21-25. Jno. 13. 21-30. *cf.* Ps. 139. 23, 24.
[y] Mk. 9. 34-37. ch. 9. 46-48.
[z] Matt. 20. 25-28. Mk. 10. 42-45.
[a] *cf.* Phil. 2. 7, etc; *cf.* Jno. 13. 13-17; *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 19.

The language used in Luke here is also characteristic in its evangelic appropriateness. "My blood shed for many" in Matthew and Mark both, is here "shed for *you;*" as the bread also is "My body which is given *for you.*" The appropriation is here not *by* them, but *to* them. He would have them realize all the consolation—all the tenderness of it.

With a pang comes the realization that the hand of the traitor is with Him on the table. The Son of man was, indeed, going in the way determined; but that altered nothing as to the guilt of him who in his wickedness had set himself to accomplish what was the purpose of God. "Woe to that man," He says, "by whom the Son of man is betrayed."

But Luke touches this less than any other of the evangelists, and he only notices in a general way the questioning that arises among the disciples on account of the Lord's words.

2. There follow what, I think, stand here together as lessons of the Cross; in which are plainly the roots of the Lord's teaching. But the Cross is indeed, as has been said, the great central point of light in human history, and therefore the lesson of lessons: God and man alike displayed in it; God and man come together, man opposed, and reconciled. What have we not in the Cross? In a sense, all lessons are lessons of it; but here, it is with the Cross in view that they are given; and none the less that disciples show themselves even yet as knowing nothing of it. How much do we know of it yet? And is it the gilded cross of the church fane? or the bare and bloody cross of the Christ of the Gospels?

[1] The controversy among the disciples as to who was to be accounted the greatest among them is peculiar to Luke as to the form and place in which we find it here. But it is the echo of what we find elsewhere in Matthew and Mark, and the manifestation of a spirit which would naturally show itself upon other occasions. In the history of the Church, how terribly has it shown itself all through: of which Matthew also has given us Luke's forewarning (xxiv. 49). Whether it is given by Luke in the sequence of time or not, it is evident that we are to read it as here given: brought into plain, naked opposition to the spirit of Him who was now descending so manifestly to the lowest depths of His humiliation,—to that which, above all, our necessity and His love united to bring Him into. For them the Kingdom of God was still but as the kingdoms of the nations, and they knew not that the humbling oneself as a little child was the way of greatness in it. The Lord, as He had done before, reminds them of the essential difference between dignity among fallen men, and that where divine love ruled. The title of "benefactor," *Euergetes*, is that by which

ye are they who have continued throughout with me in my temptations; and I appoint a [b]kingdom unto you, even as my Father appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

2 (31-34): the ministry of evil.

[2] And the Lord said,* [c]Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath demanded to have you,† that he may [d]sift you as wheat; but I have [e]prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and do thou, when once thou hast returned back, [f]strengthen thy brethren. And he said unto him, Lord, I am [g]ready to go with thee both to prison and to

* R. V. omits this clause, but the reading is well supported.
† Plural, "all of you."

b *cf.* Matt. 19. 28. *cf.* Rev. 2. 26.
c Matt. 26. 31-35. Mk. 14. 27-31. Jno. 13. 36-38.
d *cf.* Job 1. 8-12. *cf.* Am. 9. 9. *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 5.
e *cf.* Jno. 17. 9, 11, 15. *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 1, 2.
f *cf.* Jno. 21. 15-17. *cf.* 1 Pet. 5. 12. *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 10-15.
g *ctr.* Phil. 3. 3.

one of the Ptolemies is known in history, and was often bestowed upon the Roman emperor. But this flattery was not to be among His disciples; but the greater as the younger, and the leader as in the servant's place. Who was the greater in men's thoughts, the one who was at table or the one that served there? In Him what did they see? The Greatest was the One who served them all!

But on His part He was not unconscious of their faithful continuance with Him in His temptations at the hands of men and Satan throughout His ministry. They were thus shown to have after all another spirit than what their present contention would imply. Love had wrought in them also, and love would exalt them to a place in His Kingdom at His table, appointed to a kingdom as the Father had appointed Him, and to sit on thrones judging under Him the tribes of Israel. So far as rule is service, love may desire rule; and where need is, the love that serves does rule; while that which seeketh not its own can have a pleasure which it seeks, and as love, joy in love. Thus the table and the throne can be rewards in the Kingdom of God, looked for and sought after, while not departing from the Saviour's rule. The way appointed for the Kingdom is the Cross, the sacrifice of love; and "if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him."

[2] In the next lesson there is shown a ministry which is not of love, and yet love reigns in it: the sifting of God's wheat by a skilful, but not a friendly hand. "Satan has demanded to have you," says the Lord; "that he may sift you as wheat." It is in that character the accuser of the brethren, as with Job of old, would test their pretension; and *he* found that it was no light thing to be in Satan's sieve. For Simon the Lord has to pray that his faith, sore tried as it is, may not fail; it is in danger, it would seem, of fatal lapse. Nay, he has really turned aside; he must be "turned back"; but then with a gain, for he is now able, spite of the weakness he has shown, to strengthen others: "when thou hast turned back, strengthen thy brethren."

Would it not seem as if, after all, Satan had nearly succeeded? too nearly, surely, for Peter to claim a victory. His faith has not altogether failed, but that is due only to the intercession of Another: he has in fact a terrible fall. What *gain* can there be in all this? how can he have learned how to strengthen others,—himself just proved so feeble! and what did Satan's sieve accomplish? or did it accomplish anything? if not, why was it permitted?

All is answered by the fact of what faith is; and of where, being what it is, its strength is found. Faith is dependence upon another; self-distrust, the consciousness of inherent weakness, is therefore necessary to it. We see, then, how it would be possible for defeat to be a victory; how Satan's sieve would then be that strange ministry of evil of which the Cross is the fullest example: for Simon the bringing him out of a strength which was but weakness, into a conscious weakness which would be strength, and in which his lesson learnt would enable him not only to stand himself, but to strengthen his brethren.

death. But he said, I tell thee, Peter, the [h] cock shall not crow to-day till thou shalt have thrice denied that thou knowest me.

3 (35-38): "take what you have:" the manifestation of the world.

[3] And he said unto them, [i] When I sent you forth without purse and wallet and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing. And he said unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him [j] take it, and likewise [his] wallet; and he that hath none, let him sell his garment and [k] buy a sword. For I say to you that this that is written must be accomplished in me: And he was [l] reckoned with the lawless; for that which concerneth me hath [its] completion. And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is [m] enough.

3 (xxii.39-46): Gethsemane.

3. And he came out, and [n] went, as he was accustomed,

[h] ver. 60. Matt. 10.9, 10. ch. 9. 3. cf. Jno. 17. 11, 12.
[j] ctr. vers. 49-51. cf. 1 Cor. 4. 11, 12. cf. 2 Cor. 4. 16.
[k] cf. 2 Cor. 10. 4. 5. cf. 1 Cor. 15. 19, 32.
[l] Is. 53. 12.
[m] cf. Matt. 16. 11, 12. cf. Jno. 18. 36.
[n] Matt. 26. 36. Mk. 14. 32. Jno. 18. 1.

Thus all is plain; and in that which follows the Simon who needed this is unveiled to us. Honest, earnest, zealous—all that,—his "Lord, I am ready to go with thee both to prison and to death" displays the Simon whose faith in Christ needed to be strengthened by a fall. The end of this story is not yet reached; but the comforting assurance is read plainly in it that (as Paul proved it at a later day) the "messenger of Satan" may be God's missionary too, to do His needed work in the souls of His own.

Yet, had he taken warning, Peter might have escaped, not without his lesson learnt, but by learning it from the lips of the Lord. That before cock-crowing he would thrice deny Him, might have been so accepted as the revelation of his weakness and danger as to save him from it, by delivering him from the need. Instead of this, he resisted the gracious Voice that would have shielded him from the evil; and the prophecy had to take effect. Even then there remained for him, when strength and pride were smitten down together, the comfort of the exhortation: "thou, when thou hast turned back, strengthen thy brethren."

[3] The Lord goes on to warn His disciples of the altered circumstances in which now they would find themselves. The cross was His definite rejection both by Israel and the world. He was submitting to it, and they must submit, and expect to find the full edge of its opposition. When He had sent them forth before, they had lacked nothing: He had effectually provided for them. Now, although His faithful love could not cease, yet they were to be permitted to feel the condition of things. Accordingly, they were to take with them what they had, and go armed, as in a hostile country: better have no garment than no sword. He uses the figurative language so common with Him, and by which He would exercise their hearts with regard to all His utterances; indeed, ours as well as theirs. Presently Peter is using his sword; appealing evidently to the words here, as so many have appealed since, only to find how sadly he had misinterpreted them. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal," says the apostle afterwards, "but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." The sword does not naturally symbolize mere defensive warfare; and the spiritual sword is the word of God alone. The true disciple will not meet the opposition of the world with a passive resistance merely, but with that which has power over the conscience and heart. If the world is in active opposition to Christ we are to be His soldiers; and that which is the food of mighty men furnishes at the same time for the battle-field. Thus no one can properly assimilate the bread of God, without becoming so far a champion.

The disciples did not understand it. "Lord, behold," they said, "here are two swords." He replied, "It is enough." For the present, it was of no use to press it further. When the Spirit of God should bring to their remembrance all that He had said to them, they would understand it better.

3. He goes out, as He was accustomed to the Mount of Olives, and we have

to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed him. And when he was at the place, he said to them, °Pray that ye enter not into temptation. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and he kneeled down and prayed, saying, Father, ᵖif thou wilt, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will but thine be done. And there appeared to him an ᵠangel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in ʳconflict, he prayed more earnestly; and his ˢsweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground.* And when he had risen from his prayer, he came to the disciples, and found them ᵗsleeping from sorrow. And he said unto them, Why sleep ye? Rise and pray that ye enter not into temptation.

*A number of MSS. omit these two verses, but others equally ancient give them. A false idea of our Lord's divinity might have led to their early omission.

o ver. 46. 1 Pet. 4. 7. 1 Pet. 5. 8.
p *cf.* Jno. 6. 38. *cf.* Jno. 12. 27, 28.
q Matt. 4. 11. *cf.* Heb. 1. 14.
r *cf.* Heb. 5. 7, 8.
s *cf.* Heb. 12. 1-4.
t *cf.* ch. 9. 32. *cf.* Heb. 12. 5, 12.

now (more briefly than in the other Gospels,) the mystery of Gethsemane. We have already sought to show the character of the suffering there, so far as it is permitted to us to enter into it. The depths who can penetrate? The mysteries of His Person and of His work combine here to make us realize that "no one knoweth the Son but the Father," and the danger of any speculation as to these divine things. Luke, from the character of his Gospel, does not enter so fully into this suffering, for the same reason that the Cross itself does not exhibit the cup in its bitterness, as the previous Gospels do. And we must not mistake for this the physical effects upon Him which Luke alone describes. Even the significant name of the place, Gethsemane, the "oil-press," is not given here; and John makes no mention either of this or of the agony endured there. Each writer is divinely guided in what he gives or withholds, and the only evangelist who was one of the three selected by the Lord to watch with Him in that hour of agony is the only one who omits all notice of it.

Those who dwell most upon the bitterness of the "cup" that was before Him, are they who tell us of the hymn before their starting out. Luke, who dwells upon the effects for others, emphasizes by repetition the Lord's warning, "Lest ye enter into temptation." But he does not speak of the selection of the special three to be with Him; a selection which shows, as in the transfiguration, the sanctuary character of that to which they are admitted. We do not hear the threefold repetition of the prayer, nor see Him prostrate on the ground as He utters it. The appearance of the angel also relieves the darkness. It is not the forsaking of the Cross, although His human frame is oppressed, and needing the ministry that He receives. We dare not say with some, that His soul required it. He was going out to that in which He would be absolutely alone, and where all the blessing of man, all the fulfilment of the divine counsels, would depend upon His ability to endure it all. Who could imagine an angel helping Him on to this?

But the body suffers, and presently the strain upon it is seen in the "sweat, as it were great drops of blood," that fall down upon the ground. Laborer for God and man as He is, His labor is a warfare also: the enemy is here, as He presently says to those who come to apprehend Him: "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." The Seed of the woman is planting His heel upon the head of the old serpent, but His heel is bruised in doing this. In the weakness of perfect Manhood He suffers, and conquers by suffering.

The darkness of the hour is on the disciples also. Coming back to them, He finds them sleeping for sorrow. And again He has to urge on them the peculiar character of that which they are meeting: "Rise and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."

4 (xxii.47-53): The yielding up.

4. While he yet spake, behold, a [u]multitude, and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near to Jesus, to kiss him. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, [v]betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss? And when those about him saw what was going to be, they said, Lord, shall we [w]smite with the sword? And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear and [x]healed him. And Jesus said unto the chief priests and captains of the temple and elders, who were come against him, Have ye come out as against a [y]robber with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched not forth your hands against me; but this is your hour, and the [z]power of darkness.

5 (xxii.54-62): The result in divine government for Peter.

5. And they laid hold upon him, and [a]led him away, and led him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed [b]afar off. And when they had lighted a fire in the midst of the court, and were set down together, Peter sat down [c]amongst them. And a certain [d]maid having seen him sitting in the light [of the fire], and having fixed her eyes upon him, said, This man was also with him. And he [e]denied [him],* saying, Woman, I know him not. And after a little while another saw him and said, Thou also art of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. And about the space of an hour after, another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this [man] also was with him: for he is a [f]Galilean. And

*Many omit.

u Matt. 26. 47-56. Mk. 14. 43-52. John 18. 2-11.
v *cf.* 2 Sam. 3. 27.
w *cf.* 2 Sam. 20. 9, 10. Jno.6.70,71. *cfr.*ch.7.38.
x *cf.*ver.38. *cf.* Matt. 5. 38, 39.
y *cf.* Is.53.7. *cf.*Ps.109.4. *cf.*ch. 23.34.
z ver. 37. ch. 23. 32.
a *cf.*Ex.12.6. *cf.* Jno. 14. 30.
b Matt. 26. 57-68. Mk. 14. 53-65. Jno. 18. 13. 19-24.
c *cfr.* Jno. 13. 23. *cf.*Jno.21.19.
d *cf.* Gen.12. 11. *cf.* Jas. 4.4.
e *cf.* Prov. 28. 1. *cfr.* Acts 4. 19, 20.
f ver. 34. Matt. 26.69-75. Mk. 14. 66-72. Jno. 18.15-18, 25-27.
cf. Acts 1. 11. *cf.*Acts 2.7.

4. Immediately a multitude are upon Him, headed by Judas, who, according to a preconcerted signal, draws near to kiss Him. Of all signs that could have been given, it was surely that of the most brazen, smooth-faced hypocrisy. The Lord shows His deep sense of the insult: "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a *kiss?*"

On the other hand the zeal of a disciple would do Him the wrong of defending Him. A sword is out and a servant of the high priest is smitten. The appeal they make to Him has evident reference to His own words: were they to arm themselves with swords without using them? But we must be in communion with Christ to use His word aright. Was He so weak as to need help at hands like theirs? He does not answer this as in Matthew, by any assertion of how the Father's angels waited upon His will; but according to the manner of Luke puts forth His power in grace, and heals the wound. Yes, power He has; but now to lay down His life and take it again; they knew not yet the Cross as the symbol of fullest, widest, sweetest authority.

He turns to the multitudes, to appeal against their treatment of Him as a robber, when day by day He had been openly with them in the temple, and they had not laid hold of Him. They had waited for their hour and found it; darkness had favored them: alas, in reality that "*power* of darkness" which brooded over and swayed men's minds. They knew not what they were doing, or whither they were going, because that darkness had blinded their eyes.

5. The multitude lead Him to the house of the high priest; but the first thing we are called to see there is the conclusion of that story of Simon Peter which

Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And directly, while he was still speaking, a [g]cock crew. And the Lord turned and [h]looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, Before the cock crow [to-day],* thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out and [i]wept bitterly.

[g] *cf.* Rom. 7. 24, 25. *cf.* Ps. 60. 8 with Jer. 2. 19.
[h] *cf.* Ps. 32. 8.
[i] *cf.* 2 Cor. 7. 10, 11.

SECTION 2. (Chaps. xxii. 63–xxiii. 25.)

Judgment without judgment.

I (xxii. 63–71): The truth in faithfulness.

1. AND the men that held Jesus† [j]mocked him, [k]beating him, and having blindfolded him, they asked him, saying, Prophesy, who is it that smote thee? And many other things they said, railing, against him. And when it became day, the eldership of the people was gathered together, both chief priests and scribes. And they led

[j] *cf.* Ps. 69. 12.
[k] *cf.* Is. 50. 6.

*Some omit. †Most read, "Him."

we have already heard announced to him by the Lord. It is a brief one. He follows His Master into the place of His mock trial, hoping to escape notice amid the crowd that had swarmed in after Him; but thus obliged already to deny Him with his looks, if not his words. The rest soon follows. He is seen in the light of the enemy's fire, at which he is warming himself. Accusation after accusation brings out denial. In the midst of it all, the crow of a cock startles him into remembrance, and he must have turned, spite of his danger, his eyes upon the well-known Figure, silent, patient, amid the rabble of His accusers. At that moment, "the Lord turned and looked upon Peter." How the eyes met! Then the whole horror of his position burst upon him. "He went out and wept bitterly."

Sec. 2.

We are now to see the Son of God before the judgment-seat of man. Luke is briefer here than any of the Gospels. The attempts of the false witnesses before the Jewish tribunal are entirely ignored, as well as the adjuration of the high priest. We have simply the Lord's affirmation for Himself of who He is, which is sufficient for their purpose: any serious inquiry as to the truth they do not mean. Before Pilate we have only the simple fact of His acquittal of the charge preferred; spite of which He is delivered up to the people's will. It is a judgment without judgment—without the poorest semblance of right. The reference to Herod is peculiar to Luke; but he merely scoffs, and is met on the Lord's part by absolute silence. He is not in any place of authority that calls for recognition, as with Pilate and the Jewish high priest, and in his character there is nothing that can in the least measure claim it. He is past even reproof.

On the whole, Luke, following the other synoptists, seems to give simply the result morally of that of which they have given the history. The guilt of pursuing the Lord to death is that of Israel, Pilate guiltily yielding to them, indeed; and Herod being but the sign of how low Israel had fallen, even though, nay, even because himself (born of an Edomite father and a Samaritan mother,) no real Israelite.

1. As is everywhere apparent, the Jewish question was the supreme one of the Person of the Christ,—the fundamental question for every soul. Here also the fundamental witness is His own. As He stands before us,—as we see Him in every circumstance and relation of life,—who is so worthy to be believed as He?

Here, then, we have His testimony, the "Faithful and True"; and it is in faithfulness as in truth that He renders it. A passage peculiar to Luke points out this: for, when they ask, "Art Thou the Christ? tell us," He can say with assurance, "If I tell you, ye will not believe; and if I also ask you, ye will not answer Me, nor let Me go." It was in fact the incriminating question; and

him away to their [l]council, saying, If thou art the Christ, tell us. But he said unto them, If I tell you, ye [m]will not believe; and, if I ask, ye will not answer me, nor let me go.* But from henceforth shall the Son of man [n]sit on the right hand of the power of God. And they all said, Art thou, then, the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say it: for† I [o]am. And they said, What [p]need have we of any further testimony? for we ourselves have heard from his own mouth.

2 (xxiii. 1-4): The witness of the judge.

2. And the whole multitude of them arose and [q]led him to Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this [man] [r]perverting our nation, and forbidding to give [s]tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ, a [t]king. And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the king of the Jews? And he answered him, and said, Thou [u]sayest it. And Pilate said to the chief priests and multitudes, I [v]find no fault in this man.

3 (xxiii. 5-12): The scoffer's "sign."

3. But they insisted, saying, He [w]stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning even from [x]Galilee to this place. Now when Pilate heard that,‡ he inquired whether the man were a Galilean. And when he knew that he was from Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him back to [y]Herod, who himself was in Jerusalem in those days. And when Herod saw Jesus, he

*Some omit this clause, but it is evidently to be retained.
†Or, "Ye say that I am." ‡Some read "heard of Galilee."

[l] Matt. 27.1. Mk. 15. 1.
[m] *cf.* ch. 20. 2, 8. *cf.* Jno. 10. 24-26.
[n] *cf.* Acts 7. 55, 56 with Rev. 1. 7. *cf.* Heb. 1. 3.
[o] Jno. 10. 30.
[p] *cf.* Mk. 14. 58-59.
[q] Matt. 27. 2. Mk. 15. 1. Jno. 18. 28.
[r] vers. 5, 14. *cf.* Acts 17. 7.
[s] *ctr.* Matt. 22. 17-21. *cf.* Ps. 109. 2.
[t] *cf.* Jno. 18. 33-38. *cf.* Jno. 19. 12.
[u] *cf.* ch. 22. 70. *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 13.
[v] vers. 14, 22. *cf.* Acts 3. 13. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 22.
[w] *ctr.* John 6. 15. *ctr.* ch. 14. 25-27.
[x] ch. 4. 14.
[y] ch. 3. 1. ch. 13. 31, 32.

since they asked it for an evil purpose, why should He give them the answer that they sought? But this does not influence Him. What they will make of it is for them to decide; He will not on that account refuse the testimony of such unspeakable importance to them. He is in their hands, for them to work their cruel will upon Him; yet only to bring Him out of His present humiliation, and set Him free for the glory before Him. "Henceforth shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God." They understand the claim and challenge it: "Art Thou the Son of God, then?" they ask. "Ye say it: for I am," He answers. He is condemned, not at the mouth of other witnesses, but His own.

2. He is carried before Pilate, charged with the notoriously false charge of forbidding tribute to Cæsar: this based upon the truth that He is Christ a King. Pilate puts the question to Him, "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" to which John gives the full answer. Luke simply gives His affirmative reply, and the outcome of the examination, in which Pilate clears Him of all that would involve a crime against Cæsar; from which judgment he never recedes. When he sentences Him at last to the death of the cross, it is with the carefully maintained acknowledgment that he is sacrificing an innocent man.

3. The scene with Herod is peculiar to Luke. Pilate sends Him to him, hoping for something from the ruler from whose jurisdiction Jesus has come, which may settle a case made troublesome by the persistence of the people. Herod has got over his fear of Christ, and is glad to have the opportunity of seeing Him, hoping even to see Him do some "sign" in his presence. His conscience more and more hardened by his evil course, he evidently regards the Lord simply as a magician, such as was Simon the sorcerer in Samaria afterwards, and who would be sure to take the opportunity to impress such an audience with proofs of his power.

He finds indeed a sign, such as he had not looked for, a Man silent and un-

was exceedingly glad, for he had been for a long time [z]desirous to see him, because he had heard many things concerning him, and he hoped to see some sign done by him. And he questioned him with many words, but he [a]answered him nothing. And the [b]chief priests and the scribes stood, and vehemently accused him. And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and [c]mocked him, and having put on him a brilliant robe, he sent him back to Pilate. And the same day Herod and Pilate became [d]friends with one another: for they were before at enmity between themselves.

4 (xxiii. 13–25): Yielded to the people's will.

4. And Pilate, having called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, said unto them, Ye have brought unto me this man as one that perverteth the people; and behold, I, having examined him before you, have found [e]no fault in this man touching those things of which ye accuse him. No, nor yet Herod; for he* hath sent him back to us; and behold, nothing worthy of death hath been done by him. I will therefore [f]chastise him and let him go. [Now he was [g]obliged to release one unto them at the feast.]† But they cried out all together, saying, [h]Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas: (a man who for a certain insurrection made in the city, and for murder, had been cast into prison.) And Pilate, being [i]desirous to release Jesus, spake again to them; but they cried against [it,] saying, [j]Crucify him, crucify him. And he said to them

z ch. 9. 9.

a *cf.* Jno. 19. 9. *cf.* Is. 53. 7.

b *cfr.* Heb. 4. 15.

c *cf.* ch. 22. 64. *cf.* ver. 35. ch. 18. 32.

d *cf.* Acts 4. 27. *cf.* Prov. 1. 10–16.

e ver. 4.

f ver. 22. Jno. 19. 1. Matt. 27. 26.

g *cfr.* ch. 13. 1. Matt. 27. 15. Mk. 15. 6. Jno. 18. 39.

h *cf.* Is. 53. 3. *cf.* Jno. 1. 11.

i *cf.* Jno. 19. 8, 12.

j Jno. 19. 15. *cf.* Ps. 69. 20.

*A few ancient MSS., and some excellent editors read, "I sent you to him." The vast weight of authority however gives it as in the text.

†Omitted by most editors, but certainly very old.

moved, answering nothing to his questions, nor to the accusations of the chief priests and scribes, who, fearing the effect upon Herod, vehemently accuse Him. There is not even a word of warning or rebuke, but only that unbroken silence so much more terrible.

The unhappy man answers it but with mockery. Arraying Him in a brilliant robe, perhaps that of a candidate for honors, he sends the Lord back to Pilate, as if to intimate that such claims as these merited no more serious consideration.

With this Pilate and Herod are made friends again: they had before been at enmity. They are often represented as united by their common enmity to Christ; but enmity is too strong a term: He had not in fact been enough to them even to draw out enmity. He was to them, as with so many, a mere circumstance in a day's history, with Pilate an annoying one; with Herod, the possible material for amusement which it had failed to yield. Both men had enough of scepticism in them to make it impossible to give themselves to investigate a difficult problem, as to which the cost was much more certain than the profit. Their friendships were probably much less real than their enmities; but both were in a world where Christ was not, or an uncertain speculation at the most. Would that one could believe it an uncommon case.

4. The matter is again upon Pilate's hands, however, who has just enough conscience and enough guilt of his own, to make him unwilling to burden himself with the guilt of others. These miserable Jews too, whom he despised and hated, but who held him by that formidable reminder of his accountability to Cæsar, who was near and real, whatever might be thought of God. So he weakens and vacillates,—makes it not a question of righteousness as at first.

the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found in him nothing worthy of death: I will chastise him, therefore, and release him. But they were urgent, with loud voices, asking that he might be crucified. And their voices* [k]prevailed. And Pilate gave sentence that what they asked for should be done. And he [l]released him who for insurrection and murder had been cast into prison, whom they asked for, but Jesus he delivered up to their [m]will.

k cf. Ex. 23. 2.

l Acts 3. 13-15. Matt. 27. 26. Mk. 15. 15. Jno. 19. 16.

m cf. Jno. 10. 17, 18. cf. ch. 19. 14 with Acts 13. 27.

SECTION 3. (Chap. xxiii. 26-56.)

The Offering up and its Fruits.

1 (26-31): The fore-announcement of doom.

1. AND as they led him away, they laid hold upon a certain [n]Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country,† and upon him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus. And there [o]followed him a great multitude of the people, and of women who bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, [p]weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children: for behold there

n Matt. 27. 32. Mk. 15. 21. cf. Jno. 19. 17. cf. Phil. 3. 10.

o ch. 8. 1-3.

p cf. ch. 19. 41, etc.

*Some add, "with those of the chief priests."
†Or, "from the field."

but of mercy,—puts it thus into the hands of the Jews themselves whose malignity even he cannot understand,—Barabbas or Jesus? Barabbas? then they must tell him what to do with Jesus, this man in whom no evil has been found: crucify him? surely impossible; but he is now helplessly in their hands. With a last vain effort to have the guilt wholly theirs, he delivers up the Man whose innocency he has so openly declared to the death of the slave, of the criminal, and the curse of God (Deut. xxi. 23).

Sec. 3.

In the story of the Cross the peculiar character of Luke is unmistakable. He omits most of the Lord's suffering from the mere wickedness of men. We do not read of the scourging or the crown of thorns. The mockery round the cross is more briefly given. The darkness falling upon the land is noticed, but there is no cry to One who has forsaken Him. On the other hand, the fruits of His work of atonement are seen all through: in the prayer for the forgiveness of His murderers; in the story of the dying robber; as well as in the rending of the veil of the temple. Even His last words, "Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit," have their own significance in this way.

The Gospel of the Manhood is seen also. The centurion's testimony is to the "righteous *Man*." And the lament of the women of Jerusalem is in accordance with this: that human sympathy too simply natural for the Lord, spite of its manifestation of the better side of man's nature, unreservedly to accept.

1. This lamentation of the women is the first thing here, after the account, given in all the synoptists, of the cross being laid upon Simon: the need of cross-bearing by the disciple being a necessary thing to hold up before us all.

To the women He replies with lamentation for lamentation. They have more cause to weep for themselves and their children than for Him, for the day of their sorrow was near at hand in which the blessing would be theirs who had no children. In the midst of a generation the fire of whose wrath could kindle after this sort in the green and fruitful tree, what must be the lot of those who were like the dry wood, fit fuel for the flame? This is not divine wrath of which He is speaking, though divine wrath indeed might give them up to it, but what they would inflict one upon another. The sufferings of those shut up in the caldron of that besieged city are matters of common history. The Lord

come days in which they shall say, [q]Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the breasts which never nourished. Then shall they begin to [r]say to the mountains, Fall on us, and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in the [s]green tree, what shall be done in the [t]dry?

2 (32-43): Condemnation and Salvation.

2. And there were led with him two others also, [u]malefactors, to be put to death. And when they came to the place which is called the *Skull,* there they crucified him, and the malefactors one on the right hand, and the other on the left. And Jesus said, Father, [v]forgive them; for they [w]know not what they do. And [x]parting his garments among them, they cast lots. And the people stood, beholding. And the rulers also [y]derided him, saying, He saved others: let him save himself, if this is the Christ, the chosen one of God. And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, saying, If thou art the king of the Jews, save thyself. And there was also a [z]super-

*In Latin, "Calvary."

Jno. 19. 23, 24; *cf.* Gen. 37. 23, 31-33. *z cf.* Ps. 22. 6-8; *cf.* Ps. 69. 12, 21; Matt. 27. 39-43; Mk. 15. 29-32. *a* Matt. 27. 37; Mk. 15. 26; Jno. 19. 19-22.

q cf. Matt. 24. 19.
r cf. Hos. 10. 8.
cf. Rev. 6. 16, 17.
s cf. 1 Pet. 4. 17.
cf. Ps. 1. 3.
t cf. Matt. 21. 19.
cf. Jude 12.
u Matt. 27. 38.
Mk. 15. 27.
Jno. 19. 18.
cf. Is. 53. 12.
v Matt. 27. 33-37.
Mk. 15. 22-26.
Jno. 19. 17.
cf. Jno. 5. 12.
w cf. 1 Pet. 2. 23.
cf. Acts 7. 60.
x cf. Acts 3. 17.
cf. 1 Cor. 2. 8.
y Ps. 22. 18.
Matt. 27. 35.
Mk. 15. 24.

would lead them to consider the state before God in which the nation as a whole was, already putting their hand to that which as the consummation of their guilt would ensure the awful doom that was just at hand.

2. The cross is reached, and He is placed upon it, two malefactors with Him, one on either side. And now He pleads for those who have placed Him there the ignorance in which they have done it: a thing which leaves them yet the possibility of shelter in the city of refuge; and which the apostle accordingly takes up afterward with the people in his pleading with them to repent and turn to God (Acts iii. 17), as Paul applies it to himself also: "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly, in unbelief" (1 Tim. i. 13). Thus the Lord has fulfilled His own parable (chap. xiii. 6–9): the barren fig-tree is to be digged about and dunged, in order that it may yet be seen if it will bring forth fruit. This, notwithstanding His sentence pronounced upon it (Matt. xxi. 19), which He will give them still the opportunity to avert, as Nineveh averted theirs. And such is the mercy of God.

Heedless and heartless, they part His garments among them, casting the lot. Luke is briefest of all as to this, of which John will show us another side. The superscription over him in the languages of wisdom-seeking, of empire, of religion, publishes His title to the world.

And now the cry begins to ring out, though in mockery, of *salvation.* "He saved others," say the rulers: "let Him save Himself, if He be the Christ, the chosen of God." Even the soldiers take it up after their own fashion: "If thou be the King of the Jews, save Thyself." And then one of the robbers makes the impossible conjunction: "If Thou be the Christ, save Thyself *and us.*" Truly impossible to put these things together.

But the rulers know no more of salvation than the soldiers or the robber. A Christ who would save Himself could *not* be the Christ predicted by the prophets, or the Saviour of others, and Isaiah had pictured exactly what was passing before their eyes. Who could doubt the application of such words as we find here? "Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong: *because He hath poured out His soul unto death; and was numbered with the transgressors, and bare the sin of many,* and made intercession for the transgressors" (Isa. liii. 12).

scription over him, in Greek, and Roman and Hebrew letters, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Now one of the [b]malefactors that were hanged railed on him, saying, Art not thou the Christ? save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost thou not even fear God, who art in the same condemnation? And we indeed [c]justly; for we are receiving the due reward of what we have done: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said, Jesus,* [d]remember me, when thou comest in† thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day thou shalt be with me in [e]paradise.

b *cf.* Matt. 27. 44.

c *cf.* ch. 18. 13.

d *cf.* Matt. 25. 31, etc.

e *cf.* Rev. 2. 7. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 8 with 2 Cor. 12. 2–4.

*Or, "unto Jesus, Lord," but the oldest MSS. read generally with the text; and the alteration to this is more probable than the reverse.

†Some editors read "into."

Here was the secret of the Cross unveiled as the mystery of salvation; and for the Jew with his ritual of sacrifice not to understand it seems to us now almost incomprehensible. The veil was upon their heart, as the apostle declares. Pharisaic pride refused the humbling of the gospel. A Christ crucified was to the Jew a stumbling-block.

But it pleased God to give a lesson of salvation which was to accompany the story of the Cross, just in the place where every eye directed to that Cross should see it. Suddenly the voice of one of the malefactors rebukes his fellow. He, a dying man involved in the same sentence, does he not fear God, before whom he is soon going? does he not fear with that sin upon him which had brought them both justly where they were? but here was One who had done nothing amiss.

Then with this guilt upon himself also, and confessing it, he turns with the boldest possible prayer to this confessed Sinless One. "Jesus," he says,—"Jehovah Saviour,"—he could not be ignorant of the meaning of the name he uttered—"Jesus, remember me when Thou comest in Thy Kingdom." Immediately he is answered—more than answered—"Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."

We can imagine many things, of course, as to what had inspired him with a faith like this. Whatever he may have known of the Lord, however, at a former time, both Matthew and Mark assure us that "those who were crucified with Him reviled Him." The fair meaning of this has been denied without reason. The fact seems mentioned as if for the purpose of cutting off those methods of making faith easier (and therefore less notable) in the dying man, and the grace of God necessarily, at the same time, less conspicuous also. We all are familiar with the saying, that "there was one such case, that none might despair; and there was but one, that none might presume." Let us rather say that here is a pattern case of salvation, outlined in the sharpest manner that could be imagined, and placed in the most conspicuous place that could be given to it. Without works, except bad works,—without sacrament or ritual of any kind,—by no slow process and by no conditional salvation,—this condemned malefactor is given at once the perfect assurance of a place that very day with his Lord in Paradise.*

Thus the answer of grace goes beyond even the boldness of such a prayer; and when indeed does not grace exceed all possible expectations? Who could have asked or thought that God would give His Son to die for sinners? and He who has done this, "how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

*For the efforts of materialistic annihilationists to break down the evidence, derived from this promise, of the consciousness of souls in the separate state, see "Facts and Theories of a Future State." Their arguments are briefly, that Paradise is in the new earth, and so not yet existent, although the apostle did not know but that he might have been bodily in it (2 Cor. xii. 3, 4). Then, as necessitated by this, that we ought to read, "I say to thee to-day;" or else "to-day" must mean "in the day of which you speak"!

3 (44-46): accomplishments.

3. And it was now *f*about the sixth hour; and there came a darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened. And the *g*veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And Jesus, when he had cried with a loud voice, said, Father, into thy hands I *h*commit my spirit. And when he had said this, he expired.

4 (47-49): Changes impending.

4. Now when the *i*centurion saw what took place, he glorified God, saying, In very deed this man was righteous. And all the multitudes that had come together to that sight, beholding what took place, returned, *j*smiting their breasts. And all his acquaintance stood afar off, and the women who followed him from Galilee, beholding these things.

5 (50-56): Intervention in divine government.

5. And behold, there was a man named *k*Joseph, who was a councillor, a good man and righteous: he had

f Matt. 27. 45. Mk. 15. 33. *cf.* Ps. 22. 1 with 1 Jno. 1. 5.
g Matt. 27. 51. Mk. 15. 38. *cf.* Heb. 9. 3-8, 11, 12 with Heb. 10. 19-22.
h *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 23. *cf.* Acts 7. 59.
i Matt. 27. 54. *cf.* Jno. 7. 45, 46.
j *cf.* Zech. 12. 10 with Rev. 1. 7.
k Matt. 27. 57-61. Mk. 15. 42-47; Jno. 19. 38-42; *cf.* Is. 53. 9.

How perfectly does all this suit the peace-offering Gospel! The mockery and insult call forth no response from the blessed Sufferer: He seems all unconscious of it. The need that sought Him, the faith that recognized under such disguise the Lord of glory, drew from the smitten Rock the living waters.

3. The record of divine accomplishment in that hour is told in the briefest way. The darkness that comes over the land is just mentioned, and traced to its cause, the darkening of the sun itself. There follows as connected with it the end of spiritual darkness. With the veil of the temple rent, the sanctuary is open, and God is in the light. This is the characteristic of Christianity, and the result of His entrance into that darkness of which the darkness of nature was but the external sign. Luke places the cause and effect together here, ignoring, as so often elsewhere, the order of time.

But with the cry of "Father," the darkness is ended: the cry of abandonment has been answered; the cup which alone He dreaded is drained (compare the notes on Matthew and Mark); He has but now in peace to depart. The death lying upon man has still to be taken for the perfecting of atonement: God must be owned in regard to the whole penalty on sin, and Matthew has shown us the resurrection of the saints as connected with this. For doctrinal statements of all that is involved here we must wait for the epistles; but here we have the work itself whose meaning they explain.

The word used in Luke for His dying is, as in Mark, "He expired"—"breathed out." It is the simple reality of death as man endures it, quite different from the terms used in Matthew and John. It is passive endurance; in the others activity of will, though in surrender. Here, as true Man, He dies like other men; committing His spirit to His Father, His work accomplished.

4. The faith of the Gentile centurion is recorded in a different form to that which it takes in the other Gospels: "he glorified God, saying, In very deed this Man was righteous." Righteous He is emphatically, not merely, as with others, in the comparative sense: this all that he has seen attests. Prompt and outspoken in his confession, the Gentile takes the first place now, as he has since done for many centuries. He is the first sign of the change impending.

But Luke shows us also a multitude of Jews returning heart-smitten from the spectacle of the cross. For Israel also there is hope in this precious death. We have learned also something of the significance of these ministering women who are seen waiting as the darkness lifts. Things are in transition: if the nation has rejected her King, God too is moving; His purposes in connection with His Son are not to be defeated.

5. The intervention of God is seen more evidently in the provision of a sepulcre suited for that incorruptible body: a sepulcre that has never seen corruption.

not consented to their counsel and deed. [He was] from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, one who waited for the kingdom of God. He went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. And having taken it down, he wrapped it in a linen robe, and laid him in a sepulcre that was hewn in rock, where 'none had ever yet lain. And it was the day of the preparation, and the sabbath drew on. And the ᵐwomen who had come with him from Galilee, following after, beheld the sepulcre, and how his body was laid. And they returned and prepared spices and ointments.

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chaps. xxiii. 56–xxiv.)

Resurrection and Ascension to Heaven.

1 (xxiii. 56–xxiv. 12): Alive!

1. AND on the sabbath-day they ⁿrested according to the commandment; but on the °first day of the week, at early dawn, they came unto the sepulcre, bringing the spices which they had prepared.* And they found the ᵖstone rolled away from the sepulcre;

*Some add, "and some others with them."

t cf. Acts 2. 24-31.
ctr. 2 Chro. 21. 1, etc.
cf. Rom. 6. 8, 9.
m ch. 8. 2, 3.
n Ex. 20. 8–11.
cf. Col. 2. 13–17.
o Matt. 28. 1, etc. Mk. 16. 1, etc. Jno. 20. 1, etc.
cf. 1 Cor. 15.
p cf. Jno. 11. 38, 39.
cf. Jno. 10. 18.

His grave appointed Him with wicked men, He is delivered from it, and is with the rich man after He has died. He is buried by a Joseph from Elkanah's and Samuel's city, Ha-Ramathaim, (or Arimathea,) the city of the "two heights": names which cannot but speak to us of the elevation which is to be His, and to which He is to lift His people, as the true Joseph in the advancement following His sufferings (*See Sam. i., notes*). In this connection the burial of Christ will have for us a deep significance, as the apostle shows us; but it would carry us too far now to speak of it.

The women still are here as watchers; and even though the new day has not shined upon them, they are heralds of it.

SUBD. 3.

The sorrow is past; the suffering is over; upon it all rises the glory of a serene and perfect day. The Lord risen, there is peace with God accomplished, acceptance in the Beloved; and with ascension, not only heaven opened, but (as another has said) "heaven furnished for us."

What strikes one especially in these resurrection scenes in Luke, as compared with the other Gospels, is the large place the word of God has in them. This is still, no doubt, the continuation of that Human Face which, as we have seen abundantly, the third Gospel presents to us. The word of God, as that by which in his true life man lives, (as He Himself affirms from Deuteronomy,) was that by which He walked and to which He ever appealed, which He honored and held up, whether before His own, or His enemies. In these last scenes it assumes peculiar prominence. In the journey to Emmaus it is that by which He leads the perplexed disciples to a firmer faith before He manifests Himself to them in the breaking of bread. Afterwards with the eleven He refers to what is written in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Himself, and opens their understanding to understand the Scriptures. His ascension is to be a new light over all, the basis of mysteries hidden in the Old Testament itself and which necessitate a new testimony afterwards to be committed to a fresh apostle sent forth from Christ in glory, and which is distinctively what he calls it in one place, "the gospel of the glory of Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 4, R. V.).

1. The light of the resurrection morning dawns with comparative slowness in Luke's Gospel. Even because it is the Gospel of peace, we are made to see all

but entering in, they found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, while they were in perplexity about this, behold also, [q] two men stood by them in shining apparel. And as they were filled with fear, and bowed their faces to the ground, they said unto them, Why seek ye the [r] living one among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he [s] spake to you while he was still in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered up into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again. And they [t] remembered his words, and returning from the sepulcre brought back the tidings to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary of Magdala, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and the others with them, who told these things to the apostles. And their words appeared unto them as an idle tale, and they [u] disbelieved them. But [v] Peter rising up, ran unto the sepulcre; and, stooping down, he seeth the linen clothes lying there alone, and went away home, wondering at what had come to pass.

2 (13-35): Conflict, the ministry of the Word and communion.

2. And behold, [w] two of them were going that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem sixty furlongs* off. And they conversed with one an-

q *cf.* Acts 1. 10. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 12.

r *cf.* Rev. 1. 18. *cf.* Col. 3. 1.

s Mk. 9. 30-32.

t *cf.* Jno. 2. 22.

u ver. 25.

v *cf.* ch. 9. 20. ver. 34.

w *cf.* Mk. 16. 12, 13.

*Greek "stadia."

the exercise and perplexity about it, and have that upon which all peace rests established upon the surest foundations. Here at first we have but the announcement, "He is alive," carried to the apostles by those who had themselves been only taking their spices to the grave to complete His burial, and hide away for ever their best hopes!

The angels' announcement has in the very fact that it is by angels an air of distance in it, intensified by the reserve and reproof pervading the message. They do not even promise a meeting with Him: He is alive; had He not told them He would rise? why seek the living One among the dead? The women are perplexed and terrified; the apostles sceptical: these are tales, idle tales, bred in the minds of enthusiastic and visionary women: just the thought of a noted sceptic of these latter days. Peter runs, however, to the sepulcre: nothing is said of his companion, John, who will relate the visit in his own Gospel. He sees the linen clothes lying, their tenant gone, and departs, wondering.

2. We are now made to accompany two disciples, of whom we have heard nothing before and shall hear nothing again, and of whom we only know the name of one, Cleopas, upon a sorrowful walk to Emmaus, a village sixty furlongs outside Jerusalem. Their backs upon the city at such a time, and under the peculiar circumstances which they themselves relate, is surely significant. Perplexity and discouragement have taken hold of them; and in such a condition a backward course is inevitable.*

*There is something in the names that impresses us, though one may fail in giving them their proper application. Yet if we believe that every jot and tittle of the inspired Word have meaning, we cannot refuse to see significance in such points as these. Cleopas seems then to mean "All," or "every one," "a glory." The village to which he is going, if we accept the form that used to be given to the word, means "a despised people." Here is contrast, certainly, and one in agreement with a backward (and downward) course. It would remind us naturally of Israel according to the glory with which God in His promises has clothed her (see Rev. xii., the "woman clothed with the sun") and her condition, with Christ her glory renounced. The unbelief of the disciples tended to identify them with this lapsed condition, though divine love was about to recall them—could not possibly leave them to a path like this. But this is only a suggestion as to the meaning.

other about all these things that had taken place. And it came to pass as they conversed and questioned, that Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their [x]eyes were holden that they did not know him. And he said unto them, What things are these that ye confer about as ye walk, and are downcast? And one of them, named Cleopas, answered and said to him, Dost thou alone sojourn in Jerusalem, and knowest not the things that are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said to him, Concerning Jesus the Nazarene, who was a [y]prophet mighty in word and deed before God and all the people; and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him up to the sentence of death, and crucified him. But *we* trusted that it was he who is going to redeem Israel. But besides all these things, it is going on the third day since these things took place. And withal, certain [z]women from among us astonished us, having been very early at the sepulcre, and not finding his body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, who say that he is alive. And some of those with us went to the sepulcre, and found it even so as the women said; but him they saw not. And he said to them, O senseless and slow of heart to believe all that the [a]prophets have spoken; was it not needful that the Christ should [b]suffer these things, and enter into his glory? And beginning from Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning [c]himself. And they drew near to the village whither they were going, and he made as though he would go further. And they [d]constrained him, saying, Abide with us; for it is towards evening, and the day is now far spent: and he went in to abide with them. And it came to pass, as he was at table with them, he [e]took the bread, and blessed it, and having broken it he gave it to them. And their [f]eyes were

x *cf.* Jno.20. 14, 15. *cf.* Jno.21.4. *ctr.*2 Cor.3. 18.

y *cf.* ch.9.19. *cf.* Matt.21. 11.

z vers. 1-11.

a *cf.* Acts 3. 24.

b *cf.* 1 Pet.1. 10-12. *cf.* Heb.2.9, 10.

c *cf.* Rev.19. 10. *cf.* Rom.1.3.

d *cf.* Gen.18. 1-8. *cf.* Jno. 14. 23.

e *cf.* ch.9.16. *cf.* ch.22.19.

f *cf.* Ps. 119. 18. *cf.* Gal.1.16. *cf.* 1Jno.3.2.

While, then, they were on the road discussing the events that had happened, "Jesus Himself drew near and went with them." It is a sign of their condition that "their eyes were holden, that they did not know Him." In answer to His inquiries, the whole thing comes out, and "we trusted that it had been He who is going to redeem Israel" tells the tale of doubt and trouble. Yet they have heard the women's story of His being alive, and of Peter's visit to the sepulcre. What to think they know not.

Then, with a reproof for their unbelief, He begins to unfold the long prophetic burden of the ages past, through Moses and all the prophets following: their hearts burning within them as faith is rekindled at the sacred fire. They reach the village while He is reciting; and there they stay the wondrous Stranger from passing on, as He appears ready to do. Constrained by their solicitude, He enters the house to abide with them. There, in the breaking of bread He is revealed to them at last.

It is striking the character of all this: the first announcement made to women; here, before the apostles, two simple disciples are taken up to be ministered to, and with painstaking earnestness to bring them back to simplicity of faith. When

opened, and they knew him; and he vanished from them. And they said one to another, Did not our heart [g]burn within us, as he spake unto us in the way, and as he opened to us the scriptures? And rising up that same hour, they returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and those with them, saying, In very deed the Lord is risen, and hath [h]appeared to Simon. And they related the things [that had taken place] upon the way, and how he was known by them in the breaking of bread.

g cf. 1 Pet. 1. 8. cf. Jno. 20. 29-31.

h 1 Cor. 15. 5.

3 (36-53): Into the Sanctuary

1 (36-43): Himself.

3. [1] And as they spake these things, he himself [i]stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they, being excited and possessed with fear, supposed that they beheld a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my [j]hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a [k]spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me to have. And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they believed not still for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here anything to [l]eat? And they gave him part of a broiled fish [and of a honeycomb].* And he took it and ate before them.

i cf. Jno. 20. 19, 20. cf. Mk. 16. 14.

j cf. 1 Jno. 1. 1. cf. Zech. 13. 6.

k cf. 1 Cor. 15. 20. cf. Phil. 3. 21.

l cf. Acts 10. 40, 41. cf. Gen. 18. 8.

2 (44-49) the Word in witness.

[2] And he said unto them, These are my words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be [m]fulfilled that are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, con-

m cf. Acts 13. 27, 29. cf. Acts 17. 3.

*Some omit.

they come back to Jerusalem, they find that He has appeared unto Simon; and we realize that here there is more pastoral work of the same tender sort. This appearing, however, is not given us anywhere at large, as we might have expected. They meet, as it were in secret, the Lord and His failed disciple, before He meets them together, Peter and the rest of the eleven. The tender style of all this, how like the Lord it is! How unofficial, too. It is plain that this is One who is going to be Himself the Shepherd of every individual soul of His, and not put them into the hands of some ecclesiastical go-between. It is, "One is your Teacher, even Christ; and all ye are brethren." Scripture is used, and they are built up with it: no miracles take the place of it: we hear again the Voice that said, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

3. [1] But the time is now come for fuller manifestation; and we see Him presently in the midst of the gathering of His people, inviting them to assure themselves fully of the reality of what they behold. With the doors shut, as John expressly tells us, His appearance in the midst impresses itself upon them as that of His bodiless spirit rather than the reappearance of the One they knew so well as He had lived and moved among them. In the tenderest way He invites them to make proof of His being in the body, to look at and handle Him, with the very wounds He had received still upon Him. When even yet, because of the greatness of the joy, they cannot realize it, he takes of the food they give Him and eats before them. It is the blessed fact and its full certification to those who are to be His witness that are put before us in Luke, and not yet the doctrines in connection with it, which are to be given us elsewhere.

[2] The Word is again appealed to, and His solemn testimony given to the written Word as it existed in His day, His sufferings and resurrection being a special

cerning me. Then [n]opened he their mind to understand the scriptures; and he said unto them, Thus it is written, [and thus it was needful]* that the Christ should [o]suffer, and [p]rise from among the dead the third day; and that [q]repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Ye are [r]witnesses of these things. And behold, I send forth the [s]promise of my Father upon you; but do ye remain in the city [of Jerusalem]† [t]until ye be clothed with power from on high.

3 (50-53): Christ in heaven.

[3] And he led them out as far as [u]Bethany; and lifting up his hands, he [v]blessed them. And it came to pass, as he blessed them, that he was separated from them and [w]carried up into heaven.

And they [x]worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great [y]joy, and were continually in the [z]temple, praising and blessing God.

* The weight of authority seems to be against these words.
† These words are doubtful.

n *cf.* Acts 16. 14. *cf.* Jno. 16. 13.
o *cf.* Is. 53. *cf.* Ps. 22.
p *cf.* Ps. 16. 8-11. *cf.* Ps. 17. 15.
q Acts 2. 38. Acts 20. 21.
r *cf.* Acts 1. 21, 22. *cf.* Acts 2. 32. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 4-9.
s Jno. 14. 16, 17. Acts 1. 8.
t Acts 1. 4, 14 with Acts 2. 1-4.
u Jno. 12. 1.
v *cf.* Jno. 20. 19.
w Mk. 16. 19, 20. *cf.* Eph. 4. 10.
x *cf.* Rev. 5. 8-14; *cf.* Heb. 1. 6.
y *ctr.* ver. 17; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 8.
z Acts 2. 46, etc.; *cf.* Heb. 13. 10-16.

part of this prophetic witness. Repentance and remission of sins are to be preached to all nations in the name of the Risen One; Jerusalem, guilty above all, to be first addressed. Thus Luke maintains its character to the end. Nothing is said of miraculous attestation, nor of baptism: the gospel is left in its own sufficiency. But they, its witnesses, are to be clothed with the power of the Spirit, the promise of the Father, sent by Himself: a step in advance of both Matthew and Mark, and in the line of the Acts and Paul.

[3] The gospel is to be first addressed to Jerusalem, but He does not ascend from thence, but from Bethany. "From thence He had set out to present Himself as King to Jerusalem. It was there that the resurrection of Lazarus had taken place; there that the family which present the character of the remnant—attached to His Person, now rejected, with better hopes—in the most striking manner received Jesus. It was thither He retired when His testimony to the Jews was ended; that His heart might rest for a few moments among those He loved; who, through grace, loved Him. It was there that He established the link (as to circumstances) between the remnant attached to His Person and heaven. From thence He ascends." (*Synopsis.*)

He ascends with His hands stretched out in blessing, to take that place before God in which He abides, the Representative of His people, the Head of blessing for them. While Israel and the earth wait for His return to find what the Old Testament has pledged in their behalf, His place in heaven is the sign of a new order of blessing which the "mysteries" of Christianity are to take up and unfold to us. Luke is here again the precursor of Paul; while John has first his own glories to display, which, while seen on earth, are essentially of heaven; and at last will unite heaven and earth together, as surely as He in whom we recognize them unites already in His Person, in one indissoluble perfection, God with Man.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF JOHN.

JOHN, as the final Gospel, is that which above all displays the glory of the Person of Christ as the Divine Word tabernacling in flesh, the Only-begotten Son of the Father. In it, therefore, as in suited connection with this, is seen the divine work in man in its full reality. The results of the previous Gospels are brought forward, and as tested by Christ in it, the Cross has shown the world to be at enmity with God. Man is but flesh, and must be born again to see the Kingdom of God. He is dead Godward, and Christ is here the Eternal Life, the Light of men; and communicating life that they may receive the revelation. Eternal Life is thus the central truth of the book, and in connection with it the Spirit of God is seen as Communicator and Perfecter of it. The whole Triune Godhead is thus displayed in the activity of divine grace towards men. Thus John is also necessarily and pre-eminently, the apostle of love: for God in the activity of His nature is Love.

The aspect of the Lord's work in atonement is that of the burnt-offering; the sweet savor of perfect obedience under the full stress of trial: the fire of sacrifice bringing out nothing else but this.

The development of these truths in the Gospel is such as needs little introduction; John being so much more doctrinal than historical, for the most part a collection of discourses, the subject of each strongly marked, and making the divisions very clear and simple. As in the two preceding Gospels, the main divisions are three:—

1. (Chaps. i.–ii. 22): The eternal life in Christ its Source, the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.
2. (Chaps. ii. 23–xvii.): Eternal life as communicated and dependent.
3. (Chaps. xviii.–xxi): The perfected offering, and Life in the Risen One.

NOTES.

Div. 1.

The first division gives us eternal life in the Person of the Word become flesh; carrying us back to eternity to behold His glory before any creature existed, and to show us in Him the Creator of all. In relation to the Father He reveals in manhood the glory of the Eternal, Only-begotten Son; and in Him God, hidden under law, is fully revealed in grace and truth. But this implies also the communication of eternal life to men, that, born of God, and having title to the place of children, they may be able to receive the revelation.

Faith utters its voice in His herald John, proclaiming His glory as the Eternal: for sinners, the Lamb of sacrifice; for saints, baptizing with the Holy Spirit. And now begins the drawing unto Him as such: first we see those who learn from Him where He abides and abide with Him,—characteristically, a heavenly company; then Nathanael, coming to Him as the One of whom Moses and the prophets wrote, owns Him as the Son of God and King of Israel: characteristic of an Israelitish, earthly one. We then see how He waits for the divinely appointed hour for Israel's blessing, when once their purification is more than a hollow form. And lastly, the evil which has hindered God dwelling in His house on earth, is purged out, so that He may return. Through all it is Christ who, as the expression of the mind and will of God (the Word), acts for Him, giving Him at last His rest for ever.

Subd. 1.

The Life as the Light of men is the theme of the first subdivision; the Word made flesh its full and glorious display. Creation as His work is a revelation also; but darkness having come in with sin, it is no longer a sufficient one. Hence the Word Himself enters the creation He has made, and God is manifest in a new glory among men.

But man is not naturally a seeker after God, unhappy only in not having found Him. No: he has turned his back upon Him, and must be born again, and that not of his own will, in order that he may receive the glorious revelation. The communication of eternal life in this is not openly declared as yet; but those who are born of God have now the title to become His children.

1. John begins "in the beginning." There is no article; and the indefinite form, as the whole connection shows, here carries us back to the most remote that can be imagined. Whenever anything else began, then "the Word *was*," —not "began." The Word had no beginning.

By the fact of this eternity of existence He is necessarily God: God only is the "Eternal;" but the apostle will not leave us to such an inference: "the Word was with God," he says, "and the Word was God,"—a distinct Person in the unity of the Godhead.

"*With* God" here is literally "*toward* God"; and this affirms, along with distinctness of Person, the adherence of regard and affection to Him of this Being whose designation as "the Word" points Him out as giving expression to the mind of God. And this Personality and relationship are eternal likewise: the Word is not a development from God, even though a pre-creation one: for "He was in the beginning *with* God."

Thus a glimpse is permitted us into what is involved in a plurality of Persons in the Godhead. "God is love:" and are we to think of Him before creation as dwelling in a blank and utter solitude, alone, with no outflow for His love? no object towards which it *could* flow out? even now with no sufficient object worthy of Himself? And He, the Father, was He no Father then? and have His creatures alone given Him the reality of such a title? Nay, there was in the Godhead as such, as this passage already shows, an activity, a reception, an intercommunion of love: "the Word was *with* God," *toward* God. The Only-

JOHN.

DIVISION 1. (Chaps. i.–ii. 22.)

The Eternal Life in Christ, its Source, the Only-begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. i. 1–18.)

The Life the Light.

1 (1-4): The Creator, and the Light in its Source.

1. IN [the] [a]beginning was the [b]Word; and the Word was [c]with God; and the Word was [d]God.* He† was in [the] beginning with God. All things

a Gen. 1. 1. *cf.* Col. 1. 17. *cf.* Ps. 90. 2.
b *cf.* Rev. 19. 13. *cf.* ver. 18.
c ch. 17. 5. *cf.* prov. 8. 22-31.
d *cf.* ch. 20. 28. *cf.* 1 Tim. 3. 16. *cf.* Heb. 1. 8.

*The order of words in this last clause is in the original inverted, doubtless for additional emphasis:—"and *God* was the Word."
† "This One," (Gk.).

begotten Son was then in the bosom of the Father. That "bosom of the Father" is not a development, but a glorious, everlasting reality.

Now we are given to see in the Word the actual Creator. "All things came into being through Him"; and again the apostle is emphatic as to this: not even a single thing must be excepted, that ever came into being.

We can easily recognize something of the significance of such a statement; but do we recognize how far it will lead us? If the Word be, as should be plain, the One who utters out the mind of God, does this merely show us that creation is the embodiment of that mind? that God willed, and the Word performed? Or does it not, at least, prepare us to believe that creation as His work would be a revelation of His character, His thoughts and purposes? This latter is the only sufficient and worthy reason for the emphasis laid upon the fact that the *Word* was the Creator. The action of the Word, then, was the speech of God: who, if He speak, speaks not simply because He will, but because He has something to communicate. What is it He has to speak of—He who surely cannot speak an idle word? If we can trust such thoughts, how far will they carry us? far beyond the point at which "natural theology," so-called, leaves us. It will be a little thing then to find that it shows, as any manufactured article might do, that some Being made it,—by the marks of design in it that it had a Designer. Nay, we shall realize it as that which,—written as a universal language which has never suffered from the judgment of Babel—God has used to utter His parables of divine wisdom in every attentive ear. True, they are parables, and need care to interpret them,—need diligence of heart to use the care; but so would lead into the most fruitful exercise of heart and conscience, if by them we sought believingly to draw near to God.

How naturally upon every theme whatever, the Lord's teaching fell into this form of parable, making the world vocal with divine monition and heavenly comfort! How naturally these analogies of spheres so different appeal to reason itself with the force of demonstration! How readily the Teacher above all teachers expects His disciples to apprehend such lessons, as if the key to all this symbolism were in their hands! "Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know *all* parables?" From Genesis to Revelation all Scripture teems with them: surely not applications of mere casual resemblances, but rather, real utterances of the Voice that speaks in them; and with which, if we are not familiar, it is to our shame that we are not.

But indeed, while in one of God's two Books we own Christ to be the theme, the book of nature speaks to most, it is to be feared, as if there were no Christ in it; though "by Him and for Him were all things created."

And how thankful we have reason to be for this symbolical character of nature

came into being [e]through him; and without him not one thing came into being which hath come into being. In him was [f]life; and the life was the [g]light of men.

[e] Heb. 1. 10. Col. 1. 16. 1 Cor. 8. 6.
[f] *cf.* ch. 5. 26. *cf.* 1 Jno. 1. 2.
[g] ch. 8. 12; ch. 12. 35, 36, 46.

when we consider that from this lower sphere all our words for the higher are derived. Were the one not really (and therefore divinely) adapted to the other, how surely would this lead us astray! On the other hand to take them frankly as thus fitted to one another, how great a help should it be in the interpretation of spiritual things. But it must be confessed we are little practised in such explorations as this implies; even though Scripture and nature be allowed to be God's two witnesses; which should agree and confirm each other in their witness therefore.

We proceed now to the spiritual sphere, what was *in* the Word, not made by Him: for "in Him was Life, and the Life was the light of men." Many indeed take life here in the most comprehensive way, "the Word being the Source of all life to the creature," but the latter clause of the verse, it is admitted, can only refer to spiritual life. And how could this be classed with that of plant or beast, for instance? or said to be in Him? He is the Author of it: in that sense, the Source, though it be not exactly the right word for it. Life in Him, the Eternal, is surely eternal life; and having shown sufficiently for his purpose here the relation of the Word to creation generally, John at once proceeds to his grand subject. Only the eternal life could be the light of men.

A real definition of life it is generally confessed we have not. It belongs, indeed, to those essential mysteries in which so much of our knowledge is rooted. Of natural life we can only gather from its phenomena certain general ideas, which still ought to help us, if the natural and spiritual are in such close correspondence as we have claimed for them. What then can we learn phenomenally of natural life?

Life, as we read it in nature, is a spring of ordered activity which controls and manifests itself in the inanimate to which it has communicated itself. The dead material is taken up by it, assimilated, and formed into living tissue, and then into organs which work under the control of a common plan and purpose. Take the plant for example, in which you have the life force simply, without the presence of soul or spirit to perplex the results. Here then the stamp of mind is put upon that in which mind is not. It is the witness of a Mind beyond itself which works through and controls it everywhere in harmonious obedience.

Life is thus naturally self-communicative, propagates itself, proceeds from nothing else but life. This is conceded by science to-day, as far as science can speak in such a matter. It is a thing not manufactured nor evolved, not working up from below, not the product of dead matter, but an imperial power ruling this, even while freely yielding itself to it, permeating and so lifting it into a higher sphere, according to the constant law of progress disclosed by the world as a divine product.

But life in nature is haunted by its shadow, death; life in the Word is a Life eternal, "that eternal life," says the epistle, "which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." And how manifested? As life is always here, by self-communication to a lower nature, which could receive its impress and thus display a character beyond its own. "The Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us; and we beheld His glory: glory as of an Only-begotten with the Father, full of grace and truth." The mind and purposes of God were manifested in a humanity perfectly attuned to harmonious obedience to that will of God which was the one motive of His being in the world. Thus the Life was the light of men: the glory of Godhead was seen in perfect human righteousness: "As long as I am in the world," He says, "I am the light of the world." The Life is but the activity of His nature, (which is the divine nature,) which has taken up manhood in Him, to reveal itself thus, communicative and imperial.

2 (5-11): The conflict between light and darkness.

2. And the light shineth in [h]darkness, and the darkness [i]apprehended it not. There was a man [j]sent from God, whose name was John. He came for a witness, that he might bear witness concerning the light, that all might believe through him. *He* was [k]not the light, but to bear witness concerning the light. The true light was that which, coming* into the world, [l]lighteth every man. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, and the world [m]knew him not. He came unto his [n]own, and his own received him not.

*R. V. connects this clause with "every man;" there is nothing in the text to forbid either rendering.

[h] *cf.* Eph. 5. 8-13. *cf.* ch. 3. 19.
[i] *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 14. *cf.* ch. 8. 43.
[j] ver. 33. Mal. 3. 1.
[k] ver. 20. *cf.* ch. 5. 35.
[l] ch. 9. 5.
[m] ver. 5. *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 8.
[n] *cf.* Matt. 21. 33-39. *cf.* Ex. 4. 22.

2. But the next thing we hear of is darkness, and a darkness which the light as such cannot banish. It shines in it, but is not realized. This is the nature of spiritual darkness, which is not a mere absence of light, but in opposition to it. God is light; but man has his back upon God, and walks in his own shadow. He has not faith in God, and as he learned to distrust Him even in Eden, much more as out of Eden and under the consequences of his sin, which he puts to the discredit of his Maker. Thus everything is distorted, for God is the reason of all things, and if He be unknown, all things fall into confusion. Then we must do what we can for ourselves; self is all that is left us to believe in; a self which has lost all but the wreck of the image of God in which man was created.

Over all another shadow broods, of one "a liar from the beginning," and who has persuaded men to believe his lie. Under him darkness becomes a kingdom, and the power by which he reigns: "the god of this world blinds the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. iv. 4).

In such a world was this glory now to be displayed. The inspired writer filled with his theme, does not pause to speak of how or how far in former times the light had shone for men: everything seems but contrast to the present revelation; which yet—such the world was—God cannot leave without calling special attention to it. Men must be roused to behold it, and by the voice of one nearer to them, as more upon their level, more intelligible to them, as echoing the voice of conscience in their hearts. Such indeed was the "man sent from God, whose name was John." But he is not yet heard in his testimony, as he will be presently. Simply the fact is given: God sent him, a witness to bear witness concerning the truth, that all might believe through him. What an assurance of a world far away from God, that the Light must have one to proclaim it, the Creator must have one to introduce Him into His own world; and then it is necessary to say, 'He was not that light," lest men should mistake the witness to Christ for the Christ he witnessed to!

The characteristic of the real light is given, that it is not local, but for all. Sunlike, men cannot hold it in Judea simply. The Baptist was "a burning and a shining light;" but not the day-Luminary, filling heaven and earth with splendor. This universal character, reprobated in its full reality by the narrow Jew, the Evangelist shows in its true glory. Did God create the Jew only? Thus "the *world*" is one of the prominent words in this Gospel: "God so loved," not Israel merely, but "the world." Zion on her hill-top might catch the first rays of the dawn: let her golden orb rise higher, and it will reach lower too.

Men are equalized after another fashion, and which will make needful either equal judgment or fullest grace. The Light finds everywhere darkness; and darkness which yields not to the Light as light. "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." Falsehood knows not truth, nor hatred love. But more: Israel had been specially prepared by centuries of special dealing for this very time; her own King, Messiah, Deliverer,

3 (12-18): The glory of the Word tabernacling in flesh revealed to men receiving out of His fulness.

3. But as many as [o]received him, to them he gave authority to become children of God,—to those believing on his name: who were [p]born, not of [q]blood, nor of the [r]will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

o 1 Jno. 5. 1. *cf.* Gal. 3. 26. p *cf.* ch. 3. 3-7. q *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 23. r *cf.* ch. 6. 63; *cf.* Rom. 8. 8.

at last had come to her, to fulfil all her promises: "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." The education of a race, and in the divine school, failed; and failed in the very thing which all was designed for.

3. The purpose of God cannot be defeated. The need which it had to meet is now fully declared. Claim there can be none on man's part. Israel is but as the Gentile, save that, with higher privilege, her guilt is greater. The Gospel of John begins where the other Gospels end, and with the Cross as the full revelation of man's condition, as it has never before been revealed: for, if under the law the mind of the flesh is shown hopelessly insubject to the law of God, now it is seen to be "enmity against God." But thus there must be not only a work done *for* man, such as the other Gospels have fully declared, but also a divine work done *in* him, which John alone presents in its entirety. He alone speaks of the new birth, quickening, eternal life as a present possession in the soul, as well as of the gift of the Spirit, which gives it its full and "abundant" character. With him, first, the children of God by faith are recognized in their place as such, and the Lord in resurrection sends the message of His coming ascension to His "brethren."

We have now already the new birth and the new place announced, in which the will of God rises above the opposition of His fallen creature, and displays itself in a grace which draws near to Him the objects of His unsought love. "To as many as received Him, to them He gave authority to become children of God,—to those believing in His Name." This is, of course, the distinguishing mark of these, that in opposition to His own people Israel, who did not receive Christ, they received Him, thus distinguishing their faith from a mere conviction of the mind. Their belief was such as made them desire and accept Him. His Name—Jesus, the Saviour—becoming the discovery of One who met their divinely awakened need. To these He gave authority to take a place never before possessed by men in the reality of what is involved in it, as children of God by birth and nature. The sonship of the Old Testament was not founded upon this, and carried with it no assurance of salvation nor of spiritual life. God was a Father to Israel, who was thus His "son," His "first-born" (Ex. iv. 2; Jer. xxxi. 9). In the passage in Jeremiah it is "*Ephraim* is My first-born." In Mal. i. 6 He asks, "If I be a Father, where is Mine honor?" In chap. ii. 10, the sense in which He is called so is seen: "Have we not all one Father? has not one God *created us?*" And similarly in Isa. lxiv. 8, we have the appeal to Him: "But now, O Lord, Thou art our Father: we are the clay and Thou our potter, and we all are the work of Thy hand." In the preceding chapter (lxiii. 16) they cry, "Thou art our Father, our Redeemer" (*Goel*, "Kinsman-Redeemer"); but it is power that they seek to come in for them, as in Egypt. In all these cases, which are all that are in the prophets, the fatherly relationship, though assumed towards Israel in a special way, is founded upon creation.

With this title of first-born, therefore, which is given to Israel, is associated the thought of supremacy upon earth; and in the eighty-ninth psalm it is given to Messiah in the same way: "He shall cry unto Me, Thou art my Father. . . . Also I will make him My first-born, higher than the kings of the earth" (vers. 26, 27).

In both Psalms and Proverbs, God is *compared* to a father, and here the tenderest thoughts are expressed: "*Like as* a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him" (Ps. ciii. 13). But here too, what we are by creation immediately comes in: "For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust." Again in Proverbs (iii. 11, 12), we find what the apostle has quoted in the epistle to the Hebrews; "My son, despise not thou the chas-

And the Word [s]became flesh, and [t]tabernacled among us; and we beheld his [u]glory, the glory as of an [v]Only-begotten with the Father, full of [w]grace and truth.

s *cf.* ch. 6. 33, 42. *cf.* 2 Cor. 8. 9. *cf.* Phil. 2. 6-8; *cf.* Heb. 10. 5; *cf.* Lk. 1. 35. t *cf.* Ex. 25. 8, etc. with Matt. 1. 23. u *cf.* ch. 2. 11; *cf.* Matt. 3. 17. v ch. 3. 16; *cf.* Rom. 8. 29. w ver. 17; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 19.

tening of the Lord; neither be weary of His correction: for whom the Lord loveth He correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth."

Conversely, the angels are sons of God (Job i. 6; ii. 1; xxxviii. 7), most clearly in the same creative way, and as Paul quotes to the Athenians from one of the Greek poets that "we are His offspring" (Acts xvii. 28). God is thus the "Father of spirits" (Heb. xii. 9), and the possession of a spiritual nature constitutes that image of God in which we are created; though, if man does not answer to the relationship, that relation cannot be acknowledged. Thus the Lord could say to the unbelieving Jews. "If God were your Father, ye would love Me . . . ye are of your father the devil" (John viii. 42, 44)—men such as the devil, and not God, had made them.

This is the Old Testament idea of children, which reaches out after the New Testament idea, but without being able to attain the blessedness of this, founded as it is upon a new creation, a new life and nature, where no fall can again mar what the sovereign grace of God has accomplished. Children of God there were, of course, from the beginning; but now for the first time they are given to take the place of children, owned as such because they have so believed on Christ's name as to have received Him. What underlies this and justifies it is that they are the subjects of a true divine work. They are born again, not of blood—the way of natural birth; not of the will of the flesh,—man in his fallen condition; nor of the will of man—even when renewed; but of God, and God only.

Now the glory of the Light can be seen, the glory of the antitypical tabernacle, to which that of old pointed. Wisdom's delights were of old with the children of men; when Christ was born, the angels celebrated it; but it is John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, who lay on His breast, and gathered there the full intelligence of his position, who has revealed to us this new manifestation. "The Word became flesh," he says, "and tabernacled among us; and we beheld His glory; the glory as of an Only-begotten with the Father, full of grace and truth."

God had from the beginning visited His people. With a redeemed people, though it were only the shadow of the later redemption, the witness of what was in His heart was given, and the Pillar of Cloud and Fire became the Leader of His people from the border of Egypt into the land. But all this only prepared the way for the full reality which now appeared: the Word, the personal Wisdom of God, became *flesh*. An expression is used which most completely declares the reality of manhood into which He entered. It was not some docetic form of it, but the verity of that which we know as such, and which most implies the weakness of the creature. And that He *became* flesh imports this manhood, not as something outside of or other than His true Self, but assumed into it. While yet this was not, nor could be, transmuted Deity, but the Tabernacle of Deity: the divine and human not being confused together, but united; the Word tabernacling among us by becoming flesh. The Glory beheld was of an *Only*-begotten with the Father: One in whom the divine nature was, not as what might be in some true sense communicable to the creature, but in a way unique, peculiar to Himself; not derived, therefore, from the Manhood He assumed, but His relationship in the Godhead; "*with* the Father" implying that communion in the Godhead, the necessary result of this.

The Glory was not hidden, as of old, but beheld—by those that had eyes for it. That which was even necessary goodness under the law, the barrier that kept men from intruding where they could not stand, ceased to be any longer: it was now in grace that God was revealed; grace which did not moreover hide the truth, but prepared the soul for its reception and endeared it evermore.

John beareth witness of him and hath cried, saying, This is he of whom I said, He that [z]cometh after me is come to be before me: for he was before* me. And † of his [y]fulness have we all received, and grace upon grace. For the [z]law was given through Moses; grace and truth came to be through Jesus Christ. No one hath [a]seen God at any time: the Only-begotten Son, who is in the [b]bosom of the Father, *he* hath declared him.

x ver. 30.
y *cf.* Col. 1. 19. *cf.* Col. 2. 3, 9, 10.
z Ex. 20. 1, etc. *cf.* Gal. 3. 19. *cf.* Rom. 10. 4-10.
a Ex. 33. 20. *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 16. *cf.* Col. 1. 15.
b *cf.* Prov. 8. 30. *cf.* ch. 14. 31. *cf.* Col. 2. 2.

* Literally, "first," or "chief."
† Most of the earliest MSS. have "for"; but the earliest versions seem to balance this.

The aspect of the truth was invitation, not repulsion; it preached of life and not of death.

The witness of John to the deity of Christ is appended to this. Strictly it is to His pre-existence; but the one involves the other. No angel could leave the sphere in which God created him, and the Arian view of Christ's Person has no countenance in the Old Testament. So fully is this the case that in his first epistle John can say "come in flesh" as equivalent to declaring the divine-human Person. "He that cometh after me," says the Baptist, "has come to be before me:" He has come into a greater place. And no wonder! "for He was before me." And there, as it seems, the voice of the Church, by the lips of the evangelist, breaks in.* "And out of His fulness have we all received, and grace upon grace." It was grace that even at the second giving of the law could reveal along with this "the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." But still that left the law, nay, even the more *made* it a "ministration of death" for man, as showing the awful reality of his condition. As long as man stands on the footing of his own responsibility before God, his state is hopeless; only Christ before God for him can suffice. And this alone is "grace upon grace," that which we receive from Him,—grace that is *all* grace, without mixture or limit.

Accordingly, the law is put in contrast with this: "the law was given through Moses;" the second tables were written, not by the "finger of God," but by the mediator's hand. But the mediator himself could not behold face to face the glory of the Lord,—could see nothing but His "back parts:" could not see God and live. Still it remains, therefore, spite of all that was declared to him, that "no one hath seen God at any time." But the Only-begotten Son hath not only seen Him: as the Son of His love, in the Father's bosom, He hath declared Him—told Him out. Thus "grace and truth came to be" for us "through Jesus Christ." It is a grace which is identified with truth, as the singular verb joined to the two nominatives shows. It is not, as when the law was given, grace based upon a supposed condition in man,—a condition found not to exist. This caused the inadequacy of law, with whatever limitation: man must be depended on in some way: but in fact, "wherein is he to be accounted of?" The law is helpless, therefore; while the fulness of grace in Christ supposes nothing in man, except a most real need to be met out of this fulness. Here, if there were failure, it would be Christ who failed; and that is impossible. Grace and truth exist together for us now in Christ; and God in righteousness and love is told out fully in the One Mediator, who in Person and work brings God and man together.

SUBD. 2.

The first eighteen verses are, in fact, the witness of God as to Christ—a revelation. Who could know of the Word in eternity, the Creator; or of the Only-

* There is a similar out-burst in praise and testimony at the commencement of another book of John, Revelation (i. 5-7).

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. i. 19–34.)

The witness of faith.

1 (19-28): The Forerunner: himself the testimony.

1. AND this is the witness of John, when the Jews [c]sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem, to ask him, Who art *thou?* And he confessed, and denied not; and he confessed, I am [d]not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou [e]Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou the [f]prophet? And he answered, No. They said to him therefore, Who art thou? that we may give answer to those who sent us: what sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the [g]voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of [the] Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. And they

c ch. 5. 33.
d *cf.* Lk. 3. 15-17, ch. 3.28, 30.
e *cf.* Matt. 17. 10-12. *cf.* Matt. 11. 14.
f *cf.* Deut. 18. 15-19. Acts 3. 22, 23.
g Matt. 3. 3. Is. 40. 3. *cf.* 2 Cor. 13. 3.

begotten Son in the Father's bosom, or of the Word incarnate, except by revelation? But now man is given his place, and allowed to tell his story from his own side,—to show how he has come to rejoice in Christ; and we are called now to listen to the Baptist in this character of witness to his Lord.

1. It is a blessed testimony, and shows us, as the other Gospels scarcely do, the bright side of what elsewhere seems a life so shadowed. But in them we see him rather in his witness to the nation—which is, of course, a witness about Christ too; but more in His relation also to the nation and where their present state spoke sadly of what was to be the outcome of his presentation to them. With Pharisees and Sadducees coming out in their hollow fashion to his baptism of repentance, a vipers' brood, as he calls them, his testimony is largely a warning of coming judgment. The axe is already at the root of the trees, and they must not plead their being children of Abraham as exemption from the wrath at hand. He who comes is going to purge His floor and gather (it is true) His wheat into the garner; but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire. Corresponding to all this is the figure of the preacher in the wilderness, his leathern girdle fastened round his garment of hair. Of this aspect of John's ministry we find here little indeed: for here he is not standing in the presence of the people, but in Another Presence of which he is come to speak. He is standing in the glory of that Light which is in the world, and he is transfigured by it. The austerity has passed out of manner and form, and become the tender abstraction of the worshiper. They come after him, attracted by what they more readily understand, priests and Levites from Jerusalem, seeking the man able thus to stand alone, while with his words he bows the multitudes before him; they find one bowing himself in abasement deeper than that of his stricken hearers. Only not in the shadow, but in the light; not in the alarm of an awakened conscience, but in the joy of a heart that has found its rest in faith.

They came to ask him, "Who art *thou?*" "And he confessed, and denied not," says the exultant Spirit; "and he confessed, I am *not the Christ.*" Was it not, after all, but a small thing to say *that?* Yes; but it was the manner of his saying it, unasked, as one who knew in his soul that Christ whom men needed, so as to need nothing else. What did it matter what he himself was, when he and they (but in how different fashion) were standing in the presence of His glory; and they ignorant of it? But they go on: "What then? art thou Elias?" And he saith, "I am not." "Art thou that prophet?"—the Prophet of whom Moses had spoken, and whom they did not know to be Christ also; and he answered, "No;"—shorter and shorter, as one who would be quit of it; but they will not leave it there. "They said to him, therefore, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us: what sayest thou of *thyself?* He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord"—of Jehovah—"as said the prophet Esaias."

had been sent from the Pharisees; and they asked him, and said unto him, [h] Why baptizest thou then, if thou art not the Christ, nor Elias, nor the prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with [i] water: there standeth one in the midst of you, whom ye [j] know not; he who coming after me hath come to be before me;* the latchet of whose shoe I am not [k] worthy to unloose. These things took place in Bethany,† beyond Jordan, [l] where John was baptizing.

h *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 13-15. *cf.* Acts 19. 4.
i Matt. 3. 11. *cf.* Heb. 10. 4.
j ver. 5.
k Matt. 3. 14. *cf.* ch. 3. 29, 30. *cf.* Matt. 11. 11.
l Lk. 3. 3.

* The earliest versions here again are in opposition to some of the earliest MSS., which have only, "he who cometh after me."
† Not "Bethabara," as the common version.

Vox et præterea nihil: a "voice,"—scarcely a person; a voice whose whole value lies in the message that it brings; a voice, which of necessity must pass away, but which may do a work that shall not pass; here a voice that shall bring to the souls of men the imperishable Word which shall abide for ever. We cannot but realize the voice in John thus to be in suited relation to the Word, which is Christ, and of whom as such the Gospel speaks. Nor is there a moan in this over his mere brief apparition among men. What are men that a name among them and a following from them should be a thing to covet? Nay; but there *is* a Seeker of men, and for whom they have value, not as aught but as naught; as helpless, astray, lost, ruined. *That* the speaker knew; and knowing, spoke of it with a joy that would not permit him to be silent, nor permit him to stand before their eyes to hide or lessen the glory which was before his own.

But those who had been sent were of the Pharisees, and they saw nothing; nor, as conscious of their need, did they heed the testimony. They had misinterpreted the ages past, and here was the voice of those ages, and it was strange and distant, and the light in the eyes of him who spoke, had they not seen it before in many a fanatic? But, keen ritualists as they were, they had rightful question with him now, founded on his own confession: for, if he were neither Christ, nor Elias, nor the Prophet, why did he baptize?

In fact, it was a boldness unheard of to impose such a baptism upon Israelites: he a man without miracle to attest him, with nothing indeed save his own unworldly life, and that fervent appeal to the conscience which awoke it to its office, with the startling announcement of heaven's Kingdom and its King at hand. Meet him on the ground of Scripture or of fact they could not; but it was easier to question his personal right to such a prerogative as he claimed, of which they too were the prescriptive judges. But John answers them in his own strange fashion by an attack upon all ritualism in its very essence. Baptize? yes, he baptized—*with water!* Water symbolically might have deepest meaning; otherwise it could but put away the filth of the flesh. Water does water's work: for which its Maker ordained it. Why make much of this, while in the midst of them stood One, unknown, unnoticed, so great that the Baptist, as he declares, was unworthy to do for Him a menial's office, and had derived from Him all the significance he had.

Thus John was in his person a witness for his Lord. He not merely *had* a voice to speak for Him: he *was* that voice. Delivered from the common cravings of men, and standing apart from their contending interests but not their needs, Christ had delivered, Christ sufficed for him. As another could say afterwards, and with fuller intelligence, John could have said in his measure with equal truth, Christ lived in him; Christ's interests absorbed and energized him. A beautiful testimony! His voice might utter itself in the wilderness; his heart abode amid the "precious fruits brought forth by the Sun" which shone upon him, a man "filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb."

2 (29-31): The Sin-bearer and Saviour.

2. On the morrow he seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the [m] Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. He it is of whom I said, [n] After me cometh a man who is come to be before me: for he [o] was before me. And I [p] knew him not; but that he might be made [q] manifest to Israel, therefore did I come baptizing with water.

3 (32-34): anointed and baptizing with the Spirit.

3. And John bare witness, saying, I beheld the [r] Spirit descending like a dove out of heaven; and it abode upon him. And I knew him not, but he who sent me to baptize with water, *he* said unto me, Upon whom

m ver. 36. *cf.* Gen. 22. 7, 8. *cf.* Ex. 12. 3-5. *cf.* Is. 53. 7. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 18-20. *cf.* Rev. 5. 6.
n vers. 15, 27.
o cf. ch. 8. 58. *cf.* Col. 1. 17.
p ver. 33. *cf.* Lk. 1. 80. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 16.
q cf. Lk. 1. 17, 76. *r* Matt. 3. 16; Mk. 1. 10; Lk. 3. 21, 22.

2. But with these men for his hearers John cannot get his heart out; as on their part there is no movement of the heart towards the blessed One of whom he testifies. With other audience upon the morrow his joy breaks out; and we see how fully he is one with all whoever since have found in Jesus the rest and satisfaction of their souls. "He seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world." Thus we see how his faith has taken refuge in a Sin-bearer and Saviour, the only Saviour of the world. We have at the outset here the broadest view of Christ's sacrifice, as characteristically throughout the Gospel. The Baptist speaks also of "sin," not "sins." That which has been from the time of the fall ever in view in all God's dealings with the world will through this work be at last completely removed, and eternal righteousness established in its place. Meanwhile the broadest foundation is laid, for every one that will to rest on. Not Israel, not the saints, not even believers as such are given title here, but men as men, sinners with the consciousness of nothing else but sin; for for sinners the sacrifice for sin was offered; and though it be said most truly that only by faith do we receive the fruit of it, yet faith does not eye itself but its object, nor rest in any estimate of one's own condition (as to which we might be deceived) but upon the sure testimony of the Word both as to our condition and as to that which has met the condition.

Thus John's confession here is not too broad to allow of the simplest individual appropriation of it. The rock is not too broad to build upon. Every one is welcome: no question raised as to any one who comes; and none need raise a question.

John adds as to this Lamb of sacrifice his confession of Him as a divine Person, repeating his former words. He adds also that he had been (as the world itself) blind as to His glory. Yet that He might be made manifest to Israel was the whole purport of his own mission. It is the consciousness of the condition in which we were, out of which divine love and power alone have brought us that will enable us to rely upon the same grace for others, and upon nothing else but grace.

3. But this is not the whole of John's testimony. He has seen Christ as a Man marked out by the descent of the Spirit of God upon Him, and had this given to him as the sign by which he should know the One baptizing with the Holy Spirit. He sees and bears witness, therefore, that this is the Son of God.

The oil upon Aaron's head descends to the skirts of his clothing; and thus is accomplished that unity among brethren of which the Psalmist speaks (Ps. cxxxiii.) Now that the oil is the type of the Spirit, with which Christ as the true Aaron is anointed without blood, hardly needs demonstration (Ex. xxix. 7). Every thing combines to show that it was after John's baptism when the Spirit descended to abide on Christ, as the Baptist beheld it here, that this was fulfilled. (See Matt. iii., notes.) He had bowed in Jordan as the true offering in death for the sins of others, just as the Baptist proclaims Him now the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world. He is declared, as the Spirit descends

thou shalt see the Spirit descending and abiding on him, he it is who *baptizeth with [the] Holy Spirit. And I have seen and borne witness that he is the *Son of God.

s Acts i. 5.
t vers. 14, 18, 49. cf. ch. 5. 18. cf. ch. 9. 35, etc. cf. ch. 20. 29, 31.

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chap. i. 35–42.)

A fore-shadow of a heavenly gathering.

AGAIN on the *morrow John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, *Behold the Lamb of God. And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. And Jesus, having turned, and beheld them following, saith unto them *What seek ye? And they said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Teacher,) where

u cf. ch. 20. 1 with 1 Jno. 2. 8. cf. Eph. 1. 22, 23.
v ver. 29. cf. Acts 13. 38, 39.
w cf. Matt. 20. 32.

upon Him, the Son of God; and that, as the apostle tells us (Heb. v. 5), is His call to the priesthood. The baptism of the Spirit is thus His priestly action, the anointing oil flowing down from the Head, which in the psalm produces the unity of brotherhood in Israel, and could not but as fully apply to that of a heavenly people, or to the Church; the Body of Christ is formed by the baptism of the Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 13); and though we could not have this as *yet* developed, for us it is the highest expression of spiritual unity, the fullest manifestation of the power of Christ's priestly work. It gives completeness to the Baptist's testimony to our Lord.

SUBD. 3.

"To Him shall the obedience of the peoples be" was Jacob's word of old as to Shiloh: a word which has waited long for its fulfilment. Of that generation of Israel to which He came He had to say, as foretold by the prophet: "I have labored in vain, and spent my strength for naught, and in vain; yet surely," He adds, "my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God" (Isa. xlix. 4). Jehovah answers Him accordingly, not only with the assurance that Jacob shall nevertheless be brought to God by Him, but also He shall be a light to the Gentiles, that He may be His salvation to the ends of the earth (ver. 6).

But the full reality of the work among the Gentiles was, even so, not given to the Old Testament to foresee. The mystery of the Church was yet "hid in God" (Eph. iii. 9), although the Old Testament had also its witnesses, which on account of their veiled and typical language could not be understood until it pleased Him to lift off that veil. There they serve now to show the place in His heart this supreme grace of His towards men ever had.

Even in the Gospels, with the exception of what is conveyed in the brief words to Peter which Matthew has recorded for us (xvi. 18), the Church still lies hidden. John, whose testimony to the Person of Christ is so full, and whose Gospel, from its unfolding of eternal life and the gift of the Spirit, so well deserves the title which has been given to it of the "Christian Gospel," yet says nothing explicitly of the Church of God. It is of the *family* of God he speaks throughout, even when it is the Church that furnishes his example of the family.

We have, however, something more than this in what we have now before us, though not in explicit statement. The Son of God, the Word made flesh, and stooping to be the Lamb of sacrifice, then and thus Baptizer with the Holy Spirit, and bringing men into a spiritual unity which is necessarily communion with the Father and the Son, begins in the power of the grace manifested in Him to draw men to Himself. He becomes the Centre of what we soon discern to be a two-fold gathering, in principle a heavenly and an earthly one. The mind of the Spirit is evidently to show us this by typical example, the Christian and the Jewish assemblies in their characteristic features as these,—the New Testa-

[x] abidest thou? He saith unto them, [y] Come and see. They went therefore, and saw where he abode, and they [z] abode with him that day; it was about the tenth hour. One of the two who heard John* [speak] and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first [a] findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias (which is, being interpreted, the Christ). He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looking

x *cf.* ch. 14. 2, 3. *cf.* Heb. 1. 3.
y ver. 46. ch. 4. 29. *cf.* Col. 3. 1.
z *cf.* ch. 17. 24. *cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 17.
a *cf.* ver. 45. *cf.* Mk. 5. 19. *cf.* Acts 1. 8.

*Or, "hearing from John."

ment and the Old finding in Him harmonious fulfilment. How suited is this, after His fulness has been displayed, to show us something of the circles of blessing that shall surround Him, to which eternally this fulness shall flow out. The exact, even minute correspondence forbids any mistake as to what is intended: every word tells. The more we examine the more shall we realize that here are all the details of a picture such as the Spirit of God alone could have drawn, and which is addressed to our intelligence as Christians to discover.

At the commencement John is still the witness, the Old Testament in him sending its disciples to Him who is the fulfilment of its sacrificial shadows, to the Lamb of God, who satisfies as such the first need of the soul, and in setting it free makes it inalienably His own. The true disciples of the Old Testament are, therefore, those who follow Jesus; and it was as a Jewish remnant that the Church began. But immediately we hear of something beyond this. Jesus sees them following and asks, "What seek ye?" and they seek, in fact, the place where He abides. It is practically the second occurrence of a word which is common in John and characteristic of his Gospel,—related, as it is to that divine side of things with which he has so much to do. Thus the Spirit "abides" on Christ: does not come occasionally, and leave again, as with the prophets of old. The Father also "abides" in Him (xiv. 10). The believer "abides" in Christ, and Christ in him; as the branch "abides" in the vine (xv.) and thus the vine—the sap—in the branch. The bread from heaven "abides" unto eternal life (vi. 27). But here the place where Christ abides carries our thoughts at once to His own "where I am," in the Father's house, where are the "abodes" (xiv. 2) in which His people are to be with Him for ever. We have in type the heavenly family, who even now by faith see where He abides and abide with Him while night is on the earth, to come out in the morning with Him. No name of earth attaches itself to this His dwelling-place; and though, plainly, as the time indicates, they pass the night with Him, no night is mentioned, for where He is it is day.

All harmonizes thus far; but we have more than this: for "one of the two who heard John speak and followed Him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. Andrew, the "manly," "courageous," is indeed akin to Simon, "the hearkener," the "obedient," who becomes Peter the "stone" the rock-like man; and both together may speak of the energy needed to go through the transition which the name of Peter at once suggests here, and which John further emphasizes for us by interpreting the Messias of Andrew's testimony into the Gentile "Christ." The sacred language itself is changing, as we see in that of the New Testament, which is the language of the outside world.

Andrew brings his brother to Jesus; and at once we have the change of name, which in Matthew takes place at a later time. There it is evidently a confirmation of what is given at the commencement of his discipleship; there the point had come from which the whole transformation could be seen, which here is confined to himself personally. The "hearkener, the son of the dove" (Jonas)* —for with the hearing the dead live (chap. v. 25), and this life is the Spirit's

*The weight of MS. authority is for "John," though they do not agree as to the spelling. The text in Matt. xvi. reads "Jonas" without dissent at all; which makes for the less supported reading here.

upon him said, Thou art [b]Simon the son of Jonas: thou shalt be called Cephas: which is, being interpreted, A stone.*

[b] *cf.* Matt. 16. 18. *cf.* Gen. 17. 5.

SUBDIVISION 4. (Chap. i. 43–51).

The earthly gathering.

ON the [c]morrow he was minded to go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip; and Jesus saith unto him, [d]Follow me. And Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip [e]findeth Nathanael, and said unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law wrote, and the prophets, Jesus the son of Joseph who is from Nazareth. And Nathanael said unto him, [f]Can anything good be out of Nazareth?

[c] *cf.* Mal. 4. 2. *cf.* 2 Sam. 23. 4.
[d] *cf.* Matt. 4. 19.
[e] ver. 41. *cf.* Mal. 3. 16.
[f] ch. 7. 41, 42, 52.

*Gk., "Peter."

work—becomes Cephas, which also is interpreted into the Gentile Peter: that is to say "a stone." Peter himself gives us the full significance of this (1 Pet. ii. 4, 5): "To whom coming, as unto a living Stone, . . . ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house." Thus the Church is formed; and in what is intimated in this name now conferred we see the heavenly company assuming the full character of the house of God, the dwelling-place of the Spirit. The other aspects of the Church as the body and bride of Christ are to be the subjects of after revelation.

Here then is the first gathering to the Lord as it is now, Israel having rejected Him, as in John we see all through. But even on this account John will not leave it there, and we are next to see, after the same representative manner, an Israelitish company, which serves by contrast only to make more distinct, if possible, the character of that which has preceded it.

SUBD. 4.

We have a new day, and the Lord meaning to go forth into Galilee, which we have seen elsewhere to be the typical place of blessing for Israel (see p. 69 *notes*) where her ruin is most manifest. And now, instead of a continuation of the former gathering by the testimony of disciples, there is a new beginning, and the work of the Lord Himself, who calls Philip. Now the disciples' work begins again: Philip calls Nathanael with a new testimony; "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets wrote, Jesus the son of Joseph, who is from Nazareth." The being the (titular) son of Joseph, which sounds strange as the voice of faith in John's Gospel, gives Him yet His apparent legal title to the throne. Exceptional in this Gospel it plainly is, but the King of Israel is manifestly intended to be now before us: in principle it is an Israelitish gathering that is begun. Nathanael shows also at first the Jewish unbelief: "Can anything good be out of Nazareth?" And yet the Lord testifies of him, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." Notice that it is as an "Israelite" he is presented to us. "Whence knowest thou me?" he asks in surprise. "Before Philip called thee," the Lord answers, "when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." Doubtless there had been some special exercise of heart,—something in which he had been seeking God,—that Christ refers to. And with the true remnant of Israel in the last days, we know that the exercises through which they will pass will be as overshadowed by the fig-tree, which is the figure of a remnant of the nation returned to the land, but not returned to God (Luke xiii. 6–9), and who will receive Antichrist. The Psalms enter largely into these trials and sorrows; and in them God has provided for them beforehand that which will sustain their faith through that unequalled tribulation through which they will have to pass. In them, when they come to see Him face to face they will find how the Christ they have been seeking has been already with them.

Philip saith unto him, [g]Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming unto him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no [h]guile. Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the [i]fig-tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered him, Rabbi, thou art the [j]Son of God; thou art [k]King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? thou shalt see [l]greater things than these. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, [Henceforth]* ye shall see [m]heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

g *cf.* Nu. 10. 29. *cf.* Zech. 8. 21.
h *cf.* Ps. 32. 2. *cf. cf.* Is. 29. 13. *cf.* Zeph. 3. 13.
i *cf.* Lk. 13. 6–9. *cf.* Matt. 21. 19. *cf.* Neh. 9. 36, 37.
j ver. 34. ch. 6. 69.
k *cf.* ch. 12. 13. *cf.* ch. 19. 7, 8, 19.
l *cf.* Heb. 6. 5. *cf.* Lk. 22. 28, 29.
m Gen. 28. 12. *cf.* Hos. 2. 19–23. *cf.* Rev. 21. 23, 24.

SUBDIVISION 5. (Chap. ii. 1–12.)

The governmental order for the reception of the blessing.

AND the [n]third day there was a marriage in Cana of [o]Galilee; and the [p]mother of Jesus was there; and

n *cf.* ch. 1. 43. *cf.* Ezek. 37. 12. *cf.* Rom. 11. 15. *o cf.* Matt. 4. 15, 16 with Hos. 1. 9. *p* Lk. 1. 28; *cf.* Rom. 9. 5; Rev. 12. 1, 2.

*Some of the earliest MSS. and versions omit, with most editors.

Nathanael at once owns him, as the people will, and in the way in which (as we have seen in the other Gospels) He must be owned, to have blessing from Him: "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel." As Son of God, they rejected Him in the high priest's court; as King of Israel, before Pilate. Here plainly Nathanael shows himself as representing the faith of the nation in the day to come; and in that character the Lord answers him: "Because I said, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Henceforth ye shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." If the "henceforth" here is to be accepted, then it would seem even plainer that the Lord anticipates the time when the nation converted to God will make their own the confession of this new disciple. From that time heaven will indeed be opened to them, and they will see the angels its inhabitants attendant upon One who will be manifestly "Son of man." This will be indeed a marvelous and blessed thing to see; and the title "Son of man," we have seen constantly connected by the Lord with His appearing in the clouds of heaven, with the glory of the angels. Doubtless it was also the title He loved to take during His life-time upon earth, as bringing near to those among whom He was the grace of His incarnation; but the whole connection as we have traced it, and the full meaning of the words themselves, seem to forbid more than a partial reference of them to the time of His earth-sojourn. Israel on the other hand will in millennial days undoubtedly stand under the glory of the heavens opened; but thus still be in a position short of theirs who will go in where He abides, and abide with Him. The two companies, the heavenly and the earthly, are thus in marked contrast, yet in connection with one another; and we see the Lord in His place as the Centre of each. How suited, we may again say, that after His manifestation in the fulness of His grace, as the evangelist has shown Him, we should see the effect of this in the two circles of blessing which now we see around Him, and which are but the types of those who shall fill heaven and earth and eternity with their joy and praise.

SUBD. 5.

The next scene that is presented to us is also in connection with this; and here we have Galilee once more, the third day, and a marriage, to which Jesus and His disciples are invited guests. In connection with Israel these things are

Jesus also was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when the [q] wine failed, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. And Jesus saith unto

[q] *cf.* Lam.5. 15. *cf.* Is.24.7,8. *cf.* Am.8.10.

suggestive symbols; and while we would in no wise make light of the natural significance, it will surely not do this to show, as others have done before, how the spiritual significance shines through it and adds lustre to every feature. Indeed this is no exceptional character of the scriptures we are now considering. We have been constantly realizing it in the Gospel histories and in those of the Old Testament, as well as in the types and shadows of the law. When we come to the doctrinal epistles this character of the inspired Word is no longer found: for the plain reason that the spiritual is no longer under the veil of the natural, but is openly revealed. In the book of Revelation we find it, however, taken up again, and in a more pronounced way than in any other part; and here the natural significance is for the most part *only* a veil, the hiding in parabolic enigmas not only of prophetic announcements as to the earth, but of the glories of eternity itself and of those precious realities which we long to know in their full blessedness. Happy he, then, who has best learned this language, which from our Lord's use of it we may call His favored speech, the apocalyptic tongue of heaven.

But let us look at the natural aspect first; in which yet we must not think it strange that the spiritual should come in, since that which is truly natural according to God can never be divorced from the spiritual: the Word, as we have just heard, is the Creator, and creation is therefore but the expression in nature of the spiritual—of the divine mind. With the disappearance of the spiritual, the very basis of the natural would necessarily disappear.

Here in the Lord's first miracle, we do right to expect in some way an introduction to His work in general on and in behalf of nature. For this is the character of all beginnings in the word and work of God. They are really of the nature of introductions to all that follows and which is developed out of them, as the seed incloses and outlines the future plant. Thus it is that the book of Genesis, and above all, the first part of it, gives the germ and outline of all Scripture. Here in the miracle at the marriage feast we shall surely find a "sign" of this kind: it is called a sign—something which has significance after the divine order.

"A marriage" carries us back at once to Eden, and to the divine word whereby it was instituted. "It is not good for man to be alone." He is made for communion, as the gift of language shows—to communicate and to receive communication. And in this, too, he realizes not merely the need of the creature, but is in the likeness of his Creator. In the very preface to his creation, the words, "Let us make man," speak of communion.

Man truly is made to recognize in it the dependence of a creature, to whom independence would be every way unsuited and unwholesome. If not mere misery, the pride through which an angel became a devil would be fostered by it, and God's will is to "hide pride from man." His whole mode of existence here is but one interconnected series of dependencies in which marriage is a central point. And here love finds its opportunity and displays itself in the sweet ministries of life, which reflect so much of the character of God and of His ways who is Love.

Marriage is central, therefore, in the web of human life, the basis of all relationships as God has instituted them. And as *marriage* (not mere sexual union) it has at most its mere shadow in the temporary attachments of the creatures below man. Personal obligation, voluntarily assumed, and expressed in constant fidelity, distinguishes it by the height of a whole heaven from these partial reflections of it.

We can understand, therefore, the importance of the sanction which the Lord gives by His presence at this marriage feast; and even why He takes at it the place He does, as Maker of all. It is every way harmonious; while the need

her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine [r]hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, [s]Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. Now there were six waterpots of stone set there, after the Jews' manner of [t]purifying, containing two or three firkins* apiece. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with [u]water; and they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, [v]Draw out now, and bear unto the ruler of the feast: and they bare it. When the ruler of the feast tasted the water that had [w]become wine, and knew not whence it was (but the [x]servants who had drawn the water knew), the ruler of the feast calleth the bridegroom and saith unto him, Every man setteth on the good wine first; and when men have drunk freely, that which is inferior; thou hast kept the [y]good wine until now. This beginning of signs did Jesus in Cana

*Or, "measures."

r ch. 7. 6, 8. ch. 8. 20. *cf.* Is. 63. 4.
s *cf.* Lk. 2. 51.
t *cf.* Mk. 7. 3, 4. *cf.* Heb. 9. 9, 10.
u *cf.* ch. 3. 5 with Eph. 5. 26. *cf.* Ps. 51. 16, 17.
v *cf.* Mal. 3. 3, 4. *cf.* 2 Cor. 3. 16.
w *cf.* Ps. 4. 7. *cf.* Ps. 65. 3. *cf.* Is. 54. 1. *cf.* Zeph. 3. 17.
x *cf.* Matt. 14. 19. *cf.* Am. 3. 7.
y *cf.* Is. 65. 17–19. *cf.* Is. 54. 4.

and limitations brought us by the fall are recognized also and provided for. The wine runs out: the joys of earth pass and cannot be renewed; alas, the empty forms of purification, like the six empty water-pots of stone, provide no basis upon which the blessing can come. Only the servants who draw the water know how, when at his bidding the pots are filled with water, this is changed into the new wine which is alone really "good"; and in which we recognize the memorial of His own deep sorrow, yea, of the blood outpoured for the guilt of man. And here Cana, "purchase," comes to its true significance, as the secret of the return of blessing of which Galilee reminds us. But we shall see all the details of what is here more fully brought out as we take up this story in its connection with the series of pictures in which the glory of Christ is being continuously displayed.

In this, which is the full application, Galilee will speak specifically of the return of blessing to *Israel*, Cana still showing us how the blessing is regained; and the "marriage" in such connection will take us back to the language of the Old Testament prophets, who figure in this way Israel's relation to Jehovah in time past, broken by her sin, but to be restored again in a more perfect and glorious way (see Hos. ii.), in what will be the resurrection time of the nation, of which, no doubt, the "third day" mentioned speaks (Hos. vi. 2). Here are the elements of what is now before us. Beside this, the "mother of Jesus" is here: who can only figure Israel, of whom Christ came, as concerning the flesh (Rom. ix. 5). And the disciples of Jesus coming with Him to the marriage point to those associated with Him in nearer intimacy and a higher order of blessing than the Jewish bride herself.

But a marriage still for Israel, raised as a nation from the dead, brings up of necessity the thought of her broken vows and the long delay of blessing. The feast, which should have been for her continuous, has failed, the wine has run out. The mother of Jesus, the nation in the flesh, aware in some sense of her condition, appeals to Him vaguely, as we see in this Gospel; would take Him by force even, and make Him a King (ch. vi. 15), from which He can only withdraw Himself. This is the "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" of the chapter here; His "hour," indeed, "is not yet come."

Why? when the need is apparent, and confessed? Ah, the need of *wine* is; but there is another need, deeper, yea, fundamental, which they do not confess, nor realize. Those six empty water-pots of stone, set there for purifying, but incapable now, symbolize the condition of hollow formalism. *Six* is the number of labor without rest, though capable of assuming another significance; but how long has this been the suited expression of a people away from God; the practi-

of Galilee, and manifested his [z]glory; and his disciples believed on him. After this he went down to [a]Capernaum, he and his mother and his brethren and his disciples; and there he abode not many days.

[z] ch. 1. 14.
[a] *cf.* Matt. 4. 13 with Matt. 9. 1.

SUBDIVISION 6. (Chap. ii. 13-22.)

The purging out of evil.

AND the Jews' [b]passover was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And he [c]found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money-changers sitting. And, having made a scourge of small cords, he cast all out of the temple, both sheep and oxen, and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables, and said unto those who sold doves, Take these things hence: make not my Father's house a house of [d]merchandise. And his disciples re-

[b] *cf.* ch. 5. 1, ch. 6. 4, ch. 12. 1.
[c] *cf.* Matt. 21. 12, 13. *cf.* Mal. 3. 2, 3.
[d] *cf.* Is. 56. 7, *cf.* Matt. 23. 14.

cal comment upon His words, "Mine hour is not yet come"! In this interval time is not reckoned, and not as yet have we seen the end of it.

But the time comes at last, and He must work to secure the blessing which without Him will never come. Now He says to the servants, "Fill the waterpots with water"; and they fill them to the brim. The number now may be that of discipline, which we know in fact God will use to bring them under the power of His word, which is His means of purification. "The washing of water" is "by the Word" (Eph. v. 26).

Thus self-judgment is accomplished: the Word received, the basis of blessing is established for the soul: faith is come, and the object of faith will soon be clearly seen. The water changes into the wine of joy, which is identified, as we have seen before, with the remembrance of Christ's precious sacrifice. It is very much the story of any sinner saved by grace; and it will be Israel's in the day at hand. Then indeed will the wine be the best wine; better than the lips have ever before tasted. The words of the master of the feast point the contrast with the world's joys which spoil the taste and then deteriorate. With this there is no intoxication, no perversion of taste, no evil, but only good. It can be said, "Drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved"; and of Judah (the worshiper), "He has washed his garments in wine, and his vesture in the blood of grapes; his eyes shall be red with wine." The fear of intemperance here is never before the soul.

The numerical structure here emphasizes the governmental order for the reception of blessing, and shows the reason of the long delay of it in the case of Israel. The conditions are the reception of the Word in faith, with the self-judgment which is repentance. And thus Christ becomes the Saviour of the lost, the one Object, for the heart that has known Him so. Thus He takes His throne among men.

SUBD. 6.

There follows, at Jerusalem, upon the occasion of the "*Jews'* passover," as John characteristically calls it, a first purging of the temple by Him, which He repeats, as we have seen in other Gospels, after His presentation to them openly as their King. It is given as one of the features of millennial blessing by the prophet Zechariah, that "there shall be no more a Canaanite"—or "trafficker"—"in the house of the Lord of hosts" (xiv. 21). The profanation of that which, till he finally leaves it, He always calls His Father's house stirs within Him the zeal for it which, as the psalmist is cited here as saying, consumed Him. How much did that house, God's dwelling-place among men, mean for Him whose great work was to establish it! In His own Person God had come down, and in such a way as implied no mere temporary visitation. His Name Emmanuel had told that out. Wisdom's delights were with the sons of men; yet with iniquity

membered that it is [e]written, The zeal of thy house eateth me up. The Jews therefore answered and said unto him, What [f]sign showest thou to us, that thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, [g]Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. The Jews said therefore, [h]Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days? But *he* spake of the [i]temple of his body. When therefore he was risen from among the dead, his disciples [j]remembered that he had said this; and they [k]believed the scripture, and the word that Jesus had said.

[e] Ps. 69. 9. cf. Ps. 119. 139.
[f] Matt.12.38. ch. 6. 30. cf. 1 Cor. i. 22.
[g] cf. Matt. 26. 61. cf.Matt.12. 40.
[h] cf. 1 Ki. 6. 38. cf.Matt.2.3.
[i] cf. ch.1.14. 1 Cor. 6. 19.
[j] Lk. 24. 8. cf.ch. 12.16.
[k] cf.ch.20.9. cf.Ps.16.10.

He could not dwell. The precious blood shed for their sins could only make their persistence in them after this more hideous and more hateful. Thus the house must be purged in which God is to dwell; and the glory of God and the blessing of man required its purgation.

As Son of God, therefore, Christ casts out the defilement, taking openly a place of authority which none dare openly dispute. The shadow of future judgment falls upon them and scatters them. The Jews ask what sign He can show that the authority He claims belongs to Him. He answers them with a challenge to "destroy this temple and in three days He would raise it up"—referring to His death and resurrection: a parable which they could not interpret, and applied falsely to Herod's building, still unfinished; while even the disciples understood it only when it was fulfilled. The eyes of those held by externalism were not on Him; while as yet it held even those of true disciples. Thus the blow had to fall even upon the temple itself which left not even one stone upon another, and scattered its worshipers also far and wide over the earth; while the new temple of His humanity, glorified by the outbreaking of the glory that was within, becomes in heaven an open sanctuary, whence the divine Light shall irradiate the earth.

Div. 2.

The second division of the Gospel comprises the larger portion of the book. In it we have as the thread upon which its precious truths are strung, eternal life as communicated to men, with its accompaniments and implications for the possessor of it, when now it is known in its abundant blessedness (ch. x. 10).

It is divided into four parts: in the first of which the life and all that accompanies it are seen as individual blessings simply, as in new birth, and the living water springing up within the soul; in the second, they are seen in relation to the scene around, as quickening out of a world lying under judgment, and the living waters pouring out for the refreshment of others. The third part is of a larger character, and has three different portions: (1) the soul is brought to God and is at liberty,—has the freedom of the house of God; (2) it belongs to the Shepherd's flock, outside the fold, and follows Him who saves and leads it into His abundant pastures; (3) it has life in resurrection-power, death abolished for it, and the Son of God glorified thereby. The fourth part, in the Lord's last discourse with His disciples, gives the furnishing for the way through a world out of which He is gone, but as expecting His return to receive us to Himself.

The relation of these things to one another, with the unity and harmony of their presentation in the Gospel, can only be considered as we take them up in detail.

Subd. 1.

The first subdivision, then, speaks of eternal life and its accompaniments as individual blessing. This is naturally the first thing to be considered, before we look at the relationships into which we are brought by the reception of this divine gift. The beginning of all is new birth, which we have in the first section, made known to us by the Lord Himself in His words to Nicodemus. This

DIVISION 2. (Chaps. ii. 23–xvii.)

Eternal life as communicated and dependent.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chaps. ii. 23–iv.)

As individual blessing.

SECTION 1. (Chaps. ii. 23–iii. 21.)

The beginning in new birth.

1 (ii.23-iii. 8): In the sovereign power of God: spirit from the Spirit.

1. NOW when he was in Jerusalem at the passover at the feast, [k]many believed on his name, beholding the [l]signs that he was doing. But Jesus did not [m]trust himself unto them, because he [n]knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

k cf. ch. 4. 48.
l cf. ch. 6. 14, 36.
m cf. ch. 11. 45, 47.
n cf. Lk. 16. 30, 31.
n cf. ch. 6. 15.
n cf. Mk. 1. 43, 44.
o ch. 5. 42.
o cf. Matt. 9. 4.
o cf. ch. 6. 70.

is a field much traversed and by the feet of many combatants; nor must we shun a conflict upon the issue of which, as will be evident, so much depends. We are here at one of those beginnings from which such different roads open that much will depend for us upon our not missing the right way.

The second section gives us the Baptist's final testimony, both in work and word; in which, in utter despair of man, he puts us into the hand of the Heavenly Guide, to be led on where he as of the earth cannot conduct us.

Upon which the third section carries us on, in the Lord's words to the Samaritan woman, to realize what life is in the Spirit; and here a Gentile scene opens, and fields are seen white to the harvest, while Israel rejects Him whom the faith of the Samaritans recognizes as the "Saviour of the world."

The fourth section, however, as an appendix to this, reminds us by a sign again wrought in Israel—nay, in Cana, the scene of the first miracle—that God has not cast away His people of old, and shows how in their distress they will seek to Christ at last, and find His grace still ready to receive them. Here the first subdivision manifestly closes.

Sec. 1.

1. Before we look at new birth itself, we must realize man's need of it; and this is shown us in the most striking way,—not in the case of those who openly refuse Christ, but on the contrary in that of those who accredit His claim. The miracles he did at Jerusalem at the passover wrought, we are told, conviction in many minds. "They believed in His name": the words used in the first chapter as to those to whom He gave authority to become children of God: yet here no such result follows, but the reverse. "Jesus did not commit Himself to them: because He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man; for He knew what was in man."

It was a natural work then, this conviction: sincere enough, but merely intellectual; the result of a reasoning process, leading to a correct conclusion, but with no vital change in the men themselves. They were convinced; they were not converted. Their judgment was formed upon evidence strong enough, but not derived from any glory they had seen in Him. It is not said therefore of these, as of those in the first chapter, that they "received Him." Christ had not gained admittance at the door of their hearts. It was still the light shining in darkness: He had still no beauty that they should desire Him. They had no imperative need, that should demand Him. Alas, here was in reality the deepest and most fundamental need, which nothing that was in man, or of man therefore could meet at all. Death could not produce life; and with the Lord's knowledge of what is in man, He can trust nothing that is from him. This need can only be met from a Source outside of man: he to whom Jesus can trust Himself can only be a man new born.

But there was a man of the Pharisees named [p] Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: this man came to him by [q] night and said unto him, Rabbi, we [r] know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be [s] born anew, he cannot [t] see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How

p ch. 7. 48-52. ch. 19. 39, 40.
q *cf.* ch. 12. 42. *cf.* Lk. 9. 26.
r *cf.* ch. 5. 36. *cf.* ch. 9. 29-33. *cf.* ch. 12. 37-40.
s ch. 1. 13. *cf.* ver. 36.
t *cf.* 1 John 3. 2; *cf.* Matt. 5. 8.

This brings us to Nicodemus and the Lord's teaching as to new birth. The circumstances are to be noted under which he comes, with a caution which shows his apprehension of the danger for himself, and which shows therefore his earnestness in coming. His history afterwards, as the evangelist gives us the means of tracing it, confirms both these things as true of him. In the cleansing of the temple the first note had sounded of a conflict whose end (from any human point of view) it was not hard to foresee. The chiefs of the priesthood were implicated in that desecration of the house of God which the young prophet of Galilee had so denounced and broken in upon: a man who had risen up unsanctioned by the leaders of the people, of whom Nicodemus himself was one. Yet at such a juncture he risks reputation and abases his Pharisaic pride to come as an enquirer to the despised Nazarene.

He comes with the distinct acknowledgment that He is a teacher come from God; and that on the same warrant of the signs wrought by Him, which those before had grounded their faith upon,—a faith which He had discredited and set aside. But there was a hunger in the heart of Nicodemus which was not in theirs, and which brought him to the feet of Jesus; and none were ever rejected there. Yet the Lord meets him with an abruptness and peremptoriness which we do not expect from the grace which characterized Him. Putting side by side with this His manner with the Samaritan woman afterwards, it is striking to see the difference. To her was the assurance of God's readiness to give (if she but asked Him for it) living water; the token of a love she had not known nor sought to know. To him the conditions, strange and impracticable as we know they seemed, upon which alone one could see the Kingdom of God: a shut door, as it might seem, in the face of the real seeker; while she who sought not was to be wooed and won for Him. And this was, no doubt, one reason for the difference; and which makes for Nicodemus, instead of against him. Won he was: his heart drawn, and ready to receive the truth as made known to him, even to face the unwelcome, if it were but truth; and the Lord treats him accordingly.

But there is another side to it in the fact of the Pharisaism that yet cleaves to him, and which knows nothing of the lost condition of man as man. Yet to this he must be brought, stripped of every remnant of his own righteousness, and clothed even with the spotted robe of shame in which she at the well listened in wonder to hear of what God could be, even for her. Grace itself, with Nicodemus, must humble before it can exalt, must teach the worthlessness of man that all God's glory may shine out for him. The Pharisee must renounce his many years' laboriously built up claim on God, and go back behind infancy itself, to a nothingness which would be shelter to his dishonor if it were only that, there to lie down helpless at the mere pleasure of God to save or to destroy! "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God;" and who then by his own will was born at the first? So is man born again: "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

The Kingdom of God was that which the prophets had announced, and for which all Israel waited. We must not think of it in the form it has now taken, the King away, and its administration in the hands of men. We must think of it as established by power at the coming of the Lord, when for Israel a remnant alone will enter it, whose character Isaiah explicitly declares (chap. iv. 2–4).

can a man be born when he is *u* old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except one be born of *v* water and the *w* Spirit, he cannot *x* enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the

u cf. Jer. 13. 23.
v cf. Ezek. 36. 25-27. *cf.* Eph. 5. 26. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 23.

w cf. Tit. 3. 5; *cf.* Gen. 1. 2. *x cf.* Rev. 21. 27; *cf.* Rev. 22. 14, 15.

For "in that day shall the Branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem shall be called holy: even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem; when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughter of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning." Then follows the account of the glory of Jerusalem in millennial days.

It is certain therefore that, when Israel enters the Kingdom, every one will be born again that does so; and it should be clear that this is what a Jew like Nicodemus would expect, and had right to expect, if taught of the prophets. Of the Christian form of the Kingdom he could know nothing, and could be expected to know nothing; for it was not yet revealed. Nor could the Lord's words even apply to the present time, in which all the parables declare a mingled condition of things, tares and wheat together, wise and foolish virgins. On the other hand, *for us*, in the perfected form of it, it will, of course, apply in the fullest way; but of all this Nicodemus could as yet know nothing: so that the Lord's expression of wonder, "Art thou the teacher of Israel and knowest not these things?" forbids all *direct* reference in this way, and the passage in Ezekiel (xxxvi.) from which He takes the words that presently follow are a positive prediction of Israel's entering the Kingdom in this manner.

This, if true, has an important bearing upon the meaning of new birth which we shall presently consider. The principle of man's need of it for blessing at any time remains, of course, unaffected. Man is man, naturally the same all through his history; and "as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." God also remains the same, and the need of renewal, therefore, to be with Him.

Nicodemus is confounded at the thought of such a change as the Lord speaks of. It is not simply the application to Israel over which he stumbles, though this would be, of course, an additional mystery; but as to the thing in itself, how can it be possible? he asks: "How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" That is naturally impossible; but he has no explanation of it: what spiritual change can there be, so complete, so radical, so entirely beyond man to accomplish, as would be implied in a new *birth?*

The Lord reaffirms what he has said in the same solemn and emphatic manner; but now with explanations which go to the heart of the matter: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God." Then He states the need of it: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born anew."

In considering this it is natural to think first of the need, before we consider how God's grace has met it. It is evident that when the Lord is declaring the need of man's being born again, the words that declare it must have in view what man is as fallen. Thus, if with Müller and Weiss we interpreted "that which is born of the flesh is flesh" as meaning that "the corporeal birth produces only the corporeal sensuous part," one would suppose this to be as true if man had never fallen; that is, supposing that man naturally has nothing but this; and what follows would affirm, as in contrast with the sensuous part, that the spirit of man was a product of new birth; or else "that which is born of the Spirit" would refer to creation and not to new creation.

flesh is *y* flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is *z* spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born anew. The *a* wind bloweth where it listeth; and

y cf. Gen. 5. 3. *cf.* Rom. 8. 5-8. ch. 6. 63.
z cf. 1 John 3. 9; *cf.* Eph. 4. 22-24. *a cf* Ezek. 37. 9, 10; *cf.* Jas. 1. 18.

But we may confidently maintain, on the one hand that new birth *is* spoken of—that it is the Lord's subject here; and also that man every where has spirit, as well as soul and body,—that is, the sensuous part. Nay, spirit is in man the very seat of personality, as of all human knowledge (1 Cor. ii. 11), and that by which naturally men are the "offspring of God" (Acts xvii. 28), as the "Father of *spirits*" (Heb. xii. 9). New birth does not create a personality, or make a man out of a mere bestial creature.

If, then, "that which is born of the Spirit" speaks, as it certainly does, of the product of new birth, "that which is born of the flesh" covers all that man is naturally; and that he thus is only "flesh" is the effect of the fall. "Flesh" is not a new element of personality; it is strictly and evidently a degradation of it, a fallen condition. Spirit and soul are in men still, and yet these are but "flesh" after all: sunk into it, penetrated by it, so that in this way it has come to have a "mind," a "will," independent and away from God, "lusts" therefore (chap. i. 13; Rom. viii. 6, 7) of a heart unsatisfied. God and the unseen having ceased to be a reality for the soul, or at most having become a dread reality, the visible, the tangible, the sensible, possess and control it. Man is therefore flesh and only flesh.

In looking at the other side of what is here, the new birth of the Spirit, we have to remember what the trespass-offering teaches us, that God in restoring never *merely* restores. He does not reconstitute humanity as it was in Adam, but brings in Christ and makes Him the type of a new humanity, another order of manhood. This is according to a definite law of progress which runs through creation, and to which new creation conforms. According to this at each step in advance we find not the higher developing out of the lower: the plant out of the mineral, the animal out of the vegetable, man out of the animal; but a higher principle brought in and made by stooping to it to raise the lower. Thus life does not develop out of the inanimate, the crystal is not the budding of an organization, though it may be a prophecy of it. That life is only *from* life is admitted by men of science generally as far as observation and experiment can determine. Life then is a new principle which by union with it raises up the inorganic. In the animal again, the soul is not developed out of the life principle, but unites with and raises it up similarly to a higher level. In man spirit unites itself to soul. After the failure of man we may expect a new development after the same manner, by the union of a higher with a lower nature, and thus the formation of a "new man."

Of the "last Adam," however, we do not hear as yet, although we shall before the Gospel is concluded. At present we have only the new birth itself and its product a "spirit" nature. "Except one be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Water and Spirit combine to effect this wondrous transformation. What are these two that can thus unite for such a purpose? "Of all ancient writers," says Hooker, "there is not one to be named who ever expounded the text otherwise than as implying external baptism." Among moderns also this is by far the most common view; although some would take water as simply a symbol of purification. Those who make it baptism apply it mostly to Christian baptism, but some to John's and some to proselyte baptism. The "washing (or bath) of regeneration" (Tit. iii. 5) and the two baptisms of water and the Spirit are naturally taken to support this view. But the baptism of the Spirit is not in order to new birth, as the Lord's words after His resurrection clearly prove. He says to the disciples: "For John verily baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence" (Acts i. 5). But certainly it was

> thou hearest the voice thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

not at Pentecost, to which the Lord's words refer, that they were born again; and as certainly, therefore, *when* they were born again, they had not received this baptism. Thus, plausible as it may look at first, water and the Spirit cannot be united in this way.

But moreover Christian baptism was not as yet instituted, and the Lord could have expressed no astonishment at a Jewish teacher like Nicodemus being ignorant of such value attaching to it as would be thus expressed in the words we are considering. As for John's baptism, his own words are against any thought of this. His "I baptize with *water*" not only *contrasts* his baptism with that of the Spirit, but deprecates the very thought of water as capable of having so great significance.

As a symbol of purification we come nearer to the truth of it; but here the apostle helps us further with his statement that "Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water *by the Word*" (Eph. v. 25–26), and Peter adds that we are "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever. . . . And this is the word," he goes on, "which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Pet. i. 23–25). Thus it is by the word of the gospel, and not by the word that sanctifies baptismal water, as some have dreamed, that this wondrous change is effected. And if we have difficulty in understanding how the Spirit should unite with the water of baptism to accomplish a spiritual work for which water is plainly incompetent, it is on the other just as easy to see that the Spirit does unite with the Word for this purpose. "For our gospel came unto you," says the apostle to the Thessalonians, "not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance" (1 Thess. i. 5). Thus, by the Spirit and the Word, comes in new birth.

The apostle John under the figure of "*living* water" speaks of the Spirit in the believer (vii. 37–39). We can understand it clearly by this united action of the Spirit and the Word. If Christ by the Word purifies His church, the Spirit is necessary to make the Word effectual. As has been said by another, the Word without the Spirit is merely rationalism; the Spirit without the Word—the claim of that—would be fanaticism. Water is the Word; the Spirit with the Word the "living water." In the Lord's words to Nicodemus we have the bringing of the two together; and then, as "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," so "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. A fleshly nature is the product of the natural birth; a spiritual nature is the product of the new. It is only the Spirit that is spoken of here; but elsewhere we are reminded that "his seed"—the incorruptible seed, of which Peter speaks,—"abideth in" the one born again (1 John iii. 9); and James in another but similar figure speaks of the "*engrafted* word" (i. 21), by which, as the word of truth also, God has begotten us (ver. 18).

All this speaks but one language. We see that in the children of God there is implanted a nature in moral likeness to God,—in this sense, a divine nature. The full doctrine of it will develop as we go on: the co-existence of the flesh with it in the believer, the meaning of this, the hindrance resulting, the power over it, all this we shall have to look at elsewhere. So much is clear, that the believer is a true child of God as begotten of Him, and recipient of His nature: and this is what new birth implies.

The words "water" and "spirit" are, no doubt, from Ezekiel xxxvi. 25, 26, which describes the divine preparation of Israel for the Kingdom; but the Lord makes them stronger than the prophet, who does not use the expression "born again." "A new spirit" also is not the same as "spirit" from the Spirit. Yet the prophet's words should have made a teacher of Israel recognize the import of the Lord's words in relation to that change, so complete and so essen-

2 (iii. 9-18): Accompanying salvation through the Cross.

2. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou the teacher of Israel, and [b] knowest not these things? Verily, verily I say unto thee, [c] We speak that which we know, and bear witness of that which we have seen, and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you [d] earthly things and ye believe not, how will ye believe when I tell you of [e] heavenly things? And no one hath [f] ascended into heaven, but he who [g] came down from heaven, the Son of man who [h] is in heaven.

b *cf.* Ps. 51. 2, 5, 6, 10. ver. 7.
c ver. 32. *cf.* ch. 5. 31-38.
d ver. 5. *cf.* Is. 60. 21.
e *cf.* ch. 6. 53-58. *cf.* ch. 20. 17.
f *cf.* Prov. 30. 4. *cf.* ch. 1. 18.
g ch. 6. 38, 42, 58.
ch. 16. 28. h *cf.* 1 Ki. 8. 27; *cf.* Is. 57. 15.

tial, which the people must undergo in order to enter upon the long desired inheritance.

For us also the parabolic mode of speech employed should be no difficulty, constantly as He uses it to convey spiritual truth. The exercise needed for its apprehension He never seems to desire to avoid; for by it that apprehension is made more real, full and heartfelt. As spoken to a Jewish teacher, the words are perfectly natural; as his ignorance of their meaning shows his want of understanding of Israel's true condition and his own. Marvel it was indeed to her teachers that the people of God should need to be born again; but that need, so real and great, could only be met by the power of the unseen Spirit working in a way uncontrollable, as invisible to man, however plain the effects of it. It was the sovereign grace of God, therefore, which worked and must work, free as the wind, and if grace to Israel, could not be confined to Israel: we all have the same need, and are debtors to it alike.

2. But we have another need, and as imperative, which the Lord goes on to put beside the former. If men must be born again, the Son of man too must be lifted up that they may have eternal life. Death must minister to us as well as life: that which was against us must be put on our side; and then the full reality of His gift will be manifested,—not merely life, but eternal life.

Nicodemus can only express his bewilderment: "How can these things be?" he asks. The Lord asks in turn how he can be the teacher of Israel, and yet not know them. Then He affirms His own knowledge, from which He speaks, not with the uncertainty of their traditional teachers. Yet Israel received not His witness, even when He spoke of things upon earth, where what He said could in many ways be tested. New birth was a thing in this way sufficiently within their knowledge: for the work of the Spirit in men had a voice if they could hear it, and the prophets also had borne witness to it. Now if still they believed not, how would they believe if He spoke of heavenly things? of a sphere as to which they would have no witness but His own? For it was plain that there was no one—He is speaking of accessible witness only, as is manifest, not of Enoch or Elijah or the spirits of the dead—no one who had ascended up to heaven, to give any confirmation. His own witness must stand alone. He, the Son of man, had been in heaven; from heaven He had come down; still, by the mystery of His nature, the One who is in heaven. The divine-human Person comes out distinctly here, the One always in heaven, though a man on earth: of no created being could such a thing be said. And here at once comes in the witness of heavenly things; which, alas, Israel would reject, as we know they rejected Him who bore the witness, and of whom the witness was.

But that rejection itself was controlled of God to work out His purpose, and to this immediately therefore the Lord now goes on: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so also must the Son of man be lifted up, that every one who believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life." Here the Cross is spoken of in its full character, as it clearly would be where the divine purpose is in view as here. Men indeed might lift up the Son of man (chap. viii. 28); and man's sinful act could not work out the righteousness of

And as [i]Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be [j]lifted up, that every one who believeth on him should [not perish, but] * have eternal life. For God so [k]loved the [l]world that he [m]gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever [n]believeth on him should [o]not perish, but have [p]eternal

*Some omit.

i *cf.* Nu. 21. 4-9.
j ch. 8. 28. ch. 12. 32-34. *cf.* Gal. 3. 13.
k 1 Jno. 4. 9, 10. *cf.* Tit. 3. 4-7.
l *cf.* ch. 12. 46, 47. *cf.* Rom. 5.
6-8. *m cf.* Gen. 22. 2; *cf.* 1 Jno 4. 14; *cf.* Rom. 8. 32. *n* ver. 36; ch. 5. 24. *o cf.* ch. 10. 28. *ctr.* 2 Thess. 1. 9. *p* ch. 6. 47, 54; ch. 17. 3; *cf.* 1 Jno. 5. 11-13.

God; but that lifting up in the divine ordering was to be for us the token of wrath endured, of curse taken and removed: for "cursed is every one that hangeth upon a tree." (See Deut. *notes*, p. 585). This answers, according to the type which the Lord brings forward, to the lifting up of the serpent in the wilderness, which healed, by looking to it simply, the serpent's bite. And Christ being made a curse for us, by faith in Him the power of sin in us is overcome, the poison of the serpent is done away for us. "In the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin"—a sin-offering—He has put away sin for us in that which condemns it in us: we are justified, and set upon God's side as to it. The Cross is salvation for us in this double character, as penalty owned, and penalty removed; which in result turns our eyes away from ourselves to Him who is henceforth to fill them.

The penalty borne for the believer, there can be for him no perdition. The application of the brazen serpent here seems fully to confirm the reading "shall not perish," omitted though it be by some of the earliest MSS. The having eternal life goes beyond the simple removal of death, and beyond the type, while it gives us the connection with the Lord's theme with Nicodemus. For, if "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," the possession of the divine nature implies of necessity eternal life. That which is divine is that which is truly "eternal:" not simply unending when begun, but which had *no beginning*, and thus can have no end. The sacrificial work of Christ is here affirmed as the basis of this priceless gift to men, which in the moment of faith becomes assured to him who has this.

For this the Son of *man* must be lifted up: atonement must be made, and made by One in the nature of him who sinned; thus capable as man of taking the penalty upon man, and affirming the righteousness of God in it as bowing to it. Righteousness, the first necessity, is therefore met: the righteousness of God is put upon the side of the sinner who believes, as the apostle Paul will show us elsewhere. The ground of blessing is laid for all who will accept it.

But that is the human side; and God, if that be all, is the recipient only. His righteousness is declared, true; but that is not an adequate manifestation of Himself, and God is fully manifested in the gospel. Hence the Lord goes on to that most precious, most familiar statement of it in the Bible: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Here we are at the heart of the matter. We have not now the conditions emphasized upon which divine mercy can come to us, though still it remains true that such conditions there are and must be, if God abide faithful to His own nature, as He must. But here we have the moving cause of our salvation, the activity of that nature: "God loved," for "God is love." Then He loved whom? the Jew? the better class among men? those that love Him? No: but the "world," and not even "the world of the elect," as some would put it, but (as what follows should make plain) the world at large, the great world of His creatures, though now estranged from Him. Loved them, then, how much? how can we find measure for this love of His? Here is the measure of it: He "*so* loved the world that He gave His Only-begotten Son; that every one who believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Divine love has thus sought men with an earnestness and seriousness which

life. For God sent not his Son into the world to [q]judge the world; but that the world through him might be [r]saved. He that [s]believeth on him is not judged; he that believeth not is judged [t]already, [u]because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God.

3 (19-21): Manifestation by the light.

3. And this is the judgment, that the [v]light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light, [w]because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil [x]hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, that his [y]deeds may not be discovered;* but he that practiseth the truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be [z]manifested that they are wrought in God.

*Or, "reproved."

18. 7. *y cf.* ch. 7. 7; *cf.* Eph. 5. 11-13; *cf.* Heb. 4. 12, 13. *z cf.* 1 Jno. 1. 5-7; *cf.* 2 Cor. 1. 12; *cf.* Ps. 139. 23, 24.

q cf. Lk. 9. 56. *cf.* ch. 5. 45. ch. 12. 47.
r 1 Tim. 1. 15. Lk. 19. 10.
s ch. 6. 40. *cf.* Rom. 8. 1.
t ver. 36. *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 15, 16.
u ch. 8. 24. ch. 16. 8, 9.
v ch. 1. 4, 5, 9. ch. 8. 12. ch. 12. 35, 36, 46.
w cf. Rom. 13. 12, 13.
x cf. Prov. 15. 12. *cf.* 2 Chron.

can only be questioned by questioning the true dignity of Him who has come so far on God's part, to give us the assurance of it. And to Him all the ages witness, who is Himself above them all, the unique phenomenon in human history, of all God's miracles the crowning one.

But if God's love has come out in such a manner, the rejection of it is as fatal as the acceptance is fraught with blessing. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" "He that believeth not is judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the Only-begotten Son of God." But not for judgment, but for salvation, did God send His Son. That the Redeemer will in fact be the Judge of men (chap. v. 22, 23, 27) is something very different from this, nay, opposite to it.

3. But light is come into the world, and the light makes everything manifest. Here is the judgment, that men do not desire manifestation when their deeds are evil, but love the darkness which conceals them. By turning from the light, they show that they know where the light is—that it bears witness to the conscience, although they are not in it so as to get the good of it. The practiser of truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest as being wrought in God.

Here, for the present, Nicodemus and the Lord part. The Pharisee is yet hindered by his Pharisaism, and these parting words seem words for his conscience, governed as he is so much by the people among whom he is. His name bears the same equivocal stamp with his character as yet. It may be "victory of the people" or "one who conquers the people:" which it will be with him is yet in the balance. But in a darker night than the present he is to come forth at last as conqueror, not conquered. His soul will have passed out of the shadow, just when the light might seem to have failed it. For him, as for many, "it shall come to pass that at eventime it shall be light."*

Sec. 2.

We have now the final testimony of John to Christ, with the contrast, drawn by John himself, between them. He, though a "burning and a shining light," as the Lord declares, is earthy, and must pale before the orb of day. But there is no sorrow to him in this: the friend of the Bridegroom only "rejoices greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice," and his testimony at the close rings out in such a manner that many take the latter part of it to be that of the Evangelist rather than the Baptist. But this does not seem, at least, to be marked out for us in any decisive way, and our own thoughts as to what might or might not

*The similarity and the contrast between Nicodemus and Nicolaos, from whom come the Nicolaitans of Revelation (chap. ii.) is to be noted. The Nicolaitans are conquerors of the people (of *God*); Nicodemus, of the *populace*. God has a *laos*, but not a *demos*.

SECTION 2. (Chap. iii. 22-36.)

John's final testimony: the contrast between himself and Christ.

AFTER these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them and baptized. And [a]John also was baptizing in Ænon near to Salim, because there was much water there; and they came and were baptized. For John was not yet cast into [b]prison. There arose then a reasoning of the disciples of John with a Jew about [c]purifying. And they came to John and said unto him, Rabbi, he who was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, *he* baptizeth, and [d]all are coming to him. John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it hath been [e]given to him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said I am [f]not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the [g]bridegroom; but the [h]friend of the bridegroom, who standeth and heareth him, joys with rejoicing because of the bridegroom's voice. This

a Matt. 3. 5, 6.
b Matt. 14. 3-12.
c *cf.* Matt. 15. 1, 2, etc. *cf.* ch. 2. 6.
d ch. 4. 1-3. *cf.* Lk. 14. 25, 26.
e *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 5-7.
f ch. 1. 20-27.
g Matt. 9. 15. Matt. 22. 2. *cf.* Ps. 45. 1, 9, 14.
h *cf.* Matt. 11. 10, 11. *cf.* Song. 5. 1.

transcend the intelligence of one in his position do not seem a sufficient authorization.

We find at the beginning here Jesus with his disciples in the country of Judea, and baptizing,—although we are presently assured that personally the Lord did not baptize, but His disciples only (chap. iv. 2). We have nowhere else an account of such baptizing, which we naturally conclude to have been of a similar character to that of John, which is immediately mentioned. It is a confirming witness of the truth that John was proclaiming, as we may gather also from Mark (i. 15). Baptism is in the New Testament always to death; Christian baptism to Christ's death (Rom. vi. 3); and to take one's place in death is a profession of repentance. Death is the sentence from God under which man has come through sin, and thus those baptized by John confessed in it the sins which had brought them there (Matt. iii. 6). In such a position they awaited the forgiveness which He who was coming after John would bestow. Now He had come, and His own proper ministry began, as is clear, beyond John's baptism. Yet He could through His disciples confirm the truth of this, while taking care to keep His own place apart.

John also continued baptizing, keeping his place as forerunner, and was now in Ænon, "abounding in springs," *near to* Salim, or Shalem, "peace." The names are as significant in this case as in all other in the word of God. Question arose here, we are told, between John's disciples and a Jew, about purifying. Of the nature of this, and of how little answer there might be, we may judge from the Lord's words with Nicodemus; and the want of settlement of such a question would be likely to bring up the further one of the new Teacher who had appeared; and the disciples come to John thereupon, with the announcement that He to whom he had borne witness was now Himself baptizing, and men were flocking to Him.

John had, in fact, raised questions which he could not settle: we may say that it was of the very essence of his mission, that it should be so. Jesus alone was to satisfy the expectations that had been aroused by John; and in him the spirit of the past ages found embodiment, pointing on beyond themselves. John, therefore, takes occasion by all this that has arisen to speak once more and decisively of his own relationship to Christ.

A man can receive nothing, he says, except what has been given him from heaven. For one satisfied with the will of God there is abiding contentment: for, let things go as they may, God still rules all. How blessed to realize that

my joy then is fulfilled. *He* must [i]increase, but I must decrease. He who cometh from above is [j]above all: he that is of the earth is earthly and [k]speaketh [as] of the earth; he who cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath [l]seen and heard, this he testifieth, and no one [m]receiveth his testimony. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that [n]God is true. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God; for God* is not giving the Spirit by [o]measure. The Father [p]loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that [q]believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that is not subject† to the Son shall not see life, but the [r]wrath of God abideth upon him.

[i] *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 5–10. *cf.* Gal. 2. 20.
[j] *cf.* ch. 1. 31. *cf.* Matt. 3. 14. *cf.* Rom. 9. 5.
[k] *cf.* ver. 12. *cf.* Mk. 1. 4.
[l] ver. 11. *cf.* ch. 1. 18. *cf.* ch. 8. 38.
[m] ch. 1. 11, ch. 8. 45.
[n] *cf.* 1 Jno. 5. 9, 10. *cf.* Rom. 3. 4.
[o] *cf.* Col. 2. 9. *cf.* ch. 14. 8, 9. *cf.* Tit. 3. 5, 6.
[p] *cf.* ch. 5. 20–23. *cf.* Gen. 24. 36.
[q] vers. 15, 16; ch. 20. 31.
[r] ver. 18; 1 Jno. 5. 12; *cf.* Eph. 2. 3.

* Many read, "He," but the meaning is the same.
† Or, "believeth not." The thought seems to be *heart* subjection.

which keeps the heart at peace unfailingly—bids one be still and know than He is God.

He had said he was not the Christ, but His fore-runner; and in the crowds that were flocking to the new Teacher he but saw that the bride was for the Bridegroom, not for himself, who was but the Bridegroom's friend. Did they grieve for him? he joyed with rejoicing—joyed exceedingly, in the Bridegroom's voice; though it meant for himself necessarily decrease, with the increase of that Other.

Was He not necessarily supreme? He who had come from heaven, and bare witness thus of heavenly things with direct personal knowledge of them, such as none that were of the earth could have. Value Him at His worth, what were these crowds that were coming to Him? It seemed, in fact, as if none were receiving His testimony. But those who did so, found therein the truth of God as to all His promises and in all His ways: he could set to his seal that God is true. For God was giving, through Him whom He had sent, free utterance to His own heart. In contrast with the fragmentary communications of former times, He was not now giving His Spirit by measure. Nay, here was the Son Himself, the Beloved of the Father, with all things given by this love into His hand: His words, therefore, are the full heart of God made known.

Faith in Him is, then, the one necessity: he that believeth on Him has eternal life; but he that is not subject to the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides upon him. Eternal life or no life; eternal life or wrath abiding: these then are the alternatives.

Thus John sends his disciples to Jesus.

Sec. 3.

We have now to follow the Lord outside of Judea and even of Galilee, to find more receptive hearts in Samaria than in either of these, and His own heart freer than yet in Israel. A significant time it is, and all the more for its exceptional character, even in John's Gospel. Samaria, spite of the claim put forth to "our father Jacob," is really Gentile, though with a tinge of Israelitish blood which was worse than valueless, the fruit of mixed marriages forbidden and abhorred. The woman wonders that a Jew should ask but a drink of water from a Samaritan. Yet the spirit of the Lord, escaping from the oppressive self-righteousness of Jewish Pharisaism, finds room to expand in hostile Samaria; and here it is that He is fed with more than common food, and has before Him a view of whitening harvest-fields which we do not hear of elsewhere.

This connects clearly with the Lord's theme with the woman of Sychar, of living water springing up within the soul, which the evangelist, as we have seen, interprets elsewhere of the Spirit to be received in a new way after Jesus

SECTION 3. (Chap. iv. 1–42.)
Life in the Spirit.

1 (1-26): Abiding sufficiency in the soul.
1 (1-15): from God's gift.

1. [1] WHEN therefore the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing [s] more disciples than John, (though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) he left Judea and [t] departed again to Galilee. And he must [u] needs pass through Samaria. He cometh therefore to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near to the piece of land that [v] Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's spring was there. Jesus therefore, being [w] wearied with his journey, sat thus at the spring. It was about the sixth hour. There cometh a

s ch. 3. 22-26.
t ch. 1. 43. cf. Matt. 4. 12.
u cf. Matt. 15. 21, etc. cf. Lk. 19. 10.
v cf. Gen. 33. 19. cf. Gen. 48. 22. ver. 12.
w cf. Matt. 4. 2. cf. Matt. 8. 24. cf. Matt. 21. 18. cf. Heb. 4. 15.

should be glorified (chap. vii. 38, 39). Thus we are, in fact, on a line of truth characteristically Christian and Gentile; the Lord looking forward, as is plain, and speaking in the parabolic manner usual with Him in such connection; and yet so as to convey as much as could be conveyed of the blessing with which His heart overflows—of that *abundant* life which He is come to communicate (x. 10).

1. [1] The Lord Himself calls and prepares the messenger by whom He is going to reach the men of Sychar. Such a messenger He chooses! But it is not exceptional with Him to take up the beggar from the dunghill, so that, as we know, the publicans and sinners followed Him habitually. But here was one not following, but sought out,—a weary and jaded, not conscience-stricken sinner, whose wakening into life is a story which has wakened how many others! May God in His goodness tell it out once more, so that it may still be fresh in repetition, and some like her be attracted by it yet.

How suited that it is in His withdrawal for awhile from the self-righteous legalism of the Pharisees that the Lord comes into Samaria, to sow a new field with the Word of life! He withdraws even, as it would seem, from that baptism of disciples in which He has been rather accrediting John's testimony than giving voice to His own. John's voice was now hushed in prison, and his rejection had broken up that partial reestablishment of divine relationship with the people at large which the multitudes flocking around him might seem to have effected. It was gone, that dream of pious hearts in Israel: the shepherd was smitten and the sheep were scattered. And though the Chief Shepherd still remained, the open gathering was for the time given up, save of immediate followers needed for the maintenance and carrying on of the divine testimony, until it could be resumed on other ground.

With His back thus turned for the time upon Jerusalem, and His face turned toward Galilee, the place connected, typically at least, with Israel's restoration in the latter days, the two days' testimony in Samaria comes into its place morally, as a picture of the present interval of divine grace to the Gentiles. We shall find, in fact, when we come to the healing of the nobleman's son in Capernaum, that we have in this a real foreshadow of Israel's restoration when this interval is at an end. All is therefore in complete harmony.

We find, therefore, the Lord now at Sychar ("purchased") which took its name from the piece of land purchased by Jacob from the sons of Hamor, and given to Joseph, who was buried there. All that Jacob had purchased, therefore, (though he meant it otherwise,) and all that he could give to his best-loved son, was the place of a grave: a good place in which to speak of another gift and another purchase, free to all who desired and sought it, a spring of life instead of a place of death, and of which Jacob's spring could be at once the type, and (what all types must be) the instructive contrast also. To this spring, which as we learn directly was not free-flowing but shut up in a well, the Lord came, a wearied man, and sat Him down there.

woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith unto her, [x]Give me to drink. For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy provisions. The Samaritan woman therefore saith unto him, How dost thou, being a Jew, ask drink of me, who am a Samaritan woman? For the [y]Jews have no dealings with the [z]Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the [a]gift of God, and [b]who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee [c]living water. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: whence then hast thou the living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself, and his sons, and his cattle? Jesus answered and saith unto her, Every one who drinketh of this water shall [d]thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall thirst [e]no more for ever; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a [f]spring of water, springing up unto eternal life.

x *cf.* Gen. 24. 14. *cf.* Lk. 15. 5 with vers. 32-34.
y *cf.* Ezr. 4. 3, 10. *cf.* Neh. 9. 2.
z *cf.* 2 Kl. 17. 24-41. *cf.* ch. 8. 48. *cf.* Lk. 17. 15-17.
a *cf.* Rom. 6. 23.
b *cf.* vers. 25, 26, 42. *cf.* ch. 9. 35-38.
c *cf.* Jer. 2. 13. *cf.* Is. 44. 3. *cf.* ch. 6. 51, 63.
d *cf.* ch. 6. 35, 58. *cf.* Rom. 6. 21. *cf.* Eccl. 1. 8 with Eccl. 2. 1-11.
e *cf.* Deut. 33. 23; *cf.* Gal. 5. 1 6; *cf.* Eph. 3. 17-19.
f *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 13; *cf.* ch. 7. 37-39; *cf.* Eph. 1. 13, 14.

It was the sixth hour, under a noon-tide sun, and there a Samaritan woman came to draw water.

She too was weary, as her words presently indicate; alone, as He was alone, but only to make the essential contrast greater: she in the sin that isolates necessarily, shamefully, condemningly; He in the unique glory of His Person, of His quest, of His estrangement from the spirit of a world, in which were yet the objects that in love He sought. They were at opposite extremes,—in opposite paths,—and yet they met; not of her will or care, nor knew she what was before her; on His part, of the love which had in it its own necessity: "He *must needs* pass through Samaria."

Samaria had its name from the city which was its capital, "conservative," as it may be freely rendered, but in the interests of division. Alas, this went much further than they knew, and was but the expression of a deeper alienation, which could be healed only by Him who should cast Himself into the breach of human revolt from God, and bring back from it. "Give Me to drink" is here the first word of reconciliation, to the woman's wonder. "How dost Thou, being a Jew, ask drink of me, who am a woman of Samaria?" At once He brings before her God whom she knew not, and Himself in some way identified with the "gift of God" of which He speaks. *Had* she known, *she* would have taken the place of the needy one, which she truly was, and have sought of Him as having power and grace. He would not have refused her: *He* would have given her *living* water.

She does not understand, and His words are veiled as yet, for the water of such a springing well as that by which they were was in common phraseology "living" water. But this from Him in some mysterious way, with no visible means of drawing from that deep well, but as a "gift of God" telling out Him she had not known, in a way how different from her imaginings. The evident intention in all this, however much the terms may be discussed, is to make God in His love shine into her darkened soul, and to draw her by that love to Himself as the representative of God there for need on her part. Her wonder rises, and her eyes are fixed upon Him. She would learn from Himself, who is He? greater than her father Jacob, as it would seem, who himself depended with all his household upon this well alone! And still He draws her on, as He speaks now of the gift that He will give, not such water as she is thinking of, from the

2 (16-18): for sinners; the witness to the conscience.

[2] The woman saith unto him, Sir, [g] give me this water, that I thirst not, nor come hither to draw. Jesus saith unto her, Go, [h] call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus saith unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband; for thou hast had five husbands, and he whom now thou hast is not thy husband: this thou hast spoken truly.

g *cf.* ch. 6. 34. *cf.* Matt. 20. 22. *cf.* vers. 28, 29.

h *cf.* Ps. 50. 21. *cf.* ch. 2. 25. *cf.* Num. 32. 23.

well there: "Every one who drinketh of this water shall thirst again, but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall thirst no more for ever; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a spring of water springing up unto eternal life."

A marvelous advance, and a great miracle surely. Eternal life she knows in some sense. It is not a mere endless condition, but the life of the blessed. And this water, a perennial spring of refreshment within the man himself, springs up to eternal life! How her eyes would brighten and enlarge and fix themselves upon the wondrous Speaker! And yet she seems still to have grasped how little of that of which He is speaking: "Sir," she says, "give me this water, that I thirst not, *nor come hither to draw.*"

Dull she is, indeed; and little, we may think, has been gained so far. After all, she is thinking still of bodily thirst and of literal water. Yet instructive it is to see the Lord's way of dealing with such an one. The enigmatic language, —common indeed among the children of the East, yet evidently misunderstood, and left at last without such explanation as (it would be natural to say) a soul like this would require: it is plain that it is not so much the mind as it is the heart at which He is aiming; grace and truth are found in it all, and in this order: both together, and yet grace leading and characterizing; dealing with the heart even before the conscience, which is never indeed forgotten, yet never *attacked*. How different the manner in all this from that with Nicodemus, a man with so many things in his favor compared with the woman here, and yet with whom the appeal to the conscience is so earnest, so immediate, so seemingly abrupt. Yet after all, the underlying principle is the same, and the very thing which at first seems against Nicodemus is, in reality, in his favor. The woman had yet to be *drawn;* the teacher of Israel with all his Pharisaism and stiff prejudice, was yet already drawn: the latter could bear to have the conscience searched as the other at first could not.

Another thing, however, to be taken into account is just this Pharisaism of the one, while the other, though her conscience needed also to be wakened by the truth, had no false refuge under which to hide itself, and which had to be torn away. Here the advantage was on the side of the woman, the evil of whose life made it a simpler thing to turn away from it all than it was for Nicodemus with his pseudo-saintly one. Hence the one comes quickly into blessing; the other struggles and is held back.

But let us look now, apart from all question of the dealing with the woman's soul, at the truth which is brought before us here. The living water is interpreted for us in the seventh chapter as spoken of "the Spirit which they that believed on Him should receive: for the Holy Spirit was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified." We have, of course, no reason to interpret the same figure differently here from there: so that the living water speaks of the Holy Spirit as come down from heaven, the characteristic of the present or Church-period. The Lord therefore is anticipating a then future time, and hence, no doubt, we find a certain reserve as to the way in which it is spoken of, the veil being more lifted as the time of the fulfilment draws nearer. The figure combines what in the statement as to new birth we had separately, the water and the Spirit. The water as the Word is that through which the Spirit of God works, and the Spirit is thus the life of the Word. The figure of the "spring"

2 (19-26): manifestation and worship.

[3]The woman saith unto him, Sir, I [i]perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshiped in [j]this mountain, and *ye* say that at Jerusalem is the place where one must needs worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me that the hour cometh when ye shall [k]neither at this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father. Ye worship ye [l]know not what; we know what we worship: for [m]salvation is of the Jews. But

i cf. Lk. 7. 39. *cf.* ch. 9. 17. *cf.* ch. 8. 1-11.

j cf. Judg. 9. 7. *cfr.* Deut. 26. 2. *cf.* Ps. 78. 67-69.

k cf. Zeph. 2. 11.

cf. Mal. 1. 11. *l cf.* 2 Ki. 17. 28-41; *cf.* Acts 17. 23; *cf.* Gal. 4. 8. *m cf.* Ps. 147. 19, 20; *cf.* Rom. 3. 1, 2; *cf.* Rom. 9. 4, 5; *cf.* Acts 8. 14-17; *cf.* Is. 2. 3.

gives additional force to this, and especially with the addition "springing up." Power, freshness continually maintained, are in the spring; and the spring springs up—or "leaps," a strong expression—"unto eternal life."

What is the connection here between the spring—the Spirit of God in the believer—and the life? It is not surely merely an endless flow that is intended by the expression. Nor is it that the presence of the Spirit of God in the believer is needed for the commencement of life in the soul. Unhappily there is a lack of knowledge among Christians as to the true character of that gift of the Spirit which is characteristic of Christianity. We shall have it all fully brought out by the Lord Himself in His closing words to His disciples in the present Gospel. Here all this is anticipated, as already said, in these pregnant figures; and we must therefore anticipate what is there said, sufficiently to understand what is here before us. It should take little to convince us that the gift of the Spirit, that indwelling which the Lord promises His disciples there (chap. xiv. 17)—"He shall be in you,"—did not precede life in their case, nor bring it by this personal indwelling, but *followed* it. They were already in possession of life when the Lord promised this, and *of eternal* life, for there is no other spiritual life: it is eternal life or *no* life (see chap. vi. 53, 54). He declares also that it is eternal life to know the Father, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He had sent (xvii. 3), that He had manifested the Father's name to them, and they had received His words, and believed that the Father had sent Him (6, 8). Thus they had eternal life already, when this promise was given. It could not be for them the result of a gift which was to come afterwards.

The indwelling of the Spirit necessarily supposes a house in which He could dwell; and it is not until new birth that such a house is formed. Christ received by the soul must be the foundation of it; and where Christ is, the Spirit of Christ can be. He witnesses to Christ, and thus the living waters begin to rise up in the soul, which shall henceforth be its perpetual satisfaction.

But how then "*unto* eternal life"? The water (the Word) and the Spirit have united to produce the life already. The gushing spring of living water has the same elements. The *life* is in the water; the Spirit is in the Word; but now it is the Spirit *personally* present, the Divine Witness Himself in permanence. Here all figures must fail to express the fulness of the blessing, infinite as the glorious Person. But it is plain that if eternal life is the product of the Word through the Spirit in the soul, then the satisfying fulness now must be in result to produce the abundance of the life itself in practical experience and power: the spring leaps up unto eternal life. Here eternal life is an experience, an application of "life" which we are all accustomed to distinguish from "life" as vital power,—the *life we live* from the life *by* which we live. But this is *eternal* life; and, as another has said, "to be complete, it must pour itself into the objective eternity: the eternal rests not till it comes to eternity."

After all, as interpreted by experience, the promise may seem too large. "Shall thirst no more for ever": what an assurance this is! But how little oftentimes does it seem to justify itself in actual realization. Here comes in the sad reminder for us of how we with our unbelief limit the glorious largeness of the divine promises, and often seem bent upon making falsehood of eternal Truth. Christ speaks according to the fulness of the gift bestowed. As to our

the [n]hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father [o]seeketh such as his worshipers. God is a Spirit; and those that worship him [p]must worship him in spirit and in truth. The woman saith unto him, I know that [q]Messias cometh, who is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I who [r]speak to thee am he.

n *cf.* ch. 5. 25. *cf.* ch. 16. 25, 32.
o *cf.* Lk. 19. 10. *cf.* ch. 6. 44.
p *cf.* Acts 7. 48. *cf.* Heb. 10. 19-22. *cf.* Heb. 13. 10-16. *cf.* Phil. 3. 3.
q ch. 1. 41, 49; *cf.* Deut. 18. 15-19. r *cf.* ch. 9. 37; *cf.* Matt. 16. 15-17.

enjoyment of it, it is always conditional upon the way in which faith entertains it. We are not to "grieve the Holy Spirit of God whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption." But Christ is not going to draw in, in His picture of the Christian, things which are only blots and disfigurements. Alas for the unchristianity of Christians! but the shame of it is all our own. Eternal life is in us derived and dependent, needing the constant ministry of divine grace to maintain it in its manifestation in us, to develop and perfect it according to God. The full perfection of it is set before us to provoke our longing after it, and the boldness of faith to claim it from God. We are not to expect that it will be realized without the activity of faith and the diligent use of what God has given us as means to its attainment.

[2] Let us go back now to the woman. Attracted, wondering, faith in this mysterious Speaker beginning to awaken in her soul, she asks for this gift, pledged to her for the asking. "Sir," she says, "give me this water, that I thirst not, nor come hither to draw." She asks, but indeed knows not the gift of God, nor who it is that says to her, "Give Me to drink." But divine grace that is at work with her will not leave her thus, nor despise the day of small things which is nevertheless that work begun. Her heart is touched, desire awakened, her soul turning towards God; now she must have her conscience reached, that she may realize what her need is and find the satisfaction of it. But with what a gentle hand does He touch the sore that He is going to heal! the worse the sore the more gentle must be the handling. As if He would have her but bring another to share the gift for which she has asked, He says, "Go call thy husband and come hither." At once her life is bare before her. She shrinks and would cover it: "I have no husband." True, He says: I know it: "thou hast well said, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly."

So it is out. Put into few brief words, no lingering upon it, no upbraiding with it, there it yet lies before her in the light, never to be covered up again. He knows it, has known it, knew it when approaching her at first He had told her of God as she had never known Him. Now it is out, it seems like a confession He has made for her who had not courage to make it for herself. Said plainly indeed, yet not severely, but gently, pitifully, the words are like a pleading for her, a revelation of Himself. Is she not glad to be with Him upon these terms? nothing kept back, as indeed nothing could be kept back, from Him?

[3] "Sir," she says, "I perceive that Thou art a prophet:" that is her seal set to the truth of His words; and then, with that desire which He has awakened, to be (as even she, it seems, may be,) with God—therefore to be right with God, to approach Him in His own way, she puts the question of questions for a Samaritan: "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain; and *ye* say that Jerusalem is the place where one must needs worship."

It surely is not a putting off from her the first question of her sins. Had He not, with full knowledge of them, yet encouraged her to seek from God that gift of His, which she could see better now that He as the representative of God could offer to her? And in drawing near to God was there not a provision for sin, of His own establishment? Little she knew about the meaning of that yet. Little, as yet, did His own disciples know, even though the Baptist had pointed

2 (27-42): The work widens; two days of testimony.

2. And upon this [s]came his disciples, and wondered that he was speaking with *a woman; yet no one said, What seekest thou? or, Why speakest thou with her? The woman then [t]left her water-pot and went away into the city, and saith unto the men, Come, see a man who [u]told me all things that I ever did: is not this the Christ? They went out of the city [therefore],† and came to him.

s ver. 8.

t *cf.* Lk. 5. 11, 27, 28. *cf.* Phil. 3. 7.

u *cf.* Ps. 50. 21. *cf.* ch. 3. 19, 20.

* Or "the." The absence of the article does not necessarily make the noun indefinite.

† Many omit.

to the "Lamb of God." Was there not, however, in her heart something beginning which could make her better understand about that spring within the heart, of living water? And here was One who could resolve her doubts, and give her questions a divine answer! He does; but in a way how different from her expectations, when He sets aside *both* Gerizim and Jerusalem! To her the poor Samaritan, He makes known what those in closest companionship with Himself were as yet not prepared for. Yet He does not leave the question of Samaritan worship unsettled either; rather it assumes a more serious character: but first He tells her of the transcendent hour at hand which should abolish all outside worship and let men into the sanctuary of God, as children to worship the Father. What a revelation to this woman of shameful life, to whom just a moment before that life had been shown out without a remnant of a veil to hide it! Yet who among the mere children of men was better fitted than she, upon any title in himself, to draw near? And, if God were showing grace, to whom rather than to such as she would that grace manifest itself in more glory?

And now it was the Father seeking worshipers. Could it be kept back, the spring of happiness which in her also was beginning to well up, interpreting that former perplexing figure, and already seeking outflow? True, she had worshiped she knew not what; coldly, indifferently, or with spasms of dread in the gloom of the supernatural. And all the while in Israel, though even there the mass might know it as little as she, was the river of *salvation*. "Salvation" was "of the Jews": a stream which as yet indeed ran low and narrow between its banks, which the lowly and the thirsty alone knew of, but which was *there*: soon to burst forth in copious refreshment; salvation, by which men came to know God! And the hour was coming, *and now was*,—how that announcement must have woke the echoes in her heart!—when the *true* worshipers (not righteous, not self-approved, yet *true*)—when the true worshipers should worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father was seeking such to worship Him in the only way in which God, as a Spirit, could be acceptably worshiped.

Yes, she knew it, or, at least, approved it as He spake it, but too wonderful it seemed; the rush of many thoughts too great. Then as she yet believed not for joy and wondered, the cry arose in her heart for the full Interpreter of all, Messias! was He at hand? Then indeed would all perplexity be ended, all anxiety at rest: "when He is come," she says, "He will tell us all things."

And He who saw divinely all her heart, as He had seen her life,—seen the craving of her heart, seeking the good that came not, saw His work was done. For her there was but one satisfying good remaining: One for whom now the joy that had arisen in her soul waited as its justification, whom the expected longing of her heart forewitnessed as at hand: Messias, the Christ. There was but one thing more to do: and with His own heart full (as presently He bears witness that it is) yet with the quiet of that supreme contentment in His words, He completes her blessedness:—

"I that speak to thee am HE."

Thus is the living water reached for her, if not yet the Spirit of God had come

In the meanwhile his disciples asked him, saying, Rabbi, eat. But he said unto them, I have [v]food to eat that ye know not. His disciples therefore said to one another, Hath any one brought him to eat? Jesus saith unto them, [w]My food is that I should do the will of him who sent me, and finish his work. Say ye not that there are yet four months and the harvest cometh? Behold, I say to you, Lift up your eyes, and look upon the fields; for they are [x]white already unto the harvest. He that reapeth receiveth [y]wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal, that he that soweth and he that reapeth may [z]rejoice together. For in this is the saying true, [a]One soweth and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that on which ye have not labored: [b]others have labored, and ye have entered into their labors.

And [c]many of the Samaritans out of that city believed on him on account of the word of the woman who testified, He told me all things that I ever did. When therefore the Samaritans came to him, they [d]asked him to abide with them, and he abode there two days. And more a great deal believed on account of his word. And they said unto the woman, No longer do we believe on account of [e]thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the [f]Saviour of the world.

v *cf.* Matt. 16. 6–12.
w ch. 6. 38–40. Ch. 17. 4. *cf.* Lk. 2. 49.
x *cf.* Matt. 9. 36–38. *cf.* 1 Cor. 16. 8, 9. *cf.* Acts 18. 9–11.
y *cf.* Ps. 126. 6. *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 19, 20. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8.
z *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 6–9. *cf.* Am. 9. 13.
a *cf.* Acts 18. 27. *cf.* Col. 2. 1, 2.
b *cf.* Matt. 11. 13. *cf.* Heb. 1. 1, 2.
c ver. 42. *cf.* Mk. 5. 19.
d *ctr.* Mk. 5. 17.
e *cf.* 1 Ki. 10. 6, 7.
f 1 Jno. 4. 14. *cf.* ch. 3. 16, 17.

to be the indwelling Spring of it within her. Doctrinally, the connection of the whole is plain; as indeed the Lord's words carry us on to the day of an opened sanctuary and of Christian worship. Without this the fulness of life in the Spirit could not be expressed, the living water could not spring up. We see clearly also how anticipative, how Christian, in the truth contained in it, the Gospel of John is. We shall notice this more and more as we go on in it.

2. The stream of blessing widens: the woman becomes the messenger of Christ, to tell out in the city the blessedness she has received. The Man who had told her all things that she ever did is One to whom she can freely invite others. She has left her water-pot behind to carry the news of living water; and her tale procures many listeners who come out of the city to find the One who has lighted up with His love this heart so dark.

Meanwhile His disciples have come back from the city, where they had gone to buy provisions, and find Him refreshed and independent of the food. In answer to their astonishment, He tells them that His food is to do the will of Him that sent Him and to finish His work. And then He speaks to them of fields that He sees already ripening to a spiritual harvest, and of the common joy of sower and of reaper. In fact, they were to enter into the labors of previous generations, of the prophets who had prepared the way for them, Himself above all the unwearied Worker for the salvation of men. Israel might reject Him, and His labor seem vain in this respect, but here, outside of Israel, He sees the incoming of the Gentiles, while the tardy fields of Judea yet showed no sign.

Of this the Samaritans here are now the first-fruits, and there follow two days of fruitful testimony, in which at their solicitation He abides with them; many believing through the woman's witness to Him, and yet more through His own word; while their faith owns Him as the Saviour, not of Israel only, but of the world. All this shows plainly what is foreshadowed here.

SECTION 4. (Chap. iv. 43-54):
Israel's need bared and met with mercy.

Now after the two days he departed thence to Galilee. For Jesus himself bare witness that a [g]prophet hath no honor in his own country. When therefore he came into Galilee the Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for [h]they also went to the feast. He came therefore again to Cana of Galilee, where he had made the [i]water wine. And there was a certain *courtier whose [j]son was sick at Capernaum. This man, having heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, went to him and asked him that he would come down and heal his son: for he was at the [k]point of death. Jesus therefore said unto him, Except ye see [l]signs and wonders ye will not believe. The courtier saith unto him, †Sir, come down, ere my child die. Jesus saith unto him, [m]Go, thy son liveth. The man [n]believed the word that Jesus said unto him, and went his way. But already, while he was going down, his servants met him, saying that his son lived. He inquired of them therefore the hour at which he began to amend. They said therefore unto him, Yesterday, at the seventh hour the fever left him. Then the father [o]knew that it was at that hour at which Jesus said to him, Thy son liveth; and himself [p]believed, and his whole house. This [q]second sign again did Jesus when he came out of Judea into Galilee.

g Matt. 13. 57.
h ch. 2. 23. cf. ch. 7. 1-9.
i ch. 2. 1-11.
j cf. Lk. 8. 41, 42. cf. Lk. 9. 38. cf. Jer. 31. 15-17.
k cf. Ps. 44. 22.
l cf. ch. 2. 18. cf. Matt. 12. 38-42. cf. ch. 20. 29.
m cf. Matt. 15. 28. cf. Matt. 8. 13.
n cf. ver. 53.
o cfr. ch. 9. 18, 24.
p cf. ch. 11. 45.
q ch. 2. 11.

*Literally, "king's officer." Probably attached to Herod's court.
†Or "Lord."

Sec. 4.

But John, while he shows us characteristically a Christ outside of Judaism, and the precious truths which are now enjoyed in Christianity, always reminds us that God has not given up His purposes as to Israel, which are delayed but not forfeited by their unbelief. We have seen this in the first division of the book, in the miracle at Cana, where the delay of blessing in their case is accounted for, but as soon as the empty forms of purification are made real (the water fills the water-pots), then the wine, the good wine, is found in them. Now the Lord is found at Cana again, having left the white fields of Samaria for Galilee, and another miracle is wrought, though the subject of it is at Capernaum, not Cana. Judea has rejected Him, but Galilee seems ready to receive Him, and now in the courtier who comes to Him at Cana we find a plain picture of Israel, courtier of the world as she has long been. His condition, as the Lord characterizes it, is just what hers has been: "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." But he is in need: his son at the point of death in Capernaum, the city of lost opportunities, to be brought down to hades for its rejection of Christ; death facing him, he turns to Christ as his only hope, and finds the gracious answer of peace and deliverance: "Go, thy son liveth." He believes, departs, and finds it as the Lord has said to him. His son is raised up, and his whole house is brought to faith with him.

It is a simple story; and thus will Israel in her extremity be brought to God. Capernaum will come to Cana, the "village of consolation" be restored to its name upon the ground of "purchase," Christ manifesting forth His glory. And the time is not far distant now.

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chaps. v.–viii. 1.)

Eternal Life as separating from a World under Death.

SECTION 1. (Chap. v.)

Quickening by the sovereign grace of Christ; righteousness attaching to it.

1 (1-9): The power of Christ when grace itself (in connection with law) is barren.

1. AFTER these things was a [r]feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the [s]sheep-[place]* a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porches. In these, lay a [t]multitude of the sick, blind, lame, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down, at a certain season, in the pool, and troubled the water. [u]Whoever then first stepped in after the troubling of the water, was made whole of whatever disease he had.† Now a certain man was there who had been in his infirmity [v]thirty and eight years.

r *cf.* ch. 6. 4.

s Neh. 3. 1, 32. *cf.* Is. 53. 7.

t *cf.* Mk. 1. 32, 33.

u *cf.* Ezek. 18. 20-23. *cf.* Is. 55. 7. *cfr.* Rom. 5. 6.

v *cf.* Deut. 28. 59. *cf.* ch. 9. 1.

* Or "gate."

† The most ancient MSS. generally omit from "waiting" to "had." But the Alexandrian retains it, with the Vulgate. And the narrative needs it for its complete intelligibility.

This rounds off to a complete end, as is evident, the first subdivision of this central portion of the book.

SUBD. 2.

The second subdivision continues the subject of the first, eternal life as communicated to men, and dependent, a life of faith and communion; but this is now looked at as distinguishing and separating from the world, from its character and portion. As in the last subdivision also, the Spirit of God is seen as giving the life its power and fulness, and even under the same image as before, the living water; but it is now not simply rising up within and refreshing the one in whom it is, but overflowing to others also, "*rivers* of living water." This is naturally a third section; the first shows the life as quickening by the voice of the Son of God, who is at the same time the Judge of men; and the quickening is thus an acquittal by the Judge, a sentence of righteousness. The second shows us the life of faith with its sustenance, and communion resulting. The three sections together form evidently once more a complete whole.

Sec. 1.

The first section has been already briefly characterized. We find in it, more clearly than in what has preceded, an incident taken from one of the Lord's abundant miracles, and made an object lesson from which the teaching following it is drawn. Yet the truth given goes beyond the illustrative object, as is necessarily the case in one way or other with all typical or parabolic teaching: a thing which needs to be at once fully realized, and guarded from the abuse which has been often made of it. We shall have help given as to this in all this part of John.

1. The impotent man as healed by Christ is the object lesson of this chapter. The background of this is the story of Bethesda with its own impotence to heal such a case as his, spite of the angelic intervention, which made the pool a "house of mercy," but with conditions with which the man here before us could not comply. The nature of the disease forbade his availing himself of the proffered remedy.

A "feast of the Jews" brings up the Lord again to Jerusalem. We are not even told what feast it was, and the language seems plainly to tell us why, sufficiently striking as it is, even in John's Gospel, where alone it is found. A "feast of the *Jews*," as such, we are outside of here, even though it was the occasion of the Lord's visit; which, indeed, as all this Jerusalem ministry, only

When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been already a long time [thus], he saith unto him, [w] Wilt thou be made whole? The infirm man answered him, Sir, I have [z] no man, when the water is troubled, to

w cf. ver. 40. *cf.* Lk. 15. 28.
x cf. Lk. 10. 31, 32. *cf.* Is. 63. 5.

served to expose the hollowness of what was going on there, and along with this the powerlessness of the law itself as a remedy for man's condition. This last is surely the main point here: it brings us at once to what Bethesda shows us,—a truth which sets aside all help in the old covenant, and shuts one up to the grace of God alone.

Bethesda immediately comes into view with its porches filled with the sick, who are waiting for the visitation of that miraculous power which at a certain season troubled the water. Then for the moment there is healing virtue for the one who can first step in: there is the condition, the only one; whatever the virulence of the disease, it may be cured, if only one can get into the pool; but for impotence there is no healing possible.

In the midst of this multitude our eyes are fixed upon one man who lies there vainly seeking help. For thirty and eight years the disease that has fastened upon him has rendered him helpless; and there he lies in the presence of a remedy which for him is none. Others may be healed, not he. He is not able to step into the pool; he has none to put him in. The desperateness of this condition engages the heart and hand of Jesus on his behalf; he is not put into the pool; but he hears the omnipotent word which heals him, and in a moment rises up, takes up the bed he lies upon and walks.

As all these miracles are types of spiritual healing, we cannot be wrong in interpreting this of such. Moreover, the connection in this case between sin and helplessness is plain from our Lord's words to this man afterwards (ver. 14). It is a general truth which the Lord affirms that "he that committeth sin is the bond-servant of sin" (ch. viii. 34, R. V.); and none can break this bondage but the Redeemer of men. All modes of healing man's disease, short of the power and grace of Christ Himself, do but by their failure make its obduracy more manifest, and the need of Christ. And for this the law was given—not of God's choice, but of man's choice—to demonstrate against his unbelief man's utter helplessness. For all modes of man's devising are but law in principle, and men can imagine no other: it must be man's work or God's grace. Of the impossibility of its being the former Bethesda speaks to us.

The law, indeed, as given the first time,—pure law and nothing else,—had nothing remedial in its nature, and as under it Israel stood not at all, so none could expect to stand. The first tables of the covenant were broken at the foot of the mount by the hand of him who had just brought them down, and nothing remained of it but penalty.

But this was not the sufficient trial of man, for the very reason that in it as yet there was nothing remedial. We recognize without much difficulty that we are sinners, and that God must show mercy, while yet we cannot give up the legal principle. We need forgiveness,—need help,—need abatement of the severity of pure law: that is readily owned; but to give up all possibility—all need, therefore—of human work, man's pride and conscience unite in an earnest struggle against such a complete setting aside of responsibility, as he imagines it,—such an acknowledgment of complete failure in responsibility as it really means. Thus arise the various schemes of amalgamation of law and grace with which the religious systems of men abound; all of which the second giving of the law anticipated and has set aside, while it has shown how alone such a scheme could satisfy the requirements of the divine character.

The standard of responsibility never can be lowered, whether actually or virtually. The same tables of the covenant that had been broken are restored. The mercy of God may blot out the past, and allow a new beginning, but never an alteration of the terms (if they are to be legal terms) of final acceptance.

2 (9-18): The ruin for sinful men which would result from law being maintained with them; and the opposition of the men of law.

put me into the pool; but while I am coming, another goeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, [y]Rise, take up thy bed and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked.

2. And on the same day was the [z]sabbath. The [a]Jews therefore said unto him that was healed, It is the sabbath; it is not lawful for thee to take up thy bed. But he answered them, He that [b]made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walk. They asked

y Matt. 9. 6, 7. *cf.* Acts 14. 8-10. *cf.* Rom. 4. 19, 23-25.

z ch. 9. 14. *cf.* Lk. 6. 6-10.

a *cf.* Matt. 12. 2, etc.

b *cf.* Mk. 2. 28.

Thus with the declaration made this second time, that God is "gracious and merciful, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin," it is no less positively maintained that He "can *by no means* clear the guilty." "When the wicked man turneth from his wickedness, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive"; but it must be "that which is lawful and right,"—nothing less. But that is the very thing which is so hopeless.

If God can accept less, how much less? where can one stop? with the best that one can do? A careless soul may treat that carelessly; but who ever *has* done really the best one could? Will He take less still? These thoughts are only inventions of the enemy, and of which the word of God knows nothing. But then the whole scheme breaks down at that very point.

This Bethesda witnesses: at the place of sheep, whether gate or pool (the doubt about what it is may be itself significant), the "house of mercy" rears its five pillars, clinging still to the number of responsibility, with no help for the impotent such as is this man, for thirty-eight years afflicted for his sin, as Israel for theirs wandered in the wilderness an equal time, until "that evil generation" had perished from among them. No thought could there have been of help in the pool at all, if that heavenly influence had not *troubled* the water. But for him it is still in vain—vain as the troubling of law by grace, which in a legal system is always that, two contradictory principles being at work in it. From the typical point of view, however, the case of the impotent man is no exception; yet how many as with him think of it as such, are "coming," but always ineffectually, and looking for help, whether from man or God, to get into the pool.

How new an experience comes with the voice of Jesus. "Wilt thou be made whole?" Yet he begins to talk about the pool. Why not? Must it not be of God, when the angel comes down into it? And the law: is it not of God? was it not "given by the disposition of angels"? And we would even have Christ but a servant of Moses, a means of enabling us to keep the law; or One giving virtue to sacramental ordinances, always with man's aid in some way to perfect them. But Jesus passes by the pool altogether, making whole at once by His word. The thirty-eight years of impotence are ended in a moment: the man rises and walks.

2. Conflict begins on the part of the fleshly religionists who know neither their own need nor the grace of God. We have seen the image of law in the pool, and the grace and power of Christ manifested in contrast with it. We shall find in what follows how fully in accordance with this is the truth that is now to come before us. The healed man in obedience to the Lord's word takes up his bed; and that day was the Sabbath. The Jews naturally object that he is violating the law; and his answer throws the entire responsibility for this upon the One who healed him. He knows not even who He is, He has got lost from him among the throng: so that the miracle itself seems to have had no right effect upon him; and this is confirmed by what shortly follows, when the Lord, finding him in the temple, warns him not to bring on himself again by sin a judgment which would increase in severity. The result is that he goes and tells the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him whole.

Thereupon the anger of the Jews flames out against Jesus because He has done

him, therefore, Who is the man who said unto thee, Take up thy bed and walk? But he that had been healed knew not who it was; for Jesus had [c]withdrawn himself, a multitude being in that place. After these things Jesus findeth him in the temple and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: [d]sin no more, lest some [e]worse thing befall thee. The man departed and [f]told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him whole. And on this account the Jews [g]persecuted Jesus [and sought to slay him,]* because he had done these things on the sabbath. But Jesus answered them, My Father is [h]working until now, and I work. Therefore the more did the Jews seek to kill him, because he had not only broken the sabbath, but also said that God was his own Father, [i]making himself equal with God.

3. [j]Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do [k]nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do. For whatsoever

* Many omit.

[c] ch. 8. 59. Ch. 10. 39.

[d] cf. ch. 8. 11.

[e] cf. Matt. 12. 45. cf. Prov. 29. 1. ctr. ch. 9. 35-38.

[f] cf. 1 Sa. 22. 7-10.

[g] ch. 7. 19-24.

[h] ctr. Gen. 2. 2, 3. cf. Is. 43. 24.

[i] cf. ch. 10. 33. cf. Phil. 2. 6. cf. ch. 14. 9.

[j] ver. 30. cf. ch. 10. 17, 18. cf. ch. 16. 13.

3 (19-29): The revelation.

[k] (19-23): His unity with the Father in work and will.

these things on the Sabbath. It was for them the sign of that covenant to which they held, and which they did not discern had gone so fatally against them. The Lord in answer takes the highest ground here. True, He works on and knows no rest in His labor of love. He was in communion with His Father, who worked on and knew none. How could He rest—how could they wish God to have His rest, with men in the misery into which sin had brought them? Had *they* given Him His rest, of whom He had complained that they had made Him to serve with their sins, and wearied Him with their iniquities? (Isa. xliii. 24.) But then where were they with reference to this covenant of law of which the Sabbaths were the sign, and which had gone so terribly against them?

It was indeed the highest ground that He could take, Himself *not* with the people in their sin and failure, universal as it was, nor under its penalty, but working in the pity of His Father towards them in those divine works which manifested Him as all that He claimed to be. What could they give as answer? Nothing but, alas, the vindictive animosity of their pride so humbled, sin so unanswerably charged against them! Yet how had He charged? Nay, it was not He, whose *works* of mercy besought them rather to take shelter under the wings that brooded over them. They flung from them the appeal. Of Him, the Son of the Father, in their midst, they will not permit themselves to face the possibility, and as the only alternative must persecute Him to the death for claiming it.

3. They are in fact forced to a decision; and He will not leave them, therefore, without the distinct revelation of the glory that is His. This follows consequently immediately, with an overwhelming argument against their unbelief. The effect seems to have been for the time the silencing of His accusers, although their enmity is not removed, and we find it at His next visit to Jerusalem bursting out in a more determined effort to get Him into their hands.

[j] They might have misunderstood Him as to His unique claim to have God for His Father; although no Israelite would have ventured to speak of God after that manner. That God was a Father to Israel meant something very different, as they rightly conceived, though faith might have found in it an encouragement to draw nearer to Him than in fact there was ability for. But the Lord leaves them no room to doubt in what follows now of the high and exclusive way in which He declares Himself the Son of God. Even the refusal of the possibility of an independent will with Him in what He did, was itself a claim of the highest kind that could be made, consistent with the unity of the Godhead. It is

things *he* doeth, these things the Son also doeth in like manner. For the [k]Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that he himself doeth; and [l]greater works than these will he show him, that ye may marvel. For as the Father [m]raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, so also the Son quickeneth whom he [n]will. For neither doth the Father [o]judge any one, but hath given all judgment to the Son; that all may [p]honor the Son, even as they honor the Father: he that honoreth not the Son [q]honoreth not the Father who hath sent him.

[k] ch. 3. 35. ch. 15. 9, 10.
[l] cf. ch. 14. 12.
[m] ch. 11. 43, 44.
[n] cf. Jno. 15. 16.
[o] cf. Acts 17. 31. cf. Ps. 2. 6. cf. Matt. 26. 63-65.
[p] cf. Phil. 2. 10, 11. cf. Rev. 5. 11-14.
[q] cf. Lk. 10. 16. cf. ch. 15. 23; cf. 1 Jno. 2. 23.

true, also, that the unity of which he speaks here is a practical, ethical one, and not a unity of essence; but it goes so far as to lead up to this. He does not either for a moment forget the manhood that He has taken. The Father "shows" Him; He "sees what the Father does" and does in like manner; but who beside the Eternal Son could speak of doing "in like manner" to the Father? even to raising up the dead and quickening them?

The threefold "verily, verily,"—the strong form of affirmation which only John records—naturally divides what is here said into three parts; the first of which declares this practical unity. So perfect is it that He *can* do nothing of Himself; there is a moral impossibility of His doing anything that is not the expression of the Father's mind. He sees the Father's doing, and does in like manner whatever the Father does. Omniscience and omnipotence are involved in this, and yet in One who is in the place of dependence, but to whom, in the love He has to Him, the Father shows all things that He does. The One who is able to see all that God sees: who is He?

Thus what had startled the Jews—the recent miracle—was but a small thing in comparison of what would indeed awaken their wonder. The Father, they acknowledged, raised the dead and quickened them*: true, and the Son quickens whom He will. But this involves power in His hands as Judge: for to bring up really from the dead those to whom death, as with men in general, is by divine sentence, means judicial power to reverse that sentence. This leads on to a most important consequence, as we shall see directly. In fact, the Father judges no one, but has committed all (final, definitive) judgment to the Son, giving Him honor such as belongs to the Father Himself; and indeed, necessarily, he who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father either: for He has sent Him. Such is the unity of the Son with the Father. It is a unity in Godhead; or else we are taught to give to a creature the honor due to God alone.

[2] Such then is the glory of the One they are challenging. He is the divine Judge of all: the Lord of life and death. Hence follows the blessed consequence: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth Him that sent Me hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but is passed out of death into life." Thus with the possession of eternal life comes deliverance not merely from condemnation, as the common version renders it, but from judgment itself; the very reception of life is an acquittal: the Judge has spoken, and there is no more judgment needing to be reached.

Eternal life is thus marked by bowing to the word of Christ, which is the accrediting of Him who sent Him; and so He says when speaking to the Father at an after-time: "This is life eternal, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (ch. xvii. 3). On the other hand, those are dead who "having the understanding darkened, are alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blind-

* Raising the dead without quickening might be, as in the case of Samuel: to make them really alive is a further and greater thing.

2 (24): the deliverance of the believer from death and judgment.

[2] Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that [r]heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath [s]eternal life, and cometh not into [t]judgment, but hath [u]passed out of death into life.

r *cf.* ch. 8. 43. *cf.* Matt. 13. 9. *cf.* ch. 12. 37-40. *cf.* Rom. 8. 17.

cf. 1 Pet. 1. 21. s ch. 3. 15. t *cf.* Rev. 20. 11-15; *cf.* Rom. 8. 1. u *cf.* Col. 1. 13.

ness"—or "hardness"—"of their hearts" (Eph. iv. 18). This, alas, is not the exceptional condition of a few among men, but of the Gentiles, the "nations," says the apostle; and Israel is no better. "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." It is God alone who can break through a barrier of this kind, and bring "out of death into life."

[2] Life then is the fundamental necessity, the first thing needed by the soul: there is no middle state, as is evident, between life and death. We have to learn, and it may be only very gradually, as the child born into the world learns, what life is as the condition into which we have come; but without the life itself we could not have even the most rudimentary experience. We live the life, because we have the life whereby we live: if we do not distinguish in the spiritual realm, as we have to do in the natural, these two things from one another, all will be in confusion with us.

Life for the dead is resurrection-life; and the Lord now asserts the power of resurrection to be in His hands in a double way, spiritual and physical. He speaks as the Incarnate Word, and does not go back to the time of His pre-existence. He speaks of what shall be, but what is already begun, and of Himself as the Son of God among men, distinguishing between the "hour" of the spiritual and the "hour" of the physical renewal. The one had come already, though in its full blessedness as in Christianity, it had yet to come. The dead were already hearing the voice of the Son of God, and to every one that heard it it was life. Nor was there any distinction between the life as then given, and the life as it would be given: it was in either case an impartation of the life that was in Himself, as Source of it for men. For *as* the Father had life in Himself, *so* had He given to the Son to have life in Himself: "given," according to the divine counsel, to Him who was to be the "Last Adam," the Head of the new humanity; but thus to have it in Himself as the Father had it in Himself, as the Source from which others might derive it.

Let us clearly understand what is taught us here. The life in Him is of course eternal life: we understand why it is eternal; that which is in the Father and in the Son must be so. It is not simply because it will never end, but because also it never began: it always was and it always will be; that is eternity in the full sense of eternity.

It is not eternal life because it has come through death and is beyond it: in the Father, it never came through death; as divine life it never can be touched by it. It begins in us, and in us is in character a resurrection life; but that is not why it is eternal life, but it is eternal because it is divine.

It is life *in us* also: that is distinctly declared. Quickening is the impartation of life: except it were life in us, it would not be our being made to live at all. It is not Christ's having it in Himself that constitutes the difference between Him and those to whom He imparts it, but that He has it *as the Father has it*, is the perpetual Source and Fountain of it to others. We have it always in dependence—always in Him; were it possible to be cut off from Him, all would be at an end for us, but that does not mean that it is not in us, which it is positively asserted to be. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have *no* life in you": that on the one side; on the other, "he that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath *eternal* life" (ch. vi. 53, 54). Thus it is *eternal* life or *no* life, and it is of "life in you"—therefore *eternal* life in you—that He is speaking throughout. Otherwise it would be still true as to the one who *had* eaten the flesh of the Son of man, that there was no life *in him*. And again in His first epistle John says, "Every one that hateth His brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him"

2 (25-29): resurrection manifesting His glory.

3 Verily, verily, I say unto you, that the hour cometh, and *now is, when the *dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath *life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself, and hath given him authority to execute *judgment [also],* because he is *Son of man. Marvel not at this, for an hour is *coming in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have practised† good unto a *resurrection of life, and they that have done† evil to a *resurrection of judgment.

* Some omit. † Different words in the original.

v cf. ch. 4. 23.
w cf. Eph. 2. 1, 5.
x cf. ch. 6. 57. *cf.* ch. 1. 4.
y ver. 22. *cf.* Acts 10. 42.
z cf. Matt. 25. 31.
a cf. 1 Cor. 15. 12. *cf.* Acts 24. 15.
b cf. 1 Cor. 15. 42-44. *cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 16. *cf.* Rev. 20. 4-6.
c cf. Rev. 20. 12-15.

(1 Jno. iii. 15): words that would have no force except from the fact that the Christian *has* eternal life abiding in him.

Notice that expression, "abiding in him": it naturally refers us to what we have in the Gospel afterwards, where the Lord figures under a vine and its branches the relation of His people to Himself. Here the branch abiding in the vine is the condition of the vine in its life, which is its sap, abiding in the branch. This the Lord follows up with His "ye in Me and I in you" as the condition of fruit-bearing. So in the epistle, the life abiding in the professing Christian is tested by the fruit; the abiding of the life being maintained by the constant active inflow of the fulness that is in Christ into the lives of His people.

That our life is in Christ, then,—or as John rather puts it, in the Son,—is in no wise in opposition to its being in us also, as communicated, dependent life. Such it always is, and always will be. Our ability to define or give it rightful expression is feeble enough; even natural life has never been successfully defined; in cleaving closely to the inspired language we shall find a safeguard to our thoughts which will at the same time help them to legitimate expansion.

If the Father has given to the Son to have life in Himself in the same way that the Father has, the natural corollary to this is that "He hath given Him authority to execute judgment, because He is Son of man." The giving of life we have already seen in fact to imply such authority, inasmuch as it is at the same time a freeing from judgment; that is, from coming personally into it. A giving account of ourselves there will surely be, and a judgment of works, but not a judgment *by* works or according to works. That is the judgment of the "great white throne" (Rev. xx. 12, 13), and in it no fallen creature could ever stand. Even the psalmist cries: "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant: for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified" (Ps. cxliii. 2). The confusion that exists among Christians in such a matter as this is as lamentable as it is inexcusable: for Scripture has made it as plain as can be, that, raised or changed into His image in glory, all the saints of the present and the past shall at Christ's coming be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and to be ever with Him. When He comes to judge even the living, we shall be with Him, and with Him "the saints shall judge the world." The judgment of the dead before the great white throne is separated from this by an interval of a thousand years: a broad enough division, surely. But the indifference to prophecy, and even to the subject of the Lord's coming itself, has had its sad recompense in the loss of knowledge of things of fundamental importance to Christianity itself.

Judgment, all final judgment, is in the hands of Christ alone: for the tender and beautiful reason, "because He is Son of man." By a Man perfect in manhood, who has known even the weakness of it, as that title, "Son of man" indicates,—by One who "gave His flesh for the life of the world"—shall the world be judged. What assurance this gives of the most perfect consideration for creature frailty, of all circumstances that can be pleaded, in the judgment executed!

4 (30-47): The failure of man under test.
1 (30-32): of His own true witness.

4. [1] I can of [d] myself do nothing; as I hear I judge; and my judgment is righteous, because I [e] seek not mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. If I bear [f] witness concerning myself, my witness is not true: there is [g] another who beareth witness concerning me, and I know that the witness that he witnesseth concerning me is true.

2 (33-35): of John His messenger.

[2] Ye [h] sent unto John, and he hath borne witness to the truth. But I [i] receive not witness from man; but these things I say that ye may be [j] saved. He was the [k] lamp, burning and shining; and ye were willing for a [l] season to rejoice in his light.

[d] ver. 19. *cf.* ch. 8. 28.
[e] ch. 6. 38. *cf.* ch. 7. 18.
[f] *cf.* ch. 8. 13, 14, 18, 54.
[g] ver. 37.
[h] *cf.* ch. 1. 19-28.
[i] *cf.* ch. 17. 25.
[j] ch. 1. 7. *cf.* ch. 12. 28-30, 35.
[k] *cf.* Matt. 5. 14.
[l] *cf.* Matt. 3. 5-7.

Lastly, physical resurrection is also in His hand: "The hour is coming in which all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice and shall come forth"—the hour for each and all, but which does not necessarily imply the *same* hour for each and all: which we are assured by many another scripture that in fact it will not be. "Every man in his own order," says the apostle: "Christ the first-fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's, at His coming" (1 Cor. xv. 23). There is no confusion. "Each" will be "in his own rank," as it would be better rendered; and each rank will come forth at its appointed time; only "*they that are Christ's*, at His coming."

Time is not specified in the Lord's words here; for time does not affect the question of authority, and it is of the authority given to Him that He is speaking. But the "life" and "judgment" which are in His hands to dispense characterize respectively two contrasted resurrections. "They that have done good" come forth "to a resurrection of life; and they that have done evil to a resurrection of judgment." In either case death is seen in its merely provisional character: for the full carrying out of God's purpose it must disappear. Man apart from the body is not man as God made him; and therefore not what His dealings contemplate. Life, on the one hand, claims the body of the saint; as judgment, on the other hand, the body of the sinner. It is for the "deeds done in the body" men are to receive; and it is *in* the body that they are to receive it. And it is noticeable that the saint here, as well as the sinner, is characterized by his "doings." Although life is a "gift," and not a reward, yet the fruits of that life, brought forth by the renewed man, are recognized in the resurrection. The holiness of God is seen in result to have been maintained by His grace, as it is manifested in the judgment of evil.

4. Thus the Lord has in the presence of His enemies, soon to be as criminals before His judgment-seat, revealed His personal glory as the Son of the Father, with the authority belonging to Him as Man, come in the purpose of divine love among men. He proceeds to reprove them for their unbelief, in view of the witness that had been given to Him in so many ways. The character of His own testimony; the testimony of His forerunner; the supernatural works which accredited Him on the Father's part; the Father's own testimony; the Scriptures accepted by themselves: all united to put His claims beyond the power of all the cavils of unbelief to affect. And He then proceeds to point out the nature of the unbelief itself which they manifested, what it proceeded from, what it would lead to, and leaves them in the hands of Moses, whom they so trusted, yet who was their real accuser before God. It is a crushing reply, which for the present seems to stagger and confound them, so that we hear of nothing from them more, until after another period of labor in Galilee, He returns at the feast of tabernacles to Jerusalem.

[1] He returns to speak of that practical oneness which he had with the Father, which forbade Him doing anything simply of Himself. As a consequence, no independent will of His own perverted His judgment. He judged as He heard: that is, according to the real facts of the case. This perfect simplicity made His

[3] (36, 37): of signs and manifestations.

[3] But I have witness greater than that of John: for the [m] works which the Father hath given me to complete them, the very works that I do bear witness concerning me that the Father hath sent me. And the Father who hath sent me, [n] he hath borne witness concerning me. Ye have neither [o] heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.

[4] (38–40): the failure of their own experience.

[4] And ye [p] have not his word abiding in you: for him whom he hath [q] sent, him ye believe not. Ye search * the [r] Scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they that [s] witness concerning me: and ye [t] will not come unto me, that ye might have life.

[5] (41–44): the conditions of faith.

[5] I receive not [u] glory from men; but I know you, that ye have not the [v] love of God in you. I have come in my [w] Father's name, and ye receive me not; if [x] another

m ch. 10. 25, 38. ch. 14. 11.
n Matt.3.16, 17.
o *cf.* ch. 12. 29. *cf.* ch. 1.18.
p ver. 42. *cf.*ch.14.23,
q ver. 24.
r *cf.* Matt.2. 4-6. *cf.*Lk.24.25 –27.
s *cf.* Deut.18. 15-18. *cf.*Rom.1.2. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1, 10-12.
t *cf.* Lk. 14. 18. *cf.* ch. 1.11.
u *cf.* 1s.53.3. *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 17.

* So far as the form is concerned this may be rendered as an imperative.

cf. Acts 3. 13. v *cf.* ch. 8. 42; *cf.* Lk. 11. 42. w *cf.* ch. 7. 28, 29; *cf.* ch. 17. 4. x *cf.* Matt. 24. 5, 11, 24; *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 8-12; *cf.* Rev. 13. 11-15.

word to be indeed the word of God, and to have a character far removed from that of others. Thus it had to be confessed, "Never man spake like this Man." It was indeed the most signal witness to Him. Yet it stood not alone: it would have been an anomaly had it done so, and the word of the law, "the testimony of two is true," would have rendered it invalid. If He bore witness regarding Himself, though perfectly qualified to do so, it would not by itself be *valid:* which is clearly the meaning of the law. The testimony of one man might be true—absolutely; just as true in itself as that of two. But it would not be true in the same way to others: it would need confirmation. The Lord appeals therefore to another testimony—His Father's. This confirmed His own in such a way as that there could not be any more testimony needed. And, in fact, all the testimony of which He speaks here resolves itself into these.

[2] John's testimony He refers to: a merciful concession to the need of man, though as a merely human one *He* could not have need of it. It was a call to rouse men's attention and awaken the sense of need on their part; and in fact many had been roused: they had sent to him and he had borne witness to the truth. He was as the lamp, burning and shining, not the light of day, but lighting up the darkness of the night. They had been glad of it, and willing to avail themselves of its cheer for a season. Limited like all of man both as to time and place, John's testimony had of necessity to give way to Him of whom he testified.

[3] But now there was greater witness. The glorious works that were being done by Him, and which in their *completeness* spoke of a work far more glorious, these were gifts from the Father which manifested His Son, while the Father had even directly uttered His voice in attestation. But *they*, alas, had never at any time heard His voice—to them He had never spoken; nor had they seen one form of His many manifestations.

[4] The Lord proceeds to speak of what in one sense was, in another should have been, a matter of their own experience. Scripture was in their hands, they searched it, they thought they found in it eternal life. Well it spoke of Him, the Giver of life: yet they would not come to Him to find it. In fact they had not God's word abiding in them; for the One whom He had sent they believed not.

[5] The truth was, the conditions of faith were lacking in them. They received glory from one another; they did not seek it from God; they had not the love of God. Thus One coming in His Father's Name they would not receive. But that would put them into the hands of Antichrist. He will come in his own

come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe who receive [y] glory one from another, and seek not the glory that cometh from God only? Think not that I will [z] accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, [a] Moses, in whom ye trust; for if ye had believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he [b] wrote concerning me. But if ye [c] believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

y ch. 12. 43.

z *cf.* ch. 3. 17, *cf.* ch. 12. 47.

a *cf.* Rom. 3. 19, 20.

b *cf.* Num. 21. 9, *cf.* Lk. 24. 44.

c *cf.* Lk. 16. 29–31, *cf.* Acts 13. 27, *cf.* 2 Cor. 3. 14.

SECTION 2. (Chap. vi.)

Eternal life as a life of faith, and its sustenance.

1 (1–21): Christ according to Old Testament promise

1 (1–14): As Jehovah, the Creator, Source of Israel's blessings.

1. [1] AFTER these things Jesus went away beyond the sea of Galilee [that is,] of [d] Tiberias. And a great multitude followed him, [e] because they saw the signs that he wrought upon the sick. And Jesus went up into the mountain, and there sat with his disciples. But the [f] passover, the feast of the Jews, was nigh. When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great multitude coming to him, he saith unto Philip, Whence should we

d Matt. 14. 13–21, Mk. 6. 35–44, Lk. 9. 10–17.

e *cf.* ver. 26, *cf.* Matt. 4. 23, 24.

f ch. 2. 13, ch. 5. 1, ch. 11. 55.

name, doing his own will, and be received. A solemn thing to realize, and yet most sure, that all that would displace Christ in the soul makes room for Antichrist.

They could not believe, therefore. Moses had written of Him; and they trusted Moses, without believing His testimony. Moses, not He, was their accuser. If they had believed Moses, they would have believed Him. If they believed not Moses' writings, how would they believe His words? A serious question for the days in which we are.

Sec. 2.

We now have eternal life as a life of faith, a life ministered to and sustained by the bread from heaven, the antitype of the manna, but which (even on that account) transcends it. In the same way as in the last section the history is the text, from which as its occasion the truth is drawn, or which gives shape to it, though this goes far beyond, as there, what the occasion could suggest. The two parts into which the section is in this way naturally divided, are otherwise also in contrast with one another: the first giving the Lord's presentation to Israel, which was rendered vain by their unbelief; the second, the Christian verity which translates all their blessing into higher truth.

1. [1] The Lord is again in Galilee or the neighborhood, and a great multitude is gathered around him. The question of providing for such a company is raised by the Lord Himself and is addressed to Philip; who replies that it would take more than 200 pence (or denarii) even scantily to supply them. Andrew thereupon suggests that there was a lad there who had five barley loaves and two small fishes; but, as he intimates, there was no real hope in that. Yet the Lord accepts and uses these, even though it veil in some degree the wonder of that which He is about to do. The men are made to sit down, and He blesses and distributes to them; the ministration by disciples' hands is not found in John as in the Synoptists; here we have only the divine hand that really accomplished all. *He* provides; *He* ministers: Jehovah, the Creator, in tender care for all; none lost in the general mass; the details cared for, as we see all through nature, not left to the rougher management of subordinates. By and by, when all are filled, then even the fragments must not be wasted: the very last thing, perhaps, that we should expect from One who could work a miracle like this. But it is not a miracle—a "wonder" merely—but a "sign": significant all through. Where is the ragged end of nature? where are her mere useless dust-heaps? where will you find the thing she wastes? Nay, her very instruments of destruction are

buy bread, that these may eat? And this he said to [g] prove him: for he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth* of bread is not enough for them, that each may take a little. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, There is a [h] lad here, who hath five 'barley-loaves and two small fishes; but what are these for so many? Jesus said, Make the men [i] sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. The men therefore sat down, in number about five thousand. Jesus took the loaves therefore, and having given [k] thanks, he distributed to those that were set down, and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. And when they were filled, he saith unto his disciples, Gather together the [l] fragments that remain over, that nothing may be lost. They [m] gathered them together therefore, and filled twelve hand-baskets with the fragments of the five barley-loaves, that remained over unto those who had eaten.

[z] (14-21): Rejected, a stormy sea for faith until He comes.

[z] Then the men, when they saw the sign that Jesus

[g] *cf.* Lk. 9. 18. *cf.* ver. 67.

[h] *cf.* Jer.1.6, 7. *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 27, 28.

[i] *cf.* Judg.7. 13. *cf.* Ex.4.2.

[j] *cf.* Is.30.15. *cf.* Is.55.2.

[k] *cf.* ch. 11. 41, 42. *cf.*Lk.22.19.

[l] *cf.* Lev.23. 22.

[m] *cf.*Neh.8. 10.

* Denarii.

but transformers, and in the interests of preservation: "that nothing be lost" is a principle that runs through all.

[z] Christ then is here displayed in divine power amidst the people; and the question comes, as ever, how will they respond to it? They do, in fact, recognize that "this is of a truth that prophet that cometh into the world"; and they would gladly avail themselves of the power manifest, using it, however, for their own ends, and controlling it by their own will. The result is, as the Lord foresees, that they would take Him by force and make Him a King! they would compel Him to be the leader of one of those popular revolts against Roman authority, which at a later time occurred so often. Once committed to it, as they thought, beyond the power of drawing back, He would resign Himself to the will of the multitude and become the Deliverer for which all were looking. How strange a thing is the mind of man, when perverted by that very will which in this case they believe has so much power, but which only avails to cloud all true perception, and to make their reasoning the most pitiable folly. They are going to have a prophet after their own heart, and divine power work at their bidding! From such reception, which was all that the nation as a whole had for the Deliverer, the Lord necessarily withdraws. He goes up into the mountain, Himself alone, type of that ascension where He was before, which is to follow, and to which He presently refers. Meanwhile His disciples are upon the sea, darkness falling, the sea rising under a contrary wind; and such is the world in the absence of Christ for those that follow Him. "The wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest," and the "course of this world" which has rejected Him is "according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Its being called "the sea of Tiberias" is very significant, the Israelitish city bearing the name of a Roman emperor, the Gentile dominant over those who should have been the people of God, but who are sunk like Jonah in the sea of the nations, even though miraculously preserved.

The "ship" in which the disciples are marks these out as a Jewish remnant, which in fact the disciples were when He left the earth, and will be again when He returns to it (see Notes to Matt., p. 158). The Church proper is seen in Peter stepping out upon the waters to go to Jesus; but this we have not here.

had done, said, This is of a truth that [n]prophet that cometh into the world. Jesus then knowing that they were about to come and take him by force to make him a [o]king, withdrew again into the [p]mountain, himself alone. But when [q]evening came, his disciples went down to the [r]sea, and having entered into a ship, they went over the sea toward Capernaum. And darkness had already come on, and Jesus had not yet come to them. And a [s]strong wind blowing, the sea began to rise. When therefore they had rowed five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they saw Jesus [t]walking upon the sea and drawing near the ship, and they were [u]afraid. But he saith unto them, [v]It is I; be not afraid. Then they desired to take him into the ship; and [w]immediately the ship was at the land whither they were going.

2 (22-71): The confirmation in Christianity.

1 (22-33): food abiding to eternal life.

2. [1] On the morrow, the multitude which stood on the other side of the sea, when they saw that there was no

n ch. 1. 21. ch. 7. 40. cf. Deut. 18. 15.
o cf. ch. 12. 12-15. cf. ch. 2. 23-25.
p cf. Lk. 5. 15, 16. cf. Acts 3. 21, 22.
q cf. ch. 12. 35. cf. Rom. 13. 12.
r cf. Rev. 17. 15. cf. Lk. 21. 25.
s Matt. 8. 24. cf. Matt. 24. 29.
t Matt. 14. 22-33. Mk. 6. 47-51. cf. 2 Thess. 1. 7, 8.
u cf. Gen. 45. 3; cf. Mal. 3. 23. v cf. Is. 43. 1, 2; cf. Song 2. 8-13. w cf. Ps. 107. 28-31; cf. Is. 25. 9, 10.

Only He is seen coming, and they are alarmed, but His word dispels their fear; and when they receive Him into the ship, immediately they are at the land for which they set out. This ends the Jewish part: but which furnishes the principles which are developed and applied in the Lord's words which follow, and in which the thread of John's Gospel with its theme, eternal life, is resumed and carried on.

2. The promises to Israel are confirmed and raised to a higher level in Christianity, and thus become the germs and types of fuller and more wondrous blessings. The world in which we are is the world which has rejected Jesus, and into which, as just said, Israel through unbelief has sunk, and for the meantime lost her place and blessing. Into her place on earth the Church is come, but as a pilgrim and a stranger only, with blessings in a higher sphere. That which is abnormal to Israel, to be a stranger and pilgrim upon earth, is normal to the Church.

[1] The multitude seek for Jesus, in ships that have reached the place of the miraculous supply of food since the disciples left it in the only one there. Jesus had not gone with the disciples, that they know; but they follow the disciples to the city of His adoption, Capernaum, and to their astonishment find Him there. They ask Him in astonishment "when"—which involves the question, "how—He got there." But He has no reply to that; only a rebuke for the motive which made them follow Him. It was not because they saw signs: that is, not because they had realized the significance of His miracles. Had they done so, they would have been brought by them into the presence of God; and He would have got His place in their souls. But it was not so: they had but eaten of the loaves and been filled! Food that perisheth for the life that passeth: that was all that they were in pursuit of; let them work rather for the food that abideth, and that ministers to a life which is eternal. What a contrast between these!

He does not yet say that He Himself is the bread of life. He would, as with the woman of Samaria, fix their eyes upon the imperishable and eternal, and wake up in them heart-hunger after these. Till they had this, all else would be a riddle which they would not even care to solve. But He tells them that this food the Son of man would give them, not now the Son of God. As Creator He could by the mere act of His will furnish abundantly what this life required; but the food of eternal life only the Son of man could give them: for that, He must *become* the Son of man; man, in unique humanity; amid all the sons of men, *the* Son of man. What a difference between the work of creation, with all

other ship there save that into which the disciples had entered, and that Jesus had not [x]gone with his disciples into the ship, but that the disciples had gone away alone, (howbeit there came ships from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they had eaten the bread when the Lord had given thanks,) when therefore the multitude saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves entered into the ships and came to Tiberias, [y]seeking Jesus. And when they found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye [z]saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves

x *cf.* ch.16.5, 6.

y *cf.* Mk. 1. 37.

z *cf.* ver. 2. *cfr.* ch.2.11.

its display of wisdom, power and goodness, and the amazing self-sacrifice of redemption by a Son of man!

The Lord does not, and could not say, "Work for the *life*," but for the "*food*" of the life. The life itself is the fundamental, primary gift which alone makes possible any right working. The dead cannot work into life, but the Lord quickens by His voice, as we have seen. Here we are in another line of things, and there is something for man to do, though he cannot give himself life. When they take Him to mean working *works*, He tells them that God's work—the thing He wanted them to do—was to "believe on Him whom He had sent." But they had been "working" to get that food with which He had fed them; and, great as was the miracle, the food itself was but that of the earthly life. Ah, if they would take the same pains, if they would show the same eagerness, to get the bread of life eternal. He who had given them the one had been appointed and accredited of God with the seal of the Spirit (as after His baptism by John) to give them the other. Indeed, the bread itself was sealed and certified to them at the same time, the incorruptible food of an imperishable life; and Gift and Giver were the same blessed Person.

The multitude, however, at once take openly the position of unbelievers. They can ask Him in the face of the miracle what He is working, and then, naturally enough from the standpoint of those who follow Him because they have eaten of the loaves and been filled, point to the sustenance of Israel by the manna forty years in the wilderness as indeed what they might call a proper "sign." The Lord answers that the true bread from heaven is not that which Moses gave, but that which His Father gives, and that is He who cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

There they are brought face to face with that upon which all now depends for them. Eternal life is there for their acceptance or rejection in the Bread of Life, the true Manna, which is Christ Himself. Faith in Him would make them partakers of this precious gift which was not for Israel only but for the world. Wherever the need might be, here was the sufficient supply, free to all that welcomed it. He who had come down from heaven to man sought but for a welcome: how often has He sought in vain!

[2] The response, however, seems at first in this case to be all that one could desire. Like the woman of Samaria, and without exposing their ignorance as she did hers, they ask for the gift of which He had spoken. "Lord," they say, "evermore give us this bread." How like two cases may be that are nevertheless essentially different! and He who "knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man," could not be deceived. Nevertheless, He insists emphatically on the value of the gift: "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." This is exactly in the line of what He said at Sychar to the woman, and a little fuller, pointing more to the necessity of faith, and to its character, not as mere belief in a fact, but reliance upon a Person, in whom the fulness of satisfaction was to

and were filled. Work not for the food that [a]perisheth, but for that food that abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of man will [b]give you: for him the Father, even God, hath [c]sealed. They said therefore unto him, What should we [d]do that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye [e]believe on him whom he hath sent. They said therefore unto him, What [f]sign then doest thou, that we may see and believe thee? what workest thou? Our [g]fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, according as it is written, [h]Bread from heaven gave he them to eat. Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, [i]Moses gave you not the bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you the [j]true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who [k]cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world.

2 (34-51): conflict, and separation of a remnant drawn to Christ, who expect in faith the portion beyond death, which is annulled for them.

[2] They said therefore unto him, Lord, [l]evermore give us this bread. Jesus said unto them, I am the [m]bread of life: he that cometh unto me shall [n]never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst at all.

a ch.4.13,14. cf. Is. 55. 2.
b cf. ch.4.10. cf.ch.10.28.
c cf.ch.10.36. cf. Matt. 3. 16, 17.
d cf. Lk. 10. 25. etc. Acts 16. 30.
e ch.3.14-16. ch. 5. 24. Rom.4.4,5.
f cf. ch. 4.48. cf.Matt.16. 1-4.
g Ex. 16. 4-36. Nu. 11.7-9.
h Neh. 9.15. Ps.78.23-25.
i cf.1 Cor.10. 11. cf.Heb.3.5, 6.
j vers.55,58. cf.ch. 15. 1.
k vers.50,51. cf.1 Cor.10. 16.
l cf. ch. 4. 15; m ver. 48; cf. Ps. 104. 15; cf. Ps. 105. 40. n cf. ch. 4. 14; cf. ch. 11. 25, 26.

be found. But alas, this insistance upon faith is no good sign for those to whom He is speaking; for where faith is, it does not need to turn in upon itself, and does not grow by self-occupation. Nor does he who hungers and thirsts need to be told that the mere contemplation of a feast will not satisfy, but only the appropriation of it. But here was the feast spread and the welcome and a wonderful assurance: once more, perhaps, as with the parallel saying to the woman, that which may rebuke also the poverty of faith in those who have it, and to understand it we must remember that that first coming to Christ which is once for all, yet implies also a constancy of coming for all needs, an hourly dependence, and a simplicity in taking Him for all; a refusal of all helps to eke out His sufficiency by other means. In this it is that want of truth to Him will make our experience fail in just that measure. Drinking of this world's water we shall thirst again; going to the world for help, like Abraham with his face towards the south, there will come a famine in our own things, even when we would fain enjoy them. A dishonored Christ *will* fail to satisfy. Let us not impute to Him what is due to the dishonor we have done Him. We must take Him for all, to find Him all-sufficient.

But with the crowd now following the Lord there was not even the most rudimentary faith. "I said unto you, that ye have seen Me even and believe not." The work He had done they had to acknowledge, and for this they followed Him; but it was their bodies that got the food; they had known neither spiritual hunger nor supply. They had seen Him (as declared in the miracle), but they had not believed. And such is man universally: what hope, then, as to any? The answer given by the Lord is, There is hope in God alone: "All that the Father giveth Me will come to Me"; there is not merely hope, therefore, but certainty that, spite of all the opposition of the human heart to God, Christ shall not lose that which divine love in Him has sought. How fully sure is it then that He can add, "And him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." To reject the gift of His Father's love would be indeed an impossibility. Even in this, that oneness of His will with the Father's which He has before asserted, displays itself: "For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." The love that is in His heart towards men works in absolute conformity to the Father's will; and necessarily, for

But I said unto you, that ye have °seen me even, and believe not. All that the Father ᵖgiveth me will come to me, and him that cometh unto me I will in ᵍno wise cast out. For I am come down from heaven, not that I might do mine ʳown will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the ˢwill of him that sent me, that of all that he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should ᵗraise it up at the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that every one who seeth the Son and ᵘbelieveth on him should have eternal life, and I should raise him up at the last day.

o ver. 26. ch. 12. 37.
p vers. 44, 45. *cf.* ch. 17.2, 6, 9. *cf.* Acts 13. 48.
q *cf.* Matt. 11. 28. *cf.* Lk. 15.2. *cf.* Is. I. 18.
r ch. 5. 30. *cf.* Heb. 10. 5-10.
s vers. 39, 40. *cf.* 1 Tim. 2. 4.
t vers. 40, 44, 54; *cf.* ch. 11. 24-27; *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 20-23.
u ch. 5. 24; *cf.* 1 Jno. 5. 9-13.

"God is love," and therefore the will of God is the activity of Love itself. Father and Son are in absolute unity, therefore, here: the Son devoting Himself to carry out the salvation which is of God for man. "And this," He adds, "is the will of Him that sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day." Resurrection has thus to come in for the fulfilment of what He is speaking of. Israel rejecting Him, as He sees in the crowds that are now about Him, the Kingdom which had been announced as at hand would be delayed, and faith might have to wait for the accomplishment of what it sought in resurrection. And in any case, resurrection must come in at the "last day" (the close of Israel's age of law), and before the Kingdom. Death must be swallowed up in victory (Isa. xxv. 8) or how much would be lost! and He it is who must accomplish this.

He repeats this immediately, only in a somewhat stronger way, that "this is the Father's will, that whosoever seeth the Son and believeth on Him should have eternal life, and He would raise him up at the last day." This is surely not meant to set aside the duty of watching for the Lord, on the part of believers of that time, nor to say, therefore, that all would necessarily die, to be raised up. The quickening of the mortal body (Rom. viii. 11), in the case of those who are alive when the Lord comes, brings into the complete likeness of the risen saint, and is an action of the same character as resurrection. For His present purpose it was not needful to distinguish between them. Israel's seeing and *not* believing on Him was to be made the occasion of the call of a people characteristically heavenly, and to this the words before us point.

But the Jews murmur at the greatness of His claim. To them He is but the son of Joseph: they know, as they think, both His father and His mother; and how then can He say He has come down from heaven? Jesus only replies that, except the Father draw him, no one can come to Him; and such an one He will raise up at the last day. Then He explains that this drawing is by divine enlightenment, as the prophets had spoken of being taught of God. Every one who had heard from the Father and learned of Him came to Jesus. And yet, on the other hand, no one had actually seen the Father but Himself, who was of Him.

Thus man with his back to the light walks in his own shadow, with God unknown; and God has to pursue him with that unwelcome light, make him to realize his condition and his need of Jesus, that he may find the unseen Father in the Son. Here, then, the bread of life—the means of eternal life—is found. Those who ate the manna in the desert nevertheless died. For him who eats of the true heavenly bread, there is no real death: he will live forever. The lost knowledge of God, the moral link with Him, has been restored; and this is a life which so possessed will endure. The estrangement from God, which brought in death—which is in itself death—is over. Divine life—the divine nature—is in him who by faith in Christ is reconciled to God.

But for this another thing is needed, which the Lord now goes on to, and which the manna fails even to represent. The bread from heaven it does, Christ

The Jews therefore [u]murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread that came down from heaven. And they said, [w]Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how then* doth he say, I am come down from heaven? Jesus answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. [x]No one can come to me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, [y]And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father and learned [of him] cometh unto me. Not that any one hath [z]seen the Father, save he who is of God, he hath seen the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that [a]believeth on me hath eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your [b]fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead; this is the [c]bread that cometh down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the [d]living bread that came down from heaven: if any one have eaten of this bread, he shall [e]live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my [f]flesh which I will give for the life of the world.

[3] The Jews therefore contended with one another, saying, [g]How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

*Some read, "now."

u *cf.* vers.52, 61. *ctr.* vers.67–69.
w Matt. 13. 55, 56. *ctr.* 2 Cor. 5. 16. *cf.* ch. 7. 15, 27, 41, 42.
x *cf.* ch. 12. 32. *cf.* Jer. 31. 3. *cf.* Eph. 2. 8.
y Is. 54. 13. Jer. 31. 34. ver. 37.
z ch. 1. 18. ch. 7. 29.
a ch. 3. 36.
b *cf.* Nu. 14. 26–29.
c vers. 33, 35.
d *cf.* ch. 5. 25, 26.
e *cf.* Gen. 3. 22. *cf.* ch. 4. 14.
f vers. 53–56. *cf.* ch. 1. 14 with Heb. 10. 10.
g ver. 41. ch. 3. 4.

3 (52-58): the peace-offering by which we dwell in Christ and Christ in us.

in humiliation, in the wilderness of the world; yet abiding as the "*hidden* manna"—the manna preserved in the ark—for the land also; like the bread that abideth to eternal life. But now the manna fails to represent that which we find in the "bread of God," which now assumes a sacrificial character: "the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

[3] Immediately there is a a clamor again. "The Jews"—who are probably here, as they are more distinctly in the next chapter, the Judeans, in contrast with the Galileans, and always His bitterest adversaries—"the Jews therefore contended with one another, saying, How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" There were with them no spiritual needs to make them infer a spiritual meaning, and the Lord does not explain. We shall find presently that when He does so, it has no effect in preventing many even of His professing disciples dropping off from Him. Here He only insists the more on the truth and necessity of what He is declaring. With another of His strong affirmations, He carries His statement further than before, and gives it fuller emphasis: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you: he that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is truly food, and my blood is truly drink."

They were accustomed to such figurative speech; and the words would not sound as if they had been spoken elsewhere than in that eastern land. Moreover the impossibility of taking them literally would seem apparent, while the sacrificial system of the law would naturally suggest the thought of reference to it in the words of Christ. But to drink the blood of the offering was in entire opposition to the law, which forbade the drinking of *any* blood. Yet the giving His flesh for the life of the world, of which He had spoken, could be nothing else but sacrificial, while the feeding upon the flesh by any other than the priests could only apply to the peace-offering.

Our Christian knowledge enables us easily to put by the side of our Lord's words passages from the Old Testament history, the prophets and the psalms,

Jesus said therefore unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, [h]Except ye have eaten the flesh of the Son of man, and drunk his blood, ye have no life in you: [i]he that feedeth on my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will [j]raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is [k]truly food, and my blood is truly drink. He that feedeth on my flesh and drinketh my blood [l]abideth in me and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by [m]reason of the Father, so he that feedeth on me shall live by reason of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven: not as your fathers ate the manna and [yet] [n]died; he that feedeth on this bread shall live for ever.

h *ctr.* Lev. 17. 10.
i *cf.* ver. 40. *cf.* Jer. 15. 16. *cf.* Rom. 10. 10.
j *cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 14-16.
k *cf.* ver. 32. *cf.* Rom. 5. 8, 9. *cf.* Heb. 9. 22.
l ch. 15. 4, 5. *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 6, 28.
m *cf.* ch. 5. 26, 30. *cf.* ch. 17. 4.
n ver. 58; *cf.* Heb. 3. 16-19; *cf.* Deut. 2. 14, 15.

which should have helped the listeners to understand their application. In their own Targums stands recorded their own interpretation Messianically (partially, at least) of Isa. liii. and Ps. xxii. and xl., besides much else. But the conclusion was unwelcome to their unhumbled pride, and Christ crucified was "to the Jew a stumbling-block." Let us turn from them to consider for ourselves what His words mean.

Appropriating faith could hardly be more vividly pictured than in the eating and drinking of Christ's flesh and blood. The Supper of the Lord has kept continually before us the language here, which ritualism would spoil by insisting upon a real partaking in a so-called "sacrament" of a living instead of a dead Christ. Its being His death in which at His table we remember Him takes away the whole foundation of a doctrine which debases and carnalizes what is of the deepest spiritual import. We need not take it up here where we are warned on every side that it cannot be an ordinance of which the Lord is speaking when He says, "Except ye eat and drink, ye have no life in you," any more than when on the other hand He says, "He that eateth and drinketh hath eternal life." The ordinance speaks of that of which the words speak; and the truth is symbolized in act there, and in words here.

Let us note that on the one side, if we eat not we have *no* life,—nothing that can properly be called that: if we have eaten we have eternal life: *eternal* life or no spiritual life at all: that is what the Lord's "verily, verily" affirms.

Moreover, He is speaking of life *in* you: the eternal life is therefore *in* you; otherwise it would be saying, if you eat not you have no life in you, while yet, if you eat, you still have no life in you: which would be, of course, too incongruous to maintain.

Christ's flesh is given for the life of the world, and here the flesh and blood are apart: this is a sacrificial death, in which, according to the law, the blood was carefully poured out before the flesh was either burned or eaten. There was an exception to this, when the sin-offering was burned outside the camp; but this is the peace-offering; which, while it does not go so fully into the work of atonement, dwells more upon the effect of it. The passover had this character, where the whole household fed upon that the blood of which was on the door-posts. Accordingly it is the "passover, the feast of the Jews," which was at hand when these words were spoken.

The difference between the flesh and blood is evident. The "blood is the life"; and "it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul." Thus it speaks of the work accomplished, as only in death could it be accomplished; while the flesh is the victim that has died; in type, the Person of the Lord Himself. Thus the Person is first dwelt upon, the Bread from heaven; and then "the bread which I will give is My flesh."

The drinking the blood is characteristic of Christianity, as compared with that which was before it. The work is known and entered into, with its blessed

[4] (59-71): carnalizing of His words by which disciples fall away.

[4] These things he said in the synagogue as he taught in Capernaum. Many of his [o]disciples, when they heard [this] said, This saying is a hard one: who can hear him?* But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples murmured at this, said to them, Doth this [p]offend you? [what] then if ye see the Son of man [q]ascending where he was before? It is the [r]Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the [s]words I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. But there are [t]some of you that believe not. For Jesus [u]knew from

*Or "it."

o vers.64,66. cf.Matt.16. 21-23. p cf.1 Cor.1. 23. cf.1 Pet.2.8. q ch. 3. 13. cf.Matt.26. 63, 64. cf.ch.16.10. r cf.2 Cor.3. 6. cf. ch.3.5,6. s ver. 68. cf. ch. 17.8. cf.Acts5. 20. t ver. 36. u ch.2.24,25. ch. 13. 11.

effect as bringing us to God. Death has become the sustenance of Life. It is not however of the present power of resurrection of which the Lord speaks here, but of going on to it as that in which our portion is. Christ having gone out of the world by death, and we having entered into the fellowship of His death, we wait to be with Him.

Of this identification of ourselves with Him, and of Himself with us He goes on to speak. His flesh is truly food, His blood is truly drink. The food we take becomes by assimilation part of our very selves; and this wondrous food which has in it the true and eternal life (we being the dead and it the living) works "contrary to nature" to assimilate us to itself. Thus we abide in Him and He in us: Christ makes us His own, and then lives in us as His own.

He compares with this even His own human life as sent of the Father. As Man, He thus lived by reason of the Father, the Father's will being that which He was here to carry out. Even so with him in whom Christ as received by him abides, he lives by reason of Christ: Christ it is who is the explanation of his life, its thought and purpose. This is a life which is true life, a life therefore over which hangs no shadow of death: it abides for ever.

[4] But even to many of His disciples this was a hard saying, and they stumbled at it. They were thinking of the "Kingdom and glory," and wanted nothing of the "Kingdom and patience" which must precede it. To eat and drink into His death, whatever this might mean, was not the fulfilment of their carnal expectations. They had in truth no heart to inquire further, and stopped at the mere letter and the flesh. The Lord assures them therefore, He was going up where He was before. As to what He had been saying, the flesh could profit nothing; the Spirit of God alone could give life, and His words were spiritual—suited to the work of the Spirit—and quickening where He wrought. But some of them had no receptive power—no faith; and here He spoke with the consciousness which had been ever present with Him, of who it was that believed not, and how unbelief would end in apostasy and betrayal. He could find no hope but in that love-gift of the Father, of which He had spoken, and which assured Him of a people that should come to Him.

Thus He was prepared for rejection; and they took Him at His word, and rejected Him. "Upon this many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him." Such was the dropping off that He had reason to turn even to the twelve and ask, Were they going too? Faith in Simon Peter answered for the rest, there was no other to whom to go: it was, and so it has remained, Christ or none at all! And for those for whom it is so there are "words of eternal life" which are found with Him; all the more surely that, as they are unacceptable to carnal men: words which in their unearthly purity proclaim indeed the "Holy One of God."

Peter speaks for them all, but they are not in fact united in the same testimony: for now as the truth develops, and the light shines amid the darkness, the darkness gathers strength in opposition to it. This seems to be the time when in the defection going on among professed disciples, the heart of Judas

the beginning who they were that believed not; and who it was that would deliver him up. And he said, On this account I said unto you, that no one can come unto me, except it be [v]given him of the Father. Upon this many of his disciples [w]went back, and walked no more with him. Jesus therefore said unto the twelve, Will ye [x]also go away?* Simon [y]Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go away? thou hast words of eternal life; and we have [z]believed and know that thou art the [a]Holy One of God. Jesus answered them, Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a [b]devil? He spake of Judas [the son] of Simon, Iscariot: for he it was who should deliver him up, being one of the twelve.

v vers. 44, 45.
w *cf.* ver. 60. *cf.* Acts 7. 39, 51.
x *cf.* Lk. 14. 25–35. *cf.* ch. 10. 26–28.
y *cf.* Matt. 16. 16–19. *cf.* Lk. 5. 8.
z *cf.* ch. 11. 27. *cf.* ch. 1. 41, 42.
a *cf.* Acts 2. 27. *cf.* Mk. 1. 24.
b ch. 13. 18. ch. 17. 12. *cf.* Acts 1. 25.

SECTION 3. (Chaps. vii.–viii. 1.)

The Spirit in the believer the manifestation of the glory of the unknown Christ.

1 (1-9): Alone because of faithfulness, till His appointed time.

1. AND after these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Judea because they of Judea† sought to [c]kill him. Now the feast of the Jews was near, [which is] the [d]Tabernacles. His

c ch. 5. 16, 18.
d *cf.* Lev. 23. 33–36. *cf.* Num. 29. 12, etc. *cf.* Ezr. 3. 4. *cf.* Zech. 14. 16–19.

* The form of the question indicates a negative answer is expected.
† Same word as for "Jews," but here distinguishing from Galileans.

begins to conceive its first malignant schemes of hostility to the Lord. His character is at least now formed as what the Lord declares him to be, a "false accuser"—a "devil." The seed of the betrayal has already taken root within him.

Sec. 3.

The connection between this section and the last is very evident. As we have already seen, life being so largely the subject matter in this gospel, the Spirit of God is necessarily connected with this as the Communicator and power of the life. Thus in the first subdivision we had life in the first two sections, and in the third the Spring of living water; in the present one, we have had in like manner life in the first two sections, and now, in the third, we have again the living water: but it is here not simply springing up within the believer, but pouring out from him in the world "rivers of living water." The world at large is not changed by it, but an oasis is created in the desert, a prophecy of what is yet to come for the whole world.

Thus the feast that brings the Lord at this time to Jerusalem is the feast of tabernacles, Israel's joyful celebration in the land of her wanderings past, and with which the blessing of the earth is concurrent. But this has not come, and He who can alone bring it in for them is rejected by His own. Thus He goes up only to substitute as it were Pentecost for Tabernacles. The blessing is greater and of a higher order than anything the latter can show, but it is individual, not national; and still less world-wide.

For the blessing itself implies a Christ no longer present among men, but, according to the words which we have just heard uttered, "gone up where He was before." We have heard too by what way. Death has come on Him on whom it had no claim: a voluntary, sacrificial death, and His glory for ever; but the sign also of His rejection by men, a rejection which would even have been complete, had not the Father's gift secured a people to His Son. Thus then we have been brought to where we are doctrinally in the present chapter: the world still rejecting Him; the Father acting for the glory of the Son; the Spirit manifested in the world itself in those who have believed on Jesus, the Witness of His unseen glory: these are the characteristics of that to which we have now come.

1. The state of the world is that which is first revealed, the Lord Himself in

brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence and go into Judea, that thy [e]disciples also may behold thy works which thou doest. For no one doeth anything in secret, and seeketh himself to be known openly. If thou doest these things, [f]manifest thyself to the world. For [g]neither did his brethren believe in him. Jesus therefore saith unto them, My [h]time is not yet come; but your time is always ready. The world [i]cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it that its works are evil. Go ye up unto the feast; I go not up [yet]* unto this feast, because my time is not yet fulfilled. And having said these things unto them, he abode still in Galilee.

2 (10-36): Diverse opposition
1 (10-18): His knowledge and the way of knowledge the will to obey.

2. [1] But when his brethren had gone up unto the feast, then also he himself went up, not openly, but as it were in [j]secret. They of Judea then sought him at the feast, and said, Where is that man? And there was a great [k]murmuring among the multitudes concerning him. Some said, He is a [l]good man; and others said, Nay, but he leadeth the multitude [m]astray. However no one spake openly about him for [n]fear of those of Judea.

e *cf.* ch. 6. 66, *cf.* ch. 2. 11.

f *cf.* ch. 14. 22 with ch. 17. 16.

g *cf.* Mk. 3. 21, *cf.* Rom. 9. 5, 6.

h ch. 2. 4, vers. 8, 30.

i ch. 15. 19, *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 13.

j *cf.* ch. 6. 15, *cf.* Matt. 12. 16–20.

k *cf.* ch. 6. 41.

l vers. 40, 41, Matt. 21. 46.

m *cf.* Lk. 23. 2, 14, *cf.* Matt. 27. 63.

n ch. 9. 22, ch. 12. 42, 43.

*Many omit.

what complete solitude in the midst of it, without sympathy even from His human kindred, and the professing people of God only to be classed with the world: going on indeed with their feasts, the empty forms of a piety which for the mass does not exist, and which have become therefore the signs of hardness and levity of heart. What a witness against them is that history of divine deliverances which their feast of tabernacles commemorates, while those who are especially the clusterers round the holy places then, "they of Judea," are specially marked out here as those in open and deadly hostility to the Lord of life, the Son of Him they worship.

The Lord therefore does not go up at first, or openly, to the feast. He is neither Lord there, nor even welcome Guest. Nor is the time come for His open manifestation to the world, which hates Him for His faithfulness. Thus He abides solitary in His unique and perfect Manhood among men estranged from Him by His perfection.

2. [1] At the feast contradictory murmurings are heard about Him, some for, some against; suppressed however by the fear of those of Judea, who in all decisions concerning questions of authority and teaching had the upper hand. In the middle of the feast, Jesus who had come up privately to it, appeared in the temple and with the authority that belonged to Him, began to teach. Amazed at the knowledge which plainly He had not acquired at the ordinary schools of rabbinic learning, which it in no wise resembled, they inquire how He has come by it. He answers that His doctrine is not His own, but His who sent Him. He has not learned of men, nor put forth what was simply of His own mind; but what He taught He had learned of the Father in that abiding intercourse with Him in which He lived (chap. viii. 28). And He adds that they too might know for themselves whether His doctrine were of God, or of a man's mind merely. They would know this, if they were but willing to do the Father's will: for the spirit of obedience clears out of the soul the earth-vapors that obscure the heavens; he who has not heart-felt desire for the truth will scarcely learn it.

This is itself simple, if only we believe that God can certify the truth to His creatures, and that He cares enough for them to desire that they should have it.

But when it was now the middle of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple and [o]taught. They therefore of Judea wondered, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never [p]learned? Jesus therefore answered them and said, My doctrine is [q]not mine, but his who sent me. If any one [r]willeth to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself. He that speaketh from himself seeketh his [s]own glory; but he that seeketh his glory who sent him, he is true, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

2 (19-24): the double witness of the law against His adversaries.

[2] Did not [t]Moses give you the law? and [u]none of you keepeth the law: why do ye seek to [v]kill me? The multitude answered, Thou hast a [w]demon: who seeketh to kill thee? Jesus answered and said unto them, I

o ver. 28. *cf.* Matt. 5. 1, 2, etc. *cf.* ver. 46.
p *cf.* Matt. 7. 28, 29. *cf.* Acts 4. 13.
q ch. 8. 28. ch. 12. 49. ch. 3. 34.
r *cf.* ch. 8. 43. *cf.* Matt. 21. 23-27. *cf.* Ps. 25. 9.
s ch. 5. 41. ch. 8. 50. *cf.* Gal. 1. 10.
t ch. 1. 17. *cf.* Rom. 2. 17-29.
u *cf.* Rom. 3. 19.
v ver. 1.
w ch. 8. 48, 52; *cf.* Matt. 12. 24.

But, simple as it is, if we believe it, what does it reveal with regard to the condition, not of the world merely, but of the children of God to-day? The various and conflicting views of Christians as to almost every Christian truth, how are they to be accounted for, with the Bible open before us, and the Spirit of truth to lead us into all truth? What heart-searching should it not give us, to learn how far we are really willing to have the truth—the whole truth, at whatever cost.

Another test the Lord gives here: "He that speaketh from himself seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh His glory who sent him, *he* is true, and there is no unrighteousness in him." This is a personal test, as the other was the doctrinal. And here was the double witness to the glorious Speaker: who but Himself could have faced the application of these by the watchful multitudes that were around Him?

[2] He turns now openly upon His adversaries, to warn them how thoroughly the law to which they clung witnessed against them. He charges them plainly with their murderous designs upon His life; a charge which the Galileans, ignorant of what the Judeans were meditating, impute to the diseased fancies of a demoniac. The Lord goes back to the miracle which had aroused their malignant animosity. Circumcision, though incorporated by Moses in the law he gave, was yet not what came from Moses but from the fathers; it had another character, in fact, from law, as connected with those through whom God in His grace gave them the promises. Thus circumcision itself is by the apostle afterwards (Rom. iv. 11) shown to be the seal of the righteousness of faith in Abraham; and he receives it when his body is now dead and fruit from him naturally impossible, the very time of its reception thus corresponding with its spiritual meaning. This circumcision then, belonging to a period before law, and in its meaning the very opposite, is by the law itself preferred to the law,—that is, the commandment of the sabbath. Thus grace had, by the law itself, precedence above the law.

Now the impotent man was healed by the selfsame grace, his body now dead like Abraham's. Grace, not law, had had the priority in divine order, as was evident; and law, as an incompatible thing, could not be added to grace when it did come (see Gal. iii. 19–26), but came to make man's need of grace apparent. Sickness and death having come in through sin, only grace could heal the impotent; and this we have seen to be the principle which the miracle in all its details discloses. "Take up thy bed and walk" asserts the superiority of grace to law, as did the circumcision of a man upon the sabbath day. No doubt it required, as the Lord shows here, not to judge according to the appearance; but this is the true judicial spirit, and always necessary for righteous judgment.

have done [x]one work, and ye all wonder. On this account Moses gave you [y]circumcision (not that it is of Moses, but of the fathers), and ye on the [z]sabbath circumcise a man. If a man receive circumcision on the sabbath, that the law of Moses may not be broken, are ye angry with me because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath? Judge not according to [a]appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

3 (25-31): the secret of their condition manifested.

[3] Some of those of Jerusalem said therefore, Is not this he whom they seek to kill? and lo, he speaketh openly, and they say nothing to him. Have the rulers indeed recognized that this man is the Christ? But we [b]know this man whence he is; and when the Christ cometh [c]none knoweth whence he is. Jesus therefore cried out, teaching in the temple and saying, Ye both know me, and know [d]whence I am; and I am not come of myself, but he that [e]sent me is true, whom ye [f]know not. *I* know him: for I am from him, and *he* hath sent me. They sought therefore to take him; but no one laid hand on him, because his [g]hour had not yet come. And many of the multitude believed on him, and said, [h]When the Christ cometh, will he do more signs than this man hath done?

4 (32-36): their failure, and the change impending.

[4] The Pharisees heard the multitude murmuring these

x ch. 5. 10-16.
y Lev. 12. 3 with Gen. 17. 12-14.
z *cf.* Matt. 12. 4-8.
a ch. 8. 15. *cfr.* Is. 11. 3, 4.
b *cf.* vers. 40-43. *cf.* ch. 6. 42.
c *cf.* ch. 8. 14, 19. *cf.* Mal. 3. 1.
d *cf.* Matt. 21. 38. *cf.* ch. 12. 37-43.
e ver. 16.
f *cf.* ch. 1. 18. *cf.* ch. 8. 42, 55.
g ver. 6. *cf.* ch. 17. 1 with Lk. 22. 53.
h *cf.* ch. 4. 25, 26. *cf.* Matt. 12. 23.

[3] Again there is a stir among the crowd at His boldness, and on the part of some of Jerusalem, who know full well what is in the hearts of the rulers with regard to Him, an expression of astonishment that they do not interfere. Could it be possible, they ask each other, that a revulsion of mind has come, and that the rulers are beginning to recognize this Man as the Christ? But no; surely that were impossible; they knew Him and His origin, and there was no room for such mystery as they expected to attach to the coming of Messiah. Evidently to them He was but the simple Galilean, the Nazarene; and all that had taken place at Bethlehem and Jerusalem had slipped entirely out of unretentive minds which cared too little to retain it. While they were murmuring such things, the voice of Him of whom they were speaking penetrated to them where they were, not to assert His birth in David's city or of David's line, nor to recall the vision of angels and the quest of the magi, graved in the hearts of many by the slaughter of the babes. Nay, He allows that they know Him in their mere external way (for of nothing else were they speaking) sufficiently: He did not propose to supplement that knowledge, which for them would still be ineffectual. That which they needed to know He had already declared, and the way to know it, but they recognized not divine truth, nor therefore His divine mission. He was from God; but they knew not that God from whom He was.

And still the hand of God kept back the angry outburst that was ready to break out against Him: Master of all circumstances till the appointed hour when He would yield Himself to the divine will which He came to accomplish. Moreover those quiet penetrating words were gaining ground with many of the multitude, who were asking if, when Christ came, He could be expected to do more signs than the Man they were refusing had already done.

[4] A more direct effort to take Him is the result of this, the chief priests and Pharisees sending officers to apprehend Him. The Lord, with perfect understanding of all that is going on, tells them that it needs not: He is going away —back to Him who had sent Him into the world. Days would come when at last in vain they would seek Him; and into that place into which He was going

things concerning him; and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent ᵍofficers to take him. Jesus said therefore, Yet a ʲlittle while am I with you, and I go to him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; and ᵏwhere I am *ye* cannot come. They of Judea said therefore among themselves, Whither is this man about to go, that we shall not find him? Is he about to go to the dispersion among the ᵍGreeks, and teach the Greeks? What is this thing which he said, Ye shall seek me and shall not find me, and where I am *ye* cannot come?

3 (37-39): The indwelling Spirit manifesting Him.

37 Now in the ᵐlast day, the great [day] of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any one ⁿthirst, let

ᵍ vers. 45-47. *cf.* ch. 18. 3.
ʲ ch. 12. 35, 36.
ᵏ *cf.* ch. 13. 33. *cfr.* ch. 14. 2, 3. ch. 8. 21.
ˡ *cf.* Jas. 1. 1. *cf.* Acts 22. 21, 22.
ᵐ *cf.* Lev. 23. 34.
ⁿ Is. 55. 1. *cf.* Rev. 21. 6.

they could never come:—a solemn warning; but which they fling off from them in their scorn. He has indeed spoken of God as the One that sent Him, and then the warning is plain; but they will not have it so. No: He must be going to the dispersed among the Gentiles, and to teach the Gentiles; and this too was to be, though not according to their thought. Little did they realize that Lo-ammi ("not my people") was to be written upon them in the time soon to come, in a sterner fashion than ever yet had been. But beyond, in the place from which He had come, to which He was going to return, there could be no Father's welcome for the rejectors of His Son.

3. He was going away, therefore. "He was in the world, and the world had been made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He had come to His own, and His own received Him not." In that which was considered the chief of their festivals, His voice was heard only as a strange and dissonant sound. He was going away now to where He was before.

The last day, the great day of the feast, had come; and those who had gathered to it from all parts of the world were soon to separate. It was a day of rest and of holy convocation, of gathering, not of scattering; and as an eighth day,* the commencement of a new week, it spoke of eternity, of an eternal reunion, when all servile work should be at an end for ever, sin and its consequences being together put away. It corresponds with this really, that dwelling in booths was only for *seven* days; the eighth speaking of the entrance into the land.

Another ceremony, but which has no authority from Scripture, ceased also on the eighth day,—the pouring out of water drawn from the pool of Siloam. "This," says Lange, "was the celebration of the miraculous springs which God opened for the people on their pilgrimage through the wilderness. But because the eighth day marked their entrance into Canaan, the water-drawing ceased. On this day the springs of the promised land gave their waters to the people: an emblem of the streams of spiritual blessing which Jehovah had promised to His people."

They were still in the land,—a broken remnant of them, under the Gentile domination: and where now were those spiritual streams, the "living waters" that were to "go out from Jerusalem in summer and in winter"? (Zech. xiv. 8). Centuries had come and gone, and there was no sign even yet of the fulfilment. The ceremonies survived, but with the heart-sickness of deferred hope. Seasons of expectancy had passed away, fading quietly into the ordinary vacant dulness, or sometimes crushed out fiercely under an armed heel. Now there was to some the breath of another revival, although the voice of him who had first announced it had been silenced in Herod's prison. But John had given place to a Greater; and signs and wonders that might well be Messianic were waking up expectation from Galilee to Jerusalem. Yet why did He not use

* Edersheim does not regard it as the eighth day, which, he says, "in Rabbinic language was regarded as 'a festival by itself;'" but certainly not in the language of Scripture.

him come to me and drink. He that [o]believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his [p]belly shall flow [q]rivers of living water. But this he said concerning the [r]Spirit, which they that believed on him were about to receive: for [the] Spirit was not [s]yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

o *cf.* ch. 6. 35.
p *cfr.* Lk. 15. 17.
cfr. Phil. 3. 19.
cf. Ps. 84. 6.
q *cf.* ch. 4. 14.
cf. Acts 4. 20.

cf. 2 Cor. 4. 6. r *cf.* ch. 14. 16, 17; *cf.* Acts 2. 4, 33. s *cf.* ch. 16. 7.

His power after another fashion than merely in feeding or healing the multitudes? why did He not rally around Him the strength of Israel, and strike off their fetters?

The booths were gone; the wilderness-journey had come to an end; the eighth day had brought them to the land: with their Messiah in their midst, would not the land, in all the breadth and fulness of the promise to Abraham, be before them now? Yet He had spoken of going away, and to a place inaccessible to those who should seek Him and not find Him. What could all this mean, they must have questioned, many of them in their bewilderment, and found no answer.

But "in the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any one thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

"Of those who had heard Him," says Edersheim, "none but must have understood that, if the invitation were indeed real, and Christ the fulfilment of all, then the promise had its deepest meaning, that he who believed on Him would not only receive the promised fulness of the Spirit, but give it forth to the fertilizing of the barren waste around. It was truly the fulfilment of the Scripture-promise, not of one, but of all: that in Messianic times the *Nabhi* (prophet), literally the 'weller forth,' viz. of the divine, should not be one or another select individual, but He would pour out on all His handmaidens and servants of His Holy Spirit, and thus the moral wilderness of this world be changed into a fruitful garden. Indeed, this is expressly stated in the Targum, which thus paraphrases Isa. xliv, 3: 'Behold, as the waters are poured out on arid ground, and spread over the dry soil, so will I give the Spirit of My holiness on thy sons, and blessing on thy children's children.' What was new to them was that all this was treasured up in the Christ, that out of His fulness men might receive, and grace for grace. And yet even this was not quite new."

The interpretation is given by John himself on account of the importance of it: "But this He said concerning the Spirit, which they that believed on Him were about to receive; for the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified."

The fulfilment carries us on to Pentecost, when the Spirit of God came in witness to the glory of the rejected Saviour. And we must not suppose, because of the reference to the Old Testament, that in the manner of its fulfilment there was nothing but what the prophets of old declared. Peter's quotation of Joel at the time when the Spirit came shows how really the promise of our Lord could fulfil the Old Testament prophet. It does not show that there was not a deeper and greater blessing in what took place at Pentecost. The Lord's words here speak of the effect only—"rivers of living water" flowing out of the believer. The evangelist explains that this would follow the reception of the Spirit after Christ should be glorified. And the Lord's previous words assure us that this would be in the day of His absence, not of His presence; although even yet it was assured to them that He would return if only (nationally) they repented. They did not; and the mystery of the Church came gradually out. Of that there is nothing here: all is individual; and even as to the individual, we must connect what is said here with what had been said to the Samaritan woman, before we can understand that the reception of the Spirit means that indwelling presence which is the abiding spring within the man from which these

4 (40-viii. 1): Testing and tested.

4. [Some] of the multitude therefore, having heard these words, said, This is of a truth the [t]prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But others said, Doth the Christ then come out of [u]Galilee? hath not the Scripture said that the Christ cometh of the seed of [v]David, and from the village of Bethlehem where David was? There came to be a division therefore among the multitude on account of him. And some of them would have taken him, but no one laid hands on him. The officers came therefore to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him? The officers answered, [w]Never man spake* like this man. The Pharisees therefore answered them, Are ye also led astray? hath any of the [x]rulers believed on him? or of the Pharisees? But this multitude that knoweth not the law, they are [y]accursed. [z]Nicodemus saith unto them (he that came to him before, being one of them), Doth our law judge a man, except it [a]first hear from him, and know what he doeth? They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search and see: for out of [b]Galilee ariseth no prophet.

And they went each one to his house; but Jesus went unto the [c]mount of Olives.

*R. V. following a strongly supported text, reads, "Never man so spake," omitting last clause.

t ch. 6. 14.
u ver. 52. cf. ch. 1. 46.
v cf. Jer. 23. 5. cf. Mi. 5. 2. cf. Lk. 2. 4-12.
w cf. Matt. 7. 29. cf. ch. 4. 29.
x cf. ch. 12. 41, 42. cf. 1 Cor. 1. 26-29. cf. 1 Cor. 2. 8. cf. Matt. 11. 25, 26.
y cf. ch. 9. 34.
z ch. 3. 1. ch. 19. 39.
a cf. Deut. 1. 17. cf. Prov. 18. 13.
b ver. 41.
c cf. Matt. 26. 30.

"rivers" issue. For the full truth and bearing of the doctrine we must look elsewhere.

But where else shall we find so wonderful a picture of what the man indwelt of the Spirit is in the world as witness of the glory of His rejected Lord? As we have to say of kindred utterances in this Gospel, it seems too highly drawn for a picture of any save the rare exceptions among Christian men. But let us accept the reproof of this, and try rather to realize what a man indwelt of the Spirit would be normally as that. The Spirit of God—God—dwelling within one: the Living Centre of the practical life; the Enlightener of mind and conscience; the Energy of the affections and the will: all power, all wisdom in Him who as Vice-gerent of Christ has come to hold me for Christ against all that in a world opposed to Him would hinder my witness! what competency, what fulness at all times accessible to me does all this imply!

A perpetual spring in a vessel must needs overflow the vessel in which it is, the smallness of which is no limit to the spring itself. When once the vessel is full, all the power of the spring will manifest itself in the overflow. Hence, (*if we think of the spring and not of the vessel,*) "rivers of living water" are not too much to predicate of the outflow from this divine Source of blessing within the soul, which, first filling to complete satisfaction the soul itself, must surely then flow out for the need of others.

This is the Lord's own witness to the gift He gives, who cannot err in the estimate He makes of it. When we realize what it is, we cannot think it to be too high. Our experimental knowledge will depend indeed upon our practical subjection to the Spirit indwelling us; but how blessed to know that this is to be gained in so simple a way, and that this is the picture the Lord can give us of the normal Christian.

4. From this we go back to see the world in which He is, and which does not know Him. Reasonings there are many, and contrary thoughts; false tests,

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chaps. viii. 2–xii.)

Brought to God, in the power of resurrection life.

SECTION 1. (Chap. viii. 2–59.)

The Life the Light.

1 (2-11): Grace and truth.

1, AND early in the morning he came again into the [d] temple, and all the people came to him; and he sat down and taught them. And the scribes and the

[d] Lk. 21. 38. cf. ch. 18. 20.

and true tests falsely applied; the failure of His enemies to apprehend Him, failure from the timidity of the half-decided, as Nicodemus. Amid all this they scatter away from Him, every one to his own, and leave Him. He, solitary in the world He made, He to His solitude in the mount of Olives.

SUBD. 3.

The third subdivision is very distinctly marked as that, and in a double way: both as bringing into the sanctuary and giving the resurrection character of life as communicated to us by One who is both "the Resurrection and the Life." And these things are very clearly connected together by the fact that only through death could the sanctuary be opened for us, and resurrection is of necessity therefore the way in.

Historically we have not yet come to either; and this part even more distinctly if possible, than the former ones, shows us the anticipative character of the Gospel of John. As already said, there is no rending of the veil in it, as we find it in the Synoptic Gospels: for in John the Word, tabernacling in flesh, displays in Himself divine glory,—"glory as of an Only-begotten with the Father, full of grace and truth." This is what we find in what is before us here: Christ as the Light of the world, Immanuel, the Son of the Father, perfectly one with Him in all to which He testifies, a Light from which the pretentious self-righteousness of the Pharisees is driven out in confusion, while yet a convicted sinner can stand there, because revealed in grace. Grace and truth are found in Him together, and as the Son He gives the freedom of the Father's house.

Thus we begin here with the soul in the light. The second section shows the light in the soul; which makes Christ Himself the Object before it; who, as the Shepherd of the sheep, leads out His own from the Jewish fold of law into enjoyed salvation, liberty and green pastures. But for this the Shepherd must give His life up for the sheep, and these green pastures are in fact on resurrection ground.

This leads therefore to the third section, in which death is met for the believer, and Christ is now the resurrection and the life, Lazarus being here the text of the sermon, as the blind man is in the second section, and the woman taken in adultery in the first. In each case, as we have seen in the impotent man and the miraculous feeding of the multitude, the sermon goes beyond the text.

Sec. 1.

The first section, then, shows us sovereign grace in action, God Himself the only hiding-place of the convicted and condemned, and freedom therefore by the truth. Here where divine grace is so fully displayed, the history of the text is a lamentable illustration of how little that grace is realized by Christians themselves. We have but to take up indeed the writings of some of the earliest "fathers," to discover how soon the glory of its light became dimmed in the professing Church,—how soon the Judaism which combatted the apostle Paul from the beginning had overgrown or displaced the gospel which he preached. We may wonder indeed that it could venture to mutilate Scripture itself in such a manner as the MSS. and versions show has been done in this case; but this is what Augustine, as is well known, in a day little later than the earliest copies, charges against "some of little, or rather enemies to the true faith."

Pharisees bring a woman taken in [e]adultery, and having set her in the midst, they say unto him, Teacher, this woman was taken in the very act, committing adultery. Now in the law [f]Moses commanded to stone such: thou therefore, what sayest thou? But this they said, [g]tempting him, that they might have whereof to

[e] *cf.* ch. 4. 16–18. *cf.* Matt. 5. 27, 28.
[f] Lev. 20. 10. *cf.* Deut. 22. 21, 22.
[g] *cf.* Matt. 19. 3, etc.

We can, in fact, easily understand the motive which would lead to the omission of such a story as is here before us: who could imagine any bold enough to insert it where he did not find it? or the manufacture of so exquisite a piece of forgery as this would be? Indeed, few if any would venture to go quite so far as this. They speak of it rather as of some apostolic tradition, some fragment of true history, not perfectly preserved. They bow it out, in short, regretfully, but in no wise does this compensate for the greatness of the loss.

Of course, I am aware that there are difficulties urged, entirely apart from questions of the text. Thus Edersheim objects: "That a woman taken in the act of adultery should have been brought before Jesus (and apparently without the witnesses to her crime); that such an utterly un-Jewish, as well as illegal procedure should have been that of the 'Scribes and Pharisees'; that such a breach of law, and what Judaism would regard as decency, should have been perpetrated to 'tempt' Him; or that the Scribes should have been so ignorant as to substitute stoning for strangulation, as the punishment of adultery; lastly, that this scene should have been enacted in the temple, presents a veritable climax of impossibilities."

But much of this seems to be misconception merely; the rest a strange pledging oneself to what would be impossible for Scribes and Pharisees to do, mad with disappointed hatred against Christ, and bent upon compassing His destruction. As to the penalty of adultery being strangulation, "Michaelis," says Lange, "has justly denied the authority of the Talmud, and has asserted, on a comparison of Ex. xxxi. 14; xxxv. 2, with Num. xv. 32–35, that the formula 'put to death' generally means stoned. Besides strangulation is frequently used first, only as an alleviation of the prescribed penalty, as in the burning in the middle ages."

As to bringing her for judgment to the Lord, there is no evidence of any formal trial instituted, such as would need the production of witnesses. The appeal is to a prophet who should know the mind of God rather than to a judge, who should decide as to the fact. The case *was* decided according to Moses' law; but were they to act as Moses commanded? Thus the illegality vanishes: they were not setting up a new court, even feignedly; but knowing the grace they cavilled at, they would make Him either act in opposition to this, or come out in opposition to the law itself.

As for their respect for decency or the temple, under the pressure of such an opportunity, they were the children of those who murdered Zacharias, perhaps on the very spot where the Lord was at this time: and it would be scarcely safe to theorize in regard to it.

The narrative is witness to itself in its inimitable beauty and simplicity, its union of holiness and grace. It is witness also in the place in which it stands, as the introduction to the chapter, the key to what follows in it. In all this part of John the doctrine developes out of a narrative,—some miracle or significant thing, the text (as we have called it) of the sermon following. Take the story of the woman away, you will not realize in the same way at all the meaning of what is left, a broken statue without a head. This one can hardly show aright except as we take up the chapter, and therefore we may go on to this at once.

1. The Lord returns from the mount of Olives to the temple, and the people flock around Him. His manifest victory over the rulers on the previous days has discouraged open attempts upon His Person; while all the more it has

accuse him. But Jesus, stooping down, [h]wrote with his finger on the ground. And, as they continued asking him, he lifted himself up, and said unto them, He that is [i]without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the

[h] *cf.* Ex. 31. 18. *cf.* Dan. 5. 5, 25-28.

[i] *cf.* Rom. 2. 1, 22.

shown the necessity of some bold stratagem to make Him commit Himself in the eyes of the people as an offender against the law, for which they were zealots. It was just the time for such an effort as we find here, which if it were in some respects extreme, only made manifest the more the extremity to which they had been brought. As against the Friend of publicans and sinners also, their plot was well conceived. He had dared, as they murmured, to assume the prerogative of God in forgiving sins, and would evidently not be intimidated from the course He was pursuing by any fear of consequences. Yet He had not as yet ventured to pronounce the pardon of one openly condemned by Moses' law. Here was a new case therefore for Him to decide, in which He might easily come into collision with it. Did He not go after that which was lost until He found it? They would bring one lost indeed to Him, and see if He would take the burden of such: "a woman taken in adultery, in the very act!" The law had decided what was to be done: would He venture to annul its sentence? But if not, His reception of sinners must receive some modification: if He did—as they surely rather hoped—His followers would have to make open choice between Him and Moses, and the crowd would certainly drop off from Him.

The temptation is obvious, and they had much reason to expect success. Had He not in His sermon on the mount contrasted His own sayings with those of the ancients? And perhaps they had already heard such a saying as that "the law and the prophets were until John." Such things, doubtless exaggerated and multiplied by common rumor, would encourage them in their hope, as they came forward with their appeal to the Teacher for His judgment. Their surprise must have been great when, instead of answering them, "Jesus, stooping down, wrote with His finger on the ground." The common version adds: "As though He heard them not;" and others have given a similar interpretation. But He could not have *repeated* such an action with such a meaning. On the contrary, though we have nothing of any words which might be written, it is plainly the sentence itself which they are to find in the ground. But they do not understand Him, and as they continue asking, He lifts Himself up at last, and faces them.

No: He does not reverse Moses' sentence; let it be carried out: only let there be spotless hands to execute it. "Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone at her." The sentence of the law is right: yes! but on whom really is the sentence of the law? who shall escape it, if it be strictly applied? Manifestly, it is as a teacher, not a judge, that He is answering. They might say, Is law and order to come to a stand-still, because there are no spotless hands to execute it? Plainly not: nor, if the Lord were speaking as a judge, would it seem to have been in place to require any such thing. The judge in a given case has to do with the accused, and not with the executioner. But the Lord distinctly refuses to take such a place in Israel: "Man," He says to one who would have put Him in it, "who made Me a judge or a divider over you?" But if, as here, He is appealed to as a teacher, He will answer as a teacher; and then very differently. In this character, it is with the *appellants* that He has first of all to do, and not directly with the accused; and this is accordingly His course at this time. They would exhibit Him as one in opposition to Moses; He makes them realize that He alone it is who understands Moses, and uses the law with them for the purpose for which it was given, making them feel the sharp edge of its universal condemnation, in order that they may realize their need of that grace at which they cavil, and which He had come to declare and minister to men. "He that was without sin" was indeed the man the law was

ground. But they, having heard that, [j]went out one by one, beginning with the elder ones until the last; and Jesus was left [k]alone, and the woman, where she was, in the midst. And Jesus lifted himself up and seeing none but the woman, said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath [l]no one condemned thee? And she said, No one, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, [m]Neither do I condemn thee: go thy way; hencefore [n]sin no more.*

j *cf.* ch.3.20.
k *cf.* ch.9.34, 35. *cf.* Ps.51.4.
l *cf.* Ex.11.7. *cf.* 1Cor.4.3.
m *cf.* Rom. 4. 7, 8. *cf.* Rom. 8. 33, 34.
n *cf.* Lk.7.48–50. *cf.* Tit.2.11, 12.

*From vii. 53–viii. 11 is omitted in many ancient MSS., sometimes placed elsewhere; and many differences are found in the text.

seeking. For the lack of finding one, the death it threatened brooded over all; and none could see the face of God and live. Here was the first thing they needed to realize, in order to know the joy of that open face of God, which revealed in grace in the Person of the Son, brought life instead of death—*eternal* life.

"And again He stooped down, and wrote upon the ground." There it was indeed that man's sentence was written: that ground out of which man was taken, to which he must return,—dust to dust. Was that sentence upon the woman merely? Was it only upon the gross transgressor? There was the law's settlement of the question: "the man that doeth them shall live in them"; "the soul* that sinneth it shall die." Ah, yes: if the glory of God were in the face of Moses, *they* could not look upon it there: grace was the sinner's only refuge; it was theirs.

But they will not bow themselves to this. They stand in the light convicted, but only to flee out of it into the covering darkness. "And they, having heard that, went out one by one, beginning with the elder ones until the last; and Jesus was left alone, and the woman where she was in the midst."

Thus the attack has failed; the would-be accusers are silenced; they leave behind them even the sinner herself: it has become impossible for them to touch her. On her part, she remains: the light which they have found so intolerable reveals no more as to her than she has known already. Guilty, lost, she was and is: the retreat of her accusers has not altered that; to what it has left her as yet she knows not. *He* has not reversed Moses's law, whose words have yet inexplicably for the moment freed her. To herself He has not yet spoken. What will He say—what can He—with whom there is an authority that can make the leaders of the people bend and give way before it? Now she hears His voice again, and to herself, questioning, "Where are those thine accusers? has no one condemned thee?" And she says, "No one, Lord." He says again: "Neither do I condemn thee: go thy way; henceforth sin no more."

Now we cannot say what, or if any work, was wrought in the woman's soul. She utters no word which would entitle us to say that there was faith in her to lay hold of the grace that there was in Him for the chief of sinners. On His part He says nothing as to forgiveness of sins or of salvation. He has not come to judge the world, but to save the world. If the judges in Israel throw up her case, therefore, she is free. It is a great deliverance for her, and may be the type and prelude of one far greater. But the question as to this that remains does not at all affect the truth as presented to us here of God revealed in grace in the Person of the Son, in whom every soul hopelessly condemned and guilty may find refuge. Grace and truth are in Christ Jesus, and the Life is the Light of men. Whether she availed herself of it or not, on His side the sanctuary was opened; and in a world where righteousness was not,—where those who would claim it had to retire abashed and confounded from the presence of Him who for

*That is, "the person": a common use of the word soul in Scripture, and which is still preserved to our day. See for the argument as to the death-penalty of the law the notes on Exodus xxxiv. 1-7.

2 (12-20): The Father and Son their fellowship in testimony.

2. Jesus therefore spake again unto them, saying, I am the [o] light of the world: he that followeth me shall in no wise walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest witness concerning thyself: thy [p] witness is not true. Jesus answered and said unto them, Even if I bear witness concerning myself, yet my witness is true; for I know [q] whence I came and whither I go; but *ye* know not whence I came or whither I go. Ye judge according to the [r] flesh; I [s] judge no one. Yea, and if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not [t] alone, but I and the Father who sent me. And also in your law it is written that the witness of [u] two men is true: I am one who bear witness concerning myself, and the Father who sent me [v] beareth witness concerning me. They said therefore unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye [w] neither know me nor my Father. If ye had [x] known me, ye would have known my Father also.

o ch. 1.4,5,9. ch. 9. 5. ch. 12. 46.
p *cf.* ch.5.31. *cf.* ver. 17.
q ch. 13. 3. ch. 16. 28.
r ch. 7. 24. *cf.* Lk. 16. 15.
s ch. 3. 17. ch.12.47,48. *cf.* ch. 5.27.
t ver. 29. ch. 16. 32.
u Num. 35. 30. Deut. 17. 6.
v ch. 5. 37.
w ver. 55. ch. 16. 3. ch. 17. 25.
x *cf.* ch.1.18. *cf.* ch. 14.7.

those accepting condemnation was but a hiding-place. The sanctuary is opened then in sovereign grace, though the actual bringing to God, and the work that brings there, have not as yet found adequate expression. Holiness is found, however, in its true relation and due order: no condemnation leading on to no more sin. Grace and not law is the power for holiness.

2. The Lord returns to His speech with the multitude, interrupted by the appeal of the scribes and Pharisees, in words which have plain reference to what has just taken place. In that temple which, up to the moment of His final rejection, He was accustomed to speak of as His Father's house, where the Glory of old had tabernacled, and in the treasury in which the gifts of the worshipers were deposited, He openly claims that glory as His own. "I am the Light of the world," He says: "he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." The Sun is indeed rising above the hills of Judea; and the nations far and wide are to enjoy its light. Not only so, but Israel herself is beginning to be seen as part of that world which has been lying in the darkness. Sin and unbelief have shut out from her the glory which was or should have been her own, and now are shutting out the fuller splendor into which that earlier light has broadened. Israel has not vindicated any peculiar claim to that for which she has as a nation had no eyes, no heart. Light is for those that *have* eyes, and for practical use. So now it is "he that followeth Me": his alone is the blessing; *he* "shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Christ is the Life which objectively is the Light of men. In His words and acts the manifestation of God, the world in its contradiction of Him was necessarily manifested also. He was the test and touchstone of all, and in His presence every thing stood out in its true character. But thus also Christ received in the heart, the life received, becomes subjectively the light for it. In His light it finds light, and thus in following Him it has the "light of life."

A full, divine claim; and the Pharisees from their side naturally at once challenge it. "Thou bearest witness concerning Thyself," they say: "Thy witness is not true." But it is plain that that can rightly mean only "invalid." Obviously, a man may speak truly concerning himself; but his testimony, if unsupported, is insufficient. The Lord tells them that He speaks from knowledge; whereas they have only ignorance to oppose to it. They ought to have been able to recognize His divine mission at least, and owning this, they would have recognized His ability to testify also. But with all their ignorance they judged after a fleshly manner: putting themselves self-confidently into the

These things spake he in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; and no one took him; because his [y]hour was not yet come.

3 (21-29): From above, and returning thither: then to be manifested.

3. He said therefore again unto them, I [z]go my way; and ye shall seek me, and shall [a]die in your sin: whither I go ye [b]cannot come. They of Judea said therefore, Will he kill himself, that he saith, Whither I go ye cannot come? And he said unto them, Ye are from [c]beneath; I am from [d]above: ye are of this world; I am [e]not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for [f]except ye believe that I am [he], ye shall die in your sins. They said therefore unto him, [g]Who art thou? And Jesus said unto them, Absolutely* what I am even saying to you. I have many things to say and to judge concerning you; but he that sent me is true; and the things that I have [h]heard from him, these things I speak unto the world. They knew not that he spake unto them of the Father. Jesus therefore said, [i]When ye shall have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am [he], and that I do [j]nothing of myself; but as the Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he

*The rendering of the Authorized and Revised Versions, "from the beginning," is inadmissible. Both the tense and the verb itself forbid this.

[y] ch. 7. 8.
[z] cf. ch. 13. 33.
[a] ver. 24. cf. Ezek. 3, 18.
[b] ch. 7. 34. cf. Hos. 5. 6. etc. Jer. 50. 4, 5.
[c] ver. 44.
[d] cf. ch. 3. 13. cf. ch. 17. 8.
[e] ch. 17. 14, 16. cf. ch. 18. 36.
[f] cf. ch. 16. 9 with Acts 4. 12.
[g] cf. ch. 1. 19. cf. Matt. 26. 63.
[h] ch. 3. 11, 32. cf. ch. 15. 15. ver. 40.
[i] ch. 3. 14. ch. 12. 32, 33. cf. ch. 16. 8-11. cf. Acts 2. 36, 37.
[j] ch. 5. 19, 30.

judge's seat, for which they were incompetent; and ready to cut off, as in His case, those whom they ignorantly condemned. On His part, He was not taking the judge's seat, as the case of the woman illustrated. (Had He come to judge, they would all have been cut off.) And yet He truly was the One competent to do so, always in the mind of the Father, and one with it.

And if He bore witness concerning Himself, He did not stand alone in this. His witness was valid, for the Father who sent Him was bearing witness also concerning Him. He speaks evidently of those works of power, of which elsewhere He says, "The Father that abideth in Me, He doeth the works": a witness they could not deny, yet would not accept. And still they meet His claim with their mere ignorance: "Where is Thy Father?" The way to know His Father was to know Himself; and indeed they knew neither.

So He spoke in the treasury of the temple, and the hand of God was still upon them: they could do nothing. No one laid hand upon Him; for His hour to deliver Himself up, which waited His will, not theirs, was not yet come.

3. There is still no ear and no heart. He can only tell them, therefore, that He is going away—going to that place inaccessible to them, of which He had elsewhere spoken. They would seek Him, though not in true repentance, thus with no answer: they would die in their sin.

The men of Judea in sarcastic mockery say, He must mean to kill Himself: for the suicide's place of punishment is the only place they can think of where they cannot find Him. He tells them that they are from beneath, He from above: there is in them no work of God; the world in opposition to God has made them what they are: they are of it, as He is not. Thus they will die in their sins, because they will not by faith in Him lay hold of that mercy which God is holding out to them.

"Who then is He?" they ask. He can only answer that He is just what He is saying to them. Of what use to go on telling them things for which they have no ear? And concerning themselves also He has much to say and to judge;

who sent me is [k]with me: he hath not left me alone; for I do always the things that are [l]pleasing to him.

¶ (30-47): Searched out.

4. As he spake these things, many [m]believed on him. Jesus therefore said to those of Judea that believed him, If ye [n]abide in my word, ye are my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We are [o]Abraham's seed, and have [p]never been in servitude to any: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, [q]Every one that practiseth sin is the bondman of sin. Now the bondman abideth not in the house for ever; the [r]son abideth for ever. If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free [s]indeed. I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to [t]kill me, because my word hath no way with you. I speak that which I have [u]seen with my Father; and ye therefore do what ye have seen with [v]your father. They answered and said unto him, [w]Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the [x]works of Abraham. But now ye seek to [y]kill me, a man who hath told you the truth which I heard from God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the works of your father.

k ver. 16.
l cf. Matt.3. 17. *cf.* ch. 6.38. *cf.* ch. 17.4.
*m cf.*ch.2.23 -25. *cf.* ch. 7.31.
*n cf.*ch.15.7, 8. ver. 36. *cf.*Rom.8.2.
o vers.37,39. *cf.* Matt. 3. 9 with Lk. 16. 24, 25. *cfr.*Rom.4. 11, 12.
*p cfr.*Neh.9. 36, 37. *cf.*ch.19.15.
q cf. Tit.3.3. *cf.* Rom. 6. 16–21. *cf.*2 Pet. 2. 19.
r cf. Gen.21. 10. *cf.*Phile.15, 16.
s cf. Gal.5.1. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 16. *cf.* Rom. 8. 15.
t ch. 5. 18. ver. 59.
u ver. 26. *v* ver. 44; *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 8. *w* ver. 33. *x cf.* Gal. 3. 7, 9. *y* ver. 37.

but of what use? Still the True One has sent Him, and He has truly declared His words to the world. But they do not know of whom He is speaking.

Then He goes on to speak of His lifting up which they in their unbelief are going to accomplish. Then will come His manifestation and His vindication. And even now He who has sent Him is with Him, He cannot leave to Himself One who constantly does the things that please Him.

4. A wave of conviction passes over the multitude, and on hearing these words many, we are told, believed on Him; but the expression is no stronger than with regard to those who "believed on His Name" when at the feast-day they saw the miracles that He did; and of whom it is said that "Jesus did not commit Himself to them" (chap. ii. 23–25). Of these also the Lord speaks doubtfully, and presently they resent His words and lapse into unbelief the fiercer for their disappointment in Him. Perhaps they had caught at the lifting up of which He had spoken, as exaltation by the people, followed as He had said it would be by the manifestation of Himself. The Lord's words to them are certainly words well suited to turn them from any thought of mere political liberty to be gained, and to test them as to their need of a real salvation. Abiding in His word, He tells them, would prove them to be really His disciples. They would know the truth, and the truth would make them free. But at once they resist and resent this. They, the seed of Abraham, in bondage, needing to be made free? they cry: how can He speak of that? they were never in bondage to any! Spite of its notorious contradiction to the truth, their protest shows of what bondage they were thinking. But the Lord will not raise a question here, but goes deeper. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Every one that practiseth sin is the bondman of sin;" and this, though men often count it freedom, is the bitterest bondage. Hence, as this is the condition of man in general, the first thing that he needs is to be set free. There is no such thing in the spiritual realm as self-attained freedom: salvation from sin must be of God.

But what then must be the relationship to God of those who are the slaves of sin? Freemen towards God they cannot be, and yet, though rebels in heart and

They said unto him, We were not born of fornication: we have [z] one Father,—God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would [a] love me: for I came forth from God, and am come [from him]: for neither am I [b] come of myself, but *he* [c] sent me. Why do ye not know my speech? Because ye [d] cannot hear my word. Ye are of the [e] devil [your] father, and the lusts of your father ye desire to do. *He* was a [f] murderer from the beginning, and stood not in the truth; because there is [g] no truth in him. When he speaketh falsehood, he speaketh of what is his own: for he is a [h] liar, and the father of it. And because I [i] speak the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you [j] convicteth me of sin? if I say truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God [k] heareth God's words: ye therefore hear not because ye are not of God.

5 (48-59): Immanuel.

5. They of Judea answered and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a [l] Samaritan, and hast a demon? Jesus answered, I have not a [m] demon; but I [n] honor

z *cf.* Deut. 32. 6. *cf.* Gal. 3. 26.
a *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 23. *cf.* 1 Jno. 5. 1. *cf.* ch. 15. 23.
b ch. 5. 43. ch. 7. 28.
c *cf.* Heb. 5. 4, 5. ch. 3. 17.
d *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 14. *cf.* Jer. 6. 10. *cf.* ch. 7. 17.
e *cf.* Matt. 13. 38. ver. 23. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4.
f *cf.* Gen. 2. 17 with Heb. 2. 14.
g *cf.* Ezek. 28. 12–17.
h *cf.* Gen. 3. 4, 13. *cf.* 2 Cor. 11. 3. *cf.* Rev. 12. 9; *cf.* Rev. 20. 7–10.
i *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 11, 12; *cf.* ch. 5. 43.
j *cf.* Lk. 23. 41, 47; *cf.* ch. 9. 31; *cf.* ch. 19. 4–7.
k *cf.* ch. 6. 37, 44; *cf.* ch. 10. 26; *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 6.
l *cf.* ch. 4. 9; *cf.* Lk. 10. 33; *cf.* Is. 53. 3.
m ver. 52; ch. 7. 20; ch. 10. 20, 21; *cf.* Matt. 12. 24.
n *cf.* ch. 5. 41; *cf.* ch. 12. 28.

will, cannot escape from service. But unwilling service is again but bondage: the slaves of sin are therefore the slaves of God.

Man being what he is, what then can the law, the boast of the Jew, in fact, do for him? To the "soul that sinneth" it denounces death, and the shadow of this hangs over all. The covenant of Sinai is that "which gendereth to bondage, which is (typically) Hagar" (Gal. iv. 24); and freedom is unknown to it.

We see, therefore, to what the Lord is going on in the next words, seemingly disconnected as they are from what precedes them. "Now the bondman," He says, "abideth not in the house for ever; but the son abideth ever." The apostle's illustration of Hagar and Ishmael cannot but come into remembrance; and the casting out of the bondwoman and her son was now soon to come to pass. Even this is but the dispensational shadow of the dread final rejection into outside darkness which the unsaved sinner, zealous law keeper as he may be, must surely experience.

"But the son abideth ever." He is in the freedom begotten of relationship, and not under the bondman's law which may cast him out. The principle is general, but there is no application of it with regard to Christians, as the Christian status of sonship was not yet known. In fact, only Christ Himself can make free, and this is the Lord's application of it here: "If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." For the Son is no mere servant in the Father's house, but one in word and purpose with the Father; and His work is that salvation-work which alone can make free. Thus again to abide in His word leads into that communion with the Father and the Son, in which alone is found the mastery of all restraints and difficulties whatever. Blessed then is freedom such as this! for ever blessed He who brings us into it.

The Lord goes on to speak of how little their Abrahamic lineage was manifested in their ways,—how little they could really claim him for their father. And when they dare to go further, and resting on their national privilege would assert God Himself to be their Father, He shows they have no spiritual character corresponding to this, and the devil was indeed their father: murderer as he was from the beginning, and not abiding in the truth, which just as such found no reception from them. Convict Him of sin they could not, and yet they would not hear what they could not confute.

5. They turn upon Him with a two-fold thrust in answer to His double

my Father, and ye dishonor me. But I °seek not mine own glory: there is ᵖone that seeketh and judgeth. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man ᵍkeep my word, he shall never behold death. They of Judea said unto him, Now we know that thou hast a demon. Abraham is ʳdead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my word, he shall never taste of death. Art thou ˢgreater than our father Abraham, who is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself? Jesus answered, If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing: it is my Father that ᵗglorifieth me: of whom ye say that he is your God. And ye ᵘknow him not, but I know him; and if I said I know him not, I should be a liar like unto you; but I know him, and I ᵛkeep his word. Your father Abraham ʷrejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad. They of Judea therefore said unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, ˣBefore Abraham came into being, I am. They took up ʸstones therefore to cast at him; but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple [passing through the midst of them, and so passed on],*

*Some omit.

o *cf.* ver. 54. *cf.* Phil. 2. 6-8.
p *cf.* ch. 5. 23. *cf.* Phil. 2. 9-11.
q *cf.* ch. 5. 24. *cf.* ch. 14. 23, 24.
r *cf.* Heb. 11. 13. *cf.* ch. 11. 25, 26 with 1 Thess. 4. 13, 14.
s *cf.* ch. 4. 12. *cf.* Heb. 3. 3.
t *cf.* ch. 5. 31, 41. ver. 50. *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 17. *cf.* Heb. 1. 5, 6.
u ch. 7. 28. ver. 19.
v ver. 29. *cf.* ch. 15. 10.
w *cf.* Gen. 22. 1-18. *cf.* Gen. 15. 1-6.
x *cf.* Ps. 90. 1, 2 with Heb. 1. 10-12. *cf.* Heb. 13. 8.
y *cf.* vers. 5, 7, 11 with Is. 53. 5; ch. 10. 31.

charge. To the first, that they are no true children of Abraham, they retort that He is a Samaritan. To the second, that their father is the devil, that He is Himself possessed with a demon. The Lord quietly puts it away with the remark that they are dishonoring Him who seeks His Father's glory, not His own. But His Father seeks and judges. Then closing His assurance, still held out to whosoever will, of freedom by the truth, He takes up and removes the shadow which the law left hanging over its disciples, with His strongest form of affirmation: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep My word, he shall never behold death."

They meet it only with a shout of derision, for they know no removal of death save one, and without exercise of conscience know not even the sting of it—what makes death death. Abraham is dead and the prophets: is He greater, this man who will not permit, to His very disciples, even a taste of death?

But He answers: If He is but a man glorifying Himself, that glory is empty enough. Nay, but it is His Father glorifies Him,—He whom without true knowledge they call their God. On His part, if He denied the knowledge that He had of Him, He would be as false as they were now in professing that they knew Him. He did know Him, and kept His word. Then He looks back over the expectant ages awaiting Him whom now, being come, they refused, and affirms, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it and was glad." "Thou art not fifty years old," they reply; "and hast Thou seen Abraham?" His answer is the full disclosure of His glory, the claim of the incommunicable title of Deity for Himself: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham came into being, I AM."

It is Immanuel; but there is no knee bent to Him, no loving homage tendered. They take up stones to stone Him; and He, hiding Himself for the moment from their sacrilegious violence, passes out of the temple.

See. 2.

We have seen thus on God's part the sanctuary opened, God revealed in Christ in grace and truth,—the Life the Light of men. We have not yet seen the re-

SECTION 2. (Chaps. ix. x.)

The Going forth out of the Fold with Christ: Salvation, Freedom, Sustenance.

1 (ix.): The Light of Life.

1 (1-7): the Source of light.

1. [1] AND as he passed on, he saw a man [a]blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his [a]parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the [b]works of God should be manifested in him. I* must work the works of him that

a cf. Acts 3. 2. cf. ch. 11. 10.

a cf. Lk. 13. 1-5. cf. Ex. 20. 5. cf. Jer. 32. 18. cf. Ezek. 18. 20.

b cf. ch. 11. 4. cf. 1 Tim. 1. 16.

*Some read, "We," but the context shows "I" should be read.

spouse to it on man's side. We have not seen the Light received, and Christ become as the result of this the Object for the heart. We find this in the present section; and the power of the revelation, by which henceforth the walk is with and in obedience to Him. But this involves in other respects also a complete change. For Judaism as a legal system implies throughout a shut up heaven, the veil which in it hung before the face of God. To Moses himself is said, "Thou canst not see My Face." Thus the soul brought to God is necessarily, by that fact, outside of Judaism. As the epistle to the Hebrews teaches us, to be "inside the veil" means therefore, of necessity, to be "outside the camp."

God also not being revealed, the light not having come, Judaism is but a fold in which the sheep meantime are shut up in the darkness. This is their safeguard indeed, until the expected Guide and Shepherd comes, though not giving the security of the Shepherd's presence. Thus also there is bondage yet, not liberty; and, though they may be fed in the fold, it is not the place of pasture. So, when the Shepherd comes, it is to lead out of the fold, and this section is a true Exodus. It is the going forth which we shall find actually accomplished in the history of the Acts, the Exodus of the New Testament. Here we have it in its principles; and the Gospel of John in this once more displays its character as anticipative of Christianity. It is, in fact, that "beginning" from which John dates in his first epistle; Christ Himself being the Root necessarily out of which all things spring; and here anticipatively with His work accomplished, the Prophet of the new era now at hand.

1. The historical basis here is given at length: an instructive example of one to whom light is communicated, not less spiritually than physically. His simplicity and firm adherence to the truth so far as he knows it are beautiful, spite of the opposition of the leaders of the people, over whom his straightforward honesty of heart gains a manifest victory. He is given the privilege of being cast out for Christ's name, even before he knows the glory of Him for whom he suffers. Cast out, he receives the revelation of the Son of God and worships; the first of the many to form the flock of the good Shepherd, outside the fold. As a follower of the Light, he walks no more in darkness, but has the light of life.

[1] Passing on out of the hands of His persecutors, the pitiable condition of a man blind from birth arrests the Lord's attention; and the disciples (of whom we now hear for the first time during His present visit to Jerusalem) inquire as to a matter full of perplexity to such as believed with the Rabbis in every physical evil as the result of some specific sin. Was this man so born for sin committed even before birth? or was it for the sin of his parents? Neither explanation of it seems to satisfy them; and indeed, looked at, as they contemplate it, as mere punishment, it must be ever hard to satisfy oneself as to the inequalities of it that seem upon the face of the things. The Lord lets in the light of a higher purpose, as applicable to any other as to the man then before Him,—"that the works of God should be made manifest in him." Of course, the sin which has come into the world has been the cause of all the evil in it; and, of course, there is very commonly specific punishment for specific sin. With this the heart can have no rest, however, until we realize that God is manifesting Himself in all human history; for this cannot be in mere righteousness only,

sent me, while it is [c]day. The night cometh, when no man can work. While I am in the world, I am the [d]light of the world. When he had said these things, he [e]spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and anointed his eyes with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation, [f]Sent). He went away therefore, and washed, and came [g]seeing.

2 (8-34): the growth and conflicts of faith.

[2] The [h]neighbors therefore, and those who had before

[c] ch. 11.9,10.
[d] ch. 8. 12. cf. 1 Pet. 2.9.
[e] Mk. 7. 33. Mk. 8. 23. etc. Num. 12. 14.
[f] cf. ch. 4. 50. cf. Rom. 1. 5.
[g] ch. 11. 37. cf. Matt. 11. 5.
[h] cf. Mk. 5. 19.

but in love as well. We have a whole book in the Old Testament devoted to the working out of this problem of the mission of evil, which in Job's case was mistaken by his friends in the same fashion as the disciples' question would indicate here. But if the manifestation of God in His works be the great overruling purpose everywhere, then not only must there be in general love as well as righteousness, but in every one of His works there must be love. Where love is not, there God is not: if "God is love." And here the miracle (or as Scripture would speak of it from its having this very character of manifesting God, the "*sign*") is only a *special* manifestation of Him who everywhere is the same God.

The Lord adds that the day for His activity as Man upon the earth is hastening to a close. For Him also, in that sense, the night is coming; and for the world also, from which He, the Light of it, is soon to be taken. This is not in contradiction to the truth that Christianity, with its wondrous blessings, was to follow His ascension to heaven: for Christianity is not the "light of the *world*," but the taking out of it a people, whose place is to be with Christ where He is, and whose blessings are "spiritual blessings in heavenly places." This is in perfect keeping with what is the doctrine now before us, the abandonment of the Jewish fold, and the gathering of Jews and Gentiles into one, outside it. For Christians it is the night that is passing, not the day; but a night in which we see far into heaven.

The Lord now spits upon the ground, and making clay with the spittle anoints the eyes of the blind man with the clay. That might seem as if it would rather confirm his blindness than remove it, and the typical significance speaks in the same way: for out of the ground man was made, and the spittle, connected so often with humiliation and reproach, adds such thoughts to the lowly condition which manhood in itself implied for Him. Thus with Christ the very grace which brought Him down so low was misunderstood and cavilled at by the pride and self-righteousness of scribes and Pharisees, and seemed, in fact, but to make the blind eyes blinder. The plain fact of His humanity became for them an unanswerable argument against His claim of divinity, as we find shortly here. But there is a remedy which will change all: "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam," says the Lord; and then that we may recognize the spiritual meaning of this, the interpretation of the name is added, "Sent." These interpretations (found in the Gospel of John alone) are in themselves significant, as we have seen already (chap. i. 41, 42), of the going over of spiritual blessing to the Gentiles, and the present one is again perfectly in keeping with the subject here. The water is the type of the Spirit, and the spring gushing from the temple-mount, where normally rested the cloud of the divine presence, the place of the "Father's house," was an apt figure of Him in His gracious working, who was to come after the Lord's ascension, "sent" to declare the Rejected One.

How differently does this poverty now appear when it is seen as the self-abasement of divine Love in quest of men, the poverty by which they are to be made rich! And how does the application of Him thus open the eyes indeed to all other things! "He went away therefore, and washed, and came seeing."

[2] Immediately the conflict begins; and first as to the man himself. So differ-

seen him that he was a [t]beggar, said, Is not this he who sat and begged? Some said, This is he; others said, Nay, but he is like him; *he* said, I am he. They said to him therefore, [j]How were thine eyes opened? He answered, The man called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said to me, Go to Siloam and wash. I went away therefore and washed, and recovered sight. They said to him, [k]Where is he? He said, I know not. They bring him to the Pharisees, the man once blind. Now it was the [l]sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. The Pharisees therefore also again asked him how he recovered sight. And he said to them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and see. Some of the Pharisees said therefore, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath. Others said, [m]How can a sinful man do such signs? and there was a division among them. They say again therefore to the blind man, What sayest thou of him, because he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a [n]prophet. The Jews therefore did not believe that he was blind and had recovered sight, until they called the parents of him who had recovered sight, and asked them, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? His parents answered and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but how he now seeth we know not, or who opened his eyes *we* know not: ask him; he is of age; he will speak for himself. These things said his parents, because they [o]feared the Jews. For the Jews had already agreed that if any one confessed him to be the Christ, he should be [p]put out of the synagogue. On this account his parents said, He is of age: ask him. They called therefore the second time the man who had been blind, and said to him, Give glory to God; *we* know that this man is a [q]sinner. He answered therefore, If he is a sinner I know not; one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see. They said to him therefore, What did he to thee? How opened he thine eyes? He answered them, I told you already, and ye did not hear: why would ye hear it again? would ye also become his disciples? They railed at him and said, Thou art *his* disciple; but we are [r]Moses' disciples. *We* know that God spake unto Moses, but this man, we know not [s]whence he is. The man answered and said unto them, Now in this is a wonderful thing, that *ye*

t *cf.* Lk. 18. 35–43.

j *cf.* ch. 3. 4.

k *cf.* ch. 10. 39–42. *cf.* ver. 35.

l *cf.* ch. 5. 9.

m *cf.* ch. 3. 2. *cf.* vers. 31–33. *cf.* ch. 10. 21.

n ch. 4. 19. ch. 6. 14.

o ch. 7. 13. ch. 12. 42, 43.

p ch. 16. 2. *cf.* Lk. 6. 22.

q ver. 16. *cf.* ch. 5. 23.

r *cf.* ch. 5. 45–47. *cf.* Acts 13. 27.

s *cf.* ch. 7. 27, 28. *cf.* ch. 8. 14.

ent is he with the light in those blank and sightless eyes, that they cannot at first believe it is the same. Then comes the question, what has made this change; and he refers it to the "man called Jesus." There is as yet little knowledge indeed of the One who has had compassion upon Him. Still it has taken hold, and a little germ of faith, scarcely to be distinguished as that at first, increases amid opposition, even by means of it, until, having learned to own Him as a prophet, the glory of the Son of God is finally revealed.

know not whence he is, and he hath opened mine eyes. We know that God [t]heareth not sinners; but if any one be a worshiper of God and doeth his will, him he heareth. Never* was it heard that any one opened the eyes of one that was born blind. Except this man were of God, he could do [u]nothing. They answered and said unto him, Thou wast wholly [v]born in sins, and dost *thou* teach us? And they [w]cast him out.

3 (35-41): the revelation.

35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having [x]found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the [y]Son of God? He answered and said, And who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him? Jesus said to him, Thou hast even seen him, and he who speaketh with thee is he. And he said, I believe, Lord; and he [z]worshiped him. And Jesus said, For judgment am I come into this world; that they that see not might see, and that they that see might become [a]blind. Some of the Pharisees that were with him heard these things, and

* or, "Since the world was."

t *cf.* Ps. 66. 18. *cf.* Acts 19. 13-16.
u *cf.* ch. 5. 19. *cf.* ch. 14. 10, 11.
v ver. 2. *cf.* Ps. 51. 5. *cf.* Lk. 18. 11, 12.
w ver. 22.
x *cf.* Heb. 13 10-13. *cf.* Heb. 10. 19-21. *cf.* ch. 8. 9.
y *cf.* vers. 11, 17, 25, 31, 33. *cf.* ch. 1. 49.
z *cf.* ch. 14. 9. *cf.* ch. 20. 16, 17, 28. *cf.* Phil. 2. 10. *cf.* Rev. 5. 12.
a *cf.* Matt. 13. 12-15. *cf.* Acts 6. 51-53.

The picture of hierarchic pretension with its blindness and hostility to the truth is complete. The Pharisees question the man, the parents, the man again. That the unbribed power of God has acted they have no wish to take into their argument. If He has, let Him have the praise of it: that hinders nothing the condemnation of Him with whom God has chosen to ally Himself, for His share in the matter. Did He not make the clay upon the Sabbath-day? The man with clearer insight affirms that God does not hear sinners: if He were not of God He would not be owned of God after this manner.

They have no argument to meet this; all the more earnestly do they denounce it. A man wholly born in sins,—for was not his blindness proof enough of that?—to be teaching *them!* So they cast him out of the synagogue: they have before decided that if any should confess that the Worker of these mighty deeds was Christ, he should be cast out. Thus the open rupture with the disciples of Christ has begun on the part of the synagogue.

35 He is cast out; but cast only in this way into the company of Christ at whom all this is aimed. Nor will he be long left without the blessedness of such companionship. Again Jesus finds him, as before He found him, now to complete the work which He had then begun. "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" He asks; and he, though not knowing Him in that glory which is His, yet with full confidence in his Guide, inquires, "And who is He, Lord, that I may believe on Him?" He is following on in the track of the light that is come to him, and now has reached the Source of it. "Jesus said to him, Thou hast even seen Him, and He that speaketh to thee is He." At which, with the straightforward simplicity that had baffled the Pharisees, and now yields itself with complete conviction to the completing truth, he answers, "I believe, Lord;" and worships. He has not found merely a creed: he is brought to God. That which we did not apprehend in the woman is now unmistakably seen in the once blind man: he is morally and spiritually, as well as physically enlightened; he is in the light, and the light also is in him.

And the Lord, who came not into the world for the purpose of judging it, but for its salvation, nevertheless by the fact of His presence in it, has brought judgment into it. The necessary effect is found that the (consciously) blind—the seekers therefore of light—are brought to see; while the pretentious seers—the men of this world's wisdom—are made blind. The Pharisees ask where they are to be classed—with the blind or with the seeing. The Lord answers them

2 (10): The flock outside the fold.
) (1-5): the call of the true Shepherd.

they said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye would have [b]no sin; but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin [c]remaineth.

2. [1] Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not through the [d]door into the sheepfold, but mounteth up elsewhere, *he* is a [e]thief and a robber. But he that entereth through the door is the [f]shepherd of the sheep. To him the [g]porter openeth; and the sheep [h]hear his voice; and he calleth his own sheep by [i]name, and [j]leadeth them out. And when he hath put forth all his own, he goeth [k]before them, and the sheep [l]follow

b *cf.* ch. 15. 22-24. *cf.* Jas. 4. 17. *cf.* Acts 3. 17. *cf.* Rom. 5. 13.
c *cf.* Rom. 2. 17-29. *cf.* ch. 20. 23.
d *cf.* ch. 1. 45 with Heb. 5. 4-6.
e ver. 8. *cf.* ch. 5. 43.
f Ps. 23. 1. *cf.* Gen. 49. 24.

ver. 14. *g cf.* Matt. 3. 13-17; *cf.* Is. 42. 1-4. *h* ver. 27; *cf.* ch. 6. 44. *i cf.* Ex. 28. 9, 10, 21; *cf.* ch. 20. 16; *cf.* Is. 43. 1. *j cf.* ch. 9. 34-38, *cf.* Heb. 13. 13; *cf.* Gal. 5. 2. *k cf.* Col. 2. 11-15; *cf.* ch. 17. 19. *l cf.* Num. 10. 33; *cf.* Col. 3. 1.

that they have classed themselves: they say, "we see." Had they been blind, the sin that now was theirs would not have remained to them.

2. By the will of the Jews themselves therefore, the flock of Christ are now outside the fold. From His own side the Lord now confirms this: for He had come as the Shepherd into it, to lead out His sheep into a larger place. The principle of the fold is now to be given up: restraint is now to be exchanged for freedom,—a freedom made safe by an Object for the heart, controlling it by its affections, and by a living guidance which is realized as that of perfect wisdom, indissolubly united to as perfect love.

[1] That Israel were the sheep of Jehovah had been the theme of the prophets of old. He who came into this fold to exercise authority must do so under the plain warrant of Jehovah Himself. And Ezekiel had prophesied in His Name that He would raise up for them "one Shepherd" who should feed them, even His "servant David" (xxxiv. 23): that Greater one of David's line, of whom that king had only been the fore-runner and type. This was, of course, Messiah, the Lord's Anointed; and every mark that pointed out the Anointed pointed out the Shepherd of Israel also. These marks combined constituted the "door," or way of entrance by which the true claimant of such prerogative would come. All else were but thieves and robbers: men seeking their own gain in ways of treachery and violence. The entrance by the door was possible but to One,—the true Shepherd,—to whom the porter would open. He, so coming, would call His own sheep by name and lead them out.

The interpretation that would apply all this to the New Testament ministry in general, is so forced and really arrogant in its assumption, as scarcely to need notice. The one expression, "*His own* sheep" can apply to no under-shepherd; and who but He could call them by name, and lead them out? To Him alone every thing applies in the simplest and fullest way. Coming at the time definitely predicted by Daniel, confessedly of David's line, born at Bethlehem, displaying the signs that none other ever did, and that unique character which could not permit confounding Him with any other,—He came through the door manifestly. And the Spirit of God in the prophesyings at His birth, at His presentation in the temple, in the testimony of the Baptist, and the visible anointing which preceded this, opened the door of the fold. Now the sheep were beginning to hearken to His voice, calling them each by his name with a knowledge which individualized them all, with perfect and tender knowledge. These were His own sheep, but not all the sheep in the Jewish fold; and this is the strange thing that now becomes manifest, that though He who has come is the Shepherd of Israel, it is not Israel as a whole that knows His voice. Like many of the eastern folds, this one is found to have other sheep than His sheep. The call is an appeal to faith which not all have; and by it is wrought a separation, which sets them outside of the fold of Judaism altogether.

He "leadeth them out:"—stronger still in the next sentence: "when He has

him; for they know his voice. But a [m]stranger they will in no wise follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers.

2 (6-21): salvation, liberty, sustenance, in company with the Good Shepherd: the contrast with wolf and hireling.

[2] This allegory spake Jesus unto them; but *they* [n]knew not what things he was saying unto them. Jesus said therefore again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the [o]door of the sheep. All those that came [p]before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any one enter in, he shall be [q]saved, and shall [r]go in and out, and find [s]pasture. The [t]thief cometh not save to steal and

m *cf.* vers. 12, 13. *cf.* Gal. 1.8. *cf.* 2 Cor. 11. 13-15.
n *cf.* ch. 8. 43.
o *cf.* ch. 14. 6. *cf.* Acts 4. 12.
p *cf.* Jer. 23. 1-6. *cf.* Ezek. 34. 1-6. *cf.* Zech. 11. 16, 17.
q *cf.* Acts 16. 30, 31.
r *cf.* Rom. 8. 2.
s *cf.* Ezek. 34. 14; *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 2.
t ver. 8; *cf.* 2 Pet. 2. 1-3.

put forth all His own." For the principle of the fold is now to be abandoned. "The law is not of faith;" and faith is the sole productive energy in man for God: "faith, if it have not works, is dead," so necessarily productive is it, as surely as it is living: and "faith worketh by love." But law is a system of prohibition, whose inspiring principles are self-interest and fear; while "there is no fear in love." "Love seeketh *not* her own."

The law was a prohibitory fence thrown around men, the curb upon a will which was naturally lawless, which it could not change, and which fretted against it. Hence it was bondage and not liberty: under which the very children of God were as servants, and not sons (Gal. iv. 1, 3, 7); and which therefore did not yield for the Father's heart that which would satisfy Him. Every way the fold must go: Christ must put forth *all* His sheep; the putting forth implying however the strange power that a legal system yet may have even over true believers. How needful indeed this putting forth, and the history of the resistance to it, the Acts with the book of Revelation will by and by declare to us.

As we know, they were not all His sheep that lay in that Jewish fold; and His presence in it was that which tested this, and drew the line of separation. His sheep were they who recognized the Shepherd's voice; not merely knew Him by external testimony, but in the response of their hearts to what appealed to them as no other. Hence they were drawn, and followed Him in that wondrous path in which they found Him ever before them, in the track of light His footsteps left. And the Shepherd adds with regard to them, in the deep satisfaction of His own heart, "A stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers." They are not obliged to know whose voice it is, nor to be learned in theological disquisitions. There is but one Voice for which they have ear or heart; and from another voice they flee; for from any who would simulate that Voice, or claim authority over them beside, they do right in suspecting evil. For the sheep ordinarily, apart from what may appeal to them in the need of others, their best safety is in flight.

[2] But those to whom He is speaking understand nothing of what He is saying; the Lord therefore repeats and emphasizes His claim as the Shepherd of the sheep; dwelling upon their happiness with Him, in contrast with those who would make them a prey, or at least follow their own interests and leave them as a prey to others. He as the *Good* Shepherd would lay down His life for them; and that as the expression of the Father's love.

He begins with the assertion of His being the door of the *sheep*. It is not a question of the *fold* any more: there is no longer a fold; His sheep were in it, but are now ideally outside it altogether. The flock is His, and in His hand; and He is the only way of entrance into it. *He* receives into the fellowship of His people. Others that had come before Him were only thieves and robbers, with no title, and seeking no interests but their own; but His true sheep had never been deceived; and amid the multitudinous voices now, His voice, so unlike all others, rings out still, clear and distinct in its appeal to those in con-

to kill and to destroy; I came that they might have [u]life, and have it [v]abundantly. I am the [w]good shepherd: the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep. But he who is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, beholdeth the [x]wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf seizeth them and [y]scattereth the sheep. [The hireling fleeth,]* because he is a [z]hireling, and is not concerned about the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and [a]know those that are mine, and those that are mine [b]know me; even as the [c]Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and I [d]lay down my life for the sheep. And [e]other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring; and they shall hear my voice, and shall become one [f]flock, one shepherd. Therefore doth the Father [g]love me, because I lay down my life, that I

u *cf.* ch. 6. 33.
v *cf.* ch. 7. 37-39.
w *cf.* Is. 40. 11. *cf.* Ezek. 34. 11-13, 22-25. *cf.* Heb. 13. 20. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 25. *cf.* Matt. 20. 28.
x *cf.* 1 Sam. 17. 34-36. *cf.* Acts 20. 29.
y *cf.* Zech. 13. 7.
z *cf.* 1 Pet. 5. 2.
a ver. 27. *cf.* Nah. 1. 7. *cf.* ch. 6. 64. *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 19.
b ver. 4. *cf.* 2 Tim. 1.

* Many omit.

12. *c cf.* Matt. 11. 27. *d cf.* ch. 15. 13; *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 16. *e cf.* ch. 17. 20; *cf.* Acts 15. 7-9; *cf.* Is. 56. 8. *f cf.* ch. 11. 52; *cf.* Eph. 2. 13-16; *cf.* Col. 3. 10, 11; *cf.* Eph. 3. 1-6. *g cf.* ch. 5. 20; *cf.* Phil. 2. 9; *cf.* Eph. 5. 2.

sciousness of their need and guilt. Where is there another who could propose to meet all the unrest in human hearts for every one who should come to Him? and who but He has done it?

Again He declares: "I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." Salvation—a strange thing in this sense to the Jew—here lies at the very beginning of the blessings belonging to the flock of Christ; not as a possible attainment, but as a gift of unconditional grace, never therefore to be revoked. This positive assured security of His people tells at once that He and they are outside the legal fold. So the liberty that is associated with this speaks also: "He shall go in and out;" that is, the fold is no longer a place of confinement for him. He may in New Testament liberty go back to find in the Old Testament what God has given of Christ in it; but he belongs to it no more. Then also "he shall find pasture": the true place of it is certainly outside the fold. All here combines to tell his blessing, and where he now belongs.

The assurance of all blessing lies in this that he is in the care of the Good Shepherd. Wisdom and love are His; with power also that can lack no resources. The thief comes only to steal and to kill and to destroy. He on the contrary comes to give life, and that abundantly. Here a power beyond all creature power is seen; a need which is beyond all that the figure would imply. The theme of John's Gospel discloses itself once more: life, which is eternal and His gift, without whose work none could have it. This, of course, looks backward as well as forward: life for any, at any time, could be but the result of His coming; which waited not for its effectuation to bring forth its fruit; or else, of necessity, every mercy shown to man must have waited likewise. But we know without any peradventure it was not so.

Manifested, however, the life was not, until the personal Life had come. It was possessed, as we have seen, new birth—without which none could see the Kingdom of God—involving its possession; but it was possessed in the midst of hindrances of the most effectual kind to manifestation. This is a question of the condition of the life, and not of the life itself. The babe does not yet manifest what the man is; and yet it has the life and nature of the man.

In the Son come into the world, the eternal life was first and fully manifested. It was seen in Him in that knowledge of and communion with the Father, which was in Him perfect, and never clouded for a moment. And by Him it

may take it again. No one taketh it from me, but I lay it down of [h]myself. I have [i]authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it again: this [j]commandment have I received of my Father.

There was a [k]division among the Jews on account of these words. And many of them said, He hath a [l]demon, and raves; why hear ye him? Others said, These are not the sayings of one who hath a demon. Can a demon [m]open the eyes of the blind?

h *cf.* ch. 18. 6. *cf.* Matt. 26. 53.
i *cf.* Heb. 10. 5-9. *cf.* ch. 2. 19. *cf.* Acts 4. 28. *cf.* Heb. 2. 14.
j ch. 14. 31. *cf.* ch. 17. 4.
k ch. 9. 16.
l ch. 8. 48.
m *cf.* ch. 9. 31, 32.

was revealed as the portion of those who in faith received Him; for, now that He had come, there was no faith that did not receive Him. He that believed on the Son had eternal life; and he that was not subject to the Son did not see life, but the wrath of God abode upon him.

Nor did this wait for redemption to be accomplished. "The hour is coming, *and now is*, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." Thus already was He quickening dead souls with the life that was in Him; and in His prayer to the Father in which He declares that "this is life eternal, that they should know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent," He declares also that this knowledge they already had: "they have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me."

Thus the eternal life communicated to men was already exhibiting itself in its true character; already men knew the Father and the Son. But this was not yet the life in its full abundance; of which the Lord here speaks. Its character was manifested as a life of divine acquaintance and communion; but for this communion to be enjoyed aright, it needed to be freed from many great and terrible hindrances: the Cross had to be accomplished; the resurrection of Christ from the dead must give the answer on God's part to the claim of righteousness there made good, that now as risen with Christ we might be possessors of a life triumphant over death, and justified from all that had brought in death, in a recognized place of nearness to God unknown before. There in the place of sons with God, and with the Spirit of sonship to give the enjoyment of the place, the life eternal would at last have its true abundance. This is what the Lord here looks forward to: the development of it awaits us in the portion of the Gospel soon to come before us, with the Epistle to the Romans for the results in known justification, and the believer's place in Christ, and the Epistle of John for the practical results in the life down here.

He is come then to give life: as the Good Shepherd, by laying down His own: yet it is not so much doctrine that is here, as the insistence upon a love proved at whatever cost. The hireling cares but for his wages: the sheep are not his own, and he is not personally concerned about them: when the wolf appears, he leaves the sheep and flees; alas, no supposititious case, but what has been abundantly seen in history. The wolf in consequence, the open adversary, catches them and scatters them. The hireling acts in character: nothing better could be expected of him. On the contrary, between the Good Shepherd and His own exists a bond of the most tender intimacy. "I know My own, and they know Me; even as My Father knoweth Me, and I know My Father: and I lay down My life for the sheep." "The world knew Him not:" there was the strangeness resulting from contrasted natures. His sheep know Him: for they have received His life and nature, and have thus been brought into communion; and this is the same kind of knowledge as exists (however much more perfectly) between the Father and the Son. The love implied in it is manifested in this, that He lays down His life for the sheep.

But His sheep as thus defined have no longer any relationship with the Jewish fold, still less can be limited to those who have such. Law could not give this

3 (22-30): the Glory manifested in the re-dedicated temple, and His own in His hand.

3 Now the feast of the [n]dedication was taking place at Jerusalem [and]* it was winter. And Jesus was walking in the temple in Solomon's porch. The Jews therefore came round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou hold our soul in suspense? If thou art the Christ, tell us [o]plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believe not: the [p]works that I do in

n *cf.* ch. 2. 19, 20. *cf.* Matt. 24. 1, 2.

o *cf.* Matt. 21. 23-27.

p ver. 38. ch. 5. 36. *cf.* Acts 2. 22.

* Some omit.

gift of eternal life, nor have, therefore, any control over it. In the fold itself there had been those that were not His own; and there are sheep of His not of that fold at all, but Gentiles, far enough off, to be brought nigh and made to hear His voice. Then there shall be one *flock*, one Shepherd. There is no *fold* any more: the fold was Jewish and legal, and is gone. In Christ is neither Jew nor Gentile.

That wondrous act of self-devotion by which all blessing is effected and justified for men gives to the Father's heart a new reason for the love wherewith He loves even His well-beloved Son. "Therefore doth the Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again." He does not lay it down, as giving up that humanity which He has taken to accomplish the work,—the earthen vessel in which alone the bird of heaven could die. Nay, He takes up again, though in changed condition, the life He has laid down,—takes it to lay it down no more. His death is neither the exhaustion of His love, nor the limit of His work for man. He has served in the lowest deep of suffering on earth; He serves on the Throne of glory still. And the Father's love, which thus rests upon Him as Man continually, embraces as well the fruits of His work, —the men for whom He has toiled, and suffered, and won. This is all fully told out in the epistles of Paul specially; but John, though in some respects the very opposite of Paul, has many connecting links of doctrine with him; beyond the rest of the inspired writers; and this is true even as compared with Luke, whose Gospel has been even styled Paul's Gospel. We shall soon be called to realize this, which here begins to dawn on us. Our acceptance in the Beloved, of which Paul speaks (Eph. i. 6), roots itself in this peculiar love of the Father to the Son.

But the Lord goes further than this, and shows us the Father's purpose in that which He is executing, the Father's commandment entrusted to Him to execute. Not by constraint but freely He lays down His life: "No one taketh My life from Me, but I lay it down of Myself: I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it again." For as Man, He will not dispose of His own life without the Father's sanction; but that is not all: "this *commandment* have I received of My Father." Thus throughout He is the obedient servant of the divine counsels: one with the Father in what He has in hand to do; the Word, in all things the expression of the Divine Mind; and still "we behold His glory,—glory as of an Only-begotten with the Father, full of grace and truth."

So "there was a division again among the Jews on account of these words." On the one hand they repeat the old blasphemy, that He had a demon, and was raving. Others object to such a sentence, and yet seem to go no further than perplexity. In sorrowful indecision only, the matter for the present ends.

3 The feast of the dedication of the temple occurred two months later than the previous narrative; the connection of it with it is, however, manifest. The dedication commemorated was not that of Solomon's, but the re-dedication by Judas Maccabæus, after its profanation by Antiochus. Yet the Lord walking in Solomon's porch (or colonnade) is surely significant in this way, as carrying us back to that first dedication, if only by way of contrast. The massive foundations of Solomon's structure remained, but only in ruin, which, however sought to be repaired, witnessed to what had come in the way of failure and ruin. How

my Father's name these bear witness of me. But ye believe not [q]because ye are not of my sheep, [as I told you].* My sheep [r]hear my voice, and I [s]know them, and they [t]follow me. And I give unto them [u]eternal life; and they shall in no wise ever perish; and no one shall [v]seize them out of my hand. My Father who gave them to me is greater than all; and no one is able to seize them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are [w]one.

q ch. 8. 47. cf. 1 Jno. 4. 6. cf. ch. 6. 44.
r ver. 3. cf. Rom. 10. 17. cf. Acts 16. 4.
s vers. 14, 15.
t cf. ch. 8. 12. vers. 3, 4. cf. ch. 6. 66–69.
u ch. 3. 16. cf. ch. 17. 3.
v cf. ch. 6. 39.

* Many omit.

cf. Rom. 8. 35–39; cf. 1 Pet. 1. 5. w cf. ch. 5. 19; cf. ch. 14. 9–11; cf. ch. 17. 21–24.

much this second temple, again renewed with great magnificence by the bloody hands of the Edomite Herod, lacked of what the old possessed! As it stood, it was the very witness of their pretentious legalism, covering up the decay and desolation underneath. The Glory was departed, the Living Voice that had once spoken to them was silent now. The Ark and Mercy-seat, where the covering blood should have been sprinkled, the Throne of the divine Inhabitant, was gone. All went on now, not upon the old basis, but only as permitted by long-suffering patience, still pleading, still abused.

Yet the Maccabæan outburst of loyalty to God had for awhile seemed to argue better things in the near future for the returned remnant of a people already scattered. Alas, it was but the convulsive leap of a flame that for a moment sought the heavens, and then died down to its now cold ashes. On man's part, what hope more? In a few souls God's mercy kept hope still; but the fulfilment of it lingered long.

And now there was a new Voice in Solomon's porch: a Voice that did not ignore the ruin, did not accord with the Pharisaism which the people followed, did not ring with the trumpet-tones of the warlike zealotry which would seize its triumph out of the reluctant hand of time; and yet thrilled heart and conscience, as if all the being of man were in His hand and answered to His summons. The Light shone; and the depths within were penetrated by it.

For in fact the Glory had returned, and the Voice long silent had again awakened. It had proclaimed itself in the temple and synagogue, as well as in the places of daily concourse, and in the quiet homes of men. Here was He for whom they had dedicated and re-dedicated the temple, the fitting completion to their celebration of it now. But the fervor of enthusiasm around Him was not for Him: already He had been rejected, vilified and blasphemed; and the few who really listened had to take as outcasts their place with Him. But He was leading them out; and the hand that led them sheltered them; the glory of His presence shone around them: they are hidden in the Sanctuary of it from all that would injure them; for none shall pluck them out of His hand.

The Jews come round about Him in Solomon's porch, and urge Him not to leave them longer in suspense, but tell them plainly if He is the Christ. He answers that He has already told them without effect; and that the works He was doing in His Father's Name bore witness of Him. They believed not because they were not of His sheep, who heard His voice. These sheep of His He knew, and they followed Him. He had said this before; but He now adds: "And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall in no wise ever perish," (it is the strongest possible affirmation,) "nor shall any one pluck them out of My hand."

The absolute security of the sheep of Christ could hardly be more fully affirmed. For, first of all, they have a nature which, as divine, is truly everlasting; it has become truly their own nature, although it is true that they have yet also in them a fleshly nature which is not in conformity, but in contradiction to it. This, which seems to many a strange doctrine, is nevertheless the true experience of every child of God. Yet in face of it the apostle can say, "Who-

The Jews therefore again took up [z]stones that they might stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shown you from the Father: for which of these good works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, For a good work we stone thee not, but for [y]blasphemy, and because thou, being a man, makest thyself God. Jesus answered them, Is it not [x]written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods to whom the word of God came, (and Scripture [a]cannot be broken) say ye of him whom the Father hath [b]sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do

z ch. 8. 59.
y *cf.* Matt. 9. 3. *cf.* ch. 19. 7. *cf.* Lev. 24. 16.
x Ps. 82. 6. *cf.* Ex. 22. 9, 28.
a *cf.* Matt. 5. 17-19. *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17. *cf.* Acts 13. 29.
b *cf.* ch. 8. 42. *cf.* ch. 1. 32-34.

soever is born of God doth not commit," or "practise," "sin: for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." The character of the divine life in him is such that it masters the evil; not, in final result, is mastered by it. It abides; it is eternal life.

But the Lord does not leave us to any inference, even the surest: He goes on to say: "And they shall in no wise ever perish." The consequence is developed, and the negation faces every way: think of what danger you may, that "in no wise ever perish" meets it all. The weakness of the creature, its mutability, with the sad history of change that lies against it, all is met by such an assurance. But the Lord goes even further: He looks at the question of the world against these poor sheep of His,—the world, and Satan the prince of it,—and He seals His assurance with a double seal: They are Mine, He says: "No one shall seize them out of My hand. My Father who gave them to Me is greater than all; and no one is able to seize them out of the Father's hand." The Cloud is opening now to let out the enfolded Glory; now it shines fully out: "I and the Father are one."

The meaning of this last assertion has nevertheless been disputed. It is plain how those who heard Him took it, and how, instead of expressing alarm and grief at so great a mistake, He confirms finally their interpretation. Schaff well shows the argument, which I can do no better than insert in this place. He says (Lange's Commentary on John):—

"The neuter ἓν (one) denotes, according to the connection and for the purpose of the argument, unity of *will* and *power;* which rests on the unity of *essence* or *nature:* for power is one of the divine attributes, which are not outside of the divine essence, but constitute it. Even if we confine ἓν to dynamic unity, we have here one of the strongest arguments for the strict divinity of Christ. It is implied even more in ἐσμεν (we are) than in ἓν. No creature could possibly thus associate himself in one common plural with God Almighty without shocking blasphemy or downright madness. In this brief sentence we have, as Augustine and Bengel observe, a refutation both of Arianism and Sabellianism: ἓν refutes the former by asserting the dynamic (and, by implication, the essential) unity of the Father and the Son. 'I and the Father' and 'we are' refute the latter by asserting the personal distinction. Sabellianism would require the masculine εἷς, instead of the neuter; and this would be inconsistent with 'We are,' and the self-conscious 'I.'"

The Jews understand well enough, and take up stones to stone Him: but the might of His presence stills them. He calmly appeals to them: "Many good works have I shown you from the Father: for which of these good works do ye stone Me?" They could not deny the power or the goodness, but the grace which had brought the Son of God among them in such lowly guise, they could not believe: "For a good work we stone Thee not, but for blasphemy; and because Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God." Thus His words seemed against His works, and for His words they condemned Him; in His reply, there-

not the [c]works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and [believe]* that the Father is [d]in me, and I in the Father.

They sought therefore again to take him, and he [e]went forth out of their hand; and went away again [f]beyond Jordan unto the place where John was baptizing at the first; and he abode there. And many came unto him; and they said, John indeed did no sign, but [g]all things that John spake concerning this man were true. And [h]many believed on him there.

* Many read, "understand."

[c] ch. 14. 10, 11. ch. 15. 24.
[d] ch. 14. 10. *cf.* ch. 17. 22, 23.
[e] ch. 8. 59. *cf.* Lk. 4. 30.
[f] ch. 1. 28. *cf.* ch. 7. 1.
[g] ch. 1. 7, 29–34. ch. 3. 27–36. ch. 5. 33.
[h] *cf.* ch. 7. 31. *cf.* ch. 8. 30.

fore, He appeals to their own Scriptures, their "Law," as they themselves called the whole of them, but the spirit of which their unsubject hearts had so little entered into. Was it not written in their law, "I said, Ye are gods"? Thus the title of "gods" had been given to mere men; but who by the word of God that came to them, the commission by which they, the judges in Israel, acted, became His representatives. "If those who in so acting had received an indirect commission, were gods, the very representatives of God, could it be blasphemy when He claimed to be the Son of God, who had received, not authority through a word transmitted through long centuries, but direct personal command to do the Father's work; had been directly and personally consecrated to it by the Father, and directly and personally sent by Him, not to say, but to do the work of the Father? Was it not rather the true and necessary inference from these premises?" (*Edersheim.*)

The Lord here doubtless refers, not to that of which He Himself alone could have the consciousness, but to His open anointing by the Spirit in bodily form, and the Father's attesting words, when after His baptism by John He went forth to His ministry. John had borne witness to Him in connection with this, as the "Son of God." Was it not suitable that, if men by God's commission could represent Him so, He, sent openly among men in such a manner, should be in fact such a Representative as only the true Son could ever be?

The works of His Father done by Him confirmed all this in the fullest way. They implied this abiding of the Father in Him, in the power displayed, His abiding in the Father in intimacy of communion. Thus there was sufficient witness to the truth of His claims; and if they believed not His words, they might at least believe His works.

The seal which the Lord puts upon the perfection of Scripture is as plain as possible. "Scripture cannot be broken." The fact of its being Scripture guarantees the absolute inspiration of the very words used. The term He builds upon might seem to be at least somewhat extreme as applied to men; yet He takes it as an example of a rule of the most universal character, to which no exception at all can be made. Not only this or that statement which it makes can be demonstrated as true, but the mere fact of its being in Scripture sufficiently vouches for it. The highest Critic that can be never criticizes Scripture, but affirms the truth of all of it; and the futility of all men's efforts to break it in pieces. They are doomed of necessity to defeat and dishonor, as is all the rebellion of the creature against God.

But Israel rejected the testimony of His words and works together. Again they sought to take Him,—a thing impossible until His own time came. He went forth out of their midst unharmed, and went to where formerly John had baptized, where, the soil having been broken up, the seed of His word took root. "John," they said, "did himself no miracle; but all that John spake of this Man was true. And many believed on Him there."

SECTION 3. (Chaps. xi., xii.)
Resurrection-Life; in which the Son of God is glorified.

1 (xi. 1-46): The presence of the Life.
1-4: the call and the purpose.

1. [1] Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus from [t]Bethany, of the village of Mary and her sister Martha. It was Mary who [j]anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. Therefore his sisters [k]sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest* is sick. But when Jesus heard it, he said, This sickness is [l]not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby.

[t] *cf.* Lk. 10. 38, 39. *cf.* Lk. 24. 50.
[j] ch. 12. 3.
[k] *cf.* Lk. 7. 3. *cf.* ch. 4. 46, 47.
[l] *cf.* ver. 11. *cf.* Matt. 9. 24. *cf.* ch. 9. 3.

* φιλεις, the love of a friend.

Sec. 3.

We have now the character of the life received as resurrection-life. For us it has necessarily sprung out of death, the death of Another: according to the Lord's words that we find here, that, "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but, if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

For us also quickening is out of death. Dead naturally in trespasses and sins, we are quickened together with Christ, and raised up together. The first is a change of condition, an immense one, from death unto life, from a naturally hopeless state of alienation from God ("alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their hearts,") to a state of knowledge of God which implies communion with Him, even though it be at first about our sins. "*Risen* with Christ" is a change of position; the *place* of the dead is changed for the place of the living: it is the opposite of burial, as life is the opposite of death.

Thus resurrection-life is life with the fruits of Christ's death attaching to it; fruits into the enjoyment of which we come more or less gradually, but which belong to us from the beginning of the life itself. Here we find the removal of the hindrances which have existed to our drawing near to God, and the opening of the sanctuary: the realization upon our side of that which upon God's side we have seen already. This shows us the unity of this third subdivision, as also we have seen.

It is Christ's death that has delivered us from the bondage of the law, and brought us out of the fold into the green pastures into which the Shepherd leads His sheep. The sections here unite together into a perfect whole, as needs must be the case where they are realities of the Spirit's work, and in Scripture which is everywhere a living organism.

The section divides naturally into two parts: the first, dwelling upon the presence among men of the Personal Life Himself; the second showing the death, out of which for us the life must come.

1. The presence of the Life is for those who receive Him the annulling of death, as is shown for us illustratively in the resurrection of Lazarus. Here text and sermon are interwoven throughout; the Lord's words interpreting His works, while yet the faith of His disciples was unable to apprehend in any proper way what for full development waited the coming of the Spirit to disclose. Here again we find the anticipative character of the Gospel, and the link between John and Paul, of which I have before spoken. We must go on to Ephesians and Colossians to learn fully what it is to be quickened and raised up with Christ, though here we have the basis of the doctrine.

[1] Lazarus, whom Jesus loves, is lying sick at Bethany; and his sisters, Mary and Martha, of whom Mary is specially dwelt upon as the one who anointed the Lord's feet with ointment, send Him word of it. They need do nothing more than let Him know.

2 (5-16): the delay and death: the shadow of death.

[2] Now Jesus loved * Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When, therefore he heard that he was sick, he [m]abode still two days in the place where he was. Then, after these things, he saith to his disciples, Let us go into Judea again. The disciples say unto him, Rabbi, the Jews [but] now sought to [n]stone thee, and goest thou thither again? Jesus answered them, Are there not twelve hours in the day? if any one walk in the

m cf. Matt. 15. 23. cf. Lk. 18. 7.

n ch. 10. 31.

*Ἠγάπα, stronger than the other word.

The after-circumstances cannot but remind us of the story of Jairus' daughter in the synoptic Gospels, in which also there was delay upon the road, and when He came the child was dead; the greater miracle of resurrection followed also in this case. The typical meaning is made plain there by that other story of her who touched in faith the border of His garment, while He was on the way, and was healed of her bloody issue. Even so, while on His way to raise dead Israel, as He yet will do, He is detained by the faith of the Gentiles which claims and draws virtue from Him.

Underneath this dispensational view there lies a universal application in which the two miracles are but different sides of the one story of salvation. From the human side, faith lays hold of Christ, and finds the virtue that is in Him. From the divine side, man is seen to be dead, and must have life. Israel's state nationally only pictures the condition of men at large.

These meanings may perhaps co-exist in the story of Lazarus (or Eleazar, "the Mighty One is helper") of Bethany (the "house of humiliation"). The names alone tell a story of where the help of the Mighty One is found. Israel will find it there in the day that is to come. But that the deeper and at the same time wider application is that which is most in the line of truth before us here needs no argument. Although there are in John, as we have seen, supplementary glances at Israel's condition, yet the deeper and therefore universal view of man as man is what is the general truth, and that as the basis for the announcement of higher and Christian blessings.

Lazarus is sick; and, though Jesus loves him,—nay, even because He does,—Lazarus must die; yet his sickness is "not unto death,"—has not that in view as its end,—"but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby." The blessing of the creature is not forgotten in this, but established; for it is in this pre-eminently that God is glorified. On the Urim and Thummim of the high priest's breast-plate, the "lights and perfections" (typically) of God Himself, are written the names of the tribes of Israel; and these again, for us, are the typical expression of the Christian in his various characters. "I am glorified in them," says the Lord of glory; and He who is thus glorified in them will glorify them with Himself.

Mary's anointing of Him is not forgotten here: the "exalted one," as her name denotes, is best known as that in her exaltation of Him. Wherever the gospel is preached is this told for a memorial of her. Here it is mentioned anticipatively, though it will be again given in its place historically.

[2] Jesus loves them all, these disciples of His, and remains where He is two days still, as if the news of this sickness had not affected Him. But now He says, to the surprise of those who after all knew Him so little, "Let us go into Judea again." When they object that the Jews had sought to stone Him, He simply refers them to the twelve hours of the day, in which without stumbling man could walk. He, in fact, was the light of the world while in it; full light for those that followed Him. Apart from that they might stumble; for the light was not in themselves. And then He tells them, not of His present safety from the men of Judea, but of the purpose which, without needing to think of them at all, drew Him there at this time. "Our friend Lazarus," He says, finding

day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the [o]light of this world; but if any one walk in the night, he stumbleth, because the light is not in him. These things said he, and after this he saith, Our friend Lazarus is fallen [p]asleep; but I go, that I may [q]awake him out of sleep. The disciples therefore said unto him, Lord, if he have fallen asleep, he will be healed. Now Jesus had spoken of his death; but they thought that he spake of the rest of sleep. Jesus therefore then said plainly, Lazarus hath died; and I am [r]glad for your sakes that I was not there, that ye may believe; nevertheless let us go to him. Then said [s]Thomas, who is called Didymus,* unto his fellow-disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

[3] (*a*) When therefore Jesus came, he found that he had

o *cf.* ch. 9. 4. *cf.* ch. 7. 30.

p *cf.* Matt. 9. 24. *cf.* Acts 7. 60. *cf.* Matt. 27. 52.

q *cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 13–17.

r *cf.* ch. 9. 3. *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 9, 10.

s *cf.* ch. 14. 5. *cf.* ch. 20. 24–29.

3 (17–46): the resurrection.

a (17–27): the Personal Life.

* The Hebrew and Greek respectively for "Twin."

a motive for them also in the affection in which their hearts accompany His own, "Our friend Lazarus is fallen asleep; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep." He talks so quietly they do not understand Him; for the shadow of death is upon all their souls, but the thought of sleep is not even a shadow. "Lord," they say, "if he have fallen asleep, he will be healed." Then He descends to their common language: "Lazarus hath died; and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that ye may believe:"—how little like faith was their present mood!—"nevertheless let us go to him." Thomas breaks out with a love which has not emerged yet from the shadow, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

[3] (*a*) How monotonous and tedious in its night-like uniformity is the spirit of unbelief! specially, as we see it here, not in the outside world, which has rejected Christ, but among those who yet have, spite of all, received Him, and cling to Him. We are permitted here to see how heavily the cloud hangs before we see it lift and scatter: for the Life is come; and the Life is the Light of men.

We find the Saviour now come to Bethany, where Lazarus had been already four days in the tomb. Martha, foremost always in her activity, meets Him outside the village, with a confession at once of her faith and her disappointment: "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." In what follows, her emotion, excited by His presence, goes beyond her actual faith, as the result shows: "But even now I know that whatsoever Thou shalt ask of God, God will give it Thee." The Lord tests her at once with the assurance of a joy too great for her: "Thy brother shall rise again." She sinks at once into mere orthodoxy: "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." The Lord replies in the memorable words that have comforted so many since: "*I* am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and every one who liveth and believeth on Me shall *never* die."

Here then is He in whom resides the power of resurrection and of a life not subject to death. Resurrection comes first, and is that which would appeal to Martha in her present condition. Of life untouched by death she could think only as a future thing, to follow this when in its full reality it should be come. But the Lord applies it to the then present time, dividing this from the past by the presence of Himself now come for the annulling of death. He that believed on Him, though having died, death should be annulled for him: he should live again, and live eternally. But for the believer now alive, this power over death would at once manifest itself; and here He makes it plain that He is speaking of no special, exceptional class: "*every one* who liveth and believeth on Me shall never die."

been already four days in the tomb. Now Bethany was [t]nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary, to [u]comfort them concerning their brother. When Martha therefore heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him; but Mary [v]sat in the house. Martha therefore said unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died; but [w]even now I know that whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the [x]resurrection at the last day. Jesus

t cf. Lk. 24. 50.

u vers. 31, 33, 36, 37, 45.

v cf. Lk. 10. 39.

w cf. vers. 39, 40.

x cf. Lk. 14. 14. *cf.* Acts 23. 8.

The difficulty of the passage has been such to some as to make them think of the Lord's coming as the time when it would be fulfilled. When He comes again the dead in Him will be raised, the living believer, changed into His image, will never die. There will certainly be the most perfect fulfilment of what is said here. But on the other hand, there is nothing but such a fulfilment to make us think of such a postponement of it to the future, which is quite in opposition to the division of time which the Lord is making: "every one that liveth and believeth"—*now;* not shall be living and believing at My return: of which He is not saying a word here.

As for the present application the apostle does not hesitate to say that God according to His own purpose and grace, given us in Christ Jesus before the age-times,* "now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, has abolished" (or "annulled") "death, and brought life and incorruption" (not "immortality") "to light by the gospel" (1 Tim. i. 9, 10). This is the inspired application of the Lord's words here, which it makes perfectly plain. In the past death *was*,—a shadow over souls, such as we see it in the previous part of the chapter, such as we find it in the wail of a Hezekiah, or in Job's picture of "a land of darkness, as darkness itself and . . . where the light is as darkness" (Job x. 22). But now with the Life is come the Light; and the shadow of death is penetrated by it. He that had the power of death is met and vanquished, the captives are freed (Heb. ii. 14, 15).

There is, however, in the Lord's words here, that anticipative character which we have seen so much in John. He Himself was even then, as He is just about to show, the "resurrection and the life,"; yet this anticipates that death of His through which alone the power of death could be annulled. In Him the Eternal Life was to pass through death, not to be enfeebled even for a moment by it, but the reverse: to gain thereby a new energy for the deliverance of those now to receive it, which should make it that "abundant" life of which we have heard the glorious Giver speak. The time had not yet come to utter it fully, and we must go on to the epistles of Paul to find the doctrine in its full development. But here is the root of it. He that is quickened of God now is "quickened together with Christ, and raised up together" (Eph. ii. 5, 6): the virtues of that death out of which alone is life attach to the life communicated. For those who have it, death in the reality of this is behind and not before them; the storm of judgment is behind and not before: that which is before is the pathway of light in which the risen Christ is ascended to glory, the Representative-Head, and Forerunner of His people. For the full development of this, as has been said, we must wait for him whose gospel is in his own description of it, "the gospel of the glory of Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 4, *Gk*), whom the Spirit of truth was pleased to use

* In the common version, "before the world began"; in the revised, "before eternal times," but "times" cannot be "eternal." The fact is that the word (αἰών) of which this is the adjectival form has two meanings: one being "age," by which in the plural it is always translated; while the other is "eternity" proper, a later use. The mere fact of its being plural in this case decides for its being rendered as I have rendered it, "the age-times."

said unto her, [y]I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth on me, though he have [z]died, shall live; and every one who liveth and believeth on me shall [a]*never* die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord; I believe that [b]thou art the Christ, the Son of God, who should come into the world.

b (28-38): sympathy.

(*b*) And when she had said this, she went away and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Teacher is come and calleth thee. And she, when she heard it, arose quickly and came to him. Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still at the place where Martha met him. The Jews therefore, who were with her in the house and comforted her, seeing that Mary rose up quickly, and went out, followed her, thinking, She is going to the tomb, to weep there. Mary therefore, when she came where Jesus was, and saw him, fell at his feet, saying unto him, [c]Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. Jesus therefore, when he saw her [d]weeping, and the Jews weeping, who had come with her, was deeply moved in spirit, and troubled, and said, Where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus [e]wept. The Jews therefore said, See how he loved * him. But some of them said, Could not this man, who [f]opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that this man also

y *cf.* ch. 5. 21. *cf.* ch. 6. 39, 40. *cf.* Rev. 1. 18.
z *cf.* ch. 5. 28. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 22, 23.
a *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 51-57. *cf.* ch. 21. 22.
b *cf.* Matt. 16. 16. *cf.* ch. 6. 68, 69.
c ver. 21.
d *cf.* Acts 8. 2.
e *cf.* Heb. 4. 15. *cf.* Lk. 19. 41.
f ch. 9. 6, 7.

* ἐφίλει, the love of a friend.

for the ministry of this; but we shall find the Lord in John steadily leading us on in this direction, until He finally commends us to the Spirit of truth to teach us what as yet they could not bear (xvi. 12, 13).

Martha shows us this in her answer to the Lord here. When He asks of her, "Believest thou *this?*" she can only answer, with true faith but without understanding of the blessedness contained in the words she has just listened to, "Yea, Lord, I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, that should *come into the world.*" True, and a glorious truth; but it is not that of which He has been speaking.

(*b*) Evidently she has the consciousness of this: for immediately she leaves Him, and goes in search of a better scholar. She who has learnt so much at the feet of Jesus, she—it seems as if she said—will understand the better what this means. So she goes and calls Mary her sister secretly, and says: "The Teacher is come, and calleth for thee." Mary, who seems to have been waiting for a positive call, thereupon rises quickly and comes to Him. The Jews, who had come out from Jerusalem to comfort as best they might the afflicted sisters, follow her, as they suppose, to the tomb, and find themselves instead in the presence of Jesus.

Mary is unconscious of them now. She falls at His feet with a stronger emotion than has been manifested in Martha, but only to repeat in her sister's words what they had evidently often said to one another, that if He had but been there, their brother would not have died. There, unlike Martha, she stops and says no more. She sees no way, and cannot speak as if she did. Let the lips she has listened to so often speak for Him and her. And here the Lord is moved as we do not read of His being before. As He looks upon the weepers round Him, He is deeply moved in spirit, and His words move on to action. "Where have ye laid him?" He asks. And when they bid Him "come and

should not have died? Jesus therefore, again deeply moved within himself, cometh to the tomb.

c (38-45): the glory of God.

(c) It was a cave, and a [o]stone lay upon it. Jesus saith, Take away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, already he [h]stinketh; for it is the fourth* day. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that if thou shouldst believe, thou wouldst see the [i]glory of God? They took away the stone, therefore, and Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou [j]hearest me always, but on account of the multitude that [k]stand around I said it; that they also may believe that thou hast sent me. And having said this, he [l]cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth! And the dead came forth, bound feet and hands with [m]grave-clothes, and his face was bound round with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, [n]Loose him, and let him go.

Many, therefore, of the Jews who came to Mary, and saw what he had done, [o]believed on him; but some of them went away to the Pharisees, and [p]told them what Jesus had done.

*Or, "he is (dead) four days."

o *cf.* Matt. 27. 60, 66.

h *ctr.* Acts 13. 36, 37.

i ver. 4. *cf.* ch. 17. 4. *cf.* ch. 2. 11.

j *cf.* ch. 8. 29. *cf.* ver. 22.

k *cf.* ch. 12. 29, 30.

l *cf.* ch. 5. 25. *cf.* Matt. 8. 8.

m *ctr.* ch. 20. 5–7. *cf.* Gal. 4. 10. *cf.* Col. 2. 20–23.

n *cf.* Rom. 8. 2. *cf.* Gal. 5. 1. *cf.* Acts 18. 25, 26.

o *cf.* ch. 8. 30, 31. *cf.* Acts 9. 42.

p *cf.* ch. 5. 15.

see," His tears are restrained no longer: "Jesus wept." Precious sympathy of One whose consciousness of power does not prevent His entering into the sorrows He is relieving; who in His wonders of divine power was still the Man Christ Jesus, and "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses."

The Jews take notice of His grief, and say, "See how He loved him;" while with some it wakes the inquiry, has He then, like others, nothing but His tears to give him? He opened the eyes of the blind; and could He not prevent this man dying? Then again He is deeply moved within Himself, as He feels the unbelief which everywhere follows Him. And now He is at the tomb.

(c) It is a cave; and a stone lies at the mouth of it. And now the unbelief of Martha would oppose the removal of the stone: of what use can it be to bring to light a man four days buried? of what but to turn a sweet if sad memory into an offence? But the only offence is the unbelief that will retain him in the tomb, and shut out from the soul, as the Lord reminds her, the glory of the living, omnipotent God.

He is now then face to face with death, and in view of the multitude gathered there, He thanks the Father that He has heard Him, and as One always hearing Him; expressly referring to that assemblage there in unbelief, but who may be brought to believe. In that confidence, and in attestation of such oneness always with the Father, He calls aloud for Lazarus to "come forth!"

How that multitude of eyes must have peered into the darkness; and what a hush of expectation must have fallen upon the crowd, as they strained every sense to catch the issue of such a pledging of God to a miracle like this. Jairus' daughter had but just died; the widow's son at Nain was but on his way to burial; but here was one who in that quick southern clime must have been already far sunk into corruption, and God pledged by One professing to be *always* heard by Him to bring him up!

And the pledge is redeemed! Shambling forward, as one bound up yet in the habiliments of death, Lazarus obeys the call and comes—a living man. He has recrossed the boundary-line which none of himself or by mere human aid has ever come back over. He has come back a witness to the Resurrection and the

2 (xi. 47-xii): The Death in which is life.
1 (xi. 47-xii. 8): anticipations.
a xi. 47-52): man's plea and God's foundation.

2. [1] (*a*) The chief priests, therefore, and the Pharisees gathered a [q]council, and said, What are we doing? for this man [r]doeth many signs. If we let him thus alone, [s]all will believe on him; and the [t]Romans will come and take away both our place and nation. But a certain one of them, [u]Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all; nor consider that it is profitable for us* that [v]one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this he spake not of himself, but being high priest that year, he [w]prophesied that one man should die for the nation; and not for that nation only, but also that he should [x]gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

*Many read "you."

q *cf.* Matt. 26. 3.
cf. ch. 9. 22.
r *cf.* ch. 12. 19.
cf. Acts 4. 16.
cf. ch. 3. 19.
s *cf.* ch. 6. 15.
cf. ch. 18. 36, 37.
etc. ch. 19. 12-15.
t *cf.* Acts 16. 13, 14.
cf. Acts 21. 28.
u *cf.* Matt. 26. 3.
v ch. 18. 14.
cf. Is. 53. 8.
w *cf.* Nu. 27. 21.
cf. Num. 23. 7-10.
x *cf.* ch. 10. 16; *cf.* Rom. i. 16; *cf.* Is. 49. 6; *cf.* Ps. 22. 27.

Life, that the Son of God may be glorified in him. He has come back, a challenge thrown in the face of Christ's would-be murderers, of the possibility of success against One to whom death and the grave are subject. He has come back to walk in the power of such a victory, the type and pattern of that resurrection-life which "every one that liveth and believeth on Him" is called now to enjoy. In such a life is God indeed glorified. In such a life is power over the world attained. In men taken out of the world, sanctified and sent into it again, to represent Him in it as He did the Father.

"Loose him and let him go," is now the enfranchizing word. The will of the Lord is that those who have received life from Him should enjoy it in all its blessed freedom, delivered from the grave-clothes of Judaism, meant to put on men the stamp of death, and not of life. "Loose him and let him go," is the Lord's word now to the evangelist and to the teacher. Let the law do its work thoroughly upon the life of flesh and nature; and let the Cross confirm the lesson of the end of human strength, human wisdom, human will; but let the man in Christ be free as the light and air of heaven to which now he belongs: not in bondage but in freedom can the Son of God be glorified; and everywhere there rings through the New Testament the echo of His own words here, "Loose him and let him go."

The result of the miracle is that, on the one hand, many believe; on the other, word is brought to the Pharisees, and stirs more than ever the animosity which seeks the life of Christ.

2. [1] Here then the second part begins, in which we find the need of that Death out of which alone for us the resurrection-life can come. Anticipations of it and of its fruit start up in unlikely places. A Sadducean high-priest prophesies unwittingly, God overruling the heartless suggestion of human expediency to give testimony to the unique value of His Son's work which then goes beyond it. On the other hand, Christ has His own feast, the anticipation of what He can find in the company of His people. Out of worst evil is going to be the bud and fruitage of fullest good; and God shall be supreme over all, His glory everywhere manifest.

(*a*) We find then the Pharisees in council with the chief priests, men of a different creed and interests, but with whom they could make common cause against Christ. They have to confess that He whom they are unrelentingly pursuing "doeth many signs." Their only argument from this is that if they let Him alone, all men will believe on Him, and the Romans will take away their place and nation. This brings forward Caiaphas, who rebukes them for their inability to make so simple a calculation as that between the value of one man and a nation. He does not speak of *right* but of *profit*, and claims this for

b (53–57): withdrawal and expectancy.

(*b*) From that day therefore, they took counsel that they might kill him. Jesus therefore no longer walked [y]openly among the Jews, but went away thence into a country near the desert, to a city called Ephraim and there abode with the disciples. Now the [z]passover of the Jews was nigh, and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the passover, that they might [a]purify themselves. They [b]sought Jesus therefore, and said among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye? that he will not come to the feast? And the chief priests and Pharisees had given commandment that if any one knew where he was, he should make it known, that they might [c]take him.

c (xii.1–3): a feast for Him.

(*c*) Jesus therefore, six days before the passover, came to [d]Bethany, where Lazarus was whom Jesus raised from among the dead. There therefore they made him a

y ch. 7. 1.

z ch. 6. 4. ch. 2. 13. *cf.* ch. 5. 1.

a *cf.* ch. 18. 28. *cf.* Num. 9. 10-13. *cf.* 2 Chron. 30. 17-20. *cf.* Is. 29. 13.

b ch. 7. 11.

c *cf.* Matt. 26. 14-16. ch. 18. 2, 3.

d ch. 11. 1.

his own side of the account. Nor does he realize the blinding nature of self-interest, nor question the competence of his conclusion in the least. His arithmetic is so simple it can hardly be worked wrong.

Notice how, when God puts His seal upon all this, the whole character of it changes. From God's side, this "profitable for *us*" becomes (of course) "profitable for *you;*" the self-interest that in the first case distorts and spoils everything becomes a glorious manifestation of divine love, which can then only consist with fullest righteousness. "The Son of man must be lifted up," that this profit may be realized: if it were not divine righteousness itself, Love could not give up its Beloved to it.

Thus Israel's blessing is secured; but there is a purpose beyond this in the death of Christ that the evangelist from his standpoint cannot fail to notice. He is not going to die "for that nation only, but also that He might gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." As the Shepherd had sheep not of the Jewish fold, so the Father had children not of that family. As not all in the fold were the Shepherd's sheep, so not all the family of Israel were God's family. The law which gendered to bondage could not mark out or gather the children of God. Adoption could not be enjoyed under it: the real children were as servants and not sons. God was saying, "I am a Father to *Israel*," not to those born of the Spirit, and children of God indeed. The moment He acts upon this latter principle, the old distinction is given up, and the children that Judaism scattered abroad are gathered.

Thus John keeps steadily to his theme, eternal life and what accompanies its possession, now that it is manifested. Of the Church he does not speak; but of the family; unity with him is unity of life, and so in the Father and the Son.

(*b*) The Lord being thus rejected, and His death determined, He withdraws from those who are compassing it to a country near the desert, to a city called Ephraim, and remains there with His disciples. This too seems an anticipation of what is coming, when withdrawn from Israel, and found among disciples only, He really withdraws for "double fruit," which "Ephraim" means.

Among the Jews, gathering in preparation for their passover, there is expectation with uncertainty, while the malice of His enemies is planning for His death.

(*c*) Six days before the passover, He is at Bethany again, in the midst of that little company who had in so remarkable a way been witnesses of His glory, and who show us that believing remnant which, while Israel rejected Him, gathered around Him. These are soon to be the commencement of that Christian gathering which in John has been already variously foreshadowed. Here they make Him a feast, as once (and only once) before, Matthew the publican

[e] feast, and [f] Martha served; but Lazarus was one of those at [g] table with him. [h] Mary then having taken a pound of ointment of pure spikenard, very costly, anointed the feet of Jesus, and [i] wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was [j] filled with the odour of the ointment.

d (xii. 4-8): tested.

(*d*) Now [k] Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples, who was about to deliver him up, saith, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence,* and given to the poor? But this he said, not that he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a [l] thief, and had the bag, and carried what was put in it. Jesus said therefore, Suffer her to have kept it for the day of my burial. For the poor ye have always with you, but [m] me ye have not always.

2 (xii. 9-19): testimony and conflict.

[2] The great [n] multitude of the Jews, therefore, knew that he was there; and they came, not on account of Jesus only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he raised from among the dead. But the chief priests took counsel that they might [o] kill Lazarus also; because that on his account many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.

* "Denarii," as elsewhere.

cf. ch. 13. 33. *n* ver. 12; *cf.* Mk. 12. 37. *o cf.* ch. 9. 34; *cf.* ch. 15. 20.

e Matt. 26. 6-13. *cf.* Lk. 5. 29-32. *cf.* ch. 4. 7, 31, 32.
f cfr. Lk. 10. 40, 41. *cf.* Matt. 11. 29, 30.
g cf. Mk. 5. 43. *cf.* Lk. 15. 23, 24.
h ch. 11. 2. *cf.* Lk. 7. 37, 38. *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 15-17. *cf.* Song 1. 3, 12-14.
i cf. Lk. 10. 39. *cf.* ch. 11. 32. *cf.* Matt. 21. 8.
j cf. Ex. 40. 34, 35. *cf.* Acts 2. 2.
k cf. Matt. 26. 8.
l cf. ch. 13. 29. *cf.* ch. 6. 70, 71.
m Mk. 14. 7. ver. 35.

had made Him a feast, though with a very different company. There as the Saviour of sinners, Matthew had put Him in company with sinners; and a feast, we may be sure, that meant for Him. Here it is with saints that He is found, the fruit of His salvation, and typically on resurrection ground; and here service, communion, worship, have their representatives. Martha still serves; Lazarus is at table with Him; while Mary, entering more deeply into what is before Him, anoints Him for His burial. John alone names Mary here, as he alone points out the traitor as raising the murmuring against her, and that which moved him in it. John too speaks of the anointing of His feet, the other Gospels of that of His head. Here she is like the woman in the Pharisee's house, as in the wiping them with the hair of her head. John also tells us how the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. Thus deeper appreciation on the part of the beloved disciple seems to flow from deeper communion with the Lord's own estimate (comp. Luke vii. 44, 46). How sweet to Him was that lavish expenditure of love which others counted waste. In the Synoptists the memorial of it goes out with the gospel; in John the odor abides in the house. Glorious testimony to a woman's act, such as we find recorded of no other. But she had learnt at His feet what she poured out there.

(*d*) This act of love brings out the traitor; and we have a glance at His previous history. What the other was pouring out on Him, he would have filched from Him. When he could do this no longer, he sold himself.

[2] Now we have the Lord's entry into Jerusalem as King of Israel. It naturally occupies in John a much smaller place than in the other Gospels. The elaborate preparation for it that we see in the others John has nothing of; nor is there the detail of the entry itself, the purification of the temple, nor the strife with Him on the part of the heads of the people, nor His solemn arraignment of them all. Nor have we the Olivet prophecy following. On the other hand, we have the effect of the resurrection of Lazarus, the testimony to Him of those in whom it had wrought, and on the other hand, the intensifying of the opposition by it. The fulfilment of Zechariah's prophecy is only realized by the disciples afterwards. All this is for John the history of a struggle, and the end of which is

On the morrow, a great multitude that came to the feast, having heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took [p]branches of palms and went out to meet him, and cried, Hosanna; [q]blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel. And Jesus having found a young ass, sat upon it, as it is [r]written, Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, thy King cometh, sitting upon an ass's colt. These things [s]knew not his disciples at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and that they did these things unto him. The multitude therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb, and raised him from among the dead, bare [t]witness. On this account also the multitude went to meet him, because they heard that he had done this sign. The Pharisees therefore said to one another, Ye see that ye profit nothing: behold, the [u]world is gone after him.

[2](xii.20-33): glory displayed, fruit realized.

[3] Now there were certain [v]Greeks of those who came up to worship at the feast. These therefore came to

p Matt. 21.8-11. Mk. 11. 8-10. Lk. 19. 36-40. cf. Rev. 7.9, 10.
q cf. Ps. 118. 25, 26.
r Matt. 21. 1-7. Zech. 9. 9.
s cf. ch. 2.22. cf. ch. 13.7. cf. ch. 14.26. cf. Lk. 18.34.
t ver. 11. cf. Lk. 19.37.
u cf. ch. 11. 47, 48.
v cf. Mk. 7. 26. cf. Acts 10. 34, 35. cf. ch. 10.16. cf. Ps. 72.9-11.

the Cross and the setting aside of Israel nationally. He marks it in connection with what follows here, which is peculiar to himself. For his purpose, he has no need to enlarge upon it. The coming up of the Greeks introduces once again what is his peculiar theme.

[3] The Greeks here are pure Gentiles and not Grecian Jews, although worshipers of the true God as revealed in Israel. As sharers of the hopes that Israel's prophets had aroused, they come forward, respectfully using the mediation of a disciple to gain an interview with Him. The mediation of a Jew was a perfectly natural thought for a Gentile believing in the prophets, where the Gentile seeking God, clings to the skirts of the Jew (Zech. viii. 23). As the centurion before used the Jewish elders, so the Greeks here would use Philip. He, with the caution of his people in such a matter, associates another with himself to approach his Master in the matter; and Andrew takes the lead in communicating their desire to the Lord. He at once declares that the hour is come that the *Son of man* should be glorified; using the title by which is indicated His link with man as Man.* As Son of man, all peoples, nations and languages are to serve Him, and in a Kingdom that shall not be destroyed (Dan. vii. 14).

The hour had not arrived, however, for the Kingdom here depicted; and it has not yet arrived; nor is the Son of man a title which He takes in relationship to the Church. But there was an hour just at hand for another, His strange, yet greatest glory, to be acquired by Him; and in which not His connection with Israel but His manhood place for men was for all eternity to make Him glorious. By the power of this work the Son of man lifted up was to draw all men to Him. In the value of it, the earth and all the dwellers in it will become His own. Without it man's ruined race could be but as a cinder-slag in the fire of God's wrath. He goes on immediately to speak of this necessity, therefore, in order to His own fruitfulness, affirming it as constantly in John with what is of deepest importance with the seal of His double "verily;" "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except the grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Nature is summoned here to show the law of increase which is stamped upon her; and that creative law is made an argument for the necessity of the death that is before Him. What an exaltation of the analogies in nature, to exhibit and use them

* Andrew, the "manly," is foremost in the introduction.

[w] Philip, who was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, Sir, we desire to see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew; and Andrew cometh and Philip, and they tell Jesus. And Jesus answereth them, saying, The hour hath come that the Son of man should be [x] glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except the grain of wheat fall into the ground and [y] die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it beareth [z] much fruit. He that [a] loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any one would serve* me, let him [b] follow me; and [c] where I

* διακονέω.

a Matt. 10. 39; Lk. 14. 26. b *cf.* ch. 13. 36–38; Matt. 16. 24. c ch. 14. 3; ch. 17. 24.

w ch. 1. 43, 44. ch. 14. 8–11.
x *cf.* Lk. 9. 31, 51. *cf.* Matt. 26. 53, 54.
y *cf.* Ex. 21. 3. *cf.* Matt. 16. 21–23. *cf.* ch. 3. 14, 15. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 36.
z *cf.* Gen. 2. 18, 21–23. *cf.* ch. 20. 17 with Heb. 2. 11, 12.

in such a way as this! and what a means of interpreting nature itself is here given us! How it shows that Christ, ignored by the so-called "natural" theology, is the true key to the interpretation of nature, and that the Cross is stamped ineffaceably upon it. Nature is thus invested with the robe of a primæval prophet, and that the Word, who is God, is the Creator of all things becomes not merely the announcement of Scripture, but a plainly demonstrated fact before our eyes to-day.

The grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies: it has life in it, and it carries it with it through death itself. The death which it undergoes is in the interest even of the life, which it sets free from its encasement—from the limitations which hedge it in—to lay hold of and assimilate the surrounding material, by which it expands into the plant which is its resurrection, and thus at last into the many grains which are its resurrection-fruit. How plainly is this no accidental likeness which the Lord has seized for illustration of His point. It is as real a prediction as ever came from the lips of an Old Testament prophet: every seed sown in the ground to produce a harvest a positive prediction that the Giver of life must die. The union of Christ with men is not in incarnation, though that, of course, was a necessary step towards it. But the blessed Man, so come into the world, was a new, a Second Man, who could not unite with the old race, but becomes the Head of a new one, another—a "last Adam." Alone He was the life, and the Life was the Light of men; but if that were all the history would be summed in the words that follow: "And the light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not. He was in the world . . . and the world knew Him not." To the dead life must be communicated, that there may be eyes to see. Men can only be born again into the family of God, of which the Son of God as Man is the beginning.

Yet the Life cannot simply communicate the life. Around Him are the bands of eternal righteousness, which has pronounced condemnation upon the guilty, and only by the satisfaction of righteousness in the penalty incurred can these bands be removed. Death—death as He endured it—alone can set Him free from these limitations: He is "straitened till it be accomplished." In resurrection He is enlarged, and becomes the Head of a new creation; and "if any man be in Christ, it is new creation" (2 Cor. v. 17). In those redeemed by His blood the tree of life has come to its precious fruitage.

Thus the Son of God goes forward to His death. These Greeks coming up show divine grace working. Mere King of the Jews He is not, but the Saviour of men; and the wide harvest coming in is claiming Him for the realization of its promise. The burden of the world is upon Him. Past, present and future centre in Him. The glory of God, the blessing of man, call on Him with a voice which He has heard long since in the height from which He has descended. Now from a lower and nearer point of view the depths appear of

am, there shall my servant* be; if any one serve † me, him will the Father [d]honor. Now is my soul [e]troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour‡? But on this [f]account came I to this hour. Father, [g]glorify thy name. There came therefore a [h]voice from heaven, I [i]have both glorified it, and [j]will glorify it again. The multitude therefore that stood and heard it, said that it thundered; others said, An [k]angel hath spoken to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not for my sake, but for [l]your sakes. Now is the [m]judgment of this world: now shall the [n]prince of

*διάκονος. †διακονέω, ‡Many omit the question.

d cf. 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8. cf. ch. 14. 21, 23. cf. ch. 16. 27.
e cf. Matt. 26. 38, 39. cf. ch. 13. 21.
f cf. ch. 18. 37. cf. Heb. 10. 5-10.
g cf. Lk. 22. 42. cf. ch. 5. 30.
h cf. Matt. 3. 17. cf. Matt. 17. 5.
i cf. ch. 11. 40-42.
j cf. Rom. 6. 4; cf. Phil. 2. 11.
k cf. Acts 23. 9.
l ch. 11. 42.
m cf. Gal. 6. 14.
n cf. Matt. 12. 29. cf. ch. 14. 30; cf. Heb. 2. 14.

the abyss into which He must yet descend, that He may lay in it the eternal foundations which nothing shall shake again.

Each grain of wheat that is found on the parent plant follows of necessity by the law of its own nature the pattern of the grain from which it came. His people too must be prepared to follow Him upon the road on which He is going. "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. He that serveth Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be; if any one serve Me, him will the Father honor." Here is the rule, and here is the reward of service: to be with Christ, where He is, is such reward as love itself would seek, crowned with the honor which the Father puts upon such loving service. The way of attainment is by the path that He has trodden, and that way, in its general character at least, is unmistakably plain.

For Him, however, there was that which darkened the road, and made it what for us it never can be. What He has taken from ours was the intense sorrow of His; not mere death, nor even with all that the wickedness of man and the malignity of Satan could add to it of bitterness, but the awful reality of sin borne by Him in the midst of all this, and the penalty of it in its unrelieved intensity. The anticipation of this presses upon Him as He speaks: "Now is My soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour?" Nay, "for this cause came I to this hour." Relief could not be found in this direction: there was but one thing could give it, but one prayer possible: "Father, glorify Thy Name." To that immediately the answer comes: and in the hearing of the multitude: "there came a voice from heaven; I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." That was what the Son was here in the world for, and it was in open acceptance of the Son's work that the Father glorified His own name. In a special way this had been done in the resurrection of Lazarus; but it was to be done in a more signal manner, when "by the glory of the Father" Christ Himself would be raised from the dead (Rom. vi. 4).

Meanwhile this Voice came as His witness to the multitude. For Himself it could not be needed, who walked in a communion with God which was never broken. Alas, for them a Voice from heaven was a strange and, for the mass, an unintelligible sound. The multitude said, "It thundered." A few, who still did not clearly recognize it, said, "An angel has spoken to Him." The Lord replies, It is for your sakes and not Mine; and then warns them that the world's judgment is at hand in that which He is looking on to. His death at its hands would indeed be its condemnation. Its chosen prince was not the true, but the usurper; to be cast out yet by the power of that which He was accomplishing by its means. The Son of Man was to be lifted up from the earth, the witness of His rejection by men, yet of the curse borne for them: of which the final result in the new earth would be, all men drawn to Him by its sweet beneficent power, even now the attractive centre for the myriads of the redeemed.

this world be cast out. And I, if I be [o]lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he was about to die.

[4] (34-43): the testing.

[4] The multitude therefore answered him, We have heard out of the law, that the [p]Christ abideth for ever; and how sayest thou that the Son of man must be lifted up? [q]who *is* this Son of man? Jesus therefore said unto them, Yet a [r]little while is the light among you: walk while ye have the light, that the darkness may not overtake you. And he that walketh in the darkness [s]knoweth not whither he goeth: while ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may [t]become sons* of light.

These things spake Jesus; and departing, [u]hid himself from them. But [v]though he had done so great signs before them, yet they believed not on him: that the word of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he said, [w]Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of [the] Lord been revealed? For this cause they could not believe, because Esaias said again, He hath [x]blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, because† he [y]saw

o ch. 3. 14. ch. 8. 28. *cf.* Rom.5.8. *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 19.

p *cf.* Ps. 72. 17. *cf.* Is. 9. 7. *cf.* Ps. 102. 23–27.

q *cf.*ch.8.25. *cf.* ch. 5. 27

r ch. 7. 33.

s *cf.* Jer. 13. 16. *cf.* ch. 11. 9, 10. *cf.*1 Thess. 5. 4

t *cf.*Eph.5.8. *cf.*1 Pet.2.9. *cf.*Col.1.12.

u ch. 8. 59.

v *cf.*ch.11.47–53. *cf.*ch.10.38.

w Is. 53. 1. Rom.10.16.

x *cf.* Is.6.10. *cf.*Matt.13. 14, 15. *cf.* ch. 8. 43 with 2 Thess. 2. 11, 12.

y Is. 6. 1-8.

*Not children, as is usual in John. †Many read "when."

Thus it is His heart relieves itself. The glory of God, the overthrow of evil, the redemption and reconciliation of men, is to be accomplished by that, the cost of which is to be for Him so much. He weighs the gain against the purchase-price for Him, and is content.

[4] There follows here again, as so constantly in John, that conflict of unbelief with the truth which reveals so perfectly the condition of man. The moral disease which cleaves to him is the very thing which makes the remedy so distasteful. Above all, the Cross is utterly an offence; and fullest grace of God is refused for its incompatibility with the self-righteousness of man. The Jews take up this affirmation that the Son of man must be lifted up, which they rightly enough interpret of His death, to put it in contrast with what the law has declared. The Christ according to it abides forever; and how can this be consistent with the Son of man being lifted up? Who is He then, this Son of man? But the Lord does not directly answer them. For their state of heart is not reached by the formal answer of a question. He simply presses on them the speedy passing of the opportunity which they now had. The light would be soon taken from them, except by their availing themselves of it they make it their own. When the darkness came, they would lose the way indeed; acceptance of the light while yet they had it would make them sons of the light, in whom the light would be as nature.

With these words He is gone again out of their midst, and hidden from them. He had wrought so many signs among them, and they had only fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy of a people given up to hardening. The moral glory of His suffering and humiliation had only, being such as they were, blinded their eyes; and His grace published had but hardened their heart, so as to make it impossible for them to see or understand, to be converted and healed. These things Isaiah said, as seeing in the glory of Jehovah displayed in the temple the glory of Christ: for Christ is the Word, in whom alone God has ever displayed Himself; and in

his glory; and he spake of him. Although indeed from among the [a]rulers also, many believed on him, but on account of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be [a]put out of the synagogue: for they [b]loved glory from* men rather than glory from* God.

5 (44-50): responsibility attaching to the light.

[5] And Jesus cried aloud, and said, He that believeth on me believeth not on me, but on him that [c]sent me; and he that beholdeth me [d]beholdeth him that sent me. I am come [as] [e]light into the world, that every one who believeth on me may not abide in darkness. And if any one hear my words and believe them not, I [f]judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to [g]save the world. He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words, hath what judgeth him: the [h]word which I have spoken, *that* shall judge him at the last day. Because I spake not from myself, but the Father who sent me, he hath given me [i]commandment what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is [j]life eternal: what things therefore I speak, even as the Father hath said unto me, so I speak.

a cf. ch.7.48. cf. ch. 3.1. cf. 1 Cor. 1. 26.
a cf.ch.9.22, 34. cf. Heb. 13. 10-13.
b cf. ch.5.44. cf.Rom.1. 16. cf. 2 Tim.1. 8.
c cf. ch.5.24. cf.Mk.9.37.
d ch. 14. 9. cf. ch. 1. 14, 18. cf.Col.1.15.
e ch. 1. 4, 5. cf. ch. 8. 12, vers. 35,36.
f cf. ch. 5.45. cf. ch. 8. 15, 26. cf. Lk. 12. 14.
g cf.ch.3.17. cf. 2 Cor. 5. 19. cf. Rev. 20. 11-15.
h cf. Deut. 18. 18, 19. cf.Matt.25. 31-46.
i cf.ch.10.18. cf.ch.14.31.

* Literally, "of."

cf. ch. 15. 10; cf. ch. 3. 34. j cf. ch. 6. 63 with ch. 17. 8.

the Man Christ Jesus this display is at last fully made. But how could the Pharisaic Jew, ignorant of himself and God alike, recognize the One in the Other?

Yet the evidence was abundant; so that among the chief rulers many believed. Their reason was convinced, but their hearts were unchanged, and the consequences of confessing Him were too serious: they desired the glory that men could bestow rather than the glory which God could give: the fatal choice of alas how many!

[5] The Evangelist brings forward, therefore, here the emphatic words of Jesus which proclaim the responsibility attaching to the light which had shone among them.

Light indeed it was, the revelation of God in His true character, so that to believe on Him was to believe on Him who sent Him forth, to behold Him was to behold the One from whom He came. There was no side interest to divert any from the true and living God He represented.

His mission also was the appealing, attractive mission of salvation, and not of judgment. There was everything in it to win, rather than repel. Yet in the last day, that sweet and winning message would witness against the rejector of it all the more surely. Ah, says the apostle, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation!

And in all this, nothing was spoken from Himself, but all according to a commandment given Him of the Father. He knew it in its outcome, its meaning for man—eternal life! and spoke it in the joy of communion with it,—with Him who sent it.

So the message ends: here is the responsibility of him who hears it. Henceforth, until as the Lamb of sacrifice He again appears among the people, He is shut up in the company of His own, to communicate to them His last words of guidance and overflowing love, for the impending time of His absence from them: a legacy which has never been exhausted yet; and of which, live as freely on it as we will, we shall find it hard to exhaust even the daily income.

SUBDIVISION 4. (Chaps. xiii.–xvii.)

Mercy for the path.

SECTION 1. (Chap. xiii. 1–17.)

With all power His, and faithful to those given Him, He maintains them in righteousness.

NOW before the [k]feast of the passover, Jesus knowing that the [l]hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own that were in the world, [m]loved them [n]unto the end.* And when supper was begun, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to deliver him up, he knowing that the Father had [o]given all things into his hands, and that he was [p]come from God and was [q]going to God, riseth from supper, and [r]layeth aside his garments, and taking a towel, [s]girded himself. Then he poureth [t]water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' [u]feet, and to [v]wipe them with the towel with which he was girded.

k *cf.* Matt. 26. 2. etc. *cf.* ch. 12. 1.
l *cf.* ch. 7. 8. *cf.* ch. 12. 23. *cf.* ch. 17. 1.
m ver. 34. ch. 10. 11. *cf.* Song. 8. 7.
n *cf.* Gen. 28. 15. *cf.* ch. 10. 28–30. *cf.* Rom. 8. 35–39.
o *cf.* ch. 5. 20–23. *cf.* ch. 17. 2.
p ch. 8. 42. ch. 16. 28.
q *cf.* ch. 17. 11. *cf.* ch. 20. 17.
r *cf.* Lk. 22. 27. *cf.* Phil. 2. 7, 8.
s *cf.* Matt. 20. 28. *cf.* Lk. 12. 37.

* Or, "to the uttermost."

t *cf.* Eph. 5. 26; *cf.* ch. 15. 3. u *cf.* Ex. 40. 30–32; *cf.* Ps. 119. 9. v *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 6–8; *cf.* 1 Sa. 2. 7; *cf.* Ps. 23. 3.

SUBD. 4.

Israel has now fully manifested her unbelief, and the Lord has been dwelling upon His lifting up at their hands,—on their parts, the most complete and contemptuous rejection, though to be overruled of God for widest blessing. He was going back to the Father, the glorious work being fully accomplished for which He had come. That accomplishment has been indeed anticipated all through the Gospel, as we have seen. Apart from it no blessing at all could have been for man; and the hands to which it had been committed were fully competent. God could own from the beginning with the most open testimony His delight in Him, even as upon the Cross itself He could turn away His face from Him who in human weakness hung there, and leave Him unassisted to the struggle and the victory, upon which hung all the issues of eternity. *He* was to be thus the "Father of eternity" (Isa. ix. 6; Heb.) which was to take shape and pattern in the womb of the Cross.

Now He stood on the eve of His actual departure. One brief awful moment past, Heaven beckoned Him; the glory from which He had come was hailing Him back; the Father's greeting of His Royal Priest,—the Father's throne awaited Him: all things were in His hand; yet He has upon earth an interest that detains Him, which in the glory of God is to occupy Him still. He is leaving upon earth the chosen companions of His path; those indeed that have hardly ever understood Him,—whose lack of sympathy has been itself one of the bitterest trials, of those that made Him the "Man of sorrows" that He was. Yet they are His hard-won spoils from the hand of the enemy,—the first-fruits of the spiritual harvest coming in. They are His own, the gift of His Father, the work of His Spirit, the purchase of His blood, by and by to tell out and for the ages to come, divine love and power to all His intelligent creation. Nor, spite of their feebleness, can He forget how their hearts awakened by His call, have clung to Him in the scene of His rejection, how they have left their little all to follow Him. Now He is going to leave them in that world whose enmity they must for His sake incur, and in which they would fill up that which was behind of His afflictions for His body's sake, which is the Church (Col. i. 24). In human tenderness His heart overflows towards them, while in divine fulness; and this is what we find before us now. It is peculiar to John, and furnishes them for the way, and arms them for the impending conflict.

Then cometh he to Simon Peter. *He* saith unto him, Lord, dost [w]thou wash *my* feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou [x]knowest not now; but thou shalt know* [y]afterwards. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast [z]no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my [a]hands and my head. Jesus saith unto him, He that is [b]bathed needeth not save to wash his [c]feet, but is clean [d]every whit; and ye are clean, but [e]not all. For he knew who would deliver him up: therefore said he unto them, Ye are not all clean.

w *cf.* ch. 16. 21-23.
x *cf.* vers. 12, 36. *cf.* ch. 12. 16. *cf.* Heb. 12. 11.
y *cf.* ch. 21. 15-19. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 25.
z *cf.* Gen. 35. 2, 3. *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 1, 2. *cf.* Eph. 4. 30-32.
a *cf.* Rom. 4. 4, 5. *ctr.* Ps. 26. 6.
b *cf.* Heb. 10. 22; *cf.* Tit. 3. 5. c *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 6; *cf.* 2 Cor. 7. 1. d *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 11; *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 30; *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 9. e ver. 18; ch. 6. 70.

* or, "understand."

This therefore is the true wilderness section of the Gospel,—not the history of the wilderness, but the preparation for it; what is to it as the early part of Numbers to the latter part. Alas, such a history was to follow,—and has followed; yet in which divine grace has abounded over human failure. So must it ever be.

Sec. 1.

The order of Scripture is a point of special importance. So we shall find it here. Grace reigns through righteousness. Righteousness must be maintained or God, who in all His acts must be consistent with himself, cannot give way to the love which is in His nature. This is seen in the Cross, but it remains a principle in all God's dealings with His people. We "call on Him as Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work" (1 Pet. i. 17). The Father's character must be maintained with His own children; and they must be taught to act in conformity with it. Our "Advocate with the Father" also is "Jesus Christ the righteous." One who can no more forget righteousness than He can forget the people He has redeemed. It is not, of course, as Advocate we see Him here; because plainly it is not with the Father that we see Him, but with His people. Yet He is anticipatively the Risen and Ascended One, with all things given into His hands. It is in this character He acts, in a love that cannot give up its objects, and which recognizes it as a first necessity for them that they should be conformed to His nature and ways.

They are to have part with Him; but what does this involve as to those in such a place of defilement as this world is, and with so great susceptibility to defilement in it? His action in view of all this is quite easy of interpretation, spite of the many who have seen in it only a lesson of humility, and indeed the institution of an ordinance to remind of this. But the Lord Himself assures us that there is a deeper meaning than this, for Peter certainly knew what the Lord was doing, if there were no more than this; but the Lord says that at present he did not know; but that he should know afterwards. The doing to others by the disciples as He had done to them would necessarily depend also upon their knowledge of what He had done; which, if it were to receive spiritual interpretation, would make what was enjoined on them to be of a similar character.

But Christ's cleansing of His Church is, as the apostle tells us, with washing of water by the Word (Eph. v. 26); and this at once throws light on the deeper meaning. It is as we well know, only as so cleansed that we can, as the Lord says to Peter again, "have part with Him." Thus all is as clear as can be. No ordinance could accomplish this; and we immediately perceive the primary importance of this for all that follows. Communion itself—which is "part with Him,"—fruitfulness, testimony, must all depend upon this.

When therefore he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments and had sat down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye

Jesus rises therefore from supper, not when it was ended, as the common version represents, but while it was going on, leaving the place of communion, as if this were interrupted, until His necessary work for them should renew it once more. He rises therefore from supper, and girds Himself for a fresh service. His sacrificial work is over; the shedding of blood is no more needed, but only the washing of water; and here also not the "bath of regeneration, "(Tit. iii. 5), but simply, as He presently points out to Peter, the washing of the feet. It is defilement contracted in the walk that is in question; and He puts Himself at their feet to wash them. As of old Jehovah could say to Israel, "Thou hast made Me to serve with thy sins, "(Isa. xliii. 24,) so may He still say to us; but His unchangeable love is equal to all possible demands upon it. Notice here that all His disciples need it, and that thus He invites us all to-day to put our feet into His hands continually, that they may be cleansed according to His thought of what is cleanness, who alone is capable of judging according to the perfect standard of the sanctuary, of which He is indeed Himself the Light.

And again notice what is involved in this: for it makes clear that the Lord's significant action here does not simply point out to us the remedy for that defilement of which we may be conscious, while of course it does apply in the fullest way to this. The principle goes much further; for there is, as we all must be aware, a sad possibility of *un*conscious defilement and thus of slipping unawares out of communion with God; while conscience gives no sign of what is wrong, and may thus mislead us as to our condition. It cannot be too fully impressed upon our minds that conscience is not the standard of right and wrong, but the word of God alone is that. The testimony of the Word itself is, that "If a soul sin, and commit any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the Lord, *though he wist it not*, yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity" (Lev. v. 17). For who can truthfully say that he was necessarily ignorant of what the word of God declares?

But even where the thing is clear, conscience may be dull and indifferent. The common sights and sounds with which the world is full tend insensibly to dull us; the dust with which the air is full settles upon the mirror, we know not how, and it gives no more the clear witness that it did so short a time since: we need therefore continual recourse to Him whom the Psalmist invoked: "Search me O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me" (Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24). Ah! what incompetent judges are we in our own case! and how thankful may we be to have such an One as is here before us to judge our case for us! It is involved in this, that we come into His hands, not for mere settlement of this matter or that; we do not say to Him, "Search out this or that," but, "Search *me;*" and thus, if we are perfectly honest in it, we are inviting the light to be poured into all the dark corners and crannies of our lives and hearts: we are with Him without reserve,—for self-judgment indeed, but as He manifests us to ourselves and thus enables us.

If there has been conscious failure, the mere confession of it is not the whole matter, perhaps not the half of it. Many from a misapplication of the apostle's words,* "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins," (1 John i. 9,) would make this a light and easy method of settling old scores which leaves them ever more lightly to be run up again. Others with a more serious but a legal spirit, are left groaning over their inability to determine how far they have fulfilled a condition which they cannot treat so lightly. Neither of these realize that the real remedy given by the apostle, "If any one sin," is the blessed Advocate with the Father, who here, as the necessary result of His being this, Himself assumes the responsibility of cleansing us after His own manner,

* Which really refer to Salvation.

that communion may be restored. *Confession is not washing*, and His words are, "If *I* wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." Washing is more than forgiveness. There is the searching out by the Word of the matter as in the Presence of God; where the steps which led into the evil come into review, as well as the end they led to, and the foundation of all is judged: so that the hold of the sin is broken for the sinner. We have a conspicuous example of the Lord's dealing with a soul for restoration in the history, soon to be given us, of Simon Peter. Not without significance is it, that the very one who resists the Lord's proffered service to him (however his motive may plead in his excuse) is the one who becomes in his failure the example of cleansing such as is before us in figure here.

How the need we have of Him is emphazised all through Scripture! and how good and wholesome to be thus made to keep close to Him for all the length of our journey! Is it a hardship to be thus in continual company with Him? Look at Him here, and answer! He is at our very feet to wash them! And what His action here secures is that we should have part with Him. Is not all the misery of our lives but the result of losing sight of Him? When Israel entered their promised land, Jehovah went with them. There was given them continual access to Him, for guidance in every emergency that could arise. They seem to have interpreted this in such a way that they would not burden the Lord with too many of their matters. It was plain enough to them that Ai was so small a city that but a small number of them would be competent to take it. They tried that, and at little Ai found their first defeat. Israel had sinned; but it was hidden from them. How then were they responsible for that? Ah! they had followed their own thoughts, and had taken no counsel of the Lord. They did the same in the matter of the Gibeonites, and again the enemy succeeded against them. Now "these things were our types;" only the battle is for us a spiritual one: not therefore less arduous. How we need His cleansing grace, that we may be such as He can show Himself for in the day of conflict; that we may obtain possession of that land which is (in the fullest sense) our "part with Him!"

If it be restoration that is needed, how comforting the knowledge of the truth that nothing can shut us out of His Presence, if indeed our heartfelt desire is to be there; that we are welcome, just as we are, not needing any whole or partial cleansing to entitle us to come in at a door which is never closed against us. For indeed, if we did need this, we could never find it: His word is,—not, if thou art not washed,—but, "If *I* wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me."

Thus of necessity the first step to be taken is to come back to Him, from whom to have got away is the first and saddest failure. If we come back, it is, of course, to put ourselves into His hands, that He may discover to us our need, and meet it with His grace. None but Himself can meet it. In the glory of His Presence the heart is softened, while the conscience is aroused. While He does not upbraid, truth in the inward parts is re-established, and power is found in the very consciousness of weakness, and confidence in the wreck of all self-trust. We have all this brought out in the story of Peter, which for its importance the Spirit of God has given us at length; we shall not, for this reason, dwell more upon it in this place.

Peter, when he learns that it is to have part with Christ that his feet are to be washed, goes immediately, after his ardent manner, to the opposite extreme. "Lord," he says, "not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." The Lord answers him, "He that is *bathed* needeth not, save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." The "washing of regeneration," the cleansing which is effected in new birth, never needs to be repeated. Spite of all that tends to destroy it in this world, the effect is an indelible one. "Whosoever is born of God," says the same apostle who records this in his first epistle, "doth not commit"—or rather, "practise"—"sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin"—be sinning—"because he is born of God." In how many ways we are reminded of the unfailing character of God's precious grace! The love

[f] call me Teacher and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, ye ought also [g] wash one another's feet. For I have given you an [h] example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The bond-servant is no [i] greater than his lord; nor he that is sent* greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, [j] happy are ye if ye do them.

* Literally, "the apostle."

[f] Matt. 23.8, 10. cf. Eph. 6.9.
[g] cf. Gal. 6.1. cf. 1 Pet. 5.5. cf. 2 Thess. 3. 14, 15.
[h] cf. 1 Pet. 2. 21. cf. Eph. 5.2. cf. Matt. 11. 29.
[i] Matt. 10. 24, 25. ch. 15. 20.
cf. ch. 21. 18, 19.
[j] Lk. 11. 28; cf. Matt. 7. 21; cf. Jas. 1. 22–27.

that has laid hold upon us for eternal glory is not going to be defeated in what it has taken in hand to do. The washing of the feet can be repeated indefinitely, but not the bathing of the whole person. The bathed person may defile his feet by walking, but nothing more. Only the feet need cleansing to be wholly clean.

The Lord now exhorts His disciples to imitate His example. They called Him Teacher: let this lowly grace of His then be their instruction. They called Him Lord: let them obey His command. He, their Teacher and Lord, had washed their feet: they might well wash one another's feet. Plainly it was no mere ceremony that he was proposing for their imitation, but the meeting of a deep spiritual need, as love alone could meet it. In a scene of defilement such as the world is, alluring even the hearts of disciples from their Lord, be it theirs to recover and cleanse those who were being drawn away by its allurements. Mere judgment of the evil would not do this, however righteous. Love alone has power to draw, and Christ must be the One drawn to or there is no restoration. How strangely do those who confess themselves debtors wholly to a Saviour's grace yet deal with one another on the totally opposite principle of law. He that would cleanse another's feet must be at his feet to cleanse them. The soul that has fallen into sin has done so because it has got away from the Source of holiness and strength. It is of small service to judge for such their sin; that is only the sign of how far they have departed. They need with this the confirmation to them of that grace which alone breaks the dominion of sin (Rom. vi. 14). People seem as if they argued as to failing Christians, that grace has failed with them, and now *government*, as they would say, must have its course. Now government is the government of grace. "*Grace* reigns through righteousness;" the government is a *Father's* government; while He truly "judges according to every man's work." God's electing love has pledged even, as to Abraham, (Gen. xv. 17,) the "smoking furnace" to do His work. He may thus permit Issachar, become the world's drudge for hire (Gen. xlix. 15), to gall his shoulder with the yoke of a hard service. A child of God may thus be allowed to eat of the fruit of his own ways, that he may learn, in the only way that he himself has rendered possible, the perfection of the ways of God. It is a painful method but a self-chosen one; and plainly through all grace is working,—*governing*. We can never oppose, for the child of God, His government to His grace. All through, His path is light; and it could not be grace that did not conform to this.

Manifestly, therefore, this does not shut out from His Presence the soul that seeks Him; whatever may be the distance to which it has wandered from Him. It may unbelievingly think itself shut out; it may take the eating of the fruit of its own ways, to which it may still be compelled, as the evident proof of this, which it is not: David's sin followed him all the rest of his life; but that in no wise set aside the fact of his full forgiveness.

It should be evident that we can never merit or work our way into that glorious Presence by getting cleansed from whatever evil we may by our wandering from it have fallen into. The grace which alone could open the door still keeps the door open, and only there, at the hands of Christ Himself, can cleansing be

SECTION 2. (Chap. xiii. 18–38.)
The enemy's work but adding glory to the humbled Son of man.

1 Forewarning of One, prescient and supreme, who identifies His sent ones with Himself.

1. I SPEAK [k]not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, He that [l]eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. Now I tell you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye may [m]believe that I am he. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that [n]receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

k ver. 10. *cf.* ch. 17. 12.
l Ps. 41. 9. *cf.* Ob. 7. ver. 26.
m *cf.* ch. 14. 29. *cf.* ch. 16. 4.
n Matt. 10. 40. *cf.* Matt. 25. 40. *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 14–16.

obtained. As long as we are away, we shall still only "stumble and stray," and therefore to be kept out would be to make all recovery impossible. But the weakening of faith by the evil course that has been pursued may indeed be a terrible hindrance; and here is a main point to be remembered by those who desire to have the happiness of which the Lord speaks, of doing to others that which He is doing so constantly for us, as far as it is possible for us to follow Him in it. We must remember that grace alone is the victorious breaker of sin's bonds, and is thus the holiest thing possible: there needs no modification of it at any time,—no guarding it by the mixture with it of something else. That which is not holiness is not grace, and it is not to skin over an ulcer slightly to maintain God's perfect grace for all that seek Him at any moment of time.

Just on this very account,—because grace is sovereign,—there must be, of course, the soul's full surrender to it; and this we must insist on. Christ cleanses after His manner: it must be full cleansing or not at all. As already said, we come near to put our feet in His hands: there is no other access at all, but for this purpose,—no possibility of having part with Him save as we submit ourselves to this. Christ must be "Teacher and Lord" absolutely, as He assures every one of His own. The terms of discipleship He has fully insisted on, and they never vary. Grace sovereign means Christ sovereign, and there is no other way. But with Him there is always, not simply light given, but strength ministered,—strength which is made perfect in our human weakness,—and a joy which *is* strength,—it is the atmosphere proper to it: "in Thy Presence fulness of joy."

Happy then are we if, knowing these things, we are found doing them. Abundance of need there is among the people of God for the ministry of such grace to the wandering and needy. It is the ministry of Christ Himself: there is no help, no restoration possible save as we can get them to Christ; and He, whatever the case may be, is all-sufficient. But we must pass on.

Sec. 2.

The shadow of what He has just said deepens upon His soul. Of those with Him now, in the intimacy to which His love has admitted them, there is yet one to whom that love itself can add but deeper perdition. The enemy is there and at work, where divine love has brought Him, upon a path descending now to the utter darkness only to be relieved by the consciousness that it is indeed love's errand that He is upon, and of the recompense that awaits it,—a "joy set before Him" for which "He endured the Cross, despising the shame."

As Seed of the woman, the conflict with Satan was part of His necessary work. By man whom he had overcome the adversary was to be overcome, and God vindicated in His latest creation-work. But the conditions of the conflict were far otherwise than at the beginning. Man, conquered in his strength, was to conquer in his weakness, cleaving, in the character which belongs to the creature and is his safeguard to maintain, to the might of God. Thus with the "heel" of His perfect Humanity He trod down the adversary; that heel bruised even to death in doing this. It was now the hour in which His assailant in the wilderness, then baffled and withdrawing for a season, would return as prince

2 (21-30): After the sop, Satan!

2. When Jesus had said these things, he was [o]troubled, and testified and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall deliver me up. The disciples therefore looked at one another, [p]doubting of whom he spake. Now there was, lying on the bosom of Jesus, one of his disciples whom Jesus [q]loved. Simon Peter therefore maketh a sign to him, that he should ask who it was of whom he spake. He then, leaning on Jesus' breast, saith unto him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answereth, He it is to * whom I shall give the sop, when I

o *cf.* ch. 12. 27. *cf.* Matt. 26. 37, 38.

p Matt. 26. 21-25. Mk. 14. 18-21. Lk. 22. 21-23.

q ch. 19. 26. ch. 20. 2. ch. 21. 7. *cf.* Gal. 2. 20.

* Or, "for whom I shall dip the sop and give it to him."

of this world with the power of the world behind him: and already had he found one of the chosen twelve, for the paltriest of bribes, willing to betray his Master. From the buffeting of the storm so arising the rest must scatter from Him or be overthrown: to His very face another would deny Him; He must be stripped of what comfort the faithfulness of His few intimates could secure Him; one partial but sweet exception being shown us in this Gospel and in no other. But all is allowed for His fullest triumph. He is to be uniquely perfect, in a unique place, God Himself leaving Him, until the time in which, the demands of righteousness being fully met, He will be able to appear in His behalf.

1. With the sense then of what is before Him, He foretells the defection of Judas. This yet only accomplishes the Scripture. It was written: "He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me." *His* heel! the most contemptuous rejection possible: was it not such to sell the Lord of glory for the price of a slave? It was as if he would inflict upon Christ the serpent's predicted doom! But it was all foreseen and announced, and He afresh announces it, that faith might be strengthened in the rest by that which would naturally most severely try them. By His choice of them alone they were secured; and He who had prayed for Peter, that his faith might not fail, was even now watching over the weak faith of the rest.

Then He raises them up to fullest identification with Himself: "Verily, verily, I say unto you. He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth Me: and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me." This is yet in the ears of Judas; which are dulling, however, into the hardened insensibility which only sin can produce. We are next called, for our instruction, to contemplate this tremendous spectacle,—to tread, as it were, the very antechamber of hell itself.

2. The Lord's soul is troubled: He is not roused to anger, as we might well expect to find. He is the One who has said and sworn, "As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth;" and the tears wept over Jerusalem seem ready to flow over once more. In all that passes between the Lord and Judas in these last scenes, another and more powerful feeling keeps back the anger which the baseness of his awful traffic in the blood of his Master would naturally arouse:—the appalling sight of one over whom were gathering, as it were, beforehand the lurid shadows of the pit. What must it have been for Him to have to say, "One of *you* shall deliver Me up"? The other disciples seem scarcely to have imagined the possibility of real treachery on the part of one of their own number; for after Judas is distinctly pointed out, and the Lord dismisses him with the significant words, "What thou doest, do quickly," not one of them thinks for what purpose he is gone out. They think perhaps of some unintentional disclosure, or at most of some break-down in weakness under too great a pressure; but a deliberate betrayal how can they imagine on the part of one who has been in *His* company? We recall naturally the words of the apostle afterwards,—the very one to whom the secret was communicated here,—as if they might account for the strange inability to comprehend what

have dipped it. And when he had [r]dipped the sop, he taketh and giveth it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And [s]after the sop, then Satan entered into him. Jesus therefore saith unto him, What thou doest do [t]quickly. But none of those at table knew why he said this unto him: but they supposed, since Judas had the [u]bag, that Jesus said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of for the feast, or that he should give something to the poor. He therefore, having received the sop, [v]went immediately out; and it was [w]night.

r *cf.* Ru. 2. 14. *cf.* Gen. 43. 34.
s ver. 2. *cf.* Ps. 109. 4. *cf.* Heb. 10. 29.
t *cf.* Lk. 12. 50. *cf.* Matt. 23. 32.
u ch. 12. 6. *cf.* Lk. 8. 1-3.
v *cf.* Gen. 4. 16.
w *cf.* Lk. 22. 53; *cf.* Matt. 8. 12; *cf.* Jude 13.

had been declared so plainly,—"He that sinneth hath not seen Him neither known Him." True it is, Judas *had* never known the glory in the face of Jesus. What he had known we will not speculate upon; it needs not. So near, yet so far off; capable of casting out demons in Christ's name, yet one to whom, on His side, Christ must say, I never knew you,—this is the plain and awful conjunction, challenging all hearts.

"After the sop, Satan:" there is another terrible conjunction. The token of love becomes in its rejection that which hands over the unhappy man to the adversary of Christ. That morsel from the dish was, we may be sure, no mere sign for another, no semblance of a friendship that no more existed. On the side of Him who gave it, it was true, where all was true,—the token of love that even yet would fain be received as that, and that could warm even a lifeless soul to life. If, still rejected, it should be death instead of life, this is but the necessary transformation which sin indulged produces in the most precious gifts of God. Love with its own wonder-working brings out of death life; in the nature of things, the opposite will produce the opposite. It is the one law, by which like produces like.

And we have, in beautiful contrast here, the sweet assurance of how love welcomes where it is welcomed. The unnamed beloved disciple brought into the same view with Judas,—though we may elsewhere have his name revealed,—seems here to have given us a blank cheque, to which any other that desires may have leave—if he fulfil the conditions—to put in his name. Most certainly, here we find one whose love presses for recognition, and will never fail to answer to faith's utmost claim upon Him. "Drink," He says, "Yea, drink abundantly, O beloved!" How John has drunk in, his first epistle will bear witness for him. He is the apostle of love;—love that he has learned where one and all must learn it. "Hereby know we love, because He laid down His life for us." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." "Herein is love perfected with us, that we should have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is so are we in this world." Thus John draws his arguments from where we all may draw them; but he has so abundantly drunk in, that the whole furniture of his epistle seems but the product of the assimilation of the words of Christ. Especially is this true of these last words before His being delivered up. But John's style, the aspect in which he sees things, is just what we find in the Gospel. All through you see his receptive character,—the man who leaned on the breast of Jesus; and thus he is the apostle of the divine nature and the life eternal; life, light, righteousness, love,—these are the themes of which he is never weary of speaking. And this is what so attracts the heart in John,—it is the heart of Christ that attracts us. Ah, it is this heart that seeks still vessels into which it may pour its fulness. And what we can appropriate we are still welcome to. Which is only to say, we are still welcome to lie on His bosom, as the beloved disciple did, and learn where he learned.

3 (31-35): The Son of man glorified, and God in Him.

3. When therefore he was gone out, Jesus saith, Now is the Son of man [z]glorified, and God is [y]glorified in him. [If God be glorified in him],* he will also glorify him in [z]himself; and will [a]straightway glorify him. Little children, yet a [b]little while am I with you. Ye shall seek me; and, [c]as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go ye cannot come, so now I say to you. A [d]new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another; [e]as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all [f]know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."†

4 (36-38): Man unable to follow Him now.

4. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go thou [g]canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. Peter saith unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will [h]lay down my life for thee. Jesus answereth, Wilt thou lay down thy life for me? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The [i]cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice.

x *cf.* ch. 7. 39. *cf.* ch. 17. 1.
y *cf.* ch. 12. 28. *cf.* ch. 14. 13.
z *cf.* Heb. 2. 9. *cf.* ch. 17. 5.
a *cf.* Acts 2. 24. *cf.* ch. 12. 23. *cf.* Phil. 2. 9-11.
b *cf.* ch. 16. 16-22.
c ch. 7. 33. ch. 8. 21.
d *cf.* Rom. 13. 8. *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 7, 8.
e ch. 15. 12, 17. *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 11, 23.
f *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 14. *cf.* ch. 17. 21.
g ver. 33.
h Matt. 26. 33-35. Mk. 14. 29-31. Lk. 22. 31-34; *ctr.* Phil. 3. 3.
i ch. 18. 17, 18, 25-27.

* Many omit this clause. † Literally, "among yourselves."

3. Out the traitor goes into the night,—a terrible night! but the heart of Jesus is relieved by his absence. He proceeds to enlarge upon the results of His Cross. The Son of man is to be glorified in it: is it not His glory to-day? God too, in every attribute, is glorified in Him. Where do we see God's righteousness as in the Cross? Where has His love been manifest as there? A sinner taken to heaven by its means is made the righteousness of God in Him! the riches of the glory of His grace are told out to eternal ages. Sin, which might seem to have brought everything into question, has been by its means made the occasion of His brightest, fullest, most marvellous revelation!

If God then has been so glorified in Him, He will respond by glorifying in turn Him who has done this. He is taken up to the right hand of God and sits upon the Father's throne. This is possible to Himself alone, and is so given, but the results for man are unspeakably great: a Man is in the nearest place to God that can be: God and man one in His Person! He does not follow this out here: in its fulness it waits for the interpreting Spirit.

But this involved for the disciples His going away. As He had said to the Jews so now He says to them, He is going where they cannot come. They are not now to be with Him, going out and coming in, as through the blessed time just at an end; let them cling all the more to one another as His representatives,—representatives thus of His love to each and all. The duty of love would thus be as a new commandment with the new light of His life laid down for them shining upon it. So would men also recognize them as His disciples,—as having practically learned a lesson so divinely set.

4. Peter full of love which the Lord's words have inflamed, but with no just estimate of himself, bursts out with the question, why cannot he follow Him now? If it were death that was before Him, he would follow Him through that,—was ready to lay down his life for Him. How little we think often in our well-meant zeal, of how much self-confidence may inhere in it and what it needs to follow the footsteps of Him who yet has left us an example to be followed! Peter was to be gratified in his desire when Christ should have prepared the way; and when he himself had learned by all the bitterness of failure his own incompetency. But how severe a teacher experience is! and how much might we escape of such necessity, if only we would learn from Scripture,—

SECTION 3. (Chap. xiv.)

Part with Him: the Father's House, and the Manifestation of the Father, in the Son and by the Spirit.

1(1-7): Abodes in the Father's House.

1. LET not your heart be [j]troubled: ye believe on God; believe also on me. In my Father's House are many [k]abodes; if it were [l]not so, I would have told you: for I [m]go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I [n]come again, and will receive you unto myself: that [o]where I am there ye may be also. And whither I go ye [p]know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?

cf. Phil. 3. 20, 21. *o cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 13-18; *cf.* ch. 17. 24; *cf.* ch. 12. 26; *ctr.* ch. 7. 34, 36; *cf.* ch. 11. 25.

j ver. 27. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 16, 17.

k cf. 1 Ki. 6. 5, 6. *cf.* Ezek. 41. 6. *cf.* Rev. 3. 12.

l cf. ch. 8. 40. *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 16.

m cf. Heb. 9. 24 with Heb. 10. 19.

n cf. Acts 1. 11. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 23.

p cf. ch. 13.

"profitable for correction and instruction in righteousness!" How good is God, to supply us with such a teacher! How we fill our path with sorrow by not submitting to it!

Sec. 3.

We have now the "part with Him" of which He has already spoken. First its full consummation in the Father's House, the many abodes in glory, in which we shall dwell with Him. Then we have the present manifestation of the Father to us in Christ Himself, and by the gift of the Holy Spirit: so perfectly are we provided for on our way to that eternal Home. Father, Son, and Spirit are all employed in our behalf, on a path which shines with heavenly light upon it to the perfect day.

1. The Lord exhorts and encourages them in view of His departure from them. He is to be their sufficient resource whatever might be their trouble, as the sure though unseen object for faith, as God was. The Father's House was before them as before Him, the only full satisfaction for the heart, where rest will be eternal. That was the place to which He was going, and there of necessity His own would be with Him. Would He otherwise have encouraged an intimacy which was to end for ever? would He not have warned them? Ah, He was going up there to love and care for them with the same steadfast care as when on earth, and would prepare a place for them.

Until He finally left it, as rejected by Israel, the temple was for Christ His Father's House. Now He speaks of another,—that of which Israel's was but the figure: but therefore naturally using this to illustrate the higher meaning. The "holy places made with hands," says the apostle (Heb. ix. 23, 24) are "figures of the true," "the patterns of things in the heavens." The court of that house with its numerous chambers, in which the priests as they came up for service in their various courses found temporary lodgment, were indeed more a contrast than anything else with the glorious abodes which the Lord speaks of here. These are *homes*, not mere lodging-places; and in nearer relation to the Divine Father than such outside courts could indicate. The reality transcends all shadows. They who are here provided for are the happy children of One who transcends infinitely all other fathers. And this at once delivers us from the thought which has been attached to the simple language of the blessed Teacher,—as if "many" signified diversity of rank. The whole connection and the terms used are against such an interpretation. In the Father's House all are children; and all the children are in the nearness of such relationship. It is the fruit of Christ's work, and not the reward of our own. It ought to be plain at once to every one who knows anything of the place into which divine grace has brought him, that these things cannot be mingled. The apostle's words clearly state the incompatibility of these two principles: "If by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace, otherwise work is no more work" (Rom. xi. 6).

Jesus saith unto him, I am the [q]way, and the [r]truth, and the [s]life: [t]no one cometh unto the Father but by me. [u]If ye had known* me, ye would have known* my Father also; and from [v]henceforth ye know* him, and have seen him.

*Two Greek words—the first and last γινώσκω, the second οἶδα.

[q] *cf.* ch. 10. 9. *cf.* Heb. 10. 20. [r] *cf.* ch. 1. 14, 17. *cf.* 1 Jno. 5. 20. *cf.* Eph. 4. 21. [s] *cf.* ch. 1. 4. *cf.* ch. 5. 26. [t] *cf.* Acts 4. 12; *cf.* Heb. 7. 25; *cf.* Eph. 2. 18. [u] ch. 8. 19. [v] *cf.* ch. 16. 25; *cf.* ch. 20. 17; *cf.* Rom. 8. 15.

The principles are incompatible, and in all that the work of Christ has accomplished for us, this needs and owns no help from man. Yet it is quite true that there are rewards, and that divine love will satisfy itself in thus owning all that has been done for love. Mercy will show itself also in this; but how? By cleansing away all that which has been mixed with it, and would make this impossible; and this is what is represented to us in the *blood-washed* robes of the book of Revelation. The righteousness which we have in Christ,—the best robe in the Father's House,—can never need such washing; but the robes that are spoken of in this way are the "righteousnesses," or, as the Revised Version has it, "the righteous *deeds*" of the saints: for the book of Revelation is the book of the Throne,—of government and recompense, and we must not be surprised if we have a very different view of things from that presented in Romans or Galatians.

But the whole context assures us that differences of reward are not in question. The Lord is not telling His disciples that "one star differeth from another star in glory,"—it is not indeed glory at all, of which He is speaking; He is comforting their hearts in the thought of His absence, that after all it is only a temporary one, and that the Father's House to which He is going has room enough for all, and is to receive them all eternally. The issues of responsibility do not come in here, as should be plain, and would only introduce an element of uncertainty where faith needed to have the clearest vision.

He had come amongst men, not merely to do a certain work among them, however great, and to be gone. He was going back; but as a Man, taking back with Him the nature He had assumed to the glory He had left,—the pledge of abiding fellowship with those for whom He now went up to take a place as their Representative before God. The communion to which He had admitted them on earth was there to be continued and perpetuated: if it were not so, He would have told them; He would not have bound their hearts to Himself by that dear, familiar intercourse to which He had encouraged them, if it were to have an end for ever. Not so; if He were going away, it was to prepare a place for them; and He would return again Himself to receive them to Himself,—to welcome them to His own eternal Home. His must be their first, best greeting.

He does not explain how the place in His Father's House should be prepared for them; nor were they yet, perhaps, able to understand. The epistle to the Hebrews will show us, if we turn to it, that the heavenly places had to be purified by the better sacrifice which He was to offer, in which all the sacrifices of the law would find their fulfilment. Ephesians speaks similarly of the "redemption of the purchased possession;" and Colossians of the reconciliation of things in heaven (Heb. ix. 23; Eph. i. 14; Col. i. 20). Such thoughts are, even now, strange to many a Christian; for we are slow to realize the extent of the injury that sin has inflicted, and equally, therefore, the breadth of the application of the work of Christ. This is not the place to enlarge upon it; but it is not difficult to understand that wherever sin has raised question of God,—and it has done so, as we know, in heaven itself,—the work of Christ, as bringing out in full His whole character in love and righteousness regarding that which had raised the question, has enabled Him now to come in and restore, consistently with all that He is, what had been defiled with evil. Thus our High Priest, to use as the apostle does the figures of Israel's day of atonement, has entered into the sanctuary to reconcile with the virtue of His sacrifice the holy

2 (8-14): Christ's witness to the Father.

2. Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have [w] I been so long time with you, and hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father, and how sayest thou, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The [x] words that I speak unto you I speak not from myself; but the Father who abideth in me, he doeth the * works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very [y] works' sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that

* Many read, "his."

[w] *cf.* Matt. 11. 27. ch. 12. 45. *cf.* ch. 1. 18.

[x] *cf.* ch. 7. 16. *cf.* ch. 8. 28.

[y] ch. 5. 36. ch. 10. 38. *cf.* Acts 2. 22.

places themselves, and make them accessible to us. Man in Christ has risen to the highest pinnacle of glory with the whole acclaim of heaven; and men redeemed by His blood can be associated with their Lord in glory, "made the (manifested) righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21).

They knew therefore whither He was going; they knew also the way. For they knew in fact more than they realized that they knew. When Thomas, thinking, as it would appear, of a kind of map of the road, which they had not, ventures to object their ignorance of this, the Lord shows him his mistake by assuring him that He Himself was the Way: through Him alone could any come to God. Nor only so; He was also the Truth,—the revelation of God. And since, even so, man was dead and unreceptive of the truth, He was the Life also, which men needed for this reception. The full treasury for man's need was here then to be found.

2. Philip's desire to be shown the Father brings out more fully the witness of the Son to Him. Where Philip was, many are still to-day. They know Christ as, in a sense, the way to God; but as yet they have not seen the Father in Him: Christ is rather to them a Saviour *from* God, than the manifestation of God. He is the Doer of the work which the Father, although they call Him this, simply receives. They are shielded from His wrath, but Himself they do not know. They are, in short, where the Israelite was the night of their first passover. Sheltered under the blood of the lamb, yet the wail of judgment was in their ears, and God for them was identified with what in reality is only His *strange* work,—unknown therefore in what is His true character.

The Lord's reply to Philip is an expression of pain at his want of apprehension. "Have I been so long time with you, and hast thou not known *Me*, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father, and how sayest thou, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not from Myself, but the Father who abideth in Me, *He* doeth the works." His very presence here was to declare the Father, and that after all the Father should not be understood by disciples of His, wounds Him in the deepest way. "Believe Me," He says, "that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me,"—that is, that we are thoroughly identified,—"or else believe Me for the very works' sake." It is a tender but sad rebuke. Had Philip indeed not known that He was on the Father's mission? that He was Himself the Love-gift of God? But *we* are even less excusable, if now we know not. What, is the Father righteousness merely, and only the Son love? are there two Gods, or One Only God? If we have indeed come to Christ, we have not to go a further journey to reach the Father, but have got the very depth of the Father's heart told out. This is, as we have seen from the beginning, the constant theme in John. And oh, what a marvelous joy in simplicity of faith to take it in! Philip was right at least in saying, "It sufficeth us"; and nothing short of this can possibly suffice us.

And the Lord adds to this, that because He was going to the Father, in

believeth on me, the [z] works that I do shall he do also; and [a] greater works than these shall he do, because I go to the Father. And [b] whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, this will I do, that the Father may be [c] glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask* anything in my name, [d] I will do it.

3 (15-27): The indwelling of the Spirit.

3. If ye [e] love me, keep my commandments. And I will request† the Father, and he will give you another

* Many insert, "Me."
† A familiar word, always used of our Lord's asking the Father.

z *cf.* Matt. 21. 21. *cf.* Acts 4. 9, 10.
a *cf.* Acts 2. 37-47. *cf.* Acts 16. 25-34.
b *cf.* ch. 15. 7, 16.
c ch. 13. 31. *cf.* ch. 15. 9.
d *cf.* ch. 16. 23, 24. *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 8, 9.
e vers. 21, 23; ch. 15. 10; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15.

testimony of the Father's delight in that glorious work achieved, even these poor disciples of His should do greater works than He Himself had done. The thousands converted at Pentecost, compared with the "labor for nought" of which He complains through Isaiah as characterizing His own life-toil, already illustrate this; while beyond lay that Gentile harvest which, even while Israel was reaping the fruit of her rejection of Him, would anticipate the final world-harvest. These things are, no doubt, the "*greater* works," while the miracles that He did His disciples also did, even to the raising of the dead, the healing by the shadow of Peter, or the communication of curative power to handkerchiefs or aprons by the body of Paul. This was still the Son's own work, all things being put into His hand as the Fulfiller of the Father's purpose, and received by Him to glorify the Father in the accomplishment of His blessed will. Whatever therefore they should for this end in His Name ask of the Father, He, the Son, would do it; that in the Son the Father might be glorified. And He repeats again, to emphasize it, "If ye shall ask anything in My Name, I will do it."

This is indeed a large enough assurance. It is guarded and made right by the controlling purpose. He who is possessed by the desire that God may be glorified has in this assurance a wondrous possibility before him of successful prayer. Such a desire, just as it is whole-hearted, will clear the sight, and enable for such prayer as can be answered,—will lift up the heart with confidence to God.

We are taught by all this what praying in Christ's Name is:—that it is not a mere putting His Name at the end of one's prayer. It means that we are identifying ourselves in faith with Him who seeks ever the fulfilment of the divine purposes. How impossible to ask truly in Christ's Name that we may obtain the satisfaction of mere selfish cravings! And yet what confidence does it give, that in proportion as our desire is to fill aright the place which He has given us as His representatives upon earth, we may have all that we can possibly need to accomplish this. Here there need be no stinted expectation: here is a sphere in which coveting is fully in place. Alas, how we practise humility after the fashion of Ahaz, who, where God had bidden him make request according to His own greatness, assumes the garb of a piety which he does not possess, and says, "I will not ask, neither will I *tempt the Lord*." And how often do we remain content with a mere scanty pittance of spiritual good, when God has blessed us with "*all* spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus,"—when He is glorified in our practical possession of them,—and when He has said to us, "Covet earnestly the best gifts," and, "Open thy mouth *wide*, and I will fill it."

3. The Lord now proceeds to speak of the provision made for them, that they might not be left as orphans in the world in the time of His absence from them, but have Him manifested to them, and realize His presence with them in a better and higher way than even when He was with them upon earth. We have already been told of that gift of the Spirit which they that believed on Him were to receive in a new way after Jesus should be glorified (chap. vii. 35). But now the Lord teaches them distinctly that the Spirit is personally to come

[f] Advocate, that he may be with you for ever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world [g] cannot receive, because it beholdeth him not, nor knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you, and [h] shall be in you. I will not leave you [i] orphans, I will [j] come unto you. Yet a

f ch. 15. 26. ch. 16. 13. cf. 1 Jno. 2. 1.
g cf. 1 Cor. 2. 14.
h cf. ch. 7. 37–39. cf. 1 Cor. 6. 19; cf. 2 Cor. 6. 16; cf. 1 Jno. 3. 24.
i cf. Rom. 8. 15, 16; cf. Gal. 4. 6.
j cf. ver. 23; cf. Eph. 3. 17; cf. Col. 1. 27.

and take the place that He had filled among them. As the Spirit of truth He would lead them into all truth, giving them the full consciousness of their identification with Him and His with them. *He* would not leave them, but abide with them for ever. This is indeed the great characteristic of the time in which we live, that while Christ is above on high, our Advocate with the Father, we have "another Advocate" down here,—another glorious Person to take up our cause on earth, and be *in* us such power as Christ is *for* us at the right hand of God. Thus indeed is our weakness and emptiness ministered to by divine and perfect fulness and strength. How wondrous is this provision made for us! and what a testimony to the value of the work which has been accomplished for us! This divine Person comes to make *us*,—our very bodies,—His dwelling-place,—His temple. Yet we are fully conscious that evil also dwells in us: and thus there arises the very serious question, How can the Spirit of God dwell in such an abode? And this is the argument in some forms of perfectionism,—Christ and Belial, it is urged, cannot dwell in the same temple. Certainly the temple cannot be Belial's and yet Christ's; but how God could dwell in the midst of a sinful people was the lesson of the day of atonement in the old dispensation: "And (the priest) shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness" (Lev. xvi. 16).

For us the blessed work is accomplished of which Israel's sacrifices were but the mere figure, and it is in Christ that the believer is seen and accepted. The Spirit indwelling is the witness of the perfection of that offering which has "perfected for ever"—or, "in perpetuity"—"them that are sanctified" (Heb. x. 14). The right word here is "in perpetuity,"—which assures us that at no time—not for a moment—is the believer other than perfect before the eye of God, and that upon ground entirely irrespective of his personal behavior. With the *Father*—as such—it is very different: "the Father, without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work" (1 Pet. i. 17). But as between God and His creature all is once for all settled, and to take account of sin there would be to dishonor the covering blood. Thus "if any one sin," says the apostle, writing to Christians, "we have an Advocate with the Father.—Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John ii. 1). The relationship in which we stand to God is not, and cannot be changed by that which yet becomes more evil in view of it. The Father's character is outraged by the ill-conduct of those who are of His family, and the Father's heart is wounded in the same proportion. His provision of atonement for it cannot make it less serious in His sight: the Cross has only revealed it in its abyss of horror.

The Lord's title in this passage is the same as that which in the Gospel He gives to the Spirit. In the common version it is translated "Comforter," and is quite capable of such a meaning; but when He says, "*another* Comforter" he is comparing the Spirit with Himself. The word in these two applications must therefore be rendered uniformly, and "Advocate" is perhaps its best, as it is its most usual rendering. Literally it means "one called to one's side,"—a helper, assistant; thence, an advocate, a legal assistant, in whose hands you leave your case. The Lord is He to whom God has committed His people,—on earth the true and faithful Shepherd of the sheep, who laid down His life for them. Now going on high, He still maintains in glory the same care over His flock; and thus their stumblings and wanderings engage Him still in their be-

little while, and the [k]world beholdeth me no more; but ye behold me: [l]because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall [m]know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my [n]commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my [o]Father, and I will love him, and will [p]manifest myself unto him.

k ch. 7. 33, 34. ver. 17.
l cf. Rom. 5. 10. cf. 2 Cor. 4. 10, 11. cf. Heb. 7. 25.
m ver. 10. cf. ch. 16. 25.
n ver. 15.
o cf. ch. 12. 26; cf. ch. 16. 26, 27.
p cf. ch. 7. 4; cf. Heb. 2. 9; cf. 2 Cor. 3. 18.

half. He is their Advocate with the Father,—not because the Father Himself can fail in either love or power, but as the One who has had committed to Him the burden of them all. To Him they were left in the conflict of the Cross: His hand is to bring them through to glory.

Yet on earth, He having gone from it, they are to have another Advocate, the Holy Spirit; from the beginning the Worker in God's creation and then in His new creation work. The communication of life, the whole work of sanctification, the resurrection of the dead, is His to carry into effect; and this through all dispensations. But this very fact, while it suits well the nature of the place which He has come to fill, shows at the same time that the place itself must imply something other than the work that He has always done. He has come to form and indwell the House of God on earth, and to make the saints individually His living temples. He has come to unite the people of Christ to Himself in heaven, and thus to form also the Body of Christ, with destinies of wondrous blessedness. All this will only open up by degrees, John himself never speaking of the Church, but of the family of God,—of the life therefore which makes men His children. But that this also may have its full character, the Spirit of God must come: in this way the Lord now proceeds to speak of Him.

It is noticeable that it is to disciples who out of love to Him, and not in a spirit of legality, are seeking to keep His commandments, that the Lord promises the gift of the Holy Spirit. If the Spirit be come to dwell in us, the first requisite is readiness of obedience. Wondrous are the possibilities held out to us in this marvelous gift; but marvelous also is the possibility we have of belittling even a gift like this. The Galatians had it, who were giving up the gospel for the law. The Corinthians had it, who were carnal, and walked as men. It belongs to the mystery of our nature that we may have as though we had not. It belongs to the royalty of it that we may debase ourselves. Stranger still is it that the children of this world may be wiser in their generation than the children of light, and that the Lord should even have to put this as if a characteristic thing. Were we not unfaithful to ourselves and to God, how would the world be lighted up with the reflection of the glory that is in the unveiled face of Jesus! how we should go through the world as visitants from another sphere! Thus we need not wonder that the Lord should almost seem to put it as if the gift of the Spirit were dependent upon the reality of one's obedience. What! can we have God in us, and entertain Him so poorly? Nothing could make such a thing credible but the sad experience of so lamentable a fact. Yes, men who KNOW that Christ has died for them,—who KNOW that the Spirit of God dwells in them,—who KNOW that God's way is the only way of peace and joy and power,—can yet live and act as if nothing of all this were true. We can give up certainties of blessing for certainties of spiritual loss! Who can enough bewail the misery of such unaccountable folly?

Let us learn now from the Lord's lips what this gift is of which He is speaking to us; the fruit of the Son's entreaty with the Father, a divine Person with us,—in us,—never to leave us more! One who with perfect wisdom, perfect love, and perfect power, takes our case into His hand, leaving us nothing to do but to walk with Him in restful confidence and certainty of unfailing good. Yet not to be led blindly, or without exercise, but as one being trained in communion with the divine thoughts and affections, for eternal fellowship with the Father and the Son!

Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how cometh it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not unto the [q]world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If any one [r]love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our [s]abode with him. He that [t]loveth me not keepeth not my words: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but my Father's who sent me. These things have I said unto you while abiding with you: but the

q cf. Gen. 5. 22.
cf. 1Jno.3.1.
*cf.*Col.3.3,4.
r ch. 15. 10.
cf. 1Jno.5.3.
s cf. ver. 2.
cf. Is.57.15.
cf. Rev. 3. 20.
t cf. Gal.5.6.
*cf.*Jas.2.14-17.

This Spirit is the "Spirit of truth:" the false halo of Satan's lure thrown over things, the mirage of the desert, is to depart; not to leave one with a mere sombre shadow in its place, but to substitute for it the true yet transfiguring light of an opened heaven, beckoning,—inviting us to the abodes of the Father's House,—the glory of God! Darkness there is still remaining, but it is passing away, as the apostle says, and the true light already shines (1 John ii. 8).

For the Spirit of truth is now to utter the "many things" of which the heart of Christ has long been full, but as yet unable to relieve itself; for there were none able to bear the things to be spoken. Think of it! all this is uttered now, to the very last we are to have of revelation; and the Revealer Himself is with us, to give spiritual capacity for its reception. The light is now come to illumine all the ages past with the glory of the ages still to come! light that is its own convincing witness to the soul flooded with its brilliance. Yet the world, alas! cannot receive the Spirit. It has rejected the Word manifest in flesh, and will not receive One whom it cannot see: "it beholdeth Him not, nor knoweth Him." But receptive, obedient souls have good cause to know Him: "for He dwelleth with you,"—as Christ had dwelt with them; but there was to be an intimacy even beyond this;—"He dwelleth with you, and *shall be in* you." This was to be the new blessedness,—God no more dwelling in temples made with hands, but man to be His temple.

After this manner then, Christ would still be with them; they were not to be orphans, left to the helplessness that His very presence had discovered to them. The Spirit would be for them the conscious link with the unseen but unforgetting Saviour. While the world would behold Him no more, they would still behold Him, with whose triumphant life in glory their life was bound up. This identification in life with Him is the connecting link with Paul's doctrine afterward, who developes from it the whole truth of Christian standing as we find it in Romans and Ephesians; as upon the basis of the Spirit's indwelling he builds the truth of the Church as the Body of Christ. If Luke in some sense approach nearest to Paul's gospel, as is so often, and not without cause, insisted on, yet John is most nearly related to him with respect to all his higher truths of Christian position. This we shall see better, if the Lord permit us to go on to the Epistles; but it should not be hard to realize already. So directly He assures us here: "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." We shall be better able, however, to apprehend the meaning of this when we come to His own development of it in the next section.

The Lord goes on to show that this manifestation of Himself will be necessarily dependent on, and therefore proportionate to the opening of the heart to receive it. The heart for Christ moreover is indicated not so much by emotional sensitiveness as by the spirit of obedience which has itself also higher or lower grades which require careful noting, though in themselves quite easy to be apprehended. In his first epistle John emphasizes the same thing. The apostle of love is careful to insist that the love of which he speaks is liable to very grave mistakes in men's estimate of it. It is not so simple as it would appear, to make the estimate. You have to distinguish between sentiment and practical reality;—the world in general easily does this;—and then you have to distin-

Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall [u]teach you all things, and bring all things to your [v]remembrance which I have said unto you. [w]Peace I leave with you: [x]my peace I give unto you: [y]not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be [z]troubled, nor let it be afraid.

u ch. 16. 13. *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 20, 27.
v *cf.* ch. 2. 22.
w *cf.* ch. 20. 19. *cf.* Col. 1. 20.
x *cf.* ch. 16. 33. *cf.* Col. 3. 15.

cf. Matt. 11. 29. *y cf.* ch. 16. 22; *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 10. *z* ver. 1; *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 18.

guish, as the world can scarcely do, between the mere human quality and the divine. Thus love with John is characterized especially as love, not of men in general, but of the *brethren:* for he that loveth Him that begat loveth them also that are begotten of Him. And again, as here, it is love that keeps His commandments: for "this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments."

So the Lord says: "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him." Here evidently, though a man have the Spirit, the fruits of the Spirit will be found only in the way of practical obedience. How else could we expect them? Can we think that God would comfort His people in paths of disobedience? That would be unholiness, and abhorrent to His very nature. No: love itself must walk contrary to us, if we will walk contrary: "he that spareth his rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes" (Prov. xiii. 24).

The question of Judas (the Lebbæus of Matthew, and brother of James the son of Alphæus),—although the Lord seems not to have distinctly answered it,—brings out the further assurance, "If any one love Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

This statement might appear at first sight to be only the equivalent of the former one; although it is plain that the latter is more emphatic. In each case it is the character of true love of which the Lord is speaking; and indeed it seems as if He would not suppose in His disciples a love less than such as He is speaking of. John follows his Master's style, when he bursts out in his impassioned way when speaking of the Lord, (which yet is truer than the most rigorous induction of facts could suggest) "he that sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him." It is the only thing to be said, to speak worthily; and he that falsifies it is in that measure not a true witness to his Saviour-Lord.

True also it is, that something of both characters of love, as Christ affirms them, will be found in all true Christians,—overborne so much by contrary influences that like Peter in the high priest's palace, only He who knoweth all things can detect the true disciple underneath the false. There is the false within us all, as well as the true; alas, in many, so often uppermost. The results cannot fail to follow: the blessing of which the Lord speaks attaches to that with which He here connects it. We find it in proportion as we answer to the character.

Looked at in this way, there is no difficulty in seeing the deeper nature of a love that keeps Christ's word, as compared with that which keeps commandments only. Not to keep a positive command is simple, rank rebellion,—nothing less. His "word" is wider, while it addresses itself with less positiveness of authority to the one whose heart and conscience are less prompt to the appeal of love. And the largeness of Christ's word involves for keeping it an habitual searching into it, with more than readiness to face all that may be thus discovered. Is it not to be feared that there are many who shrink from honest investigation of the Word, because they do not want to be "troubled" with such and such questions? Nay, is not this one of the commonest causes of the sad ignorance which is found so widely prevalent with regard to it? But were ignorance an excuse, and we were so unhappy as to desire one, it is plain that the deeper the ignorance the better off we should be; and the dullest searcher would be the most blameless also!

4 (28-31): Christ's departure and the failure of His own.

4. Ye have [a]heard that I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would have [b]rejoiced that* I go unto the Father: for the Father is [c]greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye may [d]believe. I will no longer speak much with you: for the [e]prince of the world cometh, and in me he hath nothing. But that the world may know that I [f]love the Father, even as the Father gave me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

*Or, "because."

[a] ch. 13. 33, ver. 3.
[b] cf. ch. 17. 13 with Heb. 12. 2.
[c] cf. ch. 10. 29, 30. cf. Heb. 2. 7.
[d] ch. 13. 19. ch. 16. 4.
[e] ch. 12. 31. ch. 16. 11. cf. Lk. 4. 6. cf. 2 Cor. 4. 4. cf. Eph. 2. 2.
[f] cf. ch. 15. 10. cf. ch. 11. 41, 42. cf. ch. 12. 50.

But how the Lord delights in the one who with a true spirit of obedience welcomes the light of divine truth without any reserve or qualification whatever! Not only will He manifest Himself to him, but "My Father will love him, and We will come and make our abode with him." How much fuller and more permanent is the blessing here! To the two at Emmaus the Lord manifested Himself; but there was no tarrying of that coveted blessing. And how many of us are in like condition! Transient gleams there are of a glory that abides not, and which leaves the soul burning but mourning after it. But there is something more than this in our Lord's words here. "We will come," He says, "and make our abode with him." The result will be to manifest the competence of Scripture for the "man of God," to whom alone it is pledged as competent, —"able to furnish thoroughly unto all good works." Who is the man of God, but he who is out and out for God? and who else can expect to be furnished in this way, but he who is honestly intentioned to use his knowledge as before Him who gave it? The very passage which we are quoting here reminds us of where the profit is to be found: "all Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." If we do not mean to accept the reproof and the correction, where is the use of talking about the rest?

In God's ordered path alone can we find God. In His marked out way it would be *impossible not* to find Him.

"He that loveth Me not keepeth not My words:" here only is the decisive test. Feeling is right, but too sensitive to external influences to be a safe gauge of the man proper. The truest love is shy and sensitive to self-inquiry. Under its influence we are more apt to challenge and accuse ourselves than to congratulate. Nor need we this introspection: let us walk only in His ways, and we shall find the Lord's own acknowledgment. We shall find Him walking and talking with us, as has been always His manner with His own: we shall find Him treating us as those of whom He is not ashamed.

And this is communion with the Father and the Son: "for the word which ye hear is not Mine,"—not simply Mine,—"but My Father's who sent Me."

And now they were to receive the full revelation: the Advocate, the Holy Spirit,—sent too from the Father as He had been, but now in His Name which covered all of blessing for them,—*He* would teach them all things: leading them on, as well as reviving and giving them the full value of all that they had heard with Him. The effect for them would be peace in the heart, even as the legacy of His death was peace in the conscience. They would have the peace He Himself enjoyed,—the result of that unbroken communion in which He walked with God. For us it is restlessness of will disturbs this,—the strife with His will which this means, and the dissatisfaction of soul which follows every gain we may seem to make in this direction. Desiring but His will, there can be no proper doubt as to the issue. *That* is as sure as it will be blessed; and thus the true remedy for fear is found.

4. Now they should be able to face the fact of His departure which they knew to be but for a time. Nay, they should, if they loved Him, be able to rejoice

SECTION 4. (Chap. xv. 1-16.)

The incoming change from Judaism to Christianity, and the test of profession in practical walk.

1(1-8): Abiding in the vine the only sufficiency.

1. I AM the [g] true Vine, and my Father is the Husbandman. Every [h] branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that [i] beareth fruit he purgeth* it, that it may bear more fruit. Pure* are ye [j] already by reason of the word that I have spoken unto you. [k] Abide in me, and [l] I in you. As the branch [m] cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, so neither can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the

g *cf.* Ps. 80. 8-11. *cf.* Is. 5. 1-7. *cf.* Jer. 2. 21. *cf.* Is. 42. 1. *cf.* Is. 63. 5.

h *cf.* Matt. 3. 10. *cf.* Rom. 11. 17, 21.

i *cf.* Matt. 13. 12. *cf.* Heb. 12. 5-11. *cf.* Rom. 5. 3, 4. *cf.* ch. 17. 17.

j *cf.* ch. 13. 10. *cf.* Eph. 5. 26; *cf.* Lev. 13. 6.

*The same root.

k vers. 5-7; *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 28; *cf.* Heb. 10. 38, 39.

l *cf.* ch. 17. 23; *cf.* Eph. 3. 17.

m *cf.* Rom. 8. 10.

that He was going to the Father,—back to Him who abode in that exaltation which He, on His errand of love, had given up. Yet it would bring to an end for the time the intercourse that He had had with them. Nor was the world a place in which this could continue. The world!—its prince was coming; how different from Himself, its rightful Prince! Nay, there was nothing in common between them: the prince of the world had nothing in Him! Yet to the world He was giving proof, in that through which He was thus to pass, of His love to the Father. But the world being what it was, He was leaving it; and for those that were His also, it was no tarrying place: "Arise," He says, "let us go hence."

Sec. 4.

Christ is then leaving the world, and His own, who are still in it, are yet not of it. As a consequence, Judaism is given up, and part with Christ takes the place of part with the nation of Israel. This is, most evidently, the meaning of the Lord now proclaiming Himself the true Vine, and His disciples "branches" in this. The vine was the Lord's figure of Israel in Isaiah (chap. v.). It is as evident also that the vine is the symbol of what is looked to for bearing fruit, and that it is for bearing wild fruit that Israel is rooted out of her vineyard. In the Christianity which takes the place of Judaism on the earth, much more then is fruit the necessary requisite. And that is plainly what is insisted on here.

1. First, we see what is alone sufficiency for the fruit required. It is what is implied in the very nature of a branch,—to abide in the vine: apart from Christ we can do nothing. If the branch abide not in the vine, the vine—the vine-sap—cannot abide in the branch; and this is the reason of the connection and order which the Lord's words indicate: "Abide in Me, and I in you." "Abide in Me,"—that is the command,—the responsibility; "and I in you,"—that will be the assured result. But let us look in detail at what is here before us.

"I am the true Vine, and My Father is the Husbandman." We are looking evidently, at what has to do with the earth: and as evidently, the true Vine is in contrast with Israel, as already said. Christ now openly takes the place which was ever His, of the real Source of all fruitfulness for God. The legal system would have made Christ the topmost Branch of the national tree, but no more: for if man could have stood under it, he would have needed no Saviour: his fruitfulness would have been of himself. But this was a means of probation only: God giving abundant testimony of what He intended by it in plain words as to the issue, as well as in that sacrificial and typical ritual which accompanied it and pointed beyond it. It was to be by a new covenant that blessing was to come to the nation, and not by the old, Sinaitic one; which testified ever by its vail dropped over the face of God that none could on that ground see or stand before Him.

The vine too is the natural figure of dependence, and needs constantly the

Vine: ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for [n] apart from me ye can do nothing. If any one abide not in me, he is [o] cast forth as a branch, and is withered: and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they

[n] *cfr.* Phil. 1. 11, *cfr.* Phil. 4. 13.
[o] ver. 2. *cf.* Matt. 25. 30.

labor of the husbandman; and into such a dependent condition did the Son of God come down, that He might be the Producer of fruit for God, such as yet had never been, as well as the Pattern of fruitfulness also, wherever found. In Him was the life of faith seen in its perfection. If the branches are in Him, and so He in them, as the productive life-sap,—so does He speak also of being in the Father, and of the Father in Him:—"The Father who abideth in Me, *He* doeth the works." We see thus how the figure of the vine underlies all these expressions. The dependent Man, in whom the Father abides reproduces Himself in His believing people who abide in Him. He is the Vine, they are the branches: He is in them, not personally, but as life and nature: and they are in Him as products of His life, abiding in Him by that faith which is characteristic of it.

The Life is the Divine Life; and thus we hear in the Son's prayer which follows His request, "that they all may be one, *as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they may be one in Us;*" and so also the apostle who so closely follows Him, declares: "If that which ye heard in the beginning abide in you, ye also shall abide in the Son, and in the Father."

But there is a never to be forgotten difference between the believer and His Lord, which these very words imply: if he can be said, as the apostle here affirms, to be "in the Father," and that seem to even him too much with the Son of God Himself, the preceding "in the Son" shows the way of it to be only through the Father's own love—the gift of His Son for men. We are in the Son, and *thus* in the Father: for us that is mediatorial wholly, which for Him was the necessary prerogative of His glorious Person. Only the Son Himself could be in this way in the Father; and thus His declaration of this as to Himself was the necessary claim of Deity.

Life, as we have it, is in the Son (1 John v. 11). He is the Eternal Life itself,—the Source of it for men; thus the "Last Adam" of the new creation. And here is the foundation of Paul's doctrine as to Christian position, as already said. John's is not position: for the Son's position cannot be ours; and John says "in the Father," as well as "in the Son;" where position cannot be thought of.

The figure of the vine and its branches thus clearly illustrates the truth of that vital connection between Christ and His people which is what in Christianity has replaced the formal and sacramental connection which obtained in Judaism. It is quite true that there is here supposed however a possibility of a connection which is still formal merely. There is the necessity dwelt upon of *abiding* in the vine. The one that abides not is cast forth as a branch, and is withered and burnt. In this case, of course, the one who comes to his end in such a way could never have been a branch in vital union with Christ; or the whole doctrine as to life in Scripture would be violated. But in what branch of a vine, it will be asked, has the sap never circulated? and in what other than vital connection could one speak of a branch in the vine?

The question is not answered here; and to answer it one must appeal to similar images elsewhere. We are most naturally reminded of the broken off branches of the olive, of which the apostle speaks in Romans xi. Here, without raising question as to the meaning of the olive itself, the branches are distinctly said to be broken off for unbelief, and those who stand to "stand by faith." The interpretation of the vine is so far confirmed, that those broken off are those who have no spiritual life at all. The principle of continuance is that of faith.

Nor only so; for the Gentile had no part in the olive at the beginning; he is

are [p]burned. If ye abide in me, and my [q]words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father [r]glorified, that ye bear much fruit, and ye shall become [s]disciples of mine.

[p] *cf.* Matt. 13. 40–42. *cf.* Heb. 6. 8.
[q] *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 14. *cf.* Col. 3. 16 *cf.* ch. 14. 13.

cf. 1 Jno. 5. 14, 15. [r] *cf.* 2 Cor. 9. 13; *cf.* Matt. 5. 16; *cf.* Tit. 2. 10. [s] *cf.* ch. 8. 31; *cf.* ch. 13. 35.

not a natural branch, but grafted in—as the apostle is careful to tell us, "contrary to nature"—into the good olive, out of the wild olive to which he naturally belonged. This "grafting" is common to all Gentiles; but where, as in the vine here, Christ is the stock, it is clearly true that there are no natural branches,—that *every one* must be grafted in. Now here it is plain that every graft does not abide, or, as we say, "strike." The "abiding" is just *striking:* it is the rooting itself in the stock,—a vivid image of faith's laying hold, which, looking at things from the human side of responsibility insisted upon in the exhortation in this case, makes us partakers in the preciousness of Christ our life.

"My Father is the husbandman,"—although it has been applied by some to the divine dealing with Christ Himself,—is applied by the Lord evidently to His dealing with His people. "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bear more fruit."

The vine, as already said, is the ideal of a fruit-bearer. It is fit for nothing else. "Shall wood be taken thereof, to do any work?" asks the Lord by the prophet; "or will men take a pin of it, to hang any vessel thereon?" (Ezek. xv. 3). "I looked for it to bring forth grapes," He says again of Israel as His vine (Isa. v. 2). This is what still the Father looks for from us. And notice that it is not works, of which the vine speaks. Works may be fruit, assuredly, and blessed fruit; still, works are acts, which may have a certain character; fruit speaks more properly of the character itself. Thus "the fruit of the Spirit," says the apostle in Galatians (ch. v. 22, 23), "is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance." These are things which show the life in the branch; in activities, no doubt; but they belong more to the person than do the activities. Moreover, the apostle speaks of them as fruit, not fruits: he dwells more upon the unity exhibited than the variety. And this is a blessed character of the Spirit's workmanship, that it is a complete harmonious development, in which every part is in evident relationship with the rest. Love that "seeketh not her own" shines out along the line of these jewels, pervading them all, and not merely stringing them together.

If, therefore, there is no fruit, there is manifestly no life: the branch that bears no fruit has no title to the vine; it can only be taken away. If it bear fruit, then comes the "purging" that it may bear more fruit. Whatever this may include beside, the Lord's words that follow show certainly that the Word is the effectual means by which this purging is accomplished. "Purged,"—or "clean,"—He says, "ye are already, by reason of the word that I have spoken unto you." The Word is that which judges all that is impure in God's sight, while by its sweet encouraging grace, it wins and divorces the heart from it. Any one who is in the least acquainted with vine-culture knows how much pruning it requires, to make a vine bear proper fruit. It is most instructive to realize that this pruning is not necessarily the taking away of what is merely, or in itself evil: leaves and branches,—even if fruitless branches, do not naturally speak of this. The injury that they do lies in squandering the precious sap; which again does not so much lessen the quantity of the fruit produced, as it affects the quality. The things by which Christian fruitfulness are most seriously affected are apt to be, not so much things positively evil: these bear their brand upon their face, for the most part: and the conscience, if it be not dull indeed, is roused against them. It is rather the negative than the positive quality which is dangerous. It is occupation with that which simply has not

2 (9-16): Communion in love.

2. As the Father hath [r]loved me, I also have loved you: [s]abide ye in my love. If ye [t]keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I said unto you, that my [u]joy may be in you, and your joy may be full. This is my [v]commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you. Greater love hath no one than this, that a man [w]lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, [x]if ye

r *cf.* ch. 5. 20. *cf.* ch. 17. 26. *cf.* ch. 10. 14, 15.
s *cf.* Gal. 2. 20.
t ch. 14. 15, 21, 23. *cf.* ch. 10. 17, 18.
u *cf.* ch. 17. 13. *cf.* ch. 14. 27. *cf.* ch. 16. 24.
v ch. 13. 34; 1 Jno. 4. 21. w *cf.* ch. 10. 15; *cf.* Rom. 5. 6-10; *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 10. x *cf.* Matt. 12. 49, 50; *ctr.* Lk. 6. 46.

Christ in it, which (tolerated for its very harmlessness) insensibly steals away the vigor of spiritual life. Lawful things, as the apostle reminds us, may bring us thus under their power; and even the name of "duty" may be invoked to cover with its sanction what is in reality only the slipping of the heart away from its first duty to Him who has redeemed and purchased us with His blood.

The lesson of the vine is here that of the need of concentration; of which Paul, in his epistle to the Philippians, gives us so pregnant an example. His "one thing I do" is the only principle for Christian progress, or happiness either. It ensures both. The knowledge of the new man teaches him that "Christ is ALL:" and we cannot broaden or brighten the spiritual life by adding anything to Him.

"Abide in Me" is therefore what He exhorts to:—to realize our dependence, and cultivate that faith which is the acknowledgment of it, and which brought us to Him at first, as the Only-sufficient and All-sufficient Saviour in that hour of supreme distress. Saviour He is still, and all through; not least from our own will and way:—the principle of sin, and the sure road to disaster. To be true to what was our first happiness is to make permanent that happiness; to abide in Him is to find Him in His fulness abiding in us, and all His promises interpreted to us by their fulfilment in the experiences of a blessed and fruitful life. It is only, as has been already said, what is implied in our very Christianity itself: for he who does not abide in Christ in some true sense, is not a Christian. But, alas! we need the exhortation: who will say that Christians do not need to be exhorted to *be* Christians? "He that abideth in Me, and I in Him, the same beareth *much* fruit." We only need to be fully what we really are:—not to be untrue to our God, our Saviour, and ourselves.

Now comes the warning: "If any one abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered:" that is the spiritual result, as the words "as a *branch*," indicate: but there follows the final judgment, in that figurative language in which it is so commonly described: "and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." The change has been often noted in this place from "ye" to "any one." The Lord would not have it supposed that it might be possible for those who are truly His to be thus cast forth and to perish: therefore His altered speech. He returns, however, immediately now to His former direct address: "If *ye* abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Here is a further condition, and which certifies, in the same manner as we have seen His language do elsewhere, the character of the prayer to which He pledges success. If His words abide in us, they will give shape to our desires and requests, so that He can answer them without injuring us or contradicting His own character. But if we thus drank in His words, what wondrous power would our prayers possess! Why do we not know more of it? There can be but one reply: we too little yield ourselves to be possessed by these precious words,—care often too little to face them. They demand too much of us. We would sooner pursue our own wills, giving Him what we may consider a fair proportion of what is His, and hoping He will not expect too much from such as we are. Of how

do whatsoever I command you. I call you no longer [a] bondservants: for the bondservant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends: for all things that I have heard from my Father I have made [b] known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have [c] chosen you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear [d] fruit, and that your fruit should abide: that [e] whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name, he may give it you.

a *cf.* Rom. 8. 15. *cf.* ch. 8. 34–36.
b *cf.* ch. 17. 26. *cf.* ch. 16. 13.
c ch. 6. 70. *cf.* ch. 13. 18. *cf.* Eph. 1. 4.
d ver. 8.
e ver. 7.

much we rob ourselves, in thus robbing Him, we shall learn, it may be when it cannot be righted.

He would touch our hearts with another thought, that His Father will be glorified in our bearing *much* fruit: and we shall become such as He can count true disciples of His own. A precious inducement! in which He appeals to our hearts, and expects them to respond to affection so well proved. Have we not dropped out a good deal out of that term so full of meaning, except as applying it to these men of a by-gone day? Is it not perhaps significant, if we have done so?

2. The Lord goes on to speak of the new position in which, as delivered from the law, they were placed,—no longer servants, but friends,—and of the communion in love implied in this. The disciples of Moses were bondsmen of the law under which they were placed, and had even no access to God,—the way into the holiest not being yet manifested (Heb. ix. 8). Grace was now changing all. They had looked upon the glory of the Word made flesh,—the glory of the Only-begotten of the Father, in whom the Father Himself was declared and seen. God had come nigh: and now, if He who declared Him were going back to heaven, heaven could not be closed by this, but rather opened. God come nigh, for those who welcomed this, could be no transient vision. But, for one near God, bondservice is no more possible: communion in love must take the place of the former distance: and this is the subject here.

As Christ on earth had been the Object of His Father's love, so now were His people that of His. As to Him it was a love of complacent delight: walking as He did in His Father's commandments, the One Man answering to the heart of God; He would have them answering similarly to His own heart, walking in His commandments, so as to be partakers of the joy which He had tasted, even amid all the sorrow of His path. He desired for them fulness of this joy. And as He had loved them, even to the laying down His life for them, so was it His commandment that they should love one another: and so they would be still in fellowship with His love.

He was laying down His life for them,—His friends: how could they have greater proof that such they were indeed? Friends! and no longer servants: no more did He call them that: for, instead of mere messages of their duty, He had been opening to them all the truth as to those purposes of the Father with which He had been entrusted. And such is Scripture for us now: with a length and breadth and depth and height in it which befits such a communication from the Father to the Son as that of which the Son here speaks.

This love was at the foundation of all for them: and to it they owed, and we owe, that choice which was on His side, not on ours. "Ye have not chosen Me," He says, "but I have chosen you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide: that whatsoever ye should ask the Father in My Name, He may give it you." Thus in conscious weakness the power of God is with us: and as He sought us when lost,—when there was nothing but our misery to awaken His compassion, so we may count assuredly upon Him, whatever our helplessness, to perfect the work He has begun. What comfort lies for us in that royal word, "I have chosen you!"

But grace enables us to fulfill the conditions necessarily imposed by the holi-

SECTION 5. (Chaps. XV. 17-XVI. 27.)
A new place with God.

1 (17-25): Identified with Christ for love or hate.

1. THESE things I [f]command you, that ye love one another. If the world [g]hate you, ye know that it hath hated me, before you. If ye were of the world the world would [h]love its own: but because ye are [i]not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The [j]bondservant is not greater than his lord. If they have [k]persecuted me, they will also persecute you: If they have kept my word, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they [l]know not him that sent me. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had [m]sin: but now they have no pretext for their sin. He that [n]hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not [o]done among them the works that no other hath done, they had not had sin, but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this is that the word may be [p]fulfilled which is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.

2 (26-XVI.3): His witnesses in the world.

2. When the [q]Advocate is come, whom I will send unto

[f] ver. 12.
[g] *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 1, 13. *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 12.
[h] *cf.* Gen. 39. 14. *cf.* Jas. 4. 4. *cf.* Gal. 1. 10. *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 15.
[i] ch. 17. 14, 16. *cf.* Phil. 3. 20.
[j] ch. 13. 16.
[k] *cf.* ch. 16. 1, 33. *cf.* 1 Cor. 4. 11-13.
[l] ch. 16. 3. *cf.* ch. 8. 19. *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 8.
[m] *cf.* ch. 9. 41. *cf.* Lk. 12. 47, 48.
[n] *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 23. *cf.* ch. 5. 23.
[o] *cf.* ch. 12. 37-41. *cf.* Acts 2. 22, 23.
[p] *cf.* Ps. 35. 19. *cf.* Ps. 69. 4.
[q] ch. 14. 16, 26.

ness of the divine nature:—and cannot set these aside: therefore the closing words. They are in the same line with others that we have lately heard: which they emphasize only in a somewhat different way. Fruit that *abides* is that which alone satisfies God. How much that looks well has not that quality in it which ensures permanence. How much that seems truly of God reveals its character by its decay! This "abiding" connects itself, in the Gospel of John, with the divine side of things which is seen all through.

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All this involves, as has been seen, a new place with God. We must not expect to have it presented as we find it done by Paul at an aftertime. Only by degrees could the full truth be made known: and for this the Spirit of truth Himself must come. What we have now before us is the result of Christ's departure from the world. His disciples being left in it as His representatives and witnesses, with the Spirit also in it, and the consequences of this, while with the Father there would be enjoyed a freedom of access in His Name before unknown. It is in fact a new place with God, but in practical life down here, which is so much the theme in all John's doctrinal unfolding.

1. The identification of His disciples with their Lord, whose representatives on earth they are now to be, is the first thing here. The world itself would identify them. The hatred with which it had followed Him it would now show to His people. They need not wonder at it. If they were separated from it in spirit and character, as also by His choice of them to be His own outside it, then there was consistency in such opposition. *He* could not commend Himself: how could they? His persecutors would, of course, be theirs: while those who kept His word would keep theirs also. The Object of their hatred was, above all, Himself, and ultimately the Father, who had sent Him. They had had fullest evidence of His mission in His words and works: works unparalleled by those of any other: so that the sin of their rejection of Him was manifest. They hated, alas! both Himself and His Father. Their own Scripture had been fulfilled, "They hated Me without a cause."

2. Amid all this opposition, they were not alone to be His representatives,

you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who goeth forth from the Father, he shall [r]testify of me: and ye [s]also shall bear witness, because ye are with me [t]from the beginning. These things have I spoken unto you, that ye may not be stumbled. They shall [u]put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh when he that [v]killeth you will think that he offereth God service. And these things will they do, because they have not [w]known the Father nor me. But these things have I spoken unto you, that when their* hour cometh, ye may [x]remember them, that I told you [of them].

3 (4-15): The manifestation of the Spirit.

3. And these things I told you not at the beginning, because [y]I was with you; but now I go away to him that sent me: and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? but because I have said these

*Some read "the."

r 1 Jno. 5. 6. cf. Acts 5. 32. cf. 1 Cor. 12. 3.
s Lk. 24. 48. Acts 10. 39, 41.
t cf. Acts 1. 21, 22. cf. 1 Jno. 1. 1.
u cf. ch. 9. 34. cf. ch. 12. 42. cf. Acts 13. 50.
v cf. Acts 7. 58, 59. cf. Acts 22. 20. cf. Acts 26. 9.
w ch. 15. 21.
x ch. 13. 19. ch. 14. 29.
y cf. Matt. 9. 15. cf. ch. 17. 12.

but His witnesses: they and the Spirit whom He would send to them from the Father. There would be thus a double witness,—the unseen Spirit being known in the mighty works which would be done. He would be in this way also the Advocate, plead for God and for His people, even though it might be to deaf ears. As the Spirit of truth also, the truth would commend itself to the conscience, if the heart were closed. Their own testimony would be that of men in personal acquaintance with those details of His life and ways which they have, in fact, made known to us. The human witness would be a natural and needed supplement to the divine.

Spite of all, it was necessary to warn them that the opposition of the world to Him would not thus be overcome. They would be put out of the synagogues: nay, men's hearts would so pervert their consciences that they would kill them, and offer that to God as acceptable service. We find this conspicuously enough in such an one as Saul of Tarsus, "concerning zeal, persecuting the Church:" so little does a good conscience certify a soul to be right with God!

3. The Lord goes on to speak again of the coming of the Spirit, with regard to the character of His testimony. So important for them was it that it was even expedient that He should depart, that the Advocate might come. Again He speaks of Him by that assuring title, which declares how thoroughly He has made their cause His own. According to the divine purpose, Christ must go to the Father, or the Spirit would not come; for it is to a glorified Christ that He testifies. Christianity in its full character is, in fact, the fruit of His ascension, as Paul makes fully plain, who was Himself converted by the "gospel of the glory" (2 Cor. iv. 4, 6).

For this, however, we must yet wait: here we have, first, the result of the presence of the Spirit thus sent from the rejected One in glory, as the necessary demonstration of the world's sin, with the judgment of its prince, and the manifestation of the Father's righteousness. "He will convict" does not necessarily imply that men will receive the conviction. The guilty do not necessarily own the righteousness of their sentence. The world assuredly does not own it. None the less has God demonstrated the guilt of the world, and placed men under responsibility to receive His sentence. There lies the way into inconceivable blessing in that salvation for the guilty which the gospel proclaims.

Christ has been in the world: He has been rejected and cast out of it; it is too plain to be denied that He died a malefactor's death. Men may say for themselves, that individually they had no hand in it. This they do say: how is it possible they can be guilty of what was done by men of another race and of another time? Well, look at the Jew in the centuries that have elapsed since

things unto you, [z]sorrow hath filled your heart. But I tell you the truth: it is [a]expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the [b]Advocate will not come unto you: but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will [c]convict the world of sin, and of [d]righteousness, and of [e]judgment. Of sin, because they [f]believe not on me: of righteousness, because I [g]go unto my Father, and ye see me no more: of judgment, because the [h]prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot [i]bear them now: but when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will [j]guide you into all truth: for he will not speak [k]from himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to [l]come. He shall [m]glorify me, for he shall take of mine and announce it to you. All things that the Father hath are [n]mine: therefore I said that he taketh of what is mine, and shall announce it to you.

z ver. 22. *cf.* ch. 14. 1.
a *cf.* ch. 7. 38, 39. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 16.
b ch. 15. 26.
c *cf.* Acts 2. 37.
d *cf.* Acts 7. 52.
e *cf.* Acts 2. 19, 20.
f *cf.* ch. 3. 18, 19.
g *cf.* Acts 3. 13. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 21.
h *cf.* Heb. 2. 14. *cf.* ch. 12. 31. *cf.* Col. 2. 15.
i *cf.* Mk. 4. 33.
j ch. 14. 26. *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 20, 21.
k *cf.* ch. 5. 19.
l *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 9, 10; *cf.* Gal. 5. 5. m *cf.* ch. 7. 39; *cf.* Gen. 24. 35, 36; *cf.* Num. 8. 2-4; *cf.* 2 Cor. 3. 17, 18. n *cf.* ch. 17. 10; *cf.* Matt. 11. 27; *cf.* ch. 13. 3.

then: has not His blood been upon them, and on their children? Have they not bought for themselves "a field to bury strangers in" with the "price of blood?" If Christ was not what He claimed, was He not worthy of the sentence under which He suffered? If you do not believe in Him, do you not affirm that sentence to be righteous? Who were these Jews, who put Him to death? Were they not a people carefully prepared for centuries to receive the One they rejected? If you had been among them, would not you have rejected Him too?

Scripture at any rate affirms that "as in water face answereth to face, so the *heart* of man to man." It does not say that the *life* is the same, and the difference in this respect may be due to many causes: but it says, the *heart* is. And it speaks of Israel as a field specially cared for and cultivated, to show precisely what one may expect from the soil of the human heart. Their own law had given a dreadful description, drawn too from experience, of what God had found in them: and the apostle, quoting it, says, "We know that whatsoever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law." Granted, you say perhaps, but that is Israel. See then how he concludes: what the law says it does indeed say to those who are under the law:—true, but for what purpose? why, "that *every* mouth may be stopped, and *all the world* become guilty before God" (Rom. iii. 19). That is, Israel is not an exception as to man's state before God, but rather, *an unexceptionably perfect example*. If Israel be found such as this, one need go no further,—the whole world is condemned.

This, though the sentence of the law, applies as well, as must be evident, to the rejection of Christ. The unbelief for which the world is condemned is naturally characteristic of us all: and those who are brought to receive Him are just those who will most fully own this; the language of the prophet will be theirs: "He was despised and rejected of men: a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not." If there be difference as to any, it is the mercy of God that has made the difference.

But the presence of the Spirit convicts the world also of righteousness: "of righteousness, because I go unto the Father, and ye see Me no more." We hear in the prayer that follows, His appeal in this way: "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee: but I have known Thee: and these have known that Thou hast sent Me." Here He puts in contrast the world, which is about to demonstrate its ignorant hatred of the Father by the murder of the Son, with Himself, against whom they are showing their enmity. In this open conflict,

4 (16-22): The change from sorrow to joy.

4. A °little while, and ye no longer behold me, and again a little while and ye ᵖshall see me; because* I I ᵍgo to the Father. Some of his disciples said therefore to one another, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while and ye behold me not, and again a little and ye shall see me: and because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? We ʳknow not of what he speaketh. Jesus knew therefore that they were desirous to ask him, and he said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves of this that I said, A little while and ye behold me not, and again a little while and ye shall see me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall ˢweep and lament, and the world shall ᵗrejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be ᵘturned into

o *cf.* ch. 7. 33.
p *cf.* ver. 22. *cf.* ch. 14. 19.
q *cf.* ver. 10, 28.
r *cf.* Mk. 9. 10, 32. *cf.* ch. 12. 16.
s *cf.* Lk. 23. 27, 28. *cf.* Matt. 9. 15.
t *cf.* Rev. 11. 10. *cf.* 1 Ki. 21. 16.
u *cf.* Lk. 24. 41. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 3. *cf.* Ps. 30. 5.

* Some omit this clause, but its recurrence in the next verse shows it should be retained.

with whom will He show Himself? His accusers dare to condemn Him in the Father's Name; and the bitter cry upon the Cross might seem to justify their accusations. He must come openly out and show with whom He is: and in resurrection from the dead God manifests Himself accordingly. He rises, and with abundant witness, but not to show Himself to the unbelieving world, but to return in glory to the Father. The world sees Him no more till He comes back to judge it. God and the world are in demonstrated opposition.

Righteousness has acted: and righteousness will act further in the nearing future, in taking out of the world which has rejected them also, those whom He has linked with Himself, as in His prayer. Resurrection and ascension will demonstrate as to them also with whom the Father is. In heaven they will be "made the righteousness of God in Him." A marvelous display! but the Lord does not here speak of it. It is of the testimony of the Spirit's presence in the world that He is here speaking.

But what remains, then, for the world itself? Judgment! and already the prince of this world has been judged. We must not understand this to mean that sentence has been executed upon him: which plainly is not the case. It is *pronounced*, but certainly he is not shut up in the abyss as yet (Rev. xx. 1–3); and still less in the lake of fire (ver. 10). Branded with his doom, he yet is suffered, in the wisdom of God, to be still abroad, the subtle tempter or the cruel persecutor of the disciples of Him whom he has, in both characters, assailed before.

The Lord turns to brighter themes: emphasizing once again that it is the Spirit of truth that is to come to them, to guide them into what as yet they could not bear:—in fact, into the whole range of truth, and to lead out into the blessed future. In all this the glory of the Son would be revealed: for all things that the Father hath being His, there remains nothing beyond this of which to speak. As Paul says by the illumination of the Spirit now, "All things were created by Him and for Him; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist" (Col. i. 16, 17). Let us remember with adoring hearts, that we are "heirs of God and joint-heirs of Christ;" and let us seek to enter into the amazing grace of such a revelation with all the energy that the Spirit can give.

4. The Lord again speaks of His departure, in terms which His previous words might have enabled them to understand. He was indeed going to the Father; yet by the coming of the Spirit He would, as it were, again be with them: for, as He had said, in that day they would know as they had never known, that He was in the Father, and they in Him, and He in them. But

joy. A woman, when she is in travail, hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will [s]see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy [t]no man taketh from you.

5 (23-27): Results in access to God.

5. And in [u]that day ye shall ask * me nothing; verily, verily, I say unto you, [v]Whatsoever, ye shall ask † the Father in ‡ my name, he will give it you. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name: ask and ye shall receive, that your [w]joy may be full. These things have I spoken unto you in [a]allegories: [but] the hour is coming when I will no more speak unto you in allegories, but will declare unto you [b]openly about the Father. In that day ye shall ask † in my name: and I say not unto you that I will ask * the Father for you: for the Father himself [c]loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have [d]believed that I came out from the Father.

SECTION 6. (Vers. 28-33.)

A note of victory.

I [e]CAME out from the Father, and am [f]come into the world: again I [g]leave the world and [h]go to the Father.

* ἐρωτάω. † αἰτέω.

‡ This clause is by many put at the end of the sentence.

s cf. ver. 16. *cf.* ch. 20. 19, 20.
t cf. ch. 14. 27. *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 10.
u cf. ver. 30. *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 20 with ver. 13.
v ch. 14. 13, ch. 15. 16. *cf.* 1 Jno. 5. 14.
w ch. 15. 11, ch. 17. 13. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 8.
a cf. ch. 10. 6. *cf.* Matt. 13. 11, 12.
b cf. ch. 20. 17. *cf.* 2 Cor. 3. 12-18. *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 8.
c cf. ch. 14. 21, 23. *cf.* ch. 17. 26.
d cf. ch. 8. 69. *cf.* ver. 30, ch. 17. 8.
e cf. ch. 8. 14, 42.
f cf. ch. 1. 9-11.
g cf. ch. 12. 35.
h cf. ch. 17. 13.

His words only show them lost in the mysterious sorrow of His departure,—the departure again of Him who had come into the world to bring in the long-expected blessing, and was going back with His end, as it seemed, unachieved, to leave them with their failed hopes! The present sorrow was too heavy upon them for the hope beyond to be realized as yet. The sorrow was plain; the hope was a perplexity.

5. But the Lord goes on to the results Godward of the new place He was about to take, and again declares the value of His Name in access to the Father. It was not to be as if He stood between, and they must come to Him, that He might go to the Father for them. No, He had opened the way for direct approach. Moreover the Father Himself loved them for the love they had to Him whom they had received as come out from the Father. Let them prove for themselves the sweetness of this way of access, that they might realize the fulness of joy resulting from so wonderful a place of intimacy as would now be theirs. For as yet they had asked nothing in His Name: they had not learned to identify themselves with Him who as yet had not taken His place for them with God. But the sanctuary now stood open, the allegories in which He had hitherto spoken to them were to be exchanged for open speech that suited this. There was now to be in the nearest place with God a Man in heaven. Henceforth there is for men an entrance into that within the veil, whither the Forerunner has entered for us.

Sec. 6.

A brief note of triumph closes His speech with the disciples. He repeats finally that, having come from the Father into the world, He now goes back from the world to the Father. It might seem as if He was returning with His great purpose unaccomplished, and with regard to Israel, it was in some sense really so: "I have labored in vain, and spent My strength for nought," is His own complaint through the prophet (Isa. xlix. 4): yet, He adds, "Surely My

His disciples say unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no allegory. Now we [i]know that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any shouldst ask* thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God. Jesus answered them, [j]Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is come, that ye shall be [k]scattered every one to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am [l]not alone, because the Father is with me. These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have [m]peace. In the [n]world ye [shall] have tribulation, but be of good courage: I have [o]overcome the world.

i *etc.* ch. 14. 5, 8.
j *cf.* ch. 13. 38.
k *cf.* Matt. 26. 31. *cf.* Mk. 14. 50. *cf.* ch. 20. 10.
l *cf.* ch. 8. 16, 29. *etr.* Mk. 15. 34.
m ch. 14. 27.
n *cf.* ch. 15. 18–21. *cf.* Acts 14. 22. *cf.* Rom. 5. 3–5.
o *cf.* ch. 14. 30. *cf.* Heb. 12. 2. *cf.* Rev. 3. 21. *cf.* 1 Jno. 5. 5. *cf.* Rom. 8. 37–39.

SECTION 7. (Chap. xvii.)

The Melchizedek Priest: His work anticipatively completed.

1 (1-5): Authority over all flesh, to give eternal life.

1. THESE words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the [p]hour is come: [q]glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may [r]glorify thee; as thou

* ἐρωτάω.

cf. ch. 12. 23. q *cf.* ch. 12. 28; *cf.* ch. 13. 31, 32; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 21. r *cf.* Phil. 2. 11; *cf.* ver. 4.

judgment is with the Lord, and My work with My God." The answer accordingly comes from God to Him: and we know how that Cross which was then the symbol of His rejection has become the symbol of a wider and higher triumph. New purposes were to be disclosed: mysteries hidden in God through all the former ages were to reveal the unsuspected wonder of His work, and fill heaven as well as earth with the display in them of the divine glory. The Lord is full, as we are permitted to see when He turns presently to His Father, with the light beyond the gloom; but the disciples are not ready for the communication of it to them. For a moment, indeed, a gleam seems to have pierced the darkness. As He speaks of going to the Father, they have got already, they say, beyond the allegories into the plain speech they longed for and of which He had spoken. But even in the words in which they say this, they show how far the gloom had shrouded them. "*Now we know*," they say, "that Thou knowest all things:—*by this we believe that Thou camest forth from God.*" Patiently and sadly He replies to this: "*Do* ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is come, that ye shall be scattered every one to his own, and shall leave Me alone: and yet," He adds, "I am not alone, but My Father is with Me." Amid all, He knows that the victory is sure: and sure for *them*: "These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good courage: I have overcome the world."

Sec. 7.

His discourse with them is ended, and He turns now to the Father, to put into His hand these poor and presently to be scattered sheep, of whom He is going to show Himself, in the very hour of their scattering, more than ever the good Shepherd. It is the Melchizedek, or Royal, Priest however, to whom we are privileged to listen in His intercession for His people, the work being anticipated as done, that puts Him in the place. We have seen this character attaching to much that He says, in all this part of John, as very largely to the doctrine of the Gospel as a whole. In this closing portion, we have seen Him at the commencement in the place of Advocate, or rather what connects with this, and which involves the same position as the Risen and Ascended Man in which we find Him here. So it is said,—"knowing that the Father had put all things into His hands;"—that is really His Kingship: He is Lord of all.

There is, of course, a special form of His Kingdom which He takes for a special purpose, when as Son of man He brings the earth from its disorder back to

hast given unto him [s]authority over all flesh, that as to all that thou hast [t]given him, he might give them life eternal. And this is the [u]life eternal, that they should [v]know thee, the only true God, and [w]Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have [x]glorified thee upon the earth: I have [y]finished the work which thou hadst given me to do. And now, O Father, [z]glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory that I had with thee [a]before the world was.

[s] *cf.* ch. 3. 35. *cf.* ch. 5. 27. *cf.* Matt. 28. 18.
[t] vers. 6, 9, 24. *cf.* ch. 6. 37, 39. *cf.* Heb. 2. 13.
[u] *cf.* ch. 3. 14-16. *cf.* ch. 10. 28, 29.

cf. 1 Jno. 5. 11, 12. [v] *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 13; *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 7, 8; *cf.* Gal. 4. 9. [w] *cf.* ch. 6. 29; *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 14. [x] ch. 13. 31; *cf.* ch. 8. 29. [y] *cf.* ch. 13. 1; *cf.* ch. 4. 34; *cf.* ch. 19. 30. [z] *cf.* Rom. 6. 4; *cf.* Acts 3. 13. [a] ver. 26; *cf.* Prov. 8. 22-30; *cf.* Phil. 2. 6; *cf.* Col. 1. 15; *cf.* Heb. 1. 3.

God. Into man's hand it was put at the beginning, and by man's fall it was corrupted and ruined. By man's hand that ruin must be repaired: and thus that Kingdom is the Kingdom of the Son of man: but He is King already before this comes, sitting on the Father's throne, and we are "translated into the Kingdom of the Son of His love."

The Melchizedek Priesthood is supposed by some to contemplate simply the millennial kingdom;—that is, in its exercise; but the bread and wine of our Melchizedek should lead us into a wider application of the type. Indeed, as a type,—in which way alone we must view the application made of Gen. xiv.,—the whole action and the circumstances speak more distinctly of our blessing as Christians than they do of any other. For Sodom is not judged, and Abraham with his typical heavenly calling we may claim without hesitation as our representative: "Abram the Hebrew," (the "passenger,")—passing through a world by which he will not be enriched, "from a thread even to a shoe-latchet." No doubt, there is a right application to millennial times: and the Lord will be seen and will act in that character in relation to Israel and the earth. This is quite true: while it is clear that the argument of the epistle to the Hebrews shows us Christ after the order of Melchizedek *now*, though the type in relation to the "shadow of heavenly things" in the tabernacle brings before us necessarily the type of Aaron.

The relation to what we have in Hebrews is clear in the position taken by the Lord in the prayer He utters. We see Him in the first place with authority given Him over all flesh; then, as not praying for the world: that is, "separate from sinners." Lastly, He is shown as "higher than the heavens,"—in the glory given Him, to which (though a glory always His own) it is as Man He goes back. The mingling of blessing and prayer is quite characteristic. The Royal (and more than royal) Priest is manifest throughout.

1. The Lord's heart is free; He is no longer hindered by the unbelief of those about Him, nor occupied with them, but for them with God. He speaks as the Son of the Father, who has fulfilled the mission upon which He came, and is going back, to take the place belonging to Him,—to the glory which He had before; yet still as Man, to take it from His Father's hand, and to carry through in power what He had begun in suffering. He speaks in the consciousness and communion of the coequal Son, yet in entire devotion to the Father's glory:—"Glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." Authority over all flesh is His; but it is His Father's gift, as His people are. He has ability to sustain what requires no less than divine power, and He gives eternal life,—a divine gift; but the power He uses is in obedience, and everywhere the mystery of His Person manifests itself in His utterances. He is God Himself, in the creature's place to make good the failure of the creature, and by His condescending love to win him from his ruinous path of self-will back to Himself. Who could henceforth refuse a path in which he saw before him the Son of God,—"Leader and Finisher of faith" in its whole course?

But it was His also to give to them eternal life,—a nature to receive and de-

2 (6-21): His prayer not for the world, but for His own.
1 (6-10): The Father's gift.

2. [1] I have [b]manifested thy name unto the men whom thou [c]gavest me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them unto me, and they have kept thy word. Now they [d]know that all things that thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the [e]words that thou hast given me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I [f]came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray with regard to them; I pray [g]not regarding the world, but regarding those whom thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all things that are [h]mine are thine, and all [i]thine are mine, and I am [j]glorified in them.

b *cf.* ch. 1. 18. *cf.* ch. 14. 9-11. ver. 26.
c vers. 2, 9.
d *cf.* ch. 16. 30.
e *cf.* ch. 3. 34. *cf.* ch. 8. 28. *cf.* ch. 15. 15. ver. 14.
f ch. 16. 28.
g *cf.* ch. 14. 22 with ch. 15. 19. *cf.* 1 Jno. 5. 19. ver. 25.
h *cf.* ch. 10. 29, 30.
i ch. 16. 15. j *cf.* 2 Thess. 1. 10; *cf.* Eph. 2. 7.

light in the revelation made. For "this," He says, "is eternal life, that they should know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." This is not a definition absolutely of eternal life, but how it is known and realized, now that Christ is come. The Lord's words necessarily look on, not back; to make them rule out the possibility of eternal life in an Old Testament saint, because he could not say, "Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent," would be a very unwarranted deduction.

2. [1] Marked out by these characters, as He tells us distinctly His disciples were, (for He had made known to them the Father's Name, and they had received His words, and knew surely that He had come out from the Father,) He now presents them to the Father. As the Priest with God, He is the Intercessor for His own, and not for the world,—"separate from sinners," as we read in Hebrews. The priest supposes established relationship with those for whom he stands before God, although with Israel under the law all was but a shadow of the true. Our Priest goes into heaven in the value of an offering once offered, never to be repeated, by which He has "perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

"The only true God," whom Israel knew in contrast with the false gods of the heathen, was nevertheless, as such, in His innermost reality unknown. And this the veil of the sanctuary shutting men out from Him declared. Even by Moses His Face could not be seen. Thus the Lord speaks of "Thy Name which Thou hast given Me." It was His work to declare that Name; and He declares it as a name of relationship to Himself. The Son speaks of the Father: yet God had been spoken of as such before. Nay, He had, as we know, proclaimed Himself a Father to Israel; and we have heard the Jews boldly venturing upon it: "We be not born of fornication," they had said to Jesus Himself; "we have one Father, even God." But they were pushed into saying so: if you had asked them for the Name of Israel's God, you would have heard of Jehovah, or the Lord Almighty, but it is not likely that "the Father" would have leaped to any body's lips. Alas, Israel was no child by nature to such a Father; and God could be no right Father to such a child. On the lips of the Divine Son, sent in servant-form into the world for man's necessity, how different does it become!

It is an eternal relationship, not one of time. It is not relation contracted for a purpose, however blessed may be the purpose. It belongs to His eternity. Love has in Him an Object worthy of itself. Could it be imagined away without a loss so great as to be disastrous?

Think, then, of this, the Son of His bosom, here in the world, a world which He created, at His own personal cost to put away the evil, and bring those who had wandered from Him back to God! This as the manifestation to men of Him who could give His Son for such a purpose, and to be the Head of a new creation built up out of the old, the assurance to it of fullest and abiding blessing!

2 (11-16): Not of the world, and to be kept from the evil.

[2] And I am no longer in the world, and these are in the [k]world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, [l]keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be [m]one as we. While I was with them, [n]I kept them in thy name which thou hast given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them hath perished but the [o]son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now I come to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my [p]joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word, and the world hath [q]hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldst [r]take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the [s]evil. They are [t]not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

k cf. ch.13.1.
*cf.*1 Pet.5.8.
l ver. 15.
*cf.*1 Pet.1.5.
*cf.*Jude.24.
m vers. 21, 22.
*cf.*ch.10.16.
*cf.r.*1 Cor.1. 10-13.
n cf. Lk. 22. 35, 36.
*cf.*Lk.12.22-38.
o cf. ch.6.70, 71.
cf. Acts 1. 25.
*cf.*2 Thess. 2. 3.
p ch. 15. 11.
q ch. 15. 18, 19.
cf. Jas. 4. 4.
r cf. 1 Cor. 5. 10; *cf.* 1 Cor. 7. 20; *cf.* Gal. 1. 4. *s cf.* 1 Jno. 5. 18, 19; *cf.* Lk. 11. 4. *t* ver. 14; ch. 8. 23; *cf.* ch. 18. 36; *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 11; *cf.* Heb. 13. 14.

Thus has He manifested to us the Father's Name; but He has done more even than this,—He has given us a place with Him as children, in the value of a life communicated to us, as those of whom thus He, taking as Man the First-born place among them, is not ashamed!

No wonder, therefore, that the authority given Him over all flesh should be for this as the fundamental and decisive exercise of it, to give eternal life to as many as are given to Him; thus of necessity separated from the world which has rejected Him. How dear are they to Him as the Father's gift! how dear as those of whom His grace can say, forgetting all that could be pleaded, however rightly, against them, 'They have kept Thy word!" He has taken fullest care that they should know, in all that He can speak of as His own, the Father as the Source of all. For He has given them but the words given Him, and in receiving them they know Him as the One come out from Him—the Sent One of God.

Here then are those with regard to whom He prays: the Father's own, the fruit of the Father's mission of the Son; those given Him of the Father and still the Father's; even as in the perfect communion of that relationship all things are. In these also, the fruit of His own work, He is glorified.

[2] Now He was no longer to be in the world, but they would be left in it, without that gracious, all-sufficient companionship which they had been enjoying. He commits them, therefore, to the care of that Divine Father, under whose guidance and government the children of God still walk (1 Pet. i. 17); He abiding as the Lord who directs their service (Eph. iv. 5, 6; 1 Cor. xii. 5). For all things are in His hands, to work out in power, as has been said, what He has in suffering laid the foundation for; but the relation of the Father to the children is as plainly to be recognized. He prays, therefore, to the *Holy* Father, to keep them in the power of that Name which He has manifested to them. The power of it would be to keep them near to Him: for the sanctuary of His Presence is the only refuge from self and sin. At a distance from the Light, evil and good become soon merged and indistinguishable. With Christ the atmosphere in which He lived was God, and into it He brought all others:—"While I was with them, I kept them in Thy Name, which Thou hast given Me." Alas, there was one who was repelled by it: "I have guarded them, and not one of them has perished but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled."

He was going to God, but would leave them, not in sorrow, but in joy. "The joy of the Lord is strength;" and He had spoken to them as He had, that they might have that joy which had been His own, in the midst of a scene of sorrow such as the world would all the more be; for in proportion as they had

[3] (17-21): He sanctifying Himself, that they may be sanctified.

[3] Sanctify them by the [u]truth: thy [v]word is truth. As thou hast [w]sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And in their behalf I [x]sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. Neither do I pray with regard to [y]these alone; but also regarding those believing on me through their word; that they all may be [z]one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one* in us: that the [a]world may believe that thou hast sent me.

u *cf.* ch. 8. 32. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 13. *cf.* Eph. 4. 24.

v *cf.* Eph. 1. 13 with Eph. 5. 26. *cf.* Ps. 119. 160.

w ch. 20. 21.

x *cf.* ch. 10. 36. *cf.* Heb. 7. 26. *cf.* Col. 3. 1.

* Some omit "one."

y *cf.* Acts 2. 39; *cf.* Rom. 9. 23, 24. z *cf.* ch. 10. 16; *cf.* Eph. 2. 13-19; ver. 11. a *cf.* ch. 13. 35; *cf.* Acts 5. 12-14; *ctr.* Rom. 2. 24.

their joy in God, would it be realized how far it was away from Him, and it would hate them as not of it. The light would bring its shadows, and they would be identified with Himself in sorrow and in joy alike. Yet He did not pray that they should be taken out of the world: the wilderness would have for them its harvests, to be reaped through all eternity. How Israel's feast of tabernacles tells of that! He prayed only that they might be kept out of the evil in it. From the world itself He had entirely separated His own; they belonged to it, in the appointment of God and in the nature He had given them (inconsistent as they might be with this) no more than did He Himself.

[3] The truth was to be the means of sanctification to them,—"*Thy* truth," He says, that is, the truth as characterized by that revelation of the Father of which He has been speaking. Now, sending them into the world, as He was doing, the open glory of heaven into which He had introduced them was to be henceforth characterized by a new Object in it,—a Man, set apart there to God (as "sanctified" means),—sanctified by Himself, as none other ever was, to be for Him His image in human form (2 Cor. iv. 4). Divine glory shining out in the face of Jesus.

We have here another instance of the foundation of Paul's doctrine being in this Gospel. The "gospel of the glory of Christ" was that by which the apostle of the Gentiles was turned to God, and this was the light in which he henceforth walked. Christ in glory was the power over him, the joy within him. Here was his eye fixed; here was the goal of his course, which in his ardor was a *race*. The passion of his soul was to "win Christ, and to be found in Him." And he states but his experimental knowledge of the Lord's words here when he says that "Christ is made unto us wisdom from God, even . . . *sanctification*" (1 Cor. i. 30). The Object before him detached him from the world, and drew him heavenward. It absorbed and inspired him. Generalizing his experience, he affirms for Christians at large the result as he had realized it: "We all, beholding the glory of the Lord with open face,"—it is the *Lord's* face that is "open," or without a veil,—"are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit" (2 Cor. iii. 18).

This is an inspired comment upon the words before us in the Gospel. We shall find them developed for us by the apostle in various ways, which at present we shall not attempt to follow. Every Christian heart should know for itself this central glory of the gospel, in which God and Man meet, and meet for ever; in which Christ gone in to God, with His work achieved, our Forerunner, invites us to abide where He abides. Who shall deny Him what His soul has wrought for?—or refuse to go in out of the night, where there is no night more?

Where this light falls, it is *glory*: "from glory to glory," says the apostle. The least degree is that; and where it shines it brightens to the endless day. "That they may be sanctified in truth," says the Lord; and the touch of these rays is the dispelling of all illusion. What is the world? it ignored, insulted, crucified *Him!*—a world in which He could serve, but not reign! and yet even the life here is lifted into glory, when we can say, "The life which I live

3 (22-26): Manifested glory.

3. And the [b]glory which thou hast given me I have given them; that they may be [c]one, as we are one; I [d]in them and [e]thou in me, that they may be [f]perfected into one, that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast [g]loved them as thou hast loved me.

Father, as for those* whom thou hast given me, I desire that where I am they also may be [h]with me; that they may [i]behold my glory which thou hast given me; for thou [j]lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

O [k]righteous Father, the [l]world hath not known thee, but [m]I have known thee, and [n]these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have [o]made known to them thy name, and [p]will make it known; that the [q]love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and [r]I in them.

*Many read, "that which."

b cf. Rom. 8. 17, 30. *cf.* Eph. 2. 6, 7. *cf.* Phil. 3. 21.
c cf. vers. 11, 21.
d ver. 26. *cf.* Rom. 8. 10. *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 16.
e cf. ch. 14. 10, 11.
f cf. 1 Jno. 4. 12. *cf.* Eph. 4. 15, 16.
g ch. 16. 27. *cf.* ch. 14. 21, 23.
h ch. 14. 3. *cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 17. *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 11, 12.
i cf. 1 Jno. 3. 2; *cf.* Rev. 22. 4; *cf.* Tit. 2. 13.
j cf. ver. 5; *cf.* Prov. 8. 30; *cf.* ch. 1. 18.
k cf. ver. 11; *cf.* Rev. 16. 5.
l ch. 15. 21; *cf.* ch. 1. 10; *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 21.
m ch. 8. 55; *cf.* ch. 10. 14, 15.
n ch. 16. 27-30; ver. 8.
o ver. 6; *cf.* ch. 14. 9.
p cf. ch. 20. 17; *cf.* Rom. 8. 15; *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 13.
q ch. 15. 9; ch. 16. 27.
r cf. Eph. 3. 17.

in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

And here the Lord explicitly assures us of our interest in all this: "Neither pray I regarding these alone, but also regarding those believing on Me through their word; that they may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me."

This is a unity of practical life, oneness of heart and mind, such as subsists between the Father and the Son: a unity which the world is to be able to see, so as to be led by it to faith. It is not, of course, that the world as a whole will believe, but men of the world have been at all times wrought upon by it. It is not the Church that is meant,—in John we have not this; although, no doubt, every breach of Church unity has begun as a breach in the practical life. The life has its character from the truth entered into; and "one in Us" shows it to be a life of fellowship with the Father and the Son. How glorious such a witness! What a testimony to Him who can work it in such as we are!

3. The prayer now passes into blessing pronounced,—the expression of His will with regard to His own, and in which He goes beyond the time of His absence to that in which His glory will be openly revealed. The change is suited to this, and to the Melchizedek character as well; though we have no reason to limit this to the time of open manifestation.

The glory given us we shall be seen in together when the Lord appears, and it will be the glory in which He will appear as Son of man. Then the world therefore will *know*,—it will be no question of faith any longer, but of sight,—that Jesus was sent of the Father. In that day He will come "in His own glory, and that of His Father, and of the holy angels" (Luke ix. 26).

But it is not said, "in the glory of His saints," although they have glory; and the reason is here apparent, that it is in His glory they will come. His is the glory which they reflect, and so the Lord says, "I in them," and the apostle, that "He cometh to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe, . . . in that day" (2 Thess. i. 10). The glory will be seen to be His, but they will share it; and being thus "perfected into one,"—in a unity of glory such as shall be worthy of Him, the world shall know, He says, "that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me." Words these are indeed, which none but Himself would have dared to use;

DIVISION 3. (Chaps. xviii.-xxi.)

The Perfected Offering and the Resurrection of the Life.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chaps. xviii.-xix. 16.)

Sovereign Lord and Willing Offering.

SECTION 1. (Chap. xviii. 1-11.)

Obedient to the Father's will.

WHEN Jesus had said these things, he [s]went forth with his disciples beyond the torrent Kedron, where was a [t]garden, into which he entered and his disciples. And Judas also, who delivered him up, knew the place, for Jesus ofttimes resorted thither with his disciples. Judas, therefore, having received the [u]troop and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

[s] Matt. 26. 30, 36. Mk. 14. 26, 32. Lk. 22. 39.
[t] *cf.* Gen. 2. 8. *cf.* ch. 19. 41.
[u] Matt. 26. 47. Mk. 14. 43. Lk. 22. 47.

but we stand before God in the value of what He is: grace finding in this way its ability to manifest itself so as to bring out all the depths of His nature. He is going "in the ages to come" to show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii. 7). Need we say of anything, it is too great to show forth this?

But there is a glory His which is greater than that in which He is to be seen with His people, and which can only be seen in His own eternal dwelling-place; therefore He desires that we may be with Him, to behold it there. It is glory which as Man He enters, and in that sense "given" glory, and yet as the recognition of the love which was eternally His. Thus it is Divine glory, as far as the creature can be strengthened to behold it. There are necessary limits here,—limits which forbid even our defining them further. And the whole of what we have here is of a nature which requires rather prayer than study to apprehend it. We must be where He is, to realize the vision.

The Lord appeals now to the "*Righteous* Father," as One who, in the midst of a world "alienated from the knowledge of Him," has known Him; and He links His disciples, spite of their feebleness, with Himself, as those who at least have known Him as sent of the Father. To them He had made known His Name, and would go on to make it known; for (they and we) must here be learners still. The love of the Father to the Son is, as we have seen, part of that manifestation; and so this becomes an inward realization in the soul; and He, the Object of the Father's love, in whom therefore the Divine nature in its glory revealed itself,—He becomes in them the necessary Object also, and the One in whom fellowship with God is henceforth found.

DIV. 3.

We have reached now the third division of the Gospel, in which we see the perfected offering, and that resurrection from the dead which is its manifest acceptance. John gives, as has been already said, the burnt-offering aspect of the Lord's work, which would alone suit the view of His Person as the Only-begotten of the Father. "Lo, I come to do Thy will" is here the characteristic; and as the Mighty Worker He carries it to completion. As the free-will sacrifice He freely lays down His life. Throughout it reads like a triumphal progress. There is no agony in the Garden, no cloud upon the Cross. He testifies Himself that the work is finished; and this is confirmed by the threefold witness of the Spirit, the water, and the blood. The resurrection of the Lord is, as we might expect, more fully opened up in its consequences for us than in the other Gospels.

SUBD. 1.

In the first subdivision His sovereignty is shown over all circumstances, which makes Him, therefore, the free and willing Offering that He is. There

Jesus, therefore, [v]knowing all things that were coming upon him, went forth and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus the Nazarene. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And [w]Judas also, who delivered him up, stood with them. As soon then as he said unto them, I am he, they went backward and [x]fell to the ground. Again therefore he asked them, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus the Nazarene. Jesus answered them, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, [y]let these go their way: that the saying of Jesus might be [z]fulfilled, As for those whom thou hast given me, I have not lost one of them. Simon Peter, therefore, having a [a]sword, drew it, and smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear: and the servant's name was Malchus. Jesus therefore said unto Peter, [b]Put up the sword into the sheath: the [c]cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

v cf. ch. 13. 1, 3.

w ver. 7. *ctr.* ch. 1. 38. *ctr.* ch. 20. 15.

x cf. Matt. 26. 53. *cf.* ch. 10. 18.

y cf. ch. 10. 28.

z ch. 17. 12.

a cf. Matt. 26. 51, 52. Mk. 14. 47. *cf.* Lk. 22. 35–38, 50, 51.

b cf. ver. 36.

c Matt. 27. 39, 42.

is the complete fulfillment of His own words: "No man taketh My life from Me, but I lay it down of Myself; I have authority to lay it down, and authority to take it again; this commandment have I received of My Father." How perfectly the freedom and the constraint unite together here!

Sec. 1.

The first section beautifully exhibits both characters. He goes over the "black" winter-torrent Kedron, so significant of the "brook in the way" of which He had to drink, in order that He might with His work accomplished "lift up the head." For the refreshment that He procured for others was that which was His own; and it broke out of the dark abyss of suffering which was now before Him. Over Kedron, then, He passes to the garden, carrying with Him His disciples; He was carrying them indeed, though by a way they knew not, to the paradise of God.

But He is clearly going forward with perfect knowledge of all, on His own part: Judas, we are significantly told here, knew the place as one of frequent resort by the Lord with His disciples. He is not shunning but seeking now the "oil-press" of sorrow. Eternal joy is to be the sure result.

How pitiful, in view of this, the array mustered to take the One who comes forward to meet it! "Whom seek ye?" He asks; and when He tells them, He is the One they are seeking, as if fulfilling the divine decree as to that supreme Name of Jesus, they all go backward and fall to the ground. Then, being warned, He gives them leave, if still they will, to take Him; but with the stipulation (blessed Shepherd of the sheep!) that they must let His followers go. And they let them go! even though Peter, out of harmony with His Lord's mind as so frequently he is, uses his sword against them! What of them all? Alas, the poor tools of their own enemy! will He contend with souls that He has made? No, all is settled for Him entirely apart from any thought of them or of their master: He does not speak in John of the twelve legions of angels ready to take the place of the twelve,—twelve now no more!—who are soon to forsake Him. The Son is in the presence of the Father only; and "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" is His unanswerable, all-sufficient argument.

Sec. 2.

They bind Him who is bound already, the meek Lamb of sacrifice; and now we have a scene how different in the high priest's court. The questioning before Annas is only given by John; who on the other hand does not relate, though he

SECTION 2. (Chap. xviii. 12–27.)
The deceit of an enemy and the denial of a friend.

THE troop, therefore, and the captain, and the officers of the Jews, took Jesus and [d] bound him. And they led him away to Annas first: for he was [e] father-in-law to Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. Now it was Caiaphas who gave [f] counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people. And Simon Peter [g] followed Jesus, also [h] another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the court of the high priest; but Peter stood at the door without. Then went out the other disciple who was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. The 'maid-servant, therefore, that kept the door, saith unto Peter, Art thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not. And the servants and officers were standing there, having made a [j] fire of coals, for it was cold; and they were warming themselves; and Peter stood [k] with them and warmed himself. The high priest therefore asked Jesus about his disciples and about his doctrine. Jesus answered him, I have spoken 'openly to the world; I taught always in the synagogue and in the temple, where all the Jews come together, and in [m] secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? ask those who have heard, what I have spoken unto them; behold, [n] they know what I have said. And as he said these things, one of the officers that stood by struck Jesus on the [o] face, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so? Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear [p] witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me? Annas therefore sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

[d] *cf.* Gen. 22. 9.
[e] *cf.* Matt. 26. 57, ver. 24. *cf.* Acts 4. 6.
[f] ch. 11. 49-53.
[g] Matt. 26. 58. Mk. 14. 54. Lk. 22. 54.
[h] *cf.* ch. 13. 23. *cf.* ch. 20. 2-4. *cf.* ch. 21. 20.
[i] *cf.* Acts 12. 13.
[j] ver. 25. *cfr.* Heb. 11. 25. *cfr.* 2 Tim. 2. 3, 4.
[k] *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 14-17. *cf.* Prov. 13. 20.
[l] Matt. 26. 55. Lk. 4. 15. ch. 7. 26.
[m] *cf.* Is 48. 16. *cf.* Matt. 13. 10-17.
[n] *cf.* ch. 7. 28, 46. *cf.* Matt. 26. 59, etc.
[o] Matt. 26. 67. ch. 19. 3. *cf.* Is. 50. 6.
[p] *cfr.* Acts 23. 1-3.

implies, the trial before Caiaphas. As father-in-law of the latter, and one who had been at a former time, high priest himself, he may have been, as Lange suggests, regarded by the Jews as still the true one; his relationship to the present one giving him his opportunity also to affect a position which he could not openly take. The Romans set up one after another as it pleased them,—a thing rightly enough offensive to the upholders of the law, and which seems to appear as this in the remark twice made, that Caiaphas was the high priest *for that year* (ver. 13; chap. xi. 49). The two seem to have occupied even the same house. Caiaphas, we are reminded, was the man who had given counsel to the Jews as to the expediency of one man dying for the people, which God overruled to be a prophecy of a Saviour, but which showed him as a judge prepared with his verdict. Annas is as much allied to him in spirit as in flesh. His whole aim here is to ensnare the Lord with questions as to His disciples and His doctrine, for which Christ refers him to what He had taught everywhere with the greatest publicity. It was for His accusers to make their charges, and prove them against Him. To the one who smites Him for want of reverence for the high priest He only replies with a quiet remonstrance.

Annas is baffled, though not turned from his malignity, and sends Him bound to Caiaphas; of the trial before whom the evangelist takes no further notice. It was a trial scarcely in form, and, as we have seen, decided before it was commenced. It is left a blank, as in fact was that of Annas.

But Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said, therefore, unto him, Art thou also one of his disciples? He [q]denied and said, I am not. One of the servants of the high priest, being a kinsman of him whose [r]ear Peter had cut off, saith, Did I not see thee in the garden with him? Peter then denied again: and immediately a [s]cock crew.

[q] ver. 17.
[r] ver. 10.
[s] ch. 13. 38. Matt. 26.69–75. Mk. 14. 66–72. Lk. 22. 55–62.

SECTION 3. (Chaps. xviii. 28–xix. 16.)

Hearts made manifest.

1 (xviii. 28–32): The word of Jesus governing.

1. THEY lead, therefore, Jesus from Caiaphas into the [t]prætorium: and it was early: and they themselves went not into the prætorium, that they might not be [u]defiled, but might eat the passover. Pilate, therefore, went out unto them, and said, What [v]accusation bring ye against this man? They answered and said unto him, If this man were not a [w]malefactor, we would not have delivered him up to thee. Pilate, therefore, said unto them, Take ye him and judge him according to [x]your law. The Jews said unto him, It is not [y]permitted us to put any one to death; that the [z]word of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he was going to die.

[t] Matt. 27.2, etc. Mk. 15. 1, etc. Lk. 23. 1, etc.
[u] *cf.* ch. 11. 55. *cf.* Acts 11. 3. *ctr.* Deut. 21. 7.
[v] *cf.* ch. 19. 7.
[w] *ctr.* ver. 30.
[x] *ctr.* Rom. 3. 21.
[y] *ctr.* ch. 10. 31. *ctr.* Acts 7. 59.
[z] *cf.* ch. 12. 32, 33. *cf.* Gal. 3. 13. *cf.* Matt. 20. 19.

With Peter's denial we are sadly familiar, and John appears to add nothing to it; but he himself, though unnamed, surprises us with the quiet boldness of faith and love which carry him through untouched and unquestioned, where the apparently bolder disciple breaks down so helplessly. He is known to the high priest, and to the keeper of the gate, and known as a follower of Christ too, as her question to Peter shows, "Art *thou also* one of this man's disciples?" Afterwards we shall find him in the same open way with the mother of Jesus at the cross, and obtaining a precious recognition, and a precious charge, from the dying Saviour: and through all he is untouched and unquestioned. Blessed it is to see him who speaks so of love an example of it: unquestioned by men, he is unquestioned also by the Lord: there is plainly no need of it; and happy is he who is in such a case. Let us seek for nearer acquaintance, and we shall be truer to Him; here is the soil in which faith rooting itself will grow vigorously. Let us get nearer to His heart, that we may be qualified to walk evenly and undisturbed through the world's allurements and its threats alike, armed against each by the secrets learned there.

Sec. 3.

1. In the third section the Lord answers for Himself before Pilate; and this is proportionately much dwelt upon, and particulars given which we do not find elsewhere. It is evident that what we are shown is the searching out of the Roman's conscience in the light of the Presence before which he stands. Judge and accused change places; and, hard as the governor may be,—a man stained with many crimes, he yet compares favorably with Israel's leaders, blinded and darkened with the light they have shut out. That Pilate shrank, though vainly, from what the insane fury of the Jews forced upon him is plain in all the Gospels; but John shows us the under-workings of a convicted soul, as no other does, and the Lord's compassionate faithfulness towards the miserable victim of his own self-treachery. Hearts are made manifest all through, and the Light shines upon all the clouds that would obscure it. Even the refusal of the people to take the matter into their own hands, when Pilate would put it in them, only works, as is noted, for the fulfillment of the word of Jesus. Crucifixion was not a Jewish punishment. The "hanging upon a tree" was with them

2 (xviii. 33-38): Judgment for the judge.

2. Pilate, therefore, entered again into the prætorium, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the [a]king of the Jews? Jesus answered, Sayest thou this of thyself? or did others say it to thee concerning me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me; what hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is [b]not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, my servants* would have fought, that I might not have been delivered up to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate said, therefore, unto him, Thou art then a king? Jesus answered, Thou sayest it, for I [c]am a king. For this I have been born, and for this

3 (xviii. 38-xix. 7): People and judge transformed and manifested.

have I come into the world, that I might bear [d]witness to the truth: every one that is [e]of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, [f]What is truth?

3. And when he had said this, he went out again unto

* Gk. "officers."

a Matt. 27. 11.

b cf. ch. 17. 16. cf. Matt. 4. 8, 9. cf. ch. 6. 15. cf. Matt. 25. 31, etc.

c cf. Ps. 45. 1. cf. Zech. 9. 9. cf. Rev. 19. 16.

d cf. Rev. 1. 5.

e cf. ch. 8. 47. cf. ch. 10. 26. cf. 1 Jno. 4. 6.

f cf. ver. 37. cf. ch. 19. 8. cf. 1 Cor. 1. 21, 26.

after death, and not a mode of inflicting this: but with death all was ended for the Lord; and the rich man's sepulcre begins His vindication.

2. Before Pilate the Lord answers at once, when He is questioned, that He is King of the Jews. But He asks, Is this his own question?—has he personal interest in it? Of Messiah he must have heard, and of all the hopes that were connected with it; more surely still, of a reign of righteousness and truth to replace the long oppression, and bring peace at last to a weary, if not sin-weary world. Was the intervention of God anything,—even an alarm perhaps, to one of the world's rulers? But Pilate puts off the question as a mere Jewish one: let him look at how his own case stands as a man accused by his own people; what reason had they? The Lord answers him, but keeps His steady pressure upon the conscience, already uneasy, of the real criminal before Him the real Judge. He lets Pilate know that His Kingdom is not of this world,—has not its origin or nature from the world: else would He not have been left, unarmed and without a struggle, to the merciless hands that had been laid upon Him. Had His followers,—out of all the crowds that had gathered round Him,—been organized into such a force as would be needed for the establishment of a kingdom such as Rome could fear or take into account? His Kingdom plainly was not like one of these.

But then He really was a King? the Roman questioned. And the Lord answers that indeed He is a King: that His birth and coming into the world (and here a gleam of His divine nature flashes out) was to bear witness to the truth. Truth, in a false and hollow world, to establish this was the purpose of His life and mission. By this would He establish also His kingdom over the hearts and minds of men. Truth is one, decisive, imperial: he that would learn it must be subject to it. And here Christ drops a word for the conscience of His hearer, "Every one who is *of* the truth heareth My voice."

Pilate answers like the sceptical Roman that he is, "What *is* truth?" Alas, their Pantheon of captured gods had had bitter fruit in their rough conquerors. They had learned to believe in gods no more, save in him who had overtopped them all, their emperor; and in him the farce was but too transparent. And yet here was a word to get behind even such defences: for, if he knew not what was truth, he could know, at least, whether *he* was "of" it. And, if to be true were needful for such knowledge, was the lack of this, perhaps, what made truth appear such an unattainable thing?

3. Something, at least, makes Pilate uneasy; he stays for no answer, but goes off to the multitude, to declare that he can find no fault with Jesus. His busi-

the Jews, and saith unto them, I find [g] no fault in him. But ye have a custom that I [h] release unto you one at the passover, will ye therefore that I release unto you the king of the Jews? They all * cried out, therefore, again, saying, [i] Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

Then Pilate therefore took Jesus and [j] scourged him. And the soldiers plaited a [k] crown of thorns, and put it upon his head: and put a [l] purple robe on him: and they approached him and said, Hail, [m] king of the Jews! and they [n] smote him on the face. And Pilate went out again and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him out unto you, that ye may know that I find [o] no fault in him. Jesus, therefore, came forth, wearing the crown of thorn and the purple robe. And he saith unto them, [p] Behold the man! When, therefore, the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, saying, [q] Crucify! crucify him! Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him and crucify him; for I find no fault in him. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he [r] made himself the Son of God.

g *cf.* Matt. 27. 24. Lk. 23. 4. ch. 19. 4.
h Matt. 27 15, etc. Mk. 15. 6, etc. Lk. 23. 17, etc.
i *cf.* Acts 3. 14.
j Matt. 20. 19. Matt.27.26. Mk. 15. 15. Lk. 18. 33. *cf.* Is. 50. 6.
k Matt. 27. 29. Mk. 15. 17. *cf.* Gen. 3. 18. *cf.*Gal.3.10, 13.
l *cf.*Matt.27. 28. *cf.* Ex.26.1.
m *cf.* Ps. 69. 12.
n ch. 18. 22.
o ch. 18. 38. *cf.*Deut.32. 31.
p ver. 14. *cf.* Is. 40. 9.
q Matt. 27. 22.

* Some omit "all."

r ch. 5. 17, 18. *cf.* ch. 10. 30, 33; *cf.* Matt. 26. 33; *cf.* ch. 9. 35

ness was, in that case, only to release Him; but he seeks compromise with his conscience, instead of yielding to it, and, in what seems to him a way of escape from a difficult situation, puts the whole matter into the people's hands. Thus he makes it almost impossible to return to the path of righteousness from which he has departed, and proclaims himself openly as not of the truth.

But the people reveal themselves in a worse fashion still, and do what even a Pilate believes impossible. It is this impossibility upon which he reckons, only to find that he has shut for himself the door of escape which he had hoped to find. They immediately avail themselves of the opportunity to show their preference of a robber and murderer to their own glorious King. We have noticed elsewhere how strangely yet significantly this name Bar-Abbas, "son of the father," comes in here. It was the Son of the Father,—just as that,—whom they were refusing now; but of what father was this lawless one the son? A shadow it is, surely, of their awful apostasy to come, when they will receive him who comes in his own name, true child of the rebel and "murderer from the beginning" of whom the Lord had warned some before, in words which had cut deep into those who heard them, that they were the spiritual children. The works of their father they were indeed now doing.

Pilate, now in their hands, gives up Jesus to be scourged; hoping, however, as it would seem, by this, according to his former proposal (Luke xxiii. 22), to appease the people, that he might then release Him. In every compromise of this sort he only and miserably fails. John does not dwell upon all this: he mentions the scourging, the crown of thorns, the mockery of the purple robe; but these very briefly. By all this, Pilate vainly endeavors to awaken sympathy in behalf of the One whom again, to his own condemnation, he declares to be without fault. We may be sure, from his known character, he would have gladly found what would have justified him in pursuing with good will the course upon which he was now being urged unwillingly. Yet he emphatically reiterates that he finds no fault in Him. Israel it is who hound Him to the death; crying out *what* death,—the most cruel and ignominious one,—they have chosen

4 (xix. 8-11): Impotence of the one who has once yielded.

4. When Pilate, therefore, heard that word, he was the more [s]afraid, and went into the prætorium again, and saith unto Jesus, [t]Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him [u]no answer. Pilate, therefore, saith unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have [v]authority to release thee, and have authority to crucify thee? Jesus answered, Thou wouldst have no authority against me, except it were [w]given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me up to thee hath the [x]greater sin.

5 (xix. 12-16): A self-pronounced, but divine sentence.

5. Upon this Pilate [y]sought to release him; but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: every one that maketh himself a king declareth [z]against Cæsar. When Pilate, therefore, [a]heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down in the judgment-seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in Hebrew Gabbatha. And it was the [b]preparation of the passover: it was about the sixth hour; and he saith unto the Jews, [c]Behold your king! But they cried out, [d]Away, away with him, crucify him! Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your king? The chief priests answered, We have [e]no king but Cæsar. Then [f]delivered he him up therefore to them to be crucified.

s *cf.* Matt. 27. 19. *cf.* Acts 24. 25.
t *cf.* ch. 7. 27-29.
u *cf.* Is. 53. 7.
v *cfr.* 2 Sam. 23. 3.
w *cf.* Rom. 13. 1-7. *cf.* Dan. 2. 21. *cf.* Gen. 31. 29.
x *cf.* ch. 9. 41. *cf.* Matt. 21. 38.
y *cf.* Acts 3. 13. *cf.* Acts 24. 27.
z *cf.* Lk. 23. 2. *cf* ch. 18. 36.
a *cf.* ch. 12. 42, 43. *cf.* Prov. 29. 25.
b ch. 18. 28.
c ver. 5.
d Matt. 27. 22, 23. ver. 6.
e *cfr.* ch. 6. 15. *cfr.* Ps. 45. 1. *cf.* ch. 14. 30.
f *cf.* Acts 2 23. *cf.* Acts 4. 27, 28.

for Him. "Take ye Him and crucify Him," Pilate answers; "for I find no fault in Him." Then they bring out their real accusation: "We have a law, and by our law He ought to die; because He made Himself the Son of God." He must die, because He is what He is, and affirms it. He must die for the grace which has made Him become Man!

4. But Pilate is stricken again by such an accusation: for the legends of heathen superstition are revived at the suggestion, and he remembers, no doubt, that gods and sons of the gods had visited men, according to current beliefs, which he had perhaps too rashly discredited. Did He not carry Himself as if indeed divine? And there were other influences, as the dream of his wife, to make him tremble. He calls Him once more before him, and with an unaccustomed awe upon his spirit, asks Him, "Who art Thou?" He is not a weak man (save as the slave of his own lusts is weak); he is not easily moved to pity; nor is it pity now. He had mingled the blood of the Galileans with their sacrifices, and could have trampled these Jews down now remorselessly, had he not been in hands for the moment stronger than his own. So the Lord plainly and compassionately tells him now. He would have had no authority at all against Him, had it not been given him from above. *God*, (though moved in a way far different from men,) God had delivered Him up; and, alas! the Jew had found in this his opportunity, misconceive it as he might, to pour out the enmity of his heart upon the very One of whom all the ages prophesied, and whom he had been prepared by the voice of heaven's messengers continuously uttered to expect. The Jew had then, indeed, a greater sin than Pilate's: the actual traitor was but the representative of his nation then.

5. Pilate is shaken more than ever by the Lord's words, and again seeks to release Him; but he is not master of himself, and cannot be of others. The Jews know the man, and know their opportunity, and bring to bear upon him an argument that makes him plastic in their hands at once. God is a possibility indeed, but Rome is a certainty, and nearer at hand. "If thou let this Man go," they cry, "thou art not Cæsar's friend; every one that maketh himself a king declareth against Cæsar."

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. xix. 16-42.)

Humbling Himself to the cross.

SECTION 1. (Chap. xix. 16-30.)

Obedience perfected.

1 (16-18): Into the kingdom of death.

1. THEY took Jesus, therefore, and led him away; and he went forth, [g] bearing his cross for himself, to the place called the [h] place of a Skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha, where they crucified him; and with him two others, on this side and on that side [one], and Jesus in the [i] midst.

g *cf.* Gen. 22. 6 *cf.* Mk. 15. 21, etc.

h Lk. 23. 33. *cf.* Rom. 5. 14.

i Matt. 27. 38 Mk. 15. 27, 28. *cf.* Lk. 23. 39-43.

"Pilate's playing with the situation," observes Lange, "is now past; now the situation plays with him. First he said—not *asked*,—What is *truth?* Now his frightened heart, to which the emperor's favor is the supreme law of life, says, What is *justice?*" He takes his place on the judgment-seat, therefore, and with what seems something between a taunt and a faint, final plea, says to the Jews, "Behold your King!" But they are only stung to madness: "Away! away with Him!" they cry, "Crucify Him!" "Shall I crucify your King?" he asks again; and now they are made in divine government to pass upon themselves the judgment under which they have ever since been lying: the chief priests answer, "*We have no king but Cæsar.*"

It was not the verdict of the Jews alone, and they have not suffered alone. The whole world has been lying under the yoke which they have preferred to the easy yoke of Christ. They have often got very tired of Cæsar,—true; and, as we see by their fitful movements every now and then, would fain be rid of him. They are always crying, "Give us better government;" but all they can do is, with doubtful betterment, to divide him up into many little Cæsars; better, as they think, because weaker, and with divided interests, so that the balance of power may secure the even weights of justice. That is still an experiment, some think; but this chronic war is never peace, nor can be; and the reason is, men have refused the Prince of peace. Modify it, rename it, disguise it, as you please, the reign of Cæsar is the only alternative.

The struggle on Pilate's part is ended; he consents to the people's verdict; the Lord of life is adjudged to death,—to the death of the Cross.

SUBD. 2.

We have come now to the last step in this unequalled humiliation,—to the death of the Cross. We have seen the character of this in this Gospel to be that of the burnt-offering, which emphasizes on the one side His free obedience, on the other, our acceptance in the value of this. Both these will be found accordingly in what is before us now.

Sec. 1.

The first section shows us then His obedience unto death completed. John's presentation of all this is unique, both in what he gives and in what he omits. Details are little dwelt upon; a few points are brought into prominence, every one of which has its manifest bearing upon the general presentation. The simplicity and depth that everywhere pervade the Gospel are nowhere more conspicuous than they are here.

1. First, He comes, bearing His cross, to Golgotha, the place of a skull,—the place of the kingdom of death. This is plainly what the world is because of sin,—death being the stamp of the government of God upon it. For this the Lord sought it: here His love to men brought Him; only He could lift this burden from them, and for this He must come Himself under it. Those two others whom we well know, to whom death is clearly such a penalty, are on either side of Him, and He in the midst. Penalty it is He is taking; Himself on the division line

2 (19-22): His contested title maintained.

2. And Pilate wrote a [j]title, and put it upon the cross. Now there was written, JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Many of the Jews therefore read this title; for the place where Jesus was crucified was near to the city; and it was [k]written in Hebrew, Roman, Greek. The chief priests, therefore, said unto Pilate, Write not, The king of the Jews, but that *he* [l]*said*, I am king of the Jews. Pilate answered, [m]What I have written I have written.

3 (23, 24): Exposed and displayed.

3. The [n]soldiers, therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and the coat:* now the coat was [o]seamless, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore to one another, Let us not [p]rend it, but cast [q]lots for it, whose it shall be: that the [r]scripture might be fulfilled which saith, They parted my garments among themselves, and for my vesture they cast the lot. These things therefore the soldiers did.

4 (25-27): Human & still.

4. Now there [s]stood by the cross of Jesus his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and

* Or, "tunic."

[j] Matt. 27. 37. Mk. 15. 26. Lk. 23. 38.
[k] *cf.* ch. 4. 42. *cf.* Acts 2. 7, 8.
[l] *cf.* ver. 7. *cf.* ch. 18. 37.
[m] *cf.* Num. 23. 19, 20.
[n] Matt. 27. 35. Mk. 15. 24. Lk. 23. 34.
[o] *cf.* Ex. 28. 31, 32. *cf.* Heb. 7. 26. *ctr.* Gen. 3. 7.
[p] *cf.* Lk. 5. 36. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 17.
[q] *cf.* Prov. 16. 33. *cf.* Eph. 1. 4.
[r] Ps. 22. 18.
[s] *cf.* Matt. 27. 55, 56. Mk. 15. 40, 41. Lk. 23. 49.

between the saved and the unsaved, the Transformer of death into that which effects the transition from penalty to Paradise.

2. He comes thus into death as King,—"King of the Jews," indeed, but which in its full rendering implies so much. It faces the Jew, the Greek, the Roman, affirming to each in his own language, with a positiveness which His enemies vainly strive to set aside, a meaning for each one. Here is indeed God's King,—King in death as in life,—here in a peculiar way affirmed; His Cross henceforth to be the very sign of His power, the sceptre under which they bow, in adoring homage.

3. Now we see what indeed recalls the burnt-offering. This was flayed, that all beneath might be exposed, and its perfection seen. So now they strip the Lord, and expose Him. Here, in this Gospel alone, His seamless robe is spoken of, in figure that robe of righteousness which in Him was indeed seamless, but which now human hands have stripped from off Him, giving Him the malefactor's place instead. But how fully is He displayed by it in a righteousness which glorifies the righteousness of God itself, by penalty owned and taken in grace for others! It is not relaxed or modified, as many would teach, but taken in its full intensity of suffering; which alone would maintain the perfect righteousness of it. But thus He has a righteousness acquired as Man, which as Man He needs not. It is not His personal obedience in life, but in stooping to that which, because of His righteous life, *could* be no due of His. Thus it remains for the lot (which refers the whole disposal of it to the Lord) to decide whose it shall be. God has decided that it shall belong to the man of faith; and so the best robe in the Father's house is reserved for the returning prodigal; keeping nearer to what is before us here, let us say, to those who pierced His hands and feet, or drove the spear into His blessed side.

4. Amid it all, He has still the human tenderness which shows unchanged the Man Christ Jesus. His mother, standing by His cross, He commends to the care of His beloved disciple, the spiritual link being more than the natural, even while the natural is being recognized. Here, with one exception in the first chapter of Acts, we part with Mary; she is not mentioned in the after-books. In all the doctrine of the epistles she has no place. Blessed among women as she is surely by her connection with the human nature of our Lord, the entire

Mary of Magdala. Jesus, therefore, seeing his mother, and the [t]disciple whom he loved standing by, saith unto his mother, Woman, [u]behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

5 (28-30): "Finished."

5. After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now finished, [v]that the Scripture might be accomplished, saith, I thirst. There stood there a vessel full of [w]vinegar: so, binding to hyssop a sponge full of vinegar, they raised it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore received the vinegar, he said, It is [x]finished; and he bowed his head and [y]delivered up his spirit.

[t] ch. 18. 15.
[u] cf. ch. 2. 4. cf. ch. 21. 15-17.
[v] ver. 24, etc.
[w] cf. Ps. 69. 21.
[x] cf. ch. 4. 34. cf. ch. 17. 4. cf. Heb. 10. 5-10. cf. Rom. 10. 4. cf. Gal. 3. 13. cf. Rom. 4. 4, 5.
[y] cf. Matt. 27. 50. cf. Mk. 15. 37; cf. Lev. 1. 1-9.

silence of Scripture as to her in that fulness of Christian truth which it was the office of the Spirit of truth to communicate is the decisive overthrow of the whole Babel-structure of Mariolatry which Romanism has built up upon a mere sand-foundation. She remains for us in the word of God, a simple woman rejoicing in God her Saviour,—a stone in the temple to His praise, and with no temple of her own. To use the grace of the Redeemer in taking flesh among us by her means to exalt the mother to the dishonor of Christ her Lord is truly a refined wickedness worthy of the arch-deceiver of mankind.

5. We find now the divine end reached, and as it only could be, by the divine way; the Lord Himself here declares the perfect accomplishment of all that Scripture has foretold, save one thing only, and in death, as in life, Scripture is for Him the authoritative word of the living God. As in the temptation He had refused to minister to His own need, apart from that by every word of which, He declared, man lives, so now, on the same principle, He makes known that need, *not* that it might be ministered to, but *that Scripture might be fulfilled*. He does not Himself fulfil it; God can be trusted to take care for that; but He gives utterance to the distress which will as uttered occasion the fulfilment. The terrible thirst of crucifixion is upon Him; but that is not enough to force the parched lips to speech; but it is written, "In My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink:" this opens them. He will show Himself, as ever, in active obedience to the will of God, which He came to accomplish. He simply says, "I thirst:" and by the unsympathetic hands of those around His cross, the vinegar is tendered, and the prophecy fulfilled.

All is finished: and His own lips declare it. The very smallness, apparently, of this last matter cared for is absolute proof that no scripture whatever could be left as of no importance. The entire body of Old Testament prophecy is confirmed and certified with all the weight of Christ's authority. He had said before, "Scripture cannot be broken:" and we know exactly what for Him was "Scripture." Here, amid the intense sufferings of the cross, we see how completely He owned and was guided by it. That will of God which He came to do was here marked out for Him. The Law was in His heart; and in the very replacing of the Old Testament sacrifices by His one supreme sacrifice, (of which the psalm referred to speaks,) every part of this was honored and upheld. The Antitype necessarily confirmed the type He was displacing, and we have seen this in all the detail given us in the Gospels.

It is to His sacrificial work that the Lord undoubtedly has reference here. All scripture as to Himself was certainly not yet fulfilled; but the work of propitiation was accomplished, His words, of course, anticipating (as we have seen to be so much the character of the Gospel of John) the death which was now just before Him. The cup of wrath was, in fact, already drained, as the comparison of Mark and Luke fully assures us. The awful cry of forsaken sorrow which we find in the former has been already exchanged for the cry of "Father," with which the enjoyment of all that this endeared relationship implies has returned

SECTION 2. (Chap xix. 31-42.)
The Witness of Salvation.

1 (31-33): His righteousness affirmed.

1. THE Jews, therefore, since it was the [z]preparation, that the bodies might not remain upon the cross upon the sabbath (for that sabbath-day was a [a]great day) besought Pilate that their [b]legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. The soldiers, therefore, came and brake indeed the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with him; but when they came to Jesus and saw that he was [c]already dead, they brake not his legs.

2 (34-37): Expiation and cleansing in a dead Saviour.

2. But one of the soldiers with a spear [d]pierced his side, and immediately there came out [e]blood and [f]water. And he that saw it bare [g]witness, and his witness is true, and he knoweth that he saith what is true, that ye might [h]believe. For these things came to pass that the scripture might be fulfilled, A [i]bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, [j]They shall look on him whom they pierced.

[z] ver. 42.
[a] *cf.* Ex. 12. 16. *cf.*ch.16.20.
[b] *cf.* Deut. 21. 23.
[c] *cf.*ch.10.18.
[d] *cf.* ch. 20. 25-27.
[e] *cf.* 1 Jno. 1. 7. *cf.* 1 Jno. 5. 6, 8.
[f] *cf.* Tit. 3.5. *cf.* Eph. 5. 26.
[g] *cf.*1 Jno.1. 1-3. *cf.*ch.21.24.
[h] ch. 20. 31.
[i] Ex. 12. 46. Num. 9.12. *cf.*Ps.34.20.
[j] Zech.12.10. *cf.*Rev.1.7.

also. Death remains yet, before full atonement is completed; for death *and* judgment are the double penalty upon man. Death, however, is governmental, not the necessary expression of divine holiness as against sin. Men may, therefore, die in the full favor of God; while the wrath of God would be impossible to be felt by one enjoying it. Death and the cup of wrath were both taken by the Lord; the latter first,—death following to complete the work; and thus now, at the moment of death, the Victor's cry, "It is finished." (See Introduction pp. 26–28.)

So He delivers up His spirit to the Father. We do not find Him, as in Luke, actually saying, "Father;" and this would seem more suited an utterance in the Gospel of the Manhood, than here, where (though not exclusively) the Only-begotten is set before us. Yet it is, as we know, to the Father that He commends it. Here He does not commend it, but delivers it up; He has power over it, as mere man has not; and the expression is stronger in this respect than that in Matthew, where the proper rendering is that "He *dismissed*" it. The expression in each Gospel is in the most perfect accordance with the character of each.

Sec. 2.

In the second section we have immediate witness to the salvation wrought; not the witness of men, as in the centurion in the other Gospels, but that of the divine word, that is, God's own testimony. This is what best suits John, as should be evident; the witness of the Spirit also being given in a special way: the Spirit, the water, and the blood unite together to declare that "God hath given us eternal life: and this life is in His Son."

1. First, we have the testimony of His perfect righteousness: He is the One fulfilling absolutely the Psalmist's words as to the righteous (Ps. xxxiv. 20), that Jehovah "keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken." The shield thrown over Him is made more manifest by the commandment given as to those crucified here, that their legs should be broken, and they should be taken away. This is carried out as to the two malefactors; but with the Lord, His work accomplished, men have no more power over Him; there must be now no marring of even the outward form that has enshrined the symmetry of the spirit within. But this connects also with the paschal ordinance concerning the lamb, that "they shall not break a bone of it." Here the rough, untutored hands of lawless men religiously respect the legal ordinance, and declare the Christ they know not the Fulfiller of this redemption type. It is a testimony to His Person,

3 (38-42): Worshipping remembrance.

38. Now, after these things, [k]Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but [l]secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him leave. He came, therefore, and took away his body. And there came also [m]Nicodemus (who at first came to him by night) bringing a mixture of [n]myrrh and aloes about a hundred pounds weight. They took therefore the body of Jesus, and [o]wound it in linen clothes with spices, as is the custom of the Jews to bury. Now there was in the place where he was crucified a [p]garden; and in the garden a new sepulcre, wherein was man [q]never yet laid. There, therefore, they laid Jesus because of the Jews' preparation, because the sepulcre was near at hand.

k Matt. 27. 57-61. Mk. 15. 42-47. Lk. 23. 50-56.
l *cf.* ch. 7. 13. *cf.* ch. 12. 42.
m ch. 3. 2. ch. 7. 50.
n *cf.* Ps. 45. 8. *cf.* Song. 4. 14.
o *cf.* ch. 11. 44. *cf.* ch. 20. 7.
p *cf.* Gen. 2. 8. *cf.* ch. 18. 1. *cf.* Rev. 2. 7.
q *cf.* Mk. 11. 2. *cf.* Josh. 3. 3, 4. *cf.* Is. 53. 9.

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chaps. xx., xxi.)

The Apocalypse of Resurrection.

SECTION 1. (Chap. xx. 1-10.)

Alive!

20. AND on the [r]first day of the week cometh [s]Mary of Magdala early, while it was yet dark, unto the sepulcre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulcre. She runneth, therefore, and cometh to Simon

r Matt. 28. 1, etc. Mk. 16. 1, etc. Lk. 24. 1, etc.
s *cf.* Mk. 16. 9.

as the next to come before us is a testimony to His work. It is the unblemished lamb that can alone be offered, and therefore the order is perfect here as elsewhere.

2. That which is bidden is not done; while that which is not bidden is done: for all is under higher government than man's. The word of God rules everywhere among and by means of those ignorant and those hostile. The thrust of the soldier's spear certifies the death so necessary to us against all docetism, while the act of hatred brings forth the answer of divine love,—the certification of redemption wrought. Out of Christ, as the riven Rock, flow the streams of spiritual healing; not water alone, as the apostle comments for us, but water and blood. The miraculous nature of the flow is clear from the way that it is insisted on,—the positive truth of it reiterated, the observation of the beloved disciple certified to us in his epistle afterwards as the witness of the Spirit of God. We want, therefore, no naturalistic explanations of a divine work on our behalf, "that ye might believe." Cleansing as well as expiation for men requires the death of Christ. The fulness of spiritual meaning we must seek where the apostle developes it, in his first epistle.

Israel are yet to look upon Him whom they have pierced, as the evangelist reminds us; and then a fountain will be opened to them for sin and for uncleanness. When they find the rift in the Rock, they will find the stream that flows from it; for them as for us, out of the heart of Christ.

3. No wonder that His body is wrapped in the spices now. Soon to rise, as He is, yet His death abides ever in the remembrance of His own in sweet and sacred significance. Blessed it is to see the timid becoming bold under its influence. Nicodemus is here with his hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes, to rival Joseph in his testimony of honor and affection for Him who has transformed death by His subjection to it. Only John mentions the great amount of spices, and that it is a garden in which is sown this seed of immortal life. While He is in the tomb, the Jews have their "preparation day," and a mockery of sabbath-rest. Of the reality of rest that has been wrought out for them, they are ignorant altogether.

Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have [t]taken away the Lord out of the sepulcre, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter therefore went forth, and the other disciple, and came to the sepulcre. And they ran both together, and the [u]other disciple outran Peter, and came first to the sepulcre. And, stooping down, he seeth the linen clothes lying, yet went he not in. Simon Peter cometh therefore also, following him, and [v]went into the sepulcre, and beholdeth the [w]linen clothes lying, and the [x]napkin that was upon his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in therefore the other disciple also, who came first to the sepulcre; and he saw and [y]believed; for yet they knew not the [z]scripture, that he must rise from among the dead. So the disciples [a]went away again unto their own home.

t vers.11-13. *cf.*Lk.24.21.
u ch. 21. 20.
v *cf.* ch.21.7.
w ch. 19. 40. *cf.*Eph.4.8.
x *ctr.* ch.11. 44.
y *cf.* ver. 31. *cf.* ch.21. 7.
z *cf.* Lk. 24. 24-26. *ctr.* Acts 2. 24-32.
a *cf.*ch.21.3.

SUBD. 3.

We may well entitle this last portion of the Gospel "the Apocalypse of Resurrection." No evangelist dwells upon this as John does. And though the cloud of unbelief is seen, which, in fact, clung to the disciples in these days of sorrow, and through which the glory dawning had to make its way, yet we are not allowed to be in the shadow of it, as is so much the case in Luke. We are not left so much at the threshold of the blessing, but conducted in. And thus, as it would seem, John, rather than Peter, is to abide with us, (though not, as the disciples thought, in personal presence, but in the truth committed to him) until the Lord's return.

Sec. 1.

The sabbath of the old creation passes in gloom and sorrow; the first day of the new week comes, and with it the First-born from among the dead, the Head of a new creation, abiding in the power of His immortal life. We have nothing of the futile guarding of the tomb, unworthy of record even here. The stone is rolled away; the sepulcre empty! No thought of the truth, however, flashes upon the mind of the early visitor who marks it all only as announcing a new calamity. They have taken her dead Lord out of the sepulcre; still and ever her Lord, though her heart be buried with Him. She runs with her burden of grief to pour it out to those as credulous in unbelief as she is; and Peter and John run back to the tomb, to find in the peace and order there the assurance that the absence of Christ's body from the place where reverent hands had laid it is not the work of man at all, but that He is truly risen from the dead. Scripture doctrine as to it they know of none:—only a resurrection at the last day, which was the orthodox faith that we have heard expressed by Martha. They themselves had questioned, as to what He had said about Himself, "what the rising from the dead should be." Still such a distinct special resurrection was a mystery to them; but the fact they were now convinced of: He was risen. They have thus lost interest in the sepulcre with its shadow,—still perplexed as they may be:—they go home.

But the first day of the week has found significance in a new beginning, beyond death which is the stamp upon the old creation,—the brand upon a fallen world. Man in Him has entered upon a new scene free from this; and they are linked with Him in it, though as yet they may not be able to define the place they have, or the nature of their link with Him. Nor have they as yet seen Him; nor has a word reached them from that unseen region into which He has entered.

SECTION 2. (Chap. xx. 11-18.)
Relationship in the new life.

BUT Mary stood [b]weeping at the sepulcre, outside; so, as she wept, she stooped, [and looked] into the sepulcre, and beholdeth two [c]angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have [d]taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And having said these things, she turned back, and beholdeth Jesus standing, and [e]knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? [f]whom seekest thou? She, supposing that it was the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, [g]Mary. She turned and saith unto him in Hebrew, Rabboni: which is to say, Teacher. Jesus saith unto her, [h]Lay not hold upon me; for I have not yet [i]ascended to my Father; but go unto my [j]brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto [k]my Father, and [l]your Father, unto my God, and your God. Mary of Magdala cometh and bringeth [m]tidings to the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

b ver. 13.
c *cf.* Lk. 24. 4.
d *cf.* Song 3. 2.
e *cf.* Lk. 24. 16.
f *cf.* ch. 1. 38. *ctr.* ch. 18. 4.
g *cf.* ch. 10. 3.
h *ctr.* Matt. 28. 9. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 16.
i Lk. 24. 51. *cf.* Heb. 4. 14, 15.
j *cf.* Heb. 2. 11.
k *cf.* ch. 17. 11.
l *cf.* Gal. 4. 6.
m *cf.* Lk. 24. 10, 11.

Sec. 2.

They go home, cheered though perplexed, to await what needs must follow. But there is one who cannot leave the place where she had last seen (though in what circumstances of distress) her Lord and Saviour. She has followed back to the sepulcre the quicker steps of the two men: coming too late, as it would seem, to learn from them the confidence they had gathered. Her own sight is too much dimmed with irrepressible tears, to gather it where they have done. Of resurrection, save at the far-off end-time, she has no expectation. But her heart clings, with a tenacity that nothing can divert or weaken, even to the Dead, by whose death she is desolate, but who survives in those indestructible memories which support and sadly light her through the gloom. Now she stands weeping outside the sepulcre, and, stooping down, looks into it. Was it a sight to prepare her for what would else have been too overwhelming a joy? Two angels in white are sitting, one at the head, the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. They sit in peaceful contemplation of the place now vacant, and ask why she should be weeping, and whom she was seeking there. Absorbed with her one object, however, she seems scarcely to recognize the strangeness of the vision, but answers with the same story she had brought to the disciples, that men had taken away her Lord! Then she turns away again on a quest from which the presence of angels cannot distract her, to find, though she knows it not, Jesus Himself before her.

Spite of her ignorance,—spite of the unbelief which was in that ignorance,—Mary it was who was to be the first witness of His resurrection, the first evangelist of the new order of things which is established by it. A woman's heart had anointed Him for His burial; and this He would proclaim wherever the gospel should go out. Now again a woman's heart, more devoted than His foremost disciples, is to carry, in the energy of its new-born gladness, the message that has gladdened it to these, and to become, as it were, the apostle to apostles! How it tells us of the way in which the heart becomes the leader of the

SECTION 3. (Chap. xx. 19-23.)
The heavenly company, and their spiritual endowment.

WHEN, therefore, it was evening on that day, the [n] first of the week, and the [o] doors being shut where the disciples were, for [p] fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the [q] midst, and saith unto them, [r] Peace be unto you. And having said this, he [s] showed unto them both his hands and his side. The disciples there-

n cf. Acts 20. 7. *cf.* Rev. 1. 10.
o cf. Gen. 45. 1. *cf.* Rev. 1. 9.
p cf. ch. 19. 38. *cf.* Acts 12. 12-17.
q ver. 26.
r ch. 14. 27; *cf.* Eph. 2. 17.
s cf. Col. 1. 20; Lk. 24. 40.

mind into the truth of God, and of the displacement of mere officialism in the Christian order.

Yet, after all, how little had Mary appreciated the One she loved with such heart-felt devotion! and her unbelief it is that, as with those upon the road to Emmaus afterward, holds her eyes when at first she sees the so eagerly desired object. He has to repeat to her the angels' question, why she is weeping, and *whom* she is seeking there among the dead. Can she indeed be so dull? Can we, alas, who have so much less excuse than Mary? How much of our sorrow which seems most to spring from our love of Him, is yet due in fact to our little appreciation of Him? Do we not also seek the Living One as if He were dead, and dishonor Him in our very worship of Him? Thus Mary repeats her wail to her unknown Lord Himself, and can take Him for the gardener, whose Voice had freed her once from the sevenfold power of the enemy which held her. Yet withal what a right she doubts not she has in Him, whom she seems to think the whole world must know at once: "Sir, if thou hast borne *Him* hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away!" But the Good Shepherd calls His sheep by name, and they know His Voice. He recalls her to herself, and so to Himself: "Mary!" and her heart is at rest. "Rabboni," she says; that is, "Teacher!" How blessed to learn, at His feet, like this!

She learns, not only that He is risen, but of a relationship that His resurrection has brought His people into. He is not ashamed to call them "brethren," and in the recognition of that which His work has done for them, and which is theirs in the life they have in Him, He ascends to His Father and their Father, to His God and to theirs. Mary must not, therefore, think to hold Him, as her love would desire; while the purpose of God is revealing itself in fuller and higher blessing than ever known before.

He had never yet called His disciples "brethren;" although this was the fulfillment of what had been prophetically announced long since. The sin-offering psalm (Ps. xxii.), which so fully depicts the sufferings through which Messiah was to pass, gives us from the lips of the same Sufferer, when delivered, the assurance, "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise Thee." We have heard, accordingly, already that declaration of the Father's name, on which, in His final prayer before His betrayal, He so dwells. The relationship to Himself, and so to the Father, which is implied on their part, is only now for the first time explicitly made known. Himself as man the "First-born among many brethren," yet, except the Corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone. Thus He is straitened till it be accomplished, and only now can the full reality be told out. As has been often noticed, He cannot, however, put them upon the same level with Himself. He does not say, "*Our* Father," but "My Father and yours;" He maintains the place which of necessity belongs to Him, while giving them their own upon the basis of this.

Sec. 3.

It is practically, therefore, as the First-born among many brethren that Mary's message announces Him. And now we find Him in the midst of the assembly, the blessing still enlarging as He declares it to them. There is nothing indeed about the Church in this Gospel, whether as the House of God or the Body of

fore were [t]glad, when they saw the Lord. Jesus said therefore unto them again, Peace be unto you: [u]as the Father sent me forth, I also send you. And having said this, he [v]breathed into them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the [w]Holy Spirit: whosesoever sins ye [x]remit, they are remitted unto them: whosesoever ye [y]retain, they are retained.

t ch. 16. 22. cf. 1 Pet. 1. 3, 8.
u ch. 17. 18. cf. Matt. 28. 18-20.
v cf. Gen. 2. 7. cf. 1 Cor. 15. 45.
w cf. ch. 7. 39. cf. Lk. 24.

49. x cf. Matt. 16. 19; cf. Matt. 18. 18; cf. Acts 22. 16. y cf. Acts 5. 3-10; cf. 1 Cor. 5. 11-13.

Christ. In John we have only the Family of God, as far as doctrine goes, the line of truth which is plainly in natural connection with that of eternal life so characteristic of the Gospel. With this is found that of the indwelling Spirit, which gives to the life itself, always belonging to the children of God, its "abundant" blessedness. These are the connected truths all through, which connect with every other. We shall find them in this closing portion as elsewhere.

The evening of the first day of the week is come, and the disciples are gathered together. Let us note that this is either not reckoned in the Jewish manner, or else it is the *closing* evening of the Jewish day, which was from the decline of the day to sunset. Sunset was thus "between the evenings," which was the time when the passover lamb was offered, as well as the daily evening sacrifice (Ex. xii. 6; xxx. 8). At this time, then, were the disciples gathered; the doors being shut for fear of the Jews; the world being armed against the Prince of peace. But no shut doors can keep Him from His own; and presently He is among them: "Jesus came and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you." More than words, even of the Son of God, were needed to convey this. His word had created the worlds: but for redemption, He had said Himself, "the Son of man *must* be lifted up." That divinest work of all had been accomplished, and He can show them still the proofs of it in His hands and side. John says nothing of their unseemly fear, but of the joy into which it passed: "then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord."

And again He says, "Peace be to you," and sends them out into the world, to represent Him in it, as He had been sent into it to represent the Father. They belonged no more to it, as He had said to them before:—no more than He did. The world could not be at peace, nor those whose hearts were in it. They had been delivered from the corruption that was in it through lust, by the knowledge of Himself whom the world had rejected. Their portion was outside of it with Him: and thus they would be competent witnesses of that better part, and for Him who had enriched them with it from His voluntary poverty.

He follows these words with a significant action, breathing into them, and saying, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit;" with regard to which both the words and action have received various interpretation. We must, therefore, examine them with some care, the more because the symbolic action seems undoubtedly to point to something beyond the present capacity of the disciples to understand,—something, therefore, left to come to light afterwards. He does not Himself interpret His action, except the words accompanying are that interpretation. And this they can hardly be, much as they throw light upon it. We are left, therefore, to the natural significance of what is given us, seen in the light of truth revealed elsewhere, remembering that no parable can be authority for doctrine.

After all, the Lord's breathing into them carries us necessarily back to the inbreathing of God into the first man. The very word used here, and which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, is that used in the Septuagint for this primal act, by virtue of which Adam became a living soul. Here then should be a new beginning of life, which, as such, must be from God, but from God incarnate; and with this we are already familiar, as truth that He Himself has taught us, that "as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the

SECTION 4. (Chap. xx. 24-31.)
A glance at the earthly company.

BUT [s]Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not [a]with them when Jesus came. The other disciples, therefore, said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I [b]see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not be-

s ch. 11. 16.
a *cf.* Num. 9. 13. *cf.* Heb. 10. 25.
b *cf.* ch. 4. 48. *cf.* Zech. 12. 10.

Son to have life in Himself;" so that, "as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, so the Son quickeneth whom He will" (chap. v. 21, 26). The Son is thus a true fountain of life for men, and, as the words declare, a divine life.

We cannot but connect this with a title given to the Lord, though not in John, of "Last Adam" (1 Cor. xv. 45): "The Last Adam is made a quickening Spirit." The contrast between the first and the Last, which we realize in His present action, is recognized and emphasized here. He is not Himself breathed into, as was the first man, but breathes into others. As the quickening Spirit, He communicates spiritual, divine life, such as we have seen to be the essential element in new birth. He is thus the Author of what is a new creation, higher in character than the old; and this is clearly what is symbolized in His present action.

Its place with reference to His work now finished is just as evident. He has told us already that, "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Here, then, is this now from the other side declared. It is not, as sometimes put, a question of *union*, but of what is more fundamental than this. The fruit of the corn of wheat is that of life communicated, but which passes through what both the Lord and His apostle afterwards call "death" to produce it (chap. xii. 24; 1 Cor. xv. 36). It is now, therefore, that He takes openly the place of the Last Adam. Life must come to man out of death, and in no other way; for death is the penalty of sin, and he is a sinner. But thus also, as springing out of this, vicariously endured, it comes accompanied with the efficacy of atonement made: he who receives it "*hath* eternal life, and doth not come into judgment, but is passed out of death into life" (chap. v. 24). The fundamental truths of the Gospel of John are thus embodied in this inbreathing by the risen Saviour.

But then it is, necessarily, of something that His disciples have before received that He is speaking to them in it. The giving of life could not actually wait for His resurrection. The Cross, standing amid the ages, looks backward as well as forward. And the Lord, in speaking of His communication of the life in Him, takes care to assure us of this. "The hour is coming," He says, "*and now is*, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live" (chap. v. 25). And when afterwards He speaks of what is (now) characteristic of eternal life,—that they "know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent," He declares at the same time that this knowledge they already had (chap. xvii. 6-8). There can be nothing plainer, then, than that the Lord is not here communicating to His disciples what they had not received before, but that He is simply putting together in this symbolic manner things that were, in fact, already theirs. Every thing is emerging now from the obscurity of Moses' veil (2 Cor. iii. 13) into the open glory of Christ's face unveiled.

Now when the Lord goes on to say in plain speech, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit," it should be as plain that He is not interpreting the past, but speaking of something they had not yet received. The evangelist, when reporting to us His words at the feast of tabernacles as to the "living water," remarks that "this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believed on Him should receive;" and then he adds, "for the Holy Spirit was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified." Here, as far as words can show it, the same reception of the Spirit

lieve. And after eight days, his disciples were again within, and Thomas with them: Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and saith, [c]Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, [d]Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing. Thomas answered and said unto him, [e]My Lord and my God! Jesus saith unto him, Because thou hast [f]seen me thou hast believed; [g]blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed.

c ver. 19.
d *cf.* ver. 20.
e *cf.* ch. 1. 1, 49. *cf.* ch. 9. 35-38. *cf.* Phil. 2. 10, 11.
f ver. 25.
g *cf.* Rom. 4. 18-20.

is spoken of. But here also a time is given before which the Spirit could not be received. Jesus must be first glorified, says the apostle. If, then, the Lord was not yet glorified at the time in which He uttered the words we are considering, these must still have had a reference to the future: that is, to that Pentecostal gift of the Spirit, to which, perhaps, we should be naturally inclined to refer them.

Now, when we remember the Lord's previous declaration that He must go away to the Father, or else the Advocate would not come to them (chap. xvi. 7), there can be no right question that this glorifying of Jesus was His being glorified with the glory which He had with the Father before the world was (chap. xvii. 5). The fact, then, that He was upon earth when now speaking to them would be sufficient proof that the reception of the Spirit, of which He was speaking was, in fact, Pentecostal. Yet it has been imagined even that the Lord had already ascended to the Father between the time when He had said to Mary that He had not yet done so and His being here in the midst! For, they say, He forbade Mary to touch Him, because not ascended, while here and elsewhere He freely permits it. But this is simply a misinterpretation of His words to Mary, and His going to the Father is always spoken of as implying His absence from His people during the present time. Such an imaginary ascension, for which not a single direct scripture can be quoted, and which would displace that which is always spoken of as such, cannot possibly, therefore, be maintained.

But, we are told by others, the article should be omitted in the Lord's words here, and therefore they intimate, not the Spirit as personally coming at Pentecost, but a bestowment of spiritual energy simply, which raises the life communicated to its proper resurrection power. We are not yet arrived where this question can be fully discussed, which can only be in Romans, but the lack of scripture for it is the most fatal objection. As to the absence of the article, it is absent also in that which was just now quoted from the seventh chapter, where we must read, according to this, "for Holy Spirit," or, as many read, simply "Spirit was not yet." But this would then deny the possibility of any such bestowment before the Lord's ascension. This would be altogether fatal to any such interpretation. Besides which, the Holy Spirit, (or, if it be preferred, simply Holy Spirit) cannot be shown to be anywhere identified with life, or any degree of it. I am aware that "the Spirit is life" (Rom. viii. 10) may be cited against me; but that is plainly the personal Spirit. The only proper force of the words, therefore, is that the Spirit is life potentially,—is the Source of it,—to the children of God. The Spirit does not stand there for the life: nor for any grade or character of life; all the more surely, that it *gives* it character.

"Receive ye the Holy Spirit," means, then, simply what it says, and cannot be the interpretation of the inbreathing which precedes the words, and which do evidently speak of the giving of life; not, however, of a communication of it there and then, but of one they had already received, and by which they had become a new creation. Creation is not an increase of life, but a beginning of it, as is plain. They had received life, as we have seen, and *eternal* life. It is now seen as bringing them into new creation, delivering them therefore from

Yea, and many [h]other signs also did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that ye may [i]believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have [j]life through his name.

[h] ch. 21. 25.
[i] *cf.* ch. 11. 15.
[j] ch. 3. 15, 16. *cf.* 1 Jno. 5. 10-12.

the old; and so from sin and judgment, as connected with it. Now they are qualified to receive the Spirit, to be the power indeed of the new life as resurrection life, with the value of Christ's blessed work for God attaching to it.

Sin is thus for them put away: they belong to a Kingdom of life and not of death, and of righteousness as inseparably connected with this. They are to be representatives of this now upon earth, remitting or retaining sins in His Name, and by His authority; not, surely, in relation to heaven and its blessedness, as has been monstrously claimed by the false church; but in relation to the sphere of His earthly interests. This is a seal upon the higher blessing into which He has introduced them; the reception of the Spirit being their qualification for it, and the condition therefore implied that they act in the power of that endowment.

Sec. 4.

Here then we have the heavenly company:—not exactly the Church; at least, not as the Body of Christ, or the House of God; things which are not in the line of the apostle's teaching. But the Spirit which they are to receive sufficiently marks them out as those who, in fact, belong to that which is the gathering together of the children of God, before scattered abroad (chap. xi. 52). But we have seen also that John cannot forget (or the Spirit of God as speaking through him) that there are promises of blessing for the earth, and therefore to an earthly people, which He will fulfil in their entirety to them. We have had glances at this already, again and again, and now we have another. Thomas, called Didymus, (both names meaning "a twin,") though one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. We may easily believe that the unbelief which he so conspicuously exhibits, may have hindered his being with them at that memorable time. How many glorious opportunities do we not lose from such a cause? Not even the testimony of all the others is sufficient to make him credit so marvelous a tale. Like Israel, he must look upon the Pierced One, or he will not believe. The week passes, therefore, with Thomas unbelieving still; just as the present time with Israel. But on the eighth day, the first of the new week, the disciples are again together, and now Thomas is with them: Jesus comes once more, the doors again being shut, and stands in the midst, and says again, "Peace be unto you." And now Thomas may satisfy himself; but he is broken down in adoring wonder: "My Lord and my God!" he exclaims, as, thank God, at last the nation will; but to find that he has lost, not time alone, but the higher blessing: "Thomas," says the Lord, "because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

The apostle adds here that the object of his writing was to awaken and encourage faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God; that thus men might have life in His Name. For this purpose, he had not attempted an impossible relation of all the signs that Jesus had done. These were innumerable; nor is a faith founded merely upon miracles a sufficient faith (chap. ii. 23–25). His aim had been that the divine glory of the Lord should appear; so that His Name—the display of Himself, might prove its power for this, as it alone could do. Acquaintance with the Son of God! Ah, is not this, indeed, the need we have, one and all? is it not here all need shall be supplied?

Sec. 5.

After the Jew is brought into blessing and the appearing of the Lord in their behalf, blessing will, as we know, go out to the nations, the judgments that are

SECTION 5. (Chap. xxi. 1-14.)
Man as man—the Gentile—with God.

AFTER these things Jesus manifested himself again to the disciples at the [k]sea of Tiberias: and in this manner he manifested himself. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael who was of [l]Cana of Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a [m]fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth and entered into the ship, and that night they caught [n]nothing. And when the [o]morning was already coming on, Jesus stood on the shore: the disciples however [p]knew not that it was Jesus. Therefore Jesus saith unto them, Children,* have ye any thing to eat? They answered him, No. And he said unto them, [q]Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the [r]Lord. When, therefore, Simon Peter, heard that it was the Lord, he girded on his outer garment, (for he was naked) and [s]cast himself into the sea; and the other disciples came in the boat, (for they were not far from land, but only about two hundred cubits), dragging the net of fishes.

k ch. 6. 1.
l ch. 2. 1.
m *cf.* ch. 20. 10. *cfr.* Acts 6. 2.
n *cf.* Lk. 5. 3-7.
o *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 8.
p ch. 20. 14.
q *cf.* ch. 9. 7.
r *cf.* Lk. 24. 30, 31.
s *cf.* ch. 20. 6. *cf.* ch. 13, 37.

* The form of the question suggests a negative answer.

inflicted upon the world preparing the way for this, as the prophet says, "When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. xxvi. 9). Restored Israel will then be the centre from which living waters will go forth to water the earth; and, as their casting away has been for the reconciling of the world, the receiving of them shall be, in the words of the apostle, "life from the dead" (Rom. xi. 15). To this the closing scenes in this Gospel now carry us on, in what has evidently the character of a supplementary part. For, as another has remarked, here "we find ourselves upon the ground of the historic Gospels; that is to say, that the miracle of the draught of fishes identifies itself with the work of Christ on earth, and is in the sphere of His former association with His disciples. It is Galilee, not Bethany. It has not the usual character of the doctrine of this Gospel, which presents the divine Person of Jesus, outside all dispensation, here below; raising our thoughts above all such subjects. Here, at the end of the Gospel, the Evangelist comes for the first time on the ground of the synoptics, of the manifestation and coming fruits of Christ's connection with earth. Thus the application of the passage to this point is not merely an idea which the narrative suggests to the mind, but it rests upon the general teaching of the Word." (*Synopsis.*)

As in the final parable of the seven in Matt. xiii. the net is cast into the waters of the nations, those of the disciples in one way or another most prominently connected with Israel being foremost among the fishers now. Thus Peter, the leading apostle to the circumcision, is conspicuous all through. Next to him, we have Thomas named, and then Nathanael, both typical representatives of Israel in the latter days. The connection of Nathanael with Cana of Galilee, where the water was made wine, is noted also for the first time. Only the sons of Zebedee are named besides. Peter leads, but there is unsuccessful

As soon, therefore as they went on shore, they saw a
'fire of coals there,* and fish lying thereon and bread. *t cf.* ch. 18. 18.
Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have
now caught. Simon Peter, therefore, went on board
and drew the net to land full of great fishes, a hundred
and fifty and three; and although there were so many,
the net was "not rent. Jesus saith unto them, "Come *u ctr.* Lk. 5. 6.
and dine.† But none of the disciples durst inquire of *v cf.* ch. 6. 10.
him, Who art thou? knowing it was the Lord. Jesus
therefore cometh and "taketh the bread and giveth *w cf.* Lk. 24. 30, 31.
them, and the fish likewise. This is now the *third *x cf.* ch. 20. 19, 26.
time that Jesus manifested himself to the disciples,
after that he was risen from among the dead.

* Literally, "lying." † Literally, "break your fast."

toiling through the night, until with the morning Jesus stands upon the shore. Then at His "Cast the net upon the right side of the ship, and ye shall find," they do find, acting upon His word, a great multitude of fishes. Yet it is noted that the net holds together: "Christ's millennial work is not marred. . . . That which He performs does not rest on man's responsibility as to its effect here below: the net does not break. Also, when the disciples bring of the fish that they have caught, the Lord has some already there. So shall it be on earth at the end. Before His manifestation He will have prepared a remnant for Himself upon the earth; but after His manifestation He will gather a multitude also from the sea of nations;" which "the sea of Tiberias," bearing the name of the Cæsar whom man has chosen for his king, may fitly image.

Peter, prominent all through, not only presents, as already said, the Jewish ministry which will be used in this, but it is to be remarked how in keeping with it is the work of restoration needed in his own soul. He also has denied his Master, as Israel has, and has to be brought back after such terrible failure, yet is put again into the place he might seem irretrievably to have lost.

Thus we see in this section man as man, apart from all covenant privilege, brought to God. Judgment itself will work out the purposes of grace; and thus also will it be seen that grace truly reigns: although that which is for God a "strange work" must still, alas! have its place, as we shall see clearly in the day that comes.

Sec. 6.

What follows now to the end of the Gospel takes a different turn. In it we may see, not obscurely, the foreshadow of the passing away of the ministry to the circumcision, Peter being still the representative of this, in contrast with John, who in his covers the whole interval until Christ's return. This requires to be looked into, however, while upon the surface may be seen the instructive history of a soul exercised under the tender but searching eye of Christ,—the exemplification of that process of cleansing to have part with Him, which He Himself has depicted for us under the symbol of feet-washing. This is fully in the line of John's special teaching, and its importance may well claim from us most earnest consideration.

The searching of Peter's soul which comes now before us is not the first step by any means towards his recovery. Evident as this is, it needs to be emphasized because of a very general mistake that is made with regard to it. The Lord's words to him in view of his sin, not yet committed, disclose, on the other hand, that which is the fundamental need of one who has fallen as he had. "I have prayed for thee," says He, "that thy *faith fail not.*" With our hand in His, in the self-distrust which is the fruit of true self-knowledge, we should be surely guided and safely guarded. In Peter we see, at the very time when the Lord's warning words are uttered, the indications of his danger: "Though

SECTION 6. (Chap. xxi. 15-19.)
Peter; the shortened Jewish Ministry.

SO WHEN they had dined,* Jesus saith unto Simon Peter, [y]Simon, son of Jonas, lovest† thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou [z]knowest that I have affection‡ for thee. He saith unto him, [a]Feed my lambs. He saith unto him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I have affection for thee. He saith unto him, [b]Tend my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, hast thou affection for me? Peter was [c]grieved because he said unto him the third time, Hast

y *cf.* Matt. 26. 33.
z *cf.* ch. 2. 25.
a *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 2. *cf.* Is. 40. 11.
b *cf.* 1 Pet. 5. 1-3. *cf.* Acts 20. 28.
c *cf.* ch. 13. 38.

* Literally, "breakfasted." † *Αγαπας*, a strong term.
‡ *φιλέω*, the love of friendship.

all should be offended," he says, "yet will I never be offended. I am ready to go with Thee to prison and to death." This is a condition which not only exposes one to fall, but for which the fall itself may be the only remedy. We have to learn that when we are weak only are we strong; and that Christ's strength is made perfect in weakness. Peter's case is a typical one; and thus it is so valuable for us. The Lord Himself, in such a case as this, cannot pray that Peter may not fall, but that he may be "converted" by it,—turned from that dangerous self-confidence to consciousness of his inability to trust himself, even for a moment. Here Satan is foiled and made to serve the purpose of that grace which he hates and resists. He can overpower this self-sufficient Peter; but only to fling him for refuge upon his omnipotent Lord. Just as "the messenger of Satan to buffet" Paul works for what he in no wise desires, to repress the pride so ready to spring up in us, and which the lifting up to the third heaven might tend to foster. Here there had been no fall, and all was overruled for fullest blessing; in Peter's case, on the other hand, Satan's effort would be to assail the fallen disciple with suggestions of a sin too great to be forgiven,—or, at least, for restoration to that eminent place from which it would be torture to remember he had fallen. What he needed to meet this was *faith;* and this, therefore, the Lord prays might not fail with him.

How careful is He to revive and strengthen in the humbled man the practical confidence so needful! The knowledge of it all given him before-hand,—of the prayer made for him,—of the exhortation addressed to him when restored, to "strengthen his brethren,"—all this would be balm indeed for his wounded soul; but even this was not enough for his compassionate Lord. The first message of His resurrection has to be addressed specially "to Peter," (Mk. xvi. 7,) and "to Cephas" himself He appears, before the twelve (1 Cor. xv. 5). Thus he will not shrink back when they are all seen together. When we find him now at the sea of Tiberias, it is easy to realize that all this has done its work. Told that it is the Lord who is there upon the shore, he girds on his outer garment, and casts himself into the sea, impatient to meet his Lord. But now it is he is ready, only now, for that so necessary dealing with his conscience, when his heart is fully assured. On the shore a fire of coals is burning, the only other time when we read of such a thing beside being when he had warmed himself at a similar one at that time which he never will forget. Yet it would seem as if Christ had forgotten it. He adds no word, but makes him sit down there in company with Himself and it,—a silent preacher, not the less effectual.

They have dined, and now the living Voice begins. Where does it begin? where the preacher to his conscience left it? No; not a word of this. Nothing is said for a moment about this fall; there is no charge,—scarcely, one would

thou affection for me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou [d]knowest all things; thou knowest that I have affection for thee. Jesus saith unto him, [e]Feed my sheep. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither [f]thou wouldst, but when thou shalt be old thou shalt [g]stretch forth thy hands and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not. And this he said, [h]signifying by what manner of death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he said unto him, [i]Follow me.

[d] *cf.* 1 Cor. 4. 3, 4.
[e] ver. 15. *cf.* ch. 10. 9.
[f] *cf.* vers. 3, 7.
[g] *cf.* ch. 19. 18.
[h] *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 14.
[i] *cf.* Matt. 4. 19. *cf.* Matt. 16. 24.

say, a reminder—of what the preacher before had taken for his text. A quiet and a tender question it is now, and from One whose love has been more and more rising upon him, till now it is full day, brightness and warmth together. "Simon, son of Jonas," says the Voice now, with its familiar and yet ever growing fulness of meaning for him, "Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?"

One cannot help but see that the Lord is recalling to Peter, and yet not as if *He* would recall them, his fervent but boastful words, that, though *all* should be offended, yet *he* would not be. He will not charge him with them, but only let him himself recall them in the light of what deeper knowledge he has acquired, that he may now give judgment as to them. But Peter simply declines the comparison. He is content with affirming his love, though not in the terms of the question put. The Lord cannot allow it, therefore, to rest there, but repeats His question in a briefer and more pointed way. Peter again affirms, and again the Lord presses him upon his own chosen ground; and now Peter's heart bursts out: "Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, Lovest thou Me? And he said unto Him, Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." This threefold repetition connects Peter's boastful affirmation with his repeated denials in the high priest's palace. Root and fruit are connected together, so that he may the better trace that connection, and Peter's answer testifies of the omniscience that has searched him out. "Lord," he says, "Thou knowest all things!" but that only deepens the conviction that while he had signally failed to manifest his love in outward act, yet He who knew all could read it in his heart.

The Lord's questions vary, however, more than we have yet taken into account. In the first two He uses a different word for "love" from that which He uses the third time, but which is that which Peter uses throughout. The latter is the term for affection, ardent and heartfelt, but, it may be, unintelligent and unappreciative also. The former is a love guided and sanctioned by a deliberate judgment. Both terms are used in a bad sense as well as a good, and the more discriminating and deliberate love is, the worse it is, if set upon evil. Yet this intelligent love which can give a reason to itself is otherwise the higher quality. It is the love of the spirit, as Scripture would put it, as Peter's word expresses that of the soul; and although the Father is said in both ways to love the Son, yet when it is said, "God is Love," the word used is necessarily the former.

The Lord then uses this higher term first, and descends afterwards to the lower, thus searching out Peter more and more. In the first place too, He adds, "more than these do," (the other disciples,) but then asks, "Dost thou love Me?" as if He would say, "at all?" And when Peter still urges his, "Thou knowest I have affection for Thee;" He at last takes him up even there, and asks, "*Hast* thou affection for Me?" Then the disciple's heart gushes out. Even this slighter "affection," alas! might be questioned now:—for had not mere friend braved and done more for friend than he for his Lord and Saviour? Yes, but He who knew all things would not judge him as men might. He dares not

SECTION 7. (Chap. xxi. 20-25.)
John completing the interval till the coming of Christ.

PETER, turning about, seeth the [j]disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, who is he that delivereth thee up? Peter, therefore, seeing him, saith unto Jesus, Lord, and [k]what as to this man? Jesus saith unto him, If I

[j] ch. 13. 23.

[k] *cf.* Rom. 4. 14. *cf.* Gal. 2. 7-9.

now say that he loves more than others,—dares profess nothing as to the quality of his love at all: let the Lord judge, who would not too severely;—who has not been driven from him by all that He has seen in him: yet, be it what it may, he *has* affection.

His self-judgment is complete. Searched out under the divine eye, he is found and owns himself, not better but worse than others, so self-ignorant that he cannot claim *quality* for his love at all; only something he is conscious of, which even so, in his utter failure to manifest it, omniscience alone might see.

The needed point is reached, the strong man converted to weakness is now fit to strengthen his brethren; and, as Peter descends step by step the ladder of humiliation, step by step the Lord follows him with assurance of the work for which he is destined. "Feed My lambs," He says, "tend My sheep," "feed My sheep." He, the faithful Shepherd, who could give His life for them, could yet confide these sheep, so dear to Him, into the hands of this humbled, ruined man. How sweet and assuring this grace to Simon Peter, as to us all! Now indeed he answers to his name: he is the "hearkener, son of the Dove," and is risen out of the ruin which will yet abide with him in cherished memory for ever. God, who is the God of resurrection, has performed this.

But the Lord does not even stop here. He goes back to that fervent protestation that Peter is ready to follow Him to prison and to death. He has missed his opportunity, but he shall retrieve it yet, and show what divine grace has indeed made Christ to be to him. Sealing it with His strong manner of affirmation, He declares, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not." "This spake He," says he who had been witness of it, "signifying by what death he should glorify God. And, when He had spoken this, He saith unto him, Follow Me."

In the strength of nature he had not been competent. Mere flesh and blood will ever fail in the battles of the Lord. Yet He who has enjoined upon us the taking forth the precious from the vile, knows how to discern amid whatever may be mingled with it that which is truly of Him. Peter shall regain his lost opportunity, and yet have the privilege accorded him of dying for his Saviour. As a veteran in such warfare, he shall die upon the battlefield, and follow Christ through the gateway by which He left the conflict for the eternal joy.

It is in the contrast with John which follows we are made to realize that Peter is here also the representative of that ministry to the circumcision which was, as we know, in a principal way committed to him. That ministry ended as a distinct thing with the scattering of the people when Jerusalem was taken and destroyed by the Romans. The times of possible restoration held out to them by the reception of the Crucified One, lengthened out by the longsuffering mercy of God for many years, though more and more realized as hopeless, was then ended in terrible judgment. Henceforth to the end of the times of the Gentiles, as our Lord announced, Jerusalem would be trodden down by them. While it is, of course, true that the gospel goes out to men everywhere, without distinction of persons, and that only "blindness in part" is happened to Israel, the nation as such is for the present set aside. The testimony characteristic of the time of God's longsuffering is therefore set aside also.

will that he abide [t]until I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me. This saying therefore went abroad among the brethren, that that disciple [m]was not to die; yet Jesus said not unto him, He is not to die; but, If I will that he abide until I come, what is that to thee?

This is the disciple who [n]testifieth of these things,

t *cf.* ch. 14.3. *cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 10. *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 23.
m *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 51. *cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 15, 17.
n ch. 15. 27. *cf.* ch. 19. 35.

Sec. 7.

We come now to the Lord's words as to John, which have for us a deeper concern. Peter, turning about, sees John following; and with a natural, but perhaps too merely human interest, asks, "Lord, and what as to this man?" He answers, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me." This saying, we learn, though put only in the form of a question, was taken by the disciples as intimating that that disciple therefore would not die; but that this was not really what the Lord had said. The apostle who writes this, and of whom it is written, knew apparently no more than the rest: he simply guards against what might be a misconception. That is impossible now; but it leaves the question for us still, what then did the Lord mean? Was it only a rebuke to Peter? Either it is that, or there must be, one would say, some way by which John could live on, other than personally, and which may explain the mysterious words.

It is simple enough to say that John lives on in his writings. But then it might be urged, that is only what all the inspired writers will; still it cannot but come to mind that, in fact, John's writings not only predict circumstantially the Lord's return, but stretch over all the intervening time till then. While he does not take us up into heaven, as Paul does, and show us our place in the glorified Man up there, yet all the more he seems to abide with the people of God on earth until Christ's return, as a human presence watching and caring for them. John may be thus truly said to be waiting with those on earth for his absent Lord in a way in which we could not speak of any other inspired writer.

Even his epistles declare the last time to be here, and while watching over the development of the life (which is, as we know, his great subject) in babes, young men, and fathers, gives them instruction as to Antichrist. His doctrine, in the Gospel and epistles, is a connecting link between Paul on the one hand, and those who treat of the practical walk, as do the writers of the other General Epistles. But he fills this, as no other, with the personal glory of Christ, the Only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father.

He is thus really a conservative presence: binding Scripture and the brotherhood of Christians also into a unity that is power to "abide,"—a favorite word of his, and which the Lord uses as to himself. We need not wonder to read upon his golden belt the words which most of all are fundamental to a unity of life, a living unity,—

Light, and Love!

The apostle closes his Gospel with another reminder of the inadequacy of all human words to tell out His glory, of whom he has been speaking. If it were attempted to tell out all, the world would be unable to contain the books that would be written. It would be an impracticable load to lift, rather than a help to clearer apprehension. How thankful we may be for the moderation that has compressed what would be really blessing to us into such a moderate compass! which yet, as we all must know, develops into whatever largeness we may have capacity for. Our Bibles are thus the same, and quite manageable by any. On the other hand, are we burning to know more? we may go on without any limit, except that which our little faith or heart may impose. May God awaken our hearts to test for themselves the expansive power of Scripture, and whether

and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true. And there are also [o]many other things that Jesus did, which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the [p]world itself could not contain the books that would be written.

o ch. 20. 30.
p cf. Eph. 3. 19. cf. 2 Cor. 3. 3 with Eph. 1. 22, 23.

we can find a limit anywhere! Like the inconceivable immensity of the heavens, ever increasing as the power of vision is lengthened, we go on to find that the further we go only the more does the thought of infinity rise upon us; but this infinity is filled with an Infinite Presence; in every leaf-blade, in every atom, yet transcending all His works; and "to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him."

THE BIBLE TRUTH PRESS, NEW YORK.

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A REVISED TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES
WITH EXPOSITORY NOTES:

ARRANGED, DIVIDED, AND BRIEFLY CHARACTERIZED

ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THEIR

NUMERICAL STRUCTURE

F W Grant.

FOURTH EDITION

V. 6

ACTS TO 2 CORINTHIANS

NEW YORK
LOIZEAUX BROTHERS, BIBLE TRUTH DEPOT
1 EAST 13TH STREET

ORDER AND DIVISIONS OF THE BOOKS

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

1. THE BOOKS OF THE LAW:—
   1. Genesis.
   2. Exodus.
   3. Leviticus.
   4. Numbers.
   5. Deuteronomy.

2. THE COVENANT-HISTORY:—
   1. Joshua.
   2. Judges.
      Ruth.
   3. Kings:—
      First Book (*Samuel*).
      Second Book (*Kings*).
   4. Captivity-Books:—
      Ezra.
      Nehemiah.
      Esther.
   5. Chronicles.

3. THE PROPHETS:—
   1. Isaiah.
   2. Jeremiah.
      Lamentations.
   3. Ezekiel.
   4. Daniel.
   5. The Book of Minor Prophets:—
      1. *Hosea.* *Amos.* *Micah.*
      2. *Joel.* *Obadiah.* *Jonah.*
      3. *Nahum.* *Habakkuk.* *Zephaniah.*
      4. *Haggai.* *Zechariah.* *Malachi.*

4. THE PSALM-BOOKS:—
   1. The Psalms.
   2. Job.
   3. Solomon's Song.
   4. Ecclesiastes.
   5. Proverbs.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

1. THE GOSPELS:—
   1. Matthew. Mark. Luke.
   2. John.

2. THE ACTS.

3. THE PAULINE EPISTLES:—
   1. Romans.
      Galatians.
      Ephesians.
      Colossians.
      Philemon.
      Philippians.
   2. Thessalonians.
      First Epistle.
      Second Epistle.
      Corinthians.
      First Epistle.
      Second Epistle.
      Hebrews.
      Timothy.
      First Epistle.
      Second Epistle.
      Titus.

4. THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES:—
   1. Peter.
      First Epistle
      Second Epistle.
   2. James.
   3. John.
      First Epistle.
      Second Epistle.
      Third Epistle.
   4. Jude.

5. REVELATION.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

PREFACE

AFTER an interruption which threatened a complete setting aside of the NUMERICAL BIBLE, as far as I at least could have personally to do with it, the Lord has graciously permitted me to see the second volume of the New Testament at last ready for what readers He may give interest in it. Realizing the imperfection that cleaves to all that is of man, I have yet no doubt that the value of the numerical structure to the interpretation of the word of God will be found here still by others as by myself. It has never (to me) failed to witness to the integrity, harmony, and perfection everywhere pervading this: the evidence of which will not fail to be found by those who care to look for it. As for the rest, it remains only to say that I have sought to make the outline of the divine truth in the Scriptures contained in this volume—mere outline as it must necessarily be—as full as space and ability permitted. Nor have I sought anywhere to hide my convictions upon any subject whatever that came fairly before me, but have taken my readers fully into my confidence, as the nature of my task demanded. "He that hath My word, let him speak My word faithfully," is a direct command which has given me no liberty, where a prudent reserve might have commended my work to a much wider circle. Alas, for the distractions of Christendom! which show how far Great Babylon has thrown its shadow beyond itself. But God would use even this for blessing to those absolutely sincere before Him, and not willing to give up any of that truth, into *all* which His Spirit would fain guide us. The exercise necessitated cannot fail to be for more establishment and deeper apprehension of that about which there has been exercise; and to "prove all things" is everywhere needed in order to "hold fast that which is good." But Christians will find here no departure from the fundamentals of the common faith as expressed in the three great creeds which are a legacy from the early centuries.

Alas, that already we miss from them the clear ring of the gospel: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved"!

The last volume of the New Testament is almost entirely in manuscript already.

It is due to Mr. Ridout, as well as to those who may miss the usual fulness of the references in the later epistles, to say that he is not responsible for these, having himself also been for some months laid aside from all work of this kind by the prostration of severe illness, from which he is now happily recovering, so that the next volume will show, as we trust, once more the marks of what has been to him so long a labor of love.

F. W. GRANT.

Plainfield, N. J., August 17th, 1901.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NUMERALS.

The reason for the significance must be sought in previous volumes, especially in Appendix II. to the Volume on the Psalms.

ONE.

Soleness, singularity, uniqueness; solitariness, barrenness.
Sufficiency, power, independency, pride, rebellion.
Identity, unchangeableness, consistency, perpetuity, truth, knowledge.

(UNITY.)

Unity, at-oneness, harmony, congruity, integrity, righteousness, obedience, concord, peace.

(PRIMACY.)

Supremacy, headship, rule; beginning, cause, occasion, source, foundation, ground, plea.

(COMBINATIONS OF MEANINGS.)

Life, personality, will. Choice, election. Grace.
God, Almighty, Eternal, Jehovah, Father.

TWO.

(RELATION.)

Help, support, confirmation, assurance, competent testimony.
Seconding, preservation, deliverance, salvation. Service, ministry.
Addition, increase, growth; progress, movement, activity.
Attachment, love, desire, prayer. Association, partnership, fellowship.

(SECOND.)

Dependence, faith. Inferiority, lowliness, humiliation, subjection.

(DIFFERENCE.)

Diversity, contrast; contradiction, opposition, conflict, enmity.
Double-mindedness, duplicity, deceit.

(DIVISION.)

Separation, analysis, differentiation, discernment; judgment, wisdom; sight.
Decay, death, dissolution.
Christ, Second Person, God and Man, Second Man, Word of God, Witness, Saviour, Servant, Minister. Cross. Soul. Woman.

THREE.

(THREE DIMENSIONS.)

Solidity; reality, realization, fulfilment, fulness; manifestation. Sanctuary; glory, praise. Name.

(THREE STRAIGHT LINES INCLOSE A SPACE.)

Setting apart for purpose; specialization, sanctification, holiness; transformation. Dwelling-place, possession, portion. Marriage. Ban.

(THIRD LINE OF A TRIANGLE RETURNS TO THE FIRST.)

Resurrection; return, revival, recovery; reproduction. Spirit.

FOUR.

Yieldingness, weakness; meekness, mercy. Failure, testing; experience; transitoriness, change.
Creature, earth, walk on earth, world.

FIVE.

God in government; capacity, responsibility, exercise, way and end; conditions.
Weak with the Strong; Man with God; Immanuel.

SIX.

Manifestation or fulness of evil. Work-day week; limit, discipline; mastery, overcoming.

SEVEN.

Completeness, perfection; rest.

EIGHT.

New in contrast with the Old.

TEN.

Simply a 5 by 2.

TWELVE.

The manifest rule of God.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

IN the New Testament Pentateuch, there is no question possible that the book of the Acts fills the Exodus place. It is the story of the going forth of the people of God from a servitude the "yoke" of which, as the apostle of the circumcision himself declares, neither they nor their fathers were able to bear (chap. xv. 10). To the conscience quickened by the entrance of divine light, what can be more unendurable than the bondage of law? And the Light had come into the world. Christ had swept away the things permitted for the hardness of men's hearts; He had drawn with absolute precision the line between right and wrong; He had followed it into the secret chambers of the heart, and condemned as adultery the lustful look, denounced causeless anger as subject to the judgment, the calling a brother "fool" as worthy of hell fire; He had required men to love their enemies, pray for those that cursed them, return good for evil, live a life which men have at large judged to be as impracticable as beautiful. Make all this into a legal system, and it is indeed an intolerable one. The apostle Paul has told us how the very prohibitions of the law stirred up within him the lust which it condemned, so, that "holy, just, and good" as the commandment was, when it came to him in the reality of what it was, the sin, of which he had been before so little conscious that it seemed as if it were dead, revived and *he* "died" (Rom. vii. 9). This is the powerlessness of law, and this is at the same time its strength: its powerlessness *is* its strength; for it is the impotence of man's own self-devised way (for all natural religion is law in some form) to meet God and stand before Him. The veil unrent before His face, the way into the holiest still unopened, the plain declaration that (upon that footing) no man can see Him and live,—all these unite to speak the hopelessness of confidence in human effort of any kind. None can rise up to the measure of divine requirement, nor can the holiness of God permit the modification of the requirement. The old covenant, then, must be done away, and the glorious new covenant of God's "I wills" must be substituted for that to him so fatal of "Thou shalt."

"There is," therefore, "verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof (for the law made nothing perfect), and the bringing in of a better hope, by which we draw nigh to God" (Heb. vii. 18, 19). Hagar, who "gendereth to bondage," must, according to the apostle's inspired "allegorizing" of

Abraham's history, be cast out of the house (Gal. iv. 30). "The law is not of faith," and the contradictory principles of grace and of works cannot subsist together (Gal. iii. 12; Rom. xi. 6).

But with Hagar Ishmael also must be cast out; and here we have to read, as the apostle also teaches us, the rejection of Israel nationally, cleaving to law and refusing grace, and Him in whom alone grace can be offered and is found. This is what we have in the book of Acts: the weaning time of Isaac, the child of the freewoman, the "mocking" of Ishmael, the setting aside of unbelieving Israel as involved in that of the legal covenant, to which with all the spirit of bondage that it breathes, they yet adhere. With this, as its necessary corollary, we find the gathering together of the children of God who were scattered abroad,—the widening of the publication of the gospel, first to Samaria, and then to the uncircumcised nations, the opening of the "mysteries" in the gospel given to Paul, the special features of the work among the Gentiles. The final portion shows Jewish enmity bringing the great apostle of the Gentiles to a Roman prison: a close in sorrow which we may find to have significance in relation to the Gentile work at large, and to be a prophecy of the failure of what we speak of (somewhat loosely perhaps) as the Christian dispensation.

Into the doctrines of Christianity the book of Acts does not enter largely: it is a history, and apart from what we have already seen, scarcely treats as we might have expected of the new truth which has come to gladden and bless and sanctify the redeemed. We have a certain development in connection with Paul's ministry which we shall have to trace, from forgiveness of sins to justification and a place in Christ, the Spirit being all through the witness to Christ glorified and the seal of the disciple. The Church as the House of God or the Body of Christ is only seen here by the help of what is given us elsewhere; it is rather seen here as a communion of believers in an exalted Saviour, expecting His return, and meanwhile enjoying the consciousness of the salvation He has wrought.

The main divisions of the book have been in some measure indicated:—

1. (Chaps. i.–vii.):—The beginning of the Church: the call of Israel alone.
2. (Chaps. viii.–xii.):—Israel rejecting, but the Church enlarging.
3. (Chaps. xiii.–xx.):—The Proclamation of the Mysteries.
4. (Chaps. xxi.–xxviii.):—Into the Roman prison.

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

DIVISION 1. (Chaps. i.–vii.)

The Beginning of the Church: the call of Israel alone.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. i. 1–11.)

The Foundation.

1 (1-3): The Living Lord.

1. THE [a] first account indeed did I make, O Theophilus, concerning all things which Jesus [b] began both to do and teach, until the [c] day in which he was taken up, when he [d] by the Holy Spirit had

[a] *cf.* Lk. 1. 1-4.
[b] *cf.* Jno. 17. 4 with Jno. 20. 21. *cf.* Mk. 16. 20.
[c] Lk. 24. 50, 51. ver. 2. *cf.* 1 Tim. 3. 16.
[d] *cf.* Matt. 3. 16 with ch. 10. 38. *cf.* Jno. 20. 21-23.

NOTES.—DIV. 1.

ISRAEL has rejected her Lord and Saviour: the Son of God has come to His own, and His own have not received Him. Tested under law, they had been proved "ungodly and without strength;" the coming of Christ had now more completely tested them, with a more terrible result: the Cross had now manifested as to them that the mind of the flesh was enmity against God.

It is true that this was not the condition of Israel only. "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man;" and we have learned nothing right, if we have not learned to identify ourselves with the privileged nation, and to see in their condemnation the judgment passed upon the whole world. This we shall have put before us fully by the apostle of the Gentiles in that epistle in which he declares a salvation needed alike by all as being without difference guilty before God. But this is not what we have to do with here; here it is as yet Israel alone that is before us; Israel, over whom the heart of God is still yearning, and for whom, therefore, as a nation, there is to be a first offer of grace, if perhaps the demonstration of their guilt and danger in the crucifixion of the Son of God may work upon them to receive it. "Repentance and remission of sins" was indeed to be "preached among all nations," but "beginning at Jerusalem," (Luke xxiv. 47), and from thence, if even yet they would repent, the living streams were to flow forth.

Accordingly at the Cross itself there is heard the intercession, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;" words which Peter takes up in his address to the multitude upon the healing of the lame man at the beautiful gate of the temple: "And now, brethren, I know that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers;" and thereupon he assures them that, if now they repented, the times of refreshing would come from the presence of the Lord, and He would send Jesus Christ to fulfil to them all that the prophets had foretold of blessing (chap. iii. 17–21).

With this offer and its results the first division mainly is taken up; the end being reached in the trial and stoning of Stephen, who fulfils his name in receiving the "crown" of martyrdom, and is, according to the Lord's parable the messenger of the unhappy people sent after Him, to say they will not have this Man to reign over them. Until this time there is no going out whatever to the Gentiles. Although the risen Saviour has declared that the apostles are to be His witnesses "in Samaria, and to the end of the earth," not even Samaria, though so near at hand, and having, in fact, upon one memorable occasion, heard, not without precious fruit, the gospel from His own lips, gets any further testimony. All seems in suspense while the issue of Israel's call is yet to be seen. A Gentile centurion has already proclaimed the Crucified to be the Son of God; yet we hear of no Gentile added to the Church; and this, though formed by the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost, has not displayed therefore its distinctive

given commandment unto the apostles whom he had chosen; to whom also he [e]presented himself alive after he had suffered, with many sure proofs, being seen by them during [f]forty days, and [g]speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.

[e] vers. 21, 22. cf. Jno. 20. 19, etc. cf. 1 Cor. 15. 4-8.
[f] cf. Matt. 4. 2.
[g] cf. Lk. 24. 25-27.

characteristics. It is a remnant of Israel merely, and has heard nothing apparently whatever of its own high calling. From this point it is that a notable change begins.

SUBD. 1.

It is striking that, while Luke's is one of the two only Gospels closing with the ascension of Christ, he yet should begin what is in some sense, as he declares, a continuation of his former work, with another account. The reason of this, however, is not hard to discover. In Matthew He has announced that upon that "Rock" which Peter had just confessed He would build His assembly (chap. xvi. 18). And He Himself, as Peter assures us, is the foundation upon which this "spiritual house" is built up (1 Pet. ii. 4–6). Resurrection it is that has marked out the Son of the Living God (Rom. i. 4). His work is there manifestly accomplished and accepted; that upon which all rests for us is finished, and here alone can there be an unchangeably secure foundation laid for any blessing. But the Church as the "spiritual house" is the House of God; and it is made so by the indwelling of the Spirit within it; while, if we think of it as the Body of Christ, it is by one Spirit that we are all baptized into one body (1 Cor. xii. 13). This the Lord presently assures us, was at Pentecost: Pentecost then was the beginning of the Church, and the Spirit given at that time was the fruit of Christ's departure to the Father (John xvi. 7); and it is as there set at the right hand of God that He is made Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body (Eph. i. 20–23).

It is plain, then, why the story of the assembly as related here should have for its introduction the ascension of Christ. It was fitting that this should end the Gospel; it is as fitting that it should begin the history of the Acts: in both connections its place is perfect, yet it is neither from the Gospel nor the Acts that we are made to realize this. Scripture as a whole is the product of one Mind alone.

1. It is the writer of the Gospel of the Manhood who gives us here, distinctly as linked with it, the story of that which He has specially associated with Himself as Man. The body is that by which the spirit of man which is in him takes its part in the world and is able to express itself in a scene like this. The Body of Christ is in the same way the "epistle of Christ," the expression of the absent One who as Head guides and governs it. To be feet and hands and mouth for Christ, as representatives of Him, seems fittingly and naturally to explain our position in this respect, which the opening of the Acts may well confirm. "Acts of the *Apostles*" is the title given by the MSS., which is confirmed by writers as early as Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian, while Luke himself might appear to furnish another. For he calls his Gospel a "first account" of things which "Jesus *began* both to do and teach until the day in which He was taken up." The "Acts" he leaves us to infer to be a second account, of things Jesus went on to do after His ascension, somewhat as Mark speaks of the disciples going forth and preaching everywhere, "the Lord (in heaven) working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." Here in Luke it would be, not the Lord working *with*, but *in* and *through*; and this would be completely that which the members on earth of the Christ in heaven would seem to suggest.

A *company* like this the world had never seen before. It implies an intimate fellowship with the mind of Christ (1 Cor. ii. 16), and a unity of loving obedience to His will, which, empowered by the Spirit of God, would be indeed an epistle of Christ upon the earth; and such truly was the Church at its commencement. They were a force among men which was recognized alike by

I (4-8): His witnesses.

2. And being assembled together with them, he [h]charged them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but [i]wait for the promise of the Father, which, [saith he,] ye have heard from me. For [j]John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be [k]baptized with the Holy

h Lk. 24. 49.
i *cf.* vers. 13, 14. *cf.* Lk. 2. 25–29.
j *cf.* Jno. 1. 26–33. *cf.* Matt. 3. 11.
k ch. 2. 1-4; ch. 11. 15, 16; *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 13.

enemies and friends. As they became known, indifference ceased regarding them; there remained but sympathy or opposition, friendship or bitter hatred. They experienced the truth of the Saviour's words, "If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also." And, while persecution did not fail to follow, the word of God ran and was glorified; the light shone; the heavens through which Christ had gone were pouring out radiance through that open door.

Luke writes once more to his friend Theophilus, who, we notice, has lost his title of honor on the world's roll,—a sign, perhaps, of advance in honor on a better one; perhaps the world had promoted the "friend of God" after its fashion with such. At any rate, Luke was sure of Theophilus' continued interest in such matters as he cared to write about. In *him* Jesus had begun both to do and teach,—a beginning which would have a glorious ending and a sure one. He is not able to go on in the truth, for whom the world is not dropping off the more in proportion as he goes on with this; and such an one, we may surely believe, was he to whom Luke the evangelist,—must we not say, Luke's glorious Master also?—was able to pour out his heart.

Of that which Jesus goes on to do and teach, Luke devotes himself, as we have seen, to the activity, rather than the doctrine. It has never been the method of the Spirit to confide what He has to communicate to a single teacher. No one vessel could be found competent to hold all the truth;—a thing to be marked at all times, when the Spirit is communicating. Humility is better served, communion is more realized, God is more fully exalted, in the use of various instruments, not tied to any, working sovereignly as He will. But Luke has a very distinct line of his own, as, more or less, every inspired writer has. He is the historian of the Spirit's energy in a world of sin and of Satan's power manifested;—the historian, therefore, of a mighty conflict, the world side of that which in Ephesians is seen upon its heavenly side. Here it is the struggle to save men from his sway on earth; there it is to lay hold against all his wiles of our inheritance in heaven.

It is the commandment of the Lord to which all are subject here; He, as true and typal Man, speaking by the Holy Spirit upon Him to the apostles He had chosen; to whom as witnesses of His resurrection He shows Himself alive after His suffering with many sure proofs. For the resurrection, as the sign of His acceptance, and of ours in Him, is the basis of the whole gospel, and of our heavenly position, as well as of the Church; and thus the resurrection chapter closes the first epistle to the Corinthians, the epistle of Church fellowship and activity, the doctrinal counterpart of the Acts itself.

Again and again, therefore, during forty days the risen Lord is seen by them, and as no mere apparition, but freely speaking to them of the Kingdom of God, to the interests of which they were now devoted. This is the general term for that which meets the condition of a world away from God, which has thrown off allegiance to Him, and wandered in the tortuous labyrinths of its false wisdom and the misery of its self-will. For God being no longer in His place, all else is out of its place necessarily when that to which all is in relation has ceased to be.

Thus the news of the coming of the Kingdom of God is indeed gospel; and the faith of Jesus, as it prevails, establishes of necessity the Kingdom. The full rest of the soul is only gained when the apprehension of sovereign Love has subjected the will of man to entire acquiescence in its blessed ways.

2. It is not by the knowledge of His resurrection merely that they are qualified to bear testimony for their Lord. The promise of the Father is to be ful-

Spirit not many days hence. They therefore, who had come together, asked him, saying, Lord, dost thou at [t]this time restore the kingdom to Israel? He said unto them, It is not for you to know [m]times and seasons which the Father hath placed under his own authority. But ye shall receive [n]power when the Holy Spirit hath come upon you, and ye shall be my [o]witnesses, both in [p]Jerusalem, and in all [q]Judea and [r]Samaria, and to the [s]end of the earth.

t cf. Lk. 24. 21. *cf.* Lk. 19. 11. *cf.* ch. 3. 19–21.
m cf. 1 Thes. 5. 1, etc. *cf.* Mk. 13. 32–37.
n cf. ch. 4. 33.
o ver. 22. *cf.* Jno. 15. 26, 27.
p cf. ch. 2. 14.
q cf. ch. 8. 1. *r cf.* ch. 8. 5. *s* ch. 13. 46, 47; *cf.* Col. 1. 23.

filled, and they are to be baptized with the Holy Spirit within a few days from that time. It is sorrowful enough, after all the pains that the Lord has taken to make known the true nature of the coming of the Spirit, and even in spite of the apostle's declaration that "by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body," that Christians should still be ignorant of the character of that which then took place,—should confound Person and influence, the Gift with the gifts! The Lord has fully shown us that it was the Spirit Himself who then would come in place of Him who was now going away: "another Comforter" or Advocate, to be with them, as Christ had been, but *in* them also, making their bodies by His Presence temples of God. As the Spirit of adoption He taught them to cry, "Abba, Father!" As dwelling in the Church, this became also the House and Temple of God; as united by Him to Christ, His Body. The various gifts are qualifications for various place in this, as its members.

It is not so much denied that such things are, as that it was ever otherwise than now, at least from Abraham, with whom by most the Church is thought to have begun. All that has taken place since is, for those who hold such views, merely an increase of light and power; the coming of the Spirit merely a strong term for a larger outpouring than heretofore; and such "a Pentecostal shower" should "precede every sermon." This treatment of Scripture evacuates it of its proper meaning. Its language becomes loose, indefinite, incapable of precise significance. We escape from this fog easily by giving the same credit to the statements of the word of God that we should to those of any honest man not given to exaggeration, nor liable to confusion of speech. However, this is not yet the place to discuss the doctrine of the Church, for the simple reason that we have not yet the scripture as to it, and the Church is born, like many another child of destiny, without the knowledge of its God-given dignity.

But we should notice that the Lord, after His resurrection, has acknowledged in His disciples brethren of His own, and that the "promise of the Father" of which He here speaks characterizes well the Spirit of adoption which is at hand. The children of God which have been scattered abroad are now to be gathered together, and this involves that they shall be known to themselves and one another. Baptism with the Holy Spirit, whatever else it may mean, is the introduction into this acknowledged family of God, and as the *Holy* Spirit, the introduction accomplished by it is no formality but a true and enduring change. John's baptism of water is only mentioned, as he himself mentioned it, to be put in contrast with the gift now to be given by the Son of God. It is a true initiation into a spiritual state, never to be confounded or mixed up with any baptism of water: there the line is clearly drawn by the Lord's own conduct as to the latter: "Jesus Himself *baptized not*, but His disciples" (John iv. 2).

Those gathered round Him now, as risen from the dead, are still, however, Jews, and with little ability to enter into that which the Lord is putting before them. We hear, at least of no question pointing in this direction. They have another, "Lord, dost Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" The answer to this we can easily see now they were not prepared for; nor did it accord with the offer which was to be made through them to the nation, to be told the final result. "It is not for you," He says, "to know times and seasons which the Father has placed under His own authority." Yet, with reference to

3 (9-11): Ascending, but to return.

3. And having said these things, while they beheld, he was [t]taken up, and a [u]cloud received him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven, as he was going, behold, [v]two men stood by them in white garments, who also said, Ye men of Galilee, [w]why stand ye looking into heaven? This Jesus, who hath been taken up from you into heaven, shall so [x]come in like manner as ye have seen him going into heaven.

t ver. 2. *cf.* Eph. 4. 10. *u cf.* Ex. 13. 21. *cf.* Matt. 17. 5. *cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 17. *cf.* Rev. 1. 7. *v cf.* Lk. 24. 4. *w cf.* Joo. 20. 17.

cf. Lk. 24. 5; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 16. *x cf.* Matt. 24. 3; *cf.* Heb. 9. 28; *cf.* Tit. 2. 13; *cf.* Zech. 14. 4.

Israel in the days preceding her entrance into the blessings promised her, such times are not only given, but it was distinctly declared to the prophet of them that, while the vision was shut up and sealed to the time of the end, yet that then the wise shall understand (Dan. xii. 9–11). The Lord's words therefore are an intimation that they stood not in such relation to the coming blessing. And as they were, so are we still. A heavenly people, waiting to be caught up to heaven, "days and months, and times, and years" are not for those who are not of the world, but detached from the stream of the world's history. That which to the wise in Israel, in such a crisis as Daniel shows they are to pass through, will be of the greatest importance for them to know, would have been to Christians, through all the intervening centuries of their history, a knowledge which would have put far off from them the One for whom they wait. We still watch *because* we know not what hour our Lord doth come (Matt. xxiv. 42).

But if times and seasons were not for them to understand, there was a glorious testimony to be given, for which the Spirit's coming would empower them. They were to be His witnesses far and wide, even to the end of the earth; and of this testimony Jerusalem would be the beginning and the centre. How great a glory indeed the Light that arising out of Israel illumines already with its beams every heart that will receive it in! "A Light," says Simeon, "for revelation of the nations, and the Glory of Thy people Israel." But not as yet would Israel receive the message sent.

3. Now in open sight of all, He is taken up. The cloud that receives Him out of their sight is surely the "bright cloud" of the Transfiguration. It is the Man Christ Jesus welcomed by the Glory into which He is taken; and no vision of angels would be as fitting as is this. Nay, angels have here no place: we are made to think rather of the apostle's words, that being perfected, He was "saluted of God a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. v. 10). The Glory salutes Him here, now perfected; and His priestly office is that upon which depends all the outflow of divine grace with which the book is filled.

Upon earth the angels have their message of comfort: this Jesus is to return as He went up; the beginning and end of the day of atonement are here brought together. As Priest He departs, and as Priest He will return to bless the people of Israel. As yet it is of Israel that they are specially thinking; and His coming for the Church is not revealed. The disciples are in heart an Israelitish remnant still, and the revelation of the purposes of God proceeds only gradually. But heaven is where He is; and the angels' message comforts the home-sickness of their hearts as they see Him depart. Up, then! to serve Him in His absence. Not in contemplation merely, but in active energy of devoted labor will they be in fellowship with Him, who even upon the throne of heaven is serving still.

SUBD. 2.

We have now the inroad that Satan has made upon their ranks repaired, and Matthias substituted for Judas in the number of the twelve apostles. Dreadful was the apostasy of one in such a position: and it could not be permitted that men should have the least apparent cause to blaspheme on this account; it must be shown that sin in its extremest manifestation had not yet exceeded the bounds ordained by God for it;—that in its worst uprising He was Master still.

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. i. 12-26.)

Matthias added to the Eleven Apostles.

1 (12-14): A new beginning.

1. THEN they returned to Jerusalem from the mount
called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a [y]sabbath
day's journey off. And when they entered it, they
went up to the [z]upper room where were staying both
[a]Peter and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and
Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James [the son]
of Alphæus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas [the
brother] of James. These all continued with one ac-
cord in [b]prayer, with the [c]women, and [d]Mary the
mother of Jesus, and with his [e]brethren.

2 (15-22): The guidance of Scripture.

2. And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the
brethren, (the multitude of names was about a [f]hun-
dred and twenty of those together) and said, Brethren,
it was necessary that the [g]Scripture should be fulfilled,
which the Holy Spirit forespake by the mouth of David,
concerning Judas, who became [h]guide to those who
took Jesus: for he had been [i]numbered amongst us, and

[y] *cf.* Jno.11. 18.
[z] *cf.* Jno.20. 19. *cf.* ch.20.8.
[a] *cf.* Matt. 10. 2-4. *cf.* Mk.3.16 -19. *cf.* Lk.6.14-16.
[b] *cf.* ch. 6. 4. *cf.*ch.16.16. *cf.*ch.20.36.
[c] *cf.* Lk. 8.2, 3.
[d] *cf.* Jno.19. 26, 27.
[e] *ctr.* Jno.7. 5.
[f] *ctr.*ch.2.41.
[g] *cf.* Jno.17. 12.
[h] Jno. 18. 2, 3.
[i] *cf.* Jno. 6. 70, 71.

1. They return from the mount of Olives to Jerusalem: Olivet is their spring of power; Jerusalem the sphere of their ministry: they break no sabbath-rest by journeying between the two. Olivet is their Gilgal, for their new conquest of the land; but they are a small company for so great a work, and realize their weakness. Gathering in the upper room where the eleven are staying, they continue with one accord in prayer, waiting for the fulfilment of the promise made. This conscious weakness is a main element of strength. The work being so entirely beyond them, they are delivered from the necessity of calculating their own resources, and are left to the unobstructed view of God as their sole argument and their sufficient resource.

Mary the mother of Jesus is seen here for the last time in Scripture. She takes her place simply with the rest, humbled, no doubt, rather than exalted by God's grace towards her. What a grief it would have been to her to have known the place in which an apostate church would set her in the time to come! She is neither prayed to, nor even leads in prayer, but remains as in the beginning "the handmaid of the Lord," and with this passes out of the history. In the doctrine of the epistles she has no place, and is never mentioned. Blessed and honored she is, and always will be; by none so dishonored as by those who would force her into a place impossible for a creature, that of a Pagan goddess rather than a Christian saint.

2. We see now the authority of Scripture over these disciples of the Lord Jesus, in which they are true followers of their Master. We have traced His ways in the Gospels, and know how fully the principle that "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God doth man live" was acted upon by Him. Scripture that "cannot be broken" had for Him, therefore, all the authority of unalterable truth. "But how, then should Scripture be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" He gives as a convincing reason for not taking Himself out of the hands of those who came to seize Him. On the Cross, "that the Scripture might be fulfilled, He saith, I thirst." Twice over He speaks of the course and end of Judas as needful "that Scripture might be fulfilled." Peter, therefore, does but follow his Lord, when now, standing up amongst the brethren, he declares that "it was necessary that the Scripture should be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spake before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became guide to those who took Jesus." How blessed to realize the control of the Word of God in the darkest events, as in those most evidently displaying the

had obtained his lot in this [j]ministry. Now this man purchased a [k]field with the wages of iniquity, and [l]falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it was known unto all the dwellers in Jerusalem, so that that field is called in their dialect, Aceldama, that is, the field of [m]blood. For it is [n]written in the book of Psalms, Let his camp* be desolate, and let no man dwell therein; and his office let another take. Wherefore of the men who have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the [o]baptism of John until the day in which he was taken up from us, there must one be with us a [p]witness of his resurrection.

3 (23-26): The lot manifests.

3. And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they [q]prayed and said, Thou, Lord, who [r]knowest the hearts

*Or, habitation.

j cf. Matt. 10. 5. cf. Matt. 7. 22, 23.
k cf. Matt. 27. 5-8.
l cf. 2 Sam. 17. 23.
m cf. Matt. 21. 38, 39. cf. 1 Ki. 21. 19. cf. Rev. 14. 17-20.
n Ps. 69. 25. Ps. 109. 8.
o cf. Jno. 15. 27. cf. ch. 13. 24.
p ver. 8. ch. 2. 32. ch. 4. 33. cf. 1 Cor. 15. 3-8.
q ver. 14. ch. 6. 6. ch. 13. 3.
r cf. Jno. 6. 70 with Jno. 13. 18. cf. 1 Sa. 16. 7.

signs of His handiwork! How dark they would be, if we had not in this way the assurance of His perfect oversight of every circumstance! But the Cross is, above all, this assurance, as the speaker here will presently point out to us. What a blaze of prophetic light is concentrated upon it! and how the worst evil the world ever saw is there gloriously overruled to be the greatest good! And what is true of this is true of every evil that has stained man's history: "He maketh the wrath of man to praise Him; and the remainder of wrath He will restrain."

So, then, with Judas, whose terrible descent is spoken of here, from his reception of the lot of his apostleship to his suicide in the field of blood, which he had purchased with the price of his iniquity. The apparently discordant accounts as to this purchase have been reconciled in a manner well-known and probable enough. Begun by the traitor, we have only to suppose it closed by the leaders of the people; Judas returning to it to hang himself in his despair, as Matthew relates; the judgment of God ensuing, as related here. That the character of the purchase-money should combine with the horror of his death to give its name of Aceldama to the potter's field, is in no wise difficult to understand.

Peter in his quotation connects two psalms (lxix. 25; cix. 8); the first fulfilled in the judgment at which his own hands had doubly wrought, the second as defining the duty which now pressed upon them. The office which he has shamed and cast aside is not to be left vacant to bear witness of the enemy's victory. All has been provided for,—all has been specified beforehand in the prescient wisdom of God, which cannot be taken by surprise or overmatched by Satan's subtlety or power. Nay, the Word is shown by his apparent success only the more fully master in all circumstances. It lies with them now to see filled up their broken ranks,—not by the appointment of a fresh apostle, for which plainly they have no authority, but by choosing out from among themselves those who had the necessary qualifications for one who was to be a witness of that wondrous life which had shone out among men, and then referring to the Lord Himself to determine which of these was according to His mind.

3. Scripture had settled for them what His mind was as to the place being filled; for the determining of the individual there was the lot, used so often in Israel for a matter like this. They had even the scripture for this, that, if "the lot is cast into the lap, the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord" (Pro. xvi. 33). They had no reason to doubt, therefore, that they would have His guidance

of all men, show which of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take the lot of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas turned aside, to go to his [s]own place. And they gave [t]lots for them, and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

[s] *cf.* Jno. 17. 12. *cf.* Rev. 22. 11, 15.

[t] Prov. 16. 33. *cf.* Gal. 1. 1, 12, 15. *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 12.

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chap. ii.)

The Promise of the Spirit fulfilled.

1 (1-4): Power.

1. AND when the [u]day of Pentecost was now accomplishing, they were all [v]together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of a mighty [w]rushing wind, and filled all the house where

[u] ch. 20. 16. 1 Cor. 16. 8. Ex. 34. 22. Lev. 23. 15-21. Num. 28. 26. Deut. 16. 9-12.

[v] ch. 1. 14. ver. 46.

[w] *cf.* Ezek. 1. 4; *cf.* Ezek. 37. 9 with Jno. 3. 8.

in acting on such an assurance; the Spirit had not yet come; and this, which some have taken to cast doubt upon the issue, and to dispute Matthias' right to the apostleship, they had no ground for believing to be a cause for delay when Scripture was thus clear. They acted in obedience, not in self-confidence; we never find their act disputed afterwards, and we have surely no right to dispute it now. It would be a totally different thing to imitate their conduct, now that the Spirit of God is come.

It is true that we have nothing of Matthias afterwards; but the same could be said of most of the apostles; nor of the fancied substitution of Paul for him at a later time have we any proof whatever. We have no reason for believing Matthias to have been other than his name imports, "the gift of the Lord" to them, according to their faith; and it is a happy thing to see faith acting in them in such simplicity and confidence, the word of God being its justification as always,—in this case before the Spirit has come. When He comes, it will not be to render us less subject to the Word, but on the contrary, to give us the fulness of it, even of the Old Testament; and the new dispensation which is now being introduced, with all its higher blessing, will confirm the old.

SUBD. 3.

The fulfilment of the promise is not long delayed, and we come now to the real commencement of the Church of God on earth. In saying this it must be remembered we are simply using the familiar word, which has so long retained its place that it would be now almost affectation to change it. Every one knows that the strictly accurate term is the "assembly," and that this also needs to be further defined as the assembly which is Christ's Body, or we shall fall into confusion. And this is the good of adhering to the common phraseology, negative enough in character to receive meaning from Scripture, but which, understood in this way, may become as definite as we can desire. The word "Church" in itself means only something belonging to the Lord, and so may apply to an assembly or a building, as in fact, people apply it. The Scripture-word "assembly" cannot be confounded in this fashion, but yet in itself would not distinguish the Jewish "assembly in the wilderness" from the Christian one so widely different, or even that heathen assembly which the town-clerk at Ephesus dismissed (chap. xix. 41). The word "Church" has the advantage that it does not really occur in Scripture; so that in using it invariably for the Christian assembly we can make it definite without any confusing with a scriptural word. Thus it will be easily understood if we use it here.

As already said, for the *doctrine* of the Church we need not look in the Acts. We have to go further now, and say, that for the doctrine of the Spirit we must not look in the Acts. It is important to recognize this, that we may retain the truth of the doctrine. In the Acts we shall not find "sealing," "anointing," or the "earnest" of the Spirit, or any terms equivalent with these. Of the

they were sitting. And there appeared unto them divided [x] tongues, as of [y] fire, and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all [z] filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to [a] speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

x *cf.* Matt. 3. 16. vers. 4, 32.
y *cf.* Jer. 23. 29.
z *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 13 with ch. 1. 5, 8.
cf. ch. 4. 31. a *cf.* Mk. 16. 17; *cf.* ch. 19. 5, 6.

baptism with the Spirit we do hear, but without the help of Corinthians should not be able to understand it. On the other hand, of the Spirit being poured out, coming and falling upon men we hear in the Old Testament, as well as in the book before us. These things have been urged in various interests, and we must not ignore them: Scripture is as perfect in its form as in its matter, and it is only by strict attention to such things as these that we honor its perfection and obtain its deepest secrets. The Spirit is also spoken of as given and received; we have the "gift" of the Spirit, as elsewhere the "gifts."

Now the absence of certain terms which speak of the Spirit's inward operation is not to be wondered at in what is an historical account. As the public Witness to Christ, it is natural that the outward manifestations should be dwelt upon, rather than the inward, more really important though these last might be. Thus also the gift of tongues is specially noticed. When the Spirit fell or came upon men in the Old Testament times, it was seen similarly in works of power put forth; and the coming upon men speaks naturally of enduement with power. Of the work in the heart no spectator could be witness, save as this showed itself in fruit in the life in due season. And this does not lack in what is before us now, as is most evident; but it does not give us insight into the character of the Spirit's outpouring seen at Pentecost.

It is to the Gospel of John that we must turn, in fact, to know the real significance of the Pentecostal gift; although, as we have seen in going through this, even John does not speak of the Church. That it is the Spirit Himself who comes, the Lord there makes very plain to us; but the effect as declared is the perfecting of the truth and of the individual life; the circle into which you are brought by it is that of the acknowledged family, or, as Paul would say, the sons. The Spirit is the "Spirit of adoption"; the "gift" of the Spirit is to individuals; and, while producing necessary oneness of mind and heart, does not in any other way seem to imply the formation of a "body."

Yet that it was the baptism of the Spirit that was received at Pentecost, does not admit of question; and "by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." Thus the Church, the Body of Christ, came into being,—a body such as never had existed before. It was not proclaimed at its birth, however, nor for a good while afterwards. It was Christ that was proclaimed,—Christ come into the world, crucified by men, raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, ascended up to God, and now Lord and Christ, a Prince and Saviour, to give remission of sins. The present revelation opens gradually, developing out of Old Testament Scripture fulfilled, and as a message also to the people of the Old Testament; and only as it is seen that Israel will still refuse the grace of God, is there a widening of the sphere of the proclamation, and new characters begin to be assumed by the assembly. The present division does not go beyond the first form of the message.

1. Pentecost is named from its connection with the Sheaf of Firstfruits, being the fiftieth day from this which speaks of the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Upon this day two loaves of firstfruits, the beginning of the harvest, were offered to God. Their typical application is shown very clearly by the fact that they are baken with leaven, and therefore can represent nothing but men in that condition to which the fall has brought them, although the action of the leaven has been stopped by the fire,—that is, the holiness of God which has its effect in self-judgment. They are a "new meal-offering to the Lord," the fruit of, and in character akin to that "corn of wheat" which, that it might not abide alone, fell into the ground and died (John xii. 24); the presence of the leaven being

2 (5-13): Strange yet familiar utterances.

2. And there were [b]dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, reverent men, from every nation of those under heaven. Now this rumor* having come abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because each one heard them speak in his [c]own dialect. And they were

*R. V. with many reads, "when this sound was heard," but this is unnatural, and not required by the original.

b *cf.* Is. 2. 3. *cf.* Is. 49. 21, 22.

c *ctr.* Gen. 11. 1-9. *cf.* Jno. 19. 19, 20 with ch. 1. 8. *cf.* 1 Cor. 14. 11, etc.

met by a sin-offering, which is followed by two lambs for a peace-offering, with seven lambs, a bullock, and two rams, for a burnt-offering. There is adequate witness to peace accomplished, with a full realization of acceptance with God,—the work of Christ in its completeness for the soul. This, of course, does not give the Church in its unique character as that, but rather in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel which began with it; consequently, all the more in the character in which, in fact, we see it in the Acts. The "feast of weeks," as they called it, fulfils its typical significance, as Passover and the sheaf of first-fruits had fulfilled theirs.

Pentecost finds the disciples gathered once more together. In those days of expectancy, it seems to have been habitual with them, and not as if any premonition of what was to take place had brought them at this time. But suddenly there comes from heaven a sound rousing them all to instant attention. It is like that of a powerful sustained breathing: so I think the words should be understood; it is confessedly "blowing" or "breathing" rather than "wind" as in the ordinary versions; and the latter of these two words should have the preference. It is not a storm that can furnish us with the symbols here; and in consistency with this, "rushing" is better replaced with "sustained." The simple force is "carried on"; it is not intermittent, as breathing might otherwise be taken to be. The idea suggested is that of inspiring, animating agency, though beyond human,—a heavenly power; not fitful or (as we say) impulsive, but lifting and bearing on with divine energy. It is the "power from on high," which the Lord promised, that has manifested itself; and, as the savor of the ointment once poured upon Him at that time filled the house, so now the house is filled with that which is poured out upon those whom divine grace has identified with Christ risen and gone up to God. Upon Him when in the world the Spirit had come to abide, the testimony to Him who was not of the world; so now upon those not of the world, because chosen by Him out of it, yet sent into it as His representatives, the Spirit comes to abide. Upon Him it was the seal of His perfection; upon them it is the seal of their perfection in Him.

The sound is not alone; a light as of fire appears in the form of tongues parting themselves, which rest upon each one there; and they all, filled with the Spirit, begin to speak in the diverse languages into which sin has divided the tongues of men. Grace is pursuing man with its testimony wherever his sin has carried him; as a consuming fire to his sin, but as light for his darkness, and in love which testifies by those who, themselves once the servants of sin, now speak with tongues enfranchised and given utterance by the Holy Spirit.

For the Spirit in man, not occasionally merely, nor, as one may say, officially, but characteristically and abidingly, so that it may be pressed as a part of one's responsibility to "be filled with the Spirit," (Eph. v. 18,) is indeed the perfect witness of how grace has come in for us, and therefore of the value before God of Christ's precious work. This is what we have insisted on in the Acts, rather than the doctrine—any doctrine—of the Church of God. This is the key to the missionary activity which so pervades it, as the coming into the realization of it from out of legal shadow makes it the New Testament Exodus. The height of Christian position we must wait for in Paul; for to him is the administration of the mystery committed.

2. The great word, as we see now, is testimony. The gift of tongues is prominent from the first; and this it is that attracts the multitude. It was indeed a

all amazed and wondered, saying, Behold, are not all these that speak [d]Galileans? and how hear we them, each in our own dialect in which we were born? [e]Parthians and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, both Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, both Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya beside Cyrene, and sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, we hear them speak in our tongues the [f]great things of God. And they were all [g]amazed and in perplexity, saying one to another, What may this be? But others, mocking, said, They are full of new [h]wine.

3 (14-36): The proclamation of Christ risen and glorified.

3. But [i]Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and spake out to them, Men of Judea and inhabitants of Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. For these are not full* of wine, as ye suppose, for it is (but) the [j]third hour of the day; but this is that which was spoken through the prophet [k]Joel: And it shall be in the [l]last days, saith God, that I will pour out of my Spirit upon [m]all flesh: and your

* Drunken.

d ch. 1. 11. *cf.* ch. 4.13.
e *cf.* Rev.5.9. *cf.* Rev.7.9.
f *cf.* ch.10.36 –42.
g ver. 7. *cf.* ver. 43.
h *cf.* ch. 17. 32. *cf.*ch.26.24, 25. *cf.* Eph. 5. 18.
i *cf.* ch.3.12. *cf.* ch. 10. 5. *cfr.*Jno.18. 25-27. *cf.*Matt.16. 19.
j *cf.*1 Thess. 5. 7. *cf.* Eccl.10. 16, 17.
k Joel 2. 28-32. *cf.*Is. 32.15. *cf.*Ezek.39. 29. *cf.*Zech.12. 10.
l *cf.* Is. 2. 2. *cf.*Num.24. 14-25.
m *cf.* Is. 40. 5; *cf.* Jer. 31. 33, 34; *cf.* Is. 54. 13.

new thing in Israel, and its significance is at once manifest. Tongues were not needed for Jews in Palestine. The gift said at once, "Here is something to go forth." The scattering of the Jews, the privileged possessors of a revelation from God, was in His providence a preparation for the evangelization of the nations, and had, as we find abundantly in the Acts itself, been the scattering of seed widely among them. The Hellenistic Jews, with whom we shall soon be brought in contact, had taken up with some earnestness, if with less intelligence, the questions arising from their necessary relations with the paganism around. But, although there were thus many proselytes, yet there could not be said to exist any true missionary spirit, and the temper of the stricter Jews towards those who turned to them from the idolatry on all sides was not encouraging. Now had come the breath of change; and a new message must come with the new spirit. God was claiming His creatures, far as they might have wandered from Him; the miraculous gift was at once a trumpet to call the mass together, and a means of reaching personally all who should come.

There is no need for noticing the strange and differing versions that have been given by interpreters of what, though a miracle, is so simple a fact. It is plain that this crowd of people of many languages heard these men who were evidently Galileans speaking in these tongues. The miracle, as one of old remarked, was with those that spoke, not with those that heard; and therefore they were real languages the speakers used. Not even the "great things of God" that they heard them utter seem to have made such an impression upon the multitude, as this wonder of their use of unfamiliar speech. The Jews, unacquainted with these dialects, mocked the disciples as men who were drunken with new wine; but the rest marvelled.

3. It is specially to these uncomprehending ones, men of Judea and inhabitants of Jerusalem, that Peter, standing up with the eleven, addresses himself in explanation. They were, in fact, the guilty ones to whom yet, first of all, the gospel was to be preached. He gravely remonstrates against their groundless thought, of men being drunk so early in the day. The third hour of the day was that of the daily sacrifice, the custom prevailing being to abstain from food and drink, specially upon the feast-days, until this was offered. This is only a means, however, of gaining the hearing that he seeks: for explanation of what

sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; moreover upon my bondmen and upon my bondwomen will I pour out of my Spirit in those days, and they shall [n]prophesy. And I will show [o]wonders in heaven above and signs on the earth beneath; blood and fire and vapor of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the [p]great and glorious day of [the] Lord come. And it shall be that [q]whosoever shall call on the name of [the] Lord shall be saved. Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus the [r]Nazarene, a man [s]pointed out of God to you by mighty works and wonders and signs, which God wrought by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves [t]know: him, delivered by the determinate [u]counsel and foreknowl-

n *cf.* ch. 10. 44-46. *cf.* ch. 11. 28. *cf.* ch. 21. 9, 10.
o *cf.* Matt. 24. 29. *cf.* Rev. 6. 12-17.
p *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 2. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 2-12. *cf.* Is. 13. 9-11. *cf.* Mal. 3. 2 with Mal. 4. 1-3. *cfr.* Rev. 3. 10.
q Rom. 10. 13. *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 2.
r *cf.* ch. 3. 6. *cf.* Jno. 1. 45, 46. s *cf.* Matt. 3. 17 with ch. 10. 38; *cf.* Jno. 3. 2; *cf.* Jno. 5. 36. t *cf.* Jno. 11. 47. *cf.* Jno. 12. 37-40. u *cf.* Matt. 26. 24; *cf.* ch. 4. 28; *cf.* ch. 13. 27.

was taking place he refers them to their own scriptures. Joel had spoken of an outpouring of the Spirit in the last days which would affect young and old, men and women, after this manner. The apostle cannot mean indeed that this is the proper fulfilment of this prophecy, which speaks definitely of what shall take place after Israel's deliverance, when Jehovah should be openly dwelling in the midst of her, as now too surely He was not. But what if already these things which they were witness of were the premonitory signs of the incoming of those last days? We have only to remember that the time of the restoration of the kingdom to Israel had been a matter of enquiry on the part of the disciples with their risen Lord, and that He had definitely refused them satisfaction. Peter could not then say that the days of Joel were upon them. Yet he could warn them that such times were coming, which, with all their blessing, involved antecedently the "great and glorious day of the Lord," which for man's sin would not be light for all, but might be darkness (Amos v. 18). And he reminds them of the darkening of sun and moon that would precede it: what if already the things they witnessed might be signs of this great day? By and by we shall find a definite promise given that, if there were nationally repentance and the reception of Him whom they had crucified, He would return, and bring in that time. Plainly, then, as far as Peter knew, it might not be far away; and it was in the mind of God that Israel should thus have the offer of all that He had promised, without any drawback to the mercy so declared.

But Joel had added the necessary condition of salvation in the trial of those days:—a condition which could hardly be called one indeed, so naturally would it be the resource in trial to "call upon the Name of the Lord," (that is, "of Jehovah.") Yet even here, alas, might the unbelief of man make this a stumbling-block over which to fall and perish: for, in fact, Jehovah had come to them already, and they had rejected Him!

From this point, then, Peter begins to preach to them Jesus. He does not shun the title of Nazarene which was such an offence to them. Had not God borne witness to Him by mighty works and signs, which He wrought by Him in their very midst? Could they deny it?—an unbribed witness, surely.

What then had been the issue? They, the men of law, had used the hands of lawless men—of the Gentiles, to crucify and slay Him. That might seem, at least, the effectual disproof of His claims; nay, nothing had been accomplished but what had its place in the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God by which He had been delivered up; all man's attempts would indeed have been futile, apart from this!

Spite of the Cross, God had shown His estimate of Him by resurrection from the dead. The Firstfruits from the dead, He had broken bands which yet had

edge of God, ye, by the hands of [u]lawless men, have crucified and slain. Whom God hath [v]raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not [w]possible that he should be held by it. For [x]David saith regarding him, I saw the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, that I should not be [y]moved. Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my [a]tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall dwell* in [b]hope: because thou wilt not leave my soul in [c]hades; thou wilt not suffer thy pious one to see [d]corruption. Thou hast made known to me the paths of [e]life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy counte-

*Literally, "tabernacle."

cf. Ps. 40. 13-17. *a cf.* Ps. 40. 1-3; *cf.* Heb. 2. 12. *b cf.* Jno. 16. 20-22; *cf.* Rom. 4. 18. *c* ver. 31; *cf.* Ps. 30. 3; *cf.* Ps. 102. 23-28; *cf.* Ps. 21. 1-4. *d* ch. 13. 35; *ctr.* Gen. 3. 19; *ctr.* Job 7. 9; *ctr.* 1 Cor. 15. 42. *e cf.* Rom. 6. 9; *cf.* Rev. 1. 18.

u cf. Jno.19. 11-16. *cf.* ch. 3.13. 14.
v cf. 1 Cor. 15. 4. *cf.* Rom. 4. 25. *cf* Rom.6.4. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 21.
x cf. Lk. 24. 5, 6. *cf.* John 10. 18. *cf.* Rev. 1. 18.
y Ps. 16. 8-11. *cf.*ch.13.34.
z cf. Is.50. 8, 9.

released no one besides after this manner. Others had been indeed raised up, but at last to return again and moulder in the dust to which man is sentenced. Not so with Him: it was not possible for Him to be held by it.

Peter cites their scriptures in proof of this; and as sufficient witness, David, of whose line Messiah was to come: in the sixteenth psalm, David, though speaking in the first person, speaks evidently of Another than himself, who, perfect in a perfect pathway, Jehovah always before Him, always therefore for Him, gave unwavering steadfastness to all His steps. It was a pathway of life, therefore, even though it led through death; in which His flesh dwelt in confident hope, that He would not abandon His soul to hades, nor suffer piety such as His to see corruption. Beyond, the face of God was the brightness before Him. Of David himself certainly, all this could not be said. Not to him could this perfection be ascribed; and his monument amongst them showed him to have seen corruption, like all others. Not of himself, then, did he speak; and there was but One of whom it could be spoken. As a prophet he looked forward to Him whom God had sworn, as the fruit of his loins, to set upon his throne, King of the final Kingdom; final, because perfect, as necessary in the perfection which He manifests here.

But David's throne, would the Jew have argued, where is David's throne today? Did He take it? Is He filling it,—the Nazarene? And Peter could never have replied, as so many since have done for him, that the throne of heaven was, as the greater, inclusive of the less! No, his argument is a very different one. He has been in death, as this perfect One was to be; He has come up out of it, His flesh even not having seen corruption. That God has raised Him up, all the disciples there were witnesses. But more, the Spirit with its tongues of fire was His witness. "Being by the right hand of God exalted," says the apostle, "and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured out this which ye now see and hear."

But that is not the argument: he is coming to it; and again he draws from David's arsenal. The weapon is one with which the Lord has before met and silenced the scribes; now it is to do the happier work of bringing the unbelieving to the faith of the gospel. David has shown, he would let them know, that there was to be for that Son whom he owns to be his Lord, a time of waiting for the Kingdom, with enemies opposing. He shows also that this waiting time would be while He was personally exalted at the right hand of God. "Jehovah said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thy foes the footstool for Thy feet." Thus the pause before the taking of David's throne is itself a proof of the Messiahship of Jesus, instead of being an argument against it; and David himself it is who testifies to this.

Thus His enemies are to be put down, and those who call upon Jehovah's

nance. Brethren, I may speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both [f]dead and buried, and his monument is with us unto this day. Therefore, being a [g]prophet, and knowing that God had sworn to him with an oath that of the [h]fruit of his loins one should sit upon his throne, he, [i]seeing (this) before, spake of the [j]resurrection of Christ, that he was not left in hades, neither did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are [k]witnesses. Therefore, being by* the right hand of God [l]exalted, and having received from the Father the [m]promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath [n]poured out this which *ye* behold and hear. For [o]David hath not ascended into the heavens; but he saith himself, [p]The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my [q]right hand until I put thy foes for the [r]footstool of thy feet. Therefore let all the [s]house of Israel know assuredly that God hath [t]made him, this Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

4 (37-40): Mercy for Israel yet.

4. Now, when they heard this, they were [u]pricked in heart, and said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Brethren, [v]what shall we do? And Peter said unto

*Or, "at."

f ch. 13. 36. 1 Ki. 2. 1, 10. *cf.* Neh. 3. 16. *cf.* Zech. 1. 5.
g cf. 2 Sam. 23. 2. *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 21. *cf.* Ps. 22. 1, etc. with 1 Pet. 1. 10, 11.
h cf. Ps. 89. 3, 4. *cf.* 2 Sam. 7. 12-17. *cf.* Rom. 1. 3. *cf.* Ps. 132. 11.
i cf. Ps. 72. 1, 17, 20.
j cf. Ps. 40. 1-3. *cf.* Ps. 110. 1.
k ch. 4. 33.
l cf. ch. 3. 13. *cf.* Phil. 2. 9-11.
m cf. ch. 1. 4 with Jno. 14. 16, 17, 26.
n ver. 17. *cf.* Tit. 3. 5, 6.
o cf. Prov. 30. 4. *cf.* Jno. 3. 13.
p Ps. 110. 1.
q cf. Heb. 1. 3; *cf.* Eph. 1. 20, 21.
r cf. Heb. 2. 8, 9; *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 25-28.
s ver. 22; *cf.* ch. 3. 25, 26; *cf.* ch. 13. 26, 46.
t cf. Ps. 45. 3-8; *cf.* Is. 53. 12.
u cf. Gen. 42. 21; *cf.* Zech. 12. 10; *cf.* ch. 7. 54.
v cf. Lk. 3. 10-14; *cf.* ch. 22. 10. *cf.* ch. 16. 30, 31.

Name and find salvation in the last days must accept as Saviour Him whom Israel has rejected: for, "let all the house of Israel know assuredly," concludes the apostle, "that God has made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

4. The proof is conclusive, and the arrow of conviction is winged by the Spirit to the hearts of the listeners there. "Brethren," they cry out in alarm, "what shall we do?" And the grace that meets them is full and immediate. Let them in true repentance give up their sinful opposition to the Christ of God, and be baptized, each one, in dependence on the name of Jesus, for the remission of sins, and they should themselves receive the gift of the Holy Spirit; for the promise was to them and to their children, and to those afar off, even as many as the Lord (Jehovah) their God should call. But we must look at this more particularly.

In the Lord's commission to His disciples, as we have it in Luke's Gospel, repentance and remission of sins are to be preached in the Name of the risen Christ to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem. This is accordingly what we find here,—repentance and remission of sins; though with an addition which has to be taken into account.

The Name of Jesus Christ has been proclaimed by the apostle to the sinners of Jerusalem; faith in that Name, if real, will of necessity produce repentance in the hearts of His rejectors hitherto. What a discovery of the state of man is the cross which he has given to the Christ of God! "Pricked in the heart" they may well be; but the apostle declares the mercy of God as pledging itself to those who, undoing their former rejection, take their place now as loyal subjects of the Crucified One. As the open sign of this, they must be "baptized in dependence on the Name of Jesus Christ:" baptism being the authoritative way of discipling (Matt. xxviii. 19), and His Kingdom being a Kingdom of truth (Jno. xviii. 37). Peter is using thus the two keys of the Kingdom (Matt. xvi. 19; *see the notes*).

them, [w]Repent, and be [x]baptized, each one of you, in dependence on* the name of Jesus Christ, for the [y]remission of sins, and ye shall receive the [z]gift of the Holy Spirit. For the [a]promise is for you and for your [b]children, and for all who are [c]afar off, as many as [the]

*It is not "in" the name, as generally translated, but "on" (ἐπί). One may say, "on account of," but it is feeble, and the word is used as given above. The Name of Christ gives character and motive to the baptism.

w Lk. 24.47. ch. 3. 19. ch. 20. 21. *cf.* Ps.51.3,5.
x *cf.* Matt. 28. 19. *cf.* ch.22.16. *cf.* Gal.3.27, 28.
y *cf.* Jno. 20. 23. *cf.* Rom.10. 9. *cf.* Rom. 6.
3, 4. z *cf.* ch. 5. 32; *cf.* ch. 10. 44, 45; *cf.* Eph. 1. 13. a *cf.* vers. 17, etc; *cf.* ch. 19. 2-6. b *cf.* Is. 54. 13; *cf.* ch. 16. 31. c *cf.* ch. 11. 15-18; *cf.* ch. 1. 8; *cf.* Is. 49. 1.

The connection of baptism with the remission of sins is a difficulty with many. It has been so much abused in the interests of sacramentalism, that it is no wonder if the very allowance of *any* connection should be abhorrent to those who, rightly refusing the mediatorship of sinful men between the soul and God, identify such a thought with any connection of the kind. But it is not faith to be afraid of Scripture; and, in some sense, Scripture *does* make baptism, not a prerequisite to the washing away of sins, but the actual doing of this. If Peter here bids his hearers be baptized for the remission of sins, Ananias clinches the two things together in his words to Saul of Tarsus: "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the Name of the Lord." It is not the place yet to examine this particularly, but it cannot fairly be denied that the washing away of sins of which he speaks is put as the effect of baptism. If we are to meet Romanism effectually, we must frankly own the truth that is in it. It is not possible to maintain the ground that here a remission of sins *by men* is not intended. Did not the Lord, in fact, say to His disciples, "Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them"? He certainly did. To be able to illustrate this by the example of baptism cannot surely endanger the gospel with those who know it. Nor can any limiting the power to remit sins to the apostles avail to alter the conditions of the case. We can only affirm that the question of the Jews, in the sense in which they made it, is simply unanswerable: "Who *can* forgive sin, but God alone?" We must answer: As before God, none! He does not give His glory to another.

On the other hand, to apply a text like this to the preaching of the gospel, as if this were the power of the keys, as is so often done among Protestants, is to weaken the cause which it is intended to defend. Whose sins do *I* remit, when I preach the gospel? Clearly, none! And it is just here, where the question is of sins being put away from before God, that it is utterly impossible for men to do anything. Neither baptism nor anything else that can be done by man, can cleanse a soul for heaven; nor has it to do with admission there at all, but with discipleship, and therefore with the earth, and not with the heaven. It does not even admit into the Church; for there another baptism, that of the Spirit, perfectly distinct from it, takes its place, as we have seen. He who as Creator has given everything its place from the beginning does not override this, and confound all our thoughts by making matter do the work of Spirit, any more than He puts man into His own place. We must keep these lines clear, or everything falls into confusion. But there is a sphere of things on earth, which is in a peculiar way that of His interests, in which He has put man in responsibility to have things after His own mind, and where therefore a certain authority is necessarily committed to him. Here things are to be kept clean for Him; and therefore he must be able to pronounce within fixed limits between clean and unclean; therefore to cleanse *for that sphere*. Admission to fellowship or readmission after the suspension of this, these are examples with which we are all familiar. Baptism for the remission of sins is not difficult to understand in this way,—an authoritative, governmental remission, which testified on God's part to a soul His disposition towards it, if, on its side, there were no dishonesty of heart, but truthful response to the divine approach to it.

Lord our God shall [d]call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort them, saying, Be saved* from this [e]perverse generation.

5 (41-47): Results

5. Those, therefore, who [f]received his word were baptized; and in that day there were added about [g]three thousand souls. And they persevered in the apostles' [h]doctrine and [i]fellowship, in the [j]breaking of bread and [k]prayers. And [l]fear came on every soul, and many [m]wonders and signs took place through the apostles.

d *cf.* ch. 13. 48. *cf.* Rom. 9. 23-26.
e *cf.* Matt. 3. 7. *cf.* ch. 7. 51.
f *cf.* ch. 17. 11, 12. *ctr.* Jno. 1. 11.
g *cf.* ch. 1. 15. *cf.* Jno. 12. 24. *cf.* Jno. 14. 12.

* Or, "save yourselves."

h cf. 2 Tim. 3. 14; *cf.* Col. 3. 16. *i cf.* 1 John 1. 3. *j cf.* ch. 20. 7; *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 23-29. *k cf.* ch. 3. 1. *cf.* ch. 6. 4. *l cf.* Heb. 12. 28; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 17-19. *m* ch. 5. 12-16.

The Gift of the Holy Spirit is promised to every one who turns to God after this manner in true subjection to Jesus Christ as Lord. We must, of course, distinguish this one Gift common to all from the various "gifts" (*charismata*,—a different word) which were imparted variously. These will come to be considered in another place. Where the Spirit is, the gifts of the Spirit will, more or less, be found. The one is the Source; the other the stream; and, amid the changing forms of the latter, the fundamental Gift, without which is no Christianity, abides the same.

The apostle closes with assuring them of Israel's interest in the blessing, even though it had a wider range, as Joel had declared as to the day of which he spoke. The promise, he tells them, is for you and for your children; but beyond these, for all that are afar off,—the Gentiles; yet not as claim; even Israel could have no claim; it depended for all entirely upon the call of God's grace: "to as many," he adds, "as the Lord (that is, Jehovah) our God shall call."

We shall have to notice in its place that, when we come to the reception of the Spirit on the part of the Gentiles, the insistence upon baptism as a condition drops. God takes things into His own hands, as one may say, and the Spirit falls upon Cornelius and those with him while they are yet listening to Peter's address, and before ever a hint of baptism has been given. Saul of Tarsus, again, is baptized first, and so are the disciples of John at Ephesus. In the case of the Samaritans, again, even when they have been baptized there is still delay; and they have to receive the Spirit from the apostles' hands. Thus the order of reception is conditioned upon the persons: for the Jews who had openly rejected the Lord, baptism is always a pre-requisite; they must openly own Him whom they had disowned. The varying order, but above all, the entire setting aside of ordinances in the case of the Gentiles (which is our own case, for the most part now,) at once destroys the ritualistic teaching as to baptism. According to this, Cornelius must have received the Spirit while in an unregenerate condition! for he had not yet received the "sacrament of regeneration." Thus do the simple facts of history of themselves refute the whole system of error. Scripture is in all its parts prophetic; and the wisdom of God has given ample warning against the inroads of evil, for those who have hearts open to receive instruction. We shall see this more and more, as we go on with the inspired writer.

"With many other words," he adds, "did (Peter) testify, and exhort them, saying, Be saved from this perverse generation."

5. God is at work, and the harvest is large and immediate: three thousand souls in one day! Nor was this temporary emotion; but the effects were permanent as they were deep. "They persevered in the apostles' teaching and fellowship,—in the breaking of bread and prayers." In this enumeration, that to which they owed all—the teaching—comes necessarily first, as the root of all the rest. Here was what gave them their fellowship; it was in the truth: participation in that drew them together. They had nothing of the poet's liberalism,—"for forms of faith let graceless zealots fight;"—grace had come to them in inseparable companionship with truth, which they found not in the world,

And all that believed were [n]together, and had all things [o]common, and [p]sold their possessions and goods, and distributed them to all, according as any one had [q]need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the [r]temple, and [s]breaking bread at* home, received [their] food with [t]gladness and singleness of heart, [u]praising God, and having [v]favor with all the people; and day by day the Lord [w]added together those being saved.

*This may be rendered, "from house to house."

n cf. ch. 4. 23. *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 13.
o cf. ch. 4. 32-35. *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 17, 18 with 2 Thess. 3. 1-12.
p cf. Lk. 12. 33. *cfr.* Lk. 18. 22 with 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15.
q cf. Eph. 4. 28.
r cf. ch. 3. 1.
s ver. 42; *cf.* Heb. 13. 10-13.
t cf. Neh. 8. 10-12; *cf.* Eccl. 9. 7.
u cf. Eph. 5. 18-20.
v ch. 5. 13; *cf.* Prov. 16. 7; *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 12-16.
w ch. 5. 14; *cf.* ch. 9. 31 *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 4, 5; *cf.* Rom. 15. 7.

but which had exposed the world and set them apart from it to Him whom the world had crucified and by whose cross they were crucified to it. Of the Church they knew little yet; but they had found Christ; and the force of that irresistible attraction which drew them as to a common centre, drew them to one another. The Church began as the spiritual creation of that Spirit which had come to bear witness of Christ; and it knew Him before as yet it had learned to know itself.

These things find illustration in that which follows next,—"the breaking of bread,"—which from its first application to a common meal, we see here set apart to its sacred use in reference to that which the Lord had instituted for a remembrance of Himself. It is strange that any should dispute this application in the place before us, where certainly we are not meant to understand that the disciples "persevered" in partaking of food, nor in coming together for this, (which they never did,) nor in the "love-feasts," of which we read in Jude, but which were not an institution of Christ at all, and probably a later practice. The preliminary meal, of which the disciples had partaken with their Lord before the Last Supper, was the passover, which could not be thought of in this connection. And if, as is very probable, it was at the end of a common meal that they remembered the Lord's death, there could be no reason for so unlikely a thing, and so repulsive to the warm Christian hearts of those who are here spoken of, as naming the meal with which the Supper was associated, while forgetting that which alone made it worthy of mention.

The breaking of bread, in the mention thus made of it, shows the Lord as the Centre of His people, the Object before them, the Sustenance of their true life, the Effecter of their communion with one another: this realized in that precious Death, passed for ever, yet ever abiding in that which it has wrought and that which it has displayed. Lastly, prayer manifests the sense of constant need which the nearer we are to God is always the more realized.

The effect upon the outside multitude was that of fear; signs and wonders being continually wrought by the apostles as the special witnesses to the Risen Saviour. The people in the mass seemed with them, as in His early life with the Lord Himself. They were, in fact, at present in that border land, so hopeful, yet so unsafe, which will presently empty itself either into the fixed abodes of conviction and faith, or with more likelihood, into the seats of alienation and rejection.

Among those who believed was manifested a unity of heart and interest, in which the natural selfishness of the fallen condition was swallowed up in the fulness of a love which the sense of divine love had begotten. They were together in such sort that all they had was held in common; not by any law or outward constraint, which would have spoiled it all, but in the consciousness of what they were all to Christ, and what Christ was to each and all of them. Enriched by Him with a blessing which nothing could diminish, but the more they ministered it, the more they had it, "they sold their possessions and goods, and

SUBDIVISION 4. (Chaps. iii., iv.)

The Testing of the Nation.

1 (iii. 1-11): The power of Jesus' Name.

1. NOW Peter and John were going up into the [x] temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. And a certain man, [y] lame from his mother's womb, was being carried, whom they placed daily at the temple gate which is called [z] Beautiful, to ask [a] alms of those who went into the temple; who, seeing Peter and John about to enter into the temple, asked an alms. But Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, [b] Silver and gold have I not; but what I have I give thee:

x ch. 2. 46. cf. Lk. 24. 53. ctr. ch. 21. 26-30.
y cf. ch. 14. 8. cf. Jno. 5. 5. cf. Rom. 8. 3. cf. Heb. 7. 18, 19.
z cf. He. 10. 1.
a cf. Jno. 9. 8. cf. Lk. 18. 35. ctr. Rom. 8. 32. ctr. 1 Cor. 3. 21-23.
b cf. 2 Cor. 6. 10. cf. 1 Cor. 4. 11-13. cf. Phil. 4. 11-13.

distributed them to all, as any one had need." So by more than miracles was the power of the Spirit displayed among them. As for the rest, they were in their own consciousness but a remnant of Israel who had received Messiah. And though by the indwelling of the Spirit the House of God after a new manner had begun upon earth, yet their daily resort was still to the temple; and this was in the love that still waited upon His ancient people, permitted and used of God for testimony to the nation. But the temple after all was not where they could enjoy what was peculiar to themselves. The bread in which they remembered what had made all new to them was broken at home. In spite of the ambiguity of the expression, and the reference to the ordinary meal which follows it here, this is the most natural application of the breaking of bread in this place also. There seems scarcely need to tell us that they ate their meals at home! and to refer it, as has been done, to their having no longer part in the peace-offering or other sacrifices, has everything against it, at so early a date as this. Long afterwards we hear that the many thousands of the Jews who believed were all zealous of the law; and Paul even is persuaded to enter purified into the temple with men who were distinctly to have an offering offered for every one of them (chap. xxi. 20, 26). It is vain, therefore, to seek to transfer these new-made Christians to a later time than that to which we have, in fact, arrived. God bore long with the continuance of that which had been His own institution, and it would be many years before the epistle to the Hebrews would be written. The statement here seems certainly to have its only proper application to the Lord's Supper, while it would be not unsuited in such connection to speak of how even the common meals were taken with the gladness which the Christian feast had communicated to them.

Thus the happy days went on; and day by day the Lord added together those that were being saved. Israel would not yet turn to the light vouchsafed her; but a remnant were being marked off, in which would be found the nucleus of a new testimony: to the principalities and powers in heavenly places was to be made known in the Church the manifold wisdom of God.

SUBD. 4.

We are now to see the testing of the nation by the offer of divine grace to it as a whole,—the distinct promise that, even yet, if they will now repent and receive Him, Jesus, though in heaven, will return, and the blessing prophesied for them shall be fulfilled. The commission already given as to the Gentiles lies, therefore, still in abeyance, because the question of relation between Jew and Gentile in the new condition introduced will be affected by the answer given to such an offer. The hostility of the leaders is apparent from the outset; but that which ends hope is that the people as a whole more and more identify themselves with the position of the leaders; and by and by it is from the Jewish element that even in far-off cities the bitterest opposition comes to be found.

in the [c]name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles became strong, and [d]leaping up he stood and [e]walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping, and [f]praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God; and they recognized him that it was he who sat for alms at the beautiful gate of the temple, and they were filled with [g]wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. And, as he held fast to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.

[c] ch. 4. 7-10. ver. 16. *cf.* ch. 16. 18.
[d] ch. 14. 10. *cf.* ch. 16. 24, 34. *cf.* Is. 35. 6. *cf.* ch. 10. 44.
[e] *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 12. *cf.* Gal. 5. 25. *ctr.* Matt. 13. 20, 21.
[f] *cf.* Lk. 18. 43. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 9.
[g] ch. 2. 12.

2 (iii. 12-16): Conviction as to the denial and death of Jesus.

2 And Peter seeing it, answered to the people, Men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so intently upon us, as if by our [h]own power or piety we had made him walk? The God of Abraham, and of

[h] *cf.* Gen. 41. 16. *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 9. *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 6, 7.

This is specially roused by the reception of the Gentiles on equal terms with Jews, by which, of course, these forfeit the exclusive privileges they have really so little valued. But this does not fall to be considered yet.

1. A man, lame from his birth, was accustomed to be carried and laid down at the temple gate which was called Beautiful, to solicit alms from those who went into the temple. He cannot but remind us of the similarly impotent man at the pool of Bethesda upon whom the Lord Himself works a like miracle of healing; and as in that case, we cannot but see here the condition of the nation, impotent at a door which impotence could not enter. The dwelling place of God, however nigh, and however beautiful the approach to it might be, was powerless for blessing, and indeed now vacant,—a seemly formalism only. They praised the gate indeed by which none really entered, great as might be the throng of worshipers, into the presence of God. The beggarly, maimed condition, for those who had eyes to see, characterized all who sought that way of approach.

It is in the consciousness of such a state that the power of the Name of Jesus makes itself known. At the ninth hour, being the third hour of prayer, the hour of the evening sacrifice,—the time when the answer to Daniel was vouchsafed, God manifests Himself in answer to that Name by Peter, who with John is going up still among those of whom they are not. Poor in that world in which his Lord had become poor, he has in the One despised by Israel as the Nazarene the secret of a power still available to them, if like the beggar they will but ask an alms. First lifted, he then leaps up and stands, and now enters into the temple a true worshiper. How simple and natural a picture of such an one, to whom, released from his life-bondage, every movement is a new joy, a leap of the heart to God. The people recognize with amazement this transformation from impotence to exuberant life, and seeing the man holding Peter and John, run to them in the porch called Solomon's, greatly wondering. Sad reminder of that ruin, from which they would fain believe they have emerged! well will it be if they let this preach to them their need of a Saviour, while they listen to the assurance that He indeed is come.

2. But this involves the story of their sin, which is charged home upon them. They need not look so earnestly on *them*, (the apostles say,) as if by power of their own, or by reason of their great piety, they had made the man to walk. No, it was the God of their fathers,—of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, from whom they had wandered so far as to be unconscious of His doings, who had acted for the glory of His Servant Jesus whom they had delivered up and even forced His condemnation at the hands of the Gentile governor, when *he* had

Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath [e]glorified his Servant* Jesus; whom *ye* delivered up, and [f]denied him in the presence of Pilate, when *he* had adjudged to [k]release [him]. But *ye* denied the Holy and Righteous One, and demanded a [l]murderer to be granted unto you, and [m]killed the Author of life; whom God hath [n]raised from among the dead, whereof we are [o]witnesses. And his name, through [p]faith in his name, hath made this man strong, whom ye behold and know; even faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

3 (iii.17–26): Yet He may return and the restitution of all things be fulfilled.

3. And now, brethren, I know that ye did it in [q]ignorance, as also your rulers; but God hath thus [r]fulfilled the things which he had fore-announced by the mouth of all the [s]prophets that his Christ should suffer. [t]Repent therefore, and be† converted, that your [u]sins may be blotted out; so that [v]times of refreshing may

*Greek παις, household servant, not δουλος, bondman.

†Or, "turn again."

e *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 21. *cf.* Matt. 28. 18. *cf.* Jno. 2. 11.
f *cf.* Lk. 23. 5. *ctr.* Matt. 26. 70. *cf.* Gal. 1. 23.
k *cf.* Matt. 27. 24.
l *cf.* Lk. 23. 13–25. *cf.* Jno. 5. 43. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 8–12.
m ch. 2. 23. Acts 7. 52. *cf.* Jno. 10. 18.
n ch. 2. 24.
o ch. 4. 33.
p *cf.* ch. 14. 9. *cf.* ch. 15. 9. *cf.* Mk. 9. 23, 24.
q *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 8. *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 13. *ctr.* Matt. 21. 38; *cf.* Lk. 23. 34; *cf.* Rom. 11. 25–27.
r *cf.* ch. 13. 27; *cf.* Matt. 26. 54, 56; *cf.* Lk. 24. 46.
s *cf.* Is. 53; *cf.* Ps. 22; *cf.* Zech. 13. 7; ch. 17. 3; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 11, 12.
t ch. 2. 38; Lk. 24. 46, 47.
u *cf.* Is. 43. 25; *cf.* Jer. 33. 8; *cf.* Ps. 85. 1, 2.
v *cf.* Ps. 65. 12, 13; *cf.* Ps. 72. 6; *cf.* Hos. 6. 1–3; *cf.* Zech. 10. 1; *cf.* Is. 35. 1, 2.

given judgment in His favor. They had chosen instead of the Author of life, a murderer! but God had raised Him from the dead; and His Name, through faith in it, had wrought this miracle.

3. Hopeless indeed might their condition seem who had killed the Author of life! That which was their fundamental need they had put from them in a manner seeming to forbid all hope. As the Servant of God, He had come to minister to them, and they had struck down the ministering Hand. The Gentile would have saved whom the Jew put to death: Him whom they knew as the Holy and Righteous, and from whom mercy flowed out still, as it had flowed out in His life.

But the City of Refuge stood open still, as now divine grace assured them. As at the cross He had prayed for them as ignorantly doing what yet they had so heartily done, so now the apostle grounds still upon their ignorance, as the only possible argument in their behalf, an offer once again of mercy. God too had overruled for the accomplishment of His determinate purposes of good this wickedness itself. Messiah needs must suffer; and this suffering is of grace on His part. Grace then can manifest itself by its means. Did they repent now, nationally, and turn to God, not only would their sins be blotted out, but the presence of Jehovah would be again manifested in their midst, the unfailing sign of the Spirit's renewing influence, and He would send once more their appointed Messiah,—Jesus. Not till His return from heaven would come the long expected blessing for the earth, the time to which all prophets have ever been looking forward,—times of restoration physical as well as spiritual. These cannot be, then, while Israel is still in unbelief; and the long season that has elapsed since the offer made to them by the apostle here has been but a time of suspension of the earthly promises. God has, however, in the meanwhile been revealing and carrying into effect other purposes, and of fuller, higher blessing, —of grace therefore more wondrous, the unfolding of which we shall see gradually beginning, as soon as it is clear that Israel as a nation is still going to reject the grace yet being extended towards her, with the full testimony of the Spirit also, to make it good. In what is here before us, the trial is now upon her, and our eyes are directed to the result of this.

The apostle goes on to show the emphatic witness of Moses himself to Christ.

come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may [w]send the Christ fore-ordained to you, Jesus; * whom heaven must indeed receive [x]until the times of restitution of all things, of which God hath [y]spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets since time began. Moses indeed said, A [z]Prophet shall [the] Lord your God raise up unto you from among your brethren like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you: and it shall be that every soul that shall not hear that prophet shall be [a]destroyed from among the people. And indeed [b]all the prophets, from Samuel and those following, as many as have spoken, have announced also these days. Ye are the [c]sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God appointed to our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy [d]seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. To you [e]first, God, having raised up his Servant, sent him to bless you, in [f]turning every one of you from his iniquities.

4 (iv. 1-22): The failure under test.

4. But while they were speaking to the people, the [g]priests and the captain of the temple, and the Saddu-

w cf. ch. 1. 11. cf. Ps. 96. 12, 13.
x cf. Ps. 110. 1. cf. Hos. 5. 15.
y cf. Is. 1. 25, 26. cf. Jer. 23. 5-8.
z Deut. 18. 15-19. cf. Lk. 24. 19. ch. 7. 37.
a cf. Jno. 16. 9. cf. ch. 13. 41.
b cf. 1 Sam. 15. 26-28. cf. 2 Pet. 1. 19.
c cf. Matt. 23. 31. cf. Rom. 9. 4, 5.
d Gen. 12. 3. Gen. 22. 18.
e cf. Lk. 24. 47. cf. ch. 13. 46. cf. Ro. 1. 16.
f cf. Matt. 1. 21. cf. Is. 59. 20.
g cf. Matt. 27. 1.

* Or, "Christ Jesus fore-ordained for you."

A Prophet like to himself he had declared that Jehovah would raise up to them: One whose authority he strongly affirms; not a mere expounder of what had been spoken before, but the Originator of a new dispensation, as was Moses, and necessarily, therefore, in advance of that which he had inaugurated. In the passage in Deuteronomy from which Peter quotes, it is after the inability of the people to draw nigh to God has been demonstrated, and the Lord has acquiesced in their own statement of it,—"They have well said that which they have spoken," —that He declares that He will raise up to them a new Prophet. Had Moses sufficed, there would not have needed to be another; but the Law must necessarily fail to bring nigh to God. "There shall no man see Me and live" had been His word to the lawgiver himself; and the veil before the holiest bore witness to it throughout the dispensation. But in this failure all fails for man's blessing; and on this account, as the apostle tells us, God finds fault with the law. There must be, then, another Prophet and a different message. If He be heard, then there opens for the recipient of it that otherwise inaccessible way to God; while, if He be not heard, there is indeed no remedy: "every soul that shall not hear that Prophet shall be destroyed from among the people." Thus has Moses spoken of One greater than himself. Thank God, though Israel as a nation rejected Him, as we know, in the days to which we are now looking back, yet "Him shall ye hear" is declared in her favor with regard to days to come. The blessing has been long delayed; but in the meanwhile the gospel has risen up above these human barriers to only a more wondrous height, to overflow to the nations with a fuller blessing.

But thus then had Moses spoken; and from Samuel, through a succession of witnesses raised up, the same things had been constantly uttered. The apostle urges them now upon His hearers, as the legitimate heirs, the sons of the prophets, and of the wide-reaching covenant of promise given before the Law, and not crippled by its ineffectiveness. In Abraham's Seed all the families of the earth would indeed find the blessing. To them, therefore, had Jesus come first of all, to bring it to them, in turning them every one from the iniquities which now were the true hindrance.

4. A sinister interruption here takes place,—the first note of warning from

cees came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached in Jesus the [h]resurrection from among the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in ward until the morrow; for it was already evening. But many of those who had heard the word [i]believed; and the number of the men came to about five thousand.

And it came to pass upon the morrow that their rulers and elders and scribes in Jerusalem, and Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the high-priestly family, were [j]gathered together. And when they had set them in the midst, they enquired, By what power, or by what name, have *ye* done this? Then Peter, [k]filled with the Holy Spirit, said unto them, Rulers of the people and elders of Israel,* if *we* are to-day being examined on the ground of a good deed done to an impotent man, by what means he hath been made whole, be it known

[h] ver. 33. cf. ch. 26. 23.

[i] cf. ch. 2. 41.

[j] cf. Jno. 11. 47. cf. Jno. 16. 1-3.

[k] cf. ch. 2. 4. cf. ch. 13. 51, 52. cf. Matt. 10. 20.

*Many omit "of Israel."

the heads of the people. While the lower classes listened, the religious leaders felt the preaching in the Name of Jesus to be a direct attack upon themselves. The most forward now and henceforth were the Sadducees, with whom the resurrection of the Saviour was the overthrow of their nihilistic creed. How happy might they have been to have their dread negations penetrated by this glorious light from heaven! but, in fact, the more complete the proof of the truth of the gospel, the more they were stirred up against it. Had it been less complete, they would undoubtedly have acted in a milder fashion; but when argument is made impossible, the will that lurks in it stands out from under the cover with the more stubborn energy to win the already decided battle. Of all men, the hopeless Sadducee should have been the most ready for the gospel; but in reality he was more indifferent than hopeless; his creed was positive in the present rather than negative as to the future; a fair world balanced in his mind the dimness of heaven. Thus he might in any wise not have troubled himself about the enthusiasm of the disciples, had not the miracles brought God too near and preached too alarmingly to the conscience. That should have broken him down before God, but that here the fanaticism of the rebellious spirit was aroused to get rid of the truth with the witness to the truth. But the truth not only abides, but sustains the witness also which it has called forth. The apostles are imprisoned; but the number of the converts rises to five thousand *men*. It seems as if the narrator were thinking, in this manner of statement, of the camp and battle-field.

The morrow comes, and with it the whole council is gathered together. They who have slain the Master now face the disciples, to find them very unlike the timid men they had been. Now it was not they that spoke, but, as it had been promised, the Spirit of their Father that spoke in them. The foremost now in the confession of Christ was he who had, in the very recent past, denied Him; and with none of them was there any hesitation or tremor of soul. They were "in nothing terrified by their adversaries," which the apostle speaks of afterwards to the Philippians in like case as "to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God" (Phil. i. 28).

Were *they* not afraid to put their idle question, when the "power" which had wrought was manifest and before their eyes, and manifestly divine? And did they not tremble to hear—so attested—the Name of Him whom they had slain? Had they heard of Peter's old denial? and did they dream that even then he might repeat it? Vain hope indeed, if it was theirs! The "Spirit of

to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the [l]name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom *ye* crucified, whom God raised from among the dead, by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the [m]Stone set at naught by you the builders, which is become the head of the corner. And there is [n]no salvation in any other; for there is none other name [o]under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Now when they saw the [p]boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were [q]illiterate and home-bred* men, they wondered; they [r]recognized them also, that they had been with Jesus. And beholding the man who was healed standing with them, they had no [s]reply. But when they had commanded them to go out of the council, they conferred among themselves, saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed an [t]evident sign hath been done by them is manifest to all that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. But that it [u]spread no further among the people, let us [straitly] [v]threaten them that they speak no more to any in this name. And having called them, they charged them not to speak at all nor teach in the name

l ch. 3. 6, 16.
m Ps.118.22. Matt.21.42. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 6-8.
n *cf.* ch. 13. 26. *cf.* 1 Tim. 2. 5. *cf.* Jno.14.6.
o *cf.* Gal. 1. 7, 8. *cf.* Rom. 3. 19. *cf.*Col.1.23.
p *cf.* vers.29 -31. *cf.* Rom. 1. 16. *ctr.*Jno.18. 25-27.
q *cf.*1 Cor.1. 26-29. *cf.*Jno. 7.15 -17.
r *cf.* Lk. 22. 56.
s ver. 16. *cf.* Jno. 11. 47. *cf.* Jno. 15. 24.
t *cf.*ch.13.31. *cf.* ch. 7. 51.
u *ctr.* Mk.1. 44, 45.
v ch.5.28,40.

* The word suggests the thought of "private persons," in contrast to those who had been in public life.

glory and of God" was filling Peter now; and they had to hear their guilt charged home upon them, and Jesus Christ the Nazarene declared, as His own lips had once intimated, the "Stone" rejected by the builders, as prophecy had forewarned would be the case. Yes, the building of living stones upon this Corner-stone was already taking place, as thousands in Jerusalem were now witness; by which their office of builders had plainly passed from them. Nay, more; there was no salvation either in any other; none other name under heaven given among men, whereby they could be saved!

They do not, in the presence of their persecutors, as before the people, append to this the promise of Christ's return. This hard-trodden ground must be plowed up, before such good seed as this could be safely committed to it. But they preach salvation, as to perishing men, Sanhedrists as they might be, and doctors of the Law; they themselves in possession of the only security for life and blessing, which they offer with a conscious certainty which, as we know, the teaching of the scribes had not, but which had always characterized their Master's teaching. Still, as of old, it causes astonishment; illiterate, home-bred men as they plainly were. And there stands with them their voucher, a crippled beggar restored, with a new gladness greater than for his physical healing! Among themselves, when the accused have been for awhile sent aside, the council admit their perplexity. An evident sign has been done which they can as little deny as they choose to accept; and the worst of it is that it has laid hold of the people;—for men with their strong faith in the present an argument most difficult to resist; for such faith seeks no martyrdom. Truth also they seek not, these leaders of the people, but that which is convenient and will preserve their valued authority. They decide therefore that they will threaten the disciples, and forbid their speaking any more in the name of Jesus. If they cannot refute, they can yet forbid. They can make wrong by edict what they cannot prove to be wrong by any argument they possess.

But they find the men intractable beyond their expectation: men to whom God is the fountain of all authority, and whose consciences are, without fear of results, before Him alone. Their course is fixed, to obey God rather than

of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, Whether it be right before God to hearken unto you [w]more than unto God, judge ye; for *we* [x]cannot but speak what we have seen and heard. But when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way they could punish them, on account of the people; for they all were [y]glorifying God for that which was come to pass. For the man was more than forty years old, upon whom this sign of healing had come to pass.

5 (iv.23-36): God with His own.

5. And being [z]let go, they went to their own [company], and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard it, they [a]lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, [b]Sovereign Lord, thou art He who hath made heaven and earth and sea, and all things in them; who by the

w ch. 5. 29.
x *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 16.
cf. Jer. 20. 9.
cf. Am. 3. 8.
cf. 2 Cor. 5. 11-15, 20, 21.
y ch. 3. 10.
cf. ch. 5. 26.
z *cf.* ch. 14. 26.
cf. Heb. 10. 25.
a *cf.* ch. 1. 14.
cf. ch. 12. 5, 12.
b *cf.* Ps. 114. 7.
cf. Ps. 124. 8.
cf. ch. 17. 24.

man; and they dare even to appeal to the consciences of their judges in behalf of such a determination. With the council the fear of men is in proportion to the absence of their fear of Him; and this deters them from going further at the present time. They threaten and let them go. For the wave of popular feeling on account of the miracle that has been done is at present not safely to be resisted.

5. The disciples return to their own company;—to how different an atmosphere! The opposition of the enemy had failed, and was destined to fail; it had only given opportunity to set before the whole council of the people the blessed Name which it was their happiness to make known. It had thus furthered their work, not hindered it; and this was but the type and prophecy of all the future,—"He maketh the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder of wrath He will restrain." The threatenings only show the restraint actually put upon those whose will for harm could not be doubted, and strengthened in going forward those whom they were intended to intimidate. All this they now report among those greeting them on their return, who answer with an outburst of praise, lifting up their voices to God with one accord, as Sovereign Lord of all that He has created, and who has fulfilled what long He had declared in overruling the conspiracy of Jews and Gentiles against Jehovah and against His Christ. The quotation is from the second psalm, which, according to the common belief among the Jews, they ascribe to David. With strange and terrible unanimity, indeed, had all the world (Jews and Gentiles together) combined against Him with whom was all the hope of the world. But this is only the proof of the thorough sameness of man everywhere,—not only one blood, as God made them, but of one spirit, such as the Fall has made them. Only divine grace has anywhere brought in a difference, and then by a change so great and sovereign that the Spirit of God speaks of it as "new creation." Israel's rejection of her Lord was indeed a perfect witness of how all help that could be given him, short of that, must be unavailing, when the Jew it was who clamored for His crucifixion from the unwilling Gentile. So too it was the Jew who was to hound on the heathen persecution of His followers in the time soon to come.

They had accomplished their evil will. There was no resistance. The Light of the world had seemed to be quenched in darkness; but only to rise again in unsetting glory. There had been done just what God's hand and counsel determined before to be done!

What then could His disciples ask, save for boldness to proclaim and follow Christ? *He* had been more than content through all to be the Servant of that unique and glorious will. They pray only for the stretching out of God's

mouth of thy servant * David hath said, [c]Why did the nations rage? and the peoples meditate vain things? The [d]kings of the earth set [themselves], and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Christ. For of a truth, against thy holy Servant† Jesus, whom thou hast [e]anointed, were gathered together in this city both [f]Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the nations and the peoples of Israel, to do [g]whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. And now, Lord, [h]look upon their threatenings, and grant unto thy servants,‡ that with all [i]boldness they may speak thy word, in that thou stretchest out thy hand to heal, and that signs and [j]wonders may be done through the name of thy holy Servant† Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was [k]shaken where they were gathered together; and they were all [l]filled with the Holy Spirit, and spake the word of God with boldness.

c Ps. 2. 1, 2. *cf.* Ps. 46. 6, 7.
d *cf.* Ps. 48. 4. *cf.* Is. 52. 15.
e *cf.* Matt. 3. 16, 17. *cf.* ch. 10. 38.
f Lk. 23. 7-13.
g *cf.* ch. 13. 27. *cf.* ch. 2. 23. *cf.* Jno. 19. 11.
h *cf.* 2 Ki. 19. 16. *cf.* 2 Sa. 16. 12. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 21-23.
i *cf.* Eph. 6. 19. *cf.* Phil. 1. 20.
j ch. 5. 12-16.
k *cf.* ch. 2. 2.
l *cf.* ver. 8.

* *Παῖς.* Many read, "by the mouth of thy servant, our father David, through the Holy Spirit."

† *Παῖς*; and always when referring to our Lord.

‡ Literally, "bond servants," *δοῦλοι.*

hand in such a way as to give them power and courage; and that signs and wonders may be done in Christ's Name, to carry on that blessed service.

How certain is the answer, when the Lord and His interests are the burden of the prayer! and there is no reserve of self-seeking to give unsteadiness to the faith that would lay hold of Omnipotence! The assurance of being heard is immediately granted them, the place being shaken in which they were gathered together. It is the answer of the Creator, as appealed to, and who will yet "shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land, and shake all nations," to bring in Christ (Hag. ii. 6, 7). But also they are all filled with the Holy Spirit, and speak the word with boldness.

Lest we should sigh and say, These are but records of far-off days, let us remember that we are exhorted, and it is part of our responsibility, therefore, to "be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. v. 18.) This is no question of gifts lost to the Church, nor even of exceptional blessing. We may make it, alas, exceptional; but that is another thing. It is but, in fact, a question of devotedness: for the Spirit is here to glorify Christ, not to give impossible brightness to lives lived in the circle of our own petty interests; which, indeed, so far as they answer to this character, are not in any true sense our interests; for these are all secured with Christ on high. We are identified with Him as our Representative before God, to have resting upon us the favor in which He dwells; and He is identified with us as His representatives on earth, for a life for Him as thus sent into it. We see then how fully and simply in place is what we have here. The disciples are full of His interests. How could it be otherwise than that the Witness for Christ on earth should fill them as vessels of testimony for Him? The same argument will always hold good; and the Spirit can never be indifferent to His glory. To suppose any thing else would be to dishonor Him who is come to abide with us forever, and who is yesterday, to-day, and for ever the same. For us also, every thing else must be shaken, until He is made supreme over all.

There follow also, as surely, the fruits in practical life. The innate selfishness of the heart is surmounted by the influx of spiritual blessing which expands while it overflows it. There was no communistic law among these gathered saints; it would have spoiled all, if there had been; it was a unity of

And of the multitude of those that believed, heart and soul were [m]one; and not one said that any of the things that he possessed was his own, but all things were common to them. And with great power did the apostles give [n]witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great [o]grace was upon them all. For neither was there any in [p]want among them; for as many as were possessors of lands and houses sold them, and brought the price of the things that were sold, and [q]laid them down at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made to every one, according as he might have need.

m ch. 2. 44, 45. cf. 1 Cor. 12. 13.
n ch. 1. 8. cf. 1 Cor. 15. 5-8.
o cf. ch. 2. 47. cf. 1 Pet. 3. 13.
p cf. 2 Cor. 8. 14, 15. cf. Rom. 12. 13. cf. 1 Jno. 3. 17, 18.
q ver. 37. cf. ch. 6. 2-4.

SUBDIVISION 5. (Chap. iv. 36–v. 11.)

The Government of God over those with Him.

AND [r]Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas (which is, being interpreted, A son of consolation), a Levite, by birth a man of Cyprus, being possessed of land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and [s]appropriated [part] of the price, his wife also being [t]privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath [u]Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to appropriate [part] of the price of the land? While it remained did it not remain thine [v]own? and

r ch. 11. 22, 23, etc. cf. ch. 15. 39.
s ctr. ch. 4. 36, 37. cf. Josh. 7. 1. cf. Lev. 23. 17. ctr. Deut. 26. 12-14.
t cf. Prov. 11. 21. ctr. 1 Pet. 3. 7.
u cf. Jno. 13. 2, 27. cf. 1 Tim. 6. 10.
v cf. ch. 4. 32. ctr. 2 Cor. 9. 1-9.

heart which allowed none of them to say that what was really his belonged to him. The sale of lands and houses was optional and unsolicited, as we see by the very specification of those who did this. There was therefore no general renunciation of personal title; but a love that knew no holding back from the need of another. It was the instinct of hearts that had found their real possessions in that sphere into which Christ had risen. The glorious fact of resurrection to which testimony was being given now with power took them of necessity out of the world; and great grace was on them all. The deeper need which could not be thus met found still the means to meet it in the actual sale of possessions on the part of those that had them; so that there were none that lacked: the money being laid at the apostles' feet. It is not necessarily that all sold all they had; but that this was the way in which the need was met: the history following, and which grows out of this, seems to make this plain.

SUBD. 5.

We have now to see the government of God over His own, now separated as a distinct company from the mass of Israel, although one could not say, as yet, from Israel itself. The trial of the nation as such is not yet ended. Meanwhile we are called away from this to see the attempt of the enemy against this new beginning, and the solemn judgment of God by which it is defeated. Yet on the other hand, we are not to overlook the divine appreciation of the fruits of the Spirit, where they are found, as in the case of Joseph, surnamed Barnabas, who by his ministry in self-sacrificing love to the need of the saints "purchases to himself a good degree" (1 Tim. iii. 13), and we hear of him accordingly, in the after history. His name answers to his character here,—"one who adds,"—and he becomes indeed a "son of consolation,"—meriting his surname.

In terrible contrast to him is Ananias ("Jah has shown grace") but who abuses grace to his own destruction. The good report of Barnabas, if we may

when it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thy heart? thou hast not lied unto [w]men, but unto God. And Ananias, hearing these words, [x]fell down and expired: and there came a great [y]fear upon all that heard. And the young men arose and wrapped him up, and carried him out and buried him.

And it came to pass about three hours afterwards, that his wife, not knowing what had happened, came in. And Peter answered her, [z]Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. And Peter said unto her, Why have ye [a]agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried thy husband are at the door, and they will carry thee out. And [b]immediately she fell at his feet and expired; and the young men came in, and found her dead, and carrying her out, buried her by her husband. And great fear came upon all the assembly, and upon all that heard these things.

w vers. 3, 9.
cf. 1 Thess. 4. 8.
cf. Lk. 10. 16.
ctr. 1 Thes. 2. 13.
cf. 1 Cor. 3. 16, 17.
x *cf.* Lev. 10. 1–3.
ver. 10.
y ver. 11.
cf. Heb. 12. 28.
z *cf.* Ezek. 18. 20.
cf. 1 Tim. 5. 22.
a ver. 2.
ctr. Matt. 18. 19.
b ver. 5.
cf. 1 Tim. 5. 24.
ctr. 2 Cor. 12. 20, 21.

judge by the connection, seems to have moved him; but only with an ungodly emulation. He covets the reputation and influence; with perhaps much greater things following, as the movement spreads; but he has no thought, even for this, of making the sacrifice demanded. Outwardly he must do it, while his heart refuses, and thus, in conjunction with his wife, he forms a deliberate plan to deceive,—leaving God out. He actually sells his possession, and professedly brings the whole purchase-money, to lay it down at the apostles' feet. But he has not brought the whole: he reserves a part for himself, and in the midst of the divine power working (only in grace as yet, which probably he misinterprets, to his ruin,) does not fear to offer this imitation of the fruit of divine love,—in fact, a fraudulent attempt to buy for himself what alone he values. Satan was thus working from inside the assembly, to destroy truth and holiness, and thus early to introduce into it the worldly elements which, by and by, alas, were to gain open allowance. But the Spirit of God, as yet ungrieved, forbids the intrusion of the evil; and judgment swift and terrible smites down the transgressor. His unhappy wife, coming in afterwards, and deliberately reaffirming her husband's falsehood, shares his punishment. And fear falls upon all the assembly, and upon all that hear these things.

Thus we have indicated to us the evils which, from within as well as from without, threatened the infant Church. It is in a hostile world. It carries the fatal seeds of corruption in its own bosom. For in this respect the community can only be as those who compose it. The exercise as to evil and the struggle with it we are not yet, in the wisdom of God, delivered from; although the final deliverance is completely secured. God is training us for eternity, and to bring us into full participation in His apprehension of it. For this He would have us see it as those who are partakers of the divine nature, and yet linked with that flesh in which "dwelleth no good thing." Responsible to be its masters, we may yet degrade ourselves to do its will, and need at all times to be on the watch against it; while the world around appeals to it, and incites it to activity, and Satan with all the cunning of four thousand years' acquirement is "the prince of this world," proved so by the Cross! So thoroughly are we intended, it is plain, to learn the painful—and yet, it must be, salutary—lesson of the nature of that which exhibits the ruin of the creature fallen away from God! But this is also the background of the divine glory in redemption, in which He is displayed in His mastery over it, and thus we are held fast to Him forever.

SUBDIVISION 6. (Chap. v. 12–vi. 7.)

Triumph within and without.

1 (v. 12-16): Constant power.

1. AND by the [c]hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. And of the [d]rest dared no man join himself to them; but the people magnified them; (and [e]believers were more and more added to the Lord,—multitudes both of men and women;) insomuch that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and placed them on beds and couches, that at the least the [f]shadow of Peter, when he came, might overshadow some one among them. And the multitude also came together from the [g]cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick persons, and those troubled by unclean spirits, who were all healed.

2 (v. 17-33): Persecution and deliverance.

2. And the [h]high priest rose up, and all that were with him, being the sect of the [i]Sadducees, and were filled with jealousy,* and [j]laid hands on the apostles, and put them in public ward. But an [k]angel of the Lord opened the prison doors by night, and brought them out, and said, Go, stand in the temple, and [l]speak unto the people all the words of this life. And when they heard it, they entered into the temple about daybreak, and taught. And when the high priest was come, and they that were with him, they called together the [m]council, and all the elderhood of the sons of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. But when the officers came, they found them not in the prison;

c ch. 2. 43.

d *cf.* Ex. 12. 31-33. ver. 11. *cf.* 1 Cor. 14. 25.

e *cf.* ch. 6. 1, 2. *cf.* ch. 9. 31.

f *cf.* ch. 19. 11, 12. *cf.* 1 Jno. 1. 7 with Heb. 12. 13.

g *cf.* Matt. 4. 24 with Jno. 14. 12.

h *cf.* Jno. 11. 47 with Jno. 15. 20.

i Matt. 22. 23.

j ch. 8. 26. ch. 12. 7-11.

k *cf.* ch. 1. 8. *cf.* ch. 4. 20, 21.

l ch. 6. 12.

* Or, "wrath."

SUBD. 6.

The inspired historian does not detain us long with this now, but passes on to speak of the Church's triumph over this double evil, within and without.

1. There is the constant display of divine power at the hands of the apostles; so the crowds follow, and the people magnify them; while the fear of what has taken place deters those from joining them who are not joined to the Lord in living faith. But multitudes are thus added to Him, both of men and of women. Consciences are brought into serious exercise, with the sure result of many believing. The place which is habitually frequented, and in which we have found them before, is Solomon's porch; the testimony of their ruin under the old covenant, whatever may have been the pains to cover it up since, and even to decorate that which covered it. Jerusalem thus becomes a centre to which men flock from all the districts round, bringing the sick and those oppressed by demons,—two classes always carefully distinguished in the word of God; and the very shadow of Peter is sought to for its power to heal; nor do we read of disappointment even in this. The masses all are healed. So fully is the prayer of true and devoted hearts for the glory of Jesus answered of God.

2. Persecution arises again, and from the same quarter as before; the high priest being foremost, with the sect of the Sadducees, to which he belonged. But when the apostles are once more shut up in prison, an angel of the Lord (that is, of Jehovah) opens the doors by night, and bids them enter again into the temple, to preach there unto the people "all the words of this life." In the morning, therefore, the prison being securely shut, they are found in the temple at their

and returned and reported, saying, We found the prison shut with all [m]security, and the guards standing at the doors; but when we had opened them, we found no one within. And when they heard these words, both the captain of the temple and the chief priests, they were much perplexed concerning them, what this would come to. And there came one and told them, Behold, the men whom ye put into the prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people. Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them, not with violence, for they [n]feared the people, lest they should be stoned. And they brought them, and set them in the council. And the high priest asked them, saying, We straitly [o]charged you not to teach in this name, and behold, ye have [p]filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to [q]bring upon us this man's blood. But Peter and the apostles answered and said, We must [r]obey God rather than men. The God of our [s]fathers hath raised up Jesus; whom *ye* [t]slew and hanged upon a tree. Him hath God with his right hand [u]exalted [as] Founder* and Saviour, to give [v]repentance to

m *cf.* Jno. 20. 19.
n *cf.* Matt. 21. 26.
o ch. 4. 18-21.
p ch. 4. 4.
q *cf.* Matt. 27. 25. *cf.* Matt. 23. 35.
r *cf.* Ex. 1. 17. ch. 4. 19.
s ch. 3. 13. *cf.* ch. 13. 17.
t ch. 2. 23.
u ch. 2. 33.
v *cf.* Lk. 5. 32. *cf.* ch. 11. 18.

* Or, Leader.

blessed work. The council is perplexed, and wonder what will be the end of it; but the issue raised is become so serious for them, that they will dispute it with God Himself. So they command them to be brought once more, though it has to be done quietly, lest the excited people should stone the officers; and for the second time the council of the nation, in answer to their charge of violating the prohibition they had given, have to listen to the statement of their crime. The rulers had made obedience to them impossible by their own vain conflict with the God of their fathers. Him, whom they had put to death with the greatest indignity, God had raised up, and with His right hand exalted Him to be Founder* and Saviour, to begin that new temple to God's praise, of which they had before proclaimed Him the Foundation-Stone. But for this it was necessary that every one who should form part in it—for the temple was to be, as Peter explains from his own name, a building of "living stones" (1 Pet. ii. 4, 5)—should be cleansed and sanctified. The Founder must therefore be a Saviour, and give repentance and remission of sins. The apostles say, "to Israel," and this He will yet do. It was the nation that was at present before them, and to whom their message was. The Church had not emerged into distinct thought, although it was in existence in fact, but as a babe that had not yet learned to know itself. But Christ,—Christ was their absorbing occupation and delight; no higher could be, though they were to learn much more of their own relationship to Him. "And we are witnesses of these things; and the Holy Spirit also, which God hath given to them who obey Him."

But it is not proof which they were wanting,—these leaders of the people; just the reverse; and to be reminded of the proof which was all too demonstrative only throws them into a passionate rage that would quench itself in the blood of those who so fearlessly maintain this testimony. Had they not quenched this light once? Could they not again do so? Had they not put out of their way the Master? Could they not deal with the disciples?

* The word here is the same as that in the first answer of the apostles, and there translated "Author,"—"Author of life." It does not seem practicable to give a uniform rendering, except, with the common version, we use the very meagre word, "Prince." The meaning is, "one who begins, or originates;" thus, leader and author in one. "Founder," which is also given by the lexicons, unites these thoughts, and seems the best adapted to the sense in this place.

Israel, and [w]remission of sins. And *we* are [x]witnesses of these things, and the Holy Spirit [y]also which God hath given to them that obey him. But they, when they heard this, were [z]cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.

3 (34–42): Sheltered.

3. But there stood up in the council a [a]Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, had in honor among all the people, and commanded to put forth the men for a short time. And he said unto them, Men of Israel, take [b]heed to yourselves as regards these men, what ye are going to do. For [c]before these days rose up Theudas, professing to be somebody, to whom a number of men—about four hundred—joined themselves: who was slain, and all, as many as obeyed him, were dispersed and came to nothing. After this man rose up Judas the Galilean in the days of the [d]census, and drew away people after him. *He* also perished, and all, as many as obeyed him, were [e]scattered abroad. And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will

w *cf.* Lk.24. 47, 48.
x ch. 1. 8.
y *cf.* Heb.10. 15-17. *cf.* Eph. 1. 13.
z ch. 7. 54. *ctr.* ch.2.37.
a *cf.* ch.22.3. *cf.* ch.23. 6.
b *cf.* ch. 23 9. *cf.* Matt.12 30.
c *cf.* ch. 21. 38. *cf.* Jno.10.8.
d *cf.* Lk. 2.2.
e *cf.* Jno. 10. 12. *ctr.* Jno.11. 52.

So impossible is it for His enemies to understand the patience of God, which is oftentimes so great a trial to His people even. If He has indeed this power, how is it that, as the Psalmist puts it, He does not "pluck His hand out of His bosom," and deal more openly with His adversaries? Will He use it in healings and raising up crippled beggars, and let His people lie so defenceless in the hands of their persecutors? Can this gentle zephyr ever grow into a tornado blast? They cannot believe it, however great at times the evidences may seem to be. Did not the prison doors unaccountably open? Yes; but that did not deliver out of their hands after all! Balance this against that: even their Master did not come down from the cross; and the cross seems ordained for His disciples also. Yes; the Cross! and how little yet do we understand its glory!

3. Thus, even if He interferes for His own, there is generally a veil over His Face: "Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known!" Still, for all that, "Thou leddest Thy people like a flock" (Ps. lxxvii. 19, 20).

Christ's witnesses are now to prove this; they are to be sheltered, yet by no apparent intervention of the divine Hand. One of the councilors themselves, a Pharisee and not a believer, though brought by all he has seen and heard into the neutral position which his advice indicates, is the instrument which God uses at this time to shelter the witnesses of His grace to men. Gamaliel, a man of great weight among the Jews, and grandson of the celebrated Hillel, having caused the apostles to be put forth for a little while, remonstrates against any violence. The case before them, he urges, was no solitary one; and the examples they had had of impostors who had arisen showed how surely these pretensions of men came to nought. He mentions two of these: one well-known,—"Judas of Galilee, in the days of the census,—the other a Theudas,* only conjecturally taken to be either a Judas, in the reign of Archelaus, as Archbp. Ussher thought, or else a Matthias, about the close of that of Herod. Both attempts ended dis-

*There having been another Theudas, resembling this one of Luke, but some fifty years too late, mentioned by Josephus, this has naturally been used by infidelity to discredit the Scripture narrative. But, as the name was common, so the insurrections of the time were many; "the Theudas, whose defeat by Fadus he places a dozen years later" than Gamaliel's speech, "seems to have had a far larger following than the four hundred men of whom our Evangelist writes." (W. Kelly on the Acts.) Ussher speaks of Theudas as only the Syriac form of Judas; while Koehler (in Herzog's Real Encyclop.) makes it the Greek translation of Matthias, the "gift of Jehovah" or of God.

be [f]overthrown; but if it be of God, ye will not be able to overthrow them;—that ye be not even found [g]fighters against God. And they were persuaded by him; and having called the apostles, they [h]beat them, and commanded them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. They therefore departed from the presence of the council, [i]rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name. And every day, in the temple and the house,* they [j]ceased

[f] cf. Ps. 2. 1-3.
[g] cf. ch. 9. 4, 5. cf. r. ch. 11. 17. cf. 1 Cor. 10. 22.
[h] cf. ch. 22. 19.
[i] cf. Matt. 5. 12. cf. 1 Pet. 4. 12-16. cf. ch. 21. 13.
[j] cf. Eph. 6. 20. cf. 2 Tim. 2. 9.

*Or, "at home."

astrously, as Gamaliel reminds his hearers, and so would this, if it were not of God. The possibility of this he warns them of, and the result in that case of being found fighting against God. A tremendous possibility, indeed!

His advice is conformable to such a suspense of judgment: "Refrain from these men, and let them alone." To which they agree, with a strange modification of their own; for while they acknowledge they may be fighting against God, and so give up their murderous intent, they contradict themselves, and show the malice of their hearts, by beating these possible witnesses for God, before they let them go! and again forbidding them to speak what they cannot venture to say may not be truth! Such a being is man!

But Gamaliel himself, though impressed, and right in his refusal to act in the dark as if in the light, is otherwise wrong in his principles, and untrue to the truth. His *judgment by the issue* leaves him a doubter till that issue; and when, and what, may that issue be? If one could look far enough, no doubt the end would be seen to be in accordance with the righteousness of God who governs. But who will undertake to trace this with any infallibility through those ways which the Psalmist confesses are in the sea, and His footsteps are not known? Who will pierce the clouds and darkness that are about Him, and give a trustworthy account of all His doings? The Psalmist complained of the prosperity of the wicked, and had to pursue them to the other side of death, in order to find satisfaction (Ps. lxxiii.). The friends of Job argue like Gamaliel here, and are rebuked by the sufferer as speaking deceitfully for God (Job xiii. 7); for he also has seen the wicked spend their days in prosperity (chap. xxi. 13). The Preacher too sees it as among the vanities of earthly things, "that there be righteous men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; and again there be wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous" (Eccl. viii. 14). While Habakkuk complains to Him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity that yet He looketh upon them that deal treacherously, and holdeth His peace when the wicked swalloweth up the man that is more righteous than himself (Hab. i. 13). And Jehovah answers him that "the just shall live by *faith*" (ii. 4).

And this is what Gamaliel with his temporizing policy has left out. He would wait and watch, and go down to the grave perhaps unconvinced; and so there is reason to believe he did; while a bolder and more hasty spirit might catch more quickly his conclusion, and decide,—but decide wholly wrong. For it would be hard upon his principles to accept in his way as the witnesses for God men "as it were, appointed unto death, a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men;—hungry and athirst, and naked, and buffeted"! Must not those who laid their stripes upon the apostles now have fancied they were helping to disprove these fanatical teachings with every stroke of their lash? The meaning of the Cross would be, for them and for their teacher both, an impossibility to comprehend.

But God none the less had sheltered His people; and, as for the rest, they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for the Name! And still, every day, in the temple and in the house, they ceased not to teach and tell the glad tidings that Jesus was the Christ.

not to teach and tell the glad tidings that Jesus was the Christ.

4 (vi.1-7): Trial from weakness.

4. Now in these days, when the number of the disciples was [k]multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the [l]Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, that their widows were overlooked in the [m]daily ministrations. And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples, and said, It is not right that we should [n]leave the word of God, and serve tables. Look out, therefore, brethren, from among you seven men, [o]well reported of, full of the [Holy]* Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will [p]appoint over this business; but *we* will give ourselves up to [q]prayer and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude; and they [r]chose Stephen, a man [s]full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon,

k ver. 7. *cf.* Deut. 32. 15.
l ch. 9. 29.
m ch. 4. 34, 35.
n *cf.* Ex. 18. 17-26.
ver. 4.
o *cf.* ch. 16. 2. *cf.* 1 Tim. 3. 7-10. *cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 12.
p *cf.* ch. 14. 23. *cf.* Tit. 1. 5.
q *cf.* ch. 13. 2. *cf.* Col. 2. 1, 2.
r ver. 8.
s *cf.* ch. 11. 24.

* Some omit.

4. Another trial was at hand; and now again from within: a difficulty had to be met, which the very growth in numbers tended to produce, the natural selfishness of man's heart showing itself amid all the power and joy of the work of the Spirit constantly progressing. "There arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews," or Hellenists, "against the Hebrews," (the native Jews,) "because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations." It does not say, they *were* neglected, but that this was affirmed. In fact, although grace was here dominant above it, there was always a certain jealousy existing between these two classes. The Jews born in foreign countries tended to more liberal views than those of Judea, and indeed to a liberality as far from the truth on one side as the Pharisaism of the Rabbinistic teachers was upon the other. It was upon the side of the Hebrews, however, that jealousy was rather to be expected. Here it was on that of the Hellenists; but perhaps a reaction resulting from the knowledge of such a spirit generally existing, which would give rise to suspicions such as we find actually manifested now. But there is grace to meet them effectually, as has been often pointed out; for the names of those chosen on account of the complaints, to take charge of the whole matter of the ministry of the common fund are Greek, every one; and thus, presumably Hellenistic. Those who murmured should have the distribution in their own hands; and those who cannot trust their brethren shall find that nevertheless their brethren can trust *them*. How lovely is divine grace! and how effectual is such a settlement! The thought that some have had, that there had been already men appointed to this charge, but who were all Hebrews, and that the seven now chosen were only an addition to the previous number to satisfy the foreign element by giving them representation which hitherto they had not had, is as totally without foundation in Scripture, as it destroys all the beauty of the act itself. In this case, it was but a mere act of tardy justice, or at least the reparation of an actual oversight, which might have given some apparent ground for the complaint. But there is no truth in it; for it is the apostles who have hitherto been in charge of that which we have seen laid at their feet for that purpose; and who now take occasion to relieve themselves of what was become a burden, distracting them from their own proper work. The disciples are now to choose those in whom they can have confidence for the management of that which they had themselves contributed; the apostles, however, giving them appointment, as being the divinely constituted leaders, and representatives of the absent Lord.

The word of God is that which we see they recognize as their true sphere of service, and that to which they desire wholly to devote themselves; joining with this prayer, which they put first, as the necessary prerequisite. Without

and Parmenas, and Nicolas, a [t]proselyte of Antioch, whom they set before the apostles, and when they had prayed, they [u]laid their hands upon them. And the word of God [v]increased; and the number of the disciples [w]multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the [x]priests were obedient to the faith.

t *cf.* ver. 1.
u *cf.* 1 Tim. 4. 14. *cf.* 1 Tim. 5. 22. *ctr.* Eph. 4. 11, 12.
v ch. 19. 20.
w *ctr.* ver. 1.
x *ctr.* Jno. 7. 48.

SUBDIVISION 7. (Chap. vi. 8–vii.)

Completion of the Testimony to the Nation.

1 (vi. 8–15): The occasion.

1. NOW Stephen, [y]full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. And there arose certain of those who were of the synagogue which is called [the synagogue] of the Libertines, and of Cyreneans, and Alexandrians, and those who were of

y ver. 5.

that link of conscious dependence, what gift,—even the greatest,—could at all avail? But here we realize the exceeding importance attaching to it in their minds: "We will give ourselves up to prayer and to the ministry of the word." Is it not here, in fact, that we fail so much, and the ministry of the word fails correspondingly?

Even for such work as serving tables men are to be sought full of the Holy Spirit, and of wisdom; and the first two that are among the number of those appointed are to be owned and honored of God afterwards in very different ways. One of them also is a proselyte,—of a class thoroughly despised by the Hebrews in general; even while they would do much to gain them. But the grace of God was removing already these unspiritual estimates,—merging all human distinctions in the consciousness of a common relationship to Christ and to God. They are set apart, not without prayer, and by the imposition of hands, as a token, doubtless, of the fellowship with them in their new office. Thus the brief trouble ended; and all was overruled for blessing and the display of the new spirit which animated the new company of believers. The power of it was felt in the increased power of the word of God. The number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and even of the priests a great company became obedient to the faith. The expression made use of in their case lays stress upon the greater difficulty, speaking humanly, to be surmounted by those whose office it would set aside; and of this, although the full light of Christianity had not yet dawned, there were already many intimations.

SUBD. 7.

In fact, the whole system of Judaism is tottering to its fall; and the nation is ready to give its last, emphatic answer to the grace that has visited it. The number to which the converts had increased could only arouse hostility proportionately more, as the leaders felt their authority compromised, themselves personally attacked, and all ranks being swept away into an opposition continually gathering strength, with its arguments which could be met only by force, and its signs and wonders which could neither be denied nor imitated. Only the fear of the people had hitherto restrained, as we have seen, the outbreak of fury on the part of the council twice before. And now it is increasingly being felt that a struggle cannot be averted; it is in fact a death-struggle. The occasion of its coming on is now shown us by the inspired historian; and with this the offer to the nation as such ends. Stephen, "full of grace and power," becomes, on that very account, the object of special enmity to the enraged people, and as the first martyr, receives the "crown" of which his name speaks.* He becomes the messenger sent after the Lord, to say, "We will not have this Man to reign

*The meanings of the seven names are no doubt significant:—1. Stephen—A crown. 2. Philip—A lover of horses—a racer. 3. Prochorus—A leader of praise. 4. Nicanor—A victor. 5. Timon—Honorable. 6. Parmenas—Enduring. 7. Nicholas—Conqueror of the people.

Cilicia and of Asia, [z]disputing with Stephen. And they were [a]not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit in which he spake. Then they [b]suborned men who said, We have heard him saying blasphemous things against Moses and against God. And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him, and seized him, and [c]brought him to the council. And they set up false witnesses who said, This man ceaseth not to speak words [d]against the holy place and the law: for we have heard him say that this Jesus the Nazarene will [e]destroy this place, and [f]change the customs which Moses delivered unto us. And all that sat in the council, looking intently upon him, saw his [g]face as the face of an angel.

z *cf.* ch. 13. 45.
a Lk. 21. 14, 15. *cf.* Jer. 1. 8, 9. *cf.* Ps. 119. 98–100.
b *cf.* 1 Ki. 21. 9–13. *cf.* Mk. 14. 55–59.
c ch. 5. 21.
d *cf.* ch. 21. 28. *cf.* ch. 7. 47–60. *ctr.* Matt. 21. 12, 13.
e *cf.* Matt. 23. 38, 39. *cf.* Matt. 24. 1, 2.
f *cf.* ch. 15. 10, 11; *cf.* Gal. 6. 12–16.
g *cf.* ch. 7. 55, 56 with 2 Cor. 3. 13, 18.

over us." The glory of Christ shines upon the face of His witness, and makes it radiant with the light of heaven, where the Son of man stands at the right hand of God. Earth has cast out the Light; but to earth's outcasts heaven is opening, as it never opened yet. We have an intimation, indeed, of Paul's "gospel of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;" although not yet is Paul come to proclaim it. He is there! yes; keeping the garments of those that stone that glory from the face of Stephen!

1. We do not read hitherto of any miracles wrought by other hands than those of the apostles; but now the "power" that is in Stephen manifests itself in great wonders and signs among the people. There is commencing, apparently, a wider bestowal of gifts of this kind, such as was, at any rate, found afterwards. The "faith," of which we have been told that he was full, doubtless coveted, as the apostle exhorts at a later time, the best gifts, and these, although not so valuable in themselves as that of prophecy, were of great importance for the crisis then approaching. The saints had prayed, on the first return of the apostles from the council, that God would glorify the name of Jesus by stretching out His hand to heal; and Stephen's endowment is found in connection with most earnest testimony. Hellenist himself, the men of the Hellenistic synagogues to whom he had been probably formerly well known, undertake disputation with him, but are unable to resist the wisdom and spirit by which he speaks. This rouses all their malice against him; and as with his Lord, to whom through this closing scene he is in growing likeness, they suborn men to bear false witness against him. They could easily pervert his words, no doubt, into blasphemies against Moses; and those against God could be, with not much more difficulty, reasoned from the other. And now we find what is deeply significant for the issue with regard to the nation; the people, who had hitherto been favorable to the disciples, now join the outcry against them. Henceforth, save as the direct action of the Spirit still produces faith in a remnant of them, rulers and people are one. Persecution can now therefore begin in earnest, and the door of repentance as yet held open to them begins to close. This gives character to the last testimony of Stephen, as we shall see directly: it is a full summing up of the case against them, and adds to their crime in the death of the Lord Jesus, the witness that they always resist the Holy Spirit. The last hope is gone when this can be said.

They come upon him, and seize him, and bring him before the council,—at last with their wolfish ferocity unbridled. And here the false witnesses can amplify their assertions: "He does not cease," they affirm, "to say things against the holy place, and the law: for we have heard him say that this Jesus the Nazarene will destroy this place, and change the customs which Moses delivered unto us."

Matter enough indeed to stir the dullest of those who have no greater boast

2 (vii. 1-53): The charge: Israel has always resisted the Spirit, and rejected her deliverers.

1 (vers. 1-8): Abraham at the beginning.

2. And the [a]high priest said, Are these things so? And he said, Brethren* and fathers, hearken:

[1] The God of [b]glory appeared unto our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, and said unto him, [c]Go forth from thy [d]land, and from thy [e]kindred, and come into the land that I will [f]show thee. Then went he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Haran. And from thence, when his [g]father had died, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell. And he gave him [h]no inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: and he [i]promised to give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when he had [j]no child. And God spake on this wise, that his seed should [k]sojourn in a strange land, and that they would bring them into [l]bondage, and treat them evil, four hundred years. And the nation to which they are in bondage will I [m]judge, said God; and after these things they shall [n]come forth, and serve me in this place. And he gave him the covenant of [o]circumcision. And so he [p]begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac [begat] [q]Jacob, and Jacob the [r]twelve patriarchs.

* Literally, "men, brethren."

a cf. Matt. 26. 62. cf. ch. 23. 1, 2.
b Gen. 12. 1, cf. 2 Pet. 1. 3.
c cf. Heb. 11. 8.
d cf. Heb. 13. 13, 14.
e cf. 2 Cor. 5. 16, 17.
f cf. Ezek. 20. 6. cf. Heb. 11. 9, 10.
g Gen. 11. 26.
h cf. Heb. 11. 9, 10.
i Gen. 12. 5.
j Gen. 15. 7. Gen. 17. 8.
k Gen. 15. 3. Gen. 18. 10. cf. Heb. 11. 11, 12.
l Gen. 15. 13, 14. Gen. 47. 11, 12.
m Ex. 1. 8-14. cf. Ex. 12. 40, 41.
n Ex. 3. 19, 20.
o Ex. 14. 29, 30.
p Gen. 17. 9-14.
q Gen. 21. 1-4.
r Gen. 25. 24-26.
s Gen. 29. 31, etc.

than to be Moses' disciples! They look intently upon the man so accused, to see how he will bear himself, or what he will answer to such an accusation, and lo, as if he were himself Moses, his face brightens with an angelic glory! As if not seeing the lowering gloom around him, he is in the light, under the smile of God!

2. Stephen is not upon his defence. He is not answering for himself, nor pleading at all. He is the judge giving sentence. He is the still, small voice of the national conscience roused by the power of the Spirit of God. He is the memory of the people, edged and sharpened, as when called into the Presence of God. The long roll of the centuries obeys his summons, and comes forth; its record of the simplest, but with a strange new utterance; a voice of challenge and conviction, impossible to resist. If, even now, they had but hearkened to it! But man is capable of turning from known, incontestable realities, and of saying in the pride of his heart that things are as he will have them to be. Thus Israel once more turns her back upon God, and abides still under the doom which it has brought upon her.

[1] Stephen goes back to Abraham, to the father in whom they boasted, but in whom God had set before their eyes the principles which He would have them ever remember,—principles which, while the world continues what sin has made it, must ever abide as principles owned of Him and necessary for a path according to His mind. Back of law they must go to find the one in whom they had the promises,—a man justified by faith, and thus a perfect example of the grace which they so steadily refused.

"The God of glory," begins Stephen, "appeared unto our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran." Thus all for him was found in One who by this marvelous vision drew him to Himself. We know that he and his were serving other gods in that land beyond the flood, (that is, Euphrates, Josh. xxiv. 2). They were involved in the idolatry in which, even then, the whole land was immersed; and there and thus grace met him. He was not the heir of privilege; and for him the glory dwelt not in any place

2 (vers. 9-16): Joseph rejected by his brethren.

2 And the patriarchs, [x]envying Joseph, [a]sold him away into Egypt; and God was with him, and [b]delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him [c]favor and wisdom before Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him [d]governor over Egypt and all his house. And there came a [e]famine over all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction; and our fathers found no sustenance. But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he [f]sent out our fathers the first time. And at the [g]second time, Joseph was made known to his brethren, and Joseph's [h]family became known to Pharaoh. And Joseph [i]sent and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, [j]seventy-five souls. And Jacob [k]went down into Egypt, and died, he and our fathers, and

[x] Gen. 37. 11. [a] Gen. 37. 28. [b] Gen. 39. 2, 21-23. [c] Gen. 41. 14-16. [d] Gen. 41. 38-44. Ps. 105. 17-22. [e] Gen. 41. 54, etc. [f] Gen. 42. 1-3. [g] Gen. 43. 2-15. Gen. 45. 1-15. [h] Gen. 45. 16. [i] Gen. 45. 21-27. [j] *cf.* Gen. 46. 26, 27. [k] Gen. 46. 5-7.

cf. Ex. 1. 6; *cf.* Deut. 10. 22.

made with hands, but apart from the world, in which he became by the revelation henceforth a pilgrim. From the land of his birth God called him out, and from his kindred; and the land to which He called him was one unknown. Faith every way was a necessity to him; slow as he might be, and was, to sever the ties of nature, which were but hindrance to him. After his father was dead, God removed him to the land which was to be his own.

Yet here also the discipline continued, and by faith alone was the land ever enjoyed by him. Promised it was, but no foot of it made good to him; and the seed which was to inherit it came late and slowly on. Of grace, then, and of faith in the unseen, was Abraham's life a constant witness to them; and this was the life so approved of God, so honored by themselves, who yet knew so little of it!

A long sorrow also was made known to him in relation to his seed. They were again to leave the land which was theirs by promise, and to dwell in another, ill-treated, and in bondage, until 400 years had run their length. Then God would judge their oppressors, and they should come out, and serve Him in the inheritance destined for them. But for so long a time still discipline and the need of faith! They grew to a nation in that stern Egyptian school. But why the furnace covenanted to them thus? Why this need of the Refiner's fire?

It all hangs perfectly together: man under this patient but strong hand of God, ever to be watched, never to be reckoned upon. On the other hand, faith in God always therefore the one necessity, always sure amid all changes. With this, as the apostle shows, witnesses that covenant of circumcision of which Stephen thereupon speaks. Abraham is near a hundred years old, "his body now dead," nothing more to be expected from it. Just there it is that God, as the "Almighty" God, comes in to renew His assurance of what *He* will do, when Abraham can do nothing. Circumcision is "the putting off the body of the flesh" (Col. ii. 11); and thus it was to him "the seal of the righteousness of faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised" (Rom. iv. 11). Where then is the law, and all the work of man in which Israel so trusted, in the covenant given to a man with a "body now dead"? And this sign is now to be put upon all the seed of Abraham: "And so he begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob, and Jacob the twelve patriarchs" or tribe-fathers.

Here are the principles which would have carried Israel through to blessing. Had they sat patiently at the feet of Moses even, they would have learned them from the other side. God never left Himself without witness of the characteristic marks of all that comes from Him: "Had ye believed Moses," said the Lord to them, "ye would have believed Me." And this was as true of His indirect, as of His direct testimony.

2 Stephen goes on to another part of well-known history, in which not only the fundamental untrustworthiness of man displayed itself, but in a way which

they were [l]carried over to Sychem, and laid in the [m]sepulchre which [Abraham]* bought for a sum of money from the sons of Emmor, the [father]† of Sychem.

[s] (vers. 17–50): Moses: to whom they were set apart; the revelation and the Sanctuary.

[3] But when the [n]time of the promise drew nigh, which God had promised‡ to Abraham, the people grew and [o]multiplied in Egypt; until [p]another king arose over Egypt, who knew not Joseph. This man dealt [q]subtly with our race, and evil entreated our fathers, so as to cause their infants to be cast out that they might not live. At which time [r]Moses was born, and was fair §§ unto God; and was nourished three months in his father's house. And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter [t]took him up, and brought him up for her own son. And Moses was [u]instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in his words and deeds. And when a period of forty years was fulfilled to him, it [v]came into his heart to look‖ upon his brethren, the sons of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was being oppressed, smiting the Egyptian. And he thought that his brethren would [w]understand that God by his hand was giving them deliverance, but they understood not. And the [x]next day he appeared unto them as they strove, and urged them to peace, saying, Men,¶ ye are

*See the note below. † Or, in Sychem. ‡ The word suggests the thought of free and willing promise. §§ Or, "very fair." ‖ Or, "visit." ¶ Or, "Ye are men, brethren."

l Gen. 50. 4-13. 25.
m Gen. 23. 19, 20. cf. Gen. 33. 19. cf. Josh. 24. 32.
n cf. Ex. 2. 23-25.
o Ex. 1. 7.
p Ex. 1. 8.
q Ex. 1. 10-22.
r Ex. 2. 1-4. cf. Heb. 11. 23.
s Ex. 2. 5-10.
t cf. Dan. 1. 4, 17. cf. Is. 19. 11, 12 with 1 Cor. 1. 20.
u Ex. 2. 11, 12.
v ctr. Jno. 2. 4. cf. Lk. 24. 49.
w Ex. 2. 13.

was but too significant of their later rejection of their God-sent deliverers. Indeed, their latest and worst was in so many ways pictured in it that the least sensitive conscience should have been aroused by it. And this took place in the history of the first fathers of the nation, who yet wrought out in it unwittingly the purposes of God. Who could forget the envy of Joseph's brethren! which yet helped to fulfil the very premonitions of his greatness which had caused their envy. They sold him into Egypt, (did those before Stephen not remember their own thirty pieces of silver?) but God was with him, spite of those afflictions in the meantime, out of which God so signally delivered him, and made him governor over all the land. Then came the famine which compelled his guilty brethren to have recourse to him whom they had rejected and cast out. And this again led to the fulfillment of the prophecy to Abraham. Man, working freely and, alas, away from God, nevertheless wrought out His purposes as if designedly seeking their accomplishment.*

[3] And now the speaker proceeds to Moses himself,—Moses whose disciples they all claimed to be, as indeed God had made him their deliverer and lawgiver; but had he in fact fared much better at their hands? Through Moses also they had received the "living oracles," and the house of God (which they had brought into his indictment) had received its initial form through him. What was the

*There is a well-known difficulty in connection with what is said of the burial of Jacob and his sons. The simplest rectification is by omitting "Abraham" from the text; which would then read "which he bought,"—referring to Jacob, and "*they* were carried over to Sychem" would refer to Jacob's sons alone; of whom we only know that Joseph was, but the tradition among the Jews was that the rest were also. "Jerome states that Paula saw the sepulchres of the rest; and Wetstein quotes Syncellus and two Jewish writers to the same purpose. The omission of Abraham is given credit to by this—that one uncial MS., ancient and of good authority, has an addition here which gives strong ground to suppose Abraham to be an interpolation." (The Irrationalism of Infidelity: being a reply to "Phases of Faith;" p. 140.)

brethren; why do ye wrong one another? But he that did his neighbor wrong thrust him away, saying, [x]Who set thee over us as ruler and judge? Wilt thou kill me, as yesterday thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses [y]fled at that saying, and became a sojourner in the land of Midian,* where he [z]begat two sons.

And when [a]forty years were fulfilled, there appeared unto him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai an angel in a [b]flame of fire in a bush. And when Moses saw it, he wondered at the vision: and as he drew nigh to behold it, there came the voice of [the] Lord, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob. And Moses [c]trembled, and durst not behold. And the Lord said unto him, [d]Loose the sandal from thy feet; for the place where thou standest is holy ground. I have surely [e]seen the ill-treatment of my people in Egypt, and have heard their groaning; and I am [f]come down to deliver them. And now come, I [g]send thee into Egypt. This Moses whom they [h]denied, saying, Who

* Gk. "Madiam."

x Ex. 2. 14 *cfr.* Lk. 12. 14.
y Ex. 2. 15 *cf.* Heb. 11. 27.
z Ex. 2. 22; Ex. 18. 3, 4
a *cf.* Nu. 14. 33, 34. *cf.* Matt. 4. 1, 2.
b Ex. 3. 1-3 *cf.* Lk. 20. 37, 38.
c *cf.* Heb. 12. 21. Ex. 3. 6.
d Ex. 3. 4, 5 *cf.* Josh. 5. 15
e Ex. 3. 7. Ex. 2. 23-25
f Ex. 3. 8. *cf.* Jno. 6. 38-40. *cfr.* Gen. 11. 5-7.
g Ex. 3. 10 Ps. 105. 26
h ver. 27. *cf.* Judg. 11. 7. *cf.* 1Sa. 17. 28

testimony of history again as to all this? He brings forward no reasoning of his own; nothing that they could for a moment deny: the facts are a sufficient argument. But he goes more leisurely through these, as if he would have them marshal their cumulative evidence well, and compel the attention of his unwilling listeners. It is as if, not he, but Moses himself had turned to be their accuser; as the Lord had before declared to them that he was; and that they were going on with such an adversary to the judgment. The judgment now was really come, and the Judge was about to deliver them to the officer, that they might be cast into prison:—a prison from which (although the doors are about to open) they have never come forth yet.

The birth of Moses was in one of the disastrous times of Israel's history. The destruction of their male children threatened their very existence as a nation; and as one of these doomed ones, he was only saved by the signal interposition of God, who shelters him in the bosom of the persecutor. As the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter he is taught all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and becomes mighty in words and deeds. Scripture says nothing elsewhere of this education of his, but much of the divine discipline by which he became the fit ruler of the people of God. Stephen mentions, perhaps, his greatness, to exhibit the more the power of that love which made him renounce it all to identify himself with a rabble of serfs, and set himself in opposition to all the wealth and power and civilization of the foremost nation of the day. Perfectly he knew all that his choice implied; but he saw Him who was invisible, who was lost to the Egyptians amid their bestial deities; and "it came into his heart to look upon his brethren, the sons of Israel." God was looking upon them, as he was; and the spirit of the deliverer awoke within him. Seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was being oppressed, and smote the Egyptian. He thought that his brethren would understand that by him God was giving deliverance to Israel; but they understood not. The love that had brought him to renounce for their sakes the place in which he had been so wonderfully put by God, was not appreciated; and when he would have united and set them at one, he was in their mind only assuming without warrant the place of a ruler and judge over them. He had to flee with his work unaccomplished, and become a sojourner in the land of Midian, where he found other attachments, and became the father of children.

set thee as ruler and judge? this man did God send as a ruler and redeemer, with the hand of the [h]angel who appeared to him in the bush. *He* brought them out, having done [j]wonders and signs in Egypt, and at the [k]Red Sea, and in the [l]wilderness forty years. This is that Moses who [m]said unto the sons of Israel, A Prophet will God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me.* This is he who was in the [n]assembly in the wilderness, with the [o]angel who spake unto him in the Mount Sinai, and with our fathers; who received [p]living oracles to give unto us. To whom our fathers would not be [q]subject, but thrust him from them, and in their [r]hearts turned [back] unto Egypt; saying unto Aaron, Make us [s]gods who shall go before us; for this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we know not what hath happened to him. And they made a calf in those days, and brought a sacrifice to the idol, and [t]rejoiced in the works of their own hands. And God turned, and [u]delivered them up to serve the host of heaven; as it is written in the book

* Or, "as He raised me." Some add, "Him shall ye hear."

[h] *cf.* Ex. 14. 19.
[j] Ex. chs.7-12. Ps.78.43-51.
[k] Ex. 14. Ps. 106. 9.
[l] Deut. 8.15. Ps. 78. 15, etc.
[m] Deut. 18. 15. ch. 3.22, 23.
[n] *cf.* Ex.16.1. *ctr.* Eph. 1. 22, 23.
[o] vers.35,53. *cf.* Is. 63. 9.
[p] *cf.* Rom.3. 1, 2. *cf.* Rom. 9. 4, 5.
[q] *cf.* Ps. 95. 8-11.
[r] *cf.* Gen.19. 17. *cf.* Ex.16.3.
[s] Ex. 32. 1, etc.
[t] Ex.32.6,18. *ctr.* Ps.66.6.
[u] *cf.* Judg.2. 11-14. *cf.* Rom. 1. 24, 28.

No doubt there was that in Moses that needed the discipline; and at the backside of the desert he got training that he needed for the work which after all he was to do. God is over all, and through all, and in all. Thus all can be accepted as of Him, and one can see His hand in that which is nevertheless the sin of man, and done in opposition to Him. In the people there was no preparedness of heart, no generous response to the devotedness that would have served them, no perception of the mind of God at all. Their appointed deliverer they drove out among strangers, as Israel were doing now with One who had come down from a more wonderful height, with attestation from God beyond all that ever had been given before, and to accomplish a much mightier deliverance. But the warning was plain that that Moses in whom now they boasted had been for forty years an outcast from the people who had yet to own that God indeed had raised him up to be their ruler and their judge.

Stephen pursues the story of how to that rejected man there came the commission from God, sealed with the broad seal of wonders and signs which accredited in that day to another generation what now no miraculous signs, with how much that went far beyond them, could accredit. In the flame of fire in a bush unburnt, Jehovah had manifested Himself to him, tremble though he might as he stood barefoot in His presence, to send him back, His messenger, into Egypt. How unlike indeed to the glory that had so lately been displayed among them, where He who was sent was One with Him who sent Him,—the glory of the Father's Son!

Yet Moses accomplished His work; as Egypt and the Red Sea and the desert witnessed. They believed in Moses now! Was it not he who said, "A prophet will God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me"?

From him came the living oracles,—the voice of Him who had been speaking to them ever since. He whom they rashly accused of blasphemy against Moses, clears himself from any possible imputation of irreverence as to what had spoken to his own soul as that. But for Israel, alas! how had Israel, encompassed with all those daily manifestations of divine power and grace of which their history bore witness,—how had Israel treated Moses? How had they treated that Greater Presence that went with them then? It was all written in those records of theirs, so well-known by them, so little fruitful in them. Were they subject?

of the [u]prophets, Have ye offered me victims and sacrifices, O house of Israel, forty years in the wilderness? Yea, ye took up the [w]tent of Moloch, and the *star of [your]* god Remphan,† the figures which ye made to worship them; and I will [y]carry you away beyond Babylon. The [z]tent of testimony was with our fathers in the wilderness, as he that spake to Moses commanded to make it after the [a]pattern which he had seen. Which also our fathers, receiving from their predecessors,‡ [b]brought in with Joshua, when they took possession of the nations, whom God [c]thrust out from before the face of our fathers,—until the days of David, who found [d]favor before God, and asked to find a tabernacle§ for

[u] Am. 5. 25-27.
[w] *ctr.* Ex. 25. 8. *cf.* Lev. 20. 2, 3.
[x] *ctr.* Ex. 13. 20, 21. *ctr.* Nu. 24. 17.
[y] *cf.* 2 Chro. 36. 11-21. *cf.* Jer. 25. 9-12.
[z] Ex. 40. 1, etc.
[a] Ex. 25. 9, 40.
[b] Josh. 18. 1.
[c] Josh. 23. 9. ch. 13. 19.
[d] *cf.* 1 Sam. 13. 14. *cf.* 1 Sam. 16. 1. *cf.* Ps. 132. 1-5.

* Some omit. † Or, Rephan.

‡ This is one word in the original, διαδεξάμενοι, "receiving by transmission."

§ A different word from "tent," suggesting a permanent abode.

Let their molten god bear witness! Let Jehovah's neglected altars, all those forty years, while those of Moloch and Remphan steamed with profane offerings! And there, as Amos declares in the name of the Lord, their captivity had already been decided.* How this shows the unity of the nation morally all through their history! for their heartfelt turning to God at any time would have brought about the rescinding of that judgment which the prophet thus declares had been continually impending over them.

The tent of testimony began also in the wilderness the history of that dwelling-place of God among them, which furnished another count in the indictment of the fearless disciple. Moses had received the pattern, and made it as directed; and it had come into the land with Joshua, when God cast out the nations from before His people. Of how much might the mere mention of its tarrying time remind them, until David prepared for, and Solomon built the House which with its chequered history, and so long now in its tenantless condition, they clung to yet. But whatever it might be, did they think it, then, so adequate a dwelling for the Creator of all? Solomon himself had asked with wonder, whether He whom the heaven of heavens could not contain could be indeed contained in the house that he had builded. And God Himself had asked by the prophet a similar question. How poor and unworthy was in fact that reverence for the house by those who had cast out and slain the Son of the Father,—Him whose glory Isaiah had seen filling it!

At the thought of that, the light upon that radiant face seems to kindle into an awful glow of fire. The love of God poured out upon the people of His choice, met but by the enmity of apostate hearts, which had tasted only to harden themselves against it, stirs to passionate outbreak a heart that has with its whole energy responded to it. He rebukes them as not the Israel of God, but stubborn and uncircumcised Gentiles in heart and ears. They had always,—and now how fatally,—resisted the gracious strivings of the Holy Spirit, in one unbroken succession of ungodly men. Had he spoken to them by prophets? which of these had not been the victims of their malicious rage? They had slain the messengers who had but announced the coming of the Righteous One; and He having come, they had now gone on to be His betrayers and His murderers! Law!—they might talk of law! They had received it, indeed, at the hands of angels; but they had never kept it.

* Amos v. 25-27. Stephen follows, in general here, the text of the Septuagint, which substitutes Remphan for the "Chiun" of the Hebrew; for what reason seems not to be clear. For "beyond Damascus," in the prophet, Stephen, interpreting by the history, says "beyond Babylon."

the God of Jacob. But Solomon built him a [c]house.
Howbeit the Most High [f]dwelleth not in [places] made
with hands; as saith the [g]prophet, Heaven is my
throne, and earth is my footstool: what is* the house
that ye will build me, saith [the] Lord; or what is the
place of my rest? hath not my hand [h]made all these
things?

Ye [i]stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears!
ye do always [j]resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers
did, so do ye. Which of the [k]prophets did not your
fathers persecute? and they have slain those who
foretold the coming of the Righteous One, of whom *ye*
are now become the betrayers and the [l]murderers! who
have received the law as ordinances of [m]angels, and
have not kept it.

3 (54-60): Heaven opened, and Jesus in the glory of God.

3. And when they heard these things, they were [n]cut
to the heart, and they gnashed upon him with their

c 2 Sam. 7. 1-13. 1 Ki. 8. 20.
f ch. 17. 24.
g Is. 66. 1, 2. cf. 1 Ki. 8. 27.
h Ps. 102. 25-27. Ps. 104.
i Ex. 32. 9. cf. Is. 48. 4.
j cf. Gen. 6. 3. ctr. Eph. 4. 30.
k Jer. 2. 30. Matt. 23. 34-36. Lk. 20. 9-15.
l ch. 2. 23.
m cf. Ps. 68. 17. cf. Gal. 3. 19.
n ctr. ch. 2. 37. cf. 2 Cor. 2. 15, 16.

* Literally, "what kind of house."

3. Was it not true? There was nothing in it all, but the simplest facts of history, the unimpeached, unimpeachable testimony of writers held by themselves for inspired men. Not even a comment had been given, not an application made, until the full tale to which they had listened was complete. Then at last the verdict had been pronounced, none other than which could possibly have been given. Their consciences bore witness in the lightning flash of conviction which cut them to the heart. Yes, it was true; that was the maddening, if not the overwhelming reality: and stubborn with Satanic pride, they were not overwhelmed, but maddened: "They gnashed upon him with their teeth." It was like a defiant hell; though hell will not be defiant.

On the other side, heaven opens upon its martyr —surely martyr now! Filled with the Spirit, he looks up with eager intentness, out of the fast darkening earth to the place whence the light of God, breaking through the mists, had lighted up his face with radiance. But now, as he looks, there is no mist at all, but a way opened through to the uttermost glory; and there He of whom he had testified is revealed to him, standing at the right hand of God. There are no receptive hearts to which to utter it; but he cannot keep back the closing testimony vouchsafed him. Hear it or not, the testimony must be given. Eager, impassioned, triumphant, "Behold," he says, "I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God."

They will have no more! As out of the mouth of the pit, comes the shriek of frenzied opposition: "they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city and stoned him." Israel has given her answer to the appeal of God, and in the light of the open heavens, they slay His witness. The trial of the nation with this is ended.

Yet out of the darkness there is permitted to us here one reminder of transcendant grace: "the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was *Saul*."

There is nothing to be said of him yet; we are turned from him to him who has now fought the good fight, and has finished his course, for whom his crown of victory is reserved: "They stoned Stephen invoking and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" Witness he is to the last; and most so when wholly unconscious of it he has beheld the glory of his Lord with open face, and is changed by it into the same image, from glory to glory:—undying glory in a dying face! "And kneeling down, he cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge! And having said this, he fell asleep."

teeth. But he, [o]being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up steadfastly into [p]heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and he said, Behold, I see the [q]heavens opened, and the [r]Son of man standing at the right hand of God. And they cried out with a loud voice, and [s]stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord, and cast him [t]out of the city, and [u]stoned him. And the [v]witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, invoking,* and saying, Lord Jesus, [w]receive my spirit! And kneeling down, he cried with a loud voice, Lord, [x]lay not this sin to their charge! And having said this, he [y]fell asleep.

o ch. 6. 5.
p *cf.* ch. 1. 10, 11.
q *cf.* Matt. 3. 16.
cf. ch. 9. 3.
cf. Heb. 2. 9.
r *cf.* Jno. 12. 34.
cf. Matt. 25. 31.
s *cf.* Matt. 13. 15.
cf. ch. 22. 22.
t *cf.* Lk. 4. 29.
cf. Heb. 13. 12.
cf. Jno. 9. 34.
u Matt. 21. 35.
cf. Lev. 24. 13-16.
v *cf.* Deut. 13. 9, 10.
cf. Deut. 17. 7.

* There is no object after this, but the thought is, "Calling upon the Lord Jesus as God."

ch. 8. 1; ch. 22. 20. w *cf.* Lk. 23. 46; *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 19. x *cf.* Lk. 23. 34; *cf.* Matt. 5. 44. y *cf.* Lk. 8. 52; *cf.* 2 Tim. 1. 10; *cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 13-18.

How plainly through all this is the fore-gleam of what is just at hand! Only in the language of Saul, the present persecutor,—of Paul, the apostle as he is soon to be,—do we find adequate expression for the spiritual interpretation of the last moments of the dying Stephen. He was to see for himself, through the wondrous grace of God, what Stephen had seen and testified. But in Stephen himself he had seen that transforming power of the glory of Christ, of which he speaks in the words that have been quoted from him. Was he not looking back in them to such a scene as we know never passed from his remembrance? True, he had raged against it then. All the deeper would be his remembrance of it now. Paul is in many ways Stephen revived; and thus what the imprint of Stephen's death would make him. Certainly there was here the anticipation of that "gospel of the glory of Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 4), which was, in a special sense, his gospel. Fitting it was that the awful cloud which closed in darkness Israel's day of grace, should be handed with the brightness of the day that was to follow. The fulness of God's grace, and His manifold wisdom were to be told out now in the Church in its new and heavenly relationships,—mysteries that had been hid from ages and generations, but are now made manifest to the saints (Col. i. 26). In Stephen's vision we have not as yet, of course, the Church, but the Son of man in heaven, which He has opened by His presence there; Heaven fixing the gaze and beckoning the feet of the saints by the Object revealed there. Judaism is thus ended for us; the law with its unrent veil is set aside; and the way is opened for Jew and Gentile to be brought together as heirs of a better inheritance than the law could speak of.

But even now this will only gradually be realized; and the riches of grace will only by degrees pass into the actual possession of those to whom they are destined.

Div. 2.

The death of Stephen was the definite rejection of Christ on the part of the nation. It closed on God's side the last attempt to get fruit from the fig-tree of the vineyard, according to the parable (Luk. xiii. 8, 9). There was no remedy now, nor hope of averting the sentence pronounced, that it should be cut down; and for this the Roman axe had long been sharpening. There remained still—and remain—the promises of God to be made good to a future generation; which grace will fulfil, but of which no particular one can claim fulfilment. Meanwhile He has other purposes, for the accomplishment of which even the blessing of the earth (inseparably bound up with Israel's) may well wait,—purposes which are to show forth the exceeding riches of His grace in Christ,

DIVISION 2. (Chaps. viii.–xii.)

Israel rejecting, but the Church enlarging; the barriers between Jew and Gentile broken down.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. viii. 1–25.)

The free choice of the Spirit: individuality and independence.

1 (1-4): The overruling hand of God.

1. AND [z]*Saul was in** agreement with his taking away. And there arose at that time a great [a]persecution of the assembly that was in Jerusalem; and they were

[z] ch. 7. 58. [a] *ctr.* ch. 2. 47.

* agreeing to.

and His manifold wisdom, to the principalities and powers in heavenly places (Eph. ii. 7; iii. 10).

Thus the setting aside of Israel only leaves room for the increase and development of the Church already formed, but needing yet to know itself as the vessel of this display. The unfolding begins now at once; although with a slowness, for which the history of all previous revelations might well have prepared us. Successive communications, and by various instruments, have always been the method which God has employed, as Scripture, in every part of it, is witness to us. We may be able to see but little the reason of this; although we may be sure that there is profoundest wisdom in it. Nor is this the place to enquire as to the general meaning of the divine ways in this respect. In the case before us, however, we may easily discern how gently, one by one, the bonds are broken which held the people of God to a system such as Judaism was; a system of divine institution, although in accommodation to the need—in fact the self-sufficiency—of man, and not the expression of what was in His own heart. These ties to it are therefore hindrances, which a deeper apprehension of God, or even of themselves, would bring deliverance from, and which the lack of deliverance will make formidable, and yet, with their apparent sanctions they cannot be too rudely broken through. We shall see how thoroughly yet how tenderly this is done; although the history here does not complete the deliverance; above all, does not give the full spiritual account of it, for which we must go to the epistles.

The present division shows the breaking down of the partition wall between Jew and Gentile, by the reception of Gentiles into the assembly; although questions will come up for settlement afterwards, as we find in the fifteenth chapter with regard to the observance of the law of Moses. We see too the freer action of the Spirit of God, in those outside the original apostles. There is another reason for this in the need of the initiative being plainly taken by God Himself, in some sort even apart from these, who are very plainly under the influence of Jewish prejudices which the younger disciples, and perhaps less weighted with the responsibilities of their position, are the more ready to break through.

SUBD. 1.

The Spirit, as we know, has come, and in signs and miracles of power is testifying to the Risen Christ. But until Stephen, and apart from speaking with tongues and prophesying, these seem to have been confined to the apostles themselves (chap. ii. 43; v. 12). With Stephen, who is used of God to give the final testimony to the rulers of the Jews, and in whom appears the anticipation of the impending change, the "wonders and great signs" seem more the fruit of faith and grace with which he is filled. Yet even in Stephen there might appear to be a connection of these with the office given to him, to which he had been set apart by apostolic hands. Now this is to be quite manifestly altered; the time for the free action of the Spirit has come; and He is to be seen as the true Vicar of Christ upon earth, not only energizing, but disposing and directing. Although there has been no doctrine of it yet, the Body of Christ is formed;

all [b]scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. And [c]devout men buried Stephen, and made great lamentation over him. But Saul [d]ravaged the assembly, entering into every house,* and dragging off both men and women, deliv-

* Or, "house after house."

b ch. 11. 19. *cf.* ch. 1. 8 with Phil. 1. 12.
c *cf.* Lk. 23. 48, 50.
d ch. 9. 1. ch.26.10,11. *cf.*1Cor.15.9. *cf.* 1 Tim.1. 13.

and the various gifts which this implies manifest themselves under the constraint of divine love, in the various ability of which their possessors become conscious in the ministry to which love moves. For the possession of the gift brings the responsibility to use it;—a responsibility which is, first of all, to God. The gift is a "manifestation;" and "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal" (1 Cor. xii. 7). The simple rule, intelligible to all, of imparting for the need anywhere what each might have to supply it with,—the adaptation in spiritual things of the rule with which they began in temporal things,—this they found amply sufficient, under the Spirit's guidance, as the general principle of service; which the apostle formulates for them afterwards in the exhortation that "as every one has received the gift," they were "so to minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Pet. iv. 10). This is the principle of a "body,"—a living organism; in which there is no useless member, but the individuality of each one is maintained; individuality without independency,—things which are contradictory of one another: to affirm the latter, as to deny the former, is equally to destroy the thought of the body altogether.

There was no doctrine of the body of Christ as yet. The love that united these disciples to one another taught them the practice doubtless; just as it taught them in temporal things not to say that anything was their own. There was no law to prohibit such ministry as any one was capable of; and they would no doubt have thought such a law as unreasonable in one case as in the other.

While all were thus free to minister, there was of course an inspired teaching which was carefully distinguished from all other. "They continued," it was said of these early disciples, "in the apostles' doctrine." There were men accredited as appointed and qualified of the Lord to lay the foundations on which, and according to which, all the building was to be. As yet there were probably not even the rudiments of any New Testament Scriptures; although one could not say that there was no beginning of such attempts at relation of things most surely believed as Luke afterwards refers to, encouraging his more perfect account. Who can say when Matthew began to write? But all must be the merest conjecture as to this. While yet at Jerusalem, with so many living witnesses as were around them, the need for written records would not be felt as afterwards; and yet it is hard to think that with the intense interest attaching to events then fresh in so many memories, there would be even then no effort to preserve these with the accuracy that writing alone could ensure.

But God had taken care that "scriptures" the infant Church should possess from the beginning; scriptures by which the words of the primitive evangelists would be, and were (with the emphatic approbation of the inspired historian) carefully tested. These Old Testament Scriptures had, as we know, been opened by the Lord Himself after His resurrection to others beside the apostles, and their understandings also opened to understand them. Under such teaching, and with this divine assistance, how much of New Testament truth would they be able to anticipate in those "living oracles" of which Stephen speaks, and which, all through His life on earth, the Lord so constantly referred to and upheld. It is not even yet needless to insist upon the honor which God has always put upon His written Word, even in days in which there were inspired teachers in the Church; who themselves, as we see, constantly referred to it. The Church never taught: it was rather that which was to be profited by teach-

ered them to prison. They, therefore, who were scattered abroad went through [the countries] telling the
[e] glad tidings of the word.
8 (5–13): The Samaritans believe.
2. Now [f] Philip went down to [the]* city of Samaria,

[e] ver. 1.
[f] ch. 6. 5.

* Or, "a": though MSS. differ.

ing. It was at all times in subjection to Scripture, not above it; as were also its inspired teachers. What cause have we for thanksgiving for that which puts into every hand that by which alone the apostolic rule can be observed, to "prove all things, hold fast that which is good!"

1. At this juncture, when the Church is beginning, (as yet, one may say, unconsciously,) her exodus from the Jewish limitations in which, as yet, she had been held, God manifests His overruling power in a very striking way. The tiger-spirit in people and rulers, which had been restrained hitherto, that the new-born child might gather strength, is permitted now to manifest itself; and having tasted blood in Stephen's martyrdom, rages against the followers of the Lord. The Church at Jerusalem is scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, with the notable exception of those whom the priests and rulers had most cause to dread! The apostles, guided of God, no doubt, alone remain. The seed of the gospel is thus scattered abroad, presently to spring up with plentiful fruit; while the absence of the apostles necessitates the rising up of new leaders in these various movements. All are cast with more simplicity upon God alone, to learn as the unfailing consequence, each for himself, the resources that are in Him. The weaning-time of Isaac is fairly begun; though unbelieving Ishmael may mock the more; all which will only hasten the casting out of the bondwoman and her seed.

On the other hand Saul is seen in the very forefront of the persecution, ravaging the flock. Who could have foreseen that here the great apostle of the Gentiles was also getting his education in the omnipotent wisdom of God? But so it was. A Pharisee of the Pharisees was learning in himself, in the most effectual way possible, the spirit of Pharisaism; while he was sharpening the axe which was to smite his self-righteousness to the ground, and prepare him as the chief of sinners to be the humblest of scholars in Christ's school of grace. Thus God works! How marvelous are His workings! How well we may trust Him to carry out His purposes for the glory of Christ! Saul is already helping to scatter the seed which by and by he will be foremost in sowing. Now he is in agreement with Stephen's being taken away; yet the glory in Stephen's face is to have its part in his own transformation into another witness to the Son of man at the right hand of God; himself converted by the gospel of that glory!

The martyr too is buried by devout men, who without being as yet Christians, are penetrated with the sense of the mockery of all justice in his cruel death, and are thus brought into indignant opposition to the heads of their own nation. We may see in them how the blood of the martyrs will be the seed of the Church, as after-generations have proved abundantly. Here too God is working: defeat is victory, and the dead are workers still. They have not failed, who have fertilized the soil of the gospel with their life-blood. The Church is scattered; and those who are thus sent abroad proclaim, with all the emphasis of their suffering undergone for Him, the value to them of the Christ to whom they testify. Who could bribe these tongues to silence, when the Spirit of glory and of God rested upon the confessors of His Name, the more endeared to them? How could the "glad tidings of the Word" find better evangelists?

2. It is in this connection that another of the Seven comes before us, Philip, next named after Stephen, whom we find now, his office at Jerusalem having come to an end by reason of the persecution, preaching Christ in Samaria, among a people with whom (as another has said) law had failed utterly as always. The Gospel of John has shown us the Lord already there, and many believing through His word; while in the beginning of the Acts itself He names

and preached unto them the Christ. And the multitude with one accord gave [g] heed to the things spoken by Philip, when they heard and saw the signs that he did. For from many who had [h] unclean spirits, they came out,* crying with a loud voice; and many who were [i] paralysed, and who were [j] lame, were healed. And there was great [k] joy in the city. Now there had been before in the city a certain man named Simon, who

[g] *ctr.* ver. 11, *cf.* ch. 16. 14, *cf.* Jno. 4. 36–38.
[h] *cf.* Mk. 16. 17, *cf.* ch. 16. 16–18.
[i] *cf.* Lk. 5. 18, etc.
[j] *cf.* ch. 3. 2, etc.
[k] *cf.* Lk. 19. 37, *cf.* ch. 16. 34.

* If the stronger reading is to be followed, the literal rendering would be a broken sentence, the subject changed—"many of those who had unclean spirits—they came out."

distinctly, after Jerusalem and Judea, Samaria as a place in which the apostles were to be His witnesses (chap. i. 8). Hitherto, however, it had not been visited by them; and we can understand how the reception of disciples from that schismatic region, with which the Jews had not even ordinary dealings, as the woman of Sychar reminded the Lord, would have created difficulty which it might have been hard for Jews to meet. Now, when driven out from Jerusalem, the opposition there seemingly hopeless to be surmounted, these circumcised worshippers of the One God could hardly fail to be among the first thought of, with the Lord's example and His word before them. Samaria accordingly is the first place now to be evangelized.

"The opinion," says Lechler, "that this Philip was one of the twelve, was entertained already by Polycrates in the second century, by the authors of the Apostolical Constitutions, in the third century, and by others; it was suggested not only by the sameness of the name, but probably also by the special character of the labors of Philip, since these appear to be such as the apostles exclusively performed. This latter view seems, indeed, to be sustained by the expression, 'he preached (*ekerusse*) the Christ;' inasmuch as it was originally applied to the proclamation of a herald, and denotes therefore here that a public declaration was made in a more than ordinarily solemn manner, and by special authority, while in the case of others, merely the terms *euangelizesthai* [evangelizing] (viii. 4; xi. 20) and *lalein ton logon* [speaking the word] were employed. The evangelizing labors of Philip, therefore, undoubtedly seem to be of a different kind from those of the latter. But they do not on this account assume a decidedly *apostolical* character, in which case *didaskein* or *didache* [teach, teaching] would have been the term employed, as in iv. 2, 18; v. 25, 28, 42; comp. ii. 42. The word *kerussein*, in the present verse, constitutes, as it were, an intermediate grade, or occupies a position between the specifically apostolical *didaskein* and the general Christian *euangelizesthai*, or *lalein ton logon*. This view is in the strictest accordance with the opinion that Philip was one of the Seven, as these men really did occupy an intermediate position in their respective relations to the apostles, and to the disciples in general." (*See Lange's Commentary: the Acts*).

If such, indeed, is the language of the Word, it is right that we all should understand it. We must agree with Lechler that the Philip here spoken of is not the apostle, and for the double reason that the connection shows that the apostles were at this time all at Jerusalem, and because the visit of Peter and John to Samaria afterwards is inexplicable if Philip were of the same standing with themselves. As to the rest, there is no ground for the attempted distinction. Apostles "taught" indeed, and with peculiar authority; but they also "preached" (chap. ix. 20; x. 42; xx. 25, etc.), "evangelized" (chap. viii. 25; xiv. 7, 15, 21, etc.), and "spoke the Word" (viii. 25; xiv. 25, etc). The word used with regard to Philip here, and which means "to publish, or proclaim," is used with regard to those who preached Christ of envy and strife, supposing to add affliction to Paul's bonds (Phil. i. 16); and also with regard to the leper's publication of his leprosy which the Lord had healed, but where assuredly he

used [l]magic arts, and astonished the nation of Samaria, saying that he himself was some great one. To whom they had all given heed, from small to great, saying, This is the [m]power of God which is called great. And they gave heed to him because that for a long time they had been astonished at his magic arts. But when they [n]believed Philip preaching the glad tidings concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were [o]baptized, both men and women. And Simon also himself [p]believed; and having been baptized, remained constantly* with Philip, and was

* Or, "gave strict heed to."

[l] *cf.* ch.13.6-11. *cf.* ch.19.13-16. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 7-12.
[m] *cf.* Matt. 24. 24. *cf.* Jno.5.43.
[n] *cf.* ch. 13. 38, 39.
[o] ch.2.38,41. vers. 36,38. ch.10.47,48.
[p] *cf.* Jno. 2. 23-25. *cf.* Matt.13. 20, 21.

had no "special authority" to do so, but on the contrary, was expressly *forbidden* by the Lord (Mk. i. 45). While as for the "teaching," said to be "specifically apostolical," it is the word used when Christians generally are exhorted to be "teaching and admonishing one another" (Col. iii. 16). It seems even impossible to believe that Lechler means to assure us that there were no rightful teachers except the apostles! Yet his words seem to have no meaning, if they do not mean this.

The whole interest of such arguments clearly is in support of the claim which used to be more openly advocated than at present, that all preaching should be in the hands of a special class of men ordained for this, to which Philip could be then assigned, because of apostolic hands laid upon him; ignoring the fact which is so plain in the history here, that Philip was set apart, with the rest of the Seven, to "serve tables," and that there is no such thought as that of ordaining to preach or teach,—by apostles or any other,—in all the New Testament. We are not going out of our way now, to take this up; but we must not shun what purport to be arguments from the word of God, as to this or any other matter.

The signs which accompanied Philip's preaching were never granted to all; and as intended to bear witness to the Risen Lord, naturally would go with the proclamation of the Word. At first, they seem, for the same reason doubtless, to have been confined to the apostles, to whom was confided a special testimony to the Resurrection. The wider sphere in which now this testimony was going out would imply a corresponding enlargement in the range of such conferments. There is nothing apparently in this which demands very special explanation. God was acting in all this for the glory of Christ, and in behalf of the gospel of His grace which was now about to shine out in deeper, fuller, sweeter significance than it had ever exhibited before.

The miracles at once gain the attention of the people; but only as making way for the Word, which holds them. The power over unclean spirits is marked; and Samaria appears in more than this respect as largely under the power of the enemy, spite of its professed worship of the true God. It may well be that the truth which had begun to work among them had stirred up special resistance on the part of one who knew its power; and Simon the sorcerer had been his special agent to distract and turn away the minds of the Samaritans from the truth. He had dazzled them with a wonder-working, the source of which he was content mysteriously to hint at as some preternatural greatness in himself, which left their imaginations to go further than his cautious claim. For them he came to be "The power of God which is called great;" but before the true power of God all this collapsed, and a great mass of the people followed Christ, and were baptized, both men and women.

A more notable thing follows. The stronghold of Satan's power is itself shaken, and Simon the sorcerer becomes by conviction and profession a disciple of Christ! Simon also himself believed, and having been baptized, remains

astonished, [q]beholding the signs and great works of power that took place.

3 (14-17): The Spirit given.

3. Now when the [r]apostles who were in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John, who, having come down, prayed for them that they might receive [the] Holy Spirit. For as yet he was [s]not fallen upon any of them; only they were baptized unto the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they [t]laid their hands on them, and they received [the] Holy Spirit.

q *cf.* Jno. 4. 48. *cf.* Lk. 16. 31.

r ver. 1. *cf.* Jno. 4. 22.

s ch. 2. 38.

t *cf.* ch. 19. 6. *cfr.* ch. 10. 44-48.

constantly with Philip, as much astonished as he had astonished others, beholding the signs and great works of power taking place. So, apparently, the gospel had triumphed everywhere; in a sense, had done so; but it had to be realized that even victories of the truth in a world fallen away from God, are not always or wholly the triumphs that they seem.

3. Spite of the power manifested, and the joyful reception of the gospel in so many hearts, there was still a lack among these baptized believers which must have been felt greatly. The testimony at Jerusalem had been, "Repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." And so it came to pass. But at Samaria, where the conditions then announced had been evidently fulfilled, the effect did not follow: "as yet the Spirit was not fallen upon any of them." It was not simply an absence of the signs that then followed those who believed. It was not only that the gifts failed, but the "Gift." Manifestations of the Spirit regularly declared the Spirit's presence; but here they were absent; and the inconceivably greater Gift—that of the Spirit itself,—had not been conferred.

That this was the Pentecostal gift none can surely doubt; and the Lord Himself defines this as the Baptism of the Spirit (chap. i. 5). The apostle Paul assures us that by this we are brought into the Body of Christ (1 Cor. xii. 13). This is certainly neither the effect nor the accompaniment of water baptism, as with the ritualists: for at Pentecost the hundred and twenty were not baptized with water, and the converts here in Samaria had all both faith and baptism, yet had not the Spirit. Moreover, while in Jerusalem baptism was a prerequisite, in the case of the Gentiles afterwards the Spirit fell on them *before* the baptism (chap. x. 47). Thus every way there have been distinguished for us things which should never have been confounded. The analogy between them manifestly is, that as water-baptism introduces into the outer sphere of profession, so that of the Spirit introduces into the inner circle of the Church of God.

With new birth or conversion it would again seem almost impossible to confound the Pentecostal Gift. The apostles were neither converted nor born again at Pentecost, but long before; and the Samaritan believers were likewise, as in every other case, converted first.

Finally, the gifts received for testimony were quite distinct from that indwelling of the Spirit personally which the Lord emphasizes for us in the Gospel of John as that which would be the result of His going to the Father (Jno. xiv. 20; xvi. 7). Signs and works of power the disciples had been commissioned to do before (Matt. x. 8), and many others had done them in Old Testament times.

It only remains to enquire why the gift of the Spirit should be delayed in the case of the Samaritans, and why it should have been communicated by means of the apostles. We have not heard of the latter at Jerusalem, nor do we in the case of Cornelius and his friends; a thing which again quite overthrows the ideas which ritualism has associated with it. We find nothing like an ordinance which could only thus be administered, but on the contrary, a quite exceptional dealing with the Samaritans, repeated, as far as we know, but in one case (chap. xix. 6). The rule among Gentiles seems to have been different (Gal. iii. 5).

¢ (18-25): Simon exposed.

4. But Simon, seeing that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the [Holy]* Spirit was given, offered them "money, saying, Give me also this authority that, on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive [the] Holy Spirit. But Peter said unto him, Thy money go with thee to "destruction, because thou hast thought that the gift of God might be obtained by money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter; for thy "heart is not

u *cf.* Matt. 26. 14-16. *cf.* ch. 3. 6.

v *cf.* 2 Kl. 5. 16, 26, 27. *cf.* Heb. 13. 5, 6.

w *cf.* Matt. 15. 8, 19. *cf.* Jude 4.

* Some of the earliest MSS. omit.

And if apostles' hands were indeed necessary for such a communication, where are the apostles, authenticated as the early apostles were, by whose hands alone it can be effected? Thank God that He has not tied His grace to anything of this kind!

With regard to Gentiles also, the necessity of baptism as a prerequisite is done away. Who will assert that in the very first case of their admission to the Church the link between things which God intended to be kept united could be thus broken through? Baptism for those who had openly rejected the Lord as come to them would be there an open reception of Him,—the fit accompaniment of that repentance which was now preached to them in His Name. Here also, where there had been a long schismatic denial of the city and house of God at Jerusalem, that this should be ended by the acknowledgment on their part of Jerusalem in those who had to come from Jerusalem to communicate the Gift which they so imperatively needed, seems in keeping with His ways. For, as the Law pointed forward to the gospel, the necessity of which it so distinctly showed, so does the gospel in its turn confirm the Law. God's dispensations have one common Author, who is to be acknowledged in them all. The Gentiles were a people "without God in the world" (Eph. ii. 12), but a circumcised and orthodox nation must own the institutions of the God they worshiped. All seems here consistent and in place.

4. But the wondrous Gift, while perfecting the true disciples in what they lacked, unveils the unhappy Simon as still in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. Wondering at this new power displayed, he covets for himself the ability to bestow it, and would make merchandise of the divine vouchsafement; it was in full reality,—even in the extremest form of it,—the "trader in the House of the Lord" (Zech. xiv. 21),—the sin of which Christ had indignantly purged His Father's House, and of which Judas himself was but the highest expression. What was afterwards called "simony" was necessarily a feebler manifestation of the same spirit, which may take forms, moreover, not covered by this word. The carnal mind intruding into divine things will necessarily seek to use them for fleshly advantage;—necessarily, for it knows nothing better: the only full victory over it is with him who has found in Christ Himself the satisfaction which frees him from self-enslavement, and makes it a delight henceforth to pour out upon His feet its most precious ointment.

The fervid heart of Peter bursts forth at this offer on the part of a professed disciple, and he denounces it with terrible severity, as if to prevent the possibility of any recurrence of so great a crime. "Thy money go with thee to destruction," he says, "because thou hast thought that the Gift of God might be obtained with money." It was indeed a bold attempt on the part of Satan, if it were not too foolish to be taken as one of his, to regain the ground that he had lost in Samaria. He had in fact insulted the Lord in as evil a fashion in the temptation in the wilderness; and in his worst malice his utter folly is most manifested too. And this poor tool of his, who had seemed to have escaped from his hand, had only demonstrated now how near it was possible to come to the Saviour and His salvation without ever having really "part or lot in the matter" of the Holy Spirit at all. The apostle urges upon him, therefore, repentance and supplication to God, if perhaps the thought of his heart might be

upright before God. [x] Repent therefore of this thy wickedness; and supplicate the Lord, if indeed the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee: for I see thee to be in the [y] gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity. And Simon answered and said, Do ye supplicate the Lord for me, that [z] nothing may come upon me of the things of which thou hast spoken.

They, therefore, having testified and spoken the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached* the glad tidings to [a] many villages of the Samaritans.

x *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 25, 26.

y *cf.* Deut. 29. 18, 19. *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 5.

z *cf.* Ex. 9. 28. *cf.* Lk. 16. 24. *cf.* 2 Cor. 7. 10.

a *cf.* ch. 1. 8.

* Or, "continued preaching."

forgiven. The doubt arises, not from the limitation of divine mercy, but rather from the hardened condition of the man himself, whom he cannot but regard as in the bitterness of gall itself, and as in the bond (some would say, "bundle") of iniquity. Nothing of all that he had seen and owned as to the power of God manifest there, and bowing so many souls before God, had changed him from the sorcerer he had been before, who would now but use the wondrous power he was witness to, to bring men under his own control and make himself to others the centre which he was to himself! This is man still, with the devil's deceit clinging to him, "Ye shall be as God;"—which was in this way, that, as there cannot be two Gods, man must *displace* God, and reign himself in the empty throne! Antichrist at the end will be the full exemplification of this; and, as the Lord intimated to the Jews, for those who refuse Him who comes in His Father's Name, the alternative must be that they will receive Antichrist. He is only the incarnation of their own desires, although like Saul of old he may be a head and shoulders taller than any of his followers.

Simon's answer to the apostle shows that, though alarmed, there is no repentance with him. He asks that they would supplicate the Lord that nothing of the things of which they have spoken may come upon him. He is alarmed as to what may come, and that is all; there is no consciousness of his great inward need, no confession that we read of. Like the devils, he believes and trembles, but he does not turn to God on his own account. And so he passes out of the inspired history. There is a legendary one about him, which speaks of him as returning to his old arts as a magician, but with inveterate hatred of that from which he has turned; but there is no certainty about anything beyond what is written here.

The apostles help on the work in Samaria with their own testimony, and themselves evangelize many other villages; but there is no record given as to the success of their labors. The work is confirmed by their visit to Samaria, and fellowship established between this and what has been the headquarters of the Jewish work. A great step forward has plainly been accomplished.

SUBD. 2.

We are carried off to other scenes, in company with the fruitful preacher at Samaria; who is taken from the work in which he has been blessed and honored, upon a journey which would seem naturally a strange one, announced to him as it is beforehand as to an indefinite place upon a desert road,—the road to a Philistine city. But God claims obedience as a first requisite for blessing; which surely follows it: the labor of believing simplicity shall not go unblessed. In fact he is to be now the evangelist of far-off lands.

A man of Ethiopia has been to Jerusalem to worship, and is returning by that desert road. We may be confident that Jerusalem had not much at that time to reward a pilgrimage. The road might well be to him a dreary one. With a heart for God, such as he surely had, the contact with priests and rulers of the stamp of Caiaphas and his Sadducean company must have thrown a shadow upon his soul. He was besides an outcast religiously, spite of a high position

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. viii. 26–40.)

The Word still going further, and the Old Testament conducting to the New.

BUT an [b]angel of [the] Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go southward, upon the way which goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is [c]desert. And he arose, and went. And behold, a man of [d]Ethiopia, a eunuch, a man in power under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was over all her treasure, had come to [e]worship at Jerusalem. And he was [f]returning, and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Esaias. And the [g]Spirit said unto Philip, Draw near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither, and heard him reading the prophet Esaias, and he said, [h]Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How should I be able, except some one should guide me? And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. And the passage of the Scripture which he read

b *cf.* ch. 5. 19, 20. *cf.* ch. 10. 3. *cf.* ch. 12. 7. *cf.* ch. 27. 23, 24.
c *ctr.* vers. 6–8. *cf.* ch. 16. 23, 24. *cf.* Rev. 3. 7.
d *cf.* Jer. 38. 7, etc. *cf.* Ps. 68. 31.
e *cf.* 1 Ki. 8. 41, 42. *cf.* Jno. 12. 20.
f *cf.* Lk. 24. 13, etc. *cf.* Is. 1. 11–14.
g ch. 10. 19. *cf.* ch. 13. 2. *cf.* ch. 20. 23.
h *cf.* Lk. 24. 45. *cf.* 2 Cor. 3. 15. *cf.* Rom. 10. 14, 15.

and his heart for God. As a eunuch, (if we are to take that literally, as I doubt not,) he could not come into the congregation of the Lord (Deut. xxiii. 1); whatever precious assurances there might be for him of future blessing (Isa. lvi. 3–5). Sitting in his chariot, on his return from the city of hollow forms and barren solemnities, he turns naturally to the pages of the prophets, and of Isaiah most of all, to find consolation; but here too he was met by sorrow, and of a kind also that he could not penetrate,—the sorrows of One from whom Israel, it seemed, had turned, of One led as a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb dumb before its shearers, His judgment taken away, His life from the earth. He is reading this aloud as he overtakes Philip upon the road, as if he would impress himself with something which should have significance for him, but has not; the cloud is over it hopelessly, as it seems to him, without some guide; and he has none. How could he think of finding an interpreter upon that desert way, his back upon Jerusalem, and after his useless visit there?

How the voice of the evangelist, cheery with its message ready, the Voice of the Spirit astir in him to deliver it, must have made his heart leap in response to the question which penetrated already with a ray of light the gloom of his perplexity, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" "How should I?" he answers simply; "except some one should guide me?" And immediately there springs up in his soul the eager hope that in this unknown stranger, God may have sent him help. He asks Philip, therefore, to sit with him in his chariot, and soon is an enwrapt hearer of the gospel of Christ.

Philip's text has been already found for him: from the prophet's picture of the Servant of Jehovah he begins to preach Jesus as the fulfilment of Old Testament prediction; and the good seed sinks into soil prepared. The eunuch finds that he too can have his place in the congregation of the Lord; and he finds One who can do for him what Jerusalem and the law have been unable to do. He takes his place without hesitation as owning in baptism Jesus as his Lord; and, Philip being immediately caught away by the Spirit of the Lord, he goes upon his way with the living Saviour, who is to be henceforth his Guide and Friend, rejoicing.

This story closes here; too soon to satisfy the interest that has been awakened in it. We would fain follow this simple-hearted traveler, and learn whether he is permitted to become the evangelist of the land to which he is returning,—whether, or in what measure, Ethiopia will now stretch out her hands towards God: but nothing of all this is made known to us. If we find in it a hint of the gospel now to go out to the nations afar off, yet it is but a hint, and not an

was this: [i]'He was led as a sheep to the [j]slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is dumb, so he [k]openeth not his mouth. In his humiliation his [l]judgment was taken away; his generation who shall declare? for his [m]life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered and said to Philip, I pray thee, of [n]whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself or of some other? And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from [o]this scripture, preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came upon a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, water! what doth hinder me to be baptized?* And he commanded the chariot to stand still; and they went down both into the water,—both Philip and the eunuch; and he [p]baptized him. And when they had come up out of the water, the [q]Spirit of [the] Lord caught away Philip, and the eunuch saw him no more; for he went on his way, [r]rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus; and passing through, he [s]preached the glad tidings to all the cities, until he came to Cæsarea.

i cf. Is. 53.7, 8.
j ch. 2. 23.
k cf. 1 Pet. 2. 23.
l cf. Phil. 2. 8. cf. Lk. 23. 41, 47.
m cf. Ps. 102. 23, 24. cf. Dan. 9. 26.
n cf. ch. 2. 30, 31. cf Rev. 19. 10. cf. 1 Pet. 1. 10, 11.
o cf. Lk. 24. 27. cf. ch. 17. 2, 3, cf. ch. 10. 43.
p ch. 16. 33, etc.
q cf. 1 Ki. 18. 12. cf. 2 Ki. 2. 16. cf. Ezek. 3. 12, 14.
r ver. 8.
s cf. ver. 25. cf. ch. 21. 8.

* The thirty-seventh verse of the common version is omitted in nearly all the earliest MSS. and versions.

assurance. The apostle of the Gentiles is not yet raised up, and it is his work that we are to pursue in this connection, though there are preliminaries, as we are now to see. But if this be the purport of the story here, it does not seem completed as we might expect. There must be, one would say, another purpose in it; and we are naturally led to look at it again, to see if we may not discover this.

And here at once it strikes us, that this is a child of the old dispensation, in whom its necessary limitations and failure to satisfy those to whom it ministered are plainly set forth, and to whom it is but a hand pointing forward to Him who alone can do this. It is, in short the Old Testament leading on its disciples to the New, that we have before us here; an important point in the history of these times we are considering. We have but just now seen in Samaria how the New Testament takes care to vindicate the Old. Now we have the converse of this; it is the Old Testament seen awakening the longings of the heart after that which it cannot itself supply, while it does testify to the Living Source of it. With this meaning all the details of the story agree: the appearance of the angel of the Lord—that is, of Jehovah*—to Philip, to make known to him his commission. When his work is accomplished, again, it is "the Spirit of Jehovah" who snatches away the messenger. This is both Old Testament speech and action. The Spirit of Jehovah occurs once in the Gospels (Luk. iv. 18), and once before in the Acts (chap. v. 9); it never occurs in the New Testament again. Jehovah also, or what stands for it here, the Name for Israel's covenant God, is naturally found also in Old Testament connection, or in that part of the New in which it is not yet decided whether Israel is or is not to be the special people of God. The Gospels have it frequently, and the first eight chapters of the Acts; after this, except for special reasons in the twelfth chapter, it occurs but twice, or possibly thrice (chap. xiii. 10, 11; xv. 17). The Old Testament has in fact handed over its disciples to the New; and in the

*In the Septuagint, as in our common version of the Old Testament, from which (with the apparent vindication of it in the New) the practice is derived, "the Lord" is commonly substituted for the "Jehovah" of the Hebrew. It is distinguished in the New from the general reference to the Lord Jesus (except where it is a direct quotation from the Greek version) by the omission of the article, bracketed in our text,—"[the] Lord."

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chap. ix. 1–30.)

The Gospel of the Glory of Christ.

1(1-9): Grace to the chief of sinners.

1. BUT Saul, [t]still breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and asked of him [u]letters to Damascus, unto the synagogues, that if he found any who were of the [v]Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. And as he

[t] ch. 8. 1, 3. ch.26.10,11.

[u] ch. 22. 5.

[v] ch.19.9,23. ch.24.14,22.

Epistles we find it only in such references as before mentioned, or two or three times in those written to believers of the circumcision, as in James and Peter. A very few times (again most naturally) it occurs in Revelation. The significance here is therefore plain.

The eunuch is a man in high position, a man of wealth, and of an earnest heart. He is therefore one in whom the character of the Old Testament can be most conspicuously seen; while we see also the care of God for His own to relieve the darkness for those who in their perplexity sought to Him. The Psalms illustrate abundantly both the darkness and the relief. Now the dawn of a brighter day had begun; and the Old Testament hails with gladness its coming so long delayed. It was yet but the dawn, though how bright a one!

Philip is caught away; the mere human teacher is not to take the place of the Divine. His coming and his departure are both well fitted to assure the new disciple how safely he may rest in the all-sufficiency that has thus met and ministered to him. Philip on his part is found at Azotus, the Philistine Ashdod; and from thence, with the joy in his heart of one who is taking the spoil* from the strong one whom a Stronger has overcome, he evangelizes all the cities as far as Cæsarea.

SUBD. 3.

In perfect order of development, we are now to see the conversion of the apostle of the Gentiles; who receives grace and apostleship from the ascended Lord. We have noticed already the connection between Stephen's witness and that of Paul. In Stephen Israel has definitely rejected the Messiah, and thus put from her the blessing to be brought in by Him; the blessing for the earth at large being identified with that of the earthly people. But God has other and higher purposes,—the display of a fuller grace which shall both stoop lower and lift up higher. Man having been thoroughly shown out, not merely impotent and rebellious under law, but in the cross of Christ the mind of the flesh being manifested as enmity against God, He will now act for Himself, to display Himself; and since He is Love, it must be in love that He is displayed,—love in answer to enmity; which is, therefore, grace: of which the messenger is in himself also the perfect exponent. Saul has shared in the national sin of Christ's rejection, is of the party that could be quoted as to an individual in opposition to Him (Jno. vii. 48), was in agreement with the murder of Stephen, and is only roused by it to greater violence; he is the apostle of Jewish malignity, pursuing the disciples even to strange cities, at the very time when he is smitten down by the light from an open heaven, and transformed from the persecutor of Christ into His most devoted follower,—ever afterwards the apostle of the grace that has transformed him. Here, where there could be no possible thought of claim, heaven, closed to man's righteousness, opens to its central, infinite glory, to display in the midst of it, whence the light came, the One whom as yet Saul knew not, but who identified Himself with His suffering saints on earth. The gospel of the glory of Christ was henceforth his gospel.

It is evident that here the meaning of Stephen's radiant face is now made plain. Heaven is really opened,—a Man gone in there, but occupying a place that no mere man could occupy. Paul preaches Him from the first, that He is the

*Ashdod means "spoiler."

journeyed, it came to pass that he drew [w] near unto Damascus; and suddenly there flashed around him a [x] light out of heaven. And he [y] fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why [z] persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he [said], I am [a] Jesus, whom thou persecutest.* But rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be [b] told thee what thou must do. And the men who journeyed

[w] cf. ch. 22. 6-17. cf. ch. 26. 10-18. cf. 1 Cor. 15. 9, 10 with Zech. 3. 2. [x] cf. 1 Jno. 1. 5. cf. 2 Cor. 4. 6. [y] cf. Job 42. 5, 6. cf. Phil. 3. 7, 8. cf. Lk. 18. 13.

* That which follows here in the common version is found in no Greek MS.

[z] cf. Zech. 2. 8; cf. Jno. 15. 20, 21; cf. Eph. 5. 29, 30. [a] cf. ch. 2. 33-36; cf. Heb. 2. 9. [b] cf. ch. 10. 30, 31; cf. Gal. 1. 12-16.

Son of God (ver. 20). Yet he sees Him none the less the Representative of His people, and the bringing men to see and fill their place in Him is henceforth to be his effort,—that for which the Spirit of God has taken him up and uses him. We may not find it come fully out in the Acts, but the necessary first consequence is that Jew and Gentile have no more any separate standing. It is not a Christ after the flesh that he sees, but a Christ in heaven; and that is not the place of a Jew's blessings, nor one from which, if grace bestow it, he can exclude the Gentile. The apostle of the Gentiles is here prepared.

1. Grace is the foundation of all,—free, sovereign grace. Of what use his privileges as a Jew to one taken red-handed on his mission of blood, as Saul is now! It is not a mere repentant sinner suing for and finding mercy. He is an enemy, when as such he is reconciled to God. Legality is an impossibility to one in his position. He cannot dream of any of those half-gospels with which men delude themselves first, and then their hearers. He, at least, had not done his best, save to be lost. His Pharisaism tumbled in one rag-heap at his feet, his cry was now that he was "chief of sinners;" and under no legal system whatever could the *chief* of sinners possibly have hope. But he, met and conquered by divine love, was given no room to dishonor it by a single question. And "in me," he says, "did Christ Jesus show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them that should hereafter believe on Him, to life everlasting." (1 Tim. i. 16). Thus was Paul's doctrine prepared for him at the start; and he also, even in his unconverted state, for it.

"Concerning zeal, persecuting the Church," was Paul's own account afterwards of the state in which divine grace found him (Phil. iii. 6). It did not alter his conviction that he was the chief of sinners; "the least of the apostles," he says elsewhere, and "not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God" (1 Cor. xv. 9). A man's religion may be the worst thing about him; and his sincerity in it will not hinder its effect upon him, but rather make it the more sure. In this case, how solemn to realize that Saul's religion was zealous law-keeping; the law being that which God Himself had given: it was one of Moses' disciples, of whom they could rightly say, "We know that God spake by Moses," who was in that character attacking Christ!

"Touching the righteousness of the law, blameless;" this is another thing that, looking back at himself with full Christian enlightenment, he says of his unconverted state. That was what his conscience said: it did not condemn or accuse him; and that was undoubtedly what in his case made him the zealous persecutor that he was: he had a zeal for God and for that law under which he had fared so well, and deserved so well of Him who gave it! Thus all that seemed so favorable in Saul's case was what was most against him: his own good character, his zeal for law, and, as he allows with regard to his nation at large, his zeal for God even (chap. xxii. 3); and that God was the true God, not a false one: whom yet he was bitterly against, and knew it not, and who was therefore, in so far, against him, even while He pursued in His love this zealous antagonist. What confusion is here! And this is the confusion which

with him stood speechless, [c]hearing the voice,* but beholding no one. And Saul arose from the earth, and when his eyes were opened, he [d]saw no one;† and they led him by the hand, and brought him to Damascus. And he was [e]three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

c *cf.* Dan. 10. 7. *cf.* Jno. 12. 28, 29. *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 14.
d ch. 22. 11. *ctr.* ch. 9. 40.
e *cf.* Lk. 24. 7 with Col. 2. 12.

*The "voice," but not the words, (as shown by the genitive here) in contrast with xxii. 9, which implies the words.
†Many read, "nothing."

springs out of all self-justifying efforts: "for they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God "(Rom. x. 3). Paul will tell us himself in his first epistle, how the scales fell from his eyes in this respect. At present it is with the consequences that God faces him; and on the road to Damascus he suddenly finds himself smitten down by the light of a glory shining in the face of Him against whom the full current of his legal prejudices, with his traditionalism and his strong passion for his nation, all combined to carry him.

It is striking that, while we know from Paul's own statements afterwards, and even from the words of Ananias to him in the present chapter, that Jesus Himself appeared to him, we hear in this first account only of the Light and of the Voice; light out of heaven, in which, certainly for the first time, he stood revealed to himself; a Voice along with it, which fastened his eyes upon himself, even then to raise with himself the question, rather than to accuse, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?"

There could, of course, be no answer. Under the power of that glory which had transfigured Stephen, the very throb of the heart must have been hushed, called to expectant stillness in the presence of God. No need for answer! Had he not helped to batter out that glory from a human face with stones? Now a Human Voice from the midst of that glory was appealing to him, claiming these persecuted ones as His own—Himself! Yet he is drawn,—not repelled. Even now he can seek from Him who is speaking the anticipated answer which condemns—but HE has *not* condemned—him: "Who art Thou, Lord?" And the Royal Voice answers, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest."

Thus they come together—Lord and follower; never to be separated more! How grand and wonderful is the simplicity of it all! The chief of sinners and the Lord of saints come together in a manner which has cost how great a price to effect; and the grace shown is as implicit as it wakes up implicit confidence to receive it. Has not this smitten sinner been in the outshining glory of God, unsmitten?—in the radiance shining on Stephen himself? There are other accounts, but they do not alter this; one can only say, the grace of it is perfect: and when we learn that he is to be the teacher of grace to others, we realize how completely fitted for such a purpose is that of which the history is recorded here. But it is the same grace which meets all of us.

We can see too, that the identification of Christ with His people is here, which is to be developed on two sides, as "ye in Me and I in you." And in this Jew and Gentile disappear, and the way for the mystery of the Church is prepared. Heaven is opened: God has come out to men; and Man—how glorious a MAN!—has gone in to God. Who that knows what was committed to Paul to teach us, but must see how the Pauline truths begin to appear in Paul's conversion? We must not expect to reach their development in the Acts; and it is not yet, therefore, the time to follow their development. We must wait for Romans, Ephesians, Corinthians, Hebrews, to have the working out.

The words that follow, in the common version, this declaration of Himself upon the Lord's part are borrowed from the other accounts of what is here. Luke gives us in this place only the direction to the new disciple to enter into the

2 (10-16): The mission of Ananias.

2. Now there was a certain disciple in Damascus, by name Ananias; and the Lord said unto him in a *f*vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, [here am] I, Lord. And the Lord [said] unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight; and seek in the house of Judas one by name Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he *g*prayeth, and hath seen a man named Ananias coming in, and laying his hands upon him, that he might receive sight. But Ananias answered, Lord, I have *h*heard from many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints in Jerusalem; and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon thy Name. But the Lord said unto him, Go; for he is a *i*chosen vessel unto me, to bear my Name both before the *j*nations and *k*kings, and the *l*sons of Israel; for I will show him how many things he must *m*suffer for my Name.

f cf. ch. 10.3 17.
cf. ch. 2. 17
g cf. Lk. 18 13.
cf. Lk. 15.7
h vers. 1, 2
cf. Gal. 1.23
i cf. Gal. 1 15, 16.
cf. Rom. 1.1
j cf. Rom. 11 13.
cf. Eph. 3 7, 8.
k cf. 2 Tim 4. 16, 17.
cf. ch. 26. 1 2, etc.
l cf. ch 21.40
cf. Rom. 1 16.
cf. Rom. 9 1-5.
m ch. 20. 23
cf. 2 Cor. 11 23-28.
cf. Gal. 6. 17

city, and there it shall be told him what he is to do. The men accompanying him stand speechless, hearing the sound of the voice, but nothing more; the significance is for Paul. He on the other hand remains blinded by the light, and has to be led by the hand into Damascus; in which condition he continues three days without food or drink. He needs this, doubtless, for the tempest aroused within him to subside,—for the review of the now terrible past, and the realization of the new beginning. The resurrection number may well have its significance here in the apprehension of the old things now for him passed away, and all things become new. Shut up in darkness, amid his now uncongenial associates, he is made to realize his entire dependence upon God to bring him forth, and to accomplish in him the purposes of His marvellous grace.

2. We have now a lovely picture of the free intimacy between our Lord and His disciples in those yet unclouded days of early freshness. Saul is to take his place among the followers of the Crucified in the lowly way of baptism at the hands of those who had preceded him as such. A disciple named Ananias ("Jah has shown grace") is chosen by the Lord for the introduction of Saul. He is simply termed a "disciple," and yet is chosen, not only for the administration of baptism, which is in keeping with all that we have elsewhere in relation to this, but also for that which at Samaria just now required a special visit of apostles from Jerusalem—the communication of the Spirit. We have not yet come to this, however, here; but simply to consider the choice of Ananias to minister in the way we see him do to one designed to be the special apostle of the Gentiles. In Paul we see, as he himself declares to us, any Jewish thought of succession from the original twelve broken through. Paul is an "apostle, not of men, nor through man;" and on this account confers not with flesh and blood, nor even goes up to Jerusalem in the first place, to those who were apostles before him, but to Arabia, to the "backside of the desert" (Gal. i. 16, 17). The living and abiding Spirit is to be Himself the Source of supply; and the warrant for what is said is, first of all, the truth of it, intertwining with, confirmed by and confirming, all that is truth elsewhere.

Ananias is therefore, as a simple disciple, all the more suited to be sent to Saul; and the Lord accordingly appears to him in a vision, bidding him go and seek in the house of Judas this man who has seen him in a vision, in answer to his prayer, laying his hands upon him, that he may receive his sight. Thus he who is to be in such a large and blessed way, the minister to others is to learn himself, first of all, his own need of ministry, and to receive it. How suited a messenger must this Ananias, with his significant name have seemed to the thankful and humbled man! "Grace" was, indeed, his new-

3 (17-22): Filled with the Spirit.

3. And Ananias went away and entered into the house; and, [n]laying his hands on him, he said, Saul, Brother, the Lord hath sent me,—Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way by which thou camest,—that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be [o]filled with [the] Holy Spirit. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight. And he arose, and was [p]baptized; and having taken food, he was strengthened. And he was with the disciples that were in Damascus certain days. And immediately he preached Jesus in the synagogues, that he is the [q]Son of God. And all who heard him were astonished, and said, [r]Is not this he who in Jerusalem destroyed those who called upon this name, and came hither for this purpose, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? But Saul [s]increased more and more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt at Damascus, proving that [t]this is the Christ.

n ver. 12. *cf.* Mk. 16. 18. *cfr.* ch. 8. 17-20.
o cf. ch. 10. 44.
p cf. ch. 16. 33, 34.
q cf. Rom. 1. 4. *cf.* Jno. 9. 35. *cf.* Heb. 4. 14.
r vers. 13, 14. *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 12-17.
s cf. 1 Tim. 4. 14, 15.
t cf. ch. 17. 3. *cf.* ver. 20.

found joy. But Saul's reputation has gone before him, and Ananias shrinks from his task, and ventures even to remonstrate with his Lord. Do we, who perhaps wonder at his foolish faint-heartedness, never imitate it, and reason with Omniscient Love as to His ways with us? But the Lord replies by letting him know that Saul was a chosen vessel unto Him, to bear His Name in testimony of the widest range,—to Gentiles and to Jews both; but the Gentiles here come before the Jews. That which he is to suffer also is proportioned to the breadth of his testimony; to bear the Name of Jesus implies suffering; witness and martyr are to be the same word.

3. There can be no more demur, but Ananias departs upon his errand; and entering the house, lays his hands upon Saul, acquainting him with his commission. It is remarkable that Ananias here joins his being filled with the Spirit as that for which he is sent, while yet it is not mentioned when, or in connection with what, Saul receives the Spirit. With Jews, as having openly rejected Christ, the order elsewhere was that they owned him in baptism, by which they received public remission of their sins, and then they received the gift of the Holy Spirit. At Pentecost nothing is said of the laying on of hands for this, which is first recorded as done in Samaria; but at Ephesus also John's disciples are first baptized, and then they still wait for the Spirit until Paul's hands are laid upon them. In the case of Cornelius and his friends, there is no previous baptism, and no laying on of hands at all. *Was* there any laying on of hands for this by Ananias? Two things would argue for it,—the words of Ananias himself, and the case of John's disciples. On the other hand, on the imposition of hands all we hear of as following is the healing of Saul's blindness; there is nothing said of the Spirit being given at that time; nor of any imposition of hands at a later time. The insistence upon baptism first in the case of the Jew seems likewise against it; though the apostle of the Gentiles is so exceptional a case, and seems so to reflect the gospel that he carries, and the change in regard to the Gentile is so marked, that one is inclined to read his saying, "Christ sent me not to baptize," *back* into his own history here. In this unsatisfactory way, it seems, we have to leave it.

"Filled with the Holy Spirit," however, he is indeed; immediately preaching in the synagogues to which his letters of authorization are addressed that very Jesus, whose followers he is commissioned to destroy. He preaches Him also as yet the twelve, as far as the history goes, have not done, in the very character in which Israel had rejected Him, as *Son of God*. This is the fullest reversal of his own mad unbelief, and the completest challenge of that of Israel.

4 (23-30): Tribulation.

4. Now, when many days were fulfilled, the Jews took [u]counsel together to slay him; but their plot became known to Saul. And they watched also the gates day and night, that they might slay him; but the* disciples took him by night, and [v]let him down through the wall, lowering him in a basket. And when he was come to Jerusalem, he essayed to join himself to the disciples; and they were all [w]afraid of him, not believing him to be a disciple. But [x]Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and related to them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had spoken boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was with them [y]going in and out at Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. And he spake and disputed with the Grecian Jews; but they went to work to kill him. And when the brethren knew it, they brought him down to [z]Cæsarea, and sent him away to Tarsus.

u ch. 5. 21. *cf.* ch. 7. 57, 58.

v 2 Cor. 11. 32, 33. *cf.* Josh. 2. 15. *cf.* 1 Sa. 19. 12.

w *cf.* vers. 13, 14.

x ch. 4. 36. *cf.* ch. 11. 22-26.

y *cf.* ch. 22. 17, 18.

z *ctr.* ch. 23. 31-35.

* R. V. reads, "his," but this is not required by the text, and does violence to the teaching of scripture.

The missionary of their own enmity is suddenly become the very champion of the "Way" he persecuted. Astonishment, which for the moment must have been dismay, falls upon those who hear him and know that which has wrought this change, to which his companions on the road could but bear witness as far as that strange interruption of their journey was realized by them. And Saul increased more and more in strength, and confounded the Jews dwelling at Damascus, proving that the One whom he confessed was indeed the Christ.

The preaching of Jesus as the Son of God we should naturally have expected to have heard in the first place from the lips of John, whose writings are, as we know, so full of this. In Paul's epistles, if Hebrews is, as I doubt not, to be included among these, we have the Lord spoken of in this character twenty-nine times; but in John's epistles (of only seven chapters) there are twenty-three occurrences. In one passage alone in the rest of the General Epistles, where Peter quotes the Voice from the "excellent glory" (2 Pet. i. 17), do we find this title; this, although Peter is in the Gospels the first of the inspired writers to own Christ openly in this way. The kinship between Paul and John is thus plainly declared. The connection with Paul's doctrines we must consider later, as we take up his epistles.

4. The visit to Arabia, of which the epistle to the Galatians speaks, takes place evidently during those "many days" at the end of which the persecution breaks out, in which first Saul has to taste of the same cup of which he had been compelling others to drink in the dark days forever ended. At first the wonder of his conversion had discomfited the adversaries; but this naturally terminates in a violent reaction on the part of those who have not been brought by it to God; and now they join together in a plot to slay him: but He who in so extraordinary a way had brought him to Himself had no intention of leaving him in the hands of his enemies. The plot became known to Saul; and the gates being watched day and night, the disciples let him down in a basket through a window in the wall by night, and he escapes their hands.

So ends Saul's testimony at Damascus; nor is he rescued by a miracle from the death designed for him, but escapes in a lowly manner enough, more suited to the way of the Cross which he had begun to tread. It is but the beginning of those many sufferings which the Lord had said that He would show him that he was to endure for His sake. The Glory which was henceforth his guiding star did not light up the earth for him, but drew him out of it. His was to be in a

SUBDIVISION 4. (Chap. ix. 31–43.)
Remnant mercy in Israel.

1 (31): Peace.

1. THEN had the assembly* [a]peace throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, being [b]edified; and, walking in the [c]fear of the Lord, and in the [d]comfort of the Holy Spirit, was [e]multiplied.

*So the earliest MSS. and versions; but many read, "assemblies."

a *ctr.* ch. 8. 1.
b *cf.* Eph. 4. 16.
c *cf.* Heb. 12. 28. *cf.* Ps. 34. 9.
d *cf.* Phil. 2. 1, 2. *cf.* Jno. 14. 16.
e *cf.* ver. 42. *cf.* ch. 16. 5.

peculiar sense a heavenly testimony, and the power of it that by which the world was crucified to him, and he unto the world.

Driven from Damascus, Saul goes up to Jerusalem, according to his own statement to see Peter (Gal. i. 18); for what purpose we are not told; but he abode there only fifteen days. Although three years had elapsed from the time of his conversion, the report of it which had reached the disciples there had yet found no credit in the scene of his former "ravages" upon the flock of Christ. In Arabia he had been for some time probably away from observation, and his recent testimony again in Damascus seems not to have been known. Thus when he essayed to join himself to those whom he had helped to scatter, and who had, no doubt, many of them, vivid remembrances of those unhappy days, there was a general recoil. "They were all afraid of him, not believing him to be a disciple." At this juncture the future companion of his labors, Barnabas, appears as mediator. He took and brought him to the apostles; that is, as Paul himself tells us, to Peter and James, the Lord's brother, and represents to them the whole matter. The cloud is cleared away, and Saul remains with them going in and out at Jerusalem, and speaking boldly in the name of the Lord.

He takes up now the work of the first martyr, disputing with the Hellenistic Jews, who go to work to give him Stephen's portion; but in an ecstasy (chap. xxii. 17, 18) the Lord appears to him, and bids him depart from the city, assuring him that they will not hear his testimony, and that he is to be sent far off to the Gentiles. The brethren thereupon bring him down to Cæsarea on the sea-coast, and send him forth to Tarsus, his native city. There for awhile we leave him.

SUBD. 4.

Israel is thus casting out the messengers sent to her, and filling full for herself the cup of wrath, which at a later time we know that she drank to the uttermost. But God is slow to anger, and of great mercy; and while the threatened judgment lingers, His long suffering is salvation to a remnant, in whom may be seen the promise yet abiding of final blessing to Israel as a whole. This remnant is as the sap of a cut down tree, in which is the hope of revival for the tree. The history of the development of the divine ways in the Church pauses for awhile here, to give us such an intimation of the faithfulness of a Saviour God.

1. We have first, as the result of the dealing of God with the chief persecutor, peace to the assembly throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria;—the whole extent, as far as yet enjoyed, of Israel's land. It is but a remnant, this assembly, as already said, and the mass are rejecting; and so it will be even in the last days: a remnant will become the nation; God having to purge out the obstinate rejectors from among the people, as prophecy shows abundantly. Here it is only a hint of what will be; yet we see in it Judea and Jerusalem maintained in their central place, Samaria owning it, in Galilee of the Gentiles God's heart towards His scattered ones. Outwardly there is peace; inwardly the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit. How blessed to realize when for Israel at last all this shall be fulfilled!

Let us notice what are here put together for us: first of all, not the comfort, but the fear of the Lord,—hearts in subjection to the Ruler of His people. With Him, if grace reigns, as it does, the reign is not less absolute, but more.

2 (32-35): Æneas healed.

2. And it came to pass, as Peter went [f]throughout all parts, he came down also to the saints who dwelt at Lydda. And he found there a certain man named Æneas, who had kept his bed eight years, [and] * was [g]paralysed. And Peter said unto him, Æneas, Jesus the Christ healeth thee: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately; and [h]all that dwelt in Lydda and the Sharon saw him, and† turned to the Lord.

[f] *cf.* ch. 8.25.

[g] *cf.* Matt. 9.2, etc. *cf.* Mi. 4.6, 7.

[h] *cf.* Ps. 126.1, 2.

3 (36-43): Dorcas raised up.

3. Now there was in Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which being interpreted is called Dorcas;‡

* Literally, "who." † οἵτινες: "who also." ‡ "Gazelle."

When grace has not for its effect the fear of the Lord, in the same proportion is grace really unknown, and the comfort of the Holy Spirit will be unenjoyed. The Spirit is here to glorify Christ; and, as the *Holy* Spirit, refuses absolutely all touch of evil; legality and license are both in uttermost extreme from Him, and further by far than they are from one another. The slave may at times make up for his slavery by license; the child's happy service needs no compensation for its offering of love.

Here in a soil like this the seed of divine truth will fructify; for it is love that edifieth; and the assembly walking in such a spirit will be surely multiplied. Where an opposite spirit exists, multiplication will be but a multiplication of the evil; it is a good law that forbids such unhappy growths to go on, whose sap, against nature, is poisonous to themselves.

2. We now follow Peter, who with the growth of the work is no more confined to Jerusalem, but is passing through the land. He comes down to the saints who dwell at Lydda, a still existing town in the plain of Sharon, and finds there a certain man, who from the description and the apostle's words to him seems not yet to be a disciple, named Æneas, eight years paralyzed. Immediately, upon Peter's declaration, "Jesus the Christ healeth thee, arise, and make thy bed," he is healed and rises up; and all that dwelt in Lydda and the Sharon" (the Plain, stretching from Joppa to Cæsarea on the sea-coast), "saw him, and turned to the Lord."

Conversion so widespread shows indeed that God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew (Rom. xi. 1); and Lydda well fulfills its name, as the "birthplace" of so many souls. We naturally ask ourselves, Is this all that we are intended to find in it? or is there here, as in so many other cases, a hidden meaning? If the Lord is assuring us in this of what the apostle declares that Israel's remnant according to election preaches to us, would it be strange to find in it a further assurance as to God's purposes towards His ancient people? Here too, would be the very place in which we might expect to find this: here, where we are just at the point at which, the natural branches being broken off for unbelief, the Gentiles are being graffed into the olive. Certainly all is in harmony in this way. Æneas means "praise"; and in the case of Israel, a paralysis of praise is truly come upon her. She is a reproach instead of praise, but is yet to be a people formed for Himself, to show forth His praise. Æneas is thus yet to be healed, and as it were in a moment, by Jesus the Christ; and Lydda may well speak of a new "birth" by which this will be effected. Nothing else will accomplish it; for the nature of man is fallen, and the Lydda of natural birth is in the "plain,"—the common level of humanity. Christ alone can renew it; so that in the end Sharon shall be a fold of flocks (Isa. lxv. 10), a type of which this remarkable ingathering of converts there may speak. For when Israel is that praise to God which she never yet has been, then will the time have come for such a turning to God as the earth has not yet witnessed. Israel's eighth year will have come,—her new covenant time.

3. If this, then, be the deeper view of the healing of Æneas, the raising up of Dorcas must, one would say, be in the same line of application, and have its

she was [i]full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. And it came to pass in those days that she fell sick and [j]died; whom having washed, they laid in an [k]upper chamber. And as Lydda was nigh unto Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him, entreating him, Delay not to come on to us. And Peter arose and went with them; whom, when he had arrived, they brought up to the upper chamber. And all the [l]widows stood by him, weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, when she was with them. But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down and prayed; and turning to the body, he said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand, and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her [m]alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord. And it came to pass, that he abode many days in Joppa, with one [n]Simon, a tanner.

[i] *cf.* 1 Tim. 2. 10.
[j] *cf.* Jno. 11. 3, 14. *cf.* Rm. 1. 3, 5.
[k] *cf.* ch. 1. 13. *cf.* ch. 20. 8.
[l] *ctr.* ch. 6. 1.
[m] *cf.* Lk. 8. 51–55. *cf.* Rom. 11. 15.
[n] *cf.* ch. 10. 6, 28.

own story to tell, different, yet connected. And here one thing is plain: Æneas presents to us the healing of a sinner; Dorcas, on the other hand, the resurrection of a saint. If both of these speak of Israel, it must be in these contrasted ways: and in both ways it is clear that Israel may be spoken of, or her history would be a very different one from what we know it to be. Israel as astray from God is how the centuries long have known her, the enemy of Christ and of His cause, and for many this has almost blotted out the remembrance of the long debt we owe her, and of the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles that have sprung from her. But God does not forget: "I remember thee," He says, "the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after Me in the wilderness, in a land not sown. Israel was holiness unto the Lord, and the firstfruits of His increase: all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them, saith the Lord" (Jer. ii. 2, 3). And for us, how is it possible to forget that from Israel we have obtained, through the mercy of God, almost the whole of the precious volume of inspiration, out of which we have, so to speak, been fed and clothed, *not* for centuries merely, but for the life that is to come? Here as a picture of Israel, this woman full of good works and almsdeeds is surely no unfitting one. The more we consider, the more we shall realize its perfect appropriateness.

It is in Joppa, anciently Japho, that we find her.—a name which means, as I take it, "fair to Him." (See notes on Josh. xix. 46.) This agrees entirely with that view of Israel which is presented to us here. Tabitha's name is given us in two languages, as if there were importance in it, and means "beauty," in Daniel (chap. xi. 16, 41), twice applied to the land of Israel, "the *glorious* land." Its secondary meaning, in which we are to take it here, is "gazelle," so named from its beauty, one of the clean animals of Scripture, both chewing the cud and dividing the hoof (Lev. xi. see the notes). If we realize the typical meaning of these, we shall understand its application to one who "ruminates" upon the Word, the walk corresponding to this. Israel as represented by the psalmists, and especially the writer of the 119th psalm, answers fully to the name; and in this character they were suited to be vessels of inspiration, as in fact they were. The double name gets in this way its significance; for these two languages, Hebrew and Greek, were those of the Old and New Testaments, for both of which we are indebted to the Jew.

Tabitha is dead, and there is no human hope of recovery for her. We may weep and lament, but she is gone from us; yet those possessed with the spirit

SUBDIVISION 5. (Chap. x., xi.)
The Gentile brought to God.

l (x.-xi. 18): Jew and Gentile at one.
l (x. 1-20): God Himself the Mover.

1. [l] NOW [there was] a certain man in Cæsarea, Cornelius by name, a [o] centurion of the band called the Italian band, a devout man, and one that [p] feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God continually. He saw in a [q] vision, openly, as it were about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in unto him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And he, fastening his eyes upon him, and being afraid, said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a [r] memorial before God. And now [s] send men to Joppa, and fetch one Simon, who is surnamed Peter; he lodgeth with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the

o *cf.* Lk. 7. 2-10.
p ver. 35. *cf.* ch. 16. 14.
q *cf.* ch. 9. 10. *cf.* vers. 10-17.
r *cf.* Matt. 26. 13. *cf.* Heb. 6. 9, 10.
s ch. 11. 13, 14.

of Peter may still pray, not without hope, for Israel's resurrection. It will surely come, as it did in the case before us here, and Israel live in far more than all the glory of her past. The effect too, as in the healing of Æneas, will be the bringing many more to faith. Joppa or Japho will again fulfill its name, and "the Lord of hosts shall be for a crown of glory and for a diadem of beauty unto the residue of His people" (Isa. xxviii. 5).

How fitting and comforting an assurance with which to turn to see the incoming of the Gentile, as we find it now in the pouring out of the Spirit on Cornelius and his company at Cæsarea!

SUBD. 5.

The quiet and gradual way in which preparation has been made for the disappearance of the barrier between Jew and Gentile must be apparent to all. Israel has had full and patient trial, all possible proof given her of its being God who was appealing to her, God whom she was resisting, fully displayed in goodness ready to forget all past offences,—the very death of His Son, if only now at last, they would turn to Him. When it is manifest that they will not, then the door is opened to Samaria, a circumcised people, not without Jewish admixture, partially obedient to the law, and who are compelled to own Jerusalem in the reception of the distinct characteristic of the new faith that has gladdened them. Then God Himself leads on in a special way to the reception of the eunuch, with whom the grace of Christ goes out to lands afar off. After this it is that the apostle of the Gentiles is raised up, although only very slowly does his mission become known; he himself only slowly awaking to it; himself a "Hebrew of the Hebrews," yearning over his kinsmen after the flesh, and but now a rigid Pharisee. But even so, *he* is not to lead in the admission of the Gentiles; but an unexceptionable instrument is provided for this,—no less than the foremost of the apostles of the circumcision, Peter himself.

In this also now God manifests His will with unmistakable plainness in the double vision, at Joppa and Cæsarea; then by the outpouring of the Spirit in view of all who came with Peter: those who are ready to oppose at Jerusalem have to own that God has granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life.

After this the way is opened by which certain disciples without any prominence of gift or position can speak at Antioch to the Gentiles, and gather an assembly there; and this becomes a new point of departure from which the first direct mission to the Gentiles is sent out; but this by a special revelation of the Spirit, which sets apart Barnabas and Saul for the new work.

1. The first section here manifestly takes in the work at Cæsarea, by which the principles are established which henceforth govern the Assembly. It is in effect constituted by them as now outside the Jewish fold. The exodus is really

sea.* And when the angel who was speaking to him was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier, of those who waited upon him continually, and having related all things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

And on the morrow, as 'these were journeying, and drawing near to the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour. And he became hungry, and desired to eat. But while they

t *cf.* ch. 8.26–39.

* The words following in the common version are wanting in all the best MSS.

complete, though there may be an effort afterwards really to undo this, and bring all the disciples under the law of Moses. This is resisted, however, on the very ground of what has been established here.

[1] All through this fresh movement, as already said, God is Himself the Mover. He begins, with the care which we see manifested all through, with an unexceptionably good example of the Gentile, a man "borne witness to by the whole nation of the Jews," and therefore, not perplexing the matter by any extraneous question. He is moreover a devout man, a worshiper of the true God, and one that truly fears Him, all his house participating with him also in this. Although not outwardly united in any way to Israel, yet his heart necessarily united him to the people of Him he worshiped, and he manifested this by his almsgiving. He was a man of prayer; praying to God continually. But all this, true as it was, and the fruit of faith, (without which it would not have been true, nor could God, as He presently does, have owned it,) had not sufficed to set him where grace sets the believer now, in conscious salvation. God was now "preaching peace by Jesus Christ"; and to those far off, and to those that were nigh, He had to preach it (Eph. ii. 17).

At the ninth hour of the day, the Jewish third hour of prayer, God owns and answers the man that seeks Him, and an angel of God visits him. The fear that falls on men so naturally in the presence of the supernatural, falls upon him, but the message is one of grace alone, and he is assured that his prayers and alms have come up for a memorial before God. He is directed therefore to send for Peter from Joppa, who shall tell him words (it is added in the account afterwards given at Jerusalem), whereby he and all his house shall be saved.

In such a declaration, if we are to understand it aright, we must remember that we are here in the overlapping of two dispensations. It is as evident, on the one hand, that Cornelius was already a believer, as that, on the other, he had not yet the faith of Christ. In the midst of Christendom to-day, such a condition would be perfectly anomalous and unintelligible; and so for most it would be to talk of a soul having life and being still unsaved. Cornelius undoubtedly had life; he was one of those sheep not of the Jewish fold, of which the Lord had spoken, whom He would bring and unite with those of Israel, and there should be one flock, one Shepherd (Jno. x. 16). He was in fact now causing these to hear His voice, and this accounts for what is strange apparently in the Gentile here, but which is at once intelligible when we consider his position between the dispensations. And though Cornelius was a believer of that which was passing away, yet for final salvation he needed to receive the Christ who had come, and would do so if the Shepherd's voice fairly reached him: for His sheep hear His voice. If it be final salvation that is spoken of here, all difficulty disappears as to the words used. Of a *present* salvation Judaism, as a legal system, could know nothing; much less, if possible, a Jewish proselyte, or one like the Roman centurion, converted to God, and yet outside the law. Into the precious assurance of this nothing but Christianity could bring him.

Let us notice, before we pass on, the blessed announcement, "who shall tell thee words whereby thou and *all thy house* shall be saved." They are in fact the

made ready, an ecstasy came upon him; and he beheld [u] heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet, [tied]* at the four corners, [and]* let down to the earth; in which were [v] all the fourfooted beasts and creeping things of the earth, and birds of the heaven. And there came a voice unto him, Rise, Peter; kill and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything [w] common or unclean. And the

u *cf.* Eph. 3. 5, 6. *cf.* ch. 7. 56.
v *cf.* Rom. 3. 9–18.
w *cf.* Lev. 11. 1, etc. *cf.* Ezek. 4. 14. *cf.* Is. 66. 17.

*Omitted in some MSS.

paschal announcement of Christianity. Of the Jewish feasts, as we have them given in the twenty-third chapter of Leviticus, only those of the seventh month, in their typical significance, belong to Israel nationally,—the number seven being, as we know, the sign of completion—the complete time reached. Passover, the Sheaf of Firstfruits, Pentecost, were all offered to Israel, but rejected by them, and are become the peculiar Christian feasts, a silent gap of time intervening between these and the national seasons—the Blowing of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Tabernacles—of the seventh month.

Passover is not *national*, in the sense in which the offerings of the Day of Atonement covered all Israel. It was kept by families, and might be held a second time by those who were hindered by defilement or a journey at the first celebration: just as now it is not nations that are contemplated, but believers from among the nations; however freely the gospel is addressed to all. Yet here nevertheless God would assure us of a grace that would not forget the links of relationship by which He has bound us together. "Thou and thy house" reminds us still of the family ordinance, though unbelief, in a dispensation whose principle is, "Thou standest by faith," may make all this void. For there is, of course, no possible reason for so wild an imagination as that the comforting promise to Cornelius' house, or any other, is "*irrespective of faith.*" Rather, if faith be in any sense the gift of God, are we assured by this, and the general thread of such intimations woven into Scripture, that He is ready to bless the households of His people still, wherever the Abrahamic faith shall be accompanied with that Abrahamic diligence of heart which seeks God's blessing in His appointed ways. However much the gospel might be preached to Cornelius' household, such an assurance would mean very much for him. We all have the comfort of knowing that it is the same gracious God with whom we have to do to-day, who has given us too, as some of us have the consolation of believing, in other ways, an assurance akin to that here vouchsafed the centurion; but which only faith can have and plead with Him aright. Here is not the place further to enlarge upon it.*

The angel does not preach the gospel to Cornelius, but sends Peter to him for this; so thoroughly does the Lord cleave to His own methods and appointments. Peter moreover, as we have seen, is specially needed here; and that need is seen the more in the means taken to prepare the apostle for what is before him. The Lord goes in advance of the messengers from Cæsarea to the house of Simon the tanner † by the seaside; and that house is the lowly birthplace of a wide and far-reaching movement in His ways with men.

*The name Cornelius is no doubt significant as all is here, though we may not see its significance. It was the name of a prominent Roman family—the Cornelian—and this, with his being the centurion of the Italian band, seems to emphasize the fact of his being absolutely a Gentile. The word Cornelius means, "pertaining to a horn." S. R.

†The occupation of tanner was considered unclean by the Jews. A large part of the tanning was the preparation of skins for water bottles. May there not be a suggestion here of the passing of that ceremonial uncleanness which is brought out in the history of Cornelius? Peter was already lodging at the house of this Simon, a preparer of unclean things to be vessels for holding pure water. That his house was by the seaside seems also to suggest the sea of the Gentiles,—a familiar thought in Scripture—upon whose border Peter indeed was. S. R.

voice [came] again to him the second time,* What God hath [x]cleansed, make not *thou* common. And this took place thrice, and the vessel was immediately [y]taken up into heaven.

Now as Peter doubted in himself what the vision he had seen might be, behold, the men that were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, [z]stood at the gate, and called, and asked whether Simon who was surnamed Peter, was lodging there.

x *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 9–11. *cf.* Eph. 2. 11, etc.

y *cf.* Eph. 5. 25–27. *cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 17.

z *cf.* ver. 9.

* Plural.

The vision sent to Peter is founded on that distinction of clean and unclean meats which operated so largely in keeping the Jew apart from the Gentile. The Gentile was himself in fact the unclean liver with whom the one who sought conformity to the mind of God could not indeed go far without danger of pollution. The law, entirely apart from the typical significance in which so much of the interest attaching to it is found by us to-day, served as a useful barrier to unlimited intercourse with the idolatrous world around, which in these very things had upon it, as we know, the stamp of its idolatry. The question of meats offered to idols could in this way become a serious one for Christians themselves, though now for the uninstructed only (1 Cor. viii). But Judaism as a rule for a people in the flesh, externally rather than spiritually set apart to God, was of necessity negative and prohibitory in its requirements,—a fold shutting in, rather than a principle of liberty: for liberty would be in their case concession, instead of victory over opposing forces. Christianity with its spiritual power alone could permit liberty. It was a sign of weakness for Judaism that it had no missions, preached no evangel: how could the word, "No man can see My Face and live," be this? So the Jew went beyond the law in his restrictions, built the fence higher and higher, but found none sufficient.

With Christianity a new power had come; Godward and manward there was a significant change. The Jew himself was gone morally: what use of a fence to keep from contamination the crucifiers of the Son of God? It was not merely that the mind of the flesh was not subject to the law of God; it was enmity to God Himself. And what the end of this long experiment proved as to the Jew, it proved really as to man at large; there was nowhere any betterness. Jew and Gentile had been united at the Cross; they had no need to separate after this: for the believer in Christ, the *world* was crucified by it, and he crucified to the world.

From that side the fence had gone; but from God's side it was gone also. For those who had crucified Christ, it must be now either judgment wholly, or else pure grace. But Christ need not have died to ensure man's condemnation; nor would He have died to increase man's doom. Thus, if there is to be any fruit of His death whatever, it must be grace. If God then means by it to show His grace, how great will that grace be!

In fact man by the murder of the Son of God has consummated his sin, and demonstrated his condition; but on the other hand Christ gave Himself for our sins, and grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life. Thus the fence is down from God's side; the veil that hid His blessed face is rent from top to bottom, and to all men, guilty alike, and with no pretension to title, Jew or Gentile, God has come out, and whosoever will is welcome in.

In such light as this, then, the contention of Jew with Gentile is at an end; to maintain it is mere self-righteousness. The vessel that Peter sees comes down from heaven; and as seen thus the distinctions made by Judaism are ended and over. "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life." "He" too "that believeth that Jesus is the

And while Peter pondered over the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee; but arise, and go down, and go with them, nothing [a]doubting; for *I* have sent them.

2 (21-43): The testimony received.

[2] And Peter went down, and said unto the men, Behold, I am he whom ye seek; [b]what is the cause for which ye are come? And they said, [c]Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one fearing God, and borne witness to by the whole nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by a holy angel to send for thee to his house, and to hear words from thee. So he called them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow he arose and went forth with them, and certain of the [d]brethren from Joppa went with him. And on the morrow he entered into Cæsarea. And Cornelius was [e]waiting for them, having called together his kinsmen and his near friends. And when Peter was now coming in, Cornelius met him, and [f]fell at his feet, and worshiped him. But Peter raised him, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. And talking with him, he went in, and found many come together: and he said to them, Ye [g]know how it is unlawful for a Jew to keep company or come unto one of a strange race; and to me hath God [h]shown that I must call no one common or unclean; wherefore also, when I was sent for, I came without gainsaying. I ask therefore, with [i]what intent ye sent for me. And Cornelius said, [j]Four days ago, I had been fasting* unto this hour; and* the ninth [hour] I was praying in my house; and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, and said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are remembered before God. Send therefore to Joppa, and fetch Simon, who

a *cf.* ch. 16. 9, 10.

b ver. 29. *cf.* Lk. 18. 41.

c vers. 1-6.

d ver. 45. ch. 11. 12. *cf.* 2 Cor. 13. 1.

e *cf.* Lk. 8. 40. *cf.* Mk. 5. 19. *cf.* Jno. 4. 29.

f *cf.* ch. 16. 29. *cf.* Rev. 19. 10. *cf.* Rev. 22. 8, 9. *cf.* ch. 14. 11-18.

g ver. 14. ch. 11. 3. *ctr.* Gal. 2. 12, 13.

h ver. 15. *cf.* ch. 11. 15-18.

i ver. 21.

j vers. 1-8.

*Some of the oldest MSS. leave out "fasting," "and," but they are well supported, and seem necessary.

Son of God overcometh the world;" there is a new power, and with it a new liberty: the true Shepherd is calling His sheep out of the sheep-fold, and with Him, His hand over them, His voice in their ears, liberty is safe.*

The vessel comes down from heaven and returns again there: it is the Church, heavenly in origin, and heavenly in destination; and those within it are alike those whom God has cleansed, and who must not be called common.

But Peter still doubts the meaning of the vision, until the three men sent by Cornelius are at the door, inquiring after him, and the Spirit bids him rise and go with them, for He has sent them.

[2] Upon all this history the inspired writer dwells, not heeding repetition, for the heart of God is pouring itself out in this getting back to it now of those so long self-banished. The Gentile is truly the prodigal here restored; and we as Gentiles may well be touched at the interest displayed in those for whom the ring and robe are waiting. Things are told out at length, and we realize

*The unclean beasts and creeping things contained in the net were forbidden in Leviticus (chap. xi). The food of a clean people must be clean. But as man is assimilated to that upon which he feeds, we see here the character of all men—no doubt Jew as well as Gentile, though prominently the latter. The heavenly vessel is seen to be full of that which is represented by these unclean beasts and creeping things, the foul, vile, violent sinners—cleansed by grace and made meet for heaven. "And such were some of you." S. R.

is surnamed Peter; he lodgeth in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea; who, when he is come, shall speak to thee.* Immediately therefore I sent unto thee; and thou hast done well, that thou art come. Now therefore we are all here [k]present before God, to hear all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord.

And Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is [l]no respecter of persons: but in [m]every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him. The word† which he sent unto the sons of Israel, preaching [n]peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all) ye know;—the word‡ which came throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee, [o]after the baptism that John preached: [even] Jesus who was of Nazareth, how God [p]anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power; who went about [q]doing

* A few of the oldest MSS. omit this clause.
† λογος ‡ ῥῆμα.

k cf. Lk. 8. 18. cf. Gal. 4. 14. cf. 1 Thess. 2. 13.
l cf. Rom. 2. 11. cf. Deut. 10. 17. cf. Rom. 3. 29, 30. cf. Rom. 10. 12, 13.
m cf. ch. 15. 7–11. cf. Rom. 2. 27–29. cf. Ps. 15. 1, 2.
n cf. Eph. 2. 17. cf. Lk. 2. 14. cf. Col. 1. 20.
o ch. 1. 22. cf. Matt. 4. 12–17.
p cf. Ps. 2. 2. cf. Matt. 3. 16, 17. cf. Ps. 45. 7.
q cf. Matt. 11. 2–6.

the response upon the other side, as we learn of the company which without prompting, save of a heart opening to the grace that greets him, Cornelius gathers to hear what, if he know not yet, he knows, so heralded, is good news from God. Upon all these, gathered up in the stretched out Arms, the Father's kiss is pressed in the Spirit presently outpoured,—the Spirit of adoption! What a scene to melt the last bit of legal ice out of the soul of Peter, as he realizes how impossible it is for him to withstand God! Truly it is impossible! the flood-gates are giving way, and all the fulness of divine love, long kept back by the requirements of divine righteousness, is hastening to manifest itself. The ages to come are to bear witness of the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. Nothing can keep back now what all the sin of man in its worst display has only shown in its supreme and glorious power.

Arrived at Cæsarea, Peter rebukes his would-be successors of to-day by raising up him who had fallen at his feet as the messenger of God; and having explained how God had delivered him from his Jewish prejudices, preaches Jesus as Christ and Lord to those assembled. He now fully realizes that in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is acceptable to Him. How could *He* indeed ignore what is but the fruit of His own work in the soul, wherever found?

They were not unaware of the word which He had sent to Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ. As a word to Israel they had only as yet known of it; but He is Lord of all; and as that they were also now to have to say to Him. Of His mighty works they could not indeed be ignorant, who through all Judea and Galilee went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil. How plain was it that in all this God was with Him! Yet what they had done to Him was as well known also; they had slain and hung Him on a tree! There for the nation He had disappeared: they indeed had seen Him no more; but God had raised Him up the third day, and manifested Him to chosen witnesses, who (as the one who stood before them now) had eaten and drunk with Him after He was risen from among the dead. From Him had these commission to proclaim Him to the people, and that as One divinely appointed to be Judge of the living and the dead.

There was a breach, then, as to the nation; Israel had rejected the Lord: God had answered it by setting Him high above all, and putting judgment into His hands; yet the testimony of it was already an intimation of grace. How far, and in what manner would that grace be shown? Here Peter brings in the wit-

good, and [r]healing all that were oppressed* of the devil; for [s]God was with him. And we are [t]witnesses of all things that he did, both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem; whom also they [u]slew, hanging him on a tree. Him God [v]raised up the third day, and gave him to be manifested, not to all the people, but to [w]witnesses chosen before of God,—to us who [x]ate and drank with him after he was risen from among the dead. And he [y]charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he who is appointed of God the [z]judge of the living and the dead. To him do all the [a]prophets witness, that through his Name every one who believeth on him shall receive [b]remission of sins.

3 (44-48): The Spirit poured out.

[3] While Peter yet spake these things, the Holy Spirit [c]fell upon all who heard the word. And they of the circumcision who believed were [d]astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that upon the nations also the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out. For they heard them [e]speak with tongues, and magnify God.

r *cf.* Lk. 8. 27, etc. *cf.* Lk. 13. 16. *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 8.
s *cf.* Jno. 3. 2. *cf.* Jno. 8. 29. *ctr.* Matt. 27. 46.
t ch. 1. 22. ver. 41.
u ch. 2. 23. ch. 13. 27, 28.
v ch. 2. 24.
w ch. 13. 30, 31. *cf.* ch. 1. 22. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 5-8.
x *cf.* Lk. 24. 30, 41-43. *cf.* Jno. 21. 9-13. *cf.* 1 Jno. 1. 1.
y *cf.* ch. 1. 2-8. *cf.* Jno. 20. 21.
z *cf.* Jno. 5. 21-29. *cf.* ch. 17. 31. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 1.
a *cf.* ch. 26. 22, 23; *cf.* Rom. 3. 21; *cf.* Lk. 24. 25-27.
b ch. 5. 31; *cf.* ch. 13. 38, 39.
c *cf.* ch. 2. 2; *ctr.* ch. 8. 15-17.
d *cf.* ch. 11. 18; *cf.* ch. 15. 12.
e *cf.* Mk. 16. 17; *cf.* ch. 19. 6.

* Literally, "Held under the power."

ness of the prophets, by whom from the beginning God had been speaking to men. It could not be, in fact, that such things should take place without having been anticipated and announced in the ages of which they were the consummation. That which affected the whole world could not be isolated from all its previous history. Central in their relation to all human things, the Cross and the Resurrection are in reality their explanation. With the testimony of the ages the glory of the miracle was only in harmonious correspondence. Its exceptionality was its fitness for the place it occupied.

They knew (the men whom the apostle was addressing) the testimony of the prophets, which, just as being Gentiles, would have for them an attraction of a special kind. Did it not speak of nations upon whom the Lord's name would be called? (Amos ix. 11, 12.) And in Abraham's Seed were not all the families of the earth to be blessed? But Peter more definitely interprets and applies the gospel of their predictions, that through the name of Jesus whosoever believed on Him would receive remission of sins. According to such a principle, the Gentile who believed had equal assurance of this with the Jew. If even to the Jew acceptance were by faith alone, then for the Gentile who had faith there was acceptance also.

[3] Thus far had the apostle reached,—and he tells us himself, that it was but the beginning of what he intended to say (chap. xi. 15)—when he was arrested by a sign of precious significance: without the administration of baptism, as with the pentecostal audience,—without the imposition of apostles' hands, as at Samaria,—the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word! God again was the Mover; and in anticipation of every question that might be raised, setting aside all thought of human succession, or of sacramental endowment,—"by the hearing of faith" alone (Gal. iii. 2), the Gentiles received the Spirit, and were thus gathered into the assembly. The barrier between Jew and Gentile had been removed by the hand of God Himself, and the Church had assumed the character it was hereafter to retain. In Christ there was to be now neither Jew nor Gentile. The bond was not to be that of nationality nor of legal observance, but of the One Spirit uniting into one body. Not that the body of Christ was yet known doctrinally; nor even of the House of God have we yet heard, though the indwelling of the Spirit would give rise to a growing consciousness

Then answered Peter, Can any one forbid water, that these should not be [f]baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.* Then prayed they him to [g]tarry certain days.

[4] (xi. 1-18): The place of the Gentile conceded.

[4] And the apostles and the brethren who were throughout Judea heard that the nations also had received the word of God. And when Peter went up to Jerusalem, they of the [h]circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. But Peter began, and set it forth in order unto them, saying, [i]I was in the city of Joppa, praying; and in an ecstasy I saw a vision, a certain vessel descending like a great sheet, let down by four corners out of heaven; and it came even unto me: upon which when I had fixed mine eyes, I considered, and saw the fourfooted beasts of the earth, and [j]wild beasts, and creeping things, and birds of the heavens. And I heard also a voice saying unto me, Rise, Peter; kill and eat. But I said, Not so, Lord; for nothing common or unclean hath ever entered into my mouth. But the voice answered the second time out of heaven, What God hath cleansed make thou not common. And this took place thrice, and all were drawn again into heaven. And behold, immediately three men stood before the house in which we were, having been sent from Cæsarea unto me. And the Spirit [k]bade me go with them,

f ctr. ch. 2. 38. ctr. ch. 19. 5, 6. cf. Eph. 1. 13.
g cf. ch. 11. 23. cf. ch. 18. 27, 28.
h cf. vers. 29, 30. cf. ch. 15. 1, etc.
i ch. 10. 9-22.
j cf. Tit. 3. 3. cf. Is. 65. 25.
k cf. ch. 16. 7-10.

* Some substitute, and a few add, "the Lord."

of this which would soon find support in the Lord's words to Peter, with the name given to him. In his first epistle we have the development of this, to which Paul, however, gives completeness. The fact anticipated the doctrine; and that which hindered the development of this had now given way (Eph. ii. 14, 15).

Baptism takes here, therefore, another place from that which it had before this. It follows, instead of preceding, the reception of the Spirit. Peter makes this a manifest reason why baptism cannot be denied them: "Can any one forbid water," he asks, "that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?" It was not necessarily the place which this was to take henceforth; for after this we find the Jewish disciples of the Baptist (chap. xix. 5, 6), having not only to be baptized, but to have the imposition of hands, in order that they may receive the Spirit. The Gentiles, on the other hand, having had no legal status hitherto, are dealt with in pure grace alone; the ground upon which they are met is manifestly this, and this only: hence God can give way to His love with more simplicity; and He does so, to the astonishment of "those of the circumcision," who find all their own scruples and hesitation set aside with a decisive authority, against which they have no power to protest. To do aught but accept it would be plainly to "withstand God," as Peter himself says. He commands, therefore, that they should be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ, and, accepting frankly all the consequences of this, stays with them at their desire for some days.

[4] The history is pursued further, and with the same carefulness of detail, to the recognition of this place given to the Gentiles at Jerusalem itself, notwithstanding the objections on the part of the disciples there. In fact, the eating with men uncircumcised seems to have been heard of, before the way of the grace of God. Peter gives an account of all, therefore, from the beginning;

nothing doubting. And these six [l]brethren also accompanied me; and we entered into the man's house, and he [m]told us how he had seen the angel in his house, standing and saying, Send to Joppa, and fetch Simon, who is surnamed Peter, who shall speak unto thee [n]words, whereby thou shalt be saved, thou and all [o]thy house. And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit [p]fell on them, even as on us at the beginning. And I [q]remembered the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water, but *ye* shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit. If God then gave unto them the [r]like gift as also unto us, when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, [s]who was I, that I could withstand God? And when they heard these things, they held their peace, and [t]glorified God, saying, Then indeed hath God given to the nations also [u]repentance unto life.

2 (xi.19-30): A Gentile assembly.
1 (19-21): The free work of the Spirit, independent of the apostles.

2. [1] They then who were [v]scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to none save [w]only to the Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who when they came to Antioch, spake [x]also to the Greeks,* preaching the glad tidings of the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number [y]believed and turned to the Lord.

*The larger number of the MSS. have "Hellenists"; but this is quite against the context.

l ch. 10.23,45.
m ch. 10.30-32.
n *cf.* Jno. 6. 63. *cf.* Eph. 1. 13. *cf.* Rom. 10. 17.
o *cf.* ch. 16. 31.
p ch. 10. 44.
q ch. 1. 5. *cf.* Jno. 14. 26.
r *cf.* ch. 15. 9. *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 13.
s *cf.* ch. 10. 47, *cf.* Rom. 9. 20.
t *cf.* ch. 21. 19, 20.
u Lk. 24. 47. *cf.* ch. 20. 21.
v ch. 8. 1-4.
w *cf.* ch. 10. 28.
x *cf.* Jno. 10. 16. *cf.* ch. 13. 46-48.
y *cf.* Rom. 10. 12, 13.

and all resistance is silenced by the simple narration. The question with which he ends it is quite unanswerable. They needs must glorify God that He has granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life. Not even a breath is heard about the need of circumcising them to keep the law of Moses; the act of God is too conspicuous; He is so completely in it from end to end. And thus the all-important transformation is effected without a dissenting voice.

2. [1] The principle being now established, the free action of the Spirit is seen in raising up at Antioch what becomes characteristically a Gentile assembly. For this there is not even the putting forth of a man like Philip. None are allowed to be conspicuous in this work, for the eye to fasten upon: God would make it manifestly His own. Scattered by the same persecution which had been already made to minister to the need of Samaria, Phenicia, Cyprus and Antioch are visited by those whose hearts, filled with the grace which they have themselves experienced, lead them out to minister to the need of others. But at first it is to Jews only that the good news is proclaimed; the effect also is not apparent,—certainly seems in marked contrast with the success among the Greeks, to whom at last they turn. The hand of the Lord is with them, and a great number of converts is the result of their evangelistic labor. It is remarkable how officialism is discredited in all this. We do not know the name of a single person used in the work. The great apostle of the Gentiles is yet in comparative obscurity in his native city; Barnabas is not yet upon the scene: God is acting in conspicuous sovereignty by what instruments He will; and this in the case of the first Gentile assembly is surely designed to attract our notice. Antioch is to "stand over against" Jerusalem, as even its name may imply, as identified with such freer action; and it is noticeable that the disciples are first called Christians here in Antioch. In Jerusalem they were but "the sect of the Nazarenes."

2 (22-26): Confirmation and building up.

2 And the [z]report concerning them came to the ears of the assembly that was in Jerusalem; and they [a]sent forth Barnabas, that he should travel as far as Antioch; who when he had arrived and seen the grace of God, was [b]glad, and exhorted them all, that with [c]purpose of heart they should cleave to the Lord; for he was a good man, and [d]full of the Holy Spirit, and of faith; and a great multitude was [e]added to the Lord. And he went forth to [f]Tarsus, to seek Saul; and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And so it was that for a [g]whole year they were gathered together in the assembly, and taught a great multitude; and that the disciples were [h]called Christians first in Antioch.

z ver. 1.
a *cf.* ch. 15. 22.
b ver. 18. *cfr.* ch. 13. 45.
c *cf.* Phil. 3. 13, 14. *cf.* Ps. 86. 11. *cf.* Dan. 1. 8. *cf.* Eph. 4. 14, 15.
d ch. 6. 5. *cf.* ch. 4. 36, 37.
e *cf.* ch. 5. 14.
f ch. 9. 30.
g ch. 18. 11. ch. 19. 10. *cf.* ch. 17. 2. *cfr.* ch. 8. 39.
h ch. 26. 28. 1 Pet. 4. 16; *cf.* Jas. 2. 7.

[3] Still the new work is not to drift into independence of the old, but to be acknowledged and accepted at Jerusalem itself, as in the case of the reception of Cornelius and his company at Cæsarea. The report, therefore, reaching the Jewish capital, Barnabas is sent forth to go as far as Antioch,—a well-chosen representative. He does not go with authority, nor seek to exercise it; nor has he in hand, as the apostles in their visit to Samaria, to supply any deficiency in the condition of these Syrian brethren, who have evidently received the Spirit, as they did at Cæsarea, without need of apostles, or of imposition of hands. Barnabas sees the grace of God in them, and is glad, and simply exhorts them all, that with purpose of heart they should cleave to the Lord;—a word never uncalled for. It is his character that is dwelt upon in this connection, not his office: "he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit, and of faith;" and this is seen in its effect, doubtless, in the progress of the work there: "a great multitude was added to the Lord."

It is Barnabas who is the means of introducing Saul into this field of labor. We may naturally suppose that he recognized in him a special fitness for the great work now beginning; but we see how simply his connection is brought about with the field to which from the commencement of his apostleship he is destined. God is not in haste, and His purposes are worked out often in what we may call the homeliest ways. The man who had introduced him to the apostles at Jerusalem, and who there had been witness to his energy and power, now seeks him out at Tarsus, no great distance off, and Saul returns with him to Antioch. There the work still progresses; and there the Christians get what is henceforth their distinctive name. We are not told whence it came; but the argument is just that Jews who refused Jesus as the Christ could not have given it to them; and that we only find it elsewhere, either in the mouth of those outside, as king Agrippa, or where the thought is of one suffering as such from the hands of unbelievers, as Peter uses it (1 Pet. iv. 16). It was therefore given by men outside, as one would infer, and in connection with the notable work accomplished at this time. The disciples were no more looked at as a mere Jewish sect. The weaning-time of Isaac was accomplished; and, while the children of the bondwoman "mocked" at the feebleness of the true heirs of grace, and cast them out, it was really they themselves who were being cast out. The Church's unity in Christ was being proclaimed, even by the lips of unbelievers; the One Name covering alike Jew and Gentile, while it separated them from all, whether Jew or Gentile, who did not confess Him.

[3] The Spirit of God gives a little glimpse, in closing this portion, of the recognition on the part of the assembly at Antioch of their relationship and obligation to those from whom they had received spiritual blessings so great. Indeed it is from a prophet from Jerusalem that they have warning of the approach of the famine which occasions this ministry, and which seems especially

ii (27-30): The return ministry.

27 In these days prophets came down from Jerusalem
to Antioch. And one of them, by name [i]Agabus, stood
up, and signified by the Spirit that there would be a
great famine over all the inhabited earth; which came
to pass in the days of Claudius. And the disciples,
every man [j]according to his ability, determined to send
relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea: which also
they did, [k]sending it to the elders by the hand of Bar-
nabas and Saul.

i cf. ch. 21. 10

j cf. 2 Cor. 9. 6, 7. cf. ch. 4. 34, 35.

k ch. 12. 25. cf. Rom. 15. 26, 27.

to have affected the province of Judea. It is the first time that Christian prophets are mentioned in the New Testament; although they seem not to have been few in number, and are placed second only to the apostles themselves in the enumeration of gifts bestowed by Christ upon the Church. Prophecy also, as we shall find elsewhere, is in a special way characteristic of Christianity. Unsuccessional, springing out of close intercourse and communion with God, the disclosure of His mind so as to bring souls into His Presence,—it should be and is, in closest relation with the rent veil of the Sanctuary and the ability to draw near to God which mark the present period. Prediction was never more than a comparatively small and variable part of it; although this is what we find in the prophesying of Agabus upon the only two occasions in which he appears in the history. Indeed he is a prophet of sorrow at both times, although of that which God overrules for good; but then, of what sorrow may not this be said?

The disciples do not think little of this ministry of means, when they choose the two most prominent among them to administer it; and Barnabas and Saul, on the other hand, do not think it a matter that they should not be burdened with. Indeed, we know from the epistles of the latter what he thought upon the subject. In those fresh days, when it could be said that every one gave "according to his ability," how much love—divine love—was there not expressed in it! How different when it would have rather to be said, as in many of the sad days of decline since then, "every one a little of his superfluity, and the richest in proportion least of all!" Everything is degraded or spiritualized by the heart that is in it,—or is not in it.

We hear, too, for the first time, of "elders" in the Jewish assemblies, who, though doubtless an adoption from what was an immemorial custom in Israel (for we have no account of any distinct origin), yet seem from the epistle of Peter to be hardly officially appointed (1 Pet. v. 1), but rather the natural result of wisdom and experience attaching to age, which would make the "elder" the natural leader in the counsels of a people. In the Gentile assemblies we read of their appointment afterwards, where (and perhaps because) the patriarchal custom did not have the same recognition; and there with some restrictions which were only necessary to right "oversight," which (and not preaching) was that which was their work. The incidental notice here hardly requires the examination of the subject of eldership which it must receive when we come to the epistle to Timothy. It is well to note, however, that neither was it a gift, nor did it need one for qualification, which was almost wholly moral; while for preaching or teaching there needed no authorization from man, but the gift entailed the responsibility of using it, and manifested itself wherever there was an ear to hear. But all this must wait for its development elsewhere.

SUBD. 6.

1. While the Church is thus being enlarged, unhappy Israel becomes only more hostile to the followers of Him whom they have crucified, and a new king (Herod Agrippa I.) rises up to give their enmity effect. Though we may be little able to interpret the details, yet the circumstances undoubtedly suggest an anticipation of the last days, when the lawless king will exalt himself against

SUBDIVISION 6. (Chap. xii.)

Israel in full unbelief under their apostate king; but with God's hand over it.

1 (1-17): In God's hand, not the king's.

1. NOW about that time Herod the king put forth his hands to do [t]hurt to some of the assembly. And he slew [m]James the brother of John with the sword. And when he saw that it was pleasing to the Jews, he went on to take Peter also; (and they were the [n]days of unleavened bread;) whom having [o]seized he put in prison, delivering him to four quaternions of soldiers to guard him; intending after the passover to bring him out to the people. Peter therefore was kept in prison; but [p]prayer was made unceasingly* by the assembly to God for him. And when Herod was about to bring him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping [q]between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and guards before the door kept the prison. And lo, an [r]angel of [the] Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; and he smote Peter on the side, and awoke him, saying, Rise up quickly. And his chains 'fell off' from his hands. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And he did so. And he said unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went forth, and followed him; and knew not that it was true, which was done by the angel, but [t]thought he saw a vision. And when they were past the first and second guard, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth into the city; which [u]opened to them

t *cf.* ch. 8. 1. *cf.* Jno. 16. 2.
m *cf.* Matt. 20. 20-23.
n ch. 20. 6. *cf.* Ex. 12 34, 39 with 1 Pet. 1. 6, 7.
o ch. 4. 3. ch. 5. 18. 23. ch. 16. 23, 24.
p *cf.* 2 Cor. 1. 10, 11. *cf.* Phile. 1. 19. *cf.* Phil. 22.
q *cf.* ch. 21. 33.
r *cf.* ch. 5. 19. *cf.* Ps. 34. 7. *ctr.* Matt. 26. 53, 54.
s *cf.* ch. 16. 26. *cf.* Ps. 116. 16.
t *cf.* ch. 10. 17. *cf.* Ps. 126. 1. *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 2, 3.
u ch. 5. 19. *cf.* Mk. 16. 3, 4.

* Literally, "intensely."

God, assuming for himself divine honors. We have here, also, in effect, the slain and the spared remnant represented in the opposite lot of James and Peter: the one given up, as it might seem, so strangely, his service but begun, to a violent death, while for the other an angel must be sent from heaven, to rescue him in a wonderful manner "from all the expectation of the people of the Jews," about to glut their evil desire with the death of another apostle of Jesus. Yet James was one of the three specially in the Lord's confidence, along with John and Peter. His life is to us a blank, and his day went down at noon! How little can we see of the divine ways! and, if we judge a course merely by its results, how surely shall we misjudge! In the events to which we seem to be looking forward here, those that are martyred under the beast have their part in the first resurrection (Rev. xx. 4-6); while the spared remnant has but its portion on earth: and thus will eternity reverse our present apprehension of how many things!

The story of Peter's deliverance is told vividly and in detail; but while it yields much food for meditation, it scarcely requires an interpreter. It may appear even too far out of the usual course of God's ways to find ready application to our common lives; yet it is the same God with whom we have to do; and, if we had but skill to trace His ways with us more, we might find more reason to wonder at the essential resemblances than to be perplexed at the apparent differences. The veil is over His governmental dealings, for it is a dispensation of faith and not of sight; but it is yet the part of faith to take away the veil, and through all disguises to recognize the well-known features of the Love that seeks to be apprehended by those who are the objects of it;

of its own accord; and they went out, and passed on through one street; and immediately the angel departed from him. And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a truth, that the Lord hath sent forth his angel and [v]delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. And when he had become conscious [of it], he came to the house of Mary the mother of John who was surnamed Mark, where many were [w]gathered together and praying. And when he knocked at the door of the gate, a maidservant came to listen, by name Rhoda. And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for joy, but ran in, and told that Peter stood before the gate. And they said unto her, Thou art [x]mad. But she confidently affirmed that it was even so. And they said, It is his [y]angel. But Peter continued knocking, and when they had opened and saw him, they were amazed. But he, beckoning to them with the hand to hold their peace, related to them how the Lord had brought him out of prison. And he said, Tell these things to [z]James, and to the brethren. And he [a]departed, and went unto another place.

v *cf.* Dan. 3. 17, 28. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 17, 18.

w ver. 5. *cf.* Matt. 18. 19, 20.

x *cf.* Is. 65. 24. *cf.* ch. 2. 13.

y *cf.* Matt. 18. 10 with 2 Cor. 5. 8. *ctr.* Lk. 24. 36–43.

z ch. 15. 13. ch. 21. 18. *cf.* Gal. 1. 19. *cf.* Mk. 15. 40. *cf.* Jas. 1. 1. *cf.* Jude 1.

a *cf.* Jno. 8. 59. *cf.* Matt. 10. 23.

2 (18-23): The destruction of the adversary.

2. Now as soon as it was day, there was no small [b]stir among the soldiers what had become of Peter. And when Herod had sought for him and found him not, he examined the guards, and commanded that they should

b *cf.* ch. 5. 22, 23.

and that before the veil is drawn away, as soon it shall be, and we shall know, even as we are known.

The angels too are still "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to those who shall inherit salvation;" and we easily remember how in Elisha's day the eyes that God opened could see the "chariots and horses of fire" round about the man who to common sight looked absolutely unprotected. Did we seek with more longing that intercourse with the unseen which surely we may attain, how would our spiritual vision gain in clearness, what recompense should we have from Him, who still as of old, "satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness"! There are other prison-doors, and better guarded than these that could not hold Peter, which may need to be loosed for us, that we may go forth into the great spiritual world around us! and the prison perhaps is one out of which, in reality, we have hardly been, or not been,—then most secure, of course, when we scarcely recognize that we are shut in at all, or, therefore, think of deliverance! Perhaps the gates would open to us of their own accord, if we on our part were not so well satisfied to have them shut.*

2. Israel, as we see, is going onward to doom; yet they have a king under whom now the whole land is once more united. They will in fact have a political revival at the end, when all will seem to be theirs except the life from God without which all is death still, and only worse corruption. The picture of the wilful king is, no doubt, here, as has already been remarked, though it may be slightly drawn. Solemn it is to see, that whether faintly or plainly to be seen, wherever Christ is rejected Antichrist appears. So it ever is: "I have

* For some reason, the Spirit gives the name of the damsel who announces Peter's deliverance. It is Rhoda—a rose.

Peter's angel is evidently to be understood as his spirit, without his body. They thought he had been put to death. S. R.

be [c]put to death. And he went down from Judea to Cæsarea, and tarried there. Now he was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon; and they came to him with one accord, and having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their [d]friend, they asked for peace, because their country was [e]nourished by the king's. And upon a set day, Herod [f]arrayed himself in royal apparel, and seated himself upon the throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people shouted, saying, The voice of a [g]god, and not of a man! And immediately the angel of [the] Lord [h]smote him, because he gave not God the glory; and he was [i]eaten of worms, and expired.

[3] (24, 25): The return.

3. But the [j]word of God grew and multiplied. And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had [k]fulfilled their ministration, taking with them [l]John who was surnamed Mark.

c *cf.* ch. 18. 27. *ctr.* Matt. 28. 11-15.
d *ctr.* ch. 24. 26.
e *cf.* 1 Kl. 5. 11. *cf.* Ezek. 27. 17.
f *cf.* ch. 25. 23. *ctr.* Lk. 23. 11.
g *cf.* Dan. 4. 29-33. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 3-12. *cf.* Rev. 13. 11-18.
h *cf.* 2 Kl. 19. 35. *cf.* 2 Chro. 26. 16-21.
i *cf.* Is. 51. 7, 8. *cf.* Is. 14. 11. *cf.* 1 Tim. 5.

24. *j* ch. 6. 7; ch. 19. 20. *k* ch. 11. 29, 30; *cf.* ch. 14. 26; *cf.* Rom. 15. 28. *l* ver. 12; ch. 13. 5.

come in My Father's Name, and ye receive Me not; if another come in his own name, him ye will receive." In every individual case, such is the spiritual law: and there is nothing arbitrary or strange about it; in it men are but a law to themselves, in fact: there are but these two alternatives; not to choose the one is in itself to choose the other.

Of all this one can say little, however, as to its bearing upon what is before us in the Acts. It is easy to see that we have in this part the divergence of two roads that never can meet. Israel and the Church here part. Save for a moment to reaffirm the freedom of the Gentile from the legal yoke, the history returns no more to Jerusalem, until the last sad days of Paul's arrest and imprisonment from which he escapes only by the appeal to Cæsar, which carries him eventually to Rome itself. Jerusalem and Rome are alike the prisons of the gospel, however much it be true nevertheless, that "the word of God is not bound." But this lies yet a good way before us.

3. This portion does not close with the death of Herod, but with the increase and multiplication of the word of God; which in fact is now not merely to have large fruit among the Gentiles, but to expand into a glorious revelation of things hitherto kept secret—the manifold wisdom and the marvelous love of God, which is to make the Church for all eternity the temple of His praise.

It is Paul, as we know, who is to be in this respect the "completer" of the word of God (Col. i. 25); and it is Paul whose course we are now especially to follow, himself the most perfect display of grace towards the "chief of sinners," and now to proclaim that grace in an unequalled manner, the record of which we have in his fourteen epistles. The Acts does not give us indeed, in any sufficient manner, the doctrine of Paul. It presents us rather with the character of his work, as we shall see, together with the reception given it by the legalist and by the world,—a lesson for the days since then, by which we must seek to profit, as God may give.

From Jerusalem Barnabas and Saul now return. The ministers of Gentile love to their brethren of the circumcision, the opposition that we shall but too soon see springing up comes from no failure upon the part of him who once wished himself accursed from Christ for his kindred according to the flesh (Rom. ix. 3). That they would not receive his testimony he had been already warned (chap. xxii. 18); yet his heart could not be kept back in its overflowing affection for them. We are to see how it was repaid,—alas! and yet no wonder; was it not Christ, and Him crucified, whom Paul proclaimed? and to the people who had crucified Him? Such is man! and in the sovereign grace of the God of grace alone is there hope for any.

DIVISION 3. (Chaps. xiii.–xx.)
The Mysteries Opened.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chaps. xiii., xiv.)
Foundation principles.

1 (xiii. 1-3): The divine call.

1. NOW there were in Antioch, in the [m]assembly that was there, [n]prophets and teachers: [o]Barnabas, and Symeon who was called Niger, and Lucius the Cyrenian, and Manaen, [p]foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch, and [q]Saul. And as they were [r]ministering to the Lord

[m] *cf.* 11. 19-24.
[n] *cf.* Eph. 4. 11; *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 28, 29.
[o] ch. 4. 36, etc.
[p] *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 26-29.
[q] ch. 8. 1, etc.
[r] *cf.* ch. 6. 4.

The mention of Mark as accompanying the return to Antioch has a moral with it, which develops later. He was sister's son to Barnabas (Col. iv. 10); and this touch of nature prevails in the end to separate the two zealous laborers with whom he is for the present united. And yet Mark—here the failing servant—is by and by the one who records the Lord's own unfailing service in the second Gospel; and of whom the untiring Paul will one day say, "He is profitable to me for the ministry" (2 Tim. iv. 11). How will grace triumph at the last over all our failures!

DIV. 3.

It has been already said that we must not expect to have any full opening of the mysteries here, as we have in the epistles. The New Testament is characterized by them: "Let a man so account of us," says the apostle, "as ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. iv. 1). There are "mysteries of the Kingdom" (Matt. xiii. 11), as the Church also is one. Even the "blindness in part" which "is happened unto Israel" is a mystery (Rom. xi. 25); and the partaking of the Gentile in the promise in Christ on equal terms with the Jew (Eph. iii. 6) is a mystery also. Thus we can speak of mysteries being opened here without implying that the truth of the Church is declared as Paul elsewhere declares it. The mystery is the one assembly of Jew and Gentile, and Christ's epistle in the world, with the ministration of righteousness and life, and of the Spirit, in contrast with the legal ministration of death and of condemnation. As this, we shall not wonder if the enemy would use the Jew in his unbelief against it, and the legal principle which God, having accomplished His end with it, has set aside. This will appear, in fact, as Satan's great endeavor from the beginning. We have even a typical presentation of this as an enforcement of warning, in Elymas. The attempt of the Pharisaic converts to put the yoke of the law upon the Gentiles is a more open endeavor, and from within. The "ministration of righteousness" we find at the Pisidian Antioch.

SUBD. 1.

The first subdivision here naturally comprises the account of the first mission from Antioch, constituted thus, instead of Jerusalem, the center of the new work. It gives us evidently the foundations laid by one who was a "wise master-builder," and with this the reception accorded to the grace proclaimed. This lies upon the surface; how much that must be underneath may the Spirit of God disclose to us as we take up what is here!

1. We have first the divine call, which must in some way be repeated, wherever profitable labor is to be done after this fashion. The Spirit of God is here pleased to make known to us that all the separation and guidance of the Lord's servants and messengers is from Himself. How strange and incongruous is the thought of "ordination" which so attaches to it in the minds of many! For, in the first place, both Barnabas and Saul are expressly named among the "prophets and teachers" ministering to the Lord in Antioch at this time. They were not, then, to be ordained to such an office, who had already been a good while in it; and surely not by men who could not be supposed to be any way

and *fasting, the [t]Holy Spirit said, Separate to me now Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have [u]called them. Then, having *fasted and prayed, and [w]laid hands upon them, they [y]let [them] go.

s cf. ch. 10. 30. cf. 2 Cor. 4. 7. t cf. ch. 8. 29. cf. ch. 16. 6, 7. u cf. 1 Cor. 12. 4-11. v cf. ver. 2. x ch. 14. 26.

cf. Phil. 3. 3. w cf. Gal. 2. 9; cf. ch. 15. 40; ctr. ch. 6. 6; ctr. 1 Tim. 4. 14. y ch. 14. 26.

superior, if equal, to themselves! One would surely say that the idea of equals lifting equals to a higher position than themselves, and which after all was only the position they had held before, would be too contradictory to be entertained by any serious mind. But if not, this was no ordination to an office at all.

Again, there was only one degree higher than those of these prophets and teachers, and that was the apostle's. Paul was an apostle, as all admit, in the fullest and most eminent way; but he distinctly declares himself (Gal. i. 1) "an apostle, not of men, nor *through* man;" men neither called him, nor ministered in this in any way. It was not then to this that he and Barnabas were called at Antioch.

We are told, moreover, to what it was they *were* called: for, at the end of the special work to which in fact they immediately set out, they return to Antioch, and there it is added, "whence they had been committed to the grace of God *for the work which they fulfilled.*" It is as certain, therefore, as Scripture itself can make it, that the work in question was not an apostle's, prophet's, or teacher's office, but simply an evangelistic mission to the needy fields of Asia Minor.

Indeed, by this separation of Saul and Barnabas from their number at the Spirit's word, is only made more distinctly apparent that free and necessary work on His part which has been continually coming into more prominence in this book. He chooses, He sends; nothing is rightly done apart from this. Fit it was, the Spirit being come to take charge of all that should be done in the Name of Christ on earth, that this choice and will of the Spirit should now be emphasized in the strongest way. Judaism was a system of law, with a strong principle of succession in it; where in the most sacred things, as in the priesthood, son succeeded father; where the elders ruled as elders (though in this there was a right and necessary element, as has been said, and as we shall have more fully to see hereafter); the only exception to this (and it is a streak of blessed light through all the darkness of the history) is in the reservation of the prophet's office in the hand of God alone. Elsewhere, with the succession of kings, priests, elders, the flesh came in to defile and mar in every shameful and terrible way possible; while the prophets, with God's call and message, were the men of God in their several days. Each could say, after the pattern of Paul, "neither of men nor by man." Prophecy in this character of it, as has been already said, is of the very spirit of Christianity. It breathes of intercourse with God. And with God manifested in Christ, the sanctuary opened, who can wonder that the apostle should say, "I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied; for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues;" "covet spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy;" for "ye may *all* prophesy" (1 Cor. xiv. 1, 5, 31).

In the shadow of Judaism, (as we see in the disastrous return to it, now for so many centuries,) succession—that is, dependence upon flesh and blood—comes in naturally everywhere. The simple rule of God—the conscience before Him alone—cannot be permitted. The prophet call, the prophet voice,—these have less room for them in such legal systems than in Judaism itself: naturally, again; for this is the veil reintroduced, and therefore darker than anything that God could ever have permitted. At the time to which we have come in the book before us, Christianity was coming into her proper freedom from the yoke of bondage, the last remains of the shadow passing from her spirit; and in the new freedom, that it might be freedom, the rule of God was to be recognized in its full and sweet reality. The Christian was "not in the flesh, but in the Spirit," which meant both of these two inseparable things. Thus, of necessity, in the highest department of Christian work, the rule of the Spirit must be above

2 (xiii.4-12): The conflict with the enemy in the Jew.

2. They, therefore, being [y]sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to [z]Cyprus. And having arrived at Salamis, they announced the word of God in the [a]synagogues of the Jews; and they had also [b]John as [their] attendant. And when they had gone through all the isle as far as Paphos, they found a certain magian, a [c]false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus, who was with the [d]proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of understanding.

y ver. 2. *cf.* ch. 16. 6, 7.
z ch. 4. 36. *cf.* ch. 15. 39.
a ver. 14. ch. 14. 1. ch. 17. 1, 2. *cf.* Rom. 1. 16.
b ch. 12. 25.
c *cf.* ch. 8. 9-11. *cf.* ch. 19. 13-20.

cf. 2 Thess. 2. 9, 10; *cf.* Rev. 3. 9. d *cf.* ch. 28. 7; *ctr.* ch. 18. 12-17.

all emphasized. It was only the assertion of what was now to be the universal principle; but it is here expressed in a manner the most distinct; not by a Voice within the soul itself merely, but by one that demanded and obtained the obedience of the gathered company,—to which they openly set their seals; for the imposition of hands was the sign of identification and fellowship with those to whom the call was—with their obedience to it.

They were all in all seriousness of spirit waiting upon the Lord when the word came; and afterwards when they laid their hands upon them, prayer and fasting accompanied the action. But those who acted with this true and earnest interest assumed no authority in it: they "let them go,"—not "sent them away." The "sending forth," as now directly said, was of the Spirit.*

2. The journey through Cyprus has but one point in it upon which the historian dwells. Salamis is only mentioned to state that they announced the word of God there in the synagogues of the Jews. The rule, "to the Jew first," was observed in this case; nor have we any record of work among the Gentiles. Among the Jews also the fact of the preaching is not accompanied by any statement as to the effect; there may have been such; it would be natural, under such preachers, and on a mission directed by the Spirit of God, to reason that there must have been; but it is certain that it is only the fact that is given us here, and not its consequences. The Jew is still sought by divine grace, and sought in an especial manner also. The giving up of the nation as such does not mean any turning away of the offer of salvation from them. The first step upon the road here makes plain that the love that has been with them seeks them still. The breach is upon their side, not on His.

This seems to connect morally with the account which is now given of the Jew at Paphos; scarcely a Jew indeed, one would say, so perverted, heathenized, demonized, is he. All the more, however, is he the true picture of the Jew, or of Judaism, fallen by opposition to Christ into the power of the enemy, and then becoming the most virulent of foes. Such is this Bar-jesus, with his fair name and his practice of occult arts, false prophet through and through. He is the worst hindrance to the Gentile inquirer, stout refuser of salvation on his own account; and that, whether outside the professing church, or (as he will be by-and-by) within it. He is to be the great antagonist of Paul all through, bringing him at last into the Roman prison, in which for so many generations he was shut up; for without the Jew the Roman could have done little.

Plainly, it is not the opposition of the moment at which we are looking here, but something far deeper and more lasting;—lasting until the "mist and darkness," come upon the Jew for his opposition to the truth, shall pass away, in the dawn of a day beyond the present. Bar-jesus, living reality as he was, is

* While the names of the prophets and teachers are given, it is not to be inferred that the ministry and fasting were only by these, but rather that the whole assembly at Antioch was engaged. Some of the gifts are mentioned, and these were doubtless the channels of the Spirit's communication, but on their return we find Paul and Barnabas gathering the whole assembly to rehearse the accomplishment of the work to which they had been committed (chap. xiv. 26, 27). It would thus seem that all was done with the fellowship of the entire assembly; and this seems to agree with the teaching as to the local assembly being the habitation of the Spirit. S. R.

He called to him Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. But Elymas the magian (for so is his name interpreted) [e] withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul from the faith. But Saul, who is also Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fastened his eyes upon him, and said, O full of all deceit and recklessness,* [f] son of the devil, enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease perverting the Lord's right ways? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be [g] blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell upon him a mist and darkness; and he went about, seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then the proconsul, seeing what was done, [h] believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

[e] *cf.* ver. 45. *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 14-16.

[f] *cf.* Jno. 8. 38-44.

[g] *cf.* Gen. 19. 11. *cf.* John 9. 39 with Rom. 11. 7-10, 25.

[h] *cf.* Jno. 4. 53.

*Or, "subtlety."

nevertheless a type of something far more enduring than himself, and to us all more important. It will be good for us to stand still a little, and contemplate that to which our attention is here by the Spirit of God pointed,—the universal foe of the grace of the gospel.

"God gave man the law." This, which is almost the universal cry (hardly accurate as it is), is an argument which no one can contest, and which, it is thought, makes it really heresy to take seriously what Paul says about a Christian being "dead" to it. You may put in a word, and say, "dead to the (ceremonial) law." Then it will be all right to say so. But unfortunately the apostle, no matter what his apologists may invent for him, will not permit this. For the law of which he is speaking in the very place in which he says this (Rom. vii. 4–7), is at any rate that which said, "Thou shalt not covet," the last commandment graved upon those tables of stone shown, it is argued, by their very material to be absolutely permanent.

If this be true, then, as undoubtedly the Jew thought, he has certainly matter of contention with Paul about it. But the Jew went further than this, and upon the same warrant of "This do and thou shalt live," denied Paul's whole gospel of "righteousness without works" (Rom. iv. 6), spite of his testimonies from Abraham and David. We shall find all this carefully gone through in the epistles, and we have no intention of taking it up here; but here is the fundamental controversy through the Christian centuries, within, more than with those outside the profession. Ritualism, Romanism, (how much more than these!) are just Judaism come into Christianity; but yet not purely that,—not Judaism as God gave it,—but with an element introduced which is of the enemy. Judaism was not an enemy to the truth of God; the law was a handmaid—Hagar. It pointed to Christ its end and fulfilment, not only in its types, but also by its own manifest incompetence to bring to God. Its "ministration" was of death and condemnation, with the veil before the face of God! The word from His lips was "None can see Me and live." Thus the finger of hope could only point forward to the "new covenant," which in the mere announcement of it made the first old (Heb. viii. 13). But in the new ritualism of Rome and of her daughters, while the shadows of Judaism are darker than of old, no finger is found pointing beyond itself,—no glory of Christ illumines them. He is come and gone, and has left still a closed up sanctuary, and a gospel of doubt! The glory is still in the face of Moses; the veil is upon His own! But this is Judaism with its heart dead within it, and the light that plays over it weird, fantastic, demonic. Its mysteries are magic; the power it craves oppressive, not protective; its yoke is tyrannous, and its burden heavy. It is Elymas the sorcerer, courting the powers of the world, and opposing the gospel of grace in the apostle. It is Paul of all men whom this does oppose.

3 (xiii. 13-41): The proclamation.

3. Now [g]Paul and his company, having sailed from Paphos, came to Perga of Pamphylia; and John [h]departed from them and returned to Jerusalem. But they, passing through from Perga, came to Antioch of Pisidia; and they went into the [i]synagogue on the sabbath-day, and sat down. And after the [k]reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, speak. And Paul stood up, and beckoning with the hand, said, Men of Israel, and ye that [m]fear God, hearken! The God of this people Israel [n]chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they sojourned in the land of Egypt, and [o]led them forth with a high arm out of it. And for about [p]forty years of time he nursed * them in the wilderness.

*The common text, with many MSS., reads "bore their manners."

g *cf.* ver. 9. *cf.* Phil.3.7. *cf.* 2 Cor.12. 11.
h *cf.* ch. 15. 37-39. *cf.* Col.4.10. *cf.* 2 Tim.4. 11.
i ver. 5.
k ch. 15. 21. *cf.* Lk.4.16-27.
m ver. 26. *cf.* ch. 10. 2.
n *cf.* Deut.7. 6-8. *cf.* Ps. 105. 6, 43.
o Ex. 13. 14, 16. *cf.* Ps. 105. 37.
p Ex. 16. 35. ch. 7. 36.

The conflict with the Jew manifests Saul as Paul, the name which he henceforth retains. The contrast between the two is such as could not escape notice. Saul, the man of Benjamin, necessarily brings up the figure of that other Saul, the king of men, such as the people "asked," head and shoulders above the common stature, in contrast with Paul, the "little," the man "less than the least of all saints," and only the chief of sinners. But this is he who can now be "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus," "a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Paul is the fittest name possible for the man who is to be taken into the third heaven, and lead us into the open sanctuary, and present us "perfect in Christ Jesus."

It is not from the converted Sergius that Paul derives his name, the most unlikely thing possible for one so free from all human dependence. While, at the same time, it is quite in keeping with all else here that the man who escapes from the snare of the Jew should be also a Paul—a "little" one. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of heaven." In Scripture, while the history is ever truth, the fullest reason of things is always the spiritual one; for He who is Infinite Wisdom governs all, and with an absolute control of all material, which if we accredited it, and realized the service of love in which it is made to work, we should see the glory of God indeed.

Upon the opposers of truth the mist and darkness of error must surely settle down. Woe to him who resists at any point the light of God! It is by the cover of darkness alone that he can do it; and he who shuts his eyes to any part of truth will find that he can make no terms with the error to which he surrenders. In the purport of his act he shuts out everything; and it is only the mercy of God which can put limit to the terms of an absolute surrender to the "authority of darkness."

3. The conflict at Paphos is thus but a typical introduction to what follows it; in which we are now to find what the reception of the gospel of Christ will be in a world so needy of it, so ignorant of its need. The conversion of the proconsul is all that we hear of in this way in Paphos; for we have not all that took place, but all that the Spirit of God saw fit to communicate. Cyprus is now left behind, and "Paul and his company" cross over to the mainland, to Perga in Pamphylia, on their onward way. There John their assistant leaves, when the work is just beginning, and returns to Jerusalem. With the general reticence of Scripture in such matters, we are told nothing of his motives. We may infer, as it is usual to do, and as the point at which he leaves and his return home naturally would indicate, that the difficulties of the way were making themselves felt with one whose strength was not sufficiently in God for

And when he had [q]destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He gave them their land for an [r]inheritance; and after these things he gave them [s]judges [to the end of] about four hundred and fifty years,* till [t]Samuel the prophet. And then they [u]asked for a king; and God gave them [v]Saul, the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. And when he had [w]removed him, he raised up [x]David for [their] king; to whom also he testified and said, I have [y]found David the son of Jesse, a man after my heart, who shall do all my will. Of this man's [z]seed hath God brought† unto Israel, according to promise, a Saviour, Jesus, when [a]John had proclaimed before his coming in person‡ a

q ch. 7. 45. Josh. 12. 1, etc.
r Josh. 14. 1, etc. Ps. 78. 55.
s Ju. 2. 16. Ju. 3. 9, etc.
t ch. 3. 24. *cf.* 1 Sa. 7. 6, 17.
u 1 Sa. 8. 5, 19, 20.
v 1 Sa. 10. 1, 24.
w 1 Sa. 15. 23. *cf.* Hos. 13. 11.
x 1 Sa. 16. 1, 11-13.
y Ps. 89. 20. 1 Sa. 13. 14.
z Matt. 1. 1. Rom. 1. 3.
a Mat. 3. 1-3.

*The time is in some of the earliest MSS. put in connection with "He gave them their land" etc.
†Or "raised up;" which has the consent of many MSS. and the Syriac versions.
‡Literally, "the presence of his entry,"—the presence which his coming made actual.

the demand. The path of faith will surely be too severe a test for all that is not faith; and all may not be faith that at first seems so. Faith is strengthened in the path, and does not fail because of difficulties which it supposes, and by which it is exercised: but the unreal is sifted out, and the true state of things is made apparent. Not that there was not reality in John, as we realize in his recovery afterwards. He needed, no doubt, the lesson, to learn which Paul's faithfulness also might be requisite, when again he offered himself for what he failed in now. How good when we truly learn by our failures the way not to fail! A different thing, indeed, from the constant failure to which so many seem only to become habituated, and easily plead their weakness, as if they found no more strength in God than in themselves.*

With the sorrow of this defection on them, the travelers pass on from Perga; and next we hear of them at Antioch in Pisidia, where we have the proclamation of Paul's gospel, in a way that "stands over against" the proclamation to the Jews by Peter at Jerusalem. Antioch of Pisidia ("the well-watered plains?") may give us a hint of this, as the other Antioch (of Syria—Aram, the "high" or "exalted") has been seen to "stand over against" Jerusalem in another respect. The address here is indeed to Israelites, and in the synagogue also, but taking in the proselytes in a distinct way, too,—"ye that fear God." The announcement, besides, of justification for every one who believeth in Jesus gathers in the Gentiles in numbers the next sabbath, inflaming, alas! the jealousy of the Jews. As a consequence of this, the turning to the Gentiles is definitely announced. Peter declares forgiveness of sins to those who repent and are baptized. Paul, justification in Christ for the believer. No apostle except Paul in terms declares this; although John here, as in other ways, comes nearest to him; indeed, the difference in this respect is scarcely more than verbal. The bold assurance as to the impotence of Moses' law, in the face of the synagogue, is characteristic of Paul.

The apostle begins by reminding them how God had brought Israel out of Egypt, and planted them in the land. After this, while through their sins the time was indeed disastrous, He had raised them up judges to the end of about 450 years, till Samuel—another memorable deliverance. There was more disaster, for the people would have a king; but here also, after forty years of trial, God overtopped their failure with the gift of one after His own heart; with him

*May there not be a suggestion too that Mark shrunk from the evident tendency to reach Gentiles? This is the theme of this part of the book, and the mention of his return to Jerusalem is significant. S. R.

baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John was fulfilling his course, he said, What suppose ye that I am? I am not he; but behold, there [b]cometh one after me, the shoes of whose feet I am not worthy to unloose. Brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to us* is the word of this [c]salvation sent. For they that dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they [d]knew him not, nor the voices of the [e]prophets which are read every sabbath, [f]fulfilled them in condemning him. And though they found [g]no cause of death [in him], they besought Pilate that he might be slain. And when they had [h]fulfilled all things that were written of him, they took him down from the tree, and placed him in a [i]tomb. But God [j]raised him from the dead, and he was [k]seen for many days, of those who came up with him from Galilee unto Jerusalem,—men who are now his [l]witnesses unto the people. And *we* declare to

b Jno. i. 26, 27.
c *cf.* ch. 4. 12. *cf.* ver. 47.
d *cf.* Jno. i. 10, 11. *cf.* ch. 3. 17.
e *cf.* ch. 26. 22, 23, 27. *cf.* Rom. 3. 21.
f *cf.* ch. 2. 23. *cf.* ch. 17. 3. *cf.* Jno. 19. 11.
g Mk. 14. 55. *cf.* Mk. 15. 10.
h *cf.* Lk. 18. 31. *cf.* Jno. 19. 30.
i Matt. 27. 59, 60. Jno. 19. 41, 42.
j ch. 2. 24. *cf.* Rom. 6. 4.
k ch. i. 3. *cf.* I Cor. 15. 5-7.
l ch. i. 8. ch. 2. 32.

* While this is the better supported reading, "you" is not a weak one and certainly agrees with the context.

the promise of a Saviour in his line. There was then a weary interval, which for his purpose the speaker can pass over; at last, after a needed baptism of repentance proclaimed to Israel, the Saviour came. All had known John; and he had borne public witness to the coming after him of One with regard to whom he was not worthy to do a menial's office. His salvation whom John had heralded was now being declared to the residents at Antioch.

A strange story indeed, of a smitten and slain Saviour! slain in accordance with their prophecies, by a people who refused the testimony of the prophets. Causelessly slain, yet His death had broken the bonds of death, and God had raised Him in an exceptional manner from among the dead: a thing borne witness to by many witnesses.

The apostle had testimony of his own which he could have added, as we know; but he prefers to make his appeal to what they had in their hand, the Scriptures which, thank God, are in our hand also. He appeals to three special texts as to the fulfilment of this promise.

The first is the second psalm, to which Peter also had appealed. God had owned a Man on earth—His anointed King on Zion—as His begotten Son. This was the claim which, as made by Jesus, the scribes so stoutly resisted. That any *man* should dare, in that sense, to call God his Father, was in itself, whatever he might offer in proof, incredible and monstrous. All His glorious works were nullified by this claim. Yet there it was, upon the face of their own scriptures, true certainly as to *some* Man: so that, if He had *not* claimed it, He could not have been the Christ of God! Thus the very objection that they made was proof rather for, than proof against Him. Jesus was in fact the One raised up of God to them in fulfilment of the promise. Did they but recall that psalm,—and how could an Israelite forget it?—they might see how the very controversy of Israel and of the kings of the earth with Him was recorded in it,—the vain attempt "against Jehovah and against His Christ." Did not He who sat in the heavens laugh? What could they do with Him they had safely guarded in His sepulcre?—with the Risen One whom they had helped so manifestly to proclaim? If they had His body, they had only to produce it, to quench all this joy that had so strangely arisen over the grave of a Crucified Man. But everywhere that Cross itself became a triumph! The Crucified had become glorified on earth; was it not the reflection of a brighter and heavenly glory?

you glad tidings,—the [m]promise made unto the fathers, that God hath fulfilled this unto us their children, in that he raised up Jesus; as also it is [n]written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. But that he raised him from among the dead, [o]no more to return to corruption, he hath spoken thus, I will give you the [p]faithful mercies* of David; wherefore he saith also in another [psalm], [q]Thou wilt not suffer thy Pious* One to see corruption. For David, having in his own generation served the counsel of God, [r]fell asleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: but he whom God raised up saw [s]no corruption. Be it [t]known unto you, therefore, brethren, that through this man is announced to you [u]remission of sins; and from all things from which in

m ch. 26.6,7. *cf.* Gal. 3.16.
n Ps. 2. 7. Heb. 1. 5. Heb. 5. 5.
o *cf.* Rom. 6. 9, 10. *cf.* Heb. 9. 25–28. *cf.* Gen. 24. 5, 6.
p Is. 55. 3. *cf.* Ps. 89. 33–37.
q Ps. 16. 10. ch. 2. 27.
r 1 Ki. 2. 10. *cf.* 2 Sa. 7. 12.
s ch. 2. 29–31. *ctr.* Gen. 3. 19.
t vers. 32, 33. *cf.* ch. 2. 36.
u ch. 5. 31. ch. 10. 43. *cf.* Eph. 1. 7. *cf.* Heb. 10. 17, 18.

* ὅσια, ὅσιος, the connection cannot be made apparent in English without a paraphrase; but see the Notes.

The second psalm does not, however, speak of resurrection; for that the apostle adduces a singular text from Isaiah (chap. lv. 3), "I will give you the sure (or faithful) mercies of David." These mercies, as every one knew, were to be in a Person (as the next verses also show), a Son of David, greater far than he. And of Him the sixteenth psalm, next quoted, plainly speaks. David it is; and yet was it fulfilled in David? Here was a Pious One, who on account of what He was, though His soul would be in hades, would not be suffered to see corruption in the grave. That was not true of David, as they all knew. Of One whom they could not deny to be the Son of David it *was* true. In Him those mercies were deposited in a way which rescued them from peril evermore.

The connection between the "mercies" and the "Pious" One is not seen in English. The words are really the same—and this both in Greek and Hebrew; and some would make them so in English, by translating, "Thy Merciful One;" but I do not take this to be the connection. It is not as being merciful that God could not suffer Him to see corruption: nor for anything that He is towards men. As "Thy Pious One" is undoubtedly a good translation, so it is one that suits the place in which we find it here. But the word used in relation to Jehovah, as in the first case, cannot mean this; we cannot speak of Jehovah's "piety"; and here the alternative rendering as "mercies," "benefits," is evidently right. The word in Hebrew, in its radical meaning, speaks of affection abundant and ready to flow out, whether Godward or manward, and needing therefore to be variously expressed. In the One before us, the true David, or "Beloved," is found the abundant outflow in *both* directions; and here is the connection between the passages as far as this word is concerned. In the Mediator standing between God and man, both God and Man are found in full, ideal relationship. And it is in the Risen Man that this is clearly established, never to be disordered any more.

The effect is now that there is a gospel: "Through this Man is announced to you remission of sins;" and that in a complete way which not only witnesses mercy on God's part, but righteousness,—as justification manifestly does. The wail of the Jobs of ancient time is answered, "How shall man be just with God?" though in a way transcending all ability on man's side; for now God is just, and the Justifier of the ungodly, through faith in Jesus. The justification of a sinner—the righteousness of God put fully upon his side—in the only way in which it could possibly be accomplished, will be the wonder and delight of eternity. What indeed could Moses' law do in such a matter? It was only for sins done inadvertently that it provided (Lev. iv. 2, 13, 22, 27); for any other it

[v] Moses' law ye could not be justified, in him is [w] justified every one who believeth. See then, that there come not upon you that which is spoken in the prophets, Behold, ye [x] despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye will in no wise believe, if one declare it unto you.

4 (xiii.42–52): The Jews rejecting, the apostles turn to the Gentiles.

4. And as they went out, they [y] besought that these things might be spoken to them the next sabbath. Now when the synagogue broke up, many of the Jews and of the worshiping proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas; who, speaking to them, persuaded them to [z] continue in the grace of God. And on the next sabbath almost all the city was gathered together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with [a] jealousy, and contradicted the things spoken by Paul, and railed. And Paul and Barnabas spake out boldly, saying, It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken [b] first to you. Since ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we [c] turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord enjoined us, [d] I have set thee for a light of the nations, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the end of the earth. And the Gentiles hearing [this] were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many

v cf. Rom. 3. 19, 20. cf. Rom. 10. 3-11. cf. Gal. 3. 10-14. cf. Heb. 7. 18, 19.
w cf. Rom. 3. 28. cf. Ro. 5. 1. cf. Gal. 2. 16.
x Hab. 1. 5. cf. Is. 29. 14. cf. 2 Cor. 2. 15, 16.
y cf. Matt. 13. 20, 21.
z cf. Col. 1. 23. cf. Jude 21. cf. Heb. 10. 38, 39.
a cf. 1 Thes. 2. 16. cf. Matt. 23. 13. cf. ch. 22. 21, 22.
b cf. Lk. 24. 47. cf. Rom. 1. 16.
c cf. ch. 28. 26–28. cf. Ezek. 3. 4-7.
d Is. 49. 6. cf. ch. 15. 16, 17; cf. Rom. 11. 25.

was incompetent. And if "without shedding of blood is no remission," "the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sins" (Heb. ix. 22, x. 4–7). Of something beyond itself it was ever speaking; yea, of Him whose death for sinners was now an offence everywhere to the Jew.

The apostle adds the warning which the prophet had already given; or rather, God by him; an intimation not to be carried away by the unbelief of their leaders,—an unbelief so plainly foretold. Alas, it was soon to be seen that they needed the warning, and yet that it was to be, except to a remnant, given in vain!*

4. The history of this follows; in which we see the pride of the Jew in his exclusive privileges making him refuse the most precious blessings, if he is to share them with the Gentile. The simple condition of faith which the gospel imposes sets the believing Gentile upon the same footing with the Jew; and on the next sabbath almost the whole city comes together to hear news like this. The sight of the multitudes stirs up the Jews to jealousy, and they contradict Paul with open railing. This in turn rouses the two evangelists to declare their express commission to the Gentiles; and that, since they who had been privileged to have the first invitation of divine grace had put it from them, they would turn to these. And again they produce the undeniable statement of the Word, that Christ was set to be a light to the nations, a salvation even to the end of the earth.

It is, in fact, to One whose labor has been in vain in Israel that God speaks after this manner (Isa. xlix. 4–6). If Israel were not gathered, this even would be a small thing, compared with the work in which He should be glorified, of wide blessing among the Gentiles. This shows it contemplated, at least, that there might be a time when Israel would reject while the Gentiles would receive Him. What serious question would not such a suggestion raise in the mind of

* This address of Paul has something in common with that of Stephen, in that it is a historic summary. It differs from that however, and resembles Peter's at Pentecost, in showing from Scripture the death and resurrection of Christ. S. R.

as were *e*ordained to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was *f*carried abroad through all the country. But the Jews excited the *g*women of the upper classes who were worshipers, and the chief men of the city, and stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and *h*cast them out from their borders. But they *i*shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came to Iconium. And the disciples were *j*filled with joy and with [the] Holy Spirit.

e cf. Rom. 8. 29, 30. *cf.* Jno. 6. 44. *cf.* Rom. 9. 15, 16.
f cf. ch. 19. 10.
g cfr. ch. 17. 4, 12.
h cf. 1 Thes. 2. 15. *cf.* Jno. 16. 2. *cf.* ch. 8. 1.
i Matt. 10. 14.

5 (xiv. 1-7): The Strong with the weak.

5. And it came to pass in Iconium that they entered together into the *k*synagogue of the Jews, and *l*so spake that a great multitude of both Jews and Greeks believed. But the Jews who were disobedient *m*stirred up the souls of the Gentiles, and made their minds ill-affected against the brethren. Long time therefore

cf. ch. 18. 6.
j cf. ch. 16 25. *cf.* Col. 1. 24. *cf.* Matt. 5. 12. *cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 6.
k ch. 13. 5, 14.
l cf. 1 Cor. 2. 1-5.

cf. Rom. 15. 19; *cf.* Gal. 3. 1. *m* ch. 13. 50; ver. 19.

a Jew! And these prophets were read continually in their synagogues! but unbelief gets through the plainest testimonies. The Gentiles are glad, however, and glorify the word of the Lord; and in the sovereign grace of God many believe; and the word of the Lord is carried abroad throughout all the country.

But an opposition is now roused, which follows the apostles through all their labors in these parts. Those who will not themselves receive the truth will not, if they can help it, suffer the truth to be received; and the Jews have influence enough with the Gentiles to turn them against those whom they hate for bringing blessing to the Gentiles! Such is man! So the bringers of good news are cast out for the news they bring; but the disciples are filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

5. The work at Iconium does not present much difference from that at Antioch; only that here a larger number of the Jews believe. The end is similar; the unbelieving Jews stir up the Gentiles, and the apostles have to flee. What is emphasized in the account given is certainly the help found in God, who links Himself to human weakness so as to make it "mighty through God." First, in the synagogue they "*so* spake that a great multitude of both Jews and Greeks believed." Here, spite of its being clearly the work of God to bring men to Himself, yet none the less is He pleased to give effect to the words of His people in such sort that it can be said, they *so* spake as to produce faith. There is a right fitting of words to such an end which must not be overlooked; a skill which only a wisdom begotten of love can enable with, and which disdains not diligence for the attainment of its ends,—"And because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he pondered and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. The preacher sought to find out acceptable words, and that which was written uprightly, even words of truth" (Eccl. xii. 9, 10).

There are many who seem to think that the teaching of the Spirit of God should set aside all this. They speak slightingly of the "study" even of the word of God. They no longer "cry after knowledge," nor "lift up the voice for understanding;" they do not "seek her as silver," nor "search for her as for hid treasures." Yet they doubt not to "understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God" (Prov. ii. 3–5). Without sowing of seed, they expect harvests, and that negligence now shall do the work of diligence, and find the blessing it has never sought.

But the man of God is to be furnished unto all good works; and from Scripture only is this furnishing. If we are to be "as new-born babes, desiring the sincere milk of the Word," *how much* does a new-born babe desire milk? Alas! the careless way in which the word of God is read to-day shows little of the

they tarried, speaking [n] boldly in dependence on the Lord, who bare [o] witness to the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. But the multitude of the city was [p] divided; and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles. And when an effort was made, both of the Gentiles and of the Jews, with their rulers, to use them ill, and stone them, they became aware of it, and [q] fled unto the cities of Lycaonia, to Lystra and Derbe, and the surrounding country; and there they evangelized.

6 (xiv.8-20): Touching the boundaries.

6. And there sat a certain man in Lystra, [r] impotent in his feet, lame from his mother's womb, who had never

n *cf.* ch. 4.29, 31. *cf.* ch.28.31. *cf.* Rom.1.16.
o *cf.* Mk.16.20. *cf.* ch. 5.32 with ch.10.44-47.
p *cf.* ch. 17.4-8.
q Matt. 10.23. *cf.* Matt.12.15.
r *cf.* ch.9. 25. *cf.* ch.3. 2-8.

teaching of the Spirit of God; and thus with each new wind of doctrine, the anchors of so many drag at once!

Here we are speaking rather of the ability to affect others; and for this the need of gift from God must not be forgotten. But the possession of whatever gift does not render one superior to the rules which are common to all Christians, and which are plain moral rules, every one. The *servant serves with what the Christian has acquired;* and this is a most important rule indeed! We acquire and prove in our own souls what we can then use for the souls of others; and the very fact that we are to serve others with it shows the need all have of it, and not servants only. There is no part of the word of God that is not intended for all the people of God; and we all learn as learners, not as teachers. Oh for the longing from the heart of every Christian for that which has all come from the heart of God for all His own!

Those *so* speak as to make men believe, who have themselves received with a living and joyous faith what they impart to others; and who impart it therefore, not according to the rules of an artificial pedagogy, but from such full hearts as alone can reach hearts.

So the apostles spake, and so the Iconians believed. But all the more it stirred the souls of some to faith, the more would it awaken opposition in the hearts of its rejectors. Again it was the Jews who evil affected the Gentiles towards the brethren, newly become such. Here too, however, the weak are with the Strong, who protects them and enables them to continue in the midst of the opposition, by means, perhaps, of the signs and wonders which He grants them to do, and of which at Antioch we hear nothing. They seem by no means, therefore, a necessary accompaniment of the gospel, but rather an occasional help,—in this case, seemingly, to quiet opposition, and make men realize with whom they had to do.

The city was divided; but at last a determined attack was to be made,—a combined attempt to stone them on the part of Jews and Gentiles both. Acting then upon the Lord's words to the disciples, they flee to Lystra and Derbe, in the wilder parts of Lycaonia, and there pursue their work.

6. As at Iconium there was seen the power of Him who was with His word, so now at Lystra is demonstrated the fickleness of the multitude, who presently stone the man whom at first they would have worshiped as a god. The healing of the impotent man suggests the latter; yet is all incompetent to commend to the mass the blessed truth brought to them by the healer, which should have been its own commendation; while the tale of his traducers finds its way to the very bottom of their hearts! Both ways one touches boundaries here, but finds good nowhere. Men will idolize you, perhaps; for God has lost His place with them, and it is easily given to another. They will destroy their idol too, as easily. This is the creature, man, to whom nevertheless God has sent a message of infinite grace, the story of a work more wonderful than ever blessed before the ears that hear it; but over this he has the greatest difficulty! What

walked. This man heard Paul speaking; who, fastening his eyes upon him, and seeing that he had [s]faith to be made whole, said with a loud voice, Stand upright upon thy feet; and he [t]leaped up and [u]walked. And the multitudes, seeing what Paul had done, lifted up their voices, saying in the Lycaonian [tongue], The [v]gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas Jupiter, and Paul Mercury, because he took the [w]lead in speaking. And the priest of Jupiter, who was before the city, brought bulls and garlands to the gates, and would have done [x]sacrifice with the multitudes. But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they rent their garments, and sprang forth among the multitude, crying out and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of [y]like passions with you, and bring you glad tidings, that ye should [z]turn from these vain things unto the living God, who [a]made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein; who in the past generations [b]suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways. And yet he left not himself without [c]witness, in that he did good and gave you rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness. And with these words they scarcely restrained the multitudes from sacrificing to them.

But there came Jews from Antioch and Iconium; and, having [d]persuaded the multitudes, they [e]stoned Paul, and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. But while the disciples surrounded him, he stood up, and [f]entered into the city; and on the morrow he [g]went away with Barnabas to Derbe.

7 (xiv.21-28): The completion of the work.

7. And when they had evangelized that city, and made many disciples, they [h]returned to Lystra, and Iconium and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to [i]continue in the faith, and that through

s cf. Matt. 9. 2, 28, 29.
t cf. Is. 35. 6. cf. 1 Pet. 1. 23.
u cf. 1 Thes. 2. 12 with Is. 40. 31. ctr. Gal. 5. 7.
v cf. ch. 8. 10. cf. ch. 28. 6. cf. ch. 12. 22.
w ch. 13. 13, 16.
x cf. ch. 10. 25, 26. cf. Dan. 2. 46. ctr. ver. 19.
y cf. Jas. 5. 17. cf. Rev. 19. 10.
z cf. 1 Thess. 1. 9. cf. ch. 15. 19. cf. Gal. 4. 8-11.
a cf. ch. 4. 24. cf. ch. 17. 24. cf. Col. 1. 16.
b cf. ch. 17. 30. cf. Gen. 15. 16. cf. 2 Pet. 3. 9, 10.
c cf. Rom. 1. 20, 21. cf. Matt. 5. 45. cf. Ps. 65. 8-13.
d ch. 13. 50. cf. Mk. 15. 11.
e cf. ch. 7. 58. cf. ch. 9. 16. cf. 2 Cor. 11. 25.
f cf. Jno. 11. 7-10. cf. ch. 20. 24.
g cf. ver. 6.
h cf. ch. 15. 36.
i ch. 13. 43. cf. ch. 2. 42.

but the power of the Spirit could one trust to make way for the gospel in a world like this?

Preserved from it at Iconium, Paul is permitted to be stoned at Lystra; how, amid it all, his mind must have gone back to Stephen! but that he should abide in the flesh was needful yet for many; and this, and not the wills of lawless men, governs all: while the disciples stand round him, he rises up, and returns into the city. "Fear would have said, Go anywhere else just now. Self would have said, Stay there, and see what a future triumph for the gospel! But the thoughts of man are in neither suggestion the mind of Christ; and this the apostle had and acted on." (W. Kelly.) "On the morrow he went away with Barnabas to Derbe."

7. The limit of their journey at the present time is now reached. At Derbe there are many disciples made, with no record of after-persecution; and thence they return to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, "confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God." Such words for the mass seem idle now, though assuredly they should still have meaning. The lives of the speakers were in this case an illustration in full of what they declared, and it was

many [j] tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God. And having chosen them [k] elders in each assembly, having [l] prayed, with fastings, they [m] commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed. And having passed through Pisidia, they came unto Pamphylia; and having spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia; and thence they sailed to Antioch, whence they had been [n] committed to the grace of God, for the work which they had fulfilled. And when they had come, and gathered together the assembly, they [o] related to them all that God had done with them, and how he had [p] opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles. And they remained no little time with the disciples.

[j] *cf.* Rom. 5. 3. *cf.* Phil. 1. 29. *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 12, 13.
[k] *cf.* ch. 11. 30. *cf.* ch. 20. 17. *cf.* 1 Tim. 3. 1, etc. *cf.* Tit. 1. 5–9.
[l] *cf.* ch. 13. 3.
[m] ch. 20. 32.
[n] *cf.* ch. 13. 2–4.
[o] ch. 15. 3, 4, 12. ch. 21. 19.
[p] *cf.* ch. 11. 18; *cf.* 1 Cor. 16. 9.

not possible for any to dissent from a principle so manifest as these had made it.

Now for the first time we come to the appointment of elders in the assemblies; a class of officers of which we have heard hitherto only among the assemblies in Judea. Unless age and experience are to count for nothing in the affairs of the assembly, an eldership must naturally obtain recognition everywhere, practically if not formally; and in the Jewish assemblies it seems to have been simply a natural growth (1 Pet. v. 1, 5), officialized by antique and patriarchal custom. Yet all would not be ready to take their part in the responsibilities implied, and many would become in different ways disqualified. The eldership would thus become more restricted than the term properly would argue for.

In the assembly also, in contradistinction from Judaism, all terms had a spiritual significance. The "babes, young men, and fathers" were spiritual grades primarily; even though by no means wholly severed from their natural representatives. Years would count, and yet not simply as time and nothing else. That would be true even in nature, that men might be older or younger than their age; but spiritually much greater and more significant would such disproportion be. Thus there would be disqualifications for eldership, and mainly moral, though not wholly. If any one examines the apostle's qualifications of an overseer (which was the official status of the elder), as given in the first epistle to Timothy, he will easily discern the moral character on which all is based, and that it is that of the "father" (chap. iii. 1–7; comp. v. 1). A specific gift was quite another matter; and though it might and should develop, no age or experience could communicate it. But it was just the experience of one spiritually a "father" which would enable him for oversight in the family of God.

In the case of the assemblies here, the apostles choose elders for them; they are not able, therefore, to do it for themselves: and this is confirmed by the express commission given to Titus to appoint elders in those of Crete, as by the directions as to them given to Timothy; where the fact of his being at Ephesus, where there were already such (chap. xx. 17) makes their inability to appoint also as evident as that of the assembly. It was an office which apparently any might desire, and to which, therefore, one would say, all who had the needful qualifications might be appointed. The appointment conveyed an authority which the exercise of special gift did not require; that of the preacher or teacher being simply that of the word he ministered, and not of office.

Things being thus set in order in these young assemblies, with prayer and fasting they commended them to the Lord, in whom they had believed; and passing back along the road by which they had come, having reached the sea-coast, sailed to Antioch. There they had been committed to the grace of God for the work now fulfilled; and there they related how God through them had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. There they remained no little time.

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. xv. 1–35.)
Is the Law to be added to the Gospel?

1 (1-6): The occasion of the question.

1. AND certain persons who had come down from [q] Judea taught the brethren, Except ye shall have been circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved. A commotion therefore having taken place, and no little [r] debate with them by Paul and Barnabas, they arranged that Paul and Barnabas, and some others of them should go up to [s] Jerusalem to the apostles and elders about this question. They therefore, having been brought on their way by the assembly, [t] passed through both Phœnicia and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles; and caused great [u] joy to all the brethren. And being arrived at Jerusalem, they were [v] received by the assembly and the apostles

q *cf.* Gal. 2. 12. *cf.* ch. 10. 45.
r ver. 7. *cf.* Gal. 2. 1-10. *cf.* Gal. 5. 2-12. *cf.* Gal. 6. 12-16.
s *cf.* ch. 11. 2. *cf.* ver. 1.
t *cf.* ch. 14. 27.
u *cf.* ch. 11. 18, 23.
v *cf.* ch. 21. 17.

SUBD. 2.

We have already seen abundantly, and as emphasized in the Cross itself, that it is the men of law who are to be the special opponents of the way of grace. That which God gave for the cure of self-righteousness is that which the perversity of man uses in the interest of it. And this we are to find both outside and inside Christianity, adapting itself in various grades and modifications to what is its mere opposite; as a parasitic growth twines itself round and sustains itself upon that from which it draws the nutritive juices which are its life.

The law was given for the cure of legality; but its mode of dealing with this (perhaps the only, and thus the absolutely necessary way) being that of experiment, it seems at first sight, and on a superficial view, to favor it. God gave the law, say men, and think they need go no further. Would He say, "Do this," without meaning that you are to do it? That its real purpose should be to stop every one's mouth, and bring all the world in guilty before God,—that is an intolerable thought. And when, convicted and undone, we must needs cast ourselves upon Christ entirely for the righteousness which in ourselves we cannot find, still, for most of us, if not all, the same weary round must be pursued in the interests of holiness and practical life; conscience goading us on a road which to the most conscientious is most impracticable, until we break down with the despairing groan, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" The least conscientious get on best here; and they find provided for them all along the road certain helps for travelers—mere evasions of the truth, or opiates for the conscience—which enable them to tread it with apparent ease, or lead them off unwittingly upon a convenient bye-path. With these inventions we have not as yet to do; we are here at the beginning of the history of Christianity, and things meet us in their first and simplest forms. Here therefore, those of the sect of the Pharisees who believe have only in a straightforward manner to declare that it is needful to circumcise the Gentile converts, and to enjoin them to keep the law of Moses. And by this they mean, not certain moral essentials, but the law as a whole: what a Jew would call that. This question—already settled as it might seem, and indeed really was—comes up nevertheless again for settlement. It cannot be suffered to be decided in default merely of advocates for Moses; it must be taken up distinctly, raised and argued out; and this is accordingly what we find now.

1. Those who are the occasion of the question being raised do not themselves make a question of it. They preach boldly and without a doubt their legal doctrine, as is usual with men of their class. "Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved." It need not, one would think, have raised much alarm; for they could quote neither scripture nor apostle for it; but

and the elders, and they [w] announced to them how great things God had done with them. And there rose up some of the [x] sect of the Pharisees who believed, saying that it was needful to circumcise them, and enjoin them to keep the law of Moses. And the apostles and the [y] elders were gathered together to see about this matter.

2 (7-21): The witness of God.

2. And when there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said unto them, Brethren, ye [z] know how, long ago, God made choice among you, that by my mouth

w ch. 14. 27. ver. 12.

x ver. 1. cf. ch. 26.5. cf. ch. 23. 6.

y cf. vers. 2, 4, 22. cf. ch. 14.23. cf. 1 Pet. 5.1.

z cf. chs. 10, 11. 1-18.

the sheep of Christ are, alas, a timid folk, and a loud voice and a confident tone are apt to dismay, if not to carry them. A commotion thus is easily excited, which even Paul and Barnabas are unable to put an end to. Behind these persons from Judea looms the shadow of Jerusalem and the twelve, the primal seat of authority; and in fact it is of God that this matter shall be settled there, so that there may be no possibility of cavil any more. Jerusalem is to be the place of settlement, just because the Jewish yoke is to be finally and for ever taken off the necks of the Gentiles, and no other hands could do it so well. It is an act of abdication of supposed rights that is to be accomplished, and those must do this who are thought to have the rights. After all, the decision really is that *God* has settled the matter, and that they have nothing to do but to bow to what He has done.

It is in a very different interest that this first "council" is quoted and appealed to, namely to give sanction to a hierarchical government of the Church. The patriarchate of Jerusalem is thus made to have its beginning from the earliest times, with James as its head and oracle giving sentence, even in the presence of the whole conclave of the apostles themselves! A small foundation indeed, upon which to build the immense system that has been built upon it. The moral suitability of all here is as plain as the *un*suitability for the purposes of ecclesiastical pretension which it is made to serve. And this will be more evident as we proceed to consider it.

The discordant voices that have been heard have come from Judea. There is the seat of what may be a growing and fatal heresy. The place for it to be met is there where it has had its origin, and with the full agreement of those who are leaders in the Jewish assemblies. Paul and Barnabas, with others from Antioch, it is arranged, shall go up there; and the assembly, in testimony of their fellowship with them, conduct them on the way. Everywhere, as they pass through Phenicia and Samaria, they carry with them the news of the Gentile work now fairly beginning, and of the wonderful power of God which has shown itself in this: a fitting introduction to bring hearts into accord with Him in the grace He has already manifested, and to make them fear to cloud it by the bringing in of a principle so contradictory to that first free action of the Spirit as that which men would now fain introduce.

So they come to Jerusalem, and in full assembly, before the apostles and elders, announce the same joyful news of the blessing that has been given,—the first-fruits of a great harvest to come in. *God* has wrought; will they dictate to Him the terms of continuance of that which without condition He has so begun? Here the Pharisees among the disciples echo the voice which has been heard at Antioch, and in the same positive way. We cannot be saved *by* the law, indeed, but can we be saved *without* the law?—a question existing to-day, apart from the crude form in which it is uttered here; and urged with the same heedlessness of the answer of God already fully given, as well as of the imperative needs that lie hid in their souls who ask it.

2. It is noticeable that not the apostles only come to consider the matter. Those set in the place of founders of Christianity—Christ's special gifts to the Church for that purpose—do not assume on that account to sit in a conclave of their own, and simply let others know the decision they have arrived at. Just

the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God, who [a]knoweth the heart, bare them witness, [b]giving them the Holy Spirit, even as to us, and put [c]no difference between us and them, [d]cleansing their hearts by faith. Now then, why [e]tempt ye God, in putting a [f]yoke upon the disciples' necks, which [g]neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the [h]grace of the Lord Jesus we shall be saved in the same manner as they. And all the multitude kept silence; and they hearkened unto Barnabas and Paul [i]relating how great signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles by their means.

a *cf.* Jno. 2. 24, 25. *cf.* ch. 1. 24. *cf.* Rom. 8. 27. *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 19.
b *cf.* ch. 10. 44-47. *cf.* Gal. 3. 2. *cf.* Eph. 1. 13.
c *cf.* Rom 3. 22-24, 29, 30. *cf.* Rom. 10. 12. *cf.* Eph. 2. 11-22. *cf.* Col. 3. 10, 11. d *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 11; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 22; *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 9; *cf.* Ps. 51. 10. e *cf.* Heb. 3. 9, 10. f ver. 28. *cf.* Gal. 5. 1; *cf.* Gal. 4. 8-11; *cf.* Col. 2. 16-23. g *cf.* Matt. 23. 4; *cf.* Gal. 3. 19, 23, 24; *ctr.* Matt. 11. 28-30; *ctr.* 1 Jno. 5. 3. h *cf.* Rom. 11. 6; *cf.* Eph. 2. 8, 9; *cf.* Gal. 1. 6. i vers. 3, 4.

so much the more as the Lord has endowed them with special gift, so much the less need have they to fence themselves round with the claim of authority which after all is found in the word they bring, and must have its confirmation in the conscience and heart of those that listen to it. Those whose history we have before us here are evidently men who believe in full light and fresh air,—who allow discussion, and appeal themselves both to Scripture and reason. Reason is not a revelation, and must be subject to revelation; but which will enlighten, not contradict it. The more they were persuaded of the truth they had being indeed from God, the more freely could they take the ground of one of these apostles, "I speak as to wise men,"—sensible men, as we speak commonly—"judge ye what I say" (1 Cor. x. 15). The cry against the mind so often made by assumed spirituality is most contrary to God, who has made us altogether for Himself, and claims us altogether. Mind is not a product of the fall, though the fall has darkened and enfeebled it. We need God here as everywhere, to deliver from the power of sin which has enslaved naturally all our faculties; but a man without mind is simply an idiot, and the lack is one which no spiritual work that one ever hears of provides substitute for. Mind is a gift of creation, not of new creation. The new-creative work is spiritual, and not mental, however much the whole man is enlarged and blessed by it.

The naturalness of all here is refreshing. Debate goes on freely with the apostles in presence; the arguments of the law-advocates are allowed to have full hearing, although they are not recorded for us. At last Peter stands up and narrates the story we have listened to before, of how God had settled this matter a good while since, when by his mouth the Gentiles first heard the gospel and believed. God had testified in their behalf, putting the seal of His Spirit on them though uncircumcised, purifying them not by circumcision but by faith. Had He then spoken anything of any supplementary work to be effected in them by Moses? And what did their own experience tell them of the yoke of the law? Would they put that upon these fresh disciples, which they and their fathers too had found no ability to bear? It would be tempting God, not pleasing Him to impose that upon them which He in His ways had conspicuously left aside. And they themselves trusted for salvation, not to legal righteousness, but to the grace of the Lord Jesus.

The clear and sufficient argument goes further than they yet were able or disposed to carry it. Was God indeed freeing the Gentiles' necks from such an intolerable yoke, still to leave the Jewish believers under it? But they keep to the point in hand: God had certainly spoken with sufficient plainness as to it, and the silence following testifies to the effect produced. To have resisted would have been resisting Him. They are silent therefore, while Barnabas and Paul—we see how naturally here at Jerusalem Barnabas, best and longest known, returns to his old precedence—once more relate the signs and wonders with which it had pleased God to confirm their work among the nations. It was in fact

And after they had held their peace, [j]James answered, saying, Brethren, hearken to me: Simon* hath related how God first visited the Gentiles, to [k]take out from them a people for his Name. And to this [l]agree the words of the prophets, as it is [m]written, After these things I will return, and [n]build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen: yea, I will build again the ruins of it, and set it up, so that the [o]residue of men may seek out the Lord, even all the nations upon whom my Name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth these things [p]known from eternity.† Wherefore *I* judge that we

j ch. 12. 17. ch. 21. 18. cf. Gal. 1. 19. cf. Gal. 2. 9, 12.
k cf. ch. 13. 48. cf. Rom. 15. 9–12.
l cf. ch. 2. 16.
m Am. 9. 11, 12.
n cf. Hag. 2. 9.
o cf. ch. 17. 26, 27. cf. Is. 49. 1, 6.
p cf. Is. 45. 21, 22. cf. Gal. 3. 8.

*Symeon. †MSS. vary as to the exact words; but the meaning is little changed.

Peter's argument extended and amplified; and thus God had been bearing witness to what was in His heart: who should gainsay Him? It was a different—a strange work compared with anything that the law could show, the heart of God breaking through all barriers with its message of divine reconciliation and peace for all;—God the God of all His creatures once again; sin and its estrangements overcome for all who would have it so!

This story of grace ended, James adds a final word; not, surely, as president of the conference, any more than Patriarch of Jerusalem, but as led of the Spirit, who has the controlling place all through, and therefore just the most suitable person to show the complete harmony that prevailed. It is, no doubt, as commonly understood, not James the apostle, the son of Alphæus, but James the brother of Jude, the writer of the epistle which we have under his name. Everything that we know of him shows him to have been himself one of the most zealous of the law, which indeed all the thousands of believing Jews could a good while afterwards still be claimed to be (chap. xxi. 20). If James gives his judgment in agreement with Peter, then there is really no more to be said. In that sense his judgment is final; but Peter's had already settled all. Rather, it was God who had done so; and James continues but his argument by an appeal to Scripture to show that the blessing of the Gentiles as Gentiles had been before announced by God Himself. For this purpose, while he refers generally to the prophets he is content to quote Amos (chap. ix. 11, 12), in proof that there would be nations upon whom God's Name would be called. He does not at all say that the fulfilment of this was now taking place, or therefore, that the tabernacle of David was now being raised up. It is sufficient for him that such a thing as Gentiles being owned as God's was in full accord with God's ways announced. The prophecy clearly looks on to millennial times, and not to Christian; but that which God can do at one time cannot be *in itself* inconsistent for Him to do at another.*

James concludes that those are not to be troubled who from the nations are turning to God. Whoever desires to know the law can hear it every sabbath in the synagogues. Let them only abstain from pollutions of idols, from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. And to this the whole assembly agree without further discussion.

We have no difficulty as to the first two things specified here. The last two are connected together, and go back beyond Moses to God's covenant with Noah and his posterity,—therefore are not simply Jewish, though incorporated in the Jewish law, but apply to the whole present race of men. "The blood is the

*The quotation here of the Septuagint version, where it so decidedly differs from the Hebrew, cannot but impress one. James does not seem the man to favor Hellenism, and the whole character of the proceedings shows the manifest guidance of the Spirit of God. A very slight change of the Hebrew letters would reproduce the text which the Alexandrian translators must have had before them. The meaning thus obtained seems also better than that of the present text.

should not [t]trouble those who from the Gentiles are turning unto God; but that we write unto them that they abstain from [u]pollutions of idols, and from [u]fornication, and from that which is [u]strangled, and from [u]blood. For Moses, from generations of old, hath in every city those who preach him, being read in the [v]synagogues every sabbath.

3 (22-35): The publication.

3. Then pleased it the [w]apostles and the elders, with the whole assembly, to send men chosen from among them, unto Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas,—Judas, who

q ver. 10. cf. Rom. 7. 22-24. cf. Gal. 5. 17.
r ver. 29. cf. 1 Cor. 8. cf. 1 Cor. 10. 19-22. cf. Rev. 2. 14.
s cf. 1 Cor. 5. 1, 13. cf. 1 Cor. 7. 2, etc. cf. 1 Thess. 4. 3-8.

t cf. Gen. 9. 4; cf. Lev. 22. 8. u cf. Lev. 17. 14. v cf. ch. 13. 15; cf. 2 Cor. 3. 15. w ver. 28; cf. Matt. 18. 20.

life," and life belongs to God: the recognition of this in so open a way as is here enjoined is surely seemly; and in a world of strife and bloodshed such as sin has made this,—where, too, the creatures subjected to man are in danger of ruthless extirpation at his hands, not even limited by his own interest in their preservation, is (or would be, if it were maintained) every way for good. Man has, of course, set it aside, and the world at large has forgotten it; but the good of that which is from God abides, and this it is the duty and privilege of the Church to maintain,—the rights of the Creator, as well as the grace of the Redeemer. Another has said with regard to this decree:—

"It is a direction which teaches, not that which is abstractly good or evil, but that which was suitable to the case presented. It was 'necessary,' not 'righteous before God', to avoid certain things. The things might be really evil, but they are not here looked at in that way. There were certain things to which the Gentiles were accustomed, which it was proper they should renounce, in order that the assembly might walk as it ought before God in peace. To the other ordinances of the law they were not to be subjected. Moses had those who preached him. That sufficed, without compelling the Gentiles to submit to his laws, when they joined themselves, not to the Jews, but to the Lord.

"This decree therefore does not pronounce upon the nature of the things forbidden, but upon the opportuneness—the Gentiles having in fact been in the habit of doing all these things. We must observe that they were not things forbidden by the law only. It was that which was contrary to the order established by God as Creator, or to a prohibition given to Noah when he was told to eat flesh. Woman was only to be connected with man in the sanctity of marriage, and this is a very great blessing. Life belonged to God. All fellowship with idols was an outrage against the authority of the true God. Let Moses teach his own laws; these things were contrary to the intelligent knowledge of the true God. It is not therefore a new law imposed by Christianity, nor an accommodation to the prejudices of the Jews. It has not the same kind of validity as a moral ordinance that is obligatory in itself. It is the expression to Christian intelligence of the terms of man's true relations with God in the things of nature, given by the goodness of God, through the leaders at Jerusalem, to ignorant Christians setting them free from the law, and enlightening them with regard to the relations between God and man, and to that which was proper to man,—things of which, as idolatrous Gentiles, they had been ignorant. I have said, *addressed to Christian intelligence:* accordingly there is nothing inconsistent in eating anything that is sold at the shambles; for I acknowledge God who gave it, and not an idol. But if the act implies communion with the idol, even to the conscience of another, it would be provoking God to jealousy; I sin against Him or against my neighbor. I do not know whether an animal is strangled or not, but if people act so as to imply that it is indifferent whether life belongs to God or not, I sin again; I am not defiled by the thing, but I fail in Christian intelligence with regard to the rights of God as Creator." (*Synopsis.*)

3. For the publication of the decree, the assembly choose out men from among them to send back as their representatives with Paul and Barnabas to

is called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren; and they [x]wrote thus by them: The apostles and elder brethren,* to the brethren from among the Gentiles at Antioch and in Syria and Cilicia, greeting: Forasmuch as we have heard that [y]some who went out from among us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, [saying that ye must be circumcised and keep the law,]† to whom we gave no commandment, it seemed good unto us, having come to a common mind,‡ to send [z]chosen men to you, with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,—men who have [a]given up their lives for the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall tell you the [b]same things by word [of mouth]. For it [c]seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no [d]burden more than these [e]necessary things, to abstain from idol-sacrifices, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornications; from which if ye keep yourselves ye shall do well. Farewell. They therefore, being let go, came down to Antioch; and having gathered the multitude, delivered the epistle. And

x ch. 16. 4.

y vers. 1, 5. cf. Gal. 2. 12, 13.

z ver. 22. cf. ch. 13. 2.

a cf. ch. 14. 19, etc. cf. ch. 20. 24.

b cf. 2 Cor. 13. 1.

c ver. 22. cf. 1 Cor. 2. 14-16. cf. ch. 16. 6, 7.

d cf. ver. 10. cf. Gal. 5. 10.

e ver. 20.

* Or, "elders and brethren." † Many omit the bracketed portion.
‡ Or, "being assembled with one accord."

Antioch, to confirm all by word of mouth that they were writing, that no suspicion should by any possibility arise; expressing also in their letter, in strong terms their thorough confidence in those who had been the leaders in this work among the Gentiles. It is striking that in the letter the "elder brethren" (which is generally accepted now as the true reading) are associated with the apostles. It confirms what has been already said as to the character of eldership in the Jewish assemblies, while showing how little jealous as to their prerogatives as such were the genuine apostles. The place they had, and which was given them by the Lord, the Spirit of God maintained in the spiritual power which was theirs—the gift which they used to serve with. In seven out of fourteen of Paul's epistles we find a similar association of others with himself; and such style is truly apostolic. The men of those days were yet in remembrance of the Lord's pattern of greatness being a little child, and that He Himself had been among them as one that serveth.

When they say, "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us," it has to be remembered that the Spirit coming upon Cornelius and his company was indeed to Peter and to those with him the incontrovertible proof of God's acceptance of men uncircumcised; and that thus we can easily see why they should speak of the Spirit first and apart from themselves. The same seal had everywhere been put upon the Gentile converts; how then could they do otherwise than obediently follow as the Spirit so manifestly led? Their decision had been called for: they declare themselves therefore, as they could not do otherwise, in obedient harmony with what the Spirit Himself, apart from them, had done. The witness of the prophets, to which James had appealed, was also His witness; and the command given to Noah was of course no new enactment, but what Scripture had handed down. Really there was the fullest reason, therefore, for the language which they use, which separates what the Spirit Himself had led in from their own following as thus led of Him.

Nor is it in the least probable that they would have thought it necessary in announcing a decision of this character, to assure men that they were acting by the Spirit in such terms as they use here. That they *had* the Spirit, no one questioned; their actual *guidance* would not be better proved by the assertion, if

when they had read it, they *f* rejoiced for the consolation. And Judas and Silas, being *g* prophets also themselves, comforted the brethren with much discourse, and established them. And having tarried awhile, they were let go in peace from the brethren to those who sent them. [But it seemed good to Silas to abide there.*] But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, *h* teaching and announcing the glad tidings of the word of the Lord, with many others also.

f ch. 11. 23.
g cf. ch. 13.1. cf. 1 Cor. 14. 1–5.
h cf. ch. 11. 26.

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chaps. xv. 36–xx. 38.)

Transformations: the moral result.

SECTION 1. (Chaps. xv. 36–xvi. 12.)

The fundamental principle the sovereign will of God.

1 (xv. 36–41): Faithfulness.

1. BUT after some days Paul *i* said to Barnabas, Let us *j* return now, and visit the brethren in every city in which we have announced the word of the Lord, [and see] how they go on. And Barnabas advised that they should take with them also *k* John, called Mark. But Paul thought it not fit to take with them him who had fallen off from them from Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. A very *l* warm feeling

i ctr. ch. 13.2.
j cf. ch. 14.21–23.
k ch. 12. 12, 25. ch. 13. 5, 13. cf. Col. 4. 10. cf. 2 Tim. 4. 11.
l cf. Gen. 13. 7, 8. cf. 1 Cor. 11. 19.

*The majority of MSS omit the verse in brackets, but verse 40 would seem to show Silas had remained, or returned again.

any were disposed to question that. The apostle Paul does indeed, on one occasion, when he had been giving a judgment as to what it would be happier for one to do, remind us that he had the Spirit of God (1 Cor. vii. 40). But that is just because he is not speaking authoritatively, but simply tendering advice. He is not, as it were, in this case, the *apostle*, but the *man;* and we might need to be reminded that he was yet a man endowed (in how singular a way) with the Spirit of God. But what is before us now is a very different thing from this; and the authority of their decree would not be enhanced by a claim which the fact of its emanation from the apostles of the Lord and Saviour rendered quite unnecessary. On the other hand it would not be out of place to point out, against those who were troubling that the Spirit had already decided the whole matter. The case of Cornelius could not be unknown to them; in which the lack of circumcision had been definitely a question, and at Jerusalem itself. They had been taking up again what had been before sufficiently threshed out. In fact it was the enemy's work, however overruled of God for blessing; and in other and more subtle forms was to be again and again renewed.

For such need as all this implied, the testimony of Judas and Silas, prophets themselves, would be all-important; and thus in fact we hear of the comforting and establishment of the brethren by their means. Peace and unity were perfectly preserved; and as yet the adversary had gained no advantage. It is noted that, after they had tarried awhile, they are "let go in peace" to those who sent them; while the word of the Lord makes progress still in Antioch, and the number increases of those who labor in it.

SUBD. 3.

The part of the Acts to which we have now come, and which seems to include all the remaining labors of Paul, in Europe and in Asia, until his last journey to Jerusalem, where the malice of the Jews delivers him, after the pattern of his blessed Master, into the hands of the Gentiles, is from its largeness and variety hard to characterize. It can hardly be doubted, however, to give the moral result of the publication of the gospel in the Gentile world. The record

arose therefore [between them], so that they separated from one another, and Barnabas taking Mark sailed to [m]Cyprus; but Paul chose Silas and went forth, being [n]commended by the brethren to the grace of the Lord.* And he passed through Syria and Cilicia, [o]confirming the assemblies.

m *cf.* ch. 4. 36. *cf.* ch. 13. 4.
n *cf.* ch. 13. 3 with ch. 15. 26.
o ch. 16. 5. *cf.* Rom. 1. 11.

* Or, "of God." MSS. differ.

presents carefully selected types of its working in the midst of a people far enough away from God to worship in Athens one unknown, and in Ephesus to have it slander to assert that "they are no gods that are made with hands." Where God is thus lost the whole anchorage of the soul is lost, and all things must be in drift; but it is hard for us to realize how openly evil stalked abroad in the old heathen world. The remedy provided by the gospel was no superficial one, but met the condition in what was its source, by the revelation of God in Christ, and the establishment of abiding relationship in peace between Him and all who in faith received the word of reconciliation.

Sec. 1.

The character of the message is seen in the messenger, as Paul elsewhere urges. A yea and nay preacher would not commend his preaching as a trustworthy "yea." (2 Cor. i. 17–19.) A man himself insubject could not expect to lead others into subjection to God. And this is what we start with here in him who is the pattern worker set before us in the scenes in which we are now to accompany him. For him to live was Christ; and that means obedience absolute: that God must be God was his fundamental principle; and this gave him, not freedom from exercise, but assurance as to a path which he could walk in in faith as God's path—the only thing that can give ability for it. Christ as his Lord alone, the Spirit was for him, as for all others then, sole Guide and Interpreter of his Lord's will. His conscience was before God and not man, as a right conscience ever must be. Nothing is more plainly seen here than the positive way in which the Spirit guided, often in opposition to the human wisdom and will of the apostle himself. Being forbidden to speak the Word in Asia, they attempt to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffers them not. Then follows the vision of the man of Macedonia, and they pass over into Europe. Guidance is by no means in any uniform way; one needs to be on the alert, as well as instructed in the Lord's mind. Guidance with the eye requires the eye to be in waiting for the look that is to guide; and so Elijah stood before the Lord his God.

1. In the first place we do not hear of any direct word. It is the heart that prompts Paul to think of the brethren in the various places in which he had preached the gospel, with solicitude to know how they have been faring since. He proposes therefore to Barnabas that they should visit them together. Love is the true motive principle, and (where it is divine love) is clear-sighted too. The trouble as to guidance here is to avoid mixtures and counterfeits. That Barnabas should be ready seems a matter of course; but he proposes to take Mark with them, who had failed them on the former occasion, and at the very entrance upon what was the real work. Here was love too, no doubt, but as to his sister's son, too purely human. Paul being unwilling, there arises a very warm feeling between them, which separates the two so closely attached hitherto. Barnabas, kindly man as he is, now ruffled in his affections which doubtless are mingled with gracious desire that the young man may recover himself, seems to manifest most (as just such kindly spirits, so touched, are apt to do) the impatience which hurries him off with his nephew to his native land; and we lose him from the history. Paul, choosing Silas for his companion, goes forth, commended by the brethren to the grace of the Lord. Barnabas had failed also, just before this, as we learn from Galatians, following Peter's example upon the

2 (xvi.1-5): Wisdom.

2. And he came also to Derbe and Lystra; and behold, a certain disciple was there, by name Timotheus, the son of a [p] Jewish woman who believed, but the father a Greek, who was borne [q] witness of by the brethren in Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him, and took and [r] circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. And as they journeyed through the cities, they delivered them for their observance the [s] decrees determined on by the apostles and elders that were at Jerusalem. The assemblies therefore were confirmed in the faith, and [t] increased in number daily.

p cf. 2 Tim. 1. 5. *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 15. *cf.* Eph. 6. 4. *cf.* 1 Cor. 7. 14.
q cf. 1 Tim. 3. 7. *cf.* 3 Jno. 12.
r cf. 1 Cor. 9. 19, 20. *cf.* Gal. 2. 3. *cf.* Gal. 5. 6. *cf.* Gal. 6. 15.
s ch. 15. 22-29.
t ch. 2. 47. ch. 9. 31.

Jewish question; and this would naturally add to the seriousness of the matter in Paul's eyes. Certainly with him it was faithfulness that cost much which could make him stand against the endeared companion of days so happily remembered, and against the solicitations of a heart that knew if any did, the mercy of God towards the weak and erring, but now must be strong in the interests of grace itself to keep it free from all that would hinder its proper testimony among men. To Mark, at a later day, he gladly bears testimony; and he, the failing servant, is privileged, as we know, to give us the story of the Unfailing, Perfect One. Would he not in that after-time be the first to justify the apparent harshness which was only truth to Christ before all else, of the apostle now? And this is true love also, that seeketh not her own, but can be faithful because it *is* love.

2. But love gives wisdom also; and fullest obedience to Christ will go farthest in all that is permissible to yield to bring men to Him. At Jerusalem the circumcision of the Gentiles had been resisted to the uttermost, and on his new journey into Asia Minor Paul carried with him and delivered to the assemblies the decrees which had distinctly freed them from any imposition of the yoke of the law; yet at Lystra he himself circumcises Timothy, the child of a Jewess and a Greek; and this is for some an inconsistency sufficient to discredit the whole narrative. In fact, it is doubted, however, whether such a step was legally right at all; though if it were not, it is hard to see how it would have conciliated the unconverted Jews, and not rather have been an additional offence to them. The apostle certainly knew well the people he was dealing with, none better; and that would settle the legality of it, in their minds at least. As for his own use of the Jewish rite, he uses it, as is plain in the fullest Christian liberty, which is always liberty to give up one's privileges wherever the love that constrains us to seek souls for Christ shall be better served by it. He expresses elsewhere carefully the principle that guides him here: "to those that are under the law, as under the law, *not being myself under law*, that I might gain those that are under the law" (1 Cor. ix. 20). Here is the motive of his act in this case, with the assertion at the same time of his own freedom from the law while acting so. It is the wisdom that wins souls that he displays in it. Of Timothy we shall hear much elsewhere. At present we know him only as one to whom witness is borne by the brethren, and whom Paul takes with him as companion and assistant on his journey now. He answers to his name all through, as "one who honors God"; and even the two epistles to him which are preserved to us are in striking accord with this. It is to Timothy that Paul in his very last epistle pours out his whole heart.

The company of travelers thus increased carry with them the decrees determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem; and these have happy effect in confirming the assemblies in the faith, and adding to their number. Grace it is that establishes the soul and wins the heart to God.

3 (6-12): The Spirit and the vision.

3. And they went through the region of Phrygia and [u]Galatia, having been [v]forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia, and having come down to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, and the [w]Spirit of Jesus* suffered them not; and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. And a [x]vision appeared to Paul in the night: There was a man of Macedonia standing and beseeching him, and saying, [y]Come over into Macedonia and help us. And when he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go forth into Macedonia, [z]concluding that God had called us to announce to them the glad tidings. Having sailed away, therefore, from Troas, we went in a [a]straight course to Samothrace, and the day following to Neapolis, and thence to [b]Philippi, which is the first city of that part of Macedonia, a colony; and we were in this city tarrying certain days.

u ch. 18. 23. cf. Gal. 1.2. cf. Gal.4.13-15.
v ver. 7. cf. Rom. 1. 13. cf. Rom.15. 22-29. cf. ch. 8.29.
w cf. ch. 21. 4, 11. ctr. 1 Thess. 2. 18. cf. Rom. 8. 9-16.
x cf. ch.10.3, 9-16.
y cf. ch. 22. 17-21. cf. Ps.68 31.
z cf. ch. 10. 19, 20. cf. 1 Cor. 2. 15.
a cf. ch.20.6.
b Phil. 1. 1. cf. ch.19.21.

* Some omit "of Jesus."

3. The controlling hand and guidance of the Spirit are here very clearly seen. There was no one method of it,—and this is for our instruction, as well as the fact itself. If the broad commission be to "go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," that in no wise sets aside the fact that there is to be subjection to God as to the way of carrying this out. His personal interest in it is such that He cannot leave to hap-hazard, or to the fallible judgment of men, the questions of time and place, and indeed of any other matters in connection with a work so precious. There is need—even for an apostle, there always was—for every one who would have success in his work to take every debatable point into the sanctuary for guidance. *How* we shall be guided, we see here to be another matter. They pass through Phrygia and Galatia, where we hear afterwards of disciples who are, no doubt largely, if not altogether, the fruit of their labor at this time. They then turn westward towards proconsular Asia, which included Mysia, Lydia, and Caria, that is, all the western coast,—at another time to be evangelized by Paul from Ephesus with large results. Now, however, they are forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the Word there. They seek from Mysia, therefore, to go north-east into Bithynia; but here again, with more of outward restraint apparently, "the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not." In both these cases we are left without positive means of ascertaining the character of the hindrance: for the first word does not necessarily signify a verbal prohibition. Satan too might hinder, as the apostle says to the Romans; but hindrance by the Spirit would, no doubt, be realized by its character, if not sometimes without serious and profitable exercise: the enemy cannot so well mimic the work of God as to deceive the one who is truly single-hearted. Indeed the unique expression used here—the Spirit of Jesus—may well intimate this: the Spirit in the power of which He walked upon earth; Jesus being the personal Name by which He was known on earth.

Thus they are hindered from going whether to the right or to the left. If they go forward, they must go to Troas. There, almost upon the old battle-ground between Europe and Asia, they were just opposite Macedonia; and there that vision appeared in the night to Paul, in which a man of Macedonia, representative of the whitening harvest fields beyond, stood and besought him, saying, "Come over and help us!" Immediately they concluded that the Lord had called them to announce the gospel in those parts, and sought to go forth into Macedonia.

Thus, after a time of fruitful and happy work, they are left for awhile to

SECTION 2. (Chap. xvi. 13–40.)
Progress through conflict.

1 (13-15): A heart divinely opened.

1. AND on the [c]sabbath-day we went outside the gate * by the [d]river, where it was the custom for prayer to be, and we sat down and spake to the [e]women who had come together. And a certain woman, named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of [f]Thyatira, who worshiped God, heard us; whose [g]heart the Lord opened to attend to the things spoken by Paul. And when she

*Some read "city."

c *cf.* ch.17.2.
d *cf.*Gen.24. 11.
e *ctr.* ver. 9. *cf.* Zech. 4. 10.
f *cf.* Rev. 2. 18. *cf.* ch.10.2.
g *cf.* ch. 11. 18. *cf.*Jno 6.44. *cf.*2Cor.4.6.

groping and uncertainty, headed off from different roads that seem open to them, yet shut up by this to take the direction in which the Lord was in fact bringing them, until in due time the uncertainty is removed, and they receive definite assurance as to what is in His mind. How comforting to us, conscious of many perplexities, is this little glimpse of the way of one like Paul! It may be said however, that we can hardly expect a vision at last to resolve our doubts, and that thus we are still left without the consolation we might derive from this. But neither did the apostle expect or in general receive a vision to guide him. It is not given to any man to walk habitually in such open light. It would not really encourage faith, which has to do with the unseen and not the seen. And perhaps the record here may serve a purpose of good by preventing our expectation of any one method of assurance, and casting us upon Him to meet us in any way He please; so that we may learn the better His various speech, and be more on the alert to discover Him under whatever apparent disguises. Doubtless the man of Macedonia shows us the appeal to that in us which is, or should be, at all times the motive power; and the weighing of comparative needs, as well as of what in the Lord's ways He has been leading on to, will have its place in determining the issue for us. After all, no rules can be given which will not probably have large exception in actual working out. The Lord is able to give assurance to the heart that honestly seeks to be subject to Him; and that is the main point.

Another beautiful touch in the narrative is found here:—At Troas we discern, simply by the change of the pronoun used, that the narrator himself has joined the party of Paul. His name is never once mentioned, and it is only by the change from "they" to "we" that we are able to trace him from Troas to Philippi, where he seems to remain until Paul returns, after his long stay at Ephesus, when he rejoins and travels with him to Jerusalem (chap. xx. 6–xxi. 18). There, during Paul's long imprisonment, we lose sight of him again; but upon the apostle's voyage to Italy, once more he is with him the whole way to Rome (Chap. xxvii. 1–xxviii. 16). Through all he certainly filled no unimportant place,—one would say more so than others whose names are mentioned; yet he keeps to this reticence which characterizes him all along the way. There is no trace of self-consciousness about him, as one may say; and how beautiful is this in the inspired historian of such a book as this! what an example for us, who are, alas, so apt to give at least their due value to all our doings. It is surely a lesson which we shall do well to take to heart.

Sec. 2.

Philippi is evidently the starting-point of the history proper, as the Spirit of God is pleased to take it up for our instruction. It begins with conflict, and the power of Satan is more nakedly manifest here than at Paphos upon the former journey. It is no longer, however, debased Judaism that is the instrument, but heathenism, the rule of the demons or false gods, which had for the world at large usurped the place of the One true God. The power of the world has here therefore to be reckoned with, and the progress of the gospel in the teeth of persecution. Yet under no circumstances does the gospel succeed so

had been [h]baptized, and her [i]house, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be [j]faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

2 (16 24): Satan for and against.

2. And it came to pass, as we were going to the place of [k]prayer, that a certain female slave, having a [l]spirit of Python, met us, who brought her masters much [m]gain by soothsaying. She, having followed Paul and us, cried, saying, [n]These men are servants of the Most High God, who show unto you the way of salvation.

[h] ver. 33. ch. 8. 38, etc.
[i] cf. ver. 31. cf. 1 Cor. 7. 14. cf. Lk. 18. 15, 16. cf. Gen. 18. 19.
[j] cf. 2 Jno. 4-11. cf. 2 Sa. 20. 16-22. cf. Phil. 4. 3.
[k] cf. ch. 2. 42. cf. ch. 6. 4.
[l] cf. Matt. 15. 22; cf. ch. 8. 9; cf. ch. 19. 19. [m] ver. 19. [n] cf. Mk. 1. 34; cf. Lk. 8. 28; cf. Ex. 7. 11, 12; cf. ch. 19. 15-16.

well; and Philippi is a marked instance of this,—always in lively sympathy with the gospel, as we know from the epistle to the saints there; and to whom the apostle speaks as to sympathetic hearers of his own earnest pressing forward in what was to him a race for a prize. The name Philippi, "fond of horses," naturally reminds us of this, and stamps with its significance spiritually those who now come before us, as well as the whole-hearted laborers the fruit of whose work they are. Progress through conflict may well characterize this section; and there is little true progress made where the adverse power is not realized.

1. The beginning here is in a humble way enough. Here, where they have been brought by a vision of imploring need, the very man of the vision does not appear; and in the absence of any synagogue, such as in general provided them with their first opportunity, they are fain to go outside the city-gate, by the bank of the river where it was the custom for prayer to be, and speak to the women who seem alone to have the heart to come together. We see that they are not men who will miss a small door open in seeking a large one; and here also, if there be effectual entrance, it must be the Lord who makes it. The heart of Lydia* is thus divinely opened to attend to the things spoken by Paul. Her baptism soon follows, with that of her house, or family, as if the natural consequence of her own faith. So undoubtedly would a proselyte to Judaism as she was have considered it; and the Lord has long since assured us that such a rule as to the kingdom of God has not been repealed (Matt. xviii. 14). Entrance into the Church is not at all in question; to which the baptism of the Spirit alone could introduce. It is the confusion between Church and Kingdom which has largely been the cause of the difficulty upon these points which has arisen. The doctrine is not here before us to consider. Lydia, as the faithful person that she desires to be known as, does not shrink from identifying herself with those who have been the means of bringing her the truth which has won her. In those days it was not possible to be long ignorant of what it involved to do this; but with whole-hearted decision she at once presses the little company of Christ's witnesses to come into her house and abide there; and her earnestness will admit of no refusal: she constrained them. In fact the clouds were already gathering which portended a storm which was soon to break.

2. The enemy does not begin, however, with an open attack—far from it: he announces himself in the first place as himself a witness to the message that Paul brings! A female slave, having a spirit of Python (supposed to be inspired by Apollo) and who brought her masters much gain by her divinations, followed Paul and his companions on their way to the place of prayer, and day after day

* Lydia's occupation and the city whence she came are given, and these with the significance of her name, would doubtless help in illuminating the brief narrative we have of her conversion, had we eyes to see. Thyatira was a city in Asia, where the door had just been closed on Paul. The first convert in Europe was from that city, and thus the continuity of the work is shown. Her business—said to be characteristic of the city—had to do with the adornment of the natural man. Her lowliness is in striking contrast with the Church of Thyatira (Rev. ii. 18, etc.), which represents the Church of Rome, the "woman arrayed in purple and scarlet color."—S. R.

And this she did many days. And Paul, being [o]distressed, turned and said unto the spirit, I [p]charge thee in the Name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And it came out the same hour. And her masters, seeing that the hope of their [q]gains was gone, seized Paul and Silas, and dragged them into the market-place before the [r]rulers; and having brought them to the prætors, they said, These men, being Jews, exceedingly [s]trouble our city, and teach customs which it is not lawful for us to receive or practise, being Romans. And the [t]multitude rose up too against them; and the prætors, having torn off their [u]garments from them, commanded to [v]beat them with rods. And having laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into [w]prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely; who, having received such a charge, cast them into the inner prison, and made their [x]feet fast in the stocks.

o cf. Phil. 1. 18. *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 14, 15.
p cf. Mk. 5. 8.
q cf. ch. 19. 24–26.
r ch. 17. 6, etc. *cf.* Mk. 13. 9.
s cf. ch. 6. 13, 14.
t cf. ch. 14. 19. *cf.* ch. 19. 28, 29.
u cf. 1 Thess. 2. 2.
v cf. 2 Cor. 11. 25.
w cf. ch. 8. 3.
x cf. Jer. 29. 2. *cf.* ch. 12. 10.

cried out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who show you the way of salvation." It was an astonishing testimony from one accredited by the multitude as a true prophetess, but whose whole condition spoke to those who could discern the truth of dreadful bondage to an evil spirit! Yet it was in this case a true testimony, and which from such lips would naturally bring the attention of many to the truth. Nor had those accredited by it any responsibility apparently in the matter. Why should they not even accept such homage to the truth forced from the mouth of a demon? So had the evil spirits in the Lord's time owned Him as the Holy One of God whom men scoffed at as the Nazarene. But He had silenced them, and cast them out; and now also there could be no alliance between the awful power that held the world captive and Him who is its Deliverer. Satan, if he will testify, shall testify in being cast out; and the apostle, though for a time simply ignoring his effort to attach himself as a parasite to the tree of life, at last brings to bear on him the power of the Name of Jesus Christ, and his captive is set free.

Alas, not always was there to be the wisdom to discern the attack of the enemy in that which spoke highly of the way of salvation, and glorified its ministers. And so in fact was the way to be perverted, and the ministry to become the chief agency in its perversion; the little seed became a tree, with the birds of the air lodged securely in its branches. Who can doubt that we have here a forecast of that which has now become history?—though the disaster wrought is not yet all told out.

Alliance or persecution,—these are the alternatives: false friendship or open war. The apostle's act shows at once his acceptance of the issue, and presages the final result; though for the present—and this in the ordering of God for blessing to His own—the conflict may seem largely to go against them. The cross must be the way to the crown, as the Lord has fully assured us; and "if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." The world is adverse, and the condition of progress is that we make our way through hostile forces. At Philippi, the enemy seeks to turn his first discomfiture into success. The loss of their gains stirs up the girl's masters to drag Paul and Silas before the magistrates, with the charge that as Jews they are troubling the city by introducing customs unlawful to them as Romans. The prejudice against Jews was great, and the last part of the charge had in it a certain amount of truth, as well as ability to rouse the fanaticism of Romans. "The letter of the Roman law, even under the republic, was opposed to the introduction of foreign religious; and though exceptions were allowed, as in the case of the Jews themselves, yet the spirit of the law entirely condemned such changes in worship as were likely to unsettle

3 (25-40): God manifesting Himself.

3. But about [y]midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God; and the prisoners listened to them. And suddenly there was a great [z]earthquake, and the foundations of the prison shook; and immediately all the doors were [a]opened, and every one's bonds were loosed. And the jailer, being roused out of sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, drew his sword, and was about to [b]kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul called out with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself [c]no harm; for we are all here. And having called for [d]lights, he sprang in, and [e]trembling

y *cf.* Job 35. 10. *cf.* ch. 13. 52.
z *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 10. *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 14.
a *cf.* ch. 4. 31. *cf.* Rev. 6. 12-17.
b *cf.* ch. 5. 19. *cf.* ch. 12. 4-7.
c *cf.* ch. 12. 19. *cf.* Matt. 27. 5. *cf.* 1 Sa. 31. 4, 5.
d *cf.* ch. 27. 24, 44; *cf.* Mk. 5. 5.
e *cf.* Ps. 119. 105, 130.
e *cf.* ch. 9. 4; *cf.* Heb. 10. 31.

the minds of the citizens, or to produce any tumultuous uproar . . . . Thus Paul and Silas had undoubtedly been doing what in some degree exposed them to legal penalties; and were beginning a change which tended to bring down, and ultimately did bring down, the whole weight of the Roman law on the martyrs of Christianity" (*Conybeare and Howson*).

Thus the prince of this world had taken means to secure himself against the truth which might dethrone him; and at Philippi different causes combined to rouse the excitement of the mob so as to carry the magistrates along with it. The arrested men are stripped and beaten in the merciless way natural, not merely in the hard pagan world, but in the lawless condition in which things were at present. Bruised and bleeding they are thrust into prison, with a charge to the jailer to keep them safe; who on his part thrusts them into the innermost dungeon, and their feet into the stocks.

These are the world's weapons, which are freely used upon unarmed and defenceless men, teachers, as an oracle of their own had loudly proclaimed, of the way of salvation. But if the weapons of these men are not carnal, they are, in the language of one of the sufferers here, "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds," and presently the prison walls are stirred to their foundations, as vibrating to the unaccustomed sound of prayer and praise from lips that cannot be silenced as the hearts that move them cannot be stilled.

3. "At midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God; and the prisoners listened to them."

What a new sound it must have been! Had it been in a Christian land, as we say, however poorly any land may be that, we should think of memories that it would awaken in whatever hardened hearts; but here there were no memories to awaken; it was a new gospel of gladness going forth, which in such circumstances those old Romans knew not. They could die well, as we know;—sternly, grimly, they could die; with their song too upon their lips, as heroes, patriots, and in softer moods of love and loyalty; but all this was inspiration from earthly sources, and not strange to men: here was inspiration of another kind,—a new strain that held the listeners by its rapt unearthliness, its confidence and joy in an unseen God. Here was its revelation—its gospel: would there be answer to this undoubting claim upon One assumed so near and competent?

Suddenly an unexpected answer came: a great earthquake rocked the prison to its foundations; and in a moment all the doors were opened, and every one's bonds were loosed! Yet all the more the wonder held them: they were in hands so manifestly mighty, so interested too, and guided by purpose for the manifestation of which they could only wait. Did not some realize perhaps, that there was here a God worth waiting for, whom it must be a joy to know?

There was one, however, to whom what had taken place was a message of death, or seemed such. The jailer, roused from sleep by the sudden shock, and seeing the prison doors open, supposed that the prisoners had escaped. In that case, from the severity of the Roman law there would have been for him no

fell down before Paul and Silas. And leading them out, he said, Sirs, *f* what must I do to be saved? And they said, *g* Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,* and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy *h* house. And they spake to him the *i* word of the Lord, with all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and *j* washed their stripes, and was *k* baptized, he and

* Some omit "Christ."

f *cf.* ch. 2. 37. *cf.* 2 Cor. 7. 10. *ctr.* Lk. 18. 18–23. *cf.* Job. 9. 2. *g* Jno. 3. 16. Jno 6. 28, 29. ch. 13. 38, 39. Rom. 10. 6–11. 1 Pet. 1. 21. *h* ch. 11. 14. *i* *cf.* ch. 10. 36–43; *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 1–4; *cf.* Rom. 10. 17. *j* *ctr.* ver. 24; *cf.* Gal. 5. 22. *k* ver. 15.

escape. He had drawn his sword to kill himself, in despair of life, when a voice of quiet assurance from the depths of the prison arrested him. "Do thyself no harm," it called; "for we are all here." In that instant the voice of God had spoken to him; the keeper and his captives had changed places: the perfect authority breathing in these words, coupled with mercy to himself so great, which had laid aside all that self-concern prompted to, to care for a mere careless and hardened persecutor, smote him with conviction that God was with these men. He was in their hands, and not they in his. Conscience and heart were roused in him together; the sense of sin, and of goodness that drew him after it. He called for lights, and sprang in, and fell down before Paul and Silas, trembling with these new emotions; and bringing them out, with the voice of the prophetess, no doubt, ringing in his ears, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

It was such a cry as divine grace awakens and responds to. The facing of death immediately before, the consciousness of the divine hand in all that had taken place, had been used of the Spirit of God to make him understand what salvation would mean, though not the way of it. The way he did not understand; nor could he have understood without further help the simple words (to us, thank God!) in which it was made known to him: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,—thou and thy house." It is a blessed word; blessed in the largeness of assurance that clings to it; and which, though on opposite sides misconceived, we are not to give up on that account.

It is faith in a personal Saviour that is preached to the convicted man,—a committing himself to One mighty to save; a believing *on*, which is trusting, leaning on. It is not a doctrine simply that he is to accept, but a living Person who is to be trusted.

But then it is a Person who has accomplished a work for men, in the power of which He is Lord and Christ; not simply Sovereign Ruler, but the "Anointed" Priest, the Representative of His people. As having stood in our place upon the cross, He stands as the One in whom we are accepted before God.

It is necessarily, therefore, faith which saves, just because it is Christ who saves; it is not the value of faith in itself, although there *is* value in faith; for it is the real active principle in every soul: so that it can be said, "Faith, if *it* have not works, is dead, being alone." It works because it puts Christ in His place, and so God (as manifested in Christ) in His also. But as contrasted with works it is the very confession of creature nothingness and worthlessness, in which it lays hold of Another as all its competence and all its boast. Repentance and faith are thus but the opposite sides of the amazing change which is wrought in conversion: the one is the face turned towards God, as the other is the back turned upon self. Each therefore implies the other.

But now as to the closing words, "thou and thy house:" have they any special encouragement as to the family of a believer, or have they not? Do they mean only "thou, if thou believest, and thy house also, if they believe"? Or do they mean something more than this? Would there be need to assure the penitent here, that faith being the way of salvation, it was as open to his house upon their believing as to himself? It does not seem as if he would need to be assured of that.

all his, immediately. And having brought them up into his house, he set [l]food before them, and [m]rejoiced with all his house, he having believed God. And when it was day, the prætors sent the lictors, saying, Let those men go. And the jailer reported the words to Paul, saying, The prætors have sent to let you go; now therefore go out, and depart in peace. But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us publicly uncondemned,

[l] *cf.* Heb. 6. 10.
[m] *cf.* Matt. 25. 35, 36. *cf.* ch. 2. 46. *cf.* Rom. 15. 13. *cf.* Lk. 15. 6, 7.

On the other hand, there should not need to say, that if faith be, as it surely is, the way of salvation, there is no exemption of the family of a believer from the necessity of faith. If there should possibly be any, as is sometimes stated, who with the plain word of Scripture before them can yet hold that for a believer's house there is even the possibility that without faith they may still please God, or that the father's faith can in anywise be proxy for that of the child, such a superstition needs only to be brought into honest daylight to be refuted. Quite a different thing it is to believe that there are special promises to a believer's house, not unconditional, and yet conditioned only upon his being in practical reality, and in relation to that which is in question, a believer. Such a belief has plenty to ground itself upon in Scripture, and is not a superstition but a faith.

Take Abraham, "the father of all them that believe" (Rom. iv. 11), as an illustration and somewhat more. "I know him," says the Lord, "that he will command his children and his household after him, and *they shall* keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him" (Gen. xviii. 19). Here is, indeed, not a promise but an assurance, grounded upon that which the practical character of his faith wrought in the Old Testament example of it. Himself called out from the idolatry around to keep the way of the Lord, he acknowledged Him as the God of his household as well as his own God. With such purpose of heart the wise man's proverb would be fulfilled as to his house, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov. xxii. 6). This is the rule of the Christian's house, according to which he is to bring up his children in the "nurture (or discipline) and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. vi. 4). To this the promise applies that assures him that it shall be effectual; and not in vain is the assurance. The faith which it is true they need cannot be imparted by all that man can do for them: how comforting then the word which entitles confidence in the Lord to whom we bring them, and whose we would have them, that nevertheless this "discipline and admonition" shall be effectual! Discipleship, government, discipline belong to the kingdom; and "thou and thy house" have always been the rule in the kingdom of God. Yet all here is distinctly conditional, not absolute, as the Gospels fully show us; and to this, and not to the Church, is baptism introductory (see Matt. xxviii. 18, 19, *notes*); all is perfectly intelligible, therefore, when we find directly here, that "they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house;" and that the jailer "was baptized, he and all his, immediately."

Notable it is that of Israel's "set times" (Lev. xxiii.), which typically present God's ways (as we say dispensationally), on to the end which is God's rest, those from Passover to Pentecost speak of what was indeed offered to Israel, and thus might have been hers, but being rejected through unbelief, they have passed from her in their spiritual significance and become the peculiar portion of the (characteristically Gentile) Church. No doubt can be entertained as to Pentecost; but the Sheaf of First-fruits also, which is Christ in resurrection, the promise of the harvest to come, is also ours whose portion will be with Him in this, while Israel inherits hers upon earth. Accordingly the feasts which speak of the national blessing come afterwards, with an interval between, in the

men that are [n]Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out [o]secretly? Nay, indeed, but let them come themselves, and bring us out. And the lictors reported these words to the prætors; and they were afraid when they heard that they were Romans. And they came and besought them, and when they had brought them out, they asked them to go [p]away out of the city. And after having gone out of the prison, they entered into [the house of] Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they [q]comforted them and departed.

n *cf.* ver.21. *cf.* ch.22,25-29. *ctr.* ch.23.6. *cf.* ch.25.11, 12. *cf.* Is.30.2,3.
o *cf.* 1 Pet.4. 15, 16. *cf.* 1 Cor.10. 32 with 1 Pet. 2. 12, 15.
p *cf.* Lk.8.37.
q *cf.* ch. 14. 22. *cf.* Phil. 2. 1, 2.

seventh month; the feast of trumpets gathering them afresh, at the new moon, when the Sun of righteousness begins to shine afresh upon Israel; the day of atonement then showing their sins put upon the scapegoat and sent away; and finally the feast of tabernacles consummates their blessing.

Passover, let us notice, is not like the day of atonement, one sacrifice covering all the people, but "a lamb for a house," each family distinctly represented. Nay, if one should be defiled at the time of its celebration, or on a journey afar off, a second Passover can be kept, to remedy the omission. I do not say but that, in a secondary sense, this may apply to Israel, who were indeed defiled at the time of Christ's suffering for men; but this would only confirm the more the application of the Passover primarily to the present going out of the gospel in the day of Israel's rejection.

But what then is the principle that faces us in the Passover? Clearly, it is "Thou and thy house;" the heads of the houses kill the lamb, and sprinkle the blood upon the lintel and the two side-posts of the houses where they eat it. The family character of the redemption feast is manifest; and notice again that it is at Philippi, among those who are Gentile—no synagogue of the Jews in the place, and not a word of any man of Israel in the place, save only the preachers themselves, that we hear what we may call now the passover gospel—"Thou shalt be saved: thou and thy house."

What a change has passed, and as in a moment, upon the hardened instrument of heathen cruelty and opposition to the word of Christ! "He took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and having brought them up into his house, set food before them, and rejoiced with all his house, believing God." Although we have to translate perhaps in this way, on account of the difficulty of other rendering in English, yet it should be understood that the expression "with all his house" is not here as in the case of Crispus afterwards where it is said that he "believed with all his house" (chap. xviii. 8). Here it is an adverb, and there should be a reason for the difference, the effect of which would be to make the joy more simply his own. It is certain, at least, that although they had spoken the word to all that were in his house, faith is ascribed to himself alone.

The work in the prison is done, and now indeed the prison doors can hold them no longer. The day having come, the magistrates sent the lictors with a curt message to "Let those men go." But Paul is concerned that there should be no avoidable reproach left upon the testimony, and he refuses to be dismissed in this manner after the public wrong upon men uncondemned. The magistrates are afraid when they hear that they are Roman citizens they have been treating in this manner, and come in humble fashion to bring them out; begging them, however, to leave the city. They return therefore to Lydia's house; and after having there met the brethren (of whom, in the time that had elapsed, and as from the epistle afterwards we cannot but infer that, there were many), and having comforted them, they departed.

SECTION. 3. (Chap. xvii.)
Renewals.

1 (1-9): Another King.

1. Now when they had journeyed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to [r]Thessalonica, where was the synagogue of the Jews; and Paul, as his [s]custom was, went in unto them, and on three sabbath days discoursed with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging that the Christ must needs have [t]suffered and [u]risen up from among the dead; and that this [v]Jesus, whom I announce unto you, is the Christ. And some of them [w]believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas, and of the Greeks who [x]worshiped, a great multitude, and of [y]chief women not a few. But the Jews being moved to [z]jealousy, and having taken to [themselves] certain [a]wicked men of the market, and gathering a crowd, set the city in a [b]tumult; and having beset the

r *cf.* Phil. 4. 16. 1 Thess. 1. 1.
s ver. 10, etc.
t *cf.* Lk. 24. 26, 27. *cf.* Ps. 22. 1. *cf.* Is. 53. 4-7. *cf.* Zech. 13. 7.
u *cf.* Ps. 16. 9-11. *cf.* Ps. 110. 1.
v *cf.* ch. 18. 5, 28. *cf.* Matt. 16. 15-17.
w *cf.* ver. 12.
x *cf.* ch. 16. 14.
y *cf.* ch. 13. 50. *cf.* Phil. 4. 3.
z *cf.* ch. 5. 17. *cf.* Mk. 15. 10.

cf. 1 Thess. 2. 14-16. a *cf.* 1 Ki. 21. 10; *cf.* ch. 6. 11. b *cf.* ch. 19. 23, etc.

Sec. 3.

The three narratives following unite together to show the renewal in different ways accomplished by Christianity. At Thessalonica the charge brought against it is in one sense true, and its glory, that there is another King—Jesus. At Berea the movement is peaceful and not revolutionary, though a great advance; the new revelation borne witness to by the old, which it fulfils and justifies. At Athens, at the highest point of civilization in the Gentile world, the need is deepest and most fundamental: it is the unknown God, once known, but from whom they have turned, who has afresh to be revealed in the blessed gospel of Jesus and the resurrection.

1. Thessalonica was the chief city of Macedonia; and here was the synagogue of the Jews—the only one which, apparently they possessed in those parts. Accordingly we find Paul here in the synagogue, and reasoning from the Scriptures. A suffering Messiah was always the offence to the Jew; and the necessity for this suffering, as well as the fact of the resurrection of the Lord, becomes therefore the apostle's theme. The effect among the Jews themselves, however, is not so great as among the proselytes, of whom a great multitude, and among them many women of chief rank, believe. This as usual arouses the jealousy of the unbelieving Jews, who are not ashamed to associate themselves with the rabble of the market-place to accomplish their ends, and drive the unwelcome strangers from the place. A tumult is raised and they beset the house of Jason,* where they were lodging, but do not find them; and failing in this, drag off Jason and certain of the brethren before the city-rulers. The charge is disregarding the decrees of Cæsar for the commandments of a new King, Jesus. And, though this is, of course, their malice—a repetition of the old attack upon the Lord Himself—yet it is striking to note how constantly in the epistles to the Thessalonians afterwards the coming of the Lord is spoken of. The Kingdom itself is only twice actually mentioned in the two epistles; but that the coming was to introduce this could not fail to have been a part of the teaching in the synagogue. That they were a company waiting for God's Son from heaven was soon known throughout Macedonia and Achaia; and Jews could not be ignorant

* Jason means apparently "healer." Doubtless he was a Christian, as he is spoken of in Rom. xvi. 21. How like the Jews it was to refuse their own mercies. Christianity was the "healing" they needed individually and nationally, but in their mad hatred of Jesus they would forfeit every blessing. "When I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered." "I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by the arms; but they knew not that I healed them." However, a true pledge has been given by the true Jason, and one day, for Israel and Judah both, it will be said, "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely" (Hos. vii. 1; xi. 3; xiv. 4).—S. R.

house of Jason, sought to bring them forth unto the people. And not having found them, they [c]dragged Jason and certain brethren before the city-rulers,* crying out, These men who have [d]stirred up the habitable earth are come here also; whom Jason hath received; and these all do [e]contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another [f]king, Jesus. And they troubled the multitude and the city-rulers, when they heard these things; and having taken [g]security of Jason and the rest, they let them go.

c *cf.* ch. 18. 17.
d *cf.* Lk. 23. 5. *cf.* ch. 16. 20, 21. *cf.* Gal. 5. 14.
e *cf.* ch. 25. 10–12. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 12.
f *cf.* Lk. 23. 2. *cf.* Jno. 18. 33–37. *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 13–16. *cf.* Rom. 13. 1–7.
g *cf.* ch. 5. 40.

* "Politarchs:" their special title in Thessalonica.

of what this would mean in connection with Messiah's reign. The attack for the present, ends without serious consequences. The rulers only take security of Jason and the others, and let them go. Paul and Silas are sent away by the brethren under cover of the night, and escape to Berea; although it could not be long, with such a testimony as that given by the newly gathered assembly, before persecution would revive, as in fact we know it did (1 Thess. ii. 14; 2 Thess. i. 4); and this through the rancor still of those who should have been the first to welcome the announcement.

Brief as is the whole account here, it is evident that this is what the work in Thessalonica is intended to be associated with,—the coming of a kingdom such as the world has never seen, but which alone will give it the peace it craves. Peace can only be the effect of righteousness, and this not simply in the supreme head, but also in each subordinate authority,—when "the mountains shall bring peace unto the people, and the hills, by righteousness" (Ps. lxxii. 3). Christ is in this way "the Desire of the nations," even although the nations with one consent united against Him, and a Christian nation is still little more than a convenient phrase. Nothing but judgment will put the world at the feet of Christ, and the "Great Shepherd of the sheep" must yet shepherd the nations with an iron rod (Ps. ii. 9). Even for their own blessing—and it is in fact the history of every converted soul—men must be warred upon and overcome.

Yet what a hope it is—the only possible one, as the history of the world bears witness—the Patient Sufferer of the Cross the fulfilment of David's picture of—

> "A righteous Ruler over men,
> A Ruler in the fear of God!
> Even as the morning-light when the sun ariseth,
> A morning without clouds:
> From the brightness after rain
> The herb springeth from the earth" (2 Sam. xxiii. 3, 4).

But if thus the King cometh, the Kingdom, in a true and blessed sense, is here already. Already is He Lord and Christ, and all authority in heaven and earth is given to Him. He is on the Father's throne, and we are "translated into the Kingdom of the Son of His love" (Col. i. 13). It is a Kingdom faith indeed alone can recognize, and yet for faith with glorious meaning. His subjects suffer, and the truest most; yet still it is "the Kingdom," if also "the patience, of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rev. i. 9). And while this does not set aside the subordinate authority of Cæsar, but makes us subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake (1 Pet. ii. 13), it turns these "powers that be" into "ministers of God for good" (Rom. xiii. 4), and for faith produces a marvelous change. For even a wrong done to me in intent on the part of man, if I realize *His* intent in it, becomes the wholesome discipline of love, if not more unveiled blessing. How resentment is quieted, the fretted heart tranquilized, the soul encouraged, wisdom is given to us, as we are kept in the power of a truth like this! Paul and Silas may sing in their Philippian dungeon, before the earthquake executes its beneficent mission, and frees them from their shackles. Christ is on the throne; and while still we are to keep the word of His patience (Rev. iii. 10), that too is blessing, and fellowship with Him is perfected in it.

2 (10-15): Progressive testimony.

2. And the brethren immediately [h]sent away Paul and Silas by night to Berœa; who, being arrived, went into the [i]synagogue of the Jews. And these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, receiving the word with all [j]readiness of mind, [k]searching the scriptures day by day whether these things were so. [l]Therefore many of them believed; and of the Grecian women that were of the higher class, and of the men, not a few. But when the Jews from Thessalonica knew that the word of God was announced also by Paul in Berœa, they came there also, [m]stirring up* the multitudes. And then immediately the brethren [n]sent away Paul, to go as far as to the sea; but Silas and Timotheus remained there. And they that conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens; and having received a charge to Silas and Timotheus that they should [o]come to him as quickly as possible, they departed.

3 (16-34): Revelation of the unknown God.

3. But while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was [p]aroused within him, when he beheld the city full of idols. He reasoned therefore in the [q]synagogue with

h ver. 14. cf. Matt. 10. 23.
i ver. 1, etc.
j cf. ch. 16. 14. cf. tr. ch 14. 2.
k cf. Jno. 5. 39, 40. cf. vers. 2, 3. cf. ch. 26. 22, 23.
l cf. Ps. 119. 130. cf. Rom. 10. 17.
m cf. ver. 5.
n ver. 10.
o cf. 2 Tim. 4. 9. cf. ch. 15. 40.
p cf. ch. 18. 5. cf. ch. 14. 13-16.
q vers. 2, 10.

*Many add, "and troubling."

2. In Berea we find, as in the case of the eunuch, the old dispensation leading on its disciples to the new. Revelation has always been progressive; and even now that it is complete, there is, in its gradual opening up under the guidance of the Spirit, something that seems analogous to this. Faith is in this way ever being tested, while also the new approves itself as of God by the firm hold which it retains of the past, in which it roots itself, and upon which it throws fresh light. The new truth cannot be in contradiction to the old, which in fact has led on towards and prepared the way for it. Nothing could seem more contradictory than the law and the gospel; and yet the latter is the necessary complement of the former. *Legalism* is the contradiction, and not the law.

The Jews at Berea are more noble than those at Thessalonica, the gospel commending itself to them by its own inherent credibility, its witness to the conscience and the heart. They were predisposed, therefore, to receive it, while yet they waited till Moses should be heard in testimony. With disciples such as these, miracles are not needed and would rather distract than help. The Word is itself the greatest of miracles—the voice of the Living God, which has sounded on through the ages, never silent, wherever there was an ear to hear. Thus the predisposition to receive the gospel ripens into faith with these Bereans as they search the Scriptures, with vigorous determination day by day. Many believe; and the Grecian women that were honorable (or of the higher class), and of men, not a few. The tidings of it soon reached Thessalonica, only forty-five miles away, and answer comes in the shape of angry emissaries from the unbelievers there, who stir up the multitudes. Again Paul has to flee, though Silas and Timothy, less important in the eyes of the persecutors, are able to remain; and thus the gospel of Christ makes its way to Athens.

3. At Athens Paul is roused by the obtrusive idolatry, nowhere more obtrusive than there, to earnest discussion in the market-place with any whom he meets. In the synagogue he seems to have found nothing; the Athenian spirit may well have had its effect here also, even in a reaction against the new things after which the busy idlers of the city sought, and with which their scorn could confound the good news of salvation by a dying and risen Saviour. As for the Greeks it is the Epicureans and Stoics who assail the preacher, as they think, of new divinities; themselves either sceptic as to any true God whatever,—the

the Jews, and with the worshipers, and in the market-place every day with those he met. And some also of the Epicurean and Stoic [r]philosophers assailed him. And some said, What would this babbler say? and some, He seemeth to be an announcer of strange* divinities: because he announced the glad tidings of [s]Jesus and the resurrection. And they laid hold of him, and brought him to the Areopagus,† saying, Can we learn what this new doctrine is, of which thou speakest? For thou bringest certain [t]strange things to our ears; we would therefore learn what these things mean. Now all Athenians and the strangers sojourning there spent their time in nothing else than either telling or hearing [u]something new.

* Or, "foreign." † "Mars' hill."

r *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 22. *cf.* Col. 2. 8, 9. *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 20, 21.

s *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 2. vers. 31, 32. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 12.

t *cf.* ch. 26. 8. *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 18–25.

u *ctr.* 1 Jno. 2. 7, 8, 27. *cf.* Is. 57. 20.

world being neither His creation nor His care,—or else on the other side making man independent of Him, and mere fate the real governor both of God and man. The Epicurean sought his end in pleasure; the Stoic stiffened himself in self-righteousness and pride. To the latter indifference was a positive duty; in both were the sure signs of that break-down of the purer philosophy which they followed which showed itself in the open scepticism in turn following them: all showing the consciousness of the failure of philosophy in every form, and the need of that revelation against which it nevertheless so eagerly contended.

After all, in the heart of man lay needs unsatisfied, which could not accept a stone for bread; and the restless questioning of the Athenian spirit bore witness to this also. Babbler as they might think Paul was, they still would hear him; and with courteous phrase they invite him to the Areopagus, where the supreme court of Athens commonly held its sittings. But there was now neither thought of judgment nor a true judicial spirit in the crowd that assembled there. The old world had largely with the Roman come to ask after the truth itself with little thought of finding it. Still, for the moment they listened; and he to whom truth was no question but a joyous and deep conviction, took advantage of the occasion offered to press upon them his one remedy for the common need of man—Jesus and the resurrection.

Everywhere around there were tokens, the speaker said, of their great reverence for divinities. It was easier, according to the satirist, to find a god than a man in Athens. Yet this reverence, misplaced and perverted as it was, had its touching side of appeal as witness to the cry of humanity after God. If they know not the One true God, they must invent one; or, perhaps, as with the Athenians, many; though this is but the testimony that the many cannot fill the place of the One.

Thus man's heart craves for a god; alas, one cannot say, for God: that is another matter. In Israel the true God was known,—had declared Himself, and in such a way as one would have thought would have won their hearts for ever to Himself. What was the answer which in fact they gave to Him? It was for long but the setting up of the idols of their defeated enemies, for whose sins God had cast them out before them! He Himself puts the question which reveals man's conduct in this respect (Jer. ii. 11): "Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but My people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit." This does not make Israel an exception among the nations: man everywhere is man; when Pharisaism suited the prince of this world better than idolatry, the people became zealous monotheists and keepers of the law; and their own words, "Which of the Pharisees have believed on Him?" show the success of the scheme. The question of monotheism is not the question now, and the cross is not for the monotheist, but for the Christian.

And Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said, Men of Athens, I observe how very [t]reverent of divinities ye are: for as I passed through and beheld your objects of worship, I found even an altar on which was inscribed, To an [u]unknown God. Whom therefore ye ignorantly reverence, him *I* [v]proclaim to you. God, who [w]made the world and all things therein,—he being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in [x]temples made with hands, neither is served by human hands, as if he needed any thing, when he himself [y]giveth to all life and breath and all things. And he hath made of one blood* [z]every nation of men to dwell upon all the face of the earth, having fixed their appointed times and the [a]bounds of their habitations, that they might [b]seek God, if indeed they might feel after him and find him, although he is [c]not far from every one of us; for

t *cf.* 1 Cor. 8. 5 with 1 Cor. 10. 20. *cf.* Gal. 4. 8.
u *cf.* Rom. 1. 19-21. *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 21. *cf.* Jno. 4. 22. *cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 5.
v *cf.* Jno. 1. 18 with 1 Cor. 1. 24, 25.
w Gen. 1. 1. Jno. 1. 1-3. ch. 14. 15.
x *cf.* ch. 7. 48-50.
y *cf.* Gen. 2. 7. *cf.* Dan. 5. 23.
z *cf.* Gen. 11. 1-9. *cf.* Mal. 2. 10. *cf.* Rom. 5. 12.
a *cf.* Deut. 32. 8; *cf.* Deut. 2. 1-9.
b *cf.* ch. 15. 17; *ctr.* Rom. 1. 21.
c *cf.* Ps. 139. 7-10; *cf.* Jer. 23. 23, 24; *ctr.* Eph. 2. 13.

* "Blood" is omitted by some, but should most probably be retained.

Among the heathen also, at this time, change was in the air. The reverence for divinities yet outwardly remained, but Epicureans and Stoics were eating out the heart of it. The "unknown God," upon which Paul with divine sagacity had fixed his eyes, was now really characteristic of the condition, rather than even the goddess who had given her name and wisdom to the city. God was indeed more and more confessedly unknown; and great must have been the wonder, if not scorn, that met the apostle's bold declaration,—"Whom therefore ye ignorantly reverence, Him *I* proclaim unto you."

He goes on immediately to do this,—to set Him in His place in relation to the creature as the Maker of all, therefore the Lord of all,—a place that heathenism never truly gave Him. For the Epicurean, as for the modern scientific heathen, the world was a fortuitous collection of atoms, coming together according to laws of its own,—of the matter which it all was. For the Stoic also, God was but the force in matter,—not existent apart from it. The Platonist also believed matter to be eternal, although he attributed to God the soul which animated it and produced the actually existent world. But as a consequence God is in a continual struggle with that matter which He did not create, and by which He is limited. He can neither conquer it, nor withdraw Himself from it; He is not the absolute Creator and Lord of all whom the apostle announces—the Almighty, in whose control of all the soul of man can find its rest.

Supreme above all, it is thus alone He can be near to all; not dwelling in temples made with hands, which isolate and shut Him up; nor served by human hands, as if He were in need. Sufficient to Himself, He is the Source and Centre of all; life and breath and all things but His gift. None then can make Him his debtor, nor give Him, save of what is but His own.

Such is He then whom this preacher declares to the Athenians: a God who is really God. He proceeds to put man in his place with Him, leveling all distinctions upon which Jew and Greek alike prided themselves, in the assurance of that one blood in which all men participated. Nay, their times and the very bounds of their habitations had been alike fixed by Him who withdrew not His care from any creature He had made, and who had appointed all these, that in the sense of their limitation and dependence, as well as of the divine ordering of things amid which they moved, men might in their need feel after Him and find Him. Nor is He far from any one: for indeed we are encompassed by Him,—in Him we live and move and are! The last is the full generalization: we are

in him we live and move and are; as some of your own [f] poets also have said, For we are also his offspring. Being then the [g] offspring of God, we ought not to think that that which is divine is like [h] gold or silver or stone, graven work of art and man's device. The times indeed of this ignorance God [i] overlooked, but now enjoineth men that they all everywhere [j] repent: because he hath appointed a [k] day in which he will judge the habitable earth in righteousness by a Man whom he hath appointed; furnishing assurance unto all, in that he hath [l] raised him from among the dead.

But when they heard of a resurrection of the dead,

[f] *cf.* Tit. 1. 12.
[g] *cf.* Nu. 16. 22.
cf. Lk. 3. 38.
cf. Gen. 2. 7.
[h] *cf.* Ps. 115. 4-7.
cf. Is. 40. 18, 19.
cf. Dan. 3. 1, etc.
[i] ch. 14. 16.
[j] ch. 26. 20.
cf. 1 Thess. 1. 9, 10.
[k] *cf.* Rom. 2. 16.
cf. 1 Thess. 5. 1-3.

cf. Matt. 25. 31–46. [l] ver. 18. *cf.* Rev. 1. 7; *ctr.* Rom. 4. 24, 25.

sustained by Him, we are carried by Him,—more completely than the infant in its mother's arms; for His arms never unclose,—in Him at all times we are: words which he caps with a quotation from their own poets, recognizing the true creative link with God of a spiritual being such as man is, "For we are also His offspring." He is not here considering the effect of the fall, nor as yet man's responsibility, but the place given him in God's design, from which he will be better able to estimate his own departure.

But alas, how far he had got! Was man indeed the offspring of God? and did he think that gold and silver and stone,—dead matter, graven by human skill into some resemblance of himself, could be a worthy representation of the divine? Could the eyes and ears and bodies of men,—things of which God could have no possible need for seeing or hearing—represent that in which they were "in His image"? The spiritual they could not represent! they could only degrade it by such similitudes.

Alas, it was indeed the unknown God they worshiped! And these things characterized times of ignorance which He from whom they had turned had patiently gone on with. God had ignored, as they had. If He had now come in to make Himself known afresh, there ensued for men the necessity of repentance. Judgment was decreed for the whole habitable earth in righteousness, and that by a Man to whom God had testified so as to give full assurance to all by having raised Him from among the dead.

It is of the judgment of the living, not of the dead, that the apostle speaks here, and with the evident intention of announcing the coming of the Lord and the introduction of His Kingdom. Of salvation He had yet said nothing; for his hearers are philosophers, and not the conscience-struck and weary. But of the world's need and its remedy they might still be ready to hear, who were ignorant of their own; and their hearts be stirred by the prospect of a reign of righteousness, in contrast with the hard Cæsarism under which they were pressed down. They have had enough, however; and the mention of resurrection brings their patience to an end. Some mock; while others courteously defer the matter to another time; it is not serious enough to rouse them to hostility. Nothing was to be expected from an audience like this, and even Paul could only turn away and leave them. We hear of no such poverty of result in any other place, but with the wise of this world the wisdom of God is foolishness. Yet here also God could not allow His word to be absolutely barren. "Certain men clave to him and believed, among whom also was Dionysius* the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris." Though tradition has manufactured for the former a bishopric of Athens, and the martyr's crown, these are at present to us names only: the history connected with them remains for disclosure at a future time.

* "Dionysius" is naturally connected with Dionysus or Bacchus, implying one dedicated to him. Etymologically it may mean "divinely pricked" or "spurred." "Damar" is in Greek "one subdued, tamed, broken in to the yoke," and so "a bride."

some [m]mocked; and others said, We will hear thee [m]again concerning this matter. So Paul went out of the midst of them. But certain men [n]clave to him and believed, among whom also was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

SECTION 4. (Chap. xviii. 1-23.)
"Weak things of the world."

1(1-3): The independency of grace.

1. AFTER these things, he departed from Athens and came to [p]Corinth. And he found there a certain Jew, by name [q]Aquila, a Pontian by race, lately come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to [r]depart from Rome, and came unto them. And because he was of the same trade, he abode with them and wrought; for by their trade they were [s]tent-makers.

m *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 18. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 12. *cf.* ch. 26. 23-25.
n *cf.* ch. 24. 25. *cf.* ch. 5. 38, 39.
o *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 26-29. *cf.* Matt. 11. 25, 26.
p 1 Cor. 1. 2. ver. 27 with ch. 19. 1.
q vers. 18, 26. Rom. 16. 3, 4. 1 Cor. 16. 19. 2 Tim. 4. 19.
r *cf.* Lk. 2. 1. *cf.* Phil. 1.

12. s ch. 20. 34; *cf.* 1 Cor. 4. 12; *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 9; *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 11; *cf.* Heb. 11. 9 with Heb. 13. 14.

Sec. 4.

It is to the Corinthians that Paul writes at an after-time, of how God has called the weak things of the world to put to shame the things that are mighty (1 Cor. i. 27); and they found in themselves the evidence of this. The two epistles to the Corinthians display them strikingly in this character. The first epistle especially, in contrast with that to the Ephesians, which sets before us the Church in its heavenly aspect, shows us the Church in the world, exposed to the influences which beset it from that trinity of evil which perplex the fallen creature. The first part of the epistle (chaps. i.–x.) shows the Corinthians the need of fencing off these; as it too clearly manifests also how weak had been their resistance to them. Corinth was indeed a perfect type of the world as governed by the lusts that rule and rage in hearts away from God—of "the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Pet. i. 4). Corinth was a proverb, even among the light-hearted Greeks, for this; and those who had been called out from it by the victorious grace of God were still in danger, often imminent indeed, of being again overcome by it. Yet here, as not in philosophic Athens, the Lord had much people. As in His life on earth He was known as the Friend of sinners, and Himself declared that He was the Saviour of the lost, so do we find the gospel true to its character as it goes forth here. In the haunts of vice it found the sick who needed the physician, and could bear also to be told that they needed one. Among the Corinthians, rather than the Athenians, would be those satiated* with the pleasures, convinced of the vanity of a world which they well knew. Here was the very place in which the contrast between this and what the gospel offered could be best told out. If those called were the weak things of the world, how weak also was that world itself, which yet held so many in its bondage!

1. The apostle departs from Athens, then, and comes to Corinth; and the spirit in which he entered this busy, rich, luxurious city, he himself has declared. He came with a deep, almost oppressive sense of his responsibility as bringing the testimony of God into the midst of a people so needy, while so alive to their own interest, accustomed to make keen estimate of the wares offered to them, and with every allurement of earth in earnest competition with that which he had to offer, a Saviour already rejected by the world and cast out, condemned and crucified. Well might one so absolutely devoted to his work of ministry, with the burden of souls so upon him, be "in weakness and fear, and in much trembling," as, fresh from his disappointment at Athens, he contemplated the scene before him now. With such an one this could only issue in a

* May not this even be the meaning of "Corinth," from κορέννυμι, "to sate"?

2 (4-8): Separation from the unbelieving Jews.

2. And he reasoned in the [t]synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks. And when both Silas and Timotheus came down from Macedonia, Paul was pressed by the word, [u]testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. But as they opposed and blasphemed, he shook out his clothes, and said unto them, Your [v]blood is upon your own head; I am [w]pure: from henceforth I will [x]go to the Gentiles. And he departed thence, and went into the house of a certain man, by

t ch. 17. 1, 2, etc.
u *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 16, 17. *cf.* ver. 28.
v *cf.* Matt. 27. 25. *cf.* Ezek. 33. 4.
w *cf.* ch. 20. 26, 27. *cf.* Ezek. 3. 18, 19. *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 15, 16.
x ch. 13. 45-47; ch. 28. 24-28; *cf.* Rom. 11. 11-15.

realization more complete than ever of the One Power which alone could be competent to lay hold of and arrest these busy idlers, and bring them to face themselves and God. Jesus Christ the Crucified was indeed his only theme; but if He were the One rejected by the world, He was also the One whom the Spirit glorified: and thus his preaching was in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power. In a city in which oratory and persuasive speech would be peculiarly in requisition, there he relied upon no excellency of speech or of wisdom, used no allurement, but leaned wholly upon the Spirit of God.

There was one adaptation to the state of things at Corinth, however, which is noted for our attention. Not indeed that he practised it nowhere else, for he refers to his doing so afterwards at Ephesus (chap. xx. 34), as in the two epistles to the Thessalonians he shows us that he had done among them. Still it is here for the first time that it is mentioned in the Acts that he labored for his maintenance, and the character of his work also. We are certainly intended to recognize here the suitability of this in wealthy and commercial Corinth. He would not have them think of the gospel as among the wares in which they traded. Money could not buy the priceless gift of God; nor should they be able to think, even for a moment, that he sought what was theirs in anywise. No, he sought themselves only, and in that love of Christ in which He had become poor for men, who was so rich, that they by His poverty might be made rich. Thus Paul in Corinth would take nothing of the Corinthians; for which he justifies himself afterwards in both epistles (1 Cor. ix. 12–18; 2 Cor. xii. 13–18).

It is not without meaning, certainly, that here also, in a place so typical of the world in its highest energy, we should be told that Paul's occupation was that of *tent-making*. Spiritually this needs no interpretation. It is what grace would teach every redeemed soul, as it taught Paul also to serve men in this very attitude of independence of them. Surely there is nothing also like the tent as a symbol of such independence; he that is but a pilgrim in the world can find ability for this, as he cannot who seeks his home in it. While his companions' names are equally significant of the faith which of old has used these travelers' ways: Priscilla or Prisca ("ancient" or "venerable") reminding us, as the apostle does in Hebrews, that "by faith the *elders* obtained a good report," and Aquila ("eagle") of its soaring habit and keen sight. This last is a man of Pontus, or "the deep;" as he that has been in the depth alone learns to rise above his natural condition, and it is "they that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters,—these see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep." All here fits well together, and is of easy interpretation to those who can believe that the word of God deals so much in parables, and that it will bear the microscope after a fashion like this.

2. According to his common practise, Paul begins his testimony in the synagogue, addressing himself there, however, to both Jews and Greeks. From the former he gets little except opposition, going on to open blasphemy; which provokes the apostle on his part to announce his purpose, as at Pisidian Antioch before, to go to the Gentiles. He withdraws, therefore, to the house of a proselyte named Justus, adjoining the synagogue. The "just" was the characteristic

name Justus, who worshiped God, whose house adjoined to the synagogue. But [y] Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed the Lord, with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed and were baptized.

[y] 1 Cor. 1. 14.

3 (9–11): ▲ vision.

3. And the Lord said unto Paul in the night by a [z] vision, Fear not, but speak, and be not silent: for I am with thee, and no one shall set on thee, to harm thee; for I have [a] much people in this city. And he dwelt there a [b] year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

[z] *cf.* ch. 10. 10, etc. *cf.* ch. 16. 9. *cf.* ch. 27. 23, 24.
[a] *ctr.* ch. 17. 34. *cf.* ch. 11. 24. *cf.* ch. 13. 48.
[b] *ctr.* ch. 17. 2. *cf.* ch. 19. 10.

4 (12–17): The world passive.

4. But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul, and brought him before the judgment-seat, saying, This man [c] persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law. But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If indeed it were a matter of [d] wrong, or wicked

[c] *cf.* ch. 16. 20, 21.
[d] *cf.* ch. 19. 37, 38. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 12.

title of saints under the law; but now he who would be *with* the just must be outside the synagogue. Here the work in Corinth seems fairly to begin: Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believes, with all his house; and many of the Corinthians follow him in the confession of their faith. Thus grace works, in contrast with the law, although it remains true that "not many wise men according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called." None the less the Spirit wrought; and whatever those were who were brought together, we know that they came behind in no gift (1 Cor. i. 7): God needed not the assistance of the world's endowments although He does not despise or set aside that which has been of His own communication who is Creator of all (Matt. xxv. 15). They are called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ, from out of and yet in the midst of a world that lieth in the wicked one.

3. Here, as at Troas the vision of a man had appeared to him to invite his entrance into Europe, so now the Lord Himself appears to Paul to encourage him to remain. By revelation, as we learn from Galatians (ii. 2), he had gone up to Jerusalem, to vindicate there the rights of the Gentiles as against the zealots for the law. He had carried thence with him the letter in which the Jewish leaders renounced explicitly what authority in this matter they might be supposed to have. Henceforth all the open testimony of God that we hear of is against his persistence in special Jewish ministrations. He had been told explicitly that the Jews would not receive his testimony concerning Christ, and the twelve had assigned to him the Gentile work, as they themselves assumed the responsibility of that among the Jews (Gal. ii. 7–9). It is impossible not to connect all this with what we shall have in the after-history.

But the vision now is only encouragement. He is expressly guaranteed against harm, and assured of much people belonging to the Lord in this Gentile city, in which the Jews had shown already their opposition in so marked a way, that he must needs turn from them. Corinth was a place naturally discouraging enough; and with his heart so engaged with Israel as he himself has assured us that it was, the special seal now put upon his work in this place is very significant. Accordingly he continues for a year and six months teaching the word of God among them.

4. The Jews display their enmity more and more: and all that he has to experience in the way of persecution arises from this cause. It is they who bring him before the Gentile judgment-seat; and, availing themselves of the permission accorded to them to worship God after their own manner, they complain of him as inciting to an unlawful worship. It is their own law, however, of which they are thinking, and not the Roman one, as Gallio easily discerns; they

recklessness, ye Jews, with reason would I have borne with you; but if it be questions of *words and names and of the law ye have, look to it yourselves: I have no mind to be a judge of these matters. And he drove them from the judgment-seat. And they all laid hold on /Sosthenes the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment-seat. And Gallio *cared for none of these things.

5 (18-22): How the end is reached of the second journey.

5. And Paul, having yet stayed there many days, took

e ch. 23. 29. ch. 25. 19.

f 1 Cor. 1. 1. *g* *ctr.* Jno. 19. 13-16. *ctr.* ch. 24. 26, 27.

were never noted for obedience to their Gentile rulers, though for their particular purpose they might profess to have no other king but Cæsar. It was a mere hypocritical plea, as every one knew, and he treats it as such. Doubtless for him it was a question but of words and names, which he can meet with the most philosophic indifference! Think of the weariness, even to a Stoic, of being a judge in such matters! How little he knew of Him who even by means like these was sheltering His people. The accusers were driven from the judgment-seat. The multitude, going further than the judge, beat the ruler of the synagogue before it. But Gallio was still indifferent.

5. Thus protected according to the Lord's assurance, the apostle still remains a considerable time at Corinth; but nothing more is related to us than the fact. This is the end of his progress westward; and from Cenchrea, the port of Corinth, he sets sail for Syria, taking Ephesus, however, by the way. At Cenchrea we have a circumstance given which has divided the opinions of commentators,—that of the vow on the part of one of these travelers. Lechler ventures even to say that it is "involved in an obscurity which will never be removed;" but this is an accusation of an inspired writer which only shows for how little inspiration counts with many professedly orthodox to-day. That there is difficulty in deciding more than one question with regard to it, is quite another matter: the same may be said of multitudes of things in Scripture, which give us needful exercise, and that is all; surely a thing which we cannot expect to be saved from. To say, it cannot be cleared up, is to say, either that Luke meant nothing by it, or meant us to learn nothing (which is practically the same thing), or else that he blundered so painfully as to miss entirely the object for which he has written!

The first question we have to ask is, *who* is it of whom it is recorded here that "he shaved his head in Cenchrea: for he had—or, had had—a vow"? On the one hand Aquila is the one who stands immediately before; on the other, Paul (it is urged) is the principal subject here, and before the mind of the Spirit all through, rather than Aquila. Both these things, however, may be fully allowed without the consequence which is pressed as following. Paul's relation to the vow may be primary or secondary; it may be related to him simply as having to do with one of his company who, if not converted by his means, was yet in fullest connection and sympathy with him. It has been rightly noticed also, as it would seem, that in the passage Priscilla being named first brings Aquila into that place in which he would most naturally appear as the maker of the vow. Still, in two of Paul's epistles (Rom. xvi. 3; 2 Tim. iv. 19) it has been objected, that the same order of the names occurs; and here we may believe that the reason is one of personal character and usefulness, in which the wife may have been in advance of her husband; and though in ver. 2 Aquila has the precedence, this is not at all certain as to ver. 26. We can only say therefore, that according to the structure of the sentence, the maker of the vow would seem to be Aquila.

Another argument to the same end is obvious, that we might more easily understand this vow of Aquila than of Paul. He is introduced to us at Corinth simply as a certain Jew, with whom Paul works because they were of the same trade, not necessarily of the same faith. If he were a late convert, no one

leave of the brethren and sailed thence to Syria; and with him Priscilla and Aquila, having [h]shorn his head in Cenchrea, for he had had a vow. And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there; and he entered into the [i]synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. And when they asked him to remain with them a longer

[h] *cf.* Num. 6. 5, 18. *cf.* ch. 21. 23, 24. *cf.* Gal. 4. 9. *cf.* Col. 2. 20–23.
[i] ver. 4.

could wonder at his having been under a vow when brought to Christ: a vow which may not till now have expired, the shaving of the head, as we naturally judge from the analogy of Nazariteship (though this were not it), took place at the expiration, and not at the commencement. All this would fit together in the simplest manner thus, and provoke no question. It has been said that the record of it would have no value either; but this assuredly is not well considered. A charge against Paul on the part of the Jews was, as we shall soon have witness, that he taught all the Jews among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, nor to walk after the customs (chap. xxi. 21). The evidence of Aquila with his shaven head would be in direct opposition to this.

Let Paul be the subject on the other hand, and there is very great difficulty. It is of no use to urge, as has been done, his purification afterwards at Jerusalem, which was undoubtedly a step taken to conciliate the Christian Jews, and conformable enough to his avowed principle to be to those under the law as under the law, that he might gain those who were under the law. A vow was a voluntary act between the person and God, not required of any, and therefore which could give no offence in its non-observance; there was no breach of law in not assuming it. Aquila might have assumed it in his pre-Christian state, when he would naturally let it run on to its termination and have honored Moses in that which was to him as a Christian a thing indifferent; but how could Paul's doctrine of being "dead to the law by the body of Christ" (Rom. vii. 4) consist with the deliberate *taking up* of that which no conscience of another required, and which, if of his own free choice, would be the going back to build up again the things he had destroyed? Why then should we attribute that to the apostle to which certainly no necessity of the language here obliges us, and for which we have presently to seek all possible excuse in vain? The ethical argument is after all surely the decisive one, unless we are to be content to make an unasked for sacrifice of the apostle's character to show a liberality which is by no means that, in things that are not our own.

Paul then came with his companions to Ephesus, where he left them; he himself going on. But in the meanwhile he embraced the opportunity which the visit gave him to reason in the synagogue with the Jews, according to his wont. Here he found response in such a way that they would willingly have delayed his departure to minister to their need. But it is indeed strange to find that he is not ready to stay; and why? If the words that are in the common version be really part of the text, it is because he must by all means keep the coming feast at Jerusalem! If the words should not be there, he merely promises, if God will, to return. However this be, Jerusalem is in his heart, as we see by that which follows; although if it be not in the questioned words, the name itself is nowhere found. Indeed, in any case the narrative here is brief and as it were hurried. One cannot see what is really accomplished. Instead of any word about keeping the feast, he runs up from Cæsarea, salutes the assembly (we have to infer what assembly,—perhaps to take it as if for him at the moment there were scarcely an assembly elsewhere), yet he does not stay; we do not see what, if anything, is accomplished: the greatly desired visit has a strange unsatisfactoriness about it. It may well be, as we realize from what takes place at a later time, that he *cannot* stay there; he goes down to Antioch, from whence the Spirit had called him to go forth at first; his second missionary journey is thus over.

time, he did [j] not consent; but took leave of them, saying, [I must by all means keep the coming feast at Jerusalem, but]* I will return unto you, if God will: and he set sail from Ephesus. And landing at [k] Cæsarea, he went up and [l] saluted the assembly, and went down to [m] Antioch.

SECTION 5. (Chaps. xviii. 23–xx.)
The Assembly with God, and its responsibility.

1. [1] *a* AND having spent some time, he departed, and went through the country of [n] Galatia and Phrygia in order, [o] establishing all the disciples.

*Some of the oldest MSS. and versions omit this clause.

[j] *cf.* ch. 20. 16.

[k] *cf.* ch. 21. 8. *cf.* ch. 23. 33.

[l] *cf.* ch. 9. 26–28. *cf.* ch. 15. 4. *cf.* ch. 21. 17, 18.

[m] ch. 11. 25, 26.

[n] ch. 16. 6.

[o] ch. 14. 22. ch. 15. 32, 41.

1 (xviii. 23–xix. 20): Uniqueness of power.

[1] (xviii. 23–xix. 7): Its sources.

a (xviii. 23–28): The knowledge of Christ.

In this sudden close of what has been so fruitful and blessed a labor—where neither at Jerusalem or Antioch do we read of anything commensurate with the rest at all—it seems to me that we have the sad foreshadow of that which afterwards closes the active ministry of the great apostle of the Gentiles in a Roman prison. His heart seems breaking over Israel; and Israel alone has no welcome for him. Israel is his betrayer, and the very hope as to her which it seems he cannot resist, but of the fruitlessness of which he has been warned long since, betrays and leads him to disaster. He is in fellowship with the heart at least, if not fully the mind, of that dear Lord and Master, into whose spirit he had drunk so largely. Here his heart yearns with His over Jerusalem. By and by he will have to say with Him, as in the epistle to the Hebrews, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate!"

This leave-taking of a beckoning field like that of Ephesus, this hurried visit to the unnamed city, from which, after a salutation to the assembly, he is forced away again, is touching indeed. In the near future he is to yield to his affections a costlier sacrifice. For the present he is spared for new fields of labor and large fruit.

Sec. 5.

We are now come to the last labors of the apostle among the Gentiles in liberty, with the constraint of Christ's love alone upon him;—so far, at least, as the Spirit has been pleased to declare them to us. His testimony did not, of course, end here, and through his bonds might acquire a character and power it could not else have. That God was over all, and in all for blessing, needs no demonstration; but this testimony in bonds has another character than that we have been considering. If the apostle were set free afterwards, and made his wished for journey into Spain, we have no account of it; nor is the account that is here given incomplete: it is sufficient for the purpose of the Spirit who has given it, which is not a biography of Paul or any other. The narrative before us has evidently quite another design than this: it is the history of the founding of the Church as the company of the saved, whether Jews or Gentiles, brought out from the Jewish house of bondage and given to enjoy the liberty of grace. Hence we shall find, according to the manner of Scripture elsewhere, that this last portion of the ministration of the mystery will be (whatever else may be in it) very much of the nature of a review and summary of its leading features—not of doctrine but of history—while carrying us on also beyond to the future so full of responsibility and peril, of a divine testimony once more committed to man, whose course has been hitherto little but continued failure. The fact that there would be this is not shirked for a moment, but clearly announced. There would be again the display of sad, mysterious wreckage of all that man could wreck; although God's purposes could not but go on to completion. The epistles, as we know, develop this failure fully.

Along with this, as is natural, there is yet a manifestation of the power of

And a certain Jew, by name [p] Apollos, an Alexandrian by race, an eloquent man, mighty in the [q] scriptures, arrived at Ephesus. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and being fervent in spirit he spake and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, knowing [r] only the baptism of John; and he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. But when Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him to them and

p cf.1 Cor.3. 4–7. cf.Tit. 3.13.
q cf.ch.17.2.
r cf.ch.19.3.

God as connected with this testimony,—a power supreme over all the power of the enemy: the failure is not from any failure in this respect, whatever may be the conflict,—a conflict of which the epistle to Ephesus, the assembly mainly before us in all this part, warns us, and of the conditions of it.

Ephesus is indeed the representative assembly everywhere in the New Testament. In the epistle we find the full doctrine of the Church committed to it, not as in those to the Corinthians, as a communion of saints on earth, but in its heavenly character. In Revelation it comes before us in the first place as a vessel of testimony upon the earth. The two epistles exhibit it in contrasted spiritual condition: the first as faithful in Christ; the second as threatened with withdrawal of the candlestick, except it repent. We need not wonder to find this representative character attaching to it in the history also. We see it in its first freshness, and with its endowment of power; but with its responsibility also, and the sad prophecy of what would follow the removal of the apostle from the midst; when grievous wolves would be successors to so true a shepherd, and from among themselves would men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.

This, then, is the Deuteronomy of the Acts, with which the history of the "dispensation of the mystery" concludes, so far as active labors are concerned of him to whom it was first committed. The last division of the book has a character of its own which we must consider elsewhere.

1. That which characterizes the whole account of Ephesus as we have it here is the uniqueness of power manifested. It is at the very seat of the enemy's power, as seen in the notorious idolatry there, the worship of Artemis or Diana, in her image that fell down from heaven, as well as in the demon-possessions, sorcery and magic that abounded there. Even on this account must the power of God be put forth in a decisive way. Special miracles are wrought by the hands of Paul; and the very demons themselves become unwilling witnesses, in the mastery shown over all pretenders to that to which where real they must needs be subject.

[1] The sources of this power are also carefully put before us. In Apollos we see the knowledge of Christ in its effect; in the other disciples of John the witness of the Spirit characteristic of Christianity. Here plainly is the secret of the whole matter,—the supreme Name, and He who is come to glorify the absent Lord. In the case of Apollos the Spirit is not mentioned; yet is He freely working in a testimony not confined to Paul, and glorifying therefore the more, Paul's blessed Master.

a First, however, we are shown Paul himself starting fresh from Antioch, in the energy of a love which, caring for all, carries him once more over ground he had visited on his second journey; taking it up now in an orderly manner, so as to overlook none of those who had then been brought to Christ, of whom (in Galatia at least), there were many, and, at present, earnest disciples. Of Phrygia we know nothing except that it had been visited throughout; but the implication is that there also there were many; for whom now he was caring rather than raising up new assemblies.

Meanwhile we hear of a notable arrival at Ephesus in the person of an Alexandrian Jew, from a place well-known already in connection with Philo and his allegorization of the Scriptures, by and by to be more noted for the similar,

more *exactly set forth to him the way of God. And when he was minded to pass into Achaia, the brethren *wrote to the disciples, urging them to receive him; who, when he had come, *contributed much to those who had through grace believed. For he entirely *confuted the Jews, [and that] publicly, showing through the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

s ch. 19. 4. *cf.* Heb. 6. 1-3.
t *cf.* Rom. 16. 1, 2. *cf.* 1 Cor. 16. 3. *cf.* 2 Cor. 3. 1-3.
u *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 6.

cf. Rom. 12. 6-8; *cf.* Eph. 4. 11-13. *v* *cf.* ch. 6. 10; *cf.* ch. 17. 3.

though Christian, school of Origen. But if Philo were his master, Apollos had been led on beyond him by the voice of Israel's preacher of repentance and of Jesus also, as far as proclaimed by him. He knew no further, doctrinally, whatever he may have known as to the facts of His death and resurrection. The Christian gospel was to him unknown.

Yet what he knew he was zealous in making known, and with a wealth of proof from the Old Testament. Thus he began to speak boldly in the synagogue,—a remarkable case of faith manifesting itself amid many hindrances. How much perplexity for a man with but Jewish hopes, Messiah come and Israel not being gathered! a message broken off, without completion! When we remember John's own questioning from Herod's prison, how striking it is to find so long after a disciple of John with faith in the Messiah he had announced, who yet might seem to have disappeared without the accomplishment of what He came for! But his heart carried his faith through all these difficulties; and the voice that spoke at Ephesus did not falter in spite of all.

We can understand then the joy of heart in one so loyal to the truth when Aquila and Priscilla took him to them, and made known to him the truth which both removed his difficulties and perfected with more glorious hopes that which already so possessed his soul. Doubtless it brought for a time his testimony at Ephesus to a close, while the former teacher became once more a learner at the feet of Him whom his faith amid whatever obscurity had yet recognized and confessed; and it is no wonder if the large Christian assembly at Corinth abounding in gift and in such near connection with the commercial centre of Asia, attracted the eager disciple. There at any rate he soon desired to be, where his eagerness and boldness rapidly made him a leader and helper of those who were in Christ before him. Publicly and completely he confuted the unbelieving Jews, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

The part taken by Priscilla, a woman, in this instruction given to Apollos, noted as it naturally has been and rightly, still deserves emphatic recognition. Did she go beyond her place? and does the prohibition of a woman's teaching by that Paul, one of whose company she had so long been, rebuke her conduct on this occasion? Nay, Paul it is who in naming these two whom he so highly valued, both in the comparatively early epistle to Rome, and in the later one to Timothy, puts Priscilla before Aquila. We may be sure that neither did she go beyond the place that God had given her, nor did the apostle mean to seal the lips of believing women, so that they should not help others with the truth they have received. On the contrary, the communication of that which one has received is as much the obligation of a woman as of a man. The knowledge of the truth is one of those various gifts of God which, according to the apostle's exhortation (1 Pet. iv. 10), brings under the responsibility of ministering it. Nay, if the heart be right with God, it must be so: the full spring must needs overflow; out of the abundance of the heart the mouth must speak.

This does not constitute teaching in the forbidden sense, even where, as in this case, there is a distinct purpose to set forth the way of the Lord. It by no means necessarily involves the authority, publicity or place of the teacher, which few *men* have, whom no one would think of depriving of their undoubted right to speak of Christ to the utmost of their ability. Without being an evangelist, one may evangelize; and so, without being or claiming to be a teacher, one may

b (xix. 1–7): The witness.

b And it came to pass while [w]Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the [x]upper districts, came to [y]Ephesus; and having found certain disciples, he said unto them, Did ye [z]receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?* And they said unto him, We did not even [a]hear if the Holy Spirit were [come]. And he said, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. And Paul said, John indeed baptized with a [b]baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him who was [c]coming after him, that is, on Jesus. And when they heard this, they were [d]baptized unto the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had [e]laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they [f]spake with tongues and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve.

*Or, more literally, "believing, did ye receive the Holy Spirit?" There is no interval implied between believing and receiving the Spirit.

w ch. 18. 27. cf. 1 Cor. 1. 12.
x cf. ch. 18. 23. cf. ch. 16. 6.
y cf. ch. 18. 19. cf. Eph. 1. 1.
z cf. ch. 1. 5.
a cf. Jno. 7. 39.
b cf. ch. 18. 25. cf. Lk. 3. 3.
c cf. Matt. 3. 11. cf. Jno. 1. 26–29.
d cf. ch. 2. 38.
e cf. ch. 8. 17. cfr. ch. 10 44–48. cf. Eph. 1. 13.
f cf. ch. 2. 4. cf. 1 Cor. 12. 10, 11. cf. 1 Cor. 14. 1, 2, etc.

set forth the truth as God has enabled to apprehend it; thus a woman also without getting out of the place which the Creator has given to the woman.

We shall find the suited place to speak fully of this elsewhere; and what one would rather press here, and what needs much to be pressed, is the example of this noble woman in seeking to make another partake in that which had filled her own soul with peace and happiness. How largely is it true of men even, and much more of women, that the idea of having no responsibility in the matter of instructing others becomes an excuse for little regard to be instructed themselves, in any full and accurate way, in truths which are for all, and for one as much as another! It is conceded that it would be a shame for the teacher not to be taught; but they are not teachers; therefore they need not be accurately taught! But really it cannot be maintained that fulness or accuracy should be required of the teacher, if it is little matter in regard to those taught by him. As a teacher, what can one want which he does not need to teach? Have not all Christians need of all Christian truth? Alas, it is carelessness of heart that pleads so, whether in man or woman; and thus it is that, when Satan would bring in falsehood under some plausible disguise, the mass of Christians themselves are so slow to recognize it, if they recognize it at all; thus it is that, with all our vaunting of an open Bible, the Bible is yet but little really open to us! With all its fulness for us, it is as to practical possession but a thing of shreds and tatters! And again, if uneducated teachers make uneducated disciples, the converse is also true, and unteachable disciples soon and of necessity make unskilled teachers. Why should they be skilled in that which their hearers have no heart to learn? And thus the wheel turns along a sharp decline!

b The case of Apollos is followed—and surely with meaning in the connection—by that of other disciples of John; but who plainly were not companions, still less equals of Apollos. By the latter Jesus was known, however imperfectly, but the twelve soon after found by the apostle have to learn the testimony which John bore to Jesus. Of the coming of the Spirit they have, of course, not heard; and that is the purport of their answer to the question put: they do not speak of the *existence* of the Spirit, but of His being on earth,—of the baptism of the Spirit being an actual accomplishment. But this with Jews, from Pentecost and on, had followed their baptism to the Name of Jesus; Paul therefore asks to what then they had been baptized; and Jesus being declared to them, they are baptized to His Name. Even then it is only upon the apostle's hands being laid upon them that the Holy Spirit comes upon them, and they speak with tongues and prophesy. Thus what Peter and John did at Samaria the apostle

2 (8-10): Separation and increase.

[8] And he entered into the [g]synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, reasoning and persuading [as to] the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when some were [h]hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the way before the multitude, he departed from them, and [i]separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. And this took place for [j]two years, so that all that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

3 (11-20): Signs.

[11] And God wrought [k]extraordinary works of power by the hands of Paul, so that even napkins* or aprons were brought from contact with him,† [and put] upon the sick, and the diseases left them, and the evil spirits came out. And certain also of the strolling Jewish [l]exorcists took in hand to name, over those who had evil spirits, the Name of the Lord Jesus, saying, I adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth. And there were

g ch. 13. 5.

h cf. ch. 13. 45, 46. cf. ch. 7. 51. cf. Rom. 11. 7-10.

i cf. ch. 18. 6, 7. cf. Heb. 13. 10-13.

j cf. ch. 18. 11.

k cf. ch. 5. 15, 16. cf. Matt. 14. 36 with Jno. 14. 12.

l cf. ch. 13. 8. cf. ch. 8. 9. cf. Matt. 12. 24.

* Σουδάρια—"sweat cloths." † Literally, "from his skin."

of the Gentiles does now in regard to Jews. Israel seems to be at a greater distance than formerly from God, and authority is not recognized in Jerusalem, but as connected with one whose testimony Israel will not receive, but who has been sent by the Lord from heaven, with a heavenly testimony which Israel has never had made to them. Power is in the Risen Jesus, and is actualized for men in the Spirit His Witness. The prophesying reminds us of the new intercourse with God, and the tongues of a gospel for the nations round.*

[8] In suited connection with this, we now find separation taking place between the Christian assembly and the unbelieving Jews. The apostle continues his labor in the school of a Greek, Tyrannus. God in absolute sovereignty, in a way which to the Jew might be in disrepute, but which was forced upon Him by their sin, while it was in fact the sovereignty of grace to sinners, is taking His place among the Gentiles. Thence the Word goes freely forth, so that all in Asia hear it, the word of the rejected Lord,—both Jews and Greeks. The position of the assembly is clearly defined, and there is a wide and fruitful testimony.†

[11] The power of God is now manifested in an extraordinary manner in connection with Paul, the minister of this new and heavenly grace, so that napkins (or sweat-cloths) and aprons from his skin—both the signs of a toil which sin has necessitated—not only healed disease but expelled demons from the possessed. So has love's labor wrought through Him who came under the penalty of sin to heal spiritual disease and destroy the power of Satan. So manifest was the power of the Name of Jesus that certain wandering Jews, exorcists, undertook to use it as a charm, to conjure with. Seven sons of a Jewish high-priest, named Sceva (or Skeua, "implement, instrument"?) did this, but with a result for them as unfortunate as unforeseen. "Jesus I know," answered the demon, "and Paul I am acquainted with; but who are ye?" And the demoniac fell

* This is the only case of re-baptism mentioned in the New Testament, and it is interesting to note the reason. It was because they had only received the baptism of John, unto repentance, and not that which confessed Jesus Christ. Doubtless John's baptism, as all other, was by immersion, but the stress here is laid not upon the form—important as it is to be obedient in all things—but upon the Name of our Lord Jesus. There is doubtless instruction in this.

This instance also illustrates the indissoluble connection between faith in Christ and sealing with the Spirit, for doubtless they were both sealed individually and baptized corporately by the gift of the Holy Spirit. But there must be faith, and only that, if there is to be sealing. S. R.

† The name Tyrannus, "a sovereign ruler," seems to emphasize this thought. All things are in God's hands, and never more so than when the doors are apparently closed.—S. R.

certain men, the seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish high [m] priest, who did so. And the evil spirit answered and said unto them, Jesus I [n] know, and Paul I am acquainted with; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped upon them, and [o] mastering them both, prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house, naked and wounded. And this became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, who dwelt at Ephesus, and [p] fear fell upon all of them, and the Name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. Many too of those who had believed came [q] confessing and declaring their deeds. And not a few of those who practised curious arts brought their books and [r] burned them before all; and they reckoned the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.* So [s] mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed.

2 (21-41): Opposition.

2. Now when these things were fulfilled, Paul [t] purposed in his spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia

* Calculated at from about $7,500 to $10,000.

m *ctr.* Is. 52. 11. *ctr.* Lev. 21. 1, etc. *cf.* Jer. 5. 31.
n *cf.* Mk. 1. 23, 24. *cf.* Jas. 2. 19. *cf.* ch. 16. 16-18.
o *cf.* Lk. 11. 21, 22. *ctr.* 1 Jno. 4. 4.
p *cf.* ch. 5. 11.
q *cf.* Matt. 3. 6. *cf.* 1 Cor. 14. 24, 25. *cf.* 1 Jno. 1. 9.
r *cf.* Lev. 13. 57. *cf.* Jude 23.
s ch. 6. 7. ch. 12. 24. *cf.* 1 Cor. 16. 8, 9.
t ch. 20. 1. *cf.* 2 Cor. 1. 15-17.

upon them, mastered and drove them, naked and wounded, from the house.* Thus a startling witness from another side caused fear to fall upon all who dwelt at Ephesus. The effect was great in the confession and abjuring of their magic arts on the part of numbers who brought and publicly burned their books. "It was precisely in Ephesus that magic, strictly so called, held its seat. It had been originally connected with the worship of Artemis" (Lechler).†

Power, then, characterizes the work in Ephesus; and this, as already said, is in close relation to the view of the assembly in its responsibility which is here depicted. Ephesus means probably "desirable," and as the object of Christ's affection the assembly cannot lack on His side. Power cannot be wanting to it, if it is not wanting to itself. Evil from without cannot prevail against it, except it withdraw itself from the security of the divine shield. It is the ransomed and redeemed of Him who is gone up on high, having led captivity captive, and spoiled principalities and powers, triumphing over them in His Cross. "If God be for us, who shall be against us?" Alas, is this Ephesus, thus defended, thus endowed, still to illustrate the mutability of man in all that has been intrusted to him? is it to furnish after all the most signal illustration of the warning, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?"

2. The apostle's labors are near their close at Ephesus, and he has in mind another visit to Macedonia and Achaia, before once more his longing heart carries him again to Jerusalem. After that he says, he must see Rome; and he was indeed to see it, but under what different circumstances from what he could

* It is striking that we have three Jewish sorcerers who came in contact with the gospel—Simon at Samaria, Elymas in Cyprus and these sons of Sceva. Simon professed Christianity, but showed his unregenerate heart by desiring to purchase the power of bestowing the gift of God. He seems to stand for professing Judaism which for gain would take the name of Christ, and then lapse. Bar-Jesus always opposed, yet with a name suggestive of that imitation of truth which is so common. He seems to stand for the whole nation upon whom judicial blindness has fallen. The sons of Sceva would imitate a power to which they were strangers. We cannot help remembering how the "false prophet" in the last days will perform lying wonders, and meet a more awful doom than these.—S. R.

† The magic and curious arts here spoken of cannot but suggest to the thoughtful mind that which finds frequent mention, not only in the Old Testament but the New. It is the habit of the day to speak with contempt of sorcery and witchcraft, as mere chicanery. But Scripture speaks of them as satanic. Without doubt it is part of the enemy's way to hide his hand, but faith should see with Scripture, nor confine demon possession, sorcery and magic to apostolic times merely. There is no question that they exist now under the forms of spiritism, hypnotism and other "curious arts."—S. R.

and Achaia, to proceed to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see [u]Rome. And having sent into Macedonia two of those who [v]ministered unto him, [w]Timotheus and [x]Erastus, he remained himself awhile in Asia. And at that time there took place no small disturbance about the [y]way. For a certain man, by name Demetrius, a silver-beater, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the artisans; whom he gathered together, with those who wrought in such things, and said, Men, ye know that from this [z]trade come our means; and ye see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away a large number, saying that they are [a]no gods which are made with hands. Now not only is there danger for us that this trade come into disrepute, but also that the [b]temple of the great goddess Artemis be counted for nothing, and that she may be deposed from her magnificence, whom all Asia and the habitable earth worshipeth. And when they heard this, they were filled with rage, and all cried out, saying, [c]Great is Artemis of the Ephesians. And the city was filled with confusion; and they rushed with one accord into the theatre, having seized and carried with them [d]Gaius and [e]Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's fellow-travelers. And when Paul was minded to enter in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not. And some also of the Asiarchs* who were his friends, sent to him and

u *cf.* Rom. 15. 22-29. *cf.* Rom. 1. 13.
v *cf.* ch. 13.5. *cf.* 1 Cor. 16. 10.
w 1 Tim. 1.2.
x *cf.* Rom. 16. 23. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 20.
y ch. 9. 2. ver. 9.
z *cf.* ch. 16. 16, 19.
a ch. 17. 29. *cf.* Rev. 13. 14, 15.
b *cf.* vers. 35, 37. *cf.* Matt. 24. 1, 2.
c ver. 34. *cf.* ch. 8. 10. *cfr.* ch. 14. 11-18.
d *cf.* ch. 20. 4.
e ch. 20. 4. ch. 27. 2. *cf.* Col. 4. 10.

* Officers elected by the cities who at their own expense furnished festivals in honor of the gods.

have imagined now. How little he could have anticipated those years in prison, cut off from the work he loved, and then as a prisoner to see Rome also! It was a foreshadow doubtless of what awaited his gospel from legal opposition, and then from the world-power, with which in this respect it was allied. For himself we have already seen how he had been warned of the uselessness of his efforts in behalf of his misguided countrymen, and how he had been turned back on his last attempt to reach them, from the city itself, without anything attained. This time we know that he goes back as the bearer of a large offering from the Gentile Christians to the assemblies of Judea, which was to be an acknowledgement of the great debt they owed them, and a help to greater oneness of feeling between them. Yet was every fresh success among the Gentiles, accompanied as it was by a fresh manifestation of hostility on the part of the unbelieving Jews, increasing the bitterness of national enmity against himself, and the danger to himself at every return among them. Danger to himself was indeed never a deterrent: he was "ready not to be bound only, but to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Chap. xxi. 13). But would that sacrifice avail? and what of the growing work in those fields afar off, to which with the distinct warning that Israel would not receive his testimony, he had been expressly sent?

It is noteworthy how the claims of the Gentile assemblies are pressed upon him at this time. Of the state of the large assembly at Corinth he hears just at this time; the fruit of this for us we have through the overruling hand of God in those two epistles in which the dangers of the Church in the world its opposite are so vividly pictured for us. After this the conflict with Judaism in Galatia

[f] urged him not to present himself in the theatre. Different persons then kept crying out different things; for the assembly was confused; and the most knew not why they had come together. But from among the crowd they put forward [g] Alexander, the Jews thrusting him forward. And Alexander, beckoning with his hand, would have made plea to the people; but when they came to know that he was a Jew, one cry arose from all, crying out for about two hours, [h] Great is Artemis of the Ephesians. And when the town clerk had quieted the multitude, he said, Ephesians, what man is there then, who does not know that the [i] city of the Ephesians is temple-keeper of the great Artemis, and of the [image] that [j] fell down from heaven?* These things therefore being beyond contradiction, ye ought to be quiet, and do nothing rash. For ye have brought these men, who are [k] neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess. If indeed then Demetrius and the artisans with him have matter against any, [l] court-days are going on, and there are proconsuls: let them prosecute one another; and if ye make inquiry

[f] *cf.* ch. 21. 4, 12-14.

[g] *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 20. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 14.

[h] ver. 28.

[i] *cf.* ch. 17. 21.

[j] *cf.* ch. 14. 12. *cf.* Rev. 12. 7-9.

[k] *cf.* Rom. 2. 22. *cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 9 with 1 Cor. 1. 23, 24.

[l] *cf.* ch. 18. 12-17. *cf.* ch. 25. 10-12.

*Zeus (Jupiter). This entire clause is one word, "the Zeus-fallen."

calls forth the letter in which he sharply defines the contrast between the principles of law and grace. The epistle to the Romans either before or after this, written in view of the hindrances he had found to coming to them, lays down for them and for us the great foundations of Christian position, and explains the grafting of Gentiles into the good olive in place of the Jewish branches broken off through unbelief. The state of Corinth probably delays him now, while sending Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia, and now suddenly there breaks out at Ephesus a tumult of opposition against him which threatens even life.

The history of this outbreak shows us the power of the prince of this world sustained by the worldly interests which love to shelter themselves under the cover of religion. A religion men must have; yet how thin a varnish of it will suffice for the crowd, while the crowd again will suffice for the religion. What an absurd thing to deny what all Asia and the world worship! Really men believe in men: and though you may think of the individuals what you please, the mass must be judged differently. Thus it can come to be heresy that they are no gods who are made with hands; and the town clerk can shame a multitude out of treating it seriously. This, though Demetrius and his fellows are keener sighted through their nearer concern in what affects their craft, and this is the first and inciting argument; though all can feel that they gain in greatness from their magnificent goddess, and their pride can work alongside of their grosser interests. In fact the cry that unites the mob is "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" though, when they come together, it is hard to translate this into an intelligible expression. Alexander the Jew (perhaps the coppersmith of whom Paul speaks elsewhere) cannot for that reason head the crowd against the refusers of idolatry, and confusion reigns; until the townclerk with his wonder at what is not in question, and his plea for men who are neither sacrilegious nor blasphemers, backed by the suggestion of Rome's strong way of suppressing a riot, brings in order and dismisses the crowd. Paul is kept out of the way, even by the kindly advice of some of those in high place among the religious functionaries, who realize the nature of what has called the assemblage together. And indeed conscience is not in the crowd but in the individual; the Lord, as

concerning other things, it shall be settled in the lawful assembly. For indeed we are in danger of being [m]accused for this day's riot, there being no cause in view of which we can give a reason for this concourse. And having said these things, he dismissed the assembly.

3 (xx.1-12): The return, the remembrance, and the revival.

3. Now after the uproar had ceased, Paul, having called the disciples to him, and [n]exhorted them, bade them farewell, and went away, to go into [o]Macedonia. And having gone through those parts, and exhorted them

[m] *cf.* ch. 21. 31, 32.

[n] *cf.* ch. 16. 40.

[o] ch. 19. 21. *cf.* ch. 16. 9, 10.

we remember, had often to scatter the crowds; Paul recognizes that he has no place here, and escapes their hands.

Such is the world into which Christianity has come—a kingdom of truth appealing to the true, claiming obedience at all personal cost, prostrating all idolatry before the ark of God. Outwardly its aspect may be greatly changed, but its features still remain, and the inevitable conflict. "All that is of the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, are not of the Father, but are of the world." And again, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

3. The journey of the apostle through Macedonia and Achaia, with all its interest for us, is passed over in the briefest way. How much would we fain have known of Philippi and Thessalonica and Berea, of Athens and of Corinth! but Scripture approves itself in all this most unlike mere human history. After Paul's leaving Ephesus, a few words suffice for the journey through Macedonia, in which we have not even the names of the places he visited, or the time spent. In Greece (Achaia) not even Corinth is mentioned, although we are told that he was there three months. Then the machinations of the Jews, his constant enemies, decide him to return by way of Macedonia, and we are told the names of his companions,* more numerous than usual, who accompany him back to Asia; that they went before, however, from Philippi to Troas, waiting for him there. At Philippi, as we discern once more by the change of pronoun, Luke joins him once again, after an interval of between six and seven years, and sailing from Philippi, they come in five days to Troas.

Seven days are spent at Troas, and terminate with the first day of the week, on which we find the disciples gathered together to break bread, and Paul, ready to depart on the morrow, pours out his heart to them till midnight. It is surely not, as some would have us consider it, an ordinary meal at which they gather, which would deprive the time specified of all its significance, and indeed the breaking of bread itself. On the other hand, with the first day of the week, the resurrection day, there are connected how many joyful and tender memories for the Christian heart! The seventh day rest of the old creation has now given place to that which speaks of a new beginning out of death, death itself yielding to life which has death behind it, and is a life eternal. Instead of a rest when the week of labor is over, it is a rest beginning and characterizing the blessedness it ushers in. The legal principle, "do and live," is exchanged in it for the evangelical one, "live and do." The seventh day is a command; the first day is a day of privilege; and how significant it is that, whereas in the Old

* There are seven of these companions, all of whose names occur elsewhere. The meanings are mostly plain, whether we can give the interpretation or not. 1. Sopater, "The Father the Saviour." No doubt an abbreviated form of Sosipater (Rom. xvi. 21). He was from Beroea, where, more noble than those of Thessalonica, they searched the scriptures. He was the son of Pyrrhus, "the fiery or ardent,"—a good companion in service. 2. Aristarchus, "the best ruler." 3. Secundus, "the second or assistant." These two were from Thessalonica. 4. Gaius, "pertaining to the land, or earth." He was from Derbe and not the Macedonian mentioned in chap xix. 29. We do not know which is the "mine host" of Rom. xvi. 23, and of John's third epistle. 5. Timothy, "one who honors God," well known from the two epistles addressed to him. 6. Tychicus, "fortunate," similar to Eutychus in this same chapter. He was frequently sent on errands by Paul. 7. Trophimus, "nourished." He was a Gentile apparently, and both he and Tychicus were from Asia. Nothing special is said of him except that he was left at Miletus sick (2 Tim. iv. 20).—S. R.

with much discourse, he came into [p]Greece. And having spent three months [there], and a [q]plot being laid against him by the Jews when he was about to sail for Syria, he determined to return through Macedonia. And there accompanied him as far as Asia [r]Sopater, a Berean, [son of] Pyrrhus; and of Thessalonians [s]Aristarchus and Secundus; and [t]Gaius of Derbe and [u]Timotheus; and of Asia [v]Tychicus and [w]Trophimus. These going before waited for us in Troas; and we sailed away from Philippi after the [x]days of unleavened bread, and came to them in [y]five days to Troas, where we tarried seven days.

p *cf.* ch. 17. 15. *cf.* ch. 18. 1.
q ver. 19. *cf.* ch. 9. 23. *cf.* ch. 23. 12. *cf.* ch. 25. 3. *cf.* 2 Cor. 11. 26.
r *cf.* Rom. 16. 21.
s *cf.* ch. 19. 29.
t *cf.* Rom. 16. 23. *cf.* 3 Jno. 1.
u ch. 19. 22.
v Eph. 6. 21. Col. 4. 7, 8. 2 Tim. 4. 12.
Tit. 3. 12.
w ch. 21. 29; 2 Tim. 4. 20.
x ch. 12. 3; *cf.* ch. 18. 18.
y *ctr.* ch. 16. 11.

Testament prophets the observance of the sabbath is again and again urged upon the people as a condition of blessing, in the New Testament epistles it is only once mentioned, and that to say, "Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days" (Col. ii. 16). The things with which it is classed are a convincing testimony of how it is regarded.

The breaking of bread was that for which the believers at Troas were assembled, and not even to hear the apostle, great as the privilege of this might be. The language implies that this was an ordinary meeting to remember the Lord in His death, at which the apostle took occasion to address them. Upon the Lord's day they observed the Lord's Supper. The day is evidently what is styled this in the book of Revelation (chap. i. 10), which is not the prophetic "day of the Lord," for this could not be applied at any rate to the first three chapters there; besides which it is another expression, literally "the Dominical day," as the Supper is (1 Cor. xi. 20) "the Dominical Supper." What day but the first day of the week has the Lord stamped as His? the day hallowed by His appearance as risen in the assembly of His disciples; the day in which He hailed them as His brethren, and breathed on them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. That first day made Him their Lord in a glory unknown hitherto; and that title, "the Lord's day," conveys to us the very essence of its blessedness. He who was under death is victorious over it; He who was under our sins is risen for ever free; and when Thomas is bidden to reach out his hand and put it into His side, the glad cry of his heart in response is "My Lord and my God!"

Fit it is, then, that the Lord's Supper should go with the Lord's day; with the feast of Resurrection, the joy of the Remembrance. The death which He has left behind we cannot leave behind: His resurrection glorifies and does not efface it; the myrrh and aloes perfume His garments still (Ps. xlv. 8; Jno. xix. 39, 40). Up in the glory of heaven He is seen by the hearts of His redeemed as a "Lamb slain" still (Rev. v. 6).

How much depends upon our remembrance here! How suited a time for the departing apostle to address his farewell words to those he is of necessity leaving to bear their own burden of responsibility as the purchased of the precious blood of Christ! Upon the fulness and constancy of this remembrance rests all the hope of the future of the Church as His witness upon earth until He comes. In the joy of resurrection to show forth His death,—that is the responsibility; to realize this is to find power to sustain it. Upon such a fruitful theme no wonder that the apostle should prolong his speech till midnight, and beyond. But at midnight it is that a significant event occurs. In the upper room in which he is speaking, lighted up with many lights, but in a window looking out into the darkness, Eutychus, the "prosperous," sleeps, as in such places of outlook prosperity can induce sleep, soothed, alas, by words that once had interest, but out of which the meaning has now died. So sleeping, he falls out of the window to the ground, and is taken up dead. Until this word, we might easily

And the [z]first day of the week, we being assembled to [a]break bread, Paul discoursed to them, being about to depart on the morrow, and prolonged his speech until midnight. And there were many [b]lights in the [c]upper room, where we were assembled. And a certain youth, by name Eutychus, sat in the [d]window, overpowered with deep [e]sleep; and as Paul was discoursing still more, he fell overpowered by the sleep down from the third story, and was taken up dead. But Paul went down and [f]fell upon him, and embracing him, said, Be not troubled, for his life is in him. And having gone up, and broken the bread, and [g]eaten, and conversed with them a long while till day-break, so he departed. And they brought the youth away alive, and were not a little comforted.

z *cf.* 1 Cor. 16. 2. *cf.* Rev. 1. 10.
a *cf.* Matt. 26. 26–28. *cf.* ch. 2. 42. *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 23–33.
b *cf.* Eph. 5. 8.
c ch. 1. 13. *cf.* Col. 3. 1.
d *ctr.* Jno. 20. 19. *cf.* 2 Sa. 11. 2.
e *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 6. *cf.* Eph. 5. 14.
f *cf.* 1 Kl. 17. 21, 22. *cf.* 2 Kl. 4. 34, 35. *cf.* ch. 9. 40, 41.
g *cf.* ch. 27. 33–36.

take all this, (however literally a fact, as none will question,) to be yet an allegorical description of a soul's decline and fall from truth once really and savingly known. The lighted room in the midst of surrounding darkness, the windows, avenues into the darkness of the outside world, the youth even of the sleeper (it is to the young man that John speaks specifically when he says, "Love not the world"), his very name, Eutychus, pointing out the seduction of prosperity, the consequent sleep in this place of peril, which in fact leads to his fall,—all this reads with perfect consistency, and there would seem no difficulty in understanding the warning conveyed, until we hear this last word, "taken up *dead*," while he that believeth on Christ can never die. Yet here an exceptional word is spoken,—a word that we hear nowhere uttered as to a dead man. The apostle goes down, and falling upon him, and embracing him, says, "Be not troubled, for his life is in him." But one with his life in him is not what we would ordinarily call dead. Does this then simply speak of life now restored by the power of God which has wrought through Paul? I own that this is what one would naturally think; and in this case an interpretation of it in the way suggested is not to be thought of. We must then accept the modification that it represents the lapse of one not savingly, but only superficially impressed; and we might think of such as are, in Jude's strong language, "*twice* dead,"—dead in nature, and now dead by apostasy. Such a warning would be indeed awfully solemn; but in the case of which Jude speaks he does not seem to intimate any possibility of recovery such as we see in Eutychus. Doubtless there are different grades, however, of cases seemingly the same; and here we might leave it.

But there are those who attribute a different meaning to the apostle's words: "Eutychus pays the penalty of his inattention; but God bears testimony to His own goodness, and to the power with which he had endued the apostle, by raising him from a state of death. Paul says that his soul was yet (?) in him: he had only to renew the connection between it and his physical organization. In other cases the soul had been recalled." Another says, "Assuredly the apostle in these words had no desire to make light of the power of God which had wrought in this miracle. It may be well to compare with this Luke viii. 49–56, where the spirit of the Jewish maiden had departed. But the Lord's words were enough; and 'her spirit returned.' Here it was not so: 'his soul is in him,' says the apostle, though divine power alone could retain it, or hinder the proximate break-up."

If this be really what is meant, we have a death which, as far as man is concerned, is truly that,—the one in it outside of all human help, or even accessibility to any mode of appeal that can be made. Is it not possible also for a true child of God to get into a condition resembling this? as far as man is concerned

4 (13-38): Departure, and testing fore-warned.

4. But we, having gone before on board ship, set sail for Assos, there intending to take in Paul; for so had he directed, himself being about to [h]go on foot. And when he met with us at Assos, we took him up, and came to Mitylene. And having sailed thence on the morrow, we arrived over against Chios; and the next day we touched at Samos; and having* remained at Trogyllium, the next day we came to [i]Miletus. For Paul had determined to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not be made to [j]spend time in Asia; for he was hastening, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of [k]Pentecost.

h *cf.* Matt. 26. 36.

i *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 20.

j *cf.* ch. 18. 20.

k ch. 2. 1. *cf.* ch. 19. 21. *cf.* Gal. 4. 10, 11.

* Many omit this clause.

inaccessible; the truth itself known in such sort that it has power no longer? nothing remaining capable of penetrating the hardened conscience, or of rousing any longer the insensible heart? How terrible may be the effect upon men in this way of truth heard, it may be, long, but not yielded to, or no longer so, but met with a resistance continued until it has stiffened into indifference? the speaker becoming perhaps "as a very lovely song of one that has a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument" (Ezek. xxxiii. 32), or soothing the hearer in his dangerous sleep!

Some lesson such as that which has been indicated, the story of Eutychus must surely yield. We are here amid intimations of the present time, when the Church, bereft of her first human guardians, would have to work out her own salvation in a world opposed to Christ; and in which, as we shall shortly have plainly declared, the enemy would have in the meantime only too much success both in alluring and worrying the sheep of Christ. The Spirit indeed would not depart; and in the faithfulness and love of God there would always be refuge and unfailing blessing for His own. But the source of worse danger they carry ever with them, an evil heart of unbelief ready to turn them aside to seek other help than in the Only and All-powerful Helper. Thus declension and revival have marked the Church's history upon earth; the mercy of God raising up deliverers in those who sought fully to follow in the path of faith, while the mass dragging behind would limit and enfeeble the deliverance. In Paul here we may see the special power of one who wrought with God to revive the dead, and relieve for a time the distress; but the vessels of this power depart, and those who have rejoiced in it but had it not are left once more to face their own responsibility with their feebleness to meet it. The apostle in the consciousness of such a condition of things ensuing, himself sustained* by the refreshment of that which is the means of communion to the whole company, spends the whole night in converse with them till the day breaks, and at the day-dawn departs.

4. To Assos, where his companions proceed on shipboard, Paul goes alone on foot! It is probable enough that at this moment solitude was more congenial to him than companionship, even with those so spiritually akin as were his companions at this time. The future of that Church, so dear to him as the Church of Christ, was, as we know by what follows, upon his heart. He was the man of all on earth upon whom this burden rested (2 Cor. xi. 28, 29). None knew as well, perhaps, as he, upon Whose shoulders of strength the graven names are; yet that did not hinder the employment of his heart with those for whom the heart of Christ was employed, but gave depth to it. There were personal causes of thought also, although not separate from the Church's need, in whose serv-

* I do not doubt that it is the bread which they have broken at the Lord's Supper, which he now breaks for his own support (a connection which has great significance), and that this is not the Supper itself. As others have remarked, the action here is confined to himself, and the word "eaten" added, which is literally "tasted," is more suited to this.

And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the [l]elders of the assembly. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know how, from the first day on which I set foot in Asia, I was with you the whole time, serving the Lord with all [m]lowliness of mind, and with tears, and in trials which befell me by the [n]plots of the Jews; how I [o]kept back nothing of what was profitable, so as not to announce it to you, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and Greeks [p]repentance towards God, and [q]faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.* And

*Some omit "Christ."

l *cf.* ch. 14. 23. *cf.* ver. 28. *cf.* 1 Tim. 3. 1-7.
m *cf.* 1 Thes. 2. 1, 6, 7. *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 3. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 5.
n *cf.* ver. 3.
o *cf.* ver. 31. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 2.
p *cf.* ch. 2. 38. *cf.* ch. 17. 30. *cf.* Gal. 3. 22.
q *cf.* ch. 16. 31. *cf.* Rom. 10. 8-13. *cf.* Gal. 2. 16.

ice his life was spent. He was going to Jerusalem; place of so many memories, and perhaps of his most real conflict. What waited him there? what lay beyond this? would it affect his after-course? would it alter those visions of future service which did not stop short of the furthest bounds of the west? Doubtless he had occupation enough with thoughts that thronged him those twenty-five miles or so to Assos. There they took him up, and thence they sailed, passing by Ephesus, which with all his ties to it would detain him too long if he visited it now, and only briefly pausing at Miletus.

But Ephesus could not be left aside with no token of his ever-abiding love; and the stay at Miletus gives him his desired opportunity. It was but thirty miles away, and a good road connecting; "he sent and called to him the elders of the assembly," for his last tender greeting.

The address of the apostle to the elders here is clearly in accordance with what has been already said of the representative character of the assembly at Ephesus. We have nothing like it elsewhere; and it ends in fact Paul's ministry of active labor as far as the only inspired account given us depicts it. From Jerusalem a new kind of testimony begins, and if he were freed from his chain at Rome, and permitted to carry out his thought of going on to Spain, yet nothing of this comes into or is needed for the completion of the history,—for the divine purpose with which it has been given us. A divine history is no mere account of things in detail; it is much more than this: it is a specially arranged extract from the whole, to prevent our losing ourselves in the many details, and to guide us to a proper estimate of the whole; it is at once a history and a comment which the history itself furnishes.

According to the divine thought, then, the evangelization of the Gentiles is here complete: we stand at the end and look back upon it; and with the review can look on also to see the result of it all, as thus complete. Moreover, in the review of the work of such an one as Paul we get a clearer apprehension spiritually of these results than if we had a wider field and many workmen. Then we should have a complicated problem to work out—to estimate the laborers and their labors separately and together, and to distinguish what might be due to each. Now on the other hand, we have one pattern workman, and we can certainly anticipate no better results from any other, nor from any number of others; we have the whole matter resolved for us with the greatest simplicity that can be.

An unalterably solemn thing it is, to look at it so; and a comparison made outside the history of the Acts will only confirm it. Where was there a place more competent as an example than the great assembly at Corinth, "coming behind in no gift;" the fruit of the apostle's careful labors for a year and a half; in how short a time does the first epistle, written from Ephesus during his work there, show us results such as we need not be reminded of; the Spirit of God, by the hand of Paul himself, has given it in detail. Look at Galatia with its zeal and enthusiasm for him who had brought it the gospel of Christ; in still less

now, behold, I go [r]bound in spirit to Jerusalem, [s]not knowing the things that I shall meet with in it, save that the [t]Holy Spirit testifieth to me city after city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. But I hold not my life of any account as [u]precious to myself, so that I may accomplish my [v]course, and the ministry which I received of the Lord Jesus, to [w]testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now behold, I know that all ye among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom [of God]* will [x]see my face no more.

r *cf.* ch. 19. 21. *cf.* ch. 21. 13.
s *cf.* Heb. 11. 8.
t *cf.* ch. 21. 4, 11. *cf.* ch. 8. 29. *cf.* ch. 16. 6, 7.
u *cf.* Phil. 3. 7–10. *cf.* Phil. 1. 20, 21.
v *cf.* Phil. 3. 13, 14. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8.
w ver. 21.

* Many omit.

cf. Rom. 1. 1; *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 16. x ver. 38; *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 6.

time from that of his second visit swept by the chilling blasts of legality, and giving up the joyous Spirit of adoption for the spirit of bondage. Compared with these Paul's declaration as to Ephesus is moderate indeed.

At the outset he reminds them of the character of his life and service among them, so well known during the long time he had spent there. His service now ended, he can speak of it with frankness and simplicity of heart to those who would need to serve with the same lowliness, compassed with the same perils. In his ministry there had been no reserve—no keeping back of anything that would be profitable, in a service which was not only public and general, but individual and from house to house. The basis of all was that which went out in testimony to Jews and Greeks,—repentance towards God, that judgment of self in His Presence which sets aside self-righteousness and self-confidence of every kind, and thus also that seeking after one's own will and way which is the essence of sin; on the other hand, faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, which alone gives God to be known and joyed in, and thus links the soul to Him from whom it can no more be sundered. These two things, it is evident, are but different parts of the one great whole of conversion, and which cannot exist apart from one another. One cannot exist, therefore, *before* the other, and they exercise a reciprocal influence upon each other. True repentance is as evangelical as true faith; and true faith as practical as true repentance. And the relation of each to a man's works is strangely in contrast with the usual thoughts; for while *faith* it is that is the worker, insomuch that "faith, if it have not works, is dead" faith merely, *repentance* it is that turns from all doings of man as wherein to have confidence, abhorring *self*, not sin merely, as the best man on earth was taught to do (Job xlii. 6). But thus the two clasp hands and walk together.

On such a basis, then, has his work been: but he is now leaving it; as far as they are concerned, it is for ever,—they will see his face no more. For himself, he is going to Jerusalem, bound in spirit—surely not the Holy Spirit, to whom the term he uses would be quite inapplicable, nor does it speak of the sweet and happy constraint of love, though love is in it—deep and constraining love; but along with this is certainly a foreboding which casts a shadow over him; the word "bound" reminds one of the victim for the altar; yet, if it were only that, and he felt the Lord were leading him in this way, his spirit would be brighter: his *spirit* would not bind him, though men's hands might. Contrast his words to the Philippians, where he is contemplating such a possibility: "Yea, and if I be offered"—"poured out" rather, the figure being taken from the drink-offering, which was a symbol of joy; and thus he goes on,—"and if I be poured out upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all" (Phil. ii, 17). Again, when in nearer view of the end:—"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand; I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will

Wherefore I testify to you this day that I am [y] pure from the blood of all; for I have not shrunk from announcing to you [z] all the counsel of God. [a] Take heed* to yourselves and to all the [b] flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you [c] overseers, to tend the assembly of God, which he [d] purchased with the blood of his own.† [For] I know [this], that [e] after my departure there will come in among you grievous wolves, not sparing the flock; also from [f] among your own selves shall men rise up, speaking things perverted, to draw away the [g] disciples after them. Wherefore [h] watch, remembering that for three years I ceased not night and day to [i] admonish each one [of you] with tears.

y *cf.* ch. 18. 6. *cf.* Ezek. 33. 1-9.
z *cf.* Jer. 26. 2. *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 11, 12.
a *cf.* 1 Tim. 4. 6, 16. *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 10.
b *cf.* Jno. 10. 16. *cf.* Jno. 21. 15-17. *cf.* Col. 1. 24, 25.
c *cf.* Phil. 1. 1. *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 12. *cf.* 1 Tim. 3. 1. *cf.* Heb. 13. 7, 17, 24.
d *cf.* Eph. 5. 25. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. *cf.* Matt. 13. 45, 46.

* Many add, "therefore."

† Or "the assembly of the Lord, which he purchased with blood that was his own." MSS. are nearly equally divided; and I am not satisfied that what I have given is the true reading. The plea that "church of the Lord" is found nowhere else may incline one the more to accept an unusual phrase; and "blood that was His own" would be in contrast with that "blood not his own" (Heb. ix. 25), with which the Jewish high priest entered the holiest.

cf. 1 Cor. 6. 19, 20. *e cf.* Phil. 2. 12; *cf.* 1 Tim. 4. 1; *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 1. *f cf.* 2 Tim. 1. 15; *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 10; *cf.* 3 Jno. 9, 10. *g cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 12; *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 18. *h cf.* Matt. 24. 42; *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 3-10. *i cf.* Col. 1. 28; *cf.* Phil. 3. 18, 19; *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 4.

give me in that day" (2 Tim. iv. 6–8). The mere circumstances, therefore, will not explain the expression used by him now without a great wrong to the apostle himself; except indeed we take in the circumstances in a wider sense, beginning with his love to Israel; deep enough to have made him, as he declares to the Romans (and when this journey was in fact before him), be wishing that he himself were anathema from Christ for his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh (Rom. ix. 3); yet with those words in his ears,—how they must have remained in his ears!— "They will not receive thy testimony concerning Me," how the longing desire of the heart may work round the plainest testimonies! and especially even when the love that creates it is one like this of the apostle, a divine love for the people of God; for a people whose history was the history of God's grace to men from times far off, and of whom the Lord Himself had said, "Salvation is of the Jews."

Here he was, then, with his offering from the Gentiles, hoping, as it would seem, that now at last he might find that restriction removed, and that He who had once sent him far off to the Gentiles, might now permit him a testimony that should be accepted at Jerusalem itself. And yet—and yet—an uncertainty seems to cling to it in his mind, and shadow the hope that would fain be confident. He *knows not* what is to befall him there. There was the general witness of the Spirit—no exceptional thing that—wherever clustered the abodes of men, there were the scenes of his trial, if of his triumphs,—bonds and afflictions awaited him. What wonder if they did so at Jerusalem? Would he shrink from it on that account? Did he value his life, in the accomplishment of his course,—of that ministry received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God?

In Ephesus, however, his work was done; with the whole counsel of God fully declared to them, he was clear from the blood of all. He addresses himself, therefore, to those to whom the Spirit had given a place of oversight in the assembly, to care for it and watch and warn as he had done, tending the flock as shepherds, in view of evils which he can already foresee, and which would require their utmost vigilance and care.

As others have said, it is plain that the apostle thinks of no successors to himself in apostolic power or place. It is the elders who are now to exercise oversight, and they are not apostles. We find by the Apocalyptic epistle to

And now I [j]commend you to God and the [k]word of his grace, which is able to [l]build [you] up, and to give [you] an [m]inheritance among them that are [n]sanctified. I have [o]coveted of none silver or gold or apparel; yourselves know that these [p]hands have ministered to my needs, and to those who were with me. In all things I have given you an [q]example that so laboring ye should sustain the weak, and to [r]remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

j ch. 14. 23. *cf.* Eph. 6. 23.
k cf. Col. 3. 16. *cf.* 1 Tim. 4. 13. *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 14-17.
l cf. Col. 2. 7. *cf.* Col. 1. 10. *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 18.
m cf. ch. 26. 18. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 4, 5.
n cf. 1 Cor. 1. 2; *cf.* Jno. 17. 17; *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 13.
o cf. 1 Thess. 2. 5; *cf.* 1 Sa. 12. 3; *cf.* 2 Cor. 7. 2.
p ch. 18. 3; *cf.* 1 Cor. 4. 12; *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 14, 15; *cf.* 2 Cor. 11. 7-10; *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 13; *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 9; *cf.* 2 Thess. 3. 8.
q cf. Phil. 3. 17; *cf.* Phil. 4. 9; *cf.* Gal. 6. 2, 10.
r cf. Matt. 10. 8; *cf.* Jno. 4. 31-36.

Ephesus, that in fact just to that which, as has been already said, in a special way represents the Church at large there *did* come those who professed to be such successors: men who claimed to be apostles and were not, and whom they found liars (Rev. ii. 2). The Corinthians also are warned of *false* apostles (2 Cor. xi. 13), but nowhere are any exhorted to receive the *true*. This is marked and decisive as to those who make such claims to-day. It is remarkable indeed how ritualism has stultified itself in its successional pretensions, which always cleave to Peter, never to Paul: to the man, that is, who distinctly gave up the Gentiles to the care of Paul, himself going to the circumcision (Gal. ii. 9). Who pretends, in fact, to be successor to Paul, who had the whole Gentile field committed to him? Or when did Paul confine himself to so narrow a field as that which the widest imaginable episcopal diocese would be to such an one (Rom. i. 13–15)? But in fact the *episcopi*—the bishops—are here in these elders (ver. 28, R. V.), who were simply the overseers of an assembly,—no one of them with diocese or parish or assembly of his own. We have seen such appointed in the Gentile assemblies by Paul and Barnabas on their first return journey through Lycaonia and Pisidia (chap. xiv. 23), and here we find them again in Ephesus. They are a company in each assembly of men fitted by their years, or that practical experience that should come through years, to take fatherly rule and oversight together. In this way they were to tend the flock as shepherds, but it by no means follows that this comprehends also the "nourishing and furnishing it with the wholesome food of the Word and all the means of grace," as Lechler alleges; here is not the place properly to discuss this; it is quite natural for those to think so who have been accustomed to see in the minister of the church the union of all the public "gifts" in the body of Christ. On the other hand it may be asserted without hesitation that the minister of a church, as almost everywhere found to-day, does not anywhere appear in the pages of the New Testament. The elders were a local board, as is plain; and by the very fact that they were "elders," though the word seems to have lost its meaning now, they could not include all ministry in the assembly; which the well-known text in the first epistle to Timothy (v. 17) confirms: elders might rule well, and yet not labor in the Word and doctrine; the one did not at all include the other.

Appointed by the apostle, as in the case before us compared with those already mentioned we cannot doubt they were, it could be said that the Holy Spirit had made them overseers, and in the assembly of God which He had purchased with the blood of His own—of One in such endeared relation as Christ was. How great the responsibility, then, of such a charge! The more, because evil times were coming, and not far off, as "after my departure" would surely indicate. The conflict with evil in a world like this cannot be avoided; and God turns it to blessing, but does not keep His people from it. Have we not to maintain a similar struggle with an inward enemy also? And so as to the Church of God, it would not be persecution from the world that would be the only, or even the chief trial. Here too there would be internal strife: "I know," says

And having said these things, he [s]kneeled down and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell upon Paul's neck, and [t]kissed him tenderly; sorrowing most of all for the word which he had spoken, that they would [u]see his face no more. And they conducted him to the ship.

[s] ch. 21. 5.
[t] *cf.* Gal. 4. 14, 15. *cf.* 1 Thess. 3. 6.
[u] ver. 25. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 19.

the apostle, "that after my departure there will come in among you grievous wolves, not sparing the flock; also from among your own selves shall men rise up, speaking things perverted, to draw away the disciples after them." On the one hand, from without the evil would break in through the slackly-guarded gates: we see the possibility of this in Simon at Samaria; though there the power did not lack to detect and cast out what had gained admission. On the other hand, from within perversions of truth would come, men seeking to make of themselves a centre instead of Christ: the subtlest evil,—truth with a twist in it, so as in some sense to deceive the true. For, alas, how seldom are we absolutely and altogether such that error cannot appeal to us! Doubtless "he that will do His will shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God;" but who then can look round among the contradictory views that divide the sincerest Christians, without realizing how much our own wills must deceive us after all?

How solemn does this make the apostle's word to Timothy, "Take heed to *thyself* and to the doctrine" (1 Tim. iv. 16); to thyself first! For Scripture itself will only furnish perfectly the man of God: and we may be earnest enough to learn just such and such things, and find no capacity, because of something we do *not* want to learn, which must be learned first! For this cause what we may be pleased to call our open Bible may be a Bible with few wide open pages. If we shut our eyes, we cannot dictate to them just what they shall shut out!

But if anything like this be true, then we must not wonder at the decline that seems ever ready to set in after the greatest of revivals. All truth makes demand proportionate to its blessedness, and thus the highest truth may be the first to be lost. It is a solemn thing indeed that, even amongst Christians, the doctrine of Paul is that least received, most carped at. How significant were the tears with which day and night he ceased not to admonish every one!

Therefore they were to watch; God and the word of His grace remained with them, and would remain: a sufficient resource surely, whatever the trial. It was able to build them up and give them an inheritance among the sanctified; it is able still to minister now to the soul a portion as large as ever. We have no limit except that which we make for ourselves; why make it?

Sustained by all this wealth of blessing, he could appeal to them that he had coveted nothing from them. His own hands had sufficed for his need, and even for that of others with him. He had given them an example of labor freely engaged in on behalf of the weak, and a fulfilment of the words of the Lord Jesus, that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

He closes with a full heart, pouring out his prayers with them before he leaves them, with a burst of sorrowing love on their part at the close of a ministry to which they owed their all, henceforth a memory only, save in that one letter from the Roman prison in which he takes them and us up into the land where are no partings, and where the inheritance of them that are sanctified is spread before us and made our own. He had been already caught up there, to see things he could not communicate. In his captivity at Rome even he seems to have acquired a more penetrating apprehension of the things unseen, which he is able at the same time to communicate. May we have ability to receive these revelations which alone place us in the full height of our position as Christians, and thus give us the full length and breadth of what is through grace our own!

DIVISION 4. (Chaps. xxi.–xxviii.)
Into the Roman Prison.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. xxi. 1–14.)
Forewarnings.

1 (1-6): The will of God.

1. AND when it came to pass that, having got away from them, we set sail, we came in a [v]straight course to Cos, and on the morrow to Rhodes, and thence to Patara. And having [w]found a ship crossing over to Phenicia, we went on board, and set sail; and having sighted Cyprus, and left it on the left hand, we sailed to Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to discharge her cargo. And having found out the [x]disciples, we tarried there seven days; who [y]said to

[v] *cf.* ch. 16. 11.
[w] *cf.* ch. 27. 6.
[x] *cf.* ch. 9. 2.
cf. ch. 20. 6.
[y] *cf.* ch. 20. 23.
cf. ver. 11.
cf. ch. 16. 6, 7.
cf. 1 Thess. 5. 19.

DIV. 4.

The last division of the Acts is plainly of a very different character from those before it. The progress of the gospel is over; the chief evangelist, the apostle to whom is committed the whole Gentile field, is shut up in prison, not (as far as the history given to us goes) to escape from it again, whatever partial relief might be obtained. Rome, the capital of the world, shows herself, only less bitterly, alas, than Israel, the enemy of God and of His grace. The word of God is indeed not bound; it is His word who is over all, and who is with it; but its ministers are confessors, and its witnesses are martyrs. There is no conversion of the world, nor does it change its prince; and it is prophetic of the future of Christendom itself the welcome that Rome extends to Paul and to his gospel, the fullest chords of whose music sound from the place of his captivity.

It should not be strange to find therefore, in the whole narrative before us now, the prophetic character (which indeed underlies all Scripture history) becoming very manifest. The broad features are of the clearest, although details may be often hard to read. Legalism has been all through, and not simply at the beginning, more than the profane world itself, the enemy of the gospel, and the inspiration of the world in its attacks upon it. Rome has been judaized, never truly Christianized; and judaized Rome has had more martyrs than Pagan Rome ever had. Babylon the Great is the false woman on the wild beast's back,—the seven-hilled city in her "mystery" phase. But it is enough here to indicate in general terms what is before us; the details will develop as we proceed.

SUBD. 1.

Not without full warning does the apostle come into soldier's chain. God utters His voice with absolute plainness, and it is not due to any lack in this respect that the disaster happens which occupies so many pages of the Acts. We see here a reason why it could not be in its totality the Acts of Jesus; why the Acts of the apostles do not fully represent these. The voice of the Lord is heard now in protest against the act of one of His most devoted servants; even although that act itself is one of complete self-sacrifice, and although it is permitted for purposes of wise and holy, far-reaching design. There is no more mystery here than in a multitude of the ways of Him around whom in divine government clouds and darkness so often are. He can be completely *over* what He cannot sanction in anywise; and what an immense comfort is it to know this! What a confusion would the world be if it were not so! whereas the very exercise which this now involves for us is itself most truly helpful in that discernment of good and evil in which so much of our education here consists.

The warning given is a double one. The apostle is first told, plainly and unequivocally, not to go to Jerusalem; and then the consequences of going are put

Paul by the Spirit, that he should not set foot* in Jerusalem. And when it came to pass that we had completed the days, we departed, and went on our journey, all of them [z]accompanying us, with wives and children, till we were out of the city; and [a]kneeling down on the shore, we prayed, and took leave of one another; and we went on board ship, and they returned home.

2 (7-14): In bonds through Jewish enmity.

2. And having finished the voyage from Tyre, we ar-

[z] ch. 20. 38.
[a] ch. 20. 36.

*Some read, "go up to."

before him. Had the latter been announced alone, with one such as Paul, they might not have been sufficient; coming after the other, they reiterate the prohibition. Spite of all, the apostle certainly sees nothing of the kind; there is a veil over his eyes very solemn indeed in character, by reason of its being that of an impulse possessing him so exalted and so pathetic as was that love to Israel which he himself has recorded for us in the epistle to the Romans (ix. 1–4). That epistle was written in contemplation of this very journey (xv. 25); he had long treasured in his heart the thought of it, and the apparent failure of his previous attempt to reach the object of his desire had only perhaps made more absorbing that desire. Under the control of this he seems incapable of realizing any hindrance to its effectuation. Ready to any extent to sacrifice himself, how could it be possible that God should be against that which was in fact the fruit of the Spirit of Christ?

1. He wrenches himself away therefore from the beloved Ephesian disciples, a need greater than theirs pressing him on; and with a straight course and all things favoring, pursues his voyage to the Syrian coast. At Tyre he lands, and there they find disciples, with whom they remain seven days; and now comes the first distinct intimation from more than one of these, speaking by the Spirit, "that he should not set foot in Jerusalem." It is strange to find, spite of the explicitness of this, Lechler contending that it was only the knowledge of Paul's sufferings in Jerusalem that they had by the illumination of the Spirit, while "the entreaty itself, that Paul should not visit Jerusalem where such dangers awaited him, was not dictated by the Holy Ghost, but was prompted solely by human opinions and affections." He appeals, of course, not to the passage before him, but to the prophecy of Agabus which was after this, and to the language of the apostle himself in chap. xx. 23, which we have already considered, in proof of what he advances; but such a way of reading Scripture could make almost anything of it. Not a word is said here about any sufferings that were to result from the visit, but "they said by the Spirit that he should not" go there. If this were not prophecy, as we know it could not have been, then it could only be guidance; and we may notice again how fully it is confirmed to the apostle by the mouth of at least two witnesses. It is quite true that he is not really guided by it, and we may not be able to account fully for his neglect of such an intimation; but we must not set aside the plain words which we find here, and which alone put in its true light much that follows, as well as some things that have gone before. Certainly there was upon Paul the spell of a wondrous love, if we do not say, its delirium; a love, which those for whom it was, rejected, as they did the much more wondrous love of the Son of God, of which this was but the reflection. Had he not caught it in the glory of that Face, into which, we know, he was habitually looking?

Another farewell scene is depicted for us here with these brethren of Tyre, who with wives and children accompany their visitors to the ship, and with prayer take leave of them. A shadow of what is at hand seems falling upon these little companies of believers, which is lightened up with the tender constancy of an affection which has in it the assurance of eternity.

2. The party of Paul take ship once more, coasting the Syrian shore to Ptole-

rived at Ptolemais, and having saluted the brethren, remained one day with them. And departing on the morrow, we came to Cæsarea; and we entered into the house of Philip the [b]evangelist, who was one of the [c]seven, and abode with him. Now this man had four daughters, virgins, who [d]prophesied. And as we tarried some days, there came down from Judea a certain prophet named [e]Agabus; and coming to us, and taking Paul's [f]girdle, he bound his own feet and hands, and said, Thus saith the Holy [g]Spirit, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and [h]deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. And when we heard these things, both we and those of that place [i]besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then answered Paul, What do ye, weeping and [j]breaking my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to [k]die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. And when he would not be persuaded, we were quiet, saying, The [l]will of the Lord be done.

b ch.8.5,etc. cf. Eph. 4. 11. cf.2 Tim.4. 5. cf.Rom.10. 14, 15.
c ch. 6. 5. cf. Phil.1.1. cf. 1 Tim.3. 13.
d cf. 1 Cor. 11. 5. cf.1 Cor.14. 34, 35.
e ch. 11. 28.
f cf.2 Cor.12. 15. cf. Phil. 2. 17. cf.Jno.13.4.
g cf. ver. 4. cf.ch.20.23.
h vers. 31–33. cf.Matt.20. 18, 19.
i cf.ch.19.30, 31. cf.Matt.16. 21–23.
j cf. ch. 20. 37; cf. Gal. 4. 19. k cf. Phil. 1. 20, 21; cf. 2 Tim. 4. 6–8. l cf.ch. 13. 27; cf. Rom. 8. 28.

mais, which we now call Acre, where again they find disciples; few towns there were now, no doubt, without them. And next day they are at Cæsarea, at the house of that Philip the evangelist with whose work at Samaria we are well acquainted. We have here a glimpse of what helps us to realize the way in which the gifts of the Spirit were manifested through the assemblies. Philip has four daughters, all prophetesses, a lovely picture just put before us, one would say, that we might admire it (for we have nothing of them more than this), perhaps that we may remember that the same Spirit is with us still, and that we may covet, as we are exhorted to do, the gifts of His grace. We may also understand that women as such are not shut out from them, however there may be for them (as women) a suited sphere for their exercise. It is *nature* that has marked out this sphere; which grace does not set aside, nor limit on this account the fulness of blessing that may be theirs who covet it. How good it would be to see more of this coveting in faith, and that we would put to the proof in faith these assurances that are given us. How great would be the result, not to the individual only, but in the assembly as a whole, of believing hearts that craved from God their portion! We have not, because we ask not; we ask and have not, because our prayers are too much a conflict with God for what, if He granted, it would be disaster for us, instead of desires that rise after those blessings which are laid up for us in Christ already, and may be claimed with the full confidence of faith.

One cannot say again with Lechler that this account of Philip's daughters stands in no immediate connection with the events here related. Why should we make our own capacity to discern such things the measure of what is really in them; disparaging Scripture in the proportion in which we elevate ourselves above it? When the Church is being left of its great apostle, is it not suitable that we should be shown how fully, nevertheless, the endowment of the Spirit is upon it, even in its weakest members? that the Lord's care for it neither fails nor is abridged; and that it need neither fail nor fear because of this?

But Philip's daughters have no prophecy for Paul: it is Agabus of whom we have heard before, who, coming down from Judea, announces to him that which awaits him from the people upon whom his heart is set. It is Paul's own girdle, however, that binds his hands and feet; that is, it is his own zealous service to them that puts him into their hands. The meaning is given to him, and in the most emphatic way, as a declaration of the Spirit, of the *Holy* Spirit, who thus

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chaps. xxi. 15–xxii. 29.)

The Arrest.

1 (xxi. 15-26): The cause of the arrest.

1. AND after these days, we made ready our baggage, and went up to Jerusalem. And there went with us also some of the disciples from Cæsarea, to bring us to one Mnason, a [m]Cyprian, an early disciple, with whom we were to lodge. And when we were arrived

[m] *cf.* ch. 13. 4. *cf.* ch. 15. 39.

reveals to His servant the unchanged evil in the hearts of those once the murderers of the Saviour, and now ready to be his own. Was not *He* too delivered to the Gentiles? a likeness which could not but affect the apostle, so closely to follow in his Master's steps. Yet was not that Gentile cross to which they gave him up the very symbol of salvation for men? So with himself also, might the apostle argue, if this were but a means by which the tardy hearts of Israel were to be smitten to repentance, would not suffering be light that should have this result? So when those around begin in their distress to beseech him not to go up to Jerusalem, he is fixed and resolute, moved by their tears indeed, but not altered. Did they not know him ready even to die at Jerusalem for the Name of the Lord Jesus? But the Spirit had spoken nothing about death. The captivity of years, shut up from the work he loved, and with which he was so identified, would it not be worse than any death could be? How if he had recognized it as the shadow of that setting aside of his gospel also, in days not far off?

And in fact such an intimation we, at least, may read in it. The judaizing of the Church, which he had already been called so earnestly to contend against, was to be a worse enemy to the free grace of God he published than this Jewish people now menacing himself. Alas, it would be armed with all the natural resistance of the self-righteous heart against that which humbles it, even while it exalts immeasurably the soul once humbled. Who that knows anything of himself but has known this Jew in him, not one of God's Israel indeed, but such as confronted Christ and now Paul, with his circumcision of flesh, and not of heart, and his steadfast resistance to the truth at all points. Such in the professing church at a later day the Lord Himself characterizes as those "who say they are Jews, but are not, but are the synagogue of Satan:" words which let in a terrible light upon the degradation ensuing upon their prevalence (as prevail they did), and which changed the heavenly to the earthly, spirit to flesh, grace to law, the company chosen out of the world into a confusion of Church and world together; the adversary's attack by low imitation upon that which Christ is sanctifying, cleansing it by washing of water by the Word, to present it to Himself a glorious Church!

We can understand by this, not only the apostle's captivity—that is, his gospel's,—but how this Judaism (false to the core, as false in its abuse of Christian names) gave up what it had first polluted into the hands of the world, and thus riveted the chains of a long captivity. Sad it is, though profitable, to trace, step by step, the awful transformation. It is not for us to do it now; it is enough to show how fully the history which is before us here has its spiritual counterpart in that of the Church afterwards. Judaism had only the external form of separation from the world, which could not yet be actual; the new Judaism coming in after the separation was accomplished, brought back (and of course into the place of power) the world once more. It was the Babylonish captivity of the Church of God.

SUBD. 2.

The story of how Paul actually falls into the hands of his enemies implicates the Christians in Jerusalem, who by their advice, which he takes, and to satisfy their zeal for the law, puts himself into the very place of chiefest danger, and where the presence of one known to advocate the equal footing of Jew and Gen-

at Jerusalem, the brethren [n]received us gladly; and the day following Paul went in with us to [o]James, and all the elders were present. And having saluted them, he [p]related one by one the things which God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. And when they heard it, they [q]glorified God. And they said unto him, Thou beholdest, brother, how [r]many myriads there are among the Jews of those who have believed; and all are [s]zealots for the law. And they have been [t]informed concerning thee that thou teachest all the Jews that are among the Gentiles to apostatize from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children, nor to walk after the [u]customs. What is it then? a multitude will necessarily come together, for they

n ch. 15. 4.
o ch. 12. 17. cf. Gal. 2. 9.
p cf. ch. 14. 27. cf. ch. 15. 12.
q ch. 11. 18.
r cf. ch. 4. 4.
s cf. ch. 22. 3. cf. Phil. 3. 5, 6.
t cf. ver. 28.
u cf. ch. 16. 3.

tile would be sure to lash the unconverted Jew to fury. His own compliance, though from pure desire to be to the Jew a Jew, to win the Jew, yet not only puts him into the hands of his enemies, but takes him off the higher ground upon which he habitually walked, and renders his steps less certain. It is a painful history all round.

1. The cause of Paul's arrest is traced briefly but clearly, and shown to rest with the Jewish Christians. Before we come to this, it will not be amiss to note that it cannot be for nothing that we are told of the place in which the apostle at this time lodges: *some* meaning must certainly attach to this, whether or not we are able to find the meaning; and some relation there must be also to the narrative with which it is connected. Those also who believe in God's absolute control of history, and that Scripture everywhere shows this control, can have no difficulty in accepting a meaning flashed out of a name as a true, if hidden, indication of the mind of God. Now Mnason, at whose house Paul lodges at this time, is from a word which means "to sue for, court," and Paul is certainly here as a suitor, and in a strange place for him: he is in a place not his own. The man in Christ, which he has but lately told others it was all his boast to be (2 Cor. xii. 5), is here in the guise of one walking orderly and keeping the law. And it is the suit he has in hand that brings him down to this. He is really lodging with Mnason, the disciple from the beginning, or early disciple, as the term used is. Was it not, in fact, such early disciples, belonging to the time when Christians could be reckoned but as a sect of the Jews, among whom would naturally be found those of whom it was asserted as a universal truth that they were "all zealots for the law"? Mnason himself would be actually included here. Could Paul be ranged among these? No one could imagine it. But he certainly was laboring to make himself acceptable to these. No doubt, the law was to him a thing indifferent, and that it was his acknowledged principle to become to the Jew a Jew, that he might gain the Jew. But would they not have understood by it something more? and does not "walking orderly and keeping the law" imply that he belonged to the house of Mnason, rather than that he was but lodging there? There surely was not a selfish thought in the apostle's heart. He was walking in the spirit of pure self-sacrifice, to win his Jewish kindred to the Lord; but if he had declared to them his exact position with regard to it—"to those under the law as under the law, *not being myself under the law*" (1 Cor. ix. 20, R. V.), would it have been, could it have been, a means of winning them?

The meeting that is pictured for us as taking place is at James' house, and with the elders. The apostles seem by this time to have scattered from Jerusalem, and nothing is mentioned with regard to them. Nor indeed does James himself seem to take any prominent part, such as he took at the council to decide the place of Gentile converts with respect to the law. It is more than possible that those most fanatical as to Moses were the most forward, as they had indeed

will hear that thou art come. Do therefore this that we say to thee: we have four men who have a [v]vow on them; take these, and purify thyself with them, and be at charge for them, that they may shave their heads; and all will know that there is nothing in those things of which they have been informed concerning thee, but that thou thyself also walkest* [w]orderly, keeping the law. But concerning those of the Gentiles who have believed we have [x]written giving judgment that they should† keep themselves from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what is strangled, and from fornication. Then Paul took the men, and the next day

v *cf.* ch. 18. 18.

w *cfr.* Phil. 3. 7, 8. *cf.* Gal. 6. 12–16.

x ch. 15. 22–29.

* This is one word in the original, and suggests keeping rank.
† Many add, "observe no such thing, only to."

made their voices to be heard first on the former occasion. Paul himself, in the natural progress of divine revelation, had doubtless made advance, while it would be well if under the influence of their alarm at the steadily growing questions involved by the increasing Gentile element in the assemblies, these had not gone backward. There was a strong feeling abroad as to Paul, and a multitude behind who must needs come together. While it was the nation still in unbelief of which Paul was surely thinking, he is faced with this opposition first to be encountered of the converted and Christian Jews. On their side they must needs recognize also the wondrous work of divine grace which God has been working by him among the nations. They will make no doubt that all the reports that have come to them concerning him are but perversions. They are ready to assume that he is really as good a Jew as ever; what they propose to him then is not a concession: it is a justification of himself from calumny merely. Let the Gentiles, as they have conceded, remain Gentiles; he could not have taught the Jews to apostatize from Moses, and not to circumcise their children, nor to walk according to the customs. Let him take then these four men who, being believers like himself, could yet bind themselves with the Nazarite vow, and presenting himself with them in the temple purified, take upon him the expenses necessary for their completion of it, and that publicly, that all might recognize clearly his own relation to the law.

Nothing is proposed to him, as many have thought, about taking upon himself the vow in question. He is merely to purify himself ceremonially, for his appearance in the temple, and it was no new thing that they advised, but what is known to have been done by others very near the time at which all this took place. In fact there was nothing in all that was advised that the apostle could not have done with a good conscience as a part of his privilege to give up his own liberty in toleration of the ignorant infirmity of others; but the question returns, and will return: Was it to be understood in this way? Here among "zealots for the law," there was indeed ignorance on every side; could he then adapt himself to this, raising no question, leaving them to grow into the truth, as necessarily they would? not forcing any, as in fact he had never forced,—tolerant where God yet was tolerant? Could he not in such a case, without professing anything where it was at present hopeless to bring round this mass of prejudiced opposition to the higher truth, as he saw and followed it, simply go through the ceremonial as they prescribed it to him, and remove out of his way this hindrance to that upon which his heart was set, the proclamation of Christ to his kindred by one whose very advocacy itself was evidence of the truth that he proclaimed, who with his own eyes had seen Christ Jesus the Lord, and had seen men bow before that sacred Name as he had?

Yes, it was indeed vain to expect to quell in any other way the storm that was beginning to manifest itself, though in its first zephyr breathings. He had

purifying himself with them, entered into the temple, notifying [his] [y]completion of the days of purification, until the offering were offered for every one of them.

2 (xxi. 27–40): The arrest made.

2. And when the seven days were almost completed, the [z]Jews who were from Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the multitude and laid hands on him, crying out, Men of Israel, help! this is the man who [a]teacheth all everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place; and moreover he hath brought Greeks into the temple, and hath profaned this holy place. For they had before seen with him in the city [b]Trophimus the Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple. And the whole city was [c]moved, and there was a concourse of the people; and they laid hold of Paul, and dragged him out of the temple; and immediately the [d]doors were shut. And as they were seeking to [e]kill him, a report came up to the chief captain* of the cohort,† that the whole of

y *cf.* Nu. 6. 13, etc.

z *cf.* ch. 13. 50. *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 14, 15.

a ver. 21. *cf.* ch. 18. 13.

b ch. 20. 4.

c *cf.* ch. 19. 29.

d *cf.* 2 Ki. 11. 15. *cf.* 2 Chron. 26. 20.

e *cf.* ch. 7. 57–60.

*Greek, "chiliarch," captain of a thousand: the military tribune commanding the garrison of Antonia.

†Or, "band."

seen the whirlwinds of Jewish passion aroused in the very midst of the Gentiles, and able to carry with them the Gentiles themselves, otherwise cynical and indifferent. What would it be with such questions started here where the crowd was one, and Christians too were in zealous opposition to whatever seemed to touch the authority of Moses?

But what then did all this do but echo the words which shortly were to come home to him with terrible confirmation as he faced the wild tumult from the castle-stairs, "They will not receive thy testimony concerning Me"? The apostle of the Gentiles must renounce all hope of being God's messenger to Israel; and he who sought it, spite of the burning, uncalculating love that had brought him there, was necessarily out of the path to which God had called him. The testimony to Christ indeed was to be permitted him, though it could but demonstrate once more the hardness of heart to which they could only be given up. The Lord would and does own His faithful servant in a testimony, to which He would not nevertheless have sent him. Over it all He was; and the history of that which follows becomes, as has been said, the prophecy of long centuries to come, in which such scenes would be in principle re-enacted upon a larger scale. History is averred to repeat itself, and the reason is obvious: for man repeats himself; and poor fallen man is in every generation but the reflection of his father Adam. And where God's grace has made a difference, still there remains even here a nature which maintains but too much of the likeness. God's hand has overruled in this case to forecast the future for our instruction; yet even this could not be so impressive and complete if it were not founded upon a similarity of moral elements which in their inter-working present a more than superficial parallel. It is a parallel of causes as well as effects,—fruits and consequences which we can trace to roots and seeds which are in ourselves also, and present grounds of real and profitable self-judgment.

2. The counsel of the elders is acted on by the apostle. He does not, for he could not, declare himself under the law. He treats them all, one would say, as those who were not ripe for disclosures of this nature, which must wait for a fit season to be made. Enough that he can undertake this charge and perform this purification in the same way in which he had circumcised Timothy some time since. The shadows for him had passed in that which had fulfilled them: these with their zeal for the law were in the shadow still, and he must wait

Jerusalem was in a tumult; who immediately took [f] soldiers and centurions, and ran down to them; and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left off beating Paul. Then the chief captain came up and laid hold on him, and commanded him to be [g] bound with two chains, and inquired who he might be, and what he had done. And some in the crowd called out [h] one thing, some another; and he, unable to know anything certain on account of the tumult, commanded him to be brought into the castle. And when he came to the stairs, so it was that he was borne by the soldiers because of the violence of the crowd; for the multitude of the people followed, crying out, [i] 'Away with him! And as Paul was about to be led into the castle, he saith unto the chief captain, May I say somewhat unto thee? And he said, Dost thou know Greek? Art thou not then the [j] Egyptian who before these days made insurrection and led away into the wilderness the four

[f] *cf.* ch. 23. 27.
[g] *cf.* ver. 11.
[h] *cf.* ch. 19. 32.
[i] *cf.* Lk. 23. 18. *cf.* Phil. 3. 10.
[j] *cf.* ch. 5. 36.

upon God for their deliverance. But it is evident, nevertheless, that here he is in no position to help them, but that his present action must encourage them in their own. But his heart presses him on to reach a place in which his voice may be heard with acceptance by his people, and he stoops to the present sacrifice required: to what it will lead on he does not know.

In fact, the plan seems to be working well; the days are almost completed, when that comes of which he has been warned. Some Jews from Asia find him in the temple, having seen him previously in the city with an Ephesian Greek—one of his Gentile "nurselings," as they might taunt him, from the name. Outside, they had endured him, as it seems, or at least had refrained from an attack; but now this man with his disreputable tastes had dared invade the sanctuary itself; doubtless the same man inside, as he had been out: he had brought his Greek there, no doubt. Instantly there flashes out the wrath of the impetuous, haughty race. The city is moved, and the people run together, and dragging him out, shut to the temple-gates. Paul is in those well-known hands that spare not; and only by the intervention of God the Romans become his saviors from the violence of the raging mob! The plan which appeared so reasonable has ended only in disaster: Paul need take no more trouble to appease the Christian Jews, and is in the very worst possible position to reach the unbelieving ones!

It is significant that Lysias, the chief captain's name, means "one who looses, or delivers," and that nothing but the Roman arms in fact accomplished the deliverance of the believing Jews from the legal system in which they were bound up. It was not to be more than a decade, if so much, until that temple which was its necessary centre and heart should be overthrown, according to our Lord's prophecy, by the Roman power, and the people scattered over the face of the earth. Their house, long bereft of the divine Presence, but where alone the blood of atonement could be offered for their sins, and with which all their ritual was connected, was taken from them utterly, and the system ended, although unbelief might still grip it with dead hands. In the rejection of the grace which was now going out to the Gentiles, they had rejected that which was their only possible salvation, and judgment in brief time followed; though not before the last word should be uttered by him whom in fact, though not in form, they had delivered to the Gentiles, bidding the true in heart amongst them go forth out of the camp (Heb. xiii. 13). That he should have the last word for them, who had sought them with such earnest desire, was the divine recognition of him whom they had treated with unworthy suspicion, and be-

thousand men of the assassins? But Paul said, I am a Jew of [k]Tarsus of Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city; and I beseech thee, give me leave to speak unto the people. And when he had given him leave, Paul stood upon the stairs, and beckoned with his hand unto the people.

3 (xxi. 40–xxii. 21): Paul declares his conversion, and the revelation made to him.

3. And a great silence being made, he addressed them in the [l]Hebrew dialect, saying, Brethren and fathers, hear my defence now unto you. (And when they heard that he addressed them in the Hebrew dialect, they were the more quiet; and he saith,) I am a Jew, born in [m]Tarsus, of Cilicia, and brought up in this city at the feet of [n]Gamaliel, instructed according to the [o]strict letter of [our] fathers' law, being a zealot for God, as ye all are to-day, one who [p]persecuted this way unto death,—binding and delivering up to prison men and women; as also the [q]high priest beareth me witness, and all the elderhood, from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and [r]journeyed to Damascus, to bring also those that were there bound unto Jerusalem that they might be punished.

k ch. 22. 3.

l ch. 22. 2. *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 20.
m ch. 9. 11, 30. ch. 21. 39.
n ch. 5. 34. *ctr.* Lk. 10. 39.
o ch. 26. 5. *cf.* Phil. 3. 4, 5.
p ch. 8. 3. *cf.* Gal. 1. 13, 14, 23. *cf.* Phil. 3. 6. *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 13.
q ch. 9. 1, 2. ch. 26. 4, 5.
r ch. 26. 12.

trayed, however undesignedly, into the hands of his enemies. "According to the wisdom given to him," says the apostle of the circumcision, "our beloved brother Paul has written to you" (2 Pet. iii. 15). The voice that had been closed by their own folly while among them now spoke in all the majesty of the truth which could no more be silenced.

3. Yet he is permitted also here one last appeal in behalf of his Lord and Saviour. Won by the demeanor of his prisoner, the chief captain gives him leave to address the mob from whom he has rescued him; and Paul uses his liberty to relate to them the story of his conversion and of the revelation made to him. He reasons with them, reminding them of his past, in which he too had shown himself with as much false zeal for God as they were now showing. As men do commonly, he had followed the belief in which he had been trained, as both the high priest and elders could bear witness of him, persecuting to the death believers in Christ, whether they were men or women, and even hunting for them beyond the borders of the land. Nothing had stopped him but that intervention from heaven itself which had revealed to him Jesus the Nazarene in glory! Those with him had seen also the light, but had not heard the words * that were uttered, which were for himself alone. He had heard the Lord declare Himself the One he persecuted. Blinded by the glory of that light, he was led into Damascus, there to await, as he was bidden, further revelations.

Paul narrates more fully than the previous history has done, the visit of Ananias,—"a pious man," as he remarks, "according to the law,"—through whom at once his sight is restored to him, and he is declared to be one chosen by the God of their fathers to know His will and see the † Righteous One, and hear, as a special witness for Him, a voice out of His mouth. Then he is bidden to be baptized, and have his sins washed away, as he thus owns the authority of Jesus. It is a clear example of baptismal remission of sins on entering the

*This is in effect the difference between the statement here and that in chap. ix. 7, in which it is said that those with him heard the voice: this is the genitive case, and speaks a partial hearing,—the sound of it but not the utterance, as the accusative in the present instance—the voice at full length.

†It is striking that the apostle does not mention the name of the Lord Jesus but once in this entire address, omitting it even where, as in verse 18, it would most naturally be used. This is due, perhaps, to a desire to avoid further inflaming the Jews.—S. R.

Now it came to pass, as I was journeying and drawing near unto Damascus, about [s]midday suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me; and I fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou [t]me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus, the [u]Nazarene, whom thou persecutest. Now they that were with me [v]saw indeed the light,* but heard not the voice of him who spake to me. And I said, [w]What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus, and there it shall be [x]told thee of all things which it hath been appointed for thee to do. And as I could not see for the [y]glory of that light, being [z]led by the hand of those that were with me, I came into Damascus. And one [a]Ananias, a pious man [b]according to the law, borne witness to by all the Jews who dwelt there, came to me, and standing by me, said to me, Brother Saul, [c]receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. And he said, The God of our [d]fathers hath forechosen thee to know his will, and to see the [e]Righteous One, and to hear a voice out of his mouth. For thou shalt be [f]witness for him to all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now, why tarriest thou? arise, and be [g]baptized, and have thy sins [h]washed away, [i]calling upon his name.

And it came to pass that, when I had returned to Jerusalem, and as I was praying in the temple, I became in ecstasy, and saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem, for they

s ch. 9. 3. ch. 26. 13. *cf.* Matt. 27. 45.
t *cf.* Matt. 6. 22, 23.
u ch. 9. 4, 5. ch. 26. 14, 15. *cf.* 1 Cor. 8. 12. *cf.* Matt. 25. 45. *cf.* Eph. 5. 29, 30.
v *cf.* Jno. 1. 46. *cf.* Is. 53. 2, 3.
w *cf.* ch. 9. 7. *cf.* Jno. 12. 29. *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 14.
x *cf.* ch. 16. 30. *cf.* ch. 2. 37.
y ch. 9. 8. *cf.* ch. 26. 16-18. *cf.* ch. 11. 13, 14.
z *cf.* Is. 6. 1-5. *cf.* Lk. 1. 20.
a *ctr.* ch. 13. 11.
b ch. 9. 10.
c *cf.* ver. 3. *cf.* ch. 21. 20.
d ch. 9. 17.
e *cf.* ch. 3. 13. *cf.* ch. 13. 17. *cf.* ch. 26. 6.
f *cf.* ch. 3. 14, 15. *cf.* Jno. 16. 10.
g *cf.* ch. 9. 15. *cf.* ch. 26. 16. *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 1.
h ch. 2. 41, etc.

*Some add, "and were filled with fear."

h *cf.* Rom. 6. 3, 4; *cf.* Col. 2. 12, 13; *cf.* 1 Pet. 3. 20-22; *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 17. i *cf.* Rom. 10. 13.

kingdom: on God's part he who truly bows to Christ is absolutely forgiven; but on man's part, as openly admitted by baptism, this can be but a conditional announcement, available, not for introduction into heaven, but into the company of disciples upon earth. As a kingdom of truth (Jno. xviii. 37) the kingdom means discipleship.

The crowd listens to this yet, spite of the claim made for the Crucified One: but we are soon to find that this is not acceptance. The apostle comes now to what is pressing upon his spirit, as he looks upon those dark, upturned faces, upon which one can imagine, however restrained as yet, that he sees the storm gathering. What can he presage else, as he repeats, emphasized as they are by recent occurrences, words from the lips of truth itself which had long since warned him, "Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive thy testimony concerning Me." How he must have watched them as he related his ineffectual pleading at that time! "Lord, they themselves know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue those that believe in Thee; and when the blood of thy witness* Stephen was shed, I also was standing by and consenting, and keeping the garments of those who slew him!" Was Paul not just the witness now to be believed?

*It is touching to remember that Paul is here making a definite confession, before the people, many of whom had doubtless witnessed his mad zeal, of his own sinful persecution of Stephen.—S. R.

will not [j]receive thy testimony concerning me. And I said, Lord, they themselves [k]know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue those who believed in thee; and when the blood of thy witness [l]Stephen was shed, I also was standing by and consenting, and keeping the garments of those who slew him. And he said unto me, Go; for I will [m]send thee to the nations* afar off.

4 (xxii. 22-29): Roman citizenship.

4. And they heard him to [n]this word; and they lifted up their voice and said, [o]Away with such an one from the earth! for it is not [p]fit that he should live. And as they cried out, and threw off their garments, and cast [q]dust into the air, the chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, directing that he should be examined by [r]scourging, that he might know for what cause they cried out so against him. But when they stretched him forward with the thongs, Paul said to the centurion standing by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a [s]Roman, and uncondemned? And when the centurion heard it, he went and told the chief captain, saying, What art thou about to do? for this man is a Roman. And the chief captain came to [him] and said unto him, Tell me, Art thou a Roman? And he said, Yea. And the chief captain answered, *I* for a great sum bought this citizenship. And Paul said, But I also was [so] [t]born. They then who were about to examine immediately departed from him; and the chief captain also was [u]afraid, when he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

j cf. ch. 9.29, 30. cf. Matt. 23. 13.
k vers. 4, 5.
l ch. 7. 58. ch. 8. 1.
m ch. 9. 15. cf. Rom. 11. 13. cf. Gal. 2. 7-9.
n cf. ch. 13. 45. cf. ch. 17. 4, 5. cf. 1 Thess. 2. 16.
o ch. 21. 36.
p cf. ch. 7. 58.
q cf. 1 Sa. 4. 12.
r cf. Jno. 19. 1.
s cf. ch. 16. 37. cf. Phil. 3. 20.
t cf. 1 Cor. 7. 20-24.
u cf. ch. 16. 38, 39. ctr. ch. 23. 27.

*Or, "far off to the Gentiles."

But He who spoke had broken off appeal: "Go," He said: "for I will send thee to the nations afar off."

4. For what then was he standing there? and what was in his mind as he declared thus to their face their unrepentant stubbornness? Would he break them down by it, even then, that they might show it to be but a thing of the past, and no longer applicable? Or did it announce the hopelessness which had now taken possession of him, the past and present linking themselves together rapidly in his mind, as when facing death they are known often to come up? If so, it was confirmed in a moment as he stood before them plainly avowed, the apostle of the Gentiles.* At once the short quiet is over. All the arrogant pride of an elect people, with which all that should humble man most may in fact inspire him, burst out of that heaving and gesticulating human mass confronting him, crying out madly for his death. The Roman captain, baffled by the foreign tongue that had been made use of, and conceiving by the outcry that there must be some proportionate cause, commands to examine Paul by scourging. It was the custom of the day, and for many a day; but from which the Roman citizen was exempted. Paul, as we know, was that; and his simple

*Both conclusions could be drawn, and both may have been in the apostle's mind. Certainly it seems clear that the Spirit of God intended us to draw these conclusions. But it looks, too, as if Paul were just entering upon an extended account of his work among the Gentiles, in order to lead up to a defense of his course, and more particularly in explanation of that for which he had been arrested. In his address before Felix he seems to resume the defense just where it was broken off here (Chap. xxiv. 11–19).—S. R.

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chaps. xxii. 30–xxiii. 35.)
Before the Special People of God.

1 (xxii. 30–xxiii. 11). The Supreme Court.

1 (xxii. 30–xxiii. 5): The head.

1. [1] AND on the morrow, desirous to know the certainty of why he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him, and commanded the chief priests and all the [v]council to come together, and brought Paul down and set him before them. And Paul, looking steadfastly on the council, said, Brethren, I have lived in all good [w]conscience before God unto this day. And the high priest Ananias commanded those that stood by him to [x]smite him on the mouth. Then Paul said unto him, God is about to smite thee, [y]whited wall; sittest thou

v ch. 23. 28.
w *cf.* 2 Tim. 1. 3.
cf. ch. 24. 16.
x *cf.* Lk. 22. 63–65.
y *ctr.* Jno. 18. 22, 23.
ctr. 1 Pet. 2. 23.
cf. Matt. 23. 27.

question, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman and uncondemned?" brings the chief captain to inquire, and ends the matter. That the apostle was well within his legal rights, none can, of course, question; but it *has* been questioned whether it was according to the height of the truth which he proclaimed to plead such rights; but the governments of the earth have always their place with Paul, and are recognized as a ministry of God for good to His people; why not thankfully use them for that, when it needed only a word of information to secure it, and there was not a thought of resistance?* With the man in Christ, as such, the governments of the earth have nought to do; nor is it to forget such a place to realize that as the creatures of God, still upon the earth, we have other relations than those implied by this. All natural relationships lie outside of it; while the peace and power and object of the man in Christ are to go with us everywhere, through all.

SUBD. 3.

Paul still awaits his trial before the supreme court of Israel, which should have been, and was professedly, the spiritual court, before the heads of the people set apart from all others as the special people of God. The place and title had been indeed long forfeited, but not the responsibility of being what the claim implied. The trial becomes in fact that of themselves in this character. As a trial of Paul, it has no result, but breaks up in confusion: its own trial is all the more perfect; its incompetence is absolute. The people have already manifested themselves; and they are what their leaders have made them; not irresponsible on that account, but most guilty in yielding themselves to such leadership. We have here the head, Ananias; the body, disunited on every essential point. In contrast with all this we have lastly the judgment of the Lord Himself, who owns His faithful servant in his witness to Him. After this he has to be once more saved by the Gentile power from a conspiracy against his life; which at the same time shifts the scene to Cæsarea, and brings him before the tribunal of the world.

1. [1]The court of Israel sits at the bidding of the Roman commander: a significant sign of where they were before God. Lysias, unable to gather the cause of so much frenzy and confusion, summons the Sanhedrin, that the charge against Paul may be made clear. The latter, with his eyes fixed upon his judges, affirms his having lived in all good conscience before God until that day. Conscience is

*And yet it is for his own protection that Paul speaks. He had not done so at Philippi, having submitted to the cruel indignity of being beaten by Roman magistrates (chap. xvi. 22). He seems only to have spoken of his citizenship on the next day for the purpose of removing any stigma that might attach to the Christian name. The magistrates are compelled tacitly to remove the stigma.

But here Paul claims Roman citizenship, even emphasizing his free birth, as he had already declared he was a citizen of no mean city. In the next chapter he declares himself a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee. While this last is far worse than the others, we cannot fail linking them together. The fact remains that the beloved and honored servant of Christ was in a false position all through, and these various acts savor a little of that spirit of compromise to which he had committed himself.—S. R.

even to judge me according to the law, and in [a] violation of law commandest me to be smitten? And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest? And Paul said, I [a] knew not, brethren, that he was the high priest; for it is [b] written, Thou shalt not speak evil of a ruler of thy people.

[a] *cf.* Deut. 25. 1, 2. *cf.* Deut. 19. 18.
[a] *cf.* 2 Cor. 7. 8. *cfr.* Jno. 8. 46.
[b] Ex. 22. 28. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 17.

[3] (xxiii. 6–10): Dissension in the midst.

[3] But when Paul perceived that the one part were [c] Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the

[c] *cf.* ch. 4. 1. *cf.* ch. 5. 17.

not the standard by which man is to be judged; nor does the apostle mean therefore to affirm this. It is simply his uprightness of which he is speaking; and indeed especially in those later and Christian days, in which alone they would care to question it. There was no accusing voice within, from which he would seek escape, which he had (or had had) to silence. He did not come as a criminal to throw himself upon their mercy, but as one pledged to the truth, to maintain it. His unblenching look was fixed upon his judges as he said this, confirming his bold words.

But the anger of the high priest is roused at once, and he commands those standing by him to smite Paul on the mouth. It was the only answer he could give, and showed, perhaps, the sting of his own conscience, which the apostle embodied for him then, and which he was accustomed to treat only as an enemy. Paul at once announces his judgment from God: "God is about to judge thee, whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me according to law, and in breach of law commandest me to be smitten?" This is not an imprecation, as is plain; it is the announcement of judgment on the part of God, and was fulfilled at the outbreak of the troubles which began the last Jewish war. Paul is here passed from the place of the accused altogether, into that of judge; and he was not one to take so solemn a place without realizing what he was doing. The high priests of this time were in fact a sorrowful indication of the condition of the people, as they were also their official representatives. Paul knew not in this case that the "whited wall,"—the painted hypocrite to whom he addressed himself,—was the high priest; and he apologizes when he learns the fact; although with the text he quotes he puts the man whom they call "*God's* high priest" upon no higher ground than "a ruler of Thy people." It has been said, and rightly, surely, that the Holy Spirit could not say, "I knew not;" yet the Spirit doubtless was in the judgment pronounced; and the indignation shown by Paul had so much justification that, remembering his own words at another time, "Be angry and sin not," and realizing that there is a necessary anger at iniquity, which is sinless, one hesitates to say whether he had passed the limit.

Of much more importance it seems than to decide as to the apostle, it is to realize that the Spirit must have used the very lack of knowledge on Paul's part to lay bare the iniquity that was upon the head of Israel's priesthood now, and the doom that was impending. If a shadow that priesthood was at any time, now it was but the shadow of a shadow. Out of these forms all semblance of life had departed; and they must by the law of nature vanish away.

[3] There follows the further testimony of a house divided against itself, and that in the most important matters. Moreover that which was most contrary to God—which indeed destroyed the very foundations—was in the ascendancy, not indeed in regard to the number of its followers, who were few, but nevertheless possessed at this time of the chief places. The comfortless doctrine of the Sadducees which denied all future life for man could never appeal to the masses, but remained as the justification of those too rich and well satisfied with the present to trouble about the future. It was the unbelief of immortality; not a faith, but a blight of faith. Between Sadducee and Pharisee the friction was necessarily of the extremest kind, although they might band together for a common purpose, which was then sure to be of the most evil character.

council, Brethren, I am a [d]Pharisee, the [e]son of Pharisees:* concerning the hope and [f]resurrection of the dead I am being judged. And when he had said this, there arose a [g]dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the multitude was divided. For the Sadducees say that there is [h]no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit; but the Pharisees confess both. And there arose a great clamor; and the scribes of the Pharisees' part arose and strove, saying, We find [i]no evil in this man; and [what] if a spirit hath spoken to him, or an [j]angel?† And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should be torn in pieces by them, commanded the [k]soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and bring him into the castle.

[3] (xxiii. 11): The Presence of the Lord.

[3] And the night following the Lord [l]stood by him and

[d] *cfr.* Phil. 3. 5, 7.
[e] *cf.* Gal. 2. 18–21. *cfr.* Col. 3. 10, 11.
[f] ch. 24. 15, 21. *cf.* ch. 26. 5–7. ch. 28. 20.
[g] *cf.* ch. 28. 29.
[h] Matt. 22. 23.
[i] *cfr.* ch. 22. 22.
[j] *cf.* ch. 22. 7. *cf.* ch. 5. 34–40.
[k] ch. 21. 31–33.
[l] *cf.* ch. 18. 9. *cf.* ch. 27. 23. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 16–18. *cf.* Heb. 12. 5, 6.

* Many read, "of a Pharisee."
† Some read, "If . . . let us not fight against God."

None knew better than Paul this essential opposition. With the Pharisees also he had a link, in all this doctrine which the Sadducee wholly denied. Of this he now avails himself: was it to throw confusion merely among those who were alike in hostility to the Name which was all his glory? or had he the hope, slight as it might be, of working upon the more orthodox by an appeal to the truth they had? All that could be spoken of as "the hope," and which connected itself more fully for the Christian than even for the Pharisee with the resurrection of the dead, separated both from the chief men in the council there. *As between these*, Paul's claim to be a Pharisee would certainly be justified; that he would have made it in any other connection one can hardly believe. But we are bound to impute, and with such an one as the apostle, the highest motive possible for what he did. He is clearly not at his highest. Yet he might have discerned that here there was no opportunity for his great theme, which must have been well known to these his judges, even if they had not been amongst the crowd that listened to him from the castle stairs; and he might have realized that now the suggestion of the link between Pharisaism and Christianity was the best seed he could sow on soil like that before him. In fact there seems a certain success in it. Could they have been ignorant how much they were admitting when they allowed that perhaps a spirit or an angel might have spoken to Paul? We cannot follow this to any after results, but that does not justify us in declaring that there were none, or in thinking even that this was not all that could be done upon this occasion in testimony to Christ. Certainly we have no right to suppose that that devoted love to his people which had made him in face of all assurances as to the result put himself thus into their hands, had failed him now that he was there, and that he was merely trying to throw his foes into disorder as a means of escape for himself: he as to whom the Spirit in every city bore witness that bonds and afflictions awaited him.

But the effect, as far as we are given to trace it, seems to be more to expose the condition of things in Israel than to alter anything. The very men who here are ready apparently to go far in admission of the divine claim of Christianity would soon repent their hasty speech. The council, having exhibited its incapacity for righteous judgment, breaks up in mere confusion; Paul being once more saved out of their hands by those who are thus allowed to show their true title over them. Israel itself it is that is under judgment, and that in the chief seat of wisdom and authority.

[3] The apostle has accomplished nothing by his earnest self-devotion; he is manifestly out of his place, and the power realized in his labors among the Gen-

said, Be of good courage; * for as thou hast borne full witness at Jerusalem of the things concerning me, so must thou bear witness also at [m] Rome.

2 (xxiii. 12–35): The conspiracy and deliverance.

2. And when it was day, the Jews banded together, and put themselves under a [n] curse, saying that they would neither [o] eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. And they were more than forty who had made this conspiracy; and they came to the chief priests and elders and said, We have put ourselves under a great curse, to taste nothing till we have killed Paul. Now therefore do ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he [p] bring him down to you,† as though ye would judge more exactly of his case; and we, before ever he come near, are ready to kill him. But Paul's [q] sister's son heard of the lying in wait, and came and entered into the castle, and reported it to Paul. And Paul called to him one of the centurions, and said, Bring this young man to the chief captain, for he hath somewhat to report to him. So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and saith, Paul the prisoner called me to

m *cf.* Rom. 15. 24, 28. ch. 19. 21. *cf.* ch. 25. 16.

n *cf.* 1 Ki. 19. 2. *cf.* 1 Sa. 14. 24.

o *ctr.* Ps. 132. 1-5. *cf.* Prov. 4. 16.

p ch. 22. 30.

q *cf.* Col. 4. 10.

* Some add, "Paul." † Some add, "to-morrow."

tiles is not with him here. All the more, now that this has been fully manifest, does he find the divine arm thrown round him, and himself get the ministry that he needs to sustain him in this failure of cherished hopes. "The night following, the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good courage; for as thou hast borne full witness at Jerusalem of the things concerning me, so must thou bear witness also at Rome."

How beautiful the strong expression, "full witness!" It might have seemed that he had not had opportunity for this. And how much cause of exercise and sad questioning might there be in regard to this! That which he had been warned of had taken place; the warning which he had not heeded. Whatever might have been the motive, how vain to run contrary to the dictates of a Wisdom which was at the same time the perfection of Love! Yet He at least could sympathize with His servant's sorrow who had wept His own tears over Jerusalem, and had to say too, as *he* was saying, "I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain." And the Lord gives him too in his sorrow to have part also in His consolation, "yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and My work with My God." It might seem as if the Lord were even thinking of such reflections as we would be apt to make upon the disappointed and sorrow-stricken laborer, and were throwing around him the shield of *His* acceptance. He who has done worthily at Jerusalem shall have committed to him the same testimony at Rome! How well He knows that this is Paul's blessedness to bear witness for Him! How He assures him of strength that shall be with him to carry him through; and that all the might of the world is powerless against him! Blessed be God that this remains in its comfort abidingly for those to whom the world will have the same Marah-spring to offer, which the "Tree" alone can sweeten.

So he goes back to his old call as the apostle of the Gentiles, if he be now "an ambassador in chains." Rome! what treatment will the proud city of the world give to an ambassador in chains?

2. The council is not, however, the Jews' last answer to the gospel of God's grace. Their moral state comes out still more in the conspiracy which follows to lie in wait for Paul and kill him. The forty or more pledge themselves to it by a religious vow, and then communicate their plan to the chief priests and

him, and asked me to bring unto thee this young man, who hath somewhat to say unto thee. And the chief captain took him by the hand, and going aside, asked him privately, What is it that thou hast to report to me? And he said, the Jews have [r]agreed to ask thee to bring down Paul to-morrow to the council, as though they would inquire something more precise concerning him. Do not thou therefore be persuaded by them, for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, who have put themselves under a curse neither to eat nor drink till they have slain him; and now they are ready, looking for the promise from thee. So the chief captain let the young man go, charging him, Utter to no man that thou hast represented these things unto me. And he called to him a certain two of the centurions, and said, Get ready two hundred [s]soldiers that they may go as far as Cæsarea, and seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen, for the third hour of the night; and [he bade them] provide beasts, that they might set Paul thereon, and bring him safe through to Felix the governor; and he wrote a [t]letter in this form:—

Claudius Lysias to the most excellent [u]governor Felix, greeting. This man having been [v]seized by the Jews, and about to be [w]slain by them, I coming up with the soldiery rescued, having [x]learned that he was a Roman. And desiring to know the ground on which they accused him, I brought him down to their [y]council, whom I found to be accused of [z]questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge [a]worthy of death or bonds. And when it was [b]disclosed to me that there would be a plot* against the man, I immediately sent him to thee, charging his [c]accusers also to speak against him before thee. Farewell.†

The soldiers therefore, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris. But on the morrow they left the horsemen to go with

r vers. 12-15.

s *cf.* ch. 21. 32.

t *cf.* ch. 25. 26.
u *cf.* ch. 24. 3. *cf.* ch. 26. 25.
v *cf.* ch. 21. 11.
w ch. 21. 30-35.
x *etc.* ch. 22. 25-29.
y ch. 22. 30.
z *cf.* ch. 18. 15. *cf.* ch. 25. 19.
a *cf.* ch. 25. 25. *cf.* ch. 26. 31. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 12, 19.
b vers. 16-22.
c *cf.* ch. 24. 19.

*Many read, "by the Jews." †Some omit.

elders, without a thought, evidently of opposition on their part, nor that they will do aught but help on their design. And plainly they are not mistaken, although we hear nothing more about it, as God in His providential care for His servant causes the whole to fall to the ground. At the right moment Paul's sister's son, of whom we have not heard before, comes forward to declare what has come to his knowledge; and Lysias, now thoroughly aroused, sends off his prisoner, well protected by an escort, to the governor at Cæsarea. That he seeks to make capital out of his zeal on behalf of a Roman citizen, stretching the truth considerably in order to do so, scarcely calls for remark, so thoroughly is it the way of the world at all times. By this act Paul is transferred from the Jews' tribunal to that of the Gentiles, though the Jews are still his accusers to the end. If Jerusalem can no more put to death the prophets herself, she will use the hands of others as far as she can influence them. We are now to see Paul therefore at Cæsar's judgment seat.

him, and returned to the castle; and they when they entered into [d]Cæsarea and presented the letter to the governor, presented Paul also before him. And when he had read it, and asked of what [e]province he was, and learning that he was of Cilicia, I will hear thee fully, said he, when thine accusers also are arrived. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's prætorium.

[d] *cf.* ch. 21. 8–14.

[e] ch. 21. 39. *cf.* Lk. 23. 6, 7.

SUBDIVISION 4. (Chaps. xxiv.–xxvi.)

Before the world's tribunal.

1 (xxiv.): Rebellion of will against righteousness.

1 (1–9): The grounds of the charge.

1. [1] AND after five days the [f]high priest Ananias came down, with certain * elders and an [g]orator, one Tertullus, and laid their information against Paul before the governor. And he being called, Tertullus began to accuse [him], saying, Seeing that by thee we [h]enjoy much peace, and by thy foresight things are set right for this nation, we receive it every way and everywhere, most excellent Felix, with all thankfulness. But that I may not detain thee too much, I entreat thee to hear us briefly in thine equity. For we have found this man a [i]pest, and moving insurrections among all the Jews throughout the inhabited earth, and a [j]ringleader

[f] ch. 23. 2.

[g] *cf.* ch. 12. 20.

[h] *ctr.* ver. 10. *cf.* ver. 27.

[i] *cf.* ch. 17. 6. *cf.* Lk. 23. 2.

[j] *cf.* ch. 11. 26. *cf.* ch. 28. 22. *cf.* ver. 14.

* Many read, "the."

SUBD. 4.

1. Before the governor the Jewish charge is quickly estimated at its worth; but that does not end it. Self-interest governs all; though conscience may feebly make its voice heard. As before the Jewish council, the judges are really those that are being judged, although there is no denunciation of judgment, as in the high priest's case. Christ came not to judge the world, but to save the world.

Felix, the "happy," the first of the two governors with whom we have here to do, does all that man's will combined with power can do to make good his name. Man turned away from God, and disbelieving His love and care, necessarily cares for himself, and counts it pleasure to do his own will. Violence and corruption went together in him: the two characters of the world at large. His wife Drusilla, who is mentioned presently, a Jewess, and the sister of Agrippa, had been seduced by him from the king of Emesa, her former husband. "With all cruelty and licentiousness," says the Roman historian, "he exercised the authority of a king in the spirit of a slave." He was in fact a freedman of Claudius, who had appointed him governor; and through his brother's influence with the emperor was able to retain his place. By Lysias Paul is presented to him as practically an innocent man; for questions of Jewish law meant little to the heathen. Still, if he were an object of interest to the Jew, the governor might find his own interest in it. His record was not good, and to please the people might be a point of wisdom; not, on the other hand, to give him up to them too easily: there might also be advantage on the other side. This is the way accordingly, in which we find him acting; and we are allowed to see his motives too.

[1] The importance of the prisoner is soon seen by the high priest coming down himself, with some of the elders, and a Latin orator to plead their cause; who with fulsome flattery sets the matter before Felix. "A mover of insurrection" is to appeal to the quick ears of the Roman; "a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes" shows his importance to themselves. They repeat also the false

of the sect of the Nazarenes, who also attempted to [k] profane the temple; whom we also had seized, [and would have judged according to our law; but Lysias the chief captain came up and took him with great force out of our hands, commanding his accusers to come to thee] * from whom thou wilt be able, by examining him thyself, to discover all these things of which we accuse him. And the Jews also [l] joined in the charge, asserting that these things were so.

§ (10-23): The answer.

[10] And when the governor beckoned him to speak, Paul answered, Knowing that for [m] many years thou hast been judge unto this nation, I cheerfully answer as to the things concerning myself: as thou canst ascertain that it is not more than [n] twelve days since I went up to worship at Jerusalem; and neither in the temple did they find me arguing with any one, or stirring up a crowd, neither in the synagogues, nor throughout the city; nor can they [o] prove to thee the things of which they now accuse me. But this I confess to thee that according to the way by them [p] called a sect so serve I my fathers' God, believing all things that are according to the law, and that are [q] written in the prophets; having hope towards God, which these also themselves look for, that there is to be a [r] resurrection both of just and unjust. Herein also do I exercise myself to have always a [s] conscience void of offence toward God and men. Now after some years I arrived to bring [t] alms to my nation and offerings; whereupon † they found me [u] purified in the temple, not with crowd

k *ctr.* ch. 21. 27-29. *cf.* ver. 18. *cf.* ch. 19. 37.
l *cf.* ver. 13. *cf.* ch. 6. 11-14.
m *ctr.* ver. 2. *cf.* ch. 26. 2, 3.
n *cf.* ver. 1 with ch. 21. 27.
o *cf.* ver. 6. *cf.* ch. 25. 11.
p ver. 5.
q *cf.* ch. 26. 22, 23. *cf.* ch. 17. 2, 3. *cf.* Lk. 24. 44, 45.
r *cf.* ch. 23. 6. *cf.* ch. 17. 31. *cf.* ch. 4. 33. *cf.* Jno. 5. 28, 29. *cf.* Rev. 20. 4-6, 11-15.
s *cf.* ch. 23. 1. *cf.* Heb. 13. 18.
t *cf.* Rom. 15. 25-28. *cf.* 1 Cor. 16. 1-3. *cf.* 2 Cor. 8. 1, etc. *cf.* 2 Cor. 9. 1, etc. *cf.* Gal. 2. 10. *cf.* ch. 11. 27-30.
u *cf.* ch. 21. 26.

* Most omit; but the sentence does not seem complete without it.
† Or, "in which," that is in making the ceremonial offerings.

charge of profanation of the temple,—a matter which he would know was quite competent to cause grave trouble among a people as sensitive in religious externals as were the Jews. By examination the governor might soon convince himself of the truth of what they were saying.

[10] Paul, answering for himself, easily breaks through this web of sophistry. It was but twelve days since he went up to Jerusalem to worship. He had been neither disputing with any, nor making a tumult; and they had no witnesses to produce for the substantiation of their charges! His belonging to what was in their eyes a sect he owns, but a sect of the most perfect orthodoxy according to the law; and he names especially the doctrine of the resurrection (with a probe, perhaps, for the conscience of his judge) of the just and also of the unjust. And with him this was not unpractical creed-holding merely: he exercised himself always to have a conscience void of offence toward God and man.

What resurrection was for the apostle as the basis of Christian confidence and position those that were before him could not be expected to understand. Nor does he go on now to speak of Christ risen, but only urges the power of such a truth as the Roman and the Sadducean Jew alike knew nothing of. But the unjust were to rise, as well as the just. With him it was a sweet and purifying hope; for them what should be a warning of the most solemn character. But what did any of them know about an exercised conscience?

Such however was he; and as they had no witness as to things charged which they knew not, so as to what they did know—his conduct before the council, what complaint could they bring but one that condemned themselves as Jews,

nor yet with tumult; they were certain Jews from [v] Asia, who ought to be present before thee, and to be the accusers, if they had aught against me. Or else let these themselves say what [w] wrong they found in me when I stood before the council, except it be for this one voice which I cried standing among them, [x] Touching the resurrection of the dead I am being judged this day before you.

But Felix, having more [y] accurate knowledge concerning the way, deferred them, saying, when Lysias the [z] chief captain is come down, I will determine your matter. And he ordered the centurion that he should be kept in charge, and should have indulgence, and not to hinder any of his [a] friends from ministering to him.

[8 (24-27): Bared before God.]

[3] And after certain days, Felix having arrived with Drusilla his* wife, who was a [b] Jewess, sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the [c] faith in Christ [Jesus].† And as he reasoned about [d] righteousness and [e] temperance and the [f] judgment about to come, Felix was [g] ter-

* Many read, "his own." This almost sounds like satire, as though some special claim had to be made for one not truly his.

† Some omit.

[v] ch. 21. 27.
[w] cf. ch. 25. 11.
[x] ch. 23. 6. cf. ch. 26.6. cf.ch.28.20.
[y] ver. 10. cf.ch.26.2,3.
[z] ch. 23. 26, etc.
[a] cf.ch. 27.3. cf. ch.28.10. cf. 2 Tim.1. 16-18.
[b] cf.vers.10, 22. cf.Mk.6.17, 18.
[c] cf.1Tim.3. 9. cf.Gal.1.23.
[d] cf.Rom.1. 18. cf. Jno. 16. 8–11.
[e] cf. Eph. 4. 19. cf.Gal.5.23, 24.
[f] cf.ch.17.31. cf. Rev. 20. 11-15.
[g] cf. Jas. 2. 19.

ctr. ch. 16. 29, 30; *cf.* 2 Cor. 7. 10.

that he had declared that with regard to the resurrection of the dead he was called in question?

There was thus no case to decide; except the accusation were itself the proof. The only righteous judgment would be to discharge the prisoner; but that was too simple a solution of the matter for one who knew of nothing so simple as a bribe, and who had heard of alms and offerings for his people that Paul had had in hand. Spite therefore of his accurate knowledge of the "way," as men styled Christianity (the way indeed of life and peace and holiness), Felix simply defers the case till Lysias should come down, though Lysias' judgment he well knew already, and Lysias does not appear even to have been sent for. Delay until on either side some advantage to be gained by him should help him to see better,—this is for him the only straightforward procedure.

Meanwhile, having no grudge against Paul, and a possible interest in his friends' ministering to him, he has his captivity made as light as possible, and would by no means prevent his friends doing this. God is plainly over it in mercy to His servant, while yet the way out of his prison which Felix would think so easy for him, is absolutely barred.

[3] Nevertheless there is with Felix also a certain desire to hear about the new teaching: and he and Drusilla his wife send for Paul to learn about that faith in Christ Jesus, of which at his trial he had said nothing directly. It were no wonder if he with the life that he had lived should be willing to hear of any way not too costly by which he could be given rest as to a future which for such as he can hardly fail to be more or less a subject of disquiet. But it is no wonder if he find in his quest something graver than he thought. Perhaps he had heard that here was a hope for sinners, though without any real apprehension as to the meaning of sin. Here then is his need; and Paul reasons with him of righteousness and temperance and judgment about to come, until the miserable man is frightened.* But he does not yield. The cost is greater than

*It is hardly necessary to add that the subject matter of Paul's discourse here is personal righteousness, not "the righteousness of God." Righteous was what Felix was not, nor temperate—therefore judgment to come was all he could look forward to. Well might he tremble. There is no account of what else Paul said, more specifically concerning the faith, it is enough to know Felix refused this testimony; how could he receive the gospel?—S. R.

rified, and answered, For the [h] present go thy way; and when I can get an opportunity, I will call thee again. He hoped at the same time that [i] money would be given him by Paul; wherefore also he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him. But when two years had elapsed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and Felix, desiring to gain [j] favor with the Jews, left Paul bound.

2 (XXV. 1-12): The appeal to Cæsar.

2. Festus therefore, having come into the province, after three days went up to Jerusalem from Cæsarea. And the [k] chief priests and the chiefs of the Jews informed him against Paul; and they besought him, asking as a favor against him that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying [l] wait to kill him on the way. Howbeit Festus answered that Paul was being kept in Cæsarea, and that he himself was about to set out shortly. Let them therefore who are in authority * among you, saith he, go down with me, and if there be in the man [m] anything

[h] *cf.* ch. 17. 32. *ctr.* 2 Cor. 6. 2.
[i] *cf.* Jude 16. *ctr.* Rom. 2. 11.
[j] ch. 25. 9. *cf.* Mk. 15. 15.
[k] ver. 15.
[l] *cf.* ch. 23. 12-15.
[m] ch. 23. 30.

* Or, "able."

he supposed; he must consider it well, and will not come to any hasty decision. He had adjourned Paul's case; he can adjourn his own: "For the present go thy way," he concludes; "when I can get an opportunity, I will call thee again:"—too common an escape to elicit much wonder, though Felix' words have become an every-day quotation. Opportunities come and go; the preacher is at his elbow, and he even sends for him, with an ulterior purpose in it of winning a bribe; but, of course, in vain: the preacher is incorruptible, like divine justice; for two years this goes on; at the end of which he is succeeded by Porcius Festus; and desiring to gain favor with the Jews, he leaves Paul bound!

2. Another governor appears in Festus, a name singularly akin to Felix and which means "festive, joyous." The world keeps holiday while the saints suffer. More respectable in character than Felix, he is yet not above desiring to do the Jews a favor at the expense of justice. The chief priests and elders would still get rid by foul means of one against whom they can establish nothing, and solicit Festus that he may be brought to Jerusalem for trial, intending to waylay and kill him on the road. But Festus, guided of God, whatever was his own motive, decides that having been taken to Cæsarea, he shall remain there, and his accusers bring their charges against him there. The trial is a mere repetition of the former one, with the same utter lack of proof. But here the governor's anxiety to please the Jews is shown, even while he knows, as Paul declares, that he had done them no wrong. Paul therefore appeals, according to his right as a Roman citizen, to Cæsar's own judgment and his appeal is admitted. The scene is to shift once more, and the Lord's words to him are to be fulfilled: he is to testify to Him at Rome.

Another question, difficult to answer, has been raised here: Was this appeal according to the mind of God? It is certain that Festus and Agrippa unite to declare a short time after, that it was the only thing that hindered his being set free. This might be looked at as simply the excuse of one who did not want to take the responsibility himself of setting him free, but that it is Agrippa says it. Paul certainly had the assurance also from the Lord that he was to testify at Rome; so that he need not have apprehended anything from the plotting of the Jews. On the other hand, if he were to testify at Rome as at Jerusalem, did not this appeal, in virtue of which he was in fact taken there, seem to him perhaps only the acting in accordance with the divine will? How shall we decide that it was lack of faith, or lack of wisdom on the part of one who surely

amiss, let them accuse him. And when he had tarried among them not more than eight or ten days, he went down to Cæsarea; and on the morrow sitting on the judgment-seat, commanded Paul to be [n]brought. And when he was come, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood round about, bringing many and grievous charges which they [o]could not prove; Paul answering for himself, Neither against the [p]law of the Jews, nor against the [q]temple, nor against [r]Cæsar, have I sinned at all. But Festus, desiring to gain [s]favor with the Jews, answered Paul and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me? But Paul said, I stand before 'Cæsar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged. To the Jews have I done no wrong, as *thou* also very well knowest. If then I am a [u]wrong-doer, and have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die; but if there is nothing of those things whereof they accuse me, no one can give me up by favor unto them: I [v]appeal unto Cæsar. Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Thou hast appealed unto Cæsar; unto Cæsar thou shalt go.

3 (xxv. 13–xxvi. 32): Once again the revelation.

3. Now after some days had passed Agrippa the king and Bernice arrived at Cæsarea to salute Festus. And when they had tarried some days there, Festus set

n ver. 23.
o ch. 24. 13.
p *cf.* ch. 21. 21.
q *cf.* ch. 24. 12, 18.
r *cf.* Jno. 19. 12. *cf.* Dan. 6. 22. *cf.* Rom. 13. 1-3.
s *cf.* ch. 24. 27. *cf.* Prov. 29. 25.
t *cf.* ch. 23. 30.
u *cf.* ch. 24. 20. *cf.* ch. 18. 14.
v *cf.* ch. 26. 32. *cf.* ch. 28. 19.

exceeded any of us in both respects, and who was in the circumstances as we are not, with more perfect knowledge of all that was implied?

If an appeal to Cæsar were in itself contrary to Christian principle, then, of course, to make it could not be right under any circumstances, or whoever did it. Nor have we any reason to conclude that it was impossible for an apostle to go seriously astray, as we know Peter did. But, as already noticed, Paul elsewhere fully accepts the "powers that be" as those appointed of God to be the ministers of God for good to men, and there seems no difficulty really in his using them for that. If we know not his motive, in the case of one such as he was, it is merely justice to accredit him with the highest.

3. Before the council of the Jews, and in the two presentations of their charges against him, we do not see Paul free as usual to proclaim his theme. He is hindered by the dogged opposition of those he is meeting, and does little more than repel the accusations made against him. We are now, however, once more to hear him proclaim the grace of which he has been the subject, and before a Jewish king also, the last that was to be before they should be scattered over the face of the earth.

Festus, who is in perplexity as to what to signify concerning him when he is sent to Cæsar, takes advantage of the coming of Agrippa to learn more than he has yet been able to do of one about whom the heads of the nation are so much excited, and yet whose main crime seems but to be believing that a man known to have died is alive. Resurrection seems to him to be too foolish a superstition for him to permit himself to say, "alive *again*."

Agrippa, a Jew, is expert in all such questions; and to him therefore he narrates the case that gives him difficulty, which Felix has left upon his hands. Agrippa is interested in another manner, and would be glad to hear the man himself. Festus answers at once that he shall hear him; and a public audience is given next day before which Paul shall plead his cause. Little they think of what it means for all there, the hearing they shall give to this poor prisoner!

Paul's case before the king, saying, There is a certain man [w]left prisoner by Felix, about whom, when I was in Jerusalem, the chief priests and elders of the Jews laid information, asking for judgment against him. To whom I answered, It is not the [x]custom for Romans to deliver up any man before that the accused have the accusers [y]face to face, and have had opportunity of defence regarding the complaint. When therefore they came together here, I [z]made no delay, but next day sat down on the judgment-seat, and commanded the man to be brought. Concerning whom, when the accusers stood up, they brought no charge of such [a]evil things as I supposed, but had certain [b]questions against him of their own religion,* and of a [c]certain Jesus, a dead man,† whom Paul affirmed to be alive. And as I myself was at a loss as to an inquiry into these things, I [d]asked whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged concerning these things. But Paul having [e]appealed to be kept for the decision of Augustus,‡ I

w ch. 24. 27. cf. ch. 26. 29.
x vers. 4, 5.
y cf. Jno. 7. 51. cf. Deut. 19. 15–21.
z ver. 6.
a ver. 11.
b cf. ch. 18. 15, 16. cf. ch. 23. 29.
c cf. ch. 17. 18, 31, 32. cf. ch. 3. 15.
d vers. 3, 9.
e ver. 11.

*Or, "superstition." The same word as is applied to the Athenians (chap. xvii. 22)
†Or, "who had died."
‡This is a title and not a proper name—"The one to be revered." It is not used by Paul, and seems to suggest that worship claimed by the Roman Emperor which will end in the worship of the image of the Beast.

Paul narrates his conversion, very much as he had narrated it to the crowd before the castle-stairs. The value of it is seen in the threefold account which is thus given us in this inspired book where every word is measured. The differences in these several narratives are not great, and in the last two have respect to the very different audience on each occasion. Agrippa is tolerant and not uninterested, with an air of candor, and an expert in all Jewish questions. Scandalous suspicions attached to his life; yet he was the guardian of the temple, and the high priestly office was in his appointment. Paul addresses him with confidence in his knowledge, and in his belief also in the prophets, while the issue shows a certain effect of the apostle's words upon him, a certain accessibility to conviction, of which he appears himself aware, while he shrinks from it.

Behind him Festus is no bad representative of the Roman of his day, sceptical as the mass were, and proud as they could hardly help being. These two not inaptly stood forth as types of the world of that day, in which the cross was to the Jew a stumbling-block, and to the Greek foolishness,—little as Festus might have in him of the Greek philosopher, whom the apostle in the passage quoted had especially before him.

Behind these again were the heads in war and peace, the chief captains and magistrates, and all the parade and pomp which as needful to his dignity show man to be so little. The prisoner before them is to answer for himself. With him one soon sees that that is the least part of what he thinks of, though this necessarily gives the form to his address; but his testimony as he tells them before long, is very different from any testimony to himself. He is heaven's ambassador, though in bonds; their own condition and not his is that which moves him. Upon him the light has shone which transfigures all things; while they are in the darkness, needing to be turned from it to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. Not that there is menace upon his lips, but persuasion: he is beseeching men in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God.

The form of his address only adds to its effectiveness; with the chain upon

commanded him to be kept till I should send him to Cæsar. And Agrippa [said] unto Festus, I also would [f]desire to hear the man myself. To-morrow, saith he, thou shalt hear him.

On the morrow then Agrippa came and Bernice with great [g]pomp, and having entered into the place of audience, with the chief captains* and the [h]principal men of the city, at the command of Festus Paul was brought. And Festus saith, King Agrippa, and all men that are present with us here, ye [i]behold this man, about whom the whole multitude of the Jews applied to me both in Jerusalem and here, crying out against him that he ought not to live any longer. But I, having found that he had done [j]nothing worthy of death, and he himself having [k]appealed unto Augustus, I decided to send him. Of whom I have no [l]certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him before you, and specially before thee, king Agrippa, so that after examination had, I may have somewhat to write. For it seemeth to me [m]unreasonable to send a prisoner and not to signify the charges against him.

f *cf.* Lk. 23. 8, 9.

g *cf.* Matt. 10. 18, 19.
h *cf.* Dan. 3. 2.

i *cf.* Jno. 19. 5.
cf. Phil. 3. 10.

j ch. 23. 29. ch. 26. 31.
k ver. 11.
l *cf.* vers. 19, 20.

m *cf.* Jno. 7. 51.
cf. ch. 28. 17, 18.

* Or, "Chiliarchs."

his wrist, the guerdon that the world has given him for service done to it, the witness to them all of how fully he has accepted the costs of his great office. They may count him mad, but the fire in his eyes is true and steadfast, and fed by no fuel that their world can furnish;—a man who is beyond and inaccessible to them plainly; whose only wish for them—the highest he can wish them—is that they may just be as he is, except those bonds!

He begins with what the Jews in general knew, if only they cared to testify as to it, that he had been himself a Pharisee, one of the strictest sect in Judaism, the zealots of their religion. Now he was being judged, and by Jews! for the very hope which was their national one, secured by the promise of God unto their fathers, and which all their* twelve tribes confessed as their own; earnestly serving God in this assurance! How full of self-contradiction is man, and especially the religious man, in whom yet the power of the truth has not broken down the pride of nature, so as to bring into real subjection to it. Christ was indeed the fulfillment of God's glorious promise, and in a more wonderful way than could have been anticipated by the firmest believer in what was the burden of the prophets. They had slain Him for the very claim He made (in every possible way confirmed) to fulfil this. And when, after the accomplishment of their awful will, the issue proved to have been overruled of God for fullest blessing, and His loving mercy, with increased evidence and miraculous attestation, was announced for their acceptance, they had still met it with malignant opposition, and slaughter of the messengers. Why but because they could not humble themselves to receive grace as grace?

Thus Paul the Pharisee was condemned by Pharisees for faith in the fulfilment of their chiefest hope; his testimony also including that of resurrection, which the Pharisees confessed, and yet refused. But "why," he asks, "should

* Paul includes all Israel. Faith never recognizes anything short of God's thoughts, and Paul here, as James in his epistle, includes all the Israel of God. The nation, to be sure, was scattered and to all appearances irretrievably destroyed, but as Elijah builds God's altar of 12 stones, so Paul here, speaking for the remnant, looks forward to the restoration of blessing to the nation on the basis of resurrection: "After two days will He revive us; in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight" (Hos. vi. 2). In the Revelation we see the 12,000 sealed from each tribe.—S. R.

And Agrippa said unto Paul, It is permitted thee to
[n] speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched out his hand, and answered for himself;—*

Concerning all things of which I am accused by the Jews, king Agrippa, I count myself [o] happy that I am to answer for myself before thee to-day; especially because thou art acquainted with all [p] customs and questions that are among the Jews. Wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.

My [q] manner of life then from my youth, which was from the beginning among my nation and at Jerusalem, know all the Jews, who [r] know me from the beginning, if they be willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a [s] Pharisee. And now I stand to be judged for the [t] hope of the promise

[n] *cf.* ch. 22. 1, etc.
[o] *cf.* Lk. 21. 12-15.
[p] *cf.* ch. 24. 10.
[q] ch. 22. 3.
[r] *cf.* Gal. 1. 13.
[s] *cf.* ch. 23. 6. *cf.* Phil. 3. 5, 6.
[t] *cf.* ch. 13. 32. *cf.* ch. 28. 20.

*Or, "made his defence."

it be thought an incredible thing by you, if God raiseth the dead?" He appeals against the unbelief which constantly assumes to ground itself upon reason, to reason itself. Admit a God who once created all things, and the credibility of resurrection becomes merely a question of satisfactory testimony to it.

God had overthrown in his own case an opposition which exceeded. With him the call of duty itself urged him against every follower of the Nazarene; and beyond the land he pursued them in his madness to foreign cities. He was the apostle of Jewish hatred, with commission from the religious leaders of the people, when at midday, in the midst of his company, and in active prosecution of his self-sought mission, that took place which had changed all for him henceforth. Heaven from its home of light poured forth a radiance brighter than the sun—brightness not darkness, and not a vision of terror, though human strength collapsed under it; and prostrate on the earth, he heard from the glory revealed One who spoke in the tongue of the old revelation, and to him with familiar knowledge, Himself unknown: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *Me*? It is hard for thee to kick against the goads."*

How completely is grace joined with the authority which manifestly belongs to the glorious Speaker! and how unanswerable the question which might have been a sentence, but which seeks only the soul's judgment of itself! Saul can plead, what indeed he afterwards declares to be the only ground upon which mercy could have been shown him, the ignorance which was nevertheless the result of unbelief. "And I said, Who art Thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."

How wondrous a revolution in a few moments of time, from the fanatic pride of the legalist to the consciousness of one who is chief of sinners; from the ardent hunter down of Christians to the earnest disciple of Christ! How must the apostle have questioned, with his eyes upon the assemblage, whether the Lord were not revealing Himself in like manner to some there who were traveling with him as he spoke, to the place of unexpected meeting. And immediately he goes on to declare his commission to all such, as servant of this same Jesus, and witness of the things which then and afterwards he had learned of Him.

The next words define the new place of the Christian, taken out from Israel and from the Gentiles alike, to the latter of whom Paul is distinctly sent. It

*This last expression seems to suggest that the goad had been long applied, and that Paul had been resisting. Was not Stephen's address a goad which Paul had resisted, and his testimony to the Lord's being at the right hand of God? Surely these and doubtless the patience and the testimonies of many whom he had persecuted were divinely intended as goads for his conscience. But he had resisted all till this overwhelming testimony made it impossible to do so any longer.—S. R.

made of God unto our fathers; unto which our [u] twelve tribes, earnestly serving* night and day, hope to arrive, for which hope I am accused by Jews, O king! [v] Why is it judged incredible by you, if God raiseth the dead? I indeed [w] thought with myself that I ought to do many things in opposition to the Name of Jesus the Nazarene; which too I [x] did in Jerusalem; and I both shut up many of the saints in prisons, having received the [y] authority from the chief priests, and [z] when they were put to death I gave my vote;† and often punishing them in all the synagogues, I [a] forced them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly [b] mad against them, I persecuted them even as far as to foreign cities.

Whereupon, as I [c] journeyed to Damascus with [d] authority and commission from the chief priests, at [e] midday on the way I saw, O king, a [f] light from heaven, [g] above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and those who journeyed with me. And when we were all [h] fallen to the earth, I heard a voice saying unto me in the [i] Hebrew language, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is [j] hard for thee to kick against goads. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And the

* The word suggests God as its object.
† This word suggests the character of the vote; "gave against."

[u] *cf.* Jas. 1. 1. *cf.* 1 Ki. 18. 30, 31. *cf.* Rev. 7. 4-8.
[v] *cf.* ch. 17. 32. *cf.* Rom. 4. 18-25. *cf.* Heb. 11. 19.
[w] *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 13. *cf.* Jno. 16. 2.
[x] ch. 22. 4, etc.
[y] ch. 9. 1, 2.
[z] ch. 8. 1. ch. 22. 20.
[a] *cf.* ch 18. 6. *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 13.
[b] ch. 9. 1.
[c] ch. 9. 3.
[d] ch. 9. 2.
[e] ch. 22. 6. *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 3.
[f] *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 6.
[g] *cf.* Lk. 9. 29.
[h] *cf.* Job 42. 5, 6.
[i] *cf.* ch. 22. 2. *cf.* Rom. 8. 15 with Heb. 2. 11, 16, 17.
[j] *cf.* ch. 7. 51.

has been said that Paul was in fact taken out of Israel only, and not out of the nations; and that the thought therefore must be, as in the common version, that of delivering rather; but if he were taken out from Israel, it was important to say that this was not to give him the mere position of a Gentile. There might seem to be but the one or other, but the Christian has another and heavenly place, as on earth simply that of a pilgrim and a stranger. "They are not of the world," says the Lord of His disciples, "even as I am not of the world;" and how important for the one sent into it as the messenger of Christ to maintain this.

The purpose of the message is "to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light." Light is come into the world; and although He who was the Light of it when in it is gone out of it again, rejected by it, yet the light streams now from an open heaven, in principle as Paul saw it. Thus men have only to have their eyes opened to see it too. Here is their responsibility, and here too is their guilt, that they love the darkness as in our Lord's time, because their deeds are evil. Evil ever craves the cover of darkness; and there is one in the world,—alas, the prince of it,—who is ready effectually to blind the minds of those that believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them (2 Cor. iv. 4). So the Lord adds here, "that they may turn from the power of Satan unto God; that they may receive remission of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in Me."

If there were a weary heart under any of those brilliant masks which the apostle's hearers wore that day, the account with its appealing commentary, the man himself, should surely have touched them. The glory of that grace, with its remission and sanctification—all man's need met at once by faith in Him who had lifted this Saul the persecutor indeed into another sphere unknown to Jew or Gentile, was a thing unique, and which as yet had lost by repetition nothing of its freshness. He goes on to the effect upon himself, which was as lasting as it was immediate. He was not disobedient to the heavenly vision: Damascus, Jerusalem, Judea, and the nations round were witnesses of that.

Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou [k]persecutest. But [l]arise, and stand upon thy feet; for to this end have I appeared to thee, to [m]appoint thee a servant* and a witness, both of the things which thou [n]hast seen, and of those wherein I [o]will appear to thee, [p]taking thee out from the people and from the Gentiles unto [q]whom I send thee, to [r]open their eyes, that they may turn from [s]darkness unto light, and from the [t]power of Satan unto God, that they may receive [u]remission of sins, and [v]inheritance among them that are [w]sanctified by faith in me. Whereupon, king Agrippa, I was [x]not disobedient to the heavenly vision; but brought the message [y]first to those at Damascus, as well as [z]Jerusalem, and [a]through all the country of Judea, and to the [b]Gentiles, that they should [c]repent and [d]turn to God, [e]doing works worthy of repentance. For this cause the Jews [f]seized me in the temple, and attempted to slay me. Having therefore obtained the [g]help that is from God, I stand unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying nothing beside what the [h]prophets and Moses said should come, [as to] whether Christ should [i]suffer; whether he first by [j]resurrection of the dead should proclaim [k]light [l]both to the people and to the Gentiles.

k ch. 22. 7, 8. cf. 1 Cor. 12. 12, 13.
l cf. Rev. 1. 17.
m ch. 9. 15.
n ver. 13.
o cf. 2 Cor. 12. 1–4. cf. Eph. 3. 3.
p cf. ch. 15. 14.
q cf. Gal. 1. 15, 16. cf. ch. 13. 46.
r cf. Is. 42. 7. cf. 1 Pet. 2. 9.
s cf. Col. 1. 12, 13.
t cf. 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4.
u cf. ch. 13. 38, 39. cf. Eph. 1. 7.
v cf. ch. 20. 32. cf. Eph. 1. 11. cf. 1 Pet. 1. 4.
w cf. ch. 15. 9. cf. 1 Cor. 6. 11. cf. Heb. 13. 12.
x cf. ch. 5 32 with Rom. 1. 5.
y ch. 9. 20.
z ch. 9. 28, 29. cf. ch. 22. 17–21.

* Ὑπηρέτης, an official servant.

a cf. ch. 15. 3. b cf. ch. 14. 24, 25; cf. ch. 16. 6–10, etc; cf. Rom. 15. 18, 19. c cf. ch. 17. 30. d cf. 1 Thess. 1. 9; cf. ch. 20. 21. e Matt. 3. 8; cf. ch. 19. 18–20. f ch. 21. 27, etc. g cf. 1 Cor. 15. 10; cf. 2 Cor. 12. 9. h ch. 13. 27; cf. Rom. 3. 21. i cf. ch. 17. 3 with Is. 53. 4–6. j cf. 1 Cor. 15. 12–19; cf. Rom. 4. 25. k cf. Lk. 2. 32; ver. 18. l cf. Rom. 1. 16; cf. Rom. 3. 29, 30.

The effect would be in souls repentant, turning to God, and in works answerable to repentance.

Here was the whole matter for which he was accused; for this the Jews had seized, and would have slain him. Yet what he witnessed was only the fulfilment of what Moses and the prophets said should come: the decision of the question of a Christ that was to suffer, and of His resurrection bringing light to Israel and to the nations.

It should be evident that the apostle does not mean that the revelation made to him was merely within the bounds of the older one. The things that are in his mind are summed up in the two points following, which he names. It is certain that there were mysteries now being revealed which had been kept secret during all time before, as that of the Church as the Body of Christ, which no Old Testament scripture even hints at. Thessalonians, Corinthians, Galatians, Romans, were already written more than two years when Paul said this. It is not the truth that Christianity is but an illuminated edition of Old Testament revelation; nor is it the truth that the distinctive features of Christianity had not yet been made known. It is not therefore the truth that the apostle means to say this. Both things have been inferred from the closing words here; but both are entirely wrong as to the foundation facts of which Paul is professedly speaking; *they* are indeed borne witness to by all Scripture from beginning to end.

Festus at this point breaks in with the loud confident voice of one who has heard enough, and is prepared with his verdict. With Roman haughtiness he conceives all this to be the superstition of a Jew, the dream of a man addicted to too much reading. Much learning, to his practical mind, when gained in such by-paths of knowledge, might naturally lead to madness. But Paul replies with a quiet and respectful appeal to the better knowledge of the Jewish king;

And as he thus answered for himself, Festus saith with a loud voice, Paul, thou art [m] mad; much learning is turning thee around to madness. But Paul saith, I am not mad, most excellent Festus, but speak plainly words of truth and soberness. For the king is [n] acquainted with these things, unto whom also I speak freely; for I am persuaded that none of these things is hidden from him; for it is not a thing done in a [o] corner. King Agrippa, [p] believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. And Agrippa [said] unto Paul, With [q] little [effort] thou art prevailing to make me a Christian! And Paul [said], I [r] would to God that with little or with much, not only thou, but all that have heard me this day might become such as I also am, [s] except these bonds.

And the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them; and when they had withdrawn, they spake one to another, saying, This man doeth [t] nothing worthy of death or bonds. And [u] Agrippa said unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar.

m *cf.* ch. 2. 13. *cf.* ch. 17. 18. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 13.
n ver. 3.
o *cf.* ch. 10. 36–43.
p *cf.* Jno. 5. 45–47.
q *cf.* ch. 24. 25. *cf.* Mk. 12. 34.
r *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 8. *cf.* Gal. 4. 12.
s *cf.* Col. 4. 18. *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 9.
t ch. 23. 29.
u *cf.* ver. 28.

in whose presence he had been speaking therefore freely. Neither the scriptures nor the facts of the life and death of Jesus could be hid from one so well known for his interest in Jewish affairs as king Agrippa. These things had been done before the whole people, in Jerusalem their chief city, and not in a corner. And the prophets were there to answer for themselves. He concludes by a bold appeal to the king himself to make known the belief which he is sure he has in them: "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest."

Doubtless the apostle saw that a powerful impression had been made upon the king, whose words in answer, with all their lightness, seem to deprecate being pressed further at this time. If on the one hand we cannot take them to be a confession of even half-conviction, yet they do seem a half-apology for saying no more. "With little effort thou art prevailing to make me a Christian," leaves it still doubtful what a further effort might accomplish. But the more really touched he is, the more he would shrink from showing it before such an assemblage as this, while yet he is not broken down to self-forgetfulness. He seems not to have command enough over himself to say what an orthodox Jew could easily have done, that he *does* believe the prophets. He puts the whole question off in a way that most would think was simply banter, and which he might be glad to have taken for it, and which yet might be but a nervous plea for escape at this time. And the apostle sends after him in his retreat that memorable sigh of prayer, large enough to enfold the whole company among whom he would fain be hidden, "I would to God that with little effort or much, not only thou, but all that have heard me this day might become such as I also am,—except these bonds!"

No more effectual pleading could there be, with Agrippa as with all beside, than just this overflow of a heart so full that it cares to hide nothing! so pledged to and joyous in the truth to which it is pledged, that it need not and cannot refrain from the outpouring of its delight, in the longing that all men might share with him the plenteous blessing which chains could not restrain, though he could not wish these to any! There is no need to come between it and the reader with a comment which might rather lessen than bring home the power of that which interprets itself as the spontaneous testimony to a heart that divine grace has at once enlarged and filled to the overflow. The effect is immediate. The king rises up, as if he would not care to face a longer audience;

SUBDIVISION 5. (Chaps. xxvii., xxviii.)
The way and the end: conditions and exercises.

1 (xxvii.): Man's will and God's rule.

1. AND when it was [v]determined that we should sail for Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners to a [w]centurion named Julius, of the Augustan cohort. And embarking in a ship of Adramyttium, which was about to sail to the places on the [x]coast of Asia, we put to sea, [y]Aristarchus a Macedonian of Thessalonica being with us. And the next day we arrived at [z]Sidon; and Julius treated Paul kindly, and

[v] ch. 25. 12.
[w] cf. ch. 10. 1.
[x] ctr. ch. 20. 16. cf. Jon. 1. 3.
[y] ch. 19. 29. cf. Jno. 14. 16.
[z] cf. ch. 21. 3-7.

and the whole company is dispersed. It is not saying too much, certainly, according to the evidence, but if the people are to be considered who pronounce the judgment, it is yet a testimony to the truth, that "they spake one to another, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds." Agrippa adds to Festus, "This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar." But who knows? Agrippa might safely say this: *he* was not governor of a people so well able to make trouble for him, as the men of Judea might prove to be for Festus; and if Cæsar's judgment seat were more what Paul calls it afterwards, "the mouth of the lion," than the abode of justice, all the more would the Roman desire that Paul should test this rather than himself. There cannot be a doubt that the safe and happy prisoner was better prepared to do so than his judge; his case being after all in higher hands. The appeal was for the governor a not unfortunate circumstance. Paul goes on in peace whither God guides.

SUBD. 5.

With the apostle's voyage to Rome the book of the Acts ends. The strangeness of such an ending has been often commented upon, and naturally; especially for those who imagine a history of progress on to final triumph for the Church on earth. We expect some correspondence between the history at large and this its specimen page; and to end with a shipwreck and the apostle of the Gentiles in a Roman prison gives an impression of an unfinished fragment instead of the perfect workmanship of the divine hand. But this proceeds from a wrong conception of what the Church's course was in fact to be, which all the sorrow and disaster of near nineteen centuries has for many been incompetent to remove. Allow the Scripture-statements their full weight, and the want of correspondence will be no longer felt: for the history is really that of a shipwreck and a prison; and instead of wondering any longer at the apparent contrast, we shall perhaps suspect that the similarity may be closer than it seems, and begin asking ourselves if the one is not indeed an allegory of the other.

The very name of Rome to us at the close of so many long years as have passed is predictive of disaster. Rome has through all its existence as a dominant world-power antagonized the gospel. Submit to it it never really did. It took the name of Christian, but as a symbol of material conquest and political dominion; and thereby dragged in the dust what professedly it exalted. As already said, it was judaized rather than Christianized, and with the Jewish spirit of legality drank in its bitter animosity to the gospel. The spirit of Rome was indeed always legal; but this legality now became ecclesiastical, sacerdotal, hierarchical, and necessarily persecuting. Begin Paul's captivity it did not, for it never knew him but as a prisoner. But keep him prisoner it did, until the time of God's release came. The picture does not go as far as this; probably for the reason that after all this never has been,—never will be—complete; while what has taken place in this way is the mere mercy of God, and for us the instruction is in the causes leading to the disaster: causes which are still at work, and in which we may have part, if we do not avert it by self-judgment.

1. There are two parts in this account, the first of which consists of the voyage and shipwreck, ending with the reaching land at Melita or Malta. Here also

permitted him to go to his [a]friends and have attention paid him. And putting to sea from thence, we sailed under the lee of [b]Cyprus, because the winds were [c]contrary. And having sailed across the sea that is off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came unto Myra, [a city] of [d]Lycia; and there the centurion found a ship of [e]Alexandria sailing for Italy, and put us on board. And sailing slowly many days, and having with [f]difficulty got abreast of Cnidus, the wind not [further] suffering us, we sailed under the lee of [g]Crete abreast of Salmone; and coasting it with difficulty, we came to a certain place called Fair Havens, near to which was the city of Lasæa. And much time being spent, and the voyage being now [h]dangerous because the [i]Fast was already past, Paul [j]admonished them, saying, Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the lading and the ship, but also of our [k]lives,

a ch. 24. 23. *cf.* ch. 28. 15, 16.
b *cf.* ch. 15. 39. *cf.* Gal. 2. 18 with Josh. 6. 26.
c *cf.* ch. 16. 6, 7. *ctr.* ch. 16. 11.
d *cf.* Matt. 7. 15.
e *cf.* Gal. 1. 4. *cf.* ch. 7. 39.
f ver. 4.
g *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 14-18.
h *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 1.
i *cf.* Lev. 16. 29-31. *cf.* Gal. 4. 10.
j *cf.* ch. 20. 28-31. *cf.* 1 Cor. 4. 14.
k *cf.* vers. 24, 42-44; *cf.* 1 Cor. 8. 11 with 2 Tim. 2. 12, 13.

there are two parts: the first, that in the ship of Adramyttium to Myra; the second, that in the ship of Alexandria, wrecked at Malta. The conflict of man's will with God's rule appears all through, though most conspicuously in the second part. The detail given all through should surely show us the interest that it should have for us, and that there is more in it by far than appears upon the surface.

All through Paul is a prisoner; and yet with the clear vindication of the judge from any charge which should make him rightly this. Finally he is shown to be the one to whom God has given the lives of all that sail with him. If we see in him the representative of the truth for which he stands, there can be in this no perversion of fact; and the sorrowful fact is that the truth of the gospel for which he stood has been, almost from the beginning of the Church's history until we reach the full development of the system which has Rome for its head, as it were shut up, without formal accusation perhaps, yet fettered, and scarce permitted speech; professing Christians being its courteous guard like Julius here, with a certain honor for Paul, but not freedom. Indeed Julius himself has not his choice in this: he is under authority, a centurion of the Augustan cohort, an instrument of the world power simply, and to whom in those interests with which he is identified, Paul is simply a stranger.

The meaning of his name may be variously given; that which would have significance of the kind that we are looking for, would be derived from "julus," a wheatsheaf, and might thus be "belonging to the wheatsheaf;" an enigma, no doubt, as we might expect: all here is necessarily enigmatical; but it is not impossible to penetrate the disguise.

Christ in resurrection is the significance of the one sheaf of wheat which stands out prominently in connection with the types. The sheaf of firstfruits, presented to God between Passover and Pentecost, occupies a remarkable place in that series of feasts which we easily see to be specially related to Christian truths. Christ in resurrection was also, as we know, the basis of the gospel; and in a pre-eminent way, of Paul's gospel. It is Paul's gospel that specially identifies all believers with that wheatsheaf presented to God,—that is, with Christ gone up to Him. If Julius in such an allegorized history as we are taking this to be, represents in fact, as has already been suggested, those who, even while they might be true believers in Christ, yet were ignorant of those priceless truths with which the apostle of the Gentiles was identified, and who could thus hold the truth shut up, as it were in captivity, then the implications of the name he bore would be indeed significant. They who themselves had that Christian place of identification with the risen Christ which Paul's doctrine

But the centurion believed the [l]master and ship-owner rather than the things said by Paul; and the harbor being ill-suited to winter in, the [m]majority advised to put to sea from thence, if by any means they might reach Phœnix to winter in, a harbor of Crete looking north-east and south-east. And the south wind blowing [n]softly, supposing they had gained their object, they weighed anchor and sailed close in shore along Crete. But not long after there beat down it a [o]tempestuous wind that is called Euraquilo; and when the ship was caught and could not face the wind, we gave way and were [p]driven. And running under the lee of a small island called Clauda, we were able with difficulty to secure the boat; and when they had hoisted it up, they used helps, [q]under-girding the ship; and fearing lest they should be cast upon the Syrtis, they lowered the gear, and so were driven. And as we

l ctr. Phil.3. 3.
cf. 1 Ki.12. 6-15.
m cf. Ex.23. 2.
*cf.*2 Chron. 18. 1-27.
n ch. 28. 13.
cf. Rev. 2. 12-17.
*cf.*Prov.14. 12.
o cf. Jno. 6. 16-18.
cf. Ps. 107. 23-28.
*cf.*Jonah 1. 4, 5.
p cf. Jas.1.6.
ctr. Rev 3. 11.
*q cf.*Gal.3.3.
*cf.*1 Chron. 13. 7.
ctr. Eph.4. 3, 4, 15, 16.

made so conspicuous, were yet in ignorance of the place and what belonged to it; that is, of Paul in the truth he carried; and however courteous to himself they might be, were but the instruments (yea, the imperial band) of the enemies of the truth he lived and died for. Look at the imperial band of the church fathers: do they not treat the apostle after this manner? Are they not just so many courteous Juliuses in this way?

They are bound for Italy, all these; though it may well be, not by a straight road. The first ship we find here is not going to Italy, but to the coast of Asia, and is a ship of Adramyttium—a name of which there is doubt as to the meaning, but it seems as if it might mean that "one must not haste," while Asia speaks of a "miry" shore. Spiritually at least, these things go well together. A lack of earnest diligence in the way is apt enough to have a slough for its terminus. Corinth had got so mired with the world at a very early date, though they knew little of it: they were reigning as kings, following their wills, as such a course implies, and not the guidance of the Spirit. The "best Ruler," as Aristarchus means, was with them all the way through, but we hear of him no more: he is a *passenger* and only that. Yet, as the Macedonian may remind us, He is the Spirit of worship, which putting God in His place is seen as of Thessalonica too, the means of "victory over that which brings into commotion." But so the start is made.

The next day they are at Zidon, still in what is properly Israelitish territory, though in fact in other hands. It means "taking the prey," and in Joshua's time we find it coming into Asher's portion (chap. xix. 28, see notes), and there with reference to victory over evil, which is indeed the portion of Asher, the "happy" saint. But in fact, as we know, in the common failure of Israel, Asher never did even conquer Zidon, which had many and great kings of its own, some of whom were in alliance with Israel afterwards. The "taking of prey," so connected, would come to have a different meaning, and imply such a career of conquest as that upon which, when become conscious of her power, the Church soon started. The victory over the world which faith in the Son of God gives became exchanged for victory by which the things of the world became the possession of the victors. Thus the parable of the mustard-seed began to be fulfilled, and the church to take rank among the powers of the world. Friends of Paul were still to be found, for whom victory over the world retained the old and contrasted principle of separation from it, crucifixion to it by the Cross. With these the apostle would still find communion, and hearts drawn to him.

But the ship of Adramyttium is bound for Asia; and starting again, the winds are contrary, and she is forced under the lee of Cyprus. Cyprus means blossom, especially of the olive and the vine, and became identified in the

labored exceedingly with the storm, the next day they began a [r] clearance overboard; and the third day they [s] cast out with their own hands the furniture* of the ship. And when neither [t] sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest lying on us, at last all hope that we should be saved was taken away. And when they had been long [u] without food, then Paul stood forth in their midst and said, Sirs, ye should have [v] hearkened to me, and not have set sail from Crete, and have got this injury and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good [w] courage, for there shall be no loss of life among you, [x] only of the ship. For an angel of the God [y] whose I am and whom I [z] serve stood by me this night saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must [a] stand before Cæsar; and behold, God hath [b] granted thee all who sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good courage; for I [c] believe God that it shall be as it hath been spoken to me. Howbeit we must be [d] cast upon a certain island.

* Or, "tackling."

r Jonah 1.5. cf. ver. 38. cf. Heb. 5. 12.
s cf. Eph. 4. 11, 12.
t cf. 1 Jno. 1. 5. cf. 1 Thess. 5. 19.
u cf. Rev. 3. 17. cf. 1 Pet. 2. 2.
v vers. 9, 10. cf. Rev. 3. 19.
w vers. 25, 36. cf. ch. 16. 28.
x ver. 41. cf. 1 Cor. 3. 15.
y cf. 1 Cor. 6. 19, 20.
z cf. 1 Cor. 4. 1, 2.
a ch. 23. 11.
b cf. Gen. 18. 28, etc. cf. 1 Tim. 4. 16.
c cf. 2 Cor. 1. 9, 10.
d ch. 28. 1. cf. Gal. 6. 7.

Grecian mind with what is fair and lovely in nature, with Venus and her worship, the soft influences which woo and win man's heart. And here indeed is how the heart, realizing that after all the winds for the Christian voyager are contrary, would shelter itself under what in nature it can plead, and with truth also, God has made for man's enjoyment. So He has; and yet how easy to make enticement of it, the ship using it as her shelter to reach the "miry" shores of Asia beyond! How all this fits together in the picture here! Was not this in fact the history of declension in the Church of God? a history so often repeated in individual experience that we cannot but know it all too well!

Not difficult is it to understand that beyond this there are dangers, which Cilicia, Pamphylia, Lycia, all in different ways express. Cilicia is said to mean "which rolls, or overturns," and to play the Cilician is to be cruel and treacherous like these. Pamphylia would mean a union of various tribes; and their history seems to correspond with this. Lycia is from lycus, a wolf, which whether referring to beast or man has no encouraging significance. In two of these names the dangers following the thirst for pleasure may be fitly indicated; the relaxation which it implies exposing to such dangers as the apostle speaks of to the Ephesians as the entering in of grievous wolves, not sparing the flock; while the union of various tribes was truly what practically the church soon came to be as mingling with the world's various interests affected and moulded it, making the diversity as apparent as the uniting tie. How soon did the Body of Christ cease to have visible expression; and the church united with the world become divided within itself!

Striking it is that here presently the end is reached of the first voyage at Myra, where the ship of Adramyttium is exchanged for another. If Pamphylia has the import which we see in it, the breaches of unity which it pictures would have need of the "ointment" of which Myra speaks. How many salves have been sought for this broken condition! And the change of ship for a ship of Alexandria is still more plainly significant. Alexandria speaks of help given to men, or better, of the warding off from them impending danger. The new ship of the church is a human means adapted to that end, while openly pointing now towards Italy.

Notice how well all of this agrees together: the perils have been shown us, following self-indulgence and love of pleasure. The new vessel from Egypt,

But when the [e]fourteenth night was come, as we were driven to and fro in the Adriatic, about midnight the sailors surmised that we were drawing near some country. And they sounded and found twenty fathoms; and having gone a little further and sounding again, they found fifteen fathoms; and fearing lest we should be [f]cast away on rocky places, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for [g]day. And as the [h]sailors were seeking to flee out of the ship, and had lowered the boat into the sea, under pretext of being about to lay out anchors from the prow, Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, *ye* cannot be saved. Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the [i]boat, and let her fall off. And when day was about coming on, Paul [k]exhorted them all to take some food, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye wait and continue fasting, having taken nothing. Wherefore I exhort you to take some food,

e vers.20,33.
f ver. 17. *cf.* 1 Tim.1. 19.
g *cf.*1 Jno.1. 5.
h *cf.* ver. 42. *ctr.* ver.24.
i *cf.*Heb.3.6.
j *cf.* ver. 16. *cf.* Gen. 19. 20. *cf.* Ju. 1.25, 26.
k *ctr.* 1 Sa. 28. 22–25.

which stands all through Scripture for that independence of God, alas, how natural, and from Alexandria,—a human device for warding off danger,—and now with her course directly Romeward, towards which in fact, indirectly, they have been going all the time,—all this surely speaks to us not uncertainly in what we have upon other grounds concluded to be an allegory of the Church. Most undeniably, for all who take their view from Scripture, the vessel of God's testimony has changed much since it came from His hands at the first; and there has been human shaping, taking its justification from expediency largely,—the warding off of dangers, real or imaginary. The simple eldership of the apostles' days has grown into an episcopate, more and more monarchical; and this into archiepiscopates and patriarchates, and from ministry to priesthood, and all the ranks of a hierarchy conspicuously absent from the New Testament original. The "best Ruler" is little seen, and a mere passenger: there would be danger indeed in letting the blessed Spirit have that governing place which, at the beginning, was His. We have taken a fresh start clearly, and our vessel is Egyptian—Alexandrian; and we are manifestly on our way to Rome.

But still the wind is contrary; heaven does not vouchsafe its favors for some reason; and it is with difficulty, and after many days of sailing that the vessel is got abreast of Cnidus. Cnidus means "chafing, nettling," and may be a bad augury for the new regime; and here they leave the coast of Asia for Crete.

The wind, still contrary, forces them to take refuge under the lee of Crete abreast of Salmone, a name which, like that of Salamis in Cyprus, seems to be derived from the breaking of the waves upon it. That of Crete seems to be derived from the Cherethim of the Old Testament, who in the judgment of many were its inhabitants. The meaning in that case would not be doubtful. The cherethim were the "cutters down, or cutters off," sometimes given as "executioners." But the word was also very commonly applied to the making or "cutting" of a covenant, for which as a whole sometimes the one word stood. That the covenant of the Lord should connect itself with the cutting off of evil can be no mystery to us; and significant it is that it is in turning from the "miry" shores of Asia that Crete presents itself to us. Self-judgment would have been indeed the resource for the Church bemired with the world, and it is no wonder that it should present "Fair Havens" to the buffeted ship, or that the apostle's advice should be to winter there. Final rest indeed it could not be, but yet quite helpful against winter storm; but the ship of Alexandria, under the guidance of those belonging to it, will not stay there; and Julius of the imperial band, while courteous enough to the apostle, yet approves their

for this is for your safety; for there shall not a [t]hair perish from the head of any of you. And when he had said this, he took bread, and gave [m]thanks to God before all, and brake it, and began to eat. And they all were of good courage, and themselves also took food. And we were two hundred and seventy-six, [n]all the souls that were in the ship. And having satisfied themselves with food, they [o]lightened the ship, throwing out the wheat into the sea. And when it was day, they knew not the land; but they perceived a certain bay with a [p]beach, upon which they took counsel if they could drive the ship. And casting off the anchors, they left them in the sea, at the same time loosening the lashings of the rudders, and hoisting the foresail to the [q]wind, they made for the beach. And falling into a place where [r]two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the bow stuck fast, and remained immovable, but the stern began to break up with the violence [of the waves].* And the [s]soldiers' counsel was that they

t *cf.* Matt. 10. 30. *cf.* Lk. 21. 18.
m *cf.* Jno. 6. 11.
n ver. 44.
o *cf.* ver. 18. *etr.* Eph. 3. 8.
p *cf.* vers. 12, 22.
q ver. 15. *cf.* Eccl. 11. 5.
r *cf.* ch. 23. 6–10.
s ver. 30.

*Some omit.

choice. Alexandria seems a name peculiarly significant here, and the history of the church shows here indeed how the notion of "Crete" that came from Alexandria would be in grave enough contrast with the apostle's. "Cutting off" in the shape of asceticism, and even in a covenant form, had indeed its home there. Monasticism in its pseudo-Christian form arose there: a direct descent from heathen principles and practice. "Fair Havens," with its city of the Rock (as Lasæa seems to mean) near by, did not suit with the ideal of the Alexandrians as Phenice did. Phenice means "palm," the constant figure of the righteous. Righteousness is not after all found in cutting off, and the city of the Rock intimates the corrective truth, distasteful naturally to the true ascetic. Its ideal is in this way unattainable; and when, mocked by the softness of a favorable south wind, the vessel leaves the harbor that would have saved it, the storm-blast Euroclydon descends upon it, and it is blown out irrevocably from all land.

The wind that now assails the ship is called in most manuscripts Euroclydon, but in the oldest Euraquilo. The one term means "the eastern wave," referring to the effect upon the water. The latter, the "north-easter;" which has the sanction of most of the editors. The east, as we have seen elsewhere, is the quarter that speaks simply of adversity; the north is that which speaks of darkness, mystery, and spiritual evil. Taking Euraquilo as the best-attested reading, we find it also to be the most significant. It speaks not merely of adversity, but of Satanic influence: in the case of the Church, besides persecution, of evil doctrine; and such were in fact the influences which assailed the early Christians. In the epistle to Smyrna, which stands second in that apocalyptic series in which many have learned to trace the successive stages of the Church's history, we have on the one hand the ten days of tribulation, the persecution under the Roman emperors, and on the other the blasphemy of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie. Doubtless these work together, as the shout of the hunters, which drives the deer into the trap prepared. Judaism, as we know, favored that fusion with the world as well as those defensive methods which promised best for protection from outside attack; while it was itself the most complete attack upon the vitals of Christianity. And the same two influences are, no doubt, to be seen here in the storm that hunts the Alexandrian vessel to its wreck. We must distinguish, of course, carefully,

should kill the prisoners, lest any one should swim out and escape; but the centurion, [t] desiring to save Paul, stayed them from their purpose, and commanded that those that could swim should cast themselves overboard, and get first to the land; and the rest, some on [u] planks, and some on things from the ship. And so it came to pass that all got safe to land.

[t] *cf.* ver. 3.

[u] *cf.* Jude 22, 23.

between that worldly prosperity into which, through all the assaults upon it, the church was steadily rising, and the spiritual wreck to which in this very way it was going on; until under Constantine its pilgrim and heavenly character was exchanged for an opposite one; and the gospel of grace, except perhaps with a few hidden and hunted men, was well nigh gone from the earth. We have the creed of these orthodox Nicene days, and the faith of their most eminent men in various expression, and we know with exactness what they held and taught; their doctrine as to Christ, in general orthodox enough,—as to the gospel, what the extremest ritualism may permit of it: baptism to wash away past sins, and make children of God; penance and priestly absolution, to take away sins afterward; helped, and needing to be helped, by the virtues of the saints, and even their dead bones! That was for the people of ordinary lives; but the religious life, which alone made saints, was to be found in following out what Scripture calls "the doctrines of demons, . . . forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God has created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth." (1 Tim. iv. 1–3.) This life too was to be spent in deserts, or between monastery or convent walls; and then might attain merit which would help to save other people,—the merit of doing more than it is one's duty to do.

If scripture in hand we place ourselves in the midst of that flourishing church of the Nicene period, which the hand of Constantine has just liberated from the dungeon to put it upon the throne,—and look at it with the eyes of him who said to the Corinthians, "Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings *without us*" (1 Cor. iv. 8), we shall no doubt see that, spite of all the seeming prosperity, there has been in fact a change and a loss, such as would imply no less than a shipwreck; while the "honey" of nature's sweetness enjoyed might make a Melita for the released sufferers. Into the details of the 14 days of storm and drift it is harder to enter by way of exposition. The lack of food we can understand, while yet the wheat was in the ship; the fact of the safety of the voyagers depending upon that Paul whom yet they knew so little; his voice being heard once more as the storm worked on to imminent disaster: surely ears must have been opened to hear it! The shore was won, though the ship had gone to pieces; there was a pause in the progress towards Rome, and a new ship must be found to get there, though of the same Egyptian, Alexandrian build; and then by easier stages, and with fairer weather the end will soon be reached.* †

*The details of "the Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul" have been fully examined by Mr. Smith, of Jordanhill, in a well known volume, from which all commentaries since have necessarily borrowed. On this account, and because detail of this kind is outside the purpose and scope of the present work, I have omitted mention of it. He has fully shown the exactness of knowledge which the whole narrative displays, both of the topography of the voyage, and of the navigation of the Ancients. I pass it over with this reference.

†There are many details in the narrative which are doubtless as suggestive of spiritual meaning as those given in the notes. What was the boat, which there was so much difficulty in getting at? What was the small island which proved a temporary shelter? No doubt the helps with which the ship was undergirded suggest the similar means which have been so popular in all ages of holding together from the outside that which has not strength in itself to withstand the storms. Human methods may hold the ship together for a while, but they are but human expedients and tell the tale of weakness most unmistakably. The tackling of the ship points to what might be called the machinery of church life. How often in storms must this tackling prove itself but a menace to safety. No light from heaven shines upon the stormtossed ship, for they had embarked upon a course of disobedience.—S. R.

3 (xxviii.1-15): The journey on.

2. And when we were escaped, then we knew that the island was called Melita. And the barbarians showed us no common [u]kindness; for they kindled a fire and received us all, because of the [v]rain that had come on, and because of the cold. Now when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a [x]viper came out by reason of the heat, and fastened on his hand. And when the barbarians saw the beast hanging from his hand, they said one to another, No doubt this man is a [y]murderer, whom though he hath escaped the sea, yet Justice hath not suffered to live. He, however, shook off the beast into the fire, and [z]suffered no harm. But *they* expected that he would have swollen or fallen down suddenly dead; but when they had been long in expectation and beheld nothing amiss come to him, they [a]changed their minds and said that he was a god.

u ver. 10. cf. Prov. 16. 7.
v cf. Matt. 25. 35-40. cf. Heb. 6. 7.
x cf. Gen. 3. 1.
y cf. Lk. 13. 2. cf. Jno. 7. 24.
z cf. Mk. 16. 18. cf. Phil. 1. 12.
a cf. ch. 14. 11-19. cf. ch. 8. 10.

2. The incidents of Paul's stay at Melita have all one character. They show us how the favor of the islanders was won by the display of divine power acting through him in the setting aside of what was in fact the power of the enemy, but in their minds divine, and in the relief of human suffering. The chief man receives and entertains all Paul's company. The bearing of all this upon the allegorical meaning is as plain as need be. If we have indeed arrived at that period in the Church's history when Christianity became the religion of the empire, and the emperor its official head,—when in the thoughts of men it had reached the land of milk and honey, which by the application to themselves of Jewish prophecies they could believe also to be their land of promise, then there is little difficulty in what is before us now. The very acceptance of this new head changed everything, however much the old forms might be maintained, and declared to all who had heart to understand the wreck of all true church principle. It was decisive enough that the first who took this place of ecclesiastical head was a man unconverted, and (what was still more decisive according to the doctrines of the day) unbaptized; baptized at last by a denier of the deity of Christ; the slayer also of his son and of his wife. They had afterwards to invent the fiction of the bath of Constantine to cover what was ecclesiastically the sorest disgrace. Yes, the ship was wrecked, but they had reached nevertheless the land of honey, their Melita. By and by a new ship also would be found to carry them to their destination.

Yet had not in fact the serpent's power been overcome when the Pontifex Maximus, the head of heathen power, the head that had so recently and fiercely bit at Christianity, and not in vain, was now itself Christian, and putting down heathenism? According to many since, it was the fulfilment of the Apocalyptic story of the Dragon and the Woman, and the Dragon's being cast out of heaven. Was it not indeed a good that in the seat of widest earthly power the malignant forces of evil should be dispossessed by the healing and life-giving influences of heaven's sweetest grace? That is what captivates the people of Melita, who see the viper harmless and cast into the fire, and presently experience the mercy of God in the undeniable signs of divine working. Who can deny the blessings thus coming in through that wonderful change which we have been contemplating? So Paul is in the house of Publius, and the new ship is laden with things which are the thankful acknowledgment of benefits received. Yet is Paul after all a prisoner still, and the vessel's head, at much less distance than before, is pointing towards Rome!

So again we have a ship of Alexandria, and the fresh start is but a continuation of the former voyage. The vessel went under the sign of the Dioscuri, the

Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the [b] chief of the island, by name Publius, who received and entertained us three days courteously. And it was so that the father of Publius lay ill of fever and dysentery; to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him and [c] healed him. And when this was done, the rest also who had diseases in the island came and were healed; who also [d] honored us with many honors; and on sailing laded us with things for our need.

And after [e] three months we set sail in a ship of [f] Alexandria which had wintered in the island, whose sign was the Dioscuri.* And landing at Syracuse, we tarried three days: and from thence we made a circuit, and arrived at Rhegium; and after one day a [g] south wind having sprung up, we came on the second day to Puteoli: where we found [h] brethren, and were intreated to tarry with them seven days; and so we came to† Rome. And thence the brethren, having heard about us, came out to [i] meet us as far as Appii Forum ‡ and the Three Taverns; whom when Paul saw, he thanked God and took [j] courage.

b *cf.* ch. 13. 7.

c *cf.* ch. 19. 11, etc.

d *cfr.* ch. 13. 50, 51.

e *cf.* ver. 17.

f ch. 27. 6. *cf.* Mk. 8. 14-21.

g ch. 27. 13.

h ch. 21. 4. ch. 27. 3.

i *cf.* ch. 20. 38.

j *cf.* ch. 17. 15. *cf.* Rom. 15. 30-33.

* Literally, "sons of Jupiter." (Castor and Pollux).
† Or, "toward." ‡ Or, "Forum of Appius."

"sons of Jupiter," Castor and Pollux, the patron divinities of sailors. Perhaps we may interpret this as showing what is certainly true, that while Jupiter himself may have passed away, the ideas born of heathenism remain to preside over the course of the state-church. The very title of Pontifex Maximus to which reference has been made, was retained by the Christian emperors for some time, and when dropped by them was revived, and at the present time is borne by the pope! It carried with it the claim of chief authority in matters of religion, and it is intended to announce this claim to-day.

At Syracuse they land and tarry for three days. Syracuse means "dragging unwillingly," and speaks sufficiently of the exercise of arbitrary power; which Rhegium, a "forcing the way through," intensifies. It is singular at least, that here the Dioscuri, who presided over the vessel's course, were again the patron-divinities. Puteoli ends the voyage, and takes its name from the thirty-three mineral "wells" that were there, or else from their ill-odor. Puteoli was the chief harbor of Rome, although some distance from the city. Here they found brethren, with whom at their solicitation Paul was able to stay seven days; "and so we came to Rome." The market place and the taverns complete the journey—morally, as in fact; though here also we have the meeting of the apostle with the Roman brethren.

In all this the tracing of historical fulfilment may be little detailed, but the general character of the period between the state-church and the church-state is sufficiently shown. Violence, breach of faith, pretentious assumption, characterize it; the mal-odorous wells (of error introduced) bring us nearly to Rome itself, though the traffic of the market and the dissipation of the tavern are needed touches to the picture. Even here Paul's heart is cheered as he looks upon the brethren; and prisoner as he is, he thanks God and takes courage. This is always the style of God's precious book: His "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," rings throughout it. The head hung down means only unbelief, and it is not in this way that Paul enters the miscalled "eternal city." All things that are seen are temporal; "things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, God hath revealed unto us by His Spirit."

§ (xxviii. 16–31): The special People once again.

3. And when we came to Rome,* Paul was [k]permitted to abide by himself with the soldier who guarded him. And it came to pass that after [l]three days he called together those that were chief of the Jews; and when they were come together, he said unto them, Brethren, I, though I had [m]done nothing against the people or the customs of our fathers, was yet delivered a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans, who when they had [n]examined me desired to set me at liberty, because there was no cause of death in me. But when the Jews spake against it, I was [o]compelled to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had aught to accuse my nation of. For this cause, therefore, did I call for you, to see and to speak with you; for on account of the [p]hope of Israel am I bound with this chain. And they said unto him, We neither received letters from Judea concerning thee, nor did any of the brethren arriving report or speak any evil concerning thee. But we think right to hear from thee what thou thinkest; for as concerning this sect, it is known to us that [q]everywhere it is spoken against.

* Some add, "the centurion delivered up the prisoners to the prætorian prefect; but."

[k] vers. 30, 31.
[l] *cf.* Col. 3. 1.
[m] ch. 25. 8.
[n] ch. 26. 30, 31.
[o] ch. 25. 10–12.
[p] ch. 26. 6, 7.
[q] *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 13. *cf.* 1 Pet. 3. 16.

3. There is yet a brief closing portion, which has a sorrowful yet tender interest for us. Once more we are made to see how, spite of all that he has experienced at their hands, the heart of Paul—in this not unlike his blessed Master surely—clings still to Israel. Three days only elapse after he has reached Rome when he sends for the chief of the Jews, to explain his position to them. They have forced him to appeal to Cæsar; but he has no thought to appear before him as the accuser of his nation. Accuse them he cannot, while it is their hope of which he is partaker; and on account of that hope he is bound with that chain.

To which they reply that they have heard no evil of him; but that they *have* heard of the Christian sect as that which everywhere is spoken against. They would fain hear therefore from his lips an account of what he believes. Upon which a day is set, and they come to his lodging; and there from morning to evening he expounds, as only he among men perhaps could, the whole matter from their own scriptures, law and prophets. The result is the same as ever: "some assented to the things that were said, and some disbelieved." On the whole there is clearly rejection, and Paul has to leave them under the burden which the Spirit through Isaiah had long ago pronounced with regard to them. Alas, they would not be healed, but deliberately sealed up their eyes and ears against conviction. Yet they cannot prevent the outflow of a grace which will not be content to have no response from men to His long labor of love. Nay, if Israel values it not, there are others who need it. "Be it known to you therefore that this salvation of God is sent unto the nations; and they will hear it."

Yet his position at that moment was, as we have seen, a sad prognostication that as to the Gentiles also their reception of the divine message will allow no boast over the insensate Jew. Rome is the fatal word that epitomizes their history; and not Rome pagan, but Rome papal. We may refuse in our pride to accept such a sentence,—we with our three hundred years since for us Rome's yoke was broken. Yes, and whither are we tending now? But the true answer is, not in any prophesying of our own, but in the statement of the conditions which we are under as those who have taken place and responsibilities of Israel's broken off branches as the people of God to-day; and these conditions the

And having appointed him a day, many came to him to the lodging, to whom he expounded, [r]testifying of the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, from both the [s]law of Moses and the prophets, from morning to evening. And [t]some assented to the things that were said, and some [u]disbelieved. And in disagreement among themselves they departed, Paul having said one word, [v]Well spake the Holy Spirit through Esaias the prophet unto our *fathers, saying, Go unto this people and say, Hearing ye shall hear and not understand, and seeing ye shall see and not perceive. For this people's [w]heart is become fat, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart, and return, and I should heal them. Be it known unto you therefore that this salvation of God hath been [x]sent unto the Gentiles; and they will hear it.†

And he abode two whole years in his own hired lodging, and received all who came unto him, [y]preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, with all openness [z]unhindered.

r ver. 31. *cf.* ch. 20. 21.
s *cf.* ch. 24. 14. *cf.* Lk. 24. 44.
t *cf.* ch. 13. 43.
u *cf.* ch. 17. 13. *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 14-16.
v Is. 6. 9, 10. Matt. 13. 14, 15.
w Jno. 12. 40. *cf.* Rom. 11. 8.
x ch. 13. 46, 47.
y *cf.* ch. 20. 25. *cf.* Phil. 1. 12, 13.
z *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 9. *cf.* ch. 20. 24. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8. *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 1. *cf.* Heb. 13. 7.

* Many read, "your."

† Some add: "And when he had said this, the Jews went away, and had great reasoning among themselves."

apostle Paul himself has stated for us (Rom. xi. 18–22): "Boast not against the branches; but if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be graffed in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee goodness, *if* thou *continue* in His goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." Now Rome with its claim to be the Catholic Church to-day, whatever abatement we may justly insist on as to this, is at least a positive proof that the Gentile body as such has *not* "continued" in the goodness of God. It is useless to talk of reformation and recovery: all that is but confession that the body has *not* continued. It is useless to plead that Rome is an apostate: apostasy is the plainest possible non-continuance. Thank God for all whom His mercy has saved from complicity with its wickedness! but the salvation of individuals, however much it may mean for *them*, is by no means the salvation of the Gentile body, which has had its trial, and is to be set aside. This is, I doubt not, why the Acts ends with Rome: it is the complete forecast of the issue in responsibility; although we have for this to look beyond the literal history which is but the foreshadow, to that which it has been overruled to express. It is thus like the epistles to the seven churches, which were, as we know, actually existent, and in the condition which the epistles depict at the time when these were written, yet were similarly overruled to give us the full-length history of the Church till Christ's coming again.

We are left with a touching yet cheering picture of the apostle's position in a hostile world in which nevertheless God acts still as He will, making the wrath of man to praise Him and restraining the remainder of it. The minister of Christ is fettered; the word of God not bound. And yet to common eyes this too might seem to be. Faith is needed everywhere, for God seeks and delights in faith; yet "of Him, and through Him, and for Him are all things; to whom be glory for ever" (Rom. xi. 36).

THE EPISTLES OF PAUL

THE Epistles of Paul have been already characterized as the Levitical division of the New Testament Pentateuch. They are this as bringing into the sanctuary—into the presence of God; and for this declaring the power and value of the work which opens the sanctuary and gives the soul its ability to stand before Him. So the sacrifices are in the forefront of Leviticus; the opening of the sanctuary by them on the day of atonement occupies the central portion of that book. But at that time it could be but for a moment: sacrifices and sanctuary alike were only "the figures of the true;" the dispensation was that of law, and even the high priest who alone entered the holiest, could not draw nigh; the true way in to God could not yet be made manifest. Paul was from the first, as the Acts has shown us, in the light of the opened heavens—opened really now; and the gospel of the glory of Christ was that by which he was converted, as it was that glory that drew him on, and gave him as his one purpose to win Christ and to be found in Him. For all else his desire and aim were this, to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

As a minister of Christ, there were two special spheres assigned to him: he was in a distinct and peculiar sense "minister of the gospel" (Col. i. 23), not "a" minister, as the common version reads; just as he was also in a specific sense "minister of the church" (ver. 25). On the one hand, none besides of the inspired writers declares the truth of justification and the place in Christ; though John does indeed approach very near to him in both respects, and the parable of the publican intimates the former, without developing it (Luk. xviii. 13, 14). We find these as foundations in the first of Paul's epistles. As to the Church, it is only Paul who speaks of it as the Body of Christ, or develops its relationship as Bride to Him.

The Epistles group themselves in two series. They are fourteen in number; which, of course, has its significance, as everything else in regard to the word of God, and shows in the double seven what has been already said to be characteristic of his testimony: he is the *witness of the perfection of the accomplished work*. Yet this does not mean that his writings will necessarily arrange themselves in this septenary way, and in fact they do not. They really partake of the pentateuchal form which runs so through the structure of Scripture, falling into two divisions of five parts each. The first division comprises what we may designate as the *positional* epistles, treating for the most part of individual position with its consequences; while the second division treats of *associative* or *collective relationships*. There stand thus in the first

series, Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians (with Philemon as a supplement), and Philippians. In the second we have, the two epistles to the Thessalonians, the two to the Corinthians, Hebrews, the two to Timothy, and Titus. It may seem at first sight as if Ephesians were connected as much with the second division here as with the first, seeing that the Church occupies so large a place in it, and the truth concerning it is even in some respects more fully developed than elsewhere. Yet, while we must admit a strong link in this way with Corinthians, the difference between them is just as plain, and will illustrate that between the two divisions, just where they approach most nearly to one another. Corinthians, it is plain, speaks of the Church in its order and activities on earth; Ephesians gives it as an object of faith simply, in its heavenly character. Thus it is really an individual position with regard to it that we take in this epistle. That there is everywhere in Scripture a connection of the various truths (or parts of truth) with one another, is of course evident, and that links between these various parts may be found everywhere therefore. Scripture itself is thus, as being the living thing it is, an organism; and we cannot wholly separate any book of Scripture from the rest. It will be our constant aim to show and rate at their value these living links; while even for this very purpose the individuality of each book, and every real division that Scripture manifests, must be maintained; just as in all physiology, the organs, and the tissues also which make up the organs, must be first demonstrated, before we trace these living interdependencies at all. The application of this to Scripture is not yet finding the full and hearty recognition that it ought to have in order to the experience of its value aright.

We shall confine ourselves for the present to Paul's first pentateuch, as this will occupy us for a good while to come. The central thoughts and relations of the books must be briefly stated—quite briefly in the first place—in order that a nearer view may be a real enlargement of thought, and not an entanglement or a perplexity. And here, however foolish would be the idea of studying Scripture in the concordance, every true student of it will gladly own the help which the concordance gives to clear discernment of the central thoughts of its divisions; and most of all, perhaps, in the Epistles. We must, of course, be here as always taught by the Spirit, in order not to go astray, and must use a just discrimination as to the material which it puts into our hand. There is no way of knowledge which will enable us to escape the need of labor: labor is a condition of all fruitfulness which a wise and holy God has given us as a yoke most helpful in our fallen state, but which has also its abundant recompense in its gains along the road, and in the joy of an activity, which is as it were the very buoyancy of life itself, and maintains this.

1. A mere glance at a concordance will assure us how large a place in Romans the thought of *righteousness* has. Conspicuously absent from the practical and preceptive fourth division, in the rest of the epistle it

is occurring constantly; while justification, the declaration of righteousness as against accusation made, has proportionately almost as large a place.* Thus the foundation character of the epistle is fully manifest; and the foundation is, one may say, of squared stones. These words occur in various applications but in the same interest, that of the salvation of the sinner who believes in Jesus. Thus we have man's lack (and hopeless lack) of righteousness fully proved against him; but with this the righteousness of God in justifying; that righteousness is imputed without works; that it is a righteousness of faith; a justification by the blood of Christ; and how righteousness of life is secured by it. Romans is thus a full and exact gospel treatise; but it goes further than many Christians are able to follow it, even to a place in Christ attached to a new life in Him, of whom Adam was but the contrastive type. These two things then, righteousness and a place in Christ, may be said to be the twofold theme of the first epistle. The righteousness of God in the present rejection of Israel as a nation (chaps. ix.–xi) is an argument appended very naturally to the main topics; though here also righteousness is the keynote still, and of course in harmony with the numerical place of the epistle.

2. Galatians is in closest connection with Romans, being a buttress to its doctrine of justification by faith; but essentially, in accordance with the second place in which it stands, it is a controversy. Judaism and Christianity, law and grace, are shown to be in absolute opposition, now that faith is openly avowed to be God's principle, the schoolmaster's reign over, and the children of God at home with God, having received the Spirit of adoption. The "cross," "crucified,"† "curse of the law," are characteristic words: the law as a principle lay in the way of blessing, and to be a Saviour Christ must take its curse, to remove it from us. Thus alone could the spirit of bondage be removed, and the liberty attained with which Christ has made us free. But also this deliverance is from the world, as well as law: the cross is the stamp of the world's enmity to Christ; and we, as crucified with Him, are crucified to the world. Nothing counts for God now but that new creation, to which as in Christ we belong.

3. Ephesians is characteristically the epistle of the heavenly places. In it the sanctuary is opened, not merely to let out the light of the glory, wonderful as the blessing of that is, but a risen and glorified Man has entered and sat down there, and He the Representative of men His people. We therefore are quickened together with Him, risen, and seated in Him in the heavenlies where He sits. That is the height of Christian position: no higher can be imagined.

* "Righteousness" (δικαιοσύνη) occurs thirty-six times; nearest to it comes second Corinthians, seven times. "Righteous" (δίκαιος) seven times; which is only exceeded by Matthew and Luke of the Gospels, while in the Epistles first John comes next with five occurrences. "Justify," "justification," occur eighteen times; Galatians coming next with eight.

† "Our old man was crucified with Him" is found once in Rom. vi. 6.

But there is more that follows, nevertheless; for by the indwelling of the Spirit, the fruit of redemption, we are joined to Him as members of a Body of which He is Head, the Church being thus His Fulness (or complement), who Himself filleth all in all. This is a mystery, long hidden, now told out; besides which the Church is shown to be the Eve also of the Last Adam, the fulfilment of the earliest type of these relationships, with which at the very earliest moment for expression of it the divine heart overflows! Again the Church as indwelt of the Spirit is the habitation of God, and growing unto an holy temple in the Lord; to God is glory in the Church by Christ Jesus unto all the generations of the age of ages! In every truth here, Ephesians without doubt fills its numerical place; and what an unrolling of glories it is! Must not the mere naming them fill our hearts with adoration?

4. Colossians doctrinally follows Ephesians. Some would have it precede it; but its connection with it, which cannot be doubted, is really on the other side. It has the character of its fourth place, and speaks of the walk on earth in the power of the truths that have been already unfolded. For this reason it is that on the one hand the sitting in heavenly places is not mentioned, and on the other we have the links with Romans and Galatians which have been urged in behalf of its intermediate position. The heavens are where the hope is laid up; while we are cut loose from earth in order that we may be unhindered in our course thither. This position of the Colossian epistle may account also for what at least would seem unaccountable in the intermediate one, that the Spirit of God is only once mentioned. In the first three epistles it is quite otherwise; and here also we must probably take into account the objective character of the epistle to explain the omission. It is not the power working in us that is in question, which has been already sufficiently attested, but the objective truths that rule the heart and possess it. It is the furnishing for the way that is before us here—the first part of Numbers, and not the experience of the way in the latter part. And here a beautiful character of the epistle comes out, that it is Christ and His fulness that is the furnishing. Thus the central text is surely here (chap. ii. 9, 10), "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and in Him we are filled up." We see this variously applied and amplified throughout the epistle.

A singular-looking supplement to Colossians is found in Philemon; but even the historical connection is very close. "Onesimus is mentioned in Colossians, and was sent back at the very time of that letter, Philemon himself also belonging to Colosse. It is strange, in fact, that it should be separated from that epistle, except from its being written to an individual, not an assembly, as in the latter case.

"The subject, too, no doubt seems different. It is nevertheless most beautifully connected as an appendix, as we shall easily see. For it is striking that addresses to masters and servants are found (along with other relations in life,) in both Ephesians and Colossians; *to masters*, in

Paul's epistles, *nowhere else;* thus this address to a master fittingly follows.

"A reason, too, for these addresses in these two epistles is surely this, that the thought of the place in Christ, and of the new life of which they speak, should not be taken enthusiastically to do away with the relationships of the present: a real danger, as it has proved, for some.

"Now Philemon demonstrates practically how for the apostle these relationships remain. Onesimus is by his conversion 'much more than a servant, a brother beloved;' yet Paul sends him back to his master, though he would gladly have retained him, but without *his* mind he would do nothing. The epistle shows thus strikingly the true exalting power of Christianity, not intended to release from the duties or disadvantages of an earthly place,—*not* to be a lever to lift into earthly position or ease,—but to fill with a competency to serve in the lowest and lowliest, like Him whom we all serve." (Numerical Structure of Scripture.) Philemon thus clearly connects with the subject of Colossians, the earthly path of the heavenly people.

5. Finally in this series, Philippians takes its place as a grand and blessed Deuteronomic review of conditions and results. The way and the end are put together in a glorious fashion, as found in the experience of the apostle himself; none surely more competent to give them to us! It is that experience side of things which we have noticed as absent in Colossians, but which is now developed in a practical summing up of all that is gone before it. The lesson of Romans is shown as learned in the ability to go on in freedom from the law of sin, the flesh being dismissed as having no confidence in it. It tells of the Cross as for Christ the end of a path of humiliation, which leads out of the world, and into the highest place with God; in all which we are exhorted, as having His mind, to follow Him: which is the lesson of Galatians. It speaks also of Christ as in the place He has reached, a heavenly Object for the heart, as in Ephesians and (especially) Colossians. Then in conclusion it tells us of the practical result for one who has fully tested it,—of the competency of Christ so known and lived for, amid all exercises and all circumstances whatever: "I know both how to be abased and how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need: I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." That is not a theoretic conclusion, but a conscious experience.

In their relation to one another it is plain that these epistles are a progressive series, with the pentateuchal seal fully upon them. They give us position and the outcome of position known and enjoyed. There is no need to enter more at present into this, which in its details can only properly be realized as we take up the books in succession.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF ROMANS

ROMANS has more plainly the regularity of a specific treatise than perhaps any other epistle. Everything advanced in it is reasoned out and vindicated from the objections that could be brought against it; for the more precious and fundamental the truth the more will the unbelief and pride of men summon all the forces of their intellect to overthrow it; the god of this world blinding the minds of those who believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ should shine into them. The theme of Romans is pure gospel; to make way for which, the apostle calls creation and law (man's own conscience also bearing witness) in evidence that both Jew and Gentile are alike under sin and unable to stand in the judgment. He then shows that the righteousness of God, the very thing of which the convicted sinner is afraid, is on the contrary, as manifested in the sacrificial work of Christ, now the refuge and shelter open to men as sinners, and the shield over all who believe in Jesus. It is faith then by which we are justified, not law, though this confirms the law: which witnesses to it in Abraham the father of the legal people of God, and in circumcision the seal of the righteousness of faith in him, and the token of the covenant made with him. Another thing: God showed Himself in him as the God of resurrection, the fulfilment of the promise depending upon that. We, too, believe in the God of resurrection, upon which all for us depends: He having raised up Jesus, delivered to death for our offences, and whose resurrection therefore is our justification. Peace with God, an unchangeable standing in grace, and the glory of God as our hope, are the fruits of this, able to turn to blessing all the trials of the way, our hope secure in the love of God revealed to us in Christ when enemies, and who has reconciled us to Himself through Him. Thus God Himself becomes our Joy.

The power of the blood of Christ for the sinner is thus shown in the first part; in the next we have the place in Christ risen which is the portion of the saint, and the blessings which in this way are made his. We are carried back here to the first Adam and the consequences of his fall, in corruption of nature, with death and impending judgment, for his posterity; law coming in, not as deliverer, but to reckon up sin and turn it into open transgression. On the other hand, Christ upon the same principle of the one involving the many, has become a new Head for deliverance, of whom Adam was but the type in contrast, and in whom we have blessing greater than was lost,—a new life to which

justification is attached, as condemnation to the former one; grace reigning now where before sin reigned. Thus before God we are in Christ, and not in Adam, the death of Christ having been for us the crucifixion of the old man, so that the body of sin might be annulled, that we might serve sin no more. Dead with Christ to sin, in His death to it once for all, we are alive in Him to God for evermore. This is position, not experience; but the result is, if faith has accepted this, that we cannot live in sin. But still the question of power has to be met; and this involves another—that of law. By the death of Christ we have died to law as well as to sin, and that we should bring forth fruit to God. Experience under the test of law shows that what forbids lust as sin yet provokes it, revives sin and is death to me, discovering in me a law of sin to which I am captive. God's deliverance is by the Spirit's law of life in Christ Jesus, which fulfills in us the righteousness of the law, impossible to the law itself. Thus a walk in the Spirit becomes possible, though the body is still dead because of sin. Led by the Spirit, we mortify its deeds and expect its redemption, already consciously children of God, and awaiting the manifestation of His sons, for which the whole creation, groaning, waits. But our hope is sure, and we wait in patience: if God be for us, who can be against us?

This closes the doctrine as to position. There follows the question of the promises to Israel, and how they are affected. Paul argues that they have always been fulfilled according to the sovereign pleasure of God, to Isaac and not Ishmael, to Jacob and not Esau. Will they complain? In the wilderness they would all have been cut off but for this principle; and sovereign mercy is man's only hope. Israel have stumbled at the stumbling-stone, and rejected the way of righteousness by faith for the impracticable righteousness of law. Israel's failure had been announced by their own prophets, though they have not been altogether set aside. An election of grace always remains, and God has overruled their fall for blessing to the Gentiles. But let the Gentiles also take heed: if they continue not in His goodness, they too will be set aside, and Israel brought in; and this will be again for wider blessing still to the whole world.

Practical exhortations close the epistle.

The divisions then are these four:—

1. (Chaps. i.–v. 11):—Righteousness of God in Christ towards all.
2. (Chaps. v. 12–viii.):—Deliverance from sin and law, as dead with Christ and in relationship with the Deliverer.
3. (Chaps. ix.–xi.):—Israel's special promises and their fulfillment.
4. (Chaps. xii.–xvi.): The ways that suit the mercies shown us.

THE

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

DIVISION 1. (Chaps. i.–v. 11.)

Righteousness of God in Christ towards all, and over all believers.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. i. 1–17.)

This the power of God to salvation in a gospel all of Him.

1 (1-7): Promised before, now given in Christ.

1. [a]PAUL, [b]bondman of Jesus Christ, a [c]called apostle [d]set apart to [the] gospel of God, which he [e]promised before through his prophets in holy scriptures, concerning his Son Jesus* Christ our Lord, come of the [f]seed of David according to the flesh, marked out [as] [g]Son of God in power, according to

a *cf.* Acts 7. 58.
b *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 12.
c 1 Cor. 1. 1. *cf.* Gal. 1. 15, 16.
d *cf.* Acts 9. 15. *cf.* Acts 13. 2.
e *cf.* ch. 3. 21 with Acts 17. 2, 3.
f *cf.* Matt. 1. 1. *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 8.
g *cf.* Acts 9. 20. *cf.* Heb. 1. 2.

* The order in the original puts this clause at the end of the sentence, after the word "dead."

NOTES.

DIV. 1.

THE righteousness of God in Christ is the theme of the first division of Romans; the forensic character of the epistle suiting as well the people addressed as it does the subject. Rome means "strength," or "force;" and to the many sufferers under its sway, it might seem to represent brute force only; but it never could have attained the supremacy in which it stood so long, had not that force been a disciplined, law-governed one: to law it must needs submit as first condition of any great success. Roman law accordingly still stands for us as almost the ideal of law; and this means necessarily the ideal of right also,—at least in certain respects: for though the blunders (or worse) of legislators may make us sometimes have to put in contrast law and equity, yet if the two were not in the main one, the purpose of law could not be accomplished. Error and evil are but revolutionary forces—divisive and unstable: no will of man can make them other. Because the world is under moral government, homage must be paid to it by some sort of submission; and thus it can be said of any of the powers of the world, "he is the minister of God to thee for good." Corrupt and evil as any governor on earth may be, he knows that he must pay a certain tax in this way to the right; and those most without law are, as judged in the court of their own conscience, a "law unto themselves."

According to a consent which may be held for universal therefore, in God is the fount of righteousness; and if in their highest deities the heathen world did not find a satisfying expression of this, they had to invent other, special gods to fill the gap. Thus Paul preaches to the conscience of the mass when he proclaims the righteousness of God. But when, under a conviction wrought by the Spirit, the general persuasion of man's sinfulness becomes an agonizing realization of personal guilt, then with the apprehension of this character in Him there comes a need for the preaching of the righteousness of God for comfort and not for alarm: the Righteousness of God as revealed in the gospel!

Here is the key to the meaning of a term about which there has been so much perplexity, and so great a variety of thoughts. God Himself is limited in a certain way, as we all realize. He cannot lie; He cannot repent. This is no

the [h]Spirit of holiness by [i]resurrection of [the] dead; through whom we have received [j]grace and apostleship for [k]obedience of faith among all the [l]nations for his Name's sake: among whom are ye also, [m]called of Jesus Christ:—to all that are in Rome, [n]beloved of God, called [o]saints, [p]grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[h] *cf.* Lk. 1. 35. *cf.* Matt. 3. 16, 17.
[i] *cf.* Eph. 1. 19, 20. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 20, 21. *cf.* Jno. 11. 43, 44.
[j] *cf.* Eph. 3. 2, 8; *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 9, 10.
[k] ch. 16. 26; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 2.
[l] *cf.* ch. 11. 13; *cf.* ch. 15. 9-21.
[m] 1 Cor. 1. 2; *cf.* ch. 8. 30.
[n] *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 13, 14; *cf.* ch. 8. 39.
[o] 1 Cor. 1. 2; *cf.* Heb. 13. 12.
[p] 2 Cor. 1. 2, etc.

limit indeed, save that of His own perfections: He cannot act in contradiction to His attributes. Thus, though He be Love itself, yet love cannot with Him, even in the least degree, overbalance justice. "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord" (Pro. xvii. 15). So His own Word declares, and how can He then clear the guilty? Did He not, when He gave the law, say distinctly that He could not? (Ex. xxxiv. 7.)

Thus the righteousness of God is what is of first moment in the gospel; and we can see that it is His *attribute* of righteousness that is in question: "that He may be just and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus," as the apostle shows us (chap. iii. 26), states the difficulty which the first part of the epistle meets triumphantly. That the gospel can set the very righteousness of God itself upon our side, and make it the peaceful assurance of the anxious soul, is a marvel of divine love and wisdom.

Subd. 1.

At the outset therefore the apostle sets forth this as the very power for salvation: a gospel which is entirely of God, as it is Christ who is the substance of it. Only one Man is competent to be our Saviour, who in His own Person has united God and man. We, to whom it is the gospel, have but to hear, to bow to God's wondrous grace, and be made glad; for the gospel is "glad tidings."

1. To this gospel Paul had been set apart, an apostle of it by the call of Him to whom he thankfully owns himself a bondman. For the grace that had set him free had made him His for ever. The peculiarity of his call we have seen elsewhere; he does not now speak of it, nor of where he had seen His glory of whom he speaks. He carries us back, rather, to His revelation of Himself on earth; for his purpose is to show how in His own Person He to whom the ages had been looking forward had bridged over the distance which the fall had brought in between God and man. Not that this alone could have removed the distance for man. It made God's purpose apparent to do so, and showed the strength of the hands to which this purpose was entrusted.

The promise had been in the mercy of God given from the beginning. The broken echoes of it are heard far and wide among the traditions of the nations: broken indeed, for man cannot be trusted to keep what is of most vital importance to him without corruption. Thus the prophets—themselves as the special men of God in their days the witness of general departure—had preserved it in scriptures which bore in their character as "holy" scriptures the evidence of their origin from the Holy One; and the "prophets" vindicate their title by the fact that they "speak forth" what is a message from God.

How great the mercy of a written Word, and how plainly has this been always in the mind of the All-wise for men! None the less surely that, to keep it for them, God had to separate to Himself a people from the idolatrous mass, and make them the depositaries of it. There it was as the voice of divine Wisdom in the highways of the nations, available for those who sought at least, little as men might seek or care.

Now the One so heralded had come, of the seed of David according to the flesh,—His line marked out more precisely as the years went on, the stream of prophecy becoming wider and fuller as the years lengthened, and deferred hope

2 (8-17): Which he desired to preach to them for the confirmation of their faith; being through faith for salvation, according even to Old Testament Scriptures.

2. First, I [q]thank my God through Jesus Christ concerning you all, that your faith is being proclaimed in the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of his Son, how [r]unceasingly I make mention of you at my prayers, always beseeching if any way now at least I may be prospered,

q 1 Cor. 1. 4. Phil. 1. 3. *cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 8-10.

r *cf.* Eph. 1. 15, 16. *cf.* Col. 1. 9. *cf.* Phile. 4.

might make the heart grow sick. Of royal seed, Himself a King,—such a "Ruler over men" as David's own last words foretold; yet that was His lesser and lower glory: that was "according to the *flesh*," and the word is used which intimates all the weakness of humanity in its lowest part; not that which declared man's place in creation as the offspring of God, but which linked him with all the life of which he was the head. And this, just as such, has for us how much blessing: it is the end of the Bethel ladder let down to earth; and bringing with it blessing and lifting up for the whole system with which man is connected! With flesh comes what love covets and could not find in any sphere above it: by that will which He came to do, "we are sanctified, through the *offering of the body* of Jesus Christ." (Heb. x. 10.)

But He is also Son of God in a way that Adam unfallen could not have claimed to be. Amid all the lowliness of a real humanity such as flesh would argue, He is marked out as Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by resurrection of the dead. "A Spirit of holiness" (there is no article to "Spirit") is taken by many as the Lord's divine nature, which, they urge, is the proper antithesis here: "according to the flesh," "according to the spirit;" but there is no similar language used elsewhere in Scripture for the divine nature of our Lord, and the passages appealed to (2 Cor. iii. 17; 1 Tim. iii. 16; Heb. ix. 14; 1 Pet. iii. 18) do not apply. If exact definition were intended, "a spirit of holiness" would not even really distinguish a nature truly divine, which the title "Son of God," in contrast with "come of David according to the flesh," sufficiently indicates. Paul from the beginning of his ministry, and in distinction from the first apostolic preaching given us in the Acts, "preached Jesus in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God" (Acts ix. 20).

Here we shall find what the apostle refers to, if we remember how at Jordan after His baptism, the Spirit came upon our Lord as the Father's voice proclaimed Him His beloved Son, to anoint Him for the work to which His baptism in the river of death has pledged Him. The Baptist saw it, as he tells us, and bore twofold testimony that He was both the Lamb of sacrifice and the Son of God (John i. 29–34). From this His ministry among men publicly begins, with works of power which show Him master of death itself, into which He went but to dispel it. Thus He raises the dead: Lazarus comes forth at His call, in attestation that He is the Son of the Father, whom the Father always hears (John xi. 4, 41–43). And this power to raise the dead, exercised in this way, is power over the sin which has brought in death, and which by and by His own resurrection fully manifests. He has taken our sins upon Him, and rises free from all the burdens He has assumed; the glory in His Face that which is now gospel for us all, and which characterizes in a special way Paul's gospel.

This then is He of whom the gospel speaks; a message which for its importance must have messengers devoted to it to make it known in all the world, and press it upon the attention of the most unwilling. Under the law there had been nothing of this kind outside of Israel; inside only exceptional prophetic voices, the call of solitary watchers in the night, for long silent, till renewed by the voice crying in the wilderness. But now it is a message of the morning passing on from lip to lip, where one who wakens, wakens up his fellow to repeat it. To start such music Paul "received grace and apostleship for obedience of faith among all the nations for His Name's sake;"—obedience not legal, but springing out of faith: for faith is the great worker, and if it

by the will of God to *come to you. For I long to see you, that I may †impart to you some spiritual gift, for your establishment; that is, to be ‡mutually comforted among you by the faith that is in each other, both yours and mine. And I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that I often §purposed coming to you, and have been hindered to the present time; that I might

cf. 1 Thess. 2. 17, 18. *cf.* ch. 15. 23, 24.
† *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 8.
‡ *cf.* Col. 2. 1-3.
§ *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 16, 17.
3. 7, 8; *cf.* Phile. 20.
¶ *cf.* Acts 19. 21.

have not works, is dead, not living faith. This faith the grace of the gospel awakens in the soul which God opens to it; he who had received grace in its most perfect expression was the suited apostle of it, and that in its widest range of blessed ministry. All nations were now to be the recipients of God's salvation; among whom already were these at Rome—saints by the call of grace. Everywhere we see in the very forefront of the epistle—in this opening salutation, the stamp of divine sovereignty, which is nothing else than divine love that will not be restrained by all the obduracy of man's heart. This call is the voice of the Creator: "I call unto them, they stand up together" (Isa. xlviii. 13); but now bringing forth a new creation, which with gladness proportioned to the pains He has taken to produce it, He claims and declares His own. Those called are therefore saints by calling—a people sanctified to Himself. This is the fundamental meaning of "saint," which therefore all His people are, set apart to Himself. This the blood of Christ has made us as redeemed to Him; this the work of the Spirit makes effective holiness. Let us notice the "beloved of God," which precedes and accounts for this: God has set His heart upon us; therefore He will have us for Himself. To these at Rome therefore the apostle sends his salutation of grace and peace:—not a mere wish, nor even a prayer, but a comforting assurance of blessing from God revealed as Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ upon the Father's throne.

2. He hastens to let them know, writing to them of the gospel as he is, that he means no possible discredit of their faith. On the contrary, he thanks God through Jesus Christ, who had drawn them to Himself, that their faith was being everywhere spoken about. Such a report, contrary to the custom, perhaps, with most of us, seems always to have engaged the apostle's prayers in an especial manner for those of whom he heard it. Accordingly, as one serving God in his spirit in the gospel of His Son, he was continually making mention of these Roman disciples when he was in prayer, not merely that they might be blessed, but as himself desiring to come to them. Indeed it was the longing of his heart to see them, that he might impart to them some spiritual gift, for their establishment. He speaks in the consciousness of that with which God had endowed him, and as realizing that the sincerest faith was never beyond the need of help. And indeed he rejoiced in and would be comforted by their faith as they by his.

Besides, there was a special link between all Gentiles and himself as the apostle of the Gentiles. He would not neglect any part of the field which, as that, was committed to his care; and had purposed often to come to them that he might have fruit among them as well as elsewhere. We see that the assembly at Rome was essentially a Gentile assembly, and thus was reckoned to belong to his sphere of labor. Rome herself, long after this, and to the present time, claims the apostle of the circumcision as its own, making nothing of Paul's assertion here. It is characteristic of those who "say they are Jews, and are not" (Rev. ii. 9), and natural for those who after the Jewish manner cling to succession from apostles, which Paul's call and mission so decisively broke through. Had it been Peter who had written to the Romans, how this would have been urged! The incontrovertible fact that Peter left the Gentile field to Paul (Gal. ii. 9) goes for nothing with them.

As for Paul, it is as a responsibility that he recognizes the place in which he has been put, an obligation to all classes to declare to them the gospel. Before

have some [w]fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the nations. Both to Greeks and barbarians, both to wise and unintelligent, am I [x]debtor: so, as far as may depend on me, I am [y]ready to preach the gospel also to you that are in Rome. For I am not [z]ashamed of the gospel:* for it is the [a]power of God unto salvation to every one that [b]believeth, to the [c]Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is [d]righteousness of God revealed, [e]by faith, [f]to faith: according as it is [g]written, Now the just shall live by faith.

[w] *cf.* Phil. 1. 11. *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 1, 2.
[x] *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 16, 17. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15. *cf.* Col. 1. 29.
[y] *cf.* ch. 15. 22. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 1, 2.
[z] *cf.* Phil. 1. 20. *cf.* 2 Tim. 1. 16, 17.

* "Of Christ" is omitted now by all editors.

[a] *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 18, 24; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 5. [b] ch. 4. 5; *cf.* Acts 16. 31. [c] ch. 2. 9; *cf.* Lk. 24. 47. [d] ch. 3. 21. [e] ch. 3. 22, 25, 30; ch. 5. 1. [f] *cf.* Mk. 9. 23. *cf.* ch. 10. 16, 17. [g] Hab. 2. 4; Gal. 3. 11; Heb. 10. 38.

God there were in fact but two classes, the believer and the unbeliever. The Jew had the offer first, but if salvation be by faith in it, the believing Gentile was on as sure ground, and in blessing as full as ever the Jew could be.

But he comes here to what is now the great theme before him. He was not ashamed of the gospel: he had no reason to be of that which was the power of God to salvation for men. (What a contrast of the "power" for which the very name of Rome stood, and with which as mistress of the world it was identified!) Faith, which the grace of God invited on the part of all, was the common principle of blessing for all. But what made the gospel to be so divine a power? The revelation of the righteousness of God in it. He does not say, the love or the mercy of God, but His righteousness: because, as we have seen, without permission of righteousness love and mercy cannot act; every act of God must be justified by all His attributes. No sinner was ever afraid of the love of God, or of His mercy; His righteousness is another thing. Consequently it is just the righteousness of God which, if it can be revealed in *gospel*—in good news to sinners—then we have what indeed has power to save.

But what then is this good news? a gospel of works? there can be none; and that for a very simple reason. "All have sinned;" and "if we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us." But, if then, we could henceforth yield Him unsinning obedience, that is due to Him already, and cannot atone for the sins of the past. Yet who could promise this even for the future? who would dare? Men would compromise with doing their best; but here again they do not mean just what they say. Who ever did his best? Who would dare to meet God on this ground that he had done his very best, even for a week? It would be folly indeed to think of doing so. But shall we offer Him less than this? How much less, then? That would necessarily mean the trusting to mercy without knowing how far mercy could be shown; and in no sense would righteousness be revealed in it at all.

Man cannot furnish, then, for God what would be righteousness before Him; good news there cannot be for man upon that principle; good news there cannot be, founded upon man's doing. God has another, and a very different one; the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel, not the righteousness of man in anywise, save the Second Man; and the gospel being all about Christ, we need not doubt, even if we knew no more, that it is consistent with righteousness. What is left for man to do is to justify God in all this by bowing to receive His grace as grace. Faith is thus the principle upon which His grace can be shown, or (what is the same thing) His righteousness be revealed in good news to sinners. "By faith, to faith," is here the manner of the revelation. The good news is all about Christ, as the apostle has declared; faith is that in which the soul turns away from self to Christ, and the revelation being made to faith, the believer has full title to that which is revealed. Here the Old Testament adds its confirmation also to the New: if according to the law, "the man that doeth (the commandments) shall live in them," the prophet announces the contrary

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chaps. i. 18–iii. 20.)

Creation and Law witnessing against Gentile and Jew.

SECTION 1. (Chaps. i. 18–ii. 16.)

The Gentile, left to himself, in lawless independence.

1 (i. 18-32): With the knowledge of God, not choosing to retain it.

1 (18-20): Sufficiency of the knowledge.

1. [1] FOR [the] [a]wrath of God is revealed from heaven upon all [i]mpiety and [j]unrighteousness of men who hold* the [k]truth in unrighteousness. Because what may be known of God is [l]manifest among them;

* R. V. renders this "hold down," but the general thought is of "possessing" or "holding fast," while the other is not incorrect. We have the same word in 2 Thess. ii. 6, 7, where the thought is evidently "hindering."

[a] ch. 2. 8, 9. 1 Thess. 1. 10. 2 Thess. 1. 8, 9.
[i] ch. 3. 18.
[j] ch. 3. 10.
[k] *cf.* ver. 32. *ctr.* Eph. 4. 15.
[l] *cf.* Acts 14. 17. *cf.* Acts 17. 24.

principle as in fact the way of blessing, "The just shall live by faith." (Hab. ii, 4.) Thus there is nowhere any real contradiction in God's ways with men, any more than between the plowing and the sowing. The plow of law had to do its very different work before the sowing of the gospel seed could be. That the plowing should give way to the sowing does not make light of the plowman's work. If the seed be once sown, the work of the plow will be merely devastation.

SUBD. 2.

We have now reached the body of the epistle, which proceeds in orderly progress to the full exposition of what has just been announced. If the righteousness of God is what the gospel reveals, and this on the principle of faith, then it has first to be shown, in the fullest and most careful way, that on man's part nothing else could at all avail for him. God had been working this out in the long ages preceding Christianity; and His slow, patient manner of work shows the importance of the question, as it shows also how obstinately man cleaves to some righteousness of his own, and how hard it is to bring him to repentance. Nay, the greatest pretension to righteousness that could be made was there where God had labored most. The Pharisee has become for us the very symbol of it. Everything that God had done for Israel, from the taking up of Abraham himself, in whom God's principle of faith was fully announced, when as yet there was no law to burden it with conditions, the Pharisee turned to his own account as based upon human merit; while the law, interpreted as applying merely to external conduct, could be made to serve an opposite purpose from that for which it was given. But in the law itself was the remedy for all this, as the apostle shows.

His argument covers the whole ground, bringing Gentile and Jew, with revelation and without, alike as hopeless, save in God's mere grace. His judgment, while taking account of all differences, will yet leave all without excuse; the Jew, most favored, guiltiest of all, and with an accuser just in that in which he most confidently trusts.

Sec. 1.

The case of the Gentile is that which Paul first reviews. The witness of creation to the glory of God is sufficient to condemn him for the gross idolatry to which he has turned from the actual knowledge of the true God, with which he started. The story of heathenism is that of men who with their back to the light walk necessarily in their own shadow. The moral obliquity which manifests itself in their ways is but the sure result of this departure. The fine pictures which men could draw of virtue were competent enough to show only the wilfulness of the evil which disgraced their lives, and for which their own conscience threatened them with judgment to come,—a judgment which the gospel did not ignore, but declared plainly; where the Jew would be first, as he was in privilege, but all would receive the exact award of righteousness.

1. The apostle does not overlook the difference as to light therefore; his argu-

for God hath manifested it to them; for the invisible things of him from the [m]creation of the world are perceived, being understood by the things made, [even] his everlasting [n]power and divinity, so as to make them [o]inexcusable.

m cf. Ps. 19. 1-6.
n cf. Job chs. 38-41.
o cf. ch. 2. 14, 15.

ment is, that the light man has he is not true to. The knowledge of the heathen is ample to test which way his heart inclines. He is not judged by the darkness which he cannot help, but by the light which he refuses. How can he plead his lack of that from which he turns wherever he finds it? Man's course has not been, as he would vainly have it, the evolution of a creature whom God has burdened with difficulties, yet who struggles upward under the burden, but of one whose struggles are with the God who made him, and against the Hand that would even now relieve him of a burden self-imposed.

[1] Thus the wrath of God is revealed from heaven upon all impiety and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness. If one can find a person then who has no truth to hold, he cannot come under this wrath revealed. "Impiety" is the characteristic of that for which men are condemned: a heart away from God, and which on that account deals perversely with whatever truth it has. That is the indictment; and it is broad enough to cover the whole race of fallen man. There are not two classes in this statement, as some have thought: for the express argument of the apostle here is that Gentiles who have not revelation have truth sufficient to make them without excuse. Wrath is thus upon all; though love may seek and act at the same time: "we," says the apostle, speaking of himself and believers in general, "were . . . children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. ii. 3). Thus he immediately goes on now to say of the Gentiles outside of revelation that they have nevertheless a constant manifestation of God before their eyes. Thus they "hold the truth in unrighteousness; *because* what may be known of God is manifest among them: for God has manifested it unto them." And he proceeds at once to speak of creation. It is a testimony that we think too little about, even as Christians, and naturally do not credit it with much power of appeal to heathen minds. The very glory of the Christian revelation makes all else seem dull indeed. We argue back also from the condition of the heathen into which, whatever the testimony of nature, they yet lapsed, to depreciate that which could not keep them from lapsing. But this, forcible as it may appear, is no real argument. It is exactly the same as that which the heathen might and do urge against Christianity itself from the condition of numbers under the light of it. In this way what bears witness of the evil in man is made to discredit the wisdom and goodness of God. The apostle would say, "Let God be true and every man a liar." Surely that is the proper view, which nature itself confirms: the clouds are from the earth which conceal the brightness of the heavens. Allow that there is sin in man which could make him reject and crucify the Son of God Himself, you cannot accept an argument which would equally deny the glory of God in Him because men "saw no beauty in Him, that they should desire Him."

Yet "the heavens display the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork." So said the psalmist; and the apostle is not a whit behind him here: "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are perceived, being understood by the things made, even His everlasting power and divinity, so as to make them inexcusable."

And indeed there are testimonies enough of what the natural effect of these things is upon men brought face to face with them, before yet they have hardened themselves by long opposition. In the infancy of the nations, though we cannot reach back by tradition to their true beginnings, we know enough to know (what the infidel man of science often enough reminds us of) that the tendency was rather to see God in everything than to see Him nowhere. Even idolatrous Greece peopled the fountain and stream, the mountain and forest,

[2] (21-23): Estrangement of heart leading to idolatry.

[3] Because having [p]known God they [q]glorified him not as God, neither were [r]thankful, but became vain in their [s]reasonings, and their senseless heart was [t]darkened. Professing to be [u]wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the [v]incorruptible God into the [w]likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and quadrupeds and reptiles.

[3] (24-25): The moral transformation wrought.

[3] Wherefore God [x]gave them up in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness, so that their bodies were dishonored among them; being such as [y]changed the truth of God into falsehood, and honored and served the [z]creature more than him who created it, who is [a]blessed throughout the ages. Amen.

[4] (26-32): Ways of apostate men.

[4] For this reason God gave them up to [b]disgraceful passions: for both their females changed the natural use into that contrary to nature; and in like manner the males also, leaving the natural use of the female,

p *cf.* Job 21. 14.
q *cfr.* Rev. 4. 11.
r *cfr.* Ps. 95. 2.
s *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 20, 21.
t *cf.* Eph. 4. 17, 18.
u *cf.* Acts 7. 22 with Is. 19, 11, 12.
v *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 17. *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 15, 16.
w *cf.* Ex. 20. 4-6. *cf.* Ps. 115. 4-7. *cf.* Is. 40. 18-22. *cf.* Jer. 10. 14, 15. *cf.* Acts 17. 29.
x vers. 26, 28; *cf.* Eph. 4. 19; *cf.* 1 Tim. 4. 2. y *cf.* Jer. 10. 14; *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 11, 12; *cf.* Rev. 22. 15. z *cf.* Is. 40. 25, 26; *cf.* Hab. 1. 11-16. a ch. 9. 5. b *cf.* Gen. 19. 4; *cf.* Jude 7; *cf.* Lev. 20. 13; *cf.* Eph. 5. 12; *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 9-11.

with its multitudinous gods; and the common nature worship which so infected the nations testifies at once to the power of nature to preach of the divine, and the perversion by men of that which they could not ignore.

The apostle's words by no means intimate that this witness of nature could ever do the work of the gospel: that is not the point. Nature does indeed bear witness to the gospel; but in that parabolic form for which is needed an interpreter outside itself. And the traditions of the nations show, spite of all their corruptions, that God had not left them without the knowledge of Himself, which might have in the main interpreted nature to them, if they had cared to go on with the Divine Teacher; but they cared not. The knowledge of the everlasting power and divinity of their Creator should have made them at least turn to Him; but they turned away.

[3] And thus the idolatry which had overspread the nations was explained, and could only be explained, by this insane desire to forget God; which hid Him in His works, instead of discovering Him in them. Rejecting the true God, they pictured one according to their tastes, likening Him to corruptible man himself, and even to the animals below man. In which their folly, they yet imagined themselves wise; all their reasonings being made vain by a senseless and unthankful heart. They had an "occult" wisdom, as men style it now, upon which they prided themselves, and which was confessedly a groping in the dark, ignoring the plainest facts. Such is heathenism: a worship of bestial and degraded forms, the imaginations and manufacture of their worshipers. Reason and conscience unite in the condemnation of that which nevertheless under the light of Christianity is ever coming in afresh in winking Madonnas and the virtue of dead men's bones, and wafer-gods, transformed by a few magical words into soul, body, and divinity of Him whom they call their Saviour!

[3] In this dishonor done to God they must necessarily degrade themselves also. The worshipers must become assimilated to what they worship. As their lusts had turned them away from the Holy One, so their new gods were made to sanction the lusts which had created them, and to which He whom they had forsaken gave them up. Man without God, whom it is his distinctive glory to recognize, becomes as the beast which has none. But the beast is therefore not a moral creature; man degraded to the beast becomes *im*moral. It is a necessary, but righteous retribution, in which man inflicts the punishment upon himself. His service of the creature is but his own gratification; which is but of the lusts which war against the soul. He feeds but the serpent-brood, which sting and

were inflamed in their lust towards one another; males with males working indecency, and receiving in themselves the recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not think fit to have God in recognition, God gave them up to a [c]reprobate mind, to do things unmeet, being filled with all [d]unrighteousness, [e]wickedness, [f]covetousness, [g]malice; full of [h]envy, [i]murder, [j]strife, [k]deceit, [l]malignity; [m]whisperers, [n]backbiters, [o]hateful to God, [p]insolent, [q]proud, [r]boasters, [s]inventors of evil things, [t]disobedient to parents, [u]without understanding, [v]covenant-breakers, without [w]natural affection, [x]merciless; men who, [y]knowing the righteous judgment of God, that they who do such things are worthy of death, not only practise them, but also have sympathetic [z]pleasure with those who do them.

2 (ll. 1-16.): Against the mere judges of others acts and conscience will testify in the day of judgment.

1 (1-11): No barren knowledge required, but consistent righteousness, of all alike.

2. [1] Wherefore thou art [a]inexcusable, O man, every one

c vers.24,26. cf.1 Tim.4. 2.
d ch. 3. 10.
e cf. Gen.13. 13.
f cf. 1 Ki.21. 1, etc.
g cf. Gen.27. 41.
h cf. Matt. 27. 18.
i cf. 1 Jno.3. 12-15.
j cf.Prov.17. 19.
k cf. Josh.9. 3-5.
l cf.Acts 17. 5.
m cf. Ps. 41. 7.
n cf.1 Pet.2. 12.
o cf. Jer. 44. 4.
p cf. Ex.5.2.
q cf. Is. 16.6.
r cf. Ps. 12. 3, 4.
s cf. Prov. 16. 27.
t cf.2 Tim.3. 2.
u ch. 3. 11.
v cf. Dan. 9. 27.
w cf. 1 Ki. 3. 26.
x cf. Matt. 18. 32, 33.
y cf. ch. 1. 18.
z cf. 2 Thess. 2. 12; cf. Ps. 50. 18.
a ch. 1. 20; ch. 3. 19.

torture him; and the world becomes thus a dreadful scene of suicidal warfare, the secret heart of which is blacker than its deeds declare.

[1] The ways of men in this condition the apostle* pictures: disgraceful violations of nature, and crimes that walked openly in the heathen darkness; while men who realized the judgment of God upon their abominations, not only walked defiantly in them but had sympathetic pleasure in those who did so.

2. [1] Such then was the condition of the Gentile world: one to which the Gentiles themselves bore witness in strong decisive words; but to witness against it was one thing, to escape or deliver from it quite another. In the day of judgment, says the apostle, the ability to judge another will be of no avail in behalf of him whose own deeds will be in question, when conscience, kept down by self-interest in the present time, will as in a moment resume its sway over the terrified and convicted soul, and it will be searched out under the light of absolute holiness.

It is a strange and startling fact, the ability we have to see and condemn the evil in another, while yet in ourselves, where we should know it best and recognize it most readily, we can ignore it as we do. But this self-ignorance is a voluntary one; and when the conscience *is* allowed to act, we at once discern it to have been so, and our guilt in this voluntariness.

The ability to judge is only a testimony to the responsibility which attaches to us. The inexcusability of judging proceeds from our own inability to stand before God in judgment. It is our Lord's reproof of those who brought to Him the adulteress, that he who was without sin should cast the first stone at her. To judge *sin* is, of course, always right, and we should not be in a right condition if we did not do it. Nor is the apostle here touching the question of the magistrate's duty as such, any more than that of the Christian assembly to "judge them that are within" (1 Cor. v. 12). He is not dealing with the relation of Christians to the world, but with that of men as men everywhere under

* The apostle gives in the plainest language the moral corruptions resulting from this turning away from God. He gives the extreme results of moral degradation, not as exceptional, but as showing the legitimate consequences of idolatry. There were abundant examples of it in ancient times in the unspeakable vices of Sodom and Gomorrah and those made familiar to us by the historians and satirists. Such crimes were well known to those to whom Paul wrote. Nor must we suppose that the light of Christianity has changed the heart of the natural man. Vice may hide itself in the dark when the light shines, but it is there, and the marks of the apostasy are similar in many ways to this picture of the natural man (2 Tim. iii. 1-6).—S. R.

who judgest; for wherein thou [b]judgest the other, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest [c]doest the same things. But we know that the [d]judgment of God is according to truth against those who do such things. And reckonest thou this, O man, who judgest those who do such things, and practisest them, that thou shalt [e]escape the judgment of God? Or [f]despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and [g]long suffering, not knowing that the [h]goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But according to thy hardness and impenitent heart, thou [i]treasurest up for thyself wrath in a day of wrath and [j]revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will [k]recompense to each one according to his works: to those who with [l]endurance in good work seek for [m]glory and honor and [n]incorruption, [o]eternal life; but to those who are [p]contentious, and disobey the truth, but obey [q]unrighteousness, wrath [shall be] and [r]indignation, tribulation and anguish, upon [s]every soul of man that worketh evil, [t]both of the Jew first, and of the Greek: but glory and honor and peace to every one that worketh good, both to the Jew first, and to the Greek: for there is [u]no respect of persons with God.

b cf. Matt.7. 1-5. *cf.* Jno.8.1-11.
c ver. 21-23. *cf.* Jno.8.7.
d cf. ch. 3. 6, 19. *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10.
*e cf.*1 Thess. 5. 3. *cf.*2 Pet.3.7.
f cf. Acts 13. 41. *cf.* Mal. 1. 6, 7.
g cf. ch. 9. 2. *cf.*Gen. 6.3. *cf.*2 Pet.3.9.
*h cf.*Is.30.18. *cf.*Is. 26.10. *cf.* Eccl. 8. 11.
*i cf.*Deut.32. 34, 35. *cf.* Jas. 5. 3. *ctr.*Matt.6. 19-21.
*j cf.*2 Thess. 1. 7-10. *cf.*Lk.17.30. *cf.* Rev. 19. 11-21.
k cf. Prov. 24. 12. *cf.* Jer. 17. 10; *cf.* Rev. 20. 12, 13.
*l cf.*Gal. 6.9; *cf.* Lk. 8. 15.
m cf. 1 Pet. 5. 4.
n cf. 2 Tim. 1. 10; *ctr.* Ps. 49. 20.
o cf. ch. 6. 22, 23; *cf.* Jno. 3. 16.
p cf. Acts 17. 5, 32; *cf.* Acts 7. 51.
q ch. 1. 18.
r cf. Col. 3. 6; *cf.* Rev. 19. 15.
s cf. ch. 3. 19; *cf.* Gal. 3. 22.
t cf. ch. 1. 16; *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 17; *cf.* Am. 3. 2.
u cf. Acts 10. 34; *cf.* Ezek. 18. 4; *cf.* Deut. 10. 17.

the eye of God, where none can stand in the judgment—to strip every one of the vain thought of establishing his own righteousness by some fancied superiority over his neighbor. It is one of the strangest, and yet one of the commonest of excuses. Even the comparative estimate is sure to be wrong,—for without the knowledge of the secrets of the heart we have not the means of making it, while in his own cause no human law could allow a man to be his own judge. If the comparative estimate also could be truly made, it would avail nothing before Him whose standard of right is not a relative but an absolute one. The soul also who was honestly seeking to get into God's Presence as to its own condition could never think of another than itself. The occupation with another's evil is therefore one of the surest signs of being oneself away from God.

Judging *another* and judging *sin* are in the way the apostle is speaking here incompatible things. The judgment of God is against every one who practises evil; and there is no remedy but in turning to God, whose goodness is continually inviting to repentance; while yet His forbearance how often causes men to despise the riches of that goodness; so that if judgment against an evil work is not speedily executed, the heart of the sons of men is thoroughly set in them to do evil (Eccl. viii. 11). With Pharaoh that which hardened his heart was just God's forbearing mercy (Ex. viii. 15; ix. 34); and so that which should be for good is turned again and again to evil through the revolt of man's will against his Maker; treasures of mercy are stored up for futurity as treasures of wrath, and a day of wrath must come for those upon whom all His goodness has been ineffectual for good.

That wrath will be a revelation of righteous judgment—a measurement of good and evil divinely perfect, according to the principle upon which men insist, of works. Those who in a path of righteousness persistently seek for glory, honor, and incorruption, shall obtain eternal life; those who in contentious controversy with God disobey the truth, upon them shall be wrath and indignation,

[s] (12-16): According to various grades of privilege.

[2] For as many as have [v]sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned under law shall be [w]judged by law, (for not the [x]hearers of law are just before God, but the doers of law shall be justified. For when Gentiles who have no law, practise by [y]nature the things of the law, these, having no law,

v *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 21. *cf.* Gal. 2. 15.

w *cf.* Jno. 5. 45, 46. *cf.* Jno. 12. 48. *cf.* Matt. 5. 17-20.

x *cf.* Jas. 1. 22, 23; *cf.* Matt. 7. 26, 27. y *cf.* ch. 1. 19, 20; *cf.* Acts 14. 17.

tribulation, and anguish. To the workers of good, it is emphatically repeated, shall be glory, honor, and peace. In all this the Jew comes in along with the Greek (or Gentile); and his especial privileges may even give him a first place; but the same exact award will be to each. There can be no favoritism with the righteous Judge.

What a day to test all the pretension of man, and show the consistent, equal ways of God with him, which now he so bitterly arraigns! Who could face it steadfastly without terror, if that were all? These then are the principles of the judgment; nothing is said as yet of results, nor has the gospel been as yet brought in: God's way is not to mix together things so different. The day spoken of is a day of wrath and judgment, the reward of righteousness being introduced without any intimation whether righteous there shall be found in the way indicated. We shall have directly all possible assurance with regard to this.

[2] Notice then that while we have not as yet come formally to the case of the Jew, the mention of God's equal dealing with all has brought him in. Nay, he appears in a prominent place, though with a solemn reminder for the self-confident. If first in privilege, he will be first in judgment too: can he face the responsibility entailed by the wonderful things which God has done for him? He will be judged by that law which it is his privilege to possess. Not only so, but the law has actually pronounced sentence, though that is not referred to here. But the Gentile without law shall be judged apart from law: he will not be held responsible for a knowledge he has not possessed. Is that therefore a kind of gospel as to him? Will he be considered as in a sort of irresponsible child-state and be let off easily? The case of the heathen, as the apostle has presented it to us does not encourage any such expectation, and he now adds a word which positively forbids it. He does not simply say that as many as have sinned without law shall be *judged* apart from law. People are prone to imagine that even the judgment of God can acquit a certain class of sinners, and that to be judged is by no means necessarily to be condemned;—a view which the psalmist has long ago repudiated. "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord," is his cry; "for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified" (Ps. cxliii. 2). And here the apostle puts in a word which as to the outcome of judgment cuts off hope: "For as many as have sinned without law shall also *perish* without law." Just there where one might expect a less rigorous dealing, and where, in fact, the responsibility of the Jew who has the law is not to be supposed, just there he yet inserts a word which with regard to the Jew he does not use: the Jew, he says, shall be judged by the law; but the Gentile who sins apart from law shall *perish*.

Does this then justify the Jew in his thought of a different issue as to himself from the condemnation which he readily accords to the Gentile? The apostle's purpose in all this is one quite opposite: it is to bring in all men guilty before God. And here he goes on to show that a Gentile may be comparatively in a better position than the Jew. The law does not justify hearers (in which case a Jew might indeed congratulate himself) but doers: "the *doers* of the law shall be justified." By and by we shall hear the sweeping sentence of the law as to all, and that "by works of law shall no flesh be justified in [God's] sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Here he does not as yet say this; but he appeals to the conscience of the Jew, priding himself upon the mere knowledge

are a law unto themselves, being such as show the [a]law's work written in their hearts, their [a]conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing,) in the [b]day when God shall judge the secrets of men, by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.

[a] *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 1. *cf.* Gen. 3. 7, 8. *etr.* Heb. 8. 10.
[a] *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 1. *cf.* Acts 24.
25. [b] *cf.* Acts 17. 31; *cf.* Rev. 20. 11-15.

and possession of that which he had no care to keep, against any comparison of himself with the lawless Gentile such as he was prone to make. "For when the Gentiles who have no law practise by nature the things of the law, these, having no law, are a law unto themselves, being such as show the law's work written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing."

We must distinguish carefully in these words "the law's *work* written in the heart" of a Gentile, from the *law* written in the heart of a converted Israelite, according to the new covenant (Heb. viii. 10). The confusion here is only part of a system widely held, which would, in direct contradiction to the words of the apostle here, put the whole of mankind from the beginning, with Adam their first father also, under the law of Moses, writing up, "This do, and thou shalt live" over the gate of heaven, and bringing in Christ as also under law, to do that which Adam failed to do, and justify us by His obedience in life, rather than solely "by His blood," as this epistle teaches. It would take us far out of our way to examine this at the present time, and anticipate that which will come in the scriptural order before us, as we proceed with our subject. As to the point now, the Greek shows conclusively, as our common English version does not, that it is the "work" that is said to be written, not the law itself. The Gentile here is said to have—that is, to be under—*no* law. It is only put in another form when it is said that he is a law to himself: he defines for himself what his duty is; (it does not mean, of course, that he has none, or has no thought of any, but) he has to gather the intimations of it from his own moral instincts or from his observations of others about him, perhaps also learns by more direct teaching; but precisely the thing which is lacking to him is that code of authoritative precepts which the Jew had in the law. *As* a law to himself, he recognized himself as under authority, as the Jew did, and under divine authority, for that is all that the apostle has in view, as is plain, just now; but he is under no yoke imposed by God as the Jew was; whatever be the cause of it (which we have seen in part, but which we are not investigating here,) he is a man left to himself. Yet there is that in him which does the work which the law was designed to do in giving the knowledge of sin (chap. iii. 20); not indeed in the perfect manner of the law, yet so that he who listens to the inward monitor may well condemn the Jew with his higher privilege and his lower practice.

The conscience also of the Gentile bears witness with his works, which are not fortuitous and arbitrary in character, but such that his thoughts argue against or for him, as he violates or follows the injunctions of his guide, just as with the Jew his conscience. Thus while as to the whole neither of them can plead righteousness, the Gentile may stand comparatively higher than the Jew.

In neither case is the law written on the heart naturally, as the promise of the new covenant conclusively shows: if it were true of all men naturally, it could not be a special promise to a certain class. The law written on the heart by God implies that those of whom He speaks will have hearts that forbid their forgetting what He has commanded any more; and this surely is not the *natural* condition of any: it belongs to those only of whom He can further say, "Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more." The hundred and nineteenth psalm is the fervent expression of a heart so blessed.

The three verses closing with the fifteenth are a parenthesis, the apostle returning in the sixteenth verse to announce a day when God shall judge,

SECTION 2. (Chaps. ii. 17–iii. 20.)
Accusation of the Jew by the law in which he confides.

1 (ii. 17-24): His knowledge and independence of God's will.

1. BUT if thou bearest the name of a [c] Jew, and [d] restest upon law, and gloriest in God, and [e] knowest his* will, and approvest the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, and art confident that thou thyself art a [f] guide of the blind, a light of those in darkness, an [g] instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the [h] form of knowledge and of the truth in

c *cf.* ch. 1.19, 20, etc. *cf.* ch. 3. 9.
d ver. 23. *cf.* Jno. 5.45. *cf.* Jno. 9.28, 29.
e *cf.* Lk. 12. 47, 48. *cf.* ch. 3. 2.
f *cf.* Matt. 15. 14. *cf.* Is. 56.10. *cf.* Matt. 23. 16, 17, etc.
g *cf.* Jno. 8.

* Literally, "the will."
2-5; *cf.* Lk. 18. 11. h *cf.* ch. 9. 4; *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 5; *cf.* Matt. 2. 4-6.

according to the principles he has stated, the secrets of men. "God," says the Preacher, "shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl. xii. 14). Darkness suits men now, and clouds and darkness compass often the throne of God; His ways are a mystery that we cannot fathom; but while He looks for faith now, He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make all manifest in the day that is at hand. This is as true with regard to saint as sinner, and sinner as saint; although the common thought of the two being judged together, as well as that of the saint coming personally into judgment, confounds what God has separated, and can find no scripture-justification. In what is before us here we must remember that, except in the brief glance in the introduction, the gospel has not yet been considered, nor the place therefore which it accords the believer. The day of judgment of which the apostle speaks is indeed "according to the gospel;" but is the dark background of wrath upon the sinner against which the glory of the gospel shines so wonderfully out. We must accept this judgment, to know what grace is; for God's only salvation is by judgment borne for us; and we cannot know the mystery of the Cross, until we know the penalty which the Cross has met.

It is the consideration of the principles of the coming judgment which has made it necessary to anticipate in some measure the case of the Jew, while it is that of the Gentile which is in fact before us. But it is in that which follows that the Jew comes fully up. He cannot be judged like the Gentile, upon natural grounds simply: we must take into account also his relation to the law, and finally to the promises of God; although this last comes in in a supplementary way, and after the doctrine of the gospel itself, and the position of the believer before God, have been fully established.

Sec. 2.

The apostle turns now, therefore, to the Jew, to show that he too comes under the universal sentence. The one who has sinned without law perishes without law; the one who has sinned under law is judged by the law: will the law then be favorable to him? will he be able to stand while the other is condemned? Here the apostle shows, what the Lord had before declared to them, that the very one who accused the Jews was that Moses in whom they trusted. They knew God's will indeed, only the more defiantly to set it aside: for as the people of God His Name was blasphemed among the Gentiles through their misconduct. In comparison with them, circumcision and uncircumcision must often be accounted the reverse, if the heart were what God valued. After guarding which from the abuse that might be made of such an assertion, Paul goes on to produce the very sentence against them of the law they claimed as theirs; which proved indeed the whole world under sin. Moreover, this was not the failure of the law, but its entire success in what it came to do: for by the law was to be the recognition of sin.

1. The Jew with his knowledge of the will of God did no better than the moralist among the Gentiles. Very far from being outwardly a rebel, he yet

the law,—thou then who [i]teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest not to steal, dost [j]thou steal? thou that sayest [one must] not commit adultery, dost thou [k]commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou [l]commit sacrilege? thou that gloriest in law, through transgression of the law dishonorest thou God? for on your account is the [m]name of God blasphemed among the Gentiles, as it is written.

2 (ii. 25-29): How circumcision and uncircumcision are reversed.

2. For circumcision indeed profiteth, [n]if thou keep* the law; but if thou be a transgressor of the law, thy circumcision is become [o]uncircumcision. If then the [p]uncircumcision keep the requirements of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be [q]reckoned for circumcision? and shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, fulfilling the law, judge thee who art with [r]letter and circumcision a transgressor of the law? For he is not a Jew who is one [s]outwardly, nor is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and [t]circumcision is of the heart, in spirit, not in letter; whose [u]praise is not of men, but of God.

3 (iii. 1-8): The glory of God not clouded by this.

3. What then is the [v]superiority of the Jew? or what

i cf. Matt. 23. 3, 4.
j cf. Mal. 3. 8, 9. cf. Lk. 20. 47.
k cf. Jno. 8. 7-9. cf. Matt. 5. 27, 28.
l cf. Matt. 23. 16-22. cf. Jno. 2. 19.
m Is. 52. 5. cf. Ezek. 36. 20-23. cf. 2 Sa. 12. 14. cf. 2 Pet. 2. 2. ctr. Matt. 5. 16.
n cf. Gal. 5. 3.
o cf. Lev. 26. 41. cf. Jer. 6. 10.
p cf. Eph. 2. 11.
q cf. ch. 3. 30. cf. ch. 4. 9-12.
r cf. ch. 7. 6. cf. 2 Cor. 3. 6.
s cf. ch. 9. 6-8. cf. Gal. 6. 16. ctr. Rev. 2. 9.
t cf. Acts 7. 51. u cf. Jno. 1. 47; ctr. Matt. 6. 2, etc. v ver. 9; cf. Matt. 21. 33, etc; cf. Deut. 10. 15.

* Literally, "do."

completely misunderstood his own condition, and therefore the character of that law on which he "rested,"—where no true rest was possible. So too in God he gloried, as One who had made the Jew the depositary of all the light and knowledge in the world. God and His law were owned by him, but not in subjection of heart to render Him the obedience due, but as contributing to the loftiness of his position in comparison with all other men. The Gentiles were but for him the blind, walking in darkness, foolish as undeveloped babes. The Jew was the full treasury of all that the Gentile lacked. In fact, he had the form of knowledge and of the truth as the law gave it; but the breath of life was absent from the form: in morals he contradicted his own teaching, glorying in law and transgressing it, so that the light he held but the more clearly showed his misdeeds, and dishonored the name of his God among the Gentiles, as He Himself by His prophets had declared (Isa. lii. 5).

2. What was the necessary result in His estimate who could not be content with the mere outside of things, but looks upon the heart? Was circumcision of no use because of the dishonor put upon it? No, but that could not be counted such which was united with the transgression of that which it pledged one to keep. And the uncircumcised person keeping the commandments of the law would before Him be counted as circumcised. Israel, in fact, never contained all the sheep of the Lord's flock, as we know; and the apostle will presently remind us that Abraham himself was an example of the faith that might be in one uncircumcised. How indeed would the obedience of the uncircumcised condemn the man who, having both the letter of the law and circumcision also, yet violated the law! Plainly then, one must place what is internal and spiritual before what is external in the flesh. The true circumcision is spiritual and of the heart, and constitutes the true Jew, whose "praise"* is found with Him who sees the heart.

3. All this to us seems simplicity itself; but it was not so simple to those whom it seemed to strip of all their special, divinely-bestowed privileges. The

* "Judah" means "praise"; and this is, no doubt, an allusion to it.

profit is in circumcision? Much every way, chiefly indeed that to them were [w]entrusted the oracles of God. For what if some believed not, shall their [z]unbelief make void the faithfulness* of God? Far be the thought: but let God be [y]true, and every man false; as it is [x]written, That thou mightest be justified in thy words, and overcome when thou art judged. But if our unrighteousness [a]commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who inflicteth wrath? I speak after the manner of men. Far be the thought: for how then shall God [b]judge the world? But if the truth of God hath more abounded by my lie unto his glory, why am I still judged as a sinner? and not, as we are [c]slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say, Let us practise evil, that good may come? whose [d]condemnation is just.

[w] *cf.* Deut. 4. 8.
cf. Ps. 147. 19, 20.
cf. Acts 7. 38.
cf. 2 Pet. 1. 21.
[x] ch. 10. 16.
cf. Heb. 4. 2.
[y] *cf.* Num. 23. 19.
cf. Tit. 1. 2.
cf. Jas. 1. 17.
[z] Ps. 51. 4.
[a] *cf.* ch. 2. 24.
cf. ch. 6. 1, 15.
[b] Acts 17. 31.
cf. 1 Pet. 2. 23.
cf. ch. 2. 6-16.
[c] *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 12.
cf. 1 Pet. 3. 16.
ctr. Eph. 2. 9, 10.
[d] *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 4, 5.
cf. Jude 4.

* Or, "faith."

apostle therefore here notes the objections that might be raised to it—objections which purported to be founded on God's own character: for if there were indeed, as this appeared to say, no superiority in the position of the Jew, what then did all that He had done for them amount to? for why had God separated him from the nations, and guarded this separation in so many ways? The apostle asks therefore the question on his own part, What *is* the superiority of the Jew? and what is the advantage of circumcision? Truly a strange question, which would argue how little, save material for self-importance, the questioner had found in it. But Paul answers with his whole soul that there was "much every way"; but he mentions emphatically one chief advantage that the Jews had, and that was a trust committed to them, and not for their own sake only, —"the oracles of God," His own words uttered by a human mouth-piece. The mass of men had wandered off into those various forms of idolatry which were continually tempting Israel also, and from which nothing but divine power and goodness preserved them too. Thus the divine Word, if it were to be preserved for the blessing of men, must be kept apart from these destructive influences, there whence its virtue might flow out around, and yet it might be secured from the prevalent corruption. Israel was in the place where these oracles were heard: how could any one ask, Where was the profit?

Faith, alas, did not prevail among the professing people of God: it was a matter of public history that it did not. But what then? Would that make of no effect the faith that was found? Would God be untrue to those who counted on Him, because of the lack of faith in others? Such questions scarcely merit answer. No; "let God be true, if every man were to be accounted false;" for so David wrote of his own sin, that God was only justified by it in His words, and man, so prone to judge Him, would be overcome by Him in judgment. In fact God permits sin to appear in this way to bring men low, and make them own His righteousness in whatsoever He may bring upon them.

But this only starts another question: if our unrighteousness so commends the righteousness of God, does this then make Him unable to execute judgment for that which has glorified Him? Nay, surely; for if that were so, since He makes all sins to glorify Him, restraining that which will not, no judgment could be executed on the world at all. Nay, if this were so, the principle would be just, of which Christians through their magnifying of grace were slanderously accused, that they might then do evil, so that good might come; but the just judgment of God would be in fact on those who could adopt so terrible a lie as truth. It is merely noticed here to show the folly and wickedness of what would involve such a consequence as this.

¶ (III. 9-20): Tested by law, the world proved under sin.

4. What then? are* we [a]better? No, in no wise: for we have before charged [b]both Jews and Greeks, that they are all under sin; as it is [c]written, There is none [d]righteous, not one; there is none that [e]understandeth, there is none that [f]seeketh after God. All have gone [g]aside, they have together become [h]unprofitable; there is [i]none that practiseth good, there is not as much as one: their [j]throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used [k]deceit; [l]venom of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of [m]cursing and bitterness; their [n]feet are swift to shed blood; [o]ruin

* R. V. renders this clause, "Are we in worse case than they?" giving the verb its usual passive meaning—"are we surpassed?" But this is entirely out of the connection of the passage, and the verb may be a middle,—"do we surpass?"

a cf. ch. 2. 17, etc. *b* vers. 22, 23. cf. Gal. 3. 22. *c* Ps. 14. 1-3. *d* cf. Gen. 18. 23-32. *e* cf. 1 Cor. 1. 21. *f* cf. Acts 17. 27. *g* cf. Ps. 78. 57. cf. Eccl. 7. 29. *h* cf. Matt. 25. 24-30. *i* ver. 10. ch. 5. 12. cf. Eph. 2. 1-3. cf. Ps. 130. 3. *j* Ps. 5. 9. cf. Matt. 23. 27, 28. *k* cf. Ps. 62. 9. *l* Ps. 140. 3; cf. Jno. 8. 44 with Gen. 3. 1. *m* Ps. 10. 7. *n* Is. 59. 7, 8; Prov. 1. 16; etc. Is. 52. 7. *o* cf. Gen. 6. 11; cf. Tit. 3. 3.

4. The apostle returns to the comparison of the Jew with the Gentile: could the Jew boast of any moral superiority to the Gentile? No, for the charge against both alike was that all were under sin. For this their own Scriptures, written under a dispensation of law, and addressed to those under it, were in unmistakable evidence. In them what the law could not do was seen; and the passages quoted give a survey, as wide as minute, of the facts of the case. The first passage, from the fourteenth psalm is connected with the statement that "the Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God." The result is what the apostle quotes: "They are all gone aside; they are together become unprofitable: there is none that doeth good." The previous words plainly are an adaptation from those which speak of the search itself, changed to a declaration of the result; "there is none righteous" being again an equivalent for "there is none that doeth good," which is repeated later. In other quotations the apostle gives the detail of a corruption manifesting itself in every point. Throat, lips, mouth, feet, are all the instruments of various wickedness. In the whole path are ruin and misery; —nowhere peace: before their eyes there is no fear of God. What a picture of man in nature and practice! Of course it is not meant that in every one of the children of men there is an exact similarity; or that they will necessarily be all found in any one: and God has many ways of restraint, so that what is in any of us should not all come out; but this is the race to which we belong, and any of these marks are sufficient to make plain our lineage. It is not of the Jew simply that such passages speak; it is among the children of men that the Lord is looking and making investigation, and one cannot plead that he is no child of man. The law which he has got has no plea to make in his favor, but the very contrary. It is to the people under law that all this is said; and in the Psalms and the Prophets the voice of the law is still heard, and what things soever the law saith it saith to them that are under the law: for this very purpose also, that *every* mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be guilty before God. If the Jew, after all that God has done for him, can yet plead no righteousness that will avail before the Judge of men, then all the world is surely guilty.

A poor end, you may say, to all this long education upon God's part,—all this painstaking discipline,—all these interventions and miracles! Yes, as the apostle says elsewhere, it is all a ministration of death and of condemnation (2 Cor. iii. 7, 9). But poor as the result may seem, it is to issue in that which will display the riches of God's grace to all eternity. The truth as to man's condition must come out, and he must be made to realize and accept it. Guilty and with his mouth stopped before Him, he will then find what God can be for him in so desperate an extremity. The law has not failed in its purpose when it has

and misery are in their ways; and a [t]way of peace they have not known; there is no [u]fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it speaketh to those that are [v]under the law, that [w]every mouth may be stopped, and all the world be [x]guilty before God. Therefore by works of law shall [y]no flesh be justified before him: for by [z]law is the recognition* of sin.

* Or, "full knowledge."

t *ctr.* Is. 57. 2. *cf.* Is. 48. 22.
u Ps. 36. 1. *cf.* Ex. 5. 2. *cf.* Lk. 23. 40.
v *cf.* ch. 2. 12.
w *cf.* Ezek. 16. 63. *cf.* Matt. 22. 12.
x *cf.* Is. 5. 4-7.
y *cf.* ver. 9. *cf.* Heb. 11. 7. *cf.* Jno. 12.
31. *y cf.* Job 9. 2, 3; *cf.* Job 15. 14-16; *cf.* Ps. 143. 2; *cf.* Acts 13. 39. *z cf.* ch. 5. 20; *cf.* Gal. 3. 19. *cf.* ch. 4. 15; *cf.* ch. 7. 7; *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 56.

brought him to this: that "by works of law shall no flesh be justified before Him: for by law is the recognition of sin."

Alas, in all this, man is completely at issue with God. All natural religion so called is the attempt in some way, with various modifications, to make good one's righteousness in whole or in part, before Him. Justification by works, by moralities or by ritual observances, is all that the mind of man is able to conceive as of efficacy to accomplish a salvation which God has wrought out and offers freely to him. This struggle on man's part, ignorant of the righteousness of God, to establish his own righteousness is the history of the 4000 years preceding Christ's coming, and the secret of the long delay. With the recognition of sin as the law is competent to declare it to him, the struggle is over, the old covenant has done its work, and we are ready for the gospel of "the glory of God, which is in the face of Jesus Christ," and not of Moses (2 Cor. iv. 6).

SUBD. 3.

We come therefore now to what is essentially Paul's gospel, which, though it is based on what has been done on earth, was revealed to him from the opened heavens. In his ministry of it we are continually made to realize the manner of his conversion, which, spite of the exceptional miracle which was in it, he assures us to have been a pattern one (1 Tim. i. 16). The risen Christ is the central object before our eyes in all his presentation of it. Our justification, our acceptance, are in Him; and in Him God is manifested as the Saviour-God in raising up Jesus. He who was delivered for our offences has been raised again for our justification. It is just this resurrection side of the gospel—and there is no true gospel short of resurrection—which has been so much obscured in general, even in what is commonly known as evangelical doctrine; and this is what has made the epistle to the Romans itself to be accounted so difficult a book, which, as confessedly laying the foundations of our position before God, we should not expect it to be. Here everything should be fully ascertained and assured; and we cannot but notice how careful Paul is to establish all he says, and to answer every gainsayer. In no other epistle is the appeal so constant to the Old Testament; and the objections from the side of experience are as carefully reviewed and answered. It is indeed as a wise master-builder that he lays the foundation (1 Cor. iii. 10), and if we are not able to realize this wisdom, it must be greatly to our loss. Without a firm foundation, we shall endanger all that is built upon it.

Sec. 1.

The righteousness of God we have seen to be the power for salvation in the gospel. It is just that of which the convicted sinner is most afraid. He can believe that God is good; he can believe in His love to man; but that is not here the question. While careless himself, he could believe or hope that God would be found equally careless as to sin; but now the question of righteousness cannot so easily be settled; and God must be righteous in all He does. It is indeed the wonder of divine grace that it should reign through righteousness—that righteousness itself should provide and secure blessing for the lost and hopeless. And

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chaps. iii. 21-v. 11.)
God manifested for us in Christ risen.

SECTION 1. (Chap. iii. 21-31.)
A propitiation, for grace in righteousness towards all.

1 (21-26): No difference naturally, and none in the provision made for faith.

1. BUT now [a]apart from law [b]righteousness of God is manifested, being [c]witnessed by the law and the prophets,—even righteousness of God through [d]faith of Jesus Christ unto [e]all, and over all * them that believe: for there is [f]no difference: for [g]all have sinned, and come † [h]short of the glory of God, being [i]justified [j]freely

a ver. 28. *cf.* Gal. 2. 19-21.
b ch. 1. 17. *cf.* ver. 26.
c *cf.* ver. 31. *cf.* Lk. 9. 30, 31. *cf.* Acts 10. 43.
d ch. 1. 17.
e *cf.* ch. 4. 16.
f ch. 10. 12, 13. *cf.* ver. 9.
g vers. 9, 19. Gal. 3. 22.
h *cf.* Rev. 4. 11 with ch. 1. 21. *cf.* Matt. 19.

* Or, "upon all." The earliest MSS. omit "and upon all"; but the earliest of all is corrected, and most MSS. have it.
† Or, "fail." It is a present tense.

16-22. *i* ch. 5. 1. *j* ch. 4. 4, 5; *cf.* Lk. 7. 42; *cf.* Is. 55. 1; *cf.* Rev. 21. 6.

this is what we are now called to consider,—a righteousness which not only makes possible the security of all who flee for refuge to it, but absolutely ensures it. The procuring cause of this is a propitiation which displays fully God's righteousness as to sin, so that there can be no more question of it when He receives the sinner, but the opposite: "He is faithful and just to forgive him his sins" (1 Jno. i. 9).

1. Law then is confessedly unable to produce any righteousness on man's part which can be accepted of God, or enable him to stand before God. It has done its work in convicting of sin; and that in such sort that it is proved that man's way of works can never avail for him: he can bring nothing that is not soiled by the hands that bring it. Thus his mouth is stopped: he cannot perform, nor therefore promise; he is helpless and hopeless; the account as to man is closed; he is simply in the hands of God, to do with him as He will.

If there is to be gospel, therefore, that is, "good news" for man, "apart from law" it must be. The law may witness to it, as it did, in its many types and shadows, in sacrifices which, as of bulls and goats, could never take away sin, but which thus by their own inefficacy pointed away from themselves to what they represented. The prophets amplified and made clearer these types of the law; and the hope of a Saviour to come grew through the ages of suspense.

But the time of expectation merely is over: "righteousness of God is now manifest through faith of Jesus Christ towards all, and over all them that believe." In the salvation of Israel yet to come, the Lord speaks through Isaiah of His righteousness as to be revealed (Isa. xli. 10; xlvi. 13; li. 5, 6, 8; lvi. 1). For a Jew, therefore, these thoughts could not be strange to bring together; and we must not fail to connect with such passages those which declared *their* righteousness to be of the Lord (Isa. xlv. 24; liv. 17). These are not at all equivalent things, though they are things that would fit well together, to enable truly convicted souls to think peacefully of a day when God would act in righteousness and for the salvation of His people. But the salvation of Israel in the day to come is nevertheless very different from the gospel salvation with which we have here to do. Righteousness will be then displayed in judgment upon the foes of His earthly people; in the salvation here, though it act in judgment, yet only contrast is seen in this "strange work" indeed to which the Cross is witness. Here is a judgment upon sin which is the salvation of sinners! The apostle has already spoken of righteousness of God revealed in good news to man; here also, as there, it is through faith or upon that principle, that such a thing can be. It is thus towards all men, and therefore where faith is found, it is over all such as have it: that is, it becomes for such like the roof that shelters from the storm, or like the shield that turns off every arrow of the enemy.

That this is the true force of the statement will be clear, I think, if we take into consideration what it is connected with, as the apostle goes on to explain

by his grace through the [k]redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth a [l]propitiatory, through faith, by his [m]blood, for the showing forth of [n]his righteousness in regard to the [o]passing by of sins done aforetime in the [p]forbearance of God; for the

k Eph. 1. 7. *cf.* Heb. 9. 11-14.
l *cf.* Heb. 13. 11 with Lev. 16. 14, 15. *cf.* Heb. 4. 16.
m *cf.* Heb. 10. 19-23; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19; *cf.* 1 Jno. 1. 7.
n ver. 21; *cf.* Job 33. 23.
o *cf.* Acts 17. 30; *cf.* Ex. 34. 6, 7; *cf.* 2 Sam. 12. 13.
p *cf.* Mi. 7. 18; *cf.* ch. 2. 4.

himself in what immediately follows. "Being justified," he says, "freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Thus it is of justification that he is speaking, as plainly through all this part of Romans. This justification is by blood, or what is equivalent, "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;" and here is that in which God's righteousness in justifying is declared. But justification is acquittal: it is from sin—from any charge of it—and it is divine righteousness that acts in justifying, righteousness is just that attribute of God which is concerned in it: thus it is like a broad, effectual shield stretched over the believer, and for all like a house that with its open door invites men to take shelter from the coming storm of judgment.

We must not make any confusion between this and the righteousness which is ours in Christ. The righteousness of God is not the robe that is put upon us, nor is that the theme in this first division of the epistle. In its nature also, the righteousness of God cannot be imputed to us; righteousness *is* imputed, as the apostle afterwards says, but that is another thing. "Over," therefore, rather than "upon," seems the proper rendering in this passage, which also seems preferable because it better implies the activity of God's righteousness in justification. It is this that is directly and specifically concerned in a question of this nature. We hear it often put as if God's being just *and* justifying meant His being just, *though* justifying; but that comes short of its proper force. For, as already said, in acquitting it is righteousness alone that has the case in hand. In forgiving love may act; but in justifying, righteousness. And this is what makes the question of such intense importance for the convicted soul, and sets it so perfectly at rest when the divine sentence is pronounced.

As to men in general, there is one need, and one gospel: "All have sinned," says the apostle; and then he brings forward once more the verdict of the law, which Israel so well knew: "all come short of the glory of God." That was what the veil hanging ever before the holiest, where God in very mercy to man must hide His glory from those who could not stand before Him, proved for those very people among whom He was pleased to dwell. Love came as near as it could come, and *be* love. And even to Moses, the mediator of the covenant, it had been said, "Thou canst not see My Face." Such was man at his best under the measurement of law, which, chosen by man in his self-confidence, darkened the glorious Face that longed to shine upon him. But now, when the full object of law has been attained, and its tale of man has been told out, the grace to which after all the law was meant to minister is free to show itself; condemned by law, we are "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Redemption, a "ransoming from," owns and meets the requirements of righteousness, delivering us from the condition of convicted men. The price is not yet stated, but being accepted and paid, righteousness has no further demands upon us, but is henceforth on our side: it now demands our discharge from every accusation, and in Christ Jesus is this redemption found.

Notice that it is already the risen Christ who is before us, as the order of the names distinctly indicates. Jesus was, as we know, the name given to Him at His birth, and is therefore His personal name as man; while Christ is His name of office upon which, His work of atonement being accomplished, He has now fully entered. Thus the precedence of either shows which is the predominant thought, whether Person or office. We are never said to be in Jesus, or in Jesus Christ; always in Christ, or in Christ Jesus. Here redemption is found for us

showing forth of his righteousness in the [q]present time, that he may be [r]just and [r]justifying him who is of the faith of Jesus.

2 (27-31): Justification of faith, not law, though confirming the law.

2. Where is [s]boasting then? It hath been excluded. Through what kind of law? Of works? Nay, but by a [t]law of faith. We reckon therefore that a man is [u]justified by faith, [v]apart from works of law. Is he the

q *cf.* Heb. 9. 26. *cf.* ch. 5. 6.
r *cf.* Ex. 34. 6, 7. *cf.* Is. 45. 21. Zeph. 3. 5.
s ch. 4. 2. ch. 8. 33. Tit. 3. 7.
t ch. 4. 2.

Eph. 2. 8, 9; *ctr.* Lk. 18. 11, 12. u *cf.* ch. 8. 2. v ch. 5. 1. w ver. 21; *cf.* Gal. 2. 15, 16; *cf.* ch. 11. 6.

in the Christ, who is Jesus,—in Him who has accomplished His work, and is in possession of the fruits of it.

Him has God set forth a propitiatory, through faith, by His blood; this, as the Revised Version has it, is no doubt preferable to the common one, which reads, "through faith in His blood." The word "propitiatory" is that used in the Septuagint for the "mercy-seat," as it is also in the epistle to the Hebrews (ix. 5), the only place in which it is found again in the New Testament. The mercy-seat was the place in Israel in which atonement, or propitiation, was "set forth" as the formal basis upon which God dwelt in relation with a sinful people. It was the throne of God, where He dwelt between the cherubim, and was made a "mercy-seat" by the blood sprinkled upon it. Thus "a propitiatory by His blood" is right; faith being that by which it is available to us, who now have such a throne of grace, the antitype of that ancient one, really accessible, as for Israel that ancient one was not. We have boldness to enter into the holy places, (where the mercy-seat stood), and Christ gone in to God is He through whom "grace reigns through righteousness." The rent veil is here implied as the characteristic of Christianity, though the theme in Romans is not worship, as in Hebrews, but that acceptance with God which is fundamental to it. The gospel of the glory (Paul's gospel) is thus in fact here.

The typical blood upon the mercy-seat had to be renewed year by year; for the past year it manifested God's righteousness in having gone on with the people as He had done; while it displayed for the future the basis upon which He could still go on. This aspect of the day of atonement is surely that to which the apostle now refers, though the survey now is as much more extensive as the blood of this one offering goes beyond all merely anticipatory ones. The propitiatory now set forth declares God's righteousness "in regard to the passing by of sins done aforetime, through the forbearance of God;" as well as His righteousness in the present time, "that He may be just, and justifying him who is of the faith of Jesus." That is, faith which has Jesus as its object.

The Cross stands thus among the ages with its light shining over the generations past, and more brightly in the present time. It is strange that the apostle's words should have been taken, with the help of the misleading "I say," preserved in the Revised Version, to define the gospel justification as simply from past sins, leaving the future unassured to take care for itself. It is true, indeed, that one cannot speak of sins put away before they have been committed, and that the question of the future is not taken up as yet. But "the sins done aforetime" are not the sins of a man's past life, but those of bygone ages, when yet the gospel was not, as now, declared, and sins for which the legal sacrifices had no provision could only be met by what was truly uncovenanted mercy. At the best also, there was and could be no inherent value in the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin. But how many questions did all this imply! How different from a sentence of justification, the hope of mercy! But now every question is answered, every shadow gone: Christ's sacrifice has proclaimed God's righteous judgment upon sin as nothing else could do; and enabled Him at the same time to justify him who is of the faith of Jesus.

2. Truth has wrought with grace: God could not justify man upon any ground which would give him opportunity for boasting. His principle of faith gives God, not man, the glory. That pride which is the devil's own sin, and into which he

God of [x]Jews only? is he not also of Gentiles? Yea, of Gentiles also; since it is one God who will justify the circumcision [y]by faith, and uncircumcision [z]through faith. Do we then make law of [a]no effect through faith? Far be the thought: nay, but we [b]establish law.

x *cf.* ch. 10. 12. *cf.* Col. 3. 10, 11.
y *cf.* ch. 1. 17.
z *cf.* Gal. 3. 26–29.
a *cf.* Matt. 5. 17–20. b *cf.* Is. 42. 21; *cf.* ch. 7. 12; *cf.* Gal. 2. 19–21.

has led mankind to imitate him, is broken down, not fostered, by a blessing so gained. A law, or principle, of works, if it had been possible in the nature of things for him to have been justified by it, could only have wrought disaster for him morally. Merit is not possible to a creature, from whom obedience is his constant due. "When ye have done all," says the Lord, "say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which it was our duty to do." No ladder of works, if it were long enough to reach to heaven, could give the spirit of worship which is in heaven, and which alone could make it heaven at all. Faith has a moral quality which makes it worthy to be God's principle: it glorifies Him and blesses man, while the ruin of his self-confidence prepares him for it. It suits also a God to whom all His creatures are alike a care. A faith which can grow out of one's own nothingness, the babe characteristic, needing not the wisdom of the wise, nor power of any kind, but according to which are chosen the foolish things, and the weak, and the base, and the despised, manifests One before whose greatness, and to whose love, the lowest is as the highest. In the adoption of such a principle none that do not banish themselves are banished from Him: for the highest can come down to the lowest level, when it would be impossible for the lowest to rise up to the highest. Man naturally thinks that God should be found most on the mountain tops; but the sun warms most the lower plains upon which men build their cities and live their daily lives. How would the most expert climbers of the peaks enjoy having these things reversed? Nay, the highest peaks send down their tribute of enrichment to the plains, and nature is in harmony with her glorious Maker.

So says the apostle here: "We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from works of law." The very exclusiveness of the law, which was the boast of the Jew, was thus the witness that it was not after all the way of blessing. Could God have thus forgotten the Gentile? "Is He the God of Jews only? is He not also of the Gentiles?" What can one answer? what but with the apostle: "Yea, of the Gentiles also; since it is one God who will justify the circumcision by faith"—upon that principle; and then, and thus, if he be found possessor of it, the "uncircumcision through" that "faith" which he possesses. God is drawing near to *men:* would it be a greater and better thing to say, to the Jew? One might better plead for him the exclusive right to sun and rain, or to those blessings which the more necessary they are, the more widely they are found diffused.

But then, says the objector, you are making the law to be of no effect through this advocacy of faith. As if the sowing of the field showed the plow to have been vainly used! "Far be the thought," says the apostle: "nay, but we establish law." For the real purpose for which God gave it, the law still abides, and its use is clearly manifested.

Sec. 2.

The apostle, not satisfied with this, turns round upon the Jew, and asks, Has he read carefully those precious books which God has given him? Of whose history ought he to know more than that of Abraham his father? With whose writings ought he to be more familiar than with those of David, Israel's sweet psalmist? Yet God has given His testimony as to that principle of faith to which he demurs, right there where the eyes of His people would be most constantly directed! What a reproof of legality, coming from such a quarter! For us also, what a warning as to truths which may be under our eyes in the pages of Scripture, which yet we have never seen there! not because they are not

SECTION 2. (Chap. iv. 1-12.)
Witness of the Old Testament to justification by faith.

1(1-5): That of God to Abraham the father of the Jew.

1. WHAT shall we say then that [c]Abraham our father * according to the flesh hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to [d]glory; but not before God: for what saith the scripture? Abraham [e]believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness. Now to him that [f]worketh is the reward not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt. But to him that worketh [g]not, but [h]believeth on him who justifieth the [i]ungodly, his [j]faith is reckoned for righteousness.

* Some of the earliest MSS. have "the forefather."

c cf. ch. 9. 7, 8.
d ch. 3. 27.
e Gen. 15. 5, 6. Gal. 3. 6. cf. Jas. 2. 23.
f cf. Lk. 10. 25-28. cf. Ezek. 18. 4-9. cf. Ps. 15.
g cf. Jno. 6. 28, 29. cf. Mt. 6. 6, 7.
h Acts 16. 31. cf. ch. 10. 4.
i cf. Zech. 3. 1-4. cf. Is. 6. 5-7. cf. ch. 5. 6-8.
j vers. 3, 22. ch. 8. 33.

plainly to be read, but because our eyes have been dimmed by unbelief and worldly prejudice and pride of heart, as Israel's were! May we seek to have all films of this sort purged away. Were every veil removed, how would the glory of Scripture break upon us!

1. The first witness which the apostle brings from the Old Testament books is complete in itself: it is in fact that of God Himself, and in connection with him whom they all acknowledged as under God the head of blessing for them. Were they to be blessed in another way than Abraham? Forefather he was according to the flesh, and the claim they had to him in this way they pressed to its full extent. Be it so: to them then, above all, should the lessons of his history have significance. How then was Abraham justified before God? They might plead perhaps his separation of himself from all that had natural claim upon him, in order to walk as a stranger in a land which, though God had promised it to him, he never got in possession. Was he then justified by works whose merit the rabbinical teachers so constantly brought forward? It is in fact just here that God had interposed with a remarkable and precise statement. If Abraham were indeed justified by works, then plainly he has something in which to glory; but, adds the apostle, "not before God." He has told us already that "by works of law shall no flesh be justified before Him;" Abraham cannot therefore be an exception: but in his case Scripture itself can be appealed to; the head of the people to whom the law was given was in the wisdom of God chosen to have a specific testimony, not merely of his being righteous before God, but also as to the ground of it: it is distinctly declared that "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness." This then was his justification; but it was not work of any kind that was reckoned to him for this: it was his faith; the principle of his justification is distinctly recorded for us in the Word to have been faith, not works.

This is the only example explicitly announced in the Old Testament of a person justified by faith; but here it takes precedence, as the apostle reminds us in Galatians, of any legal announcement whatever. Faith being reckoned for righteousness is clearly the same as being justified (or declared righteous) by faith. Faith is the ground upon which he is reckoned righteous. There being no actual righteousness to be found among men, God declares what he can accept as putting one among the righteous. He does not and cannot say that it is actual righteousness; which yet He must have indeed, but which man cannot furnish. For this He must look elsewhere, and we know, thank God, where He has found it. But here He simply declares what on man's part He can take as evincing that. How beautiful an announcement it is, at so early a time, and in relation to such a person! How completely is law set aside in this, although it is not a general announcement as yet, but only as to an individual. Still how easy for one realizing his need, one might think, to make the inference. For those to whom Abraham was to be a covenant head of promise, how

2 (6-8): Confirmed by David.

2. Just as [k]David also telleth the blessedness of the man to whom God reckoneth righteousness apart from works: [l]Blessed are they whose iniquities* have been [m]forgiven, and whose sins are [n]covered; blessed is the man to whom [the] Lord will in no wise [o]reckon sin.†

3 (9-12): Sealed in circumcision, the sign of the covenant.

3. This blessedness then, is it upon the [p]circumcision, or also upon the uncircumcision? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness: how then was it reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in

* Or, "lawlessnesses."
† Many read, "whose sin [the] Lord will in no wise reckon to him."

k *cf.* Matt.1. 1. *cf.* Acts 13. 22.
l Ps. 32. 1, 2.
m Acts 13. 38.
n *cf.* Lk. 15. 22. *cf.* Is.61.10.
o *cf.*2 Cor.5. 19. *cf.*Jno.8.11. *cf.* ch. 8.33, 34.
p *cf.*ch.2.25-29. *cf.* ch. 3.30.

striking a figure should he be! But the apostle goes on to enforce still further the contrast between the principles which he has been comparing: "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt." And the greatness of the reward does not alter the principle involved: if you buy heaven cheap, still you buy it. "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him who justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness."

Here the meaning of grace is brought out in the clearest way: God justifieth the ungodly; if it be through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus—through the Cross—then it is plain that the Cross is penalty for sin; it is not even for the comparatively righteous. But if God justifieth the ungodly, what work have I to do to *be* "ungodly?" And further, if I believe that He justifieth the ungodly, it will be part of the evidence that I believe this, that I drop all working to find justification at His hands. Here is the man whose faith is reckoned for righteousness.

There can be no possible mixture of contradictory things. The character and the quantity of work are not at all in question. "Worketh *not*" suits exactly, and only suits, a justification of the ungodly. And here also the grace of God acquires its power to subdue the soul to God, and win the feet from every evil way.

It is faith that is the true worker for God, as it is grace that breaks the dominion of sin. To modify grace is to destroy its power; to balance faith with works is to make men workers for themselves instead of God, and thus destroy that very fruitfulness of faith which it is desired to secure. The law-gospel is neither law *nor* gospel.

2. The apostle passes for the moment from Abraham to David. David also speaks of "the blessedness of him to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works;" and Paul quotes as to this what is significantly the first "maskil" psalm or "psalm of instruction." The blessedness is of them whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered, to whom the Lord will in no wise reckon sin. This is indeed the beginning of instruction when we have learned this lesson. And the psalmist gives it us as the personal experience which we know it was for him: while he kept silence, his bones waxed old through his roaring all the day long; he confessed his sin to God, and did not hide his iniquities; nay, but *said*, "I will confess my transgression to the Lord;" and divine grace anticipated even the confession (Ps. xxxii., *see notes*).

This is not all; for presently we find that this is no exceptional mercy to a David; nor again is there any who has no need of such a confession, and such mercy as is here shown. Nay, for "for this cause shall *every one that is godly* pray unto Thee in a time when Thou mayest be found." He therefore who has never known this way of drawing near to God is not the godly but the ungodly! such is the need of grace on the part of all!

3. The apostle turns back again to Abraham, to raise another question very important to the Jew. This blessedness then, which is of grace and to sinners, can circumcision give a claim to it which the uncircumcised have not? Well, look once more at the history: faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness;

uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he [q]received the sign of circumcision, a [r]seal of the righteousness of the faith that [he had] when in uncircumcision; that he might be the [s]father of all that believe though in uncircumcision, that [t]righteousness might be reckoned unto them also, and father of [u]circumcision, to those who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham when in uncircumcision.

[q] Gen. 17.9–14, 23–27. *cf.* Gen. 15.6.
[r] *cf.* Acts 7. 8. *cf.* Ex. 12. 44, 48. *ctr.* Gal. 6. 12.
[s] *cf.* vers. 12, 16. *cf.* Gal. 3.7. *cf.* Matt. 3.9. *ctr.* John 8. 33–40.
[t] *cf.* vers. 5, 6.
[u] *cf.* ch. 2. 28, 29. *cf.* Phil. 3.3. *ctr.* Acts 7. 51.

SECTION 3. (Chap. iv. 13–25.)

This faith in One who manifests Himself in resurrection.

1 (13–17): The promise by faith that it might be by grace, sure to all the seed.

1. FOR the [v]promise was not to Abraham or to his seed by law, that he should be heir of the world, but through righteousness of faith. But if they that are of the law be heirs, [w]faith is made void, and the promise made of no effect: for* the law worketh [x]wrath, for where

[v] *cf.* Gen. 12. 3. *cf.* Gen. 15. 5, 6. *cf.* Gal. 3.13–18.
[w] *cf.* Gal. 2. 21.
[x] *cf.* ch. 7. 10; *cf.* Gal. 3. 10; *cf.* 2 Cor. 3. 7.

* Some of the oldest MSS. read "but."

when was it reckoned then? in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? How overwhelming an answer in the simple fact to all the high and exclusive claims made by the Jew! His own father Abraham was an uncircumcised man when he possessed the faith by which he was justified, and of that faith circumcision, the sign of God's covenant with him, was the seal! As to Abraham none could deny that circumcision could not contribute to that righteousness which was his before it, and that to get his argument, the Jew must invert the facts of history. Standing as they do, Abraham appears as the father of all that believe, although uncircumcised, that God may consistently reckon righteousness to them also, and the father of circumcision (the one in whom began that separation to God implied in it) to those who not merely had the mark in the flesh, but who also walked in the steps of that faith of their father Abraham which he had while yet uncircumcised.

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How plainly then has God made the history to speak to him who has ears to hear! But there is more yet to be drawn from it, which if not so plain upon the surface, all the more convincingly declares the purpose of God toward which all history moves. Abraham is here to bear witness to another principle which in the time to come was to be more fully unfolded, and to attain a deeper significance. We have seen already that Paul's gospel begins with a risen Christ, from whom he himself learned it; but he would show us now that resurrection was always in God's mind as the way of blessing, and that Abraham had to learn this also; no doubt in a different way from that in which the gospel declares it, and yet with the same wrapped up in the germ as is now unfolded for us in the developed fruitage. We believe in the God of resurrection: well, so did Abraham; and in spite of an immense difference in the application, the identity of principle is as apparent as it is important.

1. To Abraham and to his seed was the promise made which constituted him heir of the world spiritually. The apostle reminds us that this promise was not given by law, which therefore could not burden it with conditions that in fact would nullify it. For the law (as the Jew so little realized) only brought in wrath: where no law is there is no transgression. If sin were, as is so generally asserted from a false rendering of a familiar passage, "the transgression of the law," * the apostle's words would be wholly unintelligible, and perfect moral

* 1 John iii. 4. The Revised Version has set this right. It translates, "Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness: and sin is lawlessness."

there is no law neither is there [h] transgression. Therefore it is of [i] faith, that it might be according to [k] grace, that the promise might be [l] sure to [m] all the seed; not to that which is of the law only, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is father of us all (even as it is [n] written, A father of many nations have I made thee) before him whom he believed, God who [o] quickeneth the dead, and [p] calleth the things that are not as being.

§ (18-22): Faith, spite of apparent contradiction, in God's word alone.

2. Who [q] against hope believed in hope so that he might be the father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, So shall thy seed be. And not being weak in faith, he considered [not] * his body already

* Some omit "not."

[h] cf. ch. 5. 13, 14, 20. cf. Gal. 3. 19.
[i] ch. 3. 22.
[k] Eph. 2. 8.
[l] cf. Heb. 6. 17, 18. cf. 2 Cor. 1. 20.
[m] cf. Gal. 3. 22, 28, 29.
[n] Gen. 17. 5.
[o] ver. 24. cf. Heb. 11. 19.
[p] cf. 1 Cor. 1. 28.
[q] cf. Heb. 11. 1, 12. cf. Jno. 11. 22, 40.

confusion would result. Then the law would be chargeable for all the sin in the world; and the law must have existed from the beginning: a conclusion which many frankly accept, but which would utterly destroy the apostle's argument here as it is expanded in the epistle to the Galatians. There he builds upon the fact that the promise was 430 years before the law, which could not be therefore added as a condition to a covenant made so long before it (Gal. iii. 15–17). This would of course be necessarily set aside if it were proved that the law was antecedent to the covenant, instead of following it at so long an interval. But there was yet "no law," says the apostle, to make the promise void—no condition attached to it to be violated, no line drawn to be overstepped: which is exactly what transgression means, the overstepping of a line drawn. Sin is a deeper thing: it is the lawlessness, the spirit of independence and revolt, which underlies, of course, every transgression, but which may and does exist apart from any law given to overstep; but this we shall come to later.

The promise then was entirely apart from law or condition: it was God speaking out of His own abundant goodness,—a covenant with one party to it only, and that One who cannot fail: He who accredited to Abraham righteousness by faith, in the same way gave him the promise also. For what is faith but the confession of having and being nothing, so that we turn to God of necessity for all? Righteousness came thus to him who consciously had none; and the promise to him who on his own part could promise nothing. Grace after this manner made it sure to all the seed; and those of the law could not deprive those of it who have the faith of Abraham, nor claim it, save as of faith themselves. "A father of *many* nations" went out certainly beyond Israel; and for all alike must He who spake be Quickener of the dead.

Here the true condition of man is reached, and the principle comes out in full reality upon which God must be with him to be with him at all. The dead, and things that are not! how thoroughly does this set aside the legal principle, and enthrone God in the supremacy of resources which are His alone! Man in himself is heir only to the penalty which attaches to the failed old creation; God must come in beyond the failure in the plenitude of a power which is no less grace to bring up into a life which, being His own redemptive gift, cannot again be forfeited, so as to make the failure His. Resurrection out of death is the bringing into life subject henceforth to none.

2. Here Abraham again helps us, made to learn in his body the lesson of the divine ways such as undoubtedly in those primitive days men were quicker to read in nature than we are to-day. With few books or none, the book of nature was more naturally their resource than ours; not certainly in this leaving us the gainers whatever we have gained besides. For God met them there with living parables of precious meaning, and the material world became, who can doubt? more like the friend it should be than the slave that we have made it.

having become dead, being about a [a]hundred years old, and the deadening of Sara's womb; he [b]staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, [c]giving glory to God, and fully assured that what he has promised he is [d]able also to perform; wherefore also it was [e]reckoned to him for righteousness.

3 (23-25): For us in Him who has raised up Christ.

3. Now it was not written for [m]his sake only, that it was reckoned to him, but for [n]our sake also, to whom it shall be reckoned, [o]believing on him who [p]raised up Jesus our Lord from among the dead; who was [q]delivered up for our offences, and was [r]raised for our justification.

a Gen.17.17.
b cf. Jas.1.6. cf.Mk.9.23, 24.
c ctr. 1 Jno. 5. 10.
d cf.Gen.18. 14. cf. Eph. 3. 20.
e ver. 3. Gen. 15. 6.
m cf.ch.15.4. cf. Heb. 6. 17, 18.
n cf. Acts 2. 39. cf.1 Cor.10. 11.
o ch. 10 9. cf. 1 Pet. 1.
21. p Acts 2. 24; cf. ch. 6. 4; cf. 1 Pet. 1. 21. q ch. 8. 32; cf. Is. 53. 6. r cf. 1 Cor. 15. 17.

So Abraham was made to face in his own body the impracticability of natural effort as night by night those pendant lamps of heaven shone down over his whitening head, and the word of promise whispered in the stillness, "So shall thy seed be." Faith though he had had, he too, with us all, had thought that that promise was not quite unconditioned, as Hagar and Ishmael were witness; and Sarah had had fully her part in that which had introduced the bondmaid as heir to her mistress. Did we ever try to help God but to our own shame? So Abraham had at last to walk before an Almighty God with a body now dead, which he could reckon upon no more, and there learn in experience what, having learned, we wonder we could be so slow in learning, that faith in ourselves is only so much unbelief in Him, a hindrance to the blessing He would give us. God leaves him till his case is hopeless enough for Him to be glorified aright in meeting it, and for us to see, as else we could not, the glory of His power.

Man then is put in His place, and God in His; God is glorified and man is blessed; his ruin is owned and his redemption found: and the faith that brings us there can suitably be reckoned therefore for righteousness; it is a faith that makes God all, man nothing; "*wherefore* also it was reckoned to him for righteousness."

3. The principle applies still for us: the faith is, of course, in its characteristics essentially the same. In its object it is here quite different. "It was not written for his sake only that it was reckoned unto him, but for ours also, to whom it shall be reckoned, if we believe on Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from among the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.

God is indeed in the faith of Abraham as given here and in our own the same God, the Almighty God of resurrection; but His power is now seen as displayed *for* us, and not *in* us. Yet it is displayed in regard to Another who is in the most wonderful manner identified with us, so that what has been done to Him has indeed been done to us in the best and most precious sense. It is Christ seen as our Substitute who was delivered for our offences, and whose resurrection therefore testifies the acceptance of that which has removed them from the sight of God. It is therefore for our justification: that is, it is, in a true and simple sense, our justification itself. The meritorious cause is, of course, His blood, and so it is stated a little later that we are justified by His blood. But the resurrection is the justifying *sentence*—the act of God on our behalf, as the Lord's work on the cross was what was presented to Him,—the work of the Saviour. And thus it is that we believe on Him who raised up Jesus: God in this showing Himself now upon our side in righteousness through the work accomplished, so that we know Him as toward us, and always so.

There are thus three ways in which justification is spoken of here. We are justified by His blood: the penalty that was upon us having been borne for us. We are justified by His resurrection, as the sentence in our favor which assures

SECTION 4. (Chap. v. 1-11.)
Experience on the way.

1 (1, 2): Peace with God and standing in grace.

1. Therefore having been [s]justified by faith we * have [t]peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom also we have had our [u]access by faith into this [v]grace wherein we stand and [w]boast in hope of the glory of God.

2 (3-9): God's love in Christ to us when sinners assuring us of salvation to the end.

2. And not only so, but we boast in [x]tribulations also, conscious that tribulation worketh [y]patience, and patience [z]experience, and experience [a]hope; and hope maketh [b]not ashamed, because the [c]love of God is shed

* Many read, "let us have," but the connection is all against it.

cf. 1 Pet. 1. 8; *cf.* vers. 3, 11. *x cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 12, 13; *cf.* Matt. 5. 10-12. *y* Jas. 1. 2-4; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 7. *z cf.* Heb 6. 11, 12; *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 10-12; *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 4, etc. *a cf.* Jas. 5. 7; *cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 2. *b cf.* Ps. 119. 116; *ctr.* Prov. 11. 7; *cf.* Phil. 1. 20. *c cf.* Gal. 4. 6 with Gal. 5. 22.

s ch. 3.24,28. *cf.* ver. 9. *cf.* ch. 8.33, 34.
t cf. ver. 10. *cf.* Eph. 2. 13-18. *cf.* Col. 1.20 - 22.
u cf. Eph.3. 12. *cf.* Heb.10. 19, 20.
v cf. 2 Cor.1. 24. *cf.* 1 Pet. 5. 12.
w ctr. ch. 3. 23.

of the value of His blood, and its acceptance in our behalf. Finally, we are justified by *faith*, as that which puts us among the number of those whose Representative Christ was, and is. So that, while for the sentence and the cause we look back through the centuries to the work long since done, yet we are not actually justified till we have believed on Christ. The hyper-calvinistic thought of men justified before they are born is a dangerous fantasy, which is as unscriptural as it is hurtful.

Sec. 4.

As the result of all this, the experience of the justified believer is now set before us; which is, let us note, the experience of faith, and may vary in energy of apprehension, as the faith itself is clear-sighted and intelligent. Yet all the features should be found, and the faith itself as seen here go on to the full day of open vision: it is a brief but blessed "pilgrim's progress," until the pilgrim "stands within the gate."

1. First, we have a look backward, round, and forward. Justified by faith contemplates the past; though it abides as something that ever characterizes our condition. The precious blood of Jesus necessarily abides in its value for God, and in its unchanging efficacy for every believer. "By one offering," says the epistle to the Hebrews, "He has perfected for ever" (or "in perpetuity," as the phrase means) "those that are sanctified" (chap. x. 14). The result is, "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." "He has made peace for us through the blood of His cross" (Col. i. 20). The constancy of our enjoyment is thus provided for; but we must not confound our experience of it with the blessed reality itself of what Christ has secured to us. He has not made the feelings, but has made that which entitles us to *have* the feelings.

Peace with God has been secured to us then in a way which never can be disturbed: faith has given us access into a place in which we stand in grace—the free favor of God, which as such cannot be forfeited. As a consequence, the future also is absolutely clear: "we boast in hope of the glory of God." It is not a doubtful hope that one can boast in. That out of which, even in its representative on earth, man under law had rigidly to be kept, is now wide open in its own heavenly dwelling-place. Saul of Tarsus saw it, as Stephen had seen it, with the Son of man standing in it; and that which goes out now, as we have seen, is "the gospel of the glory." We have not indeed, as far as we have yet reached in Romans, what is ours in its fulness in that central Figure standing there; yet we know that He is gone in, and the way thither is henceforth open.

2. Along the road there are tribulations: this is what the Lord has foretold, but with the assurance of the antidote that He has provided for us in the peace we have in Him. The apostle speaks in the light of experience, and as realizing the needs to which God ministers in this very way. "We boast," he says, "in tribulations also, conscious that tribulation worketh patience, and patience

abroad in our hearts through the Holy [d]Spirit that was given to us. For when we were yet [e]without strength, in [f]due season Christ [g]died for the ungodly. For [h]scarcely for a righteous man will one die; for a [i]good man certainly, someone might even dare to die; but God [j]commendeth *his* love unto us, in that while we were [k]yet sinners, Christ died for us. [l]Much more, therefore, having been now justified by* his blood, we [m]shall be saved from wrath through him.

* Or "In the power of."

23. 15–17. *j cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 9, 10; *cf.* Jno. 3. 16. *k* ver. 6, 10; *cf.* Lk. 7. 42; *cf.* Lk. 10. 33; *cf.* Eph. 2. 4–9. *l cf.* ch. 8. 32. *m cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 10; *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 17.

d Eph. 1.13. *cf.* 2 Cor. 1. 21, 22

e cf. ch. 8. 3. *cf.* Lk. 5.18–25.

f cf. Gal. 4. 4. *cf.* Heb. 9. 26.

g cf. 1 Cor. 15. 3. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 24.

h cf. Jno. 15. 13, 14.

i cf. 2 Sam.

experience, and experience hope." Here is how that which is against us works for us; and notice that the very first thing effected is the breaking down of our own wills, those wills that Jacob-like struggle so much with the will of God. Sovereign He must be; and spite of all that we have known of Him, it is what in practical detail we so little want Him to be. Amid the clouds and darkness that encompass Him in His providential dealings faith that should find its opportunity finds oftentimes bewilderment and perplexity; yet in it we are forced to recognize our nothingness, and creep closer to the side of Him who yet goes with us. Forced to let God be God, it is then that we get experience of a moral government which is that of a Father. The *forcing* of outward things comes to be read as *drawings* of Omnipotent Love that seeks us for its own delight. His ways, if still they may be beyond us, are not strange and still less adverse. They beget, not fear or misgiving, but a brightening hope, that steadies as it brightens. We realize how much rather the darkness from which we suffered was moral and within ourselves than from the mystery of things around. There *is* a mystery: this Cæsar who commands that all the world should be taxed to pay him tribute; *that* made the noise and seemed to give the portent; underneath and yet above it all, a woman is brought by it—a lowly woman to a poor Judean town—that a little Babe may be born in Bethlehem.

Here truly is the mystery that endears all mysteries, and with which the Spirit given to us builds firmly up the hope that maketh not ashamed. This hope is not something less than certainty, as mere human hopes are: the love of God to us is its foundation, is its inspiration and the energy within which lifts and carries us; love that has long waited, kept back by the stubborn haughtiness of heart which had to be beaten down into the dust ere it could have its will. So the "due season" tarried until at last, when we were yet without strength, all self-effort vain, Christ died for the ungodly.

The peculiarity of divine love is here emphasized that, while for a merely righteous man scarcely would any one be found to die, and for a *good* man—one with a heart to attract other hearts—some might even dare to die, God has shown *His* love in this, that when we were yet sinners (neither good nor righteous) Christ died for us.

Such being the love of God, and this the condition in which it met us, and in Christ His marvelous gift for us, the argument is complete that the hope connected with it cannot leave us at last ashamed: God will surely carry through what He has begun in our behalf, and save eternally those who are already justified by the blood of Christ. Love like this will not relax its hold upon us, nor power be lacking where righteousness has been in such a manner put upon the side of love. Thus the sure coming glory brightens all the clouds that hang over the road that leads there.

3. The work within us corresponds to the work done for us in sustaining such an assurance. The work of Christ has done more than put away our sins: it has reconciled us to God. His Son dying for our sins, when brought by the Spirit home to us in its persuasive power, wins effectually the heart to God. If,

3 (10, 11): Reconciled, and saved in the risen Christ, we joy in God through Him.

3. For if, being [n]enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by* his [o]life. And not only so, but we [p]boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the [q]reconciliation.

*Or "in the power of."

n *cf.* ch. 8.7. *cf.* Col.1.21, 22. *cf.*Gal.1.13.
o *cf.* Jno.14. 19. *cf.* Col.3.13.
p *ctr.* Ps.77. 3. *cf.* Ps. 43.4. *cf.* 1 Tim.1.
17. q *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 18-21; *cf.* Col. 1. 20, 21.

when we were enemies, He could so reconcile us, how much more will He bring through in spite of every difficulty, those so reconciled? We see here that reconciliation is not an after-effect upon the saint, as some would make it, but that which brings him out of his enmity, in heart to God. The apostle has not the idea of an unreconciled Christian, any more than he would have of an unjustified one. "We have now received the reconciliation" is said of all.

Moreover the "death" of His Son does not as yet imply what is presently deduced from it, our death with Him, but is put in contrast with His "life" by which we shall be saved, but obviously also to emphasize the love of God in giving up His Son to this. "His *blood*," spoken of in connection with justification, would not have been at all suited to the connection here. The point here is the effect for the heart; and therefore the closing words which bring before us the "joy in God" which is the consequence in the reconciled soul.

But the mention of His "life" is, doubtless, a link with what is to follow. To take it, as some do, as referring to the Lord's life on earth before death is out of harmony with the whole doctrine of these chapters, in which from the beginning to the end, in perfect relation to Paul's gospel of the glory, it is the risen Christ who is before us. In the gospel of John also, who, as has been often noticed, comes so near to Paul in truths peculiar to him, the Lord distinctly says to His disciples, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John xiv. 19). No one will dispute that these words refer to His life in resurrection; and the thought is entirely similar to what we have here. We are "bound in the bundle of life" with the Lord of glory; and this assures us of our eternal salvation. This doctrine we shall have in the second part of the epistle.

Here then the first division of the epistle ends. We see that the righteousness of God in the justification of the ungodly by faith in Christ, and through His blood shed for sinners, is the great subject of it. The position of the believer, except so far as his security from the wrath to come is concerned, is scarcely touched upon as yet. There is no question as yet of his nature as born of Adam, but simply of his sins. We have nothing as yet of the flesh nor of the old man; nothing about life in Christ; nothing about the facts or fruits of the indwelling of the Spirit. All this remains to be considered in the second part of the epistle, which treats of our place in Christ, and of the results of this glorious truth in blessing for the Christian.

Div. 2.

We enter now upon the most difficult part of the epistle; the right apprehension of which, moreover, is of fundamental importance in regard to the whole character and power of the Christian life. We must seek therefore to give it the most earnest attention, while assured that here as elsewhere the Spirit alone can enable us to know the value and blessedness of what is unfolded to us.

The basic truth all through is that of our new relationship to Christ as the new creation-Head, in whom it abides before God in unchanging acceptance and favor with Him. As the old creation fell in Adam, so the new creation stands in Christ; and as our part in the old creation was through the life transmitted to us from Adam, so the life received from the Last Adam brings us into the new, and gives us a place in Him. "In Christ" means identification with Christ as our Representative in glory. By this also we are identified with Him

DIVISION 2. (Chaps. v. 12–viii.)

Deliverance by our new relationship to Christ, in whom we are dead to sin and law.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. v. 12–21.)

Christ our new creation Head.

1 (12-14): Entrance of sin and death through the first Adam, the figure of One to come.

1. WHEREFORE [this is] as by [r]one man sin entered into the world, and [s]death through sin, and so death [t]came through to all men, for that [u]all have sinned. For [v]until law sin was in the world, but sin is

[r] *cf.* Gen. 3. 6-18. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 22.
[s] ch. 6. 23. *cf.* Jas. 1. 15.
[t] *cf.* Heb. 9. 27.
[u] *cf.* ch. 3. 19, 20. *cf.* vers. 17, 21.
[v] *cf.* Gen. 6. 5, 6. *cf.* Gen. 13. 13. *cf.* Lev. 18. 3, 24.

in His death, and are thus judicially freed from all that attached to us as men of a fallen race. We have died out of it in our death with Christ; our old man is crucified with Him; we are dead to sin, as He died to it once for all, and are alive to God in Him.

For practical deliverance however we need the settlement of a further question, and the realization of a new power. We are dead with Christ to law also, that we may be united to another husband, and so bring forth fruit to God. Here, as soon as we speak of union, we must have more than life in Christ, and there comes in the new power, that of the Spirit. We are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, as indwelt by the Spirit, and the law of the Spirit, which is at the same time that of life in Christ Jesus, delivers us from the law of sin and death. In this connection all the working of law while we are under it as a principle is shown us in the experience of an undelivered man; which works on to entire self-despair, and thus to the end of self-occupation: he learns in this way his freedom to turn from himself and be occupied with Christ, and so ability to bring forth fruit.

The walk in the Spirit is shown us in what follows, though still through a groaning world, and in suffering therefore, while in expectation of the glory of the children of God, for which the whole creation groans together. For our need meanwhile the Spirit becomes our effectual intercessor, and all things work together for good to those who love God. This part ends with a glowing utterance of triumph in the omnipotent supremacy of the goodness of God in behalf of the objects of His eternal purposes.

SUBD. 1.

We begin then with Christ as Head of new creation, in contrastive parallel with Adam and our heritage of evil from our first father's fall. There are here many questions that have arisen and will arise: it is a much trodden ground of debate and controversy. Happily for us, we have not the responsibility of clearing up all the difficulties of divine government, but only of seeking the meaning of what is here before us. Faith's part is not to say there are no mysteries, but to wait in quiet confidence for the due time of their revelation. We know in part, and we prophesy in part; but the veil which is oftimes over the face of His dispensations is not, thank God, therefore over His own face. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is not and cannot henceforth be in the darkness, but is Light and in the light.

1. We have first, what is too plain a fact, that sin and death are here. That death is, no one can dispute; that sin is, if any one denies, the common conscience of men will everywhere rebuke him. Sin, too, is something peculiarly man's own; man has a power for self-debasement which the beast has not, and which can hardly be an acquisition he has made, seeing it is manifestly a degeneracy. It is a principle born with him also, a universal heritage, early and quickly developing. All the evidence we can expect then is in proof of the statement here, that by one man sin entered into the world; while the shadow of it over man, which the beast feels not, confirms the further one that death

not [w]put in account* where law is not; nevertheless death [x]reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of [y]Adam's transgression; who is a [z]figure of the One who was to come.

* ἐλλογεῖται: not the same as the word for "reckoned" or "imputed." It is found again only in Philem. 18. The law put the items of sin into man's bill of account.

w cf. ver. 20. cf. Gal. 3. 19. cf. ch. 2. 12. cf. Lk. 12. 47, 48.
x ver. 21. cf. Heb. 2. 15.
y cf. Hos. 6. 7.
z cf. 1 Cor. 15. 45; cf. Heb. 2. 5-9.

came in for him as penalty with sin. If geology can appeal to facts which show that death existed before man upon the earth it in no wise touches the truth of this at all. Scripture never asserts that death came in for the beast through sin or through man. Nor does it assert that there was no death in the beginning, which is a mere mistaken inference from the green herb assigned to the living thing for food. The "world" of which the apostle speaks here is doubtless the world of men alone: it is "to all *men*" that death came through, as he says.

He adds even as to men as the ground of the penalty, "for that all have sinned;" and here the main discussion immediately begins. There are a number of different explanations of these words, but most of them really alter what they would explain. To read "in whom all sinned" is impossible as a translation; nor can one say "all have become sinful," or "all have been treated as sinners:" it is exactly the statement of chap. iii. 23, where "all have sinned" speaks of literal, personal sins committed. In complete opposition to the thought of sinning in Adam, nothing can surely be intended but that men have come under the dominion of death on account of their own sins. The contradiction of fact is, of course, the main, if not the only reason why this is not at once accepted. How could this be true of infants? is naturally asked, and might at first sight seem unanswerable. But the passage just now referred to has exactly the same thing to be said of it, but where it is no difficulty at all. If it be a question of salvation, infants cannot be saved as sinners, nor can be justified by faith; yet no one would contend on this account that this could not be God's way of salvation because it did not take in infants. The apostle speaks there simply of those standing in their own responsibility before God. Infants are therefore understood as excepted, and that applies to both statements. As soon as you can speak of accountability at all this becomes true that all sin; and that shows of course the ruin of the race. Death has come in through the one man Adam, as has been said; and yet not because of any such formal covenant with Adam on behalf of his posterity as many plead, but because through that mysterious oneness of the race which, whatever question may be raised about it, cannot be denied, the fall of Adam *did* involve the corruption of his posterity. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" asks Job; and answers himself, "Not one." Thus the "all have sinned" in this place demonstrates the fitness of God's sentence of death passed upon all. For, if you plead the exception of infants from the penalty on Adam, your exception ought to plead for them as much as to their exemption from the inheritance of corruption, which is a more terrible fact, and from which yet the justice of God does not exempt them. The greater fact of the general corruption proved so sadly as each emerges into the common world of men, implies the parallel fact of death as its accompaniment. But in this very way the consideration of the case of infants may be omitted from the statement before us.

It is thought by many that at this point the apostle breaks off his argument, to introduce a long parenthetical explanation as to the relation of law to sin, and as to the parallel between Adam and Christ, returning to complete his thought in the eighteenth verse. This (which is what we find in the common version, and which has been exchanged in the revised for the worse hypothesis of a mere broken statement which never reaches an orderly conclusion) seems, however, only to derange the true relation of parts to one another as expressed in the structure. The parenthesis seems too long and too important in what it

2 (15-17): The contrastive parallel.

2. But [a]not as the offence even so is the gracious [b]gift: for if by the [c]offence of the one the many died, [d]much more hath the grace of God, and the gift in grace, which is by the one man Jesus Christ, abounded unto many.

[a] *cf.* vers. 9, 10.
[b] *cf.* ch. 6. 23. *cf.* Jno. 4. 10.
[c] ver. 12.
[d] *cf.* ver. 10. *cf.* ver. 20; *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 14.

contains, as well as too anticipative of the after-conclusion. The twelfth verse, moreover, is not broken off in the manner supposed. The proper view seems rather, as others have suggested, that the introductory "wherefore," referring clearly to what has gone before, teaches us to look *back* for the true commencement of that to which the twelfth verse becomes then itself the conclusion; though this is not fully reached without a more explicit disclosure of what was in the apostle's mind, that Adam was in fact the "figure," or "type, of the One that was to come." For in the gospel upon which he had been dwelling was already announced that principle of the One standing for the many, to which he now explicitly calls attention. We may supply "Wherefore this is"—this coming in of peace and reconciliation through Christ—in the same way "as by one man sin and death entered." This meaning, the words as to Adam, "who is the type of the One that was to come," bring into full day, without there being formally the conclusion.

There is, therefore, no parenthesis here; but the apostle goes on to say that sin existed before law. This the Gentile needed to consider, rather than the Jew, who would easily admit it; but the Gentile might say, "We had not the will of God made known to us, as the Jew had." In fact Paul had spoken to the Athenians of a time of ignorance at which God winked. The law had put sin into account in the way the Gentile had nothing like. Adam in paradise had a law indeed, though a very simple one, and which after his expulsion from the garden could have no further application. From Adam to Moses there was no law. Yet (with one gracious exception only) from Adam to Moses the universal reign of death proved fully the presence of sin which God reckoned to them. Yet there was no law, and therefore no transgression: for where no law is there is no transgression, as has been already said (chap. iv. 15). Adam *transgressed:* he had a limit imposed which he overstepped; but those who had not sinned in the likeness of that open transgression of his, yet died, as he had died: sin universal was proved in the fact of universal death.

In all this the darkness is unrelieved; but it is but the background upon which the glory of divine grace is to be displayed: even from the centre of the darkness now the light shines: this very principle which seems only to have worked ruin, God can transform into one of complete triumph over the evil that has come in. Another Adam shall replace the failed first man, and a fairer creation arise in unfading beauty out of the ruin of the old.

2. A type, by the very fact that it is a type, must be in contrast with its antitype: the shadow cannot be the perfect image. Here, however, at first sight, the contrast is more evident than the resemblance; and the apostle at the outset emphasizes the contrast. "*Not* as the offence," he says, "so is the gracious gift." In the fact of representation of their respective companies, the two Adams are alike. Each is the head of a race, which stands or falls with its respective head. In the first epistle to the Corinthians (chap. xv. 45) these heads are themselves put in contrast with one another: "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit." This gives us the key to the respective races with which they are connected: the first is a natural, the last a spiritual race. And so it is said in the epistle to the Hebrews (ii. 16), "He taketh not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham He taketh hold." These the apostle speaks of indeed in this place as His *brethren*, rather than His seed; as in the present epistle also He is seen as "the Firstborn among many brethren" (viii. 29). And because He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb. ii. 11).

And not as by one sin is that which is given: for the judgment is by [e]one to condemnation; but the gracious gift is of [f]many offences unto an accomplished [g]righteousness. For if by the offence of the one, through the

[e] cf. Gen. 3. 24. cf. 1 Cor. 11. 32.
[f] cf. ch. 3. 13-18. cf. Ps. 19. 12.
[g] ver. 18. cf. 2 Cor. 3. 9.

Here the identity of the Head with the race is affirmed: and in this sense Adam, though the father of all, would also be the firstborn among many brethren. As to the Lord, it is with the seed of Abraham that He is allied; that is, with the family of faith, the spiritually born. And because the children God has given him are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part in the same (ver. 14).

But He is truly also the Last Adam of this spiritual race, Himself the Quickening Spirit to them all, Himself their life; "for as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, so the Son quickeneth whom He will" (John v. 21).

Thus here are two Adams, alike in this, yet how unlike! the Adam of the old, and the Adam of the new creation! In connection with the one, spite of the beauty and uprightness in which he first came forth from under the Creator's hands, his personal history was little more than that of the "offence," the fatal effects of which he transmitted to his seed. With the other comes, not penalty or requirement, but "gift." How great must be the contrast then! If God is inflicting judgment, this must be executed according to the demand of divine righteousness; but here therefore can be no overplus. But if God be *giving*, what shall limit Him as to the gift He chooses to bestow? Any gift to fallen creatures must be of His grace; but if it be grace upon grace, who shall say Him nay? Has He in fact come in in Christ simply to undo the effect of the fall, and set man where he was before it? Nay, if the offence was disastrous, and the many died, much more has the grace of God and His gift in grace, which is by the One, Jesus Christ, abounded towards many! Innocence has indeed been lost, with the continuance of life on earth, and the Eden paradise; but righteousnes and holiness have been gained, eternal life, and the paradise of God! Here is the divine balance-sheet: it would not suit God to have a poorer exhibit; it would not suit Him to have no gain in glory: and this is what the Second Man has toiled for, as the first wrought the shame.

And there is another contrast: one sin committed brought in condemnation; such was the holiness of God, a holiness still unchanged; yet now after many offences having been committed, His gracious gift is of a state of accomplished righteousness.

Again, if the men through whom those diverse effects are wrought are thus in contrast, and if the present effects themselves carry on the contrast, how will the future bring this out in full result! If the work of the one man has brought about the present reign of death, much more shall they who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the One Man, Christ. It is not merely that life will reign instead of death, but that the recipients of this grace themselves will reign in an unending life.

Thus we see, all through, that the parallel here is one of contrast, and that Christ having come in to undo the work of the fallen first man, in a grace which, though ever righteous, cannot be measured by righteousness simply, as the judgment is, there must be as the result a plenitude of blessing which shall glorify God where sin has come in to dishonor Him, and thus shall raise up the fallen creature also to a height far above the level of his original condition. These things are necessary concomitants: God is going to "show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii. 7).

This is indeed directly contrary to some thoughts which have been largely held and thought to be favored by the well-known phrase used by the apostle Peter in his address to the Jews soon after Pentecost, in which he speaks of a restitution of all things to be brought about at Christ's reappearing, and "of which" he says, "God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since

one death reigned, much more shall they who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness [h] reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

h cf. ch. 8. 17. cf. 2 Tim. 2. 12. cf. Rev. 22. 5.

the world began" (Acts iii. 21). This has been thought decisive that eternity will be but a final return to what were God's first thoughts when He created man, and which He could not permit the entrance of sin to set aside. Or else, it is contended, Satan would really have gained a victory in compelling Him to change His plan about Eden and the earth. And this has been carried so far by some that the "new earth" of which the prophets speak has been supposed to be indeed a "Paradise regained," in which generations of men would in the ordinary way of nature but without death, replace one another to all eternity. Adam, instead of Christ, is thus made to have been God's first thought, Christ an expedient when the first man failed; the paradisaic state is unscripturally exalted, and the work of Christ and its consequences really, however unintentionally, degraded. For it should be plain that as the Person is far greater, so His work must be, and so the fruits of it. Where the original creation is taken as the perfection of what was in the mind of Him who created it, Adam is considered to have been a creature made for heaven, to whom it was secured by covenant that he would receive it as the reward of his well-doing; and the ten commandments are carried back some two thousand five hundred years before they were given, to be the measure of what he was required to fulfil. Thus when he failed, Christ is supposed to have taken up the broken contract, and to have gained for us, by his fulfilment of it, what Adam lost.

All this is in complete forgetfulness of what Christ is, and of the work which lay before Him; it is to forget that almost throughout what we have been looking at, the parallel between the two Adams is one of contrast. Here let the pregnant figure of the trespass-offering speak—which is the divine thought of restitution given to us. Plainly, had man in that case fulfilled the law as regards God and his fellow, there need have been, and would have been, no offering at all. If Christ even had taken up Adam's broken contract to fulfil it, death would have had no place in such work, because death was the penalty of the breach of it. If He could thus have fulfilled the work for Adam, and given to God the obedience in which Adam failed, and in Adam's behalf, the punishment of the breach of it could not have been required of Him. What was wrong would have been set right without the shedding of blood. But "without shedding of blood is no remission;" and "if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Heb. ix. 22; Gal. ii. 21).

But furthermore, in this matter of the trespass-offering, after the injury inflicted had been duly estimated and made up, still restitution in God's thought of it, was not complete until there had been added to it a "fifth part more." Thus the person who offered the offering did more than could have been required if the trespass had not been committed, and the injured person was now a gainer to that extent. In the trespass-offering two aspects of it are distinguished which would not come together in the ordinary use of it; there was a Godward and a manward side, which in Christ's fulfilment of it *did* come together. God and man are both considered as suffering through sin, and are both now gainers through the work of Christ; and this is the "much more" of the apostle in the fifth of Romans, and this is the "fifth part more" of the book of Leviticus.

To see it in anywise, we must have clearly before our eyes the contrast between these two of whom we have been speaking: what did God gain, to speak humanly, by Christ's work? what could He have gained, at the best, by Adam's?

What was the first man, Adam?

Not, if we are to take Scripture, a being formed for heaven, but in express contrast with heaven, "of the earth, earthy." If I open Genesis, I find no hope of heaven held out to him there, no idea of being raised above the estate in which he was created. I find no works enjoined, for which he was to be

3 (18-21): The actual realization.

3. So then as by one offence [the bearing] upon all men was toward [h]condemnation, so also through one accomplished righteousness [the bearing] upon all men is toward [i]justification of life. For as through the one

[h] ver. 12, etc. cf. Gal. 3. 22.
[i] cf. Col. 2. 13. cf. Jno 5. 24. cf. 2 Cor. 3. 6-11.

rewarded; one prohibition only of a thing which would have had no moral character attaching to it, had it not been forbidden. Created very good, he was to keep his first estate, not seek a new one. Nor, until sin had made our estate evil, and only with fallen man, do we find a thought of a creature quitting its estate, except as sin. So with "the angels who kept not their first estate," of whom Jude speaks. Not made to toil at working out a righteousness, but to enjoy the bounteous goodness which had provided richly for him, one test of obedience, and of the easiest, was given: if he ate of the tree, he died.

What did God gain by such obedience?

Save as one of the countless creatures He had made, whose happiness bore witness of creating goodness and wisdom — nothing. Had he obeyed, what marvel? Had he obtained witness that he was righteous, it would have been creature-righteousness, not divine. With Eliphaz, we might have asked, "Is it gain to God that thou makest thy ways perfect?" And had he been obedient, as angels were, would the fitting reward for it have been a place in glory and at the right hand of God? Would he have inherited all things? Would he have been where Christ as Man is, and have shared what the saints will share, as joint-heirs with Him?

Simple questions, yet needful. For if they are to have adverse answer, after all the plan as shown in Adam must be so far altered; and how much does this imply?

But Adam fell: that wrong was done to God, of which the trespass-offering speaks. Sin had spoiled the old creation, and (again to speak humanly, as we must,) raised the question of God's character. If He cut off the offenders in righteousness, love would not be shown; if mercy spared them, how could He be holy? Slowly and patiently was the answer given. Christ was that answer. Not simply the taker up of man's cause. Not the worker out of mere human righteousness. But the brightness of the Father's glory; the Wisdom and Power of God: the Fulfiller of divine righteousness, and the Revealer of divine Love. The glory of God is in the face of Jesus Christ. There we see it. If the entrance of sin into the world had in anywise raised a question about God, not only are such questions for ever at rest, but the way in which it has been dealt with in the Cross of His Son becomes the very way in which His attributes shine out. Christ is not merely "the Lord our Righteousness," He is the very "Righteousness of God." Could Adam have been that, or wrought it? We are in another sphere altogether, plainly. Inseparably connected with man's worst wickedness, is the display of God's righteousness, and not in wrath, but through which He justifies the ungodly.

Thus Christ's work is different both in its character and results Godward from anything that could be of Adam, asked or had. It was such as the Only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father alone could accomplish, and must have corresponding results for man also, for here also the "fifth part more" applies. Things are restored, but not to the primitive condition before the fall. They are "*made new*," in a "*new* creation," not the old, and whose Head is "the beginning of the creation of God."

3. It is the gain manward of the work of Christ with which the apostle here is occupied; although the Godward side must be disclosed in connection with this; but the point here all the way through is the effect with regard to the many with whom the Head is connected. In the last three verses we had the contrasts between the judgment and the grace; now we have the actual realization, along with the declaration of the sufficiency of Christ's work for all, which renders all inexcusable who do not receive it. The purpose of the law added at

man's [k]disobedience the many were brought into the state of sinners, even so, through the [l]obedience of the One, the many shall be brought into the state of righteousness. Now [m]law came in by the way, that the offence

[k] *cf.* Gen. 3. 6.
[l] *cf.* Heb. 10. 5-10.
cf. Phil. 2. 8.
[m] *cf.* ch. 3. 20.
cf. ch. 7. 7.
cf. Gal. 3. 19.

the close shows the earnestness of God's grace in pressing upon men their need; law being thus a true handmaid to the gospel as is shown elsewhere. The provision for man's sinful condition is also dwelt upon, which the very idea of an Adam-head implies, a life in Christ, which prepares us for the doctrine of the chapters following, in which this comes to the front in the consideration of practical questions of the deepest interest and importance. It is characteristic of all this second division of Romans that life and nature come up in it, as in the first only actual sins, which are the ground of final judgment, as has already been shown. The conviction of a soul before God is not to be effected by pressing upon him Adam's sin, or the evil nature which he has thus derived from Adam. These he will turn into pleas in his own favor, rather than against him; and it is in this way that Job actually pleads that one cannot bring a clean thing out of an unclean: humiliated he is by it, but not condemned. On the other hand, spite of such pleas, conscience will bring him in guilty for every actual sin, and from its decision there is no appeal. Whatever man's nature may be, he, unlike the beast, is responsible to control it morally, and not be controlled by it. In the power of the will, in which lies man's true manhood, his accountability to God is found as well.

It is when one is converted and the bent of the will is Godward, that the hindrance of a fallen nature is proved in bitter experience. This we shall have to consider in a little while. At present it is only the presence of such a nature that is recognized, along with the parallel communication of a new nature from the new source of life to a believer, the new Adam-Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. Hitherto we have had the fruits of the old nature, the actual sins. Now we are to look deeper; remembering all the time what we have spoken of as to human accountability being due to something beside nature. We never speak of nature acting indeed, except as implying a certain passivity in the man himself, and not the man in his full manhood energy.

The contrast now is only that necessarily involved in the two heads that are before us; although in the statement of the general bearing of accomplished righteousness "all men" have not the same relation to the Second that they had to the first. This is of them, however, and not of Him; the express purpose of what is said here being to show that it is not from any lack of sufficiency for all that the effect of the work of recovery does not reach to the full extent of the fall. God is not willing that any should perish (2 Pet. iii. 9), and therefore could not leave any without provision made: "as by one offence (the bearing) towards all men was to condemnation, thus also through one accomplished righteousness (the bearing) toward all men is to justification of life." Besides the universal aspect, there is only the last expression that is new. "Justification of life" is not found anywhere else in Scripture, and in itself it may have more than one significance. What is commonly understood by it is "justification *to* life,"—a clearing from charge which entitles the justified man to life instead of the death that would have been his due. This is not unfitted to stand over against condemnation also, though justification alone would sufficiently do this.

But "justification attaching to life" introduces an important thought that is not found in the former way of reading it, and which connects moreover with what is soon to follow. If Christ be really another Adam, a life communicated to those who are of His race forms a necessary part of this idea. The Last Adam is thus a "quickening Spirit," a communicator of life in a way transcending all that could be attributed to the first. The life, as the Lord has taught us, is eternal life, and thus we are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. All this we have had fully in the Gospel of

might abound; but [n] where sin abounded, grace did overabound: that as sin reigned in death, even so might [o] grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

n *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 12-16. *cf.* Mk. 16. 9. *cf.* Is. 1. 18.

o *cf.* ch. 6. 14. *cf.* Tit. 2. 12-14; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15.

John, and need not repeat here what is indeed simple and familiar truth. But this life, in Him who is the Resurrection and the Life, is resurrection life. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die," He says, speaking of it, "it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John xii. 24). And so again He speaks of him that believeth in Him as one with death now behind him, and never to know it (chap. xi. 26). Thus the life being resurrection life, the virtue of His death is in it for us, and His resurrection is our justification: we have justification attaching to the life we have in Him—"justification of life." Brought into a new creation by our part in the Last Adam, His death is our severance from all that judicially attached to us in the old; "if any man be in Christ, (it is) new creation: old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Cor. v. 17). Thus the "one accomplished righteousness" has wrought for us.*

This is its bearing towards all men—most important to be stated to vindicate the grace of God from what men's unbelief might bring against it. In the actual result the apostle cannot speak any more of "all men," but once more of "the many." "For as through the one man's disobedience the many were brought into the state of sinners,"—there is the sinful state, the heritage of uncleanness derived from the uncleanness of our fallen parents,—"so through the obedience of the One, the many shall be brought into the state of righteous." This last, no doubt, includes both the justification and the life. Notice here that "the obedience of One" brings in the burnt-offering aspect of Christ's work, the full sweet savor. To stand in Christ is not merely to have our sins put away, nor even (what we have not yet come to) our old man set aside, but it is to be accepted in all the preciousness for God of His obedience.

Thus there is a growing fulness in the statements here. They are not mere repetitions of the same, however blessed, truth. They go on swelling in an increasing triumph of divine goodness overmastering evil. In the closing strain the law takes its place and acts its part, only apparently to make the tale of sin more disheartening, and yet in the end to make victorious grace manifestly supreme and lift it to its throne of glory. "Law came in by the way that the offence might abound:"—did that need? one might ask; was it not to add difficulty to difficulty—to make greater the distress that it could not relieve? So it would indeed seem, and not only seem, but so it really was: law, as we shall see fully in the argument of the seventh chapter, by its very opposition to the innate evil only arouses it to full activity and communicates to it new strength: "the strength of sin is the law" (1 Cor. xv. 56). This was indeed its mission; which if that were all, would be but disaster—a ministration of death and condemnation indeed! (2 Cor. iii. 7, 9); but it came in by the way, says the apostle,—to fulfil a temporary purpose, in making manifest the hopeless condition of man apart from grace, when every command on God's part arouses the hostility of man's heart against it: "the law entered that the offence might abound"! Yes, but that man learning himself by this, grace may be known as grace, and so received; "that as sin reigned in death, so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." How suitably the ascription of Lordship to the glorious Conqueror closes this wondrous recital of what we owe to Him! It is this heart-homage to Him which

* This "one accomplished righteousness" corresponds to the obedience of One, spoken of just below, and is in contrast with the offense and disobedience of the first Adam. It would seem to include the Lord's death and resurrection, in which God's righteousness was declared. It has nothing to do, directly, with our Lord's own personal righteousness, save as that fitted Him to be the unblemished sacrifice. In His death righteousness in grace toward man was fulfilled and in His resurrection it was proclaimed.—S. R.

1 (1-4): Our initiation into newness of life.

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. vi.)

Dead with Christ to sin, no more to be in bondage to it.

1. WHAT shall we say then? Are we to [p]continue in sin, that grace may abound? Far be the thought. We who have [q]died to sin, how shall we still live in it?

[p] ver. 15. *cf.* ch. 3. 5-8. *cf.* Jude 4. *cf.* Eph. 4. 17-24.
[q] vers. 6-10. *cf.* Gal. 2. 19, 20. *cf.* Col. 3. 3. *cf.* ch. 7. 4; *cf.* Gal. 5. 24; *cf.* Gal. 6. 14.

is of the essence of the blessing bestowed. The reign of grace is that in which Christ reigns, and subjects all enemies; the heart entirely subdued to Him, that subjection is its deliverance and freedom.

SUBD. 2.

We come now at once to that deliverance, which is detailed for us in two parts, which are taken up in perfect order,—first from sin, and then from law; the first positional, the second, practical deliverance. Necessarily deliverance from sin comes first, in order that deliverance from law may not mean lawlessness, but freedom to *serve* in newness of spirit. And yet deliverance from law must be, in order that there may be *practical* deliverance from sin. The positional is *judicial* clearing, as the use of the word "justified" (ver. 7)—"he that hath died is justified from sin"—sufficiently shows. This is not the same as from "sins," let us note, but goes beyond it. We are in Christ, who has died once and for all to that which He took upon Him, so that no question as to it can be ever raised again. We too, therefore, as in Him are once for all cleared, because He, our Representative, is. We have a place in absolute perfection before God unchangingly. And this by and by we shall find to be the "law of the Spirit," even that "life in Christ Jesus," by which we are practically "delivered from the law of sin and death" (chap. viii. 2). It is the delivering *principle* which the Spirit uses; but the question of law must be settled also, that it may practically avail us.

Questions at once assail us here, and these the apostle deals with, as we shall see, continuously. To be freed at once from all possible charge of sin, and with this from law also, would seem in the eyes of more than natural men unholy from first to last, while sin is nevertheless admittedly within us still, and the devil and the world are both around to incite and allure us. But grace really reigns; and "sin," says the apostle, "shall *not* have dominion over you, *because* ye are not under the law, but under grace" (ver. 14). It is strange, yet true, that even the Christian is slow to recognize in all the length and breadth of it, the truth of such an assertion; yet it is the thesis which Paul sets himself to maintain all through, and against all who may gainsay it. Let us watch his argument as having that personal interest in it which indeed we have.

1. He starts at once with the argument of an objector, of course, founded on his previous declaration that "where sin abounded grace did overabound." "What then?" he asks; "shall we continue in sin, then, that grace may abound?" Spite of the answer given to it here, that question is substantially raised to-day, as if there had been none; as if, in fact, it were really unanswerable. But it is true that the apostle's answer is very little understood; and even by those who are quite satisfied with it. Rejecting utterly the thought, he puts it away with another question. "We who have died to sin," he asks, "how shall we still live in it?" The putting that as a question shows how unanswerable he deems it; and unanswerable it clearly is, if only the premise is rightly taken. *If* we *are* dead to sin, then it is an undeniable consequence that we cannot live in it.

But the difficulty is with the assertion itself, that we are dead to sin. Most Christians are content to say, that they *ought* to be dead to sin, but wince as they look into the book of their experience, and are ready to declare that there never was more than One on earth, who could truly affirm this of himself.

Yet it is as plain as possible that, whether from his experience or in some

Or know ye not that so many of us as were [r]baptized unto Christ Jesus, were baptized unto his death? Therefore we were [s]buried with him through baptism

[r] *cf.* Gal.3.27. *cf.* 1 Cor.15. 29.
[s] *cf.* Col.2.12. *cf.* Jno.3.23.

other way, this is just what the apostle *does* affirm; and that not only of himself, or of some people of special attainment, but of Christians as a class—of *all* Christians. It is true as to all Christians that where sin abounded grace did much more abound, and that is the ground of the objection taken, and of course, of Paul's answer too.

This at once settles it against the so-called perfectionists, that he is not affirming as to any one's *experience*, that he is dead to sin: for Paul is certainly speaking of all Christians, and it is not the universal experience, and is not claimed that I am aware, that it is that, that all are in this sense "dead." And we shall see in a little while that this is not given as an experience of any, but as a *faith*. His words later on are, "*Reckon* yourselves dead indeed unto sin;" and the reckoning is from this that "Christ died unto sin once." This therefore is a reckoning of faith, as is clear, and not an experience. It is plain, without need of looking further, that in this being dead to sin, however little as yet we may grasp the full meaning of it, we have another example of our identification with our Representative Head. It is necessarily true therefore of every one of us, however great the need also of having it believingly realized, as the apostle urges.

He goes on to press the truth as conveyed in baptism, which as that which brings into the ranks of Christian discipleship, has been given as a picture-lesson of what discipleship implies. "Or know ye not," he asks, "that so many of us as were baptized unto Christ, were baptized unto His death? We were buried therefore with Him through baptism unto death, that as Christ was raised up from among the dead by the glory of the Father, so also we should walk in newness of life."

We need to go slowly here, so many things being in question. It is a sad sign of the confusion of the day that thus in the very rite of initiation into what is our common profession, we should yet be so little able to agree as to what is meant by it. Happily, neither mode nor subjects are before us here, though doubtless we may find what will have its implication in both these directions. But we are in company with one of those who could say, "He that is of God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth us not;" and we must surrender ourselves to his guidance absolutely.

"Baptized *unto* Christ Jesus" is certainly correct, instead of "into," though the Greek *words*, as words merely, might mean either. But the parallel "baptized unto Moses" is absolutely decisive. The Israelites were set apart to Moses in the cloud and in the sea,—to be Moses' disciples; where we plainly could not say, "into." The phrase is thus freed from all suspicion of such a ritualistic force as in very opposite interests it has been made to bear,—as if the wondrous place in Christ were conferred in baptism. "So many of us" again does not imply a smaller out of a larger number, but is on the contrary an emphatic way of saying "every one;" or as if one said, "If we were baptized to Christ at all, we were baptized to His death."

To see the force of it clearly, we have but to go back in our minds to John's preparatory baptism in Jordan, the river of death, in which men took their place as confessing their sins, and owning their rightful condemnation. Thus he baptized unto death; but it was not Christian baptism—it was not "to *Christ's* death," which is the distinctive feature of the present time, but simply to the acknowledgment of its being worthily their own.

Nevertheless it was for remission—"the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins": not present yet, so that it could be a testimony of sins actually remitted, but in view of the One coming whose forerunner John was. Nor did John close without the fuller witness that, in fact, He had come. Come! and to

unto death, that as Christ was [t]raised from among [the] dead by the glory of the Father, so also we should walk in [u]newness of life.

[t] *cf.* ch. 4.25. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 21.
[u] *cf.* Gal. 6. 15.

cf. Eph. 4. 17-24; *cf.* Col. 3. 10, 11; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 16, 17.

the very place of that which these penitents acknowledged as their due! The Lord's baptism in Jordan was for Him no baptism of repentance, but the solemn pledge to what He afterwards called "the baptism that He was to be baptized with" (Luke xii. 50). Thus alone could deliverance be achieved for men who were under death, and the virtue of that death abides; so that now convicted sinners such as these in John's day, brought to own their place in death before God, find all changed for them; they learn that He has been in death for them, and find a new life for them where death was. Thus Christian baptism is still to death but to *His* death, a death which is life to all that come to Him; and here we have the key to that which baptism expresses.

Baptism has in itself no reference to *life:* it is burial, and burial has to do with death, not life,—it is the dead who must be buried. Now comes the necessary question: in what sense are we dead, to be so buried? Notice that in the idea which baptism presents, we are baptized *to* Christ, not with Him. We are not baptized because we *have* touched Him, but, so to speak, we touch Him *in it*—as to what is intended. In other words, baptism is a gospel picture acted out. As we have seen in the words of Ananias to Saul (Acts xxii. 16) it is itself in some sense, the washing away of sins: we are not baptized because they *have* been washed away, but we wash them away in it. And this agrees perfectly with Peter's words in his first epistle (iii. 21) that in a figure baptism *saves;* not marks out the saved, as so many put it, but *saves.* And this again agrees with what John's baptism speaks of, and which the thought of baptism as burial confirms. It is as sinners we come to it, not saints; and in it we find remission of sins and salvation. These are things, as we know, upon which ritualism builds; and they are facts, but of no use to ritualism. Its followers might as well try to support life upon a picture of food, or to take names for things and prove to us there is no difference between them.

There is an illustration from the Old Testament which may more vividly present to us the truth that we have here: "Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year. And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha; and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet" (2 Kings xiii. 20, 21).

Elisha, in the miracles done by him, answered to his name, which means "My God is salvation." We have in this one a beautiful illustration of baptism, just because it is a vivid and beautiful picture of salvation through the gospel. The man is dead, and so they bury him: burying is but putting the dead into the place of death. He is let down into the grave of one who had died before: he is buried with Elisha. So buried, he touches the one who had preceded him in death, and is quickened out of it: he stands upon his feet a living man.

Here we have two deaths brought together, and the one the cure of the other. The man that you bury must be dead; and this, of course, must apply to baptism; but in what sense then dead? dead with Christ, since it is burial with Christ? That is the contention of some, and is plausible at first sight, but only at first sight; for, as we have seen, it is only the one already alive in Christ that can be dead with Christ, and the man buried in baptism is buried to touch the dead Christ and to live. Dead with Christ means dead to sin, as we have heard already, and as is to be more fully shown us; but none can be dead to sin who is not spiritually alive,—who has not already touched Christ so as to live. Buried with Christ does not then imply dead with Christ, as might be thought.

Buried because dead in sins, then? That is nearer to, but is not yet the truth. The death that we see pictured in John's baptism is the death which is

2 (5-7): The old man crucified, to nullify the body of sin.

2. For if we have become *united* with [him] in the likeness of his death, we [v] shall be on the other hand [in the likeness] of his resurrection; knowing this,

[v] *cf.* Col. 2. 11, 20.
[w] *cf.* ch. 8. 11. *cf.* Col. 3. 1.

* "Grown together"; "planted together" is not correct, and "identified," which some give, seems too free; while it indicates the effect rather than the production of this. See notes. There being no "him," some would say "united with the likeness of His death," but this creates needless difficulty. That it is with Christ is shown clearly by the context.

the *due* of sin, and not the inward condition, which is but the inveteracy of the sinful state itself. The death here is that into which Christ came; but He did not come into any sinful condition, but under its penalty. Hence burial with Christ is the owning of the penalty, which the conscience anticipates before it comes, Christ having also anticipated that place for us, that we may live. Baptism, as before said, is but a typical or acted out gospel; with a significant protest against ritualism also: for the baptism is, as the word itself shows, and the argument also, but immersion—burial, Christ alone as the quickening Spirit giving the life. It does *not* go on, as Colossians in our common version teaches, to resurrection.* It is the confession of death, for which we are put into Christ's sepulchre, that we may live. What is contemplated here is power for the new walk; it cannot itself give this: it is a baptism to death, and not to life.

This corresponds exactly also with the true rendering of 1 Peter iii. 21, which really speaks of baptism, not as the *answer* of a good conscience, which from all that we have seen it could not be, but rather "the *demand*† of a good conscience," not the declaration that we have found it. The baptism, not as an ordinance, but in the idea that it conveys, ends with effecting this. It is but the introduction of the soul to Christ, with whom all satisfaction of the conscience lies. The doctrine of Scripture is as to this consistent throughout, as it must always be.

Christ, then, was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. That for which He had come into the world demanded for Him deliverance from death, into which He came for this. But such acceptance of His work for sinners means necessarily their deliverance from the power as well as penalty of sin. Thus the practical effect for those who are His is a "walk in newness of life." The old man, as we shall presently see, is not to revive out of this burial. The "newness," as the word implies, is a newness of *kind* (*kainotees*), another sort of life. The river of death has swept over the old one.

2. The apostle goes on to show how the cross of Christ as the crucifixion of the old man becomes in the wisdom of God a means to the sin still in us being overcome. But we have to ask ourselves the question in the first place, what the expression "our old man" means. The common thought is, perhaps, that it is the sin in us personified; thus what is called afterwards the flesh: a term which we may note has not yet been used in Romans, in this sense, and the proper place to examine which will be in the next chapter. But there is one thing which is important to take into account, as to the old man, the significance of which, if not the fact, is largely overlooked, that it is never spoken of as existing in the Christian, but always as crucified or put off. It is so even in Eph. iv. 22, where the common version is at least ambignous, but where instead of "that ye put off" should be read "that ye *did* put off." Thus it refers to what for us is past, not present, and this is so far against the thought of its being the sin in us, while the fact of there being as to the Christian a "*new* man," which he has put on, replacing the old one, really demonstrates this from the other side. Always the putting off is connected with the putting on, and the two men are not co-existent but exclusive of one another.

The necessary conclusion is that the new man is characteristic of the Chris-

* Col. ii. 12 should be read, "buried with Him in baptism, in whom also ye were raised together."
† The R. V. has "interrogation," or "inquiry."

that our [x]old man hath been crucified with [him], that the body of sin might be [y]annulled, that we should be [x]slaves to sin no longer. For he that hath died is [z]justified from sin.

x *cf.* Gal. 2. 19, 20. *cf.* Eph. 4. 22.

y *cf.* ch. 7. 5, 6.

cf. Heb. 2. 14; *cf.* Ex. 14. 28-30; *cf.* Col. 2. 11. z *cf.* vers. 17-22. a *cf.* ver. 18; *cf.* ch. 7. 3.

tian; and conversely the old man is the man before his Christian course began. There is no personification in either case: it is the person that was and the person that is, each characterized morally; while, of course, the same individual persists all through. But in this way "our old man" is surely as easily read as it is significant. It is the person that was, with evident allusion to the first fallen man, the repetition of whom in all his natural descendants may account for the plural with the singular ("*our* old man"), the self-same man with each and all of us! For this "the one" and "the many" of the last chapter has prepared us; it is evident that the transmitted image of the first man in the many must for those to whom Christ is Head and Saviour be met and cancelled; while the new man is just the man in Christ, a new creation.

Let us now go back to the beginning of what is here. "For if," says the apostle, continuing his reference to the truth in baptism, "we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in that of His resurrection." The likeness of His death is, of course, baptism itself, and the being united* to Him in His death, is that which we have seen baptism to represent. If therefore that which baptism represents is fulfilled in us, then on the other hand, we shall be in the likeness of His resurrection. This may, no doubt, go on to complete realization in physical resurrection, yet surely is intended to have a present practical application, according to the whole tenor of the thought here. "We shall be" is only necessarily future from the standpoint of union with Him in His death, and its argumentative force for the present is blunted by an exclusive physical reference. The contrast between "become" and "be" favors also the present application: "if we have become united, then we shall as the result be (now) in this likeness." For as Christ was not left in the grave, so for us also the power of His resurrection must approve itself. It is contended indeed that resurrection with Christ is not found in Romans in this way. It is true that it is not dwelt upon, as in Ephesians and Colossians; yet there are references to it which can hardly be mistaken: what, for instance, does "yield yourselves unto God, as those alive from among the dead" mean? And how could the thought be absent from the "newness of life" in which we are to walk? Does not the being by the Spirit united to Christ, as in the next chapter, necessitate it? or may we have the full thought of alive in Christ, and even as a means of deliverance from the law of sin and death (chap. viii. 2) apart from this? The truth will be developed more and more as we go on with it; nevertheless the germ of all that relates to our position individually is already here.

And in connection with this it is that the crucifixion of the old man, of which the apostle goes on to speak, comes to be delivered from all ascetic mournfulness, and attains its proper character as that which annuls (or brings practically to nothing) the body of sin. It is sin as dwelling in us, acting through the body in the lusts and passions which reflect themselves in it, which in its entirety needs to be annulled. Similarly, in the next chapter, the man who has come to despair of self-mastery groans aloud for deliverance from the "body of this death;" while in Col. ii. 11 we have the parallel term, the "body of the flesh." By and by we shall be warned that the "body is dead because of sin" (chap. viii. 10), and that we are to "mortify the deeds of the body" (ver. 13). All this it is not yet the place to enter into, yet it enables us to realize sufficiently what is meant here.

* We must distinguish between being united to Him *in His death*, and union by the Spirit with Him as risen from the dead, to which we come only in the next chapter.

3 (8-11): Alive to God in Christ risen.

3. Now if we [b]died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him; conscious that Christ being raised from the dead, [c]dieth no more: death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin [d]once for all; but in that he liveth, he [e]liveth unto God. Thus do ye also [f]reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus.

b cf. 2 Tim. 2. 11. *cf.* Gal. 2. 20. *cf.* Col. 2. 20 with Col. 3. 1. *cf.* ch. 8. 11.
c cf. Rev. 1. 18.
d cf. Heb. 9. 25-28.
cf. Heb. 10. 12. *e cf.* Jno. 14. 19; *cf.* ch. 14. 7-9. *f* ver. 2; *cf.* Col. 3. 3; *cf.* Heb. 11. 1; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 7.

The crucifixion of the old man is the inflicting penal sentence upon it; and in this we must remember that it is not man's part in the Cross that is before us, but that the lifting up from the earth was that which in the law of Moses indicates the awful sentence of God upon sin: "he that hangeth upon a tree is accursed of God" (Deut. xxi. 23). Thus the cross was God's judgment upon fallen man, with whom each one of us had his place naturally. The sentence is here, not merely upon our sins but upon ourselves, and here is a meaning of the Cross most important for us to realize and take to heart. The thoughts of man's heart, his wisdom and his will, received in it their condemnation; thank God, they were put away from before Him by our glorious Substitute; so that we have our deliverance judicially and practically at the same time. How immense a gain to have learned God's estimate of ourselves in nature, so as to have learned the renunciation of our wisdom and our wills; while finding the complete setting aside of all from before God as in a dead man they are necessarily set aside: for you can charge nothing against a dead man; whatever he may have been, as now dead, "he that hath died is justified from sin." It is plain in the way the apostle is speaking, crucifixion in this case does not come short of death, as many would argue: it gives character to it as divine condemnation, and this is for the breaking of our thraldom to sin, and the annulling it in its totality. Divine righteousness has branded it,—divine love has removed its burden from me, so that I should be its slave no more.

3. But if we do not stand any more as identified with what we were in nature, or under the doom of sin,—if it is with Christ that we have died, this means for faith that we shall also live with Him. Touching Him in faith, we are henceforth identified with Him. As we have seen, He is the living Head and Representative of His people, and in Him our life is. Thus we have the assurance which He has given to His own, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John xiv. 19). The future tense in both passages simply affirms, of course, the perpetuity of what has already begun, and that is founded on what is a matter of Christian consciousness, that "Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more: death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once for all; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God." Thus that which was the burden upon Him has been for ever rolled away, and that burden was our burden. It is not partly removed, but wholly; there is no such thing as partial removal for any of His own. We are to reckon ourselves dead to sin as He is; and alive to God for ever in Him who is eternally alive to God, His glorious work achieved.

We *reckon* this so, not feel it to be so. It is an entire mistake, and fraught with important consequences, to imagine this being dead to sin to be feeling or experience. We cannot *feel* Christ's death on the cross, and it was there He died to sin, and *we* because He died. If it were experience, it would be an absolutely perfect one, no evil thought, feeling, or desire, ever in the heart; and this not true of some of the more advanced, but of all Christians always; but this is contrary to the experience of all. The attempt to produce such a condition in oneself ends in the misery of utter failure, or, still worse, in self-satisfaction, indeed, the well-nigh incredible delusion for a Christian man, that he is as impassive to sin as Christ Himself! The words do not, as already said, express such an experience; as indeed, in any such sense as this, Christ never died to sin: what for us might be the expression of perfection would be the denial of

4 (12-14): The walk consequent.

4. Let not sin therefore [g]reign in your mortal body to obey its lusts. [h]Neither yield* your members to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, [i]but yield† yourselves unto God as alive from among the dead, and your members as [j]instruments of righteousness to God. For sin [k]shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law but under grace.

* Literally "be yielding." Present.
† Literally, "Be yielded." Aorist. A definite past act.

[g] *cf.* ch. 8.2. ver. 14.
[h] *cf.* ch.8.12.
[i] *cf.* ch.12.1. *cf.* Col. 3.1.
[j] *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 19, 20. *cf.*Col.3.12-17.
[k] *cf.*Gal.5.1. *cf.* Jno.8.31-36.

such perfection as was His. In every way, then, in which we look at it, it is plain that it is not an experience of which the apostle is speaking here. We could not be told to reckon that we experience: what we reckon is a fact for faith, the fruit of the work done for us, not of that done in us: because Christ died unto sin once for all, and in that He liveth, liveth unto God, thus also do we reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God in Christ Jesus.

These last words carry us back, as there can be no right question, to those which we have heard from the Lord's own lips in the Gospel of John. Thus, looking forward to the present time, the time of His absence from His own, as gone back to Him from whom He had come, He says, "In that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in Me, and I in you" (John xiv. 20). He has prefaced this with the assurance, "Because I live, ye shall live also." His parable of the Vine and its branches, which shortly follows, gives us the fundamental thought in these expressions so often repeated, "we in Him and He in us," and we see it to be life in Him that is all through at the root of them. The epistle of John afterwards gives it more precise doctrinal statement, that "God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (1 John v. 11). It is a life which, all through the Gospel, we are shown that He communicates to us, and which we have abiding in us. Thus we are "in the Son;" and because the life is divine life, we can be said, not only to be in the Son, but in the Father also (John xvii. 21; 1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1; 1 John ii. 24). But this at once distinguishes the doctrine of Romans here from that of John. John speaks of life and nature only—what we have as children of God and born of Him; it is condition and not position, as is plain, for the thought of "in the Father," and "in the Son" alike exclude position. But Paul, as we have seen, while his doctrine is based upon a life which we have received, a life eternal, in no wise different in this way from what is revealed to us in John, yet developes in another manner this truth, and shows us other implications of it. For him the life is in Christ, the new Adam of a new creation, which rises out of the fallen one, to stand in the perfection of its Head before God, and in the value of the glorious work which has much more than redeemed us from the sin and ruin in which we were involved, and made us partakers in an infinite wealth of blessing. Thus it is "in Christ" that we live,—in Him who is before God, not simply in the right, which was always His, of the Only begotten of the Father, but as *Christ*, in the place He had taken for men, and as having accomplished the work by which they are brought to God; and the pentecostal anointing of the gathered disciples was but the overflow of that upon the priestly Head, which was thus flowing down to the skirts of His garments (Ps. cxxxiii. 2). So was He now in the fullest sense the Christ—the Anointed. Life was now in One who was the Representative Head of His people, and "alive unto God in Christ Jesus" puts together condition and position. If "in Christ" brings in the thought of new creation, as the apostle declares (2 Cor. v. 17), the new creation stands in the New Man to whom it has been committed—the Antitypical Adam of the race to whom He has become a "quickening Spirit." All this must faith reckon in, to have the fulness of the blessing here.

4. Now then the apostle can exhort to a walk suited to such a place. We see at once that he has no thought of sin having been done with in such sort that

5 (15-23): Irresponsibility and recompense.

5. What then? Are we to [l]sin, because we are not under law but under grace? Far be the thought. Know ye not that to whom ye [m]yield yourselves as bondservants to obedience, bondservants ye are to him whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But thanks be to God that ye [n]were bondsmen to sin, but ye have [o]obeyed from the heart that form of teaching to which ye were delivered. Now having been set free from sin, ye have become [p]bondservants to righteousness. I speak [q]after

l ver. 1. *ctr.* 1 Cor. 9. 21, 22. *cf.* Gal. 5. 13 -15.
m cf. Matt. 6. 24. *cf.* Jno. 8. 34.
n cf. Tit. 3. 3. *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 9 -11.
o cf. Acts 17. 30. *cf.* ch. 1. 5 with Heb. 11. 8.
p ver. 22; *cf.* ch. 7. 6; *cf.* Heb. 6. 9, 10.
q cf. ch. 3. 5.

there shall be no danger from it any more. The believer is, indeed, set free from subjection to it, but therefore in a place in which the full responsibility is his of manifesting that freedom. He is not beyond the need of the warning, "Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, to obey its lusts." These bodies, though with the sign of the fall still upon them in their evident mortality, can yet be yielded* up now to God by those who are now alive from the dead, and their members as instruments of righteousness to God. And it is to this that grace enables and constrains. No need of weakening the sense of it, then, or qualifying it with some other and therefore opposite principle! Nay, "sin shall not have dominion over you, *because* ye are not under law, but under grace." Shall the delivered soul call in again its jailer to make good its deliverance. Nay, it is grace alone in which there is any help whatever, or ray of hope. And, thank God, it is all-sufficient also. Sin shall not have dominion over the subjects of divine grace, is the apostle's assurance: grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life.

5. Everything here will be questioned, however, by the soul ignorant of itself and of God; and such questions, because of their importance, must have careful answer. Again therefore we have the objection of the mere moralist taken up to be indignantly set aside: "What then? Are we to sin, because we are not under law, but under grace? Far be the thought." Yet the heart of man is in fact capable of such abuse of divine goodness; yes, but what would such an argument mean? A soul set free willingly yielding itself to that from which God has delivered it? Is this deliverance when the heart is still deliberately seeking that from which it assumes to be delivered? Well, says the apostle, if I am addressing any in such a condition, let me remind them that here the whole nature of God is in question. Does not then the way of sin deliberately pursued, end in death? Does the gospel change this relation of sin to death? does it not manifest God, and in all His attributes? His holiness being more shown indeed in the agony of the Cross, than even the uttermost punishment of the sinner could have shown it. Thus then, if one freely yields himself to obey a master, he cannot but be reckoned as belonging to the master he has chosen, whether on the one hand to sin with its terrible wages, or of obedience to God for righteousness. In all this there rules a fundamental necessity, which the gospel could not subvert and be still a gospel.

It was necessary, therefore, to give this the clearest expression; but, while the apostle does so, he has a joyful conviction with regard to those whom he is addressing, that their own experience well interprets that which he is saying. With them he is assured, their bondage to sin is indeed past, and with heartfelt appreciation of the glorious change, they have entered upon the new service to righteousness. Melted and subdued by the power of the Word, they have been

* The reader will observe, as has often been noticed, that in speaking of yielding to sin and to God the apostle uses different tenses of the verb, which while difficult to render in English give distinct shades of meaning in Greek. He uses the present tense of the imperative in speaking of yielding to sin. It is never, at any time or during any period to be obeyed. In speaking of obedience to God, it is the Aorist imperative that is used. It is a definite act, once for all, as marking the beginning of the walk in newness of life.—S. R.

the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh; for as ye did yield your members [r] bondservants to uncleanness, and to lawlessness unto lawlessness, so now yield * your members [s] bondservants to righteousness unto sanctification. For when ye were bondservants to sin, ye were [t] free in respect to righteousness. What [u] fruit had ye *then* in the things of which ye are now ashamed? for the [v] end of those things is death. But now being [w] freed from sin and being made [x] bondservants to God, ye have your [y] fruit unto sanctification, and the [z] end eternal life. For the [a] wages of sin is death, but the gracious [b] gift of God eternal life [c] in Christ Jesus our Lord.

* Aorist.

[r] ver. 13. *cf.* 2 Pet. 2. 19.
[s] *cf.* ch. 14. 17, 18.
[t] *cf.* 1 Jno. 1. 4. *cf.* Ps. 12. 4.
[u] *cf.* Is. 5. 4. *cf.* Matt. 21. 34, 35.
[v] ch. 1. 32. *cf.* Rev. 20. 14. *cf.* Gen. 2. 17.
[w] ch. 8. 2. *cf.* Jno. 11. 44.
[x] *cf.* 1 Cor. 7. 22, 23. *cf.* Rev. 1. 1.
[y] *cf.* Phil. 1. 11.
cf. ch. 7. 4. [z] *ctr.* ver. 21; *cf.* Heb. 11. 26. [a] *cf.* 2 Pet. 2. 15; *cf.* Heb. 11. 25; *cf.* Ezek. 18. 4.
[b] *cf.* Jno. 4. 10; *cf.* ch. 4. 4, 5; *cf.* Eph. 2. 8. [c] *cf.* 1 Jno. 5. 11, 12, 20; *cf.* Eph. 2. 6.

as ductile metal run into the mould, and taking form in the pattern of their present life by the doctrine to which they are surrendered, so as, being set free from sin, to become bondservants to righteousness. Strange phrases these might seem still to use in connection with the redeemed and enfranchised children of God. The apostle in some sort apologizes for them; yet that divine love has had to conquer us for itself, we surely know; and having conquered, that it has made us bondservants to it for ever,—bound by the grace that has enfranchised us more fully and securely than any slave as such could be. Yet, alas, of this bond we need to be reminded, strangely as we are often in contradiction to ourselves: we are not beyond the exhortation to yield our members bondservants to righteousness for sanctification,—righteousness which has in it the apprehension of God's peculiar and double rights in us,—redemption more than doubling His creative claim. From the opposite side, as bondservants to sin, we were indeed free in regard to righteousness. Can we not vividly remember those shameful, barren days as to good? and the end of those things is death! How great the contrast now! "But now being freed from sin, and being made bondservants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gracious gift of God eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

This is the summing up in contrast of the two sides already set before us. The end on the one side is what man has earned; the end on the other is the full realization—the entering into—of that which is, not simply at the end, but now also, God's gracious gift to us. This has been shown us abundantly; but notice how again here "our Lord"—"in Christ Jesus *our Lord*"—closes this subject with the glad witness of what brings all the life into that harmonious order which is the result of the deliverance from sin. The Christ whom we have known in His lowliness as Jesus, now in the place of exaltation which has given us a "gospel of glory," has bowed our hearts in obedient homage to Himself. As the unwilling prophet testified of a people of other days, "the shout of a King is among" us, the pledge of victory over every foe,—"higher than Agag" with all his rebellious rout. There can be no deliverance where Christ is not enthroned; there can be nothing else, where He has His due place and acknowledgment. Put Him only in His place, and He cannot but manifest His power; and that will be more and more simple as we proceed with what is before us now.

Subd. 3.

We come to the working all this out in experience, then. What we have had already is complete enough indeed as to our *title* to be free: it is the making good to us, with its blessed consequences, of that "life in Christ Jesus," which

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chaps. vii.–viii. 4.)

Realized deliverance as united to Christ by the Spirit.

1 (1-3): Dominion of law over the living.

1. ARE ye ignorant, brethren, (for I speak to them that know law) that the law hath dominion over a man as [d]long as he liveth? For the woman that hath a

[d] *cf.* ch. 3. 19. *cf.* Gal. 4. 4, 5.

is the very "law of the Spirit" which delivers us from the law of sin and death (chap. viii. 2). But *as* the law of the Spirit we are yet to see it, and how Christ comes to have experimentally the place He must have for such result. For the whole aim and work of the Spirit is to exalt Christ; and alas, for the Christian also there needs for this a weaning from self which is apt to be a terribly slow process,—self hiding under the most specious forms of self-renunciation and the quest of holiness. And here is found one of the great mysteries of the divine ways, by an unsubduable self to turn one from self, and bring the sweetest and most effectual remedy out of incurable evil, strength out of weakness, and hope out of despair. It is here that, for the first time we learn what "flesh" is, and conscious captivity to a law of sin in the members brings us to the experience of a liberty which is the assured privilege of the "man in Christ."

It is here also that we find the true character of the law and our need of deliverance from it, in order that we may bring forth fruit to God; the death of Christ being our death to it, as truly as we saw it to be our death to sin before. The law is no more dead than sin is, but we are dead to it—a wholly different thing. The first husband must go, that we may rightly belong to the Second; for we cannot be joined to the two at once. And it is by the Spirit that we are united; the Spirit being as much the seal of Christ's claim to us as it is the Father's acknowledgment of His spiritual children.

As through the previous subdivision we had the reckoning of faith, so in the present we have this put in connection with experience, which is first of all made to bear witness to the need one has of this, and then becomes the joyful experience of faith itself.

The relation of the law to a sinner has already been fully shown. Here it makes known sin, and charges man's guilt against him, but has no remedy. There were types and shadows, as we know, that looked on to the coming Deliverer, but in this very way pointed away from themselves. In itself it brought upon men wrath only, reckoning up sin in detail, and bringing to an end the ignorance of former times at which God winked, and thus making the offence abound. Justification, peace with God, the glorious righteousness of God which now is manifested in favor of every one who believeth in Jesus,—these things have been fully declared as the fruit of the gospel only, and we are no longer engaged in the discussion of them. It is not the approach of the sinner to God which is before us now, but the walk of the saint—a totally different thing, and which we must not mix up with it, or all lines will become blurred, and the truth no longer distinguishable. Doubtless there are principles which run through both; for the Christian guided by his own reasonings merely argues very much after the manner of the natural man, and God's thoughts will not be his thoughts until he is content to have these revealed to him as Scripture has revealed them, and accepts them humbly without the modifications which he is so prone to impose on them. That righteousness is not by the works of the law he may be now convinced, and rejoicing in the realization that Christ alone is this to him, while yet in the matter of holiness he is well-nigh as legal as ever. God's way is to proclaim Christ for both, but often to deaf ears on the part of believers themselves, who having begun in the Spirit, would yet be perfected by the flesh. For saint as for sinner before, it is hard to accept in simplicity the mortifying truth that "no flesh shall glory in His Presence." Thus for long, it may be, in the conflict between God's thoughts and his own, both his own experiences and the word of truth are shrouded in darkness to him; and preferring the way of experience, he finds it the hard teacher which proverbially it is, and

husband is [e]bound by law to her husband while he liveth; but if her husband die, she is *set free from the law of her husband. So then, if while her husband

[e] 1 Cor. 7. 39. cf. 1 Sa. 25. 37-42.

* Literally "annulled," the same word as in chap. vi. 6.

at last, if taught truly by it, is only forced to turn to that which he has been unwittingly, yet not the less really, resisting, to learn what it alone can teach him, and that, after all, the moral of his disappointment and misery is to be found in his controverting the way of the Spirit to make Christ as much sanctification as righteousness to him, and to have no flesh glory in the presence of God.

But whatever the sameness of the principle involved, it is of all importance to realize, as already said, that here there is no question of peace or acceptance, but of fruit and the ability to produce it. If we mix these things together, and say, here is a soul not at rest as to acceptance, then it may at once be pleaded that the reason for the fruitlessness he finds is simply on this account! Thus the lesson in its breadth will not be learnt, and those who realize in themselves the impotence confessed in the experience here will be tempted to deny the reality of what is theirs, because of the barrenness of the life over which they groan. It is one thing to find no ability to make or assure oneself of peace with God through one's works, and quite another to find, when the question is one of producing the holiness which God claims, and which it is the instinct of the Christian man to crave, that still there is an impracticable obstacle in the way —a "flesh" in which dwelleth no good thing—which renders futile all his efforts!—to have to say, not when I would find evidence of my salvation, still less when I would make my peace with God, but simply, "when I would *do good* evil is present with me," and "the good that I would I do not, but the evil that I would not, that I do"! when consciously "I delight in the law of God after the inward man," *then* to "find another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members!"

There are two views as to these expressions into which it is well known that Christians have got, which equally, but in opposite ways, destroy their proper meaning. The one, which used to be considered, strange as it may seem, the evangelical one, simply accepts the misery of the experience here described, as the ordained and normal condition of the child of God. Ignoring the fact that it is a state of captivity which is ascribed to a law of sin, from which the law of the Spirit is expressly stated to deliver us, it separates, as the division of the chapters does, the bondage from the freedom only by some strange process of thought to identify the one with the other; the experience is taken to be the actual experience of the apostle at the time he was writing, and naturally it is not to be supposed that the state of Christians in general is beyond that of the apostle. The deliverance is, of course, in this case incidental only to special crises of the conflict, and does not affect the general conclusion which is reached at the end of the chapter, that "with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."

Against such a view the reaction of the Christian instinct has led many to an opposite extreme, which asserts not only a permanent deliverance from the law of sin for the believer, but a complete removal of the flesh itself, an absolute and experimental death to sin. This does not so much concern us at the present moment; and the misapprehension as to the latter term we have already considered.

1. The apostle first of all shows that the law itself declares the limit of law. And notice that this applies as much to the law of Moses as to any mere human code. The law has dominion over a man as long as he liveth; so long, but no longer: death ends its claim. He brings forward the law of marriage in illustration of this; and here, of course, every one who knows law would admit it at once. But using marriage as he does immediately, simply in a figurative way,

liveth, she become another man's, she shall be called an [f]adulteress; but if her husband die, she is free from the law, so that she is no adulteress, though she become another man's.

2 (4): Death with Christ cancels the bond to law.

2. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also were made [g]dead to

[f] Matt. 5.32. cf. Matt.19. 3-9.

[g] cf. Gal. 2. 19, 20. cf.Gal.5.18. cf. Col. 2.20 -23.

it would not suffice for his argument as to the believer's relation to the law (of Moses) except the principle fully applied to this. We have elsewhere looked at this, and most important every way it surely is. Moses' law has to do with the present life, and not beyond. (See notes on Ex. xxxiv. 1-7, *ante*). How necessary and how blessed that it should be so! For if "the man that doeth these things shall live in them," and "the soul that sinneth, it shall die," really defined for all eternity the conditions of life and death, who that was under it could escape eternal condemnation? But God could not bind His own hands in such a fashion. The law being intended to give the knowledge of sin, and to cut off from self-righteousness, tested man *where he was*, and before the eyes of men. The death it threatened did not appertain to a scene outside man's ken, where unable to know the facts, he might dream as he pleased of the issue of his trial, but it faced him here and now. "Die!" did he die? Universal history, with every grey hair upon his head, relentlessly gave verdict against him. Yet lost and hopeless as he was on this ground, it did not cut him off from the hope of eternal mercy. Much depends then upon the truth of the apostle's words here, that the law's dominion over a man is as long as he liveth, but no longer.

When he applies his figure of marriage to illustrate the previous relation of law to the people of God, it would not have answered his purpose at all if the Jew after all could say to him, "Well, but this is only a figure; and you are not really entitled to argue from it as if it were a fact!" But not if he could say, "The figurative purpose for which I use it does not prevent its being a true illustration of the scope of the law; and death really does break the link of relationship between the believer and the law just as my figure intimates,—call it marriage or what you please."

The term "marriage" does, however, suit his purpose here in a remarkable way, as we shall see directly; for it expresses such a relation as might be abused to very galling lordship, while it none the less allows comparison with the sweet and peculiar, exclusive relationship of the Church to Christ, and gives at once the opportunity to raise the question, which here is so important, of fruitfulness or barrenness in these contrasted conditions.

It is plain that, while addressing himself to all believers now, and not to Jews only (for the lesson remains still for us. and for all time), Paul yet looks back to the old dispensation—to the people of God under it, raising no question of other differences which are not in point, but treating all as one continuous history,—a history which in principle is the history of individuals still. For the law, though God is no longer putting people under it, is that which naturally men accept everywhere as from Him, being indeed unable to think out for themselves any other than a legal system. This is, of course, the immense importance for us of this dreary detail of human experience. For the mass of us repeat the history of Israel in this respect, and have to be allowed to learn in this way what we will not learn from the word of God alone. Gentiles as we may be, the Jew is in us all, and we have as a rule to plod on under the yoke which they found so heavy, and yet would not exchange for the easy yoke of Christ. The deliverance must in a sense come to us through the law itself, as the apostle says: "I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God" (Gal. ii. 19).

2. Deliverance for us is accomplished in the self-same way as we have before seen with regard to the deliverance from sin: "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also were made dead to the law by the body of the Christ, to become Another's—His who was raised from among the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God." A hard thing this to realize, that for fruitfulness also, and not merely

the law by the body of the Christ, to become [h]another's —his who was [i]raised from among [the] dead, that we should bring forth [j]fruit unto God.

h cf. Phil. 3. 7. i cf. ch. 10. 4. j cf. Jno. 12. 24-26. cf. Col. 3. 1. j cf. ch. 6. 21.

for justification, we must be delivered from that law the holiness of which is so absolute, and the severity of which against sin we have had to learn in the cross on which Jesus died to redeem us! But how natural to think that in this view of the Cross we have exhausted its meaning; and even when such a scripture as the present is before us, to seek escape from its plain significance. Even here many see nothing else than deliverance from legal curse: "that is, freed from the law as a rule of justification, we are at liberty to accept of the offers of gratuitous acceptance made to us in the gospel" (Hodge). On the other hand, we are familiar with the distinctions drawn between the moral and the ceremonial law, the ordinances, which, it is allowed, have passed away before the fulness of Christian light, while the ten commandments are asserted to remain as what was graven upon the tables of stone, as of permanent obligation,—the perfect rule of life for believers still.

But neither of these interpretations will stand the test of a fair analysis of the words of the apostle. The question of justification by law has long been settled, and there is here nothing which would indicate any return to it. In all this part, at least until the beginning of the eighth chapter, there is not a word which could even be imagined to be equivalent or akin to justification. The purport here, as we are definitely told, of deliverance from the law is that we may bring forth fruit to God. We are set free absolutely, not from the law in this or that aspect, but without any such reserve at all; and as for the law in its ceremonial part, it can be easily seen by any one who cares to look that there is no reference to it all the way through the experience which is detailed to us. It is not the ceremonial law that says, "Thou shalt not lust," nor which reveals a law of sin in the members!*

No, it is from the law as a whole that the deliverance must be. "Holy, just and good" as it surely is, it is not the less on that account, as the apostle elsewhere declares, "the strength of sin" (1 Cor. xv. 56); and that which is such can no more be the means of sanctification than of justification. *How* it is the strength of sin the experience to which we shall presently come will make abundantly clear to us. We have but the statement as yet—the text upon which the comment is to follow immediately.

The statement is in itself absolutely plain, that if, as has already been shown us with regard to sin, the believer is dead with Christ through Christ's substitutionary death for him, and if the law has dominion over a man only "so long as he liveth," then over him as in the value of the death of Christ before God, law has ceased to have dominion: he is "made dead to the law by the body of Christ." Thus, and thus alone, is he free to become Another's, as part of that Church which is the Bride of Christ. This is a peculiar, exclusive relationship, the apostle would tell us, which forbids the old relationship to the law. That was barren; this is to be fruitful: or rather, that, as long as one abides in it, forbids fruit. Its professed aim was fruit, and thus it claimed the husband's place; and this, for purposes of perfect wisdom, was for a time, and tentatively, allowed,—a relationship too, which only death could sever: not that the law is

* The distinction so often pressed between moral and ceremonial law is one which Scripture does not make. Law is the expression of the will of God, whether it be in some moral command or some outward ceremonial. Is not this suggested by the presence of the fourth commandment? While the observance of a day of rest is of the greatest benefit to man, yet the special day to be observed and the nature of the observance are, as we might say, arbitrary. There is nothing intrinsically immoral in the disregard of the seventh day, as there would be in the violation of the sixth or seventh commandments. And yet the fourth commandment was as binding as any of the others, because it was the expressed will of God. So all the ceremonial law was His will for His people. But all is done away in Christ, and we are told that the very law "written and engraven in stones"—the ten commandments—has been done away (2 Cor. iii. 7, 13).—S. R.

3 (5, 6): Fruit realized.

3. For when we were [k]in the flesh, the passions of sins which were [l]by the law wrought in our members, to bring forth fruit unto [m]death. But now we are *set [n]free from the law, having [o]died in that in which we were held, so that we should serve in [p]newness of spirit, and not in oldness of the [q]letter.

k *cf.* ch. 8.8, 9.
l *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 56.
cf. ver. 11. *cf.* ch. 5.20.
m ch. 6. 21, 23.
n *cf.* ch. 6.14. *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 8-10.
o ver. 4.

* Literally "annulled," the same word as in chap. vi. 6.

p *cf.* ch. 6. 4; *cf.* Jno. 6. 63; *cf.* Gal. 5. 15, 16. q *cf.* 2 Cor. 3. 6-11; *cf.* ch. 8. 4.

dead—that is nowhere said—but *we* are; it was a relationship to men in the flesh, but "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." A man in the flesh is just a living man; and the cross of Christ is the death sentence, under which he lay, executed upon him, which faith owns, while it finds its deliverance in it, and in Him raised from the dead the One to whom now its every tie is; in a new and blessed life which is not of the old creation, but of the new. But, as has been said, this yet remains to be worked out practically for us in that which follows: as yet we have but the statement, of which we are now to see the meaning and value.

3. The apostle goes on at once to the experience,—though at present only the brief statement still; but he shows the nature and cause of the barrenness of the law, which while to God it is that, is not merely that. Fruit there is, but not to God; it is "fruit unto death." "For when we were in the flesh, the passions of sins, which were by the law, wrought in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death." We see why the law is fruitless, or worse: it produces the passions of sins—a strange alliance as it might seem between sin and law, but it is not that, but opposition, as must surely be, and as the detailed experience will fully show: the holy requirements of the law are to the man in the flesh but the presenting of claims in contradiction to the "mind of the flesh," which is enmity against God (chap. viii. 7). It is merely chafed and irritated, its state brought out, not altered, the knowledge of sin produced, which we have seen to be the characteristic effect of law, but with the result of the aggravation of the whole condition. But we must pause here, to look more closely at all that is in question.

The man in the flesh is in its primary sense, as should be evident, just the living man. Here there may be no moral implication whatever, as we are well aware; but it is important to realize, when we come to the meaning of the expression as we find it now employed in that part of Romans upon which we have entered, the original force, upon which the moral one is based. The man in the flesh is in this sense the living, natural man, who has never yet known the death of Christ for sinners, and is, therefore, but identified with the old creation and the flesh; as the Lord says, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." Flesh is all that he is. Spirit and soul are hidden, as it were, in this, from which they now take their character. Their life is in the world of sense, in the old creation; there is no real outlook beyond. "When we were in the flesh" applies thus solely to those not in Christ; and the effect of law upon such is what is here described. It is true that there is a mingled experience between this and the proper Christian one, which is presently shown us, and which must be carefully distinguished from either; but for the proper understanding of this mixed condition we must realize the two conditions apart, which are thus mingled. No Christian can be in that state of which it is said that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." But it is just the misery of these that the Christian heart and the unchristian experience are seemingly joined together, although not without a certain modification of one by the other. Of this we shall have presently to speak; but as yet it is not considered, but the two opposite conditions are put in sharpest contrast, so that we may learn them aright. "When we were in the flesh" and "fruit unto death" mark the first of these, that of the natural man; whereas the soul in the experience of bondage,

4 (7-11): Experience under test of law.

4. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Far be the thought. But I had not [r]known sin except through law: for I had not been conscious of lust, except the law had said, [s]Thou shalt not lust; but sin, taking occasion by the commandment, [t]wrought in me all manner of lust. For [u]apart from law sin is dead; and *I* was alive apart from law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and *I* died; and the commandment which was unto [v]life was found for me in fact to be unto death: for sin, taking occasion through the commandment, [w]deceived me, and through it slew me.

r *cf.* ch.3.20. *cf.* ch. 5.13.
s Ex. 20. 17. *cf.* Matt. 5. 28.
t ver. 5. *cf.* Jas.1.14, 15.
u *cf.*1Cor.15. 56. *cf.* Phil. 3. 4-6. *cf.*Lk.18.18 -23.
v *cf.* Lev.18. 5. *cf.*Gal.3.21.
w *cf.* Heb. 3. 13; *cf.* Eph. 4. 22.

soon to be before us, can yet say of the sin from which he has not found deliverance, "It is no more I that do it," and "I consent unto the law that it is good."

The Christian condition is now put in contrast with that of the natural man: "but now we are set free from the law, having died in that in which we were held, so that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in oldness of the letter."

As already said, it is not the law that is dead, but we: but death having come in on either side cancels the tie. That was to the man in the flesh, but the man in the flesh is gone; we are dead in the death of Christ, and so in the flesh no longer. Hagar the bondwoman, as the apostle says elsewhere, is the law that gendereth to bondage, and we are set free to enjoy a true and blessed freedom. The law is the ministration of death, and we died in that in which we were held; but thus we found Christ who has died, and under the curse of the law, so that we are set free in a new resurrection life,—still to serve, for Christ our Lord has served and still serves—would we be set free from that?—nay, but to serve in newness of spirit, serving in joy of soul, and no more in the old drudgery yet superficiality of the letter, pressed from the outside upon unwilling hearts.

This closes the doctrine of the deliverance; which we cannot, however, fully learn save in the experience of it as practically wrought out in the soul. For this, therefore, we go back of the deliverance to realize the state out of which we are delivered.

4. The apostle carefully leads us on step by step. After the doctrine we have the experience which illustrates and enforces the doctrine. This also is first given us in brief, and then we have the exercises which spring out of the experience, and which make us to realize its meaning and importance. The law of sin in the members is then finally seen as the insurmountable barrier to man which shuts him off from the attainment of the holiness which divine grace has taught every one born of God to long for; and then, as in a moment, the groan of self-despair is cut short by the shout of victory; that which he seeks for is attained, though in a manner how different from his expectation; the law of the Spirit has delivered him from the law of sin and death.

With the experience indeed, questions begin at once in the soul, which press for an answer. What means this strange, perpetual connection between sin and law? "Is the law sin?" This connection is not now that of a doctrine, about which one might go astray; it is a fact of consciousness far too manifest to be denied or evaded; but the attitude of the one towards the other is equally unmistakable. Law is the detective under divine government, continually searching out and manifesting it in the light of infinite and omniscient holiness. How startling a revelation as to man, that to provoke lust in him, God has only to forbid it! Sin in its essential character is rebellion against God! Sin takes occasion by the commandment itself to awake all manner of lust against it. And who is not conscious of this tremendous fact that there is a pleasure in sin just as sin—in one's own will and way, as that? And think of God having forbidden, not merely a step in the direction of my own will as against His, but even

5 (12-20): Exercises springing from the experience. 1 (12, 13): the divine purpose of law.

5. [1] So that the law is [x]holy, and the commandment holy and righteous and good. Did then that which is good become death unto me? Far be the thought. But sin, that it might [y]appear sin, working death to me by that which is good; that sin might through the commandment become exceeding sinful.

x cf. Ps.19.7-11. cf. Matt. 5. 17-20. cf. Is.42.21.
y cf.ch. 4.15.

a desire to take that step! How entirely this last commandment of the ten removes the question of true righteousness from being that of the outward life simply, and makes it impossible to think of any righteousness on our part fit for Him! What a new light it throws upon the words, "The man that doeth these things shall live in them"! Yet how simple it is, that a heart set upon that which is not in the will of God for me is moral distance from Him to that extent: for God's will is never arbitrary merely, but is the expression of His nature; His way may be in the sea, and hidden from me, but it is always in the sanctuary too.

If, then, there be in me one bit of self-seeking, how must this inexorable, all-embracing law search it out and awake it into vehement life! No wonder that the apostle says that "without law sin is dead!" This is its efficacy, in fact, while it may seem, when we are seeking help from it, its impotence rather (its impotence is indeed one element of its power), that under its rule sin revives, and we die. It is the ministration of death, though on its face proposing life: what is avowedly for life, is found (and invariably found) to be unto death. And behind all this, though at present quite unseen, divine love and wisdom work; so that death itself is really a "ministration"—the death of self-confidence, and so of self-occupation also, that Christ may in result be all in all.

Meanwhile, sin is but discovered by the law, as roused and having strength given to it by the commandment. It should be quite plain that the apostle is not speaking of his present experience in all this, for we shall find him go far beyond it. His "I was alive without the law once," looks certainly like what was personal to himself, although, of course, it would in fact be the experience of others also, or there would be little use in recalling it. In all the rest that we have here, the "I" is evidently merely illustrative. It is a pronoun significant enough in its constant repetition through all this part, while Christ and the Spirit are not mentioned. The language of self-occupation cannot be mistaken, and it is only God's mercy when in such a condition there is little else to speak of but sin and misery. Good self is a worse adversary to Christ than bad self; and it is a good thing if, when with our backs to the sun, self becomes but a shadow darkening all we look upon. Law is as we have seen, in its place of service here, and if honestly listened to, the service it will do is excellent. It is a teacher, however, whose work is to make itself unnecessary, and like the plow to which we may compare it, when once the precious seed has taken root and is growing up to harvest, its use would be as disastrous as before it was beneficial.

5. But we have now to look at the exercises and reasonings incident to such a transitional stage as we cannot but here recognize. It is, as we see, the experience of a soul converted truly to God (for no other could say truthfully what is here said), but as yet unconscious of God's way of power and sanctification; taking up the law in all sincerity to work out holiness by it with God's help, as before it had sought to work out peace and justification. The necessary result is that self-occupation which the law entails upon all under it. The end sought, whatever the plea of holiness, is necessarily self-satisfaction, if in the most plausible form, and that is the element which spoils as holiness everything into which it enters. Pride was the form in which sin entered first among the angels, where there could be as yet no temptation from without; and it seems the only conceivable way of failure and apostasy under such conditions. Ezekiel describes it in words which, while openly addressed to the king of Tyre, picture surely no mere earthly king. There is but one who could fit this description,

3 (14-17): not I, but sin in me, to which I am in bondage.

[2] For we know that the law is [a]spiritual; but *I* am carnal, [a]sold under sin. For that which I really* do, I do not [b]approve: for that which I would I do not; but what I hate, this I practise. Now, if I practise what I would not, I [c]consent unto the law, that it is right. Now then it is [d]no more I that really* do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

*κατεργάζομαι—one word. It suggests the actual result, what is really accomplished.

a *cf.* Matt.5. 21, 22, etc. *cf.*Gal.5.14.
a *cf.* Is.50.1. *cf.* 1 Kl. 21. 20, 25. *ctr.*1 Cor.6. 19.
b *cf.* ver. 19.
c ver. 22. *cf.*Gal.5.17. *cf.* Ps. 119. 97.
d ver. 20. *cf.* ch. 6. 6.

and be the prince of all potentates in a world which has rejected the true Prince. Here then is the description:—

"Thus saith the Lord God, Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, . . . Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, until iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore will I cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God, and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thy heart was lifted up because of thy beauty; thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground." . . . (Ezek. xxviii. 12–17).

How unutterably solemn is such a fall! and how deeply instructive for us, with whom Satan's attempt is constantly to animate us with the same spirit, while God's desire and design cannot but be as earnest to "hide pride from man" (Job xxxiii. 17). "Ye shall be as God," was the first temptation, the success of which has left its poison in the depths of our being. Take the apostle as a pregnant example, whose very exaltation to the third heaven, instead of quenching for ever any remainder of such a spirit, necessitated, as he himself has told us, a thorn for him in the flesh, lest he should find in it the incitement to a spiritual exaltation! (2 Cor. xii. 7). What a demonstration for us all of the existence of the flesh still in the most advanced Christians, and of the way in which pride may come into the holiest things! The work of the Spirit is certainly not to comfort us in any self-satisfaction,—too perilous a thing at the best! yet it is here that even the necessity of self-judgment will be urged to keep us occupied with that which true self-judgment would make us turn away from altogether! but to our next:—

[1] Once again the apostle emphatically affirms the holiness of the law, and more: the law is not only holy: the commandment is holy, righteous, and good. What is the great principle upon which it insists, but love? "Love," he says elsewhere, "is the fulfilment (or full measure) of the law" (chap. xiii. 10). In the very giving of the law, disastrous to men as its first consequences may be, love reigns; the law itself is the handmaid of grace. Yet to a soul in the confusion which we find here, at cross purposes with God, and unable to see the end to which it is approaching, this goodness of the law seems only itself confusion in view of the death-sentence which it has brought in. "Did then that which is good," he asks, "become death unto me?" But conscience answers at once, No, the goodness of the law only makes the character of sin the more manifest and more hateful. The law is right in issuing these commands, against which the evil in me thus rebels. They only establish the authority of Him who only has authority. This spirit of rebellion is against Him who is all that that word "God" implies; and if it be in me, He is right in laying it bare, as well as in the condemnation of it.

[3] A further consequence:—I am in contradiction to myself; I am, spite of myself, in bondage to the evil. We know—all Christians do—that the law is

5 (18-20): the flesh unveiled.

18 For I am conscious that in me (that is, in my flesh) [e] good doth not dwell: for to [f] will is present with me, but to work out the right is not. 19 For the good that I would I do not practise, but the evil that I would not, this I do. 20 Now if that which I would not, this I practise, it is no more I that really * work it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

[e] *cf.* Ps. 51. 5. *cf.* Jer. 17. 9. *cf.* Jno. 3. 6.

[f] ver. 22. *cf.* Gal. 5. 17.

6 (21-23): Fettered by a law of sin.

21 I find then the law with me, that [g] when I would

[g] *ctr.* Ps. 40. 8, 9.

* κατεργάζομαι—one word. (See previous note.)

spiritual; but I—he cannot say "we" there; it is an exceptional state in him, and terrible in its exceptionality—"*I* am carnal, sold under sin." The bondage is clear, in that he cannot sanction, but hates, the very things he practises. He wishes to do the thing he cannot do; but his efforts only make apparent the fetters with which he is bound. His heart and will consent to the law that it is right. Mournful as his condition is, yet he himself, he affirms, is not the real worker of the evil. He is in the grasp of that from which he cannot escape, but yet can separate himself, and which he personifies, to enable him to separate himself the more clearly from it; a horrible, false self which fetters and oppresses what is now through grace his true self. It is evident that here is the converted man, conscious of what divine grace has wrought in him, and not doubting that he has right to disclaim and cast from him what nevertheless dwells in and masters him. It is a question of power all through, and not of peace:—that is never raised. To raise it is to introduce what confuses the whole; for if peace with God is not yet known by him who is going through this conflict, then it is impossible not to draw the conclusion that, for one who has peace, no such experience is possible: which is against the abundant witness of many who are passing through it.

It will be said that the possession of peace will necessarily modify the experience, and there is no doubt that the experience as we have it here must, in any case, be modified. It is given us, as it were, in downright black and white, without shading. No one exactly and always does what he does not approve, but the absolute way in which this is given helps us better to understand the condition; but to introduce the question of peace with God does not merely modify the experience, but alters the whole character of it. As it is plain, the apostle never raises that question here. It is simply power which he has not, and a bondage to the evil which perplexes and harasses him when he would see fruit of his life for God.

18 The result is the manifestation of what Scripture calls "the flesh." The meaning of the term, as already said, is not difficult to comprehend. The man in the flesh is, as to his higher part, his spirit and soul, immersed, as it were, in the body. He lives a sense-life in the world around him, not drawing his motives from eternity or from the presence of God, which, in fact, he does not recognize. The man before us is not thus. God, and what is pleasing to Him, has become for him the question of his life; but the flesh itself is not, as we see, removed by this. He has not merely to struggle with it, but is rather captive to it, until he has found the secret of deliverance. He is seeking this at present in a wrong way. He is seeking in himself a better state, in which he can find satisfaction. He puts it, of course, as a question of holiness. Does not God require holiness? Must he not produce it for Him then? God suffers him to be met with this impracticable body of sin over which he is not really master and cannot be. In the flesh good does not dwell. To will is present with him; to work out the right, is not. The good that he would he does not practise. The evil that he would not, that he does. He repeats this over again as the distress that weighs upon him, and his own personal abhorrence of it, and right to reject it as not himself.

21 This, then, ends the experience. There is nothing more to be said about it.

practise the right, evil is present with me. For I [h]delight in the law of God according to the inner man; but I behold [i]another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and making me captive to the law of sin which is in my members.

7(24-viii.4): Deliverance fully reached.

7. [1] O [j]wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I [k]thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 (24-25): of God in Christ.

[2] So then, with the [l]mind I myself am bondservant to the law of God, but with the [m]flesh to the law of sin.

2 (25-viii.1): the way out of bondage.

h *cf.* Ps. 119. 35. *cf.* ver. 25.
i *cf.* ch. 8. 7.
j *cf.* Ex. 14. 3, 12. *cf.* Job 14. 4.
k ch. 8. 2. *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 14.
l *cf.* ver. 22. *cfr.* 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15.
m vers. 18, 21. *cf.* ch. 8. 7.

It is simply summed up in the words that close this part. There is a law of sin in the members. We must carefully distinguish this from the presence of sin itself. Sin remains in us as Christians. We have always to watch, always to guard against it, but a *law* of sin is a very different matter. A law of sin sets sin in authority and that is surely a wholly unchristian state, although Christians have to pass through it in order to find the freedom which is proper to them. "I delight," he says, "in the law of God according to the inner man, but I behold another law in my members warring against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which is in my members." That ends the whole matter. Deliver himself he cannot. Find strength for this from God, still he cannot. He must come to that point in which he cries out to Another, and deliverance is really found in a way which no man could ever think out for himself or realize, except as taught of God.

7. [1] It closes then with a groan, the groan of absolute despair as to one's self. It is not, "How shall *I*?" any more, but, "*Who* shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Immediately thereupon the answer comes: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." It is the first time that that blessed Name comes into the whole experience. Experience it is still, but of the power of a Deliverer. There is no explanation, however, further. A great mistake has been made by interpreters generally in supposing that the verse that follows describes, in fact, the delivered man, whereas, upon the face of it there is no deliverance. It is a man in bondage and not a free man who is described there. But, in order to find the deliverance, we must ignore entirely the divisions of the chapters and take in the first verses of the eighth chapter, which, in the common version and in the minds of most, are cut off entirely from it. Thus, the deliverance and the bondage are strangely confused. A man who is bondservant to the law of God, that law which gendereth to bondage, is taken to be the man who is consciously dead to the law by the body of Christ and over whom it has no more dominion; and the man who, with the flesh still serves the law of sin, is taken again to be the one who is free from it! The law of sin is that which the law of the Spirit delivers from. There is *no* "law" of sin when the law of the Spirit has thus delivered. Thus it is plain that on neither side does the last verse of the chapter describe the freeman. It is a going back, rather, to the old experience, in order that now there may be the full explanation of the way of deliverance. That has not yet been given. To say that Christ is the Deliverer does not describe the deliverance, and it would be indeed a poor conclusion, after all the misery of this experience that we have been through, to find absolutely no account of the way out.

[2] The last verse, therefore, is still the bondage. The man distinguishes indeed himself from himself, but we have seen that he was able to do that before this. That, in fact, is not a deliverance. He is still, as he says, a bondservant in both respects, as to the law and as to sin. The answer comes in the assurance which immediately follows now, that, "There is now, therefore, no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." That may seem to lead us back to the question of justification, but there is more than that here. Justification may be indeed the basis, as it is of necessity all through, but the law which delivers

There is therefore now no [n]condemnation to those [o]in Christ Jesus.*

[2] For the [p]law of the Spirit, of [q]life in Christ Jesus, hath set me [r]free from the law of sin and of death.

[3] For what the law [s]could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in [t]like-

[n] *cf.* Jno. 5. 24. *cf.* ch. 4. 8. vers. 33,34. *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 17.

[o] *cf.* ch. 5. 18. *cf.* ch. 6. 11. *cf.* Eph. 1. 4. *cf.* 1 Jno. 5. 20.

[p] *etc.* ch. 7. 21, 22, 25.

[2] (2): realized through the Spirit.

[3] (3, 4): a practical result impossible under law.

*The last part of the verse in the common version is rejected by the editors. It follows at the close of verse 4, in its true connection.

cf. Gal. 6. 2; *cf.* 2 Cor. 3. 17; *cf.* Gal. 4. 6, 7. [q] *cf.* ch. 5. 10; *cf.* 1 Jno. 5. 11, 12. [r] *cf.* ch. 7. 24; *cf.* Gal. 4. 21-31. [s] *cf.* Heb. 7. 18; *cf.* ch. 7. 10-14. [t] *cf.* Jno. 1. 14; *cf.* Phil. 2. 7, 8; *cf.* Heb. 2. 17; *cf.* Heb. 4. 15.

him is found in the principle developed for us in the sixth chapter, as already stated, the law of the Spirit, of life in Christ Jesus. "In Christ" means identification with Christ, and it is manifest that when a soul is able to identify himself in a full, practical way, with the Christ who is before God for him, he is at once out of the condition which has just made him utter the groan of despair. If he can find his true self in Christ, *Christ* is not in the bondage; there is in Him no body of sin, no sin at all, much less a law of it, and he is in Him before God. That may not seem at first to settle the difficulty. If it be a question of power, it is still the man down here who has to possess this power, but in the state of self-occupation in which one under the law necessarily is, there can be no possession of power. In the vain attempt to find complacency in a spiritual condition of his own, his eyes are really off Christ, and, as we have said, he sees but his own shadow. God allows this, in order that Christ may be indeed a constant necessity to him and that he may cease to think of himself, good self or bad self, to rejoice in the One who is made all things to him. Thus we shall find in what follows, that there is this singular result. In the conflict which still may be, as we find it in the eighth chapter, the adversaries are no longer one self to another self, but the Spirit to the flesh. Strange it may seem that the flesh remains while the very one of whom he speaks as himself, through this experience which has just been recited, now, nevertheless, drops out entirely. It is not self at war with self any more. The self that would have gained the battle is really out of the battle. It is the Spirit who leads, and who alone *can* lead in the path of victory, and where we have the Spirit, it is of necessity Christ who is before the soul, and not self in any wise.

[3] The words of the second verse have, I doubt not, been also read without their due emphasis. It is not simply "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath set me free," it is not "the *law* of the Spirit of life," but there is the clear statement now of what the law of the Spirit, that is, the ruling principle which has come to displace the law of sin, in fact is. The law of the Spirit is that of *life in Christ Jesus*. We reckon ourselves "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus." Our life is only there, in Him. This is not a mere principle of truth embraced. It is a change which enables the Spirit of God now to be freely upon our side. Through all that we have had in the past chapter, the Spirit most evidently has no place in the experience. The Spirit's law is that we are, for power as well as for peace, for holiness as well as for justification, in Christ wholly. Life in Christ Jesus is the answer to the death which the law preached, and I am free to forget myself entirely in Him. This self-forgetfulness the legal man dreads, as being almost the same as unholiness. Are we free to forget ourselves after this manner? But, in fact, self-consciousness is that which spoils every Christian grace. To remember Christ, is of necessity holiness. To identify ourselves with Him as God has identified us, is to give us the highest possible rule of practice, but not merely that; it is to give us also the power which we seek. Christ becomes in it the object before us. We live not to glorify ourselves, but to glorify Him. Here, therefore, we are in full accord with the Spirit, and the result is absolutely sure.

[4] This is explained directly. It was impossible for the law to help us. It

ness of sinful flesh, and "for sin, "condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness* of the law might be "fulfilled in us, who "walk not according to flesh, but according to Spirit.

*This is a different word from the usual one for righteousness, and means, the righteousness of life aimed at.

u *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 21. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 24.
v *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 14. *cf.* Jno. 12. 31, 32.
w *cf.* Gal. 5. 14; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 14-19. x *cf.* Gal. 5. 16-25; *cf.* ch. 14. 17, 18; *cf.* Eph. 2. 10.

was weak through the unconquerable flesh. It required from us that which we could never furnish, and the end in this direction, as we have seen, is simply and rightly the despair of self altogether, but God has effaced self for Another; He has sent His own Son in "the likeness of sinful flesh" as the cross manifests Him, but there for sin, our sin, putting it completely away, while, at the same time condemning it utterly. Sin in the flesh is condemned,—I myself, with all that is in me, my own thoughts, my will, my wisdom, my ways,—in the cross, I see the end of it all, but the end of it in the love which has come in fully for me and which now fulfils in me the righteous requirement of the law when it is no longer simply requirement, but the Spirit of God has filled my heart with the joy of Christ. "The joy of the Lord is your strength." I am free to give myself up to drink in this love which God has shown me and which rests upon me in Christ, in all the fulness of God's delight in Him. I have no cause now to ask: Must not God condemn the evil in me? He *has* condemned it, and I read the condemnation there where I find also Himself for me in a grace which knows no conditions, and which holds me fast, therefore, forever. The Christian walk is not according to the flesh, therefore, but according to the Spirit. Self-occupation is of necessity fleshly. The Spirit of God ignores even Himself to glorify Christ. Thus, we may speak of the Spirit even, in a way which is not spiritual. We may seek in ourselves the fruit of the Spirit, when, after all, we are not in the line of the Spirit's testimony, and therefore not in the path of the Spirit at all. The righteousness which the law required cannot be forgotten in the presence of Christ. I am to walk in His company now, and never part. Self-judgment is, in fact, only possible in His presence; and in His presence it is impossible not to exercise it. We have only to remember the scene which has been given us by the apostle in which we find the Lord girded for service, and the water and the towel in His hands. Has He not said: "Except I wash thee, thou hast no part with Me?" "*With* Me," of course, not "*in* Me." If we are to have part with Him, we must be cleansed indeed, not according to our own thoughts of what cleanness is, but according to His thoughts, and He alone can cleanse us after that fashion. If, on the other hand, the need of cleansing is discovered, I find in it the assurance of my having been thus far not with Him as I should have been. If my eyes are off Him still, other things may attract me. I must get back to Him in order to find deliverance from the power of all else, in the presence of a love which has purchased me for itself and which has the fullest title over me.

Subd. 4.

The principles of a walk in the Spirit are now set before us. As already said, we shall still find the flesh present and in opposition. Conflict there is still, but captivity no more, and even conflict is, if I may say so, no more the normal condition of the Christian in this respect. Enjoying my own things, I find a sphere into which flesh cannot and will not enter. It was not in the third heavens that the apostle needed a thorn for the flesh: it was when he came down out of them. And true it is that we thus find ourselves in conflict, how much I need not say, but the Spirit of God has not set before us, as it were, the duty of conflict with the flesh or with its lusts. We are to "*abstain* from fleshly lusts which war against the soul." That is not the same as warring with them. If we are entangled, if our eyes have been allowed to rest upon something not of God, which has attracted them, then indeed there will be of necessity a strug-

SUBDIVISION 4. (Chap. viii. 5–27.)
The walk in the Spirit.

1 (5): The governing power.

2 (6-8): The Spirit in contrast with flesh.

3 (9-11): The body dead, but the Spirit life.

1. For they that are according to [y] flesh, mind the things of the flesh, and they that are according to Spirit, the things of the Spirit.
2. For the [z] mind of the flesh is death, but the mind of the Spirit is [a] life and peace: because the mind of the flesh is [b] enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed [c] can be; and they that are in the flesh cannot please God.
3. But [d] ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be

[y] *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 9-11. *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 3, 4. *cf.* Eph. 5. 15-21.
[z] ch. 6. 21. ver. 13.
[a] *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 12. *cf.* ch. 14. 17. ver. 10.
[b] *cf.* Eph. 2. 16. *cf.* Jas. 4. 4.
[c] *cf.* Job 14. 4. *cf.* Jer. 13. 23; *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 14.
[d] *cf.* ch. 7. 5; *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 9.

gle, but the being entangled was not a necessity, and it is a totally different thing to be reckoning oneself dead to sin and to be fighting it. We fight it when we have allowed it, when we have not been reckoning ourselves dead to it. There is, of course, a conflict with sin in the world around, a conflict which the Lord Himself had of necessity, because of what He was, but of which we are not speaking here. "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood," says the apostle to the Hebrews, "fighting against sin;" but that, of course, is not the sin in us, it is the sin which characterizes the world around us, the corruption which is in it through lust.

1. The first thing, therefore, that is now put before us is the governing power. "They that are according to flesh, mind the things of the flesh, and they that are according to Spirit, the things of the Spirit." The flesh seeks what is according to its mind, and the Spirit seeks what is according to His mind; but notice now, that these two are two companies. "They that are according to flesh" cannot, of course, be confounded with those that are according to the Spirit. The Spirit is for the Christian the One who has come to possess us in Christ's name and for Him; and in Him we find a power which is not of ourselves, and which leaves us still and all the way through, in conscious weakness. This is a great necessity for us, that the power should be power which is fully available for us and yet which is not our own, for the realization of which we have to lean upon Another. It is when we are weak, then we are strong. The sense of weakness is most helpful to us every way. It not only checks all self-complacent thoughts, but it makes us realize in the strength which is constantly ministered to us, the continual care and love of God. We can promise ourselves nothing even yet as to ourselves, and we need not promise anything. We need only the assurance that the love which holds us fast has all things in its control, and that in Christ there is fulness for us from which we can draw at all times. Thus, as has already been said, the "I myself" has really disappeared. The knowledge of the new man is that Christ is all. Faith does not know itself, and its object is never self.

2. The opposition between the two, the Spirit and the flesh, is now put before us. "The mind of the flesh," not "the carnal mind" as if it were a fleeting condition, but what the flesh is in its character at all times, "is death." "The mind of the flesh is enmity against God"; that is death truly. Death is separation from the source of life, and the flesh is willingly separate. Thus then, it "is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be," and "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." "In the flesh" we find here, therefore, to be a spiritual condition, although it is related to the old creation place out of which we have passed. One who is in Christ cannot be in the flesh. On the other hand, the mind of the Spirit is life and peace. How blessed a thing is such peace! At one with God, everything else is at one with us. All things of necessity, therefore, "work together for good to them that love" Him. "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

3. But immediately we are assured, "ye are not in the flesh, but in the

that the Spirit of God dwell in you; but [e]if any one have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if [f]Christ be in you, the [g]body indeed is dead on account of sin, but the [h]Spirit is life on account of righteous-

[e] *cf.* Eph. 1. 13. *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 23.
[f] *cf.* Jno. 17. 23.
cf. Eph. 3. 17. [g] *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 10. [h] *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 16; *cf.* ch. 6. 11; *cf.* ver. 2.

Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." This which has put us in the condition here is not to be looked at as if it were possible to be absent from the child of God. We are immediately warned "if any one have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." There are no Christians that are not Christ's, and here, in fact, we are assured that the Spirit of God is found in all who are such. He is the seal upon those who belong to God.

The word is not found here: we must look for it in Ephesians; but the idea is clearly expressed. A seal is the mark put upon what is one's own, with the idea of inviolability attaching to it. The 144,000 sealed out of all the tribes of Israel in the book of Revelation are a sample of this. They are sealed on their foreheads, and we find afterwards that the Name of the Lamb and of His Father is written there, evidently the effect of the sealing. This Name is their preservative from the power of the locusts in the ninth chapter. "Seals were employed," says Kitto, "not for the purpose of impressing a device on wax, but in place of a sign manual to stamp the name of the owner upon any document to which he determined to fix it." The Lord expressly speaks of the descent of the Spirit upon Himself as His being sealed of God the Father. It was then, we know, that His being the Son was fully declared. The seal was the witness of emphatic approbation. In us it is also the token of sonship. The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, but with us there cannot, of course, be the approbation of a condition in us, but rather of Him in whom we are recognized as standing before God. Thus, it is not by sealing that we are made to be in Christ. We must be in Christ in order to be sealed. God could not put His seal upon the least evil, the least taint of sin. We are in Christ, moreover, as the apostle says in the epistle to the Corinthians, by new creation. "If any one be in Christ, it is new creation"; and he adds, as what connects itself with it: "Old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." As soon as ever the work begins in us, we belong to that new creation which abides in the value of its blessed Head before God; and thus alone could it be said that "old things are passed away." In Ephesians we find also that we are "created in Christ Jesus." Creation speaks of the divine work in us from the very beginning.

It is, however, said that in this case, the "none of His" should be rather "not of Him," which is confessedly the literal rendering; and that this refers to a condition not attained by all in whom divine work has begun. The way in which simple belonging to Christ would be expressed, it is said, would be, "He is not to Him" instead of "of Him"; but in the second chapter of the second epistle to Timothy, we find the same expression exactly where most certainly the whole extent of those belonging to Him is intended to be expressed. "The Lord knoweth them that are His," "those that are *of Him*"; where, amid all the confusion of a day in which profession and reality are inextricably confused for us, the Lord yet unfailingly recognizes His own. Thus, in every way, it is clear that the seal marks out those who are children of God, and that therefore it can be fully said that if any one have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. There is no middle condition, however confused the experience may be, or dull the faith in a child of God.

Let us notice the way in which the Spirit is set before us here. First, it is the Spirit of God that dwells in us. Divine power thus keeps us for Him; but next, we have the Spirit of Christ, the One who glorifies Christ and who produces in us also a likeness to Him. Following this, we have, "If Christ be in you"; for the Spirit, in fact, as glorifying Christ, does not testify of Himself. It is not, therefore, the Spirit in you, but Christ in you. This, however, is the ex-

ness. But if the Spirit of him who [g]raised up Jesus from among the dead dwelleth in you, he who raised up Christ from among the dead shall also [i]quicken your mortal bodies on account of* his Spirit who [k]dwelleth in you.

*MS. evidence almost equally favors "through;" but critical authority decides in general for "on account of."

g *cf.* Acts 2. 24, 32, 33.
i *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 51-54. *cf.* ver. 23. *cf.* Eph. 1. 13, 14.
k *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 19.

pression of life itself, as we have already seen abundantly in the Gospel of John. The Lord's parable of the vine and the branches conveys to us fully the relation between one in Christ and Christ in him. The branch is in the vine; as a consequence, the sap is in the branch. The sap is the life derived from the vine stock. So here, "Christ in you" is the expression of life; but then to this the Spirit alone gives its proper energy. We have already seen this fully in the experience of the seventh chapter, where, although life in fact is, yet it is not in its proper power. Thus, it is said here, that the *Spirit* is life. As we have seen all the way through here, the "I myself," as it were, drops out. It is the Spirit who is the governing power, the Leader; and the attitude of faith is that of entire dependence upon Him.

"If Christ be in you," then, the apostle says, "the body still is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." The body has not yet the effect of redemption manifested in it. It is not yet quickened. Quickening is to come. "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He who raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies on account of His Spirit who dwelleth in you." That is the redemption for which we wait. In the meanwhile, the body is to be reckoned simply as an instrument in the hands of the spiritual man. If it manifests its individual life that will be seen, and so the apostle speaks directly of our mortifying the deeds of the body. Not that the body and the flesh are the same thing: the flesh may include, as we have seen, spirit and soul, the whole man; and moreover, necessarily describes an evil condition. The body is not in itself evil, and spite of the condition in which it is yet found, it is in the body that the Spirit of God dwells. (See 1 Cor. vi. 19.) Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit. We see fully how the work of Christ enables thus the taking up of that in which there is not yet the power of redemption. This will reflect again upon the experience that we have had in the previous chapter. If the Spirit can dwell in a body that is dead and that clearly through the work of Christ alone, in the same way the Spirit can dwell surely in one who is not yet in the mind of the Spirit, who needs to be delivered from the power of evil, the law of sin in his members. But "the body is dead on account of sin, while the Spirit is life on account of righteousness,"—evidently the righteousness which the Spirit produces. Nothing but that which is righteous before God could possibly be counted "life." We go on to the coming of Christ for the deliverance: "He who raised up Christ from among the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies on account of His Spirit who dwelleth in you." The pledge has been given us in Christ's own resurrection. Notice, however, that it is not exactly resurrection as to ourselves that is spoken of. Our "*mortal* bodies" implies a stage of the living and not of the dead, and quickening is that which delivers them from the state of mortality. The reason of this is plain. We are not taught, as people commonly put it, that we must all die. On the contrary, our proper state is to be waiting for the Lord. Thus here, the quickening of the mortal body refers distinctly to those who shall be living when He comes, and for them the Spirit who already dwells in the body, makes good His title to it in the most absolute way. The Spirit is, as we see all through, the earnest of that which is to come. Here then, is the complete answer to the question: "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Complete deliverance is what we wait for and yet that does not in the least imply any necessity of sin in the present

4 (12-14): The practical test of the sons of God.

4. So then, brethren, we are [t]debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to flesh: for [m]if ye live according to flesh, ye are on the way to die; but if by the Spirit ye [n]mortify the deeds of the body,* ye shall live. For as many as are [o]led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

5 (15-17): The way with God and the end in view.

5. For ye have not received a spirit of [p]bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of [q]adoption,

* Some MSS. and many "fathers" have "flesh."

t *cf.* ch. 6. 2. *cf.* ch. 13. 14. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 1.
m *cf.* ch. 6. 16, 21. *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. *cf.* Eph. 5. 5, 6. *cf.* Gal. 5. 19-21.
n *cf.* Col. 3. 5-10. *cf.* Gal. 5. 24. *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 1-3.
o *cf.* Gal. 5. 18, 25; *cf.* Ex. 13. 21, 22.
p *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 12; *cf.* Gal. 4. 21-31; *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 18; *cf.* Ex. 14. 30, 31.
q *cf.* Gal. 3. 26; *cf.* Eph. 1. 5.

time. The presence of the Spirit in us is, of course, fulness of power over it, and the delivered man who is in the power of the Spirit works out the *righteousness* of the law. Whatever we may have to say with regard to ourselves, in fact, we have ever the responsibility of walking in the power of the Spirit, and therefore, as those free from the power of sin.

4. The practical test is now found here again. As we have seen, it is freedom that tests, not bondage. The slave does his master's will; the freeman does his own; and yet even in the state of bondage which has been described to us, the will of the converted man is testified to be for God and good. Freedom is the only thing that is needed by him. The heart to serve God and to please Him he already has. Thus, amongst the professing people of God, freedom, as already said, is the test of reality. There is a way of life and a way of death. The gospel does not alter that, but, on the contrary confirms it. "So, then, brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh, for if ye live according to the flesh, ye are on the way to die." That is spoken absolutely: we have no need to qualify it in the least. If a man lives "according to the flesh," it does not say, "acts" at a given time, but if he *lives*, if that is the tenor of his life, "according to the flesh," then he is on the road to death. On the other hand, if a man has the Spirit, by the Spirit he mortifies the deeds of the body. The body is held for dead. It is used and can be fully used for God. There is not the least thought of asceticism in the apostle's language here. God has no pleasure in a man's ill-treating his body. On the contrary, it is meant to be maintained in vigor for the Lord who owns it, and yet it is to be the mere dead instrument, so to speak, of Another's will. "If ye through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." There is no other way. That marks out, as alone this can mark out, the sons of God.

But, notice the beautiful difference between what is said here upon the one side and upon the other. If men live according to the flesh, they are on the way to death. It does not say that they will die. God's grace is always free to come in, but then if it comes in it takes one off the road to death; it does not speak in such a manner as if sin were of no consequence. On the other hand, if, by the Spirit, you mortify the deeds of the body, not, you are on the *way to* life, because there is no uncertainty about the result, but "you *shall* live." Of course, the full and final result is intended there. We live at the present time and we shall go on to live forever. Thus then, the sons of God are marked out. We are called to enforce the condition which the apostle has made so absolute, whatever we may speak of grace or of faith,—and we cannot enforce these too absolutely when we are speaking of them,—yet, on the other hand, we must be just as absolute as to the way of life and the way of death. We have no right, whatever the profession may be, to consider any one as a son of God whose life does not mark him out as devoted to God.

5. But then the spirit of all this has to be carefully kept in mind. What the apostle has said might tend to produce a spirit of bondage—the fear of the result, of the issue, in unestablished souls,—but he says: "Ye have *not* received the spirit of bondage again to fear." Legality is not at all what is implied here,

whereby we cry, [r]Abba, Father. The Spirit* itself [s]beareth witness with our spirit that we are children† of God; and if children, then [t]heirs; heirs of God and [u]joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we [v]suffer with [him], that we may be also glorified with [him].

*The word for Spirit is in Greek neuter, which accounts for the pronoun being neuter. In John xvi. 8, the pronoun and participle referring to the Spirit are both masculine. It might well be "Himself" here.

†"Children" here, not "sons" the usual word in Paul's Epistles.

r *cf.* Gal. 4. 1-7. *cf.* Mk. 14. 36.
s *cf.* 1 Jno. 5. 7, 8. *cf.* ch. 5. 5.
t *cf.* Gal 3.29. *cf.* 1 Pet.1.4.
u *cf.* Jno. 17. 22. *cf.* Eph. 2. 5-8.
v ch. 5. 3; *cf.* Eph. 3. 10-13; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 6, 7.

and it does not and cannot produce the holiness which it claims and seeks; nor can it secure for itself the final result. Take our Lord's words, for instance, in proof of this. "Whosoever will save His life shall lose it, but whosoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it." There is the condition, the marking out, as here, of the way of life and the way of death. But it is not simply, whosoever will lose his life shall save it, but "whosoever will lose his life *for My sake.*" Clearly that is not the legal principle. As long as a man doubts his final security, he will, of necessity, be working for himself, but that is not "for My sake." The legal gospel, whatever spice of legality may come into it, is so far unholy, and can be nothing but unholy. We live as Christians, not to ourselves, but "to Him who died for us and rose again"; but there is a religious way of living to one's self which is just as fully that as any course of sin and self-indulgence. Thus here, therefore, we are expressly told that there is no spirit of fear for the Christian, but, on the other hand, we have received the Spirit of adoption, by which we cry, "Abba, Father." It is the heart renewed and realizing the power of the grace of God which "teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world." The witness of the Spirit with our spirit, therefore, is dwelt upon here. A double witness; there is the witness of our own spirit, and that is implied here in the first place. The spirit of man is that which makes him an intelligent being. "No one knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him." Here, therefore, the testimony of the Word, as understood and received is that which is really implied. The apostle has been in the fullest way unfolding to us this testimony, and we are not left merely, as it were, to reasoning out things; we are not left merely to our own intelligence in the matter; nor even simply to faith. We need that which is more powerful than this, and we have it in that witness of the Spirit with our spirit, which indeed, we may be little able to distinguish from the witness produced by faith in the gospel, but which gives divine power to this witness. The witness of the Spirit in this way produces a full consciousness of what God is to us, while, at the same time it is founded and must be founded upon the word of God itself. We must have the Word in proof, or we are entitled to nothing. The Spirit of God acts from and with the Word, never sets it aside, and therefore whatever "feeling" there may be, as people are accustomed to say, all this can be questioned. If it is not justified by the word of God itself, it will not do to talk of the witness of the Spirit. The two, therefore, come together, the Spirit of God and our spirit. Faith receives God's testimony in the Word, and the Spirit of God joins to this a divine power which otherwise it would not have. We cry, "Abba, Father"; we serve with the joyful consciousness that we serve as children,—the most absolute service that can possibly be; for the Father has entire claim to His child; but at the same time where there is, as in this case there must of necessity be, the true affection of children, the service is itself liberty.

Thus then, the Spirit bears witness that we are the children of God; but immense consequences follow. If children, we are heirs. As with regard to God, this might be even thought to be out of place. We inherit from our parents that which is left us when they pass away; but God never passes away. How are we to be His heirs? Only He, Himself, could have inspired such a thought as

6 (18-25): Travail-time now.

6. For I reckon that the [w]sufferings of this present time are not worthy [to be compared with] the glory about to be revealed to us. For the earnest expectation of the creature [x]waiteth for the revelation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to [y]vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the [z]creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the [a]liberty

w cf. 2 Cor. 4. 16-18. cf. Heb. 12. 2.
x ver. 22.
y cf. Gen. 3. 17, 18.
z cf. Ps. 98. 4-9. cf. Is. 35. 1, 2. cf. Is. 55. 12, 13.
a cf. Gal. 4. 26; cf. Rev. 21. 24-26; cf. Rev. 22. 1, 2 with Ezek. 47. 1-12.

this. If we want to realize what it means, we have a beautiful example of it in the case of Israel, whose land is expressly claimed to be God's land. They are to be pilgrims and sojourners with Him, thus put into possession on His part, to hold that which is nevertheless His. How perfect the security that is given in this way to their possession of it! When they shall hold it after this manner, how impossible for them to lose it again, and even now the land being God's renders it absolutely impossible that any failure on their part can disturb His purposes with regard to it. *They* might forfeit it. If it were left to them, they surely would, altogether; but God cannot forfeit it, and if He puts them in possession of that which is His own, then they have an unfailing right to that possession. So with regard to our higher and more wonderful inheritance. We are heirs of God. The things that He has created, He has not created for Himself. He has no need of them. His whole heart goes with the gift of them to His people, yet so that in the sense in which we have spoken, the things inherited remain always God's, while we possess and enjoy them fully. There is another thing added here. We are joint heirs with Christ. How wonderfully does this certify to us the extent of the inheritance! Christ is the heir of all things, and to be joint heirs with Christ gives, as one may say, the thought of a limitless inheritance; but not merely so, it assures us of the perfect way in which Christ abides still and ever the Man Christ Jesus. He means to associate us with Himself for ever. The joy of the inheritance will be the joy of being associated with Christ in it.

But then immediately there comes in what may seem to be a condition; "If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him." Suffering then is necessary to glory, but surely not in any sense as a legal condition,—the suffering with *Him*, not mere suffering in itself, but suffering with Him, suffering as He suffered in the world which was contrary to Him entirely, suffering because of the knowledge of God and joy in Him which were His ever, in view of evil and all its consequences: this, on our part, is the necessary training for that association with Him, of which our being joint heirs speaks. We are preparing to have fully His mind, learning in the midst of evil, learning what evil is in its full character even in ourselves, as we have already seen. In ourselves we are brought into the closest possible connection with it, surely that we may realize forever its nature, that we may hate it as God hates it, and that we may be fully competent to walk with Him who has solved in His own person the whole question of good and evil, and who is the glorious Conqueror over sin by suffering. Thus then, our present lives have a meaning with reference to the future which we must never lose sight of. The suffering by the way is part of our very need, in order that we may be fit for the coming glory. But, as already said, we must not think of this as mere suffering, but, as with Christ Himself, that which was most truly such to Him sprang out of the very joy that He had in God (we are not speaking of atonement now, or that which was necessary for it),—so for us, suffering must have this character. It must put us ever in fellowship with Him in order to be of any value.

6. Immediately upon this, the apostle goes on to speak more at large of the character of the present time for us. It is a time of travail. Creation itself is groaning in the bondage of corruption. It waits for liberty. It waits for the

of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation* [b]groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now; and not only so, but we ourselves even, who have the [c]firstfruits of the Spirit, [d]groan within ourselves, awaiting the adoption—the [e]redemption of our body. For we have been saved in [f]hope, but hope beheld is not hope; for what any one beholdeth, why hopeth he for it? but if we hope for what we behold not, then do we with [g]patience wait for it.

* The words "creature" and "creation" in this section are the same in the original.

b cf. Jer. 9. 10. cf. Jer. 23. 10.
c cf. 2 Cor. 1. 22. cf. Eph. 1. 13, 14.
d cf. 2 Cor. 5. 2-9. cf. 1 Cor. 15. 31, 32.
e cf. Eph. 4. 30. cf. Phil. 3. 21.
f cf. ch. 5. 2, 5. cf. 1 Pet. 1. 3.
g cf. 1 Thess. 1. 3; cf. Jas. 5. 7.

manifestation of the sons of God. Connected with man as its head, the fall of man has brought about this groaning condition. Notice that in himself man is a microcosm. He has the soul of the beast. He has the very dust of the earth in him. He is linked in the fullest possible way with creation throughout, and how blessed it is to realize that in this way Christ, in taking humanity, has linked Himself even, one may say, with the very material universe. How this assures us that it cannot lie under the condition which the fall has produced. There is yet to be a liberty for it. The liberty of grace it could not enjoy, but the liberty of the glory it shall enjoy.

The typical character which we find everywhere in nature connects itself with all this. It is a remarkable thing that even before man was upon the earth, death seems to have reigned in it, and that this for the lower creation is in no wise (chronologically) the effect of the fall. Man was created in a world which, so to speak, prophesied of that fall itself and was prepared for him by the goodness of God in view of it. Thus, if you look at nature, you will find not a condition such as we would imagine. Strife and evil (not moral evil, surely) are in every part of it; and thus alone could it present to man the lessons which he needs, but of which, alas, he is so little heedful. The witness of Christ in creation comes in in this connection. God has given us, in the most abundant way thus, a testimony of nature itself, which does not leave out His purposes of grace, but, on the contrary, bears fullest witness to them. Natural theology has been, alas, but too much divorced from this. Nature has been supposed simply to bear witness in the characters of design which are everywhere in it, of a Maker, a Creator. A Saviour has been supposed to be what lies beyond its testimony; but thus it has been made, if one may so say, more pagan than Christian. How could God Himself be rightly expressed in it, if Christ be not expressed? But this, as already said, involves the very evil and strife which we find in it. God has in all this, wrought for us, and nature is linked with us in its present groanings, as it will by and by be linked with us also in its redemption.

"For we, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption," that is, the full manifestation of what we are as sons of God, now hidden. That involves the body being glorified. We wait, therefore, for the adoption, that is, the redemption of the body. The firstfruits of the Spirit would seem to imply that after all what we possess in this way is but a pledge in anticipation of that which is to come, and we who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, on that very account, are made to groan. The hope we have of a condition so different from the present makes us only the more groan over the present. Our salvation is in hope, as to the full character of it. Of course, there is a salvation of which we can say already that God *hath* saved us. If it be a question simply of guilt and condemnation, then we are already completely saved; but salvation is very commonly looked at in a very different way from this, and it implies deliverance of the body itself and the fulfilment of all God's purposes as to us. We are saved now in hope, but then

7 (26, 27): Complete provision by the Spirit's help to our infirmities.

7. And in like manner the Spirit also joineth help to our [a]infirmity; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh [i]intercession [for us]* with groanings that cannot be uttered; but he who [j]searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to God.

[a] *cf.* Heb. 4. 15, 16. *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 9, 10.
[i] *cf.* Jude 20. *cf.* Eph. 6. 18.
[j] *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 4, 5. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 11.

* Many omit.

that means that we have not got before us that which we hope for. If we behold it, how can we still hope for it? "If we hope for what we behold not, then do we with patience wait for it." How beautiful a thought it is that this hope is so perfect, there is such complete assurance with regard to it, that the not having it only produces patience in us,—not doubt, but patience! All human hopes may possibly disappoint, but the hope which God has given us is as sure as if we already possessed it. We wait with patience, and the patience itself is holy discipline for us. We wait upon His will, but all that He can give us in the way of assurance is already ours.

7. We have now finally, in this part, the Spirit Himself entering into this groaning condition. The Spirit joins His help to our infirmity. In such a condition of trial and sorrow, our weakness is made fully evident, but that only opens to us more the heart of God and produces in us a healthful dependence upon Him every step of the way. Notice, therefore, that in connection with the Spirit helping our infirmities, prayer is that upon which the apostle dwells. Prayer is the expression of dependence. It is the expression of the creature-place which we have with God. It is the expression, also, if it be that which can rightly be called prayer, of our confidence in God. Prayer is thus, as one may say, a large part of the Christian life, or rather, it is that which links itself with every part of it. If the Lord, in the sermon on the mount, would give us a special example of righteousness Godward, He illustrates this by prayer; but the very prayer itself manifests our infirmity. We do not know even what to pray for as we ought. How blessed to know that here we have a divine Intercessor; as we have Christ before God for us, so we have the Spirit of God in us, and He makes intercession for us according to God. The prayer that He makes is, of course, absolutely according to God; yet as wrought in our hearts it may be on that very account simply a groaning which cannot be uttered intelligibly, —a wonderful thing to realize that these groanings which are the evidence of our own infirmity may, nevertheless, be the fruit of the Spirit within us; that in the ear of God they may speak intelligently, and in absolute accordance with His mind concerning us. We do not know what to pray for, and yet we pray; and God who searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, little as we may know it and blunder as we may. "He maketh intercession for the saints according to God." That does not mean simply that it is God's will that He should make the intercession, as our common version might lead some to suppose, but that the intercession itself, as being His, is of necessity in complete accordance with His thought and character. We are not, however, to suppose by all this, that the Spirit's prayer is simply groaning. The groaning accompanies the prayer and is part of the prayer. "With groanings that cannot be uttered." Nevertheless, these groanings express, as it were, after all, that which is higher in character, it may be, than the very prayers themselves, however intelligent. Our intelligence fails to accompany them. They go beyond it. But if they go beyond it, all the more they express the power of the Spirit in them—of Him who has come to join His help to our infirmities, and to carry us along the lighted road which leads to God.

SUBD. 5.

The apostle concludes here with the assurance of the result for us of being

SUBDIVISION 5. (Chap. viii. 28–39.)

The weak with the Strong.

1 (28–30): Called according to purpose in the First-born.

1. AND we know that to those who love God [k]all things work together for good, to those who are called according to purpose. For whom he [l]foreknew he also [m]foreordained [to be] conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be a [n]Firstborn among many brethren; and whom he foreordained, these he also [o]called; and whom he called, these he also [p]justified; and whom he justified, these he also [q]glorified.

k cf. Phil. 1. 12–14. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 17.
l cf. 1 Pet. 1. 2.
m cf. Eph. 1. 5, 11.
n cf. Col. 1. 15. *cf.* Rev. 1. 5. *cf.* Heb. 1. 6. *cfr.* Jno. 3. 16.
o cf. Gal. 1. 15.
p ch. 5. 1, etc.
q cf. Eph. 2. 6; *cf.* Col. 3. 4; *cf.* Is. 46. 10.

thus with God, the weak with the strong. His purpose is being carried out in us and with us, and who shall gainsay it? Thus with the boldness which is simply that of faith, he can challenge everything, the whole universe, to disappoint this purpose.

1. The purpose itself is put clearly before us. Christ is of necessity in the forefront of it, and thus its justification, and the full assurance that it will be carried out. "We know that to those who love God all things work together for good, to those who are the called according to purpose." The present is linked with the future in a most absolute way. From God's foreknowledge of us in the past eternity to the accomplished glory of the future, there is a perfectly linked chain of blessing, no link of which can ever be sundered. God's purpose is that Christ His Son, should be a First-born among many brethren. How blessed to see the grace which is necessarily manifested when Christ is thus in the forefront! It is not here, therefore, the "Only-Begotten," of whom the apostle speaks. The Son is that; but He is here in human guise, a "First-born," which implies others, and that is clearly expressed. He is found thus with those whom He is not ashamed to call His brethren. God's purpose, therefore, includes, of necessity, these. If it failed as to the brethren, it would fail as to the Son of His love. They are bound up together in His thoughts.

We have, therefore, strong words here, words that are often somewhat too strong for the faith of His people. "Whom He foreknew, He also fore-ordained to be conformed to the image of His Son." If Christ is, on the one hand, the image of God Himself, (and He alone can be that in the reality of all that is implied,) yet we are to be conformed to His image. That is God's purpose as to us. He could not surely be without a purpose, and having the purpose, He could not be without the power of carrying this through. What comfort would there be for us in the midst of such a world as this, if it were not so? if God had not a purpose, or if He had one which could be set aside by man's self-will? How blessed, when we know Himself, when we realize that His will is but the expression of His perfect nature, how blessed then to see His will in all its sovereignty! We may be sure, too, that He will respect all the powers with which He has endued His creatures. He will do violence to nothing, but while this is surely so, He will carry out in the most absolute way every part of His purpose. This is definitely asserted here. "Whom He foreordained, these He also called; whom He called, He justified; whom He justified, He glorified." It is remarkable here that there is one thing left out which we should expect perhaps to have a foremost place. After justification, we are accustomed to say, comes sanctification, but where is sanctification here? We are indeed to be conformed to the image of His Son, and that, one may say, implies it fully; but in the chain of blessing which we are looking at now, sanctification seems, surely purposely, to be omitted; for it is just here that, alas, we perplex ourselves with all sorts of questions. We make of a condition, a doubt; and the legality natural to us will seek to intrude at any possible point; but between justification and glory here, there is absolutely no room left for it to come in.

Notice that we begin with fore-knowledge. None surely can deny this to Him.

2 (31-39): What can be against us?

2. What shall we say then to these things? If God be [r]for us, who [shall be] against us? He who [s]spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us [t]all things? Who shall [u]lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God who [v]justifieth: who is he that shall condemn? It is Christ* who [w]died, yea, rather, who was [x]raised up, who is at the [y]right hand of God, who also maketh [z]intercession for us: who shall [a]separate

r cf. Ps. 118. 6. cfr. Ezek. 5. 8.
s cf. Gen. 22. 2. cf. Jno. 3. 16.
t cf. 1 Cor. 3. 21-23. ver. 17.
u cf. Ex. 11. 7. cf. Num. 23. 8, 20, 23.
v ch. 4. 5. cf. Zech. 3. 1-5.
w ch. 5. 6.

* Some early MSS. add "Jesus."

x ch. 4. 25. y Heb. 1. 3. z Heb. 7. 25. a cf. Jno. 10. 28; cf. 1 Pet. 1. 5.

He could not create, plainly, not knowing the future of what He was creating. If He foreknew, then He could not possibly be without a will with regard to the future of that which He had created. Fore-ordination follows, therefore, fore-knowledge. He will have things to be according to His own mind. From this, our calling follows, which is here, of course, not the general call of the gospel, not a call that can be refused at all, but on the other hand, the creative call, as God says by the prophet: "I call them, they stand up together"; and, as we see here, those who are called are justified. No one drops out. Justification follows the call. Identified as it is, and as we have seen, with the life which follows this, if one is called in this way to spiritual life, justification can never be apart from this. We are justified from the first moment, with the first breath that we draw of true life from God. Then notice that "glorified" seems to be put in the past, just as much as "justified." It is the style of the prophets,—everything contemplated from God's side, and, therefore, although in fact to be accomplished, yet seen as if it were already so. If God calls that which is not as if it were, its existence is by that absolutely pledged. This then is the purpose, and already He has said that, "All things work together for good," let us remember, according to that purpose. If we have anything else before our eyes, it is no wonder that we question very much how things are working for good to us. If we fail to keep in mind that which is present to God, we fail to understand what He is doing; for the fulfilment of His purpose, not one thing necessary can possibly be absent.

2. Naturally, if this be so, the challenge with which the apostle closes is yet, after all, simple: "What shall we say then to these things? If God be for us, who shall be against us?" What He has already done is the assurance that He will leave nothing undone. He has not spared His Son but delivered Him up for us all. God's holiness has been fully satisfied and God's love has not shrunk from that which is needed to give it satisfaction. If He has not spared His Son, "how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things?" A limitless blessing there, but what else could rightly measure the love which has given His Son? Then, what can be against this? "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" As we see in the prophet, if Satan stands at the right hand of Joshua, clothed in filthy garments, his sins upon him, to resist him, the word which settles all is, God has *chosen* to pluck a brand out of the burning. Certainly it is a brand. Certainly it was just the thing for burning. If God chooses to pluck it out, who shall say Him nay? How completely our sinful condition is passed over in this, or rather, it is made the means only the more of glorifying the grace which comes in for us! If, then, God has His chosen ones, who shall lay anything to their charge? It is God Himself who justifies. Who, then, shall condemn? That is the proper connection of these expressions. God is the only One who has title, in fact, to justify. He will do it, of course, according to absolute righteousness, nay, as this epistle has shown us, His very righteousness is displayed in doing it, and in heaven those that are in Christ will thus be made "the righteousness of God in Him." But just on this very account, the thing is sure. "Who shall condemn when God is He who

us from the love of Christ? shall [b]tribulation, or [c]anguish, or [d]persecution, or [e]famine, or [f]nakedness, or [g]peril, or [h]sword? as it is [i]written, For thy sake we are put to death all the day long; we have been counted as sheep for slaughter. But [j]in all these things we [k]more than conquer, through him who [l]loved us. For I am [m]persuaded that neither [n]death nor [o]life, nor [p]angels, nor [q]principalities, nor things [r]present, nor things to [s]come, nor powers, nor [t]height, nor [u]depth, nor any [v]other creature, shall be able to [w]separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

[b] *cf.* Acts 14. 22. [c] *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 4. [d] *cf.* Acts 13. 50-52. [e] *cf.* 1 Cor. 4. 11-13. [f] *cf.* Acts 16. 22. [g] *cf.* 2 Cor. 11. 25, 26, etc. [h] Heb. 11. 37. *cf.* Acts 12. 2. [i] Ps. 44. 22. *cf.* 2 Cor. 1. 8, 9. [j] *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 7-10. [k] *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 14. [l] *cf.* Jno. 16. 33. [m] *cf.* Phil. 1. 29. [n] *cf.* ch. 14. 7-9. [o] *cf.* Deut. 8. 2-4. [p] *cf.* Gal. 1. 8. [q] *cf.* Eph. 6. 12. [r] *cf.* 1 Cor. 7. 26. [s] *cf.* Ps. 112. 7. [t] *cf.* Eph. 4. 8-10. [u] *cf.* Matt. 16. 18. [v] *ctr.* ch. 1. 24, 25. [w] *cf.* 2 Tim. 1. 12; *cf.* Jno. 13. 1.

justifies?" Then "it is Christ who died, yea, rather, who was raised up and who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession (in the place of power) for us." Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? The question speaks for itself. Put as a question, it is put in the strongest form. It is a challenge, as already said, that whoever or whatever can do this be produced. Yet there are many things that seem against us. So then, "tribulation or anguish or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword?" can these? Nay, that was written and true of God's saints of old; of them it was written: "For Thy sake we are put to death all the day long, we have been counted as sheep for slaughter." Can we separate these suffering ones from Him for whose sake they suffer? Nay, in all these things we more than conquer through Him who loved us. "Conquer" by itself is too little to express it. We *more* than conquer; conquer in result, conquer in the endurance of the very sufferings which cannot prevail unless to bless and brighten us. Christ, though He may seem absent, is superintending it all in a love which mixes the whole cup for us, and every ingredient is blessing.

"For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature:"—all these things are creatures. A promiscuous looking assemblage it may be, but he wants to sum up everything that could possibly be thought of. Nothing, then, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which in Christ Jesus our Lord has found a perfect title for its expression, and which in Him, as we look at Him, has found already perfect expression. Christ Jesus, our Lord, the Man Christ Jesus, already shows us God with man in the fullest possible and absolutely unchangeable blessing.

Div. 3.

The grace of the gospel has now been carried to its issue in glory. The doctrine of the epistle is so far concluded; but we have yet to see the bearing of all this upon Israel and the special promises given to her of God. The sin of man at large and of Israel, we may say especially, has been fully proved. "There is no difference, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God;" but that does not affect at all the question of the faithfulness of God to His own Word. Let man be what he may; if God has spoken, He will surely fulfil what He has promised, and here we have to remember that the promise to Abraham was a very different one from the conditional one of law. The promise to Abraham was indeed not directly to the nation at all, and therefore the standing or fall of the nation could not affect it. It was absolute grace in its nature, and as we see in the fifteenth chapter of Genesis, if trial and suffering, if the furnace were needed as well as the lamp, the covenant included both, in order to work out the purpose of God. When law came in, it was exceptional entirely, as the apostle says, "It came in by the way," and for the purpose, not of putting Israel's title to the inheritance upon a new foundation, but really in order to

DIVISION 3. (Chaps. ix.–xi.)

Israel's special promises, how and when to be fulfilled.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. ix.)

The election of Grace.

1 (1-13): The children of promise the true seed.

1. I SAY the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great [x] sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart: for I have [y] wished, I myself, to be anathema from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh; who are Israelites; whose are the [z] adoption, and

[x] *cf.* ch. 10.1.
[y] *cf.* Ex. 32. 32.
[z] *cf.* Ex 4.22. *cf.* Hos. 11.1.

show that nothing but absolute grace could be the foundation of such promises as hers. The law was the ministration of death and condemnation, as we have fully seen, and if the inheritance were of law, as the apostle tells us afterwards, it were no more of promise. Law and promise are in absolute contrast, in contradiction, one may say, to one another. Israel chose the law, and so far, therefore, as she could do it, gave up the grace in which God in fact had been hitherto dealing with her, to accept the recompense of her own desert. She found this in result; and it was seen from the beginning that it would be terribly against her. The new covenant, which still remains to be fulfilled, provides for the fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant, but to a people who have sinned, and expressly in view of their sins; but it is absolute grace once more. It is all God's "I will," not the legal "Thou shalt." Thus, these unconditional promises must be fulfilled. The prophets fill them out and show us Israel on their conversion as a nation not lost in the midst of the Gentiles, but, on the contrary, the centre of the divine rule for the earth and in special nearness to the divine King. The promises of the Old Testament have nothing to do with heaven, no thought of any one going there. They concern the earth; and here the blessing for the earth of necessity implies the blessing for Israel. Isaiah affirms the eternal perpetuity of their seed and name, not merely for the millennium, but "as the new heavens and the new earth," says God "which I will make, shall remain before Me, so shall her seed and her name remain." Thus Israel's distinct existence, and as it is implied, distinct privilege, remains eternal. There is no escape from this, except into the utter confusion in which so many are, between the earthly people and the heavenly, Israel and the Church. If we will only read Scripture with the simplicity which belongs to it, if we will only allow that God means exactly what He says, there will be no difficulty at all in discerning that Israel's promises abide in spite of all that has come in apparently to set them aside, and (for a time,) in fact has done so.

SUBD. 1.

The first part of that which we find here shows us Israel as the elect of God, but election necessarily means grace. It is God acting in grace from Himself and without claim on man's part. Thus, in the very way in which it is carried out, we may be sure that we shall have the manifestation of this. Man will never be able to use the fact of God's election in order to get credit for himself or to establish a fleshly claim.

1. But, in the first place, before the apostle proceeds to this, he affirms, in the strongest way, his sorrow over and devoted love towards Israel. He had not been behind Moses in his desire, if it were possible, to sacrifice himself for the blessing of the people. "He *had* wished" (it is not as if it were indeed something that could be deliberately entertained or something which was thought possible in itself to be realized) that he himself "were accursed from Christ on account of his brethren, his kindred after the flesh." He does not say: "I

the [a]glory, and the [b]covenants, and the giving of the [c]law, and the [d]service, and the [e]promises; whose are the [f]fathers, and of whom is the Christ, [g]according to the flesh, he who is [h]God over all, blessed throughout the ages. Amen. It is not, however, that the word of God hath come to nought: for they are not [i]all Israel, who are of Israel; neither because they are Abraham's seed, are they all children; but in [j]Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, not they who are the children of the flesh are the children of God, but the children of the [k]promise are counted as the seed. For this word is of promise, [l]According to this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only so, but when [m]Rebecca also had conceived by one, [even] by our father

a *cf.* Ex. 19. 16. *cf.* Ex. 40. 34.
b *cf.* Ex. 19. 5. *cf.* Ex. 24. 8.
c Ex. 20. 1, etc.
d *cf.* Lev. chs. 1-9.
e *cf.* Acts 13. 32.
f *cf.* ch. 11. 28. *cf.* Heb. 11. 2.
g ch. 1. 3.
h *cf.* Jno. 20. 28. *cf.* Jno. 1. 1. *cf.* Heb. 1. 8. *cf.* Col. 1. 16, 17.
i *cf.* ch. 2. 28; *cf.* Jno. 8. 33, 37. j Gen. 21. 12; *cf.* Gal. 4. 23. k *cf.* Gal. 4. 28. l Gen. 17. 21; Gen. 18. 10, 14. m Gen. 25. 21-23.

could wish." It was simply an uncalculating, unreasoning longing, if you please, for their blessing. It was the agony of a soul beside itself with the thought of their loss of all that God had made their own. He shows us, thereupon, the ground of their endearment to him, a people connected with the whole history of God's dealing with man hitherto. To them, as he says, belong, the adoption and the glory and the covenants and the giving of law and the service of God and the promises. To them belong the fathers, and Christ too, as concerning the flesh, but He is much more than what this implies: He is "over all, God blessed for ever."

Let us look at these separately. First of all we must not confound the adoption of Israel with that which we know in Christianity. It is the peculiar privilege of the Christian dispensation, as we call it, that we both have the adoption, the open acknowledgment that we are sons of God, and the Spirit of adoption to seal and manifest this. Israel had nothing of this kind. Nationally Israel indeed could be called God's son, and, as in relation to the nations of the earth, His first-born, for the blessing of Israel implies the blessing of the nations of the earth also,—the first-born implies the later born. Nevertheless, the character of this is entirely different from Christian adoption. "You only have I known," says the Lord, "of all the families of the earth." They were still a family of the earth and never ceased to be that. Their adoption does not in the least certify the salvation of one single soul among them, nor the spiritual relationship to God on the part of any one. Nationally, they might call God, Father, and He says: "I am a Father to Israel," but the very fact of His saying that implies, as the apostle tells us, that at the time He says it, the true children of God are scattered abroad. God is not owning His children as such. The owning of the nation is in distinct contrast with this. In the time to come, as we know, Israel will be a nation all holy, but up to the time in which the apostle writes, up to the time in which we are now, the condition of the nation has been a very different one from this. The adoption, as we have seen, is an adoption of a family of earth and for earthly privilege and blessing.

Next, we have the glory; and here it is manifest that we have to think of that which dwelt in the midst of them, their peculiar privilege, the presence of God, whether in the tabernacle or in the temple, a presence manifested amongst no other people.

Thirdly, the covenants all belonged to Israel. There was no covenant with the Gentiles, except indeed, that Abraham was to be a blessing finally to all the families of the earth. Indirectly they come in there; but, as expressly made to them, there was no covenant, and with regard to ourselves also, Christians as we are, and in the fulness of a blessing which Israel could know nothing of, the new covenant is still not made with us, but *ministered to* us,—a very

Isaac, (for [the children] being not yet born, nor having done any thing good or bad,* that the "purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works,

n *cf.* ch. 11. 5-7. *cf.* ch. 8. 29, 30. *cf.* Eph. 1. 11.

* A few of the most ancient MSS. read "worthless."

different thing. The foundation has been laid, as the Lord refers to it when He institutes His memorial feast. The cup was the cup of the new covenant in His blood. The foundation of all blessing, as we know, was in the cross, and thus if Israel for the time, or, as to the mass of them, have rejected God's grace, the provisions of the covenant can, nevertheless, be ministered far and wide, and that is what we have distinctly in the New Testament. The covenants then belonged to Israel alone.

Then we have the giving of the law; and here the "ten words," as they are called, the ten commandments, are expressly declared to be a covenant with Israel. The lesson of the law was for all, the conviction of human unrighteousness was the conviction of all the world; but the law itself, which was, in fact, one of Israel's covenants, was expressly and exclusively their own.

Next, we have the service, the ritual service which God instituted in Israel. He has never instituted another yet. He has brought us indeed into the place of worshipers and given us the Spirit, that we might worship acceptably and in the nearness which divine grace has given to us; but just on that very account a ritual is *not* that which God has provided for us. We have nothing that answers even to the book of Psalms. The joy with which God has filled our heart and the truth which He has made our own, enable us to use all the assurances of blessing which we find there or elsewhere. We are "blessed with *all* spiritual blessings" in Christ, and therefore we can freely claim as ours anything that can be called a "spiritual blessing." If God says to Joshua: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," the apostle assures us we can claim *that;* although if there were any promise which could be thought of, perhaps, as special to the individual, it would be that. But all spiritual blessings are ours. That does not in the least take them from those to whom they were made. It does not deprive Israel of any part of her inheritance or of her privileges. God simply is the same God to us, only more fully known, and therefore in greater fulness of blessing for us. The greater includes the less, and the blessings spoken of throughout the Old Testament, so far as they are spiritual blessings, are, therefore, fully ours.

We would need a large service book to be able to put them into voice aright, but in fact anything of this kind would be contrary to that which we have as our peculiar blessing, the presence of the Spirit of God amongst us. Are we to put words into His mouth? He is with us, as we have seen, to give full expression to those prayers even, which may be expressed only by a groan, but it is a groan intelligent in the ears of God; but the service of God, the ritual service, was Israel's alone.

Then we have the promises; and these are in the same absolute way claimed for Israel. It is plain, of course, that the Old Testament promises are meant, those which any one in the apostle's time would recognize to be the promises. The Christian ones were still a mystery,—and the apostle shows us what is meant by this, namely, that they were things hidden from ages and generations and now made manifest to the saints. Thus the new covenant itself, as ought to be most plain, if we consider the terms of it, does not and cannot cover the fulness of our blessing. The ministers of Christ are "stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. iv. 1). What is characteristic of Christianity is just that which is beyond even the new covenant itself,—the opened sanctuary even is not, but it is not here the place to look further.

"The fathers" present to us the venerable forms that we are familiar with in Old Testament history; but Christ, again, as concerning the flesh, belongs to Israel also; that is, He came of them; while at the same time it is carefully

but of him that calleth,) it was said unto her, The [o] elder shall serve the younger. As it is [p] written, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.

[o] *cf.* Gen. 27. 29, 37.
[p] *cf.* Mal. i. 2–5. *cf.* Jer. 49. 7–22; *cf.* Am. i. 11, 12; *cf.* Obad. 1, etc.

guarded here that there was in Him that which of necessity made His manhood of much deeper significance than could be implied in the fact of His coming of Israel. The title which He constantly uses with regard to Himself in this connection is that of the Son of Man. Israel could have, in this sense, no exclusive title to Him, and, in fact, not even a special title. He is, of course, much more than Man, One over all, "God blessed forever." The distinct force of this has been attempted to be set aside by many, and in different ways, which it does not need to consider here. The words as we have them in our version perfectly express the original, and affirm in the strongest way that Christ is God in the highest sense, the God who is over all. That does not conflict in the slightest with the supreme title of the Father, but assures us that Christ is one with the Father Himself, in the same way, supreme.

All this belongs, says the apostle, to that Israel, his kindred according to the *flesh:* expressly cutting off in this way any spiritual application, so-called, as to the Christian Church. It still belongs to, and cannot be taken from them, notwithstanding their present condition, so long existent. God is strong and patient.

This, then, is the people over whom the apostle mourns, and no wonder. How is it possible for us to forget Israel's claim to the most affectionate remembrance? But if they have failed and, as to the mass, been for the present set aside, the word of God has not failed on that account. "All that are of Israel," says the apostle, "are not" therefore "Israel." A nation in the flesh, there were amongst them (scattered by the system, as already said,) the true children of God; but outside also of Israel were children of God, as we know. To belong to the nation could not deprive any one who sought God, of the blessing of that; and on the other hand, the belonging to Israel could not confer blessing upon those whose backs were really towards Him. But God had taken care expressly to show, in the very history which they had in their hands, that the seed of Abraham were not, as they constantly assumed, the mere seed after the flesh. These were not necessarily the children of Abraham in any proper sense. Thus, the history itself marks out, and from the beginning, that in Isaac the seed shall be called. Ishmael was, as to that, as much a child of Abraham as Isaac, but Ishmael is not reckoned as of the seed, as Isaac is. His being the child of the bondwoman might seem, perhaps, to account for that; therefore we have another case, and a plainer one, which God has taken abundant pains to make plain to us. Jacob, the younger, was in this the one chosen of God, and not Esau. Yet they were both children of Rebecca; according to the flesh they had both an equal title, if indeed the fullest were not Esau's, but here God Himself speaks out in the fullest way. Before the children were born, before anything had been done by either of them, either good or bad, God says: "The elder shall serve the younger." He does not base this upon any conduct of theirs. He simply affirms it to be His will, and thus if Israel will maintain that the seed of Abraham according to the flesh have rights based upon the flesh, they must admit to these rights the Ishmaelites on the one hand and the Edomites on the other; that election is of grace, therefore, that is of God's will alone, is settled by history. But let us remember here that the moment we speak of God's will, it is not merely, as we say, an arbitrary thing. In God's will, His whole nature speaks. You cannot find anywhere the will of God expressed in which you will not find His character expressed also. In fact, where this is manifested in the fullest way, just there we may expect the fullest and sweetest manifestation of what God is. We must never lose sight of this when we speak of the absolute will of God.

God's love is free: when He pleads with His people in Malachi the love He

2 (14-18): God's diverse dealing.

2. What shall we say then? Is there [q]unrighteousness with God? Far be the thought. For he [r]saith unto Moses, I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. So then it is [s]not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God who hath mercy. For the [t]scripture saith unto Pharaoh, For this very purpose did I raise thee up, that I might show in thee my [u]power, and that my [v]name might be declared in all the earth. Therefore on whom he willeth he hath mercy, and whom he willeth he [w]hardeneth.

q cf. Gen. 18. 25. *cf.* Gen. 15. 16. *cf.* ch. 3. 5, 6. *r* Ex. 33. 19. *s cf.* Deut. 7. 6-8. *cf.* Jas. 1. 18. *cf.* Jno. 1. 12, 13. *t* Ex. 9. 16. *cf.* Acts 13. 22. *u cf.* Jer. 10. 7. *cf.* Josh. 2. 9, 10.

v cf. Ps. 83. 17, 18; *cf.* Josh. 7. 9; *cf.* Neb. 9. 10. *w cf.* Ex. 4. 21; *cf.* Ex. 7. 13; *cf.* Ex. 8. 15, 32; *cf.* Heb. 3. 13; *cf.* ch. 2. 4, 5; *cf.* Is. 6. 10.

had shown to Jacob, He uses the name which reminds them of the natural character of their father, stamped so upon his descendants also, before divine grace had made him Israel. These names are used according to their different significance, in application to his seed, as one may see conspicuously in Balaam's prophecy. Here it suitably points out how little the "worm Jacob" had merited divine love. On the other hand, if He has to say in contrast, "I hated Esau," He carefully marks the wickedness on their part which had called forth His anger against them. "They shall call them the border of wickedness, and the people against whom the Lord has indignation for ever." This was not, as in the former case, before the children were born, or had done good or evil; and the free love of divine grace has no corresponding free hate, but longsuffering patience toward the creatnres He had made. "Esau have I hated" was said at the close of the Old Testament, after long trial extending over many centuries.

2. But here immediately a question is raised by men. Is this righteousness? It was the very question which the law that they had was meant to settle for them and which it does effectually settle, that on man's part *he* has none; that therefore he cannot claim anything from God on that score. If God set him aside wholly from blessing, it is no question of righteousness in God. If we speak of righteousness in that way, we ignore our own condition. The apostle appeals to the history with regard to this. When they made the golden calf at Horeb, all was gone as far as that generation was concerned. God retreats into Himself. He says: "I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy and I will have compassion upon whom I will have compassion." It is upon this ground alone that He can take them up again. The Israel of Paul's time owed thus, in fact, their very existence to this compassionate will of God.

The case of Pharaoh is another which men speak of much. God says of Pharaoh: "For this same purpose I have raised thee up, that I might show in thee My power and that My Name might be declared in all the earth." But what does He mean by this? If God is going to declare His Name, for what purpose is it? In fact, when God did thus raise up Pharaoh, the world at large was sunk in idolatry. Pharaoh was the head of the most idolatrous nation, probably, upon the face of the earth. He was also in a place in which that which was done to him, the manifestation of God's sovereign power in his case, would go far and wide amongst the nations. Was there no goodness manifest in that very fact, that "against all the gods of Egypt" He was executing judgment? We find that it did indeed speak, and the song of Israel at the Red Sea shows what was the effect amongst the nations. Not indeed, that they were brought to God by it; not necessarily that any were. Of this we have no knowledge. Yet in the case of Rahab, supplemented, no doubt, by other testimonies, we see how much it wrought. Thus, if God raised up Pharaoh and made him a monument of His judgment, it was mercy, nevertheless, that made him so, and that mercy had been displayed with regard to Pharaoh himself, as it is very easy to see. Nay, the hardening of Pharaoh's heart was largely wrought *by the*

3 (19–26): His self-manifestation in all this.

3. Thou wilt [x]say then unto me, Why then doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will? Nay, but, O man, [y]who art thou who repliest against God? Shall the thing [z]formed say unto him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the [a]potter power over the clay out of the same lump to make one vessel unto [b]honor, and another unto dishonor? What if God, willing to show his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much [c]longsuffering vessels of

x *cf.* Jer. 7. 10.
y *cf.* Job. 33. 13. *cf.* Job. 36. 23. *cf.* Matt. 20. 15.
z *cf.* Is. 29. 16. *cf.* Is. 45. 9, 10. *cf.* Matt. 11. 25–27.
a *cf.* Is. 64. 8. *cf.* Jer. 18. 1-12.
b *cf.* Prov. 16. 4; *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 20; *cf.* Acts 9. 15.
c *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 9; *cf.* Prov. 1. 22–32.

very mercy shown him. "Because judgment is not speedily executed against an evil work, therefore the heart of the sons of men is thoroughly set in them to do evil." But shall not God show mercy then? He does show it, again and again, removing the judgment threatened or brought about in the case of Pharaoh, and when the king finds relief from that which had for the moment terrified him, his heart hardens itself against God. One may say that we are told that it was God who hardened it; certainly not by any putting forth of His power to do this. It was rather the very mercy that was displayed, by which the hardening was effected, and thus God's goodness remains all the way through, whatever might be the effect upon a human heart in opposition to Him.* The sun which melts the ice may harden the clay. It is the same sun that does both. Thus, while it is true that "on whom He will He showeth mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth," and although we may be little able to follow out in detail the mystery of God's ways in this, we are not in the least called to justify Him. The day will come when everything will be fully manifest; and then He will be "justified in judgment and clear when He is judged."

3. We are next told that in all these things, in the judgment, as well as in the grace, God is manifesting Himself. The apostle first of all indeed, rebukes the thought of a man replying against God, whatever God may be pleased to do. Such replying must necessarily be in vain. Could one succeed in establishing his cause against Him, what could it be? It would be the ruin of everything. Think of being able to show that God was not the righteous, holy, gracious God He is! Think of the disaster everywhere which would result from such a thing. The moment we speak of God, we must be still and know that He is God; and the apostle insists upon this in the first place. If He be the potter, He has power over the vessels to make one vessel to honor and another to dishonor. Who shall deny Him that? How He will use His power is another matter. He never says that He makes vessels to dishonor, but as a mere question of power and wisdom, as merely the question of His Godhead, are we going to dethrone God? As a fact, when the apostle comes to the different character of vessels, he shows us that if God was minded to show His wrath and make His power known, He did it, as in Pharaoh's case, while He "endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." That was exactly Pharaoh's case; but he never says that *God* fitted the vessels for destruction. On the other hand, if He would make known the riches of His glory upon the vessels of mercy, He carefully adds: "Which He had afore prepared for glory."†

* Three expressions are used to describe the hardening of Pharaoh's heart: "Pharaoh hardened his heart"; "God hardened Pharaoh's heart"; "Pharaoh's heart was hardened." We have in these the responsible person, Pharaoh, steeling his heart against the mercy and judgment of God; then, God's acts of mercy and judgment were His own, and by these, in divine forbearance, the heart of the stubborn king was fully manifested. It was the judicial hardening which can thus be regarded as a divine infliction, as with Israel in Isa. vi. Lastly, the circumstances are looked at as having the effect; the result is simply mentioned.—S. R.

† Similarly, in the judgment of the nations in Matt. xxv., our Lord speaks to those on the right of "the Kingdom prepared for *you* from the foundation of the world," but those on the left He sends to "everlasting fire prepared"—not for them but, "for the devil and his angels." That any are saved is due alone to grace, but men cannot blame God for those who are lost.—S. R.

wrath fitted for destruction, and that he might make known the [d]riches of his glory upon vessels of mercy, which [e]he had before prepared for glory? [even] us whom he also called, [f]not from the Jews only, but also from the Gentiles? As he [g]saith also in Hosea, I will call that my people which was not my people; and her beloved who was not beloved. And it shall be that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there they shall be called sons of the living God.

4 (27-29): Mercy for a remnant only declared as to Israel.

4. But [h]Esaias crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the [i]sand of the sea, [it is] the [j]remnant shall be saved: for he is bringing the matter to an [k]end and [cutting it short in righteousness, because]* a cutting short of the matter will [the] Lord effect on the earth. And according as Esaias said before, [l]Unless [the] Lord of hosts had left us a seed, we should have become as Sodom, and been even made like to Gomorrha.

d *cf.* Eph. 1. 7, 18. *cf.* Eph. 3. 16. *cf.* Col. 1. 27. *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 12-17.
e *cf.* Gal. 1. 15. *cf.* Eph. 1. 4. *cf.* Eph. 2. 10. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 13, 14.
f ch. 3. 29. *cf.* Col. 3. 11.
g Hos. 2. 23. Hos. 1. 10. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 10.
cf. Is. 54. 1.
h Is. 10. 22, 23. *cf.* Is. 6. 11-13.
i *cf.* Gen. 32. 12. *cf.* Is. 48. 19.
j *cf.* ch. 11. 5. *cf.* Is. 11. 11, 16. *cf.* Joel 2. 32.
k *cf.* Matt. 24. 22.

* Many leave out the bracketed words, which complete the quotation from the Septuagint.

cf. Is. 30. 12, 13; *cf.* Dan. 9. 26, 27. l Is. 1. 9; *cf.* Lam. 3. 22, 23; *cf.* Mal. 3. 6; *cf.* Am. 4. 11.

God's intervention in the one case is as carefully noted as it is positively absent in the other, and this is the character of all His ways; His wrath needs to be made known, and His power. The necessity of that in such a world as is around us ought surely to be manifest. God's judgments thus have a character of mercy which we must never forget in relation to them, but if He comes out in that which most fully expresses His will, as election does, for instance, here we find all His heart conveyed in it. If election be of grace, then grace is that which we must in the fullest way ascribe to God. "We," says the apostle, are a sample of this: "We, whom He hath called not only from amongst the Jews, but also from amongst the Gentiles." We are upon the same ground, and thus it is that the apostle quotes Hosea here in two passages which manifestly apply directly to Israel only: "I will call them My people which were not My people, and her beloved which was not beloved;" and again: "It shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not My people, there shall they be called the sons of the living God." Both passages, as I have said, refer to God's purposes with regard to Israel in the time to come, but as a principle they equally show how He is acting and how He has title to act in His present grace. The men of the Gentiles, who were not His people, He is calling His people; and where He had said unto them, "Ye are not My people," there they are now called of Him His children. The apostle does not say that this is an exact fulfilment of Hosea's words. It is a fulfilment in principle, and that is all that is implied in his quotation.

4. Mercy then, in fact, is Israel's only hope, and here everything has been declared already and her own sins by the prophets. Isaiah crieth concerning Israel: "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sands of the sea, a remnant shall be saved." It will be a remnant only out of many, and this applies to the time not yet come, when "He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness," when He is making a short work upon the earth. In the fourth chapter of his prophecy, Isaiah has shown us how this will be carried out and how the nation will become at last a holy nation, when "it shall come to pass that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have

5 (30-33): Why Israel did not attain.

5. What shall we say then? That the Gentiles who followed [m] not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, but a righteousness which is of faith; but Israel, pursuing after a [n] law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law [of righteousness] *. Wherefore? Because it was not of [o] faith, but as of works.† For they [p] stumbled at the stumblingstone, according as it is [q] written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offence, and he that believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

m *cf.* ch. 10. 20. *cf.* Lk. 4. 25-27. *cf.* ch. 15. 21.
n *cf.* ch. 10. 2, 3. *cf.* Phil. 3. 5. *cf.* ch. 3. 20.
o ch. 4. 16. *cf.* Jno. 6. 29.
p *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 8. *cf.* Matt. 11. 6. *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 23.
q Is. 28. 16. *cf.* Ps. 118. 22; *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 6, 7; Matt. 21. 42.

* Many omit. † Many add, "of law."

purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning." It is the time of which He says again that, "When God's judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness"; and this principle applies to Israel also. Judgment must do its work, but in order that at last grace may be able to be manifested. But thus, in contrast with the proud expectation of blessing from God as a whole, a remnant only will remain to enjoy it. The remnant of that time will become the nation for God. He quotes another witness from the same prophet, that "Unless the Lord of hosts had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom and been made like unto Gomorrah." The judgment of the cities of the plain would be their judgment, except divine grace had made a difference.

5. But if there were no escape, except in God's mere mercy, from such an issue as to Israel, a plain reason can be given for the rejection of the many which was now taking place, although it was at that very time that Israel manifested, as we know, their zeal for the law, in a certain sense therefore, for righteousness. How strange a fact that while the Gentiles, largely men who had never followed after righteousness, who were mere sinners of the Gentiles, attained righteousness as believers in Christ, Israel, pursuing after the law of righteousness, did not attain to it; but why? Because it was by law that they sought it, in the way in which there was utter impossibility of ever finding what they sought. This has been shown us already, again and again. They rejected distinctly God's principle of faith, and thus they stumbled at the Stumbling Stone,—Christ in His grace come low enough to be stumbled over, in that humiliation which was the expression of His perfect grace, as well of the need which that grace was to meet. It was the very thing which in their condition became a stumbling block to them, and God had declared that this would be so. He was to place in Zion a "stone of stumbling and rock of offence." The fulness of God's love exhibited in Him could be no other to men filled with the Pharisaic self-righteousness which characterized the nation. They knew not their need and therefore the very goodness which ministered to that need—grace, was rejected because it was grace: the lower it had come to minister to men, the more ground had they in their thought for rejecting it.

SUBD. 2.

The contrast is now drawn between the law and the faith of the gospel. This might seem to have been sufficiently discussed; but the law is so thoroughly according to man's mind, that it is hard indeed to divorce one from it. After all the treatment which is given to it in this epistle we shall find, in that to the Galatians, how the soul even that has learned to rejoice in the grace of the gospel may still go back to what is the entire opposite of this, and we shall have to take up again the question of this opposition there, though from a different point of view to that which we have at present. Yet the very word "salvation," in the sense in which the gospel has made us to know it, is not found in connection with the law; which, at best, puts it on the wicked man to

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. x.)

The contrast between law and the faith of the gospel.

1 (1-4): The righteousness of God ignored by the self-righteous.

1. BRETHREN, the delight of my heart and my [r]supplication to God for them is for salvation. For I bear them witness that they have a [s]zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being [t]ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their [u]own [righteousness,]* have not [v]submitted to the righteousness of God. For [w]Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

2 (5-13): The word of faith and Christ for salvation.

2. For [x]Moses describeth the righteousness which is of law, that the man who hath done these things shall live by them.† But the righteousness which is of faith

r *cf.* ch. 9. 3. *cf.* Gal. 6. 16.
s *cf.* Acts 21. 20. *cf.* Lk. 18. 21, 22.
t *cf.* Lk. 19. 42. *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 6-8. *cf.* ch. 8. 21.
u *cf.* Lk. 18. 11.
v *ctr.* Phil. 3. 7-9. *cf.* Lk. 7. 30. *cf.* 2 Ki. 5. 11-14.
w *cf.* Gal. 3. 23-26. *cf.* Jno. 19. 30 with 2 Cor. 3. 6-14.

* A number omit. † Some read, "by it."

x Lev. 18. 5; Gal. 3. 12; *cf.* Lk. 10. 28.

save himself, and that by turning from his wickedness and doing what is lawful and right, a thing which all his past has proved impracticable.

1. Here it is for the salvation of Israel that the apostle longs and prays. He testifies that they have a zeal for God, a thing which reminds us of the terrible fact that there is a way which seemeth right to a man, where yet the end may be the ways of death. This is a thing which men would gladly forget. The open ways of death are many enough, and every one recognizes that men do not get to heaven by drunkenness or violence; but that there should be a way seeming *right* to a man and in following which, therefore, he may be perfectly sincere, yet proving in result to be the way of death, this is indeed a startling matter to face. Let all consider, therefore, that the "broad way which leadeth to destruction, and many they are which go in at it," is not of necessity a way of open wickedness; on the contrary, while sinful self is indeed and necessarily against God, yet righteous self is a more universal and a worse antagonist. The publicans and sinners followed Christ. The Pharisees and religious people could not believe in Him. The apostle reminds us here that the whole effort of the heart characteristically in Israel was to establish their own righteousness, and thus the righteousness of God was ignored. The effort proves that men have not measured themselves in the presence of God. Christ is now proclaimed for righteousness "to every one that believeth," and that is the opposite of law. The law says: "He that doeth"; the gospel says: "He that heareth." "Christ is the end of the law," replacing and setting it aside, and bringing in a totally contrastive principle.

2. The contrast with living by doing is plain. That is not faith, nor is it salvation. For the righteousness of faith, the apostle quotes, however, in what may seem a very strange fashion, Moses too. He puts into his words clearly what is not in Moses; and the language of Deuteronomy the thirtieth, which he uses, unquestionably speaks of the law itself. "This commandment which I command thee this day" could be nothing else but this. It was of this commandment that Moses says: "It is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off; it is not in heaven, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up for us to heaven to bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it; neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go over the sea for it and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it; but the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." Yet, in principle at least, the apostle seems to find the gospel in this. Can it be implied, where not expressed? The beginning of the chapter shows that Moses has been speaking of the time when the predicted blessing and the curse shall have been alike fulfilled, and when, scattered in every land, Israel will return in heart to what was then commanded

speaketh thus: *Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into the heavens?—that is, to *bring Christ down; or, Who shall descend to the abyss?—that is to *bring up Christ from among [the] dead. But what saith it? The word is *nigh thee, in thy *mouth and in thy *heart, (that is, the word of faith which we preach,) that if thou shalt *confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt *believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from among [the] dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the *heart one believeth unto righteousness, and with the *mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, *Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is *no difference as to Jew or Greek: for the same Lord of all is rich unto all who call upon him; for *whosoever shall call upon the name of [the] Lord shall be saved.

ctr. Jas. 2. 14-26; *cf.* ch. 6. 17. *h cf.* Jno. 9. 10-34. *i* ch. 9. 33. *j* ch. 3. 22, 29; *cf.* Eph. 2. 1-4, etc; *cf.* Acts 15. 8, 9. *k* Acts 2. 21. Joel. 2. 32.

y cf. Deut. 30. 11-14. *cf.* Jno. 3. 13. *z cf.* Heb. 10. 5-7. *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 10. *a cf.* Jno. 10. 18. *cf.* Acts 2. 24. *ctr.* Eph. 1. 19, 20. *b cf.* Lk. 10. 9. *cf.* Mk. 12. 34. *c cf.* Lk. 19. 37-40. *d cf.* Acts 16. 14. *e* Lk. 12. 8. *f cf.* Acts 16. 31. *cf.* ch. 4. 24, 25. *g cf.* Lk. 8. 15.

them. This explains the words "not in the heavens." The law had been given them in the first place from heaven, God speaking to them thence; and again, "not beyond the sea" refers to their scattered condition far away from their land, and yet with the word in their hands, and now through grace in their hearts also, for through grace it is. When they return in heart to God at that time, God will have compassion on them. They will be no more able to keep the impossible terms of the law than they ever have been, and if God takes them up at the end of their wanderings, it can only be in grace after all, although by that grace itself the law is now written in their hearts. This reminds us at once of the new covenant, for the terms of the new covenant are: "I will write My laws in their hearts"; yet how different is this "I will write" from the legal compact, "thou shalt do" so and so! Thus the light dawns on us. The apostle really makes explicit what is implicit in Moses' words; but then again, for this, Christ must come in. With Moses that is yet a secret thing which at least does not come into the passage quoted, but the apostle puts it in as, in fact, indispensable. There could be no grace apart from Christ. There could be no salvation apart from grace, and we are familiar with the new covenant as that which, of necessity, must have Christ for its fulfilment. When once we see this, we need have no difficulty about what is said here; and for us "Who shall ascend into heaven, and who shall descend to the abyss?" can only refer to Him. It seems strange at first sight that he should put it, "Say ye not in thy heart, who shall ascend into heaven," and for the purpose named; who ever did say that? No one, assuredly, ever thought of bringing Christ from heaven, as no one ever thought of raising Him from the dead. These are things outside of the range of man's natural expectation, much more of any accomplishment on his part; but this is, nevertheless, what was absolutely needed, and thus the hopelessness of *any* effort on man's part is confessed at once. If we cannot ask, even, Who shall do this? this after all is what has secured salvation for us and nothing else could secure it. Thank God, it is an accomplished thing; and therefore still more, no one could need to ask the question. Only the *word* of it remains, the report which awakens faith and of which faith lays hold. There is simply the word in the mouth and the heart, a word of confession for the mouth, and of faith for the heart. The apostle does not hesitate to put these together. He does not think of the possibility of a faith without confession. He does not own such a thing to be faith. "Faith if it have not works, is dead, being alone." It is, of course, the basis of all, necessarily. One must believe that God has raised Christ from the dead or there will be no confession of Him as the Lord of all, and the apostle joins confession with salvation surely,

3 (14-17): Published abroad.

3. How then shall they [l]call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they [m]believe on him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a [n]preacher? and how shall they preach unless they have been [o]sent? according as it is [p]written, How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good tidings of peace,*—of those who bring good tidings of good things! But they have not all [q]obeyed the gospel: for [r]Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith is by a [s]report; and the report through the word of God.†

4 (18-21): Israel's unbelief.

4. But I say, Have they not heard? Yea, truly, [t]Their voice went out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the habitable world. But I say, Did not Israel know? First, [u]Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy through [those who are] not a nation; through a nation without understanding will I anger you. But [v]Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found by those who sought me not; I was made manifest to

l *cf.* Matt. 15. 21–28. *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 2.
m *cf.* Eph. 1. 13. *cf.* Acts 11. 14.
n *cf.* Acts 8. 30, 31. *cf.* Tit. 1. 3.
o *cf.* Lk. 24. 47, 48. *cf.* Acts 13. 2-4. *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 4. *cf.* Eph. 4. 11.
p Is. 52. 7. Nah. 1. 15. *cf.* Eph. 6. 15.
q *cf.* Heb. 3. 18, 19. *ctr.* 1 Thes. 2. 13. *cf.* Jno. 5. 44.
r Is. 53. 1. *cf.* Jno. 12. 38.
s *cf.* Acts 10. 36–43. *cf.* Eph. 1. 13.

* Some of the earliest MSS. omit "of those who bring good tidings of peace." † Many read "Christ."

cf. 1 Pet. 1. 23; *cf.* Heb. 4. 2. t Ps. 19. 4; *cf.* Col. 1. 23; *cf.* Matt. 28. 18, 19; *cf.* Acts 14. 16, 17.
u Deut. 32. 21; *cf.* ch. 11. 11, 14; *ctr.* 1 Thess. 2. 16 with Matt. 23. 13. v Is. 65. 1; *cf.* Jno. 4. 7, etc; *cf.* ch. 9. 30.

as looking on to that time when Christ will confess in His turn those who have confessed Him upon earth. That is the time when salvation will be complete. The calling on Him as to which he quotes from Joel, in the same way as Peter at Pentecost, necessarily implies this. "Whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved." Notice how fully the deity of Christ is recognized here, for "the Lord" in Joel is Jehovah; and notice, too, that by the words of Joel himself the Gentile cannot be excluded. If it be "whosoever believes" and "whosoever confesses," the Gentile, of necessity, may come in here upon the same footing as Israelites themselves.

3. Here then is the gospel. To fulfil its purpose, it must be published, sent out. Here is the wide-spread mission call of Christianity, and of such a call the law knew nothing. It had a special priesthood, but no recognized ministry outside the bounds of Israel itself. That special priesthood proved, in fact, that those who were outwardly nigh were still, as to the mass, far off, and the priesthood themselves, as we know, could not really draw near to God. How little, therefore, was there for a gospel to the world! The exclusive position of Israel, of which Pharisaism boasted so much, was, in fact, the confession that the time was not yet come for the proper revelation of God. God was not yet in the light, the way into the holiest was not manifested. When this takes place, immediately the question is raised which the apostle puts in this epistle: "Is He the God of the Jews only? is He not also of the Gentiles?" Could He possibly reveal Himself, and yet hide that revelation from any of His creatures? On the contrary, it must now everywhere be pressed that God has drawn near to man, and the claim for answer must be pressed along with it. There is still an obedience requisite, an obedience of faith, without which there can be no blessing; and this comes nearer home to every man than any call under the law could possibly do; for let a man hear the law as he might, it was not the man that *heard*, but the man that *did*, that was accepted. Now, on the other hand, if a man hears, truly hears, he is accepted at once, and thus the question of obedience to such a call is urged at once. There is no reservation of it to a possible future, when he shall have fulfilled impracticable conditions.

4. The apostle goes on now to Israel's rejection. The call had been given

those who inquired not after me. But unto Israel he saith, [w]All the day long have I stretched out my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

[w] Is. 65. 2. *cf.* Matt. 23. 37, 38. *cf.* Jno. 12. 35, 36.

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chap. xi.)

How Israel's portion will be made good to them.

1 (1–6): The present election of grace showing God's unchanging purpose.

1. I SAY then, hath God [x]cast away his people? Far be the thought. For [y]*I* also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people whom he [z]foreknew. Know ye not what the [a]Scripture saith in [the history of] Elias? how he pleadeth with God against Israel: Lord, they have killed thy prophets, they have dug down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the divine answer to him? I have left to myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Even so then, in this [b]present time also, there exists a remnant according to the election of grace. And if it be by [c]grace, it is no longer of works; otherwise [d]grace becomes grace no longer.*

[x] *cf.* Lev. 26. 44, 45. *cf.* Neh. 9. 31. *cf.* Jer. 31. 36, 37. *cf.* Jer. 33. 20–26.
[y] Phil. 3. 5.
[z] *cf.* Is. 41. 8–10 with ch. 8. 29.
[a] 1 Ki 19. 10, 14, 18.
[b] *cf.* ch. 9. 27. *cf.* Jas. 1. 1. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 1.
[c] *cf.* Eph. 2. 8. *cf.* Acts 15. 11.
[d] *cf.* ch. 4. 4, 5, 16. *cf.* Gal. 5. 4.

* Some add, "And if of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no more work."

her. The apostle quotes for this the words of the nineteenth psalm. The voice of the heavens in creation, of which it speaks, is that which corresponds to the world-wide call, now that the heavens are indeed speaking; but the prophets had foretold what, in fact, has now taken place. God had said that He would anger Israel by a foolish nation, that is, by an idolatrous one, for this is the thought of "foolish" constantly in the Old Testament. "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God," or, at any rate, has wandered from the right One. Thus Israel's rejection was not only a present fact, but a fact that had been long before announced. If there was a remnant at all, it was a remnant according to the election of grace.

SUBD. 3.

We are now to see how Israel's portion is yet to be made good to them. We have seen already, that, in fact, the promises of God must be fulfilled. They are not, if we think of those to Abraham, conditioned upon any response on man's part. God alone is the Speaker in them, and as the apostle tells us in the next epistle (Galatians) the law which was 430 years after could not be added as a condition to what God had already unconditionally declared. Israel's portion is then, yet to be made good to them; but this involves another thing. If the special place and privileges of the nation are to be restored, the *church* subsists only by the breaking down of these very distinctions. In it there is neither Jew nor Gentile, but it is composed of both, united by one Spirit in the body of Christ. Thus, then, the Church must have passed away from the earth before Israel's promises can be fulfilled. The two could not exist together at the same time, and so it is stated in this chapter; as concerning the gospel, with regard to that, Israel, although always beloved for the fathers' sakes, is yet treated nationally as an enemy, and it is not, therefore, by the gospel as it goes out at present, that Israel as a whole can be brought back to God.

1. The apostle dwells first of all upon the fact of this present election of grace as declaring God's unchanged favor towards them. "God," he says, "hath not cast off His people whom He foreknew." That foreknowledge embraced, assuredly, all the history of the people of His choice. He at least could not be disappointed, nor could the evil in them work change in Him. He could cer-

2 (7-10): Blinding of the rest, as written.

2. What then? Israel hath not [e]obtained that which he seeketh after; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded, according as it is [f]written, God hath given them a spirit of slumber, eyes so as not to see, and ears so as not to hear, unto this day. And [g]David saith, Let their table be made a snare and a trap and a stumbling block and a recompense unto them; let their eyes be darkened that they see not, and bow down their back alway.

3 (11-15): The fruit of their fall and restoration.

3. I say then, Have they stumbled that they might [h]fall? Far be the thought; on the contrary, [i]by their fall salvation [is come] to the Gentiles, to provoke them to [j]jealousy. And if their fall be the [k]riches of the world, and their loss the riches of the Gentiles, [l]how much more their fulness? For I speak unto you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am [m]apostle of the Gentiles, I glorify my service; if by any means I may [n]provoke to jealousy [those who are] my flesh, and may save some out of

e ch. 9. 31. *cf.* Lk. 18. 9-14.
f Is. 29. 10. *cf.* Is. 6. 10 with Acts 13. 41.
g Ps. 69. 22, 23. *cf.* Ps. 35. 4-8. *cf.* Deut. 29. 22-28.
h *cf.* Hos. 1. 10, 11. *cf.* Jer. 31. 28.
i *cf.* Acts 13. 27. *cf.* Acts 28. 26-28.
j ch. 10. 19.
k *cf.* Lev. 25. 22. *cf.* Mk. 12. 9. *cf.* Acts 18. 6. *cf.* Gen. 45. 5-8.
l *cf.* Is. 49. 6; *cf.* Is. 60. 3, etc; *cf.* Ps. 72. 8-11.
m Acts 9. 15. ch. 15. 16; Gal. 1. 16; Gal. 2. 7-10.
n *cf.* Num. 12. 1; *cf.* ch. 10. 19.

tainly never be deceived. The heart of man, which man indeed is incompetent to fathom, He Himself claims to know perfectly. If there is a remnant preserved among them at all, it is an election of grace, and therefore independent of works, as the apostle says here,—of works of any kind. Grace, he adds, becomes grace no longer if works are mingled with it. Through all their history, even at the time of most complete national apostasy, still, as he reminds us here, there was ever a remnant. Elias, even, could make intercession to God, alas, *against* Israel. "Lord," he says, "they have killed Thy prophets and digged down Thine altars, and I am left alone, and they seek my life"; but it was a mistake in every way. God had still reserved to Himself, as He says, 7,000 men who had not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. That was His work, and therefore no power of the enemy could overthrow it. The remnant in Israel is, according to the prophet, the sap of the tree, which, though the tree be cut down, shows nevertheless that there is life in it. If there were no sap, there would be no life; but as long, therefore, as there is a remnant according to the election of grace, Israel still in that sense lives before God.

2. Blindness in part, however, has happened to them. That which Israel sought for, they have not obtained. We have already seen that the most zealous seekers were apparently those farthest from fulfilling the conditions of successful search. "The election hath obtained it," says the apostle, "and the rest were blinded." They have fallen under the judicial sentence of God, as again their prophets witnessed. God had given them such eyes as did not see, and such ears as did not hear.

3. They had stumbled confessedly over the Stumbling Stone. They had not eyes for Christ. They saw "no beauty in Him, that they should desire Him." They had stumbled, but not that they might utterly fall, as is plain from the fact that the salvation of the Gentiles was in order to provoke *them* to jealousy. God still then was expecting from them what His own grace alone could produce. But then, if such consequences and blessings were the result of their fall, would not their fulness, when it should take place, be for still greater blessing to men at large? If their casting away nationally resulted in the message of reconciliation going out to the world, will not their being received back again be life from the dead? This, as we know, in fact, has been abundantly promised. There is no blessing for the earth apart from the blessing of Israel. There could be no fulfilment of the prophecies of that time of the earth's bless-

them. For if the °casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall their reception be but ᵖlife from among the dead?

¶ (16–21): The mercy to the Gentiles testing them also.

16 4. Now if the ᑫfirstfruit be holy, so is the lump; and if the root be holy, so also are the branches. Now if ʳsome of the branches were broken off, and thou, being a ˢwild olive-tree, wast grafted in among them, and becamest a ᵗjointpartaker of the root and fatness of the olive-tree, ᵘboast not against the branches; but if thou boast, it is not ᵛthou bearest the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; through ʷunbelief they were broken off, and thou ˣstandest through faith: be not ʸhigh-minded, but fear, if indeed God hath not ᶻspared the natural branches, lest he also spare not thee.*

* R. V. reads "for if God spared not . . . neither will He spare thee."

o ver. 11.
p cf. Ezek. 37. 1-14. cf. Is. 26. 16-19. cf. Hos. 6. 1-3. cf. Ruth 4. 15, 16.
q cf. Is. 51. 1-3. cf. Matt. 3. 9.
r ver. 25. cf. Is. 6. 10-13. cf. Jer. 39. 9, 10.
s cf. Eph. 2. 11, 12. cf. Gal. 2. 15.
t cf. Acts 11. 1-18. cf. Acts 15. 14-18. cf. Eph. 3. 6-11.
u cf. ch. 3. 27-30; cf. 1 Cor. 1. 26-31; cf. Ob. 10-12.
v cf. Gen. 12. 3; cf. Gal. 3. 14.
w cf. Heb. 3. 19; cf. Jno. 12. 35-50.
x cf. 2 Cor. 1. 24; cf. 1 Cor. 10. 1-13.
y cf. Heb. 4. 1-13; Prov. 28. 14.
z cf. Lk. 19. 41-44; cf. Is. 5. 5-7.

ing without Israel being in the centre of it, as every picture shows. Of course, if, for Israel in the prophet we are content to read the Church, then everything will be changed indeed, but God's word, read in the simplicity of its ample statement, cannot possibly allow of this.

4. The present mercy to the Gentiles is, however, (and that of necessity,) the testing of these also. The witness of what man is must surely go on throughout the ages as man himself goes through them. Solemn it is to realize this in the case of Christianity, with all its fulness of blessing. Men are willing enough to forget what Scripture, however, so thoroughly assures us of. In Paul's day, the mystery of iniquity was at work; and this was to go on to its end in an apostasy out of which the man of sin, to be destroyed at the coming of Christ Himself, will arise. Grace indeed reigns in the gospel; but if we argue that this means that it is to conquer the world, this is directly denied by Scripture itself. "Let favor (or grace) be shown to the wicked," says Isaiah, "yet will he not learn uprightness." "When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." It is that which we find in Judges with regard to Israel, the King must come. Nothing will do but the coming of the King; and this not because of the power of the enemy simply, for the power of God is with His people and there can be no failure there, but because of the wickedness and failure of God's people themselves.

The apostle in the type of the olive ignores all that is distinctive of Christianity and speaks of the Gentiles as simply grafted into the place of Israel's broken off branches. These parables from nature are never pictures of grace in its fulness. In the tree, we have ever considered the responsibility for fruit; so with the vine, whether we look back to the prophet's application of this to Israel herself, or in the Lord's application of it to Christian profession now. The vine above all, perhaps, speaks of the necessity of fruit; it is of no use except for fruit; but here we find that there are branches also which are broken off, and in the Old Testament prophet, the vine itself is laid waste and trampled down.

The fig-tree planted in the vineyard now desolate as such, refers to the remnant returned from Babylon in Ezra's and Nehemiah's time; but here again the Lord takes up that figure, in order to show God's expectation of fruit from it, and how, when Christ Himself came, there was still none. Sentence was ready to go forth: "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" Still His own in-

§ (22-29): The governmental ways of God.

5. Behold then the goodness and severity of God: upon those that fell, [a]severity; but upon thee [b]goodness of God,* if thou abide in his goodness; [c]otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they [d]abide not in unbelief, shall be grafted in; for God is [e]able to graft them in again. For if thou wast cut out of the olive-tree that is wild by nature, and hast been grafted contrary to nature into a good olive-tree how much more shall these who are [f]according to nature, be grafted into their own olive-tree? For I would not have you ignorant, brethren, of [g]this mystery, lest ye should be wise

a *cf.* Num. 14. 34. *cf.* Deut. 28. 63.
b *cf.* Acts 15. 47, 48. *cf.* Acts 14. 27.
c *cf.* Jno. 15. 2. *cf.* Col. 1. 23. *cf.* Rev. 3. 16.
d *cf.* 2 Cor. 3. 16. *cf.* Jer. 3. 21 –25. *cf.* Jer. 50. 4, 5.
e *cf.* Jer. 31.
g *ctr.* Eph.

* Many omit "of God."

10-14; *cf.* Ps. 126. 1-3; *cf.* Jer. 32. 15-17, 27, 37. *f cf.* Jer. 33. 25, 26; *cf.* Ps. 85. 1, 2. 3. 3-6; *ctr.* Matt. 13. 11; *ctr.* 1 Cor. 15. 51; *ctr.* Rev. 17. 5; *ctr.* 1 Tim. 3. 16.

tercession causes it to be spared for a while yet. It is digged about and dunged; and now, if it will bring forth fruit, well; but, as we know, this was fulfilled when the Spirit of God came down amongst men at Pentecost, and still there was no answer from the people of that day.

The olive again speaks naturally of that in which the Spirit is found, for the oil, as we know, is the type of the Spirit; but the same element of responsibility is found in it. What is looked for may not be there in fact. The branches are broken off for lack of a faith which they never had, and one may partake of the fatness of the olive-tree and yet not have this. The Spirit's work, in a sense, is implied, but not, as we see, of necessity, any *inward* work. If the apostle speaks of the lump being holy as the firstfruit was, he is referring to Abraham as set apart to God, and Israel had the same setting apart, but it was not *necessarily* more than external. The branches and the root are similar.

The root again was Abraham, and it is clear that in Abraham you have, in fact, the first separation to God out of the world that history furnishes. The nations had now gone off into idolatry, gone fully away from God, although we might find exceptionally a Melchisedec amongst them. Out of that general corruption, God separates Abraham to Himself, and thus begins a new principle upon the earth. Israel manifest still God's principle, however little they realize the spiritual character of it in His thought; however little they might be indeed separate from the mass of the nations round about them.

God acting indeed in His grace in this way has made Israel to be, as it were, the very tree itself into which the Gentiles have now been grafted. Here the New Testament speaks with the Old. As the vessel of the Spirit, who can deny Israel's special place? Paul himself, the very apostle of the Gentiles, was, nevertheless, not a Gentile, as he puts it here, in the sense in which he is speaking. The Gentile is a wild graft, which, therefore, if grafted into the olive is "contrary to nature." It is, as we know, contrary to nature to graft that which is wild upon the good. Faith is required now, and the branches are broken off, therefore, because they do not answer to this. They are not competent to meet the claim which Christianity makes upon them, and they are broken off from their own olive-tree. Thus, if God be pleased to graft Israel back again, we need not be surprised. The Gentile cannot possibly claim, according to this, to have any necessary right in it, much less to be the whole thing, as he is apt to claim. Israel is only blinded in part until the fulness of the Gentiles is come in.

5. There is a limit to the present blinding; there is a limit to the time of blinding altogether. When, in God's mind, the complete number of the Gentiles is brought in, Israel will, as a whole, be saved; not, as the apostle says here, by the gospel, but by the Deliverer coming, not now out of *Bethlehem*, as once He came, to be rejected; but out of *Zion*. He does not come as the Babe born to the nation any more, but as the King and Conqueror, and then it is

in your own conceits, that [h] blindness in part is come to pass to Israel, until the [i] fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so [j] all Israel shall be saved; as it is [k] written, The Deliverer shall come out of Zion; he* shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And this is the covenant on my part for them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are [l] enemies for your sakes; but as concerning the election, beloved for the [m] fathers' sakes: for the gracious gifts and calling of God are [n] without repentance.

h vers. 7–10.
i *cfr.* Lk. 21. 24. *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 9.
j *cfr.* ver. 5. *cf.* Ezek. 37. 11, 12, 15–28. *cf.* Ezek. chs. 40–48. *cf.* Is. 11. 11–16.
k Is. 59. 20, 21. *cf.* Lev. 26. 44, 45.
l *cf.* Hos. 1. 6–9. ver. 12.

* Some read, "And he."

m ch. 9. 5; *cf.* Deut. 7. 8; *cf.* Ex. 2. 24; *cf.* Dan. 9. 15–19. n *cf.* Nu. 23. 19–24; *cf.* Mal. 3. 6.

when "Every eye" sees Him. "They also who pierced Him" shall see him, and the outburst of confession on the part of the people will be the beginning of their national blessing. Enemies indeed they now are, that is, treated by God as enemies; which does not, of course, refer simply to the enmity in their heart, but that God *treats* them for what they are, enemies, as to the gospel,—while it goes out, though still the gifts and calling of God abide for them unchangeable.

For us there is a solemn consideration here. How fully that which is characteristically Gentile Christianity has come in the minds of the vast number to be considered the whole thing, scarcely needs to be insisted on. Israel are to be saved, no doubt, but simply by the extension of the blessings of the gospel to them. Christians are that spiritual Israel, which is to bud and blossom, and fill the face of the earth with fruit. Thus the Gentiles have become, in spite of the apostle's warning against it, "wise in their own conceits." They have indeed thought that they bore the root, rather than the root them, and ignored the conditional footing upon which we, in common with Israel, as the professing people of God, stand. But the apostle brings it out fully here. "Behold, then," he says, "the goodness and severity of God: upon those that fell, severity, but toward thee goodness, *if thou continue in His goodness*, otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." Now *have* we—could we venture to say we have—continued in God's goodness? Who will say so? Why then do we hear so much of revival, and the need of revival, except because of the constant tendency to decline? But is it a tendency only? What does the very Reformation, which we rejoice over so much, bear witness as to the general condition of Christendom at the time in which this took place? What was that of the Romanism out of which the Protestant churches through the mercy of God emerged? Out of Rome, what could we say of the Greek and eastern churches, which God allowed to be smitten with the rod of Mohammedanism for their idolatrous abominations? To come closer home, what shall we say of the condition of the Protestant churches themselves since God broke the papal chain, and set them free? What of Unitarianism, Rationalism, and the hundreds of sects and heresies, which are the unanswerable reproach and witness against them? What are we sliding into now, which allows Romanism to-day to boast herself, however foolishly and falsely, as being the preserver of Scripture? Alas, we have not continued in God's goodness; and thus the sentence of excision is clearly upon us, "thou also shalt be cut off."

Thus when, according to Isaiah, the light shall arise again upon Israel, it will not be merely to add new splendor to a day already bathing with its brightness the nations of the earth, but on the contrary, as he—most unaccountably according to the dreams men are indulging in—most plainly says, when "*darkness* shall cover the earth, *gross* darkness the nations" (chap. lx. 1–3). The Gentile church is become apostate, as Paul elsewhere shows (2 Thess. ii. 3–12), the true saints having been removed to heaven. How important to realize the times in which we are, and what is before us, that we do not go with the mass in the

6 (30-36): His victory over sin.

6. For as ye indeed [o]once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy [p]through their disobedience, so also have these now disobeyed the mercy to you, that they also may become objects of [q]mercy. For God hath [r]shut up all together in unbelief, that he might show mercy unto all. O the [s]depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how [t]unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For [u]who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counselor? or who hath [v]first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him? For [w]of him, and through him, and for him are all things, to whom be [x]glory throughout the ages. Amen.

o Eph. 2. 2. Tit. 3. 3.
p ver. 11, etc.
q cf. Is. 53. cf. Mi.7.18-20. cf.Zech.12. 10.
r ch. 3. 9,19. cf.Gal.3.22.
s cf. Is. 12. cf. Is. 25. 1, etc.
t cf. Job 11. 7-10. cf. Job 33. 13. cf.Ps.77.19.
u 1 Cor.2.16. cf. Is.40.12-14. v cf. Heb. 2. 10; cf. 1 Cor. 11. 3 with 1 Cor. 15. 28. x 1 Tim. 1. 17, etc.

smooth ways in which they are prophesying to themselves peace, but walk in separation to God from all that is bringing in the end in judgment!

6. But the victory over sin is thus, after all, God's alone. Israel's unbelief has been the occasion of His mercy to the Gentiles in this very way; through the impossibility of any claim on their part any more to the privileges that were theirs, they become objects of mercy merely. They had refused God's mercy when it went out to the Gentiles. They are to be blessed finally as themselves mere Gentiles, having no claim beyond that. Thus, they are brought upon the common ground in which alone blessing can be found for any man. God could not bless them in self-righteousness it is clear; and He must in all His ways show that man throughout is a debtor to mercy alone. This is the occasion for the apostle's adoring recognition of the "riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God." The plan is clearly His; man could never have thought it out in this way. Naturally, he would never put himself in the position in which, nevertheless, divine grace finds him. He has not even "known the mind of the Lord," much less "been His counselor." "Of God and through God and to God are all things, to whom be glory for ever!"

Div. 4.

We come now to the practical results, the ways suited to these mercies of which the apostle has been speaking. The place in which practice comes we have seen far back, in the book of Numbers. We have in Genesis, life, the primary necessity; in Exodus, the knowledge of redemption; in Leviticus we are introduced into the sanctuary, into the presence of God, and learn the holiness that suits Him—ourselves now, what could not then be said, in nearness to Him; then we have in Numbers the practical walk through the world. So here we must first know the truth, as the Lord says, "that the truth may make us free," established in the position divine grace has given us. It is in that which is Christian in us that the Spirit of God alone works, in the new nature, not in the natural man. "Faith worketh by love," and then again it is love that appeals to love, and "perfect love," which is God's love towards us, "casts out fear, because fear hath torment," so that "he that feareth is not made perfect in love:" he has not yet got his lesson aright. Thus, we are set in the blessing at the outset. We have not to work into it to win it, and all this bears witness to the truth of the gospel, which is not of works, but of God's grace. We live and do, not do and live.

Subd. 1.

1. The harmony and universality of the obedience claimed are first brought before us. The principle with which we begin shows us this. The body is to be given up "a living sacrifice" to God. The body is the instrument of the spirit; and this so completely that, if it be laid hold of for Him, there is no

DIVISION 4. (Chaps. xii.–xvi.)

Ways suited to these mercies.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. xii.)

The spirit of harmonious, universal obedience.

1 (1-3): The principle: the body a living sacrifice to the will of God.

1. I [y] EXHORT you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a [z] living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, your [a] intelligent service. And be not [b] conformed to this age, but be transformed by the [c] renewal of your* mind, that ye may [d] prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

* Some omit "your."

y *ctr.* Gal. 3. 10.
cf. Phil. 4. 2.
cf. Philem. 8, 9.
z *cf.* ch. 6. 13.
cf. 1 Cor. 6. 19, 20.
ctr. 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15, 21.
a *cf.* Eph. 4. 17, 18.
b 1 John 2. 15, 17.
cf. 1 Tim. 4. 10.
cf. Gen. 13. 10, 11.
c *cf.* Eph. 4. 23.
cf. Tit. 3. 5.
cf. 2 Cor. 4. 16.
d Eph. 5. 10.

part of the practical life but must, of necessity, be His. The feet are used to walk at His bidding, the hands to employ ourselves in His things, the tongue to speak for Him and nothing else, the ear to hear His words; the eye also, so that whatever it looks upon, it will look upon as being under His control. It is plain that the whole life, thus, finds its government. The body indeed, as the apostle has shown us, is dead; but as dead it can yet be used in the power of the Spirit of God, which, as we have seen, is in it expressly for this purpose, to make it a temple for His praise. People put the citadel of practical life too far in, and even sometimes seem to think they exalt the spirit by ignoring the body; no matter what the ear hears or the eye looks upon, the spirit may be unaffected by that, which, of course, is true in one respect; but the eye affects the heart, and if we allow the eye to wander away from His control, we have allowed the enemy thus far and he has already gained a victory. Here, as we can understand, there is indeed the call for sacrifice. We need to deny ourselves as those who belong to Another, "a living sacrifice" indeed, in contrast with those sacrifices of the law which were sacrifices in death. This is in life, but a most real one, and such a sacrifice the yoke of Christ already implies for us; easy as His yoke may be, and light His burden, still it is a yoke, a restraint upon the mere natural inclinations. There was but One who answered fully to the type of the red heifer, upon which never came yoke, He who could say with the whole heart: "I come to do Thy will," with whom there was nothing else than this; for Him there could be no yoke. But yoke as there may be, and something in us, as we all shall confess, that needs to be restrained; yet the mercies of God, as we have already seen them displayed in the gospel, persuade us to this full surrender of ourselves, not as a hard, but a joyful subjection. What, indeed, is there of freedom compared with that of walking in ways that are ways of perfect holiness, but also of perfect love, where divine wisdom guides us continually and where divine power encompasses us and guards us? Thus it is "by the mercies of God" that the apostle beseeches Christians to offer up their bodies "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, an intelligent service."

But around us is a scene in opposition to us and to God. "The age," not "the world," is that which we are not to be conformed to. In a sense it is the world, but this seen in its control of the whole scene through which we move. The age is never Christian, even though Christianity is fully come, and we may be now living in lands which are called Christian; yet the god of "the age," as the word really is (2 Cor. iv. 4), is Satan. The strongest possible expression is used. He is not merely the prince, but the god of this age, and we can understand the difficulty that all this presents for us and the need we have of power working with and through us, greater than our own. Another thing.—it was in this age that we had our part naturally, and we need actually to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, that is, by our minds being made entirely

2 (3-8): Service according to the measure of faith.

2. For I say, through the grace given me, unto every one that is among you, not to be [e]high-minded, above the mind he ought to have, but to be sober-minded, as God hath apportioned to each the measure of faith. For as in [f]one body we have many members, and all the members have not the same office, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and [g]individually members one of the other. Now having [h]gifts different according to the grace given us, whether [i]prophecy, [let us prophesy] according to the proportion of faith;

[e] 1 Pet.5.5,6. cf. Phil. 2. 3, 4.
[f] 1 Cor. 12. 12, 13, etc. Eph. 4.4,11-13. cf.1 Cor.10. 17.
[g] 1 Cor. 12. 27.
[h] Eph. 4.16. cf.Col.2.19.
[i] 1 Cor.14.1-4, etc.

anew, in order to escape from it. "Renewal" is here not that which we need as realizing the wear and tear of things, the mere refreshment and revival of strength, but the actual production of another spirit and temper altogether. We need, therefore, as is plain, the word of God as that which alone can expose the subtle influences which are all around us and deliver us from the plausible deceptions which are abroad. "The word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit," a "discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." We need the double edge of it, the one for ourselves, allowing our thoughts and intents to be searched out by it; the other for what is objectively before us. How blessed to know that the proving of the will of God which will thus be effected will realize how good, acceptable and perfect that will is! There is an experience here which every soul in the least divinely taught knows well, an experience which has in it the most wonderful encouragement. How can we tell rightly what the divine way is except as we walk in it? Who that has walked in it, whatever the apparent severity of its requirements, but knows the blessedness of this?

2. Now we have, in the next place, service. Service to God is what, of course, is implied in what we have already had. Now this is made practical as service to our brother. "If we do not love our brother whom we have seen, how can we love God, whom we have not seen?" Our brother is thus the representative of God, of Him who is Father to us all; and the Church, as the body of Christ, of necessity means such a field of service. The apostle has not spoken of the Church, the epistle to the Romans does not enter upon this; but when we come to practice, the Church in fact exists, and it is the nearest thing to us that does exist. This, the apostle speaks of, therefore, at the very start, only he tells us that there is something we have to do in order to be fit for service in such a field as this. We must learn to esteem *ourselves* aright, "not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath given to each the measure of faith." Faith is not measured in the sense of its being so limited that it might possibly fail us for any work that is ours. Its limit is only found when we get outside our own sphere, and take up, perhaps, another's work. We shall not find faith for *that*. Thus we have to learn our capacity; but here again we cannot learn this by simply looking in upon ourselves. We cannot estimate our capacity until we have in measure proved it, and that is how God leads us on, not only making us know the qualification for what service He has made ours, but developing in us also the gift which He has given. Love, of necessity, sets us to work: it is the spirit of service. Love alone will prompt us, in view of needs we find, to do what we can to minister to them. Here, if it be love, we are safeguarded also, for love is the lowliest thing that can be. It "seeketh not its own," and thus pride and ambition are necessarily foreign to it; they are its contradiction, its opposite. But as we are brought into contact with the need around, and in love seek to do whatever lowly service God may give us, we find in practical working what God has indeed fitted us for, and only in such a way is knowledge truly acquired. It is noticeable, when we come to the Gentiles, how the apostle here puts together things that are clearly "gifts" in the way in which we ordinarily speak,—

or [j]ministering, [let us occupy ourselves] in ministering; or he that [k]teacheth, in teaching; or he that [l]exhorteth, in exhortation; he that [m]giveth, [let it be] in

[j] *cf.* Col. 4. 17. *cf.* Acts 6. 1, etc.
[k] *cf.* Eph. 4. 11.
cf. 2 Tim. 2. 2, 15. [l] *cf.* Heb. 3. 13; 10. 25; 13. 22. [m] *cf.* 2 Cor. 9. 10-15.

public gifts for the Church,—and things that are of the most private character. Prophecy comes first; then ministry; a large and general term used for it, which has been ecclesiastically narrowed into "deaconship;" then teaching, exhortation, but next, giving, and after that, ruling and showing mercy. It is as if the apostle foresaw the distinctions which have in fact come in, and that Christians would divide into different classes upon these points. In the first case even, there is a character of prophecy which applies to the whole Church. "Ye may all prophesy," says the apostle elsewhere, "one by one;" and he adds, "Covet to prophesy." Again, if we are not all teachers, we may all *teach*, according to our ability. Exhortation is necessarily a thing wide enough in character and all ought to find their place here also. In fact, there is never a limit to the use of anything we have, except that we do not go beyond the measure of spiritual ability. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." As already said, love and lowliness,—and the two go together,—will find their way everywhere without difficulty. To dwell upon ourselves is not the divine preparation. Love leads us out of ourselves and occupies us with others, while indeed we do learn practically, as already said, what God has qualified us for, but we learn it in the presence of others and with the necessary safeguards which practical experience furnishes for us.

But let us notice now, that in the order here, prophecy comes first. No doubt the apostle has in contemplation especially what was the gift so needed at that time, and which filled out divine revelation to its present fulness; but we are not surely to confine it to this. The first place in which we find it should make us realize the blessed position we have in Christianity as thus brought near to God, and with the most ample opportunity and encouragement in learning His mind. As the prophet said of old: "God will do nothing, but He will make it known to His servants the prophets." And now, His full mind being made known to us in Christ, the practical possession of this, and in such a way as that we shall have a word for every emergency that can arise, is open to us all. The exhortation here is that men prophesy "according to the proportion of faith," words which have been variously taken; but we can understand that faith is the whole matter here, and that for us the word of God furnishes with all that faith has to do with. It will ever be in entire dependence upon this, which, of necessity, therefore, tests all that can be called such.

In the three next cases, the great point is to occupy ourselves with that which God has really entrusted to us. We may lose the practical possession of our gift to almost any extent, by failing to use it, and, in fact, how much ministry is thus lost to the Church! Timidity, lack of confidence in God, but which necessarily goes, therefore, with a lack, more or less, of that divine love which would make us forget ourselves and break through all barriers which are not of God Himself,—these things may make us to be really unconscious of what God has endowed us with, much more, of what He would lead us on to. For "to him that hath, shall more be given." Let him that teacheth, therefore, occupy himself with his teaching, a gift which is specially apt to be encroached upon by demands of another character. Teaching is naturally of slower development than, for instance, evangelizing. We need to acquire the knowledge which we are to use in this way; but how many things come in here to hinder even the proper furnishing with this knowledge! The order of acquirement that Peter gives us is: "Add to your faith, virtue, and to virtue, knowledge." "Virtue" is there the soldier's virtue,—courage. It is that spirit of decision which at any cost carries us on. If all God's various knowledge lies open before us, who would not desire to possess himself of it? But there is need for it to be practical, for God will not give that which is to be trifled with or hoarded

simplicity;* he that [n]leadeth, with diligence; he that [o]showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.

3 (9-21): Fruit in holiness.

3. Let love be [p]unfeigned, [q]abhorring evil, cleaving to good; in brotherly love kindly affectioned towards one another; in [r]honor anticipating one another; in [s]diligence not slothful; [t]fervent in spirit; [u]serving the

n *cf.* 1 Thes. 5. 12, 13. *cf.* Heb. 13. 7, 17, 24.
o *cf.* 2 Cor. 9. 7. *cf.* Ex. 25. 2.
p 1 Pet. 1. 22. *ctr.* Ezek. 33. 31.
q 1 Thess. 5. 21, 22.

* Or, "liberality."

cf. Ps. 119. 104; *cf.* Am. 5. 15. r *cf.* Phil. 2. 3; *cf.* Eph. 3. 8. s Heb. 6. 12; *cf.* Prov. 24. 30-34. t *cf.* Acts 18. 25. u *cf.* Col. 3. 24.

up merely. He gives for use, and we must have courage to use it. It seems more difficult, perhaps, to realize how "he that exhorteth" is to occupy himself with exhortation. Exhortation, we say, can only be as the need arises, but still how many needs there are. How much, in fact, is before our eyes that we excuse ourselves, perhaps, from having to do with,—and the inventive faculty is great in making excuses. Exhortation is not, as we know, apt to be always an acceptable thing, and then again we have to guard our own spirits carefully with regard to it.

Next we have: "He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity." That has been variously put as liberality, but, in fact, the two things are very similar. A man that gives simply will do it liberally. The need will appeal to him and the love that is in him be aroused by the need; and true love is wise; there is no blindness about it. Divine love is, in fact, never separate from divine wisdom.

Next, we have "he that ruleth" or "he that leadeth." The leader is of necessity, to a large extent, the ruler also, but there is no absolute rule, except that of the Spirit in the church of God; but he that realizes that he is leading others has, of necessity, much responsibility attaching to this. If his word is weighty, he must be the more careful. The apostle says here, he must rule or lead "with diligence," that is, not careless of what he is doing, not at random, but as giving thought and care to that which is having affect upon the minds of others. The apostle closes here with, "he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness."* These are, of course, only specimens of how we are to use the gifts that are given to us, and the opportunity of showing mercy is itself, in a way, a gift.

3. Next comes what we shall realize more as fruit in holiness. That word "fruit," which we do not find here, we shall find in Galatians in a striking connection (Gal. v. 22, comp. ver. 19). Here we have the fruit of the Spirit in contrast with the works of the flesh. Activity is not necessarily fruit, as we must easily realize. Fruit is a growth, the product of life, and which needs nurture and maturing in order to be right and ripe. There is a unity about it which in work there is not. In how many directions the flesh may work, even religiously; but fruit in holiness cannot be mistaken for this. Here the apostle's first word is that which brings us to the heart of the matter. Love is the divine nature. It is, in a sense, the whole thing, but then we make so many mistakes about it, that we need to have this carefully guarded. Love itself abhors that which is evil, cleaves to that which is good. You cannot, in fact, cleave to what is good without abhorring the evil which is its opposite. Then, how much there is in the world of the affectation of love, an outside show of it which may deceive even, not merely others, but one's self also. How often we mistake in our estimation of the reality of the love we have to others. People are necessary to us, they minister to our pleasure. We appreciate that, value them in a

* Showing mercy, while a general term, is sufficiently definite for us to get its meaning. It does not mean forgiveness, or showing mercy in that sense, but rather all acts of kindness and charity—as illustrated by the good Samaritan. This mercy is to be shown, not grudgingly but "with cheerfulness," "hilarity" as the word literally is—a kind of exhibition of that "merry heart which doeth good like a medicine." It need hardly be said that this is farthest removed from a worldly levity which would grieve the Spirit of God.—S. R.

Lord; in [g]hope rejoicing; in [h]tribulation enduring; in [i]prayer persevering; [j]communicating to the needs of the saints, pursuing [k]hospitality. [a]Bless them that persecute you, bless and curse not. [b]Rejoice with those that rejoice, [and] weep with those that weep. Have the [c]same mind one towards another, not affecting high things, but consorting with the [d]lowly; be not [e]wise in your own eyes; repaying no one [f]evil for evil; [g]careful to have things right before all men; if it be possible, as far as dependeth upon [h]you, being at peace with all men; not [i]avenging yourselves, beloved, on the contrary [j]give place unto wrath; for it is [k]written, Vengeance is mine, I will recompense, saith [the] Lord. Therefore, [l]if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not [m]overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

v ch. 15. 13.
w ch. 5. 3-5.
x *cf.* Phil. 4. 4-7.
y Heb.13.16. 1 Tim.6.17-19.
z 1 Pet. 4. 9. *cf.* 3 Jno. 5-8.
a Matt.5.44. *cf.* Lk. 23. 34. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 21-23.
b *cf.* Jno.11. 33-35.
c *cf.* Phil. 3. 15, 16.
d Ps. 131. *cf.* Ps.16,2,3.
e Prov. 26. 12. Prov.14.12.
f Prov. 14. 29. Matt. 5. 38, 39. *g* 2 Cor. 8. 21; *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 12. *h cf.* Gen. 26. 20-22; *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 7, 8. *i* Lev. 19. 18; *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 15; *cf.* 1 Sam. 26. 8-11. *j cf.* Matt. 5. 39-42; *cf.* Phil. 4. 5. *k* Deut. 32. 35; Heb. 10. 30. *l* Prov. 25. 21, 22; *cf.* 2 Ki. 6. 22; *cf.* Lk. 6. 27. *m cf.* 1 Pet. 3. 9; *cf.* Prov. 15. 1; *cf.* Gal. 5. 16.

sense, and call this love, but "love seeketh not her own." It does not claim, but ministers. The love, here again, is brotherly love. The apostle is not traveling beyond that at the present moment; and again we see how self-denying it is, all the more, perhaps, because it does not dream that it is self-denial. "In honor preferring one another," ready to give that which others might suppose to be our own due. All this clearly connects together.

The next clause has been much abused, and misunderstanding has arisen from the way in which words in course of time alter their meaning. "Business" we so naturally refer to our temporal occupations; these are the things, in fact, in which men commonly and necessarily, as they believe, are most "busy," but the word simply means "diligence": "In diligence not slothful." There is a way in which we may be busy about things without real diligence. All is to be earnest with us, we are to be "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." The character of the One we serve should be enough to enforce that. No detail of duty to Him can be a light matter.

Next we have "rejoicing in hope." Alas, how the present, with its calls and duties, may interfere with that! We need continually to have our heads up and to be contemplating the unseen realities which are ours. Here we have a material for rejoicing which will never fail us, and which will carry us, as the apostle reminds us here, through tribulation itself. "In tribulation enduring"; still not without the need of realizing our dependence upon the One who carries us, and therefore "in prayer persevering." We need to realize that the prayer which may seem little effective, has nevertheless, always its answer from God. It may not be, of course, just in the way in which we imagine, but answered in some way, it surely will be.

Next we have, "communicating to the needs of the saints, pursuing hospitality." A glance now, at the outside, hostile world is given us, and yet may the exhortation be always confined to that? "Bless them that persecute you, bless and curse not." There are, alas, here also forms of persecution which may find their place even in the ranks of the saints. With all this, we are not to be shut up in ourselves. We are to "rejoice with those that rejoice and weep with those that weep." How much of joy is open to us in this way of which we do not, in fact, avail ourselves, and how much of sorrow do we shut ourselves out from, when it is just the school which God would make fruitful for ourselves! Then we are to have "the same mind one towards another," an equal mind, without

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. xiii.)
As strangers and pilgrims in the world.

1 (1-7): Obedience to authorities.

1. LET every soul be [n]subject to the authorities above [him]. For there is no authority except from* God; and those that exist have been [o]appointed of God. So that he who setteth himself against the authority [p]withstandeth the ordinance of God; and those who withstand shall receive to themselves judgment.

n 1 Pet. 2.13-17. cf. Prov. 24. 21.
o cf. Jno. 19. 11. cf. Gen. 9. 5, 6. cf. 1 Sa. 10. 1. cf. Dan. 2. 21. cf. Ezek. 21. 27.
p cf. Acts 23. 2-5. cf. 2 Pet. 2. 10, 11.

* ὑπο, "under" which suggests subjection to Him.

regard of persons. "Not affecting high things, but consorting with the lowly." That, of course, goes with this, this equal mind towards all: one who seeks high things for himself cannot practice it. "Be not wise," he adds, "in your own eyes."

Finally, as realizing the strife that is going on between good and evil, we are to abide in the good, assured that here is that which alone can overcome it. "Evil for evil" can never overcome evil. We are to be careful to have "things right before all men," as the word here means, so as to give no occasion to the adversary. As to one's own spirit, as far as it depends upon us, (as we familiarly say, "It takes two to make a quarrel,") we are to be "at peace with all men." Nothing can invade this sanctuary of ours unless we open it to the invasion. The spirit of revenge will surely do this. On the contrary, we are to give place unto wrath, not meet it with wrath, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will recompense, saith the Lord."* We must not take the judge's place, and we must not desire to do so. Love is still that which overcomes here. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

SUBD. 2.

1. Now we have the Christian attitude toward the outside world, to which we are not to be conformed. "Strangers and pilgrims" in it, we yet recognize, surely, all that is of God. Government is of God, not this or that form of it; there is no decision as to what is best or of any form being best. The world is outside of us and all that belongs to it, but God's hand is in it and over it, and with a restraining power upon the evil, which is immense mercy to all. Government is of God, whatever exists, whatever we find practically in the place in which we are. We are only passing through, and it is not ours to meddle or make. Any form of government whatever is comparatively beneficial: think of what anarchy would mean. While all forms fail, as Daniel at large shows us, because the One who alone is capable of exercising perfectly righteous rule has not come. God's mercy comes in everywhere to temper things; but the world is in opposition to God and therefore to us. As long as we are here, there will never be another condition of the world. Our place is in the world to come. There we shall reign with Christ, but now, if the apostle says to Christians, "Ye have reigned as kings," it is plainly a reproach on his lips, and he adds "*without us.*" If they got reigning, they were out of communion with the apostles, clearly; *they* were more apt to be in a prison than on a throne; and, if we are to be in communion with the apostles, it must be so still with us. If we say times have changed and our conduct therefore must change with that, the world is still the world, if it is without God. If it is with God, it is not in the

* The above is not the ordinary interpretation of this clause, though it seems to be the true one. Most commentators interpret it by what follows, "Give place to (God's) wrath, for vengeance is Mine." That is, wait on God who will execute vengeance in due time. But this is hardly in accord with a Christian spirit, which desires neither its own nor divine vengeance. The simple and natural thought would be that of yielding, turning the other cheek to the smiter.—S. R.

For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. Dost thou desire then not to be afraid of the authority? [q]Practise good, and thou shalt have praise from it; for he is a minister of God to thee for good; but if thou practise evil, be afraid, for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is a minister of God, an [r]avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil. Wherefore one must needs be in subjection, not only for the wrath, but also for [s]conscience sake. For for this cause ye pay [t]tribute also; for they are God's officers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render to [u]all their dues: tribute to whom tribute, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

2 (8-10): The debt to all men.

2. [v]Owe no one anything, save to [w]love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal,* Thou shalt not lust, and if there

q 1 Pet. 2 14. cf. 1 Pet. 4. 15. cf. 1 Pet. 3. 13.
r cf. 2 Chro. 19. 6. cf. 1 Tim. 1. 8-10.
s cf. Heb. 13. 18. cf. Acts 24. 16.
t cf. Matt. 17. 27.
u Mk. 12. 17. 1 Pet. 2. 17, 18.
v cf. Lev. 19. 13. cf. Prov. 22. 7. cf. Ps. 37. 21.
w cf. Col. 1. 4. cf. 1 Pet. 1. 22, etc.

* Some add, "Thou shalt not bear false witness."

evil sense "the world"; but who will assert that, however Christianized it may apparently be, the mass is not truly the world any longer? If this shifts for us, if the world is gradually growing better and our position in it is to be affected by that, then we are without practical guidance in the word of God. The changed times would require a new Bible. The Lord's prophetic words speak of His disciples being brought before rulers and kings for a testimony against them and the nations, nothing else. The apostle of the Gentiles is left at the close of the Acts in the Gentile prison; and, while we find in his epistles careful directions for Christians as subjects, there are plainly none for Christian kings or magistrates. We may say, perhaps, that there were none at that time, but that does not argue that there would be none; the coming king was provided for in Judaism long before he came, as well as the absolutely necessary law book in which he would find the divine laws which he was to execute. Think of Christian magistrates and kings to execute laws other than divine! Plainly, nothing of all this is given to us; and yet we accept the authorities that are as "ordained of God," and "he who setteth himself against the authority, withstands the ordinance of God." Thus, plainly, "he will receive to himself judgment." Nothing that is of God can rightly be resisted, and on the whole, through His mercy, things are so ordered that rulers are still His ministers for good, not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. Blessed it is to be able to realize how, through all that seems to be most opposed to Him, God nevertheless works, and thus we are to be in subjection for conscience' sake. How good to know that in every circumstance of this world through which we pass, while yet we are strangers in it, the world is not so strange but that we shall find God everywhere, and things that seem the most contrary, yet ordered by Him. If, indeed, the governments of the world yet require of us that which is in plain conflict with the word of God, we must obey Him rather than men, but in suffering, not resisting. This the apostle carries out to the smallest detail. We are to render to all their dues: "Tribute to whom tribute, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, and honor" also "to whom honor." We are not permitted, even, to have freedom of speech against that which is of God's institution.

2. Now comes the debt to all men. Here, it is not a question of loving the brethren merely. We are to owe *no* one anything save to love one another, and here it is pointed out that we have the fulfilment of that which the law sought, but could never obtain. Love is that which is the fulfilment of the law, or the whole of it, for if we love our neighbor as ourselves, love works no ill to

be any other commandment, it is [z]summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to one's neighbor, therefore love is the whole law.*

3 (11-14): As manifest children of light.

3. This also, knowing the time, that it is already the hour to [a]arouse out of sleep; for now is our salvation [z]nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, and the [a]day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the [b]works of darkness, and let us put on the [c]armor of light. Let us walk [d]becomingly, as in the day, not in [e]revellings and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy; but [f]put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no [g]provision for the flesh, to [fulfill its] lusts.

x Lev.19.18. cf.Matt.22. 37-40.
y Eph. 5.14. 1 Cor.15.34.
z cf. Jas. 5. 7, 8. cf. Heb. 10. 25, 37. cf. Rev. 22. 20.
a cf.1Thess. 5. 4, 5. cf. Rev. 22. 16. cf. Mal.4.2.
b Eph. 5.11, 12.
c cf.1 Thess. 5. 8.
d 1 Pet.2.12. 1 Thess. 4. 12.
e Gal. 5. 21. cf. 1 Pet. 4. 2-6.
f cf. Eph. 4. 20-24. cf. Col. 3.9-11. cf.2 Cor.12. 9.
g cf. Gal. 5. 16, 24. cf. ch. 6.12-14. cf. ch. 8.12.

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chaps. xiv.–xv. 7).

The conscience to be in each one before the Lord.

1 (xiv.1-12): The authority of the Lord over all.

1. NOW him that is [h]weak in the faith receive, not to [i]doubtful points of reasoning.† One man believeth he may eat [j]all things; another who is weak eateth [k]herbs. Let not him that eateth [l]despise him

* Literally, "the fulness of the law."
† Or, "not to deciding his doubts."

h ch. 15. 1; cf. 1 Cor. 8. 9; ctr. 1 Cor. 9. 22; cf. 1 Thess. 5. 14; cf. Acts 20. 35.
i ver. 14; cf. 1 Tim. 4. 4, 5; cf. Acts 10. 15.
j cf. Dan. 1. 8-16; cf. Matt. 23. 23.
k cf. Gal. 5. 13-15; cf. 1 Pet. 2. 16.
l cf. ver. 22.

one's neighbor. The commandments give us only the prohibition of these various forms of ill. Love owns the debt to all men and pays it. "The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit."

3. We have now another thing. We are "children of the light and of the day." We walk in the night and in the darkness, but the darkness is passing away. The hour of dawn is approaching. It is already time to be aroused out of sleep. Our salvation, final salvation of course, is getting ever nearer, but for us, already the light shines upon us. If it has not come for the world, for us it has come. We are in it in such sort that we should be reflecting it. Heaven is open to us, and the glory in the face of Christ already shines upon us. Practically to enjoy this is to manifest it and to manifest what we are. It is to put on the armor of light. Who is unaware of what a defence light is in itself in the midst of darkness? The evil deeds of men are done in the darkness. Light reproves them. How blessed to walk in the joy of that which manifests us for what we are, and which, by its presence in us, rebukes evil and breaks, as it were, the power of temptation; but we have, therefore, to put on the Lord Jesus Christ in a practical way. It is, in fact, but to sit in the sun and the sun will make its mark upon us; but that means the heart laid hold of and therefore no thought of provision for the flesh, which, with its lusts, belong to the darkness.

SUBD. 3.

We have now the settlement of questions which are not merely, as we may say, questions, but the settlement of which announces a principle which is of the utmost importance for us and for all with whom we walk. In our relationship to the Church, (for that is all that is spoken of here,) the question of conscience is one that has to be carefully considered. Conscience is individual to each one of us, but then that means that there are other consciences outside of ours, and which we have to regard. How important that we should know, both

that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not [m]judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest [n]another's servant? to his own lord he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be made to stand: for the Lord* is [o]able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one [p]day more than another; another esteemeth every day [alike]: let each be fully [q]assured in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord;† and he that eateth, eateth unto the Lord, for he giveth God [r]thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. For [s]none of us liveth to himself, and no one dieth to himself; for whether we [t]live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we [u]die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's.

* Some read, "God."

† Many add, "And he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it."

m *cf.* Col. 2. 16. *cf.* Gal. 2. 11-13.
n *cf.* Jas. 4. 11, 12. Matt. 7. 1. *cf.* 1 Cor. 10. 29.
o *cf.* ch. 16. 25. *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 9.
p *cf.* Gal. 4. 10.
q vers. 14, 23.
r 1 Tim. 4. 4.
s *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 19, 20.
t *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 13-15. *cf.* Gal. 2. 20. *cf.* 2 Sam. 15. 18-22.
u *cf.* Acts 20. 24. *cf.* Acts 21. 13. *cf.* Phil. 1. 20, 21.

for ourselves how to keep a good conscience, and how to help to maintain at the same time that in others which we realize for ourselves to be of first necessity!

1. What the apostle puts first, therefore, here, is that conscience must be before the Lord. He is the Governor of the conscience and He alone, but this means then, of course, that we are to permit other consciences to be before the Lord. We must leave each one, therefore, to his liberty in this. Nay, we must fear to be a conscience to any one, and thus, with whatever good intent, to take one away from being before God. What is here sought to be established first, therefore, is just that the only authority for the Christian is that of the Lord. A serious question for us all is how far this is real with us. How much human relationships come in and hinder! There is the relationship of children with parents; they are to obey their parents in all things. The wife with her husband, also. What is she to do when there is a conflict of judgment with regard to anything? Alas, the snare which may beset us here is a very real one. "Subject in all things" it is urged sometimes is put as without limit, but the moment we bring in God, there are conditions necessarily implied by the very fact that He is God; and so necessarily implied that they need not even be named. We need scarcely to be reminded of them. If a parent taught his child to steal, is the child to be "subject in all things"? There is a limit somewhere, as is clear. Where is the limit? It can be found nowhere except here, that the plain will of the Lord governs, whatever human will may clash with it. We are not to drift from that for the sake of company with others, or under any plea whatever of relationship to others. That which makes real all relationships, which gives its value to them all, is above them all. Relationship to God is the first relationship of all, and to be indifferent to this is to make all else valueless. In fact, it is really to undo all the bonds of society; all human relationship is violated if that to God be violated. Thus it is that if we have sinned against our neighbor, it is sin against God, and if we sin against God, it is necessarily against our neighbor.

Necessarily, the things in which one has to yield here, therefore, are things indifferent. That is what the apostle is speaking of, of meats and drinks and days. It is supposed that on both sides the authority of the Lord is owned. One cannot be really liberal in things that are not one's own. One can give up one's own liberty where it is simply a question of that, and not only we can, but we ought. The supposition here is of religious scruple entirely, not of people without conscience, but of conscience in fact rigidly governed by that which to them, whatever be the truth of it, is the will of the Lord. If a man eats, he

For to this end Christ died and lived, that he might be [v] Lord both of dead and living. But thou, why judgest thou thy brother? or again, thou, why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall [w] all stand before the judgment-seat of God.* For it is [x] written, [As] I live, saith [the] Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.

2 (13-23): The love of one's brother as a motive also.

2. Let us not therefore judge one another any more; but judge this rather, not to put a [y] stumblingblock or an occasion to fall† in a brother's way. I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that there is [z] nothing unclean in itself; except that to him that [a] accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. For if

v *cf.* Rev. 1. 17, 18. *cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 13-18.

w *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 10. *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 13-15. *cfr.* Rev. 20. 11, etc.

x Is. 45. 23. *cf.* Phil. 2. 10, 11.

y *cf.* Lk. 17. 1, 2. *cf.* 1 Cor. 8. 7-13. *cf.* 1 Cor. 10. 23. *cf.* Rev. 2. 14.

z vers. 2, 20. *cf.* Tit. 1. 15.

* A few read, "of Christ." † Literally, "fall trap."

a *cf.* 1 Cor. 10. 24-33; *cf.* ver. 23.

eats to the Lord, or if he eats not, it is still to the Lord; if he observes the day, he observes it to the Lord, or to the Lord he does not observe it. Here a question may be raised with regard to the Lord's Day. How does the principle here affect that? It would seem that it does not come into the question; just because the Lord's Day is given us not in the way of legal command, but as a privilege which must be accepted as privilege in order for the observance to be anything really acceptable to God,—not that it is supposed that a Christian could have a scruple religiously about observing the day in this case or on this ground. Religious scruples are the whole matter here and who could scruple to avail himself of the privilege of giving up a day to the Lord, a day free for him to be occupied with his own things, and in such a manner as we find Scripture before us? Question here, therefore, could scarcely be made. What the apostle has before him is, of course, as the meats and drinks show, the Jewish distinction of meats and days, which has passed away, but which, nevertheless, may have a real power over the minds of some who realize that these things were once given of God, and who do not see how He has brought us out of them. Here the principle applies which the apostle has stated elsewhere, that to those who were under the law he became as under the law, "*not being myself under the law*," as he carefully adds; "that I might gain those that are under the law." These are the questions, but the principle as we have said, the first principle here, is that the conscience is to be before the Lord alone; and that we are to leave every Christian free to act before God. We must not judge. The Lord will do that. "Every knee shall bow to Him and every tongue confess to God." It is of the first importance that in every question of conscience this should be maintained.

2. But there is another motive beside, that of duty to our brother. Our love to our brother is to be a motive. We are to consider what it means to put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in a brother's way. Let it be the lightest thing imaginable, the use of only meat to him unclean, yet our use of it may lead him into that which he has not faith for, and how could love possibly do this? A terrible thing it is to lead a person to act without conscience; that is, therefore, to sin against God. It is a thing which will necessarily have influence, if self-judgment do not come in, upon the whole character of his life and ways. We may be for ourselves doing that which is perfectly lawful to us, (in itself lawful,) and yet the question of a brother's conscience with regard to it cannot be ignored. We are not forced to eat or drink, because it is our privilege to do so. The Kingdom of God does not in its character consist of eating and drinking and such like things, but in "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." Here the one who is, while free in his inmost soul, a bond-

thy brother is [b]grieved on account of [thy] food, thou walkest no longer in love: destroy not with thy food him for whom Christ died. Let not then your [c]good be evil spoken of: for the [d]kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but [e]righteousness and [f]peace and [g]joy in the Holy Spirit. For he that in this is bond-servant to Christ is [h]well-pleasing to God and [i]approved of men. So then let us pursue the things that are for peace, and the things that are for [j]edification with regard to one another: do not for the sake of food throw down God's work. All things indeed are clean; but it is [k]evil to the man that eateth while stumbling.* It is good [l]not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor [to do] anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, [or is offended, or is weak.]† Hast thou faith? have it to [m]thyself before God. Happy is he who [n]judgeth not himself in that which he approveth. But he that [o]doubteth is condemned if he eat, because [he eateth] not of faith; but [p]whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

3 (xv. 1-7): For the glory of God.

3. Now we that are [q]strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of

b *cf.* 1 Cor. 8. 11.
c *ctr.* ch. 3. 8.
d *cf.* Gal. 4. 9-11. *cf.* Col. 2. 20-23.
e *cf.* ch. 8. 4, 10.
f *cf.* Phil. 2. 1-4.
g *cf.* Phil. 4. 4-7.
h *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 9.
i *cf.* Lk. 2. 52. *cf.* Acts 2. 47.
j ch. 15. 2. *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 11. *cf.* Eph. 4. 16.
k ver. 14.
l 1 Cor. 8. 13. 2 Cor. 6. 3. 1 Cor. 10. 33. *cf.* Acts 16. 1-3.
m *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 13. ver. 5.
n *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 21. *cf.* 2 Tim. 1. 5.

* Or, "through the offence (given)." † Some MSS. omit.

o ver. 2; *cf.* Jas. 1. 6-8. p *cf.* Heb. 11. 6. q *cf.* Gal. 6. 1.

servant to Christ,—(the apostle puts the strongest term)—will not allow the freedom that he really has to prevent him forgetting that he is bound in every way to use his freedom to glorify Christ with it; this man is "well pleasing to God and approved of men." We are to pursue, therefore, the things that are for peace, and the things that are for edification with regard to others. Think of destroying God's work in another for the sake of a piece of meat; for while the things themselves may be clean, it still is evil to the man who eats while he stumbles over it. "It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth or is offended or is weak." You may say, you have faith. Well, he says, but faith is after all the lowliest of things. Faith is realized dependence, is it not? Act in it in lowliness, "Have it to thyself before God;" and remember that, "Happy is he who does not bring judgment upon himself in that which he approveth;" but this is the very thing that the doubter does. He is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; "for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." How important is this principle, and in how wide a sphere! How important it is that we should so act in every case as not to induce the weakest or those nearest to us,—where our conduct is apt to have the strongest weight,—to walk without God! It will be no excuse for them before Him, to say that they have followed us. God's will is not so far to seek and not so hard to be understood as to allow of excuse here on the part of any, but the point is clearly especially for the strong, that they are not, by their strength, really to force others into paths, which, because doubtful to them, are necessarily wrong, even though the path looked at in itself may be a right one.

3. There is another principle which comes in here, though it be understood, as we may say, all the way through. We are here for the glory of God. "We that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for that which is good to edification;" not, therefore, as seeking to please him merely, but with a careful estimate of what will be blessing for him. As for pleasing ourselves in such things, "Christ pleased not Himself." He who was for God in the world always, who gave

us [r]please his neighbor for that which is good to edification. For [s]Christ also pleased not himself, but as it is [t]written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. For [u]whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our instruction, that through [v]endurance and through [w]comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope. Now the God of endurance and of comfort give you to be [x]likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus; that ye may with one accord, with one mouth, [y]glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore [z]receive ye one another even [a]as Christ also received you, to the [b]glory of God.

r *cf.* Phil. 2. 4.
cf. Phile. 7.
s *cf.* Matt. 17. 27.
cf. Lk. 9. 51.
cf. Phil. 2. 5-8.
t Ps. 69. 9.
cf. 1 Pet. 2. 23.
u 2 Tim. 3. 16.
cf. 2 Pet. 1. 19.
cf. 1 Cor. 10. 11.
v *cf.* ch. 5. 3.
w *cf.* Ps. 119. 50.
cf. Jas. 5. 7-11.

11. *x cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 10; Phil. 1. 27. *y cf.* 1 Cor. 10. 31; *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 11. *z cf.* ch. 16. 2; *cf.* Phil. 2. 29; *cf.* 2 Jno. 10, 11; ch. 14. 1. *a cf.* Lk. 7. 36-50 with 1 Jno. 1. 9. *cf.* Lk. 5. 27, 28; *ctr.* Lk. 18. 18-30. *b cf.* Ex. 12. 43-48; *cf.* Num. 9. 9-14; *cf.* Num. 19. 11-22.

Himself no margin, desired none, because His law was in His heart,—"Christ pleased not Himself," but "the reproaches of them that reproached Thee," He says, "fell on Me." These things are, it is plain, then, principles of the highest importance for the Christian, and the Scriptures lead us in paths which are not merely right, but which have in them the blessing and the joy which go with the right, for in this way God is the God of endurance and of comfort. The comfort is to enable to endure, and it is abundant for this. It is thus He would make us "likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus," in order that we may, "with one accord, with one mouth, glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here, then, is that which finally governs all. We are to "receive one another (it is plain from the beginning in what sense he means this) even as Christ received us, to the glory of God." The principle, of course, we may use as widely as it will carry us, but we must remember what the apostle is about when he is speaking so. He is simply enjoining the reception of one another without regard to these things which are indifferent in themselves. Here he can urge the glory of God as to be maintained by that which, in such cases ignores this difference.

Subd. 4.

There follows now what in some sense is supplementary to the whole epistle while it is, no doubt, in special relationship to those questions which we have just had discussed, and which are clearly such as would be most likely to affect the harmony of a mixed assembly of Jews and Gentiles, as that at Rome perhaps in an especial manner was. It reminds them of what the Old Testament had declared as to the acceptance of the Gentiles, an object for which, while minister of the circumcision to confirm the promises made to the fathers, Christ had no less wrought. And this leads the apostle into a brief reference to his own labors to the same end, as the apostle of the Gentiles, and to declare once more his unfeigned desire to see the saints at Rome, of which he had spoken at the beginning of the epistle. It is a human appeal which could not fail to have from one like Paul its moral effect in the same direction as what precedes it. At the same time, the comparative slightness of treatment, compared, for instance, with his defence of his ministry in the epistle to the Galatians, answers to its supplementary place here as compared with its foremost one in that which is distinctly controversial.

1. He owns the place that Christ primarily occupied as minister of the circumcision for the truth of God. It was in this character that Israel rejected Him, although the testimony as to it did not end with the Cross, but was continued in that of the Spirit afterward. But the promises which He thus confirmed themselves contemplated the blessing of the nations, and the apostles were distinctly commissioned to bear witness to Him in the whole world. The

SUBDIVISION 4. (Chap. xv. 8–33.)

The human appeal and apology of the apostle of the Gentiles.

1 (8-13): Christ's ministry having in view the whole world.

1. FOR I say that* Christ became [c]minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises of the fathers; and that the [d]nations might glorify God for [his] mercy; according as it is [e]written, For this cause will I confess to thee among the nations,† and sing unto thy Name. And [f]again he saith, Rejoice, ye nations,† with his people. And [g]again, Praise the Lord, all ye nations,† and laud‡ him, all ye peoples. And [h]again, Esaias saith, There shall be the Root of Jesse, and he that ariseth to rule over the nations; † in him shall the nations† hope. Now the [i]God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope in the [j]power of the Holy Spirit.

2 (14-33): Paul's own ministry.

2. And I myself also am [k]persuaded of you, my brethren, that yourselves also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to [l]admonish one another. But I

c ch. 1. 3. Matt. 2. 2. *cf.* Jno. 19. 15, 19-22.
d *cf.* Matt. 15. 21-28. *cf.* ch. 3. 29, 30.
e Ps. 18. 49. *cf.* Ps. 22. 27.
f Deut. 32. 43.
g Ps. 117. 1.
h Is. 11. 10. *cf.* Acts 15. 14-18.
i *cf.* ver. 5. *cf.* Heb. 13. 20.
j *cf.* ch. 5. 5.
k *cf.* 2 Thes. 3. 4. *cf.* Gal. 5. 10. *cf.* Heb. 6. 9, etc.
l *cf.* Heb. 10. 25. *cf.* 2 Thess. 3. 15.

* Some put in "Jesus" here before Christ; and a few put it after.
† Or, "Gentiles."
‡ Some of the earliest MSS. have, "and let all the peoples laud him."

psalmist had joined with the prophets and with Israel's own law-giver, as the quotations show here, in expanding these promises in fuller and more definite statements. There could, of course, be in these no announcement of the Church, the body of Christ, which was a secret hid in God till Israel refused the grace which had first of all been offered to her; but of this the apostle is not here speaking, nor is the doctrine of it in the epistle at all. The nations were to rejoice with His special people, and the root of Jesse to be their Ruler and confidence. The branches of the wild olive were, in fact, being grafted into Israel's olive-tree, though this did not mean the relinquishment on God's part of promises which were to be fulfilled to the nation in due time. The Old Testament bore witness that God had the Gentiles in remembrance; Israel's blindness in part might change the character of things for the time being, it being impossible to recognize them in this blindness of unbelief. Gentiles and Jews would thus of necessity be brought together in a way beyond that which the prophets contemplated; but this was almost necessarily the result of the Jews' own exceptional position through their sin. God's purpose of blessing to the Gentiles could not wait for this.

The apostle does not enter into all this, but it is in the strict line of his argument and easily to be understood. It was better left, perhaps, to be worked out by themselves. He closes this with an earnest prayer in behalf of the Roman saints. In the revelation God had made of Himself, whether to the disheartened adherents of the dying paganism, or to the remnant of Israel disappointed of their national expectations, He had indeed approved Himself as the God of hope. In the realization of the blessings which were now become their own, they could afford to bury their dead past, and forget it. He prays that they may be filled with all joy and peace in believing, so as to abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. How good to make full proof of the possibilities that are in our hands! and how do we possess ourselves of what is our possession! This is for a lamentation, and must be for a lamentation.

2. Paul speaks out the confidence of his heart in these Roman brethren whom as yet he had not seen. He credits them in the frankness of Christian love with the due moral effect of their faith, and with the enlightenment proceeding from

have written to you, brethren,* the more boldly in part, as [m]putting you in mind because of the grace given me from God, that I should be a [n]minister of Christ Jesus† unto the nations, ministering in priestly service the gospel of God, that the [o]offering of the nations might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.‡ I [p]have therefore my§ glorying in Christ Jesus in things pertaining to God, for I will not dare to speak anything of the things which Christ has [q]not wrought by me for the obedience of the nations, by word and deed, in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Holy Spirit; so that [r]from Jerusalem and in a circuit round unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ; being jealous‖ so to preach the gospel, [s]not where Christ was named, that I might not 'build upon another's foundation; but according as it is [t]written, They shall see, to whom no tidings concerning him had come; and they who have not heard shall understand. Wherefore also I was [u]hindered these many times from coming to you; but now, having no longer [v]place in these regions, and a [w]longing these many years to come to you whenever I take my journey into Spain,¶ I hope as I pass through to get sight of you, and by you to be [x]set forward thither, if first in measure I be [y]satisfied with your company. But now

* Some omit "brethren." † Many read, "Jesus Christ."
‡ Some read, "Spirit of God." § That is, "ground for glorying."
‖ The same word as in 2 Cor. v. 9, which might be rendered, "making it a point of honor." ¶ Some insert, "I will come to you."

m 1 Jno. 2. 21. 2 Pet. 3.1,2.
n cf. ch. 11. 13. cf. Gal.2.7-10. cf.Eph.3.8.
o cf.Is.66.20. cf. Num.8. 5-16.
p cf. 2 Cor. 11. 16, etc.
q cf.Acts 15. 12. cf.2 Cor.12. 1, 11.
r cf.Acts 22. 17-21. cf. Acts 26. 17-20.
s cf.Acts 16. 6-10, etc.
t cf. 1 Cor. 3. 10. cf.2 Cor.10. 13-18.
u Is. 52. 15. cf. Acts 13. 46, 47.
v ch. 1. 13. cf. Acts 16. 6, 7. cf. 1 Thess. 2. 18.
w cf. Acts 20. 1.
x cf.Acts 19. 21, 22. cf. Acts 23. 11. ch. 1.10, 11.
y cf.Acts 15. 3. cf. 3 John 6, 7; cf. Tit. 3. 13. z cf. Acts 28. 30, 31.

it. But he had written to them in the boldness belonging to his position as apostle of the Gentiles, a position the gift of God's grace alone, to put them in mind of all that was their own. The ministration of the gospel of God was for him in the fruit God gave him of it, a priestly service which presented the Gentiles in whom the Spirit wrought as a sanctified and acceptable offering to Him. The words, in their perfect simplicity and intelligibility, yield no cover to the ritualistic confusion which confounds ministry with priesthood — approach to God with the message of peace and reconciliation for men. Paul does not stand between the Gentiles and God, to offer anything to Him on their behalf, who in the place which Christianity had given them were themselves all a holy priesthood (1 Pet. ii. 5), all in equal nearness to Him, through the grace that had brought them nigh. But it was themselves, as the fruit of the work in them of which God had made him the instrument, who became thus an offering—his offering—to God. Thus he had matter of glorying through grace in what God had done through him to make the Gentiles obedient in faith to Christ, God also accompanying his word with signs and wonders, in demonstration of whose work in fact this work of his was. He had not been slothful or negligent either in this joyful work, but from Jerusalem in a wide circuit to Illyricum, he had fully preached the gospel of Christ.

Here he explains to them what had hindered him, with all this activity, from coming to a place so central and important as Rome was. It had been, he says, his earnest desire to follow the Scripture principle, to bring those to see who had yet had no tidings brought to them, and those understand who never yet had heard. Rome, therefore, with its assembly already gathered, could not

I am going to Jerusalem to [a]minister to the saints. For it hath pleased [b]Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem. It hath pleased them indeed, and [c]debtors of theirs they are: for if the nations have been made [d]partakers of their spiritual things, they are debtors to minister unto them in carnal things. Having completed this therefore, and sealed to them this fruit, I shall [e]set off, by * you to Spain. And I am conscious that when I come to you, I shall come in the [f]fulness of the blessing of Christ. Now I beseech you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your [g]prayers to God for me, that I may be [h]delivered from the disobedient in Judea, and my ministry that is for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, that I may come to you with [i]joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed. Now the [j]God of peace be with you all. Amen.

a cf. Acts 24. 17.
b 1 Cor. 16. 1-4. 2 Cor. 8. 1-8. 2 Cor. 9. 2-15.
c cf. 1 Cor. 9. 11. cf. Gal. 2. 10. cf. Acts 11. 29, 30.
d cf. Jno. 4. 22. cf. Acts 8. 14-17.
e cf. Prov. 16. 9. cf. Phil. 1. 12-20.
f cf. ch. 1, 11. cf. Eph. 3. 8, 19.
g 1 Thess. 5. 25. Eph. 6. 18, 19. Heb. 13. 18, 19.
h cf. Acts 21. 28-35 with Acts 23. 12-35.

* δι' ὑμῶν, "by your aid" perhaps.

cf. 2 Thess. 3. 1, 2. i ctr. 2 Cor. 12. 20, 21; cf. 2 Jno. 4; cf. 3 Jno. 4; cf. Philem. 20. j ch. 16. 20; cf. ver. 13.

claim him in view of the unoccupied places round. But now he found no more room, as he counted this, in the regions where he had been, and there was the far western country of Spain beckoning him by its need. Here would be his opportunity to visit by the way those whom he had long desired to see. This he contemplated therefore, but not immediately; for now Jerusalem claimed him, for the ministry of the contribution of the Gentiles to the need of those in whose spiritual blessings they had been made partakers. After this, Rome would come next, on his way to Spain. We have learned elsewhere how differently this was to be fulfilled to him from the way in which he now imagined. The fear of something, however, that might come to him at the hands of the disobedient in Judea, he frankly confesses, asking their prayers for his deliverance, and the accomplishment of his purpose as he had declared it to them. It is at least probable that he may have, after all, gone on to Spain; but there is no Scripture account of it, and no real certainty. There was, as we know, a long and unwilling delay, and years in a Roman prison, whether in Judea or at Rome. Our prayers are often answered in ways we know not, and so it was in this case as to the apostle himself; but who shall say that they were *not* answered? or that they were not answered in a way better in the sight of God—better for the gospel itself, than had all taken place according to his thought? Nor would this be irreconcilable with a certain effect of his own failure at this time to interpret aright his Lord's mind for him. We need not go into this here, but the mistakes of those most earnest and devoted may have, just in this very way, the most important lessons for us. We are to follow no merely human leader without personal exercise, and a grave, wise reserve which the apostle here would be the first to press upon us; "Be ye followers of me," he could say indeed, but not without the reservation implied, if not directly stated, "even as I also am of Christ." How beautiful the prayer with which he closes here,—the more as we think upon the difficulties of the way for him whose the the prayer was,—"the God of peace be with you all."

SUBD. 5.

There is no other epistle in which are found so many salutations as in this to the Romans. The wayfarer's epistle, Colossians, comes next, the naturalness

SUBDIVISION 5. (Chap. xvi.)

The close in salutations and warning.

1 (1-16): Individual recognitions.

1. I [k]COMMEND unto you Phœbe our sister, who is a minister* of the assembly which is in Cenchrea; that ye receive her in the Lord in a way [l]worthy of saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever she may have need of you, for she has been also a [m]helper of many, and of myself. Salute [n]Prisca and Aquila, my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus, (who for my life hazarded their own neck; to whom not I alone give thanks, but all the assemblies of the Gentiles;) the [o]assembly also which is in their house. Salute Epænetus, my beloved, who is the [p]firstfruits of Asia† for Christ. Salute Mary, who [q]labored much for you. Salute Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and [r]fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles; who also were in Christ [s]before me. Salute Ampliatus, my [t]beloved in the Lord. Salute Urbanus our [u]fellow-worker in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. Salute Apelles, [v]approved in Christ. Salute those of Aristobulus' [w]household.] Salute Herodion my kinsman. Salute those who are of Narcissus' [household,] who are in the Lord. Salute Tryphæna and Tryphosa, who [x]labor in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, who labored [y]much in the Lord. Salute Rufus, [z]chosen in the Lord; and his mother and [a]mine. Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brethren with them. Salute Philologus, and Julias, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints with them. Salute one another with a [b]holy kiss. [c]All the assemblies of Christ salute you.

* "Servant," not necessarily official.

† Some read, "Achaia."

a cf. Tit. 2. 3, 4; *cf.* ver. 2. *b* 1 Cor. 16. 20; 2 Cor. 13. 12; 1 Thess. 5. 26; 1 Pet. 5. 14; *ctr.* Prov. 26. 23; *ctr.* Ruth. 1. 14. *c cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 13; *cf.* 1 Cor. 10. 16, 17; *cf.* 1 Cor. 7. 17.

k cf. 2 Cor. 3. 1-3. *cf.* Acts 18. 27. *cf.* Phil. 2. 29, 30.
l cf. Eph. 5. 3. *cf.* Phil. 1. 27. *cf.* 3 Jno. 6.
m cf. Acts 16. 15. *cf.* ver. 23. *cf.* 1 Tim. 5. 10.
n Acts 18. 2, 18, 26. 1 Cor. 16. 19. 2 Tim. 4. 19.
o cf. Col. 4. 15. *cf.* Philem. 2. *cf.* Matt. 18. 20.
p cf. 1 Cor. 16. 15.
q cf. ver. 12. *cf.* Phil. 4. 3.
r cf. Acts 16. 24, 25. *cf.* Col. 4. 10. *cf.* Philem. 23.
s cf. 1 Cor. 15. 8.
t cf. Phil. 4. 1. *cf.* Acts 15. 25, 26.
u cf. Col. 4. 7.
v cf. ch. 12. 2. *cf.* 3 Jno. 12.
w cf. 1 Cor. 1. 11, 16. *cf.* Acts 16. 15, 31-34.
x cf. 1 Cor. 15. 58.
y cf. Phil. 2. 29, 30.
z cf. Mk. 15. 21. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 13.

of which we seem to recognize. In Galatians there are none; the controversy cuts off the possibility of the free interchange of human affection, where Christ Himself was now in question. In Romans as yet no controversy has arisen, and the fellowship in Christ has no restraint upon its expression. There are, of course, also, such links as might be expected with the continually shifting population of the imperial city. Could we examine more deeply, we should find, no doubt, that this is not a haphazard collection of names and memories, but that God has so ordered all as to give us instruction from every detail and name recorded. At present we cannot do this; but abundance in the way of proof we have surely had to make it a conviction that He, whose work all Scripture is, has left no part without the perfect elaboration which every thing has to which He has put His hand.

1. First, we have those enumerated whom the apostle thinks worthy of personal recognition, where any special service to the Lord has, as might be expected, its special notice. The claims of kindred, however, are not forgotten, where the higher link created by the Spirit renews and exalts it to an eternal value. But there are others whose names to us are as yet names only,—ciphers to which their connection with Christ gives all the interest; some again whose

2 (17-20): Against the causers of divisions.

2. Now I beseech you, brethren, mark those who [d] create divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned, and [e] turn away from them. For they that are such [f] serve not our Lord* Christ, but their own belly, and by [g] kind and fair speech deceive the hearts of the guileless. For your [h] obedience hath come abroad unto all. I rejoice therefore with regard to you: but I would have you [i] wise as to that which is good, and simple as to that which is evil. But the God of peace shall [j] bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The [k] grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

3 (21-24): Outflow of heart in salutation.

3. [l] Timotheus my fellow-worker, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you. I Tertius, who [m] wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord. Gaius, my [n] host, and of the whole assembly, saluteth you. Erastus, the steward of the city, saluteth you, and Quartus the brother. The [o] grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

d 1 Cor. 1. 11, 12. 1 Cor. 3. 3. 1 Cor. 11. 18–20.
e *cf.* Tit. 3. 10, 11. *cf.* 2 Thess. 3. 6.
f *cf.* Phil. 3. 19.
g *cf.* 2 Cor. 11. 13.
h *cf.* Col. 2. 4. *cf.* 2 Pet. 2. 3.
i *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 9.
j *cf.* Matt. 10. 16. *cf.* Phil. 4. 8, 9.
k *cf.* Gen. 3. 15. *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 11–14.
l 2 Cor. 13. 14, etc.
m 1 Tim. 1. 1, 2, etc. Acts 16. 1. Acts 18. 5. Acts 20. 4. *cf.* 1 Cor. 16. 21; *cf.* Col. 4. 18; *ctr.* Gal. 6. 11.
n 1 Cor. 1. 14; Acts 19. 29; Acts 20. 4; 3 Jno. 1.
o ch. 15. 33; ver. 20.

* A few MSS. insert "Jesus."

names are unknown altogether; simply they belonged to such or such a household: all these have undoubtedly just their fit place and mention; but we cannot demonstrate it: how much we have need in every sphere of faith, where our business is to turn it little by little into experimental knowledge. What precious conquests of now well-nigh barren tracts await those who will lay claim, boldly, however humbly, to their large and good land, which unbelief persistently belittles while it looks at it from afar off with its reversed telescope!*

2. Already the apostle has to warn these Roman saints, however, against those who, whether in their midst as yet or not, were certainly at work to bring in divisions and occasions of stumbling amongst those united by the Spirit into one fellowship of love and mutual service. The things warned against were contrary to the doctrine they had learned, whether or not they involved in themselves the introduction of error. But this would be apt to be the case; for there is nothing more ready to come in upon the adoption of carnal ways than perversions of doctrine to cover, if not to justify them. If a man craves the world, is he likely to take honestly the texts that speak of the Christian in his relation to it? As the epistle to the Ephesians reminds us, the eyes are in the heart (i. 18, R. V.); and with an eye that is not single, darkness comes upon the soul; and those self-deceived will become the deceivers of others. The saints are here bidden to mark and turn away from such; which may intimate that the apostle is speaking here of things not come to maturity, or what as yet did not call for or was not ripe for assembly action. But Christ was not served or honored in their ways, but self, whose cravings led them on, and characterized them, for discerning eyes, by the beggar's badge they wore; none the less that they had

* Phœbe means "radiant." "Minister" is *diaconos*, "deacon," but the word is now used too restrictedly. It is, in fact, one of the terms of widest application in this way, as may be seen by comparing some of the passages in which we find it: as chap. xiii. 4; xv. 8; 1 Cor. iii. 6; Eph. iii. 7, etc. Prisca means "ancient, venerable;" Aquila, "eagle" (see Notes, p. 121); Epænetus, "worthy of praise;" Mary, "exalted;" Andronicus, "victory of (or over?) men;" Junias (?); Ampliatus, "enlarged;" Urbanus, "man of the city;" Stachys, "ear of corn, plant, scion;" Apelles, "plain (?)"; Aristobulus, "best counselor;" Herodion, (?); Narcissus, "stupefying;" Tryphæna, "delicate (?)"; Tryphosa, "broken off (?)"; Persis, "Persian," or "destruction;" Rufus, "red;" Asyncritus, "incomparable;" Phlegon, "burning;" Hermes, Hermas, "gain (?)"; Patrobas, "a father's step;" Philologus, "fond of learning" or "of argument;" Julia, "of the wheat-sheaf;" Nereus, Olympas, of doubtful signification.

¶ (25-27): Frailty in man, and mercy in God.

4. Now* to Him who is able to [p]establish you according to [s]my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the [r]mystery, through the age-times† kept in silence, but now manifested, and by [s]prophetic scriptures, according to the commandment of the eternal [t]God, made known unto all [u]nations for the [v]obedience of faith, to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, [w]to whom be [x]glory throughout the ages. Amen.

p ch. 1. 11. 1 Pet. 5. 10. cf. Eph. 4. 14, 15.
q ch. 2. 16. cf. 2 Tim. 2. 8. cf. 1 Cor. 15. 1-4. cf. 2 Cor. 4. 1-6. cf. Eph. 1. 13. cf. Eph. 6. 19. cf. 1 Thess. 1. 5-10.
r 1 Cor. 2. 1. cf. Eph. 3. 3-11; cf. Col. 1. 26, 27; cf. Col. 2. 2, 3; cf. Col. 4. 3.
s cf. 2 Pet. 3. 15, 16 with 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17.
t cf. Col. 1. 6.
u cf. ch. 1. 5.
v ch. 11. 33-36; cf. Eph. 3. 20, 21.

* Some omit these closing verses; some put them at the end of chap. xiv.; a few, in both places.
† Or perhaps more literally, "in eternal ages."

the beggar's wheedling tone, and smooth hypocrisy, calculated to deceive, and which would deceive the unwary. With the Roman Christians there was indeed, as had come abroad and was well known, a readiness of obedience which it gave the apostle joy to recognize; but he would have them wise in it with regard to good, while as to evil simple in rejecting it, without over-occupation with that in which the power of the enemy works to ensnare the mind. The ordinance as to cleansing by the ashes of the heifer has here great practical value for us. Even the clean person, cleansing another with it, became himself unclean until the evening (Num. xix. 21). But there is happy assurance for us: "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." Peace is what is in God's heart for men; though He who came with the message of it had, because of what the world was, in the meanwhile to bring, not peace, but a sword. The work which wrought it as before God insured the casting out of the enemy; which, if it yet lingers, will have full accomplishment. Even now there are anticipations of it, and victories that presage the end.

3. There follow salutations from those with the apostle, in which the Christian heart, prompted by no special links or remembrances, save only the link of the common Christianity, flows out to those in whom it recognizes this all-sufficient relationship. The name of Tertius as the writer of the epistle shows the general custom of the apostle, most probably from some physical infirmity, such as he elsewhere refers to (2 Cor. xii. 7; Gal iv. 14, 15), to employ another person to act for him in that capacity; while a salutation from his own hand (2 Thess. iii. 17) was the token of genuineness in each epistle.*

4. The epistle ends with an ascription of praise to God as able to establish them according to Paul's gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ,—according (that is) to the revelation of the mystery hid through the dispensations hitherto, now made known, and by scriptures of prophetic character published to all nations for the obedience of faith. This in its full extent the apostle does not give in Romans. The epistle states the partial blinding of Israel to be a part of it, and with this would be the grafting of Gentile branches on Israel's olive-tree, in full equality with Jews. The body is referred to, but not necessarily as the body of Christ; but in the first epistle to the Corinthians we have the Church both as this, and as the temple of God; though Ephesians and Colossians are needed to complete the revelation. With the fully proved frailty of man, however, even of the saint, only God could be counted on to maintain His people at the height of this. The ages of silence were days of preparation for the full announcement of that in which God's wisdom as well as grace is so wondrously declared. Man had to be shown in them in his true condition, that that grace might remain man's only hope and boast. To Him alone wise will be the glory through Jesus Christ throughout the ages of eternity. Amen.

* The names here are Timotheus, "one that honors God;" Lucius, "luminous;" Jason, "healer;" Sosipater, "preserver of his father;" Tertius, "third;" Gaius, "of earth;" Erastus, "loveable;" Quartus, "fourth."

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF GALATIANS

GALATIANS is in character a controversy. In effect it is a buttress to the foundation truths of Romans, yet not stopping where Romans does, but carrying the truth of Christian position further. In Romans we have the man "in Christ," "dead to sin," "dead to the law." In Galatians we have the further truth that he is "crucified to the world," and a "new creation." New creation has been, indeed, implied in Romans, as we have seen through all the latter part, but we have only had at present Christ as the Head of it. Now we have it actually named. "In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation."

The controversial character accounts for the historical development which we find so much in Galatians, and for the place in which we find the history. In Romans, for instance, we have the apostle referring to Christ as "Minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers," but also "that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy," and he refers to his own ministry to the Gentiles; but there is no development of all this, nor is it needed, and it comes rather as an appendix to the epistle itself, than as forming any proper part of it. On the other hand, in Galatians, we begin with history,—a history of his own ministry, in which the source and channel of his apostleship and his absolute independence of those who were apostles before him are made apparent. He owes nothing to them. He has from them only a confirmation of the gospel which he preached before, and, in Peter's case, finds it in what, in a certain way, is opposition, although this is a matter of weakness on the part of the Jewish apostle and not of deliberate opposition. All this comes at the beginning necessarily, because the question made of his teaching goes on to question of his ministry altogether, and in order that he may be listened to, he has to put this upon the most positive ground. This occupies the first two chapters. We have then what is more doctrinal, the contrast between faith and law, but even here the argument is in method historical. We have, for instance, the priority of God's promise to Abraham and of the principle of faith established in it as 430 years before the law; with the consequence of this that the law could add nothing, coming where it does, to the unconditional promise. The opposition of principle is also given to us, its attitude toward man such

that Christ has to bear the curse for him in order that the blessing promised him may come. If the law comes so late, also, there is seen in this very thing that it is not other than, as the apostle has already said in Romans, a thing coming in by the way. God has not put the whole world under the school-master, nor men at all from the beginning of the world. It was added "for the sake of transgressions," as the verse really says; that is, to *have* them; not to have *sin*, but, as we have seen already, to turn sin into transgression, so to make it manifest, and in its exceeding sinfulness as against the authority of God Himself. Thus, of necessity, we find the limit of the law also, when God takes up openly faith as His principle; the purpose for which the law came, (that is, to shut man up to faith,) is accomplished, and we are no longer under a school-master.

In the third place, the apostle dwells upon that which is the characteristic of Christianity now, and which the law never gave, the Spirit of adoption, by which we cry, "Abba Father." The law brought distance. Here is nearness of the most endeared kind, and he can bring the law itself as typically, but none the less really, teaching the bringing forth to bondage which characterized the children of law, the seed according to the flesh; in contrast with the freedom of those who are children of the free woman and themselves free. Here too is history: even the gift of the Spirit is that; especially as marked openly by the signs which we know accompanied this, public as they were; and so the story of Abraham's children, however much the use of this is allegorical.

This mode of argument is strikingly different from Romans, where the appeal is rather to the conscience. History, as God's writing broadly on the face of the world, is evidently more adapted to the conviction of the Galatians, now giving up so much of what He had witnessed to their consciences, and who are made to face a witness which they cannot gainsay or mistake. The arrangement of every detail here is nothing short of divine; and they must face God about it.

Finally, we have in Galatians, the practical test as to the working of the two principles in opposition—law and grace. The Galatians themselves are a sample of it. They had found in the gospel a happiness which made them ready to give their very eyes to the man who had ministered it to them. Now they have taken up the law to perfect according to the flesh what had been begun in the power of the Spirit: as a consequence they were biting and devouring one another. The effect of law was being made manifest. He closes with the declaration of the perfect rule for a Christian, the man in Christ, as belonging to

the new creation, neither to walk, therefore, as the Gentile, in lawlessness, nor in legality, as the Jew. His whole standpoint, as shown in the unique character of the gospel which he brings, is outside the world, outside, therefore, all that to which the law applied. The veil is rent and Christ in heaven is once more seen as both the rule and power of the new activity.

The divisions are, therefore:

1. (Chaps. i. and ii.) Paul's gospel as unique in source and power.
2. (Chap. iii.) The contrast of law with faith.
3. (Chaps. iv.–v. 6.) The meaning of the Spirit of adoption having come.
4. (Chaps. v. 7–vi. 18.) The practical test.

THE EPISTLE TO THE
GALATIANS

DIVISION 1. (Chaps. i., ii.)

Paul's Gospel unique in Source and Power.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. i.)

His entire independence of man in it.

1 (1-5): An apostle not from men, nor through man, but from God alone.

1. PAUL, an apostle, not from [a]men, nor through man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who [b]raised him from among the dead, and all the [c]brethren with me, to the [d]assemblies of Galatia: [e]grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, who [f]gave himself for our sins, that he might [g]deliver us from the present evil age, according to the [h]will of our God and Father: to whom be [i]glory throughout the ages of ages: Amen.

[a] *ctr.* Jer. 14. 14. *cf.* Jer. 1. 9. *cf.* Acts 1. 15, etc.
[b] *cf.* Rom. 1. 4, 5. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 4, 8-12.
[c] *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 1. *cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 1. *cf.* Acts 15. 22, 23.
[d] 1 Cor. 16. 1. *cf.* Acts 16. 6.
[e] 1 Cor. 1. 3, etc.
[f] ch. 2. 20. 1 Cor. 15. 3. 1 Pet. 2. 24.
[g] *cf.* ch. 6. 14. *cf.* Rom. 12. 2. *cf.* Col. 2. 20.
[h] *cf.* Jno. 6. 38-40. *cf.* Jno. 10. 28-30. *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 15-17.
[i] Phil. 4. 20. Eph. 3. 20, 21.

NOTES.

DIV. 1.

THE Galatians show us, in a pregnant example, how little man can be trusted to hold the blessing that he has. If, in fact, its continuance to him depended upon this, how hopeless would be the case; but our blessings are in Christ, held fast there by divine grace for us, and thus it is alone that they could avail us.

The Galatians had received the gospel with joy and thankfulness, yet now seemed ready to surrender it, no doubt without proper realization that they were doing so. They were simply adding the law to it, but, as the apostle shows them, this would be, in fact, to surrender it altogether. He writes with earnestness as always, but with a sharpness which was not characteristic of him. He salutes no one in the letter. He starts at once with his theme, wishing them, indeed, "grace and peace from God the Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ," but not even addressing them as the church of God, but simply as the "churches" (or assemblies) "of Galatia." He is, as he says, "in doubt about them." He has "to travail in birth again until Christ be formed" in them. Thus, they are for him assemblies which have afresh to prove their right to be called Christian assemblies. Their doctrinal wanderings he treats more seriously than that moral evil which we find at Corinth, and which strikes men naturally as being of a far worse character; but without the gospel, morality cannot maintain itself, and in the doctrine of Christ is the root of all morality. Thus he is as strong and peremptory as possible, pronouncing a curse upon himself or an angel from heaven, if it were possible for such to preach any different gospel from that he had preached to them.

1. He begins at once declaring the unique character of his ministry. He affirms his apostleship in the fullest manner, as "not of men," (derived from them as its source,) "nor through man" as the channel of its conveyance; but alone "through Jesus Christ, and God the Father who raised Him from the dead." He is sent by the risen Christ, as we know, and not simply by Christ risen, but by One whom he sees for the first time in the glory of God in heaven. This charac-

2 (6-10): A different gospel, not another.

2. I marvel that ye are thus quickly [j]changing from him who called you in the power of the grace of Christ, unto a different* gospel, which is [k]not another:* only there are some who are [l]troubling you, and would [m]pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we or an [n]angel from heaven preach† unto you any other gospel than that we have preached† unto you, let him be [o]anathema. As we have said before, so now I say again, If any man preacheth† unto you any other gospel than that ye did [p]receive, let him be anathema. For do I now make‡ friends of men, or God? or am I seeking to [q]please men? If I were yet pleasing men, I should not be the [r]bondman of Christ.

3 (11, 12): The preaching of a revelation.

3. For I declare to you, brethren, regarding the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not according to man. For I neither [s]received it from man, nor was I taught it, but by the [t]revelation of Jesus Christ.

* These are two words in the original. † Literally, "evangelize." ‡ Literally, "persuade," or "satisfy."

j cf. Ex. 32. 7, 8. *cf.* Judg. 2. 17. *cf.* Hos. 6. 4. *cf.* ch. 5. 7.
k cf. Jno. 10. 7-15. *cf.* Acts 4. 12.
l cf. ch. 5. 10, 12. *cf.* Gen. 26. 15. *cf.* Acts 15. 24. *cf.* Tit. 1. 10, 11.
m cf. Matt. 13. 33. *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 17. *cf.* 2 Cor. 11. 13, 14.
n cf. 1 Ki. 13. 18. *cf.* Rom. 8. 38.
o 1 Cor. 16. 22.
p cf. ch. 3. 1-5 with ch. 5. 10.
q 1 Thess. 2. 4; *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 4, 5.
r cf. Rom. 1. 1 with Jonah 3. 2.
s 1 Cor. 11. 23; 1 Cor. 15. 3; *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 2.
t ver. 16; Acts 9. 3-5, 17-20.

ter of his ministry marks his whole teaching here. He adds as confirmation of what he is saying, that all the brethren are with him in what he writes. This defection of the Galatians was, as he will show more perfectly, in fact, from the faith held by all. He adds that "Christ gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father." The age, as we have seen, is the *time*-world, characterized by its opposition to God. The true Prince of the world has been crucified and cast out; the "god of this age" is Satan, but we are thus at once outside the world, —outside the whole region to which the law applies, as is evident. The Father's will is our deliverance from it.

2. He begins at once, his heart full, to express his wonderment, knowing what he had known of how divine grace had wrought in them, that they were so soon being removed from Him who had called them unto the grace of Christ, to a different gospel. They had had in themselves, surely, the evidence that this call was of God. Blessing and power had not lacked. The gospel to which now they were listening was not *another* gospel, for there was no other. It was no true gospel, though it might bear the name of that. It was only the effort of some who were troubling them and who wished to pervert the gospel of Christ. Immediately he denounces them with the utmost severity; but it is love that speaks in the severity itself. If it were himself or "an angel from heaven who preached any other gospel than that which had been preached to them," (and he repeats this lest they should think that it was an ill-considered outburst)—if any one "preached any other gospel than that," not merely which had been preached to them, but "which they had *received*" also, "let him be accursed." He was not, he adds, concerned about conciliating men in saying this. It was for God he spoke, as desiring to have Him upon his side, not seeking to please men; for to be a man-pleaser and a servant of Christ would be in total contradiction.

3. He goes on now to show how he had himself learned this gospel. He had not learned it of men, he had not preached it as being educated in any human school. He had been taught it by one thing alone, the marvelous revelation of Christ to him. It was this which changed him from an enemy and a persecutor to the ardent and self-sacrificing disciple of Christ. The Galatians were listening to human teachers, though, as he has already intimated, they had, in fact,

4 (13-24): His change and surrender of flesh and blood.

4. For ye have [u]heard of my manner of life once in the Jews'* religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and ravaged it; and [v]advanced in the Jews'* religion beyond many my contemporaries in my nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it was the good [w]pleasure of God,† who set me [x]apart, [even] from my mother's womb, and [y]called me through his grace, to reveal his Son [z]in me, that I [a]might preach the good news as to him among the nations, immediately I [b]conferred not with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem, to those who were apostles before me, but I went [c]away into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I [d]went up to Jerusalem, to become acquainted with Cephas,‡ and remained with him fifteen days; but other of the apostles I saw none, save James the [e]brother of the Lord. Now touching the things that I write unto you, behold, before God I lie not. Then I came into the [f]regions of

u Acts 26. 4, 5. Acts 9. 1-3.
v cf. Phil. 3. 5, 6.
w cf. Eph. 1. 5. cf. Matt. 11. 26.
x cf. Jer. 1. 4. cf. Lk. 1. 15.
y cf. ver. 6. cf. Rom. 8. 30. cf. Acts 9. 4.
z cf. 2 Cor. 4. 6. cf. 2 Cor. 3. 18. cf. Phil. 3. 8.
a Acts 9. 15. ch. 2. 7-9.
b ver. 1. cf. Acts 9. 20.
c cf. Ex. 3. 1. cf. 1 Sa. 17. 15. cf. Gen. 39. 20-23.
d cf. Acts 9. 26.

* "Judaism." † Some leave out "God." ‡ Many read, "Peter."
e cf. Matt. 12. 46. f cf. Acts 9. 30 with Acts 11. 25.

had the gospel which they had received, confirmed to them by the internal evidence as to its character, and the joy and power with which God had accompanied it.

4. He goes now into the circumstances of his conversion. He knew all about this Judaism which they were getting back into. He did not speak as one who had been a stranger to it. On the contrary, he had made the very greatest advances,— was an enthusiast for the law, beyond those of his own nation amongst whom he was, and, as an evidence of this he was beyond them all in persecuting the Church of God and wasting it. How the essential opposition of principles comes out here! Here it was only the human school that he was following; the traditions of his fathers, with all their appeal to nature and self-interest, stirred up his zeal; but God had better purposes for him, God, who had separated him from his mother's womb, and now called him by His grace. His Son was revealed, not merely *to* him, objectively, but *in* him, to be henceforth the one abiding power and reality for his soul; and the spell of his traditional religion which had set him in opposition to the Christ of God, collapsed in that moment.

He was thus the suited preacher for the Gentiles, just as himself no Gentile, but a Jew in fullest reality of zealous legalism. If he gave this up, he gave it up as fully knowing it, as realizing in himself its contrariety to the grace which God had shown him. In the consciousness of this divine call, he now conferred not with flesh and blood, and not even with those who were apostles before him. God had, in his case, broken through all semblance even of apostolic succession, so dear to many since. On the contrary, having received this revelation, he went off into Arabia, into the desert, and returned once more, from such a school as Moses learned in, to the place to which he had come to persecute this faith which he now was preaching. By and by he did indeed go up to Jerusalem "to see Peter; but abode with him only fifteen days, and other of the apostles saw none except James, the Lord's brother." Again he went off into regions far apart, and the churches of Judea which were in Christ did not know him even by face. They had simply heard that the persecutor preached now what he had been persecuting, and they glorified God in him.

As we think upon this history in its connection with what we have already

Syria and Cilicia. And I was unknown by face to the assemblies of Judea which were in Christ; but they had only [g]heard [say], He that persecuted us once now preacheth* the faith which once he ravaged; and they [h]glorified God in me.

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. ii.)

Confirmation, spite of opposition.

1 (1-10): Acknowledgment of the grace given.

1. [i]THEN after a lapse of [j]fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking [k]Titus also with me. And I went up according to [l]revelation, and laid before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles, but [m]privately before those conspicuous [among them], lest in any way I were running, or had run in [n]vain. But neither was Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, [o]compelled to be circumcised; and that on account of [p]false brethren privily brought in,

g *cf.* Acts 9. 21, 27, 28.
h *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 12–17. *cf.* Acts 11. 18.
i Acts 15. 1, 2, etc.
j Tit. 1. 4. *cf.* 2 Cor. 8. 16, 23.
k *cf.* Acts 16. 9.
l *cf.* Acts 21. 18–22. *cf.* Prov. 25. 9.
m *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 2. *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 1. *cf.* Phil. 2. 16.
n *cf.* Acts 16. 1-3. *cf.* ch. 5. 2, 3.
o Acts 15. 24. 2 Cor. 11. 26. *cf.* Jude 4.

* "Evangelizes."

seen as to the character of Christianity, it is plain how fully the prophetic character is manifested in it as characteristic of its ministry. The prophet is one brought near to God, to learn His mind in His presence, and is sent forth from God, responsible to Him alone in the message intrusted to him, to declare that mind. The *priesthood* in Israel was successional; but, as a consequence, in fact, of this, the succession guaranteed to it no true spiritual character whatever. The priesthood might, and did as we know, go far astray from God. Still the priest was the priest, and to be owned as that until God were pleased to set him aside; but the prophet even in Israel was a totally different person. Receiving his call in the most distinct way possible from God Himself, his spiritual character was vouched for by this independent call of God. He who sent him was responsible for him. Acquaintance with God was what marked him. He was characteristically the "man of God"; and as such stood forth for God, as we see in the history, in the times of deepest defection and apostasy, with his message of recall or of warning and judgment. This is, in fact, the character of all New Testament ministry. There is no official standing anywhere, to be revered *whatever the life may be.* The message from God is the whole matter; and the life if not with God would forfeit at once the claim to reality in the message. The gift is from God alone, bringing its responsibility with it. To accept man's authorization of it would only be dishonor to the glorious Giver.

SUBD. 2.

The apostle goes on now to the history of his after-communications with those who were apostles before him, and to show that while they added nothing to him in the matter of testimony, they themselves did in the fullest way confirm the reality of that apostleship which he independently received.

1. He did not go up again to Jerusalem till fourteen years had elapsed, during which much work had been done amongst the Gentiles, and Titus accompanying himself and Barnabas was the fruit of that work. The time at which he went up was that when there had been raised at Antioch itself a question of the character of this new gospel to the Gentiles. We have had the history of it already in the fifteenth of Acts. Paul and Barnabas, as we find there, were sent with the full concurrence of the brethren at Antioch, to settle once for all this matter which was agitating them; but, as he tells us here, even in this case, he did not go up as yielding merely to the solicitation of others, but by express revelation from God. The time had come, in fact, when if there was not to be an open breach, there must be the manifestation of an agreement be-

who came in privily to spy out our [p]liberty that we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: to whom we [q]gave place in subjection, not even for an hour, that the [r]truth of the gospel might continue with you. And of those who seemed to be somewhat (whatever they were, it maketh no matter to me,—God [s]accepteth not the person of man) they, I say, who seemed to be somewhat [t]imparted nothing to me; but on the contrary, seeing that the gospel of the [u]uncircumcision was entrusted to me, even as that of the [v]circumcision was to Peter (for [w]he who wrought in Peter for the apostleship of the circumcision wrought also in me toward the Gentiles), and when they perceived the grace given unto me, [x]James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the [y]right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision. Only [they would] that we should [z]remember the poor; which same thing I also was earnest to do.

2 (11-21): Peter's contradiction.

2. But when Peter* came to [a]Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be condemned. For be-

p ch. 5.1, 13. *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 19, etc.
q *cf.* ver. 11. *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 7.
r *cf.* Jude. 3.
s ver. 14. *cf.* Eph. 1. 13.
t *cf.* Tit. 1.14.
u Rom. 2.11. Acts 10. 34. Deut. 10.17.
v *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 9, 10. *cf.* 2 Cor. 11. 5. *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 11, 12.
w Acts 22. 21. *cf.* Rom. 11. 13.
x *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 1.
y *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 5-9. *cf.* Col. 1. 29.
z Acts 15. 13, etc. Acts 12. 17. *cf.* ch. 1. 19. *cf.* Jas. 1. 1.
a *cf.* 3 Jno. 5, 6. *cf.* Acts 13. 3.

* Perhaps we should read, "Cephas."

ctr. 3 Jno. 10, 11; *ctr.* Rom. 16. 17. *z cf.* Acts 6. 1, etc; *cf.* Acts 11. 27-30; *cf.* Acts 24. 17; *cf.* 1 Cor. 16. 1-3. *a cf.* Acts 11. 19-26; *cf.* Acts 15. 1.

tween those who were the leaders at Jerusalem, the central place for Judaism, and those who were preaching the new gospel. He went up accordingly and communicated to them the gospel that he was preaching; first of all, (on account of the height to which the opposition ran,) "privately to those who were of reputation," lest the outbreak of the legalism which was carrying the multitude should work disaster among those who had been gathered out among the Gentiles. This is what he means evidently by saying that he did this, "lest he should run or had run in vain." There was no yielding to the opposition in the slightest degree. Titus was with him, a Greek, yet in fullest Christian fellowship, and without being circumcised. Already he speaks of false brethren who had been unawares brought in, who were seeking to bring into bondage Christ's free men. Christianity, in fact, at Jerusalem was at present so little more than a Jewish sect that we can readily understand how open would be the door for men of this class to flock into it. The apostle withstands them, not giving place, as he says "for an hour." It might seem to others to be a small matter, that for which he was contending. With him it involved the whole truth of the gospel. The success was manifest. In conference he found that "those who seemed to be somewhat" had nothing to communicate to him; but, on the other hand, recognized that to him God had, in fact, committed the gospel of the uncircumcision just as truly as to Peter he had given that of the circumcision. The same mighty power in signs and wonders accompanied his work amongst the Gentiles as that which had manifested itself in Peter among the circumcision; and those who seemed to be pillars, (whom he now names, as James, Cephas and John,) perceived the grace that was given to him. They gave then to him and to Barnabas "the right hand of fellowship"; not simply as Christian brethren, but that they should go to the Gentiles, as they themselves remained as ministers to the circumcision. They only stipulate that the poor should be remembered; a testimony, as it seems, as to the character of those who were being reached by the gospel in Israel; and we find, accordingly, Paul zealous afterwards to bring to these the offerings of the Gentiles.

fore that certain came from James, he [b]ate with the Gentiles; but when they came, he drew back and [c]separated himself, fearing those of the circumcision. And the [d]rest of the Jews dissembled likewise with him, so that even [e]Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter* [f]before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest as† do the nations, and not as† do the Jews, [g]how compellest thou the nations to be as‡ Jews?

* Perhaps, "Cephas." † These clauses are expressed by a single adverb, "Gentilely" and "Jewishly." ‡ Literally, "Judaize."

[b] *cf.* Acts 11. 2, 3, etc.
[c] *cf.* Gen. 12. 11-13. *cf.* Prov. 29. 25.
[d] *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 6.
[e] *ctr.* Acts 11. 22-24.
ctr. Acts 13. 46. *cf.* Acts 15. 37-39.
[f] *cf.* 1 Tim. 5. 20.
[g] *cf.* Prov. 11. 1. *cf.* Rom. 2. 21; *ctr.* 1 Cor. 11. 1.

2. Such then had been the confirmation given him; but he now goes further and shows that upon an after occasion at Antioch, he had had to withstand Peter himself and that as blameworthy. He had been with them in the unrestricted liberty of Christianity, eating with the Gentiles. A change was induced by the coming of some from James. We see how firmly the Judaizing character still remained with many of these. And when they were come, Peter withdrew and separated himself, not from any conviction of error on his part, but simply as giving way, as Paul had not given way, to the opposition which he feared. Such an example in such a place soon worked disastrously. The other Jews, apparently the mass of those there, dissembled likewise with him. It was not, as we see again, conviction, but retrograde movement in spite of their convictions; and this went so far that Barnabas, the companion of Paul himself, was carried away with this dissimulation. The power of God to resist this movement was found with Paul alone. He saw that they "walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel;" and singling out Peter, not now for private conference, but in the presence of them all, (for Peter needed not to be convinced but convicted,) he said to him: "If thou being a Jew livest after the manner of Gentiles," as he had been doing, "and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou now the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" Necessarily they were doing that if they were making circumcision a necessity for the Jews to have fellowship with them. He appeals to the character of Judaism in itself in opposition to this. What had they themselves who were Jews by nature done with regard to this? They were not sinners of the Gentiles, yet—he could speak for himself fully, as we know, as the most zealous of law-keepers,—yet they knew that a man was not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ. They had given up, therefore, the one for the other. They had believed in Christ to be justified by the faith of Christ; because by the works of the law could no flesh be justified. Judaism had thus been given up: for men could not take up the law as they pleased, as a rule of life, as people say sometimes, but not as a rule of judgment. They had to take it for that for which God gave it, and a rule of judgment it necessarily was if it was to answer the purpose for which He gave it. If then they had renounced the law in order to be justified by Christ, and had found justification in this way, could it at the same time be sin to renounce it; and had Christ become the minister of sin in this matter of their justification? To build again the things destroyed was to make themselves transgressors in having destroyed them. The law either existed for them or it did not exist. We see that he goes much further than applying it or not to Gentiles; and carries to its full result the principle of the decision at Jerusalem, which went beyond the decision itself. He himself through the law had become dead to the law, and that he might *live to God*. The whole Christian life, therefore, was involved in this. The epistle to the Romans has made us fully acquainted with the argument here. The law itself, through Christ bearing its penalty for them, had, as it were, affirmed their

We, by [a]nature Jews, and not [b]sinners of the nations, but* knowing that a man is [c]not justified by works of law, but only by the [d]faith of Jesus Christ, even we have [e]believed on Christ Jesus, that we might be [f]justified by the faith of Christ, and [g]not by works of law: because [h]by works of law shall no flesh be justified. Now if in seeking to be justified [i]in Christ, we also have been found [j]sinners, is Christ then the [k]minister of sin? Far be the thought. For if the things which I [l]threw down, these I [m]build again, I constitute myself a [n]transgressor. For I [o]through the law [p]died to the law, that I might [q]live unto God. I am [r]crucified with Christ; but I [s]live, no [t]longer I, but [u]Christ liveth in me; and as to [v]that which I now live in the flesh, I live in the [w]faith which is of the [x]Son of God, who [y]loved me, and [z]gave himself for me. I do not [a]set aside the grace of God: for if [b]righteousness be through law, then Christ hath died in [c]vain.

* Some MSS. omit "but."

[a] Phil. 3. 5.
[b] *cf.* Eph. 2. 11, 12. *cf.* Matt. 15. 26.
[c] Rom. 3. 20. *cf.* Acts 13. 39. ch. 3. 11.
[d] Rom. 5. 1.
[e] *cf.* Acts 15. 9. *cf.* Acts 16. 31.
[f] Rom. 3. 28.
[g] Rom. 4. 4, 5. *cf.* Rom. 11. 6.
[h] *cf.* Job. 9. 2, 3. *cf.* Ps. 143. 2. *cf.* Ex. 34. 7.
[i] *cf.* Rom. 8. 1. *cf.* ch. 5. 6.
[j] *cf.* ver. 18 with ver. 12. *cf.* Acts 21. 20-24.
[k] Rom. 8. 1.
[l] *cf.* ch. 6. 14; *cf.* Phil. 3. 7, 8.
[m] *cf.* ch. 5. 2-4; *cf.* ch. 4. 10, 11.
[n] ver. 17; *cf.* ch. 4. 8, 9.
[o] *cf.* Rom. 3. 19, 20 with Rom. 7. 8-11; *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 56.
[p] *cf.* Rom. 7. 4.
[q] *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15; *cf.* Rom. 14. 7, 8.
[r] ch. 6. 14; *cf.* Col. 2. 11, 12, 20; *cf.* Col. 3. 3; *cf.* Rom. 6. 4-7; *cf.* Josh. 4. 9.
[s] *cf.* Col. 3. 1; *cf.* Rom. 6. 8-11; *cf.* Eph. 2. 5, 6; *cf.* Josh. 4. 3.
[t] *cf.* Rom. 6. 6. *cf.* Eph. 4. 22-24; *cf.* Col. 3. 9, 10.
[u] Col. 1. 27; *cf.* Eph. 3. 17; *cf.* Josh. 5. 13-15.
[v] *cf.* Phil. 1. 21.
[w] 2 Cor. 5. 7; *cf.* Heb. 12. 2.
[x] *cf.* Acts 9. 20.
[y] *cf.* Eph. 5. 25; *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 14.
[z] ch. 1. 4; *cf.* Jno. 10. 15.
[a] *cf.* Rom. 11. 6; *cf.* vers. 17, 18; *cf.* ch. 5. 2-4.
[b] *cf.* Rom. 3. 21; *cf.* ch. 3. 21.
[c] *cf.* ch. 3. 4; *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 17; ch. 5. 2.

death to it. He was crucified with Christ, with Him who, as he says afterwards, had borne the curse of the law, its extremest penalty, beyond which it had no claim at all. Thus he was free. Dead with Christ, it was to live, and he lived; yet not, so to speak, himself. The Christ who had been upon the cross for him, who was now in heaven, had won him for Himself, that Christ who henceforth in the glorious reality of what he saw Him to be, lived in him. It was more than Christ being his life: Christ was his true self, the aim and object of his life from henceforth; for the life which he lived in the flesh, he lived now in the faith of the Son of God who, in the wonder of His perfect grace, had loved and given Himself for him. Would they put Christ under the law also? Alas, some would and do even to-day. For the apostle, it was far otherwise. The law, if it remained now for him, would be simply the destruction of all the value of Christ's death for him. If righteousness came by the law, that death of Christ was null and void. Thus it is plain that the question of the law as a possible rule of life for the Christian is settled by the apostle's words here. God never made it that. It is manifest that even as a rule, if it were,—nay, just because it was—the perfect rule for the Jew, if the Christian be anything different, anything higher than a Jew, the Jew's rule could not give to his walk its Christian character. Instead of being too high for Christian attainment as a standard, it is all too low. In fact, there is nothing of the heavenly side of Christianity expressed in the law at all. It is the man in the flesh over whom the law has dominion; and, as we have seen elsewhere, the sphere of law is thus altogether this side of death, and not beyond it. The Christian is, through grace, beyond it. Death and judgment are behind him, not before him. He belongs to another sphere; and though upon earth, he is, nevertheless, the man in Christ, to live and walk as that. It is plain that Peter, in pursuing the course he did, had no thought whatever to be in conflict with the truth of justification before God. He simply adopted the law for the moment as a rule of life, but the apostle makes it a question of the whole gospel. He has no thought of the possibility of its being a mere rule of con-

DIVISION 2. (Chap. iii.)

The Contrast between Law and Faith.

1 (1-9): The promise to Abraham gives priority to faith.

1. O [k]SENSELESS Galatians, who hath [l]bewitched you? * to whom as before your [m]eyes Jesus Christ hath been openly set forth, crucified? † This only would I learn of you, Received ye the [n]Spirit by [o]works of law, or by the [p]hearing of faith? Are ye so senseless? having [q]begun in the Spirit, are ye now being [r]perfected in flesh? Have ye [s]suffered so many things in vain? if it be indeed in vain. He therefore who [t]ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh [u]miracles among you, [doeth he it] by works of law, or by the hearing of faith? Even as Abraham [v]believed God,

* Some add, "that ye should not obey the truth."
† Some add, "among you."

k cf. Lk. 24. 25. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 36. ver. 3.
l cf. 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. *cf.* Acts 8. 9-11.
m cf. 2 Cor. 3. 12-18. *cf.* Jno. 3. 14, 15.
n cf. Eph. 1. 13. *cf.* Acts 15. 8, 9. ver. 14.
o vers. 5, 10. ch. 2. 16.
p cf. Rom. 10. 17.
q cf. ch. 5. 7. *cfr.* Col. 2. 6, 7.
r cf. Phil. 3. 12. *s cf.* Heb. 10. 32-36; *cf.* Acts 14. 22. *t cf.* Acts 9. 17; *cf.* Acts 10. 44. *u* 1 Cor. 12. 10; *cf.* Acts 14. 3. *v* Gen. 15. 6.

duct. God meant it to raise the question of righteousness before Him. "The man that doeth these things shall live by them" was, in regard to it, the whole matter.

DIV. 2.

Paul comes now, at once, to the question of doctrine, but, as has already been said, he takes it up in a way in which we have not seen it in Romans. His historical treatment of it was indeed the plainest possible argument that he could use for those whose eyes were as dull as those of the Galatians had got to be. The broad facts of the history were there and none could deny them. God had given the promise to Abraham, a simple, unconditional promise, in which He had pledged His whole truthfulness to fulfil His word, long before the law was given at all. The argument at once brings in the authority of God Himself to settle the question.

1. He appeals to them, however, in the first place, as having received that Spirit of Christ which was the distinctive feature of Christianity. It was nothing less than a bewitchment for them now not to obey the truth, when Christ Himself—Christ crucified, as announced in the gospel, yet in the power of His grace—had been received in faith and owned by them. It was in consequence of their reception of Him that the Spirit was given. Manifestly through all the dispensation of law there was nothing like this. There was no Spirit of adoption. It had never come to any by the works of the law. It now came in universally as the result of the hearing of faith. As has often been said, if it were declared in the Old Testament that God was a Father to Israel, this was the very opposite of owning as His family those who were truly His children—for all were not of the true Israel even, that were Israelites. It was a nation in the flesh that God had been pleased to take up, and to put them in a certain relation to Himself; not in that spiritual relation which Christianity implied, for as to any of this people of God, there was no settlement of the eternal question. They might drop out of this place into hell. There was no security as to those in mere Judaism. Thus the Galatians had experience of the power of the gospel and of its being a power which the Jew, as such, knew nothing of. They had suffered, too, for the gospel, as the apostle implies. Was it all a mistake? Had it been in vain? The Spirit was "ministered" manifestly through those who preached the gospel to them; and who preached, as would ordinarily be the case then, with accompanying signs and wonders on God's part, in witness to His word. Was it by the works of the law (according to that principle) that these things were wrought, or according to the opposite manner of the hearing of faith? The law said *doing*, not hearing. The gospel said *hearing*, not doing.

and it was reckoned to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore, that they that are of faith, these are [w] sons of Abraham. And the scripture [x] foreseeing that God would justify the nations by faith, foreannounced the [y] gospel unto Abraham, [saying], In thee shall all the nations be blessed. So that they that are of [z] faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

2 (10-12): The contrary principle and effect of law.

2. For as [a] many as are of the works of the law are under curse: for it is [b] written, Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them. But that [c] no one is justified by the law with God, is manifest: for, [d] the just shall live by faith; but the [e] law is not of faith, but, he* who hath [f] done them shall live in them.

* Some read, "The man."

w *cfr.* Matt. 3. 9. *cf.* Rom. 4. 11. *cf.* Jno. 8. 39. *cf.* Heb. 11. 8, etc.
x *cf.* ver. 22.
y Gen. 12. 3.
z *cf.* Rom. 9. 7 with 2 Thess. 2. 13, 14.
a *cf.* Rom. 4. 15. *cf.* 2 Cor. 3. 6.
b Deut. 27. 26.
c Rom. 3. 20. *cf.* Lk. 18. 9-14.
d Rom. 1. 17. Heb. 10. 38. Hab. 2. 4.
e *cf.* Rom. 9. 31, 32.
f Lev. 18. 5; *cf.* Ezek. 18. 4-9.

But in this Christianity only went back to the pattern of the one whom God had, in His wisdom, set in an unmistakable place in connection with the Jew himself. Abraham was the one through whom they expected all their blessing; but Abraham, as the record was, "believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." In his case there were no works of the law, when the law as yet did not exist. If then in him faith was reckoned for righteousness,—if in him, God, having found no righteousness in man, took up the principle of faith for righteousness, it is evident that those who were truly his children would be accepted according to that principle. They which were of faith would be the children of Abraham. The Scripture then had expressly anticipated the justification of the nations through faith. It had preached, as it were, the gospel unto Abraham in the announcement that in him all the nations should be blessed. "In him" could not mean because of his merit, as the Jew perhaps was ready to aver; for as to him all merit had been disclaimed: but, on the contrary, that the nations should be blessed on that principle of faith which God had brought to the front, and acknowledged with regard to Abraham. They which were of faith, therefore, would be blessed with believing Abraham.

2. Now, to this the law could not be added. It was, as we have seen again and again, precisely the reverse of this principle. In faith there is the renouncing of self, the turning to Another on that account. On the other hand, in the law, no question of Another comes in at all. It is "*the man that doeth* them shall live by them"; but then, alas, that means curse, and curse only. As many as were of the works of the law, (as many as were on that principle), were under the curse; not that law works were bad works; clearly, the very reverse; but it was written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." That is the principle as announced by the apostle, when yet Christianity had come. He certainly knew what he was speaking of. He certainly did not believe that Christianity had modified this in any measure, so as to make a certain amount of legal works acceptable to God. The law said "all things," and the apostle says after it, "all things." No one has title to alter this in the least. But then the curse was as manifestly on every one; and how blessed, therefore, the grace which had declared in the Old Testament itself the opposite principle, when it was said by the prophet that "the just shall live by faith." That was the plain renunciation of the law for justification in the sight of God, for "the law is not of faith," as we have seen. It is the man that doeth them: it is not the work of Another, it is the man's own work by which he is to live. Christ, therefore is out of question here. If we will be justified upon the principle of the law, we must give up Christ.

3 (13, 14): Christ under the curse, for the fulfilment of the promise of the Spirit.

3. Christ hath [g]redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a [h]curse for us, (for it is 'written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree,) that the [j]blessing of Abraham might come unto the [k]nations in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the 'promise of the Spirit through faith.

[g] cf. Gen. 8. 21. cf. ch. 4. 5. cf. Eph. 1. 7. [h] cf. 2 Cor. 5. 21. cf. Heb. 13. 11, 12 with Lev. 16. 27. cf. Matt. 27. 46. [i] Deut. 21. 23; cf. 2 Sa. 21. 9; ctr. Jno. 12. 32. [j] ver. 8; cf. Rom. 4. 2-5. [k] cf. Rom. 3. 29, 30. [l] cf. Eph. 1. 13 with Lk. 24. 49.

3. But, in fact, redemption has come for us. We were, says the apostle, hopelessly under the curse of the law. That was all that it could do for us, and when Christ came, instead of there being any relinquishment of this, on the contrary, He Himself had to redeem us from the curse of the law as made Himself that curse. A strange way this may seem to be expressed in, indeed, "for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth upon a tree." One would say that the mere hanging upon a tree could neither in itself be the curse, the true curse upon sin, nor, on the other hand, mark out, of necessity, those who were under the curse. It was, as we should say a thing apparently perfectly arbitrary. An innocent man might hang upon a tree, just as a man steeped in guilt to the uttermost might never hang there. Why is it then that the law expresses itself after this manner? And here we must move carefully, for mistakes have been made on different sides as to this. We have to remember that, while in itself the law was a system of earthly government, though of divine appointment, on the other hand, in its purport spiritually it went beyond this altogether. As an earthly government—the government of an earthly people—it did not in its rewards or penal sanction go beyond the earth. It never said of the keeper of its commandments, "He shall go to heaven;" nor of the convicted sinner, "He shall go to hell."* This has been often spoken of, yet needs to be fully understood; for if it is not, confusion must result. God meant that the conviction of man by it should be fully accomplished, and therefore put both penalty and reward in a sphere cognizable by him, and not in an eternity as to which he can speculate as he pleases. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," and "the man that doeth them shall live by them," were meant to speak plainly in the common language of men; and thus speaking, the issue of the law is as plain and intelligible as its power to convict is absolutely undeniable.

The shadow of man's condemnation by it must darken the prospect beyond death; while yet God has not tied Himself to the legal judgment. If He had, there would be no hope for any. But the curse attached to hanging upon a tree is not of necessity an eternal one. Yet if there be no way of escape it will be that for all. He who bore it for others rose out of it by His own perfection (Heb. v. 7), as those for whom He bore it by that vicarious work on their behalf.

The Cross marked the character of that work as death in its full penal character, and therefore the forsaking of God; and that which for others might lose its deepest meaning, for the sacrificial victim had all its significance. An ass might be redeemed with a lamb; but the lamb devoted could not be redeemed (Lev. xxvii. 10). Is it not plain that prophetically this hanging on a tree points out the One who was indeed to be under the curse from God, and that the law waited, as it were, through all the centuries of its existence until it found finally its satisfaction in that one wonderful fulfilment, the cross of Christ? Thus alone could the blessing of Abraham come on the Gentiles; for if the Gentiles were not, in fact, under the law, (as dispensationally they were not,) yet sin must, of necessity, have the same shadow of the curse following it ever. Gentile or Jew, it could make no difference before God, and, in fact, that form which the law gave to the curse could only be the figure of a deeper thing. The blessing of Abraham could not come upon the Gentiles themselves except as that curse was

* It must be remembered that the Old Testament "hell" is "Sheol," which is hades, the place of the dead.

¶ (15-18): Impotence of the law to annul the promise.

4. Brethren, I [m]speak after the manner of men: though it be but a man's covenant, [if] confirmed, no man [n]setteth it aside, or [o]addeth dispositions. Now to [p]Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, Unto [q]seeds, as of many; but as of [r]one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. Now this I say, A covenant confirmed [s]before by God [to Christ],* the law, which came [t]four hundred and thirty years after, doth not [u]annul, so as to make the promise of no effect. For [v]if the inheritance be of law, it is no longer of promise; but God [w]gave it in grace to Abraham by promise.

5 (19-22): The governmental end of the law.

5. [x]Wherefore then the law? It was [y]added for the sake of transgressions, [z]until the seed should come to whom the promise was made; being [a]ordained through angels in the hand of a [b]mediator. Now a mediator is not of [c]one; but [d]God is one. Is the law then [e]against the

* Omitted by the earliest MSS extant, but inserted by some quite early, and in the Syriac versions as "in Christ."

cf. Heb. 6. 13, 14; *cf.* Ps. 105. 9-12. *x* ver. 21; *cf.* Matt. 5. 17, 18. *y* Rom. 3. 20; Rom. 5. 20. *z cf.* ch. 4. 4; *cf.* Heb. 10. 8, 9. *a* Acts 7. 53. Heb. 2. 2; *cf.* Ps. 68. 17. *b cf.* Ex. 20. 19-22; *cf.* Ex. 32. 30. *c cf.* Ex. 19. 3-8; *cf.* Ex. 34. 27. *d cf.* Eph. 1. 4-6; *cf.* Rom. 3. 30; *cf.* Matt. 11. 25, 26. *e cf.* Rom. 3. 31; *cf.* Rom. 7. 7, etc.

m Rom. 3. 5. Rom. 6. 19. *n cf.* ch. 2. 21. *o cf.* Rev. 22. 18. *cf.* Rom. 3. 21, 28. *p* Gen. 13. 15. *cf.* Ml. 7. 20. *q cf.* Gen. 25. 5, 6. *cf.* Rom. 9. 7. *r* Gen. 22. 18. *cf.* Gen. 3. 15. *s cf.* Rom. 4. 9, 10, 13, 14. *t* Ex. 12. 40, 41. *cf.* Gen. 15. 13. *u cf.* Rom. 4. 14. *ctr.* Heb. 7. 18, 19. *v cf.* Rom. 11. 5. *cf.* Rom. 4. 13. *w* Gen. 22. 16, 17.

removed out of the way of man by Jesus Christ, and thus alone could we receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

4. The apostle returns now back to Abraham and the promise to him, in order to show the impotence of the law to annul it. He appeals here to the moral sense of man. If he were only a man, and had made a covenant unconditionally, pledging himself to this or that, and especially, he adds, "If this covenant were confirmed, no one could disannul it" and no one could add a condition to it. Now God had made it, as is clear, in these promises to Abraham, and confirmed them, as he tells us directly, to Christ. The covenant was of promise and it was both made and confirmed. It was an absolute promise, not a conditional one. No condition, therefore, could be added without destroying its very nature. When God said "in thy Seed," it was of Christ plainly that He was speaking. As we look back at the history, we see that it was after Isaac had been delivered, as Scripture says, in a figure, from that sacrificial death from which Christ was not delivered, that God gave this. It was Christ that was in His mind. Here was the Lamb whom God would provide for the burnt-offering. Here was the ram who in the truth of it saved Isaac, as we may say,—the ram caught by its horns in the thicket: Christ thus, caught, as it were, by the very power that He had to save and bless, which His love, would not allow Him, therefore, not to put in exercise. Christ was the Seed to whom God confirmed the covenant of promise, and the law came 430 years too late to set it aside at all; but it is manifest if it were added to it, it would disannul it. The apostle dismisses both thoughts, the disannulling and the adding, the adding being, in fact, the same as disannulling. Law added would be the introduction of a contradictory principle; for if the inheritance were of the law, it would be no more of promise, whereas God gave it to Abraham by promise.

5. Naturally enough the question comes here, Why then the law? "It was added," answers the apostle, "*for the sake of* transgressions." Such is the expression; which means, not to keep transgressions in check, as the common thought seems to be, for Scripture itself has already told us that "where there is no law, there is *no* transgression." Thus it could not keep transgression in check; on the contrary, it could only produce it; that is, as we have already

promises of God? Far be the thought. For if there had been a law given [f]able to give life, [g]righteousness would indeed have been of law. But the scripture hath [h]shut up all things under sin, that the [i]promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

6 (23-25): Its limit reached, faith having come.

6. But [j]before faith came, we were kept in ward under the law, [k]shut up to the faith which was about to be revealed. So that the law hath been our [l]tutor unto Christ, that we might be [m]justified by faith; but now that faith is come, we are [n]no longer under a tutor.

7 (26-29): And in Christ Jew and Gentile perfected alike.

7. For ye are [o]all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were [p]baptized unto Christ have put on Christ. There is [q]no Jew nor

f *cf.* Rom. 8. 3.
g *cf.* Deut. 6. 25.
h ver. 23. *cf.* Rom. 3. 19, 23.
i *cf.* Rom. 4. 16.
j ch. 4. 1, etc.
k ver. 22. *cf.* Heb. 2. 15.
l ch. 4. 2. *cf.* Heb. 10. 1.
m *cf.* Rom. 10. 4. *cf.* Acts 13. 38, 39.
n *cf.* Rom. 6. 14.
cf. Jno. 3. 28

–30. o Rom. 3. 29, 30; Rom. 4. 16. p Rom. 6. 3; *cf.* Acts 19. 3-5. q *cf.* Col. 3. 11; *cf.* Rom. 10. 12.

said, it could make sin take that form. It was added, then, for that purpose; and it was added for a certain season; not being that which could confer the blessing upon man, it must be taken out of the way, in order that the blessing might come. It was added, therefore, temporarily for a certain reason; added "till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made." There was another thing. "It was ordained by angels," but it had nothing of the glory of the new covenant as made good by Christ. The glory at Sinai, as the psalmist says, was angelic glory (Ps. lxviii. 17). God Himself was unrevealed; He was behind, in the thick darkness. Or if Moses saw Him, it was but the back parts: His face could not be seen. And the very reflection of glory thus in the face of Moses made men unable to behold; it, therefore, put man only in the distance, did not bring him nigh, and thus there had to be a mediator, manifestly Moses himself; but a mediator implies two parties. "A mediator is not a mediator of one," but God was the only One who spoke in the promise to Abraham. God is One: there was no other party. All depended, therefore, in the promise, upon God Himself.

But this seems to set the law against the promise of God, men might urge. Nay, he says, in the nature of the case, a law would have had to be given which could have given life, in order that righteousness might be worked out under it. Life was what man needed. The law was the ministration of death and not of life. Righteousness, therefore, could not be by the law; and the law was not against the promise of God, but, on the contrary, shut men up to that promise for all their blessing. The Scripture which speaks of it, "hath shut up all under sin that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe."

6. This shows us, therefore, clearly the limit of the law. "Before faith came," that is, before it was God's open and acknowledged principle of blessing, "we were kept under the law, shut up to the faith which should afterwards be revealed." That faith was made necessary by the fact of the ruin in which the law proved us to be. God must bring in blessing through Another: faith in Another must be His principle. The law thus was our schoolmaster until Christ. It had a needed lesson to teach for a time. No schooling is for all time. The schoolmaster's work is to make us independent of himself, and the law's work was to bring us into a place where it would no more be needful. Its very service was to shut us up to justification by faith alone, no other mode being possible. But if, then, this is to be so, "after that faith is come, we are no longer under the schoolmaster." Faith being openly proclaimed God's principle, the law's work is done.

7. And this is shown by the fact of the new place into which God has put His people now, "sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus;" the school of law is not the proper place for us. That does not mean that we are not to profit by

Greek; there is no [r]bond- nor freeman; there is no [s]male nor female; for ye are all [t]one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye [u]Abraham's seed, and [v]heirs according to promise.

r *cf.* 1 Cor. 7. 20-24. *cf.* Philem. 16.
s *cf.* Acts 1. 14. *ctr.* 1 Cor. 11. 3-16.
t *cf.* Eph. 2. 15, 16. *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 13.
u *cf.* Rom. 4. 11.
v ch. 4. 7. *cf.* Heb. 9. 15.

DIVISION 3. (Chaps. iv.–v. 6.)

The meaning of the Spirit of Adoption having come.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. iv. 1-20.)

The Grace given.

1 (1-3): Nonage.

1. NOW I say that so long as the heir is a [w]child, he differeth nothing from a bondservant, though lord of all; but he is under [x]guardians and stewards until the term appointed by the father. Even so we, when we were children, were kept in bondage under the [y]elements of the world.

w *cf.* Heb. 6. 1.
x ch. 3. 24.
y *cf.* Col. 2. 8, 20. ver. 9.

the lessons which the law taught, of course. We may profit by the lessons which we learn in school without being under the schoolmaster; but under the schoolmaster, no one says "Father." The place of sons as such is manifestly somewhere else than at school. This, then, has come for us, for "as many of us as have been baptized to Christ have put on Christ." Christ is, according to the truth announced in baptism itself, the One in whom we are, therefore, before God. It is His perfection, His beauty that is seen upon us. Nothing else is seen, no earthly condition, no place of privilege beside. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Manifestly, if each one of us is in Christ, Christ must be the same for each and all of us. There can be no distinction here. For distinction, we must look away from Christ; but if then we "are Christ's," then "are we Abraham's seed," in the fullest way identified with the very One in whom the blessing was to be, identified with the very Heir of blessing, and therefore heirs according to the promise, "in thy Seed:" that is Christ, in whom we are.

DIV. 3. SUBD. 1.

1. The apostle, therefore, now naturally returns to what he has already spoken of as the manifest peculiar blessing of Christianity itself, the coming of the Spirit. "We are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus;" but then there were children of God before Christianity. The children of God were not gathered together as such; the true children were not acknowledged as such; but they were there. Christ died, not for the nation of Israel only, but that He might gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. There were, then, children, even while they were scattered. There were children of God under the law, but as long as they were there, they differed nothing from servants. There was no cry of "Abba, Father." There was no Father openly acknowledging them. The children were just as much children. They were, in that sense, "lords of all." Nevertheless, they differed nothing from servants as to their practical condition. They were "under tutors and governors," for their own good, "until the time appointed of the Father." Now this tutelage, as the apostle tells us, was yet a real bondage. The law was the elements of the world. It is, in fact, what enters into every system of natural religion that was ever in man's mind. It is the principle upon which the whole world goes on, which is necessary to it, and man can conceive no other; but, by that very fact, it was bondage to the child of God. He was under that which denied him the nearness which was truly his own and prevented his serving in the liberty of the child's place.

3 (4, 5): The Son subjected to law for our redemption from it.

3 (6, 7): The Spirit in the heart manifests the sons.

4 (8-20): The lapse of the Galatians.

2. But when the [z]fulness of the time was come, [a]God [c]sent forth his Son, come of a [b]woman, come [c]under law, that he might [d]redeem those under law, that we might [e]receive the adoption of sons.
3. And, [f]because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the [g]Spirit of his Son into your* hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So that thou art no longer a bondservant, but a son; and if a son, then an [h]heir through God.†
4. Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye were in [i]bondage to those that by nature are no gods; but

z *cf.* Gen. 18. 10. *cf.* Heb. 9. 26.
a *cf.* Jno. 16. 28.
b *cf.* Gen. 3. 15. *cf.* Is. 7. 14.
c *cf.* Lk. 2. 22-39. *cf.* Ex. 21. 2-6.
d ch. 3. 13.
e ch. 3. 26. *cf.* Jno. 1. 12, 13.
f ver. 7. *cf.* Eph. 2. 19.
g Rom. 8. 15

* The weight of MS. authority is for "our"; although the Syriac versions support "your." The sense seems decisive.

† "An heir through God" is given by most editors; though MS. authority is nearly equal for "heir of God through Christ."

-17. h *cf.* Eph. 1. 14; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 4. i *cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 9; *cf.* 2 Chron. 13. 9; *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 2.

2. But the "fulness of time" came. God had steadfastly in view the Object which was before Him and He could not delay longer than necessity demanded. "When the fulness of the time" then "was come, God sent forth His Son," the One in whom there was necessarily, by what He was, the greatest possible nearness to Himself, yet now apparently at a distance, "come of a woman" and actually Man, but "come under the law" also, under that which to every other was bondage, which for Himself could be none. With Him there was no impossibility of working out the righteousness of the law. It could only testify to the perfection that was in Him, and thus, after His thirty years of probation, the Spirit of God comes openly upon Him, marking Him out as the Object of God's fullest delight. *He* was sealed, as we are not, because of His own perfection; but He entered, in that very act, upon a course of ministry to others in which redemption would be accomplished for those under the law, that now "we might receive the adoption of sons"; that is, the full *place* of children, as well as the reality of being such.

3. For this is what sonship means, in contrast with children, as the terms are used here. The child (τέκνον) is the one by nature that. He is born to it, and if born he can never cease to be the child of the one of whom he is born; but he may not have the place of child, and that is what in Scripture, "sonship" implies. The son (υἱός) is the *acknowledged* child, the child in the child's place; and that is what is proper to Christianity. Children there were before it, but now they are "sons"; and we have received, in that way, the adoption. The consequence is: "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father." Notice that the place as given of God must be ours first, then comes the qualification for the place, the Spirit of His Son. How wonderfully does that speak! It is not the spirit of a son simply, but the Spirit of His Son. In fact, it is the perfection of Christ which has rendered possible this reception by us of the Spirit of Christ, and which, therefore, brings us into the sweetness of the assurance of what Christ Himself is to God, in the value of which we abide. How then, asks the apostle as it were, is it possible, in such a place, to be a servant any longer, that is, a slave? It is the bondage of slavery of which he is speaking. Servants, of course, we are in a true sense, by the very fact that we are sons. We serve as such. God has title to service, surely, from all His sons, but there is no bondage in this. If sons, we are gloriously free, and if sons, we are heirs of God through Christ. This, then, is the characteristic of Christianity.

4. The apostle turns now, therefore, to the Galatians, to appeal to them as to their lapse from such conscious blessedness. The going into Judaism is for him much the same thing as going back to the heathenism out of which, in fact, they had been brought. They had not known God, and then were doing service to those who by nature were no gods. Now they had known Him, or rather

now, when ye *know God, or rather, are *known of God, how turn ye again to the *weak and *beggarly elements, whereunto ye *desire over again to be in bondage? Ye *observe days and months and times and years: I am *afraid of you, lest by any means I have labored as to you in *vain. I *beseech you, brethren, be as I am; for I am *as ye [were]: ye have in *nothing injured me. But ye know that in* *weakness of the flesh I preached the gospel to you at the first; and that which was your† temptation in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but as an *angel of God ye received me—as Christ Jesus. What *blessedness then was yours!‡ for I bear you witness that, if possible, ye would have *plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. So then, am I become your *enemy because I tell you the truth? They are *zealous after you in no right way; on the contrary they desire to *shut you out [from us], that ye may be zealous after them. But it is right to be zealously affected *always in what is right, and not only when I am present with you. My *children, of whom again I *travail in birth until Christ be formed in you, yea, I could wish to be *present with you now, and to *change my voice; for I stand in *doubt of you.

* διὰ with the accusative may have this sense.
† Some good authorities have "my"; others nothing.
‡ Or "where is the blessedness?"

f cf. Jno. 17. 3. cf. 2 Pet. 1. 2, 3. *k* 1 Cor. 8. 3. cf. Nah. 1. 7. *l* cf. Rom. 8. 3. cf. Heb. 7. 18, 19. *m* cf. Acts 3. 2. *n* cf. ch. 3. 1-3. *o* cf. Col. 2. 16. cf. Num. 28. 11. *p* vers. 19, 20. cf. Col. 2. 1. *q* ch. 5. 2, 4. cf. Phil. 2. 16. cf. 1 Thess. 3. 5. *r* cf. 2 Cor. 8. 11-13. cf. Acts 28. 29. cf. 1 Cor. 11. 1. *s* cf. 1 Thess. 2. 8. cf. 2 Cor. 11. 29. *t* cf. 2 Cor. 2. 5. *u* cf. 1 Cor. 2. 3. cf. 2 Cor. 12. 7. *v* cf. 2 Cor. 5. 20. cf. Matt. 10. 40. *w* cf. 1 Pet. 1. 8. *x* cf. Acts 20. 37, 38; cf. 2 Cor. 8. 5; cf. Matt. 13. 20, 21. *y* cf. 2 Cor. 12. 15; cf. Prov. 27. 6. *z* cf. Matt. 23. 15. *a* cf. 2 Tim. 1. 15. *b* cf. Phil. 2. 12. *c* cf. 1 Cor. 4. 15; cf. Philem. 10; cf. Phil. 4. 1; cf. 1 Thess. 2. 7. *d* cf. Col. 2. 1; cf. 2 Cor. 2. 4. *e* cf. 1 Cor. 5. 3. *f* cf. 1 Cor. 4. 21; cf. 2 Cor. 13. 1, 2. *g* ver. 11; cf. ch. 1. 6.

He had known them. Known and recognized, how could they turn to "the weak and beggarly elements of the world" whereunto they desired again to be in bondage? It was heathenism in which, in fact, they had been. These "elements of the world" for them had been in heathenism, and yet he says "How turn ye *again?*" It was all the same thing, in fact; if Christ were given up, what did it matter? They were observing days and months and times and years. Nothing very dreadful, people would say, in that; but he immediately comments upon it: "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain." Then he beseeches them that they should be still as he himself continued to be; their lapse could not injure him in one sense. They knew how, in spite of infirmity of the flesh, he had preached the gospel to them at the first. They had not taken offence at the weakness, the physical weakness that they saw in him; they had not rejected him on account of that, which, in fact, was only designed to make the power of the Spirit in him more apparent. They had received him as an angel of God, even as the Christ he represented. Had they then, in fact, known that blessedness of which they had certainly spoken? They would have plucked out their own eyes and have given them to him. How was it now? Did telling them the truth make him their enemy? But there were others who were manifesting great zeal in their behalf, not in a right way. They were acting, as he puts it, for a purpose,—would exclude the apostle, that they might have themselves that place in their affections which they had robbed him of; but if they had really found the blessing which they declared, would it not be good for them to abide in that, to show their zeal after that manner? In fact, he was full of longing after them. He had been the one

SUBDIVISION 2 (Chaps. iv. 21–v. 6.)

The testimony of the law itself.

1(Iv. 21-31): As the mother, so the birth.

1. TELL me, ye that desire to be under law, do ye not [h] hear the law? For it is [i] written that Abraham had two sons: one by the handmaid and one by the freewoman. But he that was of the handmaid was born after the [j] flesh; and he that was of the freewoman through the [k] promise. Which things are to be [l] allegorized; for these are two [m] covenants; the one from mount [n] Sina, bringing forth to [o] bondage, which is Hagar. For this Hagar is mount Sina in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem that now is, for [p] she is in bondage with her children; but Jerusalem which is [q] above is free, which is our [r] mother.* For it is [s] written, Rejoice, thou barren, that bearest not; break out and cry, thou that travailest not; for [t] more are the children of the desolate than of her that hath the husband. For [u] we,† brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise.

h *cf.* Rom. 3. 19, 20.
i Gen. 16. 15. Gen. 21. 2.
j *cf.* Gen. 16. 2 *ctr.* Jno. 1. 13.
k *cf.* Gen. 17. 15-17. ver. 28. *cf.* Jas. 1. 18.
l *cf.* Heb. 7. 1, etc *cf.* Mk. 4. 13.
m *cf.* Heb. 8. 6, 7. *cf.* Heb. 9. 15.
n *cf.* Ex. 24. 6-8.
o ch. 5. 1. *ctr.* Rom. 8. 15. *cf.* Heb. 2. 15. *cf.* Col. 2. 20-23.
p *cf.* Jno. 8. 32-36.
q *cf.* Heb. 11. 10.

* Some MSS. have, "mother of us all." † Others read, "ye."

cf. Heb. 12. 22; *cf.* Rev. 21. 2. r *cf.* Ps. 87. 5; *cf.* Phil. 3. 20. s Is. 54. 1. t *cf.* 1 Sam. 2. 5; *cf.* Ps. 113. 9; *cf.* Rom. 11. 25. u ch. 3. 29; *cf.* Rom. 9. 8.

who had brought them into this blessing in Christ. Now he was travailing in birth again, as it were, (had all the sorrow and pain of that), until Christ should be formed in them. He desired to be present with them, yet with a changed voice. He had had to change it, for he stood in doubt of them.

SUBD. 2.

1. If they would not listen any more to the gospel or to the one who had spoken to them for Christ, the apostle would appeal now to the very law itself, which undoubtedly they must hear. Zealous law-keepers must hear the law. Here he goes back to Abraham again, and in a manner which, to some who scarcely fully accept the typical character of Old Testament history, would appear strange. Yet to "foolish Galatians" he can use this without questioning their ability to realize, not only the likeness to truth, but the truth itself that is in it. In fact, these typical pictures speak for themselves and are designed to speak. When once we have the key to them, their perfect agreement with the truth can be nothing else than that designed of God to set it forth. Abraham's two sons thus naturally speak of those two classes of his offspring of which the apostle has been speaking. There is the seed after the flesh; there is the seed after the Spirit, the natural child "and the spiritual child," the child "of faith." It is not hard, therefore, to understand the similitude when he emphasizes the one seed as that by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman. Bondage and freedom have been his theme already. How fully plain does it become when he tells us that he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh, in the ordinary course of nature, with nothing necessarily of God in it, and on the other hand he of the free woman was by promise. He has already spoken of this promise, has already connected its "in thee," said of him whose faith was reckoned to him for righteousness, with the faith of those who are the children of promise. These things, he says, not, "are an allegory," exactly, but "are allegorized." They were true things, things which had actually taken place, no question, but which nevertheless had "happened to them," as the apostle says of other things in their history, "for types." They had a divinely intended meaning in them and not merely could be used to show forth such things. These two, then, are the two covenants, the one from the Mount Sinai,

But as then he that was born after the flesh [v]persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, so also is it now. But what saith the scripture? [w]Cast out the handmaid and her son; for the son of the handmaid shall not [x]inherit with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are [y]not children of the handmaid, but of the freewoman.

2 (v. 1-6): Circumcision binds to law, and antagonizes Christ and faith.

2. With freedom hath Christ [z]set us free: [a]stand fast therefore, and be not held again in a [b]yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that [c]if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify to every

cf. ch. 2. 5. *b cf.* Acts 15. 10; *cf.* Col. 2. 8. *c cf.* Acts 15. 1; *ctr.* Acts 16. 3; *cf.* ch. 2. 3.

v Gen. 21. 9. *cf.* ch. 5. 17.
w Gen. 21. 10. *cf.* ch. 5. 24.
x *cf.* ch. 5. 21. *cf.* Rom. 8. 12, 13.
y *cf.* Rom. 6. 14. *cf.* 1 Pet. 3. 6.
z ver. 13. *cf.* John 8. 36. *cf.* Rom. 8. 2.
a Phil. 4. 1.

the law bringing forth to bondage, which is Hagar; the other, that of promise "Jerusalem which is above," "which is the mother of us all," or "which is our mother." "Jerusalem which is above" naturally carries our thoughts on to that of which John gives us in his Revelation by and by a fuller view. It was the home city, the city of which all the people of God now are children. The apostle speaks of it as having a present reality and a place which faith indeed alone can recognize, but which is none the less real. Paul turns to the prophet here, in order to show us that while, in fact, the barren was not bearing (before the time of Israel's real travailing and birth, as in a day to come,) there would be, nevertheless, the strange paradox of many more children to her than when she had an husband. This is language which the apostle's word about the olive-tree in the epistle to the Romans should enable us clearly to understand. The branches are broken off, but yet there are branches in their place which are counted as part of the olive-tree itself. They are, in fact, in a true sense, the fruit of Israel, although Israel has in the meantime lost that fruitful condition, and here we find the children which, in fact, should more rejoice her heart, when looking at things from the divine point of view, than all the generations of the nation in the flesh merely. Here, of course, are the children of promise. Here is the true Isaac, but the opposition between the one born after the flesh and this new spiritual birth is manifest. This very apostle is proof of it even now, but the known opposition everywhere manifest on the part of Israel to Christ and to His people was, of course, the greatest proof. Israel after the flesh was persecuting the children of promise, but what would be the result? The casting out of the bondwoman and her son. God had, in fact, disclaimed the principle of the law, which was the principle of bondage, and if He had now sons that were really of the free woman, children of promise, children that divine grace had made such, there could not be a common recognition of these and of those so totally opposite. "We then," he says, "brethren, are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free." The law could easily, as it were, and naturally, bring forth children to God. How natural it is for men to accept a system of this sort and to be put upon such terms with God. The whole nation of Israel at once and decisively took this ground without a question. On the other hand, the true seed desired of God must be all born by divine power; born slowly, as one may think, long years passing while they seem to be only scanty in number and slow enough to mature, yet, after all, God will have His own. Scorn as Israel might those who now were being by the Spirit of God led to Christ and Christianity, Israel's casting out was already manifestly at hand, when the very place of their holy house would be dug up by the Roman people and the worship ordained of God for the people in the flesh would no longer be possible to them. Their house was left to them desolate. It was their house, not God's, but that was the sentence upon it. It would soon be not even their house any longer.

2. The apostle closes with the exhortation to "stand fast therefore in the liberty with which Christ hath made us free" and not to be "entangled again

man that is circumcised, that he is a [d]debtor to do the whole law. Ye are [e]deprived of profit from Christ, ye who are justified by law: ye are [f]fallen away from grace. For we through the Spirit [g]await by faith the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus [h]neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but [i]faith that [j]worketh by love.

DIVISION 4. (Chaps. v. 7–vi. 18.)

The Practical Test of the Two Principles.

1 (7-15): The one command of law.

1. YE [k]were running well; who hath [l]hindered you, that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion is [m]not of him who calleth you. A [n]little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. I have [o]confidence as to you in the Lord, that ye will be no otherwise minded; and he that troubleth you shall [p]bear his judgment, whosoever he may be. And I, brethren, if I yet preach

d Rom. 2. 25. *cf.* Gen. 17. 10, etc. with Rom. 4. 11, 12.
e cf. ch. 2. 21. *cf.* Col. 1. 23.
f ctr. Heb. 6. 6. *ctr.* 2 Pet. 3. 17. *cf.* ch. 4. 9.
g cf. Rom. 5. 2, 5. *cf.* Rom. 8. 23-25.
h ch. 6. 15. *cf.* ch. 3. 28. *cf.* Rom. 10. 12.
i cf. Rom. 3. 22. *cf.* Rom. 5. 1.
j cf. 1 Thess. 1. 3. *cf.* Jas. 2. 20-26.

cf. Col. i. 4, 6. *k* ch. 3. 3; ch. 4. 15; *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 24. *l* ch. 1. 7; vers. 10, 12. *m ctr.* 1 Cor. 1. 9; *ctr.* 1 Thes. 5. 24; *cf.* ch. 1. 6. *n* 1 Cor. 5. 6; *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 33; *cf.* Gen. 19. 20; *cf.* Ex. 12. 15. *o cf.* ch. 4. 20; *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 3; *cf.* Phile. 21. *p cf.* ch. 1. 8, 9; *cf.* 2 Cor. 11. 13, 20.

with the yoke of bondage." He is very strong that there could be no profit of Christ to those who put themselves under the law. If they were circumcised, Christ would profit them nothing. A circumcised man was a debtor to do the whole law. This may seem strange from one who, as we know, before this time had himself circumcised Timothy, but the circumstances were entirely different. Timothy was a Jew by his mother's side, and it was, in that case, such a concession on the part of one not under the law putting himself under it in the very liberty that he had to gain others, as made it a sign, therefore, of liberty instead of bondage. With the Galatians it would be entirely different. They, as Gentiles, were not debtors to the law in any way, and if they put themselves under it, it was to gain from it a spiritual blessing; it was a real addition, therefore, to Christ that they were making, but by this, as we have already seen, they would be "fallen from grace," for grace cannot admit the conditional principle of law without losing all its character. Again, we see also that he has no thought of any one taking up the law as a rule of life simply; it is of justification by it that he speaks, and this was in fact the only question that the law raised; but as Christians in possession of the Spirit, which we have seen to be the sign of their Christianity, they were outside the law, and necessarily in possession of a righteousness which the Spirit of God could seal, a righteousness perfect before God. They only waited in faith for the hope which was connected with this; not for righteousness as a hope, but for the hope of glory attaching to it. Thus, they were beyond any possible need of law; and "in Christ," as he declares, "neither circumcision" availed "anything, nor uncircumcision." A man was quite outside both the Jewish and the Gentile acceptance. God accepted nothing, except as faith, which, as the sign of dependence, drew blessing from Him; and which, in its nature, worked not by the principle of fear, which was that of law, but by love.

DIV. 4.

1. The blessing could not be more complete, and they had experienced the joy and power of it. This causes him again to express his astonishment at their now refusing obedience to the truth. They had been running well. Who now was hindering them? It certainly did not come from God, this new persuasion. On the other hand, the power of evil was such that a little leaven would soon leaven the whole lump. Evil, in fact, makes continual demands. One departure from truth will necessitate many, in order that there may be perfect consist-

circumcision, [q]why am I still being persecuted? Then hath the [r]stumbling-block of the cross been done away. I would they would even [s]cut themselves off who are unsettling you. For ye, brethren, have been [t]called to liberty; only [use] not that liberty as an [u]occasion for the flesh, but by [v]love serve one another. For all the law is [w]fulfilled in one word, [even] in this, [x]Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself; but if ye [y]bite and devour one another, see that ye be not [z]consumed of one another.

2 (16-21): The antagonism of flesh and spirit.

2. Now I say, [a]Walk in* the Spirit, and ye shall in no wise fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the [b]flesh lusteth

* Or, "by."

Matt. 22. 39, 40. *x* Lev. 19. 18. *y cf.* Jas. 3. 13-16; *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 3-5. *z cf.* Tit. 1. 10, 11; *cf.* Is. 9. 18-21. *a* ver. 25; *cf.* Rom. 18. 12, 13. *b cf.* Rom. 7. 22, 23; *cf.* Gen. 25. 22, 23 with Jno. 3. 6.

q cf. ch. 6. 12. *cf.* Jas. 4. 4.
r cf. 2 Tim. 3. 11, 12. *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 23. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 8.
s cf. 1 Cor. 5. 2. *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 19.
t ver. 1. Rom. 8. 12.
u 1 Pet. 2. 16. *cf.* Rom. 6. 1, 15 22.
v 1 Pet. 2. 16. *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 16-18.
w Rom. 13. 8 10.

ency. There can be no possible compromise in a path like this, but how great the folly of those who, having experienced the joy and power of divine grace, could now take up with that which was in its nature absolutely contrary! If he looks at them, he may well be disheartened; but in grace itself he had found his refuge. In the Lord he could have confidence that they would be none otherwise minded, and the troubler, whoever it might be, should bear his judgment. He sees easily that there was temptation enough indeed, in a certain sense, to adopt such a thing as circumcision, which would remove, as between Jews and Christians, the whole offence of the cross. The apostle puts it as a thing impossible rightly to cease, and we see the persecution of which he is thinking is on the part of the Jew; and we have seen, it was so distinctly in the history which the Acts has given us. It was to the Jew that the cross was a scandal—the sign, as he has already told us, of One upon whom the law put its curse, of a curse needed to be taken because of the condition of those under law. How impossible for the Jew to allow that the law had nothing but a curse for man, and that the very Saviour of men, to be that, must bear the curse! The cross was the complete condemnation of man before God. It was also complete deliverance for those who accepted the condemnation, but this was the destruction necessarily of all legal righteousness. "I would," he says, "they would even cut themselves off which trouble you." He has no possible tolerance for that which was the destruction of Christian truth and principle; his love to the souls of men made him what people would call intolerant. But, in fact, while these men would uphold the law, the very thing that the law required from man was in practice set aside. The Galatians were finding it so. They had given up their true Christian liberty, and yet, after all, were not keeping the law, for all the law was fulfilled in one word, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." They had surely realized the power of divine grace in this way, but now the effect of their legal addition to the gospel was a total change in their own spirit. They were, as he intimates, "biting and devouring one another." What use to talk about the law in such a state as that? They might well be afraid lest they should "be consumed one of another;" but this is the necessary effect of law ever. The law is claim, demand, and expects, therefore, a full ability on man's part to meet the demand. The spirit of self-righteousness, which alone could take comfort in it on such a principle, has necessarily in it no tenderness, no recognition of one's own infirmity and no compassion for the infirmity of others. The law itself had none and could have none. It was its business to condemn, and it did it well. If a man continued not "in all things written in the book of the law to do them," he was under the curse. How simple, that to accept the law, then, as that under which one was, would be the destruction of all tenderness, of the very spirit which the law really required.

2. There is indeed in man everywhere the flesh and the lust of the flesh,

against the Spirit, and the [c]Spirit against the flesh; and these are opposed one to the other, so that ye [d]should not practise the things that ye would. But if ye are [e]led of the Spirit, ye are [f]not under law. Now the [g]works of the flesh are manifest, which are [h]fornication, [i]uncleanness, [j]lasciviousness, [k]idolatry, [l]sorcery, [m]enmities, [n]strife, [o]jealousies, [p]anger, [q]contentions, [r]disputes, [s]factions, [t]envyings, [u]murders, [v]drunkenness, [w]revels, and such like; as to which I tell you beforehand, even as I said before, that they who [x]do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

[c] *cf.* Ex. 17. 16. *cf.* Jas. 4. 5 with 2 Cor. 11. 2.
[d] *cf.* Rom. 7. 15–25 with Rom. 8. 2. *cf.* 2 Cor. 3. 17.
[e] Rom. 8. 14.
[f] Rom. 6. 14. *cf.* Rom. 7. 4. ver. 23.
[g] *cf.* Rom. 1. 26–31.

cf. Eph. 5. 11, 12; *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 1–4; *cf.* Gen. 6. 5. [h] *cf.* Gen. 19. 32. [i] *cf.* Eph. 5. 3, 4. [j] *cf.* 2 Pet. 2. 10. [k] *cf.* 1 Jno. 5. 21. [l] *cf.* Acts 13. 6. [m] *cf.* Tit. 3. 3. [n] *cf.* Prov. 17. 19. [o] *cf.* Acts 13. 45. [p] *cf.* Gen. 27. 41. [q] *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 3. [r] *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 4, 5. [s] *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 18, 19. [t] *cf.* Mk. 15. 10. [u] *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 12. [v] *cf.* Gen. 9. 20, 21. [w] *cf.* Lk. 15. 13. [x] *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10; *cf.* Rev. 21. 8.

and for a soul that does not yet realize the true deliverance that God has for us, the perfectly natural remedy is to take up with the law. It is, in fact, no remedy, but the reverse. The remedy is to "walk in the Spirit," as he urges upon them here. "Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh,"—not as some would read it now, ye shall *have* no flesh, nor even, ye shall have no lust of it. Lust is that which gives the flesh its character; that is to say, the craving of an unsatisfied heart away from God, and this, too, remains in the Christian, as is plain from what he urges here. "For the flesh," he says, "lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other." He does not say, as the common version puts it: "So that ye cannot do the things that ye would," but "So that ye should not." He will not think of an impossibility on the part of one who walks in the Spirit. To the Spirit, clearly, nothing can be impossibility. Still, the two remain here, as we have seen already in Romans, even in the delivered Christian; and just as in Romans, it is against the Spirit that the flesh lusts. He does not give us here the striving of self against self which was that of the man in the seventh chapter, as yet not delivered. He is not, therefore, as some imagine, speaking simply of what was a low state on the part of the Galatians. Granted that they were in a low state, but he puts it here as a general truth, and in language as already said, which would apply to a man in the Spirit, a delivered man. Even so, flesh and Spirit are there with all their absolute opposition to one another, and the tendency is necessarily to hinder one doing the things he would. Some have put it as if it was the will of the flesh that the Spirit here hinders, but even in the conflict of the seventh of Romans, or rather, in the state of bondage which we find there, the captive, after all, assures himself that the things that he *would* are the things according to God. The apostle would not allow that the will away from God is a Christian state at all; but the flesh, nevertheless, will seek to assert itself, and the only remedy for the soul is the way of the Spirit; that is, as we have seen, in occupation with Christ. With Him before our eyes, there is nothing for the lust of the flesh whatever, and moreover the heart that truly knows Him finds in Him a satisfaction and rest which delivers from the corruption that is in the world through lust; but then, "if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." The two things are in absolute and perfect contradiction one to another.

The works of the flesh are now enumerated, and we must remember that if the flesh be in the Christian, he can never promise himself that they will not be found in their full dreadful character, if once there be license given to it. The apostle has no idea of a modified flesh in a Christian. There are doubtless very different characters of it, but a close brotherhood in the family of sin. The apostle puts them together in that way,—"Murder, drunkenness, revellings and such like," very different in the extent of the evil, but if the soul's anchorage be lost there is no possibility of telling how far it will

3 (22-26): The fruit of the Spirit.

3. But the [p]fruit of the Spirit is [q]love, [r]joy, [s]peace, [t]long-suffering, [u]kindness, [v]goodness, [w]fidelity, [x]meekness, [y]self-control: [z]against such things there is no law. And they that are Christ's * have [a]crucified the flesh, with its [b]passions and lusts. If we [c]live in the Spirit, let us [d]walk also in the Spirit. Let us not become [e]vainglorious, [f]provoking one another, [g]envying one another.

4 (vi. 1-5): Mercy to the falling, as experiencing one's own weakness.

4. Brethren, if even a man be [h]overtaken in any tres-

* Many read, "of Christ Jesus."

y *cf.* Phil. 1. 11.
z *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 7.
a *cf.* Rom. 14. 17.
b *cf.* Rom. 14. 19.
c *cf.* Eph. 4. 2.
d *cf.* Eph. 4. 32.
e *cf.* Eph. 5. 9.
f *cf.* 1 Pet. 5. 12. g *cf.* Phil. 2. 3. h *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 6. i *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 9. j *cf.* Rom. 8. 3 with Rom. 6. 2. k *cf.* Col. 3. 5-9; *cf.* Eph. 4. 22. l *cf.* Jno. 3. 3 with Rom. 8. 6. m ver. 16; *cf.* Eph. 5. 8. n Phil. 2. 3. o *ctr.* Heb. 10. 24; *cf.* Prov. 15. 1. p Ps. 37. 1; Prov. 24. 1. q *ctr.* 1 Cor. 5. 1, etc; *ctr.* ch. 5. 19-21; *cf.* Acts 23. 3-5; *cf.* Num. 6. 9.

drift. It is only the power of the Spirit that can control the flesh; and He controls it by leading us, as we have seen, in another way; but the Spirit, while the full expression of divine grace towards us, nevertheless requires the most complete subjection to Himself. God must be God. It is no grace that will tolerate any forgetfulness of this. "Sin shall not have dominion over you, because ye are not under the law, but under grace." Grace is not toleration in any wise, and the Spirit of God can only lead those who are in full subjection in desire, at least, to Him. It is here that we need to be able so fully to say: "Search me, O God, and try me," to have our feet in the blessed hands of One who cleanses after His own mind as to cleansing. Of the whole category of sin here, it is said, "They that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." That is the road to death from which the Spirit of God takes a man, not leaves him upon it.

3. The fruit of the Spirit is now brought before us. Here, too, is a brotherhood of graces. "Fruit" the apostle calls it. The flesh has its works. He will not give that the name of "fruit," and here it is not, in fact, of work that he is speaking, but of an inward temper, the development of the divine nature, which, therefore, is in unity and peace all through. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-government, against such there is no law." Thus, that which the law could give no power to fulfil, is found by thus walking in the Spirit, and "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts:" that is to say, they have accepted the cross of Christ as that which is for them the judgment of it all and their separation from it. How perfect, in fact, is the judgment of self which the cross truly apprehended gives. It is not merely the judgment of this or that about us, but the complete removal of the man in the flesh, in order that Christ may fill all the scene for us. The knowledge of the new man is that "Christ is all and in all." Thus, it is not a process, as he puts it here, this crucifixion: it is a thing accomplished. We may have to learn by degrees what it means. The light grows brighter upon the path as we walk in it, and we discern more clearly, no doubt, that which suits God. Thus, there is growth in apprehension as to detail, but as to principle, the thing is done at the start. It is Christ, not self that we have put on, and it is that which suits Him that we follow. As it is put in Colossians, we are to "do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus," that is to say, as representing Him upon earth; and that means, assuredly, that from the start the flesh is crucified for us. The cross stands at the beginning of the Christian path, and the Galatians here had the Spirit. He does not question it. They were alive in the Spirit. If so, he says, let the walk be in the Spirit also, "let us not be desirous of vain glory" which the law, if man could keep it, could not but promote, the effect necessarily following; but as to others there would be a spirit of intolerance and not of love; "provoking one another," he says here, "envying one another."

4. We see that he is occupied throughout here, with the practical test; a

pass, ye that are [r]spiritual [s]restore such an one in the spirit of [t]meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. [u]Bear ye one another's burdens, and so [v]fulfil the law of Christ. For if a man [w]esteemeth himself to be something when he is nothing, he [x]deceiveth himself. But let each [y]prove his own work, and then he will have his glorying in regard to [z]himself alone, and not in regard to another. For each one shall bear his [a]own burden.

r *cf.* ch. 5. 25. *cf.* Rom. 15. 1.
s *cf.* Gen. 14. 16. *cf.* Jno. 13. 12-15.
t *cf.* Jno. 21. 15-17. *ctr.* Lk. 18. 11.
u *cf.* Acts 20. 35. *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 14. *v ctr.* ch. 4. 9; *cf.* Heb. 4. 15. *w cf.* Rom. 12. 3; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 12. *x cf.* Jas. 1. 22. *y cf.* Rom. 12. 2; *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 28. *z cf.* 2 Cor. 10. 12-18. *a cf.* Rom. 14. 12.

powerful method of appeal, surely, to those who had, in fact, known the blessedness which the gospel could give; far as they might now be departing from it. The law might require love indeed and did; but it could not produce it, could not even encourage such a spirit in those that followed it. You will never find the legal mind tender really of others. The apostle, therefore, presses it upon them here, that if they were, in fact, spiritual, that would be seen in their behaviour. If one were overtaken in a fault, they would restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, the very opposite of the spirit engendered by the principle which they had taken up. They would consider themselves lest they also should be tempted; but for a man under law, it does not do to consider himself after that fashion; it would work discouragement and despair. On the other hand, he must assure himself under law of his competence to fulfil the commandment, and therefore he must exact from others the fulfilment; assured of their competence no less than his. Spirituality, in fact, may be claimed by those who act in a very opposite spirit to this. That is what he rebukes here. He does not mean to affirm their spirituality. He does not mean that a man has to look at himself and ask whether he is spiritual, before he can realize ability to restore another. The spirit of meekness is the very opposite of such fancied spirituality. The spiritual man is too near Christ to believe in himself; to walk in that presence has, as its surest mark, the spirit of lowliness; and if the Spirit of God bear witness in our souls in a practical way, it will not be to puff us up with the idea of Christ-likeness, but, on the contrary, to point out to us where we are unlike Him; yet here there is no spirit of discouragement or despair engendered. If we have once learned the true judgment of ourselves before God as the cross gives it to us, we shall not expect to find anything in ourselves, and therefore shall not be disappointed; yet our resource is at hand, our strength is in Another, "In Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and we are filled up in Him." There can be no want then to us, and there can be no self-confidence in those whose habitual resort is to this fountain of supply. The spirit of meekness, therefore, will go with true spirituality. Let them show it, he urges, in that way. Let them "bear one another's burdens,"* so they would fulfil the law of Christ, who Himself assuredly was the great burden Bearer. On the other hand, if a man thought himself to be something when nothing (when did he ever think himself to be something without being nothing?) he would deceive himself. He adds now a word against those who were, in contradiction to his own principle, building upon another man's foundations, and indeed, rather destroying those foundations, than building upon them. "Let every man," he says, "approve his own work and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone and not in another." In the end, every one would bear his own burden.* Every Christian must at last take up his own responsibility before God, as we know. Every one must give account of himself to God. It will be the triumph of divine grace to be able to do it after the fashion in which we shall do it; and yet, nevertheless, there is enough in the thought for the utmost seriousness.

* These are two different words in the original.

5 (6-10): The reaping as the sowing.

5. Now let him that is [b]taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things. Be not [c]deceived: [d]God is not mocked; for [e]whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that [f]soweth to his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that [g]soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not [h]lose heart in practising what is right: for in its own season we [i]shall reap, if we faint not. So then, as we have [j]opportunity, let us work what is good toward all; and [k]especially toward those who are of the household of faith.

b 1 Cor. 9. 7-15. *cf.* 1 Tim. 5. 18.
c Jas. 1. 16. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 33.
d *cf.* Prov. 1. 24-26.
e *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 10-13.
f *cf.* Hos. 8. 7. *cf.* Hos. 10. 13. *cf.* Job. 4. 8. *cf.* Gen. 19. 36-38.
g *cf.* Hos. 10. 12; *cf.* Matt. 13. 23.
h 1 Cor. 15. 58; 2 Thess. 3. 13; *cf.* Jer. 8. 4.
i *cf.* Ps. 126. 5, 6; *cf.* Jas. 5. 7, 8.
j *cf.* Prov. 3. 27, 28.
k *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 17; *cf.* Rom. 12. 13.

5. He enters now upon the subject, which this opens, of divine government, a thing which is not, as we know, in the slightest contradiction with divine grace. These are things which are sometimes put as if in some sense contrary to one another; but, on the other hand, the government of God for us is expressly a Father's government, while it is, none the less, that of One who, without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work. This is, of course, a thing of the present, not of the future. The future judgment, whether with regard to saint or sinner, is in the hands of Christ. "God hath committed all judgment to Him because He is the Son of Man," but there is a government which is, none the less, the government of grace, because it is one absolutely intolerant of evil. We may repeat again that the toleration of evil is never grace. It would be a perversion of the very thought of grace to imagine this. "Be not deceived," he says, therefore, "God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap, for he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption and he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." These are principles of absolute necessity. Nothing can alter them. If a man sows a certain seed, he knows, or he should know, that he can get of that seed nothing but what is proper to it. If a man sows to his flesh, he sows, in fact, the corruption which he reaps. The very principle of self-will which must, of necessity, be in it, is a principle which is essentially that of sin. Every form of sin will come under this, and God may allow, in fact, such seed to come to harvest, in order that we may recognize its character, as we otherwise would not do. In the opposite way to that of the man who, bearing good seed, goes forth even weeping, but returns with joy, a man in this way may sow his seed rejoicing, but it will be the return that will be sorrowful. It does not follow that God cannot come in and deliver us from what would otherwise be the necessary fruit of such sowing, if only there be the true self-judgment of it in the soul; for to a Christian, the reaping of it is but in order to self-judgment, and if we will judge it first, there may be no need of reaping at all. Judge it first or last we surely must, or the thing will develop for what it is and be manifest, not to ourselves alone it may be, but to others also. On the other hand, "He that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Blessed and wonderful reaping! The life is looked at here, of course, in its practical character, in its fruits and activities. The life itself, the life which produces this, is no matter of reaping at all, it is what we must have to be Christians. Nevertheless, we can reap it as a practical thing, and the witness of it is that, even though reaped here upon earth, it is something which has eternity in it. All that which in us here is the fruit of the divine work has necessarily its link with eternity. It is for eternity that we are preparing. There is not even just that sharp division between the present and the future for us which we are apt so to imagine. It is eternity that God has before Him, it is the things eternal with which we are conversant day by day. It is eternity, therefore, that imprints its character upon the present. It is the life

6 (11-14): The end of the world for us in the cross.

6. See in what a [l]long letter* I have written unto you with mine own hand. As many as desire to make a [m]fair show in the flesh, these are compelling you to be circumcised, only that they may not be [n]persecuted for the cross of Christ. For [o]neither do they that are circumcised themselves keep the law; but they [p]desire you to be circumcised, that they may [q]glory in your flesh. But [r]far be it from me to glory, save in the [s]cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby† the [t]world is crucified to me, and [u]I unto the world.

7 (15-18): The perfect rule, a new creation in Christ Jesus.

7. For [v]in Christ Jesus‡ neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision; but [w]new creation. And as many as shall walk by [x]this rule, [y]peace be on them, and [z]mercy, and upon the [a]Israel of God. For the rest, let no man [b]trouble me, for I bear in my body the [c]brands of the Lord Jesus. Brethren, the [d]grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

* Or, "in what large letters." † Or, "by whom."
‡ The great weight of textual authority is for this (in Christ Jesus) though the editors in general reject it.

l cf. 2 Thess. 3. 17. *ctr.* Rom. 16. 22.
m cf. Phil. 3. 4-6.
cf. 1 Cor. 1. 26-29.
n ch. 5. 11.
o cf. Jno. 7. 19. *cf.* Rom. 2. 25.
p cf. Acts 15. 1 with ch. 4. 17.
q ctr. Phil. 3. 3.
r cf. Phil. 3. 8.
s cf. 1 Cor. 1. 18. *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 2.
t cf. Jno. 12. 31. ch. 2. 20. *cf.* ch. 1. 4.
u cf. Col. 2. 20. *cf.* Jno. 17. 9, 15.
v ch. 5. 6. *w cf.* Eph. 2. 10; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 17; *cf.* Rev. 3. 14. *x ctr.* ch. 4. 10; *ctr.* Col. 2. 21; *cf.* Col. 3. 10. *y ctr.* ch. 1. 9; *cf.* ch. 1. 3; *cf.* Jno. 14. 27. *z cf.* Heb. 4. 16. *a cf.* Rom. 9. 6-8; *cf.* Rom. 4. 12. *b cf.* Jno. 20. 17; *cf.* ver. 14. *c cf.* ch. 2. 20; *cf.* Col. 1. 24. *d* 1 Cor. 16. 23.

everlasting which we live practically now, and let us not then, says the apostle, be "weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." The path is through a world of trial, and therefore, though in itself all well doing has its own delight, yet the opposition to it from the world through which we pass will surely give us need of such an encouragement as this. "As we have, therefore, opportunity, let us do good unto all men, but especially," he adds, "unto them who are of the household of faith." This ends very much the practical test which he has been making of the two principles which we have seen in opposition all the way through the epistle. All the way through it is a controversy, and one from which we need not expect to escape while we are here. God's principles lead into conflict, and, alas, not merely with the men of the world, but, it may be, as here, with the children of God themselves.

6. In the earnestness of his desire for them, the apostle, contrary to his wont, has penned all this epistle with his own hand. His custom was simply to put a salutation from his hand at the end; but in this case, he could not, as it were, trust another, or was not free to dictate to another the things that were in his heart. It was not with him, as with those of whom he was writing, a fair show in the flesh that he was making. He was not wanting followers, nor, as they, to escape persecution for the cross of Christ. He charges them openly with this. They did not keep the law, they could not but be conscious of that. Their desire to have others circumcised was simply that they might glory in their flesh. For him all that was ended. The cross of the Lord Jesus Christ had closed for him the whole scene here; and in it the world it was that was crucified, and he himself to the world. The character of the world was thus stamped upon it. The cross was for him a shadow resting upon it. If it had judged and cast out Christ, he who was identified with Christ before God, and had learned to identify himself thus, was one whom they had crucified.

7. Christ was beyond it all. He had seen Him, Head of a new creation; in Him circumcision availed nothing now, nor uncircumcision. These had nothing to do with new creation. They belonged to the world, to the fallen world. The Christian walk was outside them altogether, not after the Jewish pattern of legality nor the Gentile pattern of lawlessness. There was a new rule,—a rule which made a man "a pilgrim and a stranger" here, the rule of belonging to

this other scene in which already the glory of Christ was displayed. In the light of that he walked, and for such as do so he desires and pronounces upon them "peace and mercy," (mercy of which they still had need) "and upon the Israel of God"—the true Israelite,* not the fleshly one. Here then, the matter rested for him. None need trouble him more. He bore already in his body the "brands of the Lord Jesus," the brands of trials and sufferings undergone for Christ and which marked him as the bondman of Christ in the joyful apprehension of the love that had been shown. He closes with the constant benediction that was in his heart: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit."

* That is, the natural descendants of Abraham who were also spiritual.—S. R.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF EPHESIANS.

THE epistle to the Ephesians carries us to the height of Christian position. It is, as we well know, the epistle of the heavenly places. Christ is seated there, and we are seated together in Him. The very scene of our conflict is in the heavenly places. In this there is a correspondence, as has been noticed long since, between it and the book of Joshua. Just as Israel had to gain possession practically of that which was their own by God's gift, so are we taught here to get possession of that which is our own in the heavens. The height of our outlook in it gives us a wider range of truth than we could have had before,—in fact, the widest.

It is true that Romans, in the announcement of our place in Christ before God, virtually involves the heavenly position; but this is not worked out in it. We have in Romans the Head of new creation, in Galatians the new creation itself, but only briefly indicated. In Ephesians we get, in a sense, beyond this. The new creation is in contrast, as its Head is, with the old creation and the first Adam; but here we have *all* things headed up in Christ, things "which are in heaven and which are in earth." We look backward to see God's purpose toward us before the world was. We look forward to see God's grace manifested to the principalities and powers in heavenly places in "His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus," and to divine glory manifested in the Church through Christ Jesus throughout the ages. Thus we have the widest scope of view anywhere in the New Testament.

The earth side, if I may so say, of our position, as Romans and Galatians have shown it to us, is omitted. We have neither "dead to sin" nor "to the law," nor "crucified to the world" here; but we are created in Christ Jesus, quickened with Him, raised up together and made to sit together in Him in the heavenly places. This is what is ours individually, which prepares the way for the development of the truth as to the Church. We have, first of all, to see that the bride of Christ is of His kindred, as Abraham required that the bride of Isaac should be. Thus, we have at the very beginning what is individual and which prepares the way to consider our corporate position as united to Christ by the Spirit and made members of His body as well as the habitation of God in the Spirit. This is the full revelation now of that

which had been a mystery hid in God from the ages and generations throughout all the age-times, and Paul himself is the special minister of this to bring men into the fulness of the blessing. It is in the latter part, in connection with our responsibility in our earth relationships, that there is developed the relation of the Church to Christ as His bride, the Eve of the Last Adam.

Everything in Ephesians, as we might expect in an epistle of this character, is based upon the will of God, which all the way through is prominently brought before us. He has "chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blame before Him in love," which is His own nature; we are "predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself;" that is "according to the good pleasure of His will." He might have had us in other relationships than this, although in any we must have been according to the requirement of His perfect nature, but He is acting in all this for the glory of His grace to manifest Himself to all His creatures, a purpose which is in itself a purpose of grace. It is the necessity of a love which must find expression; and which fills and satisfies, as it alone can satisfy, the hearts of those to whom it is revealed.

The principalities and powers in heavenly places are not overlooked, but have their own blessing in this revelation of grace to others than themselves. God's glorifying Himself is nothing less than the pouring out of that which is in Himself, and it is in this divine fulness manifested in Christ towards us that we are filled up. The Spirit of God here is the seal of all this blessing, and, as the Spirit of adoption, the Witness to us that we are the children of God, we have the pledge of the inheritance of children. "If sons, then heirs."

Here then comes association with Him who is Himself primarily the Heir of all. For Him the universe was created and He fashions it all for eternity according to God, Himself the First-Born among many brethren. Thus we are brought, of necessity, into the closest relationship to Christ. There could be nothing closer than the relation of a body to the Head. "We are the fulness" or "complement," says the apostle, "of Him that filleth all in all;" and, as the members of His body, we are to be those through whom He works out His mind throughout eternity: for the body, as is plain, is the instrument of the mind, and the Spirit of God is that which unites and energizes the whole together for this purpose. This is not a transitory blessing. It is not something connected simply with this world, but in this world we are growing up in all things to the perfect manhood, to the "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

The practical results are, of course, dwelt upon here, as elsewhere, and the conflict which we have here is not, as in Romans, or Galatians, with the flesh, but with the "principalities and powers," the rulers of the darkness of this world; the whole aim of Satan in this being to keep us out of the practical possession of that which he knows God has destined us for. We see here, therefore, what the apostle tells us elsewhere was his aim, "to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

Clearly, Ephesians fills, in an admirable way, the third place. It is the sanctuary opened to us, not for worship simply, as in Hebrews, but that we may take possession of it. Our blessings are altogether in contrast with those of Israel; we are "blessed with all spiritual blessings," but "in heavenly places in Christ."

The divisions are six:

1. (Chap. i. 1–14.) God's purpose in Christ as Source of all blessings to us and the Head of all things.
2. (Chaps. i. 15–ii. 10.) Our participation with Christ in God's work beyond death.
3. (Chaps. ii. 11–iv. 16.) The church mystery, the house of God and the body of Christ.
4. (Chaps. iv. 17–v. 21.) The ways that suit this.
5. (Chaps. v. 22–vi. 9.) Our responsibilities in those earthly relationships through which the heavenly ones also shine.
6. (Chap. vi. 10–24.) The conflict and the way of victory.

THE EPISTLE TO THE

EPHESIANS.

DIVISION 1. (Chap. i. 1–14.)

God's purpose in Christ as source of all blessing to us and Head of all things.

1 (1-6): Our predestination as sons to the Father.

1. PAUL, an [a]apostle of Jesus Christ, by the [b]will of God, to the saints which are at [c]Ephesus,* and to the [d]faithful in Christ Jesus. [e]Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

a 2 Cor. 1.1. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 9 with 2 Cor. 12. 11, 12.
b *cf.* Gal. 1. 1, 15. *cf.* 1 Cor 1. 1. *cf.* Acts 9. 15.
c *cf.* Acts 19. 1, etc. *cf.* Acts 20. 17-38. *cf.* Rev. 2. 1-7.
d *cf.* Rev. 2. 11. *cf.* Gal. 6. 16.
e Rom. 1. 7. *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 2.

* Many omit, "at Ephesus," and suggest that the epistle was either a general one, or that referred to in Col. iv. 16. But the words should evidently be retained.

NOTES.

DIV. 1.

As already said, in Ephesians we have, first of all, our individual blessing, and this in its highest character; the fruit, also, of God's purpose in Christ towards us, which is the display of Himself in His own nature; and not simply even for "the glory of His grace," but in result for "the praise of His glory." The apostle announces himself at the outset as an "apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God." He is acting in his divinely commissioned place, to declare that which, as elsewhere we find him saying, is the completion of Scripture truth, and the declaration of mysteries hidden from ages and generations and now revealed. He writes to the saints at Ephesus as to "the faithful in Christ Jesus." We have already seen that Ephesus evidently has in the New Testament a representative place with regard to the Church at large. We are here, therefore, to have the full church character given to it; yet he writes not to the church at Ephesus, but to the saints as individuals. The individual blessing comes first, and must come first. We are members of Christ only by the gift of the Spirit, but we must be first prepared of the Spirit in order to receive this gift, the temple that He is to inhabit must first be built. He could not seal flesh, nor man in sin. The bride of Christ, as already said, must be of the kindred, and therefore we have that here which first of all links us with the essential blessing of all the saints before. The "faithful in Christ Jesus" may make us realize in the Ephesians a condition of soul which prepared them to receive the truth which was now to be communicated. It is plain that in the case, for instance, of the Corinthians or of the Galatians, he was hindered by the condition of soul in those to whom he was writing. In Corinthians he does, indeed, give us the Church as the body of Christ, but he does not carry us up to the heavenly places, but simply develops the practical working of the church on earth. Here he is unhindered. It is a point to be well understood by us that we cannot learn scripture truth as we might learn any other, that there must be a condition of soul corresponding to the truth revealed. There must be hearts open to receive and to take the impress of the truth revealed. There must be a state towards God of those who are whole hearted in their desire to be subject to His mind. To these he begins with his usual salutation: "Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ."

1. He begins, then, with the praise which fills his heart as he thinks of that which is the portion of the saints. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord

/Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who *g*hath blessed us with all* spiritual blessings in the *h*heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath *i*chosen us in him before the foundation of the

* Or, "Every spiritual blessing."

f cf. 1 Pet. 1. 3. *cf.* ver. 17. *cf.* ch. 3. 14 with John 20. 17.

g cf. Col. 1. 12, 13.

cf. 1 Cor. 3. 21-23; *cf.* Rom. 8. 29 32. *h* ver. 20; ch. 2. 6; ch. 3. 10; ch. 6. 12; *cf.* Josh. 1. 2, 3; *cfr.* Deut. 28. 1-13. *i* 2 Thess. 2. 13; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 2; *cf.* 2 Tim. 1. 9.

Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." It is the Father's will, the Father's love to which all is referred here; Christ the One in whom there is the accomplishment of this. "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," suggests, as the Lord has taught us, our own twofold relationship to Him as that. "The God of our Lord Jesus Christ" implies the Man Christ Jesus down here in the place of weakness, to work out His will, to whom God must be God, who walks in the path of faith like no other man, only in the perfection which belongs to Him; but then His God is His Father, and, as this, our Father also, although there is a peculiar sense, of course, in which, as the "Only Begotten Son" He fills such a place. As the "Only Begotten," He is alone and must ever be alone. As the "First Born," He is in necessary connection with others who are not merely naturally but spiritually born. Thus, the Lord says in His message through Mary Magdalene, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God." It has been often noted that the Lord does not say here to *our* Father and to *our* God. He preserves, as a matter of necessity, the peculiar place which is His, and yet He brings us, by virtue of what He is, into relationships which are characterized by His relationship. "My Father" and therefore "your Father;" "My God" and therefore "your God." God has One now in whom He can perfectly reveal Himself. In the Old Testament He was the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob. These three, as we have seen in the book of Exodus, are those specially chosen, as, in the place they fill, giving us to know God in a distinct way. In the God of Abraham, in fact, we see the Father, just because and as in Isaac the one yielded up to death and yet brought out of it, we see the Son. The God of Jacob gives us, on the other hand, the thought of the Spirit. Jacob transformed into Israel is the typical presentation of the Spirit's work. Thus God had in some way identified Himself with these three men, but now there are and can be none associated with Christ after this manner. He is the One in whom God is displayed and He displays Him fully and perfectly. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is God perfectly revealed, and it is He who "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Notice how we are entitled, therefore, to go back through all the Old Testament scriptures and to claim every spiritual blessing that we find there as our own. We do not take them from those to whom they belonged. Those blessings declare the character of God who is now revealed to us and who has blessed us in Christ. No character of blessing, therefore, can be wanting to us. If God says to Joshua: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," we may, as the apostle tells us, claim that promise fully, although there could scarcely perhaps be one which might be considered more incidental to the peculiar place which Joshua occupied. But "all spiritual blessings" then are ours, only that the sphere to which they belong, with which they connect us, is heavenly and not earthly. There is no conflict, therefore, with Israel's blessings; although, surely, their highest blessings must be spiritual also, but they are in earthly places, not in heavenly. Christ is the storehouse of these blessings for us. He is the One who by His work in our behalf justifies their bestowal. Nay, we may say, even necessitates it, for the moment we see Christ as Man here upon earth, the fullest blessing of man is certainly implied for him. "If God spared not His Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" "All spiritual blessings" then are ours. We only need faith to claim them and enjoy them. Unbelief may, alas,

world, that we should be [j]holy and [k]without blame before him in [l]love; having [m]predestinated * us unto [n]adoption through Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good [o]pleasure of his will, to the [p]praise of the glory of his grace, in † which he hath taken us into [q]favor in the [r]beloved.

2 (7-12): Redeemed and brought into fellowship with Him.

2. In whom we have [s]redemption, through his [t]blood, the [u]forgiveness of trespasses, according to the [v]riches

[j] cf. Col. 1. 22. [k] cf. ch. 5. 27. cf. Jude 24. cf. Song 4. 7. [l] cf. 1 Jno. 4. 16. [m] Rom. 8. 29, 30. cf. Acts 13. 48. [n] cf. Gal. 4. 5, 6. cf. Rom. 8. 15.

* Or, "marked us out." † Many read, "which He hath bestowed on us."

[o] ver. 9; cf. Rom. 9. 20-24; cf. Rev. 4. 11; cf. Jas. 1. 18. [p] vers. 12, 14; cf. Rev. 1. 5, 6. [q] cf. Rom. 5. 2. [r] Matt. 3. 17; Jno. 3. 35; cf. Col. 1. 13. [s] Col. 1. 14; cf. Rom. 3. 24; cf. Heb. 9. 12, 15. [t] cf. Rev. 5. 9; cf. 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. [u] cf. Acts 13. 38, 39; cf. 1 Jno. 2. 12. [v] cf. ch. 2. 4; cf. ch. 3. 8, 16; cf. Col. 1. 27; cf. Col. 2. 3; cf. Rom. 2. 4.

make us poor still, shaming the One whom we should glorify by the manifestation of the blessing that is ours. Nevertheless, the blessings abide permanently for His people, and it is, of course, impossible that for any of these there could be the final loss of that which is thus secured; but this makes the apostle look back to eternity before ever the world was, to that will of God to which we owe our all. He has chosen us in Him before the world was. This world, so large and important as it is often in our thoughts, yet is after all that which has, as it were, come in by the way, and is a step in order to His fulfilment of these eternal blessings; but the first thing that we find here is that we must, therefore, be according to His own nature, and here, too, the guard of His holiness is first named: "That we should be holy and without blame before Him"—then His full character—"in love." We must answer thus to what He is if we are to be blessed at all. It is not, therefore, said here, "According to the good pleasure of His will." That comes in the next place when He speaks of our predestination, our appointment to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself. There it is His will merely to which we owe this. If He had servants of His power, they must answer to His nature; not, of course, that He cannot overrule the evil which has come in through sin and make sinful men the instrument of His pleasure, but this is not in question here. It is that which comes from His own heart, not that which displays His power merely, and thus there must be what corresponds to what is in His own heart. Because of what we are, this is to the praise of the glory of His grace. It is grace and grace alone that can bring into the highest place, and this grace has been shown us in the Beloved. The apostle does not say in Christ simply here, but wants to make us realize the fulness of delight which God has in Him in whom we are accepted. Thus the result must be the praise of the glory of His grace. Suited it is that those creatures of His who are to find the very highest place with Him are those thus redeemed from sin. It makes the place itself the display of what God is in a way which nothing else could do. If God is acting in grace, if He is free to show out what is in His heart, then it is what is due to Himself, we may say, that He will manifest, not what is due to us or to any of His creatures, but due to Himself, and thus the fullest blessing must result from it. Christ, "the Beloved" is, as we know, the pledge of all this.

2. He points out now, therefore, the grace side of things. In Christ we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. Let us notice that He does not speak of justification here nor in the epistle anywhere. It is not the suited term, although one peculiarly Paul's, but as another has said: "God does not justify His own work," and we are looked at here in that character. Yet there must be redemption, the taking out of the condition in which we were as sinners in the power of that blood shed, which was the necessary price, but therefore the forgiveness of sins is according to the riches* of His grace.

* How suggestive this word "riches" is, not merely of the exhaustless wealth of God's store, but, by contrast, of that poverty in us which had nothing, having "spent all." We were, and in ourselves still are, poor indeed, but this emphasizes the grace that has opened its wondrous riches to us.—S. R.

of his grace; which he hath made to [w]abound towards us in all [x]wisdom and intelligence, having made known to us the [y]mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he [z]purposed in himself, for the administration of the [a]fulness of times, to [b]head up all things in Christ, things in the [c]heavens and things upon the [d]earth; in him in whom also we have obtained an [e]inheritance, being predestinated* according to the purpose of him who worketh all things according to the [f]counsel of his own will, that we should be to the [g]praise of his glory who have [h]trusted beforehand in Christ.

w *cf.* Rom. 5. 20. *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 14.
x *cf.* ch. 3. 10. *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 21.
y *cf.* Rom. 16. 25, 26. *cf.* ch. 3. 3.
z vers. 5, 11. *cf.* Is. 42. 1.
a *cf.* Gal. 4. 4. *cf.* Heb. 9. 26. *cf.* Rev. 22. 10. *ctr.* Lk. 21. 24.
b *cf.* Col. 1. 16, 20.

* Or, "marked out."

cf. Phil. 2. 9, 10. c *cf.* Col. 2. 10; *cf.* ch. 4. 10; ver. 22. d *cf.* Ezek. 21. 27; *cf.* Is. 49. 6; *cf.* Ps. 72. 8-11. e *cf.* Rom. 8. 17; *cf.* Heb. 1. 14 with 1 Pet. 1. 4. f *cf.* Dan. 4. 35; *cf.* Is. 40. 14; *cf.* Is. 46. 10. g vers. 6, 14. ch. 3. 21; ch. 2. 7. h *cf.* Rom. 4. 3 with Jno. 8. 56; *cf.* Rom. 11. 5 with Rom. 11. 26.

It is not *mere* forgiveness, as it were. There is the overflow of goodness in it; and it is added that according to this "He hath abounded toward us now in all wisdom and intelligence." He has come out to make known to us that which is ours that we may enjoy it according to His mind. He does not reveal what He would not have us enjoy, but He has not merely revealed to us that which is our own blessing, we are made to know the fulness of His purpose which has Christ as its Object. He has made known to us "the mystery of His will," that is the secret of it not hitherto declared, "according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might head up in One all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth." This large and general purpose we do not find, therefore, in the Old Testament. Christ is the glorious King of Israel, the Ruler of the nations of the earth, but the promises of the Old Testament do not go beyond the earth; they belong, as Romans has told us, to Israel, to the apostle's kindred according to the flesh. Here we have what is much wider. Christ is to be Head over all, the fullest security of blessing to all, that could be. All things are to be in His hand when, in the wisdom of God, the time has arrived for Him to put forth His hand and take them. Even now He sits upon the Father's throne, but there, as is clear, in retirement in a certain sense. He has had necessarily to come down first into the lower parts of the earth to the death of the cross, in order that God might be glorified with regard to everything and perfect power over sin might be realized, it might be no barrier to blessing any more. Thus we can understand that at His first coming, Christ could not take the power which was His. The secret of the present delay has to do with us. He is gathering, as we shall see, a people who are to be trained in His school upon earth, in order to inherit with Him that which in grace He shares with them. Thus, the delay has respect to us, is in our behalf, and the whole truth as to the Church comes in in this place. So the apostle goes on immediately to say therefore that, "In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will, that we should be to the praise of His glory who first trusted in Christ." If He speaks of Christ's inheritance there must be the co-heirs, and that is what, during all this time of patience in which evil is so prevalent and good seems almost to be baffled, God is working out by it all that needed discipline which is to make us, as exercised with regard to good and evil, participators in the mind of Christ and instruments in His hand finally. How wonderful a purpose this that we should be not merely to the praise of the glory of His grace, but "to the praise of His glory." The praise of the glory of His grace contemplates the low, sinful estate of those whom He raises up to manifest it in, but "the praise of His glory" contemplates the wonderful

3 (13, 14): Sealed with the Spirit, the earnest of our inheritance.

3. In whom [i]ye also [trusted], having [j]heard the word of truth, the [k]gospel of your salvation; in whom also believing, ye were [l]sealed with the Holy Spirit of [m]promise, which is the [n]earnest of our inheritance, until* the [o]redemption of the purchased possession, to the [p]praise of his glory.

* Some read, "unto," connecting with "sealed."

i *cf.* ch. 2. 1, 11. *cf.* Acts 11. 18.
j *cf.* Acts 15. 7. *cf.* Acts 16. 31, 32. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 23 with Rom. 10. 17.
k *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 1-4; *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 2; *cf.* Acts 13. 38, 39.
l ch. 4. 30; 2 Cor. 1. 22; *cf.* Lev. 14. 14, 17; *cf.* Esth. 8. 8 with Rom. 8. 9.
m *cf.* Acts 1. 4 with Joo. 14. 16, 17.
n 2 Cor. 5. 5; *cf.* Rom. 8. 23; *cf.* Num. 13. 23; *cf.* Rom. 5. 5.
o *cf.* Rev. 12. 9-11; *cf.* Col. 3. 4.
p vers. 6, 12.

condition into which they are brought and seated with Christ, and here he shows us that those in Israel who through grace have anticipated what will be the faith finally of the nation ("we who first trusted in Christ") are to find an infinitely greater blessing than anything that they have lost through Israel's failure.

3. He now turns to the Gentiles, as these Ephesians were. The "we" and "ye" all through the epistle, as we have seen in Galatians also, mark out the difference. "In whom therefore," he adds, "ye also trusted after ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation." The Gentiles come in on equal footing with these Jewish first-fruits, and they have, in consequence, by that Spirit which is theirs, the Holy Spirit of promise, the seal of that condition of sonship, which is the pledge that they shall be heirs also. It is "the earnest of our inheritance till the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise," again, "of His glory." He is now the earnest. Necessarily, that character will cease when we have the inheritance itself: not the seal of the Spirit itself, which would be a loss indeed, if it were possible to us, but it is, of course, only in this way that the habitation of God abides for eternity. God will not give it up. Let us notice that the seal of the Spirit is simply that which is put upon faith in Christ, and that the "after that ye believed" is really too strong. It implies no necessary interval. "In whom having believed, ye were sealed." The sealing marks us out for God, but it is that also which, as doing this, brings in God to preserve that which is His own, and thus it is the assurance of absolute security. We are in a world in which our feebleness is, alas, continually manifest. It is God's grace, therefore, that thus takes upon Himself, as we may say, the responsibility of our being brought through. In the Spirit which He has given us He has pledged Himself to this; so Peter also, having told us that we are "begotten again to an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, reserved in heaven," adds that "we are kept by the power of God through faith unto (final) salvation" (1 Pet. i. 3–5). Here is the power of God in the Holy Spirit of power, the One who, as we have seen, dwells in the very bodies of the saints, in order to make good there, in that which is the very sign of our weakness, and which as yet does not share in the blessing of redemption, the purpose of God.

Let us notice again the peculiar expression here: "redemption of the purchased possession," which, of course, means our inheritance; but thus our inheritance needed to be purchased and needs to be redeemed. This is the first time that we have come to such an intimation. We have what is similar in Colossians, "the reconciliation of things in earth and things in heaven" (Col. i. 20), and in Heb. ix. 23 the heavenly things are seen as having to be purified by sacrifice. This is a mystery to many, the thought of "things," not simply persons, needing the work of Christ in order that God's purposes may be fulfilled as to them; but in fact, everything has waited for the glorification of God as to sin to be accomplished. Satan himself is thus in the heavenly places, not cast down, and when we look forward to the actual time when this shall take place, as the book of Revelation declares it to us, we find that the completion of God's victory over evil has waited and still waits for His purpose towards man to be fulfilled. Whatever we might think, the nature of God is

DIVISION 2. (Chaps. i. 15–ii. 10.)

Our participation with Christ in God's work beyond death.

1 (i. 15-23): Divine power toward us in Christ our Head.

1. WHEREFORE, I also, after I [q]heard of the [r]faith in the Lord Jesus which is in you and the [s]love which [ye have] towards all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention [of you] in my

q Col. 1. 4, etc. 1 Thess. i. 2, 3.
r Rom. 1. 8. *cf.* ch. 2. 8.
s *cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 9, 10. *cf.* 1 Pet. i. 22. *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 14.

such that there could not be tolerated the smallest question as to what He is. Sin has raised questions which must be fully met and answered, which the work of Christ has met, before God could lay hold even of the heavenly places themselves, in which we know sin has been, to renew them according to His eternal purpose. There is no question, of course, of the purification or reconciliation of the fallen angels, yet even so judgment alone upon them could not sufficiently vindicate Him. He cannot, in fact, be vindicated by judgment merely. Judgment may show His righteousness, but not His heart, and the question has gone deeper than with regard to righteousness. Christ's work alone has shown, not merely His holiness with regard to sin, but His love also, and thus still there is a certain delay of the fulfilment of His purpose which has been already spoken of.* He is free now to work out the restoration which is in His mind. Thus, as we have seen in Romans, the groaning creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God, and the possession which is ours in the heavenly places needed that purchase price to be paid for it, not because of those who were to be put in possession, but because of the question which sin has raised even there. The purchase is completed, but the redemption remains to be accomplished yet. "Purchase" and "redemption" are very distinct things, although the same work is necessary in each case; but redemption is the actual bringing out of the evil condition which, we may reverently say, the purchase gives God title to do. If we look on to the twelfth of Revelation, we shall find there that when the man child is taken up to heaven, the dragon and his angels are cast down. That is the redemption. The man child, no doubt, includes both the One who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron, and those also who are expressly promised to share this power with Him (Rev. xii. 16, 17). Thus, during all the time in which we wait, the Spirit of God, the Witness of the glory of Him whose work has been accomplished, is here for the guarding of the fulfilment of these purposes of blessing.

DIV. 2.

We have had, then, the general outline of God's purpose in Christ, not merely towards us, but embracing the subjection of all things to Him. We are now to see how He has, in fact, taken us up to link us with Christ for the fulfilment of blessing.

1. It takes the form of a prayer from the apostle's heart in behalf of those whom he is addressing. He longs for them and for us that we may have the spirit of wisdom and revelation with regard to all these things. In fact, how much has been hidden in this way through the lack of response on the part of God's people to these wonderful communications! He has heard of their faith in the Lord Jesus and their love to all the saints. He gives thanks, therefore, for them, but that is not enough. He realizes that they are yet in a world in which Satan is busy, as by and by he will more fully show, to deprive the people of God of that which, in their knowledge of it now, would be power for them to glorify God in the scene through which they are passing. It is here, in fact, in the entering into these purposes of God, that the Christian character is prac-

* May there not also be the suggestion that all sin penetrates even heaven? God is in relation with man, and therefore all sin of man reaches His holy presence; as the tabernacle, God's dwelling-place in Israel, was defiled by the uncleanness of the people and needed to be purged by blood (Lev. xvi. 16). When all things are finished, and the purging by power takes place, the full redemption will have been effected.—S. R.

'prayers, that the "God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the "Father of glory, would give you the spirit of "wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of him, having the eyes of your "heart enlightened, that ye may know what is the "hope of his calling [and] what the "riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his "power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power [in] which he "wrought in Christ, raising him from among the dead; and he made him to "sit at his right

t ch. 3. 14–19. Col. 1. 9. *cf.* 2 Tim. 1. 3. *cf.* Acts 6. 4. *u* ver. 3. *cf.* Jno. 20. 17. *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 23. *v cf.* Acts 7. 2. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 6. *w cf.* Col. 3. 16. *cf.* Lk. 24. 45. *x cf.* Acts 26. 18; *cfr.* ch. 4. 18; *cfr.* Matt. 13. 19. *y* ch. 4. 4; *cf.* Phil. 3. 14, 20; *cf.* Gal. 5. 5; *cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 9, 10. *z cf.* ch. 3. 16; *cf.* Phil. 4. 19; *cf.* Ex. 15. 17 with Rev. 21. 7. *a cf.* ch. 3. 20; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 17. *b* Col. 2. 12; Acts 2. 24; *cf.* ch. 2. 1; *cf.* Rom. 6. 4. *c* Ps. 110. 1; *cf.* Phil. 2. 9; *cf.* ch. 2. 6.

tically acquired, and the Christian intelligence alone fully gained. It is no wonder, therefore, if here should be the sharpest possible contention, and that here the apostle should be in prayer that God's people should lose nothing of that which He has designed for them. Accordingly, the prayer is to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, the One who has purposed all this, and the One to whom belongs the power alone to accomplish it. He prays that this God may give them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the "full knowledge," (as it should be) of Him. The deepest, sweetest character of the revelation of these things is that it gives the knowledge of Himself. For this we need, as he explains directly, the "eyes of our heart" to be enlightened. It is "heart," not "mind," for in the heart such eyes really are. It is not mere intelligence that can possess itself of these things. It is not any brightness of mind merely, as people would say. It is the heart for what is revealed that will lead to right intelligence as to the revelation. Could God possibly reveal these things with all their announced value for the soul, so that a human heart would kindle with desire to possess itself of them, only to find that the faculty had been denied of obtaining that which was sought for? How impossible to think of it! God's people deprive themselves of what is the inheritance of every one of them, and they must, of necessity, connive at their being robbed of it, in order not to know. The Spirit of revelation, the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of understanding is in them already, and, as the apostle pictures it, it is the Spirit that searcheth the deep things of God. Can He do it in one and not in another? Or, if He be pleased still to have special human instruments, does He mean by that to deny the possession of the truth to any who seek it? Certainly, it would be impossible to think so. The apostle prays, therefore, that they might know what was the hope of this calling of God, that is, of all that, in fact, is hailing us from those blessed scenes which God is opening up to us, and that they might know what the riches are of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. It is God's inheritance. No possession of it on our part could possibly deprive Him of what is in it, and how little would it be true inheritance if we did not inherit it with Him! It is God that inherits what is His, but it is the saints whom He puts in possession, just as He puts Israel in possession of the land which, nevertheless, He reserves as His, and which, therefore, cannot be taken away from Him. "The land is Mine," He says: "ye are strangers and sojourners,"—guests therefore, as such, thrown upon the goodness and liberality of Him who, as such, is entertaining them,—"ye are strangers and sojourners with Me." We inherit after the same manner: a blessed thing to know that it is not the inheritance of a lost Father, but the inheritance of One who dwells with us in it, that belongs to us. But He desires that we should know also the greatness of His power which is working towards us with regard to these very things, according to the working of the might of His strength. How He multiplies words that we might realize the energy that is at work, a power in which He has wrought in Christ; for the work done in Him is

hand in the heavenly places, far [d]above all principalities and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named, not only in [e]this age, but also in that which is to [f]come; and he hath put all things [g]under his feet and gave him to be [h]head over all things to the church which is his [i]body, the [j]fulness of him who [k]filleth all in all.

2 (ii. 1-3): Our previous fellowship.

2. And [l]you [hath he quickened] who were [m]dead in trespasses and sins, wherein ye once [n]walked, according to the course* of this [o]world, according to the

d ch. 4. 10. cf. Col. 2. 10, 15. cf. 1 Pet. 3. 22. cf. Rev. 5. 8, 9.
e cf. Matt. 12. 32. cf. ch. 3. 10.
f cf. ch. 2. 7. cf. Matt. 25. 31, etc.
g Ps. 8. 6. 1 Cor. 15. 27. Heb. 2. 8. cf. Matt. 28. 18.

* Or, "age."

h ch. 4. 15; ch. 5. 23; Col. 1. 18; Col. 2. 19. i cf. 1 Cor. 12, etc; cf. ch. 2. 16; cf ch. 4. 4, 12, 16; cf. ch. 5. 22-32; cf. Col. 1. 18, 24; cf. Rom. 12. 5; cf. Acts 9. 4. j cf. Gen. 2. 18; cf. ch. 3. 21. k ch. 4. 9; cf. Col. 2. 9, 10. l ch. 1. 13; ver. 11; Col. 2. 13; ver. 5. m cf. Jno. 11. 14; cf. Lk. 15. 24; cf. ch. 4. 18. n cf. Phil. 3. 18; cf. Rom. 3. 15–17. o cf. 1 Jno. 2. 15–17; cf. Rom. 12. 2.

done for us all, and the good of it belongs to us all. God has raised Christ from the dead then, and seated Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places. The work is perfectly accomplished, and He only awaits the full answer to it on the part of God. The present answer is only the pledge of the full carrying out of all. His place is already above every principality and power and dominion and every name named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come. He has put all things under His feet. Here it is the One then who has in His own hand the fulness of blessing for us, and this accomplishment already with regard to Him must have its present bearing upon our condition also, even while we are here in the world. God has given Him, in fact, to be Head over all things to the assembly which is His body,—Head over all things, which is that inheritance itself of which Paul has been speaking. He is Head in the full power of such a place to the assembly. All that is implied by the place He has, implies the blessing which is to be to the Church, united as it is to Him now in the nearest way that could be attained—His body; the apostle does not hesitate to add "the fulness of Him who filleth all in all." What things to bring together! Here is One who is possessor of divine fulness; no other could fill all in all, and yet the body is His fulness. He is not complete without it. In God's thought and purpose, Christ would be incomplete if His body had not its place too; how near and wonderful a place,—"His body," filled with His love, energized with His mind, working out His thoughts as our bodies work out the thoughts and purposes of our minds! It is in resurrection, of course, that He becomes this Head. It is a human Head, blessed be God, though He be much more than human. That is the fitting Head to this human Body. Thus, the Church could have no existence until after He had risen from the dead. Search throughout the Old Testament, you will find nowhere the first hint, even, of any company of people as the body of Christ. You will find saints put under Him for blessing, you will find His rule over man, but such a relationship is to be found nowhere, such a relationship could not, in fact, exist until Christ as Man had risen from the dead and become, therefore, the fitting Head for such a body. Then the body itself must be brought into being, and thus the descent of the Spirit follows the ascent of Christ to the throne of God.

2. The apostle carries us back now to what, alas, was our previous fellowship. We have been called to the fellowship of Christ, but how good for us to look back and see what He has called us out of. "And you," he says, "hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." This is the first time in the epistles that we find such a statement with regard to man's condition. The epistle to the Romans speaks of our being under death as the penalty upon our sins. It speaks of our being dead to sin as the effect of the new place of identification with Christ in His death, which God has given us; but now there is something more than this. It is man himself who is dead. That state, impracticable of help to any except God, is his. There is no possibility of self-help.

[p] ruler of the authority of the air, the spirit who now [q] worketh in the sons of disobedience: among whom [r] we also all once had our manner of life in the [r] lusts of our flesh, practising the desires of the [r] flesh and of the [r] mind, and were by [r] nature children of [r] wrath, even as the [r] rest.

3 (4-10): Quickened, raised, and seated in heavenly places.

3. But [r] God, being [s] rich in mercy, because of his [t] great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were [u] dead in trespasses, hath [v] quickened us [w] together with Christ (by [v] grace ye are saved) and hath [x] raised us up together and made us [y] sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the [z] ages to come he might

p *cf.* 1 Jno. 5. 19. *cf.* Jno. 12. 31. *cf.* Job. 1. 19.
q *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. *cf.* Jno. 8. 44. *cf.* Jno. 13. 2, 27.
r *cf.* Gal. 2. 15. *cf.* Jno. 8. 7.
s *cf.* Rom. 2. 21, 22. *cf.* Gal. 5. 16, 19-21.
t *cf.* Jas. 1. 21. *cf.* 2 Pet. 2. 14. u *cf.* Rom. 8. 6; *cf.* Col. 2. 8. v *cf.* Rom. 5. 12; *cf.* Gen. 5. 3 with Ps. 51. 5. w Rom. 1. 18; ch. 5. 6. x *cf.* Rom. 3. 9, 19, 23. y *cfr.* ver. 1. z ch. 1. 7; ver. 7; *cf.* Ps. 51. 1; *cf.* Ps. 103. 8-11. a Jno. 3. 16; *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 9, 10. b ver. 1; *cf.* Rom. 5. 6-8; *cf.* Ezek. 16. 6. c Col. 2. 13; *cf.* Jno. 11. 43, 44; *cf.* Jno. 5. 25, 26; *cf.* Jno. 3. 36. d *cf.* vers. 14-18; *cf.* Gal. 3. 28. e ver. 8; Acts 15. 11. f *cf.* Col. 3. 1; *cf.* ch. 1. 19, 20. g *cf.* Heb. 1. 3; *cf.* Josh. 11. 23. h *cf.* ch. 1. 21; ch. 3. 21; *cf.* Rev. 20. 4; *cf.* Rev. 21. 1-4.

There is no possibility of working out of that condition. No work is conceivable in such a state. This death is Godward. There is not anything which for Him constitutes life at all. He says that this is not a condition of irresponsibility, however, but the reverse. It is "in trespasses and sins" that men are dead; active enough, fully active in this character in which the epistle to the Romans has spoken of them, but dead as to the hopelessness of it, as to the total absence of all response to God which it implies. Activity there is enough, "in which ye once walked," he says, "according to the course of this world, according to the ruler of the power," or authority, "of the air, the spirit which now worketh in the sons of disobedience." This is what gives its character then to the course of this world, age, as it is literally, as we have seen; the whole period characterized by that which is away from God, and with the ruler over it who, as the ruler of the power of the air, is exhibited to us as having that complete control of the earth which the heavens have for fruitfulness or for disturbance. This ruler is the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience. They are marked out as the sons of disobedience, as that which gives him title to the power which he manifests over them. How complete is this apostasy, then, from the blessed place in which God created man to be at the beginning, the one with whom He had come down to walk as with a friend. Nor was there any who did not share this place. "Among whom we also," he adds, we Jews as well as you Gentiles, "all once had our conversation in the lusts of our flesh." We had our common fellowship, terrible fellowship indeed, "in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the wills of the flesh and of the mind;" that is, the grosser or the more refined and spirit part of our nature, both alike evil and away from God. Thus we were "children of wrath by nature even as the rest." The Jew is in no wise exempt, but, on the contrary, as being in this condition in spite of all the blessing and privilege which God had bestowed upon him, is only, if possible, in a greater depth of evil than the Gentile. Such is man's condition, then.

3. "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love wherewith He loved us even when we were dead in sins,"—that is where God's love lays hold upon us, not when there has been something right in us, not when we have begun to waken up and respond to the love which greets us from Him, but simply out of His love itself. "He has quickened us with Christ," and "by grace it is that we are saved," he adds in parenthesis, grace surely. He has given us life when in that condition. There is no condition possible between death and life, no life which could be true life except by His gift for those so fallen, so that here His love met us, doing the whole work from the beginning, quickening us, as he says, with Christ. He looks at it all as part of that same work which brought Christ up from the dead. As to the point of time, of course, we

show the [t]exceeding riches of his grace in [u]kindness towards us in Christ Jesus; for by [v]grace are ye saved through [w]faith, and this [x]not of yourselves, it is the [y]gift of God: not of [z]works, that no one might [a]glory. For we are his [b]workmanship, created in Christ Jesus [c]unto good works which God hath before [d]prepared that we should walk in them.

[t] ch. 1. 7. ver. 4. *cf.* 2 Cor. 8. 9.
[u] *cf.* Tit. 3. 4. *cf.* 2 Sam. 9. 1-3, etc.
[v] *cf.* Tit. 2. 11. *cf.* Rom. 3. 24.

[t] *cf.* Rom. 4. 16; *cf.* Gal. 3. 22. [m] *cf.* Jno. 1. 12, 13; *cf.* Jno. 6. 44. [n] *cf.* 2 Cor. 3. 5; *cf.* Acts 13. 48; *cf.* ch. 1. 4, 5. [o] *cf.* Rom. 4. 4, 5; *cf.* Rom. 11. 6. [p] Rom. 3. 27; *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 26-31; *cf.* Deut. 8. 17, 18. [q] *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 6-9; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 17, 18; *cf.* Gal. 6. 15; *cf.* Jno. 3. 6; *cf.* Col. 3. 10. [r] *cf.* Tit. 3. 12-14; *cf.* Jno. 15. 1-8; *cf.* Rom. 6. 1, 2, 6, 12-14. [s] *cf.* Gen. 2. 8-15; *cf.* Deut. 6. 10, 11; *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 18; *cf.* Gal. 5. 16.

are individually quickened and brought up, but as to the character of the quickening, it is this from its being part of that redemptive work which is the fruit of His intervention for us. It is a life which, in fact, is the life of Him with whom we are quickened. It is a life which makes Him to be the "Firstborn" among human brethren. Christ is looked at here, of course, as the Representative of His people, not, therefore, in the title which belongs to Himself personally, but in that which He had earned by the work to which He stooped. Thus it is all part of the same work. We are with Him in character by virtue of this quickening. Our condition is changed into the total opposite of what it was, and not only is our condition changed, our position is changed. He has "raised us up together." Quickening and resurrection are different things. Quickening is communication of life. Resurrection is the bringing of the life into the place of the living. Christ's resurrection has, in fact, given us this new place before God, as Romans has already taught us to say that we were justified by His resurrection. As His people, although justified now of course, when we become His people and not before, yet we look back to that resurrection of His which was the public sentence of God with regard to this. He has delivered us from every charge that could be made, from every question against us, by the resurrection of Christ. He has given us, therefore, a new and unassailable position in the One whom He has raised up. "He has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ." Notice the difference. He does not say "with Christ" now any more. He is thinking simply of the representative character of Him who is seated in the heavenly places for us. We are actually quickened, we are actually raised up, we belong no more to the dead, whether as to the condition of our souls or as to the company in which we are.* We are actually quickened and raised up, but we are not actually sitting down in the heavenlies. We are virtually and representatively sitting there in the One who is before God for us. Thus we reach, as has been said before, the height of Christian position. The epistle to the Romans has involved this already, for "in Christ" means the same thing there as here, but it is here put in the fullest and strongest way, it is developed in such a way as to make it practically a new thing for us. We would not be entitled to infer such things except we had divine warrant for them, but here we have the warrant. God has made us to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ. Now comes the display of His glorious purpose as to this. It is "that He might show forth in the ages to come the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus." We need not be surprised then that the place should be such a place of wonder! If God is going to show that which is indeed the fruit of Christ's work and the display of the full purposes of His heart, it will be surely true that the fullest blessing possible is necessitated for this. God is acting, as it were, though only grace could say so, on His own account;

* It will be noticed that "together" suggests the union of Jew and Gentile, as later on in ver. 16, they are spoken of as reconciled "in one body" by the cross. Thus we not only are quickened and raised individually, but by the very fact that *all* believers are so, we have a common life and position, into which the previous distinction of Jew and Gentile cannot enter.—S. R.

DIVISION 3. (Chaps. ii. 11–iv. 16.)

The mystery of the Church as the house of God and body of Christ.

SECTION 1. (Chap. ii. 11-22.)

One new man and one habitation of God.

1 (11, 12): The original state.

11 WHEREFORE, remember that ye who once were [t]Gentiles in the flesh, who were called [u]uncircumcision by that which is called circumcision in the [v]flesh done by hand, that ye were at that time [w]without Christ, being [x]aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the [y]covenants of promise, having no [z]hope and [a]without God* in the world.

2 (13-18): The enmity put away.

13 2. But now, [b]in Christ Jesus, ye who once were afar off are made [c]nigh by the blood of Christ. For he

* The word is one, and might almost be rendered "atheists."

cf. Jer. 14. 8. *a cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 5; *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 2. *b cf.* ver. 4; *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 22. 19; *ctr.* Ex. 20. 18 with Heb. 7. 18, 19; *cf.* Rom. 3. 25.

t ver. 1. ch. 1. 13.
u cf. 1 Sam. 31. 4. *cf.* Is. 52. 1.
v cf. Rom. 2. 26-28. *cf.* Tit. 1. 10.
w cf. Acts 4. 12. *ctr.* ver. 13. *cf.* ch. 5. 8.
x ch. 4. 18. *cf.* Gal. 2. 15. *cf.* Is. 61. 5. *cf.* Ex. 12. 43.
y Rom. 9. 4. *cf.* Lk. 1. 72, 73 with Gen. 17. 2-14. *cf.* Ex. 19. 5.
z cf. Acts 26. 6, 7. *cf.* Acts 28. 20.
c cf. Heb. 10.

but then with regard to us, it is grace and nothing but grace. He adds that all the way through here: "For ye are saved by grace, through faith"; and as if that were not enough, he adds, "and this not of yourselves:" that is, as surely is meant here, the faith itself is not of us. It is not of us, but it is God's gift. There is no principle of works, therefore, that any one may boast; nay, if you talk of works, we are His workmanship, and in such a way as He worked at the beginning in creation itself. We are His new creation, "His workmanship created in Christ Jesus." Here is what brings us, of course, into that scene of which the epistle to the Galatians has spoken to us. It is God's work in us that has accomplished this, and "He has created us unto good works," such works "as He has afore prepared that we should walk in them." He has given us a nature which will be fruitful in us after the manner that He desires. He knows what He is doing and His purposes cannot fail of accomplishment. Thus, poorly (if we look at ourselves,) as we may rightly think of ourselves, the glory to come will display the full accomplishment of all that He has had in His heart to do; and the brethren of Christ will be such as even in this way He will not be ashamed to call His brethren.

DIV. 3.

Sec. 1.

1. Having had thus the individual Christian position which the Spirit of God makes good to the soul, we now come to that which is the fruit of the Spirit, uniting us together and to Christ above. The Church is seen here in the first place as the body of Christ, and then as the house of God. The relation of the bride does not as yet come before us. The apostle goes back now to comment upon what they were to whom he was writing, as "in time past Gentiles in the flesh, called the uncircumcision" by that which was, after all, only the "circumcision in the flesh made by hands," but still in the state of privilege, as the people of God on earth. The Gentile state was that of wanderers altogether, who had turned their backs upon God and who were left, as to the mass, in the state which they had chosen. They were "without Christ," "aliens" too "from the commonwealth of Israel," "strangers from the covenants of promise;" they had "no hope," that is no hope that was rightly founded, little in fact of any kind, and were "without God in the world;" an awful position, but which he only refers to here, in order to make the contrast now more wonderful.

2. Now in Christ Jesus, they who were "far off" were "made nigh," made nigh at infinite cost, by the blood of Christ; that which at once declares the enorm-

is our [d]peace who hath made [e]both * one and broken down the [f]middle wall of partition, having [g]abolished in his flesh the enmity, the [h]law of commandments in ordinances, that he might form in himself of the two * [e]one new man, making peace; and might [i]reconcile both * unto God in [j]one body through the [k]cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and he came and [l]preached the gospel of peace to you † who were [m]afar off, and peace to those that were [n]nigh; for through him we [o]both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

d *cf.* Mi. 5. 5. *cf.* Col. 1. 20, *cf.* Heb. 13. 20.
e vers. 16, 18. *cf.* Jno. 10. 16.
f *cf.* Deut. 7. 2, 3. *cf.* Ex. 34. 12-16. *cf.* Acts 10. 13-15, 28.
g *cf.* Col. 2. 14, 20. *cf.* Heb. 8. 13.
h *cf.* Acts 15. 10, 11. *cf.* Rom. 4. 14-17.
i *cf.* Gal. 3. 28. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 17. *cf.* ch. 4. 24.

* The first of these is neuter, the last two masculine. The difference seems to be that when the result is prominent, it is neuter: but when it is the moral effect upon man, the personal form is used. Thus reconciliation and access are both in the personal form. A similar use is seen in John i. 11. "He came to His own [things] and His own [people] received Him not.

† Literally, "evangelized peace."

j *cf.* Col. 1. 20; *cf.* Rom. 5. 10; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 18-21. k ch. 1. 23; ch. 4. 4; 1 Cor. 12. 13. l *cf.* Gal. 6. 14; *cf.* Gal. 2. 19, 20. m *cf.* Jno. 20. 19-23; *cf.* Mk. 16. 15; *cf.* Col. 1. 23. n Is. 57. 19; ver. 13. o *cf.* Rom. 10. 16-21. p *cf.* Col. 3. 11; *cf.* ch. 3. 12; *cf.* Heb. 10. 19; *cf.* Rom. 5. 2; *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 13.

ity of sin in the sight of God and at the same time the infinite love which could pay the price necessitated. That which has declared the sin of the world in its fullest character is that which has put it away for every one who believes. He Himself is "our peace," and this in a double character. First of all, as the apostle puts it here, He has made Jew and Gentile "one," having "broken down the middle wall of partition." In fact, what was Jew or Gentile, when both were dead in trespasses and sins? All distinctions of necessity vanish in death and when both alike need to have peace made for them, both alike are practically far off from God, whatever the outward nearness. In fact, the very law which the Jew prided himself upon, the law of commandments in ordinances, was itself the enmity, that is, a cause of distance between God and men. Not only it could not bring nigh, but as long as it was maintained, it actually held men at a distance from God. It was the accuser of the Jew who boasted in it. It was that which made exceeding sinful the sin which it exposed. Thus it was the enmity which Christ met and abolished in His cross. This has been all worked out for us in previous epistles, but it is now looked at as connecting with the Church as the body of Christ, for which Jew and Gentile had to come together and both had to be brought nigh to God. The enmity was not merely in its effect towards the Jew only, because the condition of the Jew was only the condition of man thoroughly exposed. The enmity, therefore, had to be slain (a strong word used as to it) by that cross which was its penalty, taken and thus removed from those for whom it was taken. Thus, Jew and Gentile in Christ are brought together in "one new man." He does not say "one *body*" simply, now, because Christ, the Head, is also seen here. Thus it is "one new man" and both are reconciled to God also "in one body by the cross." He could not say the "new man" was reconciled, just because that brings in Christ. It was, therefore, here simply "in one body." The full announcement of this must be given as the gospel is given. Christ, therefore, has come and preached peace. We have there contemplated His coming into the world, but now made effective by the work of the cross, so that He preaches peace; whoever may be the instrument used, yet He Himself clearly is the great Proclaimer of it. Coming nigh, as He has done to those afar off, the distance between them and God is ended and over. He found none who did not need peace. It had to be preached to "those afar off and those that were nigh," and now "through Him" "both have access," by the one Spirit given to both, to God as Father. Thus not only is the distance removed on God's side, but it is removed on our side also. God Himself having, by the work of the Spirit, thus put us into the position practically to which the cross had given title. Here then is

3 (19-22): The spiritual house.

3. So then, ye are no more [q]strangers and foreigners, but ye are [r]fellow-citizens with the saints and of the [s]household of God, being [t]built upon the foundation of the [u]apostles and [v]prophets, [w]Jesus Christ* himself being the corner stone; in whom [x]all the building fitted together [y]increaseth to a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a [z]habitation of God in the Spirit.

* Many read, "Christ Jesus."

q ver. 12. *cf.* Deut. 16. 11.
r *cf.* Phil. 3. 20. *cf.* Heb. 12. 22-24. *cf.* ch. 3. 6.
s *cf.* Gal. 6. 10. *cf.* 1 Tim. 3. 15.
t *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 2. *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 6; *cf.* Rev. 21. 14.
u *cf.* ch. 4. 11; *cf.* Acts 1. 13; *cf.* Acts 15. 2; *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 7-10.
v *cf.* Acts 13. 1; *cf.* Acts 15. 32.
w *cf.* Matt. 16. 18; *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 10, 11; *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 4-6.
x *cf.* ch. 3. 15; *cf.* ch. 4. 4, 16.
y *cf.* 1 Ki. 6. 7 with Acts 2. 47; *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 16, 17.
z *cf.* Ex. 25. 8; *cf.* 1 Ki. 6. 3-5; *cf.* Jno. 2. 19-21; *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 16.

the first declaration really of the body of Christ, as we see directly, the revelation of the mystery in other ages unknown to the sons of men, but now revealed. We have nothing yet, as in Corinthians, of the relation, properly speaking, or at least of the activity in the relation of those brought together in this manner. It is glanced at afterwards, but at present the great point is the relation of the Head to the body which, indeed, he has spoken of before, and with the implication of the blessedness attaching to it for His people. He who is Head to the Church is "Head over all things" and thus all things are made to minister to the people whom His work has brought nigh.

3. Thus we have had, in the first part of the epistle, the relationship to the Father as children. We have had, just now, the relationship to Christ as His body. This is, of course, to Christ as Man therefore; His humanity is needed for it, and now we have the relationship to the Spirit as the house of God, indwelt of Him. The body and the house are only, in this way, different aspects of the Church. The Spirit of God dwells in the body, a truth which has its corresponding presentation in the fact that it is in our bodies also that the Spirit dwells. We remember also that in the Lord personally, His body is spoken of as the temple of God. Thus, the body in this sense also becomes the temple of God, being, in fact, that in which the Spirit displays Himself, by which His mind is made known. That is the thought of the body. Here we have the thought rather of the glory to God resulting from it. The house indwelt of the Spirit becomes a "holy temple." The apostle refers, therefore, again to their condition as being once "strangers and foreigners." Now they are "fellow-citizens with the saints," not with Israel, of course, although they might be and are called so in the Old Testament; but yet those brought, in fact, near to God, the remnant of Israel, but now in another and nearer relationship, are those with whom the Gentile Ephesians are made fellow-citizens. That is on the human side. On the divine side, they are of the household of God. The thought of the temple is to be qualified by this, that it is a living temple now, not a house made with hands, but God dwelling and walking in His people. This only, of course, gives fuller truth to the temple character which the apostle goes on to; built solidly upon the "foundation of apostles and prophets" (those, as we see by the order here, and as we see more fully presently, of the New Testament alone) "Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone," the One who in Himself unites, as it were, the two sides of the building,—the Jew and the Gentile,—together, while He is the foundation of the whole. The "apostles and prophets" are not the foundation, but they lay the foundation. "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." In Christ, therefore, all the building is fitly framed together. No one thought can express what Christ is to His people. They are built upon Him, but they grow up in Him also and thus growing, they are to be for eternity a "holy temple in the Lord." The title given to Him here shows His authority over it. He is, in fact, the Leader of the praises of His people and the One who is, as we may say, their praise note also.

SECTION 2. (Chap. iii. 1-13.)
The ministry of the mystery.

FOR this cause, I Paul, the [a]prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles, if indeed ye have [b]heard of the administration of the grace of God which was [c]given me toward you, that by [d]revelation the mystery was made known unto me, according as I have [e]written before briefly; whereby when ye read, ye can understand my intelligence in the [f]mystery of Christ, which in [g]other generations was not made known unto the sons of men as it hath [h]now been revealed unto his holy [i]apostles and prophets in the [j]Spirit, that the [k]Gentiles should

a ch. 4. 1. ch. 6.19, 20. *cf.* Acts 21, 33, etc. *cf.* Col 1.24.
b *cf.* Gal. 1. 23.
c ver. 7. *cf.* ch. 4. 7. *cf.* Rom.1.5.
d *cf.* Gal. 1. 12, 15, 16. *cf.* Rom.16. 25, 26.
e ch. 1. 9, 10, 18-22.
f *cf.* ch. 5.32. *cf.* Col. 2. 2. *cf.* Col. 4. 3.
g *cf.* Matt.13. 17, 35. h *cf.* ver. 10. i *cf.* ch. 2. 20; *cf.* 1 Cor. 4. 9; *cf.* 2 Pet. 3.2. j *cf.* Jno. 16.7,13-15. k *cf.* Acts 11.18.

But He would not have us consider the temple as being simply a future thing; that would leave us without the present blessing of it. He adds, therefore, that we are "builded together for an habitation of God" in Christ. The building is not complete, but it is an actual existence, none the less. It is a house in which God's praises are already begun, an "habitation of God," not such as Israel's of old, but "in the Spirit." These things are, as yet, simply delineated, as we may say, and outlined for us. We shall find the practical working elsewhere. The whole triune God is in relation to us, Father, Son and Spirit, and we have a different character and blessing in relation to each one, Christ Himself being, as we know, the ground of the whole.

Sec. 2.

We now come to the ministry of the mystery, with the distinct declaration of its being truth absolutely new, so that we are not to confound it with anything in the Old Testament, save, of course, what may be typically given there; but types need their explanation and therefore are no contradiction to the truth which they contain, being "hid in God" until the time comes for the revelation.

Paul declares here that he himself and no other is the one charged with the commission to declare these things. The grace to the nations connects evidently with this character of his teaching. His place, rejected of men for Christ's sake, being the seal of his ministry to the Gentiles; grace to the Gentiles was grace in its fullest aspect, and the administration of this grace was manifestly committed to him. The mystery was made known to him by revelation. He had written of it briefly before, (one would say, in the epistle to the Galatians,) although there is no development of the truth made known to him such as he is making known now, but the fact of what God had added to him beyond others is affirmed there and that is what he refers to here, by which, in reading it, they might understand his "intelligence in the mystery of Christ." He is speaking of the way in which he came into this knowledge, not of the contents of the knowledge itself. He was accredited even by the other apostles with that which was beyond them. He now goes on to speak of it as something entirely different from what had ever been revealed before. "In other generations it was not made known to the sons of men as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." He unites, after his manner, the names of others along with himself, and these, no doubt, were the dispensers under him of that which was to him, first of all, a personal revelation. This is what is to be understood everywhere in the epistles, as the meaning of those mysteries which characterize, in fact, Christianity in what is peculiar to it,—the mystery (not without a reference, no doubt, to the well-known heathen mysteries) was that which was revealed to disciples, which could not be understood apart from this revelation, and which, as revealed indeed, would only be apprehended by faith. It was not anything as yet made known to men at large, as by and by, of course, it will be. There are three things in these mysteries as spoken of here,—

be [l]joint heirs and a [m]joint body and [n]joint partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus, by the gospel, whereof I was made [o]minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me, according to the [p]working of his power. To me who am [q]less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the [r]Gentiles the gospel of the [s]unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the [t]administration of the mystery which throughout the ages hath been [u]hidden in God who [v]created all things; to the intent that [w]now

l cf. Gal. 3. 29 with Rom. 10. 12. *ctr.* Deut. 28. 13.
m cf. ch. 2. 16, 17. *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 13.
n cf. 2 Cor. 1. 20.
o cf. Col. 1. 23–25. *cf.* Rom. 15. 8–16.
p cf. Col. 1. 29; *cf.* Gal. 2. 8; *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 9. *q cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 9; *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 15. *r* Rom. 11. 13. *s cf.* vers. 18, 19; *cf.* Col. 2. 2, 3. *t cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 12. *u cf.* ver. 5; Col. 1. 26. *v cf.* Heb. 3. 4; *cf.* Jno. 1. 3. *w ctr.* ver. 5; *cf.* Heb. 9. 26.

First of all, that the Gentiles should be joint heirs, heirs on equal terms with the Jews, or rather with Jewish believers. This we cannot find, therefore, anywhere in the Old Testament. There are blessings for the nations and the world to come, but the Jew is always the head, and the Gentile the tail; there is no joint heirship, no equality. The heirship itself also is different, therefore, from that which the Old Testament promises revealed. It is in another sphere altogether. The Christian blessings are in heavenly places, and the inheritance, as has been already shown us, is an inheritance with Christ. We are co-heirs in this way, also, in a higher and more wonderful position than the Old Testament ever spoke of for any saints whatever. That is the first point; named, no doubt, first, because it seems most in relation to Old Testament truth, though in fact different. Of heirship the Old Testament certainly spoke, but not in any sense of such a body as the Church is, a joint body, as we may call it, using the same word all through here, which shows us Jews and Gentiles upon the most entire equality,—a body in which Jews and Gentiles are alike members, the body of Christ, of which, of course, we have been already fully assured. There is absolutely nothing that could even give a possible ground of confusion with the Israelitish promises.

The third thing is that Gentiles and Jews are joint partakers of the promises in Christ Jesus by the gospel. Here again, a place in Christ is nowhere spoken of in the Old Testament. Christ is King and Lord of His people. They are never identified with Him as Christians now are said to be. The promise in the Old Testament, therefore, was not such a promise. He calls it promise here, not because we have not the place already, which we have been fully assured we have; but because this, as all else, waits for its full manifestation and perfect blessedness in the eternity to come. Of this gospel, having the joy of such things already to the soul, Paul had become minister "according to the gift of the grace of God given" him, "according to the working of His power." Power indeed was needed to sustain him in the height of such a place as this, to enable him to minister it in full reality, nothing accompanying it which would lessen the blessing in the eyes of men. He adds that this grace has been given to one "less than the least of all saints," a thing which those who know God will realize to be perfectly suited; the weaker the vessel, the more manifest is it that "the excellency of the power" is "of God" and "not of man." The strong language has nothing in it which for him is strained or exaggerated, clearly; but he always has in mind that out of which God drew him, and which for him had manifested itself in the clearest and most perfect grace that could be. The former opposer and persecutor of Christ's people carries with him ever the remembrance of this. But what a message of good news, of the unsearchable riches of Christ, of things infinite in their character, which, though known surely, yet altogether pass knowledge. The mystery was now, in this way, being dispensed by him,—a mystery hidden from the ages in God, who created all things, and who acts always in that character of power which this necessitates. Once the Creator, He is now the new Creator, a consummation to which all the

to the [x]principalities and authorities in the heavenly places might be made known, [y]through the church, the [z]manifold wisdom of God, according to the [a]purpose of the ages, which he purposed [b]in Christ Jesus our Lord; in whom we have [c]boldness and access in confidence through the faith of him. Wherefore I beseech [you] that ye [d]faint not at my tribulations for you which are your [e]glory.

SECTION 3. (Chap. iii. 14–21.)

Christ abiding in the heart by faith, we are filled into all the fulness of God.

FOR this cause I [f]bow my knees unto the [g]Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,* of whom [h]every family in heaven and on earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the [i]riches of his glory, to be

* Some omit, "of our Lord Jesus Christ."

x *cf.* ch. 1. 21. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 12.
y ver. 21. *cf.* Ch. 1. 12. *cf.* Rev. 21. 9, etc.
z *cf.* Rom. 11. 33. *cf.* ch. 1. 8, 9.
a ch. 1. 4, 11.
b *cf.* 2 Tim. 1. 9, 10.
c Heb. 10. 19. *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 18. *cf.* Rom. 5. 2. *ctr.* Ex. 20. 18.
d *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 1, 16. *cf.* Phil. 1. 12–14.
e *cf.* Phil. 1. 29, 30; *cf.* 2 Cor. 1. 6; *cf.* 1 Thess. 3. 2–4.
f *cf.* ch. 1. 15, etc.
g *cf.* ch. 1. 3; *cf.* Jno. 20. 17.
h *cf.* ch. 1. 10, 21; *cf.* Col. 1. 15, 16; *cf.* Rev. 5. 11.
i *cf.* Phil. 4. 19; *cf.* ch. 1. 7; *cf.* ch. 2. 4.

ages tended, and for which they were preparing the way. Not only to the Gentiles, in fact, was this revelation being made, but angels also, "principalities and powers in heavenly places" were become the witness of "the manifold wisdom of God" now being wrought out through the Church, the purpose of the ages in Christ Jesus. We are continually apt to forget that there are others than ourselves who are deeply concerned in all this revelation. The earth is not isolated from the rest of God's creation, but His purpose connects all together and is working for the fullest blessing of all. We miss, how much, when we think, therefore, simply of the insignificance of the earth, as if, almost, that which God did upon it must be proportionately insignificant also; but it is plain that a work has been done here which has been done nowhere else, and which can never be repeated; a work which has displayed God in such a manner that the endless ages of eternity and the widest extent of the universe will be alike filled with it. What things to minister! How suited to it and necessary for one taken up by God in this way, although he joins all Christians with himself, to be admitted to "boldness and access in confidence" to God, by faith in Christ. He beseeches the Ephesians, therefore, not to faint at his tribulations for them, which were, in fact, a cause of glory to them. They were all helping to make the more manifest the "excellency of the power" of all this to be "of God;" and He who was in them could not, therefore, be cast down for them.

Sec. 3.

This closes in a prayer which has been often compared with the prayer in the first chapter, a comparison which is much in the way of contrast also. He is in earnest for that for which he prays. The expression "I bow my knees" evidently intimates that. The whole body, as it were, witnesses to that earnest desire which is filling his soul and which he addresses now, not to "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ," not to God in that character, but to "the Father of our Lord." The prayer has to do, not as before, with the knowledge which he would have the saints have of the extent of their blessing. That has been gone through, and now he desires that they should be filled with the affections suited to those to whom God has drawn near after this manner; but still he contemplates what we have just seen, this purpose of God fulfilled in the saints as having to do with "every family in heaven and on earth." Of Him, he says, of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, every such family is named. It should not be "all the family" as in the common version, which destroys the very distinctions which the apostle means to emphasize here, distinctions which only make the unity of blessing which he has before him here, the more distinct and beau-

[j] strengthened with power by his Spirit in the inner man, that [k] Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being [l] rooted and grounded in love, may be fully able to [m] apprehend with all saints what is the [n] breadth and [o] length and [p] depth and [q] height, and to know the [r] love of Christ which passeth knowledge; that ye may be [s] filled into all the fulness of God. Now to him that is able to do exceeding

j cf. Col. 1. 11, *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 9, 10. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 16. *cf.* Acts 1. 8.
k cf. Col. 1. 27. *cf.* Jno. 14. 23. *cf.* 2 Cor. 13. 5 with Rom. 8., 9 10.
l Col. 2. 7; *cf.* Jno. 15. 4-9. *m ctr.* Jno. 1. 5; *cf.* Phil. 3. 10-14. *n cf.* ch. 2. 17 with Rom. 10. 12, 13. *o cf.* ch. 1. 4 with ch. 2. 7; *cf.* Rom. 8. 29, 30. *p cf.* ch. 2. 6; *cf.* ch. 1. 20-22. *q cf.* ch. 4. 9; *cf.* 2 Cor. 8. 9. *r* ch. 5. 2, 25; Gal. 2. 20; Jno. 15. 13 with Rom. 5. 6-8; *cf.* Phil. 4. 7. *s cf.* Col. 2. 9, 10; *cf.* Jno. 1. 16; *cf.* 2 Kl. 4. 2-6. *t cf.* 2 Cor. 9. 8; *cf.* 1 Kl. 10. 1-8; *cf.* 2 Sam. 7. 19; *cf.* Song 5. 1.

tiful. Angels and men, to speak of no more, are different families, at first sight, far enough apart. The angels "who excel in strength" are manifestly of a higher order naturally than man is, man who has been united to the dust of the earth, that pride may be hidden from him; yet when we realize what divine grace has done, this human family appears in a very different character. Christ has come into relationship with these in a way that He has not to the angels. "He layeth not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham He layeth hold" (Heb. ii. 16). Thus men have a part in Christ that no angels can lay claim to. The work done for them, though their sins necessitated it, has been done for no other. It is a Man who is on the Father's throne, and not an angel. Divine grace, in the very fact of taking up the lowest of God's spiritual creatures, has manifested itself only the more, and this, too, necessitates the highest place of blessing for them. But are the angels passed over then in this? Have the other families of God been forgotten? It is clear that what the apostle has already said shows that this is not and could not be the case. The Arms that encompass man by the very fact of his being furthest off and lost, are wrapped around all the rest also. This Fatherly relationship which God has, of necessity, to His creatures, is now characterized by this relationship,—One who has come down amongst these creatures and who has in Himself wedded, as we may say, creation to God. Have the angels gained nothing by this? They did not say so when, Christ being born upon earth, they opened heaven to proclaim their praise. God's good pleasure was in men, but how much did that reveal of God to them also,—of the Father, who was also their Father?

The apostle prays now, therefore, that God may give them "according to the riches of His glory to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man." His glory is being manifested indeed in all its fullness. He desires that this should be realized by us in the heart, but for what purpose? Not that signs and miracles may display what God is working, but "that Christ may dwell" in the heart through faith. This Christ, in whom all God's purposes united and with whom we have been brought into such wonderful and tender relationship, well may He dwell through faith in our hearts, not be a Visitor, known, as it were, fitfully and imperfectly, but dwelling there so that we might be "rooted and grounded in love," that the love which has been manifested in Him might be that out of which we should draw continually and in which also we should be established, a perfect love, dismissing all fear and refusing all distance. "Rooted and grounded,"—thus we are alone fitted to apprehend "with all saints," "the breadth and length and depth and height." He does not say of what. It is not of love, certainly, that he is speaking, for he immediately goes on to say that this is measureless, this surpasses knowledge. "Breadth and length and depth and height" naturally speak of God's ways, of what He is doing. The breadth of His work includes all His creatures. The length of it is from eternity to eternity. The depth of it could only be rightly known by that depth to which Christ has descended for us; and the height by that place which He has given us with Himself; but if we apprehend these things aright, they are, in fact measurements, in a sense, of that which cannot

abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the [u] power that worketh in us, to him be [v] glory in the church in Christ Jesus, unto all the generations of the age of ages. Amen.

SECTION 4. (Chap. iv. 1-16.)
Practical results as to the Church.

1(1-6): Unities. 1. I, therefore, the [w] prisoner in the Lord, exhort you to walk [x] worthy of the calling wherewith ye were [y] called, with all [z] lowliness and [a] meekness, with [b] long-suffering,

u *cf.* ch. 1. 13, 19 with Acts 1. 8.
v *cf.* ch. 1. 12 with ch. 2. 7. *cf.* Rev. 22. 5 with Rev. 1. 5, 6.
w ch. 3. 1. Col. 4. 18.
x *cf.* ch. 1. 18. *cf.* Phil. 1. 27. *cf.* Col. 1. 10.
cf. 1 Thess. 2. 12. y *cf.* Col. 3. 15; *cf.* Phil. 3. 14; *cf.* Gal. 1. 15. z *cf.* Rom. 12. 3; *cf.* Matt. 11. 29. a *cf.* Phil. 2. 3; *cf.* Col. 3. 12. b *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 2; *cf.* Matt. 18. 21, etc.

be measured, so that he immediately adds: "To know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge," like those measurements which we take of the heavens from angles obtained on earth. They convey to us,—how much! but yet leave us to realize that we are incompetent in any full way to estimate what this love is; but even now the consequence of it will be, we shall be "filled up in all the fulness of God." This is what is in Christ. "In Him," as Colossians tells us, "dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," and it is added: "We are filled up in Him." This divine fulness then, though we cannot hold it, holds us. We are, as has often been said, like a vessel dipped in the ocean which cannot, of course, hold the ocean, but in which the ocean is, as well as round about it. Divine fulness, to be filled with that which is, nevertheless, infinite, how natural to think that here the apostle has in some way exhausted the sober estimate of things! It is as if anticipating that thought, that he says immediately, "To Him that is able to do far exceedingly above all that we ask or think, to Him be glory." How wonderful the connection there! Think of what he has just been speaking of. It is not, however, that he means that God is able to do more than fill us with all the fulness of God, but that as to all that we might think about it, He is able to exceed any measure we can make. We may ask, but He can transcend all that we can ask for. We may think, but He will be beyond us still, and beyond us in a power which works in us too, as the apostle says here, a power which is, of course, the power of the Holy Spirit. He has thus taken hold upon us for this very thing, and to make the Church the vessel of His praise, not simply for the present time, but in a way which nothing will exceed, forever: "To Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, unto all the generations of the age of ages." How he seems to contemplate there the whole history as it were of the future, filled with wonderful and new displays continually, to new spectators also of God's goodness and power, and to all these and in the midst of all these, the vessel of His glory will still be the Church in Christ Jesus. Think of it, that this is what God has brought us into! Is it possible, one would ask, to add more to a revelation such as this?

Sec. 4.

We come now, according to the order of that which we find all through Scripture, to the practical results of all this. Truths such as we have been considering must surely be of the most practical character. All doctrine, in fact, is. The precept resulting must be, of necessity, lower than the doctrine itself. The cause is more than the effect and in this case cannot even be measured fully by the effect.

1. We have, first of all here, the unities which the apostle would have us mark. There are seven unities, the number which, as we well know, speaks of a perfection, which is peculiarly that of God. He reminds us, first of all, that as to himself, it is the prisoner in the Lord who is speaking. Well may he who has shown us the power of the truth upon himself in the very place which it has given him amongst men, exhort us to "walk worthy of the calling with which we have been called." The "calling" includes all the blessing that we have been looking at. It is this which God's voice is drawing us on with, a Voice

[c] forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to [d] keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of [e] peace. There is one [f] body and one [g] Spirit, even as also ye were called in one [h] hope of your calling; one [i] Lord, one [j] faith, one [k] baptism; one [l] God and Father of all, who is [m] over all and [n] through all and [o] in us * all.

c *cf.* Col. 3. 12, 13. *cf.* 1 Pet. 3. 9–12.
d *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 10. *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 26. *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 10.
e *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 18, 19.

* Some omit, "us."

cf. 1 Thess. 5. 13; *cf.* Col. 3. 14, 15. *f cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 13; *cf.* ch. 1. 22, 23; *cf.* ch. 2. 16; *cf.* Rom. 12. 4, 5. *g cf.* ch. 2. 18; *cf.* 2 Cor. 11. 4. *h* ch. 1. 18; *cf.* Phil. 3. 14, 20, 21. *i cf.* 1 Cor. 8. 5, 6; *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 13. *j cf.* Gal. 1. 23 with 1 Cor. 15. 1–8; *cf.* Acts 24. 24. *k cf.* Acts 2. 41 with 1 Cor. 1. 13; *cf.* Gal. 3. 27. 28; *ctr.* 1 Cor. 12. 13. *l cf.* Num. 16. 22; *cf.* Is. 44. 6. *m cf.* Rom. 9. 5; *cf.* Is. 40. 12–17. *n cf.* Ps. 139. 7–12; *cf.* Acts 17. 27, 28. *o cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 24; *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 12–15.

which has power in it also to accomplish its will; but what then is the suited answer to it on our part? "All lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love." The necessary effect of having to do with God is that it puts us into that low place before Him, the place of one with whom, therefore, the high and holy One that inhabiteth eternity is able to dwell. To be with God, we must be in the sense of what God is, before Him in the consciousness of creature nothingness, yet not discouraged or distressed by that, but, on the contrary, realizing only the more the sweetness of the wonderful condescension of God toward us. We are in a world of suffering, where sin has caused suffering, and where even in one another the sin still remaining makes us suffer also; suffering from one another thus calling forth in us, as God would have it, only the more fully those Christian graces which find but opportunity for full display where there is such demand upon them. The lowliness which is the primal thought here, becomes in us meekness, and then, with reference to others, longsuffering and the bearing with one another, not as simply accepting, as it were, what we cannot escape from, but "in love." We have to "use diligence," therefore, to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace." We have not to form this unity, as is clear. The Spirit dwelling in us all has formed it, but we have to keep it "in the bond of peace." Nor is it the unity of the body of which he is speaking. That is not ours even to keep, but the Spirit is that which animates the body and makes it work together for common blessing. Thus it is not a unity in form merely, as the unity of the body might be. It is the unity characterized by what the Spirit Himself is, and to keep it may involve also sometimes what might seem to be in contrast, rather, with the unity of the body. The members of the body cannot in that character be cut off from Christ, but yet looking at things as they are here, the figure for us may be rather that of the human body such as we know it in the place of sin and death, and where one member may have, even, to be cut off for the good of the whole. The unity of the Spirit is a holy unity. Separation from evil is an essential characteristic of it, and here it may carry us beyond what the mere thought of one body would seem to necessitate. The unity of the Spirit is living unity, and we need to use diligence to keep it. How many things there are in fact that are contrary to it in a world like this!

The specification of these unities follows. "One body and one Spirit" are linked together with the "one hope of our calling" in which we have been called. Here we have, as has been often said, the innermost of three circles that we find here. The "one body and one Spirit" give us, one may say, the deepest character of unity, to which the "hope of our calling" of necessity contributes. The energy which carries us forward is the energy which works for edification and blessing now. We have then the circle of profession, not meaning by that at all to imply mere profession, while yet it leaves room for it. Here we have "one Lord," Christ in the authority which belongs to Him; "one faith," that is to say, one creed, the common range of truth which belongs to us all; "one baptism," which is not, as we see at once, the baptism of the Spirit, for that would link with the first circle rather than with the second one. Moreover,

2 (7-16): Captivity led captive and the ministry for the increase of the body.

2. But unto [p]each one of us hath grace been given, according to the [q]measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he [r]saith: When he ascended on high he led [s]captivity captive and gave [t]gifts unto men. Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also [u]descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up [v]far above all heavens, that he might [w]fill all things. And he gave some [to be] [x]apostles, and some [y]prophets, and some [z]evangelists, and some [a]pastors and [b]teachers; for the [c]per-

p *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 7. *cf.* ver. 16.
q *cf.* Rom. 12. 3-6. *cf.* Col. 4. 17.
r Ps. 68. 18.
s *cf.* Jud. 5. 12. *cf.* Lk. 11. 21, 22. *cf.* Col. 2. 15.
t *cf.* Acts 2. 33. *cf.* Heb. 2. 4. *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 4, etc.
u *cf.* Matt. 12. 40; *cf.* Ps. 40. 2 with Gen. 37. 24.
v Mk. 16. 19; ch. 1. 21; *cf.* Heb. 1. 3; *cf.* Heb. 4. 14.
w ch. 1. 23; *cf.* Col. 2. 9.
x *cf.* Acts 1. 8, 13, etc; *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 28-30.
y *cf.* Acts 11. 27, etc; ch. 2. 20.
z *cf.* Acts 8. 5, etc. with Acts 21. 8; *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 5.
a *cf.* Jno. 21. 15–17; *cf.* 1 Pet. 5. 1-4; *cf.* Acts 20. 28; *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 12, 13; *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 3, etc.
b *cf.* 1 Tim. 2. 7; *cf.* Acts 13. 1; *cf.* Heb. 5. 12.
c *cf.* Phil 1. 14; *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 2; *cf.* ver. 16.

baptism spoken of in this way, simply by itself, always seems to mean what we ordinarily call that: the baptism of the Spirit has to be expressed by this addition. The language here is used, in fact, analogically, the baptism of water being analogous with that which is a deeper thing; but in the apostle's words here it is simply the baptism of water, which connects, as we have seen, throughout with the kingdom, and therefore with the Lord. It is that in which the Lord is owned. It is that which brings into the sphere of discipleship and thus is linked with the "one faith," which is the disciples' creed. All is perfectly fitted together, therefore, here.

We have finally one unity which is wider, "one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all and in us all." If we take what we have been learning of late, we might say that this "one God and Father" introduces us into a circle which includes the angels themselves also, and so we have the "over all" and "through all," and then in distinction, if this indeed be the reading (which is somewhat in question) "in us all;" it may be however, "in all." Here we have the wide extent of creation plainly before us. He is God of all this. He is the Father of all His creatures, and though sin has indeed come in and marred, for the time, the blessedness of it, yet grace, as we know, has come in too, and more than given us back all the reality of what we have here. Evil, therefore, is not thought of in this connection. It is the glorious presence of One whom everything serves, who pervades everything, whom, therefore, we can find everywhere, if this be the truth of the third clause. Here again, then, we find the blessed triune God: Father, Son and Spirit, all in connection with us, and ourselves in distinct blessing in relation to each Person.

2. Here, then, are the relationships, but we have now to see Christ Himself working for the maintenance and manifestation of what belongs to these relationships. There is grace given to every one of us, "according to the measure of the gift of Christ;" that is, all is in His hand as Lord of all, to measure out to every one what is appointed to him, what gives him his special place. The apostle refers us back to the sixty-eighth psalm, to show us Christ ascended on high, having "led captivity captive," that is, having led captive all the power of Satan, "captivity" put for the one who produces it. It is not enough for Him to deliver His redeemed, however. He must enrich them also. If He has ascended up on high, it is to give gifts to men; but the apostle reminds us here that the One who ascended is seen by this to be One who has descended. We could not rightly speak of ascension with regard to Him, if He had not done so. He was at the highest point of all. If He is now gone up, it is because, in grace, He left the place which was truly His. He has descended, in fact, into the lower parts of the earth. But here then, is a wonderful cause of blessing for us. The very One who descended is the One who has now gone up. Thus He fills all things. There is not a place between the depth of the cross and the height of the glory which He has not occupied. There is not a place in which

fecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the [d]edifying of the body of Christ; until we all [e]attain unto the [f]unity of the faith and of the [g]knowledge of the Son of God, unto the [h]full grown man, unto the [i]measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: in

[d] ver. 16. [e] ver. 15. [f] ver. 5. [g] 2 Pet. 3. 18. [h] ch. 2. 15. [i] ch. 1. 23.

we can be in which we cannot find Him for us; and, with the perfect knowledge which he has of all, the perfect knowledge, therefore, of our necessities, He has given gifts. He means to have us up with Himself where He is, and He knows how low He has to reach down after us. It is in this way, then, that He has given "some apostles, and some prophets and some evangelists and some pastors and teachers."

Apostles and prophets come first, as we have already seen, and lay the foundation. Evangelists go out to bring in others and thus enlarge the building. Pastors and teachers care for that which is within, "for the perfecting of the saints." It is evident that not every gift is named here. It may be that every gift which He gives could scarcely be named; but that we have the special classes after this manner: evangelists, those preceding the pastors and teachers, as their work necessitates; while apostles and prophets stand, in some sense, apart from one another, in a way that is easily recognized; apostles representing more the authority of God, while the prophets speak of communications from Him. The pastors and teachers again are more closely united than any of the rest, a connection which is very obvious, for the pastor has to do with what in Corinthians is called "the word of wisdom," as the teacher has to do with the "word of knowledge." Yet these things tend to unite together; for the "word of wisdom" is but the power to apply to existing things the "word of knowledge;" and love which has the Lord's people at heart will tend always to develop the "word of knowledge" in this way. It is evident that the pastor has more the people before him, while the teacher occupies himself more with the truth; but the end is still, and in all these cases, "the perfecting of the saints." That is the first thing, and it is strongly individual. It is not yet said "for the edifying of the body of Christ," although we come to that directly, but the "perfecting of the saints,"—the individuals come first. God would not have us lose the individual in the general mass. He would not have us think of the body, as it were, apart from the members. Thus the individual saint is the first thing that is contemplated here. But then, let us notice, this "perfecting of the saints" is "to the work of the ministry." We are not to look at these things as if they were simply put side by side with one another, as if the "perfecting of the saints" was the same thing as "the work of the ministry." That is not the idea. The "perfecting of the saints," if the saints are members of the body of Christ, would be clearly to put every member in his place, and that place must be a place of ministry, for that is the function of each member of the body clearly. We have it directly after, here; but the very thought of a member of the body gives us a relationship of responsibility to the body at large, a relationship which each member has, in a way, peculiar to himself. From the very fact of what divine grace has fitted him for, he has a duty with regard to the whole to minister in that way to the whole. Thus the saints are not perfected, except as the result is the work of the ministry on *their* part, and this is parallel to the edifying of the body of Christ. That is what it involves. The body of Christ is built up by the action of these members, which, while they retain their individuality, (or there would be no peculiar ministry of any, as is clear, and no part edifying the whole), yet work for the common blessing. The whole is built up by that, as he says directly "which every part supplies."

This is the work which is needed to be done in the meantime, "until," as he says, "we all arrive at the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, at the full grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Thus he has carried us back to that thought of the

order that we may no longer be *babes, tossed and carried about with every *wind of doctrine, by the *sleight of men in craftiness, unto a *system of error; but holding the *truth in love, that we may *grow up unto him in all things who is the *head, [even] Christ: from whom the whole body *fitted together and knit by every joint of supply, according to the working in its measure of *each several part, worketh for itself the *increase of the body unto the building up of itself in *love.

j 1 Cor. 3. 1. Heb. 5. 13.
k Col. 2. 22.
l Acts 20.30.
m etr. 2Tim. 1. 13.
n cf. 2 Jno. 1.
o ver. 13.
p ch. 1. 22.
q cf. ch. 2. 21.
r ver. 12.
s Col. 2. 19.
t cf. ch. 1. 4.

"one new man" which he has given us before this,—Christ and His body together. It is manifest that the body needs indeed, how much! to grow up, if it is to grow to the "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." That "fulness of Christ" is here the Church itself, of course; for that, we have learned, is the "fulness of Him that filleth all in all," but it is the Church as a body fitted to the Head and therefore having arrived at its completion. Till then, the gifts are necessary here, and till then the "perfecting of the saints" must go on. And notice, the "unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God," these two consist almost of the same thing. We are built up from the Head and by that which is imparted to us by the Head. We are built up by that which we find in Christ. The Head develops the body, however little that may be in accordance with the figure, but Christians grow up in Christ, that is clear; and we see of how much importance the faith is of which he speaks. What knowledge of the Son of God could we have apart from the faith? The truth which God has communicated to us lies at the very foundation of everything, therefore, for our souls; only it must be truth that the Spirit of God ministers to us, and which, therefore, we learn not in the mere common way in which we may learn any other knowledge, but as subject to and taught of Him.

The effect will be that we shall be no longer babes; we shall not be "tossed and carried about by every wind of doctrine, in the sleight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive." Plenty of all that there is, and will be, and God would use it to exercise His people in the truth, that they may learn the value of that which they have, not that they may be carried away from it; and yet how apt apparently are we to be carried away! How we need to be warned with regard to this! How many systems of deception are there in the world, compared with that one truth which certainly must be somewhere, and which is the only thing that can be truth, for there is but one truth. If the babes are characterized by such instability, alas, how many remain babes, one would think, almost to the last! How common a thing it is to see those whom we thought well grounded in truth which they have enjoyed, delighted in, and yet who are carried off by the very first blast of error! How solemn a reminder it is of the need that we have to make progress in the truth that we have, if we are to hold it fast! We may learn it as a creed without ever having learned it really. We may rejoice in it in many respects and yet, for all that, without getting it so for our souls that it becomes a vital necessity for us. To lose it, is as it were to lose life itself; nay, it is to lose what is dearer than life; it is, at least in that measure, to lose Christ Himself. On the contrary, he says here "holding the truth in love," we are to "grow up to Him in all things who is the Head." How much, as already said, how much advance, then, have we all to make, how much have we to learn, how eager ought we to be over our lesson-book, how the gaps that are in God's word now for us ought to fill up! If all of it be just what God would have us acquainted with, if He has not given us too much, if the whole of it is necessary to form in us fully and properly the mind of Christ, what shall we do if we neglect the continually seeking to lay hold more of that which is indeed infinite

DIVISION 4. (Chaps. iv. 17–v. 21.)

Ways that suit this.

1 (iv. 17-24): The truth in Jesus and the new man created in righteousness and holiness of truth.

1. THIS I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye no longer walk as [the rest of] the [u]Gentiles walk, in the [v]vanity of their mind, being [w]darkened in understanding, [x]alienated from the life of God because of the [y]ignorance that is in them, by reason of the [z]hardness of their heart; who, having cast off all [a]feeling, have given themselves up to [b]lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with [c]greediness. But ye have not so

u ch. 2. 2.
v Rom. 1. 21.
w Acts 26. 18.
x ch. 2. 1.
y 1 Pet. 1. 14.
z Rom. 1. 21.
a Rom. 1. 24.
b Gal. 5. 19.
c *ctr.* 1 Cor. 12. 31.

in its character, but which God would have us in some sense embrace as a whole? If we are to be developed as a whole, developed harmoniously, we must go on to this. It is from Christ, then, that the whole body is to be built up,—every part helping in this, every part ministering to every other part, (how we suffer, therefore, from the dislocation of saints from one another which we find to-day) and each part needing to be developed according to its measure also. How much we need then to care for one another and to think of one another, even to think rightly concerning ourselves! If the whole body is to be built up, we need all, clearly, to work for this, and in the measure of every part the body builds itself up. Let us notice that. Gifts of every kind have their place, but then there are no giftless parts. The body as a whole builds itself up. The gifts exclude no action of any part of the body, but, on the contrary, are meant to induce the fullest activity on the part of every member. All that we have, we have to serve with; all that we have is responsibility as well as privilege. And let us notice that this building up can only be in love. That is the spirit of it all. That is the only possible spirit which will beget true ministry, and love always will. How is it possible, if we love others, to see them in the need in which they are and not seek to minister to that need? And how little shall we allow any thought of our insufficiency to prevent us realizing the sufficiency of Him who is fitting us all together to accomplish in us the true character of one who ministers, which is only His character who is the Minister to us all! How can we be in any right fellowship with Him without being ministers after the pattern of His gracious ministry?

DIV. 4.

The fourth division brings us, as always, to the ways that suit what has been already before us. We find, however, simply what is individual here. The Church as such, the relationship of the members to one another, and what would result from that relationship does not come before us.

1. In the first place, we have the truth "as it is in Jesus" and "the new man created in righteousness and holiness of truth." The apostle appeals to them, that now, God having separated them from all that they were in nature away from Himself, they must now walk not as other Gentiles walk but according to the truth in Jesus. He draws a strong picture of that old Gentile walk. It was "in the vanity of their minds," he says, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in them because of the blindness of their heart." How solemn a picture of the darkness of the natural condition, and ignorance which is moral; by which, therefore, everything is distorted. On the other hand, as he will presently say to us, the holiness which belongs to us is holiness of truth.

We are delivered from the shadows, brought into the reality of things. So that holiness is never less than treating things, in fact, as they are. Faith is not an enthusiastic view of life or of anything. It is simply the true view gained by God being before the soul, the light having arisen upon

[d]learned Christ, if ye have heard him and been instructed in him according as the [e]truth is in Jesus; that ye have [f]put away as concerning your former manner of life the old man, which corrupteth itself according to the [g]deceitful lusts; and that ye are being * [h]renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye have [i]put on the new man which after God is [j]created in righteousness and [k]holiness of truth.

d Acts 2. 36.
e Rev. 3. 14. 1 Jno. 5. 20.
f Rom. 6. 6. Col. 3. 9.
g 1 Tim. 6. 9.
h 2 Cor. 4. 16. Col. 3. 10.
i Col. 3. 10.
j ch. 2. 10. cf. Col. 3. 10.
k ch. 5. 9.

* Or, "are."

it. Christ was now the Object before them. They had heard Him and "been instructed in Him, as the truth is in Jesus." He does not say, as the truth is *in Christ*. The truth "in Jesus" is the practical walk, such as His walk was. He says "Jesus," therefore, because he is thinking, not of a place that we have in Him or of the results of His work for us, but simply His example, and Jesus is the name belonging to Him as here in the world, but it was the Christ that they had learned. It is as we see Him in the world that we realize what He is. Christ, as such, is an Object of faith, as we may say, while as Jesus He has come into the sphere of practical life, lived before our eyes. We see the truth in Him. "As long as I am in the world," He says, "I am the Light of the world." Consequently, everything takes its true shape in connection with Him; but it is thus, in fact, that we know Christ, —Christ is His official title. It is that which speaks of Him as the Doer of the blessed work which He has accomplished for us. It is thus that we must learn Him first, before we are competent to realize in any measure His life in the world. Having learned the value of His work for us, we must then remember that we are to walk as He walked. We must look back to that walk of His. It is in putting these things together that our practical ways become what God would have them.

After the quails, the Manna. The quails, the life given up, must be the first, for us. We must know Him as the Victim and the Saviour, and this is what introduces us to Him as the Manna, the Bread from heaven. It is thus alone we are able to walk in His company, and all that we have learned of His work is to make us more completely His in our ways down here. As a consequence, the truth for us is that we "have put off according to the former conversation, the old man which corrupts itself according to the deceitful lusts." We have renounced this. It is always said, if we speak of the "old man," that we have put it off, and of the "new man," therefore, that we have put it on. The one has come in the place of the other. The two are not existent side by side. The man that we were, the man away from God, the man walking after the imaginations of his own heart, that is the man that we have renounced. He has come to an end for us at the cross, whose judgment we have seen there. Our own wills and ways are judged. We have been renewed in the spirit of our mind; we have "put on the new man," the man of the new creation, created according to God in righteousness and holiness of truth. It is the man, therefore, who belongs to another scene than any this world can furnish. It is a scene in which Christ is the centre and indeed, in one sense, everything. The epistle to the Colossians gives us this character of the new man; that is, that he is one for whom there is "neither Greek nor Jew, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free." Plainly those are the differences which obtain upon earth, in a fallen world. The new man has lost sight of these. He is "renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him," where Christ is all and in all. Here in Ephesians, we have, rather, the effect of this. The character manifested is "righteousness and holiness of truth," but "holiness" is not here the word which stands for separation from evil. It is that, rather, which speaks of piety towards God, which puts Him in His place, the place which is necessarily His,

2 (Iv. 25–v. 2): The imitation of God in Christ, walking in love.

2. Wherefore, putting away [l]falsehood, speak ye truth every one with his neighbor, because we are [m]members one of another. Be ye [n]angry and sin not; let not the [o]sun go down upon your wrath,* neither give [p]place to the devil. Let him that [q]stole steal no more, but rather let him labor, [r]working with his hands that which is good, that he may [s]have to distribute to him that hath need. Let no [t]corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for [u]edifying, according to need, that it may give [v]grace to them that hear. And [w]grieve not the Holy Spirit of God with which ye were [x]sealed for the day of redemption. Let all [y]bitterness, and [z]heat of passion, and [a]wrath, and [b]clamor, and [c]injurious language be put away from you, with all [d]malice; and be ye [e]kind one to another, [f]tender hearted, [g]forgiving one another, even also as [h]God in Christ hath forgiven you. Be ye, therefore, [i]imitators of God as beloved children, and [j]walk in love, even as Christ also [k]loved us and delivered himself up for us, an [l]offering and a sacrifice to God for a [m]sweet smelling savor.

* Or, "provocation."

l Col. 3. 9. *m* Rom. 12. 5. 1 Cor.12.26. *n* Mk. 3. 5. *o* Ps. 37. 8. *p* 2 Cor.2.10, 11. *q* Rom.13.9. *r* Acts 20. 35. *s* Lk. 3. 11. *t* Col. 3. 8. *u* Rom.15.2. *v* Col. 4. 6. *w cf.*1 Thes. 5. 19. Heb. 10.29. *x* ch. 1. 14. *y* Jas. 3. 14. *z* Gal. 5. 20. *a* Jas. 1. 20. *b* Matt. 12. 19. *c* Jude 9. *d* Col. 3. 8. *e* Lk. 6. 35. *f* 1 Pet. 3. 8. *g* Col. 3. 13. *h cf.*2 Cor.5. 19. *i cf.*1Cor.11. 1. *j* Rom. 14. 15. *k* Jno.15.12. *l* Heb. 10.5. *m* Lev. 1. 9, 13, 17; Lev. 2. 2.

which He can never be absent from, except as the darkness of mind resulting from the condition of the soul may be unable to see Him.

2. Thus, all falsehood is put off. We "speak truth every one with his neighbor." Here indeed is a glance at a motive which comes from our relationship to one another in the Church. We are "members one of another." The eye must not deal falsely with the foot or hand; but for the members to defraud one another is to deal untruly with themselves. If we are angry, we must take care that sin does not come in upon the heels of it. There is an anger which we read of in the Lord's case. "He looked round about upon them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts." If we nurse even such anger it will be sure to degenerate. We are, therefore, not to let the sun set upon our wrath, nor to give room, in this way, to the devil. In a world in which sin is, we can have no heart for God if we do not feel it, nay, if we are not aroused by it; but if the personal element is allowed, there will soon be a wrath which is not of God. Now for him that stole, he is to steal no more, but that negative character is not enough for him. "Rather let him toil, working with his hands that which is honest, that he may have to distribute to him that needeth." No corrupt word is to be allowed out of the mouth, but again "that which is good" in the way of positive ministry, "that it may give grace to those that hear it." Then we are not to "grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom we have been sealed to the day of redemption." Notice how there is brought in here the motive derived from the grace which has come in to deliver and bring us through the peril of the way. The sealing, as we have seen elsewhere, implies our security. We are not threatened with the Holy Spirit leaving us if we grieve Him. He has come to abide, but on that very account, we must not grieve the gracious Visitor. How the word speaks of His personal interest in us, the One who has come to make good Christ's interest in His own. This bears, of course, upon every other matter here. Again, "bitterness, heat of passion, wrath, clamor, injurious language" have all to be removed from us, "with all malice," and the opposite character is to be maintained: "Kindness, compassion, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ," as it should read, "hath forgiven us." It is not "God for Christ's sake," which would seem to

3 (v. 3-21): Light in the Lord; Christ giving light.

3. But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not be even [n]named among you as becometh saints, nor filthiness, nor [o]foolish talking, nor [p]jesting, which are not befitting; but rather giving of [q]thanks. But this ye well know that no [r]fornicator nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an [s]idolater, hath any [t]inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one [u]deceive you with vain words, for because of these things cometh the [v]wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience. Be not ye, therefore, [w]partakers with them: for ye were [x]once darkness, but now are [y]light in the Lord; [z]walk as children of light (for the [a]fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth), [b]proving what is well pleasing to the Lord; and have no [c]fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even [d]reprove them; for the

n *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 1. 2 Tim. 2. 19.
o 2 Tim. 2. 23. Tit. 3. 9.
p Rom. 1. 28.
q 1 Thess. 5. 18.
r 1 Cor. 6. 9.
s 1 Cor. 5. 11.
t 1 Cor. 6. 9. Gal. 5. 21.
u Gal. 6. 7.
v Rom. 2. 8. Col. 3. 6.
w 1 Tim. 5. 22.
x 1 Pet. 2. 9.
y 1 Thess. 5. 5.
z 2 Cor. 6. 14.
a 1 Jno. 2. 9.
b Rom. 12. 2.
c 2 Cor. 6. 14.
d 1 Tim. 5. 20.

intimate as if God acted in it simply for Another, whereas "God in Christ" speaks of *the way* in which He forgives, what He has done, in fact, for us, that He might be able to forgive us, and this brings out His whole heart as well as what righteousness has necessitated. We are thus to be "imitators of God as dear children," those who express and commend their Father's character, and we are to walk in love, after the pattern of that love which Christ had to us when He gave Himself up for us "an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor." It is the burnt offering, of which the apostle is reminding us here, that offering which speaks of the perfect obedience of One who came here to do the will of God, nothing else. The offering was to God for men, and in the remembrance of this we are to walk in love, which we have learnt in Him.

3. The character and effect of the light into which we are brought is now urged upon us. There are things which are not even to be named by those who would act in character according to their name. Saints are thus set apart to God, and those who are His must be separate from the breath of defilement; nay, there are things which are less gross than these which are still not convenient, not fitting to the character of those who should walk seriously as before God, for life is serious, and as those, also, who realize the goodness of God and walk, therefore, in the spirit of praise which becomes those who recognize this. He warns us distinctly here, that no one characterized by such things as he names has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God. Men might deceive them with vain words, they might prate of Christian liberty and what not, but "on account of these things, the wrath of God comes upon the children of disobedience." He is speaking, of course, of the world, and not of Christians. He does not threaten Christians with the wrath of God. It is not the way in which the Spirit of God works upon us. At the same time, that this wrath does come upon the children of disobedience, necessarily gives intense solemnity to it. Christians, therefore, must not be in any sense partakers with them. There must be the fullest possible separation. Men could do in the darkness what they cannot do in the light, and therefore the sins of Christians have, in fact, a worse character than those even of the men around them. We were once darkness, we are now "light in the Lord." The title again brings in the thought of His authority over us. We have learned to recognize this and to walk as children of the light, because "the fruit of the light" (so it should read) "is in all goodness and righteousness and truth." How blessed and cheering the light is! And such is the path which God has ordained for us and which the light increases to the perfect day. We prove herein by practical ways what is acceptable to the Lord. We are not to have "fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness," but to reprove them. The very moderation here of his words is

things which are done by them in secret it is a [e]shame even to speak of. But all things, when they are [f]exposed by the light are made manifest; for that which [g]maketh everything* manifest is light. Wherefore he saith: [h]Awake thou that sleepest and [i]arise from among the dead, and Christ shall [j]shine upon thee. Look, therefore, [k]carefully how ye walk, not as unwise but as [l]wise, [m]redeeming the opportunity, because the [n]days are evil. Wherefore be ye not [o]foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And be not [p]drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be [q]filled with the Spirit, [r]speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; giving [s]thanks at all times for all things to him who is [t]God and Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; [u]submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of [v]Christ.

* Some render, "Everything that is made manifest is light."

[e] Rom. 1.28.
[f] Jno. 3. 20.
[g] 2 Cor. 5.10, 11.
[h] Is. 60.1, 2. (Paraphrased.)
[i] Rom. 13.11.
[j] 1 Jno. 2. 8.
[k] Col. 4. 5.
[l] Rom. 16. 19.
[m] Col. 4. 5.
[n] Jno. 7. 7.
[o] Col. 1. 9.
[p] 1 Cor. 11. 21.
[q] Lk. 1. 15, 41, 67. Acts 2. 4. Acts 4. 31. Acts 9. 17.
[r] Col. 3. 16.
[s] 1 Thess. 5. 18.
[t] Col. 3. 17.
[u] 1 Pet. 5. 5.
[v] 2 Pet. 2. 10.

striking. He does not say works fruitful in evil. It should be enough to say "unfruitful" for us. "What fruit had ye then," asks the apostle, "in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?" What we want is not merely a correct walk, but what God Himself shall find fruit in. Our character, therefore, as manifested in our ways, is to reprove these unfruitful works beneath which is also a secret depth of evil which it would be a shame even to speak of; but the light makes everything manifest. The Christian, alas, may sleep in the light itself, wherefore he says: "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from among the dead and Christ shall give thee light." To sleep among the dead, how terrible a thing! But the Christian abides, as we see here, always in the light. He may forget it, he may be untrue to it, but the light is there, and the light for him is in the face of Christ. There is no other test for anything but how it looks in His presence. We are to walk carefully, therefore. We are in a world which requires this. We must have the wisdom which is the application of the truth to all the circumstances of the way, and we must redeem the opportunity, the season; for the power of evil is such that unless we are careful, ready to lay hold of every opportunity for God, we shall find ourselves soon unable to make head against the power of Satan which is in the world around to-day. We are not to be foolish, therefore, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. Then comes a beautiful word. We are not to be "drunk with wine," not carried away from our sober senses, "in which is excess," but to "be filled with the Spirit." Here there is no excess. Yet, when the Spirit came at Pentecost, men said, in their perplexity, "These are filled with new wine;" and indeed the power of the Spirit carries us so outside of the things which are natural to men and in which the heart is, that those whom the Spirit actuates will be counted to have lost their sober senses; but the power of it is manifest in the way in which the truth enjoyed makes music in the heart,—as he says here: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." Notice that he puts it upon us to be thus filled. He does not even bid us pray for it. He will not allow us to think, as it were, that our dullness can be anything except the result of the way in which we straiten and limit the Spirit that God has given us. The spring will necessarily spring up and overflow. It would have to be kept down, as it were by force, if it did not do this, and it is the power of other things entering in which hinders thus the blessed Spirit in giving us that which is the proper effect of the blessed truth He ministers. With this, how naturally and necessarily goes the spirit of thankfulness! "Giving thanks at all times," he says,

DIVISION 5. (Chaps. v. 22–vi. 9.)

Natural responsibilities.

I (v. 22-33): The fundamental unity for man as such.

1. "WIVES, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as to the Lord; for the husband is [w]head of the wife, as Christ also is [x]head of the church; he is the [y]saviour of the body. But as the church is [z]subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their own husbands in everything. [a]Husbands love your wives even as Christ also [b]loved the church and delivered himself up for it, that he might [c]sanctify it, cleansing it by the

[w] Col. 3. 18.
[x] 1 Cor. 11. 3.
[y] Col. 1. 18.
[z] ver. 25.
[a] Col. 3. 18. 1 Pet. 3. 1, 5.
[b] Col. 3. 19.
[c] ver. 2.
[d] Jno. 17. 19. 1 Cor. 1. 2.

"for all things to Him who is God and Father, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ." *He* could give thanks at all times. He goes out with a hymn to His agony in the garden. For us, how simple, where there is nothing of this sort really awaiting us, no darkness such as He was in, nothing but the blessed light itself, how easy it should be for us to give thanks! "Submitting yourselves one to another," he says finally, "in the fear of Christ;" an unusual expression, as one might expect the *fear of the Lord*, or *the fear of God*, but the "fear of Christ" may have its suited place here, for there is a fear which springs out of the very consciousness of the love which His Name expresses.

DIV. 5.

We have now the earthly relationships of the heavenly people. It is striking that such responsibilities as these should come in just in this place. We find them also in Colossians, where the body of Christ is before us in some sense as we have it here, but it is suited, surely, that in the place which God has given us in Christ before Him, a place in which there is neither male nor female, in which, therefore, all these relationships might seem not to be found, that we should, nevertheless, have them pressed upon us. We belong to the new creation. We could not say that the relationships of which he is speaking here belong to this, and yet what is taught us clearly is that, while we are here, we are to own all that is of God, as we have seen with regard to other things. Creation was of Him. The world is fallen, but that which He meant for man in these relationships is none the less good in itself, and in this way to be respected. Christianity, as we know, in no wise sets aside whatever is of Him in any sphere, and it is suited that just here, therefore, where at least we might imagine such things could never come in, we have explicitly the responsibilities attaching to earthly relationships. In these, moreover, there is shining through, the light of those higher ones in which God Himself has taken up the ties of nature to make them the patterns of things which His own love has brought in for us. Thus it is here that we have the Church's relationship to Christ as the Eve of the "Last Adam," and it is striking that here we go to the very beginning of the world, before, in an evil sense, there was any world at all, before sin had spoiled things, to find at the very outset imaged for us that special relationship which Christ has made His own. How near it must be to His heart when it is the first thing that we find typically presented to us in the history of man! Thus, the Lord means to have us for Himself, and the tie of nature, we may be well assured, is, after all, only a feeble figure of the reality of which it is the figure.

1. The apostle begins with this here, with wives and husbands. The wives are to submit themselves to their own husbands as to the Lord. The authority of the Lord is concerned in it, and the way in which He has taken these things up is to be reverently observed also. The husband is the head of the wife, as also Christ is the Head of the assembly. The very shadows of such things must be dear to us. If it were but a picture only, how could we abuse such a picture of His love to us? We are reminded here at once,

[e] washing of water by the word, that he might [f] present the church to himself, glorious, having no [g] spot or [h] wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men also to love their own wives as their [i] own bodies: he that loveth his own wife loveth himself: for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, [j] even as Christ also the church, for we are [k] members of his body; [we are of his [l] flesh and of his bones].* For this cause shall a man [m] leave his father and mother and shall be united to his wife; and the two shall be one flesh. This

[e] Tit. 3. 5.
[f] cf. Gen. 2. 22.
[g] Song 4. 7.
[h] cf. Job 16. 8.
[i] ver. 31.
[j] Jno. 6. 51.
[k] 1 Cor. 12. 27.
[l] Gen. 2. 23.
[m] Gen. 2. 24.

* Some omit.

"He is the Saviour of the body," His is not a place of authority merely. The authority itself is that which we yield to with delight, as realizing the title that He has to it. So, says the apostle, follow the pattern, "Even as the Church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." That, of course, could not possibly be meant to limit the higher authority of Christ Himself or of the Father. If there comes to be a question there, if these two are in manifest contradiction to one another, we must obey God and not man. Upon wives, submission to their husbands is enjoined. The husbands are never pressed to keep their wives in subjection. The duty pressed upon them is to *love* their wives, but here, again, the same measure is put before us; it is to be "as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify it and cleanse it with washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing." That, it is plain, carries us back to the beginning, only it was God that presented Eve to Adam and not Adam that presented her to himself. Christ transcends all types, and therefore it is fit and right that this should be manifest to us here. *He* is going to present the Church to Himself. He is diligently perfecting it according to His own mind, that He may be able to do this.

The water washing has nothing ritualistic in it. The apostle explains it here as "by the Word." The power of the Word it is by which the Spirit works. Water could only act as water. God never uses a thing out of its place. He, the Creator, honors His own institution. He does not accomplish spiritual results by material means, nor can He possibly slight that Word, which is the work of the Spirit and by which the Spirit works. It is striking that in the Lord's words to Nicodemus, the living water gives us the Word and the Spirit in relation to one another. The life in the water is the Spirit in the Word. Without the Spirit, the Word itself could accomplish nothing; but, on the other hand, the Spirit of God acts by the Word. If the angel comes to Cornelius, it is only to send him to one who already has in his possession the revelation of God for his soul. How blessed to know that this work, which seems, as we think of it often, to be so little according to the full result which God is bringing us to, that it is, nevertheless, in hands that cannot leave unfinished that which He has begun. It would be as impossible for the Spirit to fail in the accomplishment of that which He has undertaken, as it would have been for Christ to fail in that which He came to do. Thus Christ will present the Church to Himself "glorious," not merely having "no spot," but no "wrinkle" also; no sign of old age about it, no defect; nothing will suit Him then but the bloom and eternity of an eternal youth, the freshness of affections which will never tire, which can know no decay. The Church will be holy and blameless then. After all that we have known of her history, it would be strange to read that, if we did not know how gloriously God maintains His triumph over sin and evil.

Here, then, the Antitype shines fully through the type, but men ought

[n] mystery is great, but I speak in regard to Christ and the church. Nevertheless, do ye also, every one of you, each [o] love his own wife as himself; and the wife [see] that she [p] fear her husband.

2 (vi. 1-4): The family relationship.

2. Children, [q] obey your parents in the Lord, for this is just. Honor thy father and thy mother, which is the first [r] commandment with promise: That it may be well with thee and that thou mayest live long on the earth. And ye, fathers, [s] provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the [t] discipline and admonition of the Lord.

n ch. 3. 3.
o Col. 3. 19.
p 1 Pet. 3. 2.
q Col. 3. 20.
r Ex. 20. 12.
s Col. 3. 21.
t Gen. 18. 19. 1 Sam. 3. 13.

also to "love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his own wife, loveth himself," and here, again, Christ is before us, for no one ever "hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it as the Lord the Church." Think of the apostle being able to put it in such a way. "We are members of His body;" we are "of His flesh and of His bones." These are different things which we must not confound. Eve was out of Adam. God formed the woman out of the man. She was thus akin to him in the closest way, but it is not this kinship in the spiritual sense that ever makes us members of His body. That is, as we know, by the Spirit. Both things are accomplished as to us. We have the nature which makes us to be of His kindred, nay, to be of Himself, but then we are brought into relationship, also, in which we are to be surely for all eternity; those who are the instruments of His purposes, the expression of His mind. The two things necessarily go together. The Lord must make us, first of all, such as He can work by before He can work by us.

The wife here is but another aspect of the Body. The apostle, in fact, seems to identify them. The man who loves his wife loves himself, his own flesh, his body, and so the apostle quotes from Genesis here, that "a man shall leave his father and his mother and be united to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh." This he expressly states to refer to Christ and the Church, but the apostle applies it to the natural relationship: "But let every one of you so love his wife even as himself, and let the wife also reverence her husband."

2. The admonition to children and parents follows. Children are to obey their parents "in the Lord." This preserves, of necessity, His rights. "In the Lord" means in subjection to the authority of Christ, and therefore, of necessity, preserves that authority in everything. The apostle quotes the commandment with the sanction given to it in the Old Testament,—not at all as what is absolutely true for the present time, but to show the importance attached to it by God,—the first commandment having a promise connected with it: "That it may be well with thee and that thou mayest live long on the earth" or "in the land," as the connection would rather make it. No doubt there is a government of God that goes on through all the present time, in which these things have a measure of fulfilment. The law was, or is still, the rule of God's government, which, however, the peculiar position of Christians upon the earth necessarily modifies as to them. As Christians, they may be cut off from the earth, when, as obedient children simply, they would be preserved upon it; but the Christian loss is gain, as we know, so that the apostle Peter elsewhere refuses, as we may say, to consider it as loss. "Who is he that shall harm you if ye be followers of that which is good?" But, he immediately adds: "But if ye should suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye." The suffering for righteousness' sake might seem to be a setting aside of what he had just urged, the question being the most positive form of statement, in fact. No one could harm them in following that which was good, but then, "suffering for righteousness' sake" is *not* finding harm. A Christian cut off from the earth simply goes to heaven and to Christ. The Jew cut off from his land was, at least as to Jewish blessing which was *in* the land, in a different case.

3 (5-9): Sin's transformation retransformed by grace.

3. [u]Bond-servants, obey your masters according to the flesh with fear and trembling, in the [v]singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with [w]eye service as men pleasers; but as bond-servants of [x]Christ, doing the will of God from the [y]heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord and not to men; knowing that whatsoever good thing each shall do, this shall he [z]receive of the Lord again, whether he be bond or free. And ye, masters, do the same things unto them, giving up [a]threatening, knowing that [b]both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no [c]respect of persons with him.

u 1 Pet. 2. 18.
v Col. 3. 22.
w Col. 3. 22.
x Col. 3. 24.
y Col. 3. 23.
z Col. 3. 24, 25.
a 1 Pet. 2. 23.
b Col. 4. 1.
c Col. 3. 25.

Now comes the address to fathers: in the first place not to use authority so as to make it a burden to those under it, not to provoke the children to anger, but to bring them up in the discipline and admonition of the Lord. They are to be subject to the authority to which the parents also themselves are subject. This common subjection makes everything right. Divine authority is that which establishes every other authority and in which parents and children become alike brethren and servants.

3. We have lastly the address to servants and masters. To servants, who, in fact, were bondmen, slaves, the word is to obey their "masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling," not on account of anything in their relationship to these, but as serving Christ in it, in singleness of heart as to Christ. How everything is raised in character here! The hardship of bond-service is relieved at once by the ability to make it service to Him, where all service is perfect freedom; yet this, of necessity, makes it pains-taking service too. It will be of the best kind, "not with eye service as men pleasers." If the desire were only to please these, it might be effected by what, after all, is superficial enough; but if we are, as all are, the bond-servants of Christ in spirit, "doing the will of God from the heart," we shall serve with good will "as to the Lord and not to men," and the compensation in due time may be looked for also. "Whatever good shall be done, ye shall receive of the Lord, whether a man be bond or free." Masters, on the other hand, have to remember that they have a Master in heaven. Scripture lowers the hills and raises the valleys. These also serve in their very position as masters of others. They must not, therefore, use their authority with harshness, remembering that their Master is in heaven, and that with Him there is "no acceptance of persons."

Div. 6.

We have now, in closing, a look at the hindrances that there will surely be to the filling just such a position as the epistle gives us. The highest position is that which will be most strongly contested. That in which we are most distinctly Christian, the enemy will oppose with all his power. The conflict in Ephesians is not conflict with the flesh. There is no question that Satan must work upon the flesh if he is to succeed in it. That is true, but we are never exactly called to conflict with the flesh. The lusts of the flesh war against the soul. We are not to war with them, but to abstain from them. If we are "dead to sin" and to reckon ourselves dead, that is not fighting. If there be conflict, it is the result of not having reckoned ourselves dead. Here, however, it is an enemy who is contemplated, and we must not think that the height of our position and the blessedness of the things which are set before us here will bring us upon ground unassailable to the enemy. When Israel got to Canaan, it was just there that they had to fight, and fight for the possession of that which God made their own. We have to remember what is the great point of the conflict here therefore, a conflict which we shall little feel if we are not bent upon possessing ourselves of what is our own. On the other hand, if to lay

DIVISION 6. (Chap. vi. 10–24.)

Conflict and the way of victory.

FINALLY, brethren, be [d]strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the [e]whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the [f]wiles of the devil. For our wrestling is [g]not against blood and flesh, but against [h]principalities, against authorities, against world-rulers of this [i]darkness, against spiritual [hosts] of [j]wickedness in heavenly places.

[d] Josh. 1. 5, 6, 9.
[e] Rom. 13. 12. 2 Cor. 6. 7.
[f] 2 Cor. 2. 11.
[g] 2 Cor. 10. 4.
[h] Col. 2. 15.
[i] Col 1. 13.
[j] Dan. 10. 13, 20.

hold of these heavenly things is the earnest desire of our souls, we shall find, nevertheless, that we need all the strength which is ours and all the resources of God for us, in order to prevail in the conflict. The very first point here is that strength is to be "in the Lord." We are to fight "in the power of His might." How comforting is that title which is given to Christ here! He is, in fact, the Lord of all, and though Satan may seem to have things here entirely under his sway, yet after all, he is a beaten foe, and only part of the "all things" that "work together for good to those that love God."

That does not mean that we can afford to be careless in the least with regard to it. On the contrary, we must "put on the whole armor of God that we may be able to stand." It will not do to have part of it firmly on and some other part wanting. Satan will be keen to observe the deficiency, and we cannot be rightly for God if we are not for Him in every way. It is, in fact,—as we shall see directly,—this being for Him in every respect, that is our armor to withstand the enemy. Let us notice that it is "against the wiles of the devil" that we have to stand, not against his power, for he has none in the presence of God, but his "wiles" are things that test us. We must have the wisdom of God to meet them with. We must be able to discern "things that differ;" error in its nicest shades and its closest approximation to the truth. It is the devil we are meeting, and that gives character to his assaults. He is the accuser, the accuser of the brethren, the accuser of God, surely, to the brethren. His whole aim is to put distance between the soul and God. If he cannot do that, we are safe. But the struggle then is not against flesh and blood; it is not such a struggle, after all, as Israel under Joshua had. Kings seemed to swarm in Canaan. There were abundance of principalities with which they had to deal, all of which have a correspondence in our case. Against us are principalities and powers, "the rulers of the darkness of this world." Here is a hint,—more than that,—of the method of attack. The darkness is the "darkness of this world." It is the world which Satan knows how to use and which he will bring in to cloud our perception as Christians, our realization of the things that are our own.

Thus, in the book of Joshua, we find that while the Canaanite leaders answer to these evil spirits in the heavenly places, yet, in fact, as soon as ever Israel got into the land, Jericho had to fall, and Jericho is the world itself. Yet, that same world judged in the mass, may in detail spring up again, and thus Ai, in opposition against which they failed, reminds us at once of Jericho, even in its ashes.

Then follows the deceit of Gibeon, and all through, it is the power of the world in some shape that is pictured in what they have to meet. In fact, Satan's aim will be surely, with the heavenly man, to bring in the things of earth through which he has of necessity to pass, to cloud the brightness of that heavenly blessing. Here, of necessity, is a strife for us from which we cannot escape, for one's sphere of duty is in the world, in which we have to serve God. Our occupation is in it, and thus we are brought face to face with that in which the power of Satan easily displays itself. Sight and sense will seek to prevail against faith, not so much by what is open attack as by simply the

Wherefore take up the whole armor of God that ye may be able to [k]withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore, having [l]girt about your loins with [m]truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having [n]shod your feet with the preparation of the [o]gospel of peace: over all, tak-

[k] Ps. 37. 19.
[l] Lk. 12. 35. 1 Pet. 1. 13.
[m] Jno. 17. 17.
[n] Deut. 29. 5. Song 7. 1.
[o] Col. 1. 20.

crowding out of that which is the joy and power of the soul. We need, therefore, to take "the whole armor of God," in order to be "able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." There are special evil days, that we shall all recognize. There are times when the power of the enemy is gathered against us in a very unmistakable way,—after all, perhaps, not the times in which we are in the greatest danger. After success has been obtained in some sore strife, and we are in the joy of victory, then there may be, on the other hand, a carelessness brought in by the very victory itself, which may allow us to fall, as it might seem, without a battle. Gideon defeats the hosts of the Midianites and Amalekites, a host without number. When he has gained the victory, he falls without a battle at all, as we realize in the ephod which he makes, which is, in fact, a thing bred of the very place which God has given him. He has offered sacrifices before at God's command. This entitles him, as it seems to him, to intrude upon the functions of the regular priesthood, and this connects, no doubt, with the further and worse failure in his family afterwards. When he has refused the kingship in Israel for himself, his son Abimelech grasps it in a more open manner. Thus, when we have done all, we have to stand. Nothing but humility, the constant sense of our dependence upon Another, the watchfulness which comes from this consciousness of inherent weakness, will enable us to find constant success.

The details of the armor are now presented to us. First of all, our loins are to be "girt about with truth." "Truth," notice, comes here first,—the action of the Word; and what does it do for us? It girds the loins. It prevents our garments, our habits, as we may interpret it, hindering us. The power of heavenly truth upon our souls will make us, in our whole character here, simply as those who are passing through and not settling down. Our garments in that way will never be loose about us. The strife is constant. As far as it goes, we must not expect rest. We have a rest, indeed, in Christ at all times, but that is another thing. The time of rest has not come. We are to be as soldiers of Christ, who, as the apostle says, are not to entangle themselves with the things of this world. When the enemy is meeting us with the darkness of this world, how important for us, first of all, this girdle about the loins! Next comes the "breastplate of righteousness." The breastplate covers a vital part. If indeed there is not righteousness with us, the accuser has a fair means of attack. He is Adonizedek, the lord of righteousness. Righteousness is his constant plea before God when he would sift us, as he sifted Job or as he sifted Peter. If we are God's wheat, we must expect such sifting, which accomplishes, after all, as we know already, both in Job's case and in Peter's, that which is blessing for us; but at the same time it puts us to the test. Righteousness, let us remember, is practical consistency with our position and relationships, and thus if we are indeed heavenly men, this righteousness will be a very different thing from what the world would call such. The only righteous thing for us is to be practically what we are professedly in every thing, and even the showing of mercy is only righteousness for those who have had mercy shown them, nor can righteousness exist apart from the love which we owe men at all times. Thus, the "breastplate of righteousness" is indeed important, and we see how the truth must have gone before it, to put us in the place which defines for us what practical righteousness must be with us.

Next, we have the feet shod for the way. We remember, as to Israel, how perfectly their feet were shod, how their shoes never wore out, spite of the flinty

ing up the [p]shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the [q]fiery darts of the wicked one. Have* also the [r]helmet of salvation, and the [s]sword of the Spirit, which is the [t]saying of God: [u]praying at all

* Literally, "have received."

[p] Ps. 91. 4.
[q] cf. 1 Pet. 1. 7.
[r] cf. 1 Thess. 5. 8.
[s] Heb. 4. 12.
[t] Matt. 4. 4, 7, 10.
[u] 1 Thess. 5. 17.

desert they were traversing all the forty years of their journey through. Our feet are shod differently, but, of course, in a higher way. Our "preparation" is that which is wrought by the effect of "the gospel of peace." It is not a question of carrying the gospel to others. It is our feet that are shod with this "preparation;" it is a peace which God has preached to us in it, the peace with Himself, which gives peace, therefore, as to all things: "For, if God be for us, who can be against us?" It is this peace that arms the feet, then, for all the difficulties of the way. What circumstances are there which are not in His hand? What difficulties can be too much for Him? The wilderness is still the wilderness. The trials and difficulties are there. They are best met in the consciousness of our being unable to meet them, but they must be met also with the faith that the God of peace Himself is with us and that He will give us peace always, by all means. That is the Lord's word for His people. "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in Me ye shall have peace." Here are shoes that never wear out. How blessed the experience of the way in which God has furnished us thus!

The body is thus perfectly provided for, but still we have need of the shield of faith "over all," as we should read. This is that practical confidence in God which should never fail us at all times, even in the midst of the sense of failure and the need of self-judgment. Let the armor be fitted to us as it may, there is always room for some apprehension, if we simply think about ourselves, that after all, somewhere we may have left opportunity for the enemy; but the shield of faith covers all the armor. Whatever we may imagine with regard to this, and with the consciousness of our feebleness at all times, the confidence in God, which should never slacken with us, is our security and rest; only we must remember that the putting on of the armor comes first. There must be honest endeavor to have all right in this way. We must not try to shield a body evidently exposed, with a cover of this kind, but when we have all apparently right, we have need still of that practical confidence which, let us notice here, has for its object specially to "quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one." These "fiery darts" are indeed terrible weapons. The fire speaks of the wrath of God, of judgment, at least, from Him, and it is with this that the enemy would assail us. He is, we must remember, the accuser. His aim, as already said, is to bring distance in some sense between our souls and God. How great a necessity, therefore, to maintain this happy confidence in Him, which, while it does not excuse failure in the least, yet, in utter weakness, finds all its confidence in Him who has undertaken for us. "All the fiery darts of the wicked one" can thus be "quenched" by the "shield of faith." Besides this, we are to have the "helmet of salvation," not, as in Thessalonians, the "hope of salvation." There it is the world with which we are in conflict. Here it is the consciousness of a salvation already attained, which sustains us against the enemy. This is not a hope. It is a realized certainty. This may well give us complete possession of ourselves in the peril of conflict. The helmet covers the head. We are preserved by it from blows which would rob us of what we rightly call "presence of mind." It is this presence of mind in the midst of perils which is the best kind of courage, and the salvation of God is that which may well secure it for us.

Then we have one and only one offensive weapon, "the sword of the Spirit," the word of God, as that which enables us to penetrate all the wiles of the enemy, to expose and baffle him. How impossible it will be to oppose that of

seasons, with all prayer and supplication in the [v]Spirit, and [w]watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for [x]all saints, and on [y]my behalf that utterance may be given to me in opening my mouth to make known with boldness the [z]mystery of the gospel, for which I am an [a]ambassador in chains, that in it I may have [b]boldness as I ought to speak.

[v] Jude 20.
[w] Col. 4. 2.
[x] cf. ch. 1. 15.
[y] Col. 4. 3.
[z] Rom. 16. 25.
[a] 2 Cor. 5. 20.
[b] Acts 4. 29, 31.

which we are not positively sure whether it be his voice or the voice of God Himself! If there is any confusion as to this,—and the great work of the enemy is to promote this confusion,—of necessity we have no right to dismiss from our mind the very thing which may be, nevertheless, merely his temptation. How much we want to be armed, therefore, by "the sword of the Spirit"! How we must have God's word furnishing us at all points if we are to be ready for every form of assault! But let us notice here, that it is not exactly "the sword of the Spirit which is the *word* of God." It is "the saying" rather than the "Word;" that is to say, if we think of the Word of God, it is the whole book which He has put into our hands. What we want, in fact, for the conflict, is the special word, the text which suits the occasion, and that is what "the sword of the Spirit" really is. It is the word of God as applied by the Spirit of God, used therefore, with the wisdom of God, as with our Lord in the wilderness, where always the special text is brought forward which decides what is before Him. So it must be for us; but for this, let us remind ourselves again, we must be in the energy of the Spirit. The use of the sword requires practice and to be on the alert and watchful.

All this is closed with what John Bunyan numbers amongst the weapons. It is the weapon "all prayer," and it is very striking as coming in here, after all the high and blessed truth into which the apostle has been leading us through all the epistle. There is no text, perhaps, which insists so fully upon the necessity of prayer as that which we have here. "Praying at all times, with all prayer," and not mere prayer, but "supplication," that is, earnest beseeching, the soul thoroughly conscious of its need and that in the Spirit, guided by the Spirit in that which we seek. How much prayer is there which is merely the contention of our own wills with God, which, however earnestly we may pour it out, leaves us rather exhausted with the contention than at rest in having made known our wants to Him!

But this is not enough. We are to "watch unto prayer." We are to watch "with all perseverance" and not merely as burdened with our own individual needs. Our needs, surely, must remind us of the needs of others. Our needs are the needs of others, and God, in making us realize the one, would make us realize the other. Therefore, the apostle adds: "And supplication for all saints." If we think of Israel in the land, we can realize the common cause which united them, and for ourselves there is the same common cause that unites us, and how much the defeat of others by the power of the enemy, the entanglement of others with his wiles, must add to the strife for ourselves also; yet it will not do, of course, to pray for others as realizing simply our need of others. Others too, need us, and the heart of a saint, if he be a saint at all, must respond to such an appeal for others as the consciousness of his own need makes to him. The apostle puts himself here along with the rest, as one who is in need of the prayers of the saints, and his cause is indeed the cause of all. It is Christ for whom he labors. It is the saints, therefore, whom he is serving, and the desire of his heart is that utterance may be given him to open his mouth that he may make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel for which he is an ambassador in bonds, that he may have that boldness with regard to it that he ought to have. How thoroughly he himself had the consciousness of his weakness, so that he not only seeks God for himself, but would unite others in seeking God for him. We think of such a man as the apostle as almost beyond

But that ye also may [c]know my affairs, how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother, and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things; whom I have sent unto you for this very thing, that ye may know of our affairs and that he may [d]encourage your hearts. [e]Peace be to the brethren and [f]love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. [g]Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in [h]incorruption.

[c] Col. 4. 8.
[d] 2 Cor. 1. 6. 2 Cor. 7.13.
[e] 1 Pet.5.14.
[f] 1Cor.16.24.
[g] Col. 4. 18.
[h] Tit. 2. 7.

the need of this; but, in fact, there is no one beyond it, and the success of that for which he stood is indeed the common concern of all. How our hearts should at all times be engaged with it!

This ends in substance the epistle. A few words simply are added with regard to himself, his own affairs which he counts upon the saints being interested in. Tychicus, therefore, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things of this sort known to them, while, on his part, he has sent him, not simply that they might know of his affairs, but that their own hearts might be encouraged. He concludes with the salutation: "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ," and widens this according to the character of the epistle here, which is scarcely a local one; "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption."

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF COLOSSIANS

THE epistle to the Ephesians has already carried us to the height of Christian position. Consequently, we have no further step to take in this direction, but as ever, the carrying out of the truth thus revealed is now to be proved in practice. The fourth epistle here gives us, in fact, if not exactly the walk through the world, at least the furnishing for that walk, that which would answer to the first part of the book of Numbers. A consequence of this is, that we necessarily find the truths of the former epistles brought forward into this. The truths of Romans, Galatians, Ephesians are all found in Colossians. Along with Romans, we have the man in Christ, dead to sin, and to law. With Galatians, we find him also as having died to the world, while the truth in Ephesians, that we are "quickened with Christ and raised up with Christ" is equally before us; but none of them give us, on the other hand, what characterizes the epistle here. We need all these truths for practical use in walking through the world; but the great and governing truth in Colossians is Christ Himself, not even our place in Him, although that enters into it, but the Lord Himself, the Object before the heart.

This is very clearly to be seen in comparing those parallel passages with Ephesians which are so noticeable here. Thus, if in Ephesians the apostle says that "God in Christ hath forgiven you," Colossians has it: "Even as *Christ* hath forgiven you." If Ephesians speaks of the "new man" as "created in righteousness and holiness of truth," Colossians speaks of the "new man" as "renewed in knowledge," "where there is neither Greek, nor Jew, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but *Christ is all* and in all." If Ephesians bids us "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called," Colossians bids us walk worthy of the *Lord*. The central verse in Colossians is that "all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily" and that we are filled up in Him. Thus, the soul, as one may say, and as most needed for a walk through the world, is under government here. We have received Christ Jesus the Lord and we are to "walk in Him." We are to "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing," and we "are translated into the Kingdom of the Son of God's love." This, then is our main furnishing, as we may say, for the path, while we are told directly of the strength that we receive by the power of His glory before the soul, and are exhorted to hold fast the Head, from which the whole body is ministered to and increases

with the increase of God. The truth of the Church is here, but is not dwelt on. It is the Head upon which the apostle insists.

A kindred and beautiful thing, (at first sight, however, seeming unaccountable,) is that the Spirit of God is only mentioned once, and that incidentally. We have no *doctrine* of the Spirit. How completely in accordance is this with what we know of His work, who has come to take of the things of Christ and to show them to us—not to speak of His own. In the doctrinal epistles which have preceded this, on the contrary, the Spirit is dwelt upon in all connections. Here we are face to face with the Object that the Spirit presents. The dew has brought the manna, and the dew exhales and leaves the manna for our use. Thus, then, we have the character of the epistle. There is not in it the truth of our being seated together in heavenly places in Christ, but this results from the peculiar character of Colossians, as giving us the path through the world, while, if our own position is less fully developed, the glory of Christ compensates for this, and, as has been already said, the very truth fundamental to our position, that we are in Christ before God, in measure involves this.

There are four divisions in the epistle:

1. (Chap. i. 1–18) puts us at the beginning under Christ as Head and Lord.
2. (Chap. i. 19–29) gives us the double sphere of the gospel and the Church, with the double ministry entrusted to Paul in connection with these.
3. (Chap. ii.): We are filled up in Him, in whom all fulness dwells.
4. (Chaps. iii., iv.) gives us, as usual, the practical consequences.

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

DIVISION 1. (Chap. i. 1–18.)

The sufficiency of Christ as Head and Lord.

1 (i. 1-8): The knowledge of divine grace in truth, the beginning in the soul.

1. PAUL an [a]apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God and Timotheus the brother, to the saints and [b]faithful brethren in Christ which are in Colosse. [c]Grace to you and peace from God our Father [and the Lord Jesus Christ].* We give [d]thanks unto the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,† having heard of your [e]faith in Christ Jesus and of the [f]love which ye have toward all saints, because of [g]the hope which is laid up for you in heaven,

a 2 Cor. 1. 1. Eph. 1. 1.
b Eph. 1. 1.
c cf. 1 Pet. 1. 2. 2 Pet. 1. 2.
d Rom. 1. 8. 1 Cor. 1. 4. Eph. 1. 16.
e Rom. 1. 8. Eph. 1. 15. 1 Thess. 1. 3.
f Heb. 6. 10.
g Heb. 3. 1.

* Some omit. † Or, "continually [when] praying for you."

NOTES.

DIV. 1.

THE first division, then, starts us, as it were, upon our journey. The Colossians are presented to us as "holy and faithful brethren in Christ," of whom the apostle has heard, possessors of a living faith which grows and bears fruit. He prays that it may increase, and that they may be filled with the full knowledge of His will, so as to walk worthy of the Lord; after which we are shown the One who is Lord of the individual as well as the Head of the body, the Church, and His full glories are made known to us.

1. The Colossians are seen, then, in the first place, as those who have received the knowledge of divine grace in truth, the beginning of everything for the soul, the living and active principle which at once suggests to us the fruits following, the result in practical life which the epistle insists upon. The apostle addresses himself to them as an "apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God," associating Timothy with himself in his constant, gracious manner. He owns the holiness and faithfulness which characterizes them as brethren in Christ and which gives him courage and confidence in addressing them. As holy, they are not only separate from evil, but separate to God, the first necessity for fruit. The field that bears it must be fenced off from all that would intrude from the world around. They are faithful to the position that God has given them and the light they have received,—another and equal necessity, but implied in the former. They have the "virtue" of which the apostle Peter speaks, and which leads on to knowledge. It is to those who hold in living power that which they have received, that God can still give more abundantly, but they need, as we all do, "grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

He begins now with thanking God in their behalf, "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," which, as we have already seen in Ephesians, presents to us the Lord as the One who has given God His character for the soul; and as the Son of the Father, introduces us to all the affections of the heart; divine affections, which so need to be cultivated if there is to be fruit at all. To Him then, he gives thanks continually, on praying for them, having heard that concerning them which encourages his prayer:—not only "faith in Christ Jesus," but "love towards all the saints," a love which manifests its character in that very fact. It is not simply personal, individual, and which may spring out of other connections, but love to saints as saints wherever they find them. This is

whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which is come unto you, even as it is also in all the [h]world, bearing [i]fruit and growing, even as among you also, from the day ye heard and knew the grace of God in [j]truth: even as ye learned of [k]Epaphras, our beloved fellow bondman, who is a faithful minister of Christ for you, who also declared unto us your love in the [l]Spirit.

2 (1. 9–14): A prayer for increase.

2. For this cause, we also since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for [m]you and to ask that ye may [n]be filled with the full knowledge of his [o]will in all [p]wisdom and spiritual understanding [so as] to walk worthy of the [q]Lord unto all [r]pleasing, bearing fruit in every

h ver. 23.
i Luke 8.15.
j Tit. 2.11,12.
k ch. 4. 12. Philē. 23.
l Gal. 5. 22.
m Eph. 1.15, 16.
n 1 Cor. 1. 5.
o Rom. 12.2.
p Eph. 1.17.
q cf. Eph. 4. 1.
r Rom. 15.2. 1 Cor. 10.33. cf. Gal. 1.10. 1 Thess. 2.4.

that true love of the brethren which the apostle gives as an evidence that those who possess it have passed from death unto life. He thanks God because of the hope laid up for them in the heavens, the hope which is to energize them upon the way, pilgrims and strangers as they are now, with no portion in the world through which they pass; and thus the whole energy of their souls laying hold upon that which is invisible.

This hope they found in the word of the truth of the gospel which had come to them, as it was going out in all the world; and which bore fruit and was growing among them, as wherever it was received. This knowledge seems to have been ministered to them by Epaphras, of whom he speaks as his fellow-servant, and for them a faithful minister of Christ. The work manifested the workman, and their love in the Spirit had been manifested towards the apostle himself by his means.

2. He has already said that a living faith is a growing faith. Growth is a necessity of life, and where the life is eternal life, there is here no limit of it reached, as in natural growth. We grow on till we reach eternity. Important it is to realize this,—salvation is so often simply looked at as the end itself which is to be reached, instead of the beginning, that which starts us upon the road. It is Christ in glory who is the end before us, and if we are really travellers, the light of that glory will be shining upon us more and more fully all the way.

He was not content, however, to reason that this, of necessity, would be so. He did not cease praying and asking for them, that they might be filled with full knowledge of the will of God, a thing not gained in a short time, although, as possessing the Holy Spirit, every honest soul will find practical competence for the path which he has to tread; but the full knowledge of His will will take nothing else than the full word of God to minister it to us, and here it is not to be a theoretical knowledge, but knowledge in all wisdom, a knowledge which is real for us, and applies itself to all the circumstances of the way. The right understanding of it is spiritual understanding, not merely mental reception; though that does not mean that we are to undervalue the mind, which is, in fact, that in us through which God conveys these things, but the Spirit of God must give it its proper character. The result of it, the desire of the heart, is to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, an immense responsibility indeed as servants of His to show in the world what His service means; bearing fruit, therefore, in every good work and growing by the true knowledge of God. This is found, of course, in the revelation of Christ that is being made to us. Christ is the Life within us, and that which ministers, therefore, to the life we have received. Christ is before us now in all the might of His glory for our souls, that which strengthens for the way, for all that is found here in the world so contrary to Him and to us; but we are furnished thus to all endurance and long-suffering with joy. These things are in God's hand, ordained for us only to bring out in us the Christ-likeness which belongs to a life in Him, to

good [s]work and growing by the true knowledge of [t]God; strengthened with all power, according to the might of his [u]glory, to all endurance and long-suffering with [v]joy; giving thanks unto the [w]Father who hath made us meet for the sharing of the portion of the [x]inheritance of the saints in [y]light; who hath delivered us from the authority of [z]darkness, and translated [us] into the kingdom of the Son of his [a]love; in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of [b]sins.

[s] Eph. 2. 10.
[t] 2 Pet. 3.18.
[u] Eph. 3.16.
[v] 2 Cor. 8. 2. Heb. 10 34.
[w] Eph. 5.20.
[x] *cf.* Eph. 1. 14. Gal. 4. 6, 7.
[y] 1 Thes.5.5.
[z] Eph. 6. 12.
[a] Eph. 1.22. *cf.* Rev. 3. 21.
[b] Eph. 1. 7.

separate us from a world which thus manifests itself for what it is, and to make us realize only the more the completeness of satisfaction which is in that which is our own. We see how Paul's gospel enters, of necessity, into all this. The revelation of Christ is that which is continually before him. Christ is the Goal of his race, and the recompensing Prize, as he will tell us fully in Philippians. Here it is not exactly the pressing after Him which is brought before us, but the power resulting from the apprehension of what He is, the One who has been in death for us and who has now everything in His hand. What a thing to assure and rest the heart!

But he goes on now to the fitness which is already ours to partake of the portion of the saints in light,—and wonderful this is. He does not say that God is *making* us fit for it, as we might imagine to be more suitable to be said; we are already *made* fit, and fit for the portion of the holy ones in that light which would discover the least spot or defect. And strange it would seem to many, in view of the indisputable fact that evil is in us still and that the good in us is yet far short of full development, that we are already meet for the inheritance. To have *title* to it is another thing. Title we should easily recognize that we all have; but a child may have most abundant title to an inheritance for which, as yet, he is by no means "fit." We have not merely the title, we have the fitness also. We can only realize this as we realize the distinctness of the new nature which God has imparted to us. The flesh is in us, but it is not ourselves; we are not identified with it, not in it before God. As a consequence, if the Lord should take us, in whatever way He be pleased to take us, home to Himself, the flesh is gone, and there remains nothing but that which is according to His mind. The development of the life we have is another matter, and we need not consider it here; but even a babe in Christ has fitness, therefore, for his portion. Well may we give thanks to the Father who has accomplished this for us.

We are delivered, as the apostle goes on to say, from the authority of darkness. Darkness may be also in measure in us, but it has no *title* over us. We are in the light as Christians. Whether we realize it aright or not, depends upon how far the eye is single in us; but we are practically in the darkness, in any measure of it, *only by our own consent.* God has translated us into another kingdom, put us under another authority, and that the authority of His own dear Son.

This is the only passage in which we find the present kingdom of Christ spoken of exactly in this character. As Son of Man, He waits for His Kingdom. He has not yet received it. He waits upon the right hand of God; but whatever this may imply, that He is still waiting, yet as seated on the Father's throne, in that place to which His title plainly is found in His eternal relationship to the Father, He has, in fact, all things in His hand now. This can only seem in any wise a contradiction to the fact of His waiting for His Kingdom as Son of Man, if we fail to realize that the Kingdom in that character is taken for the final setting in order of all things for eternity, which is put into Christ's hands expressly as the Son of Man. All judgment is thus committed to Him, and as by man the old creation fell away from God, so by man everything must be restored. Thus He is, as Isaiah gives it to us, the "Father of Eternity."

3 (i. 15-18): Christ, the Image of God in creation and the risen Head of the Church.

3. Who is the image of the invisible [c]God, the first-born of all [d]creation, for by him were all things [e]created, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or lordships or principalities or authorities, all things have been created by him and for [f]him. And he is before [g]all, and all

[c] 2 Cor. 4. 4. Heb. 1. 3.
[d] Rev. 3.14.
[e] Heb. 1. 2. John 1. 3.
[f] *cf.* ch. 3.11.
[g] John 17.5.

He is the One who is going to bring everything into subjection to God. We, in the meanwhile, are the fruit of His work, delivered from the opposing power of evil and brought into the Kingdom of light and peace, as those redeemed by His blood and having the forgiveness of sins. Here, therefore, we have marked out for us distinctly the character of the truth which the apostle presents to us. Already separated from the world, separated to God, we are those who are given to Christ and put into His hand to be led on through the world by the attractive power of what is in Himself, to Himself beyond it. In the "Kingdom of the Son of His love," what can be wanting to us, even though the full blessing has not come?

But we are here filling a place which has its own distinctness of privilege, a place that, in the same way, we can never fill again. We are here for Christ in the midst of a world opposed to Him, and treading in His steps who is the Author and Finisher of faith in His own Person, and who has left us an example that we should walk in His steps. This is our privilege now, and how greatly we should value it! We have not merely to go out of the world and to be with Christ where He is, which will be accomplished for us in His own time, which our souls must, of course, desire at any time; nevertheless that which God is working for us now and that which, we may say, He is working through us now, will be seen in the day to come as amply sufficient causes of delay for a little while, that, in the place of Christ's humiliation, we may learn Him better so, and acquire that mind of Christ which we have use for, in participation with Him in that which is to come.

3. We come now then fully to look at Christ Himself. We have been shown our competence for this. We can look without any harassing question as to our part in Him or our fitness for the blessing which we have before us. We ought to be capable, therefore, of full occupation with Himself. That is what the epistle to the Romans has already shown us, and that is what deliverance means really; deliverance from ourselves, in order that we may be engaged with Him, to be in whose blest company is to grow in His likeness.

Who is He then of whom we are speaking? He is, says the apostle, first of all, the Image of the Invisible God, the perfect and exact Expression of One who is nowhere seen as He is seen in Him. The invisible God has become visible to us, of course to faith; but we have the full revelation of God in Him, who, in order that He may reveal God, has come down into that which is His own creation, has taken His place in it, of necessity, thus, at the Head of it also. If He who is the Image of the Invisible God takes His place in creation, it must be as the First-born of it all, the Beginning, as He says Himself in the epistle to Laodicea, "the Beginning of the creation of God."

Here is His link at once with all that is to receive blessing through Him. Apart from those who really set themselves outside it, who refuse and turn aside from this grace of His, all creation is thus linked with Him for blessing. He has become Man. He has taken not only a human spirit, but a soul and a body. In His unutterable love, He has linked Himself, as one may say, with the very dust of the earth, that He might assure us that, of all which God has created, nothing is below His thought. He will lose nothing of it all, but bring it into that which was His mind for it in creating it; for He who has come into this wondrous place,—the very humiliation of which is glory too,—is the One "by whom all things were created, things in heaven and things on earth, visible or invisible," however high, however low you go, "thrones or dominions,

things subsist together by [h]him. And he is the head of the body, the [i]church; who is the beginning, first-born from among the [j]dead, that in all things he might have the [k]pre-eminence.

[h] Heb. 1. 3.
[i] Eph. 1. 22.
[j] Rev. 1. 5.
[k] Eph. 1. 22.

DIVISION 2. (Chap. i. 19–29.)

The double sphere of the gospel and the church, with the double ministry entrusted to Paul in connection with these.

1 (i. 19, 20): All fulness pleased to dwell in Christ for the reconciliation of all things.

1. FOR in him all the fulness [of the Godhead] was pleased to [l]dwell, and by him to reconcile all things to [m]itself, having made peace by the blood of his [n]cross, by him, whether things on earth or things in the heavens.

[l] *cf.* ch. 2. 9.
[m] *cf.* Eph. 1. 10, 14. Heb. 9. 23.
[n] Eph. 2. 14.

or principalities or powers;" the highest are but His creatures, and have not only been created "*by* Him" but "*for* Him."

What a wonderful light does that throw upon creation itself and upon its destiny! Christ is not only the One under whom it is; He is not only the One who will bring it all into blessing, but He, the One who has become the Man Christ Jesus, is the One for whom it all exists. Christ, then, and that grace which is manifested in Him,—that manifestation itself, which is in itself grace,—is that which is the great purpose of God in creation. He must manifest Himself; He must make His creatures know Him. He could not possibly leave them without the full display of all His heart. He wants to be near them. He wants to have them near Himself. Christ is the fulness of God's heart thus told out, and as He is before all, as He is the One who holds all things together now, this purpose cannot fail of accomplishment.

But there is another sphere, still, in which He is the Head, and considering that it too is needed for the full display of divine grace, (as it is that, as we have heard in Ephesians, in which God is going to show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us, and in which His glory is to be displayed forever,) it must of necessity find mention here. It is not to be lost simply in the thought of creation. He is the Head of creation, but He is also the Head of the body, the Church; and as this, He is the Beginning, a new Beginning, a First-Born, not in creation simply, but from among the dead. Here, full redemptive power manifests itself. He is seen Master of all the evil and not merely Master to subdue it, but making it all show forth His praise. Thus He is pre-eminent in all things. This is the One under whom God has put us to find our way, upheld by His grace, to the place where He Himself awaits us. How blessed should be a path upon which this light shines more and more fully to the perfect day!

DIV. 2.

Here, then, there is a double sphere marked out for our contemplation. There is the sphere of creation into which Christ in His grace has come, and there is the sphere of the Church through which His love to His creatures is to be most signally manifested. We now find these two spheres specially dwelt upon, and the apostle's double ministry in God's wonderful grace to him, answering to these two spheres. He is minister of the gospel in all the world, minister of the Church, the mystery of God now revealed.

1. "In Him," then, "all the fulness was pleased to dwell." The whole Godhead has in Him manifested itself and come forth to bless and to redeem. If we think of Christ, we must not separate from Him the Father's thought and purpose, the Father's heart told out, and if we think of Him again, He is the One whom the Spirit of God exalts and glorifies, the One in whom, as we see Him here upon earth, the fulness of the Spirit dwelt. The whole activity of

2 (i. 21-23): Of those enemies before.

2. And you who once were alienated and enemies in mind by wicked works, yet now hath he °reconciled in the body of his flesh, through death, to present you holy and unblameable and irreproachable before ᵖhim; if indeed ye abide in the faith, grounded and ᵍfirm, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye heard, which hath been preached in the whole creation which is under ʳheaven, whereof I Paul was made ˢminister.

3 (i. 24-29): The mystery filling up the word.

3. Now I rejoice in sufferings for ᵗyou, and fill up that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my ᵘflesh, for his body's sake, which is the ᵛchurch, whereof I was made minister, according to the dispensation of God which was given me to you-ward, to complete the word of God, [even] the mystery which hath been hid from ages and ʷgenerations, but now hath been manifested to his saints, to whom God would make known what

o Rom. 5. 10, 11. 2 Cor. 5. 18.
p Eph. 5. 27.
q Heb. 3. 14.
r ch. 1. 6.
s 1 Cor. 1. 17. Gal. 2. 2.
t Phil. 2. 17.
u Acts 9. 4, 5.
v Eph. 1. 23.
w Eph. 3. 2-6.

the Godhead is manifested thus in our behalf. It is Christ as Man who is still spoken of. His Manhood it is that is the tabernacle of Deity. We must not so think of His humiliation as to forget, for a moment, the glory that was ever His. He has come down, in fact, to fulfil the purpose which none but He could possibly fulfil. Sin has come in. Question has been raised by the presence of it with regard to God Himself. If left to this, God's whole place with regard to creation is compromised. Thus, as has been said elsewhere, He could not, apart from the cross, from that which has fully displayed His holiness and the judgment of sin, while displaying His love for His creatures, take up even the heavens themselves as that in which He could find delight and display His glory. By Him, therefore, God came to reconcile all things to Himself, not simply individuals, but the whole frame, as it were, of the universe. There is not a part of it to which the power of the blood of the cross does not penetrate. Our possession in the heavens is purchased by it. The earth, too, is purchased. Things on the earth or things in the heavens will alike be made once more to be according to God's mind, objects of complacent delight.

2. But if the heavens and earth are thus reconciled by His blood, there are those also who were once alienated and enemies in mind by wicked works, in whom it manifests its power. Here the reconciliation must, of necessity, include the bringing of enemies out of their enmity; while His work, the work of the cross, was needed in a double sense for this, needed as that which has made atonement for iniquity, needed as that which, by the power of divine grace in it, conquers the heart for Him. How great a triumph when we can be thus presented holy and unblamable and irreproachable before God! The apostle puts in here a word of caution needed by those amongst whom there may still be those who, whatever their profession, have not, in fact, received the reconciliation. The test of this will be a faith in which men abide on a firm foundation, not moved away from the hope of the gospel, a gospel which is being proclaimed indeed in the whole creation which is under heaven, and of which Paul himself was, in a special sense, the minister. We must remember here what has been elsewhere shown us, that Paul was not only *a* minister of the gospel, having his place with the rest who ministered it, but was in a special sense *the* minister of the gospel, which had with him a fulness of blessing which we find nowhere else.

3. But this was only a part of that which was specially committed to him. He was suffering, manifestly (he says this as writing now from his prison at Rome) on account of the Church, Christ's body; filling up, as he puts it here, that which remained of the sufferings of Christ for them. Christ had been

are the riches of the glory of this [x]mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you the hope of [y]glory; whom we proclaim, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all [z]wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ. Whereunto also I labor, striving according to his working which worketh in me in power.

[x] ch. 2. 3.
[y] Rom. 5. 2.
[z] Acts 20. 20.

DIVISION 3. (Chap. ii.)

Filled up in Him in whom all the fulness dwells.

1 (ii. 1-5): All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge herein.

1. FOR I would have you know what conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the [a]flesh; that their

[a] Rom. 1. 14.

pleased to link him in a special way with Himself, in labor for this purpose so dear to Him, the having a body, a people in the nearness of that relation to Himself, near as none other could be, and the revelation of which now completed the word of God—filled it out fully, no principle of truth remaining unrevealed. Of this, then, he was minister; of the mystery hidden from ages and generations but now made manifest to His saints, the long pent up secret of the heart that must now disclose itself; the riches of the glory of this mystery being found, not amongst Jews but amongst Gentiles,—Christ among Gentiles, not therefore glory come, as it will be when He takes His place in the midst of Israel, but the *hope* of glory belonging to another sphere, and as we know, a wonderfully higher one. This, says the apostle, was his aim, then, "admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, to present every man perfect in Christ." He works according to the full largeness in which the gospel itself goes out. He would have "every man," not merely those who actually are laid hold of by it, but in the thought of his heart, in that for which, if it might be, he works, "*every* man presented perfect in Christ." This is the character, manifestly, as we have seen, of Paul's epistles. The position in Christ is what is before him continually. This is what he would bring us up to. His writings are therefore the Leviticus of the New Testament. They open the sanctuary, and that to bring us in there. For this he was toiling. For this he was in conflict; and Christ, as it were, toiling in him, working in the power of His grace in the instrument He had chosen.

DIV. 3.

Christ then, is He in whom all the fulness dwells. We are now to have distinctly the part which is given us in this fulness. We are to be filled up in it, and that practically for our blessing now, not at some time to come; but that this may be manifested in us here by the way.

1. The apostle tells us, therefore, of the conflict that he was in with regard to them, but specially as to those whose face he had not yet seen in the flesh, his responsibility towards whom was not altered by this fact.

He is in conflict also, as knowing what the world is in which the saints are found. The greater the blessing, the greater incentive to the enemy, if possible, to take it from them; and alas, with this, the surer, if we think of men as such, that they will demonstrate their incapacity of themselves to hold it. But Paul's purpose is the encouragement of those to whom he writes,—not discouragement. The warnings of what man as man is, of the flesh that dwells in us all, the practical warnings which result from the outbreak of this also, alas, in Christians, are still only to discourage *self*-confidence, never to move one from the assurance that he should have in God. He seeks, therefore, to encourage their hearts, and that they may be united together in love, the true binding principle, in the possession of all that was their own, the riches that God would

hearts may be comforted, being knit together in love and unto all riches of the full [b]assurance of understanding to the full knowledge of the mystery of God, wherein are hid all the treasures of wisdom and [c]knowledge. And I say this that no one may delude you with persuasive speech. For, though I am absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, rejoicing and beholding your order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

2 (ii. 6-8): Rooted and built up in Him.

2. As, therefore, ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, walk ye in [d]him, rooted and built up in [e]him, and stablished in the [f]faith, even as ye were [g]taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Take heed that there be no one who shall make spoil of you through philosophy and vain [h]deceit, after the tradition of [i]men, after the rudiments of the [j]world, and not after [k]Christ,

b *cf.* Heb. 6. 11. Heb. 10.22.
c 1 Cor.2.10.
d 1 Jno. 2. 6.
e Hos. 14. 8.
f 2 Cor. 1.21.
g Eph. 4.21.
h 1 Tim. 6. 20.
i Mk. 7. 9.
j Gal. 4. 3, 7.
k ch. 3. 11.

give them in full assurance of understanding. How much is implied in this! There is to be no failure with us as to the distinct, definite, assured apprehension of all this blessing which God has given us, the full knowledge of the mystery of God of which he has spoken, in which are hid for us now "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

This may seem a strange thing to say that, in that which is only revealed at the present time, all treasures of this kind should be found; but it is manifest that in speaking to Christians, everything depends upon their being in possession of that which makes them distinctly *Christian*. Except as in this Christian place ourselves, we have not even the right knowledge of other things. For instance, if we do not realize the difference between the Church and Israel, how can we know even Israel aright? How can we know the Old Testament without being in possession of what is specifically ours in the New? He says here, as so constantly with him, "wisdom" as well as "knowledge," putting indeed wisdom first; for without the power to apply, what right gain could there be in the knowledge which is to be applied?

He goes on to intimate his knowledge of the power of the enemy which was abroad, and which would, by persuasive speech, seek to take from them the blessing; but he rejoiced, absent indeed in the flesh, yet with them in spirit, as seeing their order and the firmness of their faith in Christ. It is plain therefore that he does not, as some think, realize in them the beginning of any special form of evil, but that the warnings which we find here and there through the epistle are necessary to the character of it, as having to do with their walk in the world, a place in which every danger would necessarily beset them. He has, as we can see also, not merely those in mind whom he is addressing now at Colosse, but us also, for whom the Spirit of God is caring, through him, and who are in the midst of evils of which they are warned here. There could not but be the foresight of such things, and provision made for them, in the love that manifests itself towards all the people of God to the last generation.

2. He proceeds at once, therefore, to bid us, as having received Christ Jesus the Lord, to walk in Him. The place of identification with Him which God has given us is to be carried out in practice here. We are to walk as identified with Him. We are to walk as in this new place and new creation, separated, therefore, from the world and under the authority, as Lord, of Him whom the world has rejected. We have received Him as our Lord, not simply as our Saviour, although these two things will necessarily go together; but we have received Him as One who has rightful title over us and One in whom we have found all that enables us to be independent of the world around. Thus we are rooted and built up in Him. It is from Him that we draw subsistence as the plant through its root, and we are thus built up in Him as the plant builds it-

3 (ii. 9-15): Quickened and risen with Him.

3. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead [t]bodily, and in him ye are filled [m]up; who is the head of all principality and [n]authority; in whom also ye were circumcised with the circumcision not done with the [o]hand, in putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of [p]Christ; buried with him in [q]baptism,

t ch. 1. 19.
m Eph. 3. 19.
n ch. 1. 16.
o Rom. 2. 29. Eph. 2. 11.
p Gal. 5. 24.
q Rom. 6. 4.

self up through the nourishment which it thus receives. How perfectly then are we provided! Christ is our one Sufficiency; and "the faith" is that which has, so to speak, given us Christ Himself, for it is by faith that we know Him. We are to abound in it, says the apostle, with thanksgiving,—an immense point, for if our hearts are not making joy over the truth which God has given us, what shall we have to keep us from the evil around? or to produce in us the fruits which are acceptable to God? Here he adds one of his warnings, not to be led away, therefore, through philosophy and vain deceit; that is, through the working of man's mind apart from revelation. Christ is the subject of revelation, plainly. No human thought could have discovered Him: none can add to Him. All mere human teaching has upon it the essential marks of the world itself, a world into which He came in love, but which had no heart for Him.

3. Thus we are shut up to Christ, who is indeed, as has been declared, the Centre and Reason of the universe. The knowledge of Him is, therefore, the only key to the right apprehension of all things. These are the manifestations, each in its measure, of God; and Christ it is in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. That word, "bodily," makes Him our own. He has come out from the invisible to be among us; and not simply for display: He has pledged Himself to service in it, whatever the need may be, as when He showed them His hands and His side. And still "we are complete"—filled full "in Him," who is—notice how these things are brought together—"Head of all principality and power." To Him the circumstances of the way are absolutely obedient. Here we have the perfect ministry to us, therefore, of everything around us, as well as the perfect means of apprehension of it all, as knowing Him. The apostle goes on now to show us how thoroughly we have been cut off from other things. If the Jew was separated from the nations by the fact of his circumcision, we, he says, have been circumcised, not with that circumcision indeed, not by something with the hand, but by something infinitely more and deeper, "the putting off of the body of the flesh," the flesh in its totality, "by the circumcision of Christ," that is, by the Christian circumcision. His cross has accomplished this for us. We are privileged to turn away from all that we find thus in ourselves, to give up self in fact altogether, as having any confidence in it, as the apostle tells us in Philippians: "We are the true circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Notice that there is nothing there of self to have confidence in. It is Christ in whom we boast or glory, and that in contrast with all fleshly confidence whatever.

Slow we may be, indeed, to realize that every atom of self-confidence *is* confidence in the flesh. We would fain draw a distinction. We would say that there is a Christian self; that, after all, there must be something in us which is the fruit of God's work; but the cross has not set aside self in one fashion to allow it to be brought forward again in another. If we build again the things which we destroyed, we make ourselves transgressors in this sense also, and the apostle adds here what is the complete assertion of this: "We are *buried* with Him," he says, "in baptism." God has privileged us, thus, to put away ourselves as completely as a dead man is put away amongst the dead when he is buried.

This truth as to baptism is one of those which we derive from Romans, but we are "raised up" also, he adds; and here it is important to get clearly what the apostle really says. The common version makes it to be baptism in which

in whom * ye have been also raised [r]together through faith in the operation of God who raised him from among the [s]dead. And you, being dead in offences and the uncircumcision of your [t]flesh, hath he quickened together with [u]him, having forgiven us all [v]trespasses; having blotted out the obligation in ordinances that was against [w]us, which was contrary to us; and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the [x]cross; having spoiled principalities and authorities, he made a show of them openly, leading them in triumph by [y]it.

r Eph. 2. 6.
s Rom. 4.24.
t Eph. 2. 1.
u Eph. 2. 5.
v *cf.* Rom.5. 18.
w Gal. 3. 10.
x Eph. 2.15.
y Ps. 68. 18. Eph. 4. 8.

* "Wherein" is equally possible in the Greek.

also we are raised up, but what is connected with this makes it impossible to accept it. We are "raised up with Him," he says, "*through the faith* of the operation of God who raised Him from among the dead." We are not raised up then in an ordinance, but "through faith." The "wherein" may be, and should surely be "in whom;" and we cannot simply take this as what baptism typifies for us, because the moment we speak of type, it does not require faith to make a type to be such. We could not be raised up *typically* by faith. One could not say a type was a type through faith. Baptism in itself speaks of immersion, burial. The word would not convey that of resurrection. The force of the baptism is in the burial and nothing else. The resurrection which is to follow is in Christ and from Him alone.

It is thus that we are set free from the thought of deliverance by an ordinance, which so many hold to-day. We are "raised up through the faith of the operation of God who raised Him from among the dead." Here we see distinctly what is meant. Resurrection is the opposite of burial. In burial a dead man is put among the dead. In resurrection a now living man is given his place among the living; and it is seen that Christ identified with us through grace in His death has been raised up of God; that we might find, therefore, our own title and ability to take our place amongst those truly alive. But then all depends upon this identification of ourselves with Him. Our eyes are now, therefore, to be upon Christ. He is in this character our true self; and our confidence, therefore, is to be in Him. As we have had it in Galatians, we live, yet no more we, but Christ liveth in us. It is the One who is before God for us who is before us now in faith and whom we accept as now our true self, a self in whom we can have confidence, a self that we can contemplate with joy and satisfaction, and without the least tendency to such pride of heart as results naturally from what we call self-occupation. Here is One who will draw us away from self, who will, as a heavenly Object draw us completely out of the world, and accomplish our deliverance in both senses at the same time.

But he has another side now to present to us; and here we touch Ephesian truth, as before, that of Romans. "You," he says, "being dead in offences and in the uncircumcision of your flesh," not as living then, but as dead for God, having absolutely nothing that He could accept, nothing that is towards Him in your natural condition, "He has quickened together with Him." Here is a change of condition as well as the change of position spoken of before. We have got life, a new life, a life which has come to us through Christ's death, and which is the result of divine power working towards us in Him.

With this, therefore, we have the forgiveness of all offences. Nothing could be allowed to mar the perfection of that work for us or of its fruit in us. There could be no quickening without forgiveness, as its necessary accompaniment. As a consequence, therefore, the "hand-writing in ordinances" which stood against us, which was contrary to us, He has taken out of the way. It is not the law itself of which he is speaking, but of our *obligation to it*. This is what the "hand-writing" means, and this is what is effaced for us, it being nailed to the

¶ (ii. 16-23): The warning to hold the Head and not be subject to ordinances.

4. Let no one, therefore, judge you in meat or in drink or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or [z]sabbaths: which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of [a]Christ. Let no one rob you of your prize by a voluntary humility and worshiping of [b]angels, entering into things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by the mind of his flesh, and not holding fast the [c]head, from whom all the body ministered to and united together by joints and bands increaseth with the increase of [d]God. If ye have died with Christ from the elements of the [e]world, why, as if alive in the world, do ye subject yourselves to [f]ordinances: handle not, nor taste, nor touch (all which things are to perish with the using) after the injunctions and doctrines of [g]men? things which have indeed an appearance of wisdom in will worship and humility and severity as to the [h]body, (not in a certain [i]honor,) to the satisfaction of the [j]flesh.

z Rom.14.3.
a Heb. 8. 5.
b Heb. 1.14.
c cf. Eph. 4. 15.
d Eph. 4.16.
e Gal. 6. 14.
f Gal. 4. 3, 9, 10.
g Matt.15.9.
h cf.1 Cor.9. 27.
i 1 Cor. 6.19.
j Phil. 3.3,4.

cross. The law is not dead, as we have seen in Romans, but we have died to it. It is stated here in another way, but the same thing in effect. With this power of condemnation cancelled for us, authorities and powers, (all the power of Satan which could work in sinful men,) are also set aside. Christ has made a show of them openly, leading captivity captive, triumphing over them by His cross.

4. The apostle warns them now that they must hold fast the Head, and for this give up the ordinances of the law and all else which would prevent their drawing absolutely out of the fulness which they had in Christ. No one was to be judged with regard to meat or drink, feasts, new moons or sabbaths. All these things necessarily went with the obligation to ordinances. They were in themselves simply a shadow of the things to come. The body, that is, the substance of them, was in Christ. Christians were not to do their own will in that which looked indeed like humility, as in the worship of angels, but which was, after all, an intrusion into things unseen, and the result of pride instead of humility, while it forfeited the blessing which was to be enjoyed alone through Christ; from whom all the body ministered to and joined together by joints and bands increases with the increase of God. Christians are themselves to be as Christ Himself was, like "a root out of a dry ground," maintained by sustenance from heaven, divine sustenance alone, as he says here. They have died with Christ out of the world and therefore out of that which belongs to it. To subject themselves to ordinances, was to take a position contradictory of this. Like the legal institutions themselves, they could only deal with things from the outside, prohibit touch and taste and what not, things which appear, as we know, wise enough, but which ignore altogether that which is God's only remedy for the evil in man, which is a new creation. Such will-worship will indeed always have an appearance of wisdom and of humility too; and an ascetic treatment of the body will be held as a proof of zeal and devotedness. God has no pleasure in such things. The body, indwelt of the Holy Spirit, is to be held on that account in a certain honor, while the pride of man could be satisfied with that which, if it disregarded the body, built up the flesh.

Div. 4.

Sec. 1.

We have now the practical consequences, not negatively merely, in the refusal of certain things, but in that which is morally right and fitting, the image of Christ wrought out in the life.

DIVISION 4. (Chaps. iii., iv.)

Practical consequences.

Section 1. (Chap. iii. 1-17.)

Christ all.

1 (iii. 1-4): A life hid with Christ in God.

1. IF then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where [k]Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things that are above, not on things that are on the [l]earth; for ye have died, and your life is hid with Christ in [m]God. When Christ [our] * life shall be manifested, then shall ye also be manifested with him in [n]glory.

2 (iii. 5-11): Exchange of the old man for the new.

2. Hold † mortified, therefore, your members which are upon earth, fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness which is [o]idolatry; for which things' sake cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience;‡ in the which ye also once walked when ye lived in these [p]things. But now also have § put off all these things, wrath, anger, malice, injurious speaking, shameful language out of your mouth: lie not one

[k] ch. 1. 11. 2 Cor. 3. 18.

[l] Phil. 3. 19, 20.

[m] *cf.* 1 John 3. 1, 2.

[n] Matt. 13. 43. 2 Thess. 1. 10.

[o] Rom. 8. 13, 12, 1.

[p] 1 Cor. 6. 9-11.

* Many MSS. read "your." † An aorist imperative: not be doing it, but let it be as done. ‡ Editors generally omit "upon the sons of disobedience," but the MS. authority is abundant. § Another aorist imperative.

1. The consequence of being raised with Christ is to put us necessarily outside the world. The risen man is in connection with heaven, although, as with the Lord during the forty days, he may actually be upon earth, but as raised with Christ, in association with Him, the things above belong to him where Christ sits at the right hand of God. What is according to God is seen by this place of exaltation in which Christ is. God has hidden us, in this way, to have our hearts in company with His heart; and Christ, the accepted of God is the rejected of man. Thus, a heavenly Object lifts one from the earth. It is not a question simply of what is in itself evil or what is not. Christ has passed out of the whole scene. He is in heaven, and the heart drawn there is God's method of sanctification, therefore, for the soul. The result is that if a true life for God is lived here upon the earth, yet it is in character, in all that in which it has its source and object, a life hidden from the world. Christ is hidden, and hidden in God. As a consequence, to be understood by the world, to be commended and honored, would be contrary to that association with Christ which God has given us. The day is coming when Christ will be manifested, He who is our life even now. Then indeed that for which the Christian has lived will become apparent to all, and the wisdom of his life will be evident. Then we will be manifested with Him in glory, but for this, therefore, faith must be content to wait through all the present time, finding in Him its present joy and satisfaction, but in strangership here. This is the principle which underlies the whole moral condition for us.

2. The result is that we are to put to death our members which are upon the earth. He does not say our bodies. The body is to be offered up to God "a living sacrifice." The members are quite other morally than this implies, as he shows here. If the body is allowed to have a life, then, it is to be put to death; but he will not allow that this is properly the *body*. He speaks of it as if the members, so to speak, were in revolt from the body, in revolt certainly from subjection to God. On account of such things, the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. You walked in those things, he says, when you lived in them, but the walk must follow, there-

to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his [q]doings, and have put on the new* man which is being renewed* into knowledge after the image of him that created [r]him; where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond, free, but Christ is all and in [s]all.

3 (iii.12-17): The manifestation of Christ in His people.

3. Have† put on, therefore, as the elect of [t]God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, lowliness, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any should have a complaint against any; even as [Christ]‡ forgave you, so also do [u]ye. And over all these things [put on] love which is

q Eph. 4. 22, 25.
r Eph. 4. 24.
s 2 Cor. 5. 16, 17.
t 1 Thess. 1. 4.
u Eph. 4. 31, 32.

* The new man (*νέον*); renewed (*ἀνακαινούμενον*).
† Aorist imperative. ‡ The weight of MS. authority is for "the Lord."

fore, the character of the life. What a disgrace to walk in things in which we do not live!

There are other things to be put off, things which have not the same character of lust, but which, nevertheless, are contrary to God. We are not to lie to one another, as having put off the old man with his deeds, and having put on the new. This has introduced us, as he says, now, into a new scene. The new man has a knowledge which is derived from faith. It is the knowledge of a new creation where there is nothing but Christ. No human distinctions are recognized in it, no conditions upon which men pride themselves here. Christ is everything and Christ is in all who belong to that place. Here, as we have seen, is that which keeps the heart. We can only be strangers to that which we have been brought out of by being at home in that which is now made ours. We cannot set ourselves right piecemeal. We can only be set right by having our hearts in that, where Christ being all, all is according to God, and where we can let our hearts out freely; where we can covet everything, and nothing will be denied us.

3. The joy of the Lord is our strength. For mortification, we want power; and our power is found in that which lifts us out of the whole scene to which evil attaches. Christ, therefore, is now to give character to every part of our behaviour. As the elect of God, those who owe everything to His will, His choice as those set apart to Him, and those upon whom He has set His love, we are to put on the things which properly accompany this: "bowels of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another." It is striking how, in all these, there is found some form of self-denial. Power is shown by competence for stooping; God turning also the very things that are against us into the means of educating us in this. Things evil in themselves may, nevertheless, furnish us with a wholesome discipline for the way and enable us, in answer, to bring forth fruit which is according to God. We are to forbear as God has forborne. We are to forgive as Christ has forgiven us; to all which is to be added love, as that which is the "bond of perfectness," which keeps everything in its place and perfects every detail of life. Think how the world, even, has to put on the appearance of love, the more if it has not the reality; but love itself has no need to put on an appearance. It will manifest itself in harmony in every tone and gesture. The manifestation of the divine nature has a unity in it which makes everything to be in harmony. If there is love in the heart, the words will not be hard or unseemly; their very tone will be affected.

Here too, the peace of Christ is found, that is to preside in the heart. It is the peace which results from unbroken communion, in a life that is according to God, in ways that are ways of pleasantness and paths of peace. To this we have been called in one body. This peace is the common heritage of all the

the bond of [t]perfectness. And let the peace of Christ* preside in your [u]hearts, to which also ye have been called in one [x]body, and be [y]thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to [z]God.† And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God‡ the Father by [a]him.

t 1 Pet. 4. 8.
u Jno. 14. 27.
x Eph. 2. 13-16.
y Phil. 4. 6.
z Eph. 5. 19.
a Eph. 5. 20.

* Some MSS. read, "God." † Some read, "the Lord."
‡ Many insert, "and."

saints of God; and we may well be thankful as we realize the immensity of such a blessing as this. The word of Christ, too, is to dwell in us richly. All through, it is Christ here; the forgiveness of Christ, the peace of Christ, the word of Christ. We can see how occupation with Christ is that which is necessarily the basis of it all, and His Lordship is fully owned. Thus, the word of Christ is not only owned and bowed to, but dwells in the soul richly in all its fulness and blessedness; and this issues in an ability to teach and admonish one another in all wisdom. The truth which God has given, if it be really received, cannot be held simply as one's own. We cannot but impart it. Truth that is not imparted can scarcely be enjoyed, and in the close contact in which God has brought us with one another, the interest that He has given us in each other, the relationship we bear to one another, it cannot but follow that we shall realize one another's needs. Connected with this, the power of it all in our own hearts is beautifully shown us. "In psalms and hymns and spiritual songs," the truth makes music in us. We sing with grace in our hearts to God, and what a need there is for this, in order to any true teaching or admonishing one another. Nay, will not this enjoyment in our own souls be the most effectual form of it? Such heart-songs will awaken other songs, and in all this, he says, whatever is done, in word or deed, we are to do all things as representatives of the Lord Jesus, in His Name. How much this would settle for us as to details of practical conduct, if it were only frankly accepted by us all! In word and in deed, identification with Christ in His spirit is to mark us, and here again, as those who are giving thanks to God and the Father by Him. How we see that the spirit of joy and praise is that which becomes us, the atmosphere of heaven to which our life belongs. Here, then, is a beautiful and comprehensive picture of the Christian life in its moral aspect. We are to learn it in His company, or we shall never learn it.

Sec. 2.

We have had the character of the new man put before us with a completeness which might make us think that the whole range of Christian duty was contained in it. What are we called to recognize or "put on," but this new man?

But the new man is the man in Christ, and the place in Christ takes one outside of human distinctions; for "in Christ there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female" (Gal. iii. 28). And thus the most fundamental natural distinction seems to be set aside.

We have, however, to learn that Scripture is larger than our thoughts, and that the God of creation is that of redemption also. As long, therefore, as we are in the unchanged body of the old creation, we are subject to the ordinances which He has made for it. Doubtless also, there are higher purposes to be worked out in this way; but our point is now, the steadfast way in which God maintains His own thoughts, and will have us maintain and honor them. Husbands, wives, parents, children, are thus natural relationships established of God, and honorable in all, as the apostle says of marriage (Heb. xiii. 4).

SECTION 2. (Chaps. iii. 18–iv. 6.)
The Relationships of life.

1 (iii.18-21): By creation ordinance.

1. WIVES, submit yourselves to your husbands as is fitting in the [b]Lord. Husbands, love your wives and be not bitter against [c]them. Children, obey your parents in all things; for this is well pleasing in the [d]Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children [to anger],* that they be not [e]discouraged.

2 (iii.22-iv. 1): Results of sin.

2. Bond-servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye service† as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing the [f]Lord. Whatsoever ye do, work heartily as unto the Lord and not to men; knowing that from the Lord ye shall receive the recompense of the inheritance; ye serve the Lord Christ. For he that doeth wrong shall receive again the wrong that he hath done, and there is no respect of persons. Masters, render unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in [g]heaven.

[b] Eph. 5.22. I Pet. 3. 1.
[c] Eph. 5. 25.
[d] Eph. 6. 1.
[e] Eph. 6. 4.
[f] Eph. 6. 5. I Pet. 2. 18.
[g] Eph. 6. 9.

* There are good MSS. which omit, "to anger."
† Some MSS. have "services."

But there are other relations here which are not established of God, but have come in through sin, as that of master and slave: here one might expect that there could be nothing but (as among Christians at least) the prohibition absolutely of such. This is a matter important enough to be in effect (though not formally) the subject of a distinct epistle, which finds place as supplementary to this; we shall examine it, therefore, in that connection. Here, however, we see that the slave or bondman is addressed as such, and (what is more to the purpose) the master also.

After this there is insisted on the duty to those who are without, outside of Christian claim, but not of the all-embracing love which in Christ came after the lost,—a love to which we owe our every blessing also, who were all once outside, and among the lost. In this review of relationships, therefore, the apostle will not omit one that is so real as this, however different from, and indeed in contrast with all others.

1. Relationships ordained by the Creator come here first, and are indeed the shadow of higher and spiritual ones. This, however, which Ephesians develops so fully as to marriage, is not in any way referred to here. We have but brief exhortations, which are for the most part repetitions of those in Ephesians; we shall not do more, therefore, than point out how these repetitions emphasize what is the main responsibility in each case. Those who are in authority are to exercise it in love—a love that seeketh not its own; while it is for those under authority to yield obedience as to the Lord: a thing which gives it at once a needed guard from any weak sufferance of evil, while making the hardest task that in which "thy God hath commanded thy strength;" so that *His* strength may be reckoned on for its accomplishment.

2. This principle is carried out in application to the poor slave, who is now Christ's servant, and thus truly free. If the Lord has appointed him a lowly and trying service, it will not be counted a dishonor to him in the day of final recompense, when servant and master will stand before their common Master, to receive, not according to the place they may have filled, but according to the faithfulness with which they have filled it. The Master then will be One who has filled Himself the very lowest place to serve us all.

3. This naturally leads on to what in this day and world is truest service,

3 (iv. 2-4): The manifestation of the mystery of Christ.

3. Continue steadfastly in [a]prayer, watching therein with thanksgiving; at the same time praying for us also, that God may open unto us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds; that I may make it manifest as I ought to [e]speak.

4 (iv. 5,6): Conduct towards the world.

4. Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the [j]opportunity. Let your word be alway with [k]grace, seasoned with [l]salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one.

[a] Eph. 6.18. 1 Thess. 5. 17.
[e] Eph. 6. 19, 20.
[j] Eph. 5. 15, 16.
[k] Eccle. 10. 12.
[l] Mk. 9. 50.

SECTION 3. (7–18.)
Openings of heart.

ALL my affairs shall Tychicus make known unto you, the beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord; whom I have sent unto you for this very purpose, that ye may know our state* and that he may comfort your [m]hearts; with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of [n]you. They shall make known unto you all things that are done here.

Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, saluteth [o]you, and Marcus the cousin of Barnabas (touching whom ye received orders, if he come unto you, receive [p]him) and Jesus, who is called Justus, who are of the circumcision:

[m] Eph.6.21.
[n] Phile. 10.
[o] Acts 19.29.
[p] 2 Tim. 4. 11.

* Some read, "that he may know your state."

and as to which Paul had a special commission, the manifestation of the mystery of Christ, against which all the world is, and he who is the usurping "prince of this world;" so that, if it is to have way, God must open a door for it. For this, therefore, the apostle seeks the prayers of the disciples, and in general that they persevere in prayer, watching, as in expectation of answer, and with thanksgiving, which implies the tender and encouraging remembrance of abundant mercy. But indeed the very fact of having such a gospel to pray for may well be the greatest encouragement: how could He, who at such a cost has provided salvation, fail to answer the desire of heart which is so completely in sympathy with His own heart? Here is that as to which we may pray therefore with boldness and confident expectation; and here is the secret of confidence, when we have learned to identify ourselves with Christ's interests upon the earth as our real concern. With Paul himself there certainly was no other, as we well know.

4. Finally, apart from the direct preaching of the gospel, we are to "walk in wisdom towards those that are without, redeeming opportunities:" for in a world under Satan's power there will not be always such. For this reason one must be ready when the time comes. At all times, also, the speech is to be characterized by grace, the "salt" of divine holiness preserving this from passing over into mere laxity and inability to stand for God. This in fact alone is grace; but the holiness of grace is as far as possible from that of law, though law is holy. A Christian, as one who owes all to grace, falsifies his testimony if he shows a spirit of legality; nor will there be wisdom found in this way to "answer," or meet according to their need, the various conditions of those around. We must be in the spirit of Christ (which grace is) in order to do His work.

Sec. 3.

Perhaps one may best characterize the closing section of Colossians as "heart-openings." It is in fact the free interchange of brotherly feeling on the part of

these only are my fellow-workers for the kingdom of God, who have been a comfort unto me. [q]Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, saluteth you, always striving earnestly for you in his prayers, that ye may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God. For I bear him witness that he laboreth much* for you, and for them in Laodicea, and for them in Hierapolis. Luke, the beloved physician, saluteth [r]you, and [s]Demas. Salute the brethren in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the assembly that is in his [t]house. And when this epistle hath been read among you, cause it to be read also in the assembly of the Laodiceans, and that ye also read that from Laodicea. And say to [u]Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it. The salutation by the hand of me [v]Paul; remember my bonds. Grace be with you.†

* Some, "hath much zeal." † Some add, "Amen."

[q] Phile. 23.
[r] 2 Tim. 4. 11.
[s] 2 Tim. 4. 10.
[t] Rom. 16. 5. 1 Cor. 16. 19.
[u] Phile. 2.
[v] 1 Cor. 16. 21. 2 Thess. 3. 17. cf. Gal. 6. 11.

those who have recognized the place which they have been given with regard to one another. Thus it begins with the provision for mutual knowledge of each other's state. Tychicus, a beloved and faithful brother, able to enter into such things, is sent from the apostle to convey to the disciples the news as to himself; and to bring back from them the account of their condition. This he realizes as what their hearts would crave for comfort, as united together in the love of Christ.

There follow special greetings and remembrances; as to which there is scarcely much needed by way of explanation, though much may be gained by meditation. The apostle closes with the salutation written with his own hand, certifying the letter to be his own, and bidding them keep in mind his bonds for Christ.

THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON

PAUL, a prisoner of Christ [a]Jesus, and Timotheus the brother, unto Philemon the beloved and our [b]fellow-laborer, and to the sister Apphia, and to [c]Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the assembly in thy [d]house: grace be to you and peace, from God our Father and the [e]Lord Jesus Christ.

a ver. 9. Eph. 3. 1. Eph. 4. 1. 2 Tim. 1. 8.
b Phil. 2. 25.
c Col. 4. 17.
d Rom. 16. 5. 1 Cor. 16. 19.
e Eph. 1. 2.

NOTES.

THE epistle to Philemon is plainly an appendix to that to the Colossians, as before noticed. It was written at the same time, sent to the same place, and by the hands of one of those entrusted with the former one, with whom it has to do. As an address to a master, it naturally connects with Colossians and its kindred epistle Ephesians, the only two of Paul's epistles in which masters, as such, are addressed. Here the case of Onesimus incidentally brings before us that of slavery as seen in the light of Christianity; and this seems the real subject of the epistle. That it is not openly treated as such has its evident reason. There is no legislation as to it; but the principles that are, in fact, maintained are only wider in application, declaring, as they do, the relation of Christianity and its disciples to the world-status, in a way which touches much more than a question which, for most of us now, has ceased to be of personal concern.

The purport of the epistle is almost, one might say, to undo what the writer is doing, in returning a runaway slave, now converted, to the hands of his master, himself a Christian. What were these, then, now to one another? *Brethren*, as the apostle plainly says (ver. 16). He and the assembly which had received Onesimus had not waited for the expression of Philemon's mind before acting in the matter. Manifestly it was for God alone to bring in among His people: the baptism of the Spirit alone could make a member of the Body of Christ. When that was done, it was too late for man's interference. Thus the apostle in the previous epistle introduces Onesimus to the whole assembly as a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you; and associates him with Tychicus as bearer of tidings to them. They could not but receive whom the Lord had received, and own the apostle's messenger as one certified to them with the full weight of his authority.

Of this assembly Philemon formed a part; and thus stood committed to the reception of his slave, or to the rejection of those who had received him. There was, in fact, no thought of any dissent; there could be none without the overthrow of an order which was divine, not human; and it is with his place settled as to the assembly that Onesimus turns to meet his master, with the letter of Paul in his hand.

Yet here, it is plain, it is not to meet him, as in the assembly, upon equal terms. Distinctly is it recognized by the apostle that, (although not in the assembly,) the relation of master and slave still remained. Yet this must, of course, be made to accept whatever modification the common Christianity imposed upon it. The eternal must give law to the earthly and the temporal. But how, then, could the badge of slavery abide at all? To answer this is to answer many other questions growing out of or connected with it, relating to the practical life, and with regard to the world side of a Christianity that is not of the world.

I thank my God always, making mention of thee in my [f]prayers, hearing of thy love and [g]faith which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and unto all the saints; that the fellowship of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledgment of every good thing that is in you * toward Christ Jesus. For I had great joy † and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints have been refreshed by [h]thee, brother.

[f] Eph. 1. 16. 1 Thess. 1. 2. 2 Thess. 1. 3.
[g] Eph. 1. 15. Col. 1. 4.
[h] ver. 20.

* Some read, "us." † Some read, "thankfulness."

But here it is well to point out once more a source of confusion in our common version in the frequent want of proper discrimination between two words which it alike translates "world," but which are in different lines of thought really. *Kosmos* is the world physically, whether of people or things; while *aion* has to do with time, and means "age"—a certain defined and limited period of the world's history. There are past ages, a present age, and ages still to come; through all of which the kosmos passes; under whatever different phases, the same kosmos still.

The present age has one terrible characteristic. The former ones were all defined by God's various dealing with men; and that for blessing to them. He had not then, even for the time (as for a time alone it could be) given up the world. Thus the age of promise and of law alike contemplated blessing on the earth, and therefore the blessing of the earth; but at the present time God is simply taking out from the earth a people designed for heavenly blessing. This is indeed on His part a more wonderful work of grace than ever was before, but for the world it is a diversion from the divine ways which were leading on to blessing. The throne of God which was on earth in Israel, and the more glorious presence which since greeted it, are alike gone; and the way and cause of this, from the human side, give character to this time of His departure, which is the time of His rejection.

One may say, however, that this must not be so taken as to ignore the coming of the Spirit to represent Christ upon earth, and that the house of God in its spiritual reality is here also. This is true; and we may say again with regard to these things, that they express a more wonderful working of divine grace than ever was seen before. But notice that the *world* does not see this. Nothing is visible to human eyes any more; and "the world seeth Me no more" is Christ's acceptance of rejection by it, and the seal, therefore, of its condemnation. The gospel goes out world-wide among men; but that changes in no wise anything of this. And though it can be said that "God so loved the world as to give His Only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish, but have eternal life," yet, that we might be delivered from the *aion*—this "present evil world," or "age" (Gal. i. 4)—Christ gave Himself according to the will of our God and Father.

In the world therefore of this "age," (an age whose end will only be when Christ appears in judgment upon what will then be in ripest, fullest rebellion against Him,) the Christian can be but a stranger; and thus Scripture ever contemplates him.

This, of course, cannot alter his relation to God as the Creator, upon which Scripture equally insists; nor does it affect that moral government of things which God necessarily exercises, or He would not be God. It is this that makes us bow to the authority of those who, like the Nero of Paul's day, may be wholly set against Him. We recognize the mercy which acts, even through such as these, to restrain worse evil, and by a government of man by man, which was God's own institution after the flood. Spite of the disorder, therefore, we own God's order, and submit ourselves to His government, which we are sure is a wise and holy one, though faith is needed to realize this.

Wherefore, though I might be very bold in Christ to enjoin upon thee what is [e]meet, yet for love's sake I beseech rather, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of [f]Jesus Christ,—I beseech thee for my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds, [g]Onesimus, who in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and me: whom I have sent again to thee: do thou, therefore, receive him, that is, mine own bowels. Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might minister to me in the bonds of the gospel; but without thy mind would I do nothing,

[e] ver. 19.
[f] ver. 1.
[g] Col. 4. 9.

The character of the age has not been changed by the Christianity that is in it; and the apostle declares (none more conscious, surely, of the immensity of the blessing) that Satan is its god. "The god of this age" (2 Cor. iv. 4) is a terrible indictment indeed, after Christ has come, His work accomplished, and the Spirit here upon earth; but there it stands, and cannot be erased: we cannot alter it, but are delivered from it.

Slavery is the fruit of a world estranged from God. It is a sample of what sin has wrought, not to be imagined in a paradisaic earth, and in its whole spirit opposed to the free and equal spirit of Christianity. When these things meet, the antagonism might be expected to be sharply pronounced; and while it could not legislate for the world, or deliver its disciples from an oppressive yoke under which they might be born, yet one might expect the Church to purge itself absolutely from an incongruous practice such as this.

Yet we have already seen, both in Ephesians and Colossians, masters addressed as such, without even a reproof for what they were. Simply they were to give unto their bondservants that which was just and equal; while their Christian bondmen were (as we read in the first epistle to Timothy,) not to despise their believing masters because they were brethren, but rather to do them service as faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit (chap. vi. 2). Such an admonition may well be thought to show that among Christians the severity of these bonds was greatly slackened; but it shows still more plainly that they were not annulled.

Was this then all that Christianity had to say? It was a large and pressing question. The number of slaves in the empire was immense; the miseries resulting were excessive; in the judgment of the haughty Roman the new religion suited well this class of the oppressed and downtrodden, who in fact soon largely sought to it. Here another Master was found, with truest liberty for the slave, even while the old service might continue. And under the heathen master it did continue, for the cross was the symbol of the world's present sway, and the faithful unto death were they whom the crown waited.

It was another matter, however, where Christianity had won master as well as slave; and here, where it was mistress of all the conditions, were the relations caused by sin, and embodying so different a spirit still to continue? To such questions, Philemon, as a supplement to its connected epistles, yields the answer furnished by the New Testament.

Philemon means "friendly, loving," and it is in this character that Paul appeals to him. The Christian heart is what must decide in the matter before him; and Paul's comfort is the assurance that Philemon, the "friendly," or "kind-hearted," answers to his name. It was faith that wrought in this love, and gave it its Christian verity, and found therefore in the saints its special objects. This naturally introduces what is on the writer's heart; for the formerly unprofitable Onesimus is now one of these saints of God, who as such has a claim upon Philemon that will not be denied.

Confident, therefore, in his readiness of heart, the apostle will not insist upon

that thy benefit should not be as it were of [l]necessity, but willingly. For perhaps for this reason he departed from thee for a season, that thou mightest receive him for ever; not now as a bond-servant, but above a bond-servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord? If thou countest me then a [m]partner, receive him as myself. If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee aught, put that on my account. I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it; though I say not unto thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides. Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my [n]bowels in Christ. Having confidence in thine obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt do even more than I say.

[l] 2 Cor. 9. 7.

[m] 2 Cor. 8. 23.

[n] ver. 7.

any apostolic authority, but pleads for Onesimus as for a child of his own, spiritually, begotten too in his bonds, a solace given to him of God, who was now Paul the aged, and the prisoner of Jesus Christ. How many motives here to compel a free heart's obedience! Doubtless Onesimus had been an unprofitable servant, yet now he was profitable as a Christian, ready to do service to Philemon, as he had already done to the apostle, to whom he had endeared himself so much as to make him as his own bowels. Yet he was sending him away who might have performed the service for him that Philemon doubtless would have rendered had he been at Rome. He might well have been glad, therefore, to have such a representative in his place; and it would have been a thing most acceptable to the aged prisoner. He would indeed have retained him, but would not assume what was Philemon's mind, nor appear to force what should be freest action. Had not God, moreover, overruled the temporary departure of a slave to bestow upon Philemon in his place the far greater gift of a brother beloved? Let him receive him then as such, nay, as if it were the apostle himself; who would take upon himself also all the responsibility of any loss that he had sustained. Yet to the apostle Philemon owed a larger debt, even himself as a Christian,—a self to which his former one was of no value. As a brother then to a brother, and with all brotherly confidence, Paul appeals to him to give him joy in the Lord, satisfying the longings of a heart taught and enlarged by divine love itself.

This is the substance of the epistle; and at first sight it disappoints our expectations as the last word upon such a subject. There is no direct doctrine in it; there is no decree that Christians should set free their slaves; no appeal even to the heart of one who so clearly has a heart as Philemon has, to do so. The claim of the master is recognized, an escaped slave in the liberty of Christ is sent back to whence he had fled. It is clear that Christianity holds out no worldly inducements to its disciples,—is not to serve as a leverage to lift a believer above his position when called by divine grace. Ambition will not here be gratified, nor ease be served; but rather the scandal of the cross added to all other burdens: this, while the blessing of liberty is not denied; and if "thou mayst be made free, use it rather." But no worldly motive is to take rank with or supplement the spiritual: the misery of which has been seen abundantly from even those early days till now.

And yet it could be said, "Not now a servant, but more than a servant, a brother beloved;" and in the family of God, where none serve except the free-born children, none are bondmen but in the love of Christ. How such principles would work out in practice, we may easily conceive. Slave and brother must reveal themselves in inevitable contradiction; the Church, too, which knows only members of Christ's body, being set in charge to maintain needed

But withal prepare me also a lodging; for I hope that through your prayers I shall be given unto °you.

Epaphras saluteth ᵖthee, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus; ᵍMarcus, ʳAristarchus, ˢDemas, ᵗLuke, my fellow-laborers. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.*

* Some omit.

o Phil. 1. 25. Phil. 2. 24.
p Col. 1. 7. Col. 4. 12.
q Col. 4. 10. 2 Tim. 4. 11.
r Acts 19. 29. Col. 4. 10.
s Col. 4. 14. 2 Tim. 4. 10.
t Col. 4. 14. 2 Tim. 4. 11.

discipline, that these principles might be kept from violation. In the assembly the slave had equal right and voice; and it was likely that he would be at least as fully represented as the master.

Thus though there might be no immediate change, or imperative proclamation of release to the bondman, a spirit had entered with Christianity which was really much more than this. A new life was swelling the buds of a spiritual growth which should snap every bond that would constrict it. The life of Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, might be safely trusted to do this.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF PHILIPPIANS

THE epistle to the Philippians, coming in the fifth place of this series, is the Deuteronomy of the whole; that is, it gives us the practical result, not simply of a position in Christ, but of the apprehension of it and of Him, therefore, with whom it fills the soul. We have seen that in Colossians, the result of the apprehension of the position is Christ Himself known and nothing else, the knowledge of the new man. It is evident that in the third chapter here, we have precisely the moral result of this, Christ the one Object for the heart. The very name here, Philippians, agrees with this. "Philippians" means "fond of horses," of the race-course, as we may say, and the third of Philippians is just the Christian race, with Christ as the goal and prize of it.

The steps by which full Christian position is attained are not found here. We have simply the result. Thus, at the beginning of the third chapter, the true circumcision are those who "worship God in the Spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh;" but this "no confidence in the flesh" is just one side of the deliverance of the eighth of Romans. This, of course, is absolutely needed for such a race as we read of there. Confidence in the flesh, the flesh in the Christian as well as any other, would only be an absolute prohibition of such a course as the apostle speaks of there. We cannot carry the flesh with us upon such a journey. The very first chapter here, which gives Christ as the governing principle of the life, is also in necessary connection with this, while the second chapter traces His course as the pattern for the Christian. It is, therefore, as in Colossians, Christ all through, closing with the triumphant realization as learned by experience, of the competency for all circumstances thus acquired. Philippians is evidently Colossians, with just this one thing added, the actual experience which must be known in order to have the full result such as we have it here. The unity of subject makes the epistle practically a very simple one in its construction.

The divisions are:

1. (Chap. i.): Christ as the governing principle of the Christian life.
2. (Chap. ii.): Christ in His self-humiliation the pattern for us.
3. (Chap. iii.): Christ in glory the Object before the soul, the goal and prize of the race.
4. (Chap. iv.): Christ as known by experience in His competence for all the circumstances of the way.

THE EPISTLE TO THE
PHILIPPIANS

DIVISION 1. (Chap. i.)

Christ, the governing principle of the Christian life.

1(1-11): Shown in the constancy of the Philippians.
1 (1, 2): The order established for this.

1. [1] PAUL and [a] Timotheus, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ [b] Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons:* grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

a Col. i. 1.
b 1 Cor. i. 2.

* Or, "ministers."

NOTES.

Div. 1.

To reach the end that we have here, we must begin aright. Christ as the governing principle of the life is the starting point in the Christian race, and the necessary condition of the final result: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." It would be altogether wrong to suppose that every Christian can say this. It is open to him, surely; but as practical attainment, how far often from being reached! The result here is found only by the man to whom Christ is the governing principle of his life, the pattern of his way, and the Object for his heart. We must put these things together or we misplace the truth. It is a truth of experience; and experience alone can give it to us. Thus here, we have something more indeed than Christ being our life. It is rather the result which the epistle to the Galatians gives us, of Christ living in one. Christ our life is the necessary basis-truth; but Christ living in us is the actual power for the life,—Christ objectively present to the soul, governing it entirely: "To me to live is Christ;" and notice how this clears the sight as to all the way itself. The apostle is able to decide, as it were, whether he shall live or die, by these interests of Christ which govern him. He longs to depart and be with Christ, but he sees that his remaining in the flesh is necessary for Christ's interests, for the sake of His people, and thus he knows he shall remain and abide with them all. How thoroughly will a principle like this clear the sight as to all details! It is, in fact, the single eye; and if the eye be single, the whole body shall be full of light. It is the practical result of the exhortation in Colossians, to do whatever we do, in word or deed, in the name of the Lord Jesus; that is, as representing Him upon the earth. Thus, then, we start in the epistle before us.

1. The epistle begins with the state of the Philippians themselves. He is exceedingly happy about them. There has been with them an abiding fellowship with the gospel, that is, with the interests of Christ on earth, which has given them a necessary participation with the apostle in that defence and confirmation of the gospel which was entrusted to him. Here he finds the strongest encouragement to believe in their steady progress.

[1] He associates with himself Timothy, as together bond-servants of Jesus Christ. We know that this bond-service is the height of liberty,—that it is the language which love uses in the realization of the love which has sought us and gained us for God. He does not speak as an apostle here: he is a saint amongst other saints. The experience which we find in the epistle is plainly not to be thought

2 (3-8) Their fellowship in the gospel.

3 I thank my God upon all my remembrance of you,
4 always in every supplication making supplication for you all with [c]joy, because of your fellowship with the
5 gospel from the first day until now: being confident of
6 this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus [d]Christ:
7 even as it is right for me to think this as to you all, because ye have me in your hearts, and that, both in my bonds and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye are all participators in my grace.
8 For God is my witness, how I long for you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

[c] Rom. 1. 9. Col. 1. 3. 1 Thess. 1. 2.

[d] 1 Pet. 1. 5.

of as if it belonged to men of eminence or in some noted place, officially. So also he writes to them not as the assembly in Philippi, but as saints in Christ Jesus; that is to say, therefore, as individuals, for all experience is individual; conscience and heart are individual also, and these are the things with which we have to do here. It does not affect this that he specially names the overseers and ministers (or deacons, perhaps,) of the assembly. These, as we find in the first epistle to Timothy, were ordained for piety, to promote the practical welfare of those who were learning how to behave themselves "in the house of God," as the apostle said to Timothy himself. The house of any one tells its story of, and gives its character to, the man whose house it is; and the house of God is that surely which holiness becomes. Thus, the holy ones in Christ that are in Philippi are seen here with those who have their place amongst them for the help of holiness; and it is evident that while, as already said, conscience, heart, and experience are all individual things, yet that does not mean that we are independent of each other, that we cannot receive help from each other with regard to them. Thus, the overseers and ministers are fully in place in this epistle, and to them all he wishes grace and peace, the ever abiding necessity, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 He now reviews their history morally. We have seen, in the Acts that the principle developed in the work in Philippi is progress through conflict. The progress characterizes them all through; and the conflict, as we shall see, abides for them also, and does not daunt them. Thus the apostle is able to thank his God for his whole remembrance of them. There is nothing to hinder his heart going out towards them in the fullest way. This does not, of course, hinder his continual supplication for them also. He does not want this brightness to be clouded in the least, but he is able to make the supplication with joy and not with sorrow, as he realizes how thoroughly their spirit had been with the gospel, from the first day until the present time. They were men not satisfied with their own salvation, and not simply content with their individual blessing. They felt that so much, that they must have, if possible, all men share with them in it; and they felt their debt to Christ in such sort as to identify them with His interests upon the earth. These are necessary signs of real happiness and apprehension of our individual blessing. There cannot be the proper realization of it in the soul, unless as one is carried by it outside of one's self, and filled with the energy which faith and hope and love combine to inspire.

He prophesies, therefore, for them a steadfast progress, not indeed as having confidence in the flesh; but he realizes that this good work which God has begun in them is a work which will continue on to its completion in the day of Christ. Brightness and happiness merely, as we reckon these, might have been found with the Galatians, who, as we know, were soon in a very different condition, but it is Christ enjoyed that their conduct here declares. One may enjoy one's *blessing*, enjoy the comfort of one's security, without rightly enjoying Christ; but there is nothing that promotes stability and progress of the soul short of this. The evidence of it he saw in their earnest fellowship with him-

a (9-11): The fruit of righteousness in them to the glory of God.

2 (12-20): The opposition

1 (12-14): The overruling of Paul's bonds.

2 (15-17): Christ the more preached, even though, by some, of envy and strife.

9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in full knowledge and all [a]intelligence, so
10 that ye may judge of and approve the things that are [b]excellent, in order that ye may be pure and without
offence unto the day of [c]Christ; being filled with the
11 fruit of righteousness which is by Jesus [d]Christ to the glory and praise of [e]God.

12 Now I would have you know, brethren, that the things with regard to me are fallen out rather to the furtherance of the gospel, so that my bonds have be-
13 come manifest [as being] in Christ in all the [f]prætorium and to all others, and that most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident, through my bonds, are more
14 abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear.
15 Some, indeed, preach Christ even of envy and strife;
16 but some also of good will: the one do it of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel; but the
17 other preach Christ of contention, not purely, thinking to arouse tribulation for my bonds.

a Eph. 1. 8.
b Rom. 2.18.
c Acts 24.16.
d Jno.15.4,5.
e Jno. 15. 8.
f ch. 4. 22.

self. He was in their hearts, not simply as one to whom they owed a debt of gratitude, but as one who was set for the confirmation and defence of the gospel, and who was suffering even to bonds on this account. It was this that drew out their earnest sympathy, and on the apostle's side towards them; he longed after them, in the "bowels," that is, the tender affections of Christ Jesus.

9 He prays that this love which they manifest may abound more and more in full knowledge and all intelligence. This is what in fact love manifested in this manner is on the way to. The love of Christ is, as has already been said, the true condition of knowledge,—the eye single and the whole body full of light. Christ becomes the test of everything for the soul, and everything, therefore, is seen in its true character. They could approve thus the things that were more excellent, see things in their proper proportion to one another; and this too is needed in order to be perfectly right and without offence. It is an unhappy sign to see small things made comparatively much of, and externals take the place which only belongs to that which is inward and spiritual. While nothing, of course, is to be neglected, small as it may seem, yet a disproportionate zeal for externals, which are the smaller things, will naturally and necessarily accompany a comparative displacement of what, before God, is more excellent. He desires, therefore, that the fruit of righteousness in them may be complete and that thus, through Jesus Christ, there may be glory and praise to God from their life on earth.

2. 12 He now turns to his own circumstances in order to show how thoroughly that which seemed to be not merely against him, but against that truth for which he stood, which he represented, had been overruled of God really for the spread of the gospel and for its entrance, it may be, into places which otherwise would have been closed to it. Those bonds which were manifestly for Christ and for Christ only, (which proclaimed him a martyr, not a malefactor,) could not but draw attention to him, and make men realize what Christ must be to His own, who could thus make competent His people to suffer, and to suffer joyfully in His behalf. Thus, in all the prætorium, in the places of rule in imperial Rome, and in all other places around, the tidings went abroad; and the effect upon those themselves Christians, was to increase confidence in the Lord, instead of depressing and discouraging. Their mouths were opened to speak with more fearless confidence the word of God.

15 But there was not unmixed comfort as to this. Even here, alas, the enemy

3 (18-20): This by the Spirit turned to the glory of Christ.

18 What is it then? At any rate, in every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yea, and I will rejoice. For I know that this shall turn out for my [k]salvation, through your [l]supplication and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ; according to my earnest expectation and hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all [m]boldness, as always, now also, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.

[k] ch. 2. 12.
[l] 2 Cor. 1. 11.
[m] ver. 28. Eph. 6. 19.

could come in. There were those who for envy and strife could preach, as well as for good will. On the one hand, there were those who redoubled their own efforts as they sought to supply, as far as might be, the place of him who was now shut up. On the other hand, there were those who, in the spirit of contention even, could announce Christ; exalting themselves at his expense, who was now removed from any power of hindrance. These were the bright, early days of the gospel, and yet such a thing could even then be seen. How clear that where the Spirit works we must not expect but that the enemy will work also! Here, in fact, is that which would excite his enmity, and amongst Christians themselves there are always those who, through some lack of devotedness on their own parts, will be in his hands to promote his schemes.

18 But the apostle triumphs over it all. At any rate, he says, it is Christ who is preached, and *that* he can rejoice in. Christ would do His own work, would testify for Himself, whatever the spirit of His professed heralds. How blessed a thing to know, in the terrible failure which has come in since then, that, nevertheless, Christ remains the true and faithful Witness, and that for every soul with whom there is earnestness and simplicity, the witness that He gives will not really be clouded by the failure of others. For himself, the apostle realized that this was turning out for his own salvation; a strange term, as it might seem, for one like the apostle,—but only strange because we misconceive so much what "salvation" for such an one as himself should signify. To think of it as implying any lack of absolute security with regard to his eternal blessing, would be indeed to lower the Christian in the fullest possible way; but if we realize the condition of conflict which the world presents and what it means for one to be set for Christ in the world, (set to magnify Him, as he says directly by life or death), "salvation" will have a totally different meaning from that which is perhaps almost exclusively attached to it. We are apt to use it, in fact, in too technical a way and as if it meant only the one thing; that is to say, deliverance from guilt and condemnation. This is a salvation which is of God entirely and which we start with. No incidents of the way, no attainments that we can make, can either imperil this or increase its blessedness. God *has* saved us. That is the starting point; but then, on the other hand, salvation is used in other senses in the New Testament. It is need, of course, for that final salvation as to which at present we are only "saved in hope," when there will be complete deliverance from all that now makes one groan, "waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of the body;" but in this final form salvation is again a salvation of God entirely. We have no part in it ourselves, except to receive it. It is Christ, as the apostle tells us here afterwards, whom we wait for as Saviour, who will Himself change our body of humiliation into the likeness of His glorious body; so that in this also we have that of which the apostle cannot possibly be speaking here.

There is a third application of the term, however, which the second chapter will introduce us fully to, a salvation in which we have our part; God working in us and we working out. This is salvation from all the perils of the way, and what perils to one to whom to live is Christ! The peril is never to be made light of and was what he felt, that after all, Christ might not, (at least as He should be,) be magnified in His own.

3 (21-26): A single eye making manifest.

3. For to me to live is [n]Christ, and to die, gain: but if to live in the flesh [is my lot] this is worth my while: but what I shall choose I cannot tell. But I am in a strait betwixt two, having the desire to depart and be with [o]Christ, [for]* it is very much better; but to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall [p]abide, yea, and abide with you all, for your progress and joy in faith; that your glorying may abound in Christ Jesus, through me, by my presence with you [q]again.

4 (27-30): Tested in affliction.

4. Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel

[n] Gal. 2. 20.
[o] 2 Cor. 5. 8.
[p] ch. 2. 24.
[q] 2 Cor. 1. 14.

* "For" is omitted in the large number of MSS. and versions.

This was what was before the apostle. The circumstances of which he speaks here, that seemed most against him, were things which really tended to help him in this direction, to deliver him from self-confidence, to make him realize that it was God, after all, who had all things in His hand; and that, apostle as he was, he was only the humble instrument of God's will who could as well set him aside and carry on His work without him as use him for His purpose. This was, in fact, to such as the apostle, a manifest help and encouragement; and here the prayers of the saints counted for something, and he solicits them; while the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ could not be wanting for one set for Him. He shows us directly here what is in his thought. His earnest expectation and his hope was that he should be ashamed in nothing, but that with all boldness, as always, Christ should be magnified in his body, whether by life or death. Salvation in such a case must necessarily have its significance from the point of view of him who speaks of it, and his earnestness to realize it only shows him the more manifestly to be the man he was.

3. He now explicitly assures us of what is before him. The principle of his life was this: to him to live was Christ. Necessarily, for such an one, to die, on the other hand, would be gain. He would go to Christ; and he represents himself in a certain difficulty with regard to these two things, whether to choose life or death. To die was gain; to live was worth his while. He could not possibly want motive to live, as he looked around him and realized the condition of men and the labor of Christ Himself in their behalf. Thus there were two motives which would lead him in different directions. He could not but desire to depart and be with Christ; which, for himself, personally, would be very much better; but if he looked at the saints and thought of them, then his remaining in the flesh was more necessary, and the simple heart for Christ which carried him through all perplexities could decide for him, that, therefore, he would remain, that their progress and joy in the faith might be ministered to. It was not in the power of that Rome in which he was, head of the whole world, and with no apparent possibility for anything to thwart her will,—it was impossible for Rome to decide as to this poor prisoner. Death for him, or life, was not found by any imperial decree. Christ was the Lord of all; and thus he can prophesy not merely with regard to his continuing to live, but even his return to them again, that "your glorying may abound in Christ Jesus through me, by my presence with you again." How simply is the one, for whom Christ is the light upon the path, delivered from perplexity, just in proportion to the simplicity of his soul in this respect! This by itself would assure us that there was, in fact, a way for the apostle out of that Roman prison-house in which he was just now shut up, and that he *did* have for a time that liberty which has been so much questioned on the ground of historical evidence. Here is something more than history. It is the confidence of a soul for whom Christ decides absolutely his path, and such confidence, clear sighted as he assures us it was, could not possibly be disappointed.

4. He turns to them once more in his earnest desire for them, that they may

of [r]Christ, that whether I come and see you or be absent, I may hear of your state, that ye stand firm in one spirit, with [s]one soul, striving together for the faith of the gospel; and in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is for them an evident token of perdition, but of your [t]salvation, and that from God; because to you hath been granted, in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on [u]him, but also to suffer for his [v]sake: having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

r *cf.* Eph. 4. 1. Col. 1. 10.
s 1 Cor. 1. 10.
t *cf.* 2 Thess. 1. 5.
u Eph. 2. 8.
v 1 Pet. 4. 16.

DIVISION 2. (Chap. ii.)

Christ in His self-humiliation our pattern.

2 (1-11): The mind of Christ.
2 (1-4): The oneness of mind to be attained by absence of self seeking.

1. [1] IF there be, therefore, any comfort in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the [w]Spirit, if any bowels and compassions, fulfil ye my joy that ye be of the same [x]mind, having the same love, one in soul, thinking one thing; let nothing be in the spirit of

w 2 Cor. 13. 14.
x ch. 1. 27.

still conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, that, present with them or absent, he may find them standing firm in one spirit, with one heart, unwearyingly laboring in that same conflict which in his person the gospel was experiencing. Opposers there would be and were. They had realized this from the very beginning of their Christian course. It was a thing which they had taken account of, and which, therefore, now would not frighten them. A joyful spirit of confidence in this respect was itself an evidence that these adversaries would meet destruction, and that they themselves were heirs of that salvation which is from God alone. The suffering was as much a gift from God to them as their believing on Christ had been. It was a privilege, not something to be mourned over or regretted. They were partaking of that which they had seen in him when he was amongst them, and still heard to be his portion.

Div. 2.

We have now, therefore, set before us the whole path to its issue in glory, but as trodden in the first place and in full reality by Him who had come down into the world, drawn by His love alone, giving up all which was His just right, which He might have retained, and taking His place amongst men, to come down to the very lowest possible place in this way, the death of the cross. Such was the path which had ended, however, for Him in the glory in which now He was, and where every knee should shortly bow to Him and every tongue confess Him Lord. Such, then, is the pattern for us of One perfect in the path, but the apostle shows us also that there were, in fact, those who were running in it witnesses to the joy which, for themselves also, could make them despise the shame, and enable them to run on stedfastly to the goal which already has been shown us,—Christ Himself—the foremost in the race and who has reached the end of it.

1. He desires for the Philippians that there may be amongst them but one mind, but then, this mind could, therefore, only be the mind of Christ. If here for Him, representing Him on earth, they must realize the spirit in which He walked upon earth. There was abundant blessing that they had found already, which would be an incitement to them for this. Faith, hope and love, all drew them on, and were in them the testimony of that love which Christ had shown them.

[1] He appeals, therefore, to the comfort in Christ which they had enjoyed, the

strife or vain [y]glory, but in lowliness of mind each esteeming the other better than himself; regarding not each his own things but each of you the things of others also.

[2] Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus; who, subsisting in the form of [z]God, did not esteem it an object to be grasped* to be on an equality with [a]God; but emptied [b]himself, taking the form of a

[2](5-8): Christ's humiliation, even to the cross.

[y] Gal. 5. 26.

[z] Jno. 17. 5.

[a] *cf.* Jno. 10. 30.

[b] 2 Cor. 8. 9.

* Most say, "of rapine."

consolation of a love which had sought them and which was with them ever, a communion of the Spirit which had in it, therefore, a true, divine energy. There were bowels and compassions, tender thoughts and desires for others which the Spirit had awakened. He could appeal to them, therefore, by all this, that they would fulfil what was his joy for them, that there might be that perfect unity of mind which was but the unity of one aim, one interest,—the same love responsive in them all, soul joined to soul by this precious sympathy. Here oneness of mind would be not from mere reception of a common creed, but as the whole outcome of truth received, with all its blessed effects, as God wrought in them by it. The first necessity for this was that the spirit of the world, as the spirit of strife, with which the world was full, of vain glory which would necessitate a striving after it, should be absent from them. In the presence of God, lowliness is that which marks the soul. How could pride be nursed in such a presence? and where as a consequence realizing what they were themselves, of which they knew more, necessarily, than they could know of others? The result would be simple enough, the esteeming others as better than themselves. With regard to others, we have to give *them* credit to the full with regard to things in which we cannot know. With regard to ourselves, we are not called upon to spare ourselves; and in the consciousness of the love which is towards us, spite of all we are, we shall be delivered from any desire to make ourselves more than others. From this point of view, we can look upon each other, not with suspicion or envy, but, on the contrary, as rejoicing in that which we find of Christ in them. This is, in fact, the truest blessing for our own souls,—to walk in the enjoyment of that which Christ is, to all His own around us, and of the effects, therefore, produced by the reality of what Christ is, thus enjoyed.

[2] Now he puts before them this mind that was to be in them; a marvelous thing indeed, that, for such as we are, this mind can be enjoined and expected to be found in us,—the mind of One who, from a height of glory beyond possible apprehension, could come down, moved by His love alone, into the lowest possible depth where again the eye cannot follow Him, every step the giving up afresh of something that might be held! This is the course which manifests the mind of Christ, a course of continued self-denial and self-sacrifice, yet with an object which makes this not to be realized indeed as such. Here, we have then before us this wonderful path,—One subsisting in the form of God, that is to say, God Himself manifestly, so that there could be no question with regard to Him at all, yet this *form* of God He gave up; not the divine reality, which was, of necessity, His at all times, but the manifestation of it, the outward aspect. This he did not esteem "an object to be grasped," this equality with God. This, no doubt, is the proper translation here. It is much more than His not esteeming it robbery to be equal with Him. The point is, as the next words show us, that He was not seeking to retain that which was His without any question, but "emptying Himself."

In this spirit, He took the place of a bond-servant in the likeness of men. He does not tarry among angels, unutterable condescension as that would be. The need of men appeals to Him and brings Him on. He is not merely a Man, but in the *likeness* of men also, (in all the truth of that which manhood implies,)

[c] bondsman, becoming in the likeness of [d] men; and having been found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto [e] death, yea, the death of the [f] cross.

2(9-11): His exaltation to the glory of the Father.

[9] Wherefore also, God hath highly exalted [g] him and given to him a * name which is above every [h] name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should [i] bow, of heavenly and earthly and infernal [beings], and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is [j] Lord to the glory of God the [k] Father.

[c] Luk. 22. 27. [d] Heb. 2. 14. [e] Heb. 5. 8. [f] Gal. 3. 13. [g] Acts 2. 33. [h] Eph. 1. 20, 21. [i] Isa. 45. 23. Matt. 28. 18. Jno. 13. 13. [j] Rev. 19. 16. [k] cf. Rom. 6. 4.

* Some read, "that."

but a Manhood necessarily without blemish, a Man unfallen, nay, more perfect and greater than Adam before the fall. Here then, He was found amongst us, but even here He could not tarry. Love brought Him farther in this path which continually descended. "Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death." The very words show the glory that was His, and that that which was the consequence of the fall had no title over Him. It was in His self-humiliation that He stooped to death, this being for Him a path of obedience in which God was infinitely glorified.

But death itself was not the whole matter here. There was a depth far below death merely, the death of the Cross: not simply a death of shame, or which showed (as it did show) man's rejection of Him, but beyond all that, a death in which alone man's need could be reached, a death which alone could work atonement, a death, as we have seen in Galatians, of curse and penalty, not from man simply, but from God Himself. Here was the lowest point. Obedience itself could go no farther; and here was, at the same time, necessarily therefore, the full display of His proper glory to a soul that can realize it. Who could have stood in this place to do this work, but Himself alone? Who could, in utter loneliness and in the feebleness of humanity,—for "He was crucified through weakness,"—yet lay the foundation upon which could be securely built a new creation brighter than all before; and where God should be seen in the full display of righteousness and holiness and love, His whole nature manifested, there where every element of trial and opposition was met and mastered! Here is the pattern path. For us it is not, after all, a path that we could take, save only in the principle of it, the mind which the apostle says we are to have of One who was perfect in the obedience which made the greatest demands upon Him, and in which every step of the way was a further surrender of that which otherwise was His to retain. How wonderful, we may say again, that God should work in such as we are any resemblance to this mind of Christ, and how wonderfully must He have supplied and qualified us, in order to expect any such thing rightly from us!

[9] To this point it is Christ's course that we see, God leaving Him to it. Power was not on His side, but against Him. It was not by power that this conflict could be fought to victory, or those ends that He sought attained. Hitherto Christ might seem to be alone the worker, God simply remaining an impassive spectator of His course, but now the whole heart of God comes out manifestly. Once He has reached this point, the work being accomplished, the result gained, God now manifests Himself completely. "He has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of heavenly, earthly and infernal beings, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." Thus we see the goal reached. All opposition is vanquished and ceases. Every knee even of infernal beings must in result bow to Him. Everywhere He is confessed the Lord of all, a Man still, in the full reality of manhood, but a Man

2 (12-30): Witnesses.
1 (12,13): God working in, they are to work out His will.
2 (14-16): And as sons of God hold forth the word.

2. [1] So, then, my beloved, even as ye have always [t]obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much rather in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and [m]trembling; for it is God who worketh in you, both the willing and the working according to his good [n]pleasure.

[2] Do all things without [o]murmurings and [p]disputings; that ye may be harmless and simple, children of God without [q]blame, in the midst of a crooked and perverse [r]generation, among whom ye appear as lights in the [s]world, holding forth the word of [t]life; that I may have whereof to glory in the day of Christ, that I did not run in vain nor labor in [u]vain.

t ch. 1. 5.
m 1 Cor. 2. 3.
n 1 Cor. 15. 10. 2 Cor. 3. 5.
o 1 Cor. 10. 10.
p Rom. 14. 1.
q 1 Thess. 5. 23.
r Deut. 32. 5.
s Matt. 5. 14.
t 1 Thess. 1. 8. 1 Pet. 1. 23.
u 1 Thess. 2. 19.

in whom now all that was lost or imperilled by the fall is restored and more than restored. The glory of God shines out as nowhere else.

2. This then is the example set before us, one that we might say, perhaps, is absolutely beyond us. We may concede that it is beyond us, but not that this would induce hopelessness. On the contrary, the perfection of the standard is that which gives continually fresh desire for acquirement, and in an object such as this is for the heart, an energy for acquiring. But we have now before us witnesses amongst mere men, who present us with such actual accomplishment in men as we can no longer say, therefore, is beyond us. Whatever such an one as Paul might be in this respect, there is no inherent impossibility in our following him, even as he followed Christ. Paul was a man encompassed with the same difficulties as those that we have, and we, on the other hand, have dwelling in us the same Spirit as he had.

[1] The apostle immediately encourages us, in fact, with the assurance that if we are to work out our own salvation, yet it is God who worketh in us both the willing and the doing. We have already seen what this working out of salvation means, that it applies to the difficulties in the way, a salvation from all that would hinder the glorifying of Christ in our life here. It is this, therefore, which is to induce the fear and trembling; not in selfish dread, but the sense of our responsibility to Him to whom we owe our all and whose our life is. Plenty there is to make us serious in such work as this, but nothing to dishearten us. If God has taken in hand to work in us after this fashion, that is ample security for our success. The fact that the apostle was now absent from them, whose presence had been so great a comfort and blessing to their souls, was only to make them more completely realize this divine power which was carrying them on to the full blessing beyond.

[2] They were to preserve, on the one hand, the character which belonged to them, and on the other, to hold forth that word of life which was their public testimony in the world. The one must have the other as an accompaniment, if it was to be a testimony for, instead of against the One they heralded. Solemn it is to realize that as witnesses for Christ there can by no possibility be a negative position for us. We have the responsibility of witnesses; and if we are not that, so as to commend Christ to others, we cannot help but dishonor Him.

The apostle bids them, therefore, act in the spirit of those who are in full subjection to God, without murmuring at circumstances which they might pass through, without reasonings such as unbelief might urge, where there was such a spirit. On the other hand, they were to be harmless, children of God, who could take that name without bringing reproach upon it; and that in the midst of a generation crooked and perverse. Stars are best seen in the night, though they may shine at all times; and the world, such as it is, is the best possible place for testimony of this kind. As lights in it, they would not shine indeed

2 (17, 18): Willing to be a libation on their sacrifice.

4 (19-24): Timotheus approved amid general departure.

3 But if also I am poured out as a drink-offering on the [v]sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice, and rejoice together with you all. In like manner, do ye also rejoice, and rejoice with me.

4 But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be refreshed, knowing your [w]affairs. For I have no one like-minded, who will genuinely care as to your affairs; for all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ. But ye know the proof of him that as a child with a father he hath served with me in the work of the [x]gospel. Him, therefore, I hope to send immediately, as soon as I shall see how it will go with me: but I trust in the Lord that I myself also shall come [y]shortly.

v Num.28.7.

w Col. 4. 8.

x 1 Cor.4.17.

y Phile. 22.

by their own light. Christians are planets and not suns. The word of life held forth is that which declares the light to be reflected light, from Him who, though absent, (for it is night time now,) is yet in this sense still the true light of it. Without the testimony to Christ, the best life may appear only to testify of what is natural in man. Men constantly plead, as we know, the lives of others who make no profession. The "word of life" held forth gives the glory to God which is His due, shows that the power is outside one's self, while the effect upon one is manifest. The two things are here put in their place, the life and the light. The life in Christ was the light, but not so with us, although without the life the light would indeed be darkened. Their testimony would be for the apostle a thing to glory in, in the day of Christ, when it would be seen that he had "not run in vain nor labored in vain;" for a labor really vain must of necessity show a great defect in its own character. No true labor can be in vain in the Lord, as the apostle assures us.

3 So much then as to the character of witness on the part of Christians; but now we have examples in actual life. First of all, the apostle himself, who in the joy which so fully characterized him, a joy in Christ, which is strength for all the way, was ready in the spirit of his Master to be poured out even as a drink-offering on the sacrifice and service of the disciples' faith. The drink-offering was itself the symbol of joy; here a joy which set the offerer of it beyond all selfish calculation. He could pour out his life in the mere joy of the service of others. It was one who, as we know, was the prisoner of Jesus Christ at this time, who could say this; and who could bid them, therefore, rejoice, and rejoice with him, in that very suffering. Here is the first and most perfect witness amongst men merely, to the ability given of God to follow Christ. He does not give it openly as an example, but the Spirit of God, nevertheless, surely would draw our attention to it. It was the simple expression of his own joy, without a thought, one may say, of any peculiar testimony in it. The witness to Christ is that just in the proportion in which he is unconscious of being so. But he now brings forward those of whom he can speak as witnesses.

4 First of all, we have here Timotheus, true to his name, a man who "honors God;" now, alas, all the more manifest for what he was, in the midst of a departure sad enough to realize in days such as we are contemplating. "All seek their own," the apostle could say, "not the things of Jesus Christ;" and yet he was in the midst of that Roman assembly of whom, in his epistle to them, he had spoken as having a faith which was being proclaimed in the whole world. How short a time this testimony seems to have lasted! But Timotheus is not dragged down by it. We are not made by our circumstances; that is, if there is any vigor in our souls at all. We are *manifested* by them, which is a very different thing. One can easily look at the condition of things around and make it an excuse for the inexcusableness of our own condition; but God has

[a] (25-30): Epaphroditus.

[5] But I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier, but your messenger and minister to my [c]need; for he longed after you all, and was sore troubled because ye had heard that he was sick: for indeed he was sick, nigh unto death, but God had mercy on him; and not indeed on him alone, but also upon me, that I might not have sorrow upon sorrow. I have sent him, therefore, the more diligently, that when ye see him again ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. Receive him, therefore, in the Lord, with all joy, and hold such in [a]honor: because for the sake of the work he came nigh unto death, hazarding his life that he might supply that which was lacking in your service toward [b]me.

c ch. 4. 18.

a 1 Cor. 16. 18. 1 Thess. 5. 12.

b 1 Cor. 16. 17.

not ordained for us that we should be down to the level of those around us. All His grace abides for us, none the less. The power of the Spirit is not a mere register of the outside temperature. If men seek their own things, they will excuse themselves by the fact that they are only in keeping with the company around them. If Christ be really before the soul, it will be impossible to do so. This would rather stir up and energize one who thought of Him to serve Him the more earnestly. Thus it was with Timothy, a worthy spiritual child of such a father as Paul was, one who had served as companion with him in the work of the gospel. He had, therefore, in mind to send him immediately to them—another beautiful example as to himself of that self-denying love which wrought in him.

[5] And this goes further, for not only would he send Timothy, but he had thought it necessary already to send back to them Epaphroditus, one who had been their messenger, and minister on their part to his need, whom yet he would dismiss from the place in which his value had been thoroughly felt, in order that he might now give joy to the Philippians. There was a special reason for this on Epaphroditus' part, which shows him as another witness to the attainment of the mind in Christ. He had been sick, nigh unto death, and sick from the work into which he had thrown himself, realizing the responsibility of ministering to one identified with the gospel as the apostle was; a responsibility which, in a sense, was rather that of others, but which lacked through no fault of theirs. It was this lack that he was filling up, and with such energy and zeal that he had hazarded his life in doing this. They were to receive him, therefore, in the Lord, with all joy; and, in fact, the apostle could count so much upon their sympathy with him that he could not be content just with the assurance of his present recovery, but must send him to them, that they might satisfy themselves about it. How beautiful a testimony still to the one who could speak and act thus. How necessarily in all this the character of the man, the heart that was in him, shows itself! Feeling, on the one hand, with no ascetic stoicism, the mercy God had shown to him through Epaphroditus, the mercy He now shows in restoring him, and yet ready to sacrifice what he could realize thus the value of, almost, as one might say, without the need of doing this, merely to make their joy complete. Such, then, are the examples given us, in a way marked by such beautiful simplicity, of the possibility of the attainment of the mind of Christ in those who like ourselves were men, in all the weakness of men, and in all the difficulties, if not more than all the difficulties that encompass us also.

Div. 3.

The apostle has already led us up to the blessed Object before him. What he has been just enlarging upon is the example of the Lord's humiliation, but he

DIVISION 3. (Chap. iii.)

Christ in glory the Goal and Prize.

1 (1-3): The true circumcision.

1. FOR the rest, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord: to write the same things to you to me indeed is not irksome, and for you it is safe. Beware of [c]dogs, beware of [d]evil-workers, beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision who worship by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in [e]flesh.

[c] Matt. 7. 6. Rev. 22.15.
[d] 1 Tim.1.7.
[e] Col. 2. 11.

is now going to enlarge upon the glory which is his strength for such a path as this; the light which now shines for us upon the path, and shines more and more unto the perfect day. It is beautiful to realize that the very thing that is wanting to him now, as we look at him here, is the very thing which makes him a pilgrim and a racer,—an Object outside himself, something which he has not yet attained, but to which, because of its glory for him, he gives his whole energy to pressing on for its attainment. This is what characterizes all that we have here. His look is forward only. A racer does not look at the road on each side. He looks at what is before him; and so it is that in everything here, the principle is "forgetting that which is behind, and pressing on to that which is before." This is true of all attainment and experiences by the way, as it is of other things. It is not merely the world which is left behind,—that surely; but he himself, whatever up to the present he might be, is still left behind. It is Christ before him that gives oneness of purpose and character to his present life.

1. The thing, therefore, that he would press upon them now, as if it was all he wanted to say, was, "Rejoice in the Lord." He might seem to be insisting upon this in almost a needless manner, but it was not needless; nor for those who realized what Christ was to them, irksome either. There was opposition also. There were "dogs," evil workmen, men of the concision, just, surely, the judaizing spirit that we have seen active in the other epistles. He gives them the same title that they would apply to Gentiles. They were dogs, unclean, ferocious creatures. They were workmen it is true, but evil workmen, and busy for no good end. They were the "*con*cision," the mutilators of the flesh, as we may say, but which left it still with real strength for hindrance. After all, it was flesh they trusted in. The law, as we have seen many times, has to do with the man in the flesh and no other. Ascetic severity may be practised even to any extent, as the apostle has told us in Colossians, while the flesh gets real satisfaction by this. He will not call them the *circum*cision, the title they would have given themselves; for, now that Christianity has come, true circumcision is no more in the flesh, but is spiritual. There had indeed always to be what was spiritual in connection with it, to make it true for God; but now the characteristics of the circumcision are spiritual altogether. *We* are that, he says, who worship in the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who have no confidence in the flesh. Manifest it is that this "no confidence in the flesh" applies as much to the flesh in the Christian as to any other. Confidence in self, of any kind, is confidence in the flesh. The opposite to it here, the Object of all glorying, is Christ Himself. The knowledge of the new man is, as we have seen, Christ is all; and this it is that makes worshipers in the power of the Spirit of God, for Christ alone is He whom the Spirit glorifies, and with whom He occupies the heart. Beautiful it is to see how here the lesson of Romans, as already said, has been learned. There is no mention all the way through the epistle by the apostle, on his own part, of conflict with the flesh. His heart is there where the flesh can have no place. "The law of the Spirit, of life in Christ Jesus, has set" him "free from the law of sin and death." This Object beyond himself has made him master of himself. There is a real attainment which is the very opposite of that self-conscious sanctification which

3 (4-7): Rejected confidences.

2. Though I have matter of confidence, even in the flesh: if any other think to trust in the flesh, I rather: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of [f]Benjamin, a Hebrew of [g]Hebrews; as touching the law a [h]Pharisee; as to zeal, persecuting the [i]church; as to the righteousness which is in the law, found [j]blameless; but what things were gain to me, these I counted loss for [k]Christ.

3 (8-11): The aim, to win Christ.

3. Yea, verily, I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord;

[f] Rom. 11. 1.
[g] 2 Cor. 11. 22.
[h] Acts 23. 6.
[i] Acts 22. 3.
[j] *ctr.* Rom. 7. 7-9.
[k] Col. 3. 10, 11.

so many are seeking now. On the contrary, he sees self in such a way as that he can trust it no longer, and Christ, not self, (good or bad either,) is the One before his eyes. He does not turn back to tell you of his own experience. He is not thinking of his own attainments. He has attained nothing yet, as it were, until he is with Christ in glory. This is the genuine Christian spirit, as far removed from the helpless misery of the bondage which some would persuade us is normal for the Christian, as it is, on the other hand, far from all Pharisaic self-satisfaction or comfort in one's own condition.

2. He does indeed now tell us what ground of comfort he might have, if any, in the flesh; but only to dismiss it all as unworthy; as that which, if it were gain to him, were all the more, on account of the Christ before him, loss indeed. Anything which gave value and importance to himself would be but loss. It is in Christ that he finds all; and there is no separate interest, no treasure of any kind apart from Christ; but it is of use for him to show that he is not despising things which were not his. On the other hand, he had all that the proudest Jew could boast himself of,—a Jew himself, a circumcised man, circumcised the eighth day, of Israel's race, of the tribe of Benjamin,—not a descendant of one of Jacob's handmaids,—a Hebrew of the Hebrews, a thorough, out and out Jew, unmixed with Gentilism in any way. As to the law itself, one of the straitest sect, a Pharisee; as to zeal, (the kind of zeal that goes with law keeping,) persecuting the Church of God; but as to himself also, with regard to such righteousness as could be found in man under law, blameless. Plainly he was one in whom there was no conscious evil indulged to awaken the clamor of conscience in his soul. As he says in Galatians, he was no sinner of the Gentiles. The very things which made him afterwards to realize himself the chief of sinners were, in this way, to him, (in the state of which he speaks,) only things to be credited to him for good. As he has told us in Romans, he had not yet found the power of that commandment which brings about the full detection of man's natural evil, "Thou shalt not lust."

All this was gain to him, then. He felt and valued it; but Christ had been revealed, and where was the value now? He does not stop to debate about these things; he does not sift them to show that after all they were not what they seemed. Whatever they were, make them as much as possible, pile them up mountains high, Christ in glory set them aside altogether. They were not merely slight in gain; they were *loss*. He wanted nothing but that Christ who had been revealed to him. How blessed and wonderful to remember that this is, after all, not the picture simply of a great apostle. It is substantially the picture of a Christian in his normal character as that. The joy and the power of Christian life are found here, and the joy is the power. The life in its highest character, the spiritual condition in its fullest blessedness, are all found here.

3. It was not merely, however, for him the throwing aside of that which was religious gain to him. He had thrown all things aside. He had suffered the loss of all things and counted them, not to be some valuable sacrifice that he had made, but mere defilement, for it was Christ who was before him to be gained. He is not, from this point of view, telling us that he has gained Christ,

for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ, and that I may be found in him, not having my own righteousness which is of the [l]law, but that which is through faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God through [m]faith; that I may know him and the power of his [n]resurrection, and the fellowship of his [o]sufferings, being conformed unto his death; if in any way I arrive at the resurrection from among the [p]dead.

4 (12-16): The practical effect of what is lacking.

4. Not that I have already obtained, or am already made [q]perfect, but I press on if so be that I may lay hold, seeing that also I have been laid hold of by Christ [r]Jesus. Brethren, I do not count myself yet to

l Rom. 10.3.
m Rom. 9. 30. Rom. 10.6. 1 Cor. 1.30.
n Eph. 1.19, 20.
o Rom.8.17. 2 Tim.2.12.
p Luk.20.35.
q Heb.12.23.
r Heb. 2.16.

but that he is *seeking to win Him*. It is the actual possession of Christ in glory that he is thinking of. When there, what would it be as to himself? From that point of view, he may be permitted to think of himself. What will the man find as to himself who has thus won Christ? Not, he says, his own righteousness: that would be the legal principle essentially. He would be found in Christ, in possession of the righteousness which is by faith of Christ, righteousness which, he repeats emphatically, is of God, of His bestowal, through faith, that humblest of principles, which necessarily turns its back upon all that is of self, to lay hold of Another.

This is then the One he wants to know. He knows Him, but does not count this knowledge yet as the knowledge that he seeks. He cannot, of course, set aside this, as he has set aside other things. He would not mean to undervalue it; it was all of Christ that for the present he had; but what, nevertheless, would it be in that day when Christ Himself would be at last before his eyes, the goal of the race he had been running? He wanted to know Him after this manner, to know the power of His resurrection, not, as many think, a present power, therefore of resurrection in his soul,—that he already knew. He was risen with Christ and knew it; but it is not a condition to be attained down here, still less a condition that he had attained, that he was thinking of, but that which will put him in the place in which he seeks to be; and as a prisoner of Christ in the Roman dungeon, he is entitled to think here of the sufferings attendant, and of the death which might so easily be before him. What then? That would be his way through to the resurrection from among the dead. Thus, the sufferings themselves, the manner of death, whatever it were, if it were complete conformity to Christ's crucifixion, he would take it as that which only the more assimilated him to Christ for the present, while it was the way which led on to the apprehension of the power of that resurrection which would at last bring him to Christ in glory. As already said we have to realize, for the apprehension of what is here, that it is Christ Himself before his eyes, an Object outside the world, that is filling them. It is this and not any intervening thing that he is pressing after. It is no spiritual condition apart from this. He wants no halting place, no place to loiter in by the way, no present satisfaction, as it were, except that indeed which is derived from the blessed Object ever drawing nearer, and which is gaining upon his soul with every step he takes.

4. But he insists upon it that he has not attained, he is not already perfected. It is this that makes him pursue, with such stedfastness of aim and purpose, that which is before him. He wants to apprehend, that is, to lay hold of, that for which Christ has already laid hold of him. He is doing one thing, therefore, —how all our lives are spoilt by the desire to do more things than one! He is "forgetting the things behind, stretching out to the things before," pressing ever to the goal "for the prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus;" not simply the *high* calling, but the "calling above," the calling to a place outside the earth altogether. This is what gave him the stedfastness which was

have laid hold; but one thing [I do], forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things that are before, I press on towards the *goal for the *prize of the calling on high of God in Christ "Jesus. Let us, therefore, as many as are *perfect, be thus minded; and if in anything ye be differently minded, this also God shall reveal to you: only whereto we have already attained, let us walk in the same "steps.

s 1 Cor. 9.24.
t *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 7.
u Heb. 3. 1.
v 1 Cor. 2. 6.
w Gal. 5. 25. Col. 3. 7.

5 (17-21): The end as the way.

5. Brethren, be imitators together of me and mark them who so walk as ye have us for an *ensample; for many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of *Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. For our commonwealth hath its existence in the *heavens, from whence also we await the Saviour, the Lord Jesus "Christ, who shall transform our body of humiliation into conformity with his body of *glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things to *himself.

x 1 Cor. 11. 1. 1 Thess. 1. 6.
y Luk. 14. 27.
z Heb. 11. 13, 14.
a 1 Cor. 1. 7. 1 Thess. 1. 10.
b 1 Cor. 15. 52.
c 1 Cor. 15. 27.

manifestly his. This is what made him the man he was, and this attitude is what indeed he calls "perfection." If men would be perfect, let them be thus minded; and then, as to the details, whatever other minds they might have, God would make all plain to them. Is not this that which we need so much,—not to seek, as it were, to be of the same mind with one another? As to the details of the path, the perseverance in the path is that which only aright can make all details plain. It is manifest that as we press along a road, (one of many roads, let us say, all tending to the same point at last,) we cannot see things where we are just as others see them from their own points of view. We see things from where we are. As we get on further, each one of us, we find of necessity that our view of things is growing to be the same; not exactly because we have sought to have this so, but rather that it is the necessary result of all pressing on together to the one place in which we shall at last see absolutely together, eye to eye. Here it is that the prize awaits us. Christ is both goal and prize at the same time. What a perfect solution it will be of all the difficulties of the way! How the light of the glory of God will make everything absolutely plain, and not merely plain, but bright also!

5. "Nevertheless," he says, "whereto we have already attained, let us walk in the same steps;" that is, whatever may be our convictions at the present, let us act according to these convictions. Let us have truth practical. If we want it to be what the truth should be, we must walk in it to make it real. In this way, also, he could exhort them to follow him as he was following Christ,—to follow any others who were thus walking: not, as is evident, a following of man as man. We have to scrutinize the walk in order rightly to follow it. No man is altogether a model, and therefore Paul must say of himself, giving us the limit in this: "as I follow Christ." This brings us of necessity, to Christ Himself after all, as the one perfect Example for us; while, at the same time, we recognize and are encouraged by the example of those who are following Him. But he has now to warn them that already there were many walking,—of course with a profession, which is argued by the walk, and yet of whom he had told them often, and now even weeping told them, that they were the enemies of the cross of Christ. Not enemies of Christ Himself, exactly; that is not the thing of which he is speaking. They take no place of open adversaries, clearly, and they may even make much of the cross of Christ itself, if it were

DIVISION 4. (Chap. iv.)

The experience of Christ through all the way.

1 (1-4): The Lord for a constant joy.

1. WHEREFORE, my brethren, beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, [d]beloved. I exhort Euodia and I exhort Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yea, I beseech thee, also, true yoke fellow, assist those [women] who have striven along with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow-workers, whose names are in the book of [e]life. Rejoice in the Lord alway; again, I will say, [f]rejoice.

d Eph. 6.10.

e Luk.10.20.
f ch. 3. 1.

to shelter themselves by the grace that is in it from the rightful judgment of their unholy ways. It was possible, even then, as we know, to turn the grace of God into fleshly license, but this could not possibly avert the end to which such a course would lead. We have seen again and again that there is a way which leads to a certain end, and which will always lead there, although the mercy and goodness of God are not restricted by this; and there is a way of death from which, if grace works, it must deliver the soul. It cannot save one in it. For these, then, their end was destruction. Their god was really their belly; that is to say, the fleshly craving in them had never been set aside by any satisfaction that they had found for themselves in Christ. The craving of an unrenewed nature,—for he is not speaking of Christians, plainly,—led and governed them. These were their god, as he says, in strong, decisive language; and so deceived could they be as to glory in their shame. Earthly things they valued and secured,—prided themselves upon securing them. How different from that which we have had before us as the apostle's example!

Here, then, was the awful contrast that could yet be found amongst professing Christians in that day; and they were not few, but many, he tells us, who walked thus. "For our citizenship," he adds in contrast, "is in the heavens." All our interests, all our relationships, all our rights, all our gains are there; and while it is true that that leaves us, in the meanwhile, as it were, perhaps, but scantily provided, we are waiting for the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, who shall transform the very body of our humiliation into conformity to His body of glory, according to the working of the power which He has, even to subdue all things to Himself. That is a hope which clearly can never interfere with the pressing on in the path meanwhile,—the very opposite. The power of it is that the Christ who is at the end of the way is thus brought so near us, we may arrive there at any moment; like the disciples who, receiving Christ into the ship, were immediately at the land whither they were going. There is no necessity of so many steps upon this path of which we have been told. Divine grace may cut it short at any time. God may fulfil all our hopes in a speedier way than we can imagine.

Div. 4.

The doctrine, if we may call it so, (though it is doctrine very different plainly from that which we have had in the other epistles,) is now complete. Nevertheless, one thing remains, without which the epistle, as a whole, could not be complete. He who has been running this path with Christ, who has been thus before him,—he is to give us his experience now; and manifestly it is the experience of one who on both sides can speak with decision. He knows what Christ is. He knows the various difficulties and exigencies of the way itself. What is needed now, is to put the two together as he does here, and to show that for all these things Christ has been found competent, absolutely so.

1. There are exhortations to others which naturally come in here. His brethren are, as he has shown us, in his heart. He longs after them. They are

2 (5-9): Reliance on God in occupation with the good alone.

2. Let your moderation be known to all men. The Lord is *o*nigh. Be anxious about *p*nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with *q*thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to *r*God; and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall guard your hearts and your thoughts by Christ *s*Jesus. For the rest, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are noble, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue and if any praise, think on these *t*things. What ye have both learned and received and heard and seen in *u*me, these things do, and the God of peace shall be with *v*you.

3 (10-13): The fulness found in Christ.

3. But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now, however, at length you have revived your thought for me;

o Heb. 10. 25. *p* Matt. 6. 25. *q* 1 Thess. 5. 17, 18. *r* Luk. 18. 1. *s* Isa. 26. 3. *t* *ctr.* Num. 19. 21. *u* 1 Cor. 4. 17. *v* Rom. 15. 33. Rom. 16. 20. 2 Cor. 13. 11. 1 Thess. 5. 23.

his joy, and to be his crown. He would have them stand fast in the Lord. That is a standing fast which means, of necessity, the fullest progress. He exhorts Euodia and Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. It is the common purpose of heart, the common thought of the One they serve that is to bring them right. And he presses upon one who is not named, but whom he calls his yoke-fellow, (perhaps the Epaphroditus who seems to be carrying the letter, and whom he is sending to them,) urging him to assist these who have contended along with him in the gospel, with Clement and other fellow laborers, whose names are in the book of life. And again he urges upon them this joy in the Lord that he can never forget. They are to "rejoice in the Lord always," and he will still repeat it, he will say "rejoice."

2. In this way, they will indeed be competent to let their moderation be known to all men. They can be moderate enough as to all the things of life, as men say, when the Lord is thus their joy, and when the Lord is near also: near, I suppose, as one who never leaves His people, not perhaps in the sense that He is coming, (although He *is* coming,) but whether He comes or not, He is always with His people. They need be anxious, therefore, about nothing. Prayer became them, the confession of dependence, which, in a creature, is always becoming. Prayer and supplication, then, they could use with regard to everything, but with thanksgiving, which delivers the prayer itself from being the expression of any unbelief or murmuring, and also increases confidence in the prayer itself to One whose answers have been already manifest. Thus, spreading out before the omniscient eye of God who loves us, all their need, the peace of God, the peace in which He abides Himself, the peace which is the consciousness of perfect command of everything, so that nothing, after all, can disturb the serenity of perfect confidence, this peace of God, he says, "Shall guard your hearts and thoughts by Christ Jesus." The heart kept from wandering, the thoughts will be formed aright.

Then he would have them occupied, not with the evil around, of which there was so much, as we have learned, but with the very opposite. The heart can only find blessing in the contemplation of that which is true, noble, just, pure, amiable and of good report. These are the things to be thought about, so that the power of evil itself may not disturb us, not weigh us down, not provoke in us a spirit of mere judgment, such as evil may naturally arouse. Again he can speak of what they had seen in him as an example,—what they had learned and received and heard from him also. They were to do these things, and the God of peace, not merely peace, but the *God* of peace, would be with them.

3. He now turns to speak of that which might at first sight seem personal to himself. Personal it is, but experience is personal, and here it is that we are to

though surely ye did also think of me, but lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content. I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound: in everything and in all things I have learned the secret, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer [o]want. I can do all things through him who strengtheneth [p]me.

4 (14-23): The part the Philippians had had. Closing greetings.

4. But ye have done well in taking part with my affliction; and this also know, Philippians, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I came out of Macedonia, no assembly communicated with me in the way of giving and receiving, save ye alone; for also in Thessalonica, once and again, ye sent unto me for my needs. Not that I seek a gift, but I seek fruit abounding to your [q]account. But I have all things in full supply and abound; I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things sent from you, an odor of a sweet savor, an acceptable sacrifice, agreeable to God. And my God

o 1 Tim.6.6, 8.
p 2 Cor. 12. 10.
q 2 Cor. 12. 14.

have the joy of learning what was his personal experience in the things through which he passed. It is suited to this that he has to speak of, or at least to intimate, a real necessity in which he has been, so that he can rejoice about their thinking of him again; that is, as far as their present ministry might indicate that, but he can credit his Philippians with having thought of him indeed when they had lacked opportunity to carry out what was in their hearts. It was not his privation, whatever that might have been, that he would speak of. He had found with regard to that, in whatever circumstances he was, a perfect content. He knew how to be abased on the one hand. He knew (what is more difficult, no doubt,) how to abound on the other. He knew what it was to be in prosperity, as men speak, as well as in adversity,—how to be master of himself in both. He had learned as a disciple, had been initiated into the secret of how to be full and to be hungry, how to abound and to suffer need, *everywhere and in all things*. Here is a blessed experience indeed. He does not stop here without showing to us the source of this contentment and this peace which were always his. It was Christ who gave him the strength. No wonder, then, that it was ability for all things. This is, in fact, the jubilant summing up from the side of experience. How good it is to have it from one so well able to give it! It is plain that, personal as the need and the trial have been, what he seeks here is to give Christ the glory of that perfect competence which he had found in Him.

4. He will not, on this account, make light of that which ministered to his need, and was the manifestation of the Philippians' love and care for himself. He recognizes how well they have done, not simply at the present time, but from the beginning. At the beginning of the gospel, they were, in fact, alone in their communication with him then. They had sent and sent again for his need in Thessalonica. His heart rejoices, not in his having received such things as he plainly says, but to have such fruit in them, abounding to that account which, by and by, is to be fully given. He was now fully supplied. He was now, as he says, "abounding." A very little would, in fact, make one like this abound as to his temporal needs. He had received the things sent from them through Epaphroditus, "an odor," as he says, "of a sweet savor, an acceptable sacrifice, agreeable to God." No doubt it was that; not merely a little out of abundance, but a ministry which cost them something; and which yet, after all, in itself, one may surely say, repaid them abundantly above all costs. So it is ever, and must be, with the gracious God we have. If there is an odor of a sweet savor to God in that which is done, there will be something

shall abundantly supply all your need according to his riches in glory in Christ [r]Jesus. Now, unto our God and Father be glory to the ages of ages, Amen. Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me salute you. All the saints salute you, and specially those of Cæsar's household. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. [Amen.*]

r Eph. 3. 16.

* Some omit.

corresponding to it in the souls of those who have in this way offered what is agreeable to Him.

He could speak himself, therefore, for God with regard to them. His God, the God he knew so well, would abundantly supply all their need. How far? "According to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." We must take that into account if we are to realize the character of this abundant supply. We may make great mistakes otherwise, and plainly there is no straitness with Him at any time. If we speak of straitness, after all, God is abundant in His love, as He is abundant in the riches that He delights to minister. "To Him," he says, our God and Father, "be glory through the ages of ages." He closes with brief salutations, mentioning, amid the general salutation of the saints at Rome, those specially of Cæsar's household, manifestly in a difficult place these for disciples of Christ, and beautiful it is to see that they can be prominent in this way in their salutations of Christ's people elsewhere.

The apostle closes with what is in one way or other the close in all of them: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit."

THE SECOND DIVISION OF PAUL'S EPISTLES

TREATS of associative or collective relationships of the people of God. Here the Thessalonian epistles, the earliest of all, and simplest, begin with the thought of an assembly in God the Father, a term nowhere else used, but which clearly points to the life they have in Him. This life is manifested in the faith, and love and hope which characterize and make known the children of God; born of the Word of the gospel, coming in the power of the Spirit. The character of the instruments used of God in this testimony is seen, and that the hope of the Christian is in the coming of the Lord, which is dwelt upon, and in the second epistle connected with the apostasy foreseen in the last days,—the development of the mystery of lawlessness already working.

Corinthians then in two more epistles shows us the Church as the body of Christ, and the temple of God, indwelt of the Spirit. Sharply precisionized as it is, there is no need at present of going more fully into it. The teaching of the second epistle is, as always, supplementary to the first; ministry, a fundamental need in connection with every member of the body, being the great theme of it.

Hebrews, in the third place, brings us into the sanctuary, as a holy priesthood, through the rent veil, Christ having gone in before for us in the value of His finished work, having obtained eternal redemption. This epistle, which some would set aside from the number of Paul's, is here seen plainly to fill its place, numerically, and in the development of doctrine which the series presents. It is the Ephesians of this second division, and no other could possibly be substituted for it.

Timotheus means "one who honors God;" and the two epistles addressed to him correspond with this in the most complete manner. Godliness is their keynote; and the Church is seen in them as the house of God, to be governed, therefore, according to that holiness which becomes it, and in the maintenance of the truth without which holiness is impossible. The establishment of elders and deacons is for the furtherance of this. In the second epistle, as in that to the Thessalonians, we see the incoming of evil, of which the first warns us; and then there is need to purge oneself from the vessels to dishonor in

the "great house" of Christendom, and follow righteousness, faith, peace, with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. These two epistles, coming in the fourth place, show us the test, and failure under test, of the responsible witness for God upon the earth, and that without a good conscience being maintained the faith cannot be saved from shipwreck (1 Tim. i. 19).

Titus, therefore, the Deuteronomy of this series, teaches the necessary joining of these things together. The truth is according to godliness; all doctrine, when received into the heart, has in it a spiritual power which fashions the life and ways. The grace of God, which brings salvation, is really that which effectually teaches to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for Him who has died to redeem us from all iniquity, which, as we see, was already too sadly prevalent among professing Christians; all the more was it to be resisted and rebuked.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF FIRST THESSALONIANS

THE epistles to the Thessalonians are, as already said, distinguished from all others by the style of their address "to the assembly of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father." Of the assembly as the body of Christ there is no mention; a thought with which that of an assembly of *Thessalonians* would be incongruous. They are addressed as possessors of divine life, which is manifested in them by their faith and love and hope, wrought in them by the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit, and which declares their election. This is especially dwelt upon in the first epistle, though referred to more briefly in the second. The character of the witness through whom God gives this effective testimony is dwelt on also; and the heathen themselves are witnesses of the effect, in their being turned from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, their Deliverer from the coming wrath. They had a new King, people said, one Jesus. How new a thing indeed to those whose gods might inspire fear, but in the vices they exhibited, neither love nor respect! Here now was a King indeed, and a people who could justify their loyalty as none else could,—a King with a crown of thorns, and a Saviour! Faith, love, and hope found their centre thus in Him; their future was but His coming, and so both epistles, though in different aspects, contemplate it. The large place it has is fully accounted for: it was part of the Christian character, as given by Christ Himself when on earth, "Ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord."

The divisions of the epistle are:

1. (Chap. i.): The Word in power introducing to the true and living God as Father, and putting under the authority of Christ as Lord.
2. (Chap. ii.–iv. 12): The witness in which God bears witness.
3. (Chap. iv. 13–v. 11): The new revelation of the resurrection of the saints at the coming of the Lord.
4. (Chap. v. 12–28): Ways accordant.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE
THESSALONIANS

DIVISION 1. (Chap. i.)

The Word in power introducing to the true and living God, the Father, and putting under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 (1-4): Elect of God, as known in the life lived.

1. PAUL and [a]Silvanus and [b]Timotheus to the assembly of the Thessalonians in God the [c]Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace to you and peace [from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ].* We give thanks to God always for you [d]all, making mention of you in our prayers; [e]remembering without

*Wanting in some of the most ancient MSS., and in the Vulgate and Syriac versions.

a 2 Cor. 1. 19. 2 Thess. 1. 1. 1 Pet. 5. 12.
b 2 Cor. 1. 1. Phil. 1. 1. Col. 1. 1. 2 Thess. 1. 1.
c 2 Thess. 1. 1.
d Rom. 1. 8. Eph. 1. 16. Phile. 4.
e ch. 2. 13.

NOTES.

Div. 1.

As this epistle is the first of those written by the apostle, at least of those in the wisdom of God come down to us, so it is in regard to doctrine the simplest. There is, in fact, little formal statement of doctrine at all. Though these underlie the whole, there is no mention of eternal life, of new birth, nor even of relationship of children to the Father. There is no difficulty in finding all this in it, but it must be by the aid of other scriptures.

1. Paul joins with himself, after his manner, those who had labored with him in the work among those he is addressing. He addresses the Thessalonians, as has been before remarked, in a different way from any other assembly. He does not speak of them as the assembly of God in Thessalonica, but as the assembly of Thessalonians, rather a company, one may say, than a body; and "in God the Father," a company of children who have received life from Him. Thus to the Athenians the apostle had declared that "in Him we live, and move, and have our being; " and adds in quotation from one of their own poets, "For we are also His offspring." There is certainly a great difference between what the apostle states as true of all men, and what he here clearly ascribes to a Christian assembly as such. For however Paul might make use of man's place in creation to rebuke the folly and degradation of idolatry, he certainly would be one of the last to forget or ignore the fact that sin had come in and caused him to forfeit his natural right to claim this place; so that when the Jews would have done so with the Lord, He answered, "If God were your Father, ye would love Me." But these very words show that for the Thessalonians this original right had been recovered.

Yet we must make no mistake. The original place is but the feeble image of what is now the Christian's. The salvation of God has not simply set us back where we were before. Had it been our own work, that might indeed have been all that could be thought of; but it is the work of Christ, with all the value of His Person, His sufferings and death attaching to it. As the fruit of this, a new creation starts into being, and Christ as the last Adam has all things put into His hands, to renew after another and more glorious fashion all the promise of the first Paradise in the "paradise of God."

ceasing your work of [f]faith and labor of [g]love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ before our God and Father, knowing, brethren beloved of God, [h]your election.

2 (5–7): The effect of the word of God, and the Spirit acting in it.

2. For our gospel came not unto you in word only but in power and in the Holy [i]Spirit and in much [j]assurance; even as ye know what sort of persons we were among you for your [k]sakes. And ye became imitators

[f] Gal. 5. 6. 2 Thess. 1. 11.
[g] Heb. 6. 10.
[h] Col. 3. 12. 2 Thess. 2. 13.
[i] 1 Pet. 1. 22, 23.
[j] Col. 2. 2.
[k] ch. 2. 5, 10, 11.

Thus appended to "in God the Father" we have here "in the Lord Jesus Christ;" for this is how a way into the family of God has been regained for us, —we are "alive unto God in Christ Jesus." As we were in Adam by virtue of the life received from him, so are we in the new Adam by a life we have received; only a life so much higher, as Christ is higher than our first father, and we are born of the Spirit, so as to be partakers of the divine nature, Christ becoming the "First-born among many brethren."

This prepares the way for what the apostle goes on with satisfaction of heart to dwell upon, the result in these Thessalonians of the new life they have received. The faith and love and hope manifested in them were its evidence; for which he continually thanked God. These things were not merely a profession, but living realities. Their work was a work of faith: its motives were in the unseen, in heaven where God dwelt, not unknown, but known in Christ, all being in the light of that light. Nor was it a cold illumination: love found here its objects, and made this work an energetic "labor." Hope yet was needed; for love itself would cease to labor, if once it were clear that there could be no result; and with the Thessalonians hope gave persistence to their labor of love. All was recognized and accepted with that Divine Father, before whom they acted (Matt. vi. 1, 6, 18); and the apostle realized in it their election in the love of Him who is love. Their life thus bore witness for them, but of a grace through which they had received life. All was of God, who of His own good pleasure had begotten them to Himself.

2. The apostle recalls to their minds how these things had been wrought in them. It was the gospel which had been the fruitful seed of this bountiful harvest,—a seed having life in it: a gospel, or "good news," the testimony to His love from whom it came, winning the heart that believed the message; for "we love Him who first loved us," says the apostle (1 John iv. 19). Man has turned his back on God, having lent his ear to the devil; and the voice of recall must be a gospel that shall undo the work of Satan, while at the same time it reveals man to himself, and so humbles him in repentance before God. The Cross does both things. If it was the Son of God who hung there, for what did He hang? Was there no need for it? Nay, "the Son of man *must* be lifted up." This is at once the remedy provided for man, and his conviction as one needing such a remedy. And who, one might ask, can resist the tender appeal of such an argument? If the Son of God is to endure the penalty, can it be more than absolute righteousness requires? Can it be a harsh estimate on the part of Him who gave His Son to be the propitiation for our sins? Thus expiation and reconciliation are found together in the Cross: God is not against, but for us, in an infinite love, the only measure of which is an infinite sacrifice. Shall we not henceforth listen believingly, obediently, to Him whose whole heart has been told out in a way no human heart could have conceived, and which now surpasses human power to comprehend it as it is?

Yet even the gospel cannot work its way with man by all its competence to meet his spiritual need, nor by its display of divine goodness: "Our gospel," says the apostle, "came not unto you in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance." Power there is not to change men's hearts apart from the work of the Spirit of God; but thus also is the divine work, spite of the inherent weakness of him who might be the subject of it,

of us and of the [t]Lord, having received the word in much [m]affliction with joy of the Holy [n]Spirit, so that ye became patterns to all that believe in Macedonia and in Achaia.

3 (8–10): The Word thus published abroad.

3. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia but in every place, your faith which is toward God hath come [o]abroad, so that we have no need to say anything. For they themselves report concerning us what manner of entrance we had to you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from [p]heaven, whom he raised from among the dead, Jesus, who delivered us from the coming [q]wrath.

t 1 Cor. 11.1. Phil. 3. 17. 2 Thess. 3. 9.
m Acts 17.5.
n Heb. 10.34.
o Rom. 1. 8.
p Phil. 3.20. Tit. 2. 13.
q Rom. 5. 9. ch. 5. 9.

stable through all trial, and above all adverse influences. Father, Son, and Spirit are all, indeed, thus united to effect the salvation of the poor and sinful sons of men, though only faith may be able to realize, under the veil of the natural, the Presence of Him to whom all nature is obedient.

In making known His gospel God is pleased to use, not the tongues of angels, but those of men, recipients themselves of the same grace; who can give testimony with their lives as with their lips. Upon this the apostle lays great emphasis: "even as ye know what sort of persons we were among you for your sakes." This had had its part in making the Thessalonians what they were: "and ye became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit." Thus the work makes known the workman; while it is just as true that the more the workman is with God, the less of himself there will be in it. "Ye are our epistle," says the apostle to the Corinthians, "forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us; written, not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tables of stone, but on fleshy tables of the heart" (2 Cor. iii. 2, 3). And this is what makes the "imitation" of such workmen to be safe and right; for there is this qualification always in it, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ;" as here—"imitators of us and of the Lord." How good to be able to have a well-grounded confidence that these two things are one! The effect is manifest: "read and known of all men," is said of the Corinthians; and here the report went all abroad of these who had turned to God from idols,—to serve the living and true God. But beyond this, such was the freshness among these Thessalonians that they "became patterns to all that believe in Macedonia and in Achaia."

3. Thus the word of the Lord is published all around; the new life emphasizes the new doctrine from which it proceeded. "Blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation," they shone as "lights in the world, holding forth the word of life." The life and the word of life give fittingly their evidence together, and not otherwise; though Christ is the "Faithful Witness" when His people fail. The Thessalonians did not fail, but spoke out in such a way that those who had labored among them had no need to say anything with regard to their work. That which they were saying was sufficiently surprising: not only that there was one living and true God, in contrast with the idol-nothings of heathenism, and true service loyally given to Him, but that also the Son of God was coming in the clouds of heaven to inflict judgment for the sins of men. For Him they waited, but not in fear, though they themselves were sinners. On the contrary, they looked for Him with joy and thankfulness, as One who had come on earth to deliver them from the wrath to come, which all must meet who have not taken refuge in Him. Redemption, salvation became in this way the key-words of a new song, which those who knew it could sing in the midst of whatever difficulties, and in the face of whatever enemies.

DIVISION 2. (Chap. ii.–iv. 12.)

The witness in which God bears witness.

1 (1–12): Its singleness of heart and sincerity.

1. FOR yourselves know, brethren, our entering in which we had to you, that it hath not been in vain; but having suffered before and been shamefully treated, as ye know, at [r]Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of [s]God in much conflict. For our exhortation was [t]not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: but even as we have been approved of God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak; not as pleasing men, but [u]God who proveth our hearts. For neither at any time came we among you with flattering [v]words, as ye know, nor with a cloak of [w]covetousness, God is witness, neither seeking glory from men, neither from you nor from others, when we might have been burdensome as apostles of [x]Christ. But we were [y]gentle in the midst of you, as it were a nurse cherishing her own children; so yearning over you, we would have found our delight in imparting to you not the gospel of God only, but our own souls also, because ye became beloved by us. For ye remember,

r Acts 16.22, 23.
s Acts 17. 2.
t 2 Cor. 7. 2.
u Gal. 1. 10.
v Job. 32.22.
w Acts 20. 33. 2 Cor. 8. 20.
x 2 Cor. 11. 9.
y 2 Tim. 2. 24.

Div. 2.

The second division shows us by the example of the apostle himself, and those who with him had been laboring among them, the character of the instruments with which God works. He may, of course, overrule in any case, and bless the word of truth even from ungodly lips; and so Paul could rejoice if Christ were preached, even though it were of envy and strife. One's responsibility to the truth is because it *is* the truth. So that in any question as to this we may dismiss the speaker from our thoughts. Nay, were the speaker, as fully as Paul was, the minister of Christ, he would all the more recognize the very real danger of one receiving the Word as sanctioned by, rather than sanctioning, the utterer of it. For indeed how common a thing is it, thus to make the word of man of what is even owned to be the word of God! The true effect of it is in this way lost for the soul; and as this may be with the truth as a whole, so that the result is mere orthodoxy—a Christianity of only human making,—so it may be with regard to every separate truth—each item of the wondrous whole. How jealous need we to be over ourselves in these things.

Here, however, the apostle is dwelling upon the truth which is thus perverted, but which is no less the truth because of its perversion. The God of holiness is holy in His ways; and His instruments must be suited to this in character. The truth itself is holy; and those who make it known must do so in the effect manifested in their own lives and ways. And Satan, the great opposer of truth, shows his perfect knowledge of this when, as Paul says, he is transformed for his purpose into an angel of light. "Therefore," he goes on to say, "it is no small thing if also his ministers be transformed as the ministers of righteousness:" even he recognizes the need of suitability morally of end and ways.

1. He can appeal to what himself and his fellow-laborers were, as they went in and out amongst them. The main insistance is upon their manifest unselfishness. They had come from scourging and imprisonment at Philippi; and with the consciousness, as the apostle says elsewhere, that in every city bonds and afflictions awaited them. Certainly it was not their own things that they could find or seek, in pursuing a course which involved such things for them. Yet

brethren, our labor and toil: night and day [z]working so as not to burden any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God. Ye are witnesses, and God, how piously, and righteously, and blamelessly we behaved ourselves toward you who believed, as ye know how, as a father his own children, we used to exhort each of you, and comfort, and testify that ye should [a]walk worthy of God, who [b]calleth you to his own kingdom and glory.

2 (ii. 13-iii. 13): The imitation and the opposition; in which faith is still confirmed.

2. And for this cause, we also thank God without ceasing, that when ye received from us the word of the report of God, ye learned it [c]not as the word of men, but as it is indeed, the word of God, which worketh also in you who believe. For ye became imitators, brethren, of the assemblies of God which are in Judæa in Christ Jesus; for ye also suffered the same things of your own countrymen as they also of the Jews, who both slew the Lord Jesus, and the [d]prophets, and have driven us out; and they please not God and are contrary to all men, [e]forbidding us to speak unto the nations, that they might be saved, [f]that they might fill up their sins always: and wrath is come upon them to the uttermost. But we, brethren, having been bereaved of you for a little moment, [g]in person, not in heart, have been more abundantly [h]diligent to see your face with much desire; on account of which we were [i]desirous to come to you, even I Paul, once and again, and Satan hindered us. [j]For what is our hope or joy or crown of glorying? Are not ye also before our Lord Jesus at his coming? for ye are our glory and joy.

z Acts 20.34.

a *cf.* Eph. 4. 1. Col. 1. 10. Phil. 1. 27.

b 2 Thess. 2. 14.

c Matt. 10. 40. Gal. 4. 4.

d Matt. 5. 12. Matt. 23. 34, 37. Luk. 13. 33, 34. Acts 7. 52.

e Acts 13. 50. Acts 14. 5, 19. Acts 17. 5, 13. Acts 18. 12. Acts 19. 9. Acts 22. 21, 22.

f Rom. 11. 31.

g 1 Cor. 5. 3. Col. 2. 5.

h ch. 3. 10.

i Rom. 1. 13.

j 2 Cor. 1. 14. Phil. 2. 16. Phil. 4. 1.

they did steadfastly pursue it. As bold as ever in their confidence in God, they made known still, amid much affliction, what was none the less God's good news of joy. They had modified nothing, they had used no flattery, they had sought to please God, not man; Him whose omniscience searched the hearts of those who had to do with Him. From men they had sought nothing—had not insisted on undoubted rights—but found delight in giving what they had to give, yea, and their own souls with it. It was not simply righteousness, but love that sought not its own, and in which they labored, enforcing all their precept by example. And this that the recipients of the gospel might walk worthy of the God declared in it, who was calling men to His own Kingdom and glory.

2. They had not been disappointed at the result among the Thessalonians. The word of God had been received by them as what indeed it was, and, so received, it wrought its divine work. It took them out of their natural place in a world fallen away from God, to make them companions of those rejected by the world, but of whom the world was not worthy. Thus, says the apostle, "ye became imitators of the assemblies of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus; for ye also suffered the same things of your own countrymen, even as they of the Jews." Nor need they think this strange who were followers of the Crucified One. Israel, alas! the first in privilege among the nations, had only by this become the guiltiest of all. The Lord Jesus Himself was among them the Head of a long line of martyrs, the prophets, of whom Stephen asks, "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain

Wherefore, when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left behind at Athens alone, and [k] sent Timotheus, our brother and fellow-worker under God* in the gospel of Christ, to confirm you and encourage you concerning your faith; that no man be moved [l] by these afflictions; for yourselves know that [m] hereunto we were appointed; for also when we were with you, we told you beforehand that we are to suffer affliction, as also it came to pass, and ye know. For this cause, I also, when I could no longer forbear, sent in order to know your faith, lest in any way the [n] tempter had tempted you and our labor should be in vain. But [o] when Timotheus came just now to us from you, and brought us good news of your faith and love, and that ye have always good remembrance of us, longing to see us, even as we also you; for this cause, brethren, we have been comforted about you in our distress and affliction through your faith: for now we live if ye stand fast in the Lord. For what thanksgiving can we render again unto God for you, for all the joy wherewith we rejoice on your account before our God; night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and [p] perfect that which is lacking in your faith?

k Acts 17.15.
l Eph. 3. 13.
m Jno. 15. 20. Jno. 16. 33.
n 2 Cor. 11. 3.
o Acts 18. 1, 5.
p Rom. 1. 11.

* Or, "minister of God;" the MSS. vary.

them who showed before of the coming of the Righteous One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and the murderers." Thus the nation chosen out of the world for the blessing of the world became the great opposers and hinderers of blessing. "They please not God and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the nations, that they might be saved." Israel are, therefore, for the present, rejected and set aside; they have filled up the measure of their sins, and wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

Such was God's heart towards the Gentiles; of which they, His laborers in the gospel, were witnesses and exponents. Bereaved of them for a moment, and having to leave them in the midst of a contrary world, their hearts unchangeably were with them, and desiring to come to them again; yea, Paul himself did, as he assures them; having been hindered, not by lack of heart, but by the great adversary of Christ and His people. And in the meantime he might seem thus to prevail; but faith contemplated another scene when the evil with which we are now in conflict shall have been put down, and, in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself at His coming, these now afflicted and despised Thessalonians would become indeed, what already faith held them for, the glory and joy of those of whom they were the fruit of love's sweet labor.

Paul proceeds to show how far from indifferent he had been with regard to the afflictions they had been passing through. These had been foretold them from the first, so that they might not be taken by them unawares; nevertheless he could not leave them to the actual experience of them—so different from the looking forward merely to what had not yet come—without seeking to minister to the need which he, acquainted with suffering of this kind, knew so well. Timothy, therefore, had been sent to confirm their faith; and his return with the news of their constancy had filled with joy and comfort the apostle's heart. "For now," he says, "we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord." It is evident that here is the soul of the true worker manifest, and that this is the object throughout this part of the epistle, to show as illustrated by experience the instruments

But our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you, and the Lord make you to [q]increase and abound in love toward one another and toward all men, even as we also toward you; to the end he [r]may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father, [s]at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

3 (iv. 1-12): Their sanctification pressed.

3. For the rest, then, brethren, we beseech and exhort you, in the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received from us how ye ought to walk and please God, even as also ye do walk, [t]that ye would abound still more. For ye know what charges we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification, that ye abstain from fornication; that each one of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor; not in passionate lust, even as the Gentiles [u]who know not God; that no man overreach and defraud his brother in the matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all these things, even as we also told you before and fully testified. For God hath not called us for uncleanness, but in sanctification. He, therefore, that in this disregardeth, [v]disregardeth not man but God, [w]who hath also given unto you his Holy Spirit. Now, concerning brotherly love, ye have no

q ch. 4. 10.
r 1 Cor. 1. 8. ch. 5. 23.
s 2 Thess. 1. 10.
t Col. 1. 10.
u Eph. 4. 18.
v 1 Jno. 4. 20.
w Eph. 4. 30.

by which God works in His spiritual harvest-fields. There is no need to dwell upon it, by reason of its being so plain; while the lesson conveyed is of the utmost importance. The apostle uses the most forcible expressions to declare the thorough identification of his heart with them in all their joy and sorrow,—his realization of, and longing in regard to their need, which expressed itself in constant and earnest supplication to God that he might again be with them, and that they might have spiritual increase and establishment in holiness such as might meet approval, in the day of approval, at the coming of the Lord Jesus with all His saints.

3. He passes hereupon into exhortation. Never satisfied with any attainment, he urges upon them still more to abound in that which would please God. Two things he presses; the one complementary to the other: abstention from lust, and abounding in love. The one was even a part of the religion of the heathen; as, in the broader sense of it, it was that out of which sprang idolatry, and through which comes the corruption of the world. In the narrower and grosser sense it was indulged in the very temples of their gods. It is a proof of the moral atmosphere in which they had been brought up, that to Christians so commended as are those here it should be necessary to warn them against the gross immoralities which, however, we find later invading Corinth. For us all, moreover, it is written, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." We must not, therefore, pass lightly over what is left for our instruction also in the never-failing wisdom of One who knows the hearts of men.

But the remedy is also here, love which is the opposite of lust: the one the dominance and tyranny of self; the other that which seeketh not its own,—the spirit of service and self-denial. True, it is the love of brethren that the apostle here exhorts to, and not love in its universal aspect; but although these are separable, they will not be found, in fact, separate. The love to one another, which Paul reminds them they have been taught of God, cannot exist without flowing out to those who still are what we all once were, when divine grace met and brought us into the circle in which alone God's love can reflect itself, as

need that we write unto you; for ye yourselves are taught of God [z] to love one another. 10 For indeed ye do this towards all the brethren in the whole of Macedonia. But we exhort you, brethren, that ye abound still more, 11 and that ye study to be quiet and [y] to do your own business, and work with your own hands, even as we charged you; 12 that ye may walk honorably towards those that are without and may have need of no one.*

[z] Jno. 15.17.

[y] 2 Thess. 3. 12.

DIVISION 3. (Chaps. iv. 13–v. 11.)

The resurrection of the saints at the coming of the Lord.

1 (iv. 13-18): Dead and living in one company.

13 NOW we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those that are fallen asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as the rest also who [z] have no hope.

[z] Eph. 2. 12.

* Or, "nothing."

being enjoyed. Here the satisfied heart finds deliverance from the lusts of other things, covets but what is its own, and what is secured to it, and that which drives out lust puts in love in its place, to hold the citadel. Love is the bond of perfectness, the active energy of the divine life in the saint, and victorious in every field of conflict. The quiet occupation with one's own work, and the maintenance by this means of a proper and healthful independence of others, naturally unite with such a care for others as love ensures.

Div. 3.

The Christian hope is prominent in this epistle from the first. The Thessalonians had been converted to wait for God's Son from heaven, and this became the light for them upon a path which ended in the glory already revealed. Important it surely was that there should be no cloud upon the prospect thus before them in which the opened heavens claimed them constantly; while for the earth also was seen the end of Satan's power and of the curse, and the regeneration of the earth itself. What power for sanctification this, which made of those possessing such a hope pilgrims indeed; encompassing them continually with the atmosphere and light of heaven and the world to come!

For the Thessalonians, however, there was in fact a cloud which shadowed this glorious expectation; and the apostle proceeds to dispel it by the announcement of a new "word of the Lord," a new revelation, which declares the participation in it of the dead, for whom they were sorrowing as cut off from that which was the hope of the living. On the contrary he shows that the dead will be raised up to share with the living all that was before them. There would be no division of this sort between those alike the people of Christ. And he goes on to remind them that they were not to be (as Israel rightly will be) calculating times and seasons, which would have their place in connection with the day of the Lord, yet to come upon the world as a thief in the night. For the children of the day, suddenly as it might come, it could be no such unwelcome surprise. Let them not, therefore, sleep as others, but clothe themselves with the light as with an armor which would be their defence in a hostile place; assuring themselves that, whether living or dying, they were alike to live with their Saviour-Lord.

1. The apostle does not reprove them for the want of knowledge which they had; and which, if not inevitable, yet at least was not to be wondered at. There was, in fact, as his speaking by the word of the Lord implies, as yet no definite statement of Scripture with regard to that which troubled these young disciples. The opposite has indeed been asserted; and the phrase itself even taken as a

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so also those who have been [a]laid asleep by Jesus,* will [b]God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the [c]word of the Lord, that we who are living, who are

* Or, "have fallen asleep through Jesus."

a Rev. 1.18.
b 1 Cor. 15. 23.
c 1 Kin. 13. 17, 18. 1 Kin.20.35.

direct appeal to Scripture. But he does not produce any scripture; nor, had he done so, would it seem like Paul to affirm his speaking by it after this manner. The sufficient answer is, however, that no passage has been brought forward which could justify this view; and we may be confident none can be brought forward. The texts which have been referred to (Matt. xvi. 27; xxiv. 31; xxv. 1 sq.; Luke xiv. 14; John v. 28 sq.) are wholly incompetent; so that others have been obliged to imagine an unwritten word of the Lord which had come to Paul's ears; but why not, then, a fresh communication from the Lord in glory, such as we know he received on other subjects, and others also beside himself received? True it is, indeed, that one might well believe, apart from any positive statement, that the Lord would not, in the way they feared, leave any of His own in the day of His manifestation under the power of that death which He had Himself passed through,—deprived, not by any fault of their own, of the full participation in the glory which that death of His had entitled them to. The lack of assurance in this respect on the part of the Thessalonians may well show us our dulness in spiritual things. Yet for this the Lord has now made special provision. It is like Him, and we have all of us cause to be thankful for it. No! "if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so also those who have fallen asleep through Jesus will God bring with Him."

Let us notice a little exactly the expressions here: for we may be assured that they are themselves exact, as always in Scripture. "*Jesus* died;" His saints but "fall asleep." With Him indeed it was *death*, and in all its reality and severity as the judgment upon sin,—the sign and type of a deeper judgment. With them it is but "sleep,"—rest and refreshment, from which they rise to a day that knows no ending and suffers no decline,—a rest too, but in the full activity of life, where life is never dormant, but the joy of the Lord is strength indeed.

For, if Jesus died, He rose again; and this is what gives His death itself its full power in blessing for our souls. Thus the apostle puts the two together, as the full argument of faith as to its portion from God. It is *God* who raised up Jesus again. He has answered the cry, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" by putting the Sufferer where all the meaning of His death can now come out. Righteousness sorrowing gave Him up to die; but righteousness joyfully raises Him from the dead. Had He suffered on His own account, He could not have come out of it; His coming out is the testimony of personal righteousness in Himself, and thus of a work done for others, and of its acceptance also in their behalf. He rises their Representative, even as He died their Substitute; and the honors so acquired He, whose wealth could not be increased, acquired as treasure that He could pour out upon them. Thus His resurrection is full argument for their own; and if God bring Him again into the world, they too shall come with Him; *God* shall bring them with Him. In the day of His manifestation all must do Him honor: so He comes in the glory of His Father, with the holy angels; and how shall the dominion of death which He has broken keep from Him those who show the value of the work which has set it aside?

The apostle here announces only the truth concerning those on whose account they are bearing so needless a burden of sorrow. "God shall bring them with Him,"—His own, from whom He cannot needlessly be separated. Not, as some strangely imagine, bring them as spirits to rejoin the bodies left behind on earth: it is merely the simple and blessed fact, that they will not be wanting in the company that God brings with His Son. Then he goes on to explain how it shall be, and brings in here the assurance of their previous resurrection.

left unto the coming of the Lord, [d]are in no way to anticipate those who have fallen asleep. Because the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of the archangel, and with [e]the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise

[d] 1 Cor. 15. 52.

[e] 1 Cor. 15. 52.

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord are in no way to anticipate those who have fallen asleep. Because the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we who are alive and remain shall be caught away together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we be ever with the Lord."

Thus we can realize the tenderness of the expression, "those who have fallen asleep through Jesus," or I think, better "those who have been laid asleep by Jesus,"—by Him who has the keys of death and hades, and their Saviour. Taken in the first way, the meaning would be that "through Jesus,"—through His work for them,—death had become to them merely a sleep; but it would seem a strange manner of expressing this. Taken in the second way, the Lord's rule over death and His tender care of His people are both implied.

To us, for whom the great body of Christians are already among the dead, it cannot be a question that those remaining to the coming of the Lord will not precede the apostles and the multitude of the departed in their entrance into glory; yet, for all that, how little is the significance of this rising "first" of the dead in Christ realized by believers still. The common thought (thank God, less common than it was) of a single day of judgment in which saints and sinners rise together, necessarily destroys it entirely. Here a resurrection of the dead is shown to take place before the living saints are changed even; and then both are caught away together, to meet the Lord in the air. When He appears, therefore, they appear with Him (Col. iii. 4). Here is no promiscuous crowd, clearly: "they that are ready go in with Him to the marriage and the door is shut." There is no need for our present purpose to consider what or where this marriage is. This consideration belongs elsewhere, and is to be found where it belongs (Matt. xxv. 1 sq., notes); but we see at once that here is the company from which the Thessalonians thought their dying brethren might be excluded. It is not the dead who wait and watch with their lamps trimmed and burning; and they are in fact left out of the picture that our Lord has given us there. The apostle, speaking by the word of the Lord, now adds them to the company of those who thus go forth. As with the living so with the dead, they are not the whole number of those dead, but, as the apostle elsewhere says, "they that are *Christ's* at His coming" (1 Cor. xv. 23). Those who compose this company are distinctly specified: they are, according to the language of the epistle to the Philippians, the "*out*-resurrection from among the dead" (Phil. iii. 11).

Scripture is a perfectly consistent whole; and the faithfulness and love of God shine out in it. Christians may lose sight of what they are to Christ, but it is impossible for Him to deny Himself. They can mingle themselves with the world; but He who has redeemed them out of it can never mingle them. They will come with Him to the judgment of the world—not be judged with it by Him; and this is what the doctrine of the "resurrection from among the dead" decisively bears witness to. But all the details and manner of it are in full harmony with this. Even the prodigal, according to the Lord's own picture, must be met outside the father's house, with the father's arms; and where it is the gathering of Christians finally to their Lord, the "Lord Himself" must come to claim them: "the Lord *Himself* shall descend from heaven with a shout of command," as in supreme authority. This, although question has been made of it, is His own voice; and thus the "voice of the archangel" follows and

first; then we who are alive and remain shall be caught away together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we be ever with the Lord. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words.

2 (v. 1–11): In the darkness and in the light.

2. But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that anything should be written to you. For

[f] Jno. 14. 3.

[g] Acts 1. 7.

is distinguished from it. The highest among angels—those "ministers of His that do His pleasure,"—in sympathetic obedience gives the word (as it would seem) to the angelic host, and the trump of God sounds. "The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we" (the living) "shall be changed" (1 Cor. xv. 52). Thus the trumpet here is no call to battle, as some have thought it, but answers to the call of the assembly, in Num. x. 3, 4. In Matt. xxiv. 31, the Son of man sends His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. This, as has been shown in the consideration of the passage, is the gathering of dispersed Israel. In our present epistle it is rather what would answer to the gathering of the princes (Num. x. 4); for the company gathered is that of those who are to reign with Christ over the earth. The announcement here is exactly as in Corinthians: the dead in Christ rise first; then "we who are alive and remain" are "caught away together with them," —which involves, of course, the change of which Corinthians speaks. We are "caught away in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we be ever with the Lord."

It is not perhaps remarkable, and yet we may do well to notice, how throughout this word of comfort that title "Lord" comes in; "the word of the Lord," "the coming of the Lord," "the Lord Himself," "to meet the Lord," "be ever with the Lord." It is, no doubt, the time when His lordship will be manifest to all; and that may seem sufficient reason for it. What a joy it will be beyond expression, to see all power put into the Hands alone competent to wield it! to have every knee bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father! But "so shall we be ever with the Lord" sounds somewhat in a different line of thought; and here we perhaps rather expect the sweet familiar "Jesus," His name on earth, but far from excluding the thought of His divine personality. To fulfil the prophecy that He was to be called Emmanuel, He was called Jesus; and that, too, because He would save His people from their sins. It is a name wonderfully complete therefore in what it expresses. Yet in the thought of eternity, as the apostle realizes it in the passage before us, he does not say, we shall be ever with Jesus, nor even, the Lord Jesus, but simply, "for ever with the Lord." Some even seem to deem it too cold and distant a title for heaven; but they can hardly have noticed how it is used by the inspired writers. While, of course, speaking of authority, it is an authority under which they delight to be putting themselves, as it were, continually. With him who, though most free, would ever be known as the "bond-servant of Christ," they are ever proclaiming and exulting in His Lordship. And for those who have realized the bitter bondage of sin, how blessed the deliverance which could only be achieved by the strong hand of this glorious Master. For them this is not the language of distance, but of joyous worship. Released from such authority, to what would they be released? Will eternity make any difference in this respect? Will they need deliverance from that which wrought deliverance for them? The apostle answers that there, when we reach the end which all before has been hastening on to,—"we shall be *ever* with the *Lord*." It is the answer of heart to Him who has come forth "Himself" in joy of heart to meet them, to Him whose own words were, to those fearing soon to be made orphans by His absence, "I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am there ye may be also."

2. This is, of course, but the coming of the Lord in one aspect: as it bears upon the condition of the sleeping saints. The apostle goes on now to what is

yourselves know perfectly well that the day of the Lord so [h]cometh as a thief in the night. When they may be saying, Peace and safety, [i]then sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall in no wise escape. But ye, breth-

[h] Matt. 24. 43, 44. Luk. 12.39, 40.
[i] Luk. 17.27 –30.

most closely connected with it, but yet not synonymous, as many take it. The "*day* of the Lord" is, in fact, ushered in by the coming of the Lord: it cannot be before Christ has risen from where He is now seated, on the Father's throne, to take that which is His as Son of man. In this character it is that all judgment is committed to Him (John v. 22, 27); and thus it is that as the Son of man He comes in the clouds of heaven and sits upon the throne of His glory. But before He thus appears, He has first of all to gather His associates upon the throne of His Kingdom; and this it is which we have been just looking at. When He appears, we shall appear with Him in glory (Col. iii. 4); and when He reigns we shall reign with Him over the earth. But for this we must be either raised or changed; and more than this, we must "appear," or better, "be manifested," before the judgment-seat of Christ (2 Cor. v. 10). As to acceptance of our persons, that is already accomplished; we are "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. i. 6). Thus, personally, as He Himself has told us, he that has heard His word, and believed on Him who sent Him, shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life (John v. 24). But the appraisal of our works is another thing, and that there shall be this we are as definitely assured. "We shall be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ." It is the triumph of divine grace that everything can be brought out thus, and we can "give account of ourselves to God," without the least sullying of divine holiness; even under the scrutiny of the light of God, "made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. i. 12). Yet so "shall every one receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." The appraisal is for reward; and we receive reward or suffer loss accordingly. This therefore must be settled before His saints can come forth with their Lord, each in his apportioned place according to the judgment of divine holiness, as well as in manifestation of divine grace.

We are to meet the Lord in the air; and then, according to what the tenor of Scripture generally implies, that apportionment of reward takes place. With this also there will necessarily be another thing of incalculable value for the soul,—wisdom gathered for eternity as to sin and holiness, good and evil, and the perfect ways of God's government as to each. What lessons for the judges of the new Kingdom, who have themselves passed under the searching of inflexible holiness before they come to fill that place! How suited that they should do this; and this accounts on the one side for that which perhaps no single text, but the combined force of many prophetic scriptures assures us will be the case, that between the taking away of the saints to meet their Lord and His coming with them in the clouds of heaven there will elapse a considerable time—in fact some years. This is a matter much in dispute even yet among those who have devoted themselves more than others to the study of prophecy. It would be impossible to take it up in any adequate way here; nor is this the place in which to consider it. The full unfolding is in the book of Revelation; while the Lord's own prophecy upon the Mount of Olives, as Matthew has recorded it, is an important link between this and Daniel, the Old Testament revelation. The second epistle here, with its warning as to apostasy from Christianity threatening, and the coming of the man of sin, almost completes the scriptures relating to this subject.

But thus it is plain that the day of the Lord begins for the earth as it may be said, secretly, and is characterized in its beginning by judgment, more and more descending upon a world ripening more and more in its iniquity. The true saints in Christendom being removed to the presence of their Lord, it becomes a mere corrupt mass, lapsing into open and defiant infidelity. And now it is

ren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you as a thief: for ye are all [j]sons of light and sons of day; we are not of night nor of darkness. So, then, let us not [k]sleep as the rest do, but let us watch and be sober; for they that sleep, sleep in the night, and they that are drunken are drunken in the night; but

[j] Eph. 5. 8.
[k] Matt. 25. 5.

that, the Gentile branches being cut off, (because they abode not in the grace received) the natural branches are to be graffed again into their own olive-tree; this too for final and full blessing to the world at large (Rom. xi. 16–26). A remnant awakened by the Spirit of God to the sense of their national guilt in the rejection of Christ, and purified by the trials through which they pass, in the midst of the apostasy of the mass who receive Antichrist, are prepared for the coming of the Lord, not now into the air, as when He takes away the saints of the present and the past, but to the earth, to judge it. (See the notes on the book of Psalms, *passim*).

It is in connection with Israel that all the Old Testament prophecies find fulfilment; and its history moves in accord with prophecy. For with the blessing of the earthly people comes the blessing of the earth; and when Israel loses her position as a nation, the history of the earth is for the present closed.

The interval has indeed the most wonderful history of all; but it is that of a people called out from the earth—from Israel and from the nations both, and destined for heaven.

Thus it is plain why the apostle says to the Thessalonians here, that of the times and seasons they had no need that he should write to them. In fact, the Lord had at the beginning told His disciples that it was not for them to know the times and the seasons, which the Father had placed under His own authority (Acts i. 7). Their question, to which this is an answer, shows that, as we know, the heavenly calling of the Church was yet unrevealed. Even now they might not know all that this involved in the way of separation from Jewish and earthly prophecy; but they knew perfectly well that the day of the Lord was to come as a thief in the night. This was evidently the common Christian knowledge, and made it plain that its coming could not be calculated from Daniel's prophetic periods, for instance. In these, in fact, are found incalculable elements which, until the time comes when they will speak out, will necessarily defeat all attempts at a right estimate. Had it been possible in the apostle's days to predict the centuries of delay that have, in fact, elapsed, disciples might indeed still have waited for their Lord, but *watched* they could not, and no "thief in the night" could have troubled their slumbers. But for the heart expectancy was needed; and they were to watch *because* they knew not. Thus for these watchers the times could not speak; and in fact when they do it will be for another people than the present Christian Church, and when this is already removed to be with the Lord in the manner which we have just had before us.

For mere formal and worldly Christendom, the coming of the thief will then in a sense have taken place. Shut out in the outside darkness, when others have entered the chambers of light, no place of repentance will be left for the despisers of God's present grace. In a world which, having rejected the true King, will be left for that awful time to experience fully what Satan's rule is, they will fall under the power of his deception. Not having received the love of the truth that they might be saved, they will believe a lie; and comforting themselves with the cry of "Peace and safety," sudden destruction will come upon them as upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape!

They have chosen darkness, alas, with the light all round them; and for such the darkness is appointed. Impossible is it for the true Christian to be thus overtaken as a thief. A son of the day, the darkness has no title or claim with regard to him. The night is the period when darkness reigns; but the Christian is not of it,—not of the present "age" at all: it is characterized by a rejected

let us who are of the day be sober, [l]putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath [m]not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ; who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep we may [n]live together with him. Wherefore, encourage one another and edify one the other, as also ye do.

[l] cf. Eph. 6. 14, 16, 17.
[m] ch. 1. 10.
[n] 2 Tim. 2. 11.

Christ, gone from the earth—the Light of the world withdrawn. But the Holy Spirit is come, and the light is restored to faith: faith receives the light from heaven, though the night is unchanged by that; and the sons of light have to be armed against the darkness, which is all around them. Upon those who are in the light it can only come as a spirit of slumber, or as intoxication from the world's siren cup. But in the light itself is the remedy for this; and Christ as apprehended in the soul is its armor of defence from both snare and open assault: faith and love cover the citadel of the heart,—are its breastplate, therefore,—while the hope of salvation (the full deliverance at hand) is as a helmet for the head against all stunning of discouragement. We must brace this armor to us, says the apostle, that we may find its full sufficiency; and the expectation speedily of the Lord's return is cheer indeed, both as to the dead and in the daily conflict of the living: "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ; who died for us that, whether we wake or sleep, we may live together with Him." With this hope we may well encourage one another, as with a hope with which we ourselves are comforted of God. The apostle could, indeed, thank Him as to the Thessalonian Christians, that they were doing this.

Div. 4.

The epistle closes, according to the general manner, with exhortation to practical conduct suited to the place of blessing they enjoyed as partakers of this blessed hope. The doctrine which is according to godliness, as the apostle reminds Titus, must be given practical manifestation in the lives of its professors. And while the Thessalonians were in reality shining examples of the power of Christianity, yet no one of us was ever beyond the need of exhortation. Where the heart is right with God, the details of the life may yet need to be set right. Things may not be in due proportion and balance; and thus one truth may be bulking so large as to interfere with the right appreciation of other truth. Individuality may be stiffened into a false independence, or corporate responsibilities be made to crowd out individuality. And, moreover, while it is true that we are instructed as to principles, rather than governed by a code of laws, yet the plain single precept has its own value and importance,—the principle being thus exemplified in its application, the abstract prevented from becoming merely an abstraction, and brought into the sphere of every-day practice. The exhortation here is brief, and in brief sentences; and much of it requires no exposition, little comment such as suits our purpose now.

1. The apostle begins with urging them to recognize the Lord's working in those who, in the activity of love, were laboring among them. Leaders there surely were and are: those in whom might be discerned, not mere human energy but divine; who were to be followed, therefore, because, and as, they followed Christ. He has no idea of any blind or servile following,—of any recognition of unspiritual men in spiritual place, or invested with power by man where man had none, and God had bestowed none. The responsibility pressed upon them was one which, by the terms expressed, appealed to them as free, spiritual, and responsible, subject to Christ alone, although He may and does have those through whom He works, and whom, so far as they are this, the saints are gladly to recognize, and submit to them. It is the very opposite of a clergy constituted by man. Laboring and taking the lead *in the Lord*, their re-

DIVISION 4. (Chap. v. 12–28.)

Ways accordant.

1 (12, 13): The recognition of leaders.

2 (14-22): Amid various evils the way of right and good.

1. NOW, we beseech you, brethren, to [o]know those who are laboring among you and who take the lead among you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be in peace among yourselves.

2. And we exhort you, brethren, [p]admonish the disorderly, comfort the faint hearted, [q]sustain the weak,

[o] 1 Cor. 16. 18. 1 Tim. 5. 17. Heb. 13. 7, 17.

[p] 2 Thess. 3. 11.

[q] Rom. 15. 1.

sponsibility is to Him, and their authority is of Him wholly; and thus their admonitions have true spiritual weight. As with the word of God itself, admonition will of necessity have large place in their appeals,—leading in a path so unique and separate from all that the natural man craves and follows, and in which the weakness and folly that still cling to us become so painfully apparent. Admonition is thus in an eminent way a service of love; all the more because of the pain that must be in it, when truly this. As Paul says to the Ephesians, that he "ceased not night and day to admonish each one of them with tears" (Acts xx. 31). What need is implied here! and what earnestness to meet it! Well may he exhort the Thessalonians now to esteem such very highly in love for their works' sake. No fitting response could be but love to love.

2. There follow general moral exhortations; at the head of which comes that to peace. It is true that sometimes one must contend: we are to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3); but the apostle is here contemplating no such case; and alas, the strife of self-interest is that which too commonly disturbs the people of God; the sure sign of the allowance of lusts which show that Christ is not the present satisfaction of the soul. Real contention for the faith will be because Christ is before it, as surely as the other betrays His absence. The atmosphere of His presence is indeed peace; but conflict may be needed that that peace may be enjoyed; if it be rebellion that has launched us into it, it is not we who have broken the peace, but those who have made it impossible to retain it without treason to our Lord.

But the peace which is the result of communion will be that which maintains divine order, which is alone consistent with it. Obedience to the will of God is harmony with all around, as sin is discord, none the less but more because of the multitude that swell it. When the concord of human wills against the divine shall seem to be great enough to have conquered a harmony without God and in defiance of Him, then judgment will be at hand, complete and final, and peace will be the effect of established righteousness.

But while the disorderly are to be admonished, it is of importance also to remember those who languish in the strife continually going on between the evil and the good, a strife from which it is impossible to deliver them. The difficulties of life perplex and dismay them. They maintain a feeble and spiritless testimony, which may lapse into more or less compliance with that against which it seems vain to struggle. Here it needs much discernment often to distinguish between weakness and wilfulness; and indeed no strict line can be drawn between conditions of this kind. Weakness is often the cover and excuse for wilfulness; and admonition has constantly more or less to be blended with comfort. For with the abundant provision God has made for us, the wealth of promises, the fulfilment of which is secured by all the unchangeableness of Him who has made them,—drafts on heaven's treasury certain to be honored whenever presented,—nothing but unbelief can leave us poverty-stricken as we too often are; and what does unbelief mean but in fact a struggle between our wills and God? Yet the order—"grace and truth"—must be carefully remembered in dealing with cases of this nature. Where there is faint-heartedness, the soul must be revived and steadied by divine grace, in order to be able to act in ac-

be [r]patient towards all. [s]See that no one render to any evil for evil, but pursue always that which is good towards one another and towards all; [t]rejoice always; [u]pray without ceasing; [v]in everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus as to you; [w]quench

r Col. 3. 12.
s Rom. 12. 17.
t Phil. 4. 4.
u Luk. 18. 1. Rom. 12. 12. Eph. 6. 18
v Eph. 5. 20
Col. 3. 17. w *cf.* 1 Tim. 4. 14

cordance with divine principles. Yet here also no separation between these two can be maintained: grace is no grace apart from truth, and will never consent to separation; while, God being what He is, truth without grace could not be even truth, in any proper presentation of it.

"Comfort the faint-hearted, sustain the weak," implies, therefore, a difference between these which is quite intelligible. Real weakness there may be, where there is not faint-heartedness. There may be no tendency to give way to the pressure of circumstances or of evil, and yet weakness which claims the ministry of sympathetic love. "Be patient towards all" reminds us of how we all are (alas, how much!) the cause of trial to one another. All the more because we are brought so closely together, and the spiritual tie that unites us for eternity gives a seriousness to everything that forgets and ignores it. Yet, failing as we all are, how should the apprehension of this make us tender as to the faults of another; especially when we realize, as we are often made to do, how prone we are to misjudge,—how easily we find the mote in our brother's eye, while in fact a distorting "beam" is in our own. The exercise of patience is thus as much in our own interest as in our brother's; and patience becomes a matter of justice quite as much as of mercy.

Even if there be plain evil, good is that which alone will overcome it; in any case we are not to return evil for it, but to pursue always what is good; and that not only towards one another, but towards all. We are not permitted in such things to have one rule of conduct towards those inside and another towards those outside the Christian circle. We are not to have one face in the Church and another in the world. The love of God goes out to the world; and with the reflection of that divine love we are to love it too; all the more because we know the real and immense distance which the grace of God has made between us, and the certainty that as to those who remain in it, eternity will only confirm and increase that distance. Of that love of God from which they must break away to share the portion of the devil and his angels, we have the happiness and the responsibility of being representatives.

But for all this we need strength; and the "joy of the Lord is strength." It being the joy of the Lord, and Christ being always that, the result must be that we are privileged and under obligation to rejoice always. There is not a moment in which He is not Master, and in which all circumstances are not perfectly under His control. We, as it were, uncrown Him therefore, if we do not rejoice. That we are completely dependent on Him is nothing to be deducted from the blessedness of this, whatever it imply as to weakness on our own part. The unceasing prayer to which the apostle here enjoins us is, of course, the confession of this; but if the expression of need, it is no less the expression of faith in Him, the incense of whose acceptability is in our prayers; so that in everything we can be bidden to give thanks also, as what is the will of God in Christ Jesus regarding us. The abundant provision that we have in Him—the perfect assurance of omnipotent love—shows indeed what He would have, who has given Christ for us. Can there be in this sunshine a fleck of inconsistency or mutability at all? There can be but one answer; and in this sense also we are "filled into all the fulness of God." Thus joy and thanksgiving are the fitting accompaniments with which the apostle connects that prayer by which we draw out of the infinite fulness,—the exhortation in which we hear Christ's own voice appealing to us: "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."

The apostle closes this exhortation with one which on the one hand exempli-

not the Spirit; [x]despise not prophecies; but [y]prove all things, hold fast the right, from every form of evil abstain.

[x] 1 Cor. 14. 39.
[y] 1 Cor.2.15. 1 Cor.14.29.

fies the abundance of the provision God has made for us, while on the other, it reminds us, how sadly, of the folly to which we are prone; and that, alas! most of all with regard to His choicest gifts: "Quench not the Spirit," he says, "despise not prophecies."

The thought of *quenching* the Spirit manifestly contemplates the Spirit under the figure of fire; and we cannot but think of Pentecost with its divided tongues of fire, the manifestation in the individual of the heavenly power which had come amongst men, and come to speak with a divine message to all the families of men, divided by sin, and by the judgment upon it. The Gift, and the free giving of God were thus to be manifested by means of gifts bestowed upon those who were themselves recipients of it. But this enlightening of others was in this way a matter of responsibility on the part of those thus gifted: not in fact a limited class among Christians, except indeed as they themselves create the limit, as so many do. Here in fact is one form of quenching the Spirit, when instead of ministering one to another each according to the gift he has received (1 Pet. iv. 10) that which the Spirit has given is ignored, the ministry that love urges to is suppressed, and the Church suffers, deprived of how much of the blessing which might be hers, and of the ability to testify of the grace that she has learned.

Certainly there are special gifts,—"evangelists, pastors and teachers," as the Word declares; but this not to restrain the manifestation of the same Spirit in others; and especially as to prophecy, of which the apostle speaks in this connection here; his own injunction is, "Covet to prophesy;" and his encouragement to it, that "ye may all prophesy" (1 Cor. xiv. 1, 4, 5, 24, 30, 39). This was not necessarily the utterance of predictions, as is too commonly imagined, but that speaking out of the fulness of the Spirit what would be thus the word of God Himself, the "oracle" for His people (1 Pet. iv. 11). This involved, not so much what is ordinarily called "gift," as spirituality—that nearness to God which makes the "man of God," and one to whom He can therefore communicate His mind. But this might be done in the simple quotation of a text of Scripture, or in "five words,"—perhaps more likely so than in a long discourse, but whose testimony would be felt in heart and conscience. The effect on "one that believeth not, or one unlearned," entering in among those so engaged is that "he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth" (1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25). But this overflow of the divine fulness which is in all the saints to-day as much as in apostolic times, is not limited as to time and place, as Philip's daughters who were prophetesses show, who certainly did not prophesy in the assembly. How blessed to know that such fulness is really in us all, and that the apostle urges that it should overflow, the hindrances to this being always in ourselves, the blocking of outlet to an illimitable spring, of which we may be quite or very little conscious. In how many ways may this be done! but if out of the belly there flows *not* the living water, it is certain that there must be some hindrance for which we are responsible, if the Lord's words be the simple, always verifiable words they must be (John vii. 38).

The figure here is not of water, but of fire; and we may quench it in one another or in ourselves. The burning words which seek for utterance may consume us inwardly as finding none; or on another's lips may merely irritate the conscience which is not duly exercised. Prophesying may in either way be despised and the Spirit quenched. What would our assemblies be, if we were delivered from these resistant forces, or even duly exercised about them! if the lethargy too often oppressing us were treated as our common responsibility, and

3 (23-28): Sanctification of spirit, soul and body.

3. Now *the God of peace himself *sanctify you wholly: | *1 Phil. 4. 9. *a* ch. 3. 13.

we heard in our souls the Voice: "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from among the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

But there is responsibility upon another side; and so the apostle continues: "but prove all things, hold fast the right." Not everything that assumes divine authority for itself can be received as such. The Word must for us try everything,—the written communication be held superior to the prophet's voice: for here, alas, man's frailty and fallibility are to be remembered; while, moreover, we are to take heed, because "many false prophets are gone out into the world." Thus the Christian as a possessor of the truth is held to his responsibility to know and to maintain the truth. He cannot be deceived, except as he permits himself to be deceived; for he is not a child of darkness, but of the light: he has but to maintain his place as such, and be subject to that Spirit which has come to be in him the Witness for his absent Lord. To Him the various forms of evil, however specious and alluring, are known fully. "The wise" (with that fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom)—"the *wise* shall understand." Apart from such fear, which is not always to be found, alas, in the true Christian, we walk exposed to the enemy. Satan may assume the form of an angel of light; but we are not to be ignorant of his devices. Yet the whole armor of God is needed, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

3. Having thus exhorted his beloved Thessalonians, he closes with a prayer for them that they might be completely sanctified, or set apart to God in every faculty, whether of mind or body. Nothing less than this could be desire for them. Nothing less than this are we to tolerate in ourselves. What other can the presence of the indwelling Spirit imply? Is the house in which He dwells to be other than all His own? Power, too, certainly is His to accomplish in us all the will of God, whatever may be our own infirmity, or the opposition (always maintained in Scripture) between the Spirit and the flesh. Thus alone are we made to realize our full responsibility in every failure. So provided, we can never plead the power of that which is against us, nor even the presence in us (true as that may be) of inherited sinfulness,—of a nature still adverse to divine things. We *have* still such a nature,—instincts that would betray us to the enemy, and lead us indefinitely far away from all that is of God and good; and whoever does not know this does not know himself. But to suppose, on the other hand, that nature compels to obedience to it, is to ignore that which makes man what he is. We may act contrary to our nature, as well as follow it; and in the case of our fallen nature are responsible to do so; he who excuses his sins by his nature cannot justify himself in the court of his own conscience as to one thing that he has ever done. The Spirit is not, in fact, hindered by our nature; and he who walks in the Spirit shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

But what then? Does not this lead to a doctrine of perfection such as in various forms is held by so many Christians in our day? It does indeed set perfection before us; as does the apostle here. It allows no toleration of any *practice* short of this, even though explicit in its acknowledgment of an evil nature in us. Nor are there two levels permitted to us as Christians; so that, as some put it, to an imperfect man, of damaged moral powers, the law of Christ, in contrast with the law of Moses, requires no faultlessness, but only "perfect," that is, *pure* "love to God through Christ." No, Christ Himself, the highest and most perfect standard possible, is the one only standard for every Christian: "He who saith that he abideth in Him ought himself also to walk even as He walked" (1 John ii. 6).

Yet who is there then who has attained this? Let Christian perfection be put only as Scripture puts it, as the full, perfect walk of Christ Himself, who will step forth and claim to have attained this? Could we find one that did so, how would the common consent of Christians regard such a claim? Rightly as

and may your whole spirit and soul and body be [b]pre- [b] 1 Cor. 1. 8.

we judge ourselves for all shortcoming, yet, alas, we *do* come short; and we must neither lower the standard, nor plead a damaged moral nature to excuse ourselves.

The sanctification of which the apostle speaks here is, of course, that practical devotedness of life and walk to God which continually develops with the expansion of spiritual intelligence in the things of God. There is another that underlies it as the blood underlay the oil in the priestly anointing. Of this the epistle to the Hebrews speaks. We are set apart to God by the blood of Christ, as those made His by that which has purged us from our sins to serve the living God. Only on the basis of this can we be set apart, then, for this service. Besides this we must have a new nature as in new birth, and the indwelling of the Spirit of God, that there may be freedom and power. Of this last the epistle to the Romans speaks (chaps. vii. viii.). Here it is the setting apart in detail of the whole man, in all his practical life, that the apostle prays for in behalf of the Thessalonians.

It is the God of peace whom he prays to sanctify them wholly,—the God to whom peace essentially belongs, as absolutely supreme,—incapable of being disturbed by that which, while it may even rage against Him, is yet entirely under His control, and made to serve and carry out His everlasting purpose. But He is the God of peace also as the Maker of it; to be with whom is to have all things thus at peace with us,—nay, working together for good: "if God be for us, who can be against us?"—which may indeed seem almost the opposite of the truth in a hostile world, and with the Cross the banner under which we are gathered. Faith, however, is in the invisible, and waits for its full and glorious justification at a future time; patience must have its perfect work, though in having this we are made perfect and entire, lacking in nothing (James i. 4). The Cross is the token of the world's enmity, but of God for us, and revealed as the God of peace, through Him who has made peace for us by the blood of His cross. In this way we are at once reconciled and sanctified: the God of peace sanctifies us through the peace that He has made for us through the work of His Son. That peace, accepted and enjoyed, makes us His in the inmost depths of our being; and becomes thus in result a peace with Him which is the reconciliation to Him of all our faculties.

Yet there are hindrances in us, and in the world around us, which call for the rousing of all our energies to overcome them. From these we need to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, while it is God who worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. It is a conflict in which the help of the might of God is needed, even against ourselves. So the apostle mingles together prayer and exhortation here.

The prayer in its first part is that God would sanctify them wholly; the last word being one which refers to final condition,—*holoteleis*, all-perfectly, or all-maturely. He adds to this, "and may your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." The word for "whole" here is *holokleron*, and is expressive of quantity, as the former word of quality. Every faculty of spirit, soul and body comes into the idea: no part is omitted in his desire for them. Spirit and soul and body make up the man. All that pertains to these—every faculty—he prays may be kept blameless (here the quality of the keeping is expressed) in the power of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. A suited word with which to close an epistle which has been so much occupied with the thought of this coming, the goal of Christian hope. It is hope that encourages endurance; while we must remember the solemn reality of account to be given in His presence of what has been the course here. A slavish fear would be indeed an unsuitable accompaniment of the thought of His coming who will at that very time manifest for us the fulness of His salvation in bringing us into full likeness to Himself; but the thought of account

served blameless *to the coming of our Lord Jesus

* ἐν; but the English preserves the sense sufficiently. It is "to," so as to be "in."

given at such a time to such a Saviour can have nothing but sanctifying power for the soul.

Spirit and soul and body are His alike: we owe Him all; and Paul names them all to claim them all for Him. They are the constituent parts that make up man; and it should be clear, as it is consistent also with all other scripture, that man is thus defined as a tri-unity which proclaims his link with all creation, and himself the uniting centre of all. The vegetable takes up the dust of the earth, to inspire it with a living principle which raises it above itself, and becomes in it a principle of organization,—a prophecy of what various forms to come!

The animal follows the vegetable; and here there is not only life, but a living soul; and with this, organization is carried further; sensation appears, and voluntary motion; the vegetable functions are retained, but developed further, and perfected; with the *type* also of bodily structure, though the bodily form may still receive further development.

And now the crown is put upon the arch: the union of all lower existences with the higher nature of the angel is accomplished in man; in whom spirit is added to soul, and the image of God is in this way reached. I may repeat here what I have said elsewhere, that—

"Here an evolution there is, and a true one, not what has usurped its name; an 'unfolding' of a divine plan, in which there is, of course, progress and development, upon principles which are uniform throughout. Looking at organic being, we have three stages of progress clearly marked off from one another; the vegetable; the animal, which (in Gen. i.) is marked off as a new 'creation;' man, just as distinctly from the mere animal, as a creation also.

"Each of these contains what has preceded it, with an addition . . . There is economy of design, which at the same time gives unity to the whole; while there is advance on the part of that also in which this unity is shown. The mineral absorbed into the vegetable can scarcely be recognized any more as mineral; and it is worked up into still higher forms as the 'flesh' of animal and of man. The life of the vegetable is in the animal so characterized by the soul with which it is now united, that 'soul' and life become, in one aspect of soul, but equivalent terms. While the animal soul becomes again in man possessed of higher faculties than it ever had in the animal, and thus the fit companion and help-meet of the spirit.

"Not only so: we can go even beyond this as led of the blessed book which God has given us, and after the present life see a similar advance made still. For, as soon as he leaves the body, the saint, though still *having* soul, is now spoken of (as never while in the body) as a 'spirit;' and when he takes up the body again, this is now no longer a 'natural'—which is, literally, a 'psychical' body (a body characterized by the soul, or psyche)—but a spiritual body, (a body characterized by the governing spirit,) the body of the resurrection.

"Here is development, then, all along the line: of that there can be no question. God evolves (or unfolds) in this way the wondrous possibilities which lie wrapped up in what He has first produced. Here is *true* evolution, not the false thing of the evolutionist; but how is it accomplished? Is the soul developed out of the life of the plant? or the spirit developed out of the soul of the animal? Not so according to Scripture: at each step God must come in, and does; soul and spirit are separate creations. And how does the mineral rise into the plant structure? or this into the body of the animal? or the soul develop in man spiritual characters unknown in the animal? The answer of Scripture is, they do not raise themselves; they are *raised*: the development is in each case accomplished by the *descent* (if we may say so,) *of a higher principle*

Christ. [c]Faithful is he who calleth you, who also will do it. [c] 1 Cor. 1. 9.

to unite itself to the lower. The lower is raised by the humbling of the higher to it, and the shadow of Christ is here already unmistakably seen in nature: the seal is set upon this method as divine.

"We need not wonder: 'all things were created by Him, and for Him,' and this is His stamp on what He would approve to us as current money in the realm of thought. Why should not the figure of the King appear on what is His? So is all nature, in fact, a witness for Him, a glorious interweaving of spiritual parables, which, if we had more ability to read them, would indeed transfigure the visible with the brightness of the unseen."

Scripture distinctly teaches in spirit, soul, and body a tri-unity of man. Spirit is that which makes him what an angel is, a son of God, and in his Father's image: for God is the Father of spirits (Heb. xii. 9). To have said, "Father of souls" would have made Him Father of the beasts: for the beast is, as well as man, a "living soul," and that because a living soul is in it (Gen. i. 30). The common version of our Bible obscures the last passage by rendering "life" instead of "living soul," which it puts, however, in the margin; of course, a "living *life*" would have no sense. In other passages the word is uniformly translated "creature" (or once, "thing,") when applied to the beast: a meaning which does not belong to it. Yet the corresponding Greek word (*psuche*) is rightly rendered "souls," (in Rev. viii. 9; xvi. 3,) where certainly animals are spoken of.

On the other hand, "spirit" is never ascribed to the beast in Scripture, except it be once in Eccles. iii. 21, where the Septuagint and Targums are against it, and where, at any rate, we have the mere questioning of one seeking by human reasoning to penetrate where revelation alone is competent to lead, the result being that he is left in utter perplexity. This is the very theme of Ecclesiastes, the insufficiency of human reason, as in Job the failure of human righteousness.

The spirit of man, as we are told by the apostle, is that by which alone human things are known; and thus it is the essential characteristic of man in the terrestrial creation. It is identified in Scripture with mind or understanding, and thus with moral as well as mental judgment; which certainly the beast has not. The attempt of the materialist therefore to make it only the breath of life which is in the nostrils, founded as it is upon the identity of the word for breath and spirit in both Greek and Hebrew, may be dismissed as the uttermost folly of a puerile imagination; which indeed we need but the passage before us to set aside: for what could be meant by the sanctification of the "breath of life?"

The soul, on the other hand, is, according to the same word of inspiration, the seat of the emotions, affections, desires, appetites, the link between the spirit and the body, and so practically at least the life of the body. In man it links itself with his higher nature, and is permeated with the light of human intelligence, sharing with the spirit immortality. Yet apart from this it characterizes, as is evident, the instinctive, appetite-governed life of the beast; to which indeed fallen man may in measure sink down: the natural man is just the "psychic" or sensual, "soul-governed" man; with an awful shadow over him as that, which the beast has not: that, for him, being degradation, which in the beast is its unfallen nature (1 Cor. ii. 14, *Gk.*).*

The devotion (as we ordinarily say) of the whole man to God is thus the measure of practical sanctification. Nor is this asceticism, or real self-denial even; except as there is indeed in us still an old self, which for the true Christian has lost its authority. A life to God is what is really life, with all the power and joy of spiritual vigor in it; and to seek to hold back any part of our being from this, is to prefer death to life, mutilation to complete, all-round

* See, as to this whole subject, "Facts and Theories as to a Future State," Part I. chap. 2, 4–6.

Brethren, [d]pray for us; [e]salute all the brethren with a holy kiss. I adjure you by the Lord that [f]the epistle be read to all the *brethren. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

d Eph. 6.19. Col. 4. 3.
e Rom. 16. 16.
f Col. 4. 16.

* Many ancient MSS. insert "holy."

capacity. Who that can be called Christian can deny this? Asceticism is an affront to God,—is itself a crippling of powers that belong to Him; to live to God is to live in no convent gloom, but in the full brightness of unhindered glory,—in His light to see light. It is in the joy of the Lord alone that strength is found to serve Him in whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore. The coming of the Lord Jesus is that which will introduce us into the perfect blessedness of this; and so in the power of this hope shall we be preserved blameless on the way to this consummation of eternal happiness.

Yet the apostle's hope is in Him whose purpose as to His people cannot fail. "Faithful is He who calleth you, who also will do it." We are upon the shoulders of the Good Shepherd; and if there were final failure, it would be His strength that failed. That would be as impossible for Him, as for us without Him success would be impossible.

The apostle speaks in the consciousness of his own need. He, so much above us all in knowledge and in devotedness, is nevertheless conscious of the help derived from the prayers of his brethren. He would have them also greet one another with the warm and open expression of Christian love. He is earnest that all should hear the epistle he had written to them (assured as he was of who was, in fact, the Writer of it) and not simply to leaders as the depositaries of truth, the comfort and responsibility of which belonged to all alike. Nor, where inspired Scripture was in question, were the mass called to "hear the Church," but the Church rather to hear the apostles. Thus he adjures them by the Lord that all should hear.

He closes with the usual valediction, that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ might be with them.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF SECOND THESSALONIANS

THE second epistle to the Thessalonians is, after the manner of all second epistles, a supplement to the first. As the Christian hope —the coming of the Lord—pervades and characterizes the first epistle, so the *patience* of hope may be said to characterize the second. The coming of the Lord is still prominent: but it is more the coming to the world (His appearing or manifestation) than for the removal of His people out of it, which, though in an important place, is but once referred to (chap. ii. 1). The appearing of Christ is that which ends entirely "man's day" upon the earth, the time of man's will without manifest intervention on God's part. The manifestation of Christ will be the manifestation of the world also,—taken, as it will be, in open defiance of God and of His Son. And to permit the true character of it to come out, the restraint which unseen is upon it, and which makes things in the meantime tolerable, will be taken away, and the prince of this world unfurl the standard of rebellion amid the plaudits of the nations; and, all neutrality being at an end, the remnant of Christ's followers will once again, and more than ever, be as sheep among wolves, until the Shepherd with an iron rod "shepherds the nations."

This is the time of Antichrist and "the lie,"—the time of retribution upon those to whom, as having no love for the truth, God will send strong delusion; powers and signs and lying wonders giving apparently the same attestation to satanic falsehood as once was given to the truth itself. And thus men will be gathered against Jehovah and against His Christ (Ps. ii.), until the breath of the Lord smites down His enemies.

This then is the central subject of the epistle now before us; a most solemn one for us, who can already discern, and not afar off, the rising of these fateful storm-clouds. The practical lessons for us also are most important. All prophecy of the future is thus a present light in the dark places, to guide the feet of pilgrims in the path of God. Let us give it heed.

The divisions of the epistle are three, though not quite in accord with the three chapters of our common Bibles:—

1. (Chap. i.): In the midst of persecution, the ground of peace for the saints in the righteousness of God.
2. (Chap. ii. 1–12): The wicked one and the deliverance.
3. (Chap. ii. 13–iii. 18): Separation to God the manifestation of the saint.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE

THESSALONIANS

DIVISION 1. (Chap. i.)

In the midst of persecution, the ground of peace for the saints in the righteousness of God.

1 (1, 2): Grace and peace to the assembly from God the Father and the Lord Jesus, in whom they are.

1. PAUL and [a]Silvanus and Timotheus to the assembly of the Thessalonians [b]in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

a 2 Cor. 1. 19. 1 Thess. 1. 1.
b 1 Thess. 1. 1.

NOTES.

Div. 1.

THE present time is characterized by the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church: this the closing discourses of the Lord before His death, as John has given them to us, with the opening of the Acts, make manifest. But the presence of the Spirit convicts the world of sin, because they have not believed in Him (John xvi. 9): "They have both seen and hated both Me and My Father," is His own declaration (xv. 24). On the other hand, as to the Spirit Himself, sent to represent the One whom they have driven out of it, He says again, "Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him" (xiv. 17). Thus the Spirit is not only the Witness of the rejected Christ, but Himself also rejected; and this double rejection is for opposite reasons: for infidelity is from the heart, and so all arguments suffice for it. But thus it is plain that from the beginning it was a foregone conclusion that the world was not, as still the dream is, to be converted by Christianity, and that for the Christian it would be ever a place of rejection, as for his Master,—a place of darkness, as from the absence of the Sun. So Scripture consistently treats it ever. God is now calling out of it a people for His Name, and that is all we are to expect until Christ comes again and brings the day.

It is plain indeed, that the opposition of the world is not always felt to the same extent, or in the same way. On the one hand, the providence of God may avert the open assault of the enemy; on the other, the enemy has found by large experience that, according to the proverb, "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church;" and that the lure is in general more successful than the open attack. Attack he will still, in disguise; and has learned how in the name of Christ, and in zeal for Him, to destroy His followers. A time, too, is at hand in which he will persuade himself that the rule no longer holds; or, rather, being moved by ungovernable fury in the knowledge that he has but a short time, he will again, and more defiantly than ever, make war upon God and upon the Lamb. But this will be the time of his complete overthrow in that day of the Lord which the apostle here assures the Thessalonians is not yet come, and the character of which he unfolds to us in this epistle.

In the meanwhile the world is nevertheless in steadfast opposition to the life of faith; and in whatever form it may be, "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. iii. 12). The Thessalonians were suffering manifestly for Christ; and yet the enemy would persuade them, and by means of professing Christians themselves, that these very sufferings showed that they were in those times of divine judgment upon the earth which, being

¶ (3-5): Increase in faith and love amid sufferings, which are a witness of their part in the kingdom to come.

2. We are bound to [c]give thanks to God always for you, brethren, as it is fit, because your faith increaseth exceedingly, and the love of each one of you all towards the others aboundeth; so that we ourselves [d]glory in you in the assemblies of God for your [e]patience and faith in all your persecutions and the afflictions which

[c] 1 Thess. 1. 2.
[d] 2 Cor. 7. 14. 2 Cor. 9. 2.
[e] 1 Thess. 1. 3.

in righteous recompense for iniquity, could not be upon the saints, but on their adversaries. They might be at peace, therefore, and rejoice in being witnesses for their Lord, in sufferings which but demonstrated their worthiness of the Kingdom of God, for which they suffered.

1. The apostle, associating Silas and Timothy with him as before, greets them in the same manner as in the former epistle. As children of the Father, and owning Christ their Lord, he wishes and hails them with grace and peace from the Father and the Lord. Their sufferings altered nothing as to this,—only brought in the inexpressible comfort of it for the need in which they were.

2. The apostle then testifies his thankfulness for the increase of their faith and love. Faith grew in them exceedingly, love abounded. How good it is when we have not to look back to the happier times of a first love, but the vision brightens with the days that pass, under the beams of an unchanging sun that is ever rising into a more excellent glory! "From glory to glory:" that is the apostolic summary of progress,—the heart responding to the light that more and more shines in and gladdens it. "God who made the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, for the shining forth of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iii. 18; iv. 6). This is no temporary or partial or interrupted display, as Paul speaks of it: "We *all* . . . are changed," he says. It is not of a few specially favored and exalted ones that he declares such things. He refuses to allow that of God's will any there are among Christians who are not partakers of so great a blessing as the beginning in his soul of an eternal day. He does not, as it were, allow for retrogression, or alternation of light and darkness, of even cyclical changes of this kind. The typical Christian is he who goes on from glory to glory. If there be darkness with him, or aught but steady progress, this is the abnormal condition to be accounted for, when the path of the righteous is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. But, thank God, Scripture in its description of the Christian refuses to mingle the abnormal with the normal; and thus to make, as it were, the abnormal condition a thing of course.

The Thessalonians were making evident progress; and the trials through which they were passing did not hinder this: did they not rather help it? For when in Corinthians the apostle has shown us how "this treasure" of the light is in an earthen vessel, he immediately goes on to speak of trials and persecutions, and the bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus; this, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body (2 Cor. iv. 7–10). Indeed, what can there be more helpful to the soul, than to be so openly and wholly identified with Him whom the world crucified that it may still ordain for us, (as it *will* ordain) His cross, and throw us upon the might of His arm, and the sweet consolations of His sympathy, who was Himself "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"?

This was the case with the Thessalonians: all people knew of them that they had "another king" than the man the Roman world adored: "One, Jesus;" One whose sway was more absolute than Cæsar's, and which reached where Cæsar's could not,—to the inmost recesses of the heart; in which it yielded a delight, to those who knew it not, all but incredible. Insanity it might be, but the hold it had upon His followers was quite unmistakable; a people whose emblem was a cross, and for whom "crucified with Jesus" was a sufficient answer to the suggestion of every opposing interest.

Thus they suffered; not amid plaudits, but reproach and obloquy; yet in

ye sustain; a [f]manifest token of the righteous judgment of God; that ye should be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, [g]for which ye also suffer.

3 (6-12): The revelation of Christ will glorify Him in His saints.

3. If at least it is a [h]righteous thing with God to recompense affliction to those that afflict you, and to you who are afflicted, rest with us at the [i]revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven, with the angels of his power, [j]in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who know not God and those who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus [Christ];* men who shall suffer the judgment of

[f] Phil. 1. 28.
[g] 1 Thess. 2. 14.
[h] Rev. 6. 10.
[i] 1 Cor. 1. 7.
[j] Heb. 10. 27.

* Many MSS. omit "Christ."

which there was no sting to rankle, no bitterness to harden or inflame the spirit: they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for His Name, and found in it all a fellowship with one another which sprang out of that first fellowship which was the bud enfolding every other. The apostle assures them that their sufferings for the King were but a manifest token, in the patience and faith sustaining them all through, of the righteous judgment of God, which counted them worthy of the Kingdom of God, for which also they were suffering. In Phil. i. 28, he argues similarly that the fearlessness of the disciples in view of their adversaries was an evident token of the perdition of the latter, and of their own final salvation. He who was already thus with them by the way would be found in corresponding attitude at the end of the way, both towards friends and enemies, whom His righteous judgment, as the apostle puts it here, could not possibly confound. He does not mean or say—it would be indeed out of the question for such as Paul to say—that suffering, any more than working, could give any title to acceptance on the part of the Righteous God. It was grace (as he says again to the Philippians,) that gave them even to suffer for Christ's sake. But grace had righteous title to count them worthy; and what it had wrought in them it was righteousness also to acknowledge. For the Kingdom of God they were already suffering, identifying themselves and identified too with it; and the result would show that it was no deception.

3. Paul goes on to the final recompense of that day in which God's righteous judgment will be fully displayed. He puts in the strongest way, by making a question of it, that surely for them there could be no question as to the future: for those for whom God had already shown Himself, in the support He had given them through all their afflictions at the hands of men. There is no change in the Unchangeable; and with Him whose righteousness had so manifested itself toward them in the past there could be no failure ever to distinguish between friends and enemies. It would be righteous still to recompense affliction in the day of recompense, to those who had afflicted them; while to His suffering ones there would be rest, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of His power,—the messengers who execute His will upon the ungodly, and upon those disobedient to the gospel of His grace.

Whether there are two classes here, or one in two aspects, has been much disputed. If all men are included in the judgment spoken of, then it is evident that all have not had the gospel preached to them. The judgment of the dead, as the book of Revelation exhibits it, is certainly not intended; but only that of the living when the Lord appears. Whether this also is a judgment strictly universal may be questioned; and the question cannot be answered here without a long digression. Even so, it need not be that the apostle meant to bring in all into a statement manifestly designed as consolation for the persecuted Thessalonians. Their persecutors had certainly this double character:—they knew not God, and obeyed not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle speaks of some even of the Corinthian disciples as not having the knowledge of God (1 Cor. xv. 34); and when the Son of God was in the world—before

everlasting [k]destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the [l]glory of his might, when he shall come to be [m]glorified in his saints and to be wondered at in all who have believed (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day. To which end we also pray always for you, that our God may count you worthy of the calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness and the [n]work of faith with power; so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be [o]glorified in you and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

k Phil. 3.19.
l Rev.19.11-16. Isa. 2. 19.
m Matt. 13. 43.
n 1 Thess.1. 3.
o Jno. 17.10. 1 Pet. 4. 14.

men's eyes, and preached of in their ears—"the world knew Him not." It was an ignorance with opportunity of knowledge; though this is, in fact, the condition of all the heathen. God could not hide Himself from men that sought Him, and all ignorance is, in its essence, of the heart rather than the mind. Man proves it, when the light comes, by his rejection of it. God's vengeance, as the text before us declares it, could not fall upon mere helpless babes: that were impossible to His nature. But here plainly their ignorance is that which makes them culpable, not such as would even palliate their condition.

But the gospel! the sweet glad tidings of God, so divinely suited to all man's need, and with its revelation of the incomparable God of our Lord Jesus Christ, made known in the depths of His nature by the love-gift of His Son—what must be the consequence, answering to the revelation of the depths of man's own heart in it, of his disobedience to the gospel? Men, says the apostle, who shall suffer the judgment of everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His might. It is not any materialistic annihilation that is declared or implied in this. Banishment from the presence of that glory which he has turned his back upon and despised,—hardening himself into a final, awful incapacity for it,—what is it but the "destruction" of one made at the first in the image of God,—and for communion with Him?

Just then, on the other hand, the saints shine out in glory—their inheritance for evermore. It is the time of which we hear in Romans as "the manifestation of the sons of God." Such by creation, but redeemed and immeasurably exalted by new creation, they now are seen as the fruit of Christ's work, their glory His glory: He is glorified in them, and marvelled at in all who have believed;—and believed the same testimony which had been given to the Thessalonians. These poor persecuted followers of Christ, who now need faith so much amid the trials surrounding them, will then be the marvel of the inhabitants of earth, and make men marvel at the grace bestowed on them.

The apostle closes with a prayer that they may now in the present time exhibit a character which shall answer to such a calling as is here shown to be theirs. He prays that God may count them worthy of it: that is, that He in the day of account may adjudge them to have walked as those governed by it; for this end, therefore, that God might accomplish in them all that was in His heart to do; which faith indeed would effect, as His instrument, but with a power, therefore, more than human. So would the name of Christ be glorified in them already; and they too in Him, for whom it was the highest glory to live, to suffer, and to die. It was the grace of God, and of the Lord Jesus bestowed upon them.

Div. 2.

The apostle now proceeds to put before the Thessalonians the character of that "day of the Lord," which it had been sought to persuade them had already come; to show them what would introduce it, and that there was a present hindrance; though the mystery of lawlessness was indeed already working, which would bring in the judgment upon it, in which man's day would end.

DIVISION 2. (Chap. ii. 1–12.)

The wicked one and the deliverance.

1 (1, 2): Our gathering to Christ preceding the day of the Lord.

1. NOW we beseech you, brethren, by* the [p] coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind† nor

[p] 1 Thess. 4. 16, 17.

* Or, "in behalf of." † Literary, "from your mind."

He shows the apostasy which would be from Christianity, and the rise of Antichrist, the great apostate; in whom Satan would work in the display of miraculous power, such as once heralded the truth, but which now as "lying wonders," would be permitted to ensnare those who, having had the truth presented to them, had not the love of it, but rejected that which would have been their salvation. In this last Antichrist the Jewish and Christian forms of unbelief would come together; rising to a height of arrogancy and defiance of the living God, which would bring down the open judgment of God in the destruction of the blasphemer, whom the Lord will destroy with the breath of His mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of His Presence. With him his deluded followers will receive their judgment, and the earth be liberated from the oppressive power of evil.

1. The apostle beseeches them not to be shaken or troubled by the statement, however it might seem authenticated, and even though it might purport to be from himself, that the day of the Lord had come. Taking their view of the coming of the Lord largely, and of necessity, from the Old Testament, the day of the Lord would seem to precede what they had been taught continually to expect as the coming of the Lord. The New Testament distinguishes between two phases of this,—His coming to receive His people to Himself, as the first epistle pictures it, the dead raised and the living changed, and both caught up together to meet Him in the air. When He *appears*, (to the world) "then shall we appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 4). Thus His descent into the air and our gathering together unto Him are not the same as, but preparatory to, His appearing and our appearing with Him. This does not indeed imply any appreciable interval between them; but it leaves room for it; and we have seen elsewhere that such an interval there is, comprising, at least, the whole last week of Daniel's seventy (Dan. ix. 27)—the "end of the age" of the Lord's prophecy on the Mount of Olives (Matt. xxiv.); and which has been there shown to be the cut-off end of the Jewish age, and not a Christian one. Christianity is then gone from the earth, with the departure of Christians to be with their Lord, and Israel is now again in the fore-front, the Lord's thoughts again centering upon her. Thus in this prophecy we find Him once more recognizing as His disciples Jewish saints in connection with the temple as of old, and a revived worship there. This has, as we shall see, an important bearing on the chapter before us. It accounts also for the character, so generally misunderstood, of a large part of the book of Revelation; in which, after the addresses to the seven churches,—a necessarily veiled prophecy of the Church's history till the coming of the Lord, the apostle is in the Spirit caught up to heaven, as in fact we shall be, and there beholds the redeemed glorified and enthroned around the throne of God. The book of the divine counsels is then put into the hands of One who, though seen as a Lamb slain, is now declared to be the Lion of the tribe of Judah; that is, the King of the Jews. Accordingly, when now the scene returns to earth, we find no more the Church, but Israel and the Gentiles once again distinct (chap. vii.), and in the temple of God the ark of His covenant (chap. xi. 19). By and by the Lamb Himself stands upon Mount Zion, and with Him the sealed remnant of the tribes of Israel, seen before (chap. xiv. 1).

All this has been hidden as to its true meaning from the mass of Christians —through the common confusion between Israel and the Church, and the assumption of the heirship of the latter to all Israel's promises. It is even counted

troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of the Lord * is present.

* "Of Christ" has very little support from MSS., and none from ancient versions.

"judaizing" to take passages like these in their plain sense. Those who do so are accused of robbing the Church of her just due, as well as largely depriving Scripture of its present interest for us. In fact, it is the very opposite; but here is not the place to discuss such matters, which must be fully examined in the book of Revelation itself,—of which we can know little aright if they are unknown.

The interval, moreover, of which we have been speaking, is a period of the greatest importance in the history of the world, as the period of its permitted development apart from the restraint under which it has been from God; and in which, therefore, its character is fully manifested. Until this is done the final judgment cannot take place; and this character of the day of manifestation must needs make it of the deepest interest for every one who desires to be with God in the present time. As presently we shall find Paul saying, "The mystery of iniquity doth already work." All around us, therefore, that is going on which will be fully disclosed to all in the near future, but which God would already reveal to His people, that they may be delivered from any complicity with it, and be kept in communion with Himself. If this was true in the apostles' days, how much fuller must be its significance for days when the evil has been so long working. We need not forget that there is a present hindrance; which, moreover, we can trace, as it is most instructive to trace it, in the pages of history. What would it be for us, to acquire in this way the true history of the world as the scene of a warfare between good and evil, in the midst of which we still find ourselves, and when now approaching the crisis, as it surely is,—the forces gathering for the last, decisive conflict. What will prophecy become to us when we read it with such an application, as the living word of our glorious Captain of salvation,—the unfailing guidance of Him who seeth the end from the beginning, and whose heart is pledged to us in His cross of shame.

We are prepared now to understand the force of the apostle's adjuration "*by* the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto Him," not to be troubled by any assertion, however loudly or confidently made, that the day of the Lord was already come. It would be equally correct, as far as language is concerned, to say "in behalf of," as "by." In either case there is seen the apostle's earnest solicitude, and to which he hopes and expects response from those he is addressing, that the coming of the Lord should be free from distortions which would hinder its due effect upon the soul. The thought of the day of the Lord as to precede it would in different ways be a real distortion and distraction of heart from the simple expectancy of the Lord from heaven. The day of the Lord belongs to Jewish prophecy and times not Christian. It would set them necessarily, therefore, upon the hunt for dates and calculation of times, which have been so fruitful a cause of disappointment to multitudes at various periods. The Lord had said to His apostles after His resurrection, that it was not for them to know times and seasons, which the Father had placed under His own authority (Acts i. 7). That which will be unfolded to the "wise" in Israel in the due time of their need (Dan. xii. 9–11) was expressly hidden from the leaders in the new dispensation. And so the apostle has already told the Thessalonians that of the times and seasons he had no need to write to them (1 Thess. v. 1).

The gathering of Christians to their Lord is the natural and necessary end of Christianity—of what is called the Christian dispensation. The "end of the age" which follows is, as already said, the end of another age—Jewish, and not Christian. The disciples are again in connection with the Jewish temple and worship, yet owned by the Lord. This means that, according to Micah's prophecy (chap. v. 3), "the remnant of His brethren" are returned to the chil-

2 (3, 4): The enemy and anti-christ.

2. Let no one deceive you in any wise: for [it will not be] except the apostasy come first, and the [q]man of sin

[q] Dan. 7. 25.

dren of Israel. There is no fusion, as some would have it, of times so different. It is when darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the peoples, that the Lord arises upon Israel (Isa. lx. 2); and this can only be when He shall have gathered the saints of the present to Himself. And thus He promises the Philadelphian overcomers that He will keep them out of the hour of trial that shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Immediately He follows this with, "Behold, I come quickly" (Rev. iii. 10, 11); and what else can deliver His own from the very "hour" of a world-wide trouble, but His own coming to gather them to Himself?

Nothing but trouble is connected with this thought of the day of the Lord being come. It is not the excitement of a vain hope that the apostle would repress, but the depression resulting from dread of that from which the Lord pledges His word to the Philadelphian saints, that they shall be delivered. It is not something, as some imagine, to be desired to pass through for the glory of Christ, and in testimony to Him. It is a time of judgment for iniquity, although it is true that the mercy of God makes it also a time of new birth for Israel, and for multitudes among the Gentiles also. But it is "a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time" (Dan. xii. 1); and which the Lord emphatically reiterates as to be "great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world unto this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matt. xxiv. 21). The Thessalonians are in danger of being "shaken in their mind," or, more literally, "from their understanding," at the false announcement; which the apostle beseeches them in behalf of truths so precious as the coming of the Lord and the gathering of His own to Him, not to heed.

Even at so early a day in the Church's history, we see moreover, that the enemy was at work; and that in places where we should have little expected to find him. Thus the saints are warned that this falsehood may be put forth by persons assuming to speak under the guidance of the Spirit of God, or as a report of some oral statement of the apostle, or even by an epistle forged in his name. The variety of methods warned against show, at least, how far he believed deception might be carried; and probably from knowledge of what had been done elsewhere. At any rate, he knew full well the boldness and the craft of the great adversary of Christ and of His people, and the weakness and folly to be found among Christians, so ready to be caught by a plausibility, or daunted by an assumption of spiritual power. Is it not so still? and can we expect it to be otherwise now, than what we find in the very earliest epistles of Paul, when he, and such as he, were yet living to confront the error?

2. But he goes on now to show them how, in fact, the day of the Lord would be ushered in, and the magnitude of the evil which would necessitate the judgments characterizing it: evil which was indeed already at work, but upon which there was the restraint as yet from God, which hindered its full development. Before the *revelation* of Christ, there must be the revelation of Antichrist, the "wicked one" who will then be consumed by the breath of His mouth, and brought to nought by the manifestation of His presence.

This man of sin, moreover, would be the issue of an apostasy from the ranks of professing Christians themselves, and unite the treachery of a Judas (the son of perdition, John xvii. 12) with Jewish unbelief; yet still transcending this, in a blasphemous exaltation of himself in the very temple itself, challenging even Israel's Most High in the place claimed by Him as His earthly throne, and exalting himself as supreme above every god whatever, named among men. It is plainly the most pretentious and insolent defiance of God that can be even imagined; and yet with such imposing display of power that the masses of those once enjoying the light of revelation (Jewish or Christian) will be carried captive by it. For all the power of Satan, freed from restraint on God's part, will be let loose in it; and God will be giving over to believe a lie those who, having

be revealed, the [r]son of perdition, who [s]opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or object

[r] Jno. 17.12. 1 Jno. 2.18. Rev. 13.11.
[s] Dan. 11.36. Rev. 13.11.

once been solicited by the truth, have made a fearful and deliberate choice of error in its stead.

At the first statement of such an appalling diabolism as this impending, one would say, Here is something that has never been yet; something that would need no argument to convince us of its existence, if it *did* exist: and this is, surely, what would be the judgment formed upon the most thorough and profound examination of it in connection with all kindred passages. Here, we should say, is certainly the apostle John's great "Antichrist, who denieth the Father and the Son,"—the Christian revelation, on the one side; as on the other, he is "the liar, who denieth that Jesus is the Christ,"—the Jewish form of unbelief. It is needless, at present, to go further. In its character, as marked with such absolute distinctness, as well as in the time of the revelation, (just before that appearing of Christ, which brings the wicked one to an end,) and in its result, as carrying away the mass of unbelieving Christendom, as well as in its being given as an unmistakable sign of the day of the Lord, this devil-inspired power is guarded, as it would seem, from all possibility of being misapprehended, and decisively determined to be even yet in the future to us, however near. As we know, it has indeed been taken to be the papacy; and this was perhaps the universal belief of the Reformers; with whom, naturally enough, the evil shadow which brooded ominously over so much of the professing Church, suffered them to look no further for the full development of Antichrist. Nor were they mistaken in seeing features of this kind in one in whom the mystery of lawlessness assuredly has manifested itself in a manner so conspicuous. If, as the fruit of its working, the apostle John could already in his day declare that there were "many antichrists," and saw in this the character of the "last time," (1 John ii.18,) how clearly might it be expected that here was now the fruit, much more developed, and at least approaching its full ripeness. Did not the pope claim honors really divine? and did he not sit in this godless affectation of supremacy in the Church, the true temple of God? How could one look for plainer evidence?

Yet, however natural the error was in their time, there is one consideration which is by itself amply sufficient to prevent our following them. If Antichrist were already manifested over three centuries ago, the apostle's statement has for all this time ceased to have the significance he attached to it, as what would be an indication of the nearness of the day of the Lord. Now it is quite true that, for the Thessalonians, if we are only to think of these, it would still be a sufficient guard against any mistake such as he feared they might be making; for them the papal Antichrist would be yet far off. But to accept this as sufficient would be to say that the apostle wrote only for current needs, and did not know enough to give what would provide against such a mistake in the future. We may dismiss it, therefore, from our thoughts.

Moreover, the same consideration tells against the "man of sin" being, as this view would make him, a succession of individuals, instead of the one person, which really the whole prophecy suggests. Otherwise the sign would be insignificant, or, at least, its significance would be very much reduced. Nor can we imagine that this open defiance of God, which in fact brings in the long impending judgment, could be yet allowed to go on for generations more, unsmitten by it. It is the climax of insult and outrage, after all God's grace has been manifested in vain for salvation,—and, with the exception of a remnant preserved of God for Himself, the world of professed Christianity has gone after the devil's candidate and king. The final conflict is commenced, and the issue cannot long be in suspense: the battle is that of the great day of God Almighty.

While there may be lesser antichrists many, the definition of *the* Antichrist marked out by prophecy is, according to the apostle John, such as to describe,

of worship, so that he* sitteth in the [t]temple of God, setting himself forth that he is God. [t] Matt. 24. 15.

* Some MSS. add, "as God."

not a concealed, but an open enemy. "Who is the liar," he asks, "but he who denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is *the* Antichrist, who denieth the Father and the Son" (1 John ii. 22). Thus there is no pretence of Christianity whatever, even the least orthodox. The pope does not deny,—he affirms,—that Jesus is the Christ: he never pretended to be the Christ, but only His vicar. Antichrist is, according to the full meaning of the word, "one in the place of Christ," but *not* His vicar: he is himself the Christ, and denies that Jesus is; and so denieth the Father and the Son,—the Christian revelation in its whole extent. Thus he does not, in the common idea of this, sit in the temple of God at all; for in the Church he is not, even by profession. The papacy, for all these reasons, cannot be the "man of sin;" the pope is only one who exhibits certain similar features, and thus foreshadows the great apostate.

This leads us further to realize what the sitting in the temple of God must mean. If the Church of Christ be necessarily excluded, then there is but one other temple of which we can think; and that is the temple at Jerusalem. For the present it does not exist; and by many it is still believed to have passed away for ever. It is useless to show them the plainest statements of the Old Testament; for these they take as merely Jewish symbolism, to be applied in spirit, not in letter, to the Christian Church. But they cannot doubt that when the Lord, in His prophecy upon the Mount of Olives, speaks of "the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place," He is speaking of that very temple which was then before Him. The temple then existing, of course suffered destruction at the hands of the Romans, and according to the Lord's own prophecy; but the application of His words as given in Matthew to anything that happened before or at that time—to the standards, for instance, planted on the site of the already desolate sanctuary, is entirely set aside by the connection in which He places it. For the abomination is the sign at which His disciples are to flee, and then follows a tribulation so great that, except the days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; immediately after which the sun and moon are darkened, the stars fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens are shaken; and "then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." The Lord then speaks of angels sent forth to gather His elect from the four winds, of the going forth of the wise virgins (His true saints) to meet Him; of His sitting on the throne, and the nations being gathered before Him for judgment, when He separates between the sheep and the goats, and the latter depart into everlasting fire. It is with a violent wrench, indeed, that these things can be torn apart from one another; while by no possibility can they all be made to have taken place at the destruction of Jerusalem, now more than 1800 years ago. They undoubtedly all concur at the time for which the Thessalonian saints were looking, and for which after this long delay, that the longsuffering of the Lord might be salvation, we are looking still. (*See notes to Matt. xxiv, xxv.*)

But thus we see how there can and will be, in the last days, a revival of Jerusalem and Jewish worship there, which now becomes continually easier to anticipate, with the increasing Zionite movement, and the actual increase of the Jews in the land, which Scripture assures us again will be their own. That they are going back still in unbelief makes the temple worship easier to understand. It would be more difficult to see the connection of those disciples with Jewish worship in the days contemplated, (whom yet the Lord evidently owns as His own, and listening to His voice,) if we had not the knowledge of that coming of our Lord into the air, and our gathering to Him there, which precedes His appearing, and which the apostle is in earnest that we should not confound with the day of the Lord. If once we see the interval which elapses

3 (5-8): His revelation and portion at the manifestation of Christ.

3. Remember ye not that while I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth, that he may be revealed in his own time. For

between our gathering to Him, (which ends Christianity, in the sense we attach to it ordinarily, upon the earth,) and His appearing with us, which brings in the blessing for Israel and the world at large, things are in the main clear to us. The brethren of the Lord have returned to the children of Israel (Mic. v. 3). They are very much in the position of the disciples while the Lord was yet with them, and which continued for some time after the resurrection, while, acknowledging Jesus as their Messiah, they were "daily with one accord in the temple," and were "all zealous of the law" (Acts ii. 46; xxi. 20). Of such the apostles at the time of the prophecy we have referred to, were fitting representatives.

Among Israel, then, back in their own land, and obeying the voice of the Lord their God as made known to them by Moses' law (Deut. xxx. 2, 3), there will arise the dark and terrible figure of the last antichrist, the outgrowth of Jewish unbelief and consummated apostasy in which Christendom will end. The prophecies of Daniel regarding the abomination of desolation and the wilful king enlarge and confirm our knowledge of what is here; which the book of Revelation completes for us on both sides, the Jewish and the Christian. The figure in Daniel (xi. 36, 37) can scarcely be mistaken, of the king who "shall do according to his will, and shall exalt himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished." Here he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth that he is God. The simple placing in juxtaposition of these prophecies delivers us from all uncertainty as to the application here.

3. The apostle had already told them,—not some *other* things which would enable them to understand these (as many take it,) but these very things. The Thessalonians had forgotten already instruction they had received: a forcible reminder of the need on our part of that written Word which God in anticipation of it has provided for us. How it becomes us, in every detail, to make sure that we have the exact statements of Scripture to build our souls upon. The careless quotation of it from memory, which so often for many does duty for the real words, is a very positive injury to us, in clothing with the authority of inspiration what are the fallible conceptions of men. While, for exact, trustworthy memories, it is of course a first requisite that we exactly scrutinize the text which we store up in them; that the very perfection of our memories may not make perfect a delusion, which every recurrence of it to our minds shall only the more stamp there.

But now they knew what was keeping back the development of this wickedness so that it should only be revealed at the time ordained for it. For, though the mystery of lawlessness was already at work, there was One who held it back, and would do so, until He should be out from the midst. There is no reason to doubt, although He be unnamed, who this power restraining is. It is evident that the apostle expects the Thessalonians to have this knowledge; and if it were not from other instruction than his epistle furnished, then we too ought to be able to gather from it what they should. And indeed there seems no great difficulty, when once we have recognized the character of the evil, in recognizing the power which holds it back.

The "*mystery* of lawlessness" is not the mere fact of its existence: it has existed since ever the world was. Man doing his own will is, alas, too common a thing to excite any wonder; the wonder is when the grace of God delivers him from this madness and misery of his fallen nature. The "mystery of lawlessness" ceases, as such, in its manifestation. The special form of the mystery is then revealed in an open opposition to God and His Christ, which is developed out of the bosom of Christendom itself; setting up a false god and a false christ, to give the world its long-sought liberty from divine restraint, and bring its

the [u]mystery of lawlessness already worketh; only there is one who now restraineth until he be out from the midst; and then shall the lawless one be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall [v]destroy with the breath of his mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of his presence.

u 1 Jno. 2. 18.

v Isa. 11. 4. Rev. 19.15, 20, 21.

vaunted progress to perfection, which under Christianity it has found it impossible to attain.

In fact, already the failure of Christianity is proclaimed; and already there are incipient attempts to provide a substitute, not always covered even with a Christian dress. It will be noticed, also, how largely these lay claim to the supernatural, or what has been accounted such, and live in the borderlands of the unseen and "occult." The craving for knowledge, which is to turn to sight a faith too much given to be credulous, finds here broad fields which, being outside of Scripture, cannot invite credulity! The gains of science have been continually at the cost of the miraculous; and its marvels reveal it as the most practical friend of man. What may not the new century add to its conquests? while Scripture is constantly paling before it, or frowning on men with an oft-repeated story of a judgment continually deferred.

What hinders the outbreak of this spirit of lawlessness, which is indeed more and more declaring itself in every sphere to-day? It is nothing, and can be nothing but the strong hand of God repressing it, whatever may be the means or instruments He uses. But the prophecy before us speaks of One who is in the midst: until He be out from the midst, there will be a restraint upon the evil. Such an One it is not hard to recognize; nay, it would be hard not to recognize Him who is here to maintain the interests of the absent Christ, and here in that Church which is thus the House and Temple of God. When the Church is taken away to be with her Lord, then will He be also out of the midst; the Pentecostal dispensation, which began with His descent from heaven, will be at an end with His return to it. And this unites with what we have had before, to assure us that, Christianity being past, the only temple of God on earth will be, strange as it may seem to many now, the old temple at Jerusalem, so long forsaken, but where He will yet display Himself in more than all His glory of old time. The time of Antichrist will not, of course, be yet the time in which that glory shall return; but return it will; and the same prophet who saw its departure has seen and described its return, to depart no more (Ezek. xliii. 1–5):—a prophecy by the very terms of it never yet accomplished, but which, as God is true, must be therefore in the future, now surely near. So long as we fail to see this, what the apostle speaks of here will surely be misinterpreted by us, as it has been by so many. Once let us see this, and Daniel, Matthew, Revelation unite with Thessalonians in one clear, intelligible announcement which makes how much else clear as to the days at hand.

The Church must depart before the lawless one can be revealed; the light that is yet in the world must depart, and darkness cover the earth,—yea, gross darkness the peoples; and then "the Lord shall arise on" Israel, "and His glory shall be seen upon" her.

When that glory arises, its first act will be the smiting down of the powers of the earth, then combined against Him who made them. Israel is thus freed from the hand of her persecutors, and of the man of sin, with his standard of defiance unfurled in the very place of His throne. The words of the apostle here are but the application of the words of the prophet (Isa. xi. 1–5): "He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked (one)." In Revelation also (chap. xix. 15), "out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations; and He shall rule them with a rod of iron." Certainly it is an extreme of spiritualistic misinterpretation which here can see only the destruction of error by the

4 (9, 10): The universal testing.

4. Whose coming is according to the energy of Satan, [w]with all power and signs and wonders of falsehood, and in all* deceit of unrighteousness for those that perish, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved.

[w] Matt. 24. 24. Rev. 13. 13.

*Some MSS. omit "all."

preached gospel! The time of the manifestation of His presence will be the time of judgment for His gospel rejected; and the man of sin and his followers will not be converted, but slain. The redemption accomplished when He "treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God," will not be a redemption by sacrifice, Himself *bearing* the wrath, as so many have taken it, but the redemption of His people by power out of the hands of their enemies. The iron rod is still indeed the shepherd's rod, but it is used in the defence of the flock; and so the Lord says of His saints, as associated with Him at that time: "And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to pieces even as I received of My Father" (Rev. ii. 26, 27; Ps. ii. 8, 9). Thus alone will the world come under the dominion of the saints.

4. The apostle goes on to show what the Lord speaks of as "the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth (Rev. iii. 10). Scientific infidelity now avouches with a sneer that we never see a miracle, and Hume's argument against all evidence in favor of such is its contradiction of universal experience. But it is soon to be matter of extensive experience that miracles there are; only in a very opposite interest to that of Christianity. These things are even now showing themselves in a more or less tentative and doubtful way; they are yet to throw off all reserve, and challenge the faith of the world. "Powers and signs and wonders" are the threefold designation of miracles in Scripture: "wonders," which excite attention and admiration; "signs," or things that have meaning and doctrine; "powers," that are evidently beyond human. These have borne witness in past time to the truth;—never proved it, apart from the truth itself with which they were connected: and this is the mistake of so many at all times, that a real miracle—something that could be rightly spoken of as all these—is an absolute guarantee of the message that it brings. Thus they are ready at any time to follow what is thus supported. Yet, if there are heavenly beings,—"angels that excel in strength,"—it is evident that, if permitted, and if evil enough to attempt it, they could at any time lead us thus according to their mind. Now that is the very thing which God has declared He will permit, when the time shall have arrived. When men have shown that they desire the truth no longer, and the patient longsuffering of God has, at last, no justification further, that will have come to pass for the professing Christian world which we recognize as coming to pass in the history of individuals: God will say again, "Ephraim is joined to his idols: let him alone." And then will rise up one "whose coming is according to the energy of Satan, with all power and signs and wonders of falsehood,"—no longer in the interests of truth, but of a lie,—"and in all deceit of unrighteousness for those that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved."

Dangerous would it be, as well as foolish, to assert that this is of the past, and not the future;—that it has been fulfilled in Romanism, or in any like way. Has the power of Rome, whatever its pretension to fabulous miracle may be, exhibited itself after this fashion? No doubt, there is a class at all times ready to be duped in this way, as we see in the rapid progress of such transparent absurdities as, for instance, "Christian Science;" but in all this there is only the feeble anticipation of a delusion which will yet carry away the multitudes of unbelieving profession. The arch deceiver is not in the Vatican, nor else-

5 (11, 12): The recompense in divine government.

5. And on this account God sendeth them an energy of error, that they may believe [z]the lie; that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had [y]pleasure in unrighteousness.

[z] 1 Jno. 2. 22.

[y] Rom. 1. 32.

where at the present time: he is to be revealed in his time. And yet we may indeed discern the foreshadows of this tremendous iniquity, and realize that his way is being prepared in many events and movements that are taking place under our eyes.

5. The apostle closes here with the assurance of a holy, divine government working in all this; the worst form of evil will become (while remaining evil no less in itself) the meting out of righteous recompense to the rejectors of the truth. Indeed the very motives which lead men to the rejection of Christ lead them of necessity to the reception of Antichrist. "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not; if another come in his own name, him ye will receive." That which is according to their own taste they are permitted at last to have; and we need not doubt that it will present itself with abundance of pretentious claims, and decorated with all the taking titles of liberty, equality and fraternity, which have already proved their power to deceive the masses, and in the name of which, about a century ago, the blood of multitudes ran copiously in the streets, to the frantic delight of the onlookers. Still that which hath been is that which shall be—only with increase of malignancy in an incurable evil, for which not even a palliative any longer exists. The light will have departed which can make vice any longer ashamed, and from the restraint of all but the lusts of those as reprobate as themselves men shall at last be free. The earth owes this spectacle yet to the patient heavens; and it will be given: sin allowed to be its own terrible witness against itself,—a witness at which eternity will shudder.

Let us beware also, Christians as we may be, how we treat the truth which God has entrusted to us. Here also the rule works surely, that every bit of truth rejected delivers us up to error; and on the coin for which we sell the truth there is at all times, faint as it may be, the image of Antichrist. What debtors are we to divine grace! May we be kept in the sense of our need of it, in the salutary humility which will make us ever afraid most of all of our own wills. Alas, "we *had* turned every one to his own way" but let it suffice us now: "Jehovah hath laid upon *Him* the iniquity of us all."

Div. 3.

The doctrine of the epistle ends here; and the apostle, after his constant manner, closes with exhortation. Sin, the world, the power of the enemy, are yet to manifest themselves in a horrible unity which shall be a lesson for all time. The principles are all at work around us, though the restraint of God's hand is upon their working. The saint is, therefore, one separated from the world with a far more than outward separation: he is set apart in his very nature to God, in whose service he finds freedom, in communion with whom is his deepest possible delight. As the Lord could in every sense say, so can the believer say, in so far as his new nature is concerned, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." Just on this account, however, he is conscious that there is still within him a world that would link him with, and claim him for, that outside world from which God has separated him. And because of this, self-judgment is a constant necessity to him. He has a self of which he can yet say, through grace, that it is not himself. He is delivered from it, and yet has to abide in the power of his deliverance. He is exercised as to good and evil after a manner which no other being knows; painfully, and yet most healthfully. He is qualifying indeed for companionship with Him who for him has felt the horror of sin,—not *in* Him, but *upon* Him. Abundant provision has there been made for him, that he may grow into communion with his Lord.

DIVISION 3. (Chaps. ii. 13–iii. 18.)

Separation to God the manifestation of the saint.

1 (13-17): Let the chosen and called stand fast.

1. BUT we are [z]bound to thank God always for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning [a]chosen you to salvation by [b]sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, unto which he called you through our gospel to the [c]obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. [d]Stand fast, therefore, brethren, and hold fast the [e]instruction which ye have been given, whether by word or by our epistle. And our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us, and hath given us eternal consolation and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and [f]establish you in every good work and word.

2 (iii. 1-5): In the midst of conflict from without.

2. For the rest, brethren, [g]pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified, even as it is with you, and that we may be [h]delivered from unreasonable and evil men, for all have not faith. But [i]the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and [j]keep you from the evil. And we are [k]persuaded in the Lord as to you, that ye both do and will do what we enjoin. Now the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and [l]into the patience of Christ.

3 (6-18): And conflict within.

3. Now we enjoin you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye [m]withdraw from every

z ch. i. 3.
a 1 Thess. 1. 4.
b 1 Pet. 1. 2.
c 1 Thess. 2. 12.
d 1 Cor. 16. 13. Phil. 4. 1.
e 1 Cor. 11. 2.
f 1 Thess. 3. 13.
g Eph. 6. 19.
h Rom. 15. 31.
i 1 Cor. 1. 8. 1 Thess. 5. 24.
j Jno. 17. 15.
k Gal. 5. 10.
l Rev. 1. 9.
m Rom. 16. 17. ver. 14. 1 Tim. 6. 5.

For him all the history of the past as God reads it has been written out, in what becomes in the divine wisdom types and parables of the present; while he is set in a place which lifts him above the whole sphere of seductive self-interest into that new creation scene where Christ is all and in all, and in whose light he finds light. In abiding in Christ, in the joy of what He is, and thus finding everything his, the power and so the manifestation of the saint are found.

1. What has saved us from the awful tyranny of evil in a world whose self-chosen prince is Satan, and not Christ? From first to last salvation is the work of divine love, which has from the beginning chosen us to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. Out of the whole region of falsehood the sovereignty of truth has rescued us, making way for itself by the sweet enfranchising glad tidings of grace which is in Christ, and which leads us on a path brightened by the beckoning glory. The first exhortation, therefore, is to stand fast and hold fast the truth. There were already adversaries, as the epistle itself shows; and they need a strength beyond their own, which he prays the God they knew so well, and who was in such tender relationship with them, to minister abundantly.

2. He needs also their prayers himself, charged as he is with that gospel the power of which they had themselves proved, that it might run and be glorified in many like themselves, spite of the opposition of unreasoning and evil men, in whom true reason would have led to the faith they had not. For them and for himself he can lean upon the Lord's faithfulness; desiring that the Lord Himself direct their hearts into the love of God, and into that patience of Christ which yet went on untiringly for the accomplishment of men's salvation.

3. Disorder within faced them more menacingly; and here grace did not suggest an easy toleration of the evil, but separation from it; not indeed the cutting off of the offender from the assembly at large,—a severity of dealing not

brother who walketh disorderly, and not according to the instruction which ye* received from us. For yourselves know how ye ought to imitate us; because we walked not disorderly among you, neither ate we the bread of any one without cost, but [n]working night and day, with labor and toil, that we might not be burdensome to any of you; [o]not that we have not authority, but that we might give you an ensample ourselves to imitate us. For also, when we were with you we charged you this, that if any one will not work, neither let him eat. For we hear that there are some among you, walking disorderly, working not at all, but busybodies. [p]Now such we enjoin and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ, that, [q]working with quietness, they eat their own bread. But ye, brethren, be not [r]weary in well doing. And if any one obeyeth not our word by this epistle, mark that man, and do not [s]keep company with him, that he may be ashamed; and esteem him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace continually in every way. The Lord be with you all. The salutation by the hand of me Paul, which is the token in every epistle, so I write. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

n Acts 18. 3. Acts 20. 34. 2 Cor. 11. 9. 1 Thess. 2. 9.
o 1 Cor. 9. 12. 1 Thess. 2. 6.
p 1 Thess. 4. 11.
q Eph. 4. 28.
r Gal. 6. 9.
s Matt. 18. 17.

*Some read, "he;" some, "they."

yet required by the gravity of the case, but the lesser reproof of personal avoidance. It would be the destruction and not the maintenance of discipline to carry it beyond the end sought, which was in the first place restoration, where possible, and not cutting off. No doubt there are cases in which the sin is of a nature to destroy all present confidence, and then there is no other course but cutting off. In the one before us there is the lack of self-judgment, a spirit of self-indulgence, and spiritual conceit, in itself distressing and liable to be followed by some open fall; but as yet not without hope of recovery. Here was a call, therefore, for admonition, a testimony to the conscience, in which, of course, every one feeling rightly would coincide, but still individual. Generally followed up, it would do much to prevent the possibility of continuance of an evil, of which the streams that fed it had to be found outside itself. Foolish talkers are maintained by the folly of hearers; and bread eaten without cost must find those ready to pay the cost. Here, indeed, a false liberality might do harm to many more than those who indulged it. How little is thought of the various ways in which we may become "partakers of other men's sins!" How careful was the apostle, while having such a claim as few besides could urge, and none perhaps could refuse, still rather, for example's sake, to forbear to act upon it, than furnish the least possible excuse for others in this way. Self-sacrificing love had marked the conduct of one who sought not theirs but themselves. And the rule for these disorderly ones was that they were to obey the general law of man's existence, that if they did not work they should not eat.

On the other hand, there must be care that there should be no harshness or unbrotherly conduct, which would destroy once more the effect of the discipline. Not harshness or legality could accomplish the end sought, but only love; the assurance of which would lay hold upon the offender; drawing, while enabling the admonition to obtain audience. Only at another's feet can one wash them.

The apostle closes his epistle, as usual, with salutations. He prays that they may abide constantly in peace; true as the ordering of the Lord of peace can

make it. Peace is that to which all His ways tend ever, and which will be the final result of all. Creation, brought into complete subjection to Himself, will manifest in all its parts and relations the harmony of its complex and glorious unity. To this peace every step taken truly with God tends therefore also necessarily. And he who walks with God finds ever that, as His ways are holiness, so, spite of whatever opposition, all His paths are peace: the presence of the Lord with His people must needs ensure this.

To guard them against such impositions as he was, at least, afraid of in their case, he tells them that his greeting, in his own handwriting, would be the token of a genuine communication from himself. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ was, as we ever see, the inner token.

THE EPISTLES TO THE CORINTHIANS

IN the epistles to the Corinthians, as already said, we have the Church presented as the practical fellowship of saints on earth, which is, as such, the living expression of that fellowship with Christ to which they are called (1 Cor. i. 9) as having the mind of Christ (1 Cor. ii. 16). They are the Body of Christ, He being the Head, to whom they are subject, His Spirit dwelling in them to work out in them intelligently His will. They are thus His witnesses upon earth, and as a whole His corporate witness,—the "epistle" (not "epistles") "of Christ, read and known of all men" (2 Cor. iii. 3). For this every member of the Body is needed, and indeed as a whole must "grow up unto Christ in all things," "to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. iv. 13, 15). Thus there is a ministry within necessary, as well as an outside testimony, and "the whole Body, fitted together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the Body to the edifying of itself in love."

It will be thus seen how essential is the thought of ministry to the Church; and so it will not be wondered at that the second epistle should be devoted wholly to this subject, as a fitting and needful appendix to the doctrine of the first. How can there be fellowship with the Great Minister to all our need, without participating with Him in this character? Love, which "seeketh not her own," is the very spirit of this; and without love, what is all speech, all knowledge, all giving of one's goods to feed the poor? Nay, "though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing" (1 Cor. xiii. 2).

For all this, it is Christ who is the one sufficiency; and from Christ alone, therefore, must the Church draw for competence of every kind. Thus for fellowship with Christ, separation from the world and all its wisdom is insisted on; a world which has rejected Christ; which is corrupt through the lusts of the flesh; and over which broods the dark shadow of its self-chosen prince, who is not Christ, but the great enemy of Christ and of His people.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

THE first epistle, then, is that which gives the doctrine of the Church as a fellowship of Christians, in the world, while called out from it, subject to Christ in whom is all their sufficiency, and whose witness they are, as His Body by the indwelling Spirit expressing His mind.

The first division (chaps. i.-x.) naturally insists upon that sufficiency in Him for such true wisdom as has in it that which meets the need of man as guilty, corrupt, and estranged from God, incapable of himself of any but that which more and more leads astray from Him. Thus of necessity the true wisdom refuses all affinity or mixture with the wisdom of the world, which, as the apostle James declares, is "earthly, sensual, devilish" (Jas. iii. 15). Accordingly, such characters develop here. World-wisdom among the Corinthians goes hand in hand with fleshly indulgence, and maintains no due separation from the idolatrous demon-worship round; and the treatment of these things completes the first division of the epistle.

The second division applies to the assembly in itself;—its order, testimony in gathering, membership, spiritual manifestations; with the spirit of love which is the pervading and controlling principle,—the bond of perfectness which unites all together. It is shown, first of all, that God's order in creation is to be maintained in the Church,—an important principle, with which the law of *new* creation might be thought to be in conflict, and so to supersede it. Nature is set in its true place in regard to faith; and its teaching as not to be slighted, but understood. In the gathering of the assembly Christ is then seen as the object before all, in the love in which He has served and given Himself for them. In fact, the Cross, as the wisdom and power of God, is that which brings into communion with God and with one another. Its character in the supper as a pure remembrance is important here; and, as awaking the love and worship of the hearts, prepares for the activities which necessarily flow out of these. We are led on, therefore, to consider the company so gathered as the Body of Christ; in a relationship of dependence on, and so of ministry to, one another, and of obedience and witness to the Lord Himself. The twelfth chapter shows us how this is secured by the variety of those manifold gifts of which the

Holy Spirit is the living energy. While in the thirteenth, we have that which is more excellent than all gift, and which alone can make the gifts answer their designed end in the edification of the Body at large.

After this we come to what practically exemplifies the "more excellent way" in the assembly, and asserts, moreover, the presence of God among His people,—the power of an assembly at all times. God and men are seen here together; and the responsibility of man is necessarily insisted on,—of the gifted in the exercise of their gifts. This ends the second division of the book.

The third brings us to the resurrection from the dead. The Church is built upon the risen Christ: thus the gates of hell (or hades, as it should be) cannot prevail against her (Matt. xvi. 18). But, though already a partaker of resurrection life, there is still needed the resurrection of the body, or its change, in order to full manifestation in this character. It suits well, therefore, the epistle which treats of the Church on earth, to follow her on to the time when, at the coming of her Lord for whom she waits, "death shall be swallowed up in victory." Accordingly there is a development of this truth here such as we find nowhere else in Scripture. And this closes the doctrine of the epistle.

The last chapter is of the usual character of practical exhortation, mingled with those salutations and topics of personal interest, which have for us, as being likewise in the body, a personal interest too.

The chief divisions, therefore, are—

1. (Chaps. i–x.): The Assembly in its all-sufficiency in Christ, excluding all mixture with the wisdom, license, and demonolatry of the world, from which it is called out.
2. (Chaps. xi–xiv.): The Assembly in its fellowship, associate witness, and ministry of each to each and to all in the Body of Christ, "for the edification of itself in love."
3. (Chap. xv.): The resurrection, or transformation, of the body; that the heavenly may bear the image of the heavenly One.
4. (Chap. xvi.): Exhortations and greetings.

NOTES.

We have, then, in this epistle the Church in the world, not of it; and what is proper to these two things. The assembly is, in the meantime, gathered here; but it is the "ecclesia," the gathering "called out,"—the Gershom of the true Moses, "a stranger there" (Ex. ii. 22).

Whatever its heavenly character, it is always looked at in Scripture as on earth, and nowhere else, at the present time. The number of those who belong to it but have passed into the presence of their Lord in no wise affects this view of it. The Church is here, for here is the Spirit who gathers it; and the very indwelling of the Spirit, by virtue of which we become *members* of Christ, members of His Body, is in our bodies (chap. vi. 19), which departed saints have dropped for the moment. Thus it is plain, the importance to the Church, as well as the individual, of the resurrection doctrine which is developed in the fifteenth chapter; when the Church as such goes to be with the Lord, the body must be refashioned for its new and glorious condition.

Corinth, as we have already seen, was a very type (even among the light-hearted Greeks themselves) of luxurious self-indulgence. The derivation of the name is at least possible from a verb which means "to sate." And this is found in the present epistle—its only occurrence in the epistles—where the apostle reproaches them for the way in which they had yielded again to the Corinthian spirit: "Now *ye are full*" (chap. iv. 8). Thus the background of the epistle is, as we might expect, eminently fitted to give effect to the presentation of the truth as given in it.

Div. 1.

The first division, as already said, shows us the all-sufficiency the Church has in Christ, which renders it entirely independent of the world. This is not simply incapable of yielding help to it—it is hostile. The place of the cross of Christ is not merely a wilderness to it; it is an enemy's country, and its seductions more to be dreaded than its open opposition. This was already proving itself at Corinth; and the apostle's first work here is to fence off the garden of the Lord, not from the irruption of the wild boar that wasted Israel's vineyard, but from the seeds of poisonous growths which every wind wafted, and by which the fruits of Christian life would be vitiated and strangled. The wisdom of the world had shut out from it the glory of Christ, and ministered but to the fleshly lusts which evidenced the heart away from God, and seeking its gratification in that which carried it continually further from Him. Over it all a still darker shadow brooded,—that of a "prince of the world" which it had chosen for itself, and whose power depended upon his ability to foster every delusion, increase the already portentous darkness, and with the heavy dreams of a drugged slumber shut out all the realities of God's own light. This is the scene in which the Church of God is not merely to remain for the time of her pilgrimage, but to maintain a testimony for Christ which is, by the very fact, a defiance of the usurper of dominion in the creation of God, and therefore certain to provoke the whole power of Satan to deadliest opposition. Blessed to know that greater is He that is with us than all that are against us; but that does not mean that the warfare is not one that will put us to the fullest proof, and call for the utmost energy to gain the victory.

The first division, then, deals largely with the foe outside, but with one constantly seeking to gain footing inside; in which also he is aided, alas, by the unfaithfulness of the people of God themselves, which is, indeed, his main dependence. To meet all this the apostle shows the fulness of the resources that are in Christ for His people, and insists upon whole-hearted reliance upon them, and refusal of all the spirit and moral elements of the world around.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE
CORINTHIANS

DIVISION 1. (Chaps. i–x.)

The Church with its one, unique sufficiency excludes all other.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chaps. i.–iv.)

The barrenness of human knowledge,—the sufficiency of the divine.

SECTION 1. (i. 1–16.)

The Church under Christ the Lord.

1 (1-3): An apostle by calling to those saints by calling, who own Christ their Lord.

1. PAUL, a [a]called apostle of Christ Jesus, [b]by the will of God and [c]Sosthenes the brother, to the assembly of God that is in Corinth, to those [d]sanctified in Christ Jesus, [e]called saints, with all who

[a] Rom. 1. 1. [b] 2 Cor. 1. 1. Eph. 1. 1. Col. 1. 1. [c] Acts 18. 17. [d] Jno. 17. 19. [e] Rom. 1. 7. 2 Tim. 1. 9.

SUBD. 1.

The apostle necessarily begins with what is the first necessity; contrasting the barrenness of human knowledge with the sufficiency of divine. What so many slight as doctrine is thus the basis of all else. So we find the order elsewhere: Scripture is profitable first for doctrine, then reproof, then correction, instruction in righteousness. There must first of all be the light, which shows us the road and whither we are going. And the light must be from heaven, as nature witnesses; in himself man has none, save as the candle which lights up but a few yards round us, and that dubiously. The best natural knowledge is of our own lack of it, the sin that perverts our judgment, the death which we in vain call natural, the foreboding of what is beyond, a God whose handiwork we recognize, yet afar off: why is the Maker of the world so far off practically, as it has to be confessed He is? Revelation must come in, as the wisest of the heathen recognized, to deliver man from the uncertainty in which he is, and declare to him, what surely there must be, the way of life. Spite of all this, the world congratulates itself upon its wisdom; but "the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God."

Sec. 1.

It is this darkness and uncertainty on man's part, which could not be but as the result of a moral obliquity, which has turned him from the Source of light and blessing, that has placed him under the control of the "gods many and lords many" that oppress him now. His passions govern him, and by the skilful use of these he is turned, as the ship in the master's hand, "whithersoever the governor listeth." With the entrance of the light from heaven, this misery ceases; the kingdom of truth has come: one righteous and sufficient rule is discerned and welcomed, which embraces all circumstances, and sets the subject heart at rest. How completely may it be so for him for whom a Son of man sits upon the Father's throne, and the crown of glory rests where once was the crown of thorns. It was soon understood of Christians that they had "another king, one Jesus;" whose sovereignty meant freedom in obedience, the sweetest possible despotism of a perfect and divine love.

This is what animates the apostle as he addresses himself to the Corinthians now. He is full, as may be plainly seen, of the Lordship of Christ, their Lord and his. Alas, they needed the reminder of what alone set right the whole state of things amongst them. How could they be "full" and "rich" and

in every place [f]call upon the name of our [g]Lord Jesus Christ, theirs and ours; grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[f] Acts 9. 14, 21. Acts 22. 16. 2 Tim. 2. 22.
[g] ch. 8. 6.

"reign as kings" in the scene of His cross, if the sovereignty of Jesus had not been losing its rightful hold upon them? How could they be parcelling themselves off as followers of this and that one among the servants by whom He had ministered to them, if all were serving the Lord Christ with the simplicity they once had? The "day of the Lord," with its "revelation of the Lord," did not shine for them as once, with its overmastering display of glory that eclipsed all others with its radiance. Hence his first aim, without any formal argument, which was unneeded, was to remind them of Him they served. To serve Him would soon be proved greater than to reign as kings on earth.

1. Paul reminds them also of his own call as an apostle by the will of God, which had wrought in spite of the opposition of the human heart in his own case, as in that of "Sosthenes our brother," whom he joins with himself in his epistle, now a "strong helper," according to the probable meaning of his name, as he seems to have been, in the time of the apostle's earlier labors at Corinth, a strong opposer. The brief way in which he is mentioned here, though the name itself may not have been an uncommon one, suggests that he was known to the Corinthians as the former ruler of the synagogue would be. It is certain he would not be brought forward in this way without some reason for it.

Thus divine sovereignty had wrought for Christ, as it had wrought in the self-same grace toward every one of those Paul addresses here, if not so manifestly. He does not fail to assert this presently in direct terms where he presses upon them their own knowledge of their calling (ver. 26). Here too he addresses them (as before the Romans) as saints by calling—God's creative call (Rom. viii. 30)—as he an apostle. The assembly is also by its designation as such a company "called out," which expresses in this application a body separated from the world which has crucified the Son of God, and to which every one who believes in Him is crucified in His cross.

The two epistles to the Corinthians are the only two written to the assembly of God as such,—that is, in true church-character. "The assembly of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father," is, as we have already seen, different in its suggestion; while "the assemblies of Galatia" shows by its plural form that "the Church which is His body" is in no wise the thought, but it leaves room for question—too much in accord with the condition shown in the epistle—whether they have in fact a divine character at all. "I stand in doubt of you" is written upon the very opening of it.

Ephesians gives us most fully of all the doctrine of the Church; but it is not written *to* the Church, but to the saints; and so we may say of Colossians. They are for individual faith and conduct, and not directions for the regulation of the Body as such. Corinthians is, without doubt, all that is written directly for this purpose, by him who was the special minister of the Church (Col. i. 25).

To the assembly, then, he writes, characterizing it first as that of those sanctified (or set apart to God) in Christ Jesus. The place they had in Him was necessarily, as that, a place, not of negative separation merely from this evil or that, but a separation in which God was distinctly before the soul, according to the perfection of His holy nature. "In Christ" was the accomplishment of this: He being both in His atoning work our deliverance from the distance which sin had brought in, and in the power of His glory transforming to His likeness the one in faith beholding it (2 Cor. iii. 18). Saints, therefore, we are by calling; for it is a "calling *above*, in Christ Jesus" (Phil. iii. 14). We are called out of a fallen world to a portion in Christ, with Him where He is. Our faces there, our backs must be here. There is our goal, our prize, the home of the light which brightens all our journey thither.

It is to the assembly of God in Corinth that Paul specifically writes: and this

2 (4-16): Their competent testimony to Christ as called to fellowship with Him, and the contradiction of divisions.

2. I [h]thank my God always for you, on account of the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, that in him ye have been enriched in everything, in all utterance* and in all knowledge; even as the [i]testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, so that ye come behind in no gift of grace, awaiting the [j]revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall also [k]confirm you to the end, [so as to be] blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. [l]God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the [m]fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

[h] Rom. 1. 8.
[i] 2 Tim. 1. 8. Rev. 1. 2.
[j] Col. 3. 4. Tit. 2. 13. [k] 1 Thess. 3. 13. [l] ch. 10. 13.
[m] 1 Jno. 1. 3.

* Literally, "word."

gives its character to the epistle, as has been said. But he is far from desiring it to be thought that it is on that account in any way restricted to a mere local interest. On the contrary, it is most instructive to see his earnestness to have it understood that all Christians are concerned in and addressed in it. He adds, therefore, to the specifically named Corinthians, "with all who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,—theirs and ours." Thus there is the widest possible appeal to attention, as afterwards the strongest claim to divine authority for all that is not expressly excepted from this: "If any man be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (chap. xiv. 37).

The "calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" is bowing to authority in the hands of the divinely appointed Ruler. To "call upon the name of the Lord" is the pass-word of salvation; and the apostle has no thought here of a mere lip-confession, although, of course, there may in fact be many who say, "Lord, Lord," while the heart knows Him not. But he credits all with their responsible profession, and from his inmost heart he desires for all that "grace and peace" which have but one source, one channel,—our Father God, and the Lord our Saviour.

2. He starts at once with what we have seen to be his subject here, by acknowledging what God's abundant grace had done for them, and the witness-place for which God had furnished them. They had been enriched by grace in all utterance and in all knowledge—in what was communicated to them, and in ability to communicate it to others. The testimony of Christ which had been brought to them in the gospel, had thus been confirmed in them; God was thus glorifying Him in whom He had been glorified on earth, in those endowments which we have soon to see were being perverted by the Corinthians to the glorifying of themselves—in fact to their own dishonor. As far as they were concerned, the gifts were those of grace only,—grace which had decorated the poor human clay in those who were but the "base things of the earth," and still as earthen vessels in which the treasures of heaven had been received. They lacked in no gift: God had kept back nothing that could be needed by them for the setting forth Christ, while the day of His revelation tarried, for which they were waiting; and by this would establish them also, that in His day they might be without blame. Paul assures them, therefore, of the faithfulness of God, who, having called them to the fellowship of His Son, could not repent of what He had thus done. Every one so called will, therefore, in like manner be confirmed, and so be found blameless in the day when divine grace shall have perfected its work in them, and the robes of their righteousness will be seen as washed white in the blood of the Lamb. But there is a way by which such an end is reached, as surely as there is the end also to which it leads. Both are alike ordained, and not one without the other.

With these reminders and with this encouragement, Paul appeals to them now by the name of Him whom they called their Lord against all division of spirit, and even of mind. The name of Christ is that which is named upon us

But I exhort you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly [n]united in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been shown to me concerning you,

[n] 2 Cor. 13. 11. 1 Pet. 5. 8.

all, and will have power, as the glory of it is realized, to unite us thus together. How can the servants of the same dear Lord fail to be united in a common obedience? It may be said, "They may misconceive what that obedience is." True; how much of this, in fact, there has been. And yet the correction of it is in the same spirit provided for: for the Lord Himself has guaranteed that "He that will do His will shall know of the doctrine;" and that is a principle, surely, of the most far-reaching significance. It may be questioned or denied, except as to some things of main importance; but what does it mean, to deny it? Is it to be supposed that, in matters of practical moment, He will allow the one who with downright simplicity desires to know the path, prepared at all costs then to walk in it, yet to be without the knowledge that he seeks; and so to err in that way of holiness of which it is written that "the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall *not* err therein?"

It is quite true, again, that in all such texts mistakes may be made, and *are* made. The wayfaring man, so marked, is not the idler by the way,—not the one who believes that the intelligence of divine grace means taking things easily, and being as little as possible exercised about anything. He is not the man who little consults his road-map, is little interested in communications from the place to which he is going, and who, passing through an enemy's country, sees but little evidence of danger anywhere, and finds the proof of the world being improved in the monuments of the prophets built by the children of their persecutors. These are they who naturally take the distracted state of Christendom as an infallible argument of the uselessness of expecting positive certainty about anything beyond a few cardinal points of doctrine, and who yet think Scripture plain enough for all practical purposes. No! it is deep enough to exercise thoroughly every earnest student of it, and profitable for the "man of God" alone.

And how many are the men of God? How many are they who are set absolutely to follow all that Scripture sets before them, and never balk the light because it searches them too much? The "secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him" thus, and none of these will find Scripture disappoint them. But they will find it immensely large, and ever beyond them,—leading them on, therefore, to the invisible, the heavenly, the eternal; while giving them practical wisdom without limit with regard to all that meets them by the way.

Christian reader, is this your character? and how does your experience agree with this?

It is no wonder then that what the apostle appeals to the Corinthians by, against their divisions, is the Name of a common Lord,—that name upon which they call as owning subjection to Him whose name it is. We find directly how far they had gone astray from the simplicity of this obedience; even to the ranging themselves as disciples under the various teachers which God had given them, as one of Paul, and one of Apollos, and one of Cephas, and one even—as if putting His teachings in contrast with those of His (even inspired) servants—of Christ Himself! How many since have sought to make such a distinction! perhaps to refer us for *their* creed to the "sermon on the mount"! And one whole school of recent date, among the many monstrous births with which the degenerate universities of Protestant Germany have afflicted the church, has for its cardinal principle the opposition of Paul to Peter, and Peter to Paul, from a compromise between whose followers came the Catholic church! There is no need for us at present to concern ourselves with such grotesque heresies, and it will be of more profit to think of things that more nearly touch ourselves. We

my brethren, by those of [the house of] Chloe, that there are strifes among you. Now I speak of this, that each one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of °Apollos, and I of ᵖCephas, and I of Christ. Is Christ divided?

° Acts 19. 1.
ᵖ Jno. 1. 42.

no doubt believe that all the inspired writers are to be listened to as the mouthpieces of the Spirit of God alike; whatever may be the differences in their respective lines of testimony. It is to be feared, however, that for most of us some of these have written almost in vain. The want of balance of truth may thus be very great, and the result more than a defect in knowledge. Scripture is a living organism, in which each member ministers to the rest, and if one member suffer all the members suffer with it. Prophecy roots itself in history, which again is the birthplace of every great doctrine. Doctrine controls and models practice. To suppose that any part of the word of God may be slighted with impunity is to come near to accusing God of having spoken idly in it; and it is not the knowledge of it, but the want of knowledge—its power and preciousness not being realized in the soul, that makes men ready to yield it up to the unsparing hands of the (falsely called) "higher critics," whose every effort is to debase what they do not understand.

But this works also in other ways which may once more come closer home to us. What is it that makes people sit at the feet of men who can be but, at best, interpreters after an imperfect fashion of a book which is in all our hands, and the One infallible Interpreter of which is given to all Christians, with deference often abject to the authoritative exposition of those who know, or ought to know, as those occupied so much with the things of the world, and destitute of needful training, cannot be expected to do? Let it not be thought that it is meant that we can receive no help from teachers; or that there is not to be a due recognition of whatever help the Lord would give us. His way is to use us to one another, and the pride of independency is sure to reap its reward. But the opposite error is at least no less; it is a false, because extreme, confidence in any teacher, however pious, however gifted, which as little really honors the teacher as it even establishes in the teaching, or builds up the soul therefore before God. Such disciples of men are like a house upon the sand, when the storm of trial comes; while, as the Lord says, "He that heareth *His* words and doeth them," his house shall not fall, because it is founded upon a rock. And be it the truth one builds on, but receiving it as the word of man, without having searched out all before God, except His mercy avert, the sand that is over the rock may cause its fall as easily. Who that is a teacher indeed can be satisfied with less than divine authority for himself, or therefore allow others to be satisfied with less? The mind may wander through imaginative realms of fancy at its will, but the conscience is that which has to do with God alone, where no one of us all can answer for another. Yet how many grow up in the faith of their parents simply, without ever having examined it! or in the creed of a church certified to them by a multitude of respectable names, and thus are walking by the faith of others, and not their own! And thus we have come with the weight of centuries upon us, down to a systematized Corinthian condition, in the easiest and most natural way possible to be imagined. Alas, too natural; what more so than for Abraham to desire to carry his father with him into Canaan? Yet he only kept himself out of it till his father died. And we, what wonder that we have not much need of a text to teach us how to know of the doctrine, we who succeed to our fathers' doctrines just as to any other part of their estates, and would think it a dishonor to their memories to act as if we were wiser than they, except as perforce we are carried on with the progress of the generations, mostly scientific as it is, and thus are compelled to realize that Darwin has come, and Darwinism in religion, while they and Moses had the misfortune to live before his time.

One would think that this principle of science with its professed call for "verification," would suggest at least no less than the verification by our

Was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized to the name of Paul? I thank my God that I baptized none of you, except [q]Crispus and [r]Gaius, in order that

[q] Acts 18. 8.
[r] Rom. 16. 23.

manual of instruction, of all that we hear from those who professedly are teaching from it; but men are men, and sinuosity still marks "the worm Jacob's" course. How many verify their scientific text-books? And in religion, how shall these hard-worked business men sit down to verify the sayings of those whose business is to give out that which by long labor they have acquired? They may change their teacher, if they are unable in the main to go with him; but the method is harder to change. Until, indeed, the invisible things become for them the deepest realities, and the spoon fashion of feeding no longer is found to meet the demands of a sturdier life.

With the Corinthians things had not gone on in any wise so far as this, but the same causes were at work, and the people of God were already becoming such or such a teacher's people. The apostle meets it with the utmost vigor, according to his wont. "Is Christ divided?" he asks: are His words in contradiction to those inspired by the Spirit since He went on high? "Was Paul crucified for you?" so that you should be the people of Paul? "Or were you baptized to the name of Paul?"—as people are baptized into this or that church now. "I thank my God," he adds, "that I baptized none of you, except Crispus and Gaius, that no one may say ye were baptized to my name. And I baptized also the house of Stephanas; for the rest, I know not if I baptized any other."

"Under the old dispensation," says Hodge, "whenever any one professed Judaism, or entered into covenant with God as one of His people, all his children and dependents, that is, all to whom he stood in a representative relation, were included in the covenant, and received its sign. In like manner, under the gospel, when a Jew or Gentile joined the Church, his children received baptism and were recognized as members of the Christian Church." I quote this because of some common but important errors in it, which need to be separated from the truth which is contained.

The "baptismal covenant" is a very common doctrine in much of Protestant theology; having its main support from its analogy with the Israelite "covenant of circumcision" by which the "seed of Abraham according to the flesh" stood in acknowledged relationship to Jehovah, their covenant God. But while conceding fully the analogy, we have carefully to remember the difference between a nation in the flesh and under a covenant of law, and the Church as the Body of Christ, indwelt of the Spirit. Into this Church no ordinance can bring, but the baptism of the Spirit only (chap. xii. 13). The confounding of this with water-baptism, and of the Body of Christ with the Kingdom of heaven is one that has led largely to the ritualism with which the professing church is afflicted to-day, and from which the Reformers themselves, with but a few exceptions such as Zwingle, were by no means fully delivered. But while there was a "throne of the Lord" in Israel, where Solomon sat as the viceroy and representative of a higher power (1 Chron. xxviii. 5; xxix. 23), the sign of whose Presence was the Glory over the ark of the covenant in the innermost holy place, yet the difference is even thus apparent. And if Israel were thus a kingdom of the Lord, and might have been, had they stood to the terms of their covenant, "a kingdom of priests" (Ex. xix. 6) in nearer relationship, yet members of the Body of Christ they never were—not even that remnant according to the election of grace which has been ever among them. To urge, as so many do, that they were the "assembly," (or "church") of the Lord, as we are, is to mistake the whole matter, and substitute a false issue for the true one. The question is in no wise one of the assembly of the Lord simply, which no one could deny them to have been, but of "the assembly which is *His Body*" (Eph. i. 22, 23), which could not exist before there was a Head in heaven, or a baptism of the Spirit to form the Body. The Kingdom it is which, in whatever different forms, existed,

no one may say I have* baptized to my name; and I baptized also the house of Stephanas; for the rest, I know not if I baptized any other. [a] ch. 16. 15, 17.

* Or, "ye were:" authorities are about equally divided.

and exists all through; and in Israel the house of God was its centre; *in* the Kingdom, but of course distinct from it. And so again, the Church is now the House of God by the indwelling of the Spirit; *in* the Kingdom, but distinct from the Kingdom. It is only the confusion between Israel as the assembly of the Lord, and the assembly which is Christ's Body and the House of God, that makes this other confusion between the Kingdom and the Church. And it is true that "He hath made us a Kingdom, priests to His God and Father," as the book of Revelation says (chap. i. 6, R. V.); but this is another of the many blessings which are ours in Christ.

This distinction clear makes clear many another thing. It is on this lower ground that Israel and the Church are in some sense one. It is here that the analogy between circumcision and baptism finds its justification, and the whole ritualistic argument as to the latter is swept away. Baptism is into the Kingdom, not the Church; it is, as we have elsewhere seen, one of the keys of the Kingdom (see Matt. xvi. 19, *notes*), and one of the modes of discipling into that which is a kingdom of truth (Matt. xxviii. 19, *notes*). On this ground all the blessing is governmental, conditional, and (however it may look on to eternity,) secures nothing there. It is a remission or washing away of sin which is hypothetical necessarily, as done by those who cannot know infallibly the hearts of those who come to their baptism, and cannot cleanse those whom God has not cleansed; any more than the water which they use can cleanse the soul (see Acts ii. 38, *notes*). Nor does God work magically, as men would have Him, by means unsuitable to the nature He has given us.

If we understood that baptism is just the solemn admission to the Lord's school on earth, the difficulty as to the admission of a believer's house to this along with himself would be at an end; and the reason would be apparent for the distinction to be made between the child and the adult. God would of course have reality, and he who owns Christ Master and Lord, coming to sit at His feet and learn of Him, must come in faith or he does not come; while on the other hand the arms of divine love are ready to encircle the babes brought to Him, and His own word bids those to whose responsibility they are committed to "bring them up in the nurture and discipline of the Lord:"—that is, as disciples. Thus the assurance that "of such is the Kingdom of heaven" is as plain as need be and as encouraging as plain. There is no bringing into a place those who have no proved fitness for it; no bringing into the professing church at all; while in complete harmony with the principles announced by God in Abraham, the family ties are owned of God in blessing wherever a faith like his may lay hold of the promise, "Bring up a child in the way in which he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

Here therefore, the apostle plainly distinguishes between the only two of the assembly at Corinth whom he had baptized—"none of *you*, except Crispus and Gaius;" while of the baptized households he had baptized but one, as far as his memory served—"the house of Stephanas." Here it was not so important to remember; for it was not the children who were distracting the church by their divisions. It was sufficient, therefore, to say here, "for the rest, I know not that I baptized any other."*

* "The household of Stephanas" of whom we read at the end of the epistle that they had "addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints," seems to be the servants, the word being different,—*oikia*, and not *oikos*. "They that are of Cesar's household"—*oikia*, Phil. iv. 22—were not his children; while all the cases in which the children are plainly intended the word is *oikos*.

SECTION 2. (17-31.)
The Cross in its twofold aspect.

1 (17-21): The power of the gospel.

1. FOR Christ sent me not to baptize, but [t]to preach the gospel; not with [u]wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made void; for the word of the cross is to those that are [v]perishing, foolishness; but to us who are being [w]saved, it is the power of God; for it is

[t] Col. i. 23.
[u] ch. 2. 1, 4, 13.
[v] 2 Cor. 2. 15.
[w] Rom. i. 16.

Sec. 2.

The apostle now enters at once upon his theme, Christ, unknown by the world, the cross His emblem, whom it was impossible to commend to the world, therefore, by any means other than the "demonstration of the Spirit" to the convicted soul. Yet this Cross is at once the inlet of all wisdom to him who understands it,—the knowledge of itself and of God; the actual meeting of the need which it has discovered. Thus it is true wisdom,—not that barren wisdom of the world which fails man just where needed most, but that which under the severest test becomes the most conspicuous.

1. The apostle's disclaiming here of being sent to baptize is in perfect harmony with what has just been said of the connection of baptism with the Kingdom rather than the Church. Certainly those who received their commission from the risen, but not yet ascended Christ, could not have spoken in this way. Sent to baptize they were, and by Him who grounds it upon all power committed to Him, that is, upon the Kingdom that is His (Matt. xxviii. 18, 19). He who was distinctly sent from Christ in glory, and declares himself to be in an especial manner the minister of the Church (Col. i. 25), to whom was committed the administration of that till then unknown mystery (Eph. iii. 6–9), expressly denies baptism to have a place in that distinct commission! And this is the more noteworthy, because with regard to the Lord's Supper, which he might have received, like baptism, from those who were apostles before him, but which is plainly connected with this administration, he says emphatically that he had "received from the Lord" that which he delivered to them: this too in this very same epistle in which he denies his having received baptism in this way from Him, and which is an epistle for the authoritative regulation of the Church on earth (chap. xiv. 37).

But he was also minister of the completed gospel (Col. i. 23); and this is what he turns to speak of now. Christ had not sent him to baptize, but to preach the gospel—the glad tidings of a love now going out towards all, and in which his own heart went out in sympathetic gladness. Yet here it was the word of the Cross he carried, an ominous word of humiliation, suffering and penalty endured; and which, if endured for men, yet declared their condition who could be saved only by such a sacrifice. Here, therefore, no mere wisdom of words would suffice. That would be ignoring the very condition for which the Cross was alone the remedy. It was not a mere misunderstanding which wise words would remove, but a heart away from God which had declared itself in face of the wondrous revelation of God in Christ: men have both seen and hated both Christ and His Father. And men, according to Scripture, are the same everywhere; this condition is not an exceptional one, but, "as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man."

What use, then, of mere appeals to man, when Christ has Himself appealed, to get no answer but the Cross? The very "word of the Cross is to those that are perishing foolishness;" while indeed to those who are being saved "it is the power of God." Yes, the power of God; but then this alone can be trusted to work in it. The wisdom of the wise is brought to an end; the understanding of the man of understanding set aside: did any of them, with whatever wisdom they might have, excogitate the gospel? or produce any equivalent to the gospel? They had had ample time to do it, if they could. The nations

written, [x]I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and set aside the understanding of the understanding ones.
19 Where is the wise, where is the scribe, where is the disputer of this age? Hath not God made [y]foolish the wisdom of the world? For when, in the [z]wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the preaching to save those that believe.

2 (22-25): Yet the cross an offence to the Jew, a folly to the Greek.

22 Since the [a]Jews ask for signs and the Greeks seek for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews an [b]offence and to the Gentiles foolishness, but to those

x Isa. 29. 14.
y Isa. 44. 25.
z Lk. 10. 21. Rom. 1. 22.
a Matt. 12. 38.
b Isa. 8. 14. Rom. 9. 32.

that had once known God, had, in fact, spite of that knowledge, glorified Him not as God, nor been thankful for the knowledge, as the apostle tells the Romans; and this was the secret of the idolatry which covered the earth with hideous forms, the reflection of the lusts which warred in their members. What could be expected of those who had thus turned their backs on God, and conjured up gods not to meet the need of conscience, but to satisfy the impulses of their depravity?

God indeed, as we know, never left Himself without witness,—never meant to leave man to the mere blind gropings of a darkened intellect. Apart from the witness of external nature which is everywhere, somewhere the light was shining all the time. In the midst of the most cultivated nations of antiquity, and at the headquarters of their commercial traffic,—in close intimacy with Egypt, (upon whose bestial gods was executed once a judgment which resounded far and near,)—and in turn with Phœnicia, Syria, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, there was a people who held in their hand the revelation of God, progressing with the onward march of the generations that went by. But this was not what they craved or would receive. Thus in the self-chosen darkness their wisdom ripened till in Greece, the land of the typical Gentile, in the midst of those who professedly sought after wisdom, it produced its fairest blossoms and its ripest fruits. The wisdom of God was pleased to give ample time for the development. As in Israel under law it was to be proved that man was without strength and ungodly, so amongst the Gentiles was it to be proved that the world by wisdom knew not God. Then, when the need was fully shown, which could not else be met at all, "it pleased God by the foolishness of the preaching"—not of preaching as a method, but of the thing preached in human estimation—"it pleased God to save those that believe."

2. Not merely to Gentile philosophy, which in its very designation was a "pursuit of wisdom," but to the legal Jew no less, the cross was naturally the very opposite of what he looked for. The Jew, as we see in the Gospels, demanded signs—significant wonders. And such indeed was the Cross, the mightiest that could be; but what child of the law could accept one in which the law itself was against the sufferer,—the curse of the law upon him? Doubtless they had read of One despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, upon whom Jehovah laid the iniquity of others, and with whose stripes they are healed. Yes, but was not that Israel suffering for the sins of the world? So have they turned the edge of conviction from themselves to weave out of texts like these a subtle web of self-righteousness in their own defence. But how indeed could they think of their glorious Messiah as in the place of one made an offering for sin? How little could they imagine that in all this reasoning they were but fulfilling the prophecy they were perverting, —"He was despised, and we esteemed Him not!"

The reason why to the Greeks it was foolishness was at bottom the same—intense blindness as to man's condition and the enormity of sin before a holy God. Their gods came down to earth indeed, and in forms lower than the human; but it was in pursuit of their own lusts and passions, as vehement and

who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is more powerful than men.

3 (26-31): The manifestation in Christ of fulness for human need, to the glory of God.

3. For consider your calling, brethren, that not [c]many wise according to the flesh, [d]not many mighty, not many noble [are called], but God hath [e]chosen the foolish things of the world that he might put to shame the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world that he might put to shame the things that are mighty; and the ignoble things of the world, and things that are despised hath God chosen,* things that are not, that he might bring to naught things that are, that

c Jno. 7. 48.
d Matt. 11. 25.
e Rom. 3.27.

* "And" has good support; but is probably to be omitted.

unrestrained as any that could be found in man. Here was a setting forth of "new gods" indeed, which at once proclaimed a new estimate of sin, and swept aside under its condemnation all their rabble of dishonored deities. Were indeed all these to be replaced with that gaunt Figure of rejection and death, outcast by these contemptible Jews themselves?

But if such then were the message, what hope in announcing it? None but in God's new-creative call, the call of the gospel certainly, but the gospel made good in the soul by the mighty energy of the Holy Spirit. Many heard and hear the universal gospel-call, only to reject it; but to all those called according to the word of the apostle here, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. It is a call effectual as God can make it,—"not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance" (1 Thess. i. 5); the result being a veritable new birth: for we are "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever; and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Pet. i. 23, 25).

Thus the "foolishness of God"—what with men may be considered that—approves itself by its blessed fruit in those in whose hearts, opened by divine grace, it has been received effectually, an incoming of light and joy and peace which nothing else can avail to bring. "The foolishness of God is wiser than men," whatever may be the form of the philosophy he favors; and the "weakness of God,"—Christ "crucified through weakness,"—"is more powerful than men."

3. If such then is the true character of world-wisdom, such its contradiction to all that is genuinely this, it is but the consequence to be expected, that the calling of God will not be characteristically of those wise according to the flesh, or mighty, or noble. He has, in fact, put upon the most conspicuous developments of the world-spirit the brand of His reprobation. He chooses the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and its weak things to shame its might, and things ignoble and despised, things that are naught in men's eyes, to bring down to naught all things in the world together, that no flesh may glory in the presence of God. Alas, it is this "great Babylon that we have builded" that exalts man to his shame, and drives him out in result among the beasts that know not God, to be more bestial than they. We must accept this abasement that God may be able indeed to exalt us, and enrich us in our poverty with the riches of One self-impoverished to enrich us. In this way man is blessed indeed, and God is glorified.

We who believe are in Christ Jesus,—filled up in all His fulness; and the wisdom which here we find manifests itself as truly that by its power to meet and put away all the disastrous consequences of the fall, and bring in an overcompensation of blessing that is indeed divine. And this is what the form of

no flesh may glory before God. But of him are ye [f] in Christ Jesus, who was made to us [g] wisdom from God, [h] righteousness, as well as [i] sanctification and [j] redemption:

[f] 2 Cor. 5. 17.
[g] Eph. 1. 17.
[h] Isa. 45. 24. Jer. 23. 6. Rom. 5. 19.
[i] Jno. 17. 19; Rom. 8. 2.
[j] Eph. 1. 7.

the sentence here conveys; "righteousness, as well as sanctification, and redemption," being the distinguishing blessings that are found in the wisdom that is from God, and which manifest its truly divine character.*

It will be found also upon examination that the words stand in the order needed to bring out their relation to the fall; to that, let us remember, which began man's pursuit of wisdom, away from God. Still, "vain man will be wise, though he be born a wild ass's colt." No wonder if he should sadly lose his way. Yet in all this, supreme above it all, God works out His purposes of blessing, using even the evil itself to do so. For, if wisdom were hoped for by man from the knowledge of good and evil, this (which indeed was always designed for him by God, and which he had no need to take from Satan) is in fact overruled in such a way as to give him the deepest possible apprehension of these that (one may suppose) the creature could have; and thus, in the redeemed, to bring about a fuller conformity to the mind of God, than perhaps a being unfallen could attain. No angel could in this way 'by reason of use have his senses exercised to discern both good and evil." And the very presence of the evil in us after new birth is a fact whose import seems to lie in the same direction.

At the best, a wisdom of this kind could not, however, by itself solve any one of the most serious questions which perplex men, and will perplex them, apart from revelation. And this is what distinctly the book of Ecclesiastes is designed to show. Wisdom there is the object of the most earnest search by one who had special human wisdom given him by God, so as to be wiser than all men beside; and with riches and power back of it all, to carry out, as far as man might go, his experiments. But the wail goes up from this eager seeker of what he prized and longed for: "I said I will be wise, but it was far from me." Death baffles him. The seal upon a fallen condition cannot be broken by that which induced the fall. "Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward? or the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth? . . . As thou knowest not the way of the spirit . . . so thou knowest not the works of God that worketh all." Revelation must come in then; and here what joy to realize how it has indeed come in!

Christ is made unto us wisdom from God; and thus with Christianity, for faith, every cloud is lifted. The wisdom that is from God is a casket of priceless jewels; in which the redeemed one finds, not only liberty, but marvelous enrichment. How much is contained in just those three words, "righteousness, sanctification and redemption!" And they are in an order of progressive fulness, as we shall see, by which we enter more and more into the heart of God.

Righteousness is the first need of the sinner, and which we see symbolically met in that robe which death furnished to cover the nakedness which was the first felt need in Eden. "I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." Yet God had made him naked, not like any beast of the earth with its protective covering, but safe in the purity of his uprightness, open to the light and not ashamed. How all was altered now! The consciousness of guilt was upon him: the law of sin was already in his members; and God Himself recognizes the impossibility of restoring that lost innocence; he must have a covering, and a better one than any that he can invent with all his power of invention. Who could imagine that death, the penalty upon him, was to be that which should provide him with this? Yet we know that this is indeed the truth. The penalty must be endured, if the sinner is to be justified before God. Righteousness for him is not in any impossible work of his hands, or new life lived, but

* So the margin of the R. V., though ungrammatically, "both."

tion; that as it is written, [k]He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord.

[k] Jer. 9. 23, 24.

in the first place by the death of Him of whom all the sacrificial law spoke—whom it foreshadowed. The blood of the sacrifice—token of the life poured out—was that which was offered to God for the acceptance of the offerer; and we are thus "justified by His blood," every charge against us is refused, His resurrection from the dead being the assurance of the demand met, and thus the public sentence of justification of every one that believeth in Jesus.

But this is negative merely,—there is no imputation of guilt, and that is all; and it is not all that God has done for us; we have not in this yet reached the *robe* of righteousness, which death indeed must obtain for us, but which goes beyond the mere putting away of sin, and gives us a positive standing in the presence of God. Christ is not merely negative but positive righteousness to us. We stand in Him, in the value that He has for God, who has achieved, not merely for us but for Him also, that which has glorified Him in all His attributes. In His death all that we were by nature and practice both was branded and set aside,—"our old man crucified with Him,"—and we are accepted in the Beloved, in that unchangeable perfection which is His, living because He lives. He is the Priest that offered for us, to whom belongs the skin of the burnt-offering (Lev. vii. 8); and here we are brought back as it were to Eden, to see whence those skins that covered the first sinners of mankind were derived. How from the beginning did the eye of God contemplate the coming Redeemer in His sufferings and the glories that should follow!

Yet, however wonderful this righteousness, more is needed and more provided for us in Christ. God could not merely cover the nakedness of a sinner, while leaving him still the sinner that he was before. Man fallen was corrupt as well as guilty; and Christ is made unto us not only righteousness but also sanctification.

Now sanctification is spoken of in two different ways in Scripture: we are sanctified *positionally*, and we are sanctified *practically*,—by the blood and by the Spirit of Christ; as the blood with the oil upon the blood consecrated the priest of old (Ex. xxix. 20, 21). Positionally, as is evident, it is the blood of Christ which has set us apart to God. And this is what sanctification means, setting apart to God. The Lord thus speaks of sanctifying Himself when He is going to take a new position as Man with God: "For their sakes," He says, "I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth" (John xvii. 19). This was no spiritual change in the Lord, which it were blasphemy to think; it was simply a new place that He was taking for us Godward. Upon this too our sanctification, positionally and practically, depends. He is gone in to God as Man. Entitled ever to such a place by virtue of all that He was, His own personal perfection, He is now gone in for men; and therefore, "By His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb. ix. 12). Thus He enters as our Representative, and the blood that He has shed sets us apart, or sanctifies us, to God, in the power of His finished work, "we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (chap. x. 10). Thus the *conscience* is effectually purified, the worshiper once purged having no more conscience of sins (ix. 13, 14; x. 2); a thing how absolutely necessary for practical sanctification, for which we must be near to God: *there is no possible place of distance from sin but in nearness to God.*

Practical sanctification has its two factors in the new birth, and the operation of the Spirit through the Word upon the believer, taking of the things of Christ to show them to him. In new birth Christ is our life, and thus we have a nature capable of responding to the Word ministered to it, although still and ever the Spirit's work is necessary to make the Word good in the hearts of the children of God.

But being born again, it is Christ once more, as apprehended by the soul in what He personally is, and in the place in which He is, who is the power for

SECTION 3. (ii.)

The revelation by the Spirit, of things beyond mere human knowledge.

1 (1-5): The power of the word preached, that of the Spirit.

1. AND I, when I came unto you, brethren, came not with excellency of word or wisdom, announcing the testimony* of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, except [1]Jesus Christ and him [1] 2 Cor. 13. 4.

* Some MSS. have "mystery."

sanctification. And herein is the wisdom of God in Him fully and wonderfully displayed. He who has put away our sins and set our consciences at rest in the presence of God, has thus laid hold upon our hearts, and won us for Himself and for God, revealed in Him, for ever. Christian life—what only can be called so—is thus love's free and happy offering to Him who has loved us: "He died for all, that they which live should no more live unto themselves, but unto Him that died for us, and rose again."

Let us notice that "*rose again*;" for if our hearts are thus Christ's, where *is Christ?* In heaven. And where then are our hearts? That is the power for practical holiness, an object—*the* Object—for our hearts outside the world, outside the whole scene of temptation and evil. We have not to look about in the world, to see what of good we can perchance find in it: Christ is in heaven. Holiness is for us by heavenliness. How simply and in what perfect wisdom has God provided for us by the power of an absorbing affection, the Object withdrawn from us, outside the world, and becoming thus the goal of a pilgrim's heart and a pilgrim's steps!

And now, finally, what is "redemption"? This is the last of the three things found, according to the apostle, in this wisdom of God in Christ. What then is redemption? It is God's love acting from itself, and for itself, to satisfy itself at personal cost, in getting back that which has been alienated from Him, and which yet He values. It is more than purchase, or even repurchase; for this might be, not because of its value to myself, but to give it away again, or for some other reason. But redemption is for oneself, the getting back for oneself what one's own heart values,—the value of which is known by the price that one is willing to pay for it. Redemption brings out thus *the heart of the redeemer.*

And in Eden, amid all the goodness with which he was surrounded, man, taught of Satan, had learned to suspect the goodness of God. There and then he had lost God: for He is not God, if He is not good. Since then, naturally, "there is none that seeketh after" Him,—that believes there is anything in Him for which to seek Him. Natural religions are religions of fear and self-interest only, and men's gods are the image of their own corruptions. God must reveal Himself; and how gloriously has He done this! Not goodness merely to man innocent in Eden, but infinite love to those who in Christ could see and hate Him. "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son." Christ is the redemption-price that shows the heart of the Redeemer; this wondrous gift, the Father's heart told out in transcendent righteousness, and holiness, and love.

Nor can we forget that redemption has yet to show its power in the transformation of the body itself; that in the image of Christ fully we may enjoy the blessedness that is ours in Him for ever. Then indeed shall he that glorieth glory in the Lord; and the full blessing of the creature shall be found when He alone is glorified by all.

Sec. 3.

Having thus shown Christ to be the fulness of divine wisdom, the apostle goes on to speak of the Spirit as the only revealer of Christ, and of spiritual things, as well as the only capacity for the apprehension of them. A very clear statement is given of inspiration, such as we find it in Scripture, the fullest as-

crucified. And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. And my word and my preaching was not in persuasive words of* wisdom, but in the [m] demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith might not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

2 (6–9): The testimony of the Spirit to a hidden wisdom.

2. But we speak wisdom among the [n] perfect: but a wisdom not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who come to nought. But we speak the wisdom of God [o] in a mystery, the hidden [wisdom] which God determined before the ages unto our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew, for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; but,

[m] 1 Thess. 1. 5.

[n] Phil. 3. 15.

[o] 1 Tim. 3. 16.

* Some MSS. insert "human."

sertion of it to be found: not even the words used are taught by human wisdom, but by the Spirit of God; an assertion, certainly, although questioned, of an inspiration that is, in some sense, "verbal."

1. The testimony of God committed to the apostle was, then, as to the whole matter of it, Jesus Christ and Him crucified. He was determined to "know" nothing else: here was his sole occupation and delight. He does not say or mean that he knew nothing but the Cross. The crucified One is a theme wider than the Cross; though that indeed is to every eye divinely opened the display of an infinite glory. But Christ in His full reality is, in fact, the Centre of light, the full revelation of God, the Truth, by which every thing passing for truth is to be tested. The mind that is wholly filled with Christ is not contracted, but enlarged to its uttermost capacity. If He is the wisdom of God, it must of course be so.

Nevertheless He was the Crucified; and the apprehension of this gave peculiar character to the apostle's ministry. He had come among the Corinthians in the consciousness of his own impotence, along with the sense of the gravity and importance of such a message. He was with them, therefore, in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. Instead of trusting to persuasive words such as human wisdom would have taught him, he relied entirely upon Him who was come to glorify Christ in the world, so that his preaching was in the demonstrative power of the Holy Spirit. Thus he would have their faith to stand, not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. How blessed a result, when this is indeed so! How impregnable must be the faith that stands in the power of God! This was no question, as is plain, of the truth itself—of their getting that; but of how they got it; whether from God Himself by having to do directly with Him about it, or from man merely, apostle though the man might be. This has been already spoken of; but how necessary that it should be insisted on! With all the care that such an one as Paul had manifested in this way, yet how much was coming in now that was swaying them from the truth! Can we wonder then at what we find to be the condition of things today? But shall we therefore hopelessly give way to it? or steadfastly resist it, as we know that he did?

2. The wisdom that was in his message was "wisdom among the perfect." He means to say that the maturest spirituality knew it as such: it stood all tests of heart and conscience with those who knew it best; while yet it was not the wisdom of this age, nor even of the highest, the rulers of this age, who pass and perish. They could not penetrate to the Source from which this emanated, which was also indeed a mystery, a secret now revealed, but hidden formerly, though predetermined by God before the ages, filled so much since with these perishing human thoughts. The thoughts perish, but the predetermination of God has appointed to us a glory which will not pass away. But the rulers of

3 (10–13): The revelation, realization, and reproduction of spiritual things.

as it is written, [p]Things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor have entered into man's heart, which God hath prepared for them that love him.

3. But [q]God hath revealed them to us through His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, even the [r]deep things of God. For who among men hath known

[p] Isa. 64. 4.

[q] Jno. 16. 13.

[r] 1 Pet. Rev. 2. 24.

this age have demonstrated their ignorance of it all: they have crucified the Lord of it. Isaiah too has borne witness that the things which God has prepared for them that love Him are outside the knowledge of man naturally; strange as they are to eye and ear and even mental conception. Revelation alone can give them to us.

3. It is not meant by this then, as so many strangely quote it, that such things are still beyond our ken. The apostle immediately goes on to assure us of the very opposite of this, and of the perfect competency of the Teacher to whom now we are committed: "But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

It seems at first sight a singular expression to be used of a divine Person. We might ask with surprise, How can the Spirit of God *need* to "search" the things of God? Is He not necessarily participant with the Father and the Son in all divine knowledge? Surely, and absolutely so; but it is the Spirit *in us* that is spoken of in this way, in that blessed, mysterious working in the people of God which is at once so unfathomable a profundity and so clear a reality. It is He who works in the working of our minds as led of Him; and thus He brings us into ever fuller communion with the Father and the Son.

Are we conscious, every one of us, of this impulse within us, ever to reach out after that which is still before us,—things which, the more we learn of them, fill us with an unutterable longing to know more? It is strange that with even the mass of Christians, there seems to be little known of it. How often you hear the value of such things discounted just by reason of their "depth"! How often "too deep for me" is said with what one may call a kind of earnest levity which reveals the heart, or want of heart, behind it! Are not the revelations of Christ's love and glory of necessity attractive to those whom He has redeemed to Himself? Are any of the communications of God to His people dull and uninteresting to those who are thus recipients of His grace? Has He told out His heart with so profuse an expression as to be only tedious and unprofitable to those upon whom all this wealth of tenderness is lavished? Can Christians think slightly of communion proffered with Himself? What less or else than this is meant by the practical contentment to remain with but the slenderest knowledge of that which the Spirit of God is, if this scripture be true, continually leading us on after? We may have grieved Him indeed until His voice is well nigh silenced within us; but was it always so? Have we *never* realized such invitations to possess ourselves of what Christ has made our own? never longed to know better what, just as beyond our fullest knowledge, is ever beckoning us to enjoy it? or been aware that, if once we did so, and do so no more, this is only the unmistakable evidence of first love gone from us—of decline in our souls which it would startle us to begin to measure?

But this Spirit—indefatigable, wondrous Searcher of the deep things of God—we all of us have if Christians; for "if any one have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." And here is indeed for us—for the feeblest babes—an unlimited capacity of acquisition which it is impossible to overrate, impossible even to estimate at its full value. Well, surely, will it be to ask ourselves how far it is realized by us in practice that we have dwelling in us a Divine Person, the perfect Judge of all doctrine, the Teacher of all teachers, whose presence with us it can never be humility to forget; whom if we listen to we shall never be deceived or go astray. In this respect it becomes no question of cleverness, or in the semi-materialistic phrase of the day, of "brains," nor of mental capac-

the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? So also the *things of God hath no one known, save the Spirit of God. Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that *Rom. 11. 34.

ity. The question is of eagerness of desire for, and earnestness to obey without reserve the voice of the Revealer. This it is which, if fully apprehended, brings the conscience into exercise before God, and delivers at once from all indifference as to teachers, (for the Spirit uses His instruments with us as He will,) and at the same time from all exaggerated deference to them. "Let the prophets speak, and let the rest *judge*." The true teacher will be the first to desire to have everything searched out as before God, and judged by those Scriptures which the living Spirit has Himself indited. Thus alone will the truth taught become living truth in the soul.

"For who among men hath known the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? So also the things of God has no one known, save the Spirit of God." How worse than empty then the speculations of the wisest men as to the things of God! The spirit of man is indeed a wonderful and most important gift of the Creator, and which, therefore, God who has given it will not set aside or minimise in its own sphere. It is that by which man is distinguished from the beast, and made in the image of God. He is by it according to his creation place a son of God, as the beast is not; for God is "the Father of spirits" only (Heb. xii. 9). Thus he can recognize God, and *has* a God, in a way wholly different from the unknowing, and therefore *unmoral*, and so never *immoral*, beast. God never dishonors or degrades the creature He has made, as some wild modern theorists do. He never speaks of the mind of man as an evolution from bestial instincts or faculties. He appeals to reason, even with the wicked: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord" (Isa. i. 18). And the unbeliever, to refuse faith, has to refuse reason also. God never advocates credulity, or applauds the man who "believes because it is impossible," and thereby puts God in contradiction to the faculties that He has made. But there are two things which reason itself should make him aware of, and which fully recognized would set him on the path of divine wisdom. Neither of these can he possibly discredit, however much he may ignore them, or evade the consequences.

First, he is a sinner; which if he denies, all his neighbors at least will acknowledge for him. Sin has morally damaged him, to an extent which it is hardly possible for him to estimate; and this must be a hindrance in the way of all right understanding, until he has found a remedy for it. The gospel is thus truly logical in treating him first of all as a sinner and inviting him to accept at the outset a remedy for this condition. This done, he will be brought into that right attitude toward God, which will alone enable him to make progress in the things of God.

The next thing is of no more difficulty than the first, that, as far as God is beyond man, so far must the things of God be, except as he is taught of God. The confused and contradictory efforts of man in this direction only illustrate and confirm the saying of Zophar, "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?" (Job xi. 7, 8). But though the things that are thus in the special sense God's things, need to be revealed to man, yet in the revelation of these also God is careful not to confound his faculties: the wisdom of God is ever "wisdom" to the perfect, and not something that is "impossible," but has to be revealed none the less. He does not even, as men profess for Him, use water in a magical way to do what water was never designed to do, or change bread into a divinity for men's adoration, or justify the fetishism of superstition in any other way. He does not baffle the common instincts, perceptions, understanding of the being He has created.

we might 'know the things that are graciously given us of God. Which things also we speak, not in "words taught of man's wisdom, but in those taught of the Spirit, communicating* spiritual things by spiritual [means.]

t 1 Jno. 2. 20.
u Matt. 10. 20.

* Or, "expounding."

But thus how marvelous a gift is that of the Spirit who searcheth the deep things of God! What dishonor must we do to such a guest when His presence is ignored or scarcely realized! when Aristarchus is but a passenger on board the vessel, of which He is the rightful supreme Ruler! (See Acts xxvii. 2, *notes*) Yet "we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are graciously given us of God."

The apostle is going on to speak of what was peculiar to the vessels of inspiration; but what he speaks of in these words is, as we know, common to us all; and by and by, he will insist upon this. But there was with such as these a special apprehension of the things of God, which the Spirit furnished. This also was for us, to whom they ministered. The apostle adds that the transmission also of what was revealed was perfectly secured: "which things also we speak, not in the words taught of man's wisdom, but in those taught of the Spirit, communicating spiritual things by spiritual means."

The latter clause is sometimes translated as "explaining spiritual things to spiritual men;" this introducing to what follows, that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; and looking back to the statement that "we speak wisdom among the perfect." But the apostle seems here rather to be speaking of the character of the communication itself; and this is supported by the primary meaning of the word for communicating or expounding, which is "mixing," "combining." He seems evidently to be showing us how perfectly the revelation has been secured to us; the fallibility of the human instrument not being permitted to affect that which was conveyed. The very words were guarded, as well as the matter given. How suitable is it that this should be so, when divine love and wisdom were bent upon the effectual enlightenment and salvation of men! How could we imagine that these should after all be made dependent upon an imperfect and unstable medium! that the mind of man, feeble and limited as it is, should be left to give the best expression that it could to such amazing and transcendent thoughts as are enunciated in Scripture.

But, of course, it is answered to this that, nevertheless, we find in fact the individuality of the different writers manifesting itself in their several writings; and thus an undeniable "human element" in them which needs to be accounted for. And this is continually urged as involving their being suffered to fall into such slight mistakes—or shall we say, awkwardnesses of expression?—as would prevent our arguing from the mere words used, and shut us up to insistence only upon the general idea of the thought meant to be conveyed. It has been urged that "the term here is *logos*, which denotes rather propositions than mere 'words.'" But we need not contend for its applying to "mere" words. There is never absent from *logos* the idea of reason in the words, or, as Trench says, "The orderly linking and connecting together in connected discourse of the inward thoughts and feelings of the mind." This is no loss, but gain to the apostle's statement, to find that it claims the whole rational utterance of the divine revelation by the inspired writers to be taught not of human wisdom, but of the Spirit. It should be plain that this involves no less than the choice of words, wherever the words are not most perfectly synonymous. It is as plain that we may as much insist upon the actual words as if they were given (as it is not necessary to hold) by direct dictation. God certainly used the "human element," as He used the humanity of the Lord Jesus, not to be further from us, but to be nearer to us; we need not shrink from the full acknowledgment

4 (14-16): The incompetency of the natural man.

4. Now, the natural * man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him, and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually

* Literally, "psychical;" see notes.

of it in this way. He fitted for His purpose the vessel that He used, and used it frankly for all for which He had fitted it. He uses man, therefore, as man, not as a mere pen in His hand,—not as something passive as that might be, but rather quickened to fullest activity; all faculties in fullest exercise, as well as in perfect freedom, energized, not crippled, by that which lifted the Spirit-moved man beyond his common self, often without the consciousness of what was moving him, or that anything was. An apostle might even for a time "repent" of having written what was nevertheless an inspired letter (2 Cor. vii. 8). Who can doubt that thus the divine Maker can use the being He has made; not to the injury or repression of any part of it but the reverse; yet so as to make it entirely His own? "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

This, then, is what is meant by an inspired utterance. We may debate with very little result the manner of God's working. The finished product is that which very much more concerns us, although that which we can learn as to His ways has unfailing interest and profit for us. But the great matter for us now is, have we in inspired Scripture, as God gave it to us, something that we can wholly trust and build upon as that which will never fail us? If the human element confessedly in it is to assume such character and proportions as to make it necessary to be constantly sifting the chaff from the wheat,—if we are to sit over it as judges before we can bow to it as judging *us*,—if we need specialists to point out to us how many hands were at work in every document, how much patching and revision and modification of various kinds has taken place in that which has come down to us as the work of Moses, or of Isaiah, or of Paul,—if it can be proved that the writers made mistakes upon most subjects that are not directly moral or religious in their character,—if in short they are not wholly to be trusted on any point as to which we can test their knowledge,—how can we confide our whole spiritual interests with rest and assurance of heart to those who have so failed, with all their manifest claim to more than human equipment, to establish their credibility as to what this enlightened and scientific age claims to have made common knowledge?

Thank God that our Bible is not the thing of shreds and tatters which this folly asserts; and that those who have in truth of heart listened to its lessons of holy and lofty wisdom,—who know the unique glory of the Christ that it has made their own,—know that it is not. It is not by looking deeply into it that the vulture-critics, who would rend its sacred form, have discovered the disfigurements which they so eagerly point out. It is shallowness and unspirituality only that has deceived them. Still "He taketh the wise in their own craftiness;" but it will not be those who have most diligently and with heart-exercise searched the Scripture who will be persuaded that they are not, with the wisdom they have found in it, "wiser," as one of old says, "than all their teachers." The more they have examined it, the more critically they have studied even its minutiæ, the more the awe of a divine Presence has been upon them, the more the sweetness of divine love has drawn and enwrapped them. And as to the mere understanding of them, the less we are content with mere generalization, the more we look with reverent care into every detail, and weigh the import of every word, the more we attain to an apprehension of a perfection everywhere which manifests in whatever human guise the glory of the divine.

4. A warning follows here which enables us to understand the mystery of much of the so-called "higher criticism," as well as other abundant forms of unbelief in every age: "Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him, and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

discerned; but the spiritual [man] discerneth all things, and he himself is discerned of no one. For [v]who hath known the mind of the Lord? who shall instruct him? But [w]we have the mind of Christ.

[v] Isa. 40. 13.

[w] Jno. 17.8.

SECTION 4. (iii., iv. 7.)

Corinthian failure, and the testing of human work.

1 (iii.1-9): God the true Giver and Worker.

1. AND I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, [x]as to babes in Christ. I have given you milk to drink, not meat; for ye were [y]not able, nor indeed are ye yet able [to bear it], for ye are yet carnal. For whereas there are among you

[x] Heb. 5.12, 13.

[y] Jno. 16.12.

The word translated "natural," and for which we have, as far as I am aware, no satisfactory substitute, is *psychikos*, "psychical." It is an adjective formed from *psyche*, "soul," and for which some would propose a word which we have not, "soulual." We might render it freely as "soul-governed;" this is, at any rate, the force of it: the spirit of man (as that which truly makes him man and by which he is constituted naturally in the image of God) is of necessity that which should govern him. The spirit is the seat of the mind proper—of the mental and moral faculties; the soul is that of the emotions and instincts, which should be under the guidance and control of these. It is the sign of a fallen condition that the spirit has given way to the soul: the senses, passions, bodily appetites rule over the judgment, and darken it. The man is sensual, therefore carnal, though not necessarily in the grossest forms, the things of time and sense shut out God and all that is beyond the earth.

This is truly now the natural condition of man as fallen; and with this understanding of it, we may speak here of the natural man. As such the things of the Spirit are alien to him, the new-creative power of God must work in him before he can discern them. They are too remote, make too much demand upon him, stir too much his apathetic conscience. The light shines, but amid the darkness; men love the darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil: the darkness is real, but it is the soul's choice for itself, not God's choice for it. He cometh not to the light, because he will not submit to the condemnation of his evil deeds. The acceptance of this condemnation is the way out of his condition, through the ready grace which is at hand to meet him.

The Spirit of God is alone able to lift man out of this ruin, and restore God and the conscience to their rightful supremacy. The spiritual man is therefore in the light, and discerns all things. That does not, of course, mean that he is omniscient, or that he has not to grow in knowledge; but he has his eyes open, and is in the light. In this condition he necessarily now becomes an enigma to the natural man. He has now the mind of the Lord,—a mind all-competent; for who shall instruct Him? We are brought into fellowship with Him, though learning but gradually things which surpass all man's powers to attain full knowledge of; still it can be said already, we have the mind of Christ. But the world crucified Him.

Sec. 4.

Thus we have seen the full provision made for the Church in the midst of a hostile world. The wisdom and power of God are ministered to them in Christ, all that would bring a cloud over the face of God for them being removed. And the Spirit of God is in them to give the power of the revelation in their souls, and to lead them into the deep things of God.

Yet, spite of all that has been done for them, the history of the Church, as we find almost from the beginning here, has been one of saddest failure. The spirit of the world was infecting them at Corinth, and the first brightness was departing from them. They were divided into parties, headed by teachers who were

emulation and [a]strife, are ye not carnal and walk after the manner of men? For when one saith, I am of Paul, and another I am of Apollos, are ye not men? Who then is Apollos, and who Paul? Ministering servants through whom ye believed, and as [a]the Lord gave to each. I planted; Apollos watered; but [b]God gave the increase. So then, neither is he that planteth [c]anything, nor he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one; and each shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's [d]fellow-workmen: ye are *God's* husbandry, *God's* building.

[a] Gal. 5. 20.
[a] ch. 4. 7.
[b] ch. 15. 10.
[c] Jno. 15. 5.
[d] 2 Cor. 6. 1. Heb. 3. 6.

building with bad material into the house of God. The apostle warns them of the testing that all their work would receive, and of the vanity of the world-wisdom with which they were adulterating the truth of God. The recompense would not fail to follow.

1. In view of their condition the apostle first of all would lift their eyes to Him who was the Giver of all gift, the only effectual Worker of all good in any. He was pleased in wisdom as in grace to work through instruments, which the carnal, with eyes only for the visible, might put into His place, and clothe with a halo of glory which was His alone. So, alas, with the Corinthians: with all the wisdom upon which they prided themselves, they could not be addressed as spiritual, but as carnal merely, showing the inability of the flesh to receive the things of God. They were, no doubt, Christians, but so hindered in true spiritual development as to be still mere babes in Christ. Not that a *real* babe in Christ is carnal; but the lack with them of freshness and simplicity showed plainly what the condition was,—that it was not really the sweet child-state, but disease. Yet, let us remember, they "came behind in no gift." Gifts they had, and the Gift! there was no lack of ability in any way, had not the whole spring of true energy been kept back by the incoming of that with which it could not mingle and had no affinity. This is the one secret of all lack of growth, and the state of the Corinthians has thus a most real, if the saddest importance for us. Wherever you hear the cry, "Too deep! too deep!" as to the things of God, be sure it is not the voice of Him who in the Christian "searcheth the deep things of God." Not that there are not for all, in every stage of growth, things that may be yet too deep; but the question has to be made: does this depth yet attract and draw us on to "search" it? does it charm us with a vision of glories yet unknown, and wake us to new earnestness of purpose? or is it but the cry of spiritual sluggishness that thinks all labor in such fields mere hard-handed servitude, or perhaps, but fancy-gardening, with not enough recompense in it to invite toil like this? And these are God's things, the very Paradise of God made ours, of which our hearts may yet venture to say things like these!

It is such material as this which nevertheless furnishes apt scholars in the schools of men, as we may see again by these Corinthians. It is those with no deep earnestness in the things of God who naturally yield themselves to the guidance of others, and may even learn to debate over the respective merit of their chosen teachers. The flock is not kept together, but disperses under leaders, not hearing, or but indistinctly as afar off, the one commanding Voice of the true Shepherd. To Him, in fact, they are not near enough; and that is the meaning of all sects whatever.

Paul had to adapt himself to such indeed. He had to feed them with milk, and not with meat, though doubtless they would have desired this; but they could not assimilate it. He would fain have them grow, but they could only grow by what they could digest. He must therefore take them back to the first elements, and teach them to distinguish between the wisdom of the world and

2 (10-15): The differences in the workmen and their work.

2. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master-builder, I laid the foundation and another buildeth thereupon. But let each take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay beside that which is laid, [e] which is Jesus Christ. Now, if any one build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, each

[e] Matt. 16. 18. Eph. 2. 20.

what was God's wisdom for them, between the power of the Spirit and the incapacity of the flesh, between the human instrument and the divine Accomplisher. Their moral condition showed indeed how little they could be trusted to receive any higher truth. In strife and emulation they exhibited clearly the manner of men; while their engrossing topic was Paul and Apollos, and not Christ. Who then were these? Servants, by whom God indeed had been pleased to bring them to faith—faith in *them?* Were not the very differences of which they made so much, differences of God's appointment, who ordered as He pleased? Paul had planted; Apollos had watered: what could have come of it, had not God given the increase? What then were these human instruments? Merely a mode of working on God's part: God was really all. And despite all differences, those who wrought thus were only fellow-workmen—*God's* workmen, who among themselves were fellows; the husbandry was God's; the building God's. What a degradation for them to forget this, and to make themselves the work of men! Yet God would not overlook or forget to recompense these laborers of His, for whom they seemed so needlessly concerned.

2. The apostle now pursues the subject of these differences, and in view of the coming recompense. But here he takes pains to show what the most real and noteworthy differences were as before God. He could well speak, whom God had given in His grace the place of master-builder, and necessarily, therefore, the gifts for the place. This was the character of the apostolic office; which was in fact to lay the foundation upon which the whole Church was to be built. There could be but one foundation, and no one could lay another; they could only build upon that which was already laid. Here there could be therefore no strife, no variance, but entire unity of purpose, so long as the after-comer were a builder at all and not a destroyer—an open enemy. Now in building on this foundation it was not really a question of the various qualifications of the builders, so much as of the carrying on, with suitable material and workmanship, the plan and purpose of the building. It is of the Church as the temple of God that Paul is speaking here, as he says almost immediately, ordained because of the defectibility of human workmanship, to pass the test of fire—of the holiness that belongs to God necessarily—in the day of revelation, when the final results shall be revealed of all that has been wrought for Him upon the earth. What cannot stand the fire is thus unsuited to such a building, as is plain; and the difference of material from this point of view only divides it into two classes. The "gold, silver, precious stones," would abide the fire; the "wood, hay, stubble," would not. It seems evident that we have not before us in these, however, the "living stones," of which, as Peter speaks, the "spiritual house" is composed, but what we might consider more the *decoration* of the building. Nor is this of inferior importance when we consider that this is what, according to the figure, meets the eye of the occupant, and when we consider who this occupant is and is to be. Gold, which is the symbol of divine glory, was that which covered the whole temple that Solomon built: as "in His temple," says David, "all of it speaketh of glory" (Ps. xxix. 9). The gold speaks therefore of a character of things, the result of them for God, and which is fullest blessing for all His creatures; as silver speaks of redemption, the meeting of man's deepest need. The precious stones, as in the high-priest's jewelled breast-plate, or the foundations of the eternal city (Rev. xxi. 19), are the Urim and Thummim, the "lights and perfections" of Him who is the "Father of lights," the various display of the divine attributes. It is plain

man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it; because it is revealed in fire, and the fire shall try each man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work shall abide which he hath built thereon, he shall receive a reward. If any one's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as [f]through the fire.

3 (16-17): The Church the Temple of God.

3. Know ye not that ye are the [g]temple* of God, and that the [h]Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man

[f] Jude 23.
[g] 2 Cor. 6. 16.
[h] Jno. 14. 17.

* *Naos* the house proper.

how all this must be borne witness to in the work of every true workman, whose handiwork is to endure in the final temple to God's endless praise. The "wood, hay, and stubble" are more difficult to interpret, but seem to speak of what is in contrast with these: of what is simply human, though with what is to man noble and venerable, as the tree is (*xulon* is both "wood" and "tree"). Much below this is the "hay," more perishable, and the food of the beast and not of man; while the stubble is simply worthless, and fit fuel for the flame. We cannot perhaps characterize what is here more closely,* and indeed the broadest generality may be most effective for the warning which is given,—a warning deeply needed always, and now certainly as much as ever. What a reversal of much of our human judgments will be the judgment of the great day that comes!

For the work is revealed (only then perfectly) in fire, a fire to whose power all man's work must be yielded up. How needful to anticipate that judgment, ever seeking to be and work before God now, so that the light of His Presence now may manifest us to ourselves as we are manifest to Him. Apparent success, the applause of man, the inspiration of benevolent, philanthropic motives, yet Christless or antichristian, as is so much to-day,—how little will such things avail to save much specious service from the condemnation that is at hand! The sanction of antiquity, of fathers, and church-fathers, of even the conscience unenlightened by the word of God, how little will all this avail to set aside the decree of absolute righteousness and holiness of truth! One might ask with consternation, what will survive the unswerving sentence of infinite perfection upon that which is so thoroughly imperfect at the best, so positively defiled often with impure intermixture! Yet the judge is He who has taught us to take forth the precious from the vile, that we may be as *His* mouth! How encouraging is this! for this character is what will be evidenced then in these judgments of His mouth. And how tender and reassuring the apostle's words in this connection, but a little further on, "Then shall each have his praise from God" (iv. 5). That is what His love continually seeks; and what the blood-washed robes of the saints will attest in the day that they come forth with their Lord to take their destined place of rule with Him (Rev. xix. 8, 14; comp. vii. 14; xxii. 14, R. V.). And so here, there are those whose work shall abide, and who shall receive a reward; and even where the work is burned, yet if the soul has built upon the foundation, though he suffer loss, yet "he himself shall be saved, though so as through the fire." As a man escaping out of a burning house may be untouched by the flame, though the fire consume all that he has. We have no reason to believe either that this last will be true of any true saint —that is, that he will lose *all* reward. Nay, "each shall have his praise from God."

3. The apostle appeals to the Corinthians now, briefly but energetically, with regard to the character of this building, of which he has been speaking. It is

* There are two suggestive papers on this topic in Help and Food for 1894, pp. 18, 48, from which it will be seen I have derived help. Would that more would communicate what they have learnt individually from the precious Word.

destroy the temple of God, him shall God [e]destroy; for the temple of God is holy [and] such* are ye. [e] cf. Rev. 11. 18.

¶ (18-23) The vanity of the wisdom of the world.

4. Let no one deceive himself. if any one thinketh himself to be wise among you in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God: for it is written, [f]He taketh the wise in their craftiness. And again, [g]The Lord knoweth the reasonings of the wise, that they are vain. Wherefore [h]let no one glory in men; [f] Job 5. 13. [g] Ps. 94. 11. [h] Jer. 9. 23, 24.

* Plural masculine: "such [holy ones] are ye."

not a new truth that he is announcing to them, but something very well known; which nevertheless they had not in just appreciation. What a marvel of divine grace that they should be indwelt by the Spirit of God! We are familiar with it—as a doctrine, surely as much as they; has the wonder of it diminished with us? and do we need to be exhorted as to our responsibility in view of this relationship to the Supreme?

It is only here and in Ephesians that we have the Church spoken of as the temple of God; but in Ephesians this is not a present but a future thing: it "*groweth* unto a holy temple." The character of the epistle being predominatingly heavenly and so eternal, it is the eternal condition that is emphasized, while there is a present building that goes on to this. The epistles to Timothy give us more the present "house of God;" with Hebrews and Peter also in different aspects. But Corinthians (both epistles) alone speak of a present "temple." It is remarkable too, that only for the purpose of admonition is it referred to: in the second epistle to emphasize the refusal of idolatry (chap. vi. 16); here to warn against sacrilege. The destroyer is of course not a builder, but the opposite; yet ostensibly he might be that: different even from those who built with "wood, hay, stubble," for these might be after all at bottom Christians, and thus building upon the foundation, whatever the incongruity of the material used. Here the very existence of the Church is threatened; the man is an enemy, although he may own—nay, all the more supposing that he does own—some monstrous fiction as the Christ of his allegiance. Yet even Christians may require warning against the profanation of terms and names, which is as common to-day as at any time, and with the same witchery about it for too credulously confiding souls. The end is destruction none the less surely for the deception, which may have carried away the deceiver also: for "if any man destroy the temple of God, him will God destroy."

"For the temple of God is holy, and such (holy ones) are ye." It is plain that it is not of practical holiness that the apostle is speaking, but of that resulting from the Spirit dwelling in them,—which is indeed the power of practical holiness. The apostle presses the responsibility of those who act in presumptuous defiance of Him who has taken in grace this place of relationship to the redeemed people of God. And in this there is indeed a call for reverent and responsive recognition on their part of a grace so great.

4. But in fact the state of the Corinthians little answered to what this implied. Instead of the wisdom taught of the Spirit, the wisdom of the world had seduced them. No doubt they had little realized it, and taken according to human estimate what in God's account was foolishness instead of wisdom. To be really wise they must be content to strip themselves of it all, so as to be fools in men's eyes, whose subtle cleverness was merely a craft which, according to the righteous principles of divine government, entrapped those inspired by it. Its reasonings were vain, as all must be that does not begin and end with God. How entirely beneath the divine thought for them was this glorying in men in which they were indulging! In God's intent Paul and Cephas alike were theirs, God's instruments alike for blessing to them; and why then pit

for all things are yours: whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or [m] life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours; and ye are [n] Christ's, and Christ is God's.

5 (iv.1-7): The true responsibility and judgment.

5. Let a man so account of us as servants* of Christ and [o] stewards of the mysteries of God. Here, moreover, it is required in [p] stewards that a man be found faithful. But for me, it is a very small matter that I should be [q] judged* of you or of man's day. Nor do I

m cf. Rom. 8. 38.

n Rom. 14 8.

o Matt. 13. 52.

p Lk. 16.10.

q Rom. 14.4.

* ὑπηρέτης, the official servant.

them one against another as if antagonistic in their aims or interests? Nay, even the world, though they did not belong to it, belonged to them in this way: for it is a very different, and even opposite thing, to belong to the world, and to have the world belong to you: in the one case it is your master; in the other, your servant. Life too, and death, belonged to them, and with such a thought we are familiar. Things present too, and things to come: anything that could happen;—a wonderful summing up. And here is what certifies and makes all right, "ye are Christ's;" to belong to Christ is more than to have all else belong to you; and that "Christ is God's" brings all the universe together into fulness of blessing. He who is Heir of all things is the Son of the Father; by whom and for whom also all things were created; and He who is above all created things has come down to the lowest parts of the earth to reconcile in Himself all things to God.

5. The apostle goes on to show the responsibility of the laborer to be to God, who as knowing the hearts can alone give judgment rightly, and award due praise. The differences among the workmen also were according to His good pleasure, every gift being from Him; so that there was no ground for glorying in any way.

People were to account of them as accredited servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. This last, as we have often seen, is the peculiar character of Christianity, that it is the unfolding of things until then hidden. There is no thought in it of things beyond comprehension,—of the "mysteries," or magic, rather, of sacramental ritualism. They are the "new things" of Christianity added to the old things revealed before. For such a stewardship faithfulness was a primary necessity; but to whom then was this faithfulness to be? They were not the stewards of men, but of God; what matter then about that judgment of them by men, so easily passed, so utterly uncalled for?

In fact, it was not in that character that they were then judging, but according to their own tastes and sympathies, which were sure to be all wrong, therefore. Would those in this Corinthian state favor most those teachers who were most faithful to them? The question answers itself, and now when the custom is for men to choose their own exclusive teachers, the same principle will necessarily work, and how complete is Satan's opportunity when men can choose those to whom they shall devote themselves as teachers, shutting out, as far as possible, all other ministry by which God might awaken their consciences! The apostle here manifests entire independence of all their judgment. There was no spirit of pride in him in this, but simply the consciousness of responsibility to God, and if God and man were measured together, of what account could man be? He was not careful, therefore, to justify himself to them, or as to what judgment they might pass upon him. It was man's day, the day in which he had the earth to himself; not indeed without the restraining hand of God upon him, but still in such a way that, if once faith were not active, he might preach to himself the entire liberty which he loves. As a fact, man's day will end in the judgment of God. What a thing simply to think of! The day of the Lord begins in judgment and is upon everything that is high and lifted up, upon all

even judge* mine own self: for I am conscious of nothing as to myself; yet am I not hereby justified, but he that judgeth* me is the Lord. Wherefore, [r]judge nothing before the time, until the Lord shall come, who shall also both [s]bring to light the hidden things of darkness and shall make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall each have his praise from God. Now these things, brethren, I have in their application transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that ye may learn in us not [to go] beyond the things which are written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another. For who maketh thee to differ? and [t]what hast thou that thou hast not received? But, if thou hast received it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?

r Matt. 7. 1.
s Eccl. 12. 14.
t Jas. 1. 17.

* ἀνακρίνω, refers not to final judgment, but to the preliminary examination.

that is exalted in man's wisdom, to cast it down. If this be the character of things completely in the world at large, yet amongst Christians also the spirit of it will invade them, as we see at Corinth here, if they are not self-judged before God.

As for the apostle, in that respect in which they were judging, he did not even judge himself, he did not consider himself to be able to give a sufficient estimate of his acts and ways, although he might be, and was, conscious of nothing. After all, that did not justify him. He who justified was the Lord alone. He is not, of course, in this thinking of salvation, nor does that question enter in at all. Every Christian is, as that, a man saved already, and will himself personally, as the Lord has assured us, never come into judgment, but his ways and acts will do so; and in this respect not even an apostle could be considered a fully competent judge of his own condition. It was not that he would not be exercised about it. On the contrary, as he has himself told us, he always exercised himself to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man, but that is a very different thing from forming an estimate of one's self as a whole, which these Corinthians were doing, putting himself into a place as compared with others. How completely will that day to come in this way reverse the judgments which we may form with the greatest assurance even here on earth!

He had, as he says, transferred these things,—made application of these principles, to himself and Apollos simply, omitting all others. There were, in fact, others, and even enemies, as we know, amongst them, as he has already hinted; but if there were a Petrine party, for instance, in their midst, he says nothing about it here. Had he done so, that might well look as if, with the one opposition between himself and Peter on one important matter, he was giving judgment against Peter of the very sort he blamed; but he does not even name those who were actually moving at Corinth, teachers of quite another character from any of these. They could hardly refuse an application to himself and to Apollos, between whom there was certainly no disagreement, and who had been, in fact, the main workers at Corinth; Paul laying the foundation and Apollos building upon it.

As to the differences between God's workers, such there really were, but not of the character to be apprehended by those in this Corinthian state; and whatever differences there were, God Himself it was who had made them. Thus they would be really judging Him. They had nothing that they had not received, and if they had received it, and thus there was a difference, how could any one glory as if he had not received it!

SECTION 5. (iv. 8-21.)
Conditions of the way.

1 (8-16): Reigning before the time.

1. ALREADY ye are filled, already ye are [u] become rich; ye have [v] reigned without us: yea, and I would that [w] ye did reign, that we also might reign with you. For I think God hath set forth us the apostles last of all, as men doomed to death: for we are made a [x] spectacle unto the world, both to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye prudent in Christ; we are weak but ye are strong; ye are glorious, but we in dishonor. Even unto this present hour, we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and wander without a home, and labor, working with our own hands. [y] Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat; we are made as the [z] offscouring of the world, the refuse of all things even until now. I write not these things to chide you, but [a] as my beloved children I admonish you. For if

[u] *cf.* Rev.3.17.
[v] Jno.18.36.
[w] Rev.3.21.
[x] Heb.10.33.
[y] Matt.5.44.
[z] Lam.3.45.
[a] 1 Thess.2.11.

Sec. 5.

We now come to the conditions of the path, conditions which the Corinthians were violating altogether. No connection can be plainer in the word of God than that between a present suffering with Christ and reigning with Him by and by. If they suffered, they would also reign; but was this then, in fact, their condition? It was quite otherwise. They were refusing the place of suffering, and taking the greatest pains to escape that which should have been their real glory. The apostle calls them back to the ways in Christ which they might have seen in him, and of which Timothy would remind them,—ways which were altogether in accordance with the doctrine that he taught. In fact, how much the ways, the heart, therefore, which is manifested in them, tends to produce the doctrine. It is thus, in fact, that all heresies come in; and with that great truth of the coming of the Lord even, which brings us so sharply to the judgment of God which will then take place upon all our ways; and that is how, plainly, the Lord Himself has emphasized that men say first of all in their *hearts*, "My Lord delayeth His coming." The doctrine accordant with this is often not hard to make out, even from Scripture.

1. This, then, was the condition of the Corinthians. They were full, they were rich, they had reigned as kings, "without us," adds the apostle. It is plain that the apostles were not reigning. He would wish indeed that they did reign all together, but on the contrary, the apostles were in this respect the very last and lowest, instead of having a foremost place in the world; they were a spectacle to the world for their sufferings, nay, to angels also as well as men. How false a test, then, of a Christian's condition, is what men would call his prosperity! As to the Church in general also, how false a test would this be! The Church indeed at large has followed, as we know, the Corinthians in this way. It is reigning far more than suffering. It has exhibited in the fullest way this prudence in Christ upon which the apostle remarks here, a prudence which was employed not to avoid what would be hindrances in the way of others, but difficulties in their own way. They were full, "sated" as the word is, but of necessity they were not then in communion with the apostles in this respect, and the same test remains for us and must remain. Are we or not in communion with the apostles? They remained, as we know, until their end in martyr deaths, for the most part, just in the condition the apostle describes here. We cannot reverse that record; and if communion is something more than merely with our own time and generation, if we are to bring it up to the

ye should have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet [ye have] not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. I beseech you, therefore, be imitators of me.

2 (17-21): Ways in Christ taught and followed.

2. For this reason, I have sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, who shall put you in mind of my ways which are in Christ, according as I teach everywhere in every assembly. Now some are puffed up as if I were not coming to you; but I will come unto you shortly if the Lord will; and I will know, not the word of those that are puffed up, but the power. [b] For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. What will ye, that I come to you [c] with a rod? or in love and the spirit of meekness?

[b] *cf.* Rom. 14. 17.

[c] 2Cor. 13. 10.

apostolic standard, then what a test of our life and ways does this apostolic record become! We can see also by this, that the world would remain the world until the day of Christ. Man's day would characterize it to the end. He expected no difference. He had no such doctrine as that Christianity was to be a leaven in the world, which was gradually to change the whole condition of things. On the contrary, the Christian's course would always be one necessitating suffering. As the apostle says elsewhere: "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." No doubt the general character of things will affect in measure this also, but as to the principle, it remains entirely untouched; and these instructors among the Corinthians, of whom he says that they were indeed not fathers, God had not set His seal to their work as He had to those who established that church at Corinth,—these instructors might find for themselves, also, an easy path in leading men in the way of their own wills and desires. He does not, as already said, even mention their names. He will not allow himself to be exposed even to jangle with them. God, as is implied here, was not with them, and that was enough. As a father to those whom he had begotten in Christ through the gospel, he could beseech them to be imitators of him.

2. On this account, therefore, he was sending to them now Timotheus, himself fulfilling his name, one who faithfully "honored God," and who would put them in mind, as they needed, of ways which were in Christ,—of the doctrine they had received, and he was giving to them nothing more than in this way. What he said was that they should develop in practice that which they had received. His ways he could boldly profess (and indeed it was evident) were according to the teaching which he had delivered to them. He was coming also himself. His heart plainly urged him to this, but if he came, the question which made him, we may say, hesitate, was that of the manner in which he would have to come to them. Was he to come to exercise apostolic authority and to deal with them with a rod, which God after all had given him, or was he to come as he desired, in love and in the spirit of meekness? They were puffed up, some at least, as if he would not come; but when he came it would not be the speech of those that were puffed up that would be seen, but what was the power; for the "kingdom of God," he says, "is not in word, but in power." Power must of necessity characterize a rule of God wherever it existed.

SUBD. 2.

The apostle now turns his attention to that which necessarily went with all this world-wisdom which was manifesting itself among them. It all favored the flesh, that worst enemy of the believer, from the very fact that it is that which still dwells in him and without which no power of the enemy could prevail against him. There is another thing which increases the difficulty of dealing with it, that we have to separate between flesh in its evil sense and the body

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chaps. v.–vii.)

The flesh's lusts: separation from, and remedies.

SECTION 1. (v.)

Unity to be maintained in righteousness.

1 (1, 2): A lawlessness unique among the lawless.

1. IT is universally reported that there is fornication among you; and such fornication as is not even among the nations, so that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather [d]mourned, in order that he that hath done this deed might be taken out of your midst.

2 (3-5): Delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh.

2. For I, as [e]absent in body but present in spirit, have

[d] 2 Cor. 7. 7.

[e] Col. 2. 5.

with which it is most intimately connected, and through which it is constantly manifesting itself; and then again we have to separate it from what is proper to human nature as such, as God created it, apart from any question of the fall. This remains; and while it remains in a fallen condition, we are not by this permitted simply to ignore it. Man is still man, even though Christian, and God's appointments for man have necessarily a wise respect to his whole being as such, which it would not be safe for him to ignore. There are sins, of course, of the spirit as well as of the flesh, and we cannot identify the flesh, therefore, simply with the body; but even here, flesh, as we have seen already, characterizes the fallen condition and prompts the very sins of the spirit themselves. Thus then, while the lusts of the flesh have to be met and controlled in God's own way, we must be guided by the word of God itself, which alone can give us the true means of meeting them, the divine remedies for a fallen condition.

Sec. 1.

We have now the question of how the unity which plainly exists in the Church as the body of Christ is to be maintained in righteousness. Righteousness is, in fact, before all things necessary to be maintained. The apostle puts it first for us where he tells us that grace, if it reigns, yet itself reigns through righteousness, not setting it aside; and that we are to follow, first of all, righteousness, then "faith, love, peace, with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." Righteousness is rooted, of necessity, in the very nature of God Himself, and therefore the moment it is a question of going on with what is unrighteous, we have not to think of ecclesiastical rules or of the very relationships which God has established amongst us, so far as they interfere, or may be thought to interfere with the working out of this. God must always have maintained that which suits Himself; and thus, while there are many things besides to be considered in respect to our communion with other Christians, the very first point for us is righteousness.

1. A most solemn thing is shown us in the first place here, and that is, that if Christians fall into sin, we need not be surprised if they fall lower than the men of the world themselves. At Corinth there was already among them that which could not be found even among the Gentiles; the lawlessness was complete, unique. It was the violation of nature, and of what was God's principle as to the creation itself apart from Christianity, and yet such was the state at Corinth that they were not only going on with it, but there was no sign of mourning over it at all. "Ye are puffed up," he says, "and have not rather mourned, in order that he that hath done this deed might be taken out of your midst." They might surely, if they did not know how to deal with it, have cried to God in their sorrow, and would have been heard by Him. We have always this resource, but they were puffed up instead. How soon can the Christian forget, perhaps in the very thought of that grace which breaks the dominion of sin, the very principles which nature itself should teach him!

2. But here we come to a remarkable sample of God's power over the evil, nay

already judged, as present, him that hath so wrought this thing; [e] in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ye being gathered together, and my spirit with the [f] power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to [g] deliver such an one unto Satan for the [h] destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

3 (6-13) Our feast upon the sacrifice to be holy

1 (6 8) In sincerity and truth.

3. [i] Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that [j] a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? [k] Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye

[e] 2 Cor. 2. 10.
[f] Matt. 18. 18, 20. [g] 1 Tim. 1. 20.
[h] ch. 11. 32.
[i] Gal. 5. 9.
[j] Ex. 12. 15.

of His use of it to fulfil His own holy purposes. The man is to be delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. He is put into the hands of the adversary, who can now show himself plainly as the adversary that he always is. He can serve himself no longer by the sin of one who has been expelled from the Christian assembly. He has, therefore, nothing that he can do except to manifest his enmity against one who has borne the name of Christ, perhaps with the thought of driving him to despair by that which falls upon him, or, as in Job's case (one, of course, so different in himself from the person before us now), urge him into railing against God Himself. *God* uses him, on the other hand, that in the destruction of the flesh the spirit may yet be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. This is a principle which we find afterwards noted in His dealings with the Corinthians themselves, of whom, for the dishonor of the Lord's table, there were many who were weak and sickly, and many who slept. The apostle adds: "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged; but when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." God must manifest Himself against the sin; and if it is not to be eternally, it must be now in time; except indeed self-judgment come in, as he tells us here: "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged."

A solemn principle this is of divine government, and as we see, it is grounded in the divine nature. If His people will not maintain righteousness, He must maintain His own righteousness as to them, while at the same time He cannot, of course, and will not, forget the grace that He is showing in Christ. The apostle tells them, therefore, that he has already pronounced, as it were, with regard to the man in question, and bids them carry out his decision, which their own consciences must need respond to, in the name of Christ their Lord, as solemnly gathered together and himself in spirit, if not in body, with them, to deliver this man to Satan. This was apostolic power, no doubt. He speaks elsewhere of his delivering the promulgators of false doctrine to Satan without any question of the assembly at all; but although with us there may lack this element of authority, God will not fail to maintain the decisions of His people when according to truth and His own nature. Thus, while the Church may perhaps not be able formally to deliver to Satan, yet the principle remains untouched in integrity for us.

3. The apostle turns now to consider the influence of this evil, permitted among them, upon the whole assembly, and the necessity of their complete separation from it, not only for the Lord's sake and for the person's sake who had sinned, but for their own sake also. He speaks of that which characterizes the Christian's life as it were a feast upon a sacrifice. "Christ our Passover," he says, "has been sacrificed for us." We are living, so to speak, upon the fruits of that sacrifice. If God has bidden us to His feast, what must be the character of such a feast? The Old Testament has already shown us in its types that leaven was to be purged away before ever men ventured to sit down to partake of the passover.

[1] How sorrowful was their glorying then! Had they not received instruction from these types of the Old Testament, with which, as we see, they were certainly familiar, and familiar too in their application to Christianity? Did

are unleavened. For our passover also, even Christ, hath been sacrificed: wherefore let us [l]celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the [m]leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened [bread] of sincerity and truth.

[l] Ex. 13. 6.
[m] *cf.* Matt. 16. 6, 12.

2 (9-13): Separate from all the wicked among professed brethren, as not even from the world.

[2] I have written unto you in the epistle, not to mingle with fornicators; not altogether with the fornicators of this world, nor with the covetous and rapacious, nor with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world: but now I write unto you not to be mingled together, [n]if any one called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or

[n] *cf.* Rom. 16. 17. 2 Jno. 10.

they not know that a little leaven leavened the whole lump? Little it might be in the speech of men. When the apostle speaks thus, it is evident that every atom of leaven must be purged out in order to satisfy the mind of God. Leaven is not simply evil, but evil *allowed;* the ferment, as the thought is, of wills that are not subject to God. If such leaven be permitted in a man's own life and ways, it will of necessity characterize him as a whole. He cannot be subject to God up to a certain limit. The moment we urge a limit to obedience, we urge what is in fact disobedience, and there is no such thing with God as the allowance of such a line as this. Unleavened bread, as the apostle says here, is that of sincerity and truth. There must be whole-hearted devotedness. If we refuse obedience *anywhere*, we are disobedient. If we refuse it in one thing, this will necessarily by degrees influence all other things. So it is individually, and so it is collectively. There must be hearts that can truly desire God to search them and see whether there be any way of wickedness in them; or else there is not, as is plain, sincerity and truth. The lump with leaven in it is a leavened lump, except it be as we find it in the meat-offering of the first-fruits. In this case the action of the fire has destroyed the leaven as leaven. It is there in a sense, but not there. There is no activity of it permitted or allowed. The fire necessarily stops that completely; and it cannot be too earnestly insisted upon that such a spirit of whole-hearted devotedness of which we are speaking is necessary to the true judgment of any single thing. Otherwise, first of all, the eye by which we see is obscured, or, as the Lord would say, made evil, and: "If thine eye be evil, the whole body will be full of darkness." We cannot shut out God's light without, as far as depends upon us, shutting it out altogether. If we shut our eyes, we shut ourselves into darkness; nay, the Lord has said: "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

They were, therefore, to purge out the old leaven that they might be a new lump, even as in God's sight in Christ they were in fact unleavened. Yet they would by this be a *new* lump. Thus they were *not* that, in the condition in which they stood. What they were before God was one thing. Their lives and ways did not answer to it. "Wherefore," he says, "let us celebrate the feast not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

[2] Another principle is now shown us, that in case of sin amongst the people of the Lord there is to be a more complete separation from those going on with it than there would be from the world itself,—in which, of course, this sin was everywhere. This ought not to be strange as a principle to us, for it is plain that it is the profession of the name of Christ along with it that gives the evil in this case a character all its own. Thus, he had written to them that they were not to mingle with men of this class; and yet he is not speaking of the world, whatever their various characters of sin might be, for in fact if they were to attempt this, the world was such that they would have to go out of it altogether. There would be no possibility, even, of discerning the character of those with whom they were being brought in contact. The same difficulty of application

rapacious, with such an one not even to eat. For what have I to do with judging those that are [o]without? Do not ye judge them that are within? But those that are without, God judgeth.* [p]Put away the wicked one from among yourselves.

o *cf.* Mk. 4. 11.

p *cf.* Matt. 18. 17.

SECTION 2. (vi. 1-7.)

But with no exaction, even of one's rights.

DARE any of you, having a matter against another, go for judgment before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? Know ye not then that [q]the saints shall judge the world? and if the world is judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more, then, matters of this life? If then ye have judgments as to things of this life, set those [to judge] who are of no account in the assembly. I say this to move you to shame: is it so, that there is not a wise man

q Dan. 7. 22. Matt. 19. 28. Rev. 20. 4.

* Or, "will judge."

is found to-day with the world, which is so largely a professing world. The principle remains untouched, but the application is more difficult. We cannot treat the professing mass according to their profession, it is so merely that; but still, when there is a manifest dishonor being done to the Lord by great opposition between profession and practice, we must, as far as lies in us, clear the Lord's name from this dishonor. In the closer circle of actual communion, of course the apostle's words have their full force. The wicked one is to be put away, not merely from the table, but *from among ourselves;* and this is to extend to the very matter of eating and drinking in such a case. We are not to mingle with them in any way. The more truly the heart goes after them, as it surely must,—God's own heart goes after them,—the more closely will the divine rule be observed, which is that upon which alone there can be His blessing. As for discipline, it is always with the thought finally of the restoration of the offender. We see in what is before us here how thoroughly this was the case even after the extreme point had been reached and he had been put away from fellowship. God used this putting away to break him down, and thus for his restoration. It would not be to be with God at all to leave out of our thoughts or hearts those whom we may have had to put away from our fellowship. God's heart never gives up His people, and our hearts should never do so; and this will give the spirit of love in all our dealings with them, while it will not make the testimony we give against their ways less decisive, but much more.

Sec. 2.

We come now to matters between the saints. The Corinthians were going to law with one another, bringing in the world to witness their sad condition and to set right amongst them the things which it was a shame should be wrong. He asks them if they do not know that the saints shall judge the world. That is, of course, in the coming day of the Lord's rule over it, but it is for this that we are being trained and educated now, and how could it be possible that those who were on their way to such a place as this could be unfit or unworthy to judge these small matters, matters in the apostle's estimation of such very small account? Do ye not know, he asks, that we shall judge angels, how much more then matters of this kind? Still, if judgments were needed as to the things of this life, those practically of no account in the assembly were sufficient for such things as that. He does not, of course, literally mean that they were to choose persons of that character, but that these were matters that did not require

among you, not even one who shall be able to decide between his brethren? but brother goeth with brother to be judged; and that before unbelievers. Already indeed, then, it is altogether a fault in you, that ye have suits among yourselves. Why do ye not rather [r]suffer wrong? why not rather be defrauded?

SECTION 3. (8-20.)

The holiness of those whose bodies are temples of the Spirit.

NAY, ye yourselves do wrong and defraud, and that [your] brethren. Do ye not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: [s]neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor rapacious, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And [t]such were some of you; but ye are [u]washed, but ye are [v]sanctified, but ye are [w]justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and [x]by the Spirit of our God. All things are lawful to me, but all things are

r Prov. 20. 22. Matt. 5. 39, 40. Rom. 12. 17, 19.

s Gal. 5. 19-21. Eph. 5. 4, 5.
t Eph. 2. 1, 2. Eph. 5. 8.
u Eph. 5. 26. Tit. 3. 5. Heb. 10. 22.
v ch. 1. 30. Heb. 2. 11.
w Rom. 5. 9.
x 1 Tim. 3. 16.

even any extraordinary spiritnality and were of too little importance to reqnire any great ability of this sort to decide them; but *they* were exposing their shame before the world. They had better suffer wrong; they had better suffer themselves to be defranded. There was to be no exaction even of their rights. Grace does not exact. One may say, can we suffer the wrong to go on in the assembly? That is another matter. The question here is entirely of seeking our own things. If the matter is grave enough to touch the assembly, Matt. xviii. has given us the rnle with regard to it. There the first effort is that which is to be characteristic of our whole course; it is to gain one's brother. That is, as already said, that which discipline aims at. It may be, in fact, for the moment, impossible to be attained; and then we have the steps needed to place any matter that requires it in the hands of the assembly. Put in their hands, it is to be left there. It is for them to say as to what will set things straight. Just because they are our own things, we are not to be judges of them. No man was ever thought to be a rightful judge in his own cause, or could take the law, as people say, into his own hands. These are principles which are surely as good for us as they can be in the world at large. They are the result simply of the knowledge, alas, of our poor fallen nature.

Sec. 3.

The apostle proceeds now to speak of the holiness which befits those whose bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. They were, in fact, acting in utter forgetfulness of this. They were not only not suffering themselves to be defranded, they were doing wrong and defranding their own brethren. "Do ye not know," he asks, "that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" and then gives a catalogue of evil works, samples only, after all, of what was in the world at large, and which certainly God would never tolerate in His kingdom. Here it is of no nse pleading grace in any wise. Grace is that which breaks the dominion of sin, sets the soul right to go on with God; and if this be not the result of it, grace has not been learned at all, nor can it be pleaded as availing in behalf of those who, whatever they may profess, show themselves uninfluenced by it. This was indeed the character of some of these Corinthian saints, in a city which was proverbial for its immorality. God had brought them out; they were "washed, sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." The order and connection of these things is to be noted. The wash-

not expedient; all things are lawful to me, but I will not be [y]brought under the power of any. Meats [z]for the belly and the belly for meats, but God will bring to naught both it and them; but the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. And God hath both [a]raised up the Lord, and will raise us up through his power. Do ye not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away

[y] ch. 9. 27.
[z] Matt. 15. 17.
[a] ch. 15. 20.

ing comes first, which is, of course, but the removal of the positive evil with which they were connected. Sanctification carries this on to the full setting apart to God Himself, so that the life shall be His. Justification as it is put here is evidently that which is implied in the Spirit of God taking possession of the believer as His temple. This is indeed the most wondrous justification, and could only be the result of the Lord's work in their behalf. Thus it is said "in the name of the Lord Jesus," and this applies to the whole three things. The washing was on the authority of the name of Him who is our Saviour Lord.

One need hardly say that the reference which some here find to baptism is a mistake as to one essential character of Christianity. No external washing can affect the soul. The "washing of water," as the apostle himself has told us, is "by the word." God never uses things out of the place which He has given them. This is magic, not mystery. It is a perversion of things, it is essentially evil and of Satan. The parent it has surely been of a multitude of evils. The washing of baptism is at the hands of disciples, and no disciples hands can cleanse the soul; but this is an error which has gone far and wide in Christendom.

Sanctification is here both positional and practical, as "in the name of the Lord Jesus" it implies, first of all, the power of His blood to set apart to God; but it is also by the Spirit, therefore practical and internal, the making good in inward reality what the blood has made positionally ours.

As to justification in the sense in which we have it here, we find it once again in the first epistle to Timothy, where it is said of Christ that He was justified in the Spirit, the Spirit of God as coming upon Him being the witness to His absolute perfection. His was an anointing without blood; ours, on the contrary, is because of the value of that precious blood with God. Thus, then, the soul is brought into freedom. The law has not accomplished this, and therefore he speaks for a moment here of the entire liberty from law which thus results. "All things are lawful to me" does not, of course, for a moment change eternal *moral* conditions, but has reference to restrictions which were ceremonial merely. "Meats for the belly," as he says, and "the belly for meats." As to these things, there was the fullest and most absolute freedom; and yet even here there might be things inexpedient, and the apostle refuses to be brought under the power of things that are lawful. This is an important matter for our own guidance, for it may well be that that in which we loosely allow ourselves within the range of things entirely lawful may nevertheless have a sorrowful effect upon us. We have to use everything with the wisdom of God, and in our conduct with regard to others in an especial way are not to maintain our own rights, but to seek to minister to the needs of others. These were all things, as he shows us, of a merely temporary nature. Food was necessary in the meanwhile for the life that is, but it will come to an end and that which sustains it. On the other hand, there were things,—and the Corinthians needed the warning,—things which for the heathen in his darkness had little of real evil, but which, brought once into the light of Christianity, were seen in their true character; yet, after all, the power of bad habits might revive, even in the Christian, and thus he has to warn them that the body is simply for the Lord and the Lord for the body. God has already raised up the Lord, and we are to be raised up. In the meanwhile the body will betray us, if we do not take care to govern its appetites.

the members of Christ, and make them members of a harlot? Far be the thought. Know ye not that he that is joined to a harlot is one body: for the two, [b]he saith, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man practiseth is without the body, but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. Know ye not that your body is the [c]temple of the Holy Spirit, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? for ye were [d]bought with a price: glorify God, therefore, in your body.

b Gen. 2. 24.

c *cf.* Jno. 2. 21.

d Acts 20.28. 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19.

But how wonderful that it is in the *body* of the believer that the Spirit of God has His abode! "Your *bodies*," says the apostle, "are members of Christ." This is a different mode of speech from that which we find elsewhere. It is not that *believers* simply are members of Christ, members of His body, but that our *bodies* are His members. They belong to Him and are to be used for Him. The body is in the world, that by which we maintain our connection with external things, and in which, therefore, the mind of the human spirit is manifested. Now it is the Spirit of God that has control; the body, as we have been taught in Romans, being simply to be offered up to God as "a living sacrifice, acceptable to Him through Jesus Christ." Our members are to be His members, expressing His mind in lives devoted to Him. "Shall I then," he says, "take away," as the word is, "the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? Far be the thought!" He refers to the Lord's words in Genesis to show how really this would be taking away the body from the Lord. Every other sin, he says, that a man may practise is without the body, does not compromise it in the same way. Gluttony, for instance, or any kindred thing, evil as it is of course, yet after all does not take the body away from Him, and put it in the hands of that which is contrary to Him. With the sin in question, this was in fact what was done. The man sinned, therefore, against his own body. "Know ye not," he says, "that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and," as the result of it, "ye are not your own, for ye were bought with a price? Glorify God, therefore, in your body." There are readings here which evidently have come from the thought that this was, after all, altogether too meagre a statement; but if the body be indeed kept in this way for God, if He be glorified in it, if this be really carried out, the whole life must of necessity be His. Our life is in the body; and to have control of the body is to have the life governed for Him. Thus it may be that the *body* is spoken of as the temple of the Holy Spirit, and not the spirit as His temple, which one would rather expect. It is a triumph of divine grace indeed that here where even as yet the power of redemption is not known, for "we *wait* for the adoption, that is, the redemption of the body," yet, through the work of Christ, the Spirit of God can dwell in us. How thoroughly that shows He is the witness to Christ's perfection, to the perfection of His blessed work, and not to any perfection of our own; and here, where the contact with the world is seen in the fullest way, the Spirit of God is found to deliver us from the evil influences of that contact. The anointing oil, as we may say, flows from the head down to the hem of the garment. In the Lord Himself we remember, also, that it was His *body* of which He expressly spake as the temple which, if men destroyed, would be raised up; and it is the Church as the body of Christ in which, therefore, the Spirit dwells. Here the same thoughts are found connected, in whatever different spheres. The Church is that which is to express the mind of Christ as here in the world, the Spirit of God ruling for Him, and the absent Christ thus being, as it were, manifested before the eyes of men; as the apostle says in another place, we are "the epistle of Christ, read and known of all men." Thus we can understand, also, why it is that the Church is not looked at as peo-

SECTION 4. (vii.)
Nature: how far to be yielded to.

1 (1-9): The single life and the individual in the bond of marriage.

1. Now concerning the things of which ye wrote to me, it is good for a man not to touch a woman; but on account of fornications let each [man] have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render to the wife her [e]due; and in like manner the wife to the husband. The wife hath not authority over her own body, but the husband; in like

[e] Ex. 21. 10.

ple so commonly look at it, as partly now in heaven (in those who are its members there) and partly upon earth. The Spirit is in the Body and the Body is upon earth,—in our bodies, and that makes it decisive that death must of necessity for the time interfere with this. He that is joined to the Lord is indeed one Spirit. Through the body is the present expression of this in the world.

Sec. 4.

We now come to a question which, as already observed, is intimately connected with that of the flesh. Fallen nature is distinctly fleshly, as the Lord says: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh;" but that is the fallen condition. We are still to distinguish from that human nature as God has constituted it, and which remains therefore to be owned as such, without forgetting how the fall has affected everything now. The apostle takes up here, therefore, the question especially of marriage, but also, in connection with this, of the relationship of children to the Church of God. This is incidentally, however. He is replying to questions which have been put to him by the Corinthians, and which are of the most practical character. We find a setting forth of things very different from that which we have, for instance, in Ephesians, by the same apostle, where the higher character of marriage is shown us and God's thought in its institution. Here we have nothing but the practical question answered;—as to the expediency of it, for instance, when sin has now come in so to dislocate that which is natural, and to pervert that which is best in nature; making the strongest ties oftentimes to be the most significant of evil.

1. Here the principle, which is that which we are mainly concerned with, is a very simple one; the application of it, also, as the apostle gives it, so simple as to need little more. The principle is that the institution of God is to be maintained. Sin has not altered the rightness of that which God at the beginning ordained for man. The institution of God, therefore, has to be maintained, but on the one hand we are to consider the disturbance which sin has brought in, and how that affects the conduct of a believer with regard to such things, and we have also to consider that grace has brought in with it a power which is above nature and created new interests beyond those of the individual. Christians are free, but the apostle's idea of freedom is liberty to serve. He has no thought of anything freer than the service of Christ. Thus if these higher interests are the motive, a man may walk above nature, walk of course in faith; and he must take heed that he *has* faith to walk in this way. If not, in the necessary testing which will come in, there will surely be a breakdown, and evil instead of good. The path must be that of faith, and it can only be, therefore, in the following the will of God that we can have faith for it. We can never have faith for paths of our own choice simply. Thus, if a man choose to walk free from all distraction to serve God, apart from all the natural ties which God has instituted, he may be proportionately free from the distraction of cares which would in measure take him off from the service that he covets. On the other hand, if he is not with God, he may place himself in circumstances where there shall be much more distraction. The apostle has no thought of asceticism in the smallest degree. Man may go outside the world, as he imagines, into a wilderness and solitude, only to find that there is an inner world from which he is not

manner also, the husband hath not authority over his own body, but the wife. Defraud not one another, unless it may be by consent for a time, that ye may devote yourselves to prayer, and be together again that Satan tempt you not because of your incontinency. But this I say by way of permission, not of commandment. But I wish that all men were even as myself; however every one [f] hath his own gift from God: one man after this manner, and another after that. Now I say unto the unmarried and to the widows, it is good for them that they remain even as I. But if they have not control over themselves, [g] let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn.

[f] Matt. 19. 12.

[g] 1 Tim. 5. 14.

2 (10–16): Of separation and divorce.

2. But unto the married, I enjoin, not *I*, but the Lord, Let [h] not the wife be separated from her husband; but if also she have been separated, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband; and let not the husband leave his wife. But as to the rest, say *I*, not the Lord: If any brother have an unbelieving wife, and she is content to dwell with him, let him not leave her.

[h] Mal. 2. 14–16. Matt. 19. 6, 9.

separated and cannot separate himself, and which claims him the more for the very isolation which he has chosen. The separate path is not to be sought, therefore, for its own sake. It is not to be taken as if it were in itself a higher elevation. The motive is that which governs all, and here, therefore, the will of God, which can alone give one a right motive. In general, as the apostle decides here, the rule is the natural one. He cannot perhaps exactly quote any more that it is not good for man to be alone, and that God hath made him a help meet for him. This always remains, of course, in measure true if we contemplate man as man, but it is the first creation, not the new one; and, as already said, the interests of Christ and service to Him, in a scene which so calls for service as does the world in its fallen state, are motives which the original creation did not contemplate. The general rule, even for Christians, remains the natural one, and a path of special faith requires distinctly the special gift of God. If God brings one into circumstances of trial, He is competent for the circumstances. If we essay the trial apart from this, we shall only find the breakdown of a strength which is the strength of nature, and not spiritual strength.

On the other hand, for those who are married, the bond which God has ordained is, of course, recognized. There is no longer, in the same sense, freedom. The apostle could desire for all the very highest path, of course, but he has no commandment for any with regard to this. Wishing that all men were even as himself, he realizes, however, that every one has his own gift from God, one man after this manner and another after that. He is only expounding here what the Lord Himself more summarily declares in the nineteenth of Matthew. Thus far it is only the case of marriage among Christians themselves that he is speaking of.

2. He now takes up the question of separation and divorce; and here, as most naturally having to do with this, the case of a believer united to an unbeliever. In those days there must have been necessarily from such a cause oftentimes the greatest perplexity. He decides that in such a case the wife is not to separate herself of her own will from her husband, as in the case of Christians also he is wholly against separation; and if the wife has been separated she is to remain unmarried or to be reconciled to her husband, the husband not to leave his wife. In the case of an unbeliever there is, of course, a difference. On the side of the Christian, if the unbelieving wife be content to dwell with him, he is not to leave her; so, on the other hand, if it be the husband that is the unbeliever and

And the woman who hath an unbelieving husband, and he is content to dwell with her, let her not leave her husband; for the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the brother: else were the children unclean, but now are they holy. But if the unbeliever depart, let him depart: the brother or the sister is not bound in such cases, but God hath called us in peace. For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt 'save thy husband? or what knowest thou, O husband, if thou shalt save thy wife? ‹1 Pet.3.1,2.

3 (17-24): Specialties of the calling.

3. Only as the Lord hath distributed to each, as God hath called each, so let him walk; and so ordain I in all the assemblies. Was any one called being circumcised, let him not become uncircumcised. Hath any

not the wife. The reason of this he gives as to be found in the sanctification of the unbelieving husband in the wife, or of the unbelieving wife in the Christian to whom she is married, and he adduces as the proof of this the known position of the children of the married in such a case. The children, he says, are holy. This, of course, as it is the basis of his argument, must have been an acknowledged fact for Christians. The working of Israelitish law was quite in the other direction. If a man had married outside of Israel, the children were unclean, and were disowned as belonging to the congregation of the Lord. The holiness of the children here is not a necessarily spiritual condition, but that of external relationship, as we may say, but which of course manifests the mind of God for blessing to those who are in such a relationship.

The baptism of the household is not intimated, but it is evident that this would naturally result from the position here. The token of discipleship could hardly be denied to those who as holy were to be brought up as disciples. They are thus addressed throughout the epistles, and they could not be so addressed if outside the Kingdom of that in which the claims of Christ as Lord were owned. It has sometimes been argued that the unbelieving wife or husband is, according to this, as much holy as are the children; but this is an oversight as to what is really expressed. The unbelieving husband or wife is only sanctified in the believing partner, not otherwise: sanctified, therefore, in that relationship in which he or she stood to the other, and not in himself, so as to be himself acknowledged in any relationship to the Church of God. The relationship was clean and owned of God, so that the believer could continue in it, and is urged to do so. But, on the other hand, if, on the side of the unbeliever, he departed, then, in such cases, the brother or the sister, says the apostle, is not bound. He or she is not obliged to recognize any more the relationship as existing. Yet the apostle does not mean by this anything equivalent to divorce, or that which would set absolutely free the one separated from. The Lord Himself has decided in the plainest possible way in the Gospels that there is but one ground for divorce, and we have no right from the apostle's words here to suppose, as many do suppose now, that they declare another. Whatever trial there may be in such circumstances of separation, yet if there be no more, it is a trial to which God has called the person in question, and for which He must be counted upon; but to continue in the relationship as far as possible is that which he encourages. Christianity, with its all-embracing desire for the salvation of souls, would rather use such a relation for the salvation of the unbeliever than cast out one who might be thus rescued from his natural, lost condition.

3. The apostle here, in a parenthesis, goes aside to consider for a moment how far this principle of abiding in the position in which God's call found its objects would stand good. The general rule was, and he ordains it in all churches, to abide wherever one could abide with God. There was to be no restless spirit of

one been called in uncircumcision, let him not be circumcised. [f] Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but the keeping of the commandments of God. Let each abide in that calling wherein he was called. Wast thou called being a bond-servant? [k] care not for it. On the other hand, if thou canst become free, use it rather. For the bond-servant, called in the Lord, is the Lord's free man. In like manner, also, one called as a free man is Christ's bond-servant. Ye [l] have been bought with a price: be not bond-servants of men. Brethren, let each, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.

[f] Gal. 5. 6. Gal. 6. 15.

[k] Jno. 8. 36.

[l] ch. 6. 20.

4 (25-40): Of yielding to nature, or not yielding.

4. Now concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord; but I give my judgment as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. I think, then that this is good on account of the present necessity, that it is good for a man to remain as he is. Art

change, as if circumstances were the great consideration rather than God's control of circumstances, which ought to be realized. Thus, if any one was called, being circumcised, he was not to become uncircumcised. He was not, as it were, to ape the Gentile. So, if one were called in uncircumcision, he was not to be circumcised. Circumcision and uncircumcision were alike now on the same footing; that is to say, there was nothing in them. The keeping of the commandments of God was the whole matter. If a man were called even being a bond-servant,—and we can hardly imagine, perhaps, the bitterness of such a position oftentimes in those old heathen days, and especially for a Christian in bond-service to a heathen,—yet the apostle bids such an one not to care about it. If he could become free, by all means he may do so; but on the other hand, if he were ever so much a bond-servant and called in the Lord, the Lord had set him free in such a way as no bondage on the part of man could possibly affect. He could serve Christ in that condition; and the more painful the circumstances might be, the more acceptable even, we may be sure, would be such a service. His spirit was free, nothing could touch that, and He who was his Master was Master also of all else, so that this, as all other things, should work for good to him. If he were free as to circumstances, he would still be Christ's bond-servant. Christians are those bought with a price. They were not to be indeed the bond-servants of men. They were not to allow themselves to descend to a lower sphere of service. Christ was to be served, and His people, of course, in Him, but always, therefore, in the remembrance of that love which had at the same time bound him to Christ and set him free. The general rule, therefore, is, let each abide in the calling wherein he is called, if only he can abide there with God. If, of course, his position is such that he cannot abide in it thus, he is bound to leave it; but the restless spirit of change is not that which suits Christianity. It makes too much of the world and the circumstances, which are indeed nothing, but only a condition under which God can display Himself without possibility of hindrance.

4. The apostle returns now to the matter in hand. He answers the question, then, how far, in view of actual circumstances, marriage were good or not. He tells them this is a mere question of giving advice. He has no commandment of the Lord. He distinguishes that in the most absolute way from whatever judgment he may give as one faithful, as he was known to be, through the mercy of the Lord to him, and whose spiritual judgment might therefore be of the greatest value to those who used it aright. There was that which the apostle speaks of as a "present necessity." It is to be supposed that he refers to the immense pressure of the world upon the infant Church. This would make the

thou bound unto a wife, seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife, seek not a wife. But if [m] thou shouldest also marry, thou hast not sinned; and if the virgin marry, she hath not sinned: yet such shall have [n] tribulation in the flesh; but I spare you. But this I say, brethren, the [o] time is shortened. For the rest, let those who have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep as though they wept not; and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not; and those that buy as though they possessed not; and those that use the world as not disposing of it as their own: for [p] the fashion of this world passeth away. But I would have you to be without care. He that is [q] unmarried is careful for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; but he that is married, careth for the things of the world, how he shall please his wife. There is a difference between the wife and the virgin. She that is unmarried is careful for the things of the Lord that she may be holy, both in body and spirit; but she that is married, is careful for the things of the world, how she shall please her husband. But I say

[m] Heb.13.4.
[n] ver. 28.
[o] 1 Pet. 4.7.
[p] 1 Jno.2.17.
[q] 1 Tim.5.5.

entanglement with unnecessary cares a thing not to be desired. Still he can do little more than reaffirm what he has already said. In view of it all, it was good for a man to remain as he was; but if he was already bound to a wife, he must not seek to be loosed. If he was loosed, then he would not have him seek a wife; but at the same time distinctly decides that there was no sin at all that was in question. He or she who married did not sin. There would be trouble naturally, as he foresees, but he is not going to make this too strong a point with them, for there might be that which more than compensated the trouble. In short, it was a matter for individual exercise and determination. No one could determine the course of another; but as to all, the time was shortened. The coming of the Lord was nigh, always nigh for the Christian; without regard to any exact knowledge, he was to be in the spirit of constant expectation. Those who had wives were to be as they who had none. If they wept, things were passing, so that it was not to be as it were in real sorrow. As to that in which they might rejoice (of course, he is speaking of circumstances, what might thus rejoice them here), still they were to be as those who rejoiced not. Whatever they acquired, they were to be as though they possessed it not, and while using the world, they were not to dispose of it as if it were their own. They had, so to speak, a certain interest in it, but the character of everything was necessarily determined by the condition of things. The world was passing away; and their possession of anything would pass away with it.

And there was another matter also to be considered; the great and important thing in his eyes was that people should live without care,—without that weight of anxiety which would disturb them in their walk with God. As a fact, he is not speaking of what should be or what need be, but what is so often found. The unmarried would be naturally careful for the things of the Lord, to please Him—he has no one else to please. If a man is married, he has, on the other hand, plainly, another to please, and thus he is tempted at least to care for the things of the world in order to please his wife. So with a woman, in the same way. The one who is free from everything of this sort can be careful for the things of the Lord alone. She that is married is apt to be careful for the things of the world, just with the desire, and a not unreasonable desire, to please her husband. He is not saying this, as he declares again, constantly guarding it, for anything but for their profit. He does not want to lay down rules, the observa-

this for your own profit; not that I may set a snare before you, but for that which is seemly, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction. But if any one think that he behaveth himself unseemly as to his virginity, if he be beyond the flower of his age and so it must be, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry. Nevertheless he who standeth firm in his heart, having no need, and hath authority over his will, and hath judged this in his heart, to keep his own virginity, he doeth well. So that he that marrieth doeth well; and he that doth not marry doeth better. A wife is bound for whatever time her husband liveth; but if the husband be fallen asleep, she is free to be married to whom she will; only in the [r] Lord. But she is happier if she so remain, according to my judgment; and I think that I also have the Spirit of God.

r 2 Cor.6.14.

tion of which might only be a snare to them, but he wants them to seek, whatever their course may be, to serve the Lord without distraction. There was no sin, as he insists again, there was no kind of sin in marriage; but if a man had no need of it, if he had authority over himself and had judged in his heart to remain so, he did well. So, on the other hand, he says, the one who marries does well, although if he does not, he may do better. Once in the bond of marriage the Lord's will was already declared, wife or husband were bound unto death. If the husband were fallen asleep, the wife was still free to be married to whom she would; (thus the apostle declares positively as to the lawfulness of second marriages;) but he puts in the condition that it was to be only in the Lord, which does not mean simply that she was to be only married to a Christian, though that of course, but as seeking the Lord's guidance about it and therefore in obedience to Him, as the whole Christian life should be. The happier course, according to his judgment, was for her to remain unmarried. He thinks that he could surely speak as one having the Spirit of God, but there he leaves it.

It is plain how, all through, the apostle insists upon the difference between advice, such as one Christian may give another, (such as he above all others was competent to give,) and the command of God. All, of course, that is given here is given by inspiration, the advice as well as the command; and if, as we see in a chapter beyond this, the apostle *ordained* anything, it was in fact the commandment of the Lord. The advice was inspired, but it was *advice*. The character of it in that respect was not affected by the inspiration. It is not the lowering of the thought of inspiration, to look at it as advice simply, what he himself characterizes as that.

Subd. 3.

We have seen that in all this part of the epistle, it is the Church as in the world that is looked at, encompassed by influences which are adverse. The whole trinity of evil is against the Church. There are enemies without. There is, alas, an enemy within also, and this is that which needs specially to be guarded against. External enemies can never prevail against the Christian who is true to himself. The first failure, as we see in the church of Ephesus in the apocalyptic epistles, was in the maintenance of first love to Christ. That of necessity allows all other evils to come in. Christ, if He be known and walked with, is absolute sufficiency, as the apostle has shown us here, for everything that can arise. There must be, first of all, that which comes in between the soul and Him, in order to expose it to the power of evil.

We have seen the wisdom of the world as that which was in the case of the

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chaps. viii.–x.)

Encompassed by the prevalent idolatry, the manifestation of the enemy's work.

1 (viii.1-6): The knowledge of one only God.

1. NOW, concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth. If any one think [s]he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any one love God, the same is [t]known of him. Concerning, therefore, the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one. For

[s] ch. 13. 12.

[t] Gal. 4. 9.

Corinthians the first element of seduction. This encouraged, as it always does, the flesh, which was manifesting itself amongst them in the grossest way.

The apostle now comes to that which was encompassing them on every side, the prevalent idolatry which was the fullest manifestation of the enemy's work, of the hold that he had got upon man. The very knowledge that Christians had with regard to it had itself its dangers, through the assumption so often accompanying knowledge, and needed to be corrected. In consequence of their apprehension of the nothingness of an idol, they might walk as little realizing the power which was actually working through it, and which had molded the whole form of things around them. In connection with this, therefore, the apostle looks at the spirit in which one must walk in order to be free from the enemy's power, and appeals to the testimony of history as to the dangers of a path which lay through such a world as this.

1. He begins, therefore, at once with that which had no doubt been made a question with him, things sacrificed to idols. They were everywhere. That which was sold in the shambles was very often what had been thus offered. What were they to do about it? Was there defilement in it? He begins by asserting, first of all, the absolute nothingness of idols according to the knowledge given to the Christian. The Hebrews had a word which expressed this. The idols were "elilim",—"nothings"; but then, knowledge itself was not a sufficient guide in relation to these things. Knowledge (that is, the idea of knowing, not the things known, but the idea of knowing) puffed a man up. How readily this takes place, we ought surely to realize. How easy it is to value one's self upon every bit of truth attained, so as to set one's self on an elevation above others, instead of seeking to serve with that knowledge! They needed love, therefore, as the apostle says. Love is that which edifieth. It does not think of its own things, but of the things of others; and it is this only which is safe for the Christian himself. If a man rested upon his knowledge as if he knew something, he knew nothing yet aright. How small, (although there are things surely known,) but how small, after all, is all the knowledge of time compared with that which a moment's entrance into eternity, as one may say, will effect for us! The man who values himself upon his knowledge is but, as it were, a child, priding itself upon that which others recognize to be merely childish. He does not make light of it, of course, as that which has to do with God. The knowledge of God aright gives God His place in the soul and delivers from self, if it be really knowledge. Pride cannot live in such an atmosphere; and if one loves God, the blessed thing is that he is known of God. He walks in the light of that which God knows, as one who is manifested to Him. With regard, therefore, to the eating of things sacrificed to idols, the first principle necessarily is that the idol is nothing in the world, for there is only one God. There are plenty that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth, heavenly objects of worship or earthly ones, "gods many and lords many," according, alas, to the multiplicity of the evil principles which stir men's hearts; but to us there is but one God, the Father. This is how God is characterized for us now, the way

however there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth, (as there are gods many and lords many,) yet to us there is [u]one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for him; and [v]one Lord, Jesus Christ, [w]by whom are all things and we by him.

2 (7-13): The conscience free or not free.

2. But knowledge is not in all; and some with conscience of the idol eat until now as of a thing sacrificed to idols; and their conscience being weak is defiled. But [x]meat commendeth us not to God; neither if we eat not, do we lack; nor if we eat have we an advantage. But take heed lest by any means this your [y]right become a stumbling block to the weak. For if any one see thee who hast knowledge sitting at table in an idol-house, shall not his conscience, he being weak, be emboldened to eat things sacrificed to the idol? and the weak one, the brother for whose sake Christ died, would perish through thy knowledge. Now when ye

[u] Eph. 4. 6.
[v] Eph. 4. 5.
[w] Col. 1. 16.
[x] Rom. 14. 17.
[y] Rom. 14. 13, 20.

in which Christ has revealed Him. It is not a question here of the Trinity, or the distinction of persons, but of how God has been revealed to us in relationship, first of all to Christ, and thus to all who are His. God is no more what the mere monotheist might account Him. He is not One far off, but One come nigh. He is not One from whom, through the very dread natural to man, one might seek rather to escape, but One who is for us; One of whom it is a delight to know that all things belong, and that we also belong, to Him. How different a thing this from the mere question of one god or many. And so there is for us one Lord, he says, Jesus Christ. God hath made that same Jesus, whom men crucified, both Lord and Christ. He is, moreover, the One by whom are all things, the One who has acted for God the Father, both in creation and in the redemption of those ruined by the fall. We too are by Him. We are the fruits of His love, the work of His power. This, then, is the primary thought, and it is above all necessary that the soul should be free, not under superstitious dread of other objects, real even or unreal. There is nothing but what is under the control of Him who has loved us, who has given His Son for us, and of that Son Himself who is at the right hand of God upon the Father's throne, and living for us there.

2. But then, even among Christians this knowledge was not just as it should be in all. Some with conscience of the idol ate things sacrificed to idols. They were not free in spirit, and thus, although the idol itself was nothing, yet their *conscience* was defiled. It is a question which has already, in fact, come before us in Romans, but it is a question which pressed everywhere, in the condition of the world around Christians in those days. What was to be done? Should a man press his knowledge upon one who, after all, had not attained so much? It was rather a case for yielding in love to the weakness of another. The meat itself was nothing. It was no advantage eating it or abstaining from it, but the important thing, that which was needed, was that the Christian's right should not become a stumbling-block to the weak in faith. Suppose one who had not this knowledge were to see one who had it sitting at table in an idol house, might he not be emboldened to eat things sacrificed to an idol while, after all, his conscience was not good about it? He was merely imitating the faith of another, and the imitation of faith is not faith. He might thus be put into a condition in which he would be really drifting away from a right conscience toward God, and exposed, *naturally*, even to perish through another's knowledge. This may seem unnecessarily strong language. We might ask how is it possible that one of Christ's should perish? He is not really insisting upon any possibility of this sort, but he is insisting upon our responsibility, however this

thus sin against the brethren and wound their weak conscience, ye [z]sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I make not my brother to stumble.

[z] Matt. 25. 40, 45.

3 (Ix. 1-22): The transformation of privilege.

1 (1-7): The claim.

3. [1] Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus [Christ] * our Lord? Are not ye my work in the Lord? If I am not an apostle to others, yet at least I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord. My defence to them that examine me is this: Have we not a right to eat and drink? Have we not a right to lead about a wife that is a sister, as also the other apostles, and the brethren of the Lord, [a]and Cephas? Or I alone and Barnabas, have we not a [b]right not to be working? Who carrieth on warfare at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard and doth not eat its fruit? Or who tendeth a flock and eateth not of the milk of the flock?

[a] Matt. 8. 14.

[b] 2 Thess. 3. 9.

* Some omit.

may be. If we were to put poison upon a man's plate, whether he died or not, we should be responsible for his death; and if God will not suffer His own to find all the consequences of their sin and failure, if He will necessarily, as true to His own love, come in to deliver them, this is not knowledge such as we are to act upon. It does not affect our own responsibility, who may so easily, by our own acts, really lead astray the sheep of Christ and do them spiritual damage. It is important also to realize that in ourselves there is no help or hope, if once we are adrift from our anchorage, if we have got away from Christ. And how easily is it possible to get thus away! In this case it would be simply, as we might say, the aim to be as another Christian more advanced than myself. If the conscience be taken away from the simple, individual subjection to God, the result is the same, no matter in what way reached. We have to be exercised, each one for himself, and as a matter of responsibility to God alone, as to each step in the way. We are not to follow one another, except as we are convinced, as the apostle puts it, that that other follows Christ; but then again, if that which I do is something which may make my brother stumble, whatever may be his own responsibility in the matter, mine is clear. Says the apostle, "I will eat no flesh any more if it is to make my brother to stumble." This and this alone is the right use of knowledge.

3. But at this point we have once more what seems an entire digression from the apostle's subject, yet it is not really so. He is about to set before us this spirit which he has already exemplified, and as that which is necessary to be our spirit in order to be able to go through a world like this, under the power of Satan, and where there are in every direction baits and lures, to lure the one who is capable of another object than Christ Himself. This was the apostle's object; and he shows us now how everything,—whatever it might be, (the undoubted privileges which were his as an apostle or a minister of Christ,)—was nevertheless to be used in the interests of Christ Himself. If it were claimed apart from this, it would be, for the man himself who did this, an evil and not a good.

[1] He first gives us, therefore, the claim which was rightly his as an apostle. Was he not that? Had he not seen Jesus the Lord? It was from Him, as we know, that he had got this apostleship; but were *they* not the seals of it also? Had not his work approved itself and been owned of God? They certainly were not the people to question this. If he were not an apostle to any others, yet surely he was to them, for they themselves were the seals of his apostleship. If, therefore, people were questioning, with regard to him, whether he had really

[2] (8-14): The scripture support of the claim.

[2] Do I speak these things after the manner of a man, or doth not the law also say these things? For in the law of Moses it is written, [c]Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that is treading out corn. Is it for the oxen God is caring? or saith he it altogether on our account? Yea, for our sakes it was written, that he that ploweth might plow in hope, and he that treadeth out corn, in hope of partaking. If we have [d]sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things? If others partake of this right over you, should not we rather? But we [e]have not used this right, and bear all things, that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ. Do ye not know that they [f]who work about sacred things eat of the things of the temple? They which wait upon the altar, partake with the altar. Even so, hath the Lord ordained that they who preach the gospel, [g]live of the gospel.

[3] (15-22): The transformation.

[3] But I have used none of these things; and I write

c Deut. 25.4.

d Rom. 15. 27.

e 2 Cor. 11. 7, 9.

f Num.18.8, 21.

g Gal. 6. 6.

this apostolic right, he answered at once by fully claiming it. No doubt they might take advantage of what we have read with regard to his life at Corinth, his working with his own hands there, a distinct testimony in the midst of people such as were the Corinthians, of the love which sought not theirs, but them. Was it a question, then, of right on his part? Had he not the same right as other apostles, and the brethren of the Lord and Cephas, to lead about with him a sister as a wife? Or had he alone and Barnabas not the right to abstain from working? What did common reason say? Who carried on a warfare at his own charges? Who planted a vineyard without expecting to eat of the fruit of it? Who that tended a flock did not eat of the milk of the flock. The claim then was evident, and nature itself affirmed it.

[2] But not only nature, Scripture affirmed it also. This was not what he said himself simply. Did not the law, which was practically the Scripture that was in their hands (there was little as yet of the Christian Scriptures as we know)—but did not the law say these things too? He interprets it according to its typical character as at other times. In the law of Moses it was written: "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn." Was it really, after all, for the oxen that God cared so much? He does not, of course, mean to deny that God has care for oxen, but was that the great thing? Was there no higher purpose of such a principle as that? Does he not, in fact, say it altogether, as the apostle puts it, on account of others,—the ministers of His grace? Yes, he says, for our sake it is written; that he that ploweth might plow in hope, and he that treadeth out corn in hope of partaking. Was it not right? If he had sown unto them spiritual things, did they think it a great matter that he should reap their carnal things? They acknowledged this right in others; could they fail to acknowledge it with regard to himself? And yet he had not used this right. That was the secret of his conduct at Corinth. He bore all things that no hindrance might be given to the gospel of Christ. Here was his motive. Here was the characteristic and principle of his life. It was Christ who governed one who was perfectly free in serving Him. But further, as to the law and in that which touched the present question more nearly, had not those who wrought about sacred things a right to eat of the things of the temple? Did not those who waited upon the altar partake with the altar of the gifts given? There is a perfect analogy in God's dealings at all times; and in this case the Lord has ordained, says the apostle, that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

[3] But we now come to see how this privilege is transformed in his hands into

not these things that it may be so done in my case: for it were good for me [h]rather to die than that any man should make my glorying void. For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; for woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel. For if I do this of mine own will, I have a reward; but if not of mine own will, I am [i]entrusted with a stewardship. What, then, is my reward? That when I preach the gospel, I make the gospel* without charge, so as not to use, as belonging to me, my right in the gospel; for though I be free from all, I have made myself [j]bond-servant to all, that I might gain the more. And [k]to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under law, as under law, ([l]not being myself under law,) that I might gain those that are under law; to them that are without law as without law (not as without law to God, but in [m]lawful subjection† to Christ) that I might gain them that are without law. To the [n]weak, I became as weak, that I might gain the weak. I am become all things to all men, that by all means I might save some.

h 2 Cor. 11. 10.

i Col. 1. 25.

j Rom. 1. 14. Gal. 5. 13.

k Acts 16. 3.

l Rom. 7. 4.

m Gal. 2. 19, 20.

n Rom. 15. 1. 2 Cor. 11. 29.

* Many add, "of Christ." † ἔννομος, "inlawed."

another kind of privilege altogether; that is, the privilege of sacrificing himself for Christ and in His service. "I have used," he says, "none of these things"; an argument no doubt which they were pleading against him, and he was not going now to insist upon this claim. He did not want them to do anything with regard to this. There was a glorying which he had, and which he would rather die than have made void. It was not indeed as to preaching the gospel that he was speaking. It was not his having anything to glory in there. With regard to this, necessity was laid upon him, he could do nothing else; yea, woe would it be to him if he did *not* preach the gospel. Quite true that if he did it freely, of his own will, he would have a reward, but if not, still he was entrusted with a stewardship; but now then, what was the reward of which he speaks? It was this, that in preaching the gospel he could make the gospel without charge, so as not to use his own right in the gospel; and that, in order to make the gospel itself more effective. Free from all, even love made him a bond-servant to all, that he might gain the more. Thus, if he were addressing himself to Jews, he became a Jew to gain them. We have seen this principle already in the circumcision of Timothy in the Acts. To those under the law he became as if under the law, though he was not, as he carefully tells us, himself in reality under it; but he was privileged to give up his liberty, and he gave it up freely, to gain those that were under the law. He could be with them without insisting upon his own Christian freedom; just as, on the other hand, he could be with the Gentile as without law, not as being lawless with regard to God; on the contrary, just as in lawful subjection to Christ; for it was in His interests that he was acting and seeking to win souls. Thus he wrought that he might gain those without law. If men were weak, he took the same ground; he would become weak, too, that he might gain these. As to any privilege of his own, he could give it up. He could not, of course, give up that in which he was bound in duty to God. That was another thing. He had no liberty in that which belonged to another, but with regard to anything which was simply his own right, he could give that up and did give it up, that by all means he might save men.

4. We have seen the transformation of privilege in the hands of one for whom

4 (ix. 23-x. 14): The testing in the way.
I (23-27): Conformity to the conditions of the way.

4. [1] And I [o]do all things for the gospel's sake, that I may be a joint partaker with it. Know ye not that they who run in a race-course, run all, but one receiveth the prize? So [p]run, that ye may obtain. And every one that contendeth [for the prize] is temperate in all things: they indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown, but we an [q]incorruptible. I, therefore, so run, as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not beating the air: but I buffet my body and lead it [r]captive, that having preached to others, I may not myself be [s]rejected.

o ch. 10. 33.
p Phil. 2.16, Phil. 3. 13, 14.
q 2 Tim.4.8, 1 Pet. 5. 4.
r Rom.8.13.
s 2 Cor.13.6.

Christ was the object of life. Privilege it remained, but how changed in its character! That which was but a matter of self-interest before, becomes now an opportunity for self-sacrifice on behalf of Christ and His gospel. This was a privilege indeed, and this is the spirit which alone can carry a man safely through Satan's world undeceived and unallured (we may add, undismayed) by all that Satan may employ against him. In this there seems to be the reference to the main subject of this part, in which it is plainly the power of the enemy which is before us. He is himself one who by seeking his own, lost all that he had, and this is still the nature of his allurement. He cannot, therefore, touch the one who seeks not his own, but the things of Christ. We go on now to see how the principle tests us, the testing being necessarily involved through the fact of going through a world like this, which is Satan's world.

[1] There is a prize before the apostle, but it is beyond and therefore outside of present things. He was seeking to partake with the gospel, which he personifies here—that gospel with which he was identified in its triumphs and gains. In this he was using the energy which was requisite to press through the difficulties of the way. Life was for him a race, calling on the one hand for energy, and on the other for conformity to the conditions of a race. As the apostle says, not all the runners in a race receive the prize. There must be a running after such a manner as to obtain. Every one that contendeth for a prize is temperate in all things; and this is only to receive a corruptible crown, but the Christian's crown is incorruptible. The apostle, therefore, was so running, not in any uncertainty about the end, but as taking the due means to reach the end. He was fighting, not as one beating the air. It was no needless conflict. There was his own body to be buffeted and led captive, as he expresses it; and here after all is always the great hindrance. We have seen already how the Spirit of God is in the body in order to deliver us from the power of it, and to make the very place of the conflict that in which God manifests Himself. He does this, as he says, lest having preached to others, he himself should be rejected. The word is "disapproved," but it is the ordinary word which the apostle uses again in the last chapter of the second epistle, where it is translated "reprobates." He there plainly uses it for final, absolute rejection, and here it can be really no different from that. People have sought to guard what needs no guarding, the precious doctrine of God's perfect grace, and of the believer's safety in committing himself to that grace; but there are, nevertheless, conditions of the way; and this Scripture always recognizes. There is a way the end of which is eternal life. The way of evil and unholiness does not lead to life, but the reverse; and God's grace never alters this. It would not be that which breaks the power of sin, if it were mere laxity in this respect. The apostle expresses no fear for himself, but applies the principle to himself. He could not except himself from the application. If he did so, he would be permitting any other professing Christian to follow his example in it. It is simply the professor who is contemplated in all these conditional statements, but when we say the professor, we do not mean the mere professor, for few such would own the application, and if the Christian does not own it he is a loser by that fact. The Lord means that we should solemnly realize the connection of holiness and salvation, and we must not in any

2 (x. 1-14): The witness of history.

1 For I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that all our fathers were [t]under the cloud and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same [u]spiritual food, and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of a [v]spiritual rock which followed them, and the rock was Christ. Howbeit, with

t Ex. 14. 19-22.

u Ex. 16. 15.

v Ex. 17. 6. Num. 20. 11.

wise separate the two. On the other hand, nothing but grace can work for holiness. Nothing but grace can give us the only proper motive for a holy life, which is Christ's glory and not our personal gain; although we do gain personally by it. So with the apostle here, therefore. He speaks of himself simply as a preacher to others, and he puts himself upon the same ground as any other preacher. One may preach to others and be one's self rejected. That is, alas, clear, and that is all he says. *He* was entering intelligently into the conditions of the race and running it, but he had no thought that God would not preserve him to the end and enable him to persevere through all hindrances, whatever they might be.

1 He then adduces the witness of history in which the things that happened to Israel were, as he says, things that happened to them for types. Full of admonition in themselves, full of significance for that generation in which they really happened, they nevertheless develop for us a higher meaning which God would have us read in them, the history of which is so written that it might develop for us. How important it is to realize this principle all through those histories of the Old Testament, and even of the New, in which there is much more than is upon the surface, and in which God shows us His control upon everything in connection with men, making the wrath of man to praise Him, restraining the remainder of it, and giving a meaning to things which those of whom it is the history were perfectly ignorant. Thus he tells us that all our fathers, Israel's fathers, were under the cloud and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized to Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They were set apart to Moses as his disciples; which is what baptism represents for us with regard to Christ. They were set apart in the most solemn way by the cloud which covered them and protected them from their enemies, by the sea which divided to let them pass and overthrew their pursuers. In that cloud and sea they were delivered from all the condition in which they had been as slaves to the Egyptians, and were set truly free,—free to serve God their Saviour. How powerful should have been the impress of such events upon them, God Himself having become in this way their Saviour-God! We can find in all this history a deeper meaning, but there was a deep meaning in what they themselves experienced. Then in the wilderness the same love followed them. They ate of the spiritual food; they drank, he says, of spiritual drink, ("spiritual." one may say, perhaps, in its origin, and in the meaning which was more than merely to furnish sustenance for them,—*that* might have been done easily in another way,) but to keep them also in dependence upon God and make them realize the ministering hand of God and the tenderness of His care for them,—thus that their hearts might be brought fully to Him and made absolutely to confide in Him. This spiritual rock, as the apostle says, followed them; not, of course, that there was any *literal* following of a rock, as some have wildly imagined, or of even the streams from the first rock smitten. There was another rock smitten, as we know, afterwards, and the streams which first flowed from the rock were, therefore, not those that actually followed them all through the wilderness; but the same love followed them with a similar supply, so that it was one and the same thing all the way through; and the rock had a deeper meaning than any they could have realized in it. The rock for us is Christ. It is from this Rock, the riven Rock, that the streams of the Spirit flow to us; a Rock which requires no more to be smitten (Moses in that way spoiled the type, as we know) but only to be spoken to.

most of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things happened as types of us, that we should not [x]lust after evil things as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters as were some of them; as it is written: [y]the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

[w] Num. 14. 30, 32.
[x] Num. 11. 4, 34.
[y] Ex. 32. 6.

Thus has God provided for us. The types of baptism and the Lord's supper, which some would find here, are part of that ritualistic perversion of things which lowers everything it touches. There are no types of baptism at all. The passage in the first of Peter which may seem to come nearest to this is in fact very different. There the water of the deluge and the water of baptism are spoken of in fact as *alike* figures. They are both figures of spiritual things, and they are like figures; but the one figure is not a figure of the other figure. So with baptism and the Lord's supper now. They are both figures, and they are in their highest, deepest, fullest reality figures for us. The very adoption by the Lord of such simple things as water, as bread and wine, admonishes us to keep to the same simplicity. Water can do only what water can do; and bread and wine can minister to the body, but not as such to the soul. The spiritual significance in them is everything for us, and the memorial character of the Lord's supper, in which we have the remembrance of a dead Christ, is an absolute protest against the thought of there being ministered to us in it a Christ who does not *as such* exist. It is not a dead Christ now with whom we have to do, but a living Christ; but it is not a living Christ we have to do with in the ordinance of the supper, but a dead Christ. There can be no confusion of these two things without a confusion resulting in every way; and, as has been said before, there is nothing more degrading, there is nothing that has wrought worse confusion for the Church of Christ, than forgetfulness of simple principles such as these. Here we have "the Rock was Christ." Does anybody imagine that the rock was literally Christ? Of course not; but when the Lord says: "This is My body," He uses similar language exactly. The rock was Christ in its spiritual significance, nothing else, and the supper is Christ in sweet and holy memory; and that is much more than anything that ritualism could give us.

These things, then, were types in Israelitish history; yet after all, spite of all God's dealings with them, spite of all the love which had delivered and which was continually blessing them, with most of them God was not well pleased, and they were overthrown in the wilderness,—solemn word of admonition then for us in these things which happened, as he says, as types of us, warnings of the greatest significance. As we think of how, indeed, there were but two of that whole generation brought out of Egypt, as grown men at least, who survived to enter Canaan, it is a serious admonition as to what might come of the testing of Christian profession after this manner. Warning it is for us all. We have no right to say, Well, but we are true Christians, and therefore we need not trouble about these things. These are things which as principles are of the greatest importance for us to realize. There are evil things for which we may lust as they lusted. If God prevents the extreme result for us, that is His mercy, but the effect of our disregarding the warnings may be that our lives may be, alas, how greatly spoiled and disfigured and made quite other than He would have them, by our laxity! The people turned even from God Himself and became idolaters. As it is written: "The people sat down to eat and to drink and rose up to play." They turned from the very One who had manifestly led them out of Egypt and who went before them in a pillar of cloud and fire by night and by day. They turned from the One who had drawn them to Himself and made them His own peculiar people after this manner, and in the very presence of the fiery mount they said: "As for this Moses, we know not what has become of him. Up, make us gods that may go before us." They might dignify their idols with Jehovah's name. God would have none of it. He had already forbidden it and stamped

Neither let us [a]commit fornication, as some of them committed fornication, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ,* as some of them [a]tempted, and perished by serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them [b]murmured, and perished by the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them as types, and were written for our admonition, upon whom the [c]ends of the ages are

[a] Num. 25. 1.
[a] Num. 21. 6.
[b] Num. 16. 41, 46.
[c] Heb. 9. 26.

* Many read, "the Lord."

it as following a false god, and so in fact it was. The god they celebrated with their heathen games and sports was not Jehovah. How important for us to realize that we also may have in measure another god than the true God, while the name remains for us the same, and another Christ, perhaps, than the true Christ, although we speak reverently of Him all the while! The lusts of the flesh broke out in what followed in Israel's case. If one departs from God, the necessary result will be that from the evil in us we shall not be able to depart. It will have full control, as with Israel. In one day there fell three and twenty thousand of them. The passage in Numbers says four and twenty thousand, and it does not seem a question of any difference of reading here; but it does not say that the four and twenty thousand fell in one day. The apostle may give the immediate result here, and the history go further.

There was another form of evil. They tempted the Lord in the wilderness. They tried His patience. How great that patience had been with them, to its full limit! They refused His gracious provision and scoffed against His care, and perished by serpents. This shows us distinctly to what the apostle refers. For us, the admonition is that we tempt not Christ. It does not seem exactly to follow that he means that they tempted Christ in the wilderness. Another reading, very well supported also, is here "the Lord," instead of "Christ," but there is no need to adopt it. Christ is for us the Lord, the one Lord, than whom there is no other, and Israel's sin can be committed, as is plain, by us in this very way. We can refuse the light food of which Israel had said: "What is it?" but which contained so much for them; food of the mighty, and which would have made them, had they truly understood it, the men of might they should have been. How great for us, alas, is the danger of turning, too, from that which alone can nourish our souls and seeking in some form or other the things upon which men feed around us! The Lord allowed the power of the enemy to manifest itself in the serpents by which they perished, and the same power of the enemy will still manifest itself upon us in turning to the world away from Christ. It is there that his power is found. He is the prince of this world. The world has been formed in its moral character by that fall to which he seduced men, and thus, if we will venture upon this ground, we shall find that he has not yet given up those as to whom he believes he has gained the perfect right of a master. They murmured in other ways. They murmured when the hand of God came upon them in judgment, in the destruction of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. They murmured against Moses, when it was really by the judgment of God that these had fallen, so that again the hand of the destroyer was upon them and the former judgment was solemnly confirmed in the repetition of it. How easily, too, we may murmur against that which has been simply the necessary judgment of God because of the sins of His professing people, instead of humbling ourselves before Him on account of them!

"All these things," then, the apostle reminds us here, "happened to them as types." They are not merely things which may be applied in that way now, but that is the very meaning of the history for us as we read it. They are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages are come. It is not the ends of the "world," but the ends of the dispensations past,—those dispensations of trial which for us are closed by the death of Christ, in which

5 (x. 15-33): Association with God, and its responsibility.
1 (15 22): Identification with the Lord or with the demon.

come. Wherefore, [d]let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as belongeth to man; and God is faithful who will [e]not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but [f]will, with the temptation, make the issue also, that ye may be able to bear it. Wherefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

5. [1] I speak as to men intelligent: judge what I say. The [g]cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The [h]bread which we

[d] Rom. 11. 20.
[e] 2 Pet. 2. 9.
[f] Jas. 5. 11.
[g] Matt. 26. 27, 28.
[h] Matt. 26. 26.

the utter condemnation of man is reached, but in which, also, divine grace has reached us. We can look back now over those ages and find them all ministering to us their special lessons. How wonderful a place to be set in, to have instruction of this kind from every past generation! How important that we should heed the admonition of it, and how guilty shall we be in disregarding it! "Wherefore," says the apostle, "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." That, surely, is a great part of the admonition. Those dispensations were the trial of man as man. There can be no trial when there is no self-confidence on man's part,—when we have reached where the apostle was, and can say we have no confidence in the flesh. All self-confidence is confidence in the flesh. All true confidence is confidence in God alone. It is thus that we find ability to stand. We stand indeed, but we stand as He holds us up. If we think that we stand after any independent manner, we are on the very brink of a fall. Dependence is that which is proper to a creature; and we are not merely in a dangerous place, but we have, as one may say, already fallen, when we have lost our hold of the Hand that supports us.

How blessed to realize again that in the midst of a world full of testing, such as this is, in which the history of the Church has repeated for us in so solemn a way the history of Israel, in which man has been tested under grace (although that was not the object of grace) as he has been so thoroughly, still with the same result! When we look at ourselves, and think of how little we are able to stand against all the trials of the way, how blessed to realize the limits which the apostle sets to the trial! There is no temptation but such as belongs to man; and then, God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able. He is speaking, of course, of a soul in the true condition of conscious helplessness before Him. If we are self-confident, we shall find that the least temptation is something above what we are able; but if we are in a right condition, (which should be the normal one of the Christian,) God will not suffer temptation to be too strong for us, but will with the temptation make the outcome of it also a deliverance in due time, that we may be able to bear it. He adds, significantly, as one great lesson of it all: "Wherefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry." Idolatry was but one feature of that history of Israel, although a notorious one; but for us, is it not, in fact, in a heart that wanders from God which makes in this way, however little conscious it may be, a false god of its own,—is it not in this that all departure from Him, we may say, is found? Here is the root, the basis of it. If God Himself, the God that we know, the God that has been revealed to us, is the God of our hearts, the God whom we serve and follow, how safe and how blessed will be our condition! Christ is the manifestation of God for this, and thus we are indeed far better provided than was Israel in the knowledge of this God who claims our obedience and our affections. What is it for us to depart from One who has revealed Himself to us after this manner?

5. We return now fully to that question which has been in the apostle's mind all the way through, the results for us of this power of Satan manifest in the world, of which he is prince, and where he has so molded things according to his mind. In fact, in those days, as we know, idolatry was everywhere. The Emperor was worshiped as divine, so that not to worship him was disobedience

break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? Because we being many are one loaf, one body; for we all partake of that one loaf. Behold Israel after the flesh. Are not [e]they who eat the sacrifices in communion with the altar? What then do I say? That what is sacrificed to an idol is anything, or that the idol is anything? But [I say] that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they [f]sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I would not that ye should be in communion with demons. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; ye cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. Do we [g]provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

[e] ch. 9. 13.

[f] Deut. 32. 17.

[g] Deut. 32. 21.

[23] [h]All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful, but all do not edify. Let [m]no one seek his own, but the other's [good]. Every-

[h] ch. 6. 12.

[m] ch. 13. 5.

[23–33]: The conscience, and service to another.

to the law. What was a Christian to do in the midst of so great defilement? They, on their part, were identified with God, and with Him whom God has appointed to be the Lord of all, who claimed such obedience as none other ever even thought of claiming. The apostle, therefore, looks at this question of association with God and the responsibility resulting from it.

[16] In the first place, he puts before us our identification with the Lord as in the manifest tokens of it in the cup and the loaf, which stood for a pledged communion with Himself. He bids them enter intelligently into this question. What was the cup of blessing which they blessed? Was it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread they broke, was it not the communion of the body of Christ? Were they not all by it one loaf, the manifested body, one body, as all partaking of that one loaf? It is plain that what men call the sacrament stands for something in this connection. There is an outward pledge in it. There is something which, if not real, is the fullest hypocrisy. Here is before us in this table, in all the responsibility of it, communion with the body and blood of Christ,—Christ in all that He has done for us, all that He has endeared Himself to us by. What are we going to do with it? Thus identified, must not this follow us into our common, ordinary life, into every detail of our conduct here? He puts before them Israel after the flesh. Were not those who ate the sacrifices in communion with the altar? Were they not identified, if what they did meant anything, if it were anything more than the grossest formalism, with all that that Jewish altar stood for? It was not, therefore, a question as to whether there was any reality in the idol or not. He has already decided that there was not, but the idol stood for something in men's thoughts; and not merely that, but in this idolatry the power of Satan wrought so that the things the Gentiles sacrificed they did not sacrifice, in fact, to nothing, but to demons, and not to God. Thus there was the most serious question possible. People could not escape by saying that an idol was nothing in the world, and that there was no other God but One. They could not drink the cup of the Lord, which said this, and the cup of the idol, which said another thing. They could not partake of the Lord's table aright and of the table of demons. Was it not provoking the Lord to jealousy? Were they going to be stronger than He?

[17] Once more he takes up that which might be urged, that all these things were lawful things. A man might sit in an idol's temple and get no harm. He might eat of the idol's offerings and get no harm. With his higher knowledge, these things meant nothing for him; but that was not the whole question. On one side they might mean nothing; on another side they might mean very much. In the one view, all things indeed were lawful, but here are other things to be affected by them. Could they say that all things were expedient too? If one

thing sold in the shambles eat, making no inquiry for conscience' sake, for the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof. Now if one of them that believe not invite you and ye are disposed to go, all that is set before you eat, making no inquiry for conscience' sake. But if any one say to you, This hath been sacrificed to an idol, eat not, for his sake that showed it and for conscience' sake; but conscience, I say, not thine own, but that of the other: for why is [n]my liberty being judged by another conscience? If I partake with thanksgiving, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks? Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, [o]do all to the glory of God. Give no occasion of stumbling, whether to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the assembly of God. Even as [p]I also please all men in all things, [q]not seeking mine own profit, but that of the many, that they may be saved.

n Rom. 14. 13.

o Col. 3. 17.

p Rom. 15. 2. ch. 9. 19, 22.

q ver. 24.

had nobody to please but himself, then he might, of course, please himself; but all things, as he says, that are lawful do not edify, do not help another; and that is what we are bound to do, not to seek our own, but the good of others. As to the things sold in the shambles, which were in fact often things sacrificed to idols, they could eat of them if that were all, and make no inquiry for conscience' sake. They would neither be defiled spiritually nor injured in any way. The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. They could eat it in that sense, and so far have no conscience about it; and, supposing one of those that believed not invited them to a feast, and they were disposed to go, they could eat of that which was set before them, making no question of anything, as far as they were concerned. But suppose some one said, This is sacrificed to an idol. Now, says the apostle, that shows that here is a man to whom an idol is something, not nothing, as it is to you; and now your conscience ought to be affected by that which affects his conscience. You are one as Christians, and you are bound to help one another as one. The conscience that I am regarding, you may say, is the conscience of another, and not my own; yes, but why do I turn my liberty into something which another man's conscience judges as evil? Why do I injure him with that which I may, so far as I am concerned, do sinlessly before God? If I partake of this meat with thanksgiving, why should I do it so as to allow myself to be evil spoken of for the very thing I am giving thanks for? Is it a right use? Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we are to do all to the glory of God. We are to give no occasion of stumbling, whether to Jews or Greeks or the assembly of God. With eyes watching all around, how careful should the conduct of a Christian be, and how very far from deciding a thing is the mere question of right and wrong in itself; of right and wrong, that is, in the thing of which I am thinking, leaving out altogether the judgment of others or the snares that may be for others in it! Let it be even here not simply the question of Christians, but, as he says, Jews or Greeks, who may be drawn to Christ or repelled from Him by what they see in Christians. How common a case is this! How commonly is the conduct of Christians pleaded against the Christianity they profess! For himself it was, as we know, the apostle's constant aim to please all men in all things, but in this spirit, which involves a necessary limitation, that he was seeking, not his own profit, but that of the many, and their truest profit, also, that they might be saved.

Div. 2.

We have now reached the second division of the epistle, in which we are no longer dealing with outside questions, with the relations of the Church to the

DIVISION 2. (Chaps. xi.-xiv.)

The activities and fellowship of the assembly.

I (xi. 1-16): The headship of Christ, and of the man.

1. [r]BE ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you that ye [s]remember me in all things, and that as I delivered them unto you, ye [t]keep the things delivered. Now I would have you know that Christ is the [u]head of every man, and the [v]head of the woman is the man, and the [w]head of Christ is God.

r ch. 4. 16. Eph. 5. 1. Phil. 3. 17.
s ch. 4. 17.
t ch. 7. 17.
u Rev. 3.14.
v Gen. 3. 16. 1 Tim.2.11, 12.
w Jno.14.28. ch.15.27,28.

world, as one may say, but with that which was proper to the Church itself as a company of those gathered to the Lord's name. We have before us the spiritual activities of the assembly and the fellowship found in it. The apostle has hitherto been contending for the keeping up the fence of separation. He is now turning to what is entirely different from this. It is the fellowship of the assembly, the common enjoyment of the common blessings which belong to it.

1. In the first place, however, it is very striking that we have not the assembly as such exactly before us. The apostle begins, rather, with that which has to do with man's place in creation, apart, plainly, from the effects of the fall, therefore. He must settle this point before he goes on,—a most important point,—to show that the Church, with all its higher privileges, was still to be submitted to God as the Creator, and according to that which He had instituted for man as such. In all this he finds, indeed, the types of spiritual things. Nature is this throughout. If we look at nature apart from the word of God, nothing in it will be properly intelligible to us. If we take Scripture as the key to it, we shall find everywhere that we are in contact with the same spiritual truths as we find in Scripture. But this is not simply a question of such a kind: it is the simple truth that we have, as those who are Christ's, been restored (and more than restored) to the place which the fall had forfeited for man. We are to be filling, therefore, that place which God gave man first. We are to be observers of the order which creation has established for us. We must not use the thought of grace, or even of our place in Christ, (which is above and beyond all this,) to make void our obligation to carry out that which God has in this way appointed.

The apostle urges them to be imitators of him as he was of Christ. He could praise them that they kept him in mind in those things that he delivered to them, that they were keeping the things delivered; but he wants them to know that Christ is the Head of every man, come to be a Man Himself; taking His place as such, He takes it in necessary supremacy. He is not simply the Head of the Church here. He is the Head of *man* as a Man. He is indeed the Creator, but He is also, as elsewhere declared, the "First-born of all creation." As that First-born, he is not what Adam was; and yet, in another sense, we may speak of Adam also coming from the hand of God as the first-born of men. In that way Adam was the head of every man naturally. Christ is the spiritual Head, the One in whom manhood reaches its highest dignity, in whom the whole human race, so far as redeemed, rises again to the full thought of God for man, and beyond that which Adam himself, unfallen, could declare to us.

But Christ, then, is the Head of every man. The head of the woman is the man. Here is what we were saying; something which in the minds of many now would be contradicted or set aside by the place in Christ which we have got, in which there is neither man nor woman. That is quite true, and remains always true, that there is in Christ neither male nor female. There is a common equality, and one of the most perfect and highest kind, which can never be touched, never set aside, but to be acknowledged in the fullest possible way. That does not, on the other hand, set aside the fact that in God's order for earth, and in the place which God has given to man and woman respectively on the earth, the head of the woman is the man. The higher fact is shown forth in the

Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoreth his head. But every woman praying or [x]prophesying with her head uncovered, dishonoreth her head: for it is one and the same thing as if she were shaven. For if a woman be not covered, let her hair also be cut off; but if it be shameful to a woman to [y]have her hair cut off or to be shaved, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to have his head covered, forasmuch as he is the [z]image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. For neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man. For this cause

x Acts 21. 9.

y Num. 5. 18. Deut. 21. 12.

z Gen. 5. 1.

lower one. There are not two heads in creation, but one. Two heads would mean division. God's thought is unity. The man, as he says afterward, is not without the woman in the Lord. The man and the woman form the man in the full sense of humanity, and the woman is necessary thus to make the man what he is; but that alters nothing, but rather confirms what he contends for here according to God's thought, as we look back and see it in creation itself,—the head of the woman is the man. Let us go further, he says. The Head of Christ is God. Is that something derogatory to His true character? Is not *He* God? Is not He divine? Yet, after all, it can be said, "the Head of Christ is God." Christ has taken His place as man, and He is not ashamed of it, and He does not refuse the consequences of it. He has come to be in creation the example of most perfect obedience on the creature's part, as well as on God's part the example of the most perfect grace, the fullest revelation of God that can be found. Thus, then, we have these things established.

There are some practical consequences in the exhibition of this order of things upon the earth. If a man pray or prophesy having his head covered, he dishonors his head; in itself a very small thing surely,—in that which it signifies not small at all. Everything depends upon the truth which is in it, or the error. The head covered for him is, as we see directly, the place of subjection taken. The woman covering her head does not profess to be the head. The head is covered with her, if she takes her place praying or prophesying; that is, as we see clearly, where it is a question of the assembly,—not necessarily as *gathered*, however, where her place in connection with others, therefore, is in question. If she prays or prophesies, although this prophesying was by a higher power than that of nature,—by the Spirit of God, and thus asserting for her her full rights as one in Christ, equal rights with any other,—yet if she prayed or prophesied with her head uncovered, she dishonored her head. Everything that is out of its place before God, is dishonored. If we exalt ourselves, it is our own dishonor. It is one and the same thing, therefore, he says, as if she were shaven. Why not let the woman cut off the hair which nature has given her? Plainly she has it in a way that man has not. You say, perhaps, if she has the hair, let that be enough, it is what nature has given her, let her wear that. But the wearing of the hair is not of necessity at all the owning the truth which is in it. The covering of the head owns for her, on her part, the truth which is in that testimony of nature. She is giving heed to the testimony when she covers her head. Thus the man ought not to have his head covered, because he is, in a direct way, as one may say, the image and glory of God, His representative upon the earth. The woman is the glory of the man.

All this has reference, of course, to present display. It is not a question of what is final, what is heavenly, what is eternal. It is God's order as He has instituted it, and which we are bound to respect. There is meaning in it also, and we shall suffer if we refuse it; but the point here is, the order of creation. Thus, if we look back, the man is not of the woman. The man did not originally

ought the woman to have authority upon her head [a] on account of the angels. However, neither is the woman without the man, nor the man without the woman, in the Lord; for as the woman is of the man, so also is the man by the woman; but all things are of God. Judge in yourselves, is it seemly that a woman pray unto God uncovered? Doth not even nature itself teach you that if a man have long hair, it is a dishonor to him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering. But if any one think to be contentious, [b] we have no such custom, nor the assemblies of God.

[a] ch. 4. 9.

[b] ch. 14. 36, 37.

come from the woman. On the other hand, the woman came from the man,—not the order of things now, as one may say; but that is what God showed us at the beginning. Nor was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man. The man was created first, and it was not good for him that he should be alone. The woman was created in view of this need,—a woman for that very reason; why not another man? Just because, as another man, there would not be really the same help found. He needs that which, while a symbol of the dependence of the creature, rather than the independence given in a sense to man, would appeal to him by that very fact, and to his heart as one dependent on him. In every way, however, the woman (not the individual as such, but *as* woman) is for the man; and "for this cause," he says, "the woman ought to have authority upon her head,"—the sign of authority,—"on account of the angels." The angels are the witnesses of creation. They have seen from the beginning what God did. They are acquainted with His thoughts with regard to man, and we are a spectacle to the world and to angels and to men. Thus, then, the woman is to heed these angelic spectators.

However, he adds: "Neither is the man without the woman nor the woman without the man in the Lord; for as the woman is of the man, so also is the man by the woman, but all things are of God." God has instituted these things. If we learn them aright, we shall admire the wisdom of them; but whether or not, we are to submit ourselves to His appointment. A lower place is not of necessity a really inferior place. Christ has come into the lowest place of all in order to serve us, yet it was the most wonderful, the most glorious place that He could have taken, and all God's glory has been manifested in it. Thus we must dismiss altogether the thought of what things are, as we may say, in themselves. A servant's place, how unsuited to the Lord of glory! but look again, how suited and wonderful that Servant's place! Nay, is not God over all the One who serves all? And is He not by that very fact the Better who blesses the lesser? Has not Christ taken the place of service? and in that human body which He has, has He not pledged Himself to it in some sense forever? Let us, then, own that which God has done, and find the good of it. It is in our filling the place that we shall find the recompense from God—not just according to the place we fill, but in the way we fill it. God has appointed for us everywhere,—as we find when we come to the thought of the body itself,—God has appointed everywhere diversity, and in some sense therefore the inferiority of many, the parts that are weak and the parts that are not in honor as the other parts are; yet how perfectly are all fitted together, and how perfectly is every part necessary to the blessing of the whole! How fully has God united us in this way! Creation is but the witness of that which we find in the Church of God itself, so that the apostle appeals directly here to the teaching of nature. If a man have but long hair, is it not a dishonor to him? Why? Nature has not provided for him that covering which it has provided for the woman. If a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her, for her hair is given to her for her covering; and how truly we feel that the more a woman hides herself, the more beautiful she is,—that in this

2 (xi.17-34): Communion with Christ's death.

2. Now in giving you this charge, I do not praise you, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. For, first, when ye come together in assembly, I hear that [c]divisions exist among you, and in part I give credit to it. For there [d]must also be sects among you, that they that are approved may be [e]made manifest among you. When, therefore, ye come together

[c] ch. 1.11,12.
[d] Matt.18.7.
[e] Lk. 2. 35. 1 Jno. 2. 19.

hiding one's self is the very glory of the creature after all, and that she is but a lesson to us, one of the many lessons that God has given us as creatures, in this way. The apostle ends the matter, however, abruptly, by saying if this does not suffice, it must suffice then to say that we have no other custom than this, nor have the assemblies of God. He could speak for these, as, of course, being the one whom God had appointed to be the layer of the foundations for the whole Church at large.

2. We now come to the consideration of the assembly itself, and, first, in what gathers it. The order here is very simple and beautiful. We have, first of all, Christ in the exhibition of His love for us in the sacrifice of His death as that which draws us together. This is what our eyes are first fixed upon. This is where communion is found with one another.

We next turn to look at those who are in this way gathered. They are members of Christ, the body of Christ Himself; and we learn what is implied in this, not only that which makes them one, but the diversity which exists in this unity as that which is implied in the body as an organism. Then we have, in the thirteenth chapter, the spirit which practically animates the body of Christ, the spirit of love, which is the spirit of ministry,—a ministry which the body in itself implies, for the members are members one of another, and exist not merely for themselves, but for the whole. We are then competent to look at the exercise of the gifts belonging to them in this character, as come together in actual assembly. This is in the fourteenth chapter, and we see how the spirit of love is that which in fact orders everything, produces that which is true spiritual order according to God. This closes this part of the epistle.

We have, then, now before us, in the first place, the centre of communion, Christ Himself, but Christ not looked at as a living Person, as many would expect. We do not start with the thought that Christ is in the midst, although He *is* in the midst where people are gathered together to His Name; but that is a different thing, and in fact we are not drawn to Him as personally thus present. We are gathered together to His *Name*. That implies His absence rather than His presence, but it is the expression of what we know of Him as the absent One. It is this apprehension of Him that gathers us, and we see at once that it is not a living Christ, but a dead Christ that is before us. That is the very point of it. We are brought to look back upon the hole of the pit from which we are digged, and to realize our indebtedness to this blessed One whom we remember. Important it is that we should realize this fact, that it is a dead Christ and not a living One we remember. It is, as already said, the destruction of ritualism, in this respect, to its very centre,—the body of Christ which people speak of as indeed receiving in the Lord's supper. What body do they think of—a living or a dead body? Do they really think that they receive the dead body of Christ in any real sense in the Lord's supper? The living body is out of the question. It is a dream which is not found in any text of Scripture whatever. A dead body no one thinks of, and yet if it be any participation that we have here, it is in the dead body and not in the living one.

The apostle begins here with a reference once more to their divisions. The first thing was that in coming together they came not for the better, but for the worse, to make apparent,—as coming near to God in fact does,—their true condition. When they came together, the first thing that was manifest was their divisions. In their very way of coming together they showed themselves apart.

into the same place, it is not to eat the Lord's supper: for in eating each one taketh his own supper before [others], and one is hungry and another ᶠdrinketh to excess. Have ye not, then, houses for eating and drinking? or despise ye the assembly of God, and put them to shame who have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I do not praise. For ᵍI received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, how that the Lord Jesus, in the night in which he was delivered up, ʰtook bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, This is my body which is for you: this do in remembrance of me.

ᶠ 2 Pet. 2. 13. Jude 12.

ᵍ Gal. 1. 12.

ʰ Lk. 22. 19.

Their sects declared themselves in making separate parties of that which they owned to be the one body of Christ, even going so far as, in eating, each to take before others his own supper. It was manifest that he made it his own and not the supper of the Church as a whole, and one was hungry and another was even drinking to excess.

The license about it all is manifest; and there was an opportunity for this which now no longer exists. In fact, the Lord's supper was instituted, as we know, in connection with the celebration of the passover, and the passover supper was that, therefore, that introduced it. The "agape," or love feast, which existed at any rate very early in the Church, was the continuation of this paschal supper, which, though it did not really belong to the supper of the Lord itself, yet was supposed to make it all more exactly according to the institution. Thus there was in connection with the supper the taking of a meal, which gave the opportunity that we see here the Corinthians availed themselves of for license. The preliminary feast was crowding out, in fact, the Lord's supper altogether, and they were going on as if in entire forgetfulness of it. That is evidently what the apostle is saying here. He reproves them by asking, have they not houses for eating and drinking in, or were they putting to shame the poor who had not, and despising the assembly of God which embraces them all? Could he praise them in this? It was impossible that he could do so. Then he calls them back to the institution of the supper as the Lord had given it. It is striking that he had received this of the Lord Himself. As the distinct minister of the Church, it was not simply that he found existing that which he went on with, as in the case of baptism. As to baptism, Christ had not sent him specially to baptize, although he did baptize as others did; but the Lord's supper has a different place altogether. As that in which the unity of the body of Christ was manifested, he must have a special revelation concerning it. Thus he speaks of the special way and circumstances, so touching as they were, in which the Lord had instituted this gathering feast; it was on the night on which He was delivered up, in which there was given opportunity for the treachery of one of His own, one of those specially gathered around Himself, and who had walked in company with Him, beholding the manifestation of divine love and power in Him, which had been given. It was upon such a night as this, and in the midst of the shadow which was thus coming upon His soul, that He had taken the bread, giving thanks, and broken it, and said: "This is my body, which is for you; ["broken" is not in the original] this do in remembrance of Me." Simplicity itself all this is; how completely opposite, again, to all that ritualism has connected with it! In like manner also, after supper He took the cup, saying: "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do ye, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me." The apostle adds, as his interpretation of it: "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye declare the Lord's death until He come."

Here is the whole matter. No atmosphere of mystery surrounds it whatever. It is simply the memorial of a death to which we as Christians owe our all,

> In like manner, also, the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink the cup, ye declare the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore, whosoever shall

—the death of the One whom it has made our Lord forever. In contrast with all this, think of what ritualism has made of it! It is striking, also, that the very point here, the thing for which he is reproving the Corinthians, is for not *discerning* the Lord's body. It is plain, therefore, that it was the very opportunity to show what this discernment of the Lord's body would be. He takes no trouble to define it. He does not in the least suppose that there is any mystery about it, in the sense in which men speak of it. That which he speaks of is bread and the cup. These are the memorials of the Lord in His death. The bread is His body, more strictly Himself, as one may say. The cup is His blood, the remembrance not so much of Himself as of His work. The body and the blood are separate. It is, again, a dead Christ that we remember. We surely remember, also, that He is risen from the dead, and we know by faith, even, that He is present with us; but all this, while it gives additional gladness to the celebration, in no wise forms part of the celebration itself. The Person of the Lord, as already said, appears more distinctly in the bread which we break. It is this One, the Man Christ Jesus, whom we remember. This implies no forgetfulness of what He was, of course; but it is in fact the One who was here in the world in that life and death of His which were for us, which give us all our knowledge of Him as He lives now before God. All our apprehension of Him belongs, we may say, to this manifestation of divine love and glory in Him who was upon earth among us. He is gone out of it, but He is the same Christ who was here, and He is coming again to receive us to Himself. We look back in the ordinance to His death. We look forward to His coming again.

The cup is here said to be the new covenant in His blood,—a hard text for ritualism, that! Is it literally the *cup* that is this? We may say that is a figure,—the cup is used for what is contained in it. Granted. Well, is what is contained in it, then, the new covenant in Christ's blood? It is the blood itself if anything,—that blood which we are quite sure He did not carry into heaven, but which was shed upon earth. It is the memorial of a life given up for us, and which, as given up, in its sacrificial character is the foundation of the new covenant of grace in which we stand. The words are simple enough, and easy to be understoood. It is only ritualism itself that makes them hard. The Lord adds again in this case: "Do this in remembrance of Me." That is its distinctive character, a remembrance. A remembrance is not of something existing at the present moment, but of something in the past. It is all our joy to know that this death that we celebrate is actually past, and that it can never take place again. To talk of an unbloody offering, as men do in their mass, is only to destroy the whole reality of what is expressed here. There is no such thing as an unbloody offering. "Without shedding of blood is no remission," and this the Lord did once when He offered up Himself. Thus the significance is as plain as can be. It is absolute simplicity, which we may darken by reading into it what is not there, and which it has even been confessed by many as not there. They tell us we shall not find the doctrine in this chapter. Where should we look for it so well as here? here where the apostle is insisting upon our discernment of the Lord's body, and putting before us the very thing that gathers us? The previous chapter, to which we are sometimes referred as giving the real doctrine, has, as we have seen already, no such doctrine in it. The bread is the communion of the body of Christ. The cup is the communion of the blood of Christ. It is not the thing itself, but the expression of our fellowship in it, which is the very thing which the common remembrance implies. There is absolutely nothing else but this. We do not forget that we are one bread and one body, because we are all partakers of this one bread or loaf. It cannot be

> eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty in respect of the body and of the blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he

said that we are one loaf in any sense but as being identified with that of which we partake,—therefore, with all the thoughts that are implied in it. So if it be said we are one body, we have plainly, that which gives us unity merely as a body, brings us into one mind, one thought. It is not even said here, we are the body of Christ; and if it were, there would be an immense difference between the body of Christ which we are and that body of Christ which we celebrate in the supper. The body that we have before us is not the body the Church, and we could not possibly, in the nature of things, become the body the Church, by any reception of the body of Christ. They are different thoughts in different connections. Nor, as already said, is it really the body of Christ that is spoken of here at all, although it is quite true that the gathering *is* the gathering of the body of Christ; but that is not in the apostle's mind, as is evident.

He is thinking simply of the unity which, in fact, makes us one body in any proper sense, this unity of apprehension of that blessed death which Christ has died for us, and which our hearts own as having power over us in this very coming together; but there is really no difficulty here. In the wisdom of God, things are so expressed that we can scarcely make mischief of them if we would. The doctrine of the tenth chapter is in absolute conformity with the doctrine of the eleventh. There is no difference between them. In both alike it is the thing expressed with which we are identified, identified in the apprehension that we have of it and the part which God's grace has given us in the effect. We partake of the bread and the wine, and the bread and the wine would be nothing to us except we saw in them the body and the blood of the Lord. We partake in this way of the body and blood of the Lord, assuredly not in the gross, material sense, but in the joy of the apprehension of what these are to us. It is the same truth as the Lord has Himself given us in the sixth chapter of the gospel of John, and which is, in the minds of so many, itself to be referred to the Lord's supper. The fact is that the Lord's supper and what the Lord states there as to the bread from heaven refer to the same thing. That is all. It has been the triumph of Satan to materialize all this in such a way as to make it the instrument of a designing priesthood to get glory to itself, and to lord it over the souls and consciences of men. In no way has this been done more cruelly than in the transformation of the Lord's supper into a mass, or something approaching this. We cannot but remember, also, that at the Reformation the martyrdoms of the Lord's saints had largely reference to their refusal of this unholy doctrine,—a doctrine which would make the Lord die innumerable times, make His original death to be proportionately of little effect, and put the whole into the hands of men to make merchandise out of, and to assume to themselves the glory which is due to God.

How thankful we may be for the simplicity that we find in all this scripture! The thing that bewilders many as they look at it is just this simplicity; but there is, none the less, in the celebration of the Lord's supper a solemnity which the apostle warns us of. They could not eat this bread or drink the cup of the Lord in a light manner without being guilty in respect to the body and blood of the Lord. Here it is distinctly the "*Lord*" who is spoken of, that we may realize the character of the slight here given. We cannot bring sin into the presence of that which we celebrate as having put it away from us. If we come to celebrate the Lord's death without self-judgment, we destroy the holy character of that which is the most impressive proof of the holiness of God that could be given. Where shall we find it manifested as in the sacrifice of the Son of God Himself for sin? And "he that sinneth," says the apostle, "hath not seen Him, neither known Him." It is impossible, as he puts it, that sin and the knowledge of the Lord in that way can go on together.

that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself when he discerneth not the body. On this account, many are weak and sickly among you, and a good many are fallen asleep. But if we did discern* ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are 'chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, wait one for another. If any man is hungry, let him eat at home, that ye may not come together for judgment. And the rest will I set in order whensoever I come.

[1] *cf.* ch. 5. 5. Heb. 12.10. 11.

* Or, "judge;" but the word is, literally, "discern."

He would not frighten us away from the table of the Lord by any means. He does not say, "let a man judge himself and refrain from eating." He says: "Let a man examine (or judge) himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup." It is true that "he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself" if he discerneth not the body. That is the whole point, and must be so. It is evident that the Corinthians were making a mere common meal of that which was intended to be the constant reminder of a love which has nowhere else any equivalent. They were reaping the fruits of this laxity. There were those, he says, many, weak and sickly among them, and a good many had fallen asleep. Thus the judgment of the Lord was necessarily upon them; not because they were not His own; rather, in fact, because they were; for, as the apostle says, "When we are judged" in this way, "we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world." He distinguishes, therefore, in the sharpest way, between this present judgment and the judgment to come. But it is evident that this present judgment is a most serious and awful thing. It is the infliction of a love which, because it is holy and because it is love, must inflict what, as we may say, it is pain to inflict. We force the Lord to judge us in this way when we do not judge ourselves. God must of necessity exhibit His holiness with regard to the sins of His people. Whatever the work of Christ has done for us, (we cannot realize too much what it has done,) nevertheless it was never intended, it can never be allowed to be used for unholy purposes. Thus, they must not come together for judgment, as they were doing. These were the main points of what he had to say to them. "The rest," he says, "will I set in order when I come."

3. We come now, as already said, having seen the centre of communion, (that which forms in that way the one body,) to the body itself, to those who are gathered to the name of the Lord after this manner. We come now to see that it is in fact the body of Christ, and how far we are really to press the implications of this. "Body" is a figure, of course. We know perfectly well that it is the expression of a relationship to the Lord Jesus of the closest and most intimate nature, and which doubtless could not be expressed so well in any other way; but we do not fail to realize that it is, after all, a figure. The body is the expression of the mind. It is the link between the indwelling spirit and the external world in which we are placed. The body of Christ is thus that in which the mind of Christ is expressed, and that by which the One who is absent from the world nevertheless retains, in a certain sense, His place, and manifests Himself in it. We are the representatives here of the Lord Jesus, not simply individually, for as individuals we are not properly competent, but as a whole. We are not the *epistles* of Christ, but, as the second epistle declares, the *epistle*.

This is one rendering of what this body of Christ implies, but then we realize that there is not simply a relation to the Lord which is involved, but a relation to one another. In this body, as in other bodies, each member has indeed its own individual significance, and we must give full place for this individuality.

3 (xii): The Body and its members.
1 (1. 6): The unity in diversity.

3. [1] Now concerning spiritual [manifestations], brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that [j] when ye were Gentiles ye were led away to [k] dumb idols in whatever way ye might be led. Wherefore, I give you to understand that [l] no man speaking in the Spirit of God saith, [m] Anathema Jesus; and no one can say, [n] Lord Jesus, except in the Holy Spirit. Now there are

j Eph. 2. 11, 12.
k Hab. 2. 18, 19.
l cf. 1 Jno. 4. 2, 3.
m cf. Rom. 9. 3.
n cf. Rom. 10. 9.

Except the members of the body had their individual place, there would be no body at all. If there were no diversity, there would be no unity in this sense. The unity or organism depends upon the diversity which is in it. It is the unity of aim and purpose among parts that differ from one another. That is what we find then here, and it is, in fact, the relationship to one another which is dwelt upon in this chapter, rather than the higher character of it as in relation to the Lord. For that we must go to Ephesians and to Colossians; and it is noticeable, by the way, that when we go to these epistles, we are outside all question of the supper of the Lord. We have nothing of the kind in them. We get beyond it, as one may say. We are on the heaven-side of it; whereas this remembrance is for the world below; but the body, as already said, is here, therefore, exhibited more in the relationship of its several members than in its relationship to the Head. Being the body of Christ is that which gives it all its real significance, of course.

[1] We have, first, then, by way of preface to it, the unity which is in the diversity. The apostle begins by speaking of spiritual manifestations. There were more manifestations of this kind than simply those among Christians. There were manifestations of evil spirits as in that idolatrous worship of the Gentiles in which the Corinthians had had their part in the old times of darkness. They knew that they had been led away to dumb idols in whatever way they had been led. Now, on the other hand, with the manifestations of the Spirit in the midst, they must learn to distinguish. They must be intelligent in order to profit by them—in fact, not to be deceived by the power of the enemy; for where God works there the enemy will work as far as possible, a work by imitation, as Jannes and Jambres, the apostle tells us, withstood Moses in Egypt. It is plain that in the very midst of the Christian assembly the power of Satan might manifest itself in this way, and Christians be deceived, except they were in the power of the Spirit Himself who was manifesting Himself in the assembly. Thus the apostle gives them to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God could say, "anathema Jesus;" and no one could say, "Lord Jesus," except by the Holy Spirit. It is plain he does not mean by this that even an unbeliever among Christians could not say Lord Jesus, and that he is not speaking of anything which would inferentially and consequentially affect His Lordship. He is giving us simply that which distinguishes an evil spirit from the Spirit of God. The evil spirits, the demons upon earth, as we read in the Gospels, could freely own that Christ was the Holy One of God, but we never hear them say "Lord Jesus." That would be taking the place of subjection to Him, which, except when finally they are forced to do so, they will never take. All this removes, perhaps, what the apostle says here from what we find in the present day. We are, at least, little accustomed to think of an actual evil spirit manifesting itself in the midst of Christians after this manner. It is as plain that to those whom the apostle was addressing there was nothing at all strange about this; and it may be a question for us whether we have not rather lost sight of the doctrine than have lost the thing itself.

There is, of course, and we should all know it, that which is of real account in the tone of what is uttered professedly by Christian teachers. We are right in looking sharply to see whether the spirit of their teaching owns the Lordship of Jesus or whether there is that which is really derogatory and a dishonor to Him. This in the highest manner is what Satan works, and he is no doubt

[o] diversities of gifts of grace, but the same Spirit; and there are diversities of ministrations, and the [p] same Lord; and there are diversities of workings, but the same God who worketh all things in all.

[q] (7-13): The diversity in unity.

[2] Now [q] to every one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for profit. For to one by the Spirit is given the word of wisdom; and to another the word of [r] knowledge, according to the same Spirit; and to a different one faith by the same Spirit; and to another [s] gifts of

[o] Rom. 12. 6.
[p] ch. 8. 6.
[q] Eph. 4. 7.
[r] ch. 1. 5.
[s] ver. 28.

manifest in all that is fundamentally false in doctrine. The apostle, however, has here before him something more defined and more imposing. We have lost so much the thought of what speaking by the Spirit in the assembly is,—*men* are so much before us, (the instrument rather than the One who works by the instrument,) that naturally we are not tempted in the same way so easily to receive what may be uttered. We may, alas, receive it too easily from other points of view; but we are not, at least, imposed upon by any pretensions to spiritual utterances. We should rather discredit these. With those who were accustomed to the manifestations of the Spirit in the midst, in palpable miracles and gifts that have passed from among us, there was necessarily a temptation simply to accredit that which was uttered to its full extent, and thus Satan might get his opportunity. With us he has, no question, equal opportunity, but perhaps not manifesting himself after the same manner.

Diversities of gifts, then, are, in the apostle's thought, spiritual manifestations. They are the voice of the one Spirit in the members of Christ. There are gifts of God's grace which are different as adapting themselves to different needs, and which are different, no doubt, because also it is safer to have these various ministries than a ministry all of the same kind, a ministry too copious and too full on the part of any. In the way in which God acts, it is plain that Christians are more bound together by their very needs, and that the instruments are designed to be kept more in humility by the sense of their imperfection,—of the necessary way in which one must supplement another. This is the manner in which, as we have seen many times, God has linked men together in creation. We are more debtors to our needs, to our very imperfections in this sense, (we are not speaking of moral imperfections,) we are more debtors to our deficiencies, than we have any idea of. God binds the whole body together, as the apostle says directly, in giving the more abundant honor to that part which lacks. But these are different gifts of grace, then. Withal there is the same Spirit. There are differences of administrations and the same Lord. In the ministrations of these gifts themselves, it is the Lord to whom the gifted ones are subject. The Spirit is the power by which the gifts are made known, but the Lord it is to whom the servants are always subject. Then there are diversities of workings, (this is more general), and the same God who worketh all things in all. Here is, then, the substantial unity amid all the diversity.

[2] Now we come to consider more distinctly the diversity in the unity. To every one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for profit. That is the thought of it. It is in a practical interest and in the interest of all that the Spirit manifests Himself. Thus the responsibility of every one who has gift at all is that by this he is made debtor to others for whose profit the gift is given. He is not his own in this sense. He belongs to those with whom God has given him his place.

But there are, then, these different manifestations. In one it is the word of wisdom. That is that which would put knowledge in its proper place and give it its proper application. To another might be given the word of knowledge, still by the same Spirit, but which nevertheless exhibited itself within the limits of the individual. For instance, the word of knowledge would be the doctrine in itself, rather than in its practical application. To a different one, again, might

healing by the same Spirit; and to another workings of miracles; and to another prophecy; and to another [t]discerning of spirits; and to a different one kinds of tongues; and to another the [u]interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh the one and self-same Spirit, [v]dividing to each one as he pleaseth. For [w]even as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For [x]by one Spirit also we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and have all been given to [y]drink of one Spirit.

[t] 1 Jno. 4. 1.
[u] ch. 14. 27, 28.
[v] Heb. 2. 4.
[w] Rom. 12. 4–6.
[x] Acts 1. 5. Acts 2. 4. Acts 10. 44.
[y] Jno. 7. 37, 39.

3 (14-31): The specialties of the organism.

[3] For the body also is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, because I am not a hand, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body? And

be given faith by the same Spirit; not the ordinary faith of Christians, of course, but a special character and boldness of it which would lead the possessor into paths in which others not so gifted would break down. Then there were gifts of healing by the same Spirit; in others, the working of miracles; in others, prophecy; in others, the discerning of spirits,—not the discerning of what was working in men's minds, but rather of spiritual beings themselves in their work amongst men. Then, again, there were tongues and the interpretation of tongues. He puts lowest what the Corinthians were evidently tending to put in the highest place. We shall find in a little while how he distinguishes between tongues and prophesying, for instance, and his comparative estimate of each; but in all these things there was the work of the one and the same Spirit, who gave as He pleased to every one.

It was not to be considered, therefore, a failure in any one of the different instruments that he did not suffice for every character of ministry. On the contrary, it was the very opposite which was implied in the idea of a body. "The body is one and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body." That we understand in the natural way, and just so it is as to the body in this case; "so also," he says, "is Christ." That is, for the moment, he looks at the body and Head in connection with one another, the "one new man" of which the apostle speaks in Ephesians. He does not touch this really, but merely uses language which is in accordance with it. The Church is Christ mystically in that way. "For by one Spirit," he adds, "we have been all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free, and have all been given to drink of one Spirit." Here the propensity for materializing has been strongly manifested by interpreters, who, of course, have found the sacraments in words like these. They have perverted water baptism into a baptism into the body of Christ, a thing which is in the Lord's hands entirely, as surely as the gift of the Spirit is that which forms the body. On the other hand, the baptism of the Spirit is here plainly something different from that mere influence of the Spirit which people think about when they talk of being again and again baptized of Him. The body cannot be formed again and again. It has been formed, in fact, once for all, although it is constantly receiving accessions, of course; but the baptism of the Spirit is merely in analogy with the baptism of water, while absolutely and entirely independent of it. Again, the drinking of one Spirit, while it does not refer to the formation of the body, is clearly as disconnected with any sacramental ministrations. The reference is to that stream from the rock in the wilderness of which the apostle has already spoken. We have the reality of that.

[3] We come now to consider more distinctly the body of Christ as thus that which unites together the many members. It is plain that the body is not one

if the ear shall say, because I am not an eye, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where the smelling? But now hath [a]God set the members each one of them in the body [a]according as it hath pleased him. But if all were one member, where were the body? But now the [b]members are many and the body one. And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much rather, the members of the body which seem to be more feeble, are necessary; and those parts of the

[a] ver. 28.
[a] ver. 11. cf. ch. 3. 5.
[b] ver. 12.

member, but many. The foot has a different function from the hand, but how foolish it would be for the foot to say, because it was not the hand, it was not of the body! It is plain that Christians are capable, nevertheless, of some similar foolishness. They have not the gifts of other people, and therefore they suppose they have none. They look at the manifestation of the Spirit in others, and they are only hindered and restrained instead of encouraged by it. As to what is implied in it, they practically make themselves to be not of the body; but, asks the apostle, if the doctrine already maintained be indeed the truth, is that any proper consequence at all? "If the ear should say, because I am not an eye, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body?" On the contrary, it is just because there are these diversities of gifts that the body as a whole exists. "If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?" God has indeed acted according to His own good pleasure as to it all, and we must therefore bow to His will about it; but it is plain that if all were one member, the body would be gone. As a consequence of the members being many and the body one, the eye cannot be in independence of the hand, the head cannot be in independence of the feet. It is not Christ that is spoken of here as the head: that does not seem to be the connection. These are not, either, the words which one would expect in reference to the Head of the body, the Church; but the apostle is simply referring to a body as such—of course in relation to what is here before him, but still giving only, as it were, a natural illustration. All the way through it is nature, as it were, he uses to teach us; so the members of the body which seem to be the feebler are still necessary; whatever they may be in themselves, each has some part to perform, which, if it failed, the body would suffer by it; and the very parts of the body, he says, "which we think to be less honorable, these we clothe with more abundant honor, and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness." This is but the natural compensation which we find everywhere. The comely parts have no need. "God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that which lacked." The application of this may be very wide, and that may hinder, in some measure, the proper realization of it; but it is the public place evidently, which seems to exalt one member of the body above another, which people constantly tend to think of as that which gives importance; whereas it is plain that the public place is what belongs rather to the few than to the many, and that God has ordained for the many rather, a service that is more hidden from public view. Yet how much do we owe as Christians to those who are never known, perhaps, in public! How much do we owe to those of whom, perhaps, we never think as of any account at all! On the other hand, what honor may we find that God has bestowed upon those very persons when the day of manifestation comes! How much may they have wrought that has never been realized by us, that we were too unspiritual to realize! How much honor does God put, even, upon the simple acceptance of a quiet place, a place that brings no dignity with it, but in which one can serve God just for the sake of that sweet service!

body which we think to be less honorable, these we clothe with more abundant honor, and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness; whereas our comely parts have no need. But God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that which lacked; that there might be no division in the body, but that the members might have the same care one for another. And if one [c]member suffer, all the members suffer with it; and if one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now [d]ye are the body of Christ, and [e]members severally. And [f]God hath set some in the assembly: first, [g]apostles; secondly, [h]prophets; thirdly, [i]teachers; then [j]miracles; then [k]gifts of healings, [l]helps, [m]governments, [divers] [n]kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all [workers of] miracles? Have all gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But desire [o]earnestly the greater gifts, and yet show I unto you [p]a still more excellent way.

c 2 Cor. 1. 6
d Eph. 1.23. Col. 1 24.
e *cf.* Rom. 12 5.
f ver 18.
g Eph 4.11.
h Eph. 2.20. Eph. 3. 5.
i Acts 13. 1.
j ver 10.
k ver. 9.
l *cf.* Acts 20. 35.
m *cf.* Rom. 12 8. 1 Tim.5.17.
n ver. 10.
o ch.14.1,39.
p *cf.* ch.14.4, 5.

Thus may we realize, after all, that God may have given more abundant honor to the very part which lacked; and it is easy to understand that in this way He would unite us all together, making us profoundly conscious of our need of one another, and that there might be no division in the body,—such as these Corinthians were exhibiting, such as Christendom, alas, exhibits so much at the present day, but that the members might have the same care one for another. Sure it is that, "if one member suffer all the members suffer with it; and if one member be honored," it is really the honor and should be the joy of all. Thus he says here: "Ye are the body of Christ, and severally members." And God has been pleased to set some in the assembly in an order of His own,—first, apostles, who have laid the foundations: secondly, prophets, who have, with apostles as layers of the foundations, necessarily passed away, but whose work remains with us. Then teachers, doctrine being that which now and in all times lays the foundation still, the foundation for all practice and for all blessing. Then in this enumeration come miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues. He does not give these as if they were the whole, after all. This is only a specimen, evidently, of how God has wrought; but it is plain that all were not prophets, all were not even teachers; all, too, were not workers of miracles. We can see that this was not simply a question of faith, as we speak, and that it is not to be argued that, if we had faith enough for it, then we might expect miracles to be restored. Even in the apostle's days all had not miracles. This is what the apostle recognizes as what is normal, not abnormal. All had not gifts of healing, nor spoke with tongues, nor interpreted. After all, the eyes of men were too apt to be upon that which was prominent, forgetting that which was spiritual and moral, and that which had greater value before God. The apostle, therefore, turns now to speak of this which is indeed the spirit of all ministry, the thing which underlies all these gifts if there is to be anything in them, and which exalts in God's sight many an unknown worker, many a man ungifted,—as men might think,—into a blessed place such as may be far above the greatest of gifts. As the apostle says, greater than all gifts was that of which he was going to speak.

4. We have had thus before us the assembly and what is implied in the fact that it is the body of Christ. The analogy of the human body is preserved all through. The parts are organs. Each member in its place has its distinct capacity and therefore its function and its work, and the whole implies ministry and self-edification, which is to be the result of all this. "The body edifieth itself

4 (xiii.) The practical test.
1 (1-3). The pre-eminence of love.

4. [1] If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And if I have [the gift of] prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so that I could [q]remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed [the poor], and if I deliver my body that I may be burned, and have not love, I profit nothing.

2 (4-7): Its tokens.

[2] Love suffereth long, is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth [r]not behave

q Matt. 17. 20. Matt. 21. 21.

r Col. 3. 14.

in love." We come now to this love, which is the practical test of all that is truly edification according to God. Love is the spirit of service, as is plain. It is that which prompts not simply to work, but to serve in working. It seeketh not its own, but the things of others; and thus it is that upon which the apostle sets a higher value than upon any gift. It is the divine nature in its manifestation in men.

[1] Now he first of all insists upon the unique value of love. If this one element be removed, we have really nothing. It is not exactly the whole spirit of a Christian, but it is that which is above all necessary to his being that. No tongues thus, he says, have any value apart from this, whether they be the tongues of men or even of angels. It is merely like sounding brass or a cymbal clanging. It is dead, not living. Even the gift of prophecy becomes, apart from this, what it might be in a Balaam,—something that God may put to use, but which has no value to the one who exercises it. So with all knowledge, however universal it might be; so with all faith, if it manifested itself in such work as removing mountains; still without love it was all nothing. If there were that which simulated love still more, the bestowing of all one's goods to feed the poor; if there were that burning zeal in which one could deliver up his body to the flame, and yet love did not really prompt in all this, it would still be nothing. Nothing could possibly be more complete as to the full value of love and its necessity in everything.

[2] We have now the character of love itself; for we cannot be trusted to know what it is, as it were, instinctively, or by the signs of it even, which obtain amongst men. How often, in fact, do we mistake for it what may be social feeling, even the enjoyment which springs from a certain satisfaction of self in the object! How often do we fail to distinguish such things as these from the love that seeketh not her own! The apostle John, the apostle of love, in the same way has to give signs by which we shall know whether it is in fact divine, that is to say, true love according to God at all. Quite true that if a man say he loves God and loveth not his brother that will not avail, but on the other hand: "Hereby we know we love the children of God, because we love God and keep His commandments." The divine element must enter into it and characterize it everywhere, or it is not love as God would have it. The characteristics, therefore, are given here more particularly than elsewhere.

First of all, "Love suffereth long." It is in fact a sufferer in a world like this necessarily, as we see in Christ. What a field is this sorrow-stricken scene for its display, but how many calls upon it are there, therefore! Love suffereth long and still is kind. It does not wear out. It is not disappointed, not at least with such a disappointment as would check its outflow. Again, it envieth not. Plainly, it has not self before it, and therefore does not seek a place above others. It does not, therefore, envy others the possession of that which its possessor has not. For the same reason, "love vaunteth not itself." It does not think of itself more highly than it ought to think. It does not parade its deeds or its quality. It is not self-assertive. Still less does it go beyond what is due. It is not puffed up.

Its acts, therefore, are of a kind suitable to this. "It doth not behave itself

itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not quickly provoked, imputeth no evil, rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

8 (8-13): Its realization in heaven.

8 Love never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; or tongues they shall cease; or knowledge it shall be done away. For we

unseemly." Love is the bond of perfectness, and puts every detail, even of common behavior, right. The world imitates it, as far as may be, because it sees its comeliness. It will give the highest manners to one who may be otherwise the lowest clown. Wherever it is, it reigns. It is the governing spirit. It brings other things into subjection to itself; but then, again, it seeketh not its own. This is its grand characteristic, although expressed in the negative, as so much of this is; for, as with regard to heaven itself, we learn it so much by its contradiction to what we find around,—what we find, alas, so much in ourselves too. Love "seeketh not its own." Its activities must of necessity go forth to others. It is not, therefore, quickly provoked. It is not sensitive of that which touches oneself, yet assuredly, it may be provoked into anger. It was love in Christ when He looked around upon them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts. It was the desire of His heart for them which made their condition so serious in His eyes; but this anger is not nursed into malice. It subsides under the check of pity, the realization of what evil of necessity produces in the soul. This evil it does not impute; it does not reckon it to be there when there is not positive evidence. It has no pleasure in finding it. What it finds there is no question about imputing, in the sense in which this is said. If it be found, then, as far as may be, love covereth sin. It does not bring it out except there be positive requirement of divine righteousness or holiness that it should be brought out. It does not, therefore, rejoice in unrighteousness. How much, alas, of that which seems to be but the display of righteousness (as in Satan's accusation even of the saints) is a mere joy in unrighteousness, the very opposite, therefore, of righteousness itself! On the contrary, love "rejoiceth with the truth." Truth is the basis of all holiness, nay, of all good. There can be nothing apart from it. Love is not, therefore, blind. It has not the character which we may impute, perhaps, to human love. On the contrary, nothing is quicker or more penetrating in its view of things; but then, again, it "beareth all things." That is, as we saw at the beginning, it can patiently endure, it can suffer long. It "believeth all things" too; that is, it gives ready and unsuspicious credence. It does not suspect. As a consequence of all this, it "hopeth all things." It looks upon the good side rather than upon the evil, and, above all, God, in whom love is, who is always present to it, therefore always a cause of hope. After all, good reigns and not evil. Everything is in the hands of perfect goodness, little as at times this may appear outwardly, but thus there is no pessimism in love; it is optimistic in the highest way; but its ground of confidence is not in man, but in God. Hope, then, gives it energy or endurance. It "endureth all things." If we have not hope, there will soon be no strength to endure. Let discouragement be utter and complete, there is the end of all activity, there is the end of all service. There will be no power to serve where there is no hope in service.

8 We now look at it in another way, not in the character which it displays, but in its permanence as compared with all other things. Prophecies will be done away. Whatever their value for the time being, there will come a time when they will be indeed no more, and when their actual fulfilment will bring them to an end, whatever the honor which may be put upon them. Tongues, too, shall cease. They have reference to the condition of man, to what sin has caused, and do not put away the effects of sin, although they manifest divine

> [s]know in part and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I thought as a child, I reasoned as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see by a mirror in an enigma, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abide faith, hope, love; these three; but the greatest of these is love.

[s] ch. 8. 2.

power and divine love meeting man in these conditions; but they shall cease necessarily, therefore. Knowledge too shall be done away; that is, the kind of knowledge, of course, that we have now. He goes on to describe it afterwards as such a knowledge of things as we have by seeing them in a mirror when we cannot be in close contact with them so as to examine them for ourselves. We have to argue, to infer about them. It is largely not so much that things are, but that they must be so. This kind of knowing,—not the truth itself, concerning which the knowledge is, not knowledge in the high, full sense therefore, but the knowing, this kind of spelling out and putting together and learning, as he says, in part,—all this will necessarily come to an end when that which is merely in part is done away. It will vanish as the light of the taper in the sun. The light will be at the full when the means of light are, nevertheless, largely changed.

The apostle illustrates the present as the childhood state, therefore. A child necessarily speaks as one, thinks as one, reasons as one,—in fact, it has to do plenty of reasoning, and no one would make light of its imperfect condition; but it is imperfect, as we know. "When I became a man I put away childish things, for now we see by a mirror, in an enigma." That is the force of the words. We see the reflection of things, in a sense, rather than the reality. We are conscious of them by the impression they make upon the senses, and we have to argue from these impressions as to the facts. This is, in fact, a child's main business, which being done for those who are men, the process does not in the same way appear, although it still goes on. It is what is involved for us now, no doubt, in our being living souls, rather than spirits. We have often noticed that the living soul is what gives character to man's actual condition, as the book of Genesis may teach us, while the spirit is nevertheless in man, but embarrassed by the conditions of its existence. The body is the instrument of the soul, as the soul, too, is the instrument of the spirit. External nature is thus that which teaches us so much, and the very language which we use as to the deepest realities is borrowed altogether from external things. The spiritual we know not except as encased in the natural. This involves the enigma of which the apostle speaks.

As soon as a man is out of the body he is not conceived of any longer as a living soul, but as a spirit. The soul-life now is, no doubt, a needed discipline for the spirit; and in view of all that God foresaw as to man's condition and the outcome of his trial upon earth; the spiritual body,—as we shall see in what the apostle says beyond,—alters this relation between spirit and soul by putting the spirit completely in the governing place and making all conditions work in perfect subjection to it. That is the meaning of a spiritual body,—not a body which is formed of spirit, but a body which is characterized by the spirit that dwells in it. Such, it is plain, the body of Christ should be, for the Church has already entered by faith into the sphere of the invisible and eternal, while for it also there is, however, the necessary discipline from the state of things in the world in which it is. The apostle here, of course, is speaking of the individual: "Now we know in part, then shall we know even as also we are known." How wonderful a thing that! It is divine knowledge, as far as it goes, though, of course,

5 (xiv.): Conditions of divine co-operation.
1 (1-13): The pre-eminence of prophecy.

5. [1] Follow after love, and be emulous of spiritual [gifts], but rather that ye may prophesy. For he that speaketh with a tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no one heareth; but in spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth, speaketh unto men [to] edification and exhortation and comfort. He

having all the creature characteristics; it is not the omniscience of God, and never will be.

Thus, then, the apostle concludes from it all: "Faith, hope and love abide." He is not speaking here of eternity, but rather in contrast with such gifts as, in fact, will come to an end, having served their purpose. Love abides, for it is the divine nature. Faith, as the evidence of things unseen, necessarily passes away when all is seen with the perfect knowledge of which the apostle has spoken. Hope, too, implies the imperfection which counts upon God, but sees not. It too, therefore, must pass away in full fruition; but love abides. Therefore, the greatest of these three things which morally characterize the Christian, is love.

5. We now come to the conditions upon which alone the divine can co-operate with the human, as in the exercise of the gifts in the body of Christ. That is the main point which the apostle insists upon here. We see, indeed, the gifts in exercise, and in the assembly, but we are not to suppose that we have a full account of this. It is rather that we have urged upon us that which will put every gift in its right place, and are made to have a right comparative estimate of them,—a thing of the highest use of necessity in the assembly, in the practical service which the gifts render to the body as a whole.

[1] We are to follow after love, therefore, while emulous of spiritual things. How has this been lost sight of in the condition of things which has so long obtained in the professing Church! Who thinks of seeking spiritual gifts? If God has given them, they may be (with certain restrictions, alas,) sanctioned in their exercise; but who thinks of seeking from God gifts which he has not got? If we seek them to glorify ourselves with them, then of necessity we shall seek in vain; and thus the two things are put together,—the following after love and the desire for spiritual gifts. We see how love rules, moreover, in the broad distinctions that the apostle makes now between two representative things, prophesying on the one hand and tongues on the other. Of course, this does not embrace all that is the exercise of spiritual gift in the assembly, by any means; but all the more are we distinctly shown the principle which is to govern all in the assembly,—what in fact the rule, "Let all things be done decently and in order," involves. What is decently and orderly in God's sight? The speaking with a tongue and the interpretation of the tongue are given at the end of the twelfth chapter—last; and not without a meaning, last, in the enumeration there. In its miraculous character, the tongue was, on the other hand, a thing most notable, and which,—as we see at Pentecost,—struck men everywhere with amazement. It acted as an alarm-peal for their consciences, or as an invitation to nascent faith. But whatever its value,—and it is plain that the apostle does not mean to deny its value,—yet it is one of the things which has vanished away. As a fact, people can hardly understand at the present time what a "tongue" meant, and many are the disputes about it. The thing is gone, however men may urge that it is through the failure of faith that it is gone, which they can not show from Scripture; but it is gone, and there are things in relation to it which are even difficult, perhaps, for us to understand in the absence of it. It is for us an appeal to the past rather than the present. We must not conclude from this that we are to refer all this teaching of the chapter pretty much to a past condition, as is almost taken to be a matter of course by so many. On the contrary, the apostle is putting that which could not pass in contrast with the thing that has passed. Tongues, whatever their value, might pass.

> that speaketh with a tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the assembly. I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied. For greater is he that prophesieth than he who speaketh with tongues; except he interpret, that the assembly may receive edifying. And now, brethren,

Prophesying, which he puts in contrast with it, could not pass, and this follows from the account which he gives of each. "He that speaketh with a tongue speaketh not," he says, "unto men, but unto God, for no one heareth," that is, with the understanding, although in spirit he may speak mysteries. Thus it is evident that this speaking with a tongue,—although it be, as we see clearly by what follows, the speaking of a real language, as the hearers at Pentecost heard each in his own tongue that which was being uttered,—implied speaking in a language which was not understood, at least by the mass of the hearers. It is upon this that the apostle insists as governing the use of it. A man could get no good by that which he did not understand. If there could be no understanding, if there were no one to interpret, then the tongue was out of place entirely. However much a man might have it, he was not to exercise it. In that character he spoke, as speaking in this unintelligible way, not to men who could not understand him, but to God only, who of course did. In spirit, too, he might speak mysteries. On the other hand, he that prophesied spake directly to men, and that for edification, and exhortation, and comfort. This does not, of course, define what prophesying *is*, but what it *does*. The effect of it is such that it could not possibly be lacking in the Church at any time. The Lord never ceases to care for the edification of His people, and thus we see, also, that prophesying here by no means has necessarily the character of predicting, though in those days there might be prediction, for the time of revelation was not passed. Revelation is now complete. If any man pretends to have what is fresh in this way, it is a false pretension,—the man is a false prophet and nothing else; but it could not be supposed that the people of God came together just to hear predictions of the future.

Prophesying means, rather, in itself the speaking in a direct manner from God and for God, and is in this way something which of necessity shows the spirit of Christianity, the heavenly places being opened to us, God capable of approach in that way, and which, if we know our privileges rightly, we shall easily understand. The man who is earnest to realize the place with God which this supposes, will be he who, in the power of that communion, will be possessed most of the mind of God. But this, therefore, will not be for himself alone. That which he has he has for others also. How important just to have this,—God's word for the time, which does not of necessity imply any great gift in the speaker of it! It might be, as the apostle puts it hypothetically here, but five words. It might be but the recital of the apt scripture upon the subject, or which deals with the state of soul of the assembly. It is something which implies spirituality rather than gift, and a spirituality which should be found, therefore, in every Christian. Thus it is that he says directly that they might all prophesy one by one. He did not certainly mean by this that they might all teach one by one, that such a gift lay within the power of any one to exercise. That would only make the actual distribution of gifts ineffectual, make all gifts conditionally one and the same gift, or every person possessor of every gift; which is plainly not so, and was never intended to be so. The diversity of gift, as has already been said, is the very thing which necessitates this ministry of every one to all the rest, and thus it abides in itself, a distinction which is to be maintained and insisted upon.

On the other hand, the thing that they were all to covet was that they might prophesy. How simple and how much needed the exhortation when it implies simply that all are bound to be with God so as to learn each for himself from

> if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either in revelation or in knowledge or in prophecy or in doctrine? Even lifeless things giving sound, whether it be pipe or harp, if they give not a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or what is harped? For if also the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the war? So also ye with the tongue, except ye give a distinct word, how shall it be known what is spoken? For ye shall be speaking into

God, in a sense as if there were not another! But this does not lead to the disregard of others. Rather, it makes one capable of the truest service. It might, as we see in the Acts,—where, of course, we have it in the full character of those times,—be found in a woman as well as in a man. Spirituality knows no sex, and the presence and mind of God is not denied to any one that seeks it, be it man or woman. The restriction with regard to the use of it in the assembly is another matter, and is based upon that which we have seen already, that is, that the public place is not the place which God has designed for the woman; but it has nothing to do with the reality of blessing such as this, which, if we do not realize and appreciate aright, we shall forfeit immensely. In fact, the whole Church *has* forfeited, how much, by the misapprehension of such scriptures as these! It has had, therefore, to relegate them in their application to the past or to maintain that prophesying as it is represented nowadays is preaching! The result of this will be very evident. On the other hand, the exhortation as to prophesying is the voice of God calling His people to enjoy their place of privilege with Himself, to learn in His presence, to have His mind, and thus to be fitted each one for the place given to him in connection with all others. How important, then, that we should realize this!

"He that speaketh with a tongue," the apostle goes on, "edifieth himself." He has not, as people strangely imagine, the thought that he might not himself understand the tongue that he was using. He *edifieth* himself, and we are told shortly after that the assembly cannot receive edifying except it be by the interpretation of the tongue. If there is not meaning in the tongue, it is like a mere lifeless thing, giving sound. This principle applies plainly to the possessor of the tongue, as it does to others. The apostle has no idea, as some have put it, that the mere consciousness, as it were, of speaking by a divine impulse (however ignorant one may be of what is contained in it) is that which edifies. The whole assembly might be edified on the same principle, if that were edification; but the apostle insists that there must be the intelligent apprehension of what is heard, or there is no use, no edification. Thus, he that speaketh with a tongue, but with no power to interpret (for the gift of interpretation might not necessarily accompany the gift of the tongue) edifieth himself simply, but he that prophesieth edifieth the assembly. He does not in the least desire to set aside the speaking with tongues. He would that they all spake with them, but much rather would he that they prophesied, because "greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues." It is evident that the Corinthians thought very differently as to that. The tongue, in their minds, put a man upon a much greater eminence than any prophesying could do, but how different where love rules! and that is the whole matter here. The edification of others is that which decides upon the greatness of the speaker. The one who speaks to most edification, whatever the manner of speech, is the one who is greatest. If, then, one came speaking with tongues, what would the profit be unless there was revelation or knowledge or prophesying, (which we see he makes, therefore, distinct from revelation: there might be a prophesying without that,) or doctrine,—the teaching of some truth?

He appeals to the lifeless thing even giving sound. If there were no distinc-

the air. There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without significance. If, therefore, I know not the force of the sound, I shall be to him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh a barbarian for me. So also ye, since ye are emulous of spiritual gifts,* seek that ye may abound to the edifying of the assembly. Wherefore, let him that speaketh with a tongue, pray that he may interpret.

2 (14-25): The need of intelligibility.

[2] For if I pray with a tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my mind is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray also with the understanding. I will praise with the spirit and I will praise with the understanding. Since otherwise, if thou bless in the spirit, how shall he that filleth the place of the unlearned say amen to thy giving of thanks, seeing he knoweth not what thou sayest? For thou, indeed, givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. I thank God I speak with tongues more than you all;

* Literally, "spirits."

tions in the sounds, if it were all unmeaning, how would anything be gathered from what was piped or harped? If the trumpet gave an uncertain sound, who would prepare himself to the war? So, also, ye with a tongue, he says, except ye give a distinct word, that is, a word appreciable,—a word that shall be known in its significance by those addressed, how shall it be known what is spoken? You are just speaking, he says, into the air. Not a voice that God has given in the world but has its significance! If, therefore, tongues are to be merely a sound, the one who speaks will be simply a Barbarian to others, as those who listen are for him Barbarians. The rule, therefore, was for those who were emulous of spiritual gifts, that they might abound indeed, but for the edifying of the Church. So if a man were speaking with a tongue, he might pray that he might interpret. It may seem a strange thing that the gift of interpretation did not necessarily accompany the gift of the tongue itself; but in this way one can at least see that a gift of this showy character would be kept in more complete dependence, as was needed so much at Corinth; for the abuses which the apostle would remedy were necessarily found more or less among the people to whom he was speaking. Thus the one who seemed in their eyes so exalted by the gift of the tongue, nevertheless had to be indebted to the service of another for the interpretation of it. No doubt, where it was love that dictated, where love was in earnest for the help of men, God might add the gift of interpretation to the tongue itself, but the two things, as is plain, were distinct.

[2] The apostle goes on: "For if I pray with a tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my mind is unfruitful." It has been thought, perhaps generally, that here his inability to understand what he was saying was necessarily supposed, but why? Is not the fruit which the apostle is teaching us everywhere to look for, the edification of the assembly? And thus if a man prayed simply with a tongue, apart from interpretation, there could be no fruitfulness; in that respect the mind was really unfruitful. "But," says the apostle, "I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray also with the understanding. I will praise with the spirit and I will praise with the understanding." That is, surely, therefore, in connection with the context here, in such a way that there shall be understanding all round, for he goes on directly to argue that if you bless in the spirit only, the one who occupies the place of the unlearned cannot possibly say "amen" to the giving of thanks; for he does not know what is being said. You may give

but in the assembly, I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue. Brethren, be not children in [your] minds, but in malice be ye babes, but in your minds be mature. It is written in the law, 'With other tongues and lips of others I will speak unto this people, and not even so will they hear me, saith [the] Lord. So that tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe, but to those who believe not; but prophecy is not for those that believe not, but for those who believe. If then the whole assembly come together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in unlearned persons or unbelievers, [u]will they not say that ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and there come in one who is an unbeliever or unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all, the hidden things of his heart are made manifest; and so, falling upon his face, he will worship God, [v]declaring that God is truly among you.

[t] Isa. 28. 11, 12.

[u] Acts 2. 13.

[v] Isa. 45. 14.

thanks ever so well, but there is no edification for the other. Thus even in prayer and praise the same principle obtains. In the assembly all is done for the assembly. The speaker must be either the voice of the assembly to God or the voice of God to the assembly, but the assembly as such is always in mind, and the gathering is not to be diverted into any mere field for the private exercises of the saints, whatever their character might be. Solemn it is to realize that even the giving thanks well in this way would not justify the thanksgiving. The fact that the gift is from God does not of necessity justify the use of it. The use at any particular time must be governed by the principle which runs through all this, the principle of edification, which is sought always. The apostle was not speaking to discredit tongues, the ability to use which he had more than all, yet he deliberately chooses rather to speak five words with his understanding, to instruct others, (there he defines really what he means by five words with the understanding, which is that he may instruct others by them,) he would rather speak five words this way than ten thousand in a tongue. To think otherwise would be to be children in their minds; but he does not want them to be children in mind, although he would be happy that they were children in malice; but in their minds they were to be full grown. What, in fact, had God shown with regard to this use of tongues, unintelligible tongues, as we see? That is really the point of it. It was written in the law, in the book of Isaiah (the whole of the Old Testament is characterized as law): "With other tongues and lips of others I will speak unto this people, and not even so will they hear me, saith the Lord." But to what did this refer? In fact, to their captivity among foreigners or the dominion of foreigners over them, a thing in itself which would necessarily and notably speak to a people who could only be in this condition through their own sin and failure, and yet their sin would not be remedied by it, nor would they listen, as the Lord says, to these tongues by which He was speaking so strangely to them; so that in this case tongues were for a sign not to believers, but to unbelievers. God was speaking to them indeed, but in a strange language through their unbelief, and this only, through the hardness of their heart, shut them up the more in that unbelief, did not deliver them. Prophesying, on the other hand, was directly for believers, not for unbelievers. Now if the whole assembly come together in one place and all speak with tongues, he urges, and there come in unlearned persons or unbelievers, what will they say? What effect will it have upon them? "Will they not say that ye are mad?" It is supposed, of course, that there is no making plain the thing so as to edify; just used

[3] (26–33): The spirit of love manifest in edification.

[3] What is it, then, brethren? when ye come together, each one hath a psalm, hath a teaching, hath a revelation, hath a tongue, hath an interpretation:—let all things be done to edifying. If any one speak in a tongue, let it be by two or at the most three, and in turn, and let one interpret; but if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the assembly, and let him speak to himself and to God. Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the others *judge.* But if [w] 1 Thess. 5. 21.

* Or, "discern."

as strange tongues because of the wonder of such speech. They are tongues, he supposes, that are not understood. On the other hand, if all prophesied, and there came in one who was an unbeliever or unlearned, this bringing in of the mind of God, unbaring as it does the secrets of the heart, would bring conviction to the man who came. He might not indeed be converted by it, but he would find, in fact, his inmost heart searched out, and would recognize that it was God who was searching; so, falling upon his face, he would worship God, and declare that God was with them of a truth. How plainly is the character of prophesying thus seen as the bringing in of God in such a way as would speak for itself, the voice of God made audible in the speaker, with its direct power over the conscience of those who heard.

[3] The apostle now gives general instructions as to the assembly itself, instructions which have singular inapplicability to the Christian meeting as understood most largely in the present day. It is a gathering of the assembly as such, with room for every one to find his place and to contribute his share to the general edification and under the guidance and rule of the Spirit of God alone. "When ye come together," says the apostle, as if it were the normal thing when coming together, "every one hath a psalm, hath a teaching, hath a revelation, hath a tongue, hath an interpretation." He neither commends nor condemns this in any wholesale way. The Corinthians, no doubt, were ready enough, and their meetings would not lack in variety. The apostle's simple rule is that all things are to be done to edifying. That is the one practical direction, so simple that it is easily understood by any Christian. Any one is competent to say what ministers to himself and helps him.

It is important to see that while the Spirit is the power and energy always for this, yet at the same time he does not in any wise direct them to analyze their own convictions as to it. They are not to be before themselves in any wise. The object is to edify others, and the assembly, if right at all, will always be able to bear witness if it is edified. This governs also in what follows, that if any one speak in a tongue there are to be not more, at any rate, than two or three speakers, each in his turn. (does not that seem as if there were disorder enough in the Corinthian assembly?) and with one to interpret in each case. If there were no interpreter, then it is enjoined that there shall be silence kept in the assembly. Let such an one speak, if he be full, to himself and to God, but there can be no edification except a man can understand the language in which he is addressed. Even as to the prophets the same rule obtains, that there are to be but two or three speakers. There is not to be enough to distract or to weary, but to edify, and the rest are to judge. They are not to receive—because the ideal is a ministry of the Spirit—all that comes with the assumption of this. They are to judge. Scripture is in their hands as the means of judgment, and thus they are to discern, by that which the Spirit has already communicated, the character of present communications. If anything is revealed to another who sitteth by, the first speaker is to be silent—not, as is supposed by some, to give way to the new revelation. The apostle's words directly afterwards surely contradict that. All might prophesy, one by one. There would be time for each one, and no interference on the part of one with the liberty of another.

anything be revealed to another who sitteth by, let the first be silent. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For [God] is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the assemblies of the saints.

4 (34-40): The rule in a (fallen) creation.

[4] Let the women keep silence in the assemblies: for it is not permitted to them to speak, but to be in subjection, [x]as also saith the law. But if they will learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home: for it is a shame for a woman to speak in the assembly.

x *cf.* Num. 30. 3-13.

There is no question here of the reality of the prophesying, as there can be no question of the reality of a tongue; but the reality of the gift does not hinder the regulation of the gift, or show, therefore, that the exercise of it is always according to God. The rule is still and ever the edification of the assembly. The contributions of all are thrown, as it were, into a common fund, that all may be enriched by them, and in this general enrichment no one need strive for his own things and no one is given room to take exception to that which perhaps may not minister specifically to his own need, and yet may be meeting, in the abundant grace of God, the need of others. All have need to learn and all to be exhorted, and the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. There is in each case the responsible man whom his gift is not to control, but who, by the Spirit, is to control the gift. Human responsibility is everywhere prominent, and the practical result is that which manifests the character of what is given. God is never a God of confusion, but of peace, and this is His manner of working in all the assemblies of the saints.

[4] There was to be one exception as to this general liberty. In the assemblies, when the saints were all actually come together, the women were to keep silence. It is a question, not of a woman's capability of exhorting others or of edifying, but just that question of order with which the apostle started, and which creation establishes. The woman's sphere of liberty, and, one may say, sovereignty, is at home; that is to say, it is private and not public. It must not be thought that this does not give ample scope for the exercise of gift of whatever kind. If there were only more of the cultivation on the woman's part of that which belongs really to her sphere, how fruitful would be the exercise of gift with which God has endowed her and how many places would be open to her which men, by reason of their being men, could not in the same way fill! Thus in relation to children, it is at once evident; with the younger children, the woman is still the best and the nature-ordained teacher. God has placed the babe in its mother's arms and not its father's; and this does not mean that the woman's sphere is only in her own family. There are countless families to which her sex will introduce her, and where she may find herself fully at home and abundant profit and recompense of her work. So, through the wives, women have access in this way to an indefinite sphere of occupation for varied blessing. The wife is the heart-centre of the household, and the ability thus to reach the wife in a way that woman certainly can do far beyond others is an immense privilege and responsibility entrusted to her. Would that there were more realization of this! It would not be thought that the apostle's rule here, which is evident, was intended to reduce the woman to a nonentity or to deprive her of the use of whatever gift God may have endowed her with. As already said, if you take men themselves, how many have their proper sphere in any *public* ministrations? Women are no more disqualified in this sense than the large number of men are. God has ordained to each his place, and the spirit of love is only needed to find the wisdom which will enable any one to realize the doors which God will ever open to those who seek to serve Him among men.

Among the sick, again, how evidently is there a special place accorded to the

> [y]Came the word of God out from you, or did it come to you only? If any one thinketh himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things I write to you are the commandments of the Lord; but if any one be ignorant, let him be ignorant. So, brethren, be emulous to prophesy, and hinder not the speaking with tongues. Let all things be done fittingly and in order.

y ch. 11. 16.

woman! Here, the gentleness, the patience natural to her, the tender ministration of love, assert themselves with a power which God's grace uses continually for blessing to souls. Just when the strength is prostrated and the ear only perhaps left open, the heart is in the readiest condition to receive the truth. How blessed the privilege to be able here to sow the seed of life in souls plowed up and rendered receptive by God's dealings with them!

Thus, while the apostle's words are prohibitive in one way, they only open to us in another what is the true sphere in which the woman may be and ever has been blessed. But he allows no dispute about it. "Came the word of God," he says, "out from you, or did it come to you only? If any one thinketh himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things I write to you are the commandments of the Lord." How important is this here, where, most of all in the present day, as is evident, men tend to ignore or to resist what he here gives us! Indeed, as we easily may see, the whole chapter is largely set aside as pertaining to extraordinary gifts which have ceased, and which find their substitute as a whole, perhaps, in a preacher, who is supposed to have the remnant of all that exists in his own person, and to whom the congregation is for the most part confined. Thus a narrowness, in fact, attains which was never found in the Jewish synagogue, as one may easily see by the occurrences in the Acts. There was a ready invitation and scope for various speakers, even amid the iron rule and stiffness of rabbinism. Things are working at the present time, no doubt, to a larger liberty; alas, they are at the same time tending in an equal degree to laxity and to the disregard on another side of the apostle's word here. He is short and decisive. "If any one be ignorant," he says, "let him be ignorant." If what I have said already is not enough for his enlightenment, let him go without such enlightenment. On the other hand, there is need of exhortation surely to-day after his manner here: "So, brethren, be emulous to prophesy." Alas, it is hardly known what such words mean; and yet the responsibility remains as great as ever, and the thing to which we are all responsible to minister. He concludes with the simple words, so simple and so practical: "Let all things be done fittingly and in order."

Div. 3.

We are come now to the third division of the epistle, which is easily manifested as such by its topic, resurrection. The connection with what has gone before is evident and beautiful. Resurrection is, of course, the basis of the Church. Christ risen is the rock upon which He has been building His assembly. The resurrection of Christ is the basis of the truth for us at all times and which he insists on here as that; but the resurrection also of His people is that which he insists upon in connection with it, and which has beautiful significance in the place which it has here in reference to the other truth of the epistle. The Church is not looked at in Corinthians so much in its heavenly character as we find it in Ephesians, for instance, and even in Colossians. As the body of Christ it is, of course, heavenly, but what we are occupied with is its place in the world and its practical workings, always as remembering the needs which the being in the world ever supposes. Thus, how suited now, that we should be lifted at the close into another plane and made to realize the sphere to which the Church belongs by the contemplation of this doctrine of resurrection,—of that

DIVISION 3. (Chap. xv.)

Resurrection the perfecting of the individual and the Church.

1 (xv. 1-11): A sufficient foundation.

1 NOW I make known to you, brethren, [z]the gospel which I preach to you, [a]which also ye received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye hold fast the word which I preached unto you, [b]except ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you, in the first place, that which I also received, that

[z] Gal. 1. 11.
[a] Gal. 1. 9.
[b] Gal. 3. 4.

which will at last bring her, not out of her place as the body of Christ, but, on the contrary, into the place which is hers from the beginning, and which, therefore, is to be enjoyed in eternity! This third division is, therefore, as already said, that which lifts everything to a higher plane and connects the doctrine of the Church in the present epistle with the doctrine of the Church as we find it elsewhere.

1 The apostle begins here, therefore, with the fact of the resurrection of Christ, the manifestation of the power of His blessed work, and without which all would be indeed but shadow for us. It is, therefore, the gospel that he preached that he here insists upon, the gospel which they had received and wherein they stood. Outside of it there was no salvation; and salvation at the end could only be theirs who held fast that word which he had preached. We see, too, what place the Old Testament Scriptures had in connection with the gospel, and that even apostolic teaching was not expected to be taken for granted apart from that earnest search of these for which the Bereans are commended. Thus, if Christ died for our sins, it is according to the Scriptures. Startling to the Jew as the cross might be, the Scriptures were many which announced beforehand that which condemned the Jew for his unbelief of it. Even in his unbelief he was the custodian of the Scriptures,—Scriptures whose whole aim and purport were really Christ, from the beginning to the end. Thus he had preached that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." The many living witnesses, one would say, were ample to establish the truth, but he will not separate it from the testimony which God had given through all the previous ages, and which makes that wondrous death the centre of history.

How thoroughly the strangeness of such a death on the part of so glorious a Person is set aside by this continuous testimony of the Old Testament! Christ's death is, in fact, the opening up of this, a confirmation of it which sets everything in a new and glorious light, while it gives the New Testament, put in its place thus in connection with the Old, to have its distinct force and supremacy.

"Christ died," then, "for our sins according to the Scriptures." "He was buried,"—a fact which shows how true a death it was He died, and how little His disciples expected even that resurrection which was all necessary for them. "We thought," as one of them said, "that it was He that should have delivered Israel"; as if that thought were almost of necessity buried in the tomb in which they had laid Him. His burial has also for us, as we know, a spiritual application which the epistle to the Romans, as well as that to the Galatians, make known to us. This too, then, is part of the gospel. The least fact in this connection is of immense importance, but the resurrection is the crown of all. He was raised the third day according to the Scriptures. It might have been said, according to His own words, which His enemies could quote, and which were therefore commonly known: "After three days," they quote "the deceiver" as saying, "I will rise again." He *has* risen again, to the confusion of His enemies; but the Scriptures, as we see, are again appealed to, and their evidence put in line with all other as most important in its place.

Here the witness to the resurrection, the testimony existing, was of the most complete character. The apostle enumerates the witnesses, leaving out in a remarkable way that of Mary Magdalene and the women, so important now in the

Christ [c]died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was [d]buried; and that he was [e]raised the third day, according to the scriptures; and that he was [f]seen of Cephas, [g]then of the twelve; afterwards he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the more part remain unto the present, but some are fallen asleep; afterwards he was seen by James, [h]then by all the apostles, and last of all, he was [i]seen by me also, as by one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the assembly of God.

c Ps. 22. 15. Isa. 53. 12. Dan. 9. 26. Zech. 12. 10. Zech. 13. 7.
d Isa. 53. 9.
e Ps. 16. 10. Isa. 53. 10.
f Lk. 24. 34.
g Lk. 24. 36.
h Lk. 24. 50. Acts 1. 4.
i Acts 9. 5.

eyes of rationalists as giving birth to the doctrine itself. Important as this was in its place, this testimony of theirs, suited as this first presentation of the spoils of death to the weakest of His people, the non-combatants, as we may say,—yet here he is busy with the testimony of those more manifestly intended as witnesses to the facts of the gospel preached.

Everything is put, therefore, in order. First, He was seen of Cephas—the sweet witness to us of unforgetting love which could thus bring out of all possible despondency the soul of one who had dishonored Him by his denial. Peter must be seen first of all, so that when he sees Him among the twelve directly afterwards, he shall not be ashamed nor afraid, nor in the distance in which that denial might seem to put him.

He was then seen of the twelve, spoken of as that, although the number, in fact, was deficient, sadly deficient, at that time; but God's grace was not going to accept the deficiency, as we know, and the twelve were to stand again as the witness of a grace which could not lack the full competent witness to itself.

Afterward He was seen of above 500 brethren at once. We have no account of this elsewhere, but it was doubtless in Galilee, where, as we know, the Lord had made a special appointment to meet His disciples, and where there would be naturally, upon the mere hint of that, a gathering of as many as could by any means be present. As the apostle wrote, the larger part of these were still in life, though some had fallen asleep. No opportunity here for conspiracy, as is clear! There were too large a number for fraud of any kind,—five hundred false witnesses will surely soon fall out amongst themselves and bring the truth to light, but there never was a hint of this. The resurrection, on the other hand, was that which rallied every faint-hearted disciple to the standard of Christ, and filled them with a boldness which no trouble, no persecution could in any wise check.

He was seen then by James, probably the brother of the Lord, afterwards spoken of as such; one of those brethren of whom it had but too lately been said: "Neither did His brethren believe in Him." He thus has, as we may believe, a representative place here, one of a class of those who were brought into faith, or at least fully so, by the resurrection itself.

Then He was seen by all the apostles, evidently the last gathering at Olivet when He was taken from them, and who were thus witnesses of His ascension into heaven. Apart from all these in time and in character, "last of all," "as of one born out of due time," as he says, when the number of the apostles might seem to have been closed, and from the midst of those who were filled full with Jewish enmity, He was seen by Paul himself, a notable witness of divine grace, the grace that he was to be, above all, the witness of. "The least of the apostles," as he calls himself, not fit even to be called an apostle, because he persecuted the assembly of God. Nevertheless grace here gained its completest expression, Christ His sweetest victory. "By the grace of God," he says, "I am what I am, and His grace which came to me was not in vain, but I labored more abundantly than they all." Still, that was grace. He claims nothing for it.

But [j]by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace which came to me was not in vain, but I [k]labored more abundantly than they all; but yet not I, [l]but the grace of God with me. Whether, therefore, it were I or they, so we preach and so ye believed.

[j] 1 Tim. 1. 14.
[k] 2 Cor. 11. 23.
[l] Eph. 3. 8.

2 (12-19): The denial of it, what it involved.

[2] Now if Christ is preached that he rose from among the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, [m]neither is Christ raised; and if Christ be not raised, both our [n]preaching is vain and your faith is also vain. And we are found also false witnesses of God, because we have testified concerning God, that he raised up Christ; whom he raised not up if so be the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, neither hath Christ been raised; but if Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain, [o]ye are yet in your sins. Then also those that are fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most pitiable.

[m] 1 Thess. 4. 14.
[n] Rom. 10. 9.
[o] Rom. 4. 25.

3 (20-28): The First-fruits of the sleeping saints.

[3] But now is Christ raised from among the dead, [p]the first-fruits of those that are fallen asleep. For since

[p] Col. 1. 18. Rev. 1. 5.

What else could he do as one who had received a grace like this? But still it was grace that wrought through him to the end. But here, then, was the complete testimony. It was of one character, however various the witnesses. "Whether it were I or they," he says, "so we preached, and so ye believed."

[2] He goes on now to insist upon the resurrection of Christ as establishing the fact of the resurrection of His people. The one was no more true than the other. If the one were not true, the other was not. Yet there were some saying that there was no resurrection of the dead. So early came unbelief as to such cardinal points! Very likely they took resurrection in its spiritual application, as the apostle himself applies it elsewhere, and denied that anything more was to be expected. The saints were risen with Christ. Here, they might have said, was the whole thing; but the apostle turns upon them with the assurance that if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ Himself was not raised; they could not hold the one and deny the other. If they denied the resurrection of Christ, then both the preaching they had received was vain and their faith in it was vain;—the apostles, also, were turned into false witnesses, for their testimony had been that God had raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up if the fact is that the dead are not raised; for if the dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised. "If Christ is not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins." Every hope, therefore, is gone. Those that are fallen asleep in Christ have perished. He does not mean, as some strangely put it, annihilated, but that all that with which they had identified themselves, which they built upon for blessing, was gone, and what was the value of a faith which put men only in the suffering condition in which Christians manifestly were, most pitiable, in losing not only their hope for eternity, but their enjoyment of time itself?

[3] Thus, except the gospel is altogether false, Christ is risen, and that from among the dead,—the sample of His people in this respect, the first-fruits of those that are fallen asleep. Manifestly, Christ rose by Himself. There was no general resurrection along with Him. It was the "resurrection," as said in Philippians, "out from among the dead;" here simply the first-fruits of those that were to rise from among the dead in after times. This is, as we already know, the character of resurrection as it applies to the Christian. Of a general resurrection of the dead, saint and sinner all at one time, Scripture knows nothing.

'by man is death, by man also is the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also shall all in Christ be made alive. But each in his own rank: Christ the first-fruits; afterwards, they 'that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall 'deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign until he hath put all his enemies under his feet. The 'last enemy

q Rom. 6.12, 17.

r 1 Thess. 4. 15-17.

s Matt. 6.10. Matt. 13.43.

t Rev. 20.13, 14.

God does not fail to manifest in this way what His people are to Him, and to separate them from that world out of which He has called them. They are those of whom the apostle could say they were fallen asleep. Death had lost its character of terror for them, as it had lost its real power.

Thus, as by man death had come into the world, by man also had come the resurrection of the dead. It was suited that by him who thus might seem altogether to have lost the place in which God created him, by *man*, should the resurrection come. Man as seen in Christ is true Man, the truest Man that possibly could be. Christ assumed not another manhood, whatever dignity He might communicate to it. He is not only Man, but even the Son of man; and thus the woman herself, through whom sin entered and who yielded to the power of the serpent, has her part in the victory through Him. The woman's seed was to bruise the serpent's head. It is the victory of man, truly that, although it is indeed the grace of God through which this has come about; but we must not discredit the manhood of Christ by the thought of His deity. These were in one Person, one blessed Person, who would not be what He is to us if either failed; but thus in Him we find, as we are meant to find, the Creator-God, Victor still through man whom He created, over that which might have seemed the setting aside of all His thoughts with regard to him. Not only are His thoughts not set aside, they are brought to the full, and gloriously developed. The second Man shows us manhood as God intends it, Himself at the same time the Lord from heaven.

"As then in Adam all die, so also shall all in Christ be made alive"; not *all* men, but "all in Christ." The death in Adam is indeed universal, for all Adam's children are naturally in Adam, but it is "all in Christ" who are to be made alive. This does not deny, of course, the resurrection of the wicked, but that which they receive is not truly to be called life. The apostle will not give it that term. All true life is in Christ and thus in the saint, and "all in Christ" shall be brought into the full power and realization of this.

He speaks, as we shall find, of no other here. He does not mention, in fact, the resurrection of the wicked, although he leaves place for it, but "each in his own rank," he says,—"Christ the first-fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father." Here is the order; but, as already said, we find nothing about the resurrection of the wicked. We have plenty of assurance of it elsewhere, and even here place is manifestly left for it. Death is to be abolished completely, but it is simply, as many other Scriptures assure us, "they that are Christ's" who are raised "at His coming." The whole thought of resurrection, as we find it in the chapter here, is applied to this alone. It is only the saint, who sown in weakness is raised in power, who sown in corruption is raised in incorruption. There can be no possibility of applying such expressions to the resurrection of the wicked, or, therefore, to a general resurrection. It is "they that are Christ's at His coming" to whom all this applies.

But he adds, "then, cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father." The special kingdom put into His hands as Man is to be delivered up. Nay, He takes it only for the purpose of bringing everything into subjection to God. That which He taught His disciples to pray,

that is abolished is death. [u]For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith that all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted who put all things under him. And when he shall have put all things under him, then shall the Son also himself be subject to him that put all things under him, that [v]God may be all in all.

[4] (29-34): The trials of the way would be experienced in vain.

[4] Else what shall they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they also bap-

[u] Ps. 110. 1. Acts 2. 34, 35. Eph. 1. 22. Phil. 2. 10, 11.

[v] Rev. 22. 3.

that the Father's kingdom might come, is that which He accomplishes in power by taking Himself the kingdom. It is not for eternity, it is not even for a long period of time, and those who would tell us that the millennium is in fact but the commencement and threshold, as it were, of His kingdom, which is to continue for a long, perhaps indefinite period after it, mistake altogether the purpose of the kingdom itself. The One who takes it is, in it all, the Minister, as He ever was. He takes it, not for His own glory, but for the Father's glory. God indeed must honor the One who has glorified Him, and will put every enemy under His feet. That is right and necessary, but His own thought in it is that He must accomplish that which is in His heart; He must be, as Isaiah expresses it, "the Father of eternity." He must bring things into that condition in which they will abide eternally. Having accomplished this, for Him all is accomplished. He desires no kingdom separate from that of the Father; while, on the other hand, the throne will be ever "the throne of God and of the Lamb." It will never cease to be characterized by the One who now sits upon that throne.

Christ has manifested God for all eternity, and that manifestation abides, but the purpose of the separate kingdom is to bring everything into subjection to God as God. He must reign until He puts all His enemies under His feet, not after He has put all enemies under His feet, but until this is perfectly accomplished,—and the last enemy which is abolished is death. Thus, then, the final resurrection, the resurrection anticipative of the judgment of the great white throne, is implied here; and all things thus being put under Him, the Son also Himself becomes "subject to Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." For the perfection of eternity, there can be nothing separate and distinct from this divine rule. The establishment of it according to this perfection is just the glory of Christ to accomplish. The Father's kingdom is the kingdom of God in this character, where all the subjects are children, and God is seen in that place in which the epistle to the Ephesians characterizes Him, "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," thus "the Father of every family, whether in heaven or earth." All these families are drawn near to God in a perfect relation which Christ has established, and to which He, therefore, gives its full and eternal character.

[4] We now come to a passage as to which there is great difficulty in the minds of many, and which has, therefore, furnished occasion for a multitude of opinions. It does not seem really so difficult after all. The apostle, in speaking of the character of the Christian life as a life of trial, of suffering from persecution, gives the endurance of this as a proof of a common faith in the resurrection of the dead. With regard, therefore, he says, to those "who are being baptized for the dead," (or in place of the dead,) "what will they do if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized instead of the dead? and why do we too stand in jeopardy every hour?" An old belief interpreted this as a mere superstitious baptism of the living in place of those who might die unbaptized. This is worth mentioning as being founded upon a mistake so prevalent, that baptism has in some way to do with the future life instead of being entirely for the present. Baptism is the mark of discipleship. It is no introduction to heaven, but simply to the *kingdom* of heaven, that is, to the company of disciples upon the earth.

tized for them? And why do we also stand in jeopardy every hour? I protest by your rejoicing, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If, after the manner of men, [w] I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what profiteth it me if the dead rise not? Let us [x] eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. [y] Awake to sobriety, as it is right, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak to your shame.

[w] 2 Cor. 1.8.

[x] Eccl. 2.24. Isa. 22. 13.

[y] Rom. 13. 11.

[§] (35-49): The weakness and the power.

[5] But some will say, How are the dead raised? and with what sort of body do they come? Thou fool! What thou sowest is [z] not quickened except it die; and

[z] Jno. 12.24.

The thought of baptizing child or adult to carry them safe through to heaven is one of those false ideas which so early tended to build up the Romish system. The sacrament was supposed to minister in some way the grace of which it spoke. All this is destroyed to the root by simply keeping baptism in the place for which God has designed it,—a remission of sins indeed on the part of men, not necessarily on the part of God at all, a salvation in figure, not in fact. It is a New Testament type, and to be treated like all other types, as that which of necessity is infinitely lower than the thing of which it speaks,—yet it had and has its place as a confession of Christ, His title to Lordship over His people; that is, it introduces into the kingdom, and thus we can understand without much difficulty the text here. Christians were dying in how many different ways, and living, as the apostle speaks of himself, in constant view of death,—in that sense, "dying daily." What advantage was it to him, he says, to have fought (as after the manner of men, one might say,) with beasts at Ephesus, as a gladiator in the arena, if there was to be no resurrection of the dead? Yet men crowded into the ranks that were thus being thinned, took their place by baptism among those who were soldiers in this warfare. Was it all a dream, or were they justified in this faith in resurrection? The apostle has already identified the resurrection with Christianity itself. If there were no resurrection of the dead, Christ were not risen, and if Christ were not risen, those who had faith in Him were deceived and were yet in their sins. Thus we are not to think simply of the one point of doctrine, but of that as implying all else. The resurrection spoke, of necessity, with tremendous power, to those facing death all the time. Even the very body that dropped in the struggle would be taken up again, and taken up in a more glorious fashion. To weaken here would be to weaken all the power over sin, all the energy of the Christian life. "Let no one deceive himself," says the apostle. These things are not to be tolerated. They are not to be thought lightly of, for "Evil communications corrupt good manners." He quotes the heathen poet Menander in this last saying. That was the truth, and they must take heed to it. They must come to sobriety in righteousness and not sin. There were amongst them, evidently, some who had not the true knowledge of God. It was their shame that such should be in their midst. We see, in fact, how, in the decline of Christian vigor, the world comes in.

[5] But people would ask questions still. They must know all about the process of resurrection, and be able to predicate the character of it. They must be able to reason it out. "How are the dead raised?" they ask, "and with what sort of body do they come?" If that were meant for objection, after all it was only folly to argue in that way. The common operations of nature were sufficient to disprove their arguments. What did they know of the mystery of the seed they sowed? They sowed it that it might die, yet without that death it would never live according to that for which it was designed. In order to understand what he is saying here, we must have the true idea of human death, that it is not extinction, but separation, dissolution, the tie between spirit and body being dissolved, the body corrupting indeed, as a consequence of this, but the result,

that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat or some other; but God giveth it a body as he hath willed, and to each seed its own body. All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another of birds, and another of fishes. There are also bodies celestial and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differeth from star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead: it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is

the evolution of the new thing in which the seed manifested that for which it was designed. They sowed but bare grain, whether wheat or any other, but they knew quite well that that grain was not to continue grain, but that it would soon be clothed with a body very different from that which it had when sown in the earth. God gave it the body that He had willed for it, and to every seed its own kind of body. Thus, the individuality of what was sown was maintained all through, spite of disorganization. God in it, as in so innumerable cases in nature, has stamped things everywhere with His own stamp of resurrection. Things are in His hand. You may call the process natural because you are so familiar with it, because it is so constantly taking place under your eyes. All the same, God is working in it and through it. That which looks so merely lifeless has, nevertheless, in itself the determination of its future life. No seed produces anything else but its own kind, and yet how different is that which springs out of it from the seed out of which it springs!

Look again, says the apostle, at the various kinds of higher bodies, the flesh of men, the flesh of beasts, and birds and fishes. All these differ from one another. Is it possible to decide as to how these differences take place, to follow the process by which, out of that which seems in the first place so similar, almost identical, these different kinds arise? There are bodies celestial too, and bodies terrestrial. The analogy is less perfect here, and he does not enter into it; only he makes us realize in how many different spheres God works, and how completely He is Master of the creature everywhere. The glory of the celestial is a very different thing from the glory of the terrestrial, and yet each has a distinct glory of its own. If it be only the human body, how marvelously is it made, how perfect is its fitting of part to part! How delicate everywhere the wonderful embroidery by which it is all united together! Good it is indeed to inquire with reverence into all this, and to behold what may be permitted to us of God's ways and workings; but how foolish to dictate to Him how He shall work, or to question His power to work that which is beyond us, even to understand! The glory of the sun differs from the glory of the moon and the glory of the stars, and "star differeth from star in glory. So is it with the resurrection of the dead." A mistake is often made with regard to the application here. He is not speaking of the difference of degrees of glory among those who are to be raised from the dead. He is speaking of the difference between the body sown and the body raised, as is plain from what follows. It is quite true that there will be different degrees of glory, but that is not his topic here. It is that which is sown in corruption which is raised in incorruption. Here is the difference, a wonderful contrast indeed. That which is sown in dishonor is raised in glory. That which is sown in weakness is raised in power.

We see, as already said, that the apostle has no thought here of the resurrection of the wicked at all. Little is said about this. We have the fact, but Scripture does not enter into details as to that which is merely sorrowful, and a self-perversion from that which God intended as to men. Scripture does not

sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body: if there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. And so it is written, [a]The first man Adam became a living soul, the [b]last Adam a [c]quickening spirit. But that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is [d]of the earth, made of dust; the [e]second man is of heaven. Such as he made of dust, such also are those made of dust; and such as the heavenly, so also are the heav-

a Gen. 2. 7.
b Rom. 5. 14.
c 2 Cor. 3. 17, 18. Col. 3. 4.
d Gen. 2. 7. Gen. 3. 19.
e Jno. 3. 13.

linger on the awful sufferings of the lost, nor enter at large into their condition. For the Christian indeed, it is well-nigh enough to know that those who have refused Christ lose Christ, and that is the most awful penalty, for one who knows Him, that can be conceived. But it is plain that he is speaking here of the resurrection of the saint simply. It is only the saint who is raised in incorruption, in glory, in power. He gives us in what follows a hint at least of the character of the resurrection body. If people ask, "With what body shall they come?" He answers: "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body." The word "natural" is the same word that we have seen elsewhere in the epistle used with regard to the natural man. The natural man, as we have seen, is the *psychical* man. We have no better word in English. It is the man governed by his psyche or soul simply; therefore by his instincts, appetites, senses, without the due effect upon him of that which is invisible. So with the natural body here. It is the psychical body, the body fitted to the soul, man being made a living soul. That is his characteristic. He has a spirit, but he is not, as he will be, yet characterized by his spirit. The spirit is under limitations, under constraint, as we may say. It works and manifests itself, but it manifests itself through that which is lower than itself. The very material of our thoughts is drawn from that which is seen and tangible. We learn to apply the terms derived from this to that which is unseen and spiritual, but it is, after all, a laborious process, and, as the apostle has told us but a little while ago, we see, as it were, "by a mirror in an enigma." The discipline is, no doubt, a discipline helpful for us and with eternity in view, but it seems for the present to bind us down very much to earth. This bond will be loosed, says the apostle, not by a loss of the body or of the soul. Spirit, soul and body will always make up the man. God's original thought for him will never be set aside, but the body will be fitted perfectly, as now it is not, to the uses of the spirit, and this is the meaning of a spiritual body.

We cannot enter into it in detail, clearly, but we can, nevertheless, understand quite what that means. The body of the resurrection is not spiritual in its material, but it is spiritual in its adaptation to the spirit. There will be nothing any more to weigh upon this. Every part of the man will be in complete harmony. Every part will be in its fullest vigor, a help and not a hindrance to the other. He looks back to creation as he says this. The first Adam became a living soul. With a living soul a natural body is in keeping in the sense in which we have taken this natural body. But for us there is now another Adam, a last One, never to be superseded as the first has been. The last Adam is not characteristically a living soul. He is a quickening Spirit. The life which we derive from Him is life of a higher quality than anything that naturally even, when yet unfallen, we could derive from the first Adam. God's original thought is now capable of being told fully out. "That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; afterwards that which is spiritual." The first man, not necessarily as fallen, is of the earth, made of dust; and characterized in that sense by his lowest part; but the second man is of heaven, is char-

enly; and just as we have borne the image of the [one] made of dust, we shall also [f]bear the image of the heavenly.

e (50–58): The final victory.

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: we [g]shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this [h]mortal put on immortality. But when this corrupti-

[f] Rom. 8.29. 1 Jno. 3. 2.

[g] 1 Thess. 4. 15-17.

[h] Rom. 8.11. 2 Cor. 5. 4.

acterized by a heavenly nature. Thus, then, as he that was made of dust, such also are they his offspring who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly, Christ, so also are the heavenly ones, His people. The image of the dust-made Adam is that which we have borne. We shall bear the image of the heavenly.

50 From this the apostle draws the necessary inference, that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." This does not seem to be the same in meaning as if he said, neither flesh nor blood can inherit the kingdom of God. It is of the connection of the two that he is speaking. The blood applies to the present life. It is the vehicle of change. It is that which implies the need of continual sustenance and renewal. A body which needs no renewal cannot need blood to renew it, and thus the Lord speaks of Himself as risen from the dead, not as having flesh and blood, but as having flesh and bones. "A spirit hath not flesh and bones," He says, "as ye see Me have." He has poured out His blood and left it with the earthly life that He had lived. He has entered upon a new sphere, retaining all that makes Him truly man, but not the conditions of the old earthly life. The conditions are changed. Flesh and blood are not suited for the kingdom of God in this sense of it. He is not, of course, in the least implying that there is any evil in flesh and blood. It was that which was the original creation, as to which God pronounced that it was all very good; but it was good for its own sphere, not good for a higher one. It was good for man in the state of discipline for which God, for his own blessing, designed him at the beginning; but it is part, therefore, of the school-existence, as we may say, which, when the schooling is over, is done away. Still less can that which is corruptible inherit incorruption; so that he says, although we shall not all sleep, yet we shall all be changed. The body must, with us also, be transformed from its present condition, not merely putting off mortality or every trace of weakness and disease, but transformed to a higher condition altogether.

How suddenly will this be accomplished! Think of it, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump!" The last trump was that which in its military sense stood for departure. It was the signal to march, and that is the thought here. God is taking us into another place, and at the last trump, which sounds for this, we shall be changed into a condition corresponding with that which is implied in it. The trumpet shall sound, the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and the living shall be changed. The "corruptible must put on incorruption." There he is speaking of the dead. "The mortal" (here he speaks of the living) "must put on immortality." Here will be every way the complete triumph over death. "When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then will come to pass the word that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." Everything here applies, as we see again, to the resurrection or transformation of the saints simply. There is no thought of anything besides.

It is here that at last the triumphant appeal can rise: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" The apostle answers: "The sting of death is sin." It is that which makes it what it is for man. For the animal

ble shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then will come to pass the word that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is thy sting? Where, O death, is thy victory?* The sting of death is sin, and [j]the strength of sin the law; but [k]thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. So, my beloved brethren, be stedfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not vain in the Lord.

[i] Isa. 25. 8.

[j] Rom. 4.15. Rom. 7. 11.

[k] Rom. 7.25.

* In many good MSS. and versions, the order of "sting" and "victory" is reversed. In a number also "hades" is substituted for the second "death." Both changes are supposed to be for the sake of conformity to the Septuagint.

it has no such sting as it has for him; but "the strength, too, of sin is the law"—a vigorous statement quite in keeping with the fearlessness of the apostle. Romans has shown us fully in what way we are to interpret this. The law gave sin its strength in two ways; first of all, by there being in it no power of deliverance, but power of condemnation only. Thus sin, according to it, reigned and must reign in death. But again, law gave sin its strength by the very fact that in prohibiting it, it aroused all the evil nature of man to resistance. The doer of his own will refused the curb of that which restrained it, and the result was that the evil under this treatment became not only the more manifest but the more intensely evil,—open rebellion against God his Maker. Law for us is past, with the reign of sin also. At the time that is contemplated here sin will have passed entirely. What a deliverance! "Thanks be" indeed "to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" The result of our contemplation is to be the turning, in the meantime, with energy, to the work of the Lord that is in our hands. Every shadow has been removed from our path. Only the sure recompense of everything done for Him remains for us. What trial can daunt one who is in the full energy of this? "Be steadfast therefore," says the apostle, "immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

DIV. 4.

We close the epistle, as in almost all cases, with some references to present matters. They are quite supplementary to the epistle in its general character.

1. With regard to the collection for the saints, we see how constantly the apostle is in remembrance of what had been urged upon him at Jerusalem, that he should remember the poor. As he had directed the assemblies of Galatia, so also he now directed them. Upon the first day of the week, the Christian's day, each was to put by him in store as God had prospered him, in order that when he came there might be no collections needed to be made. He did not want this to be done evidently under the mere influence of his presence among them. He sought that it should be the expression of their own deliberate purpose, and under the influence, as one may say, of what the first day of the week meant for them all. He would not have, as is plain, mere desultory giving, not mere temporary impulse, but a systematic recognition of the goodness of God and of the need we have of one another. When he came he would send with commendatory letters those whom they would approve, to carry their bounty to Jerusalem; and if it were thought that he himself should go, they should go with him. How little he himself knew all that this would imply for him! But his heart, as we see, never forgot Jerusalem, whether in its joy or sorrow. He was going to them when he went through Macedonia, and thought that he might abide and spend the winter with them, that they might set him forward whithersoever he was going. He would not see them now by the way, but waited for the time

DIVISION 4. (Chap. xvi.)

Practical exhortation.

1 (xvi. 1-9): Directions as to the collection.

1. NOW concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the assemblies of Galatia, so also do ye. Upon the first day of the week, let each of you put by him in store as he may have prospered, that no collections may be made when I come. And when I arrive, [l] whomsoever ye shall approve, these I will send with letters to carry your bounty to Jerusalem; and if it be fit that I also should go, they shall go with me. Now I will come unto you [m] when I go through Macedonia, for I do go through Macedonia; and it may be that I shall abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may set me forward whithersoever I go. For I will not see you by the way, for I hope to remain some time with you, if the Lord permit. But I am tarrying in Ephesus until Pentecost; for a [n] great and effectual door is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.

2 (10-18): Various ministry.

2. Now, if Timotheus come, see that he be among you without fear; for he doeth the work of the Lord, even as I. Let no one, therefore, [o] despise him; but set him forward in peace, that he may come to me; for I await him with the brethren. Now concerning our brother [p] Apollos, I begged him much that he would come to

[l] 2 Cor. 8.19.

[m] 2 Cor. 1. 15, 16.

[n] Acts 19. 20.

[o] 1 Tim. 4. 12.

[p] ch. 1. 12.

when he might hope to remain a while. Their condition evidently would influence him in this respect. He wanted time for the effect of his present letter to be manifest, and to see the work of grace in the revival of spiritual energy amongst them. He tells them of the work in Ephesus which was soon to detain him and which might call back their thoughts to the work which had been in Corinth when in time past he labored there. Is it not another stir for their memories and a calling back to the first love there manifested? A great and effectual door God had opened to him, as we know, and the many adversaries are no disproof of this, but one of the common signs that God was working.

2. He commends Timothy to them. They need not have any fear with regard to him. He did the work of the Lord as Paul himself did. No one was, therefore, to despise him, as, on account of his youth, evidently they might be tempted to, but set him forward in peace, that he might go to the apostle who was waiting for him,—an additional proof of his own esteem for him who fulfilled his name as one who honored God. Next, as to Apollos, we see that the use of his name which had been made in Corinth had in no wise lessened the apostle's confidence in him. He had begged him much to go to them with the brethren. On the other hand, it was not in the mind of Apollos to go then, but he would come when he had opportunity. The motives we can only conjecture, although it is quite possible to do this on account of Apollos' former work amongst them and the parties which existed. We see that he had his own course also, independent of the apostle, who does not in the least exhort him with apostolic authority, but leaves him in freedom to his own responsibility. He bids them all stand fast in the faith, quit themselves like men, be strong; but this strength was to be manifested in loving service. Such was that, no doubt, of the household of Stephanas, which, as the first fruits of Achaia, had taken the lead too in a devotedness of this kind. The saints were to recognize those who ministered to them, and to be subject in love, not only to these, but to every one who could show himself a helper in the work and a true laborer.

you with the brethren, and it was not at all his mind to come now; but he will come when he shall have opportunity. [q]Watch, [r]stand fast in the faith, quit yourselves [s]like men, [t]be strong. Let all things be done by you in love. And I exhort you, brethren, (ye know the household of Stephanas, that it is the first-fruits of Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints,) that ye also [u]be subject to such, and to every one that helpeth in the work and laboreth. But I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because that which was lacking on your part they have supplied. For they have refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore, [v]acknowledge those that are such.

3 (19-24): Heart-manifestations.

3. The assemblies of Asia salute you. [w]Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the [x]assembly that is in their house. All the brethren salute you. [y]Salute ye one another with a holy kiss. The salutation of me Paul, [z]with mine own hand. If any one love not the Lord [Jesus Christ]* let him be anathema. Maran-atha.† The [a]grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus.

q 1 Pet. 5. 8. r 2 Thess. 2. 15. s ch. 14. 20. t Eph. 6. 10.

u Heb. 13. 17.

v Phil. 2. 29. 1 Thess. 5. 12.

w See Acts 18. 2. x Rom. 16. 5. y Rom. 16. 16. z Col. 4. 18. 2 Thess. 3. 17. cf. Rom. 16. 22. Gal. 6. 11. a Rom. 16. 20.

* A few good MSS. omit. † Accursed: Our Lord cometh (Syriac).

Stephanas himself, with Fortunatus and Achaicus had come to him, supplying what he says had been lacking upon their part. This does not refer to more than spiritual refreshment, as we see from 2 Cor. xi. 10.

3. We have now the return greetings of the saints with whom he is, among whom Aquila and Priscilla have naturally a special place. It was at Corinth that the apostle had first found these, and where, in all probability, they had been brought into the faith of Christ. They now stood in connection with an assembly gathered with them, and which had its meeting-place in their house. This might be both a cheer and an exhortation.

The salutation with his own hand was, as we have seen before, the token in every epistle that Paul wrote. Appended to it here is his solemn pronunciation of judgment from the Lord at His coming upon every one who did not love the Lord. That is the force of Anathema Maranatha. It is evident how serious the condition was at Corinth, which impelled him to such words as these. He adds, as customarily: "The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you" and "my love be with you all in Christ Jesus."

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

THE second epistle to the Corinthians, as already said, is an appendix to the first, and as such has for its subject, ministry. We have already seen that the very idea of the body of Christ supposes ministry. The various qualifications and functions of the members make each of them in his place a minister to all the rest. There are some, no doubt, who are more conspicuous than others in this, and in the epistle to the Corinthians, the apostle is himself the example of ministry in its highest character, and as manifested in a public way. We must not let this divert us from the larger thought of ministry as connected with the whole body of Christ and which in the very first chapter here the apostle puts so distinctly before us. Paul was the pattern Christian, as we have seen in the epistle to the Philippians. He is the pattern in his conversion, as he shows us in his epistle to Timothy. He was a pattern even in his previous condition, at once chief of legalists and chief of sinners. He is here pattern for us in the ministry of Christ; but we must not let his pre-eminence in this crowd out the larger thought, as in most commentaries upon the epistle it practically does. We might as well allow the individuality of Paul as a Christian to prevent the application self-evidently to be made to all other Christians. Ministry has its various characters, of course, and in some forms is not only not public, but may be of a very unobtrusive and unofficial kind; but the things which seem to be more feeble are necessary, as the same apostle has reminded us; and we are not to allow it to make us think of ministry as if it were the exclusive prerogative or duty of a certain class. The epistle thus widens from a mere defence of himself by Paul to the Corinthians,—or at most a mere ministry of his to local needs in that assembly,—it widens, I say, from this to that which is of the most general interest to us all; the principles at least become of universal application. We find this, as already stated, at the very beginning of the epistle.

The first division shows us the unity of the assembly in the mind of God, who controls all happenings to the individual members for profit to the whole.

The second division shows us, in fact, the ministry of the whole Church looked at as the epistle of Christ, to be read and known of all

men. This cannot surely be apostolic simply. It takes the whole Church to be the one epistle. This is carried on further in the chapters following, in which we see how the life comes in with its witness-bearing, as well as the word held forth by believers. We have then the testing and trial which is clearly true as to all Christians; then service in the form of the communication to those who have need, on the part of those who can supply that need. Then we find the overcoming of the difficulties of the way, (the opposition of Satan always seeking to destroy the testimony of Christ,) and the *power* to overcome. And we close finally with that which is the perfecting of the ministry; in which we see, on the one hand, the nearness to God in which those who seek earnestly to serve His people are found, and along with this the discipline they nevertheless need, and in which they learn that the power of Christ resting upon us enables us to glory in the very infirmities which call in that power. This gives us the divisions of the epistle, which are in general, with only one exception, two chapters to a division, the exception being that of the third chapter, in which we have the ministry of the new covenant put in glorious contrast with the ministration of the old. The divisions are therefore:

1. (Chaps. i., ii.): The unity of the body as recognized of God in the control of all that relates to every part for the good of the whole.
2. (Chap. iii.): Gives us ministry in its necessarily new covenant character in contrast with all that could be called such in the old.
3. (Chaps. iv., v.): Shows us the radiancy of the glory of Christ in the earthen vessels, which, by their very weakness and nothingness, only make the source of it more manifest.
4. (Chaps. vi., vii.): Shows us the testing and trial in the world through which we pass.
5. (Chaps. viii., ix.): The communication for the need of the needy on the part of those who have ability to supply the need.
6. (Chaps. x., xi.): Gives us the overcoming of the difficulties and of the power of the enemy, which would hinder the work; while
7. (Chaps. xii., xiii.) gives us the perfecting of the ministry by the ministry of God on His side to those who minister, and the discipline of the way which stamps them only with that weakness which makes them glory in His strength.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE

CORINTHIANS

DIVISION 1. (Chaps. i., ii.)

The unity of the body as recognized of God in the control of all that relates to every part for the good of the whole.

1 (1.1-7): The principle.

1. PAUL an apostle of Christ Jesus [a]by the will of God, and the [b]brother Timotheus, to the assembly of God which is in Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia. [c]Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

a 1 Cor. 1.1. Eph. 1. 1. b Phil. 1. 1. Col. 1. 1. 1 Thess. 1. 1. 2 Thess. 1. 1. c Rom. 1. 7. 1 Cor. 1. 3. Gal. 1.3, etc.

NOTES.

DIV. 1.

THE importance of the first division is plainly seen here. It is an introduction to that which follows, and puts us upon the right track for the interpretation of all that follows. It is very striking, therefore, to find here insisted on, the unity of the assembly as recognized of God in the trial of all that happens with regard to any of the members of the body, making them thus more fruitful in their service to the rest. It is immensely important that we should get the idea of ministry which thus results. The tendency has been—while no Christian surely would deny that service in some sort belongs to all the people of God—yet to make what is commonly called ministry too much the service of a class, and official. We need, all of us, to wake up fully to the fact that ministry is nothing else than that service of Christ in all our life, to which we are pledged by the very fact that we are Christians. It is not by any choice of ours that we have been baptized by the Spirit into the one body of Christ. Our place and necessary duty in relation to all other members is thus clear. We may indeed have to ask ourselves what is our own distinct function in this way, —a question which we shall not answer by looking simply at ourselves and seeking to define it by such an examination. Love, as the apostle has already taught us, is the spirit of ministry. It is that which makes us servants as a matter of course to the needs of others, and here there is no restrictive band thrown around us to hinder the free motion of love. It is as we are led out to help in whatever way we may find ourselves able to help, that that ability on our part becomes more and more known to ourselves, and we fall more intelligently into the place which God has given us. Officialism has always been a restraint upon this mutual service. A large number have thus been systematically deprived of even the very opportunity of knowing what their gifts might be; and the blessing which God would thus have given us has been limited, and, as far as we could do it, forfeited by us. The heart is that which will teach us here better than the head, and love is not the blind thing which men have painted it, but, on the contrary, that which is the very key to wisdom. "He that winneth souls is wise." The desire to do this will make us to seek out ways of doing it which will soon justify themselves, or find needed correction in the field of service itself.

1. The apostle associates himself in his address to the Corinthians now, in his constant, gracious way, with the brother Timotheus; while he has to maintain, in the state of things which we know was at Corinth, his own distinct apostleship by the will of God. He writes, therefore, with authority, not simply by

[d] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassions and the [e] God of all encouragement; who encourageth us in all our tribulation, that [f] we may be able to encourage those who are in any tribulation, through the encouragement wherewith we ourselves are encouraged of God. For as [g] the sufferings of Christ abound unto us, even so through Christ doth our encouragement also abound. And whether we are in tribulation, it is for your encouragement and salvation, which is wrought in endurance of the same sufferings which we also suffer, (and our hope for you is stedfast;) or whether we are encouraged, it is for your encouragement and salvation: knowing that as ye are [h] partakers of the sufferings, so also are ye of the encouragement.

[d] Eph. 1. 3. 1 Pet. 1. 3.
[e] Rom. 15. 5.
[f] cf. Col. 1. 24.
[g] Phil. 2. 30. 2 Tim. 2. 10.
[h] Rom. 8. 17. 2 Tim. 2. 12.

way of advice; and we see, in fact, all the way through the epistle, how he claims this authority, while desiring to use it with all the gentleness of grace. He writes to the assembly at Corinth, but with a larger reference also to all the saints who were in all Achaia, wishing them in the first place, as that which would qualify for all that he will urge upon them here, "grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Grace is, as we know, our fundamental need, as well as that in which we stand with God, and peace is that which may well be our possession as we realize the grace in which we stand; but there is also a peace which flows from communion with the Father and with the Son, and which is essential, therefore, to all Christian walk.

The apostle writes as full of the comfort with which the news which he has just got from Corinth inspires him. He blesses the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as "the Father of compassion and the God of all encouragement," and immediately gives us in this way a key-note of the epistle: "For God encourageth us," he says, "in all our tribulation, that we may be able to encourage those who are in any tribulation through the encouragement wherewith we ourselves are encouraged of God." How beautiful is the fruitfulness of sorrow thus for us, as that which only makes us more deeply to realize God as a living God and the way in which He cares and ministers to us all! God is, after all, the great Minister. We are only imitators of God in this way, feeble as we are. It is ministry upon which every one of us depends, a ministry in which He may use and does use His people, and in which also the very circumstances of the way, however adverse they may seem, are nevertheless made all to work together for good to them that love God. How conscious we must be, if we have any right Christian experience at all, of the effect of trouble thus upon us, of how, when we draw near to God by means of it, He becomes truly more the living God, to be counted upon for all our need! The trouble of which he speaks is that which has resulted to him from the place which was his in the world as devoted to Christ. The sufferings of Christ abounded to one to whom to live was Christ and nothing else. It is not disciplinary suffering that he is speaking of, therefore; although it is true that, perhaps, in all suffering even where the highest privilege is found, nevertheless we are such that discipline may be in it, perhaps is commonly in it, and is part of its blessing. But that is not what is spoken of here. If the suffering of Christ abounded to him, so in proportion did his encouragement through Christ abound also. Both things, the trouble and the encouragement, were not simply for himself, but for all Christians also. Their encouragement would be found in endurance of the same sufferings, and their salvation or deliverance out of them was the crown of his suffering. From it in due time the deliverance came.

It is here that is found the ability for helping one another upon the basis of

2 (8-14): The sentence of death in ourselves.

2. For we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning our tribulation [t]which befell us in Asia, that we were pressed exceedingly, beyond our power, insomuch that we despaired even of life. But we ourselves had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in [j]God who raiseth the dead; who delivered us out of so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we confide that he will also yet deliver us; ye also laboring together by [k]supplication for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by means of many, [l]thanks may be given by many on our behalf. For our glorying is this, the [m]testimony of our conscience, that in holiness* and sincerity before God, ([n]not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God,) we have behaved ourselves in the world, and more abundantly toward you. For we write no other things unto you than what ye well know and recognize, and I hope will recognize to the end, even as ye also have recognized us in part, that we are your glorying, even as [o]ye also are ours, in the day of our Lord Jesus.

3 (15-22): The inworking of the word and Spirit.

3. And with this confidence I was minded to come before unto you, that ye might have a second benefit; and by you to pass into Macedonia, and again from

t Acts 19.23. 1 Cor.15.32.

j Rom.4. 17.

k Rom. 15. 30.

l ch. 4. 15. ch. 9. 11.12.

m 1 Thess. 2. 10.

n 1 Cor. 2.1, 4.

o 1 Thess. 2. 19.

* Many read, "simplicity."

such common suffering and such experiences of the goodness and power of God. He had a stedfast hope with regard to them, an assurance that all this trial would work but blessing in regard to them, and now his own present encouragement by them would have its reflex influence upon them, for their own encouragement and as working out their deliverance also. If they were partakers of the sufferings on the one hand, they would be also of the encouragement on the other. Thus God has united His people together.

2. The apostle goes on to speak more of the trouble in which he had lately been, and of the effect upon himself, an effect which God would always produce in us from trial of this sort. He had been pressed exceedingly, beyond his own power to sustain it. Life itself he had given up as hopeless; but when God brought him down to this, and when the sentence of death, as it were, was written upon him, it was only that God might manifest Himself as the God of resurrection, a God acting in power beyond all thoughts of man, whatever the circumstances may be. The apostle had found deliverance. Assurance had been confirmed with him that God would always deliver him. He trusted Him for this, therefore, while recognizing the value of the prayers of the saints on his behalf, prayers which were already thus a manifest form of ministry to him; and the result with God would consequently be, in the grace bestowed upon him, thanksgiving on the part of many in his behalf. In seeing this, he is comforted by the assurance, the testimony of his own conscience, that in holiness and sincerity before God he had behaved himself in the world and even especially towards them. They were already recognizing this; and he wrote nothing else than he was sure they would recognize, and that he was their glorying, as they too were his in the coming day of the Lord Jesus.

3. He goes on now to speak of what might seem to have been a failure upon his part. He had been minded to come to them before this, to pass by them into Macedonia, and again to come from Macedonia to them, that they might set him afterward on his way to Judea; but in fact he had not done this. Had that been mere fickleness on his part, so that what he purposed to-day he would set aside to-

Macedonia to come to you, and of you to be set forward on my way to Judæa. Having therefore this purpose, did I show fickleness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that there should be with me yea yea, and nay nay? But God is faithful, that our word toward you is not yea and nay. For the [p]Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and [q]Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him is yea. For [r]whatever may be the promises of God, in him is the yea, wherefore also through him is the [s]amen, for glory to God by us. Now he that stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath [t]anointed us, is God, who also hath [u]sealed us, and given us the [v]earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

4 (23-ii. 4): The trial experienced.

4. Now I call God for a witness upon my soul that to spare you I came not yet to Corinth. Not that we have [w]lordship over your faith, but are helpers in your joy: for [x]by faith ye stand. But I determined this for myself, that I would not come again to you in grief. For if *I* grieve you, who then is he that maketh me glad, but he who is grieved by me? And I wrote this also, that when I came, I might not have grief from those of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all that my joy is the joy of you all. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you, with many tears; [y]not that ye might be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly towards you.

p Acts 9. 20.
q Acts 18. 5.
r Rom. 15. 8.
s *cf.* Rev. 3. 14.
t 1 Jno. 2. 27.
u Eph. 1. 13. Eph. 4. 30.
v ch. 5. 5. Eph. 1. 14.
w 1 Pet. 5. 3.
x Rom. 11. 20.
y ch. 7. 9.

morrow? Was there, in this way, a kind of yea and nay with him, as earnest a nay as the yea before might seem to be earnest? He desires to rid them of any thought of this kind; and it is beautiful to see how he insists that his life took character from his preaching, even in such details as he is speaking of. The Son of God who had been preached among them by himself and Silas and Timotheus was *He* preached as One in whom there was yea and nay, the author of a mere conditional and uncertain blessing? Assuredly not. All in Him was certainty; all the promises of God were in Him yea, in affirmation; and in Him too amen, in the answer of faith and experience to His assurance; that God might have His due glory as alone He could in this way. As to the position of the Christian, God had established them all together in Christ, with whom there could be no failure. Salvation was in His hands and in no other. He had complete control of all circumstances, and grace to meet all possible necessities. Then, too, the power answering to this, the power of the Spirit, had been manifest. They were anointed thus and sealed. The power communicated had marked them out in the fullest way as those who belonged to God, and thus secured His coming in on behalf of those who were His representatives upon the earth. The Spirit Himself was thus the pledge and earnest of the future in their hearts. Here all was certainty. Nothing was merely contingent. Nothing depended upon man, whatever shape God's grace might have to take in view of human frailty and uncertainty.

4. He goes on to explain the real reason for this apparent failure. It was to spare them that he had not come to Corinth. Their state was such that he was afraid of having to exercise apostolic authority in a manner that might seem to make him lord rather than servant. His absence from them was the fruit of his

5 (II.5-11): The ways of God as ways for the assembly.

5. But [z]if any one hath caused grief, he hath not grieved me but in part (that I may not overcharge) all of you. Sufficient to such an one is this rebuke, which was of the many;* so that, on the contrary, ye should rather show grace and encourage, lest, perhaps, such an one should be swallowed up with excessive grief. Wherefore I exhort you to assure him of [your] love. For to this end also I have written, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye are obedient as to everything. But to whom ye forgive anything, I also; for I also, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, it is for your sakes in the person of Christ; that we might not let Satan get an advantage over us, for we are not ignorant of his [a]devices.

[z] 1 Cor. 6.

[a] Eph. 6.11.

6 (12-17): The overcoming.

6. Now when I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ, and when a door was opened to me by the Lord, I had no [b]rest in my spirit when I found not Titus my

[b] ch. 7. 5.

* Greek, "the more."

love toward them. It was to call into exercise the faith in which they stood. They were to act in the responsibility which was their own, and he left them free to act thus. Nor was it his mind to come to them again in grief. They were the very people who in their prosperity made him glad. Why should he be anxious to grieve them? And the object of his writing now was also that he might not have grief from those in whom he ought to rejoice. He had confidence also on his own part now, that his joy was really the joy of all of them. His previous epistle, with all the touch of severity that might be in it, was only the witness of the love which he had more abundantly towards them, and which was working for their blessing in this way.

5. The apostle now takes up the case of discipline to which he had to exhort them in the previous epistle. The sorrow which had been in his heart was really theirs as well as his, and he did not want them now to press his part in it in such a way as to hinder the manifestation of their love, which should be when this sorrow of theirs had taken effect in the breaking down of the offender. They had need now to show grace and encourage, for fear the one in question should be swallowed up with the excessive grief which he seemed to be manifesting. It is quite possible for us to go from the extreme of laxity to the extreme of rigidity, these things both springing really out of a lack of true love, which can neither, on the one hand, make light of the evil, nor on the other, lose sight of its object, which is to win the sinner from his sin. He could, therefore, now exhort them to assure this person of their love; and here he desired that they would be as obedient to the word from him as they had been obedient before in the active discipline itself. If they forgave anything, he too forgave. He was with them in it and as the representative of Christ also in his apostolic character, forgiveness indeed being the very triumph of grace over sin and the triump over Satan too, in whose hands the offender had been put, but who would seek now to drive him to despair, and so to get an advantage over the flock of Christ Himself. Such were his devices, of which Christians should not be ignorant.

6. He goes back now to speak of his own personal exercises in relation to them. He had come to Troas for the gospel of Christ, and a door had been there opened to him by the Lord; yet his anxiety with regard to Corinth would not permit him to remain there. He did not find Titus as he expected, who had been sent to them, and his anxiety was such that he left even this open door and departed into Macedonia to find news of them. He does not pronounce upon this whether, after all, it had been the Lord's mind that he should depart; but

brother; but bidding them adieu, I departed into Macedonia. But thanks be to God who always leadeth us in triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest through us the savor of his knowledge in every place. For we are a sweet savor of Christ unto God, in those that are saved and in those that perish: [c] to the one a savor of death unto death, to the other a savor of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as the many who make a [d] trade of the word of God, but as of [e] sincerity, but as of God, before God we speak in Christ.

c *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 7, 8.
d 1 Tim. 6. 5.
e *cfr.* Phil. 1. 16.

there could be no question how, with such an one as the apostle, it manifested his anxiety on their behalf; but God had come in. Everywhere he found it so. God was always leading in triumph in Christ. He does not say, "maketh us to triumph," exactly. The triumph was that of God Himself, God who had unfailing interest in all that belonged to Christ, and who manifested it thus in those who were identified with Him upon earth. Through them He was making manifest the savor of His knowledge in every place; and this, too, where the gospel might seem not to be a success, as where it was manifestly such: in those that were being saved and in those that were perishing. Those who preached it were still a sweet savor of Christ to God; and He delighted in the publication of His power and grace in Him; Christ always a sweet savor to Him, even though it might be in result to those who rejected Christ only a savor of death, the anticipation of worse death,—on the other hand, a savor of life unto life to those who accepted it. Who then was sufficient for such things as these? Their sufficiency had manifestly to be of God Himself, who was the great preacher of Christ in the power of His Spirit, who had come to glorify Him at all times. Yet the human instrumentality was not set aside by this, but confirmed rather; and it required, on the part of those whom God was thus using, that earnest sincerity which was of God; who did not make, therefore, a trade of the word of God, converting it into a means of following out their own self-interest, but who, in the presence of God, where Christ was, spoke in His Name.

DIV. 2.

The second division now dwells upon the characters of this ministry of Christ, which was, therefore, the ministry of the new covenant, in contrast with all that could be called ministry in connection with the old. Ministry of such sort, as we see it in the apostle, there was not in Israel,—a ministry, that is, which went out to the world with the offer of God's grace to it. In Israel itself God was shut up. The way into the holiest was not yet made manifest; the light had not yet shone out through a rent veil. As a consequence, there was in one sense no God to proclaim. Law was in this sense enmity, as the apostle has said to the Ephesians. It was something which stood between God and man, a hindrance, as one may say, on both sides. Man could not go in to God. God could not come out, as it was in His heart to come out, to man. One may ask why then this should be, if it was in God's heart to show Himself? The apostle has answered already, in the Epistle to the Romans, that there had to be a "due time" in which, when man was found still "without strength," Christ should die "for the ungodly." The discovery of the need had to precede the ministry to it; and alas, man resists the discovery of this need. It is not sufficient for God even to declare it. Man must make the experiment for himself. He will be satisfied with nothing short of personal experience; and thus God, after the testimony of His grace,—which, in fact, had begun in Abraham,—had to allow the law to come in, in order to exhibit sin in its true character, and the hopelessness of man's condition apart from grace.

Thus it was the special priesthood which characterized Israel, a priesthood

DIVISION 2. (Chap. iii.)

The ministry of the new covenant in contrast with the old.

1 (iii. 1-6): its sufficiency as of God.

1. DO we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some, [f]epistles of commendation to you or from you? *Ye* [g]are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men: being made manifest to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but with the [h]Spirit of the living God; not on

[f] Acts 18.27.
[g] 1 Cor. 9.2.
[h] *cf.* ver.17, 18.

which was not national, as God had conditionally offered it should be in the wilderness. They were *not* a "kingdom of priests"; but the nation, put into the distance by their own departure from God and from the terms of their covenant with Him, had need of those who could approach God for them in a way they could not for themselves. Even so, the priests who approached were, after all, of the same nature and character as the people for whom they stood. They were thus an officially typical priesthood, but not the reality of it according to God. They were the shadow, and not the substance. Thus, they themselves could not go into the innermost holy place. They were shut out, as others, by the veil. The one exception of the high-priest's entrance on one day of the year only, with the blood to put upon the mercy seat, was a mere glimpse,—full of encouragement, doubtless, of that which was to come,—a finger pointing on, as always throughout the law, to that which was beyond the law itself. But thus there was a priesthood, but no ministry; that is, no ministry which now we should call such, a ministry in which the heart of God could come out as He desired. Thus the testimony was shut up in Israel, although indeed, as has often been said, it was placed upon the public highway of the world, so as to be accessible to man if he desired it; but it did not yet show God seeking as He really sought, because as yet it was not plain that they whom He sought were lost ones. For the ungodly and yet without strength,—when that was proved,—Christ in due time died. Now there is a *ministry*, a way of access to God opened by His own hand, a way out for God in His love to manifest Himself to all His creatures,—a world-wide testimony, therefore. The character of Christian ministry is thus in many respects in complete contrast with anything before it. It is plain also, by what we find here, that this ministry is not merely one of word,—a gospel, however sweet and wonderful,—but it is a testimony in life as well as in speech, as we are to see directly, an "epistle of Christ to be read and known of all men," written no more like the old, upon the tables of stone, but upon fleshy tables of human hearts. Here then, as is plain, we pass beyond the bounds of any mere official ministry and find one which belongs to the whole Church of God, and which the Church of God as a whole is alone competent for. Individuals are not the *epistles* of Christ, but the whole Church of God is that which forms the *epistle*. We may each have our part in this testimony; but the testimony of the whole is the only sufficient one; so far, at least, as man's failure allows us to speak of sufficiency anywhere.

1. The doctrine is introduced incidentally, as so commonly in the epistles, with the most important truths. He appeals to them amid all this questioning which has been going on amongst them.—Did they really need epistles of commendation to them, or did he need epistles of commendation from them to others? As to this latter, *they* were his letter of commendation, (a beautiful and tender appeal to them, this,) "an epistle written," he says, "in our hearts, known and read of all men." It would touch them indeed to ask themselves, with all the love in which he had come amongst them, how far they were truly a letter commendatory of him. But he goes on to speak of what was not local, but the general character of the Church of Christ, and that they were the epistle of Christ in contrast with the legal message to men, written on tables of stone; a letter of commendation of Christ Himself, written by the Spirit of the living

tables of stone, but on fleshy tables of the heart. And such confidence have we through Christ Godward: not that we are competent of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our competency is of God; who hath also made us competent as ministers of a [g]new covenant, [h]not of letter, but of spirit; for the letter [k]killeth, but the [l]spirit giveth life.

[g] Jer. 31. 31-34. Heb. 8. 8-13.
[h] Rom. 7. 6.
[k] Rom. 7. 5, 10, 11.
[l] Jno. 6. 63.

God. We see, I doubt not, in the end of the chapter, how this letter has been written; but it is plainly the responsibility which the whole Church has as representing Christ in the world. By their confession of Him they were identified with Him, and would give Him character in the eyes of men around them. How solemn a position is this! We cannot, as Christians, escape from the place of testimony. The only question will be, is the testimony for or against? Could it be possible that they would permit the confession of One to whom they owed their all to be to His discredit instead of to His praise? But he is not looking at this side of things now. He speaks of that which was essentially true with them as those in whom the Spirit of God had wrought. He is speaking encouragingly, not to blame; and, as a fact, this testimony could not be a local one merely. As we have said, he does not speak of individuals being epistles of Christ. No individuals could be sufficient for this. The brightest saint would have very much lacking in him. The records that we have of the saints of old have all, we may say, exhibited some conspicuous defect, while yet the general character of a saint might be evident. Here the testimony of one supplements the testimony of another; and thus, through that of the whole, Christ is borne witness to in a way in measure competent.

It is plain that this witness must be a true ministry. The formal preaching of the Word, while it has its necessary place, and even the prominent place,—yet, after all, unless in connection with its effects in the life, would come sadly short. This thought of ministry we shall find accompanies us through some chapters following. Those who hold forth the Word of life, as the apostle has told us in Philippians, must be "the sons of God, blameless and harmless, without rebuke, and in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation shining as lights in the world" (Phil. ii. 15, 16). Such lights he is indeed thinking of here, those who reflect the light from a heavenly source, from One who shines there brighter than the sun.

But thus, God was no more addressing men with a message carved upon inanimate tables, but by living messengers, His own wonderful workmanship. Such confidence with regard to them the apostle had through Christ. He knew that, alas, the flesh was in believers, and even prominent in them, and that his confidence as to them must be confidence through the Lord. But this is, therefore, an unfailing ground of confidence, and of this,—satisfied that they were after all truly the divine workmanship,—he could speak as he does here. It was not to make much of himself, of his competency in the ministry which God had given him. All competency was derived from God Himself, who in fact works in all this for the glory of Christ, and will not suffer Christ to be without His testimony amongst men. Thus had he with others been made the competent ministers of a new covenant, a covenant not of letter, as the old covenant of the law, but a covenant which was of spirit. In fact, the new covenant is, as we know, entirely the declaration of God's "I will"s: not a demand upon man, but an assurance of that which He works for and in men. It is of grace, therefore, necessarily. The covenant of law, the letter, killed; but the power of the Spirit which effected that of which the new covenant speaks, gives life.

We are carefully to observe that he is speaking here not of the letter of *Scripture*, as some would have it, but of the letter of the old covenant, which was the law. It is not true that the letter of Scripture kills. Even the letter of law, apart from its covenant character, is not against us, clearly, but the safe lesson

2 (7-11): In contrast with the ministry of condemnation and death.

2. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven on stones came in with [m]glory, so that the children of Israel could not look stedfastly upon the face of Moses on account of the glory of his face, [a glory] which is annulled, how shall not the [n]ministration of the Spirit subsist in glory? For if the [o]ministration of condemnation be glory, much rather doth the [p]ministration of righteousness abound in glory. For even that which was made glorious hath not been made glorious in this respect, by reason of the surpassing glory; for if that which is annulled was with glory, much more that which remaineth [subsisteth] [q]in glory.

[m] Ex. 34. 29-35.
[n] Gal. 3. 5. Gal. 4. 4-6.
[o] Rom. 3. 19.
[p] Rom. 4. 24.
[q] ch. 4. 4, 6.

of an old schoolmaster under whom indeed we may not be, but whose lessons still do us good. But the covenant of law kills, and only that. If law is to be the condition under which we live, we shall soon find that it is a ministration of death and not of life.

2. Now then comes the contrast, briefly yet fully told out,—the law with the ministration of death indeed. We have seen in Romans how really it had that character. When the commandment came to the apostle, when he realized the power of it, sin revived, he says, and he died. Death also was the public sentence written upon man at large, of which the law availed itself in order to work conviction in the souls of those to whom it was addressed. The death of which it spoke was just what we ordinarily call such. Upon every child of man it stamped the character of a convicted criminal, one sentenced as such to be removed from the sphere into which creation had brought him, and no one, however comparatively well he might appear in contrast with those around him, could escape this sentence. "Death has passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Grace indeed has brought in a greater blessing, but it leaves this testimony unaffected. It is a blessing of grace, not a reward of works. We are debtors simply to the compassion of God, and in order to realize the blessing we have to accept in that sense the sentence of death in ourselves. Then indeed the glory of the new covenant appears to us, and God's wonderful and sweet "I will"s are the joy and satisfaction of the soul.

Yet this ministration of death, which was therefore a true ministration, a thing meant of God in its results to be mercy to man, whatever the gravity of the sentence which it carried, yet this ministration of death written and engraven on stones came in with glory. It is plain that he is not speaking of the first giving of the law at all, but of the second, for he immediately refers this glory to that which was upon the face of Moses when he came down from the Mount after he had been there the second time, a glory which they could not look upon, though it were merely the reflection of the divine. Thus he had to cover himself with a veil when he stood amongst the people; and that characterized all the glory of the law, which was essentially a veiled glory. The second giving of the law had, in fact, unveiled in a certain sense the glory of God as the first had not. It was not the divine Face indeed revealed, but, as He says to Moses, the glory of the "back parts." His face could not be seen. A solemn word this therefore, for those who are the disciples of Moses, the assurance that according to law God could, even when He was showing real mercy, have His face turned away, and in mere pity His back turned upon men! They were not competent to see Him face to face. No man could see Him and live. No one could stand before Him upon those terms, try it as often as they might.

This opportunity of protracted trial was what the second giving of the law provided for. It was that which made the law, as it were, a pool of Bethesda, a pool into which man might get, just as if he were *not* "impotent." For an impotent man, it had no help. God, therefore, says to the wicked, that

3 (12-18): The glory in the face of Moses and that in Christ's face.

3. Having, therefore, such hope, we use great boldness;
and are not as Moses, who put a [r]veil upon his face, so
[s]that the children of Israel could [t]not fix their eyes on
the end of that which is annulled. But their thoughts
have been [u]darkened; for until this very day, at the
reading of the old covenant, the same veil remaineth
unremoved, which in Christ is done away. But unto
this day, when Moses is read, the veil lieth upon their
heart. But [v]whensoever it shall turn to the Lord, the
veil shall be taken away. Now the [w]Lord is the Spirit,
and [x]where the Spirit of the Lord is, [there is] liberty.
But we all, looking on the glory of the Lord with un-
veiled face, are transformed into the same image from
glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit.

r Ex. 34.33-35.
s cf. Matt. 13. 13.
t Rom. 10.3, 4.
u Jno. 9. 39.
v cf. Rom. 11. 23. Isa. 25. 7.
w 1 Cor. 15. 45.
x Rom. 8 15.

if he turn from his wickedness which he hath committed and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive; but nevertheless, He is One who can by no means clear the guilty, when the final account is to be made. Thus He can give another opportunity, He can forgive iniquity, transgression and sin in the meantime; but at last one must be able to show a righteousness such as He requires, and this we cannot. Thus the opportunity so given only shows the more convincingly the desperate condition of man. It is just this gracious revelation of God manifesting all the grace of which law was capable, before which the people cannot stand, and which is a ministration of death, a writing of hopeless condemnation upon all.

This glory must, therefore, pass away. The glory on the face of Moses must give way to the glory in another Face, and the ministration of death to the ministration of the Spirit, who reveals Christ. Here the glory remains, for it is glory which the sinner, hopeless in himself, may see with gladness and satisfaction. There is gospel in it, as we shall learn directly, the gospel of the glory of Christ. So then the ministration of condemnation yet had glory, but how then does the ministration of righteousness abound in glory! Claim of rightcousness the law made, but the ministration of righteousness was impossible by it. Righteousness is now *ministered* to us, not worked out by us, and thus indeed the glory of God is revealed as nothing else could reveal it. His inmost heart is told out in righteousness, but love in righteousness, and love how marvelous as shown in the gift of Christ for men! So that which was made glorious in the time past had in itself no glory compared with this surpassing glory. It would be sufficient to show this to realize that the one is the glory of that which is passed away, while the other glory remains and shall remain.

3. The ministers, then, of this new covenant can use great boldness; boldness indeed to pronounce the justification of the ungodly and to make sinners in Christ the righteousness of God! This is the boldness which grace has given us, and now there is to be nothing hidden, but the plainest speech and the fullest display of that which, while it glorifies God, is the complete blessing of man. In the dispensation of law, the children of Israel could not fix their eyes on the end of that which is now annulled. They could not see, alas, as disciples of law and going no further, the end of the law itself. The sweet grace of God, which indeed underlies everywhere its types and parables, was to them incapable of being realized. Their thoughts were darkened, and so, says the apostle, at this very day they are darkened. That veil remains unremoved from Moses' face, while yet in Christ it is done away. God has on His part done with it. They on their part have chosen it. It lies upon their heart, a heart which, taken up with its own self-righteousness, is turned away from the Lord. They must turn *to* the Lord to have the veil removed. This too shall be, in a time to which yet we look forward. The apostle now goes on to say that this Spirit,

DIVISION 3. (Chaps. iv., v.)

The radiancy of the glory in earthen vessels, making manifest its source.

I (iv. 1-6): The light shining.

1. THEREFORE, having this ministry, even as we have obtained mercy, we faint not. But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in deceit, nor falsifying the word of God, but by manifestation of the truth [y]commending ourselves to every one's conscience before God. But if also our gospel be veiled, it is [z]veiled in those that are perishing; in whom the [a]god of this age hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, so that the [b]radiance of the gospel of the glory of Christ, [c]who is the image of God, should not shine forth [for them]. For

y Jno. 8. 46.
z ch. 3. 15.
a Eph. 2. 2.
b ch. 3. 18.
c Col. 1. 15. Heb. 1. 3.

who in the new covenant works out God's blessed will in men, is in fact the Lord. It is the energy of the Second Man, who, as the apostle says, "is a quickening Spirit." The Lord and the Spirit of the Lord are in this sense identified as the apostle identifies them here. "The Lord," he says, "is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." Freedom has come in place of bondage, the joy of sonship instead of the old slavery. There is liberty of access to God so manifested, and it is in the revelation of His unveiled face that now we find the power which works in us, which makes us, in fact, that epistle of Christ of which the apostle has been so lately speaking. Here are the fingers of light that write God's new testimony upon souls. Looking now upon the glory of the Lord, a glory now unveiled, not hidden, we are transformed into the same image from glory to glory. How clear is the power of faith in this, how blessed the simplicity of it! We have only, as it were, to sit in the sun, to be bathed in its brightness. The power to enjoy Him is the power to reflect Him. The reflection is no effort, but the necessary effect of the enjoyment. While this goes on from one degree of glory to another, the least measure of it is glory, and, as more and more we know of Christ, glory superadded to glory. This is what is "by the Lord the Spirit." It is the life-giving Spirit of Christ, working in His energy in the souls of men, not only for individual blessing, but for that display also in the world of sinners which is true gospel witness.

Div. 3.

We carry these thoughts with us through the next division. We have here the radiancy of this glory, as the apostle has spoken of it, contrasted with the vessels of earth in which it is displayed. The earthen vessel may seem (in some sense may be) a hindrance, but in result God makes it only by this means manifest that the glory is not human glory, but divine. It is in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.

1. Here then is the ministry, in its character, which characterizes the new covenant. Those who have obtained mercy become of necessity the witnesses of that mercy. There are those, of course, who are specially called of God to bear public witness of it before men, but the testimony is of the same character in the humblest witness. The character of such a ministry lifts up and energizes the soul of one who is conscious of being entrusted with it. Walking in this light, the *hidden* things become "things of shame." The heart is without guile. There need be no self-deception, and no perversion of the word of God, no hiding its plainest statements, no seeking escape from its condemnation of men as such. The gospel is that of the glory of Christ. This is the true force of that which our common version has so much dimmed as making it simply "the glorious gospel." It is the glory of Christ now in heaven, His work achieved; and there,

we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus [as] Lord, and [d] ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. Because it is the God who [e] spake that out of darkness light should shine, who hath shone in our hearts for the shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

2 (7-12): Delivered unto death that life may witness.

2. But we have this treasure [f] in earthen vessels, [g] that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not of us; every way afflicted, but not straitened; perplexed, but not unto despair; persecuted, yet not forsaken; smitten down, yet not destroyed; always bearing about [h] in the body the dying of Jesus, that the

[d] 1 Cor. 9. 19.
[e] Gen. 1. 3.
[f] cf. Lev. 14. 5. Ju. 7. 16.
[g] ch. 12. 7-10.
[h] Gal. 6. 17.

therefore, as the representative of His people. If upon the cross He was their representative and bore the sin which lay upon them, that is removed, the burden of it is gone forever; all the wonder of the grace and power which have come in for us shines out in His face who is gone to God. Thus *His* glory is indeed gospel. This glorious Christ is He in whom the image of God, invisible otherwise, shines fully out. It is its own witness to those who realize their need and who find it thus met and abounded over. If it is veiled, it is veiled simply by the power of the god of this age in the minds of the unbelieving. It is not simply that Satan obscures it to them, but that it is their own unbelief which brings them under the power of Satan, and so hinders the radiance of the gospel shining forth to them. God never permits Satan to have this power apart from man's consent that it should be so. If men turn away from God, they turn to Satan. The very light of God only darkens, as one may say, the shadow which they themselves cast upon their path.

Solemn word it is that with the full consciousness of Christianity come, and its power for working in the souls of men, the apostle should call Satan not simply, as elsewhere, the prince of this world, but "the god of this *age*." Christianity has not introduced, in this respect, a new age. It gathers men out of the world. It will never affect the world itself so as to bring in a new age for men. This, of course, lies in no inherent incapacity of the gospel itself, but in the strange mystery of man's free will, by which he chooses darkness rather than light, and bondage to Satan rather than the freedom which God proclaims to him. But the age, one ought distinctly to understand, is not as yet an age of light, and the world will never be converted by the gospel, so that this shall be. Christ must come to effect this. The sun which has gone down upon the world in Christ's banishment out of it through man's unbelief, must rise again, as it will rise, and then indeed there will be a kingdom of Christ in which righteousness shall reign, and peace and blessing be the result of righteousness.

In this blessed light, then, drinking it in, it would be impossible for those in character as the preachers of it, to proclaim themselves. In the knowledge of the new man "Christ is all and in all." Christ is Lord, and the ministers of the gospel are but the servants of men for Jesus' sake. It is a glad and willing subjection in love to the need which is everywhere, and this power cannot be lacking for ministry to that need. The story of the old creation is repeated more wonderfully in the new. The God who spoke that out of darkness light should shine has shone in our hearts, in order that this knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ may shine forth to others. This is the radiancy of the glory in the face of Jesus Christ reflected from the hearts into which it has shone.

2. Here, then, is a treasure which God has designedly placed in earthen vessels for the definite purpose that the exceeding greatness of the power may be seen to be of God and not of man. The earthen vessel might seem to be an obstruction to the light which the treasure is. In some sense also it may assuredly

life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body. For we who live are alway [e]delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, [f]that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then, death worketh in us, but life in you.

[e] 1 Cor. 4. 9. 1 Cor. 15. 30, 31.
[f] 1 Thess. 1. 5.

3 (13-18): The power of resurrection and glory.

3. And having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, [k]I have believed, therefore have I spoken, we also believe, and therefore we speak; knowing that he [l]who raised up the Lord Jesus shall

[k] Ps. 116. 10.
[l] *cf.* Eph. 1. 19, 20. 1 Thess. 4. 14.

be this. The vessel itself may need to be broken in order that the light may shine. There seems indeed an evident reference to Gideon's men and the breaking of the vessels on their part that the lights they carried might be displayed. It is evident that God has chosen men for His messengers to men, and not angels. Angelic ministry might seem in some sense to be more fit, that it would have more power in it as evidently from heaven, and would not be liable to be corrupted by the tendency to failure, inseparable from man, even renewed man. But God is wiser than we, and the grace in which He makes men His ministers and messengers to men cannot be doubted. There is also a character of testimony to which the apostle refers here, which even angelic ministry could not afford. That would be a testimony in power, but not in weakness, and not manifesting that peculiar power which weakness itself alone can manifest, a power which is not its own, but of the grace which comes ever to lift up, animate and nerve to endurance in all our weakness. It is to this that the apostle goes on here. "We are every way afflicted," he says, "but not straitened." There is the effect of grace in the midst of the affliction. "We are perplexed, but not unto despair." Exercise is allowed, nay, given full room for, but the soul sustained in its confidence in God so that despair is impossible. "Persecuted, but not forsaken, smitten down, yet not destroyed." How the dying Stephen seems to be in the apostle's mind, with the light in his face, while the body was dropping into the martyr's grave! "Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus," not exactly His death, but His dying, Himself also a Martyr, the great Martyr,—and that is the point here. Bearing it about in the body is suffering at the hands of men to some extent as He suffered, but with the effect that the life of Jesus may be manifested in the body. God, he insists, has designed this,—has delivered the living up to death for Jesus' sake, but that the life of Jesus may thus be manifested even in mortal flesh. The final result, therefore, is "death worketh in us, but life in you." The badge of the cross is to be borne by the disciples of it. That is God's way of working, and it is the cross in this sense also which is to win men to God.

3. He dwells now more upon the power which sustains us under these circumstances. It is the power of *faith*,—a faith which, because it is such, must utter itself. We believe, and therefore speak. It is what the history of all time assures us of, and therefore he goes back here for a quotation, to the Old Testament; but we have that which Old Testament believers had not. We know God as the God of resurrection, in a sense in which yet they could not know Him. He has raised up the Lord Jesus, and we are so identified with Him that this perfectly assures us of what is before us also, that "He shall raise up us also with Jesus, and present us with you." The resurrection of Christ insures, as the apostle has told us before, the resurrection of His people. If we do not rise, then it must be that He has not risen. If He has risen, He has risen as the first-fruits of those that slept. In all this the same principle which he has spoken of at the beginning of the epistle still obtains. The grace that works in some, works for the sake of all. The power manifested in some is to give energy to all, and "all things," he says, "are for your sakes, that the grace abounding through the many may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God." God is still taking up Jacobs for His Israel, and out of weakness mani-

raise up us also with Jesus, and shall present us with you. For [m]all things are for your sakes, that the grace abounding through the many may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God. Wherefore we faint not; but if indeed our outward man is consumed, yet the [n]inward is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is for the moment, [o]worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; [p]while we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen: for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal.

[m] *cf.* ch. 1. 6. ch. 9. 12.

[n] Rom. 7. 22.

[o] 1 Pet. 1. 7.

[p] Rom. 8. 24, 25.

4 (v. 1-8): Our present experience.

4. For we know that if our earthly house of the [q]tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this indeed we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is [r]of heaven: if so be

[q] ch. 4. 7. 2 Pet. 1. 14.

[r] 1 Cor. 15. 49.

festing His strength; and if it be this, it is unfailing strength, so that the weakness can be no discouragement. What a testimony to the power of God when, whatever be the trial, His people faint not, but "if" indeed "the outward man be consumed, yet the inward is renewed day by day." It needs to be renewed. We are conscious of the wear and tear of things as we go through them. God makes us sensible of our dependence, sensible thus of the arms that carry us. We are learning lessons here which in eternity shall display all their fruit for us; but the present result is that the affliction is but a light one, an affliction for the moment, and "which worketh for us a more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." The apostle labors, as it were, for expressions here. The words "weight" and "glory" would be in Hebrew the same word; a glory, as the thought is, which to us as we look at it now is almost oppressive by its intensity. It would overwhelm us in our present condition, although as we carry it presently there will be no weight, but a lifting up forever. Faith here is continually a need. Hope must be not upon the things that are seen, but upon the things that are unseen. The things that are seen, with all the power that we realize they may have for us, are for a time only. The things that are not seen are the realities. They are eternal.

4. He goes on to show us how entirely for faith the things that are against us have been made our own, and the consequences of sin for man at large have been removed for us. Death is abolished. Judgment is behind us in the cross, though there remains, it is true, the giving account before the judgment-seat of Christ,—an immense blessing for us, and in which the power of God's grace will have its complete triumph.

First, as to death. "We know," says the apostle, "that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." He is speaking of the body, of course, as the "house of this tabernacle." It is that which is to be dissolved, and there remains for us, for eternity, a building of God, a house not made with hands. He is thinking, of course, not of the Father's house, but of what contrasts with and replaces the present habitation. "In this we groan," not for the mere infirmities surely from which we suffer here, but more with the sense of the impediment to the spirit which the body in its present form implies. "We long to be clothed with our habitation which is of heaven," that is, which belongs to heaven; not which is formed of heavenly material, so to speak, or which comes down from it, but which has its character derived from it. It is heavenly as suited to heaven, and to the perfect condition which will be ours then. In the present tabernacle we groan as burdened, not indeed to be unclothed, not as seeking death, but rather that which will swallow up death itself,—to be

that being clothed, we shall not be found [s]naked. For indeed we who are in the tabernacle [t]groan, being burdened; not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that the [u]mortal might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for this very thing is God, who hath given us the [v]earnest of the Spirit. Therefore, being always confident, and knowing that, while at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord (for we walk by faith, not by sight), we are confident, and well pleased rather to be absent from the body, and to be [w]at home with the Lord.

5 (9-12): The account at the judgment-seat.

5. Wherefore also we are ambitious, whether present

[s] Gen. 3. 10.
[t] Rom. 8.23.
[u] Rom.8.11.
[v] Eph. 1.14. Rom. 8. 11.
[w] Phil.1.23.

"clothed upon, that all that is mortal might be swallowed up of life." The apostle is evidently thinking here of the living when the Lord comes. It is not that that which is *corruptible*, but that which is *mortal*, may be swallowed up of life. The mortal condition is the present one, and what he would desire is not death for its own sake, but the joy of the full perfection which remains for us.

He interjects here a word which seems to be a warning for the conscience amongst a people of some of whom he stood in doubt. "If so be," he says, "that being clothed upon we shall not be found naked." That is, of course, what awaits every Christian. To lose the place in resurrection, the glorious and incorruptible body which will thus be ours, is impossible for any real Christian. It would be real nakedness, although the wicked will rise, as well as the righteous; but it will be no *covering*, the body with which they rise. There is a glance back, evidently, at man's condition after the fall when he fled among the trees of the garden from the penetrating Eyes from which, after all, there was no escape. In eternity there will be no escape. Those who are found naked then, will be in all the terror that belongs to such a condition under the eye of God. Think of the exposure! But it is plainly that which no Christian can suffer from. The resurrection is the accomplishment of that for which God laid hold upon us, and of which He has given us the pledge already, the earnest of the Spirit. "God will quicken our mortal bodies," the apostle has told us in Romans, "because of His Spirit which He has given us." It is in the body that the Spirit dwells at the present time, and He certainly will never give up that which in this way has become the temple of God. This gives, then, continual confidence. We are at home in the body, true. It is the only state with which we are familiar now, but faith realizes that the Lord is absent, and that we are absent, therefore, from Him. It is by faith we walk, and not by sight. But thus to be absent from the body is for us as Christians to be at home with the Lord. Thus is death, then, abolished for us.

5. But there is another thing that lies upon man as man, and which is the terror of death to him. "After death," says the apostle, "the judgment." But the Lord has Himself told us that he that liveth and believeth on Him shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life. If He has broken the power of death for us now, so that he that liveth and believeth in Him shall in that sense never die, so has He, and indeed in order to this, taken away the terror of judgment, which for the believer personally Christ has endured and removed. The confusion which is in the minds of Christians so much has nothing to justify it in Scripture, and is largely due, as is plain, to the forgetfulness of the coming of Christ for His own, which removes them in one company, distinct from the world, before judgment falls upon the world. They are not picked out by judgment from the world. They are separated by the coming of the Lord to gather His own to Himself. No one of those caught up can possibly doubt whose he is or what is before him. He is raised in glory or changed into it. He is in the very likeness of Him he goes to meet, and although he is to be manifested before the

or absent, to be well pleasing to him; for we must all be manifested before the [x]judgment-seat of Christ, that each may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, [y]whether good or worthless. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope also that we are made [z]manifest in your consciences. [For]* we do not again commend ourselves

x Rom. 14. 10.

y *cf.* Eccl. 12. 14. 1 Cor. 3.14, 15.

z ch. 4. 2.

* Some omit.

judgment-seat of Christ, there can be no possible terror for him in such a thought, when at last every touch of evil has disappeared. He is in the perfect likeness of the Lord Himself.

But we are to be "manifested." That is the force of the word, not merely "we shall appear," but "we shall be manifested." That is the blessing of it. Our ways and works will perfectly show what we are and what we have been, and to the glory of Him who has, spite of all our failure, accomplished at last the blessed purpose of grace towards us, so that we can be with Him, and, as it were, judge with Him our whole condition. What a lack there would be if there were not this great clearing up of things before we have passed fully into eternity,—if the wisdom and grace and holiness of God were not perfectly displayed thus in all His ways with us, if we had not the lessons of time impressed upon us for the wisdom of eternity! There will be no failure of memory then, but the keenest possible appreciation of everything. Would we forget what we have been, so as to forget along with it the grace which has been with us? Would we lose materials for the song of praise which will be ours forever? Many seem to forget the value of all this to us as the day will declare it and the glory of God which will be manifested,—the perfect fulfilment of the Lord's words as to His people: "I am glorified in them." The principle is plain, as the Old Testament expresses it, that "God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." Nothing else would be worthy of Him. He has nothing to hide, and no act of His has really been in vain, however much in our folly, as we look at things now, we might imagine so. He is to be found justified in this last judgment of all, and we too, for we are to receive also "the things done in the body, according to what we have done, whether it be good or worthless." Everything is to be appraised and estimated at its right value, but this, as it is said elsewhere, that "every one may have his praise from God."

God is seeking good and not evil. He is still, as He does ever, taking the precious from the vile, because He loves the precious. It may be needful in this way that the vile should be looked at also, but it will only enhance the preciousness of the precious. That which is worthless will of course be judged as worthless. It will not be gain. But even here the estimation of it as such will have its gain. The continuity of the future with the present existence is strangely often lost sight of. People often look at it as if the entrance into eternity were to be the entire break with the past; whereas this cannot be without proclaiming at the same time the want of eternal meaning in things here.

The principle, of course, applies also to the judgment of the wicked, and this the apostle turns to now as necessarily being brought before him with all the terror of it, when he turns to persuade men. For himself there can be no terror, but there is most solemn apprehension of what such a searching out as there will be in the day of judgment will be for men. It will still be for the things done in the body that they will give account,—a merciful limitation of it. There is no hint of what people have so strangely added to it, of sin going on even after death, and in hell itself increasing for eternity the weight of condemnation. The time of responsibility is the present time. Eternity for the wicked will be

to you, but give you occasion to glory in our behalf, that ye may have [wherewith to answer] those who glory in appearance and not in heart.

§ (13-16): The cross as the end of the flesh.

6. For whether we are beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we are sober, it is for you. For the love of Christ constraineth us, judging this: that one died for

the time for receiving the things done in the body, and thus God's mercy will limit retribution, while God's holiness will not suffer the continuance of sin, as people imagine; apart surely, from one sentence in Scripture to justify it. Hell is the prisonhouse of the condemned, not a place of manifested rebellion against God any more, or of the evil works for which the condemned are shut up there. It is mercy itself that limits all this.

It is not indeed that judgment will make any essential change in men. It will not turn the sinner into a righteous person. It will not change the heart; but nevertheless it will subdue entirely men to God. God has ordained that to Christ "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord," and that of "beings infernal" as of all the rest. This enforced subjection is, in fact, the only mercy of which they are capable; but the lake of fire itself will have no odor of corruption in it. God will be God everywhere, in hell as in heaven, however differently He will be manifested in each place.

But what a joy to the apostle the present manifestation to God, to which this brings him! We are *already* made manifest to God. We are living and walking in the presence of Him who is light, and can rejoice to be searched out by Him who loves us and has given Christ for us. The power of this upon his life the apostle hopes with confidence will bear witness to the consciences of those whom he addresses. He does not need to commend himself to them, but they have the opportunity, if they would, to glory with regard to such, in opposition to those who were showing themselves among the Corinthians, and glorying indeed in appearance, aiming to be somewhat, while the heart lacked.

6. He is plainly now thinking, for the moment, of the opposers in Corinth who could readily find occasion to criticise the ways of one so different from themselves. On the one hand he declares that it was to God he lived; on the other hand, for the sake, therefore, of men whom God loved, and to whom He had sent the message of love by him. To some he might seem indeed beside himself, just for the glow of wondrous happiness when occupied directly with God Himself, but there was plenty amongst those with whom he had to do to make him sober enough with a sobriety which had reference to them, the token of the earnestness of his heart towards them for their blessing. In all, it was the love of Christ constraining him. This was the one constraint in which there was perfect freedom. He turns to that work of the cross, to him so necessary, and which had for him the perfect revelation of the need of man, as well as the perfect provision on God's part which had been made for it. He had died for all. That was grace, but it was the perfect manifestation also of man's need. Where has sin been judged as in the cross? Where has the condition of man been manifested as it has in that fact that the love that would save men must go down to the awful depths of judgment to do so? "If one died for all, then all have died." It is not exactly, as in the common version, "all were dead." The death that Christ died was not the death in which He found men; but it is the effect of the cross of which he is speaking; it is the perfect condemnation of man, of all men, and on the part of a Saviour, not of a mere judge,—of One who desired for them eternal blessing, but who, if He accomplished this, must meet that death which was upon all. Thus, if He died for all, all died as it were, for the soul that estimated it rightly, in that cross itself. It was the end of all hope for men, apart from Christ. Nothing could be looked for from them merely, and the words are evidently to be taken in their double relation, to the cross as condemnation and to the cross as salvation.

all, [a]so then all have died; and he died for all, that they who live may no longer live unto themselves, but [b]unto him who died for them and was raised up. So that henceforth we [c]know no one after the flesh; and if we have known [d]Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him [thus] no more.

7 (17-21): In Christ, perfection and a perfect ground of reconciliation.

7. So that if any one be [e]in Christ, it is a new creation; the [f]old things have passed; behold, [all]* things are become new; and all things are of God, who hath [g]reconciled us to himself through Christ, and hath given

a cf. Rom. 8. 3.
b Gal. 2. 20. Phil. 1. 20, 21.
c Col. 3. 1, 11.
d Rom. 1. 3. Rom. 9. 5.
e Eph. 2. 10. Gal. 6. 15.
f Eph. 2. 15. Eph. 4. 24.
g Rom. 5. 10. Col. 1. 21.

* Some of the earliest MSS. omit "all."

He died indeed for all, in the desire of God, for the salvation of all. It does not and could not say that He made atonement for all, except so far as that He made life possible for all, and thus the word of the gospel could go out to all. There was no lack on God's part for any who should seek His grace; and for those actually saved by it the cross has wrought in another way by its complete deliverance from the guilt and judgment of sin. It has wrought deliverance from the power of sin itself, so that those who now live by virtue of it live a new spiritual life in the sense of the grace that has visited them, living "no more unto themselves, but to Him who died for them and rose again." This is the only complete enfranchisement and deliverance from all necessity for living to one's self any more, even religiously,—divine grace securing all our interests in the most perfect way, that now His interests may be our interests, that we may live to Him.

There is another change. The cross has ended for the Christian the whole history of man in the flesh, and thus removed him, as it were, out of sight. "Nay," he even says, "if we have known *Christ* after the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no more." This does not of course mean, cannot mean by any possibility, that the record of His blessed life on earth has not its full meaning for us. On the contrary, it is from the Christ who lived before our eyes and the Christ who died for us, that we know now the living Christ. We could not follow Him, as it were, into heaven, except as those who have known Him upon earth. That will constitute for all eternity a source of knowledge which can never be dried up. Nevertheless, Christ has passed out of it all. He is in another condition, and the living Christ we know is One who belongs to a new creation, to which also, through grace, and through His work, His people belong.

We know Him in the place to which He has ascended, and there is no other Christ to be known than this, and this affects all our apprehension of the condition of men here, and all our ways with them. How can we ever forget what the cross has manifested as to men in nature, and where alone true blessing is to be found for them? That is what marked the apostle in the entire earnestness that belonged to him. He did not look at men as men with their social and political distinctions, and what not. What were all these in the presence of the cross and the glory?

7. So that now, "If any one be in Christ, it is a new creation. The old things have passed. Behold, all things are become new." How simple and evident the result! We are the fruit of a new work of the Creator, which has brought us into new relationships, into a place which is eternal, a scene into which sin can no more enter, a paradise never to be blighted as the old one was. The apostle is not speaking here of our own condition as we know it by experience. He does not mean that there is no sin remaining in us, that we have got into any perfected condition which can set us beyond the need of self-judgment, beyond the need of discipline and correction. He is speaking entirely of what we are in Christ, something which faith knows and realizes, which we judge not by

us the ministry of reconciliation: how that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, [h] not imputing to them their trespasses; and committing to us the word of reconciliation. We are [i] ambassadors, therefore, for Christ, as though God did beseech by us, we pray in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. Him who knew no sin, he hath [j] made sin for us, that we might become the [k] righteousness of God in him.

[h] Rom. 4.6-8.
[i] Eph. 6. 20.
[j] Rom. 8. 3.
[k] Rom. 3. 25, 26.

experience, but by the revelation of the Word itself. Alas, Christians as we are, it is not impossible that the full reality of this may decline for us in its power over our souls. All the same it remains true that there is no one in Christ who is not a subject of this new creation, who does not belong to the scene where all things are new, and where all things are of God.

Thus has He reconciled us to Himself, through Christ. He has brought us out of all the estrangement natural to us. There is no distance; there is nearness. There is no separation of our things from His. They are, so to speak, identical; and thus not the apostle alone could say, nor any class among Christians merely, that "He hath given us the ministry of reconciliation." By the very fact that He has brought us to Himself and made Himself known to us, He has given us the power also of making known to others that with which our own souls are filled and of bringing others to Him. We have received the reconciliation; and what we have received, we have received not for ourselves alone, but to minister with it. It is the work which Christ Himself began upon earth when God in Him assumed the attitude of perfect grace, not imputing men's trespasses to them, reconciling, therefore, the world to Himself. It is not a question of how far this might be effectual, of how far men, in fact, responded to it. It was His attitude. It was on God's part complete, and now, with that work accomplished which he speaks of directly as the basis of it all, and which always must have been the basis of it, a work foreseen by God before it was accomplished, but which is now accomplished, He is still reconciling men, but through others, who stand instead of Christ here, His authenticated ambassadors, by whom God beseeches men still. "We pray," says the apostle, "in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." That is, Christ is not here Himself to do this, but He has multiplied the hands which are to minister it. He has on every side the witnesses that are to speak for Him. The apostle and those with him, sent in the first place direct from Christ, fulfilled this character, of course, in the most complete and authoritative way, but we must not on that account overlook our own part in it,—a part which every Christian has. It is not, indeed, a mere question of something entrusted to us, but of hearts that know God's grace and know men's need of it, which must necessarily, therefore, speak of what they know. As we have already seen, he who believes speaks. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

And here is the basis of this reconciliation still:—"Him who knew no sin, He has made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Wonderful words are these, deeper no doubt than we can altogether fathom! It may be that "sin for us" should be thought of as "sin-offering." The word in both Greek and Hebrew is identical, but this does not really alter the truth of what is here. The fact is that the sin-offering was presented to God of old as the "sin" of the one who presented it. He who presented it to God at this time was One who had none of His own, who emphatically knew no sin. He could not otherwise have presented it; for it was an offering of Himself, and that must be a spotless offering to be accepted. But He stood, therefore, before God as identified with the sin of others which He had taken upon Himself, endured the judgment of that, and thus the message of reconciliation can go out to all.

But there is more than this here. Those who receive it become the righteous-

DIVISION 4. (Chaps. vi.–vii.)

Testing and trial in the world through which we pass.

1 (vi. 1-13): Sufficiency of a ministry of God under every test.

1. NOW as fellow-workmen, we also beseech that ye receive not the grace of God in vain; for he saith, [l]I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in a day of salvation I have succored thee; behold [m]now is the well accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation. [n]Giving no manner of offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed; but in everything [o]commending ourselves as ministers of God, [p]in much endurance, in afflictions, in necessities, in straits, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings, in pureness, in knowledge, in

l Isa. 49. 8.
m Lu. 4. 19.
n 1 Cor. 9. 12.
o *cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 5.
p ch. 11. 24, etc.

ness of God, as before God in Him who has stood for them. It is not simply that God's righteousness now can act in grace in their behalf. That is of course the doctrine of Romans, which we have had before us. This is the effect of it, however. If the righteousness of God justifies us as those identified with Christ, and in the value, therefore, of His work for them, we in receiving the value of that work become the exhibition of that righteousness which has in this way acted. We become identified with it. He could appeal to the righteous Father when He quitted the world, on His own behalf, as One who had known Him, and puts along with Himself those who have known that God sent Him. The Spirit come down into the world is thus the witness of righteousness in which God has acted in His behalf in taking Him to Himself. He is the witness, as in us also, of the perfection which is ours in Him, and of the display of righteousness on God's part towards Him in the fruit of His work. Thus we become and shall ever be the righteousness of God in Christ. How far beyond the thought of mere forgiveness is this! How blessed to realize the claim that we have thus upon Him who is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and thus our God and Father! Here is indeed the basis of a reconciliation which we can now beseech men to accept, and which is in itself the fullest, brightest display of God that can ever be. Can there be another revelation of God which can exceed the glory with which He has been glorified in His beloved Son?

DIV. 4.

We have now, as always in these fourth divisions, the testing by the way; in which, if on the one hand our weakness is proved, the power of God for us is no less manifested, and the grace of God also in its support all through and in the development of the fruits of righteousness. The suffering and trial, it is manifest, give just the opportunity for this. If there were no difficulties there would be nothing to triumph over. If there were no testing, there would be no manifestation of the reality of God's work in His people. There would be no accomplishment either of that which is wrought by the necessary discipline in it all. The things that seem against us are thus really for us, according to the abiding assurance that God maketh all things to work together for good to them that love Him.

1. We have still, as all through here, the apostle himself the witness of the trial and in the trial. It is really that he is an example, by way of eminence, of that which still applies to all the people of God. Otherwise, the example would be no example. There would be nothing for us, at least, except a mere ability given to admire in another what would have no meaning for one's self. The life of the apostle, indeed, in all its suffering, may seem very little suited as an example for us in the days that we are fallen upon, days which are none the better indeed for this, and which give the trial in many respects another

long-suffering, in kindness, [q] in the Holy Spirit, in love unfeigned, in the word of truth, in the [r] power of God; by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and true; as unknown, and well known; as [s] dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and not put to death; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and [t] possessing all things. O Corinthians, our mouth is opened to you, our heart is expanded. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. Now, by way of recompense in the same kind, (I speak as unto children) be ye also expanded.

2 (vi.14–vii. 1): Separation from evil a necessity for fellowship with God.

2. [u] Be not united in a strange yoke with unbelievers, for what participation is there between righteousness

[q] 1 Thess. 1. 5.
[r] ch. 10. 4.
[s] ch. 4. 16.
[t] 1 Cor. 3. 21, 22.
[u] Deut. 7. 3. Ju 3. 5, 6. Deut. 22. 9–11. 2 Chron. 19. 2. 1 Cor. 5. 11. 2 Tim. 2. 19, 21.

character. Still the principles remain all the way through, and God's way is to give us principles, the application of which appeals to us for the needed faithfulness to carry out. Joining his fellow workers with himself, the apostle beseeches that the grace of God exhibited in his message may not be received in vain; for indeed now was the time accepted of which God before had spoken, for He had said: "I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in a day of salvation I have succored thee." Now is the time characterized pre-eminently in this way. Its character as a whole, not exceptionally or occasionally, is that of a well accepted time, a day of salvation.

Beseeching them thus, he can appeal to that which was manifestly a character of his own testimony, giving no manner of offence in anything, causing none to stumble and the ministry so to be blamed, "but in everything commending ourselves as the ministers of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in necessities, in labors, in watchings, in fastings." These were the circumstances suited for the development of such a character as he goes on to speak of: "In pureness, in knowledge, in longsuffering, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in love unfeigned, in the word of truth, in the power of God." It is evidently a world just suited to display these things in, as darkness is suited for the stars to shine in it. With reference to the opposition also: "By the armor of righteousness on the right hand and the left, by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report"; "as deceivers" in the evil report, and "true" in reality; "as unknown," on the one side, and "well known" on the other; "as dying" in the life here, with regard to all the things that in men's thoughts constitute life, "yet living" in the life which alone is true and eternal; then "as chastened and not put to death; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing and possessing all things." What contradictions and anomalies here are nevertheless made all to work harmoniously for the manifestation of Christ and His people! And this was so evident as to the apostle that there was no need indeed to enlarge upon such things. They knew that the staple of his life was found in them. He could therefore appeal confidently in the fulness of the love which he had to them, and in which now through grace he could count upon them. His mouth was open to them, his heart enlarged. Indeed, it had never been in himself that they were straitened, but in those affections really in which, speaking in love as unto his children, he could ask them by way of recompense now to be enlarged.

2. This, then, was the picture of a life so different from that which the Corinthians plainly had been seeking for themselves, in which alliance with the world had been substituted for persecution by the world, and the beginning is manifest of that which the centuries since have developed in so terrible a way. He urges them, therefore, here that they "be not united in a foreign yoke with

and lawlessness, or what fellowship hath light with darkness, and what concord hath Christ with Belial,* or what part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever, and what agreement hath the temple† of God with idols; for ye are [v]the temple† of the living God, as God hath said, [w]I will dwell among them and walk among them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people. Wherefore, [x]come out from among them and be separated, saith [the]‡ Lord, and touch not what is unclean, and I will receive you, and I will be [y]to you a Father,§ and ye shall be to me sons and daughters, saith [the]‡ Lord Almighty. Having, therefore, these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

v 1 Cor. 3. 16. 1 Cor. 6. 19.
w Lev. 26. 12. Ex. 25. 8.
x Isa. 52. 11.
y *cf.* 2 Sam. 7. 8, 14.

* Greek, "Beliar." † *Naós*, the sanctuary itself.

‡ The omission of the article in the Greek, marks "the Lord" as standing for "Jehovah."

§ The reference to 2 Sam. vii. is of the freest character, and applies the principle simply: God's ways are the result of His nature which abides the same; so therefore do His ways.

unbelievers." For those who believed in a crucified Christ, for whom the measure of things was seen in the cross, how was it possible that there should be now the ability to go on together in common effort for a common end? What participation could there be between righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship had light with darkness? Or what concord between Christ and Belial? What portion could there be for a believer to enjoy with an unbeliever; and that temple of God which he had before reminded them that they were, how could it go on in association with idolatry? Christians are the temple of the living God, the fulfilment of those words: "I will dwell among them and walk among them, and I will be their God and they shall be My people." Where God dwells, He must be God. Where God walks, those who walk must be in harmony with Him. Association with the world is thus the ruin of Christianity. Christ and the world are fundamental opposites, and we cannot, as the Lord said long before, serve two masters after this manner. The apostle appeals to them, therefore, to come out from them and be separate, (not he alone had said this, but the Lord,) and not to touch the unclean thing; and only upon such conditions could He practically be to them that which in grace He had declared Himself. He *was* their Father, but they forfeited, in the meanwhile, their claim to the enjoyment of such a relationship, unless they were in a condition in which He could display His love without compromise of His holiness. Thus alone could the Lord, the Almighty, have them with Him as sons and daughters.

How the accumulation of these divine titles here is witness of the terrible loss which they could put up with so easily! Do not the same principles obtain for us to-day? Are not the same conditions imperative, conditions which depend upon the nature of God Himself, impossible to change? Are not our associations, therefore, a matter of first consequence for us to consider? How little, however, is such association regarded now! Christians go with those most unchristian, whenever, as they think, they have common ends and purposes; which, in fact, they never can have without giving up that which is the whole matter before God—the heart exhibited in these. Communion without separation is here declared to us to be an impossible thing; and how clearly is manifested here the drift of things, even among Christians, in a day like this, when large liberality is supposed to be what is pre-eminently Christian, and the love that thinketh no evil is confounded with the blindness which sees none where it manifestly exists. God's word abides for us to-day, and the world

3 (vii. 2-16): Realization of the work of the Spirit accomplished in them.

3. Receive us: we have injured no man, we have corrupted no man, we have made gain of no man. I do not speak to condemn you, for I have said before that ye are in our hearts to die together and live together. Great is my boldness toward you, great is my glorying with regard to you; I am filled with encouragement; I am made to abound exceedingly in joy in all our tribulation. For even when we were [a]come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted in every way; without [were] fightings, within fears; but God, who encourageth those that are brought low, encouraged us by the coming of Titus; and not by his coming only, but also by the encouragement wherewith he was encouraged as to you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal toward me, so that I rejoiced the more. For if also I grieved you by the letter, I do not regret, even though I did regret [it]; for I perceive that that letter grieved you, though it were but for a season. But now I rejoice, not that ye have been grieved, but that ye have been

[a] ch. 2. 13.

abides also still in its essential character the same, the busy, self-seeking world that knows not the cross; save, perhaps, as an ornament on the outside. Here then are the promises which are made by God Himself, and which are certain of fulfilment, and as certain in the necessity of the conditions which they imply. "Let us cleanse ourselves, therefore, from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

3. The apostle pours out to them now once more all his heart towards them. He could appeal to them in the consciousness of his blamelessness, in which they would bear him witness. He had injured none. He had corrupted no one. He had made personal gain of none. It was not to condemn them that he spoke thus, for they were in his heart to die and live with them. It is remarkable and noteworthy that he puts the dying first, before the living; but he had now, not only great boldness towards them, but even great glorying with regard to them. He is as ready, and much more ready, to speak to their praise, than in rebuke; however necessary at times this might be. Now he was as full of the joy as he had been of the sorrow; a joy which the tribulation through which he had passed in no wise weakened. He had been in exceeding distress he repeats, as if he could not too earnestly insist upon it. In Macedonia his flesh had had no rest,—fightings without and fears within, but God, who encourageth those who are brought low, had encouraged him by the coming of Titus; and not by his mere coming, but by the encouragement which he had himself received amongst them. So that if he had grieved them by the letter formerly written, he could not now regret it, though for the moment he had regretted,—a remarkable instance of how little the inspiration of the inspired writer was always that of which in himself he was conscious! Here was a letter which we all recognize as an inspired letter, and yet in a moment of weakness he had regretted writing it. It shows how our affections may indeed for a time overpower our reason, and even our spiritual judgment! That grief on the part of the Corinthians,—though but for a season, and which now so evidently had worked blessing for them,—how strange, yet in some sense comforting, these exercises of the apostle as to it! But now it was abundantly manifest how God had been in it, and worked by it for blessing. They had been indeed grieved to repentance and made sorry after a godly manner, only so that in nothing there might be injury from his course with regard to them. This godly sorrow worked repentance to salvation never to be regretted. He is speaking, of course, of the salvation which, as we see in

grieved to repentance, for ye have been made sorry after a godly manner, that in nothing ye might be injured by us. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation never to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what diligence it wrought in you, yea what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea what fear, yea what earnest desire, yea what zeal, yea what vengeance! In every way ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter. Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, it was not for the sake of him that did the wrong, nor for the sake of him that suffered wrong, but for the sake of our diligent zeal for you in the sight of God being manifested to you. Therefore, we have been comforted, and we the rather rejoiced in our encouragement more abundantly by reason of the joy of Titus, because his spirit hath been refreshed by you all. For if I have boasted anything to him of you, I have not been made ashamed; but as we have spoken to you all things in truth, so also our boasting to Titus became truth; and his inward affections* are more abundant towards you when he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him. I rejoice that I have confidence in you in all things.

* Greek, "bowels."

Philippians, we have to work out for ourselves, although God works in it in His grace towards us. He is speaking of deliverance from the difficulties of the way, and this, mere sorrow of the world never did work out, but rather death. He bids them look at the effects. If they had sorrowed after a godly sort, what diligence it had wrought in them; what earnest desire to clear themselves of all that could be charged; "what indignation" in view of sin; "what fear" as they realized the weakness that had been so manifest; what "earnest desire" now for a better testimony, and "what zeal" for God, yea, even "what vengeance" upon all that opposed itself to Him! Thus they had approved themselves every way to be clear as to this matter. And what he had written to them was not for the sake of individuals merely, but that they might realize the diligent zeal which was in his heart for them in the sight of God. He was now comforted by the refreshment which Titus had received from them, and the confirmation of what he had boasted about them to him. It was now evident that spite of what had come in, yet he had spoken, in fact, the truth with regard to them. They had sustained the character which he had given them in the obedience now manifested to the word by him, and in the fear and trembling with which they had received his messenger. Confidence as to the mass of them was fully restored.

Div. 5.

We have now come to a form of ministry which it is evident the apostle makes much of, and which, perhaps, is in little danger of being thought little of at any time. As we see in the body of Christ itself, the fitting together of the whole by that which every part supplieth,—the need of one being met by the ability that is in another,—so in the world itself, not in its evil shape, but as God has ordained things amongst men, we see the same fitting together, the dependence of one upon another, the need intended, as is evident, to draw out the

DIVISION 5. (Chaps. viii., ix.)

The communication to the need of others on the part of those who have ability to supply the need.

1 (viii. 1-7): Themselves first.

1. MOREOVER, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the assemblies of Macedonia; that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their [a]deep poverty abounded to the riches of their free-hearted liberality. For according to their power, I bear witness, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves, praying us with much entreaty [to give effect to] the grace and fellowship of the service to the saints. And not according as we hoped, but they gave their own selves first to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. So that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would complete also as to you this grace also. Now as ye [b]abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and all diligence, and in your love to us, [see] that ye abound in this grace also.

[a] Mk. 12.44.

[b] 1 Cor. 1.5.

heart in men towards one another, and to make conscious the weakness which is after all a weakness manifest in all in different ways and measures. Here is, I suppose, what makes the suitability also of this subject forming a fifth division of the epistle, the number 5 speaking, as has often been said, of the weak with the strong, primarily of the creature with God, but which may thus have, and surely has, its application in a lower sphere. The ministry of power of whatever kind to weakness, is essentially that all through here; and, as we have seen already in the sermon on the mount, the Lord makes even almsgiving an example of what is simply righteousness on the part of those who realize their own need of the ministry which thus goes out to others.

1. All this is a matter in which, alas, the heart is so often separated from the hand, and the easy liberality of the rich may so assume an appearance of goodness beyond that which can really be sustained before God, that we have need of care in handling it. The Lord has shown us how the largeness of the gift is in no wise the test of what is good in God's sight, and how the two mites of a poor widow, making one farthing, can be more to Him than all the treasures piled up by the wealthy. In fact, those of whom the apostle speaks here were manifesting in their deep poverty the riches of their free-hearted liberality. This is what makes liberality noteworthy. It is not so much what is given as what remains to the giver. What the apostle valued, as there is no possibility of questioning, was not the largeness of the gift, but the heart displayed in it. The collection of which he is speaking here was for the poor Jews at Jerusalem, a witness of the appreciation on the part of the Gentiles of the blessing which God had ministered to them through the Jews. It was righteousness on their part to own this; and the spiritual blessing which they had received was far beyond anything that could be compensated pecuniarily, however much it might be acknowledged. It was the manner of the giving here which rejoiced the heart of the apostle. The saints did not give to release themselves, as it were, from a certain obligation to the Lord, but they had given themselves first to Him, and this made it a simple matter to give all the rest. Thus the material ministry became spiritual; and this is why the apostle rejoiced in it. It was an evidence of love and devotedness, and thus he could exhort the Corinthians to follow the example which the assemblies of Macedonia had set them; and, as they

2 (8-15): The Great Example; and the object of the ministry.

2. I speak not by commandment, but through the zeal of others, and to prove also the genuineness of your love. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that [c]when he was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through his poverty might be made rich. And herein I [d]give my opinion, for this is profitable for you who have begun before [them], not only to do but also to will, [e]a year ago. Now, therefore, complete the doing of it; so that as there was the readiness to will, there may be to complete [it] out of what ye have. For if there be a ready mind, [a man is] accepted according to what he may have, not according to what he hath not. For [I mean] not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: but on the principle of equality, that this time your abundance may be for their lack, and that their abundance may be for your lack; so that there should be equality. According as it is written, [f]He who [gathered] much had nothing over, and he who [gathered] little had no lack.

c Phil. 2.6,7.
d 1 Cor.7.25.
e ch. 9. 2.
f Ex. 16. 18.

3 (16-24): The apostle's care to be manifested before men as well as before God.

3. But thanks be to God who is putting the same diligent zeal for you in the heart of Titus. For indeed he accepted the entreaty, but being full of zeal, of his own accord he went unto you; and we have sent with him the brother* whose praise is in the gospel throughout

*Luke?

were abounding now in all Christian grace, they would surely abound in this grace too, among the rest.

2. He sets before them the transcendent example of One who was rich, and yet for our sakes became poor to enrich us through His poverty. What an example to keep all other giving in its place, to make it seem as little as it really is, and yet at the same time to make it more acceptable to God by the consciousness of its littleness! The Corinthians had, in fact, manifested their readiness for that of which he was speaking a year before. He had only to urge them, therefore, to carry out what had been in their thoughts so long already, remembering that, as to individual giving, God did not expect from a man what he had not, and He did not mean to ease some by putting burdens upon others. The beautiful example of the manna is that which he sets before them here, where—in a ministry which was from heaven itself and in which men had only to gather that which God had bestowed,—yet "he who gathered much had nothing over, and he who gathered little had no lack." That was God's thought and desire for them all, but using human instrumentality to accomplish it, and thus binding the hearts of His people to each other, and drawing forth the love, of which the gift, if it were anything, was but the manifestation.

3. The apostle goes on to speak of his care that in the ministration of the "carnal things," as he calls them (which prove themselves so much a temptation to the flesh, and as to which the jealous eyes of enemies would so surely be upon him) there should not be the slightest opportunity given for even a question as to his conduct. It was not enough for him here that God would know all, so that he might leave it to Him to justify him in His own time and way. Where there were means that could be taken to prevent even suspicion he would take them, which even his *not* taking might be in itself a cause of suspicion. It is a principle of importance that we are called to recognize in a man whose faith in God was so pre-eminent, that he would not act simply upon

all the assemblies; and not only so, but who was also [g] chosen of the assemblies as our fellow-traveler with this grace administered by us to the glory of the Lord Himself, and for a witness of our readiness. Avoiding this, that any one should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us; for we provide for honest things, [h] not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. And we have sent with them our brother whom we have oftentimes proved of diligent zeal in many things, and now much more diligently zealous through the great confidence he hath in you. As to Titus, he is my companion and fellow-laborer in your behalf: or our brethren, they are the messengers* of the assemblies and the glory of Christ. Wherefore, show ye to them before the assemblies the proof of your love and of our boasting concerning you.

[g] cf. 1 Cor. 16. 3, 4.

[h] Rom. 12. 17.

4 (IX. 1-5): The fear of declension.

4. For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you; for I know your readiness for which [i] I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia is prepared [j] since a year ago, and the zeal [reported] of you hath roused the mass [of the brethren]. But I have sent the brethren, in order that our boasting of you may not be made void in this respect,—in order that, as I have said, ye might be prepared; lest haply if any of the Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, *we*, that we say not ye, should be put to shame with regard to this confidence. Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the breth-

[i] ch. 8. 24.

[j] ch. 8. 10.

* Same word as apostles; so as to Epaphroditus, Phil. ii. 25.

this, in a matter of this kind. He would not say here, as in another relation he does say, that with him it was a very small matter to be judged of any. He does not build upon his apostleship, or the undoubted blessing that God had given to his labor, in such a way as to think himself beyond the need of justifying himself by the use of such precautions as would be thought needful in the case of another man. It would rather seem as if the sense of the place he filled in this way only made more imperative the necessity to "provide for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men." He did not, as many lesser men might do, and have done, stand upon the dignity of his office and disdain the thought of any account to be rendered to those before whom his life had so evidently spoken, tested as he had been by innumerable trials. No, he "magnified his office" in a wholly different way. Thus for this cause also he could be glad of the zeal of others which could lead them to accept readily association with him in this matter of ministry of even "carnal things." And he thinks it right that not only should these be men of the highest character, but also the choice of the assemblies themselves. Of these he can speak in terms of fullest assurance. "They are the messengers of the assemblies," he says, "and the glory of Christ." He would not allow it to be thought that he had covered any defects in the administration either with the cloak of his apostleship or of his personal faith.

4. He goes on to express his anxiety as to them also, that the zeal which they had shown in regard to these things a year before might not be found to have waned, as is so common a case with regard to mere human impulse. Nor would he have it appear, as any unreadiness on their part now might make it, as if their

ren that they would come to you and complete beforehand your bounty before announced, that this may be ready as bounty, and not as covetousness [of ours].

b (6-15): Principles of divine government.

5. But this [is true], k he that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he that soweth l with blessings shall reap also with blessings; every one according as he hath purposed in his heart, not grudgingly, or of necessity, for m God loveth a cheerful giver. But n God is able to make every gracious gift abound towards you, that ye, having always all-sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work,—according as it is written, o He hath dispersed abroad, he hath given to the poor, his righteousness remaineth forever. Now he that supplieth seed to the sower and bread for the eating, will supply and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness; [ye] being enriched in every way to liberality, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. Because the ministration of this service not only supplieth the wants of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; since they glorify God on account of the proof which this ministration giveth of your professed subjection to the gospel of Christ, and for the liberality of your communication towards them and towards all; and in their supplication for you, full of longing for you, on account of the exceeding grace of God in you. Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!

k Prov. 11. 24, 25.
l Prov. 22.9. Deut.15.10.
m cf. Ex.25. 2. Matt. 10. 8.
n Phil. 4.19.
o Ps. 112. 9.

boasted zeal, which had stirred so many to action, was after all only the effect of pressure put upon them—of the "covetousness" of the apostle, whether for them or for others.

5. Yet the decline which had been manifest among them in other ways might indeed have easily affected them in this manner also. It would not be therefore in vain for them to remember the sure principles of divine government. Even in nature, he who spared the seed of harvest must expect to find the result in harvest; only, as the harvest here was spiritual, it would not be as if a certain sum paid in would secure a certain amount of interest. There must be heart in it, not a gift grudgingly bestowed, for which God cared not. The apostle longed as to them for such a spiritual state as that the Giver of all good should freely pour out upon them His blessing, and that for this, as well as the fruit of their ministration itself, thanksgivings might every way ascend to God, and the hearts of the saints might in this way also be drawn to one another. These are the perfect ways of God who, whether He gives or whether He withholds, is serving us in giving or withholding. It is grace all through, reminding us ever of how He made us by the consciousness of our primal need to know Himself in the reception of His love's first offer. "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift!"

Div. 6.

1. The apostle goes on now to meet the difficulties which were manifesting themselves from the spirit of rivalry among those who professedly, at least, were ministers of Christ themselves. He entreats them by that meekness and gentleness of Christ which, with all the positive and supreme claim which He had over His people, and which He never hesitated to enforce, yet nevertheless manifested itself in all His ways towards them. So also will the apostle be lowly among

DIVISION 6. (Chaps. x., xi.)

The overcoming of the difficulties, and of the power of the enemy, which would hinder the work.

1 (x. 1-6): Mighty through God.

1. NOW I Paul myself entreat you by the [p]meekness and gentleness of Christ, who when present indeed am lowly among you, but being absent am bold towards you; but I [q]beseech that I may not be bold when present with the confidence with which I think to be bold against some who think of us as walking according to the flesh. For though we walk in flesh, we do not war after the flesh; for the [r]weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but mighty through God to the overthrowing of strongholds; overthrowing reasonings and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and leading captive every thought to the obedience of Christ; and having in readiness to avenge all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

[p] Matt. 11. 29.

[q] ch. 13. 2, 10.

[r] Eph. 6. 12, 13. 1 Thess. 5. 8.

2 (7-11): The contradiction of the opposers.

2. Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any one trusteth in himself that he is of Christ, let him think this again in himself, that even as he is of Christ so also are we. For even if I should boast somewhat more abundantly of our [s]authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification and not for your destruction, I shall not be ashamed; that I may not seem as if I were frightening you by letters: for his letters, say they,* are weighty and strong, but his

[s] ch. 13. 10.

* Many MSS. have, "saith he."

the people of God and assuming nothing, while able to be bold, nevertheless, with the confidence of what God was working by him. He besought them, however, that he might not have to manifest the boldness which he expected to show against some who were putting him down as walking upon their own level, which was according to the flesh. He walked indeed in flesh, a man like other men, but he maintained no fleshly conflict. The weapons of his warfare were not fleshly, and yet mighty through God to the overthrowing of Satan's power and the strongholds of human pride and reasoning, exalting themselves against the knowledge of God. His aim was not to establish a principle of obedience to himself, but of obedience to Christ, and there he desired to lead captive every thought. All else that would not yield to this in the way of gracious ministry he would be ready to avenge when the spirit of obedience, on the other hand, had been manifested, and those in whom it was were thus separated from the rest.

2. He reasons with them all now, however, as having amongst them those who thus questioned the authority which God had given him. Were they judging by outward appearance, mistaking the lowliness of grace for the consciousness of incapacity? If any one trusted in himself that he was of Christ, let him think this too, that whatever he might be, this the apostle could surely claim; nay, if he were to boast more abundantly of the authority the Lord had given him, he would not be ashamed; but it was for edification, not for destruction, and thus he did not want to seem as if he were frightening them by letters. His adversaries took occasion to assert that while the letters truly were weighty and strong, when the man himself was seen there was not what was corresponding to this. He maintains that just what he was in his letters, so would he manifest

'bodily presence is weak, and his "speech naught. Let such an one think this,—that such as we are in word by letters when absent, such are we also in deed when present.

t cf. ch. 12.9.
u cf. 1 Cor. 2. 1, 4.

3 (12-18): The apportionment of God.

3. For we dare not make ourselves of the number or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves; but they measuring themselves among themselves, and "comparing themselves with themselves, are not intelligent. Now *we* will not boast without measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath apportioned to us, a measure to reach even unto you. For it is not as if, not reaching unto you, we stretch ourselves beyond measure; for we came foremost as far as to you also with the gospel of Christ; "not boasting out of measure in other men's labors, but having hope, as your faith increaseth, to be enlarged among you, according to our rule, abundantly, to announce the gospel as far as the parts beyond you, not to be boasting in another man's line,* of things made ready to our hands. But *he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

v 1 Cor. 4. 3, 4.

w cf. Rom. 15. 20.

x 1 Cor. 1. 31.

4 (xi. 1-6): The peril at Corinth.

4. Would that ye could bear with a little folly in me; and indeed bear with me; for I am jealous in regard to you with a jealousy which is of God; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may 'present you a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as *the serpent beguiled Eve by his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from simplicity as to the Christ. For if indeed he that cometh preacheth

y Eph. 5. 27.

z Gen. 3. 4.

* κανόνι, same word as "rule."

himself to be when he was present with them. The deed would make good the word. The profession would not be found, as in the case of others it might be, to be beyond the reality.

3. For he did not dare to make himself one of those who were continually commending themselves, people who measured themselves among themselves, and not in the presence of God, or by the results of ministry which God had made apparent. For his own part, he would not imitate this folly, but would go no further than the measure of that which God had apportioned to him; a measure which the Corinthians knew reached even to them, for they themselves were the fruit of what God had done by him. He was not boasting of other men's labors, and he hoped that, with the enlargement of their own faith, the character of his labors would be enlarged also, and indeed that they would thus prepare his way for an announcement of the gospel in the parts beyond themselves, a kind of enlargement which would be indeed according to his desire. In himself he did not desire to glory, but in the Lord; for self-commendation could not approve the one who used it, but the Lord's commendation was the whole matter.

4. Provoked himself to a little of what might be considered this sort of folly, he could trust that they would bear with him. After all, in it was really the jealousy which he had with regard to them as those whom he had espoused to one husband, that he might present them, as it were, a chaste virgin to Christ.

another Jesus whom we preached not, or if ye received a different Spirit, which ye received not, or a [a]different gospel, which ye have not received, ye might well bear with [him]. For I reckon that [b]in nothing I am behind those pre-eminent as apostles; and if I be a simple person in speech, yet not in knowledge; but in every way we have made (this) manifest in all things to you.

5 (7-15): Ways and ends.

5. Have I committed an offence in abasing myself, in order that ye might be exalted, [c]because I preached to you freely the gospel of God? I robbed other assemblies, taking hire from them for ministry towards you; and when I was present with you and wanted, I was chargeable to no man, for that which was lacking to me the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied; and in everything I have kept myself from being burdensome to you, and I will keep myself. As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia. Why? Because I do not love you? God knoweth. But what I do, I will also do, that I may cut off occasion from those who desire occasion, that wherein they boast they may be found even as we. For such are [d]false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ; and no marvel, for [e]Satan himself transformeth himself into an angel of light. It is no great thing, therefore, if his ministers also transform themselves as ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

a Gal. 1, 6.

b ch. 12. 11. Gal. 2. 6.

c ch. 12. 13. Acts 18. 3.

d Rev. 2. 2.

e Job 1. 6,9-11. Lk. 22. 31.

He feared lest, as man had been seduced from God at the beginning, so now their minds were being corrupted from simplicity as to the Christ. But was there another Jesus than the One he preached, or was there a different Spirit from Him they had received, or was there a different gospel which was truly that? If so, indeed they might well bear with this; but he reckoned that in nothing was he behind, in this respect, those who were pre-eminent as apostles, and if he discarded the excellency or the ornaments of speech, he was not deficient in knowledge, but in every way had made himself manifest in all things to them.

5. Searching around for cause, then, for offence he might have given them, he can only find it possible in his having preached freely to them the gospel of God, taking nothing from them. He had, in fact, at the same time received from other assemblies, as if, as he puts it, he had been hired by others to minister to them; all that was deficient being supplied by those from Macedonia, and his own labor being, as we know, for the most part his own support. Thus he had not been a burden upon them as he might reasonably have been; nor was he going now to be such. There was a special reason for this exceptional conduct, and he was glad at Corinth to be able to boast himself in this respect; but why? For want of love to them? No, but to cut off occasion from those who desired occasion, deceitful workers, who had come in with really apostolic pretensions,—but baseless, and inspired of Satan himself, who could readily transform himself into an angel of light, which once he was, but is not. As the accuser ofthe brethren, Satan's great plea indeed is righteousness. We see that in his accusation of Job; and his followers were likely enough on his ground to be as false accusers of others as he is. Their end would declare it, but he does not besitate to speak plainly of what indeed must have been a terrible thing with him, to find those who were the fruit of his own labors thus carried off

¶ (16–33): Labors.

6. I say again, let no man think me to be a fool; but if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I too may boast myself some little. That which I speak, I speak not according to the Lord, but as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting. Seeing that many boast according to the flesh, I will boast also. For ye bear fools readily, *f*seeing ye are wise; for ye bear it if one bring you into bondage, if one devour you, if one take of you, if one exalt himself, if one smite you on the face. I speak by way of disparagement, as though we were weak; but whereinsoever any is bold (I speak foolishly) I am bold also. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as though beside myself), *g*I above measure so. In labors exceedingly abundant, in stripes exceeding, in prisons exceedingly abundant, *h*in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times have I received forty [stripes] save one. Thrice have I been *i*beaten with rods, *j*once was I stoned, three times I have *k*suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from [mine own] countrymen, in perils from the nations, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils on the sea, in perils among false brethren; in labor and toil, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness; beside those things that are without, that which presseth upon me day by day, the burden of all the assemblies. Who is weak, and *l*I am not weak? Who is stumbled, and I burn not? If I must needs glory, I will *m*glory in the things which concern my infirmity. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not. In *n*Damascus the governor under Aretas the king, kept the city of the Damascenes shut up desirous to apprehend me, and through a window in a basket I was let down by the wall and escaped his hands.

f 1 Cor. 4.10.
g 1 Cor. 15. 10.
h 1 Cor. 15. 30–32.
i Acts 16.22.
j Acts 14.19.
k Acts 27. 41.
l 1 Cor. 8.13. 1 Cor. 9.22.
m ch. 12.5,9.
n Acts 9. 24, 25.

away from him. A very great length, it is evident, had things gone in Corinth; and even as yet there was not the thorough deliverance which he counted on for them.

6. He turns unwillingly once more to speak of himself. Fool as they thought him, even as a fool, they who were so wise might listen a little. Foolish indeed boasting was, yet it was a folly to which one might be compelled,—a sorrowful thing that they, of all people, should be compelling him to this. But in what, then, in comparison with others, did he fail? If they were Hebrews, so was he. If they were the seed of Abraham, so was he. Were they ministers of Christ? How thoroughly had he been proved as that! The abundance of his labors spoke for him, the sufferings that these ever brought him into,—stripes and imprisonments, death facing him in every form. The record follows here, a record which far exceeds such history as we have in the Acts, which was indeed but an example of much else. Perils he had met in every form, from enemies, from

DIVISION 7. (Chaps. xii., xiii.)

The perfecting of ministry.

1 (xii. 1-6): The grace given to a man in Christ.

1. WELL, it is not of profit for me to boast, for I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago, (whether in the body I know not, or whether out of the body I know not, God knoweth,) such an one caught up to the °third heaven. And I know such a man (whether in the body or out of the body, I know not, God know- *o cf.* Gen. 1, 8, 16, 17. Heb. 4. 14.

false brethren, from fellow-countrymen, from strangers, amid the concourse of men, in wilderness desolations, in perils from what men call accidents, amid labor and toil, in watchings, in fastings, in cold and nakedness. Amid all this there was that which, for such as he was, was a pressure beyond it all, the burden of all the assemblies. Who was there with whose weakness he did not sympathize? Who was there whose stumbling did not make him burn? But if he gloried, he would glory rather in that which showed him to be the helpless creature that he was, cared for of God as such, but still left to the realization of this helplessness. He mentions but one point here, the ignominious way in which he had to take flight from Damascus, the city being shut up with a garrison to apprehend him, he himself let down from a window in the wall, in a basket, to escape his persecutors,—no miracle intervening for him, as we see, no dignity imparted by such a manner of escape as this; yet how much comfort may we sometimes find in these glimpses of the condition in which might be found so great an apostle as was Paul!

Div. 7.

We are thus introduced to what is no doubt the perfecting of ministry, the way in which, on the one hand and on the other, God is found by the soul thus pledged to His service; on the one hand the heights of blessedness to which the Lord is ready to lead His own, the wondrous comfort yielded to those who have need of comfort; while, on the other hand, we see the need of discipline also found in close connection with the comfort itself, and in such an one as Paul the apostle; and if needed by such an one, who is there that shall claim exemption from it? The effect is that to which the last chapter has in measure already brought us, the abasement of the earthen vessel, only that the excellency of the power may be realized to be of God and not of man, His strength perfected in weakness, so that the weakness itself may be gloried in, and in the consciousness of such weakness one may find strength.

1. The apostle comes now to what it is evident he said little of to others, and which was given for the joy and comfort of his own soul alone. The visions and revelations of the Lord of which he speaks were not intended to be communicated, went beyond even the possibility of communication. They were not, therefore, for others, they were for himself; and yet they are intimated here surely for the blessing of others, and that we may realize what in the same condition one may count upon from the same Lord. Paul was in this pre-eminent, as he always is. We may lose, by insisting too much upon this, all the blessing for ourselves. It is plain that the apostle does not speak of himself here as an apostle. That is not how he puts it. As an apostle, the revelations would, in fact, have been for others. They were not that, but for himself; and he speaks of himself, (for clearly it is of himself that he is speaking,) yet in such terms as would make any Christian his fellow. "I know a man in Christ," he says; but who is there among Christians who is not a man in Christ? We must be careful to note the way in which Scripture presents things to us, or we shall lose very much of the blessing of them. It is "a man in Christ,"—so simply put

eth) how that he was caught up into [p] Paradise, and heard unspeakable words which it is not allowed to man to utter. Of such an one I will glory, but of myself I will not glory, save in [mine] infirmities; for though I should desire to glory, I should not be a fool, for I will say the truth; but I forbear, lest any one should think as to me above that which he seeth me [to be], or that he heareth of me.

[p] Lk. 23. 43. Rev. 2. 7.

that if it were not for what is afterwards said, we might even question whether it were the apostle at all. It is clear that he does not want us to realize these things as simply apostolic. The "man in Christ" is, indeed, in some sense much *more* than the apostle. A "man in Christ" is one who is before God in the value and power of what Christ is for God. The apostle knew this indeed as no one else, one may say, has known it; but that which he knew so well, nevertheless, belongs in its blessedness to every Christian, and is open for every Christian to enjoy it. Let us impute to ourselves what differences there may be, and not escape from the comfort or from the exhortation that there is in it, by making "a man in Christ" really an exception among such men. That cannot be why it is so presented here. If ministry be, as we have seen it is, something which, in one form or another, every member of the body of Christ as such is to exercise; if every member of Christ is needed to fill out that epistle of Christ which the Church is, "read and known of all men," then assuredly we have our part in all that this epistle of ministry can give us, allowing fully for the pre-eminence of the apostle and for all that was really exceptional in him, but which implied, more than anything else, exceptional devotedness.

He speaks then of this man in Christ,—a heavenly man, because Christ is heavenly,—taken up into his own sphere, in heaven, in a marvelous way, of which he can give no account. Whether it was in the body, he knows not. Whether it was out of the body, he knows not. He says this twice, for a purpose doubtless. He would have us not think upon the circumstances so much, upon the exact part that miracle had to do with it; for from the miraculous we naturally seek to withdraw ourselves, (*we* do not expect miracles,) but he leaves it open. He was caught away to the third heaven, whether in body or in spirit he cannot really tell. He thought, perhaps, but little of himself, drawn out of himself as he was by the power of what was communicated to him. It was a joy indeed beyond expression, the Paradise of God, which was somehow opened to him, something which had value and power for his soul, which he could not even utter to others.

Here is the man to glory in, he says; and he separates this man, as it were, from himself, the man in the flesh, who can glory only in his infirmities. How plainly it seems that he would have us separate what he was himself from this wondrous vision given to him! It seems as if he would designedly have us separate all that was exceptional in him from this which is yet in itself so exceptional to all experiences. But would he not open the door thus to us, as far as he could open it? Would he not say, I a man in Christ, as such, was caught up to the third heaven? "Such an one." How many of us could except ourselves from this, and say we are not *such?* We are not Christians at all if that be not true of us. Such an one as this was caught up to the third heaven. Would not God draw our hearts after such unspeakable blessedness, and would He not satisfy hearts that He had thus taught to long after it? "He satisfieth the longing soul and filleth the hungry soul with goodness." How good if only we longed with an irrepressible longing for that which God must needs come in to satisfy!

But indeed we must not separate the man that Paul was in another sense from the vision which he enjoyed. We may separate the *apostle*, but we must not separate the man devoted to Christ; the man who, having received Christ Jesus the Lord, walked so really in Him; the man for whom earth was marked by the

2 (7-10): A messenger of Satan made to serve.

2. And that I might not be exalted by the exceeding greatness of the revelation, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a [q]messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I might not be exalted. For this I besought the Lord [r]thrice, that it might depart from me; and he said unto me: My grace is sufficient for thee, for [my]* [s]power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may abide upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in straits for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong.

q Lk. 13. 16. cf. 1 Cor. 5. 5.
r cf. Matt. 26. 44.
s ch. 4. 7.

* Many omit.

cross, and to whom therefore, heaven was open. Let us lay all possible emphasis upon such things as this. There is no royal way into the enjoyment of such things by a mere desire to have visions. The way is only by the way Paul really entered. We are right in believing that there was something exceptional about him. We are wrong in believing that it was a mere official distinction, as one may say; something, therefore, which separates us in kind from the man who enjoyed these things. It was the man who himself, in the joy of what he was in Christ, sought with his whole heart to present every man perfect in that same Christ whom he enjoyed. It was this man whom God caught somehow away into Paradise, and made him hear unspeakable things, the joy of which remained, however too deep for utterance. But we are immediately reminded now, that after all here was a man, upon another side, very like ourselves; a man who, if he looked at himself, could glory only in those infirmities which left him the weak creature that he was, in the hands of a God almighty for him. He does not now want to glorify himself with these revelations. He desires none to think of him above that which he sees him really to be, or hears about him.

2. He discloses to us the other Paul of whom he would not glory. He lets us know, in fact, that it was himself who had received the revelation, only in the same sentence in which he makes known to us a thorn in the flesh which the very revelation itself obtained for him. How absolute a rebuke to everything that men dream of practical perfection in the Christian, to find that one who could be caught up where perhaps no one of us has ever been, unconscious of himself while thus occupied with unutterable things, yet had need when he came out of the vision to have a messenger of Satan himself made a help to him, because of the tendency to pride of heart which the very vision might engender! Let us notice carefully that it is not said that he *had* been exalted by it. It was for no actual sin of his own that the messenger of Satan had to buffet him. It was simply because of that which was yet in him, whether exhibited or not,—of tendencies which might be checked, but which needed checking. Thus the thorn in the flesh followed the vision. It is evident, also, that this implied some bodily weakness, or deformity, which might make him little in the eyes of men, thus lowering him in the very character of a minister of Christ which the vision might be implied to nerve him for the more. It is in this way that he goes to the Lord, that is, to Christ, the Lord of the servant, to seek Him about it. Thrice he beseeches Him that this might depart from him. He is answered, and yet he is not answered. He is answered, not as he expects, but he is answered in a fuller way than he expects. The thorn is not removed, but the sufficiency of divine grace is what is assured him, and that, after all, the power of God requires but this human weakness, and is displayed the more as the weakness itself is displayed. This is, as we know, but the good of that earthen vessel in which he has already told us the divine treasure is. Here was the light of heaven itself in a vessel manifestly of earth. He must accept this position. He should

3 (11–15): The signs and the spirit of an apostle.

3. I have become a fool: ye have compelled me; for I ought to have been commended by you; for [t]in nothing have I been behind those who were pre-eminently apostles, though I be nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, signs, and wonders and mighty works. For in what is it that ye have been inferior to other assemblies, unless it be that I myself was not burdensome? Forgive me this wrong. Behold, this [u]third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not be burdensome; for I seek not yours but you; for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. Now I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls, if even though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.

[t] ch. 11. 5.

[u] ch. 13. 1. cf. ch. 1. 15.

find it no loss. Nay, is it not gain when a man can glory in the very infirmities that he would just now have had taken away, as realizing that they do but cause a power greater than his own to rest upon him? Who would exchange the power of Christ for the power of plausible human appearance, an eloquence of human words, or anything, in short, which would be so simply human as these are? Think of the power of Christ making itself manifest in the simplest words, perhaps, that human lips could utter! Think of divine power manifesting itself in one who to man's eyes was weak almost to contempt!

Of course, the infirmities here that he can glory in imply no moral imperfection. In such a thing as this he could not glory. He goes on to tell us directly what it is that he takes pleasure in, "in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in straits for Christ's sake,"—whatever made him, in fact, manifestly but an earthen vessel, wrote death upon the man Paul, in order that the life of Jesus might exhibit itself in its full divine character. It is a hard lesson to learn, but the very hardness of learning it only shows the more how necessary a lesson it is to learn. Why is it so hard a thing for us to learn it, except just for this tendency to pride of heart in us, to which, as we see, even the great apostle here was not a stranger? How thankful should we be for the discipline, in this way, which makes so little of us, but only to exalt and glorify God through us! The apostle, at any rate, accepted this thoroughly. To suppose, as people have supposed, that the thorn *was* taken away finally by the importunity of his request is to do away with the lesson we are meant to learn by it. To take away the thorn would have been to take away the glorying in it. How wonderful to be the one in whom divine glory had thus chosen to manifest itself! and such was not only Paul, but such clearly is every man in Christ. There is no exception in all this, except, alas, the exception made by our own dullness and slowness to receive the blessing which the man in Christ will find from God, just in proportion as he is really out and out that which is implied in it.

3. The apostle returns, for a moment, to exhibit, as it were, once more that folly of his which became something else in the end for which he used it, but for which he was compelled to use it, as he says here. He could not give way, in the presence of those who sought designedly to lower him that they might exalt themselves. He owns that he is nothing; yet, as we see, that could not hinder the signs of an apostle being wrought among them through him. They belonged well to one who came amongst the Corinthians with fear and trembling because of the burden of the message that he carried, because of the testimony to Christ His Saviour which was in it. With such an one the signs of an apostle were in perfect harmony, wrought among them, as he says, first of all in all patience, giving the moral quality first, but in signs also, wondrous and mighty works. There was nothing, then, in which they had been inferior to other

4 (16-21): But danger still.

4. But be it so: *I* did not burden you; but being crafty I caught you with guile! Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you? I besought Titus, and with him I sent the brother. Did Titus make a gain of you at all? Walked we not in the same spirit, [walked we] not in the same steps? For a long time ye have been thinking that we are excusing ourselves to you. We speak before God in Christ, and all things, beloved, for your edifying. For I fear lest, perhaps, when I come, I find you not such as I would, and that *I* may be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be strifes, emulations, wrath, contentions, evil speakings, whisperings, swellings, tumults; lest when I come again my God should humble me with regard to you, and that I shall bewail many who have sinned before, and have not repented as to the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have practised.

5 (xiii.): The end of exercise.

5. This third time I am coming to you. [v] In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall everything be established. I told you before and foretell you, as if I were

[v] Deut. 19. 15.

assemblies, except in that independence of them which he might seem to have manifested. If that were a wrong, they must forgive it to him. For him it was the independence only of a parent who sought the welfare of his children, rather than to be ministered to by them. "For the children," he says, tenderly, "ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children," and he, how gladly would he spend and be spent for the souls of those he loved, even though the love that he poured out upon them might but deprive him in measure of the love they gave him.

4. The attacks made upon him went further, even, than this. Some were saying, it is evident, that even in thus not burdening them there was an element of deception,—he did not himself burden them, nevertheless it was only in the craft of one who knew how to catch them with guile. It is strange that any can plead such a sentence as being an argument for guile being rightly employed by a Christian. It is the thing that he is charged with that he is speaking of here, and the thing which he immediately repels by the questions following. Had he shown his guile, then, by making a gain of them by means of others sent, that gain which personally he would not make? Titus had been sent by him and a brother in his company. Had Titus then made a gain of them? Had they not walked in the same spirit and in the same steps also? They were even thinking, some among them, that all this defence of himself was merely excuse made by a conscience that was not at ease. "We speak," he says, "before God in Christ; and all things, beloved, for your edifying." But the condition of things even yet made him fear sometimes as to those that he would find in such a condition as would humble him with regard to them and make them suffer from the rod he brought. He feared the presence of "strifes, emulations, wrath, contentions, evil speakings, whisperings," and that he might have to bewail many who had already sinned, and who had not, as others had, repented with regard to the immorality, the open outbreaks of the flesh which had been manifested amongst them.

5. Now, at last, at any rate, he was coming to them. Everything would be looked at, and in the mouth of two or three witnesses everything be established. Love itself, while it has no limit, yet can be forced to act in a way contrary to its desire. If he came again he would not spare. They were questioning his

present the second time, and now absent, to those that have sinned before and to all the rest, that if I come again I will not spare. Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me (who towards you is not weak, but is mighty in you,—for if indeed he hath been crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God; for indeed we are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you) [w]examine your own selves if *ye* be in the faith, prove your own selves. Do ye not recognize yourselves that [x]Jesus Christ is in you, except indeed ye be reprobates? Now I trust that ye shall know that *we* are not reprobates; but we pray to God that ye do no evil, not that *we* may appear approved, but that *ye* may do what is right, though *we* be as reprobates. For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. For we rejoice when we are weak and ye are strong; and this also we pray for, [y]your perfecting. Therefore, I write these things, being absent, that being present I may not [z]use severity according to the authority which the Lord hath given me for edification, and not for destruction.

w 1 Cor. 9.2.
x Rom. 8.9, 10.
y Col. 1.28.
z ch. 10.8.

apostleship, and questioning whether Christ had been speaking in him. Why did they not look at themselves if they wanted proof of that? Were they not sufficient proof? Had they not indeed evidence of the power of God in that which had been wrought, not merely amongst them, but in them? For they came behind in no gift. Whatever weakness might have been exhibited, it was a Christ crucified he preached, crucified through weakness, yet He lived now by the power of God. So too His ministers might be weak after His pattern, yet the power of God manifested in them through Him by whom they lived before God. But if they wanted a proof, then, of the apostle's workmanship, *they* were his workmanship. Let them examine themselves if they were in the faith. Let them prove themselves instead of him.

The want of understanding the long parenthesis here, which is, after all, in the apostle's manner, has made people think that Paul intended them really to examine themselves if they were in the faith. On the contrary, his argument is based upon the very fact that they need not and could not do it. He turns immediately to them with the question: "Do ye not recognize yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you, except indeed ye be reprobates?" If everything was gone, their profession and all that was implied in it, then indeed his work was gone, and the proof of his apostleship, as far as they were concerned, would be truly wanting. But he himself, at any rate, and those who had labored amongst them, were not reprobates; and they only prayed that His people might do no evil, not that they themselves might appear approved, but that they might do right, even though they might be reprobating their teachers.

After all, nothing could be really done against the truth—nothing could prevail against that—but for the truth. We must be on the other side of things, with God, in order to realize how truly this is so; but it is so, and the apostle in his devoted love towards them could rejoice if they were strong indeed, however weak he might be manifested. What he sought and prayed for was their perfecting, and his object now in writing was that he might not have to come amongst them to use a severity which indeed could be justified in the authority which the Lord had given him; an authority, nevertheless, meant for building up and not for pulling down. In all this we see the heart of true ministry, as is manifest,—the self-forgetfulness of a love that poured itself out because it was love; not for any gain, except indeed what love could count gain.

Finally, brethren, rejoice. Be perfected; be of good comfort; be of one mind; be at peace; and the God of love and [a]peace shall be with you. [b]Greet one another with a holy kiss. [c]All the saints salute you. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the [d]communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

a Rom. 15. 33.
b Rom. 16. 16.
c Phil. 4. 22
d Phil. 2. 1

Through all, let them rejoice. Joy is what becomes us, whatever the circumstances may be, and even in the very consciousness of failure itself; but the true Christian joy is in the Lord, and that should not fail or vary. Let them rejoice, then, and with that seek in all things perfection. Let them be of good comfort, of one mind, which could only therefore be the mind of Christ, if it were to be the mind of Christians. Let them be at peace; and He who was the God of love and peace would be with them. He bids them salute one another, and sends the salutation of the saints, praying that the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit might be with them all.

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THE

NUMERICAL BIBLE

BEING

A REVISED TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES
WITH EXPOSITORY NOTES:

ARRANGED, DIVIDED, AND BRIEFLY CHARACTERIZED
ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THEIR
NUMERICAL STRUCTURE

F W. Grant, ed
v 7

HEBREWS to REVELATION

THIRD EDITION

NEW YORK
LOIZEAUX BROTHERS, BIBLE TRUTH DEPOT
1 EAST 13TH STREET

Copyright, 1903
LOIZEAUX BROTHERS

PRINTED AT

THE BIBLE TRUTH PRESS, 1 & 3 EAST 13TH STREET

NEW YORK

PREFACE.

THROUGH the mercy of God, the notes upon the New Testament are herewith completed. It is only hoped that, written as it has been through a period of comparative weakness, the present volume may not show too much the marks of this, but rather how, according to the principle which He has declared to be His own, His strength is perfected in it. Through the kindness also of some whose hearts have interested them in the present attempt to set forth afresh the inexhaustible riches of the precious Word, stenography and the type-writer have been brought in to lessen the labor and expedite the work; so that more rapid progress has been made than otherwise would have been possible, and there has been given me in this way the joy of having other fellow-laborers, though as yet unknown. *He* knows, who alone can tell, to the prayers of how many I am indebted also: may many more increase a debt which gladly is confessed.

After the present volume it is intended, the Lord willing, to take up the books of the Old Testament prophets, sadly neglected as all must realize they are by the mass of even earnest Christians; or valued mostly for the detail of future events which they furnish, rather than as bringing as they do the whole world into the light of God, and His people thus into the mind of God. There is perhaps no part of Scripture which more needs and will more repay now believing work than these. May God arouse and enkindle the hearts of very many!

To the end of Paul's epistles, through the serious illness of Mr. Ridout, the references have devolved upon my own less capable hands. He is now at work at them once more, for which may He be thanked who has raised him up.

It only remains to be said that, as in former volumes, the writer of the Notes has freely and fully expressed himself upon every subject that Scripture itself has led to, trusting that those who may differ from him most will yet appreciate an honest endeavor to hide nothing at all of what divine grace has given to all, so that he could not hold it back. May He bring us all into fuller knowledge and thus into more communion with Himself!

F. W. GRANT.

Plainfield, N. J., Feb. 4th, 1902.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NUMERALS.

The reason for the significance must be sought in previous volumes, especially in Appendix II. to the Volume on the Psalms.

ONE.

Soleness, singularity, uniqueness; solitariness, barrenness.
Sufficiency, power, independency, pride, rebellion.
Identity, unchangeableness, consistency, perpetuity, truth, knowledge.

(UNITY.)

Unity, at-oneness, harmony, congruity, integrity, righteousness, obedience, concord, peace.

(PRIMACY.)

Supremacy, headship, rule; beginning, cause, occasion, source, foundation, ground, plea.

(COMBINATIONS OF MEANINGS.)

Life, personality, will. Choice, election. Grace.
God, Almighty, Eternal, Jehovah, Father.

TWO.

(RELATION.)

Help, support, confirmation, assurance, competent testimony.
Seconding, preservation, deliverance, salvation. Service, ministry.
Addition, increase, growth; progress, movement, activity.
Attachment, love, desire, prayer. Association, partnership, fellowship.

(SECOND.)

Dependence, faith. Inferiority, lowliness, humiliation, subjection.

(DIFFERENCE.)

Diversity, contrast; contradiction, opposition, conflict, enmity.
Double-mindedness, duplicity, deceit.

(DIVISION.)

Separation, analysis, differentiation, discernment; judgment, wisdom; sight.
Decay, death, dissolution.
Christ, Second Person, God and Man, Second Man, Word of God, Witness, Saviour, Servant, Minister. Cross. Soul. Woman.

THREE.

(THREE DIMENSIONS.)

Solidity; reality, realization, fulfilment, fulness; manifestation. Sanctuary; glory, praise. Name.

(THREE STRAIGHT LINES INCLOSE A SPACE.)

Setting apart for purpose; specialization, sanctification, holiness; transformation. Dwelling-place, possession, portion. Marriage. Ban.

(THIRD LINE OF A TRIANGLE RETURNS TO THE FIRST.)

Resurrection; return, revival, recovery; reproduction. Spirit.

FOUR.

Yieldingness, weakness; meekness, mercy. Failure, testing; experience; transitoriness, change.
Creature, earth, walk on earth, world.

FIVE.

God in government; capacity, responsibility, exercise, way and end; conditions.
Weak with the Strong; Man with God; Immanuel.

SIX.

Manifestation or fulness of evil. Work-day week; limit, discipline; mastery, overcoming.

SEVEN.

Completeness, perfection; rest.

EIGHT.

New in contrast with the Old.

TEN.

Simply a 5 by 2.

TWELVE.

The manifest rule of God.

ORDER AND DIVISIONS OF THE BOOKS.

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

1. The Books of the Law:—
   1. Genesis.
   2. Exodus.
   3. Leviticus.
   4. Numbers.
   5. Deuteronomy.

2. The Covenant-History:—
   1. Joshua.
   2. Judges.
      Ruth.
   3. Kings:—
      First Book (*Samuel*).
      Second Book (*Kings*).
   4. Captivity-Books:—
      Ezra.
      Nehemiah.
      Esther.
   5. Chronicles.

3. The Prophets:—
   1. Isaiah.
   2. Jeremiah.
      Lamentations.
   3. Ezekiel.
   4. Daniel.
   5. The Book of Minor Prophets:—
      1. *Hosea.* *Amos.* *Micah.*
      2. *Joel.* *Obadiah.* *Jonah.*
      3. *Nahum.* *Habakkuk.* *Zephaniah.*
      4. *Haggai.* *Zechariah.* *Malachi.*

4. The Psalm-Books:—
   1. The Psalms.
   2. Job.
   3. Solomon's Song.
   4. Ecclesiastes.
   5. Proverbs.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

1. The Gospels:—
   1. Matthew. Mark. Luke.
   2. John.

2. The Acts.

3. The Pauline Epistles:—
   1. Romans.
      Galatians.
      Ephesians.
      Colossians.
      Philemon.
      Philippians.
   2. Thessalonians.
      First Epistle.
      Second Epistle.
      Corinthians.
      First Epistle.
      Second Epistle.
      Hebrews.
      Timothy.
      First Epistle.
      Second Epistle.
      Titus.

4. The Catholic Epistles:—
   1. Peter.
      First Epistle.
      Second Epistle.
   2. James.
   3. John.
      First Epistle.
      Second Epistle.
      Third Epistle.
   4. Jude.

5. Revelation.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

THE epistle is anonymous, and its authorship has been much disputed; not its canonicity, which never really was. Peter's plain mention of an epistle of Paul to the circumcision (2 Pet. iii. 15, 16) and which he classes among the "other scriptures," would seem sufficiently decisive that the author of it was Paul. Where can we find another scripture answering to the description? spite of which commentators generally waver between Apollos and Barnabas. Tertullian, in the third century, ascribed it to the latter. None except moderns have done so to the former. The claim in this case is mainly founded upon its style,—which is said to be different from Paul's,—its constant quotations from the Septuagint, and even where the Septuagint seems to depart from the original, and to approach in some things to Philo, the Jew, the Alexandrian. A sufficient answer to this is that the Alexandrian church itself ascribed it to Paul, and apparently knew nothing in this way of their countryman Apollos.

How suited that, in fact, it should be Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, but whose heart turned back with such unchanging affection to his kindred after the flesh, his love to whom only made him the decisive witness of their rejection of his ministry to them, and who is here given to echo the words of his Master when similarly rejected: "Behold, your house is left to you desolate." But thus we may realize also the appropriateness of that strain in the epistle which so often looks out more widely than to the Christian Church itself; leaving room at least, in various places, for the grafting in again of Israel's branches into their own olive-tree when the time shall come. The doctrinal relation of the epistle to Paul has never been doubted. It would, in fact, be impossible, one would say, to doubt it; and in the arrangement of his epistles according to the numerical structure of Scripture, it fills a gap which would be serious if it were taken away. No other epistle could take its place, nor could one find a fitting place elsewhere for what comes here in such suited order. We have already seen that the second series of Paul's epistles develops collective relationship to

God. In Thessalonians, we have seen the relation of His people to Him as His family; in Corinthians as a company of people in fellowship with Christ and with one another upon the earth. In Hebrews we find them as a *priestly* family, as worshipers, a character which could not be omitted, and yet which is contemplated nowhere else. It has to do indeed with that which is a central characteristic of Christianity, the rent veil and the heavens opened. It will be seen then, at once, that Hebrews is the Leviticus of this second pentateuch, and could not be spared from its place in it. It is indeed an epistle very characteristic of Paul's doctrine, which, as characterizing the Leviticus of the New Testament, aims to bring the soul near to God in Christ, or, as he states his mission: "to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. i. 28). Hebrews would naturally in its place here exhibit this character in an intensified form, and so it does. Ephesians, the corresponding epistle in the first series, puts us in the full heavenly place itself: "Seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Hebrews develops the living activities which belong to those who in spirit enter into the heavenly places, the sphere of service of Christians as the priestly house of God.

Christianity is characterized for us largely by two things, which are implied in the rent veil. God dwells no more in the thick darkness. He is in the light. He is able to come out to man; man is able to go in to Him. In fact, both things are accomplished: God *has* come out to man in Christ; in Christ man is gone in to God. The gospel of John is that which shows us eminently the first of these, but Hebrews is here the link between John and Paul. Christ is thus, as Man, seen as the Apostle, the One who comes out with that message from God, in which God Himself is declared; but the epistle to the Hebrews develops with more fulness the second thing, man going in to God. This is the consequence of that work done upon earth before His going in, which has enabled Him to enter, not simply in the title which He always personally had, but as the "High Priest of our confession."

God coming out is the glory of the gospel. The Son of God in manhood, and manhood never to be laid down again, is "the outshining of His glory." He has spoken, but he has done more than this. He has lived and loved and suffered and died among us, and gone back again in the power of such a sacrifice, by which those in whose behalf it has been offered find "a new and living way" into the presence of God.

Both things, the coming out and the going in, as already said, are found in Hebrews, as they are found also in the beginning of John's first epistle. In these, John and Paul clasp hands together, each emphasiz-

ing the truth differently and yet each looking along the track of divine glory, so as to see and recognize the other's Object. John looks down from heaven to the earth. Paul looks up from the earth to heaven. The central Object for each is He who is the "Apostle and High Priest of our confession." This full revelation of Christianity is in contrast with all fragmentary communications by the prophets, which preceded it; but He has effected also by Himself a purification of sins, and taken His seat in consequence at the right hand of God. And thus also He has now "companions" or "fellows," "partakers" with Him, yea, those whom He is "not ashamed to call His brethren." These are the "children given" to Him, the "many sons" whom, as the First-born, the Kinsman-redeemer, He as the Originator of their salvation, is bringing to glory. They are those "sanctified," the "house of God," over whom He as Son is, as Son over sons, Great Priest over a priestly house, to whom He gives entrance into the innermost sanctuary.

But thus, the law, which pointed to such things as things to come, but was never the very image of them, is necessarily passed away. The successional priesthood of sinful and therefore mortal men, worshiping afar off, with sacrifices whose constant repetitions proclaim their inefficacy, is set aside by the coming of the true Priest, who by one perfect offering brings to an end all others, purging the conscience, to serve in His presence the living God. Christ is the glorious reality, the abiding Priest of a heavenly sanctuary, into which faith freely enters, to find the glory of God revealed in the face of Jesus Christ.

Hebrews necessarily presses, therefore, that there must be no confusion, no mixing up of the shadows with the reality. God had gone on long, even after Christianity was come, permitting to the Jewish believers a weaning time, of which the Acts gives the history, but which is now at an end. They are called absolutely to leave the camp, the glory of God having now for the third time forsaken it; the only issue of all that He had done for Israel being the crucifixion of the Son of God, sent to them in fullest grace at the predicted time and in the predicted way. As to man, all was over, but in that which proved this, God has found a way in which He can manifest Himself, to the wonder and joy and worship of eternity, and open heaven to those who have hopelessly lost earth. The blood of the sin-offering burned outside the camp was that which went inside the veil into the presence of God. The true sin-offering, bringing all other offerings to an end, has rent the veil and made the way permanent. The judgment of man naturally in the highest place of privilege, which is the camp, is the way by which there is secure entrance into the glory of God unveiled.

The epistle has five divisions:

1. (Chaps. i., ii. 4): Shows us Christ, the Son of God in manhood,—thus the First-born in uniqueness and supremacy as the Apostle of our confession; enthroned, and having laid the foundation of peace. He is thus supreme above angels, through whom the law was given.
2. (Chaps. ii. 5–iv. 13): Shows us Christ in His humiliation to death for His brethren, become the Originator of salvation for them, annulling him who had the power of death, the devil, and delivering those subject to bondage. He is here far beyond both Moses and Joshua.
3. (Chaps. iv. 14–x.): Shows us Christ as priest entering into the heavenly sanctuary, the way into which He has opened by His accomplished work. He is here in contrast both with the priests and sacrifices of the law.
4. (Chap. xi.): Gives us for our instruction the walk, trial, and experience of faith. The object of the apostle is to show that if the glorious realities of which he has been speaking are invisible, it is faith which always lays hold of the invisible, and by which all those that ever pleased God have obtained a good report.
5. (Chaps. xii. and xiii.): Closes with admonition of the responsibilities involved in all this: first, of the need of steadfast continuance in their good confession; and secondly, of separation from the Jewish system, which could now be held to only in the rejection of that to which it pointed, and which alone was what at any time had made it valuable.

THE EPISTLE TO THE

HEBREWS.

DIVISION 1. (Chaps. i., ii. 4.)

Christ the First-born in His uniqueness and supremacy as the Apostle of our confession, now enthroned, having laid the foundation of peace, thus supreme above the angels, through whom the law was given.

SECTION 1. (Chap. i. 1-4.)

God identified with the Son, in whom He has now spoken fully, not fragmentarily.

GOD, who [a]in many parts and in [b]many ways spake of old unto the fathers in the prophets, hath [c]at the end of these days spoken to us [d]in [the] Son, whom he hath established [e]heir of all things,

a cf. 2 Pet. 1. 20.
b cf. Num. 12. 6, 8.
c ch. 9. 26. 1 Cor. 10. 11.
d Jno. 14. 10. Jno. 15. 15, 22-24.
e Col. 1. 16.

NOTES.

DIV. 1.

CHRIST "the Apostle of our confession" is therefore the first theme of the present epistle; but it is Christ speaking no longer on earth, but, where the apostle saw Him, from heaven; His work accomplished and therefore His speech unfettered, with all the fulness of blessing in it, which the presence of the Spirit on earth is able to make good in the souls of men. We can see why the apostle of the Gentiles here should say nothing about his own apostleship. It is Christ for him who is the Apostle; and in an epistle to believing Hebrews, how this is suited to remove every shadow of prejudice against the one who is simply the channel of His communication to His people! It is thus also that we find the doctrine of the epistle to be in such large measure founded upon the Old Testament scriptures and their interpretation. The wisdom of God is surely found in this, which awakens so much the critics' wonder. To Jews it is the voice of Judaism itself; not the bastard Judaism of later days, but Judaism as God gave it,—making known now the uniting truth which puts together all its fragmentary relations in one glorious whole, which necessarily transcends as such all previous partial declarations.

Sec. 1.

God had, in fact, of old time, spoken "unto the fathers in the prophets." The new dispensation in no way contradicts that voice of God in the old, nor sets it aside even from its present use and blessing, but, on the contrary, gives it its full meaning and authority as such for His people now. God had spoken "in many parts,"—in some sense a characteristic of His speaking at all times, although not in the sense in which the apostle speaks here. Scripture has, in fact, never the character of a systematized theology. The truth in it is not classified for us as the specimens of a museum might be, but is a living thing, the branches of it interlacing with one another and sometimes hidden amid leaves and fruits and flowers, for faith to trace and wonder at the more. Its beauty is a beauty such as nature itself has, only far beyond nature. The resulting exercise is not only permitted, but enjoined upon us, if we will lay hold of it and make it our own. "All Scripture is profitable"; but "that the *man of God* may be perfect,

[f] by whom also he made the worlds;* who being the [g] effulgence of his glory and the [h] expression of his substance, and [i] upholding all things by the word of his

[f] 1 Cor. 8. 6.
[g] 2 Cor. 4. 4, 6.
[h] Jno. 1. 18.
[i] Col. 1. 15.
[i] Col. 1. 17.

* αἰῶνες, generally translated "ages," but used by the Jews for the universe.

thoroughly furnished to all good works." If we are not men of God, we must expect to find things hidden, and to make little way with it. "The diligent soul shall be made fat." "God satisfieth the *longing* soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness."

But the many fragmentary communications of the Old Testament were, of course, in those days, necessarily more or less separated from one another, and faith itself could only as yet make out dimly what was within the veil. The glory in Moses' face had thus always the character of veiled glory, but the veil is now taken away in Christ. How great, then, is the privilege which is ours; and how great the responsibility of availing ourselves fully of the privilege of those upon whom the ends of the ages are come,—who can now, therefore, look back over all the past, and gather the united wisdom of all God's words and ways.

For "in many ways" He spoke, as "in many parts": histories, genealogies and ordinances, with more directly prophetic speech, combining, in a perfection all their own, to assure us of how God has indeed spoken in Scripture,—a thing which modern unbelief, with the wisdom of the adversary in it, would take from us, grounding itself upon the obscurity of the revelations, when now the full light has come and obscurity can no longer be pleaded.

The whole time was, in fact, as we know, a time of probation, a time of necessary testing of man to put him in his rightful place before God, and make him accept that complete setting aside of the flesh which allows, in fact, God now to be God to us in all the fulness of a divine revelation. Thus, "at the end of these days" He has "spoken to us in the Son." The probation, for those who accept the lesson of it, is at an end. There can be no claim on man's part but that which grace permits him. There can be no attempt to substantiate the righteousness of him who has now crucified the Son of God sent to him; but in that cross itself it is that the full grace of God is manifested, salvation accomplished, enemies are reconciled to God by the death of His Son.

It is as the Son that the apostle puts Him before us here, a title unspeakably dear to us, as it is that in which He appears in such a character as to make the revelation available to us, and to put us, through grace, into the place of sons also, that we may enjoy the revelation.

He is Son of God in eternity and in deity; but this gives character, therefore, to the manhood that He assumes. Here also He is Son of God. It is the same Person, in the same relationship, but now as Man, the First-born Son, not as John shows Him to us, "the *Only*-begotten." Paul is not separating us from Him by the glory of His Person, but bringing us nigh. It is necessary to separate, that we may not confound things that so greatly differ, or deprive Him of the unique glory which is His own. The bringing nigh comes then in its due place, and with all the blessing which results from this divine glory shining from the human.

The Son of God is the appointed Heir of all things. Sonship and heirship are always connected together in Scripture; and it is thus as ourselves sons that we are heirs. He, the First-born Son, is the great Heir, the One through whom all others derive title. All things are worthily for Him, by whom, in fact, they were created, or,—as it is put here,—by whom God made them; for all this is according to divine counsels, in which God designs to make Himself known to His creatures as far as creature can possibly know Him. He is still the Infinite, and we the finite; but in coming out of His infinitude to make Himself known within the limits of time and space, He is showing that moral character

power, having [j]made [by himself]* purification of sins, [k]sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, being [l]made so much superior to angels as he hath [m]inherited a more excellent name than they.

* Some of the earliest MSS. omit. It is really involved in the middle form of the verb.

[j] ch. 9. 26, ch. 10. 12. 14.
[k] Mk. 16. 19. Ps. 110. 1.
[l] Phil. 2. 9.
[m] Jno. 1. 14, 18.

which is at the very heart of all the revelation. He is light, but He is Love, and it is love that is bringing out the light. It is not a cold radiance, but wraps us in a life-giving warmth which penetrates and holds us fast forever.

The Son of God is thus "the effulgence" of the divine glory. He is the Word, as the apostle John would tell us, and as the Word the revelation of the mind of God. "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." Thus all creation has, of necessity, His stamp upon it. All forms of creation become the types and pictures of moral and spiritual truth. They are revelations, necessarily partial, which we must put together to have the full revelation; and for this, also, the Son of God, the Revealer, must take His place among His own creatures, that the display may have that measure which, if it be not (to our finite faculties) infinite, yet infers this, and, continually growing on us, has full competence for more than satisfaction,—for eternal delight.

Thus He is "the expression of His substance": He makes the invisible God visible. We are not, by the display, diverted from Him of whom it is the display. It is God Himself we know and worship, in the Man Christ Jesus,—so near, so intimate with us, so perfect in condescending grace, yet in whose Presence the creature is necessarily abased; not put at a distance, but put in the place of entire dependence, to realize the upholding of infinite power. Thus it is said here: "Upholding all things by the word of His power." There is thus no thought in Scripture of a creation which shall be sufficient for itself, a perfect machine made to run eternally without the Hand that made it. How much would we be deprived of, if that were true! No, our dependence is just our link with the One who thus holds us up, the One whom as children we call Father, and who would make us know, in every outflow of His grace towards us, the pulsation of a Father's heart.

Thus far it is of creation simply that the apostle speaks; but the creature is fallen, and thus needs a remedy which, in fact, only makes the glory of God more manifest, and brings out fully what love is in Himself. The Son has "made by Himself a purification of sins"; how wonderful a work, when we consider it! There, in depths where naturally there was "no standing," subject to the demands of divine holiness, which He had taken upon Himself, and which could only be met by the display of a moral perfection perfectly tested, and left to be tested, in that abyss of sorrow! Power there was not, for power of itself could be of no avail here. In Him there was the perfect surrender of Man to God, One crucified through weakness, and taking His place in a helplessness utterly foreign to Him, to conquer by the might of perfect goodness and nothing else.

There was none with Him, and could be none. "By Himself" He made "purification of sins." Act of others there was none in this, nor could be. All was between Him and the God whom He thus glorified in all His attributes, in the fulfilling of a work which should glorify Him forever. Thus must He rise, and did rise, out of those inconceivable depths, to the place where now He has "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." He has gone down and risen up, that He might fill all places, bringing in everywhere the grace which makes stable the unstable, and the saved sinner the very righteousness of God in Him. Thus indeed, then, is He made "so much superior to angels as he hath" even "inherited a more excellent name than they." All that He is is manifested in His work done, and His name now is the telling out of His Personal glory.

SECTION 2. (Chap. i. 5–14.)

As Son, God, though Man, as witnessed by the Word, contrasted with angels.

FOR to which of the angels said he at any time, [n]Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, [o]I will be to him a Father, and he shall be

n Ps. 2. 7.
o 2 Sam. 7. 14.

Sec. 2.

The apostle proceeds, according to his manner in the epistle, to confirm what he has just said by the Old Testament itself. The angels were those, as we know, who, according to the full belief of the Jews, gave character to the dispensation of law. They did indeed give it a character, in this sense, that they confirmed the distance from God on man's part which the law implied. The ministry of angels is in itself, surely, a thing most gracious, but at the same time the intervention of angels between God and man does not imply the nearness into which Christianity has brought us. Rather, it speaks of what was indeed the legal characteristic, that no one could see God's face and live. *We do* see His face, by faith indeed, but still fully revealed to us in the person of His Son, and are brought nigh to Him. Angels have here no place, although in ministry, as to circumstances, they may retain it fully. But thus it is of importance here to show that the Son has a more excellent name than angels; and the apostle confirms this statement now by seven quotations from the Old Testament, which show the name that Christ inherits; and to which of the angels did the glory of such a name belong?

For those who have learned the significance of numbers and the part they have in Scripture, as in nature, as showing the mind of God impressed on every part, it will be easy to see that the series here is significant in this way. Every text is in its place, and the whole is a sevenfold witness to the Lord, in accordance with the design of the epistle.

The first quotation from the second psalm gives the foundation of all. "Thou art My Son; to-day have I begotten Thee," is the word of Jehovah to the King of Zion; who claims, upon the warrant of this, the earth as His inheritance. But the powers of earth are combined against Him, Israel nationally with the Gentiles also, and they are warned of wrath to come upon those who do not take refuge in Him in the days of His long-suffering patience. It is plain how this suits the Christ of Christians, even to the accounting for what was so perplexing to an Israelite, the delay of Israel's blessing when Messiah was now come; but the point emphasized in the quotation is His being true Son of God in nature, the Begotten of Jehovah in manhood. It is quite true that men at large, by virtue of their creation, are, as the apostle quotes even the heathen poet, "the offspring of God;" and angels also are recognized in a general way as sons of God. Israel had a special place also nationally as the first-born of Jehovah; but in this way it was not a place that could be claimed by the individual as such, but he had part in it only as one of the nation. Spiritually there was nothing, necessarily, that would answer to this. A Jew was a Jew by nature, not by new nature; and the character of the law, as we know, was the testing of men as to their condition, instead of the bringing in of spiritual power so as to affect their condition. Thus Israel's privileges were all tentative and conditional; and the law, in fact, spoke nothing plainly as to eternity at all, except as it revealed the total incompetence of man for blessing upon any ground of his own righteousness.

Certainly no one could in Israel claim to be a begotten son of God, and according to Scripture no angel either could make such a claim. No doubt the Lord is looked at here as in humanity, not according to that which we know was His divine title. He is not here "the Only-begotten Son," as John declares Him, but rather the *First*-begotten, as we shall find Him called directly. But if "the Only-begotten Son" comes into humanity, He could not lose, in this humanity that He assumes, the relationship in which He stood to God. Thus the nature

to me a Son? And again when he bringeth in the First-born into the habitable earth, he saith, [p] And let all the angels of God worship him. And as to the angels he saith, [q] Who maketh his angels spirits and his ministers a flame of fire; but as to the Son, [r] Thy throne, O God, is for the course of eternity, and a sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hast hated lawlessness; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, [s] Thou, Lord, in

[p] Ps. 97. 7.
[q] Ps. 104. 4.
[r] Ps. 45. 6,7.
[s] Ps. 102. 25, 27.

assumed becomes, as it were, like the firmament of the second day, a lower heaven through which the higher heaven of glory shines. The sun is in the firmament, yet above the firmament, and the Son of God in humanity brings into it thus the relationship to God which He could never give up. The Only-begotten becomes the First-begotten; and this implies, of course, that now there will be among men themselves those who will be also the begotten of God. This is not the human family as such, but the family of faith, as we find here fully in Hebrews. They have a new, and, as Scripture speaks, a divine nature, of which they are partakers; but this is through and in the First-begotten only, who is the Adam of the new creation, and, as the apostle says of Him in that character, a "quickening Spirit." We shall find this more particularly dwelt upon in what shortly follows.

Here we have the One through whom this unspeakable blessing is communicated; and it is impossible to confound the One to whom God says, "Thou art My Son," with any other of the sons of men. He has an empire over all by the very fact of what He is; and His miraculous birth distinguishes Him in this character: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee," says the angel to Mary, "and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee. Therefore, also, that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Thus His unique character is established on all sides.

The apostle strengthens this by a second quotation, which applied indeed first of all to Solomon, as is plain by the context, but only typically to him. Even as the builder of God's house, the true Son of David was not Solomon, but a greater, whose house and kingdom would be both eternal. We shall find Christ as the builder further on in Hebrews (chap. iii. 3), but the point for the present is, "I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son." This must be put clearly in connection with the passage from the psalm just quoted; and then we can understand that the relation on each side will be all that is implied in such words as these.

The third quotation is very full for the apostle's purpose. Here the First-born is brought again into the world. Question is made of whether the word "again" is really connected with this bringing in; but it should be plain that it is the appearing of Christ in glory that is at any rate referred to. This is the force of the words: "When He bringeth in the First-born into the world." It could hardly apply to incarnation. It is true that the angels of God worshiped, as we know, when the infant Christ was born; but they were not summoned to worship in that public way which is evidently intimated here. Then the superiority of Christ to angels will indeed be fully manifest—nay His supremacy over all, according to that Name given Him.

The fourth quotation separates the angels from such a place as we have been looking at, by saying that they are indeed but the creatures of God's hand, made and fashioned by Him at His will. "He maketh His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire." "The acceptance and use of the Septuagint translation by the writer here would quite preclude, as has been said elsewhere, the adoption of any other. 'He maketh His angels spirits' is, according to the apostle, a fact affirmed of the nature of angels, and, of course, a much higher

the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou abidest; and they all shall grow old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou roll them up and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail. But as to which of the angels hath he said at any time, 'Sit on my right hand until I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet? Are they not "all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for the sake of those who are to "inherit salvation?

t Ps. 110. 1.
u 2 Ki. 6. 16, 17. Ps. 34. 7. Dan. 6. 22. Acts 12. 7, 15.
v 1 Pet. 3. 7.

SECTION 3. (Chap. ii. 1-4.)

The publication of these good news with threefold attestation.

FOR this reason we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that have been heard, lest in any way we should slip away [from them]; for "if the word spoken through angels was firm and every transgression and disobedience received just retribution, "how

w *cf.* Gal. 3. 19. Acts 7. 53.
x ch. 10. 28, 29.

fact than making 'the winds His messengers,' as some would have it. As it might be translated either way, the meaning must be decided otherwise than by the language. Nor is it a disproportion in thought that while the material instrument is contemplated as truly in the hands of God, these 'ministers,' the spiritual beings, should be His 'messengers.' This shows, on the one hand, that no part of His creation is to be conceived as separate from Him, no physical agency that is not the embodiment of His will, while, on the other hand, the spirits, with a responsibility of their own, represent Him and are subject to Him, receiving their character and endowment from Him according to His will." (*Notes on the Psalms.*)

This distinguishes in the plainest manner all mere creatures from this Son of God.

The fifth quotation, in contrast, shows us God and man united in Him; true God, with an eternal throne, and yet true Man, in righteous recompense anointed by God with the oil of gladness above His fellows. Here Immanuel is found in the full significance of His name (Ps. xlv. 6).

The sixth quotation (Ps. cii. 25–27), in the application of it by the apostle here, throws a flood of light not upon that psalm only, but upon the whole fourth book of the Psalms, in which it has a central place. It is now not simply a Man, but a suffering, dying Man, who is yet owned of God to be the Maker of heaven and earth. These are limited and changing, but not He who gives them their limit; and who, though He may seem to be Himself at the limit of His days, is Master here as elsewhere. In fact, it is in the cross that He manifests Himself most truly, gloriously Master of all, and evil itself receives its limit from Him and owns Him Lord.

One quotation more (Ps. cx. 1) completes this series. Here He is Son at rest after His work accomplished, rejected indeed of man, but awaiting the action of God to make His foes His footstool; while He Himself sits at the right hand of God. Thus the testimony is complete, and every quotation fills perfectly its place. The angels have their place, and a blessed one, as thus in heart entering fully into the purposes of God towards those who are naturally below themselves, but in whom they learn to adore the perfect grace and wisdom of Him who lifts them up into a higher one. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?" The very salvation which marks them out as sinners is that which displays the glory of God in His grace to them, and thus becomes the new revelation of God to the angels themselves.

shall *we* escape, if we have neglected so great a salvation, which at the first began to be [y]spoken by the Lord, and was [z]confirmed to us by those that heard [him]; [a]God also bearing witness with them both by signs and wonders, and various acts of power, and distributions of the Holy Ghost according to his will?

y ch. 3. 1.
z Acts 1. 8, 22.
a Acts 2. 33. Acts 4. 30.

DIVISION 2. (Chaps. ii. 5–iv. 13.)

Christ, Captain of salvation, contrasted with Moses and Joshua, in his humiliation to death for his brethren, annulling the devil and delivering those subject to bondage.

SECTION 1. (Chap. ii. 5–9.)

As already crowned with glory, and to be over the world to come.

FOR unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the [b]habitable world to come, whereof we are speaking; but one in a certain place testified, saying, [c]What is

b *cf.* ch. 6. 5.
c Ps. 8. 4–6.

Sec. 3.

We have now the proclamation of glad tidings such as these, and that in a threefold way: first as begun to be spoken by the Lord Himself; then, as confirmed by those who heard Him; and finally, as attested by the Holy Ghost with signs and wonders and various acts of power. All this declares, indeed, the necessity of that salvation which the gospel proclaims. God has been in earnest about it. We, says the apostle, must give earnest heed to it also. Alas, it is man's chief blessing which he constantly refuses, and which even Christians, as has been fully demonstrated in the history of the Church, have proved themselves least competent to hold. That God's grace could not, after all, fail of its object, should be self-evident. God will not leave Christ without that which love in Him could account His recompense. He must see of the fruit of the travail of His soul. He must be satisfied. But with all this, the incompetence of man is fully demonstrated, and nowhere so much as when God has spoken and wrought after this manner. But the apostle is addressing himself in the first place to unbelieving Jews, or to those who might have given a temporary and superficial faith to Christianity. He therefore declares that if the law required that every transgression and disobedience should receive just retribution, it would be indeed impossible for those to escape who should neglect so great a salvation. What must be the final portion of those for whom God's work by His Son and Spirit should yet be in vain?

DIV. 2.

In the second division we have now the way in which the Lord becomes the "Originator of salvation" for His brethren, the Kinsman-Redeemer. We see Him here already crowned with honor and glory, and to be set over the world to come; and then look down from this to see His humiliation and suffering with the purpose of God in it; thus leading on to the view of His complete glory as Son over the house of God. This, in the first place, is the universe, and gives Him, therefore, His connection with all God's purposes from the beginning; but then it is the priestly house; which leads us on to the great subject of the epistle,—how He has given to us an entrance into the Holiest, and brought us nigh to God perfectly revealed.

Sec. 1.

The first section, then, shows us Christ as Man destined to be set over the world to come, though, as yet, not seen with all things put under Him as such,

man that thou rememberest him? or the son of man that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels, thou crownedst him with glory and honor [and didst set him over the works of thy hands]:* thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not in subjection under him. But now we see [d]not yet all things put in subjection to him; but we see Jesus [e]crowned with glory and honor, who was made a little lower than the angels on account of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might [f]taste [g]death for all.†

[d] Ps. 110. 1.
[e] 1 Pet. 1. 21.
[f] Jno. 8. 52.
[g] 2 Cor. 5. 15.

* Some omit. † Or "every one." It is not a plural.

but crowned with glory and honor. The world is here the "habitable earth to come," to which the psalmist is looking on now. Angels are not set over that. The Son of Man is, and He is the representative Man for God,—not the first, but the Second Man. The first man is fallen, and the race with him. The Second Man it is in whom the restored earth stands, and whose work reaches even to the reconciliation of the things in heaven.

Here we have again the testimony of the Old Testament. The habitable earth was designed for man, as is plain, at the beginning, and, spite of his fall, the purpose of God in this cannot be defeated. The angels are not to displace him here. In the quotation of the eighth psalm man is seen indeed, not merely made naturally a little lower than the angels, but such an one as makes it a matter of God's condescending grace, if He remembers him at all. The very glory of God in the heavens over his head makes the psalmist ask with astonishment, how God can visit this fallen son of man. The answer is plainly that it is *not* the *fallen* man with whom God is occupied, but Another altogether. And when Christ is seen, then the glory of the visible heavens is all eclipsed in comparison. What does it all amount to when compared with the glory of Him who is now before the eye of God, made indeed Himself a little lower than the angels, but to be crowned with glory and honor, and with all things put in subjection under His feet!

The apostle emphasizes this in the most absolute way: "For in that He put all in subjection under Him, He left nothing that is not in subjection under Him." It is quite true, he says, we do not see that yet. That is a mystery revealed to faith: it is not yet a manifestation. Nevertheless, "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels on account of the suffering of death," which He had to endure, "crowned with glory and honor." Here is One who has plainly come to seek the lowest place, and not the highest, but who, just in that very way, is exalted to the highest. Here is a true Man, and even a Son of Man; and One who has come under the penalty of sin in order that He might remove it; by the grace of God tasting death, realizing all the bitterness of it, "for every one" or "every thing," as we may otherwise read it; in either case, for the ransom of all the creation, wherever sin had blighted it. The first man stood for the whole scene with which he was connected, and which fell with him. The Second Man, in the same way, stands in connection with the whole scene, but as Redeemer and Restorer. The habitable earth to come is the sphere of the first man, but in the hands of the Second. It is earth, not heaven (as is plain by the psalm), and can only take in part of the scene in chap. xii. 22-24; as, for instance, Zion, but not the New Jerusalem. The eighth psalm may give hints of a wider dominion, but its plain speech does not go beyond the earth; but thus the purpose of God in man's creation is vindicated abundantly, nay, shown to be inconceivably more wonderful than could appear at the beginning. God is glorified in Him with a glory which fills not the earth only, but also heaven.

SECTION 2. (Chap. ii. 10-18.)

His humiliation and suffering as Kinsman Redeemer.

For it [a]became him, [b]for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing [c]many sons to glory, to make the [d]originator* of their salvation [e]perfect through sufferings. For both he who [f]sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are [g]all of one;† for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying,

[a] cf. Matt. 3. 15. ch. 7. 26.
[b] Rom. 11. 36.
[c] cf. Rom. 8. 19.
[d] Acts 5. 31. ch. 12. 2.
[e] ch. 5. 9. Lk. 13. 32.
[f] ch. 10. 10, 14, 29.
[g] Jno. 20. 17.

* ἀρχηγός, "one who initiates and carries through." † ἑξ ἑνός.

Sec. 2.

In the next section we find the Lord's work as Saviour dwelt upon. A Saviour from sin must be a Sufferer. Power simply cannot suffice. There are necessities of the divine nature which condition the forthputting of divine power. Divine holiness must be vindicated at personal cost, but divine love is bent upon bringing sons to glory. There can be no perfecting of the blessed Person, but there *must* be the perfecting of a *Saviour*. "It became Him," therefore, "for whom are all things and by whom are all things, . . . to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

This word "Captain" may be better translated "Leader," or, better still, "Originator": One who establishes the way by which He will bring others through to salvation. Nor is it indeed only salvation for which He destines them, but He brings them as sons, new-made, to a glory unimagined. How beautiful is the reminder that if there are conditions of all this, they are conditions which spring from the very majesty of Him who is bringing these sons to glory. For Him are all things, by Him are all things. This does not make Him work independently of that which must display and vindicate His holy nature. The power of God is indeed limited, but only by His own perfections. Truly omnipotent, that does not mean, of course, that He can do that which is in any way unworthy of Him; and how gloriously does He display Himself in One who comes down Himself to suffer according to the requirements of divine holiness,—Himself to take the penalty which in righteousness He has imposed! How thoroughly the rightness of the penalty is seen as taken by the Son of God Himself, God glorified in it!

The voice of the twenty-second psalm is that of One who bears witness thus in the sufferings, the unequalled sufferings, in which He is found. "But," says He, "Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." He shall inhabit, He shall dwell amongst the praises of a people such as these have, alas, proved themselves to be. He shall dwell amid these praises for eternity, but in holiness, as alone He can. He shall satisfy Himself in that in which His people too are not only satisfied, but overflow with the joy which they trace to Him, and which, therefore, is the joy of worship. Here, then, are sons related as such to the glorious Son, who has come down to be the Son of Man also. "Both He who sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of One, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren."

Here, surely, is the First-born among many brethren, and all the connection assures us that "of One," or "out of One," means really "of one *Father*." Yet there is an infinite difference, so that indeed it is divine love in Him which makes Him recognize and welcome brethren such as these. *He* is the *divine* Son. They are only human. Moreover, He is the Sanctifier; they have need of sanctification; yet he is not ashamed of them. By and by, He will conform them to His own likeness, so that they may indeed be the companions of His heart for evermore.

But this is, again, so new and strange, apparently, that the apostle must produce the Old Testament scriptures for it. He produces three: the first from

[o] I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the assembly will I sing praise unto thee. And again, [p] I will put my trust in him. And again, [q] Behold I and the children [r] which God gave unto me. Forasmuch then as the children are sharers* in blood and flesh, he also in like manner took part† in the same; that

o Ps. 22. 22.
p Isa. 8. 17. (Gk.) cf. Ps. 16.1. Ps. 18. 2.
q Isa. 8. 18.
r Jno. 17. 2.

* κεκοινώνηκεν. † μετέσχεν.

the twenty-second psalm, where, immediately after the sin-offering is accomplished, and the Sufferer is heard from the horns of the aurochs (the buffalo), He is heard saying: "I will declare Thy Name unto My *brethren;* in the midst of the assembly will I praise Thee." It is the gospel of John that gives us the primary fulfilment of this: "Go and tell my brethren," says the risen Lord to Mary, "I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and unto My God and your God." Here is the distinction indeed preserved which must always remain between the Sanctifier and the sanctified, between the Former of the relationship and those who are brought, through grace, into the relationship. But this difference is only one main element of the blessing itself, and it is in the full enjoyment of what His grace has wrought that He gathers around Him the assembly of the redeemed to sing praise to God in their midst. It is not here that *they* sing, but *He* sings. Their song will come in due time, but His must have the priority, and must have the pre-eminence. Who is the one who can sing praises to God like Him? Who can be, in that sense, associated with Him? By His Spirit, no doubt, He can and will bring His people into fellowship with Himself. Their joy is His joy, and His joy their joy, but far more blessed than any song in common is the song of this single Voice in the midst of those He gathers.

The two other quotations are side by side in Isaiah (chap. viii, 17, 18), in which the prophet personates, after the manner of the Psalms, the One to come. "I will put my trust in Him" is from the Septuagint, where, in our common version it is: "I will wait upon Him;" but in either way it is the expression of that trust in God which in Christ was absolute, and which made Him "the leader and finisher of faith," the One who in His own Person was the perfect example of it. This makes in a practical way the family of faith His brethren.

The third quotation is different, again, in its expression of the same truth. Indeed, it looks as if it were not the same. "Behold, I and the children that God has given Me" seems to refer to the natural relation of father and children, as in the prophet's case it certainly did; but here again we are to remember the typical significance, and find therefore, in this, Christ as the last Adam; which supplies thus a most important link in the chain of evidence, for it is as this that He is the Representative-Head of those for whom He laid down His life. The first Adam was, by the human life which he communicated to his descendants, a real first-born among brethren; and Christ is the same among those to whom, as life-giving Spirit, far beyond the power of the first Adam, He communicates *divine* life.

We are here again very near to the gospel of John, and are listening to the Voice which said: "As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him;" but, for this, the corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die, that it may bring forth fruit. The passage here goes back even of this, to His taking flesh to die; and since, then, "the children are sharers of flesh and blood, He Himself, in like manner, took part in the same, that through death He might bring to naught him who had the power of death, that is the devil, and set free those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." This is not putting away of sins exactly, but it supposes it. The shadow of death is dispelled by the Light of Life descending into it; and, as again the Lord says in John, of the effect of His coming as the Resurrection and the Life: "He that believeth in Me, though

through death he might *bring to nought him who hath the power of death, that is the devil; and *set free as many as through *fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For it is not angels assuredly upon whom he taketh hold, but he taketh hold of the *seed of Abraham; wherefore it behoved him in all things to be *made like unto his brethren, that he

s Col. 2. 15. 2 Tim. 1. 10.
t 1 Cor. 15. 55–57. Phil. 1. 21, 23.
u Job 10. 21, 22. Eccl. 3. 21. Isa. 38.
v cf. Rom. 9. 8.
w 1 Tim. 2. 5.

he were dead, yet shall he live,"—(that refers to the past, but again)—"He that *liveth* and believeth in Me shall never die." Death *was*, in the past. He has now abolished it for faith, and brought life and incorruption to light by the gospel.

It must be noted here, as it often has been, that while the children are said to be partakers of flesh and blood,—this "partaking" being a real having in common, a participation of the most thorough kind,—in His own "taking part" another word is used which implies limitation. It does not indeed show the character of the limitation; but the difference between the words makes us necessarily ask what, in fact, that was; and the answer comes to us immediately, that while His was true humanity in every particular necessary to constitute it that, yet humanity as men have it, the humanity of *fallen* men, was *not* His. Here there must be strict limitation. We must add, as the apostle does afterwards with regard to His temptation, "sin apart." Sin, with the consequences of sin, He could not take. Death could have no power over Him, except as He might submit Himself voluntarily to it, and this He did; but it was obedience to His Father's will, and no necessity of His condition, as it is of ours.

"For He taketh not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham He taketh hold; wherefore it behooved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things relating to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people." All this is in language which an Israelite would well understand; but the seed of Abraham, the people, are to be seen in the light of Christianity as the company of faith. If Israel nationally answered to this description, then, of course, they could claim as such the old promises; but even here not exclusively, for the apostle's words, that "they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham," must necessarily apply at all times and under all circumstances. The apostle has, in fact, however, before the end of the epistle, a word of exhortation as to leaving the camp because of Christ's rejection; and those to whom it is written, though Hebrews, are immediately here addressed as "holy brethren, partakers of the *heavenly* calling,"—which Israel's was not. "The people" and "the seed of Abraham" must be understood here, therefore, in the light of this.

The Day of Atonement is, of course, contemplated in the making of "propitiation for the sins of the people." Upon that day the sins of Israel were put upon the head of the scapegoat and taken away. It belonged to the series of feasts of the seventh month, which, in contrast with those in the early part of the year, the Passover and Unleavened Bread, the Sheaf of First-fruits, and Pentecost, are all national, and speak of the fulfilment of the promises to the nation in God's "due time." Thus, in the Feast of Trumpets, at the beginning of it, the new moon, (when the light of divine favor is beginning to shine again on Israel,) we have the feast of recall to the people. On the tenth day, the Day of Atonement, they come under the value of the work of Christ; while, beginning with the fifteenth, the Feast of Tabernacles exhibits them in the joy of their re-establishment in the land. The first series of feasts they lost through their refusal of Christ when He came, and in the prescient wisdom of God we find the Passover to have been a family rather than a national feast, that "thou shalt be saved and thy house," which Christianity proclaims. The feast of Unleavened Bread took form from the Passover, which it accompanied; and the Sheaf of First-

might be a [x]merciful and faithful high priest [y]in things relating to God, in order to make [z]propitiation for the sins of the people; for in that he [a]himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor those that are tempted.

x *cf.* ch. 4. 15.
y ch. 5. 1.
z 1 Jno. 2. 2. *cf.* Rom. 3. 25.
a *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 1, 2

fruits, that is, Christ risen, and Pentecost, the coming of the Spirit, are characteristically Christian. Israel's unbelief has delayed blessing for them; and as a consequence there is the gap which follows in the services of the year. This explains in the simplest way the mystery of the two goats of the Day of Atonement, of which much else is sometimes made.

For Israel, in consequence of their rejection of the blessing when it was offered, the putting away of sins, as in the scapegoat, is separated by a gap of time from the *work* which actually puts them away. This is exactly what is pictured in the two goats. When their sins are put upon the scapegoat, there is no actual sacrifice, no real atonement made at all. The goat is a *scape*goat, that is, a goat that gets away, not that is offered. There is positively no offering of this goat, a thing from which, through not understanding it, much confusion has arisen. Atonement is not made "*with* it," as in our common version, but "*for* it" (Lev. xvi. 10), as the words (*kapper al*) elsewhere and constantly are rightly taken to mean (Ex. xxix. 36; xxx. 12, 15, 16; Lev. i. 4; iv. 20, 26, 31, 35, etc.).

The difficulty, of course, is obvious. How can propitiation be made, or why does it need to be made, for the *goat?* But the answer is not far to seek. It is indeed because the two goats are for one sin-offering, while in fact only one is offered (Lev. xvi. 5). The Lord's lot falls on the one to be offered, the other escapes. The atonement which ideally he was to make, is, in fact, made for him by the former one.

The application is simple in view of Israel's history. The first goat is offered and its blood carried into the holiest of all when the high priest enters it. Not till he comes out again are Israel's sins put upon the scapegoat and carried away. The Day of Atonement is thus made to extend back through the whole Christian period. We have the link of the future with the past. The atonement, all of it, was made once for all, before Christ as High Priest entered the heavens. When Israel's sins are put away He will have come out again; but then, of course, no fresh sacrifice can be offered. The scapegoat is, therefore, *not* a fresh sacrifice. It points simply to a former time in which the actual one took place, and the two goats are necessary to preserve the connection, and point out the delay of blessing which the national unbelief occasions.

Another thing, also, must not be overlooked. When the high priest goes in, he takes into the sanctuary not merely the blood of the goat which is for Israel, but that of the bullock, which is for his own priestly house. Here, assuredly, it is that Christians have their typical representatives. They are, as Peter says, "a spiritual house, a holy priesthood" (1 Pet. ii. 5), and here we find the "sanctified ones," the "companions" of Christ, "partakers" (*metochoi*, chap. ii. 14), for whom the great High Priest appears before God. Notice, too, that on the Day of Atonement, the high priest does the whole work. None of the priestly family appear at all, except as they have part in the offering made for them. This has been noticed as exceptional, and to throw doubt on the offering of sacrifice as distinctly priestly work. *Being* so exceptional, we must not argue for its necessity; and even the fact that the high priest entered the holiest, not in his garments of glory and beauty, but in the plain white linen garments, is urged on the same side. We shall have to inquire as to this elsewhere, rather than here; but it is enough here to say that the words will not admit of such a thought as this. Christ must be "a merciful and faithful High Priest in things relating to God, *to* make propitiation for the sins of the people." How could one insist more upon the distinct priestly character of making propitiation than by saying He was the High Priest *to* do it?

SECTION 3. (Chap. iii. 1-6.)
His glory as Son over the house of God.

WHEREFORE, holy brethren, [b]partakers* of a heavenly calling, consider the [c]apostle and high priest of our confession, Jesus, who is faithful to him that hath [d]appointed him, [e]as Moses also was in all his house.

[b] Phil. 3. 14, 20.
[c] ch. 2. 3.
Jno. 10. 36.
[d] ch. 5. 4, 5.
[e] Num. 12. 7.

* μέτοχοι

Once more we have to distinguish between the offering of sacrifice, which was always priestly and nothing else, and the killing of the victim, which was commonly the act of the one who brought the victim. The *offering* was upon the altar, (except in the sin-offerings for the high priest and for the congregation), and that was the complete manifestation of the character of the Lord's death upon His own side, not His life taken from Him, but given up, and with this all that was implied in and associated with His death,—the deeper reality of His bearing sin in His own body upon the tree. The offering of sacrifice was thus absolutely priestly and nothing else.

It is quite true that at exceptional times, when things were out of joint in Israel, God might sanction the work of a prophet in this way; but as a regular thing, the offering of sacrifice was that into which no other but a priest could dare intrude. The Day of Atonement was exceptional in this, that it was *by eminence* the Day of Atonement; and therefore all that belongs to it is emphasized in a special way. Thus it is that now even the ordinary priests disappear, and on this special Day of Atonement one figure alone is kept before our eyes. However, all this will be plainer as we proceed.

The people for whom *our* High Priest atones are, of course, wider than Christians or the priestly house. They are all the true seed of Abraham, the family of faith through all time; and this definition is precise enough to escape all ambiguity, and wide enough to bid all men welcome to participate in the value of the atonement. The propitiation for the whole world, of which John speaks (1 John ii. 2), is thus quite easily reconciled with "a propitiation through faith by His blood" (Rom. iii. 25), because faith is that to which all men are invited. Let a man believe, then he finds an absolutely efficacious atonement according to divine knowledge of his need and grace to meet it. "The worshiper once purged has no more conscience of sins."*

In the last verse of this section we have the sympathy of the great High Priest with us guaranteed by His human experience: "In that He hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succor those that are tempted." Temptation to Him was suffering, and only that. The man who is drawn away by the temptation does not suffer, so far. He *enjoys*. With the Lord, temptation was the cause of suffering simply; nor do we desire or need sympathy with us in being led away; but, on the other hand, in the suffering simply which sin occasions to every soul that is right with God. Thus, here is the true sympathy of the Priest that we need, One able to realize our weakness, and One who has Himself stood for our sins, under the whole burden of these before God; One who is able, therefore, to show us the most perfect grace in ministering to the need we have under the temptation.

Sec. 3.

The third section carries us from the scene of His humiliation to that of His glory. He is over the house of God as the Son of God; and as His being the Son of God is the foundation of His priesthood, and that is the direct connection here, we are still in the line of the Day of Atonement; although, as ever, the substance goes beyond the shadow. The high priest in Israel (though, of course, with well-known restrictions) was over the house of God; and in the tenth

* See Lev. xvi., notes.

> For he hath been counted worthy of greater glory than Moses, by as much as he who hath built it hath more honor than the house; for every house is built by some one, but he that hath built all things is God. And

chapter here we have, in confirmation of this, the very thing expressed: "Having a great High Priest over the house of God" (chap. x. 21). This makes it evident that the comparison with Moses, which exists no longer here, is not the sole one; and to take it as such is to hinder a clear conception of what is before us. Moses is the apostle, rather, as Aaron the high priest; and we are exhorted to consider *both* "the Apostle and High Priest of our confession." Moses and Aaron appear together thus, in the history, as the double type of the Lord; and as Moses was in a sense the builder of the tabernacle, receiving the pattern of it in the mount, so, having built it, he put it under the charge of Aaron. Moses and Aaron are thus together before us here.

The apostle addresses us here distinctly as "holy brethren, partakers of the *heavenly* calling." He thus, therefore, even while addressing Hebrews, does not fail to remember that these are *Christian* Hebrews, and what is implied in that. Israel when fully blessed will never have this character; and if they had received the Lord, as in fact they rejected Him, still would not have had it. Those who believe, in the midst of the sorrow of national rejection, have the joy of higher privileges which the perfect grace of God has brought in in the lapse of the old earthly ones. It is in this way, then, that we are to "consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Jesus," one Person now, who fills the double type of Moses and of Aaron, one "who is faithful (this is not past, but present) to Him that hath appointed Him, as Moses also was in all the house of God." This is, of course, the tabernacle. It is with reference to this, that the apostle is speaking; but he has before him One who is not a *servant* in the house as Moses was, but a Son over it. He does not belong properly, as the servant does, to the house Himself; His glory is above it all; even though the house represents, as doubtless the tabernacle represented as a whole, the universe of God.

The house itself included, in the general thought of it, the court around, as well as the actual building, and in that court stood the altar, the altar of burnt offering, as the cross of Christ and the offering upon it therefore were on earth. The house proper, the sanctuary, was typically heaven, as the apostle says that these things were the patterns of things in the heavens. By faith we enter into them here, but that does not, of course, alter their character; rather, their character as heavenly gives our entrance in its proper blessing. But thus the tabernacle, looked at as a whole, is the picture of the universe of God, which, in that sense, is the created house in which God dwells. The apostle refers to this here, where he says that while every house is established by some one, he that hath established *all* things is God. This establishment of all things he applies to Christ. And Christ, as we have seen, is the Creator and Upholder. "Without Him was not anything made that was made," and He "upholdeth all things by the word of His power." He is divine, therefore, in the fullest sense. But He is the Son of God, as we know. He is the One who has been pleased thus to come forward in representative character to make known the Father, and in all the work of His hands is doing this.

Thus the difference between Moses and the One whom he typically represented is vast indeed. Moses was faithful in all God's house as a ministering servant, for a testimony to the things to be spoken afterwards. He has had his place in an important dispensation which had its purpose in the mind of God, but which was to be done away. Christ, on the other hand, is a Son over, not "His own" house, (that is not the meaning here,) but the house of God. He is the One to whom all things belong, *for* whom they are, as *by* whom they are; and this connects His work from the beginning with His work now for fallen man, and in view of all that sin has wrought in the creation of God.

Moses, indeed, was faithful in all his house, as a ministering servant, for a [f]testimony of the things to be spoken afterwards; but Christ as a [g]Son over his house; whose [h]house are *we*, [i]if indeed we hold fast the boldness and the boast of our hope firm unto the end.

[f] ch. 8. 5. ch. 10. 1.
[g] ch. 5. 5.
[h] 1 Tim. 3. 15. 1 Pet. 2. 5. 1 Pet. 4. 17.
[i] *cf.* ver. 14.

Thus, then, although Aaron does not come into view in the chapter before us by any plain statement, yet in fact we find how we have to take him into account in order to reach the full truth of what is here. If the Son of God be in supreme charge over the universe of God, and now if sin come in as a breach upon its glorious order, then we can see that He is immediately concerned in this. He will not give up His place. Sin will not make Him renounce His office, but, on the contrary, only display the more His competence for it. In view of sin it is that *the Son becomes the Priest*, the Mediator and Reconciler; and the moment it is added, as in the passage before us, "whose house are we," all becomes clear. Aaron *is* now before us. It is now the Priest in charge, assuredly, if we are His house.

It is simple to refer to the board structure of the tabernacle in typical explanation of how, in fact, the redeemed come in here, and a wonderful thing it is to realize the connection of this with that larger aspect of the tabernacle which we have been called to remember as the pattern of the universe at large. Here, at the heart of it, in the boards set up on the silver sockets made from the atonement-money (see Ex. xxvi., notes), we find a "spiritual house," of sinners redeemed and standing upon the basis of the work accomplished for them; and being the fruit of a mightier work than creation itself, we can understand, also, how this should be in fact the very sanctuary of God. Here is the display of His holiness, His grace, His manifold wisdom, as nowhere else. Here the very principalities and powers of heaven find their sweetest theme of praise.

But it does not seem as if the board structure is sufficient by itself to give us the thought of this house of God which we are. Here, as in so many other places, different types are needed, in order to give us the full thought of God. The house is a *living* house, nay, *human;* and thus not display alone, but living activities abide in it. That the Holy One would inhabit the praises of Israel is the Lord's own answer, in the twenty-second psalm, to the question of the cross; and the connection with the Day of Atonement is obvious: for the main purpose of it is that the dwelling of the Lord in the midst may be continued among them. Here we are in direct connection with all this, though beyond it, as the substance is beyond the shadow. The house is a spiritual house, and the praises are those of a people brought near to Him, a priestly house, therefore. For these the largest offering of the Day of Atonement, the bullock, is offered; and for us the High Priest is One who could not offer for Himself; so that it is the priestly house alone for which, in fact, the bullock is offered. It is not strange, then, that they should appear here. It would be strange, rather, if they did not appear; and Peter joins thus together, also, what might seem at first too diverse to be identified in such a manner, the "living stones" built on the "Living Stone" with "a spiritual *house*, a holy *priesthood*, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." "Whose house are we," as it certainly shows the Son over the house to be now the "Great Priest over the house of God," so does it identify, also, the tabernacle with the priestly worshipers. But we are the house of God, the apostle reminds us, if indeed we "hold fast the boldness and the boast of our hope firm unto the end."

Sec. 4.

The fourth section is of a very different character. It is the shadow following the light, and in Hebrews we find how the brightest lights can cast the deepest shadows. As a fourth section it reminds us of that wilderness through which the Lord led Israel of old into their rest, and that for us too there is a wilder-

SECTION 4. (Chaps. iii. 7–iv. 13.)
And leading on through the wilderness to final rest.

1 (iii. 7–13): Obedience as a condition of blessing.

1. WHEREFORE, even as saith the Holy Spirit, [f]To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness; where your fathers tempted [me]* by proving [me], and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was wroth with this generation, and said, They always err in heart, and they have not known my ways; so I sware in my wrath, They shall not† enter into my rest. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in [k]falling away from the living God; but [l]exhort one another daily, as long as it is called to-day, that none of you be hardened through the [m]deceitfulness of sin.

2 (iii. 14–iv. 2): The word, therefore, needing to be mixed with faith.

2. For we are become [n]fellows‡ of Christ, if indeed we hold the beginning of our assurance steadfast to the

[f] Ps. 95. 7–11.
[k] ch. 6. 6. ch. 10. 29.
[l] ch. 10. 25.
[m] Isa. 44. 20.
[n] Ps. 45. 6, 7.

* Some omit. † Gk., "if they shall."
‡ *μέτοχοι*, as chap. i. 9, quoting from Ps. 45.

ness, a scene of trial through which we are called to pass on to the rest which for us also still and ever lies beyond us. We are called, therefore, to persevere, to hold on our way, to "hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm to the end." This, in fact, is the test of the reality of things with us. Continuance is the proof of divine work.

1. The first subsection insists upon the spirit of obedience as always the condition of blessing. Grace does not alter this for a moment. It produces in us such a spirit. It meets the conditions; and faith is the very principle of fruitfulness, working, as it does, by love. The exhortation to God's people of old abides, then, for us, as much as it did for them: "To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." The truth speaks with authority, which those who are true will recognize; and the more precious the truth is, the sadder the consequences of practical refusal. To trifle with any truth is perilous, and hardening of heart is the necessary result. How many will one find with consciences, if one may so say, locally paralyzed through refusal of that in which the voice of God was once recognized by them? or, perhaps, the refusal to listen to that in which it was feared God *might* be speaking; for it is a wrong thought that responsibility only comes with the *conviction of God having* spoken. There is accountability easily to be detected by the question, Were you *willing to have Him speak?* What hearts we have, to which such a question could ever need to be put! How sad, above all, that unbelief should in believers produce a disregard, like this, of the one supreme Voice, like which there is no other! Thus the "ifs" come in here. All these are the tests of profession, under which the true and the false alike come necessarily, just because they are needed to distinguish *between* the false and the true; and also because God uses them to exercise those that are really His people; for we have in us the flesh still, and therefore those tendencies to departure from God which make His constant grace so needful.

But then they are not warnings to the believer against having *too much* faith, or too simple faith, but they are the very reverse. They are warnings to persevere in joyful confidence to the end. All through this epistle, where the substance which is replacing the shadows is yet invisible, it is faith that is, as it were, the one necessity, and which is as much emphasized, though from another side, as it is in the epistles to the Romans and Galatians.

2. And this is what is dwelt upon in the second subsection, in which the word

end; in that it is said, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. For who was it who, when they heard, provoked? Nay, [o]did not they all that came out of Egypt by Moses? And with whom was he wroth forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to those who were disobedient? And we see that [p]they could not enter in because of unbelief. Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left of entering into his rest, any one of you might seem to have come short [of it]. For indeed we have had the good news presented to us, even as they also; but the word of the report did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.

o Num. 14. 2–4.

p Ps. 78. 22.

3 (iv. 3-10): What the actual rest is.

3. For we enter into the rest, [we] who have believed; as he hath said, [q]As I sware in my wrath, they shall not* enter into my rest; although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he hath spoken in a certain place of the seventh day thus, [r]And God rested on the seventh day from all his works; and here again, They shall not* enter into my rest.

q Ps. 95. 11.

r Gen. 2. 2.

* Gk., "if they shall."

is seen as needing to be mixed with faith, unbelief being the very root and principle of disobedience; and if we are become the "companions" of Christ, (better not "partakers" here, which would give another thought from what is intended, but what is in the first chapter translated "fellows,") Christ is the complete Example of faith from first to last. We, therefore, must hold "the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end."

Difficulties are supposed, for how could faith show itself if there were no difficulties? Difficulties are, therefore, not strictly a hindrance *to faith*, but even the reverse. They are the conditions of its manifestation; they are a means of its exercise, and so actually of its growth. Those whose "carcases fell in the wilderness" are not types of believers in any sense, but of those who fail of final entrance into the rest of God; for that is what Canaan here typifies, as is obvious. It is important to distinguish between this final entrance and that under Joshua, which, as we know, was not final, and is for us the type of *present* entrance into our heavenly portion by faith. In this way we must remember that Joshua is not typically a continuation of Numbers or Deuteronomy, but a new beginning, parallel with these. It is while we are in the wilderness that, in fact, we enter also by faith into our heavenly inheritance. The experience of the wilderness and the laying hold of the inheritance, in this way, go together. The searching of the land by the spies (Num. xiii.) answers, however, but partially to this, while Deuteronomy ends typically our whole earthly history with that review of the wilderness-course throughout, which is only fulfilled for us at the judgment-seat of Christ. Joshua added to the books of Moses would make them a hexateuch, which the higher critics would have them to be, but which they are not; Joshua being, in fact, a new beginning, the Genesis of a new pentateuch, the historical books. We must have God's truth in God's order, or we shall not find it even God's truth.

3. The third subsection shows us what the actual rest is. *We* are entering into rest, we who have believed; but we have not entered. From the nature of it, as described presently, no one could enter into it in this life. We are going

Seeing, therefore, it remaineth that some enter into it, and those who first received the good news did not enter in on account of disobedience, again he determineth a certain day, saying in David, To-day, after so long a time, (according as it was said before) To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. For if Joshua had brought them into rest, he would not afterwards have spoken of another day. There remaineth, therefore, a sabbath-rest for the people of God. For he that hath entered into his rest, hath also himself rested from his works, as God did from his own.

4 (Iv.11-13): The testing power of the word.

4. Let us, therefore, be diligent to enter into that rest, lest any one fall after the same example of disobedience. For the word of God is [a]living and [b]effective,

[a] 1 Pet. 1.23. [b] Jer. 23. 29.

on to it, and God has been always speaking of it, as in the Sabbath type, keeping it before men from the beginning. God rested on the seventh day from all His works. That was at the beginning; but man violated that rest, and it remains for us only a shadow of what is yet to come. The apostle quotes, also, David's words, long after Joshua's day, as showing that Israel's coming into the land was still not rest. After they had come in, it was still said: "To-day, if ye will hear His voice." The rest remains, then, a true "keeping of Sabbath" for the people of God,—a rest which will be God's rest also, or what good could be in it? A rest, too, in which he who rests ceases from all the labor which sin has imposed. Such a rest has not come for us. This carries us, in fact, on to eternity, the eternal rest, of which we have seen long since that the Sabbath is the type, and not of any millennial anticipation of it. The thousand years are a time in which the earth has indeed come to its regeneration. Sin does not *reign* any more. Righteousness reigns, but still sin exists; and it is after the thousand years that death, "the last enemy," is put under Christ's feet, and the judgment of the dead comes with that. As a consequence, what we speak of sometimes as millennial *rest*, is not strictly correct. God cannot rest except with the perfect accomplishment of perfect blessing. He cannot rest while there are enemies yet to be put under the feet,—before sin and death are cast alike into the lake of fire.

4. In the fourth subsection the apostle exhorts all, therefore, to use diligence to enter into the rest before us, and again brings forward, as a warning, Israel's unbelief in the wilderness. Good tidings had come to them of the land to which God was bringing them, but they had not faith to receive them. The word, full of promise and blessing as it was, yet only exposed the unbelief which goes too surely in company with a rebellious spirit. Though good, it brought out but evil, and thus it is characteristic of the word of God to search us out and make manifest to us what we are. If we submit ourselves to this searching, how great will be the blessing in it! It will bathe us in the very light of God, and thus purge from our eyes the film that hinders the perception of other things.

"For the word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword; piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, both of joints and marrow, and a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there a creature that is not manifest in His sight, but all things are naked and laid bare unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Thus the word of God acts in the power of Him whose word it is. It brings the soul into His presence. The aroused conscience brings everything before God for judgment. Mists roll off as before the sun; and if the light shine as when at first, at God's bidding, it broke out upon the darkness and the yeasty waves of the shoreless and barren sea, still we have the word which says: "God saw the light, that it was good." The beginning of communion with God, whatever may be the matter of it, is the

and [u]sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of [v]soul and spirit, both of joints and marrow, and a [w]discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is not a [x]creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are [y]naked and laid bare unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

u Eph. 6.17. *cf.* Rev. 1. 16. Rev. 19.15.
v *cf.* Jas. 3. 15. Jude 19.
w 1 Cor. 14. 24, 25.
x Job. 34.21.
y Job 26. 6.

reception of the truth. "Soul and spirit" as thus named together can only be the two parts of the immaterial nature of man; which Scripture, spite of what many think, everywhere clearly distinguishes from one another. The soul is the lower, sensitive, instinctive, emotional part, which, where not, as in man, penetrated with the light of the spirit, is simply animal; and which also, where man is not in the power of the Spirit of God, will still gravitate towards this. The spirit is intelligent and moral, that which knows human things (1 Cor. ii. 11). In the "natural man," which is really the *psychic* man, the man soul-led (1 Cor. ii. 14), conscience, with its recognition of God, is in abeyance, and the mind itself becomes earthly. Important enough it is, therefore, to divide between "soul and spirit." "Joints and marrow" convey to us the difference between the external and the internal, the outward form and the essence hidden in it. Not at all that even the form is unimportant. Everything in nature forbids such a thought. But its beauty and effectiveness depend upon its appropriateness to the idea which rules in it. The word of God must thus be in the highest sense the book of science. All the highest and deepest knowledge is in it, and that of things naturally inaccessible to man; while everything, also, is in right relation and proportion, nothing overbalanced. It has, indeed, none of the pedantry or technical knowledge in which science is apt to shroud its wisdom, but a sweet, homely simplicity and familiarity of greeting, welcoming all comers to it, which deceives the would-be wise, who cannot understand how God's light should shine for babe and for philosopher, and how God's learning can have so little savor of the schools. Yet, is it true wisdom to make nought of it for this? Rather, does it not show us God's real desire for the education of the masses, about which men are beginning to show such very tardy earnestness? All the highest, deepest, and most practical knowledge made the possession of all that will; with a Divine Teacher also for the lowly but inquiring soul!

Div. 3.

The third division of the book is at once the largest and most characteristic of it. In it we have Christ in the heavens, and the sanctuary open for us there by His priestly work. This, however, is really reached only in the third subdivision; and we have as introduction to it, first, the Priest Himself, as called, qualified, and perfected by sufferings; and then, in His resurrection-place, Priest after the order of Melchisedec, and so upon the throne. The second more briefly speaks of the better covenant and more excellent ministry that this implies. The third, and last, occupies the two chapters following.

Subd. 1.

We have first, then, the Priest Himself, in three chapters, of which more than one, however, is an interruption to the argument, made necessary by the slowness of heart to accept the setting aside of the Levitical priesthood, and all that is involved in this. No doubt the apostle uses this parenthesis, (which is quite after the Pauline manner,) to speak of other things very necessary to his theme; but we are made to feel the intensity of Jewish opposition, and the difficulty which the legal spirit opposes to the truth, even in the believer, by the difficulty of speaking out here what is in his mind, vital as it is to Christianity itself. It would seem probable that Peter speaks of this (at least, especially) when, praising the wisdom of the epistle to the Hebrews, as what "our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you," he yet says that

DIVISION 3. (Chaps. iv. 14–x.)

Christ as Priest in the heavenly sanctuary, the way into which He has opened by His accomplished work, in contrast with both the priests and sacrifices of the law.

SUBDIVISION 1 (Chaps. iv. 14–vii.)

The Priest upon the Throne.

SECTION 1. (Chaps. iv. 14–v. 10.)

The Priest called of God.

I (iv.14-16): A Throne of Grace.

1. HAVING therefore a [a]great high priest [c]who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, [b]let us hold fast [our] confession. For we have

[a] ch. 2.17,18. cf. ch.10.21. [c] ch. 7. 26. ch. 9. 24. Eph. 4. 10. [b] ch. 10. 23.

in it are "some things hard to be understood." Paul, as we see here, fully agrees with him; and therefore the earnestness and energy of his language.

Sec. 1.

The first section then identifies for us the true Priest before God; and there are again three subsections here, the first of which introduces us to two fundamental conceptions in that which follows: a "Great High Priest who has passed through the heavens," and the "throne of grace." We may take the latter as characterizing the first subsection.

A "throne of grace" is now to Christians, happily, a very familiar thought. It is only here, however, that we have precisely this expression, although we have the thought in Romans; "Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life." The blood upon the mercy-seat before God, to which the apostle also refers in the third chapter of Romans,—"A propitiation through faith by His blood,"—put there by the high priest once a year, when, on the Day of Atonement, he entered the holiest,—was the typical rendering of such a thought so far as in the old dispensation it could be rendered. The mercy-seat was the throne of Jehovah in Israel, where He dwelt between the cherubim. Literally, it was the "*kapporeth*," or "propitiatory," the blood being that which made propitiation for the soul,—the witness of divine righteousness, which, now being met by the blood of atonement, vindicated God's grace in abiding among the people in spite of their sins.

All this was typical merely, a shadow, and nothing more. Israel could not really approach, as we know, to this throne of God, and the high priest only once a year, covered with a cloud of incense, and with the blood of atonement. For us the true sacrifice has been effected. The High Priest has passed through the heavens, the antitype to those holy places, and the throne of God is abidingly a throne of grace, to which, therefore, we are but giving honor when we come *boldly* to it for our need. This really implies for us the veil rent: for the throne of grace is in the holiest of all, and the rending of the veil is what has made for us a "new and living way" of approach there. The verses before us are, therefore, a real introduction to that which follows. It is the sympathy of the High Priest which we are here encouraged to reckon upon, and this is in connection with His being over the house of God. Thus we see how we are following on in one line of truth all through here. It reminds us of the words of the Lord in teaching us the consequences of His departure out of the world unto the Father: "If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it" (John xiv. 14).

How great an encouragement to know that upon the throne of God there is One who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and was "in all things tempted like as we are, sin apart"! Sin was to Him no temptation. There was nothing within that answered to it, except in suffering. There was

not a high priest who cannot [c]sympathize with our infirmities, but one in all points [d]tempted like as we are, [e]apart from sin. Let us [f]approach, therefore, with boldness, to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace for seasonable help.

2 (v. 1-4): The merely human type in necessary contrast.

2. For every high priest taken from among men is [g]appointed for men in [h]things relating to God, [i]that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; being [j]able

c ch. 5. 2.
d ch. 2. 17, 18. Isa. 53. 3.
e *cf.* Jas. 1. 13, 14. *cf.* Jno. 14. 30.
f ch. 10. 19. Eph. 3. 12. *cf.* ch. 7. 19.
g ch. 8. 3.
h ch. 2. 17.
i *cf.* ch. 8. 4.
j ch. 2. 18; ch. 4. 15.

and could be with Him no sinful infirmity; but He was true man, His divine nature taking nothing from the truth of His manhood, living a dependent life as we do, but with no callousness such as the flesh in us produces in a world everywhere racked with suffering from sin and out of joint, the trial of which He knew as no other could. In the garden He faced the awful cup with an agony that required angelic ministry to strengthen Him physically (in no other way) to sustain it. What a world it was for the Son of God to pass through! Has He forgotten it, or is He altered by being now out of it, and on the throne? No, but the very throne is characterized now as the "throne of the Lamb;" and for eternity will be the "throne of God and of the Lamb."

How well furnished for us, then, is the throne of grace! But we may notice that the apostle here speaks of nothing but "mercy and grace to help in time of need." Direct reference to any positive failure on our part is here omitted; and this is in the style of Hebrews, in which we find the believer, spite of all his weakness, as "perfected in perpetuity" by the precious blood which has been shed for him. This blood is here upon the mercy-seat, but the thought is therefore of nothing but the weakness which needs help. All sin has been already met.

This is only one side, it is true, of a subject such as this; and we shall find another when we turn to the first epistle of John. John gives us the subject of communion, and speaks of our relation to the *Father*. Paul here speaks of our relation to God as *God*. The mention of the Father at once assures us of a nearer relationship in which we stand to Him, and which cannot be broken. Sin, indeed, is only aggravated in its character by this very relationship, and communion is necessarily affected by the believer's sin. Here, therefore, we have Christ in another character, as "an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous," while, indeed, we are still reminded that He is the propitiation for our sins. But in Hebrews, as already said, we are seen as creatures before God, and here sin is not contemplated, just because it has been fully provided for. We come to "obtain mercy and find grace for seasonable help." It is weakness that needs the Priest now. With regard to sin, the precious blood already shed has done all that can be done. The blood is upon the throne; and to that throne, whenever we turn to God, (if indeed, of course, there is true turning to Him,) we shall find an open door and a ready access.

2. The second subsection is a statement simply as to the high priest in Israel. It is important to keep it distinct as that. How far it applies to Christ we find as we go on, but in every type there is an element of *dis*similarity, as there is of resemblance; and that because it *is* a type. How could there have been in Israel a high priest who never offered for himself? It would have falsified everything. And so with the veil; how could it have been rent under the legal system? But these exceptional contrasts have a purpose, therefore, and do not in the least hinder a careful, spiritual mind from finding Christianity in Leviticus. Of course it needs that we should have learned Christianity first from the New Testament. We should not go to Leviticus as a Jew would, and expect to find the unveiling of the truth of Christ. Moses has always a veil over the glory in his face; but it is there, we have not to put it there, and the veil for us is done away in Christ.

to exercise forbearance toward the ignorant and erring, since he himself also is [k]clothed with infirmity; and on account of this, he is obliged, [l]as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. And [m]no one taketh this honor to himself but [as] called of God, [n]even as Aaron.

3 (5–10): The fulfilment in Christ.
1 (5, 6): The Call.

3. [1] So also Christ hath not glorified himself to be made high priest, but he that said unto him, [o]Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, [p]Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

k ch. 7. 28.
l ch. 7. 27. ch. 9. 7. Lev. 4. 3. Lev. 9. 7. Lev. 16. 6.
m Num. 16. 5, 40. Num. 18. 7. 2 Chron. 26. 18.
n Ex. 28. 1.
o Ps. 2. 7.
p Ps. 110. 4. ch. 7. 21.

The high priest spoken of here is one taken from among men simply, from the common class of men. Such an expression could not be used of Christ, as ought to be clear. What follows makes it abundantly so. He is "appointed for men in things relating to God, that he might offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins." The sacrifices are thus his ordinary and necessary work, as we see; but we have not come to the application yet; and he is "able to exercise forbearance towards the ignorant and erring, since he himself also is clothed with infirmity." Here is an infirmity which is not sinless, (as any infirmity that Christ knew necessarily was,) and this is definitely seen in what follows. He is obliged, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins (which Christ never did). "And no one taketh this honor to himself but as called of God, even as Aaron was."

3. The third subsection gives us the fulfilment of the type in Christ, and here we have three parts: first, His calling, in which we find, also, the foundation of His priesthood; then His sufferings, even to death, and His deliverance out of it; and lastly, having been perfected, His greeting by God in resurrection as the royal Priest, Melchisedec.

[1] First, we have the call. The priest must be called of God; as was Aaron, so Christ. As moving only in obedience, He who had come simply to do the will of God in an already marked-out way, glorified not Himself to be made a High Priest, but received His call distinctly to that office. God's recognition of the Son in manhood is quoted as that which was really this. *He* glorified Him as such who said to Him: "Thou art My Son; to-day have I begotten Thee." The same form of citation is used in the seventh chapter, verse twenty-one: "He with an oath, by Him that said unto Him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a Priest forever." The quotation, in the first place, is from the second psalm, which puts it in connection with His claim as Heir to the sovereignty of the nations. God's Priest and King are one, and the two offices are founded upon the same personal qualification. Godhead and manhood united in Him constituted Him the true Mediator between God and men. We have seen Him taking flesh and blood for this purpose, "that He might be the First-born among many brethren;" and as the First-born is the Heir, so also has He the right of redemption. Thus He is Priest and King by the same title.

Now, if we look at the Gospels to find the open call for the priesthood, there ought to be really no doubt where it occurs. It is after His baptism by John that the Lord is first openly recognized as the Son of God by the Father's voice from heaven; and the Spirit of God coming upon Him makes Him to be now in full reality the Christ, that is, the Anointed. It answers to the first anointing of Aaron alone, without blood (Lev. viii. 12). John then recognizes Him as the Son of God, as the sacrificial Lamb (John i. 29–34); for this blessed Priest is one with His offering: "He offered up *Himself*." This, then, is our Lord's call to the priesthood. The apostle confirms the fact by a more direct quotation, the force of which he takes up later: "Thou art a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec."

[2] Immediately now we are called to see Him in the white linen robe of the Day of Atonement. He is in that suffering in which, though Son of God, He

[2] (7, 8): His suffering to death, and deliverance.

[2] Who in the days of his flesh, having offered up [q]both supplications and entreaties to him who was able to save him out of death, with strong crying and tears (and being [r]heard because of his piety), though he were a Son, yet [s]learned he obedience from the things which he suffered.

[q] Matt. 26. 39, 42, 44. Lk. 22. 44.

[r] Ps. 22. 24. *cf.* Ps. 17. 3.

[s] Phil. 2. 8.

[3] (9, 10): In resurrection saluted as perfected.

[3] And having been made perfect, he became, to all them that obey him, [t]author of eternal salvation; being saluted of God as high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

[t] ch. 2. 10.

had to learn the reality of the obedience which He had voluntarily undertaken. So intense is it that even He makes "supplication with strong crying and tears to Him that was able to save Him (not *from* death, which was impossible, but) *out of* death." That prayer was heard in resurrection. But notice especially what the answer was based upon. "He was heard for His piety, as in the margin of the common version; or, "for His godly fear," as in the revised. There is the white linen garment with which alone the sanctuary could be entered.

The priest is characterized, first of all, as the one able to draw near to God; and the first question involved, therefore, is, Is he such as can really draw near? Is he personally and entirely fitted to draw near to God? That is the question as to the offering; is it a perfect, unblemished one? That is the question as to the priest. Nothing but the white linen will do here. This is what the burnt-offering most strongly enforces. The offering is flayed and rigidly inspected; then the offerer brings it to God, nothing but sweet savor. It is what Christ is as no other offering (certainly not the sin-offering) develops it. Thus day and night the sweet savor of this must come up to God.

Here it is the priest who is spoken of, and it shows us why the garments of glory and beauty are not yet upon him: not because he is not yet the High Priest, but because atonement is in question, while the garments of glory and beauty show the *acceptance* of the work. Here he is being perfected, and, while personally nothing could perfect Christ, we have already seen that as Originator of salvation there *must* be perfecting. Thus, then, we see Him here. He is in the awful depths from which no other could have emerged,—where His feet alone could have found standing. There, being perfected by bearing the load that was upon Him, He becomes to those that obey Him the Author of eternal salvation.

[3] The being perfected is sometimes spoken of as if it were the same as being consecrated, but it should be plain that here there is a deeper meaning. We have already seen that the Originator of salvation was to be made perfect by sufferings; and we have had plainly the sufferings by which He is so. Then He is saluted of God, not merely a High Priest, but a High Priest *after the order of Melchisedec*. Ordinarily the distinction is not realized between the simple High Priest and the High Priest after this order. It is the same Person all through, and therefore it seems to be thought that this must necessarily follow; but His glories are displayed in due order, one following the other, and it is only in resurrection that He is saluted by God in this character. Notice that it is not exactly "called," as before. He is "saluted." The Priest has accomplished the fundamental work of His priesthood, and is held and acknowledged as having done so. The linen garments are now exchanged for the garments of glory and beauty. His priesthood now assumes manifestly the Melchisedec character; but we shall have, with the apostle, to break off here and take this up more fully in the seventh chapter.

Sec. 2.

The second section is, as has been already said, a parenthesis to meet the unbelief of the Jews upon a matter so vital to Christianity and so affecting the

SECTION 2. (Chaps. v. 11-vi.)

The rejection of rejectors, and the confirmation of faith.

1 (v.11-vi. 8): Judaism but the word of the beginning of Christ.

1 (v. 11-14): The Hebrew Christians still babes.

1. [1] CONCERNING whom we have much to say, and [u] hard to be interpreted in speaking, since ye are become dull in hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have again need that one should teach you what are the elements of the beginning of the oracles of God; and are become such as have [v] need of milk, and not of solid food. For every one that partaketh of

[u] 2 Pet. 3. 16.

[v] 1 Cor. 3. 2. *ctr.* 1 Pet. 2. 2.

whole system of Judaism as the replacing of the Levitical by the Melchisedec priesthood. Even to the Jewish Christians, these things were hard sayings; and it may be they had caused, in measure at least, the defection from the faith to which the apostle presently refers. The two parts of his address to them here, however, are very different, and the first part only is warning; the second is pure encouragement—two things that are never far separated in the gracious ways of God. He is the God of all encouragement; and all warnings are but, in effect, to draw us from every false ground of hope, that we may find in Him the fulness of unfailing blessing.

1. The first subsection characterizes Judaism from its divine side, only to insist the more on its essentially introductory nature. It was "the word of the beginning of Christ," very wrongly rendered in the text of both the common and the revised versions as "first principles of the doctrine of Christ." "The first principles of Christ" assuredly we are never called to leave. It is Judaism, which was thus only suited to the state of nonage now passed, and which they must leave to go on to the perfection, or "maturity," of Christianity.

[1] The Hebrew Christians were, in fact, not going on; at least, many were not. For the time they had been learning, they ought to have been able to teach others; but instead of that, they still needed themselves to be taught, and taught the very elements. They still needed milk, and could not digest "solid food." It is not "strong meat," an expression which has been very much abused, as if it were something requiring extra spiritual power to digest it. It is simply that which is suited for people accustomed to be exercised indeed in spiritual things, and thus educated so as to discern between good and evil. How much of right knowledge lies for us in this kind of discernment! "The man has become as one of us, to discern good and evil." To innocence we cannot go back; and though we have got into our present condition by a fall from God, He, in grace, would turn even this into blessing. The world, such as it is, is a place well fitted to produce and to cultivate such moral discernment. If it does not do this, however, it dulls and hardens the soul; and as the Word is that which God would use to form us after His mind, the not going on with it at once tends to increase in us this dullness of soul.

Judaism in some form has been that by which the enemy has sought to corrupt and oppose Christianity from the beginning; and it has, in fact, largely done so. It was a religion given of God, and owned, therefore, by Him at one time; and this can always be pleaded in its behalf by those who have never understood, or cared to understand, its true nature. The law, which God took up because it was already in man's heart, and to work out his thought to its proper end, to show him the evil and impracticability of it,—this man pleads as God's revelation! Did not even Christ say: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments"? He did, as He permits souls even now thus to put themselves under the law, in order that they may find by practical experience what they would not learn with God simply by His teaching. We only need to be true ourselves to realize the truth here, and that we are only bidden to put up our ladder to reach heaven with, that we may realize how far above us the stars shine down.

So when He gave "carnal ordinances," with plenty of signs to show their in-

milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe; but solid food belongeth to [w]full-grown men, who, on account of habit, have their senses exercised to distinguish both good and evil.

2 (vi. 1-8). The return to the Jewish foundations, the crucifixion of the Son of God afresh.

[w] *cf.* Phil. 3. 15.

[1] Therefore, leaving the [z]word of the beginning of Christ, let us go on to full growth; not laying again a foundation of repentance from [y]dead works and faith in God, of a [z]teaching of baptisms, and of [a]laying on of

[x] *cf.* Gal. 4. 2, 3.
[y] ch. 9. 14.
[z] ch. 9.10,13.
[a] Lev. 4. 4. Lev. 16. 21.

capacity (for He never left Himself without witness in this way), and that they were only fingers pointing on to that which was to come, there was always opportunity for men to say, "These are the very things themselves." And this is the enormous evil of ritualism in all its forms to-day,—that it takes these Jewish forms to clothe them in the dress of Christian realities, to which they only pointed, and make that which only sanctified to the purifying of the flesh (as in the case of baptismal water) to cleanse the soul, as water never did, against the standing ordinance of God the Creator. Thus the word of God itself may be abused to seal up men in delusion, and people say, See how Scripture may mislead! But Scripture is given "that the *man of God* may be perfect, thoroughly furnished," and it gives no security to any other than the man of God.

[1] "The word of the beginning of Christ" is now given us in brief in the six doctrines stated, which, if they were the *Christian* "foundation," would be a Christianity without Christ. The apostle says: "Not laying *again* a foundation," because he has in view Jews who had accepted the Christian one, and who, if they went back to Judaism, would be laying again what they had given up. But nothing here is distinctly Christian. It is not a question as to the *truth* or necessity of what is spoken of, but of its being the *Christian foundation*. Two things come first, which are in fact fundamental: "repentance from dead works and faith in God," but note that it does not say here, in *the Lord Jesus*. Two doctrines come last, which concern the future: "resurrection of the dead,"—not "resurrection *from* the dead," which is the Christian truth, but simply resurrection *of* the dead, "and eternal judgment." Between these two pairs we have what may be more questioned, but what goes to the heart of the matter as characterizing Judaism,—"a teaching of baptisms and of laying on of hands." These have been claimed as Christian baptism and *confirmation*, (something of which Scripture knows nothing whatever) or else baptism and ordination,—almost equally strange associates as a foundation. The truth is of nearer connection with the subject before us than such things would imply. In the first place, it is not baptism, but "baptisms;" and the baptism of the Spirit would surely never be associated with the baptism of water in such a manner. Moreover, Christian baptism is always *baptisma*, while this is *baptismos*,—a difference of form which is no doubt connected with the application in each case. *Baptismos* is the word used for the Jewish purifications, as, plainly, in the case of "divers baptisms" (not "washings") in the ninth chapter of this epistle, verse ten. Moreover, these are really what is referred to, or mainly referred to, here, though we must anticipate somewhat the doctrine of that chapter to make this plain.

The great failure in Judaism, as the apostle shows us there, was its failure really to purify the *conscience*, so as to set the soul at rest in the presence of God. In the tabernacle of old he says were offered "both gifts and sacrifices, which could not make him that did the service perfect as pertaining to the *conscience*." Why? Because they consisted only in "meats and drinks and divers baptisms," or purifications, "carnal ordinances," that is, ordinances which could not in their very nature affect the condition of the soul, but the flesh only. He contrasts them then with that which does purify. "For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer, purifying the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh" (here are the divers baptisms, namely of blood and of ashes,

hands, and of [b]resurrection of the dead, and of [c]eternal judgment; and this will we do, if God permit. For it is [d]impossible to renew again to repentance those once [e]enlightened, and who have [f]tasted of the [g]heavenly gift, and have been made companions* of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the [h]age to come, and have fallen away, crucifying afresh [i]for themselves the Son of God, and putting him to open shame. For the ground which drinketh in the rain which cometh oft upon it, and bringeth

b Dan. 12. 2. Acts 23. 6. Acts 24.15.
c Dan. 12. 2. *cf.* Ps.49.19. *cf.* Isa. 33. 14.
d *cf.* Mk. 3. 29, *R. V.*
e ch. 10. 32. 2 Pet. 2. 20.
f *cf.* Matt.27. 34.
g Jno. 4. 10.
h ch. 2. 4, 5.
i ch. 10. 29.

* μέτοχοι, as in chaps. i. 9; iii. 1, 14.

ordinances of flesh, purifying only the flesh), "how much rather shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

Thus the sacrificial baptisms were evidently an important part of the Jewish service; while, in connection with these, the laying on of hands would be naturally that which in Israel identified the offerer with the victim, his sacrifice. The two things would thus go together as teaching a most fundamental point for every conscience wounded with the sharp edge of the law, and which would yet convict any earnest soul of the folly of turning back to it as a foundation. In this way, a teaching (not "doctrine") of baptisms is significant. "Doctrine" will not do here, for that would speak rather of what the baptisms themselves would teach; while the point in this case is that what was taught was rather a *ritual* than a doctrine, (the blood of bulls and goats was sprinkled, the truth as to that in which the real efficacy was unpreached,) and the conscience was not purged.

And yet striking it is to see that just here, for faith indeed, under what was ceremonial, God did hide that which He would fain have the soul discover,—the true way by which the conscience could be purged. But as a ritual, on that very account, it failed altogether, because He would not have any one rest in a ritual; and indeed rest would be impossible in this way before God. Thus we can see clearly where "the word of the beginning of Christ" failed, and that it is of Judaism the apostle is speaking. In it, while sin and judgment were plain things, the remedy for sin was hid under a veil, with all the glory in Moses' face. Faith might gather comfort, so far as it could penetrate the veil, but could not yet stand in the power of the unveiled truth itself.

The apostle goes on now to show the terrible condition of those who went back to this Jewish system out of the light and blessing of Christianity. It was vain for them to think that they could replace themselves where the saints of old had been. Judaism had passed away for God, and those who went back there would find that they had left the only ground of peace and salvation. It would be even "impossible to renew again to repentance those who, having been once enlightened, and having tasted of the heavenly gift, and been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and having tasted the good word of God and the powers [or miracles] of the world to come, had fallen away." In the Israelitish cities of refuge those who had slain another without intending murder might take refuge from the avenger of blood, and Christ Himself was the true City of Refuge for those who had been partakers in the common guilt of the nation in His death. For such He Himself had pleaded at the cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;" and Peter, by the Holy Spirit, had, in view of that ignorance, preached repentance to them; but those who now went back open-eyed among His rejecters could no longer plead this. They were crucifying for *themselves* the Son of God afresh, and there was no city of refuge to open its doors to such. Christ could not be a refuge, as is plain, for those who rejected Him.

The warning here has been a sore perplexity to many who are as far as possi-

forth useful herbs for those for the sake of whom it is cultivated, partaketh of blessing from God; but when it bringeth forth thorns and briers it is found worthless and nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned.

2 (vr. 9-20): Things that accompany salvation. 1 (9-12): God not unrighteous to forget.

2. [1] But we are persuaded better things concerning you, beloved, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For [j] God is not unrighteous to forget your work, and the [k] love which ye have shown to his name, having ministered to the saints, and [still] ministering. But we desire earnestly that each one of you show the same diligence, to the [l] full assurance of hope to the end; that ye be not slothful, but [m] imitators of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

[j] Matt. 10. 42. Matt. 25. 40.
[k] cf. 1 Jno. 4. 20.
[l] cf. ch. 10. 22. cf. Col. 2. 2.
[m] cf. ch. 13. 7. Jas. 5. 10.

ble from the condition which is here contemplated. The description of these apostates, solemn as it is, does not speak of them as children of God, as justified by faith, or in any way which would imply such things as these; and the apostle, after describing them, immediately adds, as to those whom he is addressing: "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, even things that accompany *salvation*, though we thus speak." This is the most distinct assurance that he had no thought of one who had known salvation incurring the doom of an apostate.

What he says of them is, first of all, that they had been enlightened: they could plead ignorance, therefore, no longer. Secondly, they had "tasted"; but one may taste and, after all, refuse. Thirdly, they had been "partakers." The word does not mean, necessarily, more than external participation. It is the same word as "companions" or "fellows," which we have had before,—"partakers," or "companions," of the Holy Ghost. That is, they had been brought into that in which the Spirit of God bore witness to Christ and the fruit of His work, and thus had been associated with Him in this witness. "The powers of the age to come" are miracles, the mighty works by which the consequences of sin and the destructive power of Satan will be banished from the earth in the millennial reign. Such power was already being manifested in connection with the testimony of Christ in Israel; but all this goodness of God had been, to those of whom he is speaking, like rain which brought from the ground of their hearts only thorns and briars, thus manifesting it to be worthless and nigh to cursing. Christ having been rejected, God's last, best gift had only been found in vain.

2. The apostle goes on, however, now, as we have seen, to comfort and encourage those he is addressing. Notice, he is assured of "better things" as to them,—love to Christ's name proved practically and continuously in ministrations to His saints. God would not be unrighteous, so as to forget these fruits of His grace. Instead of discouraging them, He would have them give diligence so that hope might be in full assurance with them, imitating those "who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Abraham, "the father of all them that believe," the one in whom faith as the way of blessing has been openly inaugurated and proclaimed, naturally becomes here a most instructive example. God's word was pledged to him in the fullest way, but he had to have long patience. He saw little fulfilment on earth of that which God had promised, for not elsewhere than in God Himself does faith find its true strength and support. Here, indeed, He gave all that could be desired, not His word merely, but His oath—precious and wonderful condescension to human weakness. God will give as ample security Himself as we exact from one another. While faith must *be* faith, and therefore only in God, yet how tender He is! How well we may trust Him!

§ (13-20): The confirmation of hope by God's word and oath.

13 For [n] when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee and multiplying I will multiply thee; and so having had [o] long patience, he obtained the promise. For men indeed swear by a greater, and with them [p] the oath is a term to all dispute, as making matters sure. Wherein God, willing to show more abundantly to the heirs of the promise the immutability of his purpose, [q] interposed with an oath; that by [r] two immutable things, in which it was impossible that God should lie, [s] we might have a strong encouragement, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us. Which [hope] we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and [t] which entereth into that within the veil, where Jesus is entered, a forerunner for us; being made forever a high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

[n] Gen. 22. 17.
[o] ch. 11. 9, 13, 39.
[p] Ex. 22. 11.
[q] Ps. 110. 4.
[r] *cf.* Jno. 8. 17, 18.
[s] *cf.* 2 Cor. 1. 3.
[t] ch. 9. 24.

Our hope, however, has security of another kind than verbal. It is anchored "within the veil," in heaven itself, into which our Forerunner has entered, Jesus, "made a High Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." The mention of the veil here is supposed by some to contradict the thought of a *rent* veil in Hebrews; but the veil is never stated to be taken away, for the veil is the flesh of Christ; and the only possibility for such a mistake is in confounding it with the veil of which the apostle speaks in the second epistle to the Corinthians,—that veil which *was* over the face of Moses, and which *is not* over the face of Christ. *That* veil, indeed, has been taken away; but the veil through which we enter into the Holiest has not been taken away, but a way made through it, "a new and living way," as we shall presently more particularly see.

Sec. 3.

We have now before us the subject of the Melchisedec priesthood of Christ; and there are questions connected with it which require more consideration than they have yet obtained. What, exactly, does this priesthood mean? Is the whole matter for us that Christ is a Priest after that order? Is He not acting as yet in that character? And is such action purely millennial, and therefore having respect only to Israel and the earth? This is how many understand it, but does Scripture really require or warrant this? And what is the practical value for us, or for the epistle to the Hebrews, of the scriptural view? It is clear that we must take up carefully the chapter before us before we can hope to answer such questions, but let us keep them in mind all through. Whatever we may understand as to Melchisedec, it is certain that the section here, in accordance with its numerical place, shows the Priest in the sanctuary, with His propitiation work, therefore, accomplished, and in possession of the place resulting from it, "a Great Priest over the house of God." That is His present place.

There are three subsections here, with still smaller divisions in the last. The first dwells upon Melchisedec himself as presented in the book of Genesis, made typically like the Son of God; having an indissoluble priesthood in the power of an endless life: thus not only higher in character than that of Levi, but its primacy owned, as it were, by Levi himself.

The second subsection shows us the consequences of Christ's being a Priest of this order, the setting aside of the law, the priests of which were Aaronic.

The third subsection shows us, therefore, the Priest of Christianity perfected forever and made higher than the heavens, in possession of a place to which the Levitical priesthood could lay no possible claim.

SECTION 3. (Chap. vii.)

The Superiority of the Melchisedec to the Levitical Priesthood.

1 (vii. 1-10): An abiding priesthood.

1. FOR this [u]Melchisedec, king of [v]Salem, priest of the [w]most high God, who met Abraham returning from the smiting of the kings, and blessed him; to whom Abraham also gave the tenth part of all; first being by interpretation king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace; without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest perpetually.

u Gen. 14.18-20.
v Ps. 76. 2.
w Num. 24. 16. Deut. 32. 8.

1. The first subsection cites and comments upon the brief story of Melchisedec in that wonderful way which has been to many of us such a revelation of the perfection of the inspiration of Scripture, and such an unfolding of the typical history of the Old Testament. The apostle interprets for us here both the speech and the silence of the narrative; both the names and the order of the names. Every jot and tittle has to be taken into account; and it is surely very much from disregard of this that we fail to get clear and assured knowledge of what Scripture contains. We credit it with idle words; and to us they *are* idle. We dishonor the Spirit who has given the Word, and we lose the deep things of God which the Spirit searches. Especially as to parabolic speech, we say that "no parable goes on all fours," and any maimed and halted interpretation can justify itself spite of such a mark as one of wisdom's children. Let Melchisedec teach us, first of all, this truth, that no jot or tittle of the Word shall pass away without fulfilment, and let us act as if we believed this.

And now, as to the name Melchisedec, "king of righteousness." First of all, he is that; *then* "king of Salem," that is, "king of peace." This is always a principle in the divine ways. In the millennium, righteousness must first have its sway, for peace to be brought in; and as the prophet says: "The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever" (Isa. xxxii. 17). This is, of course, as true for the present as for the future, and fulfilled in the gospel in a far more wondrous way. As the effect of righteousness in the cross, peace has come to us; and our Melchisedec has indeed made good His name.

Next, he is "without father, without mother, without genealogy." So he is presented in the history, alone, without record of any preceding or indeed following him in his office. Again, "without beginning of days or end of life," thus "*made like* unto the Son of God;" not actually like Him, but *made* like, the type perfectly preserved from any contradiction or anything irrelevant, that we might have a picture of a non-successional, unending priesthood, such as that of the Lord Jesus is, who is also King and Priest in one Person; and so it was prophesied of Him: "Behold the Man whose name is the BRANCH; and He shall grow up out of His place; and He shall build the temple of the Lord, even He shall build the temple of the Lord, and He shall bear the glory; and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a Priest upon His throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (Zech. vi. 12, 13). This is doubtless millennial, and yet very like the line of things which the apostle has been pursuing here, even to the building of the house of God; but in Hebrews all is higher. Here the house is the universe. The throne upon which the Priest sits is the throne of God (chap. viii. 1). He has not yet taken His own throne as Son of Man (Rev. iii. 21); He is on His Father's, and we are thus "translated into the kingdom of His dear Son" (Col. i. 13). Thus He is already King, as He is Priest, in both characters as Son of God. His is a priestly rule over the house of God.

If we look back now to the book of Genesis, we shall find the life of Abraham

Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth part of the spoils. And [x]they indeed from among the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have commandment to take tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though these are come out of the loins of Abraham; but he who hath no genealogy from them hath tithed Abraham, and blessed him who [y]had the promises; and beyond all gainsaying the less is blessed of the better. And here, dying men receive tithes, but there one of whom it is [z]witnessed that he liveth; and so to speak, through Abraham, Levi also, who received tithes, hath been tithed: for he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchisedec met him.

x Num. 18. 21.

y Rom. 4. 13.

z Ps. 110. 4.

the fourth in the series of seven lives which give us the perfect picture of the divine life in man from the time of its beginning, in repentance and faith, in Adam, until in Joseph we see the image of Christ fully formed. Abraham, following Noah, was brought into a new scene which abides in the value of accepted sacrifice, and gives us the practical life of faith which is the result of being in Christ, a new creation. By his very call to Canaan, he is a pilgrim and a stranger on the earth. His life divides into two parts, in the first of which (chap. xi. 10–xiv.) we have the call of God and His obedience to it; while, in the second (chap. xv.–xxi.), we have the conflicts of faith. Thus the whole, as indeed Genesis as a whole, is an elaborate and perfect type in which most certainly the Christian life is set before us.

I say Christian, not because Israel is forgotten. Israel is there, and God is dwelling with her, in a love that cannot forget her; but this only makes more distinct what is our own in the book, and that decisively. Thus Abraham's own call to Canaan, the heavenly country, and his walking in it by faith as a pilgrim, is not and cannot be a type of Israel; but again, in his sons Isaac and Ishmael, Isaac is distinctly the type of "the children of the free woman."

Now it is in the end of the first part of Abraham's history that the type of Melchisedec appears. It is to Abram, the *Hebrew* (that is, "pilgrim"), returning from his conflict with the kings of the East, a Babylonish confederacy, that at the king's dale Melchisedec brings forth the bread and wine which speak to us with such perfect plainness of our royal Priest's provision for us now; *not* a sacrifice, for that has been "once for all" offered, but the *memorial* of a sacrifice,—too plain a thing to need enlargement on, or to need to vindicate our title to it. True, God is not yet *manifested* as Most High, and men and Satan seem to be joint possessors of the earth rather than God; but in the picture here, also, there is yet a king of Sodom by whom Abraham refuses to be enriched. Faith in him alone it is that counts God to be "Possessor of heaven and earth;" and faith now it is that receives such distinct ministry from the true Melchisedec, and owns God to be still in possession where most He seems to be displaced. How the bread and wine help to assure us of that!

In fact, every detail in all this story suits us admirably, and we may be confident that our Melchisedec exists for us to-day; not One who will be that in the millennium,—though then He will be recognized openly as such,—but Sodom will then get, not faith's refusal merely, but the judgment of God. Meanwhile, *we* have this ministry of bread and wine, and One with us who blesses us from the Most High God, and who, on our part, blesses the Most High God:—"In the midst of the assembly will *I* sing praise unto Thee."

The apostle goes on to prove from the history, brief as it is, the superiority of Melchisedec to Levi. "He was in the loins of his father when Melchisedec met him;" and in Abraham, Levi, therefore, paid tithes to Melchisedec. Thus the

2 (vii.11-19): The law thus set aside.

2. If indeed, then, [a]perfection were by the Levitical priesthood (for the people had their law on the basis of it) what need [was there] that still a different priest should arise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be named after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there becometh of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are said [b]pertaineth to a different tribe, of which no one hath been occupied with the service of the altar. For it is clear that our Lord hath sprung out of Judah, of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priests. And it is still more abundantly evident, since a different priest ariseth after the similitude of Melchisedec, who hath been made, not after a law of fleshly commandment, but after a [c]power of indissoluble life. For it is borne witness, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. For there is a setting aside of the commandment going before for its [d]weakness and unprofitableness (for the law made nothing perfect) and the bringing in of a better hope, by which we [e]draw nigh to God.

3 (vii.20-28): A Priesthood holy and heavenly.

1 (20-22): Appointed with an oath.

3. [1] And inasmuch as it was not without the swearing of an oath (for they are made priests without the swearing of an oath, but he with the swearing of an oath by

a ch. 8. 7.

b *cf.* Isa. 11. 1 and Zech. 6. 12, 13.

c ver. 24.

d ch. 9. 8, 9. ch. 10. 1.

e ch. 4. 16. ch. 10. 19-22.

whole Levitical priesthood owned its inferiority, and Melchisedec, as one greater than Abraham, blesses him who had the promises; but this leads us on to consequences of far greater importance.

2. In the second subsection, therefore, the apostle goes on to argue the setting aside of the law itself by the change of the priesthood. It was incontestable that according to the psalm a Priest was to arise according to this higher type, a Priest after the order of Melchisedec, and not of Aaron. We have but to consider a moment, to realize how complete a change as to the law this involved. It is not simply, as some would put it, the special law as to the priesthood; for, as we see in the Day of Atonement, all the relation of Israel to God according to that dispensation, hung upon the priesthood. The blood put upon the mercy-seat by the high priest, year by year, alone enabled God to dwell in their midst; and this could only be done by one of the family of Aaron. The law contemplated no other; yet Christ had sprung out of Judah, and the law said nothing of priesthood in connection with that tribe.

But again, why was it necessary thus to define the succession? plainly because it had to do with mortal men who could not continue in the office by reason of death. Thus it was a law of fleshly commandment. He having come, who lives eternally, sets aside the law necessarily by the very "power of an indissoluble life." All is manifestly upon a higher plane, outside the law. "There is a setting aside of the commandment going before;" and that because of "its weakness and unprofitableness." It perfected nothing. There was under it only a priesthood of dying men with animal sacrifices, unable really to atone, and a closed sanctuary, into which timidly the high priest entered once a year and immediately withdrew.

This was plain, but is to be developed presently in contrast with what is now made good to us in Christ. Now there is "the bringing in of a better hope, by which we" do, as they did not, "draw nigh to God." This introduces us to what is to be the theme of after-consideration.

3. The apostle now sets in contrast with the priests of a fleshly and earthly sys-

him who said as to him, [f]The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec) by so much did Jesus become [g]surety of a better covenant.

2 (23-25): A Saviour to the uttermost.

[23] And they indeed have been made priests more [than one], on account of their being hindered by death from continuing; but he, because he continueth ever, hath the unchangeable priesthood. Whence also he is able to save to the uttermost them that [h]come unto God by him, seeing that he always liveth to [i]make intercession for them.

3 (26-28): Holy and heavenly.

[26] For such a high priest became us, [j]holy,* guileless, undefiled, [k]separate from sinners, and [l]made higher than the heavens; who hath no need day by day, as [m]those high priests, first to offer up sacrifices for his own sins, then for those of the people; for [n]this he did [o]once for all when he offered up himself. For the law constituteth men high priests [p]who have infirmity; but the word of the oath sworn, which was after the law, [maketh] the Son, who is [q]perfected for evermore.

f Ps. 110. 4.
g ch. 8. 6.
h Jno. 14. 6.
i Rom. 8.34.
j cf. 1 Pet. 2. 5.
k cf. ch. 10. 10, 14.
l ch. 4. 14. ch. 8. 1. ch. 10. 12.
m ch. 5. 3.
n ch. 9. 12.
o cf. ch. 10. 1, 2, 12.
p ch. 5. 2.
q ch. 2. 10. ch. 5. 9.

* Though not ἅγιος here, but ὅσιος — generally translated "pious:" with affections suited to the relationship.

tem, the true and heavenly Priest to whom as types they pointed. God had announced with an oath His unrepenting purpose as to Him. As a Priest forever, in the surety of a better covenant than the legal, conditional one, and in contrast with dying men, He abides eternally to care for and bring through to heaven those who draw near to God by Him, who is always living to intercede for them. We see how different is this view from that in Romans, where *position* in Christ is contemplated; and also from that in the gospel of John, we living because He lives (John xiv. 19). Here it is the living activity of the Priest to which we are entrusted, not apart from God, but as having all power with God,—this salvation to the uttermost being, of course, not the bringing into the sanctuary here, but to that full final rest which has been dwelt upon already in the epistle.

Finally, the character of our High Priest is briefly considered,—such an One becomes us, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and become higher than the heavens,—who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for their own sins and then for those of the people, for this He did once when He offered up Himself; for the law maketh men high priests who have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is perfected for evermore."

This shows how far the Lord as Antitype transcends the type. The Jewish high priest was but a sinner amongst sinners. Christ in absolute holiness is One "separate from sinners;" and yet the apostle can say, such an One becomes us; for the blood of Christ as before God has perfected "in perpetuity" those who are sanctified by it, and "the worshipers once purged have no more conscience of sins" (chap. x. 2, 14). Thus, it is not as sinners that Christ as High Priest intercedes for us with God, but as the many sons whom He is bringing to glory. The High Priest is for infirmity, not sin, "but if any one sin we have an Advocate with the Father" (1 John ii. 1). Christ is both Priest and Advocate, but the question of sin is settled for us as towards God, while between the children and the Father it may need frequent settlement.

SUBD. 2.

The second subdivision speaks here, too, now of our having a better ministry

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. viii.)

His more excellent ministry as Mediator of a better covenant.

1 (1-6): The Priest Himself.

1 NOW of the things of which we are speaking, this is the main point: We have such an one, high priest, who hath [r]taken his seat on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; 2 a minister of the [s]holy places, and of the [t]true tabernacle, which the Lord hath pitched and not man. 3 For [u]every high priest is constituted for the offering both of gifts and sacrifices; wherefore it is of necessity that this one also should have something which he may offer. 4 If then, indeed, he were on earth, he would not even be a priest, seeing that there are those who offer the gifts according to the law, 5 (who serve the [v]representation

[r] Mk. 16.19. ch. 10. 12.
[s] ch. 9. 12.
[t] ch. 9. 11.
[u] ch. 5. 1.
[v] ch. 8. 5. ch. 9. 23.

than that of the earthly priesthood, founded as it is upon a better covenant. The first six verses emphasize the fact that it is of the true tabernacle Christ is Minister. The last seven verses speak of the change of covenant.

1. We must remember that it is the Priest in the Sanctuary that the apostle is now showing us,—a Priest who has sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. In the Lord's case we must separate widely, as with a mere human high priest one could not, between the ministry *out*side and the ministry *in*side the tabernacle. For Him the one ceased before the other was entered upon; yet He was the High Priest when He "offered up Himself" upon the cross, and He was the High Priest when He "passed through the heavens" (chap. iv. 14). There was no difference in this respect, if we are to take exactly what is written. Upon this there would seem no need to insist; yet a verse here has been so interpreted as to mean the opposite,—that the Lord was not Priest upon earth at all; and every other statement of Scripture has been discredited to uphold what is not its statement, but a mistaken interpretation of something very different from this. The apostle does not say that *when* Christ was upon earth He *was not* a Priest, but that "if then indeed He were upon earth He would not even be a Priest." Plainly he is speaking of One *not* on earth, and not as looking back either to the time when He was there. He is speaking, as he says, of Christ as the glorified High Priest, the Minister of the true tabernacle, and the reason he gives is conclusive as to this. Why would He not even be a Priest on earth? Because, he answers, "there are those who offer gifts according to the law." The law, as he has said, has defined its priests as of the family of Aaron, and Christ has no place in the line of that succession; but that has nothing to do with the Lord's work on earth, as is evident. It is a totally different thing from saying that *when* Christ offered Himself up He was not a Priest to say that *if He were* on earth He would be no Priest of any sanctuary there. True it is that the law has no place on earth for this Minister of the true tabernacle. If His name were sought upon the earthly register, it could not be found; in what is but the "example and shadow of heavenly things" His place is not. Necessarily so, for He has "a more excellent ministry" in connection with the "heavenly things themselves." Here, as already said, the confusion between the *killing of the victim*, which was not itself a priestly work, and the *offering up of the sacrifice*, which was absolutely so, has hindered many from seeing the truth. Yet every one must see at once that the Lord did not kill Himself, and yet offered Himself. The killing of the victim is the death of Christ looked at, as we may say, from its human side. The offering by the priest set forth, though still under a veil, what God found in it, but they both apply to what was done upon earth. The offering up of the sacrifice was not inside the tabernacle, but in the outer court, and is thus distinctly made to refer to something done upon earth. There was no presentation to God or burning

and shadow of heavenly things, according as Moses was oracularly told when about to make the tabernacle: for, "See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern which hath been shown thee in the mount) but now hath he obtained a more excel- | w Ex. 25.40.

of the *victim* in the tabernacle itself,—that is, in the sanctuary; and it is to be noted that while the apostle previously speaks of every high priest being constituted for the offering "both of gifts and sacrifices," when he comes here to the Lord's tabernacle work, he speaks of the offering of "*gifts*" alone. The incense and the shew-bread, to go no further, belonged, of course, to the tabernacle work. The sacrifices never entered there, except in the blood being carried in. All here, therefore, is in absolute consistency with itself and with all other Scripture.

But light has been thought to be thrown by this assertion, as it is taken to be, of Christ not having been a Priest on earth, upon that propitiation which it was His, as we have been told in the second chapter, distinctly as High Priest to make. This, then, it is urged, must have been made in heaven, and refers not to the work of the cross, but to the *presentation* for acceptance of that work before God, by the Lord, as having entered into His presence there. If, indeed, the Lord were not a Priest on earth, there would be reason, no doubt, for such an interpretation. As it is, there is none whatever. We shall have to look at it further in the chapter following this, but the acceptance of the work of the cross by God was clearly at the moment of its being made; not only the veil rent when the Lord died shows it, but also the fact that even before He dies the cloud that was upon Him is removed. He says no more "My God," as when He was forsaken, but He says "Father," in the sense of nearness. Wrath-bearing was at an end, although the death which was still due from man as a sinner had to be taken. This He takes, therefore, proclaiming at the same time: "It is finished," as He gives up His Spirit. There was no more to be done. No presentation further was necessary before Him whose Eyes are in every place, and who gives testimony as promptly as it can be done to the work which so fully satisfies Him. With regard to the interpretation of the type here, the actual entering in of the high priest into the sanctuary with the blood which he puts upon the mercy-seat, we shall have, necessarily, to look at in what follows presently.

We have yet another question, however, to consider in connection with this thought of Christ's priesthood being exercised entirely in heaven; and that is, if His be, as the apostle insists, entirely a *Melchisedec* priesthood, how else could it be exercised than *after* death, when the "many priests" of Aaron's order proved their incompetency by the fact that "they were not able to continue, by reason of death;" and in contrast with them Christ's Melchisedec character is seen in this, that He abideth forever "in the power of an endless life"?

Now, whatever the difficulty here, it is certain that Christ *was* "a merciful and faithful High Priest to make propitiation"; and therefore He was High Priest before propitiation was, or could be, made. If death, then, negatived the possibility of His being this at that time, then it would necessarily forbid His being so while *in* death, until resurrection had taken place. That is as plain as it is really decisive; for His resurrection was already the witness of the acceptance of His work, and, consequently, of propitiation (that is, appeasal) having been already made. Propitiation is by blood, and that was shed on earth; nor, when this was shed, did it wait an hour for the tokens of its acceptance. His own words, "It is finished," were followed immediately by the rending of the veil, by which the holiest was opened to man; where Christ has now gone in to take His place for us with God, in the value of that blood, our Representative.

Thus, being made perfect, He is greeted (or, "hailed") of God a High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. Notice, it is not the same word as when it is

lent ministry, by so much as he is the [x]mediator of a [y]better covenant, which is established upon better promises.

[x] ch. 9. 15. ch. 12. 24. c/. Gal. 3. 19.
[y] ch. 7. 22.

[7] For if that first one were faultless, then would no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault, he saith unto them, [z]Behold days come, saith the Lord, that I will perfect a new covenant as regards the house of Israel and as regards the house of Judah; not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because *they* did not continue in my covenant, and *I* did not regard them, saith the Lord. Because [a]this is the covenant

[7–13]: The covenants contrasted.

[z] Jer. 31. 31–34.

[a] ch. 10. 16. Rom. 11. 27.

said He was "called" to the priesthood. He is "hailed" now as Victor after His conflict, when the power of that endless life that was His had been manifested in His victory over death and him that had the power of it. Death had been but the sword which the Conqueror turned against him who wielded it; and over Him it could not have dominion when once, to do the will of God, He had descended into it. That eternal life which was in Him could not be touched by it; and the giving up of earthly life, which *for the merely human priests* had ended their priesthood fully, and taken them entirely away from the scene of their earthly ministry, could not affect the office of Him who could answer the appeal to Him as Lord of the dying malefactor with the royal words, "This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." Thus was He still Priest and King all through. Presently, with the keys of death and hades at His girdle, He is hailed in resurrection as the Royal Priest; not made so then, but approved as fully manifested such. Already, while the disciples gaze upward after Him, a cloud received Him out of their sight (Acts i. 9). Was it mere earthly vapor? or was it not, rather, the "hail,"—the welcome home, of the manifest glory? Not one poor returning prodigal, but the Father runs to greet and bring him home. Was it not fit (as when, for the objects of His redeeming love, the Lord of glory—not leaving it to angelic hosts even to give them welcome,—"the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven,") that He who was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father should thus—the angels nowhere as yet seen—be welcomed back to where He had been before, even when creation, as yet, was not called into being by His word?

[7] We are now called, in connection with this, to see the new covenant according to which the new Priest draws near to God. There is a sharp contrast here shown us between this and the legal one. The very fact, says the apostle, of the Lord's speaking of a new covenant, shows that the old was to pass away. It was, therefore, a "finding fault" with the first covenant, and all that belonged to it as such. We know what this means. God's heart was set upon the bringing His people nigh, and according to the law they could never be brought nigh. Thus, even, as regards the house of Israel and the house of Judah, with whom the new covenant is to be made in days to come, the terms of their relation to God are entirely altered. That covenant made with them in the day that He took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, did not abide. Conditional as it was, they did not fulfil its terms, did not, therefore, continue in it, and He did not regard them. It was, in fact, impossible that He could do so without denying His own nature. The covenant that He is going to make, on the other hand, asks for no fulfilment on the part of man at all, but is the simple, positive affirmation of what He will do for them. "I will put My laws into their mind, and will write them also upon their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." It is plain here that the common thought that God's law is written naturally upon everybody's heart or mind, is entirely contradicted. It is grace alone that accomplishes it

that I will make unto the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their mind, and will write them also [b]upon their hearts; and I will be God to them, and they shall be my people. And they shall not teach each one his fellow-citizen and each one his brother, saying, Know the Lord: because [c]all shall inwardly know me, from him that is little unto him that is great among them; because I will be merciful to their unrighteousnesses and their sins and their lawlessnesses I will remember no more. In that he saith, A new [covenant], he hath made the first old. But that which is [d]ancient and groweth old is near to disappearing.

b 2 Cor. 3. 3.

c Isa. 54. 13.

d 2 Cor. 5. 17.

for any; and we must remember that God is speaking here explicitly of His earthly people, and not of any heavenly one. So, when He says: "They shall not teach each one his fellow-citizen, and each one his brother, saying, Know the Lord: because all shall inwardly know Me, from him that is little to him that is great among them," a condition of things is implied such as the earth has yet never seen, and such as will not be seen until God brings back Israel to Himself, and the people, as He declares, shall be "all holy,"—when there shall be among them no one who does not know Him. And this, too, will be, not merely externally, so as to be orthodox in the faith, but, as the word is here, they shall "inwardly" know Him. And the ground of it will be this: "I will be merciful to their unrighteousnesses, and their sins and their lawlessnesses I will remember no more." Thus, the people with whom this covenant will be made will be a people in that day entirely according to His mind.

It will be asked how, according to this, the new covenant applies at all to us. Other scriptures answer this clearly by assuring us that if we have not the covenant *made* with us, it can yet, in all the blessings of which it speaks, be *ministered* to us. This unconditional grace is not limited by conditions. We have, thank God, much more than even what the new covenant declares; and grace, having laid the foundation in righteousness, can act according to its own sovereignty, and in such largeness as suits the bounty of God. We have, therefore, the new covenant fully ours, while we have much more than this, for all the "mysteries" which constitute Christianity proper are things before hidden, and really beyond it. The apostle's purpose here is evidently and simply to show us that the legal covenant is set aside, displaced by that which alone could bring any blessing for man at all.

SUBD. 3.

Thus we have had before us the Priest, and the covenant with which He is connected. The Priest is the Son of God, the One who as such is over the house of God, that is the whole universe, which was created by Him, and which He upholds by the word of His power. Sin having come in, it is He who necessarily comes forth in order to deliver His creation from it, and at the same time to glorify God by the declaration of His holiness and righteousness and love in regard to it. For this He has been down in the lowest depths, under the penalty of sin itself, to justify that penalty, and to bring in the love and light which God is into the midst of its darkest shadows. He has gone up, "passed through the heavens," into the supreme place above all, with the power thus strangely acquired to bring in blessing according to the whole character of God Himself, justifying all God's thoughts in the creation of man, and displaying in manhood itself a depth of wisdom in those thoughts by which He is glorified forever. The way is opened thus for redeemed and saved man into heaven itself, presently to be there in actual fact, but in the meanwhile, that he may enter there in spirit, in the way in which we have it shown here, into the holiest of

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chaps. ix.–x.)

The Way into the Holiest made Manifest.

1 (Chap. ix. 1-10): The first tabernacle of the old covenant.

1. THE first [covenant] had indeed, then, ordinances of divine service and a [c]world-sanctuary: for there was a [d]tabernacle constructed; the first, wherein were both the [e]candlestick and the [f]table and the [g]show-bread, which is called the holy [place]; but after the [h]second veil, a tabernacle which is called the holy of holies; [i]having a golden censer, and the [j]ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein were [k]the golden pot that had the manna, and the [l]rod of Aaron that budded, and the [m]tables of the covenant; and over it the [n]cherubim of glory shadowing the mercyseat: concerning which it is not now [the time] to speak in detail.

[c] Ex. 25. 8.
[d] Ex. 26. 1.
[e] Ex. 25.31-39.
Ex. 26. 35.
[f] Ex. 25.23-29.
Ex. 26. 35.
[g] Ex. 25. 30. Lev.24.5-8.
[h] Ex. 26. 31-33.
[i] Lev.16.12, 13. 1 Kl. 6. 22.
[j] Ex. 25. 10, 11. Ex. 26. 33.
[k] Ex.16.33, 34.
[l] Num. 17. 8, 10.
[m] Ex. 25. 16. 1 Kl.8.9,21.
[n] Ex. 25.18-22.

all: a sanctuary which, while on earth, is the anticipation of the heavenly one. That which is before us now is just the manifestation of this way into the Holiest. The work is accomplished, but we have to see the application of it to man, the purging of his conscience by the offering made for him, and the setting him free so that he may draw near to God as fully manifested by "a new and living way" which is opened to him.

There are four sections here, and the fourth of these is an exhortation in view of all that is involved. The first three give the subject itself: the first speaking of the first tabernacle of the first covenant, and which shows the character of this, the way into the holiest *not* being made manifest. The second shows the removal of the hindrance to manifestation. The third, the sanctification of the worshiper for the opened sanctuary.

1. The first section carries us back to the tabernacle of old, to show briefly the disposition of things there; and here stress is laid upon the division into two parts, (virtually two tabernacles,) divided from each other by the interior veil. The outermost one was practically open as the place of continuous priestly service. The inner was, with the exception of the brief visit of the high priest on the Day of Atonement, as constantly closed. The things which had their place in each are mentioned, but without any purpose to speak particularly of them. The great point here is this strict separation of the two; the one shut off being the place in which, when things were right in Israel, the glory of God abode, so that no access to God was what the unrent veil proclaimed. This first tabernacle was characteristic, therefore, of the law; when even to Moses, the mediator, it was said: "Thou canst not see My face; for there shall no man see Me and live." It was an image for the time then present, when gifts and sacrifices of such sort were being offered as could not perfect the conscience of the worshiper. In their very nature they could not. They were but "meats and drinks and divers baptisms," "the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean," sanctifying only to the purification of the flesh. Such a system plainly could not satisfy God, could not bring man near to God. No one, one would say, were not the facts so plainly against us in this, could even imagine it. It must therefore pass away.

This first covenant, then, had "ordinances of divine service and a world-sanctuary." There has been a difficulty made of this last expression, but it seems, evidently, to have reference to what it was as a typical presentation of heavenly things which yet accompanied the people all the way through the wilderness. This is what is before us also, when we look at what it typified. *We* have such a world-sanctuary, that is to say, a place in which we can meet God and enter in faith, therefore, into heavenly things, while conscious that we are but pass-

Now these things being thus ordered, into the first tabernacle the priests enter at all times, accomplishing the services; but into the second [q]the high priest only, once a year, [r]not without blood, which he [s]offereth for himself and for the errors* of the people: the Holy Spirit signifying this, that the way into the [t]holy [places] was not yet made manifest, while the first tabernacle as yet had its standing; which is an image for the present time, according to which are offered both gifts and sacrifices that [u]cannot make him that worshipeth perfect as to the conscience, [consisting] only of [v]meats and drinks and [w]divers baptisms,—[x]fleshly ordinances imposed until the [y]time of making things right.

2 (Ix.11-23): The conscience purged with blood.

2. But Christ being come, a high priest of the [z]good things to come, by the [a]better and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands,—that is, not of this crea-

q Lev.16.14, 15, 34. Ex. 30. 10.
r Lev. 16. 2, 3.
s ch. 5. 3.
t ver. 12. ver. 24. ch. 8. 2. ch. 10. 19.
u ch. 7. 19. ch. 10. 1. cf.ch.10.14, 22.
v Lev. 11. 2.
w vers. 13, 19. Num. 19.7, 17-19.
x ver. 13.
y cf.ch. 8. 7, 8.
z ch. 10. 1.
a ch. 8. 2.

* "Sins of ignorance."

ing through a world in which we are pilgrims and strangers. This is the sweetest grace, that such a sanctuary is open to us even here.

We must not, of course, attach the idea to any structure made with hands, nor, indeed, to anything which would imply any kind of ritualistic entrance into the presence of God. It is our joy to know that without mediation of any kind, except that of the heavenly High Priest Himself, we have ability to draw near to God, apart from all circumstances, all question even of the gatherings of His people; although here certainly we are privileged to realize to the full this heavenly worship. But we may remark that we are not here in the line of the first of Corinthians, and that Scripture itself has severed this thought of entrance into the Holiest from any idea of even our common remembrance of the Lord in His death, and of the fellowship which we enjoy as thus come together. Corinthians does not enter upon the topic of worship, even though it speaks of the Church as the temple of God; but this in regard to its holiness as such, and not to its being even a special sphere of worship. The epistle to the Hebrews is precisely that which does away with all connection of ritualistic service as necessary to the worship of God. The Jewish system pressed this very thing; but the Christian antitype to its shadows is here revealed as in absolute contrast to Judaism altogether. The holy place, with its candlestick, and table, and shewbread, as to which the apostle has little to say in this connection, was Israel's practical holy place. As such it is for us not abolished, except as to its being a "first" tabernacle, in contrast with the second one. For us, as we shall see, the two tabernacles are now one, the veil not having passed away, but being rent, so that Christ is now for us a Minister of "the holy places,"—both of them,—of "the true tabernacle, which the Lord hath pitched and not man." It is important to remember this, which will find more development as we go on. The point here is simply that, while the first tabernacle had its standing, (had its place, therefore, *as* first,) the way into the holiest was not manifest. This characterized the law, and has come to an end for us forever.

2. The second section shows us the coming in of redemption, the putting away of sin from before God, that sin which hindered God's manifestation of Himself as He desired. The things to which the Levitical system pointed are now fulfilled, the true Day of Atonement, the Great High Priest of a better tabernacle, who has entered the sanctuary, "not by the blood of bulls and goats, but by His own blood," having found, not an atonement which would last a year, but "*eternal* redemption." Thus the worshiper has at last his conscience purified from dead works, from that which had in it no savor of life; would not satisfy, therefore, the living God. The legalism of the old covenant has been replaced

tion,—neither by the blood of goats and bulls,* but [b]by his own blood, he hath entered in [c]once for all into the holy [places,] having found an [d]eternal redemption.

[b] ver. 25. [c] ch. 10. 12. [d] ch. 5. 9.

* μόσχος is not necessarily a calf, but a young, fresh animal.

by the grace of the new. The eternal inheritance is secured to those who are called by the grace of the gospel. Christ is thus the High Priest of those good things which were typified in Judaism, things still to come, which its shadows pointed to, but nothing more. The tabernacle is a better and more perfect one, "not made with hands," not belonging to the old creation. The blood of goats and bulls has been replaced by the value of His own blood, in virtue of which He has entered in once for all into the holy places, having found an "eternal redemption." He entered in in the triumph of having done this.

There may be need of some additional clearing of the old types which are here interpreted for us, as well as of their application to the things of which they speak. The mercy-seat in the holiest, as being the "propitiatory," or place of propitiation, propitiation or atonement (for the word is the same in the Hebrew of the Old Testament and in its translation in the Septuagint Greek) being made upon it once a year, the question cannot but be raised, How does this affect the question of propitiation for us being really made in heaven, in some sense at least, when our High Priest entered in? It is evident that for Israel the blood upon the mercy-seat was the fundamental condition of all their blessing. Atonement, or propitiation, was then made "for the holy sanctuary, and for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar, and for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation" (Lev. xvi. 33). Insomuch that this and this alone was the "day of atonement," apart from which no other sacrifice could legally have been offered, or God have remained in their midst at all. Is there nothing, then, in the substance that answers to these shadows, that answers just to this putting of the blood upon the mercy-seat, equally fundamental, that the throne may be for us that "throne of grace" which we know it to be? Or, can this speak simply of the Cross, and what was done there? and was not the blood, in any sense, carried in so as to be presented for acceptance before God in heaven?

Now, there is another question that may be asked in return, which, simple as it is, deserves yet serious consideration. Does any one conceive of our blessed Lord carrying in literally His blood into heaven? That will, of course, be denied at once, and wonder expressed even at the suggestion of it. These are figures, it will be rightly said, and must be figuratively conceived; and we may add, as the apostle declares of them, that they are not even "the very image" of what they represent. This must not be taken as license for any avoidance of honest, consistent observance of the very terms in which it has pleased God to reveal things to us, as has many times been said, yet it has to be considered and reckoned with none the less. What could the application of the blood to the various objects to which it was applied in the Levitical ritual mean with reference to us now? When the high priest had completed his work in the tabernacle, he went out to the altar (of burnt-offering) to apply the blood similarly there. Are we to conceive of this as some further presentation of it for acceptance in relation to what the altar typifies? It is plain that this cannot be. The altar was that from which the daily sacrifices went up for Israel, and the blood put upon it for propitiation simply set forth the righteousness of God in accepting what was done there. Just so by that upon the mercy-seat God's righteousness was set forth in continuing to dwell among a sinful people. In each case it was the blood that made the propitiation (Lev. xvii. 11); and the application of it gave it no new efficacy, but simply revealed its efficacy in particular relations. It was one of those object-lessons of which the ritualistic service consisted, and which may be easily strained in the endeavor to find in them a kind of exactness which does not belong to them. Thus, because the burning upon the altar

For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the defiled, sanctifieth for the purity of the flesh, how much rather shall the blood of Christ, who [e]by the eternal Spirit offered himself [f]without spot to God, [g]purify your conscience [h]from dead works [i]to worship the living God? And for this reason he is the [j]mediator of a new covenant, so that death having taken place [k]for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, they which have been [l]called may [m]receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

For where there is a testament,* there must needs come in the death of the testator; for a testament* is of force when men are dead; since it is in no way of force while the testator liveth.

[e] *cf.* Matt. 3. 16.
[f] *cf.* Matt. 3. 17. 1 Pet. 1. 19.
[g] ch. 10. 22. *cf.* ch. 10. 2.
[h] ch. 6. 1.
[i] *cf.* Jno. 4. 22.
[j] ch. 8. 6. ch. 12. 24.
[k] Rom. 3. 25.
[l] Rom. 8. 30.
[m] ch. 6. 15. *ctr.* ch. 11. 13, 39.

* *διαθήκη*, both "testament" and "covenant,"

followed the slaying of the victim, it was made by many to speak of atoning sufferings on the Lord's part *after* death. It has been forgotten in all such cases that "no parable can teach doctrine." We must find elsewhere the doctrine which the type illustrates, before we can find the ground for a just application.

Now it is here that the doctrine thought to be found in Scripture as to this fails so absolutely. Where shall we expect to find it if not in Hebrews, where confessedly the Day of Atonement is the text upon which the apostle is dwelling in all this part? And where is it to be found in Hebrews, or anywhere else in the New Testament, that Christ went into heaven to make propitiation there? to present His work to God for its acceptance, or in any sense to sprinkle the blood upon the Eternal Throne?

Quite another thing is, in fact, taught there,—namely, that Christ entered in once into the holy places, *having obtained* eternal redemption. As risen from the dead, raised up by the glory of the Father, He entered once, not the second time, propitiation therefore already accomplished, the resurrection the evidence of the ransom accepted, nothing remaining in this way to be done. The virtue of the blood revealed itself all the way, even as the typical veil of the sanctuary had been rent at the Cross already, before a step had been taken on the triumphant journey. All is as consistent as possible, and as plain as need be. And if it be said, Have we, then, nothing that answers more closely to this priestly action at the Throne? the answer is abundant, that the reality far transcends the type; for not only has the Throne been acting in power thus all along the road, but the Great High Priest, "having made by Himself purification of sins, He seated Himself" *upon* the Throne, "at the right hand of the Majesty on high." No blood is needed further to assure us that the Throne whereon He sits who shed it is a Throne of triumphant, glorious grace. *Christ there* is, as we are told in the epistle to the Romans (chap. iii. 25), "set forth a propitiatory" (or mercy-seat) "through faith, by His blood." Christ is HIMSELF, in heaven, the blood-sprinkled mercy-seat. The New Testament, while confirming and interpreting the Old, goes yet far beyond it; and this is an important principle for its interpretation. Where should we find this more than in the light which thus streams out through these opened heavens?

There is a parenthesis added here, in which the *covenant* of which Christ is Mediator is identified with a *testament* of which Christ is the Testator. The word in the Greek means both of these, "covenant" and "testament;" and the covenant has, in fact, come to us in the shape of a testament which His death has made good. We have been so accustomed to this view of it that it has almost obscured the thought of the covenant itself; which is, however, what the apostle dwells upon most earnestly throughout, and here he returns immediately to the thought of it.

Whence, [n]neither was the first [covenant] inaugurated without blood: for every commandment having been spoken by Moses according to the law, to all the people,—having taken the blood of bulls* and goats, with water and [o]scarlet wool and hyssop, he sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, This is the [p]blood of the covenant which God hath enjoined unto you. And he sprinkled likewise with blood both the [q]tabernacle and all the vessels of service. And almost all things are according to the law purified with blood; and [r]without shedding of blood is no remission. It was necessary, then, that the [s]representations of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

3 (ix. 24-x. 22)\ The perfecting of the worshiper for entrance into the holiest.

3. For Christ is not entered into holy [places] made with hands, the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to [t]appear in the presence of God for us; and not

n Ex.24.6-8.
o Lev. 14. 4. Num. 19.6.
p *cf.* Matt. 26. 28.
q Ex. 29. 12, 49. Lev. 8. 15, 19. Lev. 16. 14, 16.
r Lev.17.11.
s ch. 8. 5.
t ch. 6. 20.

* *Μόσχων.*

The first covenant was not inaugurated without blood. The book and all the people were sprinkled with the blood of sacrifice. This seems strange, because the covenant was the legal one, and we can only view it in this character as affirming, as the blood of atonement did in fact affirm, the righteous penalty of the law for those under it. Christ affirmed this decisively when, to redeem us, He took the curse of the law, magnified it, and made it honorable; but this blood of sacrifice showed therefore in itself what must be the necessary issue of that first covenant. But not only so, the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry were in like manner sprinkled with blood; and here the typical meaning is evident. Almost all things according to the law were purified with blood. For remission of sins there was no other way. Thus the mere figurative representations bore witness; but the heavenly things needed a better Sacrifice than anything the law could furnish.

3. Christ has entered into heaven itself, and with a Sacrifice which never needs to be repeated. If He were to *offer* again, notice, He would have to *suffer* again; but neither is possible. It is clear that here the Romish notion of an unbloody offering is absolutely set aside. "Once for all," at the completion of the ages of probation, when man's ungodliness and hopelessness of self-recovery had been perfectly demonstrated, He was manifested for the putting away of sin by the sacrifice of Himself. The consequence for faith is a complete deliverance by His work from the common portion of men in death and judgment. Death itself *is* for man judgment in this sense, that it is the sentence of God upon a fallen condition; and thus the law used it as the "ministration of death," as the second of Corinthians teaches us that it was. But while it was thus in itself the judgment of a fallen condition, there is for man as such a judgment *afterwards* which every awakened conscience prophesies to itself.

The necessary issue of this, also, is condemnation, if we personally enter into it,—that is, if we are to be judged according to such judgment as we find at the Great White Throne, every one receiving according to his works. The psalmist has already shown us that as to those even who are true servants of the Lord, they could not endure this. "Enter not into judgment with *Thy servant*, O Lord, for in Thy sight shall no flesh living be justified." From this personal judgment Christ has entirely delivered us. His own words are that "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life,

that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy [places] every year with blood of others; for then would he need often to have suffered from the foundation of the world, but now once [u]in the completion of the ages hath he been [v]manifested to put away sin by his sacrifice. And forasmuch as it is reserved unto men once [w]to die, and [x]after this the judgment, so Christ also having been once offered to [y]bear the sins of many, shall [z]appear to those that look for him the second time, apart from sin, [a]for salvation.

For the law having a [b]shadow of the [c]good things to come, [d]not the very image of the things, can never by the same sacrifices which they offer perpetually, year by year, make the comers thereto perfect. For then would they not indeed have ceased to be offered? for that the worshipers having been once purged would have no longer any conscience of sins.

[u] 1 Cor. 10. 11.
[v] 1 Jno. 3.5.
[w] *cfr.* 1 Thess. 4. 17. 1 Cor.15.51.
[x] 2 Tim.4.1. Rev. 20.12. *cf.* 1 Pet. 3. 19. *cfr.* Jno. 5. 24.
[y] 1Pet. 2.24.
[z] Acts 1. 11.
[a] Phil. 3.20, 21. Rom. 8. 23, 24.
[b] ch. 8. 5. Col. 2. 17.
[c] ch. 9. 11.
[d] *cf.*ch.9.8,9.

and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life." The appraisal of our works, when we give account of ourselves at the judgment-seat of Christ, is a wholly different matter. We are not delivered from this, because it would not be true blessing for us to be delivered from it; and grace will, after all, be most signally manifested with regard to this very judgment. From *personally* coming into judgment we are, by our Lord's explicit assurance, forever exempt. Our condition is already pronounced upon, the Word of Life has come to us, as it were, by the very sentence of the One who will be the Judge in that day; and He cannot repent of it. There is no confusion of the world with His people, such confusion as people often make. There is no picking out by judgment of those that are His own from the world around. We are, in fact, taken up from the world which lies under judgment, to Christ Himself, when He appears, taken up in one special company, and already changed into His likeness before even we see Him.

Thus judgment, in the sense in which the apostle speaks of it here, there can be none. Death there may be, but it does not come now as penalty, as before it did. Here the Lord's words again come in to assure us that while he that believed on Him in the past, though he were dead, yet would live, he that *now* liveth and believeth in Him shall never die. Jordan is thus, for the Lord's people, dried to the bottom. Thus, out of the whole condition of man as under penalty, the Christian is delivered; and, in place of death and judgment, the Christ who "once was offered to bear the sins of many shall appear to those that look for Him the second time, apart from sin, for salvation." He comes apart from sin for our deliverance. He has nothing to do with sin then. He takes up no question of this kind when He comes for His people. His coming is simply deliverance: the full, realized salvation of the whole man, when we are delivered from the last remnant of evil and all that it implies, and changed into His own blessed likeness, to be with Him as the companions of His heart forever.

Our entrance already, in spirit, into all this is that which shows our perfect sanctification for worship in the holiest as the fruit of His glorious work. This, we are reminded, was impossible under the law. That was not even the image, the exact representation, of the good things it typified; and the repetition yearly of the day of atonement showed the inefficacy of these multiplied sacrifices: "For then," asks the apostle, "would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshipers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins."

We must remember, in order to realize the completeness of this, that even in

But in these there is a calling to mind again of sins every year: for it is [e] not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, [f] Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a [g] body hast thou prepared me: in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then I said, Lo, I am come, (in the roll of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above, when he said, Sacrifices and offerings and burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein, (which are offered according to the law,) then he said, Lo, I am come to do thy will. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will

[e] Mic. 6. 6,7.
[f] Ps. 40. 6–8.
[g] Ps. 40. 6. *Sept.*

Israel no sacrifice was offered twice for *the same sins*, and that in Christendom the putting away of sins as they arise is the common thought. For this, not, indeed, a fresh sacrifice, but a fresh application of the blood is thought a necessity; but that is just what the apostle would call having "conscience of sins," instead of the conscience being "once purged," purged once for all. One who needs a fresh offering or a fresh application of the blood to cleanse him is not purged once for all; but nothing else would satisfy God's heart for us or the need which, in fact, we have. How dreadful the presence of God would be for one who fully accepted the thought of being left there an unpurged sinner, if only for a moment! No doubt, for the Christian, the thought of God's grace, however contradictory to his system, prevents him from clearly realizing what this would mean; but the apostle plainly says here that to need a repetition of such purging would mean never having been purged according to God; for He could not leave so great a need less than perfectly met. The blood of bulls and goats could not take away sins *at all;* and that was what the repetition, the taking away of sin again and again, meant. It was not true purging that was accomplished in this way at all.

Christ therefore comes to substitute for these inefficacious sacrifices His own perfect one. This was what these typical ones foreshadowed. "In the volume of the book" they were written of Him. This does not refer to eternal counsels, but to the book of the law. Coming into the world He says this, not in eternity; and it is properly "Lo, I am come," not "I come." He sees the offerings going on, but with no divine satisfaction in them, and He brings them to an end by the accomplishment of His own work. This is our need, then, as worshipers, and thus it is met. The heart is free from everything that would cloud it in the presence of God, everything that would prevent the free pouring forth of praise and thanksgiving. "We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

"A body hast Thou prepared Me," which in this connection the apostle quotes from the Septuagint, shows how perfectly the offering had been cared for by God. The Hebrew original has, as is well known, "Ears hast Thou digged for Me;" which, no doubt, is, on the whole, equivalent in meaning. It does not, apparently, as it might seem at first, refer to the bored ear of the Hebrew servant, though it approaches so nearly to it as to make the distinguishing between them no great necessity. The bored ear was the token of perpetual service voluntarily assumed; the ears digged, of capacity and readiness for receiving the word of another. A body prepared implies the "form of a servant," a nature assumed which is not, in fact, to be given up again. It is the link with the lowest rank of intelligent creaturehood, though with what possibilities of future development He alone who created them could make manifest as to them. They are the advance rank of a system with which the thought of development (though in quite

we have been [h]sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering, and offering often the same sacrifices which can never take away sins; but he having offered one sacrifice for sins, [i]sat down in perpetuity at the right hand of God; [j]from henceforth waiting until his enemies be made the footstool of his feet: for by one offering he hath perfected perpetually those who are sanctified.

And the Holy Spirit also beareth us witness, for after what was said, [k]This is the covenant that I will establish towards them after those days, the Lord saith,* I will put my laws into their hearts, and I will write them also in their minds, and their sins and their lawlessnesses I will remember no more. Now, where there is remission of these there is no longer an offering for sin.

[h] ch. 13. 12.
[i] ch. 1. 3.
[j] Ps. 110. 1.
[k] Jer. 31. 31, 33, 34.

* This perfects the apparently incomplete sentence. The apostle uses "the Lord saith," which is in his quotation, as what is therefore the after-witness of the Spirit.

another than the evolutionist sense) seems connected throughout. But in this advance the lower links do not drop off, but are raised and incorporated with the higher—a prophetic witness to that Highest which has now been revealed to us.

But the "body prepared" intimates something besides creative advance. The Fall had taken place, and the body of man, in the seeds of mortality and various derangement now inherent in it, is the manifest evidence of this. The Son of Man must be true man in all that constitutes manhood; deriving it, also, from a human mother, one of the fallen race. Who, then, can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? The power of God must come in here, as in our Lord's case is expressly declared it did, and the very body of the blessed Doer of His Father's will must be prepared Him. Thus we can see why the version of the Septuagint is accepted by the inspired writer; the body that was to be offered being thus shown to have the character of a perfect offering: "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

This is the sanctification of the epistle to the Hebrews. It is not practical sanctification by the Spirit, but by sacrifice. It is not the anointing of the priest with oil, but with the blood. The oil can be only *upon* the blood, which is the foundation of everything; and thus the priestly family is set apart to God. The offering is offered, never to be repeated. Christ is, therefore, not busy in offering continual sacrifices, as the legal priesthood. He has sat down at the right hand of God. Blessed thing for us to realize, love is at rest! He needs not to rise any more on this account. He sits perpetually there, until the time comes for His enemies to be put under His feet. There is no more to be done as regards offering. "By one offering He has perfected in perpetuity" (as the word is) "those that are sanctified;" that is, there is never a moment in which they are not in the full value of that work before God. For this the apostle can appeal again to the inspired writings in the hands of the Jews themselves, and thus brings the testimony of the Holy Spirit to confirm what he is saying.

What is said as to this is not a reference to the coming out of the Spirit after the ascent of Christ to the right hand of God, as some have made it, but, as should be evident, an appeal to what the Spirit had uttered long before. The words of the new covenant itself show fully the cessation of sacrifices for the putting away of sin, for God says in it: "Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more." But repetition of sacrifice for putting them away would be still a remembrance.

Having, therefore, brethren, [1]boldness for entrance into the holy [places] by the blood of Jesus, by a new death-made* and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is, his flesh, and having a

[1] ch. 4. 16.

* προόσφατον in its primary sense is "new-slaughtered;" and this is needed for the antithesis which the doctrine requires—"new-slain," but "living." For the veil speaks of the living Person. See notes; and those also on Ex. xxvi. 31-32.

Now the point is reached to which the apostle has been so long in coming, and for which he has so carefully prepared the way. We have, therefore, now "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh."

There are things here which we need to consider attentively. First of all, let us notice that the word for "the holiest of all" is really "the holies," or "holy places." In our common translation it is "the holiest," supposing the need of supplying "holy of" before "holies." This has been done, also, in chaps. ix. 8–12, xiii. 11, but "the holy of holies," or "holiest," is found once, and only once, in Hebrews, chap. ix. 3. In ix. 24, 25, it is "holy places," though the Revised Version translates here, as elsewhere, "holy place" without any marginal indication of the change that has been made. There is absolutely no necessity for any such alterations. Scripture is perfect as it is. In ix. 3, where there is need to distinguish between "the holy place" and "the holy of holies," the apostle uses the correct term for the latter; and where he has not done so, we may be sure that he had design in not distinguishing. Scripture is accurate here, as always.

In fact, to read here, as we should, that we have "boldness to enter into the holy places by the blood of Jesus," destroys at once two statements that have been made, to the confusion of the interpretation of the epistle:—the first, that there is no rending of the veil in Hebrews; the second, that the first tabernacle, the outer holy place, is now entirely removed in Christianity, and only the holiest of all remains. As a consequence of the latter, neither the lamp of the sanctuary, nor the table of shewbread, nor the incense altar, has anything to do with us. These are wholly Jewish, and to apply them to Christianity, it is said, is a grave mistake. Notice how this is set aside by simply taking Scripture as it is undeniably given us. We have boldness, it says, "to enter into the holy *places* (both of them, though now made one) by the blood of Jesus;" and thus it is established that the outer sanctuary abides for us as well as the inner, not *as* outer, no doubt. The two become one.

It will be asked how this consists with chap. ix. 8, in which it is stated that the way into the holy places was not yet manifested as long as the first tabernacle had its standing: but this only leads us to the true statement as to the veil being rent; for the rending of the veil it is which makes both tabernacles one; so that, in fact, the first tabernacle *has* no standing, no existence as such. If we have come into the true tabernacle at all, we have come into the holiest. If the veil be not rent, then indeed we could go, on the contrary, into the outer sanctuary first, and worship afar off until we found our way, or were admitted into the holiest; but Hebrews knows nothing of this. There is but one entrance, "by the blood of Jesus," into the united sanctuaries; and this is the access which is given us in the grace of Christianity. The veil is not removed,—that is never said,—and the mistake has resulted from the confusion, as has been already stated, with another and different veil which we have in the second of Corinthians, the veil over Moses' face. That has been removed for us as Christians, and there is no veil over Christ's face. That is true; but in the way things are stated here in Hebrews, we go *through* the veil, which is the flesh of Jesus. We go through, because it is rent for us to go through. "The new and

[m] great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts [n] sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our [o] body washed with pure water.

m ch. 3. 6.
n ch. 12. 24. ch. 9. 14.
o Tit. 3. 5. cf. Ex. 29. 4.

living way" made through it is the thing which enables us to go through. This brings it sufficiently near to what we have in the Gospels; where, as soon as the Lord Jesus died, the veil of the sanctuary was rent in the midst. And the reference to this is more complete, in fact, than perhaps any translation can easily convey; for the word "new" in this expression, though one used in the sense of "recent," has a fuller signification, which is its primary one. In the sense of "new" we should expect the word used in "new covenant" (*kainos*), scarcely "recent," a word used but once beside, adverbially, in the New Testament.* For what connection would there be between "recent" and "living"! and what force would there be in it if taken by itself? On the other hand, its full meaning of "newly slain" (*prosphaton*) † harmonizes contrastively with "and living," which completes the thought. By death and resurrection has the way been made for us into the heavenly sanctuary, through the flesh, the human nature, of Jesus; and here the doctrine of the epistle is plainly interpretative of the fact in the Gospels.

The veil, therefore, *is* rent in Hebrews, and that is why, as has been said, it is not really "having boldness to enter into the holiest," but "into the holy places;" because the two are thus united. Yet that does not mean, as it seems often to be taken to mean, that the veil is removed. It is by Jesus always that we draw near to God, and the veil has always its place. This very veil was in the type broidered with the emblems of the glory which is His as the result of His work accomplished. *This* is not removed, nor do we want it removed. *Rent* and *removed* are different things. By Him we draw near to God; but He had to die that it might be so. Look at the beautiful veil, and see what it implies.‡

The drawing near has, of course, to be, with us, a spiritual realization. The ability to draw near is our privilege at all times. The conditions are given by the apostle. "Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." We have the way secured, and the living Person of the Great Priest over the house of God, Himself on the throne of God, One who in the tenderness of divine grace ministers to our infirmities, and lifts us up above ourselves. On our part, therefore, we are to approach "with a true heart, in full assurance of faith,"—that is the proper answer to the grace that has thus provided for us; with the "heart sprinkled from an evil conscience," which is the Christian purification of the conscience previously insisted on as necessary for the practical opening of the sanctuary. The "body washed with pure water" refers to what was done at the consecration of the priests (Ex. xxix. 4), and which answers to "the washing of regeneration" (Tit. iii. 5), the word of God bringing us out from a world in rampant insubjection to God, into whole-hearted allegiance to the Son of His love. This is the spiritual reality of which baptism is the expression outwardly; but "the washing of regeneration" is not baptism, which is the mere shadow, and not the substance.

Immediately, as we are brought to the question of responsibilities here, we recognize our weakness and the general need. We must hold fast unwaveringly the confession of our hope. We must "consider one another, to provoke to love and to good works." We must "not forsake the assembling of ourselves to-

* Acts xviii. 2, "*lately* arrived."

† This is by no means an original thought. Moll, in Lange's Commentary, says: "This entrance, which forms the gateway to the holiest of all, is in its nature an ὁδὸς πρόσφατος καὶ ζῶσα, and as such has been consecrated for our use by Jesus. The epithet 'newly slaughtered' points to the fact that, previously non-existent, it has been originated by the sacrificial death of Jesus (Theodoret with most) and not to its perpetual freshness (Ebrard)."

‡ See *Notes* on Exodus.

4 (x. 23-39): The ruin of apostasy.

4. Let us [p]hold fast the confession of the hope without wavering (for he is faithful who hath promised); and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works; [q]not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the custom is with some, but encouraging one another; and [r]so much the more as ye see the day approaching. For [s]if we go astray* wilfully [t]after receiving the knowledge of the truth, [u]there remaineth no longer any sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and heat of fire about to devour the adversaries. He that hath set at naught Moses' law dieth without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much worse punishment, think ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath [v]trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant [w]wherewith he hath been sanctified an unholy† thing, and

p ch. 4. 14.
q Acts 2. 42.
r Rom. 13. 11.
s Num. 15. 30.
t ch. 6. 4-6. 2 Pet. 2.20.
u cf. Ps.40.6. ch. 7. 18. ch. 9. 10. ch. 10. 11.
v ch. 6. 6.
w 1 Cor. 7. 14.

* Or, "sin." The primary meaning of the word, to "miss the road," is evidently the force here.
† Literally, "common":—with no special sacred character.

gether." We must "encourage one another, and so much the more as we see the day approaching." Ah, is it not just the drawing near to God that exposes our essential weakness? The presence of God is the only refuge from ourselves, from the power of things around; it is the very sanctuary, the place of holiness. But how feeble are we in the enjoyment of it! And our feebleness, instead of making us draw together for mutual help, tends to disorganize and make us drift asunder; and, instead of awakening pity and longing over one another, makes us, even to each other, the subject of unsparing criticism. We need the ability to "provoke to love and to good works." If souls have got away from God, nothing but the power of the love of Christ can break down and restore.

It may seem strange to us at this time to think of Christians *then* seeing the day of Christ approaching; but the signs of the end, to observant eyes, soon began to show themselves. "The mystery of iniquity" was already at work; and when John writes his first epistle, many antichrists show it already to be the last time. Disheartening things these, but the apostle would tell us that we have not received the spirit of cowardice, but of power (2 Tim. i. 7), and we are not to be disheartened. Nothing more effectually cuts the nerve of activity than the loss of hope. The devil knows this well. Love itself will be reduced to idleness if assured there is no good in working. God is the God of all encouragement; and the moment we get to His side of things, we are on the winning side. Divine love invites us to draw on it without stint.

4. The warning which follows is one of those which in Hebrews are so frequent. The "wilful sin" here spoken of supposes, as in the sixth chapter, the knowledge of the truth, with the will in error. Sin is here, in the root-meaning of the word (*hamartia*), "missing the mark," "going astray." Here is a class whom he has to warn, as those before, against treading under foot the Son of God, going back to a Judaism all the impotence of which has been exposed, and which now, therefore, has manifestly "no more sacrifice for sins." The sacrifices were still going on at Jerusalem, but there was no reality any more in anything there. They are not failing saints, but *adversaries*, who, as such, must expect sorer judgment than under Moses' law, so much more as what they despised was greater. The blood of the covenant could not avail for one who had given it up as common, or having no virtue; and grace itself must fail those who insult the Spirit of grace. "Wherewith he was sanctified" is naturally a difficulty, though the reference to the day of atonement helps us to realize what is in-

hath done [x]despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that said, [y]Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord; and again, [z]The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. But call to remembrance the former days, in which after having been enlightened ye endured a great [a]conflict of sufferings; on the one hand, when ye were made a [b]spectacle both in reproaches and afflictions; and on the other, when ye became [c]partakers with those who were passing through them. For ye sympathized with those in* bonds, and [d]took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing that ye have for† yourselves a better and [e]an enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense; for ye have need of endurance in order that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise. For yet a very little while [f]he that cometh will come, and will not tarry. Now the [g]just shall live by faith; and if he draw back,‡ my soul hath no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of them that believe § to the saving of the soul.

x Matt. 12. 31, 32.
y Deut. 32. 35. Rom. 12. 19.
z Deut. 32. 36. Ps. 135. 14.
a Phil. 1. 30.
b 1 Cor. 4. 9.
c Matt. 25. 36.
d Matt. 5. 12.
e 1 Pet. 1. 4.
f cf. Hab. 2. 3.
g Hab. 2. 4. Rom. 1. 17. Gal. 3. 11.

* Some of the earliest MSS. have "my bonds."
† Only a few cursives have "in."
‡ "The just" and "if he" are in reverse order in the Septuagint, which is quoted here: "If he draw back, my soul hath no pleasure in him; but the just shall live by faith in Me." The Hebrew is quite different in the first part (see Hab. ii. 4).
§ Literally, "of faith."

tended. The blood put before God then was the blood of the covenant as being that in virtue of which the relation between God and Israel was maintained: in God's sight, the type of what truly sanctifies. Thus it sanctified the people, every one among them abiding in the value of it. The Christian assembly now abides under the blood of a better covenant, and of this assembly the person spoken of had formed a part. If his profession had not been true, he still had the responsibility of it in giving it up, as all the blessing of it had been open to him to enjoy. He is thus credited with that which on God's part was never hindered being made good to him, and which he had claimed to be his own.

But again the apostle comforts those he is addressing with remembrance of what they had endured, and how the Lord's grace had upheld them under it, and wrought experience, in which what had been trial becomes in result abiding blessing. Still, they had need of endurance, and would in due time find the recompense; for He who cometh will at last come. Meanwhile, "the just shall live by faith;" and he who draws back God can have no pleasure in him. The principle always remains true, but these are marked out by the apostle here as being really distinct classes. "*We* are not of those," he says, "who draw back to perdition." We are not of that class of people at all, "but of those who believe to the saving of the soul."

Div. 4.

We come now to the fourth division of the epistle, in which the apostle shows by the example of the saints of old how the practical life of those that at any time pleased God had always been a path of faith. This is, of course, a thing very necessary to his argument, which was, in fact, taking away the sensible things of Judaism and replacing them for that which, however blessed in itself, nevertheless required faith for its enjoyment in every part. It is noticeable, therefore, that when he comes to the law, the setting up of the ordered system

DIVISION 4. (Chap. xi.)

1 (1-7): The principles of the path.
1 (1-3): The sufficiency of faith as a governing principle of practical life.

The path of God's people the path of faith from the beginning.

1. [1] NOW faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the [a] conviction of things not seen. For by this the elders obtained witness. By faith we apprehend that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that that which is seen should not have its origin from things which appear.

[a] *cf.* Rom. 8. 24, 25.

in the midst of Israel, he gives us very few and slight examples, comparatively, of the path of faith. All this shows his purpose the more completely. We have the trials and experiences of faith put before us especially, as already said, in those who lived before the Jewish system had been established, as, in the wisdom of God, their own fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lived—the very men who received the promises. What a thing for Jews to realize, that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had lived their whole lives apart from that in which now they had, not indeed overmuch, but such mistaken confidence! The complete setting aside of the sensible things of Judaism left them certainly no worse, and in fact immeasurably better off, than these. Indeed, it is not of that which is seen and sensible that faith takes hold, and those who had only those things found really what was theirs in looking beyond them; by just so much as they rested in these they lost the reality.

There are four sections here; the first giving, after an introductory statement of principles, in three who lived before the flood, a foreshadowing of the path of faith ever since; the second, the gain to it of delaying the blessing; the third, the prophetic outlooks granted to it; while the fourth shows its various trials and experiences.

1. [1] The first section, again, has four parts; the first of which, as an introductory statement, shows the sufficiency of faith as the governing principle of practical life. The power of it is in this, that it is "the substantiation of things hoped for, a conviction of things unseen." The heart is drawn out of the world by the attraction of what is beyond it, of what it is convinced of, though unseen. Thus, there is independence of the world; its allurements solicit in vain; circumstances do not control us. We are masters of ourselves, and thus clear-sighted and steadfast.

Through faith, also, the men of old "obtained a good report"—of course, in God's history of things, not in man's. It is easy to see in Scripture that the thing which made the old worthies what they were was faith. How perfect the contrast between the same men energized by it and when it was at ebb in them! Then, "by faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that that which is seen should not have its origin from things which appear." It would be a good thing if the men of science to-day would give heed to such a text as this. Take Darwin's "Origin of Species," where he never gets, indeed, to the origin, and owns that he cannot prove that any species ever did originate after the fashion he decrees. And think of originating in his manner Eve out of Adam! Given even the rib, she could not have sprung out of that simply. There must have been what did not appear—the power of God. If it is not perfectly scientific to believe that in her case, we may as well give up Scripture at once, for you cannot expunge the miraculous out of it. If it be only a question of less or more, how unreasonable to measure out the power of God, and how enormous the pretence of being able to say just how much this power, or how or when it shall be fitting for it to be displayed!

God has ordained in His mercy a stable world for man, and we may thank Him that it is so, and see abundant reason for its being so, if we are to be able to reckon on things at all. But then they turn round and talk learnedly of laws of nature, and would bind the Author of nature with them, so that He shall not

2 (ver. 4): Abel witnessing and witnessed to, in the acceptance of the death which has come in through sin.

3 (5, 6): Heaven claiming the man of "dedicated" life.

4 (7): The earthly blessing of faith.

2 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he having died 'yet speaketh.

3 By faith [j]Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had the testimony that he had pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that draweth near to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those who [k]seek him out.

4 By faith Noah, [l]oracularly warned concerning things not yet seen, moved with fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his house; [m]by which he condemned the world, and became [n]heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

i ch. 12. 24.

j Gen. 5. 24. *cf.* 2 Ki. 2. 11.

k *cf.* Jer. 29. 12-14.

l Gen. 6. 13.

m 1 Pet. 3. 20.

n Rom. 4. 13.

move except at their bidding; whereas, in fact, a stable world is just what is suited as a background for the miraculous. There could be no miracle without it; and the miracles are a reserve of power most fitted to display Him as the living God amid all this mechanism, and not leave Him to be confounded with it. After all, Scripture is at once the most scientific and rational of books, while it is, besides, a miracle of the most stupendous kind, always ready to hand, and with its own power of conviction for any who will examine it. And this one may say in the face of all the higher critics in the world, who are simply the Darwinians of theology, and who, like them, theorize after the most stupendous fashion and then talk about the credulity of faith.

God manifested in creation! If we only realized just what this means, what a suited setting it would make for the brighter manifestation of God in Christ, and how, day by day, we should walk amid the ministries of all the creatures of His Hand! Day to day would indeed utter speech, and night to night tell knowledge. The universe would then be a glorious house of God, and in what corner of it could we be without Him? Here, then, as the basis of a life of faith, we are taught to realize in nature the supernatural, the seen having its root and origin in the unseen, and which has not given up its work in that primary effort that produced it.

2 In the second place, we have Abel witnessing and witnessed to, bringing to God his fuller sacrifice than Cain, which owns the death that had come in through sin, and in a way contemptible to mere reason,—folly, if it were not faith,—turning that death into an acceptable offering to God, so as to obtain witness that he is righteous, "God testifying of his gifts." But his life exhales from the earth, from which his blood cries still, the world being in opposition to God from its very beginning.

3 In the third place, we have the heavenward side of this in Enoch, walking with God in a "dedicated" life, upon which no shadow of death comes. How beautiful the gleam of brightness here! Heaven claims him, a type of the heavenly family which now waits, not for the judgment of the earth, though that be at hand, but for the translation at the coming of the Lord.

4 In the fourth place, Noah gives us the picture of the heirs of earth, Israel and the spared nations, brought through the judgment; his house saved and the world condemned by that faith of his. Here, then, we have already the plain foreshadowing of faith in its various history, these three witnesses together showing us righteousness, communion, and heirship. They are all found in it.

2. The second section gives us, next, the gain to faith in the delay of blessing; and here Abraham is the great example for us. It is striking, the difference we

2 (8-16): The gain to faith in the delay of blessing.
1 (8): Obedience to the call of God in Abraham.
2 (9, 10): The delay of blessing giving a better hope.

2. [1] By faith [o]Abraham, when he was called to go out into the place [p]which he was to receive for an inheritance, obeyed and went out, not knowing whither he was going.

[2] By faith he sojourned as a stranger in the land of promise as in a foreign country, [q]dwelling in tents [r]with Isaac and [s]Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which [t]hath foundations, whose designer and maker is God.

o Gen. 12. 1, Acts. 7.2,4.
p Gen. 12. 7.
q Gen. 12. 8, Gen. 13. 3.
r Gen.26.17.
s Gen. 25.27, *ctr.*Gen.33. 17.
t Rev. 21.19.

find between Abraham in the Old Testament and as he is presented to us in this account in Hebrews. In the Old Testament you have the circumstances of his life, and his faith in God is manifested and blessed; but of the *heavenly* country that we are now told he looked for, you find nothing. Typically, of course, there is no difficulty. Wherever we read of Canaan, we rightly think of heaven; but suppose we had not the New Testament, how much should we know? Even now that we have Paul's comment here, it has been sought by some to show that Canaan, both in the Old Testament and the New, was the sole inheritance promised to him, and that it is all he is ever to have. It is impossible to maintain this if we take the statements fairly here; but that it should have been attempted to maintain it shows how little the Old Testament by itself reveals to us of what Abraham had in view. The difference is of interest in other ways; but we may take it as illustrating the gain of delayed blessing. He did not in his lifetime receive the things promised as to Canaan; to the end he was a mere stranger in it; but it thus became for him a shadow of a better and heavenly inheritance. How much in that day God taught men by pictures of this kind must be plain to all who will consider it; and while to us it would be dreadful indeed to have to go back to such things only for ourselves, yet, when it was the large part of what men had, they might be expected to look into it in a way that now, with our fuller light, we scarcely think of doing. That, of course, does not approve our light dealing. Look at the promise of the woman's seed at the beginning, which even the perversions of it among the heathen show to have been accepted as speaking of a spiritual deliverance! Look at God clothing Adam and Eve with the skins of beasts, the fruit of death. And so everywhere at that time: things were under a veil; but we may be sure that God did not allow the veil to be so thick as to hide altogether from faith the glory beneath it.

[1] The first subsection here gives us simply and beautifully the obedience of faith in Abraham, who goes out into a place which he was to receive for an inheritance, not knowing at first where he was going. It seems as if, although his steps had been directed to Canaan, yet it was only after he got there that he learned that that was the inheritance. Alas, even with God's people, how they allow the question of where a thing will lead them, to divert them from the one and simple all-necessary question, Is it God that is leading? Not such a man was Abraham. The Lord give us to be as simple and childlike as he!

[2] The second subsection gives us more the character of the whole, for here we find him, after the births, themselves so long delayed, of Isaac and then Jacob, still a stranger in the land of his inheritance. But what was his compensation? He looked for a city having foundations, whose Architect and Builder (devising the plan and carrying it out) is God. The mention of a city is very striking, if it means that this was actually, as such, before Abraham's sight. It may mean that this it is in which Abraham's faith will, in fact, find its consummation, or it may be that God had revealed to him much more than we have knowledge of; for even the earthly Jerusalem was not then existent as the city of God; so that the type even was wanting, except it were Melchisedec's Salem; and the city here is certainly the heavenly one. The mention of "the foundations" brings before us the very city of the Apocalypse, with its twelve jeweled foundations, like the

3 (11, 12): A resurrection lesson.

3 By faith also Sarah herself [u]received strength to conceive seed, and that beyond her time of life; because she counted him faithful who promised. Wherefore also there have been born of one, and that of one [v]who had become dead, even [w]as the stars of heaven in multitude, and [x]as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable.

4 (13-16): Strangers and sojourners.

4 All these died in faith, [y]not having received the promises, but having seen them from afar off, and hailed them, and confessed that they were [z]strangers and sojourners on the earth; for they who say such things show clearly that they seek a country. And if they had had in mind that from whence they went out, they [a]would have had opportunity to have returned; but now they seek a better, that is a heavenly. Wherefore God is [b]not ashamed of them, to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city.

3 (17-22): Prophetic realizations.

3. By faith, Abraham, when he was tried, [c]offered up Isaac; and he who had received for himself the promises offered up his only-begotten [son,] as to whom it had been said, [d]In Isaac shall thy seed be called: [e]accounting that God was able to raise him even from among the dead; whence also he received him in a figure.

By [f]faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

By faith [g]Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph; and [h]worshiped upon the top of his staff.

u Gen. 21.2.
v Rom.4.19.
w Gen. 15.5. Gen. 22. 17.
x Gen.22.17. Gen. 32.12.
y ver. 39.
z Gen. 23. 4. Gen. 47. 9.
a *cf.*Gen.24. 6-8.
b Ex. 3. 6, 15. *cf.* Eph.1.3, 17. Col. 1. 3. 2 Cor. 1. 3.
c Gen. 22.1-10. Jas. 2. 21.
d Gen.21.12. Rom. 9. 7.
e Gen. 22. 5.
f Gen.27.27-29, 37-40.
g Gen. 48.16-20.
h Gen.47.31.

high priest's breastplate, the glorious lights and perfections of the divine character. A city built upon these must indeed be abiding. Abraham's hope had surely, then, been lifted to a higher plane than that of earth, in the meantime of the delay of that earthly expectation.

3 Now we come to Sarah, to find certainly a sort of resurrection of the dead for her; and the child so born, what a pledge it was of other fulfilments! Here, again, it cannot be questioned how largely the very delay increased the blessing.

4 Fourthly, it is emphasized for us how long this trial of faith lasted. They "died in faith, not having received the promises," and thus upon earth, during their whole time on it, were strangers and sojourners. The land, too, which they had left lay, in the wisdom of God, all this time as it were within sight, inviting their return; but they persisted, desiring a better country. Here was, then, once more, how great a gain! God therefore openly links Himself with them as their God. "The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob" was His own specifically declared memorial Name; and He has prepared for them a city.

3. The third section shows us faith in its prophetic realizations, which sprang, as always, from the apprehension of God in the sanctuary, where everything is seen in reference to Him alone. Here, again, there are four subsections:

First, we see Abraham offering up, at the word of God, the son in whom the promises were to be fulfilled to him. Isaac shall be brought back, therefore, his faith argues, even from the dead; from which, indeed, he is in a figure received.

Next in Isaac, though at first obscured by fleshly impulses, faith manifests itself in the recognition of God's rights as against nature, the ruin of nature being implied in it, and His separation of His people from the world.

By faith [i]Joseph, when coming to his end, made mention of the departing of the sons of Israel, and gave commandment concerning his bones. [i] Gen. 50.24, 25.

4 (23-40): The varied trials and experiences of faith.

4. By faith [j]Moses, when he was born, was hid three months by his parents, because they saw the child was beautiful; and they were [k]not afraid of the king's commandment. [j] Ex. 2. 2, 3. Acts. 7. 20. [k] Ex. 1. 16, 22.

By faith Moses, when he had become great, refused to be called [l]the son of Pharaoh's daughter; [m]choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to have the pleasure of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompense. [l] cf. Ex. 2. 10. [m] Ex. 2. 11.

By faith he left Egypt, [n]not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. By faith [o]he celebrated the passover and the sprinkling of blood, that the destroyer of the first-born might not touch them. [n] Ex. 10. 28, 29. Ex. 11. 8. Ex. 14. 13. [o] Ex. 12. 21-28.

By faith [p]they passed through the Red Sea as through dry land; of which the Egyptians making trial, were swallowed up. [p] Ex. 14. 21-30.

Thirdly, Jacob rehearses, as it were, in the blessing of the sons of Joseph, his own history; but now at the end of human strength, the struggler becomes a worshiper, and the eyes, dulling to earthly things, are lighted up with far-off glories. It is, again, a sort of resurrection story, with the issues (as always thus) in God's hand alone.

Fourthly, in Joseph's case, the departure of Israel out of Egypt is anticipated by him, and he ordains his bones to be for them a continual admonition of the change awaiting them.

4. The chapter closes with a more varied yet slighter sketch of the generations following these early patriarchs. As we come to the establishment of the legal system, the record is scanty, and even Moses himself does not appear after the Red Sea deliverance. As a fourth section, trials and experiences characterize it generally.

There are seven subsections:

In the first we have a remarkable simplicity of faith in Moses' parents, which acts upon grounds which to most would appear slight enough,—the beauty of the child. God yet answers it, for it was faith in Him; and how largely He answers, for this is Moses the deliverer! Is there not here one of the natural indications of the mind of God, which we are so unskilled in finding? which the poor and unlearned, perhaps, read best, and which are apt to be confounded with mere superstition, and indeed are separated from it by a line too indefinite for general appreciation; but God makes no mistake, and, wherever faith is, with Him it will be found in honor.

In the second place, we come to Moses himself, with whom faith argues, as it might seem, in the very teeth of a most wonderful providence. He will not be a patron to the people of God, but a sharer in their humiliation, which he esteems but "the reproach of Christ," and values above all the treasures of Egypt. The language here, no doubt, assumes a New Testament character; but Moses' faith, in fact, looked forward to Israel's Deliverer, who was to come.

Thirdly, we find the sanctuary in which he abides, the unseen presence of God; which, upon his return to Egypt, delivers him from even fearing that wrath of the king which once he did fear, and which is now shown to be powerless. While in the passover and the sprinkling of blood, he draws Israel also into the

By faith [q]the walls of Jericho fell down, when they had been compassed about for seven days. By faith [r]the harlot Rahab perished not with those that believed not, [s]when she had received the spies in peace.

And what more do I say? for time would fail me to tell of [t]Gideon, and [u]Barak, and [v]Sampson, and [w]Jephthae, and [x]David, and [y]Samuel, and of the prophets: who by faith [z]overcame kingdoms, wrought righteousness, [a]obtained promises, [b]stopped the mouths of lions, [c]quenched the power of fire, [d]escaped the edge of the sword, [e]out of weakness became strong, [f]became mighty in war, turned to flight the armies of aliens. [g]Women received their dead again by resurrection; and others were tortured, not having accepted deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others underwent trials of mockings and scourgings, yea also of [h]bonds and imprisonment. They were [i]stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, they [j]died by slaughter of the sword; they [k]went about in sheepskins, in goat-skins, destitute, afflicted, evil treated (of whom the world was not worthy), [l]wandering in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

And these all, having obtained testimony through faith, received not the promise; God having provided [m]some better thing for us, that not apart from us should they be [n]made perfect.

q Josh. 6.15, 16, 20.
r Josh. 6.25. Jas. 2. 25.
s Josh. 2. 1, 6-13.
t Judg. 6.11.
u Judg. 4. 6.
v Judg. 13. 24.
w Judg.11.1.
x 1 Sam.16. 13.
y 1 Sam. 1, 20.
z Gen.14.15. 2 Ki. 3. 16, etc. 2 Ki.6.8-12. 2 Ki. 6. 20, 21,
a Gen. 22.16 -18.
b Dan. 6. 22.
c Dan. 3. 25.
d Jer. 38.20. Jer. 39. 11, 12, 18.
e Judg. 16. 28.
f 2Chron.14. 11-15. 2 Chron.20. 20-24.
g 2 Ki. 4. 35.
h Gen.39.20. Jer. 20. 2. Jer. 37. 15.
i 2 Chron. 24. 21.
j 1 Ki. 19.10. Jer. 26. 23.
k 2 Ki. 1. 8.
l 1 Sam.22.1; 1 Ki.18. 4; 1 Ki.19. 9.
m 1 Pet.1.12; Col.1.25-27.
n ch.12. 23.

same sanctuary, as delivered from a greater fear than that of the king of Egypt, by that which has always been a sign of the recognition of the judgment upon man, in that which puts it away forever. In this way, the two illustrations of faith given here are linked together.

The fourth subsection gives us, in contrast, the experience of faith and the assaying of unbelief, at the Red Sea. To faith God opened the way, which unbelief, having evidence for its eyes that it was open, sought to walk in, and so perished.

In the fifth subsection the fall of Jericho again furnishes two contrasted examples of the weakness of man and the power of God. The walls of the city fall at the mere blast of a trumpet; while Rahab, whose house is on the wall that falls, is preserved amid the destruction which comes upon the unbelieving.

We have, then, in the sixth subsection the time following Israel's entrance into the land. Only six names are mentioned, and of these nothing specific is recorded, though their history is familiar to us; but there follows a long catalogue of various and contrasted forms in which faith in such as these overcame, most even in the way of the cross, by what seemed mere defeat. While in the last place we are carried on in thought to the time of perfect fruition for which they wait until we too receive it, we for whom, meanwhile, something better than they enjoyed has been reserved. So, in his way of constant encouragement and admonition, the apostle reminds these Hebrews.

Div. 5.

The last two chapters, forming the final division of the epistle, press the responsibilities resulting from all that has been before us. These divide, nearly with the chapters, into two parts, speaking first of steadfast continuance in the confession of their faith, through whatever difficulties, and lastly of the need of decisive separation from the "camp" of Judaism.

DIVISION 5. (Chaps. xii., xiii.)

The responsibilities resulting from all this.

SECTION 1. (Chaps. xii.-xiii. 6.)

That of steadfast continuance in the confession of faith.

1 (1, 2): The unique Example, the Leader and Perfecter of faith.

1 LET us also, therefore, being compassed about with so great a cloud of °witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us; and let us run with steadfastness the ᵖrace lying before us; looking away unto Jesus, the ᑫLeader* and ʳPerfecter of faith, who, for the ˢjoy that was set before him, endured the cross, having despised the ᵗshame, and is ᵘset down at the right hand of the throne of God.

2 (3, 4): The contradiction of sinners to be endured.

2 For ᵛconsider well him who endured so great contradiction from sinners against himself, that ye be not weary, fainting in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, wrestling against sin.

o *cf.* 1 Jno. 5. 9.
p 1 Cor. 9. 24.
q ch. 2. 10. Acts 3. 15.
r *cf.* Ps. 16. 1. ch. 2. 13. ch. 4. 15.
s *cf.* Ps. 16. 9-11. Is. 53. 11.
t Ps. 22. 6, 7, 16, 17. Ps. 69. 19.
u ch. 1. 3. Mk. 16. 19.
v Matt. 10. 24.

* Ἀρχηγός, the word elsewhere given as "originator," the idea of which is here also: The path of faith is in a sense new since Christ trod it.

1. The first section seems again to divide into seven subsections:

[1] The first of which urges concentration of energy in following One who is, whatever may be the encouragement from that of others, the unique Example, the Leader and Perfecter of faith. In the histories that remain of all these witnesses, still encompassing us, we have what is the principle of the path; and he urges, therefore, to lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily besets us, and run with patience the race set before us. For a runner in a race, to drop all unnecessary weights is imperative. The weight and the sin are quite different things, although so closely connected, as undoubtedly they are. A weight is something I take up when I need not; not a duty, for what is really a duty is never a weight. People may, of course, take up a weight and miscall it duty, and its misnomer will not hinder their finding it what it really is. But it would be impossible for God to impose upon us as duty what would be in itself necessarily hurtful. On the other hand, the artificial life lived at the present day and the supposed responsibility of living up to one's position among men, such like things do indeed often burden the back and make running well-nigh impossible. A racer's heart is at the end of the road, and his motto is: "Forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching on to that which is before." Just in proportion as he has the spirit of a racer will he measure things by his one desire to make progress in the race.

The connection with sin, too, here, is most important. It is, no doubt, sin in the abstract, although there *are* sins which beset each of us in a special way. If we thought of it as of a pack of wolves at our heels, we should easily realize the connection of a weight with sin. You must drop the weight to distance the wolves. Amalek slew the hindermost of Israel. To get on in the road is the way to escape entanglements and the need of a battle. Christ is the goal; and if our eyes are upon Him, we find at once the perfect Example and the energy for the way. "Author" in the common version is the same word as we have had before, both as "Leader" and "Originator." The path for us is what He has made it; and He has completed it, gone through it Himself all the way. "The joy set before Him" was all that was to be the issue of His work, the fruit of the travail of His soul; for this He "endured the cross, despising the shame." The cross itself He could not despise. In result He has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God; and the full compensation is at hand for Him.

[2] This introduces the second subsection. It is not merely a race we have to

x (5-11:) The trial from the divine side and its fruits.

5 And have ye quite forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto sons, [w]My son, [x]despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when reproved by him, [y]for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth? It is for chastening that ye endure. [z]God dealeth with you as with sons; for who is the son that the father chasteneth not? But if ye are without chastening, of which all are made partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons. Moreover, we have had fathers of our flesh who chastened us, and we reverenced [them]. Shall we not much rather be in subjection to the [a]Father of spirits, [b]and live? For they indeed chastened for a few days, after their own pleasure, but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now, [c]no chastening at the time seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; but afterward it yieldeth the [d]peaceable fruit of righteousness to those that are exercised thereby.

w Prov. 3. 11, 12.
x Job 5. 17. Ps. 94. 12. Ps. 119. 67, 75. Rev. 3. 19.
y Deut. 8. 5. 2 Sam. 7. 14. Prov. 3. 12
a Gen. 1. 26, 27, (*cf.* 5. 3). *cf.* Num. 16. 22.
b Isa. 38. 16.
c 1 Pet. 1. 6.
d Jas. 3. 17, 18.

run, but a battle to fight. We have to endure the contradiction of sinners as He endured. The Hebrews had suffered a good deal, but they must not, he tells them, be weary yet. They had not yet, as Christ Himself had, "resisted unto blood, wrestling against sin." Of course, the sin here is that which is outside and around. It is a different conflict from that in Gal. v., and of course, also, from that in Eph. vi. Here it is persecution, and not standing against the wiles of the devil, as there. Christ went on to death, and His followers must be prepared to do as He did; suffering with Him, as far as men are concerned. The suffering from *God*, that which made the cross what it was for Him, He alone endured; and there is no cup of that kind for us at all; no forsaking of God, but the very contrary. The suffering from men only brings Him in for us. "If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you."

5 On the other hand, as we find in the third subsection, there is a character of suffering on our part which was not and could not be His. For us there is *discipline* because of what we are, the trials by the way being overruled of God so that we should be thus made partakers of His holiness. As it is put in Romans, "Tribulation worketh patience," the subduing of our wills to God; "and patience, experience," the experience of what His will is,—"and experience, hope." It may not be any positive failure that is here in view. The thorn in the flesh, for an apostle, was needed by him because of the abundance of the revelations which had been made to him, but of course, also, in view of the tendency native in him, as in others, to be lifted up. It was preventive, therefore—a conclusive argument against those views of perfection which would imply the removal of such tendencies from any one while here. This was a man who had been in the third heavens, hearing unspeakable things, which it was not lawful or possible for one to utter; yet even he needed such a preventive, and needed it to be continued, for his prayer for its removal was *not* answered in the way expected, but grace made him triumph over it. We must take care, moreover,—as we see of the argument of Job's friends, which is now being elaborately put forth as wholesome Christian doctrine in some quarters—that one's spiritual condition be not argued from the bodily one. "Beloved," says the apostle to Gaius, "I wish in all things that thou prosper and be in health, *even as thy soul doth prosper.*" People would tell him now that there was very little need for him to have any trouble about that.

"The Lord" in the quotation here in Hebrews—"the chastening of the Lord"—is really "Jehovah," according to the usual rendering of the Septua-

4 (12-17): The ways that please God.

[4] Wherefore [c]lift up the hands that hang down, and the failing knees; and [f]make straight paths for your feet, that that which is lame may not be turned aside, but rather it may be healed. [g]Pursue peace with all, and holiness, [h]without which none shall see the Lord: watching lest there be any one who lacketh the grace of God; lest any [i]root of bitterness springing up trouble [you], and many be defiled by it; lest there be any fornicator or profane person, as Esau, [j]who for one meal sold his birthright; for ye know that also [k]afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected (for he found no place for repentance) although he sought it earnestly with tears.

5 (18-24): The end brought nigh.

[5] For ye have not come to the mount that might be touched, [l]that burned with fire, and to obscurity, and

[c] Is. 35. 3. *cf.* Job 4. 3, 4.
[f] Prov. 4.26, 27.
[g] Rom. 14. 19.
[h] 1 Cor. 6.9. Eph. 5. 5. Rev. 21.27.
[i] Deut. 29. 18.
[j] Gen. 25.33.
[k] Gen. 27.34 -38.
[l] Ex. 19.18. Ex. 20. 18. Deut. 4. 11.

gint and of our common version in the Old Testament. In 1 Cor. xi., "chastened of the *Lord*" refers to the Lord Jesus. In Peter, also, "judgment must begin at the house of God" in chastening. The "house" in Peter is the house of living stones (1 Pet. ii). In governmental dealings thus, it is much with us as with Moses on the mount. In governmental ways, clouds and darkness are still round about Him. Like Moses, we cannot meet Him face to face; but after it is past, we see the glory of the back parts. "*Afterwards* it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to those" who, in the darkness, have been "exercised thereby." The law was just such a government of God, but without the revelation of His face, as it has now been given us in Christ. Now, if as to special dealings the cloud is there, we yet know Him who is behind the cloud. Exercise is right as to what His ways mean, and we must not deem it a strange thing if we are left to the exercise. It is not intended that we should float lightly over everything. That which is from a Father's hand has purpose in it, and is not to be treated lightly. Because it is a Father's hand the purpose is blessing, and therefore there is no cause to faint under it.

[4] And so he exhorts in the next subsection, which presses the practical ways that please God, and warns against departure from Him, according to the constant style of the epistle. There need be no discouragement. They must lift up the hands that hang down and the feeble knees. And withal they must make straight paths for their feet, so that even the lame may not be turned out of the way, but rather be healed of their lameness. It is in God's path for us alone that power is found, whatever be the difficulties. The weaker we are, the more urgent should be our desire to walk where alone He can be with us; for what are all the difficulties then? And here we find not only strength, but healing. "Peace with all men" was to be sought, also, not at the expense of holiness, but in holiness, which with the Lord is of the first necessity. Without it none shall see Him, and therefore they must look diligently to see that no one among them really lacked the grace of God, and so a root of bitterness spring up in their midst by which many might be defiled; for, alas, we have in us all that which makes us sensitive to such infection, and the presence of the evil shows already a lax condition which has allowed it to spring up. How a single act may discover a man's character, as with Esau here! For a bit of food he sold his birthright; and the act characterized him as a profane person, one who habitually left God out of his thoughts. Yet he could desire the blessing, and sought it earnestly after he had lost it; just as Balaam could desire to "die the death of the righteous" while he had no thought of living their life. Thus "he found no place for repentance," for this had only respect to the lost blessing and involved no judgment of his ways before God. He valued the gain of godliness without the godliness, and the nature of God would have had to be changed to gratify him in that which was his sole desire.

darkness, and tempest, and the sound of the trumpet, and the voice of words, which [m]they that heard entreated that the word should not be uttered to them any more: (for they were not able to bear that which was enjoined: [n]and if a beast should touch the mountain it shall be stoned; and so fearful was the sight that Moses said, [o]I exceedingly fear and quake;) but ye have come to [p]Mount Zion, and to the [q]city of the living God, a heavenly Jerusalem; and to myriads of angels, the universal gathering; and to the [r]assembly of the first-born ones who are [s]registered in heaven; and to God, the Judge of all; and to the [t]spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus, the [u]mediator of a new* covenant; and to the [v]blood of sprinkling that speaketh [w]better than Abel.

m Ex. 20.19. Deut. 5. 5. Deut.18.16.
n Ex. 19. 12, 13.
o Deut. 9.19.
p *cf.* Ps. 78. 68.
q Rev.21.10.
r *cf.* Ex. 4. 22. Hos. 11. 1.
s Lk. 10. 20. *ctr.* Ex. 19. 5, 6.
t *ctr.*1 Pet.3. 19. *cf.*ch.11.40. Phil. 3. 11, 12.
u ch. 8. 6. ch. 9. 15.
v ch. 10. 22.
w Gen. 4.10.

* νέας, "new" in the sense of "what has not grown old."

[5] Now we come to the contemplation of that to which faith brings the Christian. It is put in contrast with that which characterized Judaism; not, however, as to faith, but in experience. Faith might, as has been shown us, have put before the Jew also something of that which lies before the Christian; but the point is, what did the law do to help or hinder a soul in this glorious prospect? And here the apostle carries them back to the record of its beginning, that all might judge for themselves by the facts given. Israel came to mount Sinai, and there the nation had in spirit remained: a palpable mount indeed, and that burned with fire from the presence of God. With this an awful darkness, out of which the sound of a trumpet summoned attention, and then a Voice more dreadful than all, though with a distinct utterance of words, but not a gospel; for what had been the effect upon those that heard and saw? Touch they could not, for even the beast that touched was to be stoned; and their terror was so great that they begged that the word might be spoken to them no more; nay, even Moses, the mediator, said: "I exceedingly fear and quake." Such was the character, then, of that dispensation: darkness from the face of God, obscurity as to the future; and when God drew nigh, it was but to inspire terror.

Now what a contrast! Of that opened sanctuary, the ability to draw nigh, of the promise securing everything, the apostle has already spoken. He has only now, therefore, to put before them the prospect for heaven and for earth which lies unobscured on the horizon of faith—Jewish hope as well as Christian pictured in a few touches only, but which can be extended indefinitely from a multitude of scriptures. His object is not descriptive, but to point out some features of this glorious scene.

Upon earth, first, mount Zion, the place of God's choice in grace when everything had broken down in Israel (Ps. lxxviii. 68–70), and thus his abiding rest (Ps. cxxxii. 13, 14). From this he rises to "the city of the living God, the *heavenly* Jerusalem," the corresponding centre of heavenly glory; which we must not confound, as some do, with the Church itself, which is mentioned apart, almost directly afterwards. It is the home of the saints, the common thought, and the more correct one. Next, we find "myriads of angels, the universal gathering," taking in, it is to be supposed, all ranks and orders of these heavenly beings. And next, "the assembly of the first-born ones whose names are enrolled in heaven," in contrast with Israel, who are God's first-born people enregistered on earth. These are the true heirs, the "brethren," among whom Christ is the First-born in necessary pre-eminence. These, then, are distinguished plainly from the city of God already spoken of.

Next, we rise to "God the Judge of all," the sovereign awarder to every one of place and service and recompense. This is why, in the holy city, the

δ (25-29): The limit to divine patience.

[6] See that ye refuse not him that speaketh; for [x]if they did not escape who refused him who uttered oracles on earth, much more shall not we escape who turn away from him [who speaketh] from heaven; whose [y]voice then shook the earth, but now he hath promised, saying, [z]Yet once I will shake not only the earth, but also heaven. Now this, Yet once, signifieth the [a]removing of that which is shaken, as that which is made, that that which is not shaken may remain. Wherefore let us, receiving a [b]kingdom which cannot be shaken, have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and fear; for our [c]God is even a consuming fire.

ζ (xiii. 1-6): The filling up of this character.

[7] [d]Let brotherly love continue. [e]Be not forgetful of hospitality; for [f]some have thereby entertained angels unawares. [g]Remember those that are in bonds, as bound with them; and those evil-treated, as being yourselves also in the body. [h]Let marriage be held every

x ch. 2. 3.

y Ex. 19. 18.

z Hag. 2. 6.

a Ps. 102. 26.
b Dan. 2. 44. 1 Pet. 1. 4. 2 Pet. 1. 11.
c Deut. 4. 24.
d Rom. 12. 10.
e 1 Pet. 4. 9. 1 Tim. 3. 2. Tit. 1. 8.
f Gen. 18. 2. Gen. 19. 2, 3.
g Matt. 25. 36. ch. 10. 34.
h *cf.* 1 Tim. 4. 3.

sevens which we might expect to characterize it are expanded into twelves, the number of manifest divine government. Seven is $4 + 3$, as twelve is 4×3. The twelve is thus an expanded seven; and where can perfection be more secured than by God being in absolute supremacy, His will the complete settlement of everything for His creatures?

We have, then, the "spirits of just men made perfect," which certainly are Old Testament saints distinguished as a company from "the assembly of the first-born ones." "Just men" is the natural title of the Old Testament saints, and the "*spirits* of just men" show them to be a company that has come under death, which will not be true of the Christian assembly as a whole, which remains here until the coming of the Lord. "Made perfect" is for these by resurrection, and will be accomplished at the same time for them as for us, as the last verse of the eleventh chapter says: "that they without us should not be made perfect."

We are then reminded of the foundation of all blessing, "Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and the blood of sprinkling," which has been already fully spoken of. These things we have as Christians "come to." That is, nothing lies, that we can see, between us and them. As heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, they all have to do with us, and are of full personal interest to us.

δ The sixth subsection reaches to the end of the chapter. It is another of the many warnings of this epistle, and reminds all that there is a limit to the divine patience. How great the responsibility of refusing this divine Voice which now speaks in such marvelous grace from heaven! The Voice at Sinai shook the earth, but now, "once more," He is going to "shake, not the earth only, but also heaven." If but "once more," that must imply the removal of everything that can be shaken, that all afterwards may remain absolutely unmoved. How blessed to know, then, that the kingdom that we have received is among the things that cannot be shaken! But let us have grace, therefore, to "serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire." All that is not according to His mind is destined to perish in that fire.

ζ In the seventh subsection the apostle adds some words of exhortation as to the filling out of the acceptable service on the part of those upon the earth created of God, though disordered by sin and that which is attendant upon it. They are of very simple character, and need no interpretation to make them understood. He urges the continuance of brotherly love, the maintenance of hospitality, the sympathetic linking themselves with those enduring imprisonment or suffering injury of any kind, as being themselves also in the body. He

way in honor, and the bed be undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge. Let your manner of life be [g]without covetousness, being [h]content with such things as ye have: for himself hath said, [i]I will never leave thee, neither will I forsake thee; so that we may say with confidence, [k]The Lord is my helper, and I will not be afraid: what will man do unto me?

g 1 Tim. 3.3. *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 10.
h 1 Tim. 6.7, 8. *cf.* Phil. 4. 11.
i Josh. 1. 5. *cf.* Ps. 37.25.
k Ps. 118. 6.

SECTION 2. (Chap. xiii. 7–25.)

Separation from Judaism to be absolute.

REMEMBER your leaders who have spoken to you the word of God, whose [m]faith follow, considering the issue of their walk. Jesus Christ is [n]the same yesterday and to-day and for the ages [to come]. [o]Be not

m ch. 6. 12.
n 2 Cor. 1. 19.
o Eph. 4. 14. Jude 12.

urges the holding of that in honor which God had instituted at the beginning, and that the manner of life should be without covetousness, content with whatever God might see best for them here, it being sufficient to know that He has promised never to forsake his own, so that they might say, in fearless reckoning upon Him as their Helper, they would not fear what man could do to them.

Sec. 2.

Now we have the final word which is to separate the Christian from Judaism absolutely. Isaac's weaning time is at an end, and the bond-woman and her son are to be cast out of the house. He begins by speaking to them of the leaders now passed away who had spoken to them the word of God, and, considering the issue of their conversation, they were to imitate their faith. Leaders there always will be, and all right when it is their *faith* that carries them ahead of others. But faith must be in the word of God, and have this to justify itself to others. Thus true guidance is always by the Word, and this is what preserves following from being a mere following of men. Apart from this, we may go easily astray in the path of very good men. Peter led Barnabas astray after this fashion. Paul says: "Follow me," but he adds, "as I follow Christ."

Christ is the fulness of this Word; and the effect of true ministry is always, necessarily, to exalt Him. Christ it is, also, who, as we saw at the beginning of the epistle, has brought us the full revelation of God in contrast with all former, fragmentary communications. Thus there can be nothing to come afterwards—no addition to Him. He is Israel's Jehovah, the unchangeable God, always at one with Himself, "the same yesterday, to-day and forever." Christ is thus the measure of all that is true riches for His people, the test of all true doctrine, the object of all real faith; but this being so, He is the object of Satan's constant enmity, whose unwearied labor it is to weave those diverse and strange doctrines which, however contradictory of one another they may be, present to the natural taste a variety of roads by which men may wander from the one true Way; and, of all these ways, undoubtedly the most successful are those which would reintroduce, now that it has been authoritatively set aside forever, what has been man's way from the beginning. Judaism was the trial of that way. Thus indeed it might seem to receive sanction from God Himself; but the true issue was always plainly indicated in it, and the finger pointed unmistakably beyond itself to Christ, to the new covenant replacing the old and the time of reconstruction of all things at His hands. What a triumph of Satanic skill to take out of Judaism just that mere human element which had been on trial and condemned, ignoring the condemnation, and make the finger point in fact to this as the God-commended way of blessing; making the shadow to be the substance and stamping the name of Christ upon the woof of antichrist!

This bastard Judaism, as we see it in Romanism and kindred systems to-day, is evidence of the need of such decisive separation from the Jewish camp as the

carried away with divers and strange doctrines; for it is good that the heart be established with grace, [p] not meats, by which those have not been profited who walked in them. We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat who are serving the tabernacle. For the [q] bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the holy [places] by the high priest for sin are burnt without the camp; wherefore also Jesus, that he might [r] sanctify the people by his own blood, [s] suffered without the gate. Therefore, let us go forth to him without the

[p] Rom. 14. 17.

[q] Ex. 29. 14. Lev. 4. 7, 12. Lev. 16. 27.
[r] ch. 10. 10.
[s] Mk. 15. 20-23.

apostle presses here. In his warning against diverse and strange doctrines it is plain that he has this almost wholly in his mind, as it is, indeed, in some of its forms, the one religious scheme that men naturally accept and approve. "For it is good," he says, "that the heart be established with grace, not with meats, which have not profited those that have been occupied therewith." The adoption of the legal system means the substitution of law for grace, the earthly for the heavenly, the carnal for the spiritual, the degradation of an assembly called out of the world into a mere heterogeneous gathering together, the "synagogue of Satan." For the believer entangled in it, it means uncertainty for certainty, doubt for peace, bondage for liberty; instead of communion with God the hiss of the serpent. Grace is the only thing that can dismiss fear, conquer sin, and establish the sovereignty of God over the human heart. No wonder, then, that every kind of travesty should be made of it, every form of opposition exhausted against it. But the appeal which the apostle makes here to experience will be justified by every honest and exercised soul.

The apostle at once proceeds to his point. "We have an altar of which they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle." He is opposing now the substance to the shadow, and he naturally uses the language of the tabernacle in his insistence that the reality is not in the shadow. "We have an altar," he says, which the tabernacle cannot furnish; and an offering, of which they who serve it have no right to partake. It is the peace-offering of which he is speaking, as that was the only offering in which all Israel could have communion with the altar; but the peace-offering at once suggests all the difference for which he has been contending. Peace! was it ever made by these continual sacrifices? Communion with God, how far could it be enjoyed by those for whom God was behind an unrent veil, dwelling in thick darkness? The altar itself, the altar that sanctifieth the gift, was the figure of Christ in Person. What else could sanctify *His* gift but what He was who offered it? Where, then, had the men of the tabernacle put Christ? and how could *they* have communion with the altar, who had refused the very Altar itself?

True, they had done what their types had indicated. For every sin-offering whose blood was carried into the holy places by the high priest for sin was burned without the camp; and so "Jesus, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate" of the holy city. It was one of those signs of a deeper reality which united to proclaim the true character of the Cross. Outside the gate, in the mysterious darkness, hanging upon a tree, here was proclaimed the true Sin-Offering, forsaken of God as under the curse for sin; and this was the deepest necessity for atonement. But if this were needed for the sanctification of the people, the failure of the legal system, with all its elaborate provision for that sanctification, was manifest. The law was weak through the flesh. Nothing could improve the man in the flesh so as to make him acceptable with God. Put him under the most favorable conditions, "the mind of the flesh is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be;" nay, more, it is "enmity against God." For this nothing but judgment can avail with Him. That judgment is what the Cross expresses; but with this, therefore, the whole legal system is of necessity set aside. The "camp" is just the people

camp, [t]bearing his reproach. For we have here [u]no abiding city, but we seek the one that is to come. By him, therefore, let us offer a [v]sacrifice of praise continually to God, that is the fruit of the lips confessing his name; but to do good and to communicate forget not, for with [w]such sacrifices God is well pleased. Obey your [x]leaders, and submit yourselves, for they watch over your souls as [y]those that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with groaning, for this [would be] unprofitable for you.

[t] *cf.* Gal. 5. 11.
[u] *cf.* ch. 11. 10, 16.
[v] Lev. 7. 12. Ps. 107. 22.
[w] Rom. 12. 1.
[x] vers. 7, 24.
[y] *cf.* Ezek. 3. 17. *cf.* Ezek. 34. 10.

upon that legal footing, and it is given up. All the grace of God for man is found in the Cross, and so outside it; and all the glory of God is found there also.

The glory of God had been outside before. After the golden calf, when the legal covenant, in its first form of pure law, had come to an end with the first tables, Moses had taken the tabernacle and pitched it outside the camp, afar off from the camp, and there the cloud of ministrant glory descended and the Lord talked with Moses.

When, after far longer trial, the legal covenant, in its form of mingled law and mercy, had only manifested man to be "without strength" as well as "ungodly," at the time of the Babylonish captivity, the glory was seen by the prophet Ezekiel again to take its departure from the midst of the people, and city and temple were given up to destruction.

Now for the third time, to one who has seen it in the face of Jesus, the glory is outside, and now under reproach. "Let us go forth therefore to Him without the camp," says the apostle, "bearing His reproach: for we have not here an abiding city, but we seek one to come." Our faces are not even towards the Zion of the future, but towards "Jerusalem which is above, which is our mother."

We are priests of the sanctuary, but it is the heavenly one; and the brazen altar is for us done away. Offerings have ceased there, for the virtue of the true Sacrifice abides once for all. Our only altar is now the golden altar of the sanctuary, which is still Christ, and by Him we are to "offer the sacrifice of praise continually to God, that is, the fruit of the lips, confessing His name." There is another form of this sacrifice—"to do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." How beautiful is this as the expression of a Christian life! How perfectly does it show the value of Christ's one work for us, while giving to our practical life its highest character! Our work is nothing else but praise—a thank-offering; and thus the praise of our whole life is the sacrifice with which God is pleased.

"Inside the veil" and "outside the camp" go necessarily together;—necessarily, for the true heavenly tabernacle has been always outside. While Judaism in the strict sense is what is here, yet every legal system comes under this in principle. Properly, there is indeed no real going back to Judaism; no one can reinstate it or go back where prophets and holy men of old once were. That is impossible. To bring it back into Christianity was, as the Lord Himself has taught us, only to make a "synagogue of Satan." Of course, we have to remember that people are now brought up in systems of such a character, and that many of the Lord's people are entangled in them. They are like those who in Thyatira suffered the woman Jezebel, while they were not Jezebel's children; and we must make the same distinction that the Lord does there. The *system* is, of course, no less evil for the lapse of centuries, rather the reverse.

The apostle closes now with some brief exhortations mingled with prayer, and to which are added a few words of salutation.

Their guides or leaders are again referred to, now the living ones; and they

[z] Pray for us: for we persuade ourselves that we [a] have a good conscience, in all things desiring to walk rightly. And I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be [b] restored to you the sooner. Now, the [c] God of peace, who brought again from among the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, [d] perfect you in every good work to do his will, [e] working in you what is pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for the ages of ages. Amen.

Now I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation; for it is in but few words that I have written to you. Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he should come soon, I will see you. Salute all your leaders and all the saints. They from Italy salute you. Grace be with you all. Amen.

[z] 1 Thess. 5. 25. 2 Thess. 3. 1. Eph. 6. 19.
[a] Acts 23. 1. Acts 24. 16.
[b] Phile. 22.
[c] Rom. 15. 33.
[d] 1 Thess. 5. 23. 1 Pet. 5. 10.
[e] ch. 10. 36.

are exhorted to obey them as those watching for their souls. This is plainly not official, but something to which love would prompt, and which ought to be found among us if the true-heartedness of a remnant characterizes us, whatever the broken condition of things may be. "As those that shall give account" means, of course, for themselves—their own conduct as caring for the souls of others; but that involves the condition of those for whom they watch; so that the unprofitableness there might be in it for these is easily to be understood. How many of us recognize such responsibility as to the souls of others?

The apostle then seeks their prayers as one having a good conscience, in all things desiring to live honestly—words of wonderful lowliness, considering the man who speaks. And then he breaks out into a prayer for them quite in the line of his thoughts in this epistle—that they may be "perfected in every good work to do the will of God." It is the blood of the covenant which he speaks of in it as the foundation of everything. By this we have, brought again from the dead for us, a "Great Shepherd of the sheep;" and it is "the God of peace," of whose counsel of peace this is the fruit, who has raised Him up. Peace is the fruit wrought out for us by Him upon the cross—a peace of conscience the moral effect of which is peace in heart and life—a peace which is a true reconciliation of man to God, a taking of Christ's gentle yoke and learning of Him who was meek and lowly of heart, so as to find rest to the soul. For this the God of peace has been working—the glorious harmony in which He is in that relation to His creatures which alone can satisfy Him. It is a peace in which the heart and life go up in worship, and thus the natural completion of Hebrews itself is found in such a prayer. He beseeches them to suffer the word of exhortation (which the whole epistle is), which, if it smite upon Jewish prejudice, has in it such compensation of blessing.

The epistle closes with the usual salutations.

THE EPISTLES TO TIMOTHY.

THE pastoral epistles seem almost to constitute a division by themselves. They are all of the same practical character, they are written alike to individuals, and those the representatives of the apostle in their different places. They are in this way quite distinct from the epistles to the assemblies, although, of course, the instruction remains perfectly for us to-day. They are alike in this way, that the order established at the beginning, established, though it were, for godliness, yet is so far broken through in the general decline and failure of the Church as of necessity to alter in some measure the form of the truth for us. This is, indeed, taken notice of in the second epistle to Timothy in a very distinct way, as we shall have to see. The wisdom of God, foreseeing the failure, has not left us without suited guard and provision for such a time; but while all these things associate together the epistles that are before us, yet they are practically divided as the names with which they are connected necessarily divide them, the two epistles to Timothy from that to Titus. Moreover, these are connected together, of necessity, by the place they have numerically among Paul's epistles. The book of Numbers is in this way related to the book of Deuteronomy. There is a clear connection between these two in such a way as there is not between them and the books of Exodus and Leviticus, for instance. So, in the books of the Psalms, the fourth and fifth divisions are evidently very closely connected together. The number 5 is, as has been often shown, a $4+1$, and contains in itself the meanings of both numbers—the number of weakness with that of strength; the number of the creature, we may say, with that which speaks of God. This is also the connection and division between the epistles to Timothy and Titus. The epistles to Timothy speak of behavior in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, and the directions in it are all for the maintenance of godliness, of the holiness which becomes God's house. The epistle to Titus takes also this character, but to show us that the truth, whatever is that, is of necessity according to godliness, and the relation of these with one another.

Titus is thus, however brief it may be, really the Deuteronomy of Paul's epistles, and as such we shall consider it. In Numbers also the failure of the people is brought out, as in Deuteronomy we find the lessons deduced from all this history of failure. Just so, in Timothy we have the failure which in Titus is scarcely seen; but the divine side, the lessons that God will have us learn as to it all, are fully dwelt upon.

The first epistle to Timothy is contrasted with the second as showing us the house of God in order, although there is a prophecy of the ruin which was even then impending. The second epistle shows us this in principle already accomplished. The house has become as a great house, with its "vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth, some to honor and some to dishonor;" and the word goes forth that if one therefore now purge himself from these vessels to dishonor, "he shall be a vessel to honor, sanctified and meet for the Master's use." On the other hand, such an one is to "follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart." Separation from evil has always been God's principle from the beginning.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

THE first epistle, on account of its very practical character, is somewhat hard to characterize: to give, that is, the connection between its various parts. This is not to say, as many commentators would teach us, that a connection is really wanting, and that the epistle is but a number of unassorted practical precepts; but the connection in such cases is necessarily harder to follow than where doctrine is before us. We shall find, indeed, the doctrine insisted upon, the necessity and importance of it; for it is the basis of all godliness: for the knowledge of God in Christ with which all doctrine of necessity is concerned, is that without which there can be no proper holiness, which is but separation to God as thus revealed. In this epistle the apostle insists therefore, in the first place, upon the absolute necessity of the preservation of the doctrine; and that this is a doctrine of grace and not of law. Grace is the one sufficiency for godliness as for all else. He therefore adduces himself, the messenger of this grace, as one in whom God had displayed it to the utmost; only, with faith in this there must be the maintenance of a good conscience, or shipwreck may be made as to the truth itself. Thus early have we intimation of what was, indeed, soon to come.

The second division insists upon prayer as all-needful in a world like this, and with the weakness in ourselves which we shall surely feel, if we feel anything. Prayer is, therefore, insisted on; but the house of God is, as was even true of the temple of old in its measure, "a house of prayer for all people." God, as the apostle declares Him, is the Saviour-God, revealed as that, in heart and desire towards all. As a consequence, prayer is to be made for all. Those who have no voice to utter their needs are to be represented by those whom God has waked up to the sense of them, and to whom He has given a love which seeks of necessity the blessing of men and to minister to it. But the question of prayer is wider than this, and the men are to "pray everywhere, lifting up pious hands."

In the third division, the house of God and the holiness belonging to

it are insisted upon. The elders, or overseers and deacons, are appointed specifically for this, while the Church is seen as the "pillar and ground" (or support) "of the truth," which is indeed "the mystery of piety," even He who is Himself the living Truth,—God manifest in flesh.

In the fourth division it is foreseen that in the latter days some shall apostatize from this faith.

The last division gives us various special responsibilities, whether of the assembly as a whole, or of those in office in it.

The divisions, therefore, are:

1. (Chap. i.): Grace, as the one necessity for all blessing.
2. (Chap. ii.): Prayer, as the expression of dependence on the part of those who know the heart of a Saviour-God and the Mediator between God and men, which is Christ Jesus.
3. (Chap. iii.): The house of God, and the holiness belonging to it.
4. (Chap. iv.): The latter-day apostasy.
5. (Chaps. v. and vi.): Special responsibilities.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO
TIMOTHY.

DIVISION 1. (Chap. i.)

Grace the one necessity for all blessing.

1 (1-4): The doctrine to be preserved absolutely.

1. PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ,* according to the [a]commandment of God our Saviour and of Christ Jesus† our [b]hope, to Timotheus [my] [c]true child in faith; [d]grace, mercy, peace from God the‡ Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. As I [e]besought

a Tit. 1. 3. cf. Rom. 16. 26.
b Col. 1. 27.
c Tit. 1. 4.
d 2 Tim. 1. 2. 2 Jno. 3. cf. Jude 2.
e cf. Tit. 1. 5.

* Or, "Christ Jesus." † Some MSS. read, "The Lord Jesus Christ." ‡ Some MSS. have "our."

NOTES.

DIV. 1.

IT is most instructive to see, while at the same time very simple to understand, how the apostle begins his exhortations with regard to godliness by an insistence upon that grace which is the only power that breaks the dominion of sin, and on the maintenance of the truth as to God Himself revealed as a Saviour-God towards men. This alone brings in the light in which we are to walk, and which manifests things in their true character. Holiness, or piety, is always a "holiness of truth." God Himself and our relation to Him must be established fully before we can talk of any duties to one another. It was when man slipped away from God Himself that of necessity all else was disordered, the very beasts of the field rose up against man, and the first man born into the world was the murderer of his brother.

1. Paul speaks of himself, then, as an apostle of Jesus Christ according to the commandment of God our Saviour. How beautiful the urgency of this is! One might think it would suffice to know the blessedness of salvation to make it an absolute necessity to set it forth to others; but this is not enough for Him who is revealed in Christ as the Saviour-God; and He must thus thrust out His laborers into the fields which await the seed of the gospel—that precious seed from which all real fruit for Him is to be produced. Paul insists, therefore, here also upon his apostleship. He is not a mere messenger, but a messenger with fullest authority. God would have the truth of these things certified to man with all the assurance that He can give it, and thus, as we know, the miracles which attended the proclamation of the gospel at the outset were designed to call earnest attention to the testimony going forth. Timothy is himself an example of how God would have these things constantly maintained, as he is himself urged by the apostle to communicate the things which he has heard from him, among many witnesses, to faithful or believing men who shall be able to teach others also. "Faithful" and "believing" are the same word in the Greek, and all faithfulness is, in fact, a question simply of believing. Faith and faithfulness are root and stem in all living godliness. Thus the apostle addresses Timothy as his true child in faith. With him there was, of course, no apostleship. The testimony is to be left now to the responsibility of ordinary men to maintain it. The sowing of the seed is the simple way by which other seed is to be produced for fresh sowing.

Timothy is in his character, as in his name, a true product of the apostle's

thee to abide in Ephesus, when I was going to Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they *f*teach no other doctrine, nor *g*give heed to fables and endless *h*genealogies, which bring in *i*questions rather than [further] the *j*dispensation of God which is in faith,—[so do].

2 (5-11): The application of law.

2. Now the end of the commandment is love *k*out of a pure heart and a *l*good conscience and *m*faith unfeigned; from which some having *n*gone astray have turned aside unto *o*vain speech, desiring to be *p*teachers of law;

f ch. 6. 3. *cf.* Gal. 1. 6, 7. *g* ch. 4. 7. 2 Tim. 4. 4. Tit. 1. 14. *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 16. *h* Tit. 3. 9. *i* ch. 6. 4. *j* Eph. 3. 2. *k* 2 Tim. 2. 22. 1 Pet. 1. 22. *l* 1 Pet. 3. 16. *m* Rom. 12. 9; 2 Tim. 1. 5. *n* ch. 6. 21; 2 Tim. 2. 18. *o* ch. 6. 4, 20. *p* Gal. 3. 25; Gal. 5. 4.

gospel. He is one who "honors God," who maintains what is His due amongst men. In feebleness this might be, indeed. We find in Timothy himself one with whom there was a special sense of inherent weakness. He needs to be exhorted to be strong; he needs to be told that the Spirit that we have received is not a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of a sound mind; but with a true heart all these difficulties are overcome, and there is ever, according to the apostle's greeting here, "grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and Christ," the One we serve.

Mercy, as has been often noticed, is specially added here, where an individual is addressed; and is it not according to the character of things which is coming in, that it should be now, in the close of Paul's epistles, the *individual* that is thus specially addressed? Individuality is needed surely to be preserved at all times, but how distinctly does that individuality need to be insisted on when the mass are going astray! Conscience is individual, never of a body as such; and it always leads to individual action, although where the Spirit of God is, there will be the action together, of course, of those who are guided by the Spirit.

The apostle urges him to remember that he had besought him to abide in Ephesus for the express purpose of charging some that they taught no other doctrine. The danger of this is plainly intimated; and in Paul's address, as we find it in the Acts, to the Ephesian elders, it is fully realized. Thus already the tendencies are manifest which were so soon to have such terrible development. It was all in the germ at present, but there is, alas, a kind of life in these germs of evil which leads to development of their own kind, just as faith of necessity will develop itself upon the other hand. That which he warns of here is the giving heed to fables and endless genealogies: things which, whatever they might be, did not spring out of the truth which God was declaring, and which thus brought in all the uncertainty that of necessity attaches to what is of man. These endless genealogies might be of very different kinds from the genealogies of the law upon which men might still build themselves, or the genealogies of heathenism such as afterwards manifested themselves mystically in the teachings of Gnosticism. In fact, all that men can think of naturally is the derivation of one thing from another, as we see manifestly in the science of our own days. Where God is to come in they are at fault, and there tends to be the resistance of this need of God, and the substitution of natural laws and material developments in place of the Creator. We shall find in this epistle that in the apostasy of the last days, of which the apostle speaks, it is the Creator who is in the first place set aside. For the proper intelligence of God and of His ways there must be revelation. Here reason cannot lay the foundations, although it may be summoned to approve of the foundations laid. Here is where Scripture is of the first necessity for all the foundations of science, and because men have not faith, science becomes, for lack of a foundation, a mere "opposition of science falsely called such."

2. But one pressing matter that faced Christianity now was the Judaism which had fallen away from God, and now, therefore, was in the hands of Satan everywhere to resist the truth. "The end of the commandment is love out of

not understanding either what they say nor concerning what they strenuously affirm. But we know that the [q]law is good, if a man use it lawfully; knowing this, that law [r]has not its application to a righteous person, but to the lawless and insubordinate, to the ungodly and sinners, to the unholy and profane, to smiters of fathers and smiters of mothers, to man-slayers, to fornicators, to sodomites, to kidnappers, to liars, to perjurers, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to [s]sound doctrine, according to the [t]gospel of the glory of the [u]blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.

3 (12-17): The display of God's grace in the setting apart of Paul.

3. I thank Christ Jesus, our Lord, [v]who hath enabled me because he [w]counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, who formerly was a blasphemer and [x]persecutor, and an insolent, overbearing man; but mercy was shown unto me [y]because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. But the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with [z]faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. Faithful is the word and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. But for this reason was mercy shown me, that in me, first, Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. Now unto [a]the

q Rom.7.12. Rom.3.31.
r *cf.* Rom.3.19.
s Tit. 1. 9. Tit. 2. 1.
t 2 Cor.4.4,6.
u ch. 6. 15.
v 2 Cor.12.9. Phil. 4.13.
w Acts 9.15.
x Acts 8. 3. Acts 9. 1,2.
y Num. 35. 11, 15. *cf.* Acts 3. 17. *ctr.* Heb.6. 4, 6.
z 1 Thess.1. 3.
a Rev. 15.3.

a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned." Where the truth was not received, into soil like this thorns and thistles would spring up with it and choke it; and thus those could be already pointed out who had gone astray, "desiring to be teachers of law;" by that very fact revealing that they did not understand the law itself of which they spoke. True it was that it was of God, and of necessity had use, as everything that is of God must have; but the lawful use of the law they did not recognize—that its power was in condemnation, not in justification, and not even in the production of that holiness at which it aimed and which was its own character. Thus the law had not its application to a righteous person, but to "the lawless and insubordinate, to the ungodly and sinners, the unholy and profane" of every kind. It was, therefore, for the rooting up of thorns and weeds; but where the true seed was sown and the gospel of the glory of the blessed God was bringing forth fruit, how dangerous to introduce the plowshare! Law was intended to be the handmaid of grace. It has, as a schoolmaster, its necessary lessons; but the schoolmaster is not always to abide, and the freedom of the Spirit of adoption the law never knew. Thus, as a first necessity for godliness, there must be the maintenance of the grace which alone could produce it, in contrast with the law.

3. The apostle still further insists upon his own case as being the eminent example of that grace which he was preaching; the messenger and the message corresponded fully. The message of most perfect grace came on the lips of the chief of sinners, whom grace had conquered to itself, and in whom it now found the means of assuring all that Christ Jesus had "come into the world to save sinners," and that without exception. Thus he who was beforetime the persecutor of Christians was not saved to be kept in a corner, but, on the contrary, was needed as the special advertisement of that which God was doing, that no man might conceive himself too great a sinner for this grace. True it was that it was in the ignorance of unbelief that Saul the persecutor had lived and acted. This it was that alone enabled mercy to be shown him at all, for the gates of the city of refuge were open only to the unconscious manslayer, not to the de-

King of the ages, the [b]incorruptible, [c]invisible, [d]only God, be honor and glory to the ages of ages! Amen.

4 (18-20): The danger of shipwreck.

4. This charge I [e]commit unto thee [my] child Timotheus, according to the [f]prophecies which went before as to thee, in order that thou mightest by them [g]war a good warfare, maintaining [h]faith and a good conscience, which some having put away have made shipwreck as to faith; of whom are [i]Hymenæus and [j]Alexander, whom [k]I have delivered unto Satan, that they may be taught by discipline not to blaspheme.

[b] Rom. 1. 23. [c] Jno. 1. 18. Col. 1. 15. Heb. 11. 27. 1 Jno. 4. 12. [d] Jude 25. [e] 2 Tim. 2. 2. [f] ch. 4. 14. [g] 2 Tim. 4. 7. [h] ch. 3. 9. [i] 2 Tim. 2. 17. [j] 2 Tim. 4. 14. [k] 1 Cor. 5. 5.

liberate murderer; and so those who were the deliberate rejecters of God's grace in Christ had by that very fact placed themselves beyond the power of the revelation itself to reach them. It had in a sense reached them, but only to manifest their incapacity for the reception of it altogether. Such was not Paul's case, and the grace of the Lord was "exceeding abundant" towards him, "with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." Christ had been revealed to him not in vain, and now he could assure all men who would receive it that Christ Jesus had indeed "come into the world to save sinners," and that he himself was the pattern of that grace that Christ was showing to all "who should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting." He breaks out with the praise that filled his heart to the One who through all time abides "the King of the ages, the incorruptible, invisible, only God, to whom be honor and glory to the ages of ages."

4. But immediately there follows the recognition of danger. Even grace itself may be apparently received, while in fact turned into that which is most perfectly opposed to God, the true opposite of that which it imitates. Paul commits the charge of maintaining this truth of which he has been speaking, to his child Timotheus, one specially marked out before by prophecies, for his encouragement and exhortation in the warfare to which he was now called. Two things needed to be maintained together, "faith and a good conscience,"—the recognition of the claims which faith itself made upon the soul. There were already to be seen wrecks resulting from the divorce of these two from one another. The truth itself only maintains its place in connection with that exercise of conscience which testifies to God being before the soul. Already, Hymenæus and Alexander were in this way blaspheming. Paul had, in his apostolic power, delivered them to Satan—put them into the hands of one who would use his power with them, as we have seen as to the offender among the Corinthians, for the destruction of the flesh, but that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. God's grace would thus triumph in making the very enemy of souls in this way the instrument of their deliverance.

Div. 2.

We now have, insisted on in the strongest way, the necessity of prayer. As already said, the house of God is necessarily, by the fact that this God is the God of all, "a house of prayer for all nations." Prayer is the recognition of the creature place as such,—of the need of God; while at the same time it testifies, if it be true prayer, of the faith that counts upon Him. It is striking that it comes into so much prominence in this epistle. It is important that the very grace of Christianity, the positiveness of salvation and of the working of all things together for good to them that love God, should not be permitted practically to set aside the need of prayer. God is all-mighty, all-wise, all-good; spite of all opposition, He will accomplish His will, and His will is that which should be accomplished. God is the only one who in that sense is entitled to have a will. But here there is the need, as is evident, of looking at things all around. Prayer is, no doubt, in one sense a necessity on our side, rather than on God's. We did not pray Christ down from heaven, but God sent Him for the lost. All through He is the First in this way, the One who works in us both to will and to do of

DIVISION 2. (Chap. ii.)

Prayer.

1 (1-7): For all men and those in authority.

1. I EXHORT, therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings be made [l]for all men, for [m]kings and all that are in preeminence, [n]that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all [o]piety and gravity. For this is good and acceptable before [p]God our Saviour; who [q]would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and [r]one Mediator between God and men, the [s]man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a

[l] *cf.* Isa. 56.7.
[m] *cf.* Ezr. 6. 10.
[n] *cf.* Rom. 13. 4.
[o] ch. 3. 4.
[p] ch. 1. 1.
[q] Ezk. 18. 23, 32. Tit. 2. 11, 12.
[r] *cfr.* Job 9. 33.
[s] *cf.* Heb. 2. 14.

His good pleasure. While that is true, it must not for a moment be used in contradiction to the truth that "the fervent, effectual prayer of the righteous man availeth much," and that God would have us "always to pray and not to faint." We must take this almightiness, this wisdom and love of God, to energize us, therefore, to prayer, and not to hinder us. It should act as plain encouragement, and in no other way. We are not in heaven, but only on our way to it, and prayer is just that which in the answers which we find to it keeps us in constant remembrance of the living God whom we need, and whose grace towards us becomes in this way so much more consciously such. For how much are we indebted to the needs which we thus have, and which it is plain God permits us to be reminded of in so many and often very painful ways! Love acts also in prayer, gives voice to its desires, as we see here; and thus we are permitted to have our place with God Himself, and our communion with Him who is the Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.

1. In the first place, in fact, we have the insistence here upon prayer, not for ourselves, but for others. The natural order, perhaps, with us would be first of all for ourselves, and then for others. The apostle reverses this: "I exhort, therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men; for kings, and all that are in pre-eminence," all those who stand out, evidently, from the mass as influential, in one way or another, for good or for evil, with regard to those amongst whom they move. It is true that there is a reference here to ourselves also, the result of the blessing of these, in our being able ourselves to lead a quiet and peaceable life in all piety and gravity; but we are not to think of that as if it were the whole of it; for we are immediately reminded that "this is good and acceptable before God our Saviour; who would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

Here, also, the quietness and peace in general is not, of course, and never could be, the great thought, but the work of the gospel amongst them; the life eternal is, of course, that which is the all-important consideration, and the trials and sorrows of this life are ever being used of God to awaken men to the reality of the life to come; but that the gospel should go forth in peace is the mercy sought. God "would have all men to be saved, and to come to a knowledge of the truth." Let us notice how these things are put together. There is no thought of people being saved without the knowledge of the truth. There is no thought, according to the fashion of the day, that a man simply crying in his need to God will be answered, and we need not trouble ourselves too much, therefore, about the gospel. God is surely ready to hear the cry, but His way of salvation is by the truth, and there is no other that Scripture recognizes; but the testimony now has the widest possible range. There is not only one God, as the Jew rightly contended, but "one Mediator between God and men;" not between God and the Jew, and not with any distinction amongst men in this respect. "The Man Christ Jesus," "the Son of Man," as He continually called Himself, is the expression of God's heart, not to a certain class amongst

ransom [u]for all, the testimony [to be rendered] [v]in its own times; to which [w]I have been appointed a herald and an apostle, ([x]I speak the truth, I do not lie,) a [y]teacher of the nations in faith and truth.

2 (8–15): The man and the woman.

2. I will, therefore, that the men pray in every place, [z]lifting up [a]pious hands, without wrath and disputation. In like manner also that the [b]women adorn themselves with fitting apparel, with modesty and sobriety, not with braided hair, and gold or pearls or costly array, but, what becometh women professing fear of God, with good works. Let a woman learn in [c]quietness, in all subjection; but I [d]suffer not a woman to teach, nor to exercise authority over the man, but to be in quietness. For [e]Adam was first formed, then

cf. Acts 18. 26.

[t] Job 33. 24. Mk. 10. 45.
[u] 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15.
[v] Tit. 1. 3. 1 Pet. 1. 10–12.
[w] ch. 1. 11. Eph. 3. 7, 8. 2 Tim. 1. 11.
[x] Rom. 9. 1.
[y] Acts 9. 15. Rom. 1. 5, 14.
[z] Isa. 1. 15.
[a] Ps. 24. 4.
[b] 1 Pet. 3. 3. *cf.* Isa. 3. 18–23.
[c] Tit. 2. 5.
[d] *cf.* 1 Cor. 14. 34.
[e] Gen. 2. 22.

men merely, but to all. He has given "Himself a ransom for all." He has made a provision, from the good of which none are excepted except those who voluntarily set themselves apart from blessing. The times are come in which God having fully demonstrated man's condition, He can speak out what is according to His own nature. Individually people have, no doubt, still to be tested, as through the ages men have been tested, and to be made to find their way to the place of those "without strength" and "ungodly," where Christ has met men; but God has nevertheless demonstrated man's condition as a whole, and He is not now hindered or limited in the testimony which He is giving. It is a testimony world-wide. To this the apostle was appointed "a herald" and "teacher of the nations in faith and truth." This testimony then is to characterize the Church as a whole,—not that all are, as we may say, officially evangelists, but, nevertheless, evangelization is the privilege and duty of all who themselves have received the gospel.

2. He turns to prayer in general as that which is to characterize men everywhere. In the public place it is still the *men* who are to pray, lifting up pious hands. The apostle maintains throughout, in the most consistent manner, the doctrine that the woman's place is not the public one. Nature teaches the same thing, however little we may listen to its voice. This, of course, no more cuts off the women from evangelizing, nor even from instructing in the truth which they have learned, than it cuts them off from prayer. The apostle is thinking of the house of God as the "house of prayer for all nations," and it is public prayer of which he is speaking. This is where the men as such find their place. Here there is no question, of course, of office; there is no one who is exempted really from the duty of praying in every place. The hands that they lift up must be indeed pious hands. No one who cannot lift up such has title to pray in public. Do not men, in fact, shrink often from public prayer really in consequence of the responsibility which it is felt to entail? The people who do not pray are not obliged to have their hands so scrupulously clean! If we "lift them up," they will be noticed; but what a safeguard there is in this, and how needful that everywhere Christians should be found in the place which God has accorded them, with "pious hands" lifted up, "without wrath or disputation!"

In like manner, also, he points out the moral character which the women necessarily, equally with the men, are to exemplify. They are to be adorned with fitting apparel. The seeking of adornment is natural to them, but let this then, says the apostle, be it,—in fact, the sweetest and most real adornment that can anywhere be found,—not the adornment of the outside, not costly or even so much external adornment, as the adornment of the spirit which is to be seen in them, and of the works which will speak for them; while at the same time the apparel is, no doubt, to be fitting, not slovenly, not such as would cause remark

Eve; and [f]Adam was not deceived, but the [g]woman having been deceived came to be in the transgression. But she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and love and holiness with sobriety.

[f] Gen. 3. 12.
[g] Gen. 3. 13.

upon the other side, but suited to the quiet modesty which belongs to them. As to the place of the woman as a teacher, the apostle carries us back to the beginning of all. It is, indeed, the constant way with him to uphold, along with the peculiar place which God has given us as Christians, where it is no question of sex at all, the creation-place, which is not really interfered with by this. It is not for eternity, nor meant to be put as if of equal value with the place in Christ. Nevertheless, there are lessons to be learned here which are wholesome to receive, and which cannot without danger be set aside. We shall find, in fact, as we go on, that one great feature of the apostasy, so soon to set in, will be the disregard of that which God instituted when He created man. The woman then is not to teach—that is, in such a way clearly as to exercise authority over the man. That is not a question of the fall, although the apostle brings in the fall in order to illustrate his point. It inheres, however, in the very character of woman, who is the heart of humanity, as Adam is the head. But in the fall itself Adam was not deceived. It is not that that excuses Adam in the least. It would rather be the opposite of this, but it certainly illustrates the fact that with man intelligence is prominent. The woman ought to have been kept, no doubt, by a heart which realized what God was to them, and the love which He had manifested towards them in the Paradise prepared. She was not ill-guarded against the tempter, but she was guarded in a different way. Alas, the temptation broke through both these guards, and head and heart were alike involved in the ruin that came in. Still, the woman's way of being in the transgression was as one deceived, and the man was not deceived. It is not a difference with regard to the measure of the sin itself, but it is a difference which shows the man and the woman in the characteristic features of each. The apostle closes here with the comforting assurance that where the fall had brought the woman into suffering and sorrow, which was the needed reminder of that which no child of man is ever intended to forget, God nevertheless would assuredly come in to deliver those who continued "in faith and love and holiness, with sobriety." The thought of a reference here to Christ as the child born seems to have no justification in the language nor in the context.

Div. 3.

We now come really to the house of God itself; first of all, indeed, to that which was instituted for the preservation of the character which it should necessarily have as the house of God. The elder, or overseer, and the deacon are provisions for the expression, on the one hand, of that godliness which belongs to it as such, and also of that character which we see must necessarily belong to it as the house of a Saviour-God, and whose love, therefore, must be shown by ministry to the need, which is, in fact, ordered on God's part, to draw out and cultivate the spirit so necessary in the Christian. These things are all that we may learn how to conduct ourselves in the house of God. Whatever special place Timothy might have and had, yet the conduct of any in the house of God must befit the place in which he is. The directions even as to elders and deacons are not, so to speak, merely for their own sake; they show us the character that God values and seeks from His people, giving it only an emphasis which cannot certainly make the lesson for us less.

1. The bishop, commonly so-called, or "overseer," as the word means, comes before us first here. His title of office expresses the character of it. The man himself who is to fill the office is the "elder," though not here named as such. We have the two brought together in the plainest way in the apostle's address to the elders at Ephesus in the book of Acts, where, calling for the elders of the Church, he bids them to take care for the Church of God, in which the Holy

DIVISION 3. (Chaps. iii., iv.)

The house of God and the holiness belonging to it.

1 (1-7): The overseer.

1. FAITHFUL is the saying, If any one aspireth to [h]oversight, he desireth a good work. The [i]overseer must, then, be irreproachable, a [j]husband of one wife, sober, discreet, decorous, [k]given to hospitality,

[h] Acts 20. 17, 28.
[i] Tit. 1. 6-9.
[j] cf. ver. 12. ch. 5. 9.
[k] 1 Pet. 4. 9.

Spirit had made them bishops, or overseers. The elder (elder in years) is necessarily the one who is alone fit for such an office. The incongruity of a young man being appointed to it should be obvious at first sight. It is a place which requires experience, and which calls for a reputation on the part of one who fills it, gained not all at once, but as he is tested and manifested by the testing. He was appointed specifically to this work, did not appoint himself to it, though he might aspire to such, and desire a good work in aspiring to it. In fact, work of this character is what there is, perhaps, more danger of men shrinking from than aspiring to. Not every elder in years would therefore be what his years should have made him, and the apostle's words indicate here that the love to others which necessarily exists in the Christian heart should lead him to desire labor of this kind. It is *labor*, not authority, that he desires. The appointment, which is what is called ordinarily ordination now, was that which manifestly gave authority. The idea everywhere entertained to-day that the evangelist, or teacher, needs such authority for the exercise of his proper gift, is an entire mistake as to the very purpose of the ordination. A gift speaks for itself. It is the "manifestation of the Spirit," as the apostle says, which is for every man to profit with it; that is, he is to use it for the profit of others. The fact of the gift entails the responsibility of using it, and to seek authority from man in this way is, however ignorantly, to slight the authority of God, which can make no mistake in the gift that has been given. People would say, of course, that the question here is as to the possession of the gift; but there is in Christianity, as we have seen, the widest liberty for every one, without pretension, to help another according to the full capacity which he may realize to do so. Christians will easily determine for themselves whether it is help that they are getting or the reverse. We know the baker by the bread he gives us. We know the teacher by the spiritual food which he supplies. Ordination at the hands of a certain number of any limited class sets aside in reality the responsibility of every one to take heed for himself as to what he hears. The teaching is supposed to have been otherwise guaranteed to him, and he has little to do except to sit down and receive that which comes with such a sanction. The abuse is everywhere manifest, and the abuse is inherent in such a use of ordination as we find here. The conscience of both hearer and teacher is taken away from its proper immediate exercise before God, and human influences get their leave to rule in a disastrous way. The independence of the teacher must be secured in obedience to the Spirit Himself, who is in this respect the true Overseer every way; and, on the other hand, the one who hears is to be in no wise dependent upon the teacher. The unscriptural thought of a minister and his congregation gives, in fact, the teacher a monopoly of instruction which a true soul, uninfluenced by tradition, would surely, as a matter of course, refuse. Who would desire to assume responsibility of giving to those under him all that they need in this way, shutting out the divers gifts in the body of Christ, as himself all-competent to be all gift? God's way is at once that of liberty to serve, and of *service* instead of rule, which in this case is out of place. Wherever it is a question of teaching or evangelizing, the authority is in the Word itself, and no other is needed. The Word is maintained in its place as the decisive word of God, to which all are to be subject, and is that also which every one is responsible for himself to recognize, and empowered to do so by the Spirit which is received. If the teaching becomes in any wise erroneous, so as to affect fundamental points, of course the discipline of the assembly comes rightly into its place. Apart from this, the rule is, as the

[l] apt to teach, not given to wine, no striker, but mild, not given to contention, not fond of money, one that conducteth well his own house, having his [m] children in subjection with all gravity, (now if a man know not how to conduct his own house, how shall he take care of the assembly of God?) not a novice, lest being [n] lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must have a good testimony from those without, that he may not fall into reproach and the [o] snare of the devil.

[l] 2 Tim. 2. 24.
[m] ver. 12.
[n] ch. 6. 4.
[o] Eph. 6. 11.

apostle says of prophesying in the assembly: "Let the prophets speak"—give them also their liberty—"and let the rest judge." All party spirit, all working of men's minds merely, in this way finds its most effectual power of restraint. But we have here to do, not with the evangelist or teacher, but with the overseer, who is indeed to be "apt to teach;" that is, he is to be able to use the word of God as he has received it. If he could not do this, he could have no right influence or authority over others; but this does not amount to a teacher's gift, and in fact we find elsewhere that the elders that rule well are to be accounted "worthy of double honor, *specially* those who labor in the word and doctrine." If they labored in the word and doctrine, that was an additional thing, and of necessity deserved additional honor; but the elder might rule well, apart from that. In the case, then, of oversight of the kind that is indicated here, (that fatherly oversight which he has shown his readiness for by having his children in subjection in his own house,) ordination had its rightful place. There might be matters to inquire into which it would be in no wise well for every one to have liberty for. On the other hand, we never hear of *an* elder in a place or congregation, but of *elders*. It was not the rule of one man that could be tolerated even here. Too much power of this sort man cannot be safely trusted with; while, on the other hand, the presence of a class which had such authority would be necessarily of great advantage. It is evident that the elders in no wise interfered with the responsibility of assembly discipline, however much they might be leaders here; but the assembly in this was to act as the assembly everywhere, in its own place and responsibility.

The character needed in the overseer will now be easy to understand. A man might rightly aspire to oversight, as has been already said. He might rightly crave the ability to help in matters in which every assembly, in fact, needs help. If he desired it as a good work, not for personal display, it was all well. But the overseer must be irreproachable. There must not be a cloud upon him. His moral character must be spotless in the eyes of all. He was to be the "husband of one wife, sober, discreet, decorous, given to hospitality, apt to teach, not given to wine, no striker, but mild, not given to contention, not fond of money." Here is the moral character which becomes him, and it needs scarcely to be enlarged upon. A special point is that which follows here, and we see how necessarily the elder would be both an elderly and a married man. There must have been time to show his power to conduct well his own house, otherwise how could he take this larger care as to the assembly of God itself? The apostle does not exactly say "the house of God" because, as we may believe, he is thinking of the local assembly, and the house of God is a larger thought than that; but the care, nevertheless, is similar. It is a fatherly care, suited to the house of God as such, although he cannot be the father in that house, as in fact he never was *the* father, even in one assembly. There was a community of fathers, for the house of God needs the care of many, and the various ability implied in this. He was not to be a novice, even though he might have all other qualifications. He should be a man tried, and therefore who has had time for the trial, "lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil;" that is, should fall into the sin for which the devil is condemned. A

2 (8–13): The Deacon.

2. Let [p]deacons in like manner be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not seeking gain by base means, [q]holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience; and let [r]these be first proved, and then let them minister as those without blame. The wives in like manner [s]grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be [t]husbands of one wife; [u]conducting their children and their own houses well; for those who have ministered well acquire for themselves a good degree, and much boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

[p] Phil. 1. 1.
[q] ch. 1. 19.
[r] ch. 5. 22.
[s] Tit. 2. 3.
[t] ver. 2.
[u] ver. 4.

solemn word this, which has been commented on, perhaps, sufficiently elsewhere; but here we have the primal sin itself, in view of which God has acted all the way through human history, and in the very creation of man no less. How solemn to think that a being created in perfection, one of those "angels that excel in strength," who are the type of creature independence so far as this can be spoken of, should fall in the only way, perhaps, in which we can think of any possibility of a fall on the part of such an one, by self-occupation, self-admiration; and what an awful fall it was! How has God hedged man around in this respect to hide pride from him, with the limitation of a human body, naturally a naked creature, inferior in some respects to the beasts around him, whose nature, too, in many respects he shares!

A limitation this, which the fall has only been the means of more strictly circumscribing, so that the lesson shall be more fully learned at last. In how many ways, spite of all, may this pride seek its satisfaction, nay, its recognized place, one might almost say, among Christians themselves; and how many current systems provide more or less for this! Man in the office of an elder must be specially one who has shown himself not easily lifted up with pride. He must show that he has laid to heart the lesson of his origin, and of all God's dealings with him by the way. His testimony also must be good from those that are without. God does not make light of a man's testimony from the world itself, although we must not expect the world to appreciate that which is peculiarly Christian in him; but he must have a good testimony in this way, so as not to fall into reproach, (and bring reproach, therefore, upon those among whom he has a place of this sort,) and into the snare of the devil, the accuser, who will be apt to buffet and render him useless by this very reproach.

2. The deacon is, in the strict meaning of the word, the "minister," one who serves; and this word is applied in a larger way than to the local office which is here indicated by it. Here, no doubt, the minister was such as in the case of the seven appointed in Jerusalem; whose duty it was to "serve tables." This expressively indicates what is in question. It is the bodily need especially that the deacon serves. In this way he cannot and must not forget that he is the spiritual man, and that all lesser and lower things are necessarily to have their character from their spiritual bearing. The ministry of the assembly is the outflow of the heart drawn out by the needs which God permits for this purpose. It is the same principle as that which obtains in the whole body of Christ, here more in outward things; but there is, of course, nothing secular in it, nor indeed is there to be anywhere, in any point of Christian life. Those chosen in the Acts were to be "men full of the Holy Spirit," no less; and we may be sure that they needed and could find use for all that this implies. Stephen and Philip are beautiful examples of those who in such ministry acquired "for themselves a good degree, and much boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

The deacons, then, are to be "grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not seeking gain by base means;" and while not absolutely, as in the case of an elder, needing to be "apt to teach," yet must hold "the mystery of

3 (14-16): God's house a pillar of the mystery of piety.

3. These things I write unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I delay, that thou mayest know how to conduct thyself in the [u]house of God, which is

u Eph. 2.21, 22. *cfr.* 2 Tim. 2. 20.

the faith in a pure conscience." Faith and conscience are thus to be joined together, as we have already seen. Mere orthodoxy is incompetent everywhere. If the conscience is not under the authority of the truth, the truth can only be a burden to one instead of the blessing that it should be. The deacons, also, were to be men who had been tested, and had abode the test. They were to be entrusted with things which manifestly have their power of temptation even among Christians. They are to be first proved, and then to minister as those without blame and who have approved themselves. The wives are mentioned also in a special manner here, as not in the case of the elder, which has also, no doubt, to do with the relative characters of the two offices. The wives were to be "grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things." The deacons, too, were to be "husbands of one wife, conducting their children and their own houses well." We are reminded of Philip's daughters who were prophetesses, when Philip himself had risen to a larger sphere of labor than that which was his at Jerusalem in the first place. In this way they would "acquire for themselves a good degree," they would be helped in helping, and find boldness also in the faith in Christ.

3. The apostle now tells Timothy that he was writing these things that he might know how to conduct himself in the house of God. Holiness becomes God's house forever. The holiness which should be found in the houses of His people is, of course, but the mere reflection of this. Yet here, too, the character of the house is left in measure to the responsibility of those who are in it. A responsibility indeed it is, for this house of God is the assembly of the living God, indwelt by the living Spirit, the witness for Christ upon the earth. As this, it is of necessity "the pillar," proclaiming, and "the ground of the truth," supporting it by its character; and this remains always in principle the same, although, alas, the failure of man has come in plentifully, as we know, to affect it. Still, if we think of Christendom itself, we could not look outside it for the truth, or for the character which the truth emphasizes. We must not, indeed, look at the masses—that is sadly true; but we cannot look outside the profession of the faith for this faith that is professed. The truth which it declares is of the most marvelous character. It is "the mystery of piety"—thus, that which is necessary absolutely to godliness, as we have already seen. Without the truth there will be no godliness; but here it is "the mystery of piety," not the truth simply which Israel had, but much more than this, and having features which, though we may find them in germ in the Old Testament, yet, after all, are peculiar in the full sense to the Christianity which has replaced it. A mystery is always something hidden; but which, nevertheless, is made known to those initiated. To them it is not a mystery any longer, not a secret, but a thing revealed, however much it be true that indeed there are heights and depths in it which no man has ever fathomed, or will fathom. This mystery is in a Person, acquaintance with whom, if it be real, in the heart, is piety itself. It is "He who hath been manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, received up in glory."

The opening clause here is, as we all know, contested. Our common version is: "*God* was manifested in the flesh." The Revised has it as here: "He who hath been manifested." It is a question of text, which criticism is answering in a way, perhaps, somewhat distasteful to one who cleaves most to the blessed thought, which is, however, really the same, however we read it. We are not really so poor in texts regarding the deity of Christ as to take so seriously the loss of this one; but in fact it is only a superficial view that we *do* lose it: for WHO is it that has been "manifested in the flesh"? What do such words mean? We cannot think of angels; we cannot think of a *man* manifested in the flesh. Deity it must after all be, and the language is almost equivalent to that which

the assembly of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And confessedly great is the mystery of piety, he* who hath been [w]manifested in the flesh,

[w] Jno. 1.14. *cf.* 1Jno.1.2.

* Or, "God;" but the weight of authority is against it.

the apostle John uses in the place in which he is giving us the very criterion of orthodoxy in this matter: "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ has *come in flesh* is of God." That is the confession, to deny which constitutes an antichrist; yet the deity of Christ is no more positively stated there than in the questioned passage before us. But who could speak of a *man* come in flesh? And there is no doctrine of an angel so coming, to be put in opposition to that which is plainly the true one. The manifestation of God is that which is the intent and purpose of all divine communications. It can be nothing else here than God manifested in the flesh, whether this be stated or only implied. The passage, even as commonly read, has been taken by those unsound in the doctrine, the Gnostics, as merely a sort of appearance, a manifestation indeed, but not a personal one. The connection with what follows, however, speaks in favor of the new rendering. One can hardly say "*God* justified in the Spirit." This latter clause, which speaks of the descent of the Spirit of God upon Christ, making Him thus the Christ, the Anointed, refers to Him as the Man Christ Jesus, the Second Man, wholly approved of God, refusing the first fallen one. It is quite true that here also is the One to whom God at the same time testifies as His beloved Son, but the expression has reference to the white robe in which the priest must offer, or the unblemished character of the lamb of sacrifice. It is thus John, who has seen the Spirit descend, testifies of Him as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world;" and the whole scene is in harmony with this.

In any case, as already said, it is the Lord's deity that is implied here. There is no meaning really otherwise in it; and what a wonderful thing it is, flesh, the human nature as identified with its lowest part, with just that which speaks of weakness and mutability, yet the vessel of the display of Deity itself! A Man here is found who can give God His character—single and alone can do it. The One who has revealed Himself in the Old Testament as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, (and then we must look at these as types, rather than at the men themselves,) is now revealed in One who as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ awakes the whole heart to worship. The lowliness of the manifestation is an essential part of its glory. The "vessel of earth" (although not in the same sense in which the apostle speaks of it in Corinthians) discloses, is fitted to disclose, the excellency of a power which is all of God. It is not a gleam of glory that is there, but the full reality of it, which will make the throne of God forever to be also the throne of the Lamb. God and man are here in such relation that the one is, so to speak, essential to the other. There must be truest humanity and there must be the full truth of Godhead, or the revelation is lost. It must be the Creator who becomes the Redeemer. If it were any way possible, which it is not, yet the moral impossibility of God leaving the work of redemption to another should be manifest at once. It is God Himself who thus wins man's heart to Himself. It is God who has this double claim now upon His creature. It is thus He wins for Himself the creature He has made.

From this point His justification in the Spirit becomes a necessity. God has not repented of His creation of man. Here the thought that He had in the beginning as to him is revealed. Here is the blessed Man before us who embodies that thought—One upon whom, without shedding of blood at all, because of His own perfection, the Holy Spirit can abide—nay, we should say, must abide. Our justification is, as we have seen in Corinthians, by the Spirit too; the Spirit now able to dwell in us because of the perfection in which we are before God; but this is no perfection of our own. It is the perfection of the work accom-

[x] justified in the Spirit, [y] seen of angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, [z] received up in glory.

[x] Matt. 3. 16, 17. [y] Lk. 2. 13, *et al.* [z] Mk. 16. 19, Lk. 24. 51; Acts 1. 9.

plished for us and of Him in whom we stand. On the other hand, Christ as indwelt of the Spirit is the testimony to His own perfection, and this can never know any change. He is thus the Christ, the Anointed One. This becomes His very title—the Man approved of God, and approved as suited for the work with which He here connects Himself, just come out of that retirement in which He had been before the eye of God alone, to take His place openly as ministering to man, and that to the giving up of Himself in death; as Jordan, out of which He has come up, testifies.

The next thing that we have here shows us the grandeur of the scene for which the revelation is. It is a revelation in manhood, in flesh; but it is a revelation "seen of angels." The principalities and powers become not merely spectators, but spectators of that which is wonderful blessing for them, even while the Lamb of sacrifice is, of course, not for them; but we have seen in Ephesians that God the Father as revealed to us in Christ is thus "the Father of *every* family in heaven and earth." The relation of Fatherhood is necessarily characterized by all that this revelation of the Father brings out in it.

In the next clause we have another but a different expansion of the grace that is here: "Preached among the nations" shows that the old hindrances to that which was ever in His heart have been removed, and that now Jew and Gentile alike become the recipients of His favor. He is plainly seen not to be the God of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles. Thus He is "believed on in the world." Though it be true that it is by the power of the Spirit only that anything is effected, yet there is this response in the world at large to the revelation made. That which Judaism could not accomplish, the Gentile world being practically almost untouched by it, is now accomplished. Man's heart awakens in the new springtide of blessing which is opening up, and which, whatever the conflict yet with the cloud and darkness, is destined at last to banish them from the earth, and Christ "lifted up" from the earth to draw men unto Him.

With all this ensured, then, the final word here is: "Received up in glory." The glory of God from which He has come, once more receives Him. The cloud may for a while hide Him from the earth which His presence has so blessed, nevertheless it is only to open new scenes of higher blessing to man himself. He has glorified God upon earth, and God has glorified Him in heaven. There is hence not only a light breaking out through the opened veil for men, but also a way opened in for men into the place in which He is.

Div. 4.

The fourth division stands in the saddest contrast with that which we have just been looking at. The brighter the light, the darker the shadows. The corruption of the best becomes the worst corruption; and, alas, as soon as ever we speak of what is entrusted to man, there is sure to follow the demonstration of man's wilful incapacity. We must never lose sight of the wilfulness which *is* the incapacity. Scripture never forgets the complete responsibility of man in every way, and never allows that he fails through weakness simply, through mere incompetency. The apostle goes on now, therefore, to speak of the foreseen apostasy, even from a faith like this; the power of Satan working where the power of God is working, and man giving heed to Satan rather than to God. How blessed, however, to realize that here also, where it may least seem so, God is absolute Master of all circumstances, and that even the worst revolt of the creature shall at last glorify Him! For us also the knowledge of these things should be also the knowledge of that which is in our own hearts, and which should make us cleave, in the consciousness of our weakness, to Him, with fuller purpose and desire, who alone is able to deliver us from all that is within as well as all that is without.

DIVISION 4. (Chap. iv.)

The latter-day apostasy.

1 (iv.1-5): Rebellion against the Creator-God.

1. BUT the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times [a]some shall apostatize from the faith, giving heed to [b]deceiving spirits and [c]teachings of demons; [d]speaking lies in hypocrisy, seared in their consciences, forbidding to marry, [commanding] to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be [e]received with thanksgiving on the part of them who believe and acknowledge the truth. For every creature of God is good, and [f]nothing to be rejected, being received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

[a] 2 Thess.2. 3.
[b] 1 Jno. 4.1, 6.
[c] Rev. 9. 20.
[d] 2 Thess.2. 11. 1 Jno. 2. 21, 22.
[e] Gen. 9. 3.
[f] Acts 10.15.

1. It is remarkable how much the apostle connects, in all that is here, the present with the past, carrying us back to the very beginning, to the creation and the fall, and showing us the apostasy in Christendom as being still the revolt of the creature against the Creator, the spurning of that which God instituted at the beginning, so that just as Christianity embodies in itself also the principles inherent in God's first creation, so the apostasy too sums up in itself the elements of all apostasy, which is seen to be rebellion all along the line of history, as we may say. How gracious of God that all this is marked out for us, that we might not be dismayed or overborne by that in itself so startling, the spirit of evil yet unconquered and manifesting itself only the more, the more God's grace is manifested! "The Spirit," then, "speaketh expressly that in the latter days some shall apostatize from the faith." We have not here exactly, as in Thessalonians, the fully organized apostasy. It is the individual, rather, and in that way so soon to manifest itself. The faith is here what is struck at in the first place, as it is, as we know, the foundation of all. Other things will follow; and if the faith can be destroyed, the fruits of faith will of necessity follow. Men may make, as they are making now, light of doctrine. Satan is wiser, and, with all this, while he encourages it, is only making manifest his own estimation of doctrine. He knows how to exalt morality at its expense, and to be here, apparently, the angel of light contending for righteousness. Only, in fact, his lies begin with a doctrine which his followers must receive, and in which all is found for the accomplishment of that which it is in his heart to accomplish. Apostasy from the faith will be found always to be the "giving heed to deceiving spirits, and teachings of demons," although there may be times in which this may be palpable, and, as the darkness increases, demonolatry may, and naturally will, become more openly in fashion. It is all about us to-day; by which we may judge of the darkness; but the apostle's words are not to be limited to this. A certain homage to the truth, if we can call it so, is found in these lies in hypocrisy. Evil has to put on the form of godliness, and is a successful imitator of that for which it can be no substitute. The conscience is, in fact, being seared at the same time that there is the utmost pretence of following it, and of something higher than even ordinary Christianity itself can produce. Of this character is the "forbidding to marry," and "bidding to abstain from meats," an asceticism which puts Stylites upon his pillar, and is a real satisfaction of the flesh, abhorrent to Him whose delight is that His creatures should freely enjoy that which He has created to be received with thanksgiving. Self-denial is, of course, all well, when there are interests to be served by it, and which make it, therefore, to be really this; but this is the mere caricature, the aping of self-denial, not the reality. It is plainly nothing like what you find in Christ at all, in whose presence there was a rejoicing as of the men of the bride-chamber in the Bridegroom come. Christianity has now, therefore, removed even the restrictions of Judaism, and justified God in

2 (6-16): The guard against this, negative and positive.

2. If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished with the words of the faith and of good doctrine which thou hast fully [p]followed up; but [h]profane and old wives' fables avoid. And [i]exercise thyself unto piety: for bodily exercise profiteth for a little, but [j]piety is profitable for everything, having [k]promise of the present life and of that to come. Faithful is the word and worthy of all acceptation; for for this we labor and strive,* because we hope in the living God, [l]who is the preserver of all men, [m]specially of those who believe. These things command and teach. Let

p 2 Tim. 3. 10.
h ch. 1. 4.
i Heb. 5. 14.
j ch. 6. 6.
k Ps. 4. 6 *.
l Matt. 5. 45.
m Matt. 6. 25-34. Lk. 21. 18.

* Some MSS. read, "suffer reproach."

His creation of every creature as good. The Jewish restrictions had, as we know, their typical significance, and were shadows for the time—not even then the very image of the true. The word of God thus sanctifies the reception of all that He has made for us and put into our hands; and it is the mere part of unbelief to refuse anything. With this reception there is, of necessity, that which is the acknowledgment of our dependence upon Him which all this implies, and of our need that He should make it to us that which He has ordained it for. Our very food is not sanctified to us, does not rightly become our own for Christian use, except by prayer.

2. The apostle goes on now to exhort, in view of all this, that everything that is not sanctified by the word of God should be refused. There must be no speculation, no dreaming outside the Word, nothing which would bring in uncertainty. We must walk amid realities, in the light of ascertained truth. In putting the brethren in remembrance of these things, Timothy would be a good minister of Jesus Christ, himself nourished with the words of the faith and of good doctrine, which he had fully followed up; for in all doctrine there must be that which ministers to the need of the soul, in order that there may be the fruit from it also for which it is intended. He was to avoid, therefore, "profane and old wives' fables," the merely speculative and the profane never being far apart; in fact, lacking in the very beginning of it the sobriety of mind which finds all-sufficient the revelation of God, and distrusts all human ability to transcend it. Piety was to be sought, and to this he was to exercise himself, the body being but a small part of it here, and the exercise of it being profitable for a little, but piety profitable for everything; having promise of the present life and of that which is to come. It is plain that even the Lord's words as to the losing of one's life in this world are not contradictory to what the apostle says here. A path with the light of heaven upon it, whatever be the path itself, must be a bright one; and God has amply provided for this. Happiness, indeed, is the only thing that will satisfy Him.

Faithful is this word and worthy of all acceptation: even the laboring and striving because of hope in a living God grows out of faith in One who is the Preserver of all men, especially of those who believe. The character of a Saviour-God for all is here again, as we have found it before in the epistle. Sin has brought in all the distress there is, all the hardship, all the straits and limitations. In these we are not called to rejoice, save only as indeed God works by them to give us the necessary lessons of our schooling time; but His glorious, beneficial love is that which we are called to believe in, and to see everywhere thus, whatever may be the appearances.

These things, then, Timothy was to command and teach. Youthful as he might be, he was to allow no one to despise him on that account. His own growth and maturity in the Word were to be manifest, as well as all the moral character which attaches to this. He was to give himself to exhortation, to

no one [n]despise thy youth, but be a [o]model of the believers, in word, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Until I come, give thyself to reading, to exhortation, to teaching. [p]Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was [q]given thee through prophecy, with the [r]laying on of hands of the eldership. Occupy thyself with these things; be wholly in them, that thy progress may be manifest to all. [s]Take heed to thyself, and to the teaching; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt [t]both save thyself and those that hear thee.

n 1 Cor. 16. 11.
o Tit. 2. 7. 1 Pet. 5. 3.
p Rom. 12. 7. cf. 1 Thess. 5. 19.
q ch. 1. 18.
r cf. Acts 6. 6. cf. Acts 13. 3.
s Acts 20. 28.
t Ezk. 3. 21.

teaching, developing by using the gift which had been given to him. He was not to neglect that which was in him. How many do this, perhaps by the false humility which would make the gift to be but little—false, because the smallest gift from God is not to be despised, and contains in it a germ which may indefinitely grow, if only God is served in it. In Timothy's case this gift had been given through prophecy, with the laying on of hands of the eldership. It was not the laying on of hands that communicated the gift, although it owned it, no doubt. The gift was given through prophecy, the voice of God announcing it, as prophecy means here as elsewhere. He had thus a special place which none of us can now pretend to; but with all this there is only the more need of recognition of how dependent he was upon the thing upon which we too are dependent. His gift did not release him from that which Christianity imposes upon all. He was to occupy himself with these things that he ministered, to be wholly in them—an immense point, as he declares, for a progress which was to be made manifest to all. There is nothing for power like real occupation, heart-occupation with our own things. We are relieved from the pressure of things upon us, from the cares which fret away the good of life. The things eternal assuming their proper place with us, nothing that is of time can be a real hindrance. To these things, then, he had to take heed, and to the teaching; himself not alone being concerned in them, he would both save himself (that is, in the working out salvation after the manner we have seen in Philippians) and those also who heard him.

Div. 5.

We come now to that which in itself is simple enough, scarcely needing expansion, but which, as a whole, is difficult to connect together. We are reminded, also, of the continual difference between the days of the apostle and the present days, when the seeds of evil which he saw himself beginning to work, have been so greatly developed, and have issued to so large an extent in the breaking up of the Church as a whole. Apostles are gone, and the ordering of things as a whole is left largely, as is plain, to individual responsibility. We have not even a Timothy, any more than a Paul. The ordination of elders according to Scripture has dropped, for we have none set in the place of Timothy himself or in the place of the apostle, to ordain them. To the Church the power of this was never committed. Authority, in fact, in this way could never safely be entrusted to the Church, and is not. The Church is the company of saints, the company of the taught, and not, as Rome would make it, of the teachers. But on that very account its place is that of obedience rather than authority—not but what every right action of the assembly, every act of discipline that is really of God will be owned of Him, and is that as long as authoritative; but there is no power to deliver to Satan, for instance, as we find the apostle doing; and one can see why, in the circumstances in which we are, it should be of God that the formal ordination of elders, for instance, should be denied us. We have, of course, such men as are pointed out in the present epistle, men who, as being suited for the work and desiring it, are encouraged to take it up, only that the authority that they claim must be based simply upon the Word, and upon no special commission. Every right-minded Christian, recognizing the work of

DIVISION 5. (Chaps. v., vi.)

Special responsibilities.

1 (v. 1-16): The widow, really alone.

1. "REBUKE not an elder sharply, but exhort him as a father; the younger men as brethren; the elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity. Honor widows who are widows indeed; but if [u] Lev. 19. 32.

one of this character, and acting in this manner, will surely honor such an one for the work, and for what he sees him to be; but this is a very different thing from a claim of authority. The only safety for us anywhere now is in *obedience;* and we put our own selves in this way under the authority which we plead with others. This necessarily affects the form of much that we have before us. When we come to the second epistle, we shall find that neither elders nor indeed deacons are spoken of any more. We need not say that they did not exist: things no doubt had not got so far as that. Timothy was still present to ordain, and perhaps Titus also; although, in fact, it is only the latter who is formally, as far as the epistle goes, commissioned to act in this way. We have an expression which implies that Timothy did so, but the way in which it is left shows us how, in the days that were then coming in, there would be less and less need of any insistence upon such things as these. Provision for the continuance of ordination, even in the case of elders, there is not. Timothy is instructed to commit the things which he has received to faithful men, that they may teach others also; but that in no wise includes any authoritative commission to be given to them. God works through all this, would exercise the conscience, would throw us, as already said, upon individual responsibility more, and thus produce for us a more simple and entire dependence upon Himself—a walk with Him alone. The individual is never left to be swamped, as it were, by the shipwreck of the Church at large. Alas, we may, through timidity and love of ease, give ourselves up to a condition of mere helplessness and drifting with the mass. We have to remember that it is just the mass that has failed, and that after all, at all times, the walk with God is necessarily an individual walk—not that fellowship with others is less valued, but that it gains its whole character from our own fellowship, first of all, with the Father and the Son. This alone prevents the fellowship of others even being a snare to us. The exhortation, "Go not with the multitude to do evil," is one that we have ever to keep in mind. Evil seems so much less evil, alas, when it is the multitude that are doing it. A separate course is so often looked at as really a course of pride, rather than a conscious responsibility, that we are apt to ask ourselves even, may it not be so?—can we be altogether right, when this involves the judgment that so many, therefore, and of the Lord's own people, are going wrong? For all this, the only help we have is to walk in the sense of a higher Presence, before whom men as a whole are, comparatively, but vanity.

But thus we can understand how little authority, such as ordination speaks of, can be committed to men in such a condition of things as Scripture shows us we are in at the present. We see on every side those who in this case might claim the authority, who are entirely unfit to exercise it; and men are respected and bowed to as being in an official place, who, if they were to be judged as men, would have to be shunned instead of followed. This has in Romanism, where we see all these things in full development, resulted in the priest being entirely competent as priest, while as man he may be scorned and detested. God can honor no such system as this. Scriptural following of men is simply and only as they follow Christ; but officialism leads ever to the violation of this; and where the teaching and preaching are considered to be only legitimately in the hands of those who are humanly commissioned, the worst results will necessarily follow. In Romanism the preaching and teaching part have almost ceased. There is a mere ritual administration, which can be entrusted to men of what-

any widow have children or descendants, let [v]them learn first to show piety at home and to requite their parents; for [w]this is acceptable in the sight of God. Now she who is a widow indeed, and is left alone, putteth her hope in God, and [x]continueth in supplications and prayers night and day; but she that [y]liveth in self-indulgence is [z]dead while she liveth. And these things enjoin, that they may be blameless. But if any provide not for his own, specially for those of his house, he hath [a]denied the faith and is worse than the unbeliever. Let a widow be taken into the number, being not less than sixty years old, having been [b]the wife of one man, borne testimony to by good works; if she have brought up children, if she [c]have exercised hospitality, if she [d]have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

v Matt.15.4-6.
w Eph. 6. 1, 2.
x Lk. 2. 37.
y Ezk.16.49. Lk. 16. 25.
z Rev. 3. 1.
a 2 Tim.3.5.
b *cf.* ch. 3.2.
c Heb. 13. 2. ch. 3. 2.
d Gen. 18. 4. Lk. 7. 44.

ever character, and of course the whole system becomes machinery of the lowest type, although it may be energized by a spirit of thorough evil. However, we must now go on with the epistle.

1. In his behavior among the saints, Timothy is exhorted to remember the differences which necessarily existed. Age, among other things, is to be respected; not so much in the treatment itself, as in the manner of treatment. An "elder" here is no doubt an elderly man, not simply an official elder, although it would apply to these. Such an one was not to be rebuked sharply, but exhorted humbly, as one might exhort a father. The young men were to be treated as brethren, the elder women as mothers; again, the younger as sisters, with all purity.

The case of those who are in circumstances of special need and dependence is next considered. Those that are widows indeed, in the full reality of widowhood, are to be honored, evidently to be cared for in the way of ministry, and according to their need. If such an one had children, then these were to show piety at home. It would not be right to take from them that which was their responsibility, nor would it be what would be desired on the part of those who felt things rightly from the divine or from the human side. But the widow indeed, one left really solitary, cast upon God alone, had a place of corresponding privilege as one who might give herself to prayer and supplication in behalf of others continuously. Whoever she were as to circumstances, if she was only thinking of self-indulgence, she was dead while living. God never recognizes any as having no duties to perform, no part to play, in a world such as this is. We can see how prayer is recognized as everywhere a need and a responsibility. One lying helpless upon a bed of sickness could yet pray, and pray; and perhaps there could be no greater usefulness than to live shut up, as men might think, after this fashion. If the heart was still after the things of which by circumstances one might be deprived, then all was out of place. The very providence of God was unheeded, and there could be no honor for one in such a condition. If any one did not provide for his own, especially for those of his own house, his own immediate circle, he denied the faith, and was worse than the unbeliever by the full extent of his profession.

As for the widows, those who were to be considered such were not to be less than sixty years old, having been the wife of one man, and with testimony borne to them by the good works their lives had exhibited. The children they had brought up would speak for them, the hospitality they had exercised, the washing the saints' feet (not, evidently, here the idle ceremony into which this kind of thing has degenerated, but the real practical ministry and the refreshment of those who needed it), the relief of the afflicted; in short, every good

But the younger widows refuse: for when they grow wanton against Christ they desire to marry; having condemnation because they have cast off their first faithfulness.* And at the same time they also learn to be idle, going about to people's houses; and not only idle, but [e]gossipers also and meddlers, speaking things unfit. I will, therefore, that the younger marry, bear children, [f]rule the house, give [g]no occasion to the adversary in respect of reproach, for some are already turned aside after Satan. If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them impart relief to them, and let not the assembly be charged; that it may impart relief to those that are widows indeed.

[e] 2 Thess. 3. 11. 1 Pet. 4. 15.
[f] Tit. 2. 5.
[g] ch. 6. 1. Tit. 2. 5, 8.

2 (17-21): The elder as laborer and under accusation.

2. Let the elders who [h]take the lead well, be [i]esteemed worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in word and teaching. For the Scripture saith, [j]Thou shalt not muzzle an ox that treadeth out the corn; and, [k]The workman is worthy of his hire. Against an

[h] Rom. 12. 8.
[i] 1 Thess. 5. 12, 13.
[j] Deut. 25. 4. 1 Cor. 9. 9.
[k] Matt. 10. 10. Lk. 10. 7.

* Or, "faith:" πίστις may be either.

work that could be called that. On the other hand, the younger widows were to be refused—that is, they were not to be considered as belonging to the class of widows proper. They might have taken for themselves the place as a place in honor, but without faithfulness such as would be equal to the path implied. Thus they would not continue in it, would be self-condemned in what they had done, and the restlessness of their spirit would be manifest in mere wandering about among the families of the saints, gossiping and meddling and speaking things unfit. The rule, therefore, was for the younger to marry, exercise themselves in home duties, give no occasion to a reproach which would put them into the hands of the adversary; and here a small beginning might end in their going far astray; but if there were widows in the family of any Christians, these were themselves to assume the responsibility of their relief, and leave the assembly to charge itself with those who were really in the desolation implied in widowhood.

2. The official elders are now considered. Their work is spoken of here more as taking the lead than exactly as ruling. Evidently, those who were fit for the position would be those who might be expected to have a judgment which would form the judgment of others. As has been often said, but cannot be too fully understood, the following of men in any case has to be carefully guarded. If it interferes with the taking up of individual responsibilities before God, then it is a thorough evil, and not good at all; yet how common a case is this, how content we are oftentimes to leave the responsibility to others, as if, after all, we could devolve that which is our own upon them! How we love ease, to escape the conflict of opinion, and all that this may entail also! There is not a place, perhaps, in which there is but a small company of Christians together, that does not suffer greatly from this very thing. On the other hand, to take the lead well, gave a place of special honor, which, if those who did so labored in the word and teaching, would be necessarily increased. Here it is that again the responsibility of the saints to minister to the need of such is emphasized. Scripture had already said, as the apostle has quoted in another place, that the ox was not to be muzzled that trod out the corn, and the workman, too, was worthy of his hire. All this is very different from the way of bargain and guarantee which is the fashion of the day. The workman is *God's* laborer, if he be anything; and nothing must take him from or deprive him of the privilege of a walk of faith on his own part, looking to God alone. The misery of making a man's gift a

elder receive not an accusation, unless [l]there are two or three witnesses. Those that sin [m]reprove* before all, that the rest also may have fear. I testify [n]before God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, that thou keep these things without prejudice, doing nothing by favor.

3 (22-25): Not to participate in that which may yet wait for manifestation.

3. [o]Lay hands hastily on no man, neither be [p]partaker in the sins of others. Keep thyself pure. Drink no longer water only, but use a little wine, for thy stomach's sake and thy frequent infirmities. Some men's sins are [q]manifest beforehand, going before to judgment; and some also they follow after. In like manner also the good works [of some] are manifest beforehand, and [r]those that are otherwise cannot be hid.

l Deut.19.15.
m Gal. 2.11.
n ch. 6. 13. 2 Tim.2.14. 2 Tim. 4. 1.
o cf. ch.3.10.
p 2 Jno. 11.
q cf. Gal. 5. 19.
r Eccl.12.14.

* Or, "convict"—to reprove with conviction.

matter of merchandise is illustrated so on all hands now that it should not require much to be said about it. "The merchantman in the house of the Lord" has had his rebuke plentifully, in the Old Testament and in the New.

The elder was not to have an accusation brought against him unless there were two or three witnesses. His character stood for him evidently in this respect, and one who deserved the place he filled was not to be put lightly under suspicion. Let us remember, however, that it is an elder who is spoken of here; and while the principle may be of larger application, yet there is a caution as to its use implied in the other statements here. Those that sinned were to be reproved before all, in order that the rest might fear. These things were to be observed by Timothy as in the presence of God and Christ and the elect angels. How plain the difficulty implied in his observance of them by this solemn appeal to act as in the presence of those before whom men were as nothing!

3. He was to lay hands hastily upon no man, nor thus to be partaker in the sins of others. The laying on of hands was practised in various ways in the Church of old. It was essentially a sign of fellowship, not necessarily a communication of authority at all. Those who laid hands on Paul and Barnabas when they started for their mission among the Gentiles imparted no authority to those with whom they thus signified their fellowship. On the other hand, it is quite possible, although it is disputed, that hands were laid upon elders, and that the apostle refers to this in this case. Here it would still be the sign of fellowship, the recognition of one in a certain place of confidence, in his fitness for the place into which he was put. The responsibility implied in it is evident. If thus there should be a hasty recognition not justified afterwards by the conduct of those who received it, those who had committed themselves to it would have identified themselves with what in result was shame and dishonor. Timothy must keep himself pure.

Timothy's own bodily need is not overlooked amid these instructions, and incidentally it bears witness against much that we hear in the present day. The apostle prescribes, as it were, for Timothy's weak stomach. He does not blame him for the infirmities which he has. He does not tell him that there was lack of faith or he would not have them. He does not exhort him to get people to go and lay their hands on him, or to have himself anointed with oil, or even to seek the prayers of others. He bids him *use a little wine* instead. We need not apologize for him in this. Scripture can bear all the responsibility for its statements, which, after all, here too as elsewhere, are carefully guarded. A little wine, only a little, and for the sake of a weak stomach: if men will make mischief out of that, let them do it.

The apostle ends these exhortations with a reminder which may have various

¶ (vv.1-10): Temptations from the world.

4. Let as many bondsmen as are under yoke [s]count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and the doctrine be not blasphemed; and they that have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather do them service because they are faithful and beloved, who are partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort. If any one teach differently and consent not to wholesome words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the [t]doctrine which is according to piety, he is [u]puffed up, [v]knowing nothing, [w]but sick over questions and [x]disputes of words, out of which arise envy, strife, railings, evil suspicions, wranglings of [y]men corrupted in mind and destitute of the truth, [z]holding godliness a means of gain [from such withdraw thyself]; * but [a]piety with contentment is great gain: for we have brought nothing into the world, and it is manifest † that neither can we carry anything out; but having sustenance and covering we will be content with these. But they [b]that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and many foolish and hurtful lusts which plunge men into destruction and ruin: for [c]the love of money is a root of every evil; which some having aspired after have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

s 1 Pet. 2.18.
t Tit. 1. 1.
u ch. 3. 6.
v ch. 1. 7.
w ch. 1. 4. 2 Tim. 2.23. Tit. 3. 9.
x 2 Tim. 2. 14.
y 2 Tim. 3.8.
z 2 Pet. 2. 3.
a ch. 4. 8.
b Prov. 15. 27. Prov. 28.20. Matt. 13.22.
c Ex. 23. 3.

* The best MSS. omit. † Some of the best MSS. omit: then it will be, "for neither."

application to what has gone before. Some men's sins, he reminds Timothy, are manifest beforehand, so that the judgment which belongs to them is clear even in the present life, while some may pass through life with their true character far different from that which is attributed to them—so as to the good works as well as the sins. In some cases these would be manifest and before the eyes of all, but yet the day is coming in which those unrecognized here will find full recognition.

4. He passes on to the case of bondsmen in a condition so contrary in itself to what is implied in Christianity, under a yoke which was often of the most grievous nature, to those who were enemies of the Lord whom *they* served. Yet even these they were to honor as in the place which God permitted them, and in testimony to the doctrine of Christ, that the name of God and this might not be blasphemed. If they had believing masters, there was still a difficulty upon another side. They were in danger of despising them as brethren. One can easily see how this might be, and that the common place which they had with them in the Church of God might make them fret against or overlook the responsibility of service. This question of slavery we have seen taken up in the epistle devoted to it. They were not to allow in the meanwhile their service to them to be lessened because they were Christians; rather, they might gladly do them service the more, recognizing their own faithfulness to a higher Master, and the grace which they shared with them. These things were to be insisted upon. They were wholesome words, words according to Christ, and a doctrine which was according to godliness. If any did not consent to them, he was such as, in pride of heart, was making Christianity a mere matter of wordy contention, and not recognizing its moral power. Out of such a disposition would arise "envy, strife, railings, wranglings of men corrupted in mind and destitute of the truth," making their profession of godliness a means of serving their own ends. There

5 (11-21): Closing admonitions.

5. But thou, [d]O man of God, [e]flee these things; and [f]follow after righteousness, piety, faith, love, patience, meekness of spirit. [g]Fight the good fight of faith. [h]Lay hold on eternal life, to which thou hast been [i]called and hast confessed a good confession among many witnesses. [j]I charge thee before God, who preserveth all things in life, and Christ Jesus, who [k]before Pontius Pilate witnessed the good confession, that thou keep the commandment without spot, irreproachable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which in its own times he shall show, the blessed and only Potentate, [l]the King of kings, Lord of those that exercise lordship; who only hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable; [m]whom no man hath seen nor is able to see, to whom be honor and eternal might. Amen.

Charge those who are rich in the present age not

[d] 2 Tim. 3. 17. Deut. 33. 1.
[e] 2 Tim. 2. 22.
[f] Prov. 15.9.
[g] ch. 1. 18. 2 Tim. 4. 7.
[h] ver. 19.
[i] 1 Pet. 5.10.
[j] ch. 5. 21.
[k] Matt. 27. 11. Jno. 18. 37.
[l] ch. 1. 17. Rev. 17.14. Rev. 19.16.
[m] Jno. 1.18.

was, indeed, a gain in piety, great gain, if there were with it that spirit of contentment which would necessarily go with that recognition of God in all things which piety implies. As to the world, we brought nothing into it, nor can we carry anything out of it. We are but tenants at the will of Another; and with our hearts upon the things beyond, we may well be content with such sustenance and covering as God accords to us. On the other hand, they that would be rich, whatever in fact they might be, yet if they craved riches, they would fall into temptation, the snare of the enemy, and many foolish and hurtful lusts which plunge men into destruction and ruin. For "the love of money," the apostle adds, "is a root of every evil;" not "the root of *all* evil," but a root on which anything of this character might grow. It is not the money, of course, that is evil, but the love of it; and there were many then, as there are how many now, who are only witnesses of how far men may in this way wander even from the faith itself, and pierce themselves through with many sorrows!

5. The apostle closes now with some general exhortations. As a man of God Timothy is to flee from the things which have been pointed out. To flee, oftentimes for the Christian, is valor and discretion both. There are plenty of things that could be rightly pursued and coveted, "righteousness, piety, faith, love, patience, meekness of spirit"—many of them not things which the world admires, and which only show the different spirit of Christianity. But there is a fight to be fought, a good fight, and that, indeed, for present laying hold of that eternal life which in fact belongs to every Christian, but which needs to be enjoyed in all that it implies, and which connects itself with that eternity also to which we are hastening. Here is the Christian calling, and Timothy was one who already had confessed a good confession among many witnesses. Here he was in the path of One who had been indeed the "Faithful Witness," and the apostle charges him as in the presence of such an one and of the Creator-God, who cares for all His creatures so that we may be without carefulness, to keep this commandment without spot, irreproachable, until the appearing of the Lord should put everything indeed in its right place, and put an end to conflict. God would reveal Him in the time appointed, for which Christ Himself waits, taking the *kingdom itself* in subjection to Him whom in the *kingdom He* serves as elsewhere. It is God who is "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, the Lord of those that exercise lordship;" the One who only hath in Himself immortality, all His creatures entering into this of His will merely; He whom in His essence, also, man is unable to see, dwelling, as He does, not in darkness, but in the light unapproachable, in an excellence of glory which the finite creature cannot sustain or realize. But it is light, not darkness; and it is light in

to be [n]high-minded, nor to trust on [o]uncertainty of riches, but in [the living]* God, who [p]affordeth us all things richly for enjoyment; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, [q]liberal in distribution, willing to communicate, [r]laying up for themselves a good foundation for that which is to come, that they may [s]lay hold of what is really life. O Timotheus, [t]keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane, [u]vain babblings and oppositions of falsely named knowledge, of which [v]some having made profession have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee.

n Rom. 12. 16.
o Prov. 23. 5.
p Acts 14. 17.
q Rom. 12. 13. Gal. 6. 6.
r Matt. 6. 19, 20.
s ver. 12.
t 2 Tim. 1. 14.
u cf. Col. 2. 8.
v ch. 1. 6.

* Doubtful.

which we see all that can be seen, and in its true character as He shows it. To Him be honor and eternal might!

Paul turns back once more, as he thinks of Him, to bid Timothy warn the rich not to value themselves upon these riches, so poor in such a Presence, and so uncertain at the best, but to trust in Him, this living God, who delights indeed richly to bestow all things for our enjoyment. Let them use their opportunity to do good, let them be rich in their good works, liberal in distribution, willing to communicate, laying up for themselves thus, from these perishable riches, a good foundation for eternity, and that they may lay hold of what is really life. Timothy, too, was to keep what was committed to his trust, avoiding profane, vain babblings and oppositions of knowledge of so many kinds, —falsely named indeed when they were in opposition to the truth. It is not that any kind of knowledge which is true can be without its value. Christianity does not entail the necessity of rejecting any part of it; but how easily, nevertheless, these things may be elevated into an undue place, and made to be real opposition to the truth—necessarily, therefore, false in being so. Some had already been drawn away from the faith itself after this manner. How many have been so since!

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

THE second epistle, as has already been said, is in many respects in contrast with the first. In the first, the house of God is in order, with every needful appointment for the preservation of godliness, of that which becomes the house. In the second epistle, we may almost say that we miss the house altogether. There is a *foundation* which remains firm, and that which has become a great house, with its vessels not only to honor but to dishonor also. We have no more about elders, or even deacons. Every one has, as it were, to think for himself and to act for himself, and, it may be, in the face of everything against him. We have to purge ourselves from the vessels to dishonor, and "follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." There is no hope preached of recovery from this condition. We have to face it, not in the spirit of cowardice, but with a firm reliance upon Him who remains ever the same for us, and sustained according to counsels which have been towards us before ever the Church or even the world was. The apostle himself is brighter, if possible, than ever; with the light of eternity in his eyes and the sense of his good fight being finished, he leaves those that are behind him to face the condition of things without apostolic power at all. The departure of Paul is in this way most significant; and he does not depart with the sympathy and fellowship of all the people of God, as we should have imagined surely would have been the case, but those in Asia have departed from him; of those that are around him in Rome only two or three have yielded him unmingled satisfaction. The circumstances are as dreary as can possibly be imagined, but heaven is bright, and the road brightens with the glory upon it to the perfect day which is at hand.

The epistle appeals in a peculiar manner to ourselves. We have seen the decline and all the confusion attending upon it increase only more and more up to the present time, the mercy of God coming in indeed to revive, but only with regard to a remnant which is more and more to be separated from the rest; even then to experience how the very movements which have been with God are prone constantly to terminate in the flesh, and if there is to be anything, God has to work still, as it were, from the beginning, and to separate, it may be, a fresh remnant from the remnant which has just failed. Strange indeed it is, and yet according to the character of things, that this decay, with all the terrible consequences of it, should not be perfectly obvious to all Christians—that we should have need still to debate about it, and that the dream that the Church is a little leaven in the world which is to con-

vert the world to God should still be clung to by so many as yet advocate it in the present day.

The first division begins with what is the abiding comfort and security of the soul—that God abides, and that "according to the promise of life" which was given in Christ Jesus before the world began.

The second division insists upon the conflict of faith, which was now ending for the apostle, the need of strength to meet the conditions, and of patience, whether in the warfare as a soldier of Christ or as a husbandman waiting for the fruit of the seed sown. The dead and risen One is the example here. Through death to life, through the cross to the glory, is the divine principle.

We have in the third division the manifestation of the evil now in an organized form; the whole condition of things is affected by it. The house of God is unduly enlarging. Its enlargement in this way is no cause for joy or triumph, but the very opposite. It is practically the beginning of the parable of the mustard seed, which, from the smallest of seeds, becomes a tree; which is, after all, a poor enough worldly show, and its spiritual character strangely affected by the evil introduced: the birds of the air are lodging in the branches of it.

In the fourth division we go on to the last days, but find that there is nothing but increasing lawlessness, the persecution of the godly remaining as the constant experience; the opposition of the enemy being, oftentimes, by imitation of that which is of God, the wiles of the enemy being what we have to do with in the large part of the conflict with him. Here we are reminded of how God, nevertheless, has furnished the men of God with God-breathed oracles, which are His word, ready for all emergencies, the one stay of the soul by the power of the Spirit manifested through them in the midst of the wreck of such authority as God had endowed the Church with at the beginning.

In the last division the apostle bids farewell to the scene of his labors, and leaves to others the conflict for him now finished. It is plain how the whole epistle is an appendix to the first, a gracious remembrance of our necessity on the part of Him who still abides with us, of all that might otherwise stagger and discourage us. The word is still, to the end, and always, what it was at the beginning: "Be strong," and, evermore, "Be strong."

The divisions, then, are:

1. (Chap. i.): God always abiding for us.
2. (Chap. ii. 1–13): The conflict of faith.
3. (Chap. ii. 14–26): The manifestation of evil in an organized form.
4. (Chap. iii.): The testing on all sides.
5. (Chap. iv.): The departure of Paul.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

DIVISION 1. (Chap. i.)

God always abiding for us.

1 (1-5): According to the promise of life.

1. PAUL, an [a]apostle of Christ Jesus, by the will of God, [b]according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus; to Timotheus, [c]my beloved child, [d]grace, mercy, peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God, whom I serve from [my] forefathers [e]with a pure conscience, that [f]without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my supplications night and day, [g]earnestly desiring to see thee, remembering thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; calling to mind the [h]unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois and [i]thy mother Eunice, and I am persuaded that in thee also.

[a] 1 Cor. 1. 1. 2 Cor. 1. 1.
[b] Tit. 1. 2.
[c] 1 Cor. 4. 17. ch. 2. 1.
[d] 1 Tim. 1. 2.
[e] Acts 23. 1.
[f] Rom. 1. 9. Phile. 4. 1 Thess. 1. 2.
[g] *cf.* ch. 4. 9, 21.
[h] 1 Tim. 1. 5.
[i] Acts 16. 1.

NOTES.

DIV. 1.

1. THE apostle, in writing this final epistle, realizes with satisfaction his being an apostle of Christ "by the will of God." The assurance of this is no less the assurance that that for which God has appointed him shall not, and cannot, fail. However results may seem to speak, faith knows that God is Master of all; of the whole scene, and of His foes no less. Through death to life is His principle always for us; although, taking the peculiar form which it does here through the shipwreck of the professing mass, it has a voice of alarm in it beyond what might seem to be in the normal application. Paul's apostleship is also "according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus," a promise which is developed still more in the epistle to Titus, as that which was given in Him "before the age-times." Life for us has been wrought out by Another, and is the bestowal of free grace, which therefore cannot fail. Whatever may be in conflict, here is security. The Captain of Salvation is already in glory, and the life which He has given is already within us, making itself realized in the faith which draws from Him its sustenance and blessing. The epistle has, of course, still the character of individuality strongly marked upon it, as one to Timothy the beloved child of his labor, to whom he wishes grace, mercy, peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. Grace is the foundation and security of all; mercy reminds us of the pity of God for the infirmities of those in a scene like this, constantly needy and dependent; and peace is the issue of the two former—the effect of this ministry of God to the need which only brings out, the greater it is, the more His resources. At the end of the race the apostle can look back over the race that has been run. He has served God from his forefathers with a pure conscience. He can see in his own case, as he reminds Timothy with regard to himself, how this promise of life has worked out in the preservation of a people for God often, while not in the way of nature merely, yet according to the passover character, which we have often seen to be realized so much in Christianity, the blessed assurance of salvation, as was said to the jailer,

2 (6-12): The need and support of courage amid the difficulties.

2. Wherefore, I put thee in mind that thou [j]rekindle the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands; for God hath [k]not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of wise discretion. Be [l]not therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of [m]me his prisoner; but [n]suffer evil along with the gospel according to the power of God; who

[j] cf. 1 Tim. 4. 14.
[k] Rom. 8. 15. cf. Jno. 14. 27.
[l] cf. Mk. 8. 38.
[m] ver. 16.
[n] ch. 2. 3, 9. ch. 4. 5.

to "thee and thy house." Thus with Timothy also the unfeigned faith that was in him now had dwelt first in his grandmother Lois, and then in his mother Eunice. It is good to realize in this way how it is the nature of faith to propagate itself, (God being with it and in it, for this, of course,) the Creator-God as such still bearing in mind the natural ties which He has instituted, and which, spite of all failure, He makes thus to result for blessing. The apostle never allowed his assurance of God being in all this, working out purposes that could not fail, to make him relax his supplications for the very people in whom he sees God working. On the contrary, he is only energized the more to remember them with a love which recalls such things as Timothy's tears; themselves, no doubt, the witness of the bond which united him to the apostle. The failure of those around him was only making him the more realize the heart of the young disciple, poured out perhaps over his departure, and in the consciousness of what was in every place awaiting him. It was divine life that expressed itself thus in what might seem merely human affection. As we know, in Christ the human and the divine have been inseparably united together, and there cannot be the least discordance between the two.

2. The apostle exhorts Timothy to rekindle the gift of God which was in him by the putting on of his hands. Elsewhere we have seen that this gift was given in connection with prophecies which had gone before with regard to him, and that the laying on of the hands of the elders was the recognition of it; but the apostle here declares that the one instrument of God in its communication was himself—a recognition, may we not think, of the spiritual tie which did unite the apostle to this true child, born of his labors. True gift as it was which was in him, he still needed to rekindle it—a strong word, which makes us realize the need we have even with regard to that which God Himself has given. The contact with things around tends to dull the very sense of it within ourselves, and there needs constantly recourse to God, that the gift may be maintained in the divine energy which alone suits it. Here it is evident that the decline which was already so apparent had had a certain effect, and that there was danger of giving way under the pressure of it. Timothy is reminded, therefore, that God has not given a spirit of cowardice, but of power, and of love, and of wise discretion. We have what necessarily characterises the work of Him who, dwelling in that which is the very scene of our frailty,—the body,—nevertheless, has, in fact, control of it and of everything around. Weakness may characterize the vessel, but not the power that is in it; while love leads out the soul beyond itself and enables it freely to spend one's self in self-denial for the blessing of others. The spirit of self-control controls, in fact, all other things. If we are masters of ourselves, we are masters of all else; nor can we ever have to yield to the enemy through weakness, while we have One abiding in us who is Omnipotence itself. How good, indeed, to prove the weakness, which only makes us prove the all-sufficiency of God!

Timothy was not, therefore, to be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord nor of Paul himself, His prisoner, but to take his own place as suffering evil along with the gospel according to the power of God. Power is displayed now after this manner, not in fleshly victories, or what might be recognized in the world as success, although we are prone to make this the test of everything; but we can little realize what success is as yet. By and by we shall find, indeed, that all that is of God has been successful. Nothing has been without its effect; but

°hath saved us, and called us with a ᵖholy calling, ᵍnot according to our works, ʳbut according to his own purpose and grace, which was ˢgiven us in Christ Jesus before the age-times, but hath been now ᵗmade manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who

o Tit. 3. 5.
p *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 15.
q Rom. 3. 20.
r Rom. 8. 28.
s Tit. 1. 2. Gen. 3. 15.
t Heb. 9. 26. 1 Jno. 3. 5; *cf.* 1 Jno. 1. 2.

in the meanwhile we must be far from the spirit of a Gamaliel, which would judge by what the world counts success, and leave no room, in fact, for faith at all. In the world, as people say, nothing succeeds like success. They look upon success as something evident, something which no one can deny. But what, then, was the success of Paul, the poor prisoner, deserted by the very people that were one with him as Christians? and what, indeed, with some of the main truths for which he strove, to lapse and abide in darkness unknown for many generations? The call for patience taxes us, no doubt; nevertheless, if patience have her perfect work, it will be proved that thus we shall be "perfect and entire, wanting nothing." God has already done for us so great a work that we may well trust Him for everything. He "hath saved us and called us with a holy calling;" and that not as the reward of any works of our own, but "according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the age-times," but which has now been made manifest by the appearing of the Saviour, who has "annulled death, and brought life and incorruption to light by the gospel." Here is once more, as is plain, the promise of life; the apostle carrying us back to the beginning,—not to eternity itself, as is generally supposed, but to the promise given before the dispensations began. Some would hesitate to call the announcement of the Seed of the woman a promise in this way. It was, no doubt, in the form of a doom denounced upon the serpent; but that, indeed, was a promise for man, surely intended for him, and which Adam's faith laid hold of, when, in view of it, he called his wife's name "Eve," or "life"—the one through whom death was coming in, he calls "the mother of all living." Then it was that God, answering to the faith thus manifest, clothed Adam and his wife with the very fruit of death itself, making death minister, as we know in Christ it has ministered, to the life which He gives. This is no restoration of the first man, as many speak. It is a promise of the Seed of the woman. It does not reinstate the first man as such, but proclaims, indeed, deliverance for man, for the sinner; and everything here (while couched in those parabolic actings in which so constantly we find in the Old Testament the deepest truths of God to be hidden) is in accordance with this. Life for those under death is the text upon which God was preaching; and not without the ability, surely, to convey something of the blessing to the souls of those who heard it, although the fulness of it is only now come out. The appearing of our Saviour has made it manifest by the annulling of death and the bringing of life and incorruption to light by the gospel.

The expression used here, "before the age-times," has been obscured by the supposed equivalent expression, "before the world began;" and so it has been conceived to be a promise in the previous eternity, and thus something between the Father and the Son, the terms of that covenant between these of which theology, not Scripture, speaks so much. It remains for theology to produce the first text which speaks of such a covenant. "The promise of life" was, truly, "before the age-times;" the word used here being the adjective of a word even most commonly translated "age," and which is equivalent very much to what we call a dispensation. The dispensations, in fact, had not begun when God gave this promise. Innocence was ended, God was in His grace laying hold of the fallen creature, and that for a blessing which would more than meet all the consequences of the fall; but there was no dispensation in the way in which we speak, and even the first age of man's history, which terminated at the Deluge, had little of the character of a dispensation at all. We may, no doubt, truly call it such; but that which it did was simply to test the reliance of man upon the

hath [u]annulled death, and brought life and [v]incorruption to light by the gospel; whereunto [w]I have been appointed a herald and apostle, a teacher of the nations. For [x]which cause I suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep unto that day that which I have committed unto him.

[u] Heb. 2.14.
[v] 1 Cor. 15. 54.
[w] 1 Tim. 2.7.
[x] ch. 2. 9.

promise which had been given, the test of the faith of the fallen creature in the remedy which He had announced. There was not, as yet, even the institution of human government, much less was there any law. Every one was a law to himself, and thus there was, in one sense, the fullest trial of man that could be given. He was absolutely free, that he might show now what he would do with his freedom. Alas, the flood swept over that ancient world, leaving but eight persons to begin a new one.

Through all, nevertheless, God had adhered to His purpose. The promise might seem long fulfilling. No doubt it was long. There were needs for this which man himself could little estimate. To estimate them would have been to estimate the corruption that was in him, and to pronounce upon himself in a way which he has never done except as forced to do it. Spite of the delay, God in due time, as we know, vindicated His promise—a lesson for us of patience, who have seen once more the blessed truth, now fully announced, corrupted and made light of by those who have professedly heard and received it. The times before the flood will be repeated, as the Lord assures us, in the times which precede His own appearing; but the purpose of God holds throughout, and "the knowledge of the glory of God," spite of all, shall "cover the earth as the waters cover the sea."

Death has already been annulled, and life and incorruption are brought to light by the gospel. Life there had been, spiritual life, from the beginning. God had been always giving life. There had always been upon earth a testimony in this way to Himself, but now it is brought to light; with resurrection also, which is what is referred to in "incorruption" here as a principle of God's ways of the most exceeding importance. Death is permitted to have its way as the penalty upon sin and the judgment of man universally, but only to give way to resurrection, in which God declares Himself as God, acting in the living energy which belongs to Himself and in the grace which ensures absolutely the result of this. The apostle's ministry was of the fulness of blessing such as this, which was now going out far beyond Israel to the nations everywhere, not without its necessary accompaniment of suffering also, but with the joyful knowledge in it of One who is able to keep every trust committed to Him, and to show His faithfulness fully in the day that is coming. The apostle speaks for himself as to the abiding confidence that he has in One so fully proved and so fully known.

3. He bids Timothy now to hold "the form of sound words" which he had heard of him "in faith and love" which were "in Christ Jesus." This is an important word for us, and a word too little understood by Christians in general. The words which Timothy had heard of Paul we have heard as now for us, contained in those Scriptures to which Peter assures us the epistles of Paul belong, of the character of which he is going to speak more fully in a little while; but Timothy is not merely to hold the sound words which have been heard; he is to hold the *form* of them; that is, he is to hold them in the very way in which they have been spoken, which Scripture has, it is clear, provided for us. Verbal inspiration is here insisted on, perhaps more emphatically than anywhere else. It is not simply the *spirit* of the words which we have to listen to, or the general ideas, but to take heed to the very form in which these words are conveyed to us. The form embodies the spirit; and we, as those that are in the body, should know for ourselves how much the form implies. The form is,

§ (13, 14): The form of wholesome words.

3. [v]Hold the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me, [z]in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us the [a]good thing committed unto thee.

v ch. 3. 14. cf. Tit. 1. 9.
z 1Tim.1.14.
a 1 Tim. 6. 20.

in fact, the instrument of the spirit, and is that which manifests it—which alone, for us, as we are now constituted, *can* manifest it. Scripture has thus a form as well as a spirit. Every truth of God has its own form, its way of presentation which is to be maintained and heeded.

No doubt, we may express, and are often called to express, things in the way in which they appear to us. This has an importance of its own also. It speaks of what our souls have received of that which God has been teaching, and Scripture is left in our hands in such a way as to insist upon diligence on our part to lay hold of it and to apprehend it aright. We have no creed made for us, as people ever since have been busy in making it. That which they insist upon shows us, in fact, a real need that we have, and the responsibility which rests upon us. Scripture is not given in such a manner as to manifest itself for what it is, to all. "The man of God" is to be furnished by it thoroughly, but only "the man of God." For this very reason you cannot accomplish the thing which is desired in an authoritative creed. The authority given to it is the very thing, in fact, which spoils it. There is no danger in the creed as long as it is the expression of the individual faith of those who make it, but it has no authority. It may suggest; but we can only fall back upon Scripture itself as justifying it in any way, and thus it is always open, and rightly open, to question whether Scripture *does* justify it. Scripture is thus the authority, and not the creed; yet, as already said, the creed has a necessity of its own, and is wholesome as long as, and just so long as, it is the expression of the faith of those who put it forth—no further. It may be a witness in this way for God, but a human witness, and which therefore can be appealed against, and the appeal made to God Himself—that is, to His Word.

But, in fact, the more we apprehend the form that the truth takes in Scripture, the more, of necessity, we shall find that a creed is being formed within us. The truths come together. We realize in them a harmony, a congruity, which there must be of necessity in the truth as a whole. We receive it, in a sense, in fragments; but we are necessarily not content with this. We seek to have things together; and this is necessary, that the proper power of them should be realized. The form embodies the spirit, and the form of every individual truth is that which makes for us the whole picture of the truth, each part enhancing the beauty and blessedness of the whole; but the more we really seek to have every part of Scripture in its relation to every other part, the more the form as a whole develops for us, the more shall we realize the perfection of the form which Scripture itself has, containing for us blessedness of which we have to possess ourselves in faith, and which, after all, is still ever beyond us—not to discourage but to encourage us on to the possession of it. The creed of a living faith is thus a creed which is continually perfecting, continually enlarging. It cannot be otherwise. Thus we cannot build upon the creed itself, we can only build upon the Scripture, and here the apostle's exhortation, therefore, finds its full value for us. We are to hold fast the very "form of the sound words" which it speaks to us. The more earnestly we go on, the more ready shall we be to go back, and to ripen our apprehension of the way in which the Spirit of God has spoken to us. Labor is always a necessity to us, faith has always to be in living activity; while the acceptance of an authoritative human creed results, of necessity, in the hindrance to all true progress, and in the lack of exercise as to all the details of that which is supposed to be ascertained, and which, therefore, needs it no more.

We must hold, then, "the form of sound words;" but the doctrine, however accurate, is not enough: it must be "in faith and love which are in Christ

4 (15-18): The turning away and the testing of faith.

4. This thou knowest that all they who are in [b]Asia have turned away from me, of whom is Phygellus and Hermogenes. The Lord grant mercy unto the [c]house of Onesiphorus, for he hath [d]oft refreshed me and [e]not been ashamed of my chain; but when he was in Rome he sought me out very diligently and found me. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord [f]in that day; and in how many things he ministered unto me in Ephesus thou knowest best.

[b] Acts 19. 10. Rev. 1. 11.
[c] ch. 4. 19.
[d] Phile. 7, 20.
[e] ver. 8.
[f] *cf.* Matt. 25. 36–40.

Jesus." The truth must be received in the willing and obedient heart, and responded to by the soul attracted by it, realizing the power of that which it conveys. In connection with this, the apostle urges Timothy to keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us the good thing committed to him. The Spirit who dwelt in Timothy dwells in us also, and by His power we have also to keep whatever good thing has been committed unto us. We need not inquire so much into the character of the gift. We may, perhaps, not be able to appreciate it even, fully. We shall surely lack intelligence as to it in proportion as we are less concerned to be in perfect subjection to that Spirit, who has all power for us; but to each one of us has been committed a gift, if we are members of the body of Christ at all, a gift distinctly our own, which we need the energy of the Holy Spirit to keep for us; and we shall find, no doubt, that this has suited connection here with the holding fast "the form of sound words" itself. We shall find that as God enables us to be true to the ministry of that which He has given, we shall be in the way to have more committed to us. In proportion as we undervalue the gift we shall, as far as lies in us, lose it. In proportion as we do not care to communicate to others the "sound words" which we have received, we shall find their power over our own souls diminish and their sweetness for us also.

4. We have now, in contrast with the holding fast, the turning away of many, the sad foreboding of the wholesale defection that was coming in. "This thou knowest, that all they who are in Asia have turned away from me." It is striking that here we have the field of the second and third of Revelation. Asia is, as is well known, in Scripture, not the continent which we speak of under that name, but a limited district of that which we now call Asia Minor, and in which the seven churches were all found. However far this turning away in Asia had gone, yet it is plain that it is a wide defection of which the apostle speaks here; "All they who are in Asia." Of course, it does not mean that they had turned away from the confession of Christ. Nor can it be accepted that it refers simply to the abandonment of the apostle when again imprisoned—the opposite conduct to that of Onesiphorus. The Pauline doctrines, on the other hand, *were* very early given up. Just the brightest and most blessed truths are always that which man has most proved himself unable to keep. They are the things which go first of all; and, as a fact, even the doctrine of justification by faith went in this manner, and was little realized for centuries. The doctrine of the Church we find nowhere, even in the earliest days, outside of Scripture. The Church is for the fathers just what the apostle speaks of as like "a great house." It is hierarchical, dogmatic, sacramentarian, in the spirit of the old Judaism, yet not the Judaism of Scripture, but of the Pharisees. This has acquired an outwardly Christian form, or rather, let us say, a Christian *dress*, but nothing more. Thus, then, was the necessary testing of faith proving the weakness as to the faith itself. The apostle turns from it now to one who had been able to abide the test; breathing out a fervent prayer that the Lord might grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, as one who had oft refreshed him and not been ashamed of his chain, seeking him out very diligently when he was in Rome, when the implied difficulty of finding him might have been his excuse for lack of ministry. He prays that the Lord may grant to him also that he might find mercy of the

DIVISION 2. (Chap. ii. 1–13.)

The conflict of faith.

1 (1, 2): The need of strength in grace.

1. THOU therefore, my child, [g]be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; and the things that thou hast heard of me in the presence of many witnesses the same entrust to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

[g] *cf.* Josh. 1. 6, 7, 9, 18.

2 (3-7): As soldier and husbandman.

2. Take thy share in suffering, [h]as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier entangleth himself with the affairs of life, that he may please him who hath enlisted him as a soldier. And if also one

[h] 1 Tim. 1. 18.

Lord in that day. The reward of grace, after all, is *mercy*, and can be nothing else. Only grace can say to any one of us: "She hath done what she could." Thus it is mercy crowns even the triumphant victor. Onesiphorus' ministry to the apostle had begun in other circumstances. It had not ceased when the circumstances were more adverse.

Div. 2.

We now come to the general subject of the conflict of faith, the apostle addressing himself to one who evidently was naturally of a timid spirit, while yet possessing heartfelt desire to be with Christ at all cost; but this being with Christ entailed the service of One who Himself had gone to death in the pursuit of His service, whom God had raised from the dead. In a hostile world as a soldier, he was to be free and without entanglement. As a husbandman, he must realize the long and patient labor that had to be before the fruits could be partaken of. The principle abides for all of us, of course, at all times; the apostle insists upon the faithfulness of the word, that it is, if we have died together with Him, that we shall live together; that if we endure, we shall reign with Him; and that, on the other hand, if we deny Him, He also will deny us. The one thing impossible to Him ever is that He can deny Himself.

1. The first need, therefore, in view of the circumstances, is to be strong, and grace is that which alone will furnish us with the strength we need. Timothy was, with the courage of his conviction, to entrust the things which he had heard of the apostle, in the presence of many witnesses, to faithful men who should be able to teach others also. This is the apostolic succession which we are to look for in Christianity, and it is the only one. It is a succession of those who hold the doctrine of the apostles, energized by the Spirit of God. It is at once most sorrowful and very comforting to realize how little the history of the Church is the history of those who were at any time approved of God. The first Church history was written when already a debased Christianity had accepted alliance with the world.

Paul's Christianity had found its place of shipwreck; but Christendom had found, also, its Melita, its harbor of refuge, its land of milk and honey. The millennium was supposed to be at hand, but it was only the preparation time of the new ship of Alexandria which was to bring the whole company with Paul, a prisoner, safely to Rome. It is well for us to think that the principle of what is here, however, must apply all through, and that it is right to think of the succession of faithful men who should be able to teach others. It is right, as far as lies in us, to provide for this; but it is only the power of the Spirit that can make anything effectual here, and who will assuredly take care of the glory of Christ, whatever may be before us.

2. Timothy was to take his share in suffering, then, "as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Here there was, as a first necessity, the need of being free from entanglement with the affairs of life. What a rebuke this calling of a soldier is

[i] strive for mastery, he is not [j] crowned except he strive lawfully. The husbandman must labor before being partaker of the fruits. Think of what I say, for the Lord will give thee understanding in all things.

3 (8-13): Following the dead and risen One.

3. Remember Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, who hath been raised from among the dead [k] according to my gospel, wherein I suffer as an evil doer even unto bonds; [l] but the word of God is not bound. For this cause [m] I endure all things for the elect's sake; that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with [n] eternal glory. Faithful is the word; for [o] if we

[i] 1 Cor. 9.25.
[j] ch. 4. 8.
[k] *cf.* Acts 1. 22. *cf.* Rom. 4. 24, 25.
[l] ch. 4. 17. Phil. 1. 14.
[m] Col. 1. 24.
[n] 1 Pet. 5. 10.
[o] 1 Thess. 5. 10. Rom. 6. 8.

to those who, if they be Christ's, must necessarily be such, but who think it hard to have to conform to the requirements of a soldier's life! Think of men who have to leave everything, perhaps, at a moment's notice, to put their lives in peril, and all to obtain, at most, the praise of men, the corruptible crown, which so soon must surely wither. The strife which belongs to us as Christians, however sad may be the circumstances which force one into opposition, is one, nevertheless, as to which there can never be a doubt in the soul as to the importance of that for which it is undergone—the goodness of that which is to be the reward of it. There is no throwing away of life upon a cause which may, after all, prove to be a mistake; and if the conflict even take the form, as now it must needs take it, of contention with the evil which exists among Christians themselves, and oftentimes with those who are themselves Christians, none the less it is that which can rightly engage all the energy of the soul to carry it to victory. The apostle warns us here, indeed, by another figure, that if one strive for mastery, he is not crowned except he strive lawfully. The method and character of the strife on our side must be subject to the moral conditions which never can be absent for one who is to expect his reward from God. The rightness of the cause does not release from the necessity of having every step taken to be as right as the end is. The principle of the world warfare, that in war everything is lawful, has no place in the Christian one. The end does not sanctify the means, but the better the end, the more worthy must be the means employed to attain it.

The apostle adds to this the need of patience. We are not merely soldiers, we are laborers; and the labor must come first, before there can be any partaking of the fruits. Long labor it may be, and faith needed, as we put seed into the ground, only apparently, perhaps, to be swallowed up by it, and have to wait how long to see the resurrection of that which must die first in order to bring forth fruit! Painful to nature, here are yet the conditions of the divine work; but they are necessitated by what man is on the one hand, and by the distinct need of the stamp of God being upon all that He is doing. Resurrection, the principle of which the apostle has already shown us to be in the seed sown, is that which on the one hand reveals man's condition to the full, and on the other hand displays the power of God working in its own sovereign and almighty character. The apostle urges Timothy to think well of what he is saying. And here he will find the understanding which the Lord will surely give for all the way.

3. This principle the apostle now enlarges upon: "Jesus Christ, of the seed of David," did not, nevertheless, quietly succeed to David's throne; undoubted might be His title, and sure that He was to fill it; nevertheless, upon all this, death was to pass. The very promises of God were to know this law of death and resurrection. A higher character of things, of course, ensues, and a more glorious throne than that of David is to be the portion of Him who passed through death to obtain it; but it was this which already furnished the gospel of God for men, and it was no wonder if, in the sowing of this gospel seed, there should be still the same principle observed all through. The bringer of the

have died together with [him], we shall also live together; [p] if we endure, we shall also reign with [him]; [q] if we deny him, he also will deny us; [r] if we are unfaithful, he abideth faithful, for [s] he cannot deny himself.

[p] 2 Thess. 1. 4, 5.
[q] Matt. 10. 33.
[r] Rom. 3. 3.
[s] Num. 23. 19.

DIVISION 3. (Chap. ii. 14–26.)

The manifestation of evil in an organized form.

1 (14, 15): The need of abiding in the truth.

1. OF these things put them in remembrance, testifying earnestly before the Lord not to dispute about [t] words to no profit, to the subversion of the hearers.

[t] Tit. 3. 9.

word of peace must meet the sword; the bringer of blessing for the souls of men must suffer as an evil-doer unto bonds; but it was to prove, also, that the word of God could not be bound; that the opposition of man could not, in fact, prevail against it. There were those who yet would, through the grace of God, fulfil the purpose of God in the obtaining of that salvation which was in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. God was acting for the Son of His love, and it was impossible that the fruits of His work could finally be wanting. Death itself was in this case no Sadducean annihilation of that which died. And a death with Christ is the very condition of life. Here is the faithful word, that "if we have died together with Him, we shall also live together." There is no other way. Grace itself does not deliver us from the necessity of abiding by such conditions as these. It is a principle stamped upon nature itself, and which Christianity only brings out and exhibits in its full meaning and necessity. We must endure the suffering in order to reign with Him. We must have the cross to find the crown; and then, alas, there is the possibility, even to a Christian, of shrinking from the trial, and, in some sad sense at least, if not in an open way, denying Him; but then we must expect a corresponding denial. Grace will have its way surely, but grace itself conforms to the conditions which are here. This is the way grace manifests itself, and we cannot in any sense, or in any particular, deny that which is of Christ, deny Him therefore in any part of that which belongs to Him, without finding in ourselves the corresponding recompense; and "if we are unfaithful," says the apostle, "He abideth faithful, He cannot deny Himself," His own nature. This is what makes the conditions so absolute. The One we serve must of necessity be served according to the reality of what He is. The Righteous One must be served in righteousness; the Holy One, in holiness; the One who is not of the world, by those who seek no place in the world. We cannot make Christ other than He is, and we cannot make the world other than it is.

Div. 3.

The apostle goes on now to consider more fully the actual condition of things. Evil is already manifesting itself, not merely in individuals, however numerous even these may be. It is beginning, at least, to show a more organized form. The apostle, no doubt as seeing with Him who can see the end from the beginning, speaks of it as what was implied in things that were already at work; but, manifestly, a system of things was already coming in such as in a little while was to obtain everywhere. The foundation, indeed, remained, with the seal of the Lord upon it,—the security for the soul, as one realizes it: on the one hand "the Lord knoweth them that are His," and on the other hand (if times were at hand in which it would be no longer possible for *us* to do so, yet the simple, safe principle abides,—that which is to govern our conduct at all times) he that nameth the name of the Lord is to "depart from iniquity." Doubtless the house of God remains; for the Spirit has come to abide in the Church here, and that which constitutes the Church therefore as the house of God, abides; but as to the form of it, the great house is not the form of the house of God. The apostle, in fact, does not seem as if he would name the two to-

Strive diligently to show thyself approved unto God, a [u]workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

[u] 1 Cor. 3. 13-15.

gether. We see, as it were, in what he says, but a *foundation* which abides, and a certain great house built up, as to which the Lord Himself will pronounce in due time the character.

1. The apostle introduces all this still in the way of exhortation. The things of which he speaks are not things merely to be known and lamented over. They are to produce Christian exercise and Christian action. Good it is to have mourners in secret, and the spirit of mourners is certainly that which belongs to us; a mere harsh judgment (or a cold one) can never satisfy the heart of Him who enters profoundly into the condition of things amongst His people, and to whom the whole scene is absolutely naked and open. If He judges, He judges as the Priest or Intercessor. If He walks among the candlesticks, it is because He is still earnest for the light which at such cost to Himself He has kindled amongst men; but the mere wail of lamentation does not suit Him either. It is our part to show the reality of our sorrow by our separation from the evil, and the activity of love must take its form from the condition of things around. It must not make light of the evil. Of these things, then, Timothy was to put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they should not dispute about words to no profit, and thus to the subversion of the hearers. Notice how earnestly we have to seek the profit of words. Mere idle questions are not, in that sense, idle, but work positive mischief for the soul. We must abide in that which is true, not speculative, and for this we must abide in the "*word* of truth," which alone can give it us positively with regard to anything. Deception is in the air. Satan is the prince of the power of it, and woe to us if we trust our own judgment and do even that which is right in our own eyes merely.

Timothy was therefore to strive diligently to show himself approved of God, a workman not needing to be ashamed, as "rightly dividing the word of truth." How important is this right division, of which the apostle speaks here! Scripture itself is true all through, from cover to cover, and yet how much we may blunder, and what disastrous work we may do, by giving that which is for the sinner to the saint, or that which is for the saint to the sinner; by bringing Judaism into Christianity, or even by carrying back our Christianity into Judaism. We have to learn, not merely the existence of certain truths, but the right use of them; and the abuse, in fact, is not consistent with the holding of the truth itself. Yet how little has this been observed by Christians! If a man writes a book, people will realize that there is some reason, at least, for the division that he makes in the chapters of it. If a treatise is written, they will realize it to be a first need to know what it is written about. They would not be content to say of a book of science that it was all science, without knowing to what division of science it belonged. Yet with the word of God, so various and immense as it is in scope, and dealing with the whole field of spiritual knowledge, how little importance attaches in men's eyes, to the meaning of the different books, for instance, into which Scripture has been divided, and still less to the intelligence as to the true divisions of these books themselves. Theories which are even yet current, for instance, as to the gospels are a perfect illustration of what is meant. Are they the work of independent writers? Who wrote first? How far was one the copyist of the other? Such things are deemed important; but the result is commonly only to produce in the soul the sense that Scripture is in this way a mere kind of patchwork, writers doing the best they can, and others following them to supply what they have missed, if not almost to make straight what they have left crooked. How the word of God has suffered in such hands! The very glories of Christ which are here distinguished as far as may be for us, in order that we may rightly apprehend them, are all obscured by what in the common cant of the day is spoken of as the human element in Scripture, but

2 (16-18): The growing canker of error.

2. But shun [v]profane and vain babblings, for they will fall into greater impiety. And their word will spread as a gangrene; of whom is [w]Hymenæus and Philetus; [men] who as to the truth have gone astray, saying that the resurrection hath taken place already, and overthrow the faith of some.

3 (19-21): The great house.

3. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth firm, having this seal, [x]The Lord knoweth those that are his, and [y]Let every one who nameth the name of the Lord withdraw from iniquity. But in a great house

[v] 1 Tim. 6. 20.
[w] 1 Tim. 1. 20.
[x] Nah. 1. 7. John 10.14. *cfr* Lk. 13. 27.
[y] *cf* Rom. 2. 24. *cf* 2 Thess. 1. 12.

which, forgetting how Christ has married the divine and the human, is always brought in to lead astray the soul from the divine side of things. How earnestly we need to insist upon what the apostle says here, that we rightly divide the word of truth! We shall not do it except, to begin with, we realize that it is the word of truth—all truth, and nothing else. If we treat the apostles as accused persons, we shall find that they are but silent before their self-constituted judges. If, in the appreciation which all ought to have of the character of that which they have at any rate produced, we own their sufficiency for the work entrusted to them, we shall find that they speak and speak; and the more earnestly in this spirit we inquire into *everything* that they put before us, the more we search and ask of them every question that is possible to be made, the more the infinite glory of that which is but the glory of the Word made flesh will break upon us.

2. The apostle insists once more upon the cumulative character of error, "vain babblings," not doomed to destruction by their vanity, but only increasing to continually greater impiety—*falling* into it, as the apostle phrases it; for the whole condition here is one of lapse, of declension going on and on, with no power of recovery save in the truth that is being ignored and departed from. Such words spread as a gangrene, as he illustrates by the acts of Hymenæus and Philetus, men who had already gone astray, saying that the resurrection was a thing which had taken place and not a thing to come—a spiritual resurrection therefore, and which might as such assume the appearance of spirituality in those who proclaimed such a doctrine, while it was in reality the overthrow of everything. The faith of some was, in fact, being overthrown by it. How important it is to realize the subtle link, in this way, of one error with another, and that, one error being entertained, to be consistent with it, we shall have to embrace one after another, except the mercy of God prevent. It is a down grade, an inclined plane, and the effect of natural gravitation will surely be seen in it.

3. He turns now, first of all, to point out that there was, after all, a foundation of God which stood. Blessed be God, Christ Himself is, as we know, the Foundation of faith,—the Foundation of His Church,—and this *must* stand. This is our security, as already said, that God is acting for the name of His Son, and no rising up of men against it, whatever their profession, can possibly set this aside. Every step, with God, is taken unrepentingly; the end is in view, and that end will be as surely reached as it *is* an end; but if we look practically at how God is working in this way, and seek to discover His work, we find that the foundation of God, which abides, has this seal upon it, already manifests itself in this way: if, on the one hand, with the continually increasing iniquity, our eyes become less able to discern amid the confusion those who are of God and those who are not, nevertheless, the undimmed eyes of Him who is Master over the whole scene are everywhere, with no possibility of anything being hid from them. "The Lord knoweth them that are His." This is on His side. It is not a principle operative with us except for our comfort. Comfort is that which we need to begin with, if we are to look at all at that which otherwise would be complete disheartenment. We must find it, then, in this assurance,

there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor. If therefore [z] one shall have purified himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, [a] prepared unto every good work.

[z] Prov. 25 4. Isa. 52. 11.
[a] ch. 3. 17.

not merely that the Lord surely knows, but that, after all, there are those also whom He knows; and this knowing is no less than an acquaintance of heart with heart, a relation between the Lord and those that are His; which, indeed, on their side, may not be realized with the consciousness that they should have of it, yet, after all, a true one, and to be owned of Him in due time and place. Now He may not be able to own even those that are His own, on account of that in them which violates the conditions which we have already been realizing—conditions which His own nature imposes upon that which is communion with Himself. Still, if they are His, He knows them. It is for our comfort to know that He knows them. It is not intended to be for comfort to those who are in this mixed condition, nor should they, nor can they, be content with it. The conditions of communion, the conditions under which the Lord can openly manifest Himself in connection with those that are His, are the other side of the seal here: "Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord withdraw from iniquity." It is not the name of *Christ* simply, but the name of the *Lord*—the One who has authority over us, the One to whom we bow. He who names that Name, and so far identifies himself with the One he owns as such, must withdraw from iniquity. It may cost, no doubt. We must not shrink because of the cost of it. It will cost us much more to go on with the evil, and thus lose the witness and power of communion with Him,—lose how much of the good for the present time at least of that relationship which may actually exist,—lose how much for eternity, who can tell? But we are not fit to contemplate aright the scene before us, except we realize that which alone enables us to know the Lord's work: for the actual house that exists is now a great house. There are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth. There are some to honor; there are some, alas, to dishonor. Vessels they are all, as professedly at least in the Lord's hand for His service. In some sense He may serve Himself with them too, and yet, as far they are concerned, not in any way which will bring them to honor, but to dishonor.

Here, then, at once comes the application of the rule that we must separate ourselves from iniquity. One must have purified himself from these, the "vessels to dishonor," in order to be one's self "a vessel to honor." Thus there are three classes, as it would seem, constituted: the first, the vessel to dishonor, evidently that; secondly, the vessels to honor, purified from their association with these; a third must exist, unless all unpurged vessels are reckoned as absolutely "vessels to dishonor," which one could scarcely say. They belong to a middle, undetermined class, of which one must, in measure, stand in doubt, as not characterized absolutely one way or the other. How large a class, in fact, in days such as the present, these must be; for the Lord's rule to be followed out costs much. "He that separateth himself from evil maketh himself a prey;" and then, there are really questions which come up in the mind, and which increase the hesitation of those who hesitate. What consequences will be entailed by this necessity of absolute separation from "vessels to dishonor"? They are in the house, professedly the house of God, and we cannot separate from the house. The plea of mercy, of patience, of not judging others—how many arguments are, in fact, here to prevent the drawing of a straight line! But consequences are never to be a rule for us. We must know just *of what* they are consequences, first; we must know whether they are simply present or final consequences. If our actions are to be determined by these last, they must be determined, for the most part, by a future to us inaccessible; and a common regard to prudence, as men would say, will, Gamaliel-like, operate to arrest all action; but in fact God

4 (22-26): Testing, yet merciful.

4. [b]But flee youthful lusts, and follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those that call upon the Lord [c]out of a pure heart; but [d]foolish and unsubject questions avoid, knowing that they gender strifes. And

[b] 1 Tim. 6 11.
[c] 1 Tim. 1. 5.
[d] 1 Tim. 1. 4.

takes the responsibility of all the consequences of following out *His* rule. Consequences are His, not ours, and there are no consequences to threaten us like those of not being according to His mind. They may threaten to shut us up into a narrow path, to hinder usefulness, and what not. This is all provided for by the apostle's assurance that one who purifies himself from the "vessels to dishonor" is just one "sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared to every good work." And yet here, too, faith must be exercised; the very consequences which men threaten with may seem, in fact, to follow. We know Him who had to say: "I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nought and in vain," but who could say also: "Yet surely my judgment is with the Lord and my work with my God." It is of such an One that we are followers, and, as the apostle has already reminded us, we are not to expect to have a path that is different from His. For a just estimate of our work we may have to wait for the day of account, or perhaps, even here, for a day of resurrection; but divine principles honestly worked out can have but one issue; the Lord's word guarantees against any possible failure.

This, then, is the character of things which the apostle speaks of as already coming in. The true Church of God was already beginning to be what men call "invisible." Satan was assailing it with the oversowing of God's field, with that which was imitation, or even worse. We see that God does not permit His people to say, "We are delivered to these things; there is no escape from them." The magnitude of the evil is certainly no good argument for toleration of it. Here, then, are principles which the apostle commends to us, through Timothy, as needed for the present time. There is no need to doubt, in fact no possibility of doubting, that the "great house" exists; and God calls every one to his duty with regard to it, not to give way to mere lamentation or judgment of the evil, save as judgment involves imperatively our own action with regard to that which we judge. The vessel to honor is only he who is purified from the "vessels to dishonor." That must mean something. Let us each take care for himself that he knows what it means.

4. But there cannot be merely for us a path of separation. If there is that which is to be shunned, there is also that with which we are to go. We cannot withdraw ourselves from the conflict altogether. We cannot disclaim our kinship with those who, animated by the same principles, are seeking to walk in the path in which we are walking. The walking in the same path will of necessity bring those who do so together, and that is how the apostle speaks here: "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart." There is no difficulty really in finding these. If we follow these principles, we cannot fail to find them. The practical test is the real one, and in the order of the words here; for, as we may be sure, they are important in a matter like this. Thus *righteousness* stands necessarily at the beginning. If there is not righteousness in our practical walk, no matter what else there may be claim to, it is not a walk with God. The separation from iniquity means of necessity the following righteousness. *After this* we can speak of faith, but not before it.

But then righteousness is not a sufficient principle, however a necessary one. It is absolutely necessary to refuse unrighteousness, but it is not enough simply to follow righteousness. A mere rule of right and wrong is not a rule for a Christian; that is, what is right cannot be determined in this way. "Faith" marks the need of having the distinct path which the Lord has for each of His own, and which we must take up, therefore, as from Him. God has His mind with regard to each one of us, which a mere following of what in itself might be

[e] the servant* of the Lord must not strive, but be [f] gentle towards all, [g] apt to teach, forbearing, in [h] meekness setting right those that oppose themselves, if God perhaps may sometime give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth; and that they may [i] awake up out of the [j] snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him for his will.

[e] Matt. 12. 18, 19. 1 Tim. 3. 3.
[f] 1 Thess. 2. 7.
[g] 1 Tim. 3. 2.
[h] Gal. 6. 1. Tit. 3. 2.
[i] 1 Cor. 15. 34.
[j] 1 Tim. 3. 7.

* "Bond-servant."

right would ignore. A path of faith is one in which I am distinctly before God for myself. I cannot have faith for another, nor another for me; and yet it is surely as true that if two persons walk, each one with this personal reference to God's will in everything, they will necessarily be brought together. Their path will be the same path characteristically.

Love follows righteousness and faith. It is only when these are observed that the heart is free to manifest itself. Love must be guarded by these, or it becomes a mere human affection, or mere laxity. There is nothing, perhaps, that needs so much guarding, as we see in the apostle John's first epistle, as this matter of love. It is pleaded on opposite sides for things most opposite. "By this we know," says the apostle, "that we love the children of God when we love God." But can we be trusted to know just what love to God is? Why, "this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." There is no love apart from obedience, and therefore love, of necessity, makes us walk in faith and in righteousness. The issue here is peace, which must be upon terms which consist with the honor of the Lord; and we know that He who is the Prince of Peace, over whom, when He came into the world, the angels had their chorus of "Peace on earth," yet had to say, "I came not to send peace, but a sword." Peace was in His heart, but peace with evil was for Him impossible.

Thus, then, those that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart are clearly marked out. We can only discern the heart in the practical life; and here are those who, naming the name of the Lord, withdraw from iniquity. We have here, therefore, the company of those who can walk with one another, necessarily a company more and more separate from the great mass of profession round about them, and it may be comparatively a smaller and smaller company as the days darken and evil increases, the love of many waxing cold. But there is need of further guiding as to things which may have often a special reference to those who have learned that they have to prove all things if they would "hold fast that which is good." This, too, might degenerate into needless and idle questions, things debated about, which gender unnecessary strife; and in this sense "the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing, in meekness setting right those that oppose themselves." It is very plain that there may be the advocacy of that which is in itself right and true, nay, most important, and yet in a far different spirit from this. The testing of things must be really in order to "take forth the precious from the vile," and therefore the occupation must be with that which is precious, and the owning of that which is so, even when it is found in connection with what is far otherwise. How blessed to know that as this is the Lord's rule for His people, we may be perfectly sure it is that of His own action towards all. In fact, it is as taking forth the precious from the vile that we shall "be as His mouth." We shall be able to speak for Him, in His name, who could speak of a Lot in Sodom as a "righteous man," who, "seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;" and yet Lot certainly was not one who separated himself, according to the divine thought, from the iniquity that he judged. Why was he *there*, to vex his soul with it? How many there are who vex themselves with things, (and congratulate themselves upon this,)—things that they should simply turn their back upon and leave, but which they will not! Yet God owns all that He can own. If He did not,

DIVISION 4. (Chap. iii.)

The testing every way.

1 (1-7): The lawlessness of the last days.

1. NOW this know, that in the [k] last days difficult times shall be present; for men shall be [l] lovers of their own selves, [m] money-lovers, [n] boastful, arrogant, evil speakers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, [o] without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, of unsubdued passions, fierce, haters of good, traitors, headlong, high-minded, [p] lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of piety [q] but denying the power thereof; and from these turn away. For of

[k] *cf.* 1 Tim. 4. 1.
[l] Phil. 2. 21.
[m] Lk. 16. 14. 1 Tim. 6. 10.
[n] Rom. 1. 30.
[o] Rom. 1. 31.
[p] Phil. 3. 19.
[q] 1 Tim. 5. 8.

how sad a thing it would be for any of us, when we realize the apostle's own words, that even one's unconsciousness of anything wrong is not that which justifies us, "but He that judgeth is the Lord." With hearts so capable of deception as our own hearts are, how well to realize that there is One who is "greater than our heart, and knoweth all things," but One who will, therefore, not confound even the least bit of good that He can find with the evil which may seem almost to envelop it. The mere chafing of the soul by evil does not give power over it. The one who is really with God will always, as the apostle shows us here, be looking for the work of God amongst those from whom he may have to be entirely separate. Yet God may some time give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth, and we must be careful that by our own conduct we put no hindrance in the way of their recovery. Be it that they are in the snare of the devil, yet they may awake up out of it, even those at present taken captive by him for his will.

Div. 4.

The apostle goes on now to the last days. He anticipates no recovery, save that of individuals, from the state of things which he has brought before us. On the contrary, men will "wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." It is quite true that God has again and again, as history shows us, come in for the deliverance of numbers, and we are prone to take this as encouragement to believe that there may be, after all, a recovery of the mass. Scripture gives no hope of such a condition. The history of Israel under the Judges is that which is being repeated to-day; and here we see that, in spite of all that God may work in this way, still there is, on the whole, more and more, a growing degeneracy and departure from God.

1. In the last days, then,—days which cannot be succeeded, therefore, by any of a different character,—difficult times would be present, a state of things characterized by almost all that characterized the heathenism of old, as the apostle has pictured it for us in the epistle to the Romans. This in itself would be only the repetition, therefore, of what has existed before, and people might still ask, "Is the world, in fact, growing worse?" "Have not these things always been?" The thing that distinguishes the last days from all that have preceded them is, that with the indulgence of every evil lust, men "lovers of their own selves, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God," there is still a "form of piety," but which denies the power of it. This is what we find in days like the present, the wearing out of Christianity in its power to affect the masses,—even to keep under real control the evil which more and more displays itself in its true character. Along with this, the *form* of piety may, nevertheless, have been spread. Mere open ungodliness carries its own condemnation with it, and therefore men will deceive themselves to the uttermost in a way most palpable to all outside themselves, and grace be turned effectually by them into license. From these, says the apostle, turn away. The show of piety is, of course, just what makes the times so difficult. Everywhere, things are not what they seem. The

these are they who [r]enter into houses and lead captive silly women, laden with sins, led by various lusts, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

2 (8-13): The opposition of imitation and the persecution of the godly.

2. Now in the same manner in which [s]Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so these also withstand the truth, [t]men of corrupt mind, reprobate concerning the faith; but they shall proceed no further, for their folly shall be fully manifest to all, [u]as theirs also came to be. But thou hast fully known* my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, endurance, love, patience, persecutions, sufferings, which came upon me at [v]Antioch, at [w]Iconium, at [x]Lystra what persecutions I endured; but out of them all the Lord delivered me. And indeed [y]all that will live piously in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and juggling impostors shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

r Tit. 1. 11.
s Ex. 7. 11.
t 1 Tim. 6. 5.
u Ex. 7. 12. Ex. 8. 18. Ex. 9. 11.
v Acts 13. 50.
w Acts 14. 5.
x Acts 14. 19.
y Acts 14. 22. Matt. 16. 24.

* Literally, "followed up."

process of corruption was already beginning in the days of the apostle himself. He could point to those who entered "into houses, leading captive silly women laden with sin, led by various lusts; always learning," upon the one hand; and yet "never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." A solemn reason this is, indeed, for lack of progress wherever it exists. It is not in any weakness of mind; it is not by any power of deception, even, on the part of others; nothing of this can deceive those who are not, first of all, self-deceived—who do not yield themselves, in fact, to the deception. Man is always in this sense master of himself, and God judges him as this. Whatever may be the power of the enemy, the skill of the god of this age in blinding men so as to shut out the glory of Christ from them, yet it is only the disobedient and unbelieving from whom he *can* shut it out. God has not delivered man over into his hands in such a way as not to allow escape to be always possible and sure to the soul that in the consciousness of its need will turn to Him.

2. The character of the opposition is still further dwelt upon. "As Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so these, also, withstand the truth." It was by the imitation of the miracles wrought by Moses that the Egyptian sorcerers sought to blind, and did blind, the king of Egypt. Juggling, of course, it was, and no true miracle; and no deliverance at all was even attempted by them. They could only increase the evil by what they did, and not relieve it. They could bring frogs up out of the river, but they could not take them away. They could turn water into blood, or seem to do so, but could never turn back the blood into water. Thus they could not possibly unfasten the hold of judgment upon them or upon their false gods, and there came a time in which this was fully evident, in which they had themselves to own that there was the finger of God manifest; as therefore in that which they had done there was no finger of God. Just so with the deceivers that were coming in, withstanding the truth by imitations of it, but which could not imitate the blessed salvation of God, for those in conscious need of it. As "men of corrupt mind, reprobate concerning the faith," they too would come to a point in which their folly would be fully manifest. The fruit of God's blessed word, the power of His Spirit, cannot, after all, be imitated. This has its own unmistakable evidence for every one who has eyes to see. The apostle points Timothy, in view of these things, to his own "doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, endurance," in all that came upon him. His life was formed by the doctrine, and his doctrine was in the power of the Spirit of God. Out of all the persecutions the Lord had delivered him, and "all that will live piously in Christ Jesus" must expect to suffer

3 (14-17): The God-breathed oracles.

3. But abide thou in the [a]things which thou hast learned, and of which thou hast been assured, knowing of whom thou hast learned [them]; and that from a child thou hast known the sacred Scriptures, which are able to make thee [c]wise unto salvation, through faith that is in Christ Jesus. [b]All Scripture is inspired of God, and

[a] 1 Tim. 4. 6. ch. 1. 13.
[c] cf. Ps. 119. 98, 99.
[b] 2 Pet. 1. 21.

after the same manner, while "evil men and juggling impostors" would continually "wax worse and worse." Thus there is no hope but in the coming of the Lord Himself.

3. The apostle was about to depart, but there was still an ample provision made for the sustenance of God's people, however evil the days might be. For Timothy there was the satisfaction of knowing of whom he had learned the truth, the apostle's teaching being in fullest harmony, and, indeed, the ripe fruit of what had been made known to him from a child in sacred Scriptures, able to make "wise unto salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus." Thus we see how even the apostle's words are not and could not be left to stand for themselves and be merely their own witnesses. God has been acting and speaking in the world from the beginning, and all truth must connect itself thus with that which He has been doing and saying. The Scriptures of which the apostle here speaks to Timothy, are, of course, the Old Testament Scriptures; but we see everywhere how thoroughly the apostle appeals to them, and how the written Word is in this way honored by the living speaker, even though speaking that which might be newly revealed by the Spirit of God. How important to realize this unity of the divine testimony all the way through the ages; and how clearly we can understand the effort of Satan now, first of all, to destroy, if possible, the power of that testimony from the beginning, so as to leave the Christian faith cut off really from its foundation! Scripture was, as we know, that by which the Bereans tested the word of the apostle himself, and they are commended for it.

We see, on the one hand, how the Old Testament handed on its disciples to the New, and how the New, also, was needed in order to give its full power to the older revelation. Thus, while he says that the sacred Scriptures he had known were able to make Timothy wise unto salvation, he adds: "through faith that is in Christ Jesus." In fact salvation, in all that is implied in it in the New Testament, is plainly something additional to the Old Testament. Men could not speak before Christianity of being *saved*, in the same way in which now we commonly speak of it. Salvation was, in general, even where we find the word, a deliverance from dangers or from circumstances of trial, from the power of the enemy, no doubt; but scarcely anywhere a proper salvation from *sin;* yet how important the witness of the old revelation when the new was being announced, and to us, also, to whom it has been announced! Nothing that God has given but has a permanent value which remains for us to all time. "All Scripture is inspired of God, and profitable for doctrine."

Here we come to a passage which is most contested, of course, and which we are told we have to read as, "Every scripture inspired of God," as if it distinguished such from other scriptures side by side with them, and therefore *we* had to distinguish in like manner. At once the human mind is set in supremacy over the Scripture, and we become judges of it instead of its judging us. But the apostle has been already pointing out the sacred Scriptures of which he is speaking when he says "All Scripture." Nothing is Scripture in the sense he uses the word except that which is in the *sacred* Scriptures, and nothing that is in them is without that inspiration of God which makes it "profitable for doctrine, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." The apostle Peter afterwards speaks of Paul having written to the Hebrews "according to the wisdom given to him," and puts the epistle that he had written among "the other Scriptures"—plainly as having the same character which is

'profitable for doctrine, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly furnished to every good work. c Rom.15.4.

claimed for "all Scripture" here. The word, of course, may mean merely "*writing*," but "*The* Writings," for us, are those distinguished from all other writings. It is impossible to confound them, for a soul that has the secret of God, though Rome has added, as we know, certain apocryphal books—yet who, with his eyes open, could accept one of them as upon an equal footing with those that have always been counted as Scripture? Who could add one book to the number of those that we possess? or who could mend one of them so as to justify his emendation to the Christian conscience?

Of course, I am not speaking of the correction of texts, where there is manuscript authority for the correction, but simply of a correction manifestly from man's mind, with all the learning in it which they boast of in the present day. When can they give us a Bible in this way that even they (who as specialists are supposed to have authority to commend it for us) will be able to agree about amongst themselves? Scripture has suffered, indeed, how much from the ignorance that we have of it, and from the little faith which has produced the ignorance! We have found little instruction, it may be, and no edification, from many parts that can be pointed out; and it is man's way continually either to throw the blame of this upon God, or to vindicate Him at the expense of the Word that He has given; but the more we search into these barren passages with the remembrance of what the apostle has spoken here, the more we shall find how truly there is in them also that which is of ample importance to justify their place in the word of God; and if we cannot find even a genealogy recorded to be "profitable for doctrine," it is (to say the least, most probably it is,) because we have begun by decreeing that it is not there, and therefore have never truly and devoutly searched for it. But the fact is, the higher the claim we make for Scripture, the more shall we find Scripture itself justifying the claim. The more we believe in the perfection of every part, the more we shall come to realize that perfection everywhere in it. Let us hold it fast that all Scripture, as inspired of God, is in fact, and must be, "profitable for doctrine." God in it all is providing for us that which shall have blessing for our souls, not mere facts of history or something which is merely barren knowledge, but that which is to mold and fashion us, and put us in communion with the mind of Christ. For this we need every part of it, and it is the loss of so much practically for our souls that makes us so much lacking in true knowledge of every kind.

Let us notice that, first of all, the apostle puts the doctrine as that for which Scripture is "profitable." Doctrine must come first, as the basis of everything. Truth must be ours before there can be the application of truth; and then, let us notice that the apostle immediately brings that application home in a personal way to ourselves. The first use of the doctrine is for "conviction." It is light that shines upon us, shines upon all the road in which we are, but which discovers, necessarily, in a world like this, among a people such as we are, that which must humble and bring down all the pride of our hearts, so that not as philosophers shall we receive it, but as sinners, though, through God's grace, saved sinners also. But "conviction" here, of course, is not the primary conviction merely. As we go on, it accompanies us at every step. We learn ourselves under this light more and more, and we learn what the world is. But the light is none the less blessed on that account, because it displays the evil of so much that it shines upon. "Correction" is that which is to follow "conviction," while "instruction in righteousness" carries us on to the positive side of things, and occupies us with the good in itself, and not merely enables us to distinguish it from the evil. But thus the man of God is by Scripture itself made complete, "thoroughly furnished to every good work."

DIVISION 5. (Chaps. iv.)

The departure of Paul.

1 (1-4): All the more be strong.

1. I TESTIFY [d]before God and Christ Jesus, who is about to [e]judge the living and the dead, and [f]by his appearing and his kingdom, preach the word, be urgent in season, out of season; [g]convict, rebuke, encourage, with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the

[d] 1 Tim. 6. 13.
[e] Acts 10.42. [f] 1 Pet. 1. 7. 2 Pet.1. 10, 11.
[g] 1 Tim. 5. 20. Tit. 1. 13.

It does not say, as we have often insisted upon, that *every man* may be complete, although Paul's heart would indeed desire that it might be possible to "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus;" yet it is only as *men of God* that we can be thus complete, thus furnished. If we are not that, we shall inevitably stumble over Scripture, in some part of it, as "they that are unlearned and undisciplined," Peter tells us, do. Scripture is not written so that every one, apart from his moral condition altogether, may be able to possess himself of it, and it is not, indeed, written so that every one may, with a little pains, understand the whole. It speaks, as we know, with the sweetest familiarity, and with the encouragement that is ever of God; but it manifests itself, nevertheless, as that which is beyond us, higher than ourselves, the revelation of One who necessarily is that, and whose ways and thoughts we may be led on into more and more, just because they are always still beyond us. But how wonderful, then, is this "God-breathed" Scripture, as the word "inspired" means! It is in this sense that we can call it all the word of God. There is no need for overlooking and no comfort in overlooking the human element, but that human element is always penetrated with the divine, and lifted into and empowered for that which is higher than man, and beyond him.

DIV. 5.

The last division is very characteristic of the whole epistle. It brings before us explicitly that which was before the apostle himself in everything he wrote here—his own departure from that scene in which he had so well fought the fight of faith and had now finished his course. The sorrow that he might have in his soul now was only for those he was leaving, and even that is almost swallowed up in the joyful consciousness of with Whom he was leaving them. Whatever might be, in fact, the declension that had begun, and the disastrous days which were before the Church, still, even so, the One to whom he was now going was Master of every circumstance, and would know how to glorify Himself as to all that could possibly come; aye, even as to the mistakes and failure and sins of His people; and to use even the apparently triumphant power of the enemy to do this. The whole epistle is characterized in this way by the spirit of power and of joy, of which he has spoken to Timothy; and it is this that gave him, and will give us, that sound mind which is the accompaniment of such a spirit. He in no wise made light of any of the evil; he could not do that. Evil remains evil, though God must glorify Himself about it; but, for the soul that in the consciousness of it turns to Him, there remains always a living, abiding and eternal God; and if we are with Him, there will be with us, of necessity, the joy of the final triumph all the way through. Yet this departure of Paul characterizes the state of things in which we are left; no more with apostolic power or with those whom God used as the instruments of His revelation, but in weakness, cleaving fast to that written Word only, without apparent positive intervention in our behalf.

1. But the word is, all the more, "Be strong." The difficulties are but to summon forth the strength which must indeed be in God, or it will be all too little. But He cannot fail us; and thus the apostle exhorts the disciple here, in view of One who is about to judge the living and the dead, and to appear Himself in order to take that kingdom, which will never be right save when it

time will be when they will not bear sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having an itching ear; and they will [a]turn away their ear from the truth, and will be turned to fables.

[a] 2 Thess. 2. 10, 11.

is in His hands absolutely. He is to "preach the Word, be urgent in season, out of season, to convict, rebuke, encourage, with all long-suffering and doctrine;" all the more that "the time will be when men will not bear sound doctrine, but after their own lusts will heap to themselves teachers, having an itching ear, and will turn away their ear from the truth and turn to fables." How plain that Timothy's consolation is not to be drawn from circumstances, but from those eternal realities which we need to have ever before us, but which, as we realize them, possess and command the soul, imparting to it the abiding character of that eternity to which they belong.

The judgment of the living, with many, has but little place as distinguished from that judgment of the dead, which has comparatively much less place in Scripture. The great fact kept before us is that Christ is coming; but at that coming, He will judge the living and not yet the dead, and the forgetfulness of His coming as a constant expectation is that which has, in fact, put the judgment as a whole into the far-off distance, while it has confounded saint with sinner, and lost, therefore, the distinguishing blessing of faith in Christ. The judgment of the living plainly connects with the appearing of Christ; that of the dead, with the kingdom that follows it. The apostle urges these upon Timothy as what would, amid all the difficulties of the way, be his strength and assurance. It is always according to Scripture, "yet, but a little while, and He that will come shall come, and shall not tarry." We look back and see how long it has been, and we take this to make the distance behind us put distance into that which is before us. The apostle's way for us would be rather that we should say, "The night is far spent, and the day is at hand." We may, after all, go to the Lord before He comes to us, but we shall not have missed the good of having been in the meanwhile "like unto men that wait for their Lord." The whole character of our Christianity will be affected by our "holding fast," or practically losing sight of His coming, as our constant expectation. With the sense of all this upon his soul, Timothy was to preach the Word, not the gospel simply, but the whole Word committed to him. How rare a thing is this! How few, in fact, take up the Word as a whole, to put it honestly in its entirety—so far as we may be able, to bring it all before the souls of others! Even with those who are not lacking in their apprehension of the gospel, that very gospel may be taken so as to limit the truth preached, and to get rid of how much that God certainly has in His own wisdom given for our instruction! How important a thing to be able to say, as Paul could say, that we have kept nothing back, but that, in the assurance that God has given us His Word, we have preached that Word faithfully! Timothy was to do this with the utmost urgency, "in season, out of season;" that is, there was to be no season at all; any time was the right time. That, of course, does not mean that among those outside, and, alas, under the power of Satan, there are not seasons, as other texts have shown us, which have to be laid hold of in order to reach those who at other times may be inaccessible; but amongst the people of God especially (and when we speak of preaching the Word, we must, of course, take these all in) Satan has no rightful power to shut out the truth from any. We need wisdom still, of course, in ministering the Word, according to the need which we may find in souls, and according to what they may be able to bear of it; but still the Word is for all times and for all the people of God, and we cannot count those His people who have no ears to hear it.

Again, we find conviction and rebuke as that which would necessarily spring —and, one may say, in the very first place—out of the preaching of the Word. Encouragement follows, but only for those who have hearts to accept whatever

2 (5-8): The fight fought.

2. But do thou be [f]sober in all things, suffer affliction, do the work of an evangelist, [g]make full proof of thy ministry; for [h]I am already being poured out, and the time of my [i]departure is come. I have [l]fought the good fight, I have [m]finished the course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the [n]crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me in that day; and not to me only, but also to all who [o]love his appearing.

f 1 Pet. 1. 13. j Col. 4. 17. k *cf.* Phil. 2. 17. l Phil. 1. 23. *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 14. m *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 12. n Acts. 20. 24. o *cf.* Jas. 1. 12. p *cfr.* Matt. 24. 48.

correction the word of God may bring. With souls that refuse the discipline of it, there can be no comfort rightly or safely given. Amid it all, there would be need of all long-suffering and constant teaching, all the more because the time would come when they would not bear sound teaching; but, on the contrary, after their own lusts, would heap to themselves teachers. Is it not true that the systems into which we have so largely got, really favor this devotion of people to teachers of their own choice, when they should have ears for every message that comes from God, whoever the messenger may be? But, ah, walls and fences shut out those who have not special liberty to come in, and permit the hearers inside to sit down undisturbed by that which, perhaps, is the very thing that God would have them hear. The general effect would be, as the apostle says here, to turn away the ears from the truth, and to turn them to fables.

2. Timothy, then, was to be sober in all things, to "suffer affliction," and to "do the work of an evangelist," to make full proof of his ministry in every part. Paul himself was leaving him. "I am already being poured out," he says—his own beautiful reference, no doubt, as we find in Philippians, to the drink-offering poured out upon the sacrifice. That which was used in it was the wine of joy, and the apostle so expresses it to the Philippians. If he was poured out upon the sacrifice and service of their faith, he would joy and rejoice with them all. Here it is not exactly the being poured out upon the sacrifice of others, but there is the same joy in it, as he contemplates the time of his departure having come. It was that "departing and being with Christ," of which he has already told us that it was "far better." Conflict he had had enough, but, even so, it had been a good fight. The fight was not to be regretted, but looked back upon with satisfaction. Nevertheless, it was a joy to have finished the course, and to realize that the faith which had been committed to him he had, by the grace of God, kept from all that would assail it. The crown of righteousness was now awaiting him from the Lord, the righteous Judge; when, indeed, not only he will receive his recompense, but also, as he says here, "all those who love His appearing." It is Christ's *appearing* that in this connection is most suited to what he has before him, for it is at His appearing that He gets what is His own, and when everything will appear in its true character. And then He bestows the rewards. This is always the way in which Scripture connects these things. He comes to take us to Himself; but the rewards are put rather as in connection with the kingdom. Every one in it will receive his place in due recognition of the work that he has done. There are, of course, things which are common to all the people of God, and which we have got to keep carefully apart from the thought of their being in this sense a reward at all. They are the reward of Christ's work indeed; but there has been here great confusion. The place in the Father's house is not a place which is determined by the value of whatever work we have been enabled to do. The nearness of children to the Father is not according to the appraisal of their work, but the outflow of His own heart towards those who are begotten of His own Spirit, and all of them, in this, the mere subjects of divine grace. So, too, the belonging to Christ as members of His body is the portion of all the saints of the present time; all make part of the bride, of which the apostle speaks as that Church which He loves, and for which He has given Himself. These are things which have been more or less confounded on

3 (9-22): Remembrances.

3. Use diligence to come shortly to me; for [q]Demas hath [r]forsaken me, having [s]loved the present age, and is gone to Thessalonica; Cresces to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Only [t]Luke is with me. Take Mark and bring him with thee, for [u]he is serviceable to me for ministry; and [v]Tychicus I sent to Ephesus. The cloak which I left behind me in Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, especially the parchments. [w]Alexander the smith did me much evil: the Lord will recompense him according to his works. Against whom also be on thy guard, for he hath greatly withstood our words. At my first answer no man stood with me, but all forsook me: [x]may it not be laid to their charge. But the [y]Lord stood with me

q *ctr.* Phile. 24.
r ch. 1. 15.
s *cf.* Eph. 2. 2.
t Col. 4. 14.
u *cf.* Acts 15. 38.
v Eph. 6. 21. Col. 4. 7.
w 1 Tim. 1. 20.
x Acts 7. 60.
y Acts 23. 11. Acts 27. 23. *cf.* Matt. 10. 19.

the part of those from whom we should have little expected it. The fruit of Christ's work must also be, of necessity, far beyond any fruit of our own; and thus it is a comfort indeed to realize that that which we shall have and enjoy together is far beyond anything that can possibly distinguish us from one another. God's best gifts, even in nature, are those that He bestows most widely; and yet we are not to make light of those special rewards of which Scripture certainly does not make light, and which have so much their sweetness from the fact of their coming from His hand who has Himself fought the great fight and entered into His rest.

But to love His appearing goes much further than the thought of any reward that one may find at that time. His appearing is that which is to bring the Day for the whole earth. It is the time when evil is to be put down with a strong hand, but that the love of God may be able to show itself according to His desire. It is the time when Christ Himself will be glorified, and everything put in subjection under His feet. Whatever special appeal there may be to us in the thought of our being caught up to meet Him in the air, yet, if we look at Scripture, we shall find that the appearing of the Lord, or His revelation, is that which is much more dwelt upon; and we can understand it surely in this way. We shall be with Him in that Day, and how blessed will it be to see the rightful King upon His throne, the earth subject to Him whom it has refused; the wilderness at His coming breaking out into blossom and harvest, and everything in the hands of Him who is the "Father of eternity," who is to fashion all things according to the Father's will, so that they shall be eternal! Righteousness will then, indeed, be, at last, upon an absolute throne, and the crown of righteousness be the recompense of all who love His appearing.

3. The apostle goes on now to what is more personal to himself. We see the circumstances in which he is, and how little they can minister of comfort to him. Demas, mentioned elsewhere as a fellow-laborer, had now forsaken him, drawn away by the love of the present age, and was in Thessalonica. Cresces had gone to Galatia, Titus was in Dalmatia. There is no reproach attaching to their absence from him, but they were absent. Only Luke, the so constant companion of his journeys and labors, as the Acts shows him—Luke was with him. There is a joyful word with regard to Mark, whom he desires Timothy to bring with him as one serviceable to him for ministry. Tychicus he had himself sent to Ephesus. He needs for his comfort the cloak which he had left behind in Troas, with Carpus; and he has need of his books, especially the parchments, the material of which naturally points out the importance of what was written upon them. He remembers the evil done him by Alexander the smith, probably the one whom we have seen at Ephesus. The Lord would recompense him according to his works; but Timothy had need to be upon his guard against him as one who had greatly withstood the apostle's words. More sorrowfully still,

and empowered me, that through me the preaching might be fully known, and all the nations should hear; and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom; to whom be glory to the ages of ages. Amen.

Greet [z]Prisca and Aquila, and the [a]house of Onesiphorus. [b]Erastus abode in Corinth, but [c]Trophimus I left in Miletus sick. Use diligence to come before winter. Eubulus saluteth thee, and Pudes and Linus and Claudia and all the brethren. [d]The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you.

z Acts 18. 2.
a ch. 1. 16.
b Acts 19 22. Rom. 16. 23.
c Acts 20. 4. Acts 21. 29.
d Gal. 6. 18. Philem. 25.

but in another spirit, he thinks of that first answer of his before the Roman Emperor, in which no man, even from among the brethren, stood with him, but all forsook him. He prays that it may not be laid to their charge. But there was One who stood with him, in Himself all-sufficient in place of any others; and He made this the very opportunity that the preaching should be fully known, and the nations should hear it; and for that time he was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. But, indeed, from every evil work He would deliver him, and preserve him unto His heavenly kingdom. The deliverance might take, as is plain, very different forms, and that which was, after all, to be his great deliverance might seem to be the very reverse; but God makes all things work together for good to those that love Him, and His own soul, conscious of this nearing departure, breaks out in praise to Him to whom shall be the glory of the ages of ages.

He greets finally Prisca and Aquila, his old companions, and the house of the Onesiphorus of whom we have heard him speaking. Erastus had remained in Corinth, and Trophimus he had left in Miletus sick. We see that whatever miraculous power was in the Church, it was not made use of to make every saint comfortable in this life, nor, necessarily, to enable him to minister to the comfort of others either. The apostle felt, no doubt, the absence of Trophimus; but he has not a word of reproof for him, nor a thought of murmuring with regard to it. But his heart longs once more to see Timothy, and again he bids him use diligence to come to him.

He closes with greetings from those around him and from all the brethren, and prays that the Lord might be with his spirit, energizing and controlling it. He ends with a prayer for him, that he might have the grace at all times so needful.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF THE EPISTLE TO TITUS.

TITUS, as already said, is the Deuteronomy of the second division of Paul's epistles. Its connection with the epistles to Timothy has also been noted. Godliness is in both the great thing insisted upon. The ordination of elders is for this purpose, while the promise of eternal life which is dwelt upon here as in Timothy, is in the same direction. It is the basis, in fact, of everything in the work in man. In the epistle to Titus, the declension beginning and its results are not so manifestly before us. It is not the object, although the conflict between good and evil is quite manifest also, and that within the Church itself; but the great point in Titus is that "the truth is according to godliness;" the word of revelation is that which, in fact, produces it, and, of course, sustains what it has produced. The truth, therefore, is according to godliness—cannot be severed from it. If the truth departs, godliness of necessity departs also; and if there is not godliness in the profession of the truth, the truth itself necessarily suffers and is perverted. This is the moral lesson which makes Titus, therefore, essentially Deuteronomic.

The epistle itself is of a very simple character. The two parts of it give us: the first, the general principle that the truth is according to godliness; the second, the relation of one of these to the other: that is, that the doctrine necessarily, as made known in the power of the Spirit, is the mold into which the life is cast, and the inspiration of the life itself. These things give us, therefore, the two divisions of the epistle:

1. (Chap. i.): The truth according to godliness.
2. (Chaps. ii., iii.): The relation of one of these to the other.

THE EPISTLE TO
TITUS.

DIVISION 1. (Chap. i.)

The truth according to godliness.

1 (1-4): The promise of eternal life before the ages now made known.

1. PAUL, a bondman of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the [a]truth which is after godliness, in [b]hope of eternal life, which God who cannot lie [c]promised before the age-times, but hath [d]manifested in its own season his word in the preaching

[a] 1 Tim.6.3. [b] 2 Tim.1.1. ch. 3. 7. [c] Gen. 3. 15. [d] 1 Tim.2.6.

NOTES.

Div. 1.

The connection of truth with godliness, that is, the inseparability of the two, is that which is first insisted on. The character of the relation itself comes afterwards.

1. The truth is emphasized at the very start. Paul speaks of himself as a "bondman of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which is after godliness." The opening words, as usual, give us thus the key to the epistle. The election of God is that which is the final dependence of the soul, that is, the will of God in love which goes out after its objects; a will which, surely, nothing can oppose, which must be characterized by His own nature, which alone, therefore, can give the limits of it. God cannot lie, God cannot repent; and in every manifestation of His will we find the activity of a nature which is love, and is so as much as anywhere in the refusal of the evil itself, which is the destruction of everything. It is not an arbitrary thing on God's part, that He ordains the judgment of evil, which is the necessary contradiction of His whole nature, and of all, therefore, that can possibly be for blessing. Love is in this way intolerant, of necessity. Tolerance here could not be love. God has His own way in grace of meeting souls in the deepest need that can be, but grace itself is never apart from the destruction of evil. Thus, there is that by which this grace of God works. If God saves, it is by "sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." There is no other way. Man has everywhere received and drunk in the lie of the devil. By that lie, if it is not refused, he is destroyed. All the corruption that is in the world has come in through it. Thus, then, there must be the acknowledgment of the truth which is after godliness. For this, the apostle is set. He is the minister of it, his confidence being that "hope of eternal life which God who cannot lie promised before the age-times." We see, as in Timothy so here, the going back to the beginning. Whatever may have come in since, God's purpose as revealed there abides. Whatever the delay and the need of patience, yet the end is certain. These "age-times," we have already seen, are practically the dispensations, the different steps by which God has worked out and developed what was in His mind, and made way for the full truth, which is now manifested. That long preparation of the world for that in which alone lies all blessing for man is a lesson most serious in its nature as to what man is, while it has reference also, no doubt, to the manifestation of things before the principalities and powers, the creatures of God outside of humanity, but who, nevertheless, are personally interested in all that in which God reveals Himself.

wherewith I was entrusted [e]according to the commandment of our Saviour-God; to Titus [my] [f]true child according to the [g]common faith: [h]grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Saviour.

2 (5-16): Elders ordained for the refutation of gainsayers.

2. On this account [i]left I thee in Crete that thou mightest set in order the things that remain, and [j]appoint

[e] 1 Tim. 1. 1. [f] 1 Tim. 1. 2. 2 Tim. 1. 2. [g] 2 Pet. 1. 1. [h] 1 Tim. 1. 2. [i] *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 3. [j] Acts 14. 23.

How deep this interest is we have now, and can have, probably, but little knowledge; yet we have glimpses of it scattered all through the word of God. The earth, with all the littleness which infidelity, with its feigned humility, has pointed out to us, has, nevertheless, been the theatre of that with which God has connected the manifestation of His glory as nowhere else, and the very littleness of man himself, as well as the evil condition in which he is found, has part in the manifestation. The time of full revelation is now come. This is the very season of God appointed for it; and how much, if we entered into this, might we reckon upon therefore, if indeed the knowledge of God Himself is that which in a practical sense is our very life itself. "For this is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." How little have we entered into the character of the present dispensation! How little have our hearts grasped of this desire of God to communicate His mind to us, and to bring us thus into fellowship with Himself—no longer as those to whom He speaks as servants merely, and who are to move obedient to His will, but as unto children, those brethren among whom Christ Himself takes His place as the First-born, and to whom, as unto friends, He becomes the revealer of the Father's counsels.

If we knew this aright, what interest would it give to every part of Scripture, to His thoughts with regard to His people Israel, and, back of them, to that display of Himself in nature, to which Scripture is the key! How wonderful to be those upon whom, thus, the ends of the ages are come, and to whom the stores that have been accumulated all along the line of revelation become the treasury of faith! This is His word, to which Paul was devoted—not simply His gospel, though the gospel must be the beginning everywhere, necessarily, and at once introduces the soul that has received it into the very heart of divine revelation. But the Word itself goes far beyond what we commonly call this, and is nothing less than that which is not merely to bring us out of sin into holiness, but to qualify us for that place with Christ to which infinite grace has destined us. How little we realize what the body of Christ means in this way, that body in which the Spirit dwells as never before, in order to give us capacity for the reception of these communications! When will we awake to realize and answer to this grace of God?

Again, we find the apostle insisting upon the character of God as a Saviour-God, a commandment from whom is just that which manifests the energy of a love which imperatively requires the fulfilment of its counsels. He is writing to Titus, his true child, as he declares, even as Timothy was—his child according to the faith which he had been the instrument used of God in communicating to him. To him he wishes grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus the Saviour. This individuality which the epistle emphasizes, as we have seen also with the epistles to Timothy, is that which, while it comes out in the most distinct way in the ruin of the Church which has come in, yet was always an absolute necessity. The soul must be for itself before God. We are not saved in the multitude, but saved individually; and in all our life, the more simply we have to do with God Himself, for ourselves, as if there were none other, the more fitted we shall be for fellowship with others, and to serve the ends for which God has united us together.

2. Titus had been left in Crete distinctly to complete the order of the assembly there, and to appoint elders in every city. The characters required in an elder are stated much as in Timothy, especially the family character, as one may

elders in every city, as I had charged thee,—[k]if any one be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of excess or unruly. For an overseer must be blameless as a [l]steward of God, not headstrong, not passionate, not given to wine, no striker, [m]no seeker of base gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, discreet, righteous, pious, temperate, holding fast the faithful word according to the doctrine taught, that he may be able both to exhort with sound teaching and to convict the gainsayers. For there are many disorderly [n]vain speakers and deceivers of men's minds, especially [o]they who are of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, as those who [p]subvert whole houses, teaching things which ought not to be, for the [q]sake of base gain. One of their own, a [r]prophet of themselves said, Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, idle gluttons. This witness is true; therefore reprove them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, not giving heed to [s]Jewish fables and [t]commandments of men that turn from the truth. To the [u]pure all things are pure, but to those that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience are defiled. [v]They profess to know God, but in works deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate.

k 1 Tim. 3. 2-4.
l *cf.* 1 Cor. 4. 1. 1 Pet. 4. 10.
m 1 Tim. 3. 8. 1 Pet. 5. 2.
n 1 Tim. 1. 6.
o Acts 11. 2. Acts 15. 1, 5.
p 2 Tim. 3. 6.
q 1 Tim. 6. 5. 2 Pet. 2. 3.
r Acts 17. 28.
s 1 Tim. 1. 4.
t Matt. 15. 6, 9. Col. 2. 22.
u *cf.* Eph. 4. 18.
v 1 John 2. 4.

say; for the elder is to be a father in the local assembly. Thus, he must be "the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of excess, or unruly." For the character of his children he is thus distinctly accounted as responsible. As an overseer, he is to be blameless as a steward of God, with nothing that would show a lack of government in his own spirit, "not headstrong, not passionate, not given to wine, no striker, no seeker of base gain." On the other hand, not merely of a negative character, but "hospitable, a lover of good, discreet, righteous, pious;" himself "holding fast the faithful word according to the doctrine taught, so as to be able both to exhort with sound teaching and convict the gainsayers."

The circumstances in Crete were of special exigency, and we see in them how, wherever the soul is not fully with God, the natural character necessarily comes up. One of their own, a prophet of themselves, had characterized the Cretans as "always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies" (or, "slothful gluttons"). This did not hinder the grace of God in its work amongst them; for, as we know, it is the glory of God's grace that it can avail for the chief of sinners; but it showed the character in which the evil, if it were suffered to come out, would display itself. Thus, among the Cretans there were many vain speakers and deceivers, the circumcision having specially this character, through the constant opposition which we have found legality was always manifesting to the truth of God, and the plausible cover of previous revelation under which it sheltered itself. It was imperative that the mouths of such should be stopped, as those who subverted whole houses, teaching things which ought not to be, and always with that character which is so naturally and necessarily displayed among those who are not satisfied with that which alone can satisfy. The corruption which is in the world is through lust, and at the bottom of all this plausible perversion of that which had been given of God there was a spirit coveting that which it counted gain. There was need, therefore, of sharp reproof in these cases—above all, that they might be sound in the faith, the very spring of godliness, as we have seen

DIVISION 2. (Chaps. ii., iii.)

The relation of one to the other.

1 (ii. 1-10): Things which become sound doctrine.

1. BUT speak thou the things which [w]become sound doctrine; that aged men be sober, grave, discreet, sound in the faith, in love, in patience; that the elder [x]women in like manner be in behavior as becometh sacred things, [y]not slanderers, nor enslaved to much wine, teachers of what is good; that they may admonish the young women to be lovers of their husbands, lovers of their children, discreet, [z]pure, [a]busy at home, good, subject to their own husbands, [b]that the word of God may not be blasphemed. The young men in like manner exhort to be discreet; in all things [c]showing thyself as a pattern of good works; in teaching, uncorruptness, gravity, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that [d]he who is opposed may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say concerning us; [e]bondmen to be subject to their own masters, to make themselves [f]well pleasing in all things; not answering again, not purloining, but showing all good fidelity, [g]that they may adorn the doctrine of our Saviour-God in all things.

[w] 1 Tim. 1. 10.
[x] 1 Tim. 2. 9.
[y] 1 Tim. 3. 11.
[z] 1 Pet. 3. 2.
[a] 1 Tim. 5. 14. 1 Pet. 5. 3.
[b] 1 Tim. 6. 1.
[c] 1 Tim. 4. 12.
[d] Neh. 5. 9. 1 Pet. 3. 16.
[e] 1 Pet. 2. 18.
[f] Col. 3. 22.
[g] *cf.* Matt. 5. 16. Phil. 2. 15.

the epistle declares it. Judaism, astray from the purpose of God with regard to it, was only resulting in fables and commandments of men turning from the truth. The liberty that existed in Christ was denied by it. Rules for outward conduct had supplanted that purity of heart which alone made all things pure, while to the defiled and unbelieving there was really no line of separation at all; to them nothing was pure, even the mind and conscience being defiled. With all this there was the profession of the knowledge of God, while in works they denied Him. We see how the knowledge of God should necessarily result in works accordant—how it will, in fact, necessarily do this, or it is not true knowledge.

DIV. 2.

1. The apostle goes on now to show more distinctly the character of the relation of truth to godliness. The doctrine was in itself sound or wholesome doctrine, that would bring about in its reception a healthy condition of soul. Thus there would be things becoming to it. The apostle briefly characterizes them: on the part of the aged men, "sobriety, gravity, discretion, soundness in the faith,"—as part of a moral character which, indeed, it is,—"love, patience;" on the part of the elder women, a behaviour such as became sacred things. They were not to be slanderers, not to be enslaved to much wine; on the other hand, teachers of what was good, admonishing by precept as well as example the younger women to be lovers of their husbands, of their children, "discreet, pure, busy at home." "Keepers at home" goes too far here. Home was their proper sphere, and they were to be occupied with things there, leaving none of their duties undone. They were to be "good, subject to their own husbands," that the word of God might not be blasphemed. The young men were to be discreet, not given to the impulse so natural to those who are as yet more or less unacquainted with themselves and with the manner in which things work out. While Titus was to exhort them to all this, he was to be himself a "pattern of good works, in teaching uncorrupt, grave, with sound speech, that could not be condemned," able thus to reprove the opposition which would surely be found, and which all must count upon meeting. Bondmen were to be subject to their own masters, to make themselves well pleasing in all things, "not answering

2 (11-15): The word as carrying salvation with it.

2. For the [a]grace of God, bringing [b]salvation for all men, hath appeared, [c]teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should [d]live discreetly and righteously and piously [e]in the present age, [f]awaiting the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our [g]great God and Saviour Jesus Christ; who [h]gave himself for us that he might [i]redeem us from all lawlessness, and [j]purify unto himself a [k]peculiar people, [l]zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. [m]Let no one despise thee.

3 (iii. 1-7): Sanctification wrought by the Spirit.

3. Put them in mind to be [n]subject to rulers, to authorities, to be [o]obedient, ready for every good work; to slander no one, [p]not to be contentious, [to be] mild, showing all meekness towards all men. For we our-

[a] ch. 3. 4. [b] 1 Tim. 2. 4. [c] Rom. 6. 14, Rom. 7. 6. [d] 1 Pet. 4. 6. [e] ctr. Eph 2. 2. [f] 1 Cor. 1. 7, 2 Pet. 3. 12. [g] 2 Pet. 1. 1. [h] Matt. 20. 28. [i] Ps. 130. 8, 1 Pet. 1. 18. [j] cf. Ezk. 37. 23. [k] Ex. 19. 5, 1 Pet. 2. 9. [l] ch. 3. 8, Eph. 2. 10. [m] 1 Tim. 4. 12. [n] Rom. 13. 1, 1 Pet. 2. 13. [o] 2 Tim. 2. 21. [p] 1 Tim. 3. 3; 2 Tim. 2. 24.

again, not purloining, but showing all good fidelity," that they might adorn the doctrine of our Saviour-God in all things. These are, in a general way, the things that characterize the truth in its reception, as the apostle directly now declares.

2. "For the grace of God," he says, "hath appeared, bringing salvation for all men;" and this grace it is that effectually teaches how to live aright. It brings the soul to God, thus putting away ungodliness. It satisfies the soul with Him, and thus dries up the fountain of lusts. It brings into the light of His presence, and thus enables one to live with due regard to things as they are; discreetly therefore, righteously, and piously, in the present age, so adverse, as it is, in its whole course to that which is of God, and under the power of the god of it, which is the devil. The soul thus blessed and having found its portion outside the world, in that to which the world could add nothing, had for its blessed hope "the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ,"—the time of the full revelation of Him who was already by the Spirit revealed in it, and to whose will it was henceforth bound by every possible tie of love and gratitude. Thus, for the redeemed, redemption had its character as deliverance from all lawlessness, from the whole spirit of insubjection natural to man. Those who were redeemed were a people peculiar to Himself, His own, His possession, purified therefore for Himself, according to His own will, and "zealous of good works." Here was the power of the life in the truth itself, and thus anything which touched this was a blight necessarily upon all else. Titus, therefore, was to speak in this way, "exhorting and rebuking with all authority." He was not to carry his own personal meekness so far as to let the truth in him be despised. The apprehension of these things would of necessity deliver from all half-heartedness with regard to them, and from all toleration of half-heartedness in others.

3. The apostle has thus put Christ before the soul in the power of His work as the Redeemer, and as the Object for the heart, the One whom it was liberty to serve. He now turns to emphasize the work of the Spirit, still in connection with and as the basis of exhortation to a conduct suitable. They were to be put in mind "to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be ready for every good work, to slander none; not to be contentious, but mild, showing all meekness towards all men." We see that meekness is necessarily in that which is personal to one's self. It is the refusal to insist upon our own rights, but therefore is out of place entirely when it is a question of yielding the rights of God. Here what would enable for the manifestation of such a spirit would be to look back upon the past, to realize the condition in which we all were at one time: "without understanding, disobedient, in error, enslaved by various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another." What a proof of the power of the gospel to turn those having such a character into the very op-

selves also were once without intelligence, disobedient, erring, enslaved by various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when [x]the kindness and love to man of our Saviour-God appeared, [y]not by works that are in righteousness which we have done, but [z]according to his mercy he saved us, through the [a]washing of [b]regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, which he [c]shed upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that having been [d]justified by his grace, we might be [e]heirs according to the [f]hope of eternal life.

x ch. 2. 11.
y Rom. 3. 28. Rom. 4. 6.
z Eph. 2. 4. 1 Pet. 1. 3.
a *cf.* Eph. 5. 26. John 3. 5.
b Matt. 19. 28.
c Rom. 5. 5.
d Rom. 3. 24.
e Rom. 8. 17.
f ch. 1. 2.

posite of all this; and here, again, it is the kindness and love to man of our Saviour-God which has appeared. Notice how the divine glory of Christ is ever before him. "Our great God and Saviour" is Christ Himself. No one else could have accomplished this. No one could have been allowed, if able, to bind the hearts of others to himself. The Maker of men has become the Redeemer, and it is in this that is found the moral power of the salvation. For this, all "works of righteousness which we have done" must be set aside absolutely. They would naturally make the soul owe something to itself, and the glory of God would be proportionately obscured. Now it was "according to His mercy He saved us," and this by that which was a work of the Spirit of God, a "washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit shed upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." This phrase, "the washing of regeneration," has been little understood, and thus naturally perverted. The word for "washing," which might be rendered also, and has been rendered, "bath," would in this way, so naturally to a ritualist, speak of water-baptism, that the argument was irresistible that here regeneration was in baptism itself. It is acknowledged, of course, that the word "regeneration" is one which is found in the New Testament in only one other place, but that in so different a connection as has hindered the realization of the meaning, to which, nevertheless, this should have led the way. The Lord promises to the twelve that "in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit upon the throne of His kingdom," they also shall "sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." "The regeneration" is in this passage the millennial state; but thus we may see already the difference between it and the idea of new birth, whatever the connection may be between these. The millennial regeneration is not a new life infused into the world, but it is a new state of things brought about by the new government over it. Thus, the Lord speaks of the throne of the Son of man and of thrones for His disciples. The throne of the world in the hands of the perfect Ruler is, in fact, what brings about the regeneration. Righteousness now *reigns*. In the new earth it will *dwell;* but in the millennium there is yet neither the full reality, nor, therefore, the full permanence of deliverance from evil. Righteousness reigns, and evil is not suffered any more, but the full blessing waits to be manifested in that which is eternal and not millennial. The subjugation of evil, Christ's foes put under His feet, goes on through the millennium, in different stages, towards completeness. It is the preparation for eternity, but not the eternal state itself.

It is plain, therefore, that there is a parallel between the stages of God's preparation of the earth for blessing and that of the individual man. The present stage of the earth is that out of which the Christian has been delivered, the state of bondage to corruption, the dominion of sin. The present state of the Christian is that which the earth itself waits for, the time when the power of sin will be broken and righteousness will reign. For us righteousness reigns now, but the conflict with sin is not over. This, in the millennium, will be fully seen at the end, when there is once more the outbreak of evil, Satan being let loose. What follows this is the dissolution of the present heavens and earth and the coming of the new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness, just as the dissolution

¶ (8-11): Warnings as to vain words.

4. Faithful is the word, and this I will that thou affirm strenuously, that they who have believed God may take care to [g] pay diligent attention to good works. These things are good and profitable to men. But [h] foolish questions and genealogies and strifes and contentions about the law shun; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is a heretic [i] after a first and second admonition shun; knowing that such an one is perverted and sinneth, being self-condemned.

[g] ver. 14. ch. 2. 14.

[h] 1 Tim. 1. 4-7.

[i] cf. Matt. 18. 15, 16.

or the change of the body makes way for the perfect eternal state with us. Thus there is a complete parallel, which we cannot be wrong in accepting as that which will help us with the expression here. "The washing of regeneration" is the deliverance from the power of sin, which is no more tolerated, but which is not, by any means, wholly removed. "The renewing of the Holy Spirit" is that which is constantly needed to supplement this, although the word used does not speak of a mere reviving or refreshing constantly, but rather of a change into that which is new,—thus, of ways, habits,—as the light more and more penetrates, and the word of God manifests more and more its perfection and its power for the soul.

This, then, is the way by which God accomplishes in us His salvation, working in us the willing and the doing which we work out. We are reminded here that the Holy Spirit is that which is "shed upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." There is abundant power, therefore. We are never left to our natural weakness, the Spirit of God finding in the work of Christ His ability to deal with the sin within us, and to carry us on to the perfection which we have found already before God in Christ Himself. Thus having been "justified by His grace," we become "heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Here is the necessary result, as we have seen, of that sonship to which the Spirit of God in us testifies; but the inheritance itself we enter in the recognized path of pilgrimage and strangership here. The eternal life which is in its fulness before us, and nevertheless in us at the present moment, manifests thus its power over us as carrying us forward in the power of the joy in that which is unseen, which makes the strangership here natural and easy.

4. The apostle immediately turns again to exhortation. In the power of all this he would have it earnestly affirmed that those who believe God should take care to pay diligent attention to good works. We see how the working out of salvation "with fear and trembling" is most consistent with the knowledge that God is working in us for the accomplishment of this. The sense of the greatness of the love which is thus manifested towards us, and of the glory of Him who has identified Himself with us in this way, is that which makes us all the more tremble lest in any way we should dishonor Him. "These things," then, "are good;" and, as good, are "profitable to men." But again Titus is warned, as Timothy has been, of the foolish questions, and genealogies, and strifes, and contentions about the law, which we see everywhere as dangerous for those who inherit the blessings of Judaism, but who are so apt, therefore, to mistake the figure for the reality. Man's will also is ready to come in and manifest itself, so that a man that is "a heretic," or, as the Revised Version puts it, "a factious man," a man who makes troubles with the dreams of his own mind, was to be shunned after a first and second admonition. It is not a question necessarily of assembly-judgment, for the matter might not be, in fact, serious enough for this, but a refusal to enter into that with him which, even though it may be in some measure true, yet has an exaggerated and one-sided importance which perverts it. The perversion springs, as it ever does, from the self-will of the man himself, not humble and subject to the word of God, while yet he may be diligently employed about it, but seeking his own in reality, and not the things of God. Thus "he sinneth, being self-condemned."

§ (12-15): Brotherly concern.

5. When I send Artemas to thee or [j] Tychicus, give diligence to come to me unto Nicopolis; for there I have determined to winter. Zenas the lawyer and [k] Apollos set forth diligently on their way, that nothing may be wanting to them; and let ours learn to [l] practise good works for necessary wants, that [m] they may not be unfruitful. All that are with me salute thee. Salute those who love us in faith. [n] Grace be with you all.

j 2 Tim. 4. 12.
k Acts 18. 24.
l ver. 8.
m 2 Pet. 1. 8. cf. Phil. 1. 11.
n Col. 4. 18.

5. The epistle ends, as commonly, with personal matters and greetings, which have so tender an interest, as opening to us the life of those days, and the heart of the apostle, exercised by the trials of the way, and for others, the companions of his way. He is not here the "prisoner of the Lord," but has been in Crete, and is now in Macedonia, or on his way to it. Written, as seems evident, after his first imprisonment, it is one proof, among others, of his realization of the confidence expressed in the epistle to the Philippians of his deliverance at that time: "I know that I shall abide with you all, for your furtherance and joy of faith." The three "pastoral" epistles, with that to the Hebrews, are the only Scriptural record of the interval between that and his final condemnation in the last year of Nero, A.D. 68. But there is consistent testimony that he fulfilled, also, his desire to visit Spain (Rom. xv. 24).

One can say little that is not obvious of these closing verses.

THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES.

THERE are just eight writers of the New Testament books. Four of these we find in the seven catholic epistles, although the writings of John, as we know, overflow these narrow bounds. The four writers, who stand for four divisions of the books themselves, have thus the numerical stamp of their own division, which is surely in character that which speaks distinctly of the way, of the walk upon earth; the seven epistles putting the stamp of perfection upon this, as we have had in the epistles of Paul the twice seven, the perfection of divine testimony. We have here plainly another line of things from that which we find in those that are just concluded. Paul carries us up to heaven. John, as often said, brings down heaven to earth; and that is not only true in the gospel which we have of his, in which we see the divine glory of the man Christ Jesus, but in the book of Revelation also, in which we find the Holy City coming down from God out of heaven, and the tabernacle of God with men, that He may dwell with them.

"Catholic," or "general," is, after all, a dubious term for these epistles, which merely refers to the evident fact that they are not written to any specific assembly, or even assemblies; yet Peter, as we know, is the apostle of the circumcision, and addresses *these*, that is, the remnant in Israel who have come into the faith of Jesus, while James' address is still more evidently to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad. One can hardly call such an epistle, in any strict sense, "catholic," On the other hand, there can be no doubt that they develop in various ways the practical character of the people of God on earth, which John traces, according to his manner, as the manifestation of that eternal life which is divine life, and which therefore manifests itself in likeness of the children of God to God their Father. John's epistles have thus a more internal character, while Peter and James speak more of the external path.

They stand evidently not in the order in which we have them. Peter, as the apostle of the circumcision, having naturally the first place, as he has in his subject, which is that of the government of the Father over those who are, in fact, a new people of God, and (in contrast with Israel's rejection of His word) an *obedient* people. When Israel journeyed through the wilderness, of all the holy things carried by the Levites, the ark went first; and no wonder, for it was the throne of God, where God dwelt between the cherubim, and to put it in that place was to proclaim the Master they served, and themselves before all things, if they acted in character with this place assigned it, an obedient people. This is just the theme, then, of both the epistles of Peter, while the second

shows, nevertheless, after the manner so much of these second epistles, the departure from this in the profession at large. With Peter it is to "the obedience of Christ" that those whom he addresses are sanctified, while with this goes that "sprinkling of blood" which is to cleanse even that obedience itself from all the failure which, alas, so mingles with it. The government of which he speaks is a Father's government, and thus, necessarily, the throne is a throne of grace, while at the same time it cannot be forgotten that "without respect of persons" He "judgeth according to every man's work." This is insisted on throughout the epistles.

James gives us, as is well known, the justification of the believer, but in a way of his own, which has been often taken as if it were to modify, in some respects, the doctrine which Paul has already proclaimed. But justification with James is not the justification of the *ungodly*. It is the justification of the professed *believer*, which is to be, therefore, of necessity by those works which, if faith has not, it is "dead, being alone." There is no life, no reality, in it. Thus his justification is not before God, as Paul's is; and Paul seems to leave evident room, on the other hand, for that which James speaks of. "If Abraham," he says, "were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, *but not before God.*" Thus, he does not deny that Abraham was justified by works, while he does absolutely deny that he was justified by works *before God*. When the professed believer is justified by his works, that is not at all needful for God, who knows absolutely the reality or the unreality. For man it is; and that is how James puts it: "A man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works; show *me* thy faith without thy works," (that is clearly impossible,) "and I will *show thee* my faith *by* my works." Thus the fruits of faith which are here alone in question are by no means just morality. Abraham offers up his son. Rahab, as men would say, betrays her country; but both of these own a higher allegiance than that to men; and they are the witnesses thus, not of a moral character,—although it be the source of all morality,—but of *faith*. Thus, the character which the epistle has in this way is according to the second place, which in fact it should have—that of testimony. Abraham was justified by faith when, alone with God under the stars of heaven, he was pointed to those witnesses of God's promise to him: he simply believed, and "it was counted to him for righteousness;" but when James appeals to his justification by works, it was to what men saw when he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar. There it is that we "*see* how faith wrought with his works." The testing of this in some places may seem minute, and that is the perfection of it. If you put the poor man, he says, in a poor place in your synagogue, how can you claim that you have recognized the true glory of the Lord of glory, whom you would have put in the same place if you had judged Him in the same way? The question is one of faith, and where does faith see poverty or riches?

Another characteristic of James connected with this, therefore, is "patience." That is the fruit of faith distinctly, or, perhaps we may say, hope, which yet is but faith looking forward. It is what the trial of faith works, and therefore blessed is he who endureth the trial. If only patience have "her perfect work," we are "perfect and entire, wanting in nothing." Then the Word also is what here, as elsewhere, governs the soul. That is the mirror in which we are to see ourselves. Thus, the general drift of James' epistle agrees thoroughly with its numerical place.

The epistles of John come in the third place, and are themselves three in number. Even in such matters, we must not despise the help that God would give us. John speaks, therefore, of manifestation, and, indeed, of the manifestation of that which is divine, as already said—of that divine life in the believer which produces in him the signs of his parentage. God is light and God is love; and thus the life in us displays its character as love and righteousness; and for this we are introduced, in the first place, into the sanctuary where God is revealed. He is not, we are told, merely Light; but He is in the light, the sanctuary is open, and we, as in the light, are thus revealed to ourselves; while the precious blood which is upon the mercy-seat puts away the sins which the light reveals. Thus, to be in the light is for John the definition of a Christian. The blood-cleansing does not extend beyond the limits of the light in which we are.

The second epistle connects the love and the light together, emphasizing the side of light, or truth; while the third epistle connects these also, but emphasizing the love. Love to the brethren is in John a very special manifestation of having "passed from death unto life."

Jude coming in the fourth place closes the series, sadly indeed, with the warning of the departure of the Church from holiness and subjection to the Lord, so that at His appearing the ungodly ones long prophesied of as subjects of His judgment will be found within the Church itself. Still, the Lord will preserve His own, and Jude insists in the meantime upon the testing of everything in view of general departure, with yet mercy to be shown to those of whom, after all, there is hope of recovery.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

THE character of the first epistle has been already briefly shown. The second epistle is strictly supplementary to the first, so that we perhaps need not here consider the two together. The epistle is, as already said, addressed to Jewish believers, or sojourners of the dispersion — the remnant of Israel already scattered, as we know, through their disobedience to God, and who had never been recovered in reality from that disobedience, or from the dispersion in which it ended. They were in every land as it were as captives of Babylon; but these whom Peter addresses are still more in character as a dispersion. Christianity itself has separated Jew from Jew in a more marked and thorough way than any mere dispersion among the Gentiles could have effected it. We therefore see immediately in the epistles addressed to them the fact recognized that they are a new election, a new people of God, now sanctified by the Spirit to "obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ," and with a new inheritance before them. Here, then, is an election which cannot fail. Those who are the people of God after this manner are "guarded by the power of God, through faith," unto the salvation for which, in its fulness, they are yet waiting. They are seen also as those who are under the Father's government, in which respect, as is clear, Israel had only the shadow, rather than the reality. They are distinctly now a New Testament company in the world, born anew by the word of the gospel proclaimed to them, and growing up unto salvation in the power of that same Word. They are inheritors of blessings which were in some sense proffered to Israel but rejected by them, and are thus "a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." They have the full preciousness thus of being built upon that Stone which the builders had rejected, and which had been to Israel but a "stone of stumbling and a rock of offence;" but they were now "a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for divine possession to set forth the virtues of Him who had called them out of darkness into His marvelous light." The apostle presses, then, what is to be the practical result of this, their glorifying God in the manifestation of this sanctification of theirs, and amid all the conditions which the world in its present state imposes upon them.

He then looks at the trial itself, the necessary trial resulting from the world being in opposition to God. They are to do well, suffer for it as

the natural result, and take this patiently. The lesson of the flood, the end of that old world of long ago, shows what awaits the world which has taken its character from that old one; while for the Christian there is a salvation out of it, which baptism pictures, but which is in fact accomplished by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is gone into heaven, and has all things made subject to Him. The judgment itself, as being at hand, (nay, even beginning in the judgment of the house of God at the present time,) is finally insisted on.

The divisions, therefore, are these:

1. (Chap. i. 1–21): Christians a new election, sustained by the power of God as sons for an eternal inheritance.
2. (Chaps. i. 22–ii. 10): The New Testament relationships, in place of the Old Testament ones forfeited and broken off.
3. (Chaps. ii. 11–iii. 9): The glorifying of God in the manifestation of their character as a people sanctified to Him.
4. (Chaps. iii. 10–iv. 6): The world-trial, and their trial in the world.
5. (Chaps. iv. 7–v.): The judgment at hand, and the responsibilities connected with it.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF

PETER.

DIVISION 1. (Chap. i. 1–21.)

Christians a new election, sustained by the power of God as sons, for an eternal inheritance.

1(1-5): Elect unto obedience and begotten to a living hope.

1. [a] PETER, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the [b] sojourners of the dispersion of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, [c] elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through [d] sanctification of the Spirit unto the [e] obedience and

a *cf.* John 1. 42. *cf.* Matt. 16. 18–20. *cf.* Lk. 22. 32 with John 21. 15–19.
b Jas. 1. 1. *ctr.* 1 Cor. 1. 2, *cf.* ch. 2. 11. *ctr.* 2 Sam. 7. 10.
c *cf.* Rom. 8. 29.
d *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 3. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 13.
e ver. 14. *cf.* Phil. 2. 8, with John 8. 29. *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 6.

NOTES.

Div. 1.

THAT Peter had distinctly reserved to him the character of the apostle of the circumcision is evident by the epistle to the Galatians, although he shared this apostleship with others; but he was the one identified with this ministry and giving character to it, as we have already seen in the end of the Gospel of John. Peter is, in fact, thus prominent in the commencement of the Acts, although James comes into this place towards the latter part of it; being, no doubt, alone present in Jerusalem at the time of the history. Peter's connection here with Israel scattered and in foreign lands is evidenced by the way in which he addresses them. It is not needless, perhaps, to remind ourselves how ritualism, with its so-called "voice of the Church," has perverted the facts. According to it, Peter is the head of the Gentile Church instead of the Jewish; whose place, therefore, must be found somehow at Rome, rather than at Jerusalem. Characteristic enough it is, when we realize the departure from Paul that had already set in before his death, that the true apostle of the Gentiles is almost nowhere in this account. Certainly the truth he gives is almost entirely obscured by this system, even to justification by faith itself, while the thought of the Church as the body of Christ is obscured and degraded to the lowest conception possible. The Church outside of the New Testament is from the beginning Jewish, sacramental, hierarchical—a Church such as that which in Smyrna the Lord disclaims as not that of His true, called-out ones, but the promiscuous gathering together of a people who are in this character as the mere work of the adversary, Satan's synagogue. That which is said to be the oldest document that we have in this way, "The teaching of the Twelve Apostles," is thoroughly of this character. It is striking in this connection that Peter,—to whom it seems we are to listen as the first infallible head of the Church,—is the very one whom God has chosen to announce two things which destroy the whole of ritualism down to its foundation: that is, in the first place, that new birth is (not by baptism, but) by the word of God, which in the gospel is preached unto us; and, in the second place, that all Christians are "a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Peter, as we see, strikingly maintains his character as the apostle of the circumcision in this epistle of his; but this, of necessity, therefore, takes very much the character of contrast between the Old Testament people of God and the New. Paul is the one who decisively calls the true believers to take their place outside the camp with Christ, who is outside it; but Peter, no less, would remind them that they are, as already said, a new election, and begotten by the resurrection of Christ to the inheritance reserved in heaven for them, such as Israel knew nothing of. The prophets of the Old Testament he declares spoke better than they knew; but we have the joy of

/sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: gGrace unto you and peace be multiplied. hBlessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who ⁱaccording to his great mercy hath ʲbegotten * us again unto a ᵏliving hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead, unto an ˡinheritance ᵐincorruptible and ⁿun-

f Heb. 12. 24. *cf.* Lev. 14. 14 with Lev. 16. 15.
g Phil. 1. 2, etc.
h Eph. 1. 3.
i Tit. 3. 5. Eph. 2. 4.
j *cf.* Jno. 3. 3. *cf.* ver. 23.
k *cf.* Ezek. 37. 11. *cf.* Heb. 6. 19, 20.
l *cfr.* Ex. 15. 17; *cf.* Rom. 8. 17.
m *cfr.* Ps. 79. 1, 2.
n *cf.* Rev. 21. 27.

* Or, "newly begotten." The word suggests more, apparently, than παλινγενναάω, being ἀναγενναάω, closely linked with the expression in Jno. iii. 3. More than Millennial blessing.

having the message, their message, fully told out to us, preached now "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven."

1. Peter writes, as we have seen, to "the sojourners of the dispersion," the scattered remnant of Israel; the only *true* remnant now being those who have received their Messiah in the Person of Christ. God has in their case come in to substitute for the old promises, which they have lost in the national rejection of Him, new and higher ones. They are elect as Israel was elect, but now, "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father," a foreknowledge which implies the certainty of the blessing for them. They are individually thus foreknown, and by One who has taken now distinctly the character of Father, of which His relationship to Israel, as nationally His first-born, was but the mere shadow. After all, they had not, as we know, the Spirit of adoption. Their relationship implied no security, no *soul*-salvation, nothing which went with them—except as to the responsibility of it—into that eternity into which they necessarily passed under that shadow of death, which was, in fact, the legal condemnation as well as the natural one—a sentence which, as we know, the law affirmed, but could not lift. But this present remnant were elect "through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience;" thus there was nothing simply conditional, but all had been secured to them by absolute grace. They were set apart to God, not by external privileges, marking them out from the nations round about, but by the Spirit of God, working in heart and life to form them after the pattern of One who was Himself the One absolutely obedient. They were sanctified unto the obedience of Jesus Christ.

It is important for us to realize that the obedience here was not, therefore, the obedience simply of a checked will, such a restraint as the law, for instance, might be—a limit not to be transgressed. It is an obedience which in Him gave the whole life its practical character: "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." That was the sole purpose of His being here at all. Within the bounds of law men might claim a certain liberty of their own. If they did not pass the limit, they were free within it; but here there was no limit; and more, there was no desire for anything which was not obedience itself. God's will is seen in it to be that which is the perfection of blessing. The path formed by it is a path, therefore, from which none that know it could desire to stray—a path formed by infinite love and wisdom, for us guarded also by almighty power. What ideal could one have of happiness beyond walking in such a way? The child's obedience as such is not legal. It is the obedience of love, while it is not the limited obedience of a servant merely, but an entire, whole-hearted surrender to what is indeed only the desire of a love that embraces all things in it. For us, of necessity, there has to go with this "the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." There is, alas, still that which needs removal from before God, which only the blood of Christ could accomplish. Thus the two things go fittingly together in this place.* To these Peter addresses himself with the desire that

* No doubt the "obedience" is linked with "the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus." It is the obedience of Jesus, that which has Him for its object,—subjection to Him—which He also perfectly exemplified in His earthly life. The sprinkled blood is connected with it as showing the permanent cleansing attached to it—not a legal obedience—which is also a pledge of the daily cleansing, on the ground of that blood, by water by the Word.—S. R.

2(6-9): The contrast of sufferings, through which faith finds occasion and goes on to salvation.

defiled and °unfading, ᵖpreserved in heaven for you, who are ᵍguarded by the power of God through ʳfaith unto salvation, ˢready to be revealed in the last time.
2. Wherein ye greatly ᵗrejoice, though now for a ᵘlittle while, if ᵛneed be, ye are put to grief by various ʷtrials, that the ˣproving of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be proved

o *cf.* ch. 5.4.
p Col. 1. 5. *cf.* Heb. 12. 28.
q *cf.* Jno. 10. 28-30.
r *cf.* Phil. 2. 13.
s *cf.* Rom. 8. 18. *cf.* ch. 4. 7.
t *cf.* Rom. 5. 2, 3, 11. u *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 17. v *cf.* Heb. 12. 10. w Jas. 1. 2, 3. x Jas. 1. 12; *cf.* Mal. 3. 3.

grace and peace may be multiplied to them. The sense of what God has done for them lifts his heart up to the One who has done it, "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," who has begotten them, "according to His great mercy," to "a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead." The death of Christ, of Israel's Messiah, a death at the hands of the people for whom He came, was their forfeiture of all blessing; it was the end of every claim that they had upon God. His resurrection was, therefore, a begetting *again* to "a living hope," a hope abiding in the living Person of Him who has arisen. Earth indeed was closed to them, but there stretched before them the glorious view of a better inheritance, "incorruptible" because "undefiled," and always abiding in the freshness which so soon passes from the enjoyment of anything here,—this inheritance preserved now in heaven for those themselves preserved,—"guarded by the power of God through faith" on to the complete deliverance awaiting them. Faith is here seen upon the Godward side of it, not merely upon the human. It is the means by which the power of God keeps them. Here, evidently, all is in designed contrast with Israel's portion as they had yet enjoyed it, and in its heavenly character in contrast with any blessing even conditionally promised them. From any point of view, it is rendered absolutely secure; while, on the other hand, the deliverance which was constantly looked for in Israel, the ready hand of God in delivering them from their earthly foes, and even from the many evils which sin has made common in the present life, is, as we may say, conspicuously absent from what the apostle speaks of. It is not, of course, that God's care over His own can possibly fail in time or in eternity, but that, nevertheless, there is ordained for us, as for Him who has gone before us, (perfect in the same path,) in the world, tribulation, with the joyful certainty, which brings peace to the soul, that *He* has overcome the world.

2. He now goes on to speak of the contrast which must needs abide between the present time and the blessed end to which they are looking. The joy they have is not lessened, but in some sense heightened even, by the trial—this itself, while being only for a time, having its own necessity in the proving of their faith. This involves, indeed, the trial being felt as trial. Christians are not ordained to float over everything, as it were, without feeling it. It would have no meaning or purpose if this were so. The trial worketh, as the apostle has told us in Hebrews, "the peaceable fruits of righteousness to those who are exercised thereby." The exercise, therefore, is necessary;—it may be the being left for a while to wonder, therefore, what the trial means,—sometimes only to learn in it the patience which belongs to those who are under the Father's hand, and for whom every cup they drain is mixed by a Father's love. It is not discipline that the apostle speaks of here so much, but rather the opportunity that faith has to show itself, and to find recognition of God in the time when everything will be made manifest—a faith which is, as he observes here, "more precious than the gold that perisheth, even though *it* be proved by fire." The fire would not prove that the gold was not gold. It would only bring that out more certainly; and if it were not gold in the estimation of the Prover, there would be no good in the proving.* God proves, that He may draw from us that which

* "Gold that perisheth," as compared with the imperishable faith. Gold is the least perishable thing, in the world's valuation, just as it is the least corruptible; yet compared with spiritual things it is both perishable and corruptible.

by fire, may be found unto [y]praise and glory and honor at the appearing* of Jesus Christ; whom having not seen ye [z]love; in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye [a]rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of† glory, [b]receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of [your] souls.

8(10-12): The Spirit of Christ in the prophets now the Holy Spirit from heaven.

3. Of which salvation the [c]prophets sought diligently and searched out, who prophesied of the grace [which is come] unto you; [d]searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them pointed

* Or, "revelation." † Literally, "glorified."

[y] cf. 1. Cor. 4. 5. cf. Rev. 2. 7. etc.
[z] cf. Jno. 21. 16.
[a] cf. Phil. 3. 3.
[b] cf. Heb. 10. 39.
[c] cf. 2 Pet. 1. 21. cf. Heb. 1. 1.
[d] cf. Dan. 8. 15. cf. Dan. 12. 8, 9.

He sees is there, and which He desires to be able to put to our account; and in the joy as well as in the trial faith has to be in constant activity. Christ as the object of the heart being One in whom faith alone finds deliverance from the power of things around; "whom," says the apostle, "having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." "Glorified," the last word is—already entering into that which is to come. The joy of eternity is the joy of the present, and we receive in due time the end of faith, the soul's deliverance from all that here assails and afflicts. If we always regarded trials as the apostle teaches us here to regard them, how different oftentimes would they seem to us! The enemy would use them to create distrust of the perfect wisdom or the perfect love which is employed about us, or to fix our minds even unhealthily, it may be, upon ourselves. For, as the apostle's thorn in the flesh reminds us, even that which is true discipline for us by the way is not necessarily the result of actual failure on our part, although it does show us needs we have, to which the discipline is meant to minister. But self-occupation is never God's design in it. If we have learnt how God has already proclaimed the hopelessness of the flesh, and given us deliverance from it, the end of self-judgment itself is only to turn us from ourselves, and to occupy us with this one unfailing Object of which the apostle has been speaking—with the brightness and not with the darkness—with the glory of God already revealed to us in the face of Jesus Christ, the light shining more and more upon the road which leads to Himself.

3. We have now the difference between the past and the present time pointed out in another way. The prophets of Israel all prophesied of the blessing that was to come, while being themselves unable to realize more than dimly that of which they spoke, and even the time to which it pointed. They were attracted, sought diligently, and searched out what was in their own writings—so little was that which they wrote measured by their understanding of things; so entirely did the Spirit of Christ carry them beyond anything which might even be the occasion of their prophecies. The answer that they got to their searching was simply the assurance that they were speaking of things which belonged to others, and not to themselves. We can see in such an one as Daniel a plain example of this, where that which was communicated to him was "shut up and sealed till the time of the end." At the end it would speak, and not lie; and in the time to come he would stand in his lot and enter into the enjoyment of that which as yet he could not in the same sense enjoy, except as being consciously the instrument of the Spirit to give forth these things for others.* How

"The fire shall try every man's work" (1 Cor. iii.). There it is at the end—the judgment-seat of Christ, where the fire of divine holiness and truth shall separate the precious from the vile. Here it is the trial by the way. What a comfort to think of the close connection between these two. Neither can harm us, but only bring out that which will be for eternal glory and honor.—S. R.

* This does not mean dispensational, or Church truth, but that the blessings foretold by the prophets were future, not present. Thus they saw them afar off and embraced them. It is ours to have more than this—the earnest of the Spirit making these things present realities.—S. R.

out, when it testified before of the [e]sufferings [to be] to Christ, and the [f]glories afterwards. To whom it was [g]revealed, that not unto themselves but unto you did they minister these things, which are [h]now reported unto you by those who have preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, into which things the [i]angels desire to look.*

4(13-16): The effect on the practical life.

4. Wherefore, [j]girding up the loins of your mind, be sober and set your hope perfectly on the grace which is to be brought unto you at the [k]revelation of Jesus Christ; as [l]obedient† children not conforming yourselves unto the [m]former lusts in your ignorance, but [n]as he who hath called you is holy, be ye also holy in all your behaviour: because it is [o]written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.

5(17-21): The Father's government.

5. And if ye call on him as [p]Father, who without [q]respect of persons judgeth according to each man's work, pass the time of your sojourn in [r]fear, knowing that not

* The word suggests, "stooping down," as the cherubim hovering over the mercy-seat.

† Literally, "children of obedience."

[e] cf. Is. 53. cf. Ps. 22.
[f] cf. Is. 60, etc.
[g] cf. Jer. 31. 28. ctr. Lk. 2. 26.
[h] cf. Heb. 2. 3, 4.
[i] cf. Eph. 3. 10.
[j] cf. Lk. 12. 35.
[k] cf. Heb. 9. 28.
[l] vers. 2, 22. cf. 2 Cor. 10. 5.
[m] ch. 4. 2, 3. cf. Acts 17. 30.
[n] cf. 2 Cor. 6. 17, 18.
[o] Lev. 11. 44.
[p] cf. Rom. 8. 15.
[q] cf. Rom. 2. 11.
[r] cf. Phil. 2. 12. cf. Heb. 12. 28. ctr. 1 Jno. 4. 18, 19.

different the condition now, when Christians in common enjoy the blessedness of the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, and "the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow" begin to unfold themselves even in the gospel sent abroad amongst men, with the virtue of these things in it! Even the very angels desire to look into these things, the words showing that even these blessed beings could not know, as the partakers of redemption know, the fulness of what is now the common portion of the saints. How wonderful, then, the blessing that is ours; how sorrowful to think that we should so often, in practice, find so little of all that is here implied! These angels, bending down to look into the things with which we have been brought into such intimate contact—how they reprove us for the slight hold that at the best they have of us!

4. The apostle insists now upon the effect that there is to be of all this upon the practical life. The loins of the mind are to be girt up by the truth, the common figure which speaks of the activity which is called for from us, the result of a mind set upon things unseen. The result is sobriety as to the present. The roseate color passes from the things around as a necessity of the glory revealed and enjoyed—the hope fixed upon the grace to be brought at the revelation of Christ, when all, indeed, will be manifest as grace and nothing else; when the full power of that shall be realized by us. As a consequence, for the present time we are to be as obedient children, a character which has been already enlarged upon for us—not conforming ourselves to the former lusts in the time of ignorance, when the heart, unsatisfied with God, went out after that which only begot further craving, but never satisfied. We have been called out of all that the light from heaven has revealed in its true character, to be holy, separate from evil, as God Himself is holy. We are to be in fellowship with Him; holy, therefore, in all our behavior, with nothing lax about us, nothing unsuited to the company into which we are brought.

5. There results, therefore, from the fact that we have a Father, that there must be with us the judgment of a Father, who, because He loves and has the deepest personal interest in His children, of necessity has before Him all that they are doing, all that they are occupied with. There is nothing but what is a matter of interest to Him, and as those who are His own they must reflect His character. This is what Jacob learned at Bethel—that if God in His grace has a dwelling-place with men, there must of necessity be the holiness which be-

with [s]corruptible things, silver or gold, were ye redeemed from your vain behaviour [t]handed down from your fathers, but by [u]precious blood, as of a [v]lamb without blemish and without spot, [the blood] of Christ, [w]foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but who hath been manifested at the [x]end of the times for your sake, who through him [y]believe in God, who [z]raised him from among the dead and gave him glory: so that your faith and hope might be in God.

[s] *cf.* ver. 7. *cf.* Jas. 5. 2.
[t] *cf.* Matt. 15. 2, etc.
[u] *cf.* Acts 20. 28. *cf.* ch. 2. 7.
[v] Jno. 1. 29. *cf.* Ex. 12. 3, 5.
[w] *cf.* Prov. 8. 22-31. *cf.* Is 42. 1.
[x] Heb. 9. 26.
Gal. 4. 4. [y] *cf.* Jno. 5. 24. [z] Rom. 6. 4; Acts 3. 13, 15.

comes His dwelling-place. He governs His house.* The government is in grace, as it must be to be that of a Father, and yet it is all the more even to be treated in the most serious manner. Those who would treat grace lightly cannot know it. We are to pass the time of our "sojourning here in fear," with the very consciousness of being redeemed, "not with corruptible things, silver or gold, but by the precious blood of Christ." Redemption is that which shows the value God has set upon us, and "the precious blood of Christ" as the price of redemption, how, indeed, has it shown this! But, then, it speaks of necessity also of a condition out of which we needed to be redeemed. We have been away from God; we need the bringing back, and to be with Him, therefore, as thus brought back. Here Peter glances at the vain traditions received by Israel from their fathers, and which, while they were the sign of being really away from God, only carried them still further and further away. What, indeed, could all the frivolous and minute ordinances of the Rabbins make known to them of the God who was thus identified with all these narrow restrictions, laying upon men a burden that not any of them could lift? How gloriously has He been revealed in Him through whom now we have learnt, indeed, a God in whom we may trust—One to whom the whole history of the world points, and all God's dealings in it, now manifest in resurrection from the dead and with a place given Him of God, a blessed place, which identifies God Himself with the salvation and blessing of His people, so that faith and hope might not rest short of Him! How well we remember the aim of Christ continually thus to glorify the Father, speaking words given to Him, doing things appointed for Him, One who could say of Himself: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," Himself the visible expression of God, the radiance of His glory. Tradition cannot live in the presence of One thus positively known and enjoyed as a living God for the soul.

Div. 2.

We are still led on by the apostle to contemplate these New Testament relationships which are ours in still fuller contrast with those Old Testament ones now broken off. Between the new covenant and the old, all, as we know, is contrast; and the apostle now goes on to dwell upon that rejection of Christ as the Living Stone, the Foundation of all that abiding nearness to men which a house amongst men implies—a rejection which necessarily set aside the Jewish builders as entirely incompetent. But Israel had failed long before this, and even from the beginning, as their priesthood in one family only constantly bore

*It may be useful to point out the various judgments which God has or will exercise. First, the judgment of Christ upon the cross, in place of His people. Thus the believer shall never come into judgment (John v. 24). Second, and opposite to this, we have the judgment of the Great White Throne (Rev. xx. 11-15). This is the final doom of the lost. No saved ones shall stand before that throne. Third, the earth-judgment of the living nations (Matt. xxv. 31-46). This is prior to the Millennium, as the Great White Throne is after that reign of blessing and glory. While final in its nature, it is connected with the government of Christ in His earthly kingdom. Fourth, the judgment-seat of Christ (2 Cor. v. 10) where the *works* of the believer are tested and appraised. (See also 1 Cor. iii. 11-15). Lastly we have the Father's judgment of His children in this present life. Thus for the believer judgment for salvation is past forever; for the rewards it is still future; while during his whole present life he is under the Father's judgment.—S. R.

DIVISION 2. (Chaps. i. 22–ii. 10.)

New Testament relationships, in place of the Old Testament ones forfeited and broken off.

1 (22-25): Born again by the living and abiding Word.

1. SEEING ye have [a]purified your souls by obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, [b]love one another with a pure heart fervently,* having been [c]born again, not of corruptible seed, but of [d]incorruptible, by the word of God that liveth and abid-

a *cf.* Acts 15. 9.
b Jno. 13. 34, 35.
c Jno. 3. 3-8. *cf.* Jas. 1. 18.
d *cf.* vers. 4, 18. *cf.* ch. 3. 4. *cf.* Ps. 119. 89.

* Literally, "intensely."

witness. Instead of being nationally brought near to God, as He would have it and as His very speech with them at mount Sinai bore witness, they had chosen a place of distance from Him, and had to be left, as a consequence, in that place which they had chosen. God has now come in to fulfil all these things in a better and more perfect way.

1. The apostle first of all speaks here of the company into which faith introduces the soul. The only purification of it is "by obedience to the truth," a truth which disperses the shadows and sets aside all the perversions of the adversary and deceiver. Thus they had come into connection with those who had been begotten by the same truth, "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible," by the living and abiding word of God. Here, indeed, was a brotherhood which had never had in Israel—could not as yet have—its proper recognition. The children of God were by the legal system "scattered abroad." Even in Israel they were so; while, of course, outside of Israel there were still souls that sought God according to the light they had. Israel could not gather these. It was itself but a mixture of the true and the false, and thus it could not gather to itself the true out of the false. There was no power as yet for any proper discrimination. This is the misery of all mixtures, and which the confusion which obtains in Christendom at the present time should make us, indeed, realize. How blessed a company of those drawn together by ardent desire for the same things, by the enjoyment of the same blessings, by their allegiance to the same revelation, to God perfectly revealed as He is now revealed, so as to attract and fill the heart with Himself! Here love can indeed flow out. There is nothing to check it. There is no matter, so far as this character is retained, for selfish strife with one another. The objects enjoyed are the possession of all alike, and the enjoyment of them by one only enhances, and cannot hinder, the joy of others. Here, then, was indeed an essential difference between the company of Christians and the nation of Israel. We have gone back indeed, in various degrees, to that old company, as if, after all, we had tasted the new wine but to say, "the old is better." We have even taken, in measure at least, the Israelitish community (with, more or less, its ordinances as well) as that which God has designed for His people all the way through. We have introduced a fancied regeneration by baptism to manufacture fictitious children of God, who have none of the reality; and then we have invoked the judgment of charity not to distinguish between the manufactured Christians and the true ones! The effect has necessarily followed; and "because iniquity abounds" in consequence "the love of many," even among the true children of God, has "grown cold." There is a lack of communion amongst the people of God; for communion with the world is absolutely incompatible with this. The true birth,—as Peter shows us here,—the true entrance into the family, is by the reception of the living and abiding word of God,* "the word which by the gospel is proclaimed." There

* Let it be noted what light this verse throws upon the subject of new birth—it is "by the word of God." That it is a sovereign act of God, by His Spirit, none can question. But this verse forbids us from separating, as has sometimes been done, new birth from faith in the gospel. It has been taught that new birth *precedes* faith; here we are told that the word of God is the instrument in new birth. "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of

eth. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of it as the flower of grass. The grass hath [e]withered and the flower fallen, but the word* of the Lord [f]abideth forever; and this is the word* which by the [g]gospel is proclaimed to you.

2 (ii. 1-3): Grow up to salvation.

2. Wherefore, [h]laying aside all [i]malice and all [j]guile and [k]hypocrisies and [l]envyings and all [m]evil-speakings,† as new born [n]babes desire earnestly the pure [o]milk of the word,‡ that ye may [p]grow by it unto salvation, if ye have [q]tasted that the Lord is good.

* Literally, "saying"; ῥῆμα, not λόγος.

† Literally, "speaking against," not necessarily false—καταλαλία.

‡ "Of the word" is one adjective in the Greek—λογικὸν—sometimes rendered "reasonable" as in Rom. xii. 1.

e Is. 40. 6, 8. *f ctr.* Ps. 90. 5, 6. *g* Is. 40. 9. *cf.* Rom. 10. 14, 15, 17. *h* Jas. 1. 21. Heb. 12. 1. *i cf.* Lev. 19. 17, 18. *j cf.* ver. 22. *cf.* Eph. 4. 25. *k cf.* Rom. 12. 9. *l cf.* Gal. 5. 26. *m* Jas. 4. 11. *n cf.* Matt. 18. 3. with 1 Cor. 14. 20. *o ctr.* Heb. 5. 12, 13; *cf.* Ps. 119. 140; *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17. *p cf.* Col. 1. 6, 10; *cf.* Eph. 4. 13. *q* Ps. 34. 8; *cf.* Jno. 4. 14.

can be no possibility, one would say, of confounding this with any result whatever of an ordinance. Here alone is the secret of that which, as eternal life, abides. Those who receive it belong no more, in this way, to that flesh which "is as grass, and all the glory of it but as the flower of grass." That which is merely natural withers and its flower falls, "but the word of the Lord abideth forever." Thank God for Peter's testimony! Let those who profess so much obedience to Peter listen to it! They will find here not only an authoritative Word, but that which finds, most of all, its authority in the sweetness of the truth which is proclaimed. Born again by the gospel good-news, what gladness and happiness does this infer for the life into which we enter!*

2. The apostle goes on, therefore, to insist upon this word of God, to which we owe everything, as still being the essential need for us, that we may "grow up by it," as the expression is here, "unto salvation." It is a strange expression apparently, as we first think of it—a growth unto salvation; but the salvation here is, of course, that final salvation of which he has already spoken, as what is ready to be revealed in its fulness in the last time. There is a salvation which the gospel brings, and with which we begin; but salvation is needed also all along the road; and as long as we are in the body, by that very fact, we need salvation still. "We look for the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, who shall change our body of humiliation into the likeness of His own glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue even all things to Himself." But still, a *growth* unto salvation deserves serious consideration. *Growth* is that which is proper to life. The accretion of matter in a stone, for instance, is not "growth." Salvation, in the thought which we are getting of it here, is, in fact, more and more known as we grow in the apprehension of the things which are revealed to us, and which separate us more and more, therefore, from everything that is inconsistent with them. Thus, at the outset we are called to lay aside "all malice and all guile, and hypocrisies and envies and all evil-speakings"—things which cannot possibly consist with the enjoyment and pursuit of the truth; and we are always to be, as to the word of God, like babes just born, who crave, as the one thing necessary to them, the milk which God has provided

God," "the word which by the gospel is preached." Thus while we can *distinguish* between faith and new birth, we cannot *separate* them. John iii. 3; iii. 16, must ever go together. There is no such anomaly possible as a man born again, but who has not yet believed the gospel.—S. R.

* It is interesting to note the three "incorruptible" things we have in this first chapter—an incorruptible inheritance (ver. 4), an incorruptible redemption (vers. 18, 19), and an incorruptible word by which we are born (ver. 23). Thus we have a nature which is taintless, fitted for the enjoyment of a taintless inheritance and on the basis of a redemption which never can lose its value. How the stamp of eternal perfection is upon all, and what a fitting companion to these is that "incorruptible" ornament of a meek and quiet spirit (chap. iii. 4).—S. R.

3 (4-10): A spiritual house built on the risen Christ, and in Him a holy priesthood.

3. To whom coming, a [r]living stone, [s]rejected indeed by men, but [t]chosen of God, [u]precious, ye also as [v]living stones are being built up a spiritual [w]house,* a

* Some of the oldest MSS. insert "for."

r *cf.* Matt. 16. 16, 18. *cf.* ch. 1. 3. s John 1. 11. Acts 4. 11. t *cf.* Is. 42. 1. u *cf.* Phil. 2. 9, 10. v *cf.* Eph. 2. 20-22. w *cf.* Heb. 3. 6; *cf.* 1 Tim. 3. 15.

for them. Here we must remember that we are not in the line of that which Paul says to the Corinthians, where he reproaches them as being such that have need of milk only, in opposition to solid food. The Corinthians were babes indeed, but they were babes when they ought to have been far beyond this. They were babes because growth was stunted with them through their carnality. A *true* babe is not "carnal," and can never be; but here we are to be only in one character like babes, and, indeed, babes "new-born." Even the Corinthians were not babes "*new-born*." That was the evil of it, that they were babes that were *not* new-born; but we are to be always, "as new-born babes," just in the simplicity of our craving for that which as milk God has provided for us in His own precious Word, to sustain a growth which is continual in one who is the possessor of eternal life. While we are here, if Christians and in a right condition, we are continually growing. We have to grow up, all of us, "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Which of us has attained it? In this sense we are, after all, all of us but as babes "new-born;" and in this character God has provided for us, in His word, that which has all the elements proper for nourishment in it, as milk has. The Word, the whole of it, the deepest things in it, is thus pure milk, and only milk. There is nothing to be rejected; there is only that which enters into the constitution of the Christian—as we may say, becomes really part of himself. How beautiful in that way this figure of milk, and how earnest the craving which is here implied, and which we are exhorted to, for that which can thus minister to all the necessities of our nature! Let us desire it earnestly, says the apostle, if we have tasted that the Lord is good. *Have* we tasted this? If so, can we make light of the precious Word, which is indeed the provision which God has made, in His goodness, for our souls?*

3. We come now to that rejection of the Living Stone on the part of Israel, which disqualified them as the builders of God's spiritual house. It was about those who were prominently builders that the Lord spoke at the time of His last proffer of Himself to them as Israel's King, as well as of their foreseen rejection of it. In a matter of such fundamental importance it was necessary that God should have provided for His people the assurance of what was coming with regard to those to whom they looked as their spiritual guides. "The house of God" was that which distinguished Israel from all the nations of the earth. It was that dwelling-place of God with man which, although as yet only in type, declared the desire of His heart to be with man abidingly. Thus it was the place of that glory which, though already unseen by man, yet Ezekiel saw, as having lingered with them in love as long as possible, until finally forced out by their abominations. Yet their house, as we know, was not, after the manner in which the apostle speaks here, a "*spiritual* house." It was "a house made with hands," which could not, therefore, set forth God's design in the full way in which He desired. Forsaken of God, it became, like a vacant tomb, the witness only of the life which had departed. Yet God could not give up His thought.

* We are to "lay aside,"—as in Heb. xii., where it is the weights which would hinder progress,—what is contrary to the new nature we have received, and what unfits for the enjoyment of the mutual family relationships. Malice, guile, hypocrisy, envy, and evil-speaking all have reference to our attitude toward others and are the opposite of that "fervent love" already enjoined. It will be noted that they refer largely to the state of heart, rather than grosser forms of immorality. Alas, they are not upon the list of the world's forbidden things and are all too easily indulged in by the Lord's people, without their losing caste in society. Note also that "evil-speaking" is not necessarily wicked speech in the way of falsehood or profanity. It is really "speaking against," and refers to occupation with another's ways in a spirit that does not desire his help. This is most important for our conscience.—S. R.

holy [x]priesthood, to offer up spiritual [y]sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Because it is contained in the scripture: [z]Behold I lay in Zion a corner-stone, elect, precious, and he that believeth on him shall not be ashamed. To you, therefore, who believe, is the

x ver. 9. c/. Rev. 1. 6. c/. Ex. 19. 6. c/r. Ex. 20. 18-21.
y Heb. 13. 15, 16.
z Is. 28. 16. Rom. 9. 33.

Thus, He who came seeking God's treasure upon earth always proclaimed that house (though in the idea of it, not the then reality) His Father's house; and it was there that He presented Himself when He came as King to His own, and His own refused Him. It was then entirely *their own* house (Matt. xxiii. 38) which He had to leave desolate. But God had not given up His thought; and, driven back in His love, He only, according to His constant manner, declared that love, and the purpose of it, in a fuller way than ever. Thus the Lord could say to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will build it up; but He spake of the temple of His body." In Him was indeed the perfect Witness of what was in the divine heart, and that for man; and in Him God really possessed a dwelling-place among men that could not be set aside. He was indeed rejected, and as such went back to the Father; nevertheless, the divine thought was not thus frustrated, but as the fruit of His own work the Spirit of God came down upon earth to build a habitation for God which should never cease to be this. The house was now "a spiritual house." The Lord had spoken of it to Peter when He said that upon that Rock which Peter had confessed, He would build His assembly; but as yet the thought of a habitation of God could not come fully out. Peter now explains the Lord's word to him, as we see here, in the clearest way. He sets aside all possibility of men saying, with any real semblance of truth, that Peter was himself the foundation of what the Lord spoke. It is Christ, he says, who is the Living Stone, the Foundation upon whom alone the living stones (of whom was Peter himself, according to the meaning of his name) are built up. The living stones here are the assurance of the Lord's promise that the gates of Hades should not prevail against that which He would build. They live in a power of life which cannot be touched of death; and of Himself also was this true, who, if He went down into death, was only to lay there the foundation of all blessing, and to reveal in Himself that which abolished death and brought "life and incorruption to light through the gospel." Thus, the whole building stands upon this Foundation, which is that from the beginning, "chosen of God" as "precious," and now in the present time revealing, as the apostle says directly, its preciousness. The house is "a spiritual house," the fulfilment of the promise by the prophet: "I will dwell in them and walk in them:" the Spirit of God filling and energizing that in which He dwells, so that it is not a mere shrine of the Spirit, but itself a spiritual reality; and this connects, according to the thought which we have already traced in Hebrews (chap. iii.), of a "spiritual house," with a "holy priesthood." Here we have the activity of those brought near to God in this way. They are revealed as those who, while God manifests Himself in them, have themselves, as one may say, their faces Godward and in their hearts the Spirit of relationship—a holy priesthood, capable, therefore, of this, with spiritual sacrifices now replacing the sacrifices of old, acceptable to God by Him who has made, once for all, that which was the true sacrifice in atonement for sin. Thus, the altar stands only inside the house now, the antitype of that golden altar which was in Israel's sanctuary. The brazen altar has had its fulfilment, and has thus disappeared, while the power of that acceptable sacrifice, which abides ever in its value before God, is that by which all spiritual offerings alone become acceptable. The incense upon the unbloody altar is the witness of One come up out of death, who is before God for us, in whom we stand, and in whom all acceptance is. Here, says the apostle, is the fundamental fulfilment of that scripture, "Behold, I lay in Sion a corner Stone, elect, precious, and he that believeth on Him shall not be ashamed." But to the prophet was not revealed as yet the wondrous preciousness which belongs in its full value now to those who believe; and here is

[a] preciousness, but to the disobedient, the stone which the builders rejected, the same has become the [b] head of the corner,* and a stone of [c] stumbling and a rock of offence [to those who] stumble at the word, being [d] disobedient; to which also they were [e] appointed. But ye are a [f] chosen generation, a [g] royal priesthood, a [h] holy nation, a people for a [i] possession, that ye might [j] set forth the virtues of him who called you [k] out of darkness into his [l] marvelous light; who [m] once were not a people, but are now the people of God; who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

a *cf.* ch. 1.8. *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 16.
b Ps. 118.22. Matt.21.42.
c Is. 8. 14. Rom. 9. 32, 33.
d Eph. 2. 2. *ctr.*ch.1.14.
e *cf.*Rom. 9. 17, 22.
f *cf.*Eph.1.4.
g *cf.* Rev. 1. 6. *cf.* Is. 61. 6.
h *ctr.* Matt. 3. 7. *cf.* Is. 26. 2.
i *cf.*Tit.2.14.

* Or, "chief corner-stone."

j cf. Is.43.21. *k cf.* Col.1.13. *l cf.*1 Jno.1. 5-7. *m* Hos. 1. 6, 9, 10; Hos. 2. 23; *cf.* Rom. 9. 25, 26.

one of those things in which the prophets of old predicted, as Peter has just said to us, things that went beyond their own intelligence, and which they realized to have respect, in their full meaning, to others than themselves. Alas, to Israel, that Stone which the builders rejected, while it has become, indeed, "the Head of the corner," yet is but "a Stone of stumbling and a Rock of offence to those who stumble at the Word, being disobedient." This, too, had been appointed, for it followed of necessity from the very blessedness of that which was in it—grace revealed to a carnal people who had built themselves up in pride of heart against it. It was the necessary result, they being what they were, that they stumbled at the Word through the spirit of disobedience which was in their heart, and there was no help indeed if the very wonder of God's grace was that which made them stumble.*

The apostle returns from this to contemplate with satisfaction how God nevertheless has carried out His thoughts in a more wonderful way. They were themselves now the partakers of those blessings which God had proffered to Israel of old, but which had so manifestly been without avail for them. "Ye shall be to Me," He had said, "a kingdom of priests, a holy nation." It was necessary for them to be the latter in order to be the former. It was only in the white robe which typified the purity required by God that even the typical high priest could draw near to Him; but it was not therefore the *nation* that drew near. The nation and the priesthood became emphatically distinguished from one another, while the priest himself could no more really draw nigh. There was but the witness of that which was in God's thoughts, along with the witness that as yet it was not a practical reality. Now God has accomplished this. Christians have become this holy nation,—not one of the nations of the earth,—and a royal priesthood, more even than was offered to Israel—a people who are not only priests but kings, a people thus for God's possession, such as He can openly manifest as His and claim by the Spirit indwelling them, a people able to set forth the virtues of Him who has called them out of darkness into His own marvelous light—no earthly one, but the light of His own Presence revealed to those brought nigh. Here are those to whom the words of the prophet could be applied, a people "who once were not a people, but are now the people of God; who once had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." This does not, of course, set aside the application of such a promise to Israel themselves in days to come; but God has left in it a largeness which gives room for us also, who were indeed in God's thoughts before ever the earth was, and in whom God has, more than Israel themselves can ever manifest it, shown the unchanging character of His purpose.

* There is no thought in this of the unscriptural doctrine of reprobation, man's addition to God's precious truth of His election of His people. The ungodly are not appointed to be ungodly, but being ungodly God appointed that this should be fully manifest in their rejection of Christ. Thus Pharaoh (Rom. ix.) was "raised up," put upon the throne with opportunities for rejection of God's message, and of showing the wickedness and enmity that was always in his heart.—S. R.

DIVISION 3. (Chaps. ii. 11–iii. 9.)

The glorifying of God in the manifestation of the character of a people sanctified to Him.

1 (ii. 11-17): Obedience to God, entailing obedience to authorities and powers.

1 BELOVED, I [n]exhort [you] as [o]strangers and sojourners, to [p]abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul; having your [q]behaviour honest among the nations, that [as to that] in which they speak [r]falsely against you as evil doers, they may by the good works which they behold, glorify God in the [s]day of visitation. [t]Submit yourselves [therefore] * to every institution of man for the Lord's sake, whether unto

* Many omit.

[n] *cf.* Rom. 12. 1.
[o] *cf.* Heb. 11. 13.
[p] *cf.* Ex. 17. 7-9, etc, with Deut. 25. 17, 18. *cfr.* Phil. 3. 13, 14 with Gal. 5. 16-26.
[q] *cf.* Col. 4. 5, 6. *cf.* 2 Cor. 8. 21.
[r] ch. 3. 16, etc.
[s] *cf.* Lk. 19. 44.
[t] Tit. 3. 1, etc.

Div. 3.

We come now to the practical exhortations which naturally result from these, the witness that indeed this people, chosen of God, are chosen through sanctification of the Spirit to obedience. It is that which makes this third division take the place of what one would naturally think to be a fourth, but it is characteristic of the way in which Peter is speaking. As a people sanctified unto obedience, they are revealed in the obedience itself.

1. The apostle begins here by addressing himself to those who, he reminds them, are strangers and sojourners in another way now than as scattered from the land of Israel. They belong to *heaven*, and are therefore strangers and sojourners upon earth; strangers, in the first place, as those who have believed in a crucified Lord; to whom, therefore, the world is crucified by His cross. They are separate in spirit from those who have seen the Father in the Son of God, and have seen Him but to hate Him—strangers in heart, therefore. It is a joy for them to know that they are but sojourners in a world which has this character; and yet, alas, they find in themselves a link with that world from which they have turned. There is that in themselves which is against themselves, according to the character which they have embraced in heart and desire. Peter does not speak of the flesh itself as Paul does, but he realizes lusts which are fleshly—which can be, alas, so easily awakened even in the children of God when their eyes are turned, though but for a moment, from that glory of God to which they really belong, and which robs all other things of glory. These fleshly lusts, therefore, war against the soul. He does not bid us, let us remember, *war against* them, however. We may have, as we have seen abundantly elsewhere, to fight perforce such a battle when we have allowed ourselves to be entangled by things around, the eye affecting the heart; but that which he exhorts us to is to "abstain," to "hold off," from things like these, as those who have their portion elsewhere, a portion which they have only to enter into by the power of the Spirit of God to find it, in all its power, to satisfy the soul, and thus to deliver from all lusts that can arise.* Thus will those who are strangers and sojourners have witness from such as are outside of their own blessed hopes. Such may, indeed, falsely accuse them as evil-doers for the faith

* The Old Testament type illustrates this (Ex. xvii.). The flesh in the children of Israel leads them to murmur and complain because of the trials of their pilgrim way. *Then* came Amalek (fleshly lusts) and fought against them. We read too (Deut. xxv. 17, 18) that it was against the feeble laggards in the rear that Amalek fought. It is when we lose the vigor of our pilgrim character and begin to lag and falter that we are assailed by fleshly lust. Those who, like Paul, press on after what is before, have little trouble with the flesh, though they will have conflicts with Satan. Abraham in pilgrim isolation from Sodom has no conflict on his own account with the kings who have captured the laggard Lot, but he can and does go into a conflict with the enemy to rescue his kinsman. But the nature of the conflict is changed. It is one thing to fight fleshly lusts in ourselves, and quite another thing to deliver our brethren. The great remedy for such encounters as that of Ex. xvii. is to maintain our character as "strangers and pilgrims."—S. R.

the [u]king as supreme, or to rulers as sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and the praise of those who do well. For such is the will of God, that with [v]well doing ye put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; as [w]free, and not having liberty as a cloak of malice, but as bondmen of God. [x]Honor* all men; [y]love the brotherhood; [z]fear God, [a]honor the king.

u Rom.13.1, etc.
v *cf.* ver. 12. *cf.* Matt. 5. 14-16.
w Gal. 5. 13. *cf.* Jas.1.25.
x Rom.13.7.
y 1 Thess.4. 9, 10.
z Prov. 1. 7. Heb. 12.28.
a *cf.* Prov. 24. 21. *cf.* 1 Tim.2. 2.

*The first verb here is an aorist imperative, while the three following are present imperatives. The difference seems to be that the aorist speaks of a definite and finished act, the present of a constant continuous act. Thus honor is to be given to all, as occasion arises; but we are always to fear God, etc.

they have, and yet learn in the good works which faith produces, to glorify God in the day of their own visitation—in the time when sorrow and desolation come in upon their earthly hopes and enjoyments, and leave them just such wrecks as God's grace, nevertheless, delights to take up, the beggar from the dunghill to set him upon a throne of princes. Here is the mercy of God hidden in His very judgments themselves, which would thus turn men, as it were perforce, to Him who alone can help them, and conquer them by His goodness for Himself.

Christians are therefore to submit themselves to every institution of man for the Lord's sake. Peter points out, as Paul does, that the powers that be, whatever the character of those who may be holders of the power, are yet sent "for the punishment of evil-doers and the praise of those who do well." The mercy of being delivered in this way from the anarchy which would otherwise rule is a thing undoubted. Thus, it was the will of God that they should be subject in well doing, thus putting to silence the ignorance of foolish men; free indeed, not fettered by any constraint of this kind, while they recognized God's rule in all, most free when they were most fully the bondmen of God. Thus, also, they were to "honor all men," men as men, men in the character which God has given them as His creatures, men as the representatives of God on earth, however far they might in fact have departed from this. How important to realize this honor to be given to manhood, even in the most utterly reprobate, this respect to be shown to that which they themselves do not respect; and how helpful as a spirit of recovery, such as God would use us for, thus to own something in all to which we may appeal, and by which we may, through God's grace working in it, raise them above themselves! If they have fallen, in fact, to beasts, they yet are *not* beasts; and the very penalty which they bring upon themselves is itself a witness of the higher destiny for which God meant them, and of that in themselves against which they are thus sinning. It is striking that in the midst of such thoughts (and with what relief of heart it comes!) the apostle reminds us here that there is now in God's goodness a brotherhood among men, originally fallen from God as these, yet now where the affections may go freely forth, and where manhood rises up to that which was God's original thought for it! Yet here also, as we know, we may, and do, find contradictory things which make an exhortation to "love the brotherhood" not without meaning. We are not just to love our own particular friends among these, or those bound to us by any narrower ties, or even those who approve themselves by their ways, however much we are called to give these special recognition; yet we are to "love the brotherhood," the children of God as such. "If we love Him that begat, we shall love also those that are begotten of Him." But this is, as it were, a parenthesis in what is said here. The apostle returns to it to join together the fear of God and the honor due to the king. These two come, in fact, together. It is the fear of God which is shown in honoring those who are put in office by Him: "For the powers that be are ordained of God."*

*It may not be amiss to suggest how unfitting, in the light of this scripture, is all that spirit of criticism and disrespect of the rulers, which is so common to-day. To speak evil of dignities is now, as ever, disobedience to God, and shows the lack of His fear in the heart.—S. R.

2 (18-25): Servants exhorted by the Great Example of long-suffering patience.

2. [b]Servants,* be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the [c]froward. For this is acceptable,† if any one for conscience towards God endure griefs, [d]suffering wrongfully. For [e]what glory is it if, when ye sin, and are buffeted for [it] ye take it patiently? but if, when ye do well and suffer, ye [e]take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For unto this were ye [f]called, because Christ also [g]suffered for you, leaving you an [h]example that ye should follow his steps: who did no [i]sin, nor was [j]guile found in his mouth; who when [k]reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, [l]threatened not; but [m]committed [himself] to him who judgeth righteously; who himself [n]bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we [o]being dead unto sins should [p]live unto righteousness; by whose [q]stripes ye were healed. For ye were as [r]sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the [s]shepherd and overseer of your souls.

* οἰκέται, "domestics." † Literally, "grace," χάρις.

b Eph. 6. 5-8. Col. 3. 22-25. 1 Tim. 6. 1, 2. Tit. 2. 9-14. *c cf.* ch. 3. 1. *d cf.* ch. 3. 14, 17. *e cf.* ch. 4. 15, 16. *f cf.* ch. 3. 9. *cf.* Eph. 4. 1, 2. *g* ch. 3. 18. ch. 4. 1. Rom. 4. 25. *h cf.* Phil. 2. 5-8. *cf.* Matt. 11. 29. *i* Heb. 4. 15. *j* Is. 53. 9. *k cf.* Heb. 12. 3. *l cf.* Jno. 18. 22, 23. *cfr.* Acts 23. 3-5. *m cf.* Lk. 23. 34, 46. *cf.* Is. 50. 6-8. *n* Is. 53. 4-6. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 21. *o cf.* ch. 4. 1, 2; *cf.* Rom. 6. 2. *p cf.* Rom. 6. 11; *cf.* Col. 3. 1. *q* Is. 53. 5, 10. *r* Is. 53. 6; Jer. 50. 6, 17; *cf.* Lk. 15. 4-7. *s cf.* Jno. 10. 11, 14; *cf.* Ps. 23.

2. He now turns to those to whom the form which subjection takes, even to the will of God, has special trial in it. The more, even, the Christian was in character as that, the more would he need to be reminded to be subject to such masters as only the sin and evil in the world could have given; yet "with all fear," as we know by what has just been said—the fear of God, who is, after all, still suffering these things, and working out His own purposes through them all. Thus here, again, it was not a question of the character of the master; they were to be subject, "not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward," to reap a harvest of recompense by and by, when those who for conscience toward God, enduring grief, suffering wrongfully, shall find how acceptable it has been with Him. To be buffeted for one's faults and take it patiently, there could be little glorying in; but to do well and suffer, this is the practical Christian character in a world like this, which, the more adverse the circumstances, only finds the more the means of manifestation and development. Here they could find the highest Example: "That ye should follow His steps." With Him there was nothing for which on His own account He could suffer. Yet how absolute was His subjection to this will of God: reviled, He reviled not; suffering, He threatened not, leaving it all to Him who is the righteous Judge of all, and Himself bearing the penalty of our sins upon the tree, that we should not bear them, that His death might be, by the power of it in our hearts also, our own death to sins, and the energy of a life now lived to righteousness. Let us notice that we have not here the doctrine of the apostle Paul that we are "dead to sin" by the cross. Here it is "to sins," the practical renunciation of our own wills and ways. It is not relief for the conscience that he is thinking of, as Paul in Romans, but of that which appeals to the heart. How is it possible to go on in the sins which the Lord bore upon the tree? Always in Scripture it is "upon the tree," this sin-bearing on His part, not in the blessed life in which He lived in the open favor of God, but at that exceptional time, contrasted in character, when He of whom He had testified, "Thou hearest Me always," was one of whom He had to say for the moment, "Thou hearest *not*." It is strange indeed that there should be need even to emphasize the contrast that there is between these two conditions, and that the true character of the cross should thus be hidden from any of those who owe their all to it. By these stripes we were healed. He does not now say "saved," for he is in another line of thought, as is evident.

3 (iii.1-7): The sanctification of marriage.

3. In like manner, ye [t]wives, be subject to your own husbands; that, even if any obey not the word, they may, [u]without the word, be gained by the behavior of their wives, beholding your chaste behavior [coupled] with fear; whose [v]adorning let it not be that outward one of braiding the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel, but the hidden man of the heart in the [w]incorruptible [ornament] of a [x]meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner heretofore the [y]holy women who trusted in God adorned themselves, being subject to their own husbands, as [z]Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord; whose [a]children ye are in doing well* and not being [b]afraid with any terror. In like manner, ye [c]husbands, dwell with [them] according to knowledge, giving honor unto the woman† as unto the [d]weaker vessel, as being also [e]joint heirs of the grace of life, that your prayers be not [f]hindered.

* Or, "If ye do" etc.

† This might be rendered, as by some, "Dwell with [them] according to knowledge, as with a weaker, a female, vessel, giving them honor, etc."

t Eph. 5. 22, 33. Col. 3. 18.
cf. 1 Tim. 2. 11-14.
u cf. 1 Cor. 7. 14, 16.
v cf. 1 Tim. 2. 9, 10.
ctr. Is. 3. 18-23. cf. Lk. 15. 22.
w cf. ch. 1. 4, 18, 19, 23. cf. Jas. 5. 2. cf. Matt. 6. 19-21.
x cf. Matt. 11. 29, 30. cf. Lk. 10. 39-42.
y cf. Heb. 11. 11. cf. Gen. 24. 65.
z cf. Gen. 18. 12.
a cf. Gal. 3. 7.
b cf. Prov. 3. 25, 26. cf. ver. 14.
ctr. Gen. 12. 11-13.
c Eph. 5. 25-31; Col. 3. 19.
d cf. 1 Cor. 11. 3-15; cf. Gen. 2. 18, 23.
e ctr. 2 Cor. 6. 14.
f cf. Eph. 4. 30-32 with Jude. 20.

The healing connects itself with the return on the part of sheep, once going astray, to the Shepherd and Overseer of their souls. There may be here, and seems surely to be, a reference to the condition of those whom he is specially addressing, Israelites, and as such belonging normally to the flock of God, yet rebellious and having wandered from Himself; now, won by His grace, returned to Him who has manifested Himself as the true Shepherd laying down His life for the sheep, as such is now their Leader and Guide, the Ruler of their souls.

3. The apostle turns now to consider the sanctification of marriage. It is plain that sanctification is his theme throughout; that is to say, the being set apart to God, which is what he dwells upon here as that which was to characterize the wives, even as to their dress. Their adorning was not to be for the eyes of men, not even for those of their husbands in the first place; where the braiding of hair or wearing of gold or putting on of apparel might all be in place according to the character of those to whom they were united;* but it is to *God* that they are set apart, therefore in that which is really in itself hidden from man, the hidden man of the heart, but which was to be manifest in "a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price." This indeed it is that is to act upon their partners in life, where these might be themselves unsubject to the Word—might even refuse to listen to it; so that without the Word the behavior of their wives must speak to them. Here, surely, the husbands are in view for spiritual benefit in beholding the effect of the Word upon those so near to them —a behaviour in the fear of God, not, as he cautions afterwards, in any terror of another kind; while, nevertheless, they were to be subject to their husbands in this way as Sarah obeyed Abraham; whose children* they would be in doing

* While this does not emphasize the manner of dress of the Christian woman, but rather draws attention to their true adornment, it does show how inconsistent with their calling is that worldly conformity in dress and adornment which is the common snare of women in the world. The dress of the Christian woman, as all else, should speak of nothing inconsistent with her heavenly and separate character. The very fact that we are not under law should constrain us to more simple obedience. On the other hand, shabbiness or carelessness in dress will never commend the truth.—S. R.

* Daughters of Sarah—children of Abraham. The one by a spirit of subjection, the other by faith in God. May the saints be marked by the dignity of both relationships.—S. R.

4 (8, 9): General behaviour.

4. Finally, be all of [g]one mind, [h]sympathetic, full of [i]brotherly love, [j]tender-hearted, [k]humble minded, not [l]rendering evil for evil or railing for railing, but on the contrary, [m]blessing; because ye have been hereunto called, that ye should [n]inherit a blessing.

DIVISION 4. (Chaps. iii. 10–iv. 6.)

The world-trial, and the trial in the world.

1 (iii. 10-16): Righteousness in harmony with the government of God; and yet also with suffering for it.

1. FOR [o]he that will love life and see good days, let him refrain his [p]tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile; let him turn away from evil and [q]do good; let him seek [r]peace and pursue it; for the

g cf. 1 Cor. 1. 10.
h Rom. 12. 15, 16. *cf.* Heb. 4. 15 with Jno. 11. 35.
i ch. 1. 22.
j Col. 3. 13.
k Col. 3. 12. *cf.* Acts 20. 19.
l Rom. 12. 17.
m Matt. 5. 44-48. Lk. 6. 28.
n cf. Eph. 1. 3 with ch. 1. 4.
o Ps. 34. 12-16. *p cf.* Jas. 3. 5, etc. *q cf.* Gal. 6. 10. *r cf.* Rom. 12. 18.

well. We can see how thoroughly sanctification is the key-note here. As to the husbands, he has but a word for them—that they, for their part, dwell with their wives according to the knowledge of the relationship, as God had instituted it, giving honor to the woman on the very account of her being the weaker naturally.* This is indeed what God has ordained as one of those countless ways by which He would make our dependence upon one another the means of drawing out the love to minister to the need, and thus giving blessing on both sides. But there was a higher relationship which they were not to forget: they were also joint-heirs of the grace of life, with a common dependence upon Another, which prayer expresses; and their prayers must not be hindered.

4. We have now a closing word of a very general character. All were to be of one mind. This will, of course, for Christians, mean everything, for they can only be truly of one mind as that mind is the mind of Christ. If it be not that, they will be in conflict with themselves as well as with one another. They were to be sympathetic, feeling the joys and sorrows and prompt to meet the needs of others; full of brotherly love, tender-hearted, humble-minded, or there could be no spirit of service; and in the consciousness of that blessing which they had been called to inherit they would render no evil recompense for evil which, after all, whatever the intention, could not be really done them, God working it all for good. In all this we are reminded how we are called to live in the fulness of the portion which God has given us, and that this is really competence for all things.

Div. 4.

We come now to relationship to the scene around, a world which is against God, therefore against us, and which is going on to judgment at His hands. God reigns of necessity, for no opposition can displace Him; and the righteous, as those in harmony with the government of God, have the happiness of this. Yet, spite of all, the Lord's words remain: "In the world ye shall have tribulation." That is fully realized here: the very character which is acceptable to God, and bringing blessing from His hand, nevertheless being that which may, and naturally will, bring in the trial. Faith is continually needed for the realization that, after all, God reigns, and that nothing escapes from His control. The very need of patience, as another apostle has told us, is that which works in us a spirit of quiet subjection to Another's will, and which leads into the experience of how good is that will. And thus, instead of despair in looking around upon a scene of conflict and evil, it works in us hope.

1. We have here, first, the fact that under such a government as that of God

* "The weaker vessel" does not surely mean "the lower vessel" to be treated with kindly contempt, for the text teaches just the opposite. Nor is it the weaker morally, but the more fragile, with less strength and therefore requiring care, love, and protection. It suggests the dependent position of the woman, which when forgotten leads her and the man astray, as in the case of Eve.—S. R.

[s] eyes of the Lord are on* the righteous, and his [t] ears unto their supplication; but the [u] face of the Lord is against* them that do evil. And who shall [v] harm you, if ye be zealous of that which is good? But and if ye [w] suffer for righteousness' sake, blessed are ye; and [x] fear not their fear, neither be troubled, but sanctify the Lord Christ in your hearts, and be always prepared to give an [y] answer to every one that asketh you to give account of the hope that is in you, [but]† with [z] meekness and fear, having a [a] good conscience, that wherein they speak against you as evil doers, they may be [b] ashamed who revile your good behavior in Christ.

* The same preposition in each case, the connection shows the meaning.
† Some omit.

[s] Ps. 33. 18.
[t] Ps. 34. 6.
[u] cf. Am. 9. 4.
[v] cf. Prov. 16. 7.
[w] ch. 2. 20. cf. Lk. 23. 40, 41.
[x] Is. 8. 12, 13. cf. Matt. 10. 28.
[y] Col. 4. 6. cf. Prov. 15. 23, 28.
[z] cf. 2 Tim. 2. 23–25.
[a] cf. Heb. 13. 18.
[b] cf. Lk. 13. 17.

righteousness must of necessity be a requisite for blessing. If we love life and would see good days, then we must refrain the tongue from evil, and the lips, that they speak no guile; we must turn from evil, and do good; seeking peace with all, as followers of the Prince of Peace; for "the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears open continually to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." We are never, therefore, to pursue a policy of adaptation to our surroundings. We are never forced to yield because of the dominance of evil. "Who shall harm you," he asks, "if ye have become zealous of that which is good?" But at once this seems to be contrary to the fact, not, of course, of God governing, but of the world being what it is. The world may indeed accept much of what is good because of the consequences of it. Men would sooner be served by those who would conscientiously serve them than by such as would serve themselves at their expense;* but then, on the other hand, if they are going to be consistently righteous all the way through, when this righteousness may cause the interests of an employer, for instance, to suffer, this, it is plain, will not be so acceptable; and thus, we must be prepared, after all, to suffer for righteousness' sake. The apostle looks this full in the face. He asks, as it were: is this, then, in reality an exception to the rule that none shall harm those earnestly seeking good? He answers, no, it is no exception. It is in reality only blessing. "If ye suffer for righteousness' sake, blessed are ye." There may be, of course, the sacrifice of that which, after all, is not our portion, but only, in that way, an increase, in fact, of that which is our portion. Thus there is no loss, there is gain. We lose the temporal to gain the eternal; with the continual ministry of God also to us, and His care over us all the way through, so that we need not fear the fear of other men, nor be troubled about results as they are. We have only in our hearts to sanctify the Lord whom we serve—to take care that His name and His service are not dishonored in us; and thus we shall be sustained by that strong hand which already rules upon the Father's throne: for God has "translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love." Here we have a hope which brightens everything, a hope that can give account of itself, a hope that we can cheerfully give account of to others, and yet in the spirit of meekness and fear as always; of course, a fear not of men, but of God; walking under the control of this, having a good conscience. The very thing for which they revile us as evil-doers shall testify in their own consciences in spite of all, and put to silence the revilers.

* Thus it is said of our Lord that He "increased . . . in favor with God and man," and of the early Christians that they were "praising God and having favor with all the people." So in the Old Testament, we are told if a man's ways please the Lord He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him. The preferment of Joseph and Daniel shows how acceptable the people of God are to the extent that they do not run counter to the will of man; and the persecution of both indicates the inevitable suffering for righteousness' sake. One day, even on earth, it will be true without qualification that righteousness only brings a reward.—S. R.

2 (17-22): The few saved at the flood, the many perishing; baptism a like figure of salvation.

2. For it is [c]better, if the will of God should so will, that ye suffer for well-doing, than for evil-doing; because Christ also hath [d]once suffered* for sins, the [e]just for the unjust, that he might [f]bring us to God, being put

[c] ch. 2. 20. [d] cf. Heb. 9. 12, 26, 28. [e] 2 Cor. 5. 21. ch. 1. 19. [f] cf. Eph. 2. 13.

* The weight of authority gives "died," but, there is also good evidence for "suffered" which is more suitable to the context. The words are quite similar in Greek.

2. This, then, is the world through which we pass It is the world of the Cross; and by this we are crucified to it, and it to us. We must make up our minds, then, to suffer whatever God may please to permit, only to take care that it is suffering for well-doing, and not for evil-doing. The suffering for evil, as far as we are concerned, has been taken for us by Another, as the apostle reminds us. *He* has suffered for sins, the load which we laid upon Him, and from which we must now ourselves walk free. For us, as God would have it, there is to be no suffering for sins any more; which yet, in the government of God upon earth, may be, and will be, if we are not walking according to God; but what shame and dishonor to Him who has delivered us, and given us another character, as those washed in His blood and renewed by His Spirit!

There follows here a passage which has been the subject of much controversy, and which we must therefore consider the more carefully. It has been thought by many (and perhaps this is increasingly the view taken in the present day) that it speaks of a salvation-work going on among the dead as well as among the living, which Christ began Himself by preaching in Hades to the spirits there. Nor need it be denied that there are expressions which, at least at first sight, seem to favor this. We are assured, nevertheless, that it is only a doctrine caught at which prevents any one from seeing what it so plainly says; and as this is now, to a large mass of Christians, the removal of a difficulty instead of the creation of one, we can well understand the keenness with which such a meaning is contended for. "Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in Spirit,"—in His human spirit, as they infer,—in this spirit (disembodied) He went and preached to spirits in prison, disembodied also. These, too, we are to notice, are a special class, suggesting and meeting a great difficulty. In the judgment of the flood in Noah's days, the whole population of the earth, except eight persons, were at once swept away in what might seem to be hopeless condemnation. How good, it is urged, to have a ray of light thrown upon this by such a text as the present: these hapless ones given to us as an express example of God's care for those dying without salvation, and yet, it might be, susceptible of it! May we not accept this as being help provided for us by God Himself with regard to that which must be felt by every one as a mystery of His ways? What is to become of the masses who have never heard the gospel? Are they to be all looked upon as involved in a common ruin, even although Christ died for sinners, and there is in His death the amplest provision made for all the world?

We must treat, therefore, this question seriously, as it deserves; but it is plain that there is danger of seizing upon a false hope just in proportion to its very attractiveness. Moreover, a hope of this kind may be practically more hurtful than the gloomiest view of that which (unless the text before us shall speak plainly about it) has certainly been left in obscurity. In a world like this, where, confessedly, men are not ready to accept that which God has at such a cost provided for them, and which is in itself so infinite a blessing, it may be dangerous enough to give men a hope—if it be not well justified—of an "accepted time" which is *not* the present time, and in which too, one would say, those to whom the gospel would then be preached would have much more favorable circumstances for hearing it, a much more decisive call for its acceptance, than anything which could be given here. In this case, one must say that "the day of salvation," for the mass, is really not the present time at all, as Scripture declares it to be, but the time when, life here ended, all the seductions

to [g]death in flesh but [h]quickened by [the] Spirit, in which also he went and [i]preached* to the spirits in

[g] cf. 2 Cor. 13. 4.
[h] cf. Rom. 1. 4.
[i] cf. Gen. 6. 3 with ch. 1. 11.

* A different word from chap. iv. 6. Here it is "heralded"; there "evangelized."

of the world and sense ended forever, the blessing would have nothing to counterbalance it in the thoughts of those already shut up, as here expressed, "in prison," looking for final judgment only. It will be said, of course, that it is only of those who have not had the gospel preached to them in this life that hope is given; but what, in fact, are we to understand by this? Where are we to draw the line between those who have really heard and those that have not heard the gospel? How many, even in the present day, have but distortions of the gospel preached to them instead of the reality? How many are hindered by the circumstances in which they are from any serious consideration of the gospel when it is preached? How many ears are practically stopped by that of which the apostle could speak as "the ignorance of unbelief"? If all are to be put in any wise upon an equal footing in this respect, who is there that at the present time could be considered as just upon an equal footing with those to whom the gospel, as it is claimed, will come with all the brightness of a light from heaven, cast, as it were, into the very darkness of the antechamber of hell? How simple for souls to say, We, at least, have never been given such a chance as this, and to encourage themselves with an expectation of more favorable circumstances, in which they, too, may be led to receive a gospel which will then have no drawback or abatement of it whatever.

Thus, surely, we are bound by our very love to souls to examine seriously what such a text as this may afford us in the way of hope such as is claimed for it. We are not, indeed, on that account to refuse it if it be of God; but we are surely to beware of the natural readiness to accept that which gives the cheeriest view of life that can be, and brings its cheer even from the dark prison of the dead itself. Let us look, then, at what we have here, word for word, as the pen of inspiration puts it before us.

"Christ," it is said, "once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in flesh, but quickened by (or in) Spirit." There is no preposition in either case, but we have to supply it. It is urged, and it would seem rightly, that the dative case here, in which we find both "flesh" and "Spirit," has, in fact, the force of an adverb: so that we might put it—however bad the English—as "fleshwise" and "Spirit-wise." Christ was put to death fleshwise; that is, as regards the flesh. Death, in fact, could only affect that; it had no further power over Him, who, when He died, died with the blessed assurance for us, "It is finished," as He committed His spirit to the Father.

There is no difficulty so far; but, "quickened Spirit-wise:" what shall we say of that? In the first place, what does "quickened" mean in itself? It should be plain that it is in sharpest contrast with being put to death, and that it means, in opposition to it, "being brought to life." It cannot have the force of "*preserved* alive," as some would make it: the word is never used in such a sense. But then it is the One who was put to death who was made alive, and, one would say, *could only be "made alive" in regard to that as to which death had come in.* Thus, if He was put to death in flesh, He must be quickened as regards that which suffered death. If it were in His flesh He was put to death, His flesh must be quickened. In that case there can be no question that it is resurrection that is spoken of here. It is not in this case the intermediate state that is before us, but the resurrection.

But how are we to understand, then, "Spirit-wise"? Is it His own personal spirit that is implied? or is it, on the other hand, the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit? It is plain that the Spirit of God is put commonly in contrast with the flesh, and it should be plain that the Spirit here is not Christ's human spirit,

prison, who beforetime were disobedient when the long-suffering of God waited in the /days of Noah, | /cf. Lk. 17. 26, 27.

which could not be, in accordance with Scripture, spoken of as quickening the body. It is not by the human spirit that the body is raised. By some, the Spirit is interpreted as meaning here His deity, in contrast with His humanity; but there is no instance in Scripture, that one can find, of Christ's deity being called His spirit. The Spirit of Christ, as we have it in the second epistle, as found in the prophets, is the Holy Spirit, not the divine Person of Christ. It is the same, of course, in the eighth of Romans, where the apostle declares that "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." We have, also, in the first chapter of Romans, what might seem to be a similar antithesis, where it is said that the Son of God is come of David's seed "according to flesh," but "marked out the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection of the dead." "According to flesh" and "according to Spirit" are here in clear contrast, and the Spirit is, without controversy, the Spirit of God, and not the deity of Christ. Here, too, the expression is used in connection with resurrection, although it is true that the resurrection *of* the dead does not speak simply of His own resurrection, but would include, according to the plain force of the words, the resurrection, for instance, of Lazarus, which certainly marked Him out as "Son of God in power," and was declared by Himself to do so. This does not exclude His own resurrection, however; which, in fact, was that which most fully marked Him out in this way, as is plain. We have, therefore, on the whole, in this passage in Romans, that which may throw light upon what is before us here in Peter. The One who has come as David's Seed according to flesh is clearly spoken of in such terms as Israel's Messiah, and in connection therefore with Jewish promises. The apostle, speaking for us as Christians, says in this way, in the fifth chapter of the second of Corinthians, that "if we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no more." Christ in resurrection begins for us, as is plain, that new creation to which we in Him belong; and thus we can see here, where the apostle is writing to the Jewish saints of the dispersion, that Christ was put to death in the flesh, the end of Jewish hopes naturally for those who had thus rejected their Messiah. These are, as the apostle has said in the opening of his epistle, only "begotten again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead." The words, therefore, would have a special force here if "quickened Spirit-wise" speaks, in fact, of resurrection. In this way, "Spirit-wise" would be equivalent to "quickened by the Spirit." "In Spirit" would have no force at all; nor, as to the Lord's human spirit, could "quickened" in the sense of "made alive" apply at all.

So far, then, we have nothing that would naturally lead us to think here of the Lord as in the intermediate state in Hades. Had this stood alone, it seems most certain that no one would have dreamt of applying the words to this; but we have now what is evidently a supplementary statement: "In which, *also*, He went and preached to the spirits in prison." That "also" shows plainly the supplementary, or parenthetical, character of the statement; and if it be not the Lord's human spirit which is spoken of in what immediately precedes, then, of necessity, it is not His human spirit here. Thus we have no option, as it would seem, but to refer it to the Spirit of God. The statement then will be that "by the Spirit He went and preached to the spirits in prison," and this is not in any wise in *direct* connection with His quickening by the Spirit. It by no means necessarily follows this: it may equally precede it.

But "He went and preached to the spirits in prison." This is dwelt upon to show that it was an actual journey, as it were, made by the spirit, the human spirit of Christ. We have already seen that it cannot be this human spirit, unless His human spirit could have died. There could be no quickening apart from this; but it is well known that we have a similar phraseology in the second chapter of Ephesians, where the apostle speaks of Christ having slain the enmity

while the ark was preparing; in which [k]few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water; which [l]figure

[k] Gen. 7. 7. *cf.* Matt. 7. 13, 14.
[l] *cf.* Matt. 3. 11; *cf.* Acts 22. 16.

by His cross, and then coming and preaching the glad tidings to those afar off and to those nigh, that is, to Gentiles and Jews alike. Here there can be really no question of a journey of the man Christ Jesus, and it is surely by the Spirit that this preaching took place: the apostles and other ministers of the gospel being the instrument of it, as Mark represents them going forth and preaching everywhere, "the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." The *coming* and preaching in this case speaks evidently of the *heart in the message*. The Spirit comes, and in Him Christ comes. The Spirit comes as the direct fruit of His work, and to make it good in the souls of men. Thus the divine heart is emphasized by the expression "He came and preached." In that sense He is never absent now, but His words are fulfilled: "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age;" but we do not apprehend any personal human presence in this. The same urgency may surely, therefore, be intended here when we find that "He went and preached to the spirits in prison."

But does it not say, at least, that it was to those already spirits, (that is, having passed out of the body,) that He preached; and to these as in prison also, awaiting judgment? Thus, are we not brought back to the necessity of this being a work of the Lord, whether personally or by the Spirit, among those in the separate state? Here we must notice that it is a distinct class of these, at any rate, that is brought before us. It is simply the class of those who beforetime "were disobedient, when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing." This is, we are told, but a special example of those to whom He preached, noteworthy in illustrating the difficulty of conceiving the wholesale condemnation of the world at that time, whatever may have been the state of individual souls. But let us note carefully that there is, in fact, nothing but a more or less conjectural help as to the difficulty. It is well known that some who take all this as applying to the Lord's preaching in Hades in the separate state, nevertheless deny any evangelism in it, or any evangelic result therefore. Plainly, nothing is stated with regard to this in the passage. We may import it into it, but that is all that we can do; and there seems at the first glance even an opposition to this in the fact of there being dwelt upon that longsuffering of God which waited in the days of Noah. We have in Genesis, as we know, the specific statement that it was for 120 years. All that time the ark was preparing before eyes that must have looked on with wonder certainly, whatever might have been the incredulity of the spectators. Such a thing would necessarily make a noise, and Noah, in the life he lived amongst men, as the history has shown it to us, was one whose conduct in this respect was likely to make it still more a wonder. It is curiously said that we have no hint of any actual preaching upon Noah's part.* What hint have we, on the other hand, of any evangelization, or its happy effects, among the spirits in prison? Noah most certainly preached in the very preparation of the ark itself, the most effectual witness of his faith in the judgment coming; and the explanation of this, of what he was looking for, could not possibly be hidden. Here, the dwelling upon the longsuffering of God while that open testimony lasted—120 years—is certainly not favorable to the thought of a preaching to these selfsame persons as spirits afterwards, when all that time the longsuffering had proved vain. Moreover, as has often been noticed, it is striking that it is exactly as to this generation of men that God's own words are on record: "My Spirit shall *not* always strive with man, for that he also is flesh." Thus Scripture seems to bear witness of its prophetic character in the anticipation of ques-

* Besides, we are told in 2 Peter ii. 5, that Noah was "a preacher of righteousness." Moreover, there is no record of Enoch's preaching in the Old Testament, but which is given in the epistle of Jude.—S. R.

doth also now save you, [even] baptism, (not the [m]putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the request as before God of a [n]good conscience,) by the [o]resurrection

[m] *cf.* Heb. 9. 13.
[n] *cf.* Acts 10. 47, 48.
[o] Rom. 4. 25. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 17; *cf.* Col. 2. 12.

tions that might arise with regard to this judgment of a whole generation. Moreover, while the general result is stated to have been in their case only disobedience and ensuing judgment, nevertheless this in no wise necessitates the thought of there having been no escape from eternal judgment in souls brought to repentance even when the flood had already begun. We are certainly not obliged to add to the difficulties here by making the judgment itself as harsh as possible, when the Spirit of God emphasizes in this very case God's longsuffering. To suppose that, after all, that Spirit that would not always strive with men was to strive effectually after the judgment itself had shut them up in prison, is surely contrary to the whole character of what is here. "The spirits in prison" were there as having been disobedient when the longsuffering of God waited upon them in the days of Noah. That is undeniably the case. They were "spirits in prison" as the fruit of that disobedience. Does it follow that the preaching was to them when in this condition? or does the apostle speak of a class, *now* "spirits in prison," who were disobedient to the preaching of the Spirit in the days of flesh? It is most certain, at least, that they were that; and the vivid way in which the apostle speaks here is suited to emphasize the effects of that preaching, they having been disobedient.

Thus, unless there is a clear reference to the Lord as in the disembodied condition, we have really no ground for thinking of this as any preaching of the gospel at all; but we have already seen that the preceding words do not, and can not, refer to the disembodied state, except upon the principle that we can make "quickening" to be either "preserving alive," or believe that the human spirit of Christ had need to be quickened after death. We can understand, therefore, why this going and preaching is given us as a supplementary statement to what went before. This former preaching was by the Spirit of Christ, thus by Christ Himself; the Spirit of Christ being, as we have seen, that which the apostle elsewhere speaks of as having been in the Old Testament prophets. It is thus the style of the epistle. But all this clearly adds emphasis to the fact that, after all, only "few, that is, eight souls were saved through water:" the very judgment upon the world becoming in this way the means of salvation from it to those who escaped. They were saved through water, the water itself bearing up the ark so that it should escape the judgment; and the apostle immediately goes on to apply this when he says: "Which figure (or like figure) doth also now save you."

It is plain that, in some way or other, baptism is given us as a like figure to the flood. The word used for "figure" is "antitype," which has caused many to think of baptism being the *antitype* of that of which the apostle has spoken; but there is here put upon the word a meaning which, according to Scripture, it does not have. We have the same word in the epistle to the Hebrews, (and there alone in the New Testament,) where the apostle speaks of the things in the earthly tabernacle being the "figures of the true" (Heb. ix. 24). Antitypes in the common sense they certainly could not be: it would be the most perfect inversion of the truth conceivable; and it would be equally contrary to the language of Scripture to speak of baptism as an antitype at all. One can understand, of course, the force of it for those who believe in ritualistic views of sacraments; but we need not enter into this here. The word is clearly, as in Hebrews, "figure," or, more fully and literally, "answering figure," which the common version gives as "like figure." The simple force seems to be a figure answering to the facts, and thus we can understand how the apostle should say that baptism (as such a figure) "saves." It is an expression of that which, as a corresponding reality in the soul, *does* save. We have seen the doctrine of this already in the sixth of Romans. It is noticeable that as the apostle was one of

3 (Iv.1-6): The transformation wrought by the gospel to a life in the Spirit.

of Jesus Christ, who has gone into [p]heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being subjected unto him.

3. Forasmuch, then, as Christ hath [q]suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the [r]same mind;

p Heb. 1. 3. *cf.* Eph. 1. 20-22.
q ch. 3. 18. *cf.* Matt. 16. 21.
r *cf.* Phil. 2. 5. *cf.* Eph. 6. 13.

that primal company of Christians who, notably, never were baptized with Christian baptism at all,—so far as any record shows (and thus would be in a sad condition if baptism were ordained for that which ritualism assigns to it,) he says: "doth now save *you*." He cannot say "us" in this way. He is careful also to add, parenthetically, that baptism is not (what could be the only effect of the water) "the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the request as before God of a good conscience." Notice that he has no idea of any effect of water but that of "putting away of the filth of the flesh." He has no mystic conception of water, by any possible consecration of it, affecting the soul. Meaning it has, of course, and an important place when this meaning is realized.

This, also, has been obscured by the mistranslation of what follows as "the *answer* of a good conscience before God." It is quite plain, according to what we have seen in Romans, that the "answer" of a good conscience it cannot possibly signify. People are baptized "*to* Christ." Baptism is a gospel type, and men come to it, therefore, as confessed sinners, to meet Christ in the value of His work for them. Thus "the request of a good conscience" can be clearly understood. The conscience is made good as the result of this work of Christ, and it is this that is ideally sought in baptism. It is found, in fact, not by the baptism itself, which is only burial, the sentence of death upon the sinner carried out, thoroughly, (although in the faith that Christ has died for sinners,) but thus that good conscience itself is obtained by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the witness of the acceptance of His work, a glorious and perfect one of Him "who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being subjected unto Him."

Yet the One thus accepted of God is still the rejected of man, and thus we can see how forceful is the statement of the apostle with regard to that old world swept away by the flood, and the connection of that baptism by which we enter openly into the place of Christian disciples with the judgment of man which received in that flood a statement so terribly emphatic. If question arises in the hearts of those still going through a world which rejects even the precious gospel of grace now, how forcible is the admonition of that previous rejection of God's longsuffering witness 120 years before the judgment came! The force of this is entirely done away by the thought of any preaching after death to spirits in prison. The whole is here in perfect consistency with itself when we take it as a warning corresponding to that which the Lord has given of the times that would precede His coming in judgment, as days which would be like those of Noah. That coming was, as we know, continually before the eyes of Christians at this time; they had not learned, as so many have since, to put it off into a far-off distance; and thus the apostle's words would have here the fullest possible significance.

3. But the apostle has more to say to us with regard to these matters, when he exhorts Christians that, as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, we should arm ourselves with the same mind; "for he that hath suffered in the flesh," he adds, "hath ceased from sin." Christ suffered the contradiction of sinners against Himself. He "suffered" only, did not, and could not, yield to it. He suffered to death itself, by death passing out of the whole scene in which this contradiction was realized. The conflict for Him was over. He had ceased from it. For us, also, that death of Christ apprehended by faith is the ceasing from sin, although, necessarily, in a different way from what it was with Him.* We

* To yield to sin, to go along with the world, is *not* to suffer. It is the resistance to this pressure that entails the suffering, and that insures the freedom, practically, from the sin. This is most important, in a day of laxity and worldly conformity like the present.—S. R.

for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath [s]ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. For the [t]time past may suffice to have wrought the will of the [u]Gentiles, walking in lasciviousness, lusts, wine-bibbings, revelings, carousings, and abominable idolatries, wherein they think it [v]strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of profligacy, [w]speaking evil [of you]; who shall give account to him who is [x]ready to judge the living and the dead. For to this end was the [y]gospel preached also to the dead, that they might be judged as regards [z]men after the flesh, but live [a]according to God in the Spirit.

s *cf.* Heb. 2. 18. *cf.* Heb. 12. 4. *cf.* Col. 3. 5.
t *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 11.
u Eph. 4. 17-19. Gal. 2. 15.
v *cf.* Rom. 1. 32.
w ch. 2. 12.
x Jas. 5. 9. 2 Tim. 4. 1.
y *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 29.
z *cf.* Matt. 5. 12.
a *cf.* Ps. 116. 15; *cf.* Acts 7. 55; *cf.* Phil. 1. 23.

have not passed out of the scene—we live in it; and yet our life is, in the true sense of this, outside it. We belong to another scene altogether, and our "life is hid with Christ in God." Thus the acceptance of the work of Christ marks an entire change in our own condition. We can live no more in the flesh to fulfil the lusts of men, but for the will of God, although this may entail for us such suffering in the flesh as Christ had, the contradiction of sinners remaining and working in all that is around us. For us, the time past is abundantly sufficient—now that through grace we have waked up to righteousness—to have wrought the will of the nations, of men who now turn round in wonder upon those who have left their ranks, who can no more run in the evil ways which are the mere overflowing of a heart away from God. For this, therefore, men will speak evil of those who have done so, in order that they might live to God a life according to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

And here follows a passage which has been similarly taken to that which we have just been looking at, and in a similar interest. Here, moreover, we find, as some understand it, a gospel preached to the dead as dead; "For to this end was the gospel preached also to the dead, that they might be judged as regards men after the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit." Here is a gospel preached which has effect (or is expected to have), and we must carefully consider the effect in order to the apprehension of the whole passage.

We have just been shown, in fact, the effect of the death of Christ for those who in faith realize it. It is the ceasing from sin, the ceasing from the will of the Gentiles; for which the Gentiles judge those who do so. This is the very effect of the gospel which we have here. The effect is a life "according to God in the Spirit." That is simple. But it should be as simple that this of necessity goes with a judgment by men after the flesh, a fleshly judgment passed upon those who have now learned to live a spiritual life.

That is all simple, and there should be no difficulty with regard to it. The difficulty is only here, that this gospel is said to have been "preached also to the dead." The only question can be: Is it to the dead, then, *as* dead, that it was preached? or simply in life to those who have passed away, and are *now* among the dead? Here, the effect spoken of should be in itself decisive. Suppose a preaching to the dead as dead, it is difficult to understand how men after the flesh should judge their turning to God in this condition. Is it their fellow-prisoners in the pit who do so? It is plainly that of which the apostle has been speaking, while a life "according to God in the Spirit" naturally speaks of a life lived here, not of a simple change in men who have, as to present things, ceased to live. The apostle has, in fact, already been speaking of a judgment to come, both for the living and the dead. The judgment upon the living is at the coming of the Lord, for which all Christians are taught to wait as that which is near at hand. From this judgment of the living, Christians have escaped. They wait for Jesus Christ as their Saviour, One who has delivered them already

DIVISION 5. (Chaps. iv. 7–v. 14.)

Responsibilities and judgment at the house of God already, with the judgment for the ungodly at hand.

1 (iv.7-11): Of free-giving and the ability to use the grace of God.

1. BUT the [b]end of all things is at hand. Be ye, therefore, [c]sober and watchful unto prayers; but above all things being [d]fervent in your love among yourselves, for love [e]covereth a multitude of sins; using

[b] Jas. 5. 8. *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 18.
[c] ch. 5. 8.
[d] ch. 1. 22. [e] *cf.* Jas. 5. 20 with Jno. 13. 14, 15. *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 31.

from the wrath to come. But the dead? Here the same principle obtains. To these also the gospel has been preached, not as dead but as living—but with this effect, that they are delivered from the judgment of the dead, as those who might live on to the coming of the Lord are delivered from the judgment of the living. Thus, all is really clear and consistent with the whole context. The apostle is speaking in it, as is plain, only of Christians, or at least of those to whom the gospel has been preached; and the effects which he deduces from it are perfectly inconsistent with the thought of any evangelizing of the dead as dead. The whole purport of what is here is but an expansion of what he says at the beginning, that as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, we are to arm ourselves with the same mind. We are to make Christ's suffering our ceasing from sin, so as no longer to live as men around are, in the lusts of the flesh, but to God, a life which His coming judgment will show to have had the most decisive significance.*

DIV. 5.

Throughout, we have seen that the apostle is really showing us the government of God—for the Christian, the Father's government; but even in this government of the Father, He has respect to the world as that, the need of which He cannot forget. Thus, His people must honor Him in it, or He must honor Himself at their expense. This government of God, then, more or less, appears all the way through. We are now distinctly reminded of it in that which is pressed here, "the end of all things is at hand." The end of all things is, in fact, in judgment, although necessarily, in order to bring in the blessing that is beyond. That judgment is looked at, for the believer, in fact as begun already. Judgment is already beginning at the house of God, and this is shown in the fiery trial through which the saints are passing, in which they are at the same time partakers of Christ's sufferings. We have seen already, in the Hebrews, that this does not at all hinder such suffering having a character of discipline at the same time for those who pass through it. Judgment is begun, then, at the house of God; but if it be often in this case a fiery trial, the seriousness of which they are made to realize, what will it be when it is no more the righteous that are in question, but the ungodly and the sinner? "If the righteous be with difficulty saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" We are necessarily reminded of responsibilities in connection with this, and the reward is also set before us. All this is stamped with the character of the whole book.

1. "The end of all things," says the apostle, "is at hand." We are to live in the constant thought of that. It is easy indeed to take the long time since such words were written to make an argument for at least less vivid expectation of the end announced. But that is not the way in which the Spirit of God would teach us to use it. It would make us rather say, "The night is far spent," and therefore we may surely realize the day to be at hand. We know of no long interval before us. To interpose one involves the thought of the wicked servant, "My Lord delayeth His coming." The brightness of our lives consists in bringing the eternal things, to which the coming of the Lord intro-

* Another explanation—though not so simple, nor in accord with the language—makes the judgment to be that of God, and suggests the alternative, "either judged as men, or live unto God." But this seems to do violence to the plain language, and to ignore the context as well.—S. R.

[f] hospitality one to another without murmuring; each [g] according as he hath received the gift, ministering it one to another, as good [h] stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any one [i] speak, [let it be] as oracles of God. If any one minister, [let it be] as of the ability which God supplieth, that God in all things may be [j] glorified through Jesus Christ, to [k] whom is glory and power unto the ages of ages. Amen.

f Rom. 12. 13. *cf.* 2 Jno. 10, 11. *cf.* 3 Jno. 5-8.
g Eph. 4. 7. Rom. 12. 6, 7.
h 1 Cor. 4. 1, 2. *cf.* Matt. 25. 14, 15, etc.
i *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 4; *cf.* 1 Cor. 14. 3, 24, 25.
j *cf.* 1 Cor. 10. 31; *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 14-16.
k Rom. 9. 5; 1 Tim. 1. 17.

duces us, into the present. Thus to have it ever before us in the most vivid way can be no loss, but gain. There still remains for us scripture such as this. If the apostle could say in his day, "The end of all things is at hand," with how much conviction may we say it at the present time? The result is, as he puts it here, that we are to be sober, not allowing ourselves to take a roseate view of that which is manifestly going on to judgment; and with this we need watchfulness to prayer. How little, indeed, have we learned the value of that of which Scripture makes so much!—"praying always," "watching unto prayer." When we consider that God has opened to us in this way a wondrous store of blessing, which He only seeks on our part the longing desire to possess ourselves of in order to make it practically ours, what value must there not be to us in prayer! And it is as we are enriched in such a way that we find ability for that outflow out of an abundance which the apostle, as we shall see, insists upon here. Love is but that which necessitates the outflow, and he urges that above all things we should be fervent in love among ourselves. "Love covereth a multitude of sins." We are apt to be driven in upon ourselves by the disappointment we may meet in the conduct of others; but love is the spirit that overcomes in this way, and we must not let it suffer defeat. The very nearness in which we are brought to one another, and the dearness of the relationship which we have to one another, will make us feel, and should also make us feel, the more the failure in any way to act according to this relationship.* That is a necessity of the case, while at the same time it should awaken in us the consciousness of our own shortcomings, which will not allow the building up of pride by the failure of others as to which we mourn. Love covereth sins: it does not needlessly expose them, does not talk about them without some plain demand for it; does not dwell upon them, but upon the things that are good, in which, as the heart abides, the life is cheered and brightened, and we get courage for the way. Then, love is bountiful: does not merely give, but delights in giving. Thus he presses the using hospitality one to another without murmuring† at the demands which it may make upon us; and finally, the apostle bids us, as to whatever gift we have received,—where everything that we have as Christians is in fact a gift,—that we realize the responsibility necessarily connected with this, and that we minister it as those who are but "stewards of the manifold grace of God." It is divine fulness in which we are filled up; and what capacity for ministry, as well as what responsibility, is involved in this! If any speak, he is thus to speak "as oracles of God"—a remarkable expression! It is not "*according to* the oracles of God," still less, "according to the Scriptures," as most probably we are disposed to take it; but it is as uttering from God that which is in His mind—a thing for which the presence of

* May there not also be the thought that the service of love will watch with jealous eye the beginning of evil in a brother, and by washing his feet prevent the full development of evil which would require the publicity of putting away? Love cannot hide sin that ought to be manifest, but it can prevent the need of such manifestation by faithfulness in private dealing with the evil before it assumes the character of positive wickedness. What a blessed contrast is this to that of the busy-body who feeds upon evil and gloats over the fall of another.—S. R.

† It is to be feared that the showing of hospitality is often accompanied by murmuring which the unerring foresight of the Spirit of God here warns against. God loveth a cheerful giver, but how often is the hospitality marred by the grudging spirit in which it is given. How much deception too—so that it has become a byword in the world.—S. R.

2 (12-19): Participation in Christ's sufferings, and the difficult salvation of the righteous, in its bearing on the contrary lot of the sinner.

2. Beloved, think it not [l]strange concerning the fiery trial which cometh upon you to try you, as though a strange thing happened unto you; but [m]rejoice inasmuch as ye are [n]partakers of Christ's sufferings, that at the [o]revelation of his glory, ye also may rejoice with exceeding joy. If ye are [p]reproached for the name of Christ, blessed [are ye]; for the Spirit of [q]glory and of God resteth upon you: [on [r]their part he is evil spoken of but on your part he is glorified].* For let [s]none of

* Some of the earliest MSS. omit.

l ctr. ver. 4. *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 12.
m Matt. 5. 12. Acts 5. 41.
n cf. Phil. 3. 10.
cf. Col. 1. 24.
o ch. 5. 1.
p Lk. 6. 22, 23.
q cf. Acts 6. 15 with Acts 7. 55, 56.
r Jas. 2. 7; *cf.* Acts 26. 9. *s* ch. 2. 19, 20; ch. 3. 17.

the Spirit in us is manifestly the most perfect qualification. If we were only subject to the Spirit and yielded up to Him, how thoroughly should we be able to communicate to one another that which was in fact God's wisdom for us all—not merely scriptural, but the living ministry of the Spirit for the need, whatever it might be! Then if any one minister, he is to do it as of the ability which God supplieth; he is not left to any competency of his own. He is to learn to use the abundance which God has for him as the Lord taught His disciples when, in view of the need of the multitude around, which they were plainly unable to supply, He says: "They need not depart; give ye them to eat." How surely would this be so with us if the faith which works by love were more the full reality that it ought to be! And here the apostle is not speaking simply of teaching or evangelizing, which would be covered by what he has said just before, but of any kind of ministry, in which, if we have faith to reckon upon the bounty of God, such faith can never in fact be disappointed. We cannot imitate, of course, a faith like this; and we must be truly with God in order that we may be able rightly to exercise it. We are not possessed of stores which we are to lavish just according to our own thought of what may be good. Here, as in all things else, we need divine guidance, and true faith will be found only for that which is according to the mind of God; yet how much this opens to us which we all have to confess we know so little of in practice! The end before us, as the apostle puts it here, is that which will keep us right and give us wisdom in the stewardship of such abundance, "that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom is glory and power unto the ages of ages." Surely to realize how God is bent upon glorifying His Son is the way to realize the competence which is of Him for acting to His glory. Here, then, is responsibility indeed, of how wide a range!

2. The apostle turns now to exhort them concerning that which would make them realize indeed the end to be near; for the last days, according to Scripture, are not days of ease and comfort for the people of God; they are not days of the prevalence of good, but of evil; and in all this is involved, however different may be the expression of it, how much trial for those who at all costs would walk with God! Christians were not to think it strange, then, concerning the trial through which they would pass, though it might be a fiery trial to be felt, and which could only fulfil its purpose, in fact, by being felt. A trial is meant to try, and this is what the apostle presses upon those to whom here he writes. They must not think it a strange thing—a thing foreign to what might seem to suit the followers of the Lord of glory. How easy it is, in fact, with Christ upon the throne, to think that therefore Christians must find a good place in the world instead of tribulation, although the Lord has in the plainest way admonished us that it will be otherwise! We are not to be taken out of the path in which He walked, and therefore not out of the circumstances which made the path what it was. All this would only make the coming glory more expected, more rejoiced in, and, when it would actually come, a cause even of larger joy. All recompense would be found in it, while it is true that for the present time also to be reproached for the name of Christ involves itself a necessary blessed-

you suffer as a [s]murderer, or a [u]thief, or an [v]evil-doer, or as [w]charging himself with other people's matters;* but if [any suffer] as a [x]Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him [y]glorify God in this name. For the time [is come] for judgment to [z]begin at the house of God; but if [it begin] first at us, [a]what shall be the end of those who obey not the gospel of God? and if the righteous† be with [b]difficulty saved, where shall the [c]ungodly† and the sinner† appear? Wherefore, also, let them who suffer according to the will of God [d]commit their souls in well doing to a faithful Creator.

* This entire expression is one word—ἀλλοτριοεπίσκοπος, "a bishop (overseer) in what does not concern him."

† These words are all in the singular number.

cf. Prov. 11. 31; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 10, 11. *b cf.* Phil. 2. 12, 13; *cf.* Gen. 19. 15, 16, etc. *c* 2 Thess. 1. 8, 9. *d* ch. 2. 23; Acts 7. 59; *cf.* 2 Tim. 1. 12; *cf.* ch. 3. 17; *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 24.

t cf. 2 Sam. 12. 9.
u cf. Eph. 4. 28.
v cf. 1 Cor. 5. 9–13.
w 2 Thess. 3. 11. 1 Tim. 5. 13.
x cf. Acts 11. 26. *cf.* Acts 26. 28.
y cf. Phil. 1. 29.
z Ezek. 9. 6. *cf.* Am. 3. 2. *cf.* Jno. 2. 13–16. *cf.* ch. 1. 17.
a cf. Jer. 25. 29.

ness. "The Spirit of glory and of God" rests upon those who suffer thus. It could not be otherwise. Christ could not fail His own who are earnest in the desire not to fail Him. Suffering of another sort would, of course, be inconsistent with the suffering for Christ. To suffer as a murderer or a thief, or an evil-doer of any kind, or even as concerning themselves with things which were not theirs—such things would be incongruous for the Christian; but the suffering coming on him on that very account, because he is a Christian, can be no cause for shame. It is given him, on the contrary, to glorify God. So will He be most manifestly glorified. Think of Stephen's face, and how it manifests this; and we are not to take these things as if they were wholly exceptional, but pictures with deep and blessed meaning for ourselves.

But again the apostle returns to that character of the suffering of which he has already spoken. "The time," he says, "is come for judgment to begin at the house of God." There where God dwells, there must assuredly be the maintenance of that which pleases Him; and, as we have often seen, the Father's judgment is not necessarily a chastening for positive evil that has come, but will include all that is necessary to *prevent* its coming out. God knows us better than we know ourselves; and how much even may come out of us little worthy of Him, and yet of the character of which we are unconscious! It is thus we need so much to pray that He may search us and try us, and see whether there be any wicked way in us: any way, as the word means, of pain or grief to Him. His judgment is grounded necessarily upon this deeper knowledge, and as a Father's judgment it is for our fullest blessing. Still, it is serious; as the apostle says, we are not, on the one hand, to faint under the discipline of the Lord, nor, on the other hand, are we to make light of it. It is the witness of a holiness which must be specially maintained as to those who are brought near to Him—a holiness which, the nearer we are brought to God, the more we shall justify Him in. In the sanctuary only can we understand it; and there we shall find, as the Psalmist did, the secret of this apparently strange thing—that whereas those away from Him may be left alone to prosper and increase in riches, those who are His may have to be "plagued all the day long and chastened every morning." But how solemn is the admonition, therefore, of such ways of God with His own! If judgment begin after this manner, "first at us," says the apostle, "what shall be the end of those who obey not the gospel of God?" Judgment will pass from us. What will it be for those upon whom it must abide? "If the righteous be with difficulty saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" It is not "*scarcely* saved." The thought is in some sense the very opposite of this. God has to take abundant pains with them, in order that He may carry them through in a manner according to His mind; and it is because the salvation is effectual and ample that the difficulty of it is seen. When we

3 (v. 1-7): The flock of God not the possession of men, with the crown of glory at the manifestation.

3. The [e]elders* which are among you, I exhort, who am a fellow-elder, and a [f]witness of the sufferings of Christ; who am also a [g]partaker of the glory which shall be revealed: [h]Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising oversight not of [i]necessity but willingly; not for [j]base gain, but readily; not as [k]lording it over your allotments but being [l]ensamples to the flock; and when the [m]chief Shepherd is manifested, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye [n]younger, be subject unto the elder; yea all of you, gird yourselves with [o]humility towards one another; for God [p]resisteth the proud but giveth grace unto the humble. [q]Humble yourselves, therefore, under the

* Many add, "therefore."

e 2 John. 1. *cf.* Phile. 9.
f Lk. 24. 48.
g *cf.* 2 Thes. 2. 14.
h *cf.* Jno. 21. 15, etc.
i *cf.* 2 Cor. 9. 7.
j *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 13, 17. 1 Tim. 3. 3.
k *ctr.* Ezek. 34. 4. *cf.* 2 Cor. 1. 24.
l 1 Cor. 11. 1. *cf.* Heb. 13. 7. 1 Tim. 4. 12.
m *cf.* Jno. 10. 11. *cf.* Heb. 13. 20; Ps. 23. 1.
n Tit. 2. 6.
o *cf.* Mk. 10. 43, 44.
p Jas. 4. 6.
q Jas. 4. 10; *cf.* Lk. 18. 9-14.

think of what we are, and of what God is, and that God and we are called to walk together, how should we realize what is indeed the tender love of God, which works with us thus to wean us from the things around,—from all that would awaken in the heart murmuring and unrest,—in order that we may be occupied with that which is our own, with the abundance with which He has provided us, and which He is always waiting to minister to us! "Wherefore," says the apostle, "let them who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing to a faithful Creator." God is pursuing in all this the very purpose which He had with man at the beginning, for which He made him—to have communion with Himself. This might be able, indeed, to be little developed at the beginning. It is now brought out in fullest reality.

3. The apostle turns now, in view of the people of God in weakness and suffering in a world like this, to exhort in an especial way those who had the special responsibility, involved in growth of wisdom and experience, to use these for the blessing of all. "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder." It seems plain that he is not thinking here of any *office* of eldership. We can hardly think of the apostle himself as assuming the position of one of the elders of a congregation in the sense in which we find them ordained in the separate assemblies. He is rather thinking of his years, of the long experience which they had furnished to him, of the wisdom acquired by the experience, and of those who had in their own measure a similar responsibility of such experience so acquired. This, even with the officially appointed elders, really was what would qualify a man for such an office; and it was a right thing, as Paul has told us, to desire such a place practically. It was desiring a good work. All elders in mere age would not be elders of this sort, and yet a certain age would naturally be needful as a qualification; but apart from any formal office, love would make one realize the responsibility of having that which could minister to the need of others in this way, as in every other way. The apostle was in an eminent way also "a witness of the sufferings of Christ," as he would be "a partaker of the glory" which is to be revealed. This, it is plain, does not exclude others from a proportionate share in either. Such, then, as those of whom he speaks were to tend the flock of God, exercising oversight not of necessity, but willingly, and not as lording it over possessions of their own. The flock is God's flock. There is no idea in Scripture of any flock belonging to an under-shepherd. This is what is guarded against here. They were not to take the place of lords, but of ministers under Him who, after all, was Himself so thoroughly a Minister, the Chief Shepherd, who, when He is manifested, would bestow upon those who cared for His own an unfading "crown of glory." Here, plainly, is such oversight, as may be at any time exercised, no matter what may be the ruin of the days upon which we are fallen. Peter, it is evident also,

mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; [r] casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.

4 (8-14): The meantime trial and testing.

4. Be [s] sober, be watchful; your [t] adversary, the devil, as a roaring [u] lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. Whom [v] withstand, [w] stedfast in the faith, knowing that the [x] same sufferings are accomplished in your brethren* who are in the world. But the God of [y] all grace, who hath [z] called you unto his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, when ye have [a] suffered a little while, himself shall [b] perfect, stablish, strengthen, ground [you]. To [c] him be glory and might unto the ages of ages. Amen.

r Phil. 4. 6, 7. cf. Ps. 37. 5.
s ch. 1. 13. cf. Matt. 24. 42.
t cf. Eph. 4. 27. cf. 2 Cor. 2. 11.
u ctr. 2 Cor. 11. 14.
v Jas. 4. 7. cf. Matt. 4. 10, 11.
w cf. Eph. 6. 11-13.
x 2 Tim. 3. 12.
y cf. 2 Cor. 9. 8.
z 2 Thess. 2. 14.

* Or, "the brotherhood," as in chap. ii. 17.

cf. Phil. 3. 14. a cf. 2 Cor. 4. 17; cf. ch. 1. 6. b cf. 2 Tim. 3. 17; cf. 1 Thess. 3. 2. c ch. 4. 11

is thinking of the Lord's own charge to him. How could he forget those last, tender admonitions which were at the same time the revelation of a privilege which was his, and which, through grace, remained in spite of all his failure? It is striking that here what is spoken of is not a "crown of *righteousness*" simply, but a "crown of *glory*." Righteousness shall have its own reward, but the outflow of heart towards His people, a spirit of self-sacrifice for the blessing of those so dear to Him, must receive "a crown of glory" at His hands.

The next words show that it is, after all, not an official eldership that the apostle is thinking of here, for he now turns to the younger in contrast to these, and bids them be subject unto the elder; that is, they are of course to consider their years, and what it has furnished to them, and above all the ministry to which they see them devoted. Such love carries with it true wisdom, and he who is fully devoted to the need of the saints cannot really fail to find for himself in this way the blessing of it; but all the saints are to be subject one to another. They are to gird themselves with humility in this way, humility being that which will keep everything rightly adjusted, as the girdle the robe, and which would thus enable for such activity as all are called to; for humility is a grand help against discouragement by the difficulties of the way, and necessarily against all that would search out any remnant of pride in us. "God resisteth the proud," adds the apostle, "but giveth grace unto the humble." They were therefore to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God that He might exalt them in due time. Against the might of His hand, who can exalt himself? But He Himself is waiting and desiring to be able to exalt those who will not suffer from it; and upon such an One we may cast all our care, for He careth for us.

4. There are yet some further words with regard to the trial in which they found themselves. There was an active enemy walking about as a roaring lion, with the open mouth of persecution, as we see by the connection here, seeking to daunt the suffering soul, and thus to cast down from the steadfastness of a faith which must needs persevere through the sufferings; sufferings that are accomplished in all the Lord's people who are in the world. They had only to wait for God to fulfil all His own meaning in this trial—a God of grace who has destined His people for His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, and who may be safely trusted for all the way that leads there. With Him the suffering had its ends, while of necessity it was merely temporary.* The effect would be, not what the enemy sought, but the perfecting, stablishing, strengthening, grounding of the

* While temporary, these sufferings will continue during this present life—a light and momentary affliction as compared with the eternal weight of glory. This is seen both from the grammar, the participial clause agreeing with "you," and from the context, as surely the prayer for their strengthening etc. would not be after they had suffered, but during it as well.—S. R.

By [d]Sylvanus, a faithful brother as I account, I [e]have written unto you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the [f]true grace of God in which ye stand.* She that is [g]elected with you in Babylon saluteth you, and [h]Marcus my son. [i]Salute one another with a kiss of love. [j]Peace be with you all who are in Christ.

* Many read this as imperative—Stand ye!

d *cf.* Acts 15. 27, 32. *cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 1.
e *cf.* Gal. 6. 11. *cf.* Heb. 13. 22.
f *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 1.
g *cf.* 2 John 1, 13.
h *cf.* Acts 12. 12, 25.
i Rom. 16. 16.
j Eph. 6. 23.

soul. If they might seem to sink, they would soon touch the bottom, and find how firmly the Rock was underneath them. A real suffering for Christ could not fail to have this as its answer. The trial tries not the sufferer alone, but Him who has assured us that He will be "a very present help in trouble," and that all things, moreover, shall "work together for good to them that love God." The trial itself, therefore, must work this. We must not look at things as against us, lest we put into them a sting which God would not have there. "To Him," adds the apostle, belong the glory and the might, "unto the ages of ages."

With a few words now the epistle ends. The apostle seems to have used for writing it the hand of another, as Paul had done; for it seems hard to think that he is speaking of another epistle than the one before us. The hand employed seems also to be that of a co-laborer with Paul, and one who, as belonging originally to Jerusalem, would naturally be well known to Peter also. This is Sylvanus, or Silas. He speaks of him as one whom he accounts a faithful brother, and yet, in the way in which he states this, as if they had not been long, or for long, together. His aim is to bear witness to them of the true grace of God in which they stood, and alone could stand.*

* As at the close of Hebrews we see that Paul was in Italy, doubtless at Rome, when the epistle was written; so here we see Peter was at Babylon when this epistle was written. There is not the slightest hint that he ever was at Rome before this, and from the late date of this epistle it is most unlikely that he was ever there afterwards. Thus the fabric of his being the first bishop of Rome falls to the ground. Recognizing this, the supporters of that theory claim that the Babylon here is the mystic city, as in Rev. xvii., and therefore really Rome. But this never would have been thought of but for the theory. Peter is not writing symbolically. Doubtless the elect (sister) is either his wife, or some prominent lady as in 2 John i., or else it agrees with "brotherhood," understood, a feminine word.—S. R.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER.

THE second epistle is, as all such are, an appendix to the first. It is also, as we have seen in the case of Thessalonians and Timothy, something which God has given us in view of the failure and evil coming in, a merciful provision for our need which we cannot too highly estimate at the present time. The character of the epistle is, on the whole, a very simple one. We have first of all what is needed on our own part in a time of declension, needed at all times, of course, but still the need specially brought out by such days as we more and more realize to be upon us. Here we are shown that our guard from the evil, as far as we can furnish it, is in the development in us of the divine life which God has given us. The more the pressure of the current against us, the more energy must there be on our part to meet it; but this energy is not shown mainly in outward activity, or even in controversy with evil, but in the enjoyment of our own things, and in the living in them. This is what the first chapter specially dwells upon, in which we are shown the apostle writing, as we have seen before, to converted Jews. We find what the righteousness of a divine Messiah has provided for the believer, in the lapse of his own Israelitish hopes. It is in this that all things pertaining to life and godliness are found, the knowledge of God Himself, who has "called us by glory and virtue:" animating us by His "great and precious promises," which are to furnish us with the needful courage to go through that which is adverse.

The second division dwells upon the evil already coming in, the false teachers that would arise—no strange thing for an Israelite to understand, as indeed the Christian Church in its failure has but repeated the history of the people of God of former times. We have the character of these false teachers shown to us, the power of their seduction over many who had apparently been brought out from the pollutions of the world, and that "through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," and who yet are entangled therein again, and the last state becomes worse than the first.

The third division speaks of the passing away of the world itself—the death and resurrection of the earth, as we may call it; the promise remaining, which Isaiah had already given, of a new heavens and earth, in which righteousness at last shall dwell. It is in character with the scope of Peter's ministry, the completion of God's testimony to Israel, that he should give us this; while Paul carries us from earth to heaven.

The divisions, therefore, are:

1. (Chap. i.): What the righteousness of a divine Messiah has provided for the believer.
2. (Chap. ii.): The progress of evil and the seduction of false teachers.
3. (Chap. iii.): The death and resurrection of the earth itself.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER.

DIVISION 1. (Chap. i.)

What the righteousness of a divine Messiah has provided for the believer.

1 (1.1-4): The power of the divine call through the promises.

1. SIMON Peter, [a]bondsman and apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have received like [b]precious faith with us, through the [c]righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, [d]grace to you and peace be multiplied in the [e]knowledge of God and of Jesus

a *cf.* Rom. 1. 1.
b *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 7.
c *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 9. *cf.* Heb. 6. 10.
d 1 Pet. 1. 2.
e vers. 3, 8. ch. 3. 18. Col. 1. 10.

NOTES.

DIV. 1.

THE apostle has already shown in his first epistle how God has provided in Christianity a much better thing than Israel by her unbelief has lost. He does not take this up again, but he refers to it in order to enlarge upon the provision made in this way for the practical need of the soul in the revelation of God Himself through Christ; which is, as we know, the very heart of the gospel, as it is indeed of all divine teaching. The attraction of the glory is that, as already said, which is to furnish us with the needed energy to go through the circumstances of the present; and the practical result of this is insisted on, by which the very evil that has come in may only work for the blessing, under God's overruling hand, of those who are exercised by it, and who find thus around them a condition of things which calls for the full energy of the Spirit of God to meet it. If faith is that which is the very first necessity for us as Christians, then difficulties, as we have so often had to say, are no hindrances to faith, but only that which exercises and manifests it. We find here a certain difference in the way things are presented to us from that which we have had in Paul; and while the glory of Christ and the sharing of that glory are things put before us by both these, yet Paul evidently carries us more completely to heaven itself, where he had indeed seen that glory, as Peter speaks on his part of what he had himself seen upon earth, which had confirmed the message of the prophets of old. Thus, as in the first epistle Peter has carried us back to the words spoken by the Lord to him at the time when Israel's rejection had already become manifest, so here he dwells upon what had followed this, which is manifestly, more than with Paul, the glory of the Kingdom in which Moses and Elias are found, with their testimony to Christ. The special line of truth given to each of the inspired writers is manifest. We need them all, and through grace we have them all.

1. We have first of all the power of the divine call in the exceeding great and precious promises which have become our own. These are not, of course, in any wise Israel's promises. The "precious faith" of which he speaks is the faith of Christianity, which has come to replace that expectation of earthly blessing which Judaism created. It is in this way that he speaks of "the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ." As Paul speaks of the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel, with Peter, on the other hand, there is the righteousness of Him who indeed is God, but who is also Israel's Messiah—a divine Saviour; who, if in Israel He may seem to have labored in vain and spent His strength for naught, yet only brings out, for those who have nevertheless believed in Him, a fulness of blessing unimagined before. Grace and peace are thus multiplied to them in "the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,"

our Lord; as his [f]divine power hath given to us all things that pertain to [g]life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us by * [h]glory and [i]virtue; whereby he hath given unto us his very [j]great

[f] *cf.* Zech. 4. 6.
[g] *cf.* Jno. 3. 3-8.
[i] *cf.* Phil. 4. 13.
[h] *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 4.
[j] *cf.* 2 Cor. 1. 20 with Col. 2. 3.

* Some add, "his own."

cf. Phil. 3. 14; *cf.* Acts 7. 2 with Heb. 11. 8-10. *cf.* Heb. 12. 1-3; *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 1.

which the apostle therefore, desires, in fact, to be multiplied to us. Alas, as we well know, we do not always find the blessing which God would have us to know. Indeed, how many of us do find the fulness of what is in God's heart for us? And if this may perhaps not seem so wonderful, considering our own limitations and the infiniteness of the blessing, yet how shall we excuse the dulness and slowness with which we respond to the goodness which has been manifested towards us? How little coveting on our part is there of the very things in which we, nevertheless, believe all true riches, all blessings, are to be found.

"His divine power," says the apostle, "hath given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness."* His power, notice, has given them to us. For how much had to be wrought in order that these blessings might be our own! God has not merely spoken; He has acted. The new creation is a work more wonderful in power than that which God spoke so easily into being. In this He has been not only a Laboror, but a Sufferer; wonderful as it is to speak of this in connection with One who is a divine Saviour. And thus God has been manifested, as we know, in Christ,—not even in temporary manifestation, though with an eternal effect,—but in One who abides ever the Man Christ Jesus, and even, as we see in Revelation, in some sense as "the Lamb slain," and who has made the very throne of God the throne also of the Lamb. Here is found that which truly lays hold upon the heart for God. It is a revelation not limited in its effect even to the children of men, but which is that into which the angels look with adoration; sufficient surely to gather up our affections out of a world that lieth in the wicked one, the very world of the cross itself, and to which we are crucified by that cross. Thus, it is not merely a salvation that is provided, wonderful as this is, and we have not attained what God desires for us in the simple knowledge of salvation—it is God Himself who is drawing us to Himself; and the knowledge of salvation simply in the way that so many seem to know it is not sufficient to fulfil that which the apostle has in mind here. People can vaunt their salvation and go on with the world in decent forms to the very fullest extent; but if we have the knowledge not of salvation simply, but of the *Saviour*, it is of One who "hath called us by glory and virtue," by setting before us that which is all the blessedness of life and which is outside the world and all that is in it, while it gives us thus "virtue," the soldier's courage, to go through the world as a place merely of opposing forces, where all that is of it, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father." It is in this way that His "exceeding great and precious promises" are given to us, that thus we may become "partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." We should notice here how the power of the Word is constantly that which the Spirit uses to produce in us all His work. It is thus we become "partakers of the divine nature;" it is thus we are assimilated to Him who is revealed to us. We are changed, as the apostle Paul told us, "into the same image, from glory to glory." And thus the lust is overcome, which is the sign of the fallen creature, the expression of wants which, not having found their satisfaction in God, can

* There is an evident contrast between "life" and "godliness"—the first would include new birth, or the impartation of life and its development, until in glory it reaches its true sphere; while "godliness" refers to the practical walk. There are three pairs of expressions in this portion which have much similarity. The first is "life and godliness;" the second, "glory and virtue;" and the third, "partakers of the divine nature" and "having escaped the corruption" etc. It will be noticed that the first of each of these has to do with the divine side, and the second with the practical life.—S. R.

2 (5-11): The need of progress in the development of the divine life.

and precious promises; that through these ye may become [k] partakers of the divine nature, having [l] escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

2. But for this very reason also, adding on your part all [m] diligence, in your [n] faith supply [o] virtue; and in

k *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 9. *cf.* Heb. 12. 10.
l *cf.* ch. 2. 18, 20. *cf.* Col. 1. 13.
m vers. 10. *cf.* Heb. 6. 12. *n* *cf.* Heb. 11. 1-6, etc. *o* *cf.* Acts 4. 8-13, 31; *etc.* Lk. 22. 56, 57.

find satisfaction nowhere else; and which only, therefore, debase more and more the soul that thus pursues its own gratification, drinking at every broken cistern to quench the thirst which can nowhere be satisfied except by that fountain of living waters, from which unbelief has turned. This is the first point, therefore, for us here; and it is impossible to face the condition of things around without it—to have found in God, as He has revealed Himself in Christ, that which is sufficiency and more than sufficiency, satisfaction and more than satisfaction, for every possible need. These things indeed come to us practically in the shape of "promises," which need faith in them to keep us pressing on to the fulfilment, but which thus draw our eyes away from the things around us, and develop the energy of the pilgrim and the overcomer.

2. All is grounded, says the apostle, on this with which we start. The knowledge of what is ours is to arouse in us a diligence which will make us fruitful for God. The new life which God has given us needs development, and here is the difference between one like Paul himself and the most stunted, nay, deformed, that we can find among Christians. Alas, how many are these! The very first point, the diligence, how little is it actually found to make progress in the things of God! How terrible to think that the certainty of what is ours should in so many seem rather to relax diligence than to create it! We hope, after all, to get to heaven at last; and how little do we realize, nevertheless, what eternal consequences may follow the lack of proper development on earth! The present and the future are not so widely separated as we are prone to imagine, and we must not think it a right apprehension of God's grace which can make us just content to get to heaven without having lived for Christ or honored Him on the way. Whatever heaven may be for such, we may be perfectly sure that loss here will be nevertheless eternal loss.*

The apostle, as we see, is not thinking here of works done for Christ. These come in their place surely; but what he is thinking of now is the development of Christian character, the fruits of that acquaintance with God of which he has been speaking. They are given for us in the most orderly manner possible, and we must not miss the order; but it is not as our common version puts it, a simple addition of one thing to another that he speaks of. It is, as already said, rather the development of life of which he is speaking, which is the result, therefore, of growth, and in which blossom and fruit have their orderly succession and necessary relation to one another. Thus, it is really not, "Add to your faith, virtue," simply; but "in your faith supply virtue"—see that your faith is of that kind which produces it. Without faith first, there will be none; and so with every step of what is here. The knowledge is found in the virtue; the temperance in the knowledge, and so on; just as the bud contains within itself all the parts that are to unfold in due time, while these, nevertheless, are not *merely* to be unfolded, or, rather, are unfolded only by their own growth and development.

Thus he begins with faith.† Without faith there is no love, there is no be-

* We acquire capacity here for the enjoyment of eternal things. A narrow heart for Christ here will enter into life hindered to that extent. Solemn thoughts indeed are these. May we lay them to heart.—S. R.

† It is not specified whether this faith is justifying, or that principle in the believer throughout. Would it not actually include both thoughts? Faith is the beginning and the whole substratum of the Christian life. As illustrations of the application of the "courage" to both sides of this faith might be mentioned the confession of Christ by the blind man (John ix.) in face of strongest opposition, and the faith of the apostles in their service.—S. R.

virtue, [p]knowledge; and in knowledge, [q]temperance;* and in temperance, [r]patience; and in patience, [s]godli-

* Or, "self-control."

[p] *ctr.* Heb. 5. 11-14.
[q] *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 24, 25. *cf.* 1 Pet. 3.
15. [r] Jas. 1. 3, 4. [s] Tit. 2. 12.

ginning; and the very first thing which is to proceed from faith and to characterize it is "virtue," as already said, the soldier's virtue,—courage, decision,—that quality that enables one to go through all opposition. This is, of course, a first necessity if we think of what the scene is in which God is finding fruit for Himself, how thoroughly His plants are exotics. Everything is naturally against us, as His people. Thus we must draw from unseen resources. We cannot draw from the soil of this world. That is impossible. We must be as Christ was, roots out of a dry ground, sustained by the influences of heaven, and not by the earth, which cannot yield sustenance. Faith in itself means the turning away from earth, from all that is for sight or sense; and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory whom the world crucified, is that which overcometh the world. Here is the first thing, therefore, that we need to satisfy ourselves that we are possessed of—an ability to go on, whatever the hindrances, counting the cost, but which counts on both sides, and which recognizes the cost of lack of communion with Christ and all that is involved in this as being that which overbalances all other.

Here therefore, at the ontset, the very principle of progress is given us. If earth is closed to us, we must lay hold upon heaven; and thus it is that we learn, therefore, to acquire; we find "in virtue, knowledge." We cannot learn the things of God, our own though they may be, without the honest intention to live according to them. If we want to have barren knowledge, we must not wonder if God withhold it from us. In fact, what greater injury could our souls receive than just to gain the mere outside acquaintance with things, so that we suppose we know them when there is no virtue and no blessing, no effect to be produced in us by it all.*

This knowledge, then, leads on to "temperance." Notice that as the apostle has spoken of Scripture as first of all being "profitable for doctrine," then for "correction," so it is here. The very first thing, as we learn the truth, is to recognize the claim that the truth has upon us—the discipline of it by which it divorces us from other things, gives us thus self-restraint, the power to command ourselves; as we may be sure that we can command nothing else if we do not begin here. "In knowledge," therefore, we are to find "temperance," self-restraint. The truth is to govern us, and to give us thus the power of self-government.† The heart must be in the knowledge, not the head simply; and the government of one's self, as is plain, leads on to and develops what is the next thing here, "patience."

If we have not self-command in a world like this, where everything is contrary, how impossible it will be to manifest patience! If our hearts are really withdrawn from the world, governed by unseen things in which we find, in fact, the fullest satisfaction, how easy will patience be! We have not, if even we are called to endure the loss of all things, as the apostle Paul puts it, with all this to endure the loss of one thing that is really our own. God has all this in His own keeping for us. If we recognize the government of God, therefore, and if we recognize the grace that has manifested itself toward us, it will make patience easy, make it necessary and sure.

Thus, first of all, the truth acts upon us. It delivers us from all things

* The courage is not a blind "zeal without knowledge," but an intelligent and deliberate conviction. How often does a bold ignorance meet with merited defeat, where an earnest feeding upon God's word would have fitted one to meet all opposition.—S. R.

† Thus we will not only *know* how to answer every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us, but it will be "with meekness and fear." "For the servant of God must not strive . . . in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves." How perfectly our blessed Lord exemplified this.—S. R.

ness; and in godliness, [t]brotherly love; and in brotherly love, [u]love: for if these things exist and abound in

[t] 1 Jno. 3.14. *ctr.* Gal. 6. 15.
[u] 1 Cor. 13.

that are contrary to it. It makes us masters of ourselves and of our circumstances. Now the life will manifest, as the result of this, "godliness." He who in fact has command of us, will be seen in command. Circumstances will not mold us, but He who is above all circumstances. Let them be adverse as they may, we have but to be still and know that He is God. That is what is sufficient knowledge, if we know Him who is God. We see already that, of course, godliness must have been in the life all through. There could have been no faith, no virtue, no knowledge, no temperance or patience, apart from this. Nevertheless, it has to find room for its proper development. We are delivered from the things contrary to it, and thus the life gains a character which may seem, indeed, to come strangely far on here in the order of development; but we shall find,—there is no question,—if we consider it, if we think of ourselves and look around us, how much there is in Christians themselves that hinders the development of this character. How much needs to be got out of the way before there can be the serene blessedness which is implied in it—God seen in all, God owned in all, God joyed in at all times! How great an attainment is this! how greatly to be desired therefore!—not that we may have merely some rudimentary experience of it, but the full thing itself as contemplated here.

And then notice, "in godliness, brotherly love." Yet, says the apostle: "By this we know we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." Here, too, is something, therefore, which must have begun with the beginning in us. Yet it is plain that it is produced by godliness, and that it is found in godliness, not otherwise. "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments." We are prone to make great mistakes here as to the love of God itself, to judge of what there is in us in this way more by the happy feeling produced, more or less temporarily, and gauged by the glow in our heart, rather than by the apostle's test of it: "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments:" a test under which how much of what we have counted such would not abide! In how many of most apparently lovely Christians to whom, if you bring the simple and plain command of God with regard to something, you may find even a resentment hard to be understood! How many there are who insist upon certain commands of God very strongly, and have their blind eye turned to what are His evident commands in another direction! But His commandments are His commandments. There are no exceptions, no degrees, we may even say, as to this. One plain command is just as much that as any other plain command, and we have no right to estimate the importance of one command in such a way as to make light of another. It is as the apostle says with regard to the law: you may keep every commandment but one, and if you break that, you are characterized as a law-breaker, no matter how many you may keep. God must be absolute Master. He will be satisfied with nothing else; but then, as the apostle says, "His commandments are not grievous." Even in the law the first commandment of all was, "Thou shalt love;" and the Lord sums it up as all in its essence, "Thou shalt love." What is this but the reflection of the character of Him who, as He commands this, necessarily delights in it? All other love that can be called such is but the reflection of His love, and what then are His commandments except the dictates of such perfect love towards us? But then if "this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments," here is something of necessity, as the apostle teaches, by which we may gauge our love to our brethren also. It is no love to ignore evil. To seek to free each other from it is divine. To win a brother out of it, how blessed if it be accomplished! But to ignore it is dishonor to God and cruelty to our brother, both in one. Thus, then, we can understand fully how it is "in godliness" that we must find "love."*

* May there not be also here a suggestion of the danger of becoming selfish in spiritual

you, they make you to be neither idle nor [v]unfruitful as regards the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he that lacketh these things is [w]blind, short-sighted, and hath [x]forgotten the cleansing from his

v Jno.15.5,8.
w Rev.3.17, 18. *cf.*1 Jno. 2. 9-11.
x *cf.* Jas. 1. 23, 24; *cf.* Eph. 2. 11, etc.

There is but one thing that the apostle adds to this, and that is all in a word, as one may say: "In brotherly love, love." Love is what God is. It is the divine nature itself; and thus, as we see again here, is what has been with us from the beginning; but the full development of it is what the apostle is pleading for here. These are the steps that lead to it; and there is no other way of attainment than as we come to it thus. Here, then, is that which the truth is to work in us. Here is how the "exceeding great and precious promises" are to vindicate themselves as having in them "all things pertaining to life and godliness." These are the things which alone can enable us to pass through a world which is Satan's world, where allurement on the one hand is strengthened by opposition on the other, and both would unite to make us what the apostle calls "idle and unfruitful in regard to the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." We have seen how the apostle of love, the disciple who in this way drew out more than any the heart of the Lord towards him, speaks of where he had acquired this character, and how alone we can acquire it. "He that sinneth," he says, "hath not seen *Him*, neither known *Him*." To be in living acquaintance with Him, walking in His company, learning from day to day in His presence—this is what will make unfruitfulness impossible to us. We shall not be occupied with ourselves either. It will be enough to look in His face, to realize our own shortcomings. It is He Himself who has said: "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples."

That "the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" should be unfruitful is a thing contrary to its very nature. The only possible way of its coming about, says the apostle, is by forgetfulness of it. "He that lacketh these things is blind, short-sighted, and hath forgotten his cleansing from his former sins." It is impossible to live in the things without corresponding fruit. It is impossible to be in the sun without reflecting its beams. If we are not reflecting them, we must have got out of them. That is the whole story; and alas for the possibility, which is most evident everywhere in Scripture, for those who have been cleansed and who once were alive to the joy and blessedness of the appreciation of divine love like this, ever forgetting what they have experienced and the price paid for their deliverance; and yet these things steal easily and quietly upon one. It is, indeed, the only possible way. An open assault of the enemy would be resisted by a soul in the joy of a Saviour's love; but that same soul may be gradually weaned from it by the pressure of other things—the call of imagined duties, the necessary occupation with the things of the world, the cares of this life, and the deceitfulness of riches, deceiving, alas, even those who are not possessors of them. The conscience is not alarmed by any open fall. God's mercy may, indeed, allow a fall, in order to wake one up with a start to what is coming upon him; but in how many cases there is nothing that alarms the conscience, nothing that is manifestly evil,—a little forgetfulness of prayer, a little disregard of meditation, a little less time for occupation with the Word, a greater pressure of things, so that the very time that may be used in this way shall be unfruitful,—how steadily and stealthily may the work of decline go on and gray hairs come upon one while he knows it not! The Spirit of God that would minister Christ is grieved, the power is gone out of the life, there is no longer the joy of the Lord which is strength, faith is no more in its proper activity. This is what "short-sightedness" means. Faith is never that. The face turned towards Egypt, there is a famine in one's own land, and then soon the steps are in that direction also, and

things? The virtues already spoken of have been personal rather than mutual. But godliness cannot be selfish; no amount of self-culture will do. All must be permeated by that love to one's brethren which considers their welfare and progress, as well as one's own.—S. R.

former sins. Wherefore, the rather, brethren, use diligence to make your calling and election [y]sure; for if ye do these things ye shall [z]never fall; for so shall [a]entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ be [b]richly furnished to you.

[y] *ctr.* Gal. 4. 11, 20.
[z] *cf.* ch. 3. 17.
[a] *cf.* Rev. 22. 14.
[b] *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 11-15.
ctr. Rev. 3. 11.

only the mercy of God can make one realize what it all means. We have, therefore, to use diligence to make our calling and election sure,—not as if they were anything else but sure in themselves,—but to make them a steadfast realization in the soul, a motive to action, a power to devote oneself to the things for which God has called and chosen us: "For if ye do these things," adds the apostle, "ye shall never fall; for so shall entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ be richly furnished to you." He is not talking of "entering" into it simply, but of an entrance *richly* furnished. God would not have us enter there without bringing in with us something acceptable to Him, and something that shall turn to one's own praise from Him.

Let us notice that it is of the kingdom still that Peter is talking. He could not in this way speak of entering furnished richly into the Father's house. It would not be in the same way suitable. The rewards that he has in his mind belong rather to the kingdom than the Father's house. The titles and dignities of the kingdom, whatever their value, really do not come in as a question in connection with the Father and our relationship to Him as such.* We have to avoid the confusion which is in so many minds between what is the fruit of Christ's work and what is the fruit of our own; and we have to remember that, after all, the truest, sweetest, most wonderful things, as necessarily the fruit of Christ's work must be, are just the things that we share in common. A child can never be other or less than a child in that eternal state. Distance on a child's part from the Father is impossible. The members of the body of Christ are that, not of their own striving, but of His gift. That relationship to Him, of which Scripture speaks under the image of the bride, embraces the whole Christian company, out of which none can drop who have ever belonged to it. Yet, while relationship is not and cannot be affected by our faithfulness here in the relationship, nevertheless there are things of the most precious character that can be affected. The white stone with the name written upon it, the testimony of His approbation, that which is not for public display but for secret communion between the soul and Him, this depends manifestly upon His having somewhat to approve; and, as already said, the honors of the Kingdom, things that are bestowed by His hand in testimony of His approval, are necessarily of this character. As we think of it, if we think of it at all aright, it will promote humility in us rather than pride to think of any reward to such as we are. Yet love will bestow, and love on our part will surely value that which it bestows. His gifts will be worthy of Himself, while He Himself will be infinitely greater than all gifts. But let us remember the apostle's appeal to us here, which we cannot disregard without loss, not merely for time, but for eternity.

3. The apostle goes on to assure those he is addressing of his desire for them, and that thus he would be careful always to put them in mind of that which,

* It must be remembered, however, that there is nothing transitory about this kingdom; it is "the *everlasting* kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." At present we are in "the Kingdom of Heaven"—its mystery form, during the absence of the King, and where good and bad must be allowed to grow together (Matt. xiii.). During the Millennium it will be the visible and outward display of the Kingdom of the Son of Man—all evil will there be kept under by immediate divine power. It has been thought by some that this is the end of the Kingdom, and the passage in 1 Cor. xv. has been quoted in proof of this, "Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father . . . then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. xv. 24, 28). If it be seen that this refers to the Millennial kingdom of Christ as Son of Man, it will be understood that this in no way affects that eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour spoken of here. Some have gone so far as to speak of the close of the Kingdom as "the great renunciation," leaving the impression that our Lord resigned certain glories. But we are told that He shares *forever* in the reign of God; "The throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it" (Rev. xxii. 3.)—S. R.

3 (12-21): The glory revealed assuring of the glory to be revealed, to which the word of prophecy leads on.

3. Wherefore I will be careful to put you always in [c]mind of these things, though ye [d]know them and are established in the present truth. And I think it right, as long as I am in this [e]tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle cometh speedily, [f]as also our Lord Jesus Christ hath made manifest to me: but I will use diligence that after my [g]departure ye shall have also at any time ability to call these things to remembrance. For we have not followed skilfully devised [h]fables when we made known to you the power and [i]coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but have been [j]eye-witnesses of his majesty; for he received from God the Father, honor and glory, when there was uttered to him such a voice from the excellent glory, [k]This is my beloved Son in whom I have found my delight. And this voice

[c] ch. 3. 1. cf. 1 Jno. 2. 21.
[d] cf. 1 Thess. 4. 9, 10.
[e] 2 Cor. 5. 1.
[f] Jno. 21. 18, 19.
[g] cf. Acts 20. 29. cf. Josh. 23. 14.
[h] Tit. 1. 14.
[i] cf. Mk. 9. 1.
[j] Matt. 17. 1-8.
[k] cf. Matt. 3. 17.

nevertheless, they knew and were established in. How strange, when we realize the character of these things, that there should need to be this stirring up by putting one in remembrance of that which it is not only joy to remember, but which it is, in fact, all the joy we have to remember! He would therefore, as long as he was in the tabernacle of the body, seek to do this, all the more that he had intimation from the Lord Himself that he was soon to put off his tabernacle. The apostle John has told us of the intimation that the Lord had given him that when he was old another would gird him, and carry him whither he would not. This, it is added, signified what death he should die; but it does not say that Peter at that time apprehended exactly its significance in that way. He had had, apparently, a more explicit and personal word from the Lord since then.* He would therefore use diligence that after his departure they might have at any time ability to call these things to remembrance. He was providing for them in this way in this epistle, and providing for our own needs, through the goodness of God, at the same time. How wonderful is the mercy which has thus given us something that should not have the uncertainty of tradition, its liability to corruption, but a plain word which would abide within our reach at all times!

That he and the other witnesses had not followed skilfully devised fables in making known the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ he could assure them as one of the eye-witnesses of His majesty, who on the holy mount,—hallowed forever by the wondrous memory of His transfiguration,—had received from God the Father honor and glory. The voice had come from that well-known shrine of the Godhead which had so great a place in Israel's history, and which he calls here "the excellent glory." It was the "cloud" that went with the people through the wilderness of old, that had entered into the land with them, that had dwelt in a tent and tabernacle until Solomon built the house. It was that which Ezekiel saw; at last wearied out with the unbelief and corruption of the favored people, departing finally before Nebuchadnezzar overthrew the house itself. Now indeed that glory had found a place of rest, not in a house made with hands, but in a living Person, God's beloved Son, in whom He had found His delight. What a Voice to hear now—no longer the commandments of a fiery law, but the testimony to Him who in grace companied with them, and in whom they had already found for their own souls the divine supply for their deepest need! Here was indeed the confirmation of the prophetic

* What a light this throws, incidentally, upon the blessed hope of the Lord's coming. That, and not death, was the normal hope of the Christian. It needed a special revelation, as here in Peter's case, to let one know he was to die. So far from the truth is the common saying, "We must all die.—S. R.

we [l]heard uttered from heaven when we were with him on the holy mount. We have also the [m]prophetic word confirmed, to which ye do well in taking heed (as to a [n]lamp that shineth in an obscure place, until the [o]day dawn and the morning star ariseth) in your hearts; knowing this first that no prophecy of Scripture is of its [p]own interpretation, for [q]no prophecy ever came by the will of man, but men* spake from God, being [r]moved by the Holy Spirit.

* Many prefix, "holy."

[l] Lk. 9. 35.
[m] 1 Pet. 1. 10.
[n] Ps.119.105.
[o] *cf.* Rom. 13. 12. *cf.* Rev. 22. 16.
[p] 1 Cor.2.13. *cf.* Acts 15. 15, etc.
[q] *cf.* 1Cor.7. 6, 10. 2 Tim.3.16.
[r] *cf.* Heb. 3. 7, etc.

word in which the Old Testament bore witness to the New, the brightness shining for the soul along the track of history, amid the darkness of the world, until the day should dawn and the Morning Star arise. This is a passage of well-known difficulty to many, but the apostle does not surely mean to limit the use of prophecy as something to encourage us merely till we have the proper Christian hope. That hope those to whom he was writing certainly had. Was it not theirs already, who had the word of prophecy confirmed when they had before them the blessed One who is at once the Morning Star, which will summon His people to Himself, and the Sun of Righteousness, the bringer of day to the earth at large? It is not at all a statement that prophecy would have fulfilled its purpose when this anticipatory confirmation of it should take place; but as it pointed, so it led on to the end: its light brightening and widening from century to century, even as now it still goes on for us, the night being still around us, although in our hearts it is not night, but day, for upon us the light of that future has already risen. Prophecy, even of the Old Testament, is thus not set aside. The faith that recognizes the great end of it as that which is still to come cleaves only the more to the testimony by which, in fact, the brightness of it shines more and more upon the path until the perfect day. The proper placing of the parenthesis here removes all difficulty.

The apostle adds to this what has again had difficulty for many, but in another way. "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of its own interpretation." "Its own" is the literal force of the word here, which our common version gives as "private," and which Rome has perverted, in the way well known to us, by making it mean that Scripture is not to be interpreted by the individual for himself, but he must have the consent of the Church before he can know certainly what it speaks. But the words of the apostle say nothing whatever of this kind. In the first place, he is speaking distinctly of *prophecy*, not of Scripture as a whole, although it is not necessary to contest that Scripture is always more and more made intelligible to us by the light of other Scripture. The habit of taking single texts apart from their context has, as we know, been often most disastrous to interpretation; but this has nothing whatever to do with the so-called "right of private judgment," which is better put as the liberty of the soul to hear for itself what is by the Spirit made known to every one. The other thought is only a dexterous way of making the voice of the Church override the voice of Scripture, and of enshrining the Spirit in a corporation only to be found for the purpose sought in certain imagined representatives of it, and which, the more earnestly we seek for it, the more escapes from us. The voice of the Church, as given in the celebrated saying, "Quod semper, quod ubique, et quod ab omnibus"—that is, "What always, what everywhere, and what by all," has been believed, has no existence in fact. As it is well known, fathers have contradicted fathers; councils have been at issue with councils; popes have clashed with popes: there is nothing that in this way one can lay hold of with confidence at all. Put it all together, and it is at best the word of men—of men not always even respectable, and the Spirit which is supposed to dwell in them is assumed, but little manifested. How blessed to turn from it all to that word of God—addressed, as it is, not to teachers, but to private Chris-

DIVISION 2. (Chap. ii.)

The progress of evil, and the seduction of false teachers.

1 (ii. 1-3): Rebellion.

1. BUT there arose also [s]false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, such as shall privily bring in [t]destructive heresies, denying even the Master that [u]bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction; and many shall

[s] Matt. 7.15. *cf.* Acts 20. 30.
[t] Jude 4. 2 Tim. 2. 17, 18.
[u] *cf.* Heb. 10. 29. *cf.* Matt. 13. 44.

tians, which private Christians are therefore surely capable of receiving, or it stultifies itself, and which speaks in its own sweet, homely way in the language of One whose testimony it was that "to the poor the gospel is preached" (Matt. xi. 5)! Here not pride of heart is nurtured by the consciousness of the divine voice speaking to man, but lowliness, which will surely believe that His word, in the very form of it, finds the most suited expression, and bears its own best witness to the truth. But, as already said, "*its own* interpretation" does not and cannot refer to any private judgment of any one, but simply to an interpretation isolated from all that the same Word has given elsewhere, and which would therefore necessarily run the risk of being perverted from its proper use, as a sentence more or less broken, or a page of a book detached from all the rest of it. And it is of prophecy that the apostle is speaking, not of Scripture at large, and prophecy which has for its Author in all its parts the Spirit of God alone. "Men spake from God," not otherwise; not therefore according to their own wills or according to their own thoughts, but moved by Him who sees the end from the beginning, and for whom all the depths of God are familiar realities.

This, too, one has no desire to confine in its application to prophecy. Assuredly it is true of Scripture from end to end. It is our joy to know this. Yet at the same time it is a first principle for prophetic interpretation to realize in this way the connection of every single prophecy with prophecy as a whole. We are thus saved from perverting it to a mere application to certain things which may have, after all, no importance in God's thoughts such as they have in our own, and which may be even entirely out of the sphere of God's revelation. We shall find everywhere, as we take up prophecy itself, how important is this rule which is here announced to us. It is thus things get their place and relation to one another—a relation which gives assurance to us that they do indeed belong to that place. Here alone they will be found to answer perfectly in all parts to that which is written, and we shall never have to lay upon Scripture the burden of what is due to some misfitting upon our own part, some mere human mistake.

Div. 2.

We come now, in the second division, to look at the development of evil, alas, in what is the professing Church of God on earth; the opposition of the enemy, which we have already learned to be so commonly by imitation of the truth, as well as also by weaving error and truth together, so that the truth shall attract true souls and thus put them off their guard against the error mixed with it. How essentially is the present day a day of such mixture! And how abundant are the seductions of false prophets at the present time, whether professedly Christian or as nearly as possible assuming a Christian aspect in order to deceive! *Man's will*, as we shall find, throughout distinguishes the false prophet, the very thing which the apostle has carefully assured us is absolutely foreign to the true one.

1. Looking back, the apostle reminds those whom he addresses—Israelites, as we know—that there were, there always have been, false prophets among the people. This was not to cease in Christianity, as one might easily think and would surely hope; the brightness and blessedness of God's grace in it allowing no successful imitation. Nay, says the apostle, there shall be false teachers

[v] follow their dissolute ways, through whom the way of truth shall be [w] blasphemed. And through covetousness shall they with well-turned* words make [x] merchandise of you; whose [y] judgment now from of old lingereth not, and their destruction slumbereth not.

2 (4-10): Against One able to destroy and to deliver.

2. For if God [z] spared not the angels who sinned, but having cast them down to hell† hath delivered them unto chains‡ of darkness [to be] kept for judgment, and spared not the [a] old world but preserved Noah the eighth person,§ a preacher of righteousness, having brought in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; and

v cf. Matt. 7. 13. cf. Mk. 13. 22.
w Rom. 2. 24.
x cfr. 2 Cor. 12. 14-18. cf. Tit. 1. 11.
y cf. 1 Thes. 5. 3. cf. Eccl. 11. 9.
z Jude 6. cf. Lk. 8. 31 -33. cf. Rev. 12. 9 with Rev. 20. 2, 3.
a Gen. 6. 1-8, etc. Lk. 17. 26, 27.

* Or, "insinuating."
† ταρταρώσας: literally, "placed them in Tartarus."
‡ Or, "caves," σειροῖς for σειραῖς.
§ That is, "with seven others." It is the usual idiom.

among you, and that going on to the extreme of revolt against the Master that bought them. He does not say "redeemed." He has no thought of redeemed people here. Christ has *bought* everything. The whole world is His, with all that is in it, and not merely as the Creator, but as the One who has paid an infinite price to get it back, as it were, to Himself.* But purchase is not redemption. What it does imply is the right over them of the One who has made this purchase, a right they may deny, as, in fact, those mentioned would deny it. They would develop a spirit of rebellion which would bring swift destruction, not upon themselves alone, but upon all who followed them. Their ways would be ways of dissoluteness,—their own way manifestly,—but which would cause, by the number of their followers, the way of truth to be blasphemed by those who were professed followers of it.† Seeking their own ends, they would be but merchantmen on their own account, making merchandise, with well-turned words, of the people of God themselves, to satisfy simply their own covetousness, their lust of power, lust of money, lust of fame, every other kind of lust that presses upon man. The judgment upon these was ordained from of old, and, as it were, ready to break forth. The patience of God was not indifference, and the seeming prosperity that they might in the meantime have would not hinder the completeness of their final destruction.

2. The apostle now exhorts those who might be in danger of being carried away by the false pretensions of such as these to remember the judgment which is already passed upon those who in former times walked in the same course of lawlessness and rebellion against the authority of God. The angels who sinned God has cast down to the pit, delivering them to chains of darkness to be kept for judgment—a company which, as it seems by what is said of them, must be kept separate from the more general class of Satan and his angels, who are, as we know, not in confinement as yet, but going to and fro in the earth and walking up and down in it, Satan himself being the prince of this world at the present time. These, on the other hand, are already in chains, not in hell exactly, which in the force that it has now with us would mean the final place of torment. Here, evidently, is a condition preliminary to the judgment which is at hand for them and for all else, one and the same judgment at the same time. The apostle brings forward again the judgment of that old world out of which Noah, "the eighth person,"—or one among eight,—"a preacher of righteousness," was preserved, the flood being brought in upon the world of the ungodly.

* Thus the whole field was purchased (Matt. xiii.) for the sake of the hidden treasure—the world, for the sake of Israel. So also in Heb. x. 29, apostates are spoken of as having been "sanctified" (set apart) by the blood of the covenant. Of course, this is only external, and has no thought of redemption.—S. R.

† In like manner, the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles by the godlessness of the Jews (Rom. ii. 24). The world is always ready to attribute to the true the excesses of the false imitation.—S. R.

turning the cities of [b]Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an [c]example unto those that should live ungodly; and delivered [d]righteous Lot, [e]vexed with the lascivious behavior of the godless* (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their lawless deeds): the Lord [f]knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to keep the [g]unrighteous unto the day of judgment under punishment;† and especially those who [h]walk after the flesh in the lusts of uncleanness and [i]despise authority.

3 (11-17): Their full manifestation.

3. Bold [are they], self-willed; they do not fear to [j]rail at dignities;‡ whereas [k]angels, though greater in might

b Gen. 19. 24, 25. Jude 7.
c Lk. 17. 28-30, 32. *cf.* Lk. 13. 1-5.
d *ctr.* Gen. 19. 30-38. *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 19.
e Gen. 19. 7, 8.
f 1 Cor. 10. 13.
g *cf.* Heb. 10. 27 with 1 Tim. 5. 24.
h Jude 16. *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 6.
i Jude 8. *cf.* Rom. 1. 30.
j Ex. 22. 28. *cf.* Acts 23. 4, 5; *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 17.
k Jude 9; *cf.* Zech. 3. 2.

* Or, "lawless." † Or, "to be punished." ‡ Literally, "glories."

It is the same example that we have had in the first epistle, and evidently used in the same way: not to dilate upon God's grace to those thus perishing, but the very opposite—to emphasize their judgment, and that, out of a whole world of ungodly, only eight persons were preserved. Next, he passes on to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah which God had turned into ashes, condemning them with an overthrow, making them an example to those that should live ungodly.* Here, too, was a careful discrimination in favor of the righteous, though it might be only one man who manifested himself really as that. He, too, was in a place where manifestly he had no call from God to justify his being in it. Righteous man he was, vexed with the evil behavior of the godless, and that from day to day, as in their midst he saw and heard what was taking place. But why was he there to vex his soul with it? Yet, after all, though in Sodom, he was not of Sodom, and the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation while keeping the unrighteous to the day of judgment under punishment. Even in that preliminary prison-house of the lost there must of necessity be the sense of God's anger abiding upon those shut up there, although the time of full and final apportionment has not come. The apostle emphasizes two things especially as noted among them—the outbreak of the flesh in its grossest character, and the setting aside of all authority. These two things, of course, necessarily go together; at least, the latter will accompany the former. Thus, then, had God manifested Himself able to destroy on the one hand, able to deliver on the other, and faithful on both sides to His nature and to His word.

3. We have now the full manifestation of these ungodly ones of the last days. The same general character is seen in them, only ripened in the constant resistance to the longsuffering of God, which is salvation, and to the full light which has come in. This is, in fact, what makes the last days so evil: not that, if you look at the mere outward condition, you could always say that it is worse than what the world has been ever full of; but, as we have learnt in Paul's epistle to Timothy, the evil has wrought in the presence of the truth, to which, in the first place, it had seemed indeed to be in allegiance, and which, in fact, had more or less control. Thus there was a form of godliness while the power of it was denied. Here we have a similar thing, but with a fuller description, and therefore more loathsome as seen nearer at hand. They are "bold," "self-willed,

* In the three instances of sin and its judgment there seems to be a development of evil: in the angels, self-will and rebellion are prominent; in those judged at the flood, violence and lawlessness are present; while in Sodom and Gomorrah, it is the abominable corruption of the flesh. Thus departure from God is the beginning of a course of sin which is fully manifested in unutterable corruption. It will also be noticed that, while not in the final *place* of doom, the penalty and judgment inflicted in each case is irrevocable.—S. R.

and power, bring not a railing accusation against them before the Lord. But these, as natural [l]animals without reason, born to be caught and destroyed, railing in things of which they are ignorant, shall also perish in their own corruption, [m]receiving the reward of unrighteousness: [men] that count it [n]pleasure to revel in the daytime,* spots and blemishes, reveling in their deceivings, while they [o]feast with you; having eyes [p]full of adultery† and that cease not from sin; [q]enticing unstable souls; having the heart practised in [r]covetousness, children of curse; having left the right way they have gone astray following in the path of [s]Balaam [the son] of Bosor, who loved the reward of unrighteousness, but was [t]rebuked for his own wickedness—the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the folly of the prophet. These are [u]springs without water, even mists driven by storm, to whom the gloom of [v]darkness is reserved [forever].‡

* Many translate, "for a day." † Literally, "an adulteress."
‡ Many omit, "forever."

l Jude 10. cf. Ps. 49. 20.
m cf. Rom. 2. 6-9.
n cf. 1 Pet. 4. 3. cf. Acts 2. 15. cf. 1 Thess. 5. 7.
o Jude 12. cf. 1 Cor. 11. 21.
p Matt. 5. 28. cf. Eph. 4. 19.
q ver. 18.
r ver. 3. cf. 2 Cor. 11. 20.
s Num. 22. 7, 17. Jude 11. cf. Rev. 2. 14.
t Num. 22. 28-30.
u Jude 12. cf. Matt. 21. 19.
v Jude 13. cf. Matt. 22. 13.

they do not fear to rail at dignities," whereas angels, so much greater in might and power, did not bring railing accusation against them before the Lord.* But these are only as animals naturally, without the constraint of reason or the fear of God, having lost the capacity for communion with Him, and thus all that implied or necessitated continuance at all. They were but as beasts "born to be caught and destroyed," much lower therefore than the beast, for man cannot sink *to* them without sinking lower. These, therefore, railing about things of which they are ignorant, will perish in their own corruption. There is in sin a necessary element of destruction. It has no justification of its existence, no right to live, and the perpetual degradation downward tends necessarily to the same thing. Thus they receive the reward of unrighteousness, being such as count it pleasure to revel in the daytime, not in the night, as men do usually for shame. They have learnt to face the light and defy it. Thus they can take their place even with Christians, while mere spots and blemishes upon all the Christian name; reveling at last in their very deceivings at the superior wisdom with which they trick the more credulous souls around them, their very heart going out in their restless eyes, never ceasing from sin, having the heart practiced in ways of personal gain, following Balaam in his path of old, who loved the reward of unrighteousness and walked, with the very hand of God upon him, in the folly of his own self-seeking. Thus the dumb ass was used of God in fitting rebuke to him—a human voice, yet with a beast's nature; but the beast rebukes the man, as even beast nature does. These, then, are "springs without water," those to whom men look for something but find nothing of what they want—"obscuring mists," driven by the storm of their own passions, with divine judgment at the back, unto whom the gloom of darkness is reserved forever. Such is the description of those of whom God's warning voice would remind men during the time of His longsuffering endurance of them. None must think that He is deceived, or that the judgment which He predicts is a thing that may be slighted or trifled with.

4. And now the effect of all this upon others is specially marked. "Speaking great swelling words of vanity, they allure with the lusts of the flesh those just escaping from those that live in error," men under a certain power of the truth,

* Note the contrast here between the unfallen angels and Satan, and presumably all his hosts. He is the "accuser of the brethren." Man, alas, shows his kinship with this arch railer by doing what the mighty angels do not dare to do.—S. R.

4 (18-22): Testing unstable souls.

4. For speaking great [w]swelling words of vanity they allure with the lusts of the flesh, by dissoluteness, those who are just [x]escaping from those that live in error; promising them liberty while they [y]themselves are slaves of corruption; for of whom a man is [z]overcome of the same is he also brought into slavery. For if after having [a]escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the [b]last state has become worse with them than the first. For it were [c]better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, having known [it], to turn back from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But that [word] of the true proverb hath happened to them, The [d]dog hath turned back to his own vomit, and the sow that was washed to [her] wallowing in the mire.

w Jude 16. *cf.* Ps. 73. 9.
x *cf.* ch. 1. 4.
y *cf.* Rom. 2. 19-23.
z Jno. 8. 34. Rom. 6. 16.
a ver. 18.
b *cf.* Matt. 12. 45. *cf.* Jno. 5. 14.
c *cf.* Lk. 12. 47, 48. *cf.* Heb. 6. 4-6. *cf.* Matt. 26. 24.
d Prov. 26. 11. *cf.* Jer. 2. 13. *cf.* Ezek. 16. 15. *cfr.* Rom. 6. 2.

convicted in their own conscience, while, after all, the heart is not drawn to or satisfied with the things of God. Men are forced from evil by the conviction of judgment at hand, and this is the well-known character of so many apparent conversions under the chastening hand of God. They are, after all, driven, not drawn; and thus the lusts of the flesh still allure them. They would love to have the liberty which these men promise them, although, indeed, they are but themselves the mere slaves of corruption, least their own masters when they think most surely that they are that. But thus those who "have escaped the *pollutions* of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" may be again entangled and overcome, men at heart halting between two opinions, although the truth has so far prevailed with them as to compel their separation from the very things that still invite them. We must note carefully here that those of whom the apostle has spoken in the first chapter are those who have escaped the *corruption* that is in the world through lust. This is the real Christian character. The heart is satisfied, and satisfied with Christ; and thus they have in them a principle of stability which those spoken of here have none of. They have escaped the pollutions of external things. They have never had their own inner malady healed. Thus, though it be the "knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" that has done this, they are but dogs that turn back to their forsaken vomit, and, like the washed sow, which one surely knows, spite of her washing, will go back to the mire she loves. It is plain, therefore, that the apostle is, in all this, not contemplating that which could be a possibility to any real Christian. They have *reformed*, as men say; they know the way of righteousness. They are convinced of that which the light has thus discovered to them; but that is all, and it is plain how in such a condition, when in spite of this they turn back to that which they have left, their last state has become worse than the first. Such, then, is the spreading character of this canker of evil, while at the same time we are made carefully to know how God has provided for and shields His own.

Div. 3.

And now we come to what has been noticed as peculiar to Peter among the writers of these inspired epistles, although the apostle John will treat of it more in detail in the prophecy which closes the books of Scripture. We may expect from the apostle of the circumcision a reference to that which was already a promise in the Old Testament itself, and which has to do with the judgment, and yet the renovation, of that earth with which Israel's promises are always connected. The whole fashion of this world is to pass away. As the earth, as

DIVISION 3. (Chap. iii.)

The death and resurrection of the earth.

1 (1–7): The wilfulness of preachers of the stability of all things, deriding the promise of the Lord's coming, and ignoring the doom of the first world.

1. THIS is now, beloved, the second epistle that I write unto you, in [both] which I [e]stir up your pure mind by putting you in remembrance, that ye should be [f]mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of the Lord and Saviour by your apostles; knowing this first, that in the [g]last days mockers shall come with mockery, [h]walking* after their own lusts, and saying, [i]Where is the promise of his coming? for from the time the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from

[e] ch. 1. 13. cf. Heb. 10. 25.
[f] Jude 17.
[g] Jude 18. cf. 1 Tim. 4. 1. cf. 2 Tim. 3. 1.
[h] ch. 2. 10. cf. 1 Com. 16. 18.
[i] cf. Is. 5. 19. cf. Ezek. 12. 22. 27. cf. Matt. 24. 48.

* The word here is not the usual one for "walking," but gives the added thought of "journeying." Solemn suggestion of the end of such walking.

we know it now, has had already its baptism of water, so it is yet to have its baptism of fire. The scene of sin and corruption and death must itself be purged from all that reminds of this. And this, as we have already seen in Titus, lies beyond that which we have learnt to speak of as the millennial time of blessing, which is but, after all, "the regeneration," and not the perfect state, which alone satisfies God. Peter gives us, indeed, but a mere glimpse of this; and the description of the after-prophecy is little more than such a glimpse; yet there is that in it which has the deepest interest and instruction as to the ways of God, ways which are the necessary outcome of His own nature.

1. First of all here, the apostle once more brings before us the lawless ones of the last days, now, indeed, in another character, as infidel scoffers against all that threatens their own security in evil. In stirring up the minds of those he addresses, by putting them in remembrance of the words both of Israel's holy prophets and of the later commandment of the Lord and Saviour by the apostles, he would have them understand and note especially the coming of mockers in the last days, their infidelity taught them by the lusts they seek to gratify. These have an argument which is already, in certain quarters, beginning to show itself. They ask: "Where is the promise of His coming?" and they assert that all things continue, in fact, as they were from the beginning of the creation. It is the *argument of "uniformity,"* only thoroughly carried out; and the judgment of God by the flood is ignored as men have of late been seeking to ignore it. What proof have we of the flood that can be derived from the great teacher, science? Science has, in fact, been giving its voice of late in correspondence with Scripture, but it is not welcome to those who desire no supernatural interference of God with the machinery of this world. This is hidden from them, says the apostle; really hidden, so that they may be sincere in it, and yet by the subtlety of their own wills, which so often deceive the keenest. The dependence of the heavens of old upon the word of God, how far is this to be admitted? The earth "subsisting out of water and in water" presents itself as readily in accordance with the fate of that old world overflowed with water. Did it, in fact, perish? or is there some partial flood or a tradition of many different ones that has been mistaken for this? Are there not races that came through it, after all? Are there not races that have no such tradition? Raise a question here, and it is enough. *A question, as against Scripture, is always available.* We will believe it, if we must, but we must show our readiness, at least, not to believe, if another theory may better approve itself. Let the record of the past be out of the way, and what need we fear as to any prophecy of a fiery judgment which these invalidated memoirs of an old time have preserved for us? It is by the same Word, and no other, that the heavens that are now and the earth have been stored up, reserved for fire against that which has its character as a day of judg-

the beginning of the creation. For this is hidden from them, through their own [j]wilfulness, that by the [k]word of God the heavens were of old, and an earth, subsisting out of water and in* water; by which the world that then was, overflowed with water, [l]perished; but the heavens that are now, and the earth, by the [m]same word have been stored up, [n]reserved for fire against a day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

2 (8-10): The seeming delay but the longsuffering of the Lord unto salvation.

2. But let not this one thing, beloved, be hidden from you, that [o]one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some account slackness, but is [p]long-suffering towards you, not [q]willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the [r]day of the Lord will come as a thief,*

j *cf.* Eph. 4. 18.
k Heb. 11. 3. Ps. 33. 6, 9.
l Gen. 7. 19-24.
m *cf.* Heb. 12. 26, 27.
n *cf.* Is. 24. 19, 20. *cf.* Is. 51. 6.
o Ps. 90. 4. *cf.* Ps. 39. 5. p *cf.* Hab. 2. 3. Ps. 103. 8.
q Ezek. 33. 11. 1 Tim. 2. 4.
r 1 Thess. 5. 2-4. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 2 with 1 Cor. 15. 24. ver. 12.

* Or, "through," *διὰ cf.* 1 Pet. iii. 20.
* Some add, "in the night."

ment and destruction of ungodly men. A moral character, as we see, attaches to these things, and will surely loose the tongues of immoral men against them. Yet conscience prophesies too of a judgment to come, a testimony which it costs men much to be able to silence; while the world, as we look at it, spite of all reforms and all outward embellishments of it, is not such that one can readily even believe in a holy God going on with it forever. An anger that vents itself in the destruction of the very material scene which everywhere bears witness of the evil that has defiled it, is, after all, not without its approval in the heart that knows God.

2. But what about this long waiting time, which, as we know, science would enormously protract, in which God has been going on with such a world as this? The apostle has a word to say about this. "Let this not be hidden from you, beloved," he says, "that one day, with the Lord, is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." In the presence of God's eternity we must not reckon things just as we are prone to do. After all, how can one compare all the length of time that might be granted, and the largest claim that could be made, with that immeasurable eternity which can furnish no proportion whatever to it? But there is another thing. "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some account slackness." His slackness is but His longsuffering. He "wills not that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." This is what is in His heart, His desire for men, however little they may respond to it. Yet that day of the Lord, so slow to come, will yet surely come, and come as a thief, stealing unwelcome upon men who put the thought of it willingly away from them, and thus invite deception. "But the day of the Lord will come," "in which the heavens will pass away with a rushing noise, and the elements burning with heat shall be dissolved; the earth also, and the works in it, shall be burned up." We must not confound this with the coming of the Lord for His saints, nor even with His after-appearing with them, and the judgment which will take place upon the earth when He appears. We have, as we know in the after-revelation, the very interval measured which will be between this judgment of the living and the judgment of the dead before the great white throne; and it is in connection with this last, as Peter also speaks here, that the earth and its works will be burned up. We must realize the difference, too, between "the *day* of the Lord" and "the *coming* of the Lord," and must not wonder if "the *day* of the Lord" stretch over 1,000 years or more, if it do not reach on, indeed, to eternity. It is the day when the Lord will be once more manifestly supreme, and all opposition to Him be put down with a strong hand. Thus it may begin from the time of that appearing of the Lord itself, and so in

in which the heavens will [s]pass away with a rushing noise, and the elements burning with heat shall be dissolved; the earth also and the works in it shall be [t]burned up.

3 (11-14): The fulfilment of the promise.

3. All these things, then, being thus to be dissolved, what [u]manner of persons ought ye to be, in holy behavior and godliness, waiting for and [v]hastening the coming of the [w]day of God, by reason of which [the]

[s] *cf.* Heb. 1. 11, 12. *cf.* Rev. 20. 11.
[t] *cf.* Is. 34. 4. *cf.* Mic. 1. 4.
[u] *cf.* Rom. 13. 11-14 with 1 Jno. 3. 3.
[v] *cf.* Rev. 22. 20.
[w] *cfr.* Phil. 1. 10; ver. 10.

its first beginning come as a thief, surprising the world; while, in the course of it further, the earth itself is subjected to His power and things are put into that condition, ready for the coming eternity which the reign of Christ as Man over the earth is ordained to bring about. Every enemy is to be put down, and death itself and Hades cast into the lake of fire; and then, at last, with no enemy or evil occurrent, "the day of the Lord" shall be peace, and nothing else but peace. Christ as "the Father of eternity" shall introduce the reign of peace forever.

3. We come now to the fulfilment of that promise for which we wait. If we are looking for things to be in this way dissolved, "what manner of persons ought we to be, in holy behaviour and godliness," waiting for and even hastening, with desire, the coming of that day of God when all this shall take place! Beyond it, according to His promise (we can have no evidence of it except that sure and blessed promise, that Word which we must learn to trust here or we shall be beggared forever), there remains for us the cheer of new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. This is manifestly a reference to Isaiah's word: "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered nor come into mind." It is but a glance, for the prophets of the Old Testament, apart from this, never seem to go beyond that kingdom which we, indeed, have learned to call "millennial," as having its limits defined for us in this way. For Israel, there was no such necessary limitation; there was a bright scene before them upon which their eyes should rest, assured that whatever might be beyond could only be additional blessing; and the prophet here goes on immediately to speak of God's creating "Jerusalem a rejoicing and her people a joy," in terms which very plainly imply the presence of sin, and therefore *not* an earth upon which dwelleth righteousness, not characterized by that. But we must not on that account lose sight of the distinct character of that which the apostle here, with divine insight, brings forward as what was to be really final—an absolutely "new heavens and new earth." We have one more reference to it in Isaiah, and that is where the Lord promises that as the new heavens and the new earth which He will make shall remain before Him, so Israel's seed and their name shall remain. This is naturally taken by many to imply that therefore the new earth itself only speaks here of a temporary, that is, of the millennial condition. If so, it is plainly contrary to what Peter gives us of it here, for it is plain that the dissolution of the heavens and earth that are now is in order to the bringing in of a perfect condition which is to follow it. The picture that we have in the book of Revelation is in complete accordance with this. We have only the alternative, therefore, that this is an absolute promise of God that not only the blessed of Him in Israel shall remain amongst those blessed forever (which, of course, will be true), but that their very *seed* and *name* would remain. Here then, of course, is the assertion that Israel has not merely a temporary place as a special people of His upon the earth, but that it will have such a place forever.

But this will involve a difficulty for many. It has often been dwelt upon that when, in the new earth, "the tabernacle of God shall be with men and He will dwell with them," nations shall have disappeared, with all the distinctions incident to this. It is now henceforth only God and *men*. Can we, however,

heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and [the] elements shall melt with fervent heat? But we, according to his promise, wait for [x]new heavens and a new earth, wherein [y]dwelleth righteousness. Where-

[x] Rev. 21.1-8. Is. 65. 17. Is. 66. 22.
[y] *ctr.* Rom. 5. 21. *ctr.* Is. 32. 1.

press this so far? Exactly the same thing has been thought with regard to the company of the redeemed in heaven, as we know. It has been thought and contended that they are all one company. Spite of the distinctions that we see in such a passage as that in the twelfth of Hebrews, where "the spirits of just men made perfect" (clearly by resurrection) are distinguished from "the assembly of the first-born ones whose names are written in heaven," it is so generally considered that the Church, which is Christ's body, is that which has continued through all generations, and which embraces in it all that have ever believed from the beginning, that to speak of any such distinction as is implied here has been thought unwarrantable. Yet very many now have learned to think otherwise, and the passage itself which speaks of "the assembly of first-born ones" must necessarily imply some *after*-born, who are, therefore, not of this assembly. It may be said, perhaps, that these are millennial saints. Even so, there is a distinction admitted amongst the redeemed. But it may be questioned whether the first-born are that in time, or in place, rather. Israel has been, as we know, God's first-born upon the earth, and these "first-born ones registered in *heaven*" are plainly in opposition to the "first-born ones written upon *earth*." When God says of Christ even, prophetically, "I will make Him My first-born, higher than the kings of the earth," it is plainly prerogative and dignity that are in question, rather than time. Again, among the angels, although they are in this passage in Hebrews spoken of as "the universal gathering," yet we are accustomed to recognize distinctions—authorities, principalities and powers, whatever may be implied in these. The distinction between earthly and heavenly saints must abide. If there be a new earth for those upon earth, the heavenly saints have not their portion there. Thus there is no antecedent argument against Israel's name remaining forever in connection with the new earth. The redeemed will be all redeemed. The children of God will all be children; but if it please God that all that He has wrought in Israel should be preserved in this way, as a memorial forever, what is there to stumble any in such a thing? In any case, if the "new heavens and the new earth" mean just what the apostle is speaking of here, then it is positively declared by the prophet that Israel's seed and name shall remain as long as these do. We have no reason whatever to say that the new heavens and the new earth are millennial, simply. To what other promise can Peter refer here than that in Isaiah? There *is* no other; and the apostle gives this distinctly, not as a new revelation, but as the fulfilment of God's word of old. Thus we have no alternative, surely, but to take it as it stands. Distance on the part of any from God will indeed be over. Those words of revelation, "The tabernacle of God shall be with men, and He will dwell with them," are assurance that now, what has always been in God's heart, what we have seen as revealed in Christ Himself among men,—Immanuel,—will be at last fully effectuated. There will be no distance anywhere; but that does not imply that there will be no *differences*, which, if it be maintained, must be insisted on in the fullest manner—no difference between the Church and Old Testament saints; no difference between the heavenly saints and the earthly; and this would naturally end in what is the thought of many, that the new earth will be the final abode of all these, and that the New Jerusalem itself, therefore, must lose finally its distinctly heavenly character. Scripture surely does not lead to this, nor justify it. The blessing of all will be perfect, but there will be distinct circles of blessing, none the less.

Just a word as to the expression itself, "new heavens and a new earth." The heavens here are simply the heavens of the earth itself, that is to say, all that is connected with the firmament of the second day. The heavens have too manifestly to do with the earth to be omitted in any description of the final change.

fore, beloved, seeing that ye wait for these things, be [z]diligent to be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless.

4 (15-18): The testing of the unstable.

4. And account the [a]long-suffering of our Lord to be salvation, even as our beloved brother [b]Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written to you; as also in all his epistles speaking in them of these things, wherein are some things [c]hard to be understood, which they that are untaught and ill-established [d]wrest, as also the [e]other Scriptures, to their own destruction. Ye, therefore, beloved, knowing

z ch. 1. 5. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 13.
a ver. 9.
b *cf.* Heb. 10. 23-39.
c *cf.* Heb. 5. 11 with Heb. 6. 4-9.
d *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 8.
e *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 16 with ch. 1. 20, 21.

The heavens rule the earth, and thus are naturally changed in order to the new condition of things upon it. As we find them connected in the creative account in Genesis, so we find them connected again here at the close. The new earth, let us remember, is new in the same sense that the man in Christ is a new man —not a new individual. It is the same person who was the sinner and is now the saint, but there is a new *condition* altogether. The millennium, as we have seen in Titus, is the regeneration of the earth; but that is not the prelude to its mere destruction. On the contrary, it is the first step towards abiding blessing and the change of the heavens and the earth; for the coming in of that which is new is as the change upon the body for the saint, when the body itself may be dissolved and everything seem to pass away, the very elements of it dispersed in every direction; and yet there is a resurrection of the dead. The great condition of blessing is announced. Righteousness must be the basis of all, and abiding righteousness upon the new earth means abiding blessing.* Whose heart that has known what it is to "hunger and thirst after righteousness" but must look with expectation for that time? "Wherefore," says the apostle, "seeing that ye wait for these things, be diligent to be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless." How unsuitable for the looking for this condition of perfect righteousness would be the least laxity with regard to it now!

4. But the apostle closes still with the word of warning. We are to account, as he reminds us again, that the longsuffering of the Lord is salvation. That is His meaning in it. It is not tolerance of evil in any wise, and we must not use it as an argument for any tolerance on our part of what is contrary to Him. The fruit of this longsuffering we are, every one of us: therefore we may well rejoice in it. And Peter has here a tender reference to that beloved brother, Paul, to whom the gospel of salvation was in an eminent way committed. It is the only passage, perhaps, in the New Testament in which we find the commendation of one inspired apostle by another. How suited here, where there had been, as we know, for a moment an apparent breach, which men have worked, after their manner, into a strife between two contradictory systems—Christian both, and which had finally, by some way of compromise, to be brought together and welded into one. Peter's words here are surely intended in divine wisdom to meet any such thought, and the very letter to the Hebrews is what Peter refers to in this case. "According to the wisdom given unto him," he says, he "hath written unto *you*." Yet here, above all, were, as we know, some of those things hard to be understood which would be found especially by Jews, more or less, in all his epistles. That does not, in Peter's eyes, evidently, diminish the

* We have three distinct relationships of righteousness in connection with three ages. During the present age, it is the basis upon which grace reigns—"Even so might grace reign through righteousness" (Rom. v. 21). In the cross and the resurrection of our Lord, God's righteousness has been manifested and vindicated, and a divine basis laid upon which grace may reign. During the Millennium, righteousness will reign (Isa. 32. 1). No longer will forbearance wait upon the ungodly, but swift and sure retribution will fall upon the disobedient. During the eternal age there will be no need for the repression of evil, for there will be no evil, save in the eternal prison house of Satan and the lost. But righteousness will *dwell*, have its house, in the new heavens and new earth.—S. R.

[these things] before, [f]beware lest, being carried away with the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own steadfastness; but [g]grow in grace and in the [h]knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be [i]glory both now and forever.* Amen.

* To the day of eternity.

[f] *cf.* 1 Cor. 10. 6-12. *cf.* Rom. 11. 20.
[g] *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 2. *cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 3.
[h] Col. 1. 6, 10. ch. 1. 8.
[i] 1 Tim. 1. 17. Rom. 11. 36

wisdom of them. There are those who wrest them to their own destruction, but they have to *wrest* them in order to this, and those who do so are the untaught and ill established—the people who, therefore, have not bent their hearts really to the establishing truth, and have not submitted their souls to the discipline of it. Destruction could not come otherwise to any from the blessed Scriptures, the witnesses of the fulness of God's love for men; yet even those truly His might need the admonition. God works in this way, by His admonitions; and the apostle bids them, knowing these things before, to beware lest, being carried away with the error of the wicked, they fall from their own steadfastness. He returns in his last words here, to that with which he had begun the epistle. If they would not fall or be carried away, they must "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." They must learn more and more the grace expressed in Christ; for growth in grace is surely, on the other side of it, but growth in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour. In that knowledge he has told us at the beginning, all things are found that pertain to life and godliness. "To Him," therefore, "be glory, both now and forever."*

* Most have noticed the marked similarity between the second chapter of second Peter and the Epistle of Jude. Unbelief would put a slight upon inspiration, claiming that one was but the copy of the other. Faith, however, sees only perfection in the word of God, and where there are difficulties, looks for special reasons for them. Most likely, one of the writers may have had the words of the other before him, and in speaking of the same state, would be led by the Spirit of God to use the same illustrations. But the differences between the two portions are also clearly marked.—S. R.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

THE epistle now before us has a character which makes it unique in the New Testament. It is an epistle distinctly to the twelve tribes as such; and although it is perfectly clear, as even in the opening words, that James speaks as a "servant of the Lord Jesus Christ," and that he is writing for those who have the faith of the Lord Jesus, still we find in his epistle the evidence of that condition of things which we know in fact obtained for long at Jerusalem among a people converted to Christ, and yet all of them zealous of the law. The Gentiles had, as we know, been acknowledged as having, while remaining such, the blessing of the gospel; but the maintenance of the law necessarily maintains still a distinction, in some degree at least, such as will obtain in that millennial kingdom for which we look. There, all will be believers in a common Lord; yet, nevertheless, Israel's pre-eminence will be manifest as the special people of God. The epistle to the Hebrews, one would say, could not have been written as yet, and there is no exhortation whatever to go outside the camp; on the contrary, the mention of the synagogue would seem to imply—if we do not consider the use of the word a mere adaptation to the Christian assembly—that they met still in common with others of Israel. It was truly a synagogue, a gathering *together*, and yet not properly an *ecclesia* (assembly), a "gathering *out*." The exhortations as to the rich are in the same line with this. They can hardly be addresses to those who were distinctly believers in the Lord Jesus, and yet they agree perfectly with the character of a letter to the twelve tribes that are of the dispersion. This character of the epistle it would be wrong to overlook, as it surely has its instruction for us, and we can understand how in this connection its character should be that of practical exhortation, rather than of doctrine. James as we know dwells upon practice, upon the conduct flowing from faith, the works by which faith is made perfect. The epistle may thus fairly be said to exhibit its character in that part of it which has been, perhaps, most dwelt upon,—certainly most contended about,—his peculiar doctrine of justification by faith. Paul has already left room for this, so that there is no possible collision. He has taken up the same example of Abraham which James adduces, but in order to say, "If Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory." Does he deny, then, that he was justified by works? No, surely, but he adds, as a corrective of any wrong thought from this, "*But not before God.*" Justification before God is not James' theme, then. It is a justification of the believer by his faith, for which that faith has to be seen in the fruits that prove it living, but prove it, therefore, clearly to man,

but not to God. This, of course, remains to be considered when we take it up in the epistle. It plainly is in accordance with the whole character of it. The works must be works of faith. They are not merely what men call "good works." They must not lack this element of faith in them; and this he shows us, for example, in the behavior of those who, in the synagogue, put the poor man in a good place, as recognizing where true glory is in Him who was the Lord of glory.

So, at the beginning of the epistle, the various trials in which they are to rejoice is but the proving of a faith which worketh patience; and if this faith wrought patience, if it had perfect work, then they were "perfect and entire, lacking in nothing." Thus, too, while the brother of low degree glories in the exaltation which the gospel of Christ has brought him, the rich, on the other hand, with his eyes upon the unseen, is to glory rather in his humiliation, recognizing the temporary character of all human things. The word by which God has begotten to a new life is that which they are to receive with meekness,—the engrafted word,—and thus to be doers of it, and not mere hearers, deceiving their own selves. Thus faith is no less in James' estimation than in Paul's, although it may be set before us in a different way.

The divisions are:

1. (Chap. i.) The power of faith.
2. (Chap. ii. 1–13.) "Against such there is no law."
3. (Chap. ii. 14–26.) The manifestation of faith by works.
4. (Chaps. iii., iv.) The walk through the world.
5. (Chap. v.) The end and conditions of the way.

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

DIVISION 1. (Chap. i.)

The power of faith.

1 (1-4): Faith's sufficiency in God.

1, [a] JAMES, bondman of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the [b] twelve tribes that are in the dispersion, greeting. Count it all [c] joy, my brethren, when ye fall into various temptations,* knowing that

* Or, trials.

a *cf.* Acts 12. 17. *cf.* Acts 15. 13, etc. *cf.* Acts 21. 18. *cf.* Gal. 2. 12.

b *cf.* Acts 26. 7 with 1 Ki. 18. 31.

c *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 9, 10. *cf.* Matt. 5. 12.

NOTES.

Div. 1.

In the epistle to the twelve tribes it is remarkable, and cannot be without its meaning, that the writer should be James, or Jacob, as the word is. It is the letter of a New Testament Jacob, who has learned the lesson, in fact, which Jacob in his day was so slow to learn, but which was the lesson of his life—the lesson which turned him from a Jacob into Israel, "a prince with God." But what was that lesson? It was the lesson contained in the word "Bethel," "the house of God;" God seen in it in His desire to come near to man, yea, to have an abiding place with him. The door of the house is open to him in vision, and a ladder let down, upon which the angels ascend and descend in the exercise of gracious ministry. There is not, of course, the nearness which *we* apprehend in the house of God. It is but the rudimentary idea of it; and upon Jacob's spirit there is the awe of it, rather than any sense of nearness; yet he says, "If God will be with me," and promises that he will set up God's house for Him, which, in fact, however little the manner of it might be in Jacob's thought, man was to do. But what Jacob has to realize is the ways that become this house. He is, alas, Jacob still. His footing with God he would fain put on the ground of a bargain, a coarse idea of what was to come afterwards for his descendants—the legal covenant. Yet the true thought of holiness such as becomes God's house is scarcely in his mind at all. He is still Jacob "the supplanter," or "heel-catcher," one who lays hold with his hand for his own advantage, with small scruple. He has to suffer long the consequences of this. Even when he seeks God's blessing, as we know he did seek, yet the grasp of the hand is seen. He cannot trust God to *give*. He bargains keenly with his careless brother, as afterwards he bargains with Laban also for his daughter, and gets overreached in it. When he comes back into the land, he is to meet the consequences of his early wrong-doing. He bows before his "lord Esau," whom he would conciliate with a gift. But for God to meet him, there must be, first of all, what we find in Peniel, where the wrestling is at last not on his side, but on God's, although he can wrestle sufficiently in withstanding God to find himself, to his cost, with a dislocated thigh. Even so, it is a way of blessing. The wrestler can now only cling, but it is just as he learns how to cling and not to wrestle,—that is, the way of faith instead of the way of works,—his blessing comes.

James has learnt the lesson. It is faith that he upholds ever. He joys in that humiliation in which, whatever the trial of it, he is cast upon God and finds Him for his need. He has learnt that God "giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not," and thus to ask that it shall be given him. Is it not all through just the creature taking his true place with God; and therefore, because God is good, finding the blessing of it? Here faith is fruitful indeed, and finds its recompense.

the proving of your faith worketh [d]patience; but let patience have its [e]perfect work, that ye may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

2 (5-8): The prayer of faith denied to the double-minded.

2. But if any of you lack [f]wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and [g]upbraideth not, and it shall be given to him. But let him ask in [h]faith, noth-

d Rom. 5. 3. cf. 1 Pet. 1. 7.
e cf. Heb. 12. 11 with ch. 5. 10, 11.
f cf. 1 Kl. 3. 9-12. cf. Col. 1. 9.
g cf. 2 Cor. 9. 7; cf. Rom. 8. 32.
h Mk. 11. 24; 1 John 5. 14, 15; Matt. 21. 21.

1. James then writes as "the bondman of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ to the twelve tribes that are of the dispersion, greeting." It is the salutation which we find in the letter from Jerusalem with regard to the question of law to the Gentiles, and we have no wishing them grace and peace, according to the customary form with Paul, and also with Peter. Grace is indeed mentioned but twice in the epistle. It is practical conduct, evidently, that is in question all through, and not even the springs of conduct; for faith gives us hardly that. Faith is the channel, and not the spring. Grace is the spring, and only that. But he is writing to those who, as the twelve tribes of the dispersion, are showing how God has been wrestling with them, and He would show them now the way of blessing from it. They are to account it all joy when they fall into various temptations, knowing that the proving of their faith worketh patience. This is what it always means, this working of God with His own, which is but to bring out the faith in which He delights, and to produce in them that subjection to His hand and will which is all that is needed for blessing. "Let patience have its perfect work," then we are "perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." How blessed an assurance is this! and yet how hard we find it often—the exercise of this patience—which detects in us too that element of distrust which makes the hardness of it! Perfect apprehension of the Father's cup will make us ask with the perfect Example, who needed no putting down for exaltation, "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" That question is unanswerable when once we know this Father, and that He is ours.

"Perfect and complete, lacking in nothing"—how wonderful an assurance it is, and how simple it seems, the way to it! It is simplicity itself; but the trouble is, we are not simple. How short a creed is involved in it!—nothing but the most simple and evident orthodoxy! God is almighty, all-wise, all-good; and God is for us. What must be the issue of that?

2. The blessedness of prayer comes in naturally as a corollary to this, and the thing that above all we lack, in that exercise of patience of which the apostle has just spoken, is evidently wisdom. If God's will is all, the great point is to know His will. And for this we want, not simply knowledge as to this matter or that matter, but *wisdom*—the power to apply the truth we have, so as to see how God is working, to discern His ways. Little for us, indeed, is there to do when we are in the presence of God, although it may please Him in His grace to put something into our hands; and then, of course, it is a joy to have the privilege of serving Him in it. But the first thing for all this is guidance, that wisdom which is not always either the conscious application of this or that principle, but which becomes to one habituated to it almost an instinct, as we may say; although, indeed, it has a far higher character than this; and sometimes, too, the wisdom is really unconscious altogether. We do *better than we know* just because we are given up into the hands of this higher Wisdom to work through us. God would not make machinery of us. He uses heart, mind, everything for Himself—uses us according to our nature, never loses sight of that nature which He has given us; but then it pertains just to this wisdom to realize creature nothingness, and that God's ways, after all, are not discerned everywhere—that they are too wonderful for us, and that the greatest possible wisdom is often that of just committing ourselves into His hands, assured that we *have* His guidance because we *seek* His guidance, and He cannot disappoint the faith that counts on Him.

ing doubting; for he that doubteth is like a [t]wave of the sea, driven of the wind and tossed; for let not that man think that he shall receive anything from the Lord. [He is] a [j]double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

3 (9-11): Faith's realization.

3. But let the brother of low degree glory in his [k]exaltation, but the rich in his [l]humiliation; because as

[t] Eph. 4. 14.
[j] *cf.* Heb. 13. 9. *cf.* Gal. 5. 7, 8. ch. 4. 8.
[k] *cf.* 1 Cor. 7. 22. *cf.* Col. 3. 11, 24.
[l] *cf.* Col. 4. 1. *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 26-31 with Lk. 18. 18-27.

This may have its counterfeit, it is true, and we must realize that. How easy it is just to get upon our knees and ask God to lead us, and then follow our hasty impulses after all! Who shall save us from the mistaking one of those things for the other? How can we give an answer to this? It is in the sanctuary that we must learn it. It is in drawing near to God, there, where the pride of man is humbled and the impulses of nature find complete control. There is no absolute rule by which we can discern what wisdom is. We are to ask God "who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given" us. In inspiration we cannot but remember how prophets spoke more wisely than they knew, so that they had to look at their own prophecies to find that which was in them, which they had not discovered; and such may be with us the far-reaching result of our actions that, if led of Him, we shall find that we have acted much better than we knew. He "giveth *liberally*." There is in such grace as this of which we are speaking a largeness and breadth which show it to be divine; and thus the simplest, poorest child of God, the one most consciously ignorant, just in the consciousness of that ignorance may both act and speak so of the ability that God giveth that the highest wisdom amongst men shall not come near it for the excellence that is in it; and true faith is just of this character, that it makes God all, and draws thus out of the full fountain, never seeking it in vain.

Thus the apostle insists upon it here that he who asks should "ask in faith, nothing doubting." Is it hard to do that? We are told immediately how it is that it is hard—whence the doubt comes. "He that doubteth is like a wave of the sea, driven of the wind and tossed"—open to the influences of things around, which the eye contemplates the moment God is not before it. The apostle is very emphatic here. "Let not that man think that he shall receive anything from the Lord." But of what is he speaking? Not of the exercises that an honest soul may have in discerning what the way of the Lord is, but the instability which results from a double mind, the strife of our own wills with God's will, the desire to have Him act according to *our* mind instead of desiring to act according to *His* mind. It is plain that we are not in the way to get wisdom so. Yet how much of our prayer is often just this kind of strife with God! and how often there is a thought that if we had only energy of faith in this way, we might really in some sense bend Him to our will! But that would be no blessedness. His will is that which is perfect. To call ours "imperfect" would be to put honor on it.

No doubt there are things which God is indeed ready to give, which yet He waits for us to have faith in Him about, and He may keep us waiting until we have more the faith that honors Him; but this is a different matter altogether. If we ask wisdom, how can He deny us? But if that means wisdom to carry out some self-devised way or plan, the wisdom that He gives, if we are in earnest, must be wisdom to abandon it. Thus it is as the Lord has said: "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done for you." There is where our will is such a grand success, when His words abide in us, when they mold and govern us, when they are that upon which we live, and thus become the very sap and substance of our thoughts. Then, indeed, shall we know what the power of prayer is; and Jacob's power with the angel, when he prevailed, was the power he found after

[m] flower of grass he will pass away. For the sun arose with its burning heat, and withered the grass; and its flower failed, and the comeliness of its appearance perished; so shall the rich also fade away in his goings.

4 (12-15): Temptation endured or yielded to.

4. Blessed is the man who [n] endureth temptation; for, when he is proved, he shall receive a [o] crown of life, which the Lord* hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am [p] tempted of God: for God [q] cannot be tempted with evil things, and himself tempteth no one; but every one is tempted when he is [r] drawn away and enticed by his own lust. Then lust, when it hath conceived, [s] bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is completed, bringeth forth [t] death.

[m] 1 Pet. 1. 24.
[n] ch. 5. 11. Heb. 12. 11.
[o] Rev. 2. 10. *cf.* ch. 2. 5.
[p] *ctr.* Gen. 22. 1.
[q] *cf.* Gen. 18. 25.
[r] ch. 4. 1, 2. *cf.* Josh. 7. 21, 22.
[s] *cf.* Matt. 5. 28.
[t] Rom. 6. 23.

* Some of the earliest MSS. have simply, "He."

his own strength was broken down, and there was but the clinging to God for blessing—blessing in which He always delights, and which He cannot deny us.

3. Now we have the place in which this puts us morally. The brother of low degree glories in his exaltation. The gospel fills up the valleys as surely as it levels the mountains. This exaltation is not for a moment and to pass away, while the earthly things that exalt men necessarily pass. Thus the rich, if he be indeed the possessor of faith, glories in his humiliation—in that mercy of God which has made him conscious of the transitoriness of all here, so that in the very things he has he is but Another's steward. For him, also, there has been a higher exaltation, which makes him content that the other should pass, as pass he knows it will. If the things do not die, *we die out of them;* and how quickly the comeliness passes even from that which still exists! There is but one unfading inheritance where all is eternally as fresh as at the beginning. This is faith's realization, and for it that which passes has thus the stamp of vanity upon it at all times.

4. But there are trials that come from these various conditions of life through which we pass. The poor man may find his poverty a trial; and he has a nature still within him which may easily feel the solicitation of things around; but the temptation has its own part under the hand of God, in giving him, in his endurance of it, that "crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." He may have lost his life, as the Lord expresses it, in this world, but he shall keep it unto life eternal, and find it there in what triumphant fashion —"shall *reign* in life," as the apostle has taught us to say!

But then, as to the solicitation, there is a careful guard here. When a man *is* tempted, he must not say, "I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil things, and Himself tempteth no one with evil." The trial of faith is a very different thing. The devil solicits with evil; but then he finds in us that which he counts upon as being ready to yield to the temptation; and, in fact, any one is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own lust. This is the only thing that can make him accessible. God is over all in the way of permitting the external solicitation, but the internal is of man himself. There, he is master of himself, and thus responsible for the issue ever being against him. Here, that which begins in pleasure ends naturally in death. "Lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is completed, bringeth forth death."*

* There are two thoughts as to temptation, or trial, (for there is but one word in the Greek for both the English words): that which tries by suffering, and that which tries by allurement. Thus persecution and sinful pleasure are both trials, though we usually speak of the latter as "temptation." So long as it is without, it can be resisted; but if it meet with a response in the heart, it shows that sin is already there. In this sense our blessed Lord could not be tempted, for there was nothing in Him to entice Him away. The "divers temptations" of verse 3 are doubtless trials by suffering, though the test may come in the other way.—S. R.

5 (16-27): With the Father of lights, our unchanging Father, and the responsibilities of this.

5. Do not err, my beloved brethren: "every good gift* and every perfect gift* cometh down from above, from the Father of lights, with whom is no [v]variation nor shadow of turning. According to his own [w]will begat† he us, by the [x]word of truth, that we should be a kind of [y]first-fruits of his creatures. So that,‡ my beloved brethren, let every one be [z]swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the [a]wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Wherefore, [b]laying aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, receive with meekness the [c]engrafted word which is able to save your souls. But be ye [d]doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any one be a

u 1 Tim. 6. 17. cf. John 3. 27.
v Mal. 3. 6.
w cf. John 1. 13.
x 1 Pet. 1. 23.
y cf. Rom. 8. 19-23.
z Eccl. 5. 1, 2. Prov. 10. 19.
a cf. Eph. 4. 26, 31, 32. cf. Lk. 22. 50, 51.
b 1 Pet. 2. 1. Col. 3. 8, 9.
c cf. Heb. 4. 2.
d cf. Matt. 13. 18-23. cf. ch. 2. 14-20. Jno. 13. 17.

* Two words in the original δόσις, the act of giving, and δώρημα, the thing given.
† ἀποκυέω.
‡ The majority of authorities give, "Ye know," instead of, "So that."

5. Now we are once more brought back to a realization of how, indeed, God is for us, and who He is that is thus for us. "Every good gift and every perfect gift" comes down from Him, and there is no possibility of change, no shadow of turning, with Him. Nothing that is from Him is other than a good gift if we will only use it and value it as such. He is "the Father of lights," Himself Light; the display of this light is seen in His ways with us—a wondrous spectrum indeed, in which the glory of the light is displayed in its many-colored rays! With these we are familiar as the jewels of the priest's breastplate, the embodiment of the light in those gems upon which the names of the tribes were engraven. We have them again in the jewels of the eternal city, the perfect display of God's attributes upon which all is founded there, and which, therefore, gives indeed an eternal foundation—God displayed in His own nature;—who can change this in any one respect? How blessed to be able in faith to trace Him in this way!—righteousness is now seen, in some sense, as distinct from love, so that we may even in our folly be questioning whether love be in it. But these different rays are but the various display of that which in itself is one—love in light and light in love, never divorced from one another. Can we be even righteous in that in which we show not love? or can that be love which has not righteousness in it? Here is the nature which we have received from "the Father of lights" Himself, for "according to His own will He begat us by the word of truth," and the children manifest the Father.* But what, then, must He be in all His dealings with these children that He has begotten? How can there be any contradiction, in any of His ways, to that love in which He has begotten them for Himself? And we are those, the apostle intimates, who are a kind of first-fruits of His creatures—those in whom His creative thought as to man has first come rightly to its bloom and manifestation. How wonderful a being is man in that respect, when we see him in the Man Christ Jesus, and realize this to have been God's thought from the beginning: man, with whom God dwells forever, and in whom the divine heart can find response and hold communion!

Let us therefore answer to this, exhorts the apostle. "Let every one be swift to hear," ready to take the place of those who need instruction; "slow to speak," as conscious of infirmity; "slow to wrath," because of the weakness of an impulsive nature, the wrath of man working not the righteousness of God;

* Let us notice, again, as in 1 Pet. i, 23, that this begetting is "by the word of truth." It is sovereign, for it is "of His own will." But we must not forget that the sovereign grace operates through His word. We see this truth enlarged upon in 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14, where divine election is linked with the sovereign call through the gospel.—S. R.

hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man [e]beholding his natural face in a mirror: for he beheld himself, and hath departed, and straightway forgot what manner of man he was. But he that looketh unto the perfect law, that of [f]liberty, and abideth therein, being not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, he shall be blessed in his doing. If any one [g]thinketh himself to be religious while he [h]bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure and undefiled religion before God, even the Father, is this: to [i]visit the orphans and widows in their affliction, [and] to keep oneself [j]unspotted from the world.

e *cfr.* 2Cor. 3. 18.
f *cf.* Gal. 5. 1. *cf.* Rom. 6. 22. ch. 2. 12.
g 1 Cor. 10. 12. 1 Cor. 3. 18.
h ch. 3. 2-10. Ps. 34. 13.
i Matt. 25. 36. Is. 1. 17. Is. 58. 6, 7. *cf.* 1John 3. 17, 18.
j 1 Jno. 2. 15. 1John 5. 18, 19; Rom. 12. 2; Phil. 3. 20.

thus, laying "aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness," we are ready to "receive with meekness the engrafted Word which is able to save" our souls. The Word which we receive is the Word which characterizes our nature itself. It is the *engrafted* Word, that in which the old stock and the old fruits are judged, and which gives in its reception the competency for fruit which is to God's taste. Thus the power of salvation—that is, of our deliverance from the various things which beset us by the way—is found in that word of God which He has given us. By it the divine nature grows, and the soul is delivered from the power of things around by the blessing which is ministered to it. It is only as abiding in the good that we can resist the evil. It is only in the enjoyment of what is ours that we can be really weaned and separated from all that, while in us, is yet contrary to us.

But of this Word, then, we have to be "doers," and "not hearers only." It is impossible rightly to hear without there being effect of it; and how, one would think, could there be possibility of deceiving oneself after this fashion? Yet there is what answers to the figure here, a man beholding his natural face as in a mirror, and going away, straightway to forget what manner of man he is. But to him in whom the word of God, as that by which he has been begotten, has become his very nature,—an engrafted Word, it remains for him a law the most absolute that can be,—the law of his nature, thus a law of liberty; for there is no liberty like that of doing that which it is in our very nature to do. Thus there is abiding in it. The Word is that in which the soul finds its chosen portion and delight. It is a law without legality; it is a sweet attraction which wins, not drives. Such an one cannot be a forgetful hearer of that which so completely holds and captivates him. He is thus "a doer of the work;" for a man will do according to that which is in his heart, as "out of the heart," also, "the mouth speaketh." So out of the heart will come the work, and such an one shall be blessed indeed in his doing, happy in the activity itself, happy in the fruit of that activity. On the other hand, anything that counts for religion which does not reach to this is vain, if the tongue is not bridled by it, if there is no activity of love that goes out in a scene so calculated by its need to draw it out. "Pure and undefiled religion before God, even the Father," (how well the reminder of that name comes in here!) "is this, to visit the orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world."*

* James has much to say of the use of the tongue, the gateway of the heart, and the indicator of its state. The failure to control this shows a spirit unsubject to God. On the other hand, *mere* words without fruit is valueless. In striking contrast with both uses of the tongue is that pure and undefiled religion spoken of here. The reader need hardly be reminded that it is *religion* and not life—the fruits and not the roots—that is spoken of here. To fail to see this is to make the mistake of those who would find the way of salvation set forth in the sermon on the mount. There are two proofs of this religion, answering in general to the "love" and "light" of the nature of God: the outgoing of pity and care for those destitute of earthly support—suited objects of a Father's love; and that separation from the defilements of the world—all that is not of the Father (1 John ii.). Thus the reality of true religion is manifested both positively and negatively.

DIVISION 2. (Chap. ii. 1–13.)

"Against such there is no law."

1 (1-5): The faith of Christ to be kept unmixed with respect of persons.

1. MY brethren, hold not the [k]faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, [the Lord] of glory, with [l]respect of persons; for if there come into your [m]synagogue a man with a gold ring, in fine clothing, and there come in also a poor man in vile clothing, and ye have regard to him that weareth the fine clothing and say, [n]Sit thou here in a good place,* and ye say to the poor man, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: have ye not made a difference among yourselves, and become [o]judges with evil thoughts? Harken, my beloved brethren: hath not God chosen the [p]poor as to the world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

k *cf.* ver. 14.
l Prov. 24. 23. 1 Pet. 1. 17.
m *cf.* Prov. 22. 2. *cf.* ch. 1. 1. *ctr.* 1 Cor. 14. 23. *netr.* Is. 65. 5. *cf.* John 7. 48.
o *cf.* Mal. 2. 9. Ps. 82. 2.
p Lk. 16. 19–31. Lk. 6, 20, 24. *cf.* Rev. 2. 9. *ctr.* Rev. 3. 17.

* This phrase is one adverb, καλῶς, "well."

Div. 2.

We have now what is very characteristic of the epistle, according to what we have seen as to it. It is addressed to those still under the law,—not assuredly as seeking by it life or righteousness, (for they would be no Christians who did that,) but still bound by it, as people say still, as a rule of life; only carrying this further as Jews, than men would now carry it,—although there is a teaching, reviving even in the present day, in which it is contended that, after all, the *Christian* Jew is still a Jew, and that he is right to cleave, as such, to the ordinances given to his fathers. This is the state of things which we find amongst those addressed in the epistle, to whom as yet the word to go outside the camp had not come. Thus, as we said in Acts, they would persuade the apostle of the Gentiles himself to go with those among them who were under a vow in such a way as to show that he himself walked orderly and kept the law. At the same time we have to remember, in what is before us here, that the "*righteousness* of the law," all its moral perfection, "*is* fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;" and that against the fruits of the Spirit there is no law. This is as far as the teachings of the apostle here go. He is kept by the divine wisdom of inspiration from anything that would seem yet to bind the law upon those who were, as we have seen, in conscience under it. He appeals simply to its witness, and condemns even by it such as did not manifest a Christian conduct. It is indeed faith that the apostle is really insisting on all the way through, but faith "worketh by love," and "love is the fulfilling of the law;" so that it is easy to convict by it that in which faith does not work. That is what we shall find is done here.

1. This faith is fixed upon one blessed Person in whom God has revealed a glory so far beyond any other, that, in respect of it, there is no glory at all. James presses how this must of necessity influence one in matters which may be considered of the smallest importance. The poor place given in a synagogue to a poor man (the apostle, as has already been noticed, uses a Jewish term) may exemplify this. One cannot hold the faith with regard to the Lord of glory unobscured where there is respect of persons after this manner. If one finds glory in the gold ring and the fine clothing of one, and promoting him to a good place while banishing to another the poor man with his vile raiment, is not this, asks the apostle, to make a difference among themselves and to become judges with evil thoughts? Alas, how many Christians to-day may fail to see the point of the apostle. Are there not, then, these differences, and is there not such a thing as place amongst men, which is in the meantime to be respected, even

2 (6-13): The confirmation of the law.

2. But ye have despised the poor. Do not the rich [q]oppress you? and do not *they* drag you before the judgment-seats? Do not *they* [r]blaspheme the excellent* name by which ye are called?† If indeed ye keep [the] [s]royal law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt [t]love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well; but if ye have [u]respect of persons, ye commit sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever shall keep the [v]whole law and shall offend‡ in one [point], he is become guilty of all; for he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou

q ch. 5. 4.
r *cf.* 1 Sam. 25. 10.
s *cf.* ver. 12.
t Lev. 19.18.
u ver. 1.
v Matt. 5.19. Gal. 3. 10.

* καλὸν, "beautiful." † Literally, "which has been called upon you." ‡ Or, "stumble."

though we know it is not going to last eternally? Nevertheless, it is plain what is said here, and the apostle emphasizes it. "Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor as to this world?" Are they not the very people amongst whom Christians are, for the most part, found? Are they not those most ready to lay hold of the true riches, as "heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love Him"? We see in how practical a way Christianity would manifest itself in those times of its first freshness, and yet even already was not that first freshness tending somewhat to fade?

2. But, as a matter of fact, the case that the apostle is putting is not hypothetical. He has to urge upon those he is addressing that they have "despised" the poor. One would judge that this state of things must already have been becoming common, or he would hardly speak of it in this way to the many whom he was addressing: "But ye have despised the poor," he says. And this was all the worse in view of the notorious oppression on the part of the rich, for whom that which was the blessed grace of Christianity was but a mere "strait gate." "How hardly," asks the Lord Himself, "shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!"* But thus the edge that it had for their consciences only roused them to violence. "Do not the rich oppress you and drag you before the judgment-seats? Do they not blaspheme that excellent name by which ye are called?" "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" was the royal law according to Scripture. In the second table it is plain that it was, in fact, supreme, that which gave the spirit of all the rest. This respect of persons, therefore, was a sin against the law also, for it was the neighbor *as the neighbor* that it required one to love; and here, it is plain, no earthly distinctions could be of force. If, then, they had respect of persons, they committed sin, and were convicted by the law itself as transgressors. And it was in vain to plead the keeping of other points; they were but questions of detail. If a man were to yield true obedience, it would have to be *entire* obedience, and a man was a transgressor, therefore, if he violated any one point. It would not do to say, "I am no adulterer," if a man killed his neighbor; and the law was, in fact, now, according to the new covenant which had come in for Christians, if not for the nation, a law of liberty. "I will write my laws," says the Lord, "upon their hearts." A law written upon the heart becomes the nature of the man in whom this takes place, so that there is no slavery in obedience, but de-

* In an apostate world the child of God will find himself identified more with its sorrows than its joys, with adversity rather than prosperity. This has been seen just previously in the "pure religion." Here we are reminded that God has chosen the poor to be rich in faith, while the rich have "received" their "consolation." Our blessed Lord was Himself poor, and His associations were largely with the lowly. In the Gospel of Luke we have frequent words as to the dangers of wealth—the rich fool in Luke xii., the rich man and Lazarus in chap. xvi., and the young ruler in chap. xviii. All this refers, of course, to *mere* possession of riches. We can thank God for all exceptions where wealth did not blind the eyes. But the general principle remains—one to be heeded especially in these days of money-getting and money-worship.—S. R.

dost not commit adultery, but killest, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as those that are to be judged by the [w]law of liberty. For [x]judgment [shall be] without mercy to him that hath shown no mercy. [y]Mercy glorieth over judgment.

w ch. 1. 25. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 16.
x *cf.* Matt. 18. 32-35.
y *cf.* M.t. 7. 18. Eph. 2. 4, 5.

DIVISION 3. (Chap. ii. 14–26.)

The manifestation of faith by works.

[z]WHAT doth it profit, my brethren, if any one say he hath faith, but hath not [*]works? Can that faith * save him? If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of daily food, and one from among you say unto them, [a]Go in peace, be warmed and filled, and yet ye give them not the things needful for the body, what doth it profit? So also, faith if it have not works, is [b]dead in

z *cf.* Matt. 3. 8-10. *cf.* ch. 1. 22.
a *cf.* Job 31. 19, 20. *cf.* 1 John 3. 17, 18.
b ver. 26. *cf.* Jno. 15. 2.

* Literally, "the faith."

light. And by this law of liberty, plainly, Christians then were to be judged; that is to say, it was to be expected from them that they would answer to the character implied in it; and the lack of mercy shown would necessarily bring down judgment upon the one who showed no mercy; but "mercy glorieth over judgment;" yet they were, in fact, judging the poor man for his poverty.

DIV. 3.

We come now to that part of the epistle which has been more commented on, perhaps, certainly more misinterpreted, than any other part. Faith, as we have seen, is indeed, in a certain sense, the apostle's subject all the way through. The works upon which he dwells are the works of faith. If that is not found in them, they are no good works for him. On the other hand, faith that hath not works is not faith. It is not to the dishonor of faith to say so: no, his argument is, that faith is such a fruitful principle that if the tree be there, its fruit will be surely found. The apostle's subject here is the manifestation of faith by works. He is not in the least speaking of justification before God, as we have already said. That is not his subject, nor has the apostle Paul, whose subject it is, left such an important modification of his doctrine (as by many this is thought to be) to come in this disjointed manner from the mouth of another long afterwards. If it were indeed so, it would be a hopeless matter to follow the reasoning of any one writer by itself. He might have left out some important thing which should have been considered, and the absence of which would vitiate the whole argument. As has already been said, the apostle Paul distinctly leaves room for what James says here, when he says of Abraham that if he were justified by works he would have whereof to glory, and adds, "but not before God." No one can find, throughout what is said here, any hint that a man is justified by works *before God*. The whole question is one of the reality of profession. Christians are professedly believers, but what doth it profit if any one *say* he hath faith but hath not works? It is simply a question of saying it —*professed* faith. But can faith that is in profession merely, as here, save him? It was but a fair word. Who would think that it could profit if any were naked or lacking daily food, and one should say to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," and yet do nothing to furnish them with that which was needful? What would they think of it? The profession of faith merely would be nothing better than such a profession of works, which would falsify itself at once to any one. Faith, then, that has not works is dead in itself. There is no principle of fruit in it, and this, for us, is the test of its reality. We see at once that he is not thinking of God who knows the heart, but of man who does not know it, and who can only judge of it by the outward conduct. "Some one will say,

itself. But some one will say, Thou hast faith and I have works: [c]show me thy faith apart from works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Thou [d]believest that God is one. Thou doest well. The [e]demons also believe and shudder. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that [f]faith without works is dead?* Was not Abraham, our father, justified by works when he had [g]offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and that by works faith was made perfect. And the [h]Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness, and he was called [i]friend of God. Ye see that a man is [j]justified by works and not by faith only. And in like manner was not

[c] *cf.* Col. 1. 8, *cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 3.
[d] *cf.* Heb. 6. 10.
[e] *cf.* Gal. 5. 6.
[f] *cf.* Rom. 2. 17, etc.
[g] *cf.* Matt. 8. 29.
[f] vers. 17, 26. *cf.* Rev. 3. 1.
[g] Gen. 22. 1-18. *cf.* Heb. 11. 17-19.
[h] Gen. 15. 6. Rom. 4. 3, etc.
[i] Is. 41. 8.
[j] *cf.* Rom. 5. 1 with Matt. 5. 16.

* Some read, "barren."

Thou hast faith, and I have works. Show me thy faith apart from works, and I will show thee my faith *by* my works." It is plain that that is the only possible way, and it is equally plain that it is simply a question of manifestation before man. He does, indeed, assert that the faith that saves is that which is fruitful, but who questions that? and who could possibly desire to have it otherwise? It is a blessed thing to know that that which in itself is the humblest thing possible, and which turns one away from self to Another, is yet that which, by bringing into the presence of the great unseen realities, must of necessity have its corresponding fruit in life and walk. He takes in the mere Jew here, orthodox in his monotheism; but what had it wrought in him? It was, surely, well to believe that God is One, and the demons believe that too, but their faith is thus far fruitful that at least it makes them shudder; but the faith that is merely of lip, and cannot demonstrate itself, is really of no value.

And now he brings forward the case of Abraham, our father, to whose faith God Himself had borne witness. It is not, of course, in his purpose here to cite the Scripture which speaks thus simply as sufficient, however sufficient it was to show that there *was* faith in Abraham. He does not say, as Paul does, that Abraham was justified by faith when "he believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." Was that not true, then? It must certainly have been true, for the Scripture itself asserts it. But his point is that this faith, as to which God had pronounced, issued in works which justified Abraham as a believer—justified what was said by God, that "he believed God." Thus, he does not refer to what the fifteenth of Genesis brings before us, but takes us on to what came long years after in that magnificent display of faith on Abraham's part, when he offered Isaac his son, his only son, upon the altar, at the command of God. Plainly, that was a work that needed itself to be justified by the faith that was in it. It was a faith which this rendered indisputable. It was plain to see how faith wrought with his works in this case, and by works the faith was made perfect; that is, it came thoroughly to fruition. Paul's argument is as to the justification of the ungodly; James' is as to the justification of one already accepted as a believer. It is a justification which *we* have to pronounce. The Scripture was here fulfilled which saith, "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." It was not merely now that Scripture spoke, but that *Abraham's conduct spoke* as to the truth of the Scripture. God had said that Abraham believed Him. His own conduct made it plain he did so. Thus he came into the blessed place of one whom God could call His friend; and thus "we *see* that a man is justified by works, and not by his faith only;" for if he had only his faith to speak of, no one could take account of it at all.

In Rahab the harlot we find even more conspicuously, in one way, the truth

[k] Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she had received the messengers and sent them out another way? For as the [l] body without spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

[k] Josh. 2. 1, etc. cf. Heb. 11. 31.
[l] vers. 17, 20.

of this. She was but "Rahab the harlot." There were no good works, in the way men speak, that she could produce, surely, for *her* justification; but the works which justified her now were simply works that evidenced her faith, and which had all their value in it. She realized that the messengers were, as it were, the messengers of God. She saw and owned God in them. In that way she received them, although they had come to spy out the city in which she dwelt, that they might destroy it. Plainly, if it were not before God that she bowed in this, her works were not merely unprofitable, but only evil. The seeing God made the whole difference. It was God Himself who was pronouncing the judgment: how could she resist Him? Thus she had a faith which did not ennoble her: it was, as we know, accompanied, in fact, by deception, although such deception, no doubt, as men think all right in similar cases. But if the apostle were seeking moral works by which faith was to be enriched, works which had in themselves that natural excellence which men see in works of charity and such like, certainly he would not have taken up the poor harlot Rahab as an example of them. No, it is simply the evidence of faith that he is seeking, and that in order to show us that profession merely is nothing; there must be reality; and "as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." It is mere barren orthodoxy, as we are accustomed to say; and yet, with a Jew, how much his faith counted for! There was, and there is continually, the need of the warning; and the warning is simple enough if, instead of taking merely fragmentary expressions, we look at what is put before us here in its proper connection. He will not dishonor faith, as men so often dishonor it, by putting it as if it were something merely to stand side by side with works, so that one is to be estimated by the two together. No, says the apostle, the faith is that which produces the works, the life of them, and that which makes a man's works to be acceptable to God in order to be acceptable at all. Such is the character of the faith that saves, and that does not make it, then, the works that save, or that help to save. The works simply distinguish it from the mere barren profession, which, barren as it is, men will at all times seek to make something of.

Div. 4.

The whole epistle of James, as we have seen, is of that character which we call "practical." We may expect, however, that in a fourth division practice will come in some special way before us. We have it, therefore, in what follows now. He has just shown us that faith is the first necessity for it, and that it is from faith that everything that is right in this way springs. Now he comes simply to look at the practice in itself, the walk through the world, the world having that character which we know so well, and which is God's ordained testing for the Christian. This is the good of it, the testing by it; and the apostle brings before us, in the first place, that which, where it is found in full reality, shows indeed the perfect man.

1. But notice, then, that this perfect man is manifested as such by being able to govern himself, and that he is recognized as having in him that which in itself is perfectly untamable by any power merely of man. It is remarkably and beautifully brought out by the prophet Isaiah, as to the perfect Servant of whom he speaks in his fifty-third chapter, that under the greatest stress of trial that could possibly be conceived, a trial which went on to the awful death which the Lord suffered, "He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth"—He was perfect master of Himself under all circumstances. And again, as the prophet bears witness, while

DIVISION 4. (Chaps. iii. iv.)

The walk through the world.

1 (iii. 1-12): The government of the untamable.

1. MY brethren, be not many [m] teachers, knowing that we shall receive a greater judgment; for in [n] many things we all offend. If any offend not in

[m] *cf.* Matt. 23. 2-12.
[n] *cf.* Gal. 5. 19-21. *ctr.* 1 John 3. 9.

on the one hand "He had done no violence," on the other "neither was there any deceit in His mouth." Violence comes from the abuse of power; deceit is the resource of weakness. In the Lord there could be neither. The perfect trial was but perfect manifestation of supreme excellence. His was unique obedience to the will of God, while accompanied at the same time with perfection of another kind, which made Him able to realize all the weakness of which He was the subject, He to whom sin was suffering only, and the sorest possible suffering, even to the bearing of its heavy burden upon the tree.

The apostle is speaking, then, of the government of the tongue; and he begins with that in which the line has carefully to be drawn between good and evil. "My brethren," he says, "be not many teachers, knowing that we shall receive the greater judgment; for in many things we all offend." Yet there is nothing clearer in Scripture than that, whatever one receives in the way of truth from God, he is responsible to minister it in whatever way lies open to him, for the help of others. The mere fact of the possession of that which is infinite riches to the soul that possesses it makes it a responsibility, which love at once must recognize, to minister it to others. Thus, in a sense, *all* may be teachers, while, of course, not in the sense in which the apostle is speaking here. There is the special gift of a teacher; and, inasmuch as it *is* special, it is not for every one to assume that he has it. It is the assumption of such a place as this, of which the apostle is speaking. As already said, there is need of careful discrimination, and that we should not turn his words into discouragement with regard to that in which our responsibility is so strongly emphasized. Priscilla was a *woman;* and, says the apostle, "I suffer not a woman to teach;" yet Priscilla and Aquila take Apollos and instruct him in the word of God more perfectly. Was she right? It is surely very clear that she was, and that Paul always recognizes her in an unmistakable way as eminent among women. Let us understand clearly that that which love moves us to, it gives at the same time authority for doing. It needs no authority but that which lies in its own compelling power. Love is the humblest thing that can be. It seeketh not its own; its delight is to pour itself out, to abnegate itself; and therefore, of necessity, it would at once guard one from any self-assumption. We may any of us teach that which we know, without the least pretension to be, as it were, by profession teachers; just as we may and must evangelize,—that is, carry the gospel to those who have it not,—without in the least assuming by this to be, in the proper sense, evangelists. Here love will be found that which gives wisdom for every condition. True love is not blind and foolish, but deep-sighted. Love guides and governs in all that it incites us to. If we assume the responsibility of the teacher's place, then, as the apostle says here, we shall receive a "greater judgment;" and who can question it? A greater responsibility means a greater judgment; that is to say, God will require from us in proportion to the place we have. Is He not right? and can we expect anything else? And this is a warning, therefore, as to assumption. It is not meant, in the least, to be a hindrance to anything that love may impel to. But indeed, as the apostle says, "in many things we all offend,"* and in word how easy it is to offend! In this case, if it be a question

* "In many things we all offend" is hardly to be taken as a statement of the actual life of the believer. On the contrary, the apostle in this very connection is warning against yielding to this tendency. It would seem to be a general statement of the *proneness* of all to offend, just as the tongue is prone to be unruly. But grace enables us to live without offence; not in the way of sinless perfection in ourselves, but rather as glorifying God's power to keep down the innate tendencies of the flesh.—S. R.

°word, he is a perfect man, able to bridle also the whole body. Now, if we put the ᵖbits in the horses' mouths that they may obey us, we turn about also their whole body. Behold also the ships, which are so great and driven by violent winds, and are yet turned about by a very small rudder, whither the impulse of the helmsman will. So also the tongue is a little member, and ᵍboasteth great things. Behold how much wood is kindled by how small a fire. And the tongue is a ʳfire; the world of iniquity among our members is the tongue, which ˢdefileth the whole body and setteth on fire the course of nature, and is set on fire of hell. For ᵗevery kind of beasts and of birds, of creeping things and things in the sea, is tamed and hath been tamed by mankind; but the tongue can no one among men tame: it is a ᵘrestless evil, full of death-bringing ᵛpoison.

o cf. Matt. 12. 37. *cf.* Eph. 4. 29.
p Ps. 32. 9. *cf.* 2 Ki. 19. 28.
q Ps. 73. 8, 9.
r Prov. 16. 27.
s cf. Matt. 15. 18.
t Ps. 8. 6-8.
u cf. Is. 57. 20.
v Rom. 3. 13.

of putting forth that which purports to be interpretation or application of the word of God, how necessary to realize the responsibility in handling that which, *as* the word of God, comes authoritatively to the souls of men! Here too, if we did not know God's grace, with the greatest gift we should be tongue-tied. It was he that did not trust this grace in his master who went and hid his lord's money—was unable, therefore, to use it for the very purpose for which it was entrusted to him. We are as responsible to use as we are responsible not to abuse. We cannot escape from responsibility on either hand. How blessed to know, in the consciousness that still "in many things we all offend," a grace upon which we can cast ourselves and go forward, if only there be with us the governing sense of whom we serve, and the serious desire to serve Him in it!

But the apostle goes on more fully into this question of the tongue. "If any offend not in word, he is a perfect man, able to bridle also the whole body." And yet how easily we let our tongues run on! In fact, the place that the apostle gives the tongue is that which governs the whole body. The bit in the horse's mouth is a small thing in itself, and yet the whole body is turned by it. The ships, in the midst of violent winds that act upon them, yet are turned about by a very small rudder, according to the direction that the helmsman gives. So, we may think little of the tongue, although it is the very thing by which we boast so much, but, verily, "How much wood can be kindled by how small a fire!" And here he breaks out into a description of it which is startling in its vehemence. "The tongue is a fire. The world of iniquity among our members is the tongue, which defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature, and is set on fire of hell." Of course, he is speaking of it as unrestrained by the fear of God, or unguided by the power of the Spirit. How much might we speak of the wonderful power of the tongue on the other side! What a ministry of comfort and blessing is in it! But the best gifts are in their perversion just as fruitful for evil as they are good when used aright. The sweetest ties, the most precious relationships that God has instituted amongst men, are just in the same proportion fruitful for evil in their perversion. Nevertheless there is, no doubt, a special need for such a warning as this with regard to the tongue. How apt we are to be careless about it! How apt we are to release it somewhat from the control that we ought to exercise over it! How soon, if it escapes from such control, it does the damage which we know a little fire may! How much further evil may a little evil in it—mere unguarded words, as we say—excite in others! It is an untamable evil, says the apostle; that is, of course, naturally. We have always to govern it, saints as we may be. The liberty which is truly ours does not extend, as we know, to a liberty with regard to that body which is still unredeemed, which is dead because of sin; and among Christians, where

Therewith [w] bless we the Lord and Father, and therewith [x] curse we men made after [the] likeness of God. Out of the [y] same mouth cometh forth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth the [z] fountain send forth out of the same opening, sweet and bitter? Can a [a] fig-tree, my brethren, yield olives, or a vine figs? Neither [can] that which is salt produce sweet water.

2 (III. 13-IV. 6): The strife of lusts in opposition to the wisdom from above.

2. Who is wise and intelligent among you, let him [b] show out of good behaviour his works in meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter [c] emulation and strife in your heart, [d] boast not and lie not against the truth. This is not the [e] wisdom which cometh down from above, but is [f] earthly, sensual,* demoniacal; for where

* Or, natural.

[w] *cf.* Ps. 51. 15.
[x] *cf.* 1 Sam. 17. 43.
[y] *cf.* Matt. 16. 16, 17 with Matt. 26. 74.
cf. Gal. 5. 17.
[z] *cf.* 2 Ki. 2. 19-22 with Acts 15. 9.
[a] Matt. 7. 16-20.
[b] *cf.* ch. 2. 18.
[c] 1 Cor. 3. 3. Phil. 2. 3.
[d] *cf.* Rom. 2. 23.
[e] ch. 1. 17.
[f] *cf.* Phil. 3. 19.
cf. Col. 3. 5.

is there, in fact, any source of evil, and so readily allowed to manifest itself, as the tongue? "It is a restless evil," says the apostle, always seeking expression, yet "full of death-bringing poison." "We bless the Lord" on the one hand, and curse men on the other; men whom God has made in His own likeness. Blessing and cursing come out of the same mouth. How thorough an inconsistency, as the apostle urges! In nature you do not find such things. The fountain does not send forth sweet and bitter water out of the same opening; nor a fig tree yield olives; nor a vine, figs; nor can that which is salt produce sweet water. Nature itself in this way rebukes one who was meant to be the lord of nature, as the image of Him who is the Governor over all. He has, alas, yielded himself to the government of another, and thus he has lost the power of government, largely, over nature, but above all over himself. The child of God away from God displays in full reality the power of the fall, and, as the apostle urges here, the tongue is an eminent example of this.

2. Out of the heart the mouth speaketh. We have begun with the utterance of the mouth. Now we go on to that which is more in the heart itself. "Whoso is wise and intelligent among you, let him show out of good behavior his works in meekness of wisdom; but if ye have bitter emulation and strife in your hearts, boast not, and lie not against the truth."* This is the spirit of the world, and the corruption that is in the world is through lust. It is the fruit of a heart unsatisfied with God, with that which alone can satisfy, and as a consequence there is of necessity a restless seeking of what will do this. The world cannot furnish it, and hence it goes on, only with more and more urgency and bitterness all the time. This is not a wisdom which cometh down from above. It is "earthly, sensual, demoniacal." It is first "earthly." It brings in no motive that is not of earth. The word for "sensual" is one that we have had before as "natural." It is "psychic," soul-led; "sensual" is probably here the best translation we can give to it. The soul is that which, as we have seen, divorced from the spirit, is only bestial. In it are found the instincts and appetites that have to do with the maintenance of life, and nothing more. With the presence of the spirit man has that which penetrates this soul-life, and makes it capable of higher things; but there is nothing of that here. The spirit has not its supreme place, the man is soul-led, soul-governed. This is the kind of wisdom here, which, however, has another and deeper significance still. It is not only "earthly, sensual," but "demoniacal;" Satan being the prince of the

* We seem to have here the two kinds of outflow from the heart, like the two kinds of fruit from the same tree—a thing impossible in nature, but too frequently found in man. There is either the good works of meekness and wisdom, or the envy and strife which boast, but really give the lie to God's truth. This seems to be the force of this last clause: strife and envy lead to boasting and a denial of the truth. Hence the believer is warned.—S. R.

emulation and strife are, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom that is from above is [g] first pure, then peaceable, [h] gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without contention, without [i] hypocrisy; and the [j] fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace. Whence come [k] wars and whence come fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your pleasures, which [l] war in your members? Ye [m] lust and have not. Ye [n] kill and are [o] envious and cannot obtain. Ye fight and war. Ye [p] have not because ye ask not. Ye ask and receive not because ye ask [q] amiss,* that ye may consume it in your pleasures. Adulteresses,† know ye not that the [r] friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever,

* Or, evilly. † Some read, "Adulterers and."

g *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 22. *cf.* Heb. 7. 2.
h 2 Tim. 2. 24. Phil. 4. 5.
i Rom. 12. 9.
j Is. 32. 17. Prov. 11. 18.
k *cf.* Gal. 5. 15.
l *cf.* Rom. 7. 23.
m *cf.* ch. 5. 1–5 with 1 Tim. 6. 9, 10.
n ch. 5. 6.
o *cf.* 1 Ki. 21. 1–16.
p Matt. 7. 7.
q 1 John 5. 14.
r 1 Jno. 2. 15. *cf.* Gal. 6. 12–14; *cf.* John 15. 18, 19.

world, a more disastrous influence is over man than could be found even in his mere fallen nature. There is a "spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience," the communication of a wisdom in some sense higher than their own, but at the same time only more evil. This, then, alas, is the spirit of the world. Man is not his own master, even while he vainly talks of liberty and means most earnestly to do his own will and nothing else. But these wills among men are various, and in strife with one another. Thus emulation and strife are the necessary accompaniments of all wisdom which comes not from above. There is disorder and every evil thing.

On the other hand, the wisdom that is from above is first pure. There is in it singleness and simplicity of heart. There is no double-mindedness or duplicity. It is without mixture, refusing the alliance with evil. The apostle emphasizes that this wisdom is, first of all, pure. It is from Him who is light, in whose presence everything is seen for what it is, and evil has necessarily its rightfully abhorrent aspect. Thus the wisdom from above is "first pure, then peaceable." There is no lukewarmness, no indifference to evil: there is no peace that can be made with it; but where purity is maintained, its natural character can show itself even towards the failing and the froward. It is "gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without contention," (where there is not truth and right to contend for there is no *spirit* of it,) "without hypocrisy;" and the fruit of righteousness is found in the peace which is thus maintained: "The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace." Thus it springs from righteousness and returns to righteousness again. "The effect of righteousness is peace," but the effect of such peace is again righteousness.

The apostle pursues the earthly wisdom of which he has been speaking to its results. "Whence come wars and whence come fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your pleasures" (the gratification of your lusts), "which war in your members? Ye lust, and have not." There is, in fact, no power that can satisfy this. It is condemned, by its very nature, to dissatisfaction. "Ye kill, and are envious, and cannot obtain." We see that we are being shown the natural tendencies of things as they work out in the world around. James is speaking, as one may say, in the synagogue, in a mixed congregation, in which more than the saints are before him. "Ye fight and war. Ye have not, because ye ask not." It is indeed impossible for prayer to live in such an atmosphere, as we see at once; and yet even here the subtlety of the human heart can come in, as it has devised among the heathen false gods who are but the images of lust themselves, and who can therefore be appealed to in behalf of these. Alas, Christians too may ask and receive not, because they ask amiss, to consume it in their pleasures. We know perfectly well, alas, that self-indulgence can be

therefore, is minded to be a friend of the world maketh himself* an enemy of God. Think ye that the Scripture [s]speaketh in vain? Doth the Spirit, which hath taken his [t]abode in us, desire enviously? But he [u]giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God [v]resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.

3 (7-17): In the presence of the Lord.

3. Be subject therefore to God. [w]Resist† the devil and he will flee from you. Draw [x]nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you. [y]Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be [z]afflicted and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to heaviness. [a]Humble your-

* Or, "is constituted." † Many prefix "but" to this sentence.

s *cf.* John 10. 35.
t *cf.* John 14. 26. *cf.* Eph. 4. 30.
u *cf.* Matt. 13. 12 with John 1. 16.
v 1 Pet. 5. 5. Prov. 3. 34.
w 1 Pet. 5. 8, 9. Eph. 4. 27.
x *cf.* Heb. 10. 19–22. *cf.* Mal. 3. 7.
y *cf.* 1 Tim. 2. 8.
z *cf.* Matt. 5. 4 with Ezek. 9. 4.
a *cf.* Lk. 18. 14.

found in those who are Christians also, and we may seek even from God Himself that which, after all, as He sees it, is merely something that may minister to this spirit.

The apostle flames out here as contemplating, evidently, those who are pledged to God, but who are not abiding in the satisfaction yielded by that which is their own. "Adulteresses: know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" He is contemplating those espoused to Christ, and yet giving themselves to another; and, alas, how easy it is to forget that the friendship of the world is enmity with God. Does not that seem often a little strong, perhaps? There it must remain as the immutable Word of inspiration, and let us face it fully. The world and God are on opposite sides, and can never be brought together. We may choose with which we will be; with *both* we cannot really be. "Whosoever, therefore, is minded to be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God." How well would it be if we let such strong yet wholesome admonition search us to the very bottom! How well the question comes just here, "Think ye that the Scripture speaketh in vain?" How often it seems in vain even for the children of God themselves! But "the Spirit, then, who has taken His abode in us, does He desire enviously?" This certainly seems to be the force of what is here, and it must therefore be a question, not an affirmation, as the common version makes it. "The Spirit who hath taken His abode in us" cannot mean the mere human spirit, and therefore envious desire can only be intended to be put in contrast with that which is His mind, a contradiction to Himself, which is emphasized by giving it the form of a question, as we must. We know, surely, that the Spirit of God that dwelleth in us can have nothing to do with the envious desires of the heart which go out after the world for satisfaction. Nay, "He giveth more grace." What do we need, but to realize what this grace of God is, and what it has made our own, to have every unsatisfied lust stilled; and instead of grasping for ourselves, we acquire the lowliness that waits upon God, and to which He can minister. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."

3. He leads us now more into the sanctuary, to estimate things in the presence of God. Where God is, He must rule; and if we will be the arbiters of our own portion, we must, of necessity, be away from God. "Be subject, therefore, to God; resist the devil,"—for he is always near if God be far away,—"and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you." A place before Him, even a place in Christ, is one thing; the desire for what that place implies is another. Thus, it can be said to those who in one sense are nigh, "Draw nigh to God;" and there is still this condition to be fulfilled in order that He may draw nigh to us. We are "no more strangers and foreigners." He expects from us the affections of children, of those that desire intimacy; but this can only be ours in a way conformable to His own nature. Thus, the word follows, "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-

selves before the Lord, and he shall exalt you. [b] Speak not against one another, brethren. He that speaketh against his brother or judgeth his brother, [c] speaketh against [the] law and judgeth [the] law. But if thou judgest [the] law, thou art not a doer of [the] law but a judge. [d] One is the lawgiver and judge, who is able to save and to destroy; but [e] who art thou that judgest thy neighbor?

Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city and spend a year there, and trade, and get gain, ye who [f] know not what will be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a [g] vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, [h] If the Lord will and we live, we will also do this or that. But now ye glory in your [i] vauntings: all such glorying is evil. To him, therefore, that [j] knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

b *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 1. ch. 5. 9. *cf.* Rom. 14. 4.
c *cf.* 1 Cor. 4. 5 with 2 Pet. 3. 9.
d Is. 33. 22. ch. 5. 9.
e Rom. 14. 4.
f Prov. 27. 1.
g Ps. 102. 3. *cf.* Job 7. 6–9.
h *cf.* Rom. 15. 32. *cf.* Acts 18. 21.
i *cf.* Lk. 12. 16–21. 1 Cor. 5. 6.
j 2 Pet. 2. 21. *cf.* Lk. 12. 47.

minded." The pleasures that men seek away from God need to be turned—as they will surely yet turn—into affliction for them. Let the soul anticipate this, and instead of rejoicing in such a condition, "be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; let the laughter be turned to mourning, and the joy to heaviness." No way for us but to anticipate the judgment of Him who judges not harshly, but according to truth. Let us humble, in His presence, the pride of heart which would dictate to Him, and account our own wills better than His will for us. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He shall exalt you. If we exalt ourselves, He will surely abase us. He that humbleth himself shall as surely find exaltation, but it will be in His own manner.

But if we speak of judgment, and rightly exercise it with regard to ourselves, we have to remember here also that it is not for us to judge our brother. To judge evil is right, of course, and necessary; to judge of that which we have to do is our responsibility always, and therefore of all with which we associate ourselves; but, after all, there must always be with this the reserve, as to those whose ways may be involved in this, that there is One alone who knows the heart, and can give perfect judgment. We are to beware therefore of taking the place of the judge instead of that of obedience simply, which is our own. To act as in the judgment-seat is really, says the apostle, to judge the very law itself; it is to take it away from Him to whom only the law gives it. One only is the Lawgiver and Judge, who can carry out every decision, "who is able to save and to destroy." What right have we to anticipate His judgment?*

There is another form of this forgetfulness of God to which the apostle turns—a very common one. "Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and spend a year there, and trade, and get gain; ye who know not what will be on the morrow." It is not, as we see directly, that he means to forbid all exercise of thought as to the morrow, but only the spirit of those who plan without God, who forget the uncertainty of everything here: "For what is your life? it is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." It is the spirit of self-confidence he is condemning, which boasts of what it can do without God: "For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, and we shall live, we will also do this or that; but now ye glory in your vauntings. All such glorying is evil."

* This seems to be the meaning of this somewhat obscure passage. The Lawgiver is the only judge. To anticipate His judgment is really to sit in judgment upon the law for not having provided for immediate penalty. For me to judge before the time is to condemn the law as being dilatory.—S. R.

DIVISION 5. (Chap. v.)

The end and the conditions of the way.

1 (1-12): The oneness of the way all through.

1. GO to now, ye rich, [k]weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches are [l]corrupted and your garments moth-eaten. Your gold

[k] Lk. 6. 24, 25.
[l] Matt. 6.19, 20. *ctr.* Heb.10. 34.

He adds a word now which should forever settle the question of sinless perfection for a Christian: "To him who knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."* This is much more, of course, than the prohibition of positive evil. There is a negative evil which we have carefully to keep before us. The responsibility of knowing what it is good to do is one that, while we may in a general way allow it, yet deserves far deeper consideration than we often would even desire to give it. How solemn it is to think of all the good that we *might* do, and yet have *not* done! How slow we are to recognize that this, too, is sin! We are so apt to claim for ourselves a kind of freedom here which is not Scriptural freedom; and there is no doubt, also, that we may abuse a text like this to legality, if there be legality in our hearts. We are to be drawn, not driven. Yet the neglect of that which is in our hand to do,—which we, perhaps, do not realize our capacity for, and that only through a spirit of self-indulgence or a timidity which is not far removed from this,—such neglect, how hard it is to free ourselves of it, and how much do we miss in this way of that which would be fruitful in blessing for ourselves as well as for others! for, indeed, we can never sow fruit of this kind without reaping what we have sown; and the good that we can do to others, even if it requires the most thorough self-sacrifice, yet will be found in the end to have yielded more than it cost, and to have wrought in the interests of him who has not considered even or sought this.

DIV. 5.

In this closing part of the epistle we are warned, as naturally, of the end at hand. It is most blessed comfort to realize that it is so, and yet we may need it as warning too. The way and the end are here put before us together, as they are, indeed, inseparable. The way has an ending proper to itself, and it is always right seriously to contemplate this. We may abuse the liberty of grace, not, indeed, by overvaluing it, but by our conception of what this means. The apostle's word, "That, after having preached to others, I may not myself be cast away," is taken either to qualify God's grace itself, and to make us imagine that the apostle, after all, had some right and reasonable doubt of what might be the end with him; or else, by those who know the gospel better, it is simply put aside, left out of consideration, as if there were no meaning in it; and yet how fruitful for us should be the contemplation of the way by which, and by which alone, God brings us home! It belongs to that discernment of good and evil which the same apostle has told us comes to us as those who are accustomed to be exercised about it. "By reason of use, we have our senses exercised to discern both good and evil." But James, as we realize in the way he speaks here, is still and ever in the synagogue. He is contemplating ends of the most opposite character, for opposite classes of people, to whom he addresses himself. There are the rich on the one hand, living luxuriously and in oppression of the poor. There are those who, in another spirit, are waiting for the coming of their Lord, but who need to be exhorted to patience because of the evil. Yet while we cannot but realize the different classes to whom he addresses himself, it does not follow that there is no profit for every one of us in the contemplation of this.

* This clause is introduced by "therefore," which connects it with what has preceded. Just the force of this connection is not at once seen. Some have connected it with what immediately precedes—the shortness of life. In view of that, neglect is a sin. Others, probably, are nearer the truth who regard it as a summing up in view of the principles which have been dwelt upon. The apostle has shown the right and wrong manner of life. If there is a disregard of his word, for those who now know how to do good, it is sin.—S. R.

and silver are eaten away, and their rust shall be a testimony against you, and shall eat your flesh as fire. Ye have [m]heaped up your treasure in [the] last days. Behold, the [n]hire of the laborers who have harvested your fields, which is kept back by you wrongfully, crieth, and the cries of them that have reaped are [o]entered into the ears of [the] Lord of Sabaoth. Ye have lived [p]luxuriously on the earth and indulged yourselves. Ye have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter. Ye have [q]condemned, ye have killed the just; he doth not resist you. Be [r]patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the [s]husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, having patience for it until it receive the early and the latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is drawn [t]nigh. [u]Complain not one against another, brethren, that ye be not judged. Behold, the [v]judge standeth before the door. Take, brethren, for an [w]example of suffering and of patience the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord. Behold, we call those blessed who have endured. Ye

m *cf.* Rom. 2. 5.
n *ctr.* Lev. 19. 13.
o Deut. 24. 14, 15.
p Lk. 16. 19. Ps. 73. 7.
q ch. 4. 2.
r 2 Thess. 3. 5. Heb. 10. 36, 37.
s *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 6.
t Rev. 22. 20.
u ch. 4. 11. Ps. 50. 20. *cf.* Matt. 7. 1.
v 1 Pet. 4. 5.
w Rom. 15. 4. *cf.* Matt. 23. 34–36. *cf.* Heb. 11. 32–39.

The fact is that all prophecy, which is ever hastening on towards the end, and putting in the light of the end the present, to be illumined by it, has large use for us in this very way. We look at the world as a whole unit. We see the principles upon which men act, and how they work out in result. God, who makes all manifest at the end, is thus brought in everywhere, and we learn more deeply in His presence the character of the things which are contrary to Him, as well as the character of those which please Him. This is what we find in this last division.

1. He addresses himself in the first place to the rich. He threatens them with divine judgment. In his stern, strong language he bids them weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon them. Their riches, he says, are corrupted, and their garments moth-eaten; their gold and silver are eaten away, and their rust only remains, to be a testimony against them, and to eat their own flesh as fire. They have heaped up their treasure in the last days, ignoring entirely that they *are* the last days. With no thought of the coming judgment, they let the hire of the laborers who have harvested their fields, kept back wrongfully by them, cry in the ever-wakeful ears of the Lord of Hosts, (the "Lord of Sabaoth"). They have lived luxuriously on the earth in self-indulgence. They have nourished their hearts in a day of slaughter, when, as the thought suggests, their tables must be heaped up at whatever cost; nay, they have condemned and killed the just, suffering it unresistingly. It is perfectly plain, therefore, the class which is contemplated here.

But he turns to others who are the sufferers, and to whom the word is an exhortation to patience until He comes who will set all things right. In all that which seems for themselves so vain, in the labor barren to themselves, and which yields nothing except to the hand of the oppressor, he would have them yet consider themselves as laborers for God, as husbandmen waiting for the precious fruit of the earth, which must receive the early and the latter rain before it can be harvested. Harvest there will yet be of another sort than they may now deem. They are to be patient, stablishing their hearts, for indeed the coming of the Lord has drawn nigh. They are to avoid the fretfulness which so easily results from just these things which call for patience. Those that are brethren in a common faith may even thus easily murmur against one another. It may be in view of the better lot that some may seem to have; but the Judge of all

have [x]heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is [y]full of compassion and pitiful. But above all things, my brethren, [z]swear not; neither by heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath; but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay, that ye fall not under judgment.

2 (13-18): The various conditions.

2. Doth any one among you suffer evil? let him [a]pray. Is any cheerful? let him [b]sing psalms. Is any [c]sick among you? let him call for the elders of the assembly,

x Job 1. 21, 22. Job 42.7,12.
y Ps. 103. 8.
z Matt.5.34. *cf.* Nu.30.2. *cf.* 2 Cor. 1. 17-20.
a *cf.* Hos. 6. 1. 1 Thess. 5. 17.
b Col. 3. 16. *cf.* Acts 16. 23-25.
c *cf.* Phil. 2. 26, 27; *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 30.

standeth before the doors, and for suffering and patience they may take as examples the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord; most blessed, surely, to have been such, yet they are the very types of those persecuted and wronged for that very speaking; and in the endurance which is thus called for, have they not seen the blessing? Did they not know of the endurance of Job; and in his case was not the end of the Lord seen, that indeed the Lord, spite of all that might seem contradictory to it, is "full of compassion, and pitiful"?

The apostle here closes with a solemn warning against oath-making, the special force of which for Jews we may see in our Lord's "sermon on the mount" (Matt. v. 33–37). The law, with that recognition of human strength which as law it necessarily implied, condemned only the "*for*swearing," while permitting the "swearing." But the powerlessness of man has been amply demonstrated, and the Lord teaches that now it is this which is to be recognized in the common language of those who "cannot make one hair white or black." How thoroughly is that faith, which is the apostle's theme here, united with such complete giving up of *self*-confidence as faith supposes! We have had one example of this in the rebuke of all absolute promises as to "what shall be on the morrow." The present exhortation is akin to that; and the lesson of self-distrust, by reason of its great unpalatableness to us, needs to be in various ways enforced.

2. Through all these exhortations, the emphasis, as one can easily see, is upon faith; and that is the great subject of the epistle. The *fruitfulness* of faith, of course, is pressed, as we know; but that only the more distinctly shows the prominence of it here: so in all that follows now to the end. In various conditions the one sufficiency is God. The one appeal is to Him. "Doth any among you suffer evil? Let him pray:" not take things into his own hand, but refer them to Another. "Is any mirthful?" Let his joy be in God, and uttered to Him. "Is any sick, let him call for the elders of the assembly, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up"—a passage which, by some, has been used to deny the lawfulness of all natural means, as inconsistent really with this faith in God and appeal to Him; but we must take Scripture generally to decide in a matter of this kind, and not what is evidently, in some ways at least, exceptional. It awakens questions, moreover, which are hard to answer in the present condition of things. Where shall we find the elders of the assembly now if they are to be, at least, appointed in the regular way that we find in Scripture? Certainly one very distinct thing with regard to these is that the assembly *did not*, and *could* not, appoint them. Witness the apostle's sending Titus to do so in Crete, or the specifications with regard to eldership given to Timothy at Ephesus; where already, as we know, there were elders that had been appointed before. Timothy, himself a young man and not an elder, was evidently an unsuited person for this, if there was any succession in the matter, if elders could appoint elders. The appointment is more distinctly assigned to Titus; without the thought, clearly, of the assemblies themselves being able to appoint them. In the history of the Acts it was the apostles that did so; still not the assembly. We have no apostles, man-

and let them pray over him, [d]anointing him with oil in the name of [the] Lord; and the [e]prayer of faith shall save him that is sick and the Lord shall raise him up,

d cf. Mk. 6. 13. *cf.* Lev. 14. 15-18 with Col. 2. 17, 20.

cf. ch. 1. 1 with Acts 21. 24. *e cf.* Acts 12. 5, 12-17.

ifestly, and no apostolic delegates, no one who can prove that he has a commission in such matters. No doubt, if we are content merely to think of those who fulfil the character required, without any official appointment, then we may avoid this difficulty; but it is plain we are only following an inference of our own in this case, and not the plain word of God with regard to it. Moreover, the anointing with oil in the name of the Lord seems to be the claim of an authority which those of whom we are speaking would be the last to assert. No doubt the emphasis is laid here upon the "prayer of faith," to save the sick; and the prayer of faith certainly should not be lacking with us. We need not doubt how much we should gain if there were a more simple and constant reference to the Lord in these matters, and we cannot but remember the example of old of one who sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians, and died. The use of means that are in our hand may easily be perverted to the slighting of this way of faith; and it would certainly be far better to leave out the means in any case rather than to leave out the Lord. The distinct and united acknowledgment of our dependence upon Him in all these cases is due from us, and we suffer loss if God is not acknowledged; but then for this, no elders or anointing can be needed, and the prescription of these things makes it evident that something more is contemplated here than simply the prayer of faith. Even so, there is no *prohibition* of means, if there be no *prescription* of them; and in God's ordinary way of working He certainly works by them. He could sustain us at any time without food, but we do not ordinarily expect Him to do this, although the food may profit nothing except the Lord please to use it. We cannot but remember in this way the prescription of a little wine to Timothy, while at the same time he was in the very midst of an assembly which had its regularly appointed elders. In Judaism let us remember how, at the beginning of it, God was pleased to act miraculously in a marked way; and in the beginning of Christianity in Jerusalem, we find the same signs and miracles accompanying the Word. This was a most suited testimony to the new doctrine being published, a testimony which was also recognized in our Lord's case by the Jews as that which was to establish a new doctrine (Mark i. 27). The waning of all miraculous powers when once the testimony was established is marked, and cannot be denied. People may impute it, as they do impute it, to a lack of faith on the part of Christians; but with regard to such things one might certainly expect faith to be manifested as much as in other things. In fact, they would be things most earnestly clung to, for the manifest benefit and the display of power in them. On the other hand, the prevalence of corruption which, whatever may be our own individual views of truth, cannot but be acknowledged, would naturally make it less suited that the Church so failing should still preserve her ornaments; but the reason for the decline of miracles is evidently other than this. In the history of the Acts we find an apparent absence of such things, where, for instance, as in Berea, men were employed with the Word itself to test the doctrine by it. Although in general, as the Lord promised, miraculous signs did follow at the beginning those who believed, yet even then this was never universally true. It could not be pleaded as the necessary mark of Christian faith. "Are all workers of miracles?" says the apostle; and the question in itself supposes a negative answer. Thus, if a whole assembly lacked, there was no *necessary* failure, and need be no disappointment in this case; while in Corinth their "coming behind in no gift" was no necessary evidence of a right state of soul. It seems even, one would say, a matter of course that God never meant our daily lives to be full of manifest miracles. He never meant to demonstrate the truth after that fashion. He would leave it, rather, to its own inherent and spiritual power. Men easily crave miracles; but the whole generation

and if he be one that hath [f]committed sins, it shall be forgiven him. [g]Confess, therefore, your sins one to

[f] *cf.* 1 Jno. 5. 15-17.
[g] *cf.* Acts 19. 18; *cf.* Lk. 17. 3, 4.

in the wilderness, the constant witness of these, nevertheless perished for their unbelief. The miracles work no faith, although they might, and would, awaken attention to that which God presented as an object for faith; yet to those who believed in Christ, when they saw the miracles, He did not commit Himself (John ii. 23-25). Every way it should be plain to-day that what goes for such amongst men commonly is no longer the mark upon true faith or the truth itself which calls for faith. The same things exactly can be wrought by those who deny Christian fundamentals as by those who profess them; and where is the evidence then? No set of men in the present day can be found who can adjust broken bones without surgery. If God wanted to show what He was doing, do we think that a broken bone would be a greater difficulty to Him than anything else?

Moreover, the signs and wonders of the time of the end are spoken of as rather giving evidence to falsity than to truth, to Antichrist than to Christ; and there will be signs and wonders wrought yet, which, as the Lord has said, would deceive, if it were possible, even the very elect. Thus, then, we can easily understand (and especially in such an epistle as the present—an epistle to that nation to whom God had testified by signs and wonders of old, and would repeat to them now, in evidence that Christ was in nothing behind Moses) how we should find a reference of this kind to powers which might connect themselves with the elders of the Christian assembly, and yet understand why James should leave us, as it were, at a loss how to apply these things to ourselves. We can never be wrong in believing that the prayer of faith is still really the power that will save the sick, let means be used or not used; but the use of means seems in general rather according to the Lord's mind than against it. His common way is to work through that which He has Himself ordained, and there are plainly herbs for the healing of men. The very presence of such powers is proof that the Lord has given them; and if He has given them, it is for us. Faith can acknowledge Him in these, as well as be perfectly happy in trusting Him apart from all consideration of these. The prohibition of them, if God designed it, would surely be furnished to us.

Moreover, God at no time intended that things should be left, as it were, absolutely in man's hands, even though it were the hand of faith, as the doctrines taught suppose. The prayer of faith may be that which saves the sick, and yet, after all, that be far from meaning that we can find in every case a faith which should do so. God has His own will and His own way; and while we can always reckon upon Him to answer the soul that looks to Him, yet the way of His answer we do not always know. The apostle prays that the thorn in the flesh might depart from him, but it did not depart. God turned it to greater blessing. That was an answer to the prayer, but it was not such an answer as men usually count as that. Could any one suppose that among Christians, if everything were absolutely right, the sick would always be raised up, that death would hardly obtain at all, except in the extremest old age? We may imagine any such fancies, but fancies they are, and nothing else. Yet it is plain there is an appeal to God advocated here which we are always right in making, and from which we may always expect an answer in the goodness of Him whom we address. More than this, the Lord may give distinct light as to His mind that will enable one, as to anything, to ask with assurance, without the possibility of denial. If we are near enough to God for this, we have cause indeed to be thankful; but we had better be humble about it, and be very sure that we have it before we claim it.

The apostle adds here with regard to a very possible case, that the sickness contemplated might be the result of sin itself—that if he be one that hath committed sin, it shall be forgiven him. Here is a case in which it is plain that

another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The fervent* supplication of the righteous man availeth much. [h] Elias was a man of like passions with us, and he prayed fervently† that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth for three years and six months; and [i] again he prayed and the heaven gave rain and the earth brought forth her fruit.

h cf. Acts 14. 15. cf. 1 Ki. 19. 3-5.

i 1 Ki. 18.37, 42.

3 (19, 20); A reward. 3. My brethren, if any one among you [j] err from the truth and one restore him, let him know that he that

j cf. Gal. 6.1. cf. Matt. 18. 15.

* Or, as many translate, "The supplication . . . availeth much in its working." † Or, prayed with prayer"—a Hebraism.

appeal to God is of the greatest necessity. But we may be perfectly sure that here, also, it could not be within the will of others to secure this, but that there must be in the recipient of this forgiveness the state of soul in which God can grant it.

The apostle adds a more general admonition as to which there is no difficulty: "Confess," therefore, "your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." This still, however, needs wisdom for its application. The confession of sin itself may be looked at, as men look so much at confession to a priest, as if it were to work something *merely as* confession. Apart from the recognized need of confessing to another that in which we have wronged him, there may be, and no doubt are, cases where it would be good for any one burdened with the sense of wrong-doing to unburden himself, and find the help of another's prayers. The acceptance of the humiliation of it may be good in itself; but, on the other hand, there is no general rule but will have its exceptions; or, rather, there is no principle that does not need wisdom in application. Nothing will do away with the need of this.

But the apostle enlarges here upon the value of prayer. "The fervent supplication of the righteous man," he says, "availeth much." Plainly, "the righteous man" here is one who is so simply, out and out for God, so that there is nothing to hinder the confidence in Him which this supposes. Elijah is adduced as an example here, a man who stood for God when all Israel was departing from Him; but, as he notes here, a man of like passions with ourselves—notes it, evidently, for our encouragement. We are apt to make exceptions of such men to excuse ourselves, alas, even from the blessing which was theirs in consequence of what they were. His infirmities are made known to us in the very record given to us of his faith; but the man of God was in him most eminent. Thus it was for the honor of God that "he prayed fervently that it might not rain;" not to serve any end of his own apart from this; and such prayers are of the sort that have wisdom in them, and secure answers. Thus he prayed, and it rained not on the earth for three years and six months; and again he prayed, and the heaven gave rain and the earth brought forth her fruit. The power of prayer can never be separated from the character of the man who prays, although God is pitiful, and can hear any man in his extremity; that is true, but that is not the prayer that is recorded here, or the prayer of which we can really say that it has power in it.

3. The apostle closes with one word of mingled exhortation and encouragement: "My brethren, if any one among you err from the truth, and one restore him, let him know that he that turneth back a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins." It is the restoration of a believer, but who has wandered from God, that is contemplated here. The word used in our common version, "one convert him," naturally tends to make us think of that which we ordinarily call conversion now. But the Lord talks, as we know, of Peter's conversion when he too had erred from the truth, and the Lord's grace brought him back. In the language of James, if not in

turneth back a sinner from the error of his way shall [k] save a soul from death and [l] cover a multitude of sins.

k *cf.* 1 Jno. 5. 16.
l 1 Pet. 4. 8.

the epistle to the Hebrews, a converted man may be a sinner still; and, as we know, the saving of a soul from death does not necessarily mean a salvation from death eternally, but from that judgment of God which we have seen instanced in Corinth, where many were weak and sickly among them, and many slept. In this way, a multitude of sins would be covered, not simply by the love that individually covereth sins, of which we read elsewhere, but by the labor of that love for the restoration of a soul, which is the sure way, in the government of God over His people, for a multitude of sins to be covered.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

THE three epistles of John have so much of a common character, and the two latter are so evidently supplementary to the first, that we need not consider them until we come to them.

The first epistle gives us fully the character of John as he stands among the writers here. It is evident that this epistle—while it is still, as the Gospel is, in language simplicity itself—yet is deeper in some respects than those we have hitherto been considering. As his Gospel stands amongst the other Gospels, so does his epistle stand here among the other epistles. As it is in his Gospel the witness of the eternal life which had come in Christ into the world to be the light of men, so do we open here with the setting before us Christ as this same Eternal Life, which was with the Father and has been manifested to us. But while this is fundamental to the epistle, and surely gives character to it, yet at the same time the subject of John's epistle is rather the life *in us* than the life in *Christ*, although the relation of the one to the other is constantly before us. Christ is our life, and in us it will have therefore—however feebly, comparatively,—the manifestation of the same characteristics that were seen in Him.

Thus John shows us this eternal life manifesting itself in the children of God in such a way as to show their relation to Him of whom they are thus born, who is their Father. If God be light and love, then those born of Him will be manifest by righteousness on the one hand, and by love on the other; these in close and inseparable union with one another, so that if the love have not the righteousness in it, it is not love; and the righteousness, if it have not love in it, is not righteousness. We may distinguish between these things: we can never separate them. This, then, is what gives the epistle of John its place among these general epistles. It is manifestly a third division of them, as the fact of there being three epistles seems to emphasize to us.

The divisions of the epistle are:

1. (Chaps. i.–ii. 11): God as Light and in the light, and the light in us.
2. (Chap. ii. 12-27): Growth by the truth, which is nothing else than the effect of the light manifested.
3. (Chaps. ii. 28–v.): The manifestation of the children of God by the fruit found.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF
JOHN.

DIVISION 1. (Chaps. i.–ii. 11.)

God as Light and in the light, and the light in us.

1 (1–4): The Life the Light of men.

1. THAT which was [a]from [the] beginning, which we have [b]heard, which we have [c]seen with our eyes, which we have [d]contemplated, and our hands have [e]handled concerning the [f]Word of life (and

[a] Mk. 1. 1. John 1. 29. ch. 2. 13. *cf.* Gen. 1. 1. *cf.* John 1. 1.
[b] *cf.* John 5. 24. Acts 4. 20.
[c] John 1. 14.
[d] *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 16, 17. *cf.* Acts 1. 21, 22.
[e] Lk. 24. 39. John 20. 27. *cf.* John 13. 23.
[f] John 1. 1, 14.

NOTES.

DIV. 1.

THE division, as already said, in the very beginning carries us back to the Gospel. We are even referred to "that beginning" which we find in the Gospel, not the beginning as we have it in Genesis, but the new beginning now, Christ having come into the world, the true Light for the first time manifestly shining, and God revealed in such a way as makes comparatively dim all former revelation. Light is evidently the characteristic all through this part of John. God is not only light, He is *in* the light; that is, He is revealed, and Christ who is the Life is the Light—the revelation. This light is in us by the communication of the life. The commandment that He gives is thus true in Him and in us. Here we have, as is clear, one great characteristic of Christianity—the effect of the rent veil, although not exhibited after the same manner as in Hebrews. But God in the light means the veil rent, and it is striking that in the Gospel of John there is yet no reference to the rending of the veil at all. In fact, Christ being before us as He is in the Gospel, is already the Light, the revelation of God in the world. In this sense the veil is rent already; but it is rent that He may come among us; it is not yet rent so that we can be with Him in the full way for which love seeks us. Thus the commandment given by Christ in the Gospel, the commandment of love, becomes for us now in Christianity itself a new commandment—from the very fact that it is now true in Him and in us, manifestly so. We are brought into the light, and we have received the light within us.

1. In the first place, then, we find Christ as the Life, and the Life the Light of men. John carries us back to Christ upon earth as they had seen Him, contemplated Him, handled Him with their hands, and yet manifestly One in whom there was a divine fulness which could not be seen with the eyes, however fully contemplated, nor therefore handled. For him and for all else, recipients of the revelation, it was indeed a new beginning. All former ages had been but the history of man, fallen man even, though God had wrought and testified; but there was as yet no second man. Now the second Man had come, the Man according to the divine thought of man when God made him, but not the man that God first made, although the Son of Man; and thus in the nearest possible place of intimacy to us, nay of kinship in a sense, the Kinsman-Redeemer. It is evident that this is the "beginning" of which John speaks, by his appeal to the old commandment which they had "from the beginning." It is not, let us remember, His existence that could be spoken of in this way as *from* the beginning. He was *in* the beginning, as we know; but that is a different thing. When anything began, He *was*—did not begin; but on this very account one could not rightly say, "*from* the beginning." It would not give the whole and suited truth. Moreover, he is speaking of One in the world, manifest to men's eyes and ears; and that was not what had been in that primal beginning. Yet this was a more wondrous one, eclipsing the other, but only as brightness eclipses brightness, as stars and all else are eclipsed in the radiance of the day.

the life was [g]manifested, and we have seen [it], and bear [h]witness, and declare unto you that [i]eternal life which was [j]with the Father, and hath been manifested unto us): that which we have seen and heard report we* unto you, that ye also may have [k]fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is [l]with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ; and these things write we unto you that your [m]joy may be full.

[g] 1 Tim. 3. 16. 1 Pet. 1. 20. ch. 3. 5, 8.
[h] John 15. 27. Acts 10. 39 -41.
[i] ch. 5. 20. *cf.* John 11. 25.
[j] John 1. 1, 18. John 16. 28.

* Many add, "also."

cf. Prov. 8. 22-31. [k] *cf.* Acts 2. 42. [l] *cf.* John 17. 3 with John 1. 14, 18. [m] 1 Pet. 1. 8; *cf.* John 15. 11.

He says: "*That which* was from the beginning," not *who*, as we should expect. He is speaking, as he tells us, of the Word of life—the Word of God, according to the Gospel, and in whom was life; but in the presence of such an One he can only speak of "what we have heard and seen." It was not, as it were, the whole Person fully told out, just because it was impossible that He should be fully told out; and this accounts for the peculiarity of the expression. Yet he allows of no distance in which they were from Him. Every expression here seems to be designed only to bring Him nearer, and to assure the soul more fully of its right, through grace, to Him. Thus, first it is, "We have heard;" but that, if it stood alone, might be a distant Voice, the Person Himself hidden. Therefore he goes on to say: "Which we have seen with our eyes;" but then that is not enough. It was not a momentary vision. It was not as when He appeared to the two going to Emmaus, when they knew Him and He vanished out of their sight. No, he says: we have "contemplated" Him. He has been before our eyes so that we could take in and dwell upon the blessed One before us. But that even is not enough; as He says to Thomas, for perfect conviction of who He is, "Handle Me and see," so says the apostle here: "Our hands have handled." Thus He is known in the most intimate way, the Word of Life, the Giver of it surely, but at the same time the One in whom it was, whose every act and word was the expression of it, "that Eternal Life which was with the Father."

This life, he adds, "was manifested." It was, as he says in his Gospel, "the light of men"—light in the midst of surrounding darkness which knew it not and could not comprehend it; but a light, nevertheless, manifesting all else, a divine life in Man, a revelation of personal glory. And then it was not an exceptional one, simply to those meant to be distinguished from all else by receiving it. True, the One manifesting it has not remained among us, He is gone back where He was before; but those who have seen it are witnesses of the revelation, designed witnesses, sent to declare to others "that Eternal Life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us." We are to think of it as of a life lived actually upon earth, but manifesting the unseen energy which was beneath it all, divine and eternal. It was the Son of God in the world, as he delights to tell us, "The only-begotten Son," with an excellency entirely His own, and which could not be communicated to others, and yet at the same time with a fulness of power and blessing in it such as could be communicated and enjoyed: thus producing a living fellowship which followed (for those who received it in faith) the report made, on the part of those who, whatever they had, they had for others also besides themselves, and whose joy it was to communicate to others that which only enriched themselves the more by the communication.*

* The "we" and the "you" are the apostles and other witnesses who had been in personal contact with our Lord, on the one hand, and the readers of the Epistle on the other. These last are undoubtedly believers, and yet sometimes addressed as if just hearing the Word for the first time. Thus "that ye also may have fellowship with us," would suggest those just being brought into knowledge of the truth. It does not mean to *preserve* the distinction between "us" the apostles, and "you" the saints. "Our fellowship is with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ," would not mean that fellowship was possible only for the apostles, as some hold, but for all saints, brought into fellowship with them.—S. R.

2 (5-7): The fellowship not in darkness but in light.

2. And this is the message which we have heard of him and declare unto you, that [n]God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we [o]say that we have fellowship with him and [p]walk in darkness, we lie and practise not the truth; but if we walk in the [q]light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship [r]one with another, and the [s]blood of Jesus Christ* his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

* Some omit, "Christ" here.

n *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 16. *cf.* John 3. 20, 21. *cf.* ch. 4. 8.
o *cf.* Jas. 2. 14.
p ch. 2. 11. *cf.* Eph. 5. 11, 12.
q *cf.* John 8. 3-12. *cf.* Heb. 4. 13. *cf.* Heb. 10.

19-22. *r* ver. 3; *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 22; *ctr.* Acts 5. 13. *s* Rev. 1. 5; 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19; Heb. 9. 13, 14; *cf.* Rom. 5. 1, 9; *cf.* Is. 1. 18.

This fellowship was "with the Father" Himself, and "with His Son Jesus Christ;" the Father revealing the Son, and the Son revealing the Father; the Son the object of the Father's delight, and the Father He to manifest whom the Son wrought and spoke; nay, the Father who abode in Him, and, as He says, "did the works." It is into this that we are brought—one fellowship with the apostles themselves, participation with them in the thoughts and purposes, the feelings and the affections, the whole mind of Christ. And in this fellowship, as he adds finally here, is fulness of joy to be found,—a joy which is in God Himself revealed,—not merely the fall done away, the distance produced by it annihilated, but, far more than that, the Revealer Himself Immanuel, God in Man, with men. Blessed it is to see the intensity of desire, as expressed by the apostle, that we should not only know such things, but that the whole blessing of them, if one might so say, should be enjoyed. There is, no doubt, infinity in it, but still not in such a way as to disappoint and check the eagerness of the soul, but to lead it on further and further, deeper and deeper, into that which, continually satisfying, yet draws it on ever by the satisfaction itself. Thus is the Life the light of men.

2. The apostle goes on to distinguish this from all former communications. The message heard of Him and now declared is that "God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all." Clouds and darkness have been round about Him. The veil of separation, as in the temple of old, hid Him from sight; nay, under the conditions existing then, it was mercy to do so; no one could look upon Him and live. Even Moses says: "I exceedingly fear and quake;" and they that heard His voice desired that He would speak to them in that direct way no longer, lest they should die. The mere revelation of the glory in the face of Moses had to be hidden from them; and that was the characteristic of all that dispensation—glory there waiting to be manifested, but the veil over it, so that men could not see the very blessedness of which they spoke, and which was typified and foreshadowed in all around them. Now, God is in the light, says the apostle:—"We walk in the light as He is in the light." *We* could not walk in the light in this sense until *He* was in the light. The veil is rent, the glory of God is seen. It is this into which faith introduces us now, as even faith itself could never introduce men before. We "walk in the light as He is in the light;" and thus we have "fellowship one with another," the fellowship of eyes that alike see, and of those brought into a common enjoyment of all that it manifests.

But, again, it is in this circle of the light that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." It is plain what the apostle is referring to here, that he is just in presence of that open holiest, opened by the rending of the veil when Christ died. The blood shed in propitiation for our sins has opened the way into the presence of God; the light into which we enter searches out sin, cannot leave it hidden; but where this is true, the blood cleanses from the sin brought out. In Israel's sanctuary the blood was upon the mercy-seat itself, under the full blaze of the overshining glory. Israel could not see it; but we see it; and the very light which will not suffer sin to be hidden shines in full bright-

3 (8-10): Manifestation by the light.

3. If we say that we have [t]no sin, we [u]deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we [v]confess our sins, he is [w]faithful and righteous to [x]forgive us [our] sins, and

t cf. Job 15 *cf.* Prov. 20. 9. *cf.* Lk. 18. 9-14.

u cf. 1 Tim. 1. 15. *v cf.* Jas. 1. 26; *cf.* Eph. 5. 6. *v* Ps. 32. 5; Ps. 51. 3-5; *cf.* Lk. 7. 37, etc. *w cf.* Rom. 3. 25, 26; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 21. *x* Eph. 1. 7; *cf.* Jno. 8. 11; *cf.* Lk. 7. 37-50.

ness upon the blood which has been shed for it, the value of which the light, wherever it shines, carries with it. To walk in the light is what is characteristic of the Christian, of *every* Christian. It is this light in which God is perfectly revealed, into which faith introduces; and he that is outside of it is walking still in darkness, ignorant of God, and of all things besides. It is this that he is speaking of when he puts the condition that it is "*if* we walk in the light," the blood cleanses. It is not if we walk *according to* the light. That is not here the question. It is *where* we walk, not *how* we walk, that he is speaking of. It is not a moral condition in us, however much this is produced by it. It is the power of a revelation made known to us, and which faith receives. Thus, "if we say that we have fellowship with Him (with God) and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not practise truth." The darkness, therefore, is not simply moral,—although in this darkness all things evil abide,—but it is a darkness which is, first of all, ignorance of God Himself, and which is the great primal evil, the evil which entails all other evils. For fellowship with God, He must Himself be known; and this is what the Person and work of Christ have done for us. Our need has been completely met. Love has intervened for us. Love has let out the light, and to enjoy the love we must be in the light. That will reveal us also to ourselves. That will reveal the world and all things else; and thus the holiness of truth is secured for us, sin becomes sin—stands out in all its hateful reality. We are brought into fellowship with God about it. The practical state necessarily answers, as the effect to the cause, to the revelation which has been made to us; and this is Christianity, and nothing else is.

3. The apostle immediately proceeds to test all Christian profession by these principles. He is always testing. He must have the truth, and nothing but the truth; and thus the conditions here apply to the whole of this profession, the true and the false. "If we say," "if we confess." The apostle puts himself along with all others. He distinguishes the true from the false simply as they are manifested by their fulfilment or not of the conditions. To walk in darkness, in ignorance of God, is to walk in ignorance of ourselves also. "If we say that we have no sin" (here is the ignorance belonging to the darkness), "we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." If, on the other hand, we are in the light, our sins are manifest. There is neither possibility nor desire to hide them. "We confess our sins;" and "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "If," on the other hand, "we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar," for God has positively told men that they have sinned, and therefore "His *word* is not in us." We can see therefore a necessary difference between this assertion that "we have not sinned" and that "we have no sin." The one speaks of acts committed; the other may go deeper, to search out the sin which is in our nature. How can we be ignorant of it if we are Christians indeed? There are, alas, as we know, those who not only profess Christianity, and have, no doubt, more than the profession, who yet manage to deceive themselves in such a way as to seem to say what is here: "We have no sin." Sin, they say, was indeed our past condition, and we needed grace to deliver us from it; but that grace has perfectly delivered us, and we have none of it remaining now. That is self-deception surely; and it is only by refusing to call *sin* what is really sin that they are able to carry it out. Evil thoughts, with them, are from the devil; they are something outside themselves,—the power of the enemy,—but not the corruption of their nature. Their standard is not what the scriptural standard is. Scripture makes no abatement in its demands upon us in answer to any plea as to damaged powers, and such like things. "He that saith he abideth in Him,"

4 (ll. 1-11): The mercy in view of failure, with the practical test of those in the light.

to [y]cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say, we [z]have not sinned, we [a]make him a liar, and his [b]word is not in us.

4. My [c]children, these things write I unto you [d]that ye

y ver. 7. Heb. 9. 14, 26. *cf.* Mk. 1. 40–42.

z Rom. 3. 23.

ctr. Lk. 18. 9-14. *a* ch. 5. 10; *ctr.* John 3. 33; *cf.* Rom. 3. 4. *b* John 5. 38; *ctr.* ch. 2. 14. *c* ver. 12. *ctr.* ver. 13. *d cf.* Rom. 6. 1, 15; *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 1; *cf.* Gal. 5. 16–25 with John 3. 6.

says the apostle, "ought himself so to walk even as also He walked." Maintain this standard, and who will measure himself by it and say there is no coming short? Who will look down into the depths of his soul and say that there is positively no reflection of anything there but of Christ Himself, as in the purest of mirrors? Let only such things be uttered, and they will soon meet their answer; nay, it will be impossible for themselves, if the light has indeed wrought upon them, to keep up the deception. They are justifying themselves with words, and their own conscience is against them when once they get the focus of their vision adjusted. This, then, is what the apostle gives us as to the darkness; it is the effect of being in the darkness. On the other hand, if we are in the light, we confess our sins. It is a general principle, no doubt, which goes with us through our Christian lives; nevertheless, that is not exactly what is before the mind of the apostle here. He is thinking of the soul that has just come out of the darkness into the light, in whom the first element of fellowship with God is found in the realization of its own condition. Sins are there too plainly to be hidden, extenuated, or in any way got rid of. God is the only refuge. Blessed be His name, He receiveth sinners; and thus, "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins."

How near, in such a saying as this, does John come to Paul! He does not speak of justification as Paul does. He speaks of forgiveness simply. Justification, as we have seen elsewhere, is one of the truths characterizing Paul's gospel, as to which he asserts himself that he had a special ministry; but if Paul says God is righteous to *justify*, John says here He is righteous to *forgive*. The one statement has not the fulness and boldness of the other, yet this fundamental element is in both, that it is God Himself who is manifested in the gospel to men, to sinners, and that He is not only merciful to forgive, but "faithful and righteous" in doing it. "Faithful," notice; that must be to His pledged word, or rather, let us say, in view of what the apostle is putting before us here, faithful to Christ who has died for men—faithful to that precious blood which is here seen as on the mercy-seat. The blood declares His righteousness; to the blood, too, He is faithful; and thus the one who comes into His presence as a confessed sinner is met with perfect assurance.

But there is more here, also, than the forgiveness of sins. He is faithful and righteous to cleanse as well as forgive us, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness; that is, from all that lack of uprightness before Him which is of the essence of the natural, fallen condition. So could the psalmist say of the blessedness of the man "whose iniquity is forgiven, whose sin is covered," "to whom the Lord will not impute sin, and in whom," therefore, "there is no guile." We can see by all that is stated here that he is giving us what is fundamental to the Christian condition. He is distinguishing between the one in darkness and the one in the light, between the true and the false in Christian profession; and thus he is not dealing with sin into which a Christian may fall, but with that which he brings to God as all that he *can* bring Him when he comes first to Him who has revealed Himself in Christ. We shall find that he goes on immediately to the question of sins that a Christian may commit after being that; and while there is confessedly here what as a principle will apply to the Christian through his Christian life, (because he never ceases to be in that light which dealt with him when he first entered it,) yet at the same time we shall find that the apostle deals with this in a different manner.

4. We come now immediately to this, the apostle distinguishing between what he has written and what he is now going to write: "My children," he says,

may not sin; and [e]if any one sin, we have an [f]Advocate* with the Father, Jesus Christ [the] [g]righteous;

e *cf.* Gal. 6. 1. *cf.* 1 Cor. 10. 12 with Phil. 3. 3.

f *cf.* Jno. 13. 1-15; *cf.* Lk. 22. 31, 32, 61, 62; *ctr.* Jno. 14. 16; *ctr.* Heb. 7. 25.

g *cf.* Heb. 7. 26; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 19.

* "Paraclete," as in John xiv. 16.

"these things write I unto you that ye may not sin." It is the power of this revelation of God in Christ which is indeed to be power against sin for the future; yet he contemplates the possibility of a Christian sinning. "If any one sin," he says. We might think, perhaps, that he would rather say, "*when* any one sins;" but he does not, for he will not put it as if it were *necessary* that one should sin, whatever the facts as to ourselves which we have to acknowledge. With the Spirit of God in us, is there not abundant power against all commission of sin, whatever it may be? We are witness to ourselves that we are responsible for every act of this kind. We can never say that we were left in helplessness to do this. Not to condemn ourselves would be to dishonor God; so that he puts it conditionally altogether, "*If* any one sin;" but what then? What is the remedy? That we confess our sins, so as to be forgiven? That will come in due place, but he cannot begin with that. The first and fundamental necessity here is *Christ*. It is Christ in whose hands are the basin and the towel. It is Christ who says: "Except I wash thee, thou hast no part with me." Our necessary recourse, therefore, is first of all to Christ Himself. No cleansing of ourselves can there be, no accomplishment of anything in this way, until we have our feet in His hands; and back even of this the apostle goes here. "If any one sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins." Thus, whatever the repentance needed, whatever the need of the confession of what we have done, the thing that the apostle would remind any one of who is conscious of wrong done is that "we have an Advocate with the Father." It is not, if any one *repents*, we have an Advocate; but, "if any one *sin*." How would it be with us if Christ held us not still in that embrace with which at first He received us? If He did not hold us fast to God, how surely indeed should we drift away! The word "Advocate," "Paraclete," is the same as that used by the Lord Himself with regard to the Holy Spirit, and in the same sentence He speaks of Himself in the same character. "I will pray the Father," He says, "and He shall send you *another* Advocate," even the Spirit of God. Thus we are intended to compare these. The Spirit is now the Advocate on earth, in place of Him who has gone from earth. Christ is the Advocate with the Father, the One ascended to Him and in His presence for us. If we think of the Spirit as the epistle to the Romans speaks of Him, we shall understand this term "Advocate" with more clearness. The apostle there tells us that "we know not what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." That does not mean that the whole prayer to which He leads us is such a groaning, but that there is something in the prayer to which He leads incapable of being uttered even by the person who prays. He cannot realize just what he needs. He knows not what to pray for as he should. The Spirit not only brings him into the consciousness of needs which can be expressed, and are expressed, but adds to them, after all, as from Himself, that which is an intercession according to God: something which He who searches the hearts knows as the mind of the Spirit, while to the person who prays it is but an unintelligible groan. How beautiful it is to see thus the Spirit becoming our Advocate, going beyond even all that we are capable of, in order that our prayers may be complete and according to His mind who is to answer them! In this way, although this does not cover all that is meant by the word, we can yet understand how the Spirit becomes an Advocate for us, how He takes up our cause and pleads it before God. We can see here that as to Christ, His advocacy has the same meaning. He is an Advocate with the Father, suited entirely to all that is in the Father's heart. He is Jesus Christ the righteous, One who can never abate, therefore, that which is due to the character of God—to His glory. On

and he is the [h]propitiation for our sins; and not for [i]ours only, but also for the [j]whole world.

[h] Rom. 3. 25. *cf.* Lev. 16. 15, 16 with Col. 1. 20. [i] *cf.* ch. 1. 3. [j] *cf.* Jno. 1. 29; *cf.* Jno. 3. 16; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15.

the other hand, He is One completely for us, and having title to be for us by the propitiation which He has made for our sins. Thus, we are completely provided. But notice that it is with the Father also that He is Advocate. The apostle does not say, with *God;* but with One in definite known relationship to the people whose cause Christ has taken up; and this is the character of the epistle before us all the way through.

Thus we have, as uniformly in Scripture, a living Person for all our necessities; not something to be done or gone through by us, but One who has undertaken our cause and in whose hands we are. There follows, as the corollary of this, that as we are in His hands, so, practically, the blessing lies for us in allowing ourselves to be in His hands—in realizing this in the way in which the thirteenth chapter of the Gospel presents Him to us. He is there the girded Servant of our need, with the basin and the towel. The absolute necessity for us is that *He* should wash us. Except *He* wash, we have no part with Him. Communion is necessarily interrupted if we are not washed according to that which is His thought, clean as He would have us, and thus He becomes our resource entirely. We cannot wash ourselves. We are not to set ourselves right first, in order to come to Him. We come as we are, not washed, but *to be* washed, surrendering ourselves into His blessed hands that He may show us all that is amiss with us—the secret roots and principles which have led to failure, as well as the failure itself. And the first thing for us is to realize this nearness to Him, to allow no distance, and, on the other hand, to realize that there must be the absolute putting ourselves into His hands, not dictating to Him as to what He is going to set right, but letting Him search us out, letting Him put His hand upon that which needs to be set right, not content with partial cleansing, but with that perfect one which alone can be according to His mind. Thus, there is perfect grace, but perfect holiness. The presence of the Lord is that by which alone we escape from the defilement of evil—that having to do with Him which is indeed a daily necessity for us. All this we have had indeed before us in the Gospel, as has been said, but we can realize by it that what has been already stated,—that "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins,"—while it is a principle that always applies, yet at the same time it is not the proper remedy for failure, whatever the failure may be. *Christ Himself* is the remedy; but we need Him that the confession of our sins even, which will surely follow, may be according to His mind; that we may see in His light what sin is, what our sins are, and find in the grace of His presence that which is indeed ability to pour out all our hearts before Him. Then we shall find that there is indeed a forgiveness governmentally, most necessary for communion, and for which we must have been with Him. But the first point, and in a true sense the whole matter, is to have had our feet really in His hands, with the understanding how thoroughly He is for us, and that He alone is capable of even making us aware of the failure, as in Him alone is the grace that meets it.

It is added that "He is the propitiation for our sins;" and then, after John's manner entirely, "Not for ours only, but also for the whole world." There is not, as in our version, the "sins of the whole world." Nevertheless, we need not hesitate to speak of this, as it is surely implied. When the apostle says: "Not for *ours* only," he necessarily infers that it is for the sins of others also. This does not mean that they are put away. He is a propitiation, as is said in Romans, "through faith, by His blood." It is for believers, therefore, that all this becomes effectual, and only for these. Yet so thoroughly sufficient is the perfect Sacrifice that has been offered, and so plainly is it available for every soul that honestly desires it that we can say: "For the sins of the whole world," without the least trouble or question. Beautiful it is to realize that it is just in John's Gospel, where the deepest things of divine grace are told out, that there

And hereby we [k]know that we know him, if we [l]keep his commandments. He that [m]saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a [n]liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoso keepeth his [o]word, in

k *cf.* ch. 3. 14. *cf.* ch. 5. 13, 18–20.
l Jno. 14. 15. ch. 5. 3. 2 John 6.
m ch. 1. 6; Jas. 2. 14. n ch. 1. 8; *cf.* Rev. 22. 15. o John 14. 23; Col. 3. 16.

is the fullest going out in heart to all. The call and the provision are for all. The sin of rejection is upon him who rejects, and he shall never be able to say that there was not a remedy, or that he was not able to avail himself of the remedy.

The apostle proceeds now to that which he is constantly about, the practical testing of those who by profession are in the light. Every Christian is really there, and we must not understand the "if we walk in the light" as if it meant something less than this. The opposition to walking in light is the walking in darkness, and the walking in the darkness is in no sense Christian, as we see all through here. It is not even an exceptional state into which a Christian may get. That is not the way in which it is presented here. It is not true that a Christian may be practically in darkness. There may be a want of singleness in his eye which causes this, but the walking in the light points out *where* he walks, not *how* he walks. It is *walking*, indeed, of which John speaks: walking on the one hand in the light, or, on the other, in the darkness. He has always the idea of living activity, whether the life be true life from God or not; still, it is a living, active, responsible man of whom he is speaking, who, in fact, is moving in some direction. If in the darkness, how great the peril of it! If in the light, there is a responsibility attaching also to this, not as to being in the light, but as to having it practically in him, because he *is* in the light. If we are in the daylight, we are responsible to see our way. If we are in the darkness, that is not exactly the responsibility. We can see no better with our eyes open than with our eyes shut; but if we are in the light, then we have the responsibility, and the privilege also, of knowing that we are to have our eyes open in order to be able to discern the path before us, not without exercise, necessarily. That is not implied. We may have to use our eyes to find the path, in the light as we may be; but we must be in the light to find it. John has before him, as we have seen, from the beginning of his epistle, the opened holiest, and the light streaming out through the rent veil, the light carrying with it the power of the blood which has let it out. Thus the whole question for us is, if we are in the light. At least, that is the fundamental question with which he is here concerning himself. All the way through we shall find that he is testing profession. He does not hesitate to test it thoroughly. He is not putting us upon the ground of the blood as shed for our sins, but testing whether we are on the ground. If we are in the light, he has already said, the blood avails for us. If we are in the light, the consequences of being in the light will be seen, and there will be for those who consciously are walking there the assurance which results of necessity from a practical walk with God. It is the first great primary assurance, which we find as sinners, not as saints; but it is one very necessary for us to know, and which we need exhortation about. As the apostle Peter has said, we need to make our calling and election sure, *not to God*, but to ourselves. We need to walk in such a way that the witness of the Spirit can be clear and positive with us. The apostle is writing to those who profess to have this confidence of which we are speaking. He is not afraid, therefore, of producing legality by testing it. "Hereby," he says, "we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." The apostle has no idea of separating these things from one another—the knowledge and its practical results. As he says afterwards, "He that sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him." He is clearly not thinking of that which a Christian may fall into or be overcome by. He is thinking of what is the characteristic state. If we have not this character of keeping His commandments, then it is simply a false profession

him verily is the [p]love of God perfected. Hereby [q]know we that we are in him. He that saith he [r]abideth in him, ought himself also to [s]walk even as he* walked. Beloved, I write [t]no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had [u]from the beginning. The old commandment is the [v]word which ye heard. Again a [w]new commandment write I unto you, which thing is true in [x]him and in you, because the [y]darkness is passing away and the true light al-

p ch. 4. 12, 18
q *cf.* ch. 3. 24 with Rom. 8. 16.
r John 15. 4, 5. *cf.* Col. 1. 23.
s 1 Pet. 2. 21. *cf.* Phil. 2. 5, etc.
t 2 John 5. *cf.* Phil. 3. 1.
u ch. 3. 11. John 15. 27.
v John 15. 3. John 17. 26.
y Rom. 13.

* Literally, "That one," ἐκεῖνος.

w John 13. 34; *cf.* Matt. 5. 43, 44; *cf.* Heb. 7. 18, 19. x *cf.* ch. 4. 17; *cf.* Gal. 2. 20. 12, 13; *cf.* John 12. 36; *cf.* Prov. 4. 18.

with us, and not the truth. "Whosoever keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected." That is to say, that love which he has had manifested to him in Christ has come to fruition.

And here he says, let us notice, not simply, "whoso keepeth His *commandments*," but "whoso keepeth His *Word*." There is a difference which we have already had before us in the Lord's last discourse with His disciples, as John himself has given it to us. We cannot but see how, all through the epistle, his heart goes back to those last words of his Lord—how he reproduces and emphasizes them. The very style and language are those of the Gospel, a sweet and wonderful characteristic of the one who was the disciple whom Jesus loved, who lay on His breast and drank in His words. So he says here, "keepeth His Word," because the true believer is not under a code of commandments simply, and he does not ask himself, what *must* I do? which the command implies; but rather, what *may* I do? how can I show to Him the desire I have to serve and please Him? Thus all Scripture becomes, in reality, a necessity to such. Alas, it is at best but feebly realized, that is true; nevertheless, he that knows Christ aright can not do other than understand that the whole Word of God is what has been provided for him, to form in him the mind of Christ, and that he may realize communion as God would have it. Alas for the failure and the imperfections! Still, the merely legal soul is either one that is not truly in the grace which is our whole sanctification, or he does not understand the sweetness and the power of that grace. We cannot but remember that in that epistle to the church of Philadelphia, communicated once more by John himself, and the very last discourse, as we may say, to His now fully Christian disciples, the emphasis of our Lord's approval is in this: "Thou hast kept My Word." Whatever is in Christ's mind for us, it is ours honestly, as He enables us, to act upon and carry out; and it is as we are thus practically walking with Him that we learn the full reality of knowing that we are in Him, for "He that saith he abideth in Him," says the apostle, "ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." No less a measure is laid down—no less perfect a standard must be accepted. Here is again the testing of profession. "He that *saith* he abideth in Him;" but the abiding in Him itself is what is absolutely necessary to Christianity. It is the branch abiding in the vine, so that the sap abides in the branch, and we rightly look in such a case for flower and fruit.

The apostle is not afraid of the word "commandment." He knows well that is not a word uncongenial to the heart of a true disciple. He would not be without commandments—the manifestation of an authority to which he is subject, and subject in delight, finding it his truest freedom. Thus, then, what he is writing is "no new commandment," as he says. It is but an old commandment, which they had from the beginning. We see at once that he is dating here, as ever, from Christ's life and words on earth. The old commandment is the word which he heard. What he says now is nothing new in that sense, and yet there is something new about it, and in a very important way new: "Again a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in Him and

ready shineth. He who [a]saith he is in the light, and [b]hateth his brother, is in the darkness until now. He that [c]loveth his brother, abideth in the light, and there is no [d]occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in the [e]darkness and walketh in the darkness and [f]knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his eyes.

a ver. 4.
b ch. 3. 15. ch. 4. 20.
c ch. 3. 14. 1 Thess. 4. 9.
d 2 Pet. 1. 10. John 11. 9. *cf.* Matt. 6. 22, 23.
e *cf.* Eph. 5. 8-14. f *cf.* John 8. 12-14; *ctr.* Phil. 3. 13, 14.

in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light already shineth." That is what makes the commandment "new." It is a commandment written now in the heart, according to the full character of the new covenant, and with all the power of the true light come, before which every element of darkness is passing away. He does not say here that it is *passed*, but it is *passing*. We are all conscious, however desirous in our hearts to be true to Him, that there is, after all, obscurity remaining with us; that there are things in ourselves which hinder the light, and which we have never been able yet to detect so that they should have perfect removal; but the true light shineth, and the soul, conscious of this, draws ever more fully into its beams, rejoicing in the light, willingly hiding nothing of it from itself; for it is in the light that all things get their true character; evil is seen in it with horror, and all the loveliness of that which is right and true comes out. Thus, to be in the light is no mere cold, clear knowledge. It has the blessing of warmth in it, and the vitalizing power under which all the precious fruits of the earth spring up and ripen. Thus the "thing is true in Him and in you." Christ is the light; and this light is in us also, by His grace. We are in communion with Him, as He has already assured us.

On the other hand, "he who saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in the darkness until now." Notice, he does not say merely, as some would seem to have it, that he is in the darkness *now*. That is true, but not the whole truth. He is in the darkness, and he *never was out of it*. He is in the darkness *until* now. That does not allow the possibility of a soul having been in the light, in the sense in which John is speaking here, and getting out of it again. On the other hand: "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light." He stays there, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him; but, "He that hateth his brother (notice that it is profession ever, and therefore he tests it as such; the brother by profession is counted as a brother, there is responsibility of the relationship professed, whether true or not true, and he that hateth his brother then) is in the darkness, and walketh in the darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his eyes"—a terrible condition, surely, and which seems by the language used to be distinguished from that of which the prophet speaks where men "sit in darkness, and have no light." In this case the truth has not been known, and there is nothing that one can speak of as activity at all; although surely there is in another way activity, as we all know, and plenty of evil deeds that go with such a condition. But here the light has come; the soul has the responsibility of that light; he has a walk which is estimated in its character as in the light or in the darkness, as the apostle has said in Philippians, "even weeping," of those (many they were) who walk, yet as "enemies of the cross of Christ," "whose God is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." Here is the darkness in which already many professing believers were found according to the testimony of the apostle; and this is it of which John is speaking here.*

* It is to be remarked that the apostle, in testing the profession of those who say they know God, does not speak of negative absence of evil, nor of the more general characteristics of what is known as a moral life. He seeks for love, a thing which in its true nature and energy is from God alone. If this be absent, or if in its place there be hatred, it shows the absence of life. Paul in the 13th of first Corinthians speaks in somewhat the same way—all gifts, no matter how brilliant, are valueless apart from that which is the "fulfilling of the law"—which in fact is "the Spirit's law of life in Christ Jesus."—S. R.

DIVISION 2. (Chap. ii. 12–27.)

Growth by the Truth.

1 (12): The basis of all.

2 (13): Grades to be discerned.

1. I WRITE unto you, children,* because your sins are [g] forgiven you for his name's sake.
2. I write unto you, [h] fathers, because ye have known him

[f] ver. 1. [g] *cf.* Acts 10. 43 with Col. 2. 13. [h] ver. 14. *cf.* Phil. 9. *cf.* 1 Pet. 5. 1.

* The general term for all children, τεκνία.

DIV. 2.

We now come to what is very distinct in character. The being in the light is not in itself a sufficient statement of the believer's condition. If he is in it, and the light in him, this involves another thing which must be true of him—a life which God has given, and by virtue of which he is a child of God. This is a life which he has received through the gospel. We are begotten by the Word of truth. The Word becomes, as James has said, an "engrafted Word." It has come not as word merely, but in the power of the Spirit, who works in it. We see, therefore, the perfect connection between the life and the light. In Christ it was always perfect. "The life was the light of men." In us there is now, through grace, a life which is light also, the light giving it its character; and its seed, as the apostle speaks afterwards, being the seed of the truth, which abides in the heart in which it has been sown. Growth, therefore, is also by the truth, and that is it to which the apostle now goes on. By the life we are children of a common Father; but then, while it is thus of necessity eternal life, and is divine in character, it may be in us, and will of necessity be, at the beginning, in feebleness and immaturity. Dependent it always is. It does not take us out of the creature place, but rather puts us fully in it, and makes us realize the source of all to be in Him from whom we draw. Christ is the truth. The reception of Christ is the reception of the life which the truth characterizes, and Christ is thus before the eyes of faith as the perfect Example and full Reality of that into which we are daily growing up as we know Him and walk with Him.

1. Here the apostle lays down the fundamental distinction as to all those of whom he is writing now. "I write unto you, children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake." This is true of every child of God, and it is as true of any one of these as of any other. There is no child of God who is not forgiven. "We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." This is the ground upon which the apostle writes, therefore. He would have no ground for writing if their sins were not forgiven; for it is not a question of the gospel here, that is, of preaching it to those outside, but he writes to those who have received it, and who therefore *are* forgiven—forgiven for the sake of that blessed Name which is now named upon them. They are forgiven, therefore, in all the grace that the work of Christ for them implies. This, then, is the basis of what he is at present saying. He has already been defining what is true perfection, and separating it from the false. He can now therefore write to those whom this definition has shown to be the true children of God. These have eternal life.

2. But immediately now he recognizes that there are grades and distinctions among these. There are fathers, young men, little children. The word in the last case is a different one from that which we had in the twelfth verse, which applies to all Christians. Here, on the other hand, the "little children" are those in whom life is only beginning to develop itself. The young men are those who have attained or are attaining maturity. The fathers are those that are fully mature in the perfect ripeness of what is implied in Christianity. Notice there are no "*old* men" here. There is no feebleness or decay hinted at, at all. The life is eternal, and this may and does need development, but in it there is no decline; it is eternal. But the different classes that he is addressing here are named from the evident correspondence to such classes in nature, and

who is [g]from the beginning. I write unto you, [j]young men, because ye have [k]overcome the wicked one. I [i] ch. 1. 1 with Rev. 22. 13.

cf. Col. 3. 11. [j] *cf.* 2 Sam. 23. 8. [k] *cf.* ch. 4. 4; *cf.* Heb. 2. 14 with Eph. 6. 11.

there is a certain relationship even between these, which we can easily trace. An old man brought to God, as such, will, of course, be at the same time but a little child in the things of God. Yet even so, he will not be found, probably, to have all the characteristics of little children. This will be more apparent as we proceed. But, as we see here, while the little children already know the Father—they have learnt to look in His face and recognize their relationship to Him—yet the energy of youth does not as yet belong to them. They have not known conflict yet. They have not overcome the wicked one. Yet this is not failure. It is inexperience, necessarily. It characterizes a condition which needs peculiar care, and from which failure may readily come, if God do not avert it. Nevertheless, it is not in itself failure, but very far from this. To know the Father is a wonderful and blessed reality. And the apostle has no idea really of anything lower than this. The cry of "Abba, Father," is the children's cry.*

The young men have the vigor of life, and have overcome the wicked one; but there is danger for them yet; danger, perhaps, in the very activity which this implies—danger necessarily implied, one may say, in the very fact of conflict, though they have overcome, and are looked at, in the apostle's style here, necessarily as overcomers. He puts the Christian condition here before us characteristically. He does not bring in the blots and disfigurements, nor the imperfections, though he may warn against them. He is giving us a picture of Christianity, and not of whatever foreign elements may still cleave to the Christian. This is easily to be understood. He would animate us by the realization of what we are, and not draw in what is contrary to this,—even though we may have admitted it,—as if *he* were going to admit it. We have already seen that he can say, "If any one should sin, we have an Advocate with the Father;" but he does not say,—*when* we sin, we have an Advocate with the Father. That would be a very different style of speaking; and, instead of being encouragement, would be great discouragement. He writes as to those who have the Spirit of God and know it, and with whom, therefore, the full capacity of full privilege is found, though the young men have, as it were a matter of course, overcome the wicked one. Is not He that is in them greater than he that is in the world? What else must it be than overcoming? Is not this "the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith?" Have they not faith? Here he will have no abatement of this blessedness. He could not, addressing himself to Christians as a whole, or in classes such as this, take in the defect and evil as if it were a matter of course, as if it belonged to His people. It does not belong. The young men that he is addressing, the ideal young men if you like, (but still he does not make mere ideals of them,) have overcome the wicked one.†

Now, as to the fathers, it is remarkable what he has to say of them. What is it? "Ye have known Him who is from the beginning." What is that more than the little children have known? Have not the little children known Him who is from the beginning—that is, Christ? Yes, they have known Him; and yet how little they have known Him! Knowledge it is, wonderful, blessed knowledge—knowledge which distinguishes them from all the world around;

* The knowledge of the Father is what is distinctive of Christianity, there is no Christianity apart from this; it is what our Lord came to make known, and what the Spirit bears witness to. It includes a knowledge of the dignity of our relationship—membership in the family of God; it reminds us as well of the Father's love and care, "The Father Himself loveth you;" it also recalls the fact that we are under the Father's government, therefore the necessity of walking in godly fear and obedience. Thus even the babe knows relationship, divine love, and the claims of such upon his obedience.—S. R.

† Strength is what characterizes the young men. "The glory of young men is their strength." There is the vigor needed for the inevitable conflict. As the knowledge of relationship marks the babes, so the practical carrying out of God's will—and in the circumstances in which we are—marks the young men.—S. R.

write* unto you, [l]little children,† because ye have [m]known the Father.

3 (14-27): What is to be realized by each.

3. I have written unto you, fathers, [n]because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written

* Many read, "have written." † παιδία.

l *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 2. *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 7.
m Rom. 8. 15-17. Gal. 4. 6.
n ver. 13. *cf.* Phil. 3. 10 with Eph. 3. 19.

and yet who that in fact knows Christ will account his knowledge of Him to be, as it were, anything? As we have seen in the opening of the epistle, the apostle will say for himself and others who had the inestimable blessing of being with Him upon earth—he will say, rather, "That which was from the beginning, which we have seen, *of* the Word of life." They have seen somewhat of Him. How great a mystery of blessing lies beyond! Not that they are debarred from anything; not that they have it put at a distance in any wise; quite the contrary. They are invited and drawn near by the very fulness of the revelation itself. We have seen how he continually, as it were, draws nearer in those opening words, "We have heard," "seen," "handled." Yet it is, after all, only somewhat of this divine Person, this Son who in His fulness the Father only knows. Yet he can say of these Christian fathers, "Ye have known Him who is from the beginning." Here he will not say "*that* which is from the beginning" exactly. He does not want to qualify it in this way. In one relation it may be qualified, but here he is speaking of a Person whom they know, who is the real Person upon whom their eyes have been fixed ever since they were drawn to Him by His grace and made His own. He is speaking of One in the knowledge of whom they have grown up to where they are now, and their growth is by that which they have learnt more and more of Him. They have been in His company; they have listened to His words; they have heard told out the very thoughts of His heart; they have learnt to look at all things with His eyes. They have now, as fathers, as it were proved for themselves that world, which, for the young men even, had necessarily been much of an untried world. Though they could speak of it as Scripture had declared it, yet they could not speak of it exactly as knowing it in experience yet. They had not yet tested all things in the presence of Christ. The fathers have done this, and the world has shriveled up for them into the vanity which belongs to it, and the One that abides is Christ, and only Christ. Thus, to have known Him is to have known all. It is not that they will not know Him better, but that they have got now before them (impossible to be confounded with anything else), they have got One who has given rest and satisfaction to their hearts, in whom they have found indeed "all things that pertain to life and godliness," and in such a way that there they abide, "rooted and built up in Him." There is plenty to be learnt yet, as has already been said; but as, for us all, the discernment between good and evil is that which is counted knowledge, so the discernment between Christ and all else is the fathers' knowledge here.* Thus, then, we have the three classes before us. He is going to address himself now to each.

3. But it is very striking, as soon as he begins to address himself to the fathers, as we saw first, he has no more to say to them than he had said already. How strange that seems at the first thought of it! They have got Him before them who is the fulness of knowledge, and they have got Him before them in such a way that nothing else can possibly be confounded with Him at all. This is what suits the apostle, as it were. He has nothing further in this way to say to them. With them the value of the teacher has been realized in such a measure as to make them, we may say, independent of the teacher. He seems to say

* To know Christ—the eternal Son—there is nothing beyond that, and it is far, far beyond all knowledge of relationship and all power for warfare. It was for this that Paul was ever pressing on—"that I may know *Him*." We can well understand the place the fathers would have in the assembly of God. No vigor can supply the lack of that judgment, that poise of soul which comes alone from a knowledge of Christ.—S. R.

unto you, young men, because ye are °strong and the ᵖword of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one. ᵍLove not the world, nor the things in the world: if any one love the world, the ʳlove of

o Eph. 6. 10. Phil. 4. 13. Prov. 20. 29.
p Col. 3. 16. *cf.* Matt. 4. 10, 11.
q Rom. 12. 2; *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 10. r Jas. 4. 4; *cf.* John 17. 14-16.

this even of the little children afterwards, but not in the same way as he can say it here. The office of a teacher is, in fact, always to make people more and more independent of himself. What teacher is there, that is worth anything as that, who will not aim to accomplish this? Who is going to keep others always in school to himself? What is school for but to enable them to go out from it and to live their independent lives apart? Alas, when we think of this, and look around us! Plenty there are who undervalue teaching. Fathers will not do that. Plenty there are who think that they can draw for themselves independently, as it were, from the divine Source, and be in debt to no man. They are not fathers ever who admit this. Fathers have learnt the use of teaching, and of teachers; but they have learnt, as it was surely the only right thing for them to do, that which, as already said, brings them more and more out of the school in which they have learnt it. That does not mean, of course, the school of God, in which we all are, but the school of the teacher; even when the teacher is most thoroughly such, and used of God as such. How blessed to see *this* kind of independence beginning in the soul! In fact, as we shall shortly see, there must be a character of this even from the beginning. But here is the full maturity of such a character. Here are those who have so learnt Christ, and are so in His company, that while they still learn, as we all do, perhaps from the very mouth of a babe, yet at the same time are not in the same sense scholars as once they were. They "have known Him that is from the beginning." How sweet it is indeed to know Him so! How blessed if we can see characteristics of this sort developing amongst us in the independent life and walk of those who are made so just by their recognition of their absolute dependence upon Christ, upon all the fulness of God manifested in Him into which they are daily drinking! "Rooted and built up in Him," they are "stablished in the faith, . . . abounding therein with thanksgiving."

The young men are now addressed as before, as in the energy of youth, those who have already overcome the wicked one. This is what the little children have yet to do. *They* have to discern antichrist, the falsehood from the truth; but with those here, the word of God, the first necessity for doing this, abides in them. They have fought in this respect their battle, and come through. Thus they are strong as nourished by the Word, for it is "the food of the mighty" still; it is that which gives strength.

But he has more now to say to them, and his exhortation has to do with that in which, after all, they are not yet experienced, in which their new experience has to be, and into which their very energy will necessarily lead them. The young men, naturally, are those who are going out into the world. Life in this sense is beginning with them. Their necessary occupation is in it. They cannot refuse, therefore, the having to do with it. But in this world, opposed as it is to Christ, there is yet that which, alas, is capable of attracting the heart, even of a disciple. The life which he is beginning has in itself its own attractiveness. He can be in it for Christ, and is to be. Sanctified by Him and taken out of it, we are sent into it just *as* those sanctified; but conflict is implied in this, and the stratagem of him who is the prince of it, and who can display all its glory still for the disciple, as he did of old for the disciple's Master. The evils that are in the world, by daily contact with them, grow familiar, have a natural tendency to impress us less. We are in it at any rate; have, as it were, to make the best of it. The daily wear and tear of things begins; we are not in the retirement of the family; we are away from home, more or less single and independent in our lives now, exposed thus to varied influences in which the eye

the Father is not in him; because all that is in the world, the [s] lust of the flesh, and the lust of the [t] eyes, and the [u] pride of life,* is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world [v] passeth† away, and the

* Or, "living," *βιος*, not *ζωη*.
† Or, "is passing"—the same tense as in verse 8.

[s] *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 11; *cf.* Gal. 5. 19–21.
[t] *cf.* Matt. 5. 28. *cf.* 2 Sam. 11. 2, etc. Eccl. 1. 8.
[u] *cf.* Jas. 5. 1.
cf. Dan. 4. 30, etc.
[v] 1 Cor. 7. 31; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 24.

may readily affect the heart, and having also in the heart that which can be attracted still by that which has overcome so many strong men already.

Here is the ground of the apostle's exhortation, then. "Love not the world," he says, "nor the things in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Strong, separative words for those who have but a while since come to know the Father, and who have been growing in the knowledge of the intimacy which this implies! What a thing for the young man entering the world, the remembrance of that home upon which now his back is more or less necessarily turned! The apostle would encompass those spiritually young with these affections of One who, blessed be His name, is with us still, from whose presence we are not to go, whose love has sought us and abides with us.

But the *love* of the world is inconsistent with the love of the Father. There is no element in it which is of Him. It is the great, imposing system which, for all the show it makes, has grown out just of its alienation from God. The things that are in it are "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." These characterize it,—a heart away from God which finds no longer its satisfaction in Him,—seeks it no more there, and as a consequence has to make its riches just of the things that are in its hands, with nothing beyond; the things that pamper fleshly instincts; the things that raise question and incite to how many paths of knowledge in a scene which has so many mysteries for us. There follows with this "the pride of life," the realization of man's place over the world, which, indeed, was given him of God from the beginning, but which he is all the less enjoying when he seems most conscious of it. It is not hard to understand the development here, in days when the desire of knowledge is so great with us, and the sense of acquirement so strong. In all this, the things that attract us have a certain natural and necessary interest. God did not put us here amid the wonders of His own creation without meaning them to be something to us, and He has, indeed, provided in His own Word that which stimulates question, and of a deeper character than mere nature in itself could raise. He has provided in it also the answer to these questions in a way we very little realize, and, if we turned to Him with them, how should we find what, even naturally, our heritage is! But men seek it away from God. They go into it to make it a substitute for Himself. They receive it not from Him, but from the one into whose hands it has fallen through their sin, and into whose hands they have fallen. Thus the most innocent delight can in this way draw the soul away from God. While the gifts are valued, they are not valued as His gifts, nor Himself trusted in. The gifts draw from the Giver.*

* We have three most important definitions in this brief epistle—of God, of sin, and here of the world. God is light and love; sin is lawlessness; and the lust of the world is described in the threefold way—the lust of the flesh, of the eyes, and the pride of life. The application of this to the temptation of the woman in Eden has often been noticed. She saw that the tree was "good for food;" this answers to the lust of the flesh, those more animal and sensual appetites, which would include the grosser lusts which have degraded the race. The tree was also pleasant to the eyes, answering to the lust of the eyes, that craving of an empty heart which has turned from God, and seeks in vain to fill itself by "the things that are seen." How Satan has used the tinsel of this gaudy world to stir up lust—for riches, position, power—in his captives. But it was also "a tree to be desired to make one wise," and the pride of man has ever asserted itself in claiming wisdom for itself. This sin was that of Satan, and is far more subtle than the grosser forms of the world previously spoken of. What a blessed remedy for worldliness is suggested in the words "of the Father." Where He and His love, and obedience to Him control the life, the world can have little power.—S. R.

lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God [w] abideth forever. Little children,* it is the [x] last hour and as ye have heard that [y] antichrist cometh, even now have

[w] *cf.* Heb. 12. 28. *cf.* Rev. 21. 7.

[x] 1 Pet. 4. 7. *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 1.

* παιδία.

[y] *cf.* John 5. 43 with Matt. 24. 5; *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 3-10 with Rev. 13. 11, etc.

This, as we know, began in Eden itself, where God had specially provided all that was pleasant to the sight and good for food, and destined all that He had created beneath man to subjection to him and to minister to his enjoyment. God is not the enemy of joy. It is away from Him that we have learned to think of Him so, and the effect of the tree of knowledge of good and evil has been thus made to turn our eyes away from the tree of life. This spirit intensifies as it grows, as the world becomes larger, as the material accumulates, as men incite one another more and more in the paths that they have chosen for themselves. They learn to rejoice in their independence of God. That will which is the highest influence in man must be for them a *free* will, setting to work after its own fashion, with methods of its own, apart from God; a course which at the beginning brought death into it, the shadow of which must necessarily, therefore, lie across it all. But for man this shadow is over the face of God Himself. The evil in the world he resents as from a malevolent being envying his joys, and the spirit that turns from Him becomes naturally evermore defiant of Him. Upon all this, however, death must pass; and it does pass. The commonest and most familiar thing with us now is death. "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof;" and where faith does not exist, there is no knowledge of a path upon which the shadows do not lie. Yet "He that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

But how should man be brought to believe this? Christ has been here upon earth, the Pattern of it; one whose very words were spirit and life, one Himself in the joy of the Father, and therefore at whose touch death itself passed. The life in Him was eternal life. The Son of God, from the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, was in the world to turn men back to Him from whom they have wandered. What have they done with Him? Why has not this gracious Presence remained with us? The cross was man's answer to the Father's grace, and the world remains of necessity in the death that it has chosen, and with the brand upon it that it has rejected the Father's Son. Plain all this is, indeed, to one who has received the truth which God is proclaiming. How can the world have power any more over him who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? How can there be any more anything to glory in, save in that cross by which the world is crucified to us and we unto the world? And yet what a struggle to go through the world unseduced by it! Here is what indeed requires all the energy of the young man in Christ, with all his soul awake, and everything around him full of fresh interest—as, in a sense, it ought to be. God has provided for all this energy. He has provided for us that which, as we occupy ourselves with it, more and more satisfies, even while begetting fresh desire in the soul; and here in occupation with our own things, while in a world, too, which, when we learn it rightly, belongs to us, for its true use with God; for "all is yours," says the apostle, "whether the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come." What a mastery over all is here set before us to be ours if we so will, but which, as we realize it, instead of lifting the heart up with pride, will more and more teach it dependence and the joy of being with and under the omnipotent eye of God, who is for us with all that He is, and only eager to put us in possession of that which is our own. God give His young men to accept this place, and find the true field for deathless energies, which abide in the eternal life which He has given them.

The apostle turns once more now to the little children, and, strangely as at first sight it would seem, addresses them as to antichrist. Who would think of that as a topic for the babe? But it is not just with prophetical questions that he

there arisen many antichrists, whereby we know that it is [the] last hour. They [a]went out from us, but they

[a] cf. Heb. 10. 28, 29, 38, 39. cf. John 6. 66-69.

would occupy them here. *What is* antichrist? It is in essence all that is opposed to Christ; all that would substitute itself for Him. "I have come in My Father's name," says the Lord, "and ye receive Me not. If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." If Christ be rejected, antichrist must come. If Christ does not satisfy the soul, antichrist will press his claim upon it; and here, in fact, even doctrinally in the history of the Church, was the first and long struggle of faith. All forms of antichrist were abroad, as John says here: "Even now there are many antichrists." Conflict as to the person of Christ began in the very first days. We look back at it now, perhaps, to wonder at all the many questions which arose about the glorious person of the Son of God. We wonder at the subtleties which grew out of these, and are disposed to put much of it down as the mere curious questioning of minds that were but too little occupied with the One they questioned of; but underneath it all there lay surely that which was of fundamental interest to every soul taught of God. If the knowledge of Christ constitutes Christians, then must the enemy seek to pervert the truth of Christ in every way which devilish wisdom could suggest.

The little children are in this way peculiarly open to attack. The word of God has become a new and wonderful enjoyment to them, but they are yet largely ignorant of it, and are only beginning to know Christ, "whom to know is" indeed "life eternal." Here is the secret of the form which the enemy's attack takes. If he can now get, in some way, the very truth of Christ away from them, then the whole victory is won without any question. In that early Church, which doubtless we often misconceive as to its intelligence, as in other ways, there was not yet that intimate acquaintance with the word of God upon which so much depended. As we know, it was not in their hands as it is in our hands to-day. Men might obtain laboriously a copy of a Gospel, or some other book written out by their own hands, perhaps, in order to secure it, and the Scriptures did not multiply as even in this form we might expect they would. How everything fails with us through lack of the intense desire with which our hearts should go after things like these! Now, when Scripture is in all our houses and in all our hands, how much acquaintance, after all, have we with it? How many terrible gaps are there in our knowledge? Has our familiarity with it brought all this about? Has it brought *contempt*, or what? Alas, how our unused Bibles cry out against us! Do they not cry into the ear of God? Must He not take note of them? And all the various forms of evil that are abroad to-day, do they not show how still, for masses, the infancy of things has never passed?

We must not look back to those so-called primitive times expecting to find how entirely different things were then with them. Every epistle that we have is witness that they were *not* different. At Rome, amongst those Roman Christians whom the apostle had so long been desiring to see, whose faith had come abroad so much,—when he actually got there, what was his account? "All seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's." In Ephesus, where he had been so long, so that almost all Asia heard the word of God from him at that time, how earnestly he warns them of the decay which was already creeping in! And in all this men found their opportunity to sow, in this ground so little occupied with the true seed of blessing, seed of their own (which was, after all, the enemy's sowing), and to have plentiful crops within the very harvest-field of Christendom. The world had hardly woke up with astonishment to find itself Christian, when it woke up once more to find itself Arian. Christ was almost slipping away, and the Nicene Creed, with the Athanasian, are witnesses to us of the necessary conflict by which, under God, the truth was in measure saved. But the apostle's interest here is, as ours must ever mainly be, with individual souls, and with conditions out of which these things arose, and still arise.

were not of us; for if they had been of us they would have [a]remained with us; but [they went out] that they might be made [b]manifest that they all* are not of us. And ye have an [c]anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but [d]because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is the liar but he that [e]denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is the antichrist who denieth the [f]Father and the Son. Whosoever [g]denieth the Son hath not the Father either. He who [h]confesseth the Son hath the Father also. As for you,

a *cf.* Col. 1. 23. *cf.* 1Pet.1.5.
b *cf.* Jno. 10. 26. *cf.* Matt.13. 20, 21. *ctr.* Phil 1. 6, 7.
c 2 Cor.1.21, *cf.* 1Cor.12. 13.
d *cf.* 2 Pet.3. 1.
e ch. 4. 3. *ctr.* Matt. 16. 16.
f *cf.* Jno. 14. 9–11.
g *cf.* Jno. 5. 17, 18.

* Or, "none [of them] are of us." This is a frequent idiom in the Greek, and is a strong way of saying that *no* apostates were Christians.

ctr. Eph.1. 3. h *cf.* ch. 5. 1; *cf.* John 9. 35–38.

Nor must we expect any bettering. The many antichrists proved for an apostle only that it was the "last hour." It was a departure from the truth once held—a departure which, as that, did not imply mere ignorance, but rejection. "They went out from us," says the apostle, "but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us, but they went out that they might be made manifest that they all are not of us." The doubt in this last statement implied in the common version does not really exist. The apostle does not say, "that it might be made manifest that they were *not all* of us." In the nature of things, that would be a contradiction. How could their going out make manifest with regard to some what it did not make manifest with regard to others? The form of speech here is merely a common form of Greek expression. "Except those days were shortened, *no* flesh should be saved;" but the Greek literally says: "all flesh should not be saved." Here it is plain that the going out makes manifest the same thing as to all that go out. It could not make manifest as to some what it did not make manifest as to others; and "if they had been of us," says the apostle, "they would have remained with us." He that is in Christ abides in Christ, thank God. He that is in the light abideth in the light. The apostle has no thought of the divine work in the soul being ever undone again, or that He that has begun a good work in any could fail to carry it on; but a mixed condition, such as obtains in Christendom, (such as, indeed, early obtained,) makes itself plain in this way; and through this the power of the enemy works; the antichrists are found amongst those who, not being of us, fall from the truth into the more attractive error.

But the apostle returns here to the comforting assurance of how amply God has provided even for His babes, in view of such things as these. It is to the little children that he says: "But ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things." Strange that may seem at first; yet he manifestly does not mean that they have anything like perfect knowledge, but that in this anointing from the Holy One, in the power of the Spirit who abode in them, they had really the *capacity* for the judgment of all such things as might be presented to them. In this character, as led of Him, they knew the truth. They had but to be subject to One abiding in them, who searched even the deep things of God. He had not written unto them, then, because they did not know the truth, and as if they were now to take, so to speak, his bare word for it. No, they knew it, and that no lie was of the truth. These things never really intermingled—the lie and the truth. Men may indeed seek to mix them together, and for those who are not of the truth themselves the imposition may stand; but God does not leave His people to the imperfection natural to them, and there is not one lie that they have any need of accepting along with truth, which they cannot distinguish from it. Moreover, the spirit of falsehood naturally tends to come out in its true character. It may hide itself in sophistry at the beginning, but the power of the enemy more and more is seen in the opposition

let that [h]abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning abide in you, ye also shall [i]abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the [k]promise that he hath promised us, the life eternal. These things have I written unto you [l]concerning those who lead you astray; and as for you, the [m]anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye [n]need not that anyone should teach you; but as the same* anointing [o]teacheth you as to all things and is truth, and is no lie, even also as it hath taught you, ye shall [p]abide† in him.

h cf. Heb. 4. 2. cf. Col. 3. 16. cf. John 15. 7.
i cf. John 15. 5. cf. Col. 1. 23. cf. Jas. 1. 25.
k cf. John 3. 16 with John 17. 2, 3.
l cf. Matt. 7. 15, 16. Acts 20. 29, 30. 2 Pet. 2. 1,
m ver. 20. cf. Eph. 4. 30.
n cf. Gal. 1. 8

* Or, "his." † Or, "abide ye."

with Rev. 2. 2; ch. 4. 1. o Jno. 14. 26. p Jno. 15. 4; cf. Col. 2. 6, 7.

to Christ. In the Jewish form it may deny that Jesus is the Christ; in the Christian form it will deny the Father and the Son. The great Antichrist in whom the full reality of these tendencies will appear will join the Jewish denial of Jesus being Christ with the antichristian denial of the Father and the Son; and here the point of controversy is always Christ Himself. Men may, after a sort, as we well know, own the Father when they deny the Son. In our own day, "the universal Father" is held prominently by those who, in fact, deny the Son. But the apostle tells us that those who deny the Son have not the Father either; and that, on the other hand, "he who confesseth the Son hath the Father also." How can one truly confess the *Son* without confessing the *Father?* But the Father only—whose Father may He be? Yours and mine, of sinner or saint alike! The most emphatic affirmation of the Father, therefore, may go with the most perfect denial of the Son; but the apostle warns us against any possible deception here. All this is merely Satan's substitute for truth, not the truth; with all its large liberality and plausibility. The very One in whom, as we recognize Him, we see God manifest in the fullest way is denied by it. Christ Himself is the central point of controversy, and he who confesseth the Son must surely accept the Father.

So that again he carries us back to what was heard "from the beginning." The time when that blessed Voice had first been heard amongst men was indeed a beginning, such a beginning as made it seem that there was none before. We are to expect no developments beyond this, whatever glories may develop *in* it. We have but to abide in that which He Himself has uttered; and what He has uttered, He is. He is the essential truth of His own words. If, then, that which we have heard from the beginning abide in us, we too shall abide "in the Son and in the Father." Along with this, to ourselves comes this immense blessedness; the promise that He hath promised us is eternal life; a promise, because in its full manifestation it is still before us. In us, as it is, it is yet to develop itself in such a way as alone will show all its power and value. All that it has proved itself already to be to us is yet only the anticipation and the earnest of the eternal blessing. Thus, in the energy of hope we are to go on, pressing on, indeed, to enjoy more and more that which we enjoy already, and kept in the light which is thus ever brightening, far from the paths of those who already, even in the apostle's time, were leading men astray. He reiterates the comfort here that that anointing which we have received of Him abideth in us, and we need not that any one should teach us. We are not disciples of this or that man, but of Christ! The truth which we rejoice in as it is ministered to us comes to us authenticated *not* by that which is the mere channel of it, but by Him who alone certifies divinely to the soul in the power of this same anointing, teaching us as to all things, and which is truth, and with no mixture of falsehood whatever in it. Even as it hath taught us, we *shall* abide in Him.

DIVISION 3. (Chaps. ii. 28–v.)

Manifestation of the divine nature in its fruits.

1 (ii. 28-iii. 24): The singleness and perpetuity of the life received.

1 (28-iii. 3): The unique Source and Standard of purity.

1. [1] AND now, [q] children,* abide in him, that if he be [r] manifested we may have [s] boldness and not be put to shame from before him at his coming. If ye know that he is righteous, know† that every one who [t] practiseth righteousness is begotten of him. Behold, [u] what

q ver. 12.
r Col. 3. 4. ch. 3. 2.
s cf. Heb. 10. 19.
ctr. Gen. 3. 8-10.
t ch. 3. 7, 9. cf. ch. 5. 1, 4, 18.
u ch. 4. 10. Eph. 2. 4-7.

* τεκνία. † Or, "ye know."

DIV. 3.

The third division takes in all the remainder of the book, of which it is truly characteristic. John's theme in the Gospel is eternal life in Christ Himself. His theme in the epistle is eternal life in the believer. This is the divine nature which belongs necessarily to those who are the children of God, and in whom, therefore, it produces likeness to God. God is light and God is love—both of these. The epistle it is which says that what answer to these in the believer are righteousness and love; inseparable from one another, as has been already said: for to those who have been loved as God has loved us, nothing but love would be the righteous answer. But then, again, love also must have in it this quality of righteousness, or it is not true love, but one of those human shams of which there are so many. Thus the apostle brings all to the test of practice. "He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love;" and then: "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments."

1. Here, first of all, we have the singleness and the perpetuity of the life received. It is *eternal* life, and the divine nature owns nothing to be of it that is not according to God. Thus: "Whosoever is born of God doth not practise sin, for His seed abideth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." Here both things are asserted together.

[1] But we must, first of all, have the standard by which to measure these things, and the one standard is Christ Himself. He is not only this, He is the Source, also, from which we draw. As we have seen already, we are rooted and built up in Him. Abiding in Him as the branch abides in the vine (for this figure underlies all that we find here), He abides of necessity in us. He is the life-sap from which all fruit must come. In Him *we* should abide. This we have been just now assured of, and we are never taught by John certainly to modify this by any conditions. Yet we can be exhorted to "abide in Him." The faith which is God's gift is, nevertheless, to be put forth by us, and can be sustained or hindered. There is activity in the life we have, and responsibility on our part with regard to it. Whatever God's grace (and it is perfect), yet we are always dealt with as those responsible to yield themselves to the grace which has been shown us; and this responsibility is put before us with no less simplicity than the grace itself. "And now, children, abide in Him, that if He be manifested, we may have boldness, and not be put to shame from before Him at His coming." This is not surely what can happen to the believer; but the apostle takes up the Christian according to his profession, testing it always, as we have seen already—a test which grace enables us to endure. We are not called to deny that there are conditions under which we are. We are called to realize the grace which meets all the conditions. We are to keep under our bodies, and bring them into subjection, lest, even though we may have preached to others, we ourselves should be cast away. There is no uncertainty here in the least, no more uncertainty that, if we do not keep our bodies under, we shall be castaways, than that, on the other hand, no Christian, truly such, will do other than this. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

Thus the apostle goes on here: "If ye know that He is righteous, know that

manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called [v]children of God, and such are we.* For this cause, the [w]world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, [x]now are we children of God; and what we shall be hath [y]not yet been manifested:† we know that if he‡ be manifested, we shall be [z]like him; for we shall [a]see him as he is. And [b]every one that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure.

* Many omit the last clause. † Or, "displayed."
‡ Some translate "it," referring to "what we shall be." There is no pronoun here in the original.

v John 1.12. Rom. 8. 16, 17.
w *cf.* John 1. 5, 10. John 16. 3. John 17.16, 25.
x *cf.* Gal 4.6. *cf.* Rom. 5. 1.
y *cf.* 2 Cor.4. 17, 18. *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 9. *cf.* 2 Cor.12. 4.
z Rom.8.29.
a *cf.* Heb.12. 14; *cf.* Matt. 5. 8; *cf.* 2 Cor. 3. 18.
b *cf.* Rev. 19. 7; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 15, 22; *cf.* Phil. 1. 27.

every one that practiseth righteousness is begotten of Him." He is speaking characteristically, as always, and there is no need of qualification of such things as these. He does not put such things to shake one's confidence, but rather to encourage it. The one who walks with God is not unconscious of the fruit found in such a walk as this. He is conscious that sin has not dominion where grace has dominion; and he has no occasion to shirk the practical application of such truths as these. We are the children of God, and what manner of love has the Father bestowed upon us, that we should be called His children! It is not merely that we are this as born of Him, but that He openly acknowledges us; He has acknowledged us, and the Spirit of God is the seal upon us, testifying as to what we are. He is the Spirit of adoption. There is no cloud upon this at all, and the very opposition that we find in the world only confirms the truth of this. "The world knoweth us not;" no wonder, "for it knew Him not." If the world *did* know us, we should be most unlike Him. The more closely we follow in His footsteps, the more we must expect this essential ignorance of God in Christ to be manifested with regard to us.

We are, then, the children of God; not, indeed, manifested as such, as we shall be. The life that we have is a life "hid with Christ in God." As to our external circumstances, nothing distinguishes us from other men. The body in which the Spirit of God dwells is yet a mortal body, and we who have "the first-fruits of the Spirit," yet "groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body;" for we know that if we be manifested, "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." This has been taken as if it meant that we should be changed into His likeness by seeing Him. This, of course, as a present effect of occupation with Him in faith, is true. As we gaze upon Him, "we are changed into His image, from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit;" but, nevertheless, this does not seem to be the way in which we are to understand what is here. It is also surely true that to see Him as He is, as we shall see Him in the day of His manifestation, we must be like Him *first;* and, in fact, we are changed first of all into His likeness, and then caught up to be with Him. Every hindrance, everything that would obscure, everything that would prevent perfect fitness for seeing Him as He is, morally or physically, will be removed from us. The time of perfect vision will have come; and we shall at last "know, even as we are known." What must be the transforming energy already of such a hope as this! "Every one that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure." The hope of being perfectly like Him, in a little while, does not destroy the energy of the present, but calls it forth. The joyful assurance of that to which God has destined us makes us desire now to anticipate it as fully as we may. The man who hath this hope still purifies himself. He has need to do so, for the standard that he has before him is one of perfect, of infinite purity, which he cannot say he has attained. But he is to attain it, and the power of the Spirit is in him now to conform him to the One whom he is soon absolutely to be like. The perfection

3 (4-9): The opposition to sin assured by the new nature.

4 Every one that practiseth sin practiseth also lawlessness; and [c]sin is lawlessness. And ye know that he was manifested that he might [d]take away our* sins, and in [e]him is no sin. Whosoever [f]abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not [g]seen him nor known him. 7 Children, let no man lead you astray: he that [h]practiseth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. 8 He that practiseth sin is [i]of the devil; for the

c ch. 5. 17. cf. Rom. 7. 7-11.
d John 1.29. Heb. 9. 26.
e cf. Heb. 7. 26. cf. Jno. 8. 46.
f ch. 2. 6. cf. Jno. 15. 5.
g cf. Jno. 9. 37-41. cf. Rev. 3. 18.
h ch. 2. 29.

* Some omit, "our."

i Jno. 8. 44; cf. Matt. 13. 38; cf. Acts 13. 10. cf. Matt. 7. 16-18.

unattainable here is, nevertheless, that which more and more lays hold upon him, and urges him forward to attainment. He does not allow in the meanwhile any coming short of that which he sees in Christ; and that which detects in him, as the perfect light must, everything that is contrary to it, at the same time draws him on to the full enjoyment of it. It is the practical statement of that "one thing I do," which another apostle has given us.

4 We have now once more the contrast between the one who abides in Christ and the one who "hath not seen Him, neither known Him." There is no middle ground between these two things. There is no thought of the one who has been abiding in Him failing to abide. If he abides, he sins not. If he sins, not, he does not know Him now, but he *has* not known Him. Every one that practiseth sin practiseth also lawlessness; and this is what sin is,—it is lawlessness; that is, it is the insubjection of the will to God. The common version is astray here every way, for sin cannot be defined simply as "transgression of the law," without law being in some sense chargeable with it; but "until the law sin was in the world," and law only manifested the condition of things already existing, while "by the law is the knowledge," or recognition, of "sin." It puts the actual lawlessness of man's nature to a test by positive command; and the breach of the command not only reveals a will away from God, but makes sin, by the commandment, "exceeding sinful."

How solemn a thing it is that the commandment of God should be to man that which awakes the strife of his soul against it! but this, as we know, was learnt in the Garden at the beginning. One thing denied only, amid all the profusion around of that which testified of his Maker's love, was sufficient to produce suspicion of Him. How the example here of One who was in the world, the Servant of the Father's will, and delighting to be so, doing always the thing that pleased Him, rebukes in us the waywardness which, alas, still exists in spite of such an example! "My meat and drink," He says, "is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." Then on the cross we have the perfect revelation of sin in the judgment endured by Him, the perfect revelation of a love which wins us from it, the perfect deliverance from the condemnation which would leave us powerless and hopeless. Now then: "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not." This is the holiness which is found in faith. How we see the apostle testifying of the power of Him who had called him into fellowship with Himself! How simple on the lips of him who lay on His breast, in that wondrous intimacy to which he had been admitted, that "whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, nor known Him!" Who can make light of sin that has truly looked upon Christ, his Lord? Yet here, as we know, grace itself may be so perverted as to permit that which is nothing else than disloyalty to Him. "Children, let no man lead you astray. He that practiseth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous." The apostle does not mean, of course, that in practical attainment he is this, but this is the measure that is before him, a measure from which he will not depart. "Righteous as He is righteous:" that is the Christian's measure of righteousness; that is what he is aiming after. "He that practiseth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this end hath the Son of God been manifested, that He might undo the

devil sinneth [j] from the beginning. For this end hath the Son of God been manifested, that he might undo the [k] works of the devil. Whosoever is [l] begotten of God doth not practise sin, because his [m] seed abideth in him, and he [n] cannot sin, because he is begotten of God.

[8] (10-16): The manifest image of God in His children.

[3] In this the children of God are [o] manifest and the children of the devil. Whosoever practiseth not righteousness is not of God, nor he who [p] loveth not his brother. For this is the message which ye have heard from the beginning, that we should [q] love one another; not as [r] Cain was of the wicked one and slew his brother; and wherefore slew he him? Because his [s] works were wicked, and his brother's righteous. Marvel not, brethren, if the world hate you.

j *cf.* Ezek. 28. 14, 15, 17.
k Heb. 2.14. *cf.* Lk. 10.18 with Rev. 12. 9.
l ch. 5. 18. *cf.* Jno. 3.6.
m 1 Pet. 1.23.
n *cf.* Gal. 5. 22-24.
o *cf.* Jas. 2. 18.
p ch. 4.20,21.
q Jno. 15.12.
r Jude 11. Gen. 4.1-15.
s *cf.* Gen. 4.3 with Luke 18. 9-12. Prov. 29.10.

works of the devil. Whosoever is begotten of God doth not practise sin, because his seed abideth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God."

It is strange that any should plead that this belongs to a certain class of Christians, that it is, in fact, an attainment, and not that which is true of all. It is of *every one that is begotten of God* that the apostle says, "He cannot sin, because he is begotten of Him;" and here is the indefectibility of the nature which he has received: "his seed abideth in him." That is the engrafted Word by which he has been made partaker of a divine nature. Nothing can grow out of this seed but that which is according to it. Every seed, as we know, brings forth the plant and the fruit that are proper to it. As James has said, "a fig-tree cannot bear olive berries, nor a vine figs." The Christian is characterized, thus, by what is Christian, and by nothing else. The apostle is speaking, as we see always, *characteristically*. He will not dishonor the Father by allowing aught as coming of new birth but that which is worthy of Him. We have learned of another apostle to distinguish that which may be in us as, nevertheless, no more truly ourselves; and the faith which thus identifies us with that which is of God and good is of necessity a holy principle, and admits no laxity.

[3] But now we are to see the full image of God in His children, and here we shall not find righteousness alone, but, as already said, love also. "Whosoever practiseth not righteousness is not of God; nor," on the other hand, "he who loveth not his brother." Notice that with John it is always love of the brethren of which he speaks. We are not to take this as if it meant his brother man simply. The example that he gives immediately here might seem to imply this. Cain was of the wicked one and slew his brother—of course, his brother naturally. He slew him because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous; and this is an illustration of how it is that the world hates the people of God; but we find elsewhere the careful definition on the part of the apostle as to what he means by "brethren." "He that loveth Him that begat," he says, "loveth him also that is begotten of Him." It is the new nature which produces this real kinship, and it is faith that, having introduced into the blessed knowledge of God, of necessity produces in us this love to those who manifest the divine nature. Yet, of course, when he says, "He who loveth not his brother abideth in death," he is merely dealing with men according to their profession, as everywhere through the epistle. He credits them, as it were, with this relationship which they profess to have to the people of God, and he presses the responsibility, therefore, which springs out of this relationship. But he is careful to distinguish. It is true, of course, that he who in the true sense loves his brother has not reached the limit of love in this way. As the apostle Peter has told us, we are to have "in brotherly love, love." This is the full development of the divine nature. Love is the divine nature itself. God is love. But while this is true, it is important, nevertheless, to distinguish this love to the brethren from that which might be more what men think of as benevolence. There is, in the love of which he is speaking, a recognition of God and real man-

ren, if the [t]world hate you. *We* know that we have [u]passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren; he who loveth not his brother* abideth in death. Every one that [v]hateth his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby we know love, [w]because he laid down his life for us; and *we* ought to [x]lay down our lives for the brethren.

4 (17–24): The practical test.

4 But whoso [y]hath the world's substance, and beholdeth his brother having need, and shutteth up his

* Some omit, "his brother."

[t] Jno. 15.18. Jno. 17. 14. *cf.* Jas. 4.4.
[u] Jno. 5. 24. 1 Pet. 1. 22. *cf.* Acts 16. 15, 33, 34.
[v] Matt. 5. 21, 22.
[w] Jno. 15. 13. Gal. 2. 20.
[x] *cf.* Rom. 16. 4. *cf.* Phil. 2. 17, 27, 30.
[y] Jas. 2. 15, 16. *cf.* Matt. 15. 4–6; *ctr.* Acts 2. 44, 45.

ifestation of our love to God Himself, for "he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" He has seen God in his brother. If he does not love Him there, how can he speak of loving Him where he has not seen Him? It is an unpractical profession merely, which hangs in the air.

But "we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." Not because we love *certain* of the brethren, let us remember. We may love even the children of God for some other reason than *as* His children. We may love them, perhaps, in gratitude to them for services that we may be receiving from them. Further than this, we may mistake for brotherly love that which is merely self-love in a subtler form. Men minister to our comfort, please us, and we think we love them; and in the true child of God there may be yet, after all, as to much that he counts love to the brethren, a similar mistake. A love to the children of God, as such, must find its objects wherever these children are, however little may be, so to speak, our gain from them; however little they may fit to our tastes. The true love of the children of God must be far other than sociality, and cannot be sectarian. It is, as the apostle says, "without partiality, and without hypocrisy." This does not, of course, deny that there may be differences that still obtain. He in whom God is most seen should naturally attract the heart of one who knows God according to the apostle's reasoning here. It is God seen in men whom we recognize in the love borne to them; but, then, God is in all His own, as the apostle is everywhere arguing; and therefore there is nothing self-contradictory in what has just been said.

But we need to keep the line where the apostle draws it. "He who loveth not his brother abideth in death." "Every one that hateth his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." It is plain that the apostle does not look at eternal life here as if it were a matter of attainment for the Christian. If the having eternal life were somewhat of a high attainment, he would hardly say that no *murderer* has it in him. One would hardly think of saying that "no murderer" was perfectly sanctified. The having eternal life is simply the opposite of abiding in death. There is no middle ground between these two. But immediately the heart of the disciple stirs with a realization of what love is as Christ has shown it. Here is the measure of it, in Him in whom it perfectly manifested itself. "He laid down His life for us," and the apostle does not hesitate to go the full length of this as how love should manifest itself in the Christian. "He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

4 We come once more, after the apostle's manner, to the practical test; here, the test of love. It is easy to *speak* of it. The world has its forms and phrases, and holds to them all the more zealously because the reality is wanting. True love cares not to parade itself. It "seeketh not its own," but it is, as we so often have said, the spirit of service; and thus it is, above all, the spirit of

bowels from him, how doth the love of God abide in him? Children, let us not love in word, neither in [z]tongue, but in deed and in truth; and hereby we shall know that we are of the truth, and [a]assure our hearts before him. For, if our [b]heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, we have [c]boldness toward God; and [d]whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we [e]keep his commandments and practise the things that are pleasing in his sight. And this is his commandment, that we [f]believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and [g]love one another, even as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments [h]abideth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the [i]Spirit that he hath given us.

z Rom. 12. 9. *cfr.* Ezek. 33. 31. *cf.* 2 Sam. 20. 9, 10.
a *cf.* Heb. 13. 18.
b *cf.* Jno. 8. 9. *cf.* Ps. 139. 1-4.
c *cf.* Heb. 10. 19. *cf.* 2 Cor. 1. 12. *cf.* Acts 24. 16.
d Jno. 15. 7. *cf.* Lk. 11. 5–13. *cf.* Phil. 4. 6, 7.
e *cf.* Jno. 8. 29.
f Jno. 6. 29. *cf.* Acts 20. 21.
g Jno. 13. 34. h Jno. 14. 21; *cf.* 2 Jno. 6. i *cf.* Eph. 1. 13 with Jno. 14. 16, 17.

Christ. He, then, that hath this world's substance, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up the bowels of his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him? Love is that in which faith works. Therefore he looks first that it be really that—the fruit of faith. He will not tolerate a love, whatever works it may have to boast of, which is found in those who have not the faith of Christ; but all the more earnest is he that if the faith be there, the love which is its inseparable companion will be there also, and manifest itself. We are not to love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed and truth; and thus it is alone that we have any right to recognize ourselves as being *of* the truth; and this is the only way that our hearts have confidence in drawing near to God. He is not laying foundations here, as we everywhere see. He is testing those who are professedly upon the foundation, which is an entirely different thing. Communion with God is his great theme, and communion is not a matter of sentiment merely. It is a communion in deed as well as in thought. It is communion with One who actually gave His life for us, and who went about upon earth doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil. It is communion with One who even now bears all His people upon His heart before God. How, then, can it fail to manifest itself in a life which is the reflection of His life? though, indeed, it be but a reflection, as it must be.

This is maintained only in communion with Him, and the Spirit of God is the power of this communion. How necessary, therefore, that the Spirit be not grieved in us—that our heart, as he says, should not condemn us! If it does this, how sure it is that God, who is "greater than our heart, and knoweth all things," finds much more amiss than we are finding! It is only in the light of His presence that we can really discern, and if the eye be but for a moment turned from Him, the necessary consequence follows. Things become dark to us, and if there be but the least wilfulness, a bad conscience carries us further from Him instead of bringing us to Him. On the other hand, if our heart condemn us not, then have we boldness, or confidence, toward God; not boldness from the sense of our own good condition, but because the Spirit of God is unhindered. He has not to occupy us with ourselves at all, and God is able to identify Himself with those who honor Him in their walk and ways. It is "the effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous man" that "availeth much," and so the apostle here: "Whatsoever we ask we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments and practise the things that are pleasing in His sight." The "whatsoever we ask" will necessarily get its character in this way. "If ye abide in Me," says the Lord Himself, "*and My words abide in you*, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

2 (iv. 1-6): The spirit of anti-christ.

2. Beloved, [j]believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that [k]confesseth Jesus Christ come in flesh is of God, and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus Christ come in flesh is not of

[j] *cf.* 1 Kl.22. 22. *cf.* Jer.29.8. *cf.* 1 Tim. 4. 1. *cf.*2 Pet.2.1.
[k] *cf.* Rom. 10. 9, 10. *cf.* Jno. 12. 42, 43. 1Cor. 12. 3.

"This," then, "is His commandment, that we believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, even as He gave us commandment." Faith always comes first, and puts Christ in His place, and then the fruit follows. "He that keepeth His commandments abideth in Him, and He in him." We must abide in Christ, in order that Christ may abide in us; and while this is always true of the believer, that he abides in Christ, yet there is a practical realization of this which requires faith to be in energy, and as to which, therefore, we may well be exhorted. The Spirit given to us is the One who maintains us in the realization of it; but the Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, and keenly sensitive to anything that is not of Him.

2. Immediately we have now the assurance of this. The Spirit of God in the saint is He who claims him for Christ, and uses him for Christ. How anxious, as we may say, is He to use him in every sense for Christ; and in those early days, as we know, when, at least, unbelief was not systematized as it has been now so long, the very words spoken amongst the people of God were more consciously, no doubt, than at any time since, words that were "as oracles of God." Men knew what it was to speak by the Spirit as it is little understood now; and this so much that it might even give opportunity for evil spirits to come in and speak too, with a power which might be accredited for what it assumed to be, the power of God. Thus the word here,—not to believe every spirit, but to "prove the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world." The false prophets are certainly no fewer in number at the present time than when the apostle spoke; yet, in general, we may say they assume less divine authority. We have sunk down so far into the wisdom of the world that man is credited with a place which God has lost. Inspiration is the inspiration of genius, rather than of God. We are more and more getting to lose the reality of the last, just as we are coming more and more to believe in the former. We believe in brilliancy, in eloquence, in intellect, in whatever you please in this way, but the assumption of speaking in any direct way by the Spirit of God no more exists, for the mass, except as one may say that the Spirit of God is as liberal as men are, and speaks in very diverse fashion,—in poets, philosophers, and all the acknowledged leaders among men.

It is indeed, as we know, coming to be thought once more that spirits speak through men; but this is not the sign of return to the old faith, but rather the sign of fullest departure from it. Certainly the test that the apostle applies here to speaking by the Spirit of God is one which the present day would count illiberal. It is the "spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ come in flesh" that is "of God," and "every spirit that confesseth not Jesus Christ come in flesh is not of God." How ill this suits a time when men can unite with those professing every false faith in the world, and count it Christian charity to do so! There is none of this in John. There is for him "a thing of antichrist" abroad, to which he is very sensitive, and he is sure that Satan, wherever he works, has for his object of attack Christ, as if it were Christ only. Thus it is a spirit of antichrist "that confesseth not Jesus Christ come in flesh." He is not satisfied, even, that Christ should be *left out*. He must be *confessed*, and in the full truth of His coming in flesh; that is, plainly, of His deity as well as His humanity. How could He "come in flesh," if He had no existence previous to His manhood? But Christ come in flesh is more than a theophany. He is not God displayed in man as He might be in one merely supereminent among men, in whom that created image of God, in which man was at the beginning, is more than

God; and this is that thing of [l]antichrist whereof ye heard that it is coming, and now [m]already is it in the world. Ye [n]are of God, children, and have overcome them; because [o]greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. They are [p]of the world, therefore speak they [as] of the world, and the world heareth them. *We* are of God: he that [q]knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. By this we [r]know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

l ch. 2. 18.
m *cf.* 2 Thes. 2. 7-10.
n Jno. 17. 16.
o *cf.* 2 Ki. 6. 16.
cf. Rom. 8. 31.
p Jno. 8. 23. Jno. 15. 19.
q Jno. 10. 26, 27.
r *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 12, 16.

usually manifest. No, it is "Christ come in flesh" that alone answers to what is faith in Him. "In flesh," not in the Spirit by which He spake, but in true humanity, characterized by that which testifies of weakness, of a nature that disdains nothing that is of man, save only the effects of the fall.

"The thing of antichrist," as he speaks of it here, may be something negative rather than positive, and may answer its purpose even better in that way. If Christ is not positively before the soul, it is enough: the enemy's work is done; though he will do what he can, no doubt, even to destroy mere orthodoxy because of the truth that is in it; and of the truth he is afraid. Here is that by which God may work at any time, but he cannot prevent this. The truth is in the world, and he cannot get it out of it. The best he can do often is to let men slumber and forget it; and, indeed, an orthodoxy that has no life in it, that can exist and go in company with all that is not of Christ, is a witness against Him, of which Satan is perfectly conscious. The truth professed makes men witnesses spite of themselves, witnesses for or against what they profess; and thus Satan's work may be well done by those who are orthodox enough, yet godless. Satan will do more when his time comes, when the restraint upon him, of which another apostle has spoken, shall be removed, and when he will testify his zeal against orthodoxy itself, and set himself against "all that is called God or that is worshiped," and cause men to apostatize and blaspheme the Lord who bought them; but it is not his time yet. "The mystery of iniquity" works, but it works as "mystery." Thus he has to content himself largely with a Christian world that dishonors Christ, to whom Christ is not a necessity; which can throw its all-embracing arms around Jew and infidel and what not, and admire, in its blindness, its Christianity in doing so.

How illiberal is John in this respect! How fierce his invective even against a negative antichrist! Christ must be confessed, and confessed amid the full truth of what He is. All outside of the truth of this confession of a true Christ is the world, and the world in opposition to Him. "Ye are of God, children," he says, "and have overcome them; because greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. They are of the world; therefore speak they as of the world, and the world heareth them." It must be a very different world in which the truth can be popular, or in which those who hold it can in any wise expect to be popular. It is those who speak of the world whom the world heareth. There is no idea with the apostle of a world that is gradually being leavened by the truth, and which is ceasing, therefore, to be the world in reality. Judge it by its works to-day. What is the spirit that animates it but still "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," with a daily accumulating material for these things to manifest themselves in? It is not a thing gained if the sharp line between the world and the people of God is scarcely to be found, and a Christian world has become, as it were, a matter of course, and arouses no inquiry. This is a thing that we may well covet at the present time—to get back this sharp line of distinction, even if it involve the apparent haughtiness of being able to say, "*We know* that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one." The apostle, if he says, "We are of God," can add to this: "He that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us." Now the bewilderment is becoming such that it is no

3 (iv. 7-19): The love manifested toward us perfected with and in us.

3. Beloved, let us [s]love one another; for love is of God, and every one that [t]loveth hath been begotten of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not [u]hath not known God; for [v]God is love. Herein hath the love of God been [w]manifested in regard to us, that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, [x]not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son [to be] the [y]propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also [z]ought to love one another. No one hath [a]beheld God at any time: if we love one another, God [b]abideth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby we [c]know that we abide in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And *we* have beheld and bear witness, that the Father hath [d]sent

s 2 Jno. 5.
t ch. 3. 14. 1 Thess. 4. 9.
u ch. 3. 10. *cf.* Heb. 6. 9, 10.
v *cf.* ch. 1. 5. ver. 16. *cf.* Jno. 3. 16.
w Rom. 5. 8.
x *cf.* Tit. 3. 5.
y ch. 2. 2. Rom. 3. 25.
z ver. 21.
a Jno. 1. 18. 1 Tim. 6. 16.
b ver. 15.
c ch. 3. 24. Rom. 8. 16.
d Jno. 3. 17. Jno. 4. 42. Jno. 15. 27.

longer allowable to say this, even though the "us" means, as of course it does mean, the apostles. But these men speaking by an inspiration of God, such as none of us can claim to-day, are being largely taken from us. We are learning once more to think of them rather as fishermen of Galilee, and to realize the large human element that enters into their writings. It is serious, therefore, to listen to the apostle as he closes with the assurance that, "By this ye know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error."

3. John hates because he loves, and he would not love if he did not hate. The Lord, as we know, does not hesitate to use such words as these, and to claim for Himself a place in which all the claims of mere human love must be, in comparison, forgotten. The apostle is assured, spite of his vehemence against all that is in opposition to Him who is his one Object, that it is love in which he dwells; it is love God has revealed, which is His nature, and that it is every one that loveth and none other that is begotten of God and knoweth God. This love has been manifested for him in one infinite display which makes him count, as it were, nothing else to be love in comparison with this. "God hath sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." It is plain that you must be orthodox at least to have the joy of this. God did not send some one into the world who had no such relationship to Himself as this. He sent His Only-begotten. He had not another so near to Him. It is the full wealth of His heart that He has poured out here for our acceptance, and it was our necessity that moved Him. We were dead, and in thus awaking us by His love, awaking us to love, we live through Him. "Herein," then, "is love;" a love which found us enemies, which has won us from enmity to peace and reconciliation with Him. "God, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." Sin was a reality with Him, and cost Him much for its removal. He "sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." "If, then, God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." The love that we have received is love that not only enables but compels to this. The unseen God is manifested now for us in these, the objects of His love. Is it any question if our hearts must embrace them? If God has become to us the one Reality that He truly is, must not fellowship with Him put us in fellowship with the love which He has to others? This is the way His own love, then, is perfected in us—produces, that is, its fruit; and thus He has "given us of His Spirit." It is not, "He has given us His Spirit," exactly, but a nature which is "of" Him, and which makes fellowship with Him a certainty and a necessity. Thus we abide in Him and He in us—Father, Son and Spirit witnessing together in us, with us.

Is it a love that willingly accepts limit, and that is really narrowed by this necessary opposition to the world, with all the elements that make it up? No:

the Son [to be] the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall [e]confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him and he in God. And *we* have known and [f]believed the love which God hath to us. God is love, and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God in him. Herein hath love been [g]perfected with us, that we may have [h]boldness in the day of judgment, because [i]as he is, even so are we in this world. There is no [j]fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment; and he that feareth is not perfected in love. *We* love* [k]because *he* hath first loved us.

e ver. 2.
f Jno. 6. 69.
g cf. ch. 2. 5.
h cf. Heb. 10. 19. Eph. 3. 12. cf. ch. 2. 28.
i ch. 3. 1, 2. cf. Col. 2. 10. cf. Rom. 8. 33, 34 with Song 4. 7.
j Rom. 8. 15. ctr. Rev. 21. 8.
k ver. 10. cf. 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15.

* Some add, "him."

"We have beheld, and bear witness, that the Father hath sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." It is the world alone that rejects this salvation, and will have nothing of this love; that of necessity pleases itself; therefore outside all the light and joy and peace which are brought to us by it. For the world itself Christ is the only hope. We can promise none anywhere except as it is to be a hope in Him. This world needed a Saviour, and God has provided One; but there is no other entrance, therefore, into blessing but through faith in Him. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him and he in God." Thus "we know and believe the love that God hath to us." We know it, and believe that there is in it an infinity which yet we have *not* known. This love is that in which alone we have found God, we who naturally were without Him, and we have thus found Him as our home, our dwelling-place, that which the psalmist sees to have been ever for men their "dwelling-place in all generations" (Ps. xc. 1). Had they realized this, how well would it have been with them! for "he that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High abideth under the shadow of the Almighty" (Ps. xci. 1). But it is only the Second Man in whom this was ever naturally realized. For all else it has come to them as a revelation, and as the fruit of that salvation which is theirs through it. Thus God abides in us in the full reality of His glorious name. God He is indeed who has done this, God of all circumstances, God who is over all, through all and in all, God whose love has been perfected with us, so "that we may have boldness in the day of judgment" itself, "because as He is" (notice how the apostle identifies Christ with God)—"because as He is, even so are we in this world."

How he brings it down to us, this perfect love, encompassed as we are with the evidence of sin, and the ruin that sin has wrought, and of a judgment that awaits it! Even in this world we are as Christ *is*. He does not say as Christ *was*, because that would carry us back to His life on earth, and would make us think of moral likeness between ourselves and Him; and however grace may have wrought this, it is not that which gives boldness in view of judgment; nor could we say, without a tremor, that as He *was*, so are we. Not in any sense could we say this. Yet we can look up to the blessed place in which He is, and where we know He is for us, with the assurance in our hearts of what He has said, that because He lives we shall live also, and we can say, "As He is, even so are we in this world." He does not say, "As He is, so are we *going* to be when we leave the world." He is speaking of the perfection of our acceptance in the Beloved, which is what alone casts all fear out of the soul. Our eyes are off self and upon Him; and thus His perfect love casteth fear out of us. Love has thus been perfected with us, not "our love is made perfect," as the common version most wrongly has it, but *God's* love has been perfected in regard to us. It has found its way and wrought its will in blessing for us, and is not satisfied as long as it sees in us the least element of fear remaining; for, "there is no fear in love," but love and fear are (in this sense of fear—the fear that hath torment) antagonistic to one another. How little can the heart go out towards

4 (iv. 20-v. 13): Tests as to the possession of eternal life.

4. If any one say, I love God, and [l]hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he* love God whom he hath [m]not seen? And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is [n]begotten of God; and whosoever loveth him that [o]begat,

l ch. 2. 9, 11.

m ver. 12. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 8.

n Jno. 1. 12, 13.

o ch. 4. 21. *cf.* Jno. 8. 42.

* Some read, "he cannot."

One whom it dreads as the God of judgment! The mother could better suffer the anguish of her child than God allow the torment of doubt in one of His own; but how, then, is it that there may, after all, be such among His people? The apostle's answer is, "He that feareth is not *perfected* in love." He has not learnt aright, as he should have learnt, the lesson which God is teaching him. He has not looked enough in the face of Christ, who is the manifestation of love. He is not perfect in his lesson; and yet this is the basis of all blessing for us, and this is that which works in transforming power to make us what He desires to have us. "*We love*, because He hath first loved us."

4. The apostle goes on, after his manner constantly, to test as to the truth of all this. Everything that is of God in us has to be tested. The world is the very place for this, and the things spoken of here are of so precious a nature that it makes it of absolute importance that they should be known in reality; that there should be no mistake about this, no misconception even in the Christian as to what is their true character. Christians, as we know, may themselves make the most serious mistakes, and in nothing so much as with regard to love. We mistake so easily the sentiment for the reality, and we may even say we are conscious of this love. What do we want more? But the apostle is not satisfied with emotions. Nothing more easily deceives us than these emotions. Some, as we know, are more easily susceptible of these than others. With one, that which he feels will readily overflow, the eyes and tongue and all else bearing witness to it; while another, with more repressive power, may show no sign, simply because that which he has is of a deeper character. We all know how, under a man's eloquence or under the power of the truth itself, with some there will be a rush of emotion where there is no seed really sown in the heart. What the apostle would say is that, if the seed is sown, there will be something springing from it. If one says, I love God, I cannot see his love, I cannot test it; but here is his brother, whom he calls his brother and yet hates: he is a liar, then, "for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" And the very commandment that we have from Christ is that we love one another:—a commandment given us at the hour of His departure from the world, with all the solemnity attaching to this, and in the performance of which, as the Lord says, men shall know that we are His disciples, because we have love to one another. This commandment, such an one is manifestly violating; for He hath said, "If ye love *Me*, keep My commandments." "This commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God love his brother also." It will be the necessary result of love to God. Nevertheless, it is a commandment. Alas, with the flesh in us, we may so easily encourage that which is not of God, building ourselves up, it may be, upon some evil that we have suffered or believe that we have suffered, and thus seeking to shelter ourselves under the plea of righteousness from the commandment of love. How important, then, that we should be reminded that these things dwell together; that if you tear them apart, you destroy both!

Here the apostle takes the widest sweep, so that we shall not imagine that it is just Christians who are in their full character manifesting this, that we are bound to. No; "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God." Certainly it must be true faith, and not mere orthodoxy. That is as strongly put here as it well can be; nevertheless, there may be true faith in

loveth him also that is begotten of him. Hereby know we that we love the children of God, when we love God and [p]keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are [q]not grievous. For whatsoever is begotten of God [r]overcometh the world; and this is the victory that hath [s]overcome* the world,—our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that [t]believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that [u]came by water and blood,—Jesus Christ; not by water

p 2 Jno. 6. cf. Rev. 3. 19.
q Matt. 11. 30. ctr. Acts 15. 10. ctr. Lk. 19. 20, 21.
r ch. 4. 4. cf. Rev. 2. 7, etc.
s cf. 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8. cf. 1 Cor. 15. 57, 58.
t ch. 4. 15. cf. Jno. 9. 35-38.
u cf. Heb. 10. 5-7. Jno. 19. 34, 35.

* It is difficult to render these two words to reflect the Greek—ἡ νίκη, ἡ νικήσασα—"the victory that is victorious."

Jesus when, after all, there are many things contrary to this, and to all that is implied in it in the lives of His own, and there are those of whom we can have no doubt, in fact, that they are Christians, with whom, nevertheless, it is sufficiently hard to walk in company. Yet, "whosoever loveth Him that begat, loveth him, also, that is begotten of Him." How can our hearts refuse those who are thus the fruit of the same love which has embraced us also, and to which we owe our all? But here, again, is a cross-check: "Hereby we know that we love the children of God, when"—what? When we can never separate ourselves from them? When we have a boundless charity that believes all things, so as practically to see no evil? No, but "when we love God, *and keep His commandments.*" And this last is urged so that we may not overlook it here. "*This* is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." There is nothing else that is worth calling love. Love to God is the spirit of obedience. It is that which subjects the whole life to Him. How can it be love to Him whose authority we admit, and whose perfection in the exercise of it we cannot really doubt for a moment, and yet at the same time refuse obedience to Him? What is this path that His commandments mark out for us but a path of peace, as it is a path of victory over all that would destroy peace? Subjection to God is that which is peace to the whole universe. To be with God is the only way, therefore, of entering into it; and while there are difficulties on all sides,—for the world is around us, a world which knew not God's beloved One who came into it, and knows Him no more now than it ever did,—nevertheless, "he that is begotten of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, our faith." If we have faith at all, we have in that respect overcome it; for faith is the one thing of which the world is not capable. "Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" He does not say here "the Christ," but the One from the Father's bosom, the One who manifests the Father; so that not to recognize Him is to be blind and deaf, or, as Scripture in its strong way puts it, spiritually "dead." A thing that is dead has no place longer practically in the creation of God. Life is what is necessary for this; but is *that* "life" which has neither ears, nor eyes, nor heart; which does not warm and brighten under the display of divine glory? The faith that Jesus is the Son of God is that, then, which speaks of eyes and ears and heart awake and responsive to the Creator.

Jesus is the Son of God; yet in what strange manner did He come! And yet how suitable to His glory and to our condition! "This is He that cometh by water and blood, Jesus Christ"—two things absolutely necessary:—cleansing morally, and from guilt; not water only needed, not the mere moral cleansing,—although surely that,—but the righteousness of God needing to be met; for love and righteousness, as we have seen, must go together. Sunder them, and you have neither. But this, then, is man's condition. This is what has brought the Son of God into the world He made. Only when He had reached the cross had He reached the place of our necessity. The water and the blood came to us

only, but by [v]water and [w]blood; and it is the [x]Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the [y]truth. For there are three that bear witness: the [z]Spirit, and the [a]water, and the [b]blood; and the three [c]agree * in one. If we [d]receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God, that † he hath borne [e]witness concerning his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God [f]hath the witness in himself. He that believeth not God hath [g]made him a liar, because he hath not believed in the witness that God hath witnessed concerning his Son. And this is the witness: that God hath [h]given unto us eternal life, and this life is [i]in his Son. He that [j]hath the Son hath the life. He that hath not the Son of God hath not the life.

v *cf.* Jno. 3. 5.
w *cf.* Jno. 3. 14.
x *cf.* Acts 5. 32.
y Jno. 14. 17. Jno. 16. 13.
z *cf.* 1 Pet. 1, 12.
a *cf.* Eph. 5. 26.
b *cf.* ch. 1. 7.
c *cf.* 2 Cor. 1. 19, 20.
d *cf.* Jno. 5. 33–36.
e Matt. 3. 17. Matt. 17. 5.
f Rom. 8. 16. *cf.* Gal. 4. 6. *cf.* Rom. 5. 5.
g ch. 1. 10. *ctr.* Rom. 3. 4.

* Or, "are to one [truth]." † Some read, "which he hath testified," but the text is the better supported reading.

h *cf.* Jno. 10. 10; Jno. 3. 16. i Jno. 1. 4; *cf.* Col. 3. 4; *cf.* Jno. 5. 25, 26. j Jno. 3. 36; Jno. 6. 47, 48; *cf.* Jno. 17. 2, 3.

out of the side of the dead Christ; and here, as we know, the Spirit breaks out in witness, as in the mouth of John in the Gospel, and in the scriptures which he quotes there. The Spirit has come Himself upon earth as the fruit of it, to give fuller testimony, and now the Spirit, which is the truth, bears witness with the water and the blood, and the three agree in one. It is a witness upon *earth*, as upon earth it is needed. The passage which speaks here of witness in heaven is a mere interpolation, as is fully agreed now by all. The Spirit upon earth is, in fact, the abiding witness of the full accomplishment of redemption for us. Although He was even from the beginning striving with men, and working in them, yet there could be no witness such as is at the present time, until at last the water and the blood had given testimony to the Redeemer and to His accomplished work. Now the witness is in all His people. We receive the witness of credible men, but what a witness is here! This is the witness of God Himself, who has borne witness concerning His Son; and he that believeth on the Son of God has not merely a witness outside himself, as in Scripture, (important as this is, and that upon which faith must ever build,) but he has also the witness *in himself*, not as something entirely distinct and separate from the Word, but as that which makes the Word itself a living Word, an oracle of God within him, a blessed Voice to which heart and conscience respond—the whole new man; who thus walks in a new glory revealed to him—in the light of the opened heavens, transforming all upon which it falls. How lightly men now treat faith, even when they declare they themselves have it! How simply Christians, so called, can accept what they characterize as the unity of the religious element, in such a way as to do away with the simple necessity of faith in the Son of God! Yet "he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar." How? Because he does not own the marks of divine workmanship in creation? Or because he does not believe in the common Father of men? No; but "because he hath not believed in the witness that God hath witnessed concerning His Son." All they that do not credit this are under that awful responsibility of which the apostle speaks here. And if "this is the witness, that God hath given to us eternal life," this life he also witnesses to be "in His Son," and in His Son alone. People are not to say, Well, it is in His Son, but it may be, nevertheless, for those also who are ignorant of Him, who have not seen the glory which is really His. No, it is in His Son after this manner, so that "he that *hath* the Son hath life, and he that hath *not* the Son of God hath *not* life." Here is the line of separation fixed by God Himself between faith and unbelief. There are not different "forms of faith," as the poet would persuade us, but there are many forms of *unbelief;* and one *faith*, which is in the Son of God.

These things have I [k]written unto you that ye may [l]know that ye have eternal life,—to you who believe on the name of the Son of God.

5 (14-21): The weak with the Strong.

5. And this is the boldness which we have towards him, that if we [m]ask anything according to his will he heareth us; and if we know that he heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we [n]have the petitions which we have asked of him. If any one see his [o]brother

k *cf.* Ps.119. 89. *cf.* Heb. 6. 17, 18.
l *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 1. *cf.* Heb.10. 22. *cf.* Col. 2. 2. *cf.* Heb. 6. 11.
m ch. 3. 22.
n *cf.* Mk.11. 24; *cf.* 1 Sam. 1. 17, 18.
o *cf.* ch. 2. 1; *cf.* Jno. 13. 37, 38; *ctr.* Jno. 6. 70, 71.

Yet it is true, also, that those who have eternal life in the Son of God may yet be ignorant of the immensity of their blessing. "These things," therefore, the apostle writes, that those who believe on the name of the Son of God (that is, on what He is, which His name declares) may know that they have eternal life. It is the Word here, as we see, that is competent, and alone competent, to secure them in this knowledge. He *writes*, that they may know. They are to build upon the assurance that God has given thus in His Word, and the presence of the Spirit of God in us does not make us independent of a testimony which He Himself has given, but builds us upon it. The Word tests all. It is that which alone is competent to unravel all the subtleties of the human heart, and all the subtleties by which Satan would deceive the sons of men, and to bring into the clear apprehension of everything, the light of revelation giving everything its proper character and its proper place.

5. The apostle closes his epistle with a practical word for those so blest. God has manifested Himself in order that we may have the full blessedness of this manifestation. We are left as weak in ourselves, as helpless as ever; but we have revealed in Him a fulness which is perfectly available for us, and of which it is indeed an urgent necessity that we should avail ourselves; but how strange, then, that we should need to be urged so to avail ourselves! Does not the fulness that we have in God shame indeed the emptiness that is so often our practical condition? Why is it we are not more manifestly "filled up into all the fulness of God"? We are in the One who has this fulness for us. Nevertheless, in the true sense, we have to make it ours; and therefore the apostle urges upon us here the blessedness of prayer. It is what we find constantly in Scripture, where we have in the fullest way our blessings declared to us—immutable blessings, which no hostile power can deprive us of, and yet how much, alas, they exist as if they did not exist for us! God "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." What do we want, then, to possess ourselves of these? Just to mount in faith to that pure and blessed place in which they are found, to Him in whom they are found, and to have our hearts set upon the attainment of things that receive thus their character. So here: "This is the boldness which we have towards Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us; and if we know that He heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of Him." How different this wonderful and triumphant assurance from the kind of prayer that we so often find ourselves making, and from the effect, also, as far as we can realize it, of the prayers that we make. Do we know that, whatever we ask, we have the petitions which we have asked of Him? How good it would be always to know that! Can we not know it, then? The apostle evidently speaks of it as the simplest thing that can be. If we know that He heareth us, we know that we have the petitions. Do we know that He heareth us? Do we know, as the result, that we have the petitions? Do we act as if we thought so? Is there not often some perplexity in our minds about it? What is the meaning of this, but that we have not risen into the atmosphere where all is clear? We are down in the earth valleys too much, with our view bounded by objects which, however great to us, are small indeed in comparison with the immensity of the heavens. Let us get up where our blessings are. Let us seek

sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and he will give him [p] life, for them that sin not unto death. There is a [q] sin unto death: I do not say of it that he should make request. All unrighteousness is sin; and there is a sin [r] not unto death. We know that whosoever is [s] begotten of God sinneth not, but he that hath been begotten of God [t] keepeth himself and the wicked one [u] toucheth him not. We know that we are [v] of God, and the whole world [w] lieth in the wicked one. And we

[p] *cf.* 2 Sam. 12. 13.
[q] *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 30.
[r] *cf.* Jas. 5. 15, 16.
[s] ch. 3. 9.
[t] *cf.* Jas. 1. 27. *cf.* Jude 21.
[u] *cf.* Jno. 14. 30. *cf.* Jas. 4. 7.
[v] ch. 4. 4.
[w] *cf.* Lk. 4. 6. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 4.

to possess ourselves of these blessings. Let us here covet, covet earnestly, covet the best gifts, and see whether God will deny them to us. It is surely impossible that He who has made them our own should think of denying. If we are content to let the earth draw our boundary lines for us, and to limit ourselves by the things with which faith has no proper occupation,—if our hearts are set upon that which God has never secured to us, and of which, therefore, we can indeed have little assurance that we ask according to His will,—all will be as mean and beggarly in result as we have made ourselves mere beggars and not the children of God's family of faith. Let our first prayer be, if we do not realize the prospect which the apostle has set before us in such words as we have here, that He would lift us up into the sphere in which our blessings are, and make us at home where our home is. We shall still, of course, be on earth to do His will and run upon His errands, and find happiness in all this. Our competence, indeed, for the whole life on earth is that which we find in Him who is in the heavens. To possess ourselves of that which God has sealed to us in His Son and made our own, how can we lack ability? And to do God's will on earth, if we covet that as what is really living, how, again, can we lack ability? This is the region in which the apostle is, in his exhortation and in his encouragement. It is open to us, we may be sure, and the word remains good here, "We have not, because we ask not;" or, we "ask, and have not, because we ask amiss."

In this place one is able to realize what sin is in the believer, in a brother, and the awful reality of it as a way of death, which may end governmentally in that, as we see in Corinthians. "If any one see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and He will give him life, for them that sin not unto death." Still notice, "He will give him life," although the sin be not unto death; yet it leads in that direction, although it has not involved as yet a certainty of it. There *is* a sin which involves this: "there is a sin unto death: I do not say of it," adds the apostle, "that ye should make request." "All unrighteousness is sin." Every departure from God's measure of things, from God's perfect, indefectible will is sin; but how contrary is it all, as the apostle would have us realize here, to the very end which God has given us, that there should be any sinning whatever. "We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not, but he that hath been begotten of God keepeth himself, and the wicked one toucheth him not." These are not words with regard to a special class among believers, for there are not some believers who are not begotten of Him. He is speaking of what is the proper character (looked at according to its nature), and what is the necessary fruit of that seed of the Word of God, the seed of faith which abides in them. Must not that spring up? Can it bear other fruit than that which belongs to it, and justifies it? Surely not. And notice how sin, here, is that which permits at once the awful touch of the wicked one. What a thing to alarm our consciences, and to make us realize its awful character! Here is one in whom, (in whose power,) the whole world around us lies. "We are of God," though in the midst of it; and "we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we should know Him that is true," and should know Him not simply as an object before us, however blessed, but that "we are in Him that is true, in His Son Jesus Christ." He

know that the Son of God is [x]come, and hath given us an understanding that we should [y]know him that is true; and we are [z]in him that is true, [a]in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the [b]true God and [c]eternal life. Children, [d]guard yourselves from idols.

x ch. 4. 2.
y ch. 2. 20, 27.
z *cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 1.
a *cf.* Eph. 1. 1.
b *cf.* Jno. 20. 28, 31.

cf. Jno. 1. 1. c ch. 1. 2; *cf.* Jno. 17. 2, 3. d 1 Cor. 10, 14; *cf.* Col. 3. 5.

is the true God (the apostle has no idea as distinguishing Him in this sense from the Father), He is the true God, there is no other. He is at the same time the Eternal Life, the Life which has been manifested in the world, the life, also, which is in us, the life which He who is its Source for us controls, and in which He acts,—Christ living in us, Christ possessing us, Christ the wisdom, the power, the sanctification of our souls, Christ the revelation of God to us; from which, if we stray but a step on either side, we come to an idol. "Children," is the last word of the apostle,—the word that he would have remain with us, the witness against everything that would draw away our souls from Christ,—"Children, guard yourselves from idols."

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN.

THE [a]elder unto the elect lady and her children whom I love [b]in truth; and not I only, but also all they that know the truth, for the [c]truth's sake which abideth in us, and [d]shall be with us forever: [e]Grace, mercy, peace shall be with you* from God [the] Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the [f]Son of the Father, in [g]truth and love. I rejoiced greatly that I have found [certain] of thy children [h]walking in

a 3 Jno. 1. 1 Pet. 5. 1.
b 1 Jno. 3. 18. ver. 6.
c cf. 1 Cor. 13. 6. cf. 2 Cor. 13. 8.
d cf. Ps. 119. 89. cf. Matt. 24. 35.
e 1 Tim. 1. 2. cf. Jude 2.
f cf. Jno. 16. 28.
g cf. Jno. 1. 17.
h 3 Jno. 3, 4. cf. 1 Jno. 2. 6.

* Many read, "us."

NOTES.

THE Second Epistle of John is most evidently an appendix to the First, dwelling upon the same truth in part, and in the same way, with only an emphasis put upon that which we have seen all through the First Epistle to be of special importance. As the divine nature is manifested in righteousness and love, so here truth, which is the foundation of all righteousness, is emphasized in connection with love. The inseparability of these two has been already sufficiently before us. Here it is *truth* that is emphasized, that love must be in the truth, not setting it aside, not going beyond the bounds that it imposes—if we can, indeed, call them bounds.

In the Third Epistle we shall find that it is *love* that is emphasized, that the truth must be in love.

Here is what would strike any one, that the apostle addresses himself to a woman,—"the elect lady and her children,"—the only epistle written in this way in Scripture. There must be, of course, a meaning in this. If he were writing to an assembly, it would be assembly responsibilities that would be naturally dealt with. If he is writing to an individual, it will in the same way be individual responsibilities. And if it be one, as here, who stands in peculiar relationship to the assembly, a woman whose responsibilities in this way are often apt to be considered of the smallest, then it may be held for certain that he is enforcing the duty which belongs to every one, as illustrated thus in one who might be supposed to have, if any, a freedom from them. The great matter about which he writes is still that which he has shown us to be the concern even of the little children, the matter of antichrist; not now of the special antichrist of the last days, but those who were already casting the shadow of the future upon the present. Many deceivers had already gone forth into the world, who confessed not Jesus Christ coming in flesh. Already we see that not only was the world full of hostility to Christ, but that Satan was working among those who professed faith in Him, to destroy the testimony which God had raised up. We need not wonder how the apostle's zeal flames out. It is love that speaks in him, a burning love to Christ, without which there is no *divine* love to any. Love, therefore, must be in the truth, which Christ is, the grand truth which gives character to all else.

The apostle begins by assuring this elect lady and her children, not only that he loves them "in truth," but "for the truth's sake." Thus all they that knew the truth would unite in such a love. This truth would abide in the power of God. Nothing could indeed destroy it, maintained of God in the face of all opposition. With the courage derived from this, we start here; and "grace, mercy

truth, even as we received commandment from the Father. And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a [h]new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. And [i]this is love, that we should walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, even as ye heard [k]from the beginning, that ye should walk in it. For many [l]deceivers are gone forth into the world, they that [m]confess not Jesus Christ coming in flesh. This is the deceiver and the [n]antichrist. [o]Look to yourselves that we* lose not the things which we* have wrought, but that we may receive [p]full recompense. Whosoever [q]goeth forward and abideth not in the [r]doctrine of Christ hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine,† he hath [s]both the Father and the Son. If any one [t]come unto you and bring not this doctrine, [u]receive him not into [your] house and

h 1 Jno. 5. 3.
i Jno. 14. 23.
k 1 Jno. 2. 7, 24.
l 1 Jno. 2. 18, 26. *cf.* 1 Tim. 4. 1.
m *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 2, 3.
n *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 18 with 2 Thess. 2. 7-11.
o *cf.* Rev. 3. 11. *cf.* Heb. 4. 1.
p *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 10, 11. *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 11-15.
q *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 28. *cf.* Heb. 13. 8, 9.
r *cf.* Acts 24. 24. *cf.* Col. 2. 8, 9.
s 1 Jno. 2. 23. *cf.* Jno. 14.

* Many read, "ye." † Many add, "of the Christ."

9-11. *t cf.* Acts 20. 29; *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 6, 7. *u cf.* Rom. 16. 17; *cf.* Tit. 3. 10, 11; *cf.* 1 Cor. 5.

and peace" are thus assured "from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father,"* the One in whom the truth displays all its glory.

The apostle writes in the joy of having found, among the children of her whom he addresses, those walking in the truth according to the commandment received from the Father, which is, "that we believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ," and then "that we love one another." Thus love is free to manifest itself. No new commandment, as he repeats from his former epistle, but "that which we had from the beginning;" but then, "this is love, that we walk after His commandments." There is to be no new version of it, no addition, no alteration of any kind. What was heard from the beginning may, of course, be ever better understood, more fully realized, but it must remain the same. It is plain how the positive perfection of inspiration is implied in this. There is no allowance of any human element which could touch this. Yet deception was already fully at work. Many deceivers had gone forth into the world, and they struck boldly at what was the foundation, the centre, the heart of all, "Jesus Christ coming in flesh." History is full of these attempts of the enemy. Whatever form they might take all through, there was the one aim in it, to take Christ, in the full blessedness of what He is, from the soul; and all had need to be upon their guard. He writes to those whom he recognizes as walking in the truth, those who knew the truth, loved on this account, and yet he has to say, "Look to yourselves, that we lose not the things which we have wrought, but that we may have full recompense." So subtle and so insidious are the approaches of evil! The confidence of love in those professing Christianity, might lead, even from its unsuspicious frankness, to a reception of that which had in it the germ of antichrist. Wherever it was found, even in its most incipient character, "whosoever goeth forward," (develops something that is new,) "and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God." It is not a mere human mistake, for which we may apologize. It is the deadly power of him whose works Christ came to destroy, and who would himself fain destroy the work of Christ. "He that abideth in the doctrine hath both the Father and the Son." Everything turns upon the possession of the true Christ, without whom there is no revelation of God at all—in whatever form; nothing but the widespread idolatry of the human heart. Thus, if any one came, not bringing this doctrine (he does not exactly

* The salutation seems to include the question involved. We saw in the First Epistle that it was denial of the Son of the Father that designated the Antichrist. So here, the full title is given, in face of that evil which would deny it. S. R.

greet* him not. For he that greeteth him [v]partaketh in his evil works. Having [w]many things to write unto you, I would not [write] with paper and ink; but I hope to [x]come to you and speak mouth to mouth, that our† [y]joy may be full. The [z]children of thine elect sister greet thee.

v *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 6. *cf.* 1 Tim. 5. 22. *cf.* Ps. 50. 18.
w 3 Jno. 13. 14. *cf.* Jno. 21. 25.
x Phile. 22.
y 1 Jno. 1. 4.
z *cf.* 1 Pet. 5. 13.

* The Greek is fuller here than suggested in the translations. It might perhaps be rendered, "and do not say to him, greeting."

† Some read, "your."

say, even, bringing some other doctrine, but not owning this), he was not to be received into the house, or given a common greeting. That is the force of the word, which "bidding him God-speed," as in our common version, misinterprets. There might not be positive sympathy with his views, but yet the careless putting sanction upon them by want of outspoken refusal; thus he that simply greeted him partook in his evil works. It is exceedingly strong language; and in these days, when man's will is free, and his thoughts are so abundant, hard it may seem to know how to carry it out; but the apostle makes no question of the responsibility. It was that of every private Christian; not something for teachers to settle merely, or for the assembly to have to do with, (however much, of course, it might have to do with it,) but every one was responsible to act whether others acted or did not act. Christ was to be first, and Christ was to be all. No other, nothing else, could be considered. There is no examination hinted at as to the state of soul of the one thus characterized as a deceiver. It is no question of his state of soul at all; whether, after all, he may at bottom be better than the doctrine he brings would show. The question is simply of his doctrine. He is to be judged by his *words*, not by his thoughts or motives; and it is evident that this is with the apostle a point of such special importance that it is that which gives character to his epistle here. It is what is peculiar to and distinctive of it. It is something which needs to be added to what is more formally doctrinal in the first epistle. There is to be no toleration whatever here. Toleration would only be the permitting of that which would destroy Christianity to the bottom, and rob every Christian of that which makes him this. Here there must be, therefore, the intolerance of love itself; and we see most clearly what association means here, even of the lightest kind. It gives to the person who tolerates, the character of that which he is tolerating, and the very piety of the one who did this would necessarily be only a more deceptive cover under which the evil would better work. For how much is the careless unconcern, even of those who seem to be pious, everywhere responsible!* What disaster has been wrought by it; the mingling of ranks that cannot mingle, the mingling of friends and enemies, until it is openly proclaimed as Christian charity to go with those who deny Christ, in every practical good work that can be named! Here is the root, as should be plain, of an immense evil which

* Much question has been raised as to how far this treatment is to go, of those who while themselves personally sound (if that can be called soundness which does not instinctively resent dishonor to our holy Lord) *do* receive or greet the bringer of false doctrine. As shown in the Notes, the apparently sound and pious, in going on with error which they have not personally imbibed, are more dangerous than the openly evil; for they mislead others by their example. Furthermore, the scripture before us declares that the one who greets is a partaker of the other's evil deeds. Most certainly then they illustrate the apostle's word, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," and are themselves exposed to the same treatment as the false teacher. Most unquestionably this applies to all real fellowship, at the table of the Lord and elsewhere. Doubtless too, if we were more simple and spiritual, we would, in love and faithfulness show by our refusal to greet those neutral how abhorrent to God is all tampering with unholy denials of His Son. Nor will it be out of place to call attention to the fact that in these closing days of the Church's history, there seems to be a revival, in one form or another, of the early blasphemies as to the Son of God. Let us warn one another against the least carelessness as to this. There can be tolerance of many things—weak and faulty apprehension of dispensational and other truth—but no unholy touch of the Person or Work of our blessed, adorable Lord should be tolerated for a moment.

S. R.

has filled the so-called Christian world with that which is the work of the enemy. The apostle has much else to write about, but would not do it now with pen and ink, hoping to come and to "speak mouth to mouth." All the plainer it is that here is something that he will not even for a moment delay to speak about, something that will not keep even till the time of meeting. How full of solemn warning is such an epistle as this!*

* The closing salutation from the children of the "elect sister" reminds us of the close of 1 Peter, and may be similarly explained.—S. R.

THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN.

THE [a]elder to the beloved [b]Gaius whom I [c]love in truth. Beloved, I desire that in all things thou shouldst prosper and be in [d]health, even as thy [e]soul prospereth. For I rejoiced exceedingly when the brethren came and bore [f]witness unto thy truth, even as thou walkest in truth. I have no greater [g]joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth. Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatever thou doest toward the brethren and toward [h]strangers, who have witnessed of thy love before the assembly; in [i]setting whom forward on their journey in a manner [j]worthy of God, thou wilt do well; for for the [k]Name have they gone forth, taking [l]nothing of those of the nations.

a 2 Jno. 1.
b Rom. 16. 23. 1 Cor. 1.15.
c 1 Jno.3.18.
d *cf.* 1 Tim. 5. 23. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 16.
e *cf.* Jer. 17. 7, 8. *cf.* Jer. 31. 12.
f *cf.* 2 Cor.8. 18.
g 2 Jno. 4. *cf.* 1 Thess. 3. 8.
h *cf.* Heb.13. 2. *cf.* Matt.25. 35.
i *cf.* Rom.15. 24. *cf.* Acts 15. 3.
j *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 12.
k *cf.* Acts 5. 41.
l *cf.* Matt. 10. 8; *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 14; *ctr.* 1 Cor. 9. 11-18.

NOTES.

THE Third Epistle of John is of a very different character. It does not balance or modify what he has just been saying in the least. It is not intended for this. He emphasizes the truth here at the beginning, as he had emphasized it before. He is writing to one whom he loves in the truth, and rejoices exceedingly that the brethren have come and borne witness to the truth in him, in which he walked. He has no greater joy than this, to hear of his children walking in the truth. He is very happy indeed about this beloved Gaius, and can only wish that he may prosper and be in health, even as his soul *doth* prosper—a beautiful witness. How often we could rather wish that the *souls* of Christians might prosper as they otherwise prosper! and how few are they for whom one can so frankly pray that they may prosper, as the apostle does here! He does not need to exhort him to the display of love upon which he dwells in the epistle, but only to express his satisfaction as to the way in which he *was* displaying this.

He heartily owns the faithfulness of his love towards the brethren familiarly known, and towards those who came as strangers from other places. Divine love was manifesting itself indeed in these in the activity in which they went forth for Christ's sake, to declare His name, and in dependence upon Himself alone, taking nothing of those of the nations. This is plainly an opposite course from that which is commonly thought to be right to-day, when the Church of God has become a beggar to the world, and has taught it well of how good service, apart from faith at all, it may be to it. The days of the apostle were certainly not days in which the Church ordinarily had much in the way of riches outside of the treasures which were peculiarly her own; but men felt so rich in God that they doubted not of His sufficiency for them, no matter what the need might be; and the introduction of another principle has worked, in fact, a disaster which it is inexcusable for any Christian to ignore to-day. This dependence upon God in those who went forth with His Word was what in a special way commended them to their fellow-Christians. The apostle mentions it evidently to their praise. Such, he says, we ought to receive, that we may be fellow-workers with the truth.* This was a privilege which it is clear could apply to

* This is in interesting contrast to the sad partaking of the evil deeds, spoken of in the Second Epistle.—S. R.

We, therefore, ought to [m]receive such, that we may be fellow-workers with the truth. I wrote somewhat to the assembly, but Diotrephes, who [n]loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not. Therefore, if I come, I will [o]bring to remembrance his works which he doeth, prating against us with wicked words; and not content with these, [p]neither doth he himself receive the brethren; and those who would he preventeth and [q]casteth [them] out of the assembly.

m cf. 2Cor. 7. 2. *cf.* Acts 9. 26–28. *cf.* Rom. 15. 7.

n cf. 1 Pet. 5. 3. *cf.* Lk. 22. 24–27.

o cf. 2 Cor. 13. 1, 2. *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 34.

p ctr. ver. 5. *q cf.* Lk. 9. 49, 50.

Christians alone. If the receiving of such and care for them made men fellow-workers with the truth, how could those who knew not the truth, who had no faith in Christ, be fellow-workers in this way?

Yet here, alas, there was found opposition inside the Church itself, an opposition which was assuming a very decided and aggressive form. If it even were an apostle writing to the assembly, one so well known as John, there could be a Diotrephes loving to have the pre-eminence among the disciples, who would not receive it. It is not a question here, as before, of false doctrine on either side; but the flesh has abundance of excuses for having its own way. Diotrephes neither himself received the brethren, nor suffered those who wished to do so; nay, he cast them out of the assembly. How thoroughly the shadows of the future are here upon the present also! No doubt, the one in question had much to say with regard to this irregular work, as he would count it—not simply evangelizing, as it would seem, but which contemplated the help of the Lord's people also, which would, of course, tend to bring to an end the special assumptions of one who craved eminence in this way among them. Diotrephes very likely thought that his own ministry was all-sufficient, and that it was but itching ears that craved the teaching of others.* There is nothing like the absolute freedom of ministry derived from God only, and which seeks not the sanction of men, for destroying all such rights of individuals over the assemblies of God. We may remember that Peter warns us of just such an evil as was exhibiting itself here, when he bids the elders not to be as those who exercised lordship over the flock, as if it were their own possession. The right of ministry is free to all, just as the power to minister carries with it the responsibility of ministering; but how easy it is to assume a sort of right with regard to those to whom, perhaps, we have long ministered, and who may be, more or less, even the fruit of this! Thus the Church of God has, in fact, got so much into separate companies; and with this of necessity arises the tendency to independent schools of thought, and partisanship for one rather than another, when God would minister by all to the need of all. It is of God, surely, that we should be permitted to see already, in even a somewhat extreme form, that which was to spread itself over the Christian Church so largely as it has done, depriving it of the nourishment which God has provided for it, and leading more and more to heresies which would be doctrinal also.

It is perhaps not necessary to suppose that the casting out of the assembly those who came to minister went the length of positive excommunication. The assembly itself does not seem to have been penetrated with the spirit of Diotrephes, although it had got so much under his control; and the casting out of the assembly may be simply the making it impossible for them to use in it the gifts which God had given. The aim of Diotrephes was clearly to keep the assembly for himself. There is no proof, such as has been imagined, of doctrinal tendencies having anything to do with this; though the apostle speaks strongly

* Diotrephes, "nourished by Jupiter"—of the family of the gods, seems a fitting name for the pride and haughtiness of which this man is an example. Demetrius, "belonging to Demeter" or "Ceres," while not so clear, may stand for fruitfulness and useful service. A very real contrast to the other. S. R.

Beloved, [r]imitate not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that [s]doeth good is of God. He that doeth evil [t]hath not seen God.

Demetrius hath [u]witness borne to him by all, and by the truth itself; and we also bear witness, and thou [v]knowest that our witness is true. I had [w]many things to write unto thee, but I will not with ink and pen write to thee; but I hope soon to see thee, and we will speak mouth to mouth. [x]Peace be to thee. The [y]friends greet thee. Greet the friends by [z]name.

r 1 Thess. 5. 15. cf. Eph. 5.1.
s 1 Jno. 2.29.
t cf. Heb. 12. 14.
u ver. 6. cf. 1 Cor. 16. 10.
v Jno. 19.35. Jno. 21. 24.
w 2 Jno. 12.
x Eph. 6.23.
y cf. Jno. 15. 15.
z cf. Rom. 16. 3, etc.

of the truth as that which commended, and was all that was needed to commend, the witnesses of it. He speaks thus of Demetrius as having witness borne to him by the truth itself as well as by those around; who, no doubt, testified more especially of his personal character. He may have been one of these wandering teachers and preachers which so provoked the opposition of the high clerical party represented by the chief opposer here. The apostle bears witness himself to Demetrius as one himself apparently a stranger, perhaps the bearer of the present epistle. It is an immense point to realize that the truth is in itself a sufficient warrant for the one that brings it. Truth is of God, and the voice of God has supreme right to be heard everywhere and always. The life of the one who brings it must, of course, commend the truth he brings; but the whole matter here is of the truth and the spiritual character—not of official place. Thus there is in Scripture no human commission given even by apostles themselves to preach and teach. Eldership and the diaconate were of another character, as we have seen. They were official and local; but the truth itself had everywhere title, just *as* the truth; and it has wrought nothing but mischief to have souls diverted from the question whether it is truth that is preached, to the question of any supposed commission of the man who preaches it. This has led to want of exercise everywhere as to the truth itself, the taking it second-hand on human authority, and not divine. This, in its incipiency at least, seems what is here; and it is a main point of the epistle to set the truth free from every hindrance of this character, that God's voice may everywhere appeal as it ought to the hearts of His people. The apostle closes, as in the Second Epistle, by saying that there were many other things of which he might write, but would not, hoping soon to see personally the one he is addressing, and to "speak mouth to mouth."*

* Gaius, "of the land," seems to be well known for his hospitality—a reputation to be coveted. The saints are spoken of as "friends," a title not frequently used, but appropriate in this place, where the grace of Christian friendship is exhibited. S. R.

THE EPISTLE OF

JUDE.

[a] JUDE, a bondman of Jesus Christ, and [b] brother of James, to the called ones, [c] beloved in God the Father and [d] preserved in Jesus Christ: [e] Mercy unto you and peace and love be multiplied.

[a] Lk. 6. 16. Jno. 14. 22.
[b] Jas. 1. 1.
[c] Rom. 1. 7. 2 Thess. 2. 13.
[d] *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 5. *cf.* Jno. 10. 28.
[e] 2 Jno. 3.

NOTES.

WE have come now to what, apart from the epistles incorporated in the Book of Revelation,—of which we have to speak in connection with it,—is the closing epistle of the New Testament. It has all the character of this, a solemn one indeed, as speaking of the close of the Christian dispensation itself, which morally had already come. Already there were those who had crept in privily into the Christian profession, while they turned the grace of God into lasciviousness and denied the only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. Thus there were already the people marked out, of whom Enoch long before had prophesied, that the Lord would come with ten thousands of His holy ones to execute judgment upon them. Their history is given here from beginning to end. "They have gone in the way of Cain," (the way of natural unbelief, whatever the profession,) have given themselves up to the error of Balaam for reward, (the ecclesiastical departure,) and have perished (he speaks, no doubt, prophetically here, according to the style of the old prophets, seeing already before them that which, in fact, had not yet taken place)—"perished in the gainsaying of Korah." This was the open resistance of divine authority in those who represented it: in Moses' time, resistance to himself and Aaron; in the present time, resistance to Christ in the double character represented in these, of King and Priest. Jude thus speaks of apostasy; not, indeed, of the one great apostate, who is not manifested until the Day of the Lord is fully come, but that which leads on to this final form of it, when the Lord has taken the Church to Himself.

There is, no doubt, something intended, as always, in the name of him who writes the epistle—Jude or Judah, the name of the head of Israel's royal tribe, and thus of the kingdom of Judah afterwards, from which comes the Jew, so called, now. The name has descended to us in the awful history of Judah (or Judas) Iscariot, the son of perdition, himself the representative of the nation in its denial of Christ, for which at the present time it is rejected. Judah is here, however, "the bondman of Jesus Christ," as the nation yet will be in days to come; and it is as a Jew, a believing Jew, he seems to be a witness here of the second apostasy of the professing people of God, as he had been a witness also of the first. His mention of himself as the brother of James, or Jacob, connects him still more with those twelve tribes to which James addressed himself, by Jude no longer distinctly specified as such. The actual link is for the present broken, although the suggestion of it, as one may say, remains. How solemn indeed is such a connection here! To think of one who in his own lifetime could see for himself this double apostasy, man thus fully proved in his utter incompetency, all hope to be given up as to him, except in God!

Here, indeed, the hope remains only the more stedfast, from the deliverance from mere human hope. All that abides in God will of necessity abide; and so Jude writes here to the called ones, "beloved of God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ." As called, they are preserved. God could not be unfaithful to His own call, or give up His purposes of love towards the objects of it. His salvation has all the full assurance of this: "Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied."

Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our [f]common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you, exhorting you to [g]contend earnestly for the [h]faith once for all delivered to the saints; for there are certain men [i]crept in privily, they who of old were [j]marked out beforehand to this condemnation, ungodly [persons], [k]turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and [l]denying our only Master* and Lord, Jesus Christ. But I would put you in remembrance, ye who [m]once knew all things,† that the Lord having [n]saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward [o]destroyed them that believed not; and [p]angels who kept not their original state, but left their own habitation, he keepeth in [q]eternal chains under darkness unto the [r]judgment of the great day; even as [s]Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, having given themselves over to fornication in like manner with these, and having gone after strange‡

* δεσπότης, literally, "despot." † R. V. and others render this clause, "though ye know all things once for all." ‡ Literally, "other."

f *cf.* Tit. 1. 4. *cf.* Acts 2. 39.
g *cf.* Rom. 10. 12. *cf.* Eph. 6. 12. *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 12. *cf.* Gal. 2. 5.
h *cf.* Gal. 1. 23.
i *cf.* Matt. 13. 25, 38. *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 6.
j 1 Pet. 2. 8.
k *cf.* Gal. 5. 13. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 16.
l 2 Pet. 2. 1. *cf.* Tit. 1. 16.
m *cf.* Heb. 2. 1 with Heb. 5. 12.
n *cf.* 1 Cor. 10. 1-11.
o Heb. 3. 17-19.
p 2 Pet. 2. 4.
q Matt. 8. 29 with Rev. 20. 2.
r *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 3.
s 2 Pet. 2. 6; Gen. 19. 24, 25.

He begins now by telling them that while his heart was busy with the subject of "the common salvation," and he was giving "all diligence" to write to them about this, he had to break off from it in order to exhort them to contend earnestly "for the faith once delivered to the saints," now in danger. "Once delivered" implies *once for all* delivered. There is to be no departure from this, no addition, even, which would alter its character. The faith is now complete; it is not simply that which the Lord spoke upon earth, but that which the Holy Spirit, according to His promise, has added as no less from Him. "I have many things," He said, "to say unto you; but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all truth: for He shall take of Mine and shall show it unto you." Thus, those who would listen to the Lord's voice in the Gospels must of necessity listen to what He claims to be His voice afterward, as given through the apostles and prophets raised up and qualified by the Spirit, the witness of His full, accomplished work and the glory resultant. Already this was all being called in question. There were "certain men crept in privily, men who of old were marked out beforehand to this condemnation" (Jude evidently refers to the prophecy of Enoch which he cites afterwards), "ungodly persons, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying their only Master and Lord:" the grace they laid hold of, yet perverted to give liberty to their own lusts which broke out against the authority of the Lord of Him through whom alone grace could come to men. We have seen already in Peter and others this character of the last days declared. It was not mere error, the wandering of men's minds, but a spirit of rebellion, the complete refusal of authority by unsubject hearts. Jude puts them in remembrance, therefore, as those indeed who have once for all known all these things: "that the Lord, having saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterwards destroyed those that believed not;" and that "angels who kept not their right estate, but left their own habitation, He is keeping in eternal chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." Peter speaks of these as "the angels that sinned." Jude speaks of them as apostates having left their own habitation—left the place to which God had assigned them at the beginning. So also Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around, which imitated them in the unbounded lasciviousness of a corrupt life, had been made an example of, to put as it were before men's eyes the judgment which it naturally spoke of—a judg-

flesh, lie there as an example, undergoing the judgment of [t]eternal fire. Yet in [u]like manner, these also in their dreamings defile the flesh and [v]despise lordship and rail against dignities. Yet [w]Michael, the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the [x]body of Moses, did not dare to bring a railing judgment against [him], but said, [The] [y]Lord rebuke thee. But these, whatever things they know not, they [z]rail against; and what they understand naturally, like creatures without reason, in these things they [a]corrupt themselves. Woe unto them, because they have gone in the [b]way of Cain, and given themselves up to the

t *cf.* Matt. 25. 41. *cf.* Lk. 16. 23, 24. *cf.* Rev. 19. 20.
u *cf.* Rom. 1. 24 with 2 Tim. 3. 1-7.
v 2 Pet. 2. 10. *cf.* Ex. 22. 28.
w Dan. 12. 1. Rev. 12. 7.
x *cf.* Deut. 34. 6. *cf.* Jno. 20. 12.
y Zech. 3. 2. *cf.* Matt. 4.
10. z 2 Pet. 2. 12; *cf.* Matt. 12. 7. a ver. 8; *cf.* Rom. 1. 28. b Gen. 4. 3-8; 1 Jno. 3. 12; *cfr.* Heb. 11. 4.

ment of eternal fire. Thus had God already given needed witness of that which will manifest itself in a more awful manner in the time to come. Spite of it all, those of whom Jude speaks were recklessly following exactly in the same path. By their dreaming, as those that had lost the truth of God, justifying themselves in the imaginations of their own hearts, they defiled the flesh, despised lordship, and railed against dignities. He brings forward a remarkable example in witness against such railing, when even Michael the archangel, contending with the devil about the body of Moses, did not yet dare to bring a railing judgment against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke thee." Moses, as we know, died, and the Lord buried him, and no one knows of his sepulchre to this day. One can easily see, with the tendency to idolatry which was strong in Israel, why the sepulchre of their great deliverer might be hidden from them. Satan, as it would seem, would needs bring to light what God had hidden. Yet, even then Michael had not taken it upon himself to pronounce judgment upon him, but referred it to the Lord. This belongs, no doubt, to other testimonies, such as that of the Book of Job, which assure us that the judgment of Satan himself waits for that time when the great question of good and evil will find its final settlement. Satan in the meanwhile may come up amongst the angelic "sons of God," and put in his accusation on the plea of righteousness against the people of God. He still does this, and the patience of God goes on, using all this for blessing to His people themselves, and allowing things to work out to their necessary result without hastening them, as our impatience would so readily demand. We have seen in Job's case the end of the Lord, and that it was in His wisdom to suffer what would at last show how that He was indeed exceeding pitiful and of tender mercy. God has the sickle put in when the field is ripe, and not before; and when that time of ripeness shall arrive is known to Himself alone. It is far otherwise with those of whom Jude is speaking. They rail against things which they know nothing about, while in the things which they understand naturally they act like creatures without reason, corrupting themselves by means of it; for man cannot become as a beast without debasing himself far below the beast; and that which only testifies in the beast to the absence of a moral element, in man will testify to the presence of an immoral one. Jude gives the whole course of these apostates: first, "they have gone in the way of Cain." Cain had his own natural religion, knew God after his fashion, was a monotheist, not atheist, nor an infidel; would approach God after his own fashion in that which ignored what sin is before Him, and could bring the fruit of a sin-cursed earth, the labor of his hands, without acknowledgment of the sin which had wrought the curse, or of the work of his hands being defiled by it. It is the way of how many still who have no use for atonement, no faith in "a religion of blood," as they call it; who believe in the independent mercy of God, and in themselves also as being rather the victims of their own necessity than as the free, responsible agents, of which yet they speak. The ecclesiastical error

[c] error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the [d] gainsaying of Korah. These are spots* in your [e] love-feasts, feasting together [f] without fear, being their [g] own shepherds;† [h] clouds without water, carried along by [i] winds; autumn trees [j] without fear, [k] twice dead, plucked up by the roots; wild waves of the sea [l] foaming out their own shame; [m] wandering stars, for whom hath been reserved the [n] blackness of darkness forever. And [o] Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied also as to these, saying, Behold the Lord came [p] with ten thousands of his holy ones to execute judgment upon all, and to [q] convict all the ungodly of them of all their

c 2 Pet. 2. 15. Num. 22. 12, etc. *cf.* Rev. 2. 14.
d Num. 16. 1-3, 31-35. Ps. 106. 16, 17.
e 2 Pet. 2. 13.
f *cfr.* Heb. 12. 28, 29.
g *cf.* Ezek. 34. 1-10. *cf.* Zech. 11. 15-17.
h 2 Pet. 2. 17. *cf.* Prov. 25. 14.
i *cf.* Eph. 4. 14. *cf.* Ps. 1. 4.
j *cf.* Matt. 21. 19. *k cf.* Eph. 2. 1 with Jno. 15. 6. *l* Is. 57. 20. *m cfr.* Is. 40. 26. *cf.* Is. 14. 12. *n* 2 Pet. 2. 17; *cf.* Matt. 8. 12. *o* Gen. 5. 18, 21-24; *cf.* 2 Pet. 2. 5. *p cf.* Rev. 1. 7; Rev. 19. 11-16; *cf.* Deut. 33. 2; *cf.* Dan. 7. 9, 10. *q cf.* Matt. 25. 31, etc.

* More literally perhaps, as most translate, "hidden rocks."
† Literally, "shepherding themselves."

follows the natural one. They have given themselves up to the error of Balaam for reward. They can make merchandise of the things of God, owning the true God and becoming prophets of the truth also, in a certain sense, while their hearts are set on their own covetousness. This is the ecclesiastical evil which we shall see figuring so largely in the epistles to the churches in the Book of Revelation. Jude follows them all beyond this. They have "perished," he says, "in the gainsaying of Korah." This is, of course, prophetic. It is, in fact, the apostasy in which all will end. Individuals may have gone that length. No doubt many had in Jude's time. John thus speaks of many antichrists who have gone out from us, he says, but were not of us. These were but individual anticipations of the end, which we can see now so close at hand, of this whole class. It is only the ripe fruit of what has been their character all along. "They were not of us," says John. To have pretension to Christianity while it lasts only the more suits the enemy. Gone out, they would have left the body of Christians undefiled by their presence; remaining among them, they remained but to drag down all the rest, so far as it was possible to give, alas, an evil character to the profession of Christianity at large. As a fact, although individuals might have gone out, as a class they had not. There they were in the Christian love-feasts, "sunken rocks," as Jude calls them, ready to bring everything to shipwreck; "feasting together without fear" of rebuke, hardened by a seared conscience; being their own shepherds, with all the pretence and all the wilfulness of this, able to take care of themselves, to find their own pasture, if not to lead others also; "clouds without water," with a promise, not the performance, and yet with the threatening of storm—"carried along by winds; autumn trees," in the season of fruit, but without fruit; "twice dead," once in nature, then in the pretension of what was beyond nature; "plucked up by the roots," again looking on to what was their natural destination, those dead roots that had never taken hold of that from which faith draws, at last to be exposed for what they were; "wild waves of the sea," with the foam of their shame upon them, a lawless condition, boiling over at any check or rebuke; "wandering stars"—meteors which might be even brilliant for the moment, but suddenly going out, and gone forever, gone out into the blackness of darkness.

Jude multiplies metaphors to show us his horror of it all; and here already was that class of which Enoch had prophesied long since. So thoroughly had the Spirit of God anticipated the evil, and with so great a horror—the outbreak of man's will against all the light and love and truth of God, brought in for his deliverance. Enoch, "the seventh from Adam" was, as we know, himself the type of heavenly saints removed before the time of the great flood of judgment, closing himself the history of man in brief from the beginning; one who, walk-

works of ungodliness which they have wrought ungodlily, and of all the [r]hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are [s]murmurers, complainers, [t]walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh [u]swelling words, having men's [v]persons in admiration for the sake of advantage. But ye, beloved, [w]remember the words spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, how they [x]said unto you that at the end of the time there should be mockers walking after their own ungodly lusts. These are

r Ps. 94. 4. Ps. 73. 8, 9.
s 1 Cor. 10. 10. Num. 14.2.
t 2 Pet. 2.10. *cf.* Eph. 4. 22.
u 2 Pet.2.18.
v *cf.* Jas.2.2, 3. *cf.* Lev. 19. 15.
w 2 Pet. 3.2. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 5.
x 2 Pet. 3.3.

ing with God, was able to see across the gulf of time that yet was to intervene between himself and that of which he spoke. As to these he prophesied: "Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of them of all their works of ungodliness which they have wrought ungodlily" (how he repents these epithets in the intensity of his feeling with regard to them!), "and of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." All other characters as it were are merged in this, that it is a revolt against God; at last a plain, open revolt, as we know it will be when the man of sin, the son of perdition, "exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshiped," putting himself in the very place of God, in defiance of Him. Never will man's will in this respect come out so manifestly as in those days when judgment smites it; and it is of God to permit it to come out—to take away the merciful restraint upon the evil in order to exhibit it in its full, awful form, before He sweeps it into the destruction that awaits it.

"The holy ones" of which Enoch speaks may be saints, or angels, or both of these, as in fact they will come together. It will be the sudden manifestation of the unholy and of the holy ones at once, and in opposition to one another. The "holy ones," misconceived and downtrodden for so long, will then be with the Holy One who is Lord of all. As they have been with Him in His longsuffering patience, so they will at last be with Him in the righteous display of His wrath upon the ungodly.

Jude returns to his description of them:—"These are murmurers, complainers." How certain a sign of those away from God, who either do not see His hand in things, or else fret against His hand; walking after their own lusts, they can do no other, for God is not with their lusts to prosper them; and if His mercy come in, it must be to thwart and disappoint them. These, as they have left God out of their thoughts, must have man in them, and thus those who are most independent of God, their mouth speaking in this way "great swelling words of false pretension," will have men's persons in admiration for the sake of their own advantage—slaves most of all, as they are, in that independence to which they pretend. Jude reminds those whom he is addressing that he is only in the line of the testimony of the apostles of Christ before him, who had never ceased to warn that at the end of time there would be mockers, walking after their own ungodly lusts. Notice how the two things go together; their scoffing infidelity is but the outburst of the corruption lurking within them at the time of their most zealous profession; natural men, separating themselves, as unable really to mingle with the company of God's people. It does not seem as if he meant exactly any self-righteousness, for these are not Pharisees of whom he is speaking, but rather of the Sadducean order, and who walk apart, as having after all no common tastes or sympathies with the Lord's people, of whom nominally they are part; but they are natural men, "psychical," soul-led men, according to the meaning of the word which we have had elsewhere, men in whom the instinctive, appetitive soul is not governed by the Spirit—"not having the Spirit," says Jude; but he is not, as we might perhaps expect, speaking of the human spirit here, but the Spirit of God. In fact they are not Christians: "For if any man

they who [y]separate [themselves], [z]natural [men], not having [the] Spirit. But ye, beloved, [a]building yourselves up on your most holy faith, [b]praying in the Holy Spirit, [c]keep yourselves in the love of God, [d]awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Col. 2. 7; *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 18. *b cf.* Rom. 8. 26, 27. *c cf.* Col. 2. 6; *cf.* Jno. 15. 9, 10. 20, 21; *cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 9, 10.

y cf. 1 Cor. 3. *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 19. *z cf.* Phil. 3. 19. *a cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 10–15. *d cf.* Phil. 3.

have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." But then, this is connected also with the spirit of man being once more in its proper place as the intelligent governor of emotions, affections, and appetites. Only the gift of the Spirit of God really puts it back into this place, lost in the fall, but when now recovered is brought into a higher condition than at first, with the understanding of God and an aptness for communion with Him beyond anything that even unfallen Adam could have known.

Here, then, is the full tale told of these apostates, and this is what Christianity dispensationally is going on to—apostasy. Every dispensation has ended after this manner: before the flood, as it is itself witness to us; after the flood, when the world got away into idolatry and Abraham had to be called out of it to walk alone with God; then, Abraham's seed brought into a place of special favor with God, and enriched with a revelation from Him to deliver them from the tide of traditional evil, these, alas, in their captivity in Babylon, found the end of covenant, and were scattered amongst the Gentiles; a few being permitted to go back into their land to wait there for the Messiah to come,—in the manifest condition of those who had lost everything and must be indebted to divine grace in Him for all that they could know. Yet when He came, only to be rejected and crucified, to be given up into the hands of the Gentiles, His people choosing for themselves no other king than Cæsar, and receiving that recompense of their error that was meet. Now, alas, in the vision of the apostle here, the end of the last testimony committed to faith had already come, far off as it might yet be as to the final issue, in which Gentiles as well as Jews, partakers together of the most wonderful blessing, the wonder of eternity, were to prove themselves naturally as incapable, as hopeless as ever. Jude sees it; yet with stedfast eyes that see above and beyond it, God over all, and God at last having His own way, accomplishing His own blessed purposes, and faith foreseeing it can rest in the mean time, nourished by that which God has provided for it, "meat that endureth to eternal life." We have seen the same thing in the last epistle of the apostle of the Gentiles, in whom the joy of the overcomer breaks out while still in the battlefield—the joy of one who has "not received the spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." So Jude exhorts here that we should "build ourselves up on our most holy faith"—upon all that which God has revealed to us, and in which the power of the truth to sanctify will make itself known for those who really receive it. Notice that it is not merely a faith that is to be kept, but a faith on which the soul is more and more to find its upbuilding, its edification, far removed above all storms, and indeed a house of God, "the temple of the living God," those in whom the Spirit of God dwells.

Yet here, too, is the consciousness of weakness, the assurance of the need of Him who alone can suffice for it. Thus "praying in the Holy Spirit" goes with the building up; prayer, in its full and proper character, being the evidence of the Holy Spirit's advocacy in us—prayer which is, according to God, going beyond even natural knowledge, in groanings which cannot be uttered, but in which, nevertheless, God finds the mind of One who is greater than man. Thus we are to keep ourselves in the love of God, (in the assurance of it,) which, alas, tends to be weakened as we look upon a scene of ruin come in there where God at last seemed to have something for Himself, in that Church which Christ loved and for which He gave Himself, "that He might sanctify and cleanse it

And of some have compassion, making a [e]difference; but others save with fear, [f]snatching them out of the fire, hating even the garment [g]spotted with the flesh.

Now to him that is [h]able to keep you from stumbling, and to set you [i]blameless in the presence of his glory with [j]exceeding joy, to the only [k]God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be [l]glory, majesty, might, and authority, before the whole course [of time], and now, and to all the ages. Amen.

[e] *cf.* Rom. 14. 1-3.
[f] *cf.* Gen. 19. 15, 16.
[g] *cf.* Jas. 1. 27. *cf.* Rev. 3. 4.
[h] Heb. 7. 25. *cf.* Eph. 3. 20.
[i] Eph. 1. 4.
[j] 1 Pet. 4. 13. *cf.* Lk. 15. 23.
[k] Tit. 2. 10.
[l] 1 Tim. 1. 17.

with the washing of water by the Word; that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing."

How different that which faith anticipates from that condition of things here, which one cannot but realize to be the fact! Yet the love of God abides, and will have its way, the mercy of Christ bringing us through to that eternal life in all its fulness, which has already begun in us, spite of our present weakness, and which no power of the enemy can extinguish, weak as it may seem to be. How clearly, as we realize what we are (men, naturally just what others are around us), does this mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ make itself fully felt! But thus we may abide upon our Rock of refuge, and may help some, too, out of the rising flood which is carrying off so many, "making a difference," as Jude says here—learning to distinguish conditions that even look very much alike and yet may be far removed from one another. "Of some having compassion; others saving with fear, snatching them out of the fire," in the nature of things just ready to kindle upon them, and with the hatred of the garments spotted with the flesh, which is but the necessary other side of love to God.

Jude closes with an ascription of praise—most appropriately in keeping with his name, "praise"—a praise how sweet and solemn as we stand amidst the wreck of all that can be wrecked, the shaking of all that can be shaken, with the confidence of those who know that God is able, nevertheless, to keep us from stumbling, and to set us blameless in the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. Whose joy is that? Not simply our own, that "exceeding joy," although we share in it and it reflects itself in us; but the "exceeding joy" is the joy of the Father who has got back the lost, now found, the one dead, now alive again, and He makes the whole house ring with the music that is in His own heart first.

"To Him the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, might and authority from before the whole course of time and now unto all the ages!" In the sweep of all events from the beginning on into the future, which is manifestly in His hands entirely, He abides all through, the same; Master, as He must and should be; working throughout, according to the counsel of His own will, for the display of what He Himself is, that all may know Him. This is His true glory, that which He does not acquire from anything else, but which radiates from Himself, the shining out of what He is, for the full blessing of eternity, whatever the ages yet to come may discover of Him in their turn.

REVELATION: ITS SCOPE AND CHARACTER.

WE have come now to the closing book of Scripture, the fifth part of its fifth pentateuch. It is fitting that this fifth part should be just one book, and no more. It is a book of prophecy, and of prophecy which has, as the mind of the Spirit, a unity; and here we find, in fact, the unity of all the prophecies. The number 5, as we have often seen, is a 4 and 1. The 7, which is the perfect number, breaks in half, as one may say, in the middle. It is ordinarily, at least, a 4 and 3, the 4 being a 3 and 1;—the 3, the number of deity, comes first, as is evidently its right place. Then comes the 4, which speaks of weakness, the creature under the control of the Creator, but which, alas, may come under other control also. Here is its liability to fail, and 4 is, as we know, the number of testing, and of failure also. Still, God's purpose will be fulfilled in it; and the 3 and 1, of which it is composed, show in the meaning of its factors the manifestation of the Creator in it. From this 4, another series of 3 completes the 7. In these we have the creature in its relationship to the Creator. Thus 7 is a 3+1+3. As such there can be nothing really to follow it. It is the number of completion—of perfection. We have, no doubt, an 8 also; but the 8 is in this way, as the first day of the new week, the beginning of a new series, and has its symbolic meaning from this. 5, therefore, is a 4 and 1, and is commonly divided in this way in Scripture. It is man or the creature with God, the weak with the strong. It is the number of Immanuel, in whom God and man are united forever; but it is the number, also, of man in responsibility to God—the number, therefore, of divine government as we find it eminently in this Book of Revelation, where, however, Immanuel, as the One who unites God and man, is the necessary thought everywhere.

A 5, as 4 and 1, is in this, also, a return to the beginning; and such it is here. God's first thoughts are also His last:—He holds to them. He is Himself the First and the Last, the living and unchanging One, who abides to carry out His purposes according to His own unchanging nature. Thus it is no wonder if, when we reach the end to which Revelation brings us, we find that we are once more contemplating the beginning. The beginning is now seen from the end; as, indeed, when we look closely into it, we find that the end was seen from the beginning. This, as we have already had before us, the six creative days distinctly show. Things are now seen more deeply, however, as the roll of the ages has worked them out in full. All is seen to be under the

control of God, and to be a revelation of Himself, who is thus telling all His heart out to His creatures.

Revelation is Genesis enlarged and glorified. As already said, the days of creation show us all under His hand; and thus the numbering of the days, which is in the eyes of mere science but the crudity of an infantile conception, requiring (always and for all things) God; while the part of science (so they tell us) is to put God as far as possible in the background, and do without Him upon every possible occasion. But, in fact, the order seen here, as it is seen in creation itself, is nothing but the assertion everywhere of the Mind in it throughout. Thus the numbering of Scripture is not a mere numbering. It is a *classification*. What would we do without classification in science? it should not be strange, then, if Scripture has its own. Everything is put into its place by it, and its relation marked.

When we look but a little deeper, we find that there is progress everywhere—in fact, an evolution. This word belongs to theology, and mindless science can never represent it aright. What is evolved must be *in*volved first. It is but the unfolding of what was in germ in the beginning; and this kind of evolution all nature witnesses, as it is plainly found also in Scripture. Look at these days, in which light, the expanse, the dry land, successively prepare the scene, which is then to be filled with firmamental lights, with creatures of water and air, and then of earth. This is not, in strictness, a zoological classification, which nature has never followed in its development, and which it never follows in its display. Nature is not a dead museum, but a living whole; and scientific classification, with all its use, lacks largeness to take in the various and subtle interweaving of threads into one pattern, though it may well exhibit the different threads themselves.

Yet Scripture, in its own brief way, has a more thorough classification implied in it than mere science can suggest, inviting research, not taking away the need of it. We see the distinctness and the relationship of the different lines to one another as parts of one perfect whole, the last dependent on the first, yet so that the first without the last would be a mere abortion. Life thus takes up the inorganic dust to lift it into a higher sphere, and enable it to serve in nobler ways than it seems naturally destined for. Here is a first step of progress, which shows the manner of the whole—a creature that cannot lift itself up, but must *be* lifted, and is lifted only by the uniting of a higher nature with it. Here is, for a spiritual mind, a gospel already, Christ already, and not very dimly, foreshadowed. With the creation of the soul, (which is marked out as not a development, but a distinct creation—God *created* the living soul,) the organization itself is raised to a higher level. The vegetable functions remain, and are incorporated in the animal, but now, besides this, there are self-directing and instinctive powers which need to be and are provided in it; and thus we have what is now for the first

time called the "living creature." Life displays now its value in it. Finally, by a new creation, man crowns this ascending series, in whom all former elements are combined, but reach a higher development. In him there is the dust of the ground, organization, a soul-life, but all this informed by a spirit in which we find now the image of its Maker, able to look up to Him upon the one hand, and, upon the other, down upon the lower ranks of creature-hood in communion with the glorious Creator. Adam thus fittingly gives names to all. And in man, as the image of God, a spirit from the Spirit, what a prophecy is before us, (incompetent as any one might be to understand it yet,) of Him who was to be, in a brighter and incomparable way, the true Image of the invisible God in manhood; in whom manhood itself shall find a higher plane than that for which it seemed destined, and God be seen in His place as God, yet stooping down in infinite tenderness to lift up the creature to Himself. Here is the Scriptural, the divine evolution in its whole extent; and must we not see the end, in order to appreciate rightly the beginning?

Nor does this progress of the creature stand alone, but the whole creative days leading up to the first Adam, who is himself a "first-born among many brethren," is but a continuous prophecy of the steps which should lead on to a new creation and a better Adam, with the woman (formed out of Him, bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh, the type, according to the apostle, of the Church in its relationship to Christ) completing the picture.

Then we have the Paradise garden and the tree of life, which we meet again as thoughts in Revelation. Notice also how in Revelation the numbering of Genesis begins again: seals, trumpets, vials, all are numbered, as the six days were, though now in connection with trumpet-calls of judgment which declare the vain opposition of the creature to God's thoughts, now to be set aside. Man, with a darker power behind him, has seemed to have his way a long time; and at last, according to prophecy, will parade his complete triumph; but thus only we reach what each one of the six days has declared, that "the evening and the morning are the day." There is a night implied, into which the day which has just shown itself passes, and may seem lost, but only to put upon everything the stamp of resurrection, which is the stamp of God Himself, when, out of that death in which the power of the creature is finally set aside, God, acting from Himself and by Himself, declares afresh His omnipotent power, bringing forth new life and higher beauty out of the ruin of the old.

Thus the cycle of which the preacher speaks as illustrating the vanity stamped upon man's passing generations (Eccl. i.) has in it also a higher and more comforting lesson. We find it in this return of Genesis in Revelation. The cycle is no more a mere cycle. It does not, in fact, return unto itself. The revolving earth does not return unto itself.

The morning of the new day does, and yet does not, begin again the old one. The cycle is here a spiral rather than a proper circle; and we see this in the plant, the first living thing, as a law of its growth. God's ways do not bring us back again just to the beginning. He does not replace the ruined past. Always a brighter and better thing comes out of it. The new Adam is not the mere repetition of the old. The new Paradise is the Paradise of God, and not of man merely. The new tree of life is of another nature than that by which Adam was to be sustained in the beginning. The revolution of time brings us back so as to contemplate the old beginning, so as to show that it has not been forgotten. But we are now above it, not on the same plane; and thus we can discern how prophecy should spring out of history, the event being always, however, larger than the type, because God's law is always one of encouragement and progress—Adam in the primal Garden come back in a better.

Spite of the fall and ruin, God is always seen to be Master. The earth itself has a history of this kind written in its own bowels, the present rooting itself in the past, but above it. The future more than fulfils every promise of the past, and of necessity, therefore, all prophecy runs on to the complete fulfilment, intermediate fulfilments in the meanwhile showing that the first purpose abides, which the great end alone reveals in its perfection. Thus all prophecies run on towards the close. In a book like Revelation they must, therefore, all run together. The lines are not confused, but woven together in a perfect pattern, for which divine wisdom alone is competent. Thus we can understand that "no prophecy of Scripture is of its own interpretation." We must have for comparison the various lines, distinct as well as connected. We must not merge Israel and the Church, or forget even the purposes of God as to the earth, in higher and heavenly ones. The true revelation to interpret prophecy can only be found therefore, not in self-imagined canons, but by having before one the great promises of God, remembering how He challenges every thought of their undoing, especially with regard to Israel, His people (Jer. xxxi. 35, 36), and that, even as to the new heaven and the new earth (Isa. lxvi. 22). Thus, an interpretation of Revelation which practically, if not theoretically, leaves Israel out, cannot have the needed largeness, cannot give us the mind of God. The earth also needs to come into the field of view; and if science has in a mere godless way glorified matter, we shall find that God has overdone science in its own field, but in His own glorious manner.

THE VARIOUS SCHOOLS OF INTERPRETATION.

It is well known that there are three main schools into which current interpretations of Revelation fall, each by itself deficient in its narrowness of vision.

We have Preterism, which contemplates a fulfilment almost wholly

in the past; yet even this has a basis of truth in it, though as a whole it will satisfy no one who has worthy thoughts of inspiration.

Then we have Presentism, or Historicalism, giving large place to the Church, which Preterism does not, and in this way abundantly more satisfactory to the Christian apprehension of what Christ's Church is to Himself. Yet here Israel is, on the other hand, almost lost to view, large place as it surely has in all Old Testament prophecy. Here we find naturally a larger basis of truth, but still an incompetence to give us the whole of it.

Lastly, we have Futurism, which in its extreme form gives us nothing as to the present at all. Even the seven churches are looked at prophetically as future, and sometimes even Jewish. What the Lord Himself calls "things that are," are put, in fact, among the "things that shall be." The place of the Jew in prophecy, instead of being forgotten, has become so large as to cover nearly all the field. Incompetency is written upon this view from first to last.

From what has been said, and from the character of prophecy as a whole, it will be seen that we cannot adhere simply to any one of these views. We must find in some way a means of uniting them together, while we shall naturally find the importance of realizing the difference between the primary and secondary applications. We have seen already how these secondary applications are, more or less, fragmentary, imperfect anticipations of that which will alone give us the complete, satisfactory, final fulfilment. It is this alone which will stand all tests, which maintains inspiration at its full level, which has nowhere any apologies to make for failure. Here all discords end in the complete harmony.

Let us look first a little more closely at the schools that have been enumerated. Each has its strong points, which we must recognize. Preterism has these as the others have, worse than unsatisfying as it is, as a whole. Thus, if we look at what may seem a crucial point, it is able to resolve the number of the beast (Rev. xiii. 18) in a way which, if it stood alone, could not but be apparently most convincing. Thus, Farrar, who stands most boldly for this view throughout, can appeal to the singular fact that he can not only explain by it the name itself, but even the number, which in some copies replaces the common 666—616. The number of the name is, as every one is supposed to know, simply the number of the letters which compose it; letters standing for numbers both in the Greek and Hebrew alphabets. The beast is allowed on all hands to be the Roman empire, as identified with one of the seven heads which it carries in Revelation. "Beyond all shadow of doubt or uncertainty," says Farrar, "the wild beast from the sea is meant as a symbol of the emperor Nero. Here, at any rate, St. John has neglected no single means by which he could make his meaning clear without deadly peril to himself and the Christian Church."

He gives no less than seventeen marks: First, "It rises from the sea, by which," he says, "is perhaps indicated not only a western power, and therefore to a Jew a power beyond the sea, but perhaps especially one connected with the sea-washed peninsula of Italy."

Secondly, "It is a beast like one of Daniel's four beasts, but more portentous and formidable. . . . The beast is a symbol interchangeably of the Roman empire and of the emperor. In fact, to a greater degree than at any period of history, the two were one. Roman history had dwindled down into a personal drama. The Roman emperor could say with literal truth, '*L'Etat, c'est moi*,' and a wild beast was a Jew's natural symbol either for a pagan kingdom or for its autocrat. When St. Paul was delivered from Nero, or his representative, he says quite naturally that he was 'delivered out of the mouth of the lion.' . . . Lactantius speaks of Nero as a *tam mala bestia*."

Third. "This wild beast of heathen power has ten horns, which represent the ten named provinces of imperial Rome."

Fourth. "Each one of its heads has the name of blasphemy. Every one of the seven kings, however counted, had borne the (to Jewish ears) blasphemous surname of Augustus, (Sebastos, 'one to be adored,') had received apotheosis, and been spoken of as *divus* after his death, had been honored with statues adorned with divine attributes, had been saluted with divine titles, and in some instances had been absolutely worshiped, and that in his lifetime, with temples and flamens, especially in the Asiatic provinces."

Fifth. "Diadems are on the horns because the Roman pro-consuls, as delegates of the emperor, enjoy no little share of the Cæsarean autocracy and splendor, but

Sixth. "The name of blasphemy (for such is the true reading) is only on the *heads*, because the emperor alone receives divine honor, and alone bears the daring title of Augustus."

Seven. "One of the heads is wounded to death, but the deadly wound is healed. If there could be any doubt that this indicates the violent end and universally expected return of Nero, or, (which is the same thing for prophetic purposes,) of one like him, that doubt seems to be removed by the parallel description of the seventeenth chapter, where we are told that of the seven kings of the mystic Babylon—"

Eighth. "The five are fallen, the one is, the other is not yet come, and the beast that thou sawest was and is not, and is about to come out of the abyss. 'The beast that was and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven.' Can language be more apparently perplexing? Yet its solution is obvious. No explanation worthy the name has ever been offered of this enigma except that which makes it turn on the widespread expectation that Nero was either not dead, or that, even if dead, he would in some strange way return. Only two or three of the slaves and people of humble rank had seen his corpse. All of these, except

one or two soldiers and the single freedman of Galba, had been his humble adherents. It seemed inconceivable that after a hundred years of imperialism the last of the divine race of Cæsars should thus disappear like the foam upon the water. The five kings are Augustus, Tiberius, Gaius (Caligula), Claudius, and Nero. Since the seer is writing in the reign of Galba, the fifth king, Nero, was and is not. Otho, the seventh king, was not yet come. When he came, which could not be long delayed, for Galba was an old man, he was to reign for a short time, and then was to come the eighth, which it was expected would be Nero again, one of the previous seven, and so both the fifth and the eighth."

Farrar shows us afterwards how Domitian would serve the purpose of this revived head—"the bald Nero," as men called him.

Ninth. "'All the earth wondered after the beast.' The Roman Plebs had become 'sottish, licentious gamblers;' and one who was more gigantically sottish than themselves had become their ideal. The best comment on this particular may be found in the description of Tacitus of the manner in which all Rome, from its proudest senators down to its humblest artisans, poured forth along the public ways to receive with acclamations the guilty wretch who was returning from the Campagna, with his hands red with his murdered mother's blood."

Tenth. "That the world worshiped the dragon who gave his power to the beast would be a natural Jewish way of indicating the belief that the pagan world, when it offered holocausts for its emperor, was adoring devils for deities."

Eleventh. "The cries of the world, 'Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?' sound like an echo of the shouts, 'Victories Olympic! victories Pythian! Nero the Hercules! Nero Apollo! Sacred One! the One of the Æon!'—that is, unparalleled in all the world!"

Twelfth. "The 'mouth speaking great things and blasphemies' is the mouth which was incessantly uttering the most monstrous boasts and pretensions, declaring that no one before himself had the least conception of what things an emperor might do, and of the lengths to which he could go: the mouth which ordered the erection of his own colossus 120 feet high, adorned with the insignia and attributes of the sun. As for his blasphemies, Suetonius tells us that he was an avowed and even contemptuous atheist."

Thirteenth. "'Power was given to him to act for forty-two months.' The simplest explanation is that it refers to the time which elapsed between the beginning of Nero's persecution in November, 64, and his death in June, 68, which is almost exactly three and a half years."

Fourteenth. "'It was given to him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them;' for it was he who began the terrible era of martyrdom and put a vast multitude to death with hideous tortures, on a false accusation."

Fifteenth. "'Power was given him over all kindreds and tongues and nations.' Of the representatives of the world-powers in that day, Greece received him with frantic adulation. Parthia was in friendly relations with him, and Armenia, in the person of Tiridates, laid its diadem before his feet. Even Herod the Great, though himself a powerful king, had been accustomed to talk of 'the almighty Romans.'"

Sixteenth. "'All the inhabitants of the earth,' except the followers of the Lamb, 'worshiped him.' This, as we have seen, was literally true of the emperors, both in their lifetime and after their death. At this dreadful period the cult of the emperor was almost the only sincere worship which still existed."

The seventeenth mark is the number of the name. In the language of the New Testament, however, *Neron Kaisar* could not possibly make this number; but "the apostle was writing as a Hebrew, was evidently thinking as a Hebrew." To give it in Hebrew "would render the cryptograph additionally secure against the prying inquisition of treacherous pagan informers. It would have been to the last degree perilous to make the secret too clear. Accordingly, the Jewish Christian would have tried the name as he thought of the name, that is, in Hebrew letters, and the moment that he did this the secret is revealed. No Jew ever thought of Nero except as *Neron Kesar*, and this gives at once 666." "If any confirmation could possibly be wanting to this conclusion, we find it in the curious fact recorded by Irenæus that in some copies he found the reading 616. Now this change can hardly have been due to carelessness. . . . But if the above solution be correct, this simple variation is at once explained and accounted for. A Jewish Christian trying his Hebrew solution, which would, as he knew, defend the interpretation from dangerous Gentiles, may have been puzzled by the *n* in Neron Kesar. Although the name was written in Hebrew, he knew that to Roman Gentiles generally the name was always Nero Cæsar, not Neron; but Nero Kesar in Hebrew, omitting the final *n*, gave 616, not 666; and he may have altered the reading because he imagined that in an unimportant particular it made the solution more suitable and easy."

All this has been quoted so much in full because it makes plain the strength, such as there is, in the arguments of the Preterist, and shows, indeed, in a most striking way the danger which the apostle Peter points out, of making the "prophecy of Scripture" of "private interpretation," or, as the word means, "*its own* interpretation:" something capable of standing alone, of being interpreted by itself, apart from its general connection with prophecy elsewhere. Of course, as soon as Dr. Farrar gets away from his principal argument, and aims to take up the other prophecies even of Revelation in connection with it, his success is by no means so assured, and he feels it. The second beast, for instance, in the same chapter, the wild beast from the land, the false prophet who

works signs before the first beast,—with regard to it, we are assured that "all commentators alike, preterist, futurist, continuous-historical, allegorical, with all their subdivisions, have here been reduced to manifest perplexity, and have been forced to content themselves with explanations which do violence to one or more of the indications by which we must be guided." Of course we must not expect, therefore, that his own solution of these problems is to be much more satisfactory than those of others. At the same time he attempts the solution, and in various ways, which clearly reveal his actual perplexity.

In the first place, you may take as a conjecture that "by this wild beast and false prophet is meant the Roman Augurial System." He admits, however, a great difficulty. "It has been generally felt that the institution of prophets was not so prominent, even in Nero's reign, as to admit of our applying it to the ten definite indications of the apocalyptic seer. False prophets were hardly in any sense a delegate and *alter-ego* of the emperor." He finds, on the whole, more in favor of the view that this second beast is Simon Magus! He had been baptized, and that, of course, made him more like a lamb. Then there are legions of wonderful miracles on his part, one of which was his appearing clothed in flame. Moreover, he is expressly said to have made statues move, so that he may well have pretended to make them speak. If he attempted this at all, he is more likely to have applied it to the statue of the emperor, the image of the beast, than to any other. All that would have been needed was a little machinery and a little ventriloquism. It is puzzling, however, that "the pagan historians are silent about him and his doings; but the events themselves had no political significance, and lay outside their sphere"! That is to say, "exercising all the power of the first beast in his presence" has no political significance! However, there is a third conjecture, more probable than either of the former. Hildebrand's suggestion is that by the false prophet, or the second beast from the land, is meant *Vespasian.* If the words be rendered "from the land," they then apply to Judæa, and Vespasian as emperor went forth from Judæa. Of course that was after Nero, the first beast, was dead; but then, that makes no difference to Dr. Farrar. Then he had two horns, like a lamb, and Vespasian was of a remarkably mild character. His two horns are his two sons, who were both men of mark, and supported him—Titus, the conqueror of Judæa, and Domitian, who headed his party in Rome. How these two horns made him more like a lamb is a question for Dr. Farrar. He spake, though, as a dragon, or serpent; that is, being a pagan, he used the language of paganism, and had a serpentine wisdom about him besides. Then he was a visible delegate of Nero in Palestine, and he made the earth worship the first beast, because to enforce subjection to Nero was the express object of Vespasian's mission against the Jews. It might seem an impossibility to suppose that he pretended to work signs, but in fact his

visit to Alexandria was accompanied by signs and wonders which obtained wide credence. He had anointed with spittle the eyes of a blind man and restored his sight, and before a full assembly he had healed a cripple. He had shown a remarkable example of second sight. Then, "as a *fulmen belli*, and as the supposed recipient of a favorable oracle from Elijah, Vespasian, in his brilliant success at the beginning of the Jewish war, might well be said, in the style of writing which constantly intermingles the symbolic and the literal, to have flashed fire from heaven upon the enemies of the beast."

His giving breath to the image of the beast may have been founded upon a rumor of something of the kind having taken place in Judæa; if not, the reanimation of the Roman power in Palestine is quite sufficient to meet the language of the seer. It is hardly worth while, one would say, to go through any more of this. Dr. Farrar's one doubt with regard to this application is whether St. John may not have meant to combine in his picture "the features observable in the position and conduct of Simon Magus, the false prophet who supported Nero at Rome, and of Josephus, the false prophet who embraced the cause of Vespasian in Palestine, with that of Vespasian himself as a two-horned wild beast maintaining the power of Rome in the Holy Land. The composite character of such a symbol presents no difficulty."

Naturally, when we come to the connection of the beast and false prophet in the awful battlefield of the nineteenth chapter, and their being cast alive together into the lake of fire at the appearing of the Lord from heaven, there can be no more even an attempt to show us how this could all be fulfilled in connection with these two emperors of far-back history. It is the private, or isolated, interpretation really of a small part of the prophecy which creates even the possibility of such suggestions as Dr. Farrar has given us. We shall have little or nothing to do with Preterism when we take up the interpretation of the book before us. It is, as a whole, simply a substitution of things which were a partial anticipation of the future for that future itself. Such anticipations we find oftentimes in prophecy, some figure near at hand which becomes a type of what is beyond and greater than itself; as that of Antiochus Epiphanes, for instance, in the Book of Daniel. To make these the whole fulfilment, it is necessary to destroy, as Dr. Farrar clearly aims to do, all faith in any exactness of prophecy whatever. It is for such writers rather a human presage of events sufficiently near for human ken, which, after all, may be largely also a mistake—the substitution of this for divine revelation; the human element, so called, in inspiration almost completely banishing the thought of the divine.

PRESENTISM.

In turning now to look at the historical interpretation, we find at once a manifest difference, and much that commends itself to the Chris-

tian heart. The Church, for instance, finds such a place in it as we might expect. It has, indeed, too large a place: and the connection with Jewish prophecy here almost disappears. Thus we have, in another direction, again a violation of the apostle's rule that no prophecy of Scripture is of isolated interpretation. Here Rome appears naturally in its professedly Christian character, not only in Babylon the Great, but also in the seven-headed and ten-horned beast, which is the papacy; a fulfilment for which the name *Lateinos* proffers once more its significant 666, the number of the name. It can appeal also to history for the witness of the 1260 years of its duration, though somewhat variously reckoned, now expiring. We need not enter upon it largely now, as we shall have to consider it more fully after taking up the book in detail; but as exact and full truth, everything depends for it upon that year-day system which furnishes us with these 1260 years themselves. They are the "time, times and a half," or "42 months," or "1260 days," which are found thus variously given in Revelation, and which are admittedly derived from the Book of Daniel. The fourth beast of Daniel's seventh chapter wears out "the saints of the Most High, and thinks to change times and laws, and they are given into his hand until a time and times and half a time." Judgment at the hands of the Son of Man, who comes in the clouds of heaven to execute it, and Himself to take the kingdom, ends the history of the beast both in Daniel and in Revelation. Thus it is certain that we have the same power, in fact, before us in each case. The "times" enumerated here are the same "times" in every instance of their enumeration. It is therefore most important to see how they are to be taken. If the 1260 days indeed stand for the corresponding number of years, then the application to the papacy must be taken as undoubted. No other figure that history can furnish can be substituted for this. If, on the other hand, they are simply 1260 days, (three years and a half, literally,) then, of course, they cannot measure the duration of the papacy at all. They *must* have reference to something else; and taken into connection with their close at the coming of the Lord, we may say with certainty that their fulfilment is still future. Futurism to this extent will have its undeniable justification. Is there, then, any positive way of settling this? If we will take again the apostle's rule, and seek to bring together the various passages in which these 1260 days are set before us, we shall surely be able to settle without a doubt what is alone their complete and adequate fulfilment. Now if we turn to the Book of Daniel, we find in the twelfth chapter the "time, times and a half" to be clearly reckoned from the continual offering being taken away and the abomination that maketh desolate set up. To this time there are added, in the eleventh verse, thirty more days, making 1290; and in the twelfth, forty-five days more, making 1335; but this in no wise affects the first period.

Turning back to the eleventh chapter, we find in the thirty-first verse

the profanation of the sanctuary (plainly the Jewish one), the taking away of the continual burnt offering, and the setting up of the abomination that maketh desolate. The 1260 days that follow this must of necessity cover, therefore, the details in the rest of the chapter. It is thought by many that the setting up of this abomination was by Antiochus Epiphanes in times long past. The apocryphal Book of Maccabees clearly asserts this, but we are in no wise, of course, bound to accept this interpretation. Clearly, in the eleventh chapter of Daniel, there is no other taking away of the offering, no other abomination set up than that which so many assign to Antiochus, who is, however, by some of the most careful interpreters considered only to be the foreshadow of the great enemy at the end. We cannot, and need not, enter upon this subject here. It is sufficient for us just now that the 1260 days date from the taking away of the daily Jewish offering and the setting up in its place of the abomination that maketh desolate. If we connect this with what we have had already from the seventh chapter, there is no difficulty whatever. The seventh chapter does not speak directly of any such supplanting of Jewish worship by idolatry as the eleventh chapter speaks of, but the thinking to change times and law, or "the law," as it should rather be, and these being given into the hands of the destroyer, who for the same time wears out the saints of the Most High, shows us a condition of things which is entirely in keeping with what is given us in the eleventh chapter. The two accounts are in most perfect harmony, and speak manifestly of the same thing.

Now if we turn to the ninth chapter, we have in it the great calendar of prophecy, Jewish prophecy, which will enable us to put things more distinctly in their place. Here we have the well known seventy weeks which are distinctly determined or decreed upon the people of Daniel and the Holy City, "to finish transgression and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy." Thus the Jews are manifestly before us in all this. It is with their history, and no other, that we are concerned. Moreover, the end of the period is therefore "to finish transgression and to make" (for them) "an end of sins, . . . and to bring in everlasting righteousness." It is, moreover, "to seal up vision and prophecy," that is, to give them their complete accomplishment, and, as that which certifies the full incoming of Israel's blessedness, to "anoint" that "most holy" place, which "the abomination that maketh desolate" has defiled. Here, then, is a complete, final date for all prophecy that has to do with Israel's restoration, or their preparation for it. At the end of this time Israel is restored. What, then, is the beginning of this seventy weeks? There is no necessity to think of actual chronology. That is not in our quest now. The date is given to the prophet himself as "from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem."

Whether that was the commandment given by Cyrus, or whether it was an after commandment given by his successor Artaxerxes, has nothing to do with the question before us. The seventy weeks measure, in some way or another, the time from the incomplete restoration from the Babylonish captivity to the time of the complete one, when Israel will be, as already said, restored to the full favor of the Lord.

But we have further specification. From the commencement of this period to the Messiah, the Prince, there are seven weeks and threescore and two weeks—that is, sixty-nine weeks, of course, altogether. Then, "after *the* threescore and two weeks," as it should read, (that is, after the whole sixty-nine,) Messiah shall be cut off, and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Yet at most only a week remains of this positively decreed and determined period, at the end of which Israel's full blessing is to come. The weeks, it is not doubted by any, are weeks of years. There need be no discussion about that. When Messiah, the Prince, has come, sixty-nine of these weeks, or 483 years, are past therefore, and only seven years remain. Here is a difficulty which so many have stumbled over. How, then, could it be possible that seven years at the utmost after the cross of Christ there could be the fulfilment of all prophesied blessing for Israel and their reinstatement as the people of God fully in His favor? The difficulty has led many to suppose that since the whole period must in this way have been long ago accomplished, that which was to close it must have been the Cross itself; and that we must either leave out the distinct reference to Israel's blessing, or we must interpret it (in a way unhappily so common) by putting Christians in the place of Israel, and making it an obscure prediction of the coming in of the blessings which we enjoy. Even so, this interpretation will not stand. It is plain that in this part of the prophecy the last week is, in fact, never mentioned. The sixty-nine weeks are ended, after which Messiah is cut off. There is no seventieth week at all that is spoken of here. There is no intimation even, in the prophecy, of the blessings that are to ensue, but the very opposite. Messiah is cut off "and has nothing," as we may read it in the margin of our common Bibles, instead of "not for Himself," as it is in the text. The Revised has it in the text "shall have nothing," which is surely the sense. Literally, it is "there is nothing for Him." Everything has, as it were, come to an end, in the mean time, by His death. In connection with Jewish history, and from the Jewish standpoint, that is as clear as daylight. It is perfectly clear that by the hands of those professedly His people Christ was cut off, and that as a consequence, instead of blessing nationally coming in for them, disaster and ruin followed, and must needs have followed. That is just what we have here—disaster, and nothing but disaster; the issue of which is that the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy

the city and the sanctuary—a thing long accomplished, as we know, and which no one doubts to refer to the overthrow of the city by Titus.

But thus in some way we are of necessity outside the limit of the seventy weeks already, if they are to be read in continuous connection with the sixty-nine; and the prophecy still goes on: and "even to the end shall be war," as the Revised Version reads, "desolations are determined." There is a long, indefinite time of sorrow, and nothing but sorrow, to the Jew; even to what is said to be "the end." Thus, if the "end" is the end of the seventy weeks, (however we are to calculate this,) it brings us right to the very time of their blessing, and yet marks it as a time of continuous trouble and desolation.

Supposing, on the other hand, that we are entitled to take this "end" as the end somehow of the determined period of seventy weeks, we can read it in the light of other prophecy without the least perplexity. At the end of *this* time the blessing *must* come; but *how*, then, does the blessing come? From the seventh chapter, it is perfectly plain, it is *by the coming of the Son of Man from heaven.* Who cannot see that that is the complete putting away of all difficulty? If He comes to receive the kingdom, that reception of the kingdom on His part means, according to the concurrent testimony of the prophets, the blessing of Israel. His coming marks the end of the desolations, and the new consecration of His earthly people to Himself. But still, how then are we to reckon these seventy weeks? We must go on to the end of the chapter before we can answer that. It follows now: "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week." In the margin this is rightly altered to "a covenant." There is no article. The Revised Version puts it: "He shall make a firm covenant with many for one week." The question is, with whom is this covenant made, and who is the maker of it? If it were "*the* covenant," then it might be naturally thought that it is the *divine* covenant with Israel, "the holy covenant," as it is called in the eleventh chapter; and the maker of this can be no other than Messiah Himself; but how, then, for one week? Think of Messiah making a covenant with His people for one week! Surely that is a new perplexity. It is, however, referred by many to the Lord's establishing the covenant, not, of course, with Israel, but the new covenant by His blood. Then, the blood of the new covenant was surely shed, so that there seems at first some authorization of such an interpretation. But how are we to say "for one week"? The new covenant, when made with any, is an eternal one. It cannot mean that the new covenant *lasts* a week; and if we say that the language refers rather to some special *publication* of the new covenant in the seven years following the Cross, (or less than seven if we have a mind to make it so,) then this neither really fulfils the word of the prophecy, nor can there be shown any distinct fulfilment of it in history either. What was there at the end of seven years, or half of seven years, after the Lord's death, which brought

to an end this making (or publishing) of a covenant? It is plain that nothing whatever can be pointed out to fulfil what is certainly a main point in what we have here. For this one week cannot be doubted really, on any interpretation, to be the *last* week of the seventy, and that last week is a most important one. The end of it is not the end of the publication of a covenant, but it is in some way or other the fulness of blessing being brought in. How, then, can it be shown that there has been any fulfilment of the prophecy in this way, in any proper sense at all? If it were applied to the Gentiles and the preaching of the gospel amongst them, no date of this kind as to it can be established; but there are other details here which decisively confirm the impossibility of such an application.

The last week, the end of which is to bring in the blessing, is clearly divided into two parts. "He shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even to the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." Now here we have, as is evident, sacrifice and oblation ceasing,—the Jewish sacrifices, as all must allow. Thus we have what the eleventh chapter gives again, the profanation of the sanctuary and the taking away the daily offering. In place of it, "the abomination that maketh desolate" is set up; and here we find, accordingly, that "for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate," this lasting until the consummation. That is surely until the end of the week "and that determined is poured upon the desolate." The words here clearly refer to the end of the seventy weeks, which have been said to be determined upon Daniel's people and his holy city. Now if it be said, as it has been said, that it is the Cross that makes the sacrifice and oblation to cease (as in some sense, confessedly, it has; it has taken the meaning out of them, substituting substance for the shadow, and thus bringing completely to an end the Jewish system), yet is there a possibility of saying that three years and a half after that, at the end of the last half week, the blessing comes? *To Israel* certainly it did not then come; and the abomination of desolation contemplates Israel surely, and can by no fair interpretation be made to apply in any connection with Christianity. The half week must be three years and a half, as the first half week was. You cannot make the one 1260 *days*, and the other 1260 *years*. That is absolutely impossible. What event, then, one may ask again, was there that happened just three years and a half after the cross of Christ which, to any plain understanding, can be supposed to close these seventy weeks of years and bring in the blessing for which all these seventy weeks were only preparing the way? The Cross it cannot be, for the Cross takes place three years and a half before the end. The whole attempt to make these things apply to the past is, in fact, a mere perversion of Scripture. One can say nothing else.

To the Jews this last half-week can in this way have no real application. What abomination among them was it for which the desolation followed for this short period? To speak of the destruction of the city by the Romans here is absolutely impossible; and that we have had already, in a gap of time which evidently comes into the midst of the seventy weeks themselves, and which deserves the most earnest attention if we would understand this whole matter.

Let us notice that in Jewish prophecy the whole Christian times are, in fact, a gap. As the Lord says of the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven, in the thirteenth of Matthew, they are things that were "hidden" till that time, "from the foundation of the world." The Jewish prophecies, therefore, do not speak of these mysteries. They must in some way leave room for them, but speak of them directly they cannot. Now, apply this principle to what we have in the prophecy before us. Messiah is cut off after sixty-nine weeks of the seventy have elapsed, and then "the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." There, it is plain, we have the destruction by the Romans, but that was in the year 70 of the Christian era. It carries us, therefore, completely beyond the seventy weeks themselves if taken continuously; but there is nothing about the last week or either of its halves here, and the prophecy goes on with a prospect of desolations beyond, "even to the end." What end? Now, let us notice the expression here: "The people of the prince that shall come." It does not say, the "*prince* that shall come shall destroy the city," (that might be intelligibly said of Titus,) but it is "the *people* of the prince" that do so; and "the prince that shall come" hardly seems to speak of one that shall come against the city. The *people* destroy the city, not the *prince;* but why, then, "the people of the prince"? The people were the Roman people, that is plain. The prince, therefore, must be a Roman prince; but according to the seventh chapter of Daniel the Roman Empire goes down to the end, to the coming of the Son of Man Himself; and in connection with the last days of this it is that we find, certainly, a prince whose career is very specially and significantly brought before us, terminating in judgment when the Son of Man appears. Thus, in this case, he is a *Roman* "prince that shall come," is he not? And in connection with him it is that we have that specification of time upon which we have been dwelling so much, a "time, times and a half," during which the times and the law are given into his hands, and which ends with his destruction. How perfectly it all fits with what we have here: "The people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." "To the end of the war desolations are determined." And then it is said, "He shall confirm a covenant with many for one week." The person antecedent to this "he" is clearly not Messiah the Prince, but "the prince that shall come" himself. Isolate the prophecy, make it of private interpretation, and you may make of it

almost anything that you will; but if you take it all together here, what other interpretation can we give than that we have here spoken of, of one who is to profane the sanctuary, take away the daily offering, and set up the abomination that maketh desolate? In this case, the causing sacrifice and oblation to cease does *not* refer to the Cross, but to a totally different event in the last days. If we read here, with Keil, not "the end thereof shall be with a flood," but "his end," the end of this prince, "shall be in *the* flood," then it is the history of the coming prince that is before us all through. It is he, then, that confirms a covenant with the many for one week. The specification of time is as simple here, as in connection with the Cross it is well nigh impossible to understand; but it is the same person who causes the sacrifice and oblation to cease, who sets up the abomination on account of which desolation comes. The desolation lasts for just three years and a half, is terminated by the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven, and Israel's blessing follows immediately upon this. Every detail comes into honest daylight and plain view.

If we connect once more, now, with the book of Revelation itself, we find not only the reckoning of these times, but we find the connected events exactly in accordance with what is in Daniel. In the eleventh chapter the holy city is trodden under foot of the Gentiles forty and two months—the *half-week*. There are two witnesses that prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth—*the half-week again*. When they have finished their testimony, the beast that cometh up out of the abyss makes war with them, and overcomes them, and kills them. The beast is confessedly the last beast of Daniel's four. It is the *Roman* beast.

In the twelfth chapter we have a woman who gives birth to a man-child who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron. Any one would say that that must be Christ. There is no one person to whom is given a rule of this kind but Christ, though His saints may share it with Him. The child is caught up to God and to His throne. The woman, if the application is to Christ, can be only the Jewish nation. Nothing else is possible. Christ was not the offspring of the Church, not even of the Jewish Church, as is plain. As the apostle tells us in the ninth of Romans, and as is perfectly clear—of Israel Christ according to the flesh came. But if the woman is the Jewish nation, we are told that she flees into the wilderness from the face of the dragon to a place prepared of God, that she may be nourished there a thousand two hundred and threescore days—a *half-week*. It may be said that there is an immense gap of time between Christ's being caught up to heaven and Israel persecuted in the wilderness in the days just preceding the coming of the Lord. The answer should be plain—it is just such a gap as we have in the ninth of Daniel itself; when Messiah being cut off and having nothing, none of the promises in connection with Israel being fulfilled to Him

then, "the people of the prince that shall come" destroy the city and the sanctuary. It is the same gap of time in each place, and the last week, or half-week, of the seventy appears here suddenly at the end of that gap in exactly the same place in the two prophesies.

The dragon comes down from heaven to the earth, persecutes the woman, but cannot prevail against her; and the next thing we hear is of a beast coming up out of the sea, plainly the beast already spoken of and the last beast of Daniel, marked with its ten horns and its blasphemy, and this is the beast which is described further in the seventeenth chapter in connection with the woman there, and which in the nineteenth receives judgment along with the false prophet at the appearing of the Lord. How well the apostle has bidden us, "first of all," to understand this, "that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any isolated interpretation, because holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit!"

This week, then, in both its halves, as one would say (certainly in its last half), refers to a time still future, and it is the half-week of years specially referring to Israel and to the desolation to come upon her just before that coming. But now notice this, that if this time so carefully specified, this "time, times and a half," or "forty-two months," or "1260 days," as it is variously given, is connected with the seventy weeks at all, the doom of the year-day theory in any exact application to Daniel or to Revelation *is settled once for all.* Make these 1260 days 1260 years, and remember that this is only the *last half of the week* of Daniel's seventy, then you have to reckon the whole seventy after the same manner, and they amount in all to 176,400 years. Who will claim for the seventy weeks such a fulfilment? The only possible hope is, of course, in the ability to detach the one from the other; but they are welded together, one may say, by prophetic links which it will be found impossible to snap, and which will convict any one who does so of merely wresting the Scriptures.

But that does not mean, as it might easily be taken to mean, that there is no truth in the year-day theory at all. There may be truth, but it is not the exact and literal truth. As we have seen, there may be another application of these prophecies, and an application to Christian times, which is simply an anticipation of the exact fulfilment which is to come. There may be an analogical reckoning depending upon the analogy between the histories of Israel and the Church. Such an analogy there is, and Babylonish captivity and all will come in it. Nevertheless, the two are separate and distinct. To confound them together is to make it impossible to understand either clearly. To substitute one for the other is to make it impossible to apprehend prophecy aright.

In the historical interpretation of Revelation, Israel finds almost no place whatever. All the connection with Old Testament prophets is almost completely broken off. The whole book itself is made "of pri-

vate interpretation." The historical interpretation has a certain place and claims examination, but it is but a partial truth at best, which we must in no wise allow to take the place of that which is the full and exact one.

FUTURISM.

There remains, then, only what is called "Futurism," as it would seem, to be considered. But can this fill the whole field of Revelation? As has been said, it is now sought even to make the seven churches represent seven Jewish assemblies in the last day; so that the whole Book, as it were, leaps at once into the future. The system developed in this way gives no hostages at all to the present. It may seem to be safe from refutation; for you cannot test a prophecy of the future by a fulfilment of what itself must be future. This system ignores the division which the book itself makes: "things that are," to be distinguished from "things that shall be after these." In some sense, surely, the "things that are" must give us something for the present, and this, any proper examination of them ought to place beyond doubt. It is only in this way that we can understand aright the earnest exhortation to every one that hath an ear to hear, to "hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches," and it is only in this way that we can understand the blessedness of those "who hear the words of the prophecy and keep the things which are written therein, because the time is at hand." In fact, this extreme futurist view has hardly any proper claim to be discussed. The examination which we have presently to make will assuredly show us that the present and the future both find ample place in the book of Revelation; that as to what is future itself, the present has most important relation to it, (in some sense governs it,) and here there is no anticipated leap into the future; there is no refusal by the interpretation of all reasonable tests, by history as well as in other ways. We shall find in it that the divine view is necessarily the largest possible view also; that Revelation connects itself with all the prophecies that have gone before, receiving at once help from them and throwing, also, the fullest light upon them; but this view can, therefore, not be given aright except upon a fuller induction of all the particulars.

CONNECTION WITH PROPHECY ELSEWHERE.

The great principle of the interpretation of the book, as has been said again and again, is just that which was announced by the apostle himself of the true interpretation of any prophecy. That which is new in it always reveals connection with what has gone before,—the prophecy of the New Testament with that of the Old, which, if it cannot anticipate it, yet leaves, as we have already seen, a manifest gap for it. The only preparation, therefore, for the examination of the book of Revelation is by seeking to have before us the general scope of the

prophecies elsewhere, with which what is added to them here must, of course, be in complete accordance. Let us now, then, briefly see what Scripture in this way presents to us, and we shall find Scripture confirming Scripture in such a way as to make it possible not only to read actual fulfilments of it which have taken place, but also to read in large measure what is future also. It is plain, on the one hand, we are not to expect that our view of this can ever be as absolutely complete as we might naturally desire. God does not intend that we should be able to make an exact history of the future, putting every detail of what He has given us in its place, so as to leave nothing further for the future itself to discover to us. It should be perfectly plain that this would not be according to His mind. But, on the other hand, this will not hinder us from a perfect knowledge, as we may say, of the great outlines, and such an apprehension of details themselves as will help us to apply the future to the present, which is a most important use of prophecy, too much overlooked. The future before the world is largely, alas, made up of judgment, although it is true that the judgment is for a blessing which lies beyond it, and which is as bright as God can make it. Yet the judgment is emphatically a judgment of the world as it is, a judgment in which the whole present fashion of it passes away; and how important that we should know *why* it should pass away, and now to apprehend the mind of God with regard to that which He is going to judge! In this way prophecy is of the most practical nature, and a grand help to real holiness; that is, to a separation from evil which necessarily is found in fellowship with Him. If there are things with which finally it will be seen that He cannot go on, then how clearly this must enter into our present estimate of them! And this will make clear much of the detail with regard to that which is plainly the theme of a large part of the book. If we are to get out of this mere historical details, as such, these may have little significance for us; but if we are to find in all, God's moral ways as the end will perfectly bring them out, then how great may be the importance of any detail whatever!

Let us, then, look back now, and seek to get a general outline of prophecy apart from the book of Revelation itself, so that as we enter upon it we may enter with this already as ascertained knowledge.

We have already considered the prophecy of the seventy weeks, and it will be hardly necessary to go into this again. It shows us, in the plainest way, how God is keeping Israel before Him, can never forget her, and that the time of final blessing is one in which that interest in His earthly people will be most manifestly shown. But the prophecy shows us also that in these determined times which have to do with Israel there is a gap of unreckoned time, which, while it does not bring Christianity into view, makes room for it. When Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman power, Christianity, as we know, had already started upon its career of blessing. Israel's times are uncounted then. Thus

it is that the final week is cut off from the rest of the seventy, and comes in the place it does in connection with events which are still future. This is in accordance with what the Lord said to His disciples after He was risen from the dead, when they asked Him, full of their hopes of blessing for their nation, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" He answers, "It is not for you to know the times and seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power." But "times and seasons" there are in connection with Israel. Why should we not know them, then? Just because they are not being at present reckoned, and you can begin no reckoning of them until the time comes in which they shall once more be taken up. This last week of Daniel is in fact what the Lord calls, alike in the prophecy of the thirteenth of Matthew and in that of the twenty-fourth, "the end of the age." As we have already seen, it is the Jewish age of which He is speaking. It is the broken-off end of the seventy weeks, as the events connected with it show as plainly as possible.

The Lord had announced to His disciples the impending overthrow of the temple. They thereupon put two questions to Him, which in their minds were no doubt more closely connected than they might be in ours. "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the age?" As to the first question, which had reference to the destruction of the temple, we have nothing to do with it just now. The answer to it is found more fully given in the twenty-first chapter of Luke, in which the destruction of Jerusalem, which took place more than thirty-five years afterwards, is explicitly announced. In Matthew the Lord deals rather with the second question, where the disciples seem evidently to identify the coming of the Lord with "the end of the age," or "world," in our common version. Now, remembering Daniel, and that these were Jewish questioners, with at present no hopes beyond Jewish ones, yet owning Jesus as their Messiah, with no thought of the long interval which was to elapse before His still future coming, it is plain that the "age" of which they were speaking was that in which they were, the age of the law—of Judaism as it then was. Of any *Christian* dispensation they could have had no possible thought. The coming of which they spoke was doubtless that coming of the Son of Man of which Daniel had spoken. "The end of the age" for them was that preceding the age of Messiah, which in the Jews' mind was that which we now call millennial. From our own point of view, we naturally think of it as Christian; but the Lord was answering their thoughts, in which as yet Christianity, in the way we now speak of it, could not have been. For us, Judaism is gone forever; and it seems a strange thing to speak of any end before us of that bygone age; which, of course, must imply its revival in the meantime. Yet we have seen that Daniel shows us a week of special divine dealing with Judah and Jerusalem, cut off from the sixty-nine weeks

preceding by an unknown interval, in which Christianity has prevailed, as we know. But in the last week, as we find it in Daniel, the temple-services are again going on until their interruption by the head of the Gentile power. It is to this interruption the Lord refers, directly citing Daniel for it. "When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand), then let them which be in Judæa flee to the mountains; let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house; neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes." In Luke we have the taking of Jerusalem by the Romans, and instead of any such scene as is here given, Jerusalem is compassed with armies. In this case the directions as to instant flight are omitted: they would be plainly out of place. No such rapid and immediate flight as is here spoken of was needed to escape the desolating hosts. It is merely said, therefore, "Let them which are in Judæa flee to the mountains, and let them which are in the midst of it depart out, and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto." But here it is not an enemy outside, but one in the midst, idolatry in some form set up in the very temple itself. The saints are the objects of special enmity, and they must escape without delay. "And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days; but pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day." This is in full accordance with the inference that Jews, under the full rigor of Jewish law, are contemplated.

Now comes another reference to Daniel. In his last prophecy we find that "at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince that standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book" (Dan. xii. 1). In this case it is plain that it is the great day of Jewish deliverance which is contemplated, and the people are delivered out of a time of unequaled trouble. The Lord's words can apply to no other than this: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be; and except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." The precise time of the tribulation is given by the Old Testament prophet, three years and a half, and we see by the Lord's words how impossible it is again to apply here a year-day theory, which would extend it to 1260 years. Certainly that would not be shortening the days; and a tribulation of such a character as is here spoken of could not surely be extended throughout such a period.

The Lord follows with the announcement of false Christs and false prophets, an addition to the Old Testament of the greatest significance, and which we shall find developed in prophecies that are to come before

us: "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe him not. For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert! go not forth. Behold, He is in the secret chambers! believe it not. For, as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be; for wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together." As in Daniel also, it is by this coming that the time of trouble is closed. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken; and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth (or land) mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

For our present purpose it will not be necessary to go further. The agreement with former prophecies is clear and conclusive. A latter-day remnant is seen here in Jerusalem, distinctly Jewish in character, yet who listen to Christ's words, and are owned of God; and "the end of the age," of which the disciples inquire, is identified with the broken-off last week of Daniel's seventy. The temple is once more owned as the holy place, although it is in the meanwhile defiled with idolatry; and this before the coming of the Lord in the clouds of heaven. We ask ourselves necessarily, where, then, at such a time is Christianity? And what does the presence of a Jewish "age" just before the Lord's appearing imply as to the present Christian dispensation? To this, Scripture gives no uncertain answer. It shows us that what we call the Christian dispensation is over then; that the Church, Christ's body, is complete; and that all true Christians have been caught up to Christ and are then with Him; that the rest of the professing Church has been spued out of His mouth according to His threatening to Laodicea: that the Lord is now taking up again for blessing Israel and the earth; and we are again in the line of Old Testament prophecy, and going on to the fulfilment of Old Testament promises.

That these promises belong really to Israel, Paul's kindred according to the flesh, we have his unexceptionable witness, who was himself the apostle to the Gentiles (Rom. ix. 4). But he warns earnestly the Gentile professing body that they stand only by faith; and if they abide not in the goodness of God which He has shown them, they will be cut off; while Israel abiding not in unbelief shall be graffed back again into her own olive tree. He tells us, also, that this receiving of them back shall be life from the dead to the nations of the world; that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles is come in, and that then all Israel—that is, the nation as a whole—shall

be saved. But he adds that while, as regards the gospel now going out, they are enemies—that is, treated by God as enemies—for our sakes, as touching the election, they are still beloved for the fathers' sakes; because the gifts and calling of God are without repentance (Rom. xi. 13–39). In this way the wonderful change which Matt. xxiv. exhibits is fully accounted for. The Jews and Judaism (not taking into account now the change which this will necessarily undergo) being once more owned, shows that the Christian gospel having now completed its full gathering of Gentiles, as designed by God, is going out no longer. Heaven in this sense is full, though we must make a certain exception which we shall by and by consider; but it is the gathering for earth and blessing upon the earth that are now commencing.

The Lord has spoken of false Christs and false prophets in connection with that time. Let us turn now to the apostle John's description of Antichrist, and see how this connects with such a statement. He warns us that already in his time there were many antichrists; already there was the character of the last time. He speaks of them as apostates issuing from the professing Church itself, but never really Christians, though among them (1 John ii. 18, 19); but he goes on to describe one special form, "*the* liar," "*the* antichrist," as his words really are. "Who is the liar," he asks, "but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?" And then he adds: "He is the antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son" (verse 22). Here then are two forms of unbelief, which in this wicked one unite in one. The first is the symbol of the Jewish form, that denies that Jesus is the Christ. It is not denied that a Christ there was to be, but it is denied that Jesus is this. The full Christian belief is, not only that Jesus is the Christ, but that He is also the Son of the Father; and "Whosoever denieth the Son hath not the Father." Such a virtual denial, many, as we know, even of those called Christians, make now. These deny the Son, to make much of the Father; but that of which John speaks is a step beyond this; the full climax of unbelief in the great head of it is that he denieth both the Father and the Son. Thus it will be seen that *the* antichrist of whom the apostle is speaking denies Christianity altogether; but he owns Judaism; for the very denial that *Jesus* is the Christ implies, however, that some Christ there is; and this is what antichrist, when seen in full character, means —one who is not only against Christ, but who takes His place; and so the Lord speaks of false Christs. These, then, by profession would be Jews; and the last antichrist is here a Jew. How naturally he belongs, therefore, to a time when Christianity is gone from the earth, the revived Judaism in its old seat, and the nation are in expectation, as almost necessarily they would be, of the speedy fulfilment now of the promise of Messiah. When the Lord came in the flesh there was just such an expectation, and just such fruit of it in the appearance of false Christs; and the words in Matthew show that such a time there will be again,

only now with a peculiar power of deception which only the elect escape. Among these blasphemous pretenders is the full, prophetic antichrist.

This connects naturally with that other picture which we have seen the apostle put before the Thessalonians (2 Thess. ii. 1–12); and here we find what unites John and Matthew, connecting the developed evil of apostate Christendom with the revival of Judaism, which the Lord's own words foreshadow. Here we find a direct warning of an apostasy to come, issuing in the revelation of one who is spoken of as the "man of sin, the son of perdition,"—the title given elsewhere to Judas,—but one who, as it were, not only denies and betrays Christ, but who opposes and exalts himself against all that is called God or that is worshiped. He sits in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God. The end of this wicked one is that the Lord Jesus shall slay him with the breath of His mouth and bring him to naught by the manifestation of His coming. It is plain that we are in the same times as those spoken of in Daniel and in Matthew; and when we find one sitting in the temple of God who takes such a place, how can we forbear to think of that abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, which the Lord has called our attention to through Daniel? Naturally, as Christians, we think of the temple of God as the Christian Church; and the common interpretation of the man of sin is that he is the Pope. We are not obliged altogether to deny this; for we have seen already that prophecy has oftentimes such incomplete, anticipative fulfilments, which are only pledges and foreshadows of the full and exhaustive one which is to come; but popery has existed for too many centuries to allow it to be such a sign as the apostle is speaking of, of the "Day of the Lord," either come or at hand, while the prophecies which in every other way correspond with the present one so simply explain this, that the application should not be either difficult or doubtful. Here, then, is what, so far, the great body of prophecy, apart from Revelation, presents to us.

We are now ready to look, though very briefly yet, at the book of Revelation itself, to see how thoroughly in unison it is with what has gone before; that indeed it is no isolated prophecy, but that we have, in what is elsewhere revealed, the key put into our hand of a consistent interpretation of the book from first to last.

The connection of Daniel with the Revelation has been already spoken of, and it is acknowledged, and must be, by all. The first beast of the thirteenth chapter here is the last one of Daniel seventh; but an important thing, of which Revelation speaks in connection with it, and which confirms from another side what has been said of the gap of time in Old Testament prophecy, in which in the New Testament we find the Christian Church, is that the beast of Revelation has its period of nonexistence, and then comes up again in greatly altered character, as from

the bottomless pit. He is "the beast that was, and is not, and shall be present" (chap. xvii. 8). We are not going to look closely into it now, but it is plain that if Daniel's last beast stands for the Roman Empire, then it has, in fact, in the mean time ceased to be. If it is found upon earth immediately before the Lord's appearing, then it must have come up again, as the book of Revelation represents. The beast in this form "practices" for forty and two months, that last half-week of Daniel so often spoken of, the time of the Jewish woman being nourished in the wilderness from the face of the serpent. Whether it is the time also of the prophesying of God's two witnesses clothed in sackcloth, whom the beast finally slays, is a question resulting from the fact that in the last future week there are, of course, *two* half-weeks, and we are not entitled as yet to say in which of these this testimony to Israel takes place. Either way the time of their testimony, a thousand two hundred and threescore days, is equally significant.

Before this vision, however, we find another—not preceding it in actual time, of course, but the contrary—"of a multitude out of all nations," (Gentiles, that is,) "who come out of the great tribulation" (chap. vii. 14); evidently that one which is spoken of in Daniel and in Matthew is the only one that could be (in view of what is said of it there) announced as the *great one*. In this part of Revelation, then, it should be amply clear that we are in the Jewish times of the last days. These are, in the language of Revelation itself, "things that shall be," after the "things that are" have come to an end. This gives two parts of Revelation, which we may call, therefore, the presentist and the futurist; and when we consider the present things as they are pictured to us in the book, we find, without any need for doubt at all, that we have before us Christian times, the times of the Church of God on earth.

From what we have seen already, the visions of the second half of the book plainly declare that, when this part of Revelation has its fulfilment, the Christian dispensation will have passed away, Christians will be forever with the Lord, and the earthly people will be again those owned of Him, whatever the sorrows they may have yet to pass through before their full blessing comes. Yet, the appearing of the Lord in the clouds of heaven we only reach in the nineteenth chapter; but "then," says the apostle (Col. iii. 4), "we shall appear with Him in glory." To appear with Him then, we must have been taken from the earth before; and thus the same apostle writes to the Thessalonians that "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we be ever with the Lord." Here is how, as the apostle says, "those that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." There is no promiscuous resurrection when the Lord appears in glory. There is no picking out by

judgment of sheep from goats, such as the twenty-fifth of Matthew teaches will take place when the Son of Man is come in His glory and sits on the throne of His glory. Here, on the contrary, we find but one company of raised and glorified saints, caught up to meet Him and be with Him. Scripture is clear as to this blessed fact, which in itself affirms and emphasizes the gospel assurance that those who hear Christ's word, and believe on Him who sent Him, shall not come into judgment (John v. 24). This assurance, by such an expansion of it, is made clear enough. From this view, no one would understand that between the gathering up of the saints to meet the Lord and His appearing with them in glory there was to be an interval of months and years of earthly history; nor can one be blamed for being slow to assent to such a statement as this. Yet it can be perfectly well established from Scripture, although there is no single text which states it, and here is the place to give this some final consideration.

We have seen elsewhere that as the Old Testament ends with the promise of the Sun of Righteousness, so the New Testament ends with that of the Morning Star. Christ Himself is both; and in both His coming is intimated, but, as is plain, in very different connections. The sun brings the day for the earth, floods the whole of it with light, and this is in suited connection with the blessing of an earthly people whose are the Old Testament promises. The morning star heralds the day, but it does not bring it. It rises when the earth is still dark, shining, as it were, for heaven alone. It is to saints of the present time that the Lord says, as to the overcomers in Thyatira, "I will give him the Morning Star." This speaks of our being with Christ before the blessing for the earth comes. In the promise to Philadelphia also we find the assurance, "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee out of the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Here is a universal hour of trial, out of which some saints, at least, are to be kept. They are not to be kept *through* the temptation, but kept out of the *hour* of it—out of the very time in which it takes place. This hour of temptation we need have no hesitation in taking as that time of great tribulation which has been already before us. How simply the apostle's assurance of all the saints of the present and the past being caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, so as to be with Him when He appears in glory, declares to us how Christians are to be kept out of this time! The hour of trial, then, that of the great tribulation, follows the removal of Christians from the earth. Thus it is simply intelligible how in those pictures of the world's trial which we have had before us we have had no trace of the presence of Christians. All, as we have seen, speak of Jews and Judaism as once more recognized, a thing inconsistent with the existence of Christians and Christianity at the same time; for as long as the present gospel goes out, they are "enemies for your sakes." So, also,

the antichristian snare, as spoken of in Matthew, shows the same thing. Christ is looked for in the desert, or in the secret chambers; as appearing, not from heaven, but in the midst of the people; and the false Christ, when he comes to sit with divine honors in the temple of God, does not come from heaven, or assume this. Explicitly is it stated also, in Isa. lx., that when the Lord arises upon Israel, and His glory is seen upon them, "darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples"—a thing impossible if Christianity existed at the same time, yet perfectly plain in connection with what we have been looking at. Indeed, the difficulty with such passages has been to realize the fact of such a darkness as possibly succeeding the present day of gospel light. Again, the important scene in Matt. xxv., so misconceived by most interpreters even now, and for centuries taken as a picture of "the general judgment," becomes thus perfectly intelligible, as it is only consistent with this view. It is not the judgment of the dead before the Great White Throne, as in Rev. xx., which is post-millennial. It has nothing to do with those who, as we have seen, are caught up to meet the Lord in the air; no "goats" can be caught up in that way. It is the judgment of the living upon earth, after the Lord has come and set up His throne here. There is no hint, in fact, of resurrection at all; and if the Lord caught up the saints to meet Him in the air, as we see in Thessalonians, and then immediately came on to the judgment of the earth, there could be no "sheep" then upon earth to put upon His right hand. Universal judgment alone could follow. The fact of an interval between these two, such as we have been considering, at once clears the whole difficulty.

But now let us look at the two parts of Revelation—that of the present, or "the things that are," and that of the future, or "the things that shall be after these," as we find them outlined in the early chapters. The first part, it is plain, is that of addresses to seven assemblies in Asia. It is preceded by the vision of the Lord Himself in the midst of seven golden candlesticks, or lamp-stands. The seven golden lamp-stands are the seven assemblies. The Lord's attention is, so to speak, confined to these. He is surveying them, and in the addresses which follow He tells them the result of His survey. The seven lamp-stands, with this complete number stamped upon them, are surely significant. They are the representatives of the professing Church as a whole, God's light for the earth in the mean time, now that the One who was Himself the Light of the world has been taken from it, and it is night in consequence.

The addresses themselves give us—but we cannot yet look properly at this—the history of the Church upon earth from the apostle's days till the Lord comes again. It is not put, indeed, directly as a prophecy of this, just because we are always to "be as men that wait for their Lord," and it would not be consistent with this that the long period of Church history should be given to us, which would make unintelligible

any watching for Him in the mean time, until the end should be in plain view.

To each address every one that has ears to hear is summoned to pay attention. There is no such urgent exhortation in connection with any other part of Scripture. How clearly there must be for all of us, then, that which is of the most intense interest—things which, as is said in the first chapter, "blessed are those who keep." In this way they remain, of course, with a most perfect value for every generation of Christians from that day to this. Wherever the characters of any of these churches appear, there the Lord's voice of warning or encouragement, or both, is to be heard and listened to. This could be without realizing them to be, in fact, a history of successive stages of the Church during the time of the Lord's absence. On the other hand, when it begins to be clear, by the fulfilment itself, that they *are* this, then what an encouraging admonition for us all that the Lord is at hand! Notice also how, as we draw towards the close, the coming of the Lord is more and more pressed upon us. To Thyatira already is it said, "That which ye have already hold fast till I come." And the promise of the sharing with the Lord in the authority over the nations, Christ's rule with a rod of iron, is connected with the promise, "I will give him the Morning Star." This is the first time, midway in these epistles, that the coming of the Lord is spoken of. But now, in the address to Sardis, where there is a name to live, but actual death, they are warned, "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." To Philadelphia the voice of glad encouragement, and yet of warning, is, "I come quickly, hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown." Finally, to Laodicea, lukewarm now, nauseous as that to the Lord, who stands outside still knocking, but with little encouragement, the word is, "I will spue thee out of My mouth;" while, indeed, "to him that overcometh" there is another: "I will give to him to sit down with Me in My throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with My Father in His throne." Thus the warning is intensified as the end draws near. Finally the Voice ceases; what the Spirit saith to the churches is completed; and then—"*After these things*, I saw, and behold, a door opened in heaven;" and the first voice that is heard, as of a trumpet speaking, is saying, "Come up hither, and I will show thee the things which must be after these." Here, then, is where the "things after these" begin. We have no more candlesticks, and One who stands among them, and addresses them. The apostle is caught up in the Spirit to heaven, and there what does he see? Not only the throne of God, but thrones around the throne, and upon the thrones four and twenty elders clothed in white garments, and on their heads crowns of gold.

In the fifth chapter the Lamb comes forward to take the book out of the hand of Him that sat upon the throne; and immediately we find

these four and twenty elders falling down before Him, singing a new song: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for Thou wast slain, and hast purchased unto God with Thy blood of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made them to our God kings and priests; and they shall reign upon the earth." Here is a song of redemption, and it is a song in the elders' mouths, a song which does not, however, contemplate *all* the redeemed, but only those who shall "reign upon the earth;" that is, the saints of the first resurrection (Rev. xx. 4–6).

The comparative vagueness of the text here, now recognized by the editors of the Greek Testament, has given rise to a doubt on the part of some whether the elders here are celebrating their own redemption or that of others; but it is plain that it is the redemption of the heavenly saints that they are speaking of, and these elders are clearly not angels, but men—glorified men, not spirits, but already upon their thrones around the throne of God. All is in keeping with the surroundings throughout; the apostle himself being caught up to heaven, as the representative of those who are in "the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ," being the fitting introduction to a vision of glorified saints there. These elders are found in their place throughout the rest of the book. They interpret in the seventh chapter as to the white-robed multitude. They worship again when the seventh trumpet sounds. In their presence the new song is sung which the 144,000 alone can learn; and when Babylon the Great is judged, they fall down once more before the Throne, saying, "Amen, Halleluia." It is not till after this that the Lord appears. Thus the elders are an abiding reality all through this long reach of prophecy. We must accept the fact of glorified saints enthroned around the throne of God from the commencement of the "things which shall be." With this many other things are implied of necessity—the descent of the Lord into the air; the resurrection of the dead and change of the living saints; the rejection of the rest of the professing Church, now merely professing, soon to cast off the profession; the close of the Christian dispensation. All this we have already found in Scripture to take place before "the end of the [Jewish] age"—the last week of Daniel's seventy. The internal evidence harmonizes completely with what is derived from the general consent of prophecy in proving to what point in the dispensations we have here arrived.

There is another noteworthy change which we find has taken place. If "the Lamb" takes the book to open the seals of it, "the Lamb" is yet "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," and in that character comes forward to do so. It should be plain what "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" means—that it is the King of the Jews, in fact, that is before us. Christ is taking up the earth now, and therefore Israel. This answers to what we find as to the character of the throne itself as seen here. It is a throne of judgment from which thunders and lightnings break out, but

these are encircled by the brightness of the bow of promise, the clear light shining through and in the darkness of the storm, and which is the token of God's covenant with the earth, as He declares to Noah. *It is Israel and the earth, therefore, that are to be before us in that which follows*, and the tokens of this that we find actually have been already before us. The 144,000 sealed out of all the tribes of Israel, distinguished from the multitude out of all nations who stand before the throne with their palms of victory as having come out of the great tribulation—these show us where we have arrived. It is no more the Church on earth, that Church which is neither Jew nor Gentile, but consisting of both brought together into a new relationship as the body of Christ. The old distinction, on the other hand, now prevails again; and in the fourteenth chapter we see these 144,000 *upon Mount Zion*, the seat of Jewish royalty, with the Lamb. The last week of Daniel in one or other or both its halves is brought before us again and again, until at last the marriage of the Lamb is seen in heaven, and then from these opened heavens the armies of the saints, clad in the robes of righteousness which belong to such, follow the white-horsed Rider out of heaven, to the judgment of the beast and false prophet upon the earth.

There are details here and there which may naturally still raise questions, but the general import of all this is surely not to be mistaken. Let us notice only, in conclusion, that when the saints of the first resurrection are seen to live and reign with Christ the 1000 years, these are really two companies, not one, as so commonly thought. There are those who are seen, first of all, sitting upon thrones, and judgment given to them. To these a special company is added who are distinctly *martyrs under the beast*. These together complete this resurrection-company. Thus we can understand how it is that we find glorified saints in heaven in the fourth and fifth chapters, and the marriage of the Lamb taking place in heaven before the Lord appears, while it is only in connection with this that we find the martyrs under the beast now taking their place with those raised and glorified before them. All is absolutely self-consistent, a consistency which belongs only to the truth.

This, then, in the briefest outline, is the character of the book of Revelation. We find in it the present Church-period, and the future also after the Church is removed to heaven,— when Israel becomes the special object of divine interest, the blessing of the earth being at hand in her blessing. This is not *a* fulfilment of the prophecies before us, but *the* fulfilment, while it leaves ample room to allow of anticipative, partial fulfilments also. Nero Cæsar himself, and still more the papacy, may have their place in such, and we may gather instruction from all these, but the first necessity is evidently that we should know what that fulfilment is which is alone complete, and which it is evident will test all other applications. They must be in harmony with this, or be set aside.

There is one point here, however, which deserves to be noted before we go on to consider the book in detail. The question may be asked how we can account for the great proportionate space occupied by what represents so little time in actual occurrence. Seven years, at the most, seem to elapse between the taking up of the saints of the present and the past, and the coming of the Lord to the judgment of the earth. Yet these seven years in this way are made to fill thirteen chapters out of twenty-two. Does this seem a proportion such as we could expect? or what can be the reason of it? Reason it must have if it be of God, and a reason which is moral and spiritual also. Why, then, should these seven years fill so large a place in what is distinctly the Christian book of prophecy? Now a question may be made on the other side which in part will help to answer this. Why is it that those seven years actually fill so many, many pages of *Old Testament* prophecy? It is plain that every part of this, almost without exception, looks on to the end that we have here, to the great judgment of the earth and of man by God, which must of necessity precede the blessing; for, as Isaiah says, "Let favor (that is, grace) be shown to the wicked, yet will he not learn uprightness," a thing, alas, how solemnly proved during all these centuries of gospel witness upon the earth! On the other hand, "When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." Thus judgment, now perverted from it, must return to righteousness. The shepherd's rod must become a rod of iron, shattering the nations as a potter's vessel. The true Melchisedec must be first of all,—as the apostle has pointed out to us,—according to His name, the King of Righteousness, and after that, according to His title, King of Salem, that is, King of Peace. But this judgment of the earth and man, of which, indeed, we may have made very little, how much is there for us implied in it! It is the Day of the Lord upon all the pride and all the evil of man. It is the day which will bring down into the dust all man's pretension, and which will exalt the Lord alone. And we who are waiting to be with Christ in that day, we are those who are in a special manner being exercised in conscience, amid the strife of good and evil everywhere going on, that we may have "by reason of use our senses exercised to discern both good and evil." We are those who are to be assessors with the Judge—who are to reign with Him over this very scene. We are training for it in this very strife through which we pass, and the echo of which we find within ourselves also—a struggle between the flesh, the evil principle which still remains even in the Christian, and that which is in him as begotten of God. We are learning, in this, how to be with God in His judgment of evil. We are learning the awful reality of evil in itself, in having personally to do with it after this manner. And all around us there is that which testifies as to the significance of sin; a scene which will find its perfect revelation, however, only when the Lord Himself is revealed, and when everything

is brought into judgment. Is it not clear, in this way, what the meaning is of just those last seven years in which evil is permitted at last to display itself (the restraint upon it being removed) as it has never displayed itself before—the answer of man to God, alas, after all that God in His grace has done for him, and when the corruption of the best thing has indeed issued in the worst corruption! How important for ourselves now, that we should see what, in measure hidden for the present, is thus revealed in the event—that we should be able to see the true character of things upon which the judgment of God is coming, and thus be prepared also to be associates in the Day of His appearing with Him who comes to judge! We may grant that all this is little thought of, and that here again, as in so many cases, the wonderful provision that God has made for us has been lightly esteemed. Our own distinctive blessing, what grace has done for us (which we cannot, indeed, prize too highly), has, nevertheless, been made to take more than its due place with us; for God plainly has purposes beyond the Church itself—purposes which, in their fulfilment, will be seen to glorify Him: that is, to be needed for the full revelation of His own character. He would have us witnesses of His righteousness, as well as witnesses of His grace. He would have us enter into His counsels as to man in their widest reach; for we are those of whom the Lord Himself has said, "I call you not servants, but I have called you friends; for whatsoever I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you" (John xv. 15). It is astonishing, if anything in ourselves can yet astonish us, how little we have learnt to value this inestimable blessedness; and how, in making self, or let us say even Christianity, the whole thing everywhere, and seeking to see nothing else, we have missed, and been content to miss, the largeness of the Lord's mind. Nevertheless, "we have the mind of Christ." We are the very members of His body, those in whom the expression of that mind is to be seen, not only here, but much more in the wondrous days to come; and if we realize at all the fellowship into which we have been thus called, we shall find, the more we consider it, the less difficulty in the largeness of revelation here,—a largeness which leads us on into the fulfilment of God's thoughts and purposes, the objects of adoring contemplation by the principalities and powers in heavenly places, to whom also the Church is to exhibit the various wisdom of God. "To Him," would the apostle say, "be glory in the Church, throughout all ages;" or, according to the fulness of his more pregnant speech, "throughout all the generations of the age of ages."

The divisions of Revelation are two only, as fitting in God's great witness book. They are:

1. (Chaps. i.–iii.) "The things that are," and
2. (Chaps. iv.–xxii.) "The things that shall be after these."

NOTES.

DIV. 1.

THE scope of this first division has already been sufficiently considered. The way is open for us to take it up in detail.

There are here two subdivisions, the first chapter being plainly introductory to the two following. In the first of these we have what the Lord refers to as "the things which thou hast seen." The second gives us the addresses to the churches.

SUBD. 1.

In the first subdivision we have Him as the Faithful and True, seen in His oversight of the seven assemblies representing the Church or assembly of God in its character as light-bearer for Him upon earth. The details alone can give us what is really before us here, so that there is no profit in seeking first of all to outline this. It is not as yet prophecy, of course, but an introduction to the prophecy, one which is of the greatest importance for true intelligence as to the prophecy itself. But let us proceed in an orderly way through it.

Sec. 1.

The book has, in accordance in general with other prophetic books, but in contradistinction from all the other books of Scripture, a title of its own, a title which is clearly meant to mark its importance for us. This, too, is emphasized with a distinct announcement of the blessedness both of the reader and hearer of it—if they hear practically; that is, *keep* the things which are written in it. It is "A Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto Him to show unto His servants the things which must shortly come to pass." It is astonishing that some who even have a view of the book beyond most others should take this "revelation of Jesus Christ" to be His own appearing, as in the nineteenth chapter. It is quite true, of course, that this is called His revelation (1 Cor. i. 7; 2 Thess. i. 7). The heavens that now conceal Him, except to faith, are to give Him back to human sight at last. Nevertheless, the revelation spoken of here is plainly such because it is meant to show "things which must shortly come to pass." It is a revelation which He receives as Man for men, and the style is here what has been referred to but a moment since, as where the Lord says to His disciples, "All things that I have heard from My Father I have made known unto you." Christ is always in this way leading us to the Father, making us realize that He Himself is the gift of the Father's love to us, and bidding us see the Giver in the Gift. The Father is also He who reveals Christ to souls, as we see in the Lord's words to Simon Peter: "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." Here it is God putting honor upon the One who has taken this place with men and for men; and we may notice at once that it is not merely an inspiration, but a revelation. It is not a mere assistance, as one may say, to human thoughts. *It is a communication of divine thoughts.* It is a lifting of the veil from things, which only God could accomplish. It is not a diviner, divining from things before him in history or otherwise. The apostle is, so to speak, the passive recipient (not, of course, that by this is meant the uninterested recipient) of things which are entirely beyond himself. There need be no question that we are here, thus far, upon ground on which, not the prophets of the Old Testament alone, but those of the New Testament also, stood when predicting the future. They spoke better than they knew. One can easily understand how John himself would look with wonder and delight into what his own hand had written concerning these things. Only there was not for him that word which the Old Testament prophets had to hear, that not unto himself, but to others, he was ministering. He himself, by the power of the Spirit of God which was in him, was just the one of whom we would naturally say that he was better fitted to understand than

any other what he had written down here. It is remarkable and instructive in this connection that, whatever John's own apprehension might be of the meaning of what is evidently put forth in mysterious terms, (though free for faith to penetrate as it may,) yet tradition, with all the inventive character which belongs to it, has never pretended to furnish us with a single word of explanation as to the visions to which we are coming; we find nothing beyond what John himself by inspiration has given us here. We are shut up absolutely to the inspired words themselves. Nothing has been committed to us by tradition. The break is absolute. Who can doubt that there were apostolic comments upon many of these things? But not a word has come to us with this apostolic signature to give it authority. We must gather from the Word, and from the Word alone. It is a "revelation," then, of Jesus Christ; that is, a revelation made by Him, which God gave Him, "to show unto His servants the things which must shortly come to pass." We have to mark that the book is distinctly a servant's book. One may say all Christ's own are His servants. That is true, of course, in a certain way. We would not question this, but emphasize it. Nevertheless, it is of importance we should understand that we must be with a spirit of service in our hearts in order to have title to apprehend the things that are here. They have to do with our service. They are not merely things to inform the intellect, or even to illumine the soul with glory; but they are specially and distinctively things which have practically to do with the path of service. They are the revelation of the whole field, as one may say, through which the path leads; and thus they are things not only to be heard, as men speak of hearing, but to be kept—things that are to *keep us*, in fact—keep our feet as we go through the world. Instead of Revelation being a book of dreams, there is nothing more practical than what we find in it.

Although we are in responsibility always, and in heart, it is to be trusted, servants of Christ, yet we may find, when we look at what is contained in Revelation, at the things which are given as necessary for the servant's service, that it supposes a heart exercised by the things around, such as few servants, it may be feared, attain unto. If we were to ask ourselves honestly, how much need do we realize of such a revelation, it might give us a good deal of practical searching of heart. Each servant of course has his own path, his own special line of service; yet it is evident from what we have here that no one is intended to be in such a way outside the general course of things in the Church or in the world as to be unaffected by them. In fact, the less we contemplate them, the less we are exercised by them, the more we shall be affected, but not for good. God means us to have our eyes open, our consciences on the alert: and not only that, but that the concerns of Christ at large should be our concerns; that we should feel them so; should seek to serve Him, not without the apprehension of how much the individual course acts upon the general condition of things. We may think of this influence as almost infinitesimal; scarcely to be taken into account; and humility, no doubt, may say this. Nevertheless, with any one who is truly a servant of Christ, indwelt by the Spirit of God, the Spirit of service, it is impossible to say how much may be the result, under God, of that which, looked at in itself, may well be counted infinitesimal. God's way is to work His wonders oftentimes by the smallest agencies and instrumentalities, that the work may be seen to be of Him, and not of man. And the heart that is for Him is what He values. If there be this, and we have learnt to identify ourselves with the Master we serve, with all His interests, the life resulting must necessarily be fruitful; more fruitful it may be, far, than we can ever be permitted to know. It is evident that to all of us here, to all Christians, these things are given, and that "blessed are they who hear the words of this prophecy, and *keep* the things that are written therein."

"The things," too, are explained as "things which must shortly come to pass." This is, of course, to have effect upon us. They are things in the current of which we are, not things that are merely coming to pass at some indefinite future time beyond us. We are somewhere in the current of them; just

THE REVELATION OF JOHN.

DIVISION 1. (Chaps. i.–iii.)

The Things that are.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. i.)

The Faithful and True, in oversight of the Assemblies.

SECTION 1. (Chap. i. 1-3.)

Title and Introduction.

A [a]REVELATION of Jesus Christ which God gave unto him to show unto his [b]servants the things which must [c]shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his [d]angel to his servant John, who

a *cf.* ch. 22. 18, 19. 2 Tim. 3. 16. *cf.* John 12. 49.
b *ctr.* 1 Cor. 3. 1, 2.
c *cf.* 1 Cor. 7. 29.
d ch. 22. 8, 16.

exactly where, we may have to determine for ourselves; although, even so, if we cannot put our foot exactly upon the spot where we really are, it will not be of less importance to look at the things which are behind us, as well as the things that are before us still. All is connected together. The present is the issue of the past, and contains in itself the seed of the future; and if we would be wise indeed we must trace the beginning of things, and follow them to their end. The means of doing this is in the book before us. How immensely valuable and how intensely interesting, therefore, it must be!

This, then, is what the revelation means. The mode of communication is not to be passed over. "He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, who testified the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, whatsoever things he saw." Notice the person to whom the revelation is made, who speaks of himself very soon afterwards as the brother of and joint partaker with all Christians in "the tribulation and kingdom and patience in Jesus." John is one of ourselves, and he wants to be understood to be one of ourselves. He is a sample of those to whom this testimony is committed. He is one ready to testify, and to take, also, through grace, the consequences of faithful testimony. Such an ear, as it is always open, will never lack hearing words which sound in the ears of other men, yet at the same time are not discerned in the same way by others.

Yet here, notice, there is an apparent reserve. One would not expect it, quite. One would think of Christ as in His grace Himself speaking directly to His servant, as He spoke to him upon earth. John was the disciple whom Jesus loved. He was the one who, lying upon His breast at supper, could put his personal questions to the Lord who loved him, and get direct answer. Yet here an angel is the means of communication. That always, in things of this nature, seems to imply a certain measure of distance; not, of course, that it is meant that angelic service does this. The angels are all, as we know, ministers "to those who shall be heirs of salvation;" but their ministry in this way is not in general shown in revealing things, as far as we have Scripture with regard to it. The *Spirit of God* reveals, and on earth *human* voices take up the testimony. God may send His angel to Cornelius, but it is not by the angel whom He sends that the testimony is to be given. *Peter* is the one who is to give this—an instrumentality far less competent, as we should naturally think; nevertheless, it is the instrumentality which the Lord Jesus, the *human* Head of the Church, speaking on earth through His members, makes use of. Yet here it is by His angel that He speaks to His servant John; and this reminds us that in the book itself we have in a certain place the Angel-Priest who puts His incense to the

testified the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, [c] whatsoever things he saw. Blessed is he that

[c] *cf.* vers. 12, 13, etc.

prayers of the saints. The action there declares the Lord Himself. None but Himself could add anything to prayers offered, as He does there. Yet He is spoken of as an angel rather than as a man, and, as we shall see, the whole connection here suggests a mystery—the Lord Himself as One more distant than He loves to be. We are quite sure He would not affect distance merely, as He would not desire to take such a place. He must be constrained to it in some way. The place He takes here, through the ministry that He is pleased to use, seems to have the same intimation in a kind of distance in the way of communicating things which, nevertheless, display the fulness of His love in communicating them. What constrains Him to such distance? We are not to imagine, of course, anything like a lack of intimacy between John himself and the Lord. Nothing here speaks of that. He is singled out of all men as the one capable of receiving these communications. He is the one, of all men, most in the Lord's mind. The distance, whatever it is, is more, as we should say, official than personal. Is it not the state of things in general which affects the character of that which is, as we know, not for John simply, but for the whole Church? a Church, alas, which in general, as too plainly shown us here, is declining, or declined, from its first love. Thus there is a sort of distance in the method of communication. In it love itself speaks, for Christ is God manifest, and God is Love; but it is a love that is grieved and saddened, rather than able to show itself as it fain would do.

If we recall what is so peculiar in the book of Daniel, a book so intimately linked as it is with Revelation, we cannot but realize how there also there is everywhere angelic ministry; angels move, as one would say, continually before us. There is no such opening elsewhere in Scripture to see the service which angels perform amongst men. The revelation given to Daniel is to one "greatly beloved," as is manifest also in his being the repository of things such as these; yet Israel has ceased to be nationally the people of God, and it is "the times of the Gentiles" that have come in. The distance therefore is unmistakable; and while it only brings in the Lord in special ways to minister to those that are true to Him, and to provide through them for His people at large, yet at the same time it is suited that there should be the testimony to the general condition. It is suitable also that the parabolic style should be employed which the Lord Himself employed, (although this is by no means the whole reason here,) when revealing things hitherto hidden amongst a people that had turned in heart away from Him. The parable enshrines the truth while it puts a veil over it, a veil which itself may attract, and should attract, the hearts of His people, to learn what is hidden behind it—a veil which is meant to invite research, not discourage it, but which at the same time requires true exercise before God, and earnestness of spirit on the part of those who would penetrate it.

So it is here. "He sent and signified it"—made it known by signs, and in things which John *saw*. Revelation is essentially, in this way, a vision; and a vision, moreover, of things in themselves meant to be enigmatical. This need not daunt us when we realize the question which the Lord puts to His disciples when as yet they do not understand the parable that He has spoken to them: "Do ye not know this parable?" He says, "and how, then, will ye know all parables?"—a wonderful word, indeed, which should make us begin to realize how many things there may be around us with deep, deep meaning, such as we should love to have unfolded to us, and which yet only remain hidden from us by our lack of simple earnestness of faith. The parabolic style is so much the style of Revelation that it is hard to understand how any expositor should so fail to realize this as to insist upon absolute literality anywhere. In heaven itself, and in the central Object there, we find "a Lamb as it had been slain." You say, we know at once who is meant by that. Yes, but nevertheless, what is the style of speech here? Is it literal? Need we expect to go out from where

[f] readeth, and they who [g] hear the words of the prophecy, and [h] keep the things which are written therein; for the [i] time is at hand.

[f] *cf.* Ps. 1. 2.
[g] ch. 2. 7, etc.
[h] ch. 22. 7.
[i] ch. 22. 20.

we have heard heaven itself speaking in this way, and find things that are going on upon earth revealed with absolute plainness and literality? There is no congruity in this; and, moreover, it is not according to the general style in which the future is set before us in the prophets. In our own city, "the new Jerusalem," what mean these foundations of precious stones, these rivers and this tree of life, these gates of pearl and this street of gold like transparent glass? We know, indeed, while it does not lessen our wonder, that there are those who take all these things according to the simple letter of what we read; but surely it is plain that here also, here in some sense in a special way, the apostle's words are true, that "we see yet through a glass darkly," or, as the word really means, "in a riddle," "an enigma." We see not yet "face to face." Only in this way have the things spoken their proper dignity, their spirituality and fulness of blessing for us. We may wish, perhaps, that they were somewhat plainer. God, on the other hand, would rather invite us by these apparent difficulties, and make us seek with only the more energy to possess ourselves of what, through grace, is written for us, and therefore given to us, yet left for us to be exercised about, and to learn in proportion as we are really subject to that blessed Spirit who in the saints "searches the deep things of God."

Alas, how gladly we would have no "deep things" to search into, but everything so simple and clear that no child could mistake the import. That is not God's way. The very confusion of Christendom is witness that it is not God's way. Scripture, written by inspiration of God, as it declares for itself, "that the *man of God* may be thoroughly furnished," intimates thus the moral character necessary that there may be this furnishing. Is it not right that it should be so? Do we not need the stir or impetus that such admonitions should give us? This surely is what He who is infinitely wise has ordained for us everywhere, whether in nature or in Scripture—deeper things than we have ever fathomed, mysteries which reveal no secrets to the slothful-hearted, while to the one who longs, and longs, to realize something of the fulness of the gift which God has given, the words arch over him as a bow of promise, with their tender inquiry: "Do ye not understand this parable? and how, then, will ye know all parables?" Think of our destiny; think of the hope that our Lord would raise in us when He puts questions of such a character! And yet they are questions for our souls to settle with Him. We shall find everywhere in Revelation that we are not to be saved from that; that God deals with us as those who ought to have understanding, and who have, whatever they may be themselves, an all-wise, a perfect Interpreter of divine things. Must we not grasp this in some measure, in order to understand and realize how blessed is he that readeth and they who hear the words of this prophecy? Not the world alone, but the masses of Christians say—how little certain is any interpretation of the book of Revelation! Why do they still call it Revelation, then? Or how is it that the title given here does not place it in awful reproof to them as they look at it—"A Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass"? *Has* He shown them, or has He *not* shown them? Has He shown them only in such a way as to produce confusion in the minds of those to whom they are shown? Has He written them down so poorly that men may, without blame on their part, be in continual collision with one another as to their meaning? Are we going to take the shame of this ourselves? Or are we going to impute it to the One who, out of the fulness of His love, has given us such a prophecy? Is there not the blessedness of him who reads? Do not those who read as before God find it? And if the things are to be "kept" that are written therein, can they be kept without the certain knowledge of what is written? Suppose we have not actually what is written, how far and painfully may we be misled by our very effort to keep what is here!

SECTION 2. (Chap. i. 4-8).
The address and response.

1 (4, 5): The greeting and benediction.

[1] JOHN to the [j]seven assemblies which are in Asia: [k]Grace unto you and peace from him who [l]is, and who

[j] ver. 11.
[k] cf. Rom. 1. 7, etc.
[l] cf. Ex. 3. 14.

Is there no hand that we can firmly grasp, or that will firmly grasp ours, and lead us through? Assuredly there is. Only we must be, as James says, not merely "hearers," but "doers of the work." We must be in earnest desire to do the will of God. For such, all Scripture is written; for such, in a special way, the book of Revelation is written. And what we need to ask ourselves, as we take up the closing book,—the book which completes all Scripture,—is, have we the faith that can count upon God to give us these things? Have we in our hearts the purpose to keep what is written therein? Are we those who, adding to their faith virtue, learn in this way to add to virtue, knowledge? This is God's way, and there is no other.

Sec. 2.

We have read now the inscription over the doorway, and we may enter the building itself. What we have first here is the character of Revelation as a writing by John to the seven assemblies in Asia; and we have, as it were, awakened by the first words of this the response of the Church to Him who speaks to them through John, to Him to whose constant love they owe this Book—to Him who is coming, as they now testify, to the earth once more, exchanging His invisible for visible glory, so that "every eye shall see Him," Israel, "who pierced Him," and all the tribes of the earth awake to their true condition as they realize His presence. The seal of God is put to this testimony. God it is, in fact, who is giving testimony to His Son, and who is now about openly to glorify Him.

[1] John is writing, then, to the seven assemblies which are in Asia; and, writing by the Spirit, whatever is written is with a benediction. So here, the "grace" "and peace from Him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before His throne, and from Jesus Christ."

But let us notice, first, those to whom the writing is given. It is to all of us, is it not? That has been declared. It is given to show His servants, Christ's servants, things which must shortly come to pass. No one will dream that that meant only seven assemblies in Asia now passed away, and yet it is to the seven assemblies that the writing is. They are, therefore, in some sense plainly representative assemblies, and, as we see them presently, seven lamps, amid which the Son of Man walks, to see how that which He has kindled is giving light. We must surely understand that it is not simply in Asia that He is walking, or amid seven assemblies there, but that it is the Church as a whole that is addressed; while, nevertheless, it is the Church, in character as such, these seven assemblies present to us. That we shall more and more realize as we go on to what is written, but even upon the face of it one would say it should be evident. Was the epistle to Corinth for the church at Corinth simply? or Paul's epistle to Ephesus merely to the church at Ephesus? Or has any other epistle in Scripture been written simply for the blessing of those who are formally addressed in it? The seven assemblies in question are long since passed away. Has the instruction passed? or, rather, has it not gained for us a vividness and power such as those to whom it was addressed could hardly realize? The Spirit of God is addressing it to-day, with fuller application than ever, to the Church at large. He is making it known to those to whom it is really addressed, and the various calls which we find in it to him that hath an ear to hear are decisive as to our part in it. But why, then, is it not directly given to the Church at large, instead of to seven assemblies that are in Asia? There must be a reason for this, as there is a reason for everything in Scripture. The reason is, as already said, that the seven assemblies are, in fact, representative assemblies; that they give us conditions which are found in the Church at large, and which, even by the

[m] was, and who is to [n] come; and from the seven [o] spirits which are before his throne, and from [p] Jesus Christ,

m *cf.* Ps. 90. 2.
n *cf.* Mal. 3. 1.
o ch. 4. 5; *cf.* Is. 11. 2.
p *cf.* Phil. 2. 10.

very uncertainty of where exactly they may be found, appeal to us the more to examine them—the more to exercise ourselves with regard to all that is written here.

But there is another view of the matter. These seven assemblies are all found in one little district (in fact, only the western coast) of what we call Asia Minor, or Little Asia. It was the Roman province of Asia in John's day, and it was of it that the apostle Paul, who had labored largely there, so much, indeed, that all Asia had heard the Word in some way by his means, wrote in his last epistle to Timothy (the last epistle which, we have reason to believe, he ever wrote), with the sad reminder, "This thou knowest, that all they that are in Asia have departed from me." Whoever these were, however many in fact are embraced by those words, yet it is plain that Asia was already then the scene of a revolt against the apostle himself; a revolt which he himself, in his last address to the elders of Ephesus, had not indistinctly warned them of. Why is it then, just to these that these epistles are addressed? Does not this add its voice to what we have already seen, that the manner of the communication here would speak to us of distance which has come in more or less between the Lord and His own?—on their side, of course, not really upon His, but which still gave character to His utterances. If, then, these seven assemblies in Asia are representative assemblies, as they surely are, if the Lord chose these as the very ones who were to receive this revelation, how can it fail to tell us of the condition of the Church at large, and indeed through the times through which the Revelation itself will carry us—however much there are, thank God, everywhere ears that hear and souls that overcome.

But there is now to be *overcoming*, not simply the overcoming of the world, as on the part of every Christian who believes that the crucified Lord of glory is the Son of God, but an overcoming in the Church itself of evil that has arisen there, and of evil which, according to the announcements already made in Scripture, would go on more and more developing until, the present restraint upon it being removed, "the mystery of iniquity," already working, would develop into full manifestation in the "man of sin," to be destroyed by the breath of the Lord at His appearing.

All the more, if possible, not less, there comes to those addressed this greeting of grace and peace from the whole glorious Godhead. It is what we need first to realize before we enter upon communications of such a nature as we have here:—grace in which we stand, unconditioned grace which can never fail, therefore, in its fulness of blessing for the people of God, whatever their circumstances; and peace, that we may be able to contemplate the sorrows and the evils that are before us—waves which, the higher they are, will only the more cast us upon the Rock of refuge. Always, under all circumstances, broken to pieces as the general Church may be, confusion everywhere, the world and Church mixed up beyond hope of disentanglement,—amid discordant voices, each with a different rendering of "the things that are," contradicting each other with warnings and with promises in the face of all the unity which the Church as the temple of God, indwelt by the Spirit of God, implies,—yet unfailingly is there "grace and peace" for every one who is invited of God to listen to what His voice shall utter, after all so easy to be distinguished, one would say, from every contradictory voice of man that can be. Grace and peace are what this whole communication from Him means.

"Grace," then, "and peace" are "from Him who is, and who was, and who is to come." That is a very different title of God from that which we find in the epistles in the same connection. It is not "from our God and Father," though of course He is this, but from the unchangeable One, the ever-present, ever the same. This is but the translation of "Jehovah," as we see at once;

the faithful [q]witness, the [r]first-born from the dead, and the [s]ruler of the kings of the earth.

q *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 13. *cf.* John 3.

11. r Col. 1. 18; *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 20, 23. s *cf.* ch. 19. 16; *cf.* Ps. 72. 11.

and "Jehovah" is the covenant-God and at the same time God in government. It is not our relationship to Him of which we are reminded, but of His necessary relationship to time, and all things therefore that are in time. The One who was before all, who abides through all, is the One upon whom all created things are necessarily dependent. "Who is" is put first. That He is, is the one great fact for all of us; but then, He "who is," was. There has been no beginning for Him, and there has been no change. He "who is," "was;" and He "who is" and "was" is He also "who is to come." There will still be no change, as there will be no successor to Him. Grace and peace from such a One as this, how much it means for us, perfectly revealed as He is now also in the Man Christ Jesus, known in the depths of His love by the redemption which He has accomplished for us! This is not what is spoken of here, but it is what is necessary that grace and peace should be to us from Him. Then it is "from the seven spirits which are before His throne." We see at once the style of Revelation in this. The seven spirits are but the sevenfold energy of the One, the Holy Spirit, acting in accordance with the mind of Him who is upon the throne, and in the energy implied by that throne itself. Revelation is the book of the throne; and that is what gives character to all that we have here. The seven spirits carry us on to where they are pictured as "seven lamps of fire before the throne," light-giving necessarily as God's acts are, for God's ways show forth His nature—Himself, whose ways they are. These seven spirits carry us back to the eleventh of Isaiah, where we find them in connection with the King of Israel, the Rod out of the stem of Jesse, of whom it is said, "And the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." Here we have the arrangement of the lamps in connection with the candlestick of the sanctuary, which, as we know, were in three pairs, with a central stem. This central and uniting stem bears witness that the Spirit is the Spirit of Jehovah, the covenant-God. The branches give us the character displayed; the pairs, their character as witness, three pairs bringing in the number of divine fulness and of manifestation; the whole seven, the complete display of God in these ways of His. In Isaiah the seven spirits are in connection with Christ as Man. They make Him "of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, so that He does not judge after the sight of His eyes, nor reprove after the hearing of His ears, but judges with righteousness the poor, and reproves with equity for the meek of the earth."

Grace and peace then, from these, what does it mean for us? The throne of God, with all that manifests it as His throne, power and wisdom, truth and holiness—all these manifested in fullest blessing for us. What a beginning for the study of Revelation to realize this!

And now we come to Him through whom all this is found for us—"Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the First-born from the dead and the Ruler of the kings of the earth." The saints are in witness-character, as we see in John here, but after all, how feeble is their witness; and if you take the Church at large, how unfaithful has often the witness been! But here is the one faithful Witness, who abides as that, whatever may be the failure of His people. A blessed thing to know how His Word speaks for Him in this, and how Christ is indeed a witness to Himself, whatever His people may be! But He has indeed borne witness to our condition naturally, to the sin from which He has come to deliver us. He has gone down into death, the fruit of this sin; and risen up from it, not for Himself alone, but as First-born or pledge of the many who through Him and in His likeness come out of death also. The righteousness of the throne has been fully maintained by Him, and the power of the throne can be safely entrusted in His hands; as the glory of God was entrusted to Him when He went

s (6, 7): The response of the Church.

[2] To him that [t]loveth us, and hath [u]washed* us from our sins in his [own] blood, and he hath made us a [v]kingdom, priests to his God and Father; to him be

t Eph. 5. 25. Eph. 3. 19.
u 1 Jno. 1. 7. ch. 7. 14.
v 1 Pet. 2. 9.

* Some of the earliest MSS. read, "freed."

down to death. Risen up from it, He is therefore worthily "the Ruler of the kings of the earth," that earth which He has purchased with all in it for Himself, by His blood shed. "The kings of the earth" are they that in a special manner have rejected Him, as we know. They are still, in the mass, rejecting Him. Nevertheless, He is the Ruler owned of God, now ruling upon the Father's throne; and, when He asks, to have His own throne given Him, and all His enemies subjected to Him, the footstool of His feet. This is the One to whose servants the Revelation is given; and how simple where faith is simply the service of such an One, whatever may be the destruction and confusion in the world around!

[2] The voice of the Church here breaks in in praise: "To Him that loveth us, and hath washed us from our sins in His own blood, to Him be the glory and might unto the ages of ages." "Loveth us," it should be, not "loved us;" for His love abides, while it has shown itself out in the removal of our sins from before God forever, so that we can take our blessing fearlessly as in connection with this glorious throne which has subjected us first to itself, our hearts made His whose the kingdom is, while we are brought near—not servants merely, but those who have access as priests to His God and Father. It is His God and Father still, because He is the One who is the Centre of the scene here, the One from whom all the blessing flows, God acting for the Son of His love, seen as His God who has revealed Him to us as well as in unique relationship to Him as Father. "To Him be the glory and the might," not simply for the millennial age, (for the kingdom in the hands of the Son of Man which is soon to come,) but "for the ages of ages." He is "the Father of Eternity," as Isaiah speaks. He is the One who brings everything, after sin has wrought its worst dishonor and done all it could for ruin, into subjection to God.

Our common version has, "He hath made us kings and priests." That which is commonly accepted now is "a kingdom, priests," a kingdom whose subjects, as far as we are concerned, are priests, worshipers brought near to God with the spirit of praise and thanksgiving, eternally. The expression reminds us at once of what was conditionally offered to Israel, that if they would obey God's voice and keep His covenant, they should be to Him a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. They must be, first of all, a holy nation, in order to be in this way priests to God. The white linen garment of the priest was the testimony of the character which he must have who approached to God in this way; and it was here, as we know, that Israel signally failed. They had chosen a covenant of law instead of the grace that had taken them up and brought them out of Egypt; and the law for them, as for all others, was a law working wrath. They could not abide under it; and instead of a kingdom of priests, the priesthood of Aaron and his sons—merciful provision as it might be in view of their circumstances—yet bore witness to their ruin as under it. But here is a people who are *all* priests, as Peter has borne witness: "A holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ," and "a royal priesthood" also, "to show forth the virtues of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light." Here grace has reigned indeed unto peace, and nothing finally fails of the blessing.

Here, then, is the response of the hearts of His people to Him, the song of victory with which they are taught to go into the battlefield. Conflict is before us, as we know. The very Prince of Peace, as the necessary result of what He is, has brought the sword instead of peace; and all along the way there is now the need of overcoming; but the end is certain, and the song of triumph is raised at the beginning—the song of *His* triumph who has prevailed for us, and as a con-

the [w]glory and the might unto the ages of ages. Amen.
Behold he [x]cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see
him, and such as [y]pierced him, and all the tribes of the
earth* shall [z]wail because of him.

3 (8): The seal of God.

[3] Yea, amen. I am the [a]Alpha and the Omega,†
saith the Lord God, [b]he who is, and who was, and who
is to come, the [c]Almighty.

* Or, "land."

† It is worthy of note that "Alpha" is written in full in the text, while "Omega" is not, the letter Ω being given only.

w 1 Tim. 6. 16. ch. 5. 12.
x Dan. 7.13. Matt.26.64. cf. Ps. 97.2-6.
y Zech. 12. 10. John 19.37. cf. Gen. 42. 6, 21.
z Matt. 24. 30. cf. Lk.23.30.
a ch. 21. 6. ch. 22. 13.
b ver. 4; cf. Ex. 3.14; cf. Ps. 90.2 with Prov.8.23, etc.
c cf. Gen.17.1 with Matt.28.18.

sequence a song which can never be silenced by the noise of combatants, by the strife which cannot disturb the ineffable peace of those to whom He gives peace.

This is the tribute of the redeemed to their Redeemer, and now we have their testimony also: "Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and such as pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth shall wail because of Him." This, it is plain, is not the coming of the Lord to take us to Himself. It is a coming to the earth when the heavens give back Him whom they have so long concealed, except to faith—when "every eye shall see Him." And here we are carried back at once to Zechariah to find Israel brought fully to repentance at the sight of Him who was wounded in the house of His friends. "They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem," and "in that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." Thus early the Jew takes his place in the prophecy of Revelation, while it is true that what is here may contemplate a wail wider than that of Israel's repentance. The word both in Greek and Hebrew for "earth" is the same as "land," and "all the tribes of the earth" (or land) make us necessarily find Israel here as in Zechariah. Nevertheless, the outlook in Revelation is naturally wider here, and there may be a wail, too, which is not that of repentance, but the wail of awful fear, when men cry to the rocks to fall on them and the mountains to cover them, to hide them from the face of the Lamb they have despised. Here is the Christian's testimony, and it has naturally to do not with Israel only, but with all the earth.

[3] There is now immediately another response. The "Yea, amen," that follow here are not the voice of those that have just spoken, but a greater Voice. They are the affirmation of the truth of this on the part of One who is the Alpha and Omega, the Lord God, whose speech is, as it were, thus the beginning and end of all speech. Nothing can precede, nothing can supplement it, and how blessed is this testimony given by God to Christ! It is the unrepentant, unchanging Lord who says this. It is Jehovah, "who is and who was, and who is to come," and it is the Almighty, able to bring about all that which He foretells. It is He who, as the apostle says in Hebrews, bringeth again the First-born into the world. He comes, not in His own glory only, but in the glory of His Father, with the holy angels. Thus worthily is the seal of God put upon the announcement of the coming One. In Christ Himself, as the apostle tells us, is the Yea and the Amen of all the promises of God. Suited it is that God should put His yea and amen now to this promise; and while it is of necessity, through the sin of man, an announcement of judgment also, yet it is that through which alone blessing can come for man. Through these clouds the bow of promise is manifest, and "when God's judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." "The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever." This closes the introduction to the book as a whole.

SECTION 3. (Chap. i. 9–20.)
The Risen Priest among the golden lamps.

i (9-11): The commission.

[1] I [d]JOHN, your [e]brother and joint-partaker in the [f]tribulation and [g]kingdom and [h]patience in Jesus, was* in the island that is called Patmos, for the [i]word of God and for the testimony of Jesus. I became* [j]in

d ver. 4. *cf.* Jno. 21. 20-24, ch. 22. 8.
e *cf.* Acts 10. 25, 26.
f *cf.* Jno. 16. 33.
g *cf.* Jas. 2. 5.
h *cf.* Heb. 2. 8, *cf.* 2 Thess. 3. 5.
i *cf.* Acts 5. 41.
j ch. 4. 2; *cf.* ch. 17. 3; *cf.* Lk. 4. 1.

* The same word, ἐγενόμην.

Sec. 3.

We now come to the first vision, the vision of Christ Himself, and in a way suited to what we have in the first part of Revelation, the messages to the churches. The Lord is here the Priest with the golden snuffers in His hand for His lamps of testimony; and this, as we shall see, has reference to the first part of the book only—"the things that are," the time of the Church's testimony, now fast coming to an end.

[1] We have first the commission of the seer: "I John, your brother and joint partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and patience in Jesus, was in the isle that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus." John joins himself thus to those he is addressing. He is their representative, in fact already in the kingdom, but in a kingdom to be in which aright involves necessarily tribulation. It is not the kingdom and *glory* of Christ. It is "the kingdom and patience"—the kingdom in which the cross is still the significant emblem. It is a time which, if appreciated, will be realized as one of marvelous privilege, with all the affliction that it implies, and even just on account of that very affliction. It is the kingdom of the Sufferer, and who is initiating His people into that suffering, through which He Himself has come to the crown, and through which it is His grace to them that they should come also to the crown; for it is "if we suffer," that "we shall also reign with Him." Nothing can set this aside, however things may change here and the Christian world may imagine itself beyond the application of such things to them. The drill and discipline here are the training for glory. They are the initiation into the mind of Christ, for those who are to be with Christ when He comes. They are not to be onlookers merely, but those who have learnt in themselves the reality of the conflict between good and evil, and have found in the God of resurrection the One who of necessity, first of all, puts His seal upon man's natural condition, in order that He may show Himself only supreme in His own grace and power beyond it. For us, the evening and the morning must always make the day, until that Sabbath comes when these things shall no more be spoken of, although their memory and their blessing shall abide forever.

John, then, is on the isle that is called Patmos,* for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus. That speaks at once for itself as to the treatment of the Word and the testimony of Jesus. He is an outcast exile. He is alone, as one for whom the world has no place or portion. He is apart from its strifes and from its glories; not indifferent to all that is going on, not self-exiled, not of his own choice a desert-dweller, not an anchorite or hermit, but one for whom the world has been what it has been to the Lord Himself,—one banished, as Christ was banished out of it. He is keeping the word of Christ's patience, and we know from his own words directly, what the Lord thinks of those who do so. Thus it is no wonder if Patmos be full of other visitants, and if heaven

* The island called Patmos is easily located as one of the Sporades in the Grecian Archipelago, settled early and with remains of a primitive civilization. It is described as a barren rocky island and with no remainders of the palms which once gave it the name Palmosa. As usual, chapels and monkish asylums abound. Of the significance of its name the Lexicons give no mention. There is much similarity between it and the root meaning "to tread under foot," and another meaning "to suffer." Both certainly would be appropriate for one who was being trampled under the foot of Rome, and suffering with Christ.—S. R.

[the] Spirit on the [k]Lord's day, and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a [l]trumpet, saying, What thou seest [m]write in a book, and send [it] to the [n]seven assemblies: to Ephesus, and to Smyrna, and to Pergamos, and to Thyatira, and to Sardis, and to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.

k cf. Acts 20. 7.
l cf. 1 Cor. 15. 2. cf. Mk. 16. 9.
l ch. 4. 1. cf. Ex. 19. 19, 20.
m ver. 19.
n cf. ch. 10. 4.
n cf. Acts 20, 28-30; cf. 1 Cor. 7. 17.

be opened here to the outcast of earth. It is the way to realize such revelations as we are to be introduced to, and we must not look at it as if these things for us were over,—as if we were merely reading a book which has been so furnished to us. No, we are to read it as those who are the brethren of John, and joint-partakers with him "in the tribulation and kingdom and patience in Jesus."* If we have not something of this spirit, we shall scarcely read it aright.

Here, then, it is that the Spirit comes upon him in power: "I became in the Spirit," he says, "on the Lord's day." It has been thought by many that this, which is in fact a unique phrase in Scripture, "the Lord's day," is only another way of putting "the day of the Lord," and that the seer here was, in spirit, carried on to that day at the time of which he speaks. But the difference of phrase has its own meaning. There is no difference of this sort which is meaningless in the word of God; and then just in this very part of the book which we are to consider here, it is manifestly *not* the day of the Lord that is before us. "The things that are" and "the day of the Lord" are in reality in opposition to one another. It is "the Lord's day" here, just as we have "the Lord's supper" in Corinthians,—literally "the Dominical supper," and so here, "the Dominical day." We have no word, unfortunately, in English which will convey this rightly; but "the Lord's day" as distinctly characterizes the present period, as "the day of the Lord" would say that it was ended. "The Lord's day" is the day on which we celebrate the Lord's death until He comes. It is the day in which we realize the triumph which Christ already has accomplished for us, and only in anticipation go on to the day of His full and eternal triumph. When there is to be chronicled "what the Spirit saith unto the churches," what can be more suited than to be "in the Spirit" on a day like this?

"I became in the Spirit" of course is a special thing. It is not merely what is always proper to the Christian. It is the prophet engaged with his prophecy, who speaks to us thus. The Spirit of God has laid hold of him, eyes, and ears and everything, so as to carry him, as it were, whither He would. It is not "I was in the Spirit," but "I became in the Spirit." It is not that it was constant with him, but that which for him was temporary only. We have in the fourth chapter another time in which he "became in the Spirit," and that is the introduction to the "things that shall be,"—the things that are to come after the present things are ended. Here the Lord's day gives character, as one may say, to the visions of the seer. He sees the Lord in the midst of the assemblies. He sees what the Lord has to say with regard to things that are actually round about him at that very time. They are made, no doubt, the witnesses of the future, but they are still actually existing, things with which the Lord is occupied; and thus he is not transported to any future time, nor sees things that are yet to take place, but things that are, in fact, taking place already. Yet he is not, as is evident, in the spirit of worship simply. He is not called now to remember the Lord's death. He is called in a certain sense away from this. It is "*behind* him" that he hears a great voice which is as of a trumpet, a loud and startling call; and before he sees whence the voice proceeds, he receives his commission: "What thou seest, write in a book, and send it to the

* The name Jesus, used without the title here and throughout the book, is significant as showing it is the person, the One who was here, the faithful One who has left His path to His people.—S. R.

2 (12-16): The Priestly Judge.

2 And I turned to see the voice which was speaking with me; and having turned, I saw seven golden o lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands one

o *cfr.* Ex. 25. 31-37. *cf.* Matt. 5. 14. *cf.* Phil. 2. 15, 16.

seven assemblies—to Ephesus, and to Smyrna, and to Pergamos, and to Thyatira, and to Sardis, and to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea." Thus the character of the vision attaches, as one may say, all through, to that which he is to communicate. They are direct words uttered, a direct communication given, and yet, even so the assemblies whose condition is thus brought before him are, as is evidenced all through, but a vision of future things. These are but samples chosen with a divine purpose to put before us the state of the Church at large, and, as we cannot but realize when we look into them, successive stages of the Church's history. The seven assemblies make the completeness of the view presented here, which we find confirmed by the fact of the seven golden lamps representing these assemblies, with which the Lord is seen engaged. He is not engaged, clearly, merely with seven Asiatic churches. He is looking at them, but He is looking through them also. The eyes of fire penetrate beyond the present, as the eyes of One who sees the end from the beginning, and in the things already present on earth finds unfolding the history of that which will be,—is able to see the fruit that is to come out of the tree, and to characterize it. This alone gives worthiness, in fact, to these addresses. They are not merely in view of what was actually existent then, but of the needs of all the Lord's people at any time of the Church's existence here on earth; and thus it is that every one that hath an ear is called to hear "what the Spirit saith to the assemblies."*

2 The apostle turns to see the voice that was speaking to him, and having turned he sees the seven golden candlesticks or lampstands, answering in number to the seven lamps of fire which we find afterwards burning before the throne. These represent, as we are by and by told, the seven assemblies, and plainly in their responsibility to exhibit the light of the Spirit during the night of the Lord's absence. The reference to the golden candlestick of the sanctuary in Israel is evident; but the contrast with this should be also as evident, for the candlestick of the sanctuary was one only, its six branches connected with the central stem; and it speaks of Christ, and not the Church. The seven candlesticks are for lights, not in the sanctuary, (where Christ alone is that) but in the world; and while there is a certain unity in the character of these as representing doubtless the whole Church, yet it is the Church seen, not in its dependent connection with Christ, but historically and externally as assemblies. Each lamp stands upon its own base, that is, in its own responsibility. To speak of the Son of man in the midst as the invisible bond of union is surely a mistake. He is not represented in this manner here. He is not uniting His people together, but judging each separately. Then it is the Church at large that is represented; not the true as distinct from the false, but the general profession. Thus Sardis as a whole is dead and not alive. Christ is outside of Laodicea. In the view that we shall have to take of them, we shall find that while they were actually existing, local assemblies, yet they stand each for the professing Church of a certain epoch or for what in it characterizes the epoch. To see in them but Ephesus and its contemporary assemblies, is indeed to be blind and not see afar off; for the features given are quite unmistakable to those who, with an honest heart, will consider them. They are golden candlesticks, as set for the display of the glory of God, of which the gold speaks; but while they have the privi-

* The reasons for this application of these addresses to the seven churches to the entire history of the Church need not be fully entered into at the outset. They will appear in the addresses as we go on. It may be well however to call attention to their connection with the remainder of the book; *that* is world wide and final; why should these be confined to one time and place? Then too it is "what the Spirit saith unto the churches"—a term which would include the Church for all time. Notice also that the coming of the Lord is spoken of in each of the last four addresses, suggesting that the churches addressed continue on to the end. But all this will appear as we go on.—S. R.

like unto [the] [p]Son of man, clothed with a [q]garment down to the feet, and girt about at the breasts with a golden [r]girdle. His head and his hair were [s]white as white wool, as snow, and his eyes as a [t]flame of fire;

p Dan. 7. 13. *cf.* Jno. 5. 22.
q *cf.* Dan. 10. 5. *cf.* Ex. 28. 31-35.
r *cf.* ch. 15. 6; *cf.* Lk. 22. 27. s Dan. 7. 9; *cf.* Ps. 90. 2. t Dan. 10. 6; *cf.* Heb. 4. 13.

lege and responsibility of this, they are not necessarily true to it, and, in fact, the candlestick may be removed because it is not.

But we are not occupied at present so much with the lamps as with the One who walks in the midst of them. He is "One like unto a Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the feet, and girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle." We are reminded at once of Daniel here, but the Lord is seen in a very different relation from that in which Daniel represents Him. He is in priestly garb, although as we look upon Him we see that characters appear in Him not only of the Son of man, but of the Ancient of days also, with whom in the older prophet, the Son of man is identified. His title, the Son of man, is that which, as we know, the Lord so constantly assumed in His life on earth. It is a title which speaks, not only of humanity, but of how He has *come* into humanity, conforming to the conditions of it, and in a way that links Him with humanity at large. He is true Man, submitting even to the sinless infirmities of manhood. One who has learned in suffering and sorrow what it is to be tempted "in all points like as we are, sin apart." This character, no doubt, in a special way connects Him also with the Gentile Church, not simply with the Jews; but it is not a place of distance, therefore, He is taking, but of nearness to us. He is qualified by His manhood to be the priestly Intercessor for man, although it is not intercession which He is making here; but as the Intercessor He yet fills perfectly the place in which we find Him. The One who stands before God for man is the One who here turns, on the other hand, to man, to His people, to see how they answer to His thoughts and desires for them. All judgment is in this way committed to the Son of man. It is because He is the Son of man that He is just the One fitted to judge man. He will not forget the circumstances, and the weakness amid the circumstances, of those whom He judges. He will not pronounce harsh judgment, and here He is judging in the midst of that which is His own. He is in priestly service with the golden snuffers for the light; Himself girt about with that golden girdle which shows how the glory of God is the object before Him.* But the girdle is not about the loins, it is about the breasts, for which here a remarkable word is used which signifies ordinarily the *woman's* breasts. We are to be reminded of the tenderness of heart which is His, of a love greater than a woman's.

With all this, He is not a mere Son of man. He is more than this, as the words "One *like* unto a Son of man" would plainly indicate. Why "like unto," if He were indeed only this? The very form of the expression here is what we find in Daniel. He is, in fact, the divine-human Mediator as God and Man, between God and man. Yet, as already said, He is not interceding. The characters which follow show Him as when He comes to judge the world, yet these are applied in the third and fourth addresses to the judgment of the churches. To Pergamos He writes as One that hath the sharp sword with two edges, and to Thyatira as the Son of God who has His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass. This is indeed a plain intimation of how far the world and the Church have become one in what is represented in these assemblies, but we are as yet occupied with His person here.

First of all, "His head and His hair are white as white wool, as snow,"—the character plainly of the Ancient of days, but where the years which should

* Some have thought the girdle about the breasts suggested the *repression* of that love which would naturally have spoken in our Lord. But it is enough to remember that the girdle is the symbol of service, concentration for effort; and secondly that nowhere does our Lord show more love than in this very judgment of the assemblies. "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten."—S. R.

and his feet were like fine [u]brass, as if they were burning in a furnace; and his [v]voice was as the sound of many waters; and he had in his [w]right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth went a sharp, two-edged [x]sword; and his countenance was as the [y]sun shineth in its strength.

u cf. Ezek. 1. 7. cf. Lev. 26. 19. cf. Heb. 10. 30.
v ch. 14. 2. cf. Ps. 29. 3-9. Ezek. 43. 2.
w ch. 2. 1; cf. ch. 5. 1. x ch. 19. 15; ch. 2. 12, 16; cf. Heb. 4. 12. y Matt. 17. 2; cf. Mal. 4. 2; cf. ch. 10. 1.

teach man wisdom only furnish the symbol for One with whom what is human attainment is perfect and original. The wisdom that is His is dazzling with its purity. It is absolute righteousness and holiness, and nothing else; and these, which in His eyes are as a flame of fire, search out everything before them, and they are in His feet like white (-hot) brass glowing in a furnace,—judgment resulting from a nature incapable of change, unmistakable, ever against evil. His voice, too, that with which He gives sentence, is as the sound of many waters, as the sound of that ocean which reduces man so easily to his native littleness and impotence. With all this, He has in His right hand, firmly held, those seven stars which we are presently told are the angels of the seven assemblies; not the *candlesticks*, notice, but the *stars:* for the candlesticks are earthly profession, but the stars are heavenly reality. Where He finds this, all the strength of His right hand is there to uphold it. But immediately we return to the character of judgment in the sharp, two-edged sword which, when He comes in judgment, proceeds out of His mouth. Yet His Word is, as we know, like a sharp, two-edged sword, "piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." His countenance is radiant as the sun in its strength. The day has not yet come for earth, but here is the One who will bring in the day; and for faith already here is One in whose face all the glory of God is.

Such is the One, then, who is seen here walking among the candlesticks. There is but One who can unite all these characters. Evidently He is before us also as one who is about to come. His coming is always imminent for His saints, and they need the realization of it for all present duty, for the whole path of service, which is thus as a path which shineth with the light upon it unto the perfect day. All this exhibits the Lord as if He had in fact left the sanctuary and were clothing Himself with the cloud in which He returns; and so Scripture, when urging our responsibility upon us, carries us constantly on to the day of His appearing when the result of our conduct here will be brought out and manifested to all. There is a wide distinction recognized in Scripture between this appearing of the Lord and His coming to receive us to Himself, with which, in a beautiful manner, nothing but grace is associated. When He comes to take us it is to be with Himself; and the thought of the Father's house, of our entry into it, is that which the Lord has associated with this. In the Father's house the question is not of separate place; the Father is that to all His children; and this is the first thing which He would connect with His coming for us. There is no need of any judgment first, even of a judgment of works to give us our place in this. In fact, no judgment of works could do it. We are caught up in the likeness of Him who has come to receive us to Himself: our very bodies changed from the image of the earthly to the image of the heavenly, and all alike inasmuch as they are all like His body of glory. Yet the judgment of works comes none the less, but it is always put in a different connection. It is put in connection with the Kingdom, and thus with the appearing. We shall find, as we go on with the book before us, that while the redeemed are upon their thrones all around the throne of God in the fourth chapter, seen by the prophet as soon as he is himself caught up, yet it is only as He is about ready to come forth, that we find of the bride that it is given to her to be clothed in that fine linen which speaks of the righteousnesses of the saints; not the *one* righteousness, Christ Himself, which is upon them all, but that which will also be upon them in its due season, the garment which is needed

2 (17-20): The re-assurance for the manifestation of the mystery.

17 And when I saw him, I [d]fell at his feet as dead; and he laid his [a]right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the [b]first and the last, and the [c]living one. And I was* [d]dead, and behold I am [e]alive unto the ages of the ages; and I have the [f]keys of death and of hades. 19 Write, therefore, what thou [g]hast seen, and the things that [h]are, and the things that are [i]about to be after

a cf. Dan. 10. 9, 10, 15. cf. Matt. 28. 2-4.
a cf. ver. 16. cf. Dan. 8. 17, 18. cf. Matt. 17. 6, 7.
b ver. 8, ch. 22. 13. cf. Is. 41. 4.
c cf. Jno. 5. 26.

* Or "became."

d ch. 5. 9. e cf. Rom. 6. 9. f cf. 1 Thess. 4. 14; cf. 1 Cor. 15. 20-22. g vers. 12-16. h chs. 2, 3. i ch. 4. 1, etc.

to be washed in the blood of the Lamb to make it white, and which yet can thus exhibit what the saints have been for Him as His heart estimates it, when the time of recompense shall have come and love will forget nothing of what response there has been to it in the life of the saint. Thus it is that with His appearing and His kingdom is associated the recompense of works. All exhortations, warnings, encouragements contemplate this time, and so the Lord is seen in the vision here, although He is still among the assemblies. He is walking in the midst, however, not contemplated as the centre of gathering, nor are we to look here for principles of Church-order and discipline and what not, to which all this has been perverted. We are not to look in the book of the Throne and of judgment to find the order of the Church at all. Revelation is not Corinthians, and it is hazardous to take one for the other.

17 The vision of glory overpowers the seer, beloved disciple as he is. "When I saw Him," he says, "I fell at His feet as dead." But then immediately the One whom he has known so well is manifest. "He laid His right hand upon me" (the right hand which holds the stars) "saying, fear not, I am the First, and the Last, and the Living One; and I was dead, and behold I am alive unto the ages of the ages, and have the keys of death and of hades." What an assurance! How tenderly He unites the invisible glory which belongs to Him as "the First, and the Last, and the Living One," with the acquired glory also of that wondrous death out of which He has come, the risen One with the keys of death and of hades at His girdle, alive for the joy and blessing of His own for evermore!* He who has been in death for us, has turned its awful shadow into morning The gates of strength have yielded to our Samson, and more, "out of the eater has come forth meat, and out of the strong, sweetness." "Write, therefore," He adds, with all the comfort of this assurance, "the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be after these; the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands. The seven stars are the angels of the seven assemblies, and the seven lampstands are the seven assemblies." These words give us the division of the book. "The things which are" must needs apply, as such, to the seven assemblies which were existent at that time. These things occupy the two chapters following. "The things which shall be after these" (not "hereafter," which is too vague) apply to the things which follow from the fourth chapter on. This is evident, indeed, whatever view we take of the interpretation. If we take even the historical or Church view, in that case there will be still a message to existing assemblies which must, therefore, come before all that is strictly prophetic in the book. "The things which shall be after these" will then be in the strict sense the prophecy. If we take the seven assemblies as designed to give us successive periods in the history of the Church at large until the Lord come, then it is plain that "the things which shall be after these" must show us His earthly people taken up; and the connection will be obvious, as has been already said, with the whole of the Old Testament

* "Death and hades" would seem to suggest the two thoughts: of the grave for the body, and hades, the unseen world, for the spirit. The thought in hades is not so much a *place* as that it is not *here*. It is unseen. As a matter of fact we know that the spirit of the sleeping saint is with the Lord, and yet it is, with reference to this world, in hades.—S. R.

these; the [j]mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest upon my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands. The seven stars are [k]angels of the seven assemblies; and the seven lampstands are seven [l]assemblies.

[j] *ctr.* ch. 17. 5.
[k] ch. 2, 1, etc.
[l] ver. 11.

prophecy in which the Jew is ever in the forefront, and the Jew is carrying with him the blessing of the whole world.

It has already been sought to show that these two parts (the present things having to do with the Church still upon the earth while waiting for the Lord, and the "things that shall be after these" contemplating Israel's preparation time for the full blessing, which is surely to come to her) give us the complete and fundamental interpretation of the book. Applications may be fully admitted which are yet not the full and final application, which must first of all be sought. It is not necessary to take this up again, but if the addresses to the seven assemblies contemplate only a state of things which, while then existing, has now passed away, then they will have for us of necessity much smaller interest than it should be evident the Spirit of God would have us find in them: and these addresses are already put, by the very title of the book itself, as part of prophecy. It is here that the warning to listen to what is said is at its strongest. It is here that the keeping of the things that are written in the book has most evident application to us; and thus we have distinct warrant for holding the addresses to be prophetic, and we should require very distinct and decisive evidence for refusing them such a place.

The reason also for these addresses not distinctly assuming, as a whole, the prophetic form, can be fully accounted for. Christians have been always taught to watch for their Lord's return as something the time of which they did not know: "Watch, for ye know not when the time is." We should not, therefore, expect the long actual history of the Church's tarrying here to be put before the saints of generations past, to discourage wholly their expectation. It would be to take out of their hands what we may call the lamp of testimony as to the Lord's return, the virgins' lighted lamp, lighted to go forth to meet the Bridegroom. We may in this way also clearly recognize why this view of the seven churches should not and could not be found in earlier expositions of the book. The general exhortations implied in them remain for all, but they could not anticipate what only the Church's history has made known to us; and now, when it is, as we may surely say, becoming clear, it is blessed to see that instead of this being to us a discouragement of any near expectation of the Lord, it is precisely the reverse. Near the end we must be if with assurance we can look back and say this is the Church's history hitherto; and in fact, with the character of Laodicea all around us at the present time, the Lord's words to Philadelphia come home to us with increased power, "Behold, I come quickly." This is what we gather from such an interpretation of the two chapters following now. The Lord is indeed coming quickly. How soon, who can tell? But so far as we can see, nothing remains here certainly to be fulfilled. There *may* be fulfilments which shall evidence themselves as that, if the Lord leaves us but for a short time to go on, but we cannot say that such fulfilments there *will* be. We can indeed take up with a new emphasis the words of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and say: "We are come unto Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." They are in prospect just before us—God's blessing for the earth, God's higher and more wonderful blessing for His heavenly people,—there is nothing that we know which is certainly between us and these.

Subd. 2.

We now come to the epistles to the churches, the character of which has been already more or less before us: seven in number, they naturally divide, as seven so often does, into the first four and the last three. Some would have it rather

be the first three and the last four, and this from what we find in the epistles themselves, that in the first three the call to him "that hath an ear to hear" precedes the promise to the overcomer, while in the last four it follows it. There would seem this difference, that when the call precedes the promise we have the whole assembly in some sort addressed; while, when the promise to the overcomer precedes the call, it would seem rather that there is only hope with regard to this special class. The address becomes more individual; a remnant is thoroughly marked out; but while this may be accepted as truth, yet the result does not follow. The truth is that Thyatira, the last of the four, is looked at as running on to the end. The announcement of the Lord's coming is first of all found here, and the state of things depicted in it goes on through all the after-history.

It not only does so, but it characterizes that which in an especial sense arrogates to itself the title of the Church. Rome, as we know, does this, and we shall see that Rome is reached in the epistle to Thyatira; while Babylon the Great, in the second division of Revelation, shows us her end to be after the taking away of the Church, and at the hands of the beast and the ten horns (kings) that receive their power one hour with the beast. In fact, the history during the period shown in these four churches is a progressive history, the end of which is thus fully reached in Thyatira, while in the three following churches, as we shall see when we come to examine them, we have a new departure, no longer the woman and her doctrine, but what is the fruit of a real revival from God, though it ends, alas, once more in a decline which brings it under judgment. Thus also the first four, according to the general character of the number, give a more external view which, as we go on, becomes, as we may say, even political; while the second with all its failure presents that which is at least in its whole claim spiritual, although this claim may in result have to be questioned, or even disallowed.

See. 1.

In the first four epistles, then, we find a general identity and unity, however different they may be in development; and in Thyatira that which asserts this more strongly than ever. It is the Church in the fullest way asserted to be catholic,—the Church with its authoritative voice, to which all that are of God are bound to listen. This is the woman who calls herself a prophetess, but who is really Jezebel. Here we find a preparation for what follows, a remnant now becoming separated, although not yet distinctly standing apart: the separation is more in heart and spirit than in outward position; but, for all this, the examination of the details is absolutely requisite. It is enough, therefore, simply to indicate it here.

The first section (with its four addresses) divides again into two parts. This, it has been noticed elsewhere, would indicate no bright and happy state of things. Four is, as we know, the number of the world, or of the creature: but creation as manifesting — as it should manifest — the glory of the Creator, is a three and one, these being the numbers of manifestation and of divine unity and supremacy. Two, on the other hand, is the number of division, therefore of essential frailty, contradiction and evil. This is what we find, accordingly, in what we have here.

1. In the first part we find what may be given as its character, Christ's rule over His people in measure maintained. In the second part we shall find, on the contrary, the dwelling where Satan's throne is, implying, of necessity, something opposed to this; while the woman Jezebel shows us a further step in departure from it. Here again this can be only stated at present. The proof can only be found as we take up the addresses in detail.

[1] We start, then, with Ephesus. The assemblies, as we have noticed, are all Asiatic assemblies, and we have seen already the significance of this; Asia being the scene of a movement which Paul speaks of distinctly as a departure from himself, that is, evidently from his doctrine, (for that is it with which he identifies himself). Asia also, if the apostle's own voyage to Rome has the typical

1 (1-11): Christ's rule measurably maintained.

1 (1-7): Ephesus. First love left, and so the first works; the beginning of all independency and decline.

Subdivision 2. (Chaps. ii., iii.)

The Messages to the Churches.

Section 1. (Chap. ii.)

General identity and unity to Thyatira in which it is more strongly asserted than ever, though division is then beginning, and a remnant being separated.

1. [l] TO the [m]angel of the assembly in [n]Ephesus write: These things saith he that [o]holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who [p]walketh in the midst of

m cf. Matt. 18. 10. with Acts 12. 15. *cf.* ver. 7 with 1 Cor 10. 15 and 1 Cor. 14. 37

n cf. Acts 19. 1, etc. *cf.* Acts 20. 17, etc. *cf.* Eph. 1 1

o ch. 1. 16, 20.

cf. Rom. 14. 4. *p* ch. 1. 13; *cf.* Song 6. 11.

significance which has been elsewhere given it, represents a stage in the Church's declension; the vessel which carries him, but as a prisoner, being bound first for the shores of Asia, "the miry land,"—that is, as it would seem, the significance of the name—the Church being mired with the world; how soon, in fact, that came to be its condition! Ephesus itself was, as we know, the church to which the apostle addressed that epistle which gives us the doctrine of the Church itself; not its earthly, but its heavenly character. The highest truth of Christian position, the wonderful character of the Church as the body of Christ, the house of God, and again the spouse of the Lord Jesus, is developed in it. The saints were yet in their first brightness here, and the apostle's heart was free to give them that which he could not minister to the Corinthians or to the Hebrews, being checked by their condition. It is, therefore, most significant that we find just *Ephesus* here characterized by the beginning of departure from the Lord, the beginning of all real departure, wherever it exists. Ephesus is characterized now by first love left, and as a consequence the first works also. The two things go necessarily together. Ephesus means "desirable," or "object of desire;" and this may speak of that which makes the picture sadly perfect. It is the Church, the object of the Lord's love, which is leaving the first freshness of its love to Him. This is what makes the whole address so significant. It is not, as many have supposed, that Ephesus is here first addressed as being the metropolitan church of Asia; for the Church in the beginning knew nothing of metropolitanism, and had to be degraded from heaven to earth to bear thus the stamp of earth. Political rank has no place in spiritual things; and if men point to Jerusalem, as they would, and to what they are pleased to designate as the first council there (Acts xv.), they only show by this how they have got back to Judaism, and are confounding thereby the earthly with the heavenly.

In the book of Acts we have had necessarily before us that asserted council which we have no need to deny having been such, but with a very different result from that which is sought to be deduced from it. The appeal is certainly made there, on the part of the Gentiles, to Jerusalem; and not only so, but the apostle Paul speaks of going up by revelation there (Gal. ii.); so that it was of God that there should be this appeal: but for what purpose? In order that at Jerusalem itself the hold of Jerusalem upon the people of God might be broken, and the Church set free! Nothing could possibly be so effectual as to make *Jerusalem itself set aside what was claimed to be her own jurisdiction;* and thus it is that in the letter which goes out from thence at this time, it is put as what seemed good "to the Holy Spirit and to us;" not to the Holy Spirit in us or by us, but the Holy Spirit having, as Peter argues, in fact already settled the matter by the bringing in of Cornelius and others with him; Jerusalem had nothing further to do than to profess its subjection to what the Spirit had already done. This is the plain matter of fact, as the whole history demoustrates, and it settles definitely the question of the Spirit of God making known His mind through councils of the Church—the mischief which men inexcusably have made out of this. The metropolitan character of Ephesus, as asserted by tradition, grows naturally out of its actual political place at that time; and when politics began to influence the Church, it became perfectly natural that Ephesus should have

the seven golden lampstands:—I [q]know thy works and thy [r]labor, and thine [s]endurance, and that thou canst

q vers. 9, 13, 19, etc. cf. 1 Jno. 2. 25.
r cf. Gal. 5. 6. s ctr. Matt. 13. 21; ctr. Gal. 5. 7.

the spiritual place answering to its political one. Scripture itself knows nothing of all this. There is in it the Church at large, and the churches (or assemblies); but the Church at large consists, *not* of churches, but of individuals. The body of Christ has members, and nothing else. Yet there are churches, assemblies, which in each place, in the original condition of things, was but the one assembly in that place—everywhere the assembly of God represented in those who might be gathered together there. The local assembly represented in this way, of necessity, the assembly as a whole, but it was no distinct body. The only *body* was the body of Christ. There cannot be *bodies* of Christ, but only the body. The local assembly in this way owed all that was distinctive in it to mere locality. The assembly as a whole, scattered as it is over the world, cannot, therefore, *assemble*; the actual assembly must of necessity be local. But it was thus at the same time no separate body, and could not be so without an independence being asserted by this, which in Scripture at least is never thought of.

A quotation from a commentary of recent date, and which is in its character much beyond the ordinary, may yet show us how far from the scriptural view Christians have in general departed—"The gospel everywhere speaks of a calling and an election, and the Church is the organized society of the called and elected. It is the assembly or community of those whom God has called out from the world into a common fellowship of faith, hope, and obedience, and which is preserved and perpetuated by means of functions and services included in the call. And wherever there is a company of such as have received and believed the gospel, organized into one body, in the charge of one authorized minister, and coming together in the same stated services, there is a true church; and such societies were the seven assemblies."

How strange the contradiction here! First of all, we have what is perfectly true, that "the Church is the organized society of the called and elected." Who has organized it? He, certainly, who formed it. How is it formed? "By one Spirit," answers the apostle, "we are all baptized into one body." How is the baptism of the Spirit conferred? By man's hands or what? Certainly according to Scripture it is as when, in that sample case which decided things for them in the council at Jerusalem, the Spirit fell upon Cornelius and those with him, as they heard in faith the word of God which was preached to them. He who admits into the body of Christ is thus Christ Himself and no other. But we are told now that, "Wherever there is a company of such as have received and believed the gospel, *organized into one body*," there is a true church. Is this, then, a body, an organism distinct from the general organization, the body at large? Scripture has certainly no such thought anywhere. The body of Christ is in each place as represented by the members there; but there is, as the apostle declares and as the necessity of the case shows, one body alone. The definition is rendered still more unscriptural by the addition that in order to be a true church it must be "in the charge of one authorized minister." Where shall we find the scripture for this? The same writer will not himself venture to produce for it the angels of the churches, but distinctly disallows this. Where else has he found it? Where else can any one find it to-day? It is a thing, no doubt, of old date and which is accepted apparently because of what is thought its reasonableness, and much more because of its antiquity. Scripture is absolutely against it everywhere, and the assumption of it has been the cause of untold disaster in the Church at large. We shall find it shortly stigmatized by the Lord Himself under the title of Nicolaitanism. In the body, the Lord Himself has set the members, with gifts corresponding in each case to the place He has given these. Every member is thus responsible to know his place, and responsible for the use of the gift which that place implies. The Head over all is

not [s]bear evil men; and thou hast [u]tried those who say that they are apostles and are not, and hast found

[t] *ctr.* ver. 15. *ctr.* 2 Cor. 11. 26.

[u] *cf.* Gal. 1. 8, 9; 1 Jno. 4. 1; 2 Cor. 11. 13.

Christ Himself. The Spirit uniting all in subjection to the Head is the Spirit of Christ. It is of the first importance that the conscience here should be before God alone, and that there should be none to dictate as to how or by whom the ministry everywhere is to be determined and regulated. The voice of God must be free everywhere to reach His people, and there must be no order of things which will shut it out, by whomsoever He may please to minister. Must not necessary disaster result from the interposition here of that "one authorized minister" (by whom authorized?) who is to have charge of the whole?

The church at Ephesus comes first, then, here, not because of any metropolitan position that it had, but simply because of the truth which was committed to it,—that truth to which, alas, it is beginning to be untrue. The condition of Ephesus, in fact, stands for the condition of the Church universal from that time to the present. Whatever may be said for individuals, when has the Church gone back to its first love? And that is the root of the whole matter here.

But what then is this angel of the assembly in Ephesus to whom the apostle is directed to write? It is natural enough with the thoughts that fill our minds to-day, to think of some official who presided over it, and, as we know, it has been sought to make of him either a diocesan bishop, or at any rate such a minister as is almost universal in the present day. It is the angel who is, in fact, looked at as responsible for the condition of things indicated. It is the angel who is therefore rebuked or exhorted. Who is represented here if there be no such official? To this, Scripture in general answers clearly that the word of God is always addressed to the assembly itself, and in no wise to its officials, whatever these might be. Philippi has its bishops and deacons, but it is not either to bishops or deacons that the apostle writes his letter, but "to the saints in Christ Jesus" who are there—to *all* the saints, along with these. At Ephesus itself, where we know there were bishops, Paul yet writes to "the saints which are at Ephesus and to the faithful in Christ Jesus," and the bishops have in the epistle no peculiar place at all.

In the epistle to the Romans, the address is in the same way "to all that be in Rome beloved of God, called saints;" and to the Corinthians, to whom he speaks of the special order of the Church on earth, it is, "Paul unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them which are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, both theirs and ours." There is not, in fact, a hint anywhere of such a responsibility on the part of any officials for the state of the Church as would be indicated, according to the common way of thinking, in the epistles of Revelation. We need not consider the dream of some, that the angels here were literal angels, "guardian" as they are called. This is only, if possible, more baseless than the ordinary thought. Whatever be the truth with regard to the angel, it is most certain that every one that has an ear to hear is called to hear "what the Spirit saith," not to officials, but "to the assemblies;" and is there not just here a key to the meaning of the angel symbol? Revelation is a book of symbols, as is indicated in the opening of it, and as ought to be plain to all who read it; and therefore we need not wonder so much at a symbol here. It has been thought that as "angel" just means "messenger," and is applied to others than the heavenly messengers, there might have been messengers sent to the apostle from these different assemblies, and that it is these which he is called to address thus. This is a possibility, although there is no proof of it that we can find. Nevertheless, if such a thing could be admitted, it would make this clear how the assembly could be addressed in its angel or messenger without in any wise resigning its responsibilities as such. The address to the

them [v]liars; and thou hast [w]endurance and hast borne for my [x]name's sake, and hast not wearied. But I

[v] *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 22.
[w] *cf.* Rom. 2. 7.
[x] *cf.* 3 Jno. 7; *cf.* Acts 5. 41; *cf.* Heb. 12. 1-3.

angel would be, in fact, an address to a representative of the assembly; the assembly would be addressed in him. This is, at any rate, a view of the matter which commends itself far more than the common thought; but we must nevertheless take into account what has been said already as to the angel before the addresses begin. The seven stars, says the Lord "are the angels of the seven assemblies, and the seven lampstands are the seven assemblies." There is a difference surely, as there is a connection also here. The lampstands were on earth, with responsibilities inferred of giving light there; but that light might, as we know, sadly fail, while, on the other hand, the star as the true heavenly light could hardly do so. Now if we consider the double aspect of the assembly which these addresses so thoroughly enforce, the responsible, actually existing assembly on the one hand, the assembly positionally and by profession, and on the other hand, the true people of God who soon cease to be identical with the profession as a whole, but among whom alone there could be found an ear to hear the voice that was speaking,—does it not seem plain that it is these latter for whom the angel stands? If the superscription of the epistles is to the angel of the assembly, the *sub*scription, as we may say, is to him that hath an ear to hear. These, therefore, seem to be the same; and everything would agree with this. Here alone is the heavenly, real light. Here are the stars that shine in the darkness of the night. Here are those who can be considered responsible, and addressed with full urgency of this responsibility by the Lord.

Thus, on the whole, we may conclude that here is the truth as to the angels of the churches, all the more because it does not affirm any official representatives such as can nowhere else be found in Scripture, and that it does bring, as all Scripture does, the responsibility home to every individual heart, whatever may be his place and his gift in the Church of God. Let us see, then, that our hearts are awake to respond to the voice that calls us here, not merely a voice which called to those in Ephesus or Smyrna or the rest of the assemblies, but which calls us, every one of us, and with more fulness and emphasis then ever, at the present day.* To the assembly in Ephesus the Lord presents Himself as "the One who holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." It is evident that the characteristics here are more general than special. It is what the Lord is for all His people. The heavenly light is sustained by the Lord Himself.† The lampstands speak of responsibility; Christ walks in the midst of them to ascertain their condition. In Israel, as we know, it was the duty of the priest morning and evening to put in order the lamps upon the golden candlestick. Here the general thought is, on the one hand, of power that can always be reckoned upon; on the other hand, of human responsibility.

The Lord, as always in these addresses, speaks first of what He can approve. It is His desire to approve and justify, and the consciousness of approval puts the soul into the right place to receive also the warnings and the reproof which love in its very faithfulness must give. He begins here with the works, the practical test of everything, which we find emphasized in John's own epistle. He does not pronounce upon the works, but what they connect with here implies at least a measure of approbation. They had not only works, they labored.

* This view is borne out by the use of the term "angel" to designate the spirit as contrasted with the body, as in the passages noted in the references. Peter's angel was his spirit, and they supposed that he had been put to death. Thus the angel of the Church would be the spirit of the Church, that which was really united to Christ as contrasted with its body, that which *professed* to be it. In this way the angel stands for all there is of God in a company of people—not exactly the spiritual, but all who have life.—S. R.

† As has been already said, Ephesus represents the state of the entire Church ever since the time of the apostles. Loss of first love is what has characterized it. Hence the appropriateness of our Lord presenting Himself as in connection with the whole Church, as described in the first chapter, rather than in any specific way.—S. R.

have against thee that thou hast left thy [y] first love. Remember therefore from [z] whence thou hast fallen,

[y] *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 8. *cf.* Jer. 2. 2. *cf.* Gal. 3. 1-4; *cf.* Ezek. 16. 8. [z] *cf.* Ps. 42. 4.

If it is faith that sets to work and gives character to the working, it is love that labors; so to the Thessalonians the apostle speaks of the "work of faith and labor of love." The labor here implies that it went as far as weariness; not spiritual, of course, but that the labor was real and hard. This might readily exhaust the strength, and bring the labor to an end; but here it was sustained, enduring; and that was in Thessalonians the characteristic of hope. Hope has in it, as we know, the spirit of endurance. Let hope decline, there is no longer energy for this. Thus faith, love, hope, have their proper place here;* but there is more than this. Endurance itself may end sometimes in tolerance of that which is to be endured. At Ephesus they could not bear evil men. There was no tolerance in this way. There was no lessening of evil in their eyes by the having to meet it constantly. They had met it, in fact, as it was making the highest pretensions. They had had to try those who said they were apostles, and were not. How remarkable to find so early such a pretension! They had not been daunted by it, but had tested and found them liars. Already we have an intimation of what was soon to come in. There are, as we know, presumed successors of the apostles at the present time. Paul has taught us in his own case how God has broken through that thought of succession, and that an apostle must produce his credentials direct from heaven. There is no thought anywhere in Scripture of succession to such an office. A succession to Peter himself, as the first of the apostles, was beyond even the height of the pretension here, and God has sufficiently guarded against it. Thus Paul it is who receives both the gospel in its fulness and the truth of the Church in its full character, and takes Peter himself to task for conduct that was inconsistent with this. Peter here disappears from the history, while Paul is the instrument of the Spirit, taken up and presented to us in the Acts, with whom the character and success, or otherwise, of Christian doctrine is henceforth identified; but men are easily daunted by a high pretension, and fear irreverence too much in questioning that which comes in such a way. At Ephesus as yet they had not feared to question. Already, therefore, there was that in the Church itself which would rightly awaken alarm for what was coming in; but they had endured and borne, and for Christ's name's sake too; and as to spiritual energy had not wearied.

All thus far is plain commendation then. How strange and solemn that with all this there was yet a worm at the root which might destroy it all! "But I have against thee," the Lord adds, "that thou hast left thy first love." There is no "somewhat," as in our common version. It is not put as if this could be a little thing; and this is the more striking because afterwards, where we find that when evil had grown much beyond what we have here, the Lord does speak of it as "somewhat." Thus to Pergamos He says, "I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there those that hold the doctrine of Balaam;" but we should say, and rightly say, that that was a *great* thing. Here, on the other hand, Ephesus hates the works of the Nicolaitans, who were only the beginning, as we shall see, of that Balaam evil. Yet the Lord cannot say "somewhat" here. The evil had not yet outwardly appeared at all. It was the Lord alone, as we may say, who could detect the actual decline which had taken place. But this beginning of decline is, after all, the great thing. Were there no beginning, there could be no fruit such as follows afterwards; and the loss of first love here is that which touches most nearly the heart of Him to whom Ephesus is an "object of desire." Love seeks love that shall answer to it, and the stronger the love that seeks, the more is every failure to find it realized. Here

* But is it not significant that neither faith, hope nor love are mentioned here? The *works* of these were present, produced indeed by them, but with a loss of spiritual energy suggested by the absence of the first love; the motive power has also been lost, and significantly it is not mentioned, suggesting at least its decline.—S. R.

and repent, and do the [a] first works; but if not, I am coming unto thee, and will [b] remove thy lampstand out

[a] *cf.* Heb. 6. 10. *cf.* Heb. 10. 32-34; *cf.* Acts 4. 34, 35. [b] *cf.* Lev. 14. 43-45; *cf.* ch. 3. 16.

was in fact, the beginning of all the long history of evil;—first love was already gone; not *love*, of course, but the first freshness and fulness of it. What characterizes first love is evidently full satisfaction with the object of it; and here is what Christ must be to the soul that knows Him. The knowledge of the new man is, "Christ is all;" and when He has ceased to be all for the soul, the anchor of the soul has slipped. How far one may drift after that, is an open question. Christ, we know, will not be unfaithful; and if He goes after that which is lost until He find it,—if we have all been found when we were lost,—the love that was towards us then will never leave us. But, as far as we are concerned, how far the soul may drift we cannot say, except that, of course, it cannot be into apostasy. But the loss of first love affects everything. Then the "first works" are of necessity gone with it, and so the Lord speaks here: "Remember from whence thou hast fallen, and repent, and do the first works;" for the soul that is no longer finding full satisfaction in Christ must of necessity seek to supplement Him in some way, and must of necessity seek this in that which only increases the uneasiness.* There will be need still more and more of finding that which never can be found. Christ all, to the soul, is fulness of satisfaction. With Christ alone, we cannot fail of entire happiness. But Christ supplemented by something else is Christ dishonored, and thus we find a famine in our own land, and are, as it were, driven down to Egypt perforce—a terrible thing for a Christian, when that which is really his own has thus waned in its power over him: when he has yet so much sense of what Christ is that he can no longer find in the world even what the worldling finds in it, and yet cannot find satisfaction in that which is his own either. Communion is lost, for there can be no proper communion with a dishonored Christ; and thus there is no true repentance for a soul until it has got back to the first condition.

There is solemn question for us all here, and we can see how this book of Revelation will search out our hearts! No proper servant can there be with a half-heart for Christ, and thus we can understand how we should have this set before us at the very entrance upon that which is addressed to the servant. Christ must have His place, not *a* place, but His own place; and if not, there will be no proper light for the world. The removal of the lampstand out of its place is naturally what comes of it.† The testimony of the Christian is that he has found an Object of satisfaction which the world has not found. When such an one seeks the world, the world itself knows well how to estimate this. When the objects that other men have become our objects, we may profess what we will as to Christ, but we shall only be the more false witnesses to Him by the very profession. It is a solemn thing to realize that a Christian cannot in this way really give up his place as witness, but he is a witness either for Christ or against Him. Identified with Christ as he is, the world turns necessarily to him to inquire what he has found in Christ. If he is seeking water at all the broken cisterns around him, there will be no need to say that, some way, that continual spring of which the Lord has spoken as in the soul of him that knows Him, is nevertheless failing. Thus the lamp which is lighted to go out to meet the Bridegroom, of necessity fails. It is not a question of doctrine, but of the heart; and we can no longer commend the doctrine when the heart is out of it. The con-

* Note that the Lord does not say "See *to* what," but "remember *from* what thou hast fallen." They were turned back, were not even to be unduly occupied with their present condition. This would enable them truly to measure the distance of their fall, and at the same time held out the means of their recovery.—S. R.

† Here again the warning is characteristic and significant. It is in keeping with the way in which our Lord presents Himself, as we saw. Holding the lights—the stars—in His hand, He has power to remove the very vessel of testimony. This really looks on to the end when the Church is set aside as in Laodicea. How solemnly thus the beginning and end of a course of departure from the Lord are brought together.—S. R.

of its place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the works of the [c]Nicolaitans, which

[c] ver. 15. *ctr.* 1 Pet. 5. 2, 3. *cf.* Matt. 24. 49.

dition here is just so much the more significant that there is no evil work spoken of; and how easily we satisfy ourselves with looking at our lives with a dull conscience which can recognize nothing particularly wrong, and from the world's point of view has nothing, in fact, to recognize. Spite of all this, there may already be at work that which has made distance between the soul and Christ, the very distance itself only making one less capable of estimating evil; recognizing it, no doubt, where natural conscience would, but nothing further. The natural conscience, merely, knows nothing of Christ; and how soon a Christian may get into a condition in which he too is content to judge much as the world judges, and thus does not accept the reproof which a moment with Christ would make him conscious of.

In fact, at Ephesus they had not yet departed far. Only they had had to turn from Him necessarily to depart at all. Yet the Lord closes here with words which once more have a certain commendation in them: "This thou hast, that thou hatest the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate." We shall find by and by a "doctrine of the Nicolaitans" which has come in. It is no doctrine that is yet spoken of. We may be sure, therefore, in spite of the commentators, that doctrine there is as yet none. Nicolaitanism is as yet something in the heart rather than the mind,—none the less evil indeed on that account, for it is through the heart that the mind is perverted, and we may remember how in the epistle to the Ephesians itself the apostle speaks of the eyes of their hearts being enlightened. The heart that is astray forms its doctrine to justify itself. The error of the heart becomes thus the error of the mind.

But what was this Nicolaitanism? We are referred by Church writers to a set of gnostics, who, if they existed, (which is doubtful,) could only have arisen after this. We are told, also, that what is here is simply Antinomianism; but there is no evidence at all to justify the statement. Any sect of Nicolaitans, known as such, it has been impossible to find; and it is evident, in fact, that whatever tradition may say in the matter is the fruit of the effort to find that which, from what is spoken here, was thought *must* have existed. How could the Lord speak of Nicolaitans if there were none? It is obvious He could not; but the question is, is the name simply historical, or is it symbolical—as all Revelation so manifestly is? The word means, as there can be no doubt whatever, "One who conquers (or gets the upper hand of) the people;" and the word for "people" here, "the *laos*," is that from which, significantly, has come "laity,"—a word never found in Scripture, but in common use everywhere. It is as plain as can be that there is no Christian laity in the New Testament; and that which is the opposite of it, which is in contrasted connection, the clergy, is not in Scripture either. The clergy, "*cleroi*," are, according to the name, those who are the Lord's lot, His peculiar portion. It is a term derived from the Old Testament and Judaism, where the Lord, however, was to be the lot in an especial way of those brought near to Him as the people at large were not—the priests and Levites. Nothing remains for us really to judge of what is here except that significant name. If we judge by it, "Nicolaitans" are a class who (themselves, of course, *not* laity) subject the Lord's people as laity to themselves. There is nothing necessarily immoral about them, and what is stated of them here cannot be rightly held to such an inference. They are not the Balaam-followers who in Pergamos are distinctly separated from them. We have, in fact, nothing that can more define them than the fact that they were Nicolaitans, whose "works" are first spoken of, and then their doctrine. If we are to judge by Scripture, (and we have positively nothing else to judge by,) then these who are not laity must be naturally clergy, a result which one would think would suggest itself to any mind. They are not yet in a positive place as such. There is no doctrine with regard to it. The Lord's people

I also [d]hate. He that hath an [e]ear, let him hear what the [f]Spirit saith to the assemblies. To him that [g]over-

[d] *cf.* Matt. 18. 1-11. *cf.* Matt. 20. 25-28. [e] ver. 11, etc; Matt. 13. 43; *cfr.* Matt. 13. 14, 15. [f] *cf.* 1 Tim. 4. 1. [g] ver. 11, etc; ch. 21. 7; *cf.* 1 Jno. 5. 4; *cf.* Rom. 8. 37; *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 57; *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 14.

have not been content as yet to take their place as in subjection, as laity, to any separate class of this kind. There are Nicolaitans in deeds, not yet in doctrine. There are people, we may say, who take, in fact, such a separate place, act as if they were in a nearness to the Lord which others have not, and that, we would say, officially. It may seem intensely strong, the condemnation of such in the Lord's words, "which I also hate." He does not, of course, say that He hates the *persons*, but their deeds; and when we realize what such things mean, when we realize how the whole character of the Church has been affected by them, we shall not, perhaps, wonder any more at the strength of such an expression.

God has given gifts to the Church. Christ gone up on high has given gifts to men. By the very fact of the Church being the body of Christ, gifts are implied (Rom. xii. 6), for each member must have its functions. This is what a "body" necessarily means. This is organization, and an organization of the Church is thus of God. It is in no wise left to man's arrangements. The gift is from God Himself, and the responsibility to use it results from the having it. Moreover, every member having its gift, there can be no separation of one from another in this way. There is, of course, diversity in the gifts themselves. Says the apostle, "He has given some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers." Some things here, moreover, are necessarily public in a way that others are not; but there is no special class who are beyond others "God's lot," or to whom beyond others God is their lot. Apostles and prophets laid the foundation. There remains for us only the work that they have accomplished: the foundation does not go all the way up the building. Evangelists, pastors and teachers remain. They are a continual necessity to the Church, and as this are continually being given. We are surely to thank God for His mercy in this way. But are not His chief mercies in our hands oftentimes the things most abused; the best things, capable of worst corruption? With all this we cannot find anywhere in Scripture what the quotation given awhile since makes necessary to the constitution of an assembly, the "authorized minister" who takes charge of it, who is to have in this way the laity subject to himself. Ministers are *servants*, as the apostle reminds the Corinthians, and belong to the saints and not the saints to them; and, moreover, there is not such an idea anywhere as any teacher being the exclusive teacher of an assembly, nor any pastor being the exclusive pastor of a flock which may thus be called *his* flock; and as to the evangelist, there needs no assertion that the evangelist is not the evangelist of an assembly, but one who in his very character goes out to the world with the message of life and death, by which souls are to be converted and the Church built up. These gifts are gifts which belong to a common treasury. They are given as common blessings to the whole Church of God. Being men, they are still imperfect and fallible, however qualified by the Spirit for their work, and as thus imperfect and dependent they are not set in solitary places to be all-sufficient even to two or three in any particular place, but as helpers to one another, helpers to the Church at large; they have everywhere their open field of blessed service with which no one can interfere without derogation to the authority of Christ Himself, who is alone their Master. The thought of even the fewest conceivable number of God's people being handed over to any one,—the most highly gifted that could be,—to minister to all their necessities, is not only, as it plainly is, entirely unscriptural, but it is the depriving of the Church at large of the use of gift which belongs to all, and the ready means by which the different assemblies become built up in errors naturally consequent upon such a state of things as this, where the defects of the individual are not compensated by that which is ordained of God for the correction of mere individualities, and the needful supply of that which the individual may be entirely incompetent to give.

cometh, will I give to eat of the [h] tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

[h] ch. 22. 2, 14, 19. *ctr.* Gen. 2. 9; *ctr.* Gen. 3. 22.

The epistle to the Corinthians already shows us the natural growth of what we have here. At Corinth surely there was not, as to the whole, a state of first love. This is clear by what else was going on. Christ was being supplemented in various ways. The wisdom of the world was replacing the wisdom that was in Him; and in spite of their coming behind in no gift, they were at the same time, as the apostle tells them, carnal and even babes in Christ. In such a condition of things Nicolaitanism is the natural result; but we find its growth here not at first due to the assumption of individuals so much as to the condition of the saints as a whole, who were already forming themselves into schools of teaching with such or such a teacher as the leader of the school. They were saying, "I am of Paul and I of Apollos," and were thus making themselves disciples of men. They were coming to belong to those who in God's thought belonged to them. This is the very secret of Nicolaitanism—the people subjected to the one who leads them. It is evident that all that is needed now is for men to step into the places thus prepared for them. Consent is required on both sides before there can be what indeed did prevail at Corinth. Here Paul and Apollos were not those who could adapt themselves to the system forming; and in fact, as the apostle says, he only "in a figure transferred these things" to Apollos and himself. The actual leaders were far different ones; but it is easy to see how, with the worldliness which prevailed among them, such a system would necessarily find favor. The mass might devote themselves to their worldly occupations, assured that their interests would be better cared for by a class devoted to spiritual things, who could give their whole energies to them. It was only a most suitable division of labor in their eyes, and still commends itself to the mass everywhere as such. In Ephesus there were those who were ready to act this part, but the assembly at large refused it. Christ too refuses it with His whole heart. Here it was as yet scarcely even in its forming stage; but we shall by and by find it fully formed, and learn better with what it connects itself, and how sure a sign it is of declension from primitive Christianity.

It is here that the warning voice is heard, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the assemblies." There is need already of such an admonition as this, and let us notice that it is to the assemblies that the Spirit speaks, and it is the assembly that is to know, therefore, what the Spirit says. There is nowhere recognized an intermediate class which, if it existed, would be surely, rather, that which the Spirit would address; but all here is intensely individual. "He that hath an ear, let him hear" points out at once the overcomer and the need of overcoming, and the promise is connected with this: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the paradise of God." There is to be an overcoming now in the Church of God itself, and thus no going with the multitude is possible. Each must be awake to his responsibility. He is addressed to be, in a right way, independent of circumstances, of the condition of those around him, dependent upon Christ alone. It is the voice of Christ to which the Spirit gives utterance. The promise itself carries us back, as we have seen it characteristic of Revelation to do, to the beginning; and yet not really to the old state of things as that would imply, but to that which lay hidden as a germ, nevertheless, in that primitive condition. Here is again the tree of life and paradise, but it is not Adam's paradise any more; it is the paradise of God; and the tree of life speaks of another life than what was Adam's naturally—life in dependence still, for that must necessarily be the condition of the creature, and while the life which we have is eternal life it is none the less dependent. It derives its stability from the One in whom the believer finds it. It is life *in Christ*, and thus abides for us beyond the power of anything within us or around to take away. Here it is the partaking of the fruits that is in question, of course, and we shall find these fruits at

2 (8-11): Smyrna. The open assault and secret snare of the enemy. The synagogue of Satan.

8 And to the angel of the assembly in Smyrna write: These things saith the [t]first and the last, who became [j]dead, and [k]liveth. I know thy [l]tribulation and thy [m]poverty, (but thou art [n]rich); and the blasphemy of

t ch. 1.17,18. j cf. 1 Thess. 4. 14. k cf. 1 Cor. 15. 20. l cf. Jno. 16. 33; cf. Ps. 142. 3; cf. Ps. 56. 8. m ctr. ch. 3. 17; Jas. 2. 5; cf. 2 Cor. 6. 10. n cf. 2 Cor. 8. 9; cf. Eph. 3. 8; cf. Phil. 4. 19.

the close of Revelation in the picture given us of the heavenly Jerusalem, where the tree of life yields its abundant fruitage continually, and unexhausted. The life itself we have, thank God, already; but the fruits of it, how little can we speak of these as yet! They remain to be known, as the promise here implies, when we are in the blessed scene to which the tree of life belongs.*

8 We pass on now to the assembly at Smyrna, and here we find what is admitted on all hands to be a perfect representation of the Church in its early persecutions under the heathen emperors. The very name "Smyrna" speaks of this. It means "myrrh," the bitter but fragrant perfume with which they embalmed the dead, but which speaks, therefore, of a death which is not simply death, a death that is precious; that is, as it were, incense to God; for myrrh formed part of the incense which God commanded Israel to prepare, and "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." In such death there must be of necessity the promise of resurrection. We have here, then, the open assault of the enemy on the one hand: we have a much more successful snare even, because secret, of the enemy on the other. The two go smitedly together. The roar of the lion is well suited to drive into the hidden snare; and here, in fact, was the preparation for what we shall find later in Pergamos, where the Church is now "dwelling where Satan's throne is," under the protection, as it were, of Satan himself. The Church assailed by the world is tempted to seek even to the world for defense against this. In compromise with it it will find deliverance from these open attacks,—yea, more than this, even a place and respectability in it, as at Corinth again they were all finding. They were "full," were "rich," had reigned as kings, anticipating the time when the saints indeed shall reign, and losing by this anticipation the fellowship of those who were, as Paul says, set forth even as men appointed to death.

To the angel of the assembly in Smyrna the Lord writes with sympathetic encouragement as "the First and the Last," the One beyond all human changes, and abiding with all the preciousness of this at all times for His saints. Nevertheless, He is one who has been in death and come out of it. They have but to follow Him to find how fully the way is prepared for them through death itself, and that truest life which is beyond it. He recognizes, then, the tribulation in which for His sake they were, and the poverty in a worldly sense which suited well a state of spiritual riches. The words here are in commendation, not such as we shall find addressed to Laodicea at the close. In Laodicea they too were rich, they had grown rich; but not with such riches as Christ could recognize. For Him, although they knew it not, they were the wretched and miserable, the poor and blind and naked. Here, while He recognizes the poverty in which they were at Smyrna, it is He Himself who reminds them of how rich, nevertheless, they are.

The next words here are in question as to their application. By most "the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not" is taken to refer to the well known, constant enmity of the unbelieving nation against the followers of the Messiah whom they had rejected. They are spoken of evidently here as if outside those whom the Lord is addressing. Nor is the angel charged with responsibility for their presence. They thus might easily be understood to be entirely outside Christianity, enemies and nothing else; especially as we know

* The promise to the overcomer is in keeping with the general character of the state described, while of course divinely suited to that state. To partake of the tree of life is the common portion of all the Church, and the special contrast with that loss of first love which the believer is to overcome.—S. R.

those who [o]say they are Jews, and are not, but are a [p]synagogue of Satan. [q]Fear not what thou art about

o ch. 3. 9. cf. Gal. 6. 12, 13 with Acts 15. 1, etc. p cf. 2 Cor. 11. 14, 15 with Matt. 16. 22, 23; cf. Gal. 1. 8. q Isa. 43. 1, 2; cf. Jno. 16. 33.

from the history in the Acts itself how thoroughly the Jewish opposers, stirred by the Gentiles against the growing Church, as in the case of Paul himself, were thus largely the authors of Gentile persecution. Nevertheless, if the matter were so simple an one, it is evident that it becomes by so much less significant in such an address as the present. Moreover, as we look at the words, it is hard to understand them of those who were in some sense (however little they were in God's sight such) Jews, really the seed of Abraham after the flesh, however little partakers of his spirit. Nor can we understand the need that they would have for asserting what they were in this way. A Jew was very evidently a Jew, and had his acknowledged status as such in the Roman empire. Again, if these words do not speak of it, then it is certain that what was one of the most striking features in the Church's decline is wholly omitted in what we have here, which, certainly, is just the place in which we might expect to find it.

Judaism was not simply an external evil to the Church at the beginning It was, as we know, from the very beginning that which threatened really its existence according to the constitution God has given it. This was the matter which the assembly at Jerusalem had to consider—the question whether the Gentiles were under the law or no. For a moment and so far, this was decided in that letter in which it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to them to put upon the Gentiles no such burden as was sought to be imposed. The principle here went much further than the letter itself actually did, for if the burden of the law which, as the apostle says, neither they nor their fathers were able to bear was not to be imposed upon the Gentile, then how could it be left upon the Jew? The Church is one. In it there is neither Jew nor Greek, and, as Paul writes to the Galatians, those who were justified, as all were necessarily, apart from the law ("for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified"), could not after this rightly return and put themselves under that law which had thus already been set aside for them. Thus the question might seem decided; but it was not really so, and the Judaizing Church we see beginning in that epistle to the Galatians, in which the apostle speaks after this manner. The Galatians were Gentiles, and not Jews at all. They had received God's grace, and the Spirit as the fruit of that grace—a gift which Judaism had not for its proselytes; and yet those who had begun in the Spirit were now seeking, as he tells them, to be made perfect in the flesh, and going back to carnal ordinances.

In the epistle to the Colossians we find the apostle meeting also tendencies of this nature, where he tells them that the handwriting, or obligation, of ordinances, which was against them and contrary to them, Christ had taken out of the way, nailing it to His cross. They were not to be judged, therefore, with regard to a sabbath, or the meats and drinks of Judaism.

The epistle to Timothy speaks still more decisively of those who, in the Church though they were, were seeking to be teachers of the law, not understanding, as he says, what they were saying—the terrible consequences which would ensue from this. But thus the struggle with Judaism was not a mere outside one, but one which in the Church itself had its fullest significance. It was now, in fact, that in which the attack of the enemy upon the grace of the gospel was most apparent, and the Church itself became changed, not merely in outward form, but in the whole spirit of it, into a mere continuation of what men speak of still as the Jewish Church—no doubt with added privileges, and a certain freedom from the regard of Jewish observances, but still rather the heir of the earthly Jerusalem than that which is above, "our mother." If it is impossible, as it is indeed impossible, that so mighty and significant a change could be overlooked, then we may well realize the strength of the language of the Lord here, which characterizes the party identified with the introduction of such a change as men who said they were Jews and were not, but were "the synagogue of Satan."

We could not expect that the assembly would be branded as this. The Lord could not do so. Yet, as we look at what is here, we cannot but see how thoroughly the change which steadily went on is marked for us. The synagogue was, of course, the name of the Jewish assembly, and exactly characterized it. It was not, in the Christian sense, an assembly, an "*ecclesia*," a people called out of the world and separate from it, but simply "a gathering together," as "synagogue" means, indefinite and promiscuous, believers and unbelievers confounded in it, as in fact was the case in Judaism. The thing sought thus to be introduced, synagogue instead of *ecclesia*, would be manifestly *Satan's* synagogue—that which the adversary was setting up in opposition to the truth. For Judaism introduced into Christianity can no longer be the Judaism that once was. It is impossible to recall that. When God gave it, it was, of course, for the time being, according to God; it was something, as the apostle says of the law, which came in by the way as a schoolmaster until the time that faith should have distinctly taken its place as God's principle, the only principle that He can recognize. Thus "Christ died," says the apostle John, "for that nation" (of Israel); "and not for that nation only, but also that He might gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." The Jewish system necessarily scattered these. It did not own the children of God as such. It did not distinguish them in Israel from those who were not such, and those that were outside of Israel it did not recognize at all. Now the principle is, as was proclaimed to Cornelius, that "God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him." This, of course, could only be the work of divine grace, and the principle itself is, as we see in the case of Cornelius, the setting aside of Judaism.

But thus manifestly also the mixed congregation which Judaism tolerated could not be brought into that nearness to God which faith alone could claim; and there being no distinct separation, those that were true children of God must accept the distance which alone was possible in the case of the others. Thus it should be plain what the introduction of a Jewish system into the Church would signify for the Church. The law could not justify. It was intended to condemn, and could rightly do nothing else than this. Could it have done so, it would not have answered the purpose for which God gave it. But thus, as the law could not justify, believers under it could never enjoy that justification which it is now the privilege of every saint to know, assuredly, as the foundation of everything for him. In fact—how soon! Paul's doctrine being left behind, (for he alone it is who distinctly speaks of justification) this came into corresponding uncertainty among professing Christians. For centuries, until the Reformation, justification by faith was known only—and even then scarcely with perfect clearness—by a few scattered if not hunted souls, buried in a mass of mere profession in which the old conditions of Judaism were necessarily found once more.

But again: the knowledge of justification lacking, meant, of course, the impossibility of distinguishing the true Church from the false. The true Church became, as people have even now to say, the *invisible* Church, and with every one it became a question of how to gather the best way he could the indications of his faith. He had, according to the way the apostle's words are quoted, to "examine himself whether he was in the faith and prove his own self." On the other hand, it became the part of charity to exclude as few as possible from the possibility of being what they professed. Sacraments came in thus to give a kind of certainty which was else lacking. Baptism was "for the remission of sins." It was plainly easy for any to determine for himself whether or not he was baptized, much easier than to prove satisfactorily his conversion. Thus the great stress came to be laid on baptism. In it God's grace could be emphasized in the fullest way, and even a Chrysostom could say, "Although a man should be foul with every vice, the blackest that could be named, yet should he fall into the baptismal pool, he ascends from the divine waters purer than the beams of noon." It is quite true that, in the face of what these baptized Christians

to suffer. Behold the [r]devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried, and ye shall

[r] cf. Acts 12. 1, 2. cf. Dan. 3. 15-18.

very frequently turned out to be, it was impossible to think of a salvation for them eternally, as Scripture makes it. The doctrine as to this was necessarily, therefore, soon lost; and while thus Chrysostom could say again that with baptism "are connected all the benefits of heirship and the community of interests with the family" (of God), yet to fall after baptism became not only possible doctrinally, but had abundant examples pleaded in proof. How to find their way back in this case to the condition they had lost was the problem then. It was manifestly much more difficult to find forgiveness of sins once more after having lost it. Here penances and what not naturally came in to give a measure of ease to the conscience, while priestly absolution represented, on the other side, once more, divine grace; and thus a hope, somewhat indefinite, no doubt, could be gained or regained at last by almost any. With this the power of the Church, that is to say, what practically stood for it now, the clergy, grew apace.

The inheritance from Judaism is in all this plainly to be seen, only it was now a Judaism far more pretentious than that of old, and thus very different in character. In Judaism the ceremonies plainly pointed onwards to what was still to come. In many ways their inefficacy for true salvation was made manifest; while, on the other hand, in the Judaized Christianity now coming in, that which had before been only pointed to was asserted to have come. Christ the Saviour had plainly come, and this being all the salvation that He had wrought, it was all the salvation that any could look for. The darkness was no longer the darkness of men who were waiting in hope for the daybreak. It was a darkness this side of eternity little relieved. Those most careless might hope most easily. Those realizing more what sin was would come more completely under the power of the priestly system which had now become the Church itself, but against which, none the less, the awakened conscience pleaded, spite of all that could be done to assure it. Who that will contemplate all this (which is only the statement of what was undeniably the doctrine of what assumed to be the Catholic Church for centuries) but must realize the truth of the title given by the Lord to those who introduced it, of "the synagogue of Satan." It is not meant, of course, that the Church became this, at whatever time in her history and amid all the darkness we are called to contemplate her. The Lord would make a difference, and teach us to make a corresponding difference therefore, between the teachers and the taught, those who introduced the system and those who came into it as a sad inheritance left them by their fathers—Scripture itself more or less kept from them, with only enough pleaded from it to put the Church in the authority sought for it, as in that clipped quotation, "Hear the Church;" the word of God being thus made to sanction its own abandonment, and to deliver up souls to the most enormous imposture that the world has ever seen.

But we are going on beyond where we have yet arrived, in the period which Smyrna characterizes, and the Lord's words here would teach us that not without a struggle was all this accomplished. Indeed, Church history alone assures us (and that by comparison with Scripture) of the fact of the accomplishment. For it, of course, it was no transformation, but professedly Christianity as it came from the Lord and the apostles. That there was no struggle against it is impossible to be believed, and it is to this that the words here plainly point. The "blasphemy," or slander, of the Jewish party accordingly had been directed against those who have the Lord's commendation here. Here we must remember that the making of history has been in the hands of what, according to this, would be the triumphant party; and we can hardly expect that, this being so, we should have in it, in any wise as it was, the true account of the matter. It was an age in which men did not hesitate to forge the names of those who were in repute to spurious documents, and even with the express design of giving authority to some favorite doctrine. Scripture itself is decisive as to the

have tribulation ten days. Be thou [s]faithful unto death, and I will give thee the [t]crown of life. He that hath an [u]ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the assemblies. He that [v]overcometh shall in no wise be hurt of the second death.

s *cf.* Col. 1. 23.
cf. Mk. 13. 13.
t 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8. Jas. 1. 12.
u ver. 7. etc.
v ch. 20. 6-14; ch. 21. 8.

rapid departure from Paul, while, of course, his name was held in becoming honor; yet his own words as to what was taking place in this very Asia, at the time he wrote his last epistle, give us more than a hint of what was going on; while at Rome there was already a state of things which would clearly allow of such departure. Solemn it is to realize the completeness of it at so early a date as we are forced to do, but it is only in the order of things with regard to anything entrusted to man from the beginning. How long did our first parents live in Paradise? What has been the constant record of succeeding generations? The history of the ancient people of God closes with the decisive rejection of the Son of the Father sent to them in divine love; and in the Church, with all the additional blessings which God had made its own, we must yet not wonder if history repeats itself. From Paul himself we know that "the mystery of iniquity" was already at work, and that the final issue would be an apostasy, out of which would rise that "man of sin" who is destroyed only by the breath of the Lord, and consumed in the brightness of His coming.

We thus find in Smyrna a second stage of the decline. The Church was seeking to make terms with the world. God in mercy was suffering them, on the other hand, to find what was the world's essential opposition to the grace of which they were witnesses. It was, alas, for the mass ineffectual, as we know, and the Church, come out of her ten days' tribulation prophesied here, came out of it only to clasp hands with the world in full reality.* It is to the suffering, not to the reigning Church that the Lord is speaking; and we need not wonder that to her His words are full only of encouragement and assurance: "Be thou faithful unto death" He could say to those who were thus in fellowship with Him in His rejection; "I will give thee the crown of life." The resurrection of the saint would be, in fact, such a crown of life to these sufferers, the eternal life which was already theirs manifesting itself in supremacy over death, through the power of Him who had vanquished it for them, and who will, as the apostle expresses it in the epistle to the Romans, "reign in life by the One, Christ Jesus." His encouragement to the overcomer is similar in character to this: "He that overcometh shall in no wise be hurt of the second death." He is not here using, as we shall find Him doing presently, "the sharp sword with two edges," but rather applying His own sweet balm for the wounds inflicted by the enemy. He puts alongside of the death which some of them are to suffer the awful darkness of the second death, only to say, You have escaped entirely from this, how light a thing, then, is the other!†

2. As we pass into the second section now, we find the evil threatening become a positive fact, and the Church more openly slipped away from Christ and

* The "ten days" persecutions spoken of here are no doubt symbolic, as so much else is in this book. Ten is the number which speaks of the full measure of responsibility. Thus their persecution will be only up to that measure. God would not suffer them to be tried above what they were able to bear—such as was "common to man." This would apply both to the local assembly and to that period of the Church's history which it symbolized. It has been sought to identify these ten days with ten specific times of persecution under the Roman Emperors, but it is difficult and needless to attempt this. In like manner, reference has been made to the ten plagues in Egypt; doubtless the only connection is in the significance of the number in each case.—S. R.

† It is needless to say that life, while spoken of here as a crown, is not in any sense earned by the faithful. It is the gift of God, but in connection with that gift is the reward, not distinguished from it. So too the promise to the overcomer. All believers do overcome and none shall be hurt of the second death For those, however, who have passed through the Smyrna persecutions there will be special significance in that escape. They might be called to pass through the first death, might incur all the malice and rage of man, but that which God inflicts they will forever escape.—S. R.

2 (12-29): The enemy's alliance: seduction and idolatry spreading and growing more evil.

2. [1] And to the angel of the assembly in Pergamos write:—These things saith he that hath the [w]sharp two-edged sword. I know where thou [x]dwellest, where Satan's throne is.

[w] ch. 1. 16. ver. 16. Heb. 4. 12.
[x] *cf.* Lk. 21. 35. *cf.* ch. 3. 10. *cf.* ch. 17. 8.

[1] (12-17): Pergamos dwelling where

from subjection to His Word, accepting the enemy's alliance; and here again we have two stages. In the first, at Pergamos, they are dwelling where Satan's throne is. They have accepted, consciously or not, a place in what is his kingdom, in that world whose prince is not Christ, but the adversary of Christ. The consequences are marked and many, as we would expect; but there is still a second stage to follow, in which a more pretentious form appears. The name of Jezebel is connected with the old Jewish history in such a manner as to stamp the woman here without any question; all the more because she assumes, nevertheless, to be a prophetess, and to teach by divine authority. We have had in the parables of the thirteenth of Matthew the woman, in just such connection, introducing the leaven into the meal which is in her hands—the pure doctrine of Christ committed to the Church. Here is certainly in Thyatira the same thing, only more openly done; and from this point, as we look back at Pergamos, we can realize that we have there also one of the parables of Matthew exemplified. The parable of the least of all seeds becoming a tree precedes that of the leaven, as Pergamos here precedes Thyatira; and in that tree—the evident type of the Church rooted in the earth and becoming a worldly power—the birds of the air lodge in the branches. The Lord Himself has interpreted this for us in the parable preceding, where they take away the good seed sown by the wayside; and the Lord refers this to Satan taking away from men what is sown in the heart. Now the tree shelters that which does this—again a picture which in Revelation is given from another side, in which the features are more developed, as we have seen is the case also with Thyatira. In both stages that are before us here the power of Satan manifest is unmistakable.

[1] Pergamos succeeds, then, to Smyrna, and now we find what surely has fullest meaning for us, that He who addresses it reminds them that He has the sharp "two-edged sword." There is reference to this also in the address itself. The Lord is using His Word here as that which is "living and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow;" but it is a Word which will come out in the end, as we find in the nineteenth chapter, as a Word of most positive judgment upon all His adversaries. There is no encouragement at all in such an appeal as this, but we shall find, all the more, a sweeter encouragement for the overcomer before the close. The darker the night, the more His stars will shine in it; and we know that He holds them in His hand all through. But there is now no more the blasphemy of adversaries of which He spoke to Smyrna. It is the actual state of the assembly itself with which He is concerned. Yet this is put in a way which presents precisely such a difficulty as only enables us to see the more the prophetic character and real power of what is in it. They are addressed as dwelling where Satan's throne is; and immediately it is added, in a way which seems to be commendation, that they hold fast Christ's name, and have not denied His faith, even in the days (martyr days now passed) in which Antipas His faithful witness was slain among them, "where Satan dwelleth." Thus it may seem as if, after all, here was, on the whole, a good state to be commended. Their dwelling where Satan's throne was would seem their misfortune more than their fault; and the whole matter becomes, for those who see no more than the actual Pergamos, a mystery scarcely to be understood. Trench even says, in speaking of Pergamos, "Why it should have thus deserved the name of 'Satan's throne,' so emphatically repeated a second time at the end of this verse,—'where Satan dwelleth,'—must remain one of the unsolved riddles of these epistles." We may allow that it remains thus a proof of how incompetent a merely local rendering is to explain what has in fact much larger and deeper application. It is somewhat bold, and for one like Trench, to assure us that if he has

Satan's [y]throne is; and thou [z]holdest fast my name, and hast not [a]denied my faith, even in the days in which Antipas was my [b]faithful witness, who was slain

a cf. 2 Tim. 2. 12; *cf.* Matt. 10. 33. *b cf.* Jno. 15. 27 with Jno. 16. 2; Heb. 12. 4.

y cf. Matt. 4. 8, 9 with Jno. 14. 30.
z ch. 3. 8.
, ver. 25.

not solved the mystery in question, it is destined to remain unsolved; but if so, the Lord's exhortation to us to keep the things that are written in this book must remain, in this respect, without any possibility of fulfilment. The fact is, we have little need of any historical inquiry in this case. If the fact be as Grotius and others have suggested, that there is here reference to the worship of Æsculapius, whose symbol was the serpent, this discovery only dismisses it at once from all concern of ours. It makes, as already said, the dwelling where Satan's throne is, as one may say, rather an accident than as anything that would characterize the assembly here; whereas, in fact, in the order of development which these addresses so plainly manifest, we have come exactly to that which in the most marked way characterizes the period which followed that of the heathen persecutions. Every one knows it was Constantine who put an end to these; and that the imperial throne became thus the recognized protector of the delivered Church. It might be urged, no doubt, that it then was Satan's throne no longer; but we must look much deeper before we can get proper assurance as to this. Satan's throne, which the world is, is not a local one. It is neither at Pergamos nor at Rome. It is universal, "The prince of this world cometh," says the Lord, "and hath nothing in Me." That too, it may be urged, was said before the cross, in which Satan received his judgment, and therefore before Christianity had even come in its proper character; but the apostle, as we find elsewhere, has met this argument in the completest way, and overthrown it. Satan, says the apostle, writing to the Corinthians, is not merely the prince of this world, but the "god" of it. He says, literally, not the god of this *world*, but "the god of this *age*." "In whom the god of this age hath blinded the minds of those who believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." The difference as to the word is significant. "The age" here is the word used in the second of Ephesians for the "course" of this world. It is the world in its course from the beginning to the end of it; a course which certainly had not ended when the apostle wrote. Christianity had then come, as no one can question; yet Satan still was the god of the age. He ruled the "course of the world," not as an ordinary ruler even, but as one who attracted—awful as it is to think of it—the worship of men's hearts. That is what "the god of this age" means; and that does not cease until, in the period yet to come, Satan is cast into the abyss, and shut up there, to deceive the nations no more until the 1000 years are fulfilled. Thus it is plain how little Satan's throne is limited to Pergamos, or is in any wise local.

Dwelling "where Satan's throne is," therefore, is simply dwelling in the world of which he is prince; yet some may ask as to this also, what moral character attaches to dwelling in the world? But Scripture at least is plain that the world is the place of our pilgrimage, not the place where we *dwell*.* It is the wilderness, not the "city of habitation," for the saint; and we shall find elsewhere, as we go on in Revelation, the dwellers upon the earth spoken of in this way. They are those who, instead of being pilgrims, have settled down in it. How this connects with Pergamos as giving us the time of the establishment of the Church, as men speak, is plain. In fact, everything was at once and largely changed, and it is quite in accordance with this also that it should be said to those here, "Thou holdest fast My name, and hast not denied My faith." It was, truly, a time of zealous orthodoxy; though this was altered afterward,

* In this connection it is significant that the same word is used to describe Satan's connection with the world; it is, "where Satan dwelleth." Surely that which can be described as the abode of Satan is sufficiently characterized. What reproach, then, when the same expression is also used of the professed people of God!—S. R.

among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a [c] few things against thee, because thou hast there those who hold the [d] doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast

[c] *ctr.* ver. 4. *cf.* ver. 20. [d] Num. 25. 1-3. 2 Pet. 2, 15.

when Arianism for the time came in like a flood. But the Council of Nice, which has given its name to one of the orthodox creeds of Christendom, showed this character. There is a glance here at the past in a special manner—"the days in which Antipas was My faithful witness," (witness and martyr were one in him,) "who was slain among you where Satan dwelleth." Antipas ("every one against") was a suited general name for such witnesses, when every one was against the man who testified for Christ. Times had changed since then, as is intimated, and another character belonged to the present. Thus everything suits the time succeeding the persecutions, and the name Pergamos is thoroughly significant. If divided in two, the latter part of the word is "gamos" a marriage." The other part is "though"—"a marriage though"! as if it were said, in spite of all that had so recently manifested the spirit of the world as against Christ, here now was the Church united to it in permanent relationship. The heart astray from Him, the spouse of Christ has given herself to another—a condition of things to which the words in James are the sharpest rebuke: "Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?"

No doubt they would have said, and indeed did say, that the world was a changed world under these circumstances; but when was the world ever changed so as really to have received Christ? It might throw the mantle of profession over its nakedness, but that was no change, surely, for the better; and if we take Scripture, there is not a hint throughout the New Testament of any betterness to be expected in it in this way The position of the Christian is characterized by this, that he is crucified to the world by the cross of Christ. No doubt the light of Christianity let in upon it had still power to drive many of the unclean things into their native darkness; and that manners were benefited, if not hearts purified, there need be no contention. The latter, the hand of Constantine, imperial ruler of the world as he might seem, was plainly inadequate to accomplish, and his own life was in no wise Christian. It is plain, then, how much was needed the two-edged sword to cut this unholy tie between the Church of Christ and the world of Satan. Such a compromise at the very beginning was necessarily setting God's word aside, and gave up His rights, as the very condition of its existence. *Every such compromise is, in fact, but a surrender.* The state induced, the Lord's next words show us; although here again they present a certain difficulty such as we have before found, and which requires the spiritual mind to set us free from. How could the Lord say in such a case as this, "I have a *few things* against thee," when, plainly, there were so many? The secret of this is a sorrowful and solemn one. Where first love is lost, and the soul therefore adrift from its true anchorage, the measure of things becomes necessarily altered. All afterwards would necessarily be little in comparison with the loss of that, to lose which was, in fact, to lose all power for steadfastness. Faith may still be held, while no longer in a good conscience; and, as the apostle warns in that connection, that is the way to shipwreck of the faith itself. The "few things" here were only in this sense few; but when the back is upon Christ, it is only a question of the depth of the resulting darkness. The Church was now settled in the world, and there follows as a matter of course that it should now have in it those who hold the doctrine of Balaam,—prophet of God in some sense, yet loving "the wages of unrighteousness." From hence came his "doctrine," in which the power of Moab (the world) was taught to cast a snare before the sons of Israel. The history we have in Numbers; and Jude has referred us to it as characterizing an intermediate state in the history of apostasy, between those who simply went in the way of Cain, and those who come out openly in the end in insurrection against the divine King and Priest, and so perish in the gainsaying of Korah. It is the ecclesiastical evil here, as Cain's is that of simple unbelief, and Korah's open apostasy. We know how much Balaam could

say that was true and right, and how zealously he could profess that not all the silver and gold that Balak could give could bribe him to say other than God had put into his mouth to say. Yet, spite of all this, Balaam was, according to his name, but "the destroyer of the people," who could take advantage of his very knowledge of what the people were to God, and what the God was to whom they were a people, to betray them to their ruin. We know by the history that the snare was to mix up the people of whom he had said, as from God, that they dwelt alone, and were not reckoned among the nations—to mix them up with these, so as to learn their manners.* The eating idol-sacrifices, and the moral evil connected so constantly with these, came in as the necessary result. Here we are not to think of a literal fulfilment. The impurity before us is that which, as we have seen, God speaks of in the same manner as, indeed, adultery; and idolatry soon came in, alas, in various shapes and under Christian names. In truth, it was another God than the One whom Christ had manifested, whom the masses came to worship—an evil against which the apostle John protests so earnestly in the last words of his first epistle, saying—"Children, keep yourselves from idols." Men must have some God; and there is no snare so seductive as what is in fact a false one, worshiped under the name of the true. Jesuitism afterwards taught the heathen everywhere simply to baptize their idols and retain them; and this has been repeated many times in the history of the professing Church. The temples dedicated to the Assyrian Queen of Heaven in Egypt became, one after another, nominally Christian churches, when Christians once had learned to talk of a queen of heaven too. The substitution of Mary for Astarte made no great difference.

In Balaam himself, as we know, the ruling motive was the seeking of reward. He was, for the time at least, Balak's hired prophet, and prophesied to suit his master, though compelled first to declare the counsel of God. It is easy to understand how, when the Church came to have in her hand the good things of the world, there should be plenty of false prophets after this manner, who would necessarily seek to maintain that worldly association to which they owed so much. Balaam had himself, as far as the history goes, no enmity against the people whom he thus betrayed. He merely sought his own, as the hired prophets of Christendom now would naturally do. There were of course many who, though connected with the system, were not in spirit followers of Balaam; nor is it here put as if this were the universal evil. The thing charged is that the professing Church had now manifest room for these. The system favored, and did not cast them out. The trouble is that men look at the individual without realizing the evil of the system of which the individual is the fruit. Moreover, the fact that all were not alike in this would incline men naturally to such a thought. An Ambrose or a Chrysostom would by his personal character, though exceptional, justify in the eyes of how many that with which they were connected; and when things are once established, the tendency is to accept them very much without question. "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain" is an argument as notable as ever. The comparatively few are those who, as the unsettled souls for which they are counted, disturb others with their desire to dig to the foundations. Tradition grows in honor by the multiplication of the generations who follow it, while truth strangely has no such ability, but needs to be constantly maintained of God, or is inevitably corrupted. Thus Rome has gone on adding doctrine to doctrine, as the years passed; always more and more away from the truth, and never turning towards it. Alas, it is only an exhibition of "the course of this world." Call the world the Church if you like; it does not alter it—a course which is under the rule of "the prince of the power

* It will be remembered that this mixture of Israel was with Moab and Midian, which typically suggest profession—Moab being kinsman with Israel according to the flesh—and the world, the "strife" coming in through lust. This is in accord with the spiritual meaning of Pergamos. Here is the unholy alliance with the world, and it is through profession that this is effected. The child of God instinctively shrinks from the world, open and manifest; but then profession is tolerated, so that the union with the world is effected by this go-between. Moab will lead on to the unholy marriage with Midian.—S. R.

a snare before the sons of Israel, to eat [e]idol sacrifices and commit fornication. So also hast thou those who hold the doctrine of the [f]Nicolaitans in like manner.

[e] ver. 20. Acts 15. 29. cf. 1 Cor. 5. 1. cf. 1 Cor. 10. 19-22.
[f] ver. 6.

of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." How great a snare, therefore, is this union of Church and world, in which necessarily the world gains all the Church loses, and the grieved Spirit seems almost no restraint upon the growth of the evil!

It is no wonder that here we find, along with those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, those now who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans in like manner. The two work well together. Nicolaitanism is, as we see now, a "doctrine." That which is spoken of as "deeds" in Ephesus is now crystalized into a doctrine to be accepted and defended. The people sunk in worldliness have become merely secular, and unfit for spiritual things. They naturally commit them, therefore, to those who are set apart to such things, who have time to devote themselves to them, and a training which they need, to find their way amid all the complexities that are necessarily arising. The Church must have its creeds, its canons, and its councils. The word of God can no more be trusted to settle things, where, on the contrary, so much is needed to be unsettled. Scripture would change the whole condition; but this only sets aside Scripture as unsuited to the times; and the wayfarer must not be a fool, but skilled in much traditional learning, if he would not err. The Jewish character of all this is evident. The work of the synagogue of Satan has wrought disaster enough. Scripture, with its direct simplicity of utterance, its word for individual consciences, its imperative claim of authority, if it cannot be permitted any more to judge, must be judged, or at least must practically drop very much out of thought; and this, we well know, was more and more the case. Souls everywhere in comparative distance from God, even those of the truest, were groping thus largely in the darkness. The spiritual were the clergy, or the spiritual life might be permitted to be realized in those who would bury themselves in the convent or hide in the desert. The Church, instead of the Spirit, was becoming the interpreter of Scripture; the Church determined doctrine for the mass, who, while in the mass they belonged to it, individually had scarcely place at all.

With all this, the ministry had naturally become a priesthood. This would be part of its inheritance from Judaism, but which on that very account was significant of the loss of Christian place and privilege which had come in. The very word "priest," in its history, is an indication of this. In Greek the word is *hiereus*, "one devoted to God" or "the God," "to the things of God." In this way the offerings, which were the *hiera*, were naturally in his hand to offer. The Latin word was similar, *sacerdos*, in the same way, "a person sacred or devoted to God." But this is characteristic of the whole Christian assembly, not of a class among Christians; and it is the apostle Peter himself, pre-eminently the Jewish apostle, and claimed by Rome as its first pope, who claims for them this character. They are, he says, "a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ;" but the very word "priest" shows how this had been departed from, for "priest" is nothing else than a contracted form of "presbyter" or "elder," which had naturally no such connection. With the elders the epistles to Timothy and Titus make us familiar; and we know from the Acts that the apostles appointed them in various assemblies. The elder, as we see in Timothy, was, as the word indicates, a man in years, who could take naturally the place of adviser to others, ministering the wisdom which he had gained by long familiarity with the needs and difficulties of the saints. "Elder" and "bishop" were thus practically synonymous, the last word simply meaning "overseer," thus characterizing the office which the elder had, one of fatherly oversight in the assembly. But there is no thought in it of any special privilege in drawing near to God. The transformation thus of elder or presbyter into priest is intensely significant. It originates in that which shows how the original place that all had as priests with God was lost, and this

[g] Repent, therefore; but if not, I am coming to thee quickly, and will make [h] war with them with the sword of my mouth. He that hath an [i] ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the assemblies. To him that over-

[g] vers. 5, 21. ch. 3. 19. *cf.* 2 Cor. 7. 9-11.
[h] *cf.* ch. 19. 11.
[i] ver. 29.

cf. 2 Thess. 2. 8; *cf.* Matt. 24. 51.

had become the inheritance of an official class. The special priesthood in Israel's case even, was contrary to that which God proposed for the Jewish people. They were to be what Christians are, "a kingdom of priests;" but under the legal covenant this was impossible. No one could upon that ground draw near to God at all. Even the priests were in the mass shut out from His presence; and the exceptional privilege of the high priest upon the day of atonement was scarcely privilege at all, in view of all the circumstances connected with it. The voice of the law was, as the Lord Himself declared it even to Moses, the mediator between Himself and the people, "Thou canst not see My face. There shall no man stand before Me and live." The official priesthood there, instead of involving any going out in ministry, such as the possession of the gospel necessitates for the Christian, was sustained with the well known fact that in Israel there was really none of this. The way into the holiest was not made manifest. God was in the darkness, not in the light. In very mercy He could not come out to the people, for it would have been their destruction; and thus, as there was no real coming out of God, no real going in to God, there was no message of peace and joy such as now His grace has given us. Christ "came and preached peace," says the apostle (Eph. ii. 17) "to those who were afar off," but also to those that were nigh as well; and he significantly adds, "For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father." This is the new thing in Christianity without which even priesthood in its full character was impossible, and thus the Christian priesthood goes far beyond the Jewish one: but in this way it is the priesthood not of a class, but of all. And if it has become that of a class, Christianity has lost of necessity one of its distinctive characters. And this is what the very thought of a laity implies, a "people" such as were Israel,—people of God, in a sense, but not brought near to God: a people who could not therefore, as those brought near, take up the things of God. Thus we see what a doctrine of Nicolaitanism must imply as to the general condition.*

We need not wonder then that the Lord said, "which thing I hate." Now His word is, "Repent therefore; and if not, I am coming to thee quickly, and will make war with them with the sword of My mouth." He does not say, *with thee*—guilty even as all were in the matter; but He knows how, as Jude instructs, "of some to have compassion, making a difference." And this sword of His mouth is, as we know, that which is in character discerning, discriminative. It separates between "joints and marrow," between "soul and spirit," and "is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." If we put all this together, it is impossible not to see that we have a growing evil condition among Christians plainly pointed out to us. There is an active energy of evil, a "mystery of iniquity," which already works; a power of Satan which is seeking to get between the soul and God, and under which all evils will be fostered and come more and more to their ripe fruit. There may be, and there is, as the apostle has told us, a present restraint. The Spirit of God is in the Church, and is not to be driven out by all the efforts of the enemy. Nevertheless, the path of His people is becoming more and more individual. Those that are true to Him will of necessity be more and more separated from the corrupt mass, and, if not outwardly, yet will be in spirit mourners over that with which they are in contact.

* While in the mercy of God the extreme of hierarchy ceased in the churches of the Reformation, yet much of the spirit of it remains in the clergyman. He is a person of special privilege, and alone permitted to perform certain rites. Thus the root of Nicolaitanism abides. We may thank God that many who bear the name of clergymen are true-hearted servants of Christ, and would repudiate any thought of being a sacred class. But the principle remains. —S. R.

cometh, will I give of the *j* hidden manna; and I will give him a *k* white stone, and on the stone a *l* new name written, which no one knoweth but he that *m* receiveth it.

j Ex. 16. 33, 34. Heb. 9. 4. *cf.* Phil. 3. 10.

cf. Phil. 1. 21 with Phil. 3. 12-14. *k cf.* 2 Sam. 23. 8, etc. *l cf.* Jno. 1. 42; *cf.* ch. 3. 12; *cf.* Isa. 62. 2. *m cf.* ch. 14. 3; *cf.* Song 6. 3.

The address to the overcomer now is in perfect keeping with what we have seen to be the character of Pergamos as a whole. The Lord, significantly, in the first place carries us back to the wilderness, for the world with the Church settled in it is not less a wilderness on that account, but rather the more. But it is only he who realizes this wilderness condition who will find the gracious provision which God has made for him. In the wilderness, because it grew nothing for them, because they were mere pilgrims through it, God provided, as we know, the bread from heaven; and now, says the Lord, "To him that overcometh will I give of the hidden manna." But we must notice, nevertheless, that it is the *hidden* manna of which He speaks. The hidden manna was that preserved in the wilderness to be carried into the land, that the children of Israel, when there, might see the food with which the Lord had sustained them in the wilderness. For us it is the evident and beautiful picture of what will be the result in eternity of the realization of the wilderness condition here. The food of the wilderness will be there enjoyed again; and, must we not say, in that time, when everything will be perfected, enjoyed in a fuller way than even in the wilderness it could have been? For, what is this manna? It is Christ Himself, as He has declared of Himself, "the bread that came down from heaven," the food of His people ever. Christ has come down, not merely in manhood, but Himself also into the conditions of the wilderness, come down to know all that is proper to man here, apart from sin; and even as to sin, to bear it, though the sinless One, in His own body upon the tree. It is, as we know better day by day, through the trial of the wilderness that we learn continually better the grace of Him who has come down into it, and are made to learn His thoughts, His ways, His grace and tenderness, and to find thus communion with Himself in all the power of this to sustain the soul. But the manna is hidden now; Christ is gone on high; but He is the same Christ, without any possibility of change. On the throne He is still the One who served us in our need in the lowliest condition; and the Servant's heart, that which love gave Him, is still His own. We are to realize that now; but how we shall realize it, when we are above with Him, when we shall be competent to see Him as He is; when we shall be able under the glory manifest in Him better to realize that glory which faith has learned to be in Him, the glory of the love which brought Him down in service! How we shall turn back then to the wilderness itself to read again the old experiences that we had of Him when we went through it, to taste them with a new freshness and sweetness in that place where there will be no more inability, no remnant of indifference, but when every spiritual sense will be always at its highest! What shall we not learn of the Man Christ Jesus there! And one can see in this way how we must have been in the wilderness, must have had the experiences of the wilderness, in order to be able to enter into this. No angel, it is plain, could know Him thus as we do. And must it not be that while every one of us will find with Him a deeper enjoyment than we have ever known, yet this enjoyment will be measured by that which we have had of Him on the way there? We must bring, in this sense, the manna with us out of the wilderness, in order to enjoy it in the land. A solemn consideration for us surely this is, which makes the reward here in a very strict sense the reward of the overcomer, the one whom the world does not overcome, but who overcomes it; all the more difficult indeed when the Church itself is in the world and laying hold of the world as having right to it in a way which, however, does not make him who does this the master, but the slave!

There is another promise here, the promise of the white stone, and it speaks to us clearly also of the time when we shall be with Him, and of that which

2 (18-29): Thyatira. The falsely pretentious teaching of the woman Jezebel. A remnant beginning to be separated.

18 And to the angel of the assembly in Thyatira write:—These things saith the [n]Son of God, who hath His eyes as a [o]flame of fire, and his [p]feet are like unto fine brass. I know thy [q]works, and [r]love, and [s]faith,

[n] Heb. 4.14. *cf.* Lk. 1.35. [o] ch. 1. 14. *cf.* Song 5. 12. [p] ch. 1. 15. *cf.* Isa. 63.3. [q] ver. 2, etc. [r] *cf.* Gal. 5.22; *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 14,17. [s] *cf.* Rom. 5.1.

speaks of the intimacy in which we shall be with Him also. The white stone was that which was put into the voter's urn with the name of the candidate approved upon it; and the white stone here speaks of such approval, but the approval is on His part. In the manna we see the appreciation of Christ by the saint, but in the white stone the appreciation of the saint by Christ. It is His approbation of the overcomer that is emphasized here, and the new name written on the stone is something between Him and the individual alone. "No one knoweth it but he that receiveth it." A "name" is in Scripture not the mere distinguishing of one individual from another. It is always significant. How significant is Christ's own name! He, too, has a new name which He speaks of later on. But if names are thus significant, they are so as really characterizing the person who is named. Here, therefore, the name must characterize that which Christ recognizes in the overcomer, recognizes and appreciates, recognizes as a tie between the overcomer and Himself; as a secret, as it were, of love which can be enjoyed together. What an enjoyment to have His approbation thus! And how brightly the individuality comes out here, forced, one may say, upon His people in a day of departure such as we have before us now, but none the less dear to Him when in faith we accept it, and learn day by day better to walk our individual path under His eye, as if there were no other. How clearly we see in all this that that expression with which His word to Pergamos begins, and which some think is such a hopeless enigma to discover meaning in it, is indeed the very thing that gives character to all here. It is the Church dwelling where Satan's throne is—an evil which we may not realize by becoming so familiar with it; which opens wide the door for the followers of Balaam; with seekers of their own things instead of the things of Christ; with the idolatry which the spirit of covetousness itself is and leads to, and with all else as laxity connected with this. Yet God's way is ever a way of peace and encouragement, and the hidden manna and white stone face thus the overcomer in just such a scene as this.

2 We come now to Thyatira, to find here only a further development of what we have been looking at. The Lord presents Himself still more with characters of judgment. He is "the Son of God who hath His eyes as a flame of fire and His feet like unto fine brass." The eyes speak of the present; the feet, of the future. Those feet are yet to tread "the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God." And He is the Son of God who speaks here. How significant of the degradation which His professing people have been giving Him, who have taken His very humiliation, the lowly door by which He entered into humanity itself, to keep Him at the door and humble Him continually—the Son of a human mother, thus the Babe in His mother's arms to listen to her word and do her will! Who that realizes what we are coming to now but must realize the indignant glance at a Mariolatry which He will not honor more by noticing it, only letting His own divine glory shine out to consume it upon the instant! Yet He is writing here still, after His old manner, patiently ready to own all that He can own, taking forth the precious from the vile, as His mouth always must. "I know thy works, and love, and faith, and service, and thine endurance, and thy last works to be more than the first." One would say, here certainly is something that is even the opposite of Ephesus, as being a condition improving instead of degenerating—last works more than the first. It is quite evident indeed that He is separating those to whom He speaks from that which is, nevertheless, in the Church itself, and, alas, not without toleration more or less of those whom He can yet praise after this manner. As we go on in this address we shall find, indeed, that there is a remnant more and more being sep-

and [t]service, and thine [u]endurance, and thy [v]last works to be more than the first. But I have [w]against thee that thou sufferest the woman * [x]Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she [y]teacheth and leadeth astray my servants to [z]commit fornication and to eat of idol

t *cf.* Rom. 12. 1.
u *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 6.
v *cf.* 2 Thess. 3. 4.
w *cf.* ver. 4.
x 1 Ki. 16. 31, 32.
cf. Prov. 6. 24.

* Some read, "thy wife."

y *cf.* Matt. 13. 33 with Gal. 5. 9, 11; *cf.* Gal. 2. 21. z ver. 14; *cf.* ch. 17. 3-5; *ctr.* 2 Cor. 11. 2.

arated from a mass which is getting more and more corrupt—the mass itself in fact so corrupt that He does not address it. He had spoken, but He speaks no more. He had given time for repentance, but it was all in vain: and it is here that that significant change takes place which has been noticed before—the address to the overcomer taking precedence of the call to "hear what the Spirit saith." There is no hope of the mass. It is "the rest," "as many as have not this doctrine," those who "have not known the depths of Satan," among whom alone He can look now for him "who hath an ear to hear." The significant thought here is manifestly "the woman Jezebel." She is not a mere disfiguring excrescence, but the very heart of the condition—"the woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess," while teaching and leading astray Christ's servants to commit fornication and to eat of idol sacrifices. Thus she is herself the direct follower and fruit of those Balaam followers whom we have had to do with in Pergamos; only it is plain that now there is something infinitely more pretentious than anything that has gone before. This woman, while propagating her abominable iniquity, does not hesitate to claim the very authority of God for what she is doing. She is a prophetess. Her voice is thus the voice of God Himself. Yet she is but "the woman Jezebel." That is not accidental, that significant name. It is not a mere piece of history that one with that name happened to be there. It is not meaningless, this link with the history of one of those times of debased apostasy on the part of Israel when Ahab was leading Israelites into the worship of Baal, he "whom Jezebel his wife stirred up." It is from this connection with that history, very probably, that there is a reading here in some old manuscripts which makes it "thy wife Jezebel," instead of "the woman;" but, most certainly, Jezebel is not the wife of the angel whom the Lord addresses here. *He* could not represent or be represented by Ahab, while none the less Jezebel keeps the significance of her name and of the historical connection, only with added features that Jezebel of old did not even present; for we find nothing, at least as to her, of her calling herself a prophetess, as this woman does, although she had her hundreds of false prophets as her retainers.

If we go back to those parables of the Lord in the thirteenth of Matthew which we have already had to refer to in connection with the addresses here, we shall find another point of significance. Pergamos, it is clear, represents the mustard seed grown into a tree—Christianity rooting itself in the world, and with the powers of darkness, the birds of the air, lodging in its branches. The next parable is that of the woman; and it is a woman who has to do now with the doctrine: doctrine which, as we know, was in fact entrusted to the Church to hold, but in no wise to manufacture. The woman is making a kind of bread of her own. She is putting leaven into the three measures of meal which she has in her hands, a leaven which is by and by to permeate the mass of it. The woman is the constant figure of the Church at large—woman, not man. *Christ* is the "man," the husband to whom she is espoused, to whom she is to be true and subject—the Church that Christ loved and gave Himself for, "that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." He shall have that joy at last; but meanwhile there is this external Church that represents Him here upon the earth; fatally at last misrepresents Him, and goes astray in heart to others than Himself. This is the woman Babylon, as we see her in the seventeenth chapter of this book, which gives us all

sacrifices. And I gave her [a]time that she might repent, and she will not repent of her fornication. Behold, I [b]cast her into a bed, and those that commit adultery with her into great [c]tribulation, except they shall repent of her works; and I will [d]kill her children with death; and [e]all the assemblies shall know that I am he that [f]searcheth reins and hearts; and I will give to you

a *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 9.
b *cf.* Ezek. 16. 37–41 with ch. 17. 16, 17.
c *cf.* ch. 6. 4, etc.
d *cf.* Ps. 137. 8, 9.
e *cf.* Isa. 26.
f Jer. 17. 10.
9 with Acts 5. 10, 11.

the features, more depraved if possible, of the woman before us now. Jezebel is but the woman with the leaven; and if those three measures of meal represent indeed—as we have seen when looking at it,—the fine flour of the meat-offering, which was *not* to be adulterated with leaven, but which represents Christ Himself as the food of His people entrusted to the care of His own to preserve it without adulteration, then we can see the full extent of wickedness here in this woman who calls herself a prophetess, but only prophecies to teach and lead astray Christ's servants. The "woman" is the Church, which is taught and can hold what she is taught, but *never* teaches. And it is significant that that very teaching which claims authority as the teaching of the Church, is that which, for every one who has an ear to hear, has most emphatically led astray God's people wherever it has been listened to. That voice of the Church is a lie on the very face of it, as represented in its principle, "*Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*"—"What always has been believed, everywhere, and by all." The moment that is attempted to be justified by history, the consent of the fathers, of councils, or whatever else, it is an open, proved, notorious fraud, just fit for a false prophetess whose very name carries her false pretension, Jezebel, "the chaste," but whom God stamps as a harlot, "the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth."

That which is spoken of as the voice of the Church is simply the voice of chosen witnesses, who have usurped in men's minds the place of the Church, who often witness against one another, as also in most cases against the very system which claims them and would make much of them. The Church becomes thus the councils, the clergy, finally the pope; narrowing continually in proportion as it rises more and more into complete domination of that which is now indeed a mere conquered populace, bound and burdened by that which has assumed the authority of Christ, only to seduce His servants. The long time that she has lasted is interpreted here by the Lord, simply as a time given her to repent, and she will not repent. It is of the very essence of Rome that being infallible she cannot do it. It would be the loss at once of her whole pretension. Thus nothing but judgment can await her. "Behold," says the Lord, "I cast her into a bed, and those that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they shall repent of her works." This evidently contemplates the time of which the Lord promises to Philadelphia that she shall be kept out of "the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try those that dwell upon the earth." It speaks of the time when the ten horns and the beast shall destroy the woman, and eat her flesh and burn her with fire. The children produced by her are not owned as even the possible children of God at all. "I will kill them with death," the Lord says. They are the proper fruit of the blasphemous system, and to be distinguished, as the Lord does immediately distinguish, from those who are indeed suffering her, and who may have felt the power of her seduction, but who, nevertheless, have something better in their hearts than this would intimate; and the Lord is He that searches the reins and hearts, and who, amid all the confusion, will give to each one according to his works.

He turns now from Jezebel and her followers to separate from them a people who are beginning to be more or less separated—in heart, if no more: "To you, I say, the rest who are in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, such as have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I cast upon you no

each one °according to your works. But unto you I say, the ᵖrest who are in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, such as have not known the ᵍdepths of Satan, as they say, I do not ʳcast upon you any other burden; only what ye have ˢhold fast till I shall come. And he that ᵗovercometh, and that keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give ᵘauthority over the nations, and he shall rule* them with an ᵛiron rod,

° ch. 20. 12, 13. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 10.
ᵖ *cf.* Jude 22. 23. *cf.* ch. 3. 4.
ʳ *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 1-8. *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 17, 18. *ctr.* 1 Cor. 2. 10.
ˢ *cf.* Acts 15. 28 with

* "Tend" (as a Shepherd).

1 Jno. 5. 3. ᵏ ch. 3. 11; 1 Thess. 5. 21. ᵗ ver. 11, etc; *cf.* Heb. 3. 6. ᵘ *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 12; *cf.* ch. 3. 21. ᵛ Ps. 2. 9; ch. 12. 5.

other burden." Plenty of burdens they have, alas, of necessity, in such a condition of things as has arisen and is pictured here, when in the common speech of professing Christians there are what He calls "depths of Satan." Let any one think of the maxims of Jesuitism, for instance, which have gone far and wide beyond themselves. Who can for a moment think that this language is too strong? The very foundations are removed. Morality and religion have no necessary connection. Brigands, as is well known, in Italy bring the gains of their infamy to deposit them at the feet of the Queen of Heaven. The whole system is such that no one can be any longer certain of anything. The child is not baptized if the priest never meant to baptize it, however scrupulously the outward form may be observed. The mass is not celebrated, except the priestly intention is all right about it. And who can any longer say, even according to themselves, what remains to them of these sacramental ordinances, which, after all, are all they have to trust in? What a mockery of Satan it all is! Amid it all there were, as we know, hunted, persecuted companies who, more and more, refused these abominations; and no doubt many who come down to us in history, the victims of the slanders of their persecutors, but whom God will bring out in another character in His own time. Doubtless at the best they might know little, for these were, as is even commonly said, "the dark ages," and darkness there was everywhere—darkness just in proportion as the Church ruled—the light of the world, as she should have been in the absence of the day; but it was much, with God, to maintain any integrity at all in this confusion, and what they have the Lord bids them to hold fast until He shall come.

It is now that we have, first of all, in these addresses, the intimation of His coming: and it furnishes one of those proofs, of which there are many, that the condition here continues more or less to exist until that time. Until the Lord has taken His people to Himself, Babylon will still reign a queen, and count herself no widow and to see no sorrow. But then "shall her plagues come in one day, death and mourning and famine; and she shall be utterly burnt with fire, for strong is the Lord God that judgeth her." How differently men have learnt to speak, in the false and hollow liberalism of the day, from the way in which the word of God speaks of these abominations! It is quite true that God has His own amongst them, as has been already said; but that makes only the things themselves worse, that spatter and befoul the people of God themselves. His servants, there may be many, more or less led astray. Shall we count that less evil which is leading them astray? The Lord's words are now to the overcomer simply; and here, in opposition to the false rule of the woman, it is said, "he that overcometh, and that keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give authority over the nations, and he shall rule them with an iron rod, as the vessels of a potter are broken in pieces, as I also have received from My Father."

At Corinth, where they were already in their measure, though not in this measure, reigning as kings apart from those whom they yet owned their leaders,—men appointed unto death,—we see the beginning of that which has developed into an open assumption of authority, all the worse for its being a spiritual pretension, as with Rome. The time of rule for the Church, says the apostle, will

as the vessels of a potter are broken in pieces, as I also have [o]received from my Father; and I will give him the [p]morning star. [q]He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the assemblies.

[o] *cf.* Jno. 5. 22, 27.
[p] ch. 22. 16. 2 Pet. 1. 19. *cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 13-18.
[q] ver.17,etc.

not come until all the saints reign together, and reign with Christ. The very pretension of rule in the meanwhile is stamped thus as necessarily false. When the time to reign comes, there will be no manner of doubt, no need to assert any longer a power which is manifest; and then it will be indeed a rule with an iron rod necessarily: for it is the time when judgment will return to righteousness, and when through judgment the inhabitants of the earth shall learn it. They have despised and refused grace. They must of necessity bow when Christ goes forth in power. And yet the word "rule" here shows the peculiar character of it, the heart which, nevertheless, is directing everything. It is the *rule of a Shepherd* that is signified by it; and if it be an iron rod, a rod of irresistible power that is in the Shepherd's hands, yet it will always recognize that it is for the flock that He is contending—indeed, for the earth itself, to deliver it from that which has oppressed it for ages, and, as is said afterwards in this book, "to destroy those that destroy the earth." Throughout the long time of patience, God has not been regardless of what was going on: strong and patient, and provoked every day, He will at last arise in irresistible power, and with one blow shatter the power of all His adversaries. Christ's foes shall be put as a footstool under His feet. The mere human clay will be manifested indeed as but the easily shattered vessels of the potter. How different from the thought men have of the quiet conversion of the world by the gospel, and which so many still entertain, in spite of the centuries through which that conversion has lingered, and in spite of the apostasy of a large mass of those that have borne His name! But with the uprising of the Sun of Righteousness the day will arise at last. Suddenly, when the blackest hour of night has come, when darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the peoples, the Lord shall arise upon Israel once more, and His glory shall be seen upon them (Isa. lx. 2). But the promise here anticipates the day. The Lord says to the overcomer, not that His people "shall shine forth as the sun" (Matt. xiii. 43) when the Sun arises, but here, "I will give him the morning star." The morning star comes before, and heralds the day. It does not lighten the earth, but it prophesies of the coming light; and thus the Lord will remove His own, as we have seen in Thessalonians, caught up to meet Him in the air, and they shall be ever with the Lord; when He comes forth, therefore, to come forth with Him. Here is the Morning Star, and it strikingly characterizes the standpoint of the book of Revelation. If Malachi closes the Old Testament with the announcement of the Sun of Righteousness arising upon the earth with healing in His wings, the book of Revelation closes the New with the announcement of the hope of His heavenly saints, Christ as the bright and Morning Star (Rev. xxii. 16.).

Here ends now the first division of these epistles, in which we have seen the Church still in measure one, but with the growth of evil manifest in it, the mystery of iniquity thoroughly at work, whatever restraint there may be upon it. No doubt Rome, spite of its boast of being the Church, is not after all the whole profession. The Greek and Eastern churches have not known the woman Jezebel. They have halted at Pergamos, of which the civil head of the Russian church is a plain example. It is Constantine, so to speak, who is their ruler still, and not the woman. But this is but a merciful restraint which has hindered the full development of principles which are at work in her; and she has not broken off from the line of development, but simply halted, as it were, upon the way. We are now to see how God, in His grace, has come in to deliver His people, not merely from subjection to the woman's rule, but from the system which would naturally ripen into this. God has come in to deliver. How far His people have profited by His intervention for them, and what will be the final issue, we are to see in the three assemblies which remain to be looked at, and

1(1-6): Sardis. The old unity in some sense maintained, but in a barren concord of death with life.

SECTION 2. (Chap. iii.)

Further division, with freedom from the teaching of the woman.

1. AND to the angel of the assembly in Sardis write:— These things saith he that [r]hath the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars. I know thy works, that thou

r ch. 1. 4,16. *cf.* Acts 2. 33.

which are no longer histories of the Church in general, but manifestly of a remnant, little as the remnant may show itself to be what God would have it. Failure, alas, is everywhere. We must not expect, if God comes in to deliver, that the deliverance must necessarily be full and entire, as He would have it. He awaits the response of His people to that which He is doing for them; and, (as we find in the history of Israel in the times of the Judges) when God raises up a deliverer who shall judge the people according to the light which God is giving, spite of all this, decline will follow: and the final ruin with which God has already threatened them at Ephesus—the complete removal of the church's candlestick—is only delayed, and not averted.

Sec. 2.

We have already seen, then, a remnant more or less separated in Thyatira. We are now to find the history only that of a remnant. Thyatira is left to go on till the Lord comes, substantially unaltered; but now we have churches in which the woman and her teaching no longer appear. There is a clear break from this; and the very first church here, probably, in its name indicates its remnant character. Sardis has been thought, at least probably, to be from the Hebrew *Sarid*, which means "a remnant." This certainly agrees in the most distinct way with what we have here, and we shall find now in each of the three addresses a distinct intimation that they go on to the coming of the Lord. Thus in Sardis, characteristically dead indeed and not alive, the Lord threatens that He will come to them as to the world, part of which they really are: "If thou shalt not watch," He says, "I will come upon thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know at what hour I will come upon thee." "But," says the apostle to Christians (1 Thess. v. 4), "ye are not in darkness, that that day should overtake *you* as a thief." To Philadelphia there is a more decisive word, with which promise and warning are united: "I come quickly; hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown." While, finally, to lukewarm Laodicea the Lord says, with no hint any more of a possible repentance which shall avert it, "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spew thee out of My mouth." Thus the series of addresses closes with the announcement of general disaster, although the Lord's heart towards His people, and His promise to those who listen to His voice, are found all through. What is the real application of all this we can only understand upon a fuller inquiry.

1. Sardis, as already said, means probably "a remnant;" but we must not imagine by this that it is therefore in any full way according to the Lord's mind. We can remember, as to Israel, the story of the return of such a remnant out of Babylon; but how soon, nevertheless, did that bud of promise reveal the disappointment of the hopes that were wrapped up in it! And Israel's history all through is but in too marked keeping with the history of the Church. Spite of the grace which has been shown her, that faith which is the principle by which alone she stands is, alas, but too little to be found in her: and thus the fuller her blessing, only the deeper her declension, the worse the corruption of the better thing. In Sardis we shall find that there is again being attempted that which is impossible, to unite in a true concord death with life. This, in fact, shows us, if we take these addresses as to be read in continuation, as they clearly are, that here, after all, the old unity is still in some sense maintained: that is, this unity of a barren profession with true faith. There has been no departure from this, and we can hardly fail to find the application to the story of those whom God delivered from the reign of the woman, in what we call "the

time of the Reformation." Here the Lord speaks in character, as always in these addresses, and we see at once what is lacking, although His grace is ready to supply the need. He speaks as He who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. Thus the fulness of the Spirit is His; but they need, alas, to be reminded of it. The stars, too, are in His hand: but we shall find that in fact they are put into the hand of another than Christ. "*Cujus regio ejus religio*" became the motto then; that is, "The place in which you live shows your religion." The Church goes with the nation: it is the church of the nation. That is not the rule of the woman any more. It is the rule of the man, but that man is not Christ. It is the official head, or perhaps heads, of the state. It is the principle of the state-church. If you have this, the character of Sardis results as an absolute necessity. You cannot make the state really the Church, however earnestly you attempt it. Preach the Word all over it; hold up the faith of Christ in the fullest way—to make men accept it is wholly beyond man's power. Thus the principle of decadence is sure and manifest.

There is no imputation of false doctrine any more. There is no claim of infallibility, or of inspiration from God. On the other hand, there is, in a way more distinct than heretofore, "a name to live." Under Jezebel there is not this in the same way. With all her pretension, nevertheless the nature of Rome's sacramental system is such as to leave uncertainty in result about all the profession, as they quote from Ecclesiastes, "No man knows whether he is worthy of favor or hatred." Be it so, then, that men are born again in baptism, and are sustained by the body of Christ in the sacrament of the Supper, though they have priestly absolution and the intercession of saints and angels, and of Mary, the gentle mother with her woman's heart, more to be trusted than that of Christ Himself, and who holds the ladder of life by which her votaries ascend to heaven,—yet, after all, at the best there is a long purgation to be accomplished before heaven is reached, and distressing uncertainty. The Reformation, on the other hand, with its announcement of the scriptural truth of justification by faith, made it possible and right for every poor sinner turning to God to find his name in the book of life. How blessed a contrast this with all that the "infallible church" could do for those whom it took in hand to carry through to salvation! But all the more the certainty of this assurance on the part of those who had true faith in Christ, the more impossible, one would say, would it be to give such assurance broadcast among the members of a state-church—that is, the world with the name of Christ.

In fact, this could not be. There had to be a compromise in some way, an adoption of the sacramental system to a certain extent, with a large charitable hope to justify what was really but a giving of that which was holy to the dogs, the attributing of life to that which was dead—every one left very much to determine for himself where he was before God, while others were warned to pass no judgment, and the grace of God availing for the chief of sinners was taken really to make light of necessary saintship in the believer, and so to falsify the power of that which it was intended to honor. Where grace is really, the dominion of sin is broken, as the apostle has shown us, and it is only those who are led by the Spirit of God who can be rightly counted as the children of God. But a state-church in its very nature must attenuate all this to have any warrant for existence, and thus there must of necessity be a compromise, as in fact everywhere there was, and the retention thus far at least of the old Jewish system, the synagogue instead of the assembly of God. Only on the part of some, whose fanaticism the more effectually put its brand upon the truth they had, was there the attempt to find and manifest the Church of God. For the rest, the true Church remained in the old invisibility which had been decreed for it, and thus the truth really proclaimed was everywhere in saddest contrast with the lifeless profession. As the Lord recognizes here, there were those in Sardis who had not defiled their garments; but these were the exception, not the mass. They were a remnant, so to speak, among the Reformed remnant; and the protest against Rome's errors allowed, nevertheless, in this way, one of Rome's chief errors.

hast a [s]name that thou livest, and art dead. Be [t]watchful and strengthen the things that remain which are [u]about to die, for I have not found thy works [v]perfect before my God. [w]Remember therefore how thou hast

s *cf.* Matt. 13. 24-26. *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 5. *cf.* 1 Tim. 5. 6.

t *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 6. u *cf.* Song. 8. 11; *ctr.* Isa. 58. 11. v *cf.* Lk. 8. 14; *ctr.* Phil. 1. 6. w ch. 2. 5; *cf.* 2 Tim. 1. 13.

That protest was assuredly a necessity; but it was also deemed that there must for this reason be something that would give more stability to it than the testimony of a few scattered and hunted souls. The kings and the nations, alike trodden down under the hard heel of Rome, had plenty of reason for desiring to set up a bulwark against her; and where could they have one more effectual than the profession of a Reformed creed, and putting the power to maintain it into the hands of a civil magistrate? It was the Spirit of God that had raised up a testimony against the evil, but the Spirit of God could not be counted upon by the mass to maintain that testimony. Had not, in fact, the apostle enjoined upon Christians to be subject to the powers that be? Rome had for her followers decreed a large exemption from such a duty. The Church could everywhere, as it pleased, throw the mantle of its charity over those whom the state condemned. On the other hand, for Protestants, the State now was to interfere in that which belonged really to the Church. The creed must be maintained, and non-conformity to the creed be penal. Hence, persecution and laxity went hand in hand. The things of God were committed to hands that were unfit to touch them; and while the purer creed indeed commended itself to a larger circle than of those who had true faith in it, it was thus continually nullified and defiled by its nominal adherents.

We can understand at once, therefore, the Lord's warning here to be watchful and strengthen the things that remained, which were about to die. But the truth can never be maintained by human power. The enforced creed may be, no doubt, a certain safeguard; yet while thus preserved it may actually die out amid the very people whose formula is to preserve it: for this may be but a relic of the dead past, and not a living reality. And this has been seen how often! For, "thou standest by faith" is true of the whole professing body and all that pertains to it, and nothing but faith can finally preserve even the profession of the truth itself. The work of faith was now, therefore, found lacking. "I have not found thy works perfect before My God," says the Lord. If such a condition as the presence of "ten righteous men" might have sufficed to save Sodom, so the actual faith found amongst the comparatively few may give a certain stability to that which without it could have no length of continuation at all; but the general tendency here must needs be downward; and all the churches of the Reformation have proved—whatever truth may have remained in their creed—that it does not involve the maintenance of the creed itself. Rationalism and infidelity are here the evils which threaten it; for if the truth is in the creed, yet infidelity is that which is in the mass of those who should be its supporters, but whose hearts link them with the unbelief, and not with the truth. But there is no power here but the power of the Spirit of God; and that is what has been so much forgotten even among true Christians.

The Lord recognizes in Sardis a work of His grace. He bids them remember how they had received and heard, and keep it and repent. Sad it would be to belittle the wonder of God's grace which wrought in the Reformation, and surely accomplished so much—the effect of which remains with us to-day. It was that which was not of God which has proved the burden upon it—the hindrance not merely to progress, but even to continuance. The men whom God raised up in various countries of Europe at the time of the Reformation were dependent themselves upon no earthly power, nor even upon one another, as Zwingle did not even derive from Luther: and there was everywhere proof that the Spirit of God was working independently in many hearts. These so taught of Him would necessarily come together as led in the same path, and they did so. The trouble

received and heard, and [x]keep it and [y]repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come [upon thee] * as a [z]thief, and thou shalt not know at what hour I will come upon thee. But thou hast a [a]few

* Some early MSS. omit

x ch. 1. 3.
y ver. 19.
z ch. 16. 15. *cf.* Matt. 24. 43. *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 2-5.
a *cf.* Matt. 7. 14. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 9-11; *cf.* Jas. 1. 27.

came when men with other motives proffered their help in what they could make in certain respects a common cause with these. It was the old Samaritan cry, "We seek your God as ye do" (Ezra iv. 2), but which was not met as those with Zerubbabel met it then; and if then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah and troubled them in building because of their aid *rejected*, still more now did the people of the land weaken the hands of the true people of God by the help which they *accepted*.

It is evil association which constantly corrupts the manners of the Lord's people. Mixture is Satan's constant device, and compromise necessarily grows out of mixture. We cannot walk together except we are agreed. People may say, and do say, "We agree so far; why can we not walk together at least in that in which we are so far together?" All right, if Christ and His will and Word be not left out of the agreement; but when the Church joins with the world, this must of necessity be left out. If orthodoxy be but hypocrisy, or self-deception at the best, what value is there in such orthodoxy before God? Alas, it is only the old leaning upon Egypt which we find so much of in the case of Israel; the end of which was only that they found it a broken reed, which even in the judgment of their enemies themselves was such that if a man lean on it "it will go into his hand and pierce it" (Isa. xxxvi. 6). And yet how constantly we seek help of this kind still! We invoke or accept help which cuts us off from the help of God; and all such things are manifestly only a denial of Him who is the one sufficient security of His people, and the One to whom our obedience should admit of no compromise.

But here the Judaism which has come in manifests its power for evil; Israel's national religion is pleaded in behalf of a world-church now, and after that faith is come—when God has taken it distinctly as the only principle upon which we stand—can yet go back to the legal schoolmaster. The nation in the flesh which God took up was in no wise the same thing as the Church indwelt by the Spirit of God; and when, by and by, God will be again among them as of old, it shall be under that new covenant when they are at last what they have never hitherto been, a nation "all holy;" where there will be no need for one to say to his neighbor, or to his brother, "Know the Lord," because all shall know Him, from the least even to the greatest. But alas, it is the promise of an arm of flesh which makes all these arguments so acceptable to us! Even if we have faith, we have so little faith to build upon God, to walk in absolute independence of all else, so as to be dependent upon Him alone—this is what costs; but how much another course costs! If we would keep a right balance, we must not forget to count up on both sides.

It is not the Reformation itself, so far as it was that, which the Lord judges here. Alas, it was when they ceased to be reformers, when they became conservatives with the caution of such, and had to build up systems to meet the exigencies of the times, then it was that another element came in which God is judging. And after all, how simple a thing to judge, one would think! If the world can be made the Church because we will have it so; if in the largest charity that can be required of us we can confound one of these with the other, then, of course, the national church-system will commend itself to us as having the broadest liberality that can be—fiercely denunciative as it may be of that which will now be the independent action of the Spirit of God, and therefore of the faith that cleaves to God.

The result is that the national church becomes but a dead weight, a burden

names in Sardis which have not defiled their garments, and they shall [b]walk with me in white, because they are worthy. He that overcometh, he shall be [c]clothed in white garments, and I will not [d]blot his name out of the book of life, and will [e]confess his name before my Father and before his angels. He that [f]hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the assemblies.

[b] *cf.* ch.6.11.
[c] *cf.* ch. 19. 7, 8.
[d] *ctr.*Ex.32. 32, 33. *cf.* ch. 13.8. *cf.*ch.20.12.
[e] Lk. 12. 8.
[f] ver.13,etc.

upon its living members. The Spirit of God, if He works—as work He will—must needs work in testimony against the evil; and in every such working there will be more and more the disintegration of the body as a whole. The attitude of the Lord toward Sardis here must be that which the Spirit recognizes, and with which He is; and it is an attitude of rebuke and opposition. He thus treats it here as the world, and nothing but the world; a world to which His coming can be nothing but a dread, if realized at all. It is not to His own that the Lord comes as a thief—though people may have adapted this language so as to take off the rebuke of it; rebuke it manifestly is here; yet He owns what He can own. There are still a few names in Sardis (how He speaks as able to call each one by his name!) who have not defiled their garments. They are in the midst of that which would naturally defile them. The touch of death was defilement according to the law in Israel; and the touch of spiritual death, what must that be for those in constant association with it, as in the case before us? Yet, spite of all, Christ is no doubt a sufficiency for every one who seeks to Him; but the result is, if not an outward, yet an inward separation. The Lord owns this fully: "They shall walk with Me in white," He says, "for they are worthy." That does not in the least make light of the worldly mixture which, as we see here, characterizes the whole state of things, and of which the Lord speaks to those who have an ear to hear. But the ear may be strangely dulled, even when the heart is in measure right. We are, alas, so much under the power of the circumstances amid which we are! and a national religion has its necessary seduction, bringing together those akin in nature in the recognition of ties which God does recognize, although He puts them in no such place as they are put in here. Yet to break through them requires a spiritual energy which is found in but few, while yet there are many who, without having the spirit of reformers, are nevertheless in spirit separate from the surrounding evil. God does not give us up to our surroundings. But how few they are who are not more or less governed by them! Still He who could own a righteous Lot in Sodom owns such still;—not that they do not suffer, not that their spiritual life is not of necessity overshadowed. How many questions for the conscience, how much exercise of heart, what a burden of sorrow, has to be borne in proportion as one seeks truly to be with God in such a condition of things! God's way would be that they should walk free. Nevertheless, if He only owned those who were in every way according to His mind, how few could He own at all!

The promise to the overcomer here has a somewhat negative character. "I will not blot his name out of the book of life" is plainly negative; and how significant of the general condition! Out of the Lamb's book of life how could a name be blotted? It surely could not, and the book of life therefore must here represent something in the hands of men—that "name to live" of which the Lord has spoken at the outset. How widely, in fact, is this assumed and justified by that false charity which would never wake men up to realize their condition, but leave them to drift on to a doom not the less certain because it is out of sight. The clothing in white garments is more positive, as is also the Lord's confession of His own before His Father and before the angels. Yet in it all there does not seem to be that full emphasis of approval which we find in other addresses. There is not what we have had even in Pergamos of "the hidden manna" and the "white stone." The sense of the wilderness is not upon the soul in the same way, and with all the light that He has been giving there is not that free-

2 (7-13): Philadelphia. A movement to obtain true fellowship and keep Christ's word.

2. And to the angel of the assembly in Philadelphia write:—These things saith the [g] holy, the [h] true, he that hath the [i] key of David, he who [j] openeth and no one shall shut, and [k] shutteth and no one shall open: I [l] know thy

[g] cf. Lk. 1. 35. cf. 1 Cor. 10. 31. [h] cf. Jno. 14. 6. ch. 19. 11. [i] Isa. 22. 22.

cf. Ps. 132. 11. [j] cf. Acts 12. 10; cf. Acts 16. 6-10; cf. 1 Cor. 16. 9. [k] cf. Matt. 16. 19; cf. ch. 1. 18; cf. ch. 20. 1-3. [l] cf. ch. 2. 9.

dom to go with Him which should be the response to it.* The truth is shut up in creeds and stiffened into formulas. The conscience cannot speak for God as it should, and the open Bible of which men make boast, and which indeed is in their hands, is, nevertheless, read too much within the limits imposed by that which is human recognition. The Spirit of God is too little free to interpret as He would, for individuality is lacking; and conscience and heart are nothing if they are not individual.

2. We pass on now to what should have the deepest interest for us, in that it is plainly the only address which is wholly one of commendation. It is not meant by this that there is no more need of overcoming even in Philadelphia. It is not meant that there is no need of exhortation. Nevertheless, it will be felt by any who simply read the words that are before us, that they show us a different state of things from anything elsewhere. Smyrna may be an exception to this, but yet in Smyrna there is that which we know God has always used to purify His people. There is an active persecution going on which calls men to reality, and of which we have nothing here; though it be always true, of course, that "he that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution;" but there is no crisis of it. There is not in the same way that which forces men to decide for or against Christ. What is here speaks more of a quiet movement of the Spirit, working amid such a lifeless condition as we have seen in Sardis, and recalling men to Christ Himself as the one supreme authority over the soul. It is notable here that Christ speaks of Himself more according to His personal character. He is "the Holy and the True"—words which search out necessarily, and are intended to search out, but which, nevertheless, in connection with the commendation which we find in general, show that there is in Philadelphia's condition that which more answers to His thoughts. They are keeping His word, and not denying His name.

How emphatic that makes the manner of His address here! And the name "Philadelphia" clearly speaks after the same manner. Philadelphia is "brotherly love;" but the love of the brethren would naturally imply a recognition of the brethren, such as is not found in Sardis, for instance. Where the general condition is that of death, it is plain that the relationship of Christ's people to one another cannot be recognized, except in the most partial manner. The true Church, it is said, is invisible. But how, then, can the living affections which are instinctive in Christ's people as such, to one another, find any proper expression? Thus it should be plain that we have here implied an effort, at least, to distinguish the true Church from the false, to make the Church visible; and there is an activity which must be surely of this character, which the Lord recognizes in power as the One who has authority in the kingdom, the key of David, One "who openeth and no one can shut, and shutteth and no one can open." It is only by the context that we can read aright such words as we find here. "I have set before thee," says the Lord, "an opened door, which no one can shut." But for what purpose, then? Plainly, to act according to the character that all

* Yet the promise to clothe in white raiment, coupled with that already given the few who had not defiled their garments,—"they shall walk *with Me* in white,"—is beautifully appropriate and definite. Undefiled garments here, maintained feebly but in faith, will mean not only white robes there, but association with Him whose grace alone enabled them to keep themselves unspotted from the world, even when it was in the professing Church. This is, indeed, a foreshadowing of the promise to the overcomer in Philadelphia, though not nearly so full. Have we not also in this remnant in Sardis that which, if true to the light given, later on finds fuller development in Philadelphia, just as we have seen Thyatira having a remnant which is morally linked with Sardis?—S. R.

works: behold I have set before thee an [m]opened door which no one can shut; for thou hast a [n]little power, and

[m] *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 12. *cf.* Acts 14. 27; *cf.* Heb. 13. 12, 13. [n] Ju. 8. 4; *cf.* 2 Sam. 23. 10.

indicates—an opened door for saints that are seeking one another, to find and recognize one another. There is, in some manner, an end of the condition of things, of the mixture we have in Sardis;—within how large a sphere, of course, we have nothing to indicate.*

Philadelphia certainly has not superseded Sardis. We have, as is implied, (but what for the mass would seem an evil augury rather than good,) a division which is again taking place, a necessary line which is being drawn between the world and the Church, but which will therefore imply separation from the world-church. Thus there is a distinct movement, which the Lord encourages. For if division in Corinth could only be condemned, in Sardis, on the other hand, it would be only necessary obedience to the Lord's words; and that is the obedience of which He speaks here: "Thou hast a little power, and hast kept My word." There is an energy which is scarcely found even with the overcomers in Sardis. It is but a little power indeed. How small a power one would think would be necessary to make God's people walk according to the Word which He has given them, in disregard of whatever name or authority might be pleaded against this! Yet, such as there is, He commends it. After a condition such as we have been looking at, it is refreshing to find that which undoubtedly speaks of a new spiritual activity, which the Lord owns, and with which He is.

It is also important to notice here that it is Christ's word that they have kept. In Sardis there were things that had been received and heard, though they were dying out, and to which the Lord would recall them. But here it is not simply something that they have received. It is not something recovered to them out of the Word, but the Word itself; the Word restored to its rightful place of authority over the soul; the Word with no limitations or reserves; the Word, not as defined by human creeds, but as it is in itself, with all the fulness of blessing that is in it, ready for the soul that craves it. This is really a central point in all the commendation here. In Christ's word thus kept, His authority is owned, His sole authority. Nothing must come between the conscience and His Word.

Thus, it should be plain, there is room for growth, for progress. A door open in this way, traditions, even reformed traditions, would sadly hinder. The Word is opening, and encouraging souls to take possession of the treasures that are to be found in it. None surely can look at his Bible as he has it to-day (not simply a Bible open in his hands, but open to him by the Spirit of God) without realizing how much room there is yet in it for fresh explorations; how much there is in Scripture that has never yet fulfilled its character as "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Do we not need, as it would seem, some door to be opened yet into these many hitherto blank pages, every one of which should shine out with the light of God in them for our souls? For this, however, the first necessity is that we should be keep-

* The expression "key of David" may find further suggestiveness from its connection in Isa. xxii., from which it is quoted. There Shebna, the treasurer in Hezekiah's day, is to be set aside and replaced by Eliakim as ruler of the household. The meaning of Shebna is given as "youthfulness, vigor," and of Eliakim as "God is setting up." There was a good measure of outward activity and prosperity in Hezekiah's day which might well be described by this youthful vigor, of merely human energy. While Hezekiah was a man of faith and diligent, yet there are evident indications that the state of the nation was anything but satisfactory in the sight of God. Shebna is to be displaced by one whom God sets up—fully answering to Christ who must supersede all fleshly energy. Thus Sardis would answer to Shebna, none of its works perfect before God, its vigor merely carnal; while in Eliakim we see one who is "a nail in a sure place," who opens the door to the treasure-house of God, and orders all things in that house. Where His authority is recognized, how truly too does He open the door to His people to lead them out of Judaism, or of that which resembles it, into full and sweet fellowship one with another.—S. R.

ers of Christ's word; that it should have its practical place with us, that we should crave it *all*, and not allow ourselves to be willingly ignorant of any of that which is God's means of forming us in the mind of Christ, of giving communion with Himself, of sanctification. Hopeless it may seem to think of this in large portions of those Jewish scriptures which seem to be merely records of the past, of what for us could have little, if any, significance. What has hindered our getting possession of what must needs be shut up in these apparently barren portions? We may answer, in the first place, it is because of our unbelief as to there *being* anything there; and it should be simple that this is but dishonor to Him whose Word it is, and which, as His Word, must be "spirit and life" in every part of it. If we will not believe that He has given it all for spiritual profit, it must remain probable that we shall find no profit in it. According to our faith or unbelief it will be to us.

Of course, none can deny that the way in which these things are given to us implies the need of labor, of exercise of faith in waiting on God in order to possess ourselves of them. In proportion as our energy is small, we shall think the labor too great to be compensated by the profit. Yet, assuredly, God has made no mistake. He has given us that which was in His heart to give, and He has given it in the way in which He intended to give it. No doubt there can be found a very large consent of those most trusted in these matters who will unite to assure us that we must not think to find gospel everywhere in these old records. Take the mass of commentators even, and is it not plain, not merely that they have no help for us as to whole pages of the inspired Word, but that they do not even dream of help being given? Here are matters, it is thought, for the antiquarian, matters for those curious in literary research, matters as to which it is possible for some to exhibit whatever they may have in the way of learning; but alas, with all this, how small a crumb of comfort for the soul! If we dare not go beyond our guides, if we can only drink of the water which has been kept in their reservoirs for us, if we have no access to the living streams themselves, if there is not with us the longing of heart which *must* nevertheless have access, whatever hindrances may seem to be in the way of it, then it is no wonder if an open door here should be thought of as nothing but delusion; and we must go on to believe that God has given what none can find food in, and much that must seem as only a trial of our patience, if we set ourselves once or twice a year, as a duty, to go through it.

We must have faith, then, in what the grace of God has given us, in order to be able to get on with it; but more, we must have faith also in the ability He gives to possess ourselves of it. Here, how many questions naturally assail us! When we think of the centuries during which the Church has been in possession of the completed Word, and think again how little of unity of interpretation there is at the present time,—divisions only increased, as one might think, by coming to it,—divisions for which Rome reproaches Protestants, so far with justice: but her remedy is to take Scripture out of our hands altogether, and to give us only just what and how she may deem fit,—certainly any amount of division is incomparably better than this. Nevertheless, the ruin of everything seems only to become continually more manifest. New heresies start; creeds multiply; Scripture, as is the common urging of unbelief, is appealed to for all, and Satan can boast of the success he has in making that which is the truth itself in some way the apology for error everywhere. But what are we to conclude as we think of it all? That after all there is indeed before us an open door to enter into and take possession of the word of God, to an extent only limited by our lack of faith in Him? Is it humility even to judge others in the way this seems to necessitate? And is it not presumption on our part to think that we may even possibly succeed where the generations have so much and so uniformly failed? Nevertheless, there abides for us one word of Christ which, if we keep it, will outweigh them all: "And when the Spirit of truth is come, He shall lead you into *all* truth." Is this a sufficient assurance? Is the failure His or ours? Are we given up to failure? To take any such position as these is only, in one

hast °kept my word, and hast ᵖnot denied my name. Behold I will make them of the ᵠsynagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews, and are not, but lie; be-

° *cf.* Jno.14. 23.
ᵖ *cf.* Matt. 16. 15-17. *cf.* Matt.18. 20.
ᵠ ch. 2. 9.

way or another, to charge failure upon God Himself. No, rather the fault has been that we have trusted other guides more than this one sufficient One. We have given those whom God has given to us, in order to help us with the interpretation of His Word, a place of authority which belongs to nothing but to the Word itself. We have been the followers of men too much; and thus oftentimes the best meant attempts to preserve the truth to us have only resulted in hindrance and stagnation. If God has given a little revival, if He has recovered for us a few truths that we had lost, the way has been immediately to make that which we have the measure of everything; and this, enshrined in creeds and confessions, has been a sorer hindrance in the path of progress than we may be willing to allow that it could be.

Yet there is nothing wrong in a creed or a confession. If this embodies the *present* faith of those who put it forth, it may be, and should be, a help instead of a hindrance; but the moment it is made an authority for others, then it becomes prohibitory of progress, unless we can maintain that every detail of it is infallible. But we have rightly given up infallibility of the Church teaching; are we then to follow that which is confessedly fallible, as if it were infallible? We must hold consistently all through to this, that it is not the Church that teaches. God raises up teachers, in His mercy to all; but even here there is no infallibility in the teaching. The word for us is—nay, it always was, "Let the prophets speak two or three, *and let the rest judge.*" We are to take heed *what* we hear, as well as *how* we hear; and the healthful exercise which is implied in this we cannot afford to do without. Creeds are, after all, forms of the truth dictated by men; and our faith must not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. God has not given us a creed. He has given us His Word. The creed, if it be authoritative, by its very existence says that Scripture is not enough; God has not taken sufficient care of His people; His Word is not as clear as we can make it; at least, it requires a wisdom which all have not, a learning which cannot be expected of the mass, in order to interpret it to all. Thus the babes are disqualified by their simplicity—those very babes to whom the apostle John says, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things, and need not that any one teach you." Was he right in saying this? Is that also Christ's word, which we have to keep?

It is no wonder, then, if the enemy has made the creed the means of division really, instead of unity; oftentimes that which maintains error instead of truth. Let us have our creeds, but let them be our own, and not the creeds of other men. Let us get from Scripture all that Scripture can put us in possession of, and that will practically be our creed—what we hold in living faith, and neither more nor less than that. But if it be said there is nothing then to hinder the spread of whatever heresy, this is only once more to proclaim the incompetence of Scripture and of the Holy Spirit. It is strange and sorrowful how those who can insist so rightly upon the need of an open Bible, and that "the Bible only is the religion of Protestants," yet can, nevertheless, allow to any extent these additions to it, and proclaim the indecisiveness of that very Bible which is to be the religion of every one.

How important is this, then, that the Lord says to Philadelphia: "Thou hast kept My Word"! Not My Word as filtered through the thoughts of others; not My Word as certain trusted leaders represent it; not My Word in the measure that others may have learnt it; but only and all of that which the Spirit of God makes good to our souls. No doubt we shall be tested here, for God tests always the faith that He most approves and seeks to have from us. Can we trust Him, whatever others may say? Can we accept that as truth in which we have, perhaps, the mass of His people against us? If it be true that keeping the word of

the Church is only practically unbelief, what more is keeping the word of a Church-creed or the word of any others, whosoever they may be, but which is not made good as Christ's word to us? And let us notice here that we have no more right to shorten our creed to bring it within the bounds of those of others, than we have to accept that which is outside of what is ours, of what the Word and the Spirit of God have taught us.

How important it is here that there should be with us a readiness, nay, a desire, to receive all that is Christ's word, and to follow it whatever the cost may be! How many, alas, look on to see what may be the cost of receiving such or such a thing, and for whom such questions avail to prevent all honest searching of the Word, all desire to go further in a way that threatens to cost too much to follow! Here the word of the apostle assures us that we must add virtue (that is, courage) to our faith, in order to be able to add to that virtue knowledge. We must not only have, as men say, thus the courage of our convictions, but we must *have the courage to be open* to conviction, which, in the unknown quantity that may be involved, may demand much more than the convictions we at present have. How many have stopped short in the pursuit of that which would have been the greatest blessing to them because of such a fancied lion in the way! If Christ is to say to us, "Thou hast kept My Word," there must be no reserve, no making terms with Him who is our Lord and Master, and who has not delegated His authority to any teacher or set of teachers, any more than to the Church at large. We must keep here distinctly before us the need of thorough individuality. We cannot merge that aright even in a multitude of God's people, and we need to remember what is implied in the prohibition of going with the multitude to do evil. We may do this when we have, nevertheless, no thought of doing evil, but simply go with the multitude. We shall certainly have often in this way to go beyond our faith, if not to go contrary to it; and "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Faith is as individual as possible. My faith is not yours, nor yours mine. Faith has to do with God, and with God alone; and in this sense all faith in men is out of place where God has spoken.

How much, then, is implied in even a little power to maintain such a path as this; to go on, however conscious of our weakness; to go on, and not to be stopped or turned back! And here, surely, the open door which Christ promises applies. All doors will open to the faith of the weakest one who still must at all costs be true to God; and it is well to notice here how thoroughly the Lord appeals to His people by the power of that which they have found in Himself—by the power of His claim over their souls. It is "My Word," "My name," "My patience," "My God," and "the city of My God," and "My new name." How conscious, in all this, Christ is of His power over the souls of those whom He is addressing! It is the distinctive character, one may surely say, of Philadelphia to have turned from all other confidences, all other authority, just to Himself. It is a protest, as one may say, against the negative character of mere Protestantism, which can go, as we know full well, with infidelity itself, with the various grades of denial of His name.

It is a thing for us to mark that apparently those whom the Lord addresses here have been tried, or will be tried, in some way by this denial of Christ's name. "Thou hast not denied" seems to suppose some temptation to denial, which may not, of course, have the utter grossness of what men are pleased to call "Unitarianism" now. Christ's name covers all that He is. It is the doctrine concerning Him, the doctrine therefore of His work. His name is Jesus—"Jehovah, Saviour"—just as much Saviour as Jehovah; and thus He was called Jesus because He would "save His people from their sins." And notice, moreover, that His name may be denied in deed as well as in word. The deliberate association with those that deny Him is practically the denial itself; for if He is just what His name imports, then the owning Him thus must be imperative also. How can one own God while denying Him His place as that—while consenting, anywhere and for any purpose whatever, to leave Him out? It is this

hold, I will make them to come and [r]worship before thy feet, and to know that I have [s]loved thee. Because thou hast [t]kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee [u]out of the hour of temptation which is

[r] *cf.* Isa. 49. 23. [s] *cf.* Jno. 17. 26. Jno. 15. 9, 10.

cf. Eph. 5. 25-27. [t] ch. 1. 9; *cf.* Jas. 5. 7; *cf.* Heb. 10. 36, 37. [u] *cf.* Jno. 5. 24; *cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 16, 17; *cf.* Jno. 14. 3.

that is being done by the false liberality of the day, without an apparent thought of what is meant by it. When the churches of the orthodox can be opened to Jewish rabbis, and Christians applaud this as the true spirit of Christianity itself, how near are the masses coming to shameless denial! How important it is to realize that God only gathers men to that Name, and that every gathering which has not thus the truth of what He is as the central attraction, the hold-fast that unites all together, is not a Christian gathering!

There is another word now, in which we are reminded of what first came into view in the address to Smyrna: "The synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews, and are not, but lie." In the view that we are taking of the addresses to the churches now, it may seem strange to find these again in such connection. Nor is it their blasphemy any more that is spoken of. The promise is now with regard to these: "Behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." We may be little competent indeed to say how this, which must certainly be future, is to be fulfilled. We have certainly seen a revival of such things in the midst of Protestantism in the present day, but it seems more to the purpose to remind ourselves that, if there be a return to obedience to Christ, to the acknowledging of His Word, and to the seeking of true fellowship in separation from the merely professing world, (thus a return to the principles of the Church such as we find them in the beginning,) it is natural that we should find in some shape also the revival of that old antagonism which met the apostles already in those early days. It may not take just the same form as of old. Satan is not beggared yet in his resources; and if God is giving in any sense fresh light, we may surely understand that it is as an angel of light that he will come in to antagonize it. We have to speak perhaps more doubtfully here than elsewhere, although, as already said, it is simply a promise to Philadelphia in connection with such as those who, in Smyrna, certainly represent the Judaizing element in antagonism to the grace of God and to that most wondrous revelation of it which He has given us in the Church, that they shall at length acknowledge her in the love that Christ has to her, and the place His love has given her.

The words that follow now show evidently that the truth of the Lord's coming has, to some extent at least, revived. We know how long in the history of the Church there had ceased to be any real expectation of it. In the language of the parable, even the wise virgins slumbered; but now the time of waking up seems to be at least beginning. It is involved in the approbation here, "Thou hast kept the word of My patience."

The kingdom at present takes its character from that. It is, as in the first chapter of this book, "the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ;" the kingdom in which He reigns who sits upon the Father's throne, waiting the appointed time until His enemies are made His footstool. The keeping the word of His patience implies that the truth of this is entered into. We have had promises before, of course, as to the overcomer in Thyatira; instructive as it is to find it there, surely, in the midnight times, in the dark ages, an anticipative cry raised, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh!" Nevertheless, it scarcely penetrated then the hearts and consciences of the saints. Now there is a positive commendation, the word of His patience is being kept; His people have learnt that the present time is but a waiting time, and have learnt more that longing of heart after Him. The promise in connection with it shows us also how near the end we have arrived: "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee out of the hour of temptation which is about to come upon the whole habitable world, to try those that dwell upon the earth."

There can be no doubt to those who have listened in any wise to the voice of prophecy as to what this refers to. It is evidently that "time of trouble" such as never was, of which the Lord warns in His prophecy upon the mount of Olives. This and the parallel passage in Daniel (chap. xii. 1) have, no doubt, special reference to Israel, as the context shows. But in the seventh chapter of this book we find a company from all the nations who are before the throne, and who are distinctly named as those that come "out of the great tribulation." Thus it affects much more than Israel, and certainly must come practically upon the whole habitable world. It is especially, as spoken of here, for the trial of "those that dwell upon the earth;" and this is a phrase which characterizes some whose profession has been, at least impliedly, one of not belonging to the earth. They are, as in Pergamos, dwelling "where Satan's throne is;" and the whole character of the period following the removal of the Church to heaven is such as would necessarily make it specially apply to these. It is eminently an "hour of temptation," the time of the rise of the last and special antichrist, who sweeps away the masses of those who, when they had the truth, were without heart for it; whose pleasure was in mere unrighteousness (2 Thess. ii. 10–12). But the true Church is, as has been already shown, at that time with the Lord; and this throws light distinctly upon the promise here: "I will keep thee out of the hour of temptation which is about to come." Notice, not merely "out of the *temptation*," but out of the *hour* of it—out of the time in which the temptation is. To be kept out of the hour is a virtual promise of being taken to be with the Lord; and thus it follows here, "Behold, I come quickly." "Quickly" is the word now. Things are hastening on to that final catastrophe, and the Lord is just about to take His people to Himself, and this intensifies the urgency of the appeal, "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown."

Here is what shows us the special form of overcoming in connection with Philadelphia. At first sight one would naturally ask, What room for overcoming can there be where there is nothing but commendation on the Lord's part for those He is addressing? For the overcoming is, throughout here, not that overcoming of the world merely which faith enables for, but the overcoming in connection with the evils that have come into the Church. This is plain in most of these addresses. Smyrna may seem to be an exception to this, for there, undoubtedly, there is outside persecution; but there also there is an evil within, as we have seen already, that which the Lord calls "the synagogue of Satan," the party of those who are bent upon degrading the Church to a Jewish level. There is not only the roar of the lion, but the snare also, and both have to be overcome; but in Philadelphia, while "the synagogue of Satan" is indeed noticed, yet, as already said, there is no blasphemy on its part, nothing but a promise, so far as we can see, that they shall own the Lord's peculiar affection, which is at the same time His approbation, for the Philadelphian assembly. Thus there seems to be here no evil to overcome. Certainly there is no great power. Yet, with all the weakness, there is approbation all through. How, then, can there be overcoming? The answer is surely to be found in what we have just now. In this very exhortation to hold fast what they have, there is a necessary implication that there is the danger for them of not holding fast; and such words, we may be sure, are not in vain. The danger is not merely hypothetical, but something that the history of His people strongly emphasizes for us.

But who are the people, then? And what distinctly does Philadelphia mean? The only answer that can be given must necessarily be derived from the character ascribed to her here. Philadelphia includes all those who seek to be obedient to Christ's word, in all that this implies, allowing no word of man to be added to or substituted for it. That which is added to it becomes, in fact, something thus far substituted for it: the two things are one. Philadelphia speaks of the refusal of everything of this sort, in order to keep that which can be certified as the word of Christ, and that alone; connected with which also is the necessary aim after pure communion, for a fellowship of brethren, a recognition

[v] about to come upon the whole habitable world to try those that [w] dwell upon the earth. I come [x] quickly: [y] hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy

v ch. 6. 1, etc. ch. 7. 14. ch. 8. 7, etc.
w cf. ch. 8. 13.
x ch. 22. 7, 12, 20.
y ch. 2. 25; cf. 1 Cor. 15. 58.

of those that are truly Christ's, and thus, in some sense at least, a separation from the mere worldly profession which we find so largely in Sardis.

It would not be the place here to seek to reproduce the history of such a movement, which indeed would be easy to show. It began not so long after the Reformation times, when the weight of the worldly establishments favored by it began to be felt by the more spiritual. Indeed, how was it possible that this should not be felt? The conflict with the grosser forms of evil, while it went on, no doubt prevented full realization of it. The times were such that even the world came to be for the moment, so to speak, absorbed in the religious questions. The peril of Rome had been brought home to every one's door, and the hope of deliverance from her made the truth itself, which alone could deliver, a matter of encouraging attention on the part even of the mass. A sober estimate of things could hardly at the time be taken, but as this passed, and when the victory thus far was to a certain extent won, the eye that had been turned so much outside, as a matter of course, turned elsewhere, and the spiritual condition of the world-churches could not but press more and more heavily upon the godly in the midst of them.

If we are to take the character of things depicted in the address before us, we can have no doubt that there were various movements which could be characterized, at least more or less, as Philadelphian in character; and it is noticeable that in the beginning of these things certain truths tended to revive which had long been lost to view. With separation from the world-church, in the companies of believers thus brought together there was often recognized the liberty of ministry in these congregations. The unscriptural distinction of clergy from laity was refused, along with the exclusive right of preaching on the part of an ordained ministry; and with this there came the refusal of a liturgy and forms of worship distinctly as usurping the place of the Spirit as the true Leader of the people of God. Here and there the coming of the Lord became also a more practical reality.

But while we realize these things, the sorrowful lesson is continually forced upon us of how little man is competent to hold fast the best blessings that God has given him. It is just amid that which is best and most hopeful that we find what is necessarily thus the saddest failure, and the words of the Lord's warning press upon us, "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown." Such movements have constantly begun as real and gracious revivals in the power of God, soon, alas, to decline in power and spirituality, even with the very growth in number of those affected by them. God, on the other hand, has come in again and again to give fresh light, and perfect the truth already in measure known. Certain of these, also, have taken wider hold of the masses, while at the same time they have sadly changed their form as they have thus spread themselves amongst them: in widening they have lost depth. Through the broken barriers of the world-systems a false liberality has come in, which is but the imitation of that which is truly Christian, and which makes light of the very truth which is the sole means of true fellowship among any. One can only speak generally here of such matters as these, and the Spirit of God alone can give the right application, as He will to every heart sufficiently in earnest to apprehend. It is evident that there is encouragement which remains for us in the midst of that which would seem discouragement wholly. It is evident that we must not discredit with the failure the truth held by those who, nevertheless, have failed.

Amid all this the Lord's claim for His people to manifest individually their obedience to Himself only rings out the more clearly and the more urgently. It is a special appeal to every individual as such: "Hold fast that which thou hast,

[z] crown. He that [a] overcometh, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall [b] go no more out; and I will [c] write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the [d] city of my God, the new Jeru-

[z] *cf.* ch. 2. 10. *cf.* Jas. 1. 12. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8.
[a] *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 14. *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 25. *a* ver. 5, etc; *cf.* Gal. 2. 9; *cf.* 1 Ki. 7. 21. *b cf.* Ps. 23. 6; *ctr.* Heb. 13. 14. *c* ch. 22. 4; *cf.* Ex. 28. 36; *ctr.* ch. 13. 16. *d cf.* Ps. 87. 5 with Gal. 4. 26; *cf.* Ezek. 48. 35; ch. 21. 2.

that no one take thy crown." The crown will never be the portion of any *company*, even of the Lord's people. The special reward-crown is the recompense of truth and individual fidelity to Christ.

And let us notice here, also, what it is that we are called to hold fast. Sardis may be naturally called to repent in view of what she had received, but in Philadelphia's keeping the word of Christ there is found, not simply the abiding by what has been already received, the keeping a certain fixed and limited deposit of truth, but rather the listening to a living voice which leads on in necessary progress. If we will keep the word of Christ, if there is in us the heart to do this, then it will be found that we have a creed which is continually enlarging. The Word is becoming more and more to us a living voice that leads us on; and certainly there is no holding fast where there is no progress. A certain measure of truth held but not increased, tends inevitably to become less to the one who holds it. It becomes dulled by that sort of familiarity with it which demonstrates its nature by the very lack of desire for increase. Exercise about it is gone. We are established in it perhaps. We cannot, or think we cannot, be moved from it; but it no more calls up in us the energy that it once did, and thus the decline is already manifest: for as all error is connected together, so that one little point of it that we hold, followed out to its results, will blight all the truth that is in connection with it, so, on the other hand, all truth is so connected that every point in this way gained is a point of vantage, and gives us a view of that which is still beyond—a blessed, attractive view also, which leads us on to the attainment of what is not yet attained. It is still the apostle's rule, "Forgetting that which is behind, and pressing on to that which is before;" for indeed, is not all truth, in one way or another, just the knowledge of Christ Himself? and can there be any right pressing on after Himself which does not take advantage of that which He has given, in order to make Himself known to us, and to give us fellowship with Himself?

Thus the word of Christ and growth in knowledge of it become an inevitable necessity. God has not erred in His knowledge of our need and in that which He has given us, but of which we have not yet possessed ourselves. How can we even imagine what there may be for us stored up in that which we have to confess we know not what it is? How can we measure the unknown? Alas, in our estimate of what is essential and what is non-essential, let us remember that if we apply this to the formation in us of the mind of Christ, we must not tell Him that what we know *not* is not essential to know—that we can afford to leave it out and find no loss by it. Let us be sure that if we would have for ourselves that commendation which the Lord gives to Philadelphia, there must be that quick ear for everything He utters, or *would* utter to us, which will enable Him thus to lead us on. We may be sure that he who is truly a keeper of the word of Christ shall, in proportion as he is so, find that Word becoming more clear; He will emphasize for us the encouragement of this word, "I have set before thee an open door, and no one can shut it."

The promise to the overcomer is most emphatic and beautiful. The one that has but a little strength is to be made a pillar in the temple of God—"My God," says Christ—and to go no more out, and to have upon him the name of His God and the name of the city, the new Jerusalem, and Christ's new name. "A pillar in the temple of My God" may seem strange in view of what we have at the end of the book, when John tells us that he saw no temple in the city of God, "because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." There is no need of a shrine any more when God is so entirely enshrined in the hearts

salem which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and [e]my new name. He that [f]hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the assemblies.

[e] cf. ch. 19. 12 with ch. 2. 17.
[f] ver. 22, etc.

of all there, "all" and "in all." God is at home with His people, and His people are all sons; there is no need therefore of restrictions such as have been known in time past. But on the other hand here we have plainly what is symbolical of a place which God fills, and where He is the Object of unceasing worship. Upon earth "the Church of the living God" is responsibly "the pillar and ground of the truth." Alas, she has signally failed in that responsibility, but here to the overcomer there is more than recovery. We cannot but think of those two pillars in the temple of Solomon, the name of the one being *Jachin*, and the other *Boaz*, significant names, which show what alone can constitute a pillar anywhere—Jachin, "He establishes," and Boaz, "in Him is strength." If we indeed always remembered this! The strength is not in His creatures, but in Himself; and it is He who establishes the soul—not even truth known apart from Him. The Philadelphian overcomer will be even thus a witness to the strength which has been given him, and to the grace which has made him what he is. Out of this temple he shall no more go, for it is not local, but the presence of God continually realized by the saint in glory; where forgetfulness even for a moment will be wholly impossible. Then there is identification with the name of God, Christ's God; that is, with God as displayed in Christ. On earth those who have the seal of God upon their foreheads are described as having the name of His Father written upon them. Thus they are proclaimed His, and He is seen in them; and this is the work of the Spirit to accomplish. Then there is identification with the city of God, the new Jerusalem, a heavenly, not an earthly habitation; the city in which is indeed the "foundation of peace," peace always abiding secure, never more to be assailed. The city upon earth was constantly in siege. The heavenly city is far above all possibility of this. Peace is based upon righteousness, and Christ is still and everywhere the true foundation of peace. Lastly, there is identification with Christ Himself, His new name written upon the overcomer, that name in which all His new relationships to the Church, His bride, His body, and the whole new creation, are told out.* He is not here Israel's Messiah simply. He is the Father of Eternity, the Lord of endless glory.

3. The addresses close with that to Laodicea; a name which strikes one painfully at the first glance, and the significance of which is easily seen. Laodicea is composed of two words, which unitedly mean either "the manners," "the right," or "the judgment, of the people." These are all in near connection with one another, and may all have their place in the meaning of what is before us. "People's rights"! Who does not know that this is the cry of the times? and no doubt not without much apparent justification for it, in a world full of oppression; a world in which "Might makes right" has been a constant motto, a principle really acted upon even where not acknowledged. How even the conscience itself goes with this plea of the downtrodden! Who can deny the awful abuse of power everywhere? And who cannot see that more and more, according to the democratic tendency of the times, the people are not merely pleading for but demanding a right to possess themselves of their rights? Who can wonder, either? Leave but God out (and that is, alas, what we find it in general so

* Considering Philadelphia as representing—as it surely does—a remnant testimony to Christ's truth in days of ruin and failure, how striking is the contrast between it in the eyes of the world and as rewarded in glory! What feebler, apparently, than the stand for truth—often a subject of scorn to the world: but it will be a pillar there. How significant the mention of the temple of God for those who refused the thought of any earthly sanctuary! They refused all names of man here; there they will have a triple name written by the Lord Himself—His God's, His city's, and His own new name. They confessed themselves strangers and pilgrims here; there the name of the heavenly city, with all that goes with it, will be inscribed upon them. And who can tell all that goes with that "new name" of our Lord Himself? To know Him then as we do not, and cannot, know Him now—who can measure the blessedness held out to the overcomer?—S. R.

very easy to do), why should the many accept this overbearing dominancy of the few? Why should the mere casual circumstances which few have ordained for themselves or had anything to say as to bringing about, make all the difference of luxury or penury among those sprung of a common parentage, and creatures alike of Him who is "no respecter of persons"? The case may be fairly argued, but what avails mere argument about it? The question is as to the remedy; and does it not seem as if the remedy were really in the hands of those who are the many against the few? Why should not might again make right, as it has done all through the world's history, and the people settle things with their own right hands?

But the question still remains, What sort of a settlement will be attained in this way? The masses have risen up before, and what has been accomplished? It was but a spasm of effort which exhausted itself as quickly, and things returned, as they ever seem to return, to their former condition; for these "people's rights"—*whose* rights are they? And who is to determine them? Each for himself, or the many for the few? Can one think there will be in this case righteous principles?—any less wrong? Liberty, equality and fraternity have been written in deep red letters, as we know; and the awful horror of that brief moment in which they were so, scarcely fades with the time that has elapsed since then. Who is to determine the rights, and the extent of them? Who shall apportion to each his due in a way that shall give satisfaction, perhaps, even to any? The world is full of oppression and wrong. Granted. Let the conscience be rightly before God, and there is in each of us that which will point out the cause, and convince one of the inveteracy of the evil. Who can trust himself? And he that trusts himself most, will *he* be the person most trusted by others? No; it is sin that is at the bottom of the whole, however little, indeed, we may care to know it. It is easier, no doubt, to own it for others than for ourselves; but thus those who own it for us will always be in the majority, and shall not the majority decide?

Scripture has written out in full the condemnation, and our only hope lies, after all, in submitting to Scripture. We are sinners, and this is what has wrecked our fortunes; this is what has brought clouds and darkness over the face of God Himself, and often made His ways so little what we think to be worthy of Him. Alas, we are taking up our own cause simply, in judging thus; and we cannot be trusted in our own cause to give right judgment. Yet is not the world wrong? Scripture speaks, as we know, in the strongest way about this. The socialist and the anarchist can both appeal to the denunciations of Scripture, and have claimed even the Son of man Himself as one with them because of His denunciations of the wrong that is everywhere. Let them look more deeply, and they will find that they are at total issue with Him in regard to the remedy. Power was in His own hands. Did He use it? We know the cross is His emblem. That speaks, if we have learnt it aright, of His submission to the judgment upon Him for their sin, taking that sin Himself in His love to redeem them. But His remedy, then, is to bow, not indeed to man, but to God; or if to man, yet only as in obedience to God. Here is the way out, and the only way. We suffer for our sins. Be it so. Let us own them then, and let Him be the Judge, and let us accept that judgment. Let us not plead rights which, if we argue them out before Him, will prove so fatally against us. The end of all is in His hand; and happy is the one who has learnt to leave it there, and to leave it there in confidence.

But this plea of people's rights is manifestly in connection, not merely with the politics of the time, but with the Church of God; and it has, alas, made these so much its own principles! With politics, as such, we would not expect to have much to do in these addresses to the churches; but if the world and the Church have come together so largely, as in truth they have,—when men can talk about a Christian world, and the powers of the earth have come to be practically the so-called "Christian powers,"—then how is it possible to keep politics out of the Church? or to prevent the universal spirit of unrest entering into

3 (14-22): Laodicea. Fulness, so as to have no need of Christ: He, too, sated with their false pretenses, spews them out.

3. And to the angel of the assembly in Laodicea, write: —These things saith the [g]Amen, the [h]faithful and true witness, the [i]beginning of the creation of God. I know thy works, that thou art [j]neither cold nor hot: I

[g] *cf.* 2 Cor. i. 20. [h] ch. 1. 5. ch. 19. 11. [i] Col. 1. 15-18. *cf.* ch. 21. 5. *cf.* Gal. 6. 15. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 17. [j] *cf.* 2 Cor. 1. 17; *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 5; *cf.* Matt. 24. 12.

the most purely ecclesiastical questions? It is certain that to-day there is a democratic tendency in religion as in all else. The ministry of the Church has long been a systematically hired service, and here, as elsewhere, the masses are rising up, themselves to assert their rights against the pretentious claims of the hierarchy. The Church once ruled, but the Church rules no longer. Alas, it is true that when the Church ruled most absolutely, those were the dark ages for mankind. This rule of the Church did not indeed, as we know, mean a rule of the people, but of a class which had arrogated to itself the claim to be this, and had trodden down the people into the very dust. What wonder that the people should be now asserting themselves here also? Not, indeed, to insist upon Scriptural ruling in the things of God, but upon their own rights, as the masses against the few. Ministry, it is true, means service and not ruling; but if the service be, as by common consent it has so long been, alas, a service of hire, why should not the people claim their money's worth and decide which suits them, the kind of thing they want to hear, and the men that they want to listen to? For what comes of this they cannot indeed plead Scripture, except that which they would not like to fulfil as a prediction, that "men shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and they shall turn their ears from the truth and be turned to fables." Bring the Church and the world together, as it must surely be plain to any spiritual mind that they are largely so—practically, even where not in theory; what must be the outcome when the purse rules and the popular voice decides what they care to listen to?

But before we go further, let us look at the address to Laodicea, and see what the picture is that it presents to us. Here Christ, as always, speaks in suited character for that which He is addressing. He is here "The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God:" words that again are, on the one hand, a needed warning; on the other hand, a sweet encouragement to those who can accept the warning. He is the Amen, as the apostle says to the Corinthians: "All the promises of God in Him are yea," and therefore "through Him also is the amen, unto the glory of God through us" (2 Cor. i. 20, R. V.); that is, as the revised reading has it, that in Christ there is the positive assurance of every promise of God, and that which awakens, therefore, in His people the amen, their affirmation of the assurance which they have found in Him. Here, therefore, He is Himself "the Amen." Christ is the answer from the hearts of His people as to the truth of every promise of God, and we may add surely, as to the Church, of every word that He has spoken; His Word abides; not a thing to be trifled with, to be twisted at men's pleasure, and not to be set aside. Christ is thus Himself "the faithful and true Witness." How solemn and yet how cheering the reminder, when the witness of His people on earth has failed, to know that there is One who abides true to Himself, true to God, true to us therefore, in all possible interests—His witness, that which is to be listened to, however men may contradict! This, of course, is practically the affirmation of the truth of Scripture, of that which is His Word throughout, but in which, as we know, men are claiming to find a human element which soon comes to be something that is quite other than "faithful and true," and which is used to obscure His witness: for it is manifest that if we cannot fully trust the terms of that document in which all His own witness is recorded for us, then this of necessity must partake of such uncertainty as all the record has. It is of no use affirming that still Christ remains true when we cannot produce what we can positively say are His own true words. If there be not an absolutely faithful report, then we have practically lost the faithful Witness Himself.

[k] would thou wert cold or hot. So, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to [l] spew thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am [m] rich, and have grown rich, and have need of nothing, and [n] knowest not that *thou* art the wretched and miserable one, even [o] poor and [p] blind and [q] naked; I

k *cf.* 1 Ki. 18. 21. *cf.* Matt. 12. 30.
l *cf.* Ezek. 16. 59. *cf.* Matt. 23. 38. *cf.* ch. 18. 21, etc.

m *cf.* 1 Cor. 4. 8; *cf.* Lk. 6. 24; *cf.* Ezek. 16. 15, etc; *cf.* Jas. 5. 1, 2. n *cf.* Hos. 7. 9; *cf.* Jno. 9. 39–41. o *cf.* Lk. 16. 19, 23. p *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 14; *cf.* Matt. 13. 15. q *cf.* Gen. 3. 7; *cf.* ch. 16. 15.

The Lord's last title here, "The beginning of the creation of God," speaks, of course, of *new* creation. The old, stained with sin, is no longer recognized as His. In fact, new creation was always that which was in His thoughts, which the fall, therefore, could never mar nor set aside—rather, was a means, under the controlling hand of God, of developing. Here Christ Himself is the true beginning of it. He is the One from whom it has its origin; and those who belong to it are created in Him, as the apostle expresses it in Ephesians (chap. ii. 10); and He it is who abides—for the one renewed in knowledge after the image of Him who created him—"where there is neither Greek nor Jew, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all." "People's rights" have no place here, clearly, but God's grace only. At Laodicea He is therefore outside the door, though lingering yet in His grace, if possibly any one may at last give Him admittance.

Thus we see that in Laodicea they have got far away from all that is real with God, among the shadows of their own vain imaginations. But it is noticeable here that we have not the death-coldness of Sardis; they are simply lukewarm, neither cold nor hot. The solemn thing is that the Lord estimates this as a *worse* condition than absolute coldness; and we may see in this, no doubt, that the revival in Philadelphia has thus affected them. Even that which is dead, if it is under the influence of the heat, can be warmed up, but not to *vital* warmth; and this is the condition now. In fact, they are valuing themselves upon what they have attained; recovered truth has become in a certain sense their possession, and they value themselves accordingly upon it. In their own apprehension they are rich, and have been growing rich; nay, they have need of nothing. There is perfect self-complacency just at the time when the Lord is saying, "I am about to spew thee out of My mouth." These things, indeed, go perfectly together: the condition here is that of a professed spirituality, which, by its profession, betrays itself: for, even with regard to knowledge, "If a man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know;" and "if a man thinketh that he is anything when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." That is God's estimate of man, which the truly spiritual has made his own. "We are the circumcision, who worship God by the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." But alas, how hard it is to be thoroughly convinced that all self-confidence is confidence in the flesh!

Thank God, we are rich enough in Christ to be able to contemplate our own poverty without dismay. Our riches are in Him, and here we can boast as much as we will—the more the better; but the one who in any other sense can say, "I am rich," may be sure that this is but the mere unconsciousness of one who is "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Yet a common pretension of the present day, and which is found in various forms, is a pretension to perfection, which necessarily ignores the standard of perfection which God has given us: for while it is true that "he that abideth in Christ ought himself also so to walk even as He walked," yet who could venture to say, with the full consciousness of the perfection that is set before him, that he has attained it? That faith from which all true and acceptable work is produced is a renunciation of self, in the very fact that it turns off to Another; and every whit of confidence in one's self is just so much taken from that which is due to Him who alone can be the rightful confidence of the saint. It is true that there

counsel thee to [r]buy of me gold purified by fire, that thou mayest be rich; and [s]white garments, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness may not be manifested; and [t]eye-salve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see. As many as I [u]love

r *cf.* Isa. 55. 1. *cf.* Matt. 25. 9.
s *cf.* ver. 4. *cf.* ch. 19. 8. *cf.* Lk. 15. 22
t *cf.* Jno. 9 6, 7.
cf. 2 Pet. 1. 9, 10. u Heb. 12. 6; Prov. 3. 12.

are fruits of the Spirit. We need not ignore that. Nay, it would be a wrong to the Spirit Himself to ignore it. Yet even so, it is not the work of the Spirit to make us contemplate this, nor can we be trusted to do so. It was through pride, as the apostle tells us (1 Tim. iii. 6), that Satan fell from the height in which he was created, to the place of being the Satan that he is, the constant adversary of God and man. "Thy heart was lifted up because of thy beauty. Thou hast corrupted thy wisdom because of thy brightness" (Ezek. xxviii. 17) are the words of God apparently as to this fallen being himself; but whether or not, the lesson is the same.

There is in all this self-occupation a fearful danger which Christians are painfully slow to realize. The subtle Pharisaism of a good self—justified as it is sought to be by the necessity of holiness and fruitfulness for God—will ensnare the saint for whom the gross forms of sin have no attraction; and with it all there will be constantly found a real depreciation of Christ,—to call it by no worse name,—in order that this self-satisfaction may be able to live in the dimmed glory of this Presence. Thus, not only have we the positive heresies of those who, with Irving, assert that the Lord had a fallen nature, which He had to conquer, as we have to conquer ours, but where this is not taught, yet that which the law discovered to the apostle (that the lust forbidden by it was sin) is denied, and the evil which, after all, is discovered within is imputed to Satan instead of to one's self; and it is urged that Christ was similarly tempted of Satan. A Laodiceanism of this spirit is thus manifested in the place which it gives the really perfect One; and along with this naturally goes the assumption that those who thus no longer need the discipline of sickness and suffering have therefore title (through the work of Christ, no doubt), if they have faith, to claim exemption from it. Thus the plain Sadduceeism of infidelized Christianity stalks abroad in company with the highest pretension of Pharisaism.

"I counsel thee," says the Lord, "to buy of Me gold purified by fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white garments, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness may not be manifested; and eye-salve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see." The gold is that which seems everywhere to speak of divine glory. In the ark it covered the shittim wood, the symbol of the Lord's humanity; and the golden cherubim are spoken of by the apostle as "the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy-seat." Divine glory is the display of what God is in nature, and for us it is in the face of Him now revealed to us as the true image of God. It is in Him indeed that we find all riches for the Christian; for it is as we behold thus "the glory of the Lord we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory." The whole power of sanctification lies in this, and the white garments of which He goes on to speak here are evidently in close connection with this. They typify, as always in Revelation, the practical righteousness which we see in the nineteenth chapter, as that with which it is given the bride to be arrayed. But note, these white garments have to be washed and *made* white in the blood of the Lamb (chap. vii. 14). The eye-salve is, of course, that which the Spirit furnishes, and the eyes thus anointed have one object alone, from which they would never be diverted, the light of a glory by which alone all other things are rightly seen. The Lord counsels these Laodiceans to *buy* these things. They are too rich and well-to-do to be asked to receive them freely. Nevertheless, the only purchase here is "without money and without price;" for if in fact to gain these things may cost us much, it is only the sacrifice of the rags of paper money, which was never of any real value,

I rebuke and chasten; be zealous, therefore, and [v]repent. Behold, I [w]stand at the door and knock. If any one [x]hear my voice and [y]open the door, I will [z]come in to him and [a]sup with him, and [b]he with me. He that [c]overcometh, to him will I give to sit with me in my throne; as I also [d]overcame, and have sat down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an [e]ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the assemblies.

v ch. 2. 5.
w *cf.* Song. 5. 2.
x *cf.* Lk. 12. 36. *cf.* Jno. 5. 24.
y *cf.* Jno. 1. 12. *cf.* Acts 16. 14.
z *cf.* Jno. 14. 23. *cf.* Lk. 19. 5, 6.
a *cf.* Lk. 5. 29-32. b *cf.* Lk. 15. 2; *cf.* Matt. 8. 11; *cf.* ch. 19. 9. c ch. 2. 7, etc; ch. 20. 4; *cf.* Matt. 19. 28. d *cf.* ch. 5. 5; *cf.* Jno. 16. 33; *cf.* Jno. 17. 4, 5; *cf.* Heb. 1. 3. e ch. 2. 29, etc.

and which, when we see with the apostle, we count it loss, and therefore gain to lose.

This, then, is the character of Laodiceanism. It is a sign that the patience of the Lord is running out. Yet still He lingers, for His heart has not wandered, if that of His people has. "As many as I love," He says, "I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous therefore, and repent." Still He expects no repentance of the mass. All is individual now. He is outside the door as a stranger, knocking; but if any one shall hear His voice and open the door, He will come in to him and will sup with him. Outside the door as a whole, yet it is evident that it is only the individual door that any one can open; while, as to the mass, it is already irrevocably said, "I am about to spew thee out of My mouth." Thus the threat which we find at the beginning, of the removal of the candlestick, is at last to be fulfilled. He has indeed had long patience, but there is here no true witness for Him which He can acknowledge. Thus the Church is to be set aside from its place as the responsible witness for Him upon the earth. Actually, the true saints are to be removed to heaven. This is for them but pure grace. It is the accomplishment of a promise which, the more fully the heart is His, is the more joyfully expected. But for the mass it is rejection, and only that. Nauseous in its lukewarmness to the Lord, He is going to spew it out of His mouth. Christianity proper is ended when the Lord gathers His people to Himself; yet the Christian profession, entirely empty though it may be then, may go on for a while yet; soon, however, to end in open apostasy. The history of it we shall have in the chapters that follow.

For the overcomer there is yet one final word. "To him," says the Lord, "will I give to sit with Me in My throne; as I also overcame, and have sat down with My Father on His throne." This is the announcement of the change which is coming about. On the Father's throne, though the Lord reigns, yet it is His waiting time: "Sit Thou at My right hand until I make Thy foes Thy footstool" (Ps. cx. 1). That is the distinct announcement of the time during which the King of Israel, recognized as that, shall nevertheless not be in possession of His kingdom. The sitting upon the Father's throne is a higher dignity, and the kingdom is a wider one. Manifestly, it is what is His by personal right alone, and which He cannot share even with others. Yet He has overcome to reach that place. Although His by natural right, yet He reaches it now as having accomplished a blessed work for God, which was verily a conflict. The strife between good and evil has been in His hand to work out to a conclusion, and He has virtually, though not yet actually, concluded it. He is upon the throne as having vindicated the right, as having glorified God in His ways and attributes, as having removed sin as a hindrance out of the way altogether; nay, as having made sin itself yield its tribute to the glory of the Eternal. Yet still He waits. He is to have a throne as Son of man, holding it in the nature in which He has wrought His triumph. He is to subject all things to God; to be thus "the Father of Eternity," according to the title by which Isaiah announces Him (chap. ix. 6); and this, too, is something much wider than the possession of David's throne would indicate. It is the throne of the Son of man, of One who has linked Himself with humanity, and who must therefore take up every

question which affects man or the relation of God to man. But thus He has a human throne, and there He can have those whom in this way He can call "brethren," and who can be associated with Him upon this throne which now He is going to take. All this is the intimation of what is before us in what immediately follows now—"things that are" having come to an end, and a very different state of things ensuing, in which the Church is no more recognized upon earth, and the elders are upon their thrones around the throne of God.

Laodicea closes the history of the Church on earth, and closes it, evidently, not in triumph, according to the expectation of so many still, but in judgment of the mass at the hands of the Lord Himself. Laodicea—"people's rights"—is no less, and even on that account, "people's judgment" also. The Christian dispensation, with all the grace of which it speaks, nevertheless ends as the legal dispensation ended. "Cease ye from man" is the moral throughout, a terribly sad and humiliating one if we go no further; but if "he that glorieth" may no more glory in man, there remains still the unfailing Object to glory in:—"he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." And yet here too, wonderful to say, we find a Man, and the Son of man, a Man who has not failed and will not fail; a Man in whom the early promise of creation has been more than fulfilled; a Man who, after all, eclipses the brightness of those heavens, whose glory might seem to make it strange indeed that God should visit him;—man, and even the Son of man, whom God hath made a little lower than the angels, to crown Him with glory and honor; under whose feet not simply the beasts of the earth are put, but who is at the same time the Head of all creation, and the One in whom God Himself is manifest in the full glory of His Godhead.

Div. 2.

We are but following the division of the book, which the Lord's own words imply, into "the things that are," and "the things that are about to be after these." It is not "hereafter," as in our common version; which might be indefinitely, at some future time. The words intimate a connection between the two parts of Revelation such as we should naturally suppose, at least if the epistles to the churches are in themselves prophetic. Even if it were not so, and the addresses simply had to do with existing churches of the time of the prophet, yet we should see no reason for any great break, although the coming to pass "*after these*" would, as such, naturally lose much of its significance. But if, as we may be well assured from the introduction to the whole book, all of it is a prophecy, and if we have found this confirmed in the application, as we surely have; if these addresses carry us down, therefore, until the coming of the Lord, which is more and more pressed upon us as we reach the end, then the things that follow are, of course, things taking place after the removal of the Church, as already implied in the Lord's promise to Philadelphia. What we must expect, therefore, if these things are so, is that entire change as to things on earth which would result from the Church being absent from it; which would mean the taking up afresh of Israel, and with Israel the earth once more.

The Church is heavenly. It is a gathering out of the world, which does not affect, at least savingly, the world as such. As we have seen, also, the Lord's coming for His people is spoken of as the promise of the Morning Star, which does not bring the day to the earth, although it heralds the approach of it. We have but to look at the Old Testament prophecies in order to see that for the blessing of the earth Israel must be blessed, as Hosea distinctly says (chap. ii. 14–23) that the Lord "will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably to her, and give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor" (the place of judgment) "for a door of hope; and she shall sing there as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shall call Me Ishi" (my husband), "and shalt call Me no more Baali" (my lord); "for I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be

remembered by their name." We see that this is absolute assurance of their being brought back into relationship with God abidingly, and into a nearer relationship than they have ever known before.

The prophet goes on: "And in that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely. And I will betroth thee unto Me forever; yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord." Nothing can possibly be more decisive than this is, and there follows the general blessing for the earth resultant: "And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel. And I will sow her unto Me in the earth" (the application of that name Jezreel, which means "the seed of God," or "God shall sow"); "and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not My people, Thou art My people; and they shall say, Thou art my God." It is not possible, one would say, to pervert this in the way which has been so common—reading "the Church" instead of "Israel"; and this is the language of the Old Testament generally. Thus Isaiah says (chap. xxvii. 6): "He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: *Israel* shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit." These are the promises which the apostle to the Gentiles has told us distinctly (Rom. ix. 3, 4) belong to his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh, (not Spirit) who are Israelites; and they assure us not only of the conversion of Israel, but of their distinctly being reinstated in the place of peculiar blessing, and being made instrumental to the blessing of the whole earth. Thus Israel becomes Jezreel, "the seed of God."

This, then, is the character of things that we must expect in the prophecies to follow this. The Church is no more seen upon earth, but we have, in a remarkable introduction to the things that follow, the picture of the redeemed in heaven occupying already their thrones as kings and priests to God, from whence we see them issuing in the nineteenth chapter, in the train of the white-horsed Rider; that is, accompanying Christ when He comes to the earth in judgment. The whole character of the intermediate time will be in harmony with this. The Church gone, there will only remain, as representing the one Christian profession, Babylon the Great, in full reality then "the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth."

Subd. 1.

The first subdivision carries us to the end of the opening of the seals, which therefore fully opens the book. All prior to this must therefore be of an introductory nature. The book is not fully open until every seal is broken. He who opens them is in heaven, the Object of all the worship there; and it is heaven that now manifestly rules upon earth. God, of course, has never given up His throne, and could not do so. Nevertheless, He has permitted things, apparently, to go on as if He knew nothing of what was doing there. According to the parable in the Gospel of Mark (chap. iv. 26–29), "So is the kingdom of God as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. . . . But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come." The change which takes place now indicates that the harvest of the earth is at hand. The power which governs all is distinctly shown as being in heaven. The evil may assume, and does assume, a more malignant character even than before, but there goes forth now judgment that is to arrest it, at the call of the cherubim, the executors of the government of God on earth.

DIVISION 2. (Chaps. iv.–xxii.)

Things that come to pass after these. The salvation of Israel and the earth.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chaps. iv.–viii. 5.)

The sources of power.

SECTION 1. (Chaps. iv., v.)

The opening of divine counsels by the Lion of Judah in the midst of the throne.

[1] (iv.): The throne of God in necessary righteousness but girdled with promise.
[1] (1-3): The call, and the divine throne.

1. [1] AFTER these things I saw, and behold, a [g] door opened in heaven, and the first voice which I heard as of the [h] trumpet speaking with me, saying,

[f] *cf.* ch. 1. 19. *cf.* 2 Thess. 1. 7-10.
[g] *cf.* Lk. 23. 45. *cf.* Heb. 10. 19.
[h] ch. 1. 10.

See. 1.

It is in perfect correspondence with all this, that when we look at the One by whom the book of the divine counsels is now opened, we find, in Him who is in the midst of the throne of God, the Lion of Judah; a significant term, which as applied to Christ can hardly be missed. *Judah's Lion has risen up.* Christ is taking a place in relationship to Israel; and "the times of the Gentiles" are necessarily come to an end.

This is a most important change: for when God gave up His manifest throne in Israel, and Ezekiel had seen the glory finally leave the city, Daniel (who was contemporary of Ezekiel) next represents to us the transference of power to the Gentiles, Nebuchadnezzar being distinctly given title over the earth, a title which the successive empires that the prophet sees following the Babylonian inherit from him. This gives us "the times of the Gentiles;" God being now spoken of in Daniel as "the God of heaven," as one who had left the earth, so to speak—as driven out by the sins of His professing people. This is coincident, as the Lord shows us, with the treading down of Jerusalem (Luke xxi. 24). Jebuzite feet are again upon her: "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled." Immediately after this, the Lord speaks of "signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; . . . men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth;" and then they are to "see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." Power is now in the hands of One who is truly the King of kings, and this of necessity shows us how we are to take the sealing of the 144,000 of all the tribes of the children of Israel; and the view of the Gentile company following in the same vision only makes their Israelitish character stand out the more completely. The Church, in which there is neither Jew nor Gentile, is passed from the earth, and the old distinctions are obtaining again. One may say that as it is the Lion of Judah who opens the seals, and therefore gives us to realize these counsels of God, so it is only as we discern the Lord in this character here that the book will practically open to us—that we shall be able to see what is being put before us.

1. The first thing now before us is the throne of God; not indeed as it was in Israel, but the higher throne, in heaven. It is seen as manifested in necessary righteousness, therefore in judgment, because of the condition of the earth, but yet girdled with the bow of promise, which limits the judgment, and shows the blessing which is to result from it.

[1] "After these things," says the apostle, (using the very words which remind us of that division of the book which has been already given) "I saw, and behold, a door opened in heaven; and the first voice which I heard as of a trumpet speaking with me, saying, Come up hither, and I will show thee what must take place after these things." This is something which in all Scripture we have not had before—not only a door opened in heaven, but the prophet called

up there, in order to see from that point of view (from whence alone things can be fully comprehended) what is now going to take place. Heaven has been opened before this. Enoch and Elijah went there of old, and the assurance of this has been given for the comfort of many generations since; but there was but the fact that they had gone there. No voice came back from heaven as the result. When everything had gone utterly to wreck in Israel, and Ezekiel was given to see the end in judgment, "the heavens were opened," says the prophet, and "I saw visions of God;" but he was not called up there; and the glory which he saw come forth went back without any new revelation of the place from which it came.

When our Lord was born the heavens were again opened, characteristically now to simple shepherds in the field, and the angels celebrated openly that good pleasure of God in men which has ever since characterized the revelation for us.

When, after His resurrection, the Lord went up, it was revealed that now a Man sat upon the right hand of God. Henceforth an opened heaven is that which is peculiarly characteristic of the present blessing. Stephen, under the stones of his persecutors, is given to see heaven opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God—a glorious gleam of brightness which transfigures, as well it might, his dying face.

Still, there is a certain reticence. No one who has been there comes back; until Paul, the apostle of the mysteries, can at last tell us of his being caught up (2 Cor. xii.). He knows not, indeed, "whether in the body or out of the body," but he has been there, and heard "unspeakable things," which it was not lawful for him to utter. The vision, whatever it was, is for himself alone. He has not been there as a prophet, but simply as a man in Christ. The blessing of it, no doubt, is in some sense for us, but it is equally plain that there is no communication. But now there is a prophet caught up, whose lips are no longer to be sealed. We are, so to speak, to be transported with him into that blessed place into which he goes. We are permitted at last, as we may say, to breathe the atmosphere of heaven, and to hear the voices of its inhabitants. But there is more than this, and we have a fuller interest in it, as we are directly shown.

John has already spoken of himself as in some sense the representative of the Church at large. He is the recipient, as we know, of this divine communication to Christ's servants, and he associates himself with these as their fellow-servant, and partaker with them in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Christ. It is John, let us remember also, of whom the Lord had said, in contrast to what He had announced to Peter, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" They could not read this enigma, and thought evidently that the Lord had said that that disciple should not die; a mistake against which he himself immediately cautions us. Nevertheless, in some sense John was, as we see, to go on to the coming of the Lord. He is the one who is given here to anticipate that blessed time; thus in his own person again, as it were, representing that Church which abides on earth as a company waiting for the Lord, against which the gates of hades cannot prevail, but which is to be caught up to meet Him—the antitypical Enoch of this later time. In fact, everything reminds us here of how the Lord will take His own to Himself. It is "a voice of a trumpet" speaking with him, that calls him up, the anticipation of that last trump which will awaken the sleeping saints, and call the living, with them, to their meeting with the Lord. It need be no wonder, then, if, when he is there, he finds himself as it were part of a company of redeemed, who are there also with him.

There is, indeed, no direct prophecy of that wondrous event which the apostle has described for us in the first epistle to the Thessalonians. There is a certain mystery attaching to it all, a mystery which we are called upon, as it were, to consider and penetrate; for all God's parables and deep sayings are to furnish us with wisdom—not to take wisdom from us. We are left to a certain exer-

Come up hither, and I will [i]show thee what must take place after these things. Immediately I [j]became in the Spirit; and behold, a [k]throne was set in heaven, and

[i] ch. 1. 19. *cf.* ch. 3. 10.
[j] ch. 1. 10.
[k] *cf.* ch. 3. 21. *cf.* ch. 22. 3. Ps. 103. 19.

cise about them, which is meant as a test for the state of soul in which we are, and without which Scripture will never have the blessing which God designs for us from it. No doubt also, in this way, a certain latitude, if one may so say, is permitted to us, which leaves room for that historical application to Christian times of the things which are before us here, which we shall have more to consider in the future, but which already has been spoken of as something naturally to be expected from what is inherent in the character of prophecy itself; the things that are around us being in this way the foreshadowing, with a necessary limitation, of the things to come—a foreshadow that should have true interest for us, limited as it necessarily must be; for, as with Israel's shadows, we must not be allowed to mistake the shadow for the substance. It cannot even be the perfect image of the things therefore,—but we shall have to speak of this more at another time.

What we see here is simply the prophet caught up, and with no idea, such as in the case of the apostle Paul is suggested, of a possible bodily taking up into these heavenly scenes. This, for us at least, is not needed. It is what he saw and heard that we are to be occupied with; and as to the manner of it, it is sufficient to say, as he says here, "Immediately I became in the Spirit." But he had already said this in connection with his first vision, which was upon the earth; the being in the Spirit simply assuring us that the Spirit was, as it were, eyes and ears to him, so that all was definitely secured and perfect. What he was as man was to be no hindrance to this. When God would reveal, He takes perfect care that no "human element" entering in shall mar the revelation. John became then in the Spirit. It is evidently a new beginning of his being so. It is an entirely new series of visions that he is to behold; and immediately there is before him a throne set in heaven, and One sitting upon the throne.

In Scripture the introduction to a book, or to any part of a book, will be found to give the character of that which follows. In this way we are helped to seize the central point, that point of view which, when we have it, puts other things in proper connection with it. Here, a throne set in heaven is characteristic of the whole book, but more especially of that part upon which we are entering now. Revelation, as a fifth part of the New Testament Pentateuch, is necessarily that which gives us the divine ways in government; and if we divide this number 5 into its two parts, we have, as must be quite familiar to us, $4 + 1$, the number of the creature with the number of God; the weak, therefore, with the Strong; which gives us necessarily responsibility to God on the one hand, as it declares on the other the power of that government with which this responsibility has to do. But everything is characterized by the throne here. God Himself, although spoken of as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, does not appear even once as "*our* Father." It is not, of course, that He is not fully this, but we are in a different line of things from what this would speak of.

We therefore naturally come into the Old Testament connections; for the government of God is that of which the law necessarily speaks. Thus we find God as Jehovah, the One who is, and was, and is to come, which is but the interpretation of that name. So, also, He is the Almighty, as He declared Himself to Abraham, power being the first and necessary thought in connection with all real sovereignty. Again, as we shall find, it is characteristic that the white raiment of the saints is not that of which we habitually think—our righteousness in Christ, or Christ our righteousness—but it is a righteousness governmentally awarded, and the robe requires to be washed—washed in the blood of Christ—in order that it may be the pure white needed for the presence of God. Everything is in character thus from beginning to end, even in that where we should least expect to find it, in that final city of God in which we shall find indeed our home,

one sitting upon the throne; and he that sat was [l] like in appearance to a jasper and a sardine stone; and a [m] rainbow was round about the throne in appearance like unto an [n] emerald.

[l] *cf.* ch. 21. 11. *cf.* Ezek. 1. 26, 27.
[m] *cf.* Ezek. 1. 28. *cf.* Gen. 9. 13-17.
[n] *cf.* Ps. 72. 6.

cf. Is. 40. 1, 2.

the central blessedness of the Father's house; and yet the thought of government is everywhere in it. The measures and numbers attaching to the city all give us the 12 which speaks of manifest divine government; and here we have not children with the Spirit of adoption, but worshipers praising, and servants serving. Of course this is all in perfect harmony with that place of near relationship which, in His goodness, God has given us. We worship the Father; and service is that which belongs in the fullest way to children. Nevertheless, the line of things which is before us is quite distinct.

A throne, then, is set in heaven, and One sits upon the throne; with a certain necessary mystery as to Him, for here is One dwelling in the light unapproachable, who in His innermost glory no man hath seen or can see. Yet there are images which convey to us what we may realize as to Him; and to us it is perfectly natural that these images should speak of Him as redemption has declared Him. This is what seems to be the thought of the jasper and the sardine stone. Gems, as we have seen in the high priest's breastplate long since, are pictures to us of God in His various attributes, so far as He can be displayed to us; and the names written upon these stones, the names of His people, show in what connection He has manifested Himself. The jewels are the lights of Him who is the Father of lights, in the perfect ray of light itself too bright for us, but tempered in a way which brings out glories that would otherwise be hidden; the many-hued manifestation of the light—the light spread before us in its component rays. As it is *to* man the revelation is, so that this may be perfect as possible, it is *in* man that the revelation is, and Christ is therefore the blessed revealer. It is of this revelation of God in Christ, as it would seem, that the jasper and the sardine speak; for the jasper does not seem to be what we ordinarily call this. Its light is not as it is spoken of here (chap. xxi. 11), "clear as crystal," which scarcely suits its banded appearance. Ebrard has therefore suggested the diamond, which seems most perfectly to suit what is said of the jasper here. It is indeed, like the crystal light itself, as suited as we could imagine to that which is said to image the glory of God. But there is another character of the diamond which seems to have escaped notice, and yet it gives us, as it were, the very heart of the matter. The diamond, as is well known, is crystalized carbon, which we find, in the pure form, as graphite, the black lead of our pencils.

Carbon exists in these opposite conditions. In one form the symbol of divine glory, it might in the other be naturally the symbol of sin and evil. These two things, moreover, God's grace has shown us to be in strange and intimate connection with one another; for how could God's grace display itself other than in connection with sin and evil? And it is striking to find here also that carbon is an element characteristic of all organic products, so that organic chemistry has been called "the chemistry of the carbon compounds." It is thus in beautiful connection with living forms as we see them around us, even as God has brought for us life out of death, and wrought in the transformation of our ruined humanity that which is the brightest display of divine glory. Christ is Man, the highest possible type of manhood; and while in Him the thought of evil is absolutely excluded, yet is He "the Seed of the woman;" and God has in this done what was possible to Him alone, and brought "a clean thing out of an unclean." But more than this, for here is one who has emptied Himself of that which was properly His, "the form of God," to assume the form of a servant, and to be made in the likeness of men. He too has been in the darkness of death, and come up out of it to be thus the glorious Light of redeemed men forever—the display also of God, in the love which brought Him down, and which has pre-

2(4): Thrones in subject association with the Throne.

2 And °round the throne were four and twenty thrones; and upon the thrones, four and twenty ᵖelders sitting, clothed in ᵠwhite garments, and upon their heads golden ʳcrowns.

o *cf.* ch. 3. 21. *cf.* Rom. 8. 17.
p *cf.* 1 Chro. 24. 1-19. *cf.* Heb. 12. 23.
q *cf.* ch. 3. 4, 5; *cf.* ch. 19. 8, 14. r *cf.* ch. 2. 10; *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 8.

pared for Him also a body, the sign of that perpetual service to us which He has taken up. Of the depths to which He has descended the sardine stone reminds us by its ruddy hue; and thus, in the combination of the jasper, or diamond, and the sardine stone, we have, indeed, God manifest as nowhere else we could find Him: for if this seem for a moment to be Christ rather than God, or, let us say, the Father, yet, as we know, it is not Christ's own love simply that has been displayed to us, but the Father's love who sent Him, "Who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all." This, one might even say, the jasper and the sardine stone must needs be intended to convey to us; for what other manifestation have we of God than that which we have seen in Christ? He is "the Image of the invisible God," who is at the same time "the First-born of all creation," the One in whom appears the true creation of God, never more to be marred by sin or failure, but abiding in Him who is the centre and glory of it, who is "all and in all."

Here, then, is the "appearance" of the One who sits upon the throne; and suitedly the next thing that we read is that about this throne there was "a rainbow, in appearance like unto an emerald." Here, again, we are reminded of the ruin of humanity—reminded, in fact, of the Flood, after which God used the bow as a token that it should recur upon the earth no more—this by His grace alone; and here the bow is but the glory of the light displayed in that which was the storm of judgment, but which is now destined but to refresh and fertilize the earth. It is a promise for the *earth* that we rightly read in it. Judgment is about to be poured out, but it is a judgment, not to destroy the earth, but to destroy those that would destroy it—a judgment to salvation; and here the character of what is coming before us is shown at once. Israel on the earth is necessarily connected with it, for with blessing for the earth, as we have already seen, the blessing of Israel is an ordained necessity. This is what all the power of the throne is set in motion to accomplish now.

2 But it is not the one throne that is before us simply. There are thrones around the throne; and here at once we come again to what is of central importance for the understanding of what follows. In the common version we find, perhaps, an illustration of the strange way in which even Christians hesitate fully to believe the grace of God. The translators have put "seats," although there is no possible doubt as to the meaning of the word; and there is a similar illustration, as one may surely think, in the view of many, that those who fill these thrones are angels rather than saints. Yet everything here decisively declares that they are saints, and saints alone, who are intended. The very word "elders" naturally implies this. The elders in Israel were the representatives as well as the judges of the people, representing God indeed in that judgment which they exercised for Him, so that, as we know, and as the Lord argued with the Jews, they were even called "gods," as those to whom the word, that is, the commission, of God had come. As His representatives, they are identified with Him. Here, of course, everything is in a higher sphere, but we see upon these elders the white garments which are afterwards interpreted to us as the "righteousnesses of the saints;" and while their golden crowns proclaim them kings, their number seems designed to speak of the priestly courses, which were twenty-four in Israel, as their priestly connection afterwards confirms; and it is in their song of praise that we hear the explanatory words as to the redeemed, "Thou hast made them to our God kings and priests, and they shall reign over the earth" (chap. v. 10).

Thus there is no room for doubt as to who are represented by the crowned elders here; and these thrones and crowns certify to us also another thing—that

these are saints, not only *redeemed*, but *glorified*. They are not spirits simply in happiness, as "absent from the body and present with the Lord," but they are saints risen and glorified; for these crowns speak of their reward having come, as it comes for us all together; not singly and individually, as the Lord calls away His own by death, but all together; as the apostle wishes for the Corinthians that they *did* reign, that the apostles themselves therefore might reign also.

It is less certain as to what their number indicates, which, one would say, should be certainly symbolic. As 24 it would most naturally seem to yield two twelves, the number of manifest rule, which we see in the 12 apostles, and in the 12 tribes of earth's royal people. The two twelves, therefore, may speak to us of a double company, of the saints of the Old Testament times and of the New, reigning together now in a common kingdom, while at the same time they are distinct as companies, "the Church of the first-born ones, whose names are written in heaven," as the apostle gives them (Heb. xii. 23), and the "spirits of just men made perfect:" not merely spirits now, for they could not be perfected apart from resurrection, but such as had as a company passed through death, as with the Church, as a whole, it will not be. Here are certainly two companies shown us who reign here together, although the distinction between them is not noticed here. It is not in the line of truth with which we are to be occupied.

Daniel has already shown us these thrones set, when the Son of man comes to take the kingdom (chap. vii. 9). Our common version has "cast down," but it is allowed that "set" is the proper rendering. But Daniel sees no occupants for these thrones. That remains as a secret hereafter to be revealed. We are in the complete and final prophecy here, which gathers up all these intimations, and makes plain to us their full significance. Here, it is now quite manifest what has taken place. The trumpet-voice which called the seer up to heaven was indeed representative of that which will soon gather all the saints. He who said to Philadelphia, "Behold, I come quickly," has in fact now come; not yet manifesting Himself in the clouds of heaven so that every eye should see Him, but to His own simply, who, by grace, have been waiting for Him. It is strange how persistently still the mass of commentators refuse to acknowledge this, and see in these crowned elders but an anticipation of what was in the far-off distance yet—a vision, for instance, such as we find in the company gathered out of every nation and with their palms before the throne, which is plainly anticipative. Now these two visions are in fact identified, although it is distinctly said of the latter one that it is of those who come out of the great tribulation, as the mass of the saints here most certainly do not, while it is one of these very elders who explains to the seer as to the company at whom he is looking. And this in itself lets us know that the vision of the elders is not in that way anticipative: for the presence of the elders is seen through the after-prophecy: they worship when the seventh trumpet sounds; the new song, which the 144,000 alone can learn, is sung in their presence; and when great Babylon is judged, they fall down once more before the throne, saying, "Amen, hallelujah."

Thus they are an abiding reality all through this long reach of prophecy; and we must accept the view of glorified saints, risen therefore with Christ and reigning, all through the time of which the prophecy speaks. Even this is only one of the intimations, however important an one, of what is here before us. Christianity upon earth is at an end, and we are in what the Lord calls, in the prophecy upon the mount of Olives, "the end of the age;" that is, as we have seen there, the end of the Jewish age, (Christian age there is really none)—the broken-off last week of those seventy determined upon the city and people of Israel, at the end of which their full blessing is to come. The tokens of this are all around us at every step as we proceed, and it is only an utter confusion between the Jew and the Christian, between the earthly and the heavenly, between suffering and reigning, between "the kingdom and patience" of Christ

s (5): Manifestations of the Throne.

t (6-11): The four living creatures and the universal praise.

5 And out of the throne proceeded *lightnings and voices and thunders; and [there were] seven *lamps of fire, burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God.

6 And before the throne [there was] as a *sea of glass like crystal; and in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, four *living beings, full of *eyes, before and behind: and the first living being was like a *lion, and

x Ps. 97. 3, 4. ch. 8. 5.
t cf. Ex. 37. 23. cf. Zech. 4. 2.
u ch. 15. 2. cfr. 1 Ki. 7. 23–26. cf. ch. 21. 27.
v cf. Gen. 3. 24. cf. Ex. 37.

6, 7. w cf. Ezek. 1. 18; cf. Zech. 4. 10; cf. Prov. 15. 3. x Ezek. 1. 10; cf. Prov. 30. 29, 30; cf. ch. 5. 5.

and His kingdom and glory, that can cause any possible mistake as to what is so abundantly manifest.

5 We are turned back now to look at the supreme throne itself, and we see proceeding from it lightnings and voices and thunders. The character is manifestly one of judgment, but we have been permitted to see, first, the bow of promise over it. The voices give character to what is here: the lightnings and thunders are interpreted by them. They are no longer simply providences, which we may be wholly unable to interpret. Their purpose is becoming more and more manifest. Then there are "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God." They are the different operations of the Spirit in that perfection which must necessarily attach to these. They carry us back in thought to the sanctuary-lamps, but which are connected with the central stem, which speaks of Christ Himself maintaining the divine light for men, as we see Him, though in other connection, in the eleventh of Isaiah (ver. 2), where we have exactly the candlestick: three pairs of branches, and the central stem, "the Spirit of Jehovah," Israel's covenant-God, being the lamp upon this; while "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord," give us evidently the three pairs of branches. These all rest upon the One who comes forward to take the kingdom, "with righteousness" to "judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth." It is added, "He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked one." It is evident how near we approach in that to what we find here. The seven spirits are before the throne. They act in connection with divine government, giving effect to the counsels of God concerning Christ, and for the bringing in of blessing upon the earth. These operations of the Spirit are as "lamps of fire" illuminating the scene, which otherwise, if we think of the earth, is in darkness; and it is the earth, of course, that is contemplated here, although the lamps burn before the throne in heaven. Thus we see clearly the character of what is before us.

6 But there is yet more to be seen. Before the throne there is a sea of glass like crystal. This is evidently intended to remind us of the brazen sea in the earthly temple, but which was for purification. Here purification is accomplished. It is not a sea of water any more, but filled with that which is the image of perfect purity. In the after-vision, those that have gotten the victory over the beast and over his image stand upon the sea of glass, having the harps of God. Purification for them plainly is accomplished: they stand in triumph upon the sea. But they are not upon it yet, as we contemplate it here. Their purification upon earth has yet to be accomplished. At present the significance is necessarily for those who have reached it, the heavenly saints themselves, for whom the world-trial is over and sanctification perfected.

And now, in the midst of the throne, and around it, are seen "four living beings full of eyes before and behind." The translation "beasts," as in the common version, is plainly wrong and misleading, the human element here being degraded to the bestial, for the third living being has the face of a man. The word, although applied constantly to animals, simply means (as the word animal itself does) "a living being." In these we find the four divisions of nature

the second living being like an [y]ox, and the third living being had the face as of a [z]man, and the fourth living being was like a flying [a]eagle. And the four living beings, having each one of them [b]six wings, are full of eyes around and within: and they cease not day and night saying, [c]Holy, holy, holy, Lord God [d]Almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come.

y cf. Lev. 1. 3, 5.
cf. Prov. 14. 4.
z cf. Lk. 22. 27.
cf. 1 Tim. 2. 5.
cf. Heb. 4. 15.
a cf. Jno. 3. 12, 13.

cf. Hab. 1. 8. b Is. 6. 2. c Is. 6. 3. d ch. 1. 8.

as Scripture presents them: the wild beast in the lion; cattle in the ox; one with the face of a man, the form not being given; and the last, the flying eagle, the prince of the birds of the heaven. We necessarily connect them with the similar figures in Ezekiel, connected also with the throne of God, and which are cherubic: remembering the cherubim also upon the veil, the figure of Christ's humanity, we should have no difficulty in seeing their typical resemblance to what is presented of Christ in the four Gospels. This has been already before us in looking at the Gospels themselves. Christ is He into whose hands divine government is entrusted, and therefore the connection of these symbols of it with the veil. But the cherubim speak of divine government, no doubt, as identified with the instruments used of God, in whose hand all things are, and who works out His purposes by means of whatever instrumentality He pleases. In Ezekiel we find, accompanying the cherubim, wheels within wheels—the wheels of the chariot of deity, which present, after the manner of Ecclesiastes, the course of things continually revolving; the history, as men say, that repeats itself with the generations of men, yet never returns to just what it was before, the course being ever onward. This is because it is God who is controlling it, and there is in it divine meaning and purpose, even while necessarily the creature is put into his place as such; man, if you look at him in himself, but vanity, and yet God working throughout that which is *not* vain, and of which eternity will proclaim the wisdom.

But the wheels are not seen in Revelation: we have simply the cherubic beings, the coursers of the chariot. And here, as we look at them, we see evidently that they show us the character of this government which God is exercising; the order itself being also significant, and indeed that which, as connected with Christ, we find in the Gospels. For the first being, like a lion, represents, as is plain, that power which is the first requisite to any government at all, the "lion which is strongest among beasts, and turneth not away for any" (Prov. xxx. 30). But this needs guarding against thoughts which might attach to it, for the lion is a beast of prey pure and simple, and his rush and spring are little characteristic in general of the government of God, although there are crises, as we know, which may be better represented by it. But here, the second living being, the patient ox, comes in, in which strength is imaged also, but strength devoted to service and working in the interests of man; and thus the rule of God is service also, and in man's fullest interests, as we are sure. The hands that hold it now are human also, and the hands of the perfect Servant who has served us well, and whose humanity is the pledge that He will serve us ever. The third living being has therefore the face as of a man. The face is that in which you read both intelligence and heart, and God has in Christ come near us after this manner. A man's face may, after all, hide the secrets of his heart; but here is One with whom there is no hiding, who seeks to be known by men, and to make God known; God being indeed manifest in flesh as nowhere else, come to be so near to us, so tender in condescending grace. Yet here also the fourth living being adds what we must not, and cannot, forget—the inscrutability oftentimes of perfect wisdom; ways that in one sense are open to us, and yet everywhere beyond us: this is the thought of the flying eagle. "The way of an eagle in the air" is one of the four things which the wise man declares "too wonderful" for him (Prov. xxx. 18, 19). The eagle naturally reminds us of judgment also, and that "wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered togeth-

And when the living beings shall give glory and honor and thanksgiving to him that sitteth upon the throne, who liveth unto the ages of ages, the twenty-four elders shall [e]fall down before him that sitteth upon the throne, and worship him that liveth unto the ages of ages; and shall [f]cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art [g]worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power; for thou hast [h]created all things, and for [i]thy will they were, and were created.

e ch. 5. 8, 14.
f *cf.* Ps 115.1. *cf.* Acts 3. 12, 13.
cf. 1 Cor. 15. 10.
g *cf.* ch. 5. 12.
h Gen. 1. 1. *cf.* Jno. 1. 3.
i *cf.* Col. 1. 16. *cf.* Ps. 19. 1.

er:" a scripture which applies to the very time before us, when the instruments of God's judgment will cleanse the earth from all its defilement, and by the very ban upon evil consecrate it to God. But the eagle is associated by God Himself with much more tender thoughts. "I bare you on eagles' wings," says the Lord to Israel (Ex. xix. 4), "and brought you to Myself;" and again (Deut. xxxii. 11), "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him." The flying eagle naturally connects with such passages as these, and there is no contradiction in any of them; God's judgments also being under the control of and working out the purposes of His love—love to which judgment is at the same time a necessary and yet a "strange act."

Here then, plainly, are characteristics of divine government,* while the whole make us think, of necessity, of how God uses the creatures He has made, aye the dumb creatures, and much more those who were created in the image of Himself, to accomplish His purposes. These living beings have each one of them six wings, the number of full and, indeed, unresting activity, while they are "full of eyes around and within." Divine omniscience is in them, although this does not mean that the instruments themselves possess it, though as instruments they manifest it. Thus the instincts of the animal creation generally manifest a wisdom higher than what is really in them, and so will all God's instruments which work out His purposes, guided (as we see in inspiration) better than they know. And as they rest not, so they cease not day and night saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come." The day and night are evidently from the earthly standpoint, for in heaven there is no night; but we have to do with the government which is over the earth, where day and night exist, but where the night as well as the day, the darkness as well as the light, speak in the ears of those that hear, of the holiness of an almighty God, the perfect Master of all, and the Unchangeable. Well then may it be that when these living beings give "glory and honor and thanksgiving to Him that sitteth upon the throne," the living God throughout eternal ages, the redeemed fall down before Him that sitteth upon the throne, and worship, and cast their crowns before the throne,—crowns that they have received from Him,—saying, "Thou art worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy will they were, and were created." What a rest for the heart as we go on to consider events, often so terrible in themselves, which are now to follow! The absolute sovereignty of God from which, alas, men so often shrink, is nevertheless what is the salvation of all. There is nowhere any mere *drift*. He who has given Christ for men is making all things work together for good in the accomplishment of His perfect will.†

* As has been frequently noticed, these living creatures correspond in significance closely to the four Gospels, which set forth Christ. All judgment is committed to Him, and each Gospel presents Him in a character suited to the features of one of these living creatures. Thus in Matthew, the Gospel of the Kingdom, we see Him as the Lion of the tribe of Judah; in Mark, the Gospel of the perfect Servant, we see Him as the patient ox serving God's will and man's need; in Luke, we see the face of a Man, for it is the Gospel of the Son of man; and in John, the heavenly Gospel, we see the soaring eagle.—S. R.

† It is also of the greatest importance to see that creation exists for God's glory, and not primarily for the creature's happiness. Where this latter is considered as its end, men spend

2 (v.): The Redeemer the opener of the seven-sealed book.
1 (1-5): The Lion, the Root of David.

2. [1] And I saw on the right hand of him that sat upon the throne a [j]book written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, [k]Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And [l]no one was able, either in heaven, or on earth, or under the earth, to open the book, or to look thereon. And I

j cf. Ezek. 2. 9. *cf.* Dan. 12. 4.
k cf. Ps. 15. 1 with Rom. 3. 10-12.
l cf. Is. 63. 5.

2. The ground of praise, as we see in the worship of the elders, has been hitherto creation. "Thou hast created all things" is the word; but we have now what is clearly different from this. A book, hitherto unnoticed, is seen in the right hand of Him that sitteth upon the throne, "a book written within and on the back, and sealed with seven seals." This book only One is found worthy to open; and when we look at Him, He is plainly revealed as the Lamb of sacrifice—the Redeemer therefore of His people. It is the Redeemer who alone can be the opener of the seven-sealed book. But what is intended by this? It is natural for us to think, especially in connection with the character of Revelation as a whole, that we have here the book of God's counsels, which, opened, shows us what is now coming, and to what the present action of the throne is directed. It is taken by some, however, as being rather the Lamb's title-deeds to the inheritance, and we are referred to the fact that such a sealed book was put into the hands of the redeemer of an inheritance, with the names of the witnesses written upon the back. It is said that any other thought is unworthy of what we find here—the tears of John when for the moment no one is found worthy to open the book; while it is plain that Christ was at all times the Revealer, and John could surely not be ignorant of this.

Redemption is of course, and rightly, considered to be the actual bringing out of the inheritance from under the power of the enemy, and from all the state of alienation into which it has got; and thus it is the Lion of the tribe of Judah who prevails to open the book. Power is now about to accomplish what divine grace has laid the foundation for. We are told also that when the Lamb takes the book, the song that is sung in heaven is not the song of praise for revelation, but for redemption, and that the redemption goes forward with the breaking of the seals step by step. This view of redemption is certainly according to Scripture, and that it is redemption which is in progress here; but it does not follow any the more that the book speaks of the title-deeds to the inheritance, and it seems late indeed in the history to have such title-deeds brought forward now. Moreover, that John should not know to whom these title-deeds belong is as incredible as anything. Such books moreover, in which the writing overflowed upon the back, were not unknown, outside of such title-deeds as are referred to. No doubt what opens this is not mere words, but deeds, which alone will make everything plain, clear up all the difficulties of unfulfilled prophecy, and show us the complete thoughts of God as they have never been seen before. In fact, when the seals are opened there is no proving of title or declaration of it: but the redemption itself proceeds by orderly steps to its completion. Not till the seals are all broken is the book fully opened, and this is of importance as to what is contained under the seals themselves, which are clearly thus introductory, rather than giving the details of redemption.

[1] But we have to notice first, what is emphasized by the structure, that it is "the Lion of the the tribe of Judah, the Root of David," who prevails to open the book. It is astonishing how little such a title as this seems to have impressed the mass of the interpreters of Revelation; but the lack of discernment as to Israel's place in prophecy, and that, as the apostle has said, to Israel belong

their lives in the vain pursuit of that which can only be had in full subjection to God. How the restless ways of men would be stilled, how selfishness would cease, were men to seek God's will and glory! Need we add, in the words of our Lord, that "all these things"—happiness, peace, prosperity—would be "added unto" us?—S. R.

[m] wept much because no one was found worthy to open the book, nor to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the [n] Lion which is of the tribe of Judah, the [o] Root of David, hath [p] prevailed, to open the book and the seven seals thereof.

[q] (6-7): The Lamb slain.

[5] And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living beings, and in the midst of the elders, a [q] Lamb standing, as if it had been [r] slain, having seven [s] horns and seven [t] eyes, which are the seven spirits of God

m cf. Is. 51. 17-20. *cf.* Lam. 1. 2.
n cf. Gen. 49. 9. *cf.* Prov. 19. 12. *cf.* Amos 3. 8.
o Is. 11. 1, 10. ch. 22. 16. *cf.* Matt. 1. 1.
p cf. ch. 3. 21. *cf.* Is. 53. 12
with Is. 63. 1-3. *q* Jno. 1. 29. ch. 22. 3. *r* ver. 9. *s cf.* Matt. 28. 18. *t cf.* Zech. 3. 8, 9; *cf.* Jno. 2. 25.

the Old Testament promises, has resulted in a generalization of such things in a way that has blurred all distinctness of vision. Judah's Lion has thus been separated from Judah. It speaks of power which is in the Lord's hand to execute the purpose of redemption, no doubt; but the Church is looked at as the inheritor of all such promises, and prophecy has been made, as we have often said, so much a matter of private interpretation, each one taken so apart from the whole mind of the Spirit as revealed in those who spake by Him, that of necessity any application may be accepted which may seem competent to be the fulfilment of what is in it. On the other hand, when we remember that we are at the end of the addresses to the Church—that the whole place of vision has been now removed from earth to heaven,—and that there the saints are upon their thrones around the throne of God,—that the rainbow also around the throne is prophesying of a salvation by judgment of the earth itself,—how plainly significant it is that we should find here just "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" coming to the front, and power put into His hand!

Israel and the earth are in the closest possible connection with one another. No blessing for the earth can be until Israel is blest, and thus the conqueror-King of Israel as seen here is every way significant. It is true that we do not stop with this. We are reminded of David and of the promises to him; but here is not merely David's Son and Heir, but "the *Root* of David," which speaks of the One who, while truly David's Son, is no less David's Lord. He is the *Root* from whom David and the promises to him alike spring; and how competent are the elders now to point to the One who has taken the set time, and comes forward to fulfil purposes wider than those revealed in the present gospel, which, however presented to men as a whole, the earth at large will never receive. As we find in the second psalm, against the One whom God has declared His Son, against Jehovah and His anointed, alike, "the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together;" and this spirit of rebellion, vain as it is, will not be ended until the Shepherd of Israel comes forth with His iron rod. Then, when the heathen are given Him for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession, He shall tend them (as the word is) with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. How different from that overspreading of the earth with the gospel to which men, after all these centuries of delay, are still looking forward! After all, it is the only way in which the blessing *can* come, and the present time of grace and forbearance is just that which perfectly demonstrates this. Till then, spite of the gospel of peace, peace there is not; and the only word possible on God's part is that through the prophet: "I will overturn, overturn, overturn, until He comes whose right it is, and I will give it Him." Christ must come to put down all rule and all authority and power, and all enemies shall then be put under His feet. The time at which we have arrived here is as evident therefore as can be. Here, however, the hands that rule are human hands: yet they are capable of acting in far more than human power. In Him at last judgment shall return to righteousness; and the rod of power which, *out* of His hands, has assumed the serpent form, now that He puts forth His hand to grasp it, is to return obediently to Him.

[5] The seer turns to behold the Lion of Judah, and He beholds, in fact, a

[that are] sent into all the earth; and he came and [u]took it out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

3 (8-10): The worship of the saints.

[3] And when he took the book, the four living beings and the four and twenty elders [v]fell before the Lamb, having each one a [w]harp and golden bowls full of [x]incense,* which are the prayers of the saints. And they

u *cf.* Jno. 5. 22, 23, 27.

v ch. 4. 8,10. ch. 19. 4.

w *cf.* ch.14.2. Ps. 150. 3.

x *cf.* Ps.141. 2. *cf.* Song. 1. 3.

* The word is in the plural.

Lamb; nor merely a Lamb, but One that has been slain—One who has been dead, yet lives, and is in the midst of the divine throne, and of the four living beings and of the elders, the Centre of all. The word for Lamb is significant. It is not the ordinary one, but a diminutive; instead of *amnos*, it is *arnion*—One who has been belittled and rejected by man, although here with all power as His. Here is His title to be the Redeemer, that He is the Lamb, the slain Lamb, but the slain Lamb risen; His work therefore accepted of God, and the seal upon man's fallen condition broken at last and forever; death yielding to resurrection. He has therefore the seven horns, which speak of complete power, and the "seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God sent into all the earth," perfect in omniscience and executive ability. The whole earth is before Him as come into it in humiliation; He has learnt, as man, the whole condition of things; and as man, therefore, and the Son of man, judgment is committed to Him. In this character it is that He takes the book out of the right hand of Him that sits upon the throne. He is the Son-servant of that throne. He is the One who, having done the will of God Himself alone, in the infinite depths of darkness, comes forth still to do the will of His Father upon the throne; and thus all things are put into His hand to give the universe its final adjustment, never to be disturbed again. He is the "Father of Eternity," the King of kings and Lord of lords.

[3] When He takes the book, the four living beings and the throned elders fall before the Lamb and worship. They are united together here, and in a song in which no angel joins or can join. It is most significant, the union of these in this praise in which inanimate creation itself, as betokened in the harp, yet can unite, touched by the hand of him who was placed originally as lord over the earth, but who has hitherto brought how much else beside music out of it! Now he has at last come back to the original purpose of God with regard to him, and with songs sweeter and more wonderful than creation itself could furnish. The angels, as already said, have no place here. Although it be most contrary to the thoughts entertained of them, we never hear of the angels *singing*. They have not in their song the deep notes necessary for this; nor can they (still more strange as it may seem to us) rise up to the high ones which grace is teaching us. They "behold in the Church the manifold wisdom of God," and "see the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." The angels we find in a circle outside the singers here, and therefore necessarily apart from them.

The four living beings are plainly, as we see now, not angels, but men; that is to say, the government of God of which they speak is now according to that which Scripture fully declares shall be in the hands of men: "To the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come whereof we speak;" but it is man—made, indeed, a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death—who is in this way crowned with honor and glory, and set over the works of God's hand. Christ is in the midst of the throne. He reigns, and reigns as man; but thus also His people reign with Him. The cherubic figures are no class distinctly; they are not *necessarily* angels or men. They speak of administration, of government which may be in the hands of either: it has been in the hands of angels, as we see most plainly in the book of Daniel, while now in the world to come it is in the hands of men; and thus we have in the song that is sung

sing a [y]new song, saying, [z]Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast [a]slain, and hast [b]purchased to God by thy blood [men] of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and made them to our God [c]kings* and priests, and they shall [d]reign over the earth.

[9-14]: The echo of creation.

[9] And I saw, and I heard the voice of many [e]angels round the throne and the living beings and the elders, and their [f]number was ten thousands of ten thousands and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice,

* Many read, "a kingdom."

[y] *cf.* ch. 4. 11. *cf.* ch. 14. 3.
[z] ver. 12.
[a] *cf.* Acts 3. 15.
[b] 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. 1 Cor. 6. 20.
[c] ch. 1. 5, 6.
[d] *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 12.
[e] *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 12. *cf.* Eph. 3. 10. *cf.* Ps. 103. 20.
[f] *cf.* Ps. 68. 17. *cf.* Heb. 12. 22.

now, "Thou hast made them to our God kings and priests; and they shall reign over the earth." The editors have decided that it is not "*we* shall reign," as in our common version, but "they." But that does not mean that these are speaking of others than themselves. They are not speaking of *all* redeemed men, for it is not of all redeemed men that it could be said, "They shall reign over the earth;" nor could it be said of all, "Thou hast made them kings and priests to God." In the elders, on the other hand, we see clearly such. They are all enthroned; and now we find them with the golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of saints; but in this case they speak generally: "Thou hast purchased to God by Thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, . . . and they shall reign."

Thus the time at which we have arrived should be perfectly clear. These are heavenly saints, seen as about to enter on their reign over the earth; and in their character as priests it is that they have the golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of saints. It is not said that they are offering them. In fact, at this moment they are in another attitude; but this seems to be given as a mark of the period which is now beginning, and of the company before us. Observe, however, that they are never looked at as themselves interceding, nor do they *add* anything to the prayers with which they are charged. They have no supererogatory merits to give efficacy to what they present, and the prayers themselves are the incense; not incense is added to them, although it may well be (perhaps we should say *must* be) that the incense is the sweet savor of Christ discerned in these which are the fruit of His work; but it is plain that these priestly ones cannot add this to them.

The song that they are singing is a *new* song; not because Christ is to them a new person, or that they have made new discoveries as to Him, or as to His work, but redemption is now at last for them accomplished, and it is this they celebrate, or rather the person who has accomplished it. Worthy is He to take the book of God's counsels, and open it fully out, the execution of them all being absolutely in His hands. And if He is assuming a character as the Lion of Judah in which they are not so immediately in personal relation to Him, their joy in Him will lack nothing on that account. They are those of whom He said upon earth, "I have not called you servants, but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you" (John xv. 15).

[9] The praise of the redeemed is echoed now by the praise of all creation. Not only is there sympathy with the blessing of others, but this redemption has much to do with the blessing of those who are, in a sense, altogether outside it. We know that the angels are deeply interested spectators of what is now going on. They are learning, not merely of that grace to others which redemption shows, but they are learning for themselves, in this way, the depths of the heart of God as otherwise they could not know them. Yet the power of the redemption is seen in the place of the redeemed. The angels are not only around the throne, but around the living beings and the elders, thus in a distinct circle:

[g] Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive [h] power, and [i] riches, and [j] wisdom, and [k] strength, and [l] honor, and [m] glory, and [n] blessing. And [o] every creature which is in the heaven and upon earth and under the earth and upon the sea, even all things in them, heard I saying, To him that [p] sitteth upon the throne, and unto the [q] Lamb be blessing, and honor, and glory, and might, unto the ages of ages. And the four [r] living beings said, Amen; and the [s] elders fell down and worshiped.

g ver. 9. cf. Phil. 2. 9-11. h ctr. 2 Cor. 13. 4. i ctr. 2 Cor. 8. 9. j ctr. Jno. 8. 28. k ctr. Ps. 102. 23. l ctr. Jno. 8. 49. m ctr. Is. 52. 13. n ctr. Lk. 23. 5: ctr. Gal. 3. 13. o Phil. 2. 10; Rom. 14. 11; Ps. 148. 1-13. p ch. 4. 2, 3. ch. 6. 16. q cf. John 5. 23. r ch. 4. 8. s ch. 19. 4.

naturally an astonishing thing for us who know that by creation they are nearer to God than we—"angels that excel in strength, that obey His commandments, harkening to the voice of His word;" and moreover, beings who have never fallen, never lost the place, therefore, which they had by creation. How is it possible, we might ask, that sinners, though delivered from their sins and brought to God in righteousness, can have a nearer place than these unfallen beings? Such a view has been denounced, moreover, by Christians themselves, as the mere haughtiness of human imagination. But on the other hand, what is forgotten by those who take this ground is that which gives the only right point of view. This nearness and exaltation for the redeemed is a testimony not to them, but to the *Redeemer*. It is the value of His work which they thus enjoy, as it is here the worthiness of the Lamb slain that the angels proclaim: "Worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." And this Lamb, who is He but the One who has Himself been pleased to come down into the creature-place, Himself to take up manhood, not because it was near enough to Him, so that there would be little distance traversed to take it up, but the very contrary. He has reached out, and is reaching out, to that which was in the lowest place and farthest distance, and in that way has acquired a glory to Himself also which is just the glory of this unspeakable grace. The lower His love has descended, the more it has displayed the innermost nature, the heart of God; and in this display all nature is now therefore glowing with the light of it. Thus the song of the redeemed which the angels cannot sing, the harp in their hands, the response of inanimate nature itself as touched by their hand—all this proclaims now the glory of Christ, the glory of Him *for* whom as well as *by* whom all things were created.

Therefore the response of creation in its widest extent follows now: "And every creature which is in the heaven, and upon the earth, and under the earth, and upon the sea, and all things in them, heard I saying, To Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, be blessing, and honor, and glory, and might, unto the ages of ages." It is evident that the praise here is not simply human; it is like the praise-bursts of the Psalms: "Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills be joyful together before the Lord; for He cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall He judge the world, and the people with equity" (Ps. xcviii. 7-9). That is now to be attained for which "the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth. . . . Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God" (Rom. viii. 19-22). More and more, therefore, is it confirmed—if any confirmation were needed—that it is the time of the glory of the children of God, of their manifestation in their own proper character, that is now come. The government of God, as represented by the four living beings, confirms it with their Amen; and the elders, prostrate in the homage of their hearts, fall down and worship.

1 (vi.1-8): The grounds of the judgments, in the call of the cherubim.

1 (1, 2): The first seal removed: the call of the lion.

SECTION 2. (Chaps. vi.–viii. 4.)

The seals removed in the judgments coming in.

1. [1] AND I saw when the Lamb opened [t]one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four [u]living beings saying, as a voice of thunder, [v]Come.* And I saw, and be-

t vers. 3, 5, etc.
u ch. 4. 7. ch. 5. 6.
v *cf.* 2Thess. 2. 9-12. *cf.* John 19. 15.

* Many MSS. have here, and in the parallel places, the addition, "and see;" but compare notes below.

Sec. 2.

We are now called to see the actual breaking of the seals, so that the book may be opened. It is the Lamb who removes them, as we know; but the sign of their being removed is in the judgment sent forth which answers to it, and by which the blessing alone can be brought in. With these the mystery of God's patience is removed. His government becomes what we may call *ideal*, in regard to the strife between good and evil going on still upon the earth. The long-suffering of God indeed has been salvation; but now, though in a different sense, His *judgments* are to be for salvation. As in the times of the judges in Israel, spite of divine interventions occurring when the state of things began to be insufferable, yet the call is heard more and more for a king, as the only proper remedy. "There was no king in Israel," says the inspired historian, "every one did that which was right in his own eyes." If the doing of what was *right* in this way worked disaster, what then as to the constant evil rising up, and that more and more? The king must come. Yet when he came in Israel, he was the mere foreshadow of the true King. Therefore the distress went on still, relieved, but not removed—and soon again with hardly a relief of it. He had not come who was fit to bear rule; and until He comes there is the constant need of patience. He reigns upon the throne of God, while yet it is still the "kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ." But now the King is coming forth; the time of patience is just over. God is going to manifest Himself. Judgment is returning to righteousness. The seals upon the book which prevent man's reading it are being removed.

1. As each seal is broken, a new action upon earth follows. The seals are seven, and that number is noticeable. The prevalence of these numbers characterizes Revelation, as we have seen. They speak everywhere of the undisturbed harmony of God's ways. Spite of the conflict, this harmony of course must always be; and this is what all through Scripture God means us to discern; but the harmony is becoming open now, and our attention is called to it; and thus we have the number of the seals, and of the trumpets, and of the vials; their order distinctly shown us—the way in which the divine steps move on unhindered to the sure end. Here too, as elsewhere, we find that the seven divides into four and three, the number of the creature and the number of divine manifestation. The first four have therefore a more external character than the last three. They do not reach in the same way (at least not in the same open way) to the heart of things. With this it accords that when the first four seals are opened we have in each case the call of one of the living beings, and in the order in which we have had them brought before us already—the lion, the ox, the human-faced cherub, and the flying eagle.

These calls are very significant; and their significance has hardly been observed by any interpreters. We have seen that these cherubim as they were embroidered on the veil of the tabernacle (which was, as the apostle has taught us, Christ's flesh, or humanity), so they are seen in the Gospels again in the same order in which we have them here—the Lion of Judah in Matthew's Gospel; the ox in that of Mark—the Gospel of ministry; the face of the man most evidently in Luke, which is above all the Gospel of Christ's humanity; while the flying eagle, the bird of heaven, speaks naturally of Him who has come from heaven to us, of the Word made flesh. But if this be so, we should expect that

hold, a [w] white horse, and he that sat upon it had a [x] bow; and there was given unto him a [y] crown, and he went forth [z] conquering and to conquer.

[w] Zech. 6.3. *cfr.* ch. 19. 11.
[x] *cf.* Is. 66. 19.
[y] *cf.* Dan. 9. 27 with ch. 13. 1, etc.
[z] *cf.* Dan. 7. 7, 8.

now when the Lamb has taken the book, these cherubim should each represent Him in one of these characters; and it is not in opposition to this that the call should be a call for judgment: for if it be the Lamb slain that is before us, this, while it speaks to us necessarily of the grace of redemption, yet has in it also another side. The death of Christ, on God's side, for us speaks of grace; but on man's side it speaks of the rejection by the world of Him who had come into it. Thus the cross is the stamp upon the world, and by which the world is crucified to us and we to it. The Lamb moreover, as *arnion*, (which speaks of belittling, of diminution,) naturally connects with this. The cross was man's measure of Christ. Unto the Jew it was an offense, and to the Greek foolishness; while to those who are the called, whether Jews or Greeks, it is "the wisdom of God and the power of God." But Christ rejected by the world, what does it mean but the judgment of the world?—a judgment also which works out (in a certain sense and within limits) often naturally.

Christ rejected means antichrist accepted. But Christ rejected also means, of necessity, the rejection of the blessing that comes alone through Him; and thus the government of God, as signified in the cherubim, makes necessary answer. If Christ be rejected as the King, men must have their own king; and while for the present man's king himself may be owned of God and is used of Him in the restraint of evil, while His long-suffering lasts, yet this is but—as to His government—a seal as it were, a mystery for the meantime, which, when the time of its removal comes, ends in the full character of man's rejection coming out. Even the rule of Christ becomes now the rod of iron; and the rule of man, in the end, worse even than the anarchy which it was meant to restrain. How significant, then, the call of the cherubim at this juncture!

[1] As to the first seal, indeed, there is a certain obscurity as to which of the living beings speaks under it. That it is the voice of the cherub that speaks confirms that alteration from the text of our common version which the manuscripts indeed permit, but which we cannot say exactly that they establish by any decisive weight of authority; but the confirmation from all the context here is absolute. The call of divine government is not to John, but to what comes forth in answer to it. Thus the call is not, "Come *and see*," but simply, "Come." The voice of thunder speaks plainly here. The seer would hardly be summoned after this manner, and moreover again and again as the successive seals are broken. It is the government of God that calls forth the instrument of judgment; and this shows again the character of what is called forth. We should not think, for instance, of Christ as the rider of the white horse if we had things in their proper place here. Doubtless He *will* come forth, and, according to the figure in the nineteenth chapter, upon a white horse too. This is the symbol of victorious warfare, the horse being the war-horse; and his going forth crowned, conquering and to conquer, seems clearly to harmonize with, nay, to be most fully true of Him who will put all enemies under His feet. But it is not suited that *He* should be thus called forth; nor is the time yet for Him to come after this manner. We cannot put at the beginning that which comes in fact at the end. As to gospel-triumphs, it is really impossible to speak of them in such a connection.

As already said, there is a slight obscurity as to which of the living beings calls forth the conqueror here; but, plainly, we must recognize that the lion is the most suitable one; and moreover, as in the second seal we have the voice of the second living being; in the third, that of the third; and so with the following one, the lion is thus every way implied, if not expressed, as speaking in the first. No doubt there is suitability even in the measure of obscurity, and we

2 (3, 4): The second seal removed: the call of the ox.

2 And when he opened the second seal, I heard the second living being saying, [a]Come. And another, a [b]red horse, went forth; and to him that sat upon it, it was given to take [c]peace from the earth, and that they should slay one another; and there was given to him a great sword.

a cf. Is. 8. 6, 7.
b Zech. 6. 2. cf. Nah. 2. 3. cf. 2 Ki. 3. 22, 23.
c cf. Jn. 7. 22. cf. 2 Chron. 20. 23.

cannot be too attentive to the way in which Scripture speaks, whether we can interpret it or not. But if it be the lion, the lion manifestly is the expression of regal power of the king; and thus it is the king, as it were, that calls forth the king; and if it be Christ as the Lamb slain, (it does not say *sacrificed*, but "slain"—the rejected One,) then we can understand how suitable it is that the human conqueror should come forth in answer to the call. Alas, the Prince of peace has been rejected, and war and conquest, the overturning of things, naturally ensue, because He whose right it is is rejected and gone. Thus the Lord speaks to His disciples, in His prophecy on Olivet, of wars and rumors of wars characterizing the interim before He comes again.

The white horse does not necessarily speak at all here of purity, or righteousness. It is the symbol of victory; and the bow speaks, apparently, of that which is far-reaching. The crown is given to him as the issue of it. It is not said by whom, but evidently it is acquired by conquest, and thus he goes on for the present time unchecked. A wide rule therefore must naturally be his. Such an one, moreover, one would say, must be given us elsewhere in prophecy, and must have reference to events that are to come afterwards. He must be prominent in these.

It would certainly seem, accordingly, that we can find one who answers to the picture here; and for those who have learnt what the seventeenth chapter will definitely teach us,—that the Roman empire, long since passed away, is yet to revive in an exceptional manner and for a short time only, yet in a way deeply significant of the approaching end,—it will not be difficult to imagine that here we may have what speaks of this. In fact, there seems little reason to doubt that the seventh head of the beast is here before us; although to make this plain requires a reference to much other scripture which it is hardly the place to look at yet. Only let it be remembered that "the prince that shall come," and who is to initiate that seven years' covenant with "the many" of Israel which defines for us that last week of Daniel's seventy, (which is the end of the time determined upon Israel and Jerusalem, at the close of which their final blessing is to come,) this prince is decisively a *Roman* prince. It is "the people of the prince that shall come" that have already, under Titus, destroyed the city and the sanctuary; but the prince himself is still to come. And if he come, and we are correct as to the period at which we have arrived here, then he must come forth at the very beginning of it, and it would be no wonder to find him thus at the outset brought before us.

It is most naturally by conquest that the place he acquires is to be attained, and we have had already in late history one who, though only for a brief period, yet in connection with this same territory of ancient Rome, has shown us how possible it is for such power to be suddenly acquired. Napoleon was indeed but a shadow of events to come—a shadow which quickly passed; but even thus it is proverbial that the history that is to come has its anticipation often and presage. We must leave this, however, for the present, with this mere reference.

2 When the second seal is removed, we have the call of the second living being, that is of the ox. In answer to this, another horse comes forth, red, the color of blood; and to his rider it is given to take peace from the earth, and that they should slay one another. It is not the career of a conqueror that is represented here, but a general taking away of peace—every one's hand, as it were, against his brother; thus civil war in all its dread reality. That a great sword

[a] (5, 6): The third seal removed; the call of the human-faced cherub.

[3] And when he opened the third seal, I heard the third living being say, [d]Come. And I saw, and behold a [e]black horse, and he that sat upon it having a [f]balance in his hand. And I heard, as it were, a voice in the midst of the four living beings saying, A [g]measure of wheat for a shilling,* and three measures of barley for a shilling; and hurt thou not the oil and the wine.

[d] *cf.* Lk. 14. 16, etc. with Lev. 26. 26.
[e] Zech. 6. 2. *cf.* Is. 60. 3.
[f] *cf.* Ezek. 4. 9, 10, 16, 17.
[g] *cf.* Deut. 28. 54, 55. *ctr.* Deut. 8. 9.

* Literally, "a denarius:" which is nearest a shilling of current coin.

is given to the horseman is meant, of course, to emphasize the destruction following. This is plainly the suited answer to the call of the second cherub; for the ox is the type of the laborer, the minister to man's need, the expression of a service by which all men are bound together. Such ministry is necessitated by that actual dependence upon one another which God has appointed to hide pride from man, and that love may be called into exercise.

This is what in Christ has fullest expression, this ministry to a need which no one but He Himself could relieve; and Christ rejected can be nothing else but that which surely, however slowly, withers all such service. God manifest in Him has been rejected; and just as, if received and God having His place, all things would be in necessary harmony, so, if rejected, all must be out of joint and in disorder. Man having cast off divine authority, the beasts of the earth cast off the divinely appointed human authority; and affection cast off where it should be most natural, the natural affection necessarily withers. There has been initiated a disorder which cannot stop until all natural ties are sundered, and love is turned (as it may how easily be turned) into deadliest opposition. We see under this second seal that the evil is a growing one. There is in it no tendency to self-healing, but the contrary,—corruption grows worse and worse; return to God is the only possible remedy; but there is no return.*

[3] The third seal is now removed, and with this we have the call of the human-faced cherub. At his call a black horse comes forth—the funereal color; and the rider has in his hand a balance, which a voice in the midst of the living beings interprets with the words "a measure of wheat for a shilling, and three measures of barley for a shilling." The measure, or *chœnix*, was at most about a quart, although some would say but a pint and a half. The shilling, or *denarius*, (the "penny" of the Gospels,) was in fact neither of these, but about the half of a shilling *sterling*.† It was, as we see in the parable, the ordinary day's wages, when money was far more valuable than it is at present; and the *chœnix* of wheat was considered the provision for a day. Ordinarily the *denarius* would purchase about eight quarts of wheat, but now all that a man could earn could scarcely feed himself. No doubt three measures of barley could be got for the same price; but this was not only coarser food, but would even yet imply great scarcity. Yet with all, the oil and the wine were not to be injured. One can see clearly how peace taken from the earth would involve what follows here; the oil and the wine being naturally less injured than the growth of the field, which constantly needs to be renewed. But here, of course, it is divine judgment; and the natural effect is therefore exceeded.

The congruity of this judgment with the call of the third living being is not

* The ox is the badge of patient strength yielded up in service for man's need, even unto death, laying down its life for man's food. It is the type of what our blessed Lord's life was, particularly as set forth in Mark—the Gospel of the perfect Servant. His was a love that sought not its own, but labored ever for man's need; accomplishing in His death, as sin-offering, that great service which has forever set us before God blameless. For rejectors of such grace what can there be, as a necessary result of the selfishness which ends in slaying others, instead of rescuing them? With the rejection of the peaceful ox, peace is taken from the earth. How plainly can the beginning of this be seen even now, though the One who hinders prevents full development "till He be taken out of the way"!—S. R.

† What is called a "shilling" in the eastern United States (where the cent is also called a "penny") is the nearest to an equivalent.

4 (7, 8): The fourth seal removed; the call of the eagle.

4 And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard * the fourth living being say, h Come. And I saw, and behold a pale horse, and his name that sat upon it was i Death, and hades followed with him. And there was given him † authority over the j fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with famine, and with death, and by the beasts of the earth.

h *cf.* Heb. 12. 25. *cf.* Lk. 17. 37.
i *cf.* Acts 3. 15. *cf.* Rom. 6. 23.
j *cf.* Ezek. 14. 21. *cf.* ch. 8. 7.

* Some MSS insert "the voice of." † Some read "them."

so easy to be understood as in the former cases. Were we permitted to spiritualize it, and think of what Amos proclaims,—"Not a famine of bread, nor a thirst of water, but of hearing the words of the Lord,"—such a famine would, on the other hand, suit well; for the face of a man reminds us how God has met us in Christ and revealed Himself to us, inviting our confidence, speaking with a human tongue that He may be fully understood and appreciated by us: and this familiar intercourse with Him is what is needed for true satisfaction. If then Christ be rejected, the necessary consequence is that the sustenance for the soul is lost, the bread from heaven disappears, and the world is indeed a desert unrelieved. But, as we have seen, the destitution under the third seal seems rather to be the natural result of what has already taken place. Conquest and civil war would necessarily largely interfere with the work of the field and all that was dependent upon it; while the oil and the wine might more easily escape. A literal famine therefore seems to be intended. Yet as the natural is everywhere the type of the spiritual, so it depends upon that to which it witnesses. Our common mercies are ours through Christ alone. Take away the One, the other goes—the shadow with the true substance: and though little heeded, God might thus appeal to those incapable of feeling spiritual famine by the pressure of that which was natural. While, in the long-suffering of God, His sun shines upon the evil and upon the good, and the rain is sent upon the just and upon the unjust, yet how little do men realize this dependence of the natural upon the spiritual, and how Christ rejected strikes at once at every blessing! *

4 We have now the fourth seal removed, and the call of the eagle. There follows that which in some sense is evidently final. A pale horse comes forth, and the name of its rider is Death; and hades reaps along his path. Here mercy seems to interpose a stricter limit; but authority is given him over the fourth part of the earth to kill with sword and with famine and with death, and by the beasts of the earth. "Death" is the common term for pestilence, as the plague of the Middle Ages, for instance, was called the Black Death; and here God's "four sore judgments" are let loose at once (Ezek. xiv. 21). If we think of the Gospels here, it is plain how the judgment corresponds to the rejection of the blessing which John's Gospel brings us, the Gospel of love and life and light: and this rejected, what can remain for its rejectors but the awful, eternal rejection which death, as here under the wrath of God, must needs introduce them to? And then we cannot fail to remember that the eagle is itself the symbol of judgment, and, as the Lord says, speaking of this time, "Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together." Here, then, is the natural end of this first series of the seals—a complete end but for the limit of divine

* In Luke we have the parable of the great supper, and of the feast on the return of the prodigal who but lately had been near to "perish with hunger." The rejection of the blessed Man who came to minister to our need, and to tell of the Father's house where there is "bread enough and to spare," may well lead to both literal and spiritual famine. The oil and wine were the food of the rich. The expression may indicate the great care not to waste these products. If, as is intimated in the text, they were not so much injured as the ordinary staples of life, it might show, as is always the case, that the luxuries of the rich are least affected in a time of strait. It is the poor who suffer most, even for that which will sustain life. Luke also dwells on the abundance of the rich as contrasted with the penury of the poor. See the rich fool in chap. xii., and the rich man and Lazarus, chap. xvi.—S. R.

2 (vi. 9-viii. 5): The divine side of redemption, and the differentiation which results.
1 (vi. 9-11): The fifth seal removed: the exercise of the righteous with regard to the government of God.

2. [1] And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw beneath the altar the souls of them that had been [k]slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held; and they cried with a loud voice, saying, [l]How long, O sovereign Ruler, holy and true, dost thou not judge and [m]avenge our blood on them that [n]dwell on the earth? And there was given to them each a [o]white robe; and it was said to them that they should rest yet

k *cf.* Matt. 24. 9.
l Ps. 13. 1.
m *cf.* Ps. 94. 1-6. *cf.* Lk. 18.3.
n ch. 3. 10.
o *cf.* ch.19.8.

mercy. After all, the bow of promise is upon these clouds of most awful judgment, and the earth is to issue from beneath them baptized into a new condition, and with the promise, from the mere goodness of God, that such judgment as this shall be no more.

2. Three seals remain, and now, as it is plain, we have a larger range of view, and God's side of things comes to be shown us. We have in it redemption's harvest; and if on the one side there is still an ever increasing catastrophe, we are nevertheless shown how fully all things are in the hands of One who has power, and title also, according to His own nature to act for blessing, spite of the fullest display of creature-evil that can be made.

[1] The fifth seal is now removed, and we have what is wholly different from anything before it: that which on the one hand shows us the present exercise of the righteousness of the government of God, and the answer to it that is to come when divine patience has done all that can be done by it. When the fifth seal is opened there is no cry of a cherub any more, but there is another appeal, the cry of men that have been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they bare for Him. These cry with a loud voice, "How long, O sovereign Ruler, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" Just such a cry has in fact been going up to God since the blood of Abel stained the earth. And so the Lord speaks to those who in His day were joining the ranks of all the persecutors of His own from the beginning: "Shall not," He asks, "God judge His own elect who cry unto Him, though He bear long with them?"

But the cry here is not the general cry of all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, but something special to the time at which we have arrived here. We may notice that the "souls under the altar" (the altar of burnt-offerings) plainly speak of these as a sacrifice that has been given to God. The blood of such sacrifices was poured out at the bottom of the altar; and in the life-blood, the soul—which is also the life—is said to be poured out. Thus in the fifty-third of Isaiah it is said of Christ that He "poured out His soul unto death;" and here we have at once the implication of the acceptance on the part of God of this offering of His people. Offering as it was, there was, as in the Lord's case, another side to it: cruel hands had shed this blood,—the blood of a numberless multitude, like to the saints upon their thrones above, as we have been contemplating them; for here they are *beneath the altar still*, and only in answer to their cry is the white robe of manifest approval given to them. Nor is the cry here such as we find in the Lord's own mouth, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;" nor as in Stephen's case, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." There is not in it the witness of grace, but the call for judgment; and it indicates the taking up of the old martyr cry, the passing of the long parenthesis of grace upon the earth, during which God has been gathering a people for heaven. It is the day of wrath and judgment that is at hand, and thus it is of God that they should cry for judgment. It is this fellowship with God in His thoughts that makes, on the one hand, the prayer for mercy that which alone suits us now, and, on the other, the cry for judgment that which will yet suit those who are here found waiting for a judgment which is ready to be executed.

a little while until both their fellow-servants and their brethren, who were [p]about to be killed as they, should be fulfilled.*

2 (vi.12-17): The sixth seal removed: the overthrow of all classes, bringing the end in view.

[2] And I saw when he opened the sixth seal, and there was a great [q]earthquake; and the sun became [r]black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood, and the stars of heaven fell upon the earth, as a

p *cf.* ch. 13. 15. *cf.* ch. 20.4.

q *cf.* Matt. 24. 7.

r *cf.* Joel 2. 10, 31. *cf.* Matt. 24 29.

* That is, till the number should be filled up.

But we have to notice that they are bidden to rest yet a little while, until their fellow-servants and their brethren who were about to be killed as they were should be fulfilled. Thus there is the intimation of a further company to be added to these still before the final judgment comes; and a comparison with other scriptures will make plain what is intended here. Thus, in the twentieth chapter, we read of what is a supplementary resurrection, an addition to the first resurrection of the righteous, which includes the two companies that are indicated here. We have in it a threefold distinction: First, there are thrones and those sitting upon them, to whom judgment is given. There is in this case, although constantly confounded with the others, no thought of resurrection as then taking place. They are simply living and sit upon the thrones, as we have found living saints so seated already, in that look into heaven which has just been permitted us. Secondly, there are souls—that is, according to a common use of the word at all times, persons—beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, exactly as here. These are a company of martyrs, and *all* martyrs, as is plain. It is not, therefore, a general resurrection of the righteous dead, who are not all martyrs, nor could be characterized therefore in this way. But there is a third company also—"such as have not worshiped the beast, nor his image, nor received his mark upon their forehead or on their hand." These, too, are martyrs, but martyrs under a persecution which we have yet to look at, and which follows in the course of the prophecy here. It is not now the place to speak of them more particularly, but that they are a special class is undeniably evident. These all together complete the picture of the first resurrection, and they live and reign with Christ a thousand years. Thus we have what explains fully what is given us under this fifth seal.*

[2] The opening of the sixth seal follows, and now what is before us comes more distinctly into view. Men are predicting for themselves the wrath of the Lamb, the great day of which is, in their guilty dread, thought to be now come. Thus, when the sixth seal is opened, there is a great earthquake, the sun becoming black as sackcloth of hair and the whole moon as blood, and the stars of heaven falling upon the earth, as a fig tree casts its untimely figs when shaken by a great wind. The heaven is removed as a scroll rolled up, and every mountain and island removed out of their places. Here there can be no right question that the description is figurative; for if we took it literally, then we should be plainly at the end even of the Millennium itself; for not till then does the first heaven pass away, as is here depicted. Otherwise, the signs are much as those which the Lord gives as taking place before the coming of the Son of man. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. xxiv. 29, 30). This is, however, after that great tribulation such as never was, which itself necessarily precedes His coming, and which is in fact

* These martyrs under the fifth seal are apparently those slain during the first half of Daniel's seventieth week, and not during the last half, or period of the "great tribulation." The whole time will be one of unexampled persecution; but this is intensified during the last three and a half years, the period which for the "elect's sake" has been shortened.—S. R.

fig-tree casteth its untimely figs, when shaken by a great wind. And the [s]heaven was removed as a scroll rolled up, and every [t]mountain and island were removed out of their places. And the [u]kings of the earth, and the great men, and the chief captains, and the [v]rich, and the strong, and every bondman and freeman, [w]hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains; and they say to the mountains and to the rocks,

s *cf.* Ps.82.1, 6, 7. *ctr.*2 Pet.3. 10.
t *cf.*Jer.3.23. ch. 16. 20.
u *cf.* Ps. 2 2. *cf.* Dan. 2. 21.
v *cf.* Lk.6.24. *cf.* Jas. 5.1.
w Is. 2. 19.

that tribulation under the beast which is referred to at the end of the last seal, but referred to there as still future; nor is there room for it in what is before us here. We shall find it spoken of in its own place in the future. But then it is still more evident, if possible, that the signs here are not physical signs, although they take, as one may say, their complexion from that which is coming. In men's minds, indeed, the day of the Lamb's wrath is already come; but we shall find that, near as it may be, much intervenes before it will indeed be come.

Such signs as these we have elsewhere in the prophets, as in Joel (chap. ii. 31): "The sun shall be changed into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come." In Isaiah (chap. xxxiv. 4), a prophecy of the destruction of Edom, with its after-desolation, we have, "And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll; and all their host shall fall down as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig-tree." Both passages seem to refer, the last at least ultimately, to the time of the end when the Lord comes; but the expressions in their connection show that we cannot take literally the dissolution of the heavens as pictured in them. *After* the judgment here, Idumea lies in perfect desolation: "From generation to generation," it is said, "it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever;" and when the Lord comes no such convulsion of nature takes place as that which we read here, if we are to take it literally. On the other hand, the meaning of it as a symbol is not hard to apprehend. The heavens are even in a physical sense what rule the earth; and they are used in Scripture as figuring in this way earthly government, the basis of which we have in the typical significance of the work of the second day (Gen. i. 6–8). This has been dwelt upon in its place. The earthquake thus may speak of a great political convulsion, in which the royal or imperial power suffers defeat, is as if extinguished, and the lesser dignities, which represent it with derived authority, as the moon would indicate, sharing in the catastrophe, until all rule seems to be gone and no condition is safe—even where there seemed strength as a mountain, or separation from all around as an island. The result is indicated in what follows, that "the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the chief captains, and the rich, and the strong, and every bondman and freeman," hide themselves in fear, seeing in it the wrath of the Lamb. Such an event upon a smaller scale we may find in that French Revolution, out of which came that which for a time altered the face of the earth; and here the political catastrophe involved the ecclesiastical sphere as well. All that spoke of religion seemed for the moment gone. What we have here in Revelation is, of course, of far wider extent, but can scarcely be more radical than that which in a small sphere then took place.*

Here, in a sense, the seals end; for although there is another, yet it is manifest that it only introduces the trumpet-calls that follow; and if we consider the whole character implied in these seals, it is plain that the opening of the last seal simply *opens the book*. Those before have been introductory, and show us what opens it. What an introduction is we have fully in them—the elements of

* As is intimated in the opening paragraph upon the sixth seal, the fear of those who hide themselves does not prove that the final day of the Lamb's wrath had come, but rather that the fear of it was upon men's souls. As a matter of fact, more fearful judgments are yet to be poured out.—S. R.

[z]Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that [y]sitteth upon the throne, and from the [z]wrath of the Lamb; for the great [a]day of his wrath is come, and who can stand?

x *cf.* Hos. 10. 8. Lk. 23. 30.
y *ctr.* ch. 20. 11. *cf.* Matt. 25. 31, etc.
z *ctr.* ch. 5. 6, 9, 12; *cf.* Ps. 2. 12. a *cf.* Is. 13. 6; *cf.* Matt. 24. 8.

that which is still to come before us. We have before the seventh seal a double vision which is evidently parenthetical, itself introductory and manifestly looking on to the future, but of a very different kind from all that has been before. This we will look at fully directly; but in considering the seals as a series, as they have been now before us, we need not enter into it. The question that is naturally suggested now is, how far in these seals we have exact events at all. Their often noted connection with the opening of the Lord's prophecy on the mount of Olives will show clearly what is meant. In this we have, before the announcement of the abomination of desolation in the holy place and the tribulation following, what is more general in character: "wars and rumors of wars, nation rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; famine, pestilence, and earthquakes in divers places;" then persecutions of the Lord's people, with the uprising of false prophets, who shall deceive many. This last, with the still worse pretension of false Christs, of which the Lord speaks, we have not yet in Revelation. Otherwise the resemblance, or identity rather, of the two prophecies is evident. Details are as absent from one as from the other. Exact events are not shown us, only that there is a period in which, as one may say, the character of that which is to come is beginning to be seen. It is quite simple that there should be in this way a time in which things are shaping themselves; the Lord no doubt giving to the wise in heart, who can discern, to see what is before them. Of such a period the seals naturally speak. To the wise in heart the book of prophecy is being opened, the seals upon it are being broken, but the full reality has not yet emerged.

[3] We must now look at the parenthetical visions. Here, as already said, we are in a different atmosphere from that which we have realized before. We have the actings of God rather than of man; with the result of these in grace for men. They open the book more thoroughly than anything hitherto: for without them everything would be mere confusion, or almost this. Here we find God's purpose, what He is accomplishing; and thus we gain fully the point of view from which all the rest can be beheld aright. The vision, as already said, is double. We have, on the one hand, and in the first place, the sealing of 144,000 out of every tribe of the sons of Israel. The specification as to each tribe follows, as if to impress upon us how literally we are to take it; all the more that in the second vision, in contrast with this, we have a multitude that no man can number, but now "out of every tribe, nation, and people, and tongue."

Jews and Gentiles are here, in short, plainly distinguished. Nor can this be strange to those who have considered how we are led up to it. The Church is passed from the earth. The Lord's people (not Christians only, but those of past generations) are gathered home. They are in glory, reigning upon their thrones around the throne; while the new beginning, which plainly must follow this as to God's dealings with the earth, is indicated by the Lamb coming forward as the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Judah is first among the tribes here sealed. It is the royal tribe, as we know, the tribe of David, and in which the promise of perpetual royalty is made to him. This, it should be plain, has nothing to do with the Church, with her hopes or prospects, except so far as she is associated with Christ in that rule which is now in His hands as Son of man; but if the Jews thus come once more into view as in a distinct way the people of God, the Gentiles naturally have their distinct place also. The Old Testament prophets always speak after this manner, and we have only to read them simply to realize how different is the state of things that we are contemplating from that of the time in which God is, as now, gathering Jews and Gentiles into one body, as co-heirs equally of the inheritance which is to come.

a (vii.): The divine realization.
a (1-8): Israel's election of grace.

[1] *a* And after this I saw four [b] angels standing upon the four corners of the earth, holding the four [c] winds of the earth, that no wind should blow upon the earth, nor upon the sea, nor upon any tree. And I saw an-

b *cf.* ch. 8. 2, etc.
cf. Ps. 103. 20, 21.
c *cf.* Dan. 7. 2.
cf. Eph. 2. 2 with Job i. 18, 19.

This is what we find, then, intimated on the first view. We see that we have to take Israel here as literal Israel. This is said by some to involve a contradiction of the general principles of the interpretation of the book of Revelation. Interpreters say we must take it *all* as symbolical, or *all* as literal; otherwise we are simply interpreting as we please, and all stability of interpretation is set aside. But this, as it is easy to show, is simple misapprehension, and has led those who adopt it as a rule, into manifest absurdities. On the one hand it has presented us with such monstrosities as "supernatural, infernal, not earthly locusts," but which are, nevertheless, to be taken as *literally that!* We are told "it is a day of miracle, surely a day of wonders, a day of fierce and tormenting wrath. It is everywhere so described in the Scriptures, and we do greatly mistreat the records which God has given for our learning if we allow the skeptical rationalizing of our own darkened hearts to persuade us that such supernatural things are impossible, and therefore must not be literally understood." Yet when we come to the "beast" of the thirteenth chapter, we are told (rightly enough) by the same interpreter, that we have here *not* a "literal" beast, but "a symbolical presentation of the political sovereignty of this world."

On the other hand, this rule of perfect consistency, as interpreted by others, must require us to blot Israel entirely out of such a prophecy as this, and from all place therefore in those Old Testament promises which the apostle assures us belong to his "kindred according to the flesh" (Rom. ix. 4). The fact is, the consistency so much advocated cannot be maintained in this way for even the briefest moment in interpreting the book of Revelation. Thus, for instance, under the fifth seal, we have a symbolical altar, and in connection with it "souls" that can scarcely be symbolically slain for the word of God. Nor can this be said of their fellow-servants and their brethren who are about to be killed as they were. Such a mingling of the literal and symbolic in one vision is only a sample of what will be found in almost the whole series of visions; and if it be asked, How then are we to distinguish between the literal and the symbolical? the answer should be plain that we are to judge, as it is so necessary always, *by the whole context*, and therefore by the *wider and more important consistency* of such visions as a whole—a thing which is unhappily but too little attended to by such interpreters. Symbols, of necessity, require in us all something of "the mind that has wisdom." They are supposed to require attention and exercise as to their meaning, and are by no means intended to make everything plain to the dullest as to the clearest, spiritually. All is fully open to us, but we must not make any prophecy of Scripture of private (that is, isolated) interpretation, as the apostle warns us; and the observance of this rule (which the apostle gives us as "first of all") will necessitate much useful searching of Scripture, as well as what should be most profitable meditation upon it. The Spirit of God is in it and in us also, blessed be His name; and we are dependent upon Him everywhere to guide us into all truth. But the truth will speak to the true, and God deals with us as those who should be competent thus to look everywhere beneath the surface. "In all labor there is profit," and here assuredly our labor shall not go unrewarded.

a Four angels are now seen standing upon the four corners of the earth, holding in restraint the four winds of the earth, that no wind should blow upon the earth, nor upon the sea, nor upon any tree. Manifestly here again all is symbolic. The winds of the earth are the various influences which from outside affect it; surely not *divine* influences, or they would not need to be restrained, but rather the power of the enemy working: for Satan, as we learn elsewhere, is "the prince of the power of the air," and the course of this age is thus under

other angel ascending from [the] sun-rising, having [the] [d]seal of [the] living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it had been given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, [e]Hurt not the earth nor the sea, nor the trees, until we shall have sealed the servants* of our God upon their foreheads.

d *cf.* Eph. 1. 13. *cf.* Ezek. 9. 4–7.
e *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 7. *cf.* Gen. 19. 22.

* δούλους, "bond-servants."

his control. God is above all, as we see now. Nothing is but as it is permitted to be, and this is the security of His people, whatever may be the adverse circumstances through which they pass. The earth seems always to speak of that which is settled under government, as we may say, as the sea cannot be, which speaks in general of unrestrained will—thus of the nations, looked at as away from God. The tree is individual, one specially prominent, rooted in the earth, as it might seem. A time is coming which shall test all this.

And now another angel ascends from the sun-rising. Not without significance, surely, is the east so spoken of here. The Sun is about to rise, and with this the action of the angel is associated. He has the seal of the living God, and cries with a loud voice to the four angels, saying, "Hurt not the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, until we shall have sealed the servants of our God upon their foreheads." Here it is said that to the four angels it was given to hurt the earth and the sea. Thus the judgment is in the hand of God, although the instruments may be working their own will. The angels have "power to hurt" simply because they have power to restrain, or not, the adverse influences. There is thus a time of quiet and comparative security until God has accomplished His own work in those that serve Him; "until we shall have sealed," says the angel, "the servants of our God upon their foreheads."

We cannot separate from this (in character at least) what we find of the 144,000 in the fourteenth chapter, who there stand with the Lamb upon mount Zion, and upon whose foreheads the name of His Father is seen written. This would be according to what sealing is in Scripture, the seal being a *stamp*, which here marks out manifestly those who are the Lord's. The seal is upon the forehead, where most seen, and would seem to intimate the fearlessness of their confession. We have to distinguish here between what we have in the epistle to the Ephesians as to the seal of the Spirit, if only by the fact that here the sealing is angelic, and no angel could put the seal of the Spirit upon men. It may be thought, on the other hand, that the angel here is Christ, as He certainly appears afterwards in such a character (chap. x. 1); but against this there is the fact that he associates others with himself, whether they be the four previous angels or not. He says, "until *we* have sealed." Even here it might be possibly thought that the "we" was meant to associate the Spirit of God with himself, but the language following—"the servants of *our* God"—surely forbids this. Christ could Himself speak as man, and, as we know, He commonly does so; but the Spirit of God, while He works in man, has not become man, and thus the language seems inapplicable.

This, no doubt, makes the nature of the sealing less clear than otherwise it might be. On the other hand, the seal of the Spirit, as spoken of in Ephesians, could hardly be found at a time when the Church is gone from the earth, and thus, with the Church, the indwelling of the Spirit. Lange says that we cannot suppose the apostle John to have a lower conception of sealing than the apostle Paul; but that is not at all the question, for the inspired writer does not speak according to any mere conception of his own, but according to the way in which he is instructed, and therefore according to the nature of that which is before him. The purport of the seal is that it marks out the one sealed as belonging to God; and thus, as we find afterwards (chap. ix. 4), it becomes security from the locust-plague. It is the seal of the "living God," who, as this, abides to

And I heard the number of those that were sealed: a [f] hundred and forty-four thousand sealed out of [g] every tribe of the sons of Israel. Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand; of the tribe of Reuben, twelve thousand; of the tribe of Gad, twelve thousand; of the

[f] *cf.* ch. 14. 1.
[g] *cf.* Gen. 49. 3-27. *cf.* Deut. 33. 6-25. *cf.* Ezek. 48. 1-7, 23-28.

care for and preserve that which is His own. In the Ephesian sense of sealing, we can as little understand the four winds having to be restrained that it might be done, as we can understand the angel being the agent in it. The action of the angels is certainly, as we should say, providential, and operates upon circumstances surrounding, rather than inwardly upon the soul. But we are incompetent, perhaps, to say more than that in some way God manifests His own, perhaps indeed by circumstances that bring them into special prominence, and make plain whose they are; and if we are to judge by the consequent preservation of those sealed under the locust woe, we might think that this seal of the living God marked out those who would be preserved alive for blessing upon the earth, in contrast with those slain under the beast, and who find their place in heaven. God is certainly at work to preserve through all this time of exceeding distress and danger a people for Himself, as we shall find in the flight of the woman into the wilderness, in the twelfth chapter, to a place where she is kept from the power of the dragon. Outside of this, there is a seed more open to attack, and which we find suffering afterwards under the persecution of the beast. But all this, as yet, cannot be entered into.

Those who are sealed are said specifically to be 144,000, out of every tribe of the sons of Israel. The tribes are then named, but in a peculiar manner, which would no doubt reveal to us more as to them if we had more intelligence or capacity. The order in which they are enumerated is found nowhere else, and is peculiar in the way in which the sons of different mothers—wives and concubines—are mingled together. If we follow the usual division of 12 into 4×3, we have, as Lange says, "first, two sons of Leah and one of her maid—Judah, Reuben, Gad. Secondly, Leah's adopted son Asher, Rachel's adopted son Naphtali, and Manasseh the first-born of Joseph. The third triad is formed by Leah's sons, Simeon and Levi, and her adopted son Issachar. In the fourth group Zebulon is conjoined with Joseph and Benjamin—the late offspring of Leah with the late offspring of Rachel." On a general survey, he adds, "The thought forces itself upon our mind that the vision in its symbolistic enumeration of the twelve tribes has obliterated every semblance of a legal prerogative apart from Judah's place of honor, which again was symbolically significant of the dignity of Christ." Others again take it that such a promiscuous enumeration is given us for the very purpose of intimating that these are not literally Israel's tribes at all. But this has been, in another way, and quite satisfactorily, decided for us.

We may gather from it apparently one thing, and that is, that we have before us not simply the nation preserved (and thus they are not given in the order in which they would be even in the wilderness camp, and much more in the land), but that here is a special remnant marked out, and of which we ought to be able to see more at another time. The absence of Dan from the enumeration is significant in this way; as assuredly, when the tribes are brought back to their land at last, Dan will not be wanting among them. Here the prophecy of Jacob their father (which is, in a way beyond what is ordinarily seen, significant of their whole future history) will assist us much, as well as in answering the question as to the reason of the omission. Jacob himself lets us know (Gen. xlix.) that he is speaking of what should befall them "in the last days." It is to these "last days" that Revelation has brought us, so that the application of his words to what is before us here should be the more evident.

Let us listen, then, to what the dying patriarch has to say of Dan: "Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the

> tribe of Asher, twelve thousand; of the tribe of Naphthalim, twelve thousand; of the tribe of Manasseh, twelve thousand; of the tribe of Simeon, twelve thousand; of the tribe of Levi, twelve thousand; of the tribe of Issachar, twelve thousand; of the tribe of Zebulon, twelve thousand; of the tribe of Joseph, twelve thousand; of the tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand sealed.

way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse-heels so that the rider shall fall backward. I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord." Evidently there is something here, even in its very enigmatic form, to awaken attention; and it is quite startling in the way that it answers questions which the omission of Dan in this list of the tribes will naturally awaken. Dan, as we see, is *not* to drop out of the number of these. On the contrary,—and let us remember that it is of the last days that Jacob is speaking,—"*Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel.*" Thus the Lord's grace prevails, whatever may be the failure that we find in Dan. It cannot be that a tribe should perish out of the chosen people. But then, if this be a special company, and if we should find this same company at a later time associated with the Lamb upon mount Zion (chap. xiv. 1), then one might naturally say that Dan *has* lost this place of association with the King of Israel. Yet, says Jacob, "Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel." How remarkable is this, put just as if there might be a question about it, and yet, on the other hand, giving Dan certainly no prominence, as in fact in those last days he will be found but as the border tribe in the land (Ezek. xlviii. 1). Dan shall retain his tribal staff, and that is all. But why should he seem thus to be under question? If not in rejection, yet why, apparently, in this lowly place? Have we not the answer to this also in Jacob's words, "Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse-heels, so that the rider falleth backward"? Here, for those who know the character of these "last days" of which Jacob is speaking, it will not be without significance that Dan is thus associated with and characterized by the power of the enemy, as if it had so far prevailed for his perversion. When we know that the large part of Israel in those days will fall into apostasy, surely the serpent and the adder, here distinctly identified with Dan, must be pregnant with meaning: and how much more so when we find immediately following, as it were, the groan of the remnant of those days, "I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord!"

Notice how, in the final blessing of the tribes by Jacob, we find the suited termination of this. As to Gad, a conflict in which, first overcome, he shall nevertheless overcome at last. Then, with Asher and Naphtali we have what manifestly speaks of blessing following; while Joseph and Benjamin, completing the history, show us in whom the blessing is. All, therefore, is most perfectly in keeping throughout; and we are not arguing from any mere isolated expressions, as some would suggest, but giving everything its due place and connection. The prophecy has already been considered in its place in Genesis.

We have only now to speak of the number 144,000 (12,000 of each tribe). Although it may be according to the literal truth, yet it speaks rather of a symbolical meaning. Twelve, as we everywhere see, is the number of manifest government—ordinarily at least, we may say, if not always, of *divine* government, though men may be given their place in connection with it. Certainly the number here is suggestive of just such thoughts, the thousand, moreover, being the cube of 10; and 10 as a double 5 (which seems to be all that there is in it) speaks at the same time of responsibility, and capacity, and reward. How suited is everything we see here—even if there be much we have not seen yet—to give such a character to these sealed Israelites as we have suggested! *

* The fact that those sealed are a remnant out of the mass of the nation will sufficiently characterize them. They are, doubtless, similar in character to the remnant spoken of in Ezek.

b (9-17): The saved Gentiles brought out of the great tribulation.

b After these things I saw, and lo, a [h]great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and tribe and people and tongue, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with [i]white robes, and palm branches in their hands. And they cry with a loud voice saying, [j]Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb. And [k]all the angels stood round the throne and the elders * and the four living beings,* and fell before the throne upon their faces and worshiped God, saying, Amen; blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and strength, unto our God, to the ages of ages. Amen.

[h] *cf.* Rom. 11. 25. *cf.* Is. 60. 5.

[i] *cf.* ch. 6. 11.

[j] *cf.* Ps. 118. 14, 15, 25. ch. 19. 1.

[k] ch. 5. 11, etc.

* These also are governed by the preposition "round."

b The apostle now has another vision, which naturally would have connection with the first, as well as probably be in some way contrasted with it. Here there is no more a company of Israelites that demands our attention, but a great multitude which no man can number, "out of every nation, and tribe, and people, and tongue." These then must be, largely at least, Gentiles. If we think of all that has been before us, we should say, rather, that they are exclusively Gentiles. If the Church has gone out to meet her Lord, and the Lion of the tribe of Judah it is who has taken manifest rule, and with Him a special remnant of Israel has already been seen in association, then, being in the line of Old Testament promises, which are Israel's, we must expect to find the Gentiles having a place indeed in blessing, but still a separate place from these. This company stands "before the throne, and before the Lamb." They are "clothed with white robes, and palm branches in their hands; and they cry with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb." They are thus partakers of the salvation which they have ascribed to God and the Lamb. They are clothed also with white robes, the token of full and final acceptance; and the palm branches in their hands speak of victory gained. Their being "before the throne and before the Lamb," may naturally, at first sight, declare them to be a heavenly company—a company in fact in heaven; and this, though with various application, is the thought in general of interpreters as to them. And indeed heaven is open to us. We see all the angels standing "around the throne and the elders and the living beings," and hear them as they fall upon their faces, worshiping God, saying, "Amen: blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and strength, unto our God, to the ages of ages."

But let us wait for what follows this. One of the elders puts plainly the question to the seer, "These who are clothed in white robes, who are they? and whence came they?" But John himself is evidently at a loss to say. "My lord," he answers, "thou knowest." Then we have the words which clearly and decisively explain who they are: "These are they that come out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple; and He that sitteth upon the throne shall tabernacle over them. They shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more, neither shall the sun in any wise fall upon them, nor any burning heat; because the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall shepherd them, and shall lead them to fountains of waters of life, and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes." Plainly these words speak of full blessing attained. Some of

ix. 4: "Set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst" of Jerusalem. That sealing, too, was preliminary to the slaughter about to be inflicted upon the ungodly mass. That which ever characterizes a remnant is the moral state of grief and horror at abounding evil. Such, says the Lord, "shall be Mine in that day when I make up My jewels."—S. R.

And one of the [l]elders answered saying unto me, These who are clothed in white robes, who are they? And whence came they? And I said unto him, My lord, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they that come out of the [m]great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them [n]white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they [o]before the throne of

l *cf.* Eph. 3. 10.
m *cf.* Dan. 12. 1. *cf.* Jer. 30. 7. *cf.* Matt. 24. 21, 22. *etc.* ch. 3. 10.
n *cf.* 1 Jno. 1. 7. *cf.* Zech. 3. 3-5.
o ver. 9.

them would seem as plainly to say, at first sight, that they are as certainly in heaven as the elders themselves; but let us look a little further.

They are all said to come out of the great tribulation, and this is emphasized. It is literally "the tribulation, the great one," as impressing upon us to make no mistake. There is but one tribulation that can be spoken of after this manner—that tribulation of which Daniel speaks (chap. xii. 1) as a "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time;" and when Daniel's "people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." Thus it is the time of which Jeremiah speaks, "the time of Jacob's trouble," but out of which he shall be delivered (Jer. xxx. 7). It is the time also of which the Lord speaks in His familiar prophecy, in which He expressly refers also to Daniel (Matt. xxiv. 15–21)—a time of "great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time; no, nor ever shall be." Immediately after this tribulation, there is the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and He comes in the clouds of heaven with the angels. Thus we cannot possibly be deceived as to where this brings us; and we find that we are looking forward in a vision here to what has not as yet had its place in the prophecy. In fact, we are looking on to the time when the Son of man has come. These are a special group, then. They are not the company of all the saints from the beginning, but those of one brief time; for "except those days should be shortened, no flesh should be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (Matt. xxiv. 22).

That they are clothed in white robes is of importance in different ways. It shows that they are past the judgment of works; they are not merely themselves accepted personally, but are owned of the Lord in that which has been of Him in their life and ways. The white raiment, we are told in the nineteenth chapter, is the righteousnesses of the saints. There is a needful admonition here against what we are so prone to, the attributing a sort of uniformity to Scripture which is in reality the product merely of the narrowness of our own minds, and which begets confusion instead of clearness. Scripture is larger and more various than we take it to be. It is probable that most Christians take these white robes as being simply Christ as the righteousness of His people; but at once comes the question, How could a robe like this be *washed, and made white in the blood of the Lamb?* Every one will say that is impossible, of course; then the robe in this case is not the righteousness which is given us in Christ Himself. It is not Christ as righteousness to us, but, as already said, the righteousnesses (the word is plural) of our works and ways, which must have the stamp of His approval before we can be accredited with them, before we can stand in the value that grace may give them in His sight. But how much is there in our works and ways that He can never approve! Here then is where the precious blood must be applied; not to ourselves merely, but to our *garments*. They must be washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. We see at once how suited this is to the book of the throne and of judgment, which the book of Revelation assuredly is; and we see also how necessary it is to discriminate between scripture and scripture, and to distinguish things in which there may be at first sight apparent similarity. This applies equally to such great truths as those of salvation, redemption, sanctification, nay, even justification, where much of the confusion which obtains among the Lord's people is the result simply of forgetting how large and various Scripture thoughts are. We do not reach consistent inter-

pretation by ignoring these differences which so constantly exist. Here, as already said, the company before us are plainly seen to have stood before the judgment-seat of Christ, and to have received His estimate of their lives as He has seen them.

Thus "are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple"—words in which again we shall be called to discriminate between apparently similar things. The elders are before the throne, and we naturally think of those who are before it here as being in heaven with the elders, and practically therefore as one company with these. But the words "serve Him day and night in His *temple*" are just the words which could not be used of the elders, for John explicitly says of the New Jerusalem, "I saw *no* temple therein." Here we *have* a temple; and the question necessarily arises, What temple is this, or what is meant by it? If we have not reached God's thought as to the millennial reign, and seen that there will then be a temple on earth which is the place of His throne, we shall scarcely realize the true position of this Gentile company. As risen saints, if we conceive them such, it will be difficult to imagine their relation to a temple on earth; but where are we shown that these are risen saints? Where are we shown that they have passed through death at all? Such things are constantly read into passages of this sort which do not contain them.

Take—what we cannot but realize to be a similar company at least—those who are assembled before the throne of the Son of man when He comes; when, as we are told, "the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations; and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say to them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me" (Matt. xxv. 31–36). And of these it is said finally that the righteous go away "into life eternal." How constantly in this case also it is thought that we are looking at those raised in a general resurrection, and who as sheep or goats pass, as the result of this judgment, to heaven or to hell! But nothing is said about resurrection, or about heaven. The Son of man has set up His throne on earth; and that supposes, of necessity, discriminating judgment of the nations among whom His throne now is. The passage has been examined in its place, and there is no need to repeat what has been already said.

But here it is plain there is a throne, before which men stand; and yet it is a throne on earth, though a divine throne. It is not contended that the companies are necessarily the same; but any one who is familiar with the language of the Old Testament prophets will have little difficulty in realizing what is said here. Take Isaiah's description of Jerusalem in her blessing in millennial days (Isa. iv. 5, 6), when "the Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defense. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain." The language here carries us back, of course, to Israel in the wilderness when the glory *was* such a covering to them. But this is Jerusalem under the almighty wings which would so long since have covered her, but she would not, yet under which she has come at last to rest. Here, too, it is in conflict with the thoughts of many, and yet what Scripture absolutely assures us of, that there will be a temple once more, a literal holy place upon earth which God recognizes, and where He displays Himself; so that the very sign of the end of the decreed time of God's preparatory dwelling in Jerusalem will be, as Daniel tells us, "the anointing of the

God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth upon the throne shall [p] tabernacle over them. They shall [q] hunger no more, nor thirst any more; neither shall the sun in any wise fall upon them

[p] *cf.* Is. 4. 5, 6.
[q] Is. 49. 10. Ps. 121. 6.

most holy" place (Dan. ix. 24). That which Israel has lost, and for so long lost, through their unbelief, shall be restored to them in a more wonderful manner than before; and thus it is, as we find further in Isaiah (chap. ii. 3, 4), "Many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." When this is to be, is absolutely plain from what follows this: "And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

That time surely is in the future yet. The reinstating of Israel in their land, converted to God and once more gathered, all of them, Judah united with Ephraim, and under One of whom God speaks by the prophet as "My servant David, their Prince forever," will show how little He has repented of His thoughts in connection with them. In the same explicit way does He speak in Ezek. xxxvii. 26–28: "Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in the midst of them forevermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary shall be in the midst of them forevermore." Thus it is the very sign of His acceptance of His people Israel, an acceptance which will know no change forever, that His sanctuary is explicitly in the midst of them. This, of course, is quite contrary to what we have in Christianity; but the difficulty with us has been the making of Christianity God's final thought as to the earth, as well as heaven, so as to make all these passages really unintelligible to us without such an interpretation of them as implies large modification also. Taken simply as they read, they are everywhere intelligible and most consistent, as God's words must always be. And the words of the prophets should surely make us understand better how the company that are before us here can be at once upon earth, and "before the throne of God," and "serve Him day and night in His temple," and how "He that sitteth upon the throne shall tabernacle over them."

But a difficulty may be found in another direction. These are, as is evident, a Gentile company. We have already distinguished them from those sealed of Israel in the previous vision. If Israel and the nations are thus apart, how could it be said of Gentiles here that they "serve Him day and night in His temple"? Do not the words show that there is, after all, an inconsistency in applying such language to a people upon earth, and when Israel's distinctive blessings have been restored to her? Now the prophet has already anticipated this very difficulty; for Isaiah assures us, speaking of the time of Israel's final restoration, when the Gentiles "shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations, upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to My holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord," that in that new condition, in testimony of His grace to all, *Gentiles* should also be admitted to a place of special nearness to Himself: "And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord" (Isa. lxvi. 20, 21). And here it is that the assurance follows, "For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain." Thus, while Israel has her

nor any burning heat; because the [r]Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall tend them, and shall lead them to [s]fountains of waters of life, and God shall [t]wipe away every tear from their eyes.

[4] And when he opened the seventh seal, there was [u]silence in heaven about half an hour. And I saw

[4] (viii. 1–5): The seventh seal removed, initiating the change impending.

r ch. 14. 1. Ps. 23. 1.
s Ps. 23. 2. Ps. 36. 8. *cf.* Ezek. 47. 1.
t Is. 25. 8. ch. 21. 4.
u *ctr.* ch. 5. 9-14; *cf.* Ps. 9. 16.

distinctive place and blessing, at the same time God, in His own grace, will associate others with them from among the Gentiles themselves.

It has been said that the promise "I will take of them for priests and for Levites" merely refers to these Israelites brought back by the Gentiles to Jerusalem; but, as Delitsch well says, "God is here certainly not announcing so simple a thing as that the priests among the returned people should be still priests." He has just declared that the Gentiles "shall bring all your brethren out of all the nations for an offering to the Lord, as the children of Israel bring their offering in a clean vessel unto the house of the Lord." The Gentiles are here, therefore, this clean vessel; and being thus cleansed, they have the further promise, "and of them also will I take for priests and Levites." It is plain, moreover, that such an application of Isaiah's words brings his prophecy and this passage before us into perfect harmony, and thus the connection, while at the same time the contrast with the former vision of Israel's 144,000, is preserved. The two together give us a complete picture of blessing for both Israel and the Gentiles—a bow of promise banding for them the storm through which they pass. Neither group is heavenly. Neither is the full number to be saved at that time; but they are, in the language of the fourteenth chapter, a sheaf of the first-fruits of the harvest beyond, and in each case dedicated as this, in a peculiar manner, to the Lord.

The words that follow here do indeed speak of it as the entrance into a blessing which for them shall be eternal; but so, as to Israel even nationally, when thus finally restored, they are past all changes now. Past millennial times, of which the vision speaks, there may be indeed still for them blessing such as we have not here, but that does not affect the permanence of what is promised: "They shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more; neither shall the sun in any wise fall upon them, nor any burning heat; because the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall shepherd them, and shall lead them to fountains of waters of life, and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Let us remember, also, in this connection, that while it is the earthly aspect of things simply upon which the prophets of old dwell, there is always in the New Testament an additional heavenly side, and we can see in the vision before us an intimation of this—an opened heavens, as one would say, into which at least they gaze; in the presence of which they are; so that the Lord's words to Nathaniel come to mind, in which He whom Nathaniel's faith had just acknowledged as the Son of God and King of Israel, prophesies of greater things to those who believe in Him: "Verily, verily, I say to you, henceforth ye shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." This, as the whole connection shows, has in view, not dwellers in heaven, but upon earth—those who, with Nathaniel's faith, will at last acknowledge the King of Israel, and who, in consequence of this, not, shall be in heaven, but "shall see heaven opened," and the angels of God attending upon Him who, wonderful to say, is a Son of man. Just such an opened heavens do we see in the vision before us.

[4] The seventh seal is now loosed, and there is silence in heaven about half an hour: evidently a brief pause only, and quite unsuited to indicate the commencement of eternity. One cannot say that it corresponds either, of necessity, to any pause in events upon earth, although this might follow such a pause in heaven, for heaven is in full government, as we have seen, of the affairs upon

the seven angels who [v]stand before God, and seven [w]trumpets were given to them. And [x]another angel came and stood at the [y]altar, having a golden censer; and much incense was given to him that he might [z]add it to the prayers of all saints at the golden altar which was before the throne. And the [a]smoke of the incense

v *cf.* Lk. 1. 19. *cf.* Job 1. 6.
w *cf.* Joel 2. 1. *cf.* Am. 3. 6.
x *cf.* Is. 63. 9. *cf.* Am. 9. 1.
y *cf.* Is. 6. 6.
z *cf.* Heb. 7. 25; *cf.* Jno. 14. 13.
a Ex. 30. 7; *cf.* Ps. 141. 2.

earth. There is a more important reference to which Bishop Newton (after Philo) calls attention—that "while the sacrifices were made (2 Chron. xxix. 25–28), the voices, and instruments, and trumpets sounded." "While the priest went into the temple to burn incense (Luke i. 9, 10) all was silent, and the people prayed to themselves." Here we have immediately the prayers of the saints offered to God, with incense added to them by the angel-priest; and the prayers are answered in the sounding of the trumpets, which announce more distinctly than ever the judgments of God which are at hand upon a world that has rejected Christ, and still rejects His people. In this case the silence in heaven links the opening of the seal in a very direct way with that which follows; and it would be plain that we have not in the trumpets events which go on side by side with those that have already been before us in the seals, but a new and separate series of judgments: the catastrophe under the sixth seal being in this way still more distinctly seen as by no means the final break-up of earthly governments preparatory to the assumption of the throne on earth by Him to whom of right it belongs. On the other hand, all in the seals hitherto has been preparatory. They are the opening of the book, as on the face of it would be natural to say; and only at this point therefore is the book fully opened. The contents have yet to be made plain to us.

It is in accordance with this that the seventh seal is in some sense an eighth practically, that is, if we take the septenary series as they are numbered for us here. Divisions immediately preceding have given us what can neither be placed under the sixth nor under the seventh seal, but must form a division of its own. This, according to the structure, is the seventh division. The seventh seal is both a seventh and an eighth. We can neither disregard the number specifically attached to it, nor the actual separateness of the preceding visions. The seventh seal is this, as being that which completely opens the book. Seven is the number of completion, as we know, while as an eighth it speaks of a new beginning. The sixth seal is not final judgment, however anticipative of it it may be. The winds have not yet been allowed, as we see in the following vision, to burst forth, as they are about to. The brethren also of the martyrs under the fifth seal, who are to be slain as they were, have not yet given up their lives. In the meanwhile, because the seventh seal in opening the whole book brings us face to face with the most awful period of the world's history ever to be known, we are first taken apart from the succession of events, to see beforehand the gracious purposes which are hidden behind these coming judgments. The visions are an interruption, a parenthetical instruction, which, coming in the place it does, pushes, as it were, the seventh seal on to be an eighth section, itself filling the seventh place. Surely, if numbers have significance at all, we may read it here. The seventh place is filled by that which gives rest to the heart in the assurance of that which God's accomplished work must mean in the way of blessing—a sabbatism which no restless will of man, nor power of evil, can any more disturb.

The seventh seal at once leads us on to that which governs the whole course of things before us. The trumpets to sound are war-trumpets. They correspond to the similar compassing of Jericho seven times on the last day of its existence, and show us in detail that judgment of the world prefigured in the downfall and judgment of Jericho. The trumpets, we may remind ourselves, as they are given us in the Old Testament picture, are trumpets of jubilee.

went up with the prayers of the saints, out of the hand of the angel before God. And the angel took the censer, and [b]filled it from the fire of the altar, and [c]cast it upon the earth: and [d]there were voices, and thunders and lightnings, and an earthquake.

b *cf.* Lev. 16. 12. *cf.* Nu. 16. 46.
c *cf.* Matt. 21. 44. *ctr.* Rom. 8. 34, 35.
d ch. 4. 5; Ps. 97. 3, 4; *cf.* Ex. 19. 18, 19.

While, on the one hand, they give notes of alarm and judgment, yet it is the time of liberation and restoration that is coming in; and here we are given to see what it is that moves the Hand that moves the universe—that the trumpets sound as the answer of God to the supplications of the saints. We have heard these already under the fifth seal, and have had the assurance that they *were* to be answered. Now we see that all the judgments following are in answer to them. "I saw," says the apostle, "the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them; and another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, that he might add it to the prayers of all saints at the golden altar which was before the throne." The answer comes in the shape of fire from the altar cast upon the earth, when we hear immediately what characterizes all that follows: "there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake." The sacrifice of this altar, which is the altar of burnt-offering plainly, *has gone up from it.* There is no offering any more; and alas, the masses of men have only rejected the propitiation made. The fire of the altar therefore does not now consume the victim—it remains but an awful fire of wrath upon those for whom there remaineth no more any sacrifice for sin. They have, in fact, offered victims to God—whose blood they have poured out sacrilegiously beneath God's altar. God has accepted such sacrifices on the part of His people, but they could work no atonement for the men that shed their blood. On the contrary, they plead, as we have seen, against their persecutors; and the wrath is now coming upon them to the uttermost.

Spite of all this, there is a point which is surely significant: that the Priest who puts the incense to the prayer of the saints is not the *human* priest whom we should expect. His form is angelic; and yet it is most certain that no angel besides is ever seen in such priestly attitude, and that Christ, in order "that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God," had to be in all things made like unto His brethren (Heb. ii. 17). It is Christ, surely, who is before us as offering the prayers of the saints to God, and thus we can understand the incense which He can add to them, which is but indeed the fragrance of what He was Himself, and is, for God. But in this case it seems strange that He should be in angel-garb, not human: and this would speak naturally of a certain distance on His part, who is yet interceding. To interpret this, we have to realize the condition of those for whom He intercedes. They are, according to the uniform tenor of what is here, characteristically a Jewish remnant, a remnant chosen by grace out of an otherwise apostate people, and who themselves have to be passed through the refiner's fire in order that they may at last come out the vessel that they are designed to be, for His use. Thus we can understand that they are not as yet in the full apprehension and enjoyment of what Christ is to them, as in after days they will be. Christ Himself is, in a certain sense, standing aloof. His manner, though not His heart, is strange. They cannot fail of ultimate blessing; but it is the time of Jacob's trial, out of which indeed he is to be delivered. To use the figure with which the prophet connects this, it is their finding the bitter pangs of travail which are upon the nation, but out of which a new Israel shall be born, when Jacob shall become Israel, answering now fully to his God-given name.

Thus, as we may see, the book is now really opened. We have had before us the elements which make it up. The prophetic history of it all is now to come, but the character of things should be abundantly plain. The seals have been loosed, and the book is opened.

SUBD. 2.

We have now the trumpets, therefore, in successive, orderly course; it is the progress of a judgment which is yet to salvation, and by which the earth is to come into a new state of blessing such as has never yet been known. As already said, the trumpets are trumpets of jubilee, yet Jericho is to be destroyed. The fashion of the world, evil world as it has been, must pass away; and in no other manner can salvation for man at large be reached. The trumpets proclaim this aloud. If the seals show us mysteries that have to be penetrated, the trumpets speak plainly; and that, whether all their details may be clear to us or not.

Sec. 1.

Nevertheless, we come at first to what has been always found one of the most difficult parts of Revelation, and as to which thoughts of interpreters are perhaps the most diverse. The fact is that, as to these early trumpets, there is a significant hint given us which will in measure explain the mystery in which they are involved. This is found in the vision which follows the sixth trumpet, in the same way exactly as the visions of the seventh chapter follow the sixth seal. In this, we may well look for that which will cast light upon all that is before us. In the vision following the sixth trumpet we see, first of all, an angel descending out of heaven, who claims the sea and the land—the whole earth therefore—for God. It is no doubt once more Christ in angelic form, as that which is said of Him proves; but we need not pause upon this now: the great point for us at present is, that we are brought thus manifestly into connection, in a more decisive way than before, with God's purposes of blessing for the earth at large. For this, it must be manifestly His; and thus we are brought into connection also in a fuller way than before with the prophets who speak of this—with the prophets, therefore, of the Old Testament. As He comes down, the Angel has in His hand a little book, which, in contrast with that which was in Christ's hand before, is *open* now. It is a *little* book, in implied contrast with the other, just as its being open is in contrast with the sealing of the other, and the Angel Himself declares that now there is to be delay no longer, "but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, who is about to sound, the *mystery of God shall be completed, according to the good tidings which He declared by His servants the prophets.*" This ought to make us prepared for what we find is before us when the book has been taken by John—a vision of the temple of God and the holy city, but now trodden under foot of the Gentiles, yet a testimony of God preserved in it which is to last for a period which is the exact half of a week of years. We are, in short, in the last week of Daniel's seventy, as all that is connected with this shows, and thus manifestly also where is found the full light of prophetic testimony. The little book is the testimony of Israel's prophets—little just because it is confined to earth and the divine purposes as to it, and does not in any wise reach to the full compass of that which the New Testament has revealed to us.

But if this is found only at the end of the sixth trumpet, we shall easily understand that that which takes place before this, although in the same line of things, yet can be but introductory to what the prophets speak. We are left (apart, of course, from the general indications furnished by the prophetic testimony) to a kind of isolated interpretation, if we may so say, of the former part here, and therefore we need not wonder if we find difficulty in it. No doubt we are by no means altogether left to this. We have helps and assistances which we must not disregard. We shall find that the very succession of these trumpets, plainly given as it is, every one numbered, will be a help to us. There is a certain connection of them with one another which any right interpretation of them must bring out. Events do not merely follow one another, but more or less grow out of one another. They are a divine series, and not a mere bringing together of disconnected things.

Then again, we shall find, probably, that just here, where Israel's prophets

seem in measure to fail us, there comes to our help what mere Futurism indeed refuses, but which, nevertheless, has meaning and help for us in its place, namely, the historical interpretation of Revelation: if we make it the whole thing, it will certainly display its inadequacy; but in these trumpet-proclaimed judgments, especially under the fifth and sixth trumpets, it acquires a consistency which certainly speaks for its truthfulness. We must examine somewhat this historical interpretation at a future time, but nothing forbids us to call it to our help here if we should find, as we may, help in it. If God has given us in the history of the Church—as it would be folly to deny—what may very well seem but the echo of Israel's history, the parallelism which we shall thus find should be helpful to confirm the two interpretations here, which may well be expected to be parallel. At any rate, we must search for ourselves and see.

Now the general historic interpretation of the first four trumpets applies them to the breaking up of the Roman empire by the barbarian inroads of Goths, Vandals, and Huns, until its final extinction in the West by the hands of Odoacer. The eastern half survived to a later day, but it was henceforth Grecian rather than Roman; Rome itself, with all that constituted its greatness—nay, its being, in the days of its ancient glory—having departed from it. This application agrees with the unity of these trumpets, while it gives a sufficient reason for the series coming to an end; the fifth and sixth trumpets turning now to judgments upon the eastern half, by the hands of Saracen and Turk; and the seventh being universal in its character. The Roman empire, let us remember, as the last empire of Daniel's visions, and that which existed in the Lord's lifetime upon earth, and by the authority of which He was crucified, stands as the representative of the world-power in its rebellion against God. (Compare Ps. ii. with Acts. iv. 25–28.) No wonder, therefore, if its history should be given under these war-trumpets, the last of which gives us the full victory of Christ over all the opposition.

It is consistent with this that Satan, in the twelfth chapter of this book, should, as the dragon, be pictured with the seven heads and ten horns of the Roman beast. He is the spiritual "prince of this world," and in this way is clothed with the power of the world, which we see here again as Roman. So, again, the "earth" (which both in Greek and Hebrew may mean "land," and is often by no means the equivalent of the world) seems almost constantly in these prophecies, till the final one, to be the *Roman* earth, the territory of the Roman empire in its widest aspect, and of which the western part seems to be the "third part" mentioned in the trumpets. As to this "third part," Mr. Elliott urges that during the period of these early trumpets "the Roman world was in fact divided into three parts, namely, the eastern (Asia Minor, Syria, Arabia, Egypt); the central (Moesia, Greece, Illyricum, Rhœtia); the western (Italy, Gaul, Britain, Spain, Northwestern Africa); and that the third, or western part, was destroyed." Others would make the "third part" equivalent to the territory peculiar to the third beast of Daniel, or the Greek empire; but this seems certainly not the truth; for in this case, according to the historical interpretation, the end of the eastern empire must be found under the fourth trumpet, whereas the fifth trumpet goes back, before this, to introduce the Saracens.

Of all interpretations, that only seems consistent which applies the "third part" to the western part of the Roman earth; and in this way the term may have a further significance, as that part in which the Roman empire is yet to revive, as it will revive for judgment in the latter days—the "third" being very often connected in Scripture, as is well known, with the thought of resurrection.

The Roman empire has indeed long been extinct, both in the West and in the East, and it is of this very extinction that the historical interpretation of the trumpets speaks; yet the voice of prophecy clearly assures us that it must be existing at the time of the end, when, because of the words of the little horn, judgment comes down upon it (Dan. vii. 11). The nineteenth chapter of this

book unites with the book of Daniel in this testimony; for it is when the Lord appears that the beast is seen along with the kings of the earth, arrayed in opposition against Him. Thus it is plain that the Roman empire must be existent at the end. It has yet, therefore, to rise again; and in the thirteenth chapter we see it, in fact, rising out of the sea; while in the seventeenth, where the woman Babylon has her seat upon it, it is said, "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition" (ver. 8). So it is called "the beast that was, and is not, and shall come." Nothing can be much plainer than the fact that the Roman empire will revive again.

But not only so; it is also declared by the same sure Word that it will revive to be smitten again in one of its heads, and apparently to death, yet its wound is healed and it lives (chap. xiii. 3, 12, 14). It is after this that it becomes idolatrous, as Daniel has intimated that it will, and all the world wonders after it (vers. 3, 8, 12).

It is not yet the place to go fully into this, but so much is clear as enables us to see how the historical interpretation of these trumpets points, or may point, to a future fulfilment of them. One other thing which the book of Revelation notes will make more complete our means of interpretation.

The beast, as seen in Revelation, has seven heads, or kings; and these are successive rulers—or forms of rule—over the empire: for, says the angel, "five are fallen, one is, and another is yet to come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space." The heads, then, in this primary view, are seven, but five had passed away—commentators quote them from Livy: the sixth, the imperial power, existed at that time: the seventh was wholly future, and, in contrast with the long continuance of the sixth, would continue only a short space.

But there is an eighth head; and the beast himself is this. The last statement has been supposed to mean that the head exercised the whole authority of the empire; but it would seem nothing strange for the head of empire to exercise imperial authority. Does it not rather mean that the beast that is seen all through these chapters is the beast of this eighth head?

But the seventh head, where does it come in? There are some things that would seem to give us help with regard to this: for the empire plainly collapsed under its sixth head, and the seventh could not be until the empire again existed. There are questions here which have to be settled with the historical interpretation; but in the meantime the course of the trumpets, confirmed by their historical interpretation also, would suggest that we have in them, and indeed from the commencement of the seals, the history of the seventh head. The rider upon the white horse, to whom a crown is given, may well be the person under whom the empire is at first re-established: and of such an one, Napoleon (though not, as some have thought, the seventh head himself) may be well the foreshadow. The sixth seal does not point to his overthrow: it is a wider, temporary convulsion which affects all classes—high and low together; and in the pause that follows, they would seem to recover themselves. The trumpets begin, however, at once to threaten overthrow. The very escape of the governing classes under the first trumpet seems to prepare the way for the outburst under the second, which is an eruption from beneath—fierce with passionate revolt; under the third, apostasy is added to this, casting off the restraint of divine government, soon to grow into the last and worst form of Christianity according to Satan—Antichrist: it is the opposition of deified humanity to incarnate Deity.

The result is, under the fourth trumpet, as it would appear, that the imperial power is smitten, the seventh head wounded to death, and with it the recently established empire overthrown beyond mere human power to revive again. But this brings in the help of one mightier than man—the awful power of Satan, working with an energy proportionate to the shortness of the time which is now

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chaps. viii. 6–xi. 18.)
The trumpets. The progress of judgment to salvation.

SECTION 1. (Chap. viii. 6–13.)
The empire under its seventh head.

1. (viii 6, 7): First trumpet. A concord of contraries.

1. AND the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. And the [e] first sounded, and there was [f] hail and fire, mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth; and the [g] third part of the earth was burnt up, and the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

e *cf.* ch. 6. 1.
cf. ch. 16. 2.
f Ex. 9. 23, 24. Ps. 18. 13. *cf.* Ezek. 38. 22. *cf.* Job 38. 22, 23.
g vers. 8, 10, etc. *cf.* Lk. 2. 1.

his. The beast arises out of the abyss; its deadly wound is healed; the dragon gives him his power and throne, and great authority; and all the world wonders and worships (chap. xiii. 2–4). Then indeed it is "Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabiters of the earth!"

1. The first trumpet now sounds, and there is "hail and fire mingled with blood," and they are cast upon the earth: and the third part of the earth is burnt up, and the third part of the trees, and all the green grass. We find in this what connects itself with one of the plagues of Egypt, and there is a reference in the prophets (Micah vii. 15) to some repetition of the plagues of Egypt in the last days: "As in the days of your coming forth out of the land of Egypt, will I show unto him marvelous things." The trumpets and vials, so similar as they are to one another, similarly speak also with regard to the judgments of the latter days. It is not necessary to believe, as we are sometimes assured we must, that these plagues in Revelation must have the same physical form that the plagues in Egypt had. We are intended to learn, no doubt, by the resemblance; and Egypt being, as we know, the type of the world out of which our salvation is, we can see again how these judgments are judgments upon the world in order to the deliverance of God's people out of it. But in the time of which we now are thinking, it is Israel that is God's people; and the relation that we have seen exists here, so far as it is a relation of type and antitype, would speak rather for a dissimilarity than complete likeness between them. The shadow differs from the substance, and we are led rather to expect the repetition of these Egyptian plagues in their symbolical meaning than literally. This does not lessen its importance for us.

We find the hail with fire, of the first trumpet, among these plagues of Egypt. Symbolically it is one of the most solemn figures of divine judgment which nature furnishes. In the eighteenth psalm it is found in solemn connection: "The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave His voice: hailstones and coals of fire." Electric discharges and hail are products of a common cause —a mass of heated air, saturated with vapor, rising to a higher level and meeting the check of a cold current. It is a concord of apparent contraries. Cold is the withdrawal of heat, as darkness is the absence of light; and light and heat, cold and darkness, are akin to one another. Cold stands with darkness for the withdrawal of God, as fire—which is both heat and light—for the glow of His presence; which, as against sin, is wrath. Both these things can therefore exist together. God's forsaking is in anger necessarily. Love with Him could not forsake; therefore if there be on His part withdrawal, this cannot be a mere cold turning away. There is with Him no apathy, no mere indifference; and thus the heat of His anger necessarily accompanies His withdrawal. With the hail and fire blood is mingled here—a token of violent death, which shows the deadly character of a visitation by which the third part of the earth, the third part of the trees, and all green grass, is burnt up. The earth is not the globe, but the prophetic earth; and this is practically the territory of Daniel's four empires.

2. (8, 9): Second trumpet. Eruptive violence spreading death.

2. And the [h]second angel sounded, and as it were a great [i]mountain burning with fire was cast into the [j]sea, and the third part of the sea became [k]blood; and the third part of the [l]creatures which were in the sea which had life died; and the third part of the [m]ships was destroyed.

h ch.5.3,etc.
i *cf.* Jer. 51. 25.
ctr. Is. 2. 2.
j *cf.*Is. 57.20. *cf.*ch.17.15.
k Ex. 7. 19, 20. ch. 11. 6. *cf.* ch. 16. 4-6.
l *cf.*2 Chron. 20. 23; *cf.* ch. 6. 4.
m *cf.* Ps. 48. 7.

The third part, as already said, would seem to refer to the revived Roman empire in that western portion, which was in fact what was essentially Roman, and which is what seems to be revived. There is no need to suppose, as many do, that the revival of the Roman empire necessarily infers the exact boundaries that it had of old. The empire may be the same empire without this, and in the last days the West and the East seem to be not merely in separation, but in decisive opposition to one another. It is this third part of the earth, then, that is visited in this way. By the language, it seems to affect especially the lower ranks of the people, though, as necessarily would be the case, many of the higher also, but rather in contradistinction to those in authority. They have not escaped, as we have seen, in the general convulsion under the sixth seal. Nay, the heavens fleeing away might seem to intimate that the very possibility of true government was departed. Yet this might be while the governments go on; and in what follows we find that they do go on, although never really recovering themselves. Under this trumpet now begins, as it would seem, what should really cause them to collapse. Everywhere prosperity is gone, as the burning of the grass may imply; while the trees, which speak of that more deeply rooted in the earth, and which has power to stand as it were alone, are less affected. It is noticeable how in Isaiah (chap. ii. 13, 14), in the day of the Lord, the judgment is said to be "upon all the cedars of Lebanon that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up." Everywhere it is upon that which lifts itself up that the Lord's judgment is; and the loftiness of man is specially emphasized. But the sources of all prosperity are rather found among the lowest than among the highest: "The king himself is served by the field" (Eccl. v. 9); and thus this first judgment strikes really all that is stable.

2. But the second trumpet seems at first sight to be in a different line, while the symbolic meaning shows the real connection. "As it were, a great mountain burning with fire" is cast into the sea, and the third part of the sea becomes blood, and the third part of the living creatures in the sea die, and the third part of the ships are destroyed. A reference to Jeremiah may help us here. Of Babylon, Jehovah says, "Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, which destroyest all the earth, and I will stretch out My hand upon thee and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain" (Jer. li. 25). The difference is plain, of course, as well as the similarity; but the comparison suggests to us here a power mighty, firmly seated and exalted, yet full of volcanic forces in conflict, by which not only her own bowels are torn out, but ruin is spread around. This cast into the sea (of the nations) already in commotion—as the sea implies—produces death and disaster beyond that of the preceding trumpet. Such a state of eruption we might see in France at the end of the eighteenth century, which may well illustrate what seems intended. There the fierce outburst of revolt against all forms of monarchy—the fruit of centuries of insolent tyranny under which men had been crushed—set Europe in convulsion. History is full of such portents of that which shall be, and we do well to take heed to them. Especially as the time of final judgment approaches, we may expect to find such pre-intimations of it; and thus there is a growth on to, and preparation for, that which at last takes those who have not received warning by it by surprise. The third part of the ships being destroyed would seem naturally to imply the destruction of commerce to this extent—the intercourse between the nations necessarily affected by the reign of terror around. Here let

3. (10, 11): Third trumpet. A flaming meteor turns to death the sources of of refreshment.

3. And the [n]third angel sounded, and there fell out of heaven a great [o]star, burning as a lamp; and it fell upon the third part of the rivers and upon the [p]springs of waters. And the name of the star is called, Wormwood; and the third part of the waters became [q]wormwood; and many of the men [r]died of the waters because they were made bitter.

n ch.6.5.etc.
o *cf.* ch.9. 1. *cf.* Is.14.12. *ctr.* Dan. 12. 3.
p *cf.* ch. 16.4. *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 17. *ctr.* ch. 22. 1,17.
q *cf.* Deut. 29. 18; *cf.* Jer. 23. 15; *cf.* Acts 8. 23.
r *cf.* 2 Ki. 4. 39, 40; *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 17, 18.

us notice that, mighty as the power may be, the eruption is from below, and how the distress amongst the lowest classes operates to produce it. Thus the two trumpets here connect together.

3. The third angel sounds, and there falls out of heaven a great star burning as a lamp, which, falling upon the third part of the rivers and springs of water, makes them poisonously bitter. The star is thus called Wormwood, or Absinthe, which is a bitter, intoxicating, and poisonous herb. The heavens are the sphere of government, whether civil or spiritual. A ruler of either kind might therefore be indicated here. The historical application is in general to Attila, king of the Huns. Yet the fall from heaven, the poisoning of the sources of refreshment, as well as the parallel, if not the deeper connection with the sixth trumpet, seem to point much more strongly to an apostate teacher by whose fall the springs of spiritual truth are embittered, causing men to perish. With all the misery that has hitherto been depicted as coming upon men under these Apocalyptic symbols, we have not before had any clear intimation of this, which we know, however, to be a principal ingredient in the full cup of bitterness which will then be meted out to men. Because they have not received "the love of the truth that they might be saved," God will send them "strong delusion that they may believe a lie." How much the warnings of this abound in the present day it is hardly needful to insist upon. False prophets of every kind are more and more showing themselves. In the French revolution, at the end of the eighteenth century, the revolt against existing governments linked itself with revolt against Christianity; and the social and anarchical movements which have followed, and indeed have largely sprung out of it, are uniformly allied with infidel and atheistic avowals as extreme as any of that time. We have already considered, in a measure, the doctrine of a personal antichrist yet to come, and we shall be repeatedly recalled to the consideration of it as we go on with the Revelation. Here it is only the place to say that his birthplace in this book seems to be under the third trumpet—though his descent more strictly than his rising. He is the fruit of apostasy, as the second epistle to the Thessalonians (chap. ii. 3) would lead us to anticipate, and the second chapter of John's first epistle no less.

The rivers and springs of water naturally speak of doctrine. The living water is the well known symbol of the Spirit of God; but, as acting through the Word, water becomes the symbol of this, as we find it in Eph. v. 26—"the washing of water by the Word." Here, that which should have been refreshment and blessing is distilled into poison; and what this bodes is easy to understand when we remember that if the Lord has now taken His true saints to heaven, the rest have become wholly distasteful to Him, and are to be spewed out of His mouth. Apostasy is the natural issue; and here again the premonitions of this are to be found on every side. Let us remember, also, that the casting off of divine government leads naturally to the casting off of human government as well; and here we find the connection with that which follows, although if merely human government is thrown off, that does not mean but that there may be, as in fact there will be, a form of government arising out of this chaos which will suit the purpose of the prince of this world better than anarchy itself. He can organize as well as merely destroy. He can vivify as well as slay, and we shall find that this is just what the course of things will show us here.

4. (12, 13): The fourth trumpet. Fading luminaries.

4. And the [s]fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the [t]sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars, so that the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for its [u]third part, and the night likewise. And I saw, and I heard one [v]eagle flying in mid heaven, saying with a loud voice, [w]Woe, woe, woe, to those that [x]dwell upon the earth, by reason of the rest of the trumpet-voices of the three angels which are about to sound.

s ch. 6.7, etc.
t *cf.* Joel 2. 31, Is. 13. 10. *cf.* Ex. 10. 21-23. *cf.* Jno. 12. 35.
u ver. 7. etc. *cf.* Ex. 10. 23.
v *cf.* Lk. 17. 37.
w ch. 9. 12. ch. 11. 14.
x *cf.* ch. 3. 10.

4. But now, under the fourth trumpet, a sign occurs which may be compared with that under the sixth seal; but which, in the comparison, reveals important differences. Then a convulsion affected, as it would appear, the whole earth. Now it is only the governing powers that are affected, and that not everywhere, but a third part of the sun, and of the moon, and of the stars, so that the day shines not "for a third part of it, and the night likewise." These last words, in connection with the similar limitation to the "third part" in the preceding trumpets, seems plain enough. It does not shine in the third part of the sphere of its dominion, nor the night (that is, in its moon and stars) either. Certainly this would not be the natural result of the darkening of the third part of the sun and moon; and this intimates to us, as all else does, that we have not here a literal phenomenon, but a figure of other things. Royal or imperial authority has collapsed, with its train of satellites, within such limits as the third part designates; and with this the first series of the trumpets ends. As ordinarily in these septenary series, the last three are cut off from the first four, which have a certain oneness of application, as also the use of this "third part," employed in them throughout, would imply; for the next trumpet has no intimation of this kind. The sixth has it again, but the seventh absolutely refuses all such limitation.

Here, then, as it would seem, we have the fall of the revived Roman empire in its seventh head. So far from there being any difficulty in the connection with what has preceded, it is throughout simple and consistent. There is perfect harmony with the prophecy elsewhere, as well as, so far as we can trace it, with the voice of prophecy in general—the prophecy, however, of the New Testament, rather than of the Old. What we are looking at is the collapse of Christianity itself, as an earth-power, with all that with which politically it is connected. We go on to see evils much more intense which arise out of this, and in which the power of Satan over men is most amply demonstrated. Well may the voice of lamentation be heard here, even in that which is a denunciation of judgment. "I heard," says the apostle, "one eagle flying in mid-heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to those that dwell upon the earth, by reason of the rest of the trumpet-voices of the three angels which are about to sound!"

The eagle, or vulture, is the symbol of judgment, for which the carcass, as the figure of corruption, calls; and thus the Lord's words in the Gospels, "Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together" (Matt. xxiv. 28). Spite of the common application of this to the saints as rising to meet their coming Lord, there is an incongruousness in it which one feels ought to shock every Christian soul. Scripture never suggests such degrading parallels, and the Lord's words have a totally different connection. The lightning, coming from the east and shining even to the west, figures the storm and not the calm—the awful horror of judgment, and not the joy of gathering to Christ. All this part of the twenty-fourth chapter, to the end of the forty-second verse, is Jewish in its connection, and not Christian; and that which has misled so many in the parallel passage in Luke (xvii. 37), the connection with what we find in Matthew also, but in a more distant way,—where of two men in one bed,

I. (ix. 1-12): Fifth trumpet. The lawless head of an uprising lawlessness.

SECTION 2. (Chaps. ix.-xi. 18.)
Alliance with the enemy.

1. And the [y] fifth angel sounded, and I saw a [z] star fallen from heaven unto the earth, and there was given unto him the key of the [a] pit of the abyss. And he opened

[y] ch. 8. 9, etc.
[z] *cf.* ch. 8. 10. *cf.* ch. 12. 9 with Heb. 2. 14.
[a] ch. 20. 1-3.

the one is taken and the other left; two women grinding together at the mill, the one is taken and the other left,—all this is but in perfect harmony. Those taken are taken by the judgment, not to blessing. The earth is being cleared by judgment. Thus that which is corrupting upon it must be removed, and the illustration by the case of Noah and the generation of his day, when the flood came and took them all away, shows that the taking away is this. So in the parallel case of Lot: "In the day that Lot went forth from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all." But when the Lord takes away His people, destruction does not come upon them in any such manner. The confusion commonly made between the time of the Lord's taking His own away, and that of His coming with them to the judgment, is responsible for the whole distortion of the picture here.

Sec. 2.

In evil we may always expect a constant development. It is a kingdom, and the head of it is the great apostate, Satan himself. Thus if God only permit things to have their way, as He is doing now in that which is before us in the prophecy, we must expect that the picture will grow ever darker until the great consummation when the lightning of divine wrath will at last enlighten the whole and disperse it, and the day will at last come. What distinguishes the last three woes from what has gone before is the introduction, manifestly, of Satan himself into the scene. Christianity is that which, as light, holds in check the darkness as long as its power continues. We see, indeed, its manifest waning in the present day; but when the Church is removed, and, with the Church, the Spirit of God as dwelling in it is gone out of the scene, then the apostasy from Christianity will link itself more and more openly with the enemy of God and man. We have seen in the history of the churches themselves, as given in the seven epistles, a similar progress, although necessarily not as open; but now we come to the days in which the lawless one shall exalt himself against "all that is called God or that is worshiped," and his "coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders;" God allowing to be taken with a strong delusion those who believed not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

1. Accordingly, when the fifth angel sounds, we see a star fallen from heaven to the earth, to whom is given the key of the pit of the abyss, and the pit of the abyss is opened. The star is not seen to fall, as under the third trumpet. It has already fallen; and we are necessarily referred back to the third trumpet for its previous history. It is the history of an apostate. To him is given the key of the abyss, and by his means there is opened upon the earth from the pit of the abyss a Satanic influence pictured as a smoke of a great furnace, so that the sun is darkened and the air, by the smoke of the pit. The abyss, or bottomless pit, is not hell itself; nor, according to Scripture, is Satan yet there. Yet the abyss is a "pit," often in the Old Testament the synonym for a dungeon, and everything shows it to have this meaning here; for it is a key by which alone it can be opened. The "pit of the abyss" is the "dungeon of the abyss,"—the dungeon which is that; an infinite deep from which nothing can recover itself, except by divine permission. So the demons pray that they may not be sent into "the deep," or "abyss" (Luke viii. 31); and Satan is, in the twentieth chapter, shut up there: but the distinction between that abyss and hell itself, which is the lake of fire, is manifest in what is said in that connection. In the Old Testament, parallel to this in Revelation, it is said: "They shall be gath-

the pit of the abyss; and there arose a [b]smoke out of the pit as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun was darkened, and the air, by the smoke of the pit.

[b] *ctr.* ch. 21. 24. *cf.* Joel 2.10.

ered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in prison" (Isa. xxiv. 22). Here the pit and the prison are synonymous. That it is not hell proper is seen again from the use of the word with regard to the Lord Himself (Rom. x. 7): "Who shall descend into the deep (abyss); that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead?" The connection of the pit with the state of the dead in the Old Testament is similar to that of the abyss here in the New; and the beast in its last phase is said to come up out of the abyss. Here, too, the death-state is indicated. It naturally refers to the wounding to death and revival of the beast, or of the seventh head (chap. xiii. 3, 12, 14). Some have even contended, seeing the identification of the beast, or empire, with its last head (chap. xvii. 11), for the literal resurrection of a person in this case. But literal resurrection could only be from God, and the beast in its last form is filled and energized by Satan (chap. xiii. 1, 2). The coming out of the abyss, therefore, is figurative, as the beast itself is; and indeed the use of the word seems figurative throughout. Christ has "the keys of Hades and of Death" (chap. i. 18), and it is not to be imagined that He should give up into the hand of an apostate, whether man or spirit, any portion of His own authority. We must not think, therefore, as has been done, of a literal opening of Hades, and an eruption of the spirits of the lost upon the earth. The demons, it is urged, were, in heathen account, but "the spirits of mortals when separated from their earthly bodies;" and Josephus is cited for the orthodox Jewish opinion that "demons are none other than the spirits of the wicked dead. With very few exceptions, the Christian fathers were of like opinion, . . . and the burden of evidence and authority is to the effect that demons are the souls of dead men, particularly the spirits of those who bore a bad character in this life. There is no such thing known in the Bible as a good demon." This does not suit, however, with that which the Lord gives us from the mouth of the rich man in Hades, who is assured by Abraham of a great gulf fixed between the two classes there (Luke xvi. 26), "so that they who would pass from hence to you cannot, neither can they pass to us that would come from thence." This naturally intimates that, at least without distinct permission, the spirits of the dead would not be found upon earth. God might, of course, give permission, and it is said here that to the fallen star the key of the pit is "given;" this, no doubt, from God; for if Christ be the Master of the prison-house, none plainly could break bounds without His permission. The dead are by their death removed from the sphere of earth, and those shut up to await judgment can scarcely be thought of as at the same time taking active part in that which is done upon the earth. The thought of Satan being in hell and yet taking such part as it is confessed he does, naturally leads to the thought that with regard to the spirits of the dead there may be the same thing. But Satan is not in hell, as we have seen; nor, as yet, even in the abyss. And the days of men upon earth are ended when the earthly life is. Thus we read that it is for "deeds done in the body," and not out of it, that men are to give account in the day of judgment.

But we have to remember here, surely, that the whole language is symbolic. We are not called upon to believe that Christ literally puts the key of the prison-house into the hands of an apostate. The symbolism of the language here sets aside the whole moral question as to such a thing. Man certainly has the terrible power of yielding himself to the power of evil so as to open, not merely for himself, but for others also, the access to himself and others of that which lies otherwise under the restraint of God's judgment. At the time to which we are brought here this will be done, as we have seen, in a way such as has never been known as yet; but it is the abandonment to a lie of those that love a lie; and thus fittingly that which is said to rise out of the pit is but a smoke of darkness, by which everything, to the very sun itself, is darkened. Out of this

And out of the smoke came forth [c]locusts upon the earth, and there was given unto them authority * as the [d]scorpions of the earth have authority; * and it was said to them that they should not hurt the [e]grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who have [f]not the seal of God upon their foreheads; and it was given them that they should not kill these, but that they should be [g]tormented five months; and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man. And in those days men shall [h]seek death and shall in no wise find it, and shall long to die and death shall flee from them. And the likenesses of the locusts were like [i]horses prepared for war; and on their heads were as it were [j]crowns like gold, and their [k]faces were as the faces of men, and they had [l]hair as the hair of women, and their [m]teeth were as those of lions, and they had [n]breastplates, as it were iron breastplates; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of [o]chariots of many horses running to the battle; and they have tails like scorpions, and stings;

c Ex. 10.12-15.
d *cf.* Nu. 21. 6.
e *ctr.* ch. 8. 7.
f ch. 7. 2, 3. *ctr.* ch. 13. 16, 17.
g *cf.* Deut. 28. 67.
h *cf.* Jer. 8. 3.
i *cf.* Joel 2. 4.
j *cf.* Nah. 3. 17. *cf.* ch. 16. 12.
k *cf.* ch. 13. 18.
l *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 14, 15.
m Joel 1. 6.
n ver. 17. *ctr.* Eph. 6. 14.
o Joel 2. 5. *cf.* Nah. 3. 2, 3.

* Or, "power."

smoke come locusts upon the earth, the evil bringing its own torment with it. It is not said that the locusts come directly out of the pit. It may be natural indeed to think that after all they cannot be bred of the smoke merely, but must have come out of the pit with this. But where the spiritual sense is the whole matter, naturalistic interpretations may easily deceive us. Recognizing that these are symbols, there is no difficulty. The smoke is not the smoke of torment, but the fumes of malign influences darkening men's minds. Out of this darkness we can easily understand such locusts as we have here to be bred. The symbolism, one would think, is manifest, and we can scarcely escape from it by saying that these are "supernatural, infernal, not earthly, locusts." It is quite in accordance with their origin that their power should be represented as that of the scorpions of the earth, that is, in their poisonous sting, the sting of malignant error; and their distinction from natural locusts is seen in this, that they do not touch the food of such, but are a plague only upon men, and these the unsealed men. Remembering that it is in Israel that this sealing has taken place, it seems to be clear that the unsealed ones too are Israelites, and that the sphere of this plague is in the East. They do not kill, as in general the scorpion does not, but inflict a torment to which death is preferable; and their power lasts five months. The death here is plainly not spiritual, but simple, natural death. Men long to die as their escape from torment, but death flees from them.

Next we find them pictured as warriors, a military power subordinated to what is their grand interest and aim, the propagation of poisonous falsehood. Thus the shapes of the locusts are like horses prepared to battle, and, as in the certainty of triumph beforehand, "upon their heads were, as it were, crowns like gold." Little matter of real triumph had they, as the limiting words here show. Their faces are as the faces of men. They have the dignity and apparent independence belonging to such. Nevertheless, their hair is as the hair of women, for they are in fullest subjection to the dark and dreadful power that rules over them. Their teeth as the teeth of lions shows the savage, tenacious grip with which they can hold their prey; their breastplates of iron, probably the fence of a hardened conscience. The sound of their wings like that of the locust-hosts they resemble, conveys the hopeless terror which they inspire.

and their authority* was in their tails to hurt men [p] five months. They have over them a [q] king, the angel of the abyss: his name is in the Hebrew [r] Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon.

The first woe is past. Behold, there come still [s] two woes after these things.

* Or, "power."

p ver. 5.
q *cf.* Eph. 2. 2. *cf.* Jno. 14. 30.
r *cf.* Job 26. 6. *cf.* 1 Pet. 5. 8.
s ch. 8. 13.

Finally, as most important, we are again reminded of their scorpion stings and their power to hurt men five months. From this it has been urged that we have, in fact, to double the five months and make it ten; but the words themselves prohibit such a thought. The repetition is plainly for the sake of emphasis.

They have a king over them, the angel of the abyss, whose name is given (exactly the same in meaning) in Hebrew and in Greek. The use of the Hebrew joins with what we have seen before, to assure us that it is upon Israel that this woe comes; while the Greek no less plainly indicates that the angel here has also to do with the Gentiles. According to both, he is the "destroyer." It is natural to think of Satan in such connections; and Satan, we are reminded, is the inspirer of antichrist. The historical application in this case is one in which there is great unanimity among interpreters. They are applied to Mohammed and the Saracens, whose astonishing successes were manifestly gained under the inspiration of a false religion. They came in swarms from the very country of the locusts, and their turbaned heads with men's beards and women's hair, and their cuirasses, the sparing of the trees and corn, and even of life where there was submission, with their time of prevalence according to the year-day reckoning, 150 years—all these things have been pointed out as fulfilment of the vision. It has been objected, on the other hand, that such points as these are below the dignity of Scripture, and that the terms are moral. While this is surely true if we think of the full intention, it is to be considered, on the other hand, whether God does not allow and intend oftentimes a correspondence between such outward things and what is deeper, just as the face of a man may be a real index to his spirit; and *because* they are external they are well fitted to strike the imagination. The parable is, as we know, a very common method of instruction everywhere in Scripture. Thus God would open our eyes to what is indeed all around us; and to stop at what is external, or to ignore it, is alike an error. But in any case, and for reasons already considered, we cannot take this Saracenic scourge as any complete fulfilment of the locust vision; nor can we, on the other hand, connect it in full certainty with other prophecy, as would be necessary for very clear interpretation. What seems indicated, however, with regard to its final fulfilment in the time yet to come, is the rise and propagation of that desolation to which we know both the masses of mere Christian profession and of the unbelieving Jews will in the end surrender themselves. The antichrist of that time will be, there is little doubt, both an apostate from Christianity (2 Thess. ii.) and from the faith of his Jewish fathers (Dan. xi. 37); and his apostasy will remove, under divine permission, the present restraint upon the power of evil. It will be as if the abyss had opened its mouth to darken the light of heaven. A mist of confusion will roll in upon men's minds which, under Satanic influence, will soon find definite expression both in forms of blasphemy and a host of armed adherents ready to force upon others the doctrines of the pit. As has been said, it is apparently with Israel that this trumpet has to do; but to have the Greek name of the leader seems to speak also of the connection with Gentiles. If the application here made be the true one, then we know that the wicked one will not be a Jewish false Christian merely, but will also head the apostasy of Christendom. In this sense also it may be that the beast under its last head, the revived Roman empire, is said to come up out of the abyss, its actual revival being due to the dark and dreadful power

2.(ix.13-21): Sixth trumpet. The desolator.

2. And the [t]sixth angel sounded, and I heard one voice out of the four horns of the [u]golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, Loose the four angels that are [v]bound by the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, who were [w]prepared for the hour and day and month and year, to kill the [x]third part of men; and the number of the hosts of the horsemen was two [y]myriads of myriads: I heard the number of them. And thus I

[t] ch. 6. 12, etc.
[u] *cf.* ch. 8. 3.
[v] *cf.* ch. 7. 1-3.
[w] *cf.* Jonah i. 17.
[x] *cf.* ch. 8. 7.
[y] *cf.* Ju. 7. 12.

which is presented to us here, so exceeding in malignity all that has preceded it that its advent is called, in the language of inspiration, "the first woe."*

2. The sounding of the sixth trumpet is followed by a voice out of the horns of the golden altar which is before God. We recognize it at once as that which has furnished the incense added to the prayers of the saints by the Angel-Priest, and that we have here what is distinctly judgment upon the persecutors of the people of God. We have only to remember, also, that the idolatry in Israel in the last days is spoken of as "the abomination of desolation" (that is, the abomination which brings the desolator) to see an intimation of the connection between what has taken place under the fifth trumpet and what is here. In Dan. ix. 27 it is said literally, "And because of the wing of abominations there shall be a desolator." The wing of abominations is in contrast with that sheltering wing of the God of Israel under which the true remnant amongst them have learned to trust. The voice from the altar may remind us of one who has caused sacrifice and oblations to cease from the place whence it went up to God. The altar here is indeed the golden altar, not the altar of sacrifice itself; but the blood of the sacrifice had to be applied to the horns of the golden altar in order that incense might go up from it. It is more emphatic as read now: "one voice out of the four horns"—their united cry against the blasphemous invader. The cry is for judgment, to loose the four angels that are bound by the great river Euphrates.

The Euphrates was the boundary of the old Roman empire, and there the four angels are said to be bound—restrained, it may be, by the power of the empire itself, until, having risen up against God, their own hands throw down the barrier, and the hordes from without enter upon their mission to slay the third part of men: a term which we have seen as probably indicating the revived Roman empire. Here is the seat of the beast's supremacy, with which the power of Antichrist is found allied. When we turn to the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth chapters of Ezekiel to find the desolator of the last days (chap. xxxviii. 17), we find, in fact, the full array of nations from the other side of the Euphrates pouring in upon the land of Israel, while the connection of that land with Antichrist and with the Roman empire is plainly shown us in Daniel and in Revelation alike. If the Euphrates be the boundary of the empire, as it once really was, it is also Israel's as declared by God; and the two are already thus far identified. Their connection, spiritually and politically, we shall have fully before us in the more detailed prophecy to come.

* As to the duration of this woe, five months, little may be said beyond what is given in the text in connection with the historical interpretation. Five, however, is the number of human capacity and the limit of human responsibility; ten being but the twofold witness of this, manward and Godward, as seen in the Ten Commandments. The time of this intense persecution, then, will not be beyond the limits of human endurance, or, at least, beyond the measure of human responsibility. The fact, too, that men were not slain but only tormented would also indicate this. May we not also see a measure of mercy in this limitation of the time of this infliction? "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." It would almost seem as though God were yet calling upon men in this sore judgment to turn to Him. We see, indeed, that this is implied in the next plague (ver. 20), where men still refuse to repent.—S. R.

saw the horses in the vision, and those that sat upon them, having [z]breastplates of fire and jacinth and brimstone. And the heads of the horses were as the [a]heads of lions, and out of their mouths goeth fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three plagues were the third part of men killed: by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone [b]proceeding out of their mouths. For the authority* of the horses is in their mouth and in their tails: for their [c]tails were like serpents, having heads, and by them they hurt. And the rest of the men who were not slain in these plagues [d]repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not [e]worship the demons, and the idols of gold and silver and brass and stone and wood, which can neither [f]see nor hear nor walk; and they repented not of their [g]murders, nor of their [h]sorceries, nor of their [i]fornications, nor of their [j]thefts.

z ver. 9.

a *cf.* Is. 5.29, 30.

b *cf.* Acts 9. 1. *cf.* Ps. 27. 2, 12.

c *cf.* Is. 9.15. *cf.* Mi. 3. 5.

d *cf.* ch. 2.21. *cf.* ch. 16.9, 11.

e 1Cor. 10.20. Deut. 32.17.

f Ps. 115.4-7.

g *cf.* ch. 18. 24.

h *cf.* ch. 21.8.

i *cf.* ch. 18. 9.

j *cf.* Ps. 50. 18.

* Or, "power."

But why *four* angels? and what do they symbolize? The restraint under which they were marks them sufficiently as opposing powers, and would exclude the thought of *holy* angels; nor is it probable that they are literal angels at all. They would seem representative powers, and in the historical application have been taken to refer to the fourfold division of the old Turkish empire into four kingdoms prior to the attack upon the empire of the East. If such an interpretation is to be made in reference to the final fulfilment, then it is noteworthy that "Gog of the land of Magog, Prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal,"—as the R. V., with most commentators, reads it now,—gives (under one head indeed) *four* separate powers as principal associates in this latter-day irruption. Others there are, but coming behind and apart, as in their train. This is at least a possible application, and therefore not unworthy of serious consideration; while it does not exclude a deeper and more penetrative meaning.

The angels are prepared for *the* hour and day and month and year, that they might slay the third part of men. The immense host, 200,000,000 in number, are perfectly in the hand of a Master—time, work and limit carefully apportioned by eternal Wisdom, the evil in its fullest development servant to the good. The number is particularly emphasized: "I heard the number of them;" and yet it seems impossible to be literal except we take it, as some would do, as applying to angelic hosts, where, of course, all our reasoning is lost. The horses seem to be of chief importance, and are most dwelt upon, though their riders are first described, but only with regard to their "breastplates of fire and jacinth and brimstone." These answer to the "fire and *smoke* and brimstone" out of the horses' mouths; divine judgment, of which they are the instruments, making them thus invincible while their work is being done. The horses have heads like lions; destruction comes with an open front—the judgment of God: so that the human hands that direct it are of the less consequence; divine wrath is sure to find its executioners.

God's judgment is foremost in this infliction, but there is also Satan's power in it. In this there is no possible contradiction, as we know. The horses' tails are like serpents, and have heads; and with these they do hurt. Poisonous falsehood characterizes this time, when men are given up to believe a lie. Death, physical and spiritual, are in league together, and the destruction is terrible: but those that escape are not delivered from their sins, which, as we see, are in the main idolatrous worship, with things that naturally issue out of this. The genealogy of evil is as recorded in the first of Romans. The forsaking of

3 (x. 1-xi. 14)‖ The filling up of Old Testament prophecy.

3. [1] And I saw another strong [k]angel descending out of heaven, [l]clothed with a cloud, and the [m]rainbow upon his head, and his [n]face as the sun, and his [o]feet as pillars of fire; and having in his hand a [p]little book

[k] *cf.* ch. 8.3. [l] *cf.* ch. 1.7. *cf.* Acts 1.9. [m] *cf.* ch.4.3. *cf.* Ezek. 1. 28. [n] *cf.* ch.1.16.

[1] (x.1-7): The divine claim upon the earth.

o cf. ch. 1. 15. *p ctr.* ch. 5. 1; *cf.* Ps. 40. 7; *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 19-21.

God leads to all other wickedness, but here it is where His full truth has been rejected, and the consequences are so much the more terrible and disastrous.

3. It has been already noticed that the difficulty of interpretation with regard to the trumpets hitherto is the result of their lying so much outside the field of vision of Old Testament prophecy. We are now coming, however, to what is completely within that field, and in this way the little book in the angel's hand speaks: a book which is opened, not needing to be opened, comparatively small in its scope, as Old Testament prophecy, compared with the larger range of the book of Revelation itself, necessarily is. The visions that follow here are all the filling up of Old Testament outlines. This we shall see as we take them up in detail.

[1] We have already seen that in the trumpets, as in the seals, there is a gap filled up with a vision between the sixth and seventh, so as to make the seventh structurally an eighth section. This corresponds, moreover, to the meaning; for the seventh trumpet introduces the kingdom of Christ on earth, which, although the third and final woe on the dwellers on the earth, is, on the other hand, the beginning of a new condition, and an eternal one. With this octave a chord is struck which vibrates through the universe. The interposed vision is in both series, therefore a *seventh*, with a meaning corresponding to the number of perfection. At least so it is in the series in connection with the seals, and we may be sure that we shall find no failure in this case: failure in the book of God, even in the minutest point,—our Lord's "jot or tittle,"—is an impossibility. Nothing is more beautiful of its kind than the way in which all this prophetic history yields itself to the hand that works in all and controls all; and this is what the numbers speak of. Thank God, we know whose hand it is. But the vision of the trumpet-series is very unlike that of the seals, and its burden of sorrow differs indeed from that sweet inlet into beatific rest. We shall find, however, that it vindicates its position none the less. As in the work, so in the word of God, with a substantial unity there is yet a wonderful variety; never a mere repetition, which would imply that God had exhausted Himself. As you cannot find two leaves in a forest alike, so you cannot find two passages of Scripture that are just alike, when they are carefully and intelligently considered. The right use of parallel passages must take in the consideration of the diversity and unity alike.

In the vision before us there is first of all seen the descent of a strong angel from heaven. As yet no descent of this kind has been seen. In the corresponding vision in the seal series, an angel ascends from the east; but here he descends, and from heaven. A more positive, direct action of heaven upon the earth is implied, power acting, though not yet the great power under the seventh trumpet, when the kingdom of Christ is come. This being, apparently angelic, is yet "clothed with a cloud"—a veil about him, which would seem to indicate a mystery, either as to his person or his ways. It does not say "*the* cloud,"—what Israel saw as a sign of the presence of the Lord,—otherwise there could be no doubt as to who was here: yet in his actions presently he is revealed to faith as truly what the cloud intimates. It is Christ acting as Jehovah, though yet personally hidden, and in behalf of Israel, among whom the angel of Jehovah walked thus appareled. It is only the *cloud;* the brightness which is yet there has not shone forth. Faith has to penetrate the cloud to enter the Presence-chamber. Yet is He there, and in a form that intimates His remembrance of the covenant of old, and on His own part some correspondent action.

opened. And he placed his [q] right foot upon the sea, and the left upon the land, and cried with a loud voice, as it were a [r] lion roaring. And when he cried, the

q *cf.* Ps. 95. 5.
cf. Hag. 2. 6.
r *cf.* Joel 3. 16.
cf. Amos 3. 8.

So also the rainbow, which we last saw around the throne of God, encircles His head. Joy is coming after sorrow; refreshing after storm; the display of God's blessed attributes at last; though in that which passes, a glory which endureth. And this is coming nearer now in Him who descends to earth. But His face is as the sun; there indeed we see Him: who else has such a face? In our sky there are not two *suns:* our orbit is a circle, not an ellipse.

His face is above the cloud with which He is encircled. Heaven knows Him for what He is; the earth not yet, though on the earth may be those who are in heaven's secret. But His feet are like pillars of fire, and these are what are first in contact with the earth, the indication of ways which are in divine holiness; necessarily, therefore, in judgment; while the earth mutters and grows dark with rebellion.

Now we have what reveals to us whereto we have arrived: "And he had in his hand a little book opened." The seventh seal opens a book which had been seen in heaven; the seventh section here shows us another book now open, but, as noticed before, a *little* book. It has not the scope and fulness of the other. We hear nothing of how the writing fills up, and overflows the page. It is a little book which is open, until now shut up, but which is no longer shut up; a book, too, whose contents (evidently connected with the action of the angel here) have to do with the earth simply, not with heaven also, as the seven-sealed book has. We have in this what should surely lead us to what the book is; for the characteristic of Old Testament prophecy is just this, that it opens to us the earthly, not the heavenly things. Its promises are Israel's, the earthly people (Rom. ix. 4); and it deals fully with the millennial kingdom, and the convulsions which are its birth-throes. Beyond the Millennium, except in that brief reference of Peter's to the new heavens and earth, it does not go; and the new heavens are not the subject here, but the *earth*-heavens, the heavens of the second day, as Peter very distinctly shows. There is no heavenly city in prospect here. There is no rule over the earth on the part of Christ's co-heirs such as we have found in the song of Revelation. All this the Christian revelation adds to the Old Testament, while in the present book the Millennium is passed over with the briefest notice. Here, for the first time indeed, we get its limits set, and see how short it is, while the main thing dwelt upon as to it is, those with whom shall be filled the thrones which Daniel sees "placed," but sees not the occupants (Dan. vii. 9, R. V.). Thus it is plain how the book of Old Testament prophecy is, comparatively with the New, a little book. It is fully owned and maintained that, when we look with the aid of the New Testament beyond the letter, we can find more than this. Types there are, and shadows (and that everywhere in prophecy as well as history) of greater things. Earth itself and earthly things may be and are symbols of heaven and the heavenly. The summer reviving out of winter speaks of resurrection. The very food we feed on preaches life through death, and so more evidently the Old Testament: for Revelation, completing the cycle of the divine testimony, brings us back to paradise, as type of a better one; and the latest unfolding of what had been for ages hidden, shows us in Adam and his Eve, Christ and the Church.

But this manifestly leaves untouched the sense in which Old Testament prophecy may be styled a "little book." The application here is also easy. For in fact the Old Testament prophecy as to the earth has been for long a thing waiting for that fulfilment which shall manifest and illumine it. Israel, outcast from her land, upon whom the blessing of the earth waits, all connected with this waits. We may see now, indeed, as in some measure we see their faces set once more toward their land, that other things also are ranging themselves preparatory to the final accomplishment. But yet the proper fulfilment of them is not really begun.

seven [s]thunders uttered their own voices. And when the seven thunders spake, I was about to write: and I heard a voice out of heaven saying, [t]Seal up the things which the seven thunders spake, and write them not. And the angel whom I saw standing upon the sea and upon the land lifted up his right hand to heaven, and sware by him that liveth to the ages of ages, who [u]created the heaven and the things therein, and the earth and the things therein, and the sea and the things therein, that [v]there should be delay no longer; but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the [w]mystery of God also shall be* completed according to the good tidings which he [x]declared by his own servants† the prophets.

s *cf.* Ps. 29. 3–9.
t *cf.* Dan. 8. 26. *cf.* Dan. 12. 4, 9. *ctr.* ch. 22. 10. *cf.* Ps. 81.7.
u ch. 4. 11. Gen. 1. 1.
v *cf.* ch. 1. 3. *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 9, 10.
w ch. 11. 15. *cf.* Eph. 3. 3–10.
x *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 11, 12. *cf.* Lk. 1. 70, 71.

* Literally, "has been completed." † "Bond-servants."

In the meanwhile, though the Lord is fulfilling His purposes of grace, and taking out from among the Gentiles a people for His name, as to the earth it is "man's day" (1 Cor. iv. 3, marg.). When He shall have completed this, and gathered the heavenly saints to heaven, He shall put forth His hand in order to bring in the blessing for the earth; then the day of the *Lord* will begin in necessary judgment, that the inhabitants of the world may learn righteousness. This day of the Lord begins, therefore, before the *appearing* of the Lord for which it prepares the way. The dawn of day is before the sunrise.

The apostle, in warning the Thessalonians against the error of supposing that the day of the Lord was come (2 Thess. ii. 2), gives them what would be a sign immediately preceding it. "For that day," he says, "shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." The manifestation of the man of sin is therefore the bell that tolls in solemnly the day of the Lord. This would seem to be the opening, then, of the little book. Thenceforth the prophecies of the latter day become clear and intelligible. Now the apostasy has been shown, as it would seem, in its beginning, under the fifth trumpet, and the man of sin may well be the one spoken of there. Thus the little book may be fittingly now seen as opened; and in the continuation of the vision here we find for the first time the "beast," Daniel's "*wild* beast," in full activity (chap. xi. 7). All, therefore, seems connected and harmonious, and we are emerging out of the obscure border-land of prophecy into the place where the concentrated rays of its lamp are found.

We see, too, how rapidly the end draws near: "And he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left upon the earth; and he cried with a great voice, as when a lion roareth." It is the preparatory voice of Judah's Lion as "suddenly His anger kindles;" and the seven thunders—the full, divine voice—the whole government of God in action—answers it; but what they utter has to find its interpretation at a later time.

Meanwhile the attitude of the angel is explained: "And the angel which I saw standing upon the earth lifted up his right hand to heaven and swore by Him that liveth to the ages of ages, who created the heavens and the things that are therein, and the earth and the things that are therein, and the sea and the things that are therein, that there should be delay no longer, but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound,"—when he shall sound as he is about to do,—"then is finished the mystery of God, according to the good tidings which He hath declared by His servants the prophets."

All is of a piece here: the prophetic testimony (the testimony of the little

2 (8-11): Prophesying again. The little open book.

2 And the [y] voice which I heard from heaven [was] again speaking with me, and saying, Go, take the little book which is opened in the hand of the angel who is standing upon the sea and upon the land. And I went to the angel, saying to him, Give me the little book. And he saith unto me, [z] Take and eat it up: and it will make thy belly [a] bitter, but in thy mouth it will be as [b] sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the hand of the angel, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth as honey, sweet; and when I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. And it was said unto me, Thou must [c] prophesy again of peoples and nations and tongues and many kings.

y *cf.* ch. 4. 1.

z *cf.* Ezek. 2. 8, 9. *cf.* Ezek. 3. 1-3. *cf.* Jer. 15. 16.

a *cf.* Jer. 15. 10. *cf.* Jer. 20. 14-18.

b *cf.* Ps. 19. 10. *cf.* Ps. 119. 103.

c *cf.* Jer. 25. 15-26.

open book) is now to be suddenly consummated, which ends only with the glories of Christ's reign over the earth. Amid all the confusion and evil of days so full of tribulation that except they were mercifully shortened no flesh should be saved, yet faith will be allowed to reckon the very days of its continuance, which in both Daniel and Revelation are exactly numbered. How great the relief in that day of distress, and how sweet the compassion of God that has provided it after this manner! "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved" —shall find deliverance speedy and effectual, and find it in the coming of that Son of man whose very title is a gospel of peace, and whose hand will accomplish the deliverance. There has been an apparent long delay. "There shall be delay no longer." Man's day has run to its end; and though in cloud and tempest, the day of the Lord at last is dawning. Then the mystery of God is finished—the mystery of the first prophecy of the woman's Seed, and in which the whole conflict between good and evil is summarized and foretold. What a mystery it has been, and how unbelief even in believers has stumbled over the delay! The heel of the Deliverer bruised: a victory of patient suffering to precede and insure the final victory of power! Meantime the persistence and apparent triumph of evil, by which are disciplined the heirs of glory! Now all is indeed at last cleared up; the mystery of God (needful to be a mystery while patience wrought its perfect work) is forever finished: the glory of God shines like the sun: faith is completely justified, the murmur of doubt forever silenced.

2 Thus the sea and the land already, even while the days of trouble last, know the step of the divine angel, claiming earth and sea for Christ. And now faith (as in the prophet) is to devour the book of these wondrous communications, sweet in the mouth, yet at present bitter in digestion, for the last throes of the earth's travail are upon her. By and by this trouble will be no more remembered for the joy that the birth of a new day is come, a day prophesied of by so many voices without God, but a day which can only come when *God* shall wipe away the tears from off all faces. And it comes; it comes quickly now: the voice heard by the true Philadelphian is, "I come quickly."

The prophet begins here, therefore, what is a repetition in part of what has been already communicated by the prophets of old. He has to "prophesy *again* of peoples and nations and tongues and many kings." He is giving us thus, with additions certainly, what is contained in the Old Testament prophets. He is giving us the little open book.

3 We are coming now, therefore, to the contents of the little book; and, as the numerical structure would show us here, we see how the sanctuary-worshipers are set apart to God. It is Israel's sanctuary, of course, that is contemplated—one which has been long lying empty, and which in the days before its re-anointing becomes the sign of the most open defiance of God that has ever been witnessed upon the earth, and that can be witnessed but once. The enemy is in the sanctuary, and idolatry there rears its head in the place of the name of the

[3] (xi.1-14): The sanctuary worshipers set apart to God.
[a] (1,2): The election of grace all for God.

[3] *a* And there was given unto me a [d]reed like a [e]staff, saying, Rise and [f]measure the temple* of God, and the altar, and those that worship therein. And the [g]court which is outside of the temple cast out and measure it not, because it is given to the Gentiles; and the holy city shall they [h]tread under foot [i]forty and two months.

* ναὸς, the sanctuary itself.

[d] Ezek. 40. 3. Zech. 2. 1. ch. 21. 15.
[e] *cf.* Ps. 23. 4.
[f] *cf.* Jer. 7. 1-4.
[g] *cf.* Ezek. 8. 5-9. *cf.* Ezek. 40. 17, etc.
[h] *cf.* Lk. 21. 24; *cf.* Ps. 79. 1.
[i] ch. 12. 6; ch. 13. 5.

God of Israel. Through this distress it is, nevertheless, that God forms and educates a people for Himself: and these pains are the throes of travail by which at length (and, as it might seem, "in a day) a nation is born." Israel's new nation, new in spirit, has never as yet been seen. We have here God's witness among them, by which the separation of the remnant is accomplished, which remnant, through the purgation of the judgment coming on, becomes the nation.

a The remembrance that we have before us now, that which carries us back to those prophecies of Daniel with which we should now be sufficiently familiar, guides at once as to the interpretation of what is before us. The mention of the "beast," and of the precise period of forty-two months or 1260 days, that is the half-week of his last or seventieth week previous to the coming in of blessing for Israel to the earth, is by itself conclusive. This week we have seen to be, in fact, divided by the taking away of the daily sacrifice in the midst of it (Dan. ix. 27). It is by the direct opposition to God involved in this that the man of sin is revealed. Hence it would seem clear that it is with the last half-week that we have here to do.

A reed like a staff is now given to the prophet that he may measure with it the temple of God. In a sense, no doubt, this is symbolical; that is, that the "*temple*" stands for its worshipers. We are not to think literally of the temple; and yet a purely symbolical interpretation, which would make us understand, for instance, the Church as the temple of God, would lead us, as is evident, far away from the truth. God measures the temple in token of His care of it. A reed like a staff is given to the prophet, that he may do this. If a reed suggests weakness (as all that is of God lies, at the time contemplated, under such a reproach), the words "like a staff" suggest the opposite of it. God's care for His people implied in this measurement is to unbelief indeed a mystery, for they seem exposed to the vicissitudes of other men; yet is it a staff upon which one may lean with fullest confidence. His measurement of things abides, perfect righteousness and absolute truth abiding necessarily as such. The temple is therefore, of course, the Jewish temple; not literal, but standing for Jewish worship and not Christian. Christian worship is over upon earth, and God is owning a people worshiping once more in connection with a temple, as of old. The altar as distinct from the temple proper would seem to be the altar of burnt-offering, upon which indeed for Israel all depended. It was there, too, God met with the people (Ex. xxix. 43), although, as we contemplate things here, the mass of the nation is in rejection, the court given up to the Gentiles, the holy city to be trodden under foot by them, only a remnant of true worshipers acknowledged for whom the altar still avails. A literal rendering of things here would seem only to create the most perfect confusion. While God is owning the remnant of His people at this time, their sanctuary is yet being trodden under foot along with the holy city. Temple and altar can only thus represent the true worshipers connected with these, whom God preserves. "The holy city" can speak of but one city on earth; nor can there be justifiable doubts as to the place in prophecy of this half-week of desolation. The mixture of literal and figurative language will be no cause of stumbling to any one who has carefully considered the style of all these apocalyptic visions, which are evidently not intended to carry their significance upon their faces. All must be fully

b (3–6): The witnesses.

b And I will give unto my two [j] witnesses, that they shall prophesy a [k] thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two [l] olive trees and the two lampstands, which stand before the Lord of the earth. And if any one will hurt them, [m] fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies; and if any one will hurt them, he must in this way be killed. These have authority to [n] shut

j *cf.* Is. 43. 10, 12. *cf.* Is. 44. 8.
k ver. 2. *cf.* Dan. 9. 27.
l *cf.* Zech. 4. 2, 3, 11, 14. *ctr.* Jer. 11. 16. *cf.* Hos. 14. 6. *cf.* Ps. 52. 8
m *cf.* 2 Ki. 1. 10, 12; *cf.* Jer. 5. 14; *ctr.* Lk. 9. 54, 55. *n* *cf.* 1 Ki. 17. 1; *cf.* Jas. 5. 17.

weighed, must be self-consistent, and fitting in its place, in connection with the whole prophetic plan. Thus alone can we have clearness and certainty as to interpretation.

As a man, then, who has been sunk in a long dream of sorrow, but to whom is now brought inspiriting news of a joy in which he is called to have an active part, the prophet is here bidden to rise and measure the temple of God. How speedy and thorough a relief when God is brought into the scene—and from what scene is He really absent? How animating, how courageous a thing, then, is the faith that recognizes Him!

b But where God is, there must be a testimony to Him. We find it, therefore, immediately in this case. "And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand, two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks which stand before the Lord of the whole earth."

The reference here is plainly to Zech. (chap. iv.); but there are also differences which are as plain. There the thing itself is accomplished to which here there is but testimony; and in humiliation, though there is power to maintain it, spite of all opposition, till the time appointed. The witnesses are identified with their testimony, that to which they bear witness. Hence the resemblance. They stand before the Lord of the earth, the One to whom the earth belongs, to maintain His claim upon it; in sackcloth, because this claim is resisted; a sufficient testimony in the power of the Spirit, a spiritual light amidst the darkness, which does not banish the darkness. "And if any man desire to hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies; and if any man shall desire to hurt them, in this manner must he be killed. These have power to shut the heaven that it rain not during the days of their prophecy, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague as often as they will." Here is certainly not the grace of Christianity, but the ministry of power after the manner of Elijah and of Moses, judgment which must come because grace has been ineffectual, and of which the issue shall be in blessing for more than Israel themselves. The association of Elijah with Moses, which is evident here, of necessity reminds us of their association also on the mount of transfiguration, wherein, as a picture, was presented "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. i. 16–18). They are here in the same place of attendance upon their coming Lord. It does not follow, however, that they are *personally* present, as some have thought, and that the one has had preserved to him, while the other has had restored to him, his *mortal* body for that purpose! The preservation to Elijah of a mortal body in heaven seems a thought weird and unscriptural enough, with all its necessary suggestions also; but the closing prophecy of the Old Testament does announce the sending of Elijah the prophet before the great and dreadful day of the Lord. That is the day that is before us here; and is not this proof that Elijah himself must come? Naturally one would say so, but our Lord's words as to John the Baptist, on the other hand, "If ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come," raise question. It has been answered that his own words deny that he was really Elias, and that Israel did not receive him; and so John could not be Elias to them. Both things are true, and yet do not seem satisfactory as

heaven, that no rain fall during the days of their prophecy; and they have authority over the waters to °turn them to blood, and to ᵖsmite the earth with every plague as often as they will.

c (7-14): Their death and resurrection.

c And when they shall have accomplished their testimony, the ᑫbeast* that cometh up out of the abyss shall make ʳwar upon them, and shall conquer them, and kill them; and their bodies† [shall be] upon the street of the great city, which ˢspiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was ᵗcrucified. And they of the peoples and tribes and tongues

o *cf.* Ex. 7.19.
p *cf.* Ex. chs. 7-10.
q *cf.* ch. 13.1. *cf.* ch. 17.8.
r *cf.* Dan. 7. 21. *cf.* Matt. 10. 17-22.
s *cf.* Is. 1.10. *cf.* Ezek. 16. 46.
t *cf.* Lk. 9.51.

* Θηρίον has the force of a *wild* or *ferocious* beast. † Literally, "body."

argument. That he was not Elias literally only shows, or seems to show, that one who was not Elias *could*, under certain conditions, have fulfilled the prediction; while other words of the Lord, "I say unto you that Elias is come already, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed," show even more strongly that, for that day and generation, he *was* Elias. Why, then, could not another come, and in his spirit and power fulfil the prophecy in the future day? This, Revelation seems to confirm, inasmuch as it speaks of two witnesses who are both marked as possessing the spirit and power of Elias, and who stand on an equal footing as witnesses for God. Had it been one figure before the eyes here, it would have been more natural to say that it was Elias himself who was here, but there are two doing his work; nor can we think of a possible third behind and unnoticed, and yet the real instrument of God in this crisis. The two *form* this Elias ministry, which is to recall the hearts of the fathers to the children, and of the children to the fathers, and who both lay down their lives as the seal of their testimony. Put all this together, and does it not seem as if Elias appeared in others raised up of God and endued with his spirit to complete the work for which he was raised up in Israel? Much more would all this hinder the thought of any personal appearance of Moses, while there is no prediction at all of any such thing. Jude's words (which have been adduced) as to the contention of Michael with Satan as to the body of the lawgiver, may well refer to the fact that the Lord had buried him and no man knew of his sepulchre. Satan may well for his own purposes have desired to make known his grave, just as God in His wisdom chose to hide it. Yet the appearance of Moses and Elias in connection with the appearing of the Lord as seen on the mount of transfiguration, seems none the less to connect itself with these two witnesses and their work—both caught away in like manner into "*the* cloud," as verse twelve really reads. And Malachi, just before the declaration of the mission of Elijah, bids them on God's part "remember the law of Moses My servant." Moses must do his work as well as Elias, for it is upon their turning in heart to the law of Moses that their blessing in the last days depends; and thus we find the power of God acting in their behalf in the likeness of what He wrought upon Egypt. The witnesses "have power over waters to turn them to blood." It is not that Moses is personally among them, but that Moses is in this way witnessing for them; and so the vials after this emphatically declare.*

c God thus during the whole time of trouble and apostasy preserves a testimony for Himself, until at the close that final outrage is permitted which brings down speedy judgment; for "when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that cometh up out of the abyss shall make war with them and overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall be upon the street of the great city which spiritually is called 'Sodom' and 'Egypt;' where also their Lord was crucified." If the 1260 days of prophetic testimony agree with the last half

* Doubtless this, as we have already seen in the second trumpet, is to be interpreted symbolically.—S. R.

and nations shall "look upon their dead bodies * three days and a half, and shall not suffer their bodies to be put into a sepulchre. And they that dwell upon the earth "rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those that dwell upon the earth. And after

u *ctr.* Is. 66. 24.

v *cf.* Ps. 79. 2-4. *cf.* Jno. 16. 20. *cf.* 1 Ki. 21. 15, 16.

* Literally, "body."

of the closing week of Daniel, they coincide with the time of the beast's permitted power, and the death of the witnesses is his last political act. That a certain interval of time should follow before his judgment, which takes place under the *third* and not the *second* woe, does not seem to conflict with chap. xiii. 5, where it should read, "Power was given to him to *practise*"—not "continue"—"forty and two months." The last act of tyranny may have been perpetrated in the slaying of the witnesses; and indeed it seems a thing fitted to be the close of power of this kind permitted him. With this the storm-cloud of judgment arises which smites him down shortly after.

If the duration of the testimony were supposed to be for the first half of the week, then the power of the beast would begin with the slaughter of the witnesses, and the three and a half years' tribulation *follow;* which does not seem to consist with the judgment and its effects, three and a half days afterwards.

Then, too, "the second woe is past" (ver. 14), and the third announces the kingdom of Christ as having come. It seems plain, therefore, that divine power maintains the testimony of the witnesses in spite of the reign of terror during the beast's usurpation, and that only at the end is it permitted to be, according to appearance, extinguished utterly. It is the time of the apparently perfect triumph of evil, and thus the dwellers upon the earth rejoice over them and make merry, because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt upon the earth. Here, then, for the first time, the beast out of the abyss comes plainly into the scene. In Daniel and in Rev. xiii. he does not come out of the *abyss*, but out of the *sea;* but in the seventeenth chapter he is spoken of as "about to come up out of the abyss;" showing undeniably that it is the same "beast" as Daniel's fourth one—the Roman empire. In the first case, as coming out of the sea, it has a common origin with the other three empires,—the Babylonian, Persian, and Grecian,—out of the heaving deep of Gentile nations. Then we find in Revelation what from Daniel we should never have expected, but what, in fact, has certainly taken place—that the empire which is to meet its judgment at the coming of the Lord does not continue uninterruptedly in power till then. There is a time in which it ceases to be, (and we can measure this time of non-existence already by centuries) after which it comes back in a peculiar form, as from the dead: "the beast that was, and is not, and shall be present" (chap. xvii. 8). This rising again into existence we would naturally take as its coming up out of the abyss, out of the death-state, and think that we were at the bottom of the whole matter. The truth seems to be not quite so simple, but here is not the place to go into it further. For the present it is enough to say that the coming up out of the abyss is, in fact, a revival out of the death-state, but, as a comparison with the fifth trumpet may suggest, revival by the dark and demon-influences which are there represented as in attendance upon the angel of the abyss. It is the one in whom is vested the power of the revived empire who concentrates the energy of his hatred against God in the slaying of the witnesses.

The place of their death is clearly Jerusalem: "Their dead bodies lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called 'Sodom' and 'Egypt,' *where also their Lord was crucified.*" Certainly no other place could be so defined: and thus defined and characterized for its lusts as Sodom, for its cruelty to the people of God as Egypt, it is not now called the "holy," but the "great" city—great

the [w]three days and a half [the] spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great [x]fear fell upon all that beheld them. And they* heard a great voice out of heaven saying to them, [y]Come up hither; and they went up to heaven in the [z]cloud, and their enemies [a]beheld them. And in that hour there came a great [b]earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and there was slain in the earthquake seven thousand [c]names of men. And the rest became [d]afraid, and gave [e]glory to the God of heaven. The [f]second woe is passed; behold the third woe cometh quickly.

* Some of the earliest MSS. have, "I heard."

w ver. 9.
x *cf.* Acts 5. 11.
y *cf.* ch. 20. 4-6.
z *cf.* Acts 1. 9. *cf.* 2Kl2.11.
a *ctr.* ver. 9.
b *cf.* ch.6.12. *cf.*ch.16.18, 19.
c *ctr.* ch.3.4.
d ver. 11.
e *ctr.* ch. 16. 9.
f ch. 8. 13. ch. 9. 12.

even in its crimes. In its street their bodies lie, exposed by the malice of their foes which denies them burial, but allowed by God as the open indictment of those who have thus definitively rejected His righteous rule. The race of the prophets is at an end, which has tormented them with their claim of the world for God, and the men of the earth rejoice and send gifts to one another. Little do they understand that, *when* His testimony is at an end, there is nothing left but for God Himself to come in, and to manifest a power before which man's power will be extinguished as flax before the flame.

And the presage of this quickly follows. "After the three days and a half, the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which beheld them, and they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they went up into heaven in the cloud; and their enemies beheld them."*

If this is the time of the addition of the saints martyred under the beast's persecution to the first resurrection, of which the vision in the twentieth chapter speaks, then it is plain that we are arrived at the end of the beast's power against the saints, and of the last week of Daniel. Two is the number of valid testimony, and these two witnesses may, in a vision like that before us, stand for many more, nay, for the whole martyred remnant in Israel. We cannot say it is so, but we can as little say it is *not* so; but even the suggestion has its interest: for this appendix to the sixth trumpet seems designed to put in place the various features of Daniel's last week, the details of which are opened out to us in the seven chapters following, with many additions. And this we might expect in the connected chain of prophecy which stretches on to the end: for under the seventh trumpet the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ, and "the time of the dead to be judged" is at least contemplated.

The resurrection of the witnesses is not all: a great earthquake follows, and the tenth part of the city fell; and there were killed in the earthquake 7,000 persons—"names of men," as it is put here (significantly enough in a history of doom for those who are asserting their greatness upon the earth); "and the rest were affrighted and gave glory to the God of heaven."

Thus the sixth trumpet ends in a convulsion in which judgment takes, as it were, the refused tithes from a rebellious people. There is a marked similarity here between the trumpets and the vials, which end also in an earthquake and judgment of the great city, as to which we may see further in its place. The rest that are not slain give glory to the God of heaven. It is the unacceptable product of mere human fear, which has no practical result; for God is claim-

* "The triumphing of the wicked is short." This seems suggested by the brief period of dishonor permitted to these witnesses. The correspondence with the three *years* and a half of the great tribulation is suggestive. Evil has but that brief period to assert itself, but in reality its real triumph shrivels up into *days*.—S. R.

4 (xi.15-18): Seventh trumpet. The world-kingdom of the Lord.

4. And the [g]seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The [h]world-kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ has come, and he shall [i]reign unto the ages of ages. And the twenty-four [j]elders, who sit upon their thrones before God, fell upon their faces, and worshiped God, saying, We give thee thanks, Lord God Almighty, [k]who art and who wast, that thou hast taken thy great power, and reigned. And the [l]nations were angry, and thy [m]wrath came, and the time of the [n]dead to be judged, and to give [o]reward to thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to those that fear thy name, small and great, and to [p]destroy those that destroy the earth.

g ch. 9. 13. ch. 10. 7.
h ch. 12. 10. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 24, 25.
i *cf.* Lk. 1. 33. *cf.* ch. 22. 5.
j ch. 4. 4.
k *cf.* ch. 1. 4, 8.
l *cf.* Ps. 2. 1, 2.
m *cf.* Ps. 2. 5, 12. *cf.* ch. 6. 16, 17. *cf.* Ps. 110. 5.
n *cf.* ch. 20. 12-15. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 1.
o *cf.* 1 Cor. 4. 5; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 10.
p *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 17; *cf.* ch. 13. 10.

ing the earth, not simply heaven, and for the affirmation of this claim His witnesses have died. They can allow Him heaven who deny Him earth. And judgment takes its course. The second woe ends with this, and the third comes quickly afterward.

4. The third woe is the coming of the kingdom! Yes; that to greet which the earth breaks out in gladness, the morning without clouds, the day which has no night, and the fulfilment of the first promise which fell upon man's ears when he stood a naked sinner before God to hear his doom, the constant theme of prophecy—now swelling into song and now sighed out in prayer—that kingdom is yet, to the "dwellers upon earth," the last and deepest woe!

The rod of iron is now to smite, and Omnipotence it is that wields it. The seventh angel sounds, and there follow great voices in heaven, saying, "The world-kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ has come, and He shall reign to the ages of ages."

Few words and concise, but how pregnant with blessed meaning! The earth that has rolled from its orbit is reclaimed. Judgment has returned to righteousness. He who has learnt for Himself the path of obedience in a suffering which was the fruit of tender interest in man, has now Himself the sceptre; nor is there any power that can take it out of His hand.

There are no details yet; simply the announcement, which the elders in heaven answer with adoration, prostrate upon their faces, saying, "We give Thee thanks, O Lord God the Almighty, who art and who wast, that Thou hast taken Thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead to be judged, and to give reward to Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and those that fear Thy name, small and great; and to destroy those that destroy the earth."

There is nothing difficult here in the way of interpretation, except that "the time of the dead to be judged" seems to connect with the period of earthly judgments which introduce millennial blessing. It does not take place just then, as the twentieth chapter gives full proof. The explanation is that we have here the setting up of the kingdom in its full results, and that the order is one of *thought*, and not of *time*. The judgments of the quick (or living) and of the dead are both implied in the reign of our Lord and His Christ, though they are not executed together. God's wrath is mentioned first because it is, for the earth, the pre-requisite of blessing, and because judgment is not what He rests in, but in His love. It is therefore put first, that the realization of the blessing may come after, and not give place to it. But this wrath of God which meets and quells the nations' wrath, goes on and necessitates the judgment of the dead also. Death is no escape from it. The coming One has the keys of death and hades.

With this the holiness of God is satisfied, and the love in which He rests is free

1 (xi. 19-xii.): The first promise.

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chaps. xi. 19-xiii.)

The manifestation of the wicked one, and the trinity of evil.

1 (xi. 19-xii. 6): The promised Seed and the throne in covenant.

1. [1] AND the [q] temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the [r] ark of his covenant; and there were [s] lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail. And a

[q] *cf.* ch. 15. 5. *cf.* ver. 1. [r] Heb. 9. 4. Ex. 37. 1 etc. [s] *cf.* Ex. 19. 16.

to show itself in the reward of prophets and saints and those who fear His name, little as well as great. This seems as general in its aspect as the judgment of the dead, on the other side, unquestionably is. The foremost mention of the prophets as those who have stood in testimony for God on earth is in perfect keeping with the character of the whole book before us, and the destruction of those who destroy the earth is not noticed here apparently as judgment, so much as to assure us of the reparation of the injury to that which came out of His hands at first, and in which He has never ceased to have tender interest, despite the permitted evil of man's day.

SUBD. 3.

The trumpets, as we have seen, carry us to the end of all. What follows, therefore, is not in continuation of them, but a new beginning, in which we find the development of details with regard to that which is opened under the trumpets—as to what is of primary importance, of course, and involving principles of the deepest interest and value for us. Through all, the links between the Old Testament and the New are fully maintained, and we have the full light of the double testimony. Yet shall we need on this account a more patient and protracted examination of that which comes before us.

What we have in the first place now is the manifestation of the wicked one, and indeed of that trinity of evil which appears in the last days, as if in fullest defiance of the divine trinity. The full manifestation of evil upon earth is the prerequisite of the fully manifested judgment. God lays bare first of all that upon which He strikes. In it the harvest of the earth is ripe, for this manifestation is evidently needed as part of the manifestation of Himself which is being made before the eyes of His creatures everywhere. How their gaze will be concentrated upon the earth at this time! And thus the very apparent allowance of the evil is but the necessary preliminary of the judgment itself.

1. And here we come first to what is the commencing of the fulfilment of the first promise given in the ears of fallen man, the promise of the Seed of the woman and His triumph over the serpent. We see fully once more how Genesis and Revelation come together, and how complete the cycle of Scripture is.

[1] The last verse of the eleventh chapter belongs properly to the twelfth. It characterizes what is to follow, rather than what precedes; and when we remember that Israel is upon the scene, it is of the greatest significance. The temple of God is opened in heaven, and there is seen in His temple the ark of His covenant. From the world below, that ark had long disappeared, and the temple itself been overthrown—the testimony to his displeasure with an apostate people. Nor, though the temple were replaced, as after the Babylonish captivity had been the case, could the ark ever be restored by man's hand. It was gone, and with it the token of Jehovah's presence in the midst, a loss evidently irretrievable from man's side. Yet if Israel had no longer itself the assurance of what they were to Him, in heaven all the time, though in secret, the unchangeable goodness of God remained. The ark abode, as it were, with Him; and the time was now come to manifest this. The inner sanctuary of the heavens being open, the ark of the covenant is seen there.

To us who are accustomed to translate these types into the realities they represent, this is all simple. The ark is Christ, and, as the gold *outside* the shittim wood declared, is Christ in glory, gone up after His work accomplished, the

great [t]sign was seen in heaven,—a [u]woman clothed with the [v]sun, and the [w]moon beneath her feet, and upon her head a [x]crown of twelve stars; and being with child she cried, being in [y]travail, and in pain to bring forth. And there appeared another sign in

t *cf.* Acts 2. 19.
u *cf.* Is. 50. 1.
v *cf.* Song 6. 10.
w *cf.* Gen. 37. 9.
x *cf.* ch. 7. 4-8.
y *cf.* Is. 66. 7-10; *cf.* Mi. 4. 10.

work which had provided the precious blood which had sprinkled the mercy-seat. Israel had indeed rejected the lowly Redeemer, and imprecated upon themselves the vengeance due to those who shed it. Yet, though the wrath came, Israel was neither totally nor finally rejected. The blood of Jesus speaketh better things than that of Abel, and is before God the justification of a grace that has all through been partially and shall yet be fully shown them. The literal ark is passed away, as Jeremiah tells us (iii. 16, 17), never to return; but instead of that throne of His of old, a more magnificent grace has declared that Jerusalem itself shall be called "the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord to Jerusalem; neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart."

The ark, then, seen in the temple in heaven, is the sign of God's unforgotten grace toward Israel; but the nations are not yet ready to welcome that grace, nor indeed are the people themselves, save the remnant, who on that account pass through the bitterest persecution. To that the chapter following bears decisive testimony, as it does of the interference of God for them. Therefore is it that when the sign of His faithfulness to His covenant is seen in heaven, on the earth there ensue convulsions and a storm of divine wrath: "there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail."

And now a "great sign" appears in heaven, "a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and in pain to be delivered."

The sign appears in heaven, not because the woman is actually there,—plainly she is not,—but because she is seen according to the mind of God toward her. Who the woman is should be quite plain, as the child she brings forth is One who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron. That is Christ assuredly; and the mother of Christ here is not the virgin, as we see clearly by what follows, although His virgin-birth, in its recall of the first prophecy, gives form to what we have in the vision now. Still less is she the Church, of which in no sense is Christ born, but Israel, "of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came," says the apostle (Rom. ix. 5). Thus she is seen clothed with the glory of the sun—that is, of Christ Himself as He will presently appear in supreme power as Sun of Righteousness (Mal. iv. 2); for the sun is the ruler of the day. As a consequence, her glory of old, before the day-dawn, the reflected light of her typical system, is like the moon under her feet. Upon her head the crown of twelve stars speaks naturally of her twelve tribes, planets now around the central sun.

The next words carry us back, however, historically, to the time before Christ. She is in travail with Messiah, a thing hard to realize or understand as to the nation, except as we realize what the fulfilment of God's promise as to Christ involved in the way of suffering on the part of the nation. To them, while under the trial of law and with the issue (to man's thought, of course) uncertain, Christ could not be born. The prosperous days of David must go by; the heirs of David must be allowed to show out what was in their heart, and be carried to Babylon. Humiliation, sorrow, captivity, fail to produce result; while the voice of prophecy even lapses with Malachi, until the long silence as of death is broken by the cry at last, "To us a child is born." Here is at least one purpose, as it would seem, of that triple division of the genealogy of the Lord in Matthew, the governmental Gospel, in which the first fourteen generations bring one to the culmination of their national prosperity; the second is a period of decline to the captivity; the third a period of resurrection, but which

heaven, and behold a great red [z]dragon having [a]seven heads and ten horns, and upon his heads seven [b]diadems; and his tail drew the third part of the [c]stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bring forth, that when she brought forth he might [d]devour her child. And she brought forth a [e]son, a male child,

z ver. 9.
a *cf.* ch.17.3.
b *cf.* Jno.14. 30. *cfr.* ch. 19. 12.
c *cf.* ch.8.12.
d *cf.* Matt.2. 16.
e *cf.* Is. 9. 6.

only comes at last, and as in a moment, after the failure of every natural hope. Thus in the government of God Israel has her travail-time.

But before we see the birth of the man-child we are called to look at another sign in heaven—"a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems upon his heads." These heads and horns we shall presently find upon the fourth beast, the world-empire; but we are not left doubtful as to who the dragon is. It has been argued that it is Rome-pagan, Rome being, in fact, Satan's instrumentality to destroy, if it were possible, the child born; but the teaching is wider here. The heads and the horns are not upon Rome-pagan; and here, as if to preserve from such a thought, we find the first, in all this part, of those interpretations which are henceforth given here and there throughout the book. The dragon, we are told distinctly, is "that ancient serpent which is called the Devil and Satan, who leadeth astray the whole habitable earth." Thus, as the dawn rises upon the battlefield, the combatants are discerned. It is Satan who here, as "the prince of this world," appears as if incarnate, in the last world-empire. "Seven heads" show the perfection of world-wisdom, and every one of these heads wears a *diadem*, or despotic crown. The symbolic meaning of the number does not preclude another meaning historically, as Scripture history is everywhere itself symbolic, as is nature also. The ten horns measure the actual extent of power, and infer by their number responsibility and judgment.

The serpent of old has thus grown into a *dragon*, a monster, "fiery red," as the constant persecutor of the people of God, and he draws with his tail the third part of the stars of heaven, and casts them to the earth. The analogy of the action of the little horn in Daniel (chap. viii. 10), as well as the scope of the prophecy before us, would lead us to think here of Jews, not Christians, and certainly not angels, as to whom the idea of casting them to the *earth* would seem quite inappropriate. The "tail" implies the false prophet (Isa. ix. 15), and therefore it is apostasy among the professing people of God that is indicated. False teaching is eminently characteristic of Satanic power at all times, and far more successful than open violence.

"And the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she was delivered of a son, a man-child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up to God, and to His throne."

The power of Satan working through the heathen empire of Rome was thus, with better knowledge than Rome had, in armed watch against the woman and her Seed. The census mentioned in Luke as to have gone into effect at the time of Christ's birth, and which was actually carried out after the sceptre had wholly departed from Judah, was in effect a tightening of the serpent-coil around his intended victim. Divine power used it to bring a Galilean carpenter and his wife to Bethlehem, and then, as it were without effort, canceled the imperial edict. Only from the nation itself could come the sentence which should, as far as man could do so, destroy it; and that sentence was in Pilate's handwriting upon the cross. But from the cross and the guarded grave the woman's Seed escaped victoriously. "Her child was caught up to God and to His throne." All is thus far easy of interpretation. In what follows there is more difficulty, although it admits of satisfactory solution. "The woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared of God, that there they may nourish her a thousand two hundred and threescore days."

who shall *f* rule* all the nations with an iron rod; and her child was *g* caught away to God and to his throne. And the woman fled into the *h* wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God that they may sustain her there a *i* thousand two hundred and sixty days.

* "Tend as a shepherd."

f cf. Ps. 2. 8, 9 with ch. 2. 26, 27.
g cf. Lk. 24. 51.
h cf. Hos. 2. 14. *cf.* Ezek. 20. 35.
i ch. 11. 2. ch. 13. 5.

There Daniel's seventieth week comes in again, and evidently the last half of it; but the prophecy goes on immediately from the ascension of Christ to this time, not noticing the gap of more than eighteen centuries which has already intervened between these periods. We have seen already how such an omission is to be explained. But what is the connection between these two things that seem, in more than time, so far apart—the ascension of Christ, and Israel's flight into the wilderness for this half week of years? We have seen that in the seventy weeks themselves there is found a character of Old Testament prophecy which we have to remember here. The last week, although part of a strictly determined time on Israel, is cut off from the sixty-nine preceding by a gap at least equal to that in the vision before us, the sixty-ninth reaching only to Messiah the Prince (Dan. ix. 25). He is cut off, then, and has nothing. The blessing, therefore, cannot at that time come in for them. Instead of this, there is a time of warfare and controversy between God and the people which is not measured, and which is not yet come to an end. Of this, the seventieth week is the conclusion, while also it is the time of their most thorough apostasy, the time to which we have come in this part of Revelation. This lapse of prophecy as to Israel is coincident with the Christian dispensation, the period in which God is taking out of the earth (and characteristically out of the Gentile nations) a *heavenly* people. True there are Jews saved still. "There is at the present time also a remnant according to the election of grace," but these are no longer partakers of Jewish hopes. Blessed be God, they have better ones. The nation as such is in the meanwhile, however, given up, as Micah distinctly declares to them should be the case, while he also declares the reason of this, and the limit which God has appointed to it. His words are one of the clearest of Old Testament prophecies to Christ, so clear that nothing could be clearer, and are those cited by the chief priests and scribes themselves in proof of "where Christ should be born." "They shall smite the Judge of Israel," says the prophet, "with a rod upon the cheek." It is His people who do this, His own to whom He came and they "received Him not." Then he declares the glory of the rejected One. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting" (Micah v. 2). But what will be the result, then, of this rejection? This is answered immediately. "Therefore will He *give them up* until the time that she which travailed hath brought forth; then the remnant of His brethren shall return unto the children of Israel."

The last sentence of this remarkable prophecy is a clear intimation of what we know to be the fact, that in this time of national rejection there would be "brethren" (Jewish evidently) of this Judge of Israel, whose place would not be *with* Israel, while at the end of the time specified such converted ones would again find their place in the nation. Meanwhile, Israel being given up, the blessing of the earth, which waits upon theirs, is suspended also. The shadow rests upon the dial-plate of prophecy; time is, as it were, uncounted. Christ is gone up on high and sits upon the Father's throne. The kingdom of heaven is begun indeed, but only its "mysteries," unknown to the Old Testament, "things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world."

Here, then, where we return to take up the thread of Old Testament prophecy, it is no wonder if the style of the Old Testament be again found. We have again the gap in time uncounted, the Christian dispensation treated as a paren-

2 (xii.7–9): War in heaven and the enemy cast out.

7 And there was [j] war in heaven. [k] Michael and his angels went to war with the dragon, and the dragon made war and his angels; and he [l] prevailed not, neither

[j] *ctr.* Lk.19. 38.
[k] *cf.* Jude 9. *cf.* Dan. 10. 21.
[l] *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 4; *cf.* Heb. 2. 14.

thesis in God's ways with the earth, and the woman's Seed caught away to God and to His throne.* Then follows, without apparent interval, the Jewish flight into the wilderness during the three and a half years of unequaled tribulation. The Jewish character of all this part of Revelation is seen once more in this return to the character of Old Testament prophecy.

But this does not answer the question as to the connection between the catching away of the man-child and the woman's flight. For this we must look deeper than the surface, and gather the suggestions which in Scripture everywhere abound, and here only more openly than usual demand attention.

That which closes the Christian dispensation we have seen to be what is significantly parallel to that which opens it. In the Acts, the history of the Church is prefaced with the ascension of the Lord. That which will close its history is the removal of His people. This naturally rouses the inquiry, If Christ and His people be so one, as in the New Testament they are continually represented, may not the man-child here include both, and the gap be bridged over in this way? The promise to the overcomer in Thyatira links them together in what is attributed to the man-child, the ruling of the nations with a rod of iron, and the mention of this seems to intimate that the time for the assumption of the rod is at hand.

This, then, completes the picture, and harmonizes it so that it may be well accepted as the truth; especially as this acceptance only recognizes that which is otherwise known to be true, and makes no additional demands upon belief.

The man-child caught up to God and to His throne, the woman flees into the wilderness unto a place prepared of God, where she is nourished for the time of trouble. The woman is the nation as in the sight of God, not all Israel, nor even all the saints in Israel, but those who are ordained of God to continue the nation, and who therefore represent it before Him. The apostate mass are cut off by judgment (Zech. xiii. 8, 9; Isa. iv. 3, 4). The martyred saints go up to heaven. Still God preserves a people to be the nucleus of the millennial nation; and this, of course, it is the special desire of Satan to destroy. They are preserved by the hand of God, though amid trial such as the wilderness naturally indicates, and which is designed of God for their purification.

7 And now there ensues that which in the common belief of Christians has long ago taken place, but which, in fact, is the initial stage of the final judgment: Satan is cast out of heaven. The simplest interpretation to this is counter to the common belief of Christendom. Satan has, according to the thought of many, long been in hell, though he is strangely enough allowed to leave it and ramble over the world at will. To these it is a grotesque, weird and unnatural thought that the devil should have been suffered all this time to remain in heaven. Man has evidently been allowed to remain on earth, though fallen; but then, beside the fact of death removing his successive generations, towards *him* there are purposes of mercy, in which Satan has no part. The vision-character of Revelation may be objected against it also, so that the simplest interpretation may seem on that very account the widest from the truth. Does not our Lord also say that He saw Satan fall as lightning from heaven? (Luke x. 18), and the apostle, that the angels which sinned He cast down to hell? (2 Pet. ii. 4; Jude 6). Such passages would seem, with many, decisively to affirm the ordinary view.

In fact, it is only the last passages that have any real force; and here another

* Many see here the Church associated with Christ—that is, the rapture of the saints, as well as the ascension of our Lord. The expression, however, "to God and *His* throne" would seem to confine it to our Lord as Head in its primary thought.—S. R.

was their place found any more in heaven; and the great dragon was [m] cast out, the [n] ancient serpent, who is called the [o] Devil and [p] Satan, who [q] leadeth astray

[m] *cf.* Lk.10. 18. [n] *cf.* Is.14.12. [o] *cf.* Is.24.21. [p] *cf.* Jno. 12. 31; *ctr.* Eph. 6. 12. [q] *cf.* Gen. 3.1; ch. 20. 2. [o] *cf.* 1 Pet. 5.8. [p] *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 5. [q] *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 4.

has said, "It seems hardly possible to consider Satan as one of these,"—the angels spoken of,—"for they are in chains, and guarded till the great day; he is still permitted to go about as the tempter and the adversary until his appointed time be come."*

As to our Lord's words, they are easily to be understood as in the manner often of prophecy; "I saw" being equivalent to "I *fore*saw."

On the other hand, that "the spiritual hosts of wickedness" with which now we wrestle are in heavenly places, is told us plainly in Eph. vi. 12, and in the passage in Revelation before us no less plainly. For the connection of this vision with what is still future we have already seen, and shall see further, and the application to Satan personally ought not to be in doubt. The "dragon" is indeed a symbol; but "the Devil and Satan" is the interpretation of it, and certainly not to be treated as symbolic, as the "dragon" is.

Scripture implies also in other ways what we find here. When the apostle speaks of our being "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance," he adds that it is to be that "until the redemption of the purchased possession;" that is, until we get the inheritance itself (Eph. i. 14). But we get it then by redemption, not our own, but of the inheritance itself. Our inheritance has to be redeemed; and the redemption takes place manifestly when the heirs as a whole are ready for it. Now redemption in this case, like the redemption of the body, is a redemption by power, God laying hold of it to set it free, in some sense, from a condition of alienation from Himself, and to give His people possession. And if the man-child include those who are Christ's at His coming, then the purging of the heavenly places by the casting of Satan and His angels out, is just the redemption of the heavenly inheritance.

Elsewhere we read, accordingly, of the *reconciliation* of heavenly as of earthly things (Col. i. 20). And this is a phrase which, like the former, implies previous alienation; and here it is on the ground of the cross: "having made peace through the blood of the cross." In Hebrews again, as "it was necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens"—as in the tabernacle—"should be purified with" sacrificial blood, so must "the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these" (Heb. ix. 23). The work of Christ having glorified God as to the sin which has defiled, not the world only, but the heavens, He can come in to deliver and bring back to Himself what is to be made the inheritance of Christ and His "joint-heirs."

All is, then, of a piece with what is the only natural meaning of this war in heaven. The question of good and evil, everywhere one, receives its answer for heaven as for earth, first, in the work of Christ, which glorifies God as to all, and then as the fruit of this in the recovery of what was alienated from Him, the enemies of this glorious work being put under Christ's feet. This now begins to take effect, though even yet in a way which to us may seem strange: strange it does seem to hear of war in heaven, even though Milton has sought to make it familiar to us, while putting it, however, in a wrong place; to hear of arrayed hosts on either side—of resistance, though unsuccessful, the struggle being left, as it would seem, to creature-prowess, God not directly interfering: "Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not."

After all, is it stranger that this should be in heaven than on the earth? Are not God's ways one? And is not all the long-protracted struggle allowed pur-

* Principal Barry, in Smith's Dictionary.

the whole habitable earth; he was cast out unto the earth and his angels were cast out with him.

s (10-12): The redemption of the possession.

10 And I heard a great voice in [r]heaven saying, Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ; for the [s]accuser of our brethren is cast out, who accused them before our God day and night: and *they* [t]overcame him because of the [u]blood of the Lamb, and because of the [v]word of their testimony; and they [w]loved not their life unto death. Therefore [x]rejoice, ye heavens, and ye

r *cf.* ch. 19. 1, etc.
s *cf.* Job 1. 6-12. *cf.* Job 2. 1-6. *cf.* Zech. 3. 1.
t *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 13. *cf.* Gen. 3. 15.
u *cf.* Heb. 2. 14.
v *cf.* Phil. 1. 20. *cf.* Rom. 16.
20. w *cf.* Lk. 14. 26, 27. x ch. 18. 20; *cf.* Is. 44. 23.

posely to work out to the end thus, the superior power being left to show itself as the power resident in the good by reason of its goodness, and as in that which is the key of the whole problem, the cross of the Son of man? If God Himself enter the contest, He adapts Himself to the creature-conditions, and comes in on the lowest level, not as an angel even, but a *man*.

Let us look again at the combatants. On the one side is Michael,—"Who is like God?"—a beautiful name for the leader in such a struggle. On the opposite side is he who first said to the woman, "Ye shall be as God;" and whose pride was his own condemnation (1 Tim. iii. 6). How clearly the moral principle of the contest is here defined! Keep but the creature's place, and you are safe, happy, and holy. The enemy shall not prevail against you. Leave it, and you are lost. The "dragon"—from a root which speaks of keen sight—typifies what seems perhaps a preternatural brilliancy of intellect, serpent-cunning, the full development of such wisdom as that with which he tempted Eve, but none of that which begins with the fear of God. He is therefore, like all that are developed merely upon one side, a monster. This want of conscience is shown in his being the Devil, the false accuser. His heart is made known in his being Satan, the adversary.

These are the types of those that follow them; and Michael is always the warrior-angel, characterized as he is by his name; as Gabriel—"man of God"—is the messenger of God to men. If God draw near to men, it is in the tender familiarity of manhood that He does so. How plainly, then, do these names speak to us!

In the time of distress that follows upon earth, Daniel is told that "Michael shall stand up, the great prince that standeth for the children of thy people . . . and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." Here in Revelation we have the heavenly side of things, but still it is Michael that stands up as the deliverer. The tactics of divine warfare are not various, but simple and uniform. Truth is simple, and one; error, manifold and intricate. The spiritual hosts fight under faith's one standard, and it is the banner of Michael, "Who is like God?" Under its folds is certain victory.

The dragon is cast out: the war in that respect is over; heaven is free. But he is not yet cast into hell, nor even into the bottomless pit, but to the *earth;* and thus the earth's great time of trouble ensues. Satan comes down with great wrath because he knows that he has but a short time. How terrible a thing is sin! How amazing that a full, clear view of what is before him should only inspire this fallen being with fresh energy of hate, to that which must recoil upon himself and add intensity of torment to eternal doom! Even so is every act of sin, as it were a suicide; and he who committeth it is the slave of sin (John viii. 34).

10 A great voice in heaven celebrates the triumph there. "Now is come the salvation and power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accused them before our God day and night." The salvation spoken of here is not apparently, as

that tabernacle in them. [y] Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil is come down unto you having great [z] wrath, knowing that he hath a [a] short time.

[4 (13-17): The woman in the wilderness.]

[4] And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he [b] persecuted the woman who brought forth the male child: and there were given to the woman two [c] wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness unto her [d] place, where she is sustained

[y] ch. 8. 13.
[z] ver. 17. cf. 1Pet.5.8.
[a] ctr. Jno.9. 4. cf. Lk.9.42.
[b] cf. Matt. 24. 9.
[c] cf. Ex.19.4. cf. Is.40.31.
[d] ver. 6. cf. Hos.2.14. 15.

some think, the salvation of the body, for it is explained directly as deliverance of some who are called "our brethren," from the accusation of Satan. The voice seems, therefore, that of the glorified saints, and the brethren, of whom they speak, the saints on earth who had indeed by individual faithfulness overcome in the past those accusations which are now forever ended. "Satan's anti-priestly power," as another has remarked, "is at an end."

Yet he may, and does, after this, exercise imperial power, and stir up the most violent persecution of the people of God; and these still may be called not to love their lives unto the death. It is not here, then, that his power ceases. They have conflict still, but not with principalities and powers in heavenly places. Heaven is quiet and calm above them, if around is still the noise of the battle; and how great is the mercy which thus provides for them during those three and a half years of unequaled tribulation! Is not this worthy of God that just at the time when Satan's rage is the greatest, and arming his power against God's people, the sanctuary of the soul is no more invaded by him! The fiery darts of the wicked one cease; he is no more "prince of the power of the air," but restricted to earth simply, to work through the passions of men which he can inflame against them.

[4] Accordingly, to this he gives himself with double energy: "When the dragon saw that he was cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who brought forth the man-child." But God interferes: "There were given unto the woman the two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, unto her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent."

The words recall plainly the deliverance from Egypt. Pharaoh, king of Egypt, is called thus by the prophet "the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers" (Ezek. xxix. 3), and is himself the concentration of the malice of the great world-power, while God says to delivered Israel at Sinai, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself" (Ex. xix. 4). The reference here seems definitely to this. It is not, as in the common version, "a" great eagle, but *the* great eagle—the griffon perhaps, than which no bird has a more powerful or masterly flight. Clearly it is divine power that is referred to in these words: in deliverance out of Egypt there was jealous exclusion of all power beside. Israel was to be taught the grace and might of a Saviour-God; and so in the end again it will be, when He repeats in a grander way the marvels of that old deliverance, and allures the heart of the nation to Himself.

Miracle may well come in again for them, and it may be that the wilderness literally will once more provide shelter and nourishment for them. Figure and fact may here agree together; and so it often is. The terms even seem to imply the literal desert here, just because it is evidently a place of shelter that divine love provides, and sustenance there; and what more natural than that the desert, by which the land of Israel is half encompassed, should be used for this?

That which follows seems to be imagery borrowed from the desert also. Like the streams of Antilibanus, many a river is swallowed up in the sand, as that which is now poured out of the dragon's mouth. If it be an army that is pictured, the wilderness is no less capable of the preservation of a nation's strength. The river being cast out of his mouth would seem to show that it is by the power

a time and times and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent [e] cast out of his mouth after the woman water as a river, that he might make her to be carried away of the river; and the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth and [f] drank up the river which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went away to make war with the [g] rest of her seed, who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus.

e *cf.* Is.8.7,8. *cf.* Jer.46.8. *cf.* Is.17.12, 13.

f *cf.*2Chron. 20, 23, 24.

g *cf.* ch.11.7. *cf.*Matt.10. 22, 23.

of his persuasion that men are incited to this overflow of enmity against the people of God; and this is so completely foiled that the baffled adversary gives up further effort in this direction, and the objects of his pursuit are after this left absolutely unassailed.

But those who so escape, while thus securing the existence of the nation, and therefore identified with the woman herself, are not the whole number of those who in it are converted to God; and "the remnant of her seed" become now the object of his furious assault. These are indeed those, as it would seem, with whom is the testimony of Jesus, which is, we are assured, "the spirit of prophecy" (chap. xix. 10). These are they, perhaps, who amid these days of trouble go forth, as from age to age the energy of the Spirit has incited men to go forth, taking their lives in their hand, that they may bring the word of God before His creatures, and who have ever been, of necessity, the special objects of satanic enmity. They are the new generation, of those who, as men of God, have stood forth prominently for God upon the earth, and have taken, from men on the one hand their reward in persecution, but from God on the other the sweet counterbalancing acknowledgment.

Noticeable it is that it is in heaven this new race of prophets still find their reward. The two witnesses whom we have seen ascend to heaven in the cloud belong to this number, and those who in Daniel, as turning many to righteousness, shine as the stars for ever and ever (Dan. xii. 3). Earth casts them out, and they are seen in our Lord's prophecy as brethren of the King, hungering and athirst, in strangership, naked and sick and in prison (Matt. xxv. 35, 36, 40). Heaven receives them in delight as those of whom the earth was not worthy, a gleaning after harvest, as it were, of wheat for God's granary, the last sheaf of the resurrection-saints which the twentieth chapter of the book before us sees added to the sitters upon the thrones, among the blessed and holy now complete. How well are they cared for who might seem left unsheltered to Satan's enmity! They have lost the earthly blessing, they have gained the heavenly; their light has been quenched for a time, to shine in a higher sphere forever. Blessed be God! We may follow, then, the new development of satanic enmity without fear. We shall gain from considering it. Their enemy and ours is one and the same. It is Satan, the old serpent, the ancient homicide; and we must not be ignorant of his devices. His destiny is to be overcome, and that by the feeblest saint against whom he seems for the present to succeed so easily.

2. Satan being now in full activity of opposition to the woman and her Seed, we are carried on to see further his efforts to destroy them. Working, as from the beginning, through instruments in which he conceals himself, we find ourselves now face to face with his great instrument in the last days, in which, too, we recognize one long before spoken of in the prophets, especially by him to whom, in the book of Revelation, we have such frequent reference—the apocalyptic prophet of the Old Testament.

It is indeed, without dispute, the fourth beast of Daniel to which the word of inspiration now directs our attention. "I saw," says the apostle, "a beast coming up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads names of blasphemy."

2 (xiii. 1-10): The devil's delegate.

2. And I* stood upon the sand of the sea, and I saw a beast† ^h rising out of the sea, having 'ten horns and seven heads, and upon his horns ten diadems, and upon his heads names of blasphemy. And the beast which

^h *cf.* Dan. 7. 3.
cf. ch. 17. 15.
cf. ch. 17. 8.
' *cf.* ch. 17. 9-12.
cf. Dan. 7. 7, 8.

* Some old MSS. read "he stood," referring thus to the dragon, as in R. V.

† θηρίον a *wild* beast,—all through chaps. xiii. and xiv.

The four beasts of Daniel's vision answer, as every one knows, to the *one* human figure seen by the king of Babylon. In his eyes there is at least the likeness of man, although there is no breath, no life. To the prophet afterward the world-empires appear on the other hand full of life, but *it is bestial*. One of the chapters between supplies the link between the two: for Nebuchadnezzar is himself driven out among the beasts, as we see in the fourth chapter, for a disciplinary punishment, until he knows "that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men." In a pride which has forgotten God, he has become but a beast which knows none. He is therefore driven out among the beasts until seven times pass over him. The prophet sees thus the powers of the world to be but beasts, *wild* beasts indeed, as here.

As the fourth beast moreover, the successor and heir to those that have been before it, the last empire not only shows still this bestial nature—it combines in itself the various characters of the first three. It is in general form like the leopard or Greek empire, agile and swift in its attacks, as the leopard is known to be; but it has the feet of the bear, the Persian tenacity of grasp; and the mouth of the lion, the Babylonian ferocity. Beast it is clearly, yet not in simple ignorance of God, as the beast is, for its seven heads are seen to have on each of them a name of blasphemy.

In its ten horns it differs from all before it, and these, we are explicitly told (chap. xvii. 12,13), are "ten kings which give their power unto the beast." In the vision now we find these kings actually crowned. Old Rome never had these ten kings, as we know; and thus if it be Rome here, as is surely the case, it is Rome as new-risen among the nations in the latter days.

The latter chapter, to which we have just now referred, speaks plainly of a time when the beast that was "is not;" and for centuries we are well aware the empire has not existed. But the same prophecy assures us that it is to be again, and in the vision before us we find it accordingly risen up as of old, from the sea—that is to say, from the restless strife of the nations. As we have seen, however, that is not the only way in which it is beheld, as rising again, for in the history of the witnesses it has been spoken of as ascending up out of the bottomless pit; and this is repeated in the seventeenth chapter—"the beast . . . shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition." Are these two ascents, then, or only one, looked at from two sides?

Again, of its heads, one is said in the present chapter to be wounded to death, but its deadly wound was healed, and afterward the beast is spoken of as having had the wound by a sword and living (ver. 14). Are these still various ways of expressing but the same thing, or not? And is there any way of deciding this?

Certainly the long lapse of centuries during which the beast "was not" could hardly seem to be described as its having a wound and living, or as a deadly *wound* which could be healed. Let us look more closely at the prophecy, or rather at the different prophecies about this, and see what may be gathered.

In Daniel we have no mention of the time of non-existence or of the plurality of heads upon the beast; but the ten horns show us that the empire there too is before us as it exists in the latter days, as it is plain also that it is in this form that the judgment there described comes upon it. But the prophet, considering these ten horns, sees rising up after them another little horn in which are developed those blasphemous characters that bring down its final judgment upon the

I saw was like unto a [j]leopard, and his feet were as those of a [k]bear, and his mouth was as the mouth of a [l]lion; and the [m]dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority. And [I saw] [n]one of

j *cf.* Dan. 7. 6.
k *cf.* Dan. 7. 5.
l *cf.* Dan. 7. 4.
m ch. 12. 3.
n *cf.* ch. 6. 2 with ch. 9. 1-11.

beast. It speaks great words against the Most High, and wears out the saints of the Most High, and thinks to change times and the law; and they are given into his hands until a time, and times, and a dividing of a time; that is, for the last half-week of Daniel's seventy, just before the Lord comes and the judgment follows.

Now this last horn rises up after the first ten are in existence, and therefore after the empire has assumed its latter-day form; and if this little horn be that whose "dominion" brings judgment upon the beast, then it would seem that the eleventh horn and the eighth head of Revelation must be the same.

The seven heads are not in Daniel, nor is the eleventh horn in Revelation, but we may learn in both of these, details by means of which we can compare them. Thus as to the heads, five had fallen when the angel spoke to John (chap. xvii. 10); one existed; another was to come, to last but a short time, and then would be the eighth, or *the* beast in its final form, identified with its head here as morally at least with the little horn in Daniel.

We have anticipated somewhat, and seem obliged for our purpose to anticipate what is given us only in the seventeenth chapter, before the history of these latter days will be in measure clear to us. Let us seek first to get hold of the point of time which the interpretation contemplates as present. When the angel says to John, "The woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth," we know that at the time of the revelation there was one city, and but one, to which his words could apply. It was Rome that ruled over the kings of the earth, even as Rome fills out his description also in another respect, being notoriously the seven-hilled city. That Rome is in fact the city spoken of, is, spite of the effort of a few to find another application, the verdict of the mass of commentators of all times, and this interpretation of the woman seems given by the angel as what would need no further explanation.

The ten horns, on the other hand, he states to be future: "The ten horns are ten kings which have received no kingdom as yet." Here we see that the point of view is still that of the apostle himself; and when it is said of the heads "five are fallen and one is," the heads are plainly seen to be successional, and themselves are generally referred to what Livy has given as the five different forms of government under which Rome had been before that sixth, the imperial, which existed in the apostle's day. The point of view, at any rate, seems here quite plain.

It is a curious coincidence that if in Daniel's vision of the fourth beast we connect the four heads of the leopard with the other three of the remaining ones, we have just seven; and it has been argued that these are, in fact, the seven heads upon the beast in Revelation, because the beast here has the characteristics of more than the fourth beast in Daniel; but then six heads should have fallen and not five, when the angel spoke. The sixth also would be the last Grecian head, and the Roman would be future. That the heads are successive is quite plain, and there seems no room for any other application than that of the sixth head to the emperor of Rome.

Another thing should be considered here, whether the heads are indeed expressed by the five forms of government of which Livy has spoken, and whether they do not rather refer to the great imperial powers of the world up to that time, which would in that case take in Egypt and Assyria, as well as Babylon, Persia, and Greece. Rome would thus be the sixth imperial head, the beast

his heads as if it had been smitten * unto death; and his deadly wound was [o]healed; and all the earth [p]wondered after the beast. And they [q]worshiped the dragon because he gave authority to the beast: and they [r]worshiped the beast, saying, [s]Who is like the beast? and who is able to make war with him? And there was given him a [t]mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and there was given to him authority to practise [u]forty and two months. And

* Greek, "slain."

o *cf.* Dan. 7. 8. *cf.* ch. 17.8.
p *cf.* Acts 8. 10, 11.
q *ctr.* Matt. 4. 9, 10.
r *cf.* vers. 14, 15. *cf.* Acts 12. 21–23.
s *ctr.* Ex. 15. 11.
t *cf.* Dan. 7. 8, 11, 20, 25. *cf.* Dan. 11. 36.
u ch. 11. 2; ch. 12. 6.

being considered here as the world-power in general opposed to God and His people all the way through, and coming into more and more blasphemous expression of this as the end approaches. This may seem more scriptural as derived indeed from Scripture itself, as the other is not, while the forms of government under which Rome existed, previous to the imperial, may seem to have but little to do with what is here before us. The beast manifestly combining also in itself the characters of the other beasts of Daniel would seem to agree with this, and is in general suitability to this final picture which the book of Revelation presents as the summing up of previous history, and thus presenting the world-power in its practical unity through all time.

At any rate, there can be no right question that the sixth head is the imperial power of Rome. The seventh would follow at an uncertain period in the future, and the application here has been various—to the exarchate of Ravenna, to Charlemagne, to Napoleon. It is not needful to enter into any elaborate disproof of these, as that putting together of prophecy, of the necessity of which the apostle warns us, will show sufficiently how inadmissible they are.

"The beast that was and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven," says the angel: "*one* of the seven." Bleek with others takes it to mean; "*sprung* from the seven," says Alford. But the last, if we are to interpret the sixth as we must do, can scarcely be maintained. If we are to say "one of the seven," then we may tentatively suppose it to be the seventh revived, and, put in this way, other passages throw light upon it.

The seventh head was to continue but a little while; in contrast plainly with those that had preceded it; but one of the heads (it is not stated which) was to be wounded to death and live, as we have seen. It is on this account that the world wonders after the beast; and that is clearly at the end; so that it is either the eighth head itself that is wounded and revives, or else the eighth head, which is the seventh revived, as seems to be rather the teaching of prophecy. This thought unites and makes plain the different passages.

The beast (under this eighth head) "practises forty and two months," the last half week of Daniel's seventy. Yet "the prince that shall come" makes his covenant with the Jews for the whole last week, in the midst of which he breaks it (Dan. ix. 27). Does not this show that not only are the seventh and eighth heads identical as heads, but individually also? And does it not confirm very strongly as truth what at first appeared to be only supposition? In this manner Daniel's prophecy of the little horn would describe his second rise to power after having fallen from being the seventh head of the beast to a rank below that of the ten kings. From this, partly by force, partly by concession, gained, as we shall see, by the aid of him who discerns in the fallen ruler a fitting instrument for his devilish ends, he rises to his former prominence over them all, filled with the animosity against God with which the dragon, prince of this world, has inspired him; for "the dragon gives him his power and his throne and great authority."

The picture seems complete, and the outline harmonious in all its details. It

he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name and his tabernacle, and* those [v] tabernacling in heaven. And it was given to him to make [w] war with the saints, and to overcome them; and authority was given to him over [x] every tribe and people and tongue and nation; and all the dwellers upon the earth shall worship him, [y] whose names are not written from the foundation of the world† in the book of life of the [z] Lamb slain. If any one hath an ear, [a] let him hear. If any one [b] leadeth into captivity, he goeth into captivity. If any one shall [c] kill with the sword, he must be killed with the sword. Here is the [d] patience and the faith of the saints.

v *cf.* ch. 12. 12.
w ch. 11. 7. ch. 12. 17. *cf.* Dan. 7. 21.
x *cfr.* ch. 19. 16.
y *cf.* ch. 3. 5. *cf.* Phil. 4. 3. *cf.* ch. 20. 12, 15. *cf.* Eph. 1. 4.
z ch. 5. 12.
a ch. 3. 22, etc.
b *cf.* Is. 33. 1. *cf.* Is. 17. 14.
c *cf.* Matt. 26. 52.
d ch. 14. 12. *cf.* ch. 1. 9.

* Some omit "and."

† So far as the language is concerned, this might be translated, "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

agrees with what has been before suggested, the rise of the seventh head under the first seal; its collapse under the fourth trumpet; its revival through satanic influence under the sixth. Its judgment takes place under the seventh, but the details of this are unfolded in the latter part of Revelation. We see that the conspiracy of the second psalm, of the kings and rulers "against the Lord and His Anointed," is by no means over. Nay, the Gentile power that wrote defiantly His title on His cross is risen up again, and with even more than its old defiance. The long-suffering of the Lord has not been, to it, salvation. The exhortation to "kiss the Son, lest He be angry and ye perish from the way," has not been heeded. Rome still vindicates its title to its position as the head of a hostile world. "I gave her space to repent, and she will not repent," is as true of her in her civil as in her ecclesiastical character.

The revival of the last empire is Satan's mockery of resurrection. Yet God is over it and in it, commanding her from her tomb for judgment; and with her, other buried nations are to revive and come forth to the light. Greece has thus revived. Italy has revived. Israel, as we well know, is reviving, and for her also there is not unmingled blessing, but solemn and terrible judgment that will leave but a remnant for the final promise surely to be fulfilled. Israel was foremost in the rejection of her Lord when first "He came to His own and His own received Him not." It was they who used Gentile hands to execute the sentence which they lacked power themselves to carry out, and it is strange indeed to find in these awful last days of blasphemy and rebellion the Jew still inspiring the Gentile in the last outburst of infidel pride and lawlessness. The second beast in the chapter before us is at once Jewish and, by its lamblike appearance and its dragon voice, antichristian.

And this is that to which, unwarned by the sure word of prophecy, men are hurrying on. The swiftness of the current that is carrying them, owned as it is by all, is for them progress, while it is but the power felt near the cataract. "When they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape." So said the lips that uttered that lament over Jerusalem, which, with added force, may speak to us to-day. "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wing, and ye would not!" There is a special urgency of warning here which must surely have especial meaning for us; for this power that we have just been contemplating will yet bow all the dwellers upon earth to worship, whose names are not written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb slain. Sovereign grace alone can save any out of the dreadful delusion which is here prophesied. "If any one hath an ear, let him hear." Such words may show us also that

3 (xiii. 11-18): The signs of the false prophet.

3. And I saw [e]another beast rising out of the earth; [*] and he had two horns [f]like a lamb, and spake as a [g]dragon. And he [h]exerciseth all the authority of the

e cf. 1 Jno. 2. 18, 22. cf. 2 Jno. 7. cf. Jno. 5. 43. cf. 2 Thess. 2. 3-12. cf. Dan. 11. 36-39.

* Or, "land."

f ctr. Jno. 1. 29; ctr. ch. 5. 6. g cf. Matt. 7. 15. h ctr. ver. 4 with ch. 19. 20.

this prophecy, and that which is connected with it, cannot but have distinctness of utterance, whether we realize it or not. The warning is like that appended, as we have seen, to the seven addresses of the second and third chapters, only there it is "what the Spirit saith to the churches." Here it is wider, clearly. God would have all men listen; and there are still saints, as we know, who will thus be saved by the delivering grace of God; for we are told directly of the patience and faith of the saints. The grace victorious over this apostate is only the prelude to his destruction: "If any one leadeth into captivity, he goeth into captivity; if any one shall kill with the sword, he must be killed with the sword." The saints of that day draw no sword in opposition. They wait simply upon God, upon whom none can wait in vain.

3. Along with the resurrection of the imperial power, we are now shown in the vision the uprise of another wild beast which we have nowhere else brought before us in this character. We shall have, therefore, more attentively to consider the description given, and what means we have for identification of the power or person who is described, so that the prophecy may be brought out of the isolation which would make it incapable of interpretation, and may speak at least with its full weight of moral instruction for our souls.

The one seen is another wild beast, and this character is clear enough. The empires of Daniel are "beasts," in that they know not God. The thought of the *wild* beast adds to this that savage cruelty which will, of course, display itself against those who are God's. Inasmuch as the other beasts are powers, it would seem as if here too were a power, royal or imperial; and this is confirmed by other intimations.

It is seen rising up out of the *earth*, and not out of the *sea*. The latter symbol evidently applies to the nations, the Gentiles. Does not, then, this power rise out of the nations? The "earth" has been thought to mean a settled state of things into which the nations now have got, a state of things very unlikely at the period we are considering, and which would seem rather imageable as quiet water than as "earth." Looking back to the first chapter of Genesis, in which we surely get the essential meaning of these figures, and where typically the six days reveal the story of the dispensations on to the final Sabbath-rest of God, we find the earth, in its separation from the waters on the third day, speaking of Israel as separated from the Gentiles. If this be true interpretation, as there is no need to doubt, it is an *Israelitish* power with which we are here brought face to face. Political events to-day look to a Jewish resurrection as something in the near future scarcely problematical. Prophecies that we have already to some extent considered intimate that Jewish unbelief is yet to unite with an apostasy of Christendom, and culminate in a "man of sin, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (2 Thess. ii. 3, 4). Thus we may be prepared to find here a blasphemous, persecuting power rising up in the restored nation; and this may help us to the awful significance of what follows in this place—"He had two horns like a lamb, and spake as a dragon."

"Two horns *like a lamb*." The "lamb" is a title so significant in the present book, nay, of such controlling significance, that any reference to it must be considered of corresponding importance. The two horns, then, are of course an intimation that the power exercised by the one before us (for the horn is a well-known symbol of power) is twofold. What is the twofold character of the power here? It seems as if there could be but one meaning. Christ's power is two-

first beast in his presence, and causeth the earth * and those that dwell in it to [i] worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great [j] signs, so as even to cause [k] fire to come down out of heaven unto the earth in sight of men. And he [l] leadeth astray those that dwell upon the earth, on account of the signs which were given him to do in the presence of the beast, saying to those that dwell upon the earth that they should make an [m] image to the beast, who had the wound with a sword, and lived; and it was given to

* Or, "land."

[i] ver. 8.
[j] cf. Matt. 24. 11, 24. cf. 2 Thess. 2. 9.
[k] cf. 2 Ki. 1. 10.
[l] cf. 1 Jno. 4. 1–3.
[m] cf. Dan. 3. 1, etc. cf. Matt. 24. 15. cf. Ezek. 8. 3.

fold as manifested in the day that is coming. He is "a Priest upon the throne," a royal priest, with spiritual authority as well as kingly. This the blasphemous usurper before us assumes, and this manifests him, without possibility of mistake that one can see, as Antichrist.

He is betrayed by his voice. His speech is that of a dragon. He is inspired, in fact, by Satan. There is no sweet and gracious message upon his lips. It is not he who has been man's burden-bearer and the sinner's saviour. No gentleness and meekness, but the tyranny of the destroyer; no heavenly wisdom, but Satan's craft utters itself through him. Arrogant as he is, he is the miserable tool of man's worst enemy and his own.

"And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast in his presence." He is the representative of the newly constituted empire of the West, not locally merely, but in some sense throughout it; and thus, as standing for another, he is still the awful mockery of Him who is on the throne, the Father's Representative. This is developed by the next words to its full extent: "He causeth the earth and they that dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great signs, so that he maketh fire to descend from heaven upon the earth before men." Here the very miracle which Elijah once wrought to turn back the hearts of apostate Israel to the true God, he is permitted to do, at least *apparently*, to turn men to a false one. Men are being given up to be deceived. God is sending them, as it is declared in Thessalonians will be, "a strong delusion that they may believe the lie, because they received not the love of the truth." The word of God, announcing this beforehand, would of course be the perfect safeguard of those that trusted it; and this very miracle, as it would appear, would be a sign to the elect, not of Christ, but of Antichrist. But to the men that dwell upon the earth—a moral characteristic which distinguishes those who, as apostate from Christianity, have given up all their hope of heaven, and who are all through this part specially pointed out—heaven itself would seem to seal the pretensions of the deceiver. "And he deceiveth the dwellers upon the earth by means of the signs which it was given him to do in the presence of the beast, saying to the dwellers upon earth that they should make an image to the beast that had a wound by the sword and lived. And it was given him to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause those that would not worship the image of the beast to be slain."

Is a literal image of the beast intended here, or is it some representative of imperial authority such as the historical interpreters in general, though in various ways, have made it to be? Against such thought there would be in itself no objection, but rather the reverse, the book being so symbolical throughout; but it is the second beast itself that is the representative of the authority of the first beast; and on the other hand an apparent creation-miracle would not be unlikely to be attempted by one claiming to be divine. Notice that it is not "life" that he gives to it, as the common version says, nor "spirit,"—though the word may

him to give [n]breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and [o]cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be slain. And he causeth all, small and great,

n *cf.* Ps.115. 4-7.
o *cf.* Dan. 3. 6.

be translated so,—but "breath," which, as the alternative rendering, is plainly the right one, supposing it to be a literal image.

Our Lord's words as to "the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place" are in evident connection with this, and confirm the thought. "Abomination" is the regular word in the Old Testament to express what idolary is in the sight of God. But here it is established in what was but a while before professedly His temple; for until the middle of Daniel's seventieth week, from the beginning of it, sacrifice and oblation have been going on among the returned people in Jerusalem. This was under the shelter of the covenant with that Gentile prince of whom the prophet speaks as the coming one. At first he is clearly, therefore, not inspired with that malignity toward God which he afterwards displays. Now, energized by Satan, from whom he holds his throne, and incited by the dread power that holds Jerusalem itself, he makes his attack upon Jehovah's throne, and, as represented by this image, takes his place in defiance in the sanctuary of the Most High.

The connection of this prophecy with those in Daniel and in Matthew makes plain the reason of the image being made and worshiped. The head of the Roman earth and of this last and worst idolatry, is not in Judea, but at Rome; and he who is in Judea, of whatever marvelous power possessed, is yet only the delegate of the Roman head. Thus, the image is made to represent this supreme power, and the worship paid to it is in perfect accordance with this. Here in Judea, where alone now there is any open pretension to worship the true God—here there is call for the most decisive measures. And thus the death-penalty proclaimed for those who do not worship. Jerusalem is the centre of the battlefield, and here the opposition must be smitten down. "And he causeth all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and bond, that they should give them a mark upon their right hand or upon their forehead, and that none should be able to buy or sell except he had the mark, the name of the wild beast, or the number of his name."

Thus, then, is that great tribulation begun of which the Lord spoke in His prophecy in view of the temple. We can understand that the only hope while this evil is permitted to have its course, is that flight to the mountains which He enjoins on those who listen to His voice. Israel have refused that sheltering "wing" under which He would so often have gathered them, and they must be left to the awful "wing of abominations" (Dan. ix. 27, Heb.), on account of which presently the desolator from the north swoops down upon the land. Still, His pity, whom they have forsaken, has decreed a limit, and "for His elect's sake, whom He hath chosen, He hath shortened the days."

Why is it that "breath" is given to the image? Is it in defiance of the prophet's challenge of the dumb idols which "speak not through their mouth?" Certainly to make an image speak in such a place, against the Holy One, would seem the climax of apostate insolence; but it only shows that the end is near.

What can be said of the number of the beast? The words "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast" seem directly to refer to those whom Daniel calls "the wise," or "they that understand among the people," of whom it is said, concerning the words of the vision closed up and sealed until the time of the end, that "none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand." "The wise" and "they that understand" are in Hebrew the same word, the *maskilim*, and remind us again of certain psalms that are called *maskil* psalms, an important series of psalms in this connection, four of which (lii.–lv.) describe the wicked one of this time and his following; while the thirty-second speaks of forgiveness and a hiding-

and rich and poor, and free and bond, that they should give them a [p] mark on their right hand or upon their forehead; and that no one should be able to buy or sell, except he had the mark, the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath [q] understanding count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a [r] man, and his number is [s] six hundred sixty and six.

[p] *ctr.* ch.7.2, 3.
cf. ch. 14.9.
[q] *cf.* Dan.12. 10.
cf. 1 Cor. 2. 15.
[r] *cf.* Ps.9.20.
cf. Ps.10.18.
[s] *cf.* Dan.3.1.
cf. 1 Sam. 17. 4.

place in God, the forty-second comforts those cast out from the sanctuary, and the forty-fifth celebrates the victory of Christ and His reign and the submission of the nations. Again, the seventy-fourth pleads for the violated sanctuary; the seventy-eighth recites the many wanderings of the people from their God; the seventy-ninth is another mourning over the desolation of Jerusalem; the eighty-eighth bewails their condition under the broken law; and the eighty-ninth declares the sure mercies of David. The 142d is the only other maskil psalm.

Moll may well dispute Hengstenberg's assertion that these psalms are special instruction for the *Church*. On the other hand, the mere recital of them in this way may convince us that they furnish the very keynote to Israel's condition in the time of the end, and may well be used to give such instruction to the remnant amid the awful scenes of the great tribulation. In Revelation it will not be doubtful, I think, to those who attempt to consider it, that we have in this place a *nota bene* for the *maskilim*.

Can we say nothing, then, as to the number of the beast?

As to the individual application, certainly, I think, nothing. We cannot prophesy; and until the time comes, the vision in this respect is sealed up. The historical interpreters, for whom indeed there should be no seal if their interpretation be the whole of it, generally agree upon *Lateinos* (the Latin), which has, however, an *e* too much, and therefore would make but 661. Other words have been suggested, but it is needless to speak of them. The day will declare it.

Yet it does not follow but that there may be something for us in the number, of significance spiritually. The 6, thrice repeated, while it speaks of labor and not rest, of abortive effort after the divine 7, declares the evil at its highest to be limited and in God's hand. This number is but, after all, we are told, the number of a man—and what is man? He may multiply responsibility and judgment, but the Sabbath is God's rest, and sanctified to Him. Without God, man can have no Sabbath. Thus 666 is the number of a man who is but a beast and doomed.

With this picture in Revelation we are to connect the prophecies of Antichrist which we have elsewhere in the New Testament. The apostle John has shown us distinctly that he will deny the Father and the Son—the faith of Christianity, and (not that there *is* a Christ, but) *Jesus* as the Christ. He is thus distinctly identified with the unbelief of Israel, as he is impliedly an apostate from the Christian faith, in which character the apostle plainly speaks of him to the Thessalonians. He is a second Judas, the son of perdition, the ripe fruit of that "falling away" which was to come before the day of the Lord came—itself the outcome of that "mystery of iniquity" (or "lawlessness") which from the beginning has been at work. He is the "wicked" or "lawless one"—not the sinful *woman*, the harlot of Revelation, but the "*man* of sin."

Every word here claims from us the closest attention. The sinful *woman* is still professedly subject to the man, though antichristian because in fact putting herself in Christ's place, claiming a power that is His alone. Nevertheless, she claims it in His name, not in her own. The pope assumes not to be Christ, but the vicar of Christ. The real "man of sin" throws off this womanly subjection. *He* is no vicar of Christ, but denies that Jesus is the Christ. He sits in the tem-

ple of God, showing himself that he is God. Yet even as Christ owns and brings men to worship the Father, so Antichrist brings men to worship another than himself, as Revelation has shown us. There is a terrible consistency about these separate predictions which thus confirm and supplement one another.

We see clearly that the temple in which he sits is not the Christian Church, but the Jewish temple, and how he is linked with the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel and by the Lord, an abomination which brings in the time of trouble, lasting until the Son of man comes in the clouds of heaven as Saviour of Israel and of the world.

The "abomination" is mentioned three times in Daniel; the only place that is equivocal in its application to the last days being the eleventh chapter (ver. 31). The connection would refer it there to Antiochus Epiphanes, the Grecian oppressor of Israel, who, near the middle of the second century before Christ, profaned the temple with idolatrous sacrifices and impure rites. It is agreed by commentators in general that the whole of the previous part of the chapter details in a wonderful manner the strife of the Syrian and Egyptian kings, in the centre of which Judea lay. From this point on, however, interpreters differ widely. The attempt to apply the rest of the prophecy to Antiochus has been shown by Keil and others to be an utter failure. The time of trouble such as never was, yet which ends with the deliverance of the people (chap. xii. 1), corresponds exactly with that which is spoken of in the Lord's prophecy on the mount of Olives; and the time, times and a half, named in connection with the abomination of desolation, and which the book of Revelation again and again brings before us, are alone sufficient to assure us that we have here reached a period yet future to us to-day. The connection of all this becomes a matter of deepest interest.

That the whole present period of the Christian dispensation should be passed over in Old Testament prophecy is indeed not a thing new to us, and the knowledge of this makes the leap of so many centuries not incredible. If, however, the time, times and a half, or 1260 days from the setting up of the abomination, contemplate that abomination set up by Antiochus more than a century and a half before Christ, then the reckoning of the time is an utter perplexity. Yet, what other can be contemplated, when in all this prophecy there is none other referred to? To go back to chapters eight or nine to find such a reference, overlooking what is before our eyes, would seem out of the question. What other solution of the matter is possible?

Now we must remember that the book is shut up and sealed until the "time of the end," a term which has a recognized meaning in prophecy, and cannot apply to the times of Antiochus or to those of the Maccabees, which followed them. It assures us once more that the prophecy reaches on to the days of Matt. xxiv., and that the abomination of desolation there must be the abomination here. Yet, how can this be? Only, surely, in one way. If the application to Antiochus, while true, be only the partial and incipient fulfilment of that which looks on to the last days for its exhaustive one, then indeed all is reconciled, and the difficulty has disappeared. This, therefore, must be the real solution.

What we have here is only one example of that double fulfilment which many interpreters have long since found in Scripture prophecies, and of which the book of Revelation is the fullest and most extended. There may be a question as to how far the double fulfilment in this case reaches back. With this we have not here to do, for we are not primarily occupied with Daniel. It is sufficient for our purpose if we are entitled to take the abomination of desolation here (as it certainly appears that we are bound to take it) as in both places the same, and identical with that which we find in the New Testament.

Going on in the eleventh chapter, then, to the 36th verse, we find the picture of one who may well be the same as the second beast of Revelation. If at the

first look it might appear so, a further consideration, it is believed, will confirm the thought of this. Let us quote the description in full:

"And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished; for that that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the Desire of women, nor regard any god, for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his estate shall he honor the god of forces, and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honor with gold and silver, and with precious stones and pleasant things. Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain."

If we take the prophecy as closely connected, at least from the 31st verse,—and we have seen that there seems a necessity for this,—then this king is described in his conduct after the abomination of desolation has been set up in the temple; and this strange and, it might seem, contradictory character that is ascribed to him would seem to mark him out sufficiently that he sets himself up above every god, and yet has a god of his own. This is exactly what is true of the antichristian second beast, and there can scarcely be another at such a time of whom it can be true. But let us look more closely.

First he is a king, and the place of his rule is clearly, by the connection, in the land of Israel. Thus he fills the identical position of the second beast. Then, he does according to his own will, is his own law, lawless, as in Thessalonians. His self-exaltation above every god naturally connects itself with blasphemy against the God of gods, spite of which he prospers till the indignation is accomplished, that is, the term of God's wrath against Israel; a determinate, decreed time. This is the secret of his being allowed to prosper; but God wills to use him as a rod of discipline to His people. Israel's sins give power to their adversaries.

The next verse intimates that he is a Jew himself, an apostate one, for he regards not the God of his fathers. It is not natural to apply this to any other than the true God, and then his ancestry is plain. Then, too, the "Desire of women," put here as among the objects of worship, is the Messiah promised as the woman's Seed. Thus his character comes still more clearly out. Yet, though exalting himself, he has a god of his own, the "god of forces," or "fortresses." And we have seen the second beast's object of worship is the first beast, a political idol, sought for the strength it gives, a worship compounded of fear and greed. Thus it is indeed a god whom his fathers knew not, none of the old gods of which the world has been so full, although the dark and dreadful power behind it is the same: the face is changed, but not the heart. Indeed, strongholds are his trust, and he practises against them with the help of this strange god. This seems the meaning of the sentence that follows: "And whosoever acknowledges him he will increase with glory, and cause him to rule over the multitude, and divide the land for gain." In all this we find what agrees perfectly with what is elsewhere stated as to the "man of sin." There are, no doubt, difficulties in interpreting this part of Daniel consistently all through, especially in the connection of the "king" here spoken of with the setting up of the abomination in the 31st verse; for it is the *king of the north* who there seems to inspire this; and the king of the north is throughout the chapter the Grecian king of Syria, and the part he plays is clearly that which Antiochus, the king of the north of his own time, did play. From this it is very natural that it should be conceived, as by some it is, that the king of the north and Antichrist are one. If this were so, it would not alter anything that has been said as to the application of the prophecy thus far, although there might be a difficulty as to a Grecian prince becoming a Jewish false Christ.

But there is no need for this, nor any reason, that one can see, why the perpetration of the awful wickedness in connection with Jehovah's sanctuary should not be the work of more than even the two beasts of Revelation. It is certainly

SUBDIVISION 4. (Chap. xiv.)

The earth-change at hand.

1 (1-5): The King on Zion, and those identified with Him.

1. AND I saw, and behold, the [t]Lamb standing upon mount Zion, and with him a [u]hundred and forty and four thousand, having his name and his Father's name [v]written upon their foreheads. And I heard a voice out of heaven as a voice of [w]many waters, and as a voice of great thunder; and the voice which I heard was as of [x]harpers harping with their harps; and they sing

t ch. 5. 6. *ctr.* ch. 13. 11. *cf.* Rom. 11. 26.
u ch. 7. 4. *cf.* Rom. 9. 27.
v ch. 7. 3. *cf.* ch. 22. 4. *ctr.* ch. 13. 16.
w ch. 19. 6.
x *cf.* ch. 15. 2.

striking that in chapter eight, where the rise of this latter-day Grecian power is depicted, the taking away of the daily sacrifice is linked in some way with his magnifying himself against the Prince of the host (ver. 11). It cannot be positively asserted that it is done by him, (as most translators and interpreters, however, give it,) yet the connection is so natural, one might almost say inevitable, that had we this passage alone, all would take it so. How much more would one think so when the eleventh chapter seems so entirely to confirm this! Let it be remembered that Greece was one of the provinces of the Roman empire, and as such would seem to be subject to it upon its revival, whether or not the bond with it be broken before the end. Why not a combination of powers and motives in the commission of this last blasphemous crime, even as in the cross Jew and Gentile were linked together? The instrument is, no doubt, the anti-christian power in Judea, but the Grecian power may, none the less, have its full part, and both of these be in subordination to the head of the western empire.

SUBD. 4.

We have now a section which seems designed to put together in review the various acts of God in view of the change which is at hand, whether these be in blessing or in judgment. There is mercy, as ever, while yet the world is in its special trial, and evil is fully searched out and under the hand of God.

1. The manifestation of evil is complete. We are now to see God's dealings as to it. These acts of Satan and his ministers are a plain challenge of *all* His rights in Israel and the earth; and further patience would be no longer patience, but dishonor. Hence we find now, as if in answer to the challenge, the *Lamb upon mount Zion*, that is, upon David's seat; and as the beast-followers have his mark upon them, so the followers of Christ, associated with Him here, have His and His Father's name upon their foreheads. What this means can scarcely be mistaken.

Zion is not only identified in Scripture with David and his sovereignty, but very plainly with the sovereign grace of God, when everything entrusted to man had failed in Israel—priesthood had broken down, the ark gone into captivity in the enemy's land, and although restored by the judgment of God upon the Philistines, it was no more sought unto in the days of Saul, who, though Jehovah's anointed king, had become apostate. All might seem to have gone, but it was not so, and in this extremity, as the seventy-eighth psalm says, "The Lord awoke as one out of sleep. . . . And He smote His adversaries backwards. Moreover, He refused the tent of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah—the mount Zion which He loved. . . . He chose also David His servant." Nor was this a temporary choice, as a later psalm adds: "For Jehovah hath chosen Zion, He hath desired it for His habitation. Here is My rest forever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it" (Psa. cxxxii. 13, 14).

Thus, though the long interval of so many centuries may seem to argue repentance upon God's part, it is not really so. "God is not man, that He should lie; nor the son of man, that He should repent." The Lamb on Zion shows us

as it were a [y]new song before the throne and [z]before the four living beings and the elders; and [a]no one was able to learn the song except the hundred and forty and four thousand who were purchased from the earth. These are they that were [b]not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are they who [c]follow the Lamb wherever he goeth. These were [d]purchased from among men, [e]first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no [f]falsehood, for* they are [g]without blame.

* Some omit, "for."

[y] *cf.* ch. 5. 9. *cf.* Ps. 33. 2, 3.
[z] *cf.* ch. 5. 11.
[a] *cf.* ch. 2. 17.
[b] *cf.* 2 Cor. 11. 2. *ctr.* ch. 17. 1.
[c] *cf.* ch. 17. 14.
[d] *cf.* ch. 1. 5, 6.
[e] *cf.* Jas. 1. 18. *cf.* Jer. 2. 3.
[f] *cf.* Is. 63. 8. *ctr.* 1 Jno. 2. 22.
[g] *cf.* Num. 23. 21.

the true David on the covenanted throne, and Zion by this lifted up, indeed, above the hills. The vision is of course anticipative; for by and by we find that the beast still exists. The end is put first, as it is with Him who sees it from the beginning, and then we trace the steps that lead up to it. With this method all will be familiar who are familiar with the Psalms.

But who are the 144,000 associated with the Lamb? Naturally, one would at once identify them with the similar number sealed out of the twelve tribes in the seventh chapter; and the more so, that the Lamb's and His Father's name upon their foreheads is surely the effect of this very sealing which was upon the forehead also. No other mark is given us as to them in the former vision, save that we read of them as exempted from the power of the locusts afterwards. Here, if it is not directly affirmed that they are sealed, yet it seems evident, a seal having been often a stamp with a name, and the purpose of the sealing in the former case being a mark they had as God's. This is manifestly accomplished by His name upon them. This open identification with Christ in the day of His rejection might seem to be just what would expose them to all the power of the enemy. Yet it is this which, in fact, marks them for security. In reality, what a protection is the open confession of Christ as the One we serve! There is no safer place for us than that of necessary conflict under the Lord's banner; and the end is glory. Here they stand, then, these confessors openly confessed by Him on His side; and their having been through the suffering and the conflict is just that which brings them here upon the mount of royalty. It is, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him."

Another inestimable privilege they have got, (though clearly an earthly, not a heavenly company) they are able to learn a song that is sung in heaven: "And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as a voice of great thunder; and the voice which I heard was of harpers harping with their harps; and they sing a new song before the throne and before the four living beings and the elders; and no one was able to learn the song except the 144,000 that were purchased from the earth."

It is clear that the company here occupy a place analogous to that of the Gentile multitude of the seventh chapter, who there stand before the throne and the living ones also. The vision in either case being anticipative, we can understand that earth and heaven are at this time brought near together, and that "standing" before the throne and "singing" before the throne involve no necessary heavenly place for those who sing or stand there. Here, they *stand* upon mount Zion, while they *sing* before the throne—that is, if the singers are primarily the 144,000, as many think. What seems in opposition to this is that the voice is heard from heaven, and that the company on mount Zion are spoken of as *learners* of the song. On the other side, the difficulty is in answering the question, Who are these harpers? plainly human ones, who are distinguished from the elders, yet in heaven at this time. Remembering what the time is, may help us here. May they not be the martyrs of the period with which the prophecy in general has to do—those seen when the fifth seal is opened, and those

2 (6-11): The earth-gospel.
1 (6, 7): The everlasting kingdom coming.

2. [1] And I saw [h]another* angel flying in mid-heaven, having the [i]everlasting gospel to announce to those dwelling upon the earth, and to [j]every nation and tribe and tongue and people, saying with a loud voice,

h vers. 8, 9. *cfr.* Matt. 4. 23. *cfr.* 1 Cor. 15. 1-4.
i *cf.* Geo. 3. 15 with ch. 22. 17.
j Lk. 24. 47.

* Some omit, "another."

for whom they are bidden to wait—the sufferers under the beast afterward? two classes which will be seen as completing the ranks of the first resurrection in the twentieth chapter. Those here would give us a third class evidently, neither the heavenly elders nor the sealed ones of Israel, and yet in closest sympathy with the latter. It could not be thought strange that the 144,000 here should be able to learn their song, and at the time when the Lamb is King on Zion this third class would certainly be found filling such a place as that of the harpers here. This seems indeed to meet the difficulty; for their song would clearly be a new song such as neither the Old Testament nor the revelation of the Church-mystery could account for, while the living victors over the beast would seem rightly here to enter into the song of others, rather than themselves to originate it.

But they have their own peculiar place as on mount Zion, first fruits of earth's harvest to God and to the Lamb, purchased from among men, (grace, through the blood of Christ, the secret of their blessing, as of all other,) but answering to that claim in a true, undefiled condition, in virgin-faithfulness to Him who is afresh espousing Israel to Himself. In their mouth, thus, no lie is found, for they are blameless, and these last words we shall surely read aright when we remember that to those who have not received the love of the truth God will send strong delusion, that they may believe *the* lie (2 Thess. ii. 11), and the apostle's question, "Who is *the* liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?" and that "he is the antichrist who denieth the Father and the Son" (1 John ii. 22). The names of the Lamb and of His Father are on the foreheads of these sealed ones.

2. We have now the earth-gospel, which we need not wonder to be in some sense a gospel of judgment. Thus the denunciative woe upon the beast-followers, as well as the announcement of the fall of Babylon, may enter into it, for these are the necessary clearing of the earth from the power of evil which oppresses it. The everlasting gospel is in terms accordant to this: "Fear God and give Him glory, for the hour of His judgment is come."

1 It is the foregleam of the day that comes that the first vision of this chapter shows us; but although the time is coming fast, we are first to see the harbingers of judgment, and then the judgment, before it can in fact arrive. Righteousness unheeded when it spoke in grace must speak in judgment, that the work of righteousness may be "peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever." In this way it is that we come now to what seems to us, perhaps, who have one of so much higher character, a strange, sad gospel, and yet the everlasting one which an angel flying in midheaven preaches to the inhabitants of the earth. How any one could confound this gospel of judgment with the gospel of salvation by the cross, would seem hard to understand, except as we realize how utterly the difference of dispensations has been ignored in common teaching, and how it is taken as a matter of course that the "gospel" must be always one and the same gospel, which even the epithet "everlasting" is easily taken to prove. Does it not indeed assert it, that the same gospel was preached, of course in a clearer or less clear fashion, all through the dispensation of law, and before it?

No doubt the everlasting gospel must be that which from the beginning was preached and has been preached ever since, although it should be plain that the "hour of His judgment is come" is just what with truth no one in Christian times could say. Plain it is, too, that the command to worship God the Creator

[k] Fear God and give him glory, for the hour of his [l]judgment is come; and worship him that [m]made the heaven and the earth and the sea and the fountains of waters.

2 (8): Babylon fallen.

2 And [n]another angel followed, a second, saying, [o]Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen, which hath made all nations to [p]drink of the wine of the [q]fury of her fornication.

k ch. 15. 4.
l cf. ch. 11. 14.
m ch. 4. 11.
n ver. 6.
o ch. 18. 2. Jer. 51. 8. Is. 21. 9.
p cf. Jer. 51. 7.
q ch. 18. 3, 9.

is not what any one who knew the gospel could take as that now. In fact, the gospel element, the glad tidings in the angel message, is just found in that which seems most incongruous with it to-day—that the "hour of His judgment is come." What else in it is tidings at all? That certainly is; and if serious, yet to those who know that just in this way deliverance is to come for the earth, it is simple enough that the coming of the delivering judgment is in fact the gospel.

Listen to that same gospel as a preacher of old declared it. With what rapture of exultation does he break out as he cries, "O sing unto the Lord a new song; sing unto the Lord all the earth; sing unto the Lord, bless His name, show forth His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the nations, His marvelous works among all the peoples. . . . Tremble before Him all the earth. Say among the nations that the Lord reigneth, the world also is established that it cannot be moved. He shall judge the peoples with equity. Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar and the fulness thereof; let the field exult, and all that is therein. Then shall all the trees of the woods sing for joy before the Lord; for He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with His truth" (Psa. xcvi.). Here is a gospel before Christianity, and which has been sounding out all through Christianity, whether men have heard it or not. This, too, is the echo of what we hear in Eden before the gate of the first paradise shuts upon the fallen and guilty pair, that the Seed of the woman should crush the serpent's head. That is a gospel which has been ringing through the ages since, which may well be called the everlasting one. Its form is only altered by the fact that now at last its promise is to be fulfilled. "Judgment" is to "return to righteousness." The rod is iron, but henceforth in the Shepherd's hand. Man's day is passed; the day of the Lord is come, and every blow inflicted shall be on the head of evil, the smiting down of sorrow and of all that brings it. What can he be but rebel-hearted who shall refuse to join the anthem when the King-Creator comes unto His own again? The angel-evangel is thus a claim for worship from all people, and to Him that cometh every knee shall bow.

We must not imagine that the "angel" here is necessarily this. God's way is to speak by human messengers, and He will doubtless do it at the time we are considering. Those brethren of the Lord whom He owns as such at the time when judgment separates the sheep from the goats, and by the conduct towards whom the condition of men is judged then, are doubtless these very preachers, who are Israelitish as suits the time, and as the "brethren" of the Lord speaks them to be. It is according to the words in Micah, where he speaks of "the remnant of His brethren" returning unto the children of Israel. The passage has been elsewhere examined.

2 That the message of judgment is indeed a gospel we find plainly in the next announcement, which is marked as that of a second angel, the third following, similar in character, as we shall see directly. Here it is announced that Babylon the Great has fallen: before, indeed, her picture has been presented to us, which we find only in the seventeenth chapter. The name itself is, however, significant as that of Israel's great enemy, under whose power she lay prostrate seventy years, and itself derived from God's judgment upon an old confederation, the seat of which became afterward the centre of Nimrod's empire; but that was not Babylon the *Great*, although human historians would have given

3 (9-11): The cup filled for those on whom is the sign of the beast.

3 And [r]another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any one [s]worshipeth the beast and his image, and receiveth a mark upon his forehead or upon his hand, he shall even [t]drink of the wine of the fury of God, which is mixed, unadulterated, in the cup of his wrath; and he shall be [u]tormented with fire and brimstone in the [v]presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up to the [w]ages of ages, and they have [x]no rest day and night who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

r vers. 6, 8. s *ctr.* ch. 13. 17.

t ch. 16. 19. *cf.* Jer. 25. 15.

u *cf.* ch. 20. 10.

v *cf.* Is. 66. 23, 24. *cf.* 2 Thess. 1. 9.

w *cf.* ch. 19 3. *cf.* Mk. 9. 48.

x *ctr.* ch. 4. 8.

her, no doubt, the palm. With God she was only the type of a power more arrogant and evil and defiant of Him than the old Chaldean despot, and into whose hands the Church of Christ has fallen—the heavenly, not the earthly people. It is an old history rehearsed in a new sphere, and with other names—a new witness of the unity of man morally in every generation.

The sin on account of which it falls reminds us still of Babylon, while it has also its peculiar aggravation. Of her of old it was said, "Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand that made all the earth drunken. All nations have drunk of her wine; therefore the nations are mad" (Jer. li. 7). But it is not said the "wine of the fury of her fornication." This latter expression shows that Babylon is not here a mere political, but a spiritual power. One who belongs professedly to Christ has prostituted herself to the world for the sake of power. She has inflamed the nations with unholy principles which act upon men's passions easily stirred, as we have seen in fact in Rome. By such means she has gained and retained power. By such, after centuries of change, she holds it still. But the time is at hand when they will at last fail her, and this is what the angel declares now to have come. Babylon is fallen, and that fall is final. It is the judgment of God upon her. It is retributive justice for centuries of corruption; it is a note of the everlasting gospel which claims the earth for God and announces its deliverance from its oppressors, but we have yet only the announcement. The details will be given in due place.

3 A third angel follows, noted as that, and belonging therefore to the company of those that bring the gospel of blessing for the earth. That it comes in the shape of a woe we have seen to be in no wise against this. Babylon is not the only evil which must perish that Christ may reign; and Babylon's removal only makes way at first for the full development of another form of it more openly blasphemous than this. The woman makes way for the man: what professes at least subjection to Christ, for that which is in open revolt against Him. Here, therefore, the woe threatened is far more sweeping and terrible than in the former case. There are people of God who come out of Babylon, and who therefore were in her to come out (chap. xviii. 4); but the beast in its final form insures the perdition of all who follow it: "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead or in his hand, he shall even drink of the wine of the fury of God which is mixed, unadulterated, in the cup of His wrath, and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up to the ages of ages, and they have no rest day nor night who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

It is the beast who destroys Babylon, after having for a time supported her. His own pretension tolerates no divided allegiance, and in him the unbelief of a world culminates in self-worship. Here God's mercy can only take the form of cold and emphatic threatening of extreme penalty for those who worship the beast.

3 (12, 13): The heavenly gospel.

3. Here is the [y]patience of the saints—those who keep the [z]commandments of God and the [a]faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice out of heaven saying, Write, [b]Blessed are the dead who die in [the] Lord [c]from henceforth. Yea, [d]saith the Spirit, that they may [e]rest from their labors; for their [f]works follow with them.

c cf. Ps. 55. 6-8; *cf.* Matt. 24. 9. *d cf.* ch. 2. 29. *e cf.* ch. 6. 11; *cf.* 2 Thess. 1. 7, 8. *f cf.* Heb. 6. 10; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 10.

y ch. 13. 10. *z* ch. 12. 17. *cf.* ch. 22. 9. *a cf.* Mk. 13. 13. *cf.* Jas. 2. 1. *b ctr.* 1 Cor. 15. 51. *cf.* Phil. 1. 23.

In proportion to the fearful character of the evil does the Lord give open assurance of the doom upon it, so that no one may unknowingly incur it. Here "the patience of the saints" is sustained during a "reign of terror" such as has never yet been.

3. Faith, too, is sustained in another way, namely, by the special consolation as to those who die as martyrs at this time: "And I heard a voice out of heaven saying, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord *from henceforth.*" That is plainly encouragement under peculiar circumstances. All who die in the Lord must be blessed at any time, but that only makes it plainer that the circumstances must be exceptional now which require such comfort to be so expressly provided for them. Something must have produced a question as to the blessedness of those who die at this time; and in this we have an incidental confirmation—stronger because incidental—that *the resurrection of the saints has already taken place.* Were *they* still waiting to be raised, the blessedness of those who as martyrs joined their company could scarcely be in doubt; but the resurrection having taken place, and the hope of believers being now to enter alive into the kingdom of the Son of man at His appearing, (as the Lord says of that time, "He that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved"—Matt. xxiv. 14,) the question is necessarily raised. What shall be the portion of these martyrs, then, must not remain a question; and in the tenderness of divine love the answer is here explicitly given. Specially blessed are those who die from henceforth. They rest from their labors. They go to their reward. The Spirit seals this with a sweet confirming "yea"—so it is. Earth has only cast them out that heaven may receive them; they have suffered, therefore they shall reign with Christ. Thus, accordingly, we find in the twentieth chapter that when the thrones are set and filled, those that have suffered under the beast are shown as rising from the dead to reign with the rest of those who reign with Him. Not the martyrs in general, but *these of this special time,* are marked distinctly as finding acknowledgment and blessing in that first resurrection from which it might have seemed that they were shut out altogether. It may help some to see how similar was the difficulty that had to be met with the Thessalonian saints, and which the apostle meets also with a special "word of the Lord" in the first epistle. They also were looking for the Lord, so that the language of their hearts was, with that of the apostle, "*we* who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord." They had been "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven;" and with a lively and expectant faith they waited. But then, what about those who were fallen asleep in Christ? It is evident that here is all their difficulty. He would not have them ignorant concerning those that were asleep, so as to be sorrowing for them, hopeless as to their share of blessing in that day. Nay; those who remained would not go before these sleeping ones. *They* would rise *first;* and those who were alive would then be "caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air." This for Christians now is the authoritative word of comfort. But the sufferers under the beast would not find this sufficient for *them.* For them the old difficulty appears once more, and must be met with a new revelation. How perfect and congruous in all its parts is the precious word of God! and how plainly we have, instead of what might seem an obscure or strange expression, —"blessed *from henceforth,*"—a confirmation of the general interpretation of all

4 (14-16): The harvest.

4. And I saw, and behold, a white *cloud, and upon the cloud one sitting like a [h]Son of man, having upon his head a golden [i]crown, and in his hand [the] [j]sharp sickle. And [k]another angel came out of the temple, [l]crying with a loud voice to him that sat upon the cloud, Put* forth thy sickle and reap; for the [m]hour is come to reap, because the harvest of the earth is dried.† And he that sat upon the cloud thrust his sickle upon the earth, and the [n]earth was reaped.

5 (17-20): The vintage.

5. And [o]another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, having himself also a sharp sickle. And [p]another angel came out from the altar, having [q]authority over fire; and he spake with a loud voice to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, [r]Put forth thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the [s]vine of the earth; for her grapes are [t]fully ripe. And the angel

* Literally, "send."

† That is, more than ripe. God's full long-suffering has been manifested.

g ch. 1. 7. Matt.24.30.
h *cf.* Matt. 26. 64. *cfr.*1Thess. 4. 16, 17.
i *cf.*ch.19.12.
j *cf.* Mk. 4. 29.
k vers. 6, 9.
l *cf.* Joel 3. 13.
m *cf.*Jer. 51. 33. *cfr.* Jno. 4. 35, 36.
n *cf.* Matt. 13.30,36-43. *cf.* Lk.3.17.
o vers.6,8,9.
p *cf.* ch.8. 3.
q *cf.* ch.16.5, 8.
r *cf.* ver. 15.
s *cf.*Is.5.1-7. *cf.*Matt.21. 33-41.
t *cf.*2 Thess. 2. 7-12.

this part of Revelation! The historical interpretation, however true as a partial, anticipatory fulfilment, fails here in finding any just solution.

4. In the next vision the judgment falls. The Son of man upon the cloud, the harvest, the treading of the wine-press, are all familiar to us from other scriptures, and in connection with the appearing of the Lord. We need have no doubt, therefore, as to what is before us here. The harvest naturally turns us back to our Lord's parable where the wheat and tares represent the mingled aspect of the kingdom, the field of Christendom. Tares are not the fruit of the gospel, but the enemy's work, who sows not the truth of God, but an imitation of it. The tares are thus the children of the wicked one, deniers of Christ, though professing Christians. The harvest brings the time of separation. First the tares are gathered and bound in bundles for the burning; but along with this, the wheat is gathered into the barn. In the interpretation afterwards we have a fuller thing. The tares are cast into the fire, and the righteous shine forth as the sun in their Father's kingdom.

Here, the general idea of harvest would be the same; but it does not follow that it will be necessarily identical with that in the gospel. In fact, this could scarcely be. The wheat is, at the time which we are considering, already reaped in that case, and in the barn. The field is that sown in the generations passing, by the gospel; but the parable of the sheep and goats shows us that there will yet be discriminative judgment; thus a harvest, where that which is for God is gathered in, as well as what He cannot own cast away. The idea is general, and we do not seem able more to particularize. In what follows there is no further discrimination, but judgment pure and simple.

5. Thus, in the vintage, the grapes are cast wholly into the great wine-press of the wrath of God; and thus it is the angel out of the altar who has power over the fire, at whose word it comes. The vine of the earth is a figure suitable to Israel as God's vine (Isa. v.), but now apostate. Yet it cannot be confined to Israel, as is plain from the connection in which we find it elsewhere, but it represents in any case an apostasy, and thus what we have seen to have its centre at Jerusalem, though involving Gentiles also, far and near. Thus the city, outside of which the wine-press is trodden, is Jerusalem, as the 1600 furlongs is well known to be the length of Palestine. Blood flows up to the bits of the horses for that distance—of course a figure, but a terrible one.

Both figures, the harvest and the vintage, are used in Joel with reference to this time: "Proclaim ye this among the nations; prepare war; stir up the mighty men; let all the men of war draw near; let them come up. Beat your

thrust his sickle to the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great [u] winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden [v] without the city, and there came blood out of the winepress unto the bits of the horses for a [w] thousand six hundred furlongs.

u ch. 19. 15. cf. Is. 63. 1-6.
v cf. Heb. 13. 12.
w cf. Is. 8. 8.

plowshares into swords and your pruning-hooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Haste ye and come, all ye nations round about, and gather yourselves together; hither cause Thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. Let the nations bestir themselves and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, for there will I sit to judge all the nations round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, tread ye, for the wine-press is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision, for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining; and the Lord shall roar upon Zion and utter His voice upon Jerusalem, and the heaven and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be a refuge unto His people and a stronghold to the children of Israel."

Thus comes the final blessing, and the picture upon which the eye rests at last is a very different one. "So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God, dwelling in Zion My holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more. And it shall come to pass in that day that the mountains shall drop down sweet wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the brooks of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord and water the valley of Shittim. . . . And I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed; for the Lord dwelleth in Zion."

SUBD. 5.

The visions of the last chapter plainly reach to the end of judgment in the coming of the Lord Himself. The vials, or bowls, therefore, cannot come after these or go beyond them. In fact, the coming of the Lord is not openly reached in them, though it may seem implied, for in the bowls is filled up the wrath of God. But the coming of the Lord, though necessary to complete the judgment, is yet so much more than judgment, that it would seem even out of place in a bowl of wrath. In the fourteenth chapter, where it is the Lamb's answer to the challenge of the enemy, He does indeed appear. The manifestation of Antichrist is met by the manifestation of Christ, as the day antagonizes and chases away the night; but the day then is come. In the bowls there is simply the destruction of the evil; and while the previous visions classify in a divine way the objects of wrath, the bowls give us rather the history in detail—the succession of events; though this, of course, like all else, has moral purpose and a divine meaning in it. All history has. The difficulty in common history, is to get the facts distinctly and in proportion, which the inspiration of Scripture-history secures for us. But along with this we have here what is obscured so much to men, heaven's action in earth's history; and heaven is acting in a more direct manner, now that the end is at hand, and the wrath stored up for many generations is to burst upon the earth at last. God would evidently have us to consider in detail His acts of judgment, which are at the same time the manifestation of the character of that which procures them all; all these having thus their special interest for us. God would not otherwise occupy us with that which is to Him ever a strange work, something foreign to His heart. But if it be a necessary thing to Him, the moral of it must be to us necessary, not merely for our conduct here upon earth, amongst the things which are to call forth His judgment, but, no question, in heaven itself also, when there will be thoroughly perfected that discernment of good and evil in which God is now training us.

SUBDIVISION 5. (Chaps. xv., xvi.)
The bowls of the wrath of God.

SECTION 1. (Chap. xv.)
The unity of righteousness in the King of Ages.

AND I saw [z]another sign in heaven, great and wonderful, seven angels having seven plagues, the last, for in them is [y]completed the indignation of God. And I saw as it were a [z]sea of glass, mingled with [a]fire; and those that had gained the [b]victory over the beast and over his [c]image and over the number of his name, standing upon the sea of glass, having [d]harps of God. And they sing the [e]song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the [f]Lamb, saying, [g]Great and wonderful are thy works, Lord God Almighty; [h]righteous and true are thy ways, O [i]King of Ages.* Who shall not [j]fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art [k]holy;† for all nations shall come and [l]worship before thee, because thy righteous acts have been made manifest. And after these things I saw, and the [m]temple‡ of the tabernacle of witness was opened in heaven: and there came out of the temple the seven [n]angels who

x *cf.* ch.12.1, 3.
y ch. 16.17. *cf.*ch.10.6,7.
z ch. 4. 6. *ctr.*2 Chro. 4. 2-6.
a *cf.*1 Pet.1. 7.
b ch. 12. 11.
c ch. 13. 15. *cf.* Dan. 3. 17,18,27-30.
d *cf.* ch. 5. 8. *cf.*Ps.150.3.
e *cf.* Ex. 15. 1, etc. *cf.* Deut.32. 1, etc.
f *cf.*Ps.22.22.
g Deut.32.3, 4. Ps. 92. 5. *cf.*Rom.11. 33.
h ch. 16. 7.
i 1Tim.1.17.
j *cf.* Jer. 10. 7.
ch. 14. 7.
k ch. 4. 8.
l Ps. 86. 9. *cf.* Is.45.23.
m *cf.* ch. 11. 19.
n ver. 1. *cf.* ch. 5. 1. *cf.* ch. 8. 6.

* The reading is disputed; some read, "King of saints," and others, "King of nations"; the R. V. has as above.
† Ὅσιος, not ἅγιος. ‡ Ναός, the sanctuary itself.

Sec. 1.

"And I saw another sign in heaven, great and wonderful—seven angels having seven plagues, the last, for in them is completed the indignation of God."

The one bright word here is "COMPLETED." For the earth at large, it is indeed so. Judgment comes, as we shall see at the close of the Millennium, upon a special, though, alas, numerous class; but it is nevertheless not the earth that rebels, nor can the Hand that holds the sceptre be any more displaced. How the voice of the everlasting gospel sounds in that word "completed"! But in proportion as the judgment is final now, so must it be complete, conclusive. All limitations are now removed. The rod of iron thoroughly does its work. As in the Lord's answer to His disciples' question as to this very period, "Wheresoever the carcase"—the corruption that provokes God's anger—"is, there will the eagles be gathered together."

But first,—and this is the style of prophecy, as we have seen,—before the judgment strikes, the gathering clouds are for a moment parted, that we may see, not the whole good achieved, but the care of God over His own, who in this scene might seem to have found only defeat and forsaking. One righteous Man alone ever *was* really forsaken. And we are permitted to see how, in fact, He has but hidden in His own pavilion, from the strife of men, those who amid the battle drop down and are lost. The sea of glass in the vision answers to the brazen sea in the temple of old—the laver; but here it is glass, not water. Purification is over, with the need of it. The fire mingled with it indicates what those here have passed through, which God has used for blessing to their souls. They are a special class, martyrs under the beast, no doubt, who have found victory in defeat, and are perfected and at rest before the throne of God.

They sing a mingled song, the song of Moses and of the Lamb—conquerors like those who were delivered out of Egypt, but by the might of Him who goes forth as a "man of war" for the deliverance of His people. The song of the Lamb looks to the victories recorded in this book, in which the "works" of the

had the seven plagues, [o]clothed with pure bright linen, and [p]girt about the breasts with golden girdles. And one of the four [q]living beings gave to the seven angels seven golden [r]bowls, full of the [s]indignation of God, who liveth to the ages of ages. And the temple was [t]filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power; and no one was able to enter into the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.

[o] *cf.* ch. 19. 8, 14.
[p] *cf.* ch. 1. 13.
[q] *cf.* ch. 4. 6.
[r] *cf.* ch. 5. 8.
[s] *cf.* ch. 14. 10. *cf.* Jer. 25. 15.
[t] Ex. 40. 34, 35. Is. 6. 4. 1 Ki. 8. 10, 11.

SECTION 2. (Chap. xvi.)
The wrath poured out.

1 (1, 2): First bowl. The inward truth becoming knowledge.

1. AND I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, [u]Go and pour out the seven bowls of the indignation of God upon the earth. And the

[u] ch. 14. 15, 18. *cf.* Ps. 79. 6.

Lord God Almighty of the Old Testament are repeated by Him who, as King of the ages, manifests thus His ways as true and righteous throughout the dispensations.

Divine promises are being fulfilled. God is once more taking up the cause of His ancient people, while the sufferers in Christian times are no less being vindicated and their enemies judged. He has not slept when most He seemed to do so, and now acts in judgment that makes all men fear. Ripened iniquity, come to a head wherever we may look, claims the harvest-sickle. The open challenge of the enemy brooks no delay in answering it. It is the only hope for the earth itself, which will learn righteousness when His judgments are in it, while the New Testament here coalesces with the voice of prophecy in the Old, and the cycle of the ages is completed, and returns into itself, only with a *Second Man*, a new creation, and the paradise of God. Truly Christ is "King of the ages."

And now the temple of the tabernacle of testimony is opened in heaven, where the ark of the covenant has been already seen. Faithful to that covenant now, in which Israel and the earth are together ordained to blessing, the seven angels with the seven last plagues issue forth as the result of that faithfulness. Thus they are arrayed in pure white linen, and girded with golden girdles. It is the glory of God in behalf of which they serve, as the bowls are also golden and filled with His wrath. From the glory of God and from His power smoke fills the temple. None can therefore approach to intercede. There can be no more delay. Long-suffering patience is exhausted. "No one was able to enter into the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed."

Sec. 2.

The bowls of wrath are now poured out upon the earth at the bidding of a great voice from the temple. The wrath of God is no mere ebullition of passion that carries away the subject of it. It waits the word from the sanctuary, and at length that eventful word is spoken. Completing the divine judgments, the range of the bowls is not narrower than that of the prophetic earth; and in this they differ from the trumpet-series which otherwise they much resemble. Another resemblance, which is significant, is to the plagues of Egypt, which were at once a testimony to the world and for the deliverance of Israel. Israel is here, also, in her last crisis of trouble, and waiting for deliverance for which these judgments, no doubt, prepare the way, though that which alone accomplishes it—the coming of the Lord—is not plainly included.

1. The first bowl is poured out, distinctively in contrast with the sea and rivers afterwards, upon the earth, like the first trumpet-judgment; but the effect is different. Instead of hail and fire burning up the trees and grass, an evil and grievous sore breaks out upon those that have the mark of the beast and who worship his image. In Egypt such a plague routed their wise men, so that they

[v] first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and there came an evil and grievous [w] sore upon the men who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image.

2 (3): Second bowl. "As the blood of a dead man."

2. And the [x] second poured out his bowl upon the [y] sea, and it became blood as of a [z] dead man, and every living soul died, [even] things that are in the sea.

3 (4-7): Third bowl. The springs of natural satisfaction yielding death.

3. And the [a] third poured out his bowl upon the [b] rivers and springs of waters, and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters saying, Thou art [c] righteous, who art and who wast, the holy* one, because thou hast judged thus; for they have [d] shed the blood

*Ὅσιος.

v *cf.* ch. 6.1, etc.
cf. ch. 8.7.
w *cf.* Ex.9.9-11.
cf. Is. 1.6.
x *cf.*ch.6.3,4.
cf. ch.8.8,9.
y *cf.* ch. 17.15.
z *cf.*Ps.53.1-3.
a *cf.*ch.6 5,6.
cf. ch. 8.10, 11.
b *cf.*Ex.7.17-21.
c *cf.* Rom.3.3-6.
d *cf.* ch. 18.24.
*cf.*Matt.23.35.

could not stand before Moses. According to the natural meaning of such a figure, it would speak of inward corruption which is made now to appear outwardly in what is painful, loathsome and disfiguring; those who had accepted the beast's mark being those otherwise marked and branded with what is a sign of their moral condition. As the apostle shows (Rom. i.), idolatry is itself the sign of a corruption which would degrade God into creature-semblance in order to give free rein to its lusts. Here it is openly the worship of the image, of him whom Scripture stamps as the "beast," which those branded with his mark give themselves up to. The excesses of the French Revolution, when God was dethroned to make way for a prostitute on the altar of Notre Dame, if they be not, as some have thought them, the fulfilment of this bowl, may yet picture to us how it may be fulfilled in a time of trouble such as never was before, and, thank God, such as never will be afterwards.

The inward evil working to the surface becomes at the same time its manifestation and its punishment, although there be much more than this to come.

2. The second bowl is poured out on the sea, and the sea becomes like the blood of a dead man, and every living soul dies in the sea. Here we have the second trumpet in its effect upon the sea, but without the limitation which we find there, and there seems a difference also in that the blood is as that of a dead man. It cannot be that it is merely *dead blood*, for all blood shed becomes that almost at once, and the sea turned into blood would by itself suggest death without the addition. Would it not rather seem to be that the blood of a dead man, while it is indeed dead blood, is just that which has *not* been shed? Life has not been violently taken, but lost, either through disease or natural decay. Thus in the law, that which had died of itself was forbidden as food, because it spoke of internal corruption; as the life still vigorous when the blood was shed, did not. If this thought be the true one, then the state imaged under the second bowl is not that of strife and bloodshed among the nations, but of all spiritual life gone, which the addition, "every living soul died in the sea," affirms as complete. Life there might be in hunted and outlawed men, no longer recognized as part of the nations; but the mass was dead. This seems to give consistently the full force of the expression.

3. The third bowl is poured out upon the rivers and fountains of waters, the sphere affected by the third trumpet; but in the trumpet they are made bitter. Now they become blood, which, as owned to be the judgment of God upon persecutors, seems clearly to speak of bloodshed. They are given to all to drink. Where naturally there should be only sources of refreshment, as perhaps in family life, there are found instead strife and the hand of violence. The angel of the waters may in this case be the representative of that tender care of the Creator over the creature-life, but which in this case comes to be against the persecutor, and applauds His judgments; as the altar does, upon which the lives of the martyrs have been poured out to God.

4 (8, 9): The fourth bowl. The failure of mercy.
5 (10, 11): Fifth bowl. Retributive darkness.
6 (12-16): Sixth bowl. The full manifestation of evil, but with God's hand upon it, and the coming of the Lord, its limit, nearing.

of saints and of prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; they are [e]worthy. And I heard the [f]altar saying, Yea, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

4. And the [g]fourth poured out his bowl upon the [h]sun, and it was given to it to [i]scorch men with fire; and men were scorched with great scorching, and [j]blasphemed the name of God, who had authority over these plagues; and [k]repented not to give him glory.

5. And the [l]fifth poured out his bowl upon the [m]throne of the beast, and his kingdom became [n]darkened; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and they [o]blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains and their sores; and [p]repented not of their works.

6. And the [q]sixth poured out his bowl upon the great river [r]Euphrates; and its water was dried up, that the

e ctr. ch. 5. 12.
f cf. ch. 6. 9. *cf.* ch. 8. 5.
g cf. ch. 6. 7, 8. *cf.* ch. 8. 12.
h ctr. Mal. 4. 2.
i ctr. Ps. 121. 6.
j vers. 11, 21. *k cf.* ch. 2. 21. ch. 9. 20, 21.
l cf. ch. 6. 9-11. *cf.* ch. 9. 1-11.
m ch. 13. 1, 2. *cf.* ch. 2. 13.
n cf. Ex. 10. 21-23. *cf.* Jno. 12. 35.
o vers. 9, 21. *ctr.* Heb. 12. 11.
p ver. 9.

cf. Eph. 4. 19. *q cf.* ch. 6. 12-17; *cf.* ch. 9. 13-21. *r cf.* 1 Chron. 18. 3.

4. The fourth angel pours out his bowl upon the sun, and it scorches men with its heat; but they only blaspheme God's name, and repent not. Here, as in general, the head of civil authority seems to be represented, and Napoleon's career has been taken, as in the historical application, to be the fulfilment of it. In him, after the immorality, apostasy and bloodshed of that memorable revolution, imperial power blazed out in destructive fierceness that might well be symbolized as scorching heat. There was splendor enough, but it was not "a pleasant sight to behold the sun:" the nation over which he ruled was oppressed with "glory," and soon manifested how its vitality had been exhausted by its hothouse growth. His career was brief; and briefer still, in proportion to its intensity, will be the closing despotism, which will be followed by the kingdom of the Son of man, and the display of a true glory unseen by the world before. Then shall that be fulfilled which is written: "The sun shall not smite thee by day;" and how great will be the joy of this that is added: "thy Sun shall no more go down; . . . the Lord shall be thine everlasting light" (Isa. lx. 20).

5. The fifth bowl is poured out, and the meteoric blaze is passed. Poured on the throne of the beast, darkness spreads over his kingdom. It is the foreshadow of that final withdrawal of light, the "outer darkness" of that awful time when they who have so often bidden God withdraw from them will be taken at their word. But who, out of hell, can tell what that will be? The science of the day has ascribed to the sun more than ever was before done; but who at any time could have said to the glowing sun, Depart from me: I desire darkness? Yet this is what they say to God.

Nor does the darkness work repentance: "They gnaw their tongues for pain, and blaspheme the God of heaven, because of their pains and sores, and repent not of their deeds." Such is the hardening character of sin, and such the impotence of judgment in itself to break the heart and subdue the soul to God.

6. So far, spite of the general character of the bowls, they seem to have to do almost entirely with the beast and his followers; and these are, as we know, the principal enemies of Israel, and the boldest in defiance of God at the time of the end. Nevertheless, there are other adversaries besides those of the new risen empire of the west. The king of the north, or of Greece, is evidently in opposition at the close to the "king" in the land of Israel, who is the viceroy of the beast in Judea (Dan. xi. 36). This king of Greece also, if mighty, is so "not by his own power" (Dan. viii. 24). There is behind him, in fact, a mighty prince, who in Ezek. xxxviii., xxxix. comes clearly into view as head of many eastern nations, Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal; Persia, Cush and Phut, with the house of Togarmah (Armenia), be-

way of the [s]kings from the sun-rising might be prepared. And I saw out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three [t]unclean spirits, like [u]frogs; for they are spirits of demons, doing [v]signs, which go forth unto the kings of the whole habitable earth to [w]gather them together unto the war of the great day of God Almighty. (Behold I [x]come as a thief. Blessed is he that [y]watcheth and [z]keepeth his garments, lest he walk [a]naked and they see his shame). And he gathered them together unto the [b]place called in the Hebrew tongue, Har-Magedon.

cf. 1 Thess. 5. 2-4; *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 10. *y cf.* Mk. 13. 37. *z cf.* Jas. 1. 27; *ctr.* ch. 3. 4. 18; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 3. *b cf.* Zech. 12. 11 with 2 Ki. 23. 29, 30.

s cf. Is 44.27, *cf.* Is. 41.2, 25.
cf. Is.46.11.
*t cf.*1 Tim.4. 1.
*u cf.*Ex.8.1–6.
*cf.*Acts 8.9.
v cf. ch. 13. 13.
*cf.*2 Thess. 2. 9.
w cf. ch. 17. 14.
*cf.*ch.19.19.
x ch. 3. 3.
*cf.*Matt.24. 43, 44.
a cf. ch. 3.

ing confederate with him. This is not the place to look at the people to whom all these names refer. Magog, the first of them, by common consent, stands for the Scythians, who, "mixed with the Medes," says Fausset, "became the Sarmatians, whence sprang the Russians. "Rosh" is thus, by more than *sound*, connected with Russia; as Meshech and Tubal may have given their names, but slightly changed, to Moscow and Tobolsk. The connection with Persia and Armenia (and with Greece, no less) is easily intelligible at the present day.

Here are powers, then, outside the revived Roman empire, which we find in relation with Israel at the time of the end, and which will find their place in the valley of Jehoshaphat ("Jehovah's judgment") in the day when the Lord sits there to judge all the nations round about (Joel iii. 12). Accordingly now, under the sixth bowl, the way is prepared for this, and the gathering is accomplished. The sixth bowl is poured out upon *the great river Euphrates*, the effect being that the water is dried up, "that the way of the kings of the east may be prepared." The Euphrates is the scene, also, of the sixth trumpet, which seems to give but a previous incursion of the same powers that are contemplated here, the door being now set widely open for them by the drying up of the river, the boundary of the Roman empire in the past, as it will be the boundary of restored Israel in the time to come. In the trumpet there was but an inroad upon the empire. Now there is much more than this. It is the gathering for the great day of God Almighty!

Accordingly, all the powers of evil are at work. "Three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. They are the spirits of demons working miracles, who go forth unto the kings of the whole world, to gather them together unto the war of the great day of God Almighty! . . . And they gathered them together unto the place which is called in Hebrew Har-Magedon."

The frogs are creatures of slime and of the night—blatant, impudent impotents, cheap orators, who can yet gather men for serious work. Here, those brought together little know whom they go out to meet; but this is the common history of men revealed in its true character. The Cross has shown it to us on the one side; the conflict of the last days shows it on the other. The veil of the world is removed, and it is seen here what influences carry them: the "dragon," the spirit of a wisdom which, being "earthly," is "sensual, devilish" (Jas. iii. 15); the "beast," the influence of power, which apostate from God is bestial (Psa. xlix. 20); "the false prophet," the inspiration of hopes that are not of God: so the mass are led.

Har-Magedon is the "mount of slaughter." We read of Megiddo in the Old Testament as a "valley," not a mountain; whether it refers to this or no, the phrase seems equivalent to the "mountain of the slain," a mountain of heaped up corpses. To this, ignorant of what is before them, they are gathered.

A note of urgent warning is interjected here; no need of declaring the Speaker.

7 (17-21): Seventh bowl. "It is done."

7. And the [c]seventh poured out his bowl upon the air; and there came out a great voice out of the temple,* from the throne, saying, It is [d]done. And there were [e]lightnings, and voices, and thunders; and there was a great [f]earthquake, such as had not been since men were upon the earth, such an earthquake, so great. And the [g]great city was divided into three parts; and the cities of the nations fell; and [h]Babylon the great came into remembrance before God to give her the cup of the wine of the indignation of his [i]wrath. And every [j]island fled, and the mountains were not found; and a great [k]hail, as of a talent weight, cometh down out of heaven upon men; and men [l]blasphemed God because of the plague of hail, because the plague of it is exceeding great.

c *cf.* ch. 8.1. *cf.* ch.11.15.
cf. Eph. 2.2.
d *cf.* ch. 10. 6.
e ch. 11. 19.
f *cf.* ch.11.13. *cf.* ch.6.12.
g *cf.* ch.17.9, 18.
h *cf.* ch. 17.1–5. *cf.* ch. 14.8.
i *cf.* ch.14.10 with ch.18. 5.
j *cf.* ch. 6.14.
k *cf.* ch. 11. 19. *cf.* Ex.9.18-25.
l vers. 9, 11.

* Some insert "of heaven."

"Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."

It is to the world Christ's coming will be that of a thief, for "in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh." "Blessed is he that watcheth" is, as we see by the closing words, a solemn warning to the heedless. Who will be ready at this time to hear? In any case, wisdom will utter its voice, and none shall go out to meet unwarned the doom of the rebellious. Good it is to find just in this place, whether heeded or not, the warning of mercy. Not the less terrible on that account the doom that comes.

7. And now the seventh angel pours his bowl into the air. Of "the power of the air" Satan is the prince (Eph. ii. 2), and all Satan's realm is shaken. A great voice breaks out of the throne, saying, It is done; and there are lightnings, and voices, and thunders—the "voices" showing the lightnings and thunders between which they come to be no mere natural tempest, but divinely guided judgment. There is an unparalleled convulsion, and the great city (Babylon, or, as we take it, Rome) is divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations generally fall. It is added, as respecting a special object of the divine judgment, "And Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath." This is in brief what is given presently in detail. Babylon has only once before been named in Revelation, but the two following chapters treat of it in full.

Then "every island fled away:" as I suppose, there is no isolation of any from the storm; "and the mountains were not found:" no power so great but it is humbled and brought low. "And a great hail, every stone about a talent weight, fell down from God out of heaven upon men; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great."

In the hail the effect of God's withdrawal from men is seen in judgment. The source of light and heat is one; and for the soul God is the source of both. The hail speaks not of mere withdrawal, but of this becoming a pitiless storm of judgment which subdues all, except, alas, the heart of man, which, while his anguish owns the power from which he suffers, remains, in its hard impenitency, the witness and justification of the wrath it has brought down.

Subd. 6.

We are now to look at the final victory, which is, of course, the divine victory over the fully developed evil; as seen on the one hand in Babylon the great, the woman; and on the other hand in the beast and the false prophet, who at last are in opposition to her. Babylon the great has been hitherto only the

SUBDIVISION 6. (Chaps. xvii.–xx. 3.)

The final victory.

SECTION 1. (Chap. xvii.)

The rule of the harlot

AND there came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls, and spoke with me, saying, [m]Come hither, I will show thee the judgment of the great [n]harlot that sitteth upon the many waters; with whom the [o]kings of the earth have committed fornication, and those who dwell upon the earth have been

m ctr. ch. 21. 9.
n ch. 19. 2. *ctr.* 2 Cor. 11. 2. *cf.* Is. 1. 21.
o ch. 18. 3, 9. *cf.* Jas. 4. 4.

subject of brief reference. Nevertheless, its place cannot but be a great one in the prophecy of the book of Revelation, a book which joins together the testimony of the old prophets—the prophetic history of Israel with the close of Christendom; what we call the Christian dispensation having indeed closed before, when the Lord gathered away His people, as we have seen already in the fourth chapter. But it cannot but be a matter of intense interest and profit to know what is the final end of that which is left upon earth with the profession as yet of the Christian name, a profession which is now, of course, worse than hollow. Apostasy is the inevitable result; and accordingly Babylon, as we meet her now, becomes fully apostate. This involves of necessity the history of her connection with the beast and false prophet, who are the instruments of her final overthrow. This, then, is what is before us in detail now; while we have on the other hand the celebration of the triumph over her in heaven, and the marriage of the Lamb thereupon announced as come. Babylon being thus overthrown, we have next to see the overthrow of the beast and false prophet; but this is by the coming of the Lord Himself from heaven, the judgment, as Isaiah puts it, of "the host of the high ones that are on high and the kings of the earth upon the earth" (Isa. xxiv. 21).

Sec. 1.

Babylon is already announced as fallen in the fourteenth chapter, and as judged of God under the seventh bowl; but we have not yet seen what Babylon is, and we are not to be left to any uncertainty. She has figured too largely in human history, and is too significant a lesson every way to be passed over in so brief a manner. We are therefore now to be taught the "mystery of the woman."

For she is a mystery: not like the Babylon of old, the plain and straightforward enemy of the people of God. She is an enigma, a riddle; so hard to read, that numbers of God's people in every age have taken her, harlot as she is, for the chaste spouse of the Lamb. Yet here for all ages the riddle has been solved for those who are close enough to God to understand it, and the figure is gaudy enough to attract all eyes to her—seeking even to do so. Let us look with care into what is before us in these chapters, in which the woman is evidently the central object, the beast on which she is sitting being here viewed rather in its relation to her.

It is one of the angels of the bowls who exhibits her to the apostle, and his words naturally show us what she is characteristically as the object of divine judgment. As described by him, she is "the great harlot that sitteth upon many waters, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication."

As brought into sharp contrast with the beast that carries her, we see that she is a woman, has the human form as the beast has not. A beast knows not God, and in Daniel we have found the Gentile power losing the human appearance which it has in the king's dream, to take the bestial, as in the vision of the

made [p]drunk with the wine of her fornication. And he carried me away in spirit into a [q]wilderness: and I saw a [r]woman sitting upon a [s]scarlet beast, full of [t]names of blasphemy, having [u]seven heads and [v]ten horns. And the woman was [w]clothed in purple and scarlet, and decked* with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden [x]cup in her hand, full of abomi-

p ch. 14. 8. *ctr.* Eph. 5. 18, 19.
q *ctr.* ch. 21. 10.
r *cf.* ch. 2. 20. *cf.* Matt. 13. 33.
s *cf.* ch. 12. 3 with ch. 13. 1.
t *ctr.* ch. 19. 12, 13, 16.

* Literally, "gilded."

u ver. 9; *cf.* Rom. 1. 7. v vers. 12, 16; *cf.* Dan. 7. 24. w ch. 18. 16; *cf.* Lk. 16. 19; *ctr.* ch. 19. 8. x ch. 18. 6; *cf.* Jer. 51. 7.

prophet. In Nebuchadnezzar personally we see what causes the change; that is, pride of heart which forgets dependence upon God. The woman, on the other hand, professedly owns God, and moreover, as a woman, takes the place of subjection to the man: in the symbol here, to Christ. When she is removed by judgment, the true bride is seen, to whom she is in contrast, and not, as so many think, to the woman of the twelfth chapter, who is mother, not bride, of Christ, and manifestly represents Israel.

But the woman here is a harlot in guilty relation with the kings of the earth. Here, also, is manifestly ambition, the desire of power on earth, the refusal of the cross of Christ, the place of rejection; and the wine, the intoxication of her fornication, makes drunk the "dwellers upon earth." These we have already seen to be a class of persons who, with a higher profession, have their hearts yet set upon earthly things. These naturally drink in the poison of her doctrine.

To see her, John is carried away, however, into the wilderness; for the earth is that, and all efforts of those who fain would do so cannot redeem it from this. There he sees the woman sitting on a scarlet-colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, easily identified as the beast of previous visions by its seven heads and ten horns. The beast is in a subjection to the woman which we should not expect. It is the imperial power, but in a position contrary to its nature as imperial; in this harmonizing with the interpretation of the angel afterwards—the "beast that was and is not." In some sort it is; in some sort it is not; and this we have to remember as we think of its heads and horns. If the beast is not, necessarily its heads and horns are not. These are for identification, not as if they were existing while the woman is being carried by it. In fact, she is now its head, and reigns over its body, over the mass that was and that will be again the empire, but now "is not."

What are we to say of the scarlet color and the names of blasphemy? Are they prospective, like the horns? The latter seems so, evidently, and therefore it is more consistent to suppose the former also, the difficulty of which may be relieved somewhat by the evident fact that of these seven heads only one exists at a time, as we see by the angel's words. The seven seen at once are again for identification, not as existing simultaneously. The scarlet color is that which typifies earthly glory—what is simply that. The beast's reign has no link with heaven. That it is full of *names*, not merely *words* of blasphemy, speaks of the assumption of titles which are divine, and therefore blasphemous to assume. Altogether, we see that it is the beast of the future that is presented here, but which could not really exist *as such* while carrying the woman. She could not exist in this relation to him, he being the beast that he is; and thus the expression is fully justified—really alone explains the matter—the "*beast that was, and is not, and will be.*"

There is clearly an identification of a certain kind all through. While the woman reigns, that over which she reigns is still, *in nature*, but the beast that was, and that after her reign will again be. There is no fundamental change all through. The Romanized nations controlled by Rome are curbed, not

nations and the unclean things of her fornication; and upon her [y]forehead there was a name written, [z]Mystery, [a]Babylon the great, the [b]mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. And I saw the woman drunken with the [c]blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I [d]wondered with great wonder. And the angel said

y *cf.* Jer. 3. 3.
ctr. ch. 22. 4.
z *ctr.* Eph. 3. 3-6 with Eph. 5. 32.
cf. 2 Thess. 2. 7.
a ch. 14. 8. ver. 18.
b *cf.* ch. 2. 23.
c ch. 16. 6.
d *ctr.* ver. 8.

changed. And breaking from the curb, as did revolutionary France at the close of the eighteenth century, the wild-beast fangs and teeth at once display themselves.

But we are now called to consideration of the woman, who, as reigning as the professed spouse of Christ over what was once the Roman empire, is clearly seen to be what, as a system, we still call Rome—"that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth;" which did so even in John's time, although to him appearing in a garb so strange that when he sees her he wonders with a great wonder.

She is appareled in purple and scarlet, for she claims spiritual as well as earthly authority, and these are colors which Rome, as we know, affects; God thus allowing her even to the outward eye to assume the livery of her picture in Revelation. These external signs are not to be thought unsuitable because external. They are intended surely to invite our attention to what is underneath them. She is decked, too, with gold and precious stones and pearls, figures of really divine and spiritual truths, which, however, she only uses to adorn herself outwardly with, and indeed to make more enticing the cup of her intoxication: "having a *golden cup* in her hand," says the apostle, "full of abominations and filthiness of her fornications." Now we have her name: "And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth."

Her name is Mystery, yet it is written on her forehead. Her character is plain, if only you can read it. If you are pure, you may soon know that she is not. If you are true, you may quite easily detect her falsehood. In lands where she bears sway, as represented in this picture, she has managed to divorce morality from religion in such a manner that all the world knows the width of the breach. Her priests are used to convey the sacraments; and one need not look at the hands too closely that do so needful a work. In truth, it is an affair of the hands, with the magic of a little breath by means of which the most sinful of His creatures can create the God that made him, and easily new-create, therefore, another mortal like himself. This is a great mystery, which she herself conceives as "sacrament," and you may see this clearly on her forehead then. It is the trick of her trade, without which it could not exist. With it, a little oil and water and spittle become of marvelous efficacy, her capital stock indeed, out of which, at the smallest cost, the church can create riches and power, and much that has unquestionable value in her eyes.

"Babylon the great" means "confusion the great." Greater confusion there cannot be than that which confounds matter and spirit, creature and Creator, makes water to wash the soul, and brings the flesh of the Lord in heaven to feed literally with it men on earth. Yet to this is the larger part of Christendom captive, feeding on ashes, turned aside by a deceived heart; and they cannot deliver their souls, nor say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?" (Isa. xliv. 20.)

This, for those who are deceived by it, lifts her at once into a place of supreme power that nothing can resist. If she has power to create God, she may well have power over all the creatures that He has created.

This frightful system has scattered wide the seed of its false doctrine, and the harlot-mother has daughters like herself. She is the "mother of harlots and

unto me, Wherefore didst thou wonder? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, who hath the seven heads and the ten horns. The beast which thou sawest, [e]was, and is [f]not, and is [g]about to rise out of the abyss and go into [h]destruction: and those that dwell upon the earth, whose names are not written in the [i]book of life from the

e ver. 11.
cf. ch. 6. 2.
f cf. ch. 13. 3.
g cf. ch. 13, 1.
h cf. ch. 19, 20.
i ch. 3. 5.
cf. ch. 20, 12, 15.

abominations of the earth." Solemn words from the Spirit of truth, which may well search many hearts in systems that seem severed far from Rome, as well as those that more openly approach her. Who dare, with these awful scriptures before them, to speak smooth things as to the enormities of Rome? To be protestant is indeed in itself no sign of acceptance with God; but not to be protestant is certainly not to be with God in a most important matter. This Roman Babylon is not, moreover, some future form that is to be, though it may develop into worse yet than we have seen. It is that which has been (in the paradoxical language which yet is so lively a representation of the truth) seated upon the beast, while the beast "is not." It is popery, as we know it, and have to do with it; and woe to kings and rulers who truckle to it, or (again in the bold Scripture words) commit fornication with it! "Come out from her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues!"

"And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; and when I saw her," says the apostle, "I wondered with a great wonder."

Romish apologists have been forced by the evidence to admit that it is Rome that is pictured here; but they say—and some Protestant interpreters have joined them in it—that it is *pagan* Rome. But how little cause of wonder to John in his Patmos banishment that the heathen world should persecute the saints! With us it is simple matter of history, and we have ceased to wonder; while, alas, it is true that many to-day no longer remember, and many more think we have no business to remember, the persecutor of old. It was the temper of those cruel times of old, many urge. Nineteenth century civilization has tamed the tiger, and Rome now loves her enemies, as the Christian should. But abundant testimony shows how false is this assertion. Here, just before her judgment, the apostle pronounces her condemnation for the murder of God's saints still unrepented of.

The angel now explains the mystery, and begins with the beast. "The beast that was, and is not" is clearly from the point of view of the vision, as has been said. The rule of the woman necessarily destroys beast-character while it lasts. But the beast will awake from its long sleep. It is about to come up out of the abyss, and go into perdition. This coming up out of the abyss, however, as has been elsewhere said, does not seem to be merely the revival of the empire: the key of the abyss in the hands of the fallen star under the fifth trumpet, and the angel of the abyss being the person who, by the two languages of his name is the destroyer of both Jew and Gentile, necessarily leads us to believe that there is in it the working of Satanic power. This is strengthened by the connection of this ascent with the "going into perdition" of that which comes up.

The previous revival under the seventh head would thus be passed over; this being in fact merely temporary and transitional; the prophecy, which is not a history of the beast, but of its relation to the woman, hastens on to what is most important; the beast pictured here being identified, in fact, in the prophecy itself, with its *own eighth head* (ver. 11). That it has only seven, as seen in the vision, is not against this, if the seventh and eighth heads are the same person.

The unhappy "dwellers upon the earth" wonder at this revival, whose names have not from the foundation of the world been written in the book of the Lamb slain. Divine grace is that alone which makes any to differ; and of this we are

foundation of the world, shall [j]wonder when they see the beast, because he was, and is not, and shall be present. Here is the mind that hath [k]wisdom. The seven heads are seven [l]mountains whereupon the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are [m]fallen, one [n]is, the other is [o]not yet come; and when he cometh he must remain a [p]little while. And the [q]beast that was and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the

j ch. 13, 3, 4.
k *cf.* ch. 13. 18.
l *cf.* Acts 28. 14.
m *cf.* Dan. 2. 24.
n *cf.* Acts 25. 12.
o ver. 8.
p *cf.* ch. 13. 5.
q ch. 13. 1, 3.

reminded here. The power that works in the revival of the beast is plainly beyond that of man; and how many in the present day seem to take for granted that whatever is of more than human power must be divine! This is the essence of the "strong delusion" which God sends upon those who have not received the love of the truth, that they might be saved. Powers and signs and lying wonders confirm the imperial last head in his pretension; and that they are "*lying*" means, not that they are mere juggling and imposition, but that they are made to foster lies. They shall wonder, seeing how that the beast "was, and is not, and shall be present [again]."

And here is the mind that hath wisdom, the divine secret for an understanding heart. First, as to the woman: "The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth." One would think there need not be much doubt about the application of this, and in general there has not been. That Rome was the seven-hilled city is familiar to every schoolboy, and its being a "geographical" mark need not make it unsuited to be one, as Lange believes. God would point out in this way, in a manner plain even to unspiritual souls, if possible, what it is of which He is speaking here; and He has even, if one may so say, gone out of the way to give a needed plain mark of identification, that His saints may know, whose blood it would shed, and who would need the comfort of knowing, that He was against this "mother and mistress of the churches," with all her effrontery, and the crowd that follow her.

But the heads are also seven kings, consecutive, not contemporaneous rulers; for five had already fallen, one was, and another was yet to come, only to exist for a short time; the beast himself being the final one. Imperial Rome was evidently what existed in the apostle's day. "One is" we must take, as it seems, as applying to the apostle's day, for at the time of the vision the beast itself "is not." The only other time present would be the time in which the apostle lived himself.

The imperial head came to an end necessarily when the empire as a whole broke up under the attacks of the barbarians; and to make, as Barnes and others do, the exarch of Ravenna the seventh head of the *world*-empire, is either to overlook the plain terms of the prophecy, or else to pervert the simple facts of history. The exarchate lasted about 200 years, which Barnes considers comparatively but a short time, and the papacy he considers to be the eighth head. This falls with the exarchate; for the papacy would then be but the seventh, and nothing would correspond.

The seventh head began, according to Elliott, when Diocletian, already emperor, assumed the diadem—the symbol of despotic sovereignty after the Eastern fashion; and he quotes Gibbon's words, that, "like Augustus, Diocletian may be considered the founder of a new empire." But if this were the seventh head, there was a gap between it and the papacy, and this must have been the time when the beast "was not." This is better in some respects than Barnes, and may really be an anticipative fulfilment such as we find in the historical interpretation generally. But it fails when we come to apply it consistently all through, as where Elliott has to make the burning of the woman with fire by the ten horns to be merely the devastation of the city and the Campagna prior to their giving power to the beast, whereas in the prophecy it is really effected by the beast and the horns together, and is the complete end of the system

seven, and goeth to [r]destruction. And the ten horns which thou sawest are [s]ten kings, who have received no kingdom as yet, but receive authority as kings [t]one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and give their power and authority to the beast. These shall make [u]war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall [v]over-

[r] *cf.* ch. 19. 20.
[s] Dan. 7. 24.
[t] *cf.* ch. 18. 10. etc.
ver. 10.
[u] ch. 19. 19. ch. 16. 14.
[v] ch. 19. 20. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 8, 9.

which the woman represents. It would be manifestly incongruous to suppose the papacy to hate and consume the Roman Catholic church.

The scheme of prophecy involved in all this, if taken as a whole, must be reserved for an after-time, to consider more closely. When the papacy in fact ruled the empire, it had ceased to be in a proper sense the empire, and then it was that, according to the chapter before us, the beast was not. The true bestial character could not co-exist with even the profession of Christianity.

The beast is necessarily, therefore, secular, not ecclesiastical. When the secular empire fell, the beast was not; though in that contradictory condition the woman might ride it. Since that fall there has been no revival, and therefore, as yet, no seventh head. The seventh head seems to be constituted that by the union of ten portions of the divided territory to give him power; and the preponderance of Russia in Europe might easily bring about a coalition of this kind. The new imperial head lasts but a short time, is smitten with a sword, possibly degraded to the condition of a "little horn," is revived by the dreadful power of Satan acting through the antichristian second beast of the thirteenth chapter, assumes the blasphemous character in which we have already seen him, and then throws off the last remnant of the rule of the woman. This is the beast as Revelation contemplates him generally, identified with the eighth head, but which is of the seven; in fact, is the seventh which had the wound by the sword, yet lived. Thus seen, all the passages seem to harmonize; a harmony which is the main argument for the truth of such an interpretation of them.

"And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings which have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and give their power and authority unto the beast." Alas, they are united against God and His Christ: "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful."

Here we have anticipated the conflict of the nineteenth chapter. These that are with Christ are His redeemed people, as is plain. Angels may be "chosen and faithful," but only men are "*called*"; and when He comes forth as a warrior out of heaven, they, as "the armies that were in heaven, follow Him." The rod of iron which He has Himself is given to His people, and the closing scene in the conflict with evil sees them in active and earnest sympathy with Him.

The waters where the harlot sat are next interpreted as "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." With another meaning and intent than where it is spoken of Israel, "her seed is in many waters." Her influence is wide-reaching and powerful, but it is brought to an end: "and the ten horns which thou sawest *and* the beast;"—so, and not "*upon* the beast," all authorities give it now;—"these shall hate the harlot, and make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her up with fire." That surely is not a temporary infliction, but a full end; and beast and horns unite together in it. She has trampled upon men, and according to the law of divine retribution this is done to her. This has been partially seen many times in the history of Rome, and the end of the eighteenth century was a dreadful warning of what is soon to come more terribly still upon her. The very profession of Christianity which she in time past used for the purpose of gain and power over men will, no doubt, by the same retributive law, become at last the millstone around her neck; and no eye will pity her, for it is God who has "put into their hearts to do His will,

come them; for he is [w]Lord of lords and King of kings; and those that are with him are [z]called, and chosen, and faithful. And he saith unto me, The [y]waters which thou sawest, where the harlot sitteth, are peoples, and

[w] ch. 19. 16. *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 15.
[x] *cf.* ch. 19. 14. *cf.* Rom. 1, 6.
[y] *cf.* ch. 13. 1; *cf.* Dan. 7. 2 with Ps. 2. 1.

and to come to one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast until the words of God shall be accomplished."

How good to know, amid all that day of terror, that God is supreme, above all, *in* all, the devices of His enemies! Still "He maketh the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder of it He restraineth." And this is the time which will most fully demonstrate this. It is the day of the Lord upon all the pride of man, to bring it low. It is the day when every refuge of lies shall be swept away and all the vanity of his thoughts shall be exposed. "The idols He shall utterly abolish." Yea, those who have been their slaves shall fling them to the moles and the bats. "And the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." Then the way is prepared for blessing, wide in proportion to the judgment which has introduced it.

There is yet a question which we should consider before passing on, and which affects the whole interpretation already given with regard to Babylon the great. It is being urged with more and more confidence, and by a growing number of prophetic students also, that Babylon here is, after all, *not* Rome, but the ancient city upon the Euphrates, which is to revive in the last days and manifest the old spirit which it had from the beginning. It is plain that the name itself is what has suggested this. Otherwise one would say it would never have found the acceptance which it has. The introduction, to so large an extent, of literalism into the interpretation of Revelation naturally provides for this view a great support. Those who can believe that the new Jerusalem itself is only a great city,—literally 12,000 furlongs in measure, a cube or a pyramid, as it is variously considered, its foundations literal jewels, and all else accordant,—will contend most earnestly that Babylon the great is no other than that so constantly before us in the Old Testament Scriptures. Those, on the other hand, who believe that Revelation is essentially a book of symbols will find in the very name itself a suggestion really the other way. We need rather special proof that the name is literal here, where the beast, the horns, and other surroundings are so manifestly figurative. Then the word "mystery" comes before the name, as if to assure us that there is something deeper than the letter in it. Afterwards, also, we have the warning that, "here is the mind that hath wisdom;" which, again, suggests the care we need in looking at all this. Harlotry is the uniform figure for the departure from God of one in professed spiritual relation to Him. There are two exceptions to this—in the case of Tyre (Isa. xxiii.) and Nineveh (Nahum iii.). These are the only ones to be found in all Scripture, while abundance of quotations could be given from the prophets in which Israel's relation to God is the very *ground* of such charges against a people departed from Him, and violating the relation in which He has brought them to Himself. The woman herself suggests such a thought as this. The woman of the twelfth chapter is not, however, as many take it, the figure of the Christian Church, but rather of Israel, as we have seen. That Babylon here is in contrast with her we need not deny or doubt, and the contrast comes out plainly in the fourteenth chapter, where the 144,000 stand upon mount Zion with the Lamb. Of them it is said, "These are they that were not defiled with women, for they are virgins." Against Babylon of old no such charge as what is here is ever made. Babylon the great is not only a harlot, but the "mother of harlots,"—a term which the lateness of Rome in the world's history, according to some, makes it impossible to apply to her. And this connects itself with the objection derived from the universality of Babylon's rule here, as also with the charge against her of "the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." The answer to this should be plain, that the Lord charges Jerusalem

multitudes, and nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which thou sawest, and the beast, these shall [z]hate the harlot, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and [a]burn her with fire;

[z] *cf.* Jud. 9. 23, 24. *cf.* 2 Ki. 9. 30-37 with ch. 2. 20-23. *cf.* Matt. 5. 13 with ch. 3. 16; *cf.* Ezek. 16. 37-41. [a] *cf.* Lev. 21. 9 with Jas. 4. 4.

in His day in a similar manner; declaring that upon her inhabitants shall come "all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar." "All these things," He declares, "shall come upon this generation" (Matt. xxiii. 35, 36). Certainly, nothing is said of Babylon here that can be stronger than this; and in fact upon any generation that takes up openly the sins of its ancestors, and makes them its own, such things may be said. That is how the Lord speaks of Jerusalem, and that is how the prophet speaks here.

There is no doubt that Babylon the great here is identified *in spirit* with the Babylon of old, and this accounts for the name given to her. There is a real unity in Satan's work from the beginning, while at the same time it develops from age to age, to keep pace with the developing revelation of God. It is this development which is so important here, and which seems to be so much forgotten by those who see here Babylon on the Euphrates. Idolatry is thus connected all through the world's history; and it is sadly interesting to trace in Romanism at the present time the adoption of certain old forms of idolatry, as indeed history assures us it has always, in every land, shown itself ready to ally itself with such things, covering them only with a new and Christian name. Indeed, the account of Babel at the beginning certainly looks forward to that which we find here, but not in the way in which it is represented by many: modern research and fragmentary traditions being woven together to make a history of the Biblical account for which the Bible itself is not responsible. Thus we are told that "the Bible says that it was arranged for the people to make for themselves a 'name'—a *sem*, token, sign, banner, ensign, or mark of confederation, fellowship, and organized unity," and that "that *sem*, or *sema*, was, in the language of the time, a *Sema-Rama*. Thus we have the name of the mythic *Semiramis*, the dove-goddess, which was the ensign of all the Assyrian princes. . . . The symbol of such a name or confederation would naturally, and almost necessarily, take the place of a god, and become the holy mother, the great heavenly protectress," etc., etc. All this is inventing for the Bible, to bring it up to what the Bible is here supposed to say. The thought of the Babel-multitudes, as Scripture in fact gives it, "to make themselves a name" is as simple as possible, and does not permit such things to be read into it.

Scripture is sufficient of itself in all matters of this kind, and its own account of Babylon is surely not lacking. Its typical character has been already remarked upon in its place. All this history in Genesis belongs to a great system of types in which Israel's own history is included, according to the apostle's words, "All these things happened unto them for types, and are written for our instruction upon whom the ends of the ages are come." Thus the history of Israel is repeated in the Church, and the Babylonian captivity of Israel has had sorrowful repetition in that other Babylonian captivity which has left its mark everywhere upon Christendom to-day. These types in history are a result of the fundamental unity of man everywhere, in his weakness, his folly, and his sin, over which there has been always God's controlling hand, acting according to His unity also with His own hand. Scripture gives us the history in such a manner as to bring out the types, and show us God's knowledge of everything and control of everything from the beginning. But if we go outside of Scripture, it is quite possible in such things to follow a false clue, and lose the meaning. In fact, by reverting here to Babylon, as at the beginning, the meaning *is* lost, the end of Christendom as here set before us is obscured. It is not permitted to be apostate Christendom, but a new thing which replaces it, and which is

for God hath put into their hearts to do [b] his mind, and to act with one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God shall be completed. And the woman which thou sawest is the [c] great city that hath sway over the kings of the earth.

[b] *cf.* ch. 18. 8, 20.

[c] ver. 9. *cfr.* Ps. 48. 2.

but a revival of what was at the beginning. In the last phase of things here, it is Babylon herself that is to be set aside in the open revolt against God which follows it. The woman here presents to us what we must not be allowed to miss, the end of the false pretension of the day, after the true Church is removed to heaven. When this is done, Satan is met upon his own ground as manifestly Satan. Only the battle of the great day of the Lord God Almighty remains. The anti-Church is gone, but in its place there is an anti-Christ and anti-God; and man shows what has been in his heart all through, by taking his side against God, under Satan's banner. Thus we have gone back of Babylon itself to where man placed himself at the fall; only now this is done deliberately and after the long, patient trial of centuries. The devil's word, "Ye shall be as God," is now, if possible, to be carried out; and with this open defiance the end comes, of course.

The connection of the woman with the beast is of the greatest importance to consider in all this. The beast is plainly Daniel's fourth beast, however much it may unite in itself at last the characters of those preceding. But Daniel's fourth beast, it is evident, has no successor. It is *Rome*, therefore, that is to be found in power at the end, as Babylon was at the beginning. It is not imperial Babylon that is to be revived, nor is it possible to make room in the prophecy for this. It may be true that the seven heads of the beast, successive as they are plainly, may, as already has been said, begin before Rome, and the Roman beast be seen in this, like the Roman woman, to be but the development of that which began in earliest human history. The beast, though the Roman beast, is only the continuance of the lawless Gentile powers that were from the beginning ever against God. The six heads culminate, as already said, in Rome, before the collapse of the empire. The seventh head is a new imperial head, as seen with its ten horns and as carrying the woman. It is a different form of power, transitional, and thus anomalous, but with the germ in it of the last, so that the whole number of horns is, in another view, only nine. When Christianized, Rome already lost in a sense its beast-character, though still in fact existing. Morally, it was never Christian, and its profession to be this was but a weight upon it, provoking judgment for its profession of the holy name. Thus it went down, as the historical view of Revelation shows, under the war-trumpets. The trumpets begin the history of the Church, when Church and world have become thus one. Thus at last the beast was not, though the "holy Roman empire" remained, as it were, as the ghost of what was departed. When it rises again, it rises in this anomalous condition; but even as it could not continue in this way before, so now its continuance is but "for a short time." The seventh head is wounded to death, and only revived by the power of Satan when now it becomes, as the eighth head, openly apostate, destroying the woman herself, and thus making an end of the corrupt profession upon earth. There now remains only the open war with God and the Lamb.

The connection of Rome, the city, with the Babylonian harlot is easily seen; and it is not, as Auberlen says, "totally at variance with the spirit of this thoroughly symbolical book." He would, with others, even deny the note of identification presented by the seven mountains upon which the woman sitteth. We have been told by another that these could not be even called "mountains;" they were but very small hills; but the Romans, who may be supposed to know their own language best, call them, nevertheless, montes—"mountains;" and it is quite the order of things, as shown in history, that a system of this kind should have a local representation and a name. The city of Rome has long been the centre and head of a corrupted Christianity, and cannot be released

SECTION 2. (Chap. xviii.)
Her judgment.

AFTER these things I saw [d]another angel coming down out of heaven, having great authority; and the earth was [e]lightened with his glory; and he cried with a [f]mighty voice, saying, [g]Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and become the [h]dwelling place of demons and a hold of every unclean spirit, and a hold of every unclean and hateful bird; for all the nations have [i]drunk of the wine of the fury of her fornication; and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her; and the [j]merchants of the earth have become rich by the power of her luxury. And I heard [k]another voice out of heaven saying, [l]Come out of her, my people, that ye [m]partake not of her sins, and that ye re-

d *cf.* ch. 8.3, etc.
e *cf.* ch.10.1. *cf.* Ps. 97. 4. *cf.* Ezek.43. 2.
f ch. 10. 3.
g ch. 14. 8. Is. 21. 9. Jer. 51. 8.
h *cf.* Is.13.21. *cf.* Jer.50.39. *cf.* Jer.51.37.
i ch. 17. 4.
j vers.11,12.
k *cf.* ch.16.7.
l Is. 48. 20. *cf.* Is.52.11. *cf.* Jer.50.8. *cf.* Gen.19. 15, 16. *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 17, 18.
m *cf.* Eph.5. 14.

from the responsibility of this. Thus, in the Lord's day, as all through her history, Jerusalem, on the other hand, has been identified with Israel, and is the sign of their condition at the present time. In the judgment of Babylon which follows here, Rome will assuredly be found to have her part, and to remain, in her utter desolation, such a witness for God as Babylon upon the Euphrates has long been.

Sec. 2.

The eighteenth chapter gives the judgment from the divine side. The question has been naturally raised, Is it another judgment? There is nothing here about beast or horns,—nothing of man's intervention at all,—and there are signs apparently of another and deeper woe than human hands could inflict. It is this last which is most conclusive in the way of argument, and we shall examine it in its place.

Another angel descends out of heaven, having great authority; and the earth is lighted with his glory. Earth is indeed now to be lighted, and with a glory which is not of earth. Babylon is denounced as fallen, not destroyed, as is plain by what follows, but given up to a condition which is a spiritual desolation worse than the physical one of Babylon of old, under which she has long lain, and from which the terms seem derived. She has become the dwelling-place of demons—"knowing ones;" Satan's underlings, with the knowledge of many centuries of acquaintance with fallen men, and serpent-craft to use their knowledge; a "hold of every unclean spirit, and a hold of every unclean and hateful bird." The parable of the mustard-seed comes necessarily to mind; and without confining the words here to that, it is amazing to see how deliberately filthy and impure Rome's system is. She binds her clergy to celibacy, forces them to pollute their minds with the study of every kind of wickedness, and then, by her confessional system, teaches them to pour this out into the minds of those to whom she at once gives them access and power over—and all this in the name of religion!

What has brought a professing Christian body into so terrible a condition as this bespeaks? We are answered here by reference once more to her spiritual fornication with the nations and with the kings of the earth, and to the profit which those make who engage in her religious traffic. As worldly power is before all things her aim, and she has heaven to barter in return for it, the nations easily fall under her sway, and are intoxicated with the "wine of the fury"—the madness—"of her fornication." First of all, it is the masses at which she aims, and only as an expedient to secure these the better, the kings of the earth. Thus she can pose as democratic among democrats, and as the protector of popular rights

ceive not of her plagues: for her sins have been [n]heaped up to heaven, and God hath [o]remembered her unrighteous deeds. [p]Render to her as she also hath rendered, and [q]double to her double according to her works. In the cup which she hath mixed, mix to her double. As much as she hath [r]glorified herself and lived luxuriously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a [s]queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore in [t]one day shall her plagues come: death and sorrow and famine, and she shall be burnt with fire; for [u]strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. And the kings of the earth who have committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her, shall [v]weep and mourn for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for fear of her torment, say-

n cf. Jer. 51. 9. *cf.* Is. 1.11-15.
o ch. 16. 19. *ctr.* Gen. 19. 29.
p cf. Jer. 50. 15, 29. *cf.* Jer. 51. 24, 49.
q cf. Jer. 16. 18. *ctr.* Is. 40. 2. *cf.* Matt. 7. 2.
r cf. Ezek. 28. 2-8. *cf.* ch. 3. 17.
s cf. Is. 47. 7, 8. *cf.* 1 Cor. 4. 8 *ctr.* Lk. 6. 24-26.
t cf. Is. 47. 9; ver. 10; *cf.* ch. 3. 3. *u cf.* Jer. 50. 34; *cf.* Heb. 10. 31. *v cf.* Jer. 50. 46; *ctr.* ver 20.

as against princes. In feudal times the Church alone could fuse into herself all conditions of men, turning the true and free equality of Christians into that which linked all together into vassalage to herself; and so the power grew which was power to debase herself to continually greater depths of evil. Simoniac to the finger-ends, with her it is a settled thing that the "gift of God can be purchased with money." And with her multiplicity of merchandise, which is put here in catalogue, there will naturally be an abundant harvest for brokers. With these, who live by her, she increases her ranks of zealous followers.

Another voice now sounds from heaven—"Come forth from her, My people, that ye partake not of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues; for her sins have heaped themselves to heaven, and God hath remembered her unrighteousness."

Even in Babylon, and thus late therefore, there are those in her who are the people of God. But they are called to separation. Rome is a false system which yet retains what is saving truth. Souls may be saved in it, but the truth it holds cannot save the false system in which it is found. Truth cannot save the error men will ally with it, nor error destroy the truth. There are children of God, alas, that "suffer Jezebel," but Jezebel's true children are another matter: "I will kill them with death" is God's emphatic word. The testing-time comes when the roads that seemed to lie together are found to separate, and then the necessity of separation comes. Truth and error cannot lead to the same place, and he that pursues the road to the end will find what is at the end.

"Recompense to her as she recompensed; according to her works, double to her double: as she hath glorified herself, and lived luxuriously, so much torment and sorrow give her. For she said in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore in one day shall her plagues come on her—death, and sorrow, and famine; and she shall be burned up with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her."

The government of God is equal-handed, and for it the day of retribution cannot be lacking. "God hath remembered" Babylon at last. In truth He never lost sight of her for a moment. But the wheels of His chariot seem often slow in turning, and there is purpose in it: "I gave her space to repent," He says pitifully; but pity is not weakness—nay, it is the consciousness of strength that may make one slow. There is no possibility of escape. No height or depth can hide from Him the object of His search—no greatness, no littleness. The day of reckoning comes at last, and not an item will be dropped from the account.

Then follows the wail of the kings of the earth for her, while they stand off

ing, Woe, woe, the great city Babylon, the mighty city, because in [w]one hour is thy judgment come. And the [x]merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, because no one buyeth their merchandise any more,— [y]merchandise of [z]gold, and [a]silver, and [b]precious stones; and [c]pearls, and [d]fine linen, and [e]purple, and silk, and [f]scarlet; and all thyine wood, and every article of [g]ivory, and every article of most precious wood, and of [h]brass, and of [i]iron, and of marble; and cinnamon, and amomum, and [j]incense,* and unguent, and frankincense, and [k]wine, and oil, and fine [l]flour, and wheat, and [m]cattle, and sheep, and [merchandise] of [n]horses, and chariots, and [o]bodies and souls of men. And the fruits of the lust of thy soul are [p]departed from thee; and all fair and splendid things are perished from thee, and they shall not find them longer at all. The merchants of these things, who were made rich by her, shall [q]stand afar off because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning, saying, Woe, woe, the [r]great city, that was clothed with fine linen and purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls! for in [s]one hour is so great riches become desolate. And every [t]pilot, and every voyager, and sailors, and as many as trade by the sea, stood afar off, and cried, seeing the smoke of her burning, saying, What [city] is like the great city? And they cast [u]dust upon their heads, and cried, weeping and mourning, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, wherein all that had ships in the sea were made rich by reason of her precious things!† for in one hour she is made desolate.

[v]Rejoice over her, heaven, and ye saints, and apostles, and prophets; for [w]God hath judged your judgment upon her.

* A plural. † Literally, "preciousness."

w vers. 17, 19.
x vers. 3,15.
y *cf.* Ezek. 27.
z *ctr.* Ex.25. 1-7. *cf.* Ezek.16. 11-19.
a *ctr.* Ex.38. 25-28.
b *ctr.* Ex.39. 10-13.
c *ctr.* ch. 21. 21.
d *ctr.* ch. 19. 8.
e *ctr.* Ex.26. 1. *ctr.* 1Tim.6. 15.
f *ctr.* ch. 19. 16.
g *ctr.* Ps.45. 8.
h *ctr.* ch. 1. 15.
i *ctr.* Is. 60. 17.
j *ctr.* Is. 6.4. *cf.* Ex.30.38.
k *ctr.* Num. 15. 4, 5.
l *ctr.* Lev.2. 1.
m *ctr.* Lev. 1. 2.
n *ctr.* ch.19. 11, 14.
o *ctr.* Gal.5. 1.
p *cf.* ch. 17. 16.
q vers.10,17.
r ch. 17. 18.
s vers.10,19.
t *cf.* Ezek. 27. 28, 29.
u *cf.* 1 Sam. 4. 12.
v *cf.* Jer. 51. 48. *cf.* Is.44.23. *cf.* ch.12.12.
w *cf.*ch.19.2.

in fear for the calamity that is come upon her, more sentimental than the selfish cry of the merchants, whose business with regard to her has slipped out of their hands. And then comes the detail of it, article by article—all the luxuries of life, each of which has its price, and ending with "slaves, and souls of men." If one had skill to run through the catalogue here, he would doubtless find that each had its meaning; but we cannot attempt this now. The end of the traffic is at hand, and the Canaanite is to be cast out of the house of the Lord.

The lament of so many classes shows by how many links Rome has attached men to herself. Her vaunted unity is large enough to include the most various adaptations to the character of men. From the smoothest and most luxurious life to the hardest and most ascetic, she can provide for all grades, and leave room for large diversities of doctrine also. The suppleness of Jesuitism is only that of her trained athletes, and the elasticity of its ethics is only that of the subtlest ethereal distillation of her spirit. But though she may have allurements even for the people of God, she has yet no link with heaven; and while men are lamenting upon earth, heaven is bidden to rejoice above, because God is judging her with the judgment that saints, and apostles, and prophets, have pronounced upon her.

And a [x]strong angel took up a stone like a great [y]millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall Babylon, the great city, be cast down, and shall be found no more at all; and the [z]voice of harpers and musicians, and flute-players, and trumpeters shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no [a]artificer of any art shall be found any more at all in thee; and the [b]sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; and the [c]light of a lamp shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of [d]bridegroom and bride shall be heard no more at all in thee; for thy [e]merchants were the great men of the earth, for by thy [f]sorcery were all nations led astray. And there was found in her the [g]blood of the prophets and of the saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

x *cf.* ch.10.1.
y *cf.* Jer. 51. 63, 64.
z *cf.* Is. 24.8. *ctr.* ch.14.1-3.
a *cf.* Lk. 17. 28.
b *cf.* Jer. 24. 10. *cf.* Eccl.12. 4.
c *ctr.* ch. 22. 5.
d *cf.* Jer. 16. 9. *ctr.* ch. 19. 7, 8.
e *cf.* Is. 23.8.
f *cf.* Nah. 3. 4. Prov. 9. 13-18.
g ch. 17. 6. *cf.* 1 Ki. 18. 4 with ch. 2. 20.

Finally, and reminding us of the prophetic action as to her prototype, "a strong angel took up a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with a mighty fall shall Babylon the great city be cast down, and shall be found no more at all." And then comes the extreme announcement of her desolation. Not merely shall her merchandise be no more, there shall be no sign of life at all—no pleasant sound, no mechanic's craft, no menial work, no light of lamp, no voice of bridegroom or of bride; and then the reason of her doom is again given; "For thy merchants were the princes of the earth; for with thy sorcery were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that have been slain upon the earth."

Interpretation is hardly needed in all this. The detail of judgment seems intended rather to fix the attention and give us serious consideration of what God judges at last in this unsparing way. Surely it is needed now, when Christian men are being taken with the wiles of one who in a day of conflict and uncertainty can hold out to them a rest which is not Christ's rest; who, in the midst of defection from the faith, can be the champion of orthodoxy while shutting up the Word of Life from men; who can be all things to all men, not to save, but to destroy them; at such a time, how great a need is there for pondering her doom as the word of prophecy declares it, and the joy of heaven over the downfall of the sorceress at last!

Heaven, indeed, is full of joy, and gratulation, and worship: "After these things, I heard, as it were, a great voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, Hallelujah! salvation, and honor, and glory, and power, belong to our God; for true and righteous are His judgments; for He hath judged the great harlot which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand. And a second time they say, Hallelujah! And her smoke goeth up for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshiped God, saying, Amen: hallelujah!"

We may now briefly discuss the question of how far there is indication here of a divine judgment apart from what is inflicted by the wild beast and its horns. These, we have read, "shall hate the harlot, and shall make her desolate and naked, and eat her flesh, and burn her up with fire." In the present chapter we have again, "And she shall be burned up with fire; for strong is the Lord God who hath judged her." The kings of the earth "wail over her when they look upon the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for the fear of her torment." And so with the merchants and the mariners. And finally we read, "Her smoke goeth up for ever and ever." Nothing in all this forces us to think of a special divine judgment outside of what is inflicted by human instruments,

except the last. The last statement, I judge, does. It cannot but recall to our minds what is said of the worshipers of the beast and false prophet in the fourteenth chapter, where the same words are used; but this is not a judgment on earth at all; could, indeed, "her smoke goeth up for ever and ever" be said of any earthly judgment? The words used are such as strictly imply eternity: no earthly judgment can endure in this way; and the language does not permit the idea that the persistency is only that of the effects. No, it is eternity ratifying the judgment of time, as it surely will do; and it is only when we have taken our place, as it were, amid the throng in heaven that this is seen.

But thus, then, we seem to have here no positive declaration of any judgment of Babylon on earth, save by the hands of the last head of western empire and his kings. Yet the eighteenth chapter, we have still to remember, says nothing of these kings: all is from God absolutely, and at least they are not considered. It has been also suggested that it is the "city" rather than the woman (the ecclesiastical system) that is before us in this chapter; but much cannot be insisted on as to this, seeing that the identification of the woman with the city is plainly stated in the last verse of the previous one, and also that the terms even here suppose their identity.

On the other side, there is in fact no absolute identity; nor is it difficult to think of the destruction of the religious system without its involving at all that of the city; nor, again, would one even suppose that the imperial head, with his subordinates, would utterly destroy the ancient seat of his own empire. Here a divine judgment, strictly and only that, taking up and enforcing the human one as of God, becomes at least a natural thought, and worthy of consideration.

Outside of the book of Revelation, Scripture is in full harmony with this. The millennial earth, as we may have occasion to see again, when we come to speak more of it, is certainly to have witnesses of this kind to the righteous judgment of God upon the objects of it. In it, as it were, heaven and hell are both to be represented before the eyes of men, that they may be fully warned of the wrath to come. During the present time, it is objected, there is not sufficient witness; in the Millennium, therefore, there shall be no room left for doubt. Therefore, while the cloud and fire rest as of old, but with wider stretch, as of sheltering wings, over Jerusalem (Isa. iv. 5, 6; comp. Matt. xxii. 37), we have on the other side the open witness of the judgment upon trangressors which the Lord Himself renders, as a type of the deeper judgment beyond (Isa. lxvi. 23, 24; comp. Mark ix. 43–50).

Besides this, Edom remains desolate, and, to come near to what is before us, Babylon also (Isa. xiii. 20; xxxiv. 9, 10). How suitable that Rome, the seat of a power far worse, and of far greater significance, should be so visited! Such a judgment would fill out the prophecy most fully and exactly. What a picture of eternal judgment is that of Idumea, in that "year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion"! "And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up forever." Rome is the great Edom, as it is the great Babylon; and it would be really strange if there were not to be in her case a similar recompense. Barnes quotes from a traveler in Italy in 1850 what is only a striking confirmation of the story told by all who with eyes open have visited the country: "I behold everywhere, in Rome, near Rome, and through the whole region from Rome to Naples, the most astounding proofs, not merely of the possibility, but the probability, that the whole region of central Italy will one day be destroyed by such a catastrophe. The soil of Rome is *tufa*, with a volcanic subterranean action going on. At Naples the boiling sulphur is to be seen bubbling near the surface of the earth. When I drew a stick along the ground, the sulphurous smoke followed the indentation. . . . The entire country and district is volcanic. It is saturated with beds of sulphur and the substrata of destruction. It seems as

SECTION 3. (Chap. xix. 1-10.)
The Marriage of the Lamb.

AFTER these things, I heard as the loud [h] voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, 'Hallelujah; the salvation and glory and power of our God! for [i] true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great [k] harlot who corrupted the earth by her fornication; and hath [l] avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, [m] Hallelujah. And her [n] smoke ascendeth up to the ages of ages. And the [o] four and twenty elders and the four living beings fell down and worshiped God who sitteth upon the throne, saying, Amen, Hallelujah. And there came out a [p] voice from the throne, saying: [q] Praise our God, all ye servants of His who fear him, small and great. And I heard as the voice of a [r] great multitude, and as the voice of [s] many waters, and as the voice of mighty [t] thunders, saying, [u] Hallelujah, for the Lord our God the Almighty hath reigned. Let us [v] rejoice and be glad, and give him glory; for the [w] marriage of the Lamb hath come, and his wife hath [x] made herself ready. And there was [y] given to her that she should

h ch. 18. 20. ch. 11. 15.
i *cf.* Ps. 148. 1, etc. ch. 12. 10.
j ch. 15. 3. ch. 16. 7. Ps. 96. 13.
k ch. 17. 1.
l *cf.* ch. 6. 10. *cf.* Lk. 18. 7, 8.
m ver. 1.
n ch. 18. 9, 18. *cf.* Mk. 9. 48.
o ch. 5. 14.
p *cf.* ch. 18. 4.
q *cf.* Ps. 134. 1.
r ver. 1. *cf.* ch. 7. 9. *cf.* Heb. 12. 22.
s ch. 14. 2.
t *cf.* Ex. 20. 18.
u ch. 11. 15, 17. *cf.* Ps. 97. 1, etc.
v *ctr.* ch. 18. 19.
w *cf.* 2 Cor. 11. 2. *cf.* Eph. 5. 25–27.
x *ctr.* Tit. 3. 5; *ctr.* Phil. 3. 9; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 9; *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 12–15. *y* *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 10.

certainly prepared for the flames as the wood and coal on the hearth are prepared for the taper which shall kindle the fire to consume them. The divine hand alone seems to me to hold the fire in check by a miracle as great as that which protected the cities of the plain till the righteous Lot had made his escape to the mountains."

That Rome's doom will be as thus indicated we may well believe. And it is in awful suitability that she that has kindled so often the fire for God's saints should thus be herself a monumental fire of His vengeance in the day in which He visits for these things!

Sec. 3.

The harlot is now judged. The judgment of the whole earth is at hand. Before it comes, we are permitted a brief vision of heavenly things, and to see the heirs of the kingdom now ready to be established in their place with Him who is about to be revealed. A voice sounds from the throne: "Give praise to our God, all ye His servants—ye that fear Him, small and great." It is not, of course, a simple exhortation to what in heaven can need no prompting, but a preparation of hearts for that which shall furnish fresh material for it. The response of the multitude shows what it is: "Halleluiah! for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth." The power that was always His, He is now going to put forth. Judgment is to return to righteousness. Man's day is at an end, with all the confusion that his will has wrought. The day of the Lord is come, to abase that which is high and exalt that which is low, and restore the foundations of truth and righteousness.

The false church, that would have antedated the day of power, and reigned without her Lord, has been already dealt with; and now the way is clear to display the true Bride. "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready." But the Church has been some time since caught up to meet the Lord: how is it that only now she is "ready"? In the application of the blood of Christ, and the reception of the best robe, fit for the Father's house assuredly, if any could be, she was *then* quite ready. Likeness to her Lord was

be [z]clothed with fine linen, bright [and] pure; for the fine linen is the [a]righteousnesses of the saints. And he saith unto me, Write, [b]Blessed are they who are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the [c]true words of God. And I [d]fell before his feet to worship him, and he saith unto me, See thou do it not. I am [e]fellow-servant with thyself and thy brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God: for the [f]testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

z *cf.* ch. 3. 4. *ctr.* Lk. 15. 22. *cf.* Ps. 45. 13.
a *cf.* Heb. 6. 10. *cf.* 1 Tim. 2. 9, 10.
b *cf.* Lk. 14. 15.
c ch. 21. 5. ch. 22. 6.
d ch. 22. 8, 9. *cf.* Acts 10. 25, 26.
e *cf.* Heb. 1. 14.
f *cf.* Eph. 1. 9, 10; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 10–12.

completed when the glorified bodies of the saints were assumed, and they were caught up to meet Him in the air. The eyes from which nothing could be hid have already looked upon her, and pronounced her faultless: "Thou art all fair, My love: there is no spot in thee." What, then, can be wanting to hinder the marriage? A matter of divine government, not of divine acceptance; and this is the book of divine government. Earth's history has to be rehearsed, the account given, the verdict rendered, as to all "deeds done in the body." Every question that could be raised must find its settlement: the light must penetrate through and through, and leave no part dark. We must enter eternity with lessons all learnt, and God fully glorified about the whole course of our history.

What follows explains fully this matter of readiness: "And it was given unto her that she should array herself in fine linen, bright and pure; for the fine linen is the *righteous acts* of the saints." We see by the language that it is grace that is manifest in this award. We learn by a verse in the last chapter *how* grace has manifested itself: "Blessed are they that have *washed their robes* (R. V.), that they may have right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city." But what could wash deeds *already done?* Plainly no reformation, no "water-washing by the Word" (Eph. v. 26). The deed done cannot be undone; and no well-doing for the future can blot out the record of it. What, then, can wash such garments? Revelation itself, though speaking of another company, has already given us the knowledge of this: "They have washed their robes, and made them white *in the blood of the Lamb*" (chap. vii. 14). Thus the value of that precious blood is found with us to the end of time, and in how many ways of various blessing!

It is not, then, the best robe for the Father's house: *that* robe never needs washing. It is for the kingdom, for the world, in the governmental ways of God with men, that this fine linen is granted to the saints. Yet they take their place in it at the marriage supper of the Lamb; for Christ's love it is that satisfies itself with the recognition and reward of all that has been *done for love of Him.* This is what finds reward; and thus the hireling principle is set aside.

"And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they that are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb!" Blessed indeed are they that are bidden *now!* Alas, they may despise the invitation. But how blessed are they who, when that day comes, are found among the bidden ones! I leave for the present the question of who exactly make up the company of those that form the Bride; but the Bride assuredly sits at the marriage supper, and the plural here is what one could alone expect in such an exclamation as this. There seems, therefore, no ground in such an expression for distinguishing separate companies as the Bride and the "friends of the Bridegroom." The latter expression is used by the Baptist in a very different application, as assuredly *he* had no thought of any bride save Israel.

"And he said unto me, These are the true words of God." Of such blessedness, it would seem, even the heart of the apostle needed confirmation. Then,

SECTION 4. (Chap. xix. 11-xx. 3.)

The prostration of the world-powers.

1 (xix. 11-16): The King of kings with the sceptre of righteousness.

1. AND I saw [g] heaven opened, and behold, a [h] white horse; and he that sat upon him is called, [i] Faithful and True; and in righteousness he judgeth and [j] maketh war. And his [k] eyes were as a flame of fire, and upon

[g] *cf.* Matt. 3. 16. *cf.* Acts 7. 55, 56. [h] *ctr.* ch. 6. 2. *cf.* Ps. 45. 4. *ctr.* Matt. 21. 2-5. [i] *cf.* ch. 3. 7, 14; ch. 1. 5. [j] *cf.* Ex. 15. 3; *cf.* Ps. 24. 8. [k] ch. 1. 14.

as if overcome by the rapture of the vision, "I fell down at his feet," says John, "to worship him. And he saith unto me, See thou do it not: I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

All prophecy owns thus and honors Jesus as its subject. All that own Him the highest only, the most earnestly refuse other honor than that of being servants together of His will and grace. How our hearts need to be enlarged to take in His supreme glory! and how ready are we in some way, if not in this, to share the glory which is His alone with some creature merely! Rome's coarse forms of worship to saints and angels is only a grosser form of what we are often doing, and for which rebuke will in some way come; for God is jealous of any impairment of His rights, and we of necessity put ourselves in opposition to the whole course of nature as we derogate from these. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols."

Sec. 4.

We are now carried back to the earth, to see what in fact is mercy to the earth, in the complete humiliation of the power which has been so long holding it back from God, and therefore from blessing. For thus not only the "kings of the earth upon the earth" must be humbled, but he also who has assumed so long, and usurped with such apparent success, the title of "prince of this world." Isaiah sees along with him all his rebellious following, and thus speaks of "the host of the high ones that are on high;" but in Revelation, according to its manner, Satan himself stands for the whole of this. They are summed up in him whose will they have implicitly obeyed and been molded by. For those that have manifested most their independence of God only thus show, not their liberty, but their complete subservience to another, whose service has in it no freedom at all, but most degrading slavery. The "stronger than he" has now come, and he is cast down, although this does not even yet end his history. The full tale of creature mutability has not even yet been told, and therefore the full end is not yet reached. But Christ has come, and His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom: through all, the reins of His power are not yet relaxed.

1. The prophecy pauses not further now to dilate upon the blessing. There is needed work to be done before we can enter upon this; and the work is the "strange work" of judgment. The vision that follows is as simple as can be to understand, if there are no thoughts of our own previously in the mind to obscure and make it difficult. And this is the way in which constantly Scripture *is* obscured.

Revelation, as the closing book of the inspired Word, supposes indeed acquaintance with what has preceded it, and the links with other prophecy are here especially abundant. The kingdom of Christ is the final theme of the Old Testament, upon which all prophetic lines converge; and the judgment which introduces it is over and over again set before us. The appearing of the Lord, and His personal presence to execute this, are also so insisted on that nothing but the infatuation of other hopes could prevail to hide it from men's eyes. In the New Testament the same thing faces us continually. As we are not considering it for the first time here, it will be sufficient to examine what is in the passage before us, with whatever connection it may have with other scriptures, needful to bring out fully the meaning of it.

his head [l]many diadems, and he hath a name written which [m]no one knoweth but he himself; and he was clothed with a garment [n]dipped in blood; and his name is called The [o]Word of God. And the [p]armies which are in heaven followed him upon white horses, [q]clothed with fine linen, white [and] pure. And out of his mouth goeth a [r]sharp [two-edged] * sword, that with it he may smite the nations; and he shall [s]rule † them with

l *cf.* Heb. 2. 9. *cf.* Eph. 1. 22.
m *cf.* vers. 13, 16. *cf.* Matt. 11. 27. *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 16.
n *cf.* Is. 63. 2, 3.
o Jno. 1. 1.
p *cf.* Jude 14, 15. *cf.* 1 Thess. 3. 13; *cf.* 2 Thess. 1. 7-10; *cf.* Ps. 149. 6-9.
q *cf.* ver. 8.
r ver. 21; ch. 1. 16; *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 8.
s Ps. 2. 9; ch. 12. 5.

* Many omit. † Literally, "shepherd."

Heaven is seen opened, the prophet's standpoint being therefore now on earth, and a white horse appears, the familiar figure of war and victory. It is upon the Rider that our eyes are fixed. He is called "Faithful and True,"—known manifestly to be that,—and in righteousness He judges and wars; His warring is but itself a judgment. For this His eyes penetrate as a flame of fire; nothing escapes them. Many diadems—the sign of absolute authority—are on His head. And worthily, for His name in its full reality—name expressing (as always in Scripture) nature—is an incommunicable one, beyond the knowledge of finite creatures. But His vesture is dipped in blood, for already many enemies have fallen before Him. And His name is called—has been and is, as the language implies—"The Word of God." The Gospel of John shows us that in creation already He was acting as that; and now in judgment He is no less so.

Is this revealed name anything else than His incommunicable one? It would seem not. The thought would appear to be in direct refutation of the skeptical denial of the knowledge of the Infinite One as possible to man. We cannot know infinity, but we can know the One who is infinite—yea, know Him to *be* infinite: know His name, and not know His name. The infinite One, moreover, Christ is declared here to be—no inferior God, but the Highest.

In the power of this, He now comes forth; the armies that are in heaven following their white-horsed Leader, themselves also upon white horses, sharers with Him in the conflict and the victory, clothed in fine linen, white and pure. It is this fine linen which we have just seen as granted to the Bride, and which needed the blood of the Lamb to make it white. It is therefore undoubtedly the same company here as there; only here seen in a new aspect, even as the Lord Himself is seen in a new one. It is communion with Himself that is implied in this change of character. What He is occupied with, they are occupied with; what is His mind, is their mind: so, blessed be God, it will be entirely then. None then will be ignorant of His will; none indifferent or half-hearted as to it. Alas, *now* to how much of it are even the many willingly strangers! and it is the "willing ignorance" that is so invincible: for all else there is a perfect remedy in the word of God; but what for a back turned upon that Word?

The Lord comes, then, and all the saints with Him. How impossible to think of a providential coming merely here! "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear," says the apostle, "then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 4). "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?" he asks elsewhere. Judgment is now impending: "out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He may smite the nations." So Isaiah: "He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked" (chap. xi. 4). It needs but a word from Him to cause their destruction; while it is judgment no less *according* to His word: it is that long and oft-threatened, slow to come, but at last coming in the full measure of the denunciation. Patience is not repentance.

"And He shall rule them with an iron rod"—"shepherd" them, to use a scarcely English expression. This is, of course, the fulfilment of the prophecy

a rod of iron; and he treadeth the [t]wine-press of the indignation of the wrath of God the Almighty. And he hath upon his garment and upon his thigh a name written, [u]King of kings and Lord of lords.

2 (xix. 17-21): The destruction of those who destroy the earth.

2. And I saw an [v]angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the [w]birds that fly in mid-heaven, Come hither, gather yourselves to the [x]great supper of God, that ye may [y]eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and of those that sit upon them, and the flesh of all men, [z]free and bond, and small and great. And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies [a]gathered together to make war with him that sat upon the horse and his army. And the [b]beast was taken, and with him the [c]false prophet who did signs before him, by which he led astray those that received the mark of the beast, and those that worshiped his image. The two were

[t] ch. 14. 20. Is. 63. 3, 6. cf. Matt. 21. 44.
[u] ch. 17. 14. ch. 1. 5.
[v] cf. ch. 18. 1, etc.
[w] cf. Jer. 12. 9. cf. Ezek. 39. 17–20. cf. Lk. 17. 37.
[x] ctr. ver. 9. ctr. Lk. 14. 16, etc. cf. Is. 34. 6, 7.
[y] cf. Dan. 7. 5. cf. Ezek. 32. 21–31.
[z] cf. ch. 20. 12.
[a] cf. Ps. 2. 1, 2.
[b] ch. 13. 1, etc.
[c] ch. 13. 11, etc.

of the second psalm, and decides against the still retained "break them" of the Revised Version. It is the shepherd's rod—this rod of iron, used in behalf of the flock: as He says in Isaiah again, "The day of vengeance is in My heart, and the year of My redeemed is come; and I looked, and there was none to help, and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore Mine own arm brought salvation unto Me; and My fury, it upheld Me" (chap. lxiii. 4, 5). This is distinctly in answer to the question, "Wherefore art Thou red in Thine apparel, and Thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat?" and to which He answers, "I have trodden the wine-press alone." Here, also, "He treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

Would it be believed that commentators have referred this to the cross, and the Lord's own sufferings there?* And yet it is so; though the iron rod, with which the treading of the wine-press is associated in this place, is something that is promised to the overcomer in Thyatira (chap. ii. 27)—"To him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, even as I received of My Father." We have but, with an honest mind, to put a few texts together after this manner, and all difficulty disappears.

"And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written—King of kings, and Lord of lords."

2. Now, in terrible contrast to the invitation lately given to the marriage-supper of the Lamb, an angel standing in the sun bids the birds of the heaven to the "great supper of God," to feast upon earth's proudest, and all their following. Immediately after this, the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, are seen gathered together to make war against Him who sits upon the horse, and against His army. We are no doubt to interpret this according to the Lord's words to Saul of Tarsus—"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *Me?*" But we have seen the idol thrust into Jehovah's temple, and know well that Israel's persecutors rage openly against Israel's God. They are taken thus banded in rebellion, and judgment sweeps them down; the beast and the false prophet that wrought miracles before him (the antichristian second beast of the thirteenth chapter) being exempted from the common death, only to be cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone, where at the end of the thousand years of the saints' reign with Christ we find them still.

* Where He was trodden down could not be the place where He treads down His adversaries, though their rejection of Him there is what calls for this judgment. The blood of Christ *now* speaks of better things than that of Abel; but when the day of grace is past, it will call for vengeance on those who despise it.—S. R.

cast [d]alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone; and the rest were [e]slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which [sword] proceeded out of his mouth; and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

3 (xx. 1-3): The seal upon Satan.

3. And I saw an [f]angel coming down from heaven, having the [g]key of the abyss, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the [h]dragon, the [i]ancient serpent, which is the [j]devil and [k]Satan, and [l]bound

d *cf.* ch. 20. 10. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 8. *cf.* Num. 16. 26-34.
e *cf.* Ps. 45. 5.
f *cf.* ch. 12. 7.
g *cf.* ch. 1. 18. *ctr.* ch. 9. 1, 11.
h ch. 12. 9.
i Gen. 3. 1.
j 1 Pet. 5. 8.
k *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 3 with Matt. 16. 23.
l *cf.* ch. 12. 12; *cf.* Matt. 12. 29 with Heb. 2. 14.

The vision is so clear in meaning that it really has no need of an interpreter; and we should remember this as to a vision, that it is not *necessarily* even symbolic, though symbols may have their place in it, as here with the white horses of that before us, while the horses whose flesh the birds eat are not at all so. The "beast and the kings of the earth" furnish us with the same juxtaposition of figure and fact, the figure not at all hindering the general literality of fact. In these prophecies of coming judgment, the mercy of God would not permit too thick a veil over the solemn truth. This is the end to which the world is hastening now, and God is proportionally taking off the veil from the eyes upon which it has been lying, that there may be a more urgent note of warning given as it draws nigh. "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

3. The judgment upon living men is followed by that upon Satan their prince, though not yet is it final judgment. This partial dealing with the great deceiver means that the end of man's trial is not even yet reached. He is shut up in the abyss, or bottomless pit, of which we have read before, but not in hell (the lake of fire). As restraint, it is complete; and with the devil, the host of fallen angels following him share his sentence. This is not merely an inference, however legitimate. Isaiah has long before anticipated what is here, as we have seen (chap. xxiv. 21–23) "And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days they shall be visited. Then the moon shall be confounded and the sun ashamed; for the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously."

Here the contemporaneous judgment of men and angels at the beginning of the Millennium is clearly revealed, and just as clearly that it is not yet final. The vision in Revelation is also clear. The descent of the angel with the key and chain certainly need not obscure the meaning. Nor could the shutting up of Satan mean anything less than the stoppage of all temptation for the time indicated. The "dragon," too, is the symbol for the explanation of which we are (as in the twelfth chapter) referred to Eden, "the ancient serpent," and then are told plainly, "who is the devil and Satan." It is simply inexcusable to make the interpretation of the symbol still symbolic, and to make the greater stand for the less—Satan the symbol of an earthly empire, or anything of the sort. What plainer words could be used? which Isaiah's witness also abundantly confirms. God has been pleased to remove all veil from His words here, and it does look as if only wilful perversity could misunderstand His speech.

That after all this he is to be let out to deceive the nations is no doubt, at first sight, hard to understand. It is all right to inquire reverently why it should be; and Scripture, if we have learnt Peter's way of putting it together,—no prophecy to be interpreted as apart from the general body of prophecy,—will give us satisfactory, if solemn, answer. The fact is revealed, if we could give no reason for it. Who are we, to judge God's ways? and with which of us must He take counsel? It should be plain that for a thousand years Satan's tempta-

him a [m]thousand years; and cast him into the [n]abyss, and shut him up, and set a [o]seal upon him, that he should [p]lead astray the nations no more until the thousand years should be completed. After this he must be loosed a [q]little season.

m *cf.* vers. 4, 5. *cf.* Matt. 13. 41 with Ps. 101. 7, 8. *cf.* Ps. 72. 5. *cf.* Is. 65. 20, 22.
n ch. 9. 1, 2. *ctr.* ver. 10. *cf.* Jude 6.
o *cf.* Dan. 6. 17. *cf.* Matt. 27. 64-66.
p ver. 8. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 4. ch. 12. 9.
q ver. 7.

SUBDIVISION 7. (Chaps. xx. 4-xxii.)

The Consummation.

1 (xx. 4-6): The first resurrection and reign of the saints.

1. AND I saw [r]thrones, and they sat on them, and [s]judgment was given to them; and [I saw] the [t]souls of those that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God, and such as had not [u]wor-

r *cf.* Dan. 7. 9 with Matt. 19. 28; *cf.* ch. 3. 21. s *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 2, 3; *cf.* Dan. 7. 22; *cf.* Ps. 149. 6-9.
t *cf.* ch. 6. 9-11. u ch. 13. 15-17; ch. 14. 9-13.

tions cease upon the earth; and then they are renewed and successful—the nations are once more deceived.

What makes it so difficult to understand is that many have a false idea of the millennial age, as if it were "righteousness *dwelling*" on the earth, instead of "righteousness *reigning*" over it. It is said indeed of Israel, after they are brought to God nationally, "My people shall be *all* righteous" (Isa. lx. 21); but that is not the general condition. The eighteenth psalm, speaking prophetically of that time, declares, "The strangers shall submit themselves unto Me," which in the margin is given as "lie," or "yield feigned obedience." They submit to superior power, not in heart, and so it is added, "The strangers shall fade away, and be afraid out of their close places." (Comp. lxvi. 3; lxxxi. 15.) And Isaiah, speaking of the long length of years, says, "The child shall die a hundred years old," but adds, "and the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed" (lxv. 20). So Zechariah pronounces the punishment of those who do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the glorious King (xiv. 17).

The Millennium is not eternal blessedness; it is not the Sabbath, to which so many would compare it. It answers rather to the sixth day than the seventh—to the day when the man and woman (types of Christ and the Church) are set over the other creatures. The seventh is the type of the rest of God, which is the only true rest of the people of God (Heb. iv. 9). The Millennium is the last period of man's trial, and that is not rest: trial in circumstances the best that could be imagined—righteousness reigning, the course of the world changed, heaven open overhead, the earth filled with the knowledge of the glory of God, the history of past judgment to admonish for the future: the question will then be fully answered whether sin is the mere fruit of ignorance, bad government, or any of the accidents of life to which it is so constantly imputed. Alas, the issue, after a thousand years of blessing, when Satan is loosed out of his prison, will make all plain; the last lesson as to man will only then be fully learned!

SUBD. 7.

1. And now we have what requires more knowledge of the Word to understand it rightly; but here also, more distinctly than before, there are visions and the interpretation of the vision, so that we will be inexcusable if we confound them. The vision is of thrones, and people sitting on them, judgment (that is, rule) being put into their hands. "The souls of those beheaded for the witness of Jesus and the word of God" are another company separate from these, but now associated with them; and "those who have not worshiped the beast" seem to be still another. All these live and reign with Christ a thousand years, and the rest of the dead do not live till the thousand years are ended. That is the vision. The interpretation follows; "this," we are told, "is the first resurrection;" and that "blessed and holy is he who hath part in the first resurrection: upon these the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."

shiped the beast nor his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they [v]lived and [w]reigned with Christ a thousand years. The [x]rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years

[v] *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 11. *cf.* John 5. 28, 29. [w] 2 Tim. 2. 12.

cf. Rom. 8. 17; *cf.* ch. 3. 21; *cf.* ch. 22. 5. [x] *cf.* ver. 12; *ctr.* Lk. 14. 14.

We must look carefully at all this, and in its order. First, the thrones, and those sitting on them: there should be no difficulty as to who these are, for we have already seen the elders crowned and seated in heaven, and before that have heard the Lord promise the overcomer in Laodicea that he should sit with Him upon His throne. That being now set up upon the earth, we find the saints throned with Him. In the interpretation it is said they reign with Him a thousand years. The vision is thus far very simple.

Daniel has already spoken of these thrones: "I beheld," he says, "till the thrones were placed" (as the R. V. rightly corrects the common one) "and the Ancient of Days did sit" (chap. vii. 9). But there was then no word as to the occupants of the thrones. It is the part of Revelation to fill in the picture on its heavenly side, and to show us who these are. They are not angels, who, though there may be "principalities" among them, are never said to reign with Christ. They are redeemed men—the saints caught up at the descent of the Lord into the air (1 Thess. iv.), and who, as the armies that were in heaven, we have seen coming with the white-horsed King to the judgment of the earth.

This being so, it is evident that the "souls" next spoken of are a separate company from these, though joined to them as co-heirs of the kingdom. The folly that has been taught that they are "souls" simply, so that here we have a resurrection of *souls* and not of bodies,—together with that which insists that it is a resurrection of truths or principles, or of a martyr-"spirit,"—bursts like a bubble when we take into account the first company of living and throned saints. In the sense intended, Scripture never speaks of a resurrection of *souls*. "Soul" is here used for "person," as we use it still, and as Scripture often uses it; and the word "resurrection" is found, not in the vision, where its signification might be doubtful, but in the explanation, where we have no right to take it as other than literal. What is the use of explanation, except to explain?

The recognition of the first company here also removes another difficulty which troubled those with whom the "blessed hope" revived at the end of the eighteenth century—that the first resurrection consisted wholly of *martyrs*. The *second* company does indeed consist of these, and for an evident reason. They are those who, converted after the Church is removed to heaven, would have their place naturally in earthly blessing with Israel and the saved nations. Slain for the Lord's sake, during the tribulation following, they necessarily are deprived of this: only to find themselves, in the mercy of God, made to fill a higher place, and to be added, by divine power raising them from the dead, to the *heavenly* saints. How sweet and comforting this assurance as to the sufferers in a time of unequaled sorrow!

When we look further at this last company, we find, as already intimated, that it also consists of two parts: first, of those martyred in the time of the seals, and spoken of under the fifth seal; and secondly, the objects of the beast's wrath, as in chapter xiii. 7, 15. This particularization is a perfect proof of who are embraced in this vision, and that we must look to those first seen as sitting on the thrones for the whole multitude of the saints of the present and the past. To all of which it is added that "the rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were finished"—when we find, in fact, the resurrection of judgment taking place (vers. 11–15). All ought to be simple, then. The "first resurrection" is a literal resurrection of all the dead in Christ from the foundation of the world; a certain group, which might seem not to belong to it, being specialized, as alone needing this. The first resurrection is "first" simply in

were completed. This is the [y] first resurrection: [a] blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; over these the [a] second death hath no authority, but they shall be [b] priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

cf. Ps. 32. 1 with John 11. 25, 26. *a* ver. 14; ch. 2. 11; *cf.* Rom. 6. 23; *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 56; *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 10. *b* ch. 1. 6; *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 5, 9.

y cf. Phil. 3. 11. *cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 16. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 23, 51-57. *z cf.* ch. 14. 13.

contrast with that of the wicked, having different stages indeed, but only one character: "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection! upon such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."

To suppose that this passage stands alone and unsupported in the New Testament is to be ignorant of much that is written. "Resurrection *from* the dead" as distinct from the general truth of "resurrection *of* the dead" is special New Testament truth. The Pharisees knew that there should be a resurrection *of* the dead, both of the just and unjust (Acts xxiv. 15); but when the Lord spoke of the Son of man rising *from* the dead, the disciples question among themselves what the rising from the dead could mean (Mark ix. 9, 10). Christ's own resurrection is the pattern of the believer's. The "order" of the resurrection is distinctly given us: "Christ the first-fruits; afterward *they that are Christ's* at His coming" (1 Cor. xv. 23): not a general, but a selective resurrection. Such was what the apostle would by any means gain: not, as in the common version, "the resurrection *of*" but "the resurrection *from* the dead" (Phil. iii. 11).

In his epistle to the Thessalonians the same apostle instructs us more distinctly as to it, speaking in the way of special revelation by "the word of the Lord:" "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent"—or, as the R. V., "precede"—"them that are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. iv. 15–17). Thus, before He appears shall His saints be with Him; and of course, long before the resurrection of the lost.

But the Lord Himself has given us, in His answer to the Sadducees, what most clearly unites with this vision in Revelation (Luke xx. 34–36). They had asked Him, of one who had married seven brethren, "whose wife shall she be in the resurrection?" meaning, of course, to discredit it by the suggestion. "And Jesus said unto them, The children of this world marry and are given in marriage; but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection *from* the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."

Clearly this asserts the fact, and gives the character of the special resurrection which the vision here describes. It is one which we must be "accounted worthy" to obtain, not one which nobody can miss; it is grace that acts in giving any one his place in it. Those who have part in it are by that fact proclaimed to be "the children of God;" thus again showing that it cannot be a general one. They die no more; that is (as here), they are not hurt of the second death. They are equal to the angels: above the fleshly conditions of this present life. Finally, it is the resurrection *from* the dead, not *of* the dead merely. All this is so plain that there should be no possibility of mistaking it, one would say; and yet it is no plainer than this scene in Revelation.

How dangerous must be the spell of a false system, which can so blind the eyes of multitudes of truly godly and otherwise intelligent persons to the plain

2 (xx. 7-15): The second death.

2. And when the thousand years shall be completed, Satan shall be [c]loosed out of his prison, and shall go forth to [d]lead astray the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, [e]Gog and Magog, to gather them together unto the [f]war, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and surrounded the [g]camp of the saints and the [h]beloved city; and [i]fire came down [from God] * out of heaven and devoured them. And the devil that

c ver. 3. *cf.* 2 Chron. 32. 31 with Dan. 5. 27.
d *cf.* John 3. 7. *ctr.* 1 John 5. 18.
e *ctr.* Ezek. 38. 2, etc.
f *cf.* Rom. 8. 7. *cf.* Isa. 26. 10.
g *cf.* Ezek. 38. 9, 16.

* Some omit.

cf. Isa. 8. 8; *cf.* Is. 59. 19. h *cf.* Ezek. 48. 35; *cf.* Hos. 2. 19; *cf.* Isa. 62. 1-5. i *ctr.* ch. 13. 13; *cf.* Gen. 19. 24 with Ps. 11. 6.

meaning of such scriptures as these: and how careful should we be to test everything we receive by the Word, which alone is truth! Even the "wise" virgins slumbered with the rest; which shows us also, however, that error is connected with a spiritual condition, even in saints themselves. May we be kept from all that would thus cloud our perception of what, as truth, alone has power to bless and sanctify the soul!

2. Of the millennial earth, not even the slightest sketch is given us here. The book of Revelation is the closing book of prophecy, with the rest of which we are supposed to be familiar; and it is the *Christian* book, which supplements it with the addition of what is heavenly. Thus the reign of the heavenly saints has just been shown us: for details as to the earth, we must go to the Old Testament.

In the Millennium, the heavenly is displayed in connection with the earthly. The glory of God is manifested, so that the earth is filled with the knowledge of it as the waters cover the sea. Righteousness rules, and evil is afraid to lift its head. The curse is taken from the ground, which responds with wondrous fruitfulness. Amid all this, the spiritual condition is by no means in correspondence with the outward blessing. Even the manifest connection of righteousness and prosperity cannot avail to make men love righteousness; nor the goodness of God, though evidenced on every side, to bring men to repentance. At the "four corners of the earth," retreating as far as possible from the central glory, there are still those who represent Israel's old antagonists, and thus are called by their names "Gog and Magog." Nor are they remnants, but masses of population, brought together by sympathetic hatred of God and His people—crowding alike out of light into the darkness: a last and terrible answer to the question, "Lord, what is man?"

The "Gog, of the land of Magog," whose invasion of Israel is prophetically described in the book of Ezekiel (xxxviii., xxxix.), is the prototype of these last invaders. There need be no confusion, however, between them; for the invasion in Ezekiel is premillennial, not postmillennial, as that in Revelation is. It is then that Israel are just back in their land (xxxviii. 14), and from that time God's name is known in Israel, and they pollute His holy name no more (xxxix. 7). The nations too learn to know Him (xxxviii. 16, 23). There needs, therefore, no further inquiry to be sure that this is not after a thousand years of such knowledge.

But Gog and Magog here follow in the track of men who have long before made God known in the judgment He executed—follow them in awful, reckless disregard of the end before them. This is clearly due to the loosing once more of Satan. While he was restrained, the evil was there, but cowed and hidden. He gives it energy and daring. They go up now on the breadth of the earth—from which for the moment the divine shield seems to be removed, and compass the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city. The last is of course the earthly Jerusalem. The "camp of the saints" seems to be that of the heavenly saints, who are the Lord's host around it. The city is of course impregnable:

led them astray was cast into the [j] lake of fire and brimstone, where the [k] beast and the false prophet [are]; and they shall be [l] tormented day and night to the [m] ages of ages. And I saw a great [n] white throne and him that sat upon it, from whose face [o] fled away the earth and the heaven, and no place was found for them.

[j] ver. 14. *cf.* Matt. 25. 41.
[k] ch. 19. 20.
[l] *cf.* Matt. 8. 29. ch. 14. 11.
[m] *cf.* 2 Thes. 1. 9.

cf. Mk. 9. 48; *cf.* Lk. 16. 26; *cf.* Matt. 25. 46. *n ctr.* Heb. 4. 16; *ctr.* 2 Cor. 5. 10; *ctr.* Matt. 25. 31. *o cf.* Ps. 102. 26; *cf.* Hab. 3. 6.

the rebels are taken in the plain fact of hostility to God and His people; and the judgment is swift and complete: "fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." The wicked are extinct out of the earth.

The arch-rebel now receives final judgment. "And the devil that deceived them was cast into a lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are; and they shall be tormented day and night for the ages of ages."

These words deserve most solemn consideration. They are plain enough indeed; but what is there from which man will not seek to escape when his will is adverse? The deniers of eternal punishment, both on the side of restitution and that of annihilation, are here confronted with a plain example of it. Two human beings cast in alive into the lake of fire a thousand years before are found there, at the close of this long period still in existence! How evident that this fire is not, therefore, like material fire, but something widely different! All the arguments as to the action of fire in consuming what is exposed to it are here at once shown to be vain. That which can remain a thousand years in the lake of fire unconsumed may remain, so far as one can see, forever; and it is forever that they here are plainly said to be tormented.

But it is objected that there is, in fact, no verb here: the sentence reads simply, "where the beast and the false prophet," and that to fill up the gap properly we must put "*were cast*," which would say nothing about continuance. But what, then, about the concluding statement, "and *they*"—for it is a plural—"and *they* shall be tormented day and night for the ages of ages"?

Finding this argument vain, or from the opposite interest of restitution, it is urged that "day and night" do not exist in eternity. But we are certainly brought here to eternity, and "for the ages of ages" means nothing else. It is the measure of the life of God Himself (iv. 10). No passage that occurs, even to the smoke of Babylon ascending up, can be shown to have a less significance.

Growing desperate, some have ventured to say that we should translate "*till* the ages of ages." But the other passages stand against this with an iron front, and forbid it. We are, in this little season, right on the verge of eternity itself. The same expression is used as to the judgment of the great white throne, which is *in* eternity. It will not do to say of God that He lives *to* the ages of ages, and *not through* them. The truth is very plain, then, that the punishment here decreed to three transgressors is, in the strictest sense, eternal.

Whether the same thing is true of all the wicked dead, we now go on to see.

The Millennium is over: "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things that were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hades delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every one according to their works. And death and hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And whoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

This is the judgment of the dead alone, and must be kept perfectly distinct in our minds from the long previous judgment of the *living*. The judgment in Matt. xxv., for example, where the "sheep" are separated from the "goats,"

And I saw the [p]dead, [q]great and small, standing before the throne, and [r]books were opened; and [s]another book was opened which is [the book] of life; and the dead were judged out of those things written in the books, [t]according to their works. And the [u]sea gave up the dead that were in it; and [v]death and [w]hades gave up the dead that were in them; and they were judged [x]each one according to their works. And death and hades were [y]cast into the lake of fire. This is the

p cf. ver. 5. *ctr.* ver. 4. *cf.* Acts 10. 42. *cf.* Acts 24. 15. *cf.* ch.11.18.
q cf. Ex. 12. 29. *cf.* Ps. 49.2.
r cf. Dan. 7. 10. *cf.*Matt.12. 36.
s Phil. 4. 3; *cf.* Lk. 10. 20; *ctr.* ch. 3. 1, 5. *t* Matt. 16. 27; *cf.* Rom. 2. 12, 16. *u cf.* Ex. 14. 28; *ctr.* ch. 21. 1. *v* ch. 1. 18; ch.6. 8; *cf.* John 5. 28, 29. *w cf.* Lk. 16. 23. *x cf.* Rom.14.12; *cf.* Gal. 6. 5. *y* ch. 21. 8.

is a judgment of the living—of the nations upon earth when the Lord comes. It is not, indeed, the warrior-judgment of those taken with arms in their hands, in open rebellion, which we have beheld in the premillennial vision. The nations are gathered before the Son of man, who has just come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him; and that coming, as when elsewhere spoken of throughout the prophecy, is unquestionably premillennial. As mankind are divided into three classes, "the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God," so the prophecy in relation to the Jew is to be found in chapter xxiv. 1–42; that in relation to the professing church, to the 30th verse of the next chapter; and the rest of it gives us the sessional judgment of the Gentiles, so far as they have been reached by the everlasting gospel. The judgment is not of all the deeds done in the body: it is as to how they have treated the brethren of the Lord (ver. 40) who have been among them, evidently as travelers, in rejection and peril. The Jewish point of view of prophecy as a whole clearly points to Jewish messengers who as such represent Israel's King (comp. Matt. x. 40). There is not a word about resurrection of the dead, which the time of this judgment excludes the possibility of, as to the wicked. It is one partial as to its range, limited to that of which it takes account, and in every way distinct from such a *general* judgment as the large part of Christendom even yet looks for.

Here in the vision before us there is simply the judgment of the dead; and although the word is not used, the account plainly speaks of resurrection. The sea gives up the dead which are in it, as well as, by implication, also the dry land. Death, as well as hades, deliver up what they respectively hold; and as hades is unequivocally the receptacle of the soul (Acts ii. 27), so must "death," on the other hand, which the soul survives (Matt. x. 28), stand here in connection with that over which it has supreme control—the body.

The dead, then, here rise; and we have that from which the "blessed and holy" of the first resurrection are delivered—the "resurrection of judgment" (John v. 29, R. V.). From *personal* judgment the Lord expressly assures us that the believer is exempt (John v. 24, R. V.). Here, not only are the *works* judged, which will be true of the believer also, and for lasting blessing to him, but *men* are judged *according to* their works—a very different thing. Such a judgment will allow of no hope for the most upright and godly among mere men.

And this would seem to show that, though a millennium has passed since the first resurrection, yet no *righteous* dead can stand among this throng. The suggestion of the "book of life" has seemed to many to imply that there are such; but it is not said that there are, and the words "whoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" may be simply a solemn declaration (now affirmed by the result) that grace is man's only possible escape from the judgment. May it not even be intended to apply more widely than to the dead here, and take in the *living* saints of the Millennium negatively, as showing how, in fact, they are not found before this judgment-seat?

At any rate, the principle of judgment—"according to their works"—seems to exclude absolutely any of those saved by grace. And there are intimations

§ (xxi. 1-5): The tabernacle of God with men.

[z] second death, the lake of fire. And if any one was not [a] found written in the book of life, he was [b] cast into the lake of fire.

3. And I saw a [c] new heaven and a new earth; for the [d] first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and

z *cf.* ver. 6.
a *cf.* John 3. 36.
b *cf.* Matt. 13. 42, 50.
c 2 Pet. 3.13. *cf.* Is.65.17. *cf.* Is.66.22.
d *cf.* Heb. 12. 26, 27; *cf.* ch. 20. 11; *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 10-12.

also, in the Old Testament prophecies, as to the extension of life in the Millennium, which seem well to consist with the complete arrest of death for the righteous during the whole period. If "as the days of a tree shall be the days of God's people" (Isa. lxv. 22), and he who dies at a hundred years dies as a child yet, and for wickedness—because there shall be no more any one, apart from this, that shall not fill his days (ver. 20)—it would almost seem to follow that there is no death. And to this the announcement as to the "sheep" in the judgment-scene in Matthew, that "the righteous shall go away into life eternal," strikingly corresponds. For to go into life eternal is not to possess life in the way that we at present may; in fact, *as* "righteous" they already did this: it means apparently nothing less than the complete canceling of the claim of death in their case.

And now death and hades are cast into the lake of fire—that is, those who dwelt in them are cast there. These exist, as it were, but in those who fill them; and thus we learn that there is no exemption or escape from the last final doom for any who come into this judgment. The lake of fire is the *second* death. The first terminated in judgment man's career on earth; the second closes the intermediate state in their judged alienation from the Source of life. The first is but the type of the second. As we have seen, it is not extinction at all; and indeed a resurrection merely for the sake of suffering before another extinction would seem self-contradictory. In fact, death—what we ordinarily call that—is now destroyed. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment," which is thenceforth, therefore, undying (Heb. ix. 27).

With the great white throne set up, the earth and the heavens pass away, and there come into being "a new heaven and a new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter iii. 13).

3. Before the face of Him who sits upon the great white throne "the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them" (chap. xx. 11). We have now a complementary statement: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth." It is clear, therefore, that an earthly condition abides for eternity. It is a point of interest as to which Scripture seems to give full satisfaction, whether this new earth is itself a "new *creation*," or the old earth remodeled and made new. At first sight, one would no doubt decide for the former; and this was the view that at one time almost held possession of the field, the new earth scarcely being regarded by the mass as "earth" at all. Practically, the earth was simply believed to exist no more; and in contrast with it, all was to be heavenly: the double sphere of blessing; earth *and* heaven, was lost sight of, if not denied.

Lately, for many, reaction has set in, and the pendulum has swung past the point of rest to the other extreme. The prophecies of the Old Testament rightly understood as to be literally taken, and delivered from the glosses of a falsely called "spiritual" interpretation, seem to agree with the apostle Peter and the book of Revelation in making the earth to be the inheritance of the saints—the earth in a heavenly *condition*, brought back out of its state of exile, and into true relation with the rest of the family of heaven, not alienated from their original place. Contrast between earth and heaven as an eternal existence was again, but from the other side of it, denied.

The whole web and woof of Scripture is against either of these confusions: the point of rest can only be in accepting the distinction of earthly from heav-

enly as fundamental to all right understanding of the prophetic Word. The Old Testament "promises" which have in view the earth as a sphere of blessing, are, as the apostle declares (Rom. ix. 1–4), Jewish, not Christian. The New Testament emphasizes that the blessings of the Christian are in "heavenly places" (Eph. i. 3); nor can this last possibly apply to the *earth made heavenly*. The Lord has left us with the assurance (John xiv.) that in His Father's house are many mansions,—permanent places of abode,—that He was going to prepare a place there for us, and that He will come again to receive us to Himself, that where He is, there we may be also. As well assure us that the Lord's permanent abode is to be on earth, and not in heaven, as that our own is to be here, not there.

Each line of truth must have its place if we are to be "rightly dividing the word of truth." The heavenly "bride of the Lamb" is not the earthly; "Jerusalem which is above" is not the Palestinian city; the "Church of first-born ones who are written in *heaven*" are not that "Israel" declared God's "first-born" as to the earth; the promise of the "Morning Star" is not the same as that of the "Sun of Righteousness," although Christ is assuredly both of these. Discernment of such differences is a necessity for all true filling of our place, and practical rendering of Christian life.

Let us look now, however, at the question of continuity between the earth that flees away and the earth that succeeds it. At first sight we should surely say they cannot be identical. The well-known passage in the epistle of Peter would seem to confirm this (2 Peter iii. 10, 12). There we learn that "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up." And it is repeated, and thus emphasized by repetition, that "the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat."

Yet, as we look more closely, we shall find reason to doubt whether more is meant than the destruction of the earth as the place of human habitation. In the Deluge, to which it is compared (vers. 5–7), "the world that *then was* perished;" yet its continuity with the present no one doubts. Fire, though the instrument of a more penetrating judgment, yet does not annihilate the material upon which it fastens. The melting even of elements implies rather the reverse, and dissolution is not (in this sense) destruction.

Yet the heavens and the earth pass away—that is, in the form in which now we know them; or, as the apostle speaks to the Corinthians, "the *fashion* of this world passes away" (1 Cor. vii. 31); and that this is the sense in which we are to understand it, other scriptures come to assure us.

A new earth does not necessarily mean *another* earth, except as a "new" man means another man—"new" in the sense of renewed. And even the words here, "there was no more sea," naturally suggest another state of the earth than now exists. This fact is a significant one: that which is the type of instability and barrenness, and condemns to it so large a portion of the globe, is gone utterly and forever. At the beginning of Genesis we find the whole earth buried under it; emerging on the third day, and the waters given their bounds, which but once afterward they pass. Now they are gone forever, as are the wicked, to whom Isaiah compares it: "The wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." This last is the effect of chafing against its bounds, as "the mind of the flesh" is "not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. viii. 7).

These analogies cannot fail to illustrate another which the Lord Himself gives us, when He speaks of the millennial kingdom as the "regeneration"—"ye who have followed Me, in the *regeneration*, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. xix. 28). Here let us note that it is the Lord's *kingdom*

there is [e]no more sea. And I saw the [f]holy city, new Jerusalem, [g]coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a [h]bride adorned for her husband. And I heard

e *cf.* Gen. 1. 2, 9. *cf.* Is. 57. 20. *cf.* Ps. 107. 25, 26.

f ch. 22. 19; vers. 10, 27. g ch. 3. 12. h ch. 19. 7, 8; *cf.* Eph. 5. 25-27; *cf.* Ps. 45. 13-15.

that is the regeneration of the earth. That reign of righteousness which is the effectual curb upon human wickedness, not the removal of it, answers thus to what "regeneration" is for him who is in this sense in the Lord's kingdom now. Sin is not removed; the flesh abides even in the regenerate; but it has its bound—it does not reign, has not dominion. In the perfect state, whether for the individual or the earth, righteousness *dwells*, as Peter says of the latter: sin exists no more. How striking does the analogy here become when we remember that the change, perhaps dissolution, of the body comes between the regenerate and the perfect state, just as the similar "dissolution" of the earth does between the Millennium and the new earth! Surely this throws a bright light upon the point we are examining.

The new heavens are, of course, only the *earth*-heavens, the work of the second of the six days. They are of great importance to the earth which they surround and to which they minister. More and more is science coming to recognize how (in natural law at least) "the heavens rule." Yet, who but an inspired writer, of the time of Peter or John, would have made so much of the new heavens? And these only, as Peter reminds us, develop a much earlier "promise." This we find in Isa. lxv. and lxvi., a repeated announcement, the second time explicitly connected with the continuance of Israel's "seed" and "name": "For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall abide before Me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain." Thus, even in the new earth there will be no merging of Israel in the general mass of the nations. The first-born people written on earth will show still how "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance," as will the "Church of the first-born who are written in heaven." These different circles of blessing, like the principalities and powers in heavenly places, are quite accordant with what we see everywhere of God's manifold ways and ranks in creation. Why should eternity efface these differences, which of course do not touch the unity of the family of God as such, while they are abiding witnesses of divine mercy in relation to a past of which the lessons are never to be lost?

Earth, then, itself remains, but a "new" earth; and, as the seal upon its eternal blessedness, "I saw," says the prophet-evangelist, "the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall tabernacle with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, their God." Here is the promise in Immanuel's name made finally good to the redeemed race: and he who is privileged to show us the glory of the Only-begotten of the Father, tabernacling among men when the Word was made flesh, is the one who shows us the full consummation. Of the new Jerusalem we have presently a detailed account; here, what is emphasized is, that it is the link between God and men; God Himself is with men, in all the fulness of blessing implied in that.

We must not, however, pass over anything: the less even that is said, the more should we ponder that which *is* said. Let us see, then, what is here, putting it in connection with what seems most naturally to throw light upon it elsewhere. Standing where we are,—at the end of time,—we stand, indeed, whither the whole stream of time has been conducting us, and therefore with the countless voices of the past sounding prophetically to us. What will it be to be actually there, at the end of the ways which, though through the valley of Baca, lead up to the city of God!

First, here, we are shown that He has prepared for us a city—"the holy city." The new Jerusalem is surely, what its earthly type is, a "city of habitation:"

a [i]great voice out of the throne,* saying, Behold the [j]tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall tabernacle with them; and they shall be [k]his people, and God himself shall be with them, their God. And he shall [l]wipe away every tear from their eyes. And there shall be [m]no more death, nor [n]sorrow, nor crying, nor shall there be any more [o]pain; for the [p]former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make [q]all things new. And he saith,† Write: for these words are [r]faithful and true.

i ch. 19. 1.
j *cf.* Lev. 26. 11, 12. *cf.* Is. 4. 5. *cf.* John 17. 24. *cf.* ch. 7. 15.
k 1 Pet. 2. 10. *cf.* ch. 7. 17. *ctr.* 2 Cor. 6. 2.
m *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 26, 54. *ctr.* Rom. 5. 17.
n *cf.* 1 Thes. 4. 13, 18. *ctr.* Job. 14. 1.

* Some read, "heaven." † Many MSS. insert, "to me."

o *ctr.* Rom. 8. 18-23. p *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 17, 18. q ver. 1; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 17. r ch. 22. 6; *cf.* ch. 19. 11 with 2 Cor. 1. 20.

it is not simply a figure for the saints themselves. The patriarchs of old, content to await in patient faith the end of their pilgrim-journey, "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God;" and He will not disappoint their expectations—"He hath prepared for them a city" (Heb. xi. 10, 16). At the very beginning of the world's history we find in one who manifested a totally opposite spirit, still the desire of the human heart which this promise meets. Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, fugitive and vagabond as he was, to build a city. Without faith or patience, he only shows the natural craving of the heart, but not in itself evil because natural. Ever since, the history of man has connected itself mainly with its cities. From Babel on to Rome, these have been the centres of power and progress ever, and (the world being what it is) they have exhibited in the most developed way its opposition to God. But God too has His city, and makes much of it, "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth," and with it associates (Psa. lxxxvii.) the one great Name which eclipses that of all others.

The tendency of the day is toward cities, and in these, for good or for ill, we find the greatest development of man; only, man being fallen, the development is monstrous. When the day of the Lord has put down, however, all human thoughts, it is only to exalt Jerusalem upon the earth, and to make way for the display of that better Jerusalem that is here before us.

The city is the expression of human need, and the provision for it. In the midst of strife and insecurity, men gather together for protection; but that is only a small part of what is implied in it. There are other needs more universal than this, as that of co-operation, the division of labor, the result of that inequality of aptitudes by which God has made us mutually dependent. Our social nature is thus met, and there are formed and strengthened the ties by which the world is bound together; while the intercourse of mind with mind, of heart with heart, stimulates and develops every latent faculty. "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend" (Prov. xxvii. 17).

The eternal city implies for us association, fellowship, intercourse, the fulness of what was intimated in the primal saying, "It is not good for man to be alone," but which in respect of the bride-city, which this is, has still a deeper meaning. Here, the relationship of the saint to Christ, who as the Lamp of divine glory enlightens it, alone adequately explains all. "Alone" we can nevermore be. "With Him" our whole manhood shall find its complete answer, satisfaction, and rest.

This is necessarily, therefore, the "*holy* city." Cain's has but too much characterized every city hitherto. Where shall we find, as in the city, the reek of impurity and the hotbed of corruption? There poverty and riches pour out a common flood of iniquity, out of which comes, ever increasing, the defiant cry of despair. But here at last is a "HOLY CITY," the new Jerusalem, "foundation of peace:" not, like Babel of old, towering up to heaven, but coming down

4 (xxi. 6-8): The universal test.

4. And he said unto me, [s]It is done. I am the [t]Alpha and the Omega, the [u]beginning and the end. I will [v]give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that [w]overcometh shall inherit these things, and I will be [x]his God, and he shall be my son. But for the [y]cowardly, and [z]faithless, and [a]abominable, and [b]murderers, and [c]fornicators, and [d]sorcerers, and [e]idolaters, and all [f]liars, their part shall be in the [g]lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

5 (xxi. 9–xxii. 5): The new Jerusalem, in which is the throne of God and of the Lamb.

5. And there came [h]one of the seven angels that had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the [i]bride, the Lamb's wife. And he [j]carried me away in

s *cf.* ch. 11. 15. *cf.* John 19. 30. *t* ch. 1. 8. ch. 22. 13. *u* *cf.* John 1. 1 with Eph. 1. 10. *v* ch. 22. 17. *cf.* John 4. 10. *w* ch. 2. 7, etc. *x* ver. 3. *y* ch. 22. 15. *ctr.* 2 Tim. 1. 7. *z* *ctr.* Heb. 10. 39. *a* *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 3. *cf.* ch. 17. 4. *b* *cf.* ch. 18. 24.

c *cf.* ch. 17. 2. *d* *cf.* ch. 18. 23. *e* *cf.* ch. 13. 14, 15. *f* *cf.* 1 John 2. 22. *g* ch. 20. 15; ch. 19. 20. *h* *ctr.* ch. 17. 1, etc. *i* *cf.* ch. 19. 7; *cf.* ver. 2. *j* ch. 17. 3.

from heaven, the way of all good, of all blessing for men. The tabernacle of God is with men. God Himself tabernacles with them.* His own hand removes every trace of former sorrow, every effect of sin. His own voice proclaims what His hand accomplishes: "Behold, I make all things new." Here, that we may be fully assured, a confirmatory word is added.

4. And along with this, and in view of it, in the name of Him who is Alpha and Omega, beginning and end, the sweet invitation of the gospel is once more published, the free gift of the water of life to every thirsty soul is certified, and the inheritance to the overcomer, for it is reached by the way of conflict and of triumph—grace securing, not evading, this: "He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God; and he shall be My son."

Just here, too, with no less earnestness, and in eternity, past all the change of time, the doom of the wicked is pronounced: "But the fearful,"—too cowardly to take part with Christ in a world opposed to Him,—"and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

5. The last vision of Revelation is now before us: it is that of the city of God itself. But here, where one would desire above all to see clearly, we become most conscious of how feeble and dull is our apprehension of eternal things. They are words of an apostle which remind us that "we see through a glass darkly"—*en ainigmati*, in a riddle. Such a riddle, then, it is no wonder if the vision presents to us: the dream that we have here a literal description, even to the measurements, of the saints' eternal home, is one too foolish to need much comment. All other visions throughout the book have been symbolic: how much more here! how little need we expect that the glimpse which is here given us into the unseen would reveal to us the shape of buildings, or the material used! Scripture is reticent all through upon such subjects, and the impress to be left upon our souls is plainly spiritual, not of lines and hues, as for the natural senses. "Things which eye hath not seen" are not put before the eye.

On the other hand, that the "city" revealed to us here is not simply a figure of the saints themselves, as, from the term used for it, "the Bride, the Lamb's wife," some have taken it to be, there are other scriptures which seem definitely to assure us. "Jerusalem, which is above, which is our mother" (Gal. iv.), could hardly be used in this way, though the Church is indeed so con-

* Is there not in this word "tabernacle" the suggestion that any habitation of God with men must be in pure grace? He is infinitely sufficient unto Himself, and it is only in love that He dwells with men. On the other hand, this does not imply that there is anything temporary in the abiding. It is surely eternal, as Christ is eternally Man.—S. R.

ceived of in patristic and medieval thought. But even thus it would not be spoken of naturally as "above."

In Heb. xii. we have a still more definite testimony. For there the "Church of the first-born ones which are written in heaven," as well as "the spirits of just men made perfect,"—in other words, both Christians and the saints of the Old Testament,—are mentioned as distinct from "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem;" and this will not allow them to be the same thing; although, in another way, the identification of a city with its inhabitants is easy.

We are led in the same direction by the mention of the "tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God,"—the place to which the apostle thought he might have been caught, even bodily (2 Cor. xii.),—and here is the tree of life in the midst of the city, beside the "river of water of life" which flows from the throne of God! Figurative language all this surely; yet these passages combine to give us the thought of the heavenly abode, already existing, and which will be in due time revealed as the metropolis of the heavenly kingdom—what Jerusalem restored will be in the lower sphere. Indeed, the earthly here so parallels and illustrates the heavenly as to be a most useful help in fixing, if not enlarging, our thoughts about it—always while we realize, of course, the essential difference that Scripture itself makes clear to be between them. But this we shall have to look at as we proceed.

"The holy city, Jerusalem." is certainly intended to be a plain comparison with the earthly city. But that is the type only; this is the antitype, the true "foundation of peace," as the word means. What more comforting title, after all the scenes of strife, the fruit of the lusts that war in our members, which we have had to look upon! Here is "peace" at last, and on a foundation that shall not be removed, but that stands fast forever. For this is emphatically "the city that *hath* foundations," and "whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. xi. 10). How blessed it is, too, that it should be just one of the seven angels that had the seven last plagues that shows John the city! for no mere executioner of judgment we see is he: judgment (as with God, for it is God's) is also *his* "strange work." It had to come, and it has come: there was no help, no hope without it; thus the stroke of the "rod of iron" was that of the shepherd's rod: it was the destruction of the destroyers only. But it is past, and here is the scene wherein his own heart rests, to which it returns with loyalty and devotion: here, where the water of life flows from the throne of God,—eternal, from the Eternal,—refreshment, gladness, fruitfulness and power are found in obedience.

But the city is the "Bride, the Lamb's wife." In the Old Testament, the figure of marriage is used in a similar way. Israel was thus Jehovah's "married wife" (Isa. liv. 1; Jer. xxxi. 32), now divorced indeed for her unfaithfulness, but yet to return (Hos. ii.), and be received and reinstated. Her Maker will then be once more her husband, and more than the old blessing be restored. In the forty-fifth psalm, Israel's King, Messiah, is the Bridegroom; the Song of Solomon is the mystic song of His espousals. Jerusalem thus bears His name: "This is the name whereby she shall be called: Jehovah our Righteousness" (Jer. xxxiii. 16, comp. xxiii. 6). The land, too, shall be "married" (Isa. lxii. 4).

In the New Testament, the same figure is still used in the same way. The Baptist speaks of his joy, as the "friend of the Bridegroom," in hearing the Bridegroom's voice (John iii. 29); and in the parable of the virgins (Matt. xxv.), where Christians are those who go forth to meet the Bridegroom, they are, by that very fact, not regarded as the Bride, which is still Israel (according to the general character of the prophecy), though not actually brought into the scene. Some may be able to see, also, in the marriage at Cana of Galilee (John ii. 1) the veiling of the same thought.

All this, therefore, is in that earthly sphere in which Israel's blessings lie; our

[the] Spirit to a mountain, great and high, and showed me the [k]holy city, [l]Jerusalem, [m]descending out of heaven from God, having the [n]glory of God. Her

k cf. ver. 27. *l cf.* Gal. 4. 26. *c cf.* Heb. 12. 22. *m cf.* Hos. 2. 21; ver. 23. *n cf.* Eph. 5. 27.

own are "in *heavenly* places" (Eph. i. 3), and here it is we find, not the Bride of *Messiah* simply, but distinctively "the Bride of the *Lamb*." The "Lamb," as a title, always keeps before us His death, and that by violence, "a Lamb as it had been slain" (Rev. v. 6); and it is thus that He has title to that redemption empire in which we find Him throughout this book. But "the Bride of the Lamb" is thus one espoused to Him in His rejection, sharer (though it be but in slight measure) of His reproach and sorrow, trained and disciplined for glory in a place of humiliation. And so it is said that "if *we suffer*, we shall also reign with Him;" and again, "If so be we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together" (2 Tim. ii. 12; Rom. viii. 17).

The saints in the Millennium have no heritage of suffering such as this; even those who pass through the trial which ushers it in have not the same character of it, although we must not forget those associated with the Lamb upon mount Zion, who illustrate the same truth, but upon a lower platform. Even these are not His Bride.

Ephesians, the epistle of the heavenly places, shows us the Church as Eve of the last Adam, whom Christ loves, and for whom He gave Himself. Formed out of Himself and for Himself, He now sanctifies and cleanses her with water-washing by the Word, that He may present her to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. In another aspect, this Church is His body, formed by the baptism of the Spirit as at Pentecost, complete when those who are Christ's are caught up to meet Him in the air. The doctrine of this is, of course, not in Revelation; the difficulty is in seeing the conformity of Revelation with it.

Outside of Revelation even, there is a difficulty in the connection (if there *be*, as one would anticipate, a connection) between the Church as the body of Christ now, before our presentation to Him, and the "one flesh" which is the fruit of marriage. Israel was the married wife, and will be, though now for a time "desolate," as one divorced. The Church is "espoused" (2 Cor. xi. 2), not married. Thus the "one body" and the "great mystery" of "one flesh," of which the apostle speaks (Eph. v. 29), must be distinct.

Looking back to Adam, to whom as a type he there refers us, we find that Eve is taken out of his side—is thus really his "flesh" by her very making. Thus, as one with him in nature, she is united to him—a union in which the prior unity finds its fit expression. The two things are therefore in this way very clearly and intimately connected. The being of Christ's body is that, then, which alone prepares and qualifies for the being of His Bride hereafter; and body and Bride must be strictly commensurate with each other.

The mystery here is great, as the apostle himself says; nor is it to be affirmed that the type in all its features answers to the reality. It is easily seen that this could not be; yet there is real correspondence and suitability thus far: according to it, the Church of Christ alone, from Pentecost to the rapture, is scripturally (in a strict sense) the "Bride of the Lamb."

Yet can we confine the new Jerusalem to these? There would, of course, in this case be no difficulty as to the character of a city which it is given in this vision. A city is commonly enough identified with its inhabitants, so that the same term covers both place and persons. But are none to inhabit the new Jerusalem except the saints of Christian times? Are none of these so illustrious in the Old Testament to find their place there? Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are among those with whom the Lord assures us we are to sit down in the kingdom of God (Luke xiii. 28, 29);—are they to be outside the heavenly city?

This is positively answered otherwise, as it would seem, in Revelation itself.

°brightness was like that of a most precious stone, as it were a ᵖjasper stone, clear as crystal. It had a ᵍwall great and high, having twelve ʳgates, and at the gates, twelve ˢangels, and names written thereon, which are those of the twelve ᵗtribes of the sons of Israel. On

o *cf.* ch. 22. 5. *cf.* John 17. 22.
p *cf.* ch. 4. 3. with 1 John 3. 2.
q *cf.* ch. 22. 15.
cf. Isa. 26. 1. r *cf.* Ps. 87. 2; *cf.* Ps. 127. 5. s *cf.* Heb. 12. 22. 23. t *cf.* Ezek. 48. 31-34.

For while the general account of those who enter there is that they are those "written in the Lamb's book of life" (xxi. 27), "without" the city are said to be only "dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" (xxii. 15).

In the eleventh of Hebrews, moreover, in a verse already quoted, "the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God," for which the patriarchs looked and waited, can surely be no other than that which we find here; and it is added that they desired "a better country—that is, a heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city." It could not be the New Testament Church for which Abraham looked; for this was as yet entirely hidden in God (Eph. iii. 9). Another and larger meaning for the new Jerusalem must surely, therefore, be admitted.

And why should there not be in it an inclusion of both thoughts? Why should it not be the Bride-*city*, named from the Bride-*Church*, whose home it is, and yet containing other occupants? This alone would seem to cover the whole of the facts which Scripture gives us as to it; and the Jewish Bride is in like manner sometimes a wider, sometimes a narrower conception; sometimes the city Jerusalem, sometimes the people Israel. Only that in the Old Testament the city is the narrower, the people the wider view; while in the New Testament this is reversed. And even this may be significant: the heavenly city, the dwelling-place of God, permitting none of the redeemed to be outside it, but opening its gates widely to all. A Bride-city indeed, ever holding bridal festival, and having perpetual welcome for all that come: its freshness never fading, its joy never satiating; blessed are they whose names are written there!

As before, the city is seen "descending out of heaven from God." We shall find, however, here, that the present vision goes back of the new heavens and earth to the millennial age—that is, that while itself eternal, the city is seen in connection with the earth at this time. Not yet has it been said, "The tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them." The descending city is not, therefore, in that settled and near intimacy with men outside of it in which it will be. A significant and perfect note of time it is that the leaves of the tree of life are for the healing of nations (xxii. 2). Tender as this grace is, the condition it shows could not be eternal.

All the nearer does it bring this vision of glory and of love, no more to be banished or dimmed by human sin or sorrow. The city has the glory of God; and here is the goal of hope, complete fruition of that which but as hope outshines all that is known of brightness elsewhere. It cannot be painted with words. We cannot hope even to expand what the Holy Ghost has given us. But the blessedness itself we are soon to know.

The holy city descends from heaven, "having the glory of God." She is the chosen vessel of it, to display it to the universe, being the fruit of Christ's work, the fullest witness of abounding grace. Her shining is "like a most precious stone, as a crystal-like jasper-stone," or diamond, as we have already taken it to be.* The carbon crystallized into this lustrous brilliant, which still shines with a light not its own, is a fit representation of the "glory" that is to be "in the Church in Christ Jesus unto all generations of the age of ages" (Eph. iii. 21). This glory which God manifests through His creatures, He manifests *to* His creatures, satisfying His own love in bringing them thus nigh unto Himself. How blessed to be a means of such display!

* See on chap. iv. 3.

the [u]east three gates; and on the north three gates; and on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve [v]foundations, and upon them twelve names of the twelve [w]apostles of the Lamb.

And he that spake with me had a golden [x]measuring reed, that he might measure the city, and its gates, and its wall. And the city lieth [y]foursquare, and its length is as much as the breadth. And he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs: the [z]length

[u] *cf.* Matt. 8. 11.
[v] *cf.* Heb. 11. 10.
[w] *cf.* Eph. 2. 20. *cf.* Lk. 22. 29, 30.
[x] *cf.* ch. 11. 1. *cf.* Ezek. 40. 2, etc.
[y] *cf.* 1 Kl. 6. 20.
[z] *cf.* 1 Kl. 6. 20.

The wall of the city clearly speaks of its security: it has "a great and high wall;" for "salvation hath God appointed as walls and bulwarks" (Isa. xxvi. 1). And in the wall, which has 4 sides, there are 12 gates, 3 gates on every side, for egress and ingress—home, as this is, of a life which is unceasing activity. The number 12 is upon all the city, 12 being an expanded 7, with the same factors (4×3 instead of $4 + 3$), and the symbol of manifest divine government, God being here manifestly supreme. This is perfection in its deepest analysis; and the numbers are thus one in fact. The 12 here is the usual 4×3; the 3 still speaking of divine manifestation, while the 4 shows it to be universal, the sides facing also every way.

At the gates are 12 angels; upon them the names of the 12 tribes of Israel. As the tabernacle of God, a reference to the tabernacle of old is surely in place here, though to that there was but one entrance, for a simple and beautiful reason, Christ being seen in it as the only way of approach to God. Now there are 12 gates, answering to the 12 tribes, which in the wilderness also were grouped in similar 3s around the tabernacle. Ezekiel, in his last vision of the future (chap. xlviii.), shows us what more exactly answers to what is here, though speaking of the earthly city restored, and not the heavenly; and there the gates are appropriated, one to each particular tribe. Israel are here, as it would seem, their own representatives, as in the vision of the seventh chapter; and we are reminded of their being in nearest connection upon earth with the heavenly city. In the *heavenly* sphere, at the gates are angels. The heavenly and earthly relations of the city are thus declared.

There are 12 foundations of the wall of the city also; but on these are the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. They have *laid* the foundations, and their names are stamped upon their work. We are surely not to imagine any individualizing here, as if any one foundation could be appropriated to any one apostle, or indeed that the number 12 itself is anything but characteristic. This connects itself also with the question of the presence or absence of Paul's name from the number. It is remarkable that almost the same difficulty connects with the *12* tribes of Israel, which often exclude and often include the tribe of Levi. Taking Ephraim and Manasseh, the two sons of Joseph, as tribal heads, equal in this respect to Jacob's other sons, (and this is the place that they are given in the history,) yet they are none the less always counted 12. Why may not the apostles, in spite of the addition of Paul to their number, be counted here as 12?*

The measurements of the city and the wall are next given. The city is a cube, 12,000 furlongs every way; the wall, 144 cubits high. The number 12 still governs everywhere. The cube speaks of substance, reality. The sanctuary in the tabernacle and in the temple were both cubes. This is the eternal sanctuary, and the full fruition of every hope of the saint.

The building of the wall is of jasper (or diamond). The divine glory is itself

* As Paul, too, was distinctively the apostle of the Church, through whom its unity as the body of Christ and its heavenly destiny as the Bride of Christ were revealed, we may well associate him with the city as a whole, rather than one of its foundations.—S. R.

and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall of it, a hundred and forty-four cubits, the measure of a [a]man, that is, of the angel. And the building of its wall was of [b]jasper; and the city was pure [c]gold like clear glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with [d]every precious stone: the first foundation, jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; the fifth, sardonyx: the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprasus; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve [e]pearls: each one of the gates was of one pearl. And the [f]street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. And I saw [g]no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty is the temple of it, and the [h]Lamb. And

a *cf.* John 1. 18. *ctr.* ch. 13. 18.
b ver. 11.
c *cf.* 2 Chro. 3. 8.
d *cf.* Ex. 28. 17–21. *ctr.* Ezek. 28. 13. *cf.* Is. 54. 11, 12.
e *cf.* Matt. 13. 45, 46. with Eph. 5. 25.
f ch. 22. 2. *cf.* ch. 3. 4. with Gen. 5. 24.
g *ctr.* Ezek. chs. 40, 41, etc. *cf.* John 4. 21–24.
cf. 1 Cor. 3. 16. h ch. 5. 6, etc.

a safeguard of the eternal city. What can touch that which God has ordained for His own praise? The city itself is pure transparent gold,—pure, permanent, radiant,—not hindering, but welcoming the enraptured sight. The foundations of the wall are adorned with every precious stone—all the attributes of God displayed in that upon which rests the salvation of the people of God. The stones, in their separate meanings, are again a mystery. The 12 gates are 12 pearls—the picture of such grace as has been shown in the Church (Matt. xiii. 45, 46). These gates stand open all the unending day. The street of the city is, again, "pure gold, like transparent glass." The street, especially in the East, is the place of traffic, the meeting-place constantly of need and greed. But here, all circumstances, all intercourse, the whole environment, is absolute holiness and truth, fit for and permeated by the felt presence of God.

And this leads us directly to the next statement, that because the city is *all* sanctuary, there is no more any special one. The presence of God is the temple of the city: there is no other; and the Lamb is He who characterizes for us, and will always characterize, this otherwise ineffable Presence. There is no distance; there is nothing that can produce distance; there never can be more. It is that which the presence of Jesus among us—now nearly nineteen centuries since—implied and pledged to us: it is Immanu-El—"God with us"—in full reality, and in the highest and most intimate way.

It is true we have not the Father spoken of as such: it is "the Lord (or Jehovah) God Almighty,"—the God of Old-Testament revelation,—with "the Lamb," in whom we have the revelation of the New. Nothing less, surely, is meant than God in full display, so far as the creature can ever be made to apprehend Him. There is a glory of the Light always inaccessible—not hid in darkness, but in light which no human eye can ever penetrate. None can fully know God but God. This is only to say that the creature remains the creature; but the limitation of faculties does not mean distance, as if kept back. "The Lamb" shows, on the one hand, the desire of God to be known, while implying, in the very fact of manhood taken for this revelation, that God purely as God could not be known.

Thus, it is immediately added that the glory of God lightens the city, and "the Lamb is the lamp thereof." The lamp sustains the light. It adds nothing to it, for to divine glory nothing can be added: if anything could be, it would no longer be divine. But the light is "put upon a candlestick (or lamp) that they who enter in may see the light" (Luke viii. 16). So will Christ always be the One in whom the Father is made known: nay, the sacrificial word ("Lamb") assures us that we shall always have need of the past also for this.

But this does not at all mean that there will not be what the Lord has assured us the angels of the little children enjoy continually: "Their angels do always behold the face of My Father who is in heaven."

It is time now to inquire whether the measurements of the heavenly city cannot receive further developments. As already said, there is no temple in the New Jerusalem, and the reason is that it is all temple. "The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." Over the earthly Jerusalem, in its millennial condition, the cloud of glory broods (Isa. iv. 5), and the city itself receives the name of Jehovah *Shammah*, that is, "Jehovah is there." Still the temple and the city, as we see by Ezekiel, are separate things. Here, on the other hand, they are brought together. The city *is* the temple, through the presence of God in it which constitutes it this. It is natural, therefore, to look at the earthly temple to see if there be not some connection between it and this heavenly one. Now, in each case we have careful measurements, in testimony that every detail is of divine appointment. And when we come to look at this measurement, we shall find some relationship between the two, which must certainly be intended for our instruction. In Revelation, the measurement is by "a golden reed," in the hands of an angel, who is also spoken of as a man; and this twofold designation of him, manifestly applies in some way to the measurement itself. "He measured the wall," we are told, "144 cubits, the measure of a man, that is of the angel." Thus it is human measure, and yet surpassing this; and when we turn to Ezekiel, we shall find what seems to explain this in a remarkable way. The one who measures is, in Ezekiel, spoken of all through as a "man;" but the measure shows a difference from mere human measurement, which is noted for us. It is human measure, for the cubit is used, which is such, but the cubit is *more than the human one*. Each cubit in it is "a cubit and an handbreadth," not the ordinary one. This has perplexed the commentators, who explain it in various and contradictory ways. The rationalistic one is that Ezekiel simply adopted the cubit of the country in which his people were now captives,—it is a Babylonian cubit, therefore, that we find here. Think of God taking this as a measure of His own things! But what does this "cubit and an handbreadth" mean? Meaning there is and must be everywhere, so that we are surely right in inquiring as to it. Such a detail is not given us without there being in it something that is to be carefully observed. The cubit, then, was the common, human measure. The handbreadth added made it more than the human. That is surely plain, and it seems to refer us at once to what we have in Revelation, where the measure is stated to be "the measure of a man," but not an ordinary man—in fact, "the measure of an angel."

Let us look at these measures further. What is the cubit? It is simply the human fore-arm, the measure taken from the elbow-tip to the end of the little finger. The cubit is in Hebrew *ammah*, which in its application to it evidently means "support." The fore-arm is that upon which one supports oneself in various positions. Now, if this be the simple, human measure, there may yet be a divine meaning in it, for God works through everything, and nothing is left without the touch of His hand. Now the measure in human hands, and as used here, is, as we may say, the measure of *accomplishment*. A man lays down by measurement the house that he is projecting for himself. But while it is thus significant of what is to be humanly accomplished, the weakness of man comes out in his very measure. He needs in every undertaking, in everything that he accomplishes, the support of Another. He does what he is permitted and enabled to do—no more. The cubit by itself is, then, strictly human. But now, if we add the handbreadth to it, this gives us plainly, according to what we have seen, what is beyond man; and if we look at the only occurrence of it elsewhere, we shall find it in the border which is made to the table of shewbread, a "border of a handbreadth round about." If the table speaks, then, of communion with God, which is the fundamental thought, the handbreadth round about it is at once the divine guard and the divine support. The full

the city hath no need of the sun, nor of the moon that they should shine for it; for the [e]glory of God lightened it and the Lamb is the lamp thereof. And the [f]nations

[e] ver. 11. ch. 22. 5. cf. 1 John 1. 5. cf. 1 Tim. 6. 16 with John 1. 18. [f] cf. Isa. 2. 3, 5; cf. ch. 22. 2; cf. Is. 60. 3.

breadth of the *divine* hand it is that is round about here. Now let us apply this to the cubit in Ezekiel. If the cubit show in itself human weakness, that will not do for what is before us in the vision of the prophet. The divine hand must come manifestly in. Man may be permitted his part in the structure which the prophet sees in vision, but it must be man enabled and guarded by the divine hand which is upon him. Ezekiel in his own person shows us this hand of the Lord in its effect upon himself (chap. xl. 1). Thus the human element testifies to gracious communion on man's part, which God permits and enables for. It testifies of how near to man God is coming, and of His desire for that wonderful intimacy which, as the Lord taught His disciples, when enjoyed upon earth, was the pledge and foreshadow of that that was to be eternal (John xiv. 2).

In Revelation, therefore, the interpreting angel is still the "man"; and the measurement, as we have seen, adapts itself to this. With Christ before us, we know well *that the human measure now for God must be, nevertheless, beyond what is merely human.*

But now let us look at the measurement of the temple-city itself. If the new Jerusalem be a temple, it is yet like none other that has existed. In the temple upon earth, and in the tabernacle before it out of which it grew, there was a holy place separate from the holiest in which alone God was (and yet how little was) displayed. The holy place as separate from the holiest shows, not what is in the mind of God for eternity, but what was of necessity on account of man's present condition. He cannot unrestrictedly draw near to God. In the law, the dividing veil is shown us by the apostle to declare that the "way into the holiest was not yet manifest while the first tabernacle had its standing." That first tabernacle was but the ante-chamber to the true dwelling-place of God, and shut off from it, even in mercy to man in his present unfitness. The law could bring no one nigh. For us now, as we know, the "first tabernacle," as such, is abolished by the rending of the veil. Holy and holiest come together, and we have, blessed be God, the way made open for us into the holy places,* through the blood of Jesus.

But let us look at the figures now. The tabernacle was 30 cubits long, in breadth 10, and in height 10. The holy place was 20 cubits long, the measurements otherwise being the same; and the holiest of all was but 10 cubits long, making it a perfect cube, the breadth and the length and the height of it being equal. The city here and the holiest are in perfect agreement. In the temple, the measurements were double those of the tabernacle, but relatively similar. The whole building was 60 cubits long, 20 broad, and 20 high, of which the holy place was 40 cubits long and the holiest 20, this being again, therefore, a perfect cube, the breadth and the length and the height of it equal. How easy to recognize in this the perfect realization of God's mind only in the holiest. The cube speaks, as we see, everywhere of realization, and the number 3, which is its sign, of divine manifestation.

Let us still look at the numbers which are thus brought before us: The fundamental one is everywhere beautifully the number 5. The figures are 10s throughout, and 10 is in its meaning simply *twice* 5. But what is this number 5? Of what would it necessarily speak to us in such connections as are here? It speaks everywhere of man with God, as has been abundantly shown elsewhere. But it might be man with God as simply under divine government, and thus intimating responsibility—a responsibility, too, which, as he has taken it, has been so often interpreted in a way fatal to himself. But of this we can have nothing here. We have come to God's accomplishment of His dwelling-

* See the notes on Heb. x. 19.

shall walk by the light of it; and the [k]kings of the earth bring their glory unto it. And its gates shall [l]not be shut by day, for [m]night there shall be none there. And they shall bring the [n]glory and the honor of the nations unto it. And there shall [o]enter into it nothing that is common, nor he that doeth abomination and falsehood: none but those [p]written in the Lamb's book of life. And he showed me a [q]river of water of life,

k ctr. Is. 5. 26 -29.
l ctr. Matt. 25. 10. *cf.* Is. 60. 11.
m ch. 22. 5. *ctr.* Matt. 8. 12.
n ver. 24.
o cf. ch. 22. 15.
p cf. ch. 20. 15.
q cf. Gen. 2. 10; *cf.* Ezek. 47. 1, etc.; *cf.* Zech. 14. 8; *cf.* Ps. 46. 4; *cf.* Ps. 36. 8, 9.

place amongst men, and therefore nothing but grace or glory could enter into the thought. 5 in this way we read, therefore, in Immanuel—"God with us"—certainly what tabernacle and temple, and much more the city before us, declare to us. 5 is therefore the fundamental number; that is, "God in relationship with man;" and here the number 10 only brings out still more distinctly the thought of this relationship; for almost the primary thought of the number 2 is just that of *relation*. Thus, then, the holiest itself, the very dwelling-place of God, is above all stamped with this thought, which in Christ we see accomplished, of God dwelling with man.

Now the measurement of the city, the New Jerusalem, is, as we have it in the common version, in its threefold measure, 12,000 furlongs. Here we have the 5 or 10 connected with another number which we see everywhere stamped upon the city too—the number 12: that is, the number which speaks of that perfect rule of God which is its certified and perfect blessedness. Let us dismiss for a moment the thought of the "furlong," which is human throughout, and nothing else. Furlong is "*furrow*-long," the length of the furrow which a plow makes in the field. The Greek word is *stadia*, of which, of course, the furlong is the natural enough translation, while this, however, is destitute of the thought which the word used by inspiration gives us, of something that is *stable, fixed*, as everything about this city is. We have come to that which stands forever, where there is not even a leaf that fades.

The 1000 is, of course, once more cubic. It is the cube of 10. If we read the whole together, the 12,000 *stadia* show us God in perfectly realized relationship with man, and therefore God of necessity in His supreme place as God: this, as the *stadia* show us, abiding. This is surely the real significance of the measurements of the one truly eternal city. The wall that guards it is 144 cubits, the real sacred cubit, as in this connection is pointed out to us, the 144 being, of course, but 12 × 12, the manifest supremacy of God in strongest emphasis. This is its height and thickness, no doubt, as the wall is similarly measured in Ezekiel, though with almost infinitely smaller numbers. Its length must be such as to surround the city, plainly. The divine glory fences it round on every side, save where the gates of pearl, the beauteous image of divine grace, open a way of access and of egress to its blessed inhabitants.

This, then, is the glory of the heavenly city, in the light of which the nations of the earth themselves walk, while the kings of the earth bring their glory unto it. As another has said, "They own the heavens and the heavenly kingdom to be the source of all, and bring there the homage of their power." And "they bring the glory and honor of the nations unto it." That is, "Heaven is seen as the source of all the glory and honor of this world." The nations are, as we shall see directly, undoubtedly the millennial nations; and it is no question of these entering *themselves* into the heavenly city; their glory and honor it is they bring; and though the words in the original admit the force of "into," they by no means compel it. The mention of the continually open gates speaks indeed of peaceful and constant intercourse, and we must remember that here is the abode of those who reign with Christ over the earth. Whether *these* are the "kings of the earth" meant, is, however, a question: if it were so, the "into" might be still the true sense.

The next statement as to the city regards those who do enter therein, that is,

bright as crystal, proceeding from the [r]throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the [s]street of it and of the river, on this side and on that side, the [t]tree of life bearing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit each month, and the leaves of the tree were for the [u]healing of the nations. And there shall be [v]no more curse; and the [w]throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his [x]servants shall serve him. And they shall [y]see his

r ch. 4. 2, 3.
s ch. 21. 21.
t Gen. 2. 9. ch. 2. 7. *cf.* John 3. 16.
u *ctr.* Gen. 3. 6, 7.
v *cf.* Zech. 14. 11. *ctr.* Gen. 3. 17. *cf.* Gal. 3.

10-13. *w* ver. 1. *x cf.* ch. 7. 15; *cf.* John 12. 26. *y* Matt. 5. 8; *cf.* 1 Cor. 13. 12.

have part in the blessedness which is here depicted. In opposition to all defilement, one class alone has title here: it is "they who are written in the Lamb's book of life." This surely shows that the whole of the Old Testament saints enter into the city. No one is excluded whose name is there; while, on the other hand, the millennial saints have as clearly their portion on earth—the new earth—in connection, indeed, with the "tabernacle of God," but not in it. The heavenly city remains always heavenly, and when it descends from heaven has then received its inhabitants. These distinctions, which indeed are gathered from elsewhere, are nevertheless to be kept in remembrance here, or all will be confusion.

We have next before us the "paradise of God," in which the city lies. Man's paradise of old could not yet have the city; and when the city came, it was outside of paradise altogether. Here at last the two things are united.

We are of necessity reminded also of one of the closing visions of Ezekiel, while a comparison easily shows also the difference between the earthly and the heavenly in these pictures—the one being indeed the shadow, but no more than the shadow, of the other. John here sees "a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." And in Ezekiel the life-giving waters issue forth from the house of the Lord; and this is specially noted in connection with the fruit of the trees that are nourished by it: "And by the river, upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to its months, because their waters issued out of the sanctuary; and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine" (Ezek. xlvii. 12). How like the account in Revelation is to this, no one can fail to understand: even the language might seem to be taken from it: "In the midst of the street of it, and on this side of the river and on that, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve [manner of] fruits, and yielded its fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

But in Ezekiel all is distinctly earthly, and the blessing is not yet full. The waters go down into the salt sea and heal it, so that a great multitude of fish are in its waters; but there are miry places and marshes that are not healed, but given over to salt. With both the Old Testament prophet and the New we see that the earth is yet in the millennial, not the eternal, condition; for the leaves of the tree are for medicine in both alike; there is in both need of healing yet.

The waters are in both cases from the sanctuary, for that is the character of the whole city of God. In Revelation they are specifically from the throne of God; for here the one blessedness is, as we have seen, that God reigns,—God revealed in that perfect grace that is expressed in Christ,—the throne of God being also that of the Lamb. Thus the water is the type, as always in its highest meaning, of the fulness of the Spirit, the power of life and sanctification—indeed, the power of God in all creation. The *tree* of life bears witness, as in the earthly paradise at first, of dependence upon Another, of life in dependence; but all the plenteous and varied fruits of this could not even be symbolized in the time of old: fresh fruits and abundant; who can tell the blessed meaning? or what Christ is to those that have their life in Him?

face; and his [z]name shall be upon their foreheads. And there shall be [a]no more night, and they have no [b]need of the light of lamp, nor light of the sun; for the [c]Lord God giveth them light, and they shall [d]reign to the ages of ages.

6 (xxii.6-16): The limiting guard.

6. And he said unto me, These words are [e]faithful and true; and the Lord God of the spirits of the prophets hath [f]sent his angel to show unto his servants things which must [g]shortly come to pass. And behold, I

[z] ch. 3. 12. ch. 7. 3. ch. 14. 1. *cfr.* ch. 13. 16.
[a] ch. 21. 25.
[b] ch. 21. 23. *cf.* Ps. 119. 105, 89.
[c] ch. 21. 11.
[d] *cf.* ch. 20. 4. *cf.* Rom. 8. 17. *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 12.
[e] ch. 21. 5. [f] ch. 1. 1. [g] Heb. 10. 37.

"And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him. And they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads." Thus He is openly theirs; they too are openly His. Service is taken up afresh in glory according to the fulness of that open-eyed and open-faced communion which is here so assured. It is indeed, when it has its proper character, communion itself. The love that serves us all is the love of God Himself, and of this Christ is the perfect expression. How is it possible to be in communion with Christ without the diligent endeavor to serve Him in the gospel of His grace, and in ministry to His people? In heaven service will not for a moment cease, although some precious possibilities of the present will have passed away indeed. Would that this were more realized, with the Lord's estimate of greatness in the kingdom of which He is greatest of all!

But the Light! and our inheritance is in the light. To this the vision returns, and ends with it: "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, nor light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for the ages of the ages." Thus the reign of the saints is not for the Millennium only, nor simply as partakers of the power of the rod of iron. "If by one man's offense death reigned through one, much more shall they who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life by one, Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 17). Reigning is, for the heavenly saints, inseparable from the life they enter into in the coming day. The new Jerusalem is a city of kings and priests—the bridal city of the King of kings. Here the eternal reign seems associated necessarily with the glory in which all here live and move. For those who were once sinners,—slaves of Satan, and of the lusts by which he enthralled them, to be delivered and brought, by the priceless blood of Jesus, into such communion as is here shown with the Father and the Son,—how can their condition be expressed in language less glowing than this—needing no candle, nor light of the sun, because the Lord God giveth them light—than that they reign for ever and ever?

6. The series of visions is thus completed. What remains is the emphasizing of its authority for the soul, with all that belongs to Him whose revelation it is, and who is Himself coming speedily. Thus the angel now affirms that "these words are faithful and true:" necessarily so because of Him whose words they are. "The Lord God of the spirits of the prophets hath sent His angel to show unto His servants things which must soon come to pass." Here we return to the announcement of the first chapter. The book is, above all, a practical book. It is not for theorists, or dreamers, but for servants—words which are to be *kept*, and to have application to their service in the Church and in the world.

The things themselves were soon to come to pass. In fact, the history of the Church, as the coming epistles depict it, could be found imaged, as we see, in the condition of existing assemblies. The seeds of the future already existed, and were silently growing up, even with the growth (externally) of Christianity itself. As to the visions following the epistles, from the sixth chapter on, we have acknowledged the partial truth of what is known as the historical ful-

[h] come quickly: Blessed is he that [i] keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book. And I, John, [am] he that heard and saw these things; and when I heard and saw, I fell down to [j] worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. And he saith unto me, See thou do it not: I am [k] fellow-servant with thyself, and with thy brethren the prophets, and those who keep the words of this book. [l] Worship God.

And he saith unto me, [m] Seal not the words of the prophecy of this book; for the [n] time is at hand. He that [o] doeth unrighteously, let him do unrighteously still;

[h] vers. 12, 20. ch. 3. 11.
[i] ch. 1. 3.
[j] ch. 19. 10.
[k] *cf.* Heb. 1. 14.
[l] *cf.* Heb. 1. 6.
[m] *ctr.* ch. 10. 4. *cf.* ch. 5. 9.
[n] ch. 1. 3. *cf.* 1 Cor. 7. 29.
[o] *cf.* Mk. 3. 29. *cf.* Lk. 16. 26.

filment of these. It is admitted that there has been an anticipative fulfilment in Christian times of that which has definite application to the time of the end, although it is the last only that has been, in general, dwelt upon in these pages.

Historicalists will not be satisfied with such an admission, and, refusing on their side (as they mostly do) the general bearing of the introductory epistles upon the history of the Church at large, insist upon such affirmations as the present as entirely conclusive that the historical interpretation is the only true one. In fact, the view which has been here followed brings nearest to those in the apostles' days the things announced, as well as makes the whole book far more fruitful and important for the guidance of servants. For how many generations must they have waited before the seals and trumpets would speak to these! and when they did, how much of guidance would they furnish for practical walk? The application of Babylon the great to Romanism is fully accepted, and that of Jezebel in the same way insisted on, so that as to the errors of popery we are as *protestant* as any, even if in the "beasts" of the thirteenth chapter we find something beyond this. But nothing of this could have been intelligible to the saints of the early centuries, while the fulfilment of Ephesus, Smyrna, and even Pergamos, would soon be of the first importance.

"The Lord God of the *spirits* of the prophets"—the reading now generally admitted to be right—emphasizes for us the presence of the living God as what was for these the constant realization in all the shifting scenes of human history. And so it is for those whose spirit is in harmony with them. God in past history, God in the events happening under our eyes, His judgment therefore of everything while controlling everything for His own glory and for the blessing of His people—in this respect how blessed to be guided by those wondrous revelations! while the future, to be learnt from the same infallible teaching, is not only that which animates our hopes, but is necessary for the judgment of the present no less. All lines lead on to the full end, there where the full light gives the manifestation of all.

"And behold, I come quickly." This is for the heart: future as long as we are down here, and yet to govern the present. "Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book."

Here we are warned of the mistakes that may be made by the holiest of men in the most fervent occupation with heavenly things. John falls at the angel's feet to worship him; but the angel refuses it, claiming no higher title than to be a fellow-servant *with* John himself, with his brethren the prophets, and with those also who keep the words of this book. And he adds, "Worship God;"—that is, worship no creature.

Unlike Daniel's prophecies, the words of the prophecy of this book are not to be sealed up, for the time is near. To the Christian, brought face to face with the coming of the Lord, the end is always near. What time might actually elapse, is another question. In fact, some eighteen centuries have elapsed since this was written: but while Daniel was taught to look on through a vista of

and he that is filthy let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy* still. Behold, I [p]come quickly, and my reward is with me, to [q]render to each one as his work is. I am the [r]Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Blessed are they who [s]wash their robes,† that they may have right to the tree of life, and may [t]enter in by the gates into the city. [u]Without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie.

7 (xxii. 16–21): Complete!

7. I Jesus have [v]sent mine angel to testify these things to you in the assemblies. I am the [w]root and the offspring of David, the bright and the [x]morning star. And the [y]Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that [z]heareth say, Come; and let him that is [a]athirst come. He that willeth, let him [b]take the water of life freely.

p vers. 7,20.
q Matt. 16. 27.
r ch. 21. 6.
s ch. 7. 14. *cf.* 1John 1. 7, 9.
cf. ch. 2. 7.
t *ctr.* ch. 21. 24.
u ch.21.8,27.
v ch. 1. 1.
w ch. 5. 5. *cf.* Matt.22. 41–45.
x ch. 2. 28. *ctr.* Mal. 4. 2. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 19.
y *cf.* Eph. 1. 13, 14.
z ver. 20. *cf.* Eph. 5. 27.
a ch. 21. 6. *cf.* John 7. 37. *cf.* Is. 55. 1.
b *cf.* John 4. 10; *cf.* John 1. 12.

* Or, "sanctified." † Many have, "do his commandments."

many generations to the end before him, Christians, taught to be always in an attitude of expectation, have before them no such necessary interval, and are brought into the full light now, though unbelief and wrong teaching may obscure it. But nothing in this way is under a veil save the moment, whose concealment is meant to encourage expectation. How good for us and fruitful, such concealment, may be measured by the goodness and fruitfulness of the expectation itself.

The solemn words are just ready to be uttered which proclaim the close of the day of grace to those who have refused grace. It is just ready to be said, "Let him that doeth unrighteously, do unrighteously still; and let the filthy make himself filthy still; and let him that is righteous, do righteously still; and he that is holy, let him be sanctified still." And when this applies is shown clearly in the next words, "Behold, I come quickly, and My reward with Me, to render to every one as his work shall be: I, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." The last affirmation here shows the irrevocable character of this judgment. He sums up in Himself all wisdom, all power: "None can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?"

The way of life and the way of death are now put in contrast: "Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Here is the condition of blessing stated according to the character of Revelation, in terms that have been used before. Our robes must be washed in the blood of the Lamb, as those of the redeemed multitude in the vision under the seals, in order to be arrayed in the *white* garments that are granted to the Lamb's wife. A very old corruption in this text is that exhibited in the common version, "Blessed are they that do His commandments;" but which is the true reading ought to be apparent at once. It is not by keeping commandments that any one can acquire a *right* to the tree of life. On the other hand, condemnation *is* for committing evil: "Without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie."

7. Again it is repeated, "I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify these things unto you in the assemblies;" and then He declares Himself in the two relations among men in which the book has spoken of Him: "I am the root and the offspring of David"—the Jewish relation, the divine, incarnate King of Israel—"the bright and Morning Star"—the Object of expectation for the Christian.

I testify unto every one that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any one [c]add to them, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any one will [d]take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, the things written in this book. He that testifieth these things saith, Yea, I [e]come quickly. [f]Amen, come, Lord Jesus! The [g]grace of the Lord Jesus Christ* be with the saints.

* Some omit, "Christ."

[c] Deut. 4. 2. Deut. 12. 32. Prov. 30. 6.
[d] *cf.* Gen. 3. 4 with Gen. 2. 17.
[e] vers. 7, 12.
[f] *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 8. *cf.* Heb. 9. 28. *cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 10.
[g] 2 Cor. 13. 14.

But immediately He is named,—or, rather, names Himself in this way,—the heart of the Bride, moved by the Spirit, awakes: "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come!" But because it is yet the day of grace, and the Bride is still open to receive accessions, it is added, "And let him that heareth say, Come!" And if one answer, "Ah, but my heart is yet unsatisfied," it is further said, "And let him that is athirst come; he that will, let him take the water of life freely."

Blessed is this testimony. The precious gifts of God are not restricted in proportion to their preciousness, but the reverse. In nature, sunlight, fresh air, the water-brooks, things the most necessary, are on that account bestowed freely upon all. And in the spiritual realm there is no barrier to the reception of the best gifts save that which the soul makes for itself. Not only so, but men are urged to come—to take—to look—with no uncertainty of result for those who do so. The stream that makes glad the city of God is poured out for the satisfaction of all who thirst and will but stoop to drink of it. This is the closing testimony of the gospel in this book; and that with which it is associated adds amazingly to its solemnity.

There is now another warning, neither to add to nor take from the words of the prophecy of this book. Scripture has many similar admonitions, but here the penalty is an unutterably solemn one. To him that adds, God shall add the plagues that are written in this book. From him who takes away, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and from the holy city. Yet men are now not scrupulous at least to take away many of the words of Scripture, and of Revelation among the rest. Every *word* is claimed here by the Lord Himself for God; and if this is not a claim for verbal inspiration, what is it? As manifestly the closing book of the New Testament Scripture, what may we not infer as to the verbal inspiration of other parts? And what shall be the woe of those who dare presumptuously to meddle with that which is the authoritative communication of the mind of God to man? Is it not being done? and by those who own that somewhere at least—and they cannot pretend to know exactly the limit—Scripture *contains* the word of God?

This announcement of penalty is Christ's own word: "He who testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly." Is it not when His Word is being thus dealt with that we may more than ever expect Himself? When the testimony of Scripture is being invalidated and denied, is it not then that we may most expect the faithful and true Witness to testify in person? and especially when this arises in the most unlooked-for places, and Church-teachers laboriously work out a theology of unbelief?

And the promise abides as the hope of the Church, although it be true that the Bridegroom has tarried and the virgins have slept! That—true or false—a cry has been raised, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!" is notorious. That many have stirred, and taken up the old attitude of expectancy, is also true. All these things should surely be significant also. But whatever one's *head* may

say,—whatever the doctrine we have received and hold as to the coming of our Lord and Master,—the *heart* of the truly faithful must surely say with the apostle here, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

It is the only response that answers to the assurance of His love on His departure to the Father: "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, ye may be also."

The Lord's coming—the *parousia*—is just the "presence" of the Lord Himself. Nothing short of this could satisfy the hearts of those who looked up after Him as He ascended with His hands spread in blessing over them, and were reassured by the angels' voices that this same Jesus would come again. Just in proportion as we too have learnt by the Spirit the power of the love of Jesus, we too shall be satisfied with this, and with this alone. May we learn more deeply what is this cry of the Spirit and the Bride, "Amen; come, Lord Jesus!"

APPENDIX TO REVELATION.

THE HISTORICAL VIEW.

THE historical view, which we have had to some extent already before us in the Introduction, is that which applies Revelation to the Church all through, leaving out all reference to Israel altogether. Israel has been thought, perhaps, to come in in the last hallelujah (chap. xix. 6), although how it should come in there is not quite evident. It is merely the occurrence of the Old Testament expression, and in its Hebrew form. The common belief as to the Church, as one and the same throughout all dispensations, necessarily blots out Israel as such from the book of the future, and thus denies her the possession of even Old Testament promises. Those who see the distinction between these and the heavenly ones belonging to the Church may yet, of course, take the ground that this Christian Revelation applies naturally to the Church only, and some things, on a superficial view, might seem to confirm this: for instance, that the whole millennial period as presented in the prophets is passed over in Revelation by simply giving, with regard to it, its precise duration — which makes it a "millennium"—and the reign of Christ and the saints during that period. Nevertheless, this is only a superficial view. The broader interpretation shows prophecy as a connected whole, and brings its various threads together. If we are to take the Church-historical view as complete and exhaustive, then Old Testament prophecy has little indeed to do with it; while taken as it is taken here, the larger and middle portion of the book, though applying indeed to a much smaller period of time (so small as to be a great point in the minds of many against such application), nevertheless becomes much larger in scope and of much richer interest. This is contrary to the common idea, which thinks more of the lapse of time than of the importance of the events which occur in it; but it is proved by the interest, as one may say, which *Scripture* in general takes in it; and no wonder, for it is the day of manifestation, in which on the one hand God's

dealings with man hitherto find their consummation, and thus, much of their explanation, while man's heart is told out to the full. Christ's foes are made His footstool. What importance does this give to such an application! How much interest have we, on the other hand, in the application, for instance, of the trumpets to Alaric the Goth, or Attila the Hun! No doubt there may be instruction in it all, and is; yet as a matter of comparison, who can compare these things?

Some points, no doubt, there are of very great importance, as with regard to Babylon and the beast; and these have naturally attracted proportionate attention, and brought many interpreters into an agreement conspicuously absent elsewhere, and indeed which is here only an agreement as to certain main points, while the conflict continues as to details. The conflict of interpreters has been in general, for very many, a mill-stone, consigning the whole matter to the abyss of forgetfulness; and this is not to be wondered at when we realize the limits of all such anticipative fulfilments. Limited they *must* be; for were the application complete, it would be exhaustive—there would be no room for another; while, on the contrary, the historical view leaves out the great features of the book, such as those we find in the heavenly vision of the fourth and fifth chapters.

Again, the details such as those we have referred to, regarding the earlier trumpets, could not possibly be foreseen by any amount of wisdom in prophetic study, nor would they be known even for what they are when actually passing before the eyes. Only here and there a glimmer of the truth might be seen, and this is surely what must have been intended as to them; for if capable of being read continuously beforehand, they would have put off the expectation of the Lord's coming almost indefinitely for many generations. Think, for instance, of the application in this way of the year-day theory. If any one could have seen in the uprise of the papal power something that was to last for 1260 years before the end, how thoroughly impossible would it have made it for any to be expecting the Lord for this length of time! This does not decide, indeed, as to how much truth there might be in it; but if it were true, it would have to be a truth necessarily hidden from men until the end had almost come.

We have already examined, in the Introduction, the possibility of a consistent application of this theory with all the implications which would necessarily be in it. There may be, no doubt, a partial truth in it; but it exhibits the great difficulty with the Church-historical interpretation as a whole. How much are we to take as strictly to be fulfilled? and where are we to make allowance for the necessary defects in this interpretation? Here the complete and proper fulfilment is, in fact, of great value to the historical view. It relieves it of the necessity of an absolutely consistent interpretation,—which is a burden that indeed it cannot bear,—and provides for it a stable outline with which necessarily it is to be in conformity. For example, as to the seals, the conqueror of the first seal cannot be Christ Himself in the one view and an enemy of Christ in the other. Yet the historical may, of course, and will, supply us with various mat-

ters which do not come within the range of the full and proper interpretation; as with regard, for instance, to the fall of the Christianized empire, and the papacy itself which rose upon its ruins. The woman of the seventeenth chapter is, however, and must be, on either view, the same, so that we do not need the historical interpretation in order to find depicted the development of the great "mystery of lawlessness" in Christian times. Manifestly the two views must come together at the end, if not before the end, and this we find distinctly in the seventeenth chapter.

Let us now notice once more how impossible it is to interpret the fourth and fifth chapters in any proper way according to the historical view. The vision shows us manifestly saints already in heaven, reigning, and therefore risen, seated upon their thrones around the throne of God. It is utterly impossible to apply this in the historical fashion; and that most important change by which the Lamb slain becomes before one's eyes the Lion of the tribe of Judah is equally impossible to be interpreted according to the full and right force of the terms used.

The book, according to the view before us, must be in the main the revelation of the Church's earthly history. The seals, which must be removed before the book is open, might naturally therefore have such an application to the fall of the pagan empire as is usually made. It is plain that pagan Rome must fall before the book in its main theme can be fully opened. Thus the seals are necessarily introductory, and the common view of them is thus far justified.

In the first seal, a time of conquest such as from Trajan to Marcus Aurelius actually occurred: and in this view the extension of the empire eventually helped to weaken it, and thus to prepare the way for the final catastrophe.

The second seal, in harmony with history, speaks of such civil war following as necessarily ensued from the setting up and putting down of emperors that often rose in quick succession, and by the distinct claims of different pretenders.

The third seal speaks of famine and straitness such as would naturally follow, of which one main one is noted, beginning with the Edict of Caracalla.

The fourth seal again speaks of what would be the natural result of this state of things, and is evidently a foreshadow of the approaching end, although it does not actually bring us thither.

These seals have no great difficulty in application, although they may not be, as they need not be, chronologically distinct from one another. The civil wars would not be brought to an end by the famine, nor the famine by the pestilence following. There is therefore no contradiction here.

The fifth seal brings us to another side of things, and manifestly represents the hostility to Christianity more and more developing, so that the cry of the martyrs, or their blood at any rate, went up to heaven; and the sixth seal again is the manifest answer to this, showing us the convulsions in which the pagan empire ended. This reaches to Constantine, although there is in it nothing with regard to Constantine's victory such as the plaudits of the Christian historians

might lead us to expect. Heaven views things very differently to men on earth, even oftentimes to Christian men; and the professed Christianity of the empire from this time was indeed by no means of such a nature as to be celebrated as deliverance in the sight of a holy God. Rather does it introduce us to the trumpets, which with their loud call to conflict begin now on the Christianized empire, which begins the world-history of the Church in which Church and world, alas, are so much identified.

The visions of the seventh chapter we have already seen not to have their place in the succession of events at this period, important as they are for the understanding of what is coming. Their importance has regard simply to the complete and not the anticipative fulfilment. Historical interpreters plainly break down in their attempts at application here, and necessarily so. The distinction manifest here between these two companies, the one Jewish, the other Gentile, (and these last, those who have come through the great tribulation) forbid any proper application to a time when, in the Church, Jew and Gentile, as such, exist no longer, and when the great tribulation is yet an event of the distant future.

The seventh seal, as has been elsewhere shown, contemplates the book as now open. Hence, it only introduces to us the trumpets, which, after a short interval of silence, begin to sound. Their voices announce, evidently, not peace, but strife impending, and they come as the answer once more to the prayers of the saints. If this be the history of the Church, it is not certainly one of triumphant progress, and we need not wonder if we find in them the true saints still suffering, and the new risen beast apparently, for a time, triumphant over God's witnesses upon the earth. In fact, if the woman now began to ride the beast, this could only end in catastrophe on both sides. The woman ceased thereby to be the pure woman that she should have been, and even so was a weight upon the beast's neck, which, while it remained in its inward nature unchristianized and unreformed, would only awaken the just judgment of God upon an unholy alliance. According to common consent, the first four trumpets show us judgment upon the western, as the two following show us this upon the eastern division of the now dissolving empire. We need not deny, therefore, the application of the first to the inroads of the Goths; the second, to the conquest of the Maritime Provinces of Africa and the islands by the Vandals; the third, although here less distinct, to the fierce and more quickly exhausted eruption of the Huns; or of the fourth to the time of Odoacer, by whom the name and office of Roman Emperor of the West was abolished, and "thus, of the Roman imperial sun, that third which appertained to the western empire was collapsed and shone no more." This keeps within the limits which the complete and final interpretation assigns to it, both in the part of the empire to which it applies and in the extinction of the imperial headship according to what we have already suggested—the fall of the seventh head.

From this point our attention is turned towards the East, and there is almost a consensus of interpreters in referring the fifth trumpet to the Saracenic woe.

We need not enlarge upon it, as it has been abundantly dwelt upon by others, and the application can be found in books that may be easily consulted by any who desire to do so. Similarly, the sixth trumpet no doubt refers to the Turkish woe, in which the year-day interpretation comes to the front in the prophetic year and month and day. According to this reckoning, there were 396 years, 118 days from Jan. 18, 1057, "the day when the Turcomans went forth from Bagdad on their career of victory, to the day on which the investiture of Constantinople was completed, May 16, 1453." That there are difficulties connected with this interpretation, if we are to think of it as complete and exhaustive, may, as always, be readily acknowledged; yet Barnes, in quoting from Gibbon's account, can say: "If Mr. Gibbon had designed to describe the conquests of the Turks as a fulfilment of the prediction, could he have done it in a style more clear and graphic than that which he has employed? If this had occurred in a *Christian* writer, would it not have been charged on him that he had shaped his facts to meet his notions of the meaning of the prophecy?" Here, then, the eastern empire comes to an end, as the western under the fourth trumpet; and we go on from this point to look at events of a very different character.

The interposed visions of the tenth and eleventh chapters introduce us, in natural enough order, to Reformation times. We must expect still, as ever, a certain blurring of the precise outlines, which will assure us that we are, as always with the historical view, somewhat out of focus. The angel is still Christ, who claims, in opposition to His professed vicegerent, sea and land for God; and this is confirmed by His own voice in the seven thunders. The open Bible is in the angel's hand, and this to communicate to others, as we see in the case of the prophet himself, who not only digests the contents of it, but is to prophesy again with regard to many peoples and nations and tongues and kings. Thus the reformers took up again the testimony of prophets of a day, alas, long passed, the coming of the end also not being forgotten in these announcements. Although pre-millennialism had, so far as we know, no place in the testimony of that day, yet the coming of Christ had; the Millennium either being considered to be already past, or simply being dropped out altogether. There was also such a distinction made between true and false worshipers as the measuring of the temple and altar would imply. It is as true, alas, that it was not insisted on—that in this way there was no proper separation of the Church from the world. Yet the preaching of justification by faith, and of faith itself, a living faith being a necessity to true Christianity, *did* make, more or less, such a distinction. The outer court was, however, we may say, given up to the profane for whom the established churches of the Reformation had in some way to provide, Church and nation being made, as far as profession was concerned, two aspects of the same thing. But this was only a continuance of a former state of things which, under Romanism, was of course every way worse, the assurance of salvation on the part of any, being, for the Council of Trent, the "vain confidence of the heretics." It is only by taking into account this earlier condition that the forty and two months can be made good in this connection, as undoubt-

edly, if they are 1260 years, they must begin long before the Reformation times. During this same time the two witnesses would therefore testify, God having in fact always maintained a testimony for Himself, the difficulty felt here being that this same period must end, according to this view, with the Lateran Council: "(To which all dissentients had been summoned, and at which none appeared) when, May 5, 1514, the orator of the council proclaimed to the pope from the pulpit, '*jam nemo reclamat, nullus obsistit*'—'there is an end of resistance to the papal rule in religions. Opposers there exist no more'; and again: 'the whole body of Christendom is now seen to be subjected to its head; that is, to thee.'" However little the truth of this language could absolutely be insisted upon, yet the ability to boast in this way argues at least the appearance of truth; and it is remarkable that three years and a half after (answering to the three days and a half of the vision) Luther posted up his theses at Wittemberg, a convulsion of the nations following, and one at least of the papal kingdoms, England, escaping from this control. That this will fit all around must not be contended. There is here, as elsewhere, plenty of room to question the exactness of fulfilment which, as already said, it is vain to expect in this interpretation. There is a sufficient similitude to the truth to make us believe that these things are contemplated in the prophecy. To say that they are its absolute fulfilment, and to prove it, is simply out of the question.

In the twelfth chapter the historical interpretation seems almost of necessity to fail. It is one of those connecting visions which pertain to the framework of the prophecy, and which therefore we must not expect to fit to any partial anticipation of it. It begins, as we have seen, before Revelation itself, with the ascension of Christ, the man-child who is yet to rule the nations with an iron rod. To make the man-child caught up to the throne of God to apply to any such thing as exaltation to undisputed supremacy of a converted emperor,—if we could accept Constantine as that,—would seem rather a blasphemous perversion than an interpretation of it; nor can we think either of the triumph of orthodoxy over Arianism, although this does indeed permit Christ Himself to be seen in it.

But the sway of orthodoxy over the empire, whatever it were, comes very far short of its being caught up to God and to His throne. All this is the despair of interpretation, rather than interpretation itself; nor can the flight of the woman be made to agree with what followed such a casting down of the dragon as might be implied in this. How could the casting down of the dragon from the imperial throne force the Church to flee into the wilderness? and what sort of victory over the power of evil was it that could only produce in the end the degradation of the Church? It is plain that here the historical interpretation is coming to an end, or rather it is uniting with the real and complete one, as we see in the fallen woman of the seventeenth chapter, in which plainly we have, as has been elsewhere shown, the professing Church in its last apostate condition, but where we have to a certain extent also a glance at its past history as seen in its connection with the Roman beast, which is the empire. But then, this de-

stroys the thought of the beast being, as many take it, the papacy itself. The beast is, in its inner reality, beast all through, though it is only at the end that this is fully shown out, when it and the horns finally destroy the woman. The second beast also of the thirteenth chapter cannot be either papacy or clergy; for after the woman is destroyed, we find it as the false prophet meeting its final doom at Armageddon.

There seems nothing in the chapters intermediate, between the thirteenth and the seventeenth, which would call for attention further. The historical view, if it can be held at all, fades here into a mere shadow. On the whole, is it not evident that, as already said, God does not intend us to find in all this prophecy any continuous history of the Church at all? He has provided in it that from which His saints, especially in a time of persecution, and amid the trial of their connection with the ruin of Christendom, might derive needed and truthful comfort and guidance for themselves. They have found this, and we may surely bless Him for such rightful applications of it, which nevertheless were applications only, and which, when pressed as a complete and satisfying interpretation of the whole, fail signally, and must fail. God would not have us to stop short of that which is really in His thoughts, and in which (for us now at least) the fullest comfort and blessing may be found for the soul.

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